Therapeutic Strategies in the Treatment of Pornography & Sexual Addictions

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Pornography Addiction and Families
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Therapist Issues

1. Your Sexuality – Be Grounded
   - Biases and Values
   - Triggers – sexual & emotional
   - Trauma/Abuse/Betrayal

2. Physical, Spiritual & Emotional Health
   - Collegial Support - Do not isolate
   - Social Outlets
   - Personal Relationships
   - Self Care – interests, hobbies, recreation
   - Mindfulness/Meditation
   - Exercise, healthy eating, sleep

3. Do Your Recovery Work
   - Congruence with What You Teach
   - Cannot be Passive
   - Maintain Positive Energy
   - Be energized by the battle
9 years of age is the average age of first exposure to pornography.
Nearly 1/3 of Pornography users are female.
Sexual Access Timeline 1977 - 1990

- Video = VCR and BETA
- Phone Sex
- Soft-core on cable TV - at home
- “Adult” and “Escort” Sections in Yellow Pages, magazines and newspapers
Sexual Access Timeline
1990 - 2004

- BBS - Online bulletin board systems (BBS)
- Websites for porn and prostitution
- Online Porn and file transfer sites
- Chat Rooms
- Online Hook-ups - i.e. craigslist
- Webcams and interactive live sex

Rob Weiss  SRI
Today’s World of Cybersex

• Sexting and live video streaming from your smartphone
• 3-D porn movies
• Ashley Madison.com – also a mobile app
  - Slogan “Life is short, have an affair”
  - Over 11 million members
  - May 2009 – 679,000 men and women used the service to contact a sexual partner in that single month
• Married Secrets.com
• Xango.com
• Grindr – a smartphone app that geographically locates available men. Uses your GPS coordinate to locate the closest available person
• Interactive Sex: Sinulator, Realtouch, Teledildonics
• 50 Shades of Grey
Impact of Internet Porn Use

- Heightened Sexual Cravings
- Increased Compulsitivy/Impulsivity
- Increased Risk Factors
  - Illegal behavior
  - Sexual harrassment
  - Earlier experimentation – oral and anal sex
- Sleep Patterns and Fatigue
- Couples – lower levels of intimacy, emotional and physical
Internet Pornography Impact in Japan

Teens & Young Adults:

- Erectile Dysfunction early onset
- Lessened desire to date and marry
- “Intimate desires are being met with no risk of rejection”
- Isolation and poor socialization skills
- Lowering birth rate
The Therapeutic System

12 Step

Individual Therapy

Ecclesiastical Support

Group Therapy
Order of Treatment

1. Assessment
2. Cognitive Behavioral Work – CBT
   - Psycho-education/Cycles/Boundaries
   - Community of Support/Accountability
   - Recovery Plan
   - Create Sobriety/Tools/Strategies
3. Trauma Work/Shame
4. Attachment/Affect Regulation
5. Couples Work
Assessment

- Thorough Sexual History
- Assess Axis I & II Disorders
- SCS – Sexual Compulsivity Scale
- SCI – Sexual Compulsivity Inventory
- [www.sexhelp.com](http://www.sexhelp.com) - Internet sex screening test
- TAS-20 Toronto Alexithymia Scale
- Amen Adult General Symptom Checklist [www.amenclinics.com](http://www.amenclinics.com)
Brain Science &
Recovery…
Its not just about sex.
Escape
Emotional/Psychological Pain

- Loneliness
- Boredom
- Stress/Anxiety
- Depression
- Abuse and Neglect
EMOTIONAL TRIGGERS

B O R E D
L O N E L Y
A N G R Y
S T R E S S E D
T I R E D
S H A M E
Recovery IS NOT Just Abstinence

- Premature Cure
- White knuckled sobriety

Recovery IS A Lifestyle Change

- Long Term
- Paced/Rhythm/Stable
Withdrawal

- Physical symptoms
- Loss of an old friend
- Things feel worse before better
- Expect pain and uneasiness
- Lean into the pain—"be in it"

- System needs to learn it can go without
- No one dies or explodes
- Understand brain functions
- Find other outlets—healthy replacements
- Can make other choices (A Beautiful Mind)
“The natural tendency is to surrender to the desire for a “fix” when the brain’s reward center is crying out to be drugged. Recovery requires the addict to “lean into the pain,” (Dr. Patrick Carnes) acknowledge and face it head-on. This will allow the body and mind to detoxify and finally rid themselves of the withdrawal symptoms and the overwhelming desire to act out.”

Surviving Withdrawal, LifeSTAR Network, 2005
Three Styles of Addiction

- **Arousal**
  - Dislike boredom and crave the rush of *adrenaline* (cocaine)

- **Satiation**
  - Seek relief from an already hyper-arousal state. *Endorphins* supply the neurotransmitter boost for this style. (alcohol)

- **Fantasy**
  - The neurotransmitter *dopamine* creates the “feel good” condition in this style. Characterized by preoccupation, fantasies, and dreams. (LSD, Marijuana)
Three Styles of Recovery

- Arousal becomes Excitement
- Satiation becomes Relaxation
- Fantasy becomes Creativity
Trauma /Shame Work

“Woundedness”

- Abuse – Physical, Sexual
- Emotional Neglect
- Abandonment - John Bradshaw, “Where there’s addiction there is shame, where there is shame there is abandonment.”
- Creates detachment and isolation
“Fear of abandonment is the fundamental human fear…it is so basic and so profound that it emerges even before we develop a language to describe it. It is so powerful that it activates our body’s autonomic nervous system, causing our hearts to race, our breathing to become shallow and rapid, our stomachs to quiver, and our hands to shake. We feel a sense of panic that will not be assuaged…until we regain a feeling of security.”

- Overly critical
- Self-righteous
- Rigid
- Blaming
- Pleasing/placating
- Perfectionism

**Excessive:** Working, dieting, exercising, cleaning, helping others, saving money

- Self-centered
- Lacking self-control
- Unpredictable
- Self-indulgent

**Behaviors:**
- Sexual acting out
- Verbal Abuse
- Overeating
- Spending money
- Drug/Alcohol abuse
- Self-mutilation
- Physical/Sexual Abuse
Attachment and Addiction

- Trauma/Shame creates detachment from self and others
- **Addiction as an Attachment Disorder**, Phillip J. Flores, PhD
- Masturbation & ejaculation - ways to regulate emotions – self soothe – same as drugs or alcohol
- Porn & masturbation create bonding experience to the object of the arousal…”It’s safe.”
- Oxytocin
Oxytocin – The Bonding Hormone

- Mother and newborn child
- Child birth and lactation of the breasts
- Activated during sexual arousal and orgasm
- Attachment to the source of arousal
- Sexual and Emotional needs are met - temporarily
Trauma/Attachment/Affect Regulation in the study of the brain and the neurobiology of emotion.

- Therapeutically, there is “a paradigm shift from cognitive to social-emotional development, attachment and regulation of emotion.” Dr. Allan Schore
- J Schore & A Schore, Modern Attachment Theory: The Central Role of Affect Regulation in Development and Treatment
- Affect Regulation – impacted by trauma and “early relational trauma is associated with severe attachment stressors.” Schore (2002)
- Alexithymia
Alexithymia

- “A state of deficiency in understanding processing or describing emotions.”
- Considered a personality trait not a mental disorder
- (see Reid, Carpenter, Spackman and Willes).
Treatment Strategies
**Trauma/Attachment/Affect Regulation**

- Begins with the therapeutic relationships

- Create environment of Safety (see Bowlby 1991)

- EFT – Emotionally Focused Therapy
  *Hold Me Tight*, Sue Johnson
Come Out of Hiding

- Disclosure – openness in safe places
- Freedom from Secrets
- Group & Individual Therapy – identify trauma, family of origin
- “If it's not one thing it's your mother.”
- Trauma Egg
- 12 Steps
- Discover authentic self
- EMDR
Treatment Strategies Continued…

**Mindfulness/Meditation**

- Emotional, Physical and Spiritual awareness
- Be Aware – Notice – Observe
- Self Compassion (see Reid, Temko, Fong)
- Insightla.org
- Dharmatalks.org
Moving from The Head to The Heart

“It needs to be felt.”
The Power of the Humble Warrior Heart In Recovery
A humble warrior’s heart

- A humble warrior surrenders, not to his enemy, but to his Captain, his General, to his Higher Power, to his God.
- He does whatever is required
- He goes the distance
- He battles for the safety of his wife and family
- He commits to what he knows and what he has to do
Daily Rituals...Until You Feel It!

Music  Contact with others
Scriptures  Readings
Movie Clips  Nature
Poems  Adventure activities
Meditation  Pictures/Paintings
Prayers  Stories
Exercise
Resources

*He Restoreth My Soul*, Dr. Don Hilton
*Confronting Pornography*, Chamberlain, Gray, Reid
*Don’t Call It Love*, Dr. Patrick Carnes
“Sexual Addiction and Compulsivity,” The Journal of Treatment and Prevention

**Shame**
Ted Talks.com – video, Brene Brown

**Cybersex and Social Networking**
*Smart Phones, Social Networking, Sexting and Problematic Sexual Behavior*, Robert Weiss, Charles Simonows 2010,
“Sexual Addiction and Compulsivity,” The Journal of Treatment and Prevention
Journal of Treatment and Prevention

**Mindfulness/The Brain**
*He Restoreth My Soul*, Dr Don Hilton
*Surviving Withdrawal*, LifeSTAR Network, 2005
*Your Brain on Joy*, Dr. Earl Henslin
*Insight/a.org*
*Dharma Talks.org*
*Amenclinics.com*, Dr. Daniel Amen
Resources continued…

**Spouses**
Your Sexually Addicted Spouse, How Partners can Cope and Heal, Barbara Steffens, Phd & Marsha Means, MA, 2009, New Horizon Press
Intimate Treason, Healing the Trauma for Partners confronting Sex Addiction, Claudia Black, PhD & Cara Tripodi, LCSW, 2012, Central Recovery Press
Creating Safety, LifeSTAR Network 2005
Confronting Your Spouse’s Pornography Problem, Reid, Gray

**Alexithymia**
Journal of Sex and Marital Therapy, Reid, Carpenter, Spackman and Willes, 2008; 34 (2): 133-49
Toronto Alexithymia Scale (TAS-20)

**Trauma/Attachment/Affect Regulation**
Hold Me Tight, Susan Johnson
Schore & Schore; Modern Attachment Theory: The Central Role of Affect Regulation in Development and Treatment
Affect Regulation Allan N. Schore
Still Face Video, You Tube