

Out of Control Sexual Behavior: Is it? What is it? Who is it? Is it treatable?

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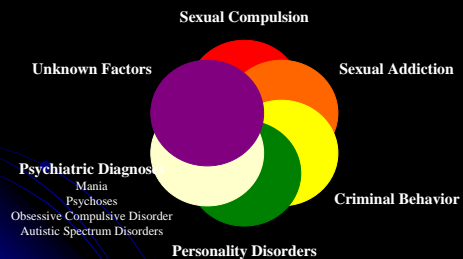
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What ARE We Talking About?

- Sexual Compulsion
- Compulsive Sexual Behavior
- Sexual Addiction
- Out of Control Sexual Behavior
- Impulsive-Compulsive Disorder
(proposed DSM-V)
- Sexual Offending
- What IS It?

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What ARE We Talking About?



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What Are We NOT Talking About?

- A Moral Stance or Religious Belief System
- A Sign or Symptom of Mental Illness
- A Means to Excuse Sexual Offending
- A Cover for Narcissism or Sociopathy
- An Endorsement of Sex Negative Attitudes
- A Judgment of Same Sex Activity
- Any Rationale for Assessing Relationship Issues

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The Addiction Model

- Primary Committed Pathological (Sick) LOVE
- Relationship
- Between A Person
- And A Mood Altering Experience
- For A Singularly Pleasurable Rewarding Experience.

The Essentials of Chemical Dependency: Alcoholism and Other Drug Dependencies. McAuliffe, Robert M. and McAuliffe, Mary Bossen. The American Chemical Dependency Society, Minneapolis, Minnesota - 1975.

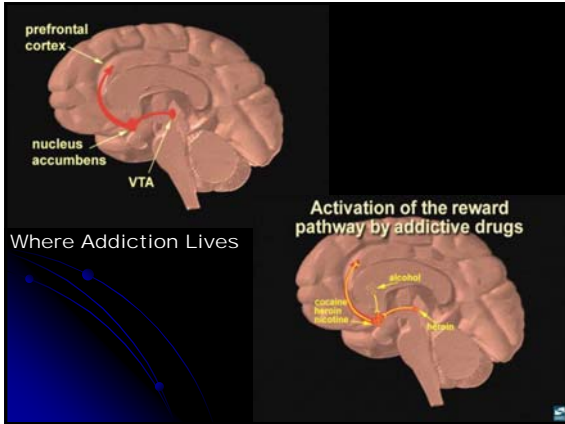
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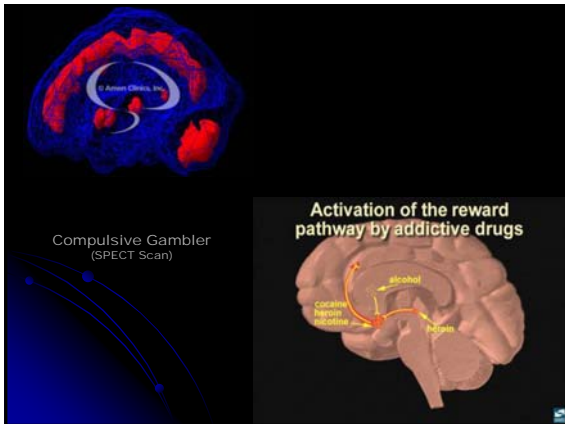
The Addiction Model

Criteria more closely parallel guidelines for substance abuse, impulse control disorder and compulsive gambling

- Recurrent failure to resist impulses to engage in specific behaviors
- Engaging in behaviors to a greater extent, or over a longer period of time than intended
- Persistent desire or unsuccessful efforts to stop, reduce, or control those behaviors
- Inordinate amounts of time spent
- Preoccupation with behavior or preparing
- Engaging in the behavior when expected to fulfill obligations
- Distress, anxiety, restlessness, or irritability if unable to engage in the behavior
- Continuation despite knowledge of persistent or recurrent social, financial, psychological, or physical problem that is caused or exacerbated by the behavior
- Need to increase intensity, frequency, number, or risk level of behaviors in order to achieve the desired effect;
- Or diminished effect with continued behaviors at the same level
- Giving up or limiting social, occupational, or recreational activities because of the behavior.

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Behaviors and Chemicals

Why We Love:

[The Nature and Chemistry of Romantic Love](#)
By Helen Fisher, PhD

- Romantic Love
- "The love-possessed person focusses almost all of his or her attention on the beloved, often to the detriment of everything and everyone around them..." p. 6
- "If the beloved [is present], then the world glows. But, if the adored one is [absent, they] feel despair...and mope until they...can renew the chase." p. 12
- "Lovers become so dependent on the beloved, they suffer terrible 'separation anxiety' when they are out of touch." p. 15
- **Hope** remains "when the dice of life relentlessly come up against them."
- **Adversity** -- heightens passion
- "Romantic Passion can produce a variety of dizzying mood changes from exhilaration ...to anxiety, despair or even rage..." 9

Chemicals and Behavior

- **Chemical Addictions**
 - All affect the mesolimbic reward system and areas linked to it
- **Romantic Love**
 - "Elevated levels of dopamine ...produce exhilaration... increased energy, hyperactivity, sleeplessness, loss of appetite, trembling, pounding heart...anxiety or fear."
 - Fisher, p. 52
 - "Elevated levels of norepinephrine generally produce exhilaration, excessive energy, sleeplessness and loss of appetite."
 - Fisher, p. 52

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Compulsive Sexual Behavior

- **Some out of control repetitive behaviors, which may reflect sexual addiction include:**
 - Masturbation
 - Simultaneous or repeated sequential affairs
 - Pornography
 - Cyber sex, phone sex
 - Multiple anonymous partners
 - Unsafe sexual activity
 - Partner sexualization, objectification
 - Strip clubs and adult bookstores
 - Prostitution
 - Sexual aversion

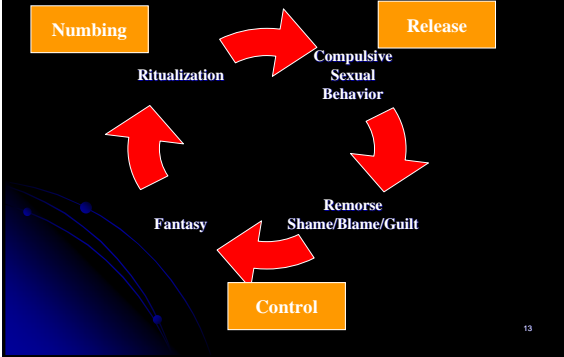
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Compulsive Sexual Behavior

- **Level I Behaviors**
 - Fantasy
 - Pornography
 - Masturbation
- **Level II Behaviors**
 - Prostitution
 - Anonymous sex
 - Group sex
 - Affairs
 - Crossdressing
 - Chat Sex/Cybersex
 - Phone Sex
 - Sadism/Masochism
 - Sex with Objects
- **Level III Behaviors**
 - Voyeurism
 - Exhibitionism
 - Indecent Liberties
 - Bestiality
- **Offending Behaviors**
 - Pedophilia
 - Incest
 - Molestation
 - Rape

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Out of Control Sexual Behavior



Assessment

- **Interaction with Other Addictions**
 - Parallel Addictions
 - Interfering / Intercepting Addictions
 - Facilitating / Escalating Addictions
 - Sequential (Serial) Addictions
- **Treatment needs to be based on the interaction of the addictive processes**

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Assessment

- **You do WHAT?**
 - **Obtaining the sexual history**
 - Start at home, earliest memories
 - First sexual feelings
 - First awareness of arousal
 - First Masturbation
 - First Pornography
 - First sexual experience
 - Length and pattern of relationships

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Assessment

- You do WHAT?
 - Further sexual history
 - Patterns that became addictive
 - When, where, how
 - Escalations – triggers? Changes? Impact?
 - Progression of the Addiction
 - Attempts to stop
 - Dumping the Porn
 - Promises made
 - Duration of Abstinence

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Assessment

- You do WHAT?
 - The REST of the sexual history
 - No room for “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell”
 - How many sexual experiences?
 - How many same sex experiences? Receptive? Insertive?
 - Sex “toys” and other fetishes
 - Fantasies they never told anybody about
 - Risks?

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Assessment

- Diagnostic Tools
 - Sexual Inventories
 - Sexual Addiction Screening Tool (SAST, G-SAST, W-SAST)
 - Kallischman Screen
 - Sexual Behavioral Inventory
 - Abel Screen
 - Multiphasic Sexual Inventory
 - Internet Sex Screening Test
 - Sexual Anorexia Inventory
 - Goal: To assess overt and covert understanding of behaviors

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Assessment

- **Addiction and the Internet**
 - Provides the perfect environment
 - You don't know me, you can't see me
 - It's not real, it's all in my head, I can make it stop
 - Screening
 - Involvement: Hours, Dollars, Types (Pics, video, chat, cybersex)
 - Escalation and attempts at control

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Assessment

- **Addiction and the Internet**
 - **Types of Users**
 - Recreational
 - Sexual Harassers, Sex Offenders
 - Lifelong Compulsives
 - Patterns develop in adolescence
 - Typically have history of Abuse
 - Ritualized, Driven behaviors
 - Paraphilic preferences (single or multiple)
 - Compulsion is central to life
 - Delmonico & Griffin, [in The Shadow of the Net](#)

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Assessment

- **Addiction and the Internet**
 - **Types of Users**
 - **Discovery Users**
 - Rapid progression to consequences
 - Frequently "Sting" victims
 - "Clean History" – sexual, psychological, family
 - Don't fit "typical" profile
 - **Predisposed**
 - Internet triggers and sustains compulsion
 - "Edge Walkers" – good external controls that are reduced by the internet setting
 - Delmonico & Griffin, [in The Shadow of the Net](#)

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Addiction and The Legal System

- Arrest may be the “Bottom”
 - Consequence
 - “Intervention”
- Identifying the Genuine Pain, Remorse, and Desire to Change is Key
- Recovery Provides Relief, NOT Escape
 - Consequences remain Consequences
 - Addiction creates Unmanageability
 - Recovery allows Serenity in Chaos
- Powerlessness means the “Problem” doesn’t go away
 - It goes into Remission

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Treatment

- Unmanageability
 - The Sex Addict has to accept that intimacy has been shattered, if it was ever present
 - The physical and “acting out” consequences are not motivation enough for change many times.
 - Focus on the re-enactment of the Core Beliefs:
 1. I am a bad, unworthy person
 2. If you really knew me, you wouldn’t like me.
 3. My needs will never get met, if I have to depend on others
 4. Sex (Love, relationships) is my most important sign of love and worth
— Carnes

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Treatment

- Surrender
 - Surrender is to the belief that survival without the behavior is actually possible.
 - Sense of future is essential
 - The GOAL is Sexual Health!
 - Celibacy is a stepping stone to healthy sexuality

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Treatment

- **Celibacy -- Developing the Undeveloped**
 - The equivalent of the binge eater learning
 - Hunger (vs. "Starvation" or hypoglycemia)
 - Satiety (vs. Painful Fullness)
 - **Requires Structure**
 - Freedom from bingeing and restricting
 - **Planned, Structured**
 - Time & Duration
 - Amount
 - Qualities, Goals, Hopes, Expectations, Boundaries

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Treatment

- **Abstinence! Forever?**
 - Process Addictions ARE different
 - Celibacy – Nobody ever died from it
 - **Detox**
 - Emotional
 - Physical – (More than "Pelvic Congestion Syndrome")
 - Fear
 - **Grief – not only losing the addiction, gaining immense fear**

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Treatment

- **Healing Sexual Shame**
 - **Keep identifying the shame and talking about it**
 - Cultural norms and family rules
 - The partner's feelings of betrayal and fear of not being good enough
 - **Saying no to sex – Sexual abstinence contracting**
 - **Sexual moratoriums**
 - Reframe as chance for brain to start healing process
 - Replace having sex with learning about sex
 - Talking openly about sex
 - Exploring history of abuse, lovemap crosswiring, & arousal damage

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Treatment

- **Healing Sexual Shame**
 - **Saying no to sex – Sexual abstinence contracting**
 - Beginning to explore sexual behavior again
 - Sacred space and time (Spiritual connections)
 - Keep talking (both shame and celebration)
 - If partnered, discuss time to learn more about other areas of relationship that have been neglected
 - **Renegotiate depending on number of slips/relapse**
 - **Discuss ways to get through cravings and engaging in appropriate safe touch and emotional healing**

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Treatment

- **Relapse Prevention**
 - **Triggers**
 - Individual – Fantasize the “Perfect Relapse”
 - Identify specific triggers AND precursors
 - **Fire Drills**
 - Prepared AND Practiced!!
 - Phone, reading, meditating, relocating, Repeat!
 - **Structure, Structure, and more Structure**

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Treatment

- **Sexual Recovery Plan**
 - **Actually, part of celibacy!**
 - **Identify guides, directors and supports well in advance.**
 - **Montgomery’s Rule:**
 - “If you can’t talk about it at the breakfast table, you probably shouldn’t be doing it in the bedroom.”
 - Corollary # 1: “If you won’t talk about it at a meeting, you need not be doing it!”

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Physical Aspects of Rebuilding Healthy Sexuality

- **Developing the Undeveloped**
 - Learning Intimacy for the First Time
 - Intimacy can be identified as
 - knowing someone **in depth**
 - knowing **many different aspects** of a person or
 - knowing **how they would respond** in different situations
 - **because of the many experiences you've had with them.**
 - Adapted from Intimate Behavior, by **Desmond Morris**.
- [Recovery Demands the same relationship with Self]

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Physical Aspects of Rebuilding Healthy Sexuality

- **Developing the Undeveloped**
 - "If it hurts when you do that, don't do that!"
 - **Cellbacy**
 - A period of time to reset the cycle
 - Think of the Eating Disordered Person and dessert
 - True sobriety doesn't begin until deprivation ends
 - Surrender to the process is often heralded by the "time" not mattering any more
 - The Counter maintains the attachment to the Addiction
 - Focus needs to shift to healing process:
"What am I gaining from this?"

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Psychological Aspects of Rebuilding Healthy Sexuality

- **Mutuality**
- **Reciprocity**
- **Honesty**
- **Joy**
- **Consistency**
 - All Based on and Require Trust

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Psychological Aspects of Rebuilding Healthy Sexuality

Consent

Congruence

Conversation

Context

- Openly Talk about it
- Discuss and disempower judgment

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Physical Aspects of Rebuilding Healthy Sexuality

- Developing the Undeveloped
 - Removing Judgment
 - Behaviors are not bad in and of themselves
 - The distortion lies in the Addiction
 - Couples have sex in recovery
 - Why is masturbation so frightening?
 - Redefining Sex and Sexuality
 - Far more than the Addictive Lasers
 - Also more than MSMPFNAKIBALO
 - Understanding and accepting individual arousal templates
 - Remember, **Psychological Safety!**

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Physical Aspects of Rebuilding Healthy Sexuality

- Developing the Undeveloped
 - Ground Rules:
 - Legal Issues (NO power differential)
 - Re-enactment of Trauma
 - Honest, Open Accountability is a MUST
 - Communication, communication, communication, then Consent and some more communication.

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Physical Aspects of Rebuilding Healthy Sexuality

- **Developing the Undeveloped**

- **Arousal vs. Attraction**

- **Arousal**
 - Physiologic
 - Attentional
 - Sexual
 - Probably Genetic in Nature (Berlin, et al)
- **Attraction**
 - Sensual
 - Developmental
 - Cultural

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Physical Aspects of Rebuilding Healthy Sexuality

- **Developing the Undeveloped**

- **Most Have Woundedness**

- Need to identify issues, hurts and triggers individually
- Need to identify issues and damage to the relationship or to self from addiction
- Relinquish the goal of orgasm
 - No more "Surgical Sex"
- Go beyond what re-injury would be to envisioning what healing would look like

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Developing a Sex Plan

Recovery Skills Applied to the Body!

Rebuilding Healthy Sexuality: Sex Plan

● Moving Forward with A Sex Plan in A Relationship

● Identify Issues

- What hurt the sexual aspects of the relationship?
- What were the consequences of the addiction?
- What are the indicators of congruence?
- What will building trust require?
- What are goals and expectations?

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Rebuilding Healthy Sexuality: Sex Plan

● Moving Forward with A Sex Plan in A Relationship

● Identify "Ground Rules"

- What means "Yes" and What means "No"
- Goal: The moment
 - Overt permission to stop
- "Safe Word"
 - Specific cues for trauma survivors
- Safer Sex and Contraception
 - Chose and purchase together

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Rebuilding Healthy Sexuality: Sex Plan

● Moving Forward with A Sex Plan in A Relationship

● Indicators for progressing

- Identify in advance
- Mutually agreed upon
- Observable
 - "Grocery Store Rule"
- Measurable
 - How do you KNOW things have changed?

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Rebuilding Healthy Sexuality: Sex Plan

- **Moving Forward with A Sex Plan in A Relationship**
 - **Monitoring Progress**
 - Each step requires pause and reflection
 - Separately and together
 - **External Feedback**
 - Accountability/Support Team
 - Therapist
 - **Mutual Feedback**
 - Congruence!

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Ultimate Goals of Healthy Sexuality

- **Basic Needs**
 - Sense of Self, Sense of Belonging
 - Self Nurturing
 - **Sensuality**
 - Sensual Sexuality
 - Relationship Sexuality
 - **Partnership**
 - Mutuality, Reciprocity, Honesty, Joy & Consistency
 - Partner Sexuality
 - **Human Sexuality**
 - Non-genital Sexuality
 - Genital Sexuality
- Adapted from Carnes

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Ultimate Goals of Healthy Sexuality

- **Spiritual Sexuality → Sexual Spirituality**
 - What Romance and Addiction try to mimic
 - The "Permanent" aspects of relationship
- **To some, using the words "Spirituality" and "sexuality" in the same sentence may seem oxymoronic...Yet this is just not the case when we look at real human experience. Just ask yourself: Whose name is most commonly moaned, uttered and invoked at the point of orgasm?"**

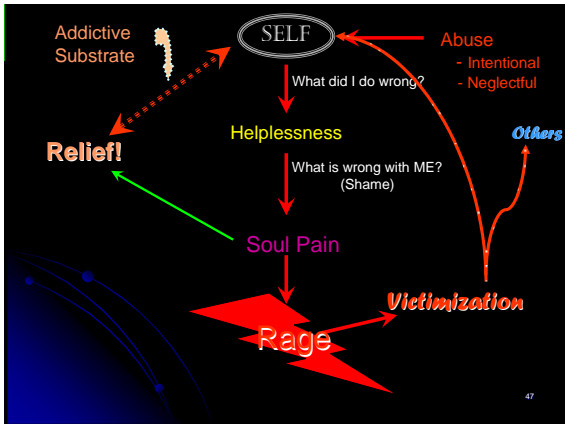
— Christian de la Huerta, OUt Magazine, January 2004, p 43

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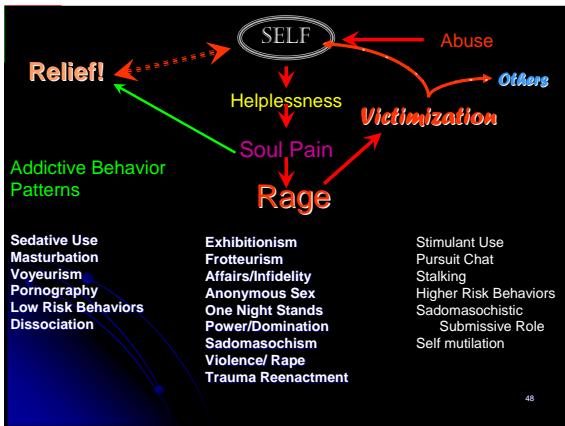
Out of Control Sexual Behavior

- **The Role of Trauma**
 - Often a common factor in Addictive or Compulsive Sexual Behavior
 - Care and Timing in addressing is essential
 - Avoid endorsing victim role
 - Avoid trauma becoming the "reason" for behavior
 - **Function:**
 - *Make Sense* of behavior
 - *Guide* in relapse prevention and healing

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