

## Resources for the Spouse of the Sexually Addicted

### Breaking Pornography Addiction

Immediate support in online support boards  
[www.no-porn.com](http://www.no-porn.com)

**Codependent of Sexual Addiction (COSA)** 12-step groups open to anyone whose life has been affected by compulsive sexual behavior.

[www.cosa-recovery.org](http://www.cosa-recovery.org) info@cosa-recovery.org

**Dr. Carnes' Resources for Sex Addiction & Recovery**

[www.sexhelp.com](http://www.sexhelp.com)

**How I overcame my sexual addiction and how anyone can**

Contains good information for spouse  
[www.sexualcontrol.com](http://www.sexualcontrol.com)

**Recovering Couples Anonymous** (12 Step groups)

P.O. Box 11029, Oakland CA 94611  
(510) 663-2312

[www.recovering-couples.org](http://www.recovering-couples.org)

**The S-Anon Family Groups** 12 step groups for relatives and friends of sexually addicted people

P.O. Box 111242, Nashville, TN 37222-1242  
TEL: (615) 833-3152

[www.sanon.org](http://www.sanon.org)

sabib@sanon.org

**Understanding Sexual Addiction**

FREE online workshop to understand what is happening to you and your partner.

[www.understandingsexualaddiction.org](http://www.understandingsexualaddiction.org)



The information in this brochure was developed by Jonathan Marsh of [www.understandingsexualaddiction.org](http://www.understandingsexualaddiction.org) and Shelly Marshall of [www.day-by-day.org](http://www.day-by-day.org)

This brochure is brought to you by:

## SEX ADDICTION is not just about sex.

### It is also about:

- Anger, isolation, & depression
- Family neglect
- Financial difficulties
- Health issues
- Impaired thinking skills
- Internet/computer widows
- Lack of empathy for a spouse
- Lies, secrecy, & deception
- Masturbation
- Pornography
- Promiscuity
- Prostitution

## Warning Signs of Possible Sexual Addiction



**This brochure is to help the spouse decide if sexual addiction may be sabotaging their marriage.**

# Sexual Addiction Awareness List

**Instructions:** Check every relevant point. Even if your partner has good reason for doing so, do not leave something off the list if it applies. This is the only way to see the whole picture clearly.

### Excessive Nudity/Exhibitionism/Voyeurism:

- A man may frequently “forget” to pull up his zipper
- A woman may not wear underpants and sit with legs open
- Encourages sexual behavior with a high risk of being 'caught in the act'
- Frequently photographs themselves nude and/or excessive admiration of their own genitalia
- Has asked to watch you make love to someone else or vice versa
- Others have “inadvertently” seen them nude more than once
- They wear clothing that makes others uncomfortable and may “accidentally” expose too much

### General Hints:

- A porno site has charged your credit card and your partner claims they were “tricked” into it
- Children display strong negative reactions (e.g. crying, tantrums) prior to being with your partner
- Family, friends, and neighbors conspicuously decrease contact with your partner or voice concern over their behavior
- Numerous hang up calls and/or suspicious calls on your bill
- Someone has told you your partner has made advances toward them

- You find them on the computer in the middle of the night

### Impaired Thinking Skills:

- Deflects responsibility for emotions (unhappiness, anger) or actions (mistakes, failures) onto others
- Frequently pursues the need to be right; extreme reactions when proven wrong
- Rewrites history by distorting or ignoring facts; yet vehemently defends them
- Significant lack of trust *in* you and others, yet expects trust *from* you and others

### Isolation Issues:

- Excessive shyness and/or social avoidance
- Frequent relocation
- Partner lacks long-term active friendships/relationships
- Partner resents/discourages active friendships and interaction/closeness with family and neighbors
- The computer/Internet is used to avoid communication and you feel like an Internet widow/widower

### Masturbation (MB):

- Excessive showering/long showers
- Hand/body lotion disappears at a rapid pace
- They inexplicably are “not in the mood” when you make sexual advances
- You find towels and clothes with emissions in them
- You have fought about them MBing rather than having sex with you
- You have walked in and “caught” him/her secretly MBing more than once



# Sexual Addiction Awareness List



## **Moral Inconsistency /Self-righteousness:**

- A respected public image and 'fitting in' take precedence over your feelings, thoughts, goals
- Displays high moral standards showing disdain for those who don't agree (conversely may show disdain for normal moral standards)
- Makes frequent requests for/assurances of absolute fidelity or the other extreme of asking for an "open" relationship
- May profess concern for the disadvantaged yet play games on the computer where the vulnerable are killed and maimed
- May quote religious scriptures to define sexuality
- Verbal trumpeting of honesty, yet hides behavior through deception and lies

## **Physical:**

- Irritated, tender, flaking or ulcerated genitalia and/or one or more venereal diseases (at any time in their life)
- Multiple abortions/pregnancies/children
- Obsession with hygiene
- S/he may engage in sexual activity or request oral sex even with active outbreaks of herpes and other STDs
- There are extremes in sex, either many times a day or hardly at all

## **Pornography:**

- Adamantly defends their right to view porn; minimizes arguments offered against porn
- Idealizes body images based on the "perfect" models in pornography
- Financial hardships result from online subscriptions, video clubs, phone sex lines, massage parlors, etc.

- Frequent suggestions/pressure for integrating porn in sex/foreplay
- Lies, secrecy, and deception have been used to hide porn use and/or you have found hidden caches of pornography
- Viewed images are socially deviant, bizarre, or victimize others (e.g. violent, illegal, disgusting, kiddie, bondage)

## **Self-absorbed Emotional Life:**

- A personal connection with your partner is sporadic. True intimacy eludes the relationship
- Consistently uses bizarre, unlikely and/or unprovable rationales as 'proof'
- Family resources are utilized and major life decisions made consistently based upon your partner's priorities
- Undue criticism of you and your physical appearance
- Your partner doesn't seem to know who you are and displays little interest in your life, your feelings, your goals

**W**e have felt betrayed by those we loved the most, and those of us who didn't know about the sexaholic behavior felt even more humiliated and stupid for not knowing.

[www.sanon.org](http://www.sanon.org)

## **Sense of Secrecy:**

- Anger/rage when confronted on lies/deceptions
- Locked office, files, desks, storage
- Plays the "honesty card" (e.g. Don't you trust me?)
- S/he refuses to tell you where they've been
- Surreptitious email accounts/P.O. Boxes/safety deposit box/passwords for computer
- The history is often deleted after Internet use
- Undisclosed checking account/credit card/financial activities

## **Sexual Needs Trump Relationship Needs:**

- Frequent unwanted sexual groping, touching, or conversely nothing
- Frequent use of sexual humor, innuendo and anecdote
- Multiple sexual partners and/or encourages an "open marriage"
- Ongoing accusations directed towards you for frigidity/prudishness
- S/he manipulates, cajoles, coheres, or demands sexual acts that make you uncomfortable
- Sexual interaction is measured/guided by performance, rather than intimacy
- Unrealistic sexual demands/responsibilities are established (e.g. need for daily sexual release)
- Your feelings about sexual matters are dismissed

## **Work Related Issues:**

- S/he has been reprimanded for personal use of phone or computer
- S/he has been warned about and/or sent for sexual harassment sensitization
- Your partner has difficulties at work and/or has lost their job and their explanation(s) sounds suspicious
- Your partner spends long hours at work and is emotionally distant when s/he comes home

This checklist may help identify a pattern in your partner's behavior that fits a general description of sexual addiction/obsession/compulsion. Most of the individual behaviors listed here are not in and of themselves indicative of addiction. But altering a lifestyle because of them, keeping secrets, and negatively affecting others, makes it part of a destructive pattern. One to two "hits" in over 50% of the categories indicates you should be seeking more information.

**I**f you see a pattern, begin educating yourself and form a plan of action. Do consult a professional who specializes in sexual addiction issues. Use the contact information on the back of this brochure and start now.

Even with good therapy, many troubled partners spend years trying to figure out why their marriage isn't working and why they cannot achieve a true and loving partnership with their mate. Because sex addiction is so secret and often well hidden, it is not usually the first thing that comes to mind for the spouse or therapist. It is important for spouses of troubled marriages and for professionals to check for sex addiction, especially when conventional counseling approaches don't seem to work. If you've tried everything and it doesn't work, then you don't have all the information. This awareness list is intended to help fill in the blanks.

**T**he overwhelming majority of compulsive sexual behavior--masturbation, prostitution, pornography, promiscuity. This, however, should never be misconstrued to think that the addiction isn't as severe, or as potentially devastating as those involving the more rare behaviors such as rape, stalking and molestation.

[www.understandingsexualaddiction.org](http://www.understandingsexualaddiction.org)