

Thank you for your interest in this topic. If you have any questions about this, or any issue, please contact our office at 214-642-8737

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Newsletter of Stonebriar Counseling Associates

▣ Definition of Pornography

Pornography is any written or visual material that depicts nudity and/or sexually explicit activity for the purpose of causing sexual arousal. What makes material pornographic is its calculated intent to cause sexual arousal. Three basic things to consider in the definition of sexual addiction:

Do I have a sense that I have lost control over whether or not I engage in my specific out-of-control sexual behavior?

Am I experiencing significant consequences because of my specific out-of-control sexual behavior?

Do I feel like I am constantly thinking about my specific out-of-control sexual behavior, even when I don't want to?

It is these three "signposts" that help to define sexual addiction and compulsivity. The range of behaviors can include masturbation and pornography through sexual exploitation of others. Men with an addiction to pornography will identify with one or more of the following statements:

>I regularly seek out pornography.

>I often spend parts of the day looking forward to viewing pornography.

>I feel out of control and unable to stop.

>I often compare my wife or girlfriend to the women in pornography.

>I often choose to look at pornography rather than be sexually intimate with my wife.

>I refuse to tell others that I struggle with pornography.

>I tell lies to cover my struggle.

Looking at pornography has led to serious problems in their life (such as a threat to or loss of job or

marriage, financial debt, promiscuous or criminal behavior).

▣ Testing for sexual addiction

Dr. Patrick Carnes was one of first professionals to work with sexually addicted people and he designed the Sex Addiction Screening Test (SAST) to help figure out who has sexual addiction problems and who doesn't. To help understand sexual addiction and determine if the problem exists, I have included a sample test in this article (see p.5).

▣ Extent of Pornography

It no longer is difficult for men to go out of their way to find pornography. Today they can get it just about anywhere. It's available at gas stations, grocery stores, video rental outlets, hotels, the workplace, and even in the home. Those with Internet access merely need a click of the mouse to download sexually graphic images and stories while their wives tuck their children in bed in the next room. In fact, the number of people using pornography on the internet is growing so fast that the *Playboy* Web site alone averages over 5 million hits a day.¹ Both lawmakers and the public argue over whether it should enjoy First Amendment protection. Sadly, pornography is highly profitable and widely available --and it doesn't seem to be going away. In less than three decades, pornography has grown into a giant industry with yearly sales of \$12-13 billion. That calculates to be a gross revenue of the three major television networks combined.² In 1996, Americans squandered more than \$8 billion on hard-core videos, peep shows,

¹ U.S. News & World Report, February 10, 1997, p.44.

² Rich, F. (2001, May 20). Naked Capitalists: There's No Business Like Porn Business. *New York Times*, p. 723.

"adult" cable programming, computer pornography, and sex magazines. That amount is more than what rock and country music recordings are able to generate annually. Rentals of hard-core films increased from 75 million in 1985 to 665 million in 1996.³

▣ Biochemical Damages and Pornography

Phenylethylamine (PEA), is dubbed the "molecule of love." Structurally it parallels amphetamine, creating a high-arousal state whose intensity soon tapers off. Both PEA and arousal spike in the presence of fear, risk and danger (common elements of addictive sexual experiences). The bio-chemicals of

In a more general sense, pornography has a detrimental effect on public attitudes about sex. It devalues sex by taking it outside the marital context and stripping it of any emotional connection. It promotes a view of sex that is casual, impersonal, and sometimes violent.

sex stimulate what's sometimes called the pleasure center of the brain, an area that, when electrically stimulated, causes rats to ignore the need for food and sleep in a frenzy of pleasure. Dr. David C. Bissette, Psy.D. a clinical psychologist in the Washington, DC metropolitan area writes, "sex is powerful because it moves so fluidly between conscious and unconscious, emotional and chemical, physical and spiritual realms. The downside is that its biochemistry can be as addictive as that of a synthetic drug. If we keep

³ U.S. News & World Report, February 10, 1997, pp.43-44.

repeating an experience that affects our brain's chemistry, we start depending on that experience to feel balanced. If we look at the psychological motivation for addiction as well as its pathway through the brain, we find three basic categories: arousal addictions that stimulate and thrill; satiation addictions that ease tension and discomfort; fantasy addictions that escape mundane reality. Drugs are stimulants, or opiates, or hallucinogens, but sex spans all three neuro-pathways. In other words, it can fill any addictive need a human being can muster." Consequently, in follow-up studies Dolf Zillmann (1989) found that after massive exposure to X-rated films, men and women became more accepting of extramarital sex, sexual coercion and violence.⁴ Indeed, sexually exciting images can set off a physical chain reaction, which burns images that can remain etched in a man's mind for years.

☐ **Ruin of Pornography**

Since the inception of *Playboy* magazine in the 1950s, mainstream society has slowly become more tolerant of pornography, but not without severe consequences. **The following are some consequences that may result from sexual addiction indicating the possibility of its existence.**

Social: The individual becomes lost in sexual preoccupation, causing an emotional distance from loved ones. Loss of friendship and family relationships may result.

Emotional: Anxiety or extreme stress are common with those who live in constant fear of discovery. Shame and guilt increase, as the individual's lifestyle is often inconsistent with the personal values, beliefs and spirituality.

Boredom, loneliness, despair are inevitable as the addiction progresses.

Physical: Some of the diseases that may occur due to sexual addiction are genital injury, cervical cancer, HIV/AIDS, herpes, genital warts and other sexually transmitted diseases. The individual may place him/herself in situations of potential harm, resulting in serious physical wounding or even death.

Legal: Many types of sexual addiction result in violation of the law, such as sexual harassment, obscene phone calls, exhibitionism, voyeurism, prostitution, rape, incest and child molestation, and other

Illegal activities: Loss of a job and professional licensure may result from sexual addiction.

Financial/Occupational: Indebtedness may arise directly from the cost of prostitutes, cyber-sex, phone sex and multiple affairs. Indirectly, indebtedness can occur from legal fees, the cost of divorce or separation.

Spiritual: Loneliness, resentment, self-pity, self blame. There is also a withdrawal of the husband from effectively leading as the spiritual leader in the home. Conversely, there is a reduction or lack of spiritual appetite for the spiritual disciplines.

These consequences are progressive as the addict minimizes them while blaming others (i.e. family and friends) and believing that some how the behavior will change. It is only when blaming and minimizing stop, that recovery can begin. Please note that the consequences can become the instruments for change if they can be truly recognized and accepted instead of denied. Researchers have shown that regular exposure to pornography can lead to rape and child molestation. In one study, 86 percent of convicted

rapists confessed to regular use of pornography, with 57 percent acknowledging that they tried to reenact a pornographic scene during the rape.⁵ The same study revealed that 87 percent of molesters of girls and 77 percent of molesters of boys regularly used hard-core pornography. Pornography is responsible for spreading the lie that women are available and willing at a moment's notice to fulfill a man's sexual demands. In most cases, it portrays women as mindless objects who exist only to service a man's every sexual whim. It further degrades both women and men as being nothing more than animals interested in sex.

☐ **Fantasy vs. Reality**

Whether a man is married or single, he is in danger of transmitting the infection of pornography into his current or future marriage. Contrary to what Hollywood or the media would have us believe, sexually explicit material does *not* enhance sex between a husband and wife. Pornography creates unrealistic demands about the frequency of sex, intimidation, lack of respect and the nature of a woman's sexual response, to name just a few. The fantasy world of pornography places unrealistic expectations that only end up with feelings of emptiness and resentment. Further, pornography inhibits a desire for emotional transparency. It destroys the intimacy of communication in a marriage. One researcher found that when men were shown pictures of *Playboy* models, they later described themselves as having less marital love than other men who were shown non-pornographic images.⁶ It is those images that cause

⁴ D. Zillmann & J. Bryant (Eds.), *Pornography: Research Advances and Policy Considerations* Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum, pp. 471, 724.

⁵ Oddone-Paolucci, E., Genuis, M., & Violato, C., (2000). A Meta-Analysis of the Published Research on the Effects of Pornography. In E. Oddone-Paolucci, M. Genuis, & C. Violato (Eds.), *The Changing Family and Child Development*. Aldershot, England: Ashgate. (p. 724).

⁶ Time, August 15, 1994

many men to compare their wives with what they have seen. And no wife can live up to the picture-perfect image of a youthful, flawlessly shaped centerfold. Understandably, many wives experience emotional fallout from pornography. One wife who caught her husband looking at pornography on the Internet described it as if there was a ripping within in her heart. She personally felt degraded whether her husband provoked her into watching sexually explicit movies with him or when he trivialized his behavior by looking at other women in public. The struggle to forgive and to trust is enormous for many women.

▣ The Slippery Slope

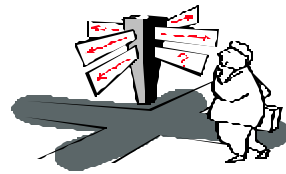
As pornography disinhibits and desensitizes the mind, it often turns into an enslaving sexual addiction where there is a "continual lust for more" (Eph. 4:18-19). This is why the Old and New Testaments of the Bible tell us that the seductive lustful appeal captures the body and soul. The book of Proverbs reminds us that "the evil deeds of a wicked man ensnare him; the cords of his sin hold him fast"(Prov. 5:22).

As with any addiction, pornography affects a man's body chemistry causing him to look forward to more of the same sexual stimulus and release. This physical bondage does *not* remove a man's responsibility, but it does start to explain why many men find sexually graphic images so hard to resist.

▣ Degrees From The Slippery Slope

According to *Jeff Olson, a licensed counselor in Michigan*, The extent of addiction can range from a "category one addiction" (mild) to a "category three addiction" (severe). In

Category One, the individual moves from a casual interest to that of making a conscious effort to seek it out—he's now obsessed with it. In a *category two addiction*, he equates the fantasy world of pornography with the real world. It is at this level where a man attempts to recreate in real life what he's seeing in pornography.



In other words, he may try to enact with his wife what he has seen, with or without her knowledge or consent. As his problem continues to spiral downwards, he may hire prostitutes or try to pick up women for "one-night stands." In my practice, I have seen men live in a *category one* or *two* addiction for years and never progress any further. If they progress to a *category three* addiction, there is a greater level of involvement in more severe forms of pornography, including child pornography. They also move to serious criminal behavior such as rape and child sexual abuse. Please note that an addiction to pornography is indeed a slippery slope. Ever so gradual, it sneaks up on a man without acknowledging it as an addiction until its voracious appetite consumes his love, commitment, and time from those close to him.

▣ Getting Started On a New Journey

Recognizing what men get out of pornography is vital. It is important to see *how* they use porn to cope with whatever difficulties they are dealing with.

Because the sexually graphic images are so hard to resist,

Believe that you CAN be completely free!

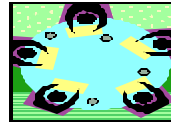
Breaking addiction is a *healing process* and believing that you can be free is an important part. Jesus said, "If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes" (Mark 9:23 NKJV).

those who find themselves sliding down a slippery slope of destruction end up withdrawing from others and from God. They lack faith in the One who suffered the ultimate price to be able to accept them. They lack the hope and vision for the kind of men they could be and what they could accomplish for God. Consequently, it is imperative to help them regain purpose that comes from living for the sake of something greater than oneself. The situation may seem bleak, but the Spirit of God can rebuild faith, renew hope, and awaken a purpose that can replace and put to death an idolatrous demand for pornography. Secondly, Admitting to having an out-of-control sexual struggle is one of the hardest confessions a man may ever make but it is essential for the healing process to begin. An addicted man must acknowledge his pride and the lies he has convinced himself in believing. Thirdly, he must acknowledge his addiction in the safety and confidentiality of another person (I Thess. 2:11-12). In a day and age where individuality reigns, Satan wants men to hide their struggles so he can get them alone and deceive them with lies such as "the problem is under control" or "you will never change." But men who start to talk about their struggles with others who can help them change will begin to see that there is light at the end of the tunnel. --4--



Newsletter of Stonebriar Counseling Associates

**From the desk of....
Bob Good**



Sexual Addiction Group Meeting

Tuesday Nights at 7:00 pm

Location: SCA office

Dear Educator and Ministry Leader:

As a new year begins I am mindful of the many people who have been impacted by our intervention during 2003. Of the clients seen, a large percentage have been those who struggle with sexual addiction. And, the number seems to be increasing! In talking to many professionals in schools, churches, and hospitals, I continue to hear reports of employees who are battling the destructive behavior associated with pornography. Dr. Mark Schwartz, clinical co-director of the Masters & Johnson Clinic writes: "The cycle begins when a sexual experience temporarily but very effectively relieves painful anxiety, distracts your mind from its problems, releases your body's lonely tensions. Suddenly you feel supremely powerful, in control of anything that might hurt you, desired and satisfied and loved. The next time you start to feel anxious, lonely, hurt or inadequate, you repeat the process. And it escalates."

Usually there's a predisposition to addiction; a history of emotional pain and sexual confusion; a life land-mined with violations of trust; an utter inability to create intimacy. "But most of all," Schwartz finishes bluntly, "people discover that they can get high from it." The sex is doubly intoxicating because of the hit of adrenaline that comes with the illicit excitement, the Russian roulette you're playing with your job, your relationship or your life. Plus, if you're having sex with a new partner, it's "fantasy sex"--anything you want it to be. Except committed, meaningful and intimate. A professional who holds a graduate degree, never understood it, either- "You want to stop, but then you rationalize, just one more time. And every time, it's insanity: You do the same old thing and think, "This time, the result will be different.'" When sex took over, he says, his emotional life died. You don't really feel depression, or sadness, or joy. All those feelings become sexualized, until all you feel is a kind of numb anxiety.

The hallmark of addiction is that sex becomes the organizing principle of daily life, with every spare moment devoted to fantasizing, planning the next experience, ritualizing it, enacting it, agonizing over the guilt and shame it leaves behind. From there, the addiction can manifest itself in an infinite variety of forms, settings, moods and degrees.

Some sarcastically jest that the worst harm porn can cause is a paper cut. They couldn't be more wrong. Pornography isn't a harmless vice. The truth is that society, women, marriages, and individual users all suffer devastating consequences. Because of the severity and illusive nature of pornography this month and the next two months will deal with understanding its impact in our neighborhood, its destructive consequences and what counselors can provide with appropriate intervention strategies. I wish you a wonderful new year with the hope that God would use us to be effective people helpers to the many who are searching for guidance.

Sincerely,

Bob


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Heterosexual Male Sexual Addiction Screening Test

The Heterosexual Male Sexual Addiction Screening Test (SAST) is an assessment of sexually compulsive or addictive behavior. A high number of YES answers may be a sign of some issues with sex addiction. After using this questionnaire, please consult a trained professional to discuss these issues further.

1. Were you sexually abused as a child or adolescent?
2. Do you regularly purchase romance novels or sexually explicit magazines?
3. Have you stayed in a romantic relationship after it became emotionally or physically abusive?
4. Do you often find yourself preoccupied with sexual thoughts or romantic daydreams?
5. Do you feel that your sexual behavior is normal?
6. Does your spouse (or significant other(s)) ever worry or complain about your sexual behavior?
7. Do you have trouble stopping your sexual behavior when you know it is inappropriate?
8. Do you ever feel bad about your sexual behavior?
9. Has your sexual behavior ever created problems for you and your family?
10. Have you ever sought help for sexual behavior you did not like?
11. Have you ever worried about people finding out about your sexual activities?
12. Has anyone been hurt emotionally because of your sexual behavior?
13. Have you ever participated in a sexual activity in exchange for money or gifts?
14. Do you have times when you act out sexually followed by periods of celibacy (no sex at all)?
15. Have you made efforts to quit a type of sexual activity and failed?
16. Do you hide some of your sexual behavior from others?
17. Do you find yourself having multiple romantic relationships at the same time?
18. Have you ever felt degraded by your sexual behavior?
19. Have sex or romantic fantasies been a way for you to escape your problems?
20. When you have sex, do you feel depressed afterwards?
21. Do you regularly engage in sado-masochistic behavior?
22. Has your sexual activity interfered with your family life?
23. Have you been sexual with minors?
24. Do you feel controlled by your sexual desire or fantasies of romance?
25. Do you ever think your sexual desire is stronger than you are?

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Note: Please feel free to print the following test and use it as needed. Understand that while the score on the test is an indication about sex addiction, it is not conclusive proof that the individual has or does not have a problem. This test is only an aid.

Cyber Sex Addiction Checklist

The Cyber Sex Addiction Checklist is a set of questions to help identify sexual activity more clearly. It is an assessment of sexually compulsive or addictive behavior. A high number of YES answers may be a sign of some issues with sex addiction. After using this questionnaire, please consult a trained professional to discuss these issues further.

1. Spending increasing amounts of online time focused on sexual or romantic intrigue or involvement.
2. Involvement in multiple romantic or sexual affairs in chat rooms, Internet or BBS.
3. Not considering online sexual or romantic "affairs" to be a possible violation of spousal/partnership commitments.
4. Failed attempts to cut back on frequency of online or Internet sexual and romantic involvement or interaction.
5. Online use interferes with work (tired or late due to previous night's use, online while at work, etc.).
6. Online use interferes with primary relationships (e.g., minimizing or lying to partners about online activities, spending less time with family or partners).
7. Intense engagement in collecting Internet pornography.
8. Engaging in fantasy online acts or experiences which would be illegal if carried out (e.g., rape, child molestation).
9. Decreased social or family interactive time due to online fantasy involvements.
10. Being secretive or lying about amount of time spent online or type of sexual/romantic fantasy activities carried out online.
11. Engaging with sexual or romantic partners met online, while also involved in marital or other primary relationship.
12. Increasing complaints and concern from family or friends about the amount of time spent online.
13. Frequently becoming angry or extremely irritable when asked to give up online involvement to engage with partners, family or friends.
14. Primary focus of sexual or romantic life becomes increasingly related to computer activity (including pornographic CD-ROM use).

The author of this test, Rob Weiss, M.A. ©



Upcoming Free Workshop

Please RSVP

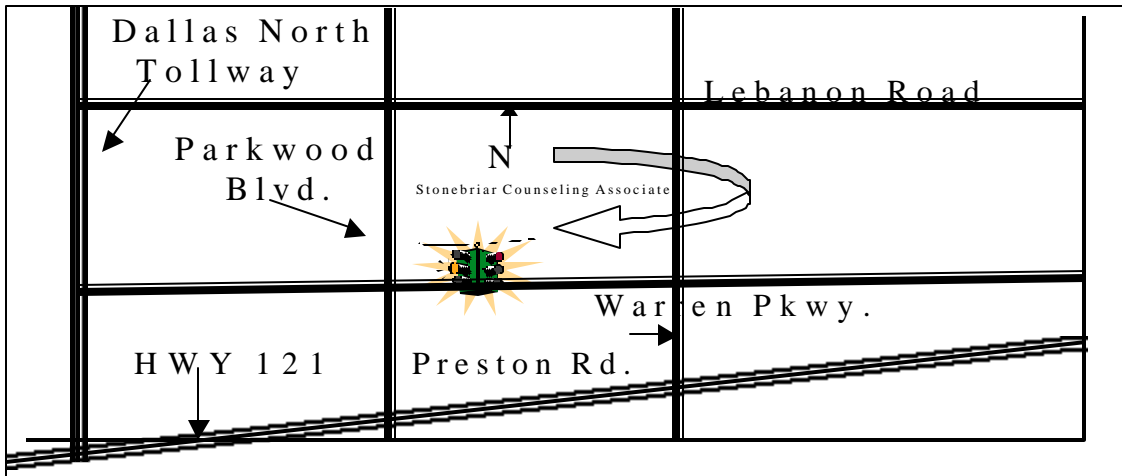


Sexual Addiction-Signs To look for/When To Refer—Jan. 21, '04

(Free Coffee and Snacks) Time: 6:30 PM

Location: 3550 Parkwood Blvd., Suite 301, Bldg. C, Frisco, Texas

Call SCA office at 214-642-8737 to register



Mission Statement

Stonebriar Counseling Associates (SCA) is purposefully passionate in providing quality psychotherapy from a Christian perspective that influences the treatment of psychological, emotional, and mental health issues.

To this end, SCA is committed to glorify God by:

- Believing that each person has the innate ability for personal growth and wholeness.
- Seeking a variety of approaches to help you learn new skills and find more choices so as to manage life's changes with a broader range of solutions for recognizing your strengths.
- Accepting all people with respect and love regardless of age, sex, race, religion, ethnicity or socio-economic status.
- Thoughtfully affirming and carefully following the morals of the Christian faith and the ethics of the professional governing boards.
- Providing research and development for new and innovative programs, seminars, and workshops in order to further the well-being and self-sufficiency of each client.