



HEALTHY SEXUAL SOLUTIONS

## **Sexual Addiction**

### **What is Sexual Addiction?**

The term "sexual addiction" is used to describe the behavior of a person who has an unusually intense sex drive or an obsession with sex. It is sometimes referred to as sexual dependency or sexual compulsivity. Sex and the thought of sex tend to dominate the sex addict's thinking, making it difficult to work or engage in healthy personal relationships.

Sex addicts engage in distorted thinking, often rationalizing and justifying their behavior and blaming others for problems. They generally deny they have a problem and make excuses for their actions.

Sexual addiction also is associated with risk-taking. A person with a sex addiction engages in various forms of sexual activity, despite the potential for negative and/or dangerous consequences. In addition to damaging the addict's relationships and interfering with his or her work and social life, a sexual addiction also puts the person at risk for emotional and physical injury.

Generally, a person with a sex addiction gains little satisfaction from the sexual activity and forms no emotional bond with his or her sex partners. In addition, the problem of sex addiction often leads to feelings of guilt and shame. A sex addict also feels a lack of control over the behavior, despite negative consequences (financial, health, social, and emotional).

For some people, the sex addiction progresses to involve illegal activities, such as exhibitionism (exposing oneself in public), making obscene phone calls, or molestation. However, it should be noted that sex addicts do not necessarily become sex offenders.

### **Behaviors Associated With Sexual Addiction**

- Compulsive masturbation (self-stimulation)
- Multiple affairs (extra-marital affairs)
- Multiple or anonymous sexual partners and/or one-night stands
- Consistent use of pornography
- Unsafe sex
- Phone or computer sex (cybersex)
- Prostitution or use of prostitutes
- Exhibitionism
- Obsessive dating through personal ads
- Voyeurism (watching others) and/or stalking
- Sexual harassment
- Molestation

## **Patterns and Examples of Sexual Addiction**

Fantasy sex: Neglecting commitments because of fantasy life, masturbation.

Seductive role sex: Extramarital affairs (heterosexual or homosexual), flirting and seductive behavior.

Anonymous sex: Engaging in sex with anonymous partners, having one night stands.

Paying for sex: Paying prostitutes for sex, paying for sexually explicit phone calls.

Trading sex: Receiving money or drugs for sex.

Voyeuristic sex: Patronizing adult bookstores and strip shows, looking through windows of houses, having a collection of pornography at home or at work.

Exhibitionist sex: Exposing oneself in public places or from the home or car, wearing clothes designed to expose.

Intrusive sex: Touching others without permission, using position of power (professional, religious) to sexually exploit another person, rape.

Pain exchange: Causing or receiving pain to enhance sexual pleasure.

Object sex: Masturbating with objects, cross-dressing to add to sexual pleasure, using fetishes as part of sexual rituals, having sex with animals.

Sex with children: Forcing sexual activity on a child, watching child pornography.