

# Sexual Addiction

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## What is Addiction?

An escalating pattern of out of control behavior over time (6 months or longer) that continues despite negative consequences and significantly affects your life

## 10 Criteria for Addiction

- Loss of Control
- Compulsive Behavior
- Unsuccessful Efforts to Stop
- Loss of Time
- Preoccupation
- Inability to Fulfill Obligations
- Continuation Despite Consequences
- Escalation
- Losses
- Withdrawal

## What is Sexual Addiction?

A pattern of out of control behaviors involving sexual arousal or sexual behaviors, which has existed for at least six months, negatively impacts your life, and continues despite negative consequences.

## Sexual Addiction is NOT . . .

- Homosexuality
- Child molestation/sexual interest in children
- Being sexually active
- Enjoying sex
- Experimenting with different positions/behaviors with your partner that do not put either of you at risk of being hurt, physically or emotionally
- Using sex toys
- Cross-dressing
- Fetishes

The opposite of  
addiction is . . .  
**CONNECTION**

## Attachment

Sustained connection with  
others



- Healthy attachment = interdependency (secure dependence and autonomy)
- Secure base to explore and adaptively respond to the environment
- Allows risk, learning, and continual progress

## Secure Attachment

- Confidence in connection
- Ability to control distress caused by separation
- Ability to express needs
- Knowledge that needs will be met
- Once reassured, return to exploration
- Knowledge that others can and will meet their needs



## Anxious Attachment

- Extreme distress on separation
- Angry protest on return of loved one
- Suppressed displays of emotion
- Resolute focus on tasks
- Clinging, pursuit, aggression
- Knowledge that others can meet their needs, but fear that they won't choose to



## Avoidant Attachment

- Suppression of attachment needs
- Focus on tasks
- Avoidance of attempts at connection
- Belief that no one will meet their needs, so don't bother expecting them to



## Fearful Avoidant Attachment

- Seeks connection, but fears it
- Caused by traumatic attachments
- Others are both the source of and the solution to fear



~~Sexual  
Addiction~~  
Connective  
Disorders

**What is a Connective Disorder?**

An inability to form healthy connections with other people.

Individuals with connective disorders are unable to foster and maintain relationships in which appropriate levels of connection are possible.

Unable to form connections, they seek connection in unhealthy ways.

"I just want to know I'm attractive. It's not like I do anything with them."

"I can't stand the thought of never having another 'first kiss'."

"He is everything I've ever wanted; everything I've ever looked for. I know now why none of my other relationships worked out."

"I just want to run. I know this is what I always do when things get bad, but I don't see any point in staying."

"She is trapped in a horrible relationship. She's not strong enough to get out on her own. I know I can save her."

"If he ever finds out who I really am, he'll leave, so I need to keep my backups ready just in case."

"None of the men I've met online have my real name or personal information. They won't be able to find me and my husband will never find out about them."

"I know my husband loves me, but my affair partner made me feel beautiful and wanted. He'll always remember me that way."

"I sat down to watch porn for 30 minutes and realized hours later that it was 4am and I had completely missed dinner and had to be at work in 3 hours."

"I had sex with him again. I know I wasn't supposed to, but I just felt so alone."

"Of course they wanted to have sex with me. I can have any female in the company that I want. I am a VP."

"I seem to be utterly unable to be completely faithful."

"I know he's meant to be with me. He really loves me, not her, and I can tell he knows that when he looks at me."


"It makes me sick to even think about having sex or even having a boyfriend. I don't see how people could like sex."

"When I'm high, that's the only time I can be myself. I can let my hair down and everyone thinks I'm hilarious."

"If only I was thin enough, then I would be good enough and people would love me."

"I couldn't even make it through the 30 minute drive. I had to pull over and masturbate. I didn't even want to, but I couldn't stop myself."

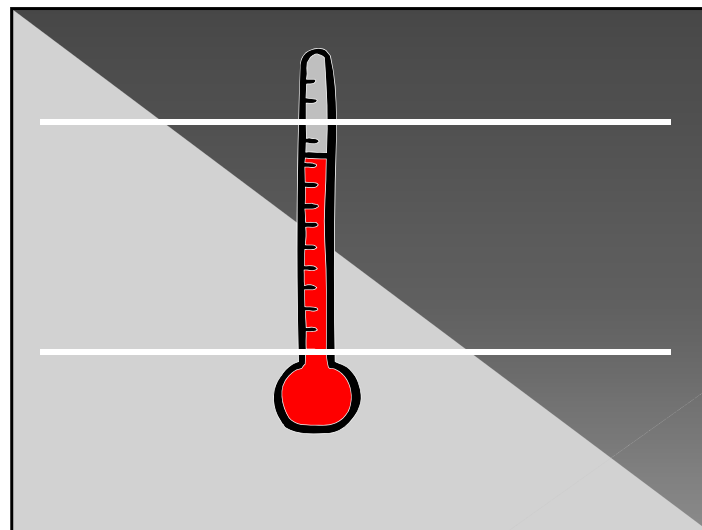
## Emotions

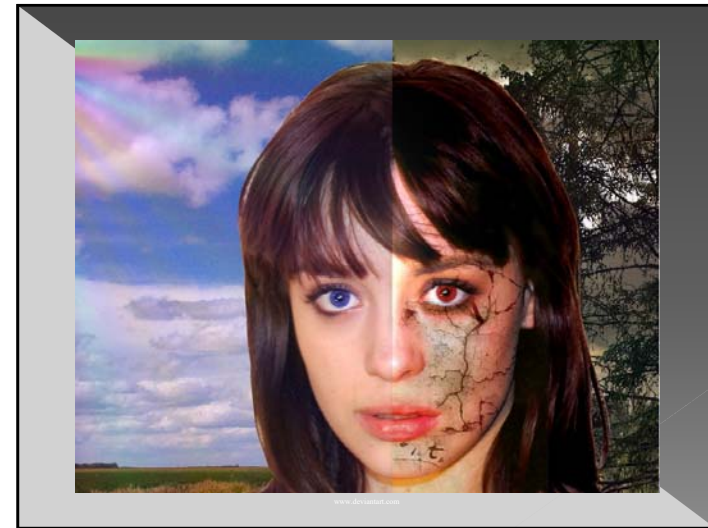
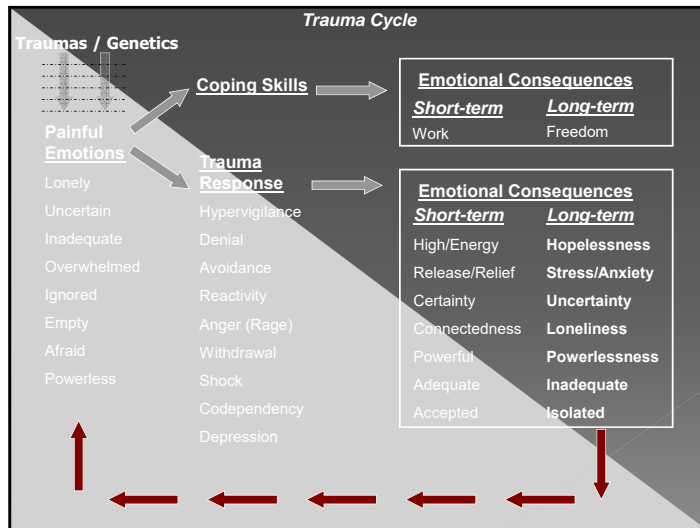


## Feeling Word List

Lonely	Scared/Fear	Happy/Joy	Rested
Powerless	Rejection (fear)	Hopeful	Energetic
Helpless/Hopeless	Abandonment (fear)	Grateful	Calm/Peaceful
Stuck/Trapped	Unappreciated (fear)	Love(d)	Relaxed
Bored	Unloved (fear)	Connected	Serene
Stressed/Tense	Inadequate (fear)	Playful	Surprised
Shocked/Surprised	Insecure (fear)		
Blah	Worth-less (fear)	<b>Secondary Emotions*</b>	
Guilty	Ignored (fear)	Shame (embarrassed)	
Regret	Anxious/Worried (fear)	Jealousy	
Torn	Uncertain (fear)	Anger (frustrated, irritated, annoyed, hate, upset, resentful)	
Sad	Discouraged (fear)		
Grief/Loss	Confused		
Distant/Disconnected	Restless		
Overwhelmed	Tired		

\*Secondary emotions are important to recognize and validate within ourselves; however, they typically motivate us to hide or attack rather than take care of ourselves and be assertive with others. Thus, we move from secondary to primary to find the tools to care for ourselves and connect with others.





## Co-Dependency

When our emotions, thoughts, and behaviors are dependent on the responses of others

## Rescuing Behaviors

Blocks or minimizes consequences for others – often in order to be needed, wanted, and loved

- Denial
- Enabling = Disabling

## Persecuting Behaviors

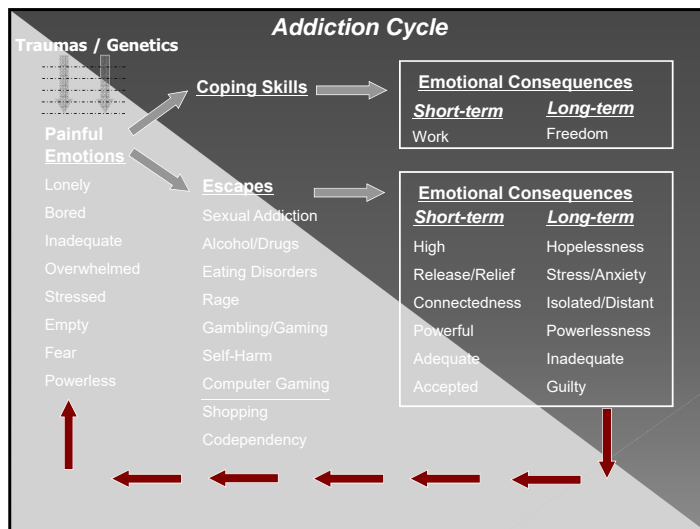
Exaggerates consequences for others in an attempt to control their behavior so you won't hurt

- Threats
- Shaming
- Reciprocation
- Controlling and Manipulating

## Suffering Behaviors

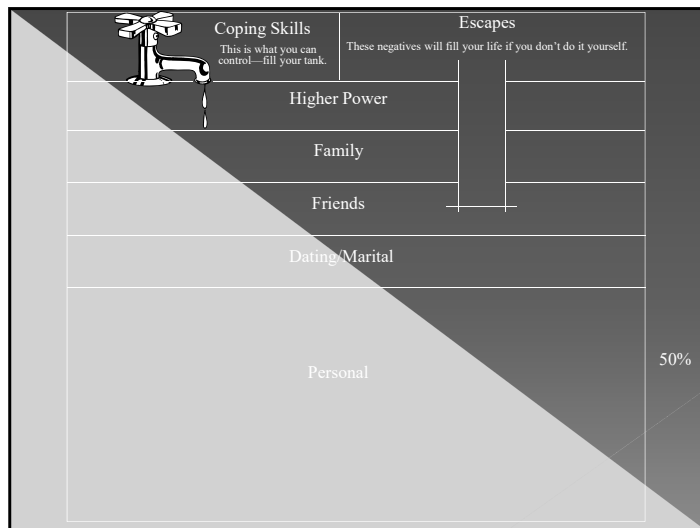
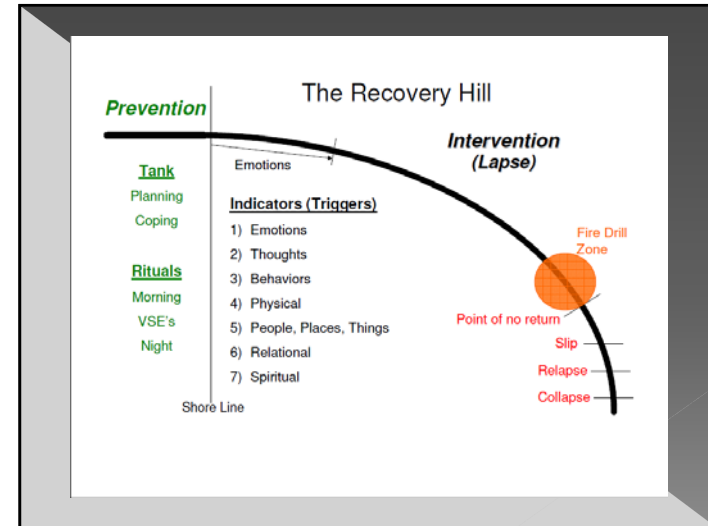
Attempts to manipulate someone(s) to rescue them as being rescued is viewed as being loved

- Self-condemnation
- Obsessive thoughts
- Remaining a victim



## Treating Connective Disorders

- Individual Counseling (for both partners, but with different therapists)
- Couples Counseling (Cotherapy)
- Group Counseling (both individually and as a couple)



## Excitement – Adrenaline

Cocaine  
 Ecstasy  
 Speed  
 Meth





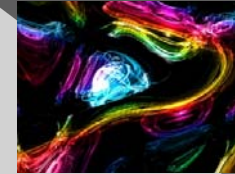
## Relaxation – Endorphins



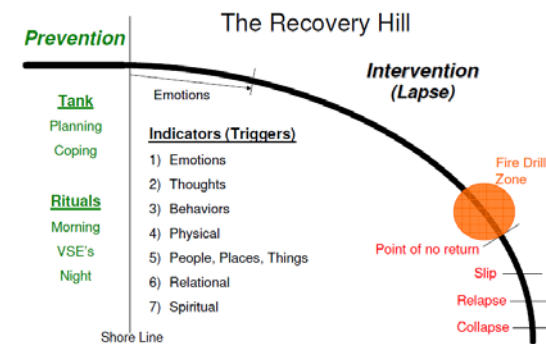
Marijuana  
Alcohol  
Heroin  
Xanax

## Creativity – Dopamine

LSD  
PCP  
Peyote  
Mushrooms



## Connection – Endorphins, Dopamine, Serotonin, Oxytocin



**Slide 35**

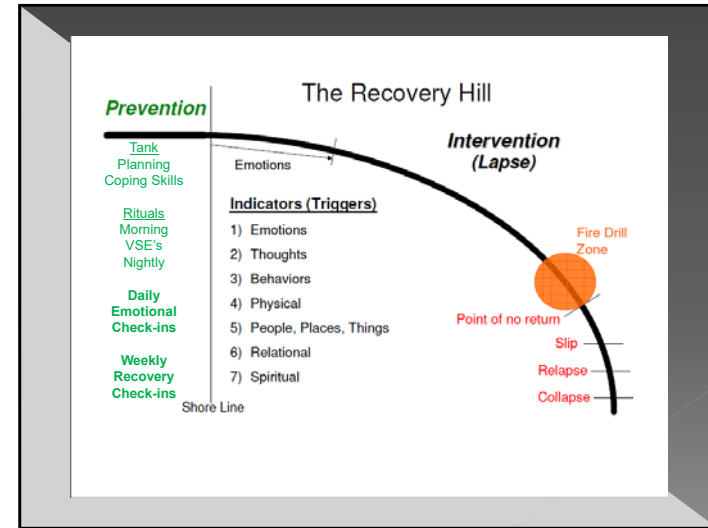
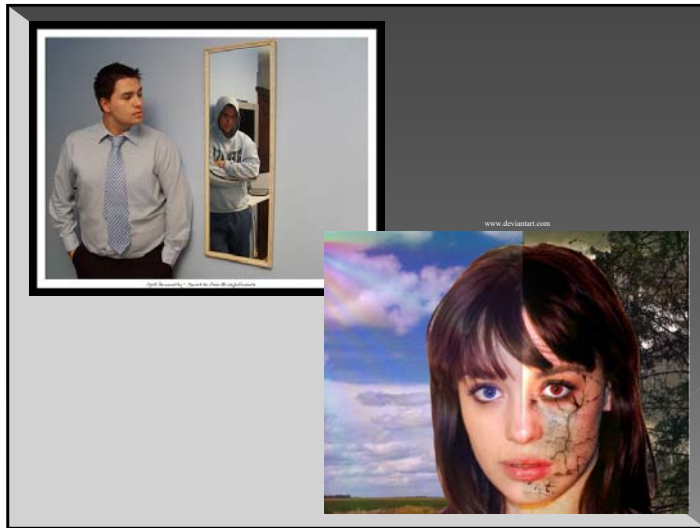
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**LK1**

Reference - University of Nevada School of Family Medicine -

<https://www.sharecare.com/health/functions-of-the-brain/what-chemicals-brain-response-happiness>

Laney Knowlton, 2/16/2016



# Trust

Predictability of behavior—for yourself and for others

# Boundaries

- Keep relationships safe for us and others – allows you to show up in relationships
- Not selfishness or threats
- Negotiable vs. non-negotiable
- If you do A, then I do B, until you do C – Natural consequences

<h3 style="text-align: center;">Shame</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ I AM a mistake</li> <li>○ No possibility of repair</li> <li>○ Matter of identity</li> <li>○ Hopeless – no growth or learning</li> <li>○ Paralyzing</li> <li>○ Global</li> </ul>	<h3 style="text-align: center;">Guilt</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● I MADE a mistake</li> <li>● Possibility of repair</li> <li>● Affirms values</li> <li>● Behavioral infraction</li> <li>● Promotes learning and growth</li> <li>● Empowering</li> <li>● Specific <sup>LK2</sup></li> </ul>
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### Empathy

#### Feeling what someone else feels

- Have to experience your own feelings first (self-compassion breeds compassion for others)
- Emotions are NOT based on subjective reality – don't argue facts
- You have to share painful emotions (in a safe way) for someone else to be able to connect to them

### Intimacy (In-to-me-see)

- Safety
- Connection
- Plan B's

### Disclosure/Amends

- Detailed outline of acting out history
- Categorize
- Add Empathy
- Outline your program
- Identify underlying patterns
- Review by therapist and group feedback
- Review by partner's therapist
- Disclosure session

**Slide 41**

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**LK2**

**Fossum and Mason - Facing Shame**

Laney Knowlton, 2/18/2016

## Impact Letter

- ◉ Anger
- ◉ Sadness
- ◉ Recognizing the good
- ◉ Acceptance

## Healthy Sexuality

- ◉ It is about connecting!!
- ◉ It is a choice
  - > Options for connection
  - > Not the domino effect
- ◉ Sensate Focus

## Sexuality

### Healthy

- ◉ is pure (no ulterior motives) and safe
- ◉ is comforting
- ◉ acknowledges you (that I'm seen and matter)
- ◉ makes you feel accepted/loved
- ◉ feels good
- ◉ is given to you
- ◉ provides relief from stress/tension
- ◉ is an exciting expression of connection (at times)

### Unhealthy

- ◉ is manipulative/coercive and unsafe
- ◉ is taking from you
- ◉ makes you an object (I don't matter)
- ◉ is pressuring
- ◉ makes you feel used (and abused)
- ◉ creates fear and distrust.
- ◉ adds tension
- ◉ creates disgust
- ◉ makes you give yourself up
- ◉ forces you to be more vulnerable than you feel safe to be