

**Counseling Solutions at St. Matthew's Institute for Healing and Intentional Growth**

**Winston Salem, NC 336 760 1780 MarriageCounseling.org**

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Impression: Cause of Sexual Addiction

Client\_\_\_\_\_Date\_\_\_\_\_

**Generally, the causes of sexual addiction may be classified into:  
biological, psychological, and spiritual.**

**Biologically, a biochemical process in the brain, affecting the pleasure and reward pathways, may trigger sexual addiction.** Studies show that food, abused drugs, and sexual interests share a common pathway within the brains' survival and reward systems. Sex and food are quite similar in this sense as they are probably the most basic and fundamental human drives.

Brain chemistry has created elaborate reward systems to motivate this goal directed behavior. Sex activates the natural opioids and dopamine that produce intense pleasure and euphoria accentuating the addiction and the likelihood of continued behavior. Interestingly, modern brain imaging shows us that the brain when sexually aroused looks nearly identical to a brain under the influence of cocaine. No wonder the drive for sex is so intense. This may explain why even competent, intelligent, and goal-directed people can be so equally obsessed with indulging in sexual fantasy and seeking a sexual "fix." *Their brains have been hijacked and the neural pathways have been rewritten.*

\_\_\_\_\_has been viewing pornography for many years including masturbating/and sexual fanaticizing. He has additionally developed a chemical dependency and his neural pathways have been rewritten in such a way that compels him to seek out pornography.

\_\_\_\_\_ has a medical condition, ADD/ADHD that often supports addictive behaviors as a means of self-medication, hyper-focusing.

\_\_\_\_\_has been practicing other addictive behaviors such as \_\_\_\_\_which compound his sexual addiction.

\_\_\_\_\_other

**Psychologically, sexual addiction has become one means of adapting to physical, emotional, or sexual abuse.** Most of reported sex addicts relate histories that include these psychological abuses and traumas. Emotionally for the sex addict, sex is not really about sex but a vehicle to provide an illusion of affirmation, a veneer of control and connection in a safe environment. The sexual "fix" has become the source of pleasure and a means of avoiding unpleasant feelings, a coping mechanism to fight stress, work difficulties, interpersonal, psychological, and emotional problems.

\_\_\_\_\_ has a history of psychological abuse/ trauma.

### **Explain**

**Studies reveal that most sex addicts come from dysfunctional families.** The findings of one study show that 72% of sex addicts had been physically abused in childhood, 81% had been sexually abused, and 97% emotionally abused. Patrick Carnes' research also indicates that 87% of the families of sex addicts included more than one addict in the home and a majority of them grew up in a rigid family system, disengaged family system, or both a rigid and disengaged family system. The implication is that a lot of sex addicts come from families where their emotional needs were not met. They learned to self soothe and self medicate as a means of enduring some pretty awful childhood experiences.

### **Explain**

**Spiritually, sexual addiction feeds the delusion that fulfilling comfort, love, and security can be experienced apart from God.** What need would they have for God if a sexual "fix" is all that they "need?" The addiction becomes the God that comforts, arouses, or helps the sex addict escape the present moment. As long as sex is an option the addict can live in the delusion of power and control and is unlikely to make the spiritual surrender necessary to experience a true spiritual experience.

### **Explain**

A religious system that promotes salvation through works alone, excessive personal and community disciplines, public disclosure of personal sins, and excessive control over its members creates an environment for emotional/social isolation which fosters sexual sins and addictions.

Trauma, drug/alcohol abuse stops emotional and spiritual maturity. Often an individual who appears very social and intellectually mature can be emotionally stunted.

## **Findings from the Arno Profile System**

Inclusion

Control

Affection

**The information above has created and supported the following erroneous sexual addict's beliefs.**

1. I am a bad and unworthy person.
2. No one would love me as I am.
3. My needs are not going to be met if I have to depend on others.
4. Sex is my most important need.