

Sex by Dr Kit S Ng, PhD Addiction

It's Not About Sex... It's About Addiction

The Struggle with Sex Addiction

Part of the struggle of sex addiction is that there will be “on and off” attempt to stop. At times, the addiction may stop for a short period of time, but in most cases, when the individual is under stress, he or she will go back to the old addictive behaviors. Dealing with sexual addiction is most illusive in the sense that anyone on a daily basis can drop everything to think about sex, scheme about sex, identify sexual opportunities and take advantage of them. This can produce intense biochemical rewards for this self-destructive behavior. Unfortunately, when they know that they are overwhelmed by these self-destructive behaviors, it gives way to guilt, remorse and promises to change.

The “three main characteristics in sexual addiction – shameful, secretive and/or abusive”. These characteristics slowly and certainly destroy the individual’s competency and effectiveness in the workplace, strip the person of his dignity and self-esteem, and hit him with shame, guilt and depression.

Case Examples

1 Henry (not real name) is a 38 year-old finance executive from a multinational company. He spends all his spare time collecting thousands of pornographic pictures, stores them in his computer, and has been making sexual contact with women through the Internet over the past few years. He even meets some of these women for daytime sexual affairs and sexual liaisons when traveling on business. He justifies his behaviours by saying that “It doesn’t hurt anybody” and “I don’t love these women, so what difference does it make?”

2 Robert (not real name), in his mid-40’s, is an award-winning manager at a hardware production company. He does not see anything wrong with simple pats on the butt, commenting on a co-worker’s legs or breast size, or making out with secretaries in the lift at the company holiday party, although he tried to approach only women who do not work directly for him. Married for 11 years, Robert maintains several sexual affairs both at work and with various babysitters and housekeepers hired to work in his home. When he was younger, he was kicked out of a school fraternity when he was accused of having sex with a woman after she passed out from drinking. At the time, he felt that too much was made of the incident, because “after all, we were drinking together”.

All these case examples highlight what Dr Carnes, an expert in sex addiction, calls the “three main characteristics in sexual addiction – shameful, secretive and/or abusive”. These characteristics slowly and certainly destroy the individual’s competency and effectiveness in the workplace, strip the person of his dignity and self-esteem, and hit him with shame, guilt and depression. [ehb](#)



How to Deal with Sexual Addiction

1. Admit that you have a problem. Change cannot occur until you have admitted the need for change.
2. Seek professional help NOW. Like dealing with other addictions, you cannot do it by yourself. Get help from professionals who have training and experience in dealing with addiction.
3. Get help along with your significant other. This may happen in the later phase of intervention.
4. Start joining some recovery support groups, preferably a sex recovery group.
5. Finally, always keep your focus and do not give up if you fail or relapse. There is life beyond sexual addiction. I can testify to lots of people who get help and get well.

3 Sally (not real name), a 41 year-old sales executive, has been in a long-term "monogamous" relationship but continues to seek anonymous sex outside of her marriage. Though promising herself that she will never repeat the same mistake, she continues to spend time looking for and engaging in different sexual encounters to meet her emotional needs. Each time she engages in a sexual encounter, she tells herself that it will be "her last time". She consistently lies to her husband and makes up countless excuses about her absences from home. When questioned about these issues, she quickly becomes irritable, angry, and defensive.

Dr Kit S. Ng, PhD, is Director of the Center for Psychology Pte Ltd (center4psy.com) specializes in treating relationship issues related to infidelities, sexual compulsivity and addiction for over 20 years.