

# Kinky Sex or Sex Addiction?

LOOKING BEYOND THE BEHAVIOR WHEN DIAGNOSING PROBLEMATIC SEXUAL BEHAVIOR

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May 2017

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## The Sex Addiction Controversy

Is sex addiction real? Depends on whom you ask



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## ASAM Addiction Definition

- We all have the brain reward circuitry that makes food and sex rewarding. In fact, this is a survival mechanism. In a healthy brain, these rewards have feedback mechanisms for satiety or 'enough.' In someone with addiction, the circuitry becomes dysfunctional such that the message to the individual becomes 'more', which leads to the pathological pursuit of rewards and/or relief through the use of substances and behaviors. So, anyone who has addiction is vulnerable to food and sex addiction.

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### AASECT Position

- AASECT recognizes that people may experience significant physical, psychological, spiritual and sexual health consequences related to their sexual urges, thoughts or behaviors. AASECT recommends that its members utilize models that do not unduly pathologize consensual sexual behaviors. AASECT 1) does not find sufficient empirical evidence to support the classification of sex addiction or porn addiction as a mental health disorder, and 2) does not find the sexual addiction training and treatment methods and educational pedagogies to be adequately informed by accurate human sexuality knowledge. Therefore, it is the position of AASECT that linking problems related to sexual urges, thoughts or behaviors to a porn/sexual addiction process cannot be advanced by AASECT as a standard of practice for sexuality education delivery, counseling or therapy.
- AASECT advocates for a collaborative movement to establish standards of care supported by science, public health consensus and the rigorous protection of sexual rights for consumers seeking treatment for problems related to consensual sexual urges, thoughts or behaviors.

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### Sex Addiction vs. Out of Control Sexual Behavior vs. Non-normative Sex




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### Sex Addiction

- How much sex = sex addiction?
  - How many drinks = alcoholism?
  - How much money lost = gambling addiction?
  - How many meals = eating disorder?

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### What Kind of Sex = Addiction?

- What kind of alcohol consumed = alcoholism?
- What kind of drug consumed = drug addiction?
  
- Addictive Disorders are not determined quantitatively but qualitatively. How is the activity affecting the person's life?

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Sex addiction is not about sex or orgasm  
It is about the search for sex and desire for orgasm  
It is a Process Addiction

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### Proposed DSM Definition

- A. over a period of at least 6 months recurrent and intense sexual fantasies, sexual urges, and sexual behavior in association of four or more of the following criteria:
  - Excessive time is consumed by sexual fantasies and urges and by planning for and engaging in sexual behavior.
  - Repetitively engaging in these sexual fantasies, urges and behavior in response to dysphoric mood states (e.g. anxiety, depression, boredom and irritability).
  - Repetitively engaging in these sexual fantasies, urges and behavior in response to stressful life events.
  - Repetitive and unsuccessful attempts to control or significantly reduce these sexual urges, fantasies and behaviors.
  - Repetitively engaging in sexual behavior while disregarding the risk for physical or emotional harm to self or others

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### Proposed DSM Definition

- B. There is clinically significant personal distress or impairment in social, occupational or other important areas of functioning associated with the frequency and intensity of the sexual fantasies, urges or behavior
  - C. These sexual fantasies, urges and behavior are not due to direct physiological effects of exogenous substances (e.g. drugs of abuse or medications), a co-occurring general medical condition or to a manic episode
  - D. The person is at least 18 years of age
- Specify if masturbation, pornography, sexual behavior with consenting adults, cybersex, telephone sex and strip clubs.

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### Sex Addiction Criticisms

- Not enough scientific evidence
- Religious basis
- Pathologizes non-normative or non-hetero sexual practices
- Sex cannot be addictive

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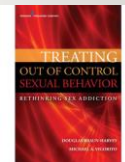
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### Out of Control Sexual Behavior

- Defined as a sexual problem of consensual sexual urges, thoughts, or behaviors that feel out of control for the individual
  - Douglas Braun Harvey Treating Out of Control Sexual Behavior



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### Out of Control Sexual Behavior

- "The substance of therapist OCSB interventions stem from what the client wants to achieve for his sexual health rather than the sexual-disorder symptoms he should overcome or what the therapist this is sexually appropriate."

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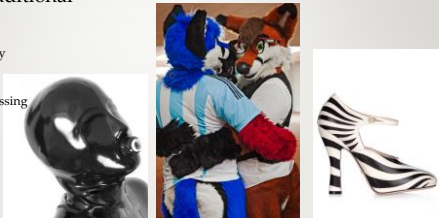
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### Non-traditional

- BDSM
- Polyamory
- Fetishes
- Cross dressing



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### Sexual Addiction Deficits

- Affect Regulation
  - Client inability to manage negative affect in a health manner
  - Sexual behavior used as a coping mechanism for self regulation



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### Sexual Addiction Deficits

- Attachment Issues
  - Intimacy disorder
    - Seeking controlled intimacy



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### Out of Control Sexual Behavior Competing Motivation

- Sexual and Erotic Conflicts
  - Obstacles to sexual and erotic self acceptance and satisfaction
    - Judgment
    - Religious beliefs
    - shame

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### Out of Control Sexual Behavior Competing Motivations

- Sexual and Erotic Conflicts
- "The goal is never to change to whom a client is attracted, what arouses the client, or to excise what he knows already turns him on. The goal is to facilitate positive identity development by fully integrating sexuality into one's self-concept."

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## Therapist Comfort with Client Sexual Issues

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Please take a moment to fill out the Comfort and Willingness Scale

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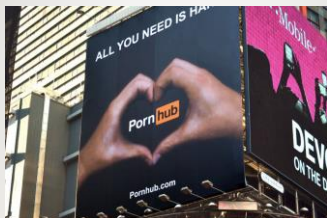
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How comfortable are you with.....



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How comfortable are you with.....



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How comfortable are you with.....



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How comfortable are you with.....



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How comfortable are you with.....



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How comfortable are you with.....



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Things that effect Therapist Activation regarding sexual discussions

- Personal discomfort hearing about details of sexual behaviors
- Personal discomfort with own sexual behavior or turn ons
- Historical or recent sexual violation
- Unresolved issues about own sexual decisions
- Personal judgments about sexual behaviors

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### Therapist Issues

- Ford & Hendrick (2003) –
  - Therapists with a more conservative sexual worldview tended to view clients with multiple sexual encounters as having more pathology than the monogamous clients.
- Hertlein (2004)
  - Therapists who self identify as more religious are more likely to rate married client's online viewing of pornography or sex chatting as a sexual addiction.

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### Therapist Issues

- Minor attraction
  - 2010 German study found that 95% of therapists surveyed were unwilling to work with patients diagnosed with pedophilia.
  - 2015 German study
    - Therapists provided anti-stigma training about pedophilia
      - Decreased agreement with stereotypes
      - Increased favorable affective response
      - Decreased social distance
      - NO EFFECT on therapists' willingness to treat pedophiles.

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### What we see in practice.....

Case Examples

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### Case Examples

- Gary
  - 57 year old married man. Father of two adult children
  - Referred by his wife's therapist because she determined he was a sex addict.
  - He had a year long affair with a female co-worker who is 25 years younger than him

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### Gary Sex Addict? OCSB? Normal?

- What do you want to know about to help you determine a diagnosis?
- Sex Addict?
- Out of Control Sexual Behavior
- Non Pathologic

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### Case Examples

- Bob
  - 43 year old married father of 2.
  - Works from home
  - Referred due to wife finding him sex chatting with women online.

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### Bob

- What do you want to know about to help you determine a diagnosis?
- Sex Addict?
- Out of Control Sexual Behavior
- Non Pathologic

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### Case Example

- Sam
  - Mid 20's, referred by Drug and Alcohol Program due to his sexual interests
  - Used to work in the pornography industry
  - Hx of polyamorous relationships
  - Enjoyed engaging in golden showers

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### Sam

- What do you want to know about to help you determine a diagnosis?
- Sex Addict?
- Out of Control Sexual Behavior
- Non Pathologic

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### Case Example

- Alex
  - 55 year old professional
  - Second marriage
  - Adult children
  - In recovery from substances
  - Hx of massage parlors and escorts

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### Alex

- What do you want to know about to help you determine a diagnosis?
- Sex Addict?
- Out of Control Sexual Behavior
- Non Pathologic

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### Case Example

- Sandy
  - 36 year old single woman
  - Gave up career to work as a professional Dominatrix

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### Sandy

- What do you want to know about to help you determine a diagnosis?
- Sex Addict?
- Out of Control Sexual Behavior
- Non Pathologic

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### Case Example

- Ray
  - 32 year old married man
  - Originally from St. Lucia
  - Liked having sex with other women sometimes
  - Struggled with the American view of monogamy

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### Ray

- What do you want to know about to help you determine a diagnosis?
- Sex Addict?
- Out of Control Sexual Behavior
- Non Pathologic

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### Case Example

- Tom
  - 27 year old gay male
  - Hx of substance problems
  - Underemployed
  - Enjoys animated furry pornography and reading erotic literature that includes sex with minors

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### Tom

- What do you want to know about to help you determine a diagnosis?
- Sex Addict?
- Out of Control Sexual Behavior
- Non Pathologic

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### Case Example

- Patrick
  - Single male, late 20's.
  - Substance addiction
  - Enjoyed anal sex and the odors produced from the practice
  - Viewed pornography focused on his arousal template

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### Patrick

- What do you want to know about to help you determine a diagnosis?
- Sex Addict?
- Out of Control Sexual Behavior
- Non Pathologic

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### Case Example

- Chris
  - Early 30's married man
  - Takes photos of women on his phone
  - Purchases used women's underwear on Reddit
  - Watches pornography every day after work

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### Chris

- What do you want to know about to help you determine a diagnosis?
- Sex Addict?
- Out of Control Sexual Behavior
- Non Pathologic

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### Case Example

- Drew
  - 54 year old divorced man
  - Three grown children
  - Referred due to legal issues with pornography
  - Has had sex with about 100 men he connected with on Grindr.

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### Drew

- What do you want to know about to help you determine a diagnosis?
- Sex Addict?
- Out of Control Sexual Behavior
- Non Pathologic

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### Case Example

- Raj
  - 44 year old divorced man
  - Father of one – joint custody
  - Has watched pornography since he was a teenager
  - Binge watches pornography for hours at a time
  - Has not been able to stop pornography use

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### Raj

- What do you want to know about to help you determine a diagnosis?
- Sex Addict?
- Out of Control Sexual Behavior
- Non Pathologic

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### Case Example

- Brad
  - 57 year old married father of two
  - Referred due to wife finding him cross dressing and hosting a tumblr blog primarily focused on male submission and chastity devices
  - Hx of frequent pornography use

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### Brad

- What do you want to know about to help you determine a diagnosis?
- Sex Addict?
- Out of Control Sexual Behavior
- Non Pathologic

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### The Take Aways

- We do NOT diagnose SA based on
  - Type of behavior
  - Our comfort with the behavior
  - Our religious belief about the behavior
  - Our cultural belief about the behavior




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### The Take Aways

- We do Diagnose SA based on
  - Ability to stop the behavior
  - Escalation of behavior
  - Negative effects of the behavior on the person's life
  - Excessive time spent
  - Purpose of the behavior
    - i.e. coping mechanism
  - Level of compulsivity
  - Excluding other MH issues

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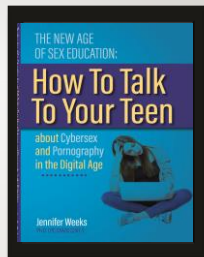
Jennifer Weeks Ph.D. LPC  
CAADC CSAT

Sexual Addiction Treatment  
Services

[www.sexualaddictiontreatmentservices.com](http://www.sexualaddictiontreatmentservices.com)

<https://drjensrecoveryreadings.com/>

The New Age of Sex Education available on  
Amazon.com




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