

What is Sex Addiction?

Sex is a natural and healthy activity for most people. It's a pleasurable form of exercise and a way to connect to others. It can improve your life, including boosting your libido, lowering your blood pressure, and ease your overall stress. It can be intensely pleasurable, intimate, and provide a sense of joy, adventure and emotional connection to one's partner(s).

However, if it begins to dominate one's thoughts and life, or impedes on daily life, work and time with friends and family, or become a compulsion, this may be a symptom or sign of a potential problem.

If sex is destructive to one's life or impacts the way they handle daily responsibilities and conflict, this is especially telling. Sex addiction refers to compulsive sexual behaviour and the need – rather than desire or want – to engage in sexual activity.

If one engages in sexual activity to find escape from their normal life, their sexual habits become the most important part of their life, or they develop unhealthy coping precedents using sex, **these are potential signs of sex addiction.** Risky sex, including exhibitionism, sex with escorts, public sex, engaging in illegal activities related to sex, and more can be signs of sexual addiction.

Emotionally, sex addiction is often accompanied afterwards with feelings of anxiety, regret, shame, and a myriad of other similar emotions. Having affairs, phone sex, consistent masturbation sessions and being unable to control one's urges can cause destruction in one's personal and professional life.

Sex addiction carries a large stigma in our current society, but **if one spends the majority of their time thinking about and acting on their**

sexual desires to feel euphoria or normalcy, they may need to seek help.

There are 12-step programs for people with sex addictions, but these programs do not require abstinence from sex to work. There are no medications for behavioural addictions, but antidepressants and therapy can be supplemented to encourage recovery.

In terms of sex and its relationship to PnP, many drugs can increase sexual desire and appetite, including meth, cocaine, and mephedrone.

Those who engage in sex with multiple partners without making use of safer sex and/or harm-reduction strategies put themselves at higher risk for HIV, syphilis, and other sexual transmitted and blood-borne infections (STBBIs).

Safer sex and harm-reduction techniques include wearing condoms during sex, using lots of lube, taking PeP or PrEP to prevent HIV infections, never sharing needles if practicing PnP, and more.

If you'd like to find out more about any of the above topics please contact [program staff at ACNS](#).