

Definitions of Words and Terms Relating to Sexual Addiction

Addict — To devote oneself or act on something habitually or obsessively, and includes behaviors such as gambling and sex (lust), or use of substances such as drugs, alcohol and nicotine. Broadly, a person whose persistent compulsive use of a behavior or substance is known by the user to be harmful.

Acting out behavior — Filling an emotional, physical or spiritual need with a lustful, self-centered sexual act. For the sexual addict lust is toxic, and sexually acting out is the “drug” of choice. The most common acting out behaviors are the pursuit of lust by using pornography and sex with self and/or other illicit sexual behaviors as an emotional escape.

It is important to understand that children and youth, as well as adults, may often experience euphoric reactions when using pornography and sex with self. They learn that engaging in such acting out behaviors “feels good” and that using will change their mood. Some have described using, especially during early experiences, as magical or mystical. Sexual acting out behaviors can be extremely addictive and, over time, may escalate into illicit sexual behaviors that are potentially illegal and even dangerous such as sexting, engaging in chat rooms where participant’s identities are unknown and may be predators, and predatory acts such as sexual molestation, and so on.

Addict behaviors — Lusting, desiring to be lusted after, objectifying, manipulating, fearing, resenting, expressing anger, lying, emotionally and/or physically withdrawing, playing the victim, fantasizing, feeling shame, minimizing, and so on.

Information dumping — Explaining or describing personal thoughts, feelings and actions without taking responsibility for them.

Lapse — Willfully choosing to pursue addict behavior and/or acting out behavior, and acknowledging the behavior to one’s sponsor within a pre-determined window of time. The

sooner the acknowledgement happens to the actual behavior the better, but no more than 24 hours. (Compare with *relapse*, *slip*)

Lust — Uncontrolled or illicit sexual desire or appetite. Lust is an attitude demanding that a natural instinct serve unnatural desires. Lusting after another person or the desire to be lusted after. For a sexual addict, lust is toxic.

Relapse — Willfully choosing to pursue addict behavior and/or acting out behavior, and then hiding, lying or failing to honestly disclose the lapse to one’s sponsor within a pre-determined window of time. (Compare with *lapse*, *slip*)

Sexual addict — A person to whom lust is toxic.

Slip — Accidental exposure to a triggering event which is then acted on by choosing to pursue addict behavior and/or acting out behavior, then acknowledging the behavior to one’s sponsor within a pre-determined window of time. The sooner the acknowledgement happens to the actual behavior the better, but no more than 24 hours. (Compare with *lapse*, *relapse*)

Transparency — Total honesty. Truly acknowledging and taking responsibility for our own feelings, thoughts, desires and actions with a person (or persons) with whom we are striving to rebuild trust.

Trigger — Event, thought, image, dream, environment, sounds, or a host of other things which when encountered may prompt addict behavior and/or acting out behavior.

User — A person who uses illegal drugs, or when the “drug” of choice is sexual acting out; someone who uses pornography and other sexual acting out behaviors for pleasure, to change mood, reduce stress, relieve boredom, and avoid difficulties or responsibilities (escape).

Using — Describing an action or a situation, specifically an acting out behavior, which is done repeatedly.
