

Questions to Qualify a Therapist

Questions to Consider Asking a Therapist When Sexual Addiction and/or Betrayal Trauma Are Present

1. What is your perspective on the effects of pornography use on individuals and relationships?

-Therapists hold different views about pornography and its impact on individuals and couples. Asking this can help ensure their approach aligns with your personal values and beliefs. Therapists who do not view pornography as harmful will likely be less helpful in your healing.

2. Do you consider pornography or other problematic sexual behaviors to be potentially addictive?

-This question helps clarify whether the therapist conceptualizes these behaviors as part of an addiction model, which can affect their approach to treatment. Therapists who do believe pornography or problematic sexual behaviors can be addictive will be more effective in their treatment.

3. How do you believe a partner is impacted by their loved one's pornography use and sexual betrayal? Do you provide support for partners who have experienced betrayal?

-Betrayal very often causes a condition known as betrayal trauma and has a significant impact on partners and their mental, emotional, physical, social, spiritual well-being. Partners need their own space and support for healing and benefit from working with trained therapists who understand their unique experience.

4. What kind of training and certification do you have in treating problematic sexual behaviors or betrayal trauma? What kind of therapeutic techniques do you use in treatment?

-It's important to know whether a therapist has received specialized and up-to-date training to treat these issues. Not all mental health professionals are equipped to address the complexities of sexual addiction or the trauma that partners may experience.

5. Have you been trained in guiding individuals and couples through full disclosure? What does that process look like with you?

-Effective healing for both partners requires a full disclosure of hidden sexual behaviors, infidelity, and any related financial impact. A therapist trained in safe and structured disclosure practices is best equipped to guide couples through this critical step in the recovery process.

6. How long have you worked with individuals or couples impacted by sexual addiction or compulsivity?

-Experience matters. Therapists with a background in this field may be better prepared to support both the person struggling and their partner.

7. How do you define recovery? What does the recovery process look like in your approach? What steps do you see as essential?

-Recovery can mean different things to different people. Clarifying this can help ensure your goals align. Some therapists may focus solely on symptom reduction, while others emphasize long-term behavior change, emotional growth, and relationship repair. Understanding their philosophy of healing will help you determine if their approach will support long-term healing.

8. Do you offer or recommend group therapy for either those struggling with sexual addiction or for betrayed partners?

-Group therapy can reduce isolation and provide valuable peer support for healing and accountability.

9. What are your thoughts on 12-Step programs in the context of sexual addiction and betrayal trauma healing?

- Healing from addiction and trauma is a spiritual process. Working the 12 Steps consistently with a sponsor, combined with qualified therapy, creates a powerful synergy that supports lasting healing. If 12-Step work is part of your or your partner's recovery plan, it's helpful to know if the therapist supports and integrates that work into treatment.

10. What is your approach to couples therapy when there is active pornography or sexual addiction in the relationship?

- Traditional marriage counseling is unhelpful when an active addiction is present. Some therapists may recommend individual work first, while others may use structured models for safely engaging both partners in the initial healing stages of sexual addiction and betrayal. Asking this helps you understand the therapist's approach and if and how your relationship will be supported during different phases of healing.

