



A place of new beginnings

SEX ADDICTION

Alan Yorker, MA, LMFT

Dual Addiction Program Coordinator

Clinical and cultural interest in addiction related to sexual thoughts, emotions and behaviors has dramatically increased in the past two decades fuelled directly by the advent of personal computers and now personal electronic devices permitting instant transmittal of explicit media written, spoken and depicted. Nothing needs to be left to the imagination. This phenomenon easily and dangerously dovetails into the mental workings of the addicted mind because the mood altering compulsion of the addicted brain is powerfully stimulated and satisfied in the short run by the arousing aspects of the nature-given gift known as sexuality.

Sexuality, that magic and biologically necessary method of assuring our species ongoing existence, is one of nature's strongest forces. In past history it was imperative for mankind to propagate and be fruitful to maintain adequate populations for mutual support, defense and survival. Our caveman ancestor saw in his entire lifetime an equal number of young and nubile females as a modern man sees in one afternoon's visit to a shopping mall! Therefore, the caveman had to be alert, watchful and active in his procreative thoughts and actions to assure delivery of his DNA contribution. Such alertness and active behavior are no longer necessary and are even counter useful to the maintenance of a stable community, country and world. We have today far too many uncared for children and too many abandoned families, and nurturing resources are stretched far too thin to be totally effective in handling the population overload.

The sexually preoccupied man or woman in today's world is a destabilizing force with his or her self centered focus on mood altering pleasure and satisfaction. The underlying neurology of hypothalamic dysfunction (addiction) has kidnapped the natural function of sex which should best be used for love sharing, intimacy and wanted procreation, and has instead diverted it to a selfish, narcissistic reward system for repetitive behaviors leading to guilt, shame, betrayal, heartbreak, and often illness. What a cruel trick, and because the thoughts, emotions and behaviors of sexual addiction live in the shadows of secrecy, help to correct this problem by rescuing the kidnapped functions and restoring them to their healthy roles often arrives too late or not at all resulting in family destruction, broken hearts, loss of self esteem, and sometimes even death.

Applying the tools of recovery to this aspect of an addict's life can reverse much of this damage. Learning to share with peers in truth and dignity can begin a calming of the neurological forces

that fuel this disease modality. Working a 12 Step SA program with support and guidance from others who empathize can make all the difference. While this concept is not intuitive or apparently logical, it is nevertheless also powerful and effective. All one sufferer has to do is ask for help.



Alan Yorker, MA, LMFT, is currently the Coordinator for the Dual Addiction Program at the Talbott Recovery Campus in Atlanta, one of the nation's leading treatment centers for addicted health and mental health professionals. His training after receiving his graduate psychology degree at Georgia State University includes a Clinical Fellowship at the University of California San Francisco, where he initiated study to become a sex therapist. He went on to further post graduate study at the Kinsey Institute for Research in Sex, Gender and Reproduction at Indiana University, where he completed an advanced certification program. He was a founder of the

Georgia Chapter of the American Association of Sex Educators, Counselors and Therapists in 1987. He has served as Chair of the Georgia Composite Licensing Board, as well as serving the Georgia Association for Marriage and Family Therapists as its Legislative Affairs Chair for five years. He has lectured on human sexuality at Emory University for fifteen years in the Schools of Medicine, Nursing and Allied Health. He has been a licensed Marriage and Family Therapist since 1976.

Talbott Recovery offers specialty programs for professionals, adults, & young adults suffering from addiction and co-occurring psychiatric disorders. Locations in Atlanta and Columbus, GA. For more information, visit www.talbottrecovery.com or call 800.445.4232.