

# Internet Usage Statistics

## understanding the size and scope of the problem

Statistic	Citation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cyberporn earns between \$366 million to over \$1 billion. Over half of all spending on the internet is related to sexual activity.</li> </ul>	Griffiths, 2001
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 70% of cyberporn viewing on the Internet occurs between the hours of 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. on weekdays.</li> <li>• 20% of men and 12% of women are using their work computers for at least some portion of their online sexual activities.</li> <li>• About 6% of Internet users have concerns about their use of the Internet for sex.</li> <li>• A profile of very severe problems exists for 1% of users, virtually crippling their ability to function</li> <li>• 40% of these extreme cases of dysfunction are women</li> <li>• 200 sexual related web sites are added to the Internet every day.</li> <li>• Sex on the Internet constitutes the third largest economic sector on the web (software and computers are first and second)</li> <li>• Some of the greatest technological innovations on the web were developed by the sex industry (for example, video streaming)</li> <li>• 20 to 30% of online users visit sites and engage in online sexual activities.</li> <li>• 20 million (and growing) people visit sexual sites each month.</li> </ul>	Cooper, 2000
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adult content sites are the fourth most visited category while at work (surpassed only by news/information/entertainment sites, search engines, and marketing / corporation information sites)</li> </ul>	Leone & Beilsmith, 1999
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sex is the most frequently searched for topic on the internet</li> </ul>	Freeman-Longo & Blanchard, 1998
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online infidelity has accounted for a growing number of divorce cases according to the President of the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers.</li> </ul>	Young, 2000
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Estimates for the number of X-rated sites on the net range from 20,000 to 7 million</li> <li>• Forrester Research found that porn Web sites earned \$1 billion in 1998 and will earn \$1.5 billion in 1999</li> <li>• Every day, 30 million people log on to pornographic Web sites</li> </ul>	"Sex on the Web," CNET.com, April 28, 1999
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As of January 1999, there were almost 20,000 unique visitors per month on the top five pay porn Web sites, and there were almost 1 million unique visitors per month on the top five free porn Web sites.</li> <li>• In November 1999, Nielson Net Ratings figures showed 12.5 million surfers visited porn sites in September from their homes, a 140% rise in traffic in just six months.</li> <li>• Nearly 17 percent of Internet users have problems with sex on the Net.</li> <li>• There are 100,000 Web sites dedicated to selling sex in some way - this does not include chat rooms, e-mail, or other forms of sexual contact on the Web.</li> </ul>	Carnes, In the Shadows of the Net
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The research company Relevant Knowledge found that 9.6 million users, (about 15% of Web users), logged on to the 10 most popular cybersex sites during the month of April, 1998 alone</li> </ul>	Wired News, June 10, 1998
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 68% of addicted couples in which one or both had lost interest in relational sex. 52% of addicts had decreased interest in sex with their spouse, as did 34% of their partners.</li> </ul>	Schneider, 2000
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Almost 9 million people in the United States need intervention for their sexually compulsive use of cybersex. There are an additional 15 million who are using cybersex moderately and show beginning signs of sexual compulsivity.</li> </ul>	Cooper, Delmonico, and Burg

# About Dr. Simpson

Dr. Paul Simpson is a licensed psychologist, author, and national speaker who has over 20 years of experience intervening in destructive sexual behaviors. He has worked in one of the nation's leading inpatient/outpatient treatment programs for sexual compulsions.

Dr. Simpson is a licensed psychologist, listed in the National Register of Health Care Providers and Psychology, certified with the Association of State and Provincial Psychology Boards, an instructor for Northern Arizona University, and listed in Who's Who in Executives and Professionals, Who's Who in the United States and Who's Who in Medicine and Healthcare.

Dr. Simpson is the author of "Second Thoughts: Understanding the False Memory Crisis" - the ground-breaking book on the FMS / Recovered Memory controversy.

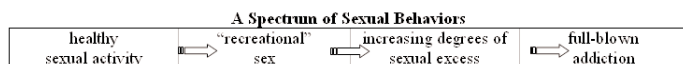
A much sought after speaker, Dr. Simpson has appeared or consulted for CNN, Frontline, Dateline, Focus on the Family, The Leeza Gibbons Show, The Oprah Winfrey Show, 60 Minutes, 20/20, Fox News, Parent Talk and The Joan Rivers Show.



# Common Questions about Internet Addictions and Strategies and Tips for Coping

## "Is everyone who looks at porn on the Internet " considered 'addicted'?"

Sexual behaviors, much like alcohol or other substance use, fall along a spectrum line of degrees. These go from complete abstinence to mild use to increasing degrees of abuse and finally to addiction. Here's what a continuum line for sexual behaviors looks like:



Just because someone gets drunk one weekend or drinks occasionally, it doesn't mean s/he is an alcoholic. In a similar vein, simply having an affair or visiting an occasional porn website does not mean someone is an addict.

Research shows that about 6% of Internet users have concerns regarding their use of the Internet for sexual purposes. Very severe problems exist for 1% of users, which virtually cripples their ability to function in day-to-day living and relationships. That may not sound like much, but 1% of millions of Internet users adds up to a considerable population of people that are hurting.

## "So how do you know when someone is addicted to Internet porn?"

The National Council on Sexual Addiction and Compulsivity (NCSAC) describes sexual addiction as "Persistent and escalating patterns of sexual behavior acted out despite increasing negative consequences to self and others." (Schneider, 1991) In the recovery community it is not necessarily the frequency or kind of behavior, but the loss of control (compulsivity) and negative consequences that indicate increasing degrees of abuse and addiction.

The Cyber Sex Addiction Checklist is offered on the NCSAC website. This test is used with permission from its author, Rob Weiss, M.A. A high number of YES answers may be a sign of some issues with sex addiction.

1. Spending increasing amounts of online time focused on sexual or romantic intrigue or involvement.
2. Involvement in multiple romantic or sexual affairs in chat rooms, Internet or BBS.
3. Not considering online sexual or romantic "affairs" to be a

possible violation of spousal/partnership commitments.

4. Failed attempts to cut back on frequency of online or Internet sexual and romantic involvement or interaction.
5. Online use interferes with work (tired or late due to previous night's use, online while at work, etc.).
6. Online use interferes with primary relationships (e.g., minimizing or lying to partners about online activities, spending less time with family or partners).
7. Intense engagement in collecting Internet pornography.
8. Engaging in fantasy online acts or experiences which would be illegal if carried out (e.g., rape, child molestation).
9. Decreased social or family interactive time due to online fantasy involvements.
10. Being secretive or lying about amount of time spent online or type of sexual/romantic fantasy activities carried out online.
11. Engaging with sexual or romantic partners met online, while also involved in marital or other primary relationship.
12. Increasing complaints and concern from family or friends about the amount of time spent online.
13. Frequently becoming angry or extremely irritable when asked to give up online involvement to engage with partners, family or friends.
14. Primary focus of sexual or romantic life becomes increasingly related to computer activity (including pornographic CD-ROM use).

## "What are some of the ways the Internet is used for sexual purposes?"

1. Uses of the internet for sexually motivated behavior include:
2. Buying or selling sexually related goods for further use offline
3. Seeking out material for entertainment/masturbatory purposes for use online
4. Seeking out sexual partners for a transitory relationship (i.e., escorts, prostitutes, swingers) via online personal advertisements/"lonely

hearts" columns, escort agencies, and or chat rooms

5. Engaging in and maintaining online relationship via e-mail and/or chat rooms
6. Exploring gender and identity roles by swapping gender or creating other personas and forming online relationships
7. Seeking out individuals who then become victims of sexually related internet crime (online sexual harassment, cyber-stalking, pedophilic "grooming" of children)

## "Why does the Internet have such a powerful pull on people's lives?"

Internet porn has become the "crack cocaine" of the sexual addictions. But why is it such a powerful force in people's lives?

Cooper (1998) suggested there are three primary factors that facilitate increased online sexuality. This was termed the Triple A Engine and the factors are defined as:

1. **Accessibility:** there are millions of sites available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. And these can be accessed from the privacy of one's home or office.
2. **Affordability:** competition on the Web keeps prices low and there are many ways to access "free" porn sites.
3. **Anonymity:** people perceive their communications to be anonymous.

There are three additional elements, which I refer to at the Triple C's:

1. **Caution:**
  - a) the fact that much of cybersex is legal
  - b) it's available in the privacy of one's home
  - c) can avoid sexually transmitted diseases
  - d) it can be ideal for hiding the activity from a partner because it does not leave obvious evidence of any sexual encounter. (Schneider, 2000)

2. **Control:** Young (2000) claims the anonymity of electronic transactions provides the user with a greater sense of control over the content, tone, and nature of the online sexual experience. Unlike real life sexual experiences, a woman can change partners if her cyber-lover isn't very good or a man can "surf" from picture-to-picture, until he finds the image that is "just right."

3. **Creativity:** Young (2000) claims that individuals are more likely to experiment sexually, as online users feel encouraged to engage in their fantasies and validated by the acceptance of the cyberspace culture. For instance, what if a man privately wondered what it would be like to have sex with another man? Within the anonymous context of cyberspace conventional messages about sex are eliminated, allowing users to play out hidden sexual fantasies without the fear of being caught. For anyone who has ever been curious about a whole range of sexual behaviors, cybersex offers a private, superficially safe, and anonymous way to explore fantasies.

## "Who tends to be Cyber-Addicted?"

A number of researchers have explored the demographics of the different kinds of Internet users in relation to online sexual and/or relationship activity (i.e., Cooper, 1998; Griffiths, 1999; Young, 1999). Cooper, Putnam, et al. (1999) put forward a continuum model of people who use the Internet for sexual purposes (recreational users, at-risk users, and sexual compulsive users):

1. **Recreational users** are those who access online sexual material more out of curiosity or for entertainment purposes and are not typically seen as having any problems associated with their online sexual behavior.
2. **At-risk users** are those who, if it were not for the availability of the Internet, may never have developed a problem with online sexuality. Cooper, Putnam, et al. (1999) claim that for these people, the interaction between the AAA factors and underlying personality factors leads to patterns of behavior that may develop into online sexually compulsive behaviors.
3. **Sexual compulsive users** are those use the Internet as a forum for their sexual activities because of their propensity for pathological sexual expression.

A profile of very severe problems exists for 1% of users and 40% of these extreme cases of dysfunction are women. (Cooper, 2000)

In a survey of 9177 Internet users, researchers found that 8% spent 11 hours or more per week engaged in online sexual pursuits. (Cooper, Putnam, Planchon, and Boies, 1999)

Cooper (2000) describes the following as at-risk to develop cybersexual addictions:

- people who suffer from low self-esteem
- a severely distorted body image
- untreated sexual dysfunctions

Severe cybersex addicts were: (Cooper, et al, 2000)

- 79% male,
- 63% heterosexual,
- 38% married (with another 15% in committed relationships).

In terms of demographics, overrepresented groups included being:

- female
- homosexual
- bisexual
- single
- a student

One study was done in an outpatient psychiatric clinic. in which 19 males and 21 females were referred primarily or exclusively for problematic cybersexual activity. These typically involved masturbating or self-touching while communicating with someone over the Internet: (Schwartz and Southern, 2000).

- Over two thirds (68%) had a history of sexual abuse, with females being more likely to present sexual abuse history and PTSD.
- Most of the male patients (90%) were self-diagnosed as sex addicts or fit the criteria for compulsive sexual behavior.
- Only half the females (52%) engaged in compulsive sexual behavior although their Internet usage and cybersex were considered by the patients and/or their referral sources to be pathological.
- A quarter of the patients participated in cybersex activities associated with atypical or special sexual interests. p 7
- They also reported that 57.5% had a chemical dependency (74% male, 50% female) and that 47.5% had an eating disorder (26% male, 67% female).

## "How are men and women different when it comes to Cybersex?"

Although there are some strong similarities between men and women in the way that they view cybersex (e.g., both view it as a way of hiding physical appearance), there are important differences.

- Young (2000) claims that women prefer cybersex because it removes the social stigma that women should not enjoy sex, and allows them a safe means to concentrate on their sexuali-

ty in new, uninhibited ways.

- Men prefer cybersex because it removes performance anxiety that may be underlying problems with premature ejaculation or impotence. (Young, 2000)
- Men are more likely to view online pornography, while women are more likely to engage in erotic chat. (Young, 2000)
- A profile of very severe problems exists for 1% of users and 40% of these extreme cases of dysfunction are women (Cooper, 2000)
- Women tend to desire cybersex in the context of a "relationship" rather than simply viewing images or text (Carnes, 1991; Cooper, Scherer, et al., 1999).
- Schwartz and Southern showed male cybersex abusers were more likely to engage in sexual compulsivity or be labeled a sex addict.
- Male cybersex abusers were likely to be older than female cybersex abusers (i.e., middle-aged).

## "What drives sexual compulsions?"

In the early 1900s, Alfred Adler argued that human behavior is goal-driven. For Adler, this teleological perspective was foundational to understanding why people make the choices they do. While it might sound odd, our behaviors actually have "payoffs" - desired goals that are met through specific behaviors.

"That's all well and good, but what does that have to do with cyber-addiction?" Everything! In over 20 years of treating sexual compulsions, I've seen 7 repeated goals that clients are consciously/unconsciously pursuing. They include excitement, comfort, escape, affirmation, power, revenge, and helplessness. Every sex addict I've ever worked with has been pursuing one or more of these goals, which are reflected in the current research literature as well.

## THE SEVEN GOALS

### *The Physical Goals:*

The first three goals (excitement, relief, and escape) reflect primarily physical goals that are attained through sex on the Internet.

- All illicit drug use serves the physical function of relaxation (depressants), excitement (stimulants), and/or escape (hallucinogens). Sexual behavior, both healthy and unhealthy,

serves these physical purposes as well. But interestingly, sex is the "one-size-fits-all" natural drug that can accommodate all of the goals at the same time. That's one reason why sexual compulsions are so difficult to overcome. We carry our "drug" inside us. At least with alcohol or heroin you can physically remove it from your presence. But that simply is not the case with our sexuality. The challenge is much greater - how to find healthy sexual balance and expression.

- "Masturbation is the one great habit that is a primary addiction. The other addictions, for alcohol, morphine, tobacco, etc., only enter in to life as a substitute and replacement for it." — Sigmund Freud
- There is speculation that addicts may inherit a genetic structure which predisposes them to addictions in general. Scientists believe there is a problem with the way an addict's brain processes neurochemicals such as dopamine or serotonin (often associated with pleasure, pain and relief in the brain). There may actually be a problem with the way the synapses fire in the brain or how connections are made. Regardless of the reason, we do know part of the problem is genetic.
- "It is becoming more evident that orgasm is not so much a function of the genitals as it is of the brain. As early as the sixteenth century it was known that opium ingestion decreased sexual activity and in some cases could cause impotence. Opiates occupy endorphin receptor sites on the presynaptic terminals of neurons in the central nervous system. In this way opiates mimic the pain-killing and the euphoric effects of our own endorphins. The inference is obvious: endorphins (and the limbic system) must somehow be involved in the ecstasy of sexual activity and orgasm. The relationship between endorphins and orgasms was demonstrated by a group of neuroscientists who showed that the level of endorphins in the blood of hamsters increased dramatically after several ejaculations. This finding would account for the well-known decrease of pain during and after sex . . . The rush of endorphins into the central nervous system could also explain the euphoria usually experienced immediately following orgasm and loss of romantic interest just after sex." *Craving the Ecstasy: The Consciousness and Chemistry of Escape*, Harvey Milkman and Stanley Sudnerwirth
- "Many ask how sex can be an addiction when no drug is ingested. Drugs, in fact, are involved - in the form of naturally-occurring peptides such as endorphins which govern the electrochemical interactions within the brain. These peptides parallel the molecular construction of opiates like morphine, but they are many times more powerful. We know that when

experimental rats are habituated to morphine or heroin, they will go through much pain in order to obtain more. However, when the pleasure centers of the brain are stimulated, releasing endorphins, rats will go through even more suffering than they will for morphine or heroin." *Don't Call It Love*, Patrick Carnes

## GOAL #1. Excitement

Physical excitement is one of the strongest payoffs for sexual "acting out" on the Internet. While this may seem like stating the obvious, it is worth taking a closer look. A healthy sexual arousal pattern also includes the excitement stage. But forbidden sex adds an "adrenalin rush" that magnifies the anticipatory and excitement phases of the arousal cycle.

- Sexual "acting out" brings about greater excitement by "supercharging" anticipation and the sexual arousal cycle with a chemical "rush" of adrenalin.
- Anonymous Sex - High-risk sex with unknown persons introduces important elements of fear and risk.
- Research shows that a person is more attractive when the subject perceived fear or risk either to him/herself or that person. Fear, risk, and novelty are well-documented neurochemical escalators of the sexual experience.
- "Considerable evidence also indicates that PEA and sexual arousal are highly affected by the presence of fear, risk, and danger. For instance, PEA concentrations have been measured as extremely high in connection with divorce court trials. Experiments with attraction have shown that fears serves as an important escalator of desire. For example, in one study students were interviewed by an attractive interviewer. Those who were (falsely) told they might receive an electric shock rated the interviewer more attractive than those who were not given this warning." *Craving the Ecstasy: The Consciousness and Chemistry of Escape*, Harvey Milkman and Stanley Sudnerwirth
- Reminiscent of the variable rate of reinforcement that gives gambling it's powerful drive, the same holds true for sexual "gambling." Every new web page, each visit to a chat room, etc. holds the promise of the idealized sexual experience. The fact that the ideal is actually a glossy fantasy and attained infrequently only reinforces the variable rate of reinforcement and proves to create an even stronger habit.

## GOAL #2. Comfort

Sexually "acting out" on the Internet can bring about relief from

life stressors. A few years back, a popular series of beer commercials featured hardworking men and woman toiling at oil drills, coast guard rescues, etc. At the end of their arduous day, they all get together for a beer, with the announcer voice-over saying, "And now it's Miller time." One of the things I've seen over the years is how many high-pressured professionals find themselves locked in the grip of sexual addiction. Looking at their lives, one sees a clear pattern of sexual acting out as a means of relaxation from the chronic stress they live under. I call this the "Miller-Time" phenomenon. Research shows that an integral aspect of sexual arousal and orgasm includes the release of oxytocin and vasopressin, which are powerful chemical relaxants.

### GOAL #3. Escape

Cybersex can provide a means of escape from the mundane "grind" of daily living. Is your life boring? Exotic fantasy worlds are just a click away on your personal computer.

One of the features of the Internet is the creation of "trance states of mind." Trance is a common, everyday occurrence for all of us. Simply defined, it involves an intense focus on an image while becoming less aware of one's physical surroundings, allowing the mind to wander while the body is in a relaxed state (on automatic pilot).

Trance is what happens to you when you're driving home from work preoccupied. You look up, and realize that you've driven five miles down the road without being consciously aware of driving. You glance in the rear view mirror, wondering if you've run a red light or, heaven forbid, run somebody over. Going to the movies is another example of natural trance state. You sit in a dark, relaxed room where distractions have been minimized. Small, colored points of light on a large white screen form moving pictures that your mind assimilates into a whole. Actors play out dramatic performances created from fictional scripts and stories. But as we sit in a darkened room with strangers beside us, we experience a wide range of emotions; laughter, anger, fear, joy. In this trance state, our mind creates a vivid experience that we react to as real.

Once in trance, a person's normal inhibitions, including sexual, are relaxed and they are able to experience events that seem very real, and can include sight, smell, touch, relationships and deep emotions. Trance also has a way of putting "time" on hold - hours can pass in what can feel like mere minutes. That's what happens as a person views internet porn or engages in a cybersexual relationship. In the privacy of their own room, they can disappear to alternate worlds that feel intensely real.

### The Psychological Goals:

The remaining four goals (affirmation, power, revenge, and helplessness) reflect primarily psychological goals that are attained through sex on the Internet.

### Goal #4. Affirmation

A universal longing is to "matter" - to have our value as a human being affirmed by someone else. Cybersex can provide desperately sought after affirmation, but with a price.

- **Exhibitionistic Sex** - With words or posted pictures, the internet addict draws attention to sexual topics and parts of their body. Sexual arousal stems from reaction of the viewer whether of shock or interest. A longed for hope is that the recipient will approve of the exhibition, thereby affirming the sex addict's value and attractiveness.
- **Paying for Sex** - Purchase of sexual services on the Internet. This is a form of affirmation - even if it is only temporarily "renting" it from another human being.
- **Ongoing relationships** - in the illusory world of the Internet, a person is able to enter into relationships with other sex addicts and find mutual affirmation. The irony is that both cybersex partners are typically lying about who they really are, so the affirmation is towards a falsely created "self."

### Goal #5. Power

In its raw form, cybersex can represent dominance and control over another person. In turn this affirms a sense of power that the sex addict lacks in his or her real world. Arousal is based on the notion of conquest and diminishes rapidly after initial contact.

Forms of power include:

- **Trading Sex** - Selling or bartering sex for power. Arousal is based on gaining control of others by using sex as leverage.
- **Intrusive Sex** - Boundary violation without discovery. Sexual arousal occurs by violating boundaries with no repercussions.
- **Pain Exchange Sex** - Being humiliated or hurt as part of sexual arousal; or sadistic hurting or degrading another sexually, or both.
- **Exploitation of the vulnerable.** Arousal patterns are based on target "types" of vulnerability.

## Goal #6. Revenge

Sex on the Internet can act as a means of revenge against perceived betrayals in the present or in the past. Hurt can come from an inattentive spouse, a condemning church, or childhood abuse.

- Anger becomes eroticized: Anger occurs in situations of high risk and fear. Anger adds intensity to the sexual experience and becomes a neurochemical escalator.
- Anger is often core to the scenarios and beliefs embedded in the arousal template.
- Anger becomes a sexual stimulus for some people.

## Goals #7. Helplessness

Cybersex can affirm a person's perceived "victim" or "helpless" condition. In a variety of ways, the goal of helplessness affirms that the person really has no control over their sexual desires, and reinforces myths/rationalizations. One example is "Men are genetically unable to be monogamous" or "It's a generational curse, my father was this way and so am I."

The Washington Post gave page one billing and a great deal of inside space to a new study finding "that men everywhere - whether single, married, or gay - want more sexual partners than women do." The results provide the strongest evidence to date that the male desire for greater sexual variety is universal. And that in turn can be taken to suggest, as the Post put it, "that male promiscuity is hardwired - and therefore 'normal.'" The study, by evolutionary psychologist David C. Schmitt of Bradley University, appeared in *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. It was based on a survey of more than 16,000 college students from 52 nations. What made the Schmitt study so noteworthy, it would seem, is its apparent implication that men can't help their lustful urges and roaming eye: It's in their genes. As the Chicago Sun-Times summed it up in a headline, "Men born to fool around, researcher says."

- Affirms the faulty core beliefs outlined by Patrick Carnes (2002):
  1. I am basically a bad, unworthy person
  2. No one would love me as I am
  3. My needs are never going to be met if I depend on others
  4. Sex is my most important need

## "So what can a person do to break out of Internet addiction?"

Plenty! Here's some tips to share with readers who think they may have a problem with the Internet:

1. **Use the Delete key:** Delete all sexually connected e-mail and website addresses.
2. **Remove your promotional materials:** Delete any self-descriptions or self-photos
3. **Stop the cameras!** Remove any live video equipment from the computer
4. **Block it!** Use blocking services (see the attached list)
5. **Go public:** Place the computer in a public area, with the screen facing the door
6. **Seek company:** Make a deal with yourself to only go online when someone else is in the room
7. **Imagine five years from now unrecovered:** Sit down where you can be quiet and contemplate. Imagine what your life will be like five years from now if you continue to act out on the internet. Consider how this addiction will continue to expand and cost you.
8. **Five years from now recovered:** At a later time, sit down and imagine what your life will be like five years from now if you get sober from the Internet.
9. **Counseling:** Seek out a professional who is experienced in addressing sexual compulsive issues. S/he can play an important role in providing insight, practical strategies, encouragement and accountability.
10. **A sponsor:** Break out of the aloneness of your problems with the web. Connect with an accountability partner or 12-Step sponsor. A sponsor in a 12 step group is similar to a mentor relationship. The sponsor should be someone who is further in sobriety, the same gender, can be called regularly, promotes step work, and encourages you towards set goals.
11. **Your partner:** Consider help from your spouse / partner. In most cases, your partner will not be a sexual compulsive and may have trouble understanding your struggles with the internet, fantasy, masturbation, or pornography. Consider getting an experienced counselor to help "direct traffic" for the two of you. Your partner is not your sponsor. You may want to agree on some questions s/he can ask you (and you will answer honestly). Plan a weekly or biweekly meeting to discuss your progress.
12. **Stepping out:** Consider attending a 12-Step meeting (see the attached list)

13. **Avoid H.A.A.L.T.:** H.A.A.L.T. stands for Hungry, Angry, Anxious, Lonely and Tired.

- **Hungry:** You need to eat regularly and properly, not allowing yourself to get too hungry, which may make you more susceptible to less-logical thinking. Some researchers believe that eating certain foods can help in recovery. Protein-rich foods like meat, fish and milk help the body produce tryptophan (an amino acid), which the body uses to make serotonin. Serotonin is essential for stabilizing mood, and controlling sexual impulses & aggression.
  - **Anxious:** Pent-up stress can be major motivator for acting out. Regularly managing anxiety is essential for maintaining sobriety. Consider 20 minutes of cardiac aerobic activities every other day to begin (be sure to check with your primary care first). Physical exercise, healthy diet, and setting limits for work are key elements of anxiety management.
  - **Angry:** If anger is a problem, be sure to take active steps to deal with it in a proactive manner. This helps to "keep short accounts" and avoid fueling your drive towards the internet.
  - **Lonely:** This is a difficult feeling for the sexual compulsive to handle. Have an action plan available. Some suggestions:
    1. Go to a public place such as a mall, restaurant, etc.
    2. Call someone.
    3. Plan ahead to avoid alone time gaps such as weekends or when the partner may be out of town.
    4. Exercise
    5. Help someone else with a project.
    6. Go to a meeting, church or other social gathering.
    7. Pray
    8. Ask others what they do.
  - **Tired:** Living at "the speed of life" creates fatigue. Tiredness can lower resistance to the point of "who cares." Sexual compulsion is a default program that becomes fully activated when fatigued. To prevent tiredness, eat right, exercise, and get regular sleep and consider working "power naps" into your day.
14. **Accountability for time:** Acting out on the Internet takes time. So make your time accountable to someone. This would exclude your spouse, but may be your sponsor, someone else in a 12 Step program, Promise Keepers, or a friend who knows about your situation and who will go over your schedule with you. This will help you avoid that "Oh, I'm alone and nobody knows" feeling which is very familiar to sexual compulsives.
15. **Antidepressants:** Selective serotonergic reuptake inhibitors" (SSRIs) like Prozac, Zoloft and Paxil, are proving useful in addressing clinical depression and compulsive & impulsive disorders. The neurochemical, Serotonin, is implicated in much of what matters to us - from winning friends & wielding power, to managing anxiety & depression, to controlling sexual impulses & aggression. It also pacifies neurons in the limbic system - the brain's "Department of Animal Instincts." It puts the brakes on primitive behaviors like sex, aggression, behavioral compulsions and excessive feeding.
16. **The Three-second Rule:** The three-second rule is simple but effective. Often sexually oriented "pop-ups" or unintended sexual content is accessed while a person is doing legitimate work on the Internet. When this occurs, count to 3, and get out of the site, take a break, etc.
17. **The Cost Card.** On the backside of a business card-size paper write at the top the word "COST" and list out some of your most significant past and future losses. Write yourself some notes that only you would understand and place this in your billfold. When you start to feel the compulsion try to talk you into acting-out, pull out your card and talk back. Having the facts puts truth on your side and you can escape from relapse. (Doug Weiss, 101 Freedom Exercises: Guide for Sex Addiction Recovery, modified)
18. **The Reward Card.** On the other side of the "Cost Card" write some of the rewards you see for your family, health, spiritual life, and career if you maintain a successful recovery from cybersex. Be as specific as possible in your rewards (staying married, seeing your children grow up, better sex). (Doug Weiss, 101 Freedom Exercises: Guide for Sex Addiction Recovery, modified)
19. **The Calling Card.** Write out the phone numbers of at least 5 to 10 people who can support your sobriety. When feeling tempted with the Internet, you pull out your phone card and call someone. Keep phone numbers in your wallet, house & office so you can call someone anytime.
20. **Letter to Self:** Imagine you were your own sponsor writing a letter to yourself just at the time you want to act out. What would you say? By writing the letter and carrying it with you, you have a significant resource to pull out at the last minute. Simply writing it creates the psychological distance you need. Have sponsors and group members write notes on

the letter itself. (Carnes, 2002)

21. **First Aid Kit:** Make yourself a psychological emergency first-aid kit. Place in a small box things that provide your life with meaning. Suggestions include:

- symbols of recovery, including medallions, tokens, and other items that remind you of significant moments in your recovery
- pictures and mementos of loved ones
- scripture and spiritual items
- copies of pages out of a recovery book
- letter to yourself
- favorite affirmations, meditations, quotes
- phone numbers of peers and sponsors
- any items that represent personal meaning to you
- tapes of special music

Keep this kit beside your computer. If you feel you are about to relapse or already have slipped, pull out the kit to get support for what you need to do. (Carnes, 2002)

22. **If you blow it:**

- Affirm yourself for the gains you have made
- Get accountable to someone
- Take care of yourself
- Learn from your mistakes
- Rest and reflect
- Connect to those who know your story
- Allow yourself to feel the pain, fear, and anger
- Stay in the present
- Accept that sex is not the enemy
- Re-establish boundaries with self and others

## Helpful Readings

### Anonymous

#### ***Hope and Recovery : A Twelve Step Guide for Healing from Compulsive Sexual Behavior***

(June 1994) Hazelden Educational Materials; ISBN: 156838050X  
The classic guide by and for those recovering from sexual compulsion examines each of the twelve steps of recovery. The personal stories of recovering people highlight each step.

### Carnes, Patrick

#### ***Don't Call it Love: Recovery From Sexual Addiction***

by Patrick J. Carnes, Reprint edition (April 1992) Bantam Books; ISBN: 0553351389

Sex is abused by sexual addicts the same way alcohol or drugs are abused by the chemically dependent. Based on an in-depth survey of more than 1,000 sexual addicts in recovery, a leading expert on sexual addiction now offers the astonishing results of his research. Includes self-tests and warning signs, plus therapies to aid recovery.

### Carnes, Patrick

#### ***Out of the Shadows : Understanding Sexual Addiction***

by Patrick J. Carnes, 2nd edition (September 1992) Hazelden Information Education; ISBN: 1568380550

This book is the first work ever published on sexual addiction, examines the tangled web of love, addictive sex, hate and fear often found in family relationships. Patrick Carnes offers a way for addicts to deal with their sexual compulsions and become whole human beings.

### Carnes, Patrick

#### ***A Gentle Path Through the Twelve Steps : The Classic Guide for All People in the Process of Recovery***

by Patrick J. Carnes, Revised edition (September 1, 1994) Hazelden Educational Materials; ISBN: 1568380585

This workbook provides a unique set of structured forms and exercises to help recovering people integrate the Twelve Steps into all aspects of their lives.

### Carnes, Patrick

#### **Starting Sexual and Relationship Recovery**

by Patrick Carnes, (2001)

Describes techniques used by recovering sex addicts and shows readers, step by step, how to break free of problematic sexual behaviors and live a healthier, more fulfilling life. A task-centered, competency-based, effective approach to recovery from compulsive behaviors.

### Carnes, Patrick

#### ***Clinical Management of Sex Addiction***

by Patrick Carnes (Editor), Kenneth M. Adams (Editor), Ken Adams. (2002) ISBN: 1583913610

This is the first comprehensive volume of the clinical management of sex addiction. Collecting the work of 28 leaders in the field, the editors provide a long-needed primary text about how to approach treatment with these challenging patients. The book serves as an excellent introduction for professional new to the field as well as serving as a useful reference tool.

### **Carnes, Patrick**

#### ***Shadows of the Net***

by Patrick Carnes, (2003)

Practical workbook offers a plan for breaking free of compulsive cybersex. Easy to follow exercises serve as a guide for confronting and understanding cybersex behavior and lead the way to change, personal growth, and a life free of cybersex's intoxicating and destructive spell.

### **Cooper, Al**

#### ***Sex and the Internet: A Guide Book for Clinicians***

by Al Cooper. (2002) ISBN: 1583913556

A professional book on internet sexuality.

### **Hall, Laurie**

#### ***An Affair of the Mind : One Woman's Courageous Battle to Salvage Her Family from the Devastation of Pornography***

by Laurie Sharlene Hall, (1998) Focus on the Family Pub; ISBN: 1561794643

Laurie Hall's story reveals pornography's subversive side and offers comfort, encouragement, insight, and a plan of action to women whose husbands are addicted. Christian Resource.

### **Kasl, Charlotte**

#### ***Women, Sex, and Addiction: A Search for Love and Power***

by Charlotte S. Kasl, ISBN 0060973218

"Crammed with case histories, diagrams and therapeutic suggestions, this study draws on psychologist Kasl's work with members of two organizations: Sex Addicts Anonymous, and Co-Dependents of Sex Addicts."

### **Means, Marsha**

#### ***Living With Your Husband's Secret Wars***

by Marsha Means, (September 1999) ISBN: 0800757106

For women who have husbands struggling with sexual addictions and how to deal private devastations.

### **Schneider, Jennifer**

#### ***Cybersex Exposed: Simple Fantasy or Obsession?***

by Jennifer P. Schneider and Robert L. Weiss.

Hazelden Publishing and Education, 2001.

### **Schneider, Jennifer**

#### ***Rebuilding Trust: For Couples Committed to Recovery***

By Jennifer P. Schneider M.D. and Burt Schneider. Hazelden Educational Materials, 1989. Reprinted with update, 1998.

Valuable resource for couples beginning recovery.

### **Weiss, Douglas**

#### ***101 Practical Exercises for Sexual Addiction Recovery***

by Douglas Weiss, 1 edition Discovery Pr; ISBN: 1881292193,

## **The Twelve Steps**

### **The Twelve Steps for Sexual Compulsives**

1. We admitted we were powerless over our compulsive sexual behaviors - that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that there was a power greater than ourselves and could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to our Higher Power.
4. With the help of our Higher Power, made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to our Higher Power, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have our Higher Power remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked our Higher Power to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were

wrong promptly admitted it.

11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our relationship with our Higher Power and praying for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry out His will.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to other sex addicts and to practice these principles in our lives.  
(Adapted from AA Services Inc.)

## SCREENING TESTS

Website addresses of professionally developed screening instruments for sex addiction

***Cybersexual Addiction Test***

([www.netaddiction.com/cybersexual%5faddiction.htm](http://www.netaddiction.com/cybersexual%5faddiction.htm))

***Online Sexual Addiction Questionnaire***

([www.onlinesexaddict.com/osaq.html](http://www.onlinesexaddict.com/osaq.html))

***Male Sexual Addiction Screening Test***

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

***Women's Sexual Screening Addiction Test***

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

***Sexaholics Anonymous Test***

([www.sa.org](http://www.sa.org))

***Sexual Compulsives Anonymous***

([www.sca-recovery.org](http://www.sca-recovery.org))

***Sex Addicts Anonymous***

([www.saa.org](http://www.saa.org))

***Sexual Codependency Sexual Coaddiction Questionnaire***

([www.azstarnet.com/%26sim;jschndr](http://www.azstarnet.com/%26sim;jschndr))

***S-Anon Checklist***

([www.sanon.org](http://www.sanon.org))

***COSA: Key Identifying Behaviors***

([www.shore.net/%26sim;cosa](http://www.shore.net/%26sim;cosa))