

## **UNDERSTANDING SEXUAL ADDICTION DISORDER!**

*I'm such a good lover because I practice a lot on my own...Woody Allen*

### **WHAT TO KNOW!**

- ❖ Sexual addiction (SA) describes a person with an unusually strong sex drive or obsession with sex that it dominates their thinking and impairs relationships
- ❖ SA is a progressive intimacy disorder characterized by sexually compulsive behaviors that interfere with normal living and cause severe stress to person, family and friends
- ❖ It completely dominates a person's life and is more important than family, work, friends
- ❖ It is the central theme in their life and they organize their world around this compulsion
- ❖ The term Sex Addiction was first coined by Dr. Patrick Carnes in the 1980s
- ❖ SA is a controversial term as it is not a true diagnosis and many people do not believe it exists as there is no clear definition as to what is the proper amount of sex
- ❖ The negative effects on the person and their family increase as SA progresses with the person intensifying their behaviors to get the same results
- ❖ SA are willing to take huge risks and sacrifice what is important to them for their "fix"
- ❖ About 3-5% of the U.S. population is a conservative estimate of those who have SA based on people who seek treatment but is probably much higher
- ❖ Sex addicts deny they have a problem, engage in distorted thinking, and blame others
- ❖ 60% of sexual addicts were abused in their childhood, or may have grown up in a hostile or chaotic home, or may have been emotionally starved for love/affection
- ❖ SA often feels shame and guilt about engaging in acts that violate their moral and religious values, causing them to live a double life
- ❖ SA behaviors are not truly choice behaviors but often mask depression, loneliness, anxiety, stress, insecurity, boredom, shame and guilt from their compulsions
- ❖ Signs of SA include compulsive masturbation, multiple affairs, multiple one-night stands, multiple and anonymous partners, frequent viewing of pornography, phone/cybersex, exhibitionism, sexual harassment, molestation, rape
- ❖ SA feel a lack of control over their behavior and form no emotional bonds with partners
- ❖ They get little satisfaction from their activities and often feel guilt and shame
- ❖ Sex addicts do not necessarily become sex offenders and not all sex offenders are sex addicts; it is estimated that 55% of convicted sex offenders are sex addicts
- ❖ Our society has become more consumed with sex; children are constantly bombarded by the media and videogames which often portray sex as sport, conquest, exciting, fun, and without consequences, without meaning, without harm

### **WHAT TO DO!**

- ❖ If you suspect your partner is a sex addict, make sure you practice SAFE SEX
- ❖ SA treatment focuses on controlling the sex addicts behaviors and developing a context of healthy relationships with sex that is mutual and not compulsive
- ❖ Certain medications including Prozac and Anafranil can be helpful
- ❖ Psychotherapy can include recognition of the consequences of SA behaviors, eliminating depression, education about healthy sexuality, developing prosocial skills
- ❖ Sex Addicts Anonymous, Sex & Love Addicts Anonymous, Sexaholics Anonymous, and Sexual Compulsives Anonymous are 12-step recovery programs
- ❖ Seek professional help if you recognize that you or someone you care about has a sexual addiction

### **WE CAN HELP!**

Call us at **954 755-2885** or email us at **DrKimmel@aol.com**.

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