

Tips For Church Leaders



Counseling those with Sex Addiction

Assessing the severity of the problem

- » How do they define pornography?
- » When were they first exposed and how frequently have they used it since?
- » What types of pornography have they consumed: heterosexual, homosexual, child pornography etc.
- » How many times have they unsuccessfully tried to abandon or stop their behavior
- » Have they kept their behavior a secret from significant relationships (secrecy and lies are the life-blood of addiction)
- » What consequences have they had as a result of their behavior, or will likely experience if their behavior continues
- » What have they tried so far? What helps? What makes things worse?
- » Withdrawal—headaches, irritability, powerful dreams, cravings
- » How is the behavior making life unmanageable? (work, concentration, problems at home or in the marriage, self confidence, etc.)

Behaviors of the addict

- » Secrecy, hiding
- » Minimizing severity of problem
- » Think it only affects themselves
- » Dishonesty
- » Rational thinking prevents them from really understanding and articulating emotions
- » Lack of empathy and understanding for the feelings of others

Recovery does not equal sobriety

- » Recovery does equal lifestyle change.
 - ♦ Connection
 - ❏ God: Wrestle with Higher power, Humility
 - ❏ Others: Accountability, Empathy
 - ❏ Self: Heart and mind, Effort, and sacrifice



Considerations When Working with the Addiction

- » Be educated about the nature of addiction and recovery
- » Affirm their worth and goodness, provide hope that recovery is possible
- » Be respectful of the deep neurobiological power of addiction (it is not just a matter of willpower, the brain function is altered)
- » Recovery is long term, “Don’t be put to sleep”
- » Set consistent long term accountability timetables
- » Meet regularly (plan on long term involvement)
- » Slips are often part of the process, and need to be used as learning experiences
- » Length of sobriety does not equal wellness, Lifestyle is the indicator of wellness
- » Direct them toward qualified professional help/resources
- » Encourage full disclosure to significant relationships (often recommended under direction of trained professional)

Interventions and the continuum of care

- » Ecclesiastical support
- » Refer to experienced qualified professionals
 - ♦ Treatment programs
 - ♦ Individual/couples counseling
 - ♦ Group counseling
- » 12 step support groups (significant difference between 12 step support and Therapy)

Additional Resources

- » www.combatingpornography.org
- » www.love-strong.org
- » www.betrayedaddictedexpert.com
- » www.ftnd.org - Fight the New Drug
- » www.salifeline.org S.A. lifeline foundation
- » Book: He Restoreth my Soul, by Donald Hilton M.D.
- » Book: What’s the Big Deal about Pornography, by Jill Manning Ph.D.
- » Book: Confronting Pornography, by Chamberlain, Gray and Reid.
- » Book: Wild at Heart, by John Eldredge
- » Show: Heart of Man



Working with the Spouses

- » Initiate contact with her
- » Remember she is experiencing a form of trauma
- » Follow up
- » Include her in some of the addicts meetings with clergy
- » Let them feel and express their grief, feelings of betrayal, etc.
- » Validate their feelings, empathize and let them know you care before you give counsel
- » Don't blame her for the problem
- » Don't give inappropriate or harmful advice (i.e., "wear lingerie", "have sex more often", "lose some weight", etc.)
- » Be directive with the addict
- » Don't push forgiveness