** The Damages of Sex Addiction**

**M**any addicts have claimed to have thought “What’s the big deal? I was only hurting myself.” In our addiction we surround ourselves in a kind of bubble where we have a distorted view of the world around us and are unable to feel attached to it or communicate with it because the wall of the bubble cuts us off. We isolate ourselves and begin to feel that we have no real effect on the world. It’s when that bubble is popped when we realize the truth. The truth is that nothing exists in this world without affecting everything around it, whether we can see those effects or not.

The damages caused by the addict’s sexual acting out can range from simply lost time to severe emotional and psychological pain and even incarceration. Looking at pornography instead of completing important work may have added to a co-worker’s already full workload. A visit to a massage parlor may have resulted in missing a child’s ball game. Continued involvement in hiring prostitutes may have used up financial resources that you and your spouse planned to retire on. Even if you were in a situation where you were viewing free pornography over the internet during free time you had it still is affecting the person on the screen. With some editing and off-screen coercion, por­nographers can make it look like what’s happening onscreen is being enjoyed. But the un-cut version is a different story. Porn actors are constantly threatened and emotionally and verbally abused by agents and directors to force them into doing things they don’t want to do. This may not be the case for every porn film but every click of the mouse you make sends your vote that you support this and you want more of it: the exploitation and objectification of another human being.

The biggest damage however, is felt closer to home. The emotional impact of realizing that your trusted partner has cheated on you in one form or another is unimaginable to anyone who hasn’t felt it. While there are certain physical and financial concerns with infidelity, the biggest issue for many is that it involved lies. The problem with lying is that once you are discovered to be a liar then anything, EVERYTHING, you say is potentially a lie. Nothing is impossible now. Your partner may feel like they’ve been living with an imposter all this time and they don’t know what you’re capable of or what your real boundaries are. The trust has been broken. The marriage or relationship has been broken and it will never be the same. Neither of you can regain what you once had. The only hope is to be able to build something better and stronger in your new relationship if you choose to work through it together.

Moving forward has its own type of pain as well. The partner, whether they decide to stay with the addict or not, lives in fear. If they stay in the relationship they fear that you may relapse, or that you may cheat again, or that you may lose your job because of a slip at work. The list goes on. If they leave then they are stepping into the unknown yet again. You were good at disguising your sex addiction, who’s to say the next person isn’t just as clever or even more so. Their trust has been broken not just with the addict but with everyone that comes after. Often time couples will stay together because there are children. This can create a hostage-like feeling which can build resentments not only against the addict but also the children if not dealt with in a healthy manner. The bottom line is that sex addiction does cause damages, many times severe, not just to the addict but to everyone around them as well.

There are also several statistics that show sex addiction as a growing issue in our society. Here are just a few:

* The divorce rate in America for first marriages is between 45% - 50% and increases up to 73% for third marriages 1
* 37% of divorces are caused by infidelity by either party 2
* Approximately 40 million people in the U.S. are sexually involved with the Internet 3
* 25% (about 68 Million) of all search engine requests are pornography related 4
* 15% of online porn habitués develop sexual behavior that disrupts their lives 5
* 38% of adults believe it is 'morally acceptable' to look at pictures of nudity or explicit sexual behavior 6
* 47% of families said pornography is a problem in their home 7
* 42% of surveyed adults indicated that their partner's use of pornography made them feel insecure 8
* 41% of surveyed adults admitted they felt less attractive due to their partner's porn use 8
* 30% of surveyed adults said their partner's use of pornography made them feel more like a sexual object 8
* 20% of men and 13% of women admitted to accessing pornography at work 9
* $13.33 Billion was spent in the porn industry in 2006, U.S. porn revenue exceeds the combined revenues of ABC, CBS and NBC 10
* There are about 1.5 Billion pornographic downloads per month (peer-to-peer) (35% of total downloads) 10
* 1 in 7 youths have received sexual solicitation (that’s as many as 3 kids in your child’s school class!) 10
* There are over 100,000 websites that offer illegal child pornography. There are 116,000 daily requests for child pornography. 10

Sex addiction is a growing issue that affects more and more people every year as well as the people around the addicted person. Businesses associated with sex are growing at incredible rates because of the addictive nature of the services and/or material they provide and the damage they cause to individuals, families, all of society continues to grow as well.

*1.Divorce Statistics,* [*www.divorcestatistics.org*](http://www.divorcestatistics.org)*, 2010*

*2.Divorce in America: Who Wants Out and Why?, Austin Institute, 9 April, 2014*

*3. Exposing Porn: Science, Religion, and the New Addiction, Paul Strand. Christian Broadcasting Network, 2004
4. Internet Pornography Statistics: 2003, David C. Bissette, Psy.D. www.healthymind.com, 2004
5. Overdosing on Porn, Rebecca Hagelin. www.worldandi.com, March, 2004
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7. Morality Continues to Decay. Barna Research Group, 3 November, 2003
8. Focus on the Family Poll, 1 October, 2003
9. Marriage Related Research, Mark A. Yarhouse, Psy.D. Christian Counseling Today, 2004 Vol. 12 No. 1*

*10. Internet Pornography Statistics, Internet Filter Review, 2006*