**Sex Addiction Recovery Kit**

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| --- |
| **Early Recovery Plan** |
| **Abstain from problematic sexual behaviour**  | * Install an internet filter on electronic devices (e.g., Net Nanny, Covenant Eyes)
* Abstinence definition and plan (90 days recommended)
* Complete action plan for triggers
 |
| **Understand sex addiction**  | * Complete SDI and PTSI (assessments)
* Start *Facing the Shadow* by Patrick Carnes (workbook)
* Access online communities like yourbrainonporn or no fapsters
* Watch videos about sex addiction (see videos page of christinabell.net)
 |
| **Develop a support team**  | * Access 12-step programs like Sex Addicts Anonymous
* Tell at least one trusted friend or family member about your recovery plans
* Utilize a phone app like Rtribe.com to track progress
* Address needs of spouse
 |
| **Address risk**  | * Obtain an STI test (through your physician or by visiting the STI clinic)
* Prepare for potential emergency disclosure if partner is at risk for a SDI
* Obtain treatment for any other addiction or mental health issues
 |

**Abstinence Definition and Plan[[1]](#footnote-1)**

In order to evaluate your success, you need a clear definition of what behaviours constitute a relapse. Sexuality sobriety may change throughout recovery, but many people decide to abstain from all sexual behaviour for the first 90 days to allow their body to re-set itself. Sexual sobriety is personally defined, but it is helpful to get show this plan to people you trust to get their feedback.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| The following behaviours constitute a relapse and re-set my sobriety date:  | *
*
*
*
 |
| The following behaviours are signs that I am heading toward relapse:  | *
*
 |
| Instead of acting out, I will keep myself busy by:  | *
*
 |
| If I have a lapse, I will:  | *
*
 |
| For the first 90 days, I am committed to abstaining from all sexual activity, including masturbation and sex with a partner (Yes / No):  | *
*
*
 |

**Action Plan for Triggers**

**Trigger =** a form of stimuli that initiates a desire to engage in addictive behaviour (typically people, places, + things)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Specific Triggers**  | **How does this apply to your situation?**  | **Action plan**  |
| Noticing attractive people  | *
*
*
 | * Alert, avert, affirm
* Practice mindfulness
*
 |
| Sexual images (e.g., Ads, Victoria’s Secret catalogue) | *
*
 | * Install internet filter
* Alert, avert, affirm
*
 |
| Sex scenes in movies + TV | *
*
 | * Limit access (filters)
* Watch TV with others
*
 |
| Specific sounds and smells (e.g., perfume, clicking of heels) | *
*
 | * Remind self of negative consequences
*
 |
| Times of day Days of the week (e.g., weekends, late nights) | *
*
 | * Plan activities during these times (preferably with other people)
*
 |
| Other:  | *
 |  |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **General Triggers**  | **How does this apply to your situation?**  | **Action Plan**  |
| Travel  | *
*
 | * Bring someone
* Share a room
*
 |
| Excessive busyness  | *
*
 | * Determine a reasonable work-load and stay within limits
* Evaluate schedule weekly
 |
| Lack of self-care  | *
*
 | * Set small goals for sleep, diet, and exercise
* Track progress
 |
| Sleep troubles  | *
*
 | * Go to bed at the same time daily (including weekends)
* Avoid electronics 1-2 hours before bed
 |
| Internet / websites  | *
*
 | * Install internet blocker
* Put phone/computer away from bed
* Delete accounts
 |
| Contact with acting-out partners  | *
 | * Block and delete numbers
* Change phone number
* Do not respond to texts
 |
| Conflict with a loved-one  | *
*
 | * Learn new communication techniques
* Pursue family counselling
 |
| Driving past acting out locations  | *
*
 | * Take a different route
*
 |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Emotional Triggers**  | **How does this apply to your situation?**  | **Action Plan**  |
| Boredom | *
 | * Plan out your schedule the night before
* Avoiding more than 1 hour of unstructured downtime
*
 |
| Irritability or excessive negativity  | *
*
 | * Discover your triggers and address them
* Pursue 7-9 hours of sleep
*
 |
| Loneliness / isolation  | *
*
 | * Reach out to one person per day
* Schedule one social outing per week
 |
| Anxiety or rumination  | *
*
 | * Learn the 4 Steps (Jeffrey Schwartz)
* Practice meditation or yoga
*
 |
| Excitement / celebration  | *
 | * Plan healthy rewards
*

  |
| Rejection or disappointment  | *
*
 | * Debrief with a trusted friend
*
 |
| Anger | *
*
 | * Discover emotional regulation strategies
* Deep breathing
*
 |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Thought Triggers**  | **How does this apply to your situation?**  | **Action Plan**  |
| Permission giving (e.g., I’ll just look for 20 minutes today) | *
*
 | * Remember negative consequences
*
 |
| Comparison (e.g., At least I’m not doing \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_) | *
*
 | * Focus on your reasons for change
*
 |
| Blaming (e.g., I wouldn’t have to look at porn if my wife wasn’t so cold) | *
*
*
 | * Learn about the drama triangle
*
 |
| Denial (e.g., no one was hurt; sex addiction is a joke) | *
*
 | * Attend 12-step meetings
*
 |
| Rationalization (e.g., men are just horny; sex is natural) | *
*
 | * Learn about sex addiction signs
*
 |
| Entitlement (e.g., I work so hard and I deserve this) | *
*
 | * Learn about erotisized rage
*
 |

**Action Plan**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Top Triggers**  | **Specific Plan[[2]](#footnote-2)** | **Results**  |
| **1.**  |  |  |
| **2.**  |  |  |
| **3.**  |  |  |

**Coping With Cravings**

**Craving =** a powerful desire for something. Cravings typically last between 7-15 minutes. Often accompanied by a physical urge, cravings involve the production of dopamine in anticipation of a reward.

**What works?**

* Healthy distraction
* Reminding yourself of negative consequences of the behaviour (e.g., playing the tape to the end)
* Reminding yourself of benefits of quitting (a reminder can be helpful)
* Practicing mindfulness – becoming a curious observer to your experience with non-judgment
* 3As: Alert (3 second rule), Avert (distraction), Affirm (positive self-statement)
* Calling a friend or sponsor
* Exercise
* Prayer
* Procrastination of the unhealthy behaviour
* Substituting with a healthy behaviour (e.g., drinking tea)
* Remind yourself of the temporary nature of cravings – this will pass!
* Writing in a journal

**Jeffrey Schwartz’s Four Steps** (for obsessive thinking + cravings)

**1. Re-label:** Notice when you have cravings and say, “I don’t need to look at pornography right now; I’m only having an obsessive thought.”

**2. Re-attribute:** Understand the craving is a false error message and say, “this is my brain sending me a false error message” or “hello brain, you may still be active, but so am I.”

**3. Re-focus:** Engage in healthy distraction by participating in a 15-minute activity you enjoy.

**4. Re-value:** ask yourself: what has this addictive urge really done for me? How has it made parts of my life worse?

**Remember:** it takes time to create new pathways in the brain and extinguish the old patterned responses. Keep practicing and learn from your experience.

**Setback Analysis + Plan**

1. What exactly happened?

2. What factors do you think triggered it?

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Lifestyle  | Emotions  | Thoughts  | Situation  |
|  |  |  |  |

3. Who needs to know? How do you plan to tell them?

4. Future planning

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| What is working:  |  |
| What would you do differently next time?  |  |
| Action items:  |  |

**Additional Resources**

**Websites**

* [Gary Wilson’s website](http://www.yourbrainonporn.com) (research articles and an online community)
* [The Truth About Porn](http://truthaboutporn.org/study/) (research)
* [Staci Spout](http://www.stacisprout.com/new-blog/2017/7/28/recovering-minds-want-to-know-best-blogs-and-more-for-sex-addiction-recovery) wrote an article rating sex addiction recovery blogs
* [NoFap](https://www.reddit.com/r/NoFap/) (online community for those quitting pornography and compulsive masturbation)
* <Rebootnation.org> (online community for those quitting porn)
* [Covenant eyes](http://www.covenanteyes.com/e-books/) (internet filter and access to free ebooks)
* [Carol the coach (podcasts)](http://www.sexhelpwithcarolthecoach.com/podcasts.html)
* [Linda Hatch’s Blog](https://blogs.psychcentral.com/sex-addiction/) on Psych central
* <Fightthenewdrug.org> (website to promote awareness and support)
* [Thanks for Sharing](https://thanksforsharing.podbean.com) podcast by Jonathan Taylor and Jackie Pack
* [The Addict, The Betrayed, and the Expert](https://itunes.apple.com/us/podcast/the-betrayed-the-addicted-the-expert/id1208799616?mt=2) podcast
* [Free interactive weekly seminars](https://sexandrelationshiphealing.com/your-own-sexual-behavior/weekly-webinars/)

**Videos**

* Visit my [video page](http://www.christinabell.net/videos/) for videos on sex addiction
* [The Courage to Love Documentary](http://www.thecouragetolove.com)

**Apps**

* [rTribe](https://www.rtribe.org)
* [End Sex Addiction and Porn Addiction](http://www.themindfulhabit.com)
* [Quit That! App for tracking sober days](https://itunes.apple.com/ca/app/quit-that-habit-tracker/id909400800?mt=8)

**Internet Blockers**

* [Rob Weiss](https://iloverecovery.com/what-are-the-best-protective-software-programs-for-recovering-sex-porn-and-love-addicts-robert-weiss-lcsw-csat-s/) has written an article about his top picks in Sept 2017
* Netsanity
* Mobicip
* Net Nanny
* Xxxchurch
* Covenant Eyes
* Ever Accountable (better for phones)

**Limiting Access to Phone / Electronics**

* [Time locking container](https://www.amazon.ca/gp/product/B00E9J3MLM/ref%3Doh_aui_detailpage_o00_s00?ie=UTF8&psc=1)

**Books (some are available in an ereader or audio format)**

* Facing the Shadow – Patrick Carnes
* Sex Addiction 101 – Robert Weiss
* The Porn Trap – Wendy Maltz
* Your Brain on Porn – Gary Wilson
* Out of the Shadows – Patrick Carnes
* TINSA: A Neurobiological Approach to the Treatment of Sex Addiction – Michael Barta
* Treating Pornography Addiction – Kevin Skinner
* The Storm of Sex Addiction - Connie A. Lofgreen
* For Love and Money – Debra L. Kaplan
* Sex Addiction – Catherine Elliott
* Lust, Anger, and Love - Maureen Canning
* Don’t call it Love – Patrick Carnes
* Shadows of the Cross (Christian) – Craig Cashwell + Penny Johnson
* Breaking the cycle – George Collins & Andrew Adleman
* When he’s Married to Mom – Kenneth Adams
* Ready to Heal (Women) – Kelly McDaniel
* Relationships in Recovery – Linda Hatch
* Sexual Anorexia – Patrick Carnes
* Naked in public (Women) – Staci Sprout
* No stones – Marnie C. Feree (Women)
1. This plan is inspired by the 3 circles plan from [Sex Addicts Anonymous](https://saa-recovery.org/SAALiterature/English/ThreeCircles/) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. What exactly do you plan to do when you encounter this trigger? [↑](#footnote-ref-2)