Free Again: A Sexual Addiction Therapy Group

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Description

_Free Again_ is a therapy group designed for men who struggle with a variety of problematic sexual behaviors such as:

- compulsive masturbation
- pornography (internet, videos, magazines, etc.)
- heterosexual or homosexual promiscuity
- exploitation of prostitutes
- extramarital relationships
- professional sexual misconduct

Men who have engaged in sexual offense behaviors such as voyeurism, exhibitionism, and child molestation may be accepted under certain circumstances. The theoretical approach of this group is informed by the cognitive-behavioral, psycho-educational and the relapse prevention treatment literature. Leadership of the group is conducted from a Christian worldview, but a participant from other faith perspectives is welcome.

Men that are not likely to be accepted into group include those who: 1) are not motivated to take responsibility for their behavior; 2) will not communicate in a truthful manner; or 3) are violent and/or current SOSA sex offenders.

About Group Therapy

Group therapy is an important and firmly established part of the treatment of compulsive sexual behavior. There is one good reason for it--it works! Group therapy involves meeting regularly with others who have similar problems and working on common issues. A group is an excellent place to work on problems because it gives one a chance to receive feedback, be
confronted, learn useful information, and watch others effectively or ineffectively deal with their problems. It is also a time to learn to relate deeply and personally with peers and therapists.

A group for individuals with compulsive/addictive sexual behavior provides the accumulated expertise on sexual deviancy that is advantageous for seeing through and dealing with minimization, denial, and other cognitive distortions that are characteristic of this problem. Group members of longer standing model successful management and control of sexual compulsiveness for newer members.

In addition to learning to control behavior, there is an emphasis on identifying and resolving issues that maintain or “drive” the sexual behavior. Much of sexual misconduct in its various forms is understood to be an attempt to meet non-sexual needs sexually.

**Goals For Free Again**

- Increase acceptance of individual responsibility for behavior. Distorted thinking in the form of denial, minimization, and projection are challenged.

- Develop an understanding of the sequence of thoughts, feelings, events, circumstances, and arousal stimuli that make up the idiosyncratic cycle of compulsive sexual behavior. A variety of tools may then be applied to break the cycle and gain control over the behavior.

- Become aware of, develop and use both internal and external controls for prevention of compulsive behavior (i.e. relapse prevention).

- Provide accountability in maintaining therapeutic and life goals. Gain empathy for those affected by one’s behavior and life patterns.

- Participate in a re-education and re-socialization process (social skills training) in order to 1) replace antisocial thoughts and behaviors with prosocial ones; 2) acquire a positive self-concept and new attitudes and expectations for himself; and 3) learn new social and sexual skills to help cultivate positive, satisfying, pleasurable and non-threatening relationships with others.

- Learn to differentiate Christian faith from religiosity in the service of sexual deviancy. Faith and spirituality are understood to be a valuable part of recovery and wholistic life.
**Structure of the Group**

Part of each group will be used to process current issues occurring with each group member. Time will also be made to introduce and discuss new content areas such as shame, boundaries, masculinity, accountability, anger, assertiveness, sexuality, spirituality, spousal relationships, etc. Use of videos, books, and other materials will be made whenever possible.

**Group Graduation Criteria**

The general criteria for successful progress toward "graduation" from group therapy include the following:

1. Member has not had an outlet (acting out behavior) for a significant, specified period of time.

2. Member has followed group rules.

3. Member has taken full responsibility for sexual behavior and is fully accountable to the group and other supervisors and identified individuals (as applicable).

4. Member has completed all homework and tasks to an acceptable standard.

5. Member has completed a sexual autobiography (SAB) and presented it to the group for approval.

6. Member has discontinued distorted thinking, and replaced it with healthy thinking.

7. Member has demonstrated an ability to interrupt and control inappropriate and/or deviant fantasies.

8. Has identified idiosyncratic pattern of sexually inappropriate/deviant behavior.

9. Member has demonstrated appropriate communication and social skills.

10. Member has demonstrated empathy for his victim(s) or other offended parties and no longer objectifies women or children.

11. Member has established and consistently demonstrates a pattern of living that is fulfilling, healthy, and above reproach.

12. Has fully supported the healing process of victim, spouse and/or other family members.

13. His spouse is sufficiently and/or fully informed of sexual history, patterns of thinking and behavior, and of relapse risk.
14. Member has made appropriate use of 1:1 and couple counseling.

15. Member has developed a support network of at least two non-family people.

16. Member has developed and met group approval of a written relapse prevention plan. Member’s spouse has approved of or supports graduation from group.