



Defining Co-Sex Addiction Sexual Codependency

Identifying the Problem

The word COSA is not an abbreviation and our members identify themselves in many different ways. Some choose "co-sex addict," "codependent to sexual addiction" or "sexual codependent." For others, "sex-addiction family member" or simply "co-addict" fits best.

One of the most difficult aspects of what we call co-sex addiction or sexual codependency, is grasping and **facing the truth** of our own condition. Another is **admitting our powerlessness** over the addict. The **continual attempt to affect or control the sex addict** renders our lives unmanageable.

Behaviors that are familiar to the co-addict/codependent are recognizable, and detrimental to both the addict and the co-addict/codependent themselves. This does not mean that we caused the addiction.

Denial and delusional thinking of the co-addict/codependent increases by making half-hearted efforts to stop the sex abuse, believing promises—"it won't happen again," or by ignoring others' reports of the sex addict acting out. Ways in which the co-addict/codependent **enables** the addict and progresses in her or his own illness are through **lying about, explaining away, or covering up** the sex addict's behavior.

Some clues in recognizing one's co-addiction/codependency might be the **obsession**, or **constant thinking** about the sex addict, **constantly looking for clues** to the sex addict acting out, checking on amounts of money spent by the sex addict, checking on where the sex addict has been and for how long, or checking in private journals or with friends of the sex addict for clues.

Because of the difficulty in admitting our powerlessness over the sex addict, continued attempts to influence the sex addict to quit the acting out escalate. The **duration and frequency** of these attempts to change or control the sex addict **increases** the unmanageability in our lives. This is known as **progression**.

Our **self-esteem** as sexual co-addicts/codependents continually becomes worse. We believe, if we just looked different, or were more intelligent or attractive, we could change the sex addict. **We do things to ourselves and others that are abusive and degrading**.

Through our co-addiction/codependency we experience **loss of memory, insane behaviors or destructive acts** against ourselves or others near us. At times, **accidents or other dangerous situations** produced by our **preoccupation** with the sex addict occur.

We get caught up in a **merry-go-round of our own emotions**, swinging from hope to fear, from grief to self-pity, from anger to guilt, and back to hope again, in cycles that progress, until we find ourselves numb as we enter the late stages.

Our own **sense of boundaries, morals or ethics erodes or rigidifies** as our co-addiction/codependency advances in its own debilitating stages.

Finally, in the progression of our own illness of co-addiction/codependency our spiritual being, **the essence of who we are, is lost**.

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