OVERCOMING COMPULSIVE SEXUAL BEHAVIOR

WEEK 1: HOW DID I GET HERE?

“Understanding is the first step to acceptance, and only with acceptance can there be recovery.”

J.K. ROWLING

OBJECTIVE

To give you confidence, this program isn’t guess work! Everything you’ll learn over the next 12 weeks is based off of 15 years of working with thousands of individuals from all over the world. We know what successful people do and we are excited to share it with you!

Our goal in this week is that you leave with a greater awareness of where you stand today. With an awareness, you can begin working on the symptoms and issues holding you back.

OOCW

COMPLETE:

- Recovery Capital Checklist
- Kick Start Checklist
- Understanding Where You Are
- Journal Prompt
RECOVERY CAPITAL CHECKLIST

OBJECTIVE
To overcome unwanted behaviors we can’t focus solely on symptom reduction. Recovery is more than just abstinence from acting out; it is about building a full and productive life.

The goal of this sheet is to create awareness around the development of important areas in your life. Areas that when improved, will lead to recovery.

INSTRUCTIONS
Each week, fill out this sheet to check on your own development. Be prepared to talk about your feelings in individual/group therapy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RECOVERY CAPITAL</th>
<th>SCORE FROM 0-10 (10 = HIGH)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12 Step Groups</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sponsor/Accountability Partner</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual Connection</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Regulation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Compassion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthy Living</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

© 2017, Addo Recovery, LLC
KICK START CHECKLIST

OVERVIEW
The goal of this assignment is to help you begin to develop basic habits that are foundational for long-term recovery. As you begin to implement these habits into your daily routine it will allow you to develop greater emotional and physical health. In turn this will increase awareness and energy to fend off cravings. Lastly, in this assignment we will ask you to begin developing a support network. Social support is one of the secrets to recovery.

INSTRUCTIONS
Set goals to accomplish the following tasks. Remember, 98% of habits can be formed in 66 days.

CHECKLIST
- **Walk 10,000 steps everyday (or another exercise equivalent).**
- **Write in your journal for 10 minutes.** Don’t judge your writing, just write. If it’s easier, write and then throw it away immediately after. The point is to write and get those inner feelings out. We want you to free your mind.
- **Give an act of service every week.** This can be as small as doing the dishes or as large as building a fence. The point is to get outside yourself and serve others. You are valuable to others.
- **Share what you are going through with someone you trust.** However, be careful with who you choose.
- **Be sober today!** You can do it! You are of great worth and value.
UNDERSTANDING WHERE YOU ARE

OVERVIEW

Many individuals who seek treatment for pornography, masturbation, or other sexually compulsive behaviors often have a long history of involvement in these behaviors. The purpose of this assignment is to increase your awareness and insight into your history and how it has become such a part of your life. A thorough self-evaluation of the twelve questions below will help you better understand yourself and how you arrived where you are today. This information can help you, your therapist, and others identify the extent of your challenge and the next steps to take in your recovery journey.

*Please consider each question and record your responses.*

How old were you when you were first exposed to pornography or acted out? What type of pornography did you see (e.g. magazines, Internet pictures, pornographic videos, etc.)?

How did you feel when you first viewed pornography or acted out? (e.g. afraid, curious, dirty, scared, excited to see more?)
What is the frequency with which you have acted out in your life? What was the frequency during your teen years? Your late teens, early twenties? How about now?

What is the longest you have gone without acted out since you first started?
How many times would you estimate you have acted out in your life?

In what ways did acting out influence your teen years? (For example, did it influence how you interacted with your parent’s and other family members?)
Did anyone know of your involvement? If so, who and how did they respond?

Did acting out influence how you approached social situations? If yes, how so?
Does acting out influence your mood (e.g. sad, irritable, guilt, etc.)? If yes, how so?

Has acting out influenced your relationships (e.g. dating, friendships, marriage)? If yes, how?
In what area of your life has acting out had the most influence? Please explain.

How acting out influencing your life now?
Which of your answers surprised you the most and why?
JOURNAL PROMPT

What is the most important thing I need to do to get started in my recovery process. What is the hardest thing I have been through in my life and how did this event/experience alter me and my life?
OVERCOMING COMPULSIVE SEXUAL BEHAVIOR

WEEK 2: REWRITING YOUR BELIEFS

“Live your beliefs and you can turn the world around.”

HENRY DAVID THOREAU

OBJECTIVE

Our beliefs can keep us trapped. Our beliefs can lead us in forming habits that can be unhealthy or against what we truly want. In this week we help you identify and rewrite your beliefs.

Our goal is that you leave with a strong plan of how to identify negative beliefs and rewrite them into positive beliefs.

OOCW

WATCH:

› Beliefs Can Keep You Trapped bit.ly/ADDOAD
› Identifying Unhealthy Beliefs bit.ly/ADDOAD
› How to Rewrite Your Beliefs bit.ly/ADDOAD

COMPLETE:

› Recovery Capital Checklist
› High Self Worth People
› Reviewing Your Story
› Journal Prompts (1-3)
RECOVERY CAPITAL CHECKLIST

OBJECTIVE
To overcome unwanted behaviors we can’t focus solely on symptom reduction. Recovery is more than just abstinence from acting out; it is about building a full and productive life.

The goal of this sheet is to create awareness around the development of important areas in your life. Areas that when improved, will lead to recovery.

INSTRUCTIONS
Each week, fill out this sheet to check on your own development. Be prepared to talk about your feelings in individual/group therapy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RECOVERY CAPITAL</th>
<th>SCORE FROM 0-10 (10 = HIGH)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12 Step Groups</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sponsor/Accountability Partner</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual Connection</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Regulation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Compassion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthy Living</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
HIGH SELF WORTH PEOPLE

OVERVIEW

In recovery, understanding and learning from other’s success can greatly help you in your journey. Because addiction is a self-worth battle, learning from those with high self-worth can provide you with a road map towards higher self-worth.

INSTRUCTIONS

To complete this assignment, write for 10 minutes about people with high self-worth. Write about what you believe they think, feel, do, and believe.
REVIEWING YOUR STORY

OVERVIEW
Understanding the key events that have influenced your life is an important step to better understanding self. As you understand key events you will begin to regain your self-worth by separating yourself from your addiction. This is an important step towards developing belief in your ability to recover.

INSTRUCTIONS
Review your life by answering the upcoming questions. We want to help you gain awareness of specific life experiences that have had the most impact on your self-worth.

What have been the best experiences of your life?
What have been the hardest experiences of your life?

What have been the most painful experiences of your life?
Describe the relationship you have had with your parents. Were you close or distant? Were they rigid or loose? Were they comforting to you?

Describe the history of feelings you have had for your mother & father.
Describe how your parents responded to your acting out.

Describe your interactions with your peers before and after acting out.
Describe any other relationships that have had impact on your life.
JOURNAL PROMPT #1

How have my sexual acts altered my perception about how I see myself and others?
JOURNAL PROMPT #2

What are the best things about me?

Remember to write for 10 minutes. I would suggest for this question to write for 7 minutes on what is the best thing about you and finish writing for the last three minutes about whether you believe in your goodness and the things you have written about yourself that are good.
JOURNAL PROMPT #3
What are the most important things you have learned about yourself week as you have been journaling?
OVERCOMING COMPULSIVE SEXUAL BEHAVIOR

WEEK THREE: LETTING GO OF YOUR SHAME

Many of us have a dark corner where a secret lurks, a secret that has power over us, that we will do anything to avoid looking at squarely. It has far more power, we rationalize, than we could ever contend with. Why fight the unfightable?

So we give in.

OBJECTIVE

To give you confidence, this program isn’t guess work! Everything you’ll learn over the next 12 weeks is based off of 15 years of working with thousands of individuals from all over the world. We know what successful people do and we are excited to share it with you!

Our goal in this week is that you leave with a greater awareness of where you stand today. With an awareness, you can begin working on the symptoms and issues holding you back.

OOCW

COMPLETE:

- Recovery Capital Checklist
- Key Life Events Inventory

READ:

- Letting Go of Your Shame
RECOVERY CAPITAL CHECKLIST

OBJECTIVE
To overcome unwanted behaviors we can’t focus solely on symptom reduction. Recovery is more than just abstinence from acting out; it is about building a full and productive life.

The goal of this sheet is to create awareness around the development of important areas in your life. Areas that when improved, will lead to recovery.

INSTRUCTIONS
Each week, fill out this sheet to check on your own development. Be prepared to talk about your feelings in individual/group therapy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RECOVERY CAPITAL</th>
<th>SCORE FROM 0-10 (10 = HIGH)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12 Step Groups</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sponsor/Accountability Partner</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual Connection</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Regulation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Compassion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthy Living</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LETTING GO OF YOUR SHAME

“I just can’t get over what I’ve done. I’ve told myself over and over again that I will stop this habit, but I always revert back to my old behaviors. There is no way I am ever going to get over this.” This is one of the most common statements I hear from my clients after they have relapsed. Usually, these words are accompanied by hopelessness and low confidence. I have observed that many of my clients carry an inordinate amount of shame, a feeling that is constantly with them whether they have been clean for a few days, a few months, or even a few years. One of the most damaging elements of sexual compulsivity is high levels of shame, which harms one’s sense of self and seldom resolves itself through sobriety alone.

Let me explain why.

In many cases, individuals trapped in their acting out behaviors have lived with secrets for a long time. Consider the case of Tommy. He was first exposed to sexual behaviors by an older neighborhood girl. He was just seven years old when she introduced him to various sexual acts. She also told him that he shouldn’t tell anybody or they would both get in trouble, especially him. He was so confused by what he was feeling. He felt bad and guilty, but he also liked the physical feeling he experienced. After that incident, Tommy began masturbating to the fantasy of the memory.

When Tommy was nine years old, his mom walked in on him masturbating. It was the look of disgust on her face that he remembered. “I honestly felt like I was the scum of the earth,” he recounted to me. Even before his mom caught him, he felt like his behaviors were wrong, but his mother’s look and subsequent statement, “You need to talk with your dad,” led him to feel like he had done something seriously wrong. He reported that when his father asked him what he was doing, Tommy had no idea what to say. He didn’t even know what the term masturbation meant. His dad said, “Your mom told me what you were doing; just try not to do it again.” That was the last conversation he had with his dad about anything sexual.

Over the next few years, Tommy continued masturbating, ensuring privacy so as not to be caught again. At age 11, he looked at pornography for the first time. He had heard some boys talking about it at school and began exploring on the Internet. Soon he was looking at pornography every chance he had. He found himself so strongly drawn to it that he would tell his parents he was
going to sleep, wait for them to go to bed, and then excitedly get up to view pornography in the middle of the night.

Nobody would have guessed that Tommy was developing a sexual addiction. In all other areas of his life, he seemed to be doing well. He had friends at school and was getting good grades. He also seemed to be getting along well with his family. Yet, in the back of his mind, he knew something was wrong. He couldn't talk to anyone about his pornography use; it would be too embarrassing. He kept telling himself over and over again that he was going to stop, but his commitment to himself only lasted for a few days before he was back viewing it again.

By the time he was a sophomore in high school, Tommy knew he had a serious problem, but he had nowhere to turn. He began to show signs of depression, but his parents chalked it up to pressure from school and sports. He started spending more time alone in his room when he was home and his busy parents didn't notice. It was during this period that his behaviors shifted from pornography and masturbation to other sexual behaviors. About half-way through his sophomore year, he became interested in a girl from school. They began dating and, within a few short weeks, started a sexual relationship that was very exciting to Tommy. His parents noticed that he was happier since entering the relationship, but they were concerned about how much time he was spending with his girlfriend. He reassured them that things were okay, but still he held the feeling deep in the back of his mind that something wasn't quite right; he knew his parents would be upset if they discovered what he was doing.

Tommy found it surprising that, even though he was being sexual with his girlfriend, he was still looking at pornography and masturbating on the days they weren't sexual together. He couldn't seem to string together more than a day or two without some form of sexual stimulation. His sexual desires had escalated to the point that he felt that he had to have something sexual almost every day. He was afraid to tell anyone. He was hiding his behaviors from his girlfriend and his parents: his family had no idea he was having sex and viewing pornography, and his girlfriend had no idea about his involvement in pornography. He was living a double life.

He often thought to himself, “If anybody really knew what I was doing, they would think I was disgusting.” He had internalized this shame and felt out of control. Soon he found himself arguing with his girlfriend, usually about the fact that she wanted to spend more time with her friends than
with him. She began pulling away, wanting to attend school activities and participate socially in ways that didn’t include Tommy. This is when Tommy developed another problematic self-belief: “I am not good enough for others. Even those who are close to me don’t want to spend time with me.”

At this point, Tommy’s shame was beginning to influence multiple areas of his life. It was guiding the way he thought about others, the way he felt about himself, and his day-to-day choices. Eventually, his girlfriend broke up with him, saying he was too needy. He got upset and accused her of only caring about herself. Some of their mutual friends from school got word of their fighting and turned on him. He began feeling like he didn’t fit in and that he wasn’t liked. He turned further inward and felt ashamed of his own behaviors.

Tommy had developed many negative self-beliefs that triggered intense depression. He didn’t know who to turn to so he began isolating himself from others. He escaped into pornography and masturbation. It was a dark time in his life. Eventually, he did find some support from friends on the school football team. These were the friendships that sustained him through high school, but his use of pornography remained a regular habit. When I asked him about the extent of his involvement with pornography, he estimated that by the time he was 18, that he had viewed pornography more than 750 times.

What is the aftermath of Tommy’s experience? And how can he start the healing process? Let’s take a look.

A Long History of Shame

Most people like Tommy go to college, get a job, and get involved in a committed relationship. They appear to be functioning well from the outside, checking several important boxes. Yet, inside they are filled with shame-based thoughts (e.g. Others wouldn’t like me if they knew the truth; I’m not as good as everyone else; I’m unlovable). These toxic thoughts then influence their emotions (depression, anxiety, loneliness) and behaviors (anger, irritability, defensiveness). In my experience, despite appearances, sexual secrets almost always lead to toxic shame.
Ancient literature reveals the insidious nature of shame. In the book of Genesis, the story of Adam and Eve teaches us about shame and covering up our mistakes. We read, “And they (Adam and Eve) were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.” (1) However, after partaking of the forbidden fruit that God had told them not to eat, “… the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons. And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden.” (2)

This example outlines the pattern that has been followed for generations: when we have nothing to hide, we are not ashamed. We know who we are and operate from a strong sense of self. Simply said, we have “no thing” to hide. On the other hand, much like Adam and Eve, when we have secrets, it is natural to want to cover our mistakes and hide; today’s version of hiding is isolation. In our efforts to cover up our unwanted thoughts, emotions, and behaviors, we suffer alone. We usually pull back from others because we do not want to be seen.

In contrast, one of our deepest natural desires is to find and experience human intimacy. In order to achieve the most intimate relationships possible, we have to be seen. We have to be willing to be fully vulnerable – naked – in front of others and let ourselves be observed. When we are truly open and emotionally naked, we are inviting another to look into us and see who we really are. This is an invitation for others to look in-to-me-(and)see: intimacy. If our most natural and best desire is to find and create human intimacy, one of the most destructive forces is shame, as it causes us to isolate and hide ourselves from others.

In his book Power vs. Force: The Hidden Determinants of Human Behavior, David R. Hawkins suggests that of all our energy fields, shame is the lowest level: “All (energy) levels below 200 are destructive of life in both the individual and society at large; in contrast, all levels above 200 are constructive expressions of power. The decisive level of 200 is the fulcrum that divides the general areas of force (or falsehood) from power (or truth):” (Loc 976 of 4441) Shame, measured at 20, is the lowest emotion in terms of energy level. Other common negative emotions and their energy levels are as follows: guilt (30), apathy (50), grief (75), fear (100), anger (150), and pride (175). The energy levels of constructive emotions are: courage (200), neutrality (250), willingness (310), acceptance (350), reason (400), love (500), joy (540), peace (600), and enlightenment (700-1000).
These measurable energy levels make it clear that shame is the most destructive of all emotions we can experience. For this reason, I find it very interesting that shame is the first identified emotion of Adam and Eve. If indeed we have an Enemy, it would only make sense that shame—which creates the lowest expression of energy—would be one of the first emotions in recorded history. In our battle for healthy living and healing, shame is one of the biggest detriments to our well-being. Thus, it is imperative that shame-based thinking be resolved as part of a healing journey.

The Development of a Shame-Based Identity

The process of healing shame may feel overwhelming to you because you have likely felt it for so many years. In fact, shame may be so common to you that you do not even realize you are experiencing it. In his book Breaking the Habit of Being Yourself, Dr. Joe Dispenza describes how we can become addicted to our own emotions: “The body becomes addicted to guilt or any emotion in the same way that it would get addicted to drugs. Every time you think a guilty thought, you’ve signaled your body to produce the specific chemicals that make up the feeling of guilt. You’ve done this so often that your cells are swimming in a sea of guilt chemicals.” (2) If left unchecked as we mature, the emotions associated with guilt become automatic. In other words, we have memorized the feelings of guilt without thinking about them.

About 95% of who we are by midlife is made of a series of subconscious programs that have become automatic: driving a car, brushing our teeth, overeating when we’re stressed, worrying about our future, judging our friends, complaining about our lives, blaming our parents, not believing in ourselves, and insisting on chronic unhappiness, just to name a few. (3,4) If indeed 95% of our thoughts, emotions, and behaviors are automatic, learning to turn off the patterns and create new ones is essential to creating change and healing.

Let’s review Tommy’s case to how his shame developed as well as the steps he began taking to move toward healing.

One of the most powerful ways to help heal shame is to understand how it developed in the first place. A quick review of Tommy’s case provides valuable insight into how his shame grew over
time. In our work together, we outlined certain key events that triggered his shame. In working with clients like Tommy, I have them complete a Key Life Event Inventory. As they work through the inventory, we begin to understand how their shame-based thinking developed.

In Tommy’s case, he initially identified the look his mother gave him (when she caught him masturbating) as the origin of his shame. However, after further review, he was able to identify shame from his sexual experiences when he was seven. He reported that for many years, he thought about the experience he had with the older neighborhood girl at age seven as common child play. However, as he explored how the experience changed him, he realized that it had triggered a cascade of sexual feelings and experiences in a way he had never considered. What seemed to him to be child’s play had altered him sexually. For example, he reported that soon after their first sexual exploring, he had started touching himself more often. He was masturbating. The more he considered it, he realized that he had begun thinking more about sexual behaviors. He had a growing interest in finding someone else with whom he could be sexual. When he discovered how easy pornography was to access through the Internet, his life again changed. He had gone from masturbating to fantasy thoughts to exploring sexual acts online. The more he reviewed his sexual history, the more insight he had into how his shame developed. Together we looked at these key sexual experiences and the shame-based thoughts that came from those events, as seen below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age: Experience</th>
<th>Outcome (Focus on specific thoughts, emotions, beliefs, and subsequent behaviors associated with your experience.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age seven:</td>
<td>Initially I was excited and liked playing doctor. However, she told me that I shouldn’t tell anyone. I felt it was wrong, but I didn’t dare talk about it. I now see how that initiated the process of me avoiding being close to my parents. I thought they would be mad at me.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Played doctor with neighborhood girl. Sexually acted out with her multiple times over a few months. It ended when she moved.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age nine:</th>
<th>The look of disgust she gave me changed me a lot. I knew I was disgusting to my mom. That day I formed a belief that I was a disgusting person, someone that others wouldn’t like.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mom caught me masturbating.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 11:</td>
<td>I was really drawn to the pornography. From the first time I saw it, I got such a high. I knew I had to hide it from my parents and others. I began seeking it out as much as I could. Pornography changed what I thought about and felt. I no longer was just fantasizing, I was looking at real people doing sexual things. I couldn’t stop myself. I lost control over myself and didn’t know what to do. I distanced myself from my parents even more. Sure we went through the motions of being a family, but they had no idea what was happening to me. I felt like I was a bad person.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I viewed pornography for the first time.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 16:</td>
<td>By the time I was 16, I had already viewed pornography and masturbated hundreds of times. When I met my girlfriend, I had already fantasized hundreds of times about actually being sexual with someone. Now, being able to have the real thing, I thought I was in heaven. I couldn’t get enough of what we were doing together. I always wanted it more than she did. Eventually, I was pushing her for more and more and she began pulling away. When she broke up with me, that was the worst time of my life. I felt like nobody would ever love me. I also felt ashamed of myself because all I could think about was sex. If she didn’t want to I would view pornography and blame her in my mind. I began hating the way I was. I felt like if others knew what I was really like, they would think I was disgusting. Nobody really knew me. It was a good thing because if they did they too would think I was bad.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Began doing sexual things with my girlfriend.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 16 to current:</td>
<td>After my girlfriend broke up with me, I didn’t date much. I was viewing porn and masturbating daily. Some days when I was alone, I would view porn multiple times throughout the day and then after my parents came home and went to bed I would look again.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viewing pornography and masturbating.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In Tommy’s Key Events Timeline, I have italicized key phrases that exemplify what I look for as a therapist: emotionally salient language that helps me understand the level of shame Tommy experienced. With clients, I look at shame-based thoughts as points of intervention. Since Tommy had been feeling and thinking these thoughts for so long, he was used to them and didn’t anticipate or realize the profound impact that they were having on him. One of the goals of therapy is to not only bring these shame-based thoughts to Tommy’s attention, but to also help him interrupt these patterns so he can begin establishing new ones.

We began by writing down the thoughts from the chart above that indicate shame. Each of the statements below include examples of what is referred to as the language of shame:

- Mad at me.
- I was disgusting.
- I couldn’t stop myself.
- I was a bad person.
- Nobody would ever love me.
- Ashamed of myself.

---

**Age 18-19:**

After leaving home for college, I met a girl that changed me. She had strong values and was super cool. I didn’t want to push things with her because I knew it would ruin our relationship. She made me want to be better. I never felt like I was good enough for her. For the first time in my life I wanted to be better. I tried my best to stop viewing pornography and masturbating, but still gave in at times. When I did act out, I found myself pulling away because I knew it would upset her. Although I never felt good enough for her, I wanted to be a better person because of her. When I couldn’t stop viewing pornography, I was afraid it would end our relationship. I knew that if she knew about my past she would end the relationship. Eventually, I think my negative self-talk and behaviors ended our relationship. She broke up with me because she felt like something wasn’t quite right with our relationship. I knew it was coming because I didn’t believe I was good enough for her. I had sabotaged the relationship because I wasn’t good enough for her. Even though I had sworn off pornography and other sexual behaviors because I was tired of how it was ruining my life, I wasn’t able to stop.
• If others knew what I was really like, they would think I was disgusting.
• Never felt like I was good enough for her.

By identifying the language of his shame, Tommy was able to see how frequently he was using the phrases listed above in his day-to-day thinking and start to understand how these thoughts influenced how he felt. While it took time, he began seeing how frequently he was putting himself down. His negative self-thoughts had become so automatic that he hadn’t realized that they were constantly playing in the background of his mind.

I told him that while awareness of the language of his shame could be helpful to him, they wouldn’t stop on their own. In order to change thoughts, it is also helpful to alter the interpretations of the images linked to his shame as well. In order to do so, we began identifying the images associated with his shame. Often these images are experiences that have a visual representation that is associated with the shame.

**The Images of Shame**

As we further explored his beliefs of “I am disgusting,” and, “Nobody would ever love me,” I asked Tommy to think of specific memories or experiences that stood out to him that represented these statements. The first memory that came to his mind was that of “the look” his mother gave him. That memory was seared into his mind and each time he thought about the experience, he had a deep visceral response. He felt such deep rejection from his mother that he could hardly talk about it without becoming emotional. He felt ashamed of his behavior and the pain of her look. He had let her down. Clearly that moment had altered how he saw himself and how he saw his mother. In fact, as his therapy progressed, he identified that experience as one that had not been resolved. It had influenced his relationship with his mother from that time to the present.

There were additional images that stuck out in Tommy’s mind. He remembered the day his girlfriend broke up with him and he felt like their mutual friends had turned on him. The rejection he felt was profound and the only way that he knew to cope with it was to escape into pornography. As he went home after his girlfriend had ended their relationship, he was upset by his own behaviors as well as angry at his girlfriend for telling their friends what had happened between them. That evening, he viewed pornography and masturbated. The image that came to Tommy’s
mind was being home viewing pornography and imagining what she was telling others. He had created a memory of what he thought she was telling others and had developed a shame-based belief that he was a bad person.

As I talk with clients like Tommy, I begin to see the moments of time they are stuck in. These are the memories that are indelibly imprinted upon their minds. As we worked together, I talked with Tommy about various strategies we could use to help him work through and resolve those painful experiences. He was curious about how to resolve such painful memories, memories he had carried with him for years.

Before we move on to what happened next with Tommy, it is important to pause and understand that when clients seek help to stop sexual compulsivity, they seldom realize that beneath their addictive behaviors are a myriad of unresolved issues. There is always a reason for addiction; unless we stop and explore the story, we may attempt to treat the symptoms and completely miss resolving the root of the problem.

**The Emotions of Shame**

“What does it feel like when I ask you to say, ‘I am a bad person?’” I asked Tommy. He thought for a moment and said, “I have felt that way for so long, I don’t really know any different.” I continued by asking him to think more about how it made him feel. He hesitated and said, “It makes me angry. For years, I have been upset at others. I don’t really know why, but it seems like I am so used to feeling upset or angry that I don’t know any different. What I do know is that being angry makes me feel like I’m doing something wrong. I think that’s why I often feel like I’m a bad person. There are moments or even whole days where I think I’m a pretty good guy, but more often than not, when I am by myself, which is often, I don’t really like who I am. I find that I have to distract myself because I don’t like the thoughts I have racing through my head. In fact, when I’m by myself, I usually have the TV on or am on my phone playing a game or checking the scores of games.”

As we talked, I asked him again to stop and reflect for a few seconds about what it was that made him feel like he was a bad person. He said, “It’s bad to be angry, it’s bad to look at pornography, and most women I know don’t want someone who is looking at pornography.” It was at this point that I stopped our conversation and shared with him some of the things that I have learned about
pornography and view of self. I asked him why he thought about 70% of individuals who completed my online survey Assessing Pornography Addiction felt like they were a bad person when they viewed pornography. He looked at me with a surprised look and said, “Really? Seventy percent of the people who view pornography feel the way I do?” I said, “Yes, that’s what I have found in my research.” I then repeated my question, “Why do you think that nearly 70% of those individuals viewing pornography indicated that at least some of the time they felt like they were a bad person when they did such?” (Information about survey outcomes available at www.discoverandchange.com/apa/results.)

Tommy thought for a few seconds and replied, “I think it is bad because society tells me it is. And when I view it even though I want to stop, I end up feeling like I am bad.” I then asked him more about his view of pornography. He thought for a few seconds and said, “I know it’s not good for me.” I asked him why he thought it wasn’t good for him. He replied, “It doesn’t make me happy. While I have never been very outgoing, when I am not watching it, I do feel better about myself. Now I distance myself from others and feel like I’m in a corner all by myself. I don’t have a lot of friends and am not really close to anyone.” The more I talked with Tommy, the more his story made sense. Statements like, “I’m bad,” “I don’t have a lot of friends,” and, “I’m angry,” are very meaningful in light of the context behind the words.

After hearing thousands of stories like Tommy’s, I began wondering why emotions like anger and sadness were common to my clients. I asked myself, why do people like Tommy become angry at themselves or others? Why do they become sad and depressed? I have found that so many of my clients are like Tommy: prone to turn inward on themselves and develop self-hatred or turn outward and become critical of the people around them. In Tommy’s case, he was doing both.

I learned a valuable lesson about these emotions from my colleague Thomas Tullos. He stated, “Anger, even rage, is almost always shame-based.” To illustrate his point, he shared a story of something he witnessed aboard a plane. He had just found his seat and was waiting for others to finish boarding when he noticed a distracted man bump into a flight attendant, who then bumped into someone else as a result. She said excuse me to both of the passengers even though it clearly wasn’t her fault. The man who bumped her looked at her and angrily said, “Watch what you’re doing next time.” The man who was bumped by the stewardess said to the first man, “Excuse me, but that was not her fault.” Then the first man, clearly embarrassed, said, “Well, she just
needs to get out of the way." Tullos interpreted the first man’s behavior as linked to his embarrassment: “His anger was a way for him to deflect the shame he was feeling.” As I have observed others who are living in anger, I too have found that underneath their rage is unresolved shame.

As we explore internalized and externalized anger, we often discover self-incriminating thoughts like, “I am bad;” as well as critical comments toward others like, “People are stupid.” Such statements are rarely viewed as associated with shame, but as we explore the deeper emotions, we find more often than not that shame is the underlying feeling.

Additional emotions that may be linked to shame include:

- Sadness (e.g. I don’t deserve to be happy.)
- Hopelessness (e.g. No matter what I do, nothing works out, so why try?)
- Disgust for self or others (e.g. I am disgusting. People are disgusting.)
- Loneliness (e.g. I don’t fit in.)

It took a few sessions for Tommy to identify the depth of his shame, but the more he looked, the more he found. It was such a big part of his life and he had hardly realized it. We began a series of mental exercises to help him write new pathways in his mind.

4 Steps to Healing the Shame Filled Mind

When individuals like Tommy realize how much of their life has been lived in shame, they usually want to learn how to resolve it. I have found that lasting change occurs when each of the following three areas are identified, understood, and changed: a) language, b) emotions, and c) memories (see Chart #1).
As outlined above, Tommy and I were able to identify the language, emotions, and memories associated with his shame. Through our discussions and his own work in between sessions, he was beginning to understand how these three areas were influencing his life. Now our challenge was to help him change the thought patterns and underlying emotions that were associated with his shame.

Below are four steps that I have found helpful in addressing and healing core shame:

**Step #1: Identify the stories (memories) associated with the shame.**

In Tommy’s case, he identified four core events that triggered his deepest shame.

1. His first sexual experiences with the neighbor girl were where Tommy’s shame originated. Initially, he didn’t think this event was a part of his shame, but as he explored it more deeply, he realized that it actually marked the beginning of his shame. He had hidden what happened from his parents. He was able to see how her words, “Don’t tell anyone about this because we will get into trouble, especially you,” had triggered shame in him. At that time, he learned to hide his behaviors from others. This awareness helped him identify where his feelings of shame began. He saw how his silence and embarrassment kept him trapped in those sexual acts. It had also hurt his relationship with his parents. Shame held in silence grows like weeds in fertile ground.

2. The second core event was when his mother caught him masturbating. As we talked, he told me that was clearly the most painful to him. Her look of disgust had been so painful that he could hardly talk about it. Nine-year-old Tommy felt so much shame from that memory.

3. The third core event was when his girlfriend broke up with him and he felt shunned by their group of friends. That evening going home by himself, with no one to talk to, he had created a story in his mind about what was being said about him. That memory was very painful to him. What made it more painful was that he had turned to pornography for comfort that evening and was disgusted with his own behavior. His shame solidified that night.

4. The fourth key event that triggered his shame was when his girlfriend in college broke up with him because she felt like something wasn’t quite right. After years of feeling inadequate, like
he was disgusting, and that others wouldn’t like him, this event reinforced his beliefs. He had internalized the belief that nobody would ever want to be with him. She was a good and kind person, which made his belief was even deeper: it became “Nobody who is good would ever want to be with me.”

These experiences were at the core of Tommy’s shame. Now that we had outlined the memories, we turned to the words associated with his shame.

Step #2: Look for and review the language of the shame.

As we reviewed Tommy’s Key Life Event Inventory, we were able to identify the language that he had used to describe what had happened. Tommy was able to see how these words had become a part of his day-to-day thinking. Statements such as, “I am disgusting,” “I’m a bad person,” and, “Nobody will ever love me” frequently ran through his mind. Linking the memories with the language was a powerful step in raising his awareness of the shame-based voices that often dominated his thoughts. However, understanding the voice of shame is one thing; changing it is completely different altogether.

The voice of shame is sneaky; it creeps into our minds when we aren’t paying attention and suddenly we find ourselves saying something like, “I’m so stupid,” or, “Who would ever want me?” When this happens, I tell my clients that they have to increase their awareness. The purpose of building self-awareness is to prevent the thoughts from running wild. As they slow down and pay attention to their thoughts, they will gain a deeper understanding of their thought patterns. Ironically, just sitting with our thoughts can help us alter them.

Yes, I am asking you to sit with the thought “I am disgusting.” When I recommended this to Tommy, he looked at me like, “Are you crazy?” Although counterintuitive, slowing down to focus on a negative thought can help process it and release its power. Try it next time you have a negative thought about yourself or the people around you. When you identify a negative thought, I invite you to pause and explore it. Seek to understand it. Ask yourself questions like, “Why am I having this thought now? What does it mean? What is the truth?” By slowing the thought process down, the thoughts that have run wild in your mind for years no longer have free reign. You are able to corral them in and harness them.
Once the thoughts have been identified and corralled, it is time to let them go. This is where I incorporate a very helpful mindfulness technique with my clients.

Here’s how it works:

**Exercise:** Once you have identified a negative thought and asked yourself questions about it, it is time to let it go. Get comfortable in a quiet place and close your eyes. Imagine that you place the thought in a river at your feet and watch as it floats away from you. As the thought slowly goes down the river, continue focusing on the fact that the negative thought is getting further and further away. As it does so, feel your body relax. As the thought turns around a bend in the river, it is out of your mind completely. Now that the thought has floated away and is out of sight, it is time to pause and reflect on the experience. Ask yourself questions like, “What just happened to me?” You could also replace the thought that you just had with a feeling of gratitude, as follows: “I am grateful that I now have the awareness of the thoughts that have been running through my mind. I am now going to shift my attention to other things I am grateful for.” In your mind, list at least one thing that you are grateful for and why.

You are now on your way to creating new neural pathways in your mind, pathways that are not based on shame. The new pathways are filled with self-awareness and gratitude. By practicing this daily, you are intentionally rewiring your brain. Lasting change often comes from daily practice and the focused development of new habits.

**Step #3: Observe and work to resolve the emotions of the shame.**

The third step to resolving shame is to discover the emotions that are associated with it. At this point, our attention shifts from the memories and thoughts associated with shame to the specific emotions of shame. For Tommy, the top two emotions were sadness and anger. As with the other two areas, it is through raised awareness and focused attentiveness that change begins. The general rule of change is you can’t change what you don’t understand. For Tommy, learning to pay attention to his emotions was very important.
When first asked about his emotions, Tommy often responded, “I don’t know.” This is a common response of male clients whose emotional expression was shut down when they were children or adolescents, often through the reinforcement, by the adults in their lives, of stereotypes regarding masculinity (such as “boys don’t cry” or “man up and be tough”). Learning to overcome the fear of expressing emotions begins by identifying and understanding emotions as they are experienced. Learning to pay attention to our emotions is a very important part of the healing and recovery process.

For this reason, I often tell clients that our emotions can teach us so much, but we have to learn to listen to what they are trying to tell us. For example, Tommy didn’t like to be sad and he didn’t like the feelings he felt when he was angry, but to him they were just normal everyday emotions. He did want to stop being angry and sad, but he did not know how to stop suffering. I let him know that the goal was not to stop the anger or sadness, but to learn from these emotions.

I was taught this method by my friends Ken and Sharon Patey. They call it un-layering the onion:

Identify the unwanted emotion. In Tommy’s case, we started with anger.

- Question: What is it that makes you angry?
- Answer (Layer 1): I think people are just stupid.
- Question: What makes you think that?
- Answer (Layer 2): They don’t really care about others.
- Question: What experiences have you had that makes you think people don’t care?
- Answer (Layer 3): Lots. My high school girlfriend breaking up with me; how my supposed friends talked about me afterwards.
- Question: When she broke up with you, what did you feel or think about yourself? (Notice we are moving away from the external (his girlfriend) and directing Tommy to turn inward toward himself).
- Answer (Layer 4): Nobody would want me. That I’m a nobody. I’m insignificant.

As we un-layer the onion, we gain a greater appreciation of what was really driving Tommy’s anger. There is always a story beneath intense emotions like anger and, unfortunately, we can get lost in
the anger and ignore what is driving it. In order to create lasting change, we have to identify the root of the problem. Then, true healing can begin.

Through this exercise, Tommy began to see his anger in a different way. No longer was his anger something that was confusing to him. As we talked, he began to realize that anger was his way of covering up the shame of being unwanted. In the end, shame-based beliefs are at the root of the problem and when we resolve them, true and lasting healing can begin.

Let’s now turn our attention to how to heal the disturbing and painful memories from the past.

**Step #4: Desensitize and reprocess the memories associated with the shame.**

For nearly 20 years of my career, I felt like I was able to help my clients understand their core beliefs and the influence those beliefs had had on their lives. In many instances, helping clients get to the root of their pain was very helpful and healing. However, in some cases, especially when there was significant trauma and unresolved memories, I felt that there were limitations in my effectiveness as a therapist. Today, that has all changed. I have experienced firsthand that painful and disturbing experiences can be healed and resolved through a powerful, research-based therapeutic approach; Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing Therapy (EMDR) is now one of the most effective approaches for treating trauma. (4)

Here’s the story of how I discovered the power of EMDR.

A few years ago, while I was learning to become a Certified Sexual Addiction Therapist (CSAT), I was asked to complete a trauma egg. This is a written exercise in which we were instructed to explore our pasts with our key caregivers and identify our roles (e.g. peace-maker, scapegoat, clown, etc.) in our families of origin. We were also asked to describe various experiences from our lives that were painful or difficult. “Usually these are events that represent profound disappointment, betrayal, or abuse. Think of times when you were embarrassed or let down, or when there was some upset or crisis that involved you.” (CSAT Manual Mod 3—pg. 70) As I worked on my egg, I was having a very difficult time identifying such experiences. I had enjoyed my childhood immensely. I had friends and loved playing sports. Even though my parents had divorced, I still felt loved and appreciated by them. I had grandparents, great-grandparents,
cousins, and aunts and uncles that were loving and supportive of me. I didn’t think I had any traumatic events to report.

As I was instructed, I responded to the questions about my mom and dad, and I had a memory come to my mind that I hadn’t thought about for 35 years. I was in my mother’s car heading south and my father was in another car heading north. We came to an intersection at exactly the same time. He had another woman in the car with him. My mother and father both got out of their cars (we were in the country, not a busy intersection) and talked for a few seconds. Mom came back to the car crying, and we turned around and headed to my grandparents’ home. My brother and I sat in the car while our mother talked with my grandparents in the house for what seemed like a very long time. When my mother came out, we didn’t talk about what had happened. It had been 35 years since that incident and I had not thought about it since the day it happened. Suddenly, I felt emotions welling up inside of me that I had never felt before. I was uneasy and didn’t know what to do with those feelings. The awareness of what had happened to the young me made me feel very sad. However, the awareness itself didn’t make the pain go away. I talked with my wife about what I had experienced at the training, but the memory sat with me for almost another year and a half. It wasn’t overwhelming or debilitating, but it was there. The memory had been reactivated and felt stuck.

Fortunately, I love to read. While I was evaluating newly released books in the Fall of 2014, I found the wonderful book The Body Keeps the Score. In this masterfully written book, Dr. Bessel van der Kolk discusses the most powerful ways to treat trauma and heal traumatic memories. As I read the book, I wasn’t thinking about the memory of being in my mother’s car; I was reading the book to see if I could learn how to better help my clients who were suffering from various types of traumatic experiences.

In Chapter 15, Dr. van der Kolk describes the effectiveness of EMDR therapy. The research outcomes he cites made me question why I hadn’t paid attention to this treatment approach before. Then he shared some profound case studies where he had personally witnessed amazing changes in clients. I thought to myself, “I want to help my clients that way.” I quickly enrolled in an upcoming class, eager to learn how to use this life-changing approach. I knew I was not as effective in treating trauma as I could be and was excited to learn.
As we began the training, it was everything that I had expected and more. The method was clear and the cases we studied were game-changing for the clients involved. In these videos, individuals (tracked for months and years after treatment) reported profound healing from difficult traumas. As the training progressed, we trainees were asked to choose an issue that we would like to address through EMDR therapy. I was eager to see how EMDR could affect my childhood memory.

As part of the EMDR protocol, the participant is asked to identify a difficult memory from their past and what they came to believe about themselves as a result of the experience. My memory was of that intersection when I saw my dad with another woman. I had identified my belief related to that experience as “I didn’t matter.” The person working with me asked me to go back to the details of this experience. As I brought it to my mind, I saw myself in an intersection. Our car was heading south and my dad’s truck was heading north. I was in the backseat of my mom’s car when my dad stopped at the same intersection with another woman in his passenger seat.

My eyes followed the index finger of the person I was practicing with as she moved her hand rapidly from side to side about twelve inches from my face. EMDR therapists call this movement bilateral stimulation (BLS). As my eyes tracked her fingers, I found myself triggered with the deepest rage I had ever felt. I felt my head burning and the vivid sensation of wanting to scream. I saw myself getting out of the car and stomping out to the middle of that intersection enraged. I was yelling at my dad and saying, “What are you doing? You are ruining our family!”

That is when my colleague’s fingers stopped. I was crying, the tears were running down my cheeks. By this time, the supervising therapist was there. “Just stay with those moments and let me know what you are noticing,” he guided me. I described what I had just seen. I was thinking to myself, “Didn’t you see it too?” It felt so real to me. After reporting what I experienced, we continued.

During the next set of eye movements, I saw the little boy (me) being loved by his family. I saw my grandparents, aunts, and uncles. Then the boy saw his dad at his baseball game supporting him. Here my colleague stopped again and asked me to take a deep breath and let it out. She asked me, “What are you noticing now?” I related what I had experienced.
We went through one more BLS series where I felt this tremendous weight on my shoulders. As we moved on to the next set of eye movements, I found myself thinking, “My dad is a good man who had a problem.” At this, the weight lifted and I felt free. My original belief, “I didn’t matter,” no longer felt true. In fact, I knew I was loved. Within a few short minutes, I had processed a very painful and disturbing memory from my past and had changed my belief about myself. When I started the processing, I had ranked the memory as a six or seven in terms of how disturbing it felt to me (on a scale of 0-10, on which zero is completely peaceful and 10 is the highest disturbance possible). After processing the memory using EMDR, the emotional pain was completely gone and the level of disturbance was zero.

This is a treasured experience. I can still see the little boy in the car at the intersection, but he is no longer filled with any kind of emotional pain. His hurt has been healed. I am a therapist who has worked with thousands of individuals over the past 22 years, and I could have never shared that experience with others had I not learned EMDR therapy.

Since that time, I have used EMDR with clients struggling with addiction, anxiety, depression, and significant levels of trauma. Watching them experience life-altering healing has been extremely powerful for me.

*How Healing the Memories Resolves the Shame*

Perhaps at this point you are thinking, “How can changing a memory reduce my shame?” It’s a great question. Shame often resides in unresolved memories. The best way to address how desensitizing and reprocessing painful memories alters the shame is through sharing Tommy’s experience with EMDR.

As we already outlined above, there were four key memories that Tommy identified. When facilitating EMDR therapy, clients are invited to focus on their first or worst memory. These memories are usually the most disturbing. When we can address and heal those memories, other subsequent painful memories can often be resolved simultaneously. Tommy chose to focus on the experience of his mother’s “look.” The belief that he held regarding this memory was “I’m disgusting.” Once I have the belief that is associated with the memory, I ask the client, “When you think of that memory, what would you like to think or believe about yourself instead?” Tommy’s
answer was, “I’m a good guy.” I asked him to think of the disturbing memory and then think about
the statement, “I’m a good guy.” I then asked him how true it felt to him between 1 (not true at all)
and 7 (completely true). He quickly ranked this statement at two; in other words, he didn’t really
believe he was a good guy.

Next in the EMDR protocol is identifying the emotions associated with the belief and where the
client feels those emotions in their body. Tommy identified sadness as his core emotion and
reported feeling that sadness in his neck and shoulders. As we prepare to do the bilateral
stimulation, I ask clients how disturbing the identified memory is between a score of 0 (not
disturbing) and 10 (very disturbing). Tommy identified the memory of his mother’s look as 8 or 9 out
of 10 — very disturbing.

As I began the first set of eye movements, I guided Tommy to think of the memory, his belief, the
emotions, and where he felt those emotions physically. One set of BLS can take between 30
seconds and a few minutes depending on what the client is experiencing. As we worked through
the first few sets, Tommy recounted seeing that look his mother gave him. He was visibly upset. I
have found that the more emotion is expressed in these experiences, the better. Tommy began
crying, and after one set of BLS, he said, “My mom was going through a lot at that time. She and
my dad were fighting. I wonder if he was hurting her somehow.” I asked him to notice that and we
kept going. After the next set he seemed almost relieved. He said, “I was so young. She didn’t
know about my experiences with my neighbor. All she saw was her boy doing something hurtful
like his dad. It hurt her.”

Usually, after a few sets during which insight is gained and change in perception is manifesting, I
stop and reassess the level of disturbance that the original memory holds. I asked Tommy, “How
disturbing does the memory feel to you now on a scale between 0 and 10?” He thought for a few
seconds and said, “Maybe a two or three.” I said, “Okay let’s go with a two or three and see what
else comes up.” We continue processing with BLS because a two or three indicates that there is
still something disturbing about the experience. As we moved on, Tommy’s mind shifted to the
memory of his first sexual experience with the neighborhood girl. After one set, he noticed the
following: “She looked at me and said, ‘Don’t tell anyone or we will get in trouble, especially you.’
That was the moment I started feeling bad about myself. I had done something wrong. I was bad.”
In the next BLS set, Tommy had compassion for the little boy in the memory. He said, “He was just
a boy. He didn’t know any better.” At this insight, he seemed relieved. When I asked him to go back
to the memory of his mother, Tommy reported it had no disturbance. It was a level zero. We
finished the rest of the EMDR protocol, then he looked at me and said, “What just happened to
me? The pain of those memories is gone.”

Tommy then asked me if the memories will come back. I shared with him what I have seen with
other clients as well as my own experience. “The memory will come back,” I told him, “but the pain
associated with the experience is gone.” He was excited.

Note to the reader: It has been more than one year since I facilitated EMDR with Tommy. He
recently told me that when he thinks of those early life memories with his mom and the
neighborhood girl, they are no longer disturbing. More importantly, he does not feel like he is a
disgusting person. I have had many similar experiences with clients since becoming trained in
EMDR. Not all experiences are like the ones I had with Tommy. Sometimes it takes a few sessions
to see this type of progress, and with some clients, the EMDR process feels uncomfortable to them
and is not as effective. However, a majority of my clients respond very well to this process and
make great strides in their healing from shame.

So what really happened to Tommy?

Memories from our past create shame-filled beliefs (e.g. “I am disgusting”). Through EMDR therapy,
the memory is reprocessed. The pain from the memories that had influenced the way Tommy
thought and felt about himself for all those years was gone. Once the pain was processed, his
shame decreased dramatically. He began making great strides in his recovery process. He still had
to work through cravings and some setbacks, but even after relapses, he didn’t beat himself up
like he had in the past. He was no longer a disgusting person. He was beginning to see that
recovery was possible for him. We will return to Tommy’s story later in Chapter _, when we discuss
how to develop meaningful connections in the healing process.

Chapter Summary

By understanding the language, emotions, and memories associated with shame, it is possible to
deconstruct the process of shame development. The four step treatment strategy includes 1)
Identify the stories (memories) associated with the shame; 2) Look for and review the language of shame; 3) Observe and work to resolve the emotions of shame; 4) Desensitize and reprocess the memories associated with shame. Through these steps, true and long-lasting healing can occur.
KEY LIFE EVENTS TIMELINE

OBJECTIVE
All of us have key life events that alter our lives for good or bad. In this assignment, your task is to identify the significant events that have changed your life. Take into account big events such as the death of a loved one, moving, your first sexual experiences, etc. Other things you might include: parents fighting or divorcing, a parent with mental health challenges or substance abuse problems, being bullied on a playground, difficult school or team experiences. Some of these events may have also happened in your adult years (e.g. Health problems, job loss, etc.).

INSTRUCTIONS
Don’t think too much about it, just write down as many experiences as you can think of for the next few minutes.

Once you are done, place your experience on the timeline.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EVENT</th>
<th>AGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Now, place each of the events above on the timeline below:
To review, respond to the following prompt in your journal:

*Now that you have identified key life events from the past, what sticks out to you the most? Identify any common themes throughout the timeline as well as the events that had the biggest impact on your life.*
OVERCOMING COMPULSIVE SEXUAL BEHAVIOR

WEEK 4: UNDERSTANDING EMOTIONS TO CONTROL BEHAVIOR

“
Feelings or emotions are the universal language and are to be honored. They are the authentic expression of who you are at your deepest place.
”

JUDITH RIGHT

OBJECTIVE
This week we will discuss how your emotions can contribute to compulsive behavior and how understanding your behavior can control your emotions.

Our goal is that you have plan to learn self control in emotional moments, leading to relapse prevention.

OOCW
WATCH:
› How Emotions Contribute to Addiction & Relapse bit.ly/ADDOAD
› Control Behavior by Understanding Emotions bit.ly/ADDOAD
› AUDIO: COAL Approach bit.ly/COALAPPROACH

COMPLETE:
› Recovery Capital Checklist
› Your Last Emotional Experience
› Coping Skills
› Where, When, Why, How?
› Journal Prompts
RECOVERY CAPITAL CHECKLIST

OBJECTIVE
To overcome unwanted behaviors we can’t focus solely on symptom reduction. Recovery is more than just abstinence from acting out; it is about building a full and productive life.

The goal of this sheet is to create awareness around the development of important areas in your life. Areas that when improved, will lead to recovery.

INSTRUCTIONS
Each week, fill out this sheet to check on your own development. Be prepared to talk about your feelings in individual/group therapy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RECOVERY CAPITAL</th>
<th>SCORE FROM 0-10 (10 = HIGH)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12 Step Groups</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sponsor/Accountability Partner</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual Connection</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Regulation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Compassion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthy Living</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FEEL CONNECTED AGAIN
YOUR LAST EMOTIONAL EXPERIENCE

OVERVIEW
We are emotional beings. We feel sad when someone tells us that they don't like us. We experience fear when we hear our company is downsizing. We become happy when someone tells us we did a good job. We feel angry when someone cuts us off on the road. Each of these events are examples of external events that trigger an emotional response. We also experience emotions when there are few if any external events happening.

Have you considered what emotions you feel when you are by yourself?

The purpose of this exercise is to raise your awareness into the emotions you have when you are all by yourself.

INSTRUCTIONS
Each of us have dominant and non-dominant emotions. Individuals who understand their dominant emotions can develop them or learn to manage them. For example, if I realize that my dominant emotion is fear, but I want to feel happy when I am experiencing fear I can acknowledge the fear and consciously choose to express gratitude for something that is good in my life —this could generate a happy feeling.

We all have core emotions. Our core emotions are:

1. Sad
2. Anger
3. Fear
4. Happiness
5. Love
6. Shame
7. Disgust
In this exercise your goal is to identify which of your emotions are most dominate.

PART #1
Below is the list of core emotions identified previously. Please rank order them for you on a scale from one to seven, with one being most dominant and seven being least dominant. Then on a scale of one to ten, with ten being that you feel that emotion very often, score each emotion (see the example below).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CORE EMOTIONS</th>
<th>EMOTION RANK ORDER (7 = DOMINANT)</th>
<th>HOW OFTEN EMOTION IS FELT (10 = OFTEN)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sad</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anger</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fear</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Happiness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Love</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shame</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disgust</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PART #2
Think back to your last emotional experience. As you reflect on that experience, answer these questions:

What triggered the emotions?
Where did the emotions come from?

What can I learn from that emotional experience?
What can I do different next time?
COPING SKILLS

OVERVIEW
Learning to cope with emotions and stressors will lead to recovery. Emotions aren’t good or bad, they are there to teach us. Effectively responding to emotions and stressors takes practice and awareness. The better you understand your stressors the better you will be able to respond to them in times of crisis.

INSTRUCTIONS
How do you generally respond to stress, crisis, and challenges in your life? What are your "go to" coping mechanisms? Think about the things that stress you out the most. What is your most common response to those stressors?
PART #1

List your top stressors or challenges in your life and your “go to” coping mechanisms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRESSOR</th>
<th>“GO TO” COPING MECHANISM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PART #2

Rewrite your stressors and “go to” coping mechanisms. Now, add possible healthier “Go To” coping mechanisms.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRESSOR</th>
<th>“GO TO” COPING MECHANISM</th>
<th>HEALTHIER COPING IDEA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PART #3
In stressful situations 10% of people make matters worse, 80% freeze not knowing how to respond, and the final 10% of people stop, analyze and improve their situation. For 10 minutes, write about which group you fall into.
PART #4

Journal about this assignment. What did you learn?
WHERE, WHEN, WHY, HOW?

OVERVIEW
The first step in learning to cope with stressors is to understand where they happen, when they happen and why they happen. The hope is to avoid the triggers all together. This assignment is crucial to your understanding of self and emotional regulation.

INSTRUCTIONS
Each time you feel a trigger write down and track where you were, when it happened, why you think it hit, and how you felt. Track your triggers for at least a week. We recommend each night to review your list and journal about your experiences.

PART #1
Each day, pay attention to your triggers and answer the questions found in the table given.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHERE?</th>
<th>WHEN?</th>
<th>WHY?</th>
<th>HOW DID YOU FEEL?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### PART #2

Journal about this assignment. What did you learn?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHERE?</th>
<th>WHEN?</th>
<th>WHY?</th>
<th>HOW DID YOU FEEL?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
JOURNAL PROMPT #1

What are my most dominate emotions?

What do I need to learn from them?
How can having the awareness about which of my emotions are most dominate help me in my recovery?
JOURNAL PROMPT #2

How can I treat people with more love and kindness?
JOURNAL PROMPT #3

What are the most important things you have learned about yourself this week as you have been journaling?
JOURNAL PROMPT #4

What are the most common ways I deal with stress besides acting out? Are these ways healthy for me? Explain your answer.
OVERCOMING COMPULSIVE SEXUAL BEHAVIOR

WEEK 5: REWIRING YOUR BRAIN BY CREATING NEW HABITS

“
We must look deeply in order to see and understand the needs, aspirations, and suffering of the ones we love.
”

THICH NHAT HANH

OBJECTIVE
In addiction it’s hard to see outside yourself. It makes sense because you are doing all you can to get grip on your own life, leaving little time to think about others.

In this week’s group we will discuss rewiring the brain through habit forming. Specifically, how forgetting yourself strengthens recovery, mindfulness and healthy eating.

OOCW
READ:
› The Power of Journaling

WATCH:
› Mindfulness: A Powerful Method to Manage Cravings bit.ly/ADDOAD
› Boost Self Control Through Adequate Sleep bit.ly/ADDOAD
› How Productivity Fights Addiction bit.ly/ADDOAD
› Developing Productive Behaviors bit.ly/ADDOAD

COMPLETE:
› Recovery Capital Checklist
RECOVERY CAPITAL CHECKLIST

OBJECTIVE
To overcome unwanted behaviors we can’t focus solely on symptom reduction. Recovery is more than just abstinence from acting out; it is about building a full and productive life.

The goal of this sheet is to create awareness around the development of important areas in your life. Areas that when improved, will lead to recovery.

INSTRUCTIONS
Each week, fill out this sheet to check on your own development. Be prepared to talk about your feelings in individual/group therapy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RECOVERY CAPITAL</th>
<th>SCORE FROM 0-10 (10 = HIGH)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12 Step Groups</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sponsor/Accountability Partner</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual Connection</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Regulation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Compassion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthy Living</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
THE POWER OF BREATHING

OVERVIEW
The goal of this assignment is to help you observe your emotions, live moment by moment to become mindful of life experiences, and gain control of your mind and decision making. As your mindfulness increases, your capacity to regulate your emotions will improve. Additionally, practicing mindfulness will greatly enhance the body’s functioning: healing, immune response, stress reactivity, and a general sense of physical well-being.

INSTRUCTIONS
Practice mindfulness by setting aside three (3) minutes, three (3) times a day to breathe. Find a quiet place where you can sit, breath, and focus on your body, mind, and feelings. Breath in through your nose for 4-6 seconds and then exhale through your mouth for 6-8 seconds. Below is a table to help you track your efforts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MON</th>
<th>TUE</th>
<th>WED</th>
<th>THU</th>
<th>FRI</th>
<th>SAT</th>
<th>SUN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SLEEPING HABITS

OVERVIEW
Addiction is amplified when the addict has sleeping problems. If you are not sleeping properly, your cognitive abilities, memory, and mood are all altered. Lack of sleep decreases energy, impacting your ability to effectively respond to and fend off cravings and temptations.

INSTRUCTIONS
To be at your highest energy, you need at least 7-8 hours of sleep a night. In this assignment we want to help you create an awareness of your sleeping habits. With awareness you can begin making the appropriate changes in your life.

STEP #1
Develop awareness by monitoring your sleep habits over the next week.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MON</th>
<th>TUE</th>
<th>WED</th>
<th>THU</th>
<th>FRI</th>
<th>SAT</th>
<th>SUN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HOURS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BED TIME</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WAKE UP</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

STEP #2
After monitoring your sleep habits answer the following question:

If you find that you’re consistently not getting 7-8 hours of sleep a night, what can you do to improve your sleep habits?

STEP #3
Journal about your experience. What did you learn?
YOUR EXERCISE HABITS

OVERVIEW

In his book Spark, John J. Ratey, MD writes, “To keep our brains at peak performance, our bodies need to work hard.” Beating an addiction to pornography requires the brain to be at peak performance. Therefore, exercise is crucial to recovery.

INSTRUCTIONS

Monitor your exercise habits for at least one week. Are you exercising 3 to 5 times a week? If not, set some goals to get more exercise.

Here are some suggestions to get you going:

- Walk for thirty minutes, 5 days a week
- Running for 15 minutes, five days a week
- Sign up for a yoga class
- Buy some free weights for strength training at home

PART #1

For one week, monitor your exercise habits.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MON</th>
<th>TUE</th>
<th>WED</th>
<th>THU</th>
<th>FRI</th>
<th>SAT</th>
<th>SUN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DID YOU EXERCISE?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHAT TYPE?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOW LONG?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PART #2
After monitoring your exercise habits answer the following question:

If you find that you’re consistently not exercising, what can you do to improve your exercise habits?

PART #3
Journal about your experience. What did you learn?
THE HELPER’S HIGH

OVERVIEW

Individuals who struggle with addiction tend to get stuck in their own challenges and setbacks. To get out of this rut, you need to reach outside of yourself early in the recovery process and find a way to serve someone. This service needs to be well thought-out and planned. Research has shown that those who serve others are happier and healthier.

INSTRUCTIONS

Each week, identify one person to serve and remember these key points:

Don’t expect anything back
Make the service something that would be meaningful to the person you choose to serve.

“We must look deeply in order to see and understand the needs, aspirations, and suffering of the ones we love.” I encourage you to look deeply at the needs of the people you love and try to give them a meaningful act of service.

STEP #1

Make a list of people you could serve.

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
STEP #2
Make a list of ways you could serve those on your list (Examples: Clean the house, call an old friend, write a kind note to someone you admire or appreciate, etc.).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>SERVICE IDEA</th>
<th>SERVICE IDEA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

STEP #3
Journal about your experience. What did you learn?
JOURNAL PROMPT #1

If I could establish one habit that I did everyday, which habit would I want to develop?

What’s preventing me from doing it?

What do I need to do to make it happen?
JOURNAL PROMPT #2
How do my sleep patterns influence my mood and energy levels? What can I do to improve my sleep habits?
JOURNAL PROMPT #3

How will you use the productivity principle in your recovery?
JOURNAL PROMPT #4

What can I do to improve my eating and exercise habits?
THE POWER OF JOURNALING

A few years ago I had a client call me during an anxiety attack. I took the call because I knew that she was in a lot of emotional pain. Unfortunately, I only had a few minutes before my next client would arrive. I quickly assessed her emotional state and how to proceed. The thought that came to my mind in that moment was, "I don't have enough time to help her navigate through this difficult issue. What is the next best alternative?" I knew that she didn't have family or social support that could respond quickly to her need, so that wasn't an option. At that point I suggested that she take out of piece of paper and write down the conversation with her dad that triggered her emotional pain. I invited her to write all of the things that came to her mind. In particular, I wanted her to focus on what the emotional pain she felt from her conversation with her father and then I wanted her to identify what she wanted to say to him. I asked her if she could complete that assignment and then call me back in two hours. She agreed and we hung up phone.

When she called me back I didn't know what to expect. If I had been asked to guess what emotional state she would be in when she called, I would have guessed that she would have still been upset and hurt. Instead, I was surprised by the clarity and conviction that she held in her voice. She described writing about the argument that she had had with her father. During her writing experience she somehow managed to shift her internal pain to what her father was feeling and thinking. She started seeing things from his perspective. Then she described to me the conversation that she wanted to have with her father. She had written down her key points. She then, in an emotionally calm voice said, "I am going to talk with my father this evening." At this point, I was stunned. During that afternoon her writing had helped her understand her own pain, her father's perspective, and what conversation she needed to have with him. That phone conversation was about five minutes long. It was the best therapy I never did.

I have thought a lot about the experience I had with my client. I have wondered why taking time to write down her thoughts and feelings changed her emotional state. What was happening in her mind? After this experience I began reviewing research literature about
journaling. I was surprised to discover that for more than 30 years, clinicians have been studying the outcomes of expressive writing (journaling). I soon discovered that my client's experience was not unique at all. In fact, researchers have found that journaling can reduce common emotional issues like depression and anxiety (Baikie & Wilhelm, 2005). What is even more impressive is that journaling can improve your physical health as well (Pennebaker, Kiecolt-Glaser, & Glaser, 1988). Journaling has also been found to be an effective tool to use after a job loss (Spera, Buhrfiend, & Pennebaker, 1994), after trauma (Greenberg, Wortman, & Stone, 1996), and after a relationship break-up (Lepore & Greenberg, 2002). The supporting evidence surrounding journaling is clear. Obviously not everyone will experience the same benefits from journaling, but the research indicates that many who journal benefit emotionally and physically.

Why Journaling Can Help

In my research it became clear that journaling was effective, but I began to wonder why it was helpful to so many people. While there is no exact answer, many of the researchers have offered their suggestions. For example, Dr. James Pennebaker, one of the leading researchers in this area, found that many people suppress or inhibit their expression of emotions, which triggers negative emotional and physical consequences. What is especially interesting about Dr. Pennebakers' research is that inhibition of positive emotions also created health problems (Pennebaker, 1990). The general idea is that when individuals suppress emotions, either positive or negative, it takes a negative toll on the body and the mind. On the other hand, when individuals learn how to express their emotions in meaningful ways, they benefit physically and emotionally.

Consider the emotional shift in the client that I mentioned in the introduction. When she slowed her mind down and put her experience on paper, her emotional state of mind changed. As she expressed her frustration regarding the argument she had had with her father, she was able to clarify her own pain and hurt. This expression of emotions via journaling calmed her agitated mind. It also allowed her to consider how her father was feeling. This was a seemingly unintended positive consequence of her journaling.
It truly is a significant finding that expressing emotions through journaling can improve your physical health. I have thought a lot about the idea of suppressing a stressful event and have come to believe that these findings should be highlighted and put in bold letters that read something like this, "SUPPRESSING YOUR EMOTIONS WILL MAKE YOU PHYSICALLY SICK" or "EMOTIONAL EXPRESSION WILL IMPROVE YOUR HEALTH AND WELL-BEING."

**Journaling: Who, How, and When It Helps**

Since journaling has been found to be effective, many researchers have started asking deeper questions like, "Who benefits the most from journaling?", "When is the best time to journal?", "Can journaling be an aid to therapy?", "Are there side effects or potential negative outcomes associated with journaling?" and "Are there ways or methods that can make journaling more effective?" The final part of this article will address these questions.

**Question: Who benefits the most from journaling?**

Answer: Journaling can help almost anyone. However, for some groups it may be more beneficial than others. For example, it has been found to be especially effective for individuals who struggle to express themselves emotionally. Those who are shy by nature find that journaling is an effective way to express themselves without being forced to confide in someone they may not know. Another group of individuals who benefit from writing are those who are trying to make sense of a difficult experience or trauma. Sometimes it is journaling that is the first step to dealing with issues that have been plaguing them their entire life. Along this same line of thinking Kate Thompson wrote, "Writing can express material which is previously unexpressed or access previously inaccessible material, allowing it to come to the surface" (Thompson, 2004). Journaling also helps groups of individuals who may not have someone to talk with about their problems (e.g., military personal, individuals living in rural settings, people who feel alone or who have no current close relationships).
Question: When is the best time to journal?

Answer: Journaling can be done at any time of the day or night. In fact, this may be one of the most beneficial elements of journaling. A journal has been described as "an immediate accessible container available at any time, not dependent on the presence of others. It is available when no one else is, at 3 a.m., in the middle of a panic attack" (Thompson, 2004). This is what happened to the client I referred to earlier. I was not available and at the time when she needed me the most. Her ability to turn to paper and write down her painful experience was therapeutic to her.

The National Center for PTSD and other researchers have found that the earlier a difficult or traumatic experience is "dealt with" the less likely the person is to experience long-term emotional issues (Department of Veterans Affairs, 2007) (Levin, 2007). Based on these findings, journaling may be one of the first lines of defense for individuals who have no one to talk to or who, for security reasons, cannot talk about what they have experienced. A good rule of thumb regarding when to journal is this: if you are experiencing something that is stirring up a lot of emotions inside of you, it is a good time to write down what you are feeling and thinking.

Question: Can journaling be an aid to therapy?

Answer: In my personal experience I have found that clients who write down their thoughts and emotions outside of therapy come to therapy more prepared to discuss their progress and what they have learned. My experience with my client is just one of many examples of how journaling can assist my clients and it is a valuable tool that clients can use outside of my office. Furthermore, when I give clients specific writing assignments based on our sessions they make additional progress between our sessions. I have discovered that clients who journal often move through therapy faster than those who don’t write.

Question: Are there side effects or potential negative outcomes associated with journaling?
Answer: This is a very good question. The answer is yes there are potential side effects of journaling. Journaling can stir up many emotions, especially when dealing hurtful and painful experiences from the past. Some individuals can trigger memories that are so painful that they don't know how to stop the negative feelings. Consequently, any time a person writes or attempts to deal with mental health related issues, they need to make sure that they have someone who can assist them if necessary.

Dr. James Pennebaker has found in his writing exercise, which consists of writing for 20 minutes a day for four days in a row, that this process can initially elevate stress levels and trigger higher levels of emotional pain. Fortunately, his research shows that individuals who are willing to go through the initial pain of bringing up traumatic memories in their journaling exercise are less depressed and have better physical health scores a few months later (Pennebaker, 1990). When a person stirs up the emotions from the past, it can initially create added stress. However, by addressing the issue through journaling the issue somehow loses its power and the individual reaps the reward of better emotional and physical health.

**Question: Are there ways or methods that can make journaling more effective?**

Answer: There are certain types of journaling that are more effective than others. Researchers have found that writing about neutral events (e.g., the weather) does not have the powerful effect that writing about how one feels about an event or earlier life experience does. Dr. Pennebaker's work with various groups clearly demonstrates that individuals who open up and disclose emotional pain make greater progress over time. Here's an example of two different approaches to addressing the journal entry topic: "Tell us about your day." In one example, you will see a neutral response that offers little insight into how this person felt about the day. In the second example, you will see someone who opened up and disclosed her deeper emotions.
Example #1: Today we went to the park and had a picnic with my mom and step-father. We played with the Frisbee and went for a short walk. When we were done at the park we went out for ice cream. Got home late and put the kids to bed. It was a busy day.

Example #2: Today we met mom and her husband (Tom) at the park for a picnic. This is an experience that I don't enjoy as much as I used to. I am still hurt by my mom's decision to marry Tom. I felt like she has ignored us kids since their marriage and when we attend activities like this, I think it is just for show. I don't think her heart is into being a grandmother. It hurts to say this and maybe I am being too sensitive, but that is how I feel about the way things are with my mother right now. I don't like feeling this way. I want to have a better relationship with her, but I don't know where to begin. It seems like I don't ever get the chance to just talk with her alone. Even if I could talk with her alone, I don't know that I trust her enough to tell her how I feel.

According to research what would be the outcome of these two examples? In the first example, a neutral response to the writing topic would not be beneficial emotionally or physically. In fact, if there were negative, suppressed emotions about this experience it could actually have a negative impact on this person's life. In the second example you will notice an open disclosure of frustration, hurt, and pain. This is the type of open disclosure that helps a person make sense of what they are feeling and it helps in the healing process.

**Conclusion**

Journaling can be a powerful tool that can be used in dealing with difficult emotions and traumatic experiences. Those who participate in it are more likely to reduce symptoms associated with depression and anxiety. They are also likely to have better physical health. The only caution about journaling is that when you are journaling about difficult issues, you may initially experience more emotional pain. However, over time the openness of disclosure will provide health benefits.
So what will you be journaling about?

References:

- http://ncptsd.va.gov/ncmain/ncdocs/fact_shts/fs_what_can_i_do.html
- http://pn.psychiatryonline.org/content/42/24/18.2.full
OVERCOMING COMPULSIVE SEXUAL BEHAVIOR

WEEK 6: ACCOUNTABILITY: THE SECRET WEAPON

“Be strong, be fearless, be beautiful. And believe that anything is possible when you have the right people there to support you.”

MISTY COPELAND

OBJECTIVE

The secret weapon to winning the battle over unwanted compulsive behaviors is accountability! But what does that really mean? It might not be what you think.

In this week’s group we will discuss what successful accountability really looks like, help you begin developing your own support team and help you find an accountability leader.

OOCW

WATCH:
- Accountability (Full Presentation) bit.ly/ADDOAD
- Coby Interview: Accountability Vs Shame bit.ly/ADDOAD
- Coby Interview: How is Accountability Different from 12-Step Group? bit.ly/ADDOAD
- Coby Interview: What is 12-Step’s Role in Accountability? bit.ly/ADDOAD
- Coby Interview: Is Accountability Scary? bit.ly/ADDOAD

COMPLETE:
- Recovery Capital Checklist
- Building A Support Team
RECOVERY CAPITAL CHECKLIST

OBJECTIVE
To overcome unwanted behaviors we can’t focus solely on symptom reduction. Recovery is more than just abstinence from acting out; it is about building a full and productive life.

The goal of this sheet is to create awareness around the development of important areas in your life. Areas that when improved, will lead to recovery.

INSTRUCTIONS
Each week, fill out this sheet to check on your own development. Be prepared to talk about your feelings in individual/group therapy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RECOVERY CAPITAL</th>
<th>SCORE FROM 0-10 (10 = HIGH)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12 Step Groups</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sponsor/Accountability Partner</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual Connection</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Regulation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Compassion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthy Living</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
BUILDING A SUPPORT TEAM

OVERVIEW
Most people struggle to find recovery because they don’t have the right support team around them. If you want to significantly increase your chance of success reach out and let others help you.

INSTRUCTIONS
List the people who are closest to you and rate how they will support your quit efforts on a scale from 1-10, 10 = Absolute Support, 1 = Hinderance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>List Those Around You (Spouse/Partner, Friends, Family, etc.)</th>
<th>Rating (10 = Absolute Support, 1 = Hinderance)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
COBY’S ACCOUNTABILITY GROUPS

OVERVIEW
Over the years, we have found that the clients we have sent to Coby have even better recovery results! Because of Coby’s experience and unique program, his accountability has proven to be the best accountability program for our clients.

For that reason, we have partnered with Coby Mitchell to provide accountability options for our clients.

We also feel it’s important that you know that Coby’s service is a paid service. However, we don’t receive a penny for what he offers.

The reason Coby charges is because it allows him to focus and dedicate his time to helping those in his program improve.

INSTRUCTIONS
To learn more about Coby’s accountability program, visit here:

ashlynnandcoby.com/contact-us/

To learn more about Coby, you can view Coby’s video story on our website:

addorecovery.com/addiction/
OVERCOMING COMPULSIVE SEXUAL BEHAVIOR

WEEK 7: UNDERSTANDING, FIGHTING AND REPLACING RELAPSE

“Peace cannot be kept by force; it can only be achieved by understanding.”

ALBERT EINSTEIN

OBJECTIVE
Without a plan, you will likely fail in your recovery efforts. We want you to succeed and the trick is to plan.

In this week’s group, we will teach you how to battle unwanted thoughts, identify cravings, understand relapse in an effort to put together a plan to overcome relapse!

By the end of this week, you should have a solid plan to get you through the difficult moments.

OOCW

WATCH

› How to Battle Unwanted Thoughts bit.ly/ADDOAD
› How to Identify Cravings bit.ly/ADDOAD
› Understanding and Fighting Relapse bit.ly/ADDOAD
› How to Replace Relapse bit.ly/ADDOAD
› Avoiding Moments of Relapse bit.ly/ADDOAD
COMPLETE:

- Recovery Capital Checklist
- Your Thoughts
- Crucial Moment Action Plan
- Journal Prompt #1
- Five Things List
- Journal Prompt #2
- How Are You Doing?

**RECOVERY CAPITAL CHECKLIST**

**OBJECTIVE**

To overcome unwanted behaviors we can’t focus solely on symptom reduction. Recovery is more than just abstinence from acting out; it is about building a full and productive life.

The goal of this sheet is to create awareness around the development of important areas in your life. Areas that when improved, will lead to recovery.

**INSTRUCTIONS**

Each week, fill out this sheet to check on your own development. Be prepared to talk about your feelings in individual/group therapy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RECOVERY CAPITAL</th>
<th>SCORE FROM 0-10 (10 = HIGH)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12 Step Groups</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sponsor/Accountability Partner</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual Connection</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Regulation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Compassion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthy Living</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

© 2017, Addo Recovery, LLC
YOUR THOUGHTS

OVERVIEW

James Allen writes, "A man is literally what he thinks, his character being the complete sum of all his thoughts." In an effort to better understand the effect our thoughts can have on us, we have asked hundreds of people to identify what they think about most. We ask, "When you are alone and have time to think, what do you find yourself thinking about?" We want to invite you to make your list of what you think about most when you are alone and have time to think.

INSTRUCTIONS

Please rank the thoughts below from most important to least important. Then rank how much time each of those thoughts occupy your mind during free times. Rank order on a scale from one to ten with ten being most important/prominent and one being least important/prominent.

PART #1

Below is a list of common thoughts people have shared with us over the years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THOUGHTS</th>
<th>IMPORTANT OF THOUGHTS (10=MOST)</th>
<th>TIME SPENT OCCUPYING YOUR MIND (10=MOST)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marriage</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exercise</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Money</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>God</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PART #2
How do your thoughts and the things you value most in life matchup? If they don’t matchup as you desire, devote time each day to positively thinking about the areas of your life that you value most.

PART #3
Journal about your experience. What did you learn?
CRUCIAL MOMENT ACTION PLAN

OVERVIEW
How many times have you promised yourself that you were never going to do that again? If you are like millions of others, you have made that promise to yourself and failed. Why? More often than not you are not prepared for the moment of temptation. Success depends on previous preparation. The brain responds effectively when it knows what to do. With preparation you will have a game plan and tools to avoid those moments when your mind and body don’t know how to respond.

In this assignment we ask you to develop a Crucial Moment Action Plan. This is a written plan that you will implement in crucial moments of cravings—This plan needs to be unique to you. The value of having a plan not having to think about what you are going to do in emotionally charged moments. You want to act without having to think. Once you have developed an automatic response to the initial thought, you are giving your brain and body a fighting chance.

INSTRUCTIONS
In the first part of this assignment your job is to write as many ideas as you can that will help you fend off cravings. Please write for 10 minutes about any and every thought that comes to your mind for what you can do or think when you are dealing with a craving. The next step is to go back and review your list and identify the key ideas that you think will help you the most. Make sure to keep your items simple, actionable and possible implement at any time, day or night.
PART #1
Write for 10 minutes about any and every thought that comes to your mind for things you can do or think when you are dealing with a craving.
PART #2

The next step is to go back, review your list, and identify the key ideas that you think will help the most. Make sure to keep your items simple and actionable.
PART #3

Journal about your assignment. How does having a Crucial Moment Action Plan make you feel and why?
JOURNAL PROMPT #1

My most common emotions are _______________.
**FIVE THINGS LIST**

**OVERVIEW**

Recovery is not an easy process. There is value in slowing down to prepare. Applying the tools we’ve discussed really matters so change will occur and new habits will be formed.

The goal is to become the master of the moment. To have the ability to succeed when things are most difficult for you. Your “Five Things” list is a list of actions you will take before you relapse.

**INSTRUCTIONS**

Your “Five Things” list should include action steps (example: call a sponsor, leave the room, go for walk, do push-ups, clean, etc.). Your list should also include an action that allows you to slow down and develop an awareness of your thoughts and emotions (example: breathing exercise, C.O.A.L. approach, etc.).

Lastly, each day for the next 10 days we invite you to write your Five Things list with your non-dominant hand. Doing this will allow you to slow down your brain and internalize your list so that in the moment of crisis you are prepared to respond.

**STEP #1**

Using the previous list from the *Crucial Moment Action Plan* as a guide, write down the five things you are going to promise yourself to do before you relapse.

1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5.
STEP #2
For the next 10 days write your five things list with your non-dominant hand.

<p>| | | | | | | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Done?

STEP #3
Journal about your experience. What did you learn?
JOURNAL PROMPT #2

Write about each of the items on your five things list. Describe in detail how you will carry them out (e.g. Exercise: I will go for a walk around the block, or I will turn off my computer and not return to it until I am confident I won't relapse).
HOW ARE YOU DOING?

OVERVIEW
We hope that you have a better understanding of yourself and the circumstances you need to avoid. In addition, we hope that you are able to pay attention more effectively to your feelings and allow yourself to gain control in tough moments.

INSTRUCTIONS
This assignment is designed to evaluate how well you are doing in understanding yourself and the circumstances you need to avoid. Please review the five strategies below and rate your efforts on a scale from 1-10, 10 = I am doing it, 1 = I am not doing it at all.

STEP #1
Complete the following table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RATE YOUR EFFORTS (10=I'M DOING MY BEST)</th>
<th>RATING</th>
<th>IF A LOW RATING, HOW CAN YOU INCREASE YOUR EFFORTS?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do you continue to Identify where, when, why, and how?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you avoid trigger environments?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you reducing your time alone?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you shared your crucial moments with someone else?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you review your plan?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
STEP #2

Journal about this assignment. What insights did you gain?
OVERCOMING COMPULSIVE SEXUAL BEHAVIOR

WEEK 8: USING RELATIONSHIPS TO STRENGTHEN RECOVERY

“

It is not our purpose to become each other; it is to recognize each other, to learn to see the other and honor him for what he is.

”

HERMAN HESSE

OBJECTIVE

Are you feeling lonely? Loneliness can lessen self-esteem, create emotional distress and a decline in executive function. As a result, loneliness can lead us to act out in ways that are unhealthy.

This week’s group is about building relationships in order to not feel lonely. We will help you create a plan to surround yourself with people that will lift you up, leaving you feeling supported in your time of need.

OOCW

WATCH:

› Building Relationships that Strengthen Recovery bit.ly/ADDOAD
› Connect with Others & Forget Yourself bit.ly/ADDOAD

COMPLETE:

› Recovery Capital Checklist
› Journal Prompt #1
› Building a Support Team

© 2017, Addo Recovery, LLC
RECOVERY CAPITAL CHECKLIST

OBJECTIVE
To overcome unwanted behaviors we can’t focus solely on symptom reduction. Recovery is more than just abstinence from acting out; it is about building a full and productive life.

The goal of this sheet is to create awareness around the development of important areas in your life. Areas that when improved, will lead to recovery.

INSTRUCTIONS
Each week, fill out this sheet to check on your own development. Be prepared to talk about your feelings in individual/group therapy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RECOVERY CAPITAL</th>
<th>SCORE FROM 0-10 (10 = HIGH)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12 Step Groups</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sponsor/Accountability Partner</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual Connection</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Regulation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Compassion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthy Living</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
JOURNAL PROMPT #1

Do you feel that you have the skills to reach out for support? Explain your answer.
**BUILDING A SUPPORT TEAM**

**OVERVIEW**

This assignment will help you identify people you could potentially call during a craving or crucial moment.

**INSTRUCTIONS**

List the people on your recovery team and answer the following questions: Who would be the number one person I would call if my cravings were high? If I had a very stressful experience, with whom would I share that experience? Who is best at listening to me and making me feel understood?

**PART #1**

List the people on your recovery team. Who you would call in a time of need?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RECOVERY TEAM MEMBER</th>
<th>WHO WOULD I CALL FIRST?</th>
<th>DURING STRESS, WHO CAN I SHARE WITH?</th>
<th>WHO IS THE BEST LISTENER?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“FEEL FELT”

OVERVIEW
We make our families and our friends suffer because we do not understand them well enough. In this assignment we will help you increase your awareness of how others are feeling. We want you to make loved ones “feel felt.”

INSTRUCTIONS
Identify the person with whom you want to be closest with and write how you can help them “feel felt.” Practice this exercise everyday for the next week and anytime you are experiencing problems in your relationships.

STEP #1
Identify the person with whom you want to be closest with and write how you can help them “feel felt.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PERSON YOU WANT TO BE CLOSEST WITH</th>
<th>HOW CAN YOU HELP THEM “FEEL FELT?”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
STEP #2

Journal about this experience. How did it help?
JOURNAL PROMPT #2
Make a list of people that you feel you can depend upon and who you could trust to be a part of your recovery team. Review the list and rank order them in order of who would be most helpful to you.
HOW OPEN ARE YOU?

OVERVIEW
In this lesson we will help you identify how open you are with others and help you create more meaningful relationships.

INSTRUCTIONS
On a scale from 1 to 10, with 10 being “I already do this” and 1 being “I don’t do this at all,” how would you score yourself in these five areas? 1. Openness, 2. Honesty, 3. Integrity, 4. Faith and hope, 5. A deeper understanding of love.

Once you have the score written, create a game plan to improve each area.

STEP #1
On a scale of 1 - 10, rate the following

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>RATE ON SCALE OF 1-10 (10=ALREADY DO IT)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Openness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honesty</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faith and Hope</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding of Love</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

STEP #2
How am I going to improve in the areas that need improvement?
STEP #3
Journal about the assignment. What did you learn?
JOURNAL PROMPT #3

How many people have I felt safe with throughout my life? Why was I safe with them?
OVERCOMING COMPULSIVE SEXUAL BEHAVIOR

WEEK 9: HOW TO DEVELOP A COMPASSIONATE MIND

"To develop compassion in ourselves, we need to practice mindful breathing, deep listening, and deep looking.

THICH NHAT HHAN

OBJECTIVE

“In the treatment of addiction, which reportedly carries more shame than other mental health concerns, shame perpetuates a cycle that actually works to maintain addictive symptoms” (Wiechelt, 2007).

This week we want to work on your shame and help you develop a compassionate mind.

OOCW

WATCH:

› Compassionately Judge Yourself bit.ly/ADDOAD
› How to Develop a Compassionate Mind bit.ly/ADDOAD
› How to Use Compassion in Your Recovery Efforts bit.ly/ADDOAD

COMPLETE:

› Recovery Capital Checklist
› Reaction Sequence
› Inner Dialogue
› Journal Prompt #1
› Journal Prompt #2

© 2017, Addo Recovery, LLC

FEEL CONNECTED AGAIN
RECOVERY CAPITAL CHECKLIST

OBJECTIVE
To overcome unwanted behaviors we can’t focus solely on symptom reduction. Recovery is more than just abstinence from acting out; it is about building a full and productive life.

The goal of this sheet is to create awareness around the development of important areas in your life. Areas that when improved, will lead to recovery.

INSTRUCTIONS
Each week, fill out this sheet to check on your own development. Be prepared to talk about your feelings in individual/group therapy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RECOVERY CAPITAL</th>
<th>SCORE FROM 0-10 (10 = HIGH)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12 Step Groups</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sponsor/Accountability Partner</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual Connection</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Regulation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Compassion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthy Living</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
REACTION SEQUENCE

OVERVIEW
Developing awareness of how your addiction works is crucial to the recovery process. The better you understand your reaction sequence the more effectively you’ll be able to respond.

INSTRUCTIONS
In this assignment we will guide you through your past relapses, and you will write the steps of the event as they unfolded.

PART #1
Stimulus: What triggered your emotions or thoughts leading to relapse?
PART #2
Emotion: What type of emotions were triggered?

PART #3
Thought: What type of thoughts were triggered?
PART #4
Chemical Release: How did your body begin to react (increased heart rate, sweaty palms, etc.)?

PART #5
Second Thought: What was the belief or justifying reason for giving in (Everyone is doing it, Not a big deal, etc.)?
PART #6

An effective tool to implement during the reaction sequence is the Stop Method. When the stimulus or trigger is experienced, say or think “STOP.” This will break the pattern and pull you away from your thoughts. After saying “stop,” repeat a personal mantra.

An example of a mantra could be:

“This is a dangerous time for me. I need to be careful. I’m not going to give in.”

Write your mantra here:
PART #7

Journal about your experience. What did you learn?
YOUR INNER DIALOGUE

OVERVIEW

Joe Dispenza said that “whatever the oft-repeated thought, behavior, or feeling is, it will become automatic, unconscious habit. So if you keep thinking the same thoughts, doing the same things, and feeling the same emotions, you will begin to hardwire your brain into a finite reality.”

This assignment is designed to help you develop an awareness of your inner dialogue. How do you talk to yourself? Is it positive or negative? We want to change your inner dialogue toward compassionate thinking.

INSTRUCTIONS

For 24 hours track your thoughts.

Every time you criticize yourself, think something negative, or demean yourself or others, give yourself a check. After you have placed the check, write down three positive things about yourself or if you were critical of others three traits or qualities you like about them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>✓</th>
<th>POSITIVE THOUGHT #1</th>
<th>POSITIVE THOUGHT #2</th>
<th>POSITIVE THOUGHT #3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓</td>
<td>POSITIVE THOUGHT #1</td>
<td>POSITIVE THOUGHT #2</td>
<td>POSITIVE THOUGHT #3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
JOURNAL PROMPT #1

Thich Nhat Hhan suggested, "the way to develop compassion is through mindful breathing, deep listening and deep looking."

Write about what deep listening and deep looking would do for you.
JOURNAL PROMPT #2

What is the most important thing you can do to increase the amount of compassion you have for yourself?
JOURNAL PROMPT #3

When in your life have you felt the most compassion for someone else? What did you do for that person in response to how you were feeling about their suffering?
OVERCOMING COMPULSIVE SEXUAL BEHAVIOR

WEEK 10: MAKING AMENDS

“...It is the highest form of self-respect to admit our errors and mistakes and make amends for them. To make a mistake is only an error in judgment, but to adhere to it when it is discovered shows infirmity of character.

DALE TURNER

OBJECTIVE

Part of the healing and recovery process is a discussion of how your behaviors have influenced others. It has been said that one of the most powerful ways for healing to happen is for the offending party to acknowledge the individuals that they have hurt or harmed.

By identifying and acknowledging the pain we have created it allows us to heal. Regarding this John Bradshaw wrote this about steps five through nine, “Steps Five, Six and Seven restore us to ourselves. We accept ourselves enough to be willing to talk about our wrongs. We have enough hope about ourselves that we can ask our Higher Power for help. We are ready to be responsible, to remedy our wrongs, to move on and grow. Steps Eight and Nine are the remedial steps. They state: “We made a list of all the persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them” (Step Eight), “We made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others” (Step Nine).

OOCW

COMPLETE:

• Recovery Capital Checklist
Beginning to Make Amends

RECOVERY CAPITAL CHECKLIST

OBJECTIVE
To overcome unwanted behaviors we can’t focus solely on symptom reduction. Recovery is more than just abstinence from acting out; it is about building a full and productive life.

The goal of this sheet is to create awareness around the development of important areas in your life. Areas that when improved, will lead to recovery.

INSTRUCTIONS
Each week, fill out this sheet to check on your own development. Be prepared to talk about your feelings in individual/group therapy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RECOVERY CAPITAL</th>
<th>SCORE FROM 0-10 (10 = HIGH)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12 Step Groups</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sponsor/Accountability Partner</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual Connection</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Regulation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Compassion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthy Living</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
BEGINNING TO MAKE AMENDS

OVERVIEW
Living amends are simple in concept: making a living amends means living a completely new lifestyle and being committed to that lifestyle (in part for those who you harmed and in part for yourself).

INSTRUCTIONS
In this assignment we will help you begin to make amends by identifying the individuals that your behaviors have harmed, writing a letter to one person that your behaviors have hurt and asking for feedback from your spouse and others you have hurt.

STEP #1
Begin identifying the individuals that your behaviors have harmed. This is not an easy activity but if done without shame, but guilt it can lead to healing for self and others.

- Self: How have your behavior/s hurt you? Be careful to slow down this process and think about the ways that your behaviors have hurt you. For example, you might identify the way that it has limited you. How has it influenced your emotions and overall happiness and well-being?
• The People Closest to You: Make a list of the people to whom you are the closest. How have you behaviors hurt or harmed these individuals. For example, if you are married you might write about the different ways that your behavior has created fear or worry in your spouse. Write about how it has altered her thoughts, emotions, and behaviors.

• Others: Now identify individuals who have been indirectly influenced by your behaviors. Your list might included: 1) your employers, 2) your religious leaders who have spent time with you; 3) extended family or friends.
STEP #2
Write a letter to one person that your behaviors have hurt. In the letter acknowledge the behaviors that you have been involved in and then write about how you lied, deceived, or manipulated them in some way. This is not a letter for to just say “I’m sorry” it is designed for the purpose of identifying and acknowledging how you hurt this person by using deceitful behavior. The more specific you can be there is a better chance of healing and recovery.

EXAMPLE
Dear ______________,

Over the past few years I have been activity viewing pornography. It has occurred on and off during that time. I anticipate I have viewed pornography 100 times in those years. It was the worst when we first moved to ________ in 2013. Since then I have talked with you but never given you the full extent of my behavior. I have lied and minimized my behavior. You didn’t deserve any of my behavior. I have been wrong and want you to know that I place no blame on you. Over the years I have often pushed responsibility onto you saying that you were not available. In my mind I would make up excuses to do what I did. I now realize that my thoughts made me into the victim and made you out to be the bad guy. For so long I really thought these things were true. It simply wasn’t fair to you. I am sorry for blaming you. I am responsible for my actions and am learning that as long as I blame you I won’t or can’t be made whole.

What I am committing to:

1. From this point forward I am committing to:
2. Take responsibility for my actions. I will not keep secrets.
3. I will reach out for support often and talk with my support team.
4. I will contact sponsor daily for the next ________ and then we will re-evaluate.
5. I will be more attentive to your needs by listening to you and answering your questions.
6. If at any time you want to ask me if I have relapsed I will respond. I want to be accountable and want no more wedges between us. My secrets have hurt your trust in me and this is my responsibility.
WRITE YOUR LETTER HERE
STEP #3
Ask for feedback from your spouse and others you have hurt.

Guidelines for receiving their feedback:
1. Be curious. Listen intently
2. Before you jump to an apology make sure you fully understand. Ask questions and seek a genuine understanding.
3. Acknowledge and re-acknowledge the hurt that you have created. Remember that healing is a process and takes time. If you are willing to be with the people you have hurt by your actions, they will sense that your heart has changed. This usually requires multiple discussions and expression of hurts. As you avoid shame-ing yourself you will be able to genuinely hear what is being said. This enables YOU and your spouse to heal.
OVERCOMING COMPULSIVE SEXUAL BEHAVIOR

WEEK 11: SIX TYPES OF INTIMACY THAT CROWD OUT ADDICTION

“Intimacy is not a happy medium. It is a way of being in which the tension between distance and closeness is dissolved and a new horizon appears. Intimacy is beyond fear.”

HENRI NOUWEN

OBJECTIVE

In order to form and maintain intimate relationships, it is important to understand your levels of intimacy. This week will help you gain awareness of your intimacy levels and help you decide which areas need work.

OOCW

WATCH:

› Six Types of Intimacy that Crowd Out Addiction bit.ly/ADDOAD

COMPLETE:

› Recovery Capital Checklist
› Your Levels of Intimacy
› Progress Check - http://www.assessingpornaddiction.com/assessment

© 2017, Addo Recovery, LLC
RECOVERY CAPITAL CHECKLIST

OBJECTIVE
To overcome unwanted behaviors we can’t focus solely on symptom reduction. Recovery is more than just abstinence from acting out; it is about building a full and productive life.

The goal of this sheet is to create awareness around the development of important areas in your life. Areas that when improved, will lead to recovery.

INSTRUCTIONS
Each week, fill out this sheet to check on your own development. Be prepared to talk about your feelings in individual/group therapy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RECOVERY CAPITAL</th>
<th>SCORE FROM 0-10 (10 = HIGH)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12 Step Groups</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sponsor/Accountability Partner</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual Connection</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Regulation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Compassion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthy Living</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

© 2017, Addo Recovery, LLC
YOUR LEVELS OF INTIMACY

OVERVIEW
In order to form and maintain intimate relationships, it is important to understand your levels of intimacy. This assignment will help you gain awareness of your intimacy levels and help you decide which areas need work.

INSTRUCTIONS
Write and rate yourself on a scale from 1-10, 10 being high, your levels in the six types of intimacy: verbal, emotional, cognitive, spiritual, sexual, psychological.

Once rated, write how you might improve your levels of intimacy that need improvement.

STEP #1
Rate your level of intimacy in the following areas:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE OF INTIMACY</th>
<th>RATING ON SCALE OF 1-10 (10 BEING HIGH)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Verbal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
STEP #2

Once rated, how can you better improve each type of intimacy?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE OF INTIMACY</th>
<th>HOW CAN YOU IMPROVE?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Verbal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
STEP #3

Journal about this assignment. What did you learn?
OVERCOMING COMPULSIVE SEXUAL BEHAVIOR

WEEK 12: YOUR TOMBSTONE

OVERVIEW
When you die, what do you want them to write on your tombstone? This is your legacy, this is what people will remember about you, what do you want them to say?

INSTRUCTIONS
Complete the following:

PART #1
Here rests__________________________, he was ...
PART #2
Time to Build!
You are the builder/creator of your life, what do you want it to be from here on out?

What are the next steps in your recovery, what's next in your relationships (romantic, familial, work, church, etc)?
What would have to happen for these things to be a reality?