

**Addiction -
How Do You Know If Infidelity is a Symptom of Sexual Addiction?
10 Indicators**

By Peggy L. Ferguson, Ph.D.

You have just discovered or been informed of your partner's infidelity. You are in shock. You are confused, angry, immobilized, depressed, and thinking you will absolutely go crazy. In the midst of all this, you keep hearing about "sexual addiction" in the media and you wonder if it is sexual compulsivity. How do you know if the infidelity is a symptom of sexual addiction?

Below are some indicators of infidelity as a component of sexual addiction:

1. Sex addiction is a pattern of sexual acting out. If this episode of infidelity is the not first time that you have suspected or discovered infidelity it may be addiction.
2. Sex addicts usually have more than one sexual compulsion. If your spouse compulsively engages in other sexual behaviors, it could be addiction.
3. If you discover that your partner has been going to strip clubs, adult bookstores, cruising locations, like "pick-up bars", or other places where they would have more of an opportunity to act out if they chose to, it could be an indicator.
4. Sex addicts often have difficulty with true intimacy. If you feel sexually used, abused, or viewed as a sex object by your partner, it is an indicator.
5. If your partner seems to have less interest in sex with you and less interest in the intimacy of your relationship, it could be an indicator.
6. Sex takes on an exaggerated level of importance to a sex addict. Thinking about sex, fantasizing, planning, being obsessed about sex, are indicators of addiction.
7. Sex addicts use sex as a drug to deal with life's ups and downs. If your spouse seems to "need sex" when s/he is stressed out, and s/he seem to feel better afterward (briefly), it could be addiction.
8. Sexual addiction is often cross-addicted with other addictions, like gambling, compulsive overeating, alcohol and other drug addiction. If your spouse has other addictions, it could be that s/he is also a sex addict.
9. If you have discovered negative financial consequences of the infidelity or of other sexual acting out, it could be addiction.
10. If one or both of you come from an addicted family of origin, where one or members are addicted to sex, alcohol or other drugs (AOD), gambling, or work, it could be addiction. Newly recovering sex addicts, (and sometimes their spouses), often discover

that there was sexual acting out in their family of origin, either with infidelity, some other compulsive sexual behavior, or sexual abuse (or other abuse).

Infidelity, like sexual addiction, carries with it, a certain amount of secrecy, dishonesty, shame, guilt, emotional turmoil, and difficulties with intimacy in significant relationships. If you can identify with some of the indicators above, the unfaithful spouse should be encouraged to be evaluated for sexual addiction by a professional. You, as the spouse, are encouraged to find out everything that you can about this illness, so that you can not only make decisions based on information, but so that you can heal from the pain that you are experiencing.

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