

How to Get Help For Sexual Addiction When You Don't Have Money

By Peggy L. Ferguson, Ph.D.

Most communities have state supported counseling resources, such as community mental health centers and substance abuse treatment centers. Some offer inpatient treatment. Some offer outpatient treatment. Some offer both. Any place that has a "sliding scale", which is cost based on adjusted income, probably has a state contract. Many have a policy that says that no one will be turned away due to a "lack of ability to pay". That means that if you cannot afford even the sliding scale fee appropriate to your income, that you can usually still get counseling.

Although there are many people who focus on sexual addiction treatment, such specialized services may not be readily available in your community, or may not be accessible to those without health insurance or ability to pay for expensive fees. In such cases, other professionals who are generally available to those with limited financial resources would most likely be connected to community mental health or substance abuse services that are state supported. Usually the helping professionals most likely to be versed in sexual compulsiveness treatment are addiction counselors.

Other "free" or "low cost" options include the local public library. Check out the Patrick Carnes books and others writing on the subject. An internet search with key words that speak to your specific situation can turn up a number of sites that have articles and other resources for personal growth and development.

The local phone book and local newspaper can tell you when, where, and phone numbers to the meetings for Sex Addicts Anonymous (SAA), Sexaholics Anonymous (SA), Recovering Couples Anonymous (RCA), or Celebrate Recovery groups. In your local newspaper, there is usually a particular day of the week where they publish a list of local organizations, meetings, groups, etc. Pick a group and start going. 12 step groups are free.

If none of the above are listed, go to open AA meetings. The principles of recovery are the same for all addictions. Many people who have sexual addiction also have other addictions, especially alcoholism and other drug addiction. So if you drink, it is probably in your best interest to become abstinent from alcohol and other mood altering drugs (with possible exception of prescribed medication) while you figure out all the variables of your sexual addiction.

Most people have to abstain from sexual behavior for at least 30 days to 90 days in order to be able to step back and assess their sexual behavior, identify negative consequences of that behavior, and identify their own personal definition of abstinence. You can treat sexual compulsion cravings the same way that you treat alcohol and other drug cravings.

Even though you don't have insurance or other economic resources, you can still recover. You just have to piece together the various components of treatment, learning, and support yourself. The ultimate goal for treatment of sexual compulsiveness, despite the initial abstinence suggestion, is not lifelong abstinence, but a return to healthy sexuality.

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