

Tasks of Sexual Addiction Recovery

Developed by Patrick Carnes, Ph.D.

| Task/Goal | Performables | Life Competency |
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| 1. Break through denial | Make a full disclosure to therapist all forms of sexual acting out. Complete a list of examples of powerlessness and unmanageability. Address thinking errors. | Recognize self delusion |
| 2. Understand the nature of the illness | Read at least one book on sexual addiction/anorexia. Complete the First Step. Complete a Sexual History. Complete a Consequences Inventory. | Have knowledge of Addiction and Recovery |
| 3. Surrender to the Process | Complete a Second Step and Third Step. | Know personal limits |
| 4. Admit damage from behavior | Write a Damage Control Plan and implement it. | Be an expert in self care, crisis avoidance and crisis management |
| 5. Establish Sobriety | Write a Sobriety Statement. Complete a Celibacy Contract of eight weeks or more. Write a Relapse Prevention Plan. Complete Fantasy Contamination Exercise. | Manage life without dysfunctional sexual behavior |
| 6. Ensure Physical Health/ Integrity | Complete a physical exam. | Be an expert in physical self care |
| 7. Participate in a culture of support | Attend Twelve Step sex addiction meetings regularly. Attend other Twelve Step meetings as appropriate. | Build a functional health support system |
| 8. Reduce Shame | Complete Step 4 and Step 5. | Recognize and manage toxic shame |
| 9. Grief Losses | Define clear grieving strategies and use them. | Recognize grief and have skills for grieving |
| 10. Understand multiple addictions and sobriety | Complete an Addiction Interaction Disorder screen. Complete a Multiple Addiction Relapse Prevention Plan. | Remain relapse free from all concurrent addictions |
| 11. Acknowledge cycles of abuse | Complete Survivors weeks. Complete Abuse Inventory. | Identify abuse and exploitation. |
| 12. Bring closure and resolution to addiction shame | Complete Step Eight and Step Nine. | Keep current on shame, resentment and relationship issues |
| 13. Restore financial viability | Save within financial means (spend less than earned). Work Recovery financial plan. | Maintain financial viability |
| 14. Restore meaningful work | Establish a meaningful career path. | Have meaningful works |
| 15. Create lifestyle balance | Use a Personal Craziness Index for 8 weeks. | Live in balance and harmony |

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| 16. Build supportive personal relationships | Find and use a sponsor. Attend therapy group for 175 hours. Be a sponsor to others. | Initiate and sustain enduring life relationships |
| 17. Establish healthy exercise and nutrition patterns | Have a weekly aerobic exercise pattern. Remain in appropriate weight range for age and height. | Stay physically fit |
| 18. Restructure relationship with self | Complete eighteen months of individual therapy. Clarify boundaries, goals and needs. | Have a workable, compassionate relationship with self in order to be self-determining and autonomous. |
| 19. Resolve original conflict wounds | Do therapy specific to family of origin or trauma issues. | Identify and manage recurring dysfunctional patterns. |
| 20. Restore healthy sexuality | Write a sex plan and keep it updated. | Have sexual health. |
| 21. Involve family members in therapy | Family members attend Family Week. Family members attend therapy sessions. | Capacity to ask help from immediate family. |
| 22. Alter dysfunctional family relationships | Full disclosure to primary partner and immediate family as appropriate. | Remain true to self in the presence of dysfunction. |
| 23. Commit to recovery for each family member | Family members/spouses enter a recovery program for themselves. | Take responsibility for self. |
| 24. Resolve issues with children | Share secrets and make amends to children when appropriate. | Resolve conflict in dependent relationships. |
| 25. Resolve issues with extended family | Share secrets and make amends to extended family when appropriate. | Resolves conflict in interdependent relationships. |
| 26. Work through differentiation/healthy boundaries | Write a "Fair Fight" contract. | Sustain intimacy without loss of self. |
| 27. Recommit/commit to primary relationship | Commit to a primary relationship, or recommit to primary relationship. | Capacity to maintain a committed relationship. |
| 28. Commit to coupleship | Attend Twelve Step meeting for couples regularly. | Participate in a community of couples. |
| 29. Succeed in primary intimacy | Have a primary relationship which is satisfying. | Be vulnerable and intimate. |
| 30. Develop a spiritual life | Find and use a spiritual director or mentor. Join a spiritual community. | Be spiritual conscious. |

See Also:

[Out of the Shadows: Understanding Sexual Addiction by Patrick Carnes](#)

[Facing the Shadow: Starting Sexual and Relationship Recovery by Patrick Carnes](#)

[Recovery Zone Volume 1: Making Changes that Last: the Internal Task by Patrick Carnes](#)

[Recovery Zone Volume 2: Making Changes that Last: the External Task by Patrick Carnes](#)