



## **Is Your Partner a Sex Addict?**

By Dr. Linda Hancock

### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Dr. Hancock has written a regular weekly column entitled "All Psyched Up" for newspapers in two Canadian provinces for more than a dozen years. Over the years, her readers and clients have said that they have benefited from her common-sense solutions, wisdom, and sense of humour. Dr. Linda Hancock, the author of "Life is An Adventure...every step of the way" and "Open for Business Success" is a Registered Psychologist who has a private practice in Medicine Hat. She can be reached at 403-529-6877 or through email [office@drlindahancock.com](mailto:office@drlindahancock.com)

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It has always been difficult to define the word "addiction" because people's perceptions vary. Some individuals minimize or have a fixed idea that they aren't addicted because they are still able to function fairly well. Underneath, however, they might feel that they have to hide their feelings and actions because they are worried that others will judge them or force them to get treatment that they do not believe they need.

Sometimes people are worried about their partner, family member or friend because there are showing signs of addiction accompanied by denial that anything is wrong. It can be very painful to watch someone who you love make poor choices over and over again without acknowledging this or getting any help. Well, you can't push a rope! Maybe you are the one who needs help to deal with the stress.

Long-time sex researcher Dr. Patrick Carnes has used research that was published in the American Society of Addiction Medicine to develop a reliable tool to use for diagnostic purposes. PATHOS is a brief screening that takes only a few minutes to complete. It has a high reliability and validity. Several studies "support the use of PATHOS as a screening instrument to detect potential sexual addiction in clinical settings."

In 30 seconds you can find out if you or your partner may be addicted to pornography or sex.

P reoccupied - Do you often find yourself preoccupied with sexual thoughts?

A shamed - Do you hide some of your sexual behavior from others?

T reatment - Have you ever sought therapy for sexual behavior you did not like?

H urt others - Has anyone been hurt emotionally because of your sexual behavior?

O ut of control - Do you feel controlled by your sexual desire?

S ad - When you have sex, do you feel depressed afterwards?

A positive response to just one of the six questions would indicate a need for additional assessment with a certified sex addiction therapist. Two or more are considered to certainly indicate sexual addiction.

If you complete the PATHOS and have further questions, do not hesitate to contact a professional who has specialized training in this field. You will never be judged or treated like you are "bad". You will be provided with excellent tools and support that will help you to regain your confidence and rebuild your health and relationships.

An old expression states "The truth hurts" but in clinical settings we believe that awareness is the first step to healing. If the PATHOS has opened your eyes to a problem, do not despair. The good news is that there is help for you. The first step is to call for an appointment today. I am sure you will be glad that you did.