

BEHAVIORAL ADDICTION INTERVENTIONS

- Experts state that behavioral addictions, in comparison to substance addictions, are similar in patterns and actions, and follow the same cycles as chemical dependency.
- Not all addictions involve the ingestion of drugs and/or alcohol. Behavior addictions fall under the area of self-harm, such as cutting one's self (those who do so are known as cutters), stress, emotional issues, mental health problems, acting out with multiple partners that can involve risky behaviors, health problems that can cause negative financial issues, and relationship abuse.
- Most behavioral addictions happen when there is a compulsion, and when the person is unable to stop an activity even when it results in negative consequences in their life.
- Behavior addictions can interrupt the person's ability to sleep, work, or have meaningful personal relationships.
- Accessing a professional interventionist for behavioral addictions can lead to prevention and give the identified patient options and treatment resources.
- Behavioral addiction interventions can be a joint effort, using a professional interventionist and behavioral therapist who are able to work collaboratively in order to help families identify community treatment resources.
- Treatment approaches for behavior addiction address the driving force behind the addictive behaviors, using various effective treatment models such as Cognitive Behavior Therapy (CBT), Motivational Interviewing (MI), and Model of Change. Each of these approaches can help, along with inpatient, outpatient, and/or community-based treatment, while involving the family in all phases of the process.

Definitions of Some Common Behavioral Addictions:

Gambling Addiction

- Many people enjoy trying their luck in a game of chance. There is a certain "rush" associated with the possibility of winning. When this behavior becomes compulsive, and the gambler is unable to control the urge to continue playing, they are dealing with a full-blown addiction.

Food Addiction

- Do you eat to live or live to eat? Not only do we need nutrition to keep our bodies healthy and functioning properly, but eating can be a very pleasurable experience. The sight, smell, and taste of food are all part of the process. What and how much we choose to eat can affect the brain, and all of these things are part of the reason some people become addicted to food.

Sex Addiction

- You may not have thought of it like this, but sex is a mind-altering experience. Being a sex addict isn't the same as having a high sex drive, although some addicts do act out regularly on their impulses. When someone is caught up in sexual behaviors as a way to zone out or get a high rather than to intimately connect with a partner, they are a sex addict.

Love Addiction

- Love addiction isn't about love at all. It has to do with the addict's need to either be in a relationship or to hang on to the person they are attached to at all costs. As a result, they strive to become the person they think their partner wants them to be, up to and including tolerating bad behavior and abuse. Other love addicts can't let go of a relationship, and become stalkers.

Porn Addiction

- When a person's interest in looking at pornographic images goes from something that is a small part of their life to the focus of a good portion of their time and energy, they are in the midst of a porn addiction. Some people spend hours or days at a time looking at or thinking about porn, which can have a profound effect on their real-life relationships.

Work Addiction

- From the time we are children, many of us are taught that working hard is something that is desirable. When we are looking for work, we want to impress the employer with the fact that we are responsible and will diligently perform our duties if hired. The slippery slope from wanting to do well on the job to work addiction starts when work

becomes the primary focus of the person's life, and they can't stop thinking or obsessing about it.

Exercise Addiction

- Exercise addiction is another example of someone participating in an activity that, when done in moderation, is considered a good thing. Over time, the person with this kind of addiction starts to behave compulsively around exercise. They work out longer, and more intensely, than is required to be fit or to train for a particular sport.

Video Game Addiction

- Video game addiction occurs when playing is no longer simply a pleasant way to spend one's time. When game use gets to the point where it becomes more important to the player than work, school, or their personal relationships, this red flag may indicate an addiction problem.

Shopping Addiction

- We live in a consumer-driven society, and spending is something that drives the economy. For a person with a shopping addiction, the urge to spend is out of control. They use shopping as a way to cope with anxiety or stress, which can lead to severe financial consequences if it isn't brought under control.