

RECOVERY GROUP INFORMATION

Celebrate Recovery Small Groups CAN:

- Provide you a safe place to share your experiences, strengths, and hopes with others that are also going through a Christ-centered recovery.
- Provide you with a leader who has gone through a similar hurt, hang-up, or habit and who will facilitate the group as it focuses on a particular Step each week.
- The leader will also follow Celebrate Recovery's "Small Group Guidelines," listed below.
- Provide you with the opportunity to find an Accountability Partner or a Sponsor.
- Encourage you to attend other recovery meetings held throughout the week.

Celebrate Recovery Small Groups Will NOT:

- Attempt to offer any professional advice. Our leaders are not counselors. At your request, we can provide you with a list of approved counseling referrals.
- Allow its members to attempt to "fix" one another.

CHEMICAL DEPENDENCY

Exploring the Issue of Chemical Dependency

Have you ever thought you have a problem with drinking alcohol or using drugs? If so, you may have tried to quit on your own and found that while you can gain some level of sobriety, freedom from the compulsion to use your drug of choice has been elusive. At Celebrate Recovery we know that a relationship with Jesus Christ as our Higher Power can set us free.

Characteristics of someone struggling with Chemical Dependency may include, but are not limited to:

- I drink or use in excess to get drunk or high on a regular basis.
- I feel powerless to stop using my drug of choice.
- I tell myself that I will quit, but I never follow through.
- My addiction causes pain to myself and to those around me.
- My use has cost me close friends, key relationships, jobs, or other important parts of my life because I have made my drug of choice the most important thing in my life.
- Using used to be fun, but now it is something I feel like I need to do just to get by.
- I get angry when loved ones tell me I have a problem.
- I try to hide my addiction from others.
- I think that if I could find the right amount, combination, or drug of choice, my problems would go away.
- I feel convicted that I have a problem, but I try to push that feeling away in order to protect my addiction.

CO-DEPENDENCY

Exploring the Issue of Co-Dependency

Co-dependency is when a person's need for approval or validation from another person allows them to be controlled or manipulated, or a person who attempts to manipulate or control someone. They are willing to compromise their own values, choices, and behavior at the expense of their personal well-being.

Characteristics of someone struggling with co-dependency may include, but are not limited to:

- Assuming responsibility for other's feelings and behaviors.
- Feeling guilty about other's feelings and behaviors.
- Having difficulty identifying or expressing one's own feelings.
- Minimizing, altering, or denying how one truly feels.
- Worrying about how others may respond to your feelings, opinions, and behavior.
- Valuing others opinions and feelings more than your own.
- Living with messages of not being good enough, valued, or loved.
- Fear of expressing different opinions or feelings from those of others.
- Fear of being hurt and/or rejected by others.
- Compromising one's own beliefs, values, and integrity to avoid other's rejection or anger.
- Over-functioning to be needed, valued, or loved.
- Tolerating mistreatment or abuse from others while justifying their behavior and trying to defend them.
- Overly caring for others at the expense of one's own self needs; feeling victimized and "used" as a result.
- Anxiety in saying "no" to someone, even when saying "yes" would be at great inconvenience.
- Directly or indirectly attempting to fix, manage, or control another person's problems to help them avoid feeling bad or experiencing the consequences of their choices.
- Judging everything you think, say, or do harshly, as never being "good enough." A perfectionist at heart.
- Feels conflicted by a desire to be needed and resentment for feeling obligated in serving others.
- Being extremely loyal, to the point of remaining in harmful situations too long.

Exploring the Issue of Being a Co-Dependent Woman in a Relationship With a Sexually Addicted Man

Many of us blame ourselves for the addict's behavior: We tell ourselves, "If only I were more attractive, thinner, taller, shorter, etc.—if only I were more sexual."

We give in to others' behaviors, only to lose ourselves in the process. Sometimes, we have even participated in their sexual fantasies, or joined in by using pornography with them, leaving us feeling used and abused. Some of us ignored or did not recognize the signs that the addict was living a secret life.

Many of us blame the addict and their behavior for every problem in our relationship. We believe that if they would only change then everything would be fine. In essence, co-dependents are addicted to their spouse's behaviors. They either give in to the addict, try to control them, or make them stop.

We have sometimes pretended to family, friends, and co-workers that everything is "wonderful." We have been unforgiving and sometimes punishing toward the addict.

Characteristics of a Co-Dependent Woman in a Relationship with a Sexually Addicted Man may include but are not limited to:

- Having a spouse who continually escapes to pornographic material.
- Having a spouse who is currently having or has had an affair.
- You, yourself, are having an affair.
- Issues dealing with molestation and abuse from a spouse.
- Their spouse engages with sex workers.

How We Find Recovery

Through a relationship with Jesus Christ as Savior and Higher Power, and by working through the 8 recovery principles and the Christ-centered 12 steps, we can find freedom from our hurts, hang ups and habits.

FOOD AND BODY IMAGE ISSUES

Exploring Food and Body Image Issues

An unhealthy relationship with food and/or our bodies begins and continues for many different reasons. Food may be used as a coping mechanism to ease negative feelings, emotions, and circumstances, to have control in one area of our chaotic life, or to change our body to fit an imagined standard that will bring fulfillment, peace, and acceptance.

We may be living a double life, secretly acting out, ashamed of our lack of control, our bodies, our destructive and irrational behaviors. We may rationalize our behaviors, justifying our unhealthy relationship with food as “health conscious.” We may jeopardize our relationships, health, jobs, morals, and values to continue in our self-destructive behaviors.

Characteristics of Someone Struggling with Food and Body Image Issues, May Include but Are Not Limited To:

- Inability to discern when physically hungry or physically full
- Excessive or compulsive consumption of food (bingeing) and/or getting rid of food (purging)
- Self-induced starvation, excessive use of laxatives, enemas, “diet” pills, or medications for weight loss
- Excessive and/or unhealthy weight loss
- Obsession with body weight and shape
- Spending the majority of your day thinking about food, when you’ll eat, what you’ll eat, how your body looks, how much you weigh, etc.
- Belief there is one or more perfect diet, program, plan, pill, or exercise that will be “the answer”
- Low self-esteem and/or negative body image
- Emotional disconnect from self, others, and God

FREEDOM FROM ANGER

Exploring the Issue of Anger

There is a plan and a purpose for anger in our lives. Anger is one of our 10 basic God-given emotions and there are constructive ways to deal with and express anger. For many of us, anger is the primary way we choose to express emotions. Therefore, anger is an issue that must be managed. We must learn to recognize our unhealthy patterns of anger and the emotions and circumstances that push us to become destructively angry.

For us, anger is a “misdirection,” a hang-up that we have developed to mask hurt or fear. At its core, our anger is an intent to preserve our personal worth, essential needs or basic convictions.

We may feel intense shame and guilt over the actions we have committed during our unhealthy expressions of anger. We vow never to act that way again, only to find ourselves back in the same situations, unable to change it by our own power.

Characteristics of Someone Struggling with Anger Issues may include, but are not limited to:

- I have to raise my voice to get my point across.
- I become impatient easily when things do not go according to my plans.
- When I am displeased with someone, I may shut down any communication with them or withdraw entirely.
- I am annoyed easily when others don't appear sensitive to my needs or convictions.
- I do not easily forget when someone “does me wrong”
- When someone confronts me with a misinformed opinion, I am thinking of my comeback while they are speaking.
- When I am forced to deal with emotions or circumstances that I do not want, I become resentful.
- I become annoyed when others don't hold themselves to the same standards that I hold myself to.
- I often use sarcasm and humor to communicate a point.
- People take me seriously when I am “aggressive.”
- I may act kindly toward others on the outside, yet feel bitter and frustrated on the inside.
- I find myself overreacting to minor incidents.

GAMBLING ADDICTION

Exploring the issue of Gambling Addiction

If, when you honestly want to, you find you cannot quit gambling entirely, or if you have little control over the amount you bet, you are probably a compulsive gambler. A compulsive gambler is described as a person whose gambling has caused growing and continuing problems in any department of his or her life.

Characteristics of someone struggling with a gambling addiction may include, but are not limited to:

- My gambling makes me careless of the welfare of myself and/or my family.
- I have borrowed money, sold possessions, and/or committed an illegal act to finance gambling.
- After losing I felt the need to return as soon as possible and win back my losses or after a win had a strong urge to return and win more.
- I have lost time at work, school, home, and with friends to gamble.
- At times, I have been defensive about my gambling and justified my right to gambling, especially when trying to escape worry or stress.
- I was trapped in the illusion of "just one more time." Or "this time it will be different."
- When I did seek help I was only looking for the pain to go away.
- My track record shows that it is impossible for me to gamble in any form.

LOVE AND RELATIONSHIP ADDICTION

Exploring the Issue of Love and Relationship Addiction

For most women with unhealthy love and relationship addiction, we are dealing with depression, isolation, and a lack of trust. Unhealthy use of love and relationships is used as a means of achieving worth.

Characteristics of Someone Struggling with Love and Relationship Addiction may include, but are not limited to:

- Lack of nurturing and attention when young
- Feeling isolated, detached from parents and family
- Mistake intensity for intimacy
- Hidden pain
- Seek to avoid rejection and abandonment at all cost
- Afraid to trust anyone in a relationship
- Inner rage over lack of nurturing, early abandonment
- Depressed
- Manipulative and controlling of others
- Perceive attraction, attachment, and sex as basic human needs, as with food and water
- Sense of worthlessness
- Escalating tolerance for high-risk behavior
- Presence of other addictive or compulsive problems
- Using others to alter mood or relieve pain
- Existence of secret “double life”
- Defining “wants” as “needs”
- Use fantasy or unhealthy relationships to escape painful feelings or reality
- Unrealistic or unhealthy expectations with our spouse

MIXED ISSUES

Welcome to Celebrate Recovery!

You may have come to our ministry because of a friend's recommendation. Maybe you are here because you saw a flyer or heard an announcement here at our church. Regardless of why you decided to attend, we are SO glad you are here.

We are very excited you have decided to stick around for our Open Share Groups. We want to provide a secure environment in our Open Share Groups that keep you coming back! That is

why we use the following five guidelines. These guidelines ensure that no matter what group you decide to attend, it will be an experience in which you will feel safe and supported.

These Small Group Guidelines are:

1. Keep your sharing focused on your own thoughts and feelings. Limit your sharing to three to five minutes.
2. There will be NO cross-talk. Cross-talk is when two individuals engage in conversation excluding all others. Each person sharing is free to express feelings without interruptions.
3. We are here to support one another, not "fix" one another.
4. Anonymity and confidentiality are basic requirements. What is shared in the group stays in the group. The only exception is when someone threatens to injure themselves or others.
5. Offensive language has no place in a Christ-centered recovery group.

Exploring Recovery

After attending our Newcomers 101 group you may still be struggling to find the right Open Share Group for you. *(The goal of Newcomers 101 is to explain how Celebrate Recovery works and to help you find an Open Share Group.)*

You may have looked through our group descriptions and not found a group that specifically meets your recovery needs.

You may have looked through our group descriptions and decided that you could be in any of them. You are unsure where exactly to start.

You may feel most comfortable starting your recovery journey around others with “mixed issues”...

However, at some point we believe there is power in being able to “name” your specific issue. Consider joining a step study, if one is available, to help you dig in to your recovery and to help you identify the core issue you are struggling with.

If you feel overwhelmed because you identify with more than one issue, we always recommend you start your recovery journey with the issue that is causing you, or others, the most pain right now.

PHYSICAL/EMOTIONAL AND/OR SEXUAL ABUSE FOR WOMEN

Exploring the Effects of Physical, Sexual and Emotional Abuse

RECOVERY IS A TWO FOLD PROCESS in this case. The first step is healing from the traumas done to us in our past, and the second step is healing from the influence these past experiences continue to have on our past.

Characteristics of Someone Struggling with the Effects of Physical, Sexual, and/or Emotional Abuse may include, but are not limited to:

- Are hesitant to identify themselves as victims of abuse.
- Feel isolated, depressed, worthless, and helpless to change.
- Are struggling with feelings about God in relation to their life experiences of abuse.
- Condemn themselves, denying the past abuse affects their present circumstances.
- Feel out of control and defeated in areas of compulsive behavior.
- Feel angry, bitter, and rebellious; have trouble with authority figures.
- Feel a lack of self-worth and low self-esteem.
- Are preoccupied with thoughts of what it means to have a “normal” relationship with others: mates, friends, family.
- Question their own sexual identity and may experience confusion regarding their own sexuality.
- Desire to regain their sexuality and feel safe in intimate relationships.
- Question self-reality: “Who am I?”
- Question whether life has a purpose.
- Feel “at home” in crisis situations.
- Struggle with perfectionism or “all or nothing thinking.”
- Desire to have victory through Christ over the life experience of abuse.

SEXUAL ADDICTION

Exploring the Issue of Sexual Addiction

Our lust often begins as an overpowering desire for pleasurable relief. We may be running from an inner pain, loneliness, emptiness, or an insecurity, and find that sex is the best way to cope. Lust, pornography, sex with ourselves or with others can briefly dissolve tension. It can momentarily relieve depression, resolve conflict, and even provide the means to escape from or deal with life's seemingly unbearable situations.

However, that pleasure often brings with it more tension, depression, rage, guilt, and even physical distress. The cycle continues as we try to relieve this new pain, leading to more sex, pornography and lust. We live in denial in order to avoid recognizing just how much our addiction controls our life. As we continue in our self destructive behaviors, sexual addiction jeopardizes our relationships, health, jobs, morals and values. Ultimately, sexual addiction takes the place of God in our lives as a coping mechanism to deal with life's hardships.

Characteristics of Someone Struggling with Sexual Addiction may include, but are not limited to:

- Engaged in promiscuity and illicit relationships.
- Engaged in sex with self, phone sex, cybersex, pornography, sex outside of marriage, hook ups
- Living a double life
- Jump from relationship to relationship
- Always looking for the "perfect" relationship to fulfill wants
- Use sexual acts as a way to cope or escape.
- Pursuit of sex has harmed or destroyed your marriage relationship
- Unable to limit or stop acting out
- Cannot resist sexual images
- Feel guilty after acting out
- Legal issues from a sexual offense
- Denies the sexual addiction is a problem
- Escalating tolerance for high risk behavior

