

Understanding and navigating

ADDICTION

Understanding addiction **02**

The dance that takes two: How codependency develops **04**

What you need to know about your husband's porn confession **06**

Easing back on your teen's gaming **08**

Helping an adult child caught up in drug or alcohol addiction **10**

Healing relationships in addiction recovery **12**

Additional resources **14**



UNDERSTANDING ADDICTION

BY WENDY KITTLITZ

Humans are created with innate needs: to feel safe and secure, to love and be loved, to connect deeply with others, and to engage in meaningful activity. In a pre-Fallen world, we were all designed to relate intimately with God, with significant others, and to have purpose by using the unique gifts and abilities given to each of us.

Sadly, we now live in a world impacted by the Fall, a world in which God's design is being distorted around us and the consequences of that impact many areas of our lives.

Addictions are an example of this. Many things that represent temptations for misuse (such as alcohol, drugs, sex, food, gaming, technology, etc.) have positive uses in the right context and in the right proportions. But for the addict, they become dangerous and harmful in a variety of ways. The word "addiction" comes from a Latin term which includes the idea of being "enslaved" and that is exactly what happens when the need for the object of an addiction becomes overwhelming.

"For freedom did Christ set us free; stand fast therefore, and be not entangled again in a yoke of bondage."

— GALATIANS 5:1 —

Identifying addiction

When does something that has legitimate uses cross the line into addiction? **It becomes a problem when it causes harm to you or others.**

For instance when counsellors do alcohol or drug screening, we assess not just the quantity of the substance consumed but the impact on the person socially, vocationally, physically and mentally.

Causes of addiction

Addiction is complex with many causes that often overlap. The following are a few factors that make people vulnerable to becoming addicted.

The first is heredity. There is strong evidence of a biological component to addictions. If there is a history of addiction in your family, you would be wise to be attuned to that risk and put strong boundaries around your choices.

A second is developmental. No one starts out intending to become addicted, but our brains are wired with a complex set of neurochemicals that impact every part of our beings. Drugs and alcohol (as well as illicit sexual activity, pornography, gambling, food and even over-working) stimulate the production of dopamine, creating a strong sense of well-being, albeit temporarily. After a while seeking the sensation becomes an out-of-control need and we keep doing it in spite of increasingly negative consequences.

A third is adverse social exposures. This could be abuse, trauma or stress, especially coupled with a lack of healthy supports. People who experience difficult events can be deeply impacted by them and can misuse addictions to cope with the pain of those experiences.

The lure of addiction

Whatever the cause, it's important to ask what purpose the addiction is serving in the life of an addict. Quite simply, for a short period of time, the object of the addiction makes a person feel better. It masks their pain; it offers a way to cope; it feels like a way to meet their needs. The problem is that it does not offer real solutions or meet the real underlying need. And as they continually seek this short-term solution, they face a myriad of other consequences, from relational to vocational, financial to legal, and so on.

So, why would anyone choose this? Addictions are not as simple as making a choice. Once something has crossed the line to being an addiction, the brain has literally been rewired by repeated exposure to the object to actually crave it. This is why simply telling yourself or your loved one to stop the behaviour is rarely enough. The person may genuinely see the harm and be motivated to stop but without miraculous intervention (which does thankfully happen in some cases), other treatment options are usually needed.

Addictions are ultimately ways of trying to get legitimate needs met with illegitimate means.

Wendy Kittlitz is the vice-president of counselling and care ministries for Focus on the Family Canada.

© 2022 Focus on the Family (Canada) Association. All rights reserved.

A CASE STUDY

Leon wants to feel loved and needed but his wife is preoccupied with work, babies and caring for her elderly father. Leon pouts, gets angry (which pushes her further away), starts looking at porn and eventually pays a woman to “get his needs met.” This pattern repeats until he is deeply addicted to sex.

Now, to be clear, Leon's wife is not responsible for his choices. Leon was given responsibility to take care of himself by God. That is the task of every mature adult.

So, what could Leon have done instead? He could acknowledge the underlying feelings he was experiencing (disappointment, sadness, feeling left out) and take them to God. He could remind himself that this is a season in his marriage and likely won't remain this way forever. He could schedule uninterrupted time with his wife to talk openly about the situation and brainstorm ways to reconnect as a couple.

But what hope is there for Leon now? There are ways to break the stranglehold of addictions and find a way back to healthy living. Depending on the type or severity of the addiction, treatment might include counselling, residential or day programs, peer support groups such as Celebrate Recovery or Freedom Session, accountability relationships, and even medication and/or biofeedback designed to help with the biochemical impacts. Finally, it's crucial to never underestimate the power of prayer, recommitting to making God the centre of your life, and working to make amends with those you have harmed. Trust will have been eroded and must be built back. But healing is possible.



THE DANCE THAT TAKES TWO: HOW CODEPENDENCY DEVELOPS

BY DR. RUSS RAINEY

David was exhausted from dealing with his wife's alcoholism. He knew that his pastor's brother battled drug addiction – and that his pastor understood the desire to see change – so he decided to share everything. The pastor surprised David with his response: “David, I know you love your wife. You've tried throwing away her hidden liquor, covering for her when she's hungover and her boss calls, and threatening legal action. But have you considered whether your actions are enabling her instead of helping?”

Codependency has long been associated with substance abuse. Treatment professionals first noticed that the spouse of an alcoholic could be as dependent on fixing, rescuing and controlling the alcoholic as the alcoholic was dependent on alcohol. So spouses were described as codependent. The couple was in a destructive dance.

Substance abuse isn't the only setting for codependency, however. The struggle could be with mental illness, irresponsibility or any number of issues. Codependency is likely to develop in any situation where someone can't function on their own – *where someone seems to need us, and we need to be needed.*

The need to be needed

Being needed feels good. And being able to safely and confidently give and receive help is part of a healthy *interdependent* relationship (where we are mutually responsible *to* each other). But for people who struggle with codependency (feeling responsible *for* someone), the appeal of being needed gets distorted. It usually plays out like this: We meet someone who doesn't necessarily look needy at first glance; in fact, they may be fun and charismatic. The more we get to know them, though, the more we mistakenly believe that they could do better with our help. Maybe they have a bad habit, a dysfunctional background, seem down on their luck or have a few rough edges. So we enter into a relationship and ignore signs of trouble. What felt so right in the beginning of the relationship becomes uncomfortable, aggravating and unpredictable. It deteriorates into a situation that feels unsafe and out of control. One dance partner becomes the whole focus of the relationship – the “problem person.” And the overly-caring person – the codependent person – is back in familiar territory: She feels the need to be needed, and she tries harder and harder to make things right.

The vicious cycle of codependency

Both people play an equal role in the downward spiral of dysfunction. Counsellors call this the *vicious cycle*.

Each person's fears and associated behaviours intensify their partner's fears and behaviours in a continual cycle of conflict, hurt feelings, anger, revenge and despair.

Picture a circle constantly turning. On one side of the circle is the problem person, and on the other side is the codependent person. Each of them provides energy to power a continuing cycle of hurt.

For example, if the problem person is abusive, old fears he carries (such as fear of being hurt, manipulated and losing control) fuel new hurtful behaviours. At the same time, the codependent's old fears (like fear of being unloved, abandoned and powerless) create new controlling behaviours toward the abuser.

The codependent's intent is to help, but the outcome is to enable.

Codependency: A pattern of enabling

To enable is to *give opportunity or make it easier for something to happen*. So in the case of codependency, enabling starts with good intentions: to make life easier for the one who seems to be struggling. But enabling robs people of taking responsibility and facing consequences for their actions.

In David's case, he's unintentionally enabled his wife's alcoholism. He might ignore the drinking, deny its harm, nag his wife, cover for her, throw away her alcohol, bail her out of jail, do things for her that she should do herself, keep her problem a secret, demean her, worry about her, and threaten consequences but not follow through.

Unfortunately, while well-intentioned, his behaviours make her worse. They also harm *him*. His efforts to fix, rescue, and control his wife only increase his hurt, fear, resentment, and stress.

What a spouse *dependent* on alcohol needs is for their partner to provide clear limits and stiff consequences. And what that enabling (*codependent*) partner needs is the courage and willingness to provide tough love. If she isn't willing and able to stop drinking, and he's not willing and able to provide necessary boundaries and consequences, nothing will change – and the cost to both of them will be high.

WHAT IS CODEPENDENCY?

By general definition, codependency is an adaptive coping mechanism used compulsively by those trying to find personal worth and value by meeting perceived needs of others.

Bottom line: Codependency is a mixed-up motivation to help. Helping becomes a have to out of a sense of guilt and survival instead of a want to out of a spirit of voluntary service.

But that goes against God's instruction: "Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Corinthians 9:7).

Relationships should be interdependent (to be mutually responsible to each another), not codependent (to be responsible for someone else). That doesn't mean we ignore legitimate circumstances of children or those who are sick, elderly or disabled. Instead, it means we seek the Lord's wisdom about our motives and whether our friend or loved one has a true need.



Dr. Russ Rainey practiced as a registered professional Christian counsellor for over 30 years.

Edited for length and clarity. © 2019 Russ Rainey. All rights reserved. Used with permission. Originally published at FocusOnTheFamily.com.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT YOUR HUSBAND'S PORN CONFESSION

BY GEREY KEETON AND JOANN CONDIE

If you've discovered your husband is looking at porn or has been sexually impure in other ways, I know you may feel as if the floor has dropped out from beneath your feet.

On the surface, you may be functioning pretty well – “intact” marriage, healthy children, steady job and busy family life. Perhaps no one would suspect that your household has been devastated by the impact of your husband's actions. But the truth is that your stability has been shaken and you are scrambling to hold everything together. You may be able to relate to Kaylee (not her real name).

Kaylee ran her arm across her husband's side of the bed and wasn't surprised to find it empty at 3:15 a.m. For many years her husband, Jackson, had struggled with insomnia, and he would often get up and go downstairs to read or play internet games until he was sleepy enough to come back to bed. It had been a while since Kaylee had gotten up to check on him. Whenever she did, he urged her to go back to bed so at least one of them could get a full night's sleep.

On this particular night Kaylee got up to search for her husband. She didn't find Jackson reading in his chair in the family room. Instead, she saw a sliver of light under his office door – the light of his computer. She was annoyed that he was playing internet games. Whenever he did that, he always came back to bed wide-awake and wanting to make love regardless of how tired she felt. If she didn't comply with his desires – or demands – he'd be

furiously and harshly criticize her for not being the kind of woman he deserved in bed.

Without knocking, she quietly opened the door. Jackson's back was to the door. Kaylee had a full view of his computer screen. The sexual images she saw on his computer screen shocked and nauseated her.

“Jackson!” she gasped.

Instantly he hit the close button, whirled around and shouted, “Why are you sneaking up on me?”

Kaylee whispered, “I only wanted to see if you were OK.”

“Don't ever do that to me again!” he responded (as if the incident were entirely her fault).

“I'm sorry,” she murmured as she quietly closed the door.

If you can relate to Kaylee's experience, you're not alone. Many women's husbands have secret sexual lives. This discovery overwhelms the wife like a tsunami smashing into a peaceful shoreline. The unforeseen revelation of a husband's lies sweeps away any remaining illusions of a secure and happy marriage.



Aftershock

A tsunami isn't a single wave. It's more accurately described as a "wave train." These waves are vast, unpredictable and capable of collapsing the damaged buildings that survived the initial shock. Similarly, relational disasters often get worse before they get better.

Some husbands wait weeks or months after the first revelation of a secret life before they admit to additional destructive behaviour. Many men, through years of internally rationalizing and minimizing their compulsive behaviours, have coped by suppressing their sexual history even to themselves. As a result, they don't initially understand or remember all the things they need to confess. Some men in recovery fully confess clearly and quickly; however, most take numerous weeks to grapple with the entire reality of their behaviour and gain the skills it takes to disclose everything. Or perhaps in spite of their cover-up efforts, new evidence gets exposed. This staggered disclosure process is usually more hurtful than getting the entire truth upfront.

Staggered disclosure

Here are several examples of staggered disclosure:

- My husband, Connor, emphatically claimed he only viewed pornography and nothing more. Following a routine ob-gyn exam, the doctor said I had an STD.
- My husband was still on probation for viewing pornography on his workplace computer when his employer found new evidence. He was immediately fired, and we lost everything we saved for.

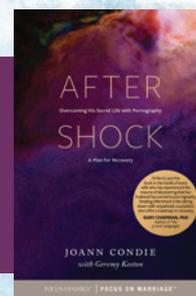
- I was offended when Cooper confessed to going to strip bars, but he assured me that he had stopped years ago. He was supposed to be on a business trip, but then he had a heart attack at the home of his secretary just 20 miles away.
- When my husband was in seminary, I was proud of him for getting help for his pornography addiction; he said he was cured. We are pastoring our third church, and his assistant found pornography on the church computer. She told the elders, and now everybody in church knows.
- I was sick to my stomach when I found my husband's regular (heterosexual) pornography. But then I found his homosexual porn. He later said that he didn't think it was necessary to talk about his childhood sexual play with other little boys; he considered it "in his past."

Couples can overcome sexual addiction, but they can rarely do it alone. I'm explaining this phenomenon because aftershocks may be on the way, and I want you to be braced for this possibility. The majority of women stumble through the early weeks of their trial as they try to squeeze out all the details from their husbands with little or no objective guidance. Getting professional help with recollection and disclosure early on is critical.

Joann Condie is a licensed professional counsellor and Jeremy Keeton is the senior director of the counselling services department of Focus on the Family in the U.S. and a licensed marriage and family therapist.

Edited for length and clarity. © 2018 Focus on the Family. All rights reserved. Used with permission. Adapted from the book *Aftershock: Overcoming His Secret Life with Pornography: A Plan for Recovery* a Focus on the Family Resource authored by Joann Condie, licensed professional counselor, with Jeremy Keeton, marriage and family therapist

If you or someone you know is walking through this, our counsellors highly recommend Joann Condie and Jeremy Keeton's book *Aftershock: Overcoming His Secret Life with Pornography*. You can get your copy at Shop.FocusOnTheFamily.ca/Aftershock.



EASING BACK ON YOUR TEEN'S GAMING

BY CATHERINE WILSON



One of the biggest challenges facing every parent today is teaching their children discernment and moderation in their use of electronic entertainment. And that challenge only intensifies once a child reaches their teen years.

By the age of 15 or so, our kids need to be well on the way to self-limiting their indulgence in video or online gaming. Healthy gaming habits will serve them well once they leave home.

But what if your teen's not showing as much self-control as you'd like? What if your teen's excessive gaming is really worrying you? That's a pressing concern for many parents. At this age, it's not as if we can simply lock up the gaming console. If teens have the motive, then the means and opportunity for gaming are as close as their phone or computer.

So how do we help our teens to cut back their gaming time? Or to convince them to cooperate with the limits we want to put in place? If we want to get our kids' attention, a good place to start is by engaging our teens in respectful discussions about how *meaningful* their gaming is.

First, learn what makes gaming meaningful to your teen

Part of loving discipline is understanding our child's perspective. If we plan to rein in our teen's gaming time, we're more likely to win our child's cooperation if we can show that we understand *why* gaming is important to them.

It's a mistake – and an insult – to suggest to kids that gaming is just “mindless entertainment.” Teens know their games are *not* mindless. Most are complex and challenging, and that's a big part of their appeal. Some kids believe the mental workout and knowledge they gain from their games justifies all the time they've invested.

For many kids, a shared interest in gaming helps them build and maintain friendships. Kids can be at a social disadvantage when their experience of a game lags behind their peers' experience.

If you've never actually *played* your kids' video or online games with them, make a point of trying their favourites. (Ask your teen if there's an in-game beginner tutorial. Or, alternatively, search online for summaries of how each game works.) Games can be a fabulous point of connection with your kids and will help you understand why insisting on certain rules might not be reasonable for some games.

All that said, I'm not suggesting you *shouldn't* put stricter limits on your teen's gaming time, but it will help win your child's cooperation if they see you making informed decisions, and if you can show your teen that you sympathize with the loss they feel. Your relationship with your child can

withstand their feelings of loss, but you want to avoid feelings of injustice.

Help make gaming less meaningful to your teen

Teens want to know that their life has purpose. We can fuel that passion for a big purpose, and at the same time, use it to steer our teen away from less meaningful pursuits.

To that end, we need to speak promises like Ephesians 2:10 into our teen's life over and over until they grasp that it really is true *for them*. We need to say it, and pray it, and believe it about them ourselves until – one day – our teen wakes up and realizes, *I really am* loved by God! God *really does* think I can play a part in his work in the world!

Once teens are fired up with that vision – reaching for whatever God has for them now and in the future – the meaningfulness of gaming in their lives can only diminish in comparison.

Make a point of serving others in need in your community as a family and look for opportunities for your teen to serve alongside their peers. Time away at a Christian camp can also be powerful for setting a new direction for teens. And don't give up your efforts to inspire other new passions in your teen. Your teen's games themselves can give clues to potential new interests. If your teen loves the swordplay aspect of their games, for example, then an offer of fencing or kendo lessons is likely to be far more meaningful to your teen than, say, guitar lessons. Brainstorm together ideas for other activities your teen could switch to when their gaming time's up.

As much as your teen may complain and resist your efforts, work to ensure your teen doesn't slide away from feeling like part of the family. Your child's memories of their last years in your home should include memories of meaningful family times – not simply memories of hours spent gaming.

Ensure your expectations are meaningful to your teen

In online forums and comment threads, frustrated young gamers often express the sentiment, *I don't understand what my parents want from me!* They're picking up a continuous negative vibe from their parents about their gaming, but without specific guidelines in place, they see no way to satisfy their mom or dad.

We'll help our teens – and ourselves – if we can clearly articulate what our concerns are about their gaming, and also state *clear goals* for them regarding their gaming time.

Talk to your teen, and together, establish some clear, workable guidelines – and consequences for not meeting them. If they could, most gamers would like to make peace between their two loves: their parents and their gaming.

Edited for length and clarity. © 2016 Focus on the Family (Canada) Association. All rights reserved.

“For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.”

– EPHESIANS 2:10 –



Read the full article at FocusOnTheFamily.ca/TeenGaming

HELPING AN ADULT CHILD CAUGHT UP IN DRUG OR ALCOHOL ADDICTION

BY FOCUS ON THE FAMILY



For parents of adult children who are addicted to opioids, alcohol or some other substance, it can be difficult to know how to help. While there is a lot you can do, you must remember that the effectiveness of your efforts will depend on your adult child's cooperation.

As an adult they are old enough to make their own decisions. You can't force them to change if they aren't willing to listen to your concerns and go along with your recommendations. But you might get them to take a second look at their choices if you handle the situation with sensitivity, humility and care.

What's the root of addiction?

Addictions of all kinds are rooted in the basic human craving for attachment and relationship.

As the parent of an addict, this is important to realize because long-term recovery and healing are unlikely apart from a thorough understanding of the emotional and psychological issues that started the problem in the first place.

Without healthy interpersonal relationships, some individuals – especially those with addiction-prone personalities – try to fill the gap and medicate the pain with drugs, alcohol or other self-soothing substances.

But using these substances changes the chemistry of the brain. So behaviour quickly grows from a pleasure-driven destructive habit into an addiction

with a severe biological grip. This physiologically based problem can be extremely hard to resolve. That's particularly true in the case of opioids because they're some of the most powerfully addicting drugs on the market.

Talk with your child

As soon as you can, share your concerns with your child openly, honestly and humbly. But remember that you have issues and problems of your own – it's not your place to "fix" them.

- **Cast a vision for them by focusing on their good qualities.** Say something like, "You may see yourself as unloved, unappreciated or unable to cope with life without drugs. But I love you, appreciate you, and see your life in an entirely different light. I believe that you will seek help someday."
- **Encourage your child to face their addiction and find professional treatment.** Get involved in the therapeutic process together as a family. Focus on the Family Canada's counselling staff can give you referrals to helpful programs or a list of qualified therapists in your area.

What if your child won't listen?

If your adult child won't willingly get help, an intervention strategy might be necessary. Professional intervention can be expensive, but you can organize something informal by asking friends and family for help.

1. Limit the group to three to five individuals. (Any more than that might overwhelm them.) You also may want to involve a professional counsellor or the pastor of your church.
2. Gather everyone together at a time when your child does not suspect what you're up to. (The element of surprise is crucial to the success of an intervention. If they know it's coming, they might not show up – or they'd have time to prepare a defence.)
3. Once you're all in the room and the door is shut, go around the circle and have each person say something positive about your child. Everyone should then describe observations of their behaviour and express concerns about their addiction.
4. Recommend specific treatment at a hospital or detox treatment centre. Then press your child to make a decision on the spot. Do not let them put the decision off until the next day. (In the event they consent, it would be good to have a car ready to take them to the treatment facility right away.)

Remember that the detox process is going to be long and difficult. When you're dealing with opioids, it usually takes at least 13 days to purge the drug from the patient's system and at least another week's stay in the hospital to deal with related after-effects.

At the end of that time, it would be ideal if your child could enroll in an extended rehabilitation program.

Move forward

Whether or not your child chooses rehab or a residential program, it's critical they're surrounded with a support system of friends and family who can hold them accountable to their commitment to stay clean.

- **Everyone involved needs to help them face the root causes of their addiction.** Consider getting the help of a professional psychiatrist, addictions-trained licensed therapist, or certified addictions counsellor to assess your child's psychological condition and review life factors that may have moved them toward addiction.

- **Explain the spiritual aspects of addiction.** Many people let themselves listen to the lies of the enemy of their souls. Understanding the supernatural dimension of the situation will give your child an important advantage in their work to overcome temptation.

Don't rescue your child



We need to offer a word of caution: It is not uncommon for parents to enable an adult child by bailing them out of legal problems or the difficulties (even homelessness) that result from substance abuse. But "rescuing behaviours" will only delay your child's search for deep and true help.

We know that seeing our children struggle is heart-wrenching, no matter their age. Unfortunately, they will probably need to hit rock bottom if they're ever going to find and follow the inspiration to change. As much as parents might want to save an adult child from the tragic consequences of their choices, that's not always possible.

Edited for length and clarity. © 2018 Focus on the Family. All rights reserved. Used with permission. Originally published at FocusOnTheFamily.com.

HEALING RELATIONSHIPS IN ADDICTION RECOVERY

BY DR. GREGORY JANTZ

There comes a point in most counselling for addiction issues when a person's support structure is brought into the process. This support structure is, generally, immediate family members, such as spouses, parents or children, but can also include extended family and friends.

The goal of these support sessions is for the person to realize they are not alone and others are willing to assist in their recovery. But these sessions are not always easy, as the addiction has universally damaged these relationships. No matter how strong, these relationships are not whole and need to be acknowledged and addressed.

A significant disconnect can develop during the recovery process between someone struggling with an addiction and their family members or friends. The addicted person believed it was the duty of the family member or friend to support recovery without bringing up any objections or consequences from the past. Some people have a sense that recovery is a “do-over” and whatever happened in the past should stay in the past. Because the recovery is new and the emotions are still raw, people are reluctant to confront the past with a mindset that, to move forward, the past should be off-limits.

“I will exalt you, Lord, for you lifted me out of the depths . . . I called to you for help, and you healed me. You, Lord, brought me up from the realm of the dead; you spared me from going down to the pit.”

— PSALM 30:1-3 —

This mindset, however, does not account for the pain experienced by the loved one because of the addiction. That pain, while it may have happened in the past, is still very present in the mind and heart of the loved one. And that present pain may not have had any outlet for expression in the past. While the addiction was active, the addicted person was compromised and often incapable of truly recognizing the truth of the other person's pain.

However, during the recovery process, as the person's mind clears, their ability to recognize the pain of others comes into focus. The relationship can shift to include the feelings and perspectives of the other person. Those feelings and perspectives can be negative, centred on the frustration, anger and despair felt as a by-product of the addiction.

This pain felt by loved ones is not just relegated to the past or the present. In the mind of the loved one, pain remains a distinct possibility for the future. This is often due to the cyclical nature of addiction recovery. It's rarely a "one and done" and often takes multiple efforts to accomplish. So, often the loved one has been at this place of recovery before, only to have the person relapse. They naturally may fear that this recovery will not last and that the addiction as well as the pain it produces could resurface.

"I can do all things through him who strengthens me."

– PHILIPPIANS 4:13 –

If the addicted person is in a relationship, recovery from addiction, by definition, must encompass recovery from within the relationship. Because the relationship involves more than one person, the addicted person cannot solely dictate what healing will look like. The other person, who has already been marginalized by the addiction, must have the opportunity to voice their experiences, even if it's extremely uncomfortable for the recovering person to hear. They must have a voice in the path to relationship recovery.

Why is relationship recovery so important within addiction recovery? At its core, addiction is a relationship. In some ways, the relationship with the addiction becomes more intimate than with other people. A dictionary definition of "relationship" is the way in which two or more concepts, objects, or people are connected, or the state of being connected. An addict has been intimately connected to the source of

their addiction. This addiction connection warps all other relationships. Those people connected to the addict become recipients of the collateral damage.

"Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer."

– ROMANS 12:12 –



One of the difficult truths of recovery is that it may end the addiction, but it is not guaranteed to undo the damage. The reality of the damage must be accepted and internalized by the recovering addict. They may need to have patience with loved ones whose paths to healing are slower.

Once recovery is well under way, it is essential to address harmed relationships. Healthy relationships are key to a healthy and balanced life. Understanding the hurt and damage inflicted on important relationships is necessary to making amends and rebuilding them. Honest, contrite and two-way communication, putting everything on the table, is critical to enabling everyone to feel heard. In doing that, everyone can move forward. Loved ones are able to wash themselves of the base issues that have hardened, and overcome the wall that addiction created.

It takes time for your family and loved ones to learn to trust you again. Be patient, and be consistent. It may be challenging for them to conceive how a short time in addiction treatment can lead to meaningful change when their tactics they've laboured through for years were not effective. As you all navigate daily life, and they see a consistent you dealing honestly with integrity, trust will develop over time.

Dr. Gregory Jantz is the founder of The Center: A Place of HOPE in Edmonds, Washington, a world-renowned expert on eating disorders, depression, anxiety, technology addiction, and abuse, and a bestselling author of 37 books.

© 2022 Dr. Gregory Jantz. All rights reserved.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES AND INFORMATION

Books for **adults**

Healing the Scars of Addiction

BY DR. GREGORY JANTZ (C03870B)

Hope, Help and Healing for Eating Disorders

BY GREGORY L. JANTZ (C01454B)

Unspoken: What Men Won't Talk About and Why

BY JOHNNY HUNT (C04240B)

The 40-Day Social Media Fast

BY WENDY SPEAKE (C04108B)

The 40-Day Sugar Fast

BY WENDY SPEAKE (C04088B)

Shame Lifter

BY MARILYN HONTZ (T00002B)

Aftershock: Overcoming His Secret Life with Pornography

BY JOANN CONDIE AND GEREY KEETON (F01821B)

Find these titles and more at Shop.FocusOnTheFamily.ca

Books for **teens**

My Tech-Wise Life

BY AMY CROUCH AND ANDY CROUCH (C04191B)

Hooked

BY FREDA MCKISSIC BUSH AND JOE MCILHANEY (C03664B)

Understanding and Loving Your Child Who Smokes Pot

BY STEPHEN ARTERBURN AND MARGOT STARBUCK (C04450B)

Choose Greatness: 11 Wise Decisions That Brave Young Men Make

BY GARY CHAPMAN AND CLARENCE SHULER (C03620B)

Lies Young Women Believe

BY NANCY DEMOSS WOLGEMUTH AND DANNAH GRESH (C03471B)

Find these titles and more at Shop.FocusOnTheFamily.ca



Adventures in Odyssey episodes

Episode 288: “The Twilight Zone”

Episode 350: “The Time of Our Lives”

Episode 628-629: “The Highest Stakes, Parts 1 and 2”

Listen at **FocusOnTheFamily.ca/AddictionAIO**

Focus on the Family **Broadcast**

“Finding Freedom from Addiction (Parts 1 and 2)”

WITH DR. GREGORY JANTZ

“Finding an Escape From Sexual Addiction (Parts 1 and 2)”

WITH JONATHAN DAUGHERTY

“Healing the Hurts Behind Your Addiction”

WITH JOHNNY BAKER

“Being Shaped by God’s Grace in the Midst of Addiction”

WITH GARY MORLAND

“Offering Hope to Families Experiencing Drug Addiction”

WITH MAC AND MARY OWEN

“Giving up Sugar, Tasting God’s Goodness”

WITH WENDY SPEAKE

Listen to these and more at **FocusOnTheFamily.ca/Radio**

Free six-part video series

“Discovering God’s Freedom from Pornography”

NICK AND MICHELLE STUMBO

Sign up to watch this free series at

FocusOnTheFamily.ca/FreedomFromPorn



Find more articles and resources at **FocusOnTheFamily.ca/Addiction**

WE'RE HERE TO HELP

We know that life can be overwhelming, and it can sometimes be difficult to know how to navigate the trials we face – whether it's addiction, depression, anxiety, broken relationships or prodigal children. Whatever you may be dealing with right now, we want you to know you're not alone.

We are here for you with prayer and counselling support.

Every weekday our team prays together for the needs of families all across the country. You can email prayer@fotf.ca or submit your prayer request online at FocusOnTheFamily.ca/Prayer.

Or if you'd like to receive prayer over the phone, call our team at **1.800.661.9800**.

We also offer a free, one-time phone consultation with one of our in-house counsellors. Our counselling staff are all committed Christians and registered (Masters level) counsellors with ministry experience. We can also refer you to a specialized counsellor in your area (fees will apply).

Call us at **1.800.661.9800** or visit FocusOnTheFamily.ca/Counselling to learn more.



GET CONNECTED WITH CELEBRATE RECOVERY AND FREEDOM SESSION

CELEBRATE RECOVERY is a Christ-centred 12-step recovery program for those seeking real and lasting freedom from addictive and dysfunctional patterns in their lives. **FREEDOM SESSION** is one of the most effective, encompassing and transferable healing-discipleship ministries available.

Many local churches across the country offer these programs. Find a group near you:

CelebrateRecovery.ca | FreedomSession.com



“Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit
of the Lord is, there is freedom.”

– 2 CORINTHIANS 3:17 –

FOCUS^{ON}THE^{THE}FAMILY[®] *Canada*

19946 80A AVENUE, LANGLEY, BC V2Y 0J8 | 1 800 661 9800 | [FOCUSONTHEFAMILY.CA](https://FocusOnTheFamily.ca)