

Characteristics of Sex, Love and Porn Addiction*

1. Having few healthy boundaries, we become sexually involved with, emotionally attached to, or sexually stimulated by people—including through pornography, fantasy, or online interactions—without truly knowing them.
2. Fearing abandonment and loneliness, we stay in or return to painful and destructive relationships, or retreat into pornography and fantasy, concealing our dependency needs from ourselves and others.
3. Fearing emotional and/or sexual deprivation, we compulsively pursue and involve ourselves in one relationship after another, sometimes having more than one sexual or emotional affair at a time, or repeatedly turning to pornography and anonymous sexual outlets to meet those needs.
4. We confuse love with neediness, physical or sexual attraction, pornography-fueled fantasy, pity, and/or the need to rescue or be rescued.
5. We feel empty and incomplete when we are alone. Even though we may fear intimacy and commitment, we continually search for relationships, sexual contacts, or stimulation through pornography and fantasy.
6. We sexualize stress, guilt, loneliness, anger, shame, fear, and envy. We use sex, pornography, fantasy, or emotional dependence as substitutes for nurturing care, connection, and support.
7. We use sex, pornography, fantasy, or emotional involvement to manipulate, soothe, escape, or control our feelings and sometimes others.
8. We become immobilized or seriously distracted by romantic, sexual, or pornographic obsessions and fantasies.
9. We avoid responsibility for ourselves by attaching ourselves to people who are emotionally unavailable, or by retreating into pornography, fantasy, and other forms of sexual escape.
10. We stay enslaved to emotional dependency, romantic intrigue, compulsive sexual activities, or compulsive pornography use.
11. To avoid feeling vulnerable, we may retreat from all intimate involvement, isolating ourselves in pornography or fantasy, mistaking sexual and emotional anorexia for recovery.
12. We assign magical qualities to others—including performers, partners, or fantasy figures. We idealize and pursue them, then blame them for not fulfilling our fantasies and expectations.

** This list is adapted via Group Conscience Vote on April 25, 2026 by the Conway Group from the conference approved document titled "Characteristics of Sex and Love Addiction" so as to include and reference addiction to pornography.*