

The Evolution of an Instrument

The Sexual Dependency Inventory (SDI-R) evolved out of an initial long term study of 932 sex addicts and their partners. Data was gathered over seven years tracing the recoveries of study participants. Sexual behavior data was collected in 170 categories. A series of factor analyses revealed ten typologies that seemed to consistently relate the behaviors. Thus, within a specific typology, if one behavior was present, high probabilities exist that others would be associated as well. Clinicians have found the SDI-R invaluable to diagnose etiology, assess the range and scope of problematic sexual behavior, and help patients understand their own arousal templates.

For example, if the patient reports fratteurism, the probability is high they also would make obscene phone calls, insert inappropriate sexual comments into conversations, and use professional roles (clergy, physicians, psychotherapists) to “inadvertently” touch patients. The critical arousal template in this example is that all the behaviors involve sexual contact without permission in ways difficult to identify or hold accountable. By having a profile of the common arousal pattern, the clinician can work with the patient to determine the origin of this common arousal scenario. The typology continues to evolve although the basic patterns remain the same. The latest permutation of this “type” is the insertion of sexual pictures in the computers of others without their knowledge. This sexual invasion fits the scenario of contact without discovery. Thus, subsequent studies have refined the typologies as well as added specific behaviors to the ten constellations of behaviors. We have used the framework of courtship disorders, to organize the types into more clinically accessible terminology.

The SDI-R also incorporates various forms of assessment to help a clinician make an informed diagnosis. Also the instrument gathers critical information about the impact of sexual behavior on work, family and lifestyle. The clinician then has more data upon which to make treatment planning decisions

The SDI-R has been actively used by clinicians for almost two decades. Specialists in sexually compulsive behavior earn a certification entitled “Certified Sex Addiction Therapist” or CSAT®. Currently it is a two year process involving four weeks of training and extensive supervision. This training is provided by the International Institute for Trauma and Addiction Professionals (IITAP) whose offices are just outside of Phoenix, Arizona. All CSAT participants hold advanced clinical degrees, and are licensed professionals in their state. CSAT® training provides extensive background in the SDI-R assessment process and protocols of discussing sexually sensitive material. Currently there are approximately five hundred certified therapists, with the Institute training 50 to 100 professionals a year. For more information about this training, please go to www.iitap.com or call 480-575-6853.