

“No One Walks Alone”

***Counseling to
The Vulnerability to
Addictions in
Congregations, Church
Workers, and Their
Families***

- **PSD Pastors’ Conference**
- **September 28-30, 2026**
- Rev. Jim Otte, LPC
- Texas District: Director of
Congregation & Worker Care

10/6/2026

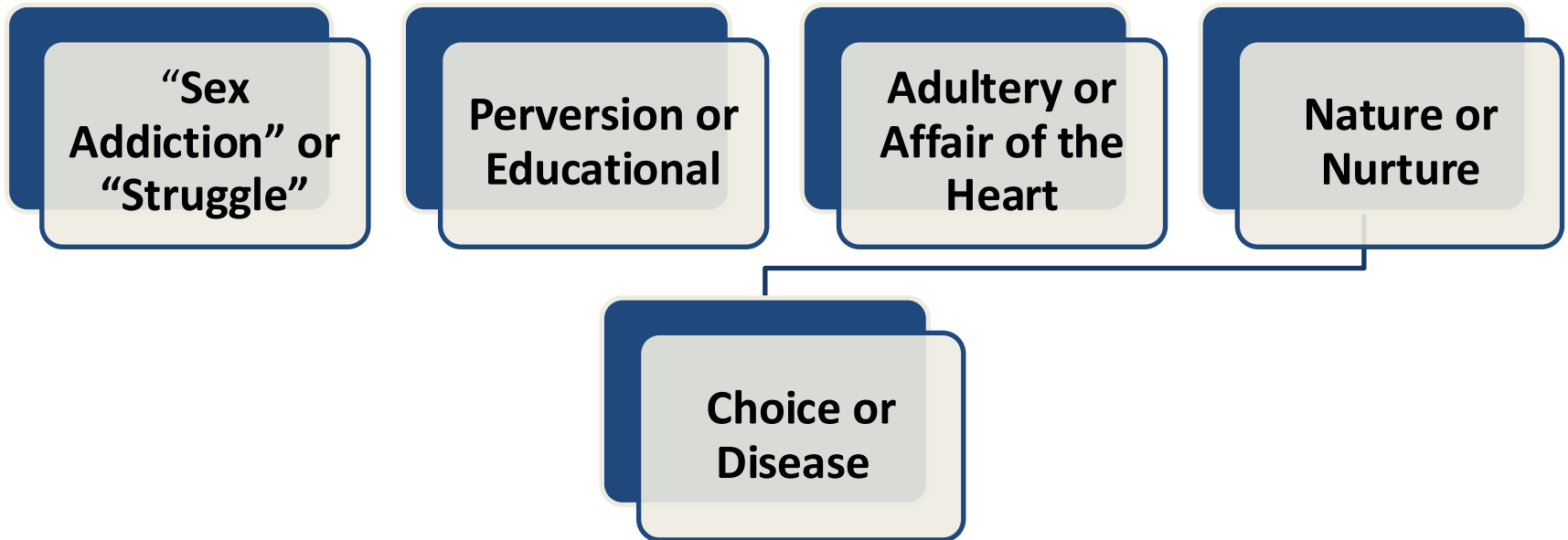
A Little Bit About Me

Rev. Jim Otte, EM. (3rd Generation LCMS PK)

- ❖ Married 49 years to Victoria; one adult daughter
- ❖ Texas LPC since 1997.
- ❖ 2022 Winner of the Bibfeldt Award.
- ❖ Synodical System Trained: 1972-1980.
- ❖ Director of Congregation & Worker Care, Texas District
- ❖ Past PLI presenter & coach in sexual integrity
- ❖ Devoted Texas Rangers & Dallas Cowboys fan

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How Do We Talk About “iT!” in Our Circles?



Definitions

Terms	Definitions
“Addiction”	Compulsive need/use of habit-forming substances; increased tolerance; obsessive use/focus (thoughts).
“Process Addiction”	Addictive <i>thinking</i> patterns; anticipation arousal (See “obsession clock”)
“Dopamine”	Brain chemical with capacity to alter what arouses the body physiologically; pleasure & relief; highly addictive; stimulus oriented

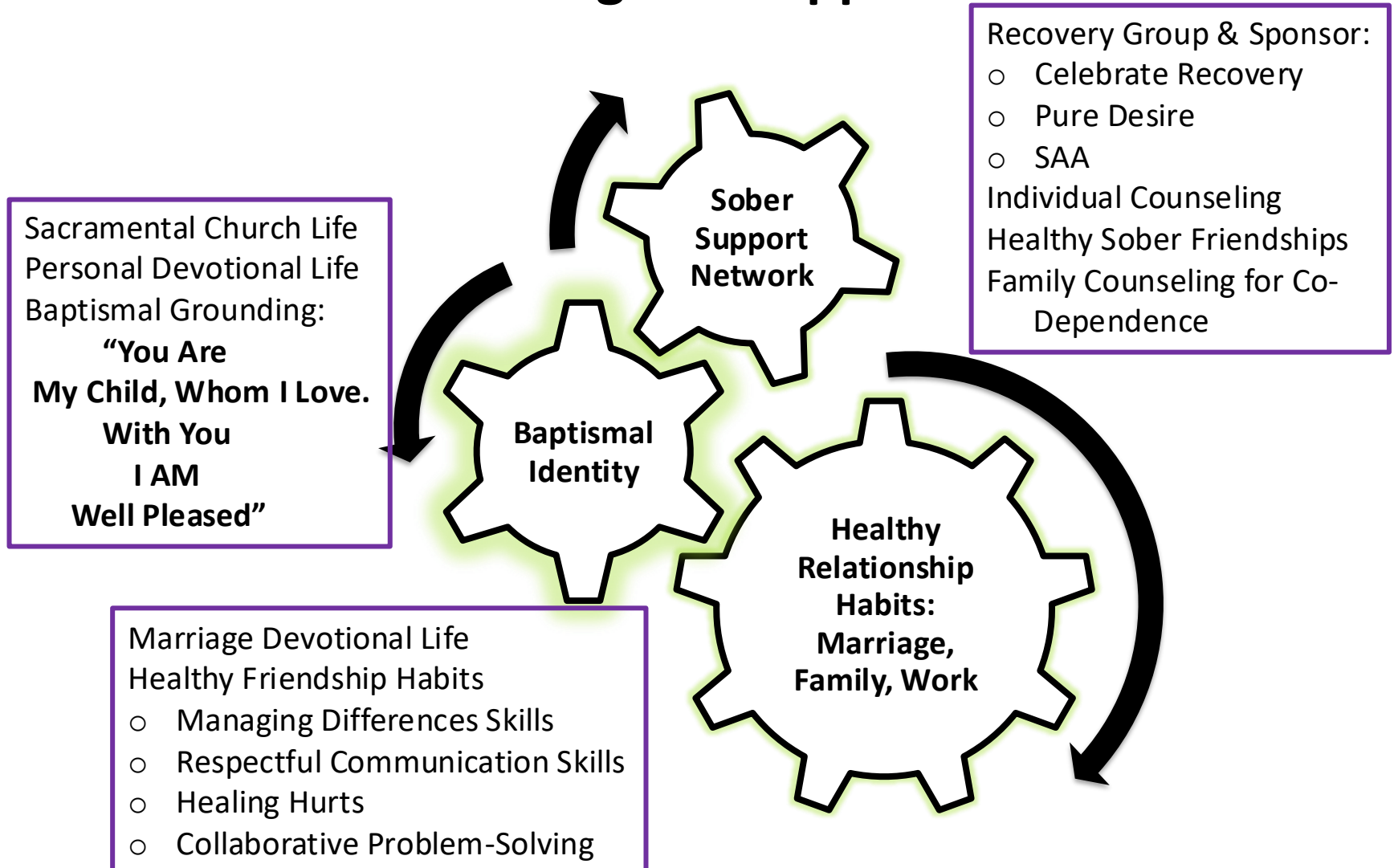
Definitions

3 Levels of Addiction

- Adapted from “Contrary to Love: Helping the Sexual Addict”
- Patrick Carnes, 1989

Level One	Level Two	Level Three
Viewing Pornography	Exhibitionism	Child Molestation
Compulsive Masturbation	Voyeurism	Incest
	Indecent Phone Calls	Rape
	Public Indecency	Child Pornography
	Using Prostitutes	
	Sexual Affairs	

Together Walking: An Integrated Approach



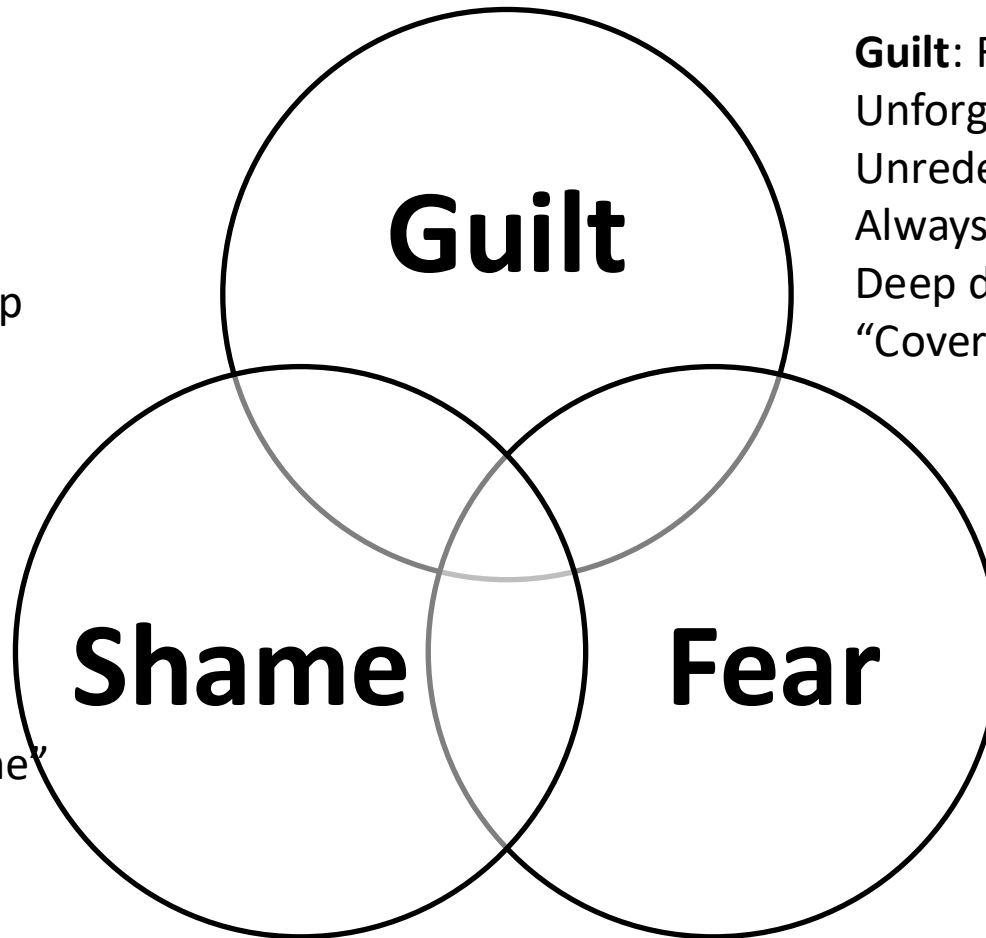
Together Walking: Biblical Listening Touchpoints

Genesis 3:7-10. Then the eyes of both were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves. Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as He was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden.

The Realization of “Naked”

The Toxic “Unholy” Trinity

Shame: Feeling...
Never measuring up
Unsalvageable
Must hide my self
Not “enough”
Not “mattering”
“Loser”
Closest to death in
body sensations
“Imposter syndrome”



Guilt: Feeling...
Unforgiveable
Unredeemable
Always the “cause”
Deep despair
“Cover” up with persona

Fear: Feeling...
Abandonment
Rejection
All “on my own”
Left to handle “iT!”
“Alone” is inevitable

Guilt, Shame, and Fear Self-Medicated 'Solutions'

Genesis 3:7-8. *"Then the eyes of both were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves. ...they hid from the Lord God..."*



***"Fig leaves...coverings"* (Characteristics of Addictions)**

**Dependence on.
Temporary fix.
Helps deny problems.
Feel worse later.
Secret 'solutions.'**

**Live in proximity of.
Increased tolerance of.
"Cover" inadequacy.
Doesn't replace value-loss.
Increases loneliness.**

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Together Walking: Counseling the Struggle

Genesis 3:8-13. Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. ⁹ But the LORD God called to the man, “Where are you?”¹⁰ He answered, “I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid.” ¹¹ And he said, “Who told you that you were naked?” Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?”¹² The man said, “The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it.”¹³ Then the LORD God said to the woman, “What is this you have done?” The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”

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Together Walking: Listen & Confront Three Pivotal Questions

1. “Where are you?”
 - a. Not geography, but relationship.
 - b. Where are you with God, with others, & self?
 - c. I listen for the ‘unholy trinity,’ cutting off from his ‘walk with God, other people, and himself.’

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Together Walking: Three Pivotal Questions

2. “Who told you that you were naked?”

- a. What are the “voices” (messaging) you are listening to? Society; friends & peers; social media; Satanic deceptions
- b. Rationalizations & self-deceptions
- c. Resentments from un-forgiveness or expectations
- d. Messaging from the ‘unholy trinity.’
- e. Beliefs derived from messaging: *“I’m just one of those people who...”*

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Together Walking: Three Pivotal Questions

3. “What is this you have done?”

- a. What is the exact nature of your relationship to porn? Sex? Porn online vs porn in your head?
- b. Origins, History, & Frequency of use
 - i. Earliest age and reasons
 - ii. Who introduced you?
 - iii. What consequences have you faced because of this?
- c. Which of the “levels” you currently fit into?
- d. In what ways are you objectifying other people?

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Together Walking: Listen & Confront Three Pivotal Questions

Purpose of Confronting:

To Call the Addiction Out
of Hiding
with a firm, evangelical,
and non-shaming voice –
toward action

Which is worse: Getting
Called Out or Not?

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Together Walking

**Best Practices: Prevention &
Recovering**

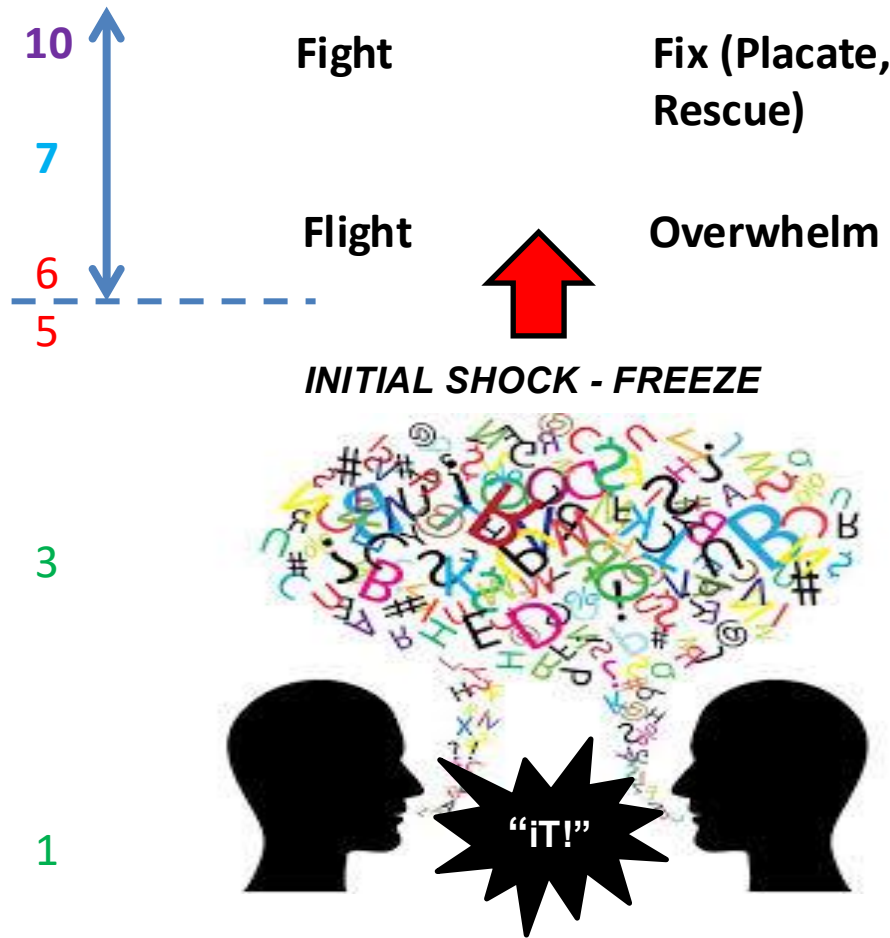
Green Zone	Red Zone	Code Blue	Trauma Zone
Generally positive & pleasant	Generally anxiety-stress producing	Generally hurt-producing	Generally anger-rage producing
Triggers thoughts of being valued and respected	Triggers thoughts of being inadequate or out of your comfort zone	Triggers thoughts of not mattering, abandoned, or being devalued	Trigger thoughts of seeking revenge, getting even, or being a victim
Words/Actions which affirm value through respecting	Words/Actions which call into question being worthy of value	Words/Actions which devalue or suggest little value or worth	Words/Actions which aggressively assert value by 'powering over' others; controlling with rage
Add to JOYful movie memories	Create stressful movie memories	Create movie memories of being wounded by others	Create movie memories of being abused, betrayed, or abandoned by others
Increases desire to connect with openness to 'leaning toward' the other person	Decreases desire to bond with someone, unless they calm themselves or you	Shuts the door on bonding by building "walls" to keep from getting hurt, but keeping hurt in	Using anger to dominate; using hurt to shun; using justification to take over; numbing self

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Together Walking: Inventory Your Vulnerability Triggers

Recognize Stress as a Trigger Mind-Body Reaction

1/15,000th of a Sec.



Mind-Body Stress Chemicals "Flood" You:

- ☐ Heart – 100 beats/minutes
- ☐ Breathing speeds up/shallower breaths
- ☐ Amygdala overpowers system into self-preservation mode
- ☐ "Cortisol Auto-Pilot"
- ☐ Mind/Body craves dopamine
- ☐ Muscle tension to prepare for action
- ☐ Mind-Body tension increase
- ☐ Current and delayed restlessness
- ☐ Ruminative memories of past pain
- ☐ Fearful projections into a negative future
- ☐ Seek self-medication to soothe self & seek relief
- ☐ Delayed acting out to medicate self

"iT!" Intensity Scale

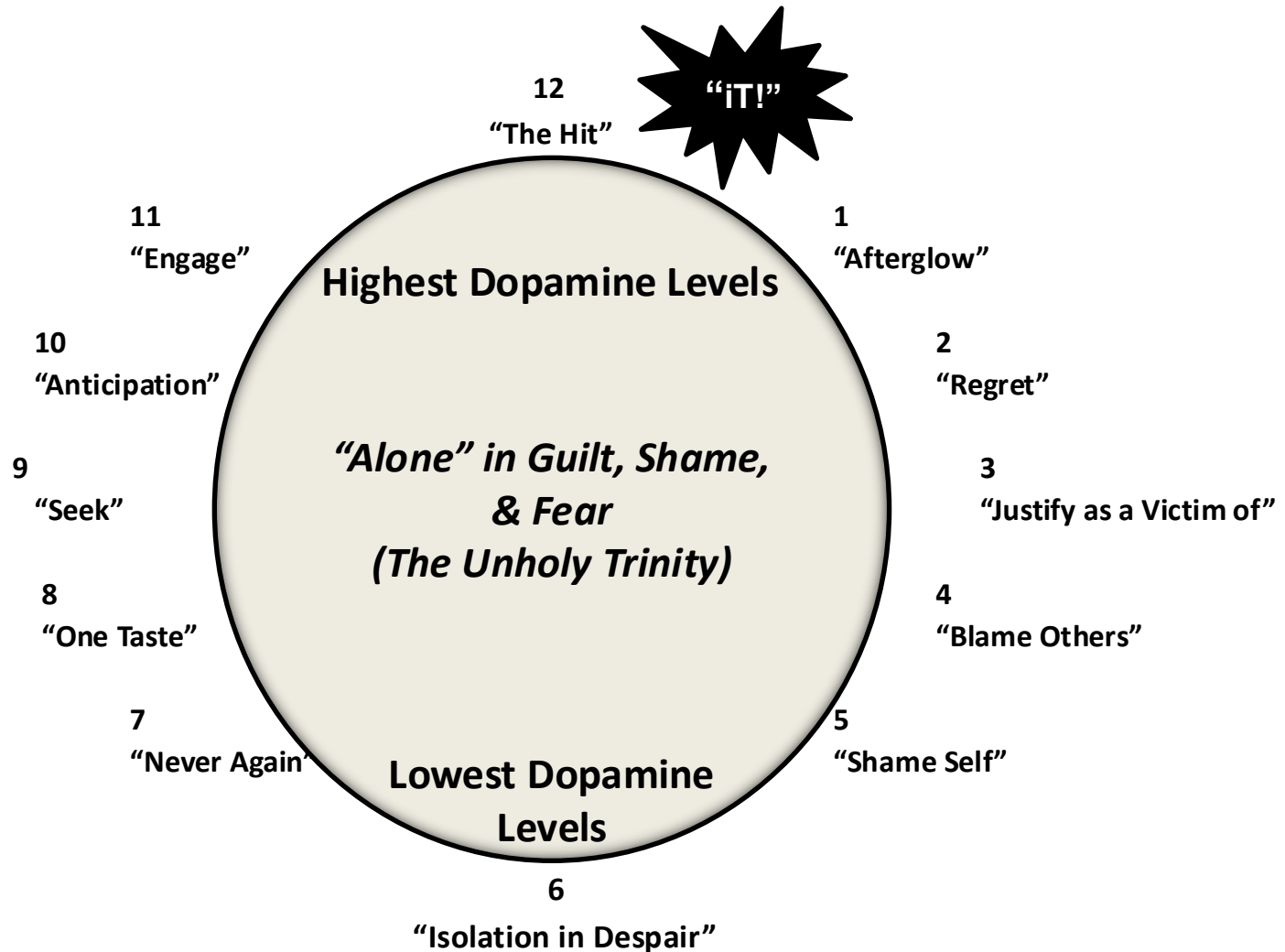
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Develop and Use Healthy Strategies for Self-Care which Calms the Anxious Mind-Body

1. Practice diaphragmic breathing to deepen oxygen intake, slow heart rate, and release muscle tension
2. Increase limb movement to restore blood circulation
3. Signal the need for “space” to prepare for re-engagement
4. Employ your “Calm Box”
 - Distraction-worthy toys or stress-release implements
 - Scents which trigger pleasant memories from childhood
 - Soothing music: hymns, Gregorian chants, orchestral
 - Playdough, crayons, un-lined paper
 - Process tools to prepare for re-engagement
 - Timer
 - Hot or cold beverage (non-alcoholic or sugary)

Recognize the Pattern

Staying Stuck in Addictive Compulsivity



Recognize Your “Levels”

- Adapted from “Contrary to Love: Helping the Sexual Addict”
- Patrick Carnes, 1989

Level One	Level Two	Level Three
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Increase Your Awareness Red Flags for Pre-Level One

"Alone" in Relationships	Internet "Habits"
Anxiety/Depression Disorders; ADHD	Late Night "Surfing" the Web
Pent-up Resentments/Rage	Secret Accounts/Passwords
Less Interest in Family Life	Unusual Need for Privacy
Denial/Avoidance in Conflict or Antagonistic Attitudes	Justifying overuse of computer
Increased Alcohol Use	Increased Use of Fantasy
Toxic People-Pleasing or Lone Ranger-ing	Gaming
Feeling Overwhelmed	Gambling
Change in Sleeping, Eating	
Mood Swings	

Avail Yourself of Treatment Resources

Level One	Level Two	Level Three
Awareness Education	Face-to-Face Counseling	Jail/Prison
Spiritual Formation Work	12-Step Recovery Work	Ministry Resignation
Marriage Counseling	Court-Ordered Treatment	Court-Ordered Treatment
Ministry Restrictions*	Sex Addiction Groups	Sex Offender Registry
“12-Step” Recovery Work	Ministry Restrictions*	
Non-Shaming Accountability & Prayer	Resignation; Zero Tolerance	
Support for the Family	Support for the Family	Support for the Family

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Together Walking: Local & District Levels

Action Steps for Coming Out of Hiding

1. Cultivate a culture of redemption.
2. Cultivate a culture committed to your spiritual, personal, emotional, and marital health.
3. Cultivate a culture which is serious about helping you get help.
4. Cultivate a culture which covers the cost of one-on-one coaching/counseling.
5. Cultivate a culture which does not “report” to District Presidents when confessions are made, unless...

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Together Walking Local & District Levels

6. Be the “one” another “one” will talk to, in the spirit of *Galatians 6:1-5*. *Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted. ² Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. ³ If anyone thinks they are something when they are not, they deceive themselves. ⁴ Each one should test their own actions. Then they can take pride in themselves alone, without comparing themselves to someone else, ⁵ for each one should carry their own load.*

“*caught*” – ensnared in a struggle; addictive processes or actions

“*restore...gently*” – non-shaming, but firm & evangelical

“*watch yourselves*” – you’ll come face-to-face with your own demons

“*burdens...load*” – share in accountability

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Together Walking Local & District Levels

7. Model healthy self-care trusting in Jesus' sufficient grace. 2 Corinthians 12:9. ⁹ *But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.*

"thorn in the flesh" – 'alone' in the unholy trinity

"grace...power" – Jesus' unconditional love is power & presence

"sufficient" – enough for the day; one day at a time

"my weakness" – the one prerequisite for needing grace

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Draw on Sex and/or Love Addiction Recovery Resources

Recovery Resource	Description
<u>Pure Desire</u>	Recovery Series for Men & Women online/in person by Ted Roberts
12-Step Recovery	SAA (Sex Addicts Anon.) & LAA (Love Addicts Anon.)
<u>Celebrate Recovery</u>	Christian “12-Step Recovery” online/in person
Al-a-non Family Groups	12-Step groups for co-dependent spouses & family members, whose loved ones are addicted
<u>Covenanteyes.com</u>	On-line filtering and accountability. Fee-based. Good!
Rev. Wayne Braun	Texas District ‘go-to’ for church workers in the struggle; Pastoral Sex Addiction Professional (PSAP): 713-903-6316
Rev. Jim Otte	Texas District Director of Congregation & Worker Care; LPC; jotte@txlcms.org (available for consultations/coaching)

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Other Recovery Resources

Carnes, Patrick. Contrary to Love: Helping the Sexual Addict. 1989

Carnes, Patrick. Facing the Shadow: Starting Sexual and Relationship Recovery. 2001.
(Workbook)

Diehm, William J. Caring Criticism: Building Bridges Instead of Walls. 1998.

Gottman, John. The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work. 1999.

Gottman, Julie. Fight Right: How Successful Couples Turn Conflict into Connection. 2024.

Love, Patricia; Stosny, Steven. How to Improve Your Marriage without Talking About It. 2007

Roberts, Ted. Pure Desire: How One Man's Triumph Can Help Others Break Free From Sexual Temptation. 2008.