

## Integrating Mindfulness into Sex Addiction Recovery

Mindfulness interventions have been on the rise in the addiction treatment community and with good reason. It seems like each month there are more scientific studies published that support the practice of mindfulness based interventions as evidenced based practice.

The emergence of scientific data is good news for those people who have known that mindfulness is helpful all along. Though the general public, or some factions of the public might realize certain interventions are helpful, they don't gain "credibility" (read insurance is willing to pay for them) until there is a strong body of scientific research to support their use.

A study published in 2013 by Rory Reid and associates investigated the relationship between emotion dysregulation (inability to manage or regulate emotions), impulsivity, stress and mindfulness in individuals who were diagnosed as hypersexual (sex addicts). People in this study did not engage in a mindfulness practice or therapy but were assessed based on objective tests.

The study showed that those people who were hypersexual were less likely to be mindful, or able to do things such as regulate attention, awareness and be non-judgmental of their own experiences. The author suggested that mindfulness scores uniquely contributed to the level of hypersexuality. The study also found that sex addiction is associated with unpleasant emotions, stress, and impulsivity. Dr. Reid suggests that these findings provide support for the use of mindfulness interventions to help sex addicts learn to regulate emotions and manage stress in a healthier manner.

In our practice, we are strong advocates of using mindfulness practices and integrating them into recovery. Our clients who undertake a meditation or yoga practice often begin to see impressive improvements in their ability to manage impulses to act out. The mindfulness exercises allow them to create an observer mind that can cultivate the ability to see the reality of situations in the moment. This also increases the client's ability act less impulsively and allows them to ride the emotional storms until they pass without acting out.

Sexual Addiction Treatment Services is honored to have Elizabeth Songer on our staff. Beth is a long term practitioner and teacher of mindfulness and meditation. In 2015 she is offering a series of mindfulness meditation seminars separately for addicts and their partners. Everyone who attends meditation with Beth loves the experience.

For more information on SATS mindfulness seminars please see our events page at [www.sexualaddictiontreatmentservices.com/events](http://www.sexualaddictiontreatmentservices.com/events).