

# **Escaping the Pain: Examining the use of Sexually Compulsive Behavior to avoid the Traumatic Memories of Combat**

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# Disclaimer

*The views expressed in this presentation are those of the presenter and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the department of the Navy, Department of Defense, nor the U. S. Government*

# Objectives

- Participants will be able to state the intra and interpersonal factors associated with the use of compulsive sexual behavior following traumatic combat exposure
- Participants will be able to define behaviors associated with sexual addiction and state major assessment and diagnostic criteria
- Participants will be able to present a therapeutic model for the care and treatment of military service members struggling with compulsive sexual behavior during and following deployment

# Case Study

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# Case Study Questions

- What issues / behaviors do you see as problematic in this case?
- What do you perceive to be the combat-stress issues?
- Are there things that could have done better or could be done now to alleviate the situation? What resources are available?
- What do you see as the ultimate goal for this individual?

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# **ASSESSMENT:**

## **Focusing on the Addiction**

# Intake Information

- Contact information
- Medical history
- Mental health history
- Addiction history
- Medications
- Family status / history
- Previous counseling / therapy
- Mental status examination
- Military service / Deployment & combat history

## Sex Addiction Screening Test (SAST)

- 45 questions – yes / no – can be completed in about 15 minutes or less
- designed to assist in the assessment of sexually compulsive or addictive behavior
- Developed in cooperation with hospitals, treatment programs, private therapists, and community groups
- the SAST provides a profile of responses which help to discriminate between addictive and non-addictive behavior.
- Can be accessed at [www.sexhelp.com](http://www.sexhelp.com) at no charge

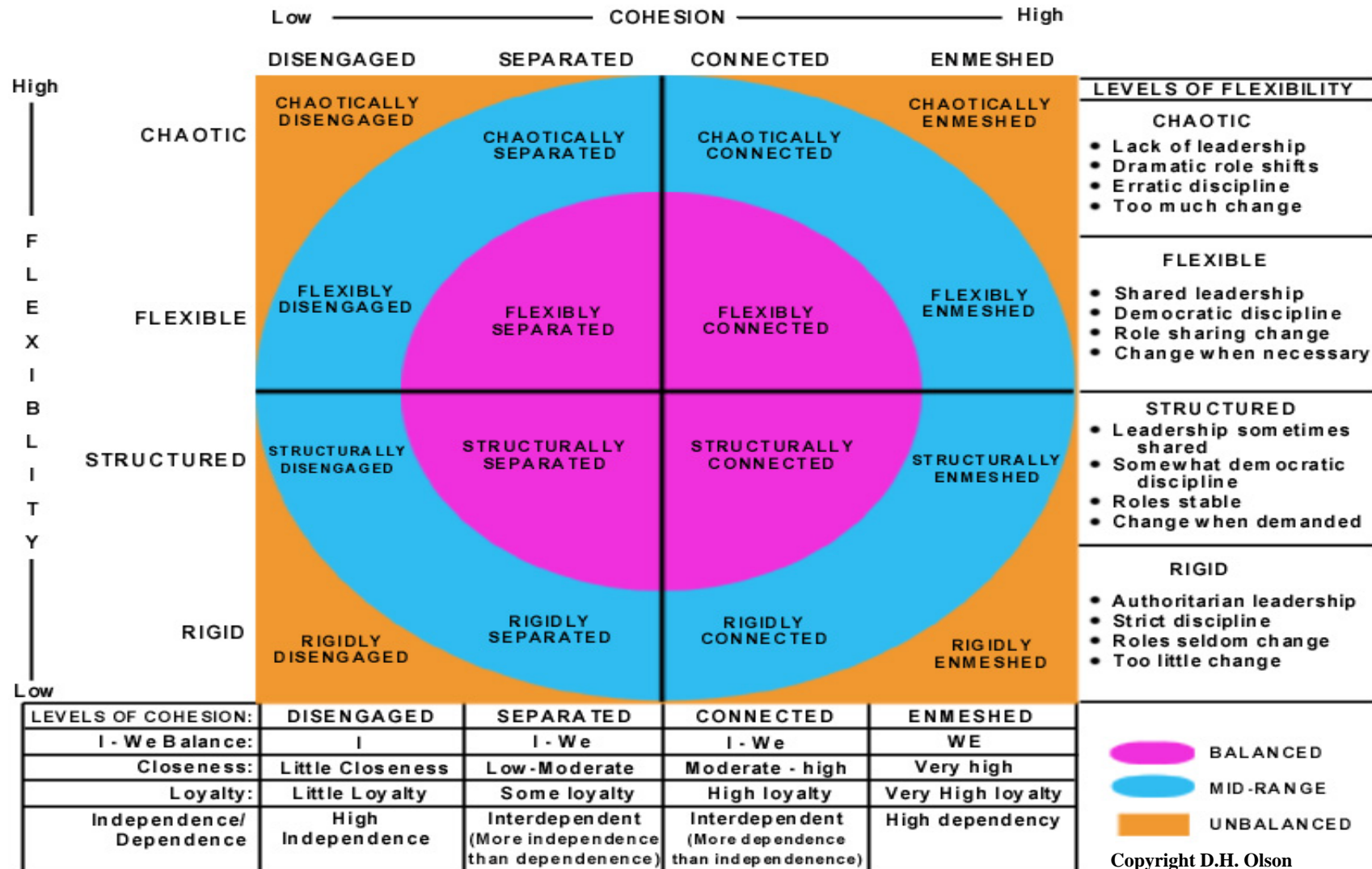
# *Sexual Dependency Inventory (SDI)*

- Typically completed between sessions (normally between 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>)
- Developed by Dr. Patrick Carnes, PhD
- Takes approximately 2-3 hours to complete
- 28 pages long
- Detailed sexual history
- Examines feelings, thoughts, behaviors, and fantasies related to sex

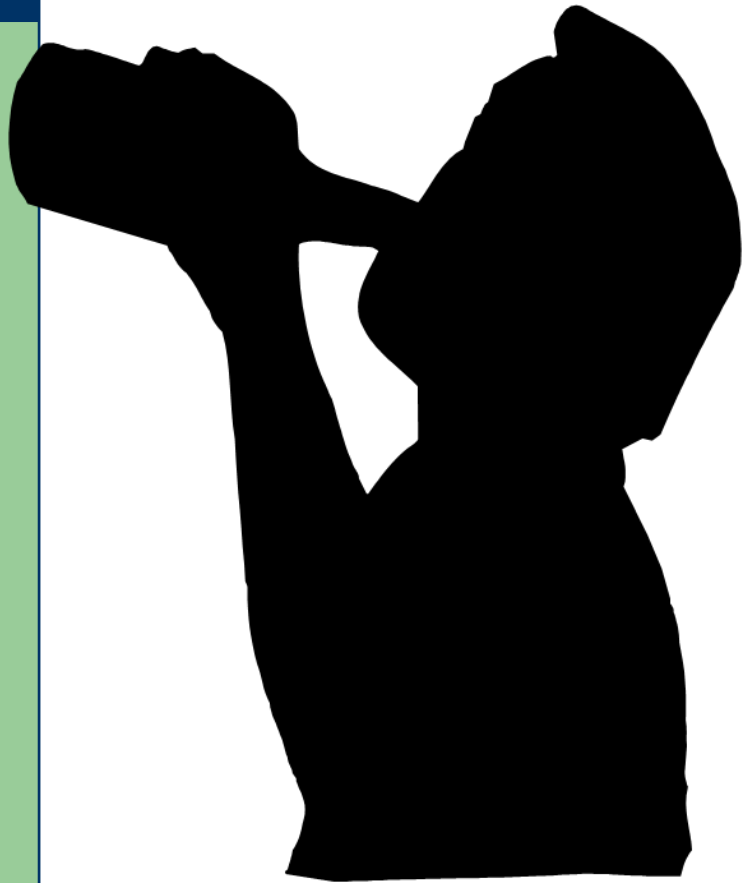
# Trauma

- Research conducted by Dr. Carnes found that in a sample of more than 1,000 sex addicts currently in treatment, abuse was present at the following levels:
  - Physical Abuse – 72%
  - Sexual Abuse – 81%
  - Emotional Abuse – 97%

# Circumplex

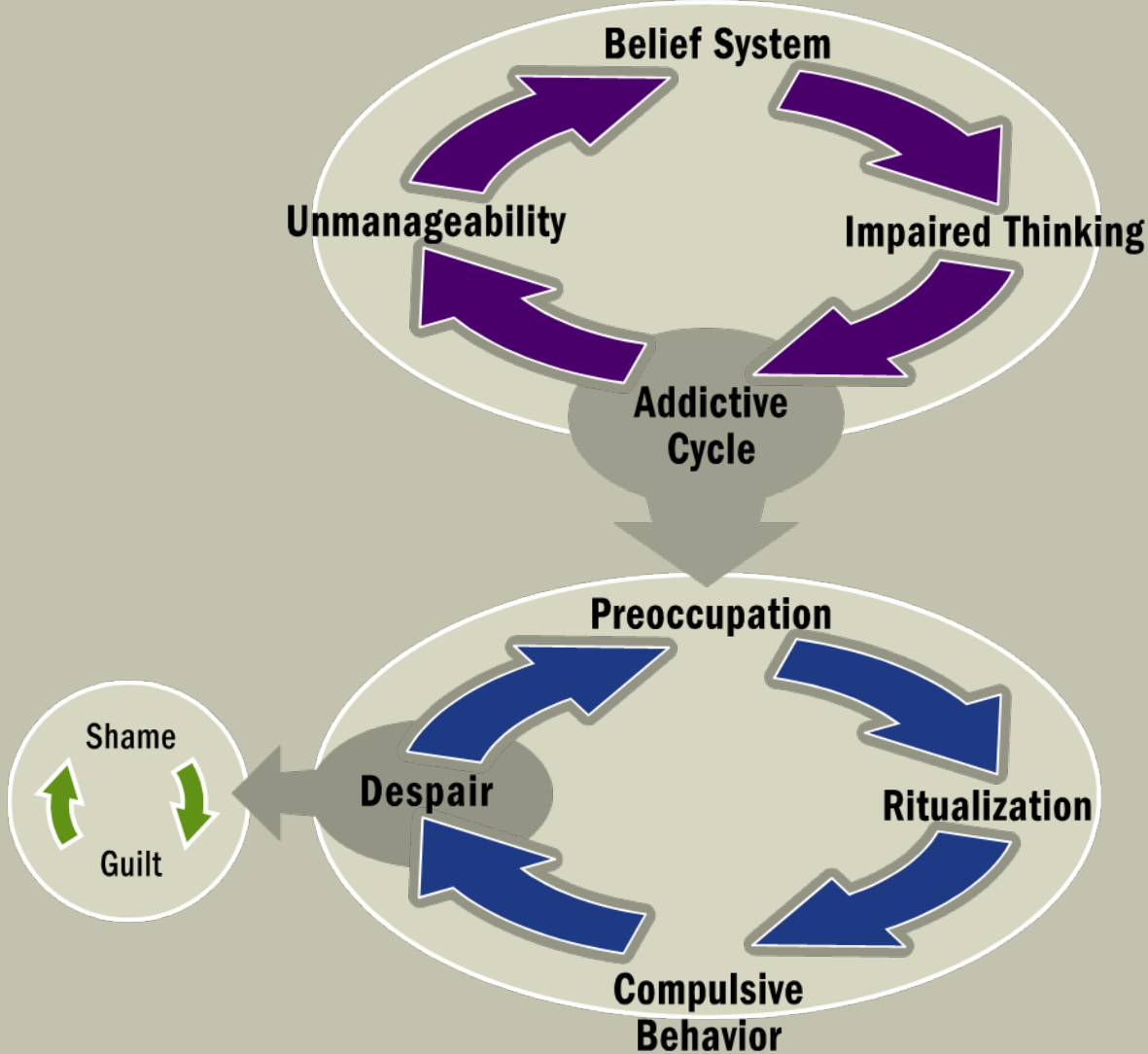


# Sex Addiction vs Alcoholism



- Numb feelings
- Escape painful parts of life
- Mood altering
- Becomes central to life
- Becomes most important need

# The Addictive System



# Belief System

- All those things the addict has heard about men, women, and sex
- Convictions, myths and values that affect decision making
- It is the way in which they view the world

# Belief System

- ❑ I am a flawed and unworthy person
- ❑ If people knew me, they wouldn't love me
- ❑ If I have to count on others my needs will never be met
- ❑ Sex is my most important need

# Impaired Thinking

- For the addict, their impaired thinking ignores reality, distorts reality, and maybe even causes them to have no reality
- Their interpretation is so different from others and they use rationalizations for their addictive behaviors

# Preoccupation

- Thinking, fantasizing, engrossed in something other than reality
- Cultivate level of preoccupation as an ongoing daily or hourly process
- The fantasy component will access key neuropathways in the brain

# Ritualization

- Continue with addictive patterns, induce trance through ritual
- All addicts use ritual to alter their mood and keep their addictive behavior going

# Compulsivity

- Actual acting out or sexually restricting
- Acting out behavior can manifest itself in many different ways

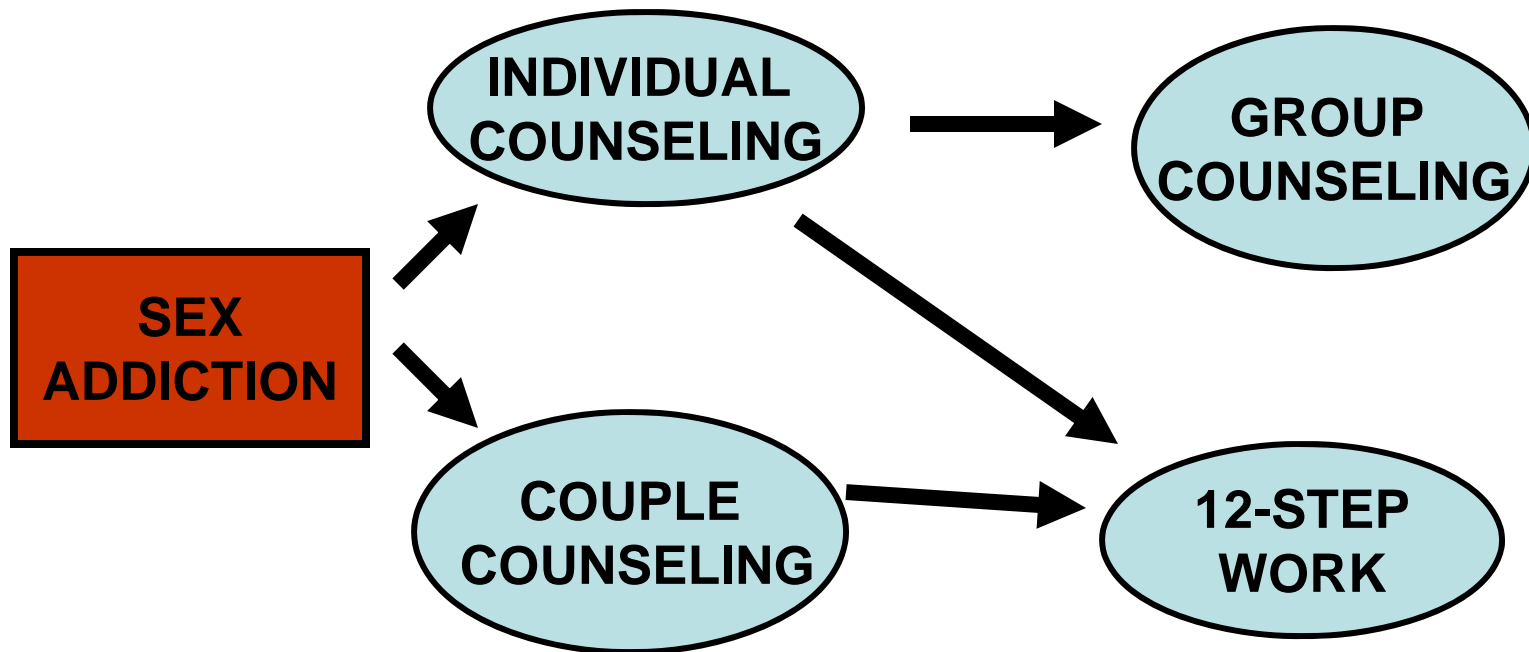
# Despair

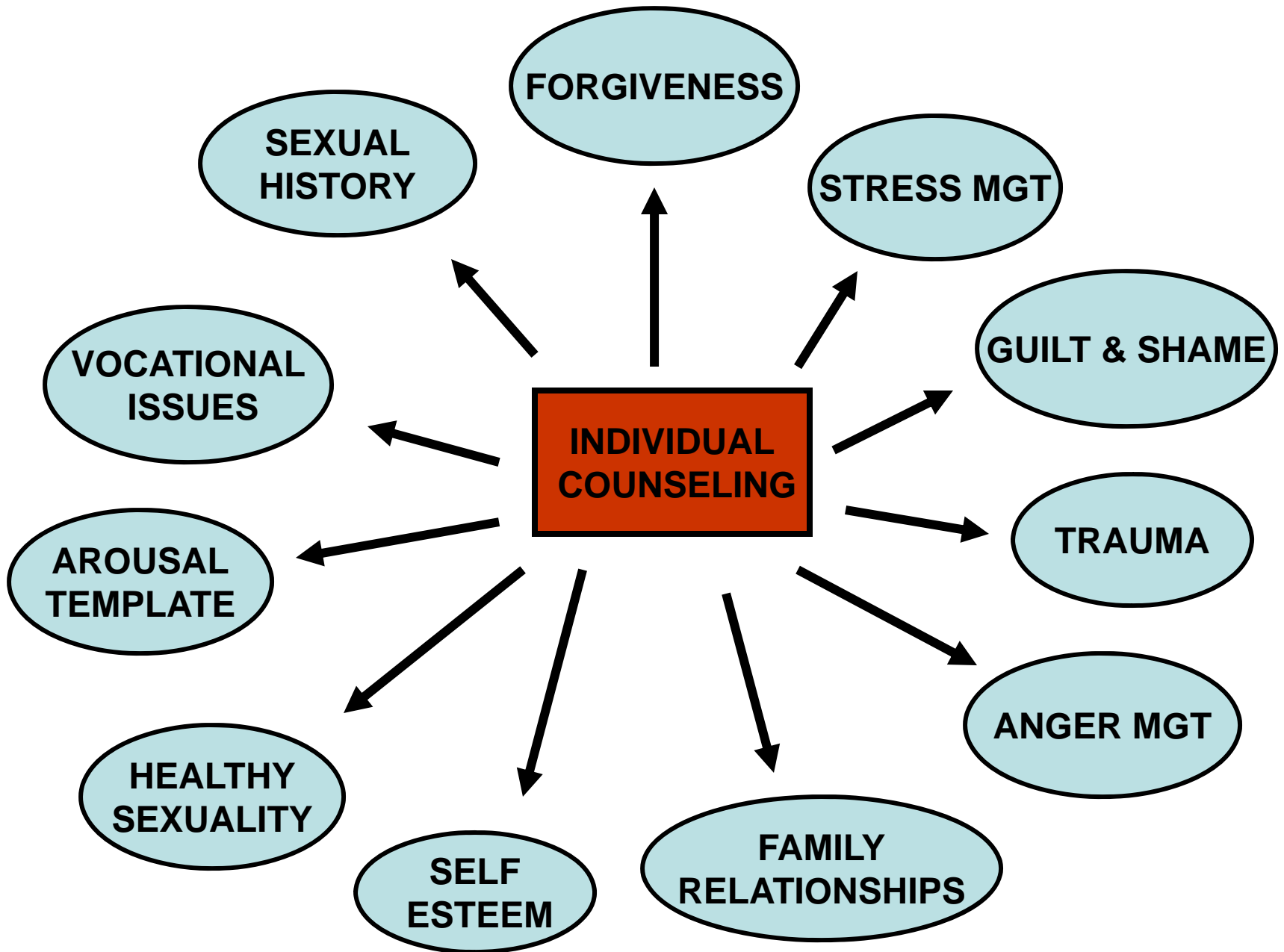
- Utter hopelessness, desperation and fear that addicts have about their behavior
- This is that “let down” feeling of failure

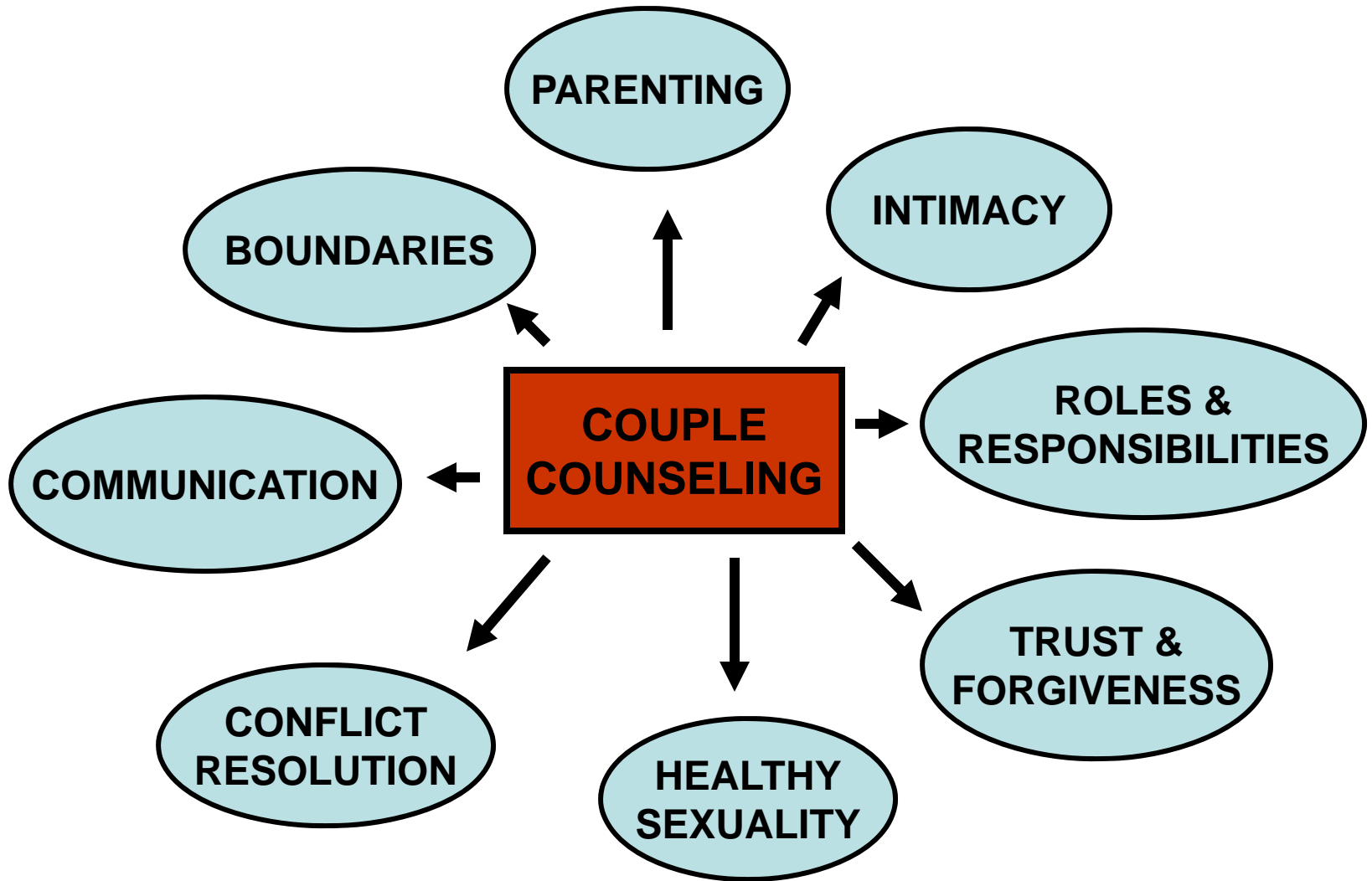
# Unmanageability

- Confirms beliefs about self and the overall Addictive System repeats itself
- Consequences may include losses and legal consequences

# Counseling Modalities – Sex Addiction







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# ONLINE RESOURCES

- SA – [www.sa.org](http://www.sa.org)
- SAA – [www.sexaa.org](http://www.sexaa.org)
- SCA – [www.sca-recovery.org](http://www.sca-recovery.org)
- SLAA – [www.slaafws.org](http://www.slaafws.org)
- SRA – [www.sexualrecovery.org](http://www.sexualrecovery.org)
- S-ANON – [www.sanon.org](http://www.sanon.org)
- COSA – [www.cosa-recovery.org](http://www.cosa-recovery.org)
- SASH – [www.sash.net](http://www.sash.net)



**Questions?**