

KeyNotes — News of the KeyStone Center Extended Care Unit

First Quarter, 2023

A Message from the Director, David Pellack PhD, LPC, CSAT

Throughout the years, I have often heard people, mostly nonprofessionals, use the terms addiction, compulsion, and problematic behavior interchangeably. However, though the difference between these terms might seem negligible, there is indeed a difference. What distinguishes addiction from compulsion is that an addiction indicates a dependency on a substance or behavior whereas a compulsion involves a powerful urge to repetitively engage in a specific behavior or substance, typically with the goal of eliminating or suppressing a negative feeling such as anxiety. An addiction involves an inability to stop. Although an individual may initially gain pleasure from engaging in the behavior or substance, ultimately there are significant negative consequences that, in the eyes of a nonaddict, outweigh any benefits. As an addiction progresses, an individual may also experience feelings of compulsivity to engage in the behavior or substance of choice. Ultimately both addiction and compulsion involve a lack of control.

What I am hearing more and more often from individuals seeking recovery is that they are more open to labeling their sexual behavior as problematic as opposed to addictive or compulsive. I understand that the terms addiction and compulsivity can be conceived as rather harsh or stigmatizing which subsequently can lead to feelings of shame and embarrassment. I find myself agreeing increasingly more with Shakespeare's Juliet when she says "What's in a name? That which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet."

I see no need to challenge new clients or potential clients about their preference or desire to label their behavior as problematic. I save that energy for challenging them to eliminate the shame they have felt, the justification they have used to act out and the false beliefs they may have developed about vulnerability and intimacy. Although an individual may initially seek comfort in labeling an addictive or compulsive behavior as problematic, I am confident that they will leave KeyStone with a stronger sense of self, a better understanding of their behavior, myriad tools

and resources to use to maintain successful long term recovery - and the willingness to consider themselves a person with a sexual addiction who is on the road to recovery.

Continuing to share the message of hope -
David

Key Team Member:

Jordana "Jody" Blumenfield

Jordana "Jody" Blumenfield, MA, NCC, CSAT-Candidate joined the Keystone ECU as the Program Coordinator after over two years at our sister facility, a residential substance use disorder program. She earned her undergraduate degree in psychology at Kutztown University and her Master's in counseling with a focus in mental health from Messiah University. Jody has worked as a therapist supporting adults working towards recovery from substance use disorders and addressing mental health concerns for over ten years in a range of programs and levels of care, now bringing this knowledge and expertise into sexual compulsivity and trauma. She is trained in many areas of Cognitive Behavior Therapy (CBT) and supports clients through clinical orientations of CBT, person-centered, and strength-based approaches. She is currently pursuing state licensure and her CSAT certification. Look around her workspace to find one of her favorite quotes, "A smooth sea never made a skilled sailor."

ECU Milestones

* **Director David Pellack, PhD, LPC, CSAT**, presented at the KeyStone Colloquial on September 14th on the topic of treatment of sexual compulsivity. He was pleased to be joined by former ECU Director Dr. Alyson Nerenberg who also discussed her new book entitled *No Perfect Love: Shattering the Illusion of Flawless Relationships*.

* **Family Therapist Karen Martin LMFT, CSAT, Client Liaison Deb MacDonald BS, and Director David Pellack, PhD, LPC, CSAT**, attended the 2022 Society for the Advancement of Sexual Health conference in Atlanta, Georgia October 14-15. Dr. Pellack lead a Roundtable discussion on cultural considerations of sexual compulsivity and problematic behavior.

* **Director David Pellack, PhD, LPC, CSAT, and Client Liaison Ms. Deborah MacDonald** will be hosting the ECU's next quarterly Zoom alumni gathering on March 14th at 7:30pm.