

Anorexia: Sexual, Social, Emotional excerpted © 1992 S.L.A.A.

What is Anorexia?

In Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous, we suffer from addiction to sex, love, relationship, fantasy, romance, and codependency. However, there is still another addiction some of us suffer from: anorexia. As an eating disorder, anorexia is defined as the compulsive avoidance of food. In the area of sex and love, anorexia has a similar definition: Anorexia is the compulsive avoidance of giving or receiving social, sexual, or emotional nourishment.

Some Varieties of Anorexia

Some of us may not have had sex or been in a close personal relationship in years. Or we may be in partnerships, but find it difficult to be emotionally close. We may be the members in S.L.A.A. who seldom speak in meetings, disappearing the instant the meeting is over. Or we may be those who, outside meetings are barely social. Or we may be the kind who do not have intimate friendships. We may have many acquaintances, but no one we're really close to. Or we may have close relations with only certain people, our children say, but keep our distance from anyone else. There are many other varieties of anorectics as well. But whichever kind we are, all of us in some important way have distanced ourselves from experiencing love.

As anorectics or as people with anorectic tendencies, we may have a wide range of feelings and responses. Some of us feel overwhelmed in social settings. Others of us get high by socializing with a great many people in order to keep ourselves from intimacy with any one person. Some of us feel incapacitated by shyness in relationships with others. Others of us are in relationship but are passionate only in one area of it; for instance, we may be emotionally invested in the relationship but remain sexually or socially unavailable.

Just as our feelings have a wide range, so do our behavior patterns. For some of us, anorexia might take on the form of an overwhelming dread of making phone calls. Some of us function well in particular situations, such as the workplace where intimacy is not usually valued, but find we are distant with family and friends. Others of us have used alcohol or drugs to become emotionally withdrawn. Or we used them to become sexually, emotionally, or socially daring, while essentially remaining out of contact with others in any meaningful way. In this way, we have used other addictions to act out anorexically.

Are You Anorectic?

Ten of the fifty questions from the pamphlet are provided here to help you decide if this pamphlet may be of use to you.

1. Do you go for long periods without being involved in a sexual or romantic relationship?
2. Do you go without social activities for extended periods of time?
3. Although in a relationship, have you found that, for a long while, you have not experienced: romance? sexuality? intimacy? friendship?
4. Are you alone more than you want, but feel unable to change that?
5. At work do you have trouble developing relationships, talk only when absolutely necessary, or hide out in the work?

6. Do you avoid relationships with a certain gender?
7. Do you stay aloof when in groups?
8. Are you afraid of being noticed?
9. Does being in the presence of others exhaust you, even if you like them?
10. Do you habitually panic or push people away when they start getting too close?