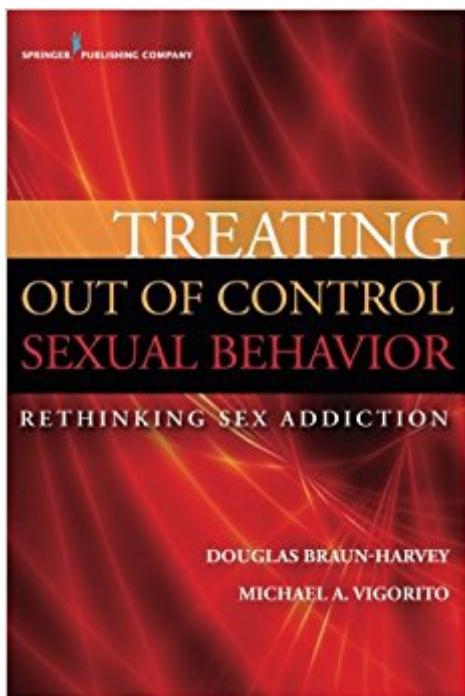


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Treating Out Of Control Sexual Behavior: Rethinking Sex Addiction



Synopsis

"I have been waiting for a book that would offer a sex-positive, non-judgmental, and non-pathologizing alternative approach for working with "sex addiction." Doug Braun-Harvey and Michael Vigorito aim men forward toward their sexual health with this refreshing critical, and compassionate model to help those in the grip of problematic sexual behavior. This book will change your thinking and your clinical work at the intersection of sexuality and psychotherapy."

-Esther Perel, LMFT, Author of *Mating in Captivity: Unlocking Erotic Intelligence* This groundbreaking book reconsiders popular notions of addictive sex. Braun-Harvey and Vigorito's sexual health psychotherapy protocol is an innovative treatment approach for men experiencing sexual lives beyond their control. "Out of control sexual behavior" (OCSB) is defined as a sexual health problem in which consensual sexual urges, thoughts, or behaviors feel out of control. As opposed to a clinical disorder, OCSB is framed as a behavioral problem within the normal range of sexual expression. The book provides step-by-step tools for assessment, treatment planning, and implementation stemming from the authors' work with hundreds of individual and group therapy clients. OCSB treatment matches individual and group therapy interventions with current motivational interviewing and readiness-for-change research. Further, this approach emphasizes the clinician's ethical responsibility to provide the most effective treatment while protecting client sexual rights and welcoming sexual diversity. Rich and varied composite case examples demonstrate clinical sexual health treatment conversations as well as stories of hope and guidance to understand how sexual health is an ally for changing OCSB.

Key Features:

- Presents a much-needed sexual health alternative to conventional thinking about assessing and treating OCSB
- Posits OCSB as a sexual health behavior problem rather than a process addiction or psychosexual disorder
- Promotes sexual health principles as the framework to envision and guide men's sexual behavior change
- Includes a practical, step-by-step pathway model to assess and treat OCSB
- Organizes a wide range of best-practice clinical interventions for individual and group psychotherapy
- Includes composite case examples demonstrating successful treatment outcomes

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Customer Reviews

Douglas Braun-Harvey, LMFT, CGP, CST, is a sexual health author, trainer, and psychotherapist who bridges sexual and mental health and facilitates organizational change. In 2013, Doug Braun-Harvey cofounded The Harvey Institute, an international education, training, consulting, and supervision service for improving health care through integration of sexual health. He teaches and trains nationally and internationally, linking sexual health principles with drug and alcohol treatment, group psychotherapy, HIV prevention and treatment, and child maltreatment. Since 1993, he has been developing and implementing a sexual health-based treatment approach for men with out of control sexual behavior (OCSB). Previous publications include *Sexual Health in Recovery: Professional Counselor's Manual* (2011) and *Sexual Health in Drug and Alcohol Treatment: Group Facilitator's Manual* (2009). He has earned several distinctions, including the 2013 Carneal Award from the Society for the Advancement of Sexual Health, a 2011 Sexual Intelligence Award, the 2011 President's Award from the National Association of Lesbian and Gay Addiction Professionals, and the 2011 Society for the Scientific Study of Sexuality Western Region Public Service Award for promoting sexual health awareness and providing the intellectual framework for integrating sexology and chemical dependency. Mr. Braun-Harvey is a licensed marriage and family therapist (MFT), certified group psychotherapist (CGP), and certified sex therapist (AASECT Certified). He is on the web at www.DBHnow.com and in private practice in San Diego, California. Michael A. Vigorito, LMFT, LCPC, CGP, is a sexual health consultant, author, and psychotherapist. As a consultant, Mr. Vigorito trains behavioral health providers to integrate sexual health into their systems of care through routine sexual health screenings, sexual risk reduction counseling, and culturally competent interventions. As a clinician, Mr. Vigorito developed, supervised, and conducted therapy in integrative behavioral health programs that worked with substance addiction, mental illness, and HIV/AIDS. In his Washington, DC, private practice, Mr. Vigorito provides individual, couple, and group psychotherapy specializing

in sexual health, including out of control sexual experiences, sexual dysfunctions, sex/drug-linked behaviors, and sexual dissatisfaction. He is licensed as a marriage and family therapist (MFT), licensed clinical professional counselor, and is a certified group psychotherapist. Mr. Vigorito is also a member of the American Group Psychotherapy Association; the Society for the Scientific Study of Sexuality; and the American Association of Sex Educators, Counselors, and Therapists. More about Mr. Vigorito can be found at www.iCounselingServices.com.

This book is a tremendous contribution to the field of Sex Therapy and Psychotherapy. As a long time clinician I read constantly. Rarely do I read something that enlightens and changes my thinking as this book has. The authors put a fresh, positive and truly effective spin on subjects that in much of the literature is fraught with judgment, moralizing and shame. They present a model that is clear, kind and truly effective, and are generous and practical in teaching the reader how to implement it. I whole heartedly recommend it. And I might add that even for those clinicians who do not necessarily work with the population that the book addresses, the way the authors conceptualize sexual health is brilliant and relevant to everyone. An excellent read. Hope these authors will write more!

Great book!

If this model of treatment had existed years ago, I may not have felt the need to write my book *The Myth of Sex Addiction*. The OCSB model redirects attention from sex, to the person in context, and forces clinicians to define WHY a sex behavior is a problem. This leads away from covert morality and cultural relativity, key weaknesses in the sex addiction model. I honor Michael and Doug's work, as well as their courage in pioneering this evolutionary movement. I encourage therapists within sex addiction to adopt this model. I also encourage other, non sex addiction therapists to explore how they might use this model to support patients who struggle with sexual behaviors, without shaming or pathologizing.

This essential volume attempts to break the current clinical logjam caused by professional failure to empirically resolve the conundrum posed by differing clinical models about troublesome sex, including sex addiction (SA), hypersexual disorder (HD), and compulsive (or impulsive-compulsive) sexual behavior (ICSB). Braun-Harvey and Vigorito have succeeded, by carefully carving a manageable piece out of the varied landscape of problem sexual behaviors by restricting their process to populations they know: Gay, kinky and hetero males who are complaining about feelings

that their sexual behavior feels out of control and dissonant with their values. The authors' success keys on side-stepping the theoretical controversies and framing psychotherapy as a "sexual health conversation" in which clients articulate their problems with their own sexual behavior and their other values. This protects clients from the intrusion of therapist values and thereby contaminating the therapeutic intent with potentially corrupting service as an agent of social control. In order to change, clients do not need to accept shaming labels or hand their already threatened autonomy over to a powerful authority figure or expert. The sexual health conversation the authors recommend has 6 elements: consent; non-exploitation; protection from HIV/STI, and unintended pregnancy; honesty; shared values; and mutual pleasure. The strategic task clients face in therapy is articulating their positions on these six dimensions with their sexual desires. While clients may come to treatment with inchoate positions on these values, and therapists have an educational role to perform regarding some of these matters, it is the client who decides how his values and behavior are to become reconciled. Treating Out of Control Behavior is appropriate for men only, the authors have no experience with female clients. It is also not appropriate for sexual offenders and involuntary populations. To their credit, the authors are specific and articulate about evaluating clients and arranging community resources and referrals for appropriate services for clients who are not appropriate. Treating Out of Control Sexual Behavior is excellent alternative to 12 step and 'sex addiction' therapies that many clients perceive as labeling, blaming, coercive, and that often mistake alternative sexualities for 'addictions'. It is client-centered, while helping clients hold themselves to a high standard of self-accountability.

What I love about this book is how radical of a paradigm shift is offered in treating out of control sexual behaviors (OCSB) based on a model that is client-informed and within a sexual health framework. In the first few pages the authors acknowledge the controversial history of sexual addiction treatment models, introduced over 30 years ago, where there is still no agreed upon criteria for sex addiction that too easily falls prey to therapist bias and wavering cultural sexual morality. Instead, they offer an approach for how a therapist can be with their client that appreciates the vast array of sexual diversity while also exploring clients feeling sexually out of control. They clearly have a relational lens as marriage and family therapists as they wrote this book. They also acknowledged their own personal experiences as gay men having been affected by the AIDS pandemic and their subsequent increased consciousness of the results of sexual shaming. They consistently encourage ongoing therapist self-evaluation and provide multiple case examples of how important this is. The authors define OCSB as "a sexual problem of consensual

sexual urges, thoughts, or behaviors that feel out of control for the individual. Their treatment approach encourages therapists to collaborate with their client to find what is healthy for them sexually instead of merely focusing on what the client finds problematic. This book details the assessment and treatment for cisgender men, who are the vast majority of those being labeled "sex addicts" by their partners, their therapists, and the media these past 30 years. What stands out to me most about this book and about their approach is how truly empathic and compassionate they are with their readers and their clients. They use relatable case examples throughout showing ways that therapists can hinder or enhance the therapeutic alliance and thereby decrease or increase the client's motivation for change. While not an easy task to do with such an often taboo and shaming topic they exemplify openness, curiosity and non-judgment. I highly recommend this book for those interested in exploring the nuances of sexuality with their clients. Most medical and mental health practitioners in the United States get such inadequate training in sexuality and are uncomfortable talking about sex with their clients. This book is an invaluable resource in shifting not only how we think about sex addiction but also how we encourage our clients' sexual health.

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