

**Innovative ACSA Practices:
Introducing Early Intervention Strategies, New Tools and Clinical Case
Insights to *Empower Clinicians***

IITAP 20th Annual Symposium
May 16, 2025

PRESENTED BY:

Kenneth M. Adams, Ph.D. & Leilani Sinclair, LMFT

ACSA Contact:

Leilani Sinclair
leilani@leilanisinclair.com
(818) 570-0745

ACSA SIGN UP SHEET

(Indicate interest in upcoming consultation group)



DR. ADAMS' ENMESHMENT AND ACSA SIGN UP SHEET:



DISCLOSURE, IMPACT AND AMENDS (DIAP) PROTOCOL - CLIENT MATERIALS

PARENTING IN THE AFTERMATH OF SEX ADDICTION DISCOVERY

What to Do, What Not to Do, and Why It Matters

The period immediately following the discovery of a parent's sex addiction can be profoundly destabilizing for everyone in the family. When a spouse's sex addiction comes to light, it often leads to a significant breakdown in the marriage—an event that can feel disorienting and overwhelming.

For parents of adult children, the impact rarely stays confined to the couple. Adult children may become drawn into the crisis—whether through emotional involvement, shifts in family roles, or disrupted trust—creating a ripple effect that reverberates throughout the entire family system.

It can be especially destabilizing for **Adult Children of Sex Addicts (ACSAs)**. During this time, ACSAs often carry a heavy emotional burden: they may witness one parent's deep pain from betrayal trauma while simultaneously trying to make sense of painful revelations about the other parent's hidden sexual behaviors. They may experience a confusing mix of shock, grief, anger, and loss, and may feel caught in a role they never expected—trying to emotionally support one or both parents while managing their own distress.

As a parent, you are likely dealing with your own intense pain—perhaps trying to simply get through each day. Co-parenting during a marital crisis of this magnitude is profoundly difficult. And yet, how you respond to your adult child in this moment can be one of the most important factors in how they cope and, over time, how they heal. Your choices—especially how you communicate with your ACSA—can either foster emotional safety and stability, or unintentionally deepen the trauma they're already navigating.

This information sheet offers practical guidance to help reduce the risk of emotional harm to your ACSA and to support the resilience they need to stay grounded as your family navigates this crisis.

DISCLOSURE, IMPACT AND AMENDS (DIAP) PROTOCOL - CLIENT MATERIALS

GUIDANCE FOR PARENTS' OF ADULT CHILDREN OF SEX ADDICTS (ACSA)

What to Do, What Not to Do, and Why It Matters

1. Limit the Disclosing of Information

- **Don't:** Disclose explicit details about the other parent's sex addiction without professional guidance.
- **Do:** Consult with a trained therapist before making any disclosures about your partner's addiction or behaviors.
- **Why:** Sharing detailed or graphic information can intensify your ACSA's trauma. Such specifics are often unnecessary for their healing and may heighten distress rather than alleviate it.

2. Reflect Before Discussing Sensitive Topics

- **Don't:** Discuss your partner's addiction with your ACSA without considering the emotional impact.
- **Do:** Pause and ask yourself, *"Is this for their benefit, or for mine?"*
- **Why:** Your ACSA may not be ready to process this information, and your intention should always prioritize their emotional well-being rather than unburdening yourself.

3. Support Your ACSA's Autonomy

- **Don't:** Encourage your ACSA to limit contact with the other parent.
- **Do:** Support your ACSA's autonomy and allow them to make their own relationship decisions.
- **Why:** Pressuring your ACSA to distance themselves from the other parent can lead to feelings of conflict and deepen their distress by forcing them to choose sides.

4. Maintain Respectful Language toward the Other Parent

- **Don't:** Speak negatively about the other parent, use blame, or express contempt in front of your ACSA.
- **Do:** Use neutral, respectful language and acknowledge the difficulty of the situation without deriding the other parent.
- **Why:** Negative comments toward the other parent can create loyalty conflicts and exacerbate your child's emotional challenges.

5. Resolve Conflicts Privately

- **Don't:** Fight or have intense arguments with the other parent in front of your ACSA.
- **Do:** Address conflicts discreetly and respectfully, away from your child's awareness.
- **Why:** Avoiding visible conflict minimizes further trauma and prevents your ACSA from being pulled into parental disputes.

6. Make Sure that ACSA Siblings Are Given the Same Shared Information

- **Don't:** Share details with one ACSA but not the others.
- **Do:** When sharing information, ensure it is responsibly communicated to each ACSA.
- **Why:** Unequal disclosure creates division and strain on sibling, and places a burden of secrecy on the adult child who carries the information.

7. Find Support Outside the Family

- **Don't:** Turn to your ACSA as your confidante or source of emotional support.
- **Do:** Seek the support you need from trusted adults, therapists, or support groups.
- **Why:** Your ACSA needs space to process their own emotions without feeling responsible for yours. Taking this off their plate is one of the greatest gifts you can give during this time.

8. No Secrecy from ACSA

- **Don't:** Ask your ACSA to keep secrets.
 - **Do:** Encourage open, honest, and respectful communication within your family.
 - **Why:** Requests for secrecy can create shame, confusion, or feelings of isolation in your ACSA.
-

Next Steps

Your choices today will likely have a lasting impact on your adult child's ability to process this crisis. Take time to reflect on how you'll approach parenting to prioritize your ACSA's emotional safety. Proactively develop a plan for consistent and healthy communication as you move forward. Bring this to your therapist for personalized guidance.

DISCLOSURE, IMPACT AND AMENDS (DIAP) PROTOCOL - CLIENT MATERIALS

ACSA PARENT'S DISCLOSURE AND ACCOUNTABILITY WORKSHEET

<u>My Actions</u>	<u>Impact to ACSA</u>

DISCLOSURE, IMPACT AND AMENDS (DIAP) PROTOCOL - CLIENT MATERIALS

ACSA PARENT - SENTENCE COMPLETION EXERCISE

The following are sentence completion written exercises. The content can serve as the basis for formulating your letter of amends. If you have multiple adult children, consider addressing the impact to each child individually.

I encouraged you to keep secrets of mine including:

One of the things I burdened you with is...

... I also burdened you with

... I also burdened you with

What I regret most as a parent is...

I want to make amends for...

To cover up my sex addiction, I lied to you about [provide specific events]

I want to recognize the following ways in which you were harmed....

DISCLOSURE, IMPACT AND AMENDS (DIAP) PROTOCOL - CLIENT MATERIALS

TEMPLATE - Parents Letter Inviting ACSA to Participate in DIAP
To Be Completed Jointly by ACSA Parents

Dear ACSA,

I hope this message finds you well. I'm writing to you today to invite you to participate in what is called a Disclosure, Impact, and Amends Process (DIAP). This is a structured process that provides a safe space where we can address the ways in which my struggle with sex addiction has affected you and caused pain within our family.

The goal of this process is to give you the opportunity to heal and to find freedom from the entanglements of the past. It will be guided by a professional who specializes in supporting adult children and families impacted by **sex addiction**/***How I've contributed to the tension and marital conflict that you experienced**, who can enable us to have the difficult through important conversations that lead to healing.

I want to acknowledge the burden you've had to carry and the challenges you've faced as a result of our family's struggles and the impact of my behavior/addiction. It's clear to me now the weight of the trauma you've had to endure, and I want to take full responsibility for my significant part in this.

I understand that this may be a lot to take in, and I want you to know that I'm here to answer any questions you may have. Your well-being is my priority, and I respect whatever decision you make regarding your participation in this process.

With love and respect,

Parent/s

**Minor adjustments are necessary when this letter is to come from both parents, i.e. change "I" to "we" or "our".*

DISCLOSURE, IMPACT AND AMENDS (DIAP) PROTOCOL - CLIENT MATERIALS

ACSA NARRATIVE TIMELINE - UP TO AGE 12

<u>Age</u>	<u>Life event</u>	<u>Trauma/Betrayal Experienced</u>	<u>Impact to Self</u>

This handout was created by Dr. Kenneth Adams and Leilani Sinclair and is intended solely for use in therapeutic settings. Licensed mental health professionals are welcome to share this material with their clients, provided the content remains unchanged and that the authors are appropriately credited.

DISCLOSURE, IMPACT AND AMENDS (DIAP) PROTOCOL - CLIENT MATERIALS

ACSA NARRATIVE TIMELINE - ADOLESCENT/ADULTHOOD

<u>Age</u>	<u>Life event</u>	<u>Trauma/Betrayal Experienced</u>	<u>Impact to Self</u>

This handout was created by Dr. Kenneth Adams and Leilani Sinclair and is intended solely for use in therapeutic settings. Licensed mental health professionals are welcome to share this material with their clients, provided the content remains unchanged and that the authors are appropriately credited.

DISCLOSURE, IMPACT AND AMENDS (DIAP) PROTOCOL - CLIENT MATERIALS

**ACSA Personal Impact Worksheet
Parental Impacts**

I experienced the following actions or behaviors from my parent/s (indicate from which parent). Check all that apply.

	SA PARENT	OTHER PARENT
Inattentive or neglectful parenting		
Physical abuse		
Sexual abuse		
Emotional abuse		
Witnessed the abuse of others (including siblings)		
Lack of protection		
Access or exposure to inappropriate sexual communication/content/images		
Lack of healthy discussions about sex		
Moralistic or judgmental attitudes about sex		
Normalized hypersexuality, objectification, or demeaning jokes aimed at a particular gender		
This parent made negative comments/disparaging remarks directed at the gender of the other parent		
This parent limited the time that I spent with my other parent (assuming the other parent was not abusive to ACSA)		
This parent encouraged secret keeping from me		
Overshared details of the SA parents' acting out		
Served as confidant to this parent		
Felt overly responsible for managing the wellbeing of this parent		
Encouragement, spoken or unspoken, to align with this parent against the other		
Did not acknowledge that the SA parent is/was a sex addict		
Felt put in the middle of parental/marital conflict		
This parent guilted me for expressing care and love toward the other parent		
This parent failed to acknowledge their role in shaping my upbringing.		
Unequal treatment of children, i.e. one child was favored, or one child is unfairly treated		
This parent would not co-parent with the other parent in a respect way in times of conflict or tension		
I felt uncomfortable expressing my love and care for my other parent, when this parent was angry at them		

This handout was created by Dr. Kenneth Adams and Leilani Sinclair and is intended solely for use in therapeutic settings. Licensed mental health professionals are welcome to share this material with their clients, provided the content remains unchanged and that the authors are appropriately credited.