

Chaille DeFaria

CULTIVATING COURAGE WITH CHAILLE

Do You Suffer With A BFPA?
You are NOT Alone! Part I

By Chaille DeFaria PCC, CDWF

Do you know someone who pulls out their hair, lashes, brows, or picks their skin uncontrollably? Or, someone who has an addiction to gaming, shopping, exercise, internet, or work?

If you answered "Yes" to any of these, you may suffer with a BFPA™, **Body Focused Process Addiction.** Process Addictions, also known as Behavioral Addictions, include compulsive and addictive BEHAVIORS that are detrimental to a person's wellbeing.

I've pulled out my lashes and brows since I was 15 and had no idea what was wrong with me for another 10. I was swimming in shame, struggling to control a behavior that I just couldn't stop. I soon learned that one to two in 50 people pull out their hair.

What is a BFPA™?
Like all addictions, these addictions activate the brain's reward circuitry. They also provide a sense of excitement, accomplishment, or fulfillment not felt at other times, and helps mitigate experiences of unwanted emotions or mental states. To be clear, Process Addictions do not include addictions to substances such as alcohol or drugs.

The "Why" Behind BFPA™ Is A Good Question.
We know through research that there is a genetic component that is hereditary, and we certainly know anxiety plays a huge role. For me, at 15, I was navigating hormones, divorcing parents, and all the other challenges of being a teenager. Pulling was a soothing way to cope and disassociate from my emotions. However, I deeply hated myself for not being able to control my behavior.

It would be a long time before I learned there was a name for my BFPA™: Trichotillomania. *Talk about a mouthful of shame.* It was even longer before I learned that perfectionism was the birthplace of my shame and by comparison, the thief of my joy.



Each of us has a story, but when we live in silence, secrecy, and self-judgment, we feel hopeless. It is difficult to find light when you are in darkness, so if you know someone suffering with a BFPA™, shine a light in front of them and remind them they are not alone.

Stay tuned for Part II where I discuss how parents and loved ones can support these disorders without fueling the behavior.

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