

## GROOMING

Grooming is a way of describing the actions a person deliberately does to try and befriend and make an emotional connection [often with a child] so they can hurt them. "Grooming" is a way of getting someone ready for abuse and involves tricks that offenders of sexual abuse use to manipulate their victim, the victim's family or community over time. This can be a very sneaky and slow process. Sometimes it is hard to see when someone is being 'groomed' until after they have been sexually abused, because some grooming behaviour looks like "normal" caring and nice behaviour.

Children are often taught to "respect their elders". Sometimes if an adult does something that makes a child feel uncomfortable or upset, the child will ignore how they feel and go along with the behaviour because they believe that the adult is always right. Examples of grooming include:

- ☐ Giving gifts or attention for inappropriate reasons
- ☐ Controlling a child through threats, force or use of authority
- ☐ Openly or pretending to accidentally expose the victim to nudity, sexual material and sexual acts
- ☐ Making close physical contact sexual, such as inappropriate tickling and wrestling
- ☐ Having an inappropriate and intrusive/pushy interest into children's physical and sexual development
- ☐ Having inappropriate social boundaries (e.g., telling the potential victims about their own personal problems etc)

## RESPONSIBILITY

Many abusers refuse to accept responsibility for the abuse. Victims of the abuse can believe they are at fault for accepting gifts or trusting them. Victims can also feel responsible for what might happen to the people they love if they tell someone about the abuse or think that no-one will believe them. This can lead to the child/adult feeling responsible and then guilty, ashamed, full of self-blame and worthless. **Abusers count on this to keep victims silent.**

The information below is especially relevant in cases where the abuser is a family member, care-giver or has some form of a relationship with the child and is from the New South Wales Pre-trial Diversion of Offenders Program (1994).

### **Identifying and Targeting**

Offenders have a special ability to identify and take advantage of children's vulnerabilities. For example, offenders target a victim by sizing up the child's vulnerability—emotional neediness, isolation and lower self-confidence. Younger children are especially in danger as they do not have the language or knowledge to understand or tell others what is happening. Children who rely on the offender for care, love, affection or other things will be at risk to the demands of the abuser and children with less parental supervision are also wanted.

### **Recruitment [gaining trust]**

Perpetrators gain trust by watching and gathering information about the person, getting to know their needs and how to fill them. This means that offenders mix effortlessly with responsible parents and carers because they seem warm, understanding and caring.

The perpetrator uses different ways to keep the child in a relationship where the abuse can happen and to desensitise the child to abusive behaviour.

### *Trust/Favouritism*

They will take deliberate steps to establish a relationship of trust, spending time with the child, listening to them, treating them as "special", or perhaps giving them compliments/presents/favours- things the child really like and enjoy.

### *Isolation/Secrecy*

The perpetrator will isolate the child and keep them away from their siblings and from the non-offending parent. The favouritism shown to the victim often promotes alienation from siblings, and can cause resentment and jealousy. The perpetrator may use the child as a "confidante", sharing special secrets. Statements like "Mum wouldn't understand how special we are together", "ours is a special love that others wouldn't understand" contribute to a climate of secrecy and alienate the child from the non-offending parent. It means the child does not feel close to people in their family and this is called 'splitting'.

### *Desensitisation*

A process of desensitisation is used to test the child's resistance and engage them in the abuse. Desensitising means to make someone NOT notice things or not worry about things when other people usually do. Perpetrators use "normal" situations and take advantage of these to hurt. For example, they may use touching as a game or introduce sexual touching as "accidental". They are likely to blur the boundaries of ordinary affection so the child confuses this with the abuse. This often occurs around the child's normal bathing, dressing and bedroom routines. The perpetrator may engage the child in their own bathroom behaviour or use talk about sex and sexual jokes to blur boundaries about it and make children confused.

Throughout the process of trying to groom the child, the perpetrator is measuring whether the child has been "groomed" enough, for example whether they show interest, will not protest, or will keep the secret.

### **Maintenance**

Perpetrators use careful planning, scheming and strategies to groom the child to participate in sexual activities. Bit by bit, they do things over time and keep checking the risks. The perpetrator will gain the compliance of the victim by:

- *Assuring the child of the "rightness" of what they are doing, e.g. through statements such as "this is a way we can show we love each other", "I am teaching you", "it's not doing any harm".*
- *Telling the child the acts will not hurt them.*
- *Conveying the negative consequences of non-compliance or disclosure, e.g. through threats, conveying the illusion that the child is "free" to choose, that he/she has consented and that they are in a "relationship"*

- *Using bribes, threats, punishment*

### **Isolating the child**

The grooming perpetrator uses the developing special relationship with the child to create situations in which they are alone together. This isolation further reinforces a special connection. Babysitting, tutoring, coaching and special trips all help this isolation happen.

A 'special' relationship can be made stronger when the perpetrator gives a sense in the child that they are loved or appreciated in a way that others, not even parents, give. Parents may accidentally feed into this by really liking the perpetrator and appreciate the unique relationship or the time they are spending with their child.

### **Sexualizing the relationship**

At a stage when there is enough emotional dependence and trust, the perpetrator progressively sexualizes the relationship. Desensitization occurs through talking, pictures, even creating situations (like going swimming) in which both perpetrator and victim are naked. At that point, the adult exploits a child's natural curiosity, using feelings of stimulation to advance the sexuality of the relationship.

When teaching a child, the grooming perpetrator has the opportunity to shape the child's sexual preferences and can manipulate what a child finds exciting and extend the relationship in this way. The child comes to see himself as a more sexual being and to define the relationship with the perpetrator in more sexual and special terms.

### **Maintaining control**

Once the sex abuse is occurring, perpetrators commonly use secrecy and blame to maintain the child's continued participation and silence— mainly because the sexual activity may cause the child to feel yukky, scared or want to withdraw from the relationship.

Children in these entangled relationships—and at this point they are entangled— start to get threats which blame them, are told that the relationship might end and they won't get the emotional and material needs (the fun stuff) they associate with the relationship, whether it be the dirt bikes the child gets to ride, the coaching one receives, affection, special outings or other gifts. The child may feel that the loss of the relationship and the consequences of telling will humiliate and make them even more unwanted.

### **SECRECY**

The abuser makes the child keep the secret. This abuser can threaten to harm the child or others, tell the child that nobody will believe them, or tell the child that something bad will happen to them if they tell someone. This leads to the child/adult feeling isolated, confused, frightened and having to hide a large part of themselves and what happens.

### **PROTECTION AND LOYALTY**

The abuser orders protection and loyalty from the child. Often the abuser is a trusted adult who the child loves, but they do not like the abuse. Sometimes the child wants the abuse to stop but doesn't necessarily want the abuser to be out of their life. This can leave them feeling very confused.

The perpetrator abuses his/her power over the child. This leads to the child/adult putting others first and self last. They are afraid to tell anyone and feel hopeless and powerless.

Once the perpetrator begins to fill the child's needs, that adult might seem more important in the child's life and may become idealized (they can do no wrong). Gifts, extra attention, affection may make one adult in particular stand out and this should raise concern and greater vigilance.

While people face similar struggles in the aftermath, it must be remembered that no two stories are the same and it is impossible to generalise the grooming tactics of perpetrators. But sometimes it can help when working through guilt and self-blame to have some idea of the same tricks of an abuser and how as a child you were the victim of a targeted and planned attack.

What happened was not your fault and despite the messages you may have been given as a child and the words that were said to you, it is important to remember one thing:

**It's not your fault.**

ASCA <http://www.asca.org.au>

HEALTH WA <http://www.kemh.health.wa.gov.au/services/sarc/documents/abuse.pdf>

## **GENERAL PRINCIPLES IN MEDIA LITERACY (*handout*)**

by Patricia Aufderheide

We know about the world primarily from the media. But the media don't simply give us the world. They interpret reality, tailor it, and perform it. In order to be responsible citizens, we need to be media literate. To help you engage in that process, here are eight "key concepts" of media literacy.

1. All media are constructions. Media do not simply reflect reality. They present productions, which have specific purposes. The success of these productions lies in their apparent naturalness. They don't look like constructions. But they are, and many different constraints and decisions have gone into why they look the way they do.
2. The media construct reality. While they themselves are constructions, media productions also construct within each of our heads a notion of the real. We each carry within us a model of reality, based on our observations and experiences. Using that model, we believe that we're capable of distinguishing truth from lies, and are confident that we won't let "them" pull the wool over our eyes. But much of our model of reality comes from the media we've seen, or that other people whom we take as models (our parents, our teachers) have seen. So it's not as easy as it might seem to draw the line between personal lived experience and the world of "the media". In fact, the media are constructing our sense of reality each day.
3. Audiences negotiate meaning in media. Even though media carry messages, they aren't received by everybody the same way. When you like a movie your friend hated, that's pretty clear. Each of us 'filters' meaning through our different experiences: our socio-economic status, cultural background, gender, whether we're tired, whether we know somebody involved in the story. But some meanings end up being more widely accepted than others, a fact that reflects the relative clout, or social power, of the filters which affect our different readings.
4. Media have commercial implications. Most media production in this country is a business, and must make a profit. Even the so-called "public" media - public television, public radio - have to raise money to survive. When you decode the media, you need to ask yourself: Who paid for this? What's the economic structure underpinning this piece of work? When the producer or writer or director chose the subject and began production, how did financial pressures affect his or her choices?

Mass media do not speak to individuals, but to groups of people - in fact, to demographic markets. You are part of several demographic markets - young people, men or women, people of your region, people with your particular hobby, etc. The more money you have to spend within any particular demographic, the more valuable you are to mass media's marketers.

Mass media's commercial implications also involve ownership in another way. If the same company owns a record company, a movie studio, a cable service, network television, videocassette recording and book and magazine publications (as does AOL / Time Warner), it has a powerful ability to control what is produced, distributed and therefore, seen.

5. Media contain ideological and value messages. A media literate person is always aware that media texts carry values and have ideological implications. (Ideology in this sense means the set of assumptions for what we think is normal.) A media literate person does not complain that something is biased; he or she searches out the bias, the assumptions, and the values in everything that's made. It's all made by people after all, who interpret the world according to their own values and assumptions. Most often, the media affirm the world as it is, the status quo, the received wisdom, whatever is thought of by the media makers as the consensus. And they become reinforcers of that status quo as a result.

Because media mostly reinforce the status quo, the fact that they carry values may seem almost invisible, or ordinary, or not worth noting. It becomes clearer that they carry those values when you disagree with them.

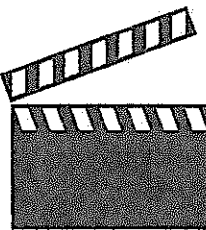
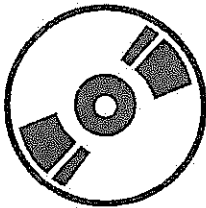
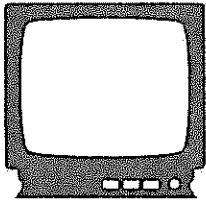
6. Media have social and political implications. Because media construct reality, under economic terms that shape their messages, and powerfully transmit values, they have important social and political effects on our lives together in society and as members of the public.
7. Form and content are closely related in media. Each medium has its own distinctive characteristics. You will get a very different experience of a major event by reading the newspapers, watching TV, listening to the radio, going A media literate person asks: What about the form of this medium influences the content? Is that formal capacity being exploited well, or is it being wasted? What about the form limits the content?
8. Each medium has a unique aesthetic form. Understanding how to "read" the media also means understanding that they are each art forms as well as information transmitters. We pay attention, in writing, to the well-crafted phrase, the vivid quote, the tightly structured argument. We appreciate editing that sharpens contrasts and makes our heart skip a beat in audio, video, and film. We understand the power of a camera to shape our own point of view on entering a scene. When we see how media are constructed, we are able to judge their aesthetic value. We ask two sets of related questions: Did it entertain me, keep my attention, involve me - and how did it do that? Did it tell me more about the world, human affairs, and my part in it - and how did it do that?

**Patricia Aufderheide** is a professor in the School of Communication at American University in Washington, D.C.; concepts drawn from *Media Literacy: Resource Guide*, Ontario Ministry of Education, 1989, and the work of many teachers.

# Raising Media Savvy Children:

## *Nine Suggestions for Parents, Teachers, and Caregivers*

**You CAN raise** media savvy kids and teach them to be smart media consumers!



- 1.** Actively engage children in **talking, playing, reading, listening** to books and music, **and creating** imaginative games. Providing children with these alternatives to television is fun, develops emotional and social bonds, and nourishes young brains.
- 2.** Emphasize **non-directed play** with children, encouraging them to entertain themselves using materials at hand in new ways. Suggest that they experiment, create roles, and practice skills—activities that develop imagination, creativity, and self-reliance.
- 3.** Help children recognize both **the good and the bad** in media consumption. Media are complex, carefully created commercial industry products whose main purpose is to sell values, behaviors, and consumerism through entertaining and emotional stimuli. Cultivate “critical appreciation” skills with your child (what is good and what is bad about this media experience?), rather than simply “demonizing” media.
- 4.** Develop **consistent limits for screen consumption**—TV, computer, and video games. Explain to children that a parent’s job is to supervise the family media “diet.” Television, movies, video games, and online fare often promote simplistic stereotypes, gratuitous violence, mindless repetition, or simply run counter to your family’s values.
- 5. Learn media’s persuasive techniques and teach them to your children.** Consuming media with your kids provides you with opportunities to discuss advertising’s emphasis on toys, sugary foods, caffeinated drinks, or to talk about stereotypes, the promotion of addictive behavior, or issues surrounding violence or body image. Celebrate positive media portrayals, too, when they appear!
- 6.** Watch **programs on tape**, so you can stop to discuss content and fast-forward through commercials. Television and other image-driven media are powerful, multi-sensory teachers of values. Even under the best of circumstances, it is difficult for parents to be as persuasive.
- 7.** Insist that children be **critical media consumers**. Ask them questions, activating the brain’s neo-cortex, where higher-level thinking (analysis, reflection, synthesis) takes place. Don’t let passive acceptance of media messages become the norm.
- 8.** Investigate the **media habits of babysitters, daycare centers, and other caregivers**. Be wary of those who continually use television, computer games, or the Internet to keep children occupied.
- 9.** Encourage children to **produce their own media** whenever possible. Art, writing projects, music making, and video/film production are not only fun and engaging activities, but will also help children cultivate their own independent and creative sense.

Visit [www.acmecoalition.org](http://www.acmecoalition.org) for more info on media curricula, activities, and resources.

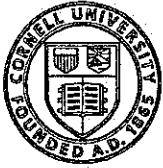


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## Questions to Ask Yourself

Ask these questions each time you see "media messages" throughout your day, to become more Media Literate.

Who made this message?

Why was it made?

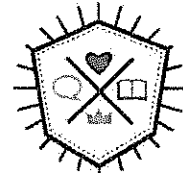
Who are they trying to reach?

What ideas, values, information (hidden or obvious) are they trying to convey?

What has been left out of the message that is important to know?

How might this message affect my actions, beliefs, values?

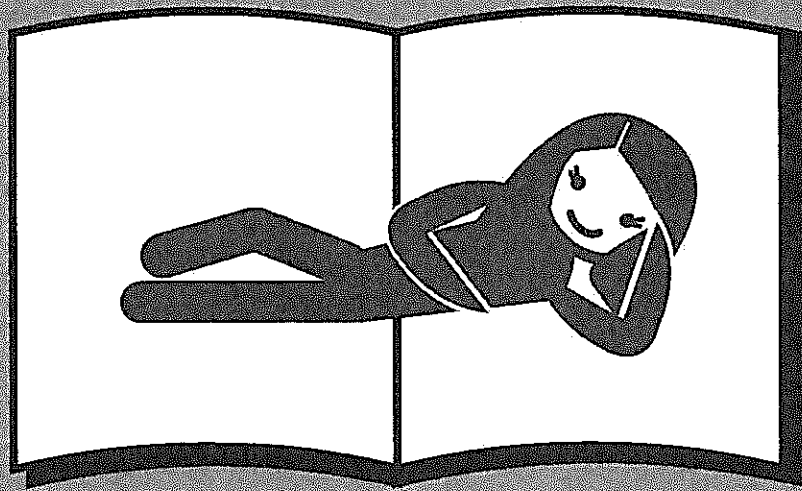




EDUCATEEMPOWERKIDS

A SIMPLE LESSON FOR  
TEACHING YOUR CHILD ABOUT

# MEDIA LITERACY



## **BACKGROUND**

Everyday, kids are bombarded by images and ideas in the media they are exposed to. It's important for children to know that digitally enhanced images in the media show impossible standards that no one can attain, not even the people in the actual images. All media messages are constructed. An advertising team puts together what people see and hear in the media. Encourage your child to think about not only the images they see, but the messages that are being presented in the images they see. Learning to think critically is an important part of growing up.

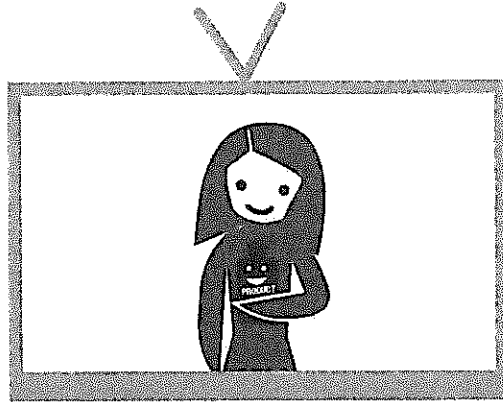
## **PREPARATION**

Review the objective of the lesson and understand why it is important to talk to your child about being media literate.

- Think about how the media has influenced your choices or affected your body image.
- The people in media images are almost always altered by airbrushing or other digital enhancements.
- Remember that people come in all shapes and sizes because we don't all fall into the very narrow definition of beauty that the media presents us with.
- Familiarize yourself with the glossary terms.

## **OBJECTIVE**

- Teach your child to question what he or she sees in all forms of media.
- Think about all the places and times your child is exposed to media images and ideas each day.
- Consider ways to counteract the negative, inappropriate, or unrealistic messages and images your child is exposed to.
- Teaching your child to take apart or "deconstruct" what they hear and see is a tool that will be invaluable to them throughout life.
- Talk about the fact that commercials are all trying to sell a product and that we should always be looking for the underlying message instead of taking things at face value.



## ACTIVITIES

While watching television or shopping with your child, challenge him or her to pick out advertisements. As you examine them, teach your child to ask himself the following questions:

1. Who created the ad?
2. Who is the ad targeting (what age group or type of person)?
3. What is the overall message of the ad?
4. Are there any underlying messages?
5. How does the ad make you feel?  
Does the ad make me feel like I need the product?  
That my life will be better with the product?  
Does it make me question my values or standards? Is the ad ok for kids?
6. If there is a person in the ad, is he or she a realistic looking person?
7. Is this ad appropriate for kids?

Ads are increasingly being placed within television shows and movies. This is called "product placement" and can be a fun scavenger hunt-type of game for kids!

## QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR CHILD

- How often do you see ads? (Try counting all the ads you see in one day!)
- Do you think the people in the media look like the people we know in real life?
- What kind of unrealistic things have you seen in the media?

## FOLLOWING UP

- Frequently point out images and messages in the media to your child and remind them that this is not a standard they or anyone else should hold themselves to.
- Be aware of ALL of the types media your children are taking in. (Online, TV, Ads in games they play, billboards, signs in the mall, etc).

- Learning to think critically about media will help your child when they are exposed to inappropriate types of media- they'll have the knowledge that media isn't an accurate representation of real life.
- This will not be a one-time discussion, you'll want to reiterate these principles continuously. This lesson will likely lead to other valuable discussions like media savvy kids, body image and self-esteem and self-worth, all of which can be found in ***30 Days of Sex Talks, Empowering Your Child with Knowledge of Sexual Intimacy*** (available on Amazon.com).

## RELATED DISCUSSIONS

(which can be found in 30 Days of Sex Talks)

Being Media Savvy  
Liking Yourself  
Respecting Others  
Self-worth/Self-esteem

## GLOSSARY TERMS

**Aspirational Character** - A character aimed at or one who tries to appeal to people who want to attain a higher social position or unreachable goal, or standard of living.

**Body Image** - An individual's feelings regarding their own physical attractiveness and sexuality. These feelings and opinions are often influenced by other people and media sources.

**Deconstructing an Image** - Breaking down the image or message into separate parts. (Words, images, body language, tone). Examining those parts critically and determining their individual meanings.

**Marketer** - A person whose job is to promote, sell, or convince people to buy a product or service.

**Media Literacy** - The ability to analyze and evaluate media. People who are media literate can understand the messages they receive from radio, internet, television, magazines, books, billboards, video games, music and all other forms of media.

**Self-Esteem/Self -Worth** - An individual's overall emotional evaluation of their own worth. Self-esteem is both a judgment of the self and an attitude toward the self. More generally, the term is used to describe a confidence in one's own value or abilities.

## TIPS FOR DECODING MEDIA DOCUMENTS

### Finding Media Documents

The term “document” refers to any media example, including printed text, images, audio and audiovisual clips, comic strips, etc.

1. **Start with a “rich” media document** that is appropriate for your students and relates to your goals.
  - Identify both your curriculum goals and your media literacy goals
  - Get support in finding appropriate documents from your librarian or other information specialists
  - Think through how you will know if your goals have been reached through the decoding lesson (how will students demonstrate what they have learned?)
2. Decode **different forms and types of media**.
  - Consider excerpts from books, TV, film, websites, maps, posters, songs, video games, advertisements, paintings, magazines, newspapers, blogs, radio, comics and editorial cartoons, etc.
  - Consider both contemporary and historic, high and low tech, mainstream and alternative, institutional and personal
  - Consider different media genre such as documentary and dramatic film; TV news, news analysis, docu-drama and reality TV; hip-hop, country, folk and classical music etc.
3. Address **copyright issues** appropriately.
  - Do you have copyright permission or can you apply fair-use (e.g. by critiquing the document with your students)?
4. **Prepare background information and probe questions** for teaching about content and source.
  - Identify and construct the background information students will need in order to effectively decode the documents
  - Plan evidence-based questions that ask students to apply core content and reflect on media construction and sourcing
5. **Less is more.** It’s better to do a “deep reading” of a few documents than a superficial analysis of many.
  - Show short excerpts from videos or films rather than the entire thing, if at all possible (a few minutes of video content is very rich in audio and visual information)

### Leading A Decoding

The key to decoding media documents lies in the use of **questions**. Try to shoot for 80-90% of what you say being in the form of questions.

1. Set up the decoding by **giving the context for analysis**.
  - Provide the necessary background information **before** you start the decoding
  - Typically give students a “heads-up” of what to look for
2. Always **start the decoding with a question**.
 

What are your impressions from what you see (just saw, just heard)?  
Does anyone have a response? Who wants to comment first?

*If possible, use a specific question that relates back to your curriculum goal:*

What is the message about \_\_\_\_\_? Which person do you think is DeSoto? What important event does this represent?

*Or you can begin with first set of media literacy questions:*

Who do you think made this (produced this)? What was their purpose?  
Who’s the target audience?
3. Follow immediately with **evidence probes**. You may want to clarify whether you’re looking for general evidence (including from the person’s prior experience), or specific evidence seen/heard in the document.
 

What’s your evidence for that? What makes you say that?  
What’s your evidence in the document? Where do you see that?





4. **Continue to probe** when appropriate, especially to get at key content points and perspectives.

- Expansion:* Tell me more about that. What do you mean by \_\_\_?
- Interpretations:* What words might you use to describe him? How does this make you feel?
- Clarifications:* So you're saying \_\_\_? Do you mean \_\_\_?
- Restatements:* (restate in slightly different words or while pointing to the relevant element of the image)
- Affirmations:* Yes! Interesting. No one's ever said that before!

5. **Open the discussion up** to other participants:

Anyone else? What else? Does anyone else have a different interpretation?  
I'm going to go around and have each of you say one word that describes \_\_\_.

*Call on people by name, if possible:*  
Carol, what do you think?

6. Use **physical cues**.

- Get close to the audience and use arm gestures to draw them in
- Point to people to answer.
- Use positive affect, nonjudgmental responses as much as possible (laugh, make facial expressions, etc.)

7. **Cautions:**

- Don't tell them what to see, or what the answer is, if possible. Continue to use questions to draw them to the points you want to make, or to the right answer if there is one.
- Help students to analyze and evaluate free from your judgments:
  - Craft questions that do not bias student judgment (e.g., "What are the messages about Native Americans?" not "How is this depiction racist?")
  - Recognize how your own biases may show up in your body language, facial expressions, language, and framing when leading a decoding
  - Decode documents that you approve of (e.g., student-produced videos critiquing media) as well as documents you are critical of (e.g., manipulative advertising or political messages by someone you would not vote for)
  - Recognize the power behind your choice of documents to decode
- Don't set them up to feel stupid or set traps to trick them. Or if you do, use "we" language:  
We've learned to focus on \_\_\_ and we tend not to notice \_\_\_. Why wouldn't we have thought of that?  
Or acknowledge your own tendencies:  
That's what I would have said too. When I first thought this, that's what I thought.
- Listen for resistance (e.g., when a student dismisses a comment by saying "you are reading into this") or for one-sided comments that are stated as truth, and probe accordingly:  
Is there only one viewpoint on that? How might other people respond differently?
- "Do no harm" - be aware of the power of media messages and the potential for unintended consequences (e.g., reinforcing the stereotypes or potentially harmful messages we are decoding)
  - Contrast negative or potentially harmful messages with positive media representations (decoding both)
  - Cue into and follow-up with student's emotional responses to documents
  - Listen well to the meaning making of your students

**Following the Decoding**

- Assess how well the decoding experience worked to meet your goals.
  - Note how the students responded to different documents and questions
  - Note whether the activity engaged students who are not typically engaged in learning as well as those who typically are
- Adapt the lesson as needed
  - Eliminate "great" documents that don't work
  - Learn from your mistakes and successes



Name \_\_\_\_\_



# Are You Media Smart?

Select a media message from a TV commercial, a Billboard, a Newspaper/  
Magazine, Website or Radio and complete the following:

1. Who is responsible for the media message? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Who is the media message intended for? How do you know? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. What is the message? What assumptions are made about the message? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. What is the media message not telling you? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Could you argue the content of this message? Why or why not? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

6. What advice can you give to individuals about this media message? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



Name \_\_\_\_\_



# Media Purposes

The purpose of Media Messages are to:

- ① Persuade    ② Entertain    ③ Inform    ④ Explain    ⑤ Profit

Select a Media Message and explain how it tries to: persuade, entertain, inform, explain or profit from the message.

Media Message: \_\_\_\_\_

Persuade:

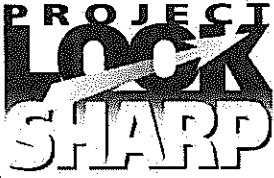
Entertain:

Inform:

Explain:

Profit:





Project Look Sharp  
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# ITHACA

*Division of Interdisciplinary & International Studies*

## **Mission Statement:**

**Project Look Sharp** provides materials, training and support for the effective integration of media literacy with critical thinking into classroom curricula at all education levels.

## **MEDIA LITERACY INVOLVES:**

- Learning how to use media wisely and effectively
- Engaging in critical thinking when evaluating media messages
- Being able to evaluate the credibility of information from different sources
- Recognizing media's influence on beliefs, attitudes, values, behaviors, and the democratic process
- Encouraging participatory citizenship
- Achieving greater understanding and appreciating multiple perspectives
- Learning to produce communication and express oneself using different forms of media

## **6 KEY CONCEPTS IN MEDIA ANALYSIS:**

1. All media messages are "constructed."
2. Each medium has different characteristics, strengths, and a unique "language" of construction.
3. Media messages are produced for particular purposes.
4. All media messages contain embedded values and points of view.
5. People use their individual skills, beliefs and experiences to construct their own meanings from media messages.
6. Media and media messages can influence beliefs, attitudes, values, behaviors and the democratic process.







CML's FIVE KEY QUESTIONS AND CORE CONCEPTS (Q/TIPS) FOR CONSUMERS AND PRODUCERS

**Media Deconstruction/Construction Framework**

#	Key Words	Deconstruction: CML's 5 Key Questions (Consumer)	CML's 5 Core Concepts	Construction: CML's 5 Key Questions (Producer)
1	<b>Authorship</b>	Who created this message?	All media messages are constructed.	What am I <b>authoring</b> ?
2	<b>Format</b>	What creative techniques are used to attract my attention?	Media messages are constructed using a creative language with its own rules.	Does my message reflect understanding in <b>format</b> , creativity and technology?
3	<b>Audience</b>	How might different people understand this message differently?	Different people experience the same media message differently.	Is my message engaging and compelling for my target <b>audience</b> ?
4	<b>Content</b>	What values, lifestyles and points of view are represented in or omitted from this message?	Media have embedded values and points of view.	Have I clearly and consistently framed values, lifestyles and points of view in my <b>content</b> ?
5	<b>Purpose</b>	Why is this message being sent?	Most media messages are organized to gain profit and/or power.	Have I communicated my <b>purpose</b> effectively?





# Technology Safety Quick Tips

Device	Description / Risks	Safety Strategies
<b>Spyware / Computer &amp; Phone Monitoring Software</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ It enables a person to secretly monitor someone else's entire computer activity.</li> <li>▪ It can be installed remotely by sending an email, photo, or instant message.</li> <li>▪ It runs hidden on a computer. It is very difficult to detect and almost impossible to remove. Some secretly reinstall if removed.</li> <li>▪ It can record and send screenshots (pictures of what's on the screen), all keystrokes typed, web sites visited, emails sent, instant messages (IM), accounts accessed, passwords typed, and more.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ When you first get a new computer or phone, increase security by enabling firewalls for your computer, network or phone (see settings) and install or run anti-spyware and anti-virus software; set your computer or device to automatically install updates.</li> <li>▪ Don't open any attachments if you don't know the sender, or you suspect abuse. Instead delete the attachment or have IT staff look at it.</li> <li>▪ Trust your instincts. If someone knows too much about your computer activity, your computer may be monitored. Use a "safer" computer (one the abuser does not have any access to) for private communications and web browsing.</li> <li>▪ Consider changing passwords and creating new accounts on another computer. Do not access those accounts or use those passwords on the monitored computer.</li> </ul>
<b>Keystroke Logging Hardware</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ It provides a record of all keystrokes typed on a keyboard.</li> <li>▪ Someone needs physical access to the computer to install and later retrieve the device with the data log of all your keystrokes.</li> <li>▪ An abuser may use it to see the passwords you type and then be able to access your email, credit card, or bank accounts, etc..</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Has someone fiddled with, fixed, or given you a new part for your computer?</li> <li>▪ Look for a small piece that connects the keyboard cord to the computer; it can also be part of an external keyboard, or something installed inside a laptop.</li> <li>▪ Change passwords on accounts from another computer and do not access those accounts from the compromised computer. With some services, you can ask to get an alert (e.g. fraud alert) if your password gets changed or your account gets changed.</li> </ul>
<b>GPS Devices (Global Positioning Systems)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ They are small, easily hidden, and affordable devices that provide the ability to monitor someone's location.</li> <li>▪ Many cell phones also have GPS devices.</li> <li>▪ They might be used to track your location real-time (as you move) and to map your location history.</li> <li>▪ Depending upon the service or</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Trust your instincts. If someone seems to know too much or show up in random places, check for hidden GPS devices or other location tracking services. Consider notifying law enforcement.</li> <li>▪ A device can be hidden in your belongings or vehicle. Check the trunk, under the hood, inside the bumper and seats. A mechanic or law enforcement can also do a search.</li> </ul>



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## Technology Safety Quick Tips

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	<p>application used to access GPS data, the stalker may be able to secretly monitor your location via websites or sometimes via their phone. Some devices must be physically retrieved for the abuser to review your location data.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Safety plan around/before removal of any location tracking device, as it may alert the abuser.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Cell &amp; Mobile Phones</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Phones can be a lifeline for victims.</li> <li>▪ Phones can be hidden inside vehicles as listening devices by using the “silent mode” and “auto answer” features.</li> <li>▪ Most phones have GPS chips and location tracking abilities, which can be used to determine someone’s location. Some abusers install additional applications on a cell phone to track your application.</li> <li>▪ Logs showing phone usage may be monitored on the actual phone or over the Internet via the phone company’s online billing record.</li> <li>▪ Joint phone plans with an abuser may give that person access to phone features and calling log information.</li> <li>▪ If your phone has a Bluetooth device, the stalker might try to connect with your phone using the Bluetooth to access information on your phone or intercept your communications.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ For additional privacy and safety, consider getting a separate donated phone from a shelter or purchasing a new phone (e.g. a pay-as-you-go phone).</li> <li>▪ Mechanics or law enforcement can check the vehicle to determine if a phone has been hidden somewhere.</li> <li>▪ Contact carrier to add a password or code to account to protect from wrongful access.</li> <li>▪ You can change the phone’s location setting to “E911 only” or “911 only” so that the phone company only access your GPS if you dial 911.</li> <li>▪ Also check if your phone has any applications installed that separately ask to access and use your real-time location, such as for mapping directions. Settings such as “show all/hidden applications” might unveil some hidden applications. Consider turning off or uninstalling these applications.</li> <li>▪ Use phone settings to change your default Bluetooth password, set Bluetooth to hidden, and turn Bluetooth off.</li> <li>▪ Always give location information to 911 in an emergency.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Caller ID &amp; Spoofing</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Reverse directories can provide location based on a phone number.</li> <li>▪ Services like Trapcall, can unblock a blocked number without notice.</li> <li>▪ Caller ID can be spoofed to falsify the number displayed when you get a call.</li> <li>▪ If you call a person using an Internet phone, your blocked number may be</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Survivors can contact the phone company and ask that their phone number be blocked to protect privacy. Blocking is supposed to prevent your caller ID from displaying. However, even with a blocked number, sometimes your caller ID will still display. Consider using another phone or outgoing phone number.</li> <li>▪ Regularly test the line by calling other phones to</li> </ul>



# Technology Safety Quick Tips

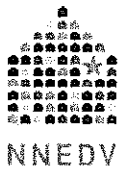
Device	Description / Risks	Safety Strategies
	displayed.	ensure it is blocked. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Use an Internet phone (i.e., Skype) or a pay-as-you-go phone purchased with cash to make calls if you are worried about your number / location being revealed.</li> </ul>
<b>Faxes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Fax headers include sender's fax number, which can be used to determine location thru reverse look-up.</li> <li>▪ Fax machines often now have hard drives and extensive memory. Consider privacy, confidentiality and privilege issues when deciding what fax machine to use.</li> <li>▪ Electronic faxes (e-fax) are sent through the Internet as email attachments and, like all email, can be intercepted.</li> <li>▪ Also because e-faxes get sent via a 3rd party and are temporarily stored on a 3rd party Internet server, there are different confidentiality and security risks.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Cover sheet can request that the header be removed before forwarding.</li> <li>▪ If it's legal, consider changing the outgoing fax number displayed to a different number on a case by case basis for safety or privacy reasons.</li> <li>▪ Never send personally identifying or sensitive information in an E-Fax.</li> <li>▪ Make sure you know who is receiving the fax. Call ahead. Some fax machines require the receiver to type in a password to see the fax.</li> </ul>
<b>Cordless Phones</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Because cordless phones transmit your conversation wirelessly between the base unit and phones, they can more easily be intercepted by scanners, baby monitors, &amp; other cordless phones.</li> <li>▪ If you do not unplug the base unit, the phone may continue to broadcast for the duration of a call, even after you switch to a corded phone, allowing for the possibility of continued interception.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Switch to a corded phone before exchanging sensitive information.</li> <li>▪ Unplug a cordless phone from the power source, even after the corded phone has been turned off or hung up to ensure that the current call's conversation won't still be broadcast and overheard.</li> <li>▪ Best practice is to limit information discussed or not use cordless phones for confidential communications with victims.</li> </ul>
<b>TTY (Teletypewriters)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A communication tool for people who are Deaf or hard-of-hearing that connects to a phone line.</li> <li>▪ Can be misused to impersonate someone.</li> <li>▪ All TTYS provide some history of the entire conversation. The history and transcripts of TTY calls might be recorded on paper or electronically. The abuser</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Create a code word or phrase to ensure the identity of the person on other end and to avoid impersonation.</li> <li>▪ Regularly clear TTY history unless a cleared history would increase risk.</li> <li>▪ Best Practice: Agencies should clear their TTY memory, avoid printing transcripts, and shred all printed transcripts of TTY calls, unless the victim</li> </ul>



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Device	Description / Risks	Safety Strategies
	<p>might monitor this information or misuse it; in some cases, a survivor might be able to introduce a transcript of a threatening TTY conversation as evidence.</p>	<p>explicitly requests that one printed transcript be kept for safety or evidence reasons.</p>
<p><b>Relay Services</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A free service where a third party (operator) facilitates a conversation for a person who is Deaf, hard-of-hearing, or has a speech disability.</li> <li>▪ Users may access relay services via a video phone, web cam, computer, TTY or other device. They might use a phone line, Internet or cable connection.</li> <li>▪ Can be used to impersonate someone.</li> <li>▪ Relay conversations and devices may be monitored.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Establish secret code words or phrases to ensure identity of person.</li> <li>▪ If possible, use a “safer” TTY, device, or computer to access relay (one an abuser hasn’t had access to).</li> <li>▪ Be aware that relay conversations might be secretly recorded by an abuser using spyware or video recording.</li> <li>▪ When possible, meet in person to discuss sensitive information.</li> <li>▪ Best practice: Relay services are not a substitute for providing interpreters. Agencies should always offer an in person certified sign language interpreter. Additionally, agencies can contract with Video Remote Interpreter (VRI) services. These are not video relay services but use similar technologies; an agency would need to have a high speed connection and video phone or web camera. An agency can contract with a VRI provider to be on call remotely 24X7 in case a survivor arrives and needs an interpreter quickly.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Email</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ It is like a postcard and is not a private form of communication.</li> <li>▪ Can be monitored and intercepted in a variety of ways, many times without your knowledge. Stalkers can intercept and monitor email using spyware or by getting your password; they might change your email settings so they can get secretly forwarded or secretly copied (designated as bcc) on every email you send or receive from that account.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Avoid using email for sensitive or personal information.</li> <li>▪ If you think your email is being monitored, consider creating an additional new email account on a safer computer. Never access the new accounts on a monitored computer (see above).</li> <li>▪ When setting up a new email account, don’t use any identifying information.</li> <li>▪ Avoid passwords that others can guess.</li> <li>▪ If you receive threats by email, save the electronic copies. Keep the emails in the system, but also consider forwarding a copy to another email account. You can also print copies of the email;</li> </ul>



# Technology Safety Quick Tips

Device	Description / Risks	Safety Strategies
		<p>see if the print version can display the full email header.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Consider reporting email threats or hacked accounts to law enforcement. These are crimes and the police can use email header information to help trace emails to the original sender.</li> </ul>
<b>Hidden Cameras</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Affordable, accessible, and easy to install, cameras come hidden in various items (clocks, plants, etc.).</li> <li>▪ Can be wired into your house or transmit wirelessly.</li> <li>▪ Can be very difficult to detect.</li> <li>▪ Can create image files that include time, date and location data.</li> <li>▪ Abuser can install camera surveillance and monitor all your activity remotely over the Internet.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Trust instincts. If abuser knows something that can only be seen, a camera may be being used.</li> <li>▪ Camera detectors can help to find wireless cameras that are giving off a signal, but will not detect a wired camera.</li> <li>▪ Law enforcement may help to search for hidden cameras.</li> </ul>
<b>Personal Information &amp; the Internet</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ All kinds of public and private organizations, agencies, services, and businesses collect and share information about people. These can include government and nongovernmental organizations, community groups, schools and online sites such as social networking, gaming or job sites. Search engines index the web and create virtual card catalogs. Some search deep into online databases and compile extensive profiles on people.</li> <li>▪ Identifying information may be online without victims' knowledge.</li> <li>▪ Stalkers use the Internet to find information about the victim including the location and contact information of victim. They also use online spaces to defame, target and damage the reputation of the victim.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Do searches on yourself to see what information is available.</li> <li>▪ Be cautious and creative when providing personal information: only provide information that you feel is critical and safe for things like store discount cards.</li> <li>▪ Ask schools, employers, courts and government services about Internet publications. Request that your information and photos not be posted in public directories or online. In court systems, ask up front how your court records can be sealed and not posted online for safety reasons.</li> <li>▪ If you have a restraining order, providing that can expedite these requests.</li> </ul>





# GET RESULTS WITH BETTER CONVERSATIONS

## What do you do about sexting?

First, understand that the young people in your care are “digital natives.” They are growing up with abilities and the tools to use them that some of us aren’t even aware of. New apps and programs are being created that allow kids to secretly access information and communication that is hidden from the adults in their lives. Prevention is optimum. You can do that by clearly addressing use of electronics before there is a problem.



Here are some suggestions for healthy responses to sexting:

- Calm down.** Pause and take a deep breath before you do or say anything.
- Never shame the young person.** Instead, explain the dangers of sending pictures that can get into the hands of anyone and that can never be retrieved off the internet.
- Respond in terms of safety of the young person,** saying something like, *“This kind of behavior could result in terrible pain for you. I care about you and want to help you stay safe.”*

Age-appropriate tools are available free of charge at [www.netsmartz.org/Parents](http://www.netsmartz.org/Parents)

☑ **Put some time between the event and the correction.** When everyone is calmed down, explain how the behavior can lead to dangerous and painful situations.

☑ **Teach the young person critical thinking skills by asking for ideas** on what he or she could do differently in the future.



☑ **If you issue consequences, make sure they are directly related to the offense.** For example, if the young person's inappropriate behavior involves a phone, restrict use of the phone.

**“Young people have no concept of the irreparable damage that can be caused by sharing explicit photos of themselves. And kids who have been sexualized are more than willing to do whatever will make them fit in..”**

**—Rhonda Sciortino**

The best way to help kids avoid the dangers of inappropriate behaviors, including sexting, is to see value in them, and help them to see value in themselves. When they see value in themselves, they feel better about themselves. When they feel better, they make better choices.

**Thank you for helping to create successful survivors!**

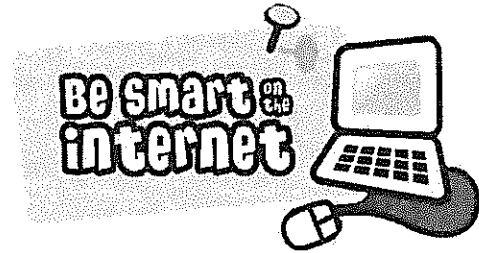
Video series available on [YouTube](#)

Provided by [Successful Survivors Foundation](#)

Sponsored by [Market Speciality Commercial](#), a business division of [Market Service Incorporated](#).

# PARENTS RESOURCE

"It is your life, these are your friends. However, as you move about, contact new people in person or on devices, I can't very well protect you. I want to help you learn how to make yourself safer, to be your own guardian of your own privacy & security."



## Internet Safety Resources

- Enough Is Enough – <http://www.enough.org/>
- Internet Safety 101 – <http://www.internetsafety101.org/>
- Google's Safety Center – <https://www.google.com/safetycenter/families/start/>
- iKeepSafe – <http://www.ikeepsafe.org/>
- Stop Cyberbullying <http://www.stopcyberbullying.org/>
- Make a Difference for Kids <http://www.makeadifferenceforkids.org/>
- Cybersafety Prevention 101 <http://www.datehookup.com/content-cybersafety-prevention-101.htm>
- Facebook for Parents <http://facebookforparents.org/>
- Be Smart, Be Safe! <http://www.edmondschools.net/cheyenne/MediaCenter/InternetSafety.aspx>
- Internet Safety Resources <http://www.txssc.txstate.edu/K12/internet-safety>
- Online Predators and Their Victims <http://www.apa.org/pubs/journals/releases/amp-632111.pdf>
- Common Sense Media – <http://www.common sense media.org/>
- Movieguide – <http://www.movieguide.org>

The following organizations regularly feature Internet Safety updates on their blogs:

- Educate and Empower Kids Blog – <http://educateempowerkids.org/>
- Covenant Eyes – <http://www.covenanteyes.com/blog/>

**FOR MORE HELP TIPS- National Center on Sexual Exploitation**  
**<http://endsexualexploitation.org/resources-parents/>**

To receive this handout in electronic PDF format for printing, email [jo@sharedhope.org](mailto:jo@sharedhope.org)



## SEXTING

Whether or not you think your teen is sexting, many teens are or their friends are doing it. Eye opening statistics show that 1 in 5 teens *admit* to sexting. The key word in this statistic is “admit.”

There are far more teens who are sexting but don't admit to it. I can bet the parents of these teens are generally unaware their teen is a “sexter.” Due to the sexting epidemic that is an unfortunate reality today, it is essential that parents talk frequently to their kids about sexting if they don't want their teen participating in it.



The first question is when to start talking to your kids about the peril sexting brings. The first discussion should commence before your child even gets a cell phone or any device that's capable of sending a sext (ie. computers, tablets, etc). Once a child receives such a device, they are susceptible to the influences of sexting. To prevent your teen from sexting you should take initiative. After your child has a device, you should frequently have an open discussion on the topic. Frequent and open discussions about sexting will make your child feel comfortable to approach and talk to you about it.



The second question is how to talk to your child about sexting. Sexting is a difficult topic to approach and requires a balancing act. You don't want to appear too judgmental or forceful, but at the same time you want to be firm with where you stand and help them to see the dangers and consequences.

To aid in your discussion we have listed a few helpful talking points:

- **What do you think is considered sexting?**
  - Sexting: sending someone sexually explicit photographs or messages, whether verbal or in pictures
  
- **Is there any harm to sexting?**
  - Can be charged for child pornography (by sending or receiving sexts)
  - Images/messages follow you, you can't delete them once they are sent
  - Sexually objectifies you
  - Images are almost always shared with others besides the receiver.
  - Reputation and future opportunities are often at risk.

- Many stories of children being forced into prostitution or sex trafficking begin with the “pimp” using sexts as a means of coercion to get them to comply with their demands.

**Is sexting worth the attention?**

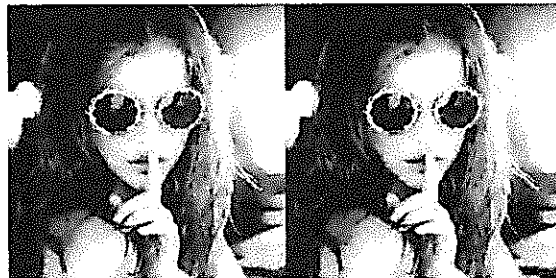
- The receiver and those they show it to are likely to lose some respect for you.
- You become a sexual object instead of a real person
- The individual asking will often try to make you feel special but all he/she really wants is a sexually explicit photo. Odds are, if he/she doesn't get it from you they will just try and get it from someone else. As long as they get it, they don't care if it's from you or the next person

- **Do you have control over a picture/ message once it's sent?**

- Absolutely not. Nearly every teen who receives a sext ends up sharing it or forwarding to others, and many sexts end up on third party websites. All of this usually occurs without your knowledge or consent.

- **Why do people sext?**

- Seeking attention/approval
- Peer pressure
- Bullying
- Want to satisfy another



**Here are some tips to start the discussion:**

- Talk about healthy media choices in general.
- Mention a story you heard in the news about other kids who are engaged in sexting.
- Ask if they know anyone who does this, maybe other kids at school.
- Ask if they have ever been asked to sext.
- Ask your kids about their future goals and then start talking about some hurdles they might encounter that would impede those goals (sexting can impact grades, college acceptance, etc.)
- Have frequent talks about healthy intimacy and boundaries, work sexting into the discussions.

**REMEMBER THAT THIS IS NOT A ONE-TIME CONVERSATION!**

**Obtain the CHOSEN documentary and show young people how easily girls can be trafficked when they “don't know” the signs.**

[www.sharedhope.org/chosen](http://www.sharedhope.org/chosen)



Talking to your kids is the most crucial and effective way to prevent sexting. Genuinely understanding the harms and consequences of sexting will be the best form of prevention.

**It's a lot better for your kids to *choose* not to sext than to force them not to sext.**

**However, you can also consider taking actions to monitor your kids' devices.** This can be done a number of ways. To get you started, here are three ideas:

1. Check your child's devices at random times. Checking at random times will encourage your kids to not send or receive anything inappropriate because they don't know when you may check their device.
2. Don't let your child go to bed with their devices. When a teen goes to bed they are left behind closed doors for hours, and as the saying goes, "Nothing good happens after midnight." This creates a prime environment for sexting. Don't let that environment be created.
3. Use a program or app that helps you monitor your kid's cell phone and Internet activity. Dr. Phil has an excellent list of recommended programs to use.

<http://www.drphil.com/articles/article/603>

#### **MORE RESOURCES FOR PARENTS**

<http://endsexualexploitation.org/resources-parents/>

- A list of resources for parents, includes: talking about porn, safe media choices, technology solutions, discussing healthy intimacy, etc.
- **How to find if your teen is sexting on Snapchat**  
<http://money.cnn.com/2014/09/03/technology/social/spy-on-snapchat/>
- **More programs for monitoring your child's device:**
  - WebWatcher: <http://www.webwatcher.com/>
  - TeenSafe: <http://www.teensafe.com/>
  - Review of best cell phone monitoring softwares of 2015: <http://cell-phone-monitoring-software-review.toptenreviews.com/>

#### **Further help with talking points:**

- <http://www.wcsap.org/sexting-talking-points-youth-focused>
- <http://www.whowillyouempower.com/craigsblog/2014/4/22/sexting-a-digital-topic-to-talk-about-with-your-teen>
- <http://www.childmind.org/en/posts/articles/2011-6-8-how-talk-your-kids-about-sexting>

# Sexting: Sending a 'sexy text' or a posting a 'naked selfie'!

Sexting, is the act of sending sexually explicit messages or photos electronically, primarily between mobile phones, but can include internet apps, email, or social networking sites.

*Once photos are sent, there is no way to get them back, and once in cyberspace, they become a permanent part of a person's digital footprint.* This means that they can forever be linked to that person and without doubt will resurface when least expected such as a job interview. Whilst the immediate fallout is usually amongst the persons peer group, school and local community where they can then be used to cyber bully and harass the victim. These images will then most likely fall into the hands or onto the computers of those with the predilection to sexually offend against children and young people. They will also be shared around a local school, community or wider which is very embarrassing and which can lead to further cyberbullying.

## **Safe texting – mobile phone use for young people and their parents**

What many young people and their parents often don't know is that sexting can have serious consequences and lead to bullying, public humiliation and even sexual assault. In most cases involving people under the age of 18 year it is illegal.

You could be charged with a criminal offence if:

- You take a nude, semi-nude, or sexually explicit photo of a person under the age of 18, even if they agree to the photo being taken or you take the photo of yourself.
- You take a photo or a video of a person under the age of 18 involved in sexual activity or posing in an indecent sexual manner, even if it is of yourself.
- You are found to have this kind of photo or video on your phone or other device e.g. PC, iPod
- You forward this kind of photo or video onto others

There are some things that both young people and parents can do to make sure mobiles are used safely.

## **Safety tips for young people**

- Don't send nude or semi-nude photos of yourself to others and don't forward any sent to you
- If you receive a sexually explicit text or photo, delete it immediately and don't forward to anyone else. Tell the person who sent it you don't want any more texts like this. If the texts keep coming report the situation to your telco who must act to warn the sender. If this does not work go to the Police.
- Think before you act - remember that once you've sent something you can't get it back or control who sees it, and that the photo or message might become public and be available for people to see for many years to come
- Remember that drinking and/or taking drugs can impact on your ability to

make a safe decision (i.e. taking a photo or sending a message you wouldn't normally take/send if you were sober). Be aware of your behavior in these situations as others have phones too!

- Think about your future and how you want people to see you – a picture taken now can have the potential to damage relationships and your career down the track. Your digital reputation is very important.
- Don't feel pressured into sending texts you don't feel comfortable with – as with any sexual behavior, you have the right to say 'no'.
- As a general rule, don't have anything on your phone you would be embarrassed about if your parents saw

### **Safety tips for parents**

- Talk to your children about the consequences of sexting, including warning them about the danger of sexual predators
- Remind them that sending, receiving or forwarding sexual images is illegal, and that respectful behavior is just as important when using mobile phones
- Give children clear rules about what they can and can't do with their mobile phone
- Become familiar with the technology your child is using (i.e. Facebook, Tumblr, Twitter, Skype etc.) and talk to them about privacy/security settings to help protect themselves from bullying/predators. Remember that most phones have instant access to the internet and social networking sites.
- Encourage your children to talk to you or another adult they trust if they have any problems or concerns around texts they have sent, received or forwarded, and reassure them this won't necessarily mean they will be asked to stop using the technology

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**Prepared by Susan McLean**

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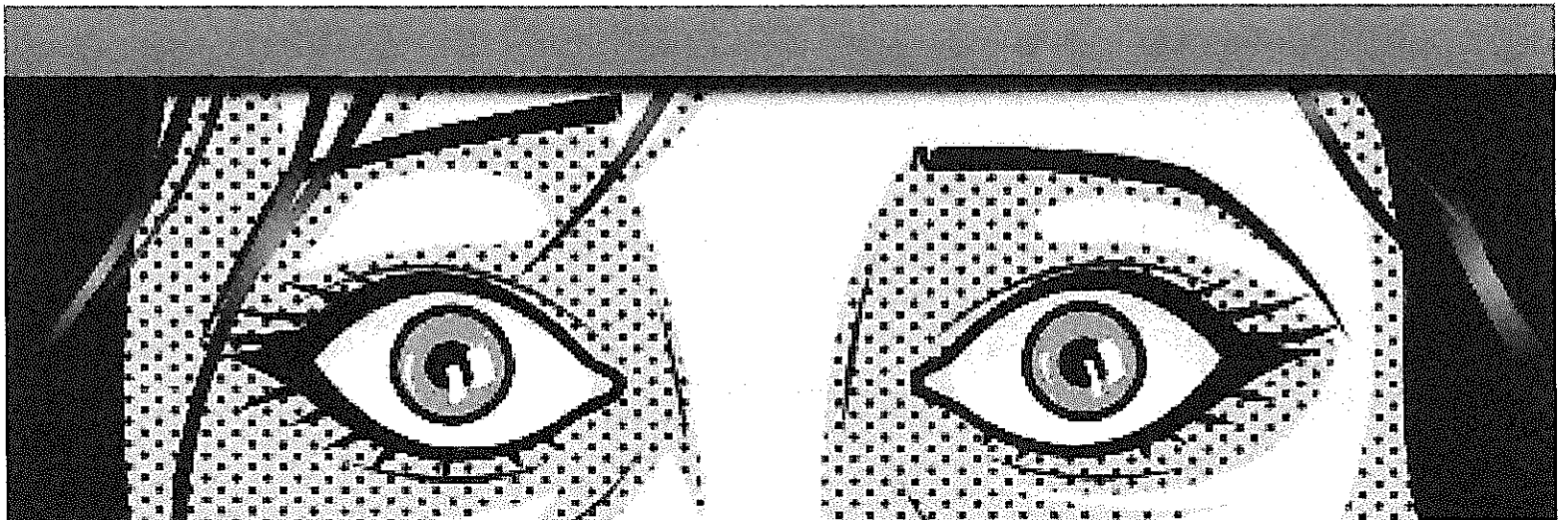
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Send me a nudie? ;)...

Promise not to share?



# “Send me a naked pic? ;) ...” “Promise not to share?”

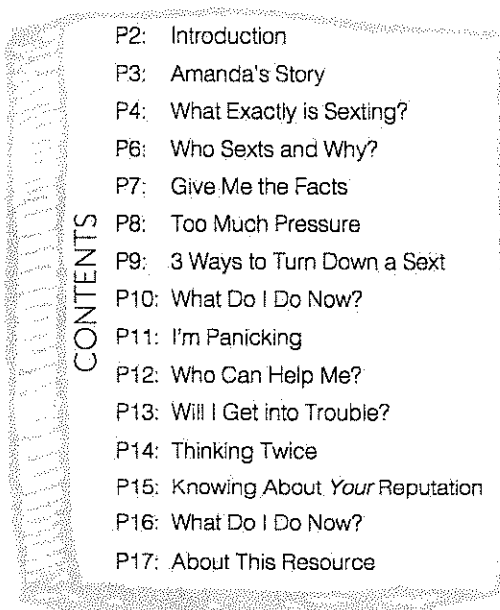
Ok ... So if you picked this up, it's likely that you already know something about sexting. Perhaps you're thinking about sending out an image of yourself or you're thinking of asking someone to send you a picture. Or maybe you've already sent or shared something that you're now regretting. Maybe you know someone else who has and you are looking for resources to help.

We've all done something that we later regretted ... No one is perfect; we've all done something that we've later realized wasn't the greatest idea, especially online. And we've all undoubtedly heard stories about posts that have gone bad or have sprouted wings of their own and got out of control. So if you're feeling alone, we want to start by letting you know that you're not.

We wrote this handbook for teens because we know that sexting can be a hard topic to navigate, plus, adults are panicking about teens' sexting. So what's the big deal? Some teens think sexting is horrible, stupid, and sure to ruin your future. Others don't get what the fuss is all about. So which is it -- and what do you really need to know about sexting?

## Read on and you will discover:

- What others have done when faced with the **decision** to engage in sexting
- How the technology works and what the actual **risks** are
- What steps you can take to gain back some **control** over a situation that feels out of control
- Whether your **fears** of getting into trouble are realistic
- The **impact** on your future and what you can do about it
- How to get **support** and **advice** from organizations that are there to help with just this sort of issue



P2:	Introduction
P3:	Amanda's Story
P4:	What Exactly is Sexting?
P6:	Who SEXTs and Why?
P7:	Give Me the Facts
P8:	Too Much Pressure
P9:	3 Ways to Turn Down a Sext
P10:	What Do I Do Now?
P11:	I'm Panicking
P12:	Who Can Help Me?
P13:	Will I Get into Trouble?
P14:	Thinking Twice
P15:	Knowing About <i>Your</i> Reputation
P16:	What Do I Do Now?
P17:	About This Resource

Look, you don't have to read this whole thing, but it does help to browse each section to get a really good understanding of how and why sexting can be problematic. The more knowledgeable you are, the better decisions you are going to make for yourself (and the better advice you'll be able to give to a friend).

# Amanda's Story

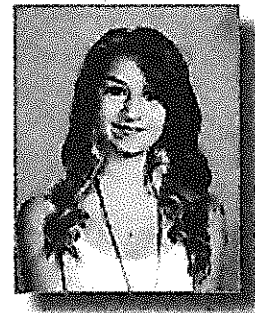
... Amanda Todd committed suicide at the age of 15 at her home in British Columbia, Canada. Before she took her life, Amanda posted a video on YouTube in which she used a series of flash cards to share her experience of being blackmailed into exposing her breasts via webcam and being bullied and physically assaulted. The video went viral after her death, resulting in international media attention. As of September 2015, the video has been watched more than 19 million times. Her mother Carol Todd has since dedicated her time to raising awareness about the issues that affected Amanda. The following is part of a letter written by Amanda's mom, Carol Todd.

"Knowledge is power"

## Amanda Michelle Todd

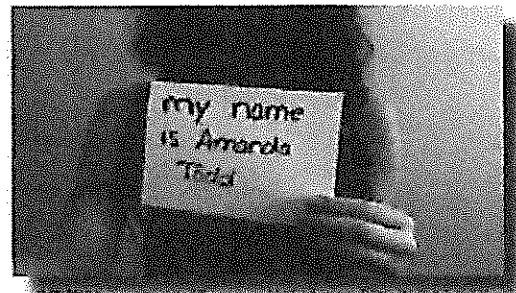
(November 27, 1996 - October 10, 2012)

My daughter, Amanda Michelle Todd, took her life at the age of 15. It all started with a topless photo. She didn't know the person at the other end of her computer was taking a picture. She didn't know that he was showing it to other men. Then she started to get blackmailed into showing more of herself via her webcam. And if she didn't, then her image would be sent throughout the Internet. What Amanda didn't do was tell an adult that this was happening to her. She kept it to herself. This image and what happened thereafter was the start to the emotional breakdown of Amanda. The loss of her confidence, her spirit and her friends. The embarrassment that followed was unbearable as was the name-calling, the slutshaming and the bullying online and offline that occurred. Eventually Amanda retreated into a shell, not being able to re-emerge as the girl she once was. As a parent and Amanda's mother, it is important to me that young people understand what can happen online and also how to protect themselves online ...



... We need to always tell our young people that it is okay to admit to making a mistake and then also to support them in talking to an adult. This action is so very important before things escalate. We all need to remember that making mistakes is normal and a part of growing up. The teen years is when a lot of these happen. Also that these experiences become learning experiences for the future years...

Sincerely, Carol Todd (Amanda's mom)  
For more information on Amanda's story, please visit:  
<http://amandatoddlegacy.org>



## Need a moment to debrief?

Take a moment and think about Amanda's story and her mother's letter. Discuss with a friend or write down your thoughts.

What is your gut reaction? Why do you think Amanda showed her breasts via a webcam? What do you think prevented Amanda from seeking help or support when the situation started spiraling out of control? What would you have done in this situation if you were Amanda's friend? What if you were Amanda herself?

## So, what does Amanda's story have to do with sexting?

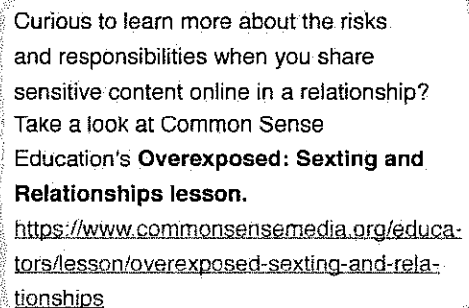
Although Amanda's story is an extreme case of what can go wrong, it does highlight the pressures many people can feel when they want to gain another person's trust or fit in. It also serves as an illustration of the aftermath that can occur when an image of oneself gets onto the Internet. But before diving in, let's step back and cover some specifics about sexting.

## What Exactly Is Sexting?

**"Teen sexting is a very rational act with very irrational consequences."** -danah boyd

"Sexting" is a term used to describe the sharing of intimate images or video with another person.

The content can range from sexually driven texts and partial or full nude photos to sexual videos or pornography. Very often, sexting occurs between couples or people who are dating, but it can also happen between friends or groups. Sexting can happen via a whole range of devices, technologies, and online spaces. Most commonly, sexting occurs through text, private message on social networks, or apps such as *Kik*, *Oovoo* and *Instagram*, FaceTime or Skype.



Curious to learn more about the risks and responsibilities when you share sensitive content online in a relationship? Take a look at Common Sense Education's **Overexposed: Sexting and Relationships** lesson. <https://www.common sense media.org/educators/lesson/overexposed-sexting-and-relationships>

## Deliberate and Accidental

Sexing isn't defined by any one fixed term. Sexting can be wanted or unwanted, and the exposure can be deliberate or accidental.

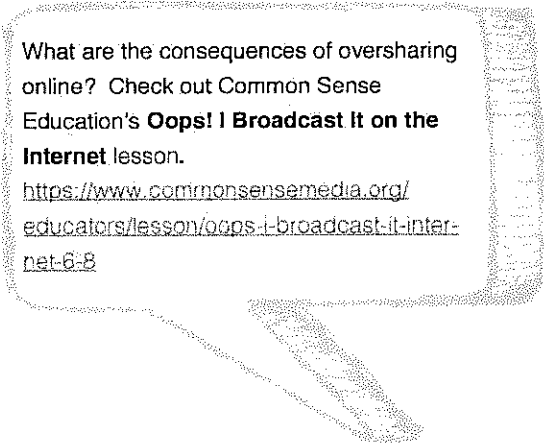
Most sexting is deliberate, meaning that the person who sent it meant for it to be sent. The sender will pose or act in a sexual way and make a direct effort to send it to the person they want to see it, usually a boyfriend or a girlfriend. There are plenty of risks with deliberate sexting, and we'll get to those soon. But sometimes it isn't deliberate -- as in Amanda Todd's case, when she didn't know the pictures were being taken and saved. In these cases, when the sexts happen accidentally, the larger consequences and privacy issues really come to the surface.

The media has been full of stories of leaked personal photos of celebrities, such as the iCloud incident where actresses including Jennifer Lawrence and Kirsten Dunst had their images hacked and posted onto 4chan. Another example is the "Snapping," where a third-party app hosting thousands of Snapchat images was hacked and the pictures were released. Many of the hacked snaps were nude or 'risque' images of teenagers that were then re-posted onto sites such as Facebook and Tumblr.

It's fair to say that sexting has become a part of our everyday pop culture. We see references in popular culture such as the 2014 "comedy" film *Sex Tape* starring Cameron Diaz or the song Dirty Picture by Taio Cruz and Kesha. Although the media tends to normalize sexting and minimize the consequences, we want to make sure you know that sexting is not "no big deal" -- and the aftermath is far from normal or desirable.

## Revenge Porn

Aside from deliberate vs. accidental texting, we also want to separate both from another, even more concerning kind of issue: revenge porn. "Revenge porn" describes the act of sending out another person's nude pictures and/or videos of the person naked and/or involved in a sexual activity as a way to get revenge or express anger. Think: A couple breaks up, and an angry ex decides to release, send, post, or share sexual content to humiliate the other person. In some cases of sexting, the major issue is whether or not you're a minor -- meaning that adults who engage in the same behavior might not get in trouble. In other cases, such as revenge porn, it's a HUGE issue and not ok, no matter who or how old you are. Around the world, governments are starting to take action and consider revenge porn a criminal activity that can land you in jail.



What are the consequences of oversharing online? Check out Common Sense Education's **Oops! I Broadcast It on the Internet** lesson.  
<https://www.common sensemedia.org/educators/lesson/oops-i-broadcast-it-internet-6-8>

# Who Sexts and Why?

## LOL or OMG?!

For people in relationships, sharing nude photos with each other is not actually a new thing.

What has changed is the speed with which a photo can go viral and the size of the audience that can see it. This makes the stakes much, much higher. The digital world brings with it a new set of challenges. Now, with the use of front-facing cameras on many smartphones, taking and sharing a mobile photo can be a spontaneous decision. Sharing directly through social networks, even privately, makes it especially hard to regain control. Just think about it: Social networks and apps are designed to make publishing and sharing quick and easy. It's hard to know where the image has gone, who has received it, and who has re-posted it already. A post can leave your social circle very quickly and spread to a large, public audience. Once you press send, that picture is out of your control forever. Period. You have no control over what others may think and how they might re-share that image to their "other" audiences by simply pressing send.



A study by the Internet Watch Foundation showed that up to 88 percent of self-generated images have been collected and put onto other sites without the sender's knowledge or consent! That means that even if the person to whom you send a picture doesn't save or share it, it might live on forever in someone else's hands, and it could pop up in the future when you least expect it.

In your parents' younger years, the embarrassing stuff they did was rarely seen by anyone else. Today, with mobile phones and the Web, that scenario has changed. The World Wide Web means the potential of a huge audience, and, of course, if a photo is uploaded and shared, it can be online forever. Pretty scary thought that something you did at age 14 can potentially affect your life 5, 10, or 15 years down the road.

# Give Me the Facts

## How many people are really sexting?

The numbers are in. A recent study out of the University of New Hampshire found that less than 16 percent of teens have created, appeared in, or received a sext.

"Estimates varied considerably depending on the nature of the images or videos and the role of the youth involved. Two and one-half percent of youth had appeared in or created nude or nearly nude pictures or videos. However, this percentage is reduced to 1.0 percent when the definition is restricted to only include images that were sexually explicit (i.e., showed naked breasts, genitals, or bottoms). Of the youth who participated in the survey, 7.1% said they had received nude or nearly nude images of others; 5.9% of youth reported receiving sexually explicit images. Few youth distributed these images."

So we can say, based on real data, that no matter how it might feel, it's just not the case that *everyone* else is sexting.

## To sext or not to sext?

Most of the time, intimate pictures are shared between partners who trust each other. And there are probably many images shared that are never seen by anyone except the intended recipient, even when the relationship ends. The trick is, it's hard to predict the future. If you have a bitter breakup, can you be sure the person will respect you enough not to share your pictures? It is important to think about the fact that sometimes during a breakup or during the heat of the moment that someone can act in an irrational or thoughtless way. Unfortunately, that's all it takes -- if someone has a naked picture of you, two seconds of feeling angry or hurt might cause them to do something that neither of you can take back.

You hope you can trust the person you text. But do you need to send them pictures of your body in the first place? If someone is pressuring or guilt-tripping you, is it someone you can really trust? Honestly, a good partner is someone who will accept your answer without question if you find the courage to say, "No, thanks."

Even if you decide you totally trust the person, it's worth it to really think about a few "what if's" ...

- *What if* the recipient loses his or her phone?
- *What if* a friend scrolls through his or her messages and sees it?
- *What if* a parent checks the recipient's phone and sees it?
- *What if* the recipient changes his or her mind?
- *What if* the relationship circumstances change?

Source: PEDIATRICS Volume 129, Number 1, January 2012

[http://www.unh.edu/ccrc/pdf/sexting%20prevalence%20proof%20-%20do%20not%20cite%20without%20permission\\_km.pdf](http://www.unh.edu/ccrc/pdf/sexting%20prevalence%20proof%20-%20do%20not%20cite%20without%20permission_km.pdf)

# Too Much Pressure

But what if you can't or don't want to say no . . . We have all been there: that feeling of being torn between doing something because we feel the pressure (or even just the temptation) and that feeling of uneasiness because we aren't sure of the outcome. More and more, sexting is used as a sign of collateral for trust within a relationship, a way to mark one's status or a way to fit in. But this notion is based on the false assumption that everyone is doing it. The reality is that not everyone is doing it, and more importantly there are better and safer ways to show someone you trust them and that they can trust you.

What if you want to say no, but you just feel *So. Much. Pressure?* It's totally normal to want to be liked and be accepted -- whether it's by your friends, your crush, or just a group of people you like hanging out with. For some people, the pressure to sext isn't even coming from the person on the receiving end of the nude photos; it's a more complicated kind of pressure coming from all around. For guys, it might be the pressure to have girls sending you photos to prove to friends that girls are basically throwing themselves at you. For girls, it might be the pressure not to seem like a "prude" or even just the pressure to look or act like your friends do. We know the reality is that you may know sexting isn't the wisest decision, but the short-term consequences (like how you're going to say "no" to the guy or girl you like or how you're going to deal with your friends taunting you) can feel much more stressful than the longer-term potential risk that the photo is leaked. But trust us: If the photo is leaked, it's much, much worse than being called "lame." It can ruin people's lives. So, we want to arm you with a few tips for how you can navigate sticky situations without giving into the pressure.



## 3 Ways to Turn Down a Request for a Sext ... without losing the relationship

1. Use humor. Using a lighthearted response, such as referencing the latest star tabloids drama and telling them, "I wouldn't mind striving for Jennifer Lawrence's freebies, great wardrobe, and chill attitude, but getting involved in an accidental leak of nude photos is one thing I don't really want to have in common."

2. Keep it offline. There's a difference between online and offline, and someone's argument may be that they have already seen you exposed offline, so it shouldn't be a big deal. Remind them that you like to have control over who sees your image and how they see it.

3. Don't fall for "I'll show you mine if you show me yours." We want to be perfectly honest about something: There is a really ugly double standard. The consequences for girls of sharing naked pictures can be way worse than the consequences for boys. So, it's not really an even trade. Also, plenty of teens say they will find a picture online or send someone else's and pretend it's their own. So if you're sending your own picture, you might not even realize you're taking a much bigger risk than the person on the other end of the conversation.



### 3 ways to take the conversation outside of the classroom

1. Share: Feel like you should clue in the adults in your life? Pass along this resource and tell them you're interested in talking.

2. Discuss: Open the discussion to your peers. Take the Amanda Todd case and ask your friends or classmates if they have ever felt the pressure to do something similar. Are there any aspects of the Amanda Todd story that stood out to them? What would you advise a friend who was in Amanda's situation and had been "exposed" by having her photos sent out to classmates?

3. Reflect: Take a moment to reflect on your thoughts on sexting, especially now that you've read this guide. Did you learn anything that you didn't know before? Do you ever see incidents in your school or among your peers that sit uneasy for you? What are two ways you can handle future situations that make you uncomfortable? It's time to be honest -- you can't change what you don't acknowledge.

# What Do I Do Now?

## The Power and the Reach of the Internet

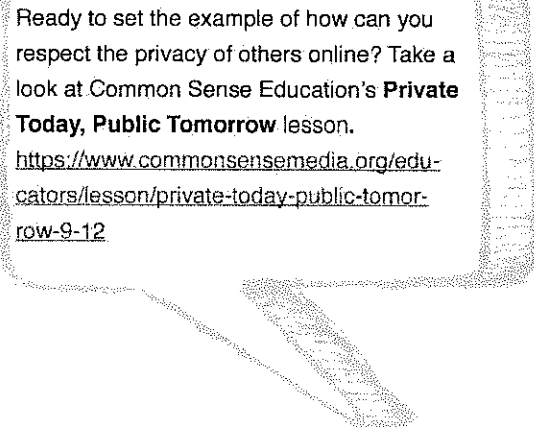
Sharing directly through social networks, even privately, makes it especially hard to regain control. Just think about it: Social networks and apps are designed to make publishing and sharing quick and easy. It's hard to know where the image has gone, who has received it, and who has re-posted it already. A post can leave your social circle very quickly and spread to a large, public audience.

Devices such as smartphones, tablets, or personal computers nowadays allow for easy screen capturing. Even if a snapchat is disappearing, someone can capture it with a quick click or two before it goes "poof" and disappears. So where could your picture be?

Photo-sharing sites such as Flickr or Instagram allow open and unrestricted (as well as private) sharing of pictures. Your data could be on a company's server or copied to users' personal devices.

Webcam sharing sites also can cause problems when people record your actions. Sites such as Omegle and Chat Roulette often attract criminal behaviors due to their anonymity. Sometimes these "anonymous" services encourage people to be more adventurous and risky, but being online is never completely anonymous. It only takes screen or webcam capturing software to allow a copy to be made, thus making that private incident all of a sudden not so private.

Cloud storage sites such as iCloud, OneDrive, GoogleDrive, or Dropbox allow server space for people to store material, such as images, virtually. Other users, with permission, then can access the files. Once again, it is difficult to know where your content actually sits and where the cloud servers are based. Those that are based outside of the United States often don't have the same laws about personal data, and your content could be sold and shared with other networks globally.

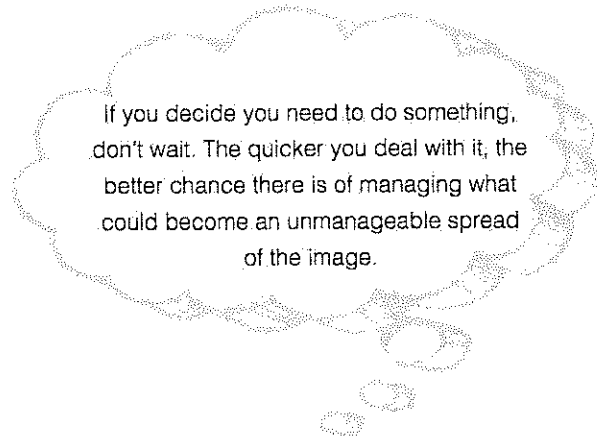


Ready to set the example of how can you respect the privacy of others online? Take a look at Common Sense Education's **Private Today, Public Tomorrow** lesson.  
<https://www.commonsensemedia.org/educators/lesson/private-today-public-tomorrow-9-12>

## I'm Panicking ...

Now what? What are the first things I should do when something goes wrong?

It might seem like the end of the world if your image has gotten out to the rest of the world when you didn't want it to, but try not to panic! Take a deep breath and give yourself a chance to think about how this might affect you.



First off, are you ok? You don't have to shoulder this alone. Find a trusted person to support you right now: an older sibling, a family member, a teacher, or a coach. You choose. Check out the list of some organizations that can help on the next page.

If you've sent something directly to someone's cell phone and then had second thoughts, you need to have an honest conversation with them as soon as possible to get them to delete it.

Sometimes, that first step of asking for help is a difficult one. But you have to be honest with yourself. Real friends and professionals trying to help are only able to do so when they know all the facts. If you know of a friend who is trying to deal with this, help him or her get the support he or she needs.

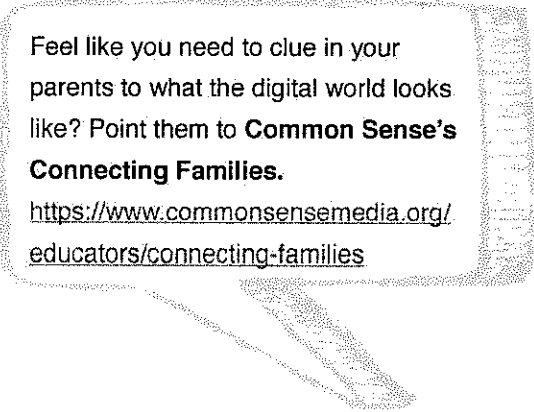
**I NEED HELP!**



# Who Can Help Me?

## Family members and caregivers

It may be your worst nightmare, thinking of telling your parents or caregivers you shared intimate pictures. And yes, they may be less than pleased at first, but they need to know; how are they going to support you if they don't know what's going on? Remember, you are not alone. A family member may have encountered similar trying situations too.



Feel like you need to clue in your parents to what the digital world looks like? Point them to **Common Sense's Connecting Families**.

<https://www.commonsensemedia.org/educators/connecting-families>

Yes, they will probably be very upset and disappointed, but they will likely respect you more for being up-front about it ... and they can be an important source of support while you're managing this stressful and complicated situation.

## School

You might want to consider telling someone at school, as your welfare is their no. 1 concern. Trained staff have access to a whole range of help. Reach out to someone you feel comfortable confiding in such as a school counselor, a teacher, or a coach. It will be much more effective dealing with this together than on your own.

## National Center for Missing and Exploited Children

The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children can help provide advice to you and your family when something like this happens. Visit their site at <http://www.missingkids.com/home>. There also is a great film about sexting called "Exposed"; it's on YouTube at <http://bit.ly/hePkDE>.

## Local police

Police sometimes are involved if an incident involves the well-being of minors. However, they are also trained to support before, as well as after, something occurs.

## Which organizations can help me?

Love Is Respect [www.loveisrespect.org](http://www.loveisrespect.org)

Crisis Text Line [www.crisistextline.org](http://www.crisistextline.org)

ThinkUknow [www.thinkuknow.co.uk](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk)

There are lots of places you can go to for support and advice. Consider who is the best person to support you. It could be a trusted adult from a youth club, job, sports team, or faith-based organization. Anyone who is trained to support young people should have some ideas for you.

## I'm just the recipient!!!!

What do you do if you get someone's else's picture or you see someone else's embarrassing picture being sent around? *What would you do?* If you see someone's picture going around -- or it gets sent to you -- the best thing to do is "delete and don't repeat." Delete the message from your phone and do your best not to repeat it or join in on the gossip. We know it can be tempting to get caught up in the gossip and share the image, but it is important to withstand the temptation and let a trusted adult know about the situation. It's also important to remember that there is a real person behind the image, who may not enjoy what is being said or done regarding his or her photo.

## Will I Get into Trouble?

Although the law was not designed to punish young people for making mistakes, when it comes to minors and naked images, the law draws a stern line. And although each state's laws can differ, the majority of them have severe penalties, intended to protect minors from exploitation. Exploitation can lead to the trade of or profit from sexual pictures of minors, even those that were taken and shared with consent. This means that if you are under 18 and you create, send, or receive sexually explicit images of another minor, under current federal laws, it could be considered child pornography. This includes taking a picture of yourself.

Whether it makes sense or not, those who that consensually share intimate photographs of minors with one another face the same punishment as those who maliciously send naked pictures of minors. Even those who receive the picture of a minor, even without asking to see it, can be prosecuted. That could mean being charged with a misdemeanor or worse. One could face felony charges, prison time, and mandatory sex-offender registration. So it is important to ask yourself, is it really worth it? Do I want to take that chance?

More information on sexting laws in your state can be found at:

[http://mobilemediaguard.com/state\\_main.html](http://mobilemediaguard.com/state_main.html).

## Is this going to affect things for me in the future?

Hopefully, in most cases, your continuing digital life will "bury" your mistakes as time goes on with positive content that you would want the world to see. There is, however, no guarantee that the pictures will not be seen by others later. Your reputation could be affected if future employers or college admissions officers come across the incident. Be prepared to be honest and open to admitting a mistake whether it's with future relationships, new friendships, or potential career connections.

# Thinking Twice

## Sexting isn't the only kind of content to think twice about sharing.

We're talking a lot about sexting because it's a really easy way that teens can end up in sticky situations, but there are other behaviors and actions that can get you in a similarly undesirable situation if you aren't paying attention. The next few sections share a few tips that apply to EVERYONE -- whether you've ever sent a sext or never will. If you're a kid with a cell phone or a social media account (or you might ever have one), there are a few things you should know.

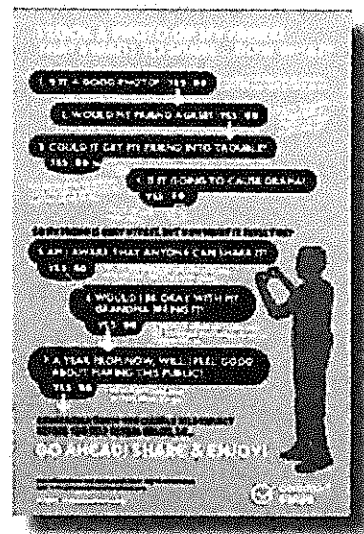
So before you post, tweet, text, or press that send button, take a moment and think:

- Could this photo get me in trouble?
- Could this get my partner or friend in trouble?
- Is this photo going to cause drama?
- Am I aware that anyone can share it?
- Would I be ok with my grandma seeing it?
- A year from now, will I feel good about sharing this image?

## Knowing who your "friends" are ...

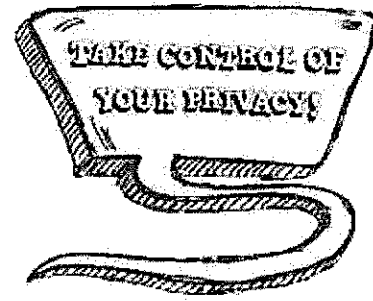
Social media is part of your everyday life, and it's probably not going away anytime soon. Since it is here to stay, it's important to ensure it is working for you and not against you. There are two important steps that everyone should take to help make sure their social media pages are in good shape.

First, think carefully about who you approve to follow or friend you. What is your definition of a "friend" or a "friend of a friend"? We often add "friends" because our other friends know them or because we feel that having a larger following will help in having more likes. Ask yourself, "Who would stand beside me when things go wrong?" Take a moment to think about how an online-only friend differs from a friend you know offline. Is having a bigger following or more likes worth the risk if something does get out? Bottom line is, it is difficult to track who has seen what and how they might react and share going forward.



Check out this poster for some quick tips on how to determine if you should send out an image or not: [https://www.common sense media.org/sites/default/files/uploads/pdfs/should-i-share\\_24x36.pdf](https://www.common sense media.org/sites/default/files/uploads/pdfs/should-i-share_24x36.pdf)

Second, take ownership of your profiles ... There are several ways in which you can choose who sees what on your profile by controlling your privacy settings. Controlling your privacy settings helps reduce the chances of an image getting into the wrong hands. Keep in mind: Just because you have a private profile doesn't mean that once the image has been sent to another person they have the same settings. That is a big what-if. Remember, once the image is up online or in the cloud, it has the chance to go public, which leaves it as fair game for anyone who comes across it.



So although making something private isn't completely fool proof, it's a really important step to make sure you're doing whatever you can to choose privacy settings that make sense for you. Here's a link to a "down and dirty" guide to how you can take control of your privacy on Facebook: [www.swgfi.org.uk/FacebookChecklist](http://www.swgfi.org.uk/FacebookChecklist)

Rule of thumb: If you wouldn't want your grandmother seeing something, don't post, share or take it!

## Knowing About *Your* Reputation

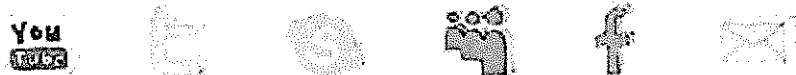
### Do you know what's online about you?

You should first check what others can see about you. Search for your name using Google or other search engines to see what information already exists about you. Although you may not have added anything new, your friends and family might have.

If you find anything offensive or require anything to be removed, report it to the hosting site immediately. Remember, the image will need to break the site's terms and conditions. If it is a naked or semi-naked image of you, the legal implications will mean that the site host is likely to remove it quickly.

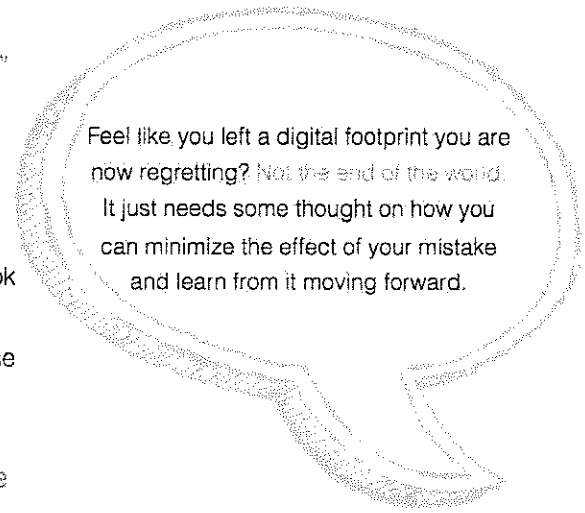
Not sure exactly how to take down those embarrassing or inappropriate photos? Take a look at this infographic from Who is Hosting This on How to Remove Your Embarrassing Photos from Social Media: <http://www.whoishostingthis.com/blog/2014/09/16/remove-photos/>

Increase and curate your positive online presence ... If you feel as though your online presence is not what you want it to be at the moment, proactively create a positive online presence that, over time, may overshadow those past online mistakes. Think before you post. Take a moment to imagine those "what if's" to determine whether that post or that text is really worth it.



# What Do I Do Now?

There are ways that you can challenge content published by others using a site's "report abuse" option. It's important to draw these sites' attention to the content as quickly as possible and to indicate why you think it should be removed. It's not enough to say, "I don't like it"; your request needs to show that it breaks their terms and conditions of use. Sites such as Facebook and Instagram don't allow nudity, so be concrete and direct when reporting. We've included some links to these reporting routes at the end of this booklet. Noting "this content contains nude images of a minor" is more clear and more likely to get the site to take action than just saying, "I don't want this image online."



It is also important to understand how *you* can change or remove content that you have posted. That profile pic of you in your underwear was funny at the time, but now you've changed your mind. While you can't be sure if others have saved it or if copies will live on in other servers, taking it down is a really important and valuable step.



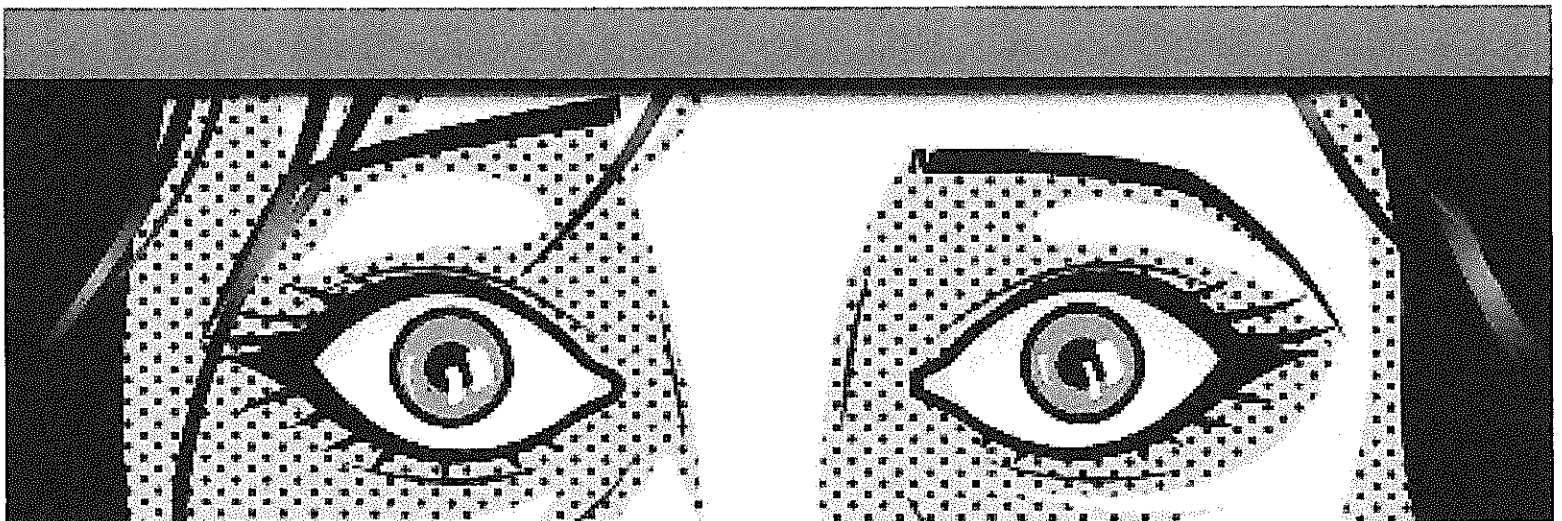
# About This Resource

This resource is a derivative of "So You Got Naked Online" by South West Grid for Learning and UK Safer Internet Centre. This resource has been adapted by Common Sense Education.

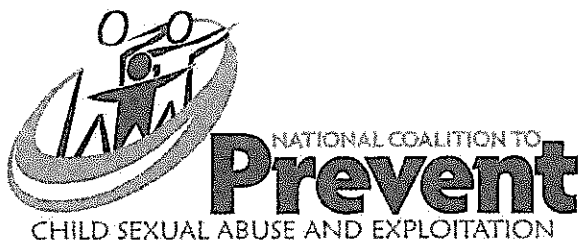


The South West Grid for Learning Trust is a not for profit, charitable trust company, providing schools and many other educational establishments throughout the United Kingdom with safe, secure, and reliable broadband Internet connectivity; broadband-enabled learning resources and services; and help, support, and advice on using the Internet safely. Find more resources at [www.swgfl.org.uk](http://www.swgfl.org.uk).

Common Sense Education is the nation's leading independent non-profit organization dedicated to empowering kids to thrive in a world of media and technology. Families, educators, and policy makers turn to Common Sense for unbiased information and trusted advice to help them learn how to harness the positive power of media and technology for all kids. Find more resources at [www.commonsensemedia.org/educators](http://www.commonsensemedia.org/educators).







## FACTS FOR PREVENTION: The Impact of Pornography on Children & Youth

For the purposes of this fact sheet we define pornography, "as sexually explicit materials (SEM) intended to create sexual arousal in the consumer. Nonviolent pornography is defined as sexually explicit materials without any overt coercive content, but which may sometimes imply acts of submission and/or coercion by the positioning of the models, use of props or displays of unequal power relationships. Violent pornography is defined as sexually explicit materials in which nonconsensual, coercive, and/or violent sexual relations are explicitly portrayed."<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, researchers have not reached universal consensus on a definition of pornography. Studies sometimes employ other terms or make other distinctions. For a better understanding of each researchers definition of pornography, readers are encouraged to refer to the individual studies cited.

**The impact of pornography is relevant to prevention of child sexual abuse and exploitation for a variety of reasons. Further, related research shows the impact of media on children and youth.**

- Violent media impacts children and youth.<sup>2,3</sup>
- Sexual objectification – the portrayal of a child as a thing for others sexual use – impacts the mental and physical health of girls.<sup>4</sup>
- Sexualized mainstream media contributes to an earlier onset of sexual behavior in youth.<sup>5,6,7,8,9,10,11</sup>
- Newer media appears to have an even greater impact.<sup>12,13</sup>
- The result of a recent meta-analysis shows a significant overall relationship between pornography consumption and attitudes supporting violence against women in nonexperimental studies. This relationship was found to be significantly stronger for violent pornography than for nonviolent pornography, although both types of pornography showed significant positive associations with attitudes supporting violence against women. This may translate into considerable social and practical significance when considered across larger populations.<sup>14</sup>
- A larger concern is the impact on children who grow, develop, and learn about themselves, their gender and relationships through the lens of pornified culture. This pornified environment paired with the lack of healthy messages and images affects their vulnerability to victimization, perpetration, and effective bystander action.<sup>15,16</sup>

*"Pornography is influencing everything from how teens language and frame sexuality to how and why they pierce certain body parts to what they expect to give and receive in intimate relationships....after all, how bad can it be if the larger culture around you finds abusive and demeaning acts a turn on?" Jill Manning, PhD, Witherspoon Institute, 2008.<sup>17</sup>*

**Exposure to pornography is common in adolescence.**

- Recent studies suggest that exposure to sexual material is common.<sup>18</sup> Fifteen percent of 12–17 year olds report looking at X-rated material either online or through traditional mediums.<sup>19</sup> When unwanted exposure also is included, 42% of 12–17 year olds in one nationally representative survey report any exposure to x-rated material online,<sup>20</sup> and 70% of 15–17 year old Internet users in another nationally representative survey reported accidentally viewing pornography online “very” or “somewhat” often.<sup>21</sup>
- In a study of 876 young people aged 15-25 years in Sweden who visited a youth center for a period of one year, “nearly all of the participants had viewed pornographic movies (among those 15 years of age, 98.9% of boys and 73.5% of girls). The majority of males (62.7%) responded positively toward pornography, describing it as ‘stimulating’ and ‘cool,’ but about all ‘exciting.’”<sup>22</sup>

*“Although prevention is needed, social change is needed even more to combat the normalization of demeaning, harmful sexual images. It is obvious that this change will be difficult to implement given the rapid and pervasive impact of internet-related technology.” Prentky et al. 2010.<sup>23</sup>*

*Pornography is moving from an individual and couples problem to a public health problem, capable of deeply harming the emotional, sexual and relationship well-being of millions of men, women and children. Wendy Maltz, 2009.<sup>24</sup>*

**Exposure to pornography has negative effects on healthy development and relationships.**

- A study of 2,343 Dutch 13-20 year olds found frequent exposure to SEM (pornography) via the Internet was related to greater sexual uncertainty (i.e., clarity of one’s sexual beliefs or values) and more positive attitudes toward uncommitted sexual exploration (i.e., sexual relations with casual partners).<sup>25</sup>
- Prolonged exposure to pornography leads to exaggerated perception of sexual activity in the populace (e.g. sodomy, group sex, sadomasochistic practices and bestiality). It also creates dispositional changes including

diminished trust in intimate partners, the abandonment of hopes for sexual exclusivity with partners, and the evaluation of promiscuity as the natural state. It fosters cynical attitudes about love, and sexual pleasures are considered attainable without affection toward partners.<sup>26</sup>

- A rigorous meta-analysis of 46 studies provides clear evidence confirming that pornography exposure is one important factor contributing directly to the development of sexually dysfunctional attitudes and behaviours. The adverse effects of pornography exposure identified include: developing sexually deviant tendencies; committing sexual offenses; experiencing difficulties in one’s intimate relationships; and accepting rape myths (e.g. a rape victim deserved to be raped because of how she dressed).<sup>27</sup>

*“A number of studies and surveys have shown that one of the initial impacts pornography has on a developing adolescent mind is that it evokes upset and distress when one is not psychologically able to process the images.” Manning, 2008.<sup>28</sup>*

*"In-depth interviews with 458 Cambodian children 12.5 – 17.5 years old found that not only does pornography have a strong impact on the behaviors of the children who view it, but on other children as well, due to increased levels of physical and verbal sexual harassment of girls, and the general increase in sexualized discourse among children." - Fordham, 2006.<sup>29</sup>*

**Pornography exposure contributes to sexual aggression in some users.**

- A study of 804 Italian males and females aged 14 to 19 found pornography use and sexual violence were significantly correlated. Females who watched pornographic videos were at significantly greater likelihood of being a victim of sexual harassment or sexual assault, while males who viewed pornography were significantly more likely to report having sexually harassed a peer or forcing someone to have sex.<sup>30</sup>

- Among the 10-15 year old respondents surveyed nationally in the Growing up with Media Study, self-reports of intentional exposure to x-rated violent material are associated with significantly higher odds of reporting perpetration of sexually aggressive behavior. This association remains significant even after a range of risk factors... are considered. Importantly the relationship between x-

rated material and sexually aggressive behavior appears to be driven by the violent content of the x-rated material. When violent and nonviolent x-rated material are examined separately, consumers of violent x-rated material are almost six times more likely than non-consumers of violent x-rated material to report sexually aggressive behavior. In contrast, consumers of non-violent material are statistically equally likely to report sexually aggressive behavior compared to those who report no consumption of non-violent x-rated material.<sup>31</sup>

- In a study of 483 seventh and eighth grade boys increased exposure to sexually explicit media at the study's outset predicted more frequent sexual harassment perpetration two years later, even considering controls (i.e. demographics, pubertal status, and sensation seeking).<sup>32</sup>

- A growing body of evidence indicates that high-frequency pornography use or consumption of violent pornography among boys and young men intensifies attitudes supportive of sexual coercion and increases their likelihood of perpetrating assault.<sup>33</sup>

- Sexually reactive children and adolescents (SRCAs) are individuals who engage in sexually inappropriate and/or coercive acts with other youth and adults. Such children and adolescents are often victims of neglect, sexual, physical, and/or emotional abuse.

SRCAs who used pornography were 5.1 times more likely to engage in coerced vaginal penetration, and 4.9 times more likely to have engaged in sex with animals than a nonusing cohort.<sup>35</sup>

- In a sample of 312 juvenile sexual offenders and non-sexual offenders, more than 50% percent of both groups saw some form of pornography before age 10, and nearly all youth were exposed to pornography after age 10. Pornography was not found to have a correlation with the age at which sexually offending youth began abusing others, the severity of their offenses, the total number of their victims, or degree of force used in their offending behaviors. However, pornography exposure was significantly correlated with their sexual arousal toward males under 12, masochism, males and females aged 13-18, and sadism. Additionally pornography exposure prior to age 10 was significantly correlated with felony assault, general delinquency, felony theft, drug sales, alcohol use, drug use, robbery, public disorderly conduct, and property damage.<sup>36</sup>

*"Pornography is a poor sex educator. Most pornography is too explicit for younger children; most shows sex in unrealistic ways and neglects intimacy and romance; most pornography is sexist; and some is based on and eroticizes violence." Michael Flood, 2009.<sup>34</sup>*

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# THE GUIDELINE

A Parent's Guide to Addressing  
Pornography With Children



After over hundreds of school assemblies around the country and receiving thousands of emails from teens around the world, Fight the New Drug has developed:

**The Guideline—A Parent's Guide to Addressing Pornography With Children**

If you currently have teenagers, are about to have teenagers, plan on having teenagers someday, or just want to help, reading this guide will provide you with powerful tools and insights for dealing with pornography in today's world.

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4

## HOW TO PREVENT

5 TIPS ON PREVENTION

8

## STARTING THE CONVERSATION

TALKING ABOUT IT

12

## HOW TO RESPOND

IF YOUR CHILD HAS A PROBLEM

18

## FAQ

UNDERSTANDING  
THE EFFECTS



# HOW TO PREVENT

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"Pornography, by its very nature, is an equal opportunity toxin. It damages the viewer, the performer, and the spouses and the children of the viewers and the performers. It is toxic mis-education about sex and relationships. It is more toxic the more you consume, the "harder" the variety you consume and the younger and more vulnerable the consumer. The damage is both in the area of beliefs and behaviors."

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**DR. MARY ANNE LAYDEN**

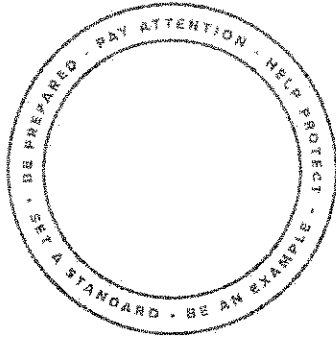
Director of the Sexual Trauma and Psychopathology  
Program at the University of Pennsylvania

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**The issue of teenagers suffering from an addiction to pornography is far larger than most of us realize. Today's technological advancements have made pornography more accessible, affordable, and anonymous than ever before. And over the last few years our organization has received thousands of emails from desperate teenagers struggling to overcome their addiction to pornography.**

**Most people don't realize that viewing pornography impacts the brain in ways nearly identical to those of hard drugs (see "What is the science behind addiction?" in the FAQ section of this packet). Education is the best form of protection. Here are five tips designed to give you the tools you need to help you fortify your child's defense against pornography.**

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### 1. BE PREPARED

Prevention begins with knowing what you're up against and having accurate information. Research facts regarding the harmful effects of pornography using the FAQ section of this guide to prepare yourself for a conversation with your child. Incorporating the science behind the dangers of pornography will help to support your family values in this discussion.

### 2. PAY ATTENTION

As gatekeepers, you should be aware of what enters into your home. Observe your children's habits to identify the potential for pornography exposure. Nearly 80% of unwanted exposure to pornography takes place within the safety of your home. Here are some questions to consider to increase your awareness:

- What games and gaming devices do your children own?
- Do your children have access to the Internet on those devices?
- What magazines are accessible to your children?
- How are your children using their cell phones?
- What kinds of text messages are your children sending/receiving?

### 3. HELP PROTECT

Once you have evaluated how pornography can potentially enter your home, it's time to act. Installing an Internet filtration system on all Internet enabled devices is a key step in protecting your family from accidental exposure. Do your research and find what system is best for your family's needs. Also, use the parental control options to password protect unwanted material on cable, Netflix, Hulu and other online streaming services.

**PORNOGRAPHY  
IMPACTS THE  
BRAIN WITH  
EFFECTS NEARLY  
IDENTICAL TO  
THOSE OF HARD  
DRUGS.**

#### 4. SET A STANDARD

Setting a standard for technology and media consumption in the home will help decrease exposure to inappropriate material. Together with your family, develop a plan for your household. This plan should include guidelines regarding consumption limits, acceptable time for use, and the location in your home for internet enabled devices. The details of what your family's plan looks like is up to you and your family to decide. Whatever standards are set, we recommend that they pertain to all members of the family and not just the children. By doing so, you will help protect adults in the home and send a message to your children that Internet safety is important no matter the age. Some questions to consider when setting a standard in your home are:

**Q: What limitations should be set on the amount of time your child spends on Internet enabled devices?**

**A:** There is a higher chance of pornography exposure when hours are spent surfing the Internet out of boredom. As a general rule of thumb, the Internet should be used with a purpose. This may require regulating the amount of time your child spends on any Internet enabled devices.

**Q: At what time of day is using an Internet enabled device acceptable?**

**A:** Research has shown that aimless online searching increases late at night. It may be necessary to confine Internet usage to a specific time period, such as 10am–10pm. However, another approach is to only allow your children to be online when an adult is at home and awake.

**Q: Where are the computers located?**

**A:** When the computers are located in a private area—such as a bedroom—the opportunity to view pornography anonymously increases significantly. By keeping computers in shared family areas, like the living room or kitchen, images on the computer screen become more obvious. This reduces the likelihood of pornography use going undetected.

**Q: Where in the home are mobile Internet enabled devices being used?**

**A:** Children can be exposed to pornography via any device that offers Internet access, this includes cell phones, laptops, tablets, iPods, and handheld gaming devices. It may be necessary to set a time period for mobile usage. You can also review your child's browsing history, text history, and data usage. Check with your mobile provider to find out how to do this remotely. Remember, Internet filtration systems can be installed on mobile devices as well. Make sure to be open and transparent about filtration softwares and all other activities. Transparency should be an expectation from both parents and children.

Take the time to discuss these questions with your entire family. Involving your children in developing your family's media plan can greatly improve buy-in. Children are more likely to follow standards that they helped to create.

#### 5. BE AN EXAMPLE

Setting a standard has a limit to its effectiveness without a model of healthy behavior. Realize the example you set is the most critical aspect to the success of your preventative actions. Identify factors that may oppose your message by asking the following questions:

- Do I watch movies with pornographic language or imagery?
- Do I listen to sexually explicit music?
- Do I listen to music that is derogatory to a specific gender?
- Do I read books or magazines that have sexual language or imagery?
- Do I use sexual language casually?
- Do I use sexually demeaning language?
- Do I respect the opposite gender and demonstrate this through my words and actions?

Children do what we do, not what we say. Be aware of this and try to model healthy communication and media consumption. ■

**START THE  
CONVERSATION**

As a parent it can be difficult, at times, to tap into your child's world and have a heartfelt conversation on topics that really matter. Here is our suggestion on how to talk about pornography.

Too often we hear parents say,

**“NOT MY KID!”**

**“MY KID DOESN'T HAVE ACCESS TO THAT KIND OF STUFF. AND EVEN IF THEY DID, THEY WOULD NEVER LOOK AT IT.”**

That may be true. We hope it is. However, statistically speaking, it's unlikely. More than 90 percent of all teenagers ages 12 to 17 have been exposed to hardcore pornography, and once they've been exposed, many keep coming back. It's no longer a question of if your child will be exposed to pornographic material online, but when.

### **WHY YOU NEED TO START THE CONVERSATION**

Pornography addiction affects boys and girls, young and old, religious and nonreligious, straight-A students and high school dropouts. Because of cultural trends and technological advancements—namely the Internet—most children are being exposed to pornography by age 9. You need to be aware that the pornography industry is targeting your child through online games, advertisements, email spam campaigns, pop-ups, merchandise, and so much more. They do this for the same reason the tobacco industry targeted teens years ago. If they can get a child hooked young, they potentially have a lifelong client.

Unfortunately, if you don't educate your kids about what healthy sexuality looks like, the porn industry will. And you probably won't like what they teach them.

### **THE CURIOSITY MYTH**

A common myth surrounding “the porn talk” is that if parents discuss the issue openly, their children will become overly curious and start seeking it out. If handled incorrectly, that can be true. However, by following this guide you will find that children are more likely to bring questions to you rather than looking for answers elsewhere. If teenagers feel like their family has a culture of openness, trust, and transparency, they are more willing to be open with their parents.

# THE DAYS OF AWKWARDLY GLOSSING OVER THE 'BIRDS AND THE BEES' TALK JUST ONCE ARE OVER.

## WHEN SHOULD I START THE CONVERSATION

The short answer: earlier than you think. If you have young children and are wondering at what age it is appropriate to start the conversation about the dangers of pornography, understand that it varies depending on specific cultural circumstances, societal influences, media exposure, and individual curiosities. However, children are being exposed to pornography at an increasingly younger age. You may need to start talking about it sooner than you had originally planned. If your child is older, the time may be now.

## HOW DO I BRING THIS UP?

The days when parents could quickly gloss over the birds and the bees are over. Today, children are repeatedly exposed to increasingly explicit sexual content, requiring parents to have open and direct conversations about the differences between healthy sexuality and its hollow counterfeits. There may be some awkwardness at the beginning, but as you make it a regular discussion, it will get easier. Here are some ideas to keep in mind as you prepare to have these conversations:

## PREPARE YOURSELF

As we mentioned in the "5 Tips for Prevention" section of this guide, it is important to make yourself aware of the science behind pornography addiction so that you are prepared to help educate your child and answer questions. You can find several articles on this subject on our website ([www.fightthenewdrug.org](http://www.fightthenewdrug.org)) and helpful information in the "Frequently Asked Questions" section of this guide.

## TAKE TIME TO TALK

When you plan to have an important conversation, set time aside so you won't feel rushed or interrupted. This could be during one-on-one time with your child, a car ride, or a private conversation before they go to bed.

## FIND THE RIGHT PLACE

Have the conversation in a location that is comfortable and private. This gives your child the freedom to ask questions and express themselves openly.

## MAKE IT A ONE-ON-ONE

Have a separate conversation with each individual child. This allows you to cater the discussion to each child's particular situation and use language that matches their level of understanding. For example, when speaking to a 7-year-old, you may not feel comfortable bringing up pornography specifically. In that situation you may want to discuss related topics that can act as building blocks for future conversations, such as private areas, no touch zones, or why it is not appropriate to take off your clothes in front of others.



“

I DON'T REMEMBER MY PARENTS TALKING TO ME ABOUT IT UNTIL IT HAD BECOME A PROBLEM. I WAS 10 OR 11. I WISH I HAD UNDERSTOOD THE ISSUE SOONER.

**WHAT SHOULD I SAY?**

Rather than give you a word for word script, we're going to focus on giving you appropriate guidelines and tools that will be adaptable for your particular situation.

**LAYER THE DISCUSSION**

Covering every aspect of this subject in one conversation is not realistic or effective. Your first conversation with your child is the start of an ongoing dialogue. Over time, continue to increase their knowledge regarding the harmful effects of pornography by having candid, age-appropriate conversations.

**SUPPORT YOUR FAMILY VALUES WITH SCIENCE**

Combine your family values with the power of scientific evidence. Including concrete evidence of pornography's harmful effects will help your child fully understand the consequences of viewing pornography. Think about how we educate our kids on the harmful effects of hard drugs. We talk about our individual family values while also discussing drugs' harmful physical effects, such as rotted teeth, lung cancer, and sometimes death.

In the "Frequently Asked Questions" section of this packet you will find factual information on the topics listed below that will help you address your children with the necessary language.

- What is The Science Behind Addiction?
- How Is Addiction Harmful?
- How Can Pornography Be An Addiction?
- How Can Pornography Hurt Me As An Individual?
- How Does Pornography Mess Up My Relationships?
- How Does Pornography Damage Society?
- What Does A Real, Healthy Relationship Look Like?

**HOW WILL MY CHILD RESPOND?**

**DISGUST**

Your child might think you are crazy for talking to him or her about this subject. Give them the freedom to express how they feel. They may react this way because they are embarrassed or uncomfortable. Be patient with them. Most likely, they are listening to what you have to say.

**DEFENSIVENESS**

Your child could also react with anger or defensiveness. This could either mean that they are currently dealing with a pornography problem or that they feel accused of something they are not guilty of. If your child responds in this way, make sure that you don't react with similar emotions. Keep calm. Try to avoid coming across as judgemental. Reacting without judgement is vital to the success of these conversations. Your child will be more willing to open up later if you handle this reaction properly.

**SILENCE**

Some children may not have anything to say. They may not know how to react, or they may feel awkward. That's okay. They may need some time to think about what you have said. Don't worry; it's still important to start the dialogue on the subject. It not only gives them vital information, but also opens the lines of communication about healthy sexuality. Starting the conversation gives them permission to come to you when they have questions or concerns.

**HONESTY**

Some children are already caught up in pornography. They may be experiencing shame, guilt, or confusion as a result of their actions. If your child is struggling with pornography use and is able to open up to you about it, be sure to offer support and love rather than disappointment or punishment. In the next section of this guide, "How to Respond if Your Child Has a Problem," we discuss some strategies for how to act in these situations. ■

# HOW TO RESPOND

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## “IF YOU TALK TO YOUR CHILDREN...

you can help them to keep their lives together. If you talk to them skillfully, you can help them to build future dreams.”

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JIM ROHN

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Life brings new challenges everyday, some of them may alter our sense of reality. One of those life-altering moments could be when you discover that your child has been viewing pornography, or in the extreme case, has an addiction to it.

Rarely will your child bring this to your attention without you discovering it first. In most cases, you are going to uncover the truth about your child's pornography habits when you look at their browsing history or catch them in the act. These events can catch parents off guard and lead to very negative responses. A knee-jerk,

emotional reaction rather than a thought-out response will likely cause more damage in an already sensitive situation.

We want to help you be as prepared as possible so that you respond in a productive way that starts the healing process. Again, because every individual and family is different, there is no perfect script that can be written. However, by keeping the following tips in mind, you can communicate effectively and have a positive impact on your child's understanding of healthy sexuality.

## 4 TECHNIQUES FOR A HEALTHY RESPONSE

### BREATHE

Initially, you may want to express anger or disappointment. While these emotions are natural reactions, they can have a devastating impact on your relationship with your child, especially regarding this topic. Taking a few deep breaths will allow yourself to gain control over your immediate emotions. A knee-jerk reaction to this issue will create secrecy where openness is essential. Think back to when you were younger. Remember that you were far from perfect. Overreacting, expressing judgment, or giving a strict punishment can add fuel to the fire of rebellion and shame. You need to understand that your child is not the problem; their issue with pornography is the problem. If you can successfully separate your child from the problem, you will start to see a clearer path toward ways to help. Removing judgment, anger, and fear from the conversation will likely result in your child feeling more comfortable coming to you for additional help or answers to sensitive questions.

### LISTEN

Once you have taken a few deep breaths and gained control of your emotions, take a minute and listen to what your child is telling you. Odds are, this isn't the easiest moment of their life either. Actively listening to what your child is saying will strengthen your relationship and allow them to feel understood. This will also give you time to gather all the facts and determine how to respond. Some suggestions for active listening are:

## EVERYDAY LIFE BRINGS NEW CHALLENGES.

### MAINTAIN EYE CONTACT

By looking down, or away from your child, you send the message that you are uninterested or uncomfortable with what they have to say. They will think that you're not listening to their perspective, but instead, planning their punishment. Maintaining eye contact will help you focus on what your child is saying, while communicating your concern for them.

### USE ENCOURAGING BODY LANGUAGE

Our body language tends to betray us when we are trying to control our feelings. This is especially true during intense situations. Closed postures such as folding your arms or shaking your head could convey anger, disappointment, and discomfort. Displaying these emotions while your child opens up to you will shut them down. Keep your posture open. This will invite more expression from your child, and give you insight into what is really going on.

### ASK NON-JUDGEMENTAL QUESTIONS

You may feel curious about certain aspects of your child's pornography use. Before you begin those conversations ask yourself, "How will knowing this help my child?" When you pose questions, be sure that they aren't self-serving, passive aggressive or leading in any way. Some ideas for questions are: When did this start? Where do you most often use? What can I do to help you stop? Asking concrete questions allows you to gather necessary information without allowing your emotions to run wild.

**VALIDATE**

After your child has said everything they needed to about how they feel and what they have gone through, it's your turn. At this point you still might be a little shocked and you might not know what to say. That's okay. It's normal to feel somewhat overwhelmed. If they have come to you with the issue, thank them for their trust in you. And let them know that you understand that it wasn't easy to open up about this. Regardless of how you discovered the problem, tell them that you love them no matter what. If they can feel your love for them they will be far more willing to continue down this path with you. It is essential for you to be a part of the solution. An important thing to remember is that this issue has become common among teenagers today. Your child isn't the only one on the block suffering from a challenge with pornography.

**YOUR CHILD  
ISN'T THE  
ONLY ONE ON  
THE BLOCK  
SUFFERING  
FROM THIS  
CHALLENGE.**

**HELP**

Finally, recognize that they need you. They need to know that you're on their side and willing to fight this thing together. You could ask your child what they specifically plan to do to stop viewing pornography before it becomes a habit, and how you can help them make that happen. Assist them as they set detailed goals, and help them to be accountable. This is where you get to show your love through your actions.

Many of you may experience a reaction from your child that is dismissive or unwilling to recognize their pornography use as a problem. It is important for you to keep these four steps in mind and not try to sway them to your line of thinking by force. What we can tell you is to not give up. Keep educating them through an open dialogue and be there for them. When they recognize it as a problem, they will know where to go.

**WHAT IF MY CHILD HAS AN ADDICTION?**

Your child's commitment to recovery can only be increased by your desire to support them as they work through this. It is also okay to look for help outside of your role as a parent. Depending on your situation and your family's needs, involving a third party for counseling or assistance might be the way to go. The more we learn about this habit the more we know just how much outside help someone needs to break free.

Remember, no one plans on addiction. Don't dwell too much on the past unless it is to help you understand how to address the future. To help, Fight the New Drug has authored FORTIFY: A Step Toward Recovery, a book specifically written for teenagers facing this issue. FORTIFY provides education, resources, and tools that assists them through the recovery process. A free, online version of this program will also be available on the Fight the New Drug website in the coming year. ●

QUESTION:

**WHAT DO YOU  
WISH YOUR  
PARENTS KNEW  
WHEN ADDRESSING  
THE ISSUE OF  
PORNOGRAPHY?**

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"I wish they told me that it exists. That would have been helpful. My parents never even informed me of it."

**"I WISH MY PARENTS UNDERSTOOD THAT SHAMING ME ONLY LED ME TO HIDE IT."**

"I wish they knew that it's not always controllable and that we want to change but that sometimes we're just stuck and we don't know who to turn to, or how to reach out."

"I wish my parents knew how to address it and speak about it openly and without feeling shy or disgusted. Today porn *is* part of the mainstream media."

"I wish my parents knew that it is NOT abnormal for kids to want to do this. Being too harsh about things of this nature isn't going to help anybody."

"I wish my parents knew that it's not a matter of "if" but a matter of "when" and to always talk about things calmly whenever they arise. I wish they knew to start talking and teaching early. They can't just give "the talk" when we are 13. It has to be constant and tailored to our age."

"I wish my parents knew that the whole "good-people-sometimes-do-bad-things" concept applies to pornography. They once discovered that a friend of mine had a problem with it, and they didn't want me talking to or associating with him anymore, even though he is a really good person and was addressing the problem!"

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"I wish they had taught me some of the language associated with the pornography industry. I stumbled upon pornography because I was looking up words and phrases I heard around school. I was too shy, or just didn't know to ask my parents first."

**"I WISH MY PARENTS WOULD ADDRESS THE ISSUE PERSONALLY AND NOT SWEEP IT UNDER THE RUG."**

"I wish they had taught me how it affects the porn performers and what leads them into porn (typically abuse and nowhere else to go). Tell me their story and give me first-hand insight to behind the scenes of what is really going on."

**FAQ**



**Here are some of the most common questions we get on the topic of pornography, and some answers you might find helpful as you discuss pornography and its effects with your children:**

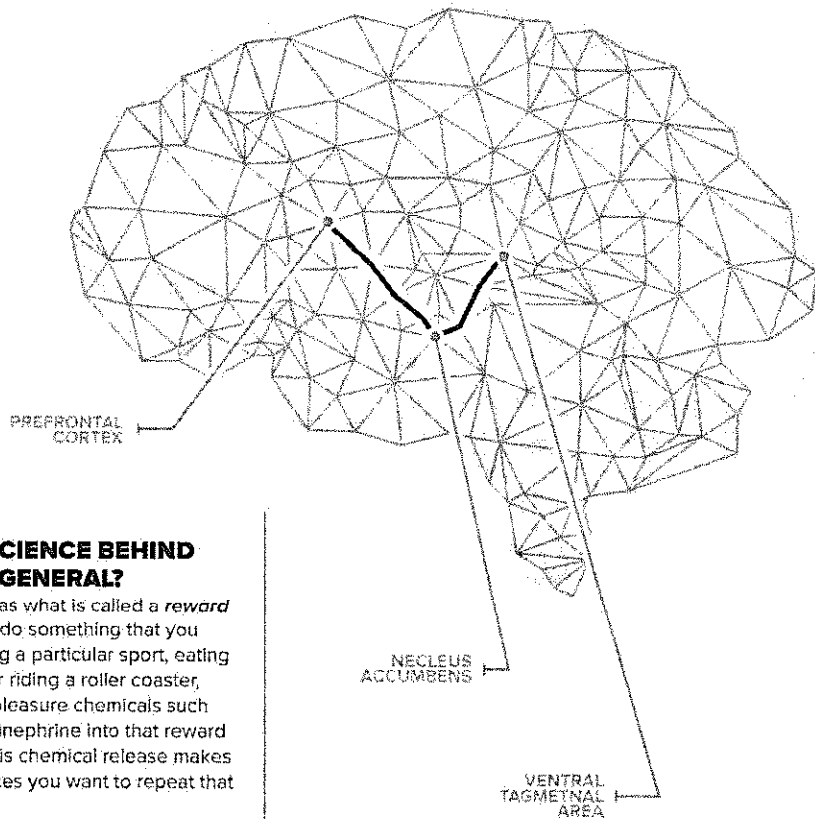
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#### **HOW IS ADDICTION HARMFUL?**

The Latin root for addiction is dico, which means "to say"—as in, someone or something else has a say. Recognize that root? It takes on an even clearer meaning in the word "dictator." In a literal sense, those who deal with addiction are no longer completely free. Their actions and choices are being mandated, controlled, and driven. Even if they want to leave the addiction, they may still feel helpless against its power over them.

And what does addiction want? It wants to be the number one priority in your life, ahead of your responsibilities, your family, and even your own health. Having an addiction robs you of control over your life. This loss of control often manifests itself through increased aggression, inability to focus, losing control over physical appetites, and a diminished ability to feel pleasure. Addiction is also often linked to clinical depression as well as feelings of worthlessness, hopelessness, and loneliness.

## THE REWARD PATHWAY



### WHAT IS THE SCIENCE BEHIND ADDICTION IN GENERAL?

Every human brain has what is called a *reward pathway*. When you do something that you enjoy, such as playing a particular sport, eating your favorite meal, or riding a roller coaster, your brain releases pleasure chemicals such as dopamine and epinephrine into that reward pathway. Because this chemical release makes you feel good, it makes you want to repeat that behavior or activity.

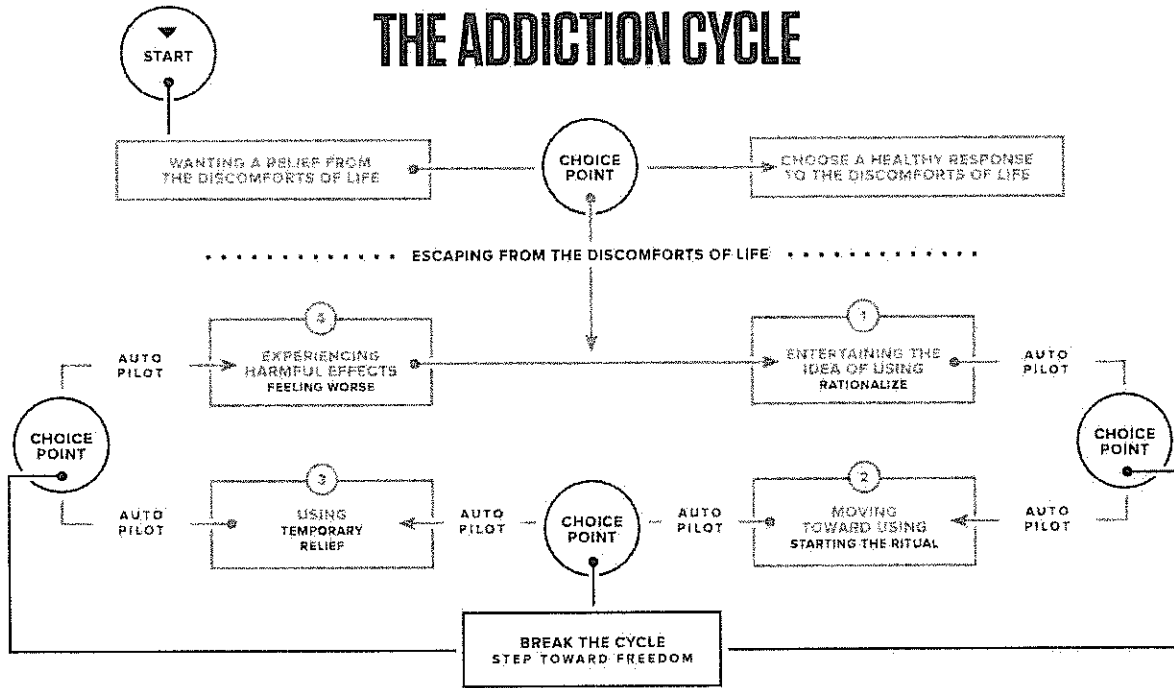
Here's the trick: those same neurochemicals are also released when you're doing some not-so-cool stuff, like taking drugs. When that happens, those chemicals are released at unnaturally high levels, overloading the reward pathway and restructuring the brain itself.

At first, your brain isn't used to such a strong dose of pleasure chemicals, so you might feel sick, excited, or shocked the first time you take drugs, look at porn, or participate in other addictive activities. But over time you start to acclimate to these elevated chemical levels, and eventually your brain begins to crave more, more often, and a more hard-core version of what you've started feeding it, just to feel normal. Pretty soon, you start choosing your addiction over the things you used to love to do. By this time, your brain has built up a dependency to that overexposure of chemicals to the point where you feel that the things you used to love to do—such as reading, hanging out with friends, or playing sports—no longer cut it. They don't release enough neurochemicals into the reward pathway to satisfy your altered brain. That, my friend, is addiction.

### HOW CAN PORNOGRAPHY BE AN ADDICTIVE?

When it comes to the brain, pornography's effects are nearly identical to those caused by other drugs in that porn overloads the reward pathway with pleasure chemicals, such as dopamine, serotonin, norepinephrine, and many others. The tidal wave of pleasure chemicals porn creates is much more intense than the reaction that would be produced by other, more natural, activities, such as playing sports or hanging out with friends. As with any other addiction, you start to compromise the things you really care about just for a momentary high or escape. And as your body acclimates to the elevated chemical levels porn produces, you'll need more and more of it just to feel normal.

# THE ADDICTION CYCLE



FIGHT THE NEW DRUGS — THE GUIDELINE

## WHAT IS THE ADDICTION CYCLE?

Often addictions occur simply because of a desire to escape or find relief from the discomforts of life. Review this diagram and try to better understand the process that one goes through when feeling the pressures of life. Notice the Choice Points (moments when one can break the cycle). Discuss with your child healthy responses to life's discomforts and what they can do to avoid slipping into the addiction cycle.

## HOW CAN PORNOGRAPHY HURT ME AS AN INDIVIDUAL?

There is clear evidence that long-term pornography use sets people up for feeling more depressed and empty than those who do not use it. One big reason for this is that the reward pathway in the brain gets so worn out by constant artificial stimulation that it simply stops being able to respond to more natural kinds of pleasure. Over time, porn users slowly start to become numb or desensitized to everyday activities. Plain and simple, life can start to feel pretty dull when we're exposing ourselves to unnatural levels of artificial stimulation all of the time. Everything else can eventually feel as boring and bland as an hour-long infomercial about tube socks.

Porn users can also become desensitized to the type of pornography they use. Like hard-drug users, they eventually become bored and start seeking more hard-core forms. Users also report having lower sexual self-esteem than non-users, attitudes of sexual permissiveness, and sexual dysfunction.

Unfortunately, there are also more serious problems that breed from pornography addiction, such as having completely unrealistic expectations about sexual partners. Researchers have found that after being exposed to pornography, subjects were less satisfied with their partners' affection, physical appearance, sexual curiosity, and sexual performance (Zillmann & Bryant 1988). Basically, it can lead to you preferring a computer screen to an actual relationship.

### **HOW CAN PORNOGRAPHY MESS UP MY RELATIONSHIPS?**

Arguably pornography's biggest consequence occurs in the contexts of marriage, relationships, and family. One of the most thorough summaries of these effects was prepared for a U.S. Congressional Subcommittee by marriage and family therapist Dr. Jill Manning in November of 2005. In it, she stated that pornography use leads to "increased marital distress, and risk of separation and divorce, decreased marital intimacy and sexual satisfaction, infidelity, increased appetite for more graphic types of pornography and sexual activity associated with abuse, illegal or unsafe practices, devaluation of monogamy, marriage and child rearing, and an increasing number of people struggling with compulsive and addictive sexual behavior."

Some have argued that pornography can facilitate connection and intimacy between loving couples. As optimistic as this theory may sound, scientific findings, as well as numerous heartbreaking personal accounts from those who have been in relationships with pornography users, suggest precisely the reverse. Pornography use decreases the viewer's satisfaction in their partner's appearance and affection, and can eventually cause them to prefer the fantasy of pornography to an actual relationship (Zillmann & Bryant, 1988). And because the excitement pornography produces makes real life seem boring, relationships in all contexts can start to dull by comparison (Weaver, 2004).

### **HOW DOES PORNOGRAPHY DAMAGE SOCIETY?**

Pornography has become an epidemic in today's society producing increased sexual health issues and human rights violations. Research has shown that pornography can lead to sexual activity at younger ages, and increased sexual permissiveness, which contributes to higher rates of STDs, teen pregnancy, and sexual assault on children. The extreme nature of many pornographic films distorts how we view one another by turning an individual into a collection of body parts rather than a human being. This objectification is linked to increased violence against women, sex trafficking, and sex slavery. FBI statistics show that pornography is found at 80% of the scenes of violent sex crimes or in the homes of the perpetrators (Anderson, 1992).

### **WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN HEALTHY SEXUALITY AND UNHEALTHY SEXUALITY?**

Imagine being lost in a blistering desert. After two days of wandering without any food or water, you come across an abandoned village on the beach of an ocean. Your attention immediately focuses on the massive body of saltwater crashing on the coast only a few hundred meters ahead. Out of the corner of your eye, you also notice a freshwater pump next to the nearest structure in the abandoned village, but all you can think about is drinking that cold ocean water. You think to yourself, "Water is water, isn't it? Whether I get it from the ocean or find it in the village doesn't really matter, right?"

Of course not. Drinking that saltwater would kill you faster than if you didn't drink any water at all. Even though freshwater and saltwater look nearly identical, their effects couldn't be more opposite. One replenishes and strengthens your body, and the other harms your body. In a similar way, sexuality is expressed in many forms—forms that can look similar from the outside. Depending on the details, however, they can have totally different effects. So what are those details that make such a difference?

Let's start with the biggest: the presence of another actual person. In a pornographic sexual experience, rather than interacting with another human being, your physiological system is being manipulated to respond to an image, with the body provoked by someone who is not really there. As this happens, your brain releases oxytocin, which is referred to as the "bonding chemical." This chemical is meant to create a sense of connection or bond between two loving individuals. In a pornographic experience, however, that chemical is being released in association with a hollow image behind a computer screen or on a magazine page. That is pretty confusing to the brain and over time your ability to bond with another real, actual person weakens.

Basically, pornography is a counterfeit—a lie. What it teaches about sex and attraction is not only false but in many cases it's also destructive. It won't bring a sense of connection, acceptance, or love. It won't vitalize or strengthen a relationship. It will slowly change the viewer's perceptions of women and men and distort their ideas of what a healthy sexual relationship should look like. ■

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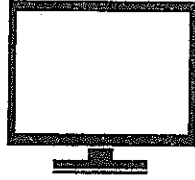
- ✓ Monitors and reports Internet use
- ✓ Each site is rated (such as T for Teen, M for Mature, etc.)
- ✓ Reports are sent to a person you choose: a parent, friend, or mentor.
- ✓ Use Reports to have conversations about online temptations.
- ✓ Available for Windows and Mac computers, iPhone®, iPad®, iPod touch®, Android™ phones and tablets.

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**2** We send reports to an Accountability Partner you choose, such as a friend, parent, or other trusted person. These reports show how you use the Web. Parents: Consider using Internet Accountability with your kids to teach responsible Internet use.



**3** Your Accountability Partners can then talk to you about the report, or you can talk with your kids about theirs. It may be as simple as a quick e-mail or as personal as a conversation.



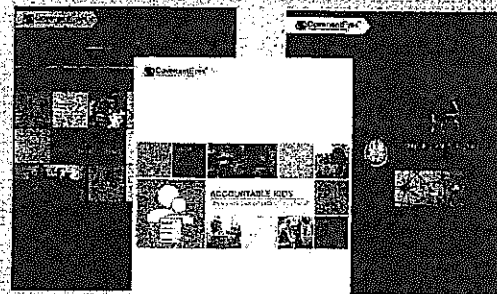
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## TALK TODAY, SAFE TOMORROW: Top 10 Ways to Start Conversations About Pornography

Talking to kids about the dangers of pornography is important – and really stressful! But if you can get started, the hardest part is behind you. Adapt these ideas and keep talking as your children grow and experience new things. You can do it! Every time you talk, your children are safer.

### 1. Start with what they already know.

You have already been talking about family values, their bodies, and personal safety issues. Build on that to help them be aware of the dangers of pornography in age-appropriate ways.

- "In our home we know to wear our clothes around other people. We take them off only in private or when we need help from someone like mom, dad, or a doctor. Sometimes you might see pictures of people who are not fully dressed. They may not be wearing any clothes at all. When that happens we look away, and tell mom or dad right away. We can help you know what to do and you'll feel better."
- "We have talked about good touch and bad touch before. We know that the private areas of our bodies are special. Sometime you might see pictures of people showing these private parts. This is not good. If you see this look away and quickly come tell me."

### 2. Teach children what pornography is in age-appropriate ways.

Definitions give power. From the simplest explanation to a full definition for older children, giving children the words to describe what they have seen opens the door to them coming to you in the future.

- "You know we have fun together sharing our favorite family pictures. But you should know that sometimes people share very bad or inappropriate pictures or videos that show people without any clothes on. Have you ever seen anything like that?"
- "You might have heard kids at school making jokes about something called pornography. Pornography is media that openly shows or describes nudity or sexuality and is intended to create sexual feelings. It can be online, or in video games, movies, photos, music, magazines, ads, and books. It is a false and harmful way to experience sexuality, so it's a good idea for us to plan together how to avoid it."

### 3. Practice with your family what to do if they see pornography.

Just like a fire drill, your children need to have a plan so they can react quickly when they encounter pornography.

- "Let's make a deal with each other, OK? If you see anything like pornography, get away from it as fast as you can and tell me right away. Let's agree to tell each other within 10 minutes if we can."
- "What could you say to a friend who wanted to show you pornography? Do you have some ideas? Maybe you could turn away and say: I don't want to see that! That's disgusting – put it away. You shouldn't be showing that."

### 4. Be upfront about your concerns.

Are you worried about talking about pornography? Being honest about your concerns can go a long way to opening up a conversation.

- "It may be awkward to talk about this but it's better than not talking at all, isn't it!"
- "I've just started learning about this subject, and I know there's more to learn. I would like to hear what you know about pornography, and then we can learn together to be smart online."
- "I wish I had done a better job of talking to you about this in the past, but it's not too late to start now."
- "I worry that if you hear about pornography, you might want to see what we are talking about. It is natural for kids to be curious and want to learn more about things, but the reason I am talking to you is because pornography is very dangerous, and I want you to be prepared to avoid it anytime, anywhere."

### 5. Take opportunities to praise kids for good decisions.

Children gain self-control and personal power when they learn to see themselves as good decision makers. Water what you want to grow!

- "I noticed that you changed the channel when that inappropriate ad came on. I'm really impressed that you made that good decision and acted so quickly. I bet you feel pretty good when you take control of what you watch. That will keep you safe from things like pornography."

### 6. Build on their desire to be trusted and grown-up.

Children look forward to growing up and want to be respected and trusted with important things. Give them credit for how difficult it is to grow up in this time.

- "You are growing up so fast and I think you are ready to talk about a really important thing. I know I can trust you to make good decisions when you understand how important it is to stay away from pornography."
- "You are such a wonderful kid, and this is a hard world we're living in. I know you're trying to keep away from bad stuff online. It's tough! Are there some rules we could set together that would help keep you safe? I trust you, but I don't trust people who want to get you trapped. What do you think might really help?"



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## 7. Use examples in the media and news.

Our cultural environment is littered with sexualized media, and the news is filled with stories of sexual misconduct. So use them as natural conversation-starters! When you see or hear something, think of it as a learning opportunity and ask your kids what they think. Give them lots of space to talk, even if it means being silent for a few uncomfortable moments. You'll be surprised at how much they open up.

- "Goodness, there's another ad showing a woman who is barely dressed. Why do you think advertisers use scantily-dressed women in their ads? What kind of a reaction are they trying to get from you?"
- "This morning I read a news story about that found hundreds of students at a school who were sexting and sharing these photos with everyone. Have you heard of anything like that at your school? What do you think about it?"

## 8. Share a personal experience.

Sharing your experiences can be life-changing for your kids. Have you seen images that you wish you hadn't? How did you react? Did you wish later that you had been prepared to know what to do? What have you learned to do better now? It will help them to feel like they can share their own experiences and feelings without shame and judgement when they understand that you have experienced some of the same struggles.

- "Sometimes when I'm on the Internet, I've accidentally seen pictures that make me feel very uncomfortable, but at the same time it is hard to look away. They show naked people and often they are treating each other in disrespectful ways. It's called pornography. Have you ever seen anything like that?"
- "When I was about your age, a friend showed me some pictures of some naked people that were in a magazine. I didn't know what to do. I didn't tell anyone because I was so afraid I'd get in trouble. So I never told anybody. Now I realize that I was just a child and I didn't do anything wrong. Sometimes we see things that are a little shocking. Has anything like that ever happened to you? I hope you know you can always tell me. You won't be in trouble at all."

## 9. Read current blogs on this issue.

The time you spend preventing problems now can save years of tears later. So periodically, spend some time to get educated to help your children. You can use these topics as conversation starters with your family. See a list of some good websites below.

- "I read something really surprising today. I learned that most parents think they have talked to their children about Internet safety more often than their children say they have. I bet that's true here too! What do you think?"
- "I read an article today that says that viewing pornography can become an addiction just as bad as any drug addiction. Have you ever heard that?"

## 10. Follow up on these conversations and check in regularly.

Once you have done the hard work of starting, keep it going! It will get easier over time and your kids will become more comfortable coming to you when they have challenging experiences.

- "Is there anything like pornography stuck in your mind from a long time ago? Do you want to tell me about it so you can let it go and forget it?"
- "Sometimes kids see pornography accidentally or when friends show them things. Have you seen anything like pornography since the last time we talked? What did you do? What could you do if that happens again?"

Let's raise the first generation to be prepared to reject pornography.

The Coalition to End Sexual Exploitation Prevention Group, a project of The National Center on Sexual Exploitation, includes these organizations who collaborated to share this message.

- [National Center on Sexual Exploitation](#)
- [PornProof Kids](#)
- [Educate Empower Kids](#)
- [Utah Coalition Against Pornography](#)
- [Women for Decency](#)
- [White Ribbon Week](#)
- [Fight the New Drug](#)
- [Enough is Enough](#)
- [Purity Works](#)

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SEXUAL  
EXPLOITATION

UTAH COALITION AGAINST  
PORNOGRAPHY



# The Normalization of Sexual Harm and the Sexualization of Children

“Little girls are being groomed into passively accepting their place as objects in our pornified culture, and boys are being taught exploitive and abusive sexual scripts.”

-- Cordelia Anderson, Founder, Sensibilities Prevention Services

## As a society, we are inundated with images and messages that are...

- 1) Sexualizing minors and children at younger and younger ages.
- 2) Portraying sexual exploitation and sexual violence as normal.

These messages are everywhere -- from TV shows and commercials, to movies and music, billboards and bus shelters, even products designed for and marketed to kids.

## Harmful to girls *and* boys, this saturation of sexual messaging...

⇒ **Creates the perception that a child's self-worth is tied to his or her sexuality. This, in turn:**

- **Degrades girls' emotional and mental wellbeing:** Adolescent girls who have a more objectified relationship with their bodies are more likely to experience depression and have low self-esteem.<sup>1</sup>
- **Decreases girls' cognitive performance:** Numerous studies have shown that self-objectification detracts from a girl's ability to concentrate and focus her attention, leading to poorer performance in math, logical reasoning and spatial skills.<sup>2</sup>
- **Limits girls' physical performance:** One study found that the greater the extent to which girls viewed their bodies as objects and were concerned about appearance, the poorer their performance throwing a softball.<sup>3</sup>
- **Teaches boys to view and treat girls as sexual objects:** Research carried out in a dozen countries found that boys exposed to porn are more likely to indulge in casual sex and less likely to form successful relationships as an adult.<sup>4</sup> It also found that young boys exposed to pornography are more inclined to believe that there is nothing wrong with pinning down or sexually harassing a girl.<sup>5</sup>
- **Impedes healthy and responsible sexuality:** Several studies have found links between early exposure to sexually explicit media and earlier sex as a teen and increases in teen pregnancy.<sup>6</sup>

⇒ **Condone and creates an appetite for sexual harassment and abuse.**

- **Watching is like acting to the brain:** Studies of mirror cells in the brain show that brain circuits fire in the same way when we observe someone doing something as when we actually do it.<sup>7</sup> Repeatedly viewing images of sexual violence desensitizes people to the awful nature of those acts.
- **Exposure to pornography and the committing of sexual violence are correlated:** Numerous studies have found that boys exposed to sexually explicit media have higher rates of sexual harassment perpetration (even controlling for other factors that could have contributed to this difference – like demographics).<sup>8</sup>
- **Victimization of underage girls is growing:** Research conducted by the Shapiro Group on adolescent girls in the sex trade suggest that in Minnesota, 124 girls under age 18 were commercially sexually exploited via internet classified ads or escort services in a single month, August, 2010.<sup>9</sup>

(over)

# The Normalization of Sexual Harm

## ⇒ What is normalization?

Normalization is the process by which an idea or behavior goes from clearly problematic to an accepted part of societal culture.<sup>10</sup>

## ⇒ There is a difference between sexy and sexually exploitive.

Harmful or exploitive images or messages depict people as sexual objects, valuable primarily as things for others' use.

Healthy images present sexuality with a sense of caring, connectedness, and sexual respect. It suggests intimacy as one part of a relationship, rather than all of it.

**Admittedly, there is a vast spectrum of sexual content, and lines are difficult to draw.**

- Is Miley Cyrus (Disney's Hannah Montana) pole dancing at the MTV Teen Music awards just showing some new moves or role-modeling objectified behavior?
- Is it significant that the main character in the new kids' movie "Hop" stops to visit Hugh Hefner at the Playboy Mansion on his journey to becoming the Easter bunny?
- Do children's push-up bras or "Who needs a credit card?" underwear cross a line?

## ⇒ The constant pushing of boundaries has changed our collective sense of what is acceptable.

Attractive → Sexy → Objectified → Pornified

## ⇒ This is the new normal's message:

*Sexual exploitation is just part of life.*

*If you are a woman, you should strive to be seen as a sexual object and treated as such.*

*If you are a man, you are to act as if a woman's only worth to you is the sexual encounter she can provide, or you can take.*

It is a message that, when we say it out loud, we soundly reject.

**Sexual violence is not inevitable. It is preventable.**



Thank you for your help pushing back against the pervasiveness of these toxic messages.

<sup>1,2,3</sup> Report of the American Psychological Association Task Force on the Sexualization of Girls. 2007. pp. 22-25.

<sup>4</sup> Harms of Pornography Exposure Among Children & Young People. Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health & Society.

<sup>5</sup> Chandra et al Longitudinal Survey of Youth, *Pediatrics* 122, No. 5, 2008, pp. 1047-1054. Children's Hospital Boston Study, presented at the Pediatric Academic Societies, May 4, 2009.

<sup>6</sup> Shane W. Kraus, Brenda Russell. Early sexual experiences: the role of internet access and sexually explicit material. *Cyber Psychology & Behavior*. April 2008, 11 (2): 162-168.

<sup>7</sup> Gallese, V., Fadiga, L., Fogassi, L., and Rizzolatti, G. (1996). Action recognition in the premotor cortex. *Brain*, 119, 593-609.

<sup>8</sup> Bonino, S., Ciairano, S., Rabaglietti, E. & Cattelino, E. (2006). Use of pornography and self-reported engagement in sexual violence among adolescents. *European Journal of Developmental Psychology*, 3(3), 265-268. Brown, J., & L'Engle, K. (2009). X-Rated: Sexual attitudes and behaviors associated with U.S. early adolescents' exposure to sexually explicit media. *Communication Research*, 36(1), 129-151. Flood, M. (2009). The harms of pornography exposure among children and young people. *Child Abuse Review*, 18, 384-400.

<sup>9</sup> Adolescent Girls in the United States Sex Trade: Tracking Study Results for August, 2010. Prepared by The Schapiro Group.

<sup>10</sup> Normalization of Sexual Harm Webinar, Cordelia Anderson & Dr. Sharon Cooper, 2006, [www.cordeliaanderson.com](http://www.cordeliaanderson.com).

# THE ROLE OF PORNOGRAPHY:

## Commercial Sexual Exploitation & Trafficking on Film

### 1. Facilitates the GROOMING process

- a. *Pornography is typically a child's first form of sex education.*
  - i. Average age a child is first exposed to porn is age 8-11.
- b. *Pornography normalizes sexual violence and exploitation.*
  - i. Close to half (46%) of adolescents age 13-25 see nothing wrong with, "sexual acts that may be forced or painful (Barna Group, 2016)."
  - ii. Porn viewers are more likely to believe that women desire rape or that rape is their fault.
  - iii. One in five pornographic images are of children (child sexual abuse images/videos), and there is a large market for rape and incest porn.
- c. *Pornography constructs sexuality in a way that eroticizes power inequality (especially between men and women).*
  - i. Porn affects the forming of a person's sexual template.
    1. Porn users eventually may *only* be aroused by porn or *only* aroused by violent or degrading sex acts with a partner.
    2. Girls may be sexualized early, may be expected to act like porn stars (especially when dating or having sex), or believe they will be valued most through their sexual appeal and by pleasing men.
    3. Boys may develop attitudes of objectification, may believe that girls/women are only valuable for sexual use, and porn may groom boys into perpetrators of sexual violence.

- ii. Nearly 90% of the most popular porn scenes contain physical violence (Bridges, 2010).
  - 1. Violence and degradation in porn are not the exception to the rule, they *are* the rule.
    - a. Common forms of violence: choking, gagging, hitting, drowning, bondage, electrocution, gang-rape, multiple penetrations by multiple men at one time, and torture
    - b. Common forms of degradation: verbal abuse, humiliating acts, ejaculation on woman's face, urination and defecation on woman's body and in mouth
- d. *Pornography is used as a training tool for prostituted people.*
  - i. Traffickers monopolize the environment and media of victims to normalize the sex trade.
  - ii. Traffickers use pornography as "training videos" to demonstrate what sex acts victims will be expected to perform on commercial sex buyers.

## **2. Pornography drives and sustains DEMAND**

- a. *Pornography normalizes the purchasing and consumption of women.*
- b. *Because of sexual entitlement and a high demand by men for commercial sex, people are exploited in the sex trade.*
  - i. At least 15-20% U.S. men admit to renting a prostituted person (1 in 5 men).
- c. *Commercial sex buyers rent prostituted women to imitate porn scenes.*
  - i. 80% of prostituted women said commercial sex buyers showed them porn to "illustrate" the acts buyers want them to perform (Malarek, 2009).

## **3. Pornography facilitates EXPLOITATION.**

- a. *Pornography, by definition, is trafficking (a third party facilitating the prostitution of another) on film.*
- b. *Many victims are specifically trafficked into the porn industry, others are filmed as part of their exploitation.*
- c. *Sexual images/videos or filmed rape and exploitation are used to blackmail people into entering the sex trade (sextortion).*