

Choices Topic for February: Pornography & Healthy Relationships

Can pornography become addictive? Yes, viewing pornography acts on the same part of the brain as drugs and alcohol. Excessive viewing can “re-wire” the brain to REQUIRE higher-and-higher levels of stimulation, leading to addiction.

- Viewing pornography excessively can arrest the development of the adolescent brain.
- Adolescents with higher degrees of social interaction and bonding are NOT as likely to watch pornography.
- Viewing *decreases*, as self-confidence *increases*.
- Adolescents may develop: unrealistic attitudes about sexuality, distorted views of relationships, decreased belief that sex is affectionate and relational.
- For many teens pornography is used as a PRIMARY source of sex education.

Is pornography viewing more dangerous today than in the past? YES! Adolescents no longer need to rely on imagination. The availability of high-speed internet (HSI) can artificially stimulate (like drugs) the brain with massive amounts of dopamine...all controlled by the user and clicks of a mouse. Before HSI, this wasn't possible. The brain can become “de-sensitized,” leading to unsatisfactory “real-life” relationships.

- A recent Japanese survey reported 36% of 16-19 year-olds had *no interest* in sex. None.
- 25% of newly diagnosed cases of erectile dysfunction are young men.
- What can parents do? Start a conversation with your kids. Create Limits. Establish expectations and consequences. External and internal monitoring. Educate kids on real dangers of pornography.

Discussion Questions:

Students:

- What are your values and feelings about pornography?
- You find yourself feeling curious. What do you do?
- A friend confides in you that he/she is viewing pornography daily. What do you do?
- What are healthy boundaries around pornography?
- A classmate is looking at pornographic material and keeps trying to get you to look at it. How would you feel? What would you do?
- Do you think pornographic videos represent real life?



Faculty, Staff, and Parents:

- How do you monitor your child's internet use?
- What are your family's values around pornography? Family code?
- What are your expectations about your child's use? Are expectations and consequences crystal clear to your child?
- You notice on your home computer that pornographic websites have been visited. What do you do?

Mesch, G. S. (2009). Social bonds and Internet pornographic exposure among adolescents. *Journal of Adolescence*, 32, 601–618. Tsitsika, A., Critselis, E., Kormas, D., Konstantoulaki, E., Constantopoulos, A., & Kafetzis, D. (2009). Adolescent pornographic Internet site use: A multivariate regression analysis of the predictive factors of use and psychosocial implications. *CyberPsychology and Behavior*, 12, 545–550