

## Guarding Against Pornography

### The Problem

"Never before in the history of telecommunications media in the United States, has so much indecent (and obscene) material, been so easily accessible by so many minors, in so many American homes with so few restrictions."

- U.S. Department of Justice

Research reveals many systemic effects of Internet pornography that are undermining an already vulnerable culture of marriage and family. Even more disturbing is the fact that the first Internet generations have not reached full maturity, so the upper limits of this impact have yet to be realized"

- Jill Manning, Sociologist

### **Porn and Your Teens**

Did you know...

9 out of 10 boys are *exposed to pornography before the age of 18.*

*The first exposure to pornography among men is 12 years old, on average (Stats vary on this, some say 11 and it is now thought to be 8).*

*71% of teens hide online behavior from their parents.*

*28% of 16-17 year olds have been unintentionally exposed to porn online.*

*20% of 16-year-olds and 30% of 17-year-olds have received a sext.*

*On average...*

*6 out of 10 girls are exposed to pornography before the age of 18.*

*15% of boys and 9% of girls have seen child pornography.*

*32% of boys and 18% of girls have seen bestiality online.*

*39% of boys and 23% of girls have seen sexual bondage online.*

*83% of boys and 57% of girls have seen group sex online.*

69% of boys and 55% of girls *have seen same-sex intercourse online.*

### **Pornography Statistics**

- Porn Sites Get More Visitors Each Month Than Netflix, Amazon And Twitter Combined.
- 30% of the Internet industry is pornography.
- Mobile porn is expected to reach \$2.8 billion by 2015.
- The United States is the largest producer and exporter of hard core pornographic DVDs and web material, followed by Germany.
- A Google Trends analysis indicates that searches for "Teen Porn" have more than tripled between 2005-2013. Total searches for teen-related porn reached an estimated 500,000 daily in March 2011— one-third of total daily searches for pornographic web sites.
- Of the 304 scenes analyzed, 88.2% contained physical aggression, principally spanking, gagging, and slapping, while 48.7% of scenes contained verbal aggression, primarily name-calling. Perpetrators of aggression were usually male, whereas targets of aggression were overwhelmingly female.
- A Google search for 'bestiality' generated 2.7 million returns.
- Youth who look at violent x-rated material are six times more likely to report forcing someone to do something sexual online or in-person versus youth not exposed to x-rated material.
  - Middle-school aged boys who view X-rated content are almost three times more likely to report oral sex and sexual intercourse than boys who do not use sexually explicit material
  - A study in the southeastern U.S. found that 53 percent of boys and 28 percent of girls (ages 12-15) reported use of sexually explicit media. The Internet was the most popular forum for viewing.
  - The words "sex" and "porn" rank fourth and sixth among the top ten most popular search terms.
  - Roughly two-thirds (67 percent) of young men and one-half (49 percent) of young women agree that viewing pornography is acceptable.
  - Nearly 9 out of 10 (87 percent) young men and 1 out of 3 (31 percent) young women report using pornography.
  - Experts have warned that the rise in the viewing of pornography was implicated in a variety of problems, including a rise in the levels of STDs and teenage pregnancies. Additionally, males aged between 12 and 17 who regularly

viewed pornography had sex at an earlier stage in life and were more likely to initiate oral sex, apparently imitating what they had seen.

- Internet pornography was blamed for a 20 percent increase in sexual attacks by children over three years.
- One out of three youth who viewed pornography, viewed the pornography intentionally.
- Seven out of ten youth have accidentally come across pornography online.
- Nearly 80 percent of unwanted exposure to pornography is taking place in the home (79 percent occurs in the home; 9 percent occurs at school; 7 percent other/unknown; 5 percent at a friend's home).
- Kids experience unwanted exposure to sexual material via:
  - o A link came up as a result of an innocent word search (40 percent)
  - o Clicking on a link in another site (17 percent)
  - o A pop-up (14 percent)
  - o Other (13 percent)
  - o Misspelled web address (12 percent)
  - o Don't know (4 percent)
  - o Pictures involving animals or other strange things (10 percent)
- Type of material youth encounter when unwanted exposure to pornography occurs:
  - o Naked people (86 percent)
  - o People having sex (37 percent)
  - o Violent pictures (13 percent)
- Every second...
- o \$3,075.64 is being spent on pornography
- o 28,258 Internet viewers are viewing pornography
- o 372 Internet users are typing adult search terms into search engines (Internet Filter Review, 2006)
- Every 39 minutes, a new pornographic video is made in the United States. (Internet Filter Review, 2006)
- Nearly 74 percent of pornography websites surveyed display adult content on their homepage (accessible to anyone) before asking if the viewers are of legal age. [1]
- American children begin consuming hardcore pornography at an average age of 11
- Four out of five 16 year-olds regularly access pornography online
- The pornography industry is a \$97 billion business worldwide

- The pornography industry is a \$13 billion industry in the United States.
- Internet pornography in the United States is a \$3 billion industry
- A recent content analysis of the 50 best-selling adult videos revealed that across all scenes:
  - o 3,376 verbal and/or physically aggressive acts were observed.
  - o On average, scenes had 11.52 acts of either verbal or physical aggression, ranging from none to 128.
  - o 48 percent of the 304 scenes analyzed contained verbal aggression, while more than 88 percent showed physical aggression.
  - o 72 percent of aggressive acts were perpetrated by men.
  - o 94 percent of aggressive acts were committed against women. (Bridges, A., Wosnitzer, R., Scharrer, E., Sun, C., & Liberman, R. (in press). Aggression and sexual behavior in best-selling pornography: A content analysis update. *Violence Against Women*.)
- Findings from the Youth Internet Safety Survey indicate that 15% of 12-17 year olds have purposefully looked at x-rated material online.
- Data from the PEW Internet and American Life Project suggest that 70% of 15-17 year old internet users accidentally view pornography "very" or "Somewhat" often.
- Data from the PEW Internet and American Life Project suggest that 70% of 15-17 year old internet users accidentally view pornography "very" or "Somewhat" often.

### **Porn Stats In Zimbabwe**

1. There is an average of over 80 000 porn requests in Zimbabwe a day between the times of 6am and 1am.
2. The above equates to 4200 requests per hour or 70 requests per minute or just over 1 request per second.
3. Porn sites are visited from work networks during working hours as regularly as they are visited from homes after hours.
4. Porn sites although mostly "free" infect your device (laptop, phone, tablet, computer) with software which extracts information for use by advertisers and hackers. Basically the site is free but they will make their money by taking your information ... some of which has commercial value.

## **Porn Stats**

### **Church Porn Statistics**

According to a survey conducted by the Barna Group in the U.S. in 2014:

64% of self-identified Christian men and 15% of self-identified Christian women view pornography at least once a month (compared to 65% of non-Christian men and 30% of non-Christian women).

37% of Christian men and 7% of Christian women view pornography at least several times a week (compared to 42% of non-Christian men and 11% of non-Christian women).

39% of Christian men and 13% of Christian women say they believe their use of pornography is "excessive" (compared to 19% of non-Christian men and 12% of non-Christian women).

21% of Christian men and 2% of Christian women say they think they might be "addicted" to pornography or aren't sure if they are (compared to 10% of non-Christian men and 4% of non-Christian women).

28% of Christian men and 11% of Christian women say they were first exposed to pornography before the age of 12 (compared to 23% of non-Christian men and 24% of non-Christian women).

### **What is Pornography?**

(Video Clip)

Pornography can be thought of as all sexually explicit material intended primarily to arouse the reader, viewer, or listener. The United States Supreme Court has said that there are four categories of pornography that can be determined illegal, which include: indecency, material harmful to minors, obscenity, and child pornography.

A) Indecent material includes messages or pictures on telephone, radio, or broadcast TV that are patently offensive descriptions or depictions of sexual or excretory organs or activities. It is often referred to as "sexual nudity" and "dirty words."

B) Material harmful to minors (HTM ) represents nudity or sex that has prurient appeal for minors, is offensive and unsuitable for minors, and lacks serious value for minors. There are "harmful to minors" laws in every state.

C) Obscenity ("hard-core pornography") is graphic material that focuses on sex and/or sexual violence. It includes close-ups of graphic sex acts, lewd exhibition of the genitals, and deviant activities such as group sex, bestiality, torture, incest, and excretory functions.

D) Child pornography is material that visually depicts children under the age of 18 engaged in actual or simulated sexual activity, including lewd exhibition of the genitals.

### **How do Children end up viewing pornography?**

How do Pornographers Target Kids?

The pornography industry often uses many different marketing tactics to attract viewers and lure kids, and their marketing models create no incentive to distinguish between child and adult traffic. In fact, most pornography sites do not request age verification of their visitors and even offer free samples of pornographic images. Some of the "responsible" pornography sites include an entry page that warns viewers to only enter if they are over 18, but in reality, anyone can gain access by simply clicking on a link that reads, for example, "I am 18 years or older."

(Video Clip)

### **Accidental Access**

#### **Free Teaser Images**

Pictures and/or streaming videos posted on the home page of a pornographic site to entice users, including:

- Sexual activity of every form (i.e., sexual intercourse, masturbation, bisexual interactions, group sex, oral sex, fetishes)
- Cybersex and cyberchats with "live" feeds (i.e., user can view and/or interact in real time with porn star)
- Site "tours" (i.e., walks user through a virtual table of contents of pictures, videos, and pornographic experiences available)

#### **Innocent Word Searches**

Pornographic website operators use popular terms or innocent words that may have little or nothing to do with the content they display to increase traffic to pornographic sites.

### **Misspelled Words**

#### **Stealth Sites**

Online pornographers often purchase "Stealth URLs." These are sites with web addresses that are close in name to the "legitimate" site.

### **Cartoon Characters and Child Icons**

#### **Pop-ups & Ad Banners**

Many popular sites and social networking spaces have advertising/banner space for purchase. Pornographers often purchase this space hoping to draw young users to their sites.

#### **Free Flash Games**

A simple, interactive game, usually integrated into a website of similar games that can be played quickly, with little learning curve and no need to save the game's progress. Popular genres include puzzle games, word games, card games, and uncomplicated animated games.

#### **E-mail Spam ("junk e-mail")**

#### **Mousetrapping**

This crafty tech-trick prevents user from escaping a pornographic site.

#### **Looping**

A seemingly never-ending stream of pornographic pop-ups to the computer screen. The only way to stop the pop-ups is to shut down the computer.

#### **Porn-Napping**

Pornographers purchase expired domain names so what was once a legitimate web address for a benign company or site now takes users to a pornographic site (see Stealth Sites).

### **What is wrong with Pornography?**

If we don't believe pornography is that bad or harmful we will not actively resist or fight against it! At the end of this presentation I am going to ask Neil Padmore to talk a little about practical ways we can safeguard our use of the

internet, but I believe no matter how cautious we are the chances of our children, or for that matter, we ourselves, being exposed to pornography are still very high. The internal guards are something we need to focus on far more as families.

### **The Goal**

We want to be intentional as parents. It's our privilege and responsibility to educate them about sexuality. We want to begin early, and continue throughout their time with us in their home.

The ultimate goal for our child's sexuality is that they will be able to see the dynamic interplay between sexuality and spirituality. As Christians, we want to help them understand, for example, that sexual intercourse is an act of love shared between a husband and wife. This sacred act symbolizes the spiritual union that will occur between Christ and His bride, the Church, upon His return to earth. We hope our sons will see themselves as a type of Christ as they relate to their wives, and that our daughters will see themselves as a type of the Church as they relate to their husbands. What we model today in our marriages will likely reproduce itself in our children's marriages.

By helping our children to see the big picture about the sanctity of sex, we are better prepared to confront the problem of pornography when and if it occurs in our children's lives.

The departure point for this is recognising and believing that pornography is deadly, destructive, addictive and extremely dangerous! (Crocodiles in Kariba).

So how is pornography harmful?

### **Pornography:**

- Has a negative impact on the emotional and mental health of children.
- Destroys Marriages and families.

**An Open Letter to the Dad Looking at Porn - [By Luke Geraty](#)**

Dear Dad,

I want to let you know first of all that I love you and forgive you for what this has done in my life. I also wanted to let you know exactly what your porn use has done to my life. You may think that this effects only you, or even your and mom's relationships. But it has had a profound impact on me and all of my siblings as well.

I found your porn on the computer somewhere around the age of 12 or so, just when I was starting to become a young woman. First of all, it seemed very hypocritical to me that you were trying to teach me the value of what to let into my mind in terms of movies, yet here you were entertaining your mind with this junk on a regular basis. Your talks to me about being careful with what I watched meant virtually nothing.

Because of pornography, I was aware that mom was not the only woman you were looking at. I became acutely aware of your wandering eye when we were out and about. This taught me that all men have a wandering eye and can't be trusted. I learned to distrust and even dislike men for the way they perceived women in this way.

As far as modesty goes, you tried to talk with me about how my dress affects those around me and how I should value myself for what I am on the inside. Your actions however told me that I would only ever truly be beautiful and accepted if I looked like the women on magazine covers or in porn. Your talks with me meant nothing and in fact, just made me angry

As I grew older, I only had this message reinforced by the culture we live in. That beauty is something that can only be achieved if you look like "them". I also learned to trust you less and less as what you told me didn't line up with what you did. I wondered more and more if I would ever find a man who would accept me and love me for me and not just a pretty face.

When I had friends over, I wondered how you perceived them. Did you see them as my friends, or did you see them as a pretty face in one of your fantasies? No girl should ever have to wonder that about the man who is supposed to be protecting her and other women in her life.

I did meet a man. One of the first things I asked him about was his struggle with pornography. I'm thankful to God that it is something that hasn't had a grip on his life. We still have had struggles because of the deep-rooted distrust in my heart for men. Yes, your porn watching has affected my relationship with my husband years later.

If I could tell you one thing, it would be this: Porn didn't just affect your life; it affected everyone around you in ways I don't think you can ever realize. It still

affects me to this day as I realize the hold that it has on our society. I dread the day when I have to talk with my sweet little boy about pornography and its far-reaching greedy hands. When I tell him about how pornography, like most sins, affects far more than just us.

Like, I said, I have forgiven you. I am so thankful for the work that God has done in my life in this area. It is an area that I still struggle with from time to time, but I am thankful for God's grace and also my husband's. I do pray that you are past this and that the many men who struggle with this will have their eyes opened.

Love, Your Daughter

- Fosters sexual "mis-education". Creates a warped understanding of the place and purpose of sex. Romans 1:21 - 32  
"21For although they knew God, they did not honour Him as God, or give thanks to Him, but they became futile in their thinking and their foolish hearts were darkened. 22Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things. 24Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonouring of their bodies among themselves, 25because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen. 26For this reason God gave them up to dishonourable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; //27and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error. 28And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done. 29They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips, 30slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, 31foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. 32Though they know God's righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them."
- Destroys and is a counterfeit for erotic love and intimacy. (Biblical references for nudity).
- Diminishes sexual satisfaction
- Teaches "Adult Entertainment" is normal and desirable

- Desensitizes the viewer and increases an appetite for more deviant, bizarre, or violent types of pornography
- Contains images that can never be erased
- Facilitates sexual aggression
- Can lead to objectification (obsessive fetishes over body parts and the rating of women by size and shape)

Can lead to "acting out" Children often imitate what they've seen, read, or heard. When children watch cowboys and Indians, they want to go play cowboys and Indians. When children watch Superman, they pretend to be action heroes. When kids watch sex, it's no surprise they want to act out sexually. Some studies suggest that exposure to pornography can prompt kids to act out sexually against younger, smaller, and more vulnerable children.

- Can lead to increased sexual callousness toward women
- Can cause some to trivialize rape as a criminal offense

**Facilitates the sex slave trade and the abuse of human beings.**

**Is addictive**

The Drug of the new Millennium

### ***Brain Imaging Studies***

During certain critical periods of childhood, a child's brain is being programmed for sexual orientation. Studies have shown that the prefrontal part of the brain that controls common sense, judgment, and emotion is not mature until approximately 21 years of age. Exposure to healthy sexual norms and attitudes during this critical period can result in the child developing a healthy sexual orientation. In contrast, if there is exposure to pornography during this period, thoughts of sexual deviance may become imprinted on the child's "hard drive" and become a permanent part of his or her sexual orientation.

*"The imprinting can become at times so strong that the individual can never gain satisfaction by giving--they always want to be taking. And its never satisfying, as it was perhaps at one time along the way, because it requires more and more of the stimulus to keep up with their sexual desires."*

— W. Dean Belnap, M.D., Pediatrician and Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist

## ***Compulsive Habituation***

In her report before Congress, Dr. Jill Manning, a marriage and family therapist who specializes in research and clinical work related to pornography and problematic sexual behaviour, noted that studies show when a child or adolescent encounters Internet pornography, it can have lasting negative or even traumatic effects on the child's sense of security and sexuality; that it promotes the belief that superior sexual satisfaction is attainable without having affection for one's partner, thereby reinforcing the commoditization of sex and the objectification of humans; and that children who have been exposed have an increased risk for developing sexual compulsions and addictive behaviour.

Pornography is not only addictive to children, but new research shows that it is as addictive as any psychoactive drug.

(Video Clip - How Porn affects the brain)

## **Warning Signs That a Child May Be Viewing Pornography**

Experts in the field of childhood sexual abuse report that any premature sexual activity in children always suggests two possible stimulants: experience and exposure.

**Your child may be viewing pornography if you discover the following:**

- An unusual curiosity about sexuality for his or her age
- Signs of premature sexual activity
- Increased pop-ups or inappropriate e-mails on your computer
- Computer screen changes quickly when you walk into a room
- Noticeable changes in behavior, including increased secretiveness or defensiveness
- Unusual or unexplained credit card charges

**My Child Has Viewed Porn, Now What? 5 SMART Tips for Parents**

If you discover your child has already viewed Internet pornography, *the way you respond can make a big difference*. It's worth the effort to help keep your kids safe online by planning for an occurrence that has become all too common.

**TIP:** Explaining that pornography exposure happens to other children as well (and may be perpetrated by friends and family members) helps kids feel *more comfortable confiding* in their parents about their own experience.

### **How you find out matters**

There are two different porn discovery scenarios which evoke strong but different emotions from parents:

1. You find out your child has been viewing porn in secret, or
2. Your child accidentally views pornography and tells you (either voluntarily or when you ask)

### **Be SMART!**

How do you respond when you find out your child has viewed pornography? Just be SMART!

- **Stay calm**
- **Make a plan**
- **Assist your kids to sort out their feelings**
- **Regularly check in with your kids**
- **Train your family**

### **Stay calm**

You've just found Internet searches for porn on a mobile device your child uses. Or maybe on the family computer. Or maybe your child is that rare bird who tells you soon after an unwanted exposure happens.

Of course, you feel anything but calm. Especially if you see some of the graphic and illicit images they've just been exposed to. (Or you find out their cousin was the one who exposed them.) Take a deep breath and go to your happy place.

### **TWO TIPS for Keeping Your Cool**

After discovering a child's exposure to porn, try to:

1. Delay reacting
2. Take time to deal with your own emotions first

## Delay Reacting

It's understandable that parents are devastated when they find their child has been looking at pornography. Even if the child came across it accidentally (as a victim of the predatory porn industry), you may feel guilty because you couldn't protect them. Or angry. Or betrayed. Or all of the above.

### **Deal with Your Own Emotions Before You Deal with Your Child**

Take the time you need to sort out your feelings. If you've discovered porn on a device your child uses, there's no reason you have to confront your child immediately.

Talk to your spouse or a close family member or friend. Or get in your car and talk to yourself! Many of us process our feelings better when we can hear ourselves talk. (Or go to that tropical happy place!)

Try to remember two facts:

- The *porn* is the enemy. You can hate the porn.
- You *love* your child. You and your child are on the **same team**.

## Make a Plan

Before you talk with your child about their exposure to pornography, make a plan about what you want to accomplish. What are your ultimate goals? Some of them might be:

- To continue building a close relationship with your child
- To provide a safe environment for them to tell you what they saw and ask questions
- To come up with some mutual solutions for keeping your child safe

Jeffrey J. Ford, a Marriage and Family Licensed Therapist who specializes in pornography addiction, **explains** that "much of the time initial disclosure begins the process of getting the whole story, and is rarely the whole story!" I know of one young man who initially said he had looked at porn only five times. His mom was relieved, but later found out that he had been viewing porn regularly for years.

Consider ways to get your child to open up and answer the following questions.

- How much pornography have they seen?
- How often have they viewed it?
- How did they find it? Did someone else show it to them?
- Which devices have they used to view it?
- What types of pornography have they viewed?

- Did they masturbate when they were viewing it? (This brings it to a higher level of involvement. Masturbating to pornography builds and solidifies a neurological pathway in the brain.)

Realize, you may not get all of these questions answered in one session. Be patient and you'll ultimately end up getting more information as your child feels safe trusting you with his/her answers.

### **Punishment or Opportunity?**

"By focusing only on setting limits and giving punishments, we can miss a crucial opportunity to help deal with the pornography he saw and to influence the lessons he is learning. This response also teaches our children that it's not safe to talk to us about sexual issues."

It may be that that in the long-run it's more helpful to focus on the reasons your child was looking at pornography, instead of doling out a punishment.

As you are planning your response to your child's porn exposure, think about:

- The information you want to discover
- How you are going to deal with the source of the pornography exposure (talk to the perpetrator's parents, advise the school, tighten filters etc)
- How you are going to involve your child in mutual solutions ("How can we help you to protect yourself from seeing these harmful and upsetting pictures?")

### **SMART Parents Assist Kids to Sort Out Confused Feelings**

#### **Porn is Tricky!**

Pornography is tricky because it evokes two conflicting feelings at the same time. Kids may feel:

1. A **pleasurable physical response** at the same time they feel
2. Repulsed, horrified and **upset emotionally**.

**NOTE:** According to Mark B. Kastleman, author of *The Drug of the New Millennium*, combining sex with violence produces a bigger rush of dopamine in the brain, which only adds to the addictive nature of porn. That's why pornography has become so violent.

Eventually, if a child is left to themselves to figure it all out, they may be enticed to seek out even more porn, despite and maybe even because of its shocking nature. In order to keep kids safe online, we need to help them understand their feelings.

### 3 Steps to Helping Kids Sort Out Their Feelings

1. **Ask: How did your body feel?** Ford advises parents to recognize that pornography arouses sexual feelings, which *physically* feel good. Acknowledging that sexual arousal feels good will avoid shaming your child about having normal sexual feelings.

2. **Ask: How did you feel emotionally?** Kids often say they feel sick to their stomach or "yukky" after seeing pornography. This is confusing. How can my body feel good but my emotions feel so bad at the same time? You can explain to them that pornography is tricky because it creates two different feelings at the same time.

3. **Explain that there is an appropriate time to experience sexual feelings.** Teach them that both their bodies and their emotions can feel good when they grow up and find someone they love and trust. Sexual feelings are good and normal and designed to bring two people together and keep them together in a committed and loving relationship like marriage.

Helping kids **sort out and understand their feelings** about the explicit images they've seen is **critical in assisting their thinking brain to reject pornography**. Acknowledging that their feeling brain is curious about seeing naked people keeps the shame factor to a minimum.

Depending on the type of pornography your child has seen, you may also want to reaffirm that real sex is **not about hurting another person**, but it's about showing kindness and affection to someone they love and are committed to.

### SMART Parents Regularly Check In with Kids about Internet Safety

(Empowering parents video)

It would be much easier if you could have ONE talk about the harmful effects of porn and be done with it? But that could actually makes things worse.

- **Kids need additional age-appropriate information** about online safety as they mature and find themselves in new and different social and media situations.

- **Kids need continual encouragement to reject porn** when their peers may be making other choices.
- **Kids need to be reminded that you are open to talking with them** about the online and social media challenges they face.
- **Kids may feel confused and overwhelmed by a one-time, never-mentioned again porn talk.** Confused kids may seek out answers from their peers or search online if they feel you're not willing to answer their questions as they come up. Too little info can be a dangerous thing as illustrated in the story below.

### **Four Tips to Encourage Regular Conversations**

No one can learn everything all at once, so here are four things you can do to incrementally talk to kids about pornography and keep the conversation going:

1. **Be open.** Communicate the message that **you are open to answer any questions** your kids may have about pornography and that **you want them to ask you.**
2. **Make yourself the expert in your kids' eyes on the topics of sex and the dangers of pornography.** Explain to your kids that **the Internet is not a safe place to ask questions about sex.** If you've read *Good Pictures Bad Pictures* with them, they'll understand how Internet pornography can trap them into an addiction.
3. **Find natural ways to check-in** on a regular basis. Maybe you could begin by mentioning something *you* saw ("Today I was watching a TV show and I turned it off because...") and then ask if they have been recently exposed to anything inappropriate or pornographic.
4. **Plan regular *Media Safety Nights*** to discuss various topics related to pornography, addiction and Internet safety. (Read the story below to see why these can be so important!) **Make them short and serve their favourite treats!**

## Why Good Kids Are Pulled Into Porn

1. Children are naturally curious.

Curiosity has an especially powerful role in childhood. Curiosity drives learning. Parents discover that curious children want to see, smell, touch, taste, and listen to new things. Humans crave and are hard-wired for novelty of all kinds, but most especially physical novelty (including sexual) experiences. **It's normal for kids to be curious about looking at both male and female naked bodies.**

2. All people, including children, are biologically designed to be drawn to sexualized images.

When children are exposed to sexual images or media they are naturally intrigued and can become excited, even aroused. This does not mean there is something wrong with them. In fact, it indicates that their bodies and brains are responding in a manner consistent with their human design.

Pornography elicits within children a premature stimulation of sexual feelings. In other words, though sexual feelings typically awaken during puberty, pornography exposure often causes this aspect of human development to activate too early. Young kids, lacking sufficient life experience and brain maturity, don't understand these newly awakened and intense sexual feelings and have difficulty coping with them.

The end result is that a child will feel drawn to pornography and not know why. The child may or may not like seeing porn initially; nevertheless, the child will often feel an inner pull towards it.

It's important to understand that this pull is as *biologically driven as the human preference for sweet foods*. Virtually all of us like something sweet. Similarly, there is an aspect in all of us (yes, even children!) that innately responds to sexual images of some kind.

3. Pornography produces powerful chemicals that reinforce a child's innate attraction to it.

Besides activating the sexual template too early, porn can activate it too much. This is because pornography is a **supernormal stimulus**.

What does that mean?

Humans are hard-wired to be interested in male and female bodies, but under normal circumstances we aren't exposed to *endless numbers of people willing to undress and perform sex acts in front of us the moment we first meet!*

This "unnatural" sexual stimulus causes the brain to release an "unnatural" (unusually high) dose of a chemical called dopamine, often called the *molecule of motivation*. Author and behavioural scientist, Dr. Susan Weinschenk explains: "The latest research shows that dopamine causes *seeking* behaviour. Dopamine causes us to want, desire, seek out, and search. It increases our general level of arousal and our goal-directed behaviour."

When a child sees porn, that child's brain will begin to release large amounts of dopamine, creating a *drive for more*, even in a child who did not like seeing pornography in the first place.

Unfortunately, with repeated exposure, porn can become strongly woven into the tapestry of a young person's developing sexual template. Eventually, porn might convince the brain that masturbation in front of a screen is more rewarding and even more normal than sexual experiences within a real, committed relationship.

### It's Normal to Be Enticed by Porn

Hopefully, you can see why good, healthy, and normal children are vulnerable to porn. When children become victims of pornography, they are merely *responding naturally* to an *unnatural or supernormal stimulus*. In fact, asking children to reject porn is asking them to have a *biologically unnatural* response to this supernormal stimulus.

Falling prey to porn's lure is our human default setting.

### Things to know about the Modern Teenage and Tweenage Worlds

1. **Kids are much more comfortable having their picture taken** than I was as a teenager. For them, taking "selfies" and photos of others is as second nature as getting up to answer a phone (attached to the wall) was for me.
2. **Many teens don't view sexting as risky** because it's so common. They know teens who sext and haven't suffered any negative consequences.
3. **Often girls feel like they must compete with porn** or they might lose their boyfriend. For many kids, it's an important form of social currency. Jennifer Lawrence has exacerbated this fear by suggesting to girls, "Your Boyfriend Is Going To Look At Porn Or He's Going To Look At You."

## What Kids Need to Know About Sharing Nude and Semi-Nude Photos

1. **Any nude photo of a minor (no matter who takes the picture) may be considered child pornography** and anyone found possessing it **may be subject to prosecution**. Parents, who own their child's phone, can be prosecuted for possession of child pornography, a felony offence.
2. **Sharing nude photos may have serious psychological consequences**, with some therapists warning that the psychological scars of sexting are akin to the post-traumatic stress of rape.

**Nothing on the internet is private. Everything on the internet is permanent.** Once a digital photo is taken and is transmitted via the Internet to any type of digital storage, it can be accessible to hackers. Nothing is actually deleted and "***no photo or video is truly temporary, even on Snapchat.***" The internet is archived and tools, such as the **WayBackMachine**, allow people to see web pages as they appeared in the past. Besides this, apps and third party websites whose purpose is to save photos **can be hacked**