

NAVIGATING PORNOGRAPHY



The problem

- The average age that a young person is first exposed to pornography is 11.
- Research found that 88.2% of online pornographic films showed physical aggression, with 94.4% of it directed towards women.
- A study of 1000 Victorians 15-29 years found that 100% of young men and 81% of young women had seen porn.
- Many young people are exposed without seeking out the content themselves. An unprotected home internet leaves young people with a higher chance of early exposure.

Many parents find themselves concerned about the topic of pornography in relation to the impact on their child. Pornography is different to the playboy centrefold images that drove the pornography industry 20 years ago. These days young people can easily find themselves exposed to hard-core, violent, degrading pornography which can affect young people in significantly negative ways.

“Pornography is a biologically addictive medium that alters the brain reward and motivation systems in a negative way” Dr Donald L. Hilton, Jr., MD, FAANS

Discuss

Discuss with your son and daughter some of the negative impacts that pornography can have on them. Discuss potential ways it may affect their long-term relationships, understanding of sex and intimacy, and their views of healthy and respectful relationships. Despite the most protected home environment, exposure to pornography is inevitable.

First Exposure: 3 Main Ways

1. Someone shows them (or text them) an image
2. They have a pornographic image pop on their screen while online (most often, when doing homework)
3. They hear an unknown terminology from a friend and instead of asking someone it's meaning they Google it.

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Turning taboo topics into everyday conversations

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How is it accessed?

- Most commonly it is accessed through a personal device (smart phone, tablet, or laptop)
- Received as a text
- Passed to a friend on a hard drive or USB stick
- Viewed on many apps
- Showed to your child by others
- On public computers or outside of your home

Put a plan in place around the type of access to devices and computers you would like your child to have. This can not only protect your child from the often damaging effects of pornography, but can also help in protecting your child from online bullying and many body image issues that can stem from long hours of unsupervised internet usage.

Some of the guidelines that may help

- Establish device free zones (ie. Bedrooms)
- Establish device free times
- Turn the Wi-Fi off at night
- Install a device manager that puts restriction on individual devices from the Wi-Fi - we recommend **www.opendns.com**

“A young person can now access more sexual content in one night, than one of their ancestors could in multiple life times.”

Conversation is key

Discussion of these topics with your children is crucial. Part of the protective role that parents play in this area is establishing healthy open lines of communication with their child around this topic.

- Set yourself up as a place where your child would come if they have questions, concerns or are facing issues around this topic.
- Help your child develop a thought process around their personal belief systems around this topic.
- Don't have “The Talk” with them; build an environment where short frequent conversations on these topics happen consistently in your family.
- Explain that at some point they will be shown or see pornography. Help them consider how they would like to respond. Use role-play if you think that would help.

Is it too late?

It's never too late to introduce this topic of conversation into your home. Nor is it too late to establish protective boundaries for your children. If your child has already had longstanding and unlimited access to devices then the process may take longer than it would for parents who are beginning this journey with children at a younger age. Change can take time...but persevere!

Is it too early?

It's never too early to begin this journey. Children of ALL ages can benefit from protective discussions, supervisions and Internet control. If your child doesn't already own a device take time to think through what YOU, as the parent would like their device ownership to look like.

Young people are capable of making fantastic choices around the topics of online pornography. With open, honest communication in your child's school and at home, young people can navigate this area well and form the ability to think critically about what they see. Make a decision today to partner with your child in protecting and supporting them as they navigate this topic.

For further information on the impact of pornography and the role that parents can play check out our website **www.yourchoicez.com.au/parents**

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