



Title: Pornography
Part 2: What’s the problem?

Level: SENIOR

Links to Curriculum for Excellence

In terms of Curriculum for Excellence this level is concerned with extending or deepening what is described at Fourth Level.

Experiences and outcomes	Benchmarks
I recognise that power can exist within relationships and can be used positively as well as negatively. HWB 4-45a I know that popular culture, the media and peer pressure can influence how I feel about myself and the impact this may have on my actions. HWB 4-46b	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distinguishes between a balance of power and abuse of power in relationships, for example, respect, trust, coercion, consent. • Explains how positive and negative body image can affect health, self-worth and behaviour, for example, self-reliance, beauty industry expectations, body building. • Evaluates how the media, including social media and pornography impact on physical and mental health.

Learning Intentions

- Young people recognise the impact that pornography has on self-image, choices and behaviours.
- Young people learn that pornography is a global business.
- Pornography is viewed as a medium through which people are objectified, hurt and exploited.
- Young people understand that they have choices and can choose to not watch pornography.
- Young people consider the impact that excessive exposure to pornography has on attitudes and brain development.
- Young people think critically about their views about pornography.

Success criteria

- I can describe the affect that exposure to pornography can have on the individual.
- I can explain that pornography presents behaviours that can be violent or degrading, and that these behaviours are not appropriate in real-life relationships.
- I understand the law on pornography.
- I can express my own views on pornography.

Resources to support this activity

- PowerPoint slides
- *Porn sex vs real sex: The differences explained with food* <https://vimeo.com/71729262> (duration 1 minutes 45) The animation is funny and direct and supports the delivery of key messages about pornography. Although direct, please remember that young people will have viewed pornography and will understand the use of humour to make the point about reality vs pornography.
- *How Porn Affects the Brain* <https://vimeo.com/27601545> (duration 4 minutes 50 seconds)
- *Fight the New Drug: A Movement for Love* <https://youtu.be/VHPTV1OLkss> (duration 2 minutes 53)
- OnlyFans <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/OnlyFans>

Whenever you use content on a platform like YouTube please cue the film you intend to play in advance, check it is the film you want to view, and skip adverts.

Activity

1. Start with a quick review of what young people remember from the last session. Share the slide ‘**Porn is everywhere**’ and ask if anyone noticed sexual imagery or pornographic images, adverts etc in the past days/week. As teacher/educator, share anything you have noticed. Explain that whether the young people think that ‘porn is everywhere’ or not – it is certainly very available, that will have been recognised by now. Explain that because porn is so prevalent, so accessible, there is an increasing amount of research about it and reaction against it. This is what this activity will explore.
2. So, the idea of today is really found in this quote from Maya Angelou – share the slide – explain that a few of the main worries or problems about pornography will be presented for discussion – 4 in all. Take any comments on the quote, say you’ll come back to it: **“If you don’t like something, change it. If you can’t change it, change your attitude.”** Maya Angelou
3. **Problem 1: Porn and reality**
Share the slide. This is something that was established in the last session. After reading check: do young people agree?

Problem 1: Porn and reality

Pornography is fantasy, and not realistic. People who we see in porn do not have realistic bodies. Porn can show some extreme and uncommon sex acts. It does not show the kind of sex that most people enjoy in real life.

Share the film: **Porn sex vs real sex: The differences explained with food**

<https://vimeo.com/71729262> (duration 1 minutes 45) The film will get some reaction and laughter – but what do young people think of the actual messages?

4. **Problem 2: Real sex is about sexual respect/Porn sex is about sexual objectification**
Share the slides. The slide is text heavy so take time to read together. Check understanding and explore with the class/group initial responses to the slide. Also ask: *When it comes to porn, and thinking about men and women, do you think they are equally objectified or is it different?*

<p>Real sex is about sexual respect Both partners are able to express their feelings and respect each other’s boundaries about sex. In a healthy sexual relationship a partner respects your decisions about what kind of sexual activity you want to have. You can decide you don’t want sex. It also involves respecting a partner’s body and using contraception or condoms as you decide.</p>	<p>Porn sex is about sexual objectification Porn sex is the act of treating a person as an instrument of sexual pleasure. Objectification means a person is a commodity or an object. They have no dignity. They are a body and body parts, to be looked at or touched. Once sexually objectified, someone’s body or body part is judged by its physical appearance or potential sexual function. Then the body/body part is treated like it exists for others to use or consume.</p>
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5. Problem 3: Porn and the brain

Explain that there is a lot of research being done now about how porn affects the brain. Stress *that as young people now, they are the first generation of humans exposed to such levels of porn* – so the question is *if you watch it, does it change more than your attitudes towards sex, does it actually change your brain?* Take any initial thoughts, then share the film, get some reactions. **How Porn Affects the Brain** <https://vimeo.com/27601545> (duration 4 minutes 50 seconds) Take further thoughts or comments, then share the subsequent 3 slides to confirm the main points, discuss as you go.

How does porn affect the brain?

- As a young person you have a developing brain, compulsive viewing of porn – so watching a lot of porn - distorts the person's idea of a healthy sexual relationship. Young men who worry about the amount of porn they watch report that “the script” of porn was always playing in the back of their minds when they were with a real partner.
- If an image or scene is no longer stimulating enough for someone looking at a lot of porn they will look for variety, surprise factor in the content, more hard-core and stranger material, anything they haven't seen in order to attain a sexual climax. One result is that some brains are being “digitally rewired” in a totally new way to demand change, excitement, and constant stimulation.
- People who watch porn just have to hit the “reset” button and stop using porn completely for a few months. In fact, even if a person doesn't think they are struggling, they might experiment with a break from porn, just to see if they can.

(Source: https://www.skeptic.com/reading_room/how-porn-is-messing-with-your-manhood/)

6. Problem 4: Pornography as a fast adapting business model: The case of OnlyFans

- *Some context for educators before sharing the slide for discussion:* In the last session one of the Porn facts was that the industry is worth more than \$100m every year. As a business it wants to grow its market and so new mediums emerge all the time. There have been recent concerns about sexual content on OnlyFans <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/OnlyFans>. Young people in the class may well be using the site to watch content like make-up tutorials or gym workouts, but there are risks of exposure to pornography or indeed young people being encouraged to create content that is or becomes increasingly sexualised. You can use the slide to generate discussion about this relatively new medium, pornography as a business and risks associated with how easy it is to create and access content that is pornographic.

Introduce the topic of OnlyFans. Ask if anyone would like to share: Who subscribes? What are you watching? Did you know you are supposed to be 18? Share the slide and discuss:

Problem 4: Pornography as a fast adapting business model/The case of OnlyFans

- What started as a way for anyone to share what they made or did has become mostly a place where explicit content is sold.
- There are concerns that young people can be led into making content that is sexualised.
- Creators on OnlyFans can be pushed to become more explicit, take more risks.
- Identities can be exposed, there is no guarantee that anything posted won't be shared and impossible to remove it entirely from the internet.

- Successful OnlyFan creators are now selling ‘how to’ guides and say they have hundreds of girls (lots being underage) messaging online for start-up advice.

7. **Social action on Porn.** The slide shows the Maya Angelou quote again. Explain that some people are trying to change how young people think about porn and get them to think about how they use it. One example is a global movement called Fight the New Drug. It’s just an example of action on pornography, but have a look at the short film *Fight the New Drug: A Movement for Love* and discuss (including the tag line #PornKillsLove) <https://youtu.be/VHPTV1OLkss> (duration 2 minutes 53)

8. **Porn – the debate.** In the remaining time have a discussion, thinking about this spectrum, where do the young people stand? Young people could physically position themselves on a continuum and discuss from that standpoint. Then, after hearing views, decide to stay in the same place or re-assess.

PORN Harmless Fun ----- PORN Harmful to all

9. **To end,** encourage young people to keep thinking about what they really think about pornography, and that they can make decisions about how much it impacts on their real lives and relationships.

Additional material:

These powerful quotes could be used when talking about pornography:

- “Pornography is about power and sex-as-weapon – in the same way we have come to understand that rape is about violence and not really about sexuality at all”. Gloria Steinem (writer)
- “There is no dignity when the human dimension is eliminated from the person. In short, the problem with pornography is not that it shows too much of the person, but that it shows far too little.” Pope John Paul II
- “Consuming pornography does not lead to more sex, it leads to more porn. Much like eating McDonalds everyday will accustom you to food that (although enjoyable) is essentially not food, pornography conditions the consumer to being satisfied with an impression of extreme sex rather than the real.” Virginie Despentes (writer)

These resources can help extend learning:

- **Edinburgh Rape Crisis Centre** have produced a resource called ‘**What Do You Think**’. The resource is designed for use by those who work directly with young people to help facilitate and continue the conversations on the impacts of pornography on young people today. This resource puts young people’s view at the centre, drawing on an interview with a 16 year old woman who shares her views on the impacts of pornography on young people: <http://www.ercc.scot/what-do-you-think/>
- **Sex Sells, But In Today’s Porn Culture, Sexual Violence Sells More.** This article (September 2020) highlights recent research on how pornography fuels and legitimizes violence, specifically against women. https://fightthenewdrug.org/in-todays-porn-culture-objectification-and-dehumanization-sell-more/?utm_source=the_movement&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=blog
- **Growing up in a pornified culture** a TedX <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YpHNImNsx8> (13 mins 47 sec) Dr Gail Dines, recipient of the Myers Center Award for the Study of Human Rights in

North America, sociology and women's studies professor, and porn industry researcher and writer, explores how masculinity and femininity are shaped by pornified images that spill over into our most private worlds.

- **Why I stopped watching porn** (2013) https://youtu.be/gRJ_QfP2mhU (15 mins 57 sec) Ran Gavrieli writes and lectures about emotional and physical safe sex; porn and porn-influenced cultural damages; gender and power relations; and sex and intimacy. In this TED talk, Ran sets out to explain why he decided to quit watching pornography.

Practitioner Notes