

Title: Pornography

Part 1: What is porn and what is it doing to us?



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
<p>I recognise that power can exist within relationships and can be used positively as well as negatively. HWB 4-45a</p> <p>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</p>	<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.

The learning intentions and success criteria are met with delivery of both parts of this topic.

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
- Discussion Cards FACT/MYTH

The films used in this activity have been produced by the social action/education programme called Fight the New Drug:

- Emma's Story: Overcoming Her Struggles with Pornography, Shame, and Self-Worth - Fight the New Drug (<https://fightthenewdrug.org/emmas-story-overcoming-her-struggles-with-pornography-shame-and-self-worth-video/>) (5 minutes 27)
- Dan's Story: "I Feel Human Again" After Quitting Porn - Fight the New Drug (<https://fightthenewdrug.org/dans-story-i-feel-human-again-after-quitting-porn/>) (3 minutes 15)
(*This film mentions suicide ideation as part of Dan's mental health struggles*).

- Paul's Story: "I'm Not Discouraged and Ashamed Anymore" by My Porn Struggle - Fight the New Drug (<https://fightthenewdrug.org/pauls-story-im-not-discouraged-and-ashamed-anymore-by-my-porn-struggle-video/>) (5 minutes 52)
- Ash's Story: How an Online Porn Habit Nearly Led to a Risky In-person Encounter - Fight the New Drug (<https://fightthenewdrug.org/ashs-story-how-an-online-porn-habit-nearly-led-to-a-risky-in-person-encounter-video/>) (3 minutes 35)

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

The activities outlined in this session, along with the accompanying Part 2, offer a range of approaches to engaging young people in a dialogue about pornography. There is enough content in this and the next session to offer more than two sessions if young people want to engage in lots of reflection and discussion. The additional material listed with Part 2 might also lend itself to extending your work on this topic to a more developed project. In essence, as with all the RSHP materials in the resource, choose to work with what suits your learner's needs, extending when you have the time or the interest of the young people.

1. **Introduce the activity along these lines:** That young people will be spending a couple of sessions on the topic of pornography, looking at how we can better understand what it is and what affects it might be having on us and our relationships. Clarify there will be no personal questions – that it is okay to have different views and opinions, but to respect each other's privacy and even if it is occasionally funny or embarrassing, be nice to each other! Ask why are we doing this? Well... (use the slide:

A survey was conducted amongst 500 UK 18-year-olds to find out their views about pornography. Most of the young people questioned said that viewing porn (either accidentally or on purpose) is common throughout the school years, with most people starting at around 13 to 15 years.

- *ThinkUknow* (2021)

2. **Porn: Fact or Myth** Introduce a task to get the lesson going. There are 8 statements on the prop/sheet, you can ask young people to work individually, as one group or in small groups to decide which are PORN FACTS and which are PORN MYTHS. After some time, get feedback. (All are actually PORN FACTS, the young people may have realised this, but check out views on this – any surprises?)

- 1 in 3 people say they are exposed to unwanted porn via ads, pop-ups etc
- Porn sites get more regular traffic than Netflix, Amazon and twitter combined.
- 1 in 5 searches on mobile devices are for porn.
- 44% of males aged 11-16 who consumed pornography reported that online pornography gave them ideas about the type of sex they wanted to try.
- 30% of the material streamed on the internet is pornography.
- The porn industry worldwide has an income of nearly \$100 billion dollars.
- In a study of porn, researchers found that 88% of scenes contained physical violence and 49% contained verbal aggression.
- The UK has the second most traffic to porn sites (USA is number 1).

3. Discussion

Use your knowledge of the young people to decide the best way to approach these next discussion points. You will know if small group or full class/group discussions will work best. You will also be aware of keeping young people safe, about not using mixed gender groupings if this might put some young people at risk or make them feel ill at ease. Use the slides to introduce each question and talk – you might want to put all questions on one slide and offer the group(s) the opportunity to pick a topic.

- **How do you think porn affects boys?**
- **How do you think porn affect girls?**
- **Do you think porn puts young people under pressure to have sex (or say they are doing it)?**

4. Personal experiences with porn

Remind everyone that we are not asking anyone to share personal information or embarrass anyone else. But it is helpful to hear in these film clips from young people who have had difficult experiences with viewing/consuming pornography. Watch at least 2 of these short films, after each take any thoughts from the group. Key themes which you might want to draw out in later discussion are: being exposed to things as children that you don't understand; feeling ashamed when watching pornography becomes a problem; that consuming a lot of pornography has impacts on mental health and feelings of self-worth. (All of the young people in these films have moved on positively from their experiences).

Emma's Story: Overcoming Her Struggles with Pornography, Shame, and Self-Worth - Fight the New Drug (<https://fightthenewdrug.org/emmas-story-overcoming-her-struggles-with-pornography-shame-and-self-worth-video/>) (5 minutes 27)

Emma is a 19-year-old student who was just 11 when she was first exposed to pornography. By the time she was 12, she says she consumed it multiple times a day on the iPod Touch her parents gave her. Her uncontrollable porn habit was also accompanied by feelings of shame and worthlessness that came from being a young girl who was told people who consume porn aren't worth dating. Hear Emma's story of how she overcame not only her pornography struggle, but also the struggle to love herself.

Dan's Story: "I Feel Human Again" After Quitting Porn - Fight the New Drug (<https://fightthenewdrug.org/dans-story-i-feel-human-again-after-quitting-porn/>)

(3 minutes 15) (*This film mentions suicide ideation as part of Dan's mental health struggles*) For six years, Dan compulsively consumed porn roughly 2-3 times a day. He describes how it made him feel "horrible," "flat," "empty," and "like a robot."

Dan explains how his addiction to pornography made him "asexual," saying that he was aroused by porn but was unable to be aroused with other humans. Then, at the age of 21, Dan decided to take back his life and break free from porn. Now, Dan is able to connect with his friends, family, and even girlfriend in a way he never thought possible. "I hadn't felt human for a long time, and I felt human again." (*This film mentions suicide ideation*).

Paul's Story: "I'm Not Discouraged and Ashamed Anymore" by My Porn Struggle - Fight the New Drug (<https://fightthenewdrug.org/pauls-story-im-not-discouraged-and-ashamed-anymore-by-my-porn-struggle-video/>) (5 minutes 52) When he was 13, Paul was exposed to pornography for the first time. His consumption escalated toward the end of high school as

he used pornography as a coping mechanism when he was feeling alone, rejected, or not good enough. Rather than feeling ashamed about his struggle, Paul has found allies to help him with his recovery, giving him hope in his ongoing journey to recovery.

Ash's Story: How an Online Porn Habit Nearly Led to a Risky In-person Encounter - Fight the New Drug (<https://fightthenewdrug.org/ashs-story-how-an-online-porn-habit-nearly-led-to-a-risky-in-person-encounter-video/>) (3 minutes 35) What started as a curiosity about the human body led Ash to look up porn every other night, if not every night. This habit not only changed the way she viewed men but also how she thought of relationships in general. She recognized her porn consumption was an issue when she almost met up with a stranger she met on an internet chat room. Nearly doing something that could have been potentially dangerous and life-threatening caused her to stop and think, "I can't do this, this is too much, this has gone too far." Now, she has invested her focus and happiness in her relationships, and she feels freer than ever before.

5. **Discussion.** Explain that a recent study amongst young people was called '**Porn is everywhere**' (use the slide) Do the young people agree? Explain that partly this means that sexual imagery is very common. Have some discussion on the assertion.
6. **Task:** Ask the young people if they would be willing to take part in an experiment. Ask them to be aware - in the next few days/week/until the next session - of what they see around them that presents really sexy/sexual or even pornographic images. This could be in pop-ups, adverts, anything they see in the street, online, anywhere. So, the question is: *Just how much are we all exposed to that is sexualised or pornographic in our day-to-day lives?* Ask them to remember what they see for reporting back next week. (As teacher/educator you need to do this task yourself to be able to inform discussion).
7. **Things to remember about porn.** As you bring the activity to a close use the 6 PowerPoint slides to talk through some key things to remember, checking understanding or taking any points/questions as you go. (Young people may have a view on whether new age verification laws will work to prevent under 18s accessing online pornography). You could email these 6 slides to young people after the lesson.
 - i. You don't have to watch porn and you also don't have to watch it just because your friends are. You have a choice to switch off anything that you don't want to see.
 - ii. Pornography is fantasy, and not realistic. People who act 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. Watching porn a lot can sometimes make real-world sex less enjoyable.
 - iii. Pornography is a business designed to make money.
 - iv. You can legally buy porn at 18. Porn websites are legally obliged to ensure a user is 18+ (called age verification). It is illegal for an adult over 18 to show an under 18 pornography, or allow the under 18 year old to watch it.
 - v. There are certain types of porn that are illegal even for adults. These are called "extreme pornographic images". This includes porn where what people do threatens a person's life, or things they do that are likely to or will cause serious injury. This also includes degrading porn, violent porn (which includes rape and abuse) or anything involving young people under the age of 18.

- vi. If you view porn that upsets you talk to some you trust. If you view porn be very careful about what you watch and click through to, it is very easy to get to a place you didn't intend to go and to view something upsetting or illegal.

Connecting with home

This term we are using two of our lessons in our Relationships, Sexual Health and Parenthood learning to talk about pornography. Research tells us that it is likely that nearly every young person has been exposed to pornography by their mid-teens. This activity allows young people to reflect on what pornography they may have seen, to develop their own views on pornography and how it may affect their views of relationships and sex.

This guidance from the NSPCC can help you think about how to speak with your child about pornography:

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/online-porn/>

This content on ChildLine site would help you answer the question *what is porn?*

<https://www.childline.org.uk/get-support/ask-sam/friends-relationships-and-sex-asksam/porn/>

Further learning activities are available that connect to this RSHP curriculum content

- Pornography part 2: What's the problem?

Additional Material

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, and echoes similar concerns raised by young people and practitioners: <http://www.ercc.scot/what-do-you-think/>

Practitioner Notes