



**WALKINGWISE**

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# EDUCATION GUIDE

Holding Candid Conversations on Child Exploitation

**EMPOWERING YOUTH**  
to Recognize Sexual Exploitation

Education for Middle, High School, College-aged Youth & Adults

# BEFORE YOU BEGIN

## Quick Start Guide

### I. Prepare for the Lesson

**Educators:** Before teaching this lesson, review the Walking Wise *School Teaching Guide* for implementation guidance. Walking Wise is designed as a prevention program; therefore, discussions about grooming, abuse, and exploitation may prompt some students to disclose past or current victimization. Before presenting the lesson, ensure appropriate support personnel and referral resources are available. Follow all mandatory reporting requirements and school protocols when responding to disclosures.

Create a safe and respectful classroom environment. *Explain that the purpose of the lesson is to increase students' knowledge and help keep them safe—not to create fear.* Remind students that they should not share personal experiences with the class. Instead, explain how they can ask for help. If appropriate, consider using an exit ticket that allows students to request a private conversation with a school counselor or school support staff for themselves or a friend. (The Student Check-In form is available in the Implementation Toolkit at [WalkingWise.com](https://WalkingWise.com).)

**Parents & Caregivers:** Begin by reviewing the *Home Teaching Guide* on [WalkingWise.com](https://WalkingWise.com). Talking with your child about sexual abuse and exploitation is one of the most important protective steps you can take as a parent. These conversations should continue over time to build trust, awareness, and resilience. You do not need to be an expert. What matters most is creating a safe environment where your child feels comfortable asking questions and seeking help. The Home Teaching Guide can help you create a safe, age-appropriate, and effective learning experience.

**Child Disclosure:** The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that parents take every disclosure of sexual abuse seriously and contact one of the following: the child's pediatrician, a local child advocacy center, a child protection service agency, or the police. For more information, visit [HealthyChildren.org](https://HealthyChildren.org). In addition, if you suspect child sex trafficking, contact the National Human Trafficking Hotline at 1-888-373-7888.

### II. Lesson Materials

#### Educators

- Consider completing the adult learning module for additional background.
- Download and adapt the classroom presentation to fit your students' age and school policies.
- Begin with open-ended "Let's Get Started" questions to build curiosity and engagement.
- Log in to [WalkingWise.com](https://WalkingWise.com) to present the animated video during the classroom presentation.
- Measure learning with the student survey before and after the lesson when appropriate.

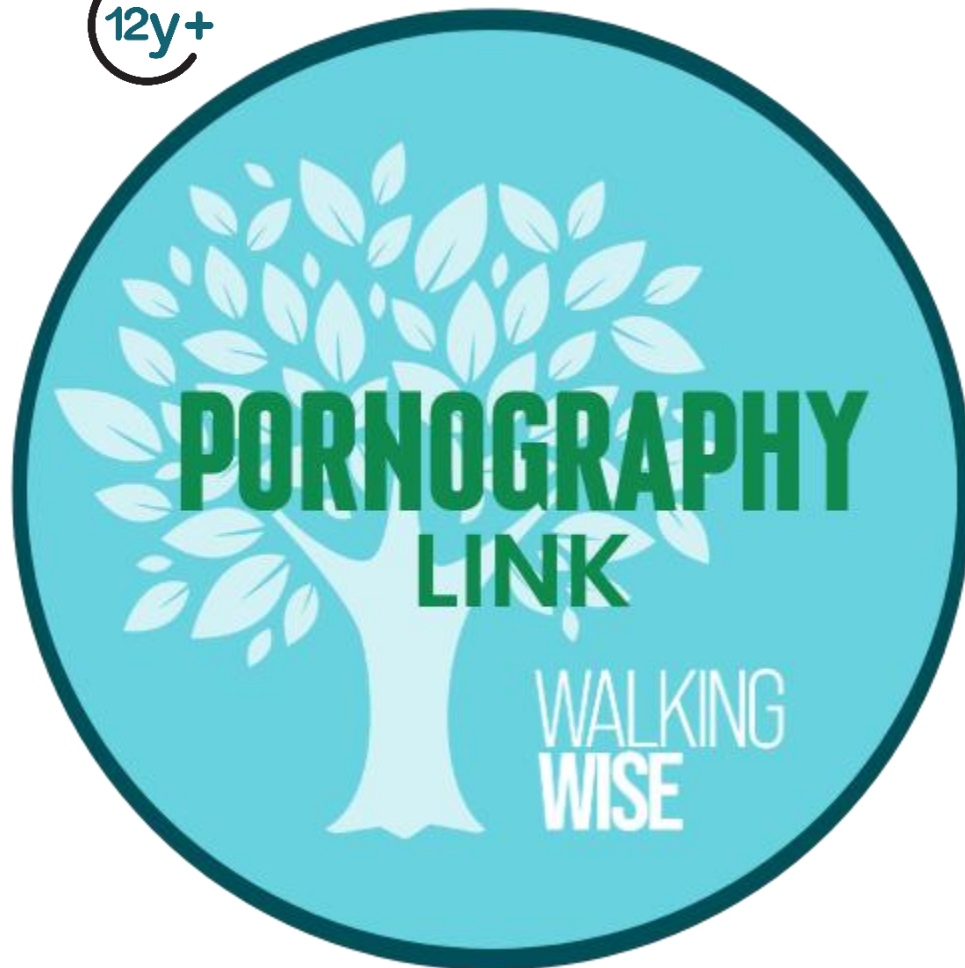
#### Parents & Caregivers

- Review the vocabulary and discussion questions.
- Begin with the open-ended "Let's Get Started" questions to help engage your child.
- Select the vocabulary words you want to review with your child before watching the video.
- Watch the animated video together.
- Use the lesson plan's discussion to talk with your child about the information shared in the video.
- Consider using the student survey to reinforce learning.

### III. Legal Disclaimer

The Walking Wise curriculum and related educational materials ("Education Program") are provided for educational purposes only. Although Walking Wise strives to provide accurate and current information, it cannot guarantee that all information will remain complete, accurate, or up to date under every circumstance. The Education Program is not a substitute for legal advice, and users should not rely on it when making legal decisions. Walking Wise LLC assumes no liability for actions taken or not taken based on the Education Program or any referenced external resources.

## LESSON #4



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## LESSON PLAN #4

### The Pornography Link

**I. Objective:** To provide ideas for fostering a deeper conversation about the connection between the mental, relational, and physical impact caused by viewing pornography and how pornography contributes to the commercial sex trade.

### II. Suggested Timing

Typical lesson time: approximately 35–55 minutes, depending on the content selected.

| Lesson Component                                                  | Suggested Time |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| Let's Get Started                                                 | 3–5 min.       |
| Classroom Presentation (Lesson Plan Content & Student Engagement) | 25–40 min.     |
| Student Survey                                                    | 3–5 min.       |

### III. Let's Get Started



Directions: Select one or two introductory questions below. Have students work in pairs or small groups for 2–3 minutes to create a brief list of responses. Ask each group to share one response that has not already been mentioned. Refer to page 9 for additional possible student responses.

**Let's think about how the media we use can influence how we think, feel, and treat other people.**

1. Why do you think it can be hard for some people to stop using social media?
2. How can the things we watch or listen to influence the way we treat other people?
3. How can watching the same type of media repeatedly affect what people believe is normal?

### IV. Vocabulary

1. **Pornography (Porn):** Pictures, videos, cartoons, anime, or other media that show sexual behavior or undressed bodies to create excitement.
2. **Habit:** Something a person does often, sometimes without thinking about it.
3. **Overexposure:** Seeing something so often that it starts to affect thoughts, feelings, or actions.
4. **Reward Circuit:** A part of the brain that links actions with good feelings and makes people want to repeat them.
5. **Dopamine:** An important brain chemical that is linked to pleasure, motivation, and reward.
6. **Motivate:** To give someone a reason or desire to do something.
7. **Isolation:** To separate or withdraw from family, friends, or other supportive people.
8. **Depression:** A mental health condition that causes ongoing sadness or a loss of interest in favorite activities.
9. **Self-Esteem:** How a person feels about themselves and their own worth.
10. **Sexual Exploitation:** Taking advantage of someone for sexual purposes, often through pressure, tricks, or control.
11. **Humiliation:** A strong feeling of embarrassment or shame.

### V. Classroom Presentation & Animated Video

Log in to [WalkingWise.com](https://WalkingWise.com) to download the classroom presentation and access the animated video in the Walking Wise Learning Platform.

**Plan Your Lesson:** The lesson plan contains the same core instructional content as the classroom presentation. Review the lesson plan, select the content and discussion questions you want to cover, then delete any corresponding slides you do not plan to use. Allow approximately 2–4 minutes per discussion question.



**Student Engagement:** The presentation includes “**What Do You Think?**” multiple-choice questions. Before revealing the answer, have students work in pairs to discuss the choices and select an answer. Invite a few pairs to briefly explain their thinking, then display the “**Answer**” slide and discuss.

## VI. Discussion Questions

### 1. How can repeated online activity become a habit or feel uncontrollable?

- **Dopamine:** When someone views something they enjoy, the brain releases dopamine. Dopamine is an important chemical that helps the brain function properly and creates feelings of pleasure and reward.
- **Feeling Good = Wanting More:** When the brain likes a feeling, it often wants to repeat the activity.
- **Reward Circuit:** The brain associates an activity it likes with good feelings. Over time, this pattern may be formed: **action → dopamine → reward → repeat**
- **Habits Can Form:** Repeating an activity often can turn it into a habit that is hard to stop.
- **Satisfying the Brain:** Over time, the brain often needs a higher level of that activity to achieve the same feeling it first experienced.
- **Overexposure:** Studies show that repeatedly viewing pornography can cause the brain to respond similarly to overuse of online gaming and social media. Some people may find it hard to control their pornography use. Even though it causes problems, they may have difficulty stopping.

### 2. Why can repeated online experiences strongly influence young people?

- **Growing Brains:** Young brains are still developing, so they learn more quickly from repeated experiences.
- **Decision-Making:** The part of the brain responsible for planning, decision-making, and self-control continues to develop until adulthood—into the mid-to-late 20s.
- **Learning by Watching:** Young people learn by watching others. Whether in person or online, repeatedly seeing the same behavior can influence how people think, what they believe, and how they act.

### 3. In what ways can viewing pornography be harmful for young people?

- **False Ideas:** Pornography can show behaviors that do not reflect real life. It often reflects unhealthy behaviors or relationships. It can also give people wrong or unrealistic ideas about body image.
- **Uncomfortable Feelings:** Some people feel confused, upset, or embarrassed after watching pornography.
- **Less Respect for Others:** Pornography can show behaviors that are not respectful or involve unsafe treatment of others, which can influence some viewers' behavior.

### 4. What changes might happen if someone spends too much time viewing online pornographic images?

- **Lost Focus and Interest:** It may become harder to focus, remember information, or do well in school. A person may lose interest in hobbies, sports, or other activities they once enjoyed.
- **Spend Less Time with Others:** They may spend less time bonding with friends or family and spend more time alone to view pornography.
- **Emotions and Substance Use:** Researchers have linked pornography viewing to depression, anxiety, and lower self-esteem. Studies also show that some teens who view pornography are more likely to use illegal drugs or alcohol.
- **Lowers Boundaries:** It may be more difficult for young people who view pornography to identify grooming, unhealthy relationships, or sexual abuse.

### 5. How can viewing pornography change the way some people treat others?

- **Bullying:** Viewing pornography is linked to a higher risk of bullying others, including cyberbullying.
- **Violence:** Studies have found that repeated exposure to pornography can make violence against girls and women seem more acceptable because porn videos make abusive behavior seem normal or desirable.
- **Choking (Strangulation):** Some pornography can make choking others seem normal or harmless, but it is dangerous. Choking can cause serious injuries, even when not visible. This can include memory loss, seizures, brain injury, or death.

### 6. How might someone trick or pressure others into creating harmful images or videos?

- **Tricked or Lured:** Someone may offer money, gifts, or help to convince a young person to share private images. An unsafe friend or acquaintance may secretly record a young person without the young person's knowledge.

- **False Promises:** An unsafe person may pretend to offer a job, such as modeling or acting, but actually intends to trick people into producing pornography.
  - **Pressure or Threats:** Someone may pressure, trick, or threaten a person into sharing images or videos.
7. **How are some harmful images or videos connected to sexual abuse or sexual exploitation?**
- **Encourage Viewing:** Some unsafe people groom young people by first exposing them to pornography.
  - **Using Images to Control Someone:** Some people use photos, videos, text messages (sexting), or fake AI images to pressure or take advantage of others. This illegal behavior is called sextortion.
  - **Making Money from Images:** Some young people (under 18) make money or are given things of value in exchange for their sexual photos, videos, or webcam images. This is known as child sexual abuse material (CSAM) and is recognized as sexual exploitation, even if a minor agrees to share or sell their images.
8. **How do federal and state laws protect children and teens (minors under 18)?**
- **Laws Protect Minors:** It is against federal law for someone to ask, pressure, trick, or force a minor into making nude or sexual images or videos.
  - **Laws Make CSAM Illegal:** Sexual images of children and teens are illegal to create, share, or possess.
  - **Ask for Protection:** If someone asks you for a sexual image, pressures you to look at sexual content, or makes you feel uncomfortable, tell a trustworthy adult right away.
9. **How should you respond to receiving sexual images or videos?**
- **Content Received:** Tell a trustworthy adult if someone sends you sexual content. You do not have to handle the situation on your own.
  - **Do Not Share It:** Do not forward or share a sexual image of a minor. Sharing the image can cause further harm and is illegal. Keeping the image is also illegal, so delete it right away.
10. **Is it possible to remove harmful images of a Minor from the internet?**
- **Take It Down Tool:** [Take It Down](#) is a free tool that helps stop the sharing of nude, partially nude, or sexual images or videos that were taken when the person was under 18.
  - **Report For Help:** Parents or trustworthy adults can help young people (under 18) report harmful images to the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC) at [Report.CyberTip.org](#).
  - **It May Take Time:** Images can spread quickly online. Removing them may take time, but help is available.

## VII. How to Ask for Help

There are safe ways to get help if you or someone you know is being threatened or harmed. Sometimes it's important to speak up for a friend because they may not be able to ask for help on their own. Remember, if something doesn't feel right, trust your gut feelings and take action.

### Options:

- If you are in immediate danger, dial 911.
- If you are experiencing harm, tell a trustworthy parent or caregiver.
- If the person causing harm IS a family member, tell other trustworthy adults.
- If you are a student, tell a trustworthy counselor, nurse, social worker, teacher, school resource officer, coach, or principal.
- If using the internet is unsafe, use a computer at school or a public library.
- If you are in public, consider hand-motioning the "Signal for Help" to quietly alert others that you need help. Someone nearby may recognize it and call the police.

**Keep Asking:** If the first trustworthy adult cannot provide help or protection, keep telling other trustworthy adults until someone listens and takes action. Everyone deserves to be safe, including you.

### 24-Hour Hotlines and Websites for HELP

Your Life Your Voice ..... 1-800-448-3000, TEXT: "VOICE" to 20121, [YourLifeYourVoice.org](http://YourLifeYourVoice.org)

Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services ..... 1-800-622-HELP (4357) or [SAMHSA.gov/young-adults](http://SAMHSA.gov/young-adults)

Fortify ..... Sign Up for Free App: [JoinFortify.com](http://JoinFortify.com)

CyberTipline..... 1-800-THE-LOST (843-5678) or [Report.Cybertip.org](http://Report.Cybertip.org)

National Human Trafficking Hotline ..... 1-888-373-7888 or TEXT: "BEFREE" to 233733

## VIDEO SCRIPT #4

### The Pornography Link

**Note:** Log in to *WalkingWise.com* to watch the video. The bolded words are defined in the vocabulary list.

Ever ridden your bike downhill and felt the thrill of speed? Then, you realize you might not be able to stop. Some **habits**, like viewing **pornography**, can feel that way, too.

Many kids first see pornography by accident. But curiosity can set in, and what may seem like a harmless search for knowledge can turn into a habit.

For some people, watching pornography can become extremely hard to stop even when it is causing problems in their lives.

Here is what science tells us about the brain's **reward circuit** and pornography:

- When someone views pornography, the brain releases **dopamine**.
- Dopamine is an important chemical linked to feelings of pleasure, motivation, and reward.
- When the brain enjoys an activity, it's **motivated** to do it again.
- Over time, the urge to watch pornography can grow.
- Eventually, a person may seek out new or more intense pornographic images so they can feel that same excitement.

The brain's desire for this type of reward can take time and attention away from school, sleep, hobbies, and activities with family and friends.

Pornography is often viewed in secret. This can lead to **isolation**, **depression**, and lower **self-esteem**.

So, what does pornography have to do with **sexual exploitation**?

- Traffickers may trick, threaten, pressure, or force people to make sexual pictures or videos.
- They often use sexual images to control victims and make money. Once these images are online, they can continue spreading long after the abuse happened.
- Traffickers may also use sexual ads online to connect victims with people willing to pay to spend time with them.

Pornography affects children in different ways, including isolated kids who are hooked on viewing harmful images on phones and game consoles. And young people...who are abused through the making of pornography and experience online **humiliation**, as well as those who are controlled by traffickers.

What pornographers don't want us to know is...those who may appear as models and actors are sometimes unwilling victims.

Viewing pornography can become a harmful habit at any age, children and teens are at greater risk because their brains are still developing. That makes avoiding pornographic images a healthy choice.

If you have tried but cannot stop viewing pornography, you don't have to handle it alone.

Help is available. Talk with a trustworthy adult.

Call a 24-hour helpline or seek out support websites.



## STUDENT SURVEY #4

### The Pornography Link

*Please mark an **X** in the box next to the best answer:*

**1. Which activity can affect the brain's reward system and form strong habits?**

- A. Gaming
- B. Scrolling social media
- C. Viewing pornography
- D. All of the above.

**2. What changes might happen if someone repeatedly views harmful online images?**

- A. They are often more focused on schoolwork.
- B. They can spend less time with friends and be less involved in activities they enjoyed.
- C. They become more confident.
- D. They have a desire to spend more time on hobbies.

**3. Which statement is TRUE about online pornographic images?**

- A. They can affect how people think, feel, or behave.
- B. They always show healthy and realistic behavior.
- C. They never affect a person's emotions.
- D. They only affect adults.

**4. Which statement is TRUE about online safety?**

- A. It is okay to share private images with strangers.
- B. If something online makes you uncomfortable, you should tell a trustworthy adult.
- C. It is usually safe to share a private image online.
- D. Young people should keep everything online a secret.

Answer Key: See page 9.

## STUDENT ACTIVITY RESPONSES & STUDENT SURVEY KEY #4

### The Pornography Link

#### Student Survey – Answer Key

The survey can be administered either after the lesson discussion or as a pre- and post-survey before students watch the video.

#### SURVEY KEY #4

- 1) D
- 2) B
- 3) A
- 4) B



#### Let's Get Started – Possible Student Responses

##### 1. Why do you think it can be hard for some people to stop viewing social media?

- It becomes a habit.
- They enjoy it.
- Their friends do it.
- It is hard to stop.
- They don't realize how often they do it.

Discussion Opportunity: Explain that repeated behaviors can become habits. Some habits are healthy, while others can become difficult to break.

##### 2. How can the things we watch or listen to influence the way we treat other people?

- We may copy what we see.
- It can change our attitudes.
- It can affect how we speak to others.
- It can influence how we think about people.
- It can shape how we treat others.

Discussion Opportunity: Explain that the media we watch and listen to can influence our thoughts, attitudes, and behavior. Choosing healthy media and positive influences helps us build respectful relationships.

##### 3. How can watching the same type of media repeatedly affect what people believe is normal?

- What once seemed unusual will eventually appear natural.
- They may copy what they see.
- It can change their opinions.
- They may stop noticing when something is unhealthy.
- Not everything online reflects real life.

Discussion Opportunity: Explain that repeated exposure to media can influence what people believe is normal. Thinking carefully about what we watch helps us make healthier and safer choices

## RESOURCES #4

### The Pornography Link

#### Research Studies & Reports

- Alexandraki, K., Stavropoulos, V., Anderson, E., Latifi, M.Q., & Gomez, R. (2018). *Adolescent pornography use: A systematic literature review of research trends 2000-2017*. *Current Psychiatry Reviews*, 14(47), 47–58.  
Free Article: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/325649770\\_Adolescent\\_Pornography\\_Use\\_A\\_Systematic\\_Review\\_of\\_Research\\_Trends\\_2000-2017](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/325649770_Adolescent_Pornography_Use_A_Systematic_Review_of_Research_Trends_2000-2017)
- Koletic, G., Cohen, N., Stulhofer, A., & Kohut, T. (2019). *Does asking adolescents about pornography make them use it? A test of the question behavior effect*. *Journal of Sex Research*, 56 (2), 137–141.  
Subscription Required: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/30074822/>
- Lin W-H, Liu C-H, Yi C-C (2020). *Exposure to sexually explicit media in early adolescence is related to risky sexual behavior in emerging adulthood*. Free Article: <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0230242>
- Ybarra, M., & Thompson, R. (2018). *Predicting the emergence of sexual violence in adolescence*.  
Free Article: <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC6483380>
- DeSousa, A. & Lodha, P. (2017). *Neurobiology of pornography addiction -- A clinical review*. *Telangana Journal of Psychiatry*, 3(2), 66-70.  
Free Article: <https://www.ovid.com/jnls/tjpy/fulltext/10.18231/2455-8559.2017.0016~neurobiology-of-pornography-addiction-a-clinical-review>
- Brown, J.A. & Wisco, J.J. (2019). *The components of the adolescent brain and its unique sensitivity to sexually explicit material*. *Journal of Adolescence*, 72, 10–13.  
Free Article: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/332122856\\_The\\_components\\_of\\_the\\_adolescent\\_brain\\_and\\_its\\_unique\\_sensitivity\\_to\\_sexually\\_explicit\\_material](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/332122856_The_components_of_the_adolescent_brain_and_its_unique_sensitivity_to_sexually_explicit_material)
- Wilkinson, K. L. J. (2023). *The Breeding of Wolves: Understanding the Escalation Continuum & Escalation Dynamics of Contemporary Sex Trafficking Demand*. *Doctoral Dissertations and Projects*. 4600.  
Free Doctoral Dissertation: <https://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/doctoral/4600>
- Olson, H. (2026). *Childhood exposure to pornography and the normalization of online exploitation*.  
Free Article: <https://www.ovid.com/jnls/nursing/fulltext/10.1097/nsg.0000000000000432~childhood-exposure-to-pornography-and-the-normalization-of>

#### Professional Organizations & Government Resources

- Culture Reframed – CultureReframed.org: *Recent research on the emotional, behavioral, and sexual harms of pornography to children, adolescents, and teens (all citations are 2018-2023)*  
<https://culturereframed.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Culture-Reframed-Harms-of-Pornography-07-2024-12.pdf>
- Defined Young Minds – DefendYoungMinds.com: *Kids can learn to reject pornography*.  
<https://www.defendyoungminds.com/articles>
- Covenant Eyes – CovenantEyes.com: *Pornography Statistics*. <https://www.covenanteyes.com/pornstats/>
- Fight the New Drug – FightTheNewDrug.org: *How Porn Can Fuel Sex Trafficking*  
<https://fightthenewdrug.org/how-porn-can-fuel-sex-trafficking/>
- Fight the New Drug – FightTheNewDrug.org: *How Porn Can Promote Sexual Violence*  
<https://fightthenewdrug.org/how-porn-can-promote-sexual-violence/>
- Your Brain on Porn (video) – YouTube.com: *Your Brain on Porn*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7oFVOJf0TzY>

**Broken link?** Please notify us at [support@WalkingWise.com](mailto:support@WalkingWise.com). **Thank you!** Links accessed 7/10/2026.