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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

Walking Wise Education Center

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Parents & Caregivers

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that parents always treat a child’s 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://www.HealthyChildren.org). In addition, if there are any suspicions of child sex trafficking, contact the National Human Trafficking Hotline at 1-888-373-7888 or Rescue America at 833-599-FREE (3733). For more information, visit [HumanTraffickingHotline.org](https://www.HumanTraffickingHotline.org) or [RescueAmerica.ngo](https://www.RescueAmerica.ngo).

LESSON #4



LESSON PLAN #4

The Pornography Link

Objective: To provide ideas for a deeper conversation that explores the connection between the mental harm caused by viewing pornography and its role in growing the commercial sex trade.

I. Emotional Readiness Acknowledgment

- A. **Educator:** To ensure readiness for exploitation prevention education, refer to the *Walking Wise Implementation Tools* and the U.S. Department of Education's guide, *Human Trafficking in America's Schools (ed.gov)*. Also, please review the classroom teaching tips to prepare for educating students about exploitation.
- B. **Parents:** To prepare for educating your children about exploitation, please review the home teaching tips.

II. Animated Video & Classroom PowerPoint Presentation

- A. **Educator:** Consider completing the adult learning module on this topic for additional background. Download and adapt the classroom presentation to fit your students' age and school policies.
- B. **Parents:** Review the vocabulary words (below) with your child, then watch the animated video. After discussing the lesson, consider having your child complete the student survey in this lesson plan.

Vocabulary

1. **Pornography:** Pictures, videos, or media that show sexual behavior to create excitement, which often display unrealistic or harmful behavior.
2. **Habit:** Something a person does regularly, often without thinking about it.
3. **Overexposure:** Seeing something so often that it starts to affect how you think, feel, or act.
4. **Addiction:** A strong urge to keep doing something even when it starts causing problems and feels hard to stop.
5. **Escalating:** Increasing in number, amount, or intensity.
6. **Dopamine:** A brain chemical that creates feelings of pleasure and motivation.
7. **Reward Circuit:** A system in the brain that connects actions with good feelings and makes people want to repeat them.
8. **Brain Fog:** A temporary feeling where it is harder to think clearly, focus, or remember things.
9. **Isolation:** Being separated from others or pulling away from people you usually talk to or spend time with.
10. **Depression:** A feeling of sadness or emptiness that lasts a long time, making it hard to enjoy everyday life.
11. **Self-esteem:** How people feel about themselves and how much they believe they are valuable and capable.
12. **Sexual Exploitation:** When someone takes advantage of another person for their own benefit, especially in a sexual way, often using pressure, tricks, or control.
13. **Humiliation:** Feeling embarrassed or ashamed caused by harmful treatment or being disrespected.

III. Post Video Discussion

1. In what ways can viewing pornography be harmful?

- **Habits Can Form:** Viewing pornography can start as something occasional, but the brain may begin to want it more often. Watching pornography often can turn into a habit that can be hard to stop.
- **Unrealistic Ideas:** Pornography can show behaviors that are not real or healthy, which may confuse people about relationships, mutual respect, and body image.
- **Uncomfortable Feelings:** Some people may feel confused, upset, embarrassed, or have lower confidence after watching pornography.
- **Less Respect for Others:** Viewing pornography can make it harder to see others as real people with feelings and can affect how someone treats others.
- **People Can Be Harmed:** Pornography is sometimes made by taking advantage of people through pressure, tricks, drugs, or other forms of control, which is a form of sex trafficking.
- **Online Risks:** Pornography may make sharing private images (sexting) seem normal. This, however, can increase the risk of being tricked or pressured by an unsafe person to share more images.

2. Why might some companies try to get young people interested in pornography?

- **To Make Money:** Some companies make money when people watch pornographic content, so they try to get as many viewers as possible.
- **To Keep People Coming Back:** They may design websites or content in ways that make people want to keep watching.
- **Future Customers:** Some companies hope that young viewers will continue using their content as they get older. (Wilkinson, K, 2024)
- **Stronger Habits Over Time:** Repeated viewing can train the brain to want more, which can turn into habits that are hard to break. (Wilkinson, K, 2024)

3. How does viewing something like pornography repeatedly turn into a strong habit or addiction?

- **Brain Chemical (Dopamine):** When someone views something they like, the brain releases a chemical called dopamine that creates feelings of enjoyment and motivation.
- **Feeling Good = Wanting More:** Because the brain likes that feeling, it remembers it and often wants to repeat the activity again.
- **Reward Circuit:** The brain begins to connect the activity with feeling good, which can turn into a pattern: action → dopamine → reward → repeat
- **Habits Can Form:** When something is repeated often, it can become a habit that can be hard to stop.
- **Stronger Urge Over Time:** Over time, the brain may want more of the activity to get the same feeling.
- **Addiction:** In some cases, a habit can become very hard to stop, even if it starts causing problems. This is called an addiction.

4. Why can young brains be more affected by repeated habits?

- **Brains Are Still Growing:** Young brains are still developing, which means they learn quickly from repeated experiences.
- **Learning Through Repetition:** When something is done repeatedly, the brain can form habits more easily.
- **Decision Making is Still Developing:** The part of the brain that helps with making good decisions and controlling impulses is still growing and will continue to develop into adulthood.
- **Stronger Impact Over Time:** Because of this, repeated exposure to certain activities can have a stronger effect on habits and behavior in young people.

5. What behavior changes might happen if someone spends too much time viewing harmful online images?

- **Thinking and Focus:** It may become harder to focus, remember things, or do well in school. Some people may feel distracted or have “brain fog.”
- **Less Interested in Activities:** A person may lose interest in hobbies, sports, or activities they used to enjoy.
- **Spending Less Time with Others:** They may start to pull away or become isolated from friends or family and spend more time alone.
- **Keeping Secrets:** They might try to hide what they are doing or feel uncomfortable talking about it.
- **Feelings and Emotions:** Some people may feel more irritable, embarrassed, or have lower confidence.
- **How They Treat Others:** It may affect how someone thinks about or treats other people, including showing less respect or understanding.

6. How can someone be tricked or pressured into creating harmful images or videos?

- **Tricked or Lured:** Someone may offer money, gifts, or help to try to convince a young person to create or share private images.
- **False Promises:** An unsafe person might pretend to offer a job (like modeling or acting), but their real intention is to get someone to create pornographic content.
- **Pressure or Threats:** Someone may pressure, manipulate, or threaten a person to get them to share images or videos.
- **Lasting Impact:** Once something is shared online, it can be hard to remove and may continue to spread without permission.

7. How can harmful images or videos be connected to exploitation and trafficking?

- **It is Against the Law to Involve Kids:** It is illegal to involve anyone under 18 in creating sexual images or videos. Laws exist to protect children and teens from this kind of harm.
- **Using Images to Control Someone:** A person may try to use private images to threaten or pressure someone, saying they will share them unless the person does what they want. This is called sextortion.
- **Used to Harm Others:** Some people use photos, videos, text messages (sexting), or even fake AI-generated images to take advantage of others or to try to control them in unsafe situations.
- **Making Money from Harm:** In some cases, people try to make money by sharing or selling harmful images or by taking advantage of others online.

8. Is it possible to remove harmful images from the internet?

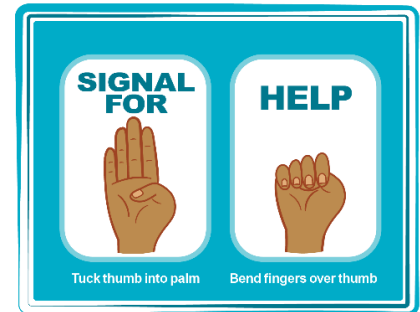
- **Take It Down Tool:** There is a free tool called **Take It Down** that helps stop the sharing of private images while protecting a person’s identity.
- **Report For Help:** Parents or trusted adults can help young people (under 18) report harmful images to the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC) at **Report.CyberTip.org**.
- **Websites Can Take Them Down:** After a report is made, experts contact websites and platforms to request that the images be removed.
- **It May Take Time:** Because images can be shared many times, it may take time to remove them, but help is available, and action can be taken.

IV. How to Ask for Help

There are safe ways to get help if you or someone you know is being threatened or harmed.

Options:

- If you are in immediate danger, dial 911.
- If the sexual predator is NOT a family member, tell a parent or guardian.
If the sexual predator IS a family member, tell a trustworthy adult.
- If you are a student, tell a trustworthy teacher, coach, school nurse, social worker, officer, principal, or guidance counselor.
- To gain internet access for help, use a computer at school or a public library.
- If you are in public, consider hand-motioning the “Signal for Help” to alert bystanders to call the police.



24-Hour Hotlines & Websites for HELP

- CyberTipline Line.....1-800-THE-LOST (843-5678) or [Report.CyberTip.org](https://www.reportcybertip.org)
- National Human Trafficking Hotline.....1-888-373-7888 or Text “BEFREE”: 233733
- Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services1-800-622-HELP (4357) or [SAMHSA.gov/young-adults](https://www.samhsa.gov/young-adults)
- Sex Addicts Anonymous1-800-477-8191 or [SAA-Recovery.org](https://www.saa-recovery.org)
- SexHelp.....1-866-575-6853 or [SexHelp.com/educate](https://www.sexhelp.com/educate)
- STRIVE21.....989-720-8000 or [STRIVE21.com](https://www.strive21.com)

VIDEO SCRIPT #4

The Pornography Link of Child Sex Trafficking

Note: The bolded words are defined in the video vocabulary list under section II.

Ever ridden your bike downhill and experienced the thrill of speed, but then anxiety sets in once you're no longer in control? That's how the human brain experiences **overexposure** to nudity and sex on the internet.

Curiosity is normal, but what may seem like a harmless search for knowledge can develop into a powerful craving for sexual images and videos. This is called **pornography** addiction, which impacts an **escalating** number of young people and adults. In fact, 42 billion visits were made to one major porn site alone...in just one year (Forbes.com, 2019).

Here's how viewing pornography can lead to **addiction**:

Each time pornography is viewed, a chemical called **dopamine** is released into the brain, creating a sensation of happiness and satisfaction. After consistently flooding the brain with dopamine and pleasure, the brain's **reward circuit** becomes rewired, causing a porn addiction. The brain's hunger for reward creates non-stop clicking from image to image. This can cause **brain fog** to set in and low motivation to do anything else.

Pornography is usually viewed in secrecy, which can lead to **isolation**, **depression**, and poor **self-esteem**.

Other addictions, like drugs and alcohol, are expensive, and the substance eventually runs out. But the porn industry provides an endless stream of free online porn, making it impossible to click to that last image.

So, what does porn have to do with child sex trafficking?

- Victims can be more easily controlled by traffickers once they've been coerced or blackmailed into making pornography.
- Traffickers convince victims that there's no escaping the sex trade once their faces are revealed in pornographic photos and videos.
- The pornography and sex trafficking industries work together to fuel the **sexual exploitation** of young people. Functioning as a marketing tool, porn sites are often used to advertise the sale of victims to sex buyers.
- When pornography fails to satisfy, some addicts can be driven to purchase young people for sex.

Children are the most innocent victims of the porn industry, including isolated kids hooked on viewing obscene images through phones and game consoles. And young people, who are harmed in the making of pornography, the endless cycle of online **humiliation**, and victims who are sold by sex traffickers through porn sites.

What the porn industry doesn't want you to know is that those who appear as models and actors are often unwilling victims.

If this is your experience, contact a trustworthy adult for help.
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?

- | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | A. Alcohol and drug use |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | B. Gambling |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | C. Viewing pornography |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | D. All of the above. |

2. What changes might happen if someone spends too much time viewing harmful online images?

- | | |
|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | A. They are often more focused on schoolwork. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | B. They can spend less time with friends and be less involved in activities they enjoyed. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | C. They feel better or more confident about themselves. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | D. They have a strong desire to spend time with friends and family. |

3. Which statement is TRUE about harmful online content?

- | | |
|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | A. It can affect how people think, feel, or behave. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | B. It always shows healthy and realistic behavior. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | C. It cannot affect the brain. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | D. It only affects adults. |

4. Which statement is TRUE about online safety?

- | | |
|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | A. It is okay to share private images with strangers. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | B. If something online makes you uncomfortable, you should tell a trusted adult. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | C. Once something is online, it is always safe. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | D. Young people should keep everything online a secret. |

STUDENT SURVEY #4

The Pornography Link

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

ANSWER KEY

KEY #3

1) D

2) B

3) A

4) B

RESOURCES #4

The Pornography Link

Visit us online at [WalkingWise.com](https://www.walkingwise.com).

Other Resource Links – Websites accessed 8/7/2025

Wilkinson Jr., Kevin L. (2024). The Breeding of Wolves: Understanding the Escalation Continuum & Escalation Dynamics of Contemporary Sex Trafficking. <https://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/doctoral/4600/>

Human Trafficking Search – HumanTraffickingSearch.org: *The Connection Between Sex Trafficking and Pornography*
<https://humantraffickingsearch.org/the-connection-between-sex-trafficking-and-pornography/>

Melissa Farley – ProstitutionResearch.com: *Renting an Organ for Ten Minutes*
<http://www.prostitutionresearch.com/FarleyRentinganOrgan11-06.pdf>

Forbes – Forbes.com: *Pornhub 2019 Year in Review Report: More Porn, More Often*
<https://www.forbes.com/sites/curtissilver/2019/12/11/pornhub-2019-year-in-review-report-more-porn-more-of-ten/?sh=347fdc694671>

The Exodus Road® - TheExodusRoad.com: *Porn and Human Trafficking: The Facts You Need to Know*
<https://theexodusroad.com/porn-and-human-trafficking-the-facts-you-need-to-know/>

Covenant Eyes – CovenantEyes.com: *Pornography Statistics*
<https://www.covenanteyes.com/pornstats/>

Fight the New Drug – FightTheNewDurg.org: *How Porn Can Fuel Sex Trafficking*
<https://fightthenewdrug.org/how-porn-can-fuel-sex-trafficking/>

Fight the New Drug – FightTheNewDurg.org: *How Porn Can Promote Sexual Violence*
<https://fightthenewdrug.org/how-porn-can-promote-sexual-violence/>

Educate Empower Kids – EducateEmpowerKids.org: *Conversations with My Kids: 30 Essential Family Discussions*
<https://educateempowerkids.org/>

Purity is Possible – PurityIsPossible.com: *The Science Behind Pornography*
<http://purityispossible.com/the-science-behind-pornography/>

YourBrainOnPorn.com: *Your Brain on Porn®*
<https://www.yourbrainonporn.com/>

Your Brain on Porn (video) – YouTube.com: *Your Brain on Porn*
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7oFVOJf0TzY>

Stop Together – StopTogether.com: *Let's Stop Watching Porn, Together*
<https://stoptogether.com/>

NoFap – nofap.com: *What is porn addiction?*
<https://nofap.com/porn-addiction>

Broken link? Please notify us at support@WalkingWise.com. **Thank you!**