

## UNDERSTANDING PORNOGRAPHY AS A PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS

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## KEY INFLUENCERS



**CORDELIA ANDERSON, MA**  
 AUTHOR & FOUNDER  
 National Children's Advocacy Center  
 Child Sexual Abuse & Exploitation

**CORDELIA ANDERSON**  
[www.cordeliaanderson.com](http://www.cordeliaanderson.com)



**GAIL DINES**  
[www.culturereframed.org](http://www.culturereframed.org)  
 solving the public health crisis of the digital age

## Pornography was...

*'Sexually explicit media that are primarily intended to sexually arouse the audience'.*

- Flood, M. (2009). Youth, Sex, and the Internet. [www.lizwalkerprepresents.com](http://www.lizwalkerprepresents.com)

## Redefining as Hardcore Pornography

Free online sites such as Pornhub, Redtube, Youporn etc.


*Illegal, unclassified, "gonzo" or hard-core XXX, "free online material that depicts individuals or groups engaging in sexual behaviours where **inequity** between the parties is clear, **violence** is observed or audible, where **degradation, humiliation, punishment** and **extreme submission** appear to be the general objective of the power dynamics or behaviour depicted.*

- Leman, J. (2014). Characteristics of Young People Referred for Problem Sexual Behaviour. [www.lizwalkerprepresents.com](http://www.lizwalkerprepresents.com)

## Research consistently states...

An overwhelming majority of online pornography depicts violent and aggressive acts in which the actor is usually male and the recipient is almost always female.

Faubert, J. D. et al. (2011). Pornography viewing among fraternity men. [dx.doi.org/10.1080/10532528.2011.581441](http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10532528.2011.581441). [www.lizwalkerprepresents.com](http://www.lizwalkerprepresents.com)



erotica      hard-core porn      extreme

Source Concept: Maree Crabbe



### CHILDREN

#### How prevalent is porn use amongst kids?

- Survey of 70,000 children in the last 18 months
- On average, sexting began in the fifth grade
- Pornography consumption began when children turned 8
- Pornography addiction began around age 11

The Boogeyman Exists  
And He's in Your Child's Back Pocket  
Jesse Weinberger  
Nationally recognized Internet Safety Expert & Counselor

Statistic Source: New York Times: What's the right age for a child to get a smartphone?

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### CHILDREN

#### Problem Sexualised Behaviours Australian Statistics

- 75% of 7-11 year old boys and
- 67% of 7-11 year old girls in treatment for PSBs reported **early sexualisation** through online **pornography**.
- Freely available online pornography is shaping the sexual conditioning of increasing numbers of young people.
- Sexual abuse of children by other children or adolescents constitutes approximately 40 to 90% of sexual offending against children.
- APS made strong statements about the impacts in their Senate Inquiry Submission

Lemon (2014). Characteristics of Young People Referred for Problem Sexual Behaviour  
Ford et al (2008). Internet-based adolescent sexual offenders: characteristics, profiles and treatment.

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### CHILDREN

#### Exposure 9 years or younger compared with 10 or over

Reported more:

- Sexually questionable acts
- Desire to engage in more varied sex
- Sexually aroused by violence
- Consumed more pornography later in life
- Spend more time per week looking at pornography

**\*\* Now pornography is viewed by youth as a source of sexual education**

Skauf (2007). Who has seen what when? Pornography's contribution to the social construction of sex with young childhood and adolescence.

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### VARYING IMPACTS ON THE VIEWER

- The characteristics of the viewer
- Their engagement with the material
- Character and context of exposure

Michael Flood (2009) Youth, Sex & the Internet

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### CHILDREN

#### Second Hand Pornography: World Vision Study Cambodian Children, 2006

In-depth interviews with children demonstrated:

- ▶ not only does pornography have a strong impact on the behaviors of children who view it
- ▶ but on other children as well - due to the increased levels of physical and verbal sexual harassment of girls, and the general increase in sexualized discourse among children

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**TEENS****Adolescents who regularly watch porn:**

- more likely to have increased anxiety and depression
- less likely to follow rules
- report difficulties in relationships
- more likely to develop unrealistic values & beliefs
- have more sexual preoccupation
- engage earlier in sexual experimentation
- girls report feeling physically inferior
- boys report fear of performance during sex
- emergence of distorted sexual scripts
- endorse violent social attitudes that are supportive of committing sexual assault and show decreased empathy for rape victims

SOURCE: Youth Wellbeing Project's submission to the Senate Inquiry into the Harm being done to Australian children through access to pornography on the internet.  
Available from URL: <http://www.lizwalkerprepresents.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/sub131.pdf>

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**YOUTH > ADULTS****General indications**

- limited capacity for intimacy
- unawareness of pleasure
- limited knowledge of consent
- less sexual enjoyment from real life behaviours
- tension & difficulties within real life sexually intimate relationships
- decreased commitment to partners:
  - *Relationships Australia:*  
*readily accessible online porn is leading to a breakdown of trust and an erosion of intimacy in about 21% of all relationships*
- young women more likely to expect violence or degrading behaviours from young men
- body dissatisfaction in both young men and women
- habitual / compulsive / addictive use leading to erectile dysfunction

SOURCE: Youth Wellbeing Project's submission to the Senate Inquiry into the Harm being done to Australian children through access to pornography on the internet.  
URL: <http://www.lizwalkerprepresents.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/sub131.pdf>

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**What you may see present**

- trauma type symptoms in children
  - bedwetting / nightmares / sudden or distinct changes in behaviour
- problem sexualised behaviour / child on child sexual abuse
- distorted sexual scripting
- anxiety and depression / oppositional behaviour / withdrawal / isolation
- 2016 RESEARCH: direct correlations between adolescent porn use and willingness to engage in casual sex
  - riskier sexual behaviours that increase susceptibility to STIs, injuries & other health problems
- reports of difficulties in relationships / signs of violence
- painful intercourse / onset vaginismus due to rough sex / no pleasure
- internal injuries / anal fissures
- request for genital surgery and body modification
- erectile dysfunction / low desire / libido issues

SOURCE: Youth Wellbeing Project's submission to the Senate Inquiry  
URL: <http://www.lizwalkerprepresents.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/sub131.pdf>

Oosteren et al (2016). Adolescents' Sexual Media Use and Willingness to Engage in Casual Sex: Differentiating Behaviors and Underlying Processes.

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**Impact on the adolescent brain**

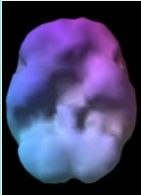
Adolescents are uniquely vulnerable to sexualized cues and media.

Developmental characteristics make the brain more vulnerable:

1. An innate vulnerability to neuroplasticity—the brain is rapidly strengthening the most used circuits and pruning the least used connections.
2. An immature prefrontal cortex - no brakes - and an over responsive limbic system.
3. An overactive stress response
4. An overactive dopamine system - dopamine is a major player in development of addiction.
5. The ability of steroid hormones to exert an organizational effect on the brain.

Dr. Jennifer Brown - 2016; unpublished research

www.proctoryourminds.org

**Impact on the human brain**

- Supranormal Stimulus
- Constant novelty paired with dopamine
- Impacts reward system
- Brain becomes desensitised
- Changes the grey matter
- Neurological addiction is becoming increasingly common

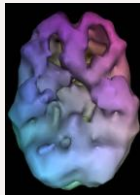


Image source: Dr Daniel Amen

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**PRE INTERNET**

- Erectile dysfunction rates of 2-5% in men under 40.

**POST INTERNET**

- Erectile dysfunction rates range from 27% (>40years) to 33% (<40years)
- Rates for low libido (hypo-sexuality) range from 16% (>40years) to 37% (<40years)
- That's nearly a 1000% increase in youthful ED rates
- A growing number of studies correlate use of internet porn with arousal, attraction, and sexual performance problems.

**AMPLE RESEARCH:** [yourbrainonporn.com](http://yourbrainonporn.com)

www.lizwalkerprepresents.com

## Pornography use has been “normalised”

- The process by which an idea or behavior **goes from clearly problematic** to:
  - *an accepted part of societal culture.*
  - *“just the way it is” or “just what people do”*
- **Once indoctrinated & barriers removed, it is viewed as beneficial or preferential & then NOT Questioned; problem is with the questioner**

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## Toxic decisions seem rational in toxic environments

Dr. John Briere

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## PUBLIC HEALTH APPROACH

## Pornography has been defined as PH issue for over 25 years

- For a problem to be a PH concern *it needs to be a social issue.*
- Pornography is a **social issue.**
- **Social issues** from a PH perspective involve problems that **affect individuals or groups beyond their capacity to correct**
- Once a social issue – *responsibility shifts from individuals to holding external social causes or influences accountable*

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## The future of public health - 1988

- Public health focuses on safeguarding and improving the physical, mental, and social wellbeing of the community as a whole.
- Public health is what we, as a society, **do collectively to assure the conditions** in which people can be healthy



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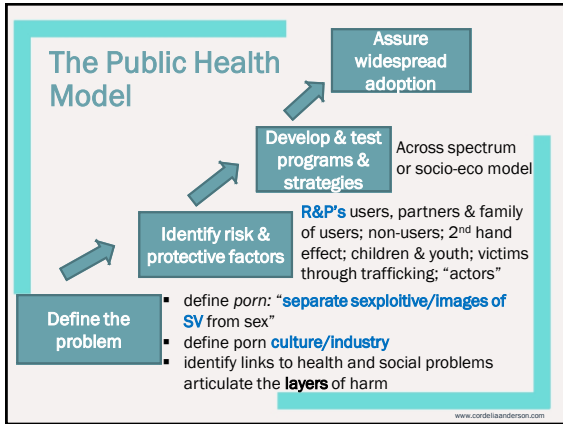
## Beyond Individual Strategies

“No mass disorder afflicting mankind is ever brought under control or eliminated by attempts at **treating the affected individual**”

... **Must target the whole population**

George Albee, 1983

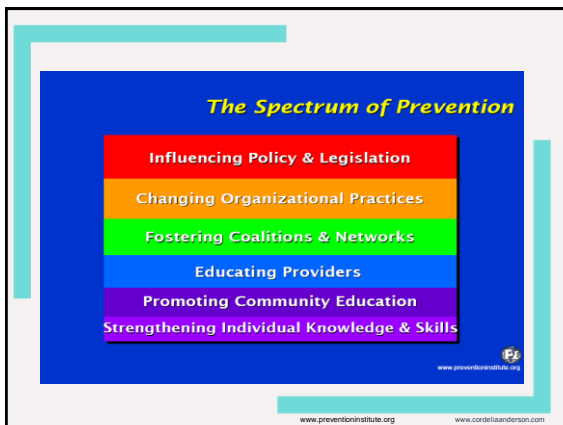
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### WHY Focus on Public Health?

We can't arrest, prosecute, incarcerate, legislate, treat or educate our way out of this. It will take all that and more and the more is **broad based social change**.

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### Possible Actions

- Agreed on best practice of **NOT recommending** pornography use in therapy
  - Scotland Sex Therapists

**- For therapist: Do No Harm**

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## HEEADSSS ASSESSMENT

May be used to specifically screen adolescents for risk behaviours and to identify social and environmental risk factors in their lives:

- HOME
- EDUCATION / EMPLOYMENT
- EATING AND EXERCISE
- ACTIVITIES AND PEER RELATIONSHIPS
- DRUG USE / CIGARETTES / ALCOHOL
- SEXUALITY
- SUICIDE / SELF HARM / DEPRESSION / MOOD
- SAFETY & SPIRITUALITY

Include Pornography in initial ASSESSMENT

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## ADD TO THE HEEADSSS ASSESSMENT – PORN QUESTIONS

Explore their knowledge, understanding, experience and porn viewing practices.

Look for risk taking related behaviour / abuse / compulsive viewing:

- Pornography is something that some young people tend to access. Has this been your experience?
- When was the last time you saw pornography?
- Do you have any questions about what you've seen?
- How often do you watch pornography?
- When do you feel the need to watch pornography? (When you are bored, angry, frustrated, lonely? Porn addiction can often be used as a coping mechanism)
- Do you think porn use is an okay habit?
- Does your porn use feel out of control?
- Do you feel as though your porn use has influenced the way you interact with others or what your expectations of 'sex' may be?

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## Conversations with parents

If there's been gradual / sudden changes in behaviour:

- Identify any 'orange' light or 'red' light behaviours suggesting PSBs
- Implement referrals to sexual behaviour management clinics such as Australian Childhood Foundation; counsellors; psychologists
- Question technology use / home internet filtering
- PPU – referrals, forums and [www.fortifyprogram.org](http://www.fortifyprogram.org)
- Determine level of conversation in the home re sexuality, relationships & porn – suggest parent education
  - Watch for trends in local clinics
  - Feedback to schools on need for education and protective behaviours education

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## What to do

- Survey of parents or professionals
  - Don't dismiss anecdotal evidence
  - Problematic Sexual Behaviors Knowledge from evidence based practice... What are clinicians seeing?
- Use studies to inform local policies/practices
- Train teams to talk about pornography as PH issue
- Engage medical & public health leaders
- Lawsuits for damages
- Offer age, stage appropriate counter education for children, youth and adults
- Grassroots organizing to demand ISP's have filters

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Addressing the harms of internet pornography on children and young people

#PORNHARMSKIDS @PORNHARMSKIDS

Add you name to the movement at <http://pornharmskids.org.au/>

## Resource Sites:

- [www.cordeliaanderson.com](http://www.cordeliaanderson.com)
- [www.culturereframed.org](http://www.culturereframed.org) - Dr. Gail Dines
- [www.yourbrainonporn.com](http://www.yourbrainonporn.com)
- [www.fortifyprogram.org](http://www.fortifyprogram.org) - free for under 20

Help forums for those experiencing porn addiction related problems

- [www.rebootnation.org](http://www.rebootnation.org)
- [www.nofap.com](http://www.nofap.com)

### Where can you find us?

-  [www.youthwellbeingproject.com.au](http://www.youthwellbeingproject.com.au)
-  [contact@youthwellbeingproject.com.au](mailto:contact@youthwellbeingproject.com.au)
-  [facebook.com/YouthWellbeingProject](https://facebook.com/YouthWellbeingProject)
-  @YouthWellbeing
-  [www.notforidde.info](http://www.notforidde.info)
-  [www.pornharmskids.org.au](http://www.pornharmskids.org.au)



**EMPOWER youth INVEST in community IMPACT the future**