

Porn and how it affects us



Often individuals take the wrong meaning / messages from porn, and this can develop unrealistic and/or negative attitudes about sex, consent, respect and relationships.

Some individuals' porn consumption may affect how they treat their partners, especially how men may treat women disrespectfully or with contempt as a result of this imbalance / misrepresentation (misogyny).

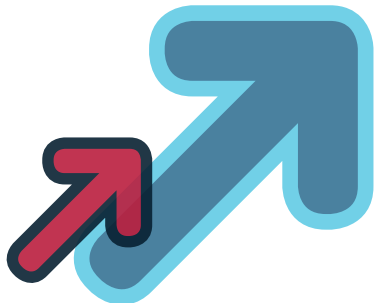
For some people, porn can make them feel bad about themselves, their body, or their own sexual performance.

Some people might also feel dependent on porn, they may feel they can't stop watching it and/or it is getting in the way of other parts of their life.

If you feel like any of these are true for you, you might want to think about limiting the amount or types of porn you watch, or not watching porn at all. Considering getting support from a youth worker or mental health professional.

Useful websites

- www.nhs.uk/live-well/sexual-health/
- www.thinkuknow.co.uk/
- www.ceop.police.uk/Safety-Centre/



For More Information:



If you would like more information, please visit our website.

If you have been affected by any of the issues described in this leaflet you can talk to a Counsellor or a Youth Worker at a Streetwise drop-in.

Advice is FREE and CONFIDENTIAL.

Produced by: Streetwise Young People's Project:

Young People's Information, Advice, Counselling, Sexual Health and Support Service for 11-25 year olds.



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The Streetwise guide to Pornography and Sexting



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Pornography and reality



Pornography is material that is intended to be sexually exciting/explicit. It is not an instruction manual for sex! Pornography doesn't teach us things like how to use condoms, how to get tested for Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs), where to get Plan B/Emergency Contraception, how to get consent, or how to make your partner orgasm.

Performance vs reality

Porn is a performance, often made by paid actors. There are lots of ways this is different to reality:

→ **Performance:** All men have big penises that stay hard until sex 'finishes'.

Reality: Penises come in all shapes and sizes and sometimes they go soft during sex.

→ **Performance:** Everyone is always up for sex of any sort, so you don't have to ask first.

Reality: Different people have different sex drives and preferences. Sometimes you just don't want to have sex and that's ok! You should never feel pressured into doing something you don't want to do and you should always get consent before doing anything.

→ **Performance:** All women are thin, shaved, have toned bodies and big breasts/bottoms.

Reality: Women's bodies come in different shapes and sizes and they are all wonderful!

→ **Performance:** Sex is better if you can do lots of difficult positions.

Reality: Sex shouldn't be uncomfortable and difficult positions aren't always best! Everyone's likes are different and everyone enjoys sex differently.

→ **Performance:** People (especially women) rarely have body hair or pubic hair.

Reality: Body hair and pubic hair are perfectly natural, there is nothing wrong with it!

The law and porn



It is against the law to make, own, or send images or videos of:

- Someone under the age of 18 (even if it is yourself). This includes images that have been drawn or photoshopped, including cartoons.
- People performing sex acts on animals or dead people.
- Sex acts that look like they may cause serious harm to a person's anus, breasts or vagina.
- Rape or sexual assault by penetration.

It is also illegal to show pornographic images to anyone under the age of 16.

Keeping safe

Choices: Sex should be enjoyable, pleasurable and fun; you should never feel rushed or pressured to do anything you don't want to do.

Communication: Talk to your partner(s) about important things like using protection, getting tested for STIs, and pleasure. Talk openly about what you like to do and what you don't like to do.

Contraception: Have safer sex to avoid STIs and unplanned or unwanted pregnancies. Remember, contraception is free and accessible!

Checking In: Check in during sex and sexual activities to make sure you and your partner(s) are enjoying yourselves and are happy to keep going.



Sexting

Sexting is when you send nude or semi-nude images/videos of yourself or sexual texts to others via message, Instagram or video chat.

Sexting is not shameful or bad, but there are things to consider when deciding to do it:

- It is illegal to sext if anyone involved is under the age of 18.
- Once you send something, you lose control of it. Other people can save and share what you send/post even if you delete the original.
- What does the other person want? Sexting should be consensual, always ask the other person first.
- Don't give in to pressure to do, send, or receive anything you don't want.

Online sexual harassment and image-based sexual abuse

Online sexual harassment is when someone acts sexually to someone else online without consent. This is illegal and includes the following:

- Cyberflashing (sending sexual photos of yourself without consent).
- Unwanted sexual comments, messages, or 'jokes'.
- Sexual threats, blackmail, or exploitation.
- Sexualised bullying.

Image-based sexual abuse is when someone shares sexual content of someone else without consent.

This was previously called 'revenge porn' and is illegal. It also includes Upskirting (taking a photo under someone's clothing without knowledge or permission) and the recording and sharing of sexual assault.

