

Understanding Pornography and Sexual Addiction

A Presentation for Parents and Leaders

- There is a dramatic need for educating leaders, parents and the general population regarding pornography and sexual addiction
- The internet has changed the game concerning pornography and sexual addiction
- Pornography and sexual addiction is of epidemic proportions
- There are many voices with varying opinions on the issue of pornography and sexual addiction. Clarity on the issue is needed.
- Parents and leaders must be educated about sexual addiction and what recovery takes in order to help those in their stewardship.
- Education only or on-line self-help programs are not sufficient for sexual addiction recovery
- A cafeteria plan that suggests trying “a little of this or a little of that” is not sufficient for sexual addiction recovery
- Leaders must recognize there is spousal trauma and their need for support and healing
- Parents must be more involved in this issue and teaching their children of the danger of pornography and healthy sexuality
- Enabling by leaders, spouses and parents is the norm. Education will help address this problem
- Much is known about how to properly deal with pornography and sexual addiction. SA Lifeline Foundation provides clear and correct answers to the questions of parents, leaders, spouses and those directly suffering from addiction. Go to salifeline.org for information

Pornography and Sexual addiction / Understanding what recovery takes

- Pornography is extremely addictive. Those who repeatedly view it will become addicted.

1-According to the most recent definition of addiction by the American Society of Addiction Medicine, addiction is an actual disease of the motivation and reward systems of the brain. It causes chemical and structural changes in brain cells. Sexual addictions are included with substance addictions in this new definition.

2-Understanding this, it is important to treat pornography addiction with the same emphasis and support given to any substance abuse.

- The internet has “changed the game” by providing a delivery system for pornography that now makes the vilest forms of pornography available to anyone, young and old, at the click of a mouse affordably and anonymously.
- Reliable studies show that a very high percentage of men and a significant percentage of women are involved in viewing pornography and are addicted. The percentages seem to be similar for members of the LDS church as compared with the general population.
- Those who are addicted to pornography (sexual addicts) cannot recover on their own.

1- While bishops serve an integral role in the spiritual healing and reclamation of the individual, they need support from strong 12 Step support groups and competent professional therapists to treat pornography addiction. Just as they would not treat cocaine addiction without encouraging the person to seek outside support, so they need to avail the member of vital lifelong support systems so long-term recovery can be maintained

- A program of recovery from pornography/sexual addiction requires:

1-Humbly seeking God's help

2-Total honesty

3-Coming out of hiding / Recognition of the addiction, willingness to seek help and doing whatever it takes to work a "program of recovery".

4-Safe environment / setting and keeping safe boundaries

5-Education on the subject of sexual addiction and recovery

6-Counseling for a minimum of 12 to 18 months from a qualified sexual addiction therapist

7-Proper involvement and support of priesthood leaders / full confession / complete ongoing honesty

8-Attending 12-step groups for sexual addiction. Participation must include sincerely working the 12-steps with a sponsor. Attendance must be consistent (at least one meeting per week) for an extended period of time, for some it is a lifetime. 12-step programs that include study materials specific to sexual addiction, a definition of what the addiction is and what sobriety is are the most effective.

A-Lust is the force behind sexual addiction. Acting out sexual behaviors (viewing pornography in all its forms, objectifying the human body, masturbation, strip clubs, voyeurism, seeking prostitutes, ext.) are the "drugs of choice" to feed the addiction. Recovery is not possible if the addictive behaviors are not stopped.

B-A clear definition of sobriety is very important for effective 12-step groups involving sexual addiction. No sex with self or others except a spouse and progressive victory over lust (not viewing pornography). This simple definition of sobriety provides a minimum defined "bottom line" to measure progress and a beginning point at which true recovery begins.

C-Sponsorship or mentoring is encouraged to assist each participant in working the 12 steps and providing experience, strength and hope for recovery.

The effects of pornography/ sexual addiction on the spouse and loved ones

- The spouse of a pornography /sexual addict is traumatized by the betrayal
- She is not responsible for and did not cause the addiction of her husband
- She requires help and support to heal from the trauma of her affliction including:
 - 1-Support from an informed leader
 - 2-Counseling from a qualified sexual addiction therapist
 - 3- Education about healing from the trauma of betrayal and abuse
 - 4- Participation in a 12-step group for an extended period of time. The program should include:
 - A-Materials designed to provide support to the afflicted
 - B-Sponsorship or mentoring is encouraged to assist in working the 12 steps and providing recovery experience, strength and hope for recovery.
- Understanding the importance of setting and keeping proper boundaries

Basic requirements for effective leadership in assisting in educating those in their stewardship as well as directly helping individuals with pornography/sexual addiction, the afflicted spouse, children, youth and young adults

- Parents and leaders must be properly educated on the subject of sexual addiction.
- Effective leaders must know what is required for recovery from sexual addiction and be consistent in their message of what recovery takes (See Section I above; Recovery from pornography/sexual addiction requires).
- Leaders must understand the afflicted spouse requires support and healing.
- Leaders must understand the need to provide assistance in teaching those in their stewardship correct information on the subject of pornography and sexual addiction
- Leaders must know where qualified help is available in their area; including educational resources, qualified therapists and effective 12-step groups specific to sexual addiction.
- Parents and leaders must not enable those in their stewardship by minimizing or ignoring “the problem”.
- Leaders must assist parents in teaching children and youth about the extreme danger of pornography and support parents in setting clear boundaries.

Important Resources:

- *Understanding Pornography and Sexual Addiction, A Resource for LDS Parents and Leaders; pages 147-149*