



Discussing The Sensitive Topic Of Pornography

Why should I talk about porn with those I date?

🕯 Nearly everyone has been exposed to porn. And exposure may motivate a person to actively and repeatedly seek out porn to fulfill sexual desires. Such consumption is addictive, causing a powerful hormonal release that affects the brain in a way similar to taking cocaine. Besides creating a dependency, porn changes how we value our bodies, relationships, view others, and is a destructive force in dating and marriage.

Discussing porn with those we date allows us to ascertain another's history of porn exposure and consumption, and their attitude towards actively seeking out porn. Opening up communication and establishing mutual expectations can help guide relationship decisions. Especially when developing a serious relationship, discussing porn can help establish rules to protect your relationship and future family.

What if the person I am dating views porn?

🕯 While you should appreciate their willingness to share delicate information, don't underestimate porn. Become educated and carefully weigh the emotional risks. Ending an addiction is a grueling process that takes significant commitment and time (usually 7 to 12 months abstinence to start gaining recovery), and often involves sporadic relapses.


Changing attitudes and behaviors can take years. As you gauge how this problem affects your relationship, assess the person's willingness to stop.

- **What recovery steps are being taken?**
- **What additional steps will they take?**


Consider setting rules regarding the progression or continuance of the relationship. Speak with other trusted individuals such as family, counselors and close friends, to gain perspective. Supporting recovery is helpful; policing another's addictive behavior is not. Attend counseling together or a 12-Step support group if appropriate.



When should I have this discussion?


 Porn is a sensitive topic. Nonetheless, it is important to discuss porn early on as you become emotionally committed in the relationship. Porn should be brought up on more than one occasion and on various levels depending on the commitment level of the relationship. Closeness and relationship expectations can guide these discussions.

What should I say?

 Share the importance of open communication and the care you have for the other person. Then bring up the need to discuss pornography despite the awkwardness of the topic. Items should be discussed that honestly explore both of your histories in terms of porn exposure, consumption, and attitudes toward porn. If a problem arose in the past or continues in the present, mention what actions are or have been taken to fix it. Useful questions could be:


- **Have you been exposed to porn?**
- **Have you actively sought porn?**
If so, what was the frequency and surrounding circumstances?
- **When did you last see porn?**
- **Do you think viewing porn is a problem?**
- **What actions have you taken to stop or protect yourself from porn in the past?**
The future?

What if I currently have a porn addiction?

 While it may seem best to hide this problem, get help and recognize that honest, open disclosure to trusted individuals is crucial in overcoming this addiction. It is critical to learn about the nature of porn addiction, and the areas in which it disrupts your life. Help yourself by assessing the circumstances surrounding porn usage and strive to remove them.

Overcoming pornography requires a strong commitment and desire to recover. Commit to on-going counseling from a qualified therapist (typically 18+ months). Join a 12-Step fellowship for porn addiction where you can gain a sponsor who can help you through the recovery steps. You may wish to commit to long-term involvement. Religious persons have found frequent visits with an ecclesiastical leader and communion with God to also be essential to their recovery.

What about dating if I have a porn problem?

 Recognize that honesty is crucial in serious dating. Keep in mind the length of the recovery process and the probability of relapse. Consider how these interface with your partner's expectations and the speed with which the relationship develops. Be up front about your struggle and share the actions being taken to correct the issue.

