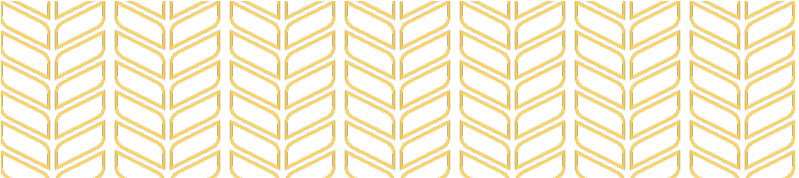




The Basics: How Pornography Hurts Women and Girls

What images comes to mind when thinking about porn consumers or addicts? Is it a mother on her computer, her kids playing in the next room? A high-profile female business executive discreetly checking her phone in a conference room? A teacher grading online papers while her students study? A doctor opening her laptop after a long day at the hospital? A high-school girl in sweatpants and a top knot switching tabs from her AP study notes to Pornhub?



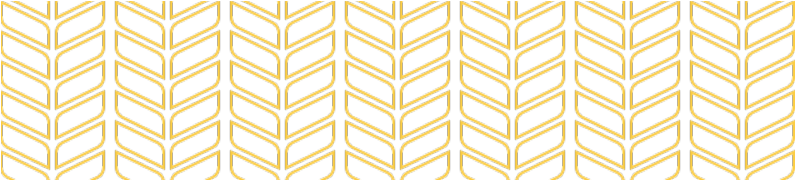
Or is it a male with his device at home, the office, or anywhere else? Most likely, it's the image of the man, and for good reason. [We know](#) that men make up roughly three-quarters of porn consumers. While the remaining 25 percent might not seem like a significant amount when compared to their male counterparts, the numbers for women do add up.

In 2017 Pornhub [reported](#) an astounding 81 million visitors per day which means that an average of 20.5 million women view pornography daily, based on those numbers, and that's just traffic to one mega site. That is a lot of women consuming porn.

Who are these women and why are they watching? They're regular people, like the ones illustrated above, and they're probably watching because porn is (mostly) culturally acceptable, works like other addictive substances where your brain floods with pleasure-inducing hormones, and is incredibly easy to access.

In fact, [over 70%](#) of porn is watched on mobile devices and [34% of](#) internet users report unwanted pornography exposure in the form of popups, fake websites, and email spam.

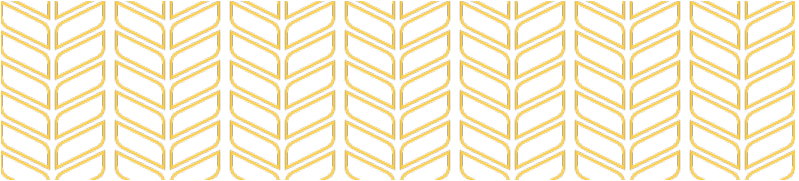




Yet shame surrounds the topic of women consuming porn, making it difficult for women to reach out for help when it becomes a problem. In fact shame is so prevalent, that online porn addiction help specifically for women is nearly nonexistent. Women do not watch porn, the internet seems to say, or if they do, they're doing it loudly—consciously making sexual choices for themselves like in the “porn for women” movement. The truth is that women do watch, and they're usually in two different camps: women who watch porn and are in favor of everyone butting out of their private sex lives, and women who struggle with addiction to something negatively affecting their lives. Both exist and both are valid. The important rise of feminism and its embrace of women managing their own sexuality has given women freedom where they have been historically limited and controlled. This is an excellent step forward toward women rejecting oppression.

However, there are problems with generalizing on either side. The website [Politico](#) says that feminists are “decidedly less vocal than they were in past decades, split internally over the question of whether filmed sex empowers women or exploits them.” When researching for this document, we found this split between porn as freedom or porn as a problem to be polarized and difficult. Yet through it all, the





culmination of our research points to the clear fact that pornography hurts women and girls. We set out to understand the reasons, doing our best to not be politically or religiously slanted by our sources. We feel that it is important to discuss the fallout of free, limitless online porn which is brimming with violence against women and girls. This is also a necessary conversation about children: the effects on children who view porn, rampant child pornography, and youth who use porn as sex education.

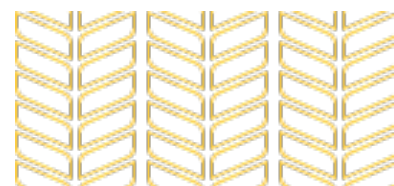
Perhaps [Brian Mcneill](#), a professor at Virginia Commonwealth University, says it best:

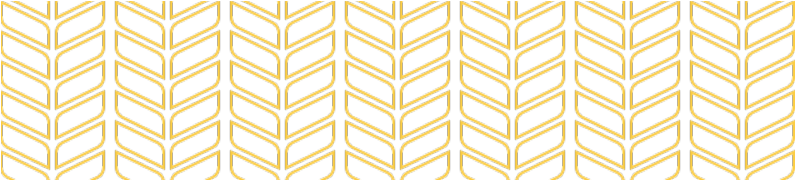
“The growth of online pornography as a means of sexual expression is a complicated issue for women, whose bodies have historically been rigidly controlled by restrictive sexual norms and practices. Online pornography offers an accessible way to seemingly resist and challenge such restrictions. However, because online pornography is dominated by an industry with economic interests in the control of women’s bodies, the sexual expression offered by the pornography industry is produced through a supply chain built on the trade and disposal of other women’s bodies for male pleasure and profit. **The pornography industry does not emancipate women from restrictive sexual practices; instead it repackages sexual control as a commercial product and markets it to women as a form of sexual choice. Thus online pornography presents dissonant messages to women—pornography is marketed to women as sexual empowerment but the content is violent and dehumanizing**”

This document strives to take an honest look at how pornography hurts women and girls through stories, research, and a little common sense. It in no way

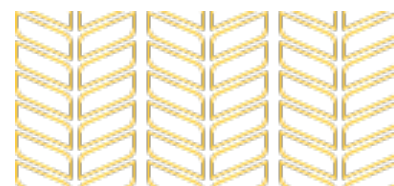
“...the culmination of our research points to the clear fact that pornography hurts women and girls.”

suggests authority over how women should manage their sexuality; rather, it offers insight into the problem and compassionate suggestions about how to move out of it.





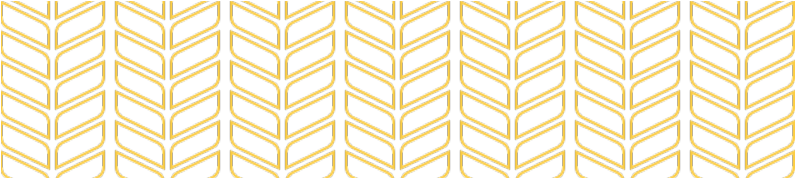
A caveat: Transectionality in gender, race, able-bodiedness, and sexual orientation are extremely important considerations when discussing the effects of porn, which this document does not delve into. Instead, our goal was to look specifically at how western women's bodies in general have been sexually objectified over time and how that intersects with their identity while viewing or participating in porn.





The Problem

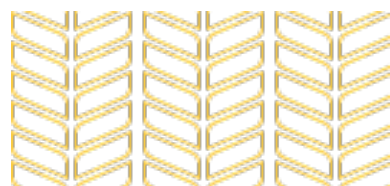
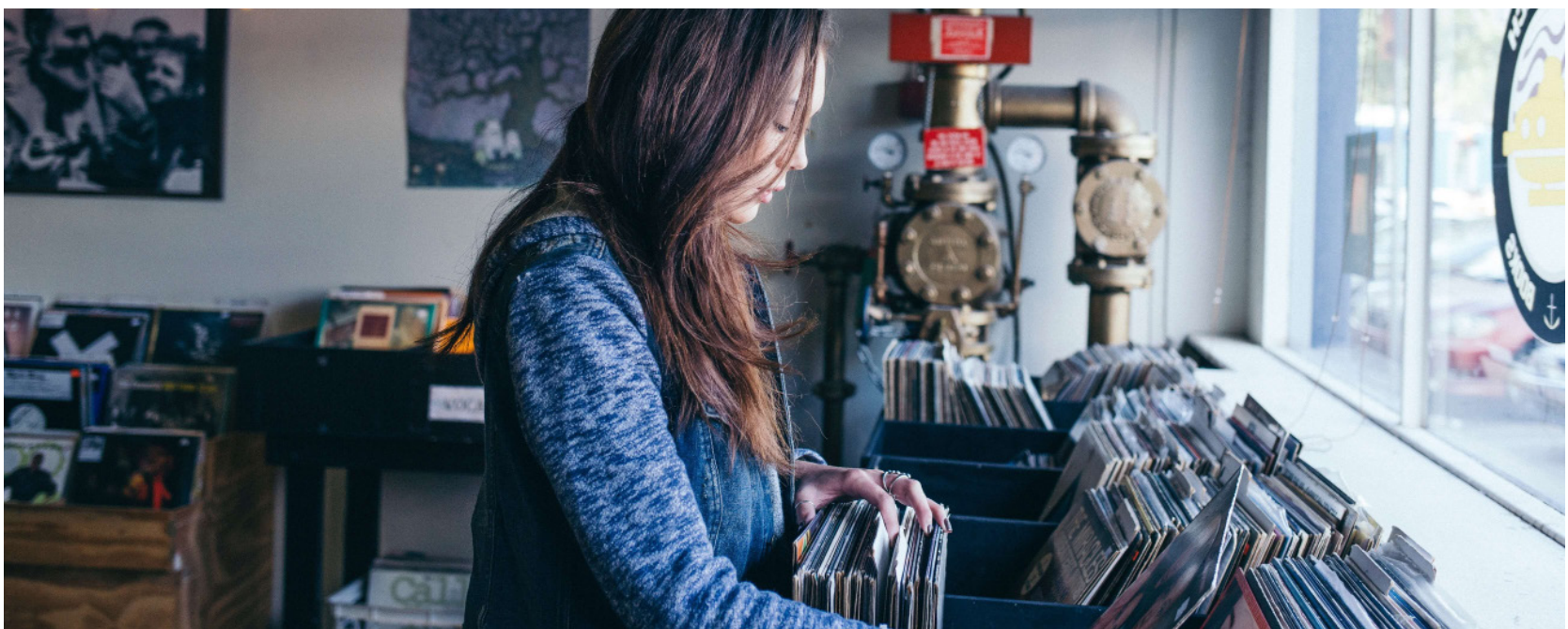
It is not enough to simply say that both men and women consume porn and therefore the negative effects are an equal problem, because genders experience pornography differently.

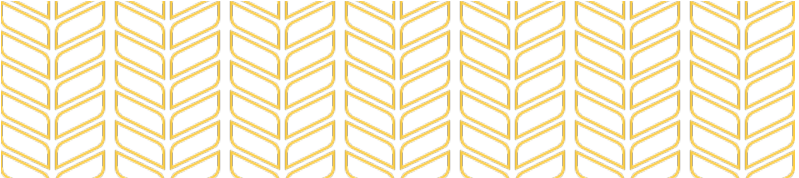


They can't help but do this because of how gender politics affect our world experience in western culture. Gender politics simply means the power imbalances between the sexes. Throughout our history, women's bodies have been highly sexualized and commodified, while men have held the power to define their identities. Objectification strips away a person's humanity, contributing to a historical oppression where women have been thought of as the weaker sex: their bodies, sexuality, thoughts, and behaviors managed and controlled. While positive change has happened, sexism and misogyny are still part of most women's experience and porn exacerbates the problem.

Misogyny and Porn

When talking about porn, misogyny is an important term to understand. It is not the same as sexism. Sexism operates from a place of misunderstanding or a lack of education. It is seen more in acts and words, such as catcalling and stereotypes like the ones people sometimes assume: women are naturally dramatic, catty, pure of heart, etc. Misogyny, on the other hand, communicates contempt and violence, often rooted in deeply held beliefs that women are only good for servicing men. Misogyny means, according to the dictionary, "entrenched prejudice against women." [One woman](#) explains it like this: "While sexism demonstrates a disregard and disrespect for women, I have always associated misogyny with something darker, angrier, and more cynical." A person can be sexist without being a misogynist. Neither sexism nor misogyny are okay and they're important to understand because mainstream porn is both a vehicle for and a creator of misogyny.





“...mainstream porn is both a vehicle for and a creator of misogyny. ”

We have a long history of female inferiority in western culture. Sexism and misogyny devalue women's worth while objectification hyper-sexualizes their bodies, creating a false story by which our society functions.

This deeply-rooted ideology becomes particularly difficult when pornography is brought into the mix. Porn is primarily produced and consumed by men. Their fantasies are the ones most often filmed, exemplified by how the camera typically stays close to the woman's body in the scene. She is the object the men act upon.

Because of our cultural history of misogyny, these fantasies often depict violence and degradation against women. Have you noticed how often the most popular pornography videos reflect the worst sort of offences such as rape, torture, and brutality like incest, gang rape, bondage, and the sexual assault of young girls?

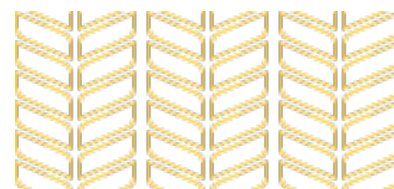
[The Washington Post](#) has this to say about it: “First and foremost, mainstream pornography consists of socially sanctioned acts of direct violence against women. What would be seen as sexual violence and brutality in other contexts is par for the course in pornography.” Unfortunately, but not surprisingly, a misogynistic and violent perspective pervades the spaces where porn is created.

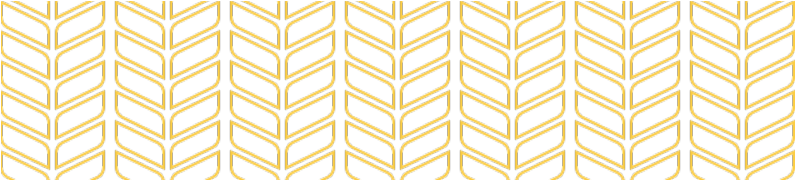
Violence: The Female Price of Male Pleasure

How then, do misogyny and violence pervade the spaces where porn is consumed? Let's take a look at that.

Pornography is a form of violence against women. Period. [Sage publishing](#) conducted a study in 2010 (the last time anyone did the math) and found that mainstream pornography includes physical and sexual violence and abuses in 88% of its scenes, with 94.4% of that violence performed upon the bodies of women and girls. Pornography as a socially acceptable, widely popular platform which directly promotes misogyny creates a host of problems for women and girls because of how it normalizes violence.

Through its acceptance of porn, society has normalized the image of women repeatedly and systematically abused through violent sexual acts. Porn strips away the humanity of women and girls, illustrating—with a few clicks—whole and complex beings easily reduced to their parts.





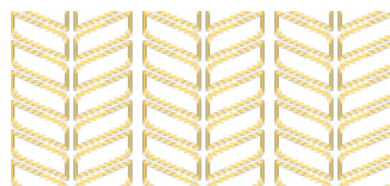
[Sexual objectification](#) occurs when a woman's body, body parts, or sexual functions are isolated from her whole person—her habits, interests, history, etc.—and treated as an object simply to be looked at, coveted, or touched. That

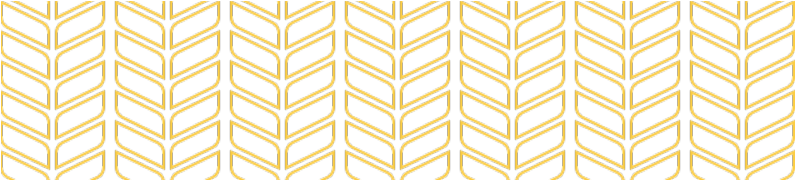
“First and foremost, mainstream pornography consists of socially sanctioned acts of direct violence against women. What would be seen as sexual violence and brutality in other contexts is par for the course in pornography.”

definition makes up nine out of ten porn videos, where the camera focuses close-up on female body parts and sexual functions. Objectification strips away that woman's humanity, making violence against her easier to accept, because she becomes not a person, but a means to an end.

In porn, women as a group are objectified. And make no mistake, pornography makes real-world violence easier to enact, easier to accept, and easier to ignore because it makes it perfectly normal.

Pornography normalizes violent sexual acts against women and girls, effectively blurring the lines of consent, giving users false ideas about intimacy, and advocating rape. [Fight the New Drug](#) says “Pornography makes women ‘rape-ready’ in the mind of its users by portraying the conquering and using of female bodies as the ideal display of masculinity.”





They explain how when viewers watch scene after scene of women dehumanized and objectified in porn, where women respond to violence with pleasure, rape and non-consent starts to look and feel normal. [Extensive research](#) confirms that the skewed, violent power dynamics in pornography translate into real-life sexual assault and harassment against women and girls *every single day*.

There are [literally thousands](#) of accounts of sexual assault and harassment, so many that they are built into the fabric of our society and go unreported by women. Consider this one incident reported in [Newsweek](#) about a woman sexually harassed by the airdrop function on her iphone. She was on a city bus when this

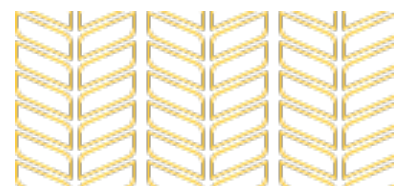
“...the skewed, violent power dynamics in pornography translate into real-life sexual assault and harassment against women and girls every single day.”

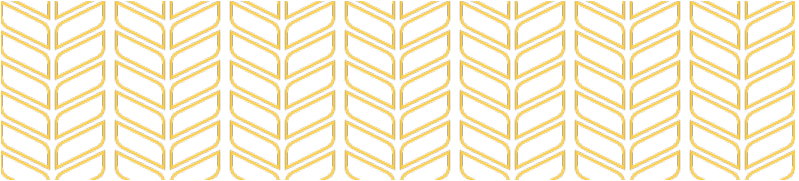
message dinged through with a link to a music file: “Songs I’ll choke you out to while destroying your uterus.” Porn taught that person those concepts and words which terrified the very real woman who was harassed by them.

Where else but pornography is this kind of violent description imaginable, let alone permissible? What other source but pornography explains how this harasser felt it was normal, or perhaps funny, to conceptualize and then say these words?

Normalizing Porn, Normalizing Pain

Ask yourself: how do you, a woman, think the normal violence and brutality acted upon women and girls (misogyny) in porn affects you? If you consistently watch porn yourself then you have seen some pretty frightening images by now. After all, we know that [pornography is addictive](#); research indicates that watching activates the pleasure centers of the brain which release serotonin and dopamine. Over time, a bigger hit of the drug is required for the same results, thus leading to more violent and degrading acts performed upon women and girls in the videos you have watched.





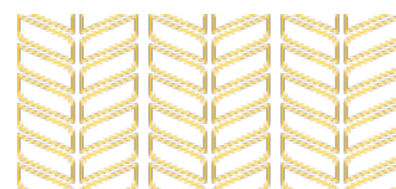
How do female porn consumers interpret that kind of degradation in everyday life? One clear way is anticipating and accepting the fact that a woman's value is tied to her willingness to be a sexual object. In our society [women are accustomed](#) to the fact that their bodies have a sticker price. Women's bodies are reduced to objects to sell cars, watches, drinks, sports, books, movies, cologne, food, you name it. From a young age girls learn to accept that their sexuality is a commodity and that they are worth less if they are not conventionally attractive or adjust their faces and bodies to meet often impossible, and usually uncomfortable standards. Lili Loufbourow wrote an article for [Newsweek](#) titled "The Female Price of Male Pleasure," where she describes these impossible standards:

"Women are constantly and specifically trained out of noticing or responding to their bodily discomfort, particularly if they want to be sexually 'viable.' Have you looked at how women are 'supposed' to present themselves as sexually attractive? High heels? Trainers? Spanx? These are things designed to wrench bodies. Men can be appealing in comfy clothes. They walk in shoes that don't shorten their Achilles tendons. They don't need to get the hair ripped off their genitals or take needles to the face to be perceived as 'conventionally' attractive."

Now add porn to the mix, which demonstrates just how okay it is to use women's bodies as objects for violence and brutality and you see even worse problems, such as voluntary genital mutilation.

According to a [Time](#) magazine article, there was an 80% increase between 2014-2015 in girls 18-years-old or younger receiving genital plastic surgery: "Just as magazines teach girls they have to be skinny to be considered attractive, porn teaches girls that to be sexy their genitals must look a certain way." Women and girls internalize the objectification they learn in a porn-saturated culture; specifically, that their sexual value is contingent upon their willingness to harm their bodies.

Porn teaches women and girls to expect pain: to expect to perform and submit to sexual acts that will hurt them, to expect to have sex even when they're not

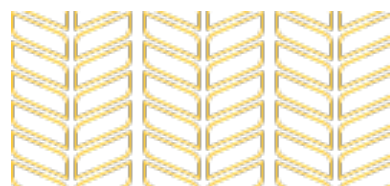


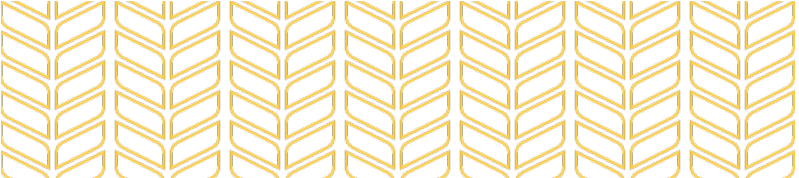


ready, and to expect their consent to be secondary to someone else's pleasure.

[Consider this startling fact:](#) “PubMed has almost five times as many clinical trials on male sexual pleasure as it has on female sexual pain. And why? Because we live in a culture that sees female pain as normal and male pleasure as right.” Mainstream pornography is a major contributor to the culturally accepted lie that female pain is normal—it is one of the primary lies in pornography. This lie seeps into the quiet lives of women in dangerous ways. Consider these [statistics](#) from the National Coalition of Domestic Violence:

- 1 in 10 women are raped by their intimate partner; 1 in 5 women have been raped in their lifetime
- 1 in 4 women are victims of severe physical violence by their intimate partner (beating, burning, strangling)
- 1 in 4 women experience sexual violence by an intimate partner
- While both women and men are victims of domestic violence, women between the ages of 18-24 are most commonly abused by domestic partners





“Because we live in a culture that sees female pain as normal and male pleasure right.”

Professor Brian McNeill, “...pornography is not mere fantasy for men; instead, it shapes how they engage in intimate behaviors.” Pornography actually changes how people understand what sex means. It changes their desires. [A 2016 study](#) on the topic concluded that people (especially men) who view pornography are much more likely to want to try sexual behaviors seen in porn, many “involving some level of aggression ranging from light slapping to choking or involve sexual behaviors which can present health consequences to the female body such as double anal penetration.”

Australia has specifically looked at the connection between women and girls’ safety and violent pornography. [A study by Collective Shout](#), an Australian nonprofit organization dedicated to protecting children from prolific, violent online porn, regularly petitions the government to make new federal laws. In a 2015 report they requested urgent action to stop porn, which they say poses a “serious threat to the wellbeing, and in some cases, the physical health and life, of girls and women.” They specifically link to studies which indicate how exposure to porn is directly related to male sexual aggression against women, especially with violent porn, but also non-violent, particularly by frequent users. One example they look to is a study of Canadian teens, where “...there was a correlation between boys’ frequent consumption of pornography and their agreement with the idea that it is acceptable to hold a girl down and force her to have sex.” Researchers in the country [have also noted](#) that anal sex among teens is directly influenced by teen boys’ access to porn, and that the practice is “painful, risky, and coercive, particularly for women.” Teen girls, in fact, have called for better sex education in school, particularly about pornography and intimacy, because of the intense pressures to engage in anal sex and send nude images to boys.

How else, besides domestic violence and physical pain does pornography’s rampant objectification and misogyny affect women on a daily basis?





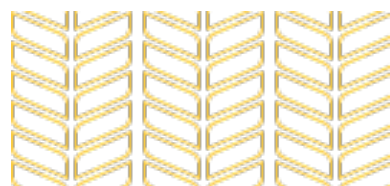
“Pornography actually changes how people understand what sex means.”

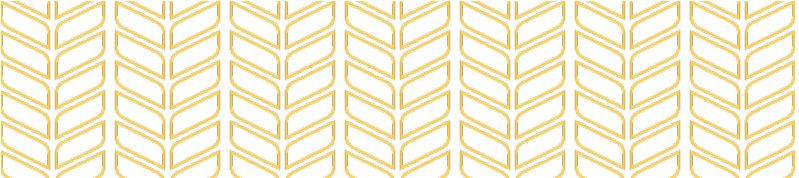
Remember our definition of objectification: when a woman’s body, body parts, or sexual functions are isolated from her whole and complex being and treated as objects to be looked at, coveted, or touched ([Roony](#)). Sound like porn much?

[According to research](#), objectification precedes sexual harassment, coercion, physical abuse, rape, and murder against women and girls and is *THE* primary contributor to violence against women. Aside from violence, online pornography contributes to major mental health problems women and girls experience, including:

- Shame
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Disordered eating
- Reduced productivity
- Trauma due to lifelong exposure to microaggressions (like watching violent porn)

To sum it up: Pornography objectifies women and girls by dehumanizing them





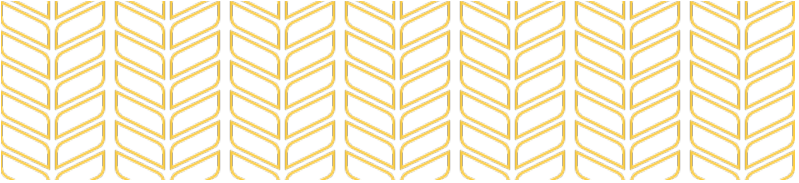
and depicting them as enjoying violent sexual acts. This leads to real-life sexual and domestic violence, as well as mental health issues. It is not a mere fantasy that the viewer leaves behind. Pornography is, in the words of [Virginia Professor Brian McNeill](#), “more than a personal choice related to speech, expression or sexuality. It is a global industry that trades on the bodies of men, women and children for profit.”

Porn and Sex Trafficking

The production and consumption of pornography is directly tied to sex trafficking. According to an excellent and [in-depth look at the topic](#), Fight the New Drug says that “in the production of mainstream porn, sex trafficking is a regular occurrence.” They explain that sex trafficking means buying or selling humans, or moving them for profit: “It’s the purest form of objectification—the literal commoditization of a person.”

Once again, the objectification of women and girls in pornography is linked to real life violence and crises. In fact, of the [estimated 21 to 32 million people subjected to slavery worldwide](#), twenty-two percent of them are exploited for sexual purposes, and half of sex trafficking victims say that while they were in





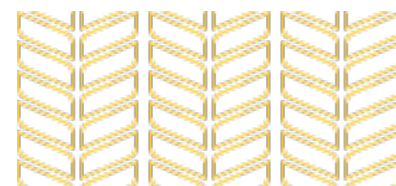
bondage their captors created pornographic videos of them. This means that among the videos posted on major porn sites, some show videos of women and girls actually being violently raped. Consider the implications of the fact that viewers cannot tell the difference.

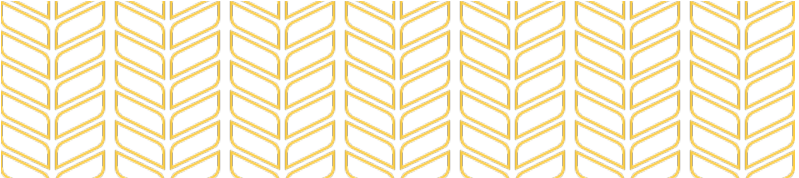
Can you tell the difference?

Watching pornography condones the enslavement and rape of women and girls for profit, as research indicates that viewers cannot tell the difference between consent and coercion. Fight the New Drug says that it's not like the female victim

"...among the videos posted on major porn sites, some show videos of women and girls actually being violently raped. Consider the implications of the fact that viewers cannot tell the difference."

is going to shout for help or "announce they are being trafficked." Videos of real women and girls in sexual bondage make their way to mainstream porn sites where viewers cannot distinguish them for what they are. Any chance these victims have of registering their pain in the videos is also lost, because "it's still impossible to know, because rape and abuse-themed porn have now become mainstream."





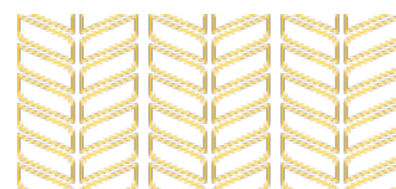
It is imperative to discontinue consuming porn for many reasons, but especially in order to prevent the actual sexual violence and rape enacted on actual women and girls in pornography videos. By discontinuing to watch, it might even positively affect the demand for sexual slavery. We do not suggest that sex trafficking is simply about supply and demand, only that watching porn contributes to the problem and is a necessary step toward progress.

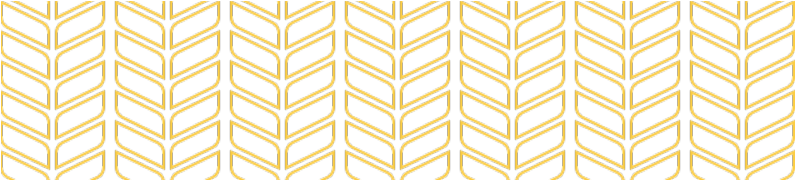
Pornography as Sex Education to Youth

The problem of pornography becomes considerably troubling when we consider how it functions as sex education to youth. [Studies show](#) that youth are exposed to pornography earlier than ever because of ease of access with technology.

“Videos of real women and girls in sexual bondage make their way to mainstream porn sites where viewers cannot distinguish them for what they are.”

On average, western children are exposed at eleven-years-old. However, new research confirms that 22% of porn users under eighteen-years-old come from children under ten-years-old. Anyone who has even opened a major porn site understands why it is problematic for a child under ten to be accessing this

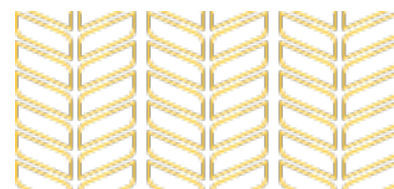


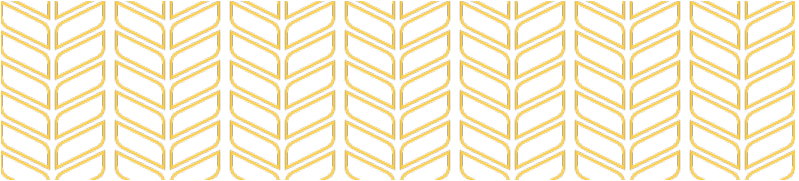


material. Although some children are coming across porn accidentally, such as in pop-up ads, over half of the children studied purposefully sought it out. The obvious cause for concern is that pornography is replacing or supplementing sexual education, with troubling real-life consequences. Many children come across porn before their parents have considered talking to them about healthy intimacy, while their brains are still developing and at a higher risk for addiction. When they're as young as nine or ten-years-old, the images they see can be terrifying, disturbing, and shocking. In-depth [research](#) confirms that “particularly among younger children, exposure to pornography may be disturbing or upsetting ...pornography is a poor, and indeed dangerous, sex educator.”

But it is a sex educator: young boys and girls are learning what intimacy should look like from watching online porn. They are taught the objectification of female bodies, that violent acts upon female bodies are normal, as is the importance of male pleasure and female submission despite pain. Boys and girls are taught that enacting pain and brutality upon girls and women is not only acceptable, but pleasurable, and even correct.

Watching pornography also [negatively influences](#) children's mental health. [Psychology Today](#) reports that boys who watch porn are likely to be “depressed, unable to enjoy intimacy, and suffer from desensitization of feelings, dissatisfaction, loneliness, isolation, and compulsion.” Girls, the report says, “take away the message that their most worthy attribute is their sexual hotness, which chips away at their self-esteem and the full range of their attributes.” Additionally, [studies suggest](#) that real-life sexual violence is not only prevalent, but increasing among teens. Not surprisingly, the study finds that porn plays a major role: “teens reporting sexual violence perpetration also reported greater exposure to sexually violent media.” Pornography as education to youth is making teens more sexually violent and increasingly less likely to practice consent. Simple internet searches confirm these facts, especially in regards to violence against teen girls, but read anecdotes [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#) for actual stories of this happening today.





Conclusion: What it means to you

Pornography plays a major role in how women and girls are objectified, commoditized, and degraded in real life. Yes, there are videos and websites which offer non-violent pornography on “women friendly” sites. However, the industry is so large, and so lucrative that it is our belief buying into pornography even in these seemingly innocent ways affects the pervasive, mega-site (like Pornhub) ideology of degradation and violence as a whole. And as mentioned previously, sex trafficking victims are indistinguishable from consenting adults, without reference to where these victims’ videos are published. The bottom line is that pornography as a culture hurts women and girls and therefore must be entirely avoided.

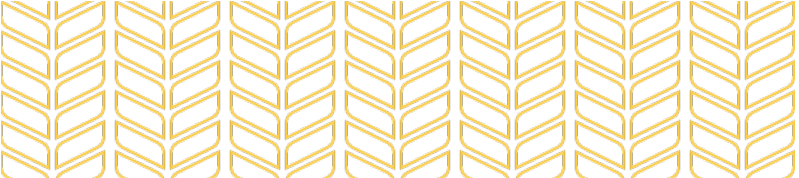
Intimacy and sexuality, on the other hand, should be celebrated and expressed in whatever ways make consenting adults happy. Female pleasure and sexual expression is a healthy, wonderful thing!





The Solution

Women and girls, as well as men and boys, deserve better. The lessons about intimacy and women's bodies porn teaches are lies which infiltrate female psyches with degrading, life-altering messages about who they are at their core. Women and girls are not objects.

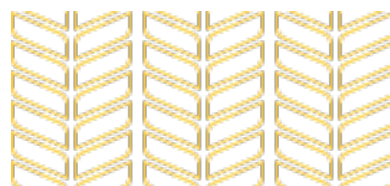


Their bodies hurt when physically abused, just as men's bodies do. They internalize degradation just as all people do. They deserve the highest forms of respect in everyday situations, like walking down the street or riding city busses, as well as in intimate ones with trusted sexual partners. Women and girls should not fear intimacy because they equate it with pain or a lack of pleasure.

They can and should experience pleasure through intimate relationships with mutual trust where they should always, 100% of the time feel safe and cared for.

Solution #1: Love and respect your body!

The very first step toward a solution is for women and girls to appreciate and respect their bodies, exactly as they are. This suggestion is loaded, as the media and culture do its best to make women and girls feel like they're not enough. No, your face is *not* okay, says every grocery store, drug store, and mall with their endless aisles of makeup and face-altering products. No, your body is *not* okay, says every Instagram account, diet and exercise ad, TV commercial, and magazine ad.

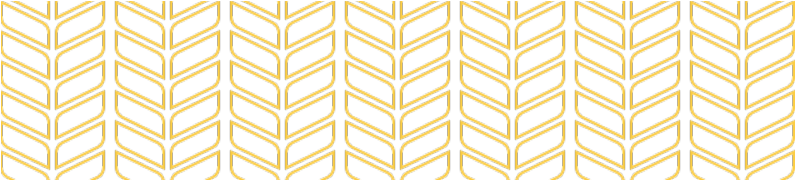


Women who suggest that they are great “as is” find themselves limited and even threatened by the deeply entrenched misogyny in western culture. People like Instagram user iamdaniadriana, a body-positive fat woman, has received multiple death threats because she insists that she should be valued exactly as she is, *especially* because she is fat. Hers is not the only anecdote; there are many stories like this online.

Women are taught to hate their natural bodies, to question them, to hurt them, and to shame them. What if that were to collectively change? What if women treated themselves like a beloved family member or friend instead of someone they despise for not being perfect? It is our belief that when women love and respect their bodies, they are more aware of how all women’s bodies should be treated, thus less tolerant of the abuses depicted in porn, and less tolerant of accepting abuse themselves.

Begin to take care of your body and your face. Skip the drinks with friends or the fancy coffee and save that money to treat yourself to some good-quality face and body lotions. Your body deserves excellent care. Take yourself on a walk, breathe deeply, feel your lungs expand with fresh air and your heart beat faster.





Treat your heart and lungs to exercise—they love it and deserve it! File your nails, trim your hair, paint your toenails. Give yourself the gift of pure body love. Your age, weight, skin tone, able bodiedness, circumstances, and health problems are not relevant to accepting your body. I have a visible health condition which has always made me feel ugly and less than when I compare it to culture's standard of "perfect,"

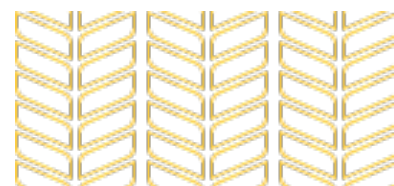
"It is our belief that when women love and respect their bodies, they are more aware of how all women's bodies should be treated, thus less tolerant of the abuses depicted in porn, and less tolerant of accepting abuse themselves."

and I have treated myself terribly because of it in the past. I'm learning that it is not an excuse to still treat my body with the utmost respect it deserves, and that perfection is a lie. Let's stop comparing ourselves to a non-existent "normal" and find ways to love ourselves right now.

Action Step: Every time you look into the mirror and find yourself thinking mean or negative thoughts about your face or body, follow these steps:

- Turn away from the mirror
- Close your eyes
- Count to five
- Turn back to the mirror
- You're ONLY allowed to say nice things about yourself.

If you can't say something nice about yourself, walk away. By walking away, you are also respecting yourself, because you deserve to have your body and your face accepted and loved every single time you look in the mirror.



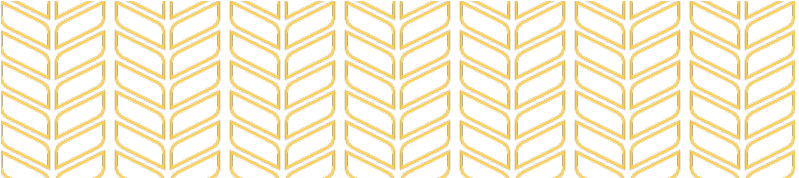


Solution #2: Quit watching porn

This one is obvious. Like other addictions, it can feel overwhelming to quit because the brain becomes accustomed to its reward centers activated by the addictive substance. Moreover, many normal situations, emotions, and objects can trigger a desire to consume pornography. In order to begin rewiring pathways in the brain which have developed a dependence on pornography, it's imperative to pay attention to the feeling of being triggered and purposefully take action against against those triggers. Read more about how triggers work [here](#).

Taking action by putting filters or accountability software on your devices is a great idea!

Accountability is one of the best tools available to help quit any addiction. When you invite another human being into your inner life and ask them to help keep you accountable to your goals, you have a much higher chance of success! You also gain the benefits of connecting to other people in deep, meaningful ways. All people can relate to shame and secrets, it is easy to be empathetic when someone opens up. For these reasons we encourage you to up your



accountability by taking courage users' online activity and sends reports of that activity to the accountability partner. By being held accountable to a trusted friend, the majority of users report that they quit for good.

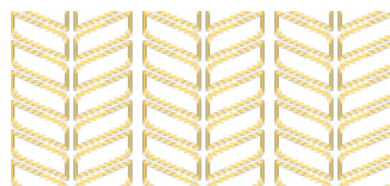
Action Step #1: Download a free trial of Ever Accountable [HERE](#).

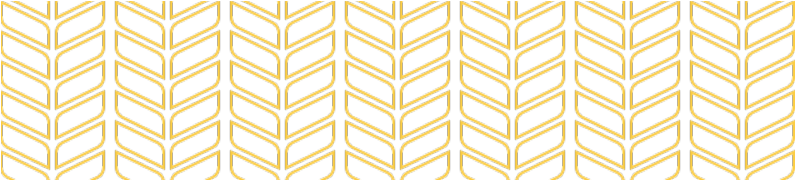
Action Step #2: Whenever you feel triggered to watch porn, turn away from your device and immediately engage in another activity. Run, walk the dog, rake leaves, cook a meal, call your grandma, do some housework, go talk to a colleague—basically, anything that redirects the trigger.

Action Step #3: Reach out to a trusted friend and share what you're going through. Ask them to help keep you accountable to your goals of quitting. Check in with them, and ask them to check in regularly with you!

Solution #3: Make women and girls your friends and allies

Phrases such as “women are so mean to each other” and “all girls are catty” are plentiful, false stereotypes that function to enforce deeply entrenched attitudes that women naturally compete with one another. Without going into the complex





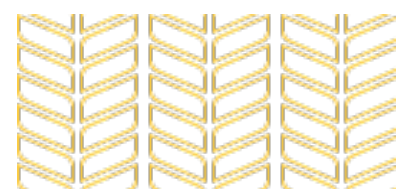
reasons why these commonly held beliefs are actually myths, the truth is that when women look at one another as allies, rather than competition, they join a network of friendship, camaraderie, and support. Women need each other to advocate for their rights, and to join together against organizations and cultural ideologies like violent pornography which cause them harm. It is actually incredible, to just decide that women are your friends and allies and witness how a simple shift in your own thinking can make positive change in your life.

One [New York Times Op Ed](#) explains how a positive view of women, rather than a competitive one, creates an environment where all women are winners:

“We aren’t competing with other women, ultimately, but with ourselves – with how we think of ourselves. For many of us, we look at other women and see, instead, a version of ourselves that is better, prettier, smarter, something more. We don’t see the other woman at all.

It’s a fun-house mirror that reflects an inaccurate version of who we are, but we turn on her anyway, because it’s easier. But we don’t need to lower the stock of other women, either for the future of the species or for our own psyches. When we each focus on being the dominant force in our own universe, rather than invading other universes, we all win.”

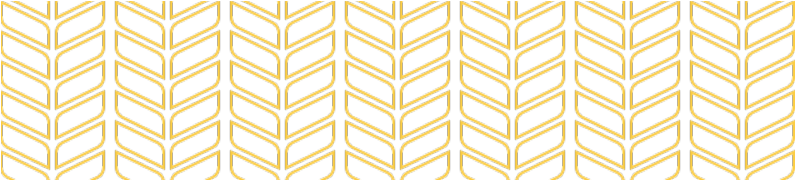
Action Step: Decide, right now, that women in your community, at work, and across the globe are your allies and friends. Ask yourself what you have to lose by acknowledging their good qualities. Will admiring another woman’s intelligence, style, or wit make you less smart, stylish, or witty? Of course not. By basking in her glow, you are shining right back. Decide, right now, that ALL women are your friends and allies. See how it makes a noticeable difference in your life (it will!).



Solution #5: Teach children about boundaries, consent, bodies, pornography, and intimacy (at age appropriate times)

As mentioned above, children are exposed to online pornography younger every year. While [there are age-appropriate guidelines](#) for when to talk to your children about it, keep in mind that the conversation needs to begin early. This might begin in the form of picture books, such as [Good Pictures, Bad Pictures](#) by Gail Poyner and Kristen A. Jenson. It helps children understand primitive definitions of pornography. Picture books work because you should be the first to define pornography for your children, rather than the internet. Reading it together is also a great opportunity to discuss consent and boundaries (appropriate vs. inappropriate touching), the child's private body and its clinical names and functions (especially their genitals), and some communication about intimacy. In fact, Jenson says parents should begin talking to their children about pornography as soon as they have internet access. Again, in proper age-appropriate doses. Whatever their age, parents need to talk to their boys and girls regularly about pornography and how it affects intimacy, consent, and identity.





Action Step: Have a conversation with your kids about pornography and sexuality. There is never the “right time” to do it. It will probably be awkward, but it is possible! Don’t think of it as the only one you’ll have, but set a goal to bring it up at least once a month. Great topics for discussion:

1. Online pornography
2. Consent and boundaries
3. Sexually Transmitted Diseases
4. Healthy intimacy/sexuality
5. Bodies, privacy, and the names of private body parts

Excellent sources for talking to your children:

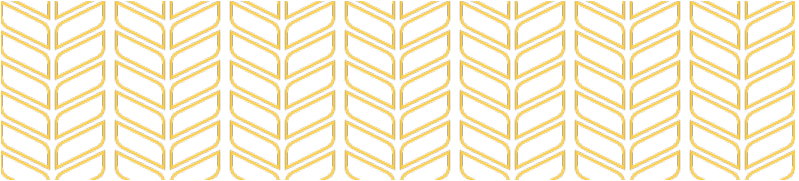
[The Complete Guide to Teaching Kids Consent At Every Age](#)
[Talking to Your Child about Staying Safe Online](#)
[Helping Young Adults with Consent Awareness](#)

Solution #6: Feel safe and comfortable 100% of the time during sex and intimacy

It goes without saying that women must trust their sexual partners and feel safe to experience pleasure. In many cases if women feel unsafe they will not experience pleasure, most likely pain and frustration, which can lead to a loathing of sexual activity. So to have great sex, for men and women alike, the best step forward is making sure women are comfortable every single time they are engaged in sexual activity. Every. Single. Time.

This means that if one partner wants to try something new and the other does not feel comfortable, then the topic is dropped! Perhaps down the line (perhaps) they might be up for it because they trust their partner and are grateful they never made them feel guilty or coerced in the first place. But that is ultimately secondary to the fact that women should *never be forced, made to feel guilty, coerced in ANY WAY into sexual activity*. No one should, that is simply human





decency! And anyway, who wants to have sex when they feel like they *should*? I appreciate this [Scary Mommy](#) perspective:

“No one wants to be in a sexless partnership. But no one should be made to feel like they owe their body to anyone.

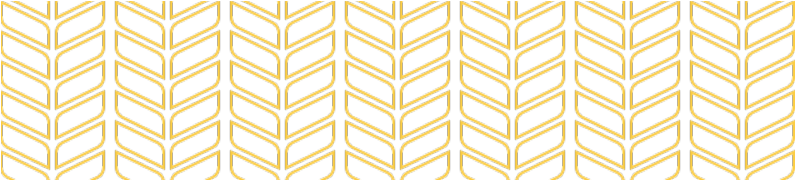
EVER.

It’s more than okay to say no to your partner, and women need to stop being shamed for this. The jokes need to stop, and feeling like we should “just do it” to keep our partner happy is unacceptable.

Married or not, sex still needs to happen between two consenting people, and if she’s not in the mood and doesn’t want to be touched, she’s not consenting and should feel comfortable saying as much without shame or guilt.

End of story.”





Action Step: Give yourself the freedom to only be intimate with someone when you want to, on your terms. You do not owe your husband/boyfriend/partner your sexuality.

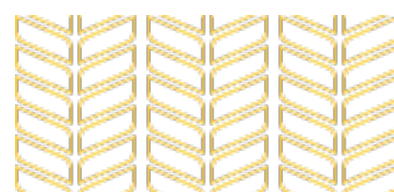
Follow these golden rules:

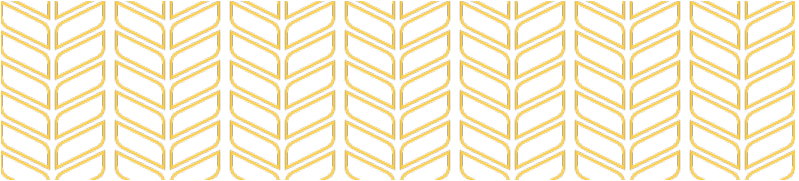
1. Only have sex, or be intimate, when you're 100% comfortable
2. Only love and trust should make you want to have sex. Guilt, fear, or compliance are not part of healthy intimacy. Do not have sex because you feel coerced.
3. No means no. If you say "no" and your partner keeps trying, they are not respecting your boundaries and you will not develop the necessary trust for healthy intimacy.
4. If you find yourself unwilling to have sex with your partner, do some personal reflection, talk to your therapist about it, and have some real conversations with your partner. You shouldn't feel like you *should* but that you want to!

Solution #7: Find a therapist

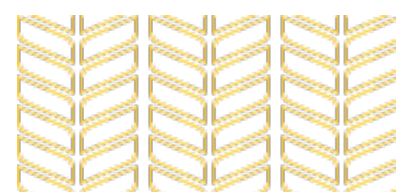
Finding the help of a licensed therapist cannot be over emphasized. They are the best professionals in our culture with training and research knowledge to understand all angles of pornography's effect on women, men, and children. It is a myth that only people who are psychotic or desperate see therapists; in fact, therapy as "upkeep" is more popular today than ever. Therapists are simply reliable, discrete people to talk to who happen to have loads of professional wisdom.

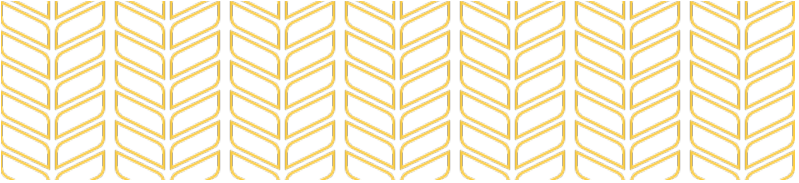
Many therapists take insurance and some take government-funded insurance. More than ever before, society respects the fact that mental health is just as important as physical health. More than ever before, society respects the fact that mental health is just as important as physical health.





Action Step: Check with your insurance to see if they pay for mental health counseling. Then look up therapists in your area and make a list of three you like, based on their qualifications, specialties, even their picture! Call the three and see if they are taking new patients. If they are, discuss payment and insurance, and if you are on a tight budget, ask if they take partial payments and find a way to go at least once in a while. Once a month is better than nothing!





In Conclusion

The difficult and complex culture surrounding pornography can be confusing for women and girls, who deal with the real-world consequences of its violence and degradation. Young girls see pop-up ads on their laptops, or search for it out of curiosity, and learn what is expected of their gender when it comes to intimacy, body desirability, and painful sexual acts. While there may be non-violent and non-degrading pornography produced, the multibillion dollar industry's content merges together into one large product we call "porn." Some of the women are actors, some are raped and hurt against their will. As a result of pornography's ubiquitous nature and ease of access ALL women who live on this planet are hurt in the process.

America has little to no government accountability or monitoring of pornography's accessibility and ethics. Until that happens, it is up to individuals to educate themselves and do what they can to choose to disengage. If you are struggling with an addiction, or a serious desire to look at porn, start with the solution steps above to begin getting your life on track. Of course we recommend you [download Ever Accountable](#) for an easy start, which you can begin right now. A majority of our customers completely quit after using it on their devices. It will help you be accountable for the life you want, rather than the lies porn disseminates. Treat your body with respect, take long walks in nature, and think about finding a therapist.

You deserve more than what porn has given you! Take your life into your own hands, turn your back on this toxic industry, and choose a higher path.

You can do it.
We believe in you!

