

Emotional and Social Health: ESH**Pornography****Essential Unit Question:**

How can teens be part of the solution for issues associated to mental health?

Key Lesson Questions:

What are the potential impacts of pornography on individuals and relationships?

KEY TERMS:

Child pornography
Commercial pornography
Felony
Pornography
Sexting
Trafficking

**Standards, Benchmarks, Indicators****9.5 Students will define pornography and identify implications for healthy relationships.**

Descriptive Statement: Pornography will be defined and discussed as it relates to healthy relationships, personal boundaries, and consent.

9.6 Students will identify the short- and long-term consequences of recording, possessing, sharing, and distributing sexually explicit media.

Descriptive Statement: Instruction will include potential present and future social, emotional, educational, and legal implications. Distribution of sexually explicit media includes texting, social media, and other means of communications.

**FLE
Lesson**

Parents may opt their child out of this lesson



NOTE: This lesson will take approximately one 90-minute block.



Materials and Preparations

Have:

- Student worksheet: [What I Know About Pornography](#)
- Student worksheet: Pornography ([note taking organizer](#))
- Student worksheet: [What Will I Do?](#)

Review:

Teachers may wish to review the following resources to learn more about pornography:

- [Sexting](#), Office of the Attorney General of Virginia
- [Journal articles](#) available from the National Institutes of Health
- [Journal articles and publications](#) available from the American Academy of Pediatrics

LEARN Link

1. Distribute the student worksheet, [What I Know about Pornography](#). Students will complete the column on the left titled, "Before Class." Allow time for students to answer the questions.
2. Ask students to put the worksheet away for now. It will be revisited at the end of class.

LEARN Engage and Explain

1. Display slides #2-4 with headlines related to pornography/child pornography.
2. Display slide #5 and say to students:

The headlines you just saw highlight the issue of pornography in society. Reputable members of the community have been arrested and charged with possession of child pornography. While pornography has been around for thousands of years, like many things, pornography has evolved and changed over time. From sexually explicit pictures left by cave dwellers to magazines and other print material popular in the past, content has become more explicit and technology has made pornography easily accessible. What was once difficult to purchase has become as easy as searching for a few key words online. With cell phones and other personal devices that access the Internet, online pornography is almost always available. Even if the intent is not to look at online pornography, many people access pornography accidentally. Searching for something online may bring up a site that is pornographic and not expected. Some of you may have already had this experience.

3. Distribute the [note taking organizer](#). Students will use the organizer to note important information during the discussion on pornography.
4. Say to students:

What is pornography? (Slide #6) Pornography refers to sexually explicit media that are primarily intended to sexually arouse the consumer. Such media includes magazines, images, the Internet, and films. (Malamuth, 2007) It is important to recognize that not all sexual images are pornography. For example, pictures of the reproductive system used to teach about reproductive anatomy and the process of reproduction are intended to educate and are not pornography.

There are several concerns (slide #7) with pornography, including emotional and social health concerns and legal consequences. Why is it important for adolescents to learn about pornography?

(slide #8) You may be surprised to hear that the average age boys first see pornography is 10. One study of youth, boys and girls ages 10-17, found that 52% of youth Internet users had been exposed to pornography online. Of those, 66% reported the exposure was unwanted and they did not intentionally search for pornography. (Source: [Unwanted and Wanted Exposure to Online Pornography in a National Sample of Youth Internet Survey](#))

In addition to accidental exposure, as indicated by the headlines, child pornography is a concern. Child pornography (slide #9) is the term used to describe pornography that involves children. Virginia statute defines child pornography as “sexually explicit visual material which utilizes an identifiable minor.” A minor is a child under the age of 18. (Source: [Sexting Protecting Yourself on the Internet and Mobile Devices Office of the Attorney General of Virginia](#)) By law, children cannot consent to participate in the creation of pornography. Child pornography involves coercion and manipulation of the child. Child pornography is exploitation.

Pornography can be further differentiated to include commercial pornography. (Slide #10) Commercial pornography is a term used to describe pornography that is intentionally planned, scripted, and created. This type of pornography may include videos or other images that are available for sale or online. It is important to understand that the sexual activity seen in commercial pornography is not real. The scenes are staged and are not representative of healthy relationships. Commercial pornography may be created by actors who consent to participating in the sexual activities seen and are paid for their work. (Remember, children cannot consent to participation in the production of pornography.) However, some commercial pornography is actually sex trafficking. The individuals may be

victims of manipulation and coercion and feel they have no choice but to participate. If you or anyone you know has been involved in the production of pornography there is action you can take. Tell your parent or guardian and the police.

Pornography may be distributed in print, text, online, and through social media. Teens and others may believe that pornography is not a big deal because it is easily accessible. However, research indicates that pornography can impact relationships and have social, emotional, and educational consequences.

Think about how you might feel if pornographic images appeared while you were online, if you received a text with a naked image, or if a friend wanted you to look at pornography and you did not want to.

(Slide #11) Evidence suggests that for some individuals, exposure to pornography results in feeling gloomy and depressed. There is also some evidence to support an increased risk of sexual offenses and acceptance of rape myths. These myths are “false beliefs [about rape] that shift the blame from the perpetrator to the survivor.” (University of Richmond, Center for Sexual Assault Prevention and Response)

Pornography can also have impacts on relationships. Think about relationships you have. These could be relationships with family members, friends, or someone you are dating. What might these people think or feel if they saw a naked image of you online? How might your parent or guardian feel if they knew you had seen pornographic images?

Allow students time to think and write their ideas. Then have students share with a partner or small group and finally ask for volunteers to share their group’s thinking.

Relationships with significant others can be harmed when pornography is involved. Each couple and individual will have their own thoughts and feelings about pornography. One study of husband and wife relationships, where the husband (slide #12) views pornography but the wife is opposed to it, found evidence that the woman may experience feelings of rejection, humiliation, isolation, jealousy, anger, shame and wonder why they aren’t good enough or feel like they need to live up to what their husband is seeing in pornography.

Among high school students (slide #13), there is evidence that suggests increased pornography use among adolescents is associated with an increase in dating abuse. Additional evidence correlates the exposure of online pornography with an increase in sexist attitudes towards women.

Sexual activity portrayed in pornography excludes conversations and negotiations that may have taken place before the pornography was produced. Pornography often focuses on the act of intercourse and leaves out other intimate ways couples may interact. It can also lead to a perception of uncommon sex acts being acceptable and an increased acceptance of sexual promiscuity.

As we have discussed in previous lessons, it is important that you set and communicate your personal boundaries. This can include how you feel about viewing pornography. No one should be forced to view pornographic images or videos. In addition, you cannot be forced to participate in the creation of pornography. What are some situations where someone may feel pressure to view or participate in pornography?

Answers may include:

- Boyfriend/girlfriend/partner wants to view porn together
- Boyfriend/girlfriend/partner wants you to send nude pictures to them

Individuals need to set boundaries they are comfortable with and that are appropriate for them. (Slide #14) No one should force another person to view pornography, participate in the creation of pornography, or participate in a sexual act seen in pornography.

Open and clear communication about boundaries in a relationship, including boundaries related to pornography, lead to healthy relationships. In general, most pornographic videos do not represent healthy relationships. Remember pornography does not show discussions and consent and may result from manipulation and coercion. In other words, what you are seeing is not real and likely isn't showing a caring and committed relationship. People should treat one another with respect.

What should you do if you are in a situation that makes you uncomfortable? (slide #15)

Answers may include:

- Tell the person to stop
- Leave the situation
- Ask a trusted adult (parent, counselor, religious leader, doctor) for help

We have talked about social and emotional implications of pornography as well as how pornography can impact relationships and the importance of boundaries and consent. There can also be consequences at school and legal consequences. (Slide #16)

It is a violation of the FCPS Acceptable Use Policy to do or attempt to do anything that interferes with the learning of students or work of employees including accessing portions of the Internet that do not support the educational mission of

FCPS; viewing, sending, or accessing illegal material; or downloading inappropriate or illegal material on FCPS computers. This can include access to pornography on the FCPS network. Accessing pornography on the FCPS network, whether on an FCPS or personal device, can result in loss of privilege to use the network as well as other consequences in accordance with FCPS Students Rights and Responsibilities.

There are many things related to pornography that are illegal. Child pornography that involves anyone under the age of 18, is illegal. This includes creation, possession, and distribution of child pornography. Because sexting may include minors under the age of 18, it can be considered child pornography. There are also laws that protect individuals from trafficking. When pornography is produced as a result of manipulation and coercion, it is illegal. The consequences include fines, jail time, and being required to register as a sex offender. Child pornography convictions are felonies. If convicted, the perpetrator is required to indicate on college or job applications that they have been convicted of a felony and explain the conviction.

Registered sex offenders face other consequences including being prohibited from going to public places where children will be such as schools, day care centers, or playgrounds and how close they can establish a residence to these places. For example, registered sex offenders cannot loiter within 100 feet of a school and cannot establish residence within 500 feet of a school. These prohibitions are lifelong unless the individual is entering the school to vote, is an enrolled student, or has received a court order allowing entry.

As a teen, someone may send you a text with a naked image of a classmate. This can be considered possession of child pornography. If you forward the text you have now distributed child pornography. This can lead to a felony conviction, time in jail, and registration as a sex offender that will impact your ability to live and visit certain places for the rest of your life. Therefore, it is imperative that you never send a sexually explicit image and you tell a trusted adult immediately if you receive such an image.

Many people are exposed to pornography unintentionally. (Slide #17) Some pornographic websites have domain names that are very similar to well-known sites. This may cause someone who makes a typing error in a web address to unknowingly go to a pornography site. Some pornography sites make it difficult to close the webpage. They may disable the back button or pop open other boxes when you try to close the site. It can be distressing and uncomfortable for anyone who is faced with a site that makes them uncomfortable and they can't get away from. If you can't close the site easily, what else can you do? Allow student answers which may include close the laptop or turn the screen off, ask a parent or guardian for help.

Like many situations teens face, they may not always know what to do. What could you do if you are in a situation where someone wants you to look at pornography or if you receive a text with a sexually explicit image? Allow student answers which may include:

- Tell the person you do not want to look at pornography
- Tell a trusted adult such as a parent or guardian, teacher, counselor, religious leader
- Leave the situation so you don't need to look at pornography
- Tell the SRO if you receive a text with a sexually explicit image

What if you are online and pornography appears on the screen?

Answers may include:

- Close the website
- Close the screen or turn off the screen
- Tell a parent or guardian or other trusted adult

What if the site you accidentally opened is difficult to close?

Answers may include:

- Close the screen or turn off the screen
- Tell a parent or guardian or other trusted adult

LEARN Active Learning

Distribute the student worksheet, *What Will I Do?* or post the [Google Form](#). Students will respond to three scenarios related to pornography. This activity will give students the opportunity to think about different situations they may find themselves in and how they will respond.

LEARN Reflect

Have students take out the worksheet, *What I Know about Pornography*, from the beginning of class and complete the column titled, "After." Then have students respond to the questions.

LEARN Now and Then

Say to Students:

While pornography may seem harmless, remember you are not seeing what happened to create the video or images. The person you see may have been coerced or exploited. The images may be the result of illegal activity. There are school and legal consequences associated with pornography. Pornography is not a representation of

healthy adult relationships. In our next lesson we will discuss characteristics of healthy relationships.

STUDENT WORKSHEET

What I Know About Pornography

Directions: For each statement indicate if you agree (A), disagree (D), or unsure (U). Only answer in the “Before” column at the start of the lesson. The “After” column and questions will be completed at the end of the lesson

Before		After
	1. Pornography is sexually explicit media intended to sexually arouse the consumer.	
	2. Pornography can be distributed by text, social media, video, or print.	
	3. Commercial pornography is a good representation of an adult sexual relationship.	
	4. If a person you are dating wants to look at pornography, you should look at it with them even if you do not want to.	
	5. Sexually explicit images sent by text can be considered pornography even if the picture was taken with consent.	
	6. If your friend sends you a sext, that can be considered possession of pornography.	
	7. Viewing pornography has no effect on teens.	
	8. Many adults including parents, counselors, religious leaders, and health care professionals, can help with situations involving pornography.	
	9. Pornography may be accessed unintentionally (by accident).	
	10. Commercial pornography may be linked to sex trafficking.	
	11. Viewing pornography may lead to feelings of depression.	

After completing both columns of the worksheet, answer the questions below:

1. How has your understanding of pornography changed as a result of today's lesson?
2. Why is there concern about adolescent exposure to pornography?
3. What are the potential impacts of pornography on individuals and relationships?
4. How could you help a friend who is being asked to view or participate in pornography by someone they are dating?

Pornography

Definitions

Pornography:

Commercial pornography:

Child pornography:

Implications: Social & Emotional

Implications: Relationships

Boundaries & Consent

Implications: Legal & Educational

