Resolution Recognizing Public Health Crisis of Pornography
Drafted by National Center on Sexual Exploitation
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Resolution No. ##

Recognizing and finding that pornography is a public health hazard leading to a broad spectrum of individual and public health impacts and societal harms.

Pornography is creating a public health crisis and therefore its harms are beyond the capability of the individual to address alone. Rather, efforts to prevent pornography exposure and addiction, to educate individuals and families concerning its harms, and to develop recovery programs must be addressed systemically in ways that hold broader influences accountable in order to counter the sexually toxic environment it perpetuates.

Pornography is contributing to the hyper-sexualization of teens,¹ and even prepubescent children,² in our society. Due to the advances in technology and the universal availability of the Internet, young children are exposed to what used to be referred to as hard core (now mainstream) pornography at an alarming rate, with 27% of older millennials (age 25-30) reporting that they first viewed pornography before puberty.³ This is leading to low self-esteem and eating disorders,⁴ an increase in problematic sexual activity at younger ages,⁵ and an increased desire to engage in risky sexual behavior as young adolescents.⁶

Additionally, children and youth are exposed to pornography that often times serves as their sex education and shapes their sexual templates.⁷ Because pornography treats women as objects,⁸ and commodities for the viewer’s use, it teaches girls they are to be used and boys to be users.⁹

Pornography normalizes violence and abuse of women and children.¹⁰ Pornography treats women and children as objects¹¹ and often depicts rape and abuse as if it were harmless.¹² Moreover, pornography equates violence towards women and children with sex¹³ and pain with pleasure¹⁴ which increases the demand for sex trafficking, prostitution, and child sexual abuse images/child pornography.¹⁵

Pornography has potential detrimental effects on the user such as: emotional, mental¹⁶ and medical illnesses,¹⁷ shaping deviant sexual arousal,¹⁸ difficulty forming or maintaining intimate relationships,¹⁹ brain development and functioning,²⁰ and problematic or harmful sexual behaviors,²¹ and addiction.²²

Furthermore, recent research indicates that pornography is potentially biologically addictive which means the user requires more novelty, which is often more shocking material, in order to be satisfied.²³ This has led to increasing themes of risky sexual behaviors, extreme degradation, violence, and child sexual abuse images/child pornography.²⁴

Pornography use has a detrimental effect on the family as it is linked to lessening desire in young men to marry,²⁵ dissatisfaction in marriage,²⁶ and infidelity.²⁷
In recognizing the public health crisis created by pornography the state of Utah is acknowledging the need for education, prevention, research and policy change at the community and societal level in order to address the epidemic that is harming the people of our state and our country as a whole.

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4. Amy E. Bonomi, Julianna M. Nemeth, Lauren E. Attenburger, Melissa Anderson, Anastasia Snyder & Irma Dotto, Fiction or Not? Fifty Shades is Associated with Health Risks in Adolescent and Young Adult Females, 23 JOURNAL OF WOMEN’S HEALTH 720–728 (2014).


xviii Melissa Farley, Emily Schuckman, Jacqueline Golding, Kristen Houser, Laura Jarett, Peter Qualliotine & Michelle Decker, Paper presented at Psychologists for Social Responsibility Annual Meeting: Comparing Sex Buyers with Men who Don’t Buy Sex: ”You can have a good time with the servitude” vs. “You’re supporting a system of degradation” (July 15, 2011); Kevin M. Williams, Barry S. Cooper, Teresa


