

# Stop Trafficking!

# Awareness Advocacy Action

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FOCUS: This issue highlights the relationship between pornography and human trafficking.

*In our digital age, pornography is more accessible. Many think of the porn industry and sex trafficking as separate issues; however, porn and sex trafficking are inseparably linked.*

*It is challenging to distinguish images of exploited individuals from consenting ones. Unfortunately, with the growth in more violent and dehumanizing content, vulnerable victims of sex traffickers fill the demand.*

*Porn fuels trafficking; sadly, porn is the primary form of sex education for millions of children.*

## The Relationship Between Pornography and Human Trafficking

The force, fraud, or coercion used to define human trafficking are all used at times in the making of pornography. When porn is produced and distributed at the expense of an individual against their will, human trafficking occurs. The Human Trafficking Hotline has identified pornography as the top-ranked industry for sex trafficking.

### Force

Traffickers force people into pornography for financial gain. Many survivors report that the “porn” created of them was recorded rape. This pornographic material can then be used to shame or blackmail them. It can also be used as evidence of sex trafficking.

### Fraud

The 2019 Trafficking in Persons Report from The U.S. Department of State reported an example of fraud with a story about traffickers in Asia that posed a model or actor agencies.

Traffickers used “fraudulent recruitment techniques to coerce Japanese men, women, and girls into signing vague contracts and threatened them with legal action or releasing compromising photographs to force them to participate in pornographic films.

### Coercion

A common way trafficking occurs in the porn industry is through the coercion used by agents and producers in recruitment and on the set. Producers may lie or

withhold information about what is expected of the performer. When the porn performer discovers that the scene is more aggressive or degrading than they’d been told, their agents often threaten to blacklist them if they don’t do what they’re pressuring them. Therefore, agents and producers often exploit the person’s vulnerabilities to coerce performers into producing more hardcore content. Recruitment of pornographic actors and actresses frequently involves threats, verbal abuse, and heavy drug use, often to help them get through hardcore scenes.

### Minors

The child pornography industry is one of the most lucrative markets for sex traffickers as the demand for child sexual abuse content is high. The most searched terms on Pornhub are “youth” and “teen.” When a minor is involved in commercial sexual activity, it is classified as human trafficking without exception. Therefore, exploitation through child sexual abuse, or child pornography, is classified as sex trafficking.

Unlike child sexual abuse imagery, there is no legal requirement to report child sex trafficking; This legal inconsistency is a significant problem. [A recent report in the Guardian](#) describes how social media platforms are legally bound to report child exploitation imagery detected on their platforms; however, they are not legally responsible for crimes, like sex trafficking, that occur on its platform.

For more information, please click [here](#).



# Awareness

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## Pornography fuels the demand for sex trafficking

Viewers of pornography help to create the demand for sex trafficking, and sex trafficking provides a supply for pornography. Victims of sex trafficking may be forced or coerced to 'work' in the porn industry, trafficked for the sole purpose of pornographic production. A trafficker can make money by selling videos of their victims to porn sites, and porn sites make money by selling the videos to consumers. The more violent the video, the more money can be made, and the less likely a willing person would do it.

Sometimes acts of prostitution are filmed without the victim's consent and distributed. Moreover, porn is marketing for sex trafficking both directly and indirectly; directly because traffickers and pimps use pornographic images of victims as specific advertising for their "product" and indirectly because porn influences the culture. Desensitization toward sexual violence through the consumption of porn can manifest in a more willingness to buy sex, which increases the demand for individuals being trafficked for sex.

For more information, please click [here](#).

## Porn desensitizes viewers to sexual violence

Viewing pornography can desensitize viewers to sexual violence. One explanation for this comes from an addiction model of porn consumption, which suggests that porn images give the viewer a brief dopamine rush.

However, just as it occurs with substance abuse, the viewer becomes desensitized and needs a harder-core or violent form of pornography to provide the extra excitement. The portrayal of hardcore violence in pornography, particularly against women, can increase the desire for more and similar kinds of violent, degrading content. This increases the demand for pornographic content to be produced, and this is where sex trafficking comes in, as demand is one-factor driving sex trafficking. Moreover, the viewer eventually loses satisfaction with just watching sexual encounters and seeks encounters with trafficked persons.

[Family Policy Alliance](#) states that an estimated 40% to 80% of consumers of child pornography abuse and molest a child.

Finally, sexual predators may show their victims pornography during the grooming process to lower their victims' inhibitions, desensitize them to sexual advances, and normalize the sexual abuse they will experience.



Porn sites get more visitors each month than Netflix, Amazon, and Twitter combined.

(<https://www.culturereframed.org/the-porn-crisis>)

## Pornography provides the script for commercial sex buyers

Pornography can also train people how to buy sex. Many victims of trafficking say they are shown pornography to demonstrate what the sex buyer wants. In one survey, 86% of prostituted women said they were shown pornography to illustrate specific acts, while 47% had been disturbed by a sex buyer's attempt to make them do something they had seen while viewing porn.

Click [here](#) for more information.

*A popular website getting millions of views was taken down in January 2022 because of proven sex trafficking claims. GirlsDoPorn tricked young women into thinking they were getting involved in a modeling video and physically forced their victims to record a pornographic video with them before letting them go. This pattern continued for eleven years before \$12.8 million was ordered to be paid back to traumatized victims. However, no amount of money will undo the life-changing rape and shame from the video of them being posted on the internet.*

## Porn producers engage in sexual violence

Some of the most popular pornography includes physical violence, such as slapping and hitting, verbal abuse, and misogynistic language. In addition, in the past few years, many porn performers have reported allegations of on-set boundary violations and being pressured to endure physical and psychological violence on the set.

Click [here](#) for more information.

## Advocacy

## Most children are just a click away from free porn



In May 2023, the Surgeon General issued a Statement of Advisory: *Effects of Social Media on Youth Mental Health*. Culture Reframed suggests that porn radically undermines the healthy development of children and youth and contributes to increasing levels of sexual inequality, dysfunction, loneliness, major depression, and violence, and has referred to porn as the “public health crisis of the digital age.”

Without comprehensive and accurate sex education, children learn about sex from social media. Often, a child encounters online porn accidentally, through platforms such as Snapchat or Instagram, or by entering innocent searches. Porn can shape how the child grows to think about gender, sexuality, relationships, intimacy, sexual violence, and gender equality.

The average age of first viewing porn, intentionally or accidentally, is estimated to be 12, with some evidence indicating as young as 8. In a survey among children from the United Kingdom, 44% of males ages 11–16 who consumed pornography reported that online porn gave them ideas about the sex they wanted to try.

Regular consumption of porn combined with the lack of education surrounding consent and healthy sexual behaviors can also become a tool to groom perpetrators of sexual violence.

Finally, police have found that porn can be used to “groom” children into thinking sex between an adult and child is an acceptable, even enjoyable activity. In addition, some advocacy groups such as Protect Young Eyes and the National Center on the Social Exploitation of Children have tested the safety of popular social media apps like Instagram and TikTok and found that children are targeted with pornographic content and sexual solicitations.

Children watching hard-core porn are likely watching it on MindGeek, the world’s largest porn provider. MindGeek operates over 100 sites, including Pornhub, with a total bandwidth exceeding Twitter, Amazon, and Facebook. Moreover, these sites are very easy to access: they’re free, rank high in Google searches, and offer an endless stream of new content.

Please go to the [Culture Reframed](#) website for more information.



# Advocacy

## Impact of Porn on Girls

Girls are impacted by their own and boys' use of porn. Culture Reframed reports that a study of girls 14- to 19-years-old found that females who consumed pornographic videos were at a significantly greater risk of being victims of sexual harassment or sexual assault. Also, 75% of 18-year-old women reported that "pornography has pressured girls and young women to act a certain way." For some adolescent girls, viewing porn is associated with more significant sexual activity and increased tolerance of sexual violence. This exposure has also led to increased victim blaming and decreased empathy for rape survivors.

Girls and women are also impacted by a culture saturated with "hypersexualized media." Exposure to sexualized images that reduce girls and women to sex objects contributes to girls' self-sexualization, where they intentionally engage in activities to appear more sexually appealing. This often leads to both females and males objectifying them, which has been shown to lead to body shame, appearance anxiety, eating disorders, low self-esteem, depression, engaging in self-harm, and an increased likelihood of drug and alcohol abuse.

To read more, please click [here](#).

*Two men, one a former police officer, lured women to Florida to audition for modeling jobs. When the women arrived, the men drugged them, filmed them being raped, and then sold the footage as porn online. Some victims, not fully aware of what had happened to them, later woke up in their cars, covered in vomit. Other victims had absolutely no recollection of what happened before being made aware of the videos online.*

## The Effects of Porn on Boys

Adolescent boys who use pornography have lower degrees of social integration, increased conduct problems, higher levels of delinquent behavior, higher incidence of depressive symptoms, and decreased emotional bonding with caregivers. These behaviors are linked to reduced connectivity between different parts of the brain responsible for impulse control, reward, and regulation.

Moreover, boys exposed to porn from a young age are more likely to have attitudes that support sexual harassment and violence against women, pressure their partners to engage in porn-style sex, and have decreased empathy for rape victims. They also experience difficulty developing intimate relationships, have increased levels of erectile dysfunction, demonstrate reduced academic performance and develop sexual preoccupation and compulsive internet use. They also experience anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, and loss of intimacy.

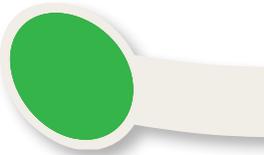
To read more, please click [here](#)

**50% of parents underestimate how much porn their teens have seen.**

<https://www.culturereframed.org/the-porn-crisis>



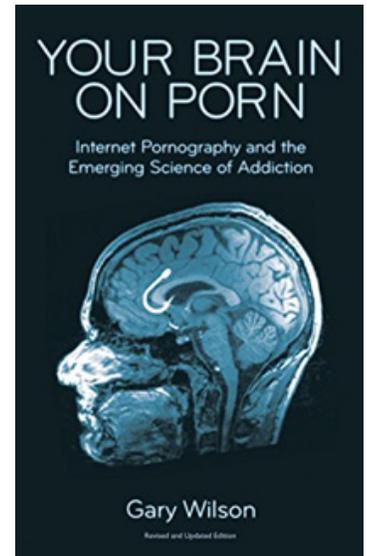
PatriciaHikari/Shutterstock.com



## Your Brain on Porn: Internet Pornography and the Emerging Science of Addiction by Gary Wilson

As high-speed internet became widely available, growing numbers of people began to worry that their porn use was running out of control. Far from preparing them for fulfilling relationships, viewing endless porn videos led to unexpected symptoms. Perhaps most surprisingly, for the first time in history, erectile dysfunction was becoming a significant problem for young men.

This led to one of the most extensive informal experiments in the history of science. Tens of thousands have tried abstaining from sexually stimulating material in a process they call 'rebooting.' Many reported startling changes, from improved concentration and elevated mood to a greater capacity for real-life intimacy.



## Clean Hotels

Hotels and motels in most cities and towns in the United States have taken the pledge to remove in-room porn as a TV offering. Interviews by concerned citizens with local hotel/motel managers about this have led them to remove the porn. Click [here](#) to learn more.

## Effective Strategies to Reduce Sex Buying

As you know, sex trafficking ends when buying ends. Please click [here](#) to view this YouTube video for strategies that may deter sex buying.

## Stop Together

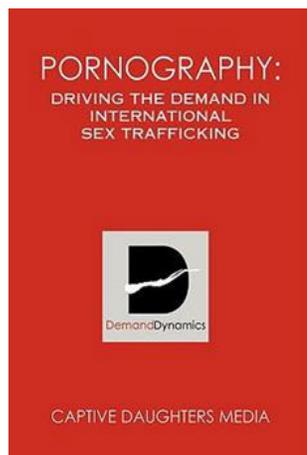
If you or someone you know feel they are addicted to pornography and need help, programs like Stop Together can offer support.. Click [here](#) for more information.

## Porn and Sex Trafficking

*How Pornography Affects Human Sex Trafficking:* Please click [here](#) to view this short YouTube video.

## Rape for Profit

A documentary on sex trafficking, *Rape for Profit*, sums up the connection between pornography and human trafficking: Prostitution is the main act, and pornography for these men is the dress rehearsal. They see it and then act it out. When a society demands more pornography, it's demanding more prostituted women.



## Pornography: Driving the Demand in International Sex Trafficking

by David E. Guinn and Captive Daughters

Founded in 1997, Captive Daughters is a Los Angeles-based non-profit dedicated to ending sex trafficking. Following a 10-month trip to Nepal in 1995, Executive Director Sandra Hunnicutt and her husband became foster parents to an abandoned girl and guardian for her sister. Both girls came from Sindhupalchok, a notorious sex trafficking district in Nepal. Upon returning to the United States, Sandra began researching trafficking and discovered a fragile network of domestic and international groups educating the public on trafficking.



# Action

## The Heart of Man

An all-male-led film documentary called *The Heart of Man* seeks to address the root of the problem. One of the men who speak in the film admits, “We’re the root of this, and if we’re the root of this, we have to figure out what has to change. It has to start with us.” Pornography enslaves men physically and psychologically, and this enslaves women and children literally via sex trafficking. Pornography is a significant gateway to sex trafficking. Men create the demand; women and children are the supply. If we transform the demand side, the supply side will also cease.



## Pornland

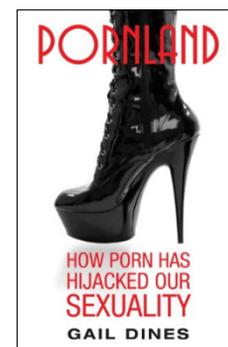
Professor Gail Dines has written about and researched the porn industry for over two decades. She attends industry conferences, interviews producers and performers, and speaks to hundreds of men and women each year about their experience with porn. Students and educators describe her work as “life-changing.”

In *Pornland*, Dines looks at porn and its impact on our lives. Astonishingly, the average age of first viewing porn is now 11.5 years for boys, and it’s no surprise that young people are consuming more porn than ever on the internet.

But as Dines shows, today’s porn is strikingly different from yesterday’s *Playboy*. As porn culture has become absorbed into pop culture, entrepreneurs are creating porn that is even more hard-core, violent, sexist, and racist. To differentiate their products in a glutted market, producers have created profitable niche products—like teen sex, torture porn, and gonzo—to entice a generation of desensitized users.

From the backstreets to Wall Street, Dines traces the extensive money trail behind this multibillion-dollar industry, which reaps more profits than the film and music industries combined. Like Big Tobacco, with its powerful lobbying groups and sophisticated business practices, porn companies don’t simply sell products. Rather, they influence legislators, partner with mainstream media, and develop new technologies like streaming video for cell phones.

Proving that this assembly line of content is limiting our sexual freedom, Dines argues that porn’s omnipresence has become a public health concern we can no longer ignore.



## Webinar: Dr. Gail Dines

Please click [here](#) to view a webinar by Dr. Gail Dines that explores how porn acts as both a method of recruitment into trafficking and a major driver of demand. Please note there is a Content and Trigger Warning. There are no graphic images, but the webinar content might be difficult for some individuals. This webinar was sponsored by United States Catholic Sisters Against Human Trafficking.

## Culture Reframed Parents Project

It can be daunting to raise kids in a culture where they are bombarded with sexual images, including porn. That's why Culture Reframed has provided a best-practice toolkit, which will help raise porn-resilient kids. You will learn:

- The harmful effects of hypersexualized media and hardcore porn, which is mainstream, free, and easily accessible
- How to teach healthy sexuality and strengthen resilience to hypersexualized media and porn
- How unrestricted use of pornography affects the brain and can lead to habituation and addiction
- How to support and guide your child each step of the way

Programs are free and include information on parents and tweens and parents and teens.

Please click [here](#) to learn more.

## U.S. Catholic Sisters Against Human Trafficking 2023 Conference

September 28-30, 2023

Doubletree by Hilton Chicago North Shore Conference Center

For more information and to register, please click [here](#).



**U.S. Catholic Sisters  
Against Human Trafficking**

## The Porn Paradox with Megan Johnson

Porn is legal. Sex trafficking is not. They are completely unrelated. Right? This talk is a paradigm shifting concept that has you asking, "Am I part of the problem? Or will I be part of the solution?"

Please click [here](#) to view this short and excellent YouTube video.



*“Viewing  
pornography  
forces me to  
see people as  
objects.”*

*-Megan Johnson,  
The Porn Paradox*



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