

LET'S TALK ABOUT

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A GUIDE FOR
HIGH SCHOOL
STUDENTS

GOALS

This zine is for highschool-aged people who are interested in learning more about pornography. We'll talk about what porn is, why people watch it and some good and bad things about porn. We'll also talk a little bit about the law and porn.

Hopefully, this zine will give you enough information to make your own decisions about whether or not you want to watch porn or think that porn is good or bad, or somewhere in between.

WHAT IS PORN ?

por·nog·ra·phy noun \-fē\

: movies, pictures, magazines, etc., that show or describe naked people or sex in a very open and direct way in order to cause sexual excitement

Often, when people talk about pornography they mean the hardcore film depiction of sex that are available on the internet. However, porn can take many shapes and is found as movies, pictures, books, stories, .gifs, audio, etc.

Hardcore: hardcore pornography contains explicit depiction of sex acts including vaginal or anal sex, oral sex or fetish play. This sort of porn is most often video, like you can find on the internet.

Softcore: is material that has a pornographic or erotic component but is less explicit than hardcore pornography. It may or may not include representations of sex acts, and nudity

Erotica: is literature (books, magazine articles, short stories) designed to arouse sexual desire. It may or may not include explicit descriptions of sex.

When we talk about porn it's important to remember that it's not one thing. There are many many different kinds of porn and so it's important to be able to tell them apart. For example, the best selling erotic book 50 Shades of Gray sold over 70 million copies worldwide, and you might see people reading it on the bus or at the doctor's office! It's a pretty harmless, fun and sexy thing that people do. On the other side of things, sexual depictions of children are exploitative and abusive and creating or owning those depictions is a serious crime. Learning to think critically about porn is an important step in making decisions about it.



"I didn't watch explicit porn until I was in university. Before that I would read books with even short descriptions of sex. That was usually enough to turn me on or get my imagination going. Plus, they were actually good books! My mom and grandma had read the same one the summer before! Harlequin novels are pretty much porn, but no one ever talks about that"

"I tend to prefer written erotica or still images because they allow me to fill in the blanks with my own stories, bodies, etc. Now i have some pretty solid performers, companies, and Tumblr blogs that i follow, but it did take some time and hunting."

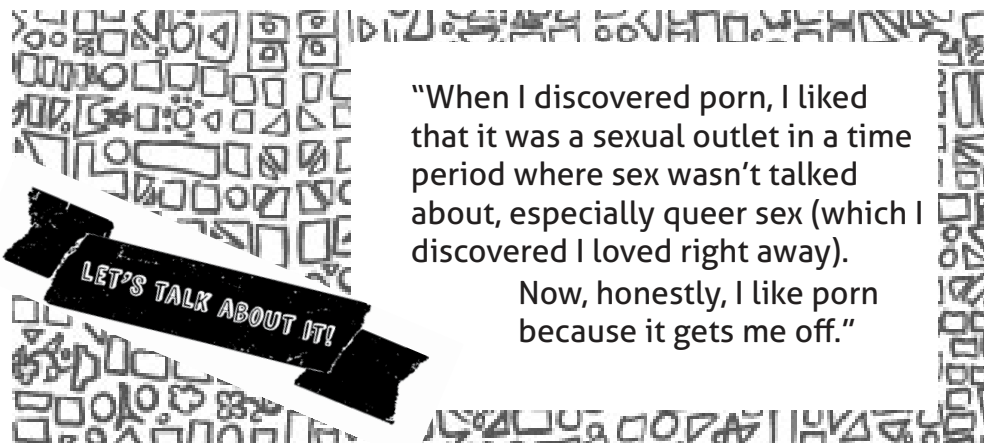
"When I was in middle school my friends recorded some of that softcore porn that came on TV late at night on VHS and shared it with us. We had that tape for a couple years.

WHY DO PEOPLE WATCH

PORN?

People watch porn for all sorts of reasons

- **Curiosity**- we're interested or wondering about sex and our bodies
- **Information**- sometimes people watch porn to learn about sex. While there is some good educational porn, most is not. We'll talk about this more later.
- **Exploration**- lots of people start watching porn before they actually have sex with a partner. They might find it helpful to explore their desires and what feels good. Again, this can be great but porn isn't always a good representation of safe and healthy sexuality.
- What other reasons can you think of?

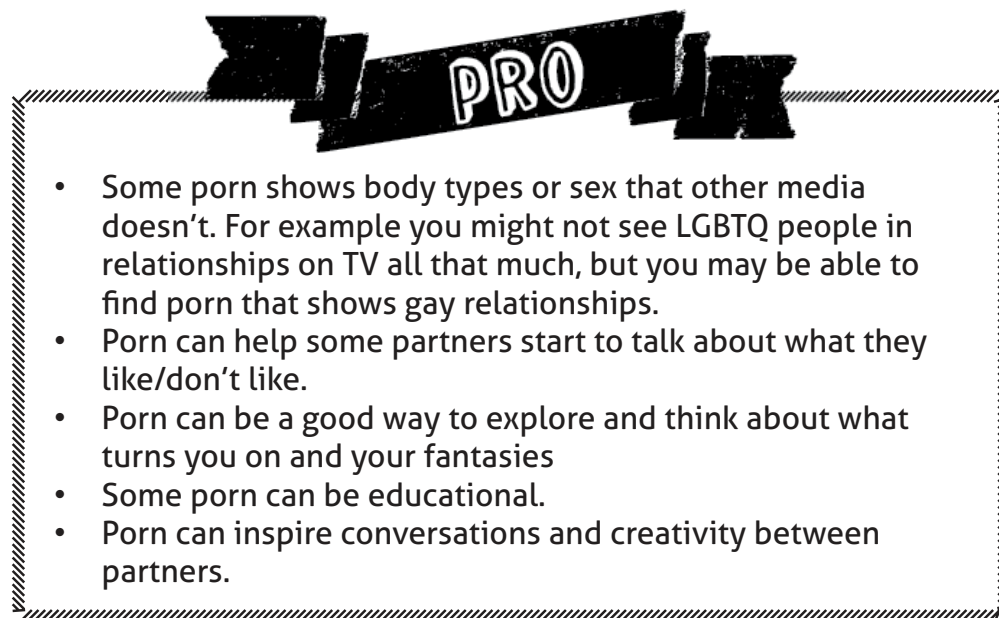


There's lots of good reasons to watch porn, but it's important to remember that you should only watch it if you want to. No one should ever force, or pressure you into watching pornography. If your partner or friends is forcing you to watch porn, you should talk to a trusted adult. Also, the legal age to watch porn is 18 in Canada. However, in reality many teens see porn before they turn 18 and you should learn a little bit about it before then.

IS PORN BAD OR GOOD?

It would be great if that was an easy question to answer. Unfortunately it's not. Your views on porn will depend on lots of different things like your gender, culture, race, etc. You also don't have to make a decision about what you think right away. It's good to explore and do some research. Hopefully this pamphlet will give you some information you need to make your own choices about that.

But to get you started, here are some pros and cons of pornography.



"I watch porn alone and with a partner. When it's with a partner, it's to inspire more creative moves and generally create a sexy atmosphere."

"I like that when I am watching or browsing porn, I am in control. I can find what I like, I can go at my own pace, I can stop or start as I like and I can focus on what gives me pleasure. I like that porn is arousing and exciting."

CON

- Porn isn't always a good example of how to practice safer sex
- Porn can create unrealistic expectations about bodies and sex acts.
- When heterosexual couples are shown, porn is often focussed on men's desires and what directors think turns men on, so real female pleasure is rarely seen.
- Most mainstream porn is hetero and cis-sexist
- Porn often represents LGBTQ people, and racialized people in offensive and exploitative ways.
- If you don't know exactly what sites you want to go to, it can be easy to accidentally find porn that you don't like.

LET'S TALK ABOUT IT!

"I think porn can be incredibly informative, both in exposing what turns you on and exposing what turns you off. I hate that the vast majority of porn totally ignores this and has the same narrow range of bodies, sexualities, and options on [display]. This [...] damages people's opinions about sex and sexual activities."

"I'm a woman and I can't watch most porn on the internet. I just find it really boring! The woman normally orgasms right away and it's super fake. They just show it to get it over with, and then move on to really aggressive penetration. While most of my relationships are with men, I mostly watch lesbian porn because it's more likely to show real female pleasure."

"I like least that it is so easy to find degrading and disturbing porn. I like least that a lot of porn is made with with very little care toward the actors or toward the viewers. This porn is produced to make money, and little else."

PORN

IS

REPRESENTATION

NOT

REALITY

Most of us know that romantic comedy movies aren't actually accurate portrayals of relationships. Well, this is also true of porn! Porn is often not an accurate portrayal of sex, sexuality and relationships. In other words, porn is a representation not a reality.

When we represent something, we might leave bits out or make certain things look better than they really are. We might fake certain parts or leave out the parts we think are boring. Porn companies and directors represent sex and sexuality in a way that they think will make you buy and watch it. All of this means that if you're watching porn to understand how sex works in the real world, you're probably not getting all the information you need. Porn presents a skewed view of what sex looks like, who does it, and how they do it.

IN PORN

Penises tend to be WAY above average in length and girth

People are often tall, and thin.

Safer sex is rarely shown

Vulvas are often very similar. Most porn actors remove all of their pubic hair. Some people get labiaplasties, which is a surgery to "trim" the labia so they look more symmetrical. This can result in loss of sensation.

Women in porn are often very thin with large breasts. They tend to all look very similar

Porn is scripted so actors know what they're doing. Actors move effortlessly between positions and always seem to know what feels good.

IN LIFE

The average penis is about 5.2-5.5. inches when erect

People of all body sizes and shapes can have active and fulfilling sex lives

People often use methods to protect from pregnancy and/or STIs

Vulvas come in all shapes and sizes. Some have longer or lopsided inner labia, some have lots of hair, some don't, some are purpleish, some are pink, etc.

Women come in all sorts of shapes and sizes

Partners need to talk to each other about consent, what feels good, when they get tired, whether they want to do something for sex to be good.

It takes hours to shoot a 30 minute porn but you don't see the breaks the actors take to eat, drink and change positions.

Penetration is the main event. Any depiction of foreplay tends to be pretty short.

Women orgasm loudly and quickly after just a little bit of stimulation.

Porn is all about visual appeal. Actors have sex at an angle and there are lots of close ups.

All sorts of people have rewarding and respectful sex.

Sex can be a little awkward, or tiring. It might last a long time, but it also might be quite short.

"Foreplay" is an important part of sex to make sure that everyone is comfortable and ready for penetration. It might also be the only thing you do during sex! Lots of people may skip penetration entirely.


Some women orgasm quickly but others take time. On average, it takes women 10-20 minutes to reach orgasm. Men reach orgasm after 7-14 minutes overall, but average two to three minutes after beginning intercourse.

Sex is about all your senses including touch, sight, smell, taste and hearing.

Porn can depict black and brown bodies, dis/abled bodies as well as LGBTQ bodies in problematic and offensive ways. It can objectify, fetishize and exploit them.

LET'S TALK ABOUT IT!

"There is no doubt that I liked porn from the beginning, but I had to search for something that I felt more comfortable with, that felt less contrived, exploitative, intrusive and plastic."

 Interested in learning more about how porn is different than sex in real life? Visit <http://bishuk.com/porn/>. Bish has lots of information about porn for teens, and this activity was inspired by his work!

SOME LAST THINGS TO THINK ABOUT...

Do I like what I'm watching? Does it turn me on or make me feel good or does it make me uncomfortable? Am I watching porn because I want to or because my partner thinks I should?

You should only watch porn if you want to and you feel like it's a positive experience. No one should ever force, or pressure you into watching pornography. If your partner or friends is forcing you to watch porn, you should talk to a trusted adult. It may take some time to explore and find something that you like, and it's ok to not like the porn that's easily available on the internet.

Do I think that this is how I should act during sexual activity?

Don't take lessons in how to have sex in real life from porn and make sure you can have a serious conversation with your partner about what you're watching. Don't assume your partner likes the things you see in porn, or that they expect you to do those things. Unless you can talk to your partner about what they like and want as well as what you like and want, you shouldn't be having sex.

What do I know about these actors/company?

Not all porn companies treat their employees well. Do some research on the company and actors. Increasingly, there's also images or videos available online of people who did not consent to having those images distributed. Do you know if this person knows that the images are available online?

LET'S TALK ABOUT IT!

"Be aware that the vast majority of pornography depicts only a narrow representation of sexuality... Plus, porn sex is not the same as real sex, so don't use it as a how-to guide."

Does this porn feed into negative or oppressive stereotypes about people?

Does the film depict black, brown, dis/abled, queer or trans* bodies as fetish objects? These films can perpetuate harmful stereotypes and attitudes towards marginalized people.

Will you pay for porn?

Most people will just laugh if you ask if they pay for their porn, but it's an important consideration. If you're into independent or feminist porn, then you should know that they really rely on the money earned from subscriptions and purchases. Without this they won't be able to keep going and provide an alternative to mainstream porn. But it's also important to realize that we can't all pay that much for porn. No matter what you choose to do, it's important to think about how it affects the actors and companies who make porn.

LET'S TALK ABOUT IT!

"I'm a poor student and have been for years, so a lot of the time I settle for tumblr and promotional clips from my favourite companies, or borrow from friends who have paid for porn. If I had a more disposable income, I definitely would [pay for my porn]. There are some really great indie companies who can always use new customers."

"I've met some of the directors and actors in the porn I like, so I can't steal their porn, I would feel awful. But I also can't afford to buy everything. Free clips are great. And when I do buy porn I try to invest in great porn that will give me a lot of 'bang for my buck', pardon the pun."

LET'S TALK ABOUT IT!

"I sometimes [see myself represented in porn], but only in queer porn. i'm a femme-y genderqueer with a more muscular build, so i'm certainly not going to see myself in mainstream porn."

"My sexuality, queer, is consistently [shown as being a turn-on for men] in mainstream porn, which is endlessly frustrating"

"My inner labia stick out and I had always been pretty self conscious about my vulva, I thought it was different and maybe gross. My partners never seemed to mind but I had never seen one like it. Feminist and Independant porn was actually great for that... I saw bodies like mine."

DIY?

THINK AGAIN

You might not think of it as porn, but creating and sending images of yourself can be risky business. Especially if you're under 18.

While the law was never intended to persecute minors who are sending photos of themselves to other minors, the law hasn't caught up to technology and it is possible for you to be charged with producing or possessing child pornography, even if it is of yourself or your partner. While minors can posses photos of a person they are legally able to have sexual relations with, they are not allowed to share or distribute these photos. This is especially true if you distribute a photo of someone without their permission.

You probably don't think of the images you send to a partner as pornography, let alone child pornography, but under the law it could be seen that way. And young people have been charged with possession in The USA, Australia and Canada (including in Nova Scotia).

Child pornography laws in Canada forbid the production, distribution, and possession of child pornography. Child pornography is any visual representations of sexual activity of a person under the age of 18 years. It also includes the depiction of the genital or anal region of a person under 18 for sexual purposes. This definition includes real people and imaginary persons (cartoons depicting child sexual acts are also illegal).

Keep these things in mind and discuss them with your partner. Most importantly, respect your partner and NEVER share intimate photos of them without their permission.

FIND OUT

MORE

Scarleteen

<http://www.scarleteen.com/>

Scarleteen is a huge and awesome site full of information for teens. Search the website for "porn" and you will find lots of information and articles.

BISH

<http://bishuk.com/porn/>

A ton of really great information for youth 14 and up. Bish has a whole section on pornography that you may find helpful.

That's Not Cool

<http://www.thatsnotcool.com/>

That's Not Cool is a national public education campaign that uses digital examples of controlling, pressuring and threatening behavior to raise awareness about and prevent teen dating abuse. That's Not Cool provides tools to help you draw your digital line about what is, or is not, okay in your relationships. There's lots of information about how you can deal with someone who is pressuring you to send them intimate photos.

Text Ed

<http://www.texted.ca/app/en/>

A great online source for everything textual. Provides information on texting and relationships, how to deal with harassment, and how to cope with stress. Through a variety of games and activities you can test your texting knowledge, find out how to use this great technology safely, and learn what to do when someone crosses the line.

**WANT TO KNOW MORE?
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