

Intro- Maggie Blaylock, LPC-MH in the state of South Dakota. I am also a CSAT (Certified Sexual Addictions Therapist) and a CMAAT (Certified Multiple Addictions Therapist). I work daily with the devastation of the aftermath on individual lives and marriages because of Sexual Addiction. In almost every case I work with pornography use was an originating factor in their addiction. Sadly I became a licensed and trained professional because 11 years ago my own marriage was devastated by sexual addiction. My husband was the child of a pastor and his parents tried very hard to monitor the content that he consumed. Unfortunately, he had access to porn he found at his grandparents home and at a friends. When high speed internet hit while he was in college this behavior turned into a major addiction in his life until he eventually could no longer hide it. I became a trained professional because there were no local therapists in my state dealing with such a complex issue. We had to travel to Colorado to find someone skilled enough to know how to help us get into recovery and eventually repair our broken relationship. Sadly, today, I am only 1 of 2 CSATs in my state and last I checked there are none in the North Dakota. I have had clients who drive down into the state of SD to a location that they can find wifi to work with me.

In 2017 the state of South Dakota declared pornography a public health crisis.

Here are three reasons (they stated) why pornography should be recognized as harmful to public health:

1) Exposure to pornography is unmanageable at the individual level: individuals and families are unable to “opt-out” of pornography, and [27% of children](#) are being exposed to it before they’ve even reached puberty.

- Most recently Google even accepted the reality of this truth when they changed their safe search settings to default for people in an attempt to make the internet a safer place for young people.
- More and more younger children are accessing internet pornography. The average age of first exposure is 11 (Randel and Sanchez, "Huffington Post" - 2016). However, "children under 10 now account for 22% of online porn consumption under 18" (British Journal of School Nursing.)

2) Pornography use shrinks the brain: a [2014 study](#) found that increased pornography use is linked to decreased brain matter in the areas of motivation and decision-making, impaired impulse control, and desensitization to sexual reward.

- See image- When one looks at pornography they are using the reward system part of their brain. This would be the limbic system of fight, flight or freeze. This area of the brain is also called the reptilian brain. Pornography or sexual content creates a supernatural stimuli that artificially enhances the release of chemicals in the reward system. The chemicals have a molecular structure very similar to cocaine. We have found that habitual porn use create grey matter in the brain (brain shrinkage) in the prefrontal cortex.

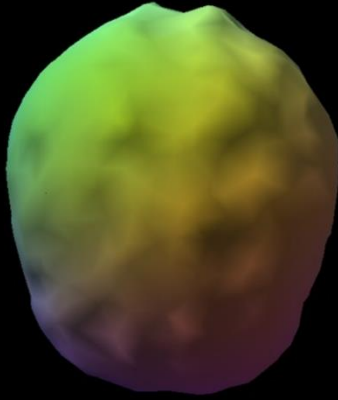
3) Pornography is linked to increased sexual violence: a [2015 meta-analysis](#) of 22 studies from seven countries found that internationally the consumption of pornography was significantly associated with increases in verbal and physical aggression, among males and females alike.

Unfortunately since 2017 the state of South Dakota has done little to no work to make more legislative actions of change or protection for children in this arena.

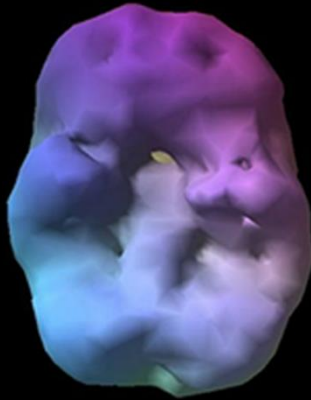
I am honored to be here today to talk about a topic that I passionately believe is an issue that we need to take steps toward correcting. I can not stress enough how big of a problem we are yet to see. I work daily with clients whose lives became unmanageable due to addiction and they barley had access to porn or sexual content compared to what our youth in society has today. I truly believe that we are just beginning to see the impact on those who have had widespread access to porn or sexual content at an early age due to its availability. I don't know how many of you saw the interview on CNN a few weeks ago with the Surgeon General talking about social media but one of the things he said that impacted me the most was that when we saw that cars were becoming more dangerous we passed laws to keep the public safe. We created speed limits and seat belt laws to protect the public. The same fits here with the arena of pornography and sexual content, we need laws in place to protect our young minds until their brains are fully grown and they have been educated and can make their own decisions about what is healthy for them.

Thank you for considering a step toward protection for the children of your state.

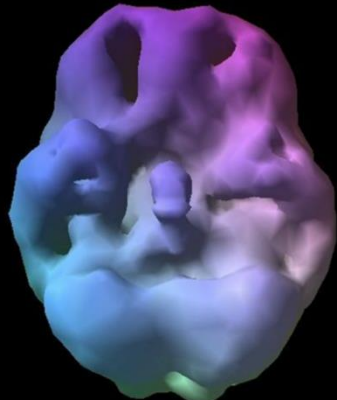
HERE'S YOUR BRAIN



HERE'S YOUR BRAIN
ON HEROIN



HERE'S YOUR BRAIN
ON PORN



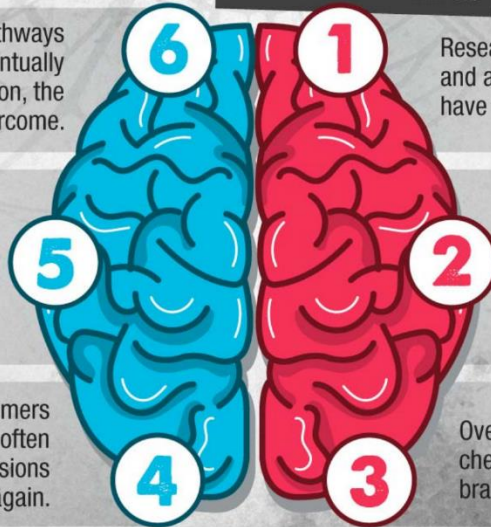
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THE EFFECTS OF PORNOGRAPHY IN THE BRAIN

The good news is that if porn pathways aren't reinforced, they'll eventually disappear. As any addiction, the addiction to porn can be overcome.

The images are burned so deeply into the mind that the person will remember them for a long time to come, maybe the entirety of their life.

Just like an addict, regular consumers will end up turning to porn more often or seeking out more extreme versions to feel excited again.



Researchers have found that internet porn and addictive substances like tobacco have very similar effects on the brain.

Like other addictions, porn activates the part of the brain called the "reward center", triggering the release of a cocktail of chemicals that give you a temporary buzz.

Over time, excessive levels of these chemicals cause the porn consumer's brain to develop tolerance.