

TESTIMONY FOR  
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Thank you, Senators, for allowing me to speak to you today.

Pornography, by its very nature, is an equal opportunity toxin. It damages the viewer, the performer, and the spouses and the children of the viewers and the performers. It is toxic mis-education about sex and relationships. It is more toxic the more you consume, the "harder" the variety you consume and the younger and more vulnerable the consumer.

The damage is both in the area of beliefs and behaviors. The belief damage may include Pornography Distortion, Permission-Giving Beliefs and the attitudes about what constitutes a healthy sexual and emotional relationship. The behavioral damage includes psychologically unhealthy behaviors, socially inappropriate behaviors and illegal behaviors.

Let me give some examples. Pornography Distortion is a set of beliefs based in pornographic imagery, sent to the viewer while they are aroused and reinforced by the orgasm. An example of Pornography Distortion would include beliefs such as "Sex is not about intimacy, procreation or marriage. Sex is about predatory self-gratification, casual recreation, body parts, violence, feces, strangers, children, animals and using women as entertainment." All of these are messages regularly sent by pornography.

Permission-Giving Beliefs are a set of beliefs that imply that my behavior is normal, acceptable, common and/or doesn't hurt anyone so I have permission to continue to behave in the way that I am. In all types of violence and addiction, Permission-Giving Beliefs are involved. Examples would include "All men go to prostitutes" "Women like sex mixed with violence" and "Children enjoy sex with adults". These particular Permission-Giving Beliefs are also common in pornography.

Both Pornography Distortion and Permission-Giving Beliefs increase the problem of mis-education about sexuality and relationships. For example, the myth that women are

sexually aroused by engaging in behaviors that are actually sexually pleasuring to men is a particularly narcissistic invention of the pornography industry. This is sexual mis-education.

The consequences of all these distorted beliefs are varied. For the viewer, pornography increases the likelihood of sexual addiction and they respond in ways similar to other addicts. Sexual addicts develop tolerance and will need more and harder kinds of pornographic material. They have escalating compulsive sexual behavior becoming more out of control and also experience withdrawal symptoms if they stop the use of the sexual material. The executive who goes to his office and logs on to the Internet porn sites at 9:00 AM and logs off at 5:00 PM is out of control and risks a great deal. Research indicates that 70% of the hits on Internet sex sites occur between 9-5 on business computers. Research also indicates and my clinical experience supports that 40% of sex addicts will lose their spouse, 58% will suffer severe financial losses, and 27-40% will lose their job or profession. Those whose marriages don't end, may find themselves increasingly dissatisfied with their spouses appearance and sexual behavior and increasingly sexually acting out which leads to an increase in sexually transmitted diseases. Research indicates that even non-sex addicts will show brain reactions on PET scans while viewing pornography similar to cocaine addicts looking at images of people taking cocaine. This material is potent, addictive and permanently implanted in the brain.

Those who use pornography have also been shown to be more likely to engage in illegal behavior as well. Research indicates and my clinical experience supports that those who use pornography are more likely to go to prostitutes, engage in domestic violence, stranger rape, date rape, and incest. These behaviors should not be surprising since pornographic videos containing all of these themes are readily available and the permission-giving beliefs of these pornographic videos reinforced by the orgasm say that all these behaviors are normal, acceptable, common and don't hurt anyone.

I have also seen in my clinical experience that pornography damages the sexual performance of the viewers. Pornography viewers tend to have problems with premature ejaculation and erectile dysfunction. Having spent so much time in unnatural sexual experiences with paper, celluloid and cyberspace, they seem to find it difficult to have sex with a real human being. Pornography is raising their expectation and demand for types and amounts of sexual experiences at the same time it is reducing their ability to experience sex.

The viewers are not the only ones to be affected by pornography. The performers are damaged as well although the performers were often damaged before they entered the industry. No healthy six-year-old growing up in a healthy home environment says, "I hope I grow up to be a porn star, stripper or prostitute". Those who now work in the porn industry were often little girls who got into their beds each night, rolled themselves into a fetal position and each night he came in and pealed her open. They work in the porn industry with its physical invasion and visual invasion because it feels like home. Once they are in the industry they have high rates of substance abuse, typically alcohol and cocaine, depression, borderline personality disorder which is a particularly serious disorder and dissociative identity disorder which used to be called multiple personality disorder. The experience I find most common among the performers is that they have to be drunk, high or dissociated in order to go to work. Their work environment is particularly toxic. One study on strippers indicated that they were likely to be punched, slapped, grabbed, called cunt and whore and to be followed home or stalked. Not

surprisingly, these women often work with bodyguards. This live form of pornography causes violence and the customers receiving these Permission-Giving Beliefs become carriers of these beliefs back to their homes, onto their jobs, into the street, onto the school yard. There they encounter women and children who do not have bodyguards.

The terrible work life of the pornography performer is often followed by an equally terrible home life. They have an increased risk of sexually transmitted disease including HIV, domestic violence and have about a 25 % chance of making a marriage that lasts as long as 3 years.

The viewers and the performers of pornography are the most direct victims. However, the children and the partners are also damaged by this industry. My clinical experience indicates that the spouses of porn viewers are often depressed, and are more likely to have eating disorders, body image disorders and low self-esteem. These wives can't function in the fake sexual world in which their husbands live. The wives may try to please their spouse by engaging in sexual behaviors that they find degrading. The wife may think that they can increase the sexual energy in the relationship and satisfy her husband if she views the pornography with him. My clinical experience is that these wives often get a short-lived boost in sexual activity but soon she notices that when her husband is having sex with her, he is turning around to watch the porn on the TV screen. She then realizes that he isn't having sex with her at all. He's masturbating inside her body while he is having sex with the women on the screen.

Some wives will resort to plastic surgery especially breast implants. Research indicates that women who get breast implants are four times as likely to commit suicide as other women are.

The children also show the damage. As pornography becomes normalized, it is left around the house. Children can get exposed to it. These are tender minds that are just developing their conceptualizations of sex. Normalizing abnormal sex increase the likelihood that they will engage in these behaviors. This increases the likelihood of early sexual experience and with it, the increasing risk of pregnancy, and sexually transmitted diseases. These children often think that all relationships are sexual. That sex is the core of their personalities and is the way in which you raise your self-esteem. This may be one reason that we see sexual addiction running in families. The distorted beliefs are not only reinforced but modeled as well. In one report in Australia, children who had become sexual predators before the age of 12, all had experienced pornographic material on the Internet and large number believed that the only use of the Internet was for pornographic material.

Children who have porn-viewing fathers complain that when he looks at them it feels "creepy". The parental gaze has now become the "porn gaze". The child of the porn user finds that every thing is now about sex.

There are no studies and no data that indicate a benefit from pornography use. If there were a benefit, then pornography users, pornography performers, their spouses and their children would show the most benefit. Just the opposite is true. The society is awash in pornography and so in fact the data are in. If pornography made us healthy, we would be healthy by now.