

How To Talk To Your Teen About Explicit Material And Pornography- AGE FOCUS: HIGH SCHOOL

OVERVIEW

Teenagers are being bombarded with images and situations that they are not equipped to handle. Often a teen is exposed to explicit material or pornography unwillingly or accidentally initially. This can cause shame and confusion in a developing teen. The best communication plan starts with setting aside time on a regular basis to have a calm and open dialogue regarding any potential exposure, discussing healthy boundaries for media and technology and creating an active plan for their protection.

The reality is that teenagers have the world at their fingertips. The ease and accessibility of the Internet, especially with hand-held devices, make exposure to explicit material as easy as the touch of a button. Awareness, accountability and communication are key in keeping teens safe from exposure, exploitation and victimization.

GOAL

- To help your teenager understand the definition of explicit material and pornography
- To clearly communicate the dangers that exists to them personally, relationally and within society
- To develop an approach on how it can be avoided
- To create a plan to protect them from ongoing exposure
- To help them if they are struggling with this issue in their life

DEFINITION OF EXPLICIT MATERIAL AND PORNOGRAPHY

Deliberate visual displays of explicit sexual content, in which people's bodies are used for the purpose of stimulation or making a financial profit. These images often include violent and exploitive actions.

THESE IMAGES ARE DANGEROUS BECAUSE:

- They don't show or portray real love, caring or intimacy
- They make violence look okay
- They exploit or hurt men, women and children
- Over time they can be addictive
- They damage a person's relationships and their view of human life

COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

- Help your teen understand they are normal if they are curious about sex.
- Help your child understand what it means to have respect for their body as well as others. Reinforce that this means we treat others, and should be treated, in an appropriate way.
- Verbalize a plan in case of exposure. (See tips below). Remember not to overreact or deflect shame upon your teenager if they have been exposed to explicit material or pornography. Most often they are feeling conflicted and shameful about what they have seen.
- Decide together to put filters on all electronic devices connected to the Internet and keep the dialogue open. (Download our **Parents Guide To Kids And Media** @ www.thenovusproject.org).
- Regularly remind your teenager to be careful when they are with others who have access to electronic devices connected to the Internet.
- Explain that it is a healthy choice to avoid viewing media in isolated places or alone.
- Ask if they are struggling in this area. Reassure them that if they find themselves in a place where they need help, to talk to you about it. (Please contact us @ www.thenovusproject.org if you have questions).

TIPS

If you see explicit material or pornography:

- Walk away
- Immediately tell a parent or trusted adult
- Talk about how you are feeling
- Remember that it does not represent the real world, real love or respect
- Make a plan to avoid future exposure (Download our **Parents Guide To Kids And Media** @ www.thenovusproject.org).

For more information about The Novus Project, visit our website: www.thenovusproject.org