

RBC SR HIGH Student Ministry Pornography/Lust Support Guide



A student comes to you confessing a struggle with porn/lust. Have no fear! This document is to help and support you as you walk alongside this student through this struggle!

First, to put your student's struggle into perspective let's look at a couple of statistics provided by youthspecialties.com:

1. 90% of boys and 70% of girls reported having accessed sexually explicit media.
2. On average, the first exposure to pornography among men was 12 years old.

Before we dive deeper, we must come to terms with the fact that this is no longer a question of "who is struggling with pornography/lust?", instead we are naive to be shocked or surprised if a student confides in us a struggle with pornography/lust/sexual addiction.

The first thing we will look into is the INWARD battle going on here. Many people approach dealing with lust/porn from just an outward perspective. This manifests in solely doing things like a student keeping their phone out of their room or putting content restrictions on their devices. While these are beneficial things for a student, that alone is purely just lust management and doesn't address the real inward battles our students are facing. Therefore, first, we will address the inward battle and then talk about the outward, more practical steps a student can take.

Let's look deeper into some of these inward battles.

Shame

First, we need to look into shame. Jay Stringer, the author of Unwanted, wrote:

"While we tend to think watching pornography will influence us to experience shame, the reverse is also true. The more we experience shame, the more we will be drawn to

pornography. Although men and women do pursue compulsive sexual choices for pleasure and their corresponding neurochemicals, it's worth considering that we can also pursue them for the purpose of self-condemnation. All of us know the experiences in life where we feel shame, but rather than turning toward love or self-care, we turn toward behavior or a substance that we know will amplify the toxic inner critic's voice."

The #1 thing that will keep your student trapped in porn addiction is shame. Shame is the lies/thoughts the enemy puts in our heads. Thoughts that we are unworthy of love or being used by God because of how we struggle. Shame can be manifested in the lie that if anyone knew how we were struggling, we would never be viewed the same. This is the number one thing that will keep your student trapped in their struggle, the cycle of shame. We must first disarm shame by affirming to them that they are loved by an Amazing God that wants to use them and heal them! Shame is disarmed when our sin is brought into the light!

We can see this in scripture through Jesus's interaction with the woman at the well in John chapter 4. An often overlooked detail of this story is that the woman at the well went to grab water during the time of day when the sun was at its peak. Usually, women at that time would go in groups to get water later in the day when it was cooler. We can gather that this woman did not want to face other people due to sin, which Jesus later brings up in chapter four, verses 16-18: "**16** Jesus said to her, **"Go, call your husband, and come here."** **17** The woman answered him, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, **"You are right in saying, 'I have no husband'; 18 for you have had five husbands, and the one you now have is not your husband. What you have said is true."**

At first glance, it may appear that Jesus was coming off as harsh, but actually, Jesus was allowing the woman to find healing and freedom from shame through her sin being brought to the light. It's amazing because, after this encounter where the woman's sin is exposed, she immediately returns to her hometown and speaks about Jesus to everyone. Isn't that amazing? The woman who was crippled by shame, and did not want to face another human being, immediately returns to her town, publicly declaring Christ's goodness, bringing many to faith in Christ.

There is immense healing once we disarm shame and bring our sin to light.

Temptation

Let's now look into what temptation at its core is:

What is Temptation?: "the trial of man's fidelity, integrity, virtue, constancy, and enticement to sin, whether arising from the desires or outward circumstances."

The word trial is the same Greek word for temptation used in James 1 (Greek: πειρασμός) peirasmos; a putting to proof (by experiment (of good), experience (of evil), solicitation, discipline or provocation); by implication, adversity— temptation.

As a people living in this fallen world, we will endure trials. Trials can create a magnifying glass for the temptations that we struggle with; things that we grasp for comfort or perceived control. Trials/temptations show where we are still being sanctified as they show the things of this world that we still desire more than Jesus and His ways.

James tells us to "Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials (temptations) of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing." James 1:2-3

James is saying to be thankful that God doesn't leave you where you are. That He's refining us, growing us, sanctifying us. This is important for our perspective as we walk with our students on this issue. This is all about the sanctification process of becoming more like Christ every day. We will have ups and downs, but ultimately, God's purpose in it all is to make us more like Him. This isn't to say that temptation should be viewed as a good thing but it is, instead, an encouraging truth that our trials/temptations serve a greater purpose in our lives (James 1:13-14).

The Science of Porn Addiction:

In terms of its effects on the human brain, Pornography addiction is startlingly similar to most drug addictions.

Fight The New Drug, an anti-porn non-profit, states (linked below):

"Deep inside the brain, there's something called a *reward center*. The reward center's job is to release a pleasure chemical called *dopamine* into our brains in response to behaviors that we perceive as positive, like eating tasty food, getting in a good workout, or enjoying a kiss. Dopamine tells our brain, "Hey, this is a good thing! Keep doing this thing!" And it sends that message in such a powerful way we become hardwired to do whatever things trigger this process. Normally, it's a great system. The problem, however, is that this process can be hijacked. When someone uses an addictive drug, that drug uses the same dopamine process as part of the high, flooding your brain with feelings of pleasure and positive reinforcement."¹

¹ <https://fightthenewdrug.org/how-porn-can-affect-the-brain-like-a-drug/>

We must keep in mind that while this is a spiritual and emotional battle/issue, there is also a very real scientific/addictive factor that we are facing with this. Finding freedom from porn can be a long healing process due to brain chemicals and long-term reliance on the pornography involved. No one is ever too far for healing, but we must be prepared to play the long game and expect our students not to be perfect.

Now that we have looked at the inward battle, let's now look at the outward steps we should take with a student when they come to us with a struggle.

Step 1:

When a student has just told you they struggle, don't react, but instead, say, "Thank you so much for telling me, I really respect you for opening up and being vulnerable with me." Then the next step is to LISTEN and allow the student to share more about their struggle. They are telling you because they have the desire to be heard and know they need to know they are not alone. Next, share John 4 with them (the woman at the well). Focus on how her sin being brought into the light healed her and killed the shame.

Step 2:

Ask questions to get the full picture of their situation. This will also help them begin to process their struggle. Here are a few questions you can ask:

- How long have you had this struggle?
- How are you seeing this affecting you?
- What made you come to me with this?
- When do you find you struggle most? (Time of day they normally do it, what emotions trigger the temptation etc.)
- What is one practical step you can take TONIGHT, to start fleeing the temptation?

Step 3:

Pray with them. Bringing the Lord and His power into this situation is huge. It also helps you to realize this struggle is not all on you.

Step 4:

Offer to meet at a later date outside of typical student ministry time; schedule a specific time and place to meet so that it doesn't get pushed off and they have something to look into the future to as they battle this temptation. Before you meet, have them meditate on these scriptures (you can text them these verses):

- 1 Corinthians 10:13 (They are not alone in their struggle, God provides a way out)
- John 4:1-42 (Woman at the Well and how she was healed by her sin being brought to the light)
- Hebrews 4:15-16 (We have a savior that can empathize)

- 2 Timothy 2:21-22 (Flee from sin; evaluate where we practically need to eliminate temptation and replace that void with things that will honor the Lord)

Step 5:

Meet with them and ask, “How have you been doing since we last spoke?”

Go through the scriptures listed above together.

Ask if they have talked to their parents about their struggle. If they have not, strongly encourage them to do so. As a student ministry, we work with families overall, so our goal is for parents also to be involved in the student’s healing process. You can let them know you or one of the staff are willing to talk to their parents to start the conversation.

After the Second meeting, pray about what is next. The Lord may be calling you to regularly meet with your student. Maybe consider going through one of the books listed at the end of this document. But if you do not feel led to meet regularly or just do not have the bandwidth, here are a couple of optional ideas on how to further support your student.

Further optional ideas on how to support your student:

1. Weekly accountability texts. Please know you don’t hold your student accountable; instead, they hold themselves accountable to you. This could be as simple as a weekly text from your student that says, “I’ve been accountable.”
2. Go through a book about freedom from pornography together and discuss it.
3. Encourage them to talk to their parents.
4. Encourage them to be a part of a support group. You can let them know you will contact John or Lee for more information on this.

Some students may require further help, such as counseling or a support group. If that is the case, please email a ministry leader listed below.

Your student needs you! Be there with them, and make sure they know that you are there for them through their struggles! Yet, also know you are not Jesus, and you cannot bear all their burdens. Please come talk to the ministry leader for support. Listed below are some external resources for you and your student. Some of which you could even go through with your student together! If you have further questions, please contact:

Lee Banton- Senior High Student Pastor

leeanton@restonbible.org

John Fletcher- Senior High Student Associate

Johnfletcher@restonbible.org

BOOK RESOURCES:

Unwanted By Jay Stringer:

“Without rival, the best book on broken sexuality I have ever read.” —Dan B. Allender, PhD

Many of us feel ashamed and undesirable after years of sexual brokenness and addiction. The guilt and stigma surrounding sexual struggles can paralyze us and keep us from seeking help and healing. Author Jay Stringer approaches these sensitive subjects with gentleness and understanding.

<https://www.amazon.com/Unwanted-Sexual-Brokenness-Reveals-Healing/dp/1631466720>

Healing The Wounds of Sexual Addiction by Mark Laaser:

“With today's rampant availability of Internet pornography, sexual addiction has become a national epidemic that affects an increasing number of Christians, even pastors, and priests. As devastating as any drug habit, it brings heartbreak and despair to those it entangles. But there is help for men and women caught in sexual addiction's downward spiral.”

https://www.amazon.com/Healing-Wounds-Sexual-Addiction-Laaser/dp/0310256577/ref=sr_1_1?crid=1T048JEJ73JH&keywords=healing+the+wounds+of+sexual+addiction&qid=1665428682&qu=eyJxc2MiOilxLjcwliwicXNhIjoiMS40NSIsInFzcCl6IjEuNTUifQ%3D%3D&s=books&sprefix=healing+the+wounds+of+sexual+addiciton%2Cstripbooks%2C67&sr=1-1

ACCOUNTABILITY SOFTWARES

Covenant Eyes:

<https://www.covenanteyes.com>

Canopy

<https://canopy.us/>

OTHER RESOURCES

The Conquer Series

<https://www.conquerseries.com>