

This is the fifth and final article in the five-part series dealing with the topic of pornography/sexual addiction.

Concerned parents often ask me what they can do to prevent their children from becoming negatively affected by pornography and other harmful materials. The questions have a tone of heartfelt urgency, especially if the parents themselves have firsthand knowledge of the destructive nature of pornography.

It's common to see the pervasiveness of pornography and other harmful materials and wonder if there is any hope of protecting children from the steady stream of intrusive images. Fortunately, parents have many tools available to help them protect and heal their families from the impact of pornography and other harmful materials.

Since so much of the pornography available to our children comes through electronic mediums such as the Internet, television, and handheld devices, it's understandable that we would focus our attention on blocking and filtering content. Unfortunately, many parents still feel helpless after they install filters on their computers and lock all of the offensive channels on their televisions. Many parents tell me that they worry about their children still finding ways to access pornography outside the home. Despite their best efforts to protect their children at home, concerned parents still wonder if there is more they should do.

I believe it's important to incorporate both "high tech" and "low tech" strategies when protecting our children from the harmful effects of pornography. One without the other is an incomplete plan for protecting our families. I'll briefly explain both strategies.

"High tech" solutions are the filtering and other technology-based solutions I mentioned earlier. It's critical that parents understand how pornography can be accessed through the different devices found in their homes. There are several organizations that educate and empower parents to protect their families from the impact of pornography. The top three I recommend most to parents are: Enough is Enough (www.enough.org), The Lighted Candle Society (www.lightedcandle.org), and The Utah Coalition Against Pornography (www.utahcoalition.org).

"Low tech" solutions are relational solutions that minimize the risk of children and teens becoming addicted to pornography. These solutions include helping children recognize and manage their emotions in healthy ways, improving the attachment bonds between parents and children, teaching children how to form healthy relationships, creating an emotionally safe climate in the home, and teaching children about healthy sexuality.

While we can't perfectly protect our children from encountering pornographic material, we can work with them to know what to do and how to respond in ways that improve the likelihood that they won't become addicted to it.

Many of these "low-tech" solutions are found in books such as "What's the Big Deal About Pornography" by Dr. Jill Manning and "Talking to your Kids About Sex" by Mark and Debbie Laaser. Local marriage and family therapist, Jeffrey Ford, has also written an article called "Creating Safe Places to Talk About Dangerous Things" (email alliantcounseling@gmail.com for a free copy). These resources will help you begin to understand how implementing "low-tech" solutions alongside "high-tech" solutions can create the best outcomes for protecting your family.

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