

Internet Pornography: An occasion of sin for our time—Part II

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“For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weakness, but one who was tempted in every way that we are, yet never sinned.” (Hebrews 4:15)

ADDICTION—an unanticipated concern

- ❖ Psychiatrically, “addiction” refers to the presence of:
 - Tolerance which occurs when the same amount of a substance elicits less of a response
 - Withdrawal symptoms
 - Affective disturbances including:
 - Depression
 - Irritability
 - Impulsivity
 - Impaired concentration
 - Disrupted sleep
 - Aggressive behavior
 - Interruption of social relationships

Criteria for an addiction to *Internet pornography*

- ❖ Experts in addiction disorders describe five successive and interdependent stages through which individuals progress into an addiction to *Internet pornography*:
 - Discovery
 - Experimentation
 - Habit
 - Compulsivity
 - Hopelessness

- ❖ The progression of these stages may be gradual or may occur rapidly after discovering pornographic websites

Why has *Internet pornography* viewing become so popular?

- ❖ Accessibility
- ❖ Affordability
- ❖ Anonymity

What underpins the emergence of *Internet pornography* addiction?

- ❖ While it may appear that addictions are pleasure-seeking behaviors, the roots of any addiction can usually be traced to an effort to wish to suppress or avoid some kind of emotional pain
- ❖ Addiction is a way to escape from an experience that is either too full of sadness (such as an abusive relationship) or too devoid of joy (an emotionally empty life)
- ❖ Emotional trauma in early life may be at the root of some addictions
- ❖ Addiction to pornography offers a fantasy world in which there are endless people who appear to be interesting to—and interested in—the person
- ❖ By fantasizing, the person addicted to pornography is able to create idealized images of sexual partners whom he believes will meet his every impulsive need