

Tips for Service Providers: Child and Youth Problematic Online Pornography

- Explore the meaning of sexting with youth and the role it plays.
- Use gender-neutral language for open, non-judgmental communication about the effect of sexual internet-based activities on healthy sexual relationships.
- Review and consult relevant federal and provincial laws, as well as Alberta Health Services policies and guidelines regarding duty to report.
- Take a harm reduction approach by exploring youth’s motivations for sexting, the nature of the relationship with the person they are sexting and the potential consequences of sexting.
- Refer to the Growing Up Online Toolkit for more information, in particular, the case study and the Screening and Assessment Tools.
- Complete a biopsychosocial assessment for symptoms of depression, hopelessness, social isolation, anxiety, and suicidality for youth impacted by nonconsensual sexting.
- Intervention and treatment for pornography addiction in youth should be similar to that of substance use.
- Find more information for yourself, parents, and youth at MyHealthAlberta.ca: [Growing Up Online](#)
- Evidence-based treatment includes trauma-informed cognitive behavioural therapy, which includes stress management, relapse prevention, self-regulation, and coping skills. Acceptance and commitment therapy focuses on processes, and can help treat problematic internet pornography use. Mindfulness and internal family systems therapy may also be helpful. If you are not familiar with these interventions, consider a referral to AHS Youth Addiction Services at 1-866-332-2322 (toll free within Alberta).

A youth might say:	You might say:
I know I shouldn't be looking at porn and I feel ashamed and embarrassed when I do, but I don't seem to be able to stop.	Repeated pornography use triggers similar addictive reactions to substance use. Pornography induces a biochemical response that activates some pathways in your brain in an intense and direct way like a drug would. This is why you feel excited when viewing pornography and why you are experiencing compulsive use, even when you don't want to.
I have tried looking for good LGBTQ2S+ sex education information, but can't seem to find anything.	You're right. There is not a lot of reliable information available for LGBTQ2S+ individuals, but let's see what we can find together. Let's also talk about how you can safely use digital technology to find information and connect with people in a supportive environment.