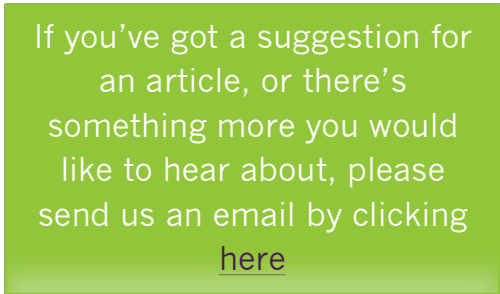




growth



It's hard to talk about sex these days without the topic of pornography eventually surfacing. And what most people find is that porn is a very divisive topic, often leading to very strong opinions being expressed. Because porn is such a polarizing subject, its role in a relationship can often be a topic of contention. However, porn isn't about to go away, in fact its accessibility is ever increasing. Therefore, couples need to be able to agree about what role pornography has in their relationship. Not talking about porn, and not making an agreement with your partner often leads to couples ending up in hurt and in pain. So, read on to find out HOW you can have that difficult conversation.

First, it is often best to talk about the **‘WHAT’** of porn. What are your own individual perceptions of porn – and check these perceptions with the facts. Just a few facts : not everyone who uses porn will become addicted, not everyone who uses porn will become sexually violent, not everyone who uses porn will become desensitized to regular sex. However, some people might ... there are some downsides to porn. You might want to look at our last article to find out more facts about porn – “Porn ... the Good, the Bad and the Ugly”.

Secondly, it can be helpful to talk about the **‘WHY’** of porn – why is it important (or not) to each partner, and why is it important (or not) to the relationship. Something to be aware of : some people will use porn to manage stress, anxiety, depression, loneliness, or other uncomfortable feelings. If this is the case in your relationship, these root causes should be addressed and alternative coping strategies developed.

Thirdly, talk with your partner about **‘HOW’** you would like to use porn in your relationship. Remember, open discussion prevents secrecy and painful discoveries (which is problematic regardless of what is being hidden). Below are some questions that might help you to bring openness and curiosity to your discussions (whether you want porn to be a part of your relationship, or maybe whether you don’t).

If your partner is interested in porn, try to understand their position by asking them:

- What is it about masturbation that you enjoy – both with and without porn? Are they different?
- Can you describe or show me the porn that you enjoy?
- What is it about that porn that turns you on, compared to porn that doesn’t?

- Are there themes, activities, or feelings from that porn that you would like to talk about incorporating into our shared sex life?
- What else do you want to ask me?

If your partner isn’t interested in porn, try to understand their position by asking them:

- How do you feel about porn in general – and why?
- How do you feel about masturbation – and is it different with or without porn?
- How do you feel about having sexual thoughts and desires about someone other than each other?
- How do you feel about me specifically watching porn?
- What else do you want to ask me?

You will both benefit from ongoing discussions that involve lots of reflection, questioning, and sharing regarding the ‘what’, ‘why’ and ‘how’ of porn, both personally and in your relationship.

This greater understanding of each other makes it easier to negotiate an agreement about porn use that you can both feel good about and that will be sustainable. Further, these discussions might also improve your sex life, regardless of whether you decide porn is important or not to your relationship.

One last thing : if you do use porn, please ensure that it is ethically produced. Ethical porn respects the rights of performers and pays them appropriately, treats performers as consenting individuals, celebrates sexuality without judgement and recognises diversity of preference, and ensures performers are comfortable, consenting and respectful of boundaries.

And don’t forget, if you, or someone you know would like help with emotion regulation, please feel free to contact us on 0488 954 195, amanda@awakenpsychology.com.au or [click here](#)

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