

Self-Help

Module 1: Understanding Why

Objectives

This module aims to help you explore and gain understanding of the following:

- Your current online sexual behaviours
- How your sexual behaviour progressed into offending behaviour
- Your motivations for this
- Patterns and trends with your current use of internet pornography and accessing of illegal images



Motivation for accessing sexual images of children

If you are concerned that you may access sexual images of a child or have already done so and want to stop this behaviour it is important that you learn as much about yourself and your behaviour as possible. The first step in doing this is to understand why you were accessing the images.

The list below offers some common motivations we hear from people who have accessed sexual images of children:

- Boredom
- Low self-esteem
- Stress
- Low self-esteem
- Stress
- Curiosity
- Desensitising to legal adult pornography
- Sexual gratification
- Loneliness
- No sex life / decreased sex life
- Excitement
- Attraction to children
- Comfort
- 'Buzz' / risk taking
- Relationship problems
- Sex addiction

Starting Point

Identify your current level of knowledge and understanding around the following aspects of how you use illegal images (1 = very little knowledge; 2 = some understanding; 3 = secure understanding).

I have a clear and detailed understanding of my sexual behaviour and the internet.	1	2	3
I can identify key events in my life that influenced me to engage in more risky sexual behaviour over time.	1	2	3
I understand how I came to first access sexual images of children on the internet.	1	2	3

- Attraction to children
- Comfort
- 'Buzz' / risk taking
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I can identify key events in my life that influenced me to engage in more risky sexual behaviour over time.	1	2	3
I understand how I came to first access sexual images of children on the internet.	1	2	3
I am aware of my patterns of internet usage and when I am most likely to access illegal content.	1	2	3

If you have scored yourself with 1 or 2 in any of the above columns, this section will be really helpful for you to increase your knowledge around why you might be accessing sexual images of children online.

You might already have some understanding of why you have been or are tempted to access images of children and you might have identified with some of the motivations listed above. However, sometimes it can be more difficult to understand our behaviour. We are going to show you two ways you can use to improve your understanding.

The first is to think about when you go on-line and what mood you are in.

Below is a diary for you to complete which will help you think about these and help you identify patterns of behaviour.

Module 1: Understanding Why

Exercise 2: Progression Timeline

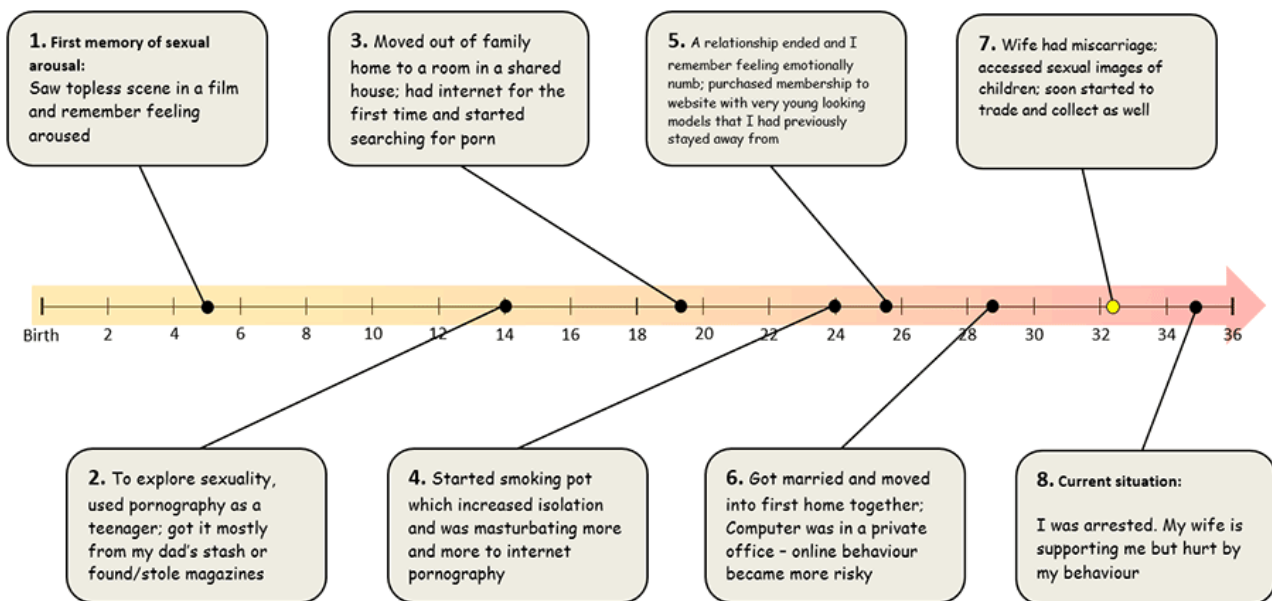
The second exercise is in three parts and looks back over your life to help you think about how you started and then continued looking at images.

PART A: Making your timeline

This first step in the exercise aims to provide you with a clear visual, mapping your progression toward accessing illegal images on the internet. In each box, write a brief description of a key event in your life, marking a progression in your online behaviour, eventually leading to your access of illegal content. Have a look at the example below to help you get started. We recommend completing your timeline in the following order:

- Your current situation (will likely be at the far right)
- The first time that you accessed illegal images of children (be sure to highlight this point on the timeline)
- Think back to your first memory of being sexually aroused, be it with pornography or other (will likely be near the far left)
- In between each of the above, identify other significant key events that you believe can be seen as 'signposts' in your life for where you broke down a barrier and progressed to more risky online behaviour. Remember that this is your timeline – if you feel that you need more boxes to tell your story, feel free to add.

EXAMPLE



PART B: Digging deeper

To further explore and reflect on your timeline, complete the following table in as much detail as possible. Feel free to use the 'Feelings word bank' (below) if needed. Remember to think about these 5 broad classes of activities when filling in the activities column:

- Downloading illegal child images
- Trading these images with others
- Producing illegal images of children
- Contacting children on the Internet for sexual reasons
- Offline sexual activity with children

EXAMPLE

Event	Age	Situation/life event – what influenced you to break down the barrier and make the progression?	Activities/actions – describe the behaviours that you were engaged in.	How were you feeling at the time?	Did the act of using the internet itself change the way you were thinking? In what way? Identify the thoughts that routinely went with each activity.
1	5	First time I saw a topless scene in a film.	Nothing beyond feeling a new sensation and remembering that feeling	excited	Didn't think too much about it, but knew it was different and that I liked it
2	12-18	Typical teenage life exploring sexuality and growing up with friends. Porn was around from time to time but never a constant. Was single more time than with a girlfriend	Masturbation became a familiar way to explore sexuality. Was secretive about masturbation	Fear of being caught	Knew it wasn't wrong but also that it was a somewhat taboo subject in the family (we rarely discussed sex)
3	19-24	Moved out of family home and into shared house. First time I had Internet access in my own private room	Started surfing for porn and masturbating more habitually	Enjoying the freedom and privacy	Not doing anything illegal - no harm done
4	22-25	Sketchy people moved into shared house and brought marijuana	Started doing drugs semi-regularly and masturbating to pornography. Isolating, refusing invitations to go out with friends, started to incubate and nurture addictive behaviour	Started having conflicted feelings of shame, regret and panic to euphoria, also started feeling apathetic	Started thinking that I might have a problem but quickly dismissed it as something that I could easily handle myself
5	25	A relationship ended and took it really hard	Took out a membership to a high risk porn website that I had previously steered clear from. I didn't seem to care so much anymore	Emotionally numb Wasn't thinking Depressed	Didn't really care anymore
6	29	Married and living in house with computer in private room. Wife would work odd hours giving me much time to myself.	Through isolation, use of Internet porn progressed and steadily grew in risk over time. Started collecting pornography	Very similar to steps 3 and 4	I can resist temptation and manage my Internet use. Sometimes felt that it was getting out of hand again
7	32-34	Wife had a miscarriage. Stress from work and pressure from family to have a child	Started looking at and trading child pornography on the internet. Would build up a collection, then delete it when had a moment of clarity, stay "sober" for a while and gradually build it up again. Repeated this cycle several times. My progression seemed to be stuck in this loop	Guilt, shame, disgust, fear	Constant conflict of emotions and morals, creating false rationalisations
8	34	My behaviour was discovered by my wife and I was arrested	Took immediate action to tell friends, family, see my GP, and start to get help	Vulnerability, fear, liberation, powerlessness	I have reached my bottom and am now able to start on my path toward recovery.

Feeling word bank:

Happy Sad Angry Hurt Depressed Frustrated Impulsive Stressed Relaxed
 Excited Bored Curious Rejected Doubtful Interested Lonely Irritated Ashamed
 Upset Annoyed Miserable Guilty In despair Uneasy Useless Vulnerable Afraid
 Nervous Timid Indifferent Restless Alienated Nonchalant Dull Anxious Confident

PART C: Understanding your behaviour over time

[Download printable version of the following questions, with space to fill in answers >](#)

Looking back over your diary and your timeline, consider the following questions:

1. How much control do you feel you had over the events that influenced you to engage in more risky behaviour? In hindsight, how could you have handled them differently?
2. How much control do you think you had over the choices you made to take action toward further offending behaviour? Why?
3. What effect/patterns or trends can you notice about the development of your sexual fantasies?

Now consider when you started using the internet regularly:

4. What made you decide to use the internet?
5. Did the act of using the internet change the way you were thinking? In what way?
6. Over time, what effect did the internet have on your life off-line (in the real world)?
7. How would you describe your life on-line (while using the internet)?

Now consider the one event that led you access illegal content for the first time and afterward:

8. Why do you think it was this specific event that triggered you to access illegal content for the first time? Why not something earlier in your life?
9. Were there other things happening in your life beyond what you have mentioned that could have contributed to your decision to access sexual images of children on the internet?
10. Why do you think you have continued the behaviour over time?
11. Using the list below, make a note of all the offending behaviours that you have engaged in:
 - a. Downloading illegal child images
 - b. Trading these images with others
 - c. Chatting to adults about sex with children online i.e. sharing fantasies
 - d. Contacting children on the Internet for sexual reasons (either via chat or webcams)
 - e. Exposing children to sexual behaviour via webcam
 - f. Producing illegal images of children
 - g. Voyeurism (hidden cameras)
 - h. Offline sexual activity with children

Can you identify how your offending changed over time and involved different behaviours?

12. Have you at any time tried to stop using the internet to access illegal images of children? If so, how many times did you try and stop? Why do you think you were not successful?

What are the important things that are motivating you to address your behaviour now? How important are they to you?

You don't see things for what they are... especially if you've been offending a long time...



PART B: Digging deeper

To further explore and reflect on your timeline, complete the following table in as much detail as possible. Feel free to use the 'Feelings word bank' if needed. Remember to consider the 5 broad classes of activities when filling in the activities column. Print the document as a PDF to save your answers.

Event	Age	Situation/life event – what influenced you to break down the barrier and make the progression?	Activities/actions – describe the behaviours that you were engaged in.	How were you feeling at the time?	Identify the thoughts that routinely went with each activity.
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					

Exercise 2: Progression Timeline

PART A: Creating your timeline

This first step in the exercise aims to provide you with a clear visual, mapping your progression toward offending behaviour on the internet. In each box, write a brief description of a key event in your life, marking a significant step in the progression of your online behaviour that eventually led to you accessing illegal content. Use the example provided to help you compose your own timeline. To save your answers, print the document as a PDF. We recommend completing your timeline in the following order:

- e) Your current situation (will likely be at the far right)
- f) The first time that you accessed illegal images of children (be sure to highlight this point on the timeline)
- g) Think back to your first memory of being sexually aroused, be it with pornography or other (will likely be near the far left)
- h) In between each of the above, identify other significant key events that you believe can be seen as 'signposts' in your life for where you broke down a barrier and progressed to more risky online behaviour. Remember that this is your timeline – if you feel that you need more boxes to tell your story, feel free to add.

1. First memory of sexual arousal:

3.

5.

7.



2.

4.

6.

8. Current situation:

Exercise 1: Daily Internet Use Record

This exercise will provide you with a visual record that will help you to recognise patterns in your behaviour and can show where you need to fill your time more positively.

- Under each day, shade in the grey column to indicate the hours that you have spent online.
- In the white column next to it, “traffic light” (Red, Amber, Green) when you access sexual activity on-line - Record involvement with illegal activity in RED, high risk activity in AMBER, and low risk activity in GREEN.
- You can include your mood states to record a pattern of these too.

This exercise will provide you with a visual record that will help you to recognise patterns in your behaviour and can show where you need to fill your time more positively.

EXAMPLE

	Mon 6 th	Tue 7 th	Wed 8 th	Thu 9 th	Fri 10 th	Sat 11 th	Sun 12 th
6-7 am							
7-8 am							
8-9 am							
9-10 am							Happy
10-11 am							
11-12 pm							
12-1 pm							
1-2 pm							
2-3 pm							
3-4 pm							
4-5 pm							
5-6 pm							
6-7 pm							
7-8 pm							
8-9 pm		OK		Happy		Lonely	
9-10 pm	OK		Stressed				
10-11 pm							
11-12 am							
12-1 am					Low		
1-2 am							
2-3 am							
3-4 am							
4-5 am							
5-6 am							

Exercise 1: Daily Internet Use Record

Every day make sure to keep a record of the amount of time you spend online and the amount of time you spend downloading, or are involved with, pornography and indecent images.

- Under each day, shade in the grey column to indicate the hours that you have spent online.
- In the white column next to it, "traffic light" (Red, Amber, Green) when you access sexual activity on-line - Record involvement with illegal activity in RED, high risk activity in AMBER, and low risk activity in GREEN.
- You can include your mood states to record a pattern of these too.

This exercise will provide you will a visual record that will help you to recognise patterns in your behaviour and can show where you need to fill your time more positively. **To save your answers in the worksheet, print the document as a PDF.**

Month: _____

	Mon _____	Tue _____	Wed _____	Thu _____	Fri _____	Sat _____	Sun _____
6-7 am							
7-8 am							
8-9 am							
9-10 am							
10-11 am							
11-12 pm							
12-1 pm							
1-2 pm							
2-3 pm							
3-4 pm							
4-5 pm							
5-6 pm							
6-7 pm							
7-8 pm							
8-9 pm							
9-10 pm							
10-11 pm							
11-12 am							
12-1 am							
1-2 am							
2-3 am							
3-4 am							
4-5 am							
5-6 am							

Module 1: Understanding Why

Reflection

As with the Introduction to this module, identify your level of knowledge and understanding around the following aspects of how you use illegal images (1 = very little knowledge; 2 = some understanding; 3 = secure understanding).

I have a clear and detailed understanding of my sexual behaviour and the internet.	1	2	3
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I understand how I came to first access sexual images of children on the internet.	1	2	3
I am aware of my patterns of internet usage and when I am most likely to access illegal content.	1	2	3

Now, consider the following questions:

- Have any of your responses changed from 1 to 2 or 2 to 3 from since the start of this module?
- In what ways might your understanding have changed?
- Which part of the module has had the greatest impact on your understanding? Why?
- Has anything from this module prompted or encouraged you to take action around your behaviour? If so, what? How do you plan to act on it?

- Has this module raised any further questions for you or made you want to explore any ideas further? What steps do you plan to take to seek out this information?

If you want to discuss anything covered in this module, have struggled with working through the self-help material or just want the opportunity to work through the self-help site with a practitioner to guide you then please [call the Stop It Now! Helpline](#) for confidential support from our trained staff.

