

Protect Our Children Townhall

Perils of Explicit Sexual Content/Pornography on Our Youth

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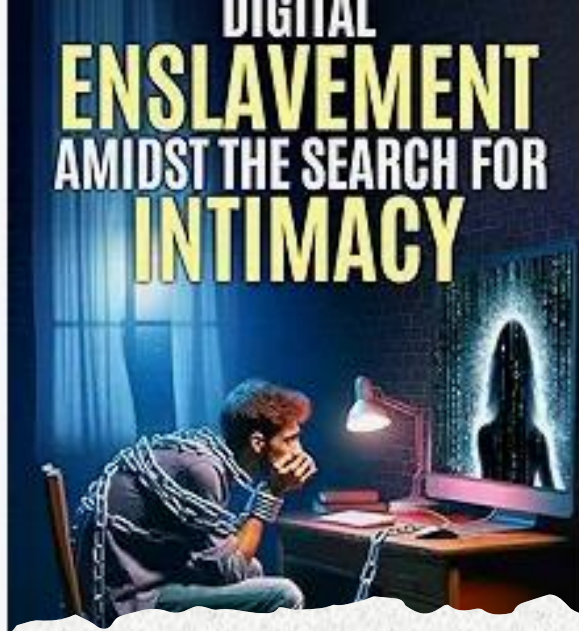
In one of my favorite movies, *A few Good Men*, Jack Nicholson decries that we don't want to know the truth. But as terrible as it is, that we must!

[Jack Nicholson - You can't handle the truth \(youtube.com\)](#)



We have a lot of slides to digest but hopefully they will prove more compelling than the Smith's 1000 boring slides from their last European vacation.





Digital Enslavement Amidst the Search for Intimacy

by Dr. Jeffrey E. Hansen Ph.D. | Feb 18, 2024

★★★★★ v 2

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Much of the content of this talk is included in my recently published book, *Digital Enslavement Amidst the Search for Intimacy*.

We will make a free digital copy of the book available to all of you as well as a PDF of my slides.

So, no need to take notes; unless you are one of those overachievers 😊

So why so much attention on the neuroscience of pornography addiction you might ask?

Porn addiction is a plague for our youth: It is damaging their brains and is destroying their futures.

Understand Brain Mechanisms: Reveals how addiction affects the brain's reward system and neural pathways.

Inform Treatments: Helps develop targeted interventions and effective therapies.

Create Preventive Strategies: Aids in designing preventive measures based on neural mechanisms.



A plea – listen with your **heart**
as well as your **brain**.

Listening to science with the **heart** means understanding its impact on human lives. It's about compassion and empathy, not just facts and figures. By balancing **intellect with empathy**, we foster more inclusive and compassionate responses and are better able to come together and find solutions to heal the wounds of our children.



In the words of **Stephen Arterburn**, world renowned expert on sexual addiction:




“I don’t know of any plague to ever reach into the homes and families all over the world and create as much damage or heartaches than the struggle of lust, affair, pornography, perversion, and sexual addiction. It seems that everywhere I look, it gets worse and worse. The Internet exploded the problem, and now cell phones transport pornography more portably than the computer and facilitates affairs with greater accessibility and secrecy” (cited in Roberts, 2008, p.9).

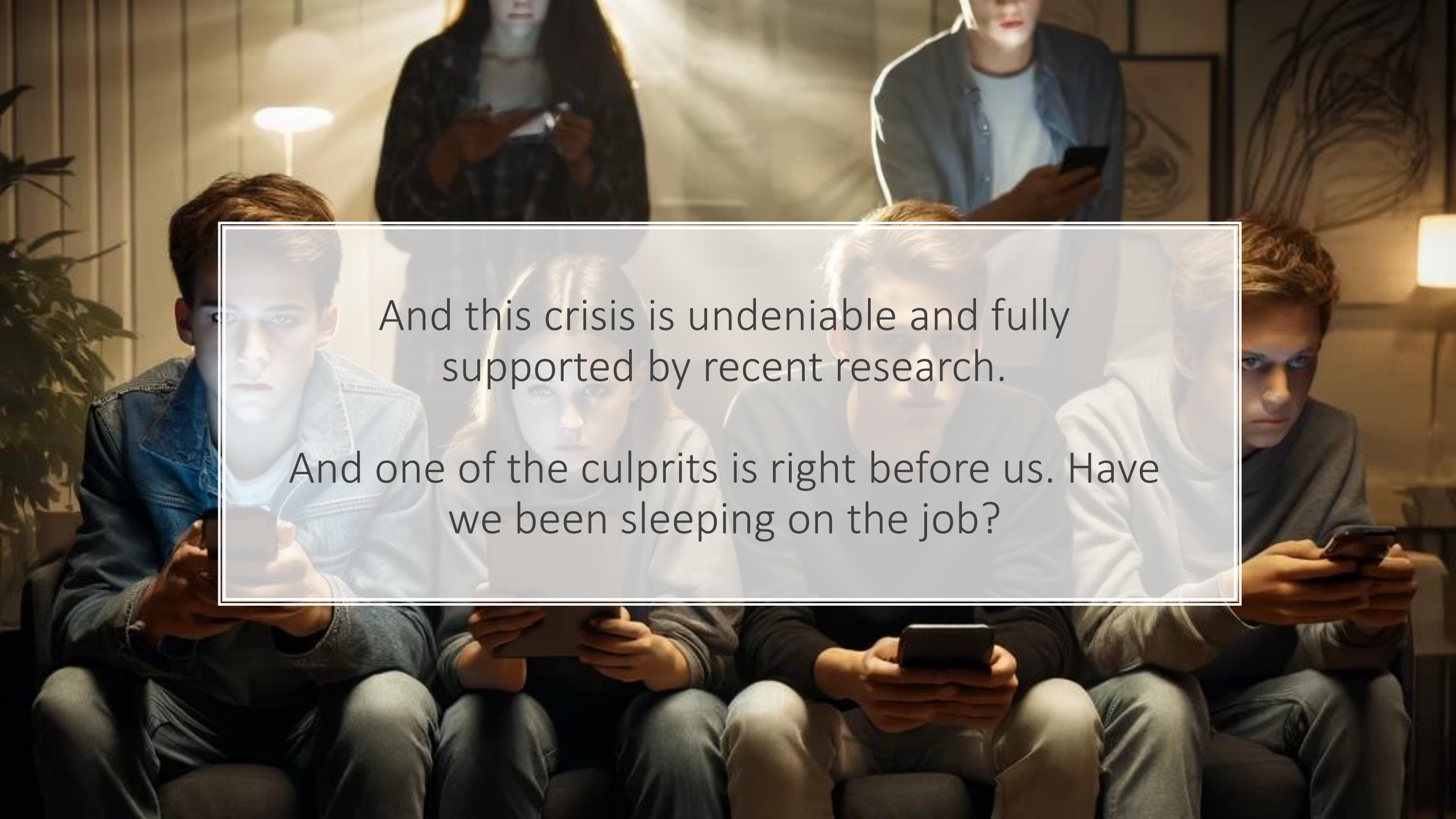
The Toll



- I have seen boys as young as 11 attempt to rape children as young as 3 after getting steamed up on porn.
- I have seen normal adolescent sexuality be hijacked and rewritten from something wonderful to something perverse.
- I have seen teens attempt suicide over the shame and guilt of pornography addiction.
- I have seen a teen addicted to violent porn savagely attack and attempt to rape a girl he desired.
- I have seen men go to jail and lose their families and their careers.
- I have seen countless marriages fail – the toll is incalculable and is mounting every day.

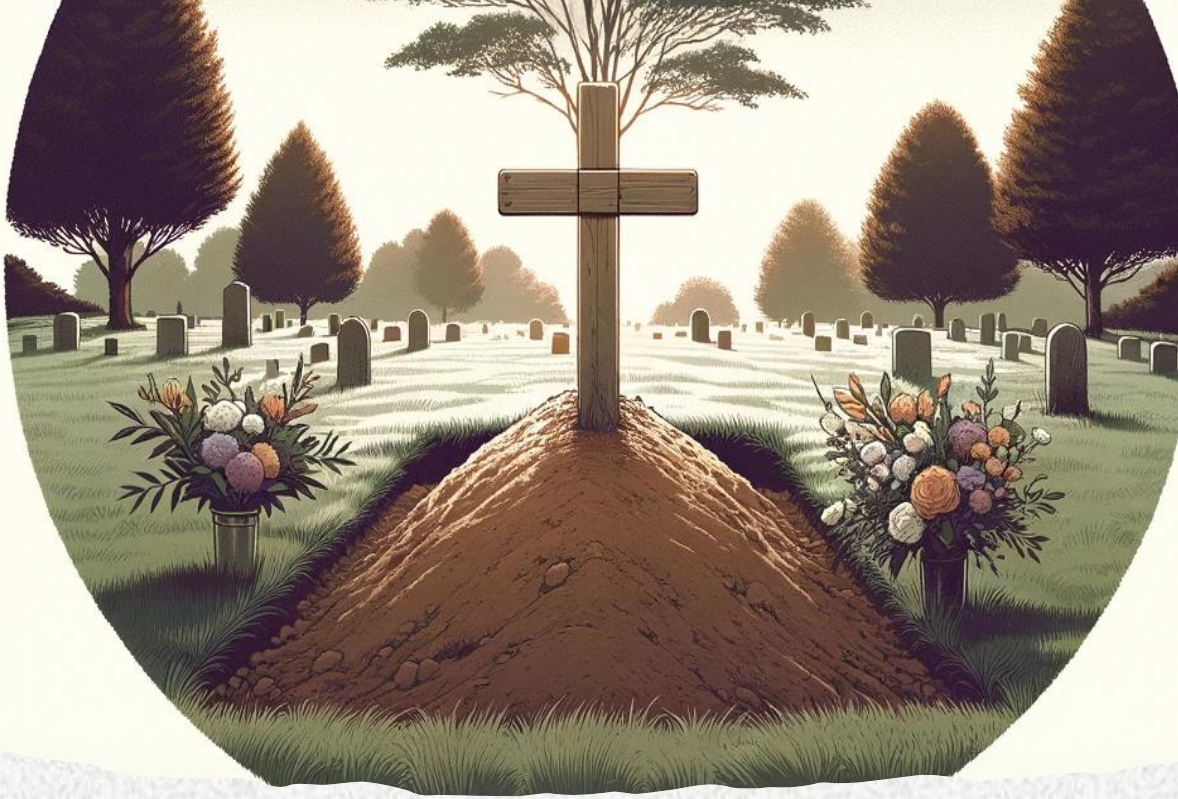
A group of diverse young people, including men and women of various ethnicities, are sitting on a long wooden bench in a minimalist room with a plain, light-colored wall. They are all looking down or away with expressions of sadness, stress, or despair. Some are resting their heads on their hands, while others have their arms crossed or are slumped over. The lighting is soft and even, highlighting the textures of their clothing and the wood of the bench. The overall mood is one of collective mental anguish.

Our youth are in the worst mental health crisis that history has ever known.

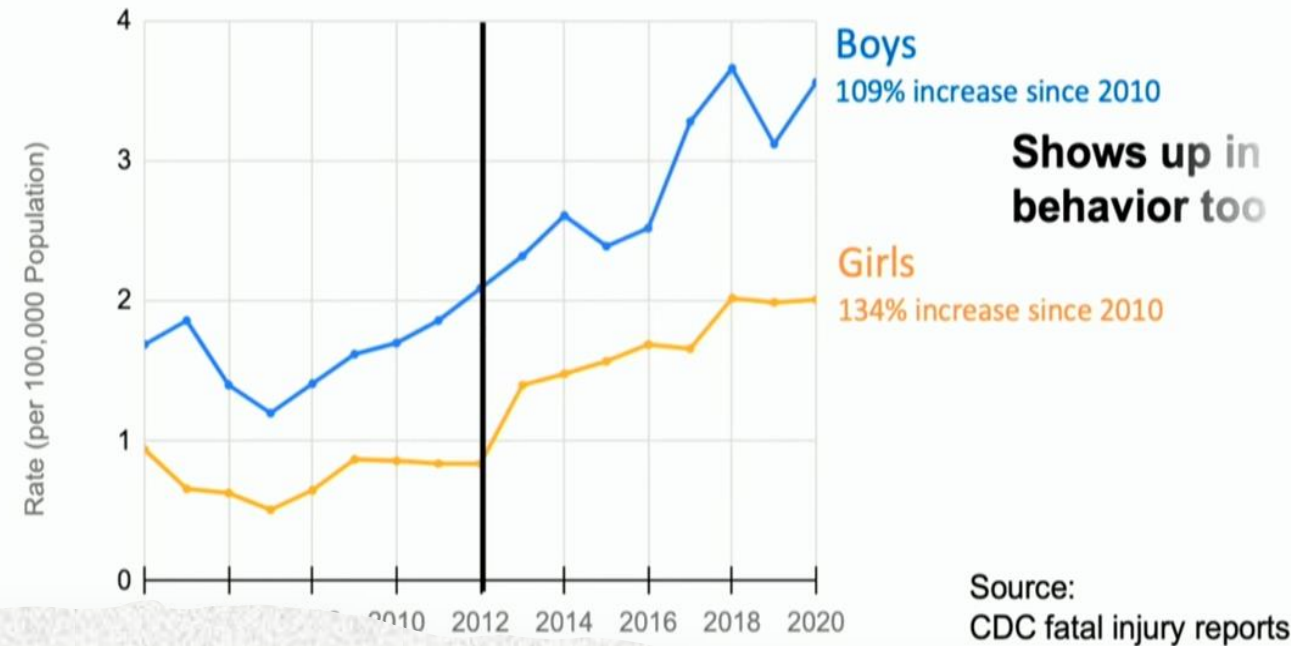


And this crisis is undeniable and fully supported by recent research.

And one of the culprits is right before us. Have we been sleeping on the job?

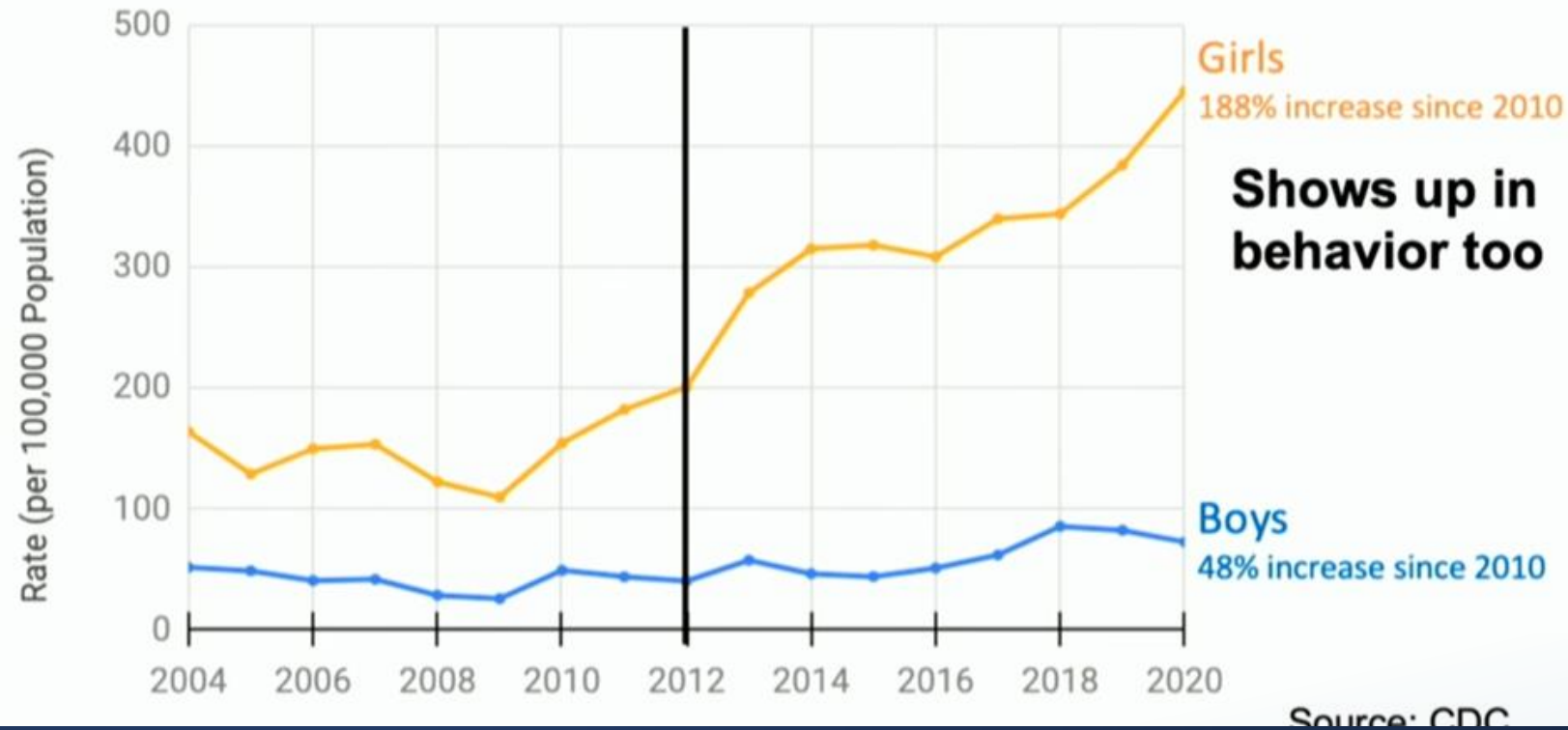


US Teens, Suicides (Ages 10 – 14)



Social Psychologist Jonathan Haidt notes that suicides among youth 10 – 14 have increased terrifyingly since 2010 (Haidt, 2014).

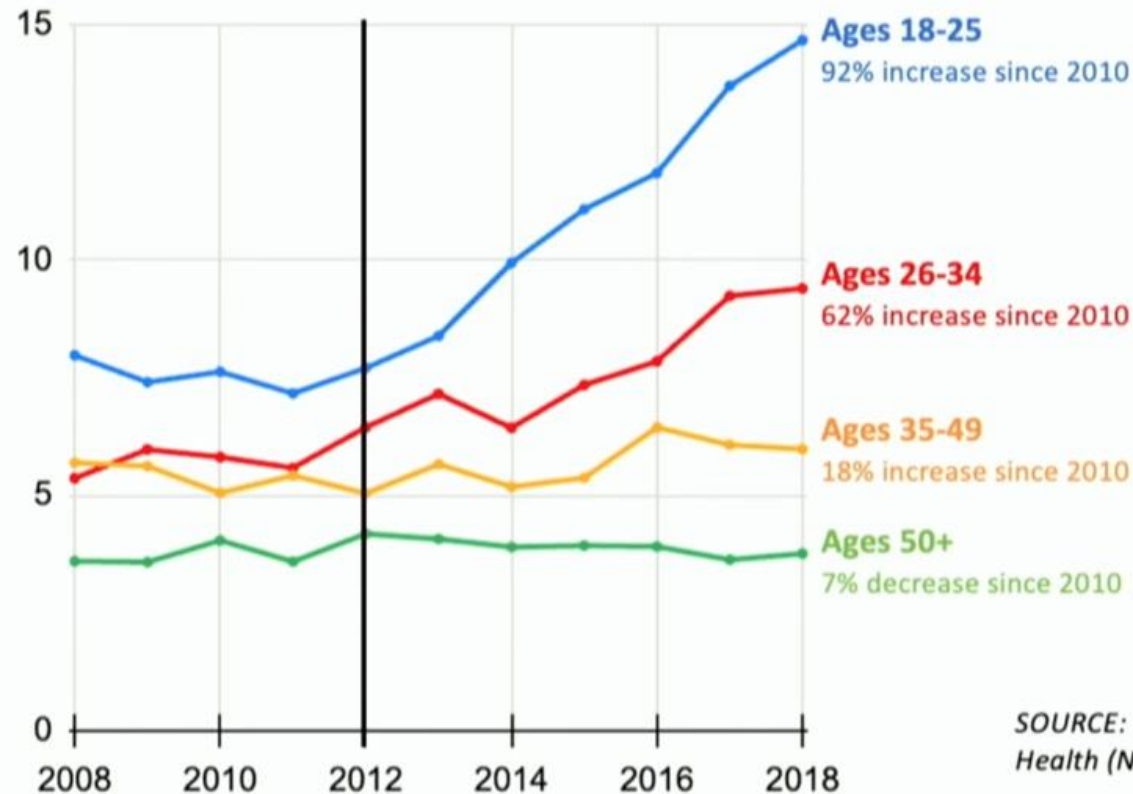
US Teens Admitted to Hospitals for Nonfatal Self-harm (Ages 10-14)



Jonathan Haidt notes that US teens ages 10 – 14 are being admitted to hospitals for nonfatal self-harm at terrifying rates since 2010 (Haidt, 2014).

Jonathan Haidt asserts that Gen Z's anxiety has skyrocketed since 2010 (Haidt, 2024).

% U.S. Anxiety Prevalence



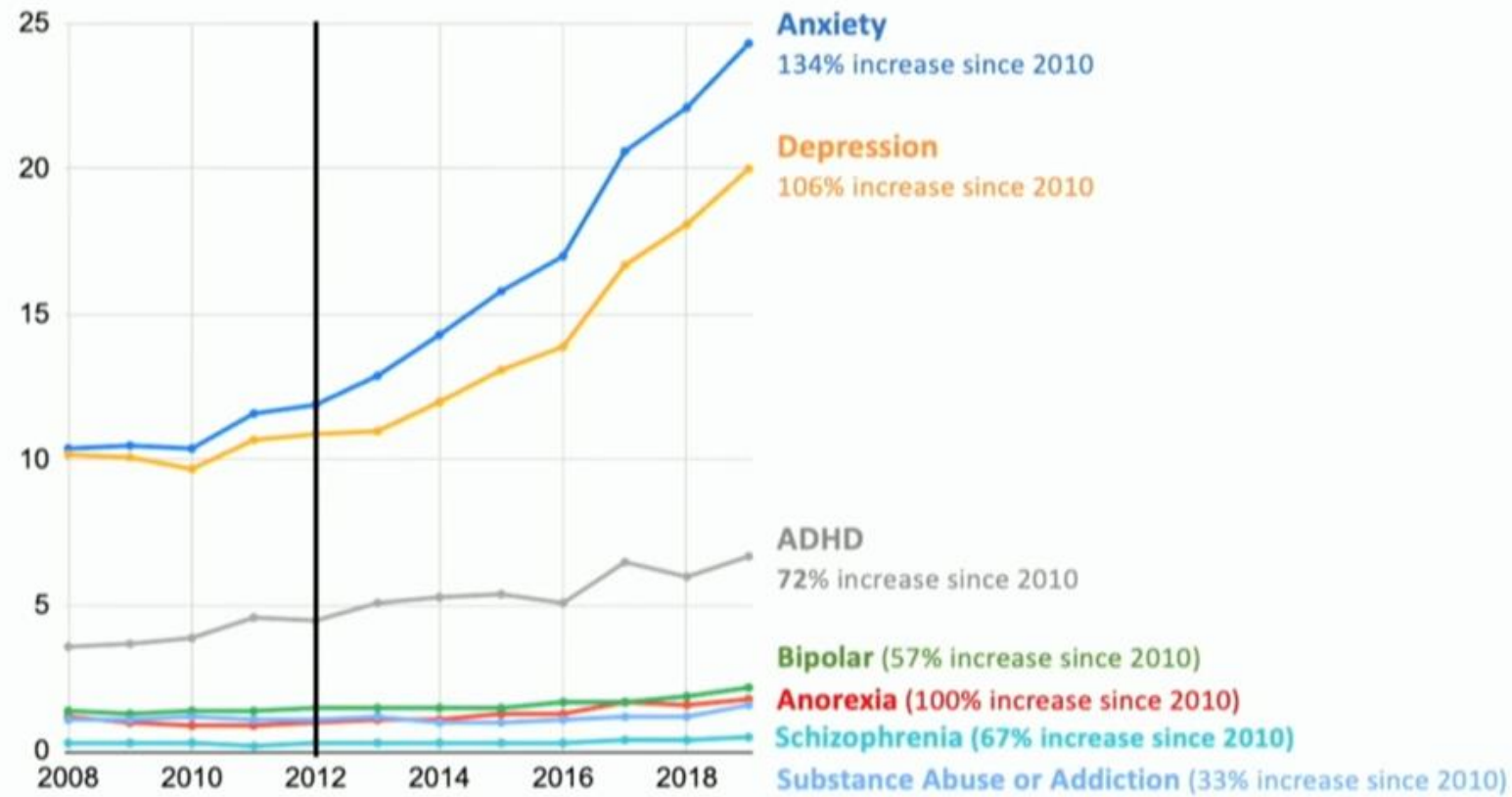
It only hits Gen Z

plus some late
millennials

Not much change
for Gen X
or Boomers

SOURCE: National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH)

% of U.S. Undergraduates Diagnosed with a Mental Illness

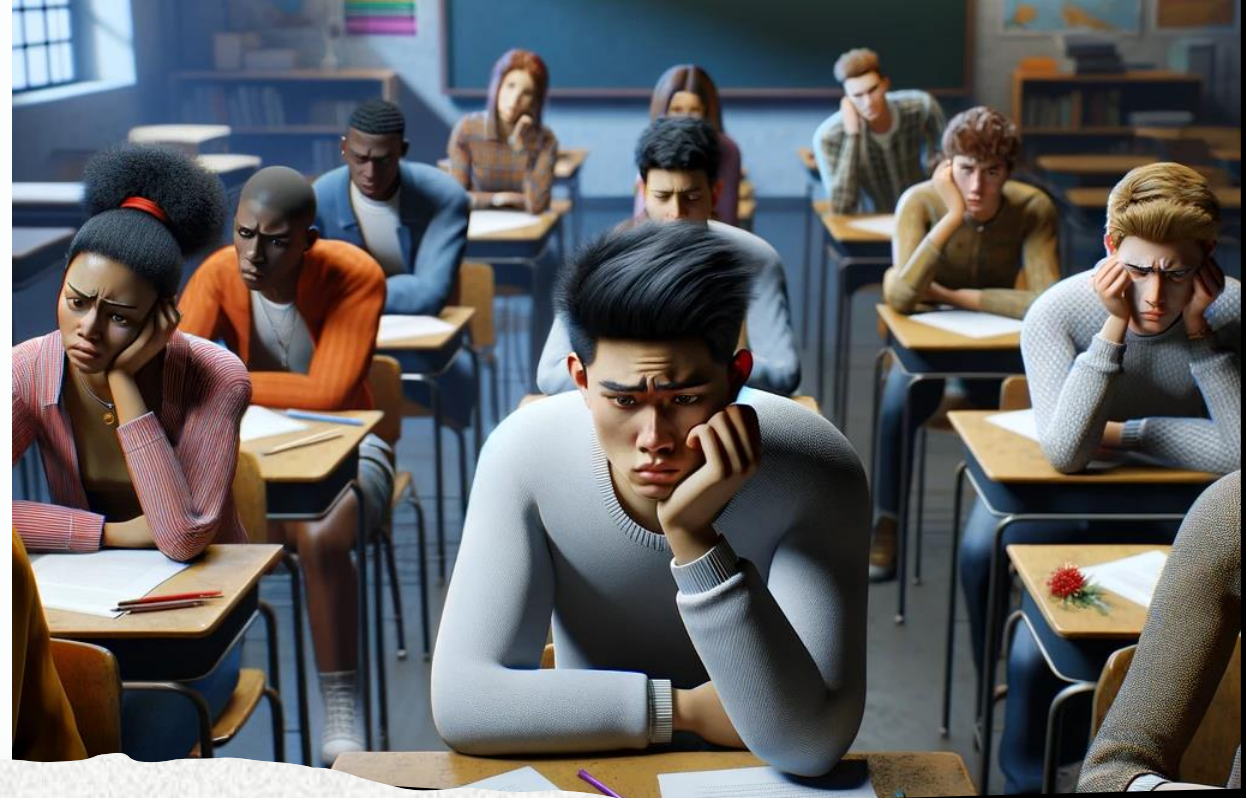
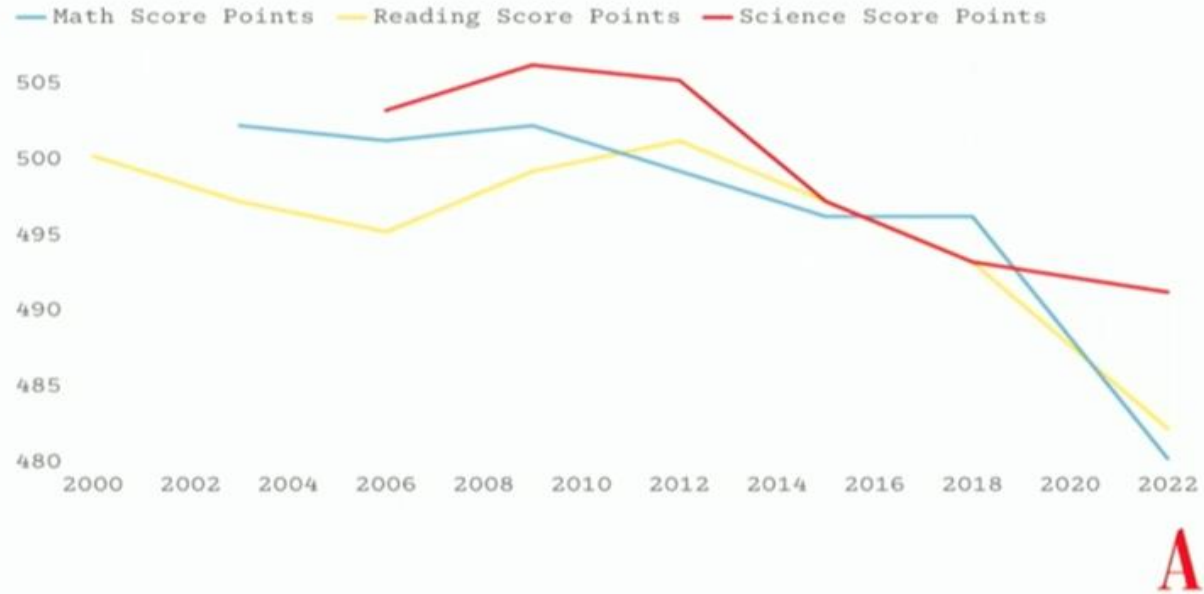


SOURCE: American College Health Association
(ACHA-NCHA II)



Jonathan Haidt states that undergraduates are becoming increasingly depressed and anxious since 2010.

Global PISA test scores in decline

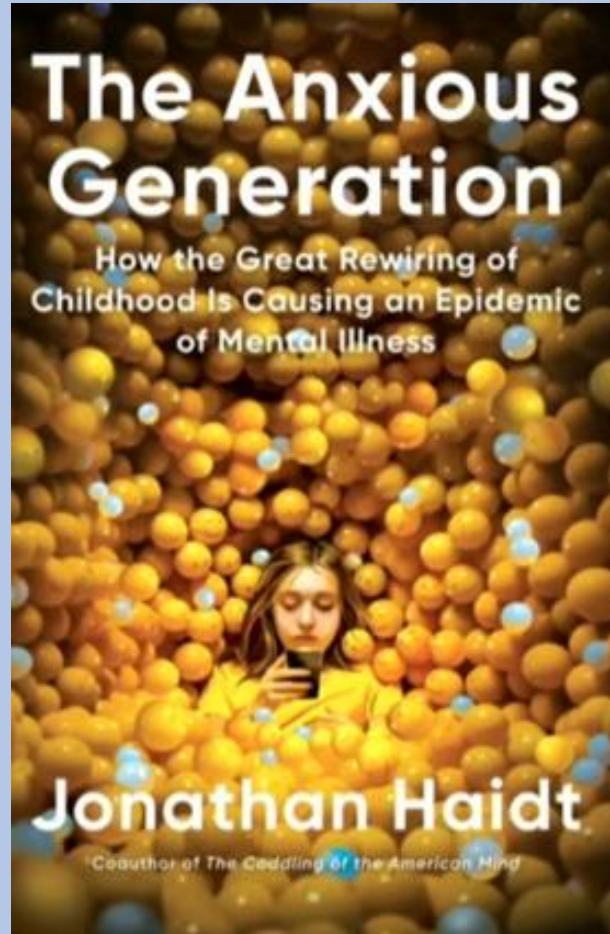


Jonathan Haidt asserts that our children have had declining Global PISA test scores in industrialized nations (Haidt, 2024).

Jonathan Haidt identifies
part of the cause:

Rewiring of Childhood
(Haidt, 2014).

His book, *The Anxious
Generation* is a very high
recommend.



The Great Rewiring of Childhood:

The play-based childhood faded out
gradually, 1980-2010

The phone-based childhood stormed
in with the iPhone and high-speed
internet, 2010-2015

*We have overprotected our children
in the real world and underprotected
them online.*

The great rewiring of childhood: 2010-2015



to



Jonathan Haidt asserts that in over protecting and allowing our children unlimited and endless exposure to electrons, we have allowed their brains to be rewired (Haidt, 2024).



Before



Now



Before



Now



Before

Now



The other becomes an image for me
– and I an image for the other.

Giovanni Stanghellini and Louis Sass

The Bracketing of Presence



We no longer experience the “real thing.”

So, having established that there is indeed a mental health crisis amongst our youth, let's turn our attention to one leading offender that has helped to rewire their brains:

Pornography and sexual content being served to our youth.



Roots of the word ADDICTION

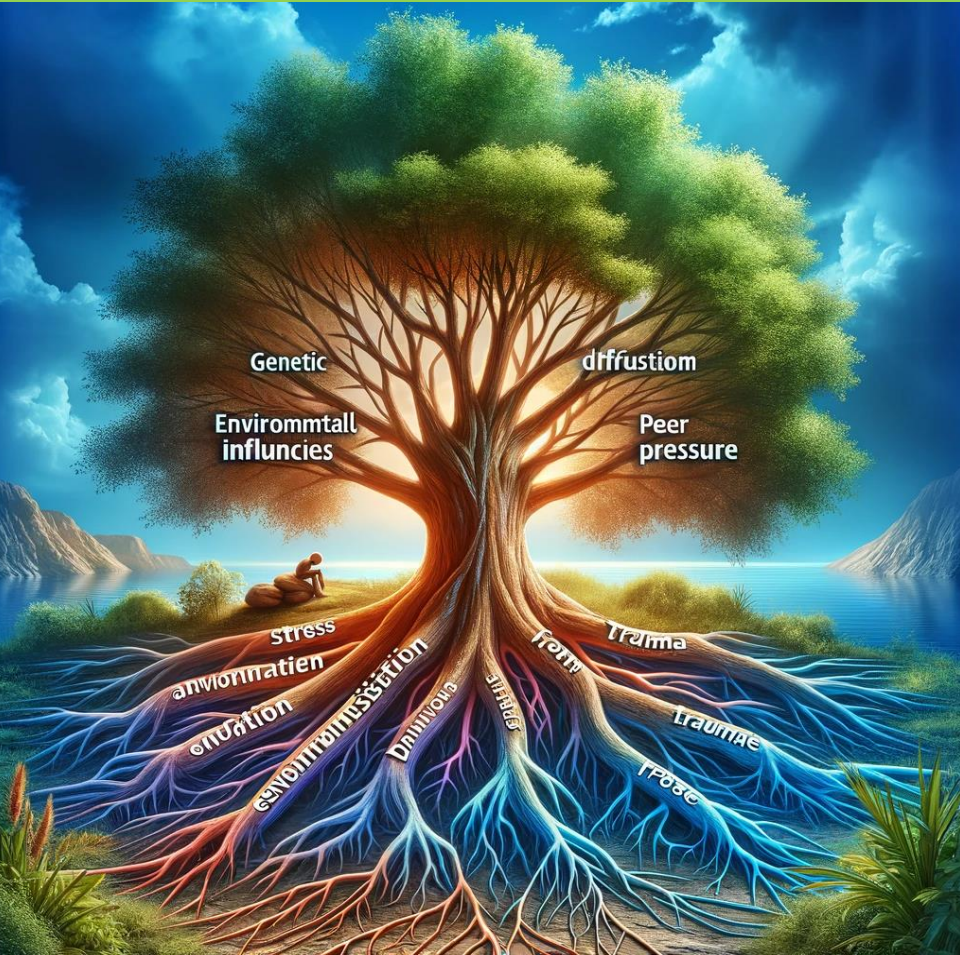
Adam Slater (2018)
Irresistible



In Rome being “**addicted**” meant that you had just been sentenced to slavery.

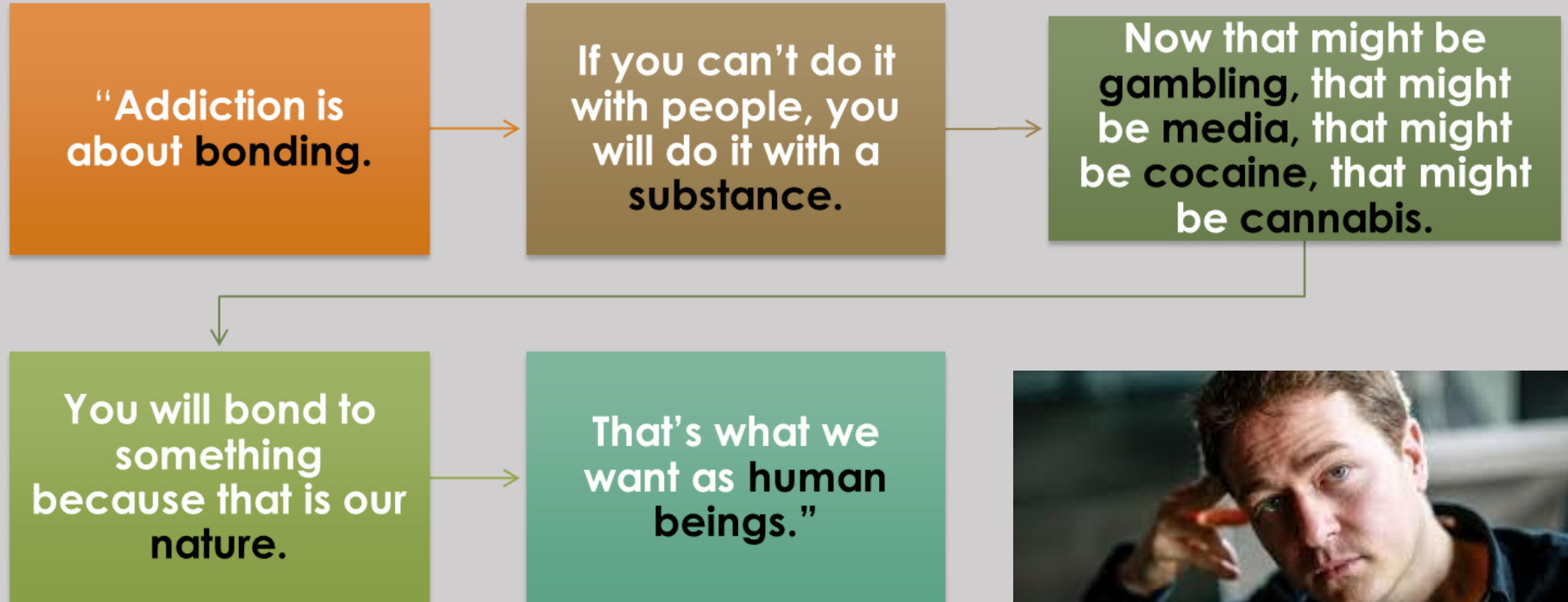


If you owed someone money and couldn't repay, a judge would sentence you to work as a slave until you could repay the debt.



Addiction later evolved to describe any bond that was difficult to break.

In the words of Johann Hari



We initially
love the
addiction
more than
anything else





And although we love the addiction initially, we become enslaved to it.

The Four Cs of Addiction

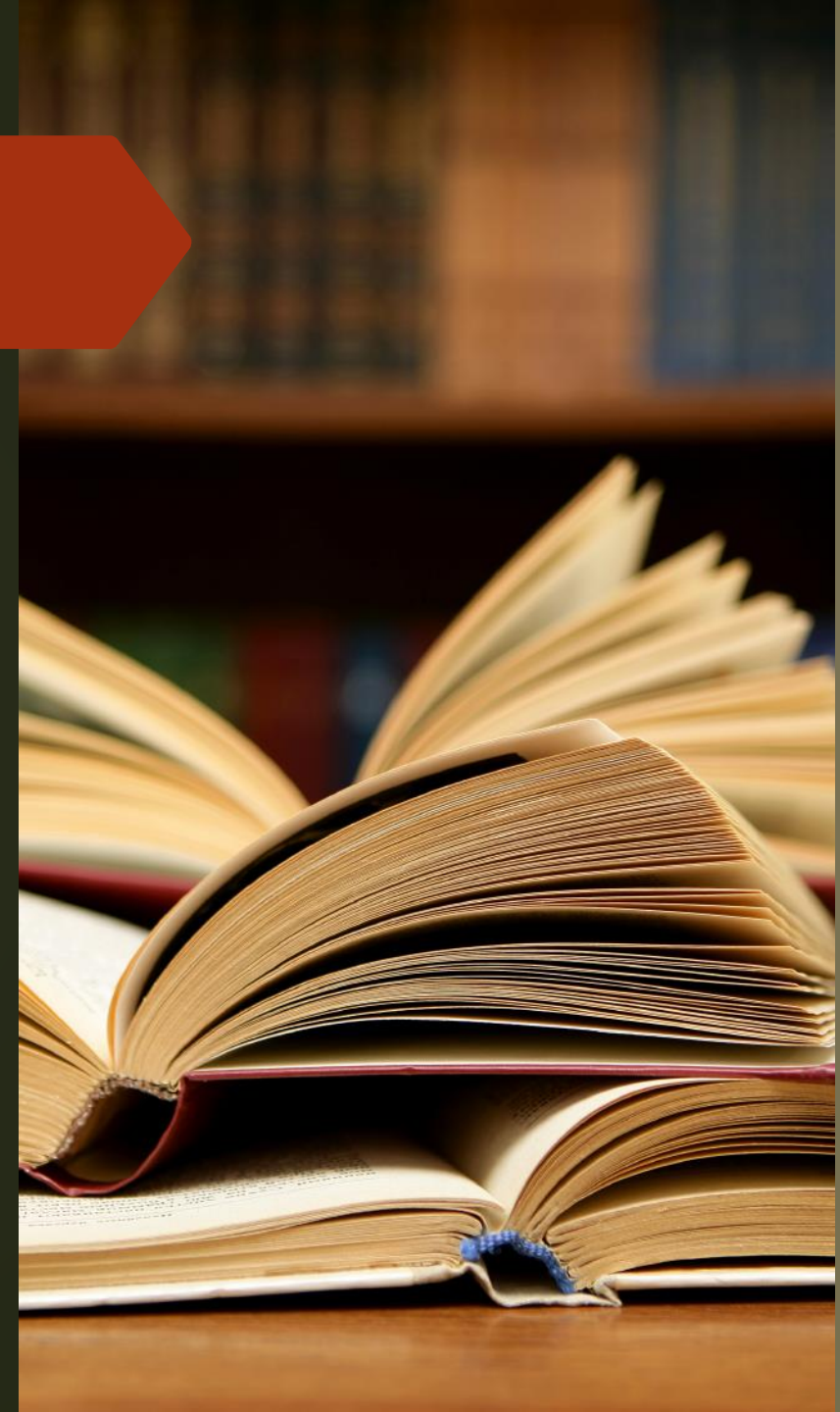
Wilson (2014) notes that all addictions, regardless of their differences, result in an established set of “**core brain changes**” which, in turn, present as recognized signs, symptoms, and behaviors such as those listed in the **Four C’s**:

1. **Craving and Preoccupation** with obtaining, engaging in or recovering from the use of the substance or behaviors in question.
2. **Loss of Control** in using the substance or of engaging in the behavior and noted by increasing frequency or duration, larger amounts or intensity, and/or increasing the risk and behavior in an effort to obtain the desired effect.
3. **Negative Consequences** in physical, social, occupational, financial, or psychological areas.
4. **Compulsive in nature**



My Favorite Authors Deserve Credit

- **Barta, M. (2018).** *TINSA: Trauma Induced Sexual Addiction*. North Charleston, SC: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform.
- **Doan, A. (2012).** *Hooked on Games*. Coralville, IA: F.E.P. International, Inc.
- **Fradd, M. (2017).** *The Porn Myth: Exposing the Reality Behind the Fantasy of Pornography*. San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press.
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- **Dines, G. (2010).** *Pornland: How Porn has Hijacked our Sexuality*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.
- **Skinner, K. (2005).** *Treating Pornography Addiction: The Essential Tools for Recovery*. Lindon, UT: K. Skinner Corporation.
- **Turner, A. (2017).** *Breaking the Feedback Loop: How I Liberated myself from Internet Addiction and you can too*. Lexington, KY: Phanarian II.
- **Zimbardo, P. and Coulombe, N. (2016).** *Man Interrupted*. Newburyport, MA: Red Wheel/Weiser, LLC.
- **Wilson, G. (2014).** *Your Brain on Porn*. UK: Commonwealth Publishing.
- **Haidt, J. (2024).** *The Anxious Generation: How the Great Rewiring of Childhood is Causing an Epidemic of Mental Illness*. NY: Penguin Press.



Delafé, a pastor's son who had everything bravely talks about his descent into pornography. Though you may not want to believe it, this could be your son's story as well.

(start 4:09)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KDbKTodzbh8&ab_channel=Delaf%C3%A9Testimonies



I Had Everything & Still Fell Into a Pornography Addiction... 🙏 (Testimony)

544K views • 1 year ago



Delafé Testimonies ✓

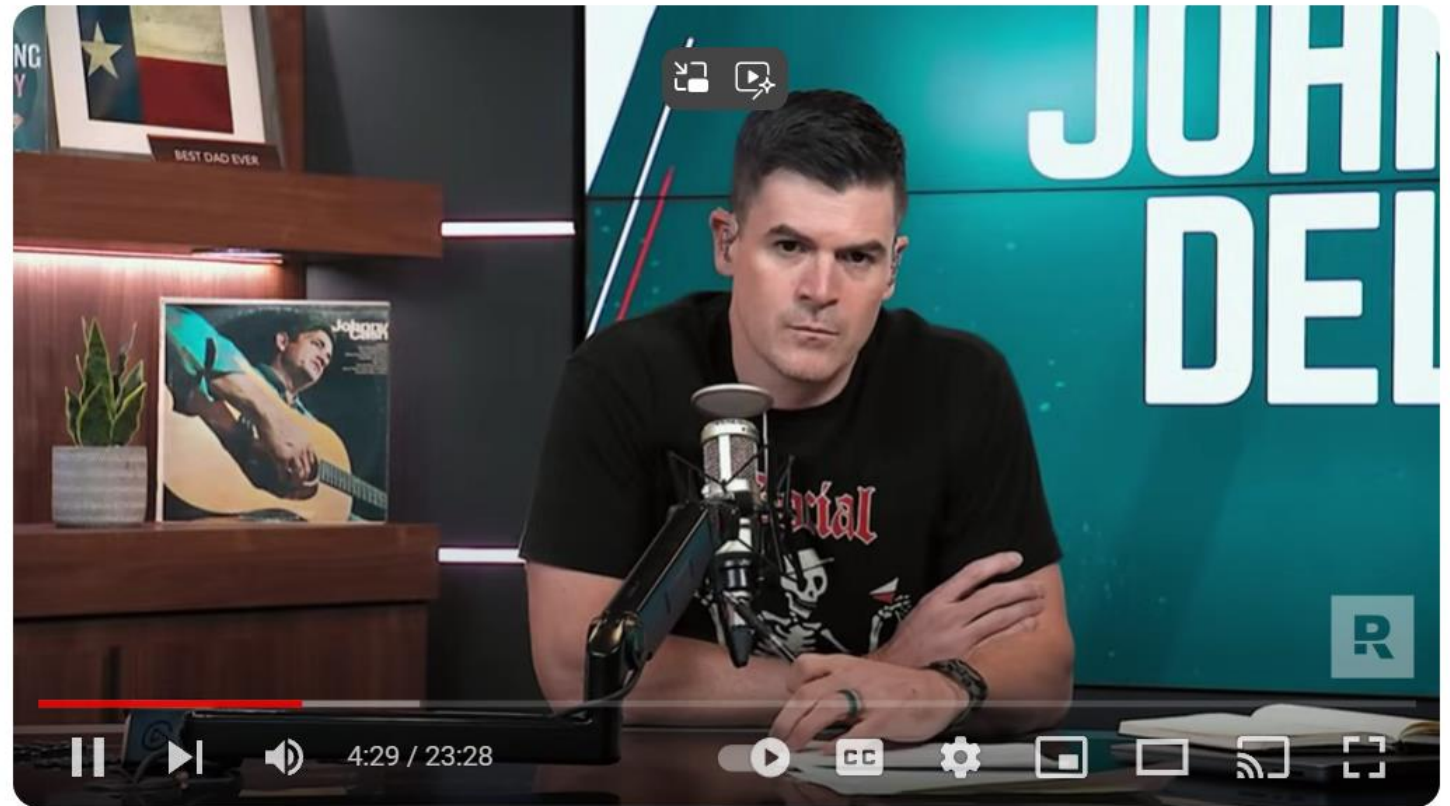
Video Credits Directed by Eric Villatoro Edited By Joshua Gayle Audio Mixed by Paul Nicholas Testimony Recorded at King of the ...

4K CC

Young man on the Dr. John Delony show describes his horrific descent into pornography

(Start 2:30)

[My Porn Addiction Is Destroying
My Life \(youtube.com\)](#)



My Porn Addiction Is Destroying My Life



The Dr. John Delo...
580K subscribers

Subscribe

12K



Share





Let me go first

- You may or may not be struggling with pornography, but even if you aren't, you undoubtedly know someone who is and your knowledge of fact from fiction and how to become free can possibly save the mind, body, and soul of that person.
- I want you to know that I offer no judgement for those who struggle. I, myself, struggled with soft porn magazine addiction as a teen and as a young man, a problem that carried into my marriage which it almost destroyed.
- I was lucky enough to have a wonderful wife who chose to not leave me and instead helped me engage in a life-saving therapy experience with a man who did not judge me and showed me the way out. I will forever be thankful and fully indebted to my wife and to Dr. Ebeye.

So how bad is it really?

- **40 million** American people regularly visit porn sites (Webroot, 2019).
- **35%** of all internet downloads are related to pornography (Webroot, 2019).
- **34% of internet users** have experienced unwanted exposure to pornographic content through ads, pop up ads, misdirected links or emails (Webroot, 2019).
- The societal costs of pornography are staggering. The financial cost to business productivity in the U.S. alone is estimated **at \$16.9 Billion annually**; but the human toll, particularly among our youth and in our families, is far greater (Webroot, 2019).
- **One-third** of porn viewers are women (Webroot, 2019).
- Between 2008 and 2011, exposure to porn among boys under the age of 13 jumped from **14% to 49%**. Boys' daily use more than doubled. (Sun et al., 2016)
- In a 2007 University of Alberta study, 429 students ages 13 and 14 from 17 schools across Alberta, Canada were surveyed about how often they accessed sexually explicit media content: **90% of boys and 70% of girls** reported accessing sexually explicit media on at least one occasion (Betkowski, 2007).

Ten of the most alarming statistics about teens and pornography

<https://www.covenanteyes.com/2015/04/10/10-shocking-stats-about-teens-and-pornography/>

9 out of 10 boys and 6 out of 10 girls are exposed to pornography online before the age of 18.

90% of teens and 96% of young adults are either encouraging, accepting, or neutral when they talk about porn with their friends.

The first exposure to pornography among boys is 8 years old, on average.

83% of boys and 57% of girls are exposed to group sex online.

32% of boys and 18% of girls are exposed to bestiality online.



Ten of the most alarming statistics about teens and pornography - cont.

<https://www.covenanteyes.com/2015/04/10/10-shocking-stats-about-teens-and-pornography/>

15% of boys and 9% of girls have seen child pornography online.

71% of teens have done something to hide their online activity from their parents.

28% of 16-17-year-olds have unintentionally been exposed to pornography online.

20% of 16-year-olds and 30% of 17-year-olds have received a sext.

39% of boys and 23% of girls have seen sexual bondage online.



Let's explore:

- Some of the causes of pornography addiction.
- The impact of trauma and pornography use/addiction on the mind, body, and soul with emphasis what neuroscience tells us.
- The way out of pornography addiction.



The Question of Shame and Moral Failure

► Although a descent into addiction can lead to **moral issues** (e.g., lying to cover, sexual acting out, etc.) it is generally not moral failure that first sets pornography addiction into motion. This is essential to know as **shaming only makes matters worse**.

► **Dr. Ted Roberts**, who served in Vietnam as a fighter pilot, then became pastor, and subsequently distinguished himself as an expert in the treatment of sexual addictions writes, “**Guilt** is about what we have done, but **shame** is about who we are. With guilt we can always get a fresh start. With shame we are **caught in a noose, because the problem stays with us**...The critical issue to remember about shame is that it causes incredible pain” (Roberts, 2008, p 73 – 74).



The Role of Trauma

Dr. Michael Barta, in his excellent book on sexual addictions, **TINSA – Trauma Induced Sexual Addiction**, along with several other writers, believe that understanding sexual addiction has long been hindered by the disorder's poorly understood cause. He notes and describes:

- Sexual addiction and specifically pornography addiction are often triggered by early trauma.
- Excessive demands on dopaminergic pathways and poor self-regulation worsen addiction.
- There is a relationship between the brain, the nervous system, and addiction.

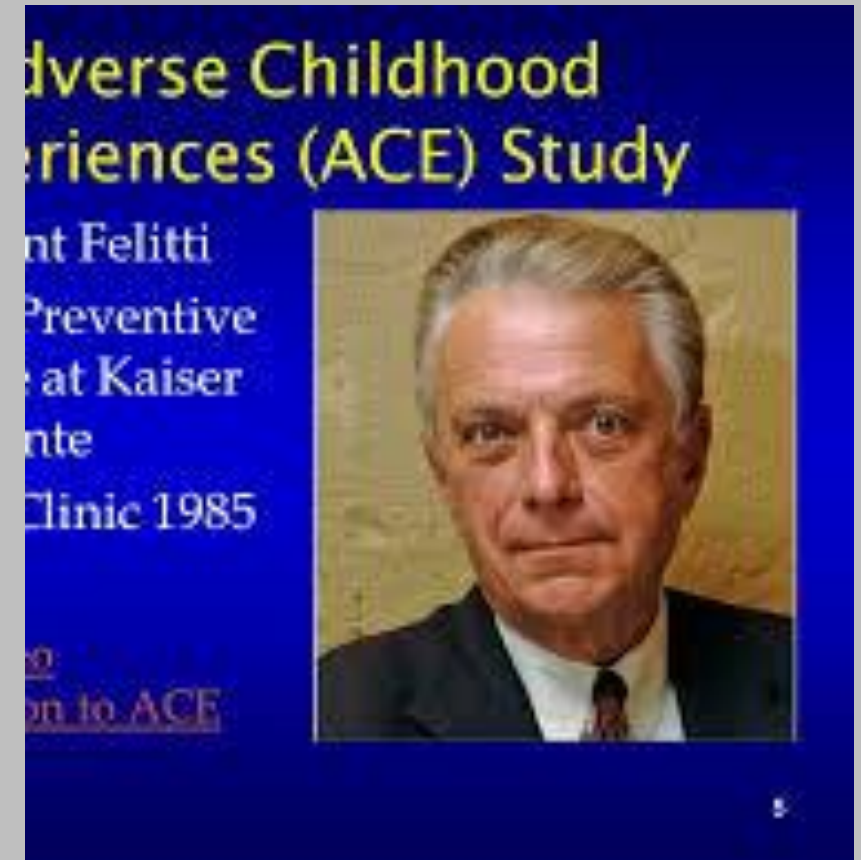


Trauma is often at the **core** of serious addiction which leads way to mental illness and then addiction to mask it. But this can be **bidirectional** as well



Trauma - Adverse Childhood Experiences

- In the mid-1980's, **Dr. Vincent Felitti** noticed a puzzling and paradoxical trend in the obesity clinic he was heading.
- Specifically, many of his participants who were having the most success in losing weight were dropping out only to gain the weight back. He interviewed the nearly 300 participants and discovered a surprising pattern: **almost all of the dropouts had suffered some form of childhood trauma** (Kain & Terrell, 2018).
- This initial study grew into a major public health study with Dr. Felitti teaming up with Dr. Anda at the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) that continues to this day, involving more than 17,000 individuals.
- This research came to be known as the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study (Felitti et al., 2014). In this study, people were asked about ten different types of traumatic events that happened to them when they were children to include physical and sexual abuse, family problems, and neglect.



Trauma and Adverse Childhood Experiences



Trauma exposure, particularly child maltreatment (e.g., neglect, emotional, physical and sexual abuse), has been established as one of the main determinants of emotional dysregulation and is also a known risk factor for psychiatric disorders, especially depression and PTSD (McLaughlin et al., 2012; McLaughlin et al., 2013).

Moreover, several prior studies have shown that trauma exposure is clearly associated with **profound deficits in emotional regulation** across the entire lifespan, including during preschool (Langevin, Hebert, Allard-Dansereau; Bernard-Bonnin, 2016), adolescence (Shields & Cicchetti, 1997; Vettese, Dyer, Li, & Wekerle, 2011) and even adulthood (Briere & Rickards, 2007; Thompson, Hannan, & Miron, 2014; Dunn et al., 2018).

Trauma occurs when we are faced with an experience that **overwhelms our ability to process incoming information** both at the time of that experience and in future situations (Barta, 2018).

Dr. Michael Barta suffered from trauma himself as a child which led him to addictions that ultimately landed him in jail and almost destroyed his life. In his book, *TINSA*, he wrote that trauma occurs when our natural defenses are unable to keep us safe from physical, emotional, or mental threats or harm (Barta, 2018).

Trauma - Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE)

The ten reference categories experienced during childhood or adolescence are as below, with their prevalence in parentheses (Felitti and Anda, 2009):

Abuse

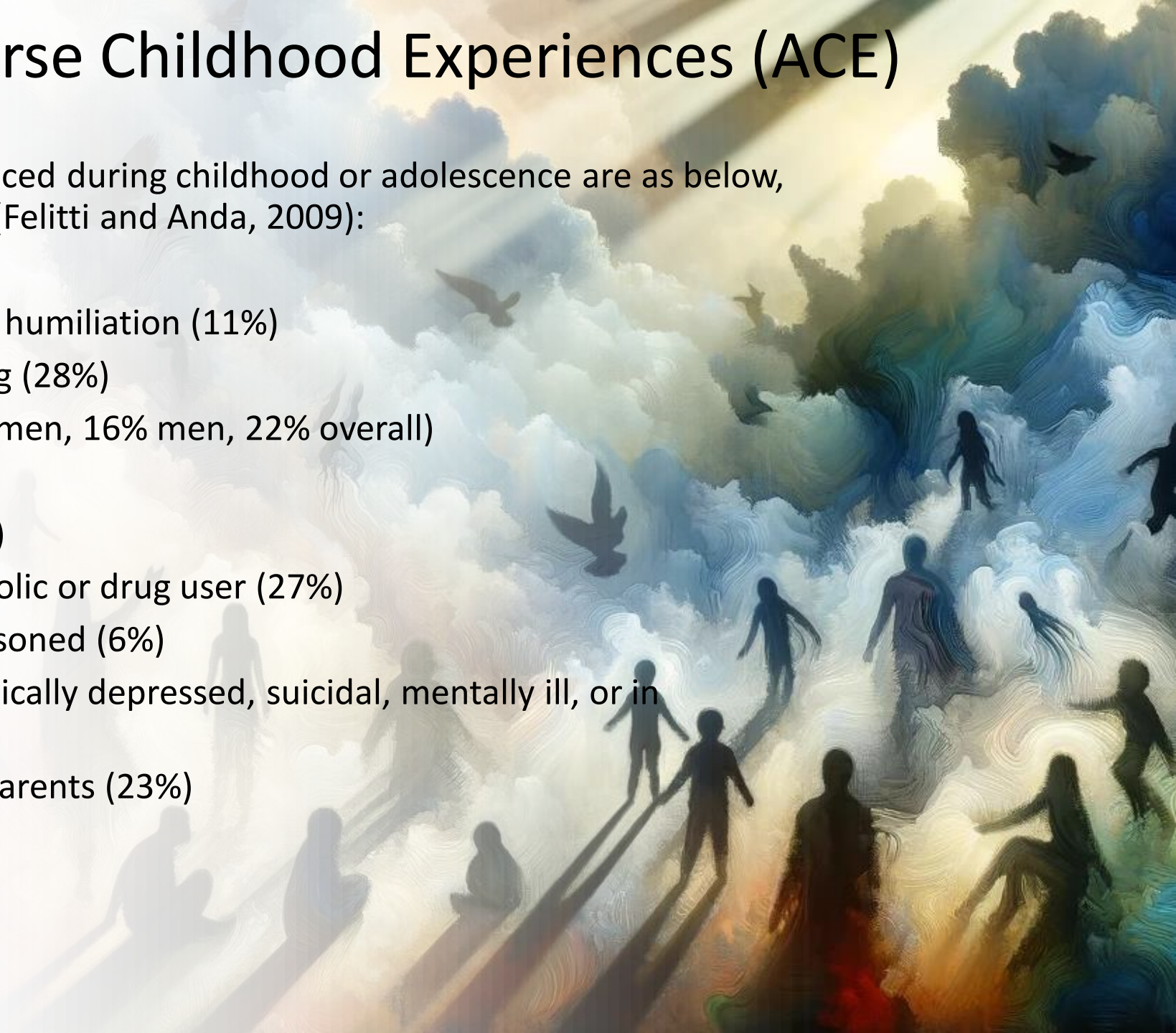
- Emotional – recurrent threats, humiliation (11%)
- Physical - beating, not spanking (28%)
- Contact sexual abuse (28% women, 16% men, 22% overall)

Household dysfunction

- Mother treated violently (13%)
- Household member was alcoholic or drug user (27%)
- Household member was imprisoned (6%)
- Household member was chronically depressed, suicidal, mentally ill, or in psychiatric hospital (17%)
- Not raised by both biological parents (23%)

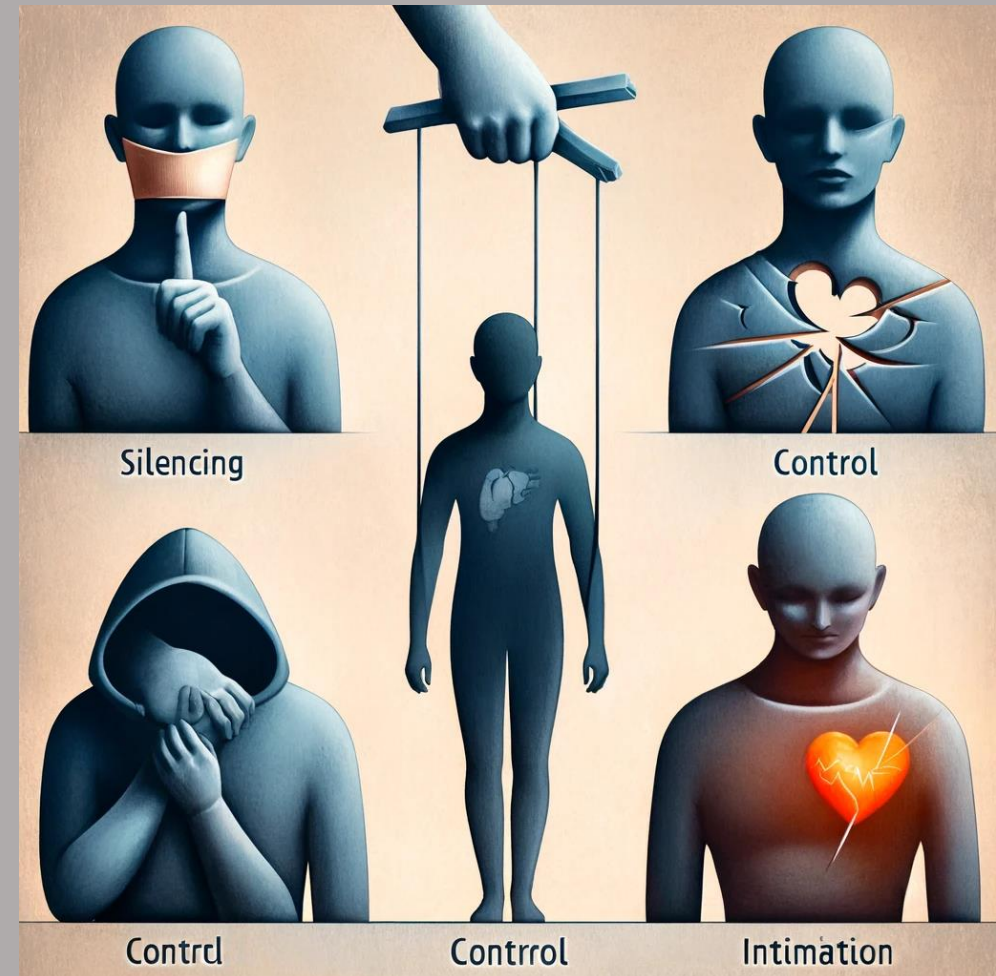
Neglect

- Physical (10%)
- Emotional (15%)



Trauma - Adverse Childhood Experiences

- Somewhat surprising in the Felitti studies was that **emotional abuse and neglect** were more likely to cause depression than any other kind of trauma – even sexual abuse.
- This suggests that the kind of treatment children receive from parents is a tremendously powerful predictor of positive outcome and when that trust is broken, devastation surely ensues.



Big T Trauma and Little t Trauma

The experts in the field divide trauma into two categories:

Big T trauma: Traumas that are associated with horrific single events such as natural disasters, terrorism, and war.

Little t trauma: Trauma that are smaller in nature such as bullying, neglect, and betrayal and typically occur during childhood.



Review of Trauma

BIG **T**

- War
- Disasters
- Childhood sexual abuse
- Physical abuse
- Car wreck
- Crime victimization
- Witnessing death
- Domestic violence

little **t**

- Emotional abuse
- Neglect
- Failure experiences
- Phobia related experiences
- Losses
- Stress at work or school
- Bullying
- Domestic violence

ACE Scores and Outcomes

As Dr. Felitti in a 2009 lecture points out, studies reveal many shocking long-term horrible outcomes when we are exposed to ACEs and this raises exponentially according to how many of them, we have been exposed to.

The results indicate that for every category of traumatic experience we have had as a child, we are dramatically more likely to be depressed as an adult.



If we have ACE scores of 4, we are:

- 260% more likely to have chronic obstructive pulmonary disease than someone with a score of 0
- 240% more likely to contract hepatitis, 460% more likely to experience depression
- 1,220% more likely to attempt suicide

If we have ACE scores of 6, we are:

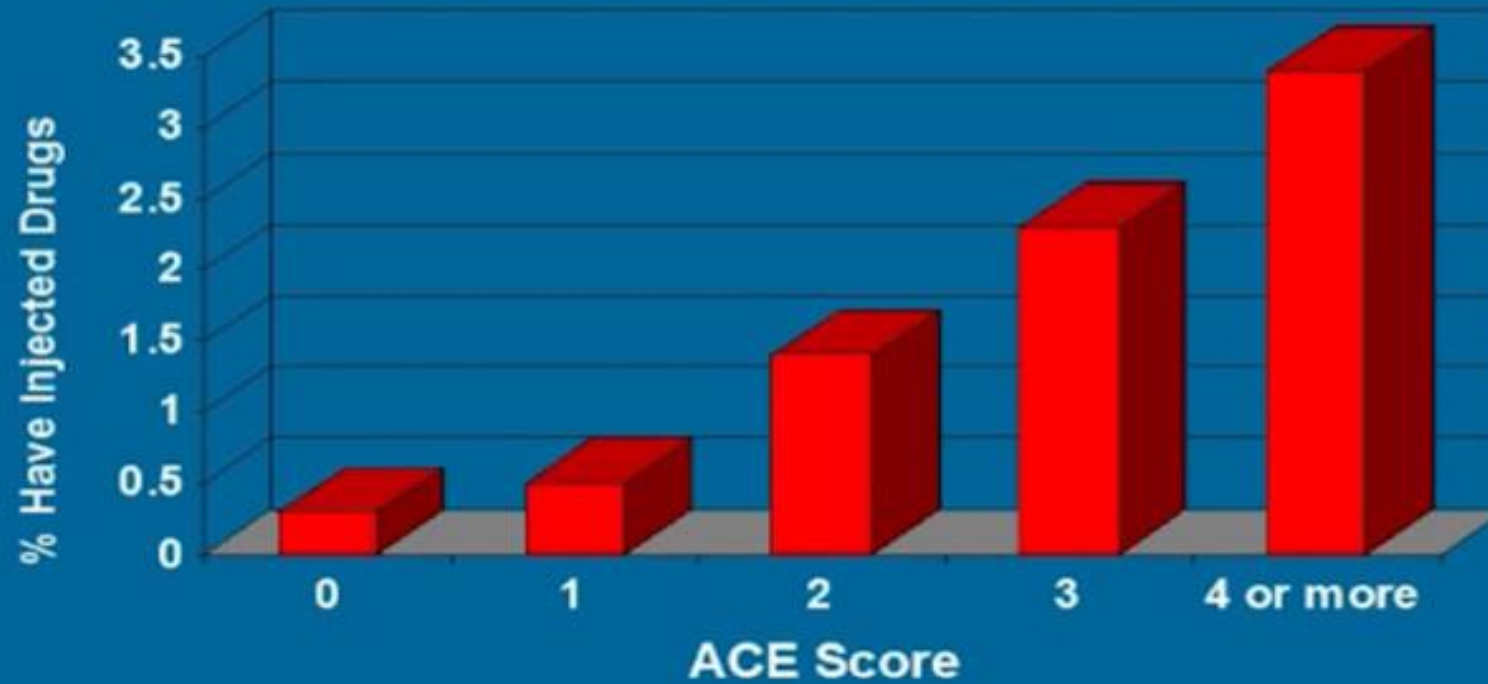
- Five times more likely to become depressed as an adult and if we have had

If we have ACE scores of 7, we are:

- 3,100 percent more likely to attempt suicide as an adult (Felitti et al., 2014; Felitti 2004; Felitti and Anda, 2009; Felitti et al., 1998).

Health risks, Emotional Benefits

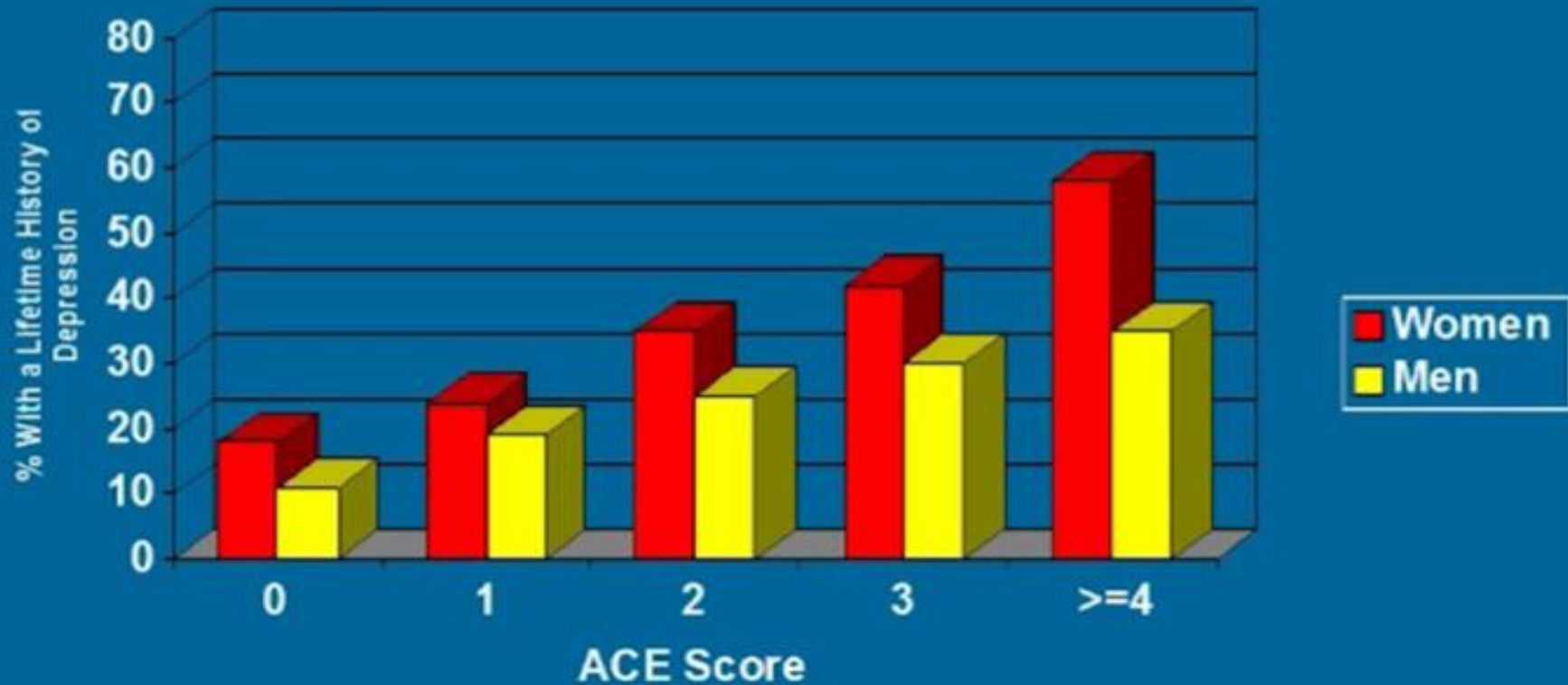
ACE Score vs Intravenous Drug Use



$p < 0.001$

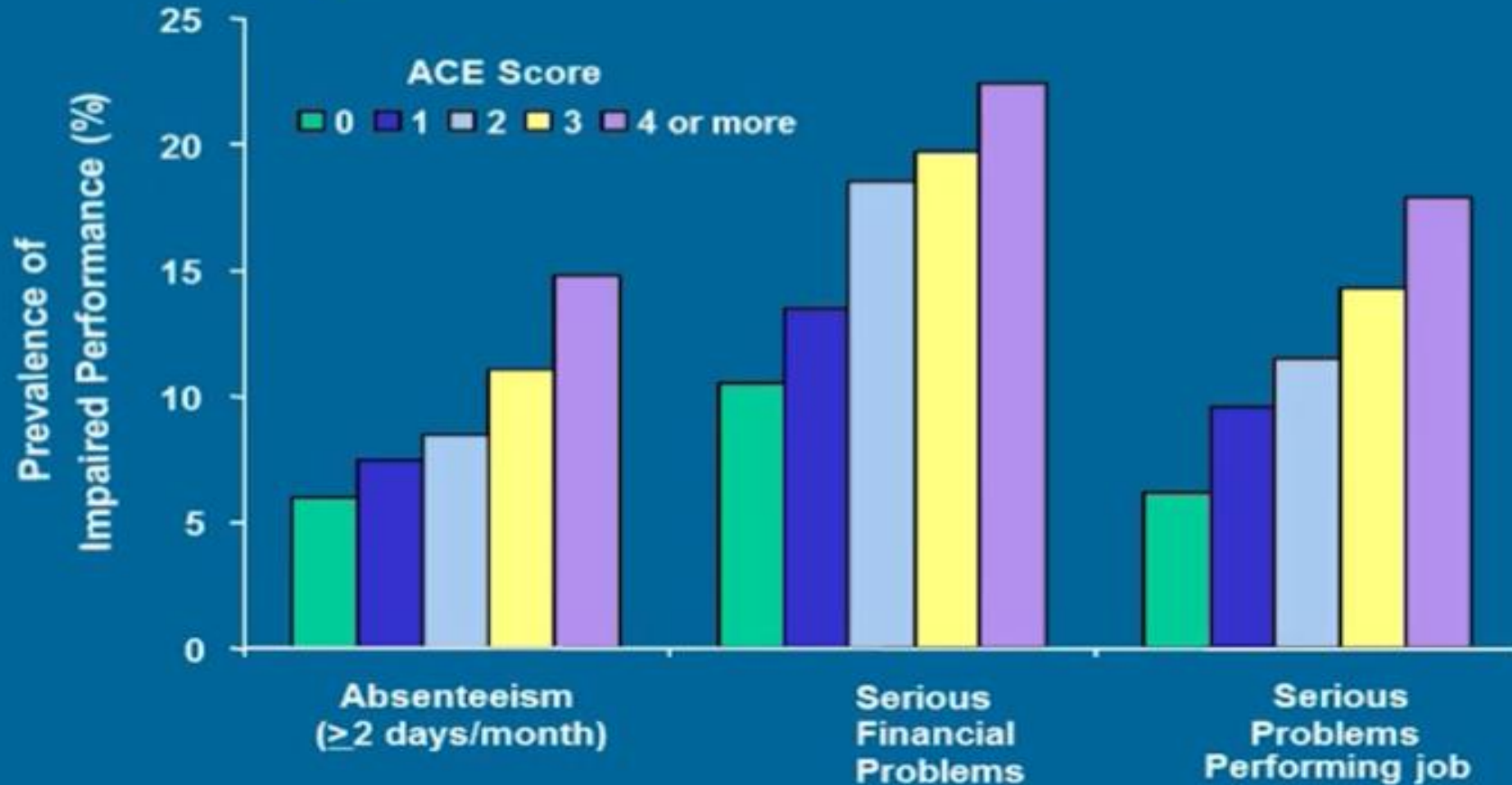
Damaged well-being

Childhood Experiences Underlie Chronic Depression



Social malfunction:

ACE Score and Indicators of Impaired Worker Performance



A man with a grey beard and a woman are looking at a screen in a medical setting. The man is pointing at the screen. In the background, there is a poster of a human body with red markings.

So, how does trauma impact the mind, body and soul?
The best contributor to that question is
Polyvagal Theory



The autonomic nervous system is our **personal surveillance system**.



In an effort to keep us out of danger, it is **always on guard**; asking the question, “Is this safe?” Its dedicated goal is to protect us by sensing safety and risk.



It achieves this by listening moment by moment to what is happening in and around our bodies and in the connections we have to others (Dana, 2018).



This listening happens far below awareness and far away from our conscious control.



Dr. Porges, understanding that this is not awareness that comes with perception which is conscious, coined the term **neuroception** to describe the way our autonomic nervous system scans for cues of safety, danger, and life threat, without involving the thinking parts of our brain or the unconscious parts of the brain (Porges, 2017).

Polyvagal Theory

The Autonomic Nervous System



Dr. Steve Porges

Polyvagal Theory

The Autonomic Nervous System

Briefly stated, our response to threat will move us toward one of **three defensive responses**. Two of which keep us in perpetual defense and one of which moves us toward health and restoration.

Sympathetic Division: Prepares the body for stressful or emergency situations – fight or flight. The sympathetic nervous system originates in spinal nerves (nerves that arise from the spinal cord) and is our system of mobilization. The sympathetic nerves are found in the middle of our backs in the thoracic and lumbar regions of the spinal cord. There are two mobilization systems in our sympathetic nervous system.

- **Sympathetic Adrenal Medullary (SAM)**: The SAM system is activated very quickly, within 100 milliseconds and brings up a burst adrenaline for a fast response to a stressor. SAM activation triggers a short-term and rapid response to a stressor which is followed by a return to regulation (Dana, 2018).
- **Hypothalamic-Pituitary-Adrenal (HPA) Axis**: The HPA axis takes over when the quick, adrenaline surge of energy of the SAM does not resolve the distress. The HPA releases cortisol (AKA stress hormone). This release takes longer and is much slower in taking effect, requiring minutes to take effect rather than seconds (Dana, 2018).



Polyvagal Theory

Sympathetic Division

- The sympathetic division **increases heart rate** and the force of heart contractions and widens (dilates) the airways to make breathing easier.
- It causes the body to **release stored energy**.
- **Muscular strength is increased**. This division also causes palms to sweat, pupils to dilate, and hair to stand on end.
- It slows body processes that are less important in emergencies, such as digestion and urination (Merck Manual).
- When we are in this physical state, we can feel emotions such as fear and/or rage and, if extremely activated, absolute terror (Rothschild, 2017).





Parasympathetic Division

- The parasympathetic division **conserves and restores calm/homeostasis**. It slows the heart rate and decreases blood pressure. It stimulates the digestive tract to process food and eliminate wastes. Energy from food is processed and used to restore and build tissues (Merck Manual).
- Dr. Porges discovered that the parasympathetic division of the Autonomic Nervous System consists of two branches which lead to two different responses.
- The main nerve in the parasympathetic nervous system is the **10th cranial nerve**, aka vagus nerve, which is the largest of the 12 cranial nerves and has huge implications for our well-being and health.
- The name vagus comes from the Latin word *vagary* which means **wanderer**, and this nerve is definitely a vagabond.
- The vagus travels downward from the brainstem to the heart and stomach and then back upward to the face and its connection with other cranial nerves.
- This amazing wandering nerve is a **mixed nerve** which communicates bidirectionally between the body and the brain. **80% percent of its fibers are sensory (afferent)** sending information from the body to the brain, and **20% are motor (efferent)**, sending action information from the brain to the body (Dana, 2018).

Polyvagal Theory

Made simple

Autonomic Nervous System

Sympathetic

Activated, anxiety, fear, terror, anger

Parasympathetic

Ventral Vagal

Connected, calm, safety

Dorsal Vagal

Shut-down, depressed

The chart below adapted by Dr. Rothschild nicely demonstrates the shifting in body sensations, physiological symptoms, and emotions as we move between autonomic states (Rothschild, 2017).

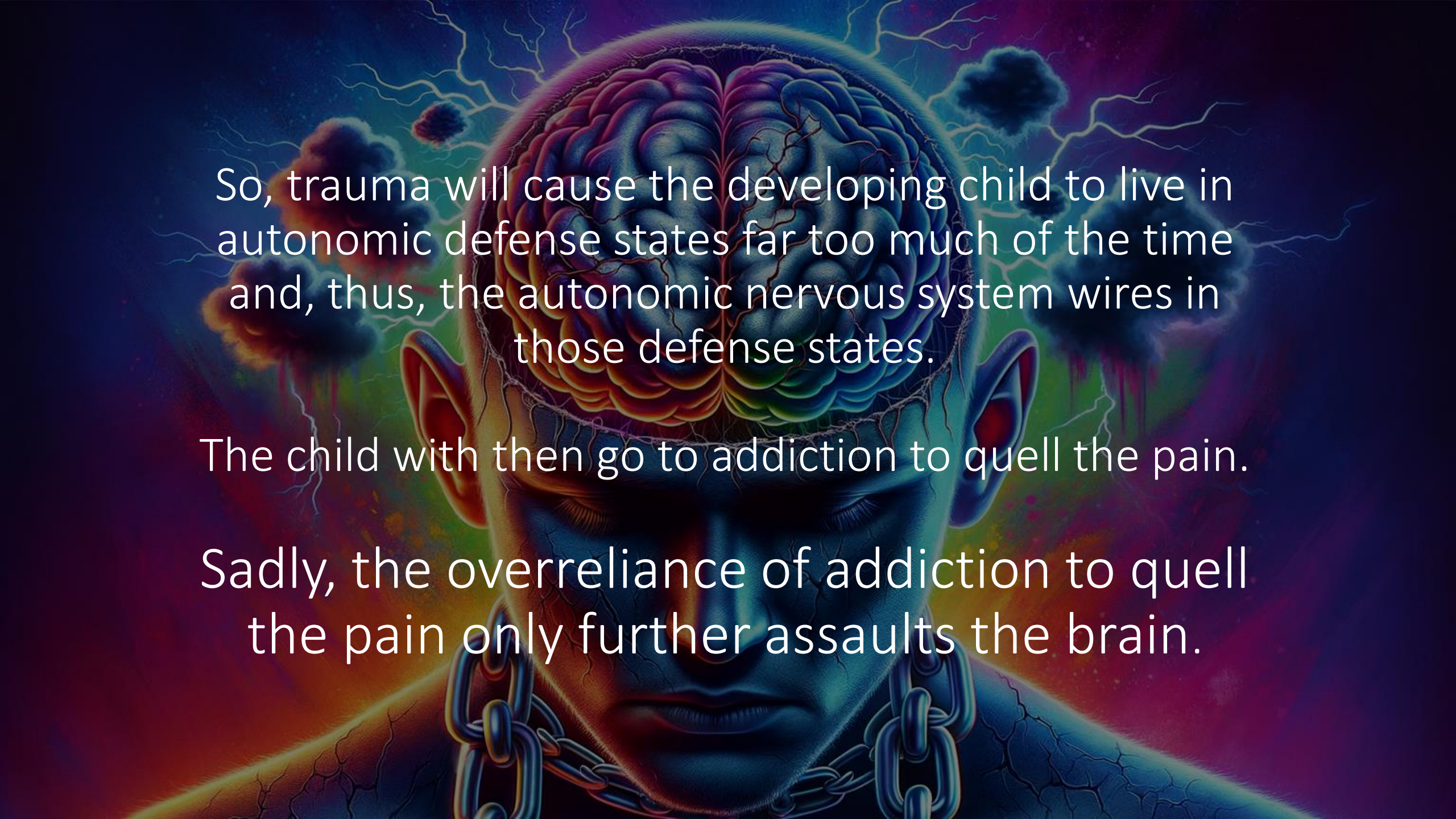
AUTONOMIC NERVOUS SYSTEM: PRECISION REGULATION

**** WHAT TO LOOK FOR ****

		LETHARGIC Parasympathetic I (PNS I)	CALM Parasympathetic II (PNS II) <i>Ventral Vagus</i>	ACTIVE/ALERT Sympathetic I (SNS I)	FLIGHT/FIGHT Sympathetic II (SNS II)	HYPER FREEZE Sympathetic III (SNS III)	HYPO FREEZE Parasympathetic III (PNS III) <i>Dorsal Vagus Collapse</i>
		 "Normal" Life			 Threat to Life		
PRIMARY STATE		Apathy, Depression	Safe, Clear Thinking, Social Engagement	Alert, Ready to Act	React to Danger	Await Opportunity to Escape	Prepare for Death
AROUSAL		Too Low	Low	Moderate	High	Extreme Overload	Excessive Overwhelm Induces Hypoarousal
MUSCLES		Slack	Relaxed/toned	Toned	Tense	Rigid (deer in the headlights)	Flaccid
RESPIRATION		Shallow	Easy, often into belly	Increasing rate	Fast, often in upper chest	Hyperventilation	Hypo-ventilation
HEART RATE		Slow	Resting	Quicker or more forceful	Quick and/or forceful	Tachycardia (very fast)	Bradycardia (very slow)
BLOOD PRESSURE		Likely low	Normal	On the rise	Elevated	Significantly high	Significantly low
PUPILS, EYES, EYE LIDS		Pupils smaller, lids may be heavy	Pupils smaller, eyes moist, eye lids relaxed	Pupils widening, eyes less moist, eye lids toned	Pupils very dilated, eyes dry, eye lids tensed/raised	Pupils very small or dilated, eyes very dry, lids very tense	Lids drooping, eyes closed or open and fixed
SKIN TONE		Variable	Rosy hue, despite skin color (blood flows to skin)	Less rosy hue, despite skin color (blood flows to skin)	Pale hue, despite skin color (blood flow to muscles)	May be pale and/or flushed	Noticeably pale
HUMIDITY	Skin	Dry	Dry	Increased sweat	Increased sweat, may be cold	Cold sweat	Cold sweat
	Mouth	Variable	Moist	Less moist	Dry	Dry	Dry
HANDS & FEET (TEMPERATURE)		May be warm or cool	Warm	Cool	Cold	Extremes of cold & hot	Cold
DIGESTION		Variable	Increase	Decrease	Stops	Evacuate bowel & bladder	Stopped
EMOTIONS (LIKELY)		Grief, sadness, shame, disgust	Calm, pleasure, love, sexual arousal, "good" grief	Anger, shame, disgust, anxiety, excitement, sexual climax	Rage, fear	Terror, may be dissociation	May be too dissociated to feel anything
CONTACT WITH SELF & OTHERS		Withdrawn	Probable	Possible	Limited	Not likely	Impossible
FRONTAL CORTEX		May or may not be accessible	Should be accessible	Should be accessible	May or may not be accessible	Likely inaccessible	Inaccessible
INTEGRATION		Not likely	Likely	Likely	Not likely	Impossible	Impossible
RECOMMENDED INTERVENTION		Activate, Gently Increase Energy	Continue Therapy Direction	Continue Therapy Direction	Put on Brakes	Slam on Brakes	Medical Emergency CALL PARAMEDICS

The Autonomic Nervous System Precision Regulation Chart is Available for purchase on Amazon for \$8.99 (a very high recommend):

Babette Rothschild (2017) https://www.amazon.com/Autonomic-Nervous-System-Table-Laminated/dp/039371280X/ref=sr_1_15?dchild=1&keywords=deb+dana&qid=1590326813&s=books&sr=1-15



So, trauma will cause the developing child to live in autonomic defense states far too much of the time and, thus, the autonomic nervous system wires in those defense states.

The child will then go to addiction to quell the pain.

Sadly, the overreliance of addiction to quell the pain only further assaults the brain.

Trauma's Impact on Social Engagement

- My own clinical experience suggests that the most common forms of trauma are due to a lack of attunement or connection with parental or adult figures while growing up.
- As Barta (2015) writes, “These deficiencies are not about bad parenting but about a parent’s inability or diminished ability to respond to the child’s emotional needs. Most parents are doing the best they can with the tools they have, but whether deliberately or inadvertently, the traumas of our childhood can have tremendous impact on our lives (Barta, 2018, p. 17)
- As trauma expert, Dr. Peter Levine notes in his book, *Healing Trauma*, “**Trauma is much about loss of connection – to ourselves, to our bodies, to our families, to others, and to the world around us.** This loss of connection is often hard to recognize because it doesn’t happen all at once. It can happen slowly over time, and we adapt to these subtle changes sometimes without even noticing them.
- **These are the hidden effects of trauma, the ones most of us keep to ourselves...**Our choices become limited as we avoid certain, feelings, people, and situations. The result of a gradual constriction of freedom is the loss of vitality and potential for the fulfilment of our dreams” (Levine, 2008, p. 9).



And trauma is not the sole cause for addiction. For some, it's just Fun!

I MAY BE A BAD
INFLUENCE



BUT DAMN, IM FUN.

Many young people accidentally discover pornography, many others are introduced to it by another person, usually a peer or a sibling.

And indeed, they find it tantalizing and fun.

They are not seeking to avoid pain nor are they necessarily suffering from a loss of connection to good living.

So, what starts off innocently enough, ends up changing their neurology and they "accidentally" become hopelessly addicted



A close-up photograph of a person's arm and hand resting on a light-colored wooden surface. In the foreground, there is a red lighter, a syringe, and a small metal spoon. The image is partially obscured by a white, torn-paper-like border that separates it from the black background below.

CAUSES OF ADDICTION:

Why Do Only Some Become Addicted?

How does the brain become addicted to substances or behaviors in the first place?



Special appreciation to Dr. Kevin McCauley
and Dr. Georg Koob whose brilliant work
inspired important content for this
presentation

Dr. Georg Koob – Director of the National Institute of Alcohol
Addiction (NIAA)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mGqBN72sSz4&ab_channel=AddictionPolicyForum



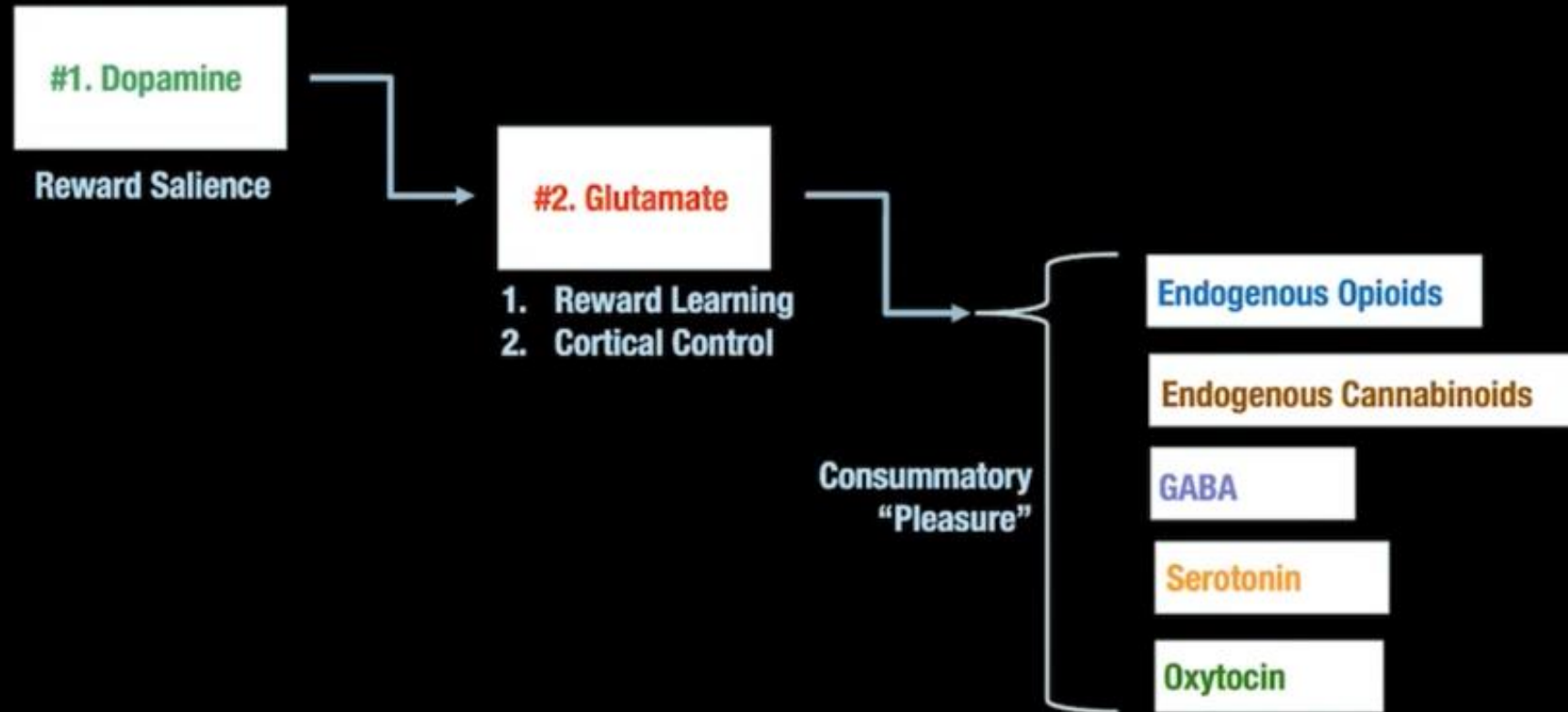
Dr. Kevin McCauley – Former Navy Flight Surgeon and now with
the Meadows

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zYphZvRHm6Y&list=PLvpkbo8ssyriex9eUKI6JGaR1UX2NGdtn&ab_channel=KTOO360TV

The three main chemicals involved in additions “The Three Amigos”

Dopamine
Glutamate
Cortisol



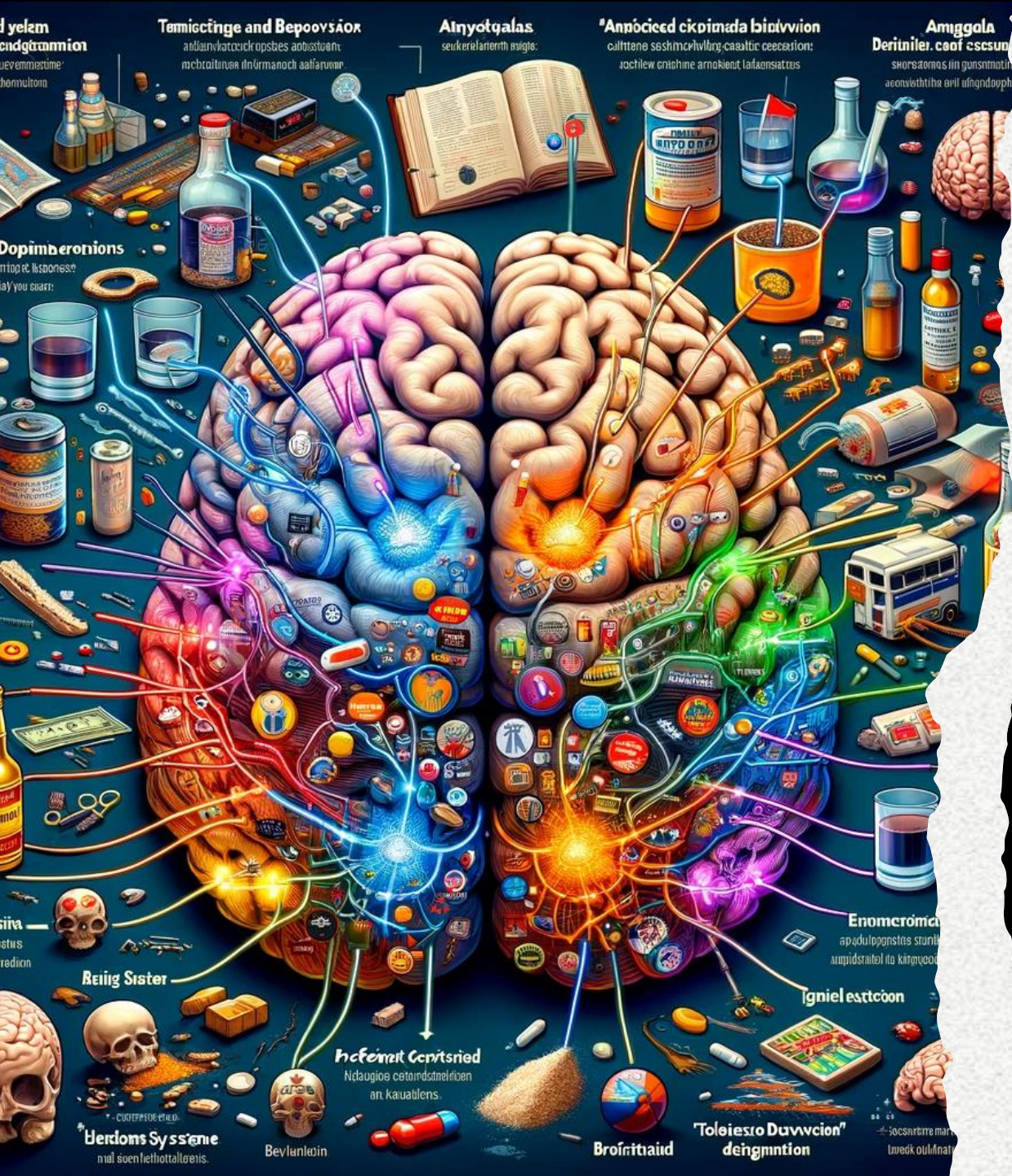


Adapted from:

Blum K, Febo M, Badgaiyan RD. Fifty years in the development of a glutaminergic-dopaminergic optimization complex (KB220) to balance brain reward circuitry in reward deficiency syndrome: a pictorial. *Austin Addict Sci*, 2016;1(2).



The “Brain Reward Cascade” (Blum)



How the Brain Gets Hooked on Substances and Behaviors?

Addiction Chemical #1

DOPAMINE

- As Kardaras(2016) stated in his book, *Glow Kids*, in order to fully understand addiction, we need to understand the brain's reward system and the impact of dopamine on that reward pathway.
- Specifically, **how much dopamine** is activated by a substance or behavior is correlated directly with the **addictive potential** of that substance or behavior.
- **Dopamine**, as many of us know, is the “feel-good” neurotransmitter that is the most critical and important part of the addiction process. Dopamine was discovered in 1958 by Arvid Carlsson and Niles-Ake Hillarp at the National Heart Institute of Sweden.

Dopamine is both a neuromodulator and a neurotransmitter

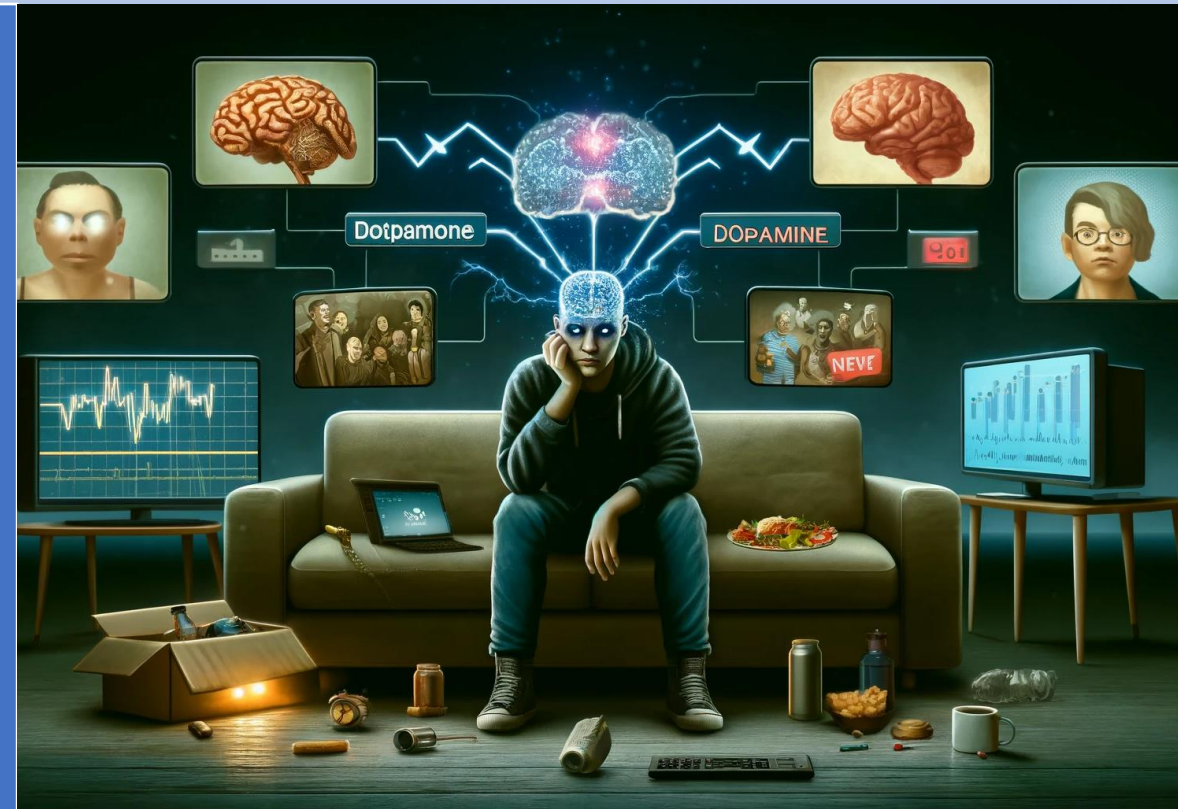
- According to Stanford neuroscientist **Dr. Andrew Huberman**, dopamine is both a neuromodulator and a neurotransmitter. The main difference between neurotransmitter and neuromodulator is that a **neurotransmitter** is a chemical messenger released by a neuron to affect either one or two post-synaptic neurons or another specific effector organ whereas a **neuromodulator** is a chemical messenger released by a neuron to affect a group of neurons or effector organs with a specific receptor.
- Furthermore, a neurotransmitter directly affects the postsynaptic partner to produce a quick, rapid effect while a neuromodulator indirectly affects the post-synaptic partner, especially through a second messenger to produce a slow but long-lasting effect. Dopamine can be released locally or volumetrically (a large dump). When it is released volumetrically, it affects many neurons. Very concerning, dopamine can ultimately affect gene expression according to Dr. Lieberman.
- Click here to listen to Dr. Huberman's excellent lecture on dopamine:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QmOF0crdyRU&t=2s&ab_channel=AndrewHuberman



Functions of Dopamine

Dr. Susan Weinschenk (2009) noted that **dopamine** is created in various parts of the brain and is critical in several brain functions to include:

- Thinking
- Moving
- Sleeping
- Mood
- Attention
- Motivation
- Seeking and reward



Inspired to watch because of Dopamine

More on Dopamine

- When an individual performs an action that is satisfying to a need or fulfills a desire, dopamine is released into the **nucleus accumbens**, a cluster of nerve cells beneath the cerebral hemispheres that are specifically associated with reward and pleasure. This is also known as the brain's **"pleasure center."**
- **Natural dopaminergic activities**, such as eating and sex, usually come after **effort and delay** and serve a survival function.
- These are called the **"natural rewards"** as contrasted with addictive chemicals/behaviors (which can hijack the same circuitry).
- Addictive drugs and behaviors, such as pornography, gambling, and video gaming, actually offer a **short-circuit** to this process which only ends up flooding the **nucleus accumbens** with dopamine and does not serve any biological function.

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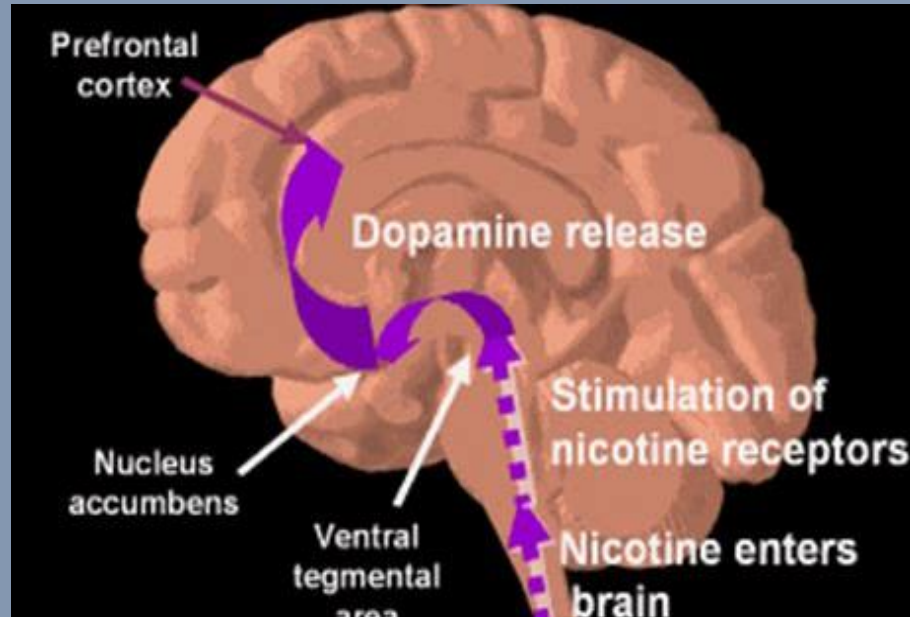
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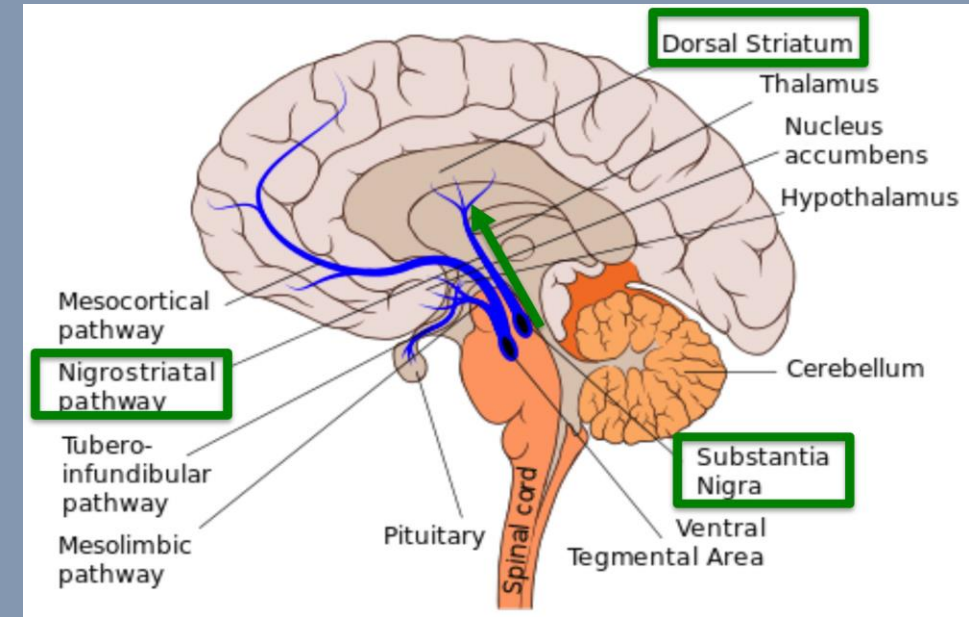
Two Main Dopamine Pathways

Mesocorticolimbic for motivation and reward

Nigrostriatal for movement



The Mesocorticolimbic Pathway transports dopamine from the **VTA** to the **nucleus accumbens**, **amygdala**, and **prefrontal cortex**. The nucleus accumbens is found in the ventral medial portion of the striatum and is believed to play a role in reward, motivation, desire, and even the placebo effect.



The Nigrostriatal Pathway travels from the **substantia nigra** to the **striatum**. The nigrostriatal pathway is important for facilitating movement.

Dopamine vs Endogenous Opioids

Click here to listen to Gary Wilson's outstanding lecture:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZLtSoWrEpIM&ab_channel=Reach10

- Although **dopamine** has been referred to as the “**pleasure molecule**,” it is more about **seeking and searching** for pleasure, rather than pleasure itself. Dopamine is more involved in drive and motivation to seek.
- The “**final reward**” or what we experience as feelings of pleasure, Wilson (2014) writes, involve the release of **endogenous opioids**.
- You can think of **dopamine** as “**wanting**” and **opioids** as “**liking**.”
- As psychologist Dr. Weinschenk explains, “Dopamine causes us to **want, desire, seek out and, search**; however, the dopamine system is stronger than the opioid system and we hence seek more than we are as satisfied...” (Weinschenk, 2009).
- “Addicts want it more but gradually like it less. Addiction might be thought of as “**wanting gone amok**.” (Wilson, 2014).



Bought the BMW
but still wanting the
Ducati Diavel



Wanting versus Liking





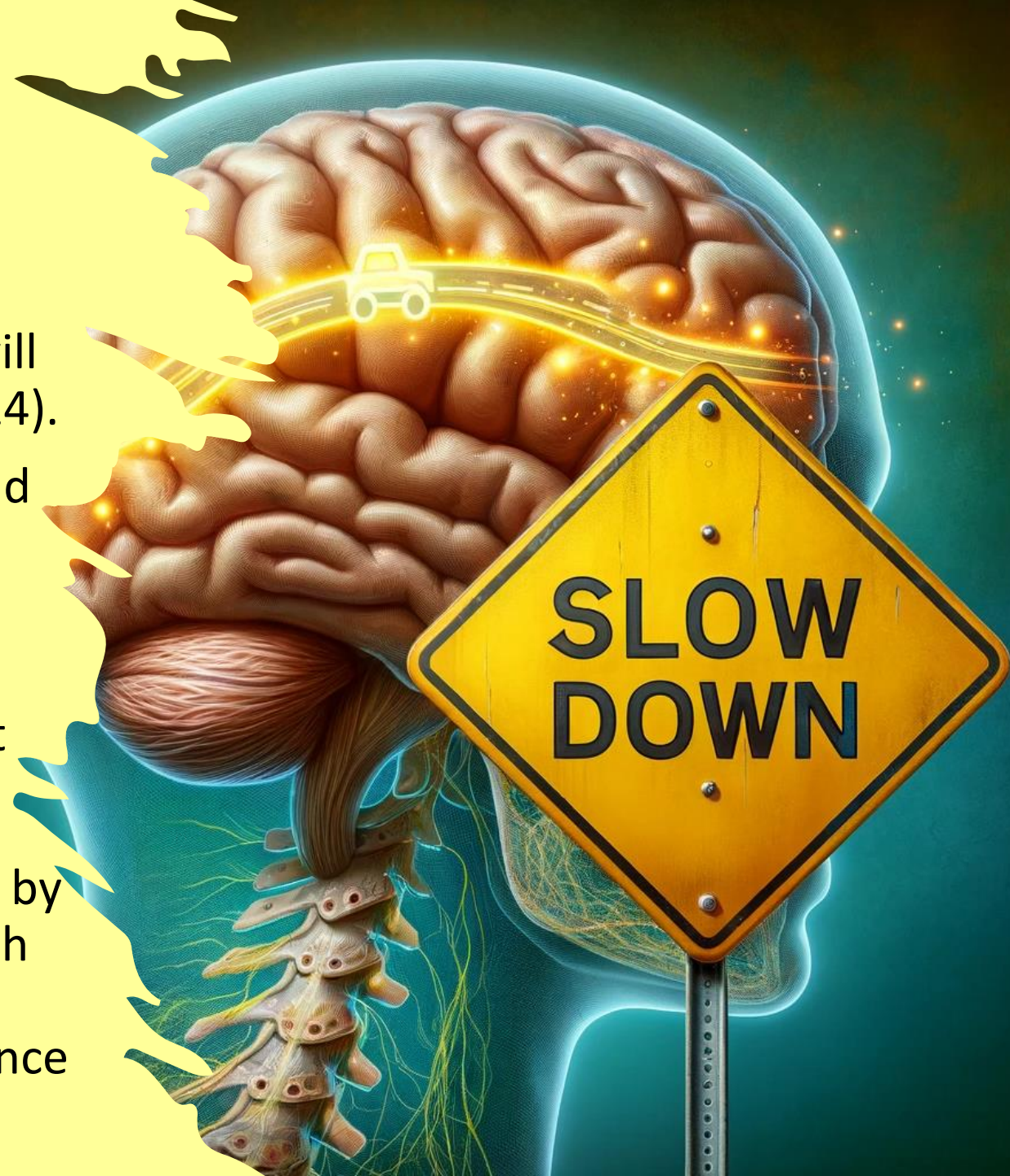
Dopamine and DeltaFosB “Keep doing it!”

- Highly salient activities, in this case addiction, lead to the accumulation of **DeltaFosB (Δ FosB)**, a **transcription factor that epigenetically activates** genes involved with addiction.
- The molecular changes it potentiates are almost identical for both sexual conditioning and chronic drug use. Specifically, DeltaFosB rewires the brain to **crave IT** whatever **IT** is (Wilson, 2014).
- DeltaFosB is responsible for ensuring that you **remember and repeat** the activity (Wilson, 2014).
- This repeated process produces what is called **sensitization** which is based on the principle, **“Nerve cells that fire together wire together”** as noted by Canadian researcher Donald Hebb in 1949. Repeated activity strengthens cell connections.

Dopamine and CREB

“Slow it Down, Silver!”

- As the brain recognizes that it needs a rest, it will kick out **CREB** to slow things down (Wilson, 2014).
- In essence, **DeltaFosB** acts like the gas pedal and **CREB** functions as the brakes.
- CREB specifically inhibits dopamine and endogenous opioids to take the joy out of the binging/addictive behavior or substance so that you can give it a rest.
- This numbed pleasure response that is induced by CREB is often identified as **desensitization** which leads to **tolerance** - the need of increasingly higher doses to achieve the same effect. Tolerance is a key factor in addiction.



So, we see that chronic overstimulation
can lead to two opposite effects:

01

Increased dopamine
activity
(wanting/seeking it
more) –

sensitization via
DeltaFosB

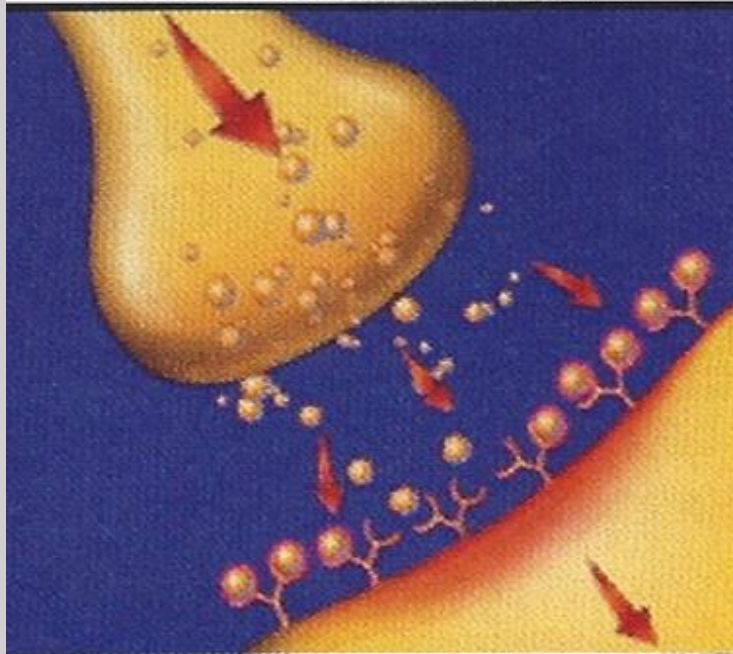
02

Decreased dopamine
and opioid activity
(liking it/enjoying it
less) – **desensitization**
via **CREB**



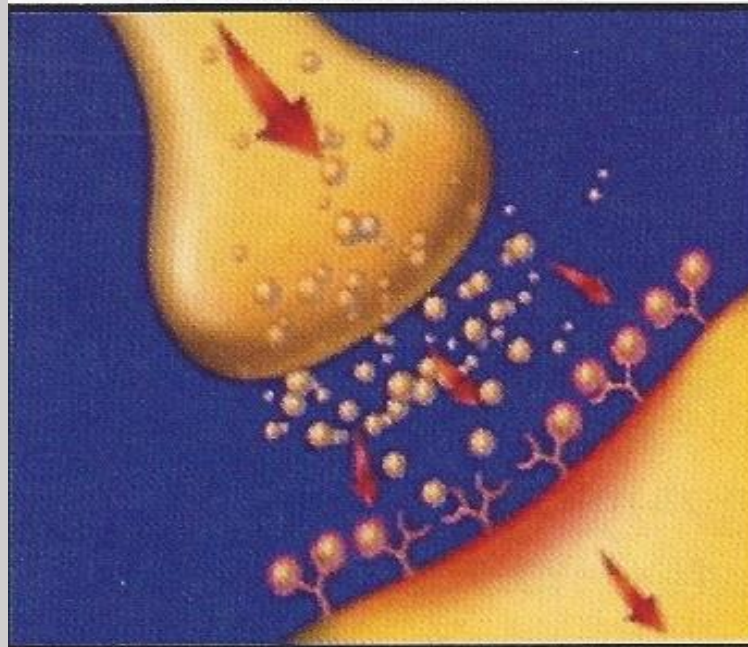
Dopaminergic Downregulation at the Synaptic Level

Normal Functioning



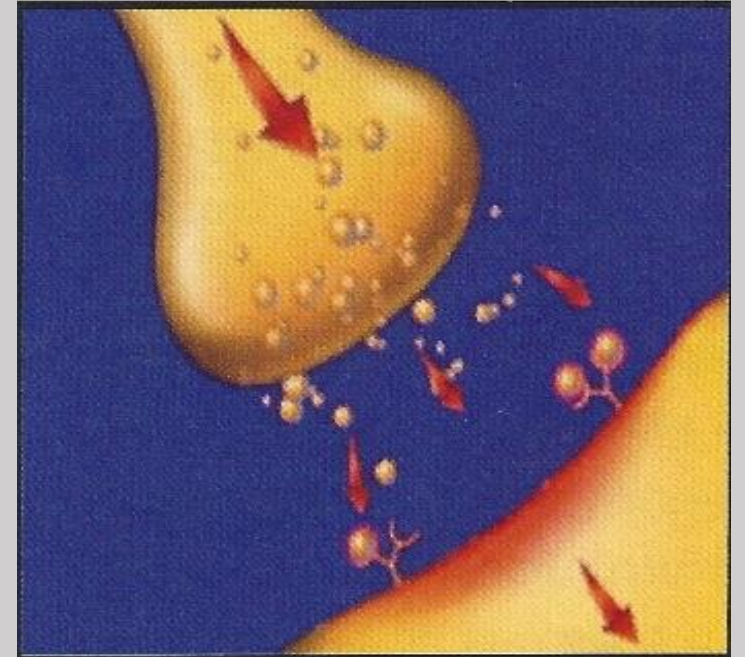
(Adapted from Stuff4Educators.com, 2014)

Over Stimulation



(Adapted from Stuff4Educators.com, 2014)

Desensitization

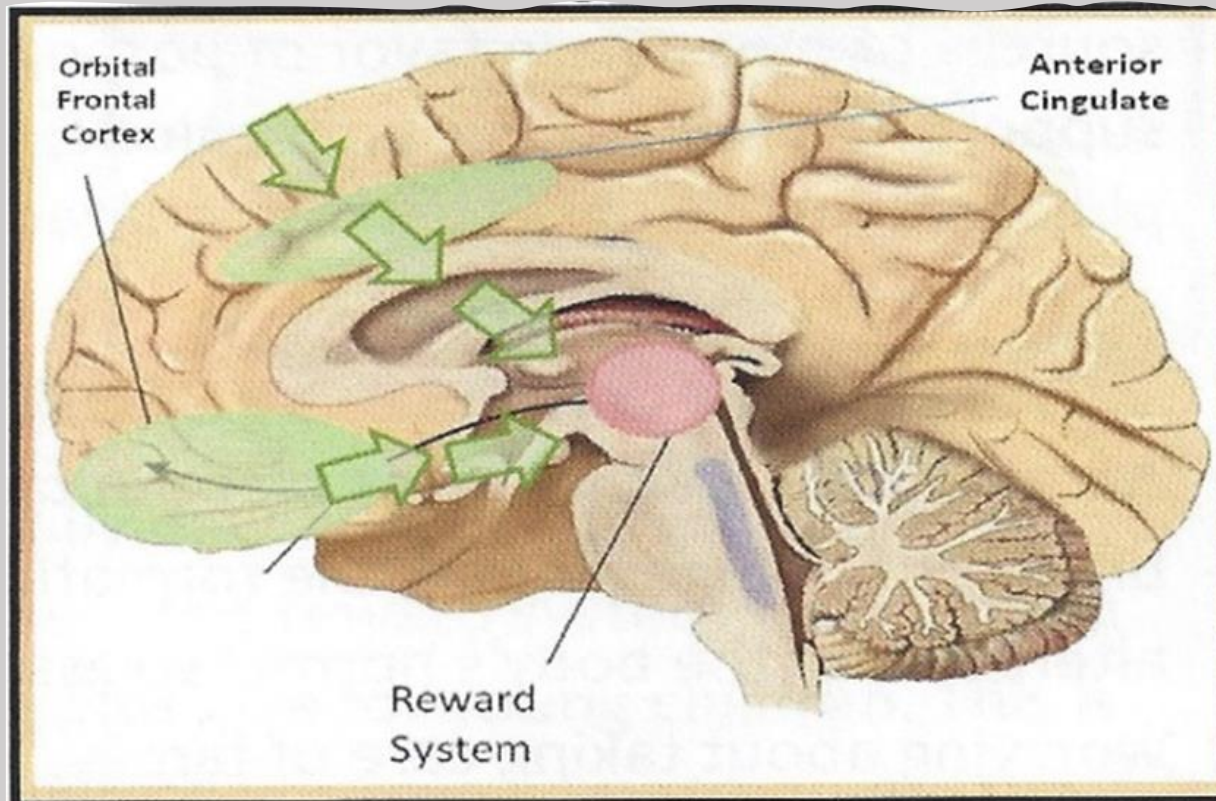


(Adapted from Stuff4Educators.com, 2014)

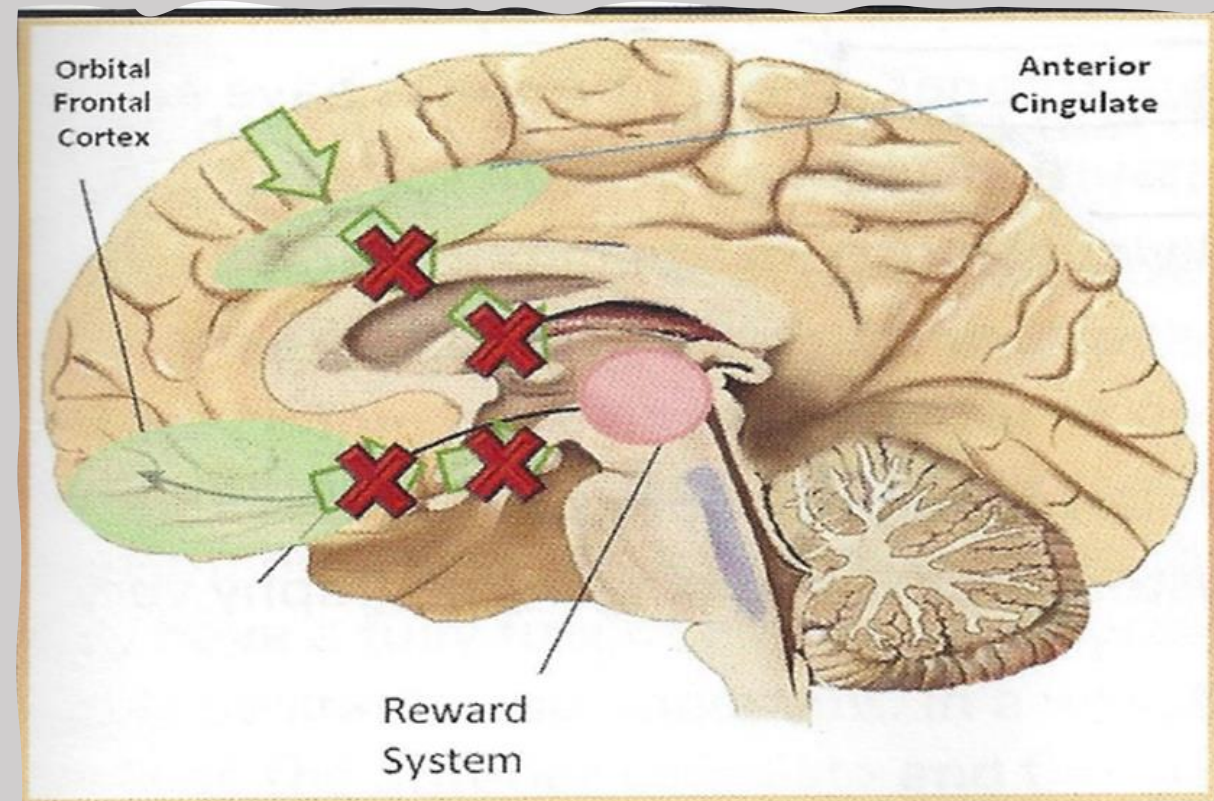
Impact of Hypofrontality – not a good thing:

Two areas of the brain, the **anterior cingulate** and the **orbital frontal cortex**, serve as a protective mechanism to override the reward system's desire for ever increasing dopamine. Sadly, **hypofrontality** involves the rewiring of our brain so that when an impulse to engage in a dopamine-related behavior is activated, the brain ends up shutting down its ability to override the reward system.

This is the breeding ground for horrible choices and impacts on social development in a really bad way.



(Adapted from Study Blue, 2007)

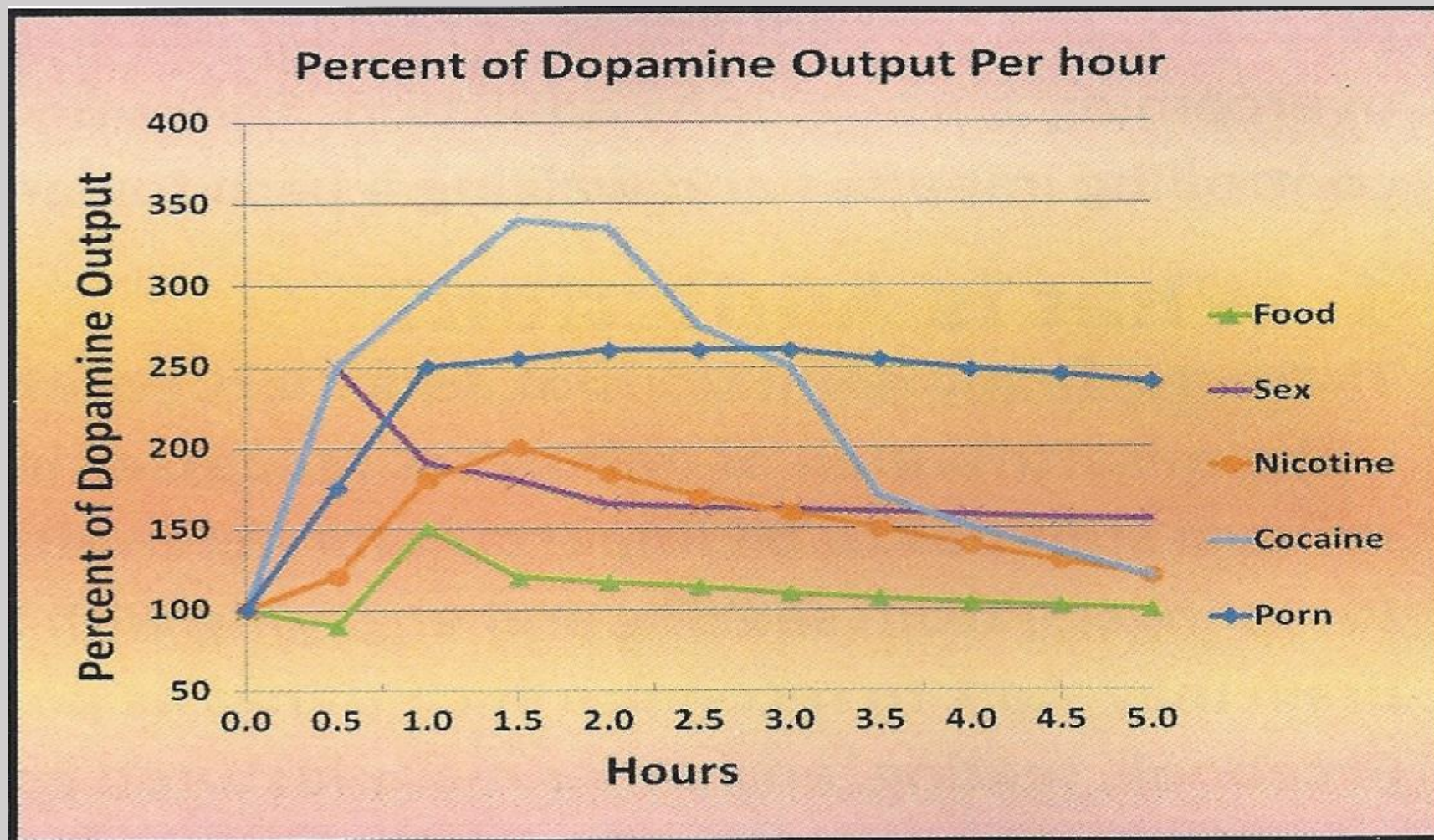


(Adapted from Study Blue, 2007)

What Cranks Us Up?

Summary of dopamine increases:

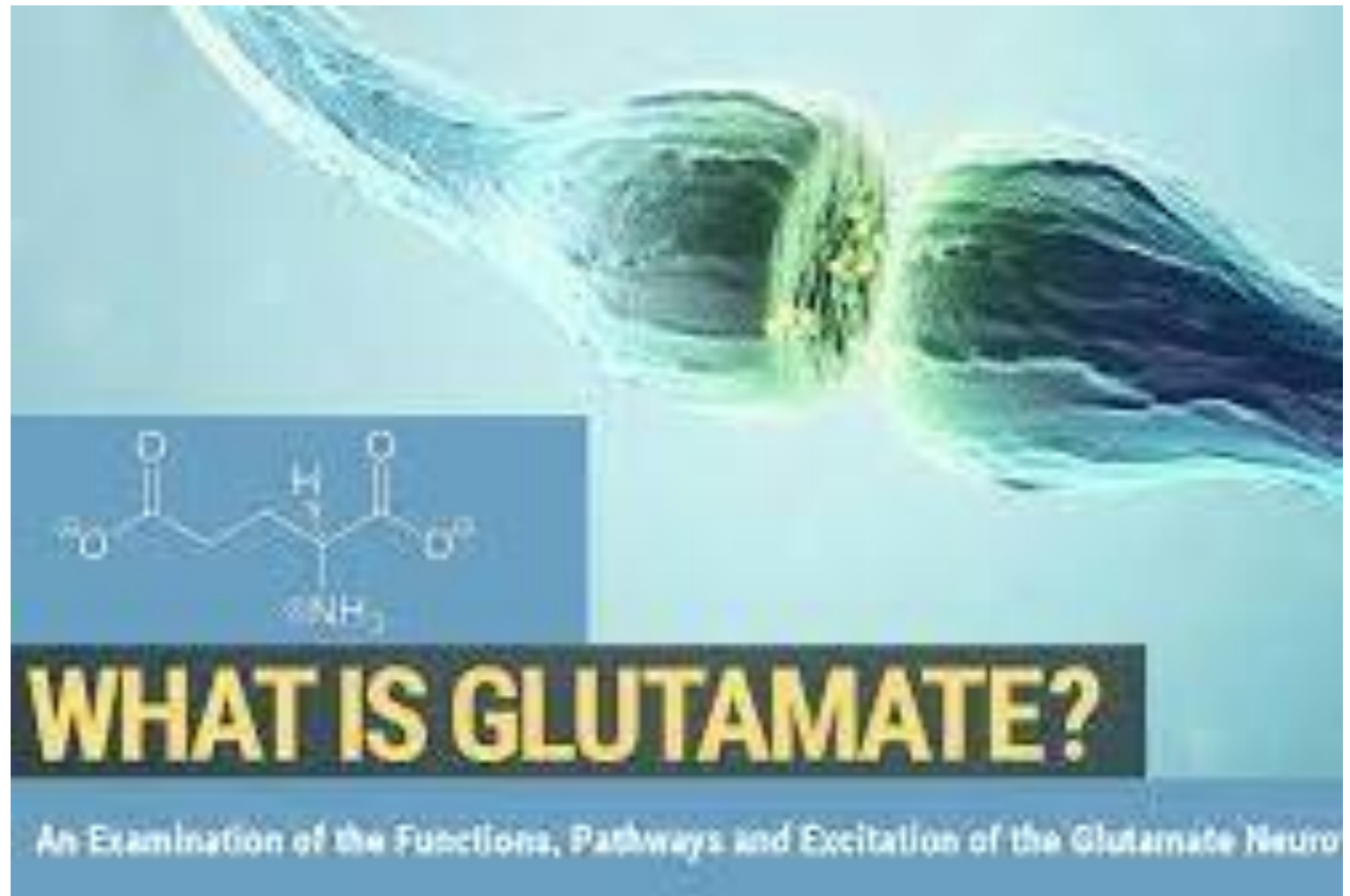
- Food – 150% increase
- Nicotine – 200% increase
- Snorting cocaine – 350% increase
- Sexual intimacy – 250% increase
- Pornography – 250% increases and stays elevated for longer – even when compared to cocaine



(Di Chiara & Imperato, 1988; newlifehabits.com, 2010)

Addiction neurochemical #2: **Glutamate**

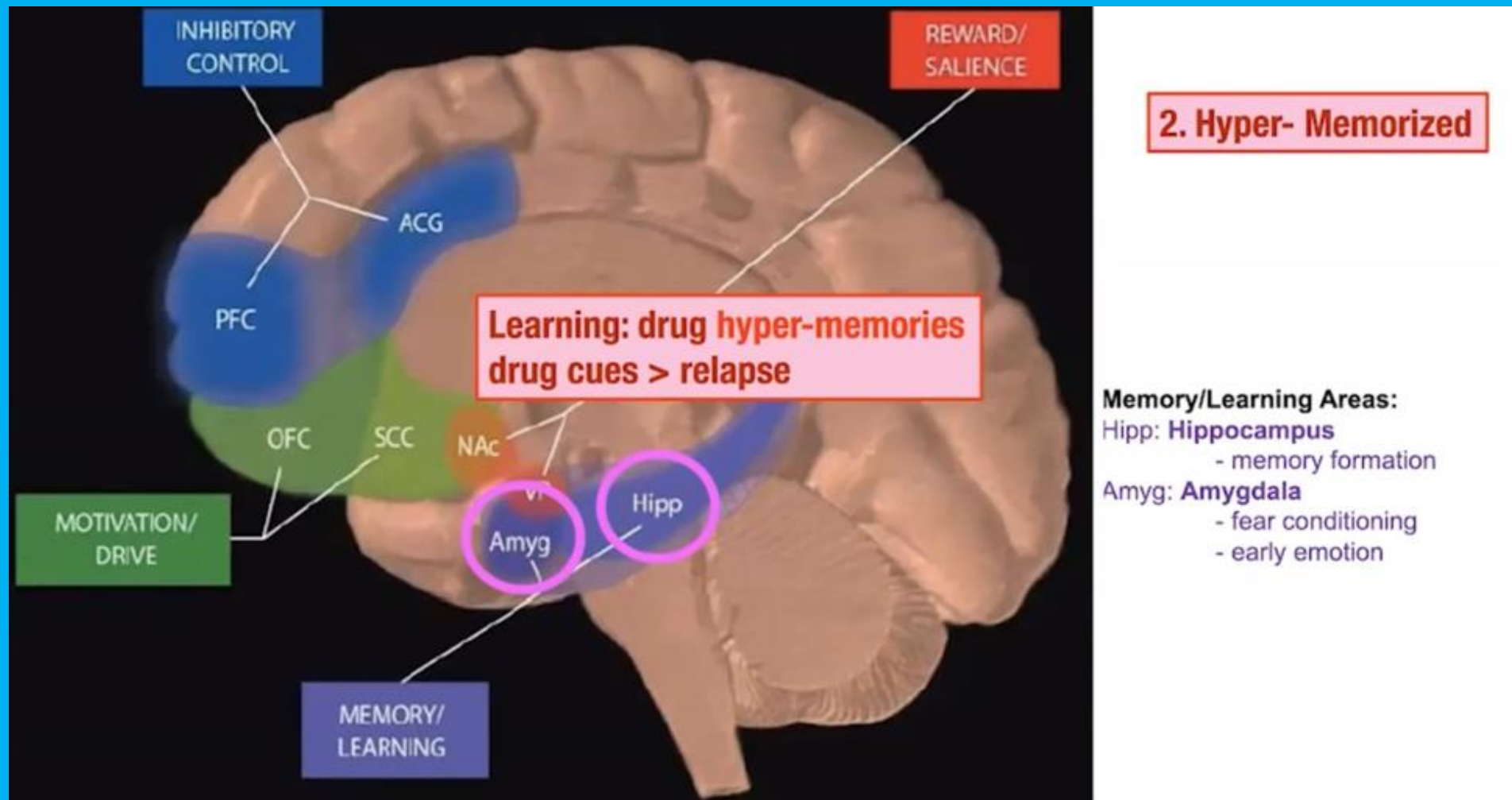
Glutamate is an **excitatory** neurotransmitter with several types of receptors found throughout the central nervous system, and its metabolism is important to maintaining optimal levels within the extracellular space. As such, it is important to memory, cognition, and mood regulation.



Addiction neurochemical #2 Glutamate

- The most abundant neurochemical in the brain
- Critical in memory formation & consolidation
- All drugs of abuse and many addicting behaviors effect Glutamate which preserves drug memories and creates drug cues
- And ... glutamate is the neurochemical of “motivation” (it initiates drug seeking)

Glutamate leads to **hyper-memorization** of addiction cues and leads to **relapse**.



Glutamate spillover and overlearning

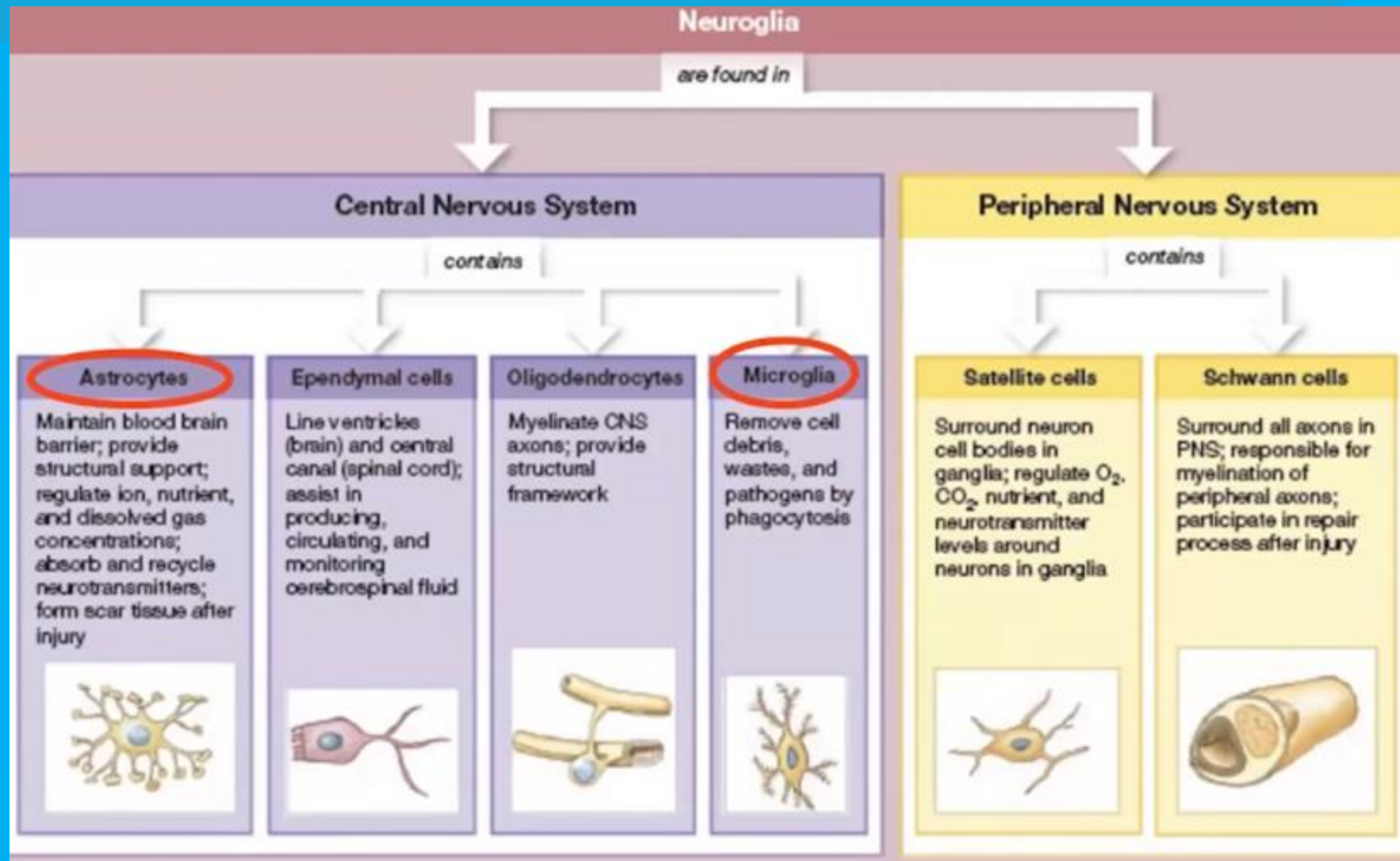
- **Enduring vulnerability to relapse due to recruitment of “cortico-fugal” GLU projections to striatum**
- **Excess GLU “spills” out of the synapse to bind to extra-synaptic GLU receptors**
- **Changes in synaptic plasticity leads to pathologic learning and memory**
- **Result: impairment of inhibition of drug seeking**



Peter W. Kalivas, PhD
Department of Neurosciences
Medical University of South Carolina

Glial Cells

Glial cells comprise about 33 – 66% of the brain and once thought to be of minor significance are hugely important to brain health and specifically, to the health of neurons.



Astrocyte Glial Cells

Traditionally seen as support cells for neurons

Connect synapses to blood vessels and make contact with hundreds of synapses and across different populations of neurons

Integrate signals from many synapses at once

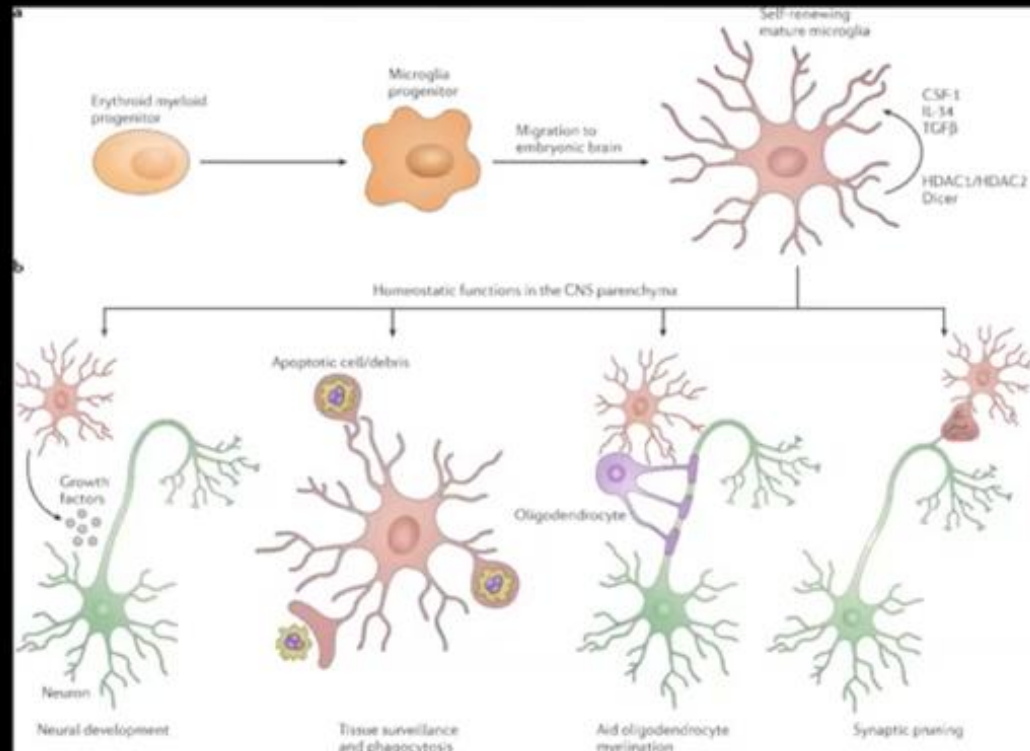
Critical for glutamate regulation (express glutamate transporters)

Also express cytokines for inflammatory signaling



Microglia

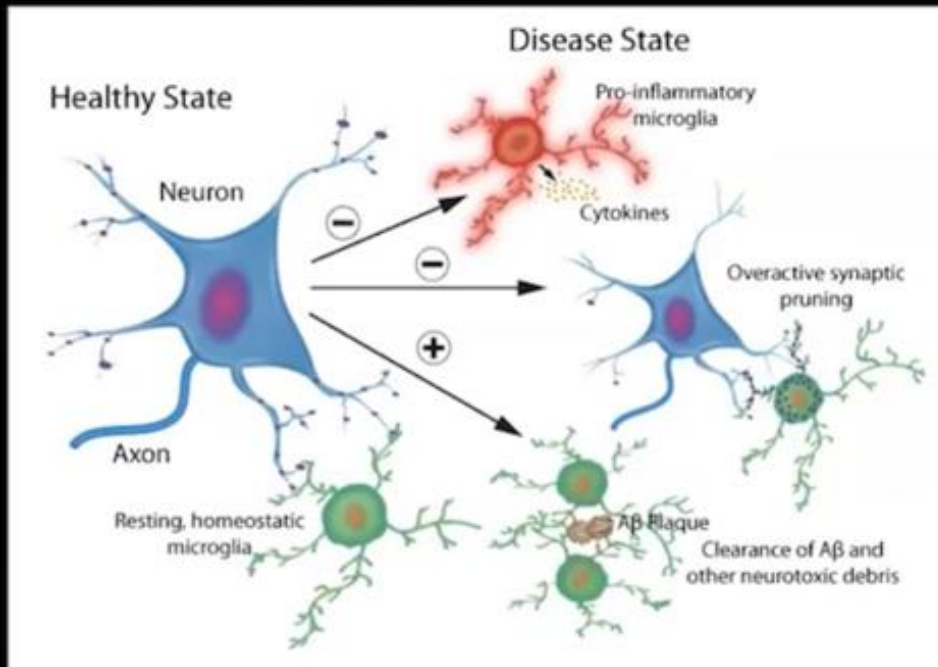
Microglia



- The resident immune cells of the CNS (the macrophages of the brain)
- Actively survey a specific brain tissue microenvironment for **Pathogen Associated Molecular Patterns (PAMPs)** given off by pathogens, toxins and drugs
- Also detect **Danger-Associated Molecular Patterns (DAMPs)** released from damaged or dying brain cells
- Receive cytokine signals from other microglia
- Assist neuronal synapse remodeling (plasticity, pruning) critical for normal development and beyond

Microglia are damaged by excessive glutamate.

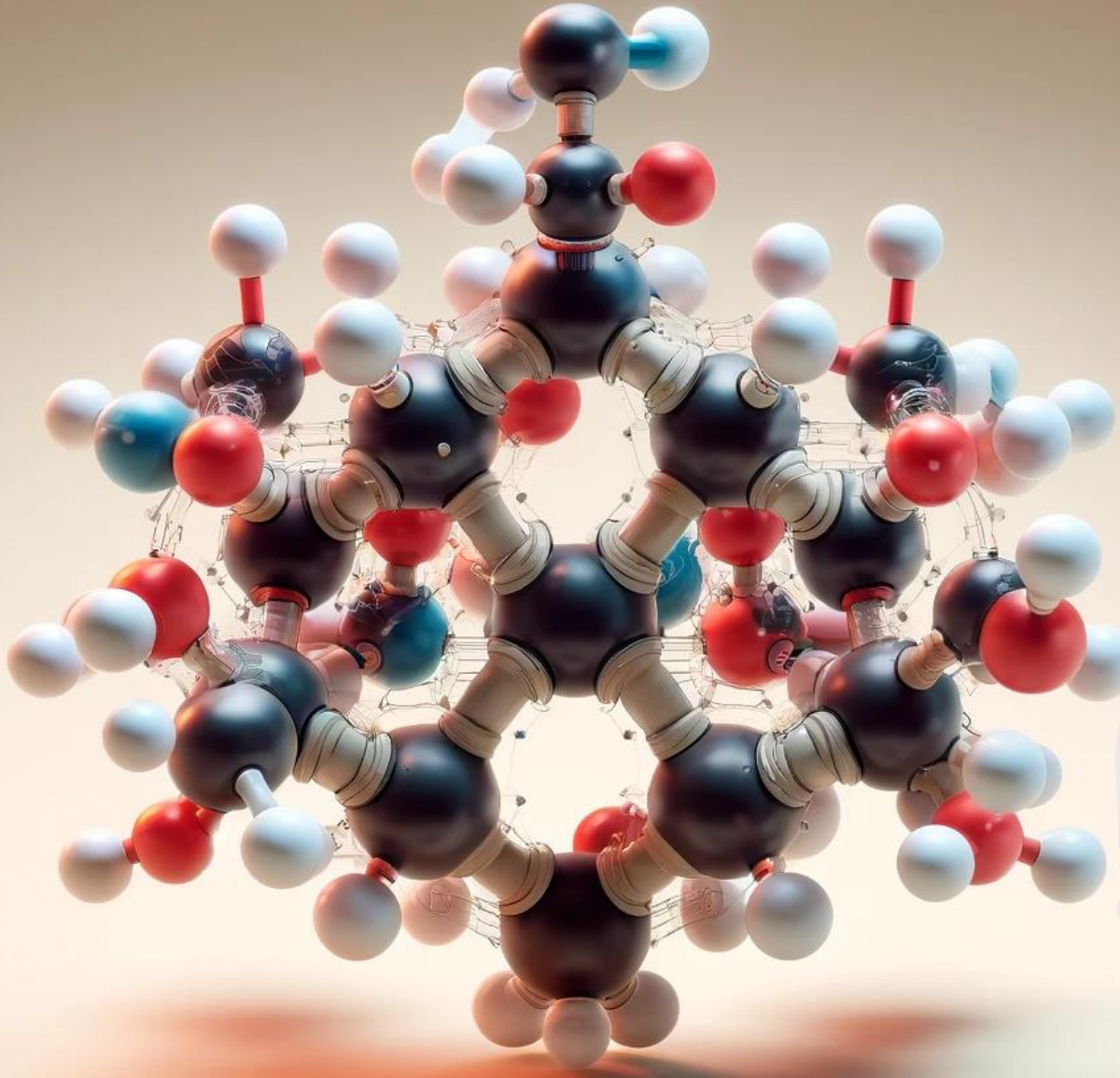
Reactive Microgliosis: response to pathogen/injury



- **Resting microglia: injury to brain > Reactive Microgliosis**
- **Microglia respond rapidly to stress and trauma**
- **Shift from ramified (resting) state to amoeboid (activated) state**
- **Microglia are very fast-moving cells (fastest in the brain: entire brain parenchyma scanned by microglia every few hours)**
- **Become macrophages > phagocytize pathogens and debris**
- **Antigen-presenting cell to T lymphocytes**

A stylized illustration of a human figure from the waist up, facing left. The figure's head is tilted back, and their right hand is raised to their forehead. The brain is depicted as a glowing, orange-red organ within the head. The lungs are shown as glowing, orange-red organs within the chest. The background is a dark, fiery orange and red, filled with numerous small, glowing spheres and larger, more complex molecular structures. The overall effect is one of intense energy and biological activity.

Addiction Chemical #3: Cortisol



What is cortisol?

- Definition: Cortisol is a steroid hormone produced by the adrenal glands, which are located on top of each kidney.
- Function: It plays a crucial role in the body's stress response, helping to regulate metabolism, reduce inflammation, and assist with memory formulation.
- Stress Response: Often called the “stress hormone,” cortisol levels increase in response to stress, helping the body manage and adapt to stressful situations.
- Regulation: It follows a daily rhythm—highest in the morning to help you wake up, and gradually decreasing throughout the day.
- Effects of Imbalance: Chronic high cortisol levels can lead to various health issues, such as weight gain, high blood pressure, disrupted sleep, and a weakened immune system.

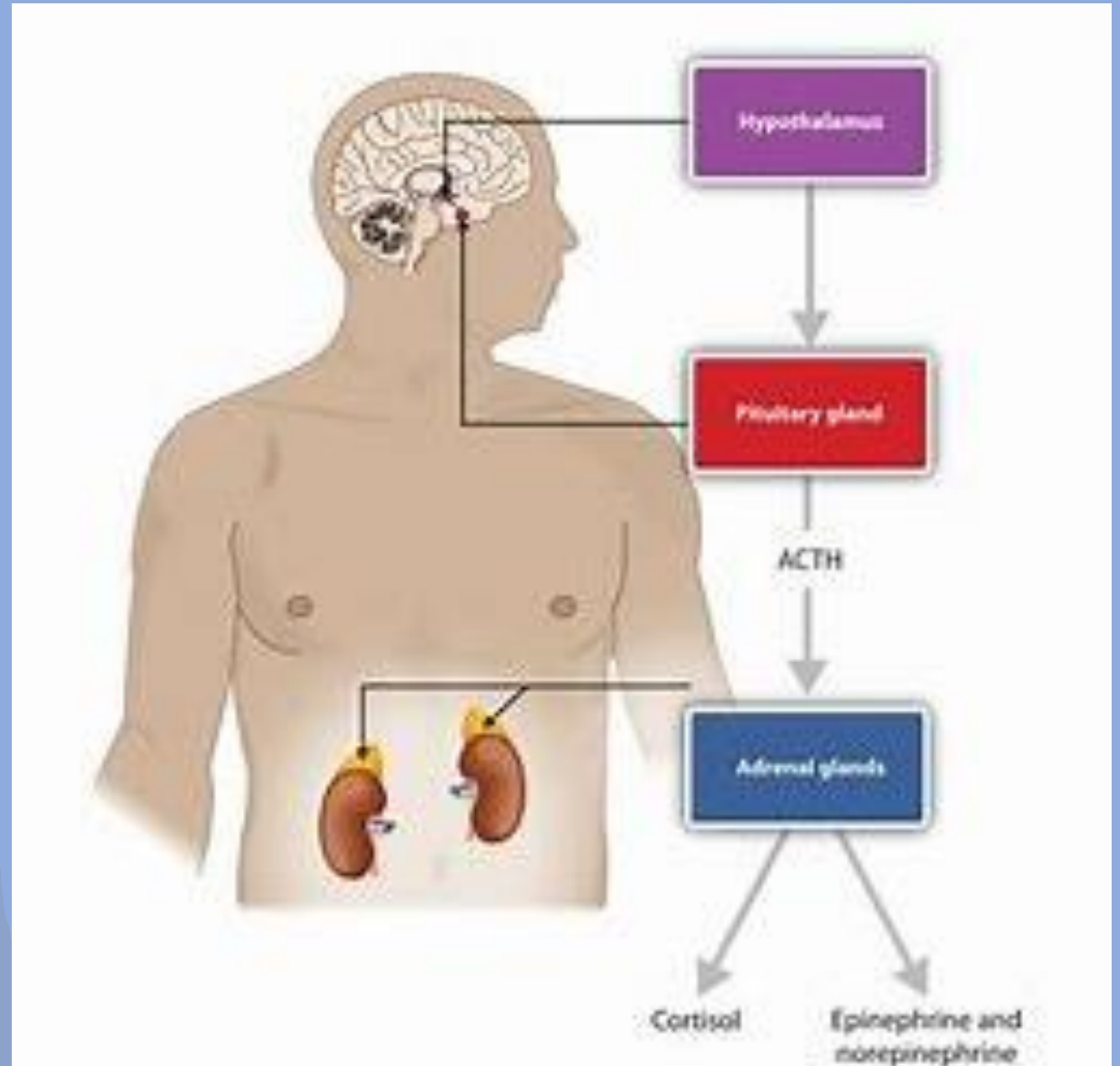
The Hypothalamic-Pituitary-Adrenal Axis (HPA)

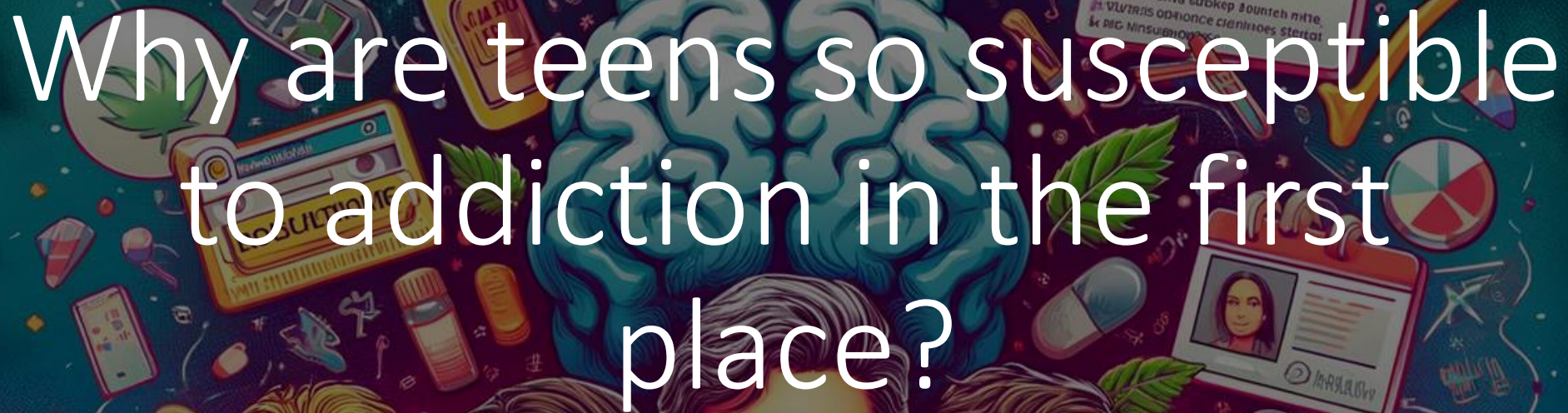
Definition: The HPA axis is a complex set of interactions among the:

1. hypothalamus
2. pituitary gland
3. adrenal glands

It regulates:

1. stress responses
2. mood
3. digestion
4. the immune system
5. energy storage and expenditure and more





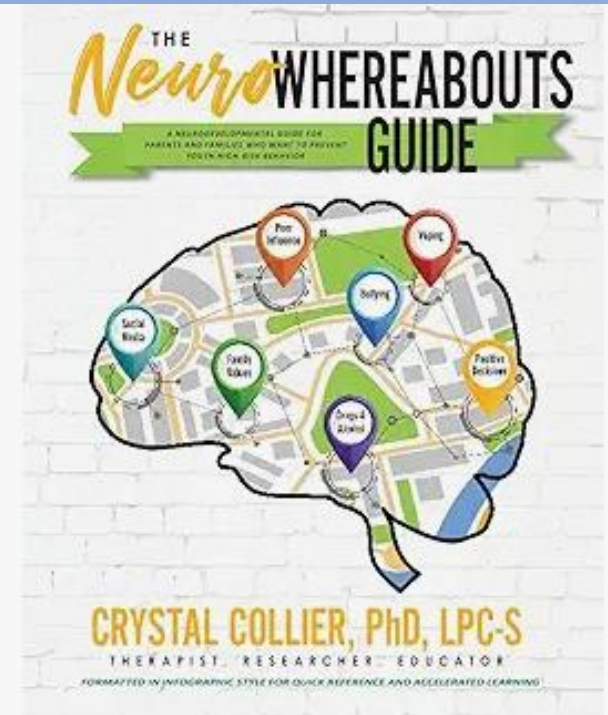
Why are teens so susceptible to addiction in the first place?

Addiction in the Developing Brain

Dr. Crystal Collier, Ph.D. teaches on how the brain becomes addicted to alcohol, drugs, and other high-risk behavior such as pornography. Her book, NeuroWhereAbouts should be a reference at the hand of any good parent.

Please click the link below to take a listen:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ItQ1IXiEDDs&ab_channel=HopeandHealingCenter%26Institute

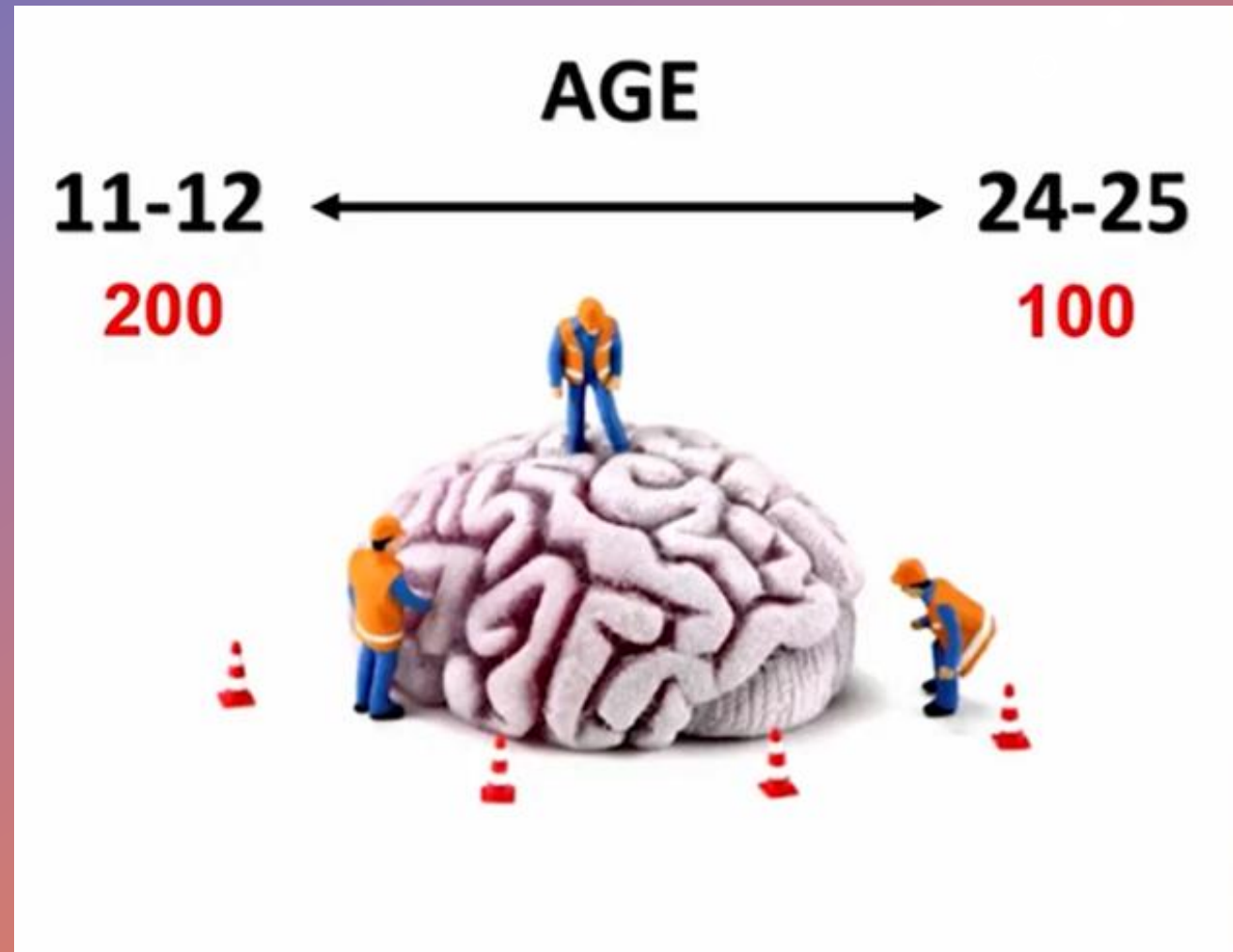


The infant neuron and its dendritic tree shown on the left is quite simple and you can see how its dendritic tree increases in complexity across the lifespan.

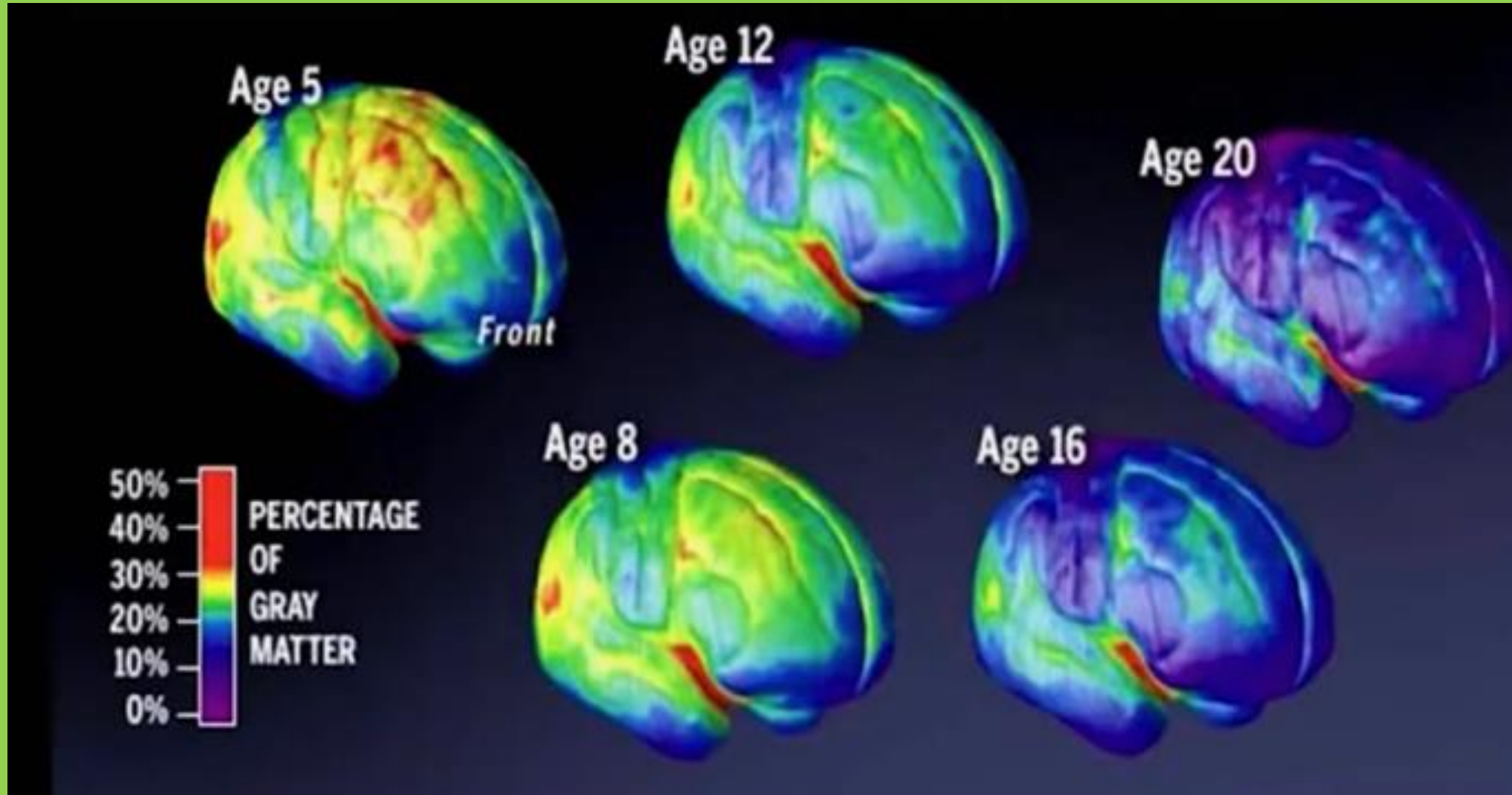


The Second Phase of Brain Growth

The second phase of brain growth starts at about 12 and continues to age 25. During this time, the brain **prunes out** little-used/unneeded neurons and the brain thus decreases from **200 billion to 100 billion neurons**. During this time, pathways that are used **myelinate** to increase efficiency. So, ensure that a teen is learning and doing good things during this time as this will wire into what becomes the adult brain.



As the brain develops gray matter or unmyelinated neurons become myelinated to become white matter. This slide nicely how much growth occurs across childhood into early adulthood. Addiction arrests this growth process.



So – use the brain
and wire in good
stuff during
adolescence or
you lose good brain
function if you
don't use it





Executive Functioning



Elementary/Middle

- Task Initiation
- Flexible Thinking
- Planning and Prioritizing
- Organization
- Working Memory
- Self-Monitoring
- Selective Attention
- Coordination

Middle/High School

- Abstract; conceptual understanding
- Impulse Control
- Problem-Solving
- Decision-Making
- Judgment
- Emotion Regulation
- Frustration Tolerance
- Ability to Feel Empathy

Executive functioning in the prefrontal cortex run the show so it is essential that we teach our children these skills early.

Porn addiction impedes the development of executive functioning in the child which has devastating consequences for their future.

The Impact of Pornography

In his compelling book, *How Pornography Harms*, Professor and Dr. John Foubert, an interdisciplinary scholar who has studied sexual violence since 1993 and the harms of pornography since 2006, reminds us of how, in contrast to a mountain of data available, the tobacco industry icons testified before Congress in 1994 that they believed that cigarettes were not addictive or harmful.



In a very similar way, Dr. Foubert notes that there are powerful voices today that try to convince us that pornography isn't harmful either (Atwood et al., 2014). He adds that there are over **100 studies** that demonstrate that **pornography harms** people, often horribly and sometimes irrevocably (Malamuth et al., 2000; Peter et al., 2016).

HOW PORNOGRAPHY HARMS

What Today's Teens,
Young Adults, Parents, and Pastors
Need to Know



JOHN D. FOUBERT, PH.D.

John Foubert provides the most significant research on the harm and
negative consequences of pornography to young people.
Let's face it: the truth is often hidden.

The Impact of Pornography on the Brain



Dr. Donald Hilton, who has authored many studies on the addictive nature of pornography, referenced research that shows that the more people watch pornography, the more **their brains actually shrink**.



Research has also demonstrated that watching pornography **slows down the working memory** (Laier et al., 2013).



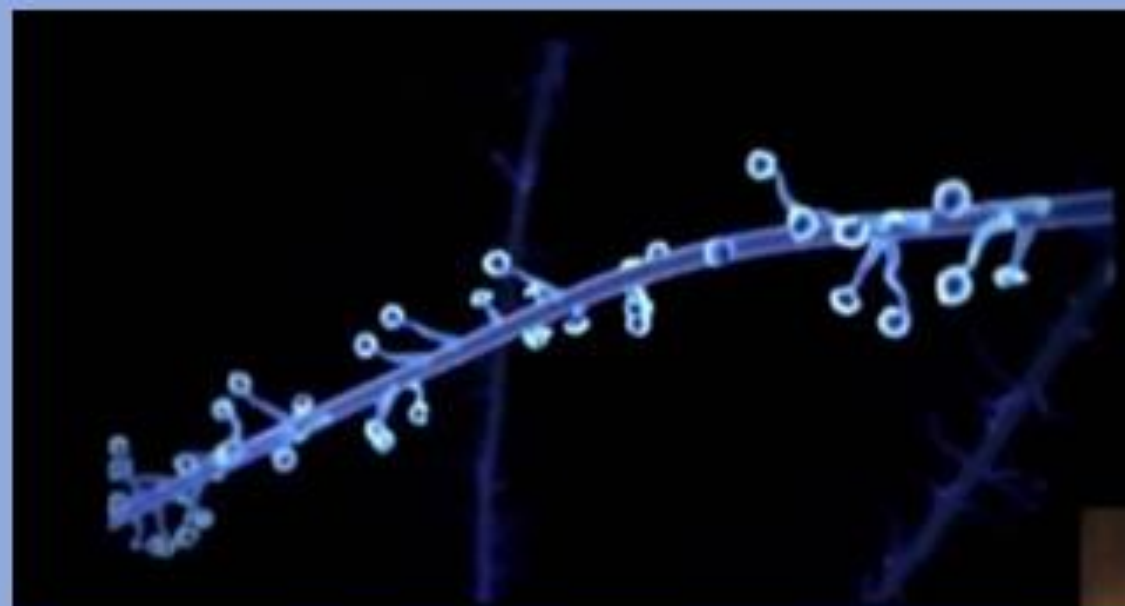
Kuhn and Gallinat (2014) found **decreased gray matter** in the brain areas that are responsible for decision making and motivation in porn seekers.

The Impact of Pornography on the Brain



It is frightening that you don't even have to be “addicted” to porn but rather merely using it begins to change the brain in fundamentally negative ways. So, if you ever thought that pornography was making you **dumber**, you were absolutely right.

Excessive dopamine flow triggered by addiction causes dendritic growth on the neuron which results in permanent changes in the brain. This explains why craving is an everlasting consequence that must be respected throughout the lifetime (images adapted from Collier, 2020).



The blessing and the curse of teen neuroplasticity

The good:

- The child brain can learn like nothing else.
- The child brain can repair more quickly to injury.

The bad:

- The developing brain will wire in an addiction faster than the adult brain.
- Every year before age 25 that the developing brain is exposed to addiction increases the likelihood by **8%** that the offending addiction will become a lifelong addiction (Collier, 2020).

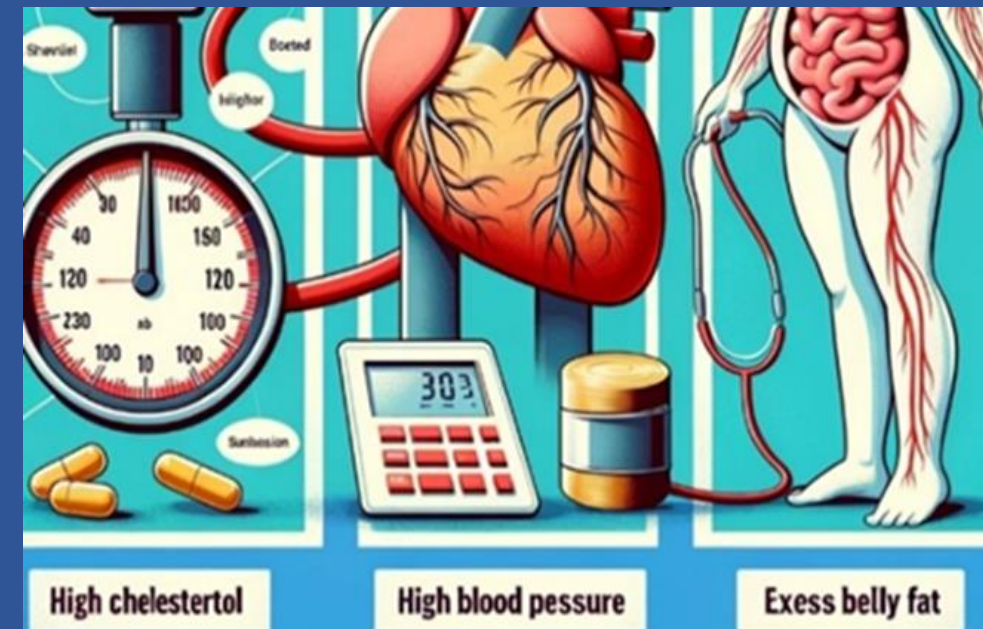
Impact of Excessive Pornography on the Body

- Excessive pornography use can trigger **Metabolic Syndrome**. Metabolic syndrome is a combination of the following (Dunckley, 2015):

- High blood pressure
- Midsection weight gain (spare tire)
- Abnormal cholesterol levels
- High fasting blood sugar

- **Metabolic Syndrome** is a serious condition and, if left unchecked, can promote:

- Diabetes
- Heart disease
- Stroke



Excessive Pornography Promotes Hyperarousal

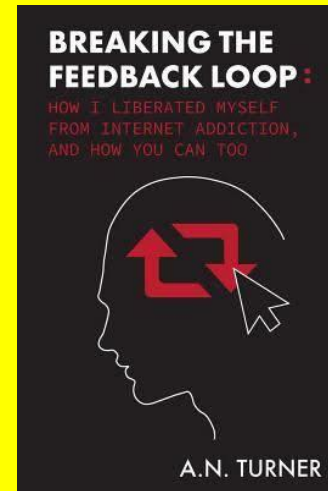
- **Blood Flow Shifts**: When the brain is under stress due to excessive porn consumption, blood flow to the brain is shunted away from the higher regions of the brain, i.e., the cortex, and directed to the more primitive parts of the brain, i.e., the limbic or old brain in an effort to promote survival.
- **Elevated Cortisol**: Chronically elevated cortisol is associated with obesity, diabetes, hormone imbalance, metabolic syndrome, and high blood pressure as previously noted (Pervanidou et al., 2011).
- **Oxidative Stress**: When the cell's natural defenses are overwhelmed due to excessive stress, the **antioxidants** or scavengers are depleted, and oxidative stress or excessive free radicals develop. Free radicals **cause inflammation, tissue damage, and decreased efficiency.**



The Impact of Porn on Depression

A.N. Turner (2017) writes of his own struggle with depression secondary to media/porn overconsumption,

*“My relationship with the Internet was not alleviating feelings of loneliness; it was amplifying my **loneliness**, bringing me to a state of **frustrated depression**. I felt boxed in, unable to breathe, trapped in an inescapable thought bubble of my own f*ed up, addictive desires. I conditioned myself to need constant stimulation. I couldn’t read, talk, study, or play the piano – all things that I love – because it all seemed too slow, too one-note...I was always tired, yet always racing in a mad frenzy. I couldn’t focus. I was anxious. I was unable to engage in solitude. My thoughts were a jumble.”*



The impact of Porn on Depression

- We are, on a surface level, the most connected society that has ever walked the planet.
- Each second, we send over 7,500 tweets, 1,394 Instagram photos, and over two million emails and view over 119,000 YouTube videos (Internet Live Stats, website, www.internetlivestats.com).
- Americans send 69,000 texts a second, which translates to over six billion texts sent out in the US daily. Paradoxically, the more connected we think we are with the façade of the Internet, the more disconnected and depressed we actually become.
- As Johann Hari (2015) said in a Ted Talk, “We are the most disconnected society that has ever been, surely.”



“Cyber void is so full of amazing emptiness that makes us feel fulfilled.”

-- Munia Khan

The connection between general media consumption to include gaming and social media and depression is well-established by Kardaras (2016)

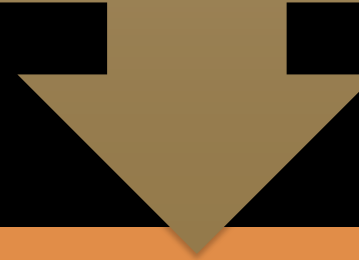
- A 2012 Missouri State University study of 216 students revealed that 30 percent of Internet users showed signs of depression and that the depressed kids were more intense web users.
- A 2014 study looked at 2,293 seventh-graders and found that Internet addiction led to increased depression, hostility, and anxiety.
- A 2014 study conducted in Pakistan with 300 graduate students found a positive correlation between Internet addiction and depression and anxiety.
- A 2006 Korean study involving 1,573 high school students found a correlation between Internet addiction, depression, and thoughts of suicide.
- Recently, the term Facebook Depression has emerged – namely, the more “friends” one has on Facebook, the higher the likelihood of depressive symptoms (Kardaras, 2016).




Excessive Pornography and Depression



As noted in [MetalHelp.net \(2016\)](#), researchers have concluded that compulsive and at-risk cybersex users experience **guilt, depression, and anxiety**. The writers conclude that this may both result from pornography usage and perpetuate further behavior.



Weaver et al. (2011) found that adult users of pornographic material reported **greater depressive symptoms, poorer quality of life, more mental- and physical-health diminished days, and lower health status** than compared to nonusers.



The Impact of Pornography on Sexual Aggression and Violence

In the chilling words of **Ted Bundy**,
serial murderer:

*"I think people need to recognize that those of us who have been influenced by ... pornographic violence are not some kind of inherent monsters. We are your sons and we are your husbands ... **Any pornography can reach out and snatch a kid out of any house today.**"*

*"I've lived in prison for a long time ... and I've met a lot of men who were motivated to commit violence just like me. **And without exception every one of them was deeply involved in pornography -- deeply influenced by an addiction.** There is no question about it. The FBI's own study shows that the most common interest among serial killers is pornography." (Dobson interview, 1989).*

Click here to view the terrifying Dr. Dobson – Ted Bundy interview:

[Ted Bundy's interview with Dr. Dobson \(youtube.com\)](#)





The Impact of Pornography on Sexual Aggression and Violence

In the words of **Jeffrey Dahmer**, serial killer who drugged and killed 17 men and boys as related in a confession to the FBI in 1992:

- *"heavy drinking, **pornography**, and masturbation"* -- admitting while in the U.S. Army he found **graphic porn** in Germany and spent thousands of dollars on it. He admitted to killing as often as once a week. (APB News, 2000).

Click here to view the "Inside the Mind of Jeffrey Dahmer: Serial Killer's Chilling Jailhouse Interview by Leslie Stahl:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iWjYsxaBjBI&ab_channel=InsideEdition

The Impact of Pornography on Sexual Aggression and Violence

► In his book, *How Pornography Harms*, Dr. Foubert (2017) notes that there are over 100 studies which show that pornography is correlated with and is the cause of a wide range of violent behaviors and about 50 studies that show a strong relationship between pornography and sexual violence (Peter et al., 2016 & Malamuth, 2000).

► Kingston et al. (2009) write that researchers have also found that pornography use specifically increases the likelihood that a man will commit acts of sexual violence against women, especially if the man in question has additional risk factors such as impulsivity and if the pornography use is frequent.

The Impact of Pornography on Sexual Aggression and Violence



Owens et al (2012) and Sun et al. (2016) reported that research findings consistently link the viewing of violent pornography to increased tendencies for **sexually aggressive behavior**



Stanley et al. (2016) reported that there is a clear association between regular viewing of online pornography and perpetration of **sexual coercion and abuse by boys.**



Stanley et al. (2016) found that both regularly watching pornography and sending or receiving sexual images or messages were associated with increased probability of being a **perpetrator of sexual coercion.**



Dr. Walther DeKeseredy (2016) reported that among divorced people he studied, 30% of the women stated their belief that their husband's pornography use was integral to the **sexual abuse they suffered in their marriage.**

The Impact of Pornography on Sexual Aggression and Violence

Dr. Mary Ann Layden found evidence of increased violent acts towards women by males who consume pornography.

If men are hostile in attitude toward women, are promiscuous sexually, and are frequent consumers of pornography, they are much more prone to be both **physically and sexually aggressive** toward women.

Pornography **teaches, gives permission, and eventually triggers** attitudes and behaviors that are destructive to both the user and to others. The damage is evident regardless of sex or of age. In her own words, “Pornography is a widely influential and very **toxic !** **teacher**” (Layden, 2010).



The Impact of Pornography on Sexual Aggression and Violence

The verdict is in!

- **Wright et al. (2016)** conducted an excellent and exhaustive meta-analysis of 22 studies from 7 different countries and concluded:

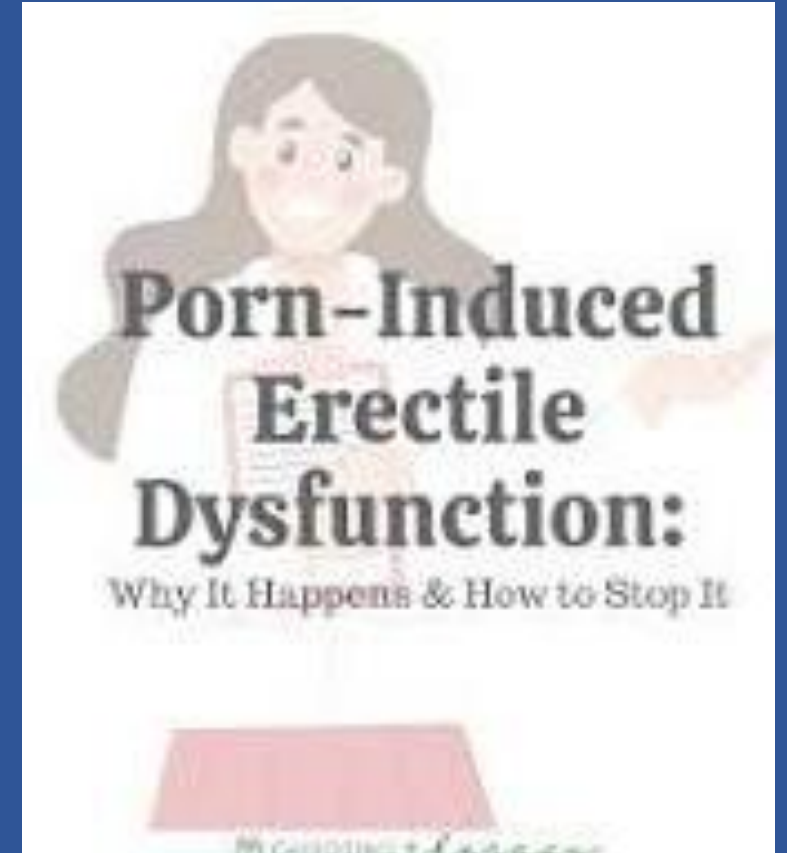
*"The accumulated data leave little doubt that, on the average, individuals who consume pornography more frequently are more likely to hold **attitudes conducive to sexual aggression** and engage in **actual acts of sexual aggression** than individuals who do not consume pornography or who consume pornography less frequently."*

Search ID: bwh

The Impact of Pornography on Sexuality

Profound sexual side effects:

- Between 1948 and 2002, the historical rates for ED in men under 40 were consistently around **2% to 3%** and did not go up very much until age 40. (de Boer et al., 2004). However, as noted by Wilson (2014), at least six studies have found **ED rates of about 14% to 33% in young men**, which constitutes a staggering **1000% increase** in just the last 15 years (Park, 2016).
- In fact, adolescents are suffering disproportionately as noted by in a Canadian study which showed that problems in sexual functioning are sadly higher in adolescent males than in adult males. In a two-year period **78.6% of males aged 16-21** reported a sexual problem during partnered sexual activity (O'Sullivan et. al., 2016):
 - Erectile dysfunction - **45%**
 - Low sexual desire - **46%**
 - Difficulty climaxing – **24%**
- These problems have led some teens to suicide.**



The Impact of Pornography on Sexuality

Scary and alarming porn fetish tastes:

- Gary Wilson (2014) writes that once upon a time, men could trust their penises to tell them everything they needed to know about their sexual preferences and orientation. However, our brains are very plastic (or able to change with experience). As such, our brains change with experience with or without our conscious participation.
- Wilson notes, that as a function of porn involvement, porn users often **move from one genre to another** and will often arrive in places that they find very disturbing and/or confusing.
- As a result, a previously defined **heterosexual boy** might ultimately find himself enjoying **homosexual pornography** and then begin to **question his sexuality**.
- Additionally, many men end up viewing child pornography as they have habituated to everything else. As has been said, "I did it all and then got bored (habituated) with it all and thus **(child porn) was the final taboo that excited me.**"



The Impact of Pornography on Sexuality

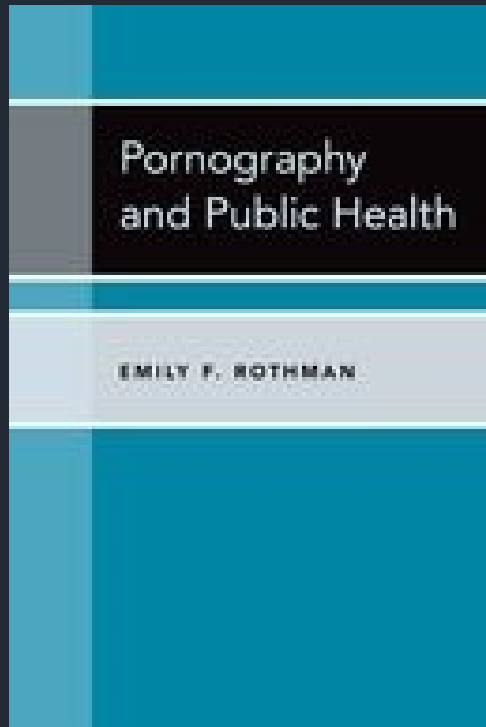
Scary and alarming porn fetish tastes - continued:

- **Downing et al. (2016)** conducted a study that found that it is now quite common to find men who view porn that is **inconsistent with their sexuality**. Specifically, they reported that **heterosexual-identified** men in the study reported viewing porn containing male same-sex behavior (20.7%) and **gay-identified men** reported viewing heterosexual behavior in porn (55%).
- **Wilson (2014)** notes that it is very sad that porn users are ignorant of how common it is to escalate; often leaving porn users in the end, feeling very anxious, demoralized, and hopeless. He adds that it can be especially distressing to escalate through **porn fetishes** that ultimately **cast doubt on one's sexual orientation**.



The Impact of Pornography on Sexuality

Pornography can promote **gender/transgender confusion** in children

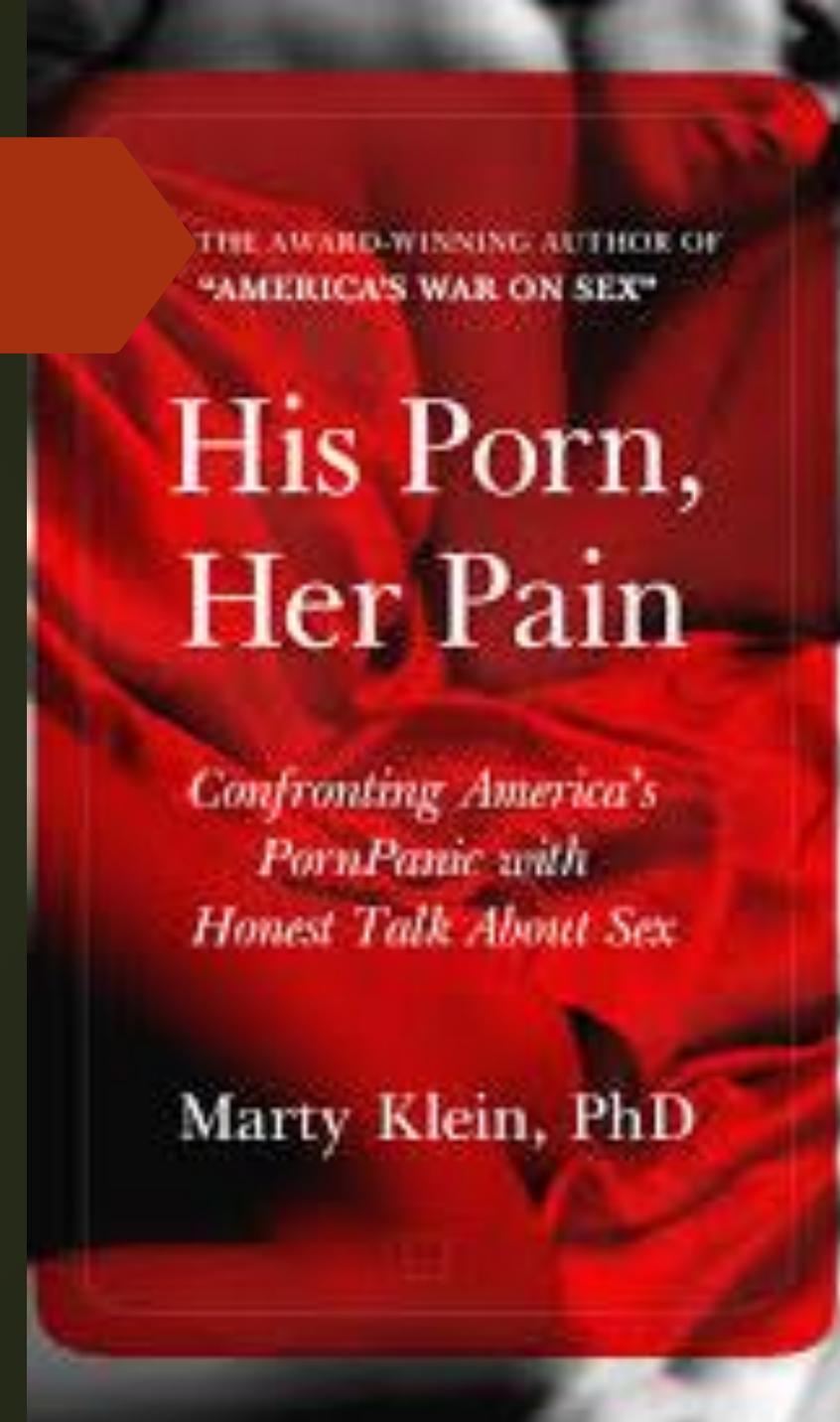


- **Distorted Gender Roles:** Pornography often exaggerates and distorts gender roles, contributing to confusion about gender identity and expectations among viewers (Rothman, 2021).
- **Influence on Sexual Identity:** Exposure to diverse and often extreme sexual content can lead to confusion about one's sexual identity and orientation, especially in young people during critical developmental periods (Rothman, 2021).
- **Emotional and Psychological Impact:** The consumption of pornography can exacerbate existing emotional vulnerabilities, leading to increased confusion and anxiety about gender identity (Rothman, 2021).
- **Porn violence against women:** The violence against women depicted in porn may trigger some girls to transition to male to escape the threat in search of safety by becoming more male-like.

The Impact of Pornography on Women and How They are Viewed - Objectification

➤ Dr. Foubert (2017) writes that the root of many acts of violence against women, to include sexual violence, lies in a process in which a person sees another person as more of an **object than a flesh-and-blood human being**. In an effort to study this process, a research team from the Netherlands investigated the relationship between adolescents viewing pornography and whether or not they ended up believing that women were more objects than real people. The results revealed that the more that **young males and females viewed porn**, the more they took on a **mindset that females indeed are objects** (Peter et al., 2007; 2009).

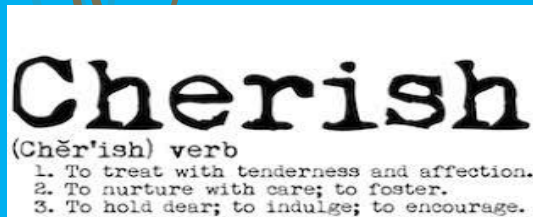
➤ In a review of previous studies on the objectification of women, Klassen and Peter (2015) noted that Internet pornography promotes gender inequality between the sexes because it treats women as sex objects, subordinates them, and depicts rape and violence against them. They conducted a content analysis of **400 popular pornographic Internet videos** from the most visited pornographic Web sites and concluded that **objectification was depicted more often for women** than for men and men were shown as dominant and women as submissive



The Impact of Pornography on Women and How They are Viewed



- Instead of a woman being seen as a lovely and beautiful human being, she is now far too often being devalued to nothing more than an object to satisfy basic animal desires that are triggered and then played out online. Men ask of their partners, and I use that term loosely, to play out their fantasies as spawned by what they have previously seen. There is little to no interest in satisfying the desires of their partners and leaving them happy and fulfilled.
- Sex is, hence, far too **dopamine-driven**, with too little oxytocin. **Oxytocin** has been called the **“love hormone”** that also acts as a powerful neurotransmitter in the brain. The body releases oxytocin during physical touch and skin-to-skin contact such as hugging, cuddling, kissing, and other sexual behaviors.
- Oxytocin brings on feelings **of calmness, security, and contentment—feelings often associated with pair bonding**. Oxytocin activates brain areas associated with pleasure and reward, likely because the body releases dopamine in coordination with oxytocin as the result of physical touch. Oxytocin also plays a role in pregnancy and nursing, and mother-infant attachment (The neurobiology of romantic love, 2018).





THE IMPACT OF PORNORGAPHY ON THE SOUL

“The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are healthy, your whole body will be full of light. ²³ But if your eyes are unhealthy, your whole body will be full of darkness.”

- Matthew 6:22-23 NIV

The impact of pornography on the soul

- **Loss of spiritual integrity:** Specifically, many spiritual and religious traditions emphasize purity of thought and action as a cornerstone of moral living. In these contexts, pornography is often seen as a violation of these principles, leading to a sense of spiritual corruption or impurity. This sense of having compromised one's moral or spiritual ideals can lead to feelings of intense guilt, shame, and a perceived and painful distance from the divine or a higher moral standard.
- **Erosion of Virtue and Self-Control:** Many spiritual traditions stress the importance of self-control, discipline, and the pursuit of virtue. Pornography addiction can be seen as a failure in self-control, which can have broader spiritual implications, and this loss of control might be viewed as a weakening of the soul's ability to resist temptation and pursue a life aligned with higher spiritual values.



The impact of pornography on the soul



- **Distortion of Human Dignity and Love:** From a spiritual perspective, human sexuality is seen by many as a sacred expression of love that affirms human dignity. Pornography, by contrast, is criticized for objectifying individuals, as noted earlier, and reducing them to mere instruments of pleasure. This objectification can be seen as a violation of the spiritual principle that views every person as having inherent worth and dignity. Regular consumption of pornography very likely desensitizes an individual to these spiritual values, leading to a degraded understanding of love and respect.
- **Impact on Spiritual Growth:** Engaging in behaviors perceived as spiritually harmful can hinder personal spiritual growth. Individuals who feel addicted to pornography often report a sense of stagnation in their spiritual lives, feeling trapped in a cycle that is at odds with their spiritual aspirations. This can lead to a feeling of disconnection from their spiritual journey and a struggle to find meaning and purpose.
- **Effect on Meditation and Prayer:** For those who engage in practices like prayer and meditation as part of their spiritual life, pornography addiction can be particularly disruptive. The intrusive thoughts and guilt associated with the addiction can become obstacles to achieving the peace, focus, and connection with the divine that these practices are meant to cultivate.



IDEOLOGICAL PATHWAY

TO THE SEXIFICATION OF CHILDREN

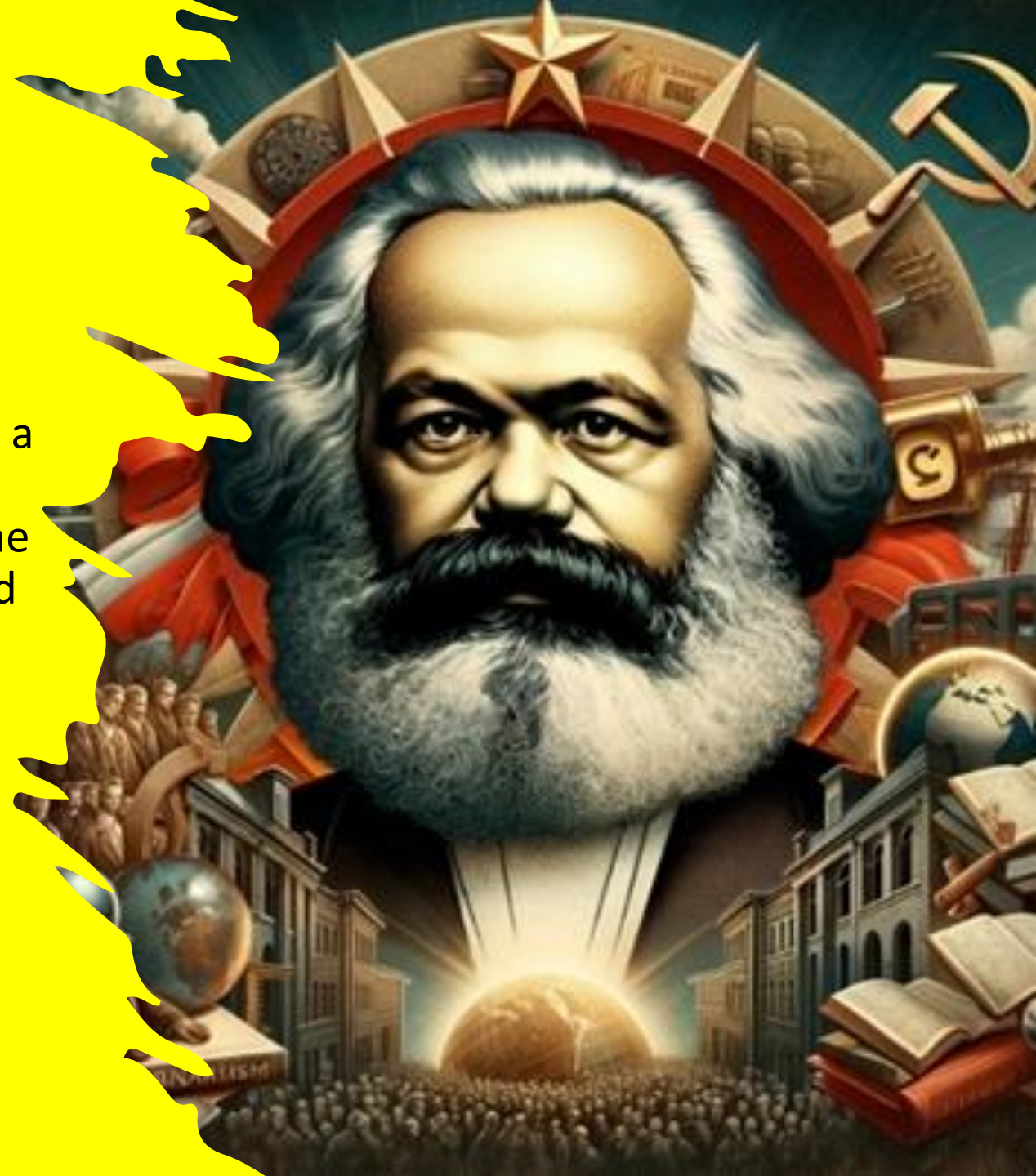
“The truth knocks on the door, and you say, ‘Go away, I’m looking for the truth,’ and so it goes away. Puzzling.”

- Robert M. Pirsig

Carl Marx and Classical Marxism

For Marx, the fundamental human problem was comprised of two things: oppression and alienation (Tinker, 2020) and oppression resulting from living in a capitalist society that was exploitative and unjust as the bourgeoisie (or ruling class/oppressor) owned the means of production which, in turn, used and abused the proletariat (working class/the oppressed) to line its own coffers. This resulted in the working class experiencing a fourfold alienation:

1. From the act of production
2. From the product made
3. From other workers
4. From his identity



Antonio Gramsci and Cultural Hegemony

Marxist devotees attempted to make sense as to why the industrial workers failed to bring revolution in Europe and America, and why only a small minority were truly radicalized.

Some of the answers were provided by the Italian Communist Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937), who died young but left an extremely influential set of writings known as the *"Prison Notebooks,"* written while he was in one of Mussolini's prisons.

Reflecting on his Catholic youth, Gramsci concluded that the issue that prevented workers from becoming communists, as Marx had predicted, was that the culture was, for the most part, Christian and held onto its Judeo-Christian values and ethics. This would always impede and stop the spread of communism.

His solution was not a frontal attack on the church, as was happening in Russia, but rather a slow takeover of church institutions and government agencies.



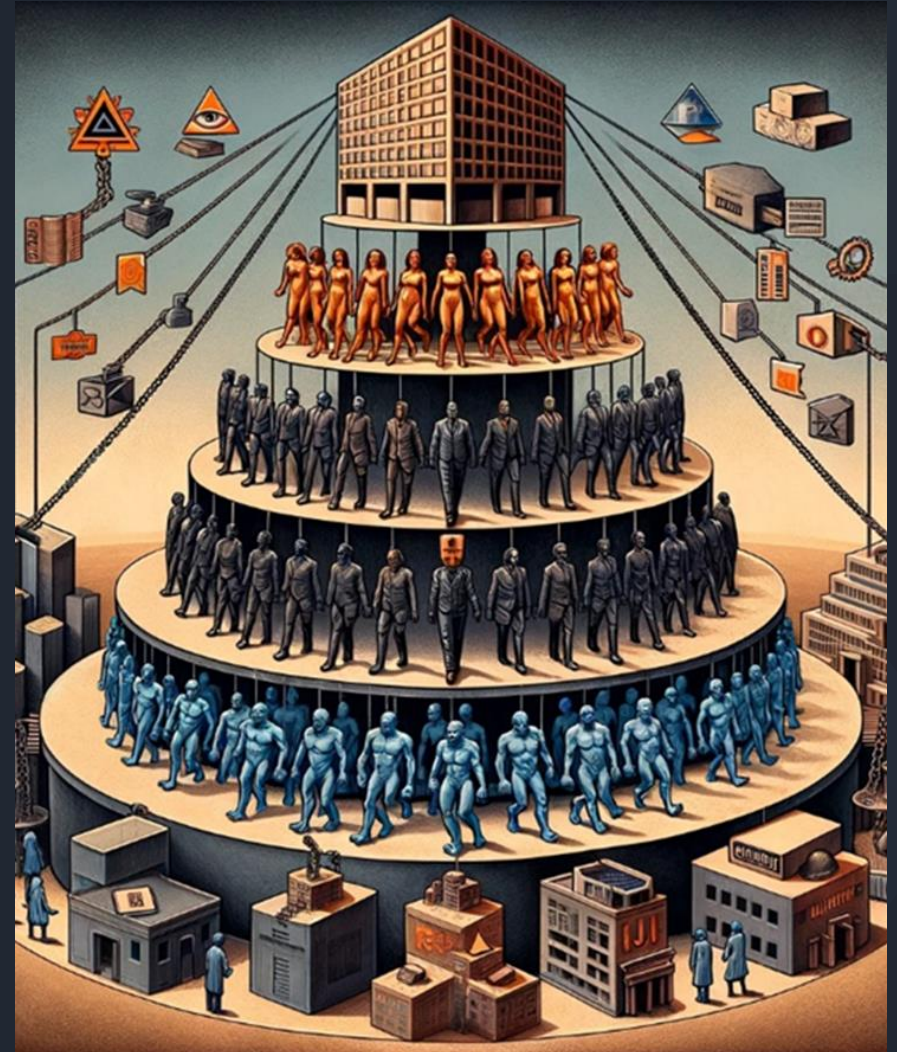
Antonio Gramsci and Cultural Hegemony, cont.

Gramsci believed **ideas** shaped economies rather than the converse.

In addition, he did not suggest a violent overthrow, as did Marx, but supported change by **capturing it through the infiltration of culture** by overtaking key culture-making institutions, such as churches, schools, media, police, the judicial system, civil services, etc.

He coined the term, **Hegemony** (from Greek Hegemon, which means ruler), which refers to the dominant class's exertion of control and influence over the people by oppressive cultural ideas and norms and advocated for the **abolition of those norms**.

This is essentially what the German student, Rudi Dutschke, of the 1960's, AKA "Red Rudi," referred to as "**The Long Walk through the Institutions.**"



The Frankfurt School

- The Frankfurt School also emerged in the early 20th century and was a group of scholars associated with the Institute for Social Research at the Goethe University Frankfurt.
- They were known for developing and contributing to critical theory. The primary goal of the Frankfurt School was to develop a comprehensive theory that could explain and **critique the social structures of capitalist societies**.
- This theory sought to identify the underlying **social, economic, and political dynamics that shape societies**.
- Some of the most prominent figures of the first generation of Critical Theorists were Max Horkheimer (1895-1973), Theodor Adorno (1903-1969), Herbert Marcuse (1898-1979), Walter Benjamin (1892-1940), Friedrich Pollock (1894-1970), Leo Lowenthal (1900-1993), and Eric Fromm (1900-1980).



The Frankfurt School

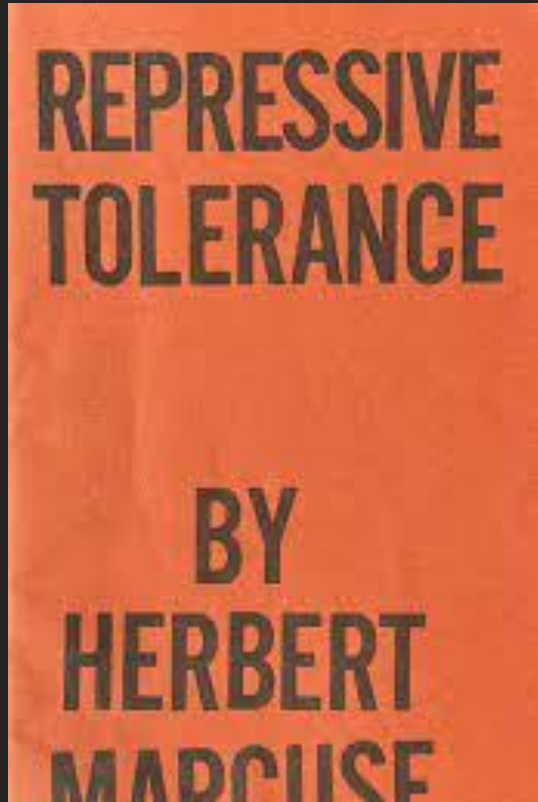
One of the key members of the Frankfurt School clan, **Herbert Marcuse**, wrote, “But society cannot be indiscriminate where the pacification of existence, where freedom and happiness themselves are at stake” (Marcuse, 1965).

“Here, certain things cannot be said, certain ideas cannot be expressed, certain policies cannot be proposed, certain behavior cannot be permitted without making tolerance an instrument for the continuation of servitude” (Marcuse, 1965).

This clearly paved a path toward **suppression of any opposing view** and should be, in itself, totally terrifying, and clearly, we find ourselves today in just such a fix.

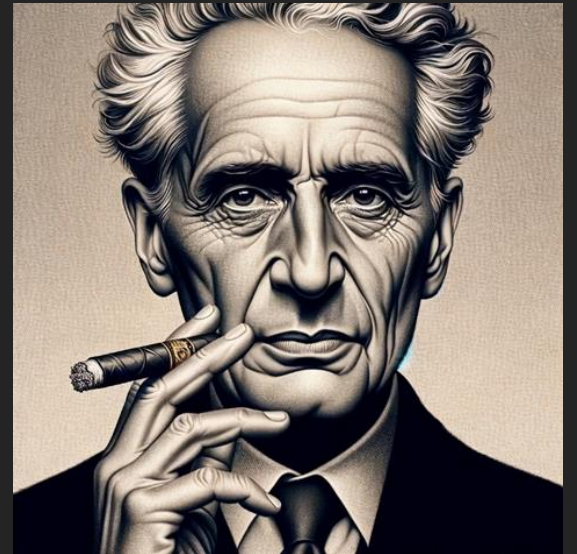


The Frankfurt School, cont.



Marcuse also helped to lay the intellectual groundwork for the Left's repression of **opposing speech** in his classic 1965 treatise, *Repressive Tolerance*.

The essential argument, according to Marcuse, is that, because the existing system is intolerant by the Left's standards, **true tolerance requires suppression of ideas and movements on the Right and acceptance only of those on the Left.** (Walsh, 2017).



— Queer Theory

Informal use of the term “**queer theory**” began in the 1990s taking from scholars, such as **Michel Foucault**, who wrote ***The History of Sexuality*** in 1976 which proposed that identity is not innate, and that sexuality is only a **social construct**.

In 1984, **Gayle Rubin** later published the influential essay *Thinking Sex: Notes for a Radical Theory of the Politics of Sexuality*, which **criticized the value system** that societies attribute to sexuality and sexual practices.



Queer Theory, cont.

Michel Foucault



- Michel Foucault was a French philosopher and historian and was both controversial and influential.
- He challenged heteronormative dominance. However, the extension of his idea that all norms are bad and freeing repressed deviant sexualities is a good thing is a bridge too far for many, including me.
- Shockingly, Foucault went on to advocate for and sign a petition to the French Parliament in 1977, arguing for the abolition of all legislation regarding the age of consent, or the effective legalization of pedophilia.



Queer Theory, cont.

Judith Butler

-
- Butler has been referred to as the “high Priestess of queer theory gibberish.” (Em, 2019).
 - “In her magnum opus of flimflam, *Gender Trouble*, Butler postulated that the incest taboo is the juridical law that is aid both to prohibit incestuous desires and to construct certain gendered subjectivities through the mechanism of compulsory identification.” **What does this gibberish mean?**
 - Butler promoted “the legitimacy and legality of public zones of sexual exchange, [intergenerational sex](#), adoption outside of marriage and **also opposed the legal restrictions against intrafamilial child sexual abuse**, (Em, 2019b).



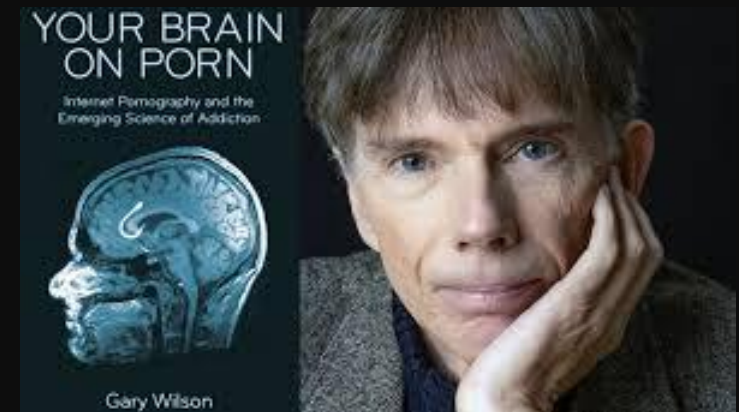
The pathway for sexification of children has been paved

1. Create a new ideology that under the cloak of making us all equal, forces us to accept that ideology as defined by the man defining that ideology, and if you refuse, you are destroyed, even killed. [That is Classical Marxism.](#)
2. Appreciate that this new way of thinking, in order to more fully take root, must change every aspect of existing culture by capturing the institutions. [That is hegemony per Antonio Gramsci.](#)
3. Disrespect and criticize every foundational cultural tradition or mores. [That is Critical Theory as promulgated by the Frankfurt School.](#)
4. Turn upside down common-sense sexual behavior and legitimize the perverse. [That is \(radical\) Queer Theory.](#)

Taking a position against sexification of children and pornography can be **dangerous**.

My good friend, co-author, and colleague **Dr. Andy Doan**, M.D., Ph.D. from Johns Hopkins and world expert on electronic media addiction with specialties in ophthalmology, aerospace medicine, neuroscience, and public health, was targeted by a porn activist (name withheld) who is a minion of Porn Hub. This person attempted to destroy his naval and medical career

Gary Wilson, who wrote the excellent book, *Your Brain on Porn*, was also targeted and emotionally destroyed by the same porn activist and shortly thereafter died of COVID. We believe the stress of this may have helped to weaken his immune system.



Some Arizona counselors are using 'sex addiction' to practice conversion therapy, critics say

A LOOKOUT investigation finds that a specific group of religious-based counselors are possibly violating their certifications and licenses

BY: JOSEPHINE JAYE MCAULIFFE/LOOKOUT - MAY 22, 2024

6:01 AM



Illustration by LOOKOUT

Jeffrey Hansen says he treats "porn addiction."

It's not a recognized diagnosis by the American Psychiatric Association—nor is any kind of sexual addiction promoted by self-described "sex addiction counselors"—but that hasn't stopped Hansen, a licensed psychologist in Arizona who works with youth, from promoting it as a way to treat people who have difficulty with sexual compulsions.

And yours truly is now in the cross-hairs of radical agenda-makers who apparently oppose addressing the pornography epidemic in children under the guise that this is some form of conversion therapy against trans-children.

Activists, be they on the far left or far right, such as Josephine, often rate high on myopic activist agenda but low on intellectual integrity.

And if you dare to disagree with them, or have a view that threatens them, they will all too often seek to destroy your career and/or your life.

Click below to read her article:

<https://azmirror.com/2024/05/22/some-arizona-counselors-are-using-sex-addiction-to-practice-conversion-therapy-critics-say/>

The Way Out

- The good news is that there is a way out if you want it bad enough and if you are willing to do the hard work.
- Let's start with what does not work. Most important is **shame**. Telling yourself or another person who is struggling with pornography addiction that you or they are a moral failure or a bad person, will not help you or them heal and, in fact, it can very often make matters far worse.
- I have seen porn addicted people in my practice who have attempted suicide by hanging and/or by handguns because they were so wracked with guilt and shame, and they tragically felt that the only escape was death.
- So be compassionate and kind to others and to yourself. You and they can heal.



Social psychologist Johnathan Haidt makes for recommendations in his book, *The Anxious Generation*, in order to protect our children. He notes that we could implement instantly today which would have dramatic and instant positive impact on improving the mental health of our youth (Haidt, 2024).



1. No Smartphones Before High School (Age 14)
2. No Social Media Before 16
3. Phone Free Schools
4. Much more childhood independence and free play

Any many would add:
Make schools porn free by keeping porn out of school libraries.

The Way Out



The Five Strategies:

- Get connected to healthy living (Hari, 2018)
- Make a U-Turn on the Superhighway (Fradd, 2017; Skinner, 2005)
- Seek online help
- Learn healthy self-regulation skills
- Accountability

Strategy One: Johann Hari's 8 Point Model for Connected Living

One: Connection to Meaningful Work

A **lack of control** and little connection between **effort and reward** are highly predictive of **depression and suicide** in the workplace (Marmot et al., 2002).

Gallup study found that twice as many people in 2011 to 2012 hated their jobs as love their jobs (Marmot et al., 2002).

Takeaway: Ensure you are connected to meaningful and fulfilling work both at the workplace and at home. For teens and many young adults, the workplace is school so attention must be given to making this a successful and meaningful endeavor.

Click here to listen to the amazing Johann Hari, one of my heroes:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=647AxVPpIGU&ab_channel=PoliticsandProse



Strategy One: Johann Hari's 8 Point Model for Connected Living

Two: Connection to Meaningful People

Pinker (2015) followed both isolated and highly connected people over nine years and found that isolated people were **two to three times more likely to die during lonely periods**.

Cacioppo (2006, 2008, 2010), a neuroscience researcher, studied the impact that loneliness has on health. He and his colleagues determined that **loneliness causes cortisol levels to go through the roof**.



Strategy One: Johann Hari's 8 Point Model for Connected Living

Two: Connection to Meaningful People – cont.

Cacioppo (2013) reported a rather shocking meta-analysis study of over 100,000 participants which found increased risks of dying early due to living with the following:

- Air pollution: 5% increased risk of dying early
- Obesity: 20% risk of dying early
- Alcoholism: 30% risk of dying early
- **Loneliness: 45% risk of dying early**

Takeaway: Ensure that you are connected with family and good friends in 3D, face-to-face relationships.



Strategy One: Johann Hari's 8 Point Model for Connected Living

Three – Connection to Meaningful Values

- Overvaluing money and possessions leads to higher scores of depression (Belk, 1983). Kasser's (2002) research specifically determined that the more **materialistic you are the more likely you are to score higher on measures of depression.**
- Takeaway: It is a powerful thing to contemplate your values and what makes you and your family unique. Knowing your values helps build a firm foundation on which to heal.



Strategy One: Johann Hari's 8 Point Model for Connected Living

Four – Connection to Childhood Trauma

As noted earlier, the Kaiser Study of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) indicated that for every category of trauma experienced as a child, he/she was dramatically more likely to be depressed as an adult (Felitti et al., 2014; Felitti, 2004).

Takeaway: Seek a competent trauma therapist to address unresolved childhood trauma less you be tempted to continue consuming pornography or another addiction to self-medicate the pain.

Strategy One: Johann Hari's 8 Point Model for Connected Living

Five – Connection to Status and Respect

Like our primate cousins, low ranking individuals show changes in the brain, specifically the pituitary and adrenal glands (Sapolsky, 1992; 2002).

As Twenge (2006) in her book *Generation Me* astutely pointed out, self-esteem is not based on air, but on mastery and real-world competence.

Takeaway: Build self-respect and confidence based on competence.





Strategy One: Johann Hari's 8 Point Model for Connected Living

Six: Connection to the Natural World

Bonobos in the wild can become sad or depressed, but there is a limit to how far they will go. In captivity, they become extremely depressed and often self-injure and/or rock compulsively (interview with Isabel Behncke cited in Hari, 2018).

“Nature Deficit Disorder” - Humans are hard-wired for a genuine nature connection (Louv, 2005).

Louv (2005) stated that many psychological problems in kids today are related to an erosion of their connection with nature and immersion into the digital world.

Exercise increases **Brain Derived Neurotropic Factor (BDNF)** which is insanely neuroprotective.



Strategy One: Johann Hari's 8 Point Model for Connected Living

Seven – Connection to a Hopeful and Secure Future:

As Native Americans were stripped of their identities, they lost their connection to the future, they became increasingly depressed, and then often resorted to alcohol which often culminated in addiction (Hari, 2018).

Takeaway: Many of us are in the same boat and have lost sight of a secure future. We need to find a way to foster competence and hope.



Strategy One: Johann Hari's 8 Point Model for Connected Living

Eight – Connection to Faith (emphasis mine):

- **Enhanced Resilience:** Dr. Lisa Miller (2021) argues that spirituality and a deep sense of connection to something greater than oneself can significantly boost resilience against stress and adversity. She provides evidence that people with a strong spiritual life tend to recover more quickly and thoroughly from life's challenges.
- **Decreased Risk of Depression:** One of the critical findings shared in the book is the protective effect of spirituality against depression. Miller's research suggests that individuals with a rich spiritual life have a **lower risk of falling into depression and/or commit suicide by fourfold**.
- **Improved Emotional Well-being:** The book also highlights that spirituality is linked to enhanced emotional well-being, including feelings of happiness, contentment, and purpose.
- **Increased Connectivity:** Miller discusses how spirituality can increase a sense of connectedness, not only with the divine or a higher power but also with the community and the world at large.
- **Support for Physical Health:** While the primary focus of "The Awakened Brain" is on mental and emotional health, Miller also touches upon the interplay between spirituality and physical health. She suggests that the mental health benefits associated with spirituality can indirectly support physical health by reducing stress and promoting healthier lifestyle choices.



Strategy Two: Make a U-Turn on the Superhighway

- **Matt Fradd (2017)** writes that there are essential elements to making a U-turn on what he calls the “superhighway” to viewing porn in any one instance.
- First, referencing **Dr. Kevin Skinner’s (2005)** excellent book, *Treating Pornography Addiction*, we must be mindful of the “**activation sequence**” or the events which he calls mile-markers that lead up to viewing porn.



Dr. Tisch Leigh, clinical psychologist and leading world expert on pornography addiction informs us of four stages of dopamine flow in the brain. This informs us that we need to shut it down early in the sequence:



1. **Dopamine Drip:** Once you even start thinking about porn, a dopamine drip starts and once started, you only have about **3 seconds to shut it down.**
2. **Dopamine Deluge:** If you don't shut this down early dopamine, starts flowing freely and you are trapped into returning to the addiction cycle
3. **Dopamine Drowning:** As you linger in this state, you become numb.
4. **Dopamine Deficit:** The consequences.
 - No motivation
 - Can't concentrate
 - Depression
 - Anxiety
 - Guilt and shame
 - Sexual Arousal Disorder (SAD)
 - Drained brain – it essentially goes into a neutral and unproductive state

Strategy Two: Make a U-Turn on the Superhighway

Mile-marker one – The trigger or stimulus:

- These are the things that initiate the activation sequence and if we can understand and appreciate these triggers, the fight against the temptation is much more likely to be won.
- **Obvious triggers** might include getting a Victoria's Secret catalogue or listening to provocative music and less obvious triggers might include being rejected or having a tough day at the office or at school.
- So, we must be aware of **the sights, sounds, and/or events that fire us up to redline RPMs**. To make that critical decision to not take the on-ramp to the superhighway,
- Fradd notes, we must turn on the **thinking brain** or prefrontal cortex or “wise mind” to take charge over the more **primitive parts of the brain**.
- One of the easiest ways to turn on the prefrontal cortex or wise mind is to say out loud or even yell and label what is happening for example: “Caution - This is a trigger!”



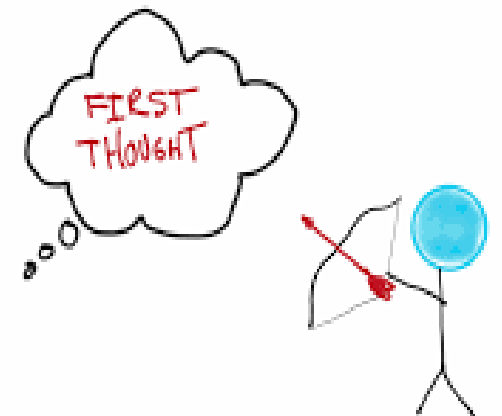
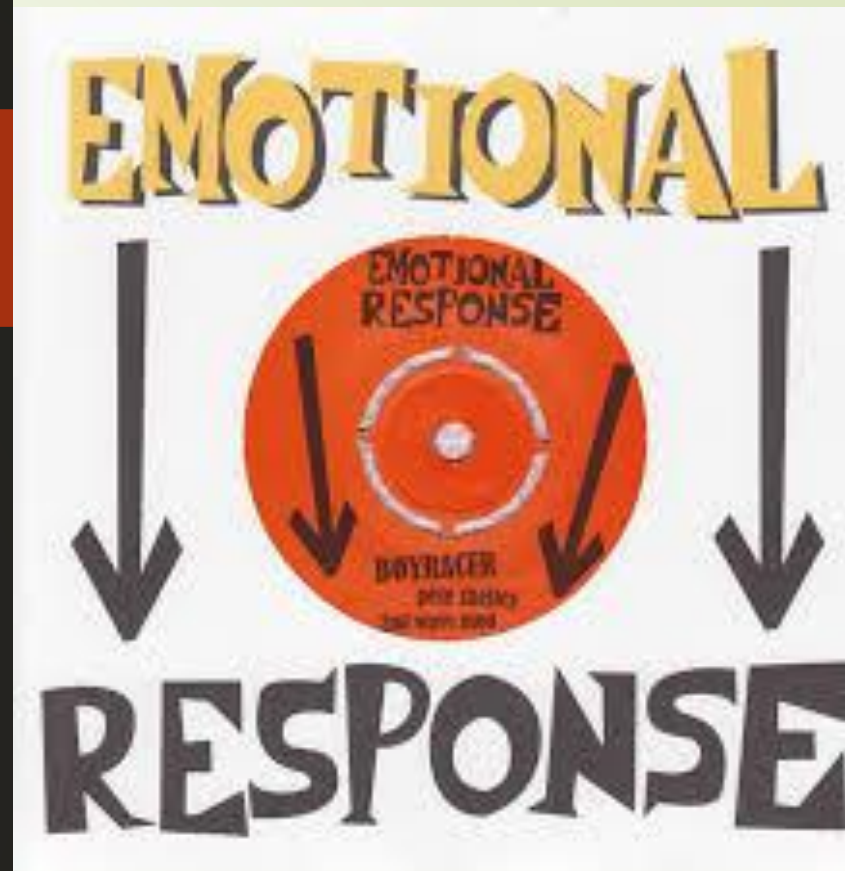
Strategy Two: Make a U-Turn on the Superhighway

➤ Mile-marker two – The emotional response:

- After the trigger, it is essential that we become aware of the **emotional response** that always follows. This could be a sense of excitement, curiosity or anticipation.
- Emotions can be very powerful and persuasive so head's up, they can hijack us faster than anything

➤ Mile-marker three – The first thought:

- At almost lightning speed and seemingly simultaneously after the emotional comes, that first thought appears which might be, "I wanna do some porn" or "nobody has to know."
- We can use our **thinking brain** to speak the truth: "I am stressed and frustrated and my typical go-to is to run to porn to make it go away."



Strategy Two: Make a U-Turn on the Superhighway

➤ Mile-marker four – The chemical release:

- As discussed earlier, **dopamine**, is a very powerful force and drives seeking behaviors, in particular. We love the feel of it more than just about anything.
- Dopamine tells us, “Remember where you got your last fix the last hundred times, and this is where you must go to get that amazing feeling again!” Those chemicals begin to be released in anticipation of the feeding fest.

➤ Mile-marker five – The body language:

- At this point, our **body begins to change** in that heart rate increases, palms become cold or sweaty, eyes dilate, there can be a certain tingling feeling in the groin, butterflies are felt in the stomach, and/or our muscles tense up.
- Once again, it is imperative that we activate our wise/thinking part of the brain to stop the progression: “My body is ramping up and I need to take evasive action to shut this down or suffer the consequences!”



STUDENT BODY LANGUAGE

IT'S WHAT YOU **DON'T SAY** THAT COUNTS!



Strategy Two: Make a U-Turn on the Superhighway

Mile-marker six – The battle:

- At this point we are in a fierce battle of **pros and cons** that bounce through our minds at rapid fire pace. This is the brain's back-up safety mechanism to throw on the emergency brakes to keep us from taking the plunge into the abyss.
- Remember how the Orbital Frontal Cortex and the Anterior Cingulate function to control the more primitive drives and/or behaviors and the more that we engage in pornography the more we degrade this protective system. **Hypofrontality** sets in.
- Whatever process wins will determine the final step – behavior.

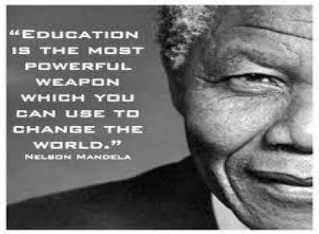
Mile-marker seven – The behavior:

- Sadly, if nothing was done during the progression in mile-markers one to seven, we will step by default to the gallows and consume porn.



Strategy Two: Make a U-Turn on the Superhighway

Educate yourself:



- We need to learn as much as we can about the impact of porn in our lives – how it damages our brains, our bodies, and our relationships. Much of this has already been covered in the previous pages of this presentation so, again, congratulations, you are on your way.
- The more we are acutely aware of this information as we fuse it into consciousness, the easier it will be to short-circuit the activation sequence.

Write down exit strategies:



- Certainly, it is one thing to take a thoughts captive that put us at risk for porn seeking but it is altogether another to know what do next. So, well before we get sucked into another activation sequence, we need to write down what we plan to do.
- Fradd (2017) recommends using strong action words such as: **"Get up," "Get out of here," "Take a walk," or "Go for a nice run."** Finally, we need to not only write them down but additionally, we need to rehearse them by **reading them out loud at least once a day**, if not more. Like in the military, overlearning in garrison saves lives in battle.
- My son who was a Marine told me that he hated the training and thought that it was an unnecessary waste of time, but once he found himself in Fallujah, Iraq in combat situations, it all made sense, and it helped to keep him alive.

Strategy Three – Seek Online Help

There are many excellent online resources. A cautionary note is that we must be careful about being online as this is the conduit for accessing porn. Research the options and find the one that best suits you and your unique needs. Some are faith-based and others, not.

No Fap (nofap.com):



This site offers a secular and comprehensive community-based pornography recovery program which helps porn struggling people connect with a very supportive community of co-strugglers who are determined to escape the bondage of compulsive sexual addictions. It is widely known in the US and internationally.

Website: <https://nofap.com/>

LifeStar (Lifestarnetwork.com):



As noted on their website, “The LifeStar Program and its Network of Therapists are dedicated to bringing hope, healing, and recovery to individuals, families, and spouses affected by unwanted compulsive sexual behaviors and the powerful grips of sex addiction.

Website: <https://lifestarnetwork.com/>

The Porn Effect (theporneffect.com):

This is a Catholic site for teens and younger adults which makes an effort to expose the reality behind what is the destructive fantasy of porn and provides a five-step plan to find freedom from it.

The Battle Plan

A Five Step Approach To Removing Pornography From Your Life

Strategy Three – Seek Online Help

Culture Reframed (culturereframed.org):



Founded by Gail Dines, the world's leading opponent against the pornography industry, this website offers extensive education about the topic as well as excellent tutorials for parents seeking to help their teens deal with media and pornography.

Website: <https://www.culturereframed.org/>

Addo Recovery (addorecovery.com):



This site offers online addiction therapy programs as well as individual online and in-person therapy. It also specializes in betrayal trauma. It is nonsectarian and offers many personal testimonies of those who have struggled

Website: <https://www.addorecovery.com/>

Real Battle Ministries (realbattle.org):



WE CARE + WE EDUCATE + WE ADVOCATE

Cofounded by Andrew Doan, MD, PhD – Medical Doctor & Neuroscientist and Julie Doan, RN – Mother & Family Advocate, **Real Battle Ministries** is a first-class, science and spiritually-based supportive website with the following mission: **Educate, Encourage, and Support** parents and children wishing to limit digital media. This site offers numerous links to scholarly articles and additional resources for treatment and support. It is the best supportive website I have reviewed.

Website: <http://www.realbattle.org/>

Strategy Three – Seek Online Help

Beggars Daughter (beggarsdaughter.com):



This website offers women, particularly Christian women, who are struggling with porn addiction very helpful resources and support.

Website: <https://beggarsdaughter.com/>

Your Brian on Pron Animated Series:



An excellent animated series exploring the Neuroscience behind Porn Addiction and how to overcome it. Based on works of Gary Wilson.

Website: <https://youtu.be/i6gk4IW1hPo>

Dr. Trish Leigh:



PORN BRAIN REWIRE gives you the knowledge, tools, and expert support to succeed in leaving porn behind for good. This comprehensive program is filled with science-based strategies, techniques, and tools so you can build a life of dignity and integrity for lasting success. Your brain rewire is an incredible, personal experience.

Website: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=csxGGuOVH6o&ab_channel=Dr.TrishLeigh

Strategy Three – Learn Healthy Self-Regulation Skills



As noted earlier, people who are addicted often live in a state of **sympathetic arousal** and they often seek pornography to quell that state, one that makes them feel as though they are in “neurological hell” within their bodies.

Although porn seeking will bring some immediate relief, in the end, this backfires and only makes that internal activation worse as previously argued. Therefore, we need to learn **healthy strategies to restore neurological peace**. Although we may already know many of these strategies, we too often don’t exercise them on a regular basis.

Mindfulness is a type of meditation which allows us to focus on being intensely aware of what we are sensing and feeling in the moment, without interpretation or judgment. Practicing mindfulness involves breathing methods, guided imagery, and other practices to relax the body and mind and help reduce stress.

The Mayo Clinic offers a brief but very helpful set of mindfulness skills which I find very helpful and encourage you to give them a try. They are briefly described below:

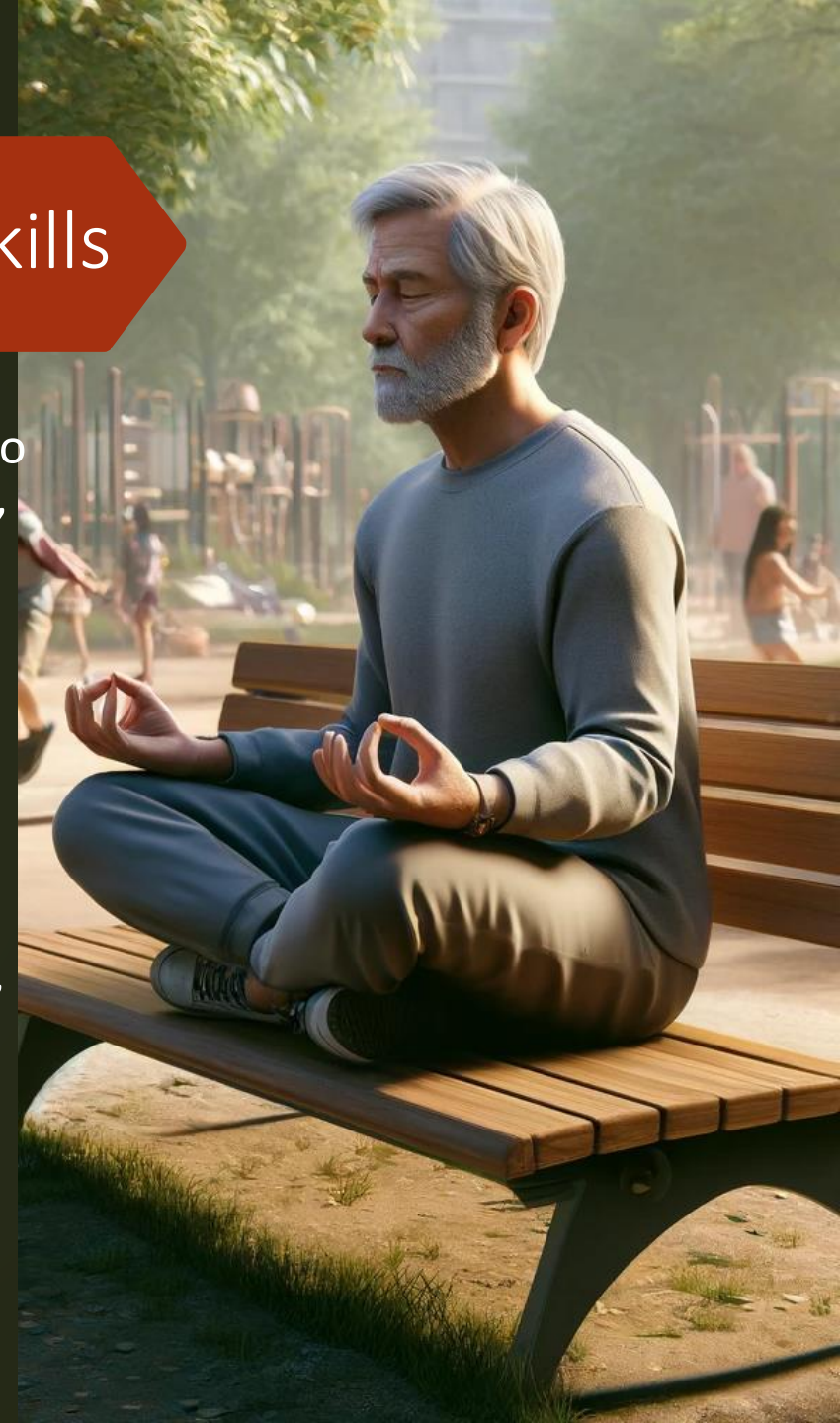
Strategy Three – Learn Healthy Self-Regulation Skills

Pay attention: It's hard to slow down and notice things in a busy world. Try to take the time to experience your environment with all your senses — touch, sound, sight, smell and taste. For example, when you eat a favorite food, take the time to smell, taste and truly enjoy it.

Live in the moment: Try to intentionally bring an open, accepting and discerning attention to everything you do. Find joy in simple pleasures.

Accept yourself: Treat yourself the way you would treat a good friend.

Focus on your breathing: When you have negative thoughts, try to sit down, take a deep breath and close your eyes. Focus on your breath as it moves in and out of your body. Sitting and breathing for even just a minute can help. Slowing down our breathing and taking in our breath more deeply into our abdomen (called abdominal breathing) are most important. This helps to promote a balance of oxygen and carbon dioxide — the brain needs both in balance to promote healthy functioning and to restore us to bring on parasympathetic calm.



Strategy Three – Learn Healthy Self-Regulation Skills

Body scan meditation: Lie on your back with your legs extended and arms at your sides, palms facing up. Focus your attention slowly and deliberately on each part of your body, in order, from toe to head or head to toe. Be aware of any sensations, emotions or thoughts associated with each part of your body.

Sitting meditation: Sit comfortably with your back straight, feet flat on the floor and hands in your lap. Breathing through your nose, focus on your breath moving in and out of your body. If physical sensations or thoughts interrupt your meditation, note the experience and then return your focus to your breath.

Walking meditation: Find a quiet place 10 to 20 feet in length and begin to walk slowly. Focus on the experience of walking, being aware of the sensations of standing and the subtle movements that keep your balance. When you reach the end of your path, turn and continue walking, maintaining awareness of your sensations (Mayo Clinic, accessed October 20, 2019).



Strategy Four – Accountability

No man is an island, entire of itself;
every man is a piece of the continent,
a part of the main.

- John Donne

As the above 17th century quote from the famous English poet John Donne suggests, we are not in this alone and so we would do well to recognize that our struggle to free ourselves from pornography cannot be won alone.

I strongly encourage you to find an accountability partner or group. I would not recommend that this individual be your love partner or spouse as this places the person you most care about in a very difficult if not untenable and/or unhealthy position.

You might also seek online accountability sources, some of which are noted earlier or groups/individuals in your community or your place of worship.



Strategy Four – Accountability

Covenant Eyes (covenanteyes.com):



Matt Fradd (2017) writes, and I agree, that this is absolutely the best filtering and accountability software on the market today. With Covenant Eyes you can use the filter component which filters out bad sites and/or the accountability component which sends out a report to your designated accountability partner. You and/or your accountability partner will receive a weekly report of which sites that were blocked, when the visit was attempted, and what search terms were used to get there.

Net Nanny (netnanny.com):



Net Nanny is a highly powerful platform for parents to control what their children are seeing and doing on the web. It doesn't just manage the time kids spend on the web. It also helps prevent cyberbullying, monitors cell phone activity, masks profanity, and blocks access to pornography. How intensely you choose to use it is up to you. Its suite of tools is accessible on most operating systems, either via web browser or mobile app

Accountable2You (accountable2you.com):



Accountable2You is Internet accountability software with an emphasis on real-time habit management. It can send out instant text alerts to your accountability partners. The software is easy to install on any number of devices. It's compatible with Apple, Windows, and Android operating systems.

Strategy Four – Accountability

If **in-home interventions** do not improve your situation, then a referral to a professional specifically experienced in media/pornography addiction is appropriate and, in more extreme cases, **residential treatment** specifically tailored to address media/pornography addiction should be considered and among the best are:

reSTART

reSTART cofounded Dr. Hilarie Cash, PhD, Chief Clinical Director and Cosette Rae

ReSTART specializes in behavioral addictions, Internet gaming disorder, video game addiction treatment, gambling, virtual reality, augmented reality, and excessive screentime and social media use. reSTART offers **in-depth residential intervention for youth 13-18** experiencing video game addiction, Internet gaming disorder, social media addiction, excessive screentime use, and often associated problems



Launch House founded by Dr. Kardaras:

Launch House offers full mental health services for adults and adolescents, including the attendant mental health and screen addiction issues that many young people face today. In addition, **residential “digital detox” services** are available for those who are overworked, overstressed, or have developed an over-dependence on screens and technology.

In Closing

- ▶ I realize that when you are a **hammer**, everything can seem like a **nail**. Being a clinical psychologist, I have watched the evolution of Internet pornography facilitate the devolution of the mind, body, and soul of many of us and cannot fail to talk about what might be uncomfortable for us and for you. The **nail in the coffin** for far too many of our men, sons, fathers, and ever-increasingly, women, daughters, and mothers is pornography.
- ▶ It is the elephant in the room and its invasion must not be ignored. I urge you to save your own mind, body, and soul or, if you are not afflicted with this plague, please reach out and help to save the mind, body, and soul of another. **Together and connected, we can do this!**
- ▶ Should you have any feedback, questions or concerns, please feel free to reach out to me via email at Jeffrey.hansenphd@comcast.net or visit my website: <https://www.jeffreyhansenphd.com/>.

