

Brief Submitted to the Standing Committee on Health Parliament of Canada Regarding M-47

Submitted by Clay Olsen , Founder & CEO, Fight the New Drug

My name is Clay Olsen and I am the founder and CEO of an organization called Fight the New Drug. We are dedicated to raising awareness among teens and young adults on the harms of pornography using only science, facts, and personal accounts. We are **not** a religious or legislative focused organization. Since our inception in 2010, well over 1 million youth from around the world have joined our movement including a large body in Canada. Due to our expansive reach we have had 10's of thousands of messages come to us telling their story of how pornography negatively impacted their life. These messages and stories come from youth unsolicited from their parents or anyone else in their life and some have come from youth as 8 years old.

In our travels we have seen first hand just how much pornography is impacting our youth as reflected in the stories below from real teens in Canada.

"I have been a pornography user for many years, and I have seen not only a change in my tastes but also a sharp downward slope in desire for real sexual experiences. I learned about sex from stumbling upon porn when I was 9 and have been conditioned to see sex as nothing but physical; I have never associated sex with emotional intimacy and I feel that is beginning to affect my relationships. I would be so grateful for the ability to cut porn out of my life and focus on real people and real emotional experiences."

"I have struggled with pornography for the majority of my adolescence. As a girl, it was something that was always talked about as a "guys' problem" growing up. I felt like I was the only girl who struggled with this, and it led me to guilt and isolation. A couple of years ago, I managed to break the habit and it felt wonderful. I told some people about my experiences and hoped to get the word out on female pornography use and how much of an unknown issue it is. However, several months ago, I slipped back into my old ways. I feel like a hypocrite. I keep telling myself that it's not that bad because I don't consume porn as often as I did back in the day, but I know full well that it is eating up my spirit. I know I need to talk to a trusted friend about this, but I'm afraid and ashamed right now. I thought this chapter of my life was behind me, but it looks like the battle is far from over."

"I grew up very sheltered in a very strict household, and was introduced to porn by a friend at age 10. I didn't know what sex was, and the topic was off limits in my house, so porn was my informal sex education. As I entered middle school my only goal was to get a girlfriend and start acting out what I was seeing in porn videos. Even though I had many girlfriends I never experienced true intimacy, and no girl could ever fulfill the fantasies I was looking for. I never realized how serious my porn addiction was until I started treating girls badly and only viewing them as sex objects."

"Hello, my name is _____ and I'm 14 years old, I have been addicted to porn for the past eight years. I have always thought porn was just something everyone watches, I

always thought I could just quit when I wanted to, but that's not the case. Three years ago I realized that I was addicted, I became angry and irritated when I couldn't watch porn. So I started to try many different ways to quit, but I have failed. I am only 14 years old, I have lots of my life left to live. I really don't want porn to be in my life another day. I don't want to have to rely on porn to make me sane, when I don't watch porn I feel incomplete, I wan't to feel complete without the need to watch porn. I don't want to look at girls my age like there objects but right now it seems like I can't."

"I have been struggling with porn addiction pretty much since I can remember. However, I only found out about it until 2 years ago when I noticed my sexual pleasure response and libido was generally numbed, but fired up with porn (I was 16 at the time). After doing some research I quickly came to the conclusion it was pornography that had, over the 8 years of watching porn, changed my brain and rewired my sexual tastes to porn rather than real life interactions. I am at a point where I make it to 15 days and relapse. Even though 15 days is absolutely not even near being free of porn, I still made some progress, so I am very hopeful."

"This addiction really needs to stop. Every relapse is another period of depression and anxiety. Whenever I make it to a week without porn, I feel like I'm on top of the world: I feel like dating girls, become very motivated for school, and experience a very joyful life. But porn is always lurking around the corner, and one relapse means 3 days of depression and trying to get myself back on track with all the pain and anxiety that comes with it."

"This addiction causes me to feel ways about my girlfriend that I really don't. I love my girlfriend to death and my addiction is causing me to feel false anger and unnecessary frustration towards her. I feel that my addiction is causing me to slowly lose my girlfriend. It is ruining my relationship and the rest of my life as well. I have tried many times to overcome this addiction and I have fell back into temptation time and time again. Porn addiction is like a cancer. It poisons everything."

"I feel like I've becoming desensitized and that porn slowly and subtly chips away at you. Porn has taught me that the girl I'm with has to be a certain standard. It has made me judge the living daylights out of every inch of a girl. The attraction I have to the girl I love has been so terribly compromised and every other girl that I can't have becomes so much more attractive. There is a automatic lustful, selfish rehearsal that echoes through my head when I see a girl that I want - 'something' that I want. See that's the thing, the identify and special individuality no longer exists when you look at a women that way. You are taking something from her that's not yours. You are objectifying her. That's what I try now to strive to flee from, but my habits and routines wear me down."

"In 2012, I began dating a boy two years my senior and at that time, I felt like I had to keep up with him sexually. I started searching online for information about oral sex, masturbation, and kissing. I read online fantasy and fan-fiction, watching YouTube videos, and looking for pornography as if they were instructional videos, but then I started realizing the feelings I could give myself if I combined masturbation and fantasy with the porn."

“The thought that something so socially acceptable is having such a negative impact on my life makes me feel uneasy, if there is a way to remedy this addiction and the byproduct being only beneficial for me i'm all for it.”

“I am a teenage girl in a society that makes it seem as if sexual struggles are exclusively a male struggle. For years I believed I was dirty and perverted because I was addicted to something that no one else around me seemed to struggle with. I spent countless nights hating myself, ashamed that I could not muster the discipline to be better. I have fought my addiction to pornography for years without success, and I need help. I want out of the dark pit that I keep digging for myself, and this program might be my last hope.”

“I am homeschooled, trying to get my diploma. Porn has made me numb to all relationships. I feel if my parents died this very moment I doubt I would mourn their death. I also struggle severely with connecting with people. I have strong feelings for a coworker of mine, but I am not able to connect with her. It makes me very depressed at times. I'm close to tears. Please help.”

*Hundreds more of these accounts are available upon request.

As you can see from this small sample of emails to our organization, pornography is having a profound impact on youth unlike any other time in our history. With unprecedented access to material that is increasingly more extreme and in many cases violent, youth are developing a warped sense of sexuality.