

Sexual & Reproductive Health Australia's (SRHA) Recommendations for Pornography Education

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Background/Purpose:

The advent of the digital age has increased the accessibility and consumption of pornography, with a growing number of adults and young people now accessing pornographic material (Lewczuck, Wojcik and Gola, 2021).

SRHA recognises that pornography can play an important and positive role for some people in exploring and/or expressing their sexuality. SRHA also acknowledges the potentially harmful impacts of pornography when combined with other influential factors. SRHA believes that education, advocacy, and policy development are critical in empowering individuals to make informed decisions about pornography and mitigate any potential harm.

Approach:

SRHA recommends:

1. Increase access to age and developmentally appropriate Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) inclusive of pornography literacy for children, young people, parents, and carers.
2. Increase training and development on CSE inclusive of pornography literacy to professionals, parents, carers, and community service providers.
3. Promote ongoing research into the potential impacts of pornography on individuals and society to inform evidence-based policies and educational content.
4. An ongoing commitment to funding for education, training, and research in this area.

Outcomes/Impact:

This approach has the potential to increase the learning outcomes of young people when it comes to the comprehensive nature of sexuality education. This approach would work as a preventative measure for Image-Based Abuse, or non-consensual sexual content online. It would also increase the digital literacy of young people, parents, carers, professionals, and community service providers.

Innovation and Significance:

Australia does not currently have a national approach to education around sexual content online, including pornography. As the significance of the online world increases for young people and their relationships, the need for this to form part of CSE increases. A nationally accepted approach could be used as the framework for localised state and territory-based curriculums, as well as informing international approaches.

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