

# Seven Levels of Pornography Addiction

Adapted from:

Skinner, K. B. (2005). *Treating pornography addiction: The essential tools for recovery*. Provo, UT: GrowthClimate, Inc.

## Level 1:

- Individuals who have recently been exposed to pornography, or they only look at pornography once or twice a year.
- These individuals have very limited exposure to pornography.
- Thoughts and everyday actions are not focused on pornography.

## Level 2:

- This level does not indicate an addiction.
- Viewing pornography is not a compulsive act, nor has it created a lot of problems.
- The desire to view does not dominate day-in and day-out thinking.
- Those at this level have recently had an increase in exposure to pornography and are questioning their growing curiosity.

## Level 3:

- On the borderline between a growing problem and a compulsive behavior – the first sign of addiction.
- Individual is looking at pornography about once a month, and then has persisted for a while.
- There are attempts to restrain self from more exposure, but they give in.
- Some at this level don't consider their involvement to be a problem – they feel like they can manage their behaviors on their own.
- Further involvement is likely to become compulsive in nature.
- Usually have been exposed to stronger forms of pornography.
- Fantasizing is also part of the clinical picture.
- At this level the individual can quickly escalate into higher levels of involvement.
- In general, these individuals have recently had an increase in exposure to pornography and are starting to think more and more about pornography and sexual things.

#### Level 4:

- Pornography involvement is likely impacting more and more aspects of the person's life.
- Consequences of behaviors are likely influencing others and other activities.
- Pornography is viewed a few times each month and the content is more "hard-core".
- Typically these individuals are viewing movies or downloading clips from the Internet.
- Fantasizing has increased.
- Individual spends time fighting off strong urges or desires to view pornography – withdrawal symptoms increase (restlessness, irritability, insomnia).
- Have been fighting pornography for many years.
- Starting to feel it is useless to try and stop.
- The risk for moving to the next level is very high.

#### Level 5:

- Pornography impacts day-to-day living.
- Pornography is viewed three to five times a week.
- Pornography is limiting personal growth and development, and may be resulting in some personal losses.
- Exposure is to stronger forms of pornography.
- Fantasies involve a significant amount of time.
- Withdrawal symptoms are much more intense.

#### Level 6:

- Pornography begins to dominate a person's life.
- Pornography is viewed virtually daily.
- Pornography has become a compulsive addiction.
- Individuals are likely to feel out of control.
- Pornography has filtered its way into other areas of life.
- The individual lies and covers up his activities.
- The individual has created a stash of pornographic images.
- Significant amounts of money are spent on pornography.
- It is common for individuals at this level to have been caught and feel negative consequences.

- Feelings of hopelessness exacerbate the problem and create further sadness and depression, leading to more viewing.
- These individuals are likely to have lost something in their life due to their involvement with pornography.

Level 7:

- Viewing pornography and sexually acting out are almost daily occurrences.
- The individual has a feeling of powerlessness and hopelessness.
- Each day involves finding and viewing pornography that is hardcore (violence, rape, incest, bestiality)
- Most are involved in acting out their sexual fantasies
- Attempts to limit/curtail viewing have found it to be virtually impossible – many have lost their resolve to quit.
- Pornography has hindered virtually all areas of the person's life.
- Lying is a frequent behavior, aimed at covering up time spent on pornography and acting out.
- If caught, the person makes efforts to minimize because of the potential consequences that are far reaching and intimidating.