

Uncovering RSE and Exposing Harms

Porn Handout

Website: <https://www.brook.org.uk/resources/>

The document can only be downloaded by entering name and e-mail.

Aims: “Brook provides free resources which can be used to supplement relationship and sex education (RSE) lessons.”¹

Age/Audience: Included as part of Brook’s free RSE supplementary resources.² Note the age-related warning included, stating that it is illegal to purchase porn under the age of 18.³

Production: Brook (charity).

Year of Publication: undated but current.

Main concerns & highlights:

- “Watching porn alone, in a private place can be a very healthy part of someone’s sex life and self-discovery and is nothing to be ashamed of.”⁴ (Note the caveats, see: “What is Illegal Porn?”)
- “Porn and the Law: In the UK, watching porn when you’re under 18 isn’t against the law, but it is illegal to buy until you turn 18.”⁵
- “As long as you remember that porn is not real, it can help you to explore fantasies on your own first, before trying them with a partner.”⁶
- “Did you know? If you watch porn to masturbate, then you could try masturbating without porn too! This way you can fully focus on yourself and what feels good without any distraction.”⁷
- “Am I watching too much porn?” Clear implication in this section is watching the “right amount” of porn is healthy & okay. Green light given: “There is no set rule with how much is too much, everyone is different.”⁸
- Illegal porn includes:
“Acts that are likely to cause serious injury to a person’s anus, breasts or genitals.”⁹

The Handout ignores some urgent questions. What about the risk of moderate or serious injury done by “non-violent” or “consenting” anal sex, as depicted in porn? This is typically aggressive or performed by more than one man (“double penetration”). It is presented as fully consenting. While porn studio producers presumably satisfy the laws of consent, the overriding narrative they usually peddle is that women are sensuous objects, without human agency, designed exclusively for male sexual entitlement. It is a scandal and major

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safeguarding failure that Brook, a registered charity with access to schools, is promoting such pernicious and corrupt ideas to children. Children can't and shouldn't be expected to make the "right" judgment call about managing the risks of physical injury caused by anal sex or any other type of sex.

Another question is why is Brook only citing concerns about acts "likely to cause serious injury to a person's anus", when *all* acts of anal sex carry serious risk of injury to the anus, especially when performed on a regular basis.

Anal sex is widely known to more easily enable the transmission of STIs and cause anal cancer.¹⁰ Silence on these medical facts is tantamount to dereliction of duty.

Schools, in their role of *loco parentis*, should be avoiding resources claiming to provide sexual health education, if they promote messages harmful to health, and foster attitudes that demean women. Promoting porn to children as "positive" is an attack on women and will inevitably corrupt the minds and hearts of boys, in their perceptions of women, sex and relationships.

References

¹ See this statement at the head of the page: <https://www.brook.org.uk/resources/> (Accessed 21 September 2020).

² Ibid.

³ p. 1.

⁴ p. 1.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ p. 2.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ See p. 1, yellow section.

¹⁰ According to the US Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), anal sex "carries the highest risk of transmitting HIV if either partner is HIV-positive." For male and female risks of contracting HIV, the CDC states: "The vast majority of men who get HIV get it through anal sex. However, anal sex is also one of the ways women can get HIV." The receptive partner in anal sex is at the most risk of HIV: "Receptive anal sex is much riskier for getting HIV. The bottom partner is 13 times more likely to get infected than the top...Using condoms or medicines to protect against transmission can decrease this risk." Apart from HIV, "a person can get other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) like chlamydia and gonorrhoea from anal sex without condoms. Even if a condom is used, some STDs can still be transmitted through skin-to-skin contact (like syphilis or herpes). One can also get hepatitis A, B, and C; parasites like *Giardia* and intestinal amoebas; and bacteria like *Shigella*, *Salmonella*, *Campylobacter*, and *E. coli* from anal sex without a condom because they're transmitted through feces." <https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/risk/ analsex.html> (Accessed 21 September 2020).

According to the American Cancer Society, "Receptive anal sex also increases the risk of anal

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cancer in both men and women. Because of this, men who have sex with men have a high risk of this cancer.” <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/anal-cancer/causes-risks-prevention/risk-factors.html> (Accessed 21 September 2020).

The NHS advises that “Penetrative anal sex has a higher risk of spreading STIs than many other types of sexual activity.” It explains: “This is because the lining of the anus is thin and can be easily damaged, which makes it more vulnerable to infection.” The STIs listed by the NHS that can be passed on through anal sex are: chlamydia, genital herpes, genital warts, gonorrhoea, hepatitis B, HIV and syphilis. <https://www.nhs.uk/common-health-questions/sexual-health/does-anal-sex-have-any-health-risks/> (Accessed 21 September 2020)

The NHS further states that: “Some infections caused by bacteria or viruses can be passed on through oral-anal sex, such as hepatitis or E. coli.” It is explained that: “It’s also possible to pass on an STI by inserting a finger into someone’s anus.” <https://www.nhs.uk/common-health-questions/sexual-health/does-anal-sex-have-any-health-risks/> (Accessed 21 September 2020)