

ASSESSING PORNOGRAPHY ADDICTION RECOVERY NEEDS



addorecovery.com

██████████@addorecovery.com

801 ██████████

Introduction

In our experience in treating pornography and sexual addiction, it has been a great benefit to see and understand that clients are at different levels of struggle. Understanding this makes it easier to understand their needs and assist them with the best treatment protocol. Many of my clients have sought help when they were compulsively acting out (levels 5–7). While in this level of involvement they are almost always thinking about pornography and their level of involvement is extremely high. When clients seek help in the early stages of involvement in pornography (levels 1–4), it is generally because what they are seeing and experiencing is starting to concern them. In this stage, they are concerned about where their behavior is headed if they do not course correct. This personal awareness is a contributor to why they are at lower levels of pornography addiction.

The Addo PAA and this booklet is designed to help you understand each congregation member's needs and level of involvement. Assisting you with your decision-making regarding their needs. As you review each member's level of pornography addiction and involvement through the Addo PAA, you can see the progressive nature. Each level has unique characteristics requiring unique recovery approaches. The jump from one level to the next is based on the increase in frequency and diversity of content of finding and viewing pornography. It is also based on fantasizing, feelings of being out of control, and an increase in risk and potentially negative consequences. In assessing the needs of your members here are some questions we encourage you to consider:

- What is the highest level of pornography involvement in which your congregation member has been engaged in the last year?
- Which level of involvement most accurately describes their behaviors?
- When they are at higher levels, what is happening in their life? (For example, what is happening in their relationships, family, job, etc.)
- How have they moved from a higher level to a lower level of involvement?

With a better understanding of your congregation member's level of involvement, you can improve your determination of what steps they need to take. When given proper steps, their recovery will dramatically improve. To assist you in your search for what to do, included in this booklet will be recommendations and suggestions based off of research and experience. However, we understand that you understand your members best and will provide the best judgment for their needs. Again, these are suggestions to empower you to better decisionmaking.

If you have any further questions or would like additional insight, please let us know. We are here to serve you and your congregation. Feel free to reach out to us anytime and for any reason.

Warmly,

Dr. Kevin Skinner

Clinical Director, Addo Recovery

██████████@addorecovery.com

Office: (801) ██████████

CHAPTER ONE

The Human Response

A common human response when doing something wrong is to minimize the extent of the problem. Therefore, most addicts deceive themselves into thinking their behavior is not as bad as it really is. This lesson was best illustrated to me by one of our clients. She came to our office and declared that her husband was having an affair. She started by discussing her husband's involvement with pornography. She had been trying for years to get him to address the issue. She dragged him to two therapists. Both were satisfied that pornography wasn't the problem when her husband openly admitted that he looked at pornography every few months, but wasn't involved anymore. They didn't ask further questions when he admitted to looking at it. They were satisfied that if he was only looking at it every few months it wasn't a problem.

By the time she came to our office her husband had been lying to her for many years. In addition to his pornography involvement he had been having affairs and was visiting topless bars. Pornography was the only manifestation of his more deeply seeded sexual addiction, but that wasn't explored in therapy; he had clearly minimized the extent of his problem. We have often wondered if the previous therapists had acknowledged his wife's concern and attempted to assess an addiction to pornography or other sexual behaviors if the outcome would have been different. Perhaps he wasn't ready or willing to honestly deal with his behaviors, but had a thorough assessment been done, what would they have learned and how would that have changed their approach to therapy?

To properly begin the recovery process it is critical for your congregation member to engage in an honest self-evaluation. Through this evaluation, they will be given a chance to look at their own level of pornography involvement. It has been our experience that a deep and honest response and self-evaluation is where real healing takes place. Dr. David Viscott's statement, "If you lived honestly, your life would heal itself,"¹ is something to live by if they want to begin the recovery process. Since it is a common behavior to minimize negative actions or to discount the impact of misbehaviors and how they affect others, the focus of the following section is to help gain awareness into your member's involvement with pornography and its effects.

CHAPTER TWO

Key Areas for Assessing a Pornography Addiction

In order to assess pornography addiction we must first define addiction. The word addiction is a term used to describe an uncontrollable compulsion to repeat a behavior regardless of its negative consequences. Pornography addiction is the compulsive attempt(s) to meet legitimate emotional needs through viewing pornography and seeking sexual gratification, generally through masturbation. There are many behaviors that can lead to a pattern of actions that most professionals recognize as addiction. For example, some of the common signs include, but are not limited to, craving for more of the behavior, increased physiological tolerance to exposure, and withdrawal symptoms in the absence of the stimulus. These are three common signs of addiction. A challenge to assessing pornography addiction arises because most addiction assessment tools have been adapted from the criteria of other addictive behaviors. Many of the tools for assessing sexually related addictions are relatively new. For example, the criteria for assessing a sexual addiction is less than ten years old and is still not part of the diagnostic manual for mental health professionals. After reviewing many of the lists that assess addiction, and after identifying the key areas that make up an addiction, I believe Dr. Patrick Carnes's list is very useful. I have adapted the list below from the criteria he outlined for a sexual addiction.

CRITERIA FOR PORNOGRAPHY ADDICTION

- Recurrent failure to resist impulses to view pornography
- More extensive/longer viewing of pornography than intended
- Ongoing, but unsuccessful, efforts to stop, reduce, or control behavior
- Inordinate amount of time spent obtaining pornography, viewing pornography, and/or being sexual—either through masturbation, or with another person or object, or recovering from sexual experiences
- Feeling preoccupied with fantasy, sexualized thoughts, and/or preparatory activities
- Viewing pornography takes significant time away from obligations: occupational, academic, domestic, or social
- Continuation of behavior despite consequences
- Tolerance—more frequent or intense pornography is needed over time to obtain the desired result
- Deliberately limiting social, occupational, or recreational activities in order to keep time open for finding and viewing pornography

- Distress, restlessness, or irritability if unable to view pornography (withdrawal)

- a) Dizziness
- b) Body aches
- c) Headaches
- d) Sleeplessness
- e) Restlessness
- f) Anxiety
- g) Mood swings
- h) Depression

The criteria listed above are the most common signs to look for in assessing a pornography addiction. If pornography addiction behaviors parallel sexual addiction, then a minimum of three of the above ten are needed for a pornography addiction to be considered present. Dr. Carnes has found that most sex addicts have five signs, while over 50 percent have seven.

Utilizing these criteria and my personal clinical experience we have developed the "Assessing Pornography Addiction" test. This test evaluates an individual's personal level of involvement in pornography and explores seven separate and unique levels of involvement or addiction to pornography. The seven levels of involvement and the criteria used to assess this will be discussed below.

THE ADDICTION CONTINUUM—7 LEVELS OF PORNOGRAPHY ADDICTION

I believe it is much easier to view pornography involvement and addiction on a continuum rather than proclaiming a person addicted or not addicted. Human behavior generally vacillates in and out of addictive behaviors. When identifying an addiction there are some defining characteristics. First, it is a compulsive behavior or it includes a loss of control. Second, negative consequences are associated with having an addiction. Even with these definitions, we seldom find that a person stays static in his involvement with addictive behaviors. It is more common to see a person's commitment and desire to stop viewing pornography wax and wane with time and circumstances.

For example, some individuals will binge for days or in

each of the seven levels of pornography addiction there are common behaviors that distinguish each level from the others. The most significant differences in the levels can be found in the consequences of the behaviors: the compulsivity, the frequency and intensity of the behavior, and the beliefs an individual forms about self. In evaluation it is helpful to understand that levels change on a regular basis. When an individual sincerely tries to limit involvement, their level of involvement will decrease. When the desire for change and feelings of hope dissipate, they will find their involvement increases toward the higher levels. Below is a continuum that illustrates the seven levels. You will also find a short introduction to each level.



LEVEL 1

Level one pornography participation is the mildest form of involvement with pornography a person can have. Generally, those at level one have just recently been exposed to pornography or they only look at pornography once or twice a year. Relatively speaking, these individuals have very limited exposure to pornography. They can count the number of times they have seen nudity on one hand. Their thoughts and everyday actions are not focused on pornography. If they view pornography, it is a random act or something that happens by accident. While their exposure to pornography may be limited, they still have to watch carefully not to let their initial exposure increase into a more consistent viewing of pornography.

Level 1 Recommendations

Based on the responses, there is not an addiction to pornography or other sexual misbehaviors. At this point, your ward member may have been more curious about pornography and the feelings associated with it. Due to the limited exposure, on a clinical level we recommend:

- A discussion about how increased exposure could become a problem.

- A discussion around the last time your member viewed pornography, the reasons why they chose to look, and the situations and locations where it happened.
- A plan of things your member can do other than view pornography when they feel like viewing it.
- A list of two or three people they can contact when the urge to look at pornography is strong.
- A discussion around being productive. Generally speaking, people with limited exposure to pornography are likely to give in when they are bored, tired, lonely, or sad. If you can, create a positive alternate behavior that you will do when the thought of pornography comes to mind.

LEVEL 2

Level two pornography involvement does not indicate that a person has an addiction. At this point, viewing pornography is not a compulsive act nor has it created a lot of problems. The desire to view pornography does not dominate day-in and day-out thinking. Generally speaking, those who score at this level have recently had an increase in exposure to pornography and are questioning the growing curiosity they feel inside.

At level two some pornographic magazines or pornographic Internet sites have been viewed. Episodes of involvement are a few times each year, no more than six. Fantasies are very minimal if at all. The challenge at this level is that there is a growing curiosity. The time spent thinking about or viewing pornography is still relatively limited, but the growing interest can escalate quickly. This is especially true if recent behaviors make a person want more and more exposure.

Level 2 Recommendations

Based upon your responses, your desire to seek help at this point is a good sign. Our experience has been that individuals who seek help before they have escalated into more intense viewing of pornography are more successful in treatment. With the right tools and knowledge you can succeed in getting pornography out of your life.

Due to your viewing pornography every few months, on a clinical level we recommend the following actions:

- A discussion about how increased exposure could become a problem.
- A discussion around the last time your member viewed pornography, the reasons why they chose to look, and the situations and locations where it happened.
- A plan of things your member can do other than view pornography when they feel like viewing it.
- A list of two or three people they can contact when the urge to look at pornography is strong.
- A discussion around being productive. Generally speaking, people with limited exposure to pornography are likely to give in when they are bored, tired, lonely, or sad. If you can, create a positive alternate behavior that you will do when the thought of pornography comes to mind.

LEVEL 3

Level three pornography involvement is on the borderline between a growing problem and a compulsive behavior—a sign of addiction. Individuals involved at level three are likely looking at pornography about once a month and this has probably been going on for a while. Those who are at this level try to restrain themselves from more exposure, but about once a month it becomes unbearable and they give in. Once they do give in it is likely they will binge for a day or two before attempting to stop again.

There are some individuals at this level who don't consider their involvement to be a problem. They feel like they can manage their behaviors on their own, and in most instances they try to monitor their behavior and limit their exposure. These individuals are at a crossroads, as further involvement is more likely to become compulsive in nature. Generally speaking, individuals at level three have to put extra effort into quitting entirely because they have been exposed to stronger forms of pornography (R-rated

videos, nude pictures, sexual movies, etc.).

Fantasizing is also a part of the battle at level three. As their mind tries to avoid thinking about pornography, they still find themselves fantasizing about viewing it. The challenge is that fantasizing at this level makes it more and more difficult to not give in to viewing pornography. It is common for individuals at level three to start spending extra time and energy fighting off thoughts of pornography and the desire to view it. They may even start to feel some of the withdrawal symptoms if they don't give in. Consequently, individuals at level three can quickly escalate into higher levels of involvement. Generally speaking, those who score at this level have recently had an increase in exposure to pornography and are starting to think more and more about pornography and sexual things.

Level 3 Recommendations

Based upon their responses, seeking help at this point is a good idea. Help can mean <...> Our experience has been that individuals who seek help before they have escalated into more intense viewing of pornography are more successful in treatment. With the right tools and knowledge they can succeed in getting pornography out of their life. Due to your viewing pornography every month, we recommend the following things:

- Take a look at the big picture. It is important to realize that pornography is as addictive, if not more addictive than drugs or alcohol. Therefore, in viewing pornography it is important to help them analyze what they are trying to accomplish in viewing it. Maybe they are looking for a "high" or maybe trying to satisfy your curiosity. Regardless, they need to take some time to identify what pornography does for them.
- Identify the last time they viewed pornography. Write down the reasons why they chose to look at pornography. Were they bored? Irritated? Sad? Lonely?
- Create a list of the times and situations where they looked at pornography. For example, "I viewed it when I was home alone and it was late at night." Or, "I only view it on the weekends when I don't have anything else to do."

- Make a list of things they can do other than view pornography when they are feeling like viewing it.
- Identify two or three people they can contact when they are feeling like they want to give in.
- Focus on being productive. If you can, help them create a positive behavior to replace the thoughts that come to their mind when they are feeling the emotions listed above (sad, lonely, upset, etc.). It really helps them to know what to do when the thought of looking at pornography comes into their mind.
- Develop a plan of action to help you prevent relapse. A good relapse prevention plan is part of a successful person's day-to-day thinking.

LEVEL 4

At level four, involvement with pornography is likely impacting more and more aspects of a person's life. At this level, individuals often begin to wonder why they are thinking so much about pornography. Their involvement may even be surprising to themselves. The consequences of their behaviors are likely influencing more than just themselves. It may be impacting their ability to focus on tasks for work, school, family life, or relationships. They are viewing pornography a few times each month and are looking at more hard-core types of pornography. They are likely viewing movies or downloading clips from the Internet.

It is likely that their fantasizing has increased. Often individuals at level four spend time fantasizing about sexual things even if they do not act out their fantasies. They are getting their high off thinking about pornographic images, but they don't feel as bad because they aren't actually looking at pornography. When individuals regularly fantasize they receive a natural high that is often a sign that an escalated behavior such as intense pornography viewing or acting out is about to happen.

It is common for individuals at level four to fight off strong urges and desires to view pornography. Therefore, at this level you will see an increase in withdrawal symptoms (restlessness, irritability, insomnia, etc.). Individuals at level four may be viewing pornography

every other week or so, but their desire to give in between episodes is often strong and challenging. Consequently, individuals at level four can quickly escalate into higher levels of involvement by viewing pornography weekly and sometimes more.

Generally speaking, those who score at level four have been fighting pornography for many years. They may have cut back or tried to stop, but find they can only go a couple of weeks without giving in to the desire. There are also individuals who are just beginning to experience escalated behaviors and feel a strong compulsion to view pornography every other week. At this point, most people are more involved in pornography than they want to be. They may feel like they have tried to stop so many times that it is hopeless. Many wonder why it is so hard to stop. The risk for moving into more intense pornography viewing from this level is high. If a person can acknowledge there is a problem at this level, he can often head off more deeply seeded compulsive behaviors.

Level 4 Recommendations

At this point your member probably needs additional help from a friend, family member, clinician, or religious leader to help fight the battle. Having someone who is aware of this issue and who can help is very valuable. They can give you a reality check when they are really struggling. One of the reasons that pornography viewing intensifies in some people is that they feel no one else cares or understands them. This causes big problems because the problem remains a secret. Therefore, if they want to curtail relapse it is a good idea to let others help them.

Based upon the responses, seeking professional help at this point is a good idea. Our experience has been that individuals who seek help at this level before they have escalated into more intense viewing of pornography are more successful in treatment. With the right tools and knowledge they can succeed in getting pornography out of their life. Due to the viewing pornography every other week, we would recommend the following things to help get started in the change process:

- Take a look at the big picture. It is important to realize that pornography is as addictive, if not more addictive,

than drugs or alcohol. Therefore, in viewing pornography it is important for you to analyze what they are trying to accomplish in viewing it. Maybe they are looking for a "high" or maybe trying to satisfy curiosity. Regardless, have them take some time and identify what pornography does for them.

- Identify the emotions they were feeling before you viewed pornography the last time. Were they bored? Irritated? Sad? Lonely?
- Create a list of the times and situations where they looked at pornography. For example, "I viewed it when I was home alone and it was late at night." These are the times where they need to come up with a game plan.
- Make a list of things they can do other than view pornography when they are feeling like viewing it or looking for the "high."
- Identify two or three people they can contact when they are feeling like they want to give in and view pornography.
- Focus on being productive. If you can, help them create an alternate positive behavior to replace the thoughts that come to their mind when they are feeling the emotions listed above (sad, lonely, upset, etc.). It really helps to know what to do when the thought of looking at pornography comes to their mind.
- Develop a plan of action to help prevent relapse. A good relapse prevention plan is part of a successful person's day-to-day thinking.

LEVEL 5

At level five, pornography is impacting regular day-to-day living. At this level, individuals are spending a significant amount of time each week thinking about pornography. There isn't a day that goes by when they don't think about looking at pornography or give in and looking at it. They are viewing pornography three to five times a week. Pornography and sexual behaviors are probably among

the top seven things they think about each day. Pornography is influencing their lives in a significant way.

Often at level five we find individuals who are also dealing with some type of loss. Since pornography is such a big part of their life, they have likely found it has impacted other areas of their life (e.g., work, education, relationships, religious involvement). At lower levels they were able to manage their life and their involvement in pornography without a lot of complications. Now, viewing pornography may be limiting their personal growth and development. In some instances it may have even resulted in losing aspects of their life that used to be important to them.

What initially may have been a hobby or something that was done for entertainment is now a big part of this person's life. Generally speaking, individuals at level five have to put extra effort into quitting entirely because they have been exposed to stronger forms of pornography (R-rated movies, X-rated movies, movie clips, streamline videos, etc.).

Individuals at level five often spend a significant amount of time fantasizing about sexual things. Their fantasies usually lead to viewing pornography. It is common for individuals at level five to begin feeling overwhelmed or consumed with their level of pornography involvement. They begin to experience more intense withdrawal symptoms the longer they go without pornography. They are on the brink of giving up their fight with it. This is what transitions them into level six pornography involvement. It is when a person begins to feel helpless and throws caution to the wind that he transitions to level six. At level six there are no barriers. Level six is when pornography consumes all of a person's daily activities; there is no more fight or desire to stop at that level.

Generally speaking, those who score at level five have been fighting pornography for many years. They may have cut back or tried to stop, but find they can only go a few days without giving into the desire. At this point most people are more involved in pornography than they want to be, but they don't know how to stop on their own. This can generate a hopeless feeling that often leads a person back to viewing pornography.

Level 5 Recommendations

At this point they may need to seek additional help from professionals and others around them. Having someone who is aware of this issue and who can help is very important in creating change. They can give you a reality check when your member is really struggling. One of the reasons that pornography viewing intensifies in some people is that they feel like no one else cares or understands them. The longer this remains a secret, the more difficult it will be for you. Therefore, to curtail relapse it is a good idea to let others help you.

Based upon the responses, seeking professional help at this point is a good idea. Individuals who seek help at this level learn that help is available and that they are not alone. With the right educational tools, group support, and therapy, pornography addiction can be overcome. Based upon the answers on the Addo PAA, we would recommend the following things to help you get started in the change process:

- Take a look at the big picture. It is important to realize that pornography is as addictive, if not more addictive, than drugs or alcohol. Therefore, in viewing pornography it is important for you to analyze what they are trying to accomplish in viewing it. Maybe they are looking for a "high" or maybe trying to satisfy curiosity. Regardless, have them take some time and identify what pornography does for them.
- Identify the emotions they were feeling before you viewed pornography the last time. Were they bored? Irritated? Sad? Lonely?
- Create a list of the times and situations where they looked at pornography. For example, "I viewed it when I was home alone and it was late at night." These are the times where they need to come up with a game plan.
- Make a list of things they can do other than view pornography when they are feeling like viewing it or looking for the "high."
- Identify two or three people they can contact when they are feeling like they want to give in and view pornography.

- Focus on being productive. If you can, help them create an alternate positive behavior to replace the thoughts that come to their mind when they are feeling the emotions listed above (sad, lonely, upset, etc.). It really helps to know what to do when the thought of looking at pornography comes to their mind.
- Develop a plan of action to help prevent relapse. A good relapse prevention plan is part of a successful person's day-to-day thinking.

LEVEL 6

At level six, pornography begins to dominate a person's life. There are very few days he doesn't view pornography. He spends a significant amount of time each day thinking about pornography and sexual things. Initially, pornography was for excitement and entertainment, but over time pornography has become more than just entertainment—it has become a compulsive addiction.

At level six, compulsive behaviors and actions are common. Individuals at this level are likely to feel out of control. This is manifest by the amount of time they are spending with pornographic materials. It has filtered its way into other areas of their life (e.g., relationships, work, school, limited fun times, etc.). There isn't a day that goes by that they don't think about looking at pornography or give in and look at it. Many at this level are viewing pornography daily.

There is also a good chance this level of involvement with pornography has created many situations where a person has had to lie to cover up his activities. Those at this level often lie about what they are doing or how they are spending their time. They have likely created their own stash of pornographic videos and magazines. Their computer has a significant amount of downloaded pornographic clips and they are likely spending a lot of money on pornography (e.g., sex sites, videos).

It is also common for individuals at this level to have been caught and they are starting to feel the negative consequences that are often associated with this level of pornography involvement. Even with the potential negative consequences, they are still willing to take risks and

give in to compulsive desires.

Individuals in this situation either have a strong desire to stop viewing pornography or they have completely given up because they feel it is hopeless. The desire to quit may be present, but the counter feeling of giving up is so strong that they feel hopeless. This feeling of hopelessness often exacerbates the problem and creates further sadness and depression, which in turn leads to viewing pornography.

Often at level six we find individuals who are also dealing with some type of loss. They are likely to have lost something in their life due to their involvement with pornography. Some people lose a job, others their spouse, others lose their desire for other passions. Still others lose their belief in God. Such is the power of pornography on the human mind at this level of involvement.

Level 6 Recommendations

At this point it is needed to seek additional help from others as well as professionals. Having someone who is aware of this issue and who can help is very important in the changing process. It is especially helpful to find someone who has either gone through this before or someone who understands addictions. They can give you a reality check when you are really struggling. One of the reasons that pornography viewing intensifies in some people is that they feel like no one else cares or understands them.

The longer they fight this battle alone, the longer this secret will eat up inside of them. If they have reached out and haven't found good help yet, don't let them quit. Sometimes it takes finding the right people with the right knowledge. Treating and overcoming pornography addiction takes time, energy, the right knowledge, honesty, and people who can and want to help.

Especially to curtail relapse it is a good idea to let others help. It has been my experience that professional help and support groups are most effective in creating lasting change. Individuals who seek help at this level learn that help is available and that they are not alone. With the right educational tools, group support, and therapy, pornography addiction can be overcome. Based upon

the answers on the Addo PAA, we would recommend the following things to help get started in the change process:

- Take a look at the big picture. It is important to realize that pornography is as addictive, if not more addictive, than drugs or alcohol. Therefore, in viewing pornography it is important for you to analyze what they are trying to accomplish in viewing it. Maybe they are looking for a "high" or maybe trying to satisfy curiosity. Regardless, have them take some time and identify what pornography does for them.
- Identify the emotions they were feeling before you viewed pornography the last time. Were they bored? Irritated? Sad? Lonely?
- Create a list of the times and situations where they looked at pornography. For example, "I viewed it when I was home alone and it was late at night." These are the times where they need to come up with a game plan.
- Make a list of things they can do other than view pornography when they are feeling like viewing it or looking for the "high."
- Identify two or three people they can contact when they are feeling like they want to give in and view pornography.
- Focus on being productive. If you can, help them create an alternate positive behavior to replace the thoughts that come to their mind when they are feeling the emotions listed above (sad, lonely, upset, etc.). It really helps to know what to do when the thought of looking at pornography comes to their mind.
- Develop a plan of action to help prevent relapse. A good relapse prevention plan is part of a successful person's day-to-day thinking.

LEVEL 7

At level seven, viewing pornography and sexually acting out are almost daily occurrences. There is a deep seeded compulsive feeling to act out. These feelings impact a

person's ability to focus, except on pornography and sex. There is a feeling of powerlessness and hopelessness at this level. There are very few days when pornography is not viewed at this level.

Each day is generally filled with finding and viewing pornography. The images seen are often hardcore and may be filled with violence, rape, incest, bestiality, and other extremely hardcore material. The reason for this escalation is that previous images are no longer stimulating. Most individuals at level seven are engaged in acting out their sexual fantasies. Those who try to limit or curtail how much they view pornography at this level have found that it is virtually impossible to do so on their own. In fact, many at this level have lost their resolve to quit and only try because of the consequences if they don't. Many have been court ordered to seek help.

Individuals at this level feel out of control. They spend hours each day looking for and finding pornography or sex. Pornography has definitely hindered the following areas of this person's life: relationships, work, school, fun and enjoyment, spirituality, and finances.

Lying is a frequent behavior of individuals at level seven. There are many situations each day in which lying has to take place in order to cover up the time spent on pornography and acting out. If caught at this level, there is a good chance this person will minimize his level of involvement because of the potential consequences. The negative consequences at this level are often far reaching and intimidating for the addicted person to deal with. At level seven the individual's mind time (meaning the things he thinks about when he is alone, at work, or even talking with others) is dominated by thoughts of pornography and sex. In fact, most people at level seven find that if they aren't acting out, they are fantasizing about what they want to do. Once a person starts acting out his fantasies and what he is seeing in pornographic films, he is in a dangerous place because of the risky behaviors in which he is engaged.

Often the devastating effects of level seven involvement are not seen for many months and sometimes years. Families are destroyed; jobs are lost. In almost every case I have seen, level seven pornography involvement includes some form of loss. Such is the addictive power of pornography.

At level seven, pornography is dominating their life. Their ability to focus on things other than pornography is limited. It is likely that they feel little power to stop viewing pornography. They probably feel helpless and hopeless. There are very few days where they don't find themselves looking at pornography. They are spending a significant amount of time each day viewing pornography and acting out sexual cravings. Initially, pornography was something that was viewed for excitement and entertainment, but over time it has become more than just entertainment, it has become an addiction. If they have tried to limit or curtail how much they view pornography, they have probably found that it isn't as easy as they thought. In fact at this point they may not have any resolve at all to quit.

Their desire to quit may be strong, but if they have tried and failed and tried and failed they may be questioning their ability to quit by themselves. Because they cannot stop on their own, they may feel like there is no hope. Desire may be strong at times and weak at others which makes this challenge even more difficult. All of these feelings are common to individuals who are at level seven. Learning the right tools can help gain confidence in their ability to win this ongoing battle. Ultimately, real change comes when you have the right tools, the desire to change, and the belief that you can change. Below you will find some recommendations based upon your results.

- Seek additional help from others around you and professionals. Having someone who is aware of this issue and who can help is very valuable in the changing process. They may feel embarrassed and/or ashamed to tell others. However, honesty with self and others is a crucial first step in order for healing to begin. It is especially helpful to find someone who has either gone through this before or someone who understands addictions. They can give you a reality check when you are really struggling. That is why fellowship groups that offer 12-step programs are a good place to start. They will find the value of seeking help in groups
- Find someone who you can talk with them about their challenge. One of the reasons that pornography viewing intensifies in some people is that they feel like no one else cares or understands them. They may find someone in a group meeting who understands you. If

they have a family member or someone else who cares about them, they may consider talking with them

- Find a professional counselor who understands addictions, in particular look for a counselor who has a background in treating sexually based addictions.
- Help them become an advocate for themselves. They have an amazing ability inside of them. They may have lost that feeling because of involvement in pornography and sexually related behaviors. Nonetheless, inside is an excellent person. Help them read as much as they can about sexual addiction and overcoming pornography. We recommend the following books "Don't Call It Love," by Dr. Patrick Carnes and "Out of the Shadows," also by Dr. Carnes.
- Remember the process of recovery takes time. In our experience, reaching out for help is a good start. As they allow others to help them, they will realize that they don't have to fight this battle alone. Their secret will no longer fester inside of them. If they have reached out and haven't found good help yet, don't let them quit. Sometimes it takes finding the right people with the right knowledge. Treating and overcoming pornography addiction takes time, energy, the right knowledge, honesty, and people who can and want to help.

WE NEED YOUR HELP – Please keep in mind that this is the first version of this booklet. We understand that with a first version there may be typos or other errors in the text and the content might not be fully usable or relevant to your situation. If you will, please forgive the errors and provide us your feedback to help us improve. Our hope is to provide you with the best available resources to make your responsibilities as a church leader easier. With your help we can create even better material.

Please submit feedback to W. Eric Red at [REDACTED]@addorecovery.com or Dr. Kevin Skinner at [REDACTED]@addorecovery.com. We thank you in advance.

Our Best,

W. Eric Red

Managing Director, Addo Recovery