



Teaching youth the blueprint for strong future families

September 17, 2019

Ohio House of Representatives Health Committee

Chairman Derek Merrin, Vice Chairman Don Manning, Ranking Member Janine Boyd and Members of the House Health Committee:

My name is Catherine Wood. I am the President of Relationships Under Construction (RUC) which provides education programs to over 25,000 students in public and private schools each year and RUC is also the fiscal agent for the Ohio Adolescent Health Centers (OAHC) which is a collaborative of 10 like organizations who provide educational programs to another 70,000+ students annually. Our educational programs are medically accurate, theoretically sound and consistent with public health models while providing risk avoidance education for middle school and high school students. We encourage students to avoid unhealthy, risky behaviors including sexual activity before marriage, sexually transmitted diseases, drugs, alcohol, vaping, dating violence, bullying, gambling, pornography and human trafficking. Relationships Under Construction encourages optimal health and healthy relationships for all youth affording them the opportunity to reach their full potential as adults.

Pornography is a public health crisis in our schools. We have been pointing out the devastating risks in our middle and high school presentations since the 1990s, but the smart phone has caused even more problems in the last six to seven years. When school after school began reporting that students were using their smart phones on the bus to look at pornography on the way to school and on the way back home, we realized the crisis needed more attention. Remember kids of all ages are on the bus so you can imagine a first grader being exposed to porn. In 2015, we started devoting an entire classroom session to addiction and pornography for high school. The very next year we began hearing that students were looking at porn and masturbating in class. One of our instructors witnessed a 7th grade student masturbating in class and when the student was sent out of class by the classroom teacher, the student ejaculated in the hallway. Many times we have heard of students with their phones masturbating in class. We knew we needed to do more, and in 2016 we added a 7th and 8th grade lesson on pornography and human trafficking. The third party evaluation of our program shows that students who have these lessons show a 10 percent decrease in using pornography when they learn more about the dangers of pornography. We wish we had the funding to provide these lessons to more schools, because the health crisis caused by pornography is at epidemic levels on all fronts. We have collected 17 pages of statistics on pornography for our curriculum. We know that our evaluations also show 40 percent of middle school students are involved in pornography and 60 percent of high school students. We understand that if this does not stop, there will not be enough police to keep our communities safe. This is a public health crisis of immense proportions. It is an attack on the family that is destroying current families and future families. Way back in 2002, the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers reported that 56 percent of all divorces involved one party having an obsessive interest in pornographic websites. Pornography has a negative effect on marriage and leads to divorce, and porn has negative health effects for the children in these marriages. Internet pornography addiction is an emerging issue that

neuroscientists are just beginning to study. The changes in the brains of porn users are similar to those who are addicted to cocaine, alcohol and other drugs according to the American College of Pediatricians, October 2015.

I don't have time to tell you all the research we have gathered, but it is of great concern. What I do want to share is just a small part of one of our lessons. I would so like to share the whole lesson, but we do not have time. Let's look at the market that pornography creates. You have a handout that shows the market. Students fill in the answers.

1. The porn user is at the top of the market and the user almost always thinks that what they do does not affect anyone else, but their use of pornography affects everyone in the culture.
2. The dad, guy, or even girl hooked on porn is likely to become an abuser of his or other people's children which can cause the abused child to run away from home.
3. Runaways fall into the human trafficking market within 48 hours of leaving home.
4. One-third of all runaways are rescued by pimps and enslaved in the porn market. The pimp promises to take care of the runaway and promises them a lifestyle of riches and travel, but in reality the pimp gets them hooked on heroin which is cheaper than cocaine. The trafficked users will do anything for their fix and so starts the trafficking of these humans.
5. Pimps supply the girls and boys for the demand of pornography users and the pornographic movie industry. Right now for every decent movie produced, 400 porn movies are produced. Pornographic movies are used to train the newly trafficked girls and boys. The porn industry is a multi-billion-dollar industry that destroys children and families.
6. "Johns" on the other side of the chart are those who buy young girls and boys for sexual exploitation and because of the great demand for young girls and boys, they create the market.
7. The only way to stop this use and abuse of trafficked humans is to dry up the demand by enforcing obscenity laws.

Healthy future families do not do drugs and do not use porn, and they protect their precious spouse and children from those who do.

We encourage students to understand that it is never too late to stop looking at pornography and increase your chances of having a healthy family.

I commend you for considering House Resolution 180 declaring pornography a public health crisis. Our children and families need your protection now.

I am happy to answer any questions.

Sincerely,



Catherine Wood