

Factors Contributing to Compulsive Use of Pornography

- Lack of healthy value ascribed to sexuality in childhood/family system (avoidance, negative messages, shame), followed by exposure to softcore pornography/pornographic magazines in early adolescence
- Avoidance of intimacy in relationships
 - emotional underdevelopment in childhood as a result of family system
 - emotionally and/or physically absent fathers (sometimes both parents)
 - low self-esteem
 - feelings of mistrust for others
 - seek to avoid the risk and potential for shame, embarrassment or rejection associated with conventional interpersonal relationships
 - relative social isolation, although they retain enough image consciousness that they are often seen as having higher social functioning and less social isolation than is actually the case
 - limited or decreased spousal emotional and sexual intimacy with spouse, limited or decreased satisfaction with marital sex, leading to decreased marital adjustment
- Needs and enjoys the thrill of the power differential between oneself and an imagined dependent person of lesser status
- Cognitive distortions regarding nature of their behavior
 - giving oneself permission
 - denial of likelihood of getting caught,
 - reduction of guilt after offending
- Lack of personal accountability for time and behavior
- May lead to acting out (boundary violations; inappropriate, suggestive comments, paying for sexual services, etc.) or risk-taking behaviors (exposing oneself in a public area, etc.)

Seminary training should include the provision of resources for spiritual and emotional formation that allow persons to work through the issues noted above prior to entering into congregational ministry. See Jocelyn Gregoire and Chrissy Jungers, "Sexual Addiction and Compulsivity Among the Clergy: How Spiritual Directors Can Help in the Context of Seminary Formation," *Sexual Addiction and Compulsivity* 11:1-2 (2004), 71-81; Katheryn Rhoads Meek *et al.*, "Sexual Ethics Training in Seminary: Preparing Students to Manage Feelings of Sexual Attraction," *Pastoral Psychology* 53:1 (2004), 63-79; David L. Delmonico, "'There But for the Grace of God'," *Sexual Addiction and Compulsivity* 10:2-3 (2003), 89-90