



# INTEGRITY RESTORED™

## **5 Ways To Help Your Spouse Recover From Porn**

Perhaps you've known for a while that your husband or wife is addicted to pornography or perhaps you are just beginning to **suspect**. We'll be the first to tell you that being the spouse of someone who uses pornography is difficult not only because it hurts him or her, but because it hurts you. It is entirely normal for you to feel hurt, angry and betrayed.

In your wedding vows, you promised to love them in good times and in bad—and pornography definitely counts as one of those bad times. The good news is that they (and you!) can heal from this damaging behavior. If you need some encouragement to start this journey, check out *Restored: True Stories of Lust and Trust After Porn* and learn about couples whose lives were shattered by porn, but were able to find healing and deeper marital intimacy (you can even read a sample chapter [here](#)).

Here are five ways that you can help your spouse begin the road to healing from a pornography addiction.

## **1. Discuss, Don't Dictate**

If your spouse isn't aware that you know about their compulsive use of pornography, the first step is finding a time to discuss the issue. While you should definitely express your own feelings, remember that this discussion will be difficult for both of you. Many porn users were first exposed as teenagers or even younger. They've been ensnared by pornography for a long time and, likely, have been experiencing cycles of guilt about their addiction.

Listen to what they have to say—Ask them if they want to stop viewing pornography. You should let them know in no uncertain terms that pornography is not a healthy part of marriage and is damaging to them, to you and to those in the images and videos. However, ultimately, it is not only you who has to see this behavior as destructive; they also have to want to rid themselves of this addiction.

If they're not convinced that pornography is causing long-term damage, ask them to consider seeking professional advice before you revisit the issue.

If they do want to move forward and stop viewing pornography, agree to work towards healing together, rather than the burden lying solely on their shoulders or on yours.

## **2. Encourage Him (Or Her) To Seek Help, Don't Micromanage**

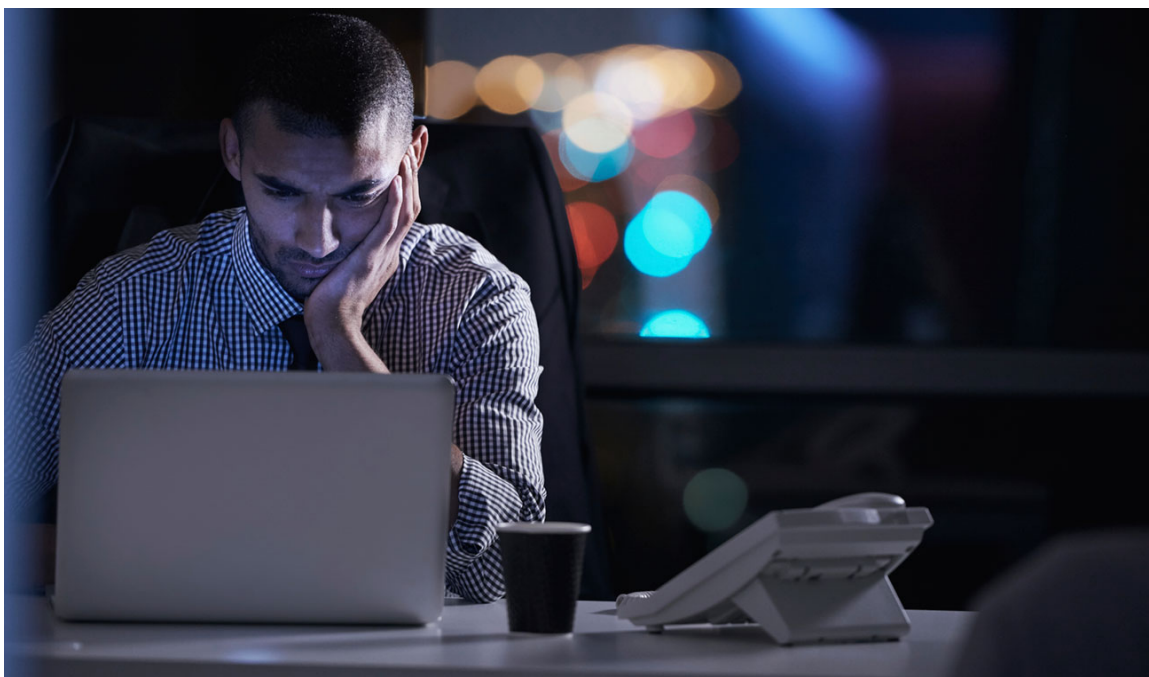
Many spouses of pornography addicts want to close this chapter in their married lives as quickly as possible. This can lead to a tendency to try to “solve” their spouse’s addiction. But, as frustrating as this can be, you didn’t cause their problem and you can’t fix it. They have to go through the process of seeking help. And, like any addiction, this process may take longer than you’d like and include some falls. Be patient with him or her and with yourself.

Remember, the pornography use is often the symptom of much deeper issues. Often people use it to self-medicate long-standing emotional wounds and conflicts. Most of the time pornography use has nothing to do with sex. It is simply an escape from deep pain.

## **3. Provide Resources and Support When Needed**

So, what can you do? You most certainly can offer resources and support. One of the first things you’ll want to recommend is that your family installs accountability and filtering software on all of the devices (computers, phones, tablets, etc.) in your house. We recommend [Covenant Eyes](#). While this removes a great deal of access to pornography, it’s important to remember that anyone who really wants to find this material will find a way.

For many addicts, it is a good idea to seek out a counselor who can address this addiction as well as any underlying issues that the behavior may stem from. It’s important to find a counselor who is trained to treat sexual addiction and trauma. Additionally, many people benefit from groups like [Sexaholics Anonymous](#), who approach healing from pornography and other harmful sexual behaviors through a 12-step program.



As a spouse, particularly when you have kids, you can also offer to make it easier for him or her to seek support. Keep the calendar open for the time when the accountability group meets, watch the kids while he or she goes to see a counselor. Or, if they want you to, you can even drive them to meetings or sessions—providing that silent support for their decision to seek healing.

Because pornography use affects marriages, we recommend marital therapy. Through this process, your spouse will really come to understand how pornography use has adversely affected both of you. This can give him/her incentive to continue in recovery and to work on restoring your marriage.

#### **4. Find Support For Yourself, Not Just Him**

It is easy to focus so much on eradicating the use of porn that we forget that spouses also may need healing and support. Upon discovering a spouse's porn habit, some men and women are so hurt that they may even experience symptoms akin to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Many spouses consider pornography use a type of cheating and coping with this sort of betrayal can bring a lot of pain to the surface.

For yourself, consider going to a counselor or seeking out a group like **S-Anon**, a support group for loved ones of a sex addict. Many spouses resist finding help for themselves because they think, “he/she caused the problem,

why should I have to work on healing!?” The fact is that you have been deeply wounded by this addiction and you need a safe place to work on your own healing. Counseling and support groups will help you with this.

Your heart needs to heal. And, of course, by seeking healing for yourself you will be better able to support your spouse and together strengthen your marriage.

## 5. Pray Together

Ultimately, true healing will only come through the grace of God. Deciding to pray together daily—even if it is just a short prayer at the beginning and the end of the day—will reaffirm your openness to God acting in your lives and your marriage. Prayer also signals your mutual intention to fight against the scourge of pornography and pursue the fullness of chastity and love that God has in mind for your marriage. I recommend couples pray one decade of the rosary daily for their individual and marital healing.

In addition, make a commitment to pray for each other, with this particular struggle in mind. Healing from addictions is not often easy, but it happens, both through hard work and through God’s help.

## Conclusion:

Finally, we want you to know that you are not alone! Many, many, women and men have suffered because of their spouses’ addiction to porn. There is hope and healing for your spouse and for you. The first step is to recognize that this behavior is destructive and to seek help.

You and your spouse can find more essential resources at the Integrity Restored Network: [integrityrestored.com](http://integrityrestored.com) as well as encouragement through the incredible testimonies in *Restored: True Stories of Lust and Trust After Porn*. Know that we are praying for you!

Integrity Restored’s mission is to help restore the integrity of individuals, spouses, and families who have been affected by pornography and pornography addiction. Integrity Restored provides education, encouragement, and resources to break free from pornography, heal relationships, and to assist parents in preventing and responding to pornography exposure that is so devastating in the lives of our children. Find out more at [integrityrestored.com](http://integrityrestored.com).

