EXPLORING THE IMPACT AND SUICIDE RISK OF CHILDREN ACCESSING PORNOGRAPHY

Dr. Kathy Weston

Nathan Jones

Anna Sarjantson

HOSTED BY
THE OLLIE FOUNDATION
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RESOURCE BOOKLET

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The OLLIE Foundation was launched in 2016 by three parents who, having each lost a teenage son to suicide, pledged to prevent such losses for other families.
OLLIE is devoted to empowering individuals and organisations to reduce suicide in their communities through education, intervention, and prevention. By providing the right support and knowledge, we're confident in our ability and yours to create positive change and save lives because...

One Life Lost Is Enough

Thank you for attending The OLLIE Foundation's talk "Exploring the Impact and Suicide Risk of Children Accessing Pornography" on the 19th September 2025.

OLLIE has a growing reputation for our Thought Leadership Events where we shine a spotlight on a community statistically at higher risk of suicide than other communities. Our talks are always inclusive, bringing all stakeholders together for education, support and development. We believe that together we can be more than the sum of our parts.

This webinar was scheduled following direct work with a family earlier this year whose teenage son was experiencing suicidal ideation. His distress stemmed from a long-term pornography addiction that began in early adolescence. He had been exposed to adult content at a young age, was later groomed through pornography networks, and by the time his father reached out to us for help, he was overwhelmed with shame, trapped in compulsive cycles, and feeling utterly hopeless.

This is far from an isolated case. There is increasing evidence, both academic and anecdotal, that problematic pornography use is having a significant impact on young people's mental health, self-image, sexual development, and emotional safety.

A recording of this talk will be available on our YouTube Channel.

This resource has been co-produced with our speakers and the delegates who attended the live event. Please use your own discretion when contacting any organisation. The OLLIE Foundation can not endorse any of the organisations listed but has curated this signposting guide in good faith and hope you will find it useful.

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Webinar Background Information

Professionals working in suicide prevention and mental health are increasingly aware of the profound risks associated with this issue:

- **Neurobiological impact: Heavy use of pornography can alter brain chemistry and neurological reward systems in similar ways to drug addiction. It can increase anxiety, reduce self-esteem, and erode impulse control, all known precursors to suicidality in young people.**
- **Algorithmic escalation: Algorithms can lead children and teens toward increasingly extreme or violent content. Exposure to this content may reinforce harmful beliefs, solidify internalised shame, and distort healthy concepts of relationships and boundaries. All things that can lead to suicidal ideation**
- **Acting out harm: There is growing evidence of young children acting out what they have seen online, without any comprehension of consent or harm caused. Survivors of such experiences may not understand the origin of their emotional turmoil until years later, often revealing a pattern of shame, rage, and suicidal thoughts in therapy. This is the case of a young teen in Herts, who was raped by her classmate in primary school and found herself a few years later in therapy. She didn't know it was rape but the explanation of what happened made it clear to the therapist. This child is in therapy because they are unhappy and anxious. Another child watching porn and acting out what they saw is the direct reason this girl is in therapy and will need so much support going forward.**
- **Isolation and secrecy: Shame associated with pornography use, especially in a digital world that both glorifies and vilifies it, leads to increased secrecy and social disconnection. This isolation is a known driver of suicide risk.**

All the above are risk factors for suicidal ideation and self-harming behaviours. As a suicide prevention charity, OLLIE has a proven track record of tackling difficult subjects that contribute to mental health decline. Whether exploring child-on-parent violence, trauma from adoption, neurodivergence, or now pornography addiction, we approach every subject through the lens of safeguarding, education, and suicide prevention.

This is a complex and often hidden risk factor that can contribute to suicide in young people. As such it is included in the government's new curriculum as the link between compulsive behaviours, trauma, and suicidal ideation is well established in the academic literature.
This webinar is precisely the type of timely; preventative work the sector needs especially given the new curriculum and concern for digital safety for young people.

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Panelist Information

Dr. Kathy Weston

Dr Weston is one of the leading national experts on parenting and parental engagement in children's lives.
In 2018, she established Tooled Up Education, a holistic bank of evidence-based resources for whole-school communities on all aspects of parenting, family life and education. Tooled Up now supports over 150 schools in 9 countries.

Kathy believes that 'there is an instruction manual for parenting' (the research evidence) and believes that children are most likely to thrive when there is a strong partnership between home and school. Kathy holds a Law degree as well as a Masters and PhD (from Cambridge University). She is originally from Northern Ireland and is a parent to two teenage boys.

Website:

- **Tooled Up Education: https://www.tooledupeducation.com/**

Connect:

- **LinkedIn**

Podcast:

- **Get a Grip by Dr Kathy Weston: Apple Podcasts**

Contact:
Kathy@tooledupeducation.com

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Panelist Information

Nathan Jones

Nathan Jones is the founder of the London Centre for Addictions, dedicated to helping people with substance abuse and sex/pornography addiction. Inspired by his own rehabilitation journey, he is passionate about reducing stigma around addiction and regularly speaks at international conferences, particularly on pornography addiction and the Inner Child Model.

Trained by Dr. Thaddeus Birchard and mentored by Dr. Alex Katehakis, Nathan developed the Integrative Approach for Treating Sex Addiction (IATSA), a neurobiologically informed framework. He trains clinicians in this model and is pursuing a professional doctorate in compulsive sexual behaviour disorder.

Alongside consultancy roles in the UK and Europe, he lectures at universities, contributes to industry events, and serves on the Board of Trustees of ATSAC. He is an accredited BACP member and co-author of Understanding Your Inner Child and Overcoming Addiction (Routledge).

Services:

- **London Centre for Addictions**

Book:

- **Understanding Your Inner Child and Overcoming Addiction**

Contact:

nathan@londoncentreforaddictions.co.uk

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Panelist Information

Anna Sarjantson

Anna is the founder of Screen-Safe, through which she is dedicated to helping parents, carers, schools, and professionals keep children safer in the digital world.

As a parent herself and with a passion for children's mental wellbeing, Anna equips families and schools with the tools and confidence they need to navigate the fast-changing online landscape.

Her work centres on building digital resilience, improving self-esteem, and fostering open conversations between adults and young people.

Anna delivers talks and training across schools, local authorities, and organisations, tackling issues such as social media, gaming, grooming, sextortion, and screen time and runs a membership for those looking for ongoing support.

Services:

- **Screen- Safe**
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Contact:

- **Email: anna@screen-safe.co.uk**
- **Instagram @screensafeglobal**
- **LinkedIn : Anna Sarjantson | LinkedIn**

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Organisations that help protect children from pornography in the UK

UK Safer Internet Centre

This partnership aims to promote the safe and responsible use of technology by young people and offers resources and advice on online safety.

Their services offer:

- **Safety guides - broken down by audience eg. CYP, parents, schools, social workers**
- **Online issues guides**
- **Social media guides**
- **Remote learning hub**
- **Training**

Internet Watch Foundation (IWF)

The IWF works to eradicate child sexual abuse imagery and other harmful content from the internet.

Their services offer:

- **Tech for good**
- **Policy work**

NSPCC

A prominent child protection charity that provides support and advice to children and families on online safety, including issues related to pornography.

- **Online safety control help**
- **Parental advice eg. guides on talking to your child about the risks of online porn**
- **Online safety guides**

Childrens Comissioner

Provides information, advice, and support to children and young people regarding their online experiences and safety.

Their services offer:

- **Youth voices hub**
- **Reports**
- **Podcast**

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Organisations that help protect children from pornography in the UK

The Molly Rose Foundation
Actively engages with legislation, particularly the UK's Online Safety Act, to advocate for stronger protections for young people online. The Foundation campaigns for increased accountability of tech companies to prevent algorithmically-driven harm, especially concerning suicide and self-harm content

5Rights
5Rights is at the forefront of delivering practical change for children so they can access the digital world knowledgeably, creatively and fearlessly.

Center for Countering Digital Hate
The Center for Countering Digital Hate stops the spread of online hate and disinformation through research, public campaigns & policy advocacy.

Internet Matters
Working with online experts, we're here to provide parent, carers and professionals with advice and support to keep children safe online.

Childnet
A youth leadership training programme empowering young people to educate their peers about online safety.

CEOP Safety Center
If you are worried about online sexual abuse or the way someone has been communicating with you online - Make a report to CEOP.

CEOP Education
The National Crime Agency's CEOP Education team aim to help protect children and young people from online child sexual abuse.

Fully Human - Ella Hansen
Fully Human is the research and development arm of the PSHE Association. It's website contains reports and articles around this fast changing world and what might best support children and young people to navigate it.

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Legislations & Enforcement:

- **The Online Safety Act requires commercial pornography sites to implement robust age verification systems by July 2025 to prevent children from accessing harmful content.**

- **Ofcom is actively investigating and enforcing these new age-check rules, conducting formal investigations into pornographic websites that fail to comply.**

Campaigns:

- **"Health Professionals for Safer Screens". Initiative promoting a smartphone-free childhood to protect children from negative impacts on their sleep, mood, attention, and social development, and calls for more public health guidance and less access to harmful online content.**

Reports:

- **“Sex is kind of broken now”: children and pornography. Children’s Commissioner, 2025**
- **“We need you to protect us” – some hard truths about children’s access to pornography. Children’s Commissioner, 2025**'
- **What’s porn got to do with it? The link between viewing adult pornography and online sexual offending against children. Lucy Faithfull Organisation, 2024**

Professional Services & Pathways:

- **Hertfordshire Harmful Sexual Behaviour Pathway 2024 - This Pathway is intended for staff and volunteers across all agencies in Hertfordshire who are working with children and young people (under the age of 18 years) where there are concerns about harmful sexual behaviour.**

Training:

- **https://icmec-english.tovuti.io/: child sexual exploitation training from icmec and ecpat.**

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Education for Young People

FlippGen:

FlippGen empowers Gen-Z and Gen-A by fostering youth-led initiatives that enhance mental health and digital wellbeing. In collaboration with mental health.

HalfTheStory:

HalfTheStory's mission is to empower the next generation's relationship with social media, through advocacy, education, and access to resources for youth.

Natterhub:

Empower children to become digitally savvy with the help of Natterhub, a fun and secure online safety learning platform for 5-11 year olds.

Logging Off Club:

We all spend so much time on “social” media, but most of us feel lonelier than ever before. Logging Off Club brings people together offline to reconnect.

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Some of your key takeaways from the talk...

Thank you for this brilliant but terrifying training.

Education about VPNs is important too!

I love the terminology of ‘digital diet’ - thank you

Culture and Religion also plays vital role social media, on search engines are constantly brushing up

There is a significant gap in the literature regarding the antecedent factors that influence adolescents' exposure to various forms of sexually explicit media (SEM).

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Staying connected with The OLLIE Foundation

OLLIE is based in the UK but our training is delivered both online and in person. This means that wherever you are in the World, OLLIE can deliver training to you!

Thought Leadership

As well as hosting discussions around Adoption, Addiction and Trauma, we also run regular Thought Leadership events with a focus on topics such as the Link between Autism and Suicide and Gender and Suicide. These can be found on our Youtube.

Online Training Sessions

We have a range of wellbeing and suicide prevention training programmes that are delivered online via Zoom. You can access more information and booking here.

In-house Training Sessions

All of our open training offers can be delivered in-house to your workplace, school or community group, tailored to your needs and at a time convenient for you. Please email contactus@theolliefoundation.org for more information about this.

Volunteers and Fundraisers

If you are interested in supporting OLLIE, either by volunteering your time and skills or completing a fun challenge or run to raise funds for us, please head to our website.

To keep updated with when our events are happening and to hear regular updates about OLLIE's work, subscribe to our Newsletter here.

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