

Pornography, Shame, and Relationships: *Clinical Tools for Modern Therapeutic Practice*

An online workshop with
Catherine Knibbs & Silva Neves

Zoom Webinar
14th November 2024, Thursday
Times:
6:00 pm – 9:00 pm, London UK
1:00 pm – 4:00 pm, New York, USA

CPD/CE credits: 3

Limited number of early bird tickets at £62 only
Regular price: £72



Location: Online streaming only
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Pornography is one of the most controversial and misunderstood topics in both public discourse and clinical practice. In this cutting-edge workshop, led by Catherine Knibbs, an expert in cybertrauma and digital wellbeing, and Silva Neves, a renowned psychosexual and relationship therapist, participants will explore the myths and realities of pornography use through a scientific, non-judgmental lens. Designed to tackle the complexities that therapists face when addressing pornography in their clinical work, this workshop will provide practitioners with the tools to engage effectively with clients who struggle with their pornography viewing, while also reflecting on their own biases and comfort levels.

Key Clinical Challenges Addressed:

- **Shame and Self-Stigma:** Many clients feel immense shame about their pornography use, which can affect their mental health, relationships, and sense of self. Practitioners will learn how to assess and address shame-based responses within a therapeutic framework, helping clients to explore these emotions safely and productively.
- **Pornography and Compulsive Behaviour:** **Clients often present with what they believe to be *porn addiction*, but the concept of addiction in the context of pornography is widely debated.** Therapists will learn how to navigate this clinical issue, using evidence-based approaches to discern between non-problematic viewing and compulsive behaviour, without pathologising natural sexual expression.
- **Impact on Relationships and Sexual Functioning:** In some cases, pornography use may intersect with relationship difficulties or concerns about sexual functioning. **Therapists will learn how to engage**



clients in discussions about the influence of pornography on their romantic or sexual relationships, offering strategies to reduce conflict and improve communication.

- **Working with Adolescents:** Practitioners will develop a safeguarding-focused approach to assessing and intervening in adolescent pornography viewing. This section of the workshop will emphasise the importance of **distinguishing between developmentally-typical exploration and problematic or risky behaviour, particularly in a digital world filled with misinformation.**

Key Therapeutic Learnings:

This workshop will be highly practical, giving participants the tools to:

- **Guide clients through conversations about pornography:** Practitioners will develop the skills to open up meaningful, non-judgmental discussions with clients about their pornography viewing, addressing any distress or confusion they may feel around this subject.
- **Assess and treat clients with compulsive pornography viewing:** Therapists will learn how to assess and manage clients presenting with compulsive behaviors in pornography viewing, **utilising evidence-based therapeutic modalities like Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) and mindfulness-based approaches.**
- **Handle pornography in the context of relationship therapy:** Special attention will be given to how pornography use can affect intimate relationships, teaching therapists to help clients navigate these issues without imposing moral judgments.
- **Increase therapist self-awareness:** Practitioners will be encouraged to reflect on their own potential biases and preconceptions about pornography, increasing their awareness of how these may impact clinical work. **Techniques for managing personal discomfort will also be introduced, such that the therapist approach remains sensitive and professional.**
- **Working with Adolescents:** Attendees will learn how to apply a safeguarding lens when assessing adolescents' pornography use, recognizing when behaviour is risky and how to intervene appropriately.

Evidence-Based Approach

Catherine and Silva will ground their presentation in the latest scientific research, offering a reality check against many of the dominant public narratives on pornography. Using the latest neurobiological data, they will clarify why pornography viewing is often labelled as an addiction and why compulsive behaviour may have deeper psychological roots that need to be addressed differently.

Some of the key myths they will address include:

- **The neurobiology of pornography:** What actually happens in the brain during pornography viewing, and why it doesn't match common addiction models
- **Pornography is not an addiction:** Breaking down why pornography use doesn't fit the criteria for addiction in most cases and how to handle this clinically
- **Compulsive vs. non-compulsive behaviour:** How to differentiate between healthy sexual expression and problematic usage
- **Safeguarding young people:** Developing protocols to assess and intervene in the pornography viewing of adolescents without exacerbating shame or fear

By the end of the workshop, participants will be able to:

- Critically appraise the latest evidence on pornography and differentiate between myth and scientifically grounded findings
- Assess and treat adolescents' pornography viewing through a safeguarding lens, ensuring that risks are identified and managed appropriately
- **Work with adult clients who present with problematic or compulsive pornography viewing, distinguishing between normal behaviour and compulsive patterns using therapeutic tools**
- Increase self-awareness by engaging in self-reflection on personal biases or discomfort around the topic of pornography, to ensure that these do not influence the therapeutic process
- Understand the nomenclature of sexual behaviours online: Recognise the language and terminology used in online sexual spaces and how these can be misconstrued or confused with problematic pornography use

Learning Objectives:

- Discuss the latest evidence on pornography and differentiate between myth and scientifically grounded findings
- **Work with adult clients who present with problematic or compulsive pornography viewing, distinguishing between normal behaviour and compulsive patterns using therapeutic tools**
- Discuss the nomenclature of sexual behaviours online: the language and terminology used in online sexual spaces and how these can be misconstrued or confused with problematic pornography use

About the speakers

Silva Neves is a COSRT-accredited and UKCP-registered psychosexual and relationship psychotherapist, and a trauma psychotherapist. He is a Pink Therapy Clinical Associate. Silva specialises working with people from the LGBTQ+ communities. He is a COSRT-accredited clinical supervisor and a Course Director for CICS (Contemporary Institute of Clinical Sexology).

He is the author of two books: *Compulsive Sexual Behaviours, A Psycho-Sexual Treatment Guide for Clinicians* (Routledge) and *Sexology: The Basics* (Routledge). He also co-edited two books with Dominic Davies: *Erotically Queer* and *Relationally Queer* (Routledge). He is a member of the editorial team for the leading journal *Sexual and Relationship Therapy*.

Silva is the recipient of the Sexual Freedom Ally Award 2023. He often contributes to the media on various sex and relationship topics and speaks internationally.

Catherine Knibbs is a Clinical Doctoral Researcher, Online Harms Consultant, Public Speaker, Author and Child / Adult Trauma Psychotherapist. She writes about and works with cybertrauma which is any trauma that occurs through an internet-ready device and writes about why we do what we do in the digital spaces. She is a co-director for the Journal 'Cybersecurity in Digital Mental Health' and Digital Lead for the West Yorkshire Adversity, Trauma and Resilience framework.

She is an advocate for children's rights, privacy, and digital explorations online. She also educates therapists via her company Privacy4 about Data protection, privacy and cybersecurity issues in relation to their practice. She is also a TEDx Speaker this year on the importance of relationships surrounded by technology.

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