

Porn-Resilient Relationships

Parenting Responses Handout

SHUTTING DOWN			GROWING UP		
The Hammer	Response - Anger, with an emphasis on punishment.	Rationale - "If I punish bad behavior, it will go away."	The Line in the Sand	Response - Boundaries. Setting limits, expecting discipline.	Rationale - "Kids thrive when they have structure and protective guidelines."
	Effects - Fear or resentment. Rebellion or avoidance. Sneaking and secrecy.	Reasons - Anger or control issues. Discipline not modeled.		Effects - Healthy development. Safety. Grumbling. Positive routines.	Shift - Address anger and control issues. Parenting education.
The Guilt Trip	Response - Shaming. Highlighting how wrong and bad the behavior was - often implying that the child is wrong and bad.	Rationale - "If they feel bad, they will stop."	The Reckoning	Response - Questions to encourage reflection. Helping tune in to corrective feelings.	Rationale - "Heeding guilt and fear can help us change behavior and create safety."
	Effects - Shame-based identity. Withdrawal and avoidance.	Reasons - Disgust with the sexual behavior. Unsure how else to discourage the behavior.		Effects - Healthy guilt. Efforts to make positive changes. Cooperation and accountability.	Shift - Focus on asking and listening. Trusting children to reach their own healthy conclusions. Empathy and emotion education.
The Witch Hunt	Response - Retaliation. Attacking external factors (e.g. the porn industry; a friend or their parents). Focus on changing circumstances or other people.	Rationale - "I can clear away the contagions so this won't happen again."	The Movement	Response - Action to promote changes in individuals, families, and communities.	Rationale - "Focused, wise action can improve people and environments."
	Effects - Alone, guilty. Unsupported, unsure what to do. Embarrassment.	Reasons - Protectiveness. Feeling an urgency to act. Discharging anger.		Effects - Empowerment. Inspiration. Hope. Belonging and involvement.	Shift - Stabilize self and home first. Discover personal strengths and purpose.

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The Pact of Silence	Response - Avoidance. No follow-up discussion.	Rationale - "Talking will just make things more uncomfortable."	The Emperor's Clothes	Response - Dialog. Begin discussing the uncomfortable issues.	Rationale - "Loving communication will light the way to solutions. Temporary discomfort is worth the progress."
	Effects - Confused. Permission, "so, was that okay?"	Reasons - Distress intolerance. Confused about how to respond. "Not a big deal."		Effects - Discomfort. Relief. Feeling seen and supported. Problem-solving skills develop.	Shift - Acknowledge feeling lost or awkward. Topic education and general parenting education.
The Sermon on the Couch	Response - Lecturing. Talking and teaching - one-sided conversation.	Rationale - "If I convince them of their errors, they will change."	The Vision Quest	Response - Values. Cultivating standards. Encouraging conscientiousness with others and with choices.	Rationale - "As my child determines what matters and how they want to conduct their lives, they will make good choices."
	Effects - Shame, "I'm not enough, I'm not getting it right." Feeling morally deprived. Annoyance or resentment and avoidance.	Reasons - Desire to teach. Afraid of listening and understanding - trying instead to influence through words.		Effects - Maturity. Better decision-making. Independence. Moral development.	Shift - Trust children to anchor into their unique values. Personality assessments. Focus on questions and discovery.
The Hot Mess	Response - Flooding. Sorrow, fear, and/or anger, with an emphasis on the parent's pain. Hysterical crying.	Rationale - "If they see how much this hurts me, they will stop."	The White Flag	Response - Acceptance. Trust that your child can still be amazing even after losing innocence or struggling.	Rationale - "Encountering darkness and challenge is universal and inevitable. It can lead to growth."
	Effects - Shock, shame. Sense of defectiveness and toxicity. Withdrawal.	Reasons - Overwhelming emotions, often related to trauma and fear.		Effects - Emotional safety. Confidence that they can grow. Worthiness despite mistakes.	Shift - Grieve. It is appropriate to feel sad and grieve. Respond to fears. This will lead to acceptance in time.

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