

## Understanding Why

### Objectives

This module will help you explore and understand:

- Your online sexual behaviour
- How your sexual behaviour moved into offending behaviour
- Your motivations to offend
- Patterns and trends with your current use of the internet for sexual reasons

### Understanding why

#### Motivation for illegal online sexual behaviour

If you are concerned about your worrying or illegal online sexual behaviour and want to stop this behaviour, it is important for you to understand more about yourself. This will help you understand why you engage with this behaviour and to ensure that you do not engage with it again.

The first step is to understand why you have engaged in this behaviour. There may be a variety of motivations, here are some factors that we hear from people:

- boredom
- low self-esteem
- stress
- curiosity
- desensitising to legal adult pornography
- sexual gratification
- loneliness
- no sex life or decreased sex life
- excitement
- attraction to children
- comfort
- a 'buzz' or risk taking
- relationship problems
- sex addiction

Use the quiz on the website to select your current level of knowledge and understanding about your behaviour. If you have very little knowledge or some understanding, this section will be really helpful for you to increase your knowledge around why you might be behaving illegally online.

### Exercise 1: Internet Use

You might already have some understanding of why you have been or are tempted to behave illegally online. You might also have recognised some of the motivations listed on the previous tab. But sometimes it can be difficult to understand our behaviour. We will show you two ways you can use to improve your understanding.

The first is to think about when you go online and what mood you are in.

Below is a diary for you to complete which will help you think about these and help you identify patterns of behaviour.

### Daily internet use record

This exercise will help you record your behaviour and recognise patterns in it. This can help you work out where you need to fill your time more positively.

- Under each day, shade in the grey column to show the hours that you have spent online.
- In the white column next to it, use a traffic light system for your behaviour: record illegal activity in red, high risk activity in amber, and low risk activity in green.
- You can also include a record of your mood.

#### Example

	Mon 6 <sup>th</sup>	Tue 7 <sup>th</sup>	Wed 8 <sup>th</sup>	Thu 9 <sup>th</sup>	Fri 10 <sup>th</sup>	Sat 11 <sup>th</sup>	Sun 12 <sup>th</sup>
6-7 am							
7-8 am							
8-9 am							
9-10 am							
10-11 am							Happy
11-12 pm							
12-1 pm							
1-2 pm							
2-3 pm							
3-4 pm							
4-5 pm							
5-6 pm							
6-7 pm							
7-8 pm							
8-9 pm							
9-10 pm	OK	OK		Happy		Lonely	
10-11 pm			Stressed				
11-12 am							
12-1 am					Low		
1-2 am							
2-3 am							
3-4 am							
4-5 am							
5-6 am							

### Exercise 2: Progression Timeline

The second exercise is in three parts and looks back over your life to help you think about how you started behaving illegally online.

#### Part A: Making your timeline

This first step aims to give you a clear visual record of how you moved towards illegal online sexual behaviour.

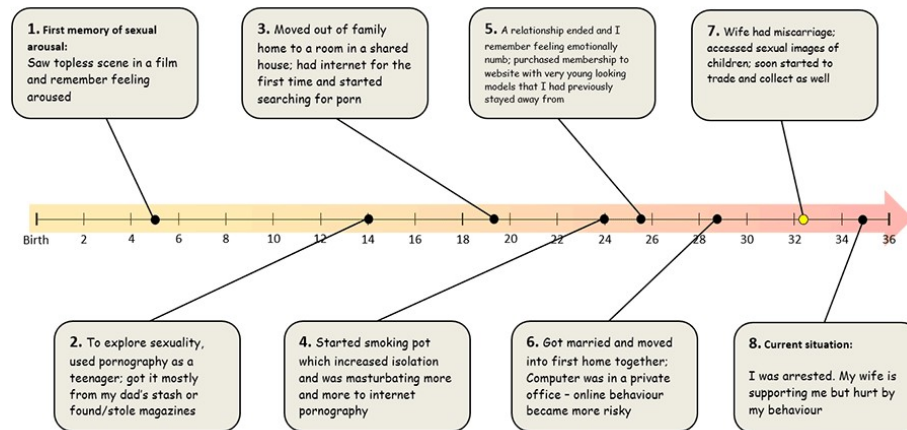
In each box, write a short description of an important event in your life. These events should show how your online behaviour changed, eventually leading to your illegal online sexual behaviour.

Look at the example below to help you get started. We recommend completing your timeline in the following order:

1. Your current situation (on the far right)
2. The first time that you behaved illegally online (highlight this point on the timeline)
3. Your first memory of being sexually aroused, be it with pornography or something else (likely near the far left)
4. In between each of the above, write other important events that you think can be seen as signposts in your life for where you broke down a barrier and moved to more risky online behaviour.

Remember that this is your timeline – if you feel that you need more boxes to tell your story then feel free to add them.

### Example



## Part B: Digging deeper

To help you explore and reflect on your timeline, complete the following table in as much detail as possible.

You can use the 'feelings word bank' below if needed. Remember to think about the pathway to any inappropriate and/or illegal behaviour you have engaged in.

### Example

Event	Age	Situation/life event – what influenced you to break down the barrier and make the progression?	Activities/actions – describe the behaviours that you were engaged in.	How were you feeling at the time?	Did the act of using the internet itself change the way you were thinking? In what way? Identify the thoughts that routinely went with each activity.
1	5	First time I saw a topless scene in a film.	Nothing beyond feeling a new sensation and remembering that feeling	excited	Didn't think too much about it, but knew it was different and that I liked it
2	12-18	Typical teenage life exploring sexuality and growing up with friends. Porn was around from time to time but never a constant. Was single more time than with a girlfriend.	Masturbation became a familiar way to explore sexuality. Was secretive about masturbation.	Fear of being caught	Knew it wasn't wrong but also that it was a somewhat taboo subject in the family (we rarely discussed sex).
3	19-24	Moved out of family home and into shared house. First time I had Internet access in my own private room.	Started surfing for porn and masturbating more habitually.	Enjoying the freedom and privacy.	Not doing anything illegal – no harm done.
4	22-25	Sketchy people moved into shared house and brought marijuana.	Started doing drugs semi-regularly and masturbating to pornography. Isolating, refusing invitations to go out with friends, started to incubate and nurture addictive behaviour.	Started having conflicted feelings of shame, regret and panic to euphoria, also started feeling apathetic.	Started thinking that I might have a problem but quickly dismissed it as something that I could easily handle myself.
5	25	A relationship ended and took it really hard.	Took out a membership to a high risk porn website that I had previously steered clear from. I didn't seem to care so much anymore.	Emotionally numb. Wasn't thinking. Depressed.	Didn't really care anymore.
6	29	Married and living in house with computer in private room. Wife would work odd hours giving me much time to myself.	Through isolation, use of Internet porn progressed and steadily grew in risk over time. Started collecting pornography.	Very similar to steps 3 and 4.	I can resist temptation and manage my Internet use. Sometimes felt that it was getting out of hand again.
7	32-34	Wife had a miscarriage. Stress from work and pressure from family to have a child.	Started looking at and trading child pornography on the internet. Would build up a collection, then delete it when I had a moment of clarity, stay "sober" for a while and gradually build it up again. Repeated this cycle several times. My progression seemed to be stuck in this loop.	Guilt, shame, disgust, fear.	Constant conflict of emotions and morals, creating false rationalisations.
8	34	My behaviour was discovered by my wife and I was arrested.	Took immediate action to tell friends, family, see my GP, and start to get help.	Vulnerability, fear, liberation, powerlessness.	I have reached my bottom and am now able to start on my path toward recovery.

## Feeling word bank

Happy, Sad, Angry, Hurt, Depressed, Frustrated, Impulsive, Stressed, Relaxed, Excited, Bored, Curious, Rejected, Doubtful, Interested, Lonely, Irritated, Ashamed, Upset, Annoyed, Miserable, Guilty, In despair, Uneasy, Useless, Vulnerable, Afraid, Nervous, Timid, Indifferent, Restless, Alienated, Nonchalant, Dull, Anxious, Confident

## Part C: Understanding your behaviour over time

**Looking back over your diary and your timeline, think about these questions:**

1. How much control do you feel you had over the events that influenced you to engage in more risky behaviour? In hindsight, how could you have handled them differently?
2. How much control do you think you had over the choices you made to move towards further offending behaviour? Why?
3. What effect, patterns or trends can you notice about how your sexual fantasies developed?

**Now think about the one event that led you to behave illegally online for the first time:**

4. Why did you decide to use the internet?
5. Did using the internet change the way you were thinking? In what way?
6. Over time, what effect did the internet have on your life offline?
7. How would you describe your life online?

**Now think about the one event that led you behave illegally online for the first time:**

8. Why do you think it was this specific event that triggered you to behave illegally online for the first time? Why not something earlier in your life?
9. Were there other things happening in your life beyond what you have mentioned that could have contributed to your decision to behave illegally online?
10. Why do you think you have continued the behaviour over time?
11. Using the list below, make a note of all the illegal behaviour that you have engaged in:
  - a) downloading illegal images of children
  - b) trading sexual images of children with others
  - c) engaging in sexual conversations about children online with adults, including sharing fantasies
  - d) contacting children online for sexual reasons including through apps, chat or webcams
  - e) exposing children to sexual behaviour including on webcams
  - f) producing illegal images of children
  - g) voyeurism including hidden cameras
  - h) offline sexual activity with children

Can you identify how your offending changed over time and involved different behaviours?

12. Have you at any time tried to stop your illegal online sexual behaviour? If yes, how many times did you try and stop? Why do you think you were not successful?

What are the important things that are motivating you to stop your illegal behaviour now? How important are they to you?

*Please return to the website and complete the **Reflection** questions at the end of this module.*