

From a Facebook posting used with permission

October 2021

First of all, thank you for raising this question (about masturbation). I think it is a really important topic that we should be able to discuss without shame.

My perspective is that we need to be teaching our children, both male and female, to know their own bodies and to not feel any shame about any of their body parts. If that includes self pleasuring then so be it. I can't speak for males, but I feel like I was raised in an environment (Christo) that was very shaming around sex and that made out that men have sex drives and women don't, which is blatantly untrue.

I think porn is a different conversation although it is closely related. Research shows that porn activates dopamine in our brains and can quickly become addictive; the dopamine response means this can show up as needing to see it more often and wanting to see more hard-core images.

Again, slightly off topic here, but I want my daughter to be able to exercise a strong "no" when she is receiving touch that is unwelcome or uncomfortable just as I want my sons to hear a "no", vocally or implied and to honour that. For my daughter to say "no", she needs to know her own body and have confidence in speaking up about it.

You might think that this would come naturally, but I will speak from my experience - I was abused by a member of the church when I was a child (just one of at least 1 hundred) and so grew up with extra shame about my body PLUS being schooled into what it means to be a good girl compliant, turning the other cheek. So, as a young adult, when I was groped, I didn't have the confidence or inner strength to exercise a NO!

I don't want that for my daughter or my sons.

I think all of these are really important conversations to have with our children and we need to be able to have them without feeling awkward or like it's shameful. When we feel that way and we lead the conversation then our kids pick up on that and unconsciously take on the belief that sex and associated body parts are shameful.