

A photograph of four young women sitting on a wooden bench outdoors. They are all looking at their smartphones. The woman on the far left is wearing a blue and white polka-dot dress and white sneakers. The woman next to her is wearing a denim jacket over a colorful patterned dress and black and white sneakers. The woman in the center is wearing a grey long-sleeved shirt and blue jeans, with her feet crossed and wearing green and white sneakers. The woman on the far right is wearing a grey t-shirt and bright teal pants, with white sneakers. A denim jacket is placed on the bench between the woman in jeans and the woman in teal pants. The background shows a metal fence and some greenery.

# how to talk to your kids about porn



# ABOUT ME...

- Qualified secondary teacher since 2005
- PSHE specialist - including Sex & Relationships Education
- Freelance emotional wellbeing educator
- Qualified coach
- Bestselling body confidence author
- Mum to 12-year-old twins
- Step-mum to two teenagers
- Open-minded
- Unembarrassable!



# BEFORE WE START

## Some assumptions and expectations...

- There are varied views on pornography and sex. You are free to hold your own view without judgement.
- Pornography may/may not be OK for adults depending on your view. It is not OK for children.
- Schools have an important role to play but parents have the main responsibility for preparing our children to know how to respond to pornography.
- None of us know everything about this subject (including me) and that's OK. There's nothing wrong with saying "I don't know".
- "Pornography" is defined as the portrayal of explicit sexual content for the purpose of causing sexual arousal. Today we're focusing mainly on online pornography.



# THE HARSH REALITY



- 9 out of 10 children have seen online porn by the age of 14\*
- 75% of parents felt sure their children had not seen online porn... but 53% of their children said they had\*\*
- More than half of 11-13 year olds said they have seen online porn\*\*
- 63% of those who have seen it said they came across it unintentionally\*\*
- Some children reported first seeing pornography as young as seven or eight\*\*

\* findings from a 2016 report by the NSPCC and the Children's Commissioner

\*\* findings from a 2019 report from the British Board of Film Classification (BBFC)



# THE IMPACT

## When children see online porn:

- they think "porn sex" is what sex looks like in real life
- they believe the types of bodies they see in porn are the norm, and they expect the same of themselves and their partners
- they learn that girls should be sexually subservient and submissive
- they learn that boys should be sexually dominant, aggressive and even violent
- they try extreme or risky sexual acts believing they're part of a "normal" sex life
- they have a distorted view of what a healthy relationship looks like





**"No parent can child-  
proof the world. A  
parent's job is to  
world-proof the child."**

**- Doug Flanders, MD**



# BEFORE YOU START THE CONVERSATION

## Choosing the balance that's right for you...

1. How opinionated do you want to be?

no judgement-  
based opinion given



giving strong opinions  
and judgements

2. How much will you question your child?

no questions asked  
about experiences



explicit questions asked  
about experiences

3. How much will you share about your own experiences?

saying nothing about  
my experiences



sharing explicit details  
of my experiences

4. How much do you want to "teach"?

main aim is to impart  
facts and knowledge



main aim is to start  
an open discussion

5. How serious do you want the conversations to feel?

a lighthearted and  
humorous approach



a sensible and  
subdued approach



# TACKLING THE ISSUES

## Let's get started

“Pornography” is a big topic! It’s easier to break it into themes.

Some issues that concern parents most\* are:

- children having a distorted view of healthy sex and relationships
- impact on body image and self esteem
- the normalisation of sharing sexualised images of themselves

\* findings from a 2018 survey by Internet Matters



## THEME 1:

# PORN SEX VS REAL SEX

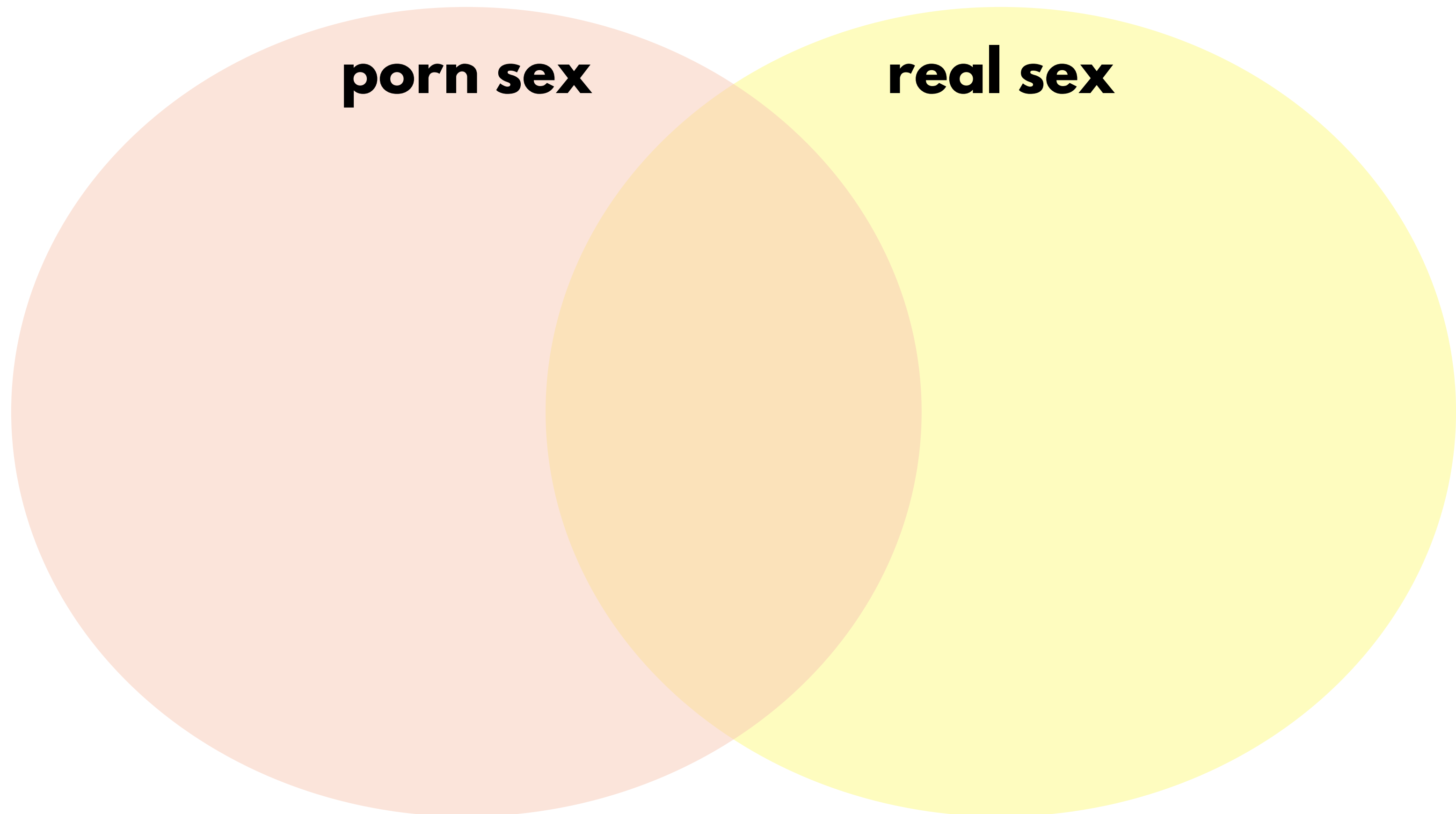
Stopping our kids thinking it's a how-to manual



Porn normalises:

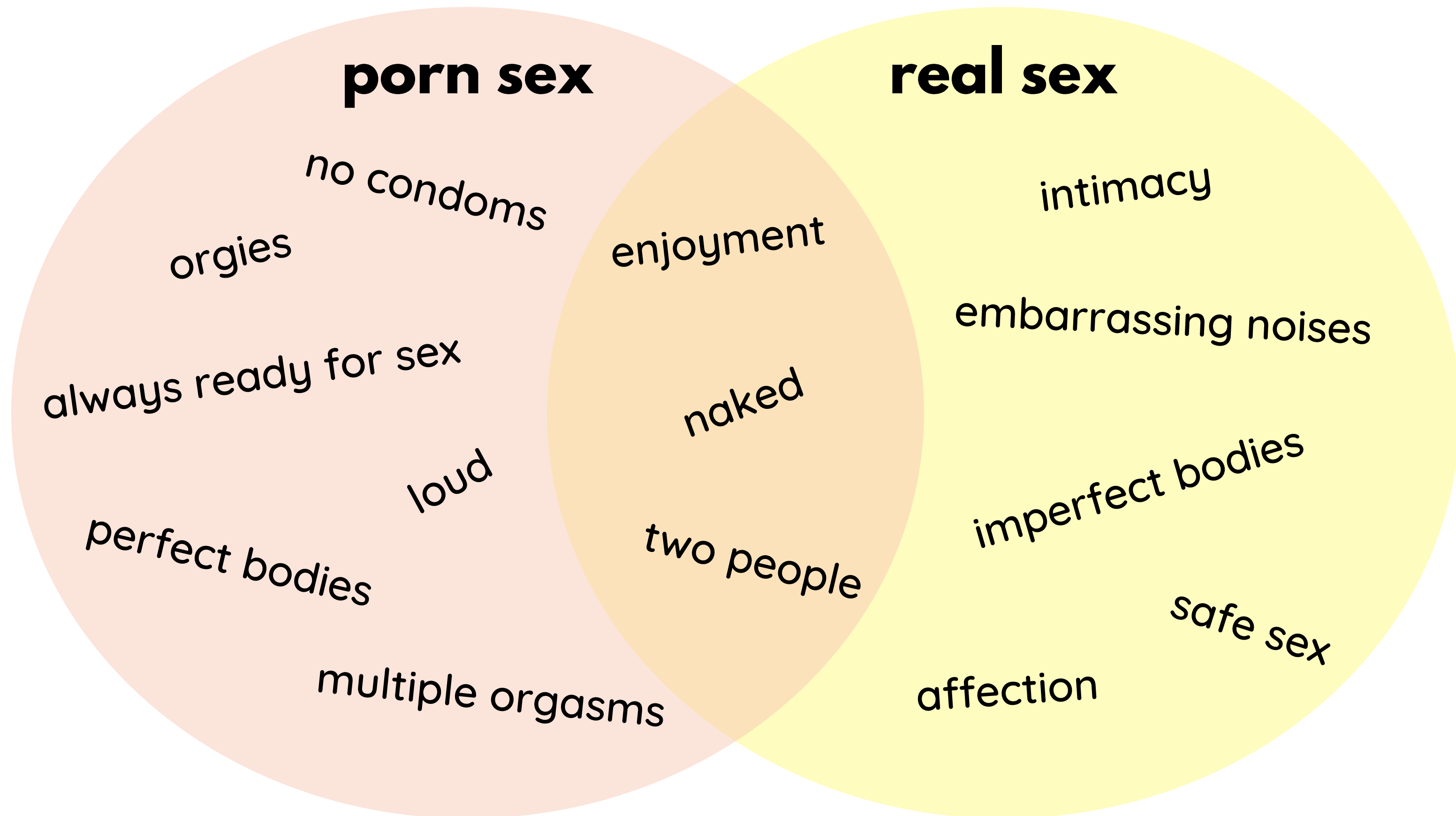
- lack of consent
- unprotected sex
- aggression
- casual sex
- sex with multiple partners
- the use of extreme sex toys
- lack of love or intimacy
- objectification of women

# PORN SEX VS REAL SEX



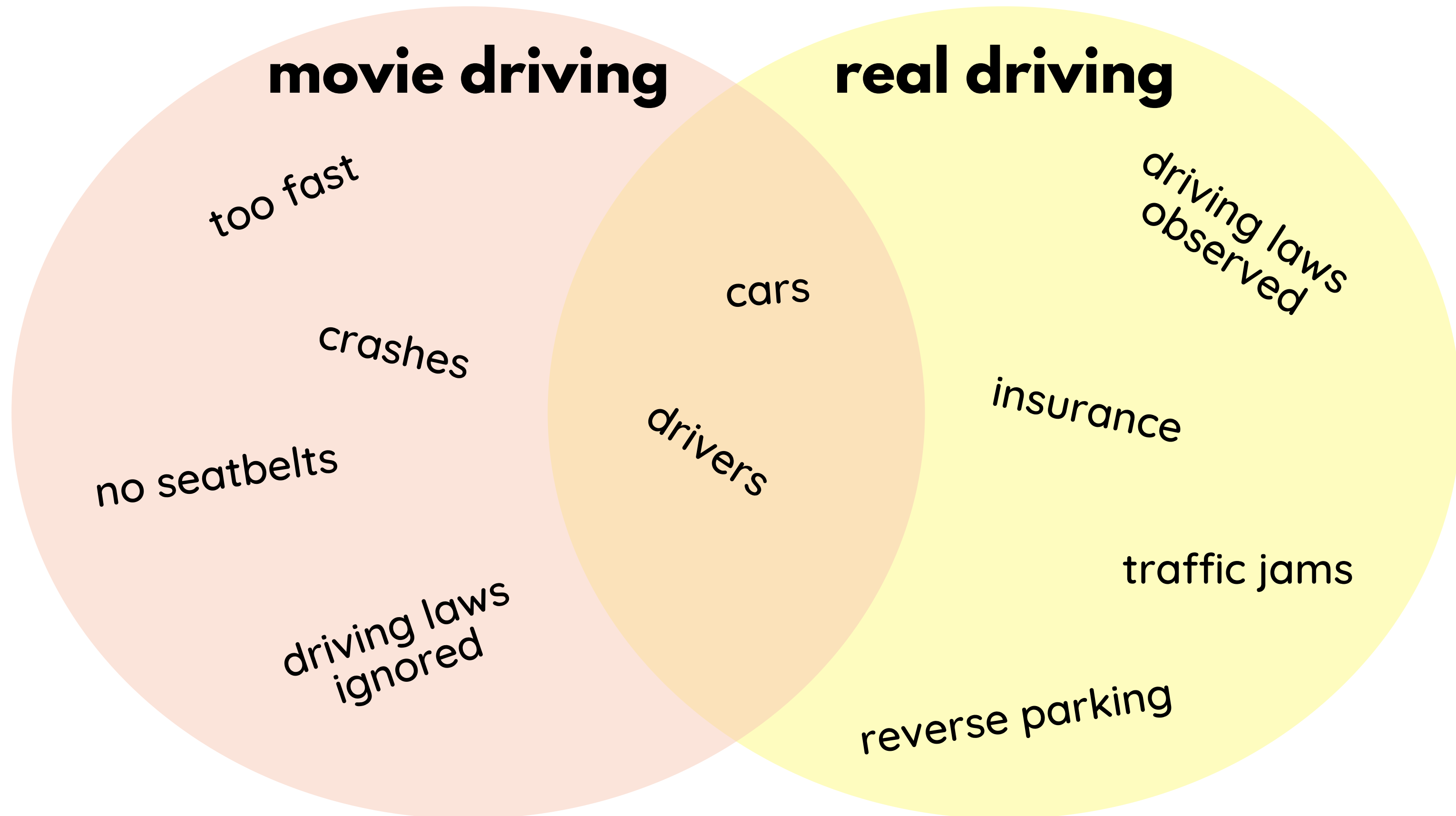


# PORN SEX VS REAL SEX



# SEX IS LIKE DRIVING A CAR...

...you wouldn't want to learn how from a movie!



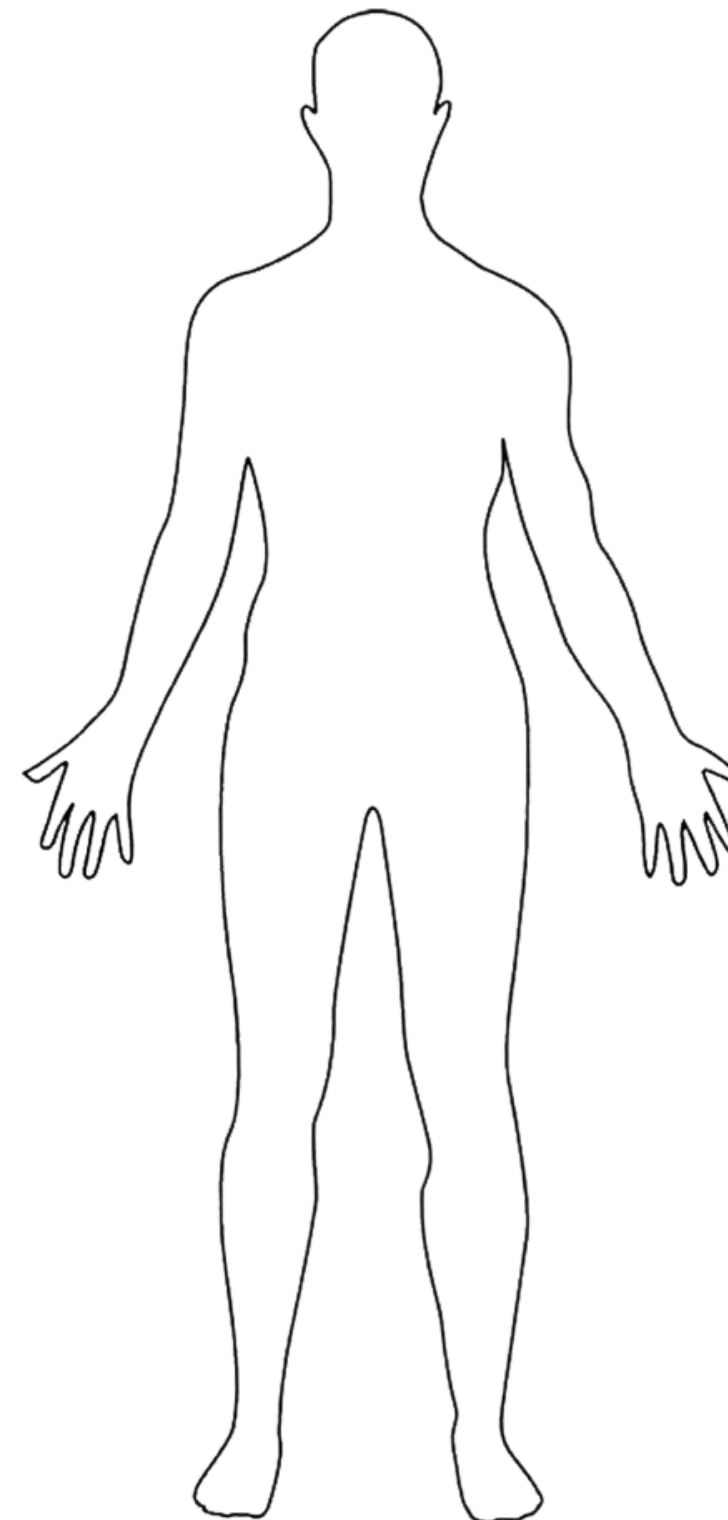
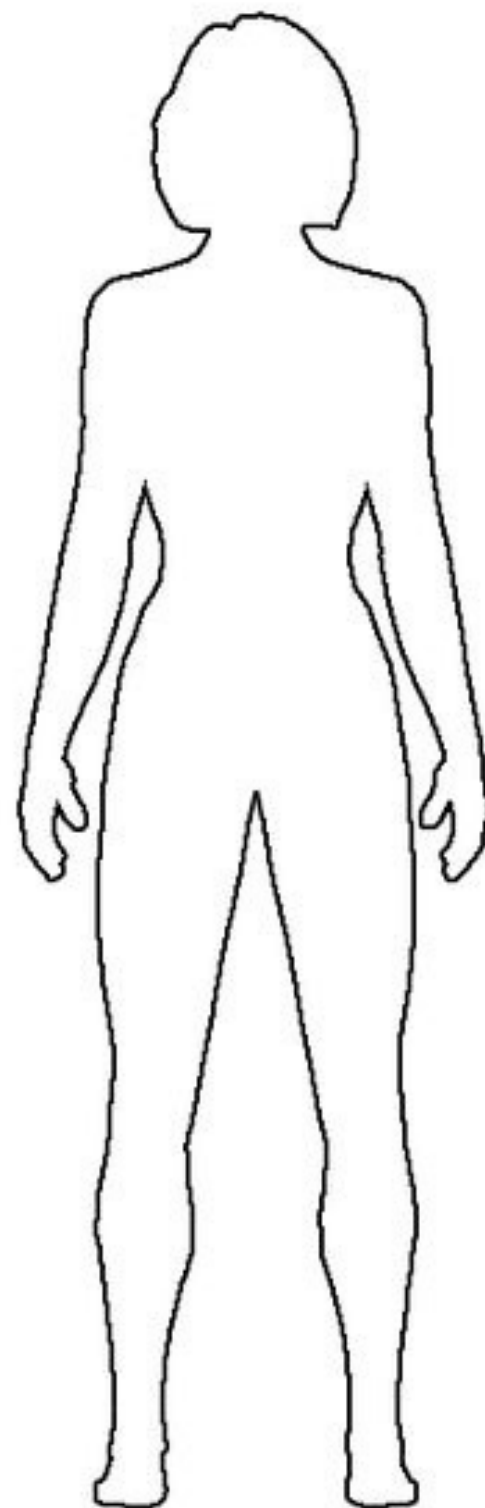


## THEME 2:

# WHAT DO BODIES LOOK LIKE?

Most of us don't look like porn stars...

What do you think  
the average adult  
in the UK looks like?

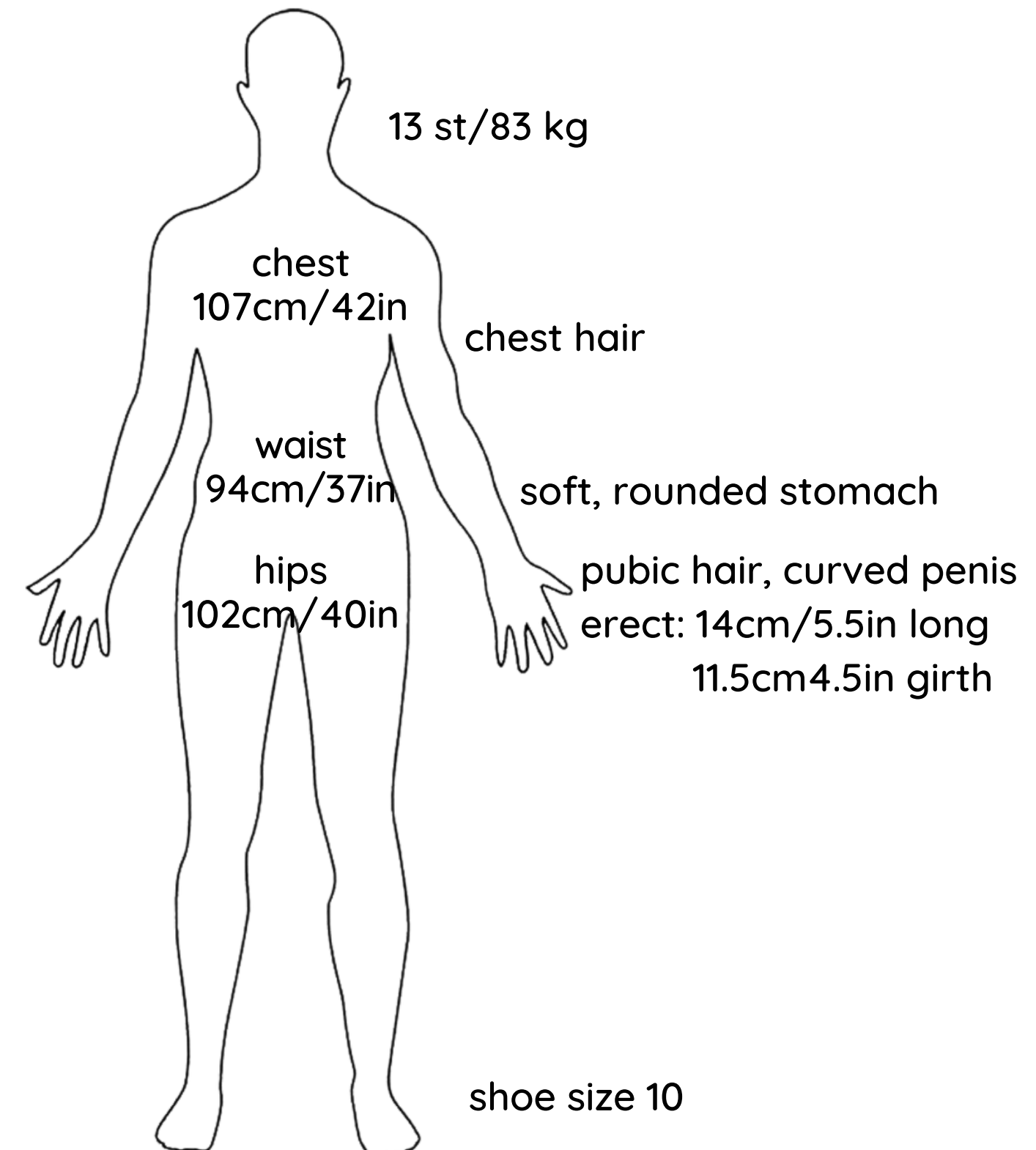
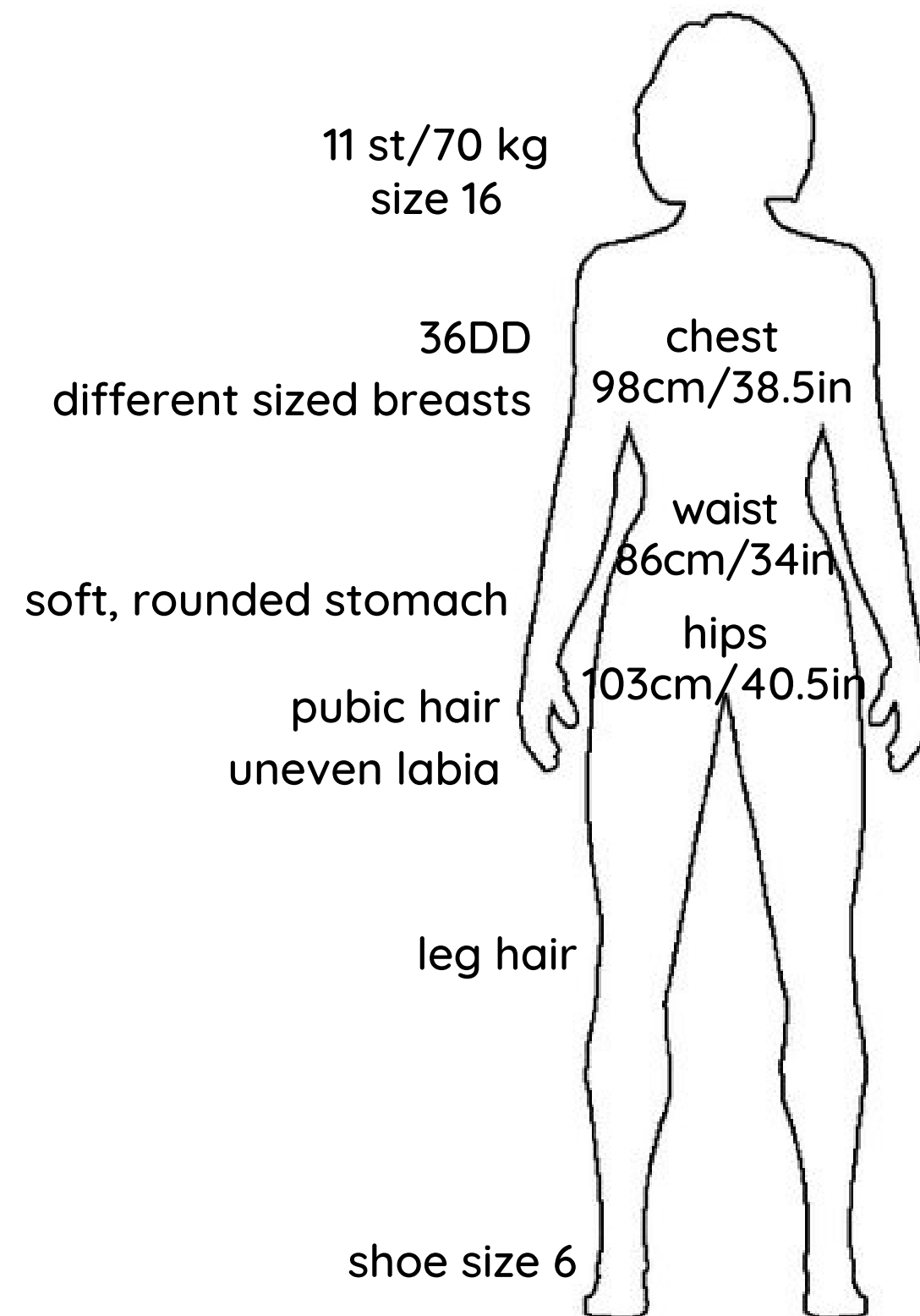


### word bank

eyes	hair
mouth	muscles
nose	breasts
stomach	penis
nipples	vagina
hips	legs
bum	arms
skin	waist
weight	chest
height	face

# WHAT DO BODIES LOOK LIKE?

Most of us don't look like porn stars...





# QUESTION BANK

- How are the bodies you created different from the average adult bodies?
- How are they different from your own body?
- Did anything about the average bodies surprise you?
- Where do we get our ideas of what a naked body should look like?
- Do people of different generations have different ideas about the ideal body? Why do you think that might be?
- What's it like for someone to feel like their body doesn't look how it's supposed to?
- How much do porn actors and actresses look like average people?
- Why do they get chosen to star in porn films rather than average-looking people?
- How do you think people would respond if people with average bodies became mainstream porn actors and actresses?



## THEME 3:

# SEXTING

And the normalisation of sexual imagery

KIDS MIGHT THINK:

"It's just a bit of fun"  
"Everyone does it"  
"I can't say no"  
"It's not a big deal"

SO HOW DO WE BRIDGE THE GAP?



PARENTS MIGHT THINK:

"It's really dangerous"  
"The impact is lasting"  
"You have to say no"  
"You'll always regret it"

**BY USING FACTS RATHER  
THAN OPINIONS**



# DID YOU KNOW...

Try asking "Guess what I found out today?" or "Did you know this?"

It's illegal to make, share or have "indecent images" of anyone under 18 - including yourself.

"Indecent images" include naked pictures, topless pictures of a girl, pictures of genitals, sexual acts including masturbation, and sexual pictures in underwear.

Schools have the legal right to search kids' devices for indecent images. Police record all sexting incidents on their crime system.

# SEXTING

A more indirect approach...

## Biggest reasons for sexting:

- peer pressure
- pressure to prove their sexuality
- harassment, threats or blackmail
- seeking approval
- online relationships
- confidence in looks and wanting to show others





# SEXTING

Explicit photos are like toothpaste...



**SOME OTHER APPROACHES TO CONSIDER...**

**“Wanting to view sexual imagery can be really important to people - often young people are accessing porn in a bid to learn about sex and sexuality or to figure out their sexual identity. While porn is clearly not the best sex educator, we’re not providing these resources anywhere else – so what are young people going to do?”**

**- Professor Clarissa Smith, Professor of Sexual Cultures, University of Sunderland**



# DON'T TALK ABOUT PORN!

**Look for discussion opportunities in:** TV programmes/films  
Song lyrics  
News stories  
Experiences of others  
A "friend" needing advice



## **Themes might include:**

Healthy sexual relationships  
Unrealistic body image  
Sexting  
Consent  
Contraception  
Intimacy  
Objectification of women  
Laws around pornography

# QUIZ TIME!

## Pornography and the law...

### legal or illegal?

- 1 A 17 year old girl takes a photo of her naked breasts and sends it to her 18 year old boyfriend.
- 2 A 15 year old shows a pornographic image to someone from their class at school.
- 3 A 19 year old watches a porn film showing an adult actress dressed as a school girl.
- 4 A couple in their 20s video themselves having sex. One uploads it without telling the other.
- 5 A woman shares photos of her ex-boyfriend's penis to humiliate him after he broke up with her.

Answers coming up...

# ANSWERS:

**1** A 17 year old girl takes a photo of her naked breasts and sends it to her 18 year old boyfriend.

**Illegal. She is creating and distributing child pornography as she's under 18. The lower age limit for being in porn isn't the same as the age of consent for sex.**

**2** A 15 year old shows a pornographic image to someone from their class at school.

**Illegal. The law prohibits anyone from showing pornography to someone who's under 18 years old.**

**3** A 19 year old watches a porn film showing an adult actress dressed as a school girl.

**It depends. If the actress is actually over 18 and has consented to being in the film it's probably legal, but if she looks under 16 then it might be illegal.**

**4** A couple in their 20s video themselves having sex. One uploads it without telling the other.

**Illegal. It's fine for over-18s to film themselves having sex if they both agree to it, but it's not lawful to upload or share it without consent.**

**5** A woman shares photos of her ex-boyfriend's penis to humiliate him after he broke up with her.

**Illegal. This is known as "revenge porn" and there is a specific law prohibiting it.**

## Questions to prompt discussion:

Do any of the answers surprise you?

Do you agree these laws are needed?  
Why/why not?

If you could make an extra law about pornography what would it be?

What would you do if you knew one of these laws had been broken by someone you know?



# "SAFE TALK"





# REMEMBER:

- Curiosity about sex is normal.
- Don't save it all for one "big talk".
- You don't have to be an expert.
- Consider what's age-appropriate.
- Don't give up if it doesn't go the way you plan.
- Every child is different.



**"There is no such thing  
as a perfect parent. So  
just be a real one."**

**- Sue Atkins**



# WHAT ABOUT YOU?

Don't ignore your own feelings



- Knowing your child has seen pornography can be distressing
- Think about who can listen and support you:
  - A partner or friend
  - A trusted colleague
  - Your child's school

# FOR MORE INFORMATION

For you and your kids

[www.familylives.org.uk](http://www.familylives.org.uk)

An organisation providing a range of parenting and family support

[www.bishuk.com](http://www.bishuk.com)

A website for kids aged 14+ to get safe and reliable answers to all their questions about sex

[www.internetmatters.org](http://www.internetmatters.org)

Information on keeping kids safe online, including tools to filter and block inappropriate content

[www.thinkuknow.co.uk](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk)

A collection of websites for younger children, teenagers and parents - with information and advice about staying safe online

[www.iwf.org.uk](http://www.iwf.org.uk)

Internet Watch Foundation - they can search for explicit images of your child and remove them