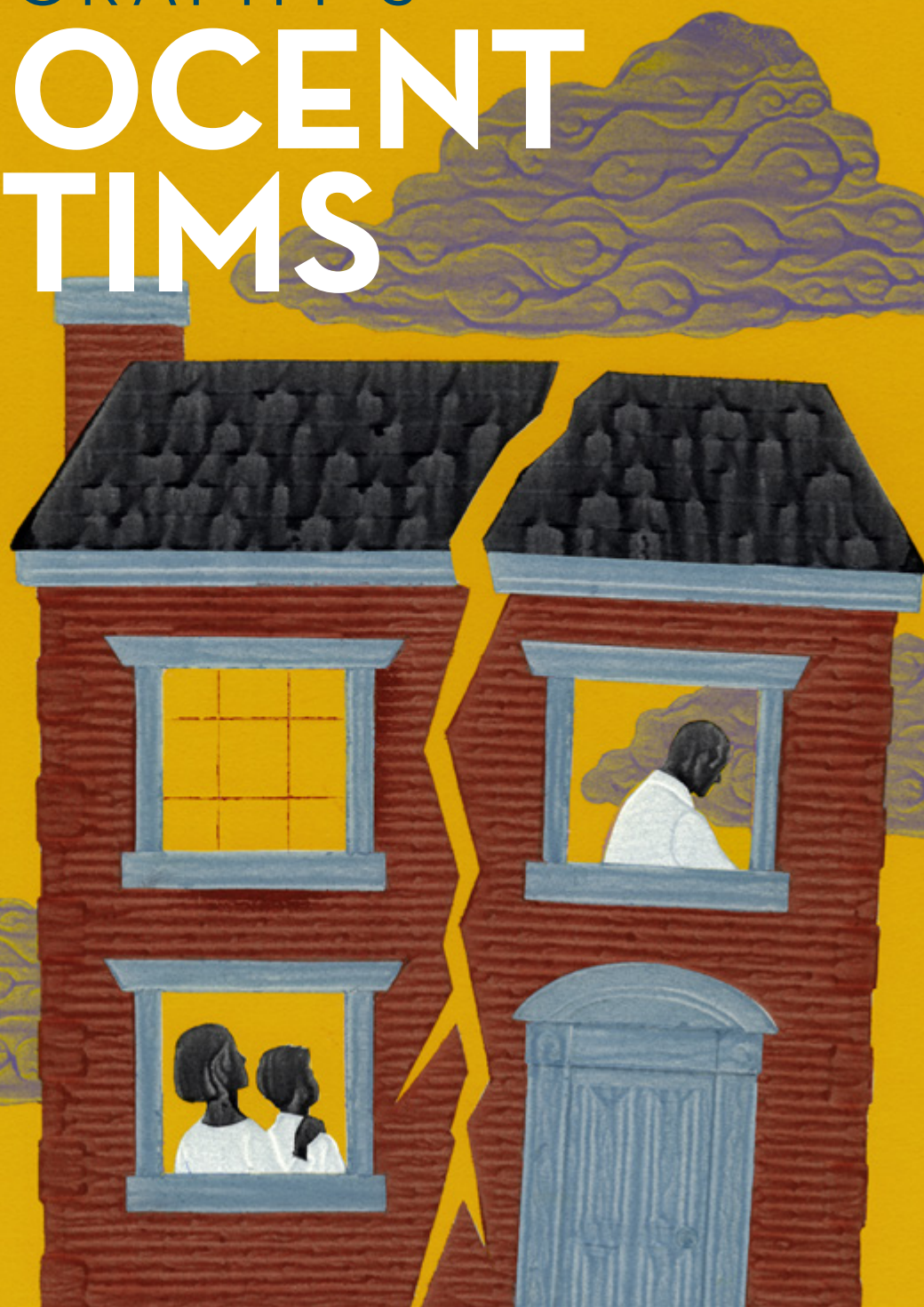


PORNOGRAPHY'S INNOCENT VICTIMS

Pornography affects more people than just those who look at it. But if you've been hurt by someone else's pornography use, there is hope.



Many of you feel that you've heard more than enough about pornography already. You feel you've heard every possible variation of "Stay away! It can ruin your life!" and "If you're caught in its snare, all is not lost!"

Of course, these messages are repeated often because they're important. But that's not all there is to say about pornography. There are many innocent people who suffer from someone else's pornography use. Here are a few things you can do to find support, help, and healing.

WHAT TO DO WHEN A PARENT IS USING PORNOGRAPHY

Recognize that there is hope.

Never give up. There is always hope. The situation you're in isn't easy, but it isn't hopeless—for you or for your parent. People in such situations often feel and express a sense that it can never get better. That just isn't true. People have come through experiences like the one you and your parent are going through. It may take time and tears, but it can get better.

Learn ways to respond appropriately to the person's pornography use.

Keep all doors of communication open. Let them know how you feel and how it's affecting you, but don't express shock or anger when you find out that a parent has been viewing pornography. Express love. Don't condemn the person.

Don't feel ashamed—it's not your fault or burden to bear.

You are not in control of your parent's pornography use, so don't burden yourself with feelings of responsibility, shame, or guilt. You can love, support, and help them in their recovery, but the outcome will be determined by *their* choices.

Find out how to be supportive but also set appropriate boundaries.

Although it's important that your parent knows that you'll support and help them it's also important that they know what your limits are. Set boundaries so that they know what they can reasonably expect from you in terms of your investment of time, effort, and emotional energy. Doing so will help keep you sane and safe.

Find someone you trust whom you can talk to.

If someone in a family is viewing pornography, children often feel like they're sworn to secrecy about it, particularly if it's a parent. But everyone needs someone to talk to. Your other parent, your bishop, another Church leader or teacher, a counselor, or even a very trusted friend can help comfort you in your anguish and perhaps offer advice.

Learn how to help make your home a safe place to talk about these things.

When people in your home talk about sex and pornography, speak calmly. Allow people to express

themselves without feeling judged. Be sincere in your expressions of love and support. And offer forgiveness when problems are being appropriately dealt with.

Remember that Heavenly Father loves you.

Even though you are in a time of trial—and perhaps *because* you are in a time of trial—your Heavenly Father has not forgotten you but will bless you with what you need to get through. Remember this, and trust in His love.

Remember that Heavenly Father loves them.

Your parent's poor decisions and unrighteous actions do

not disqualify them from Heavenly Father's love. The Savior said that the Good Shepherd is especially interested in saving the one lost sheep who has strayed from the ninety and nine (see Luke 15:1–6). It will be difficult, but your parent can repent. When they do, there will be joy in heaven (see Luke 15:7).

Pray to Heavenly Father for your parent and for hope and healing to come to you.

Your Father in Heaven does hear your prayers. Remember your parent in your prayers, and also remember your own need for healing, guidance, peace, and strength. **NE**

WHAT DO I SAY TO MY BROTHER, SISTER, COUSIN, OR FRIEND?

If you discover that a loved one your age (a brother, sister, cousin, or friend) is viewing pornography, let them know you love them. In a kind and loving way, let them know that they need to quit and that complete repentance and healing are possible. Tell them that they need to talk to their parents, their bishop, or another trusted adult to get help. If they refuse to do so, let them know that because you love them, you will help them get help by talking to someone for them.



For a spouse and family support guide and more, go to overcomingpornography.org/spouses-and-families.