CHEAT SHEET

Preparing to Tell Your Wife

Tell the truth, make room for her response, and take responsibility for what comes next.

BEGIN WITH SUPPORT

Prepare with a trustworthy helper. An extensive hidden history, repeated partial disclosures, or overwhelming distress needs a coach experienced in sexual betrayal and disclosure. Ask how both spouses will be supported. Set your next contact now. Preparation must not become an open-ended reason to keep concealing.

FIRST DISCLOSURE / WITHHELD FACTS

Prepare the behavior, timeframe, recent or ongoing use, pattern, concealment, and broken agreements. Include the facts that affect her choices, even when they are difficult to say.

RETURN TO USE

Follow the disclosure arrangement you've made. Name what happened and when, what you did to stop, and whom you contacted. If you have no arrangement, ask for help planning the conversation promptly.

01 Prepare the facts.

Use plain language without unsolicited graphic details. Include contact with other people, money spent or hidden, shared accounts or devices, and health or safety concerns. Don't hide other behavior behind the word pornography. Separate what you know from what you still need to check.

02 Give her a voice.

Ask about timing, privacy, and support she chooses. Leave room for a different setting or a pause. Avoid a time when either of you must immediately work, drive, sleep, or meet another responsibility. Do not delay information about an ongoing risk.

03 Listen without asking her to settle your shame.

Your choices are yours. Don't blame your wife, your sexual relationship, or your history. She may be angry, quiet, or need space. Don't ask for credit, reassurance, sex, quick forgiveness, or a promise to stay. Bring your fear to Jesus and your own support.

FIND YOUR FIRST WORDS

Use only words that are true for your situation.

First disclosure: "I've been using pornography and hiding it from you. I need to tell you what has been happening. These were my choices, and I know this affects your ability to trust me."

Return to use: "I looked at pornography on [date]. I've stopped and contacted [helper]. I know this hurts you again. I'll answer what I know and respect the space and support you need."

Afterward: Keep the commitments you make. Answer questions honestly, check uncertain facts, and return with answers when agreed. Support her access to care without directing what she shares.

If threats, intimidation, or violence make a private conversation unsafe, arrange professional support and a safer setting first.

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Your working plan

Type in the boxes and save a copy, or print and write by hand. Prepare these notes with your helper.

☐ First disclosure / withheld facts ☐ Return to use

MY HELPER / NEXT CONTACT

WHEN WE WILL TALK

01 What happened?

Behavior, timeframe, frequency, and most recent use.

02 What did I hide?

Broken agreements and other facts that affect her choices.

03 Which facts am I unsure about?

For example, dates or money spent. Write what you will verify, how, and by when.

04 My opening words.

Name your choices and responsibility. Leave room for her response.

05 Timing, support, and a plan to pause.

What will I propose? What does she want? How will we continue?

06 My follow-through.

Questions to answer and when; practical care; my next support appointment.

Need more room? Continue on your own paper or in a private document. Bring the complete account to your helper.