

10 WAYS TO PROTECT

YOUR CHILD

FROM BECOMING A VICTIM OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING



Know where your teens are at all times. You can easily track their cell phones with a free "Find My Phone" app like Life 360.

GET TO KNOW YOUR TEEN'S FRIENDS. OPEN YOUR HOME TO BE A "HANG OUT" SPOT WITH SNACKS AND A COMFORTABLE ATMOSPHERE SO THEY WANT TO HANG OUT THERE.

ACCORDING TO COMMON SENSE MEDIA, TEENS SPEND NEARLY 9 HOURS A DAY CONSUMING MEDIA, MORE THAN THEY TYPICALLY SLEEP!

#1. LISTEN & BE PROACTIVE: Talk to your teen and ask questions about how he/she feels about his/her peers and the people around them. Teens sometimes struggle with peer pressure, bullying, and other social pressures like drinking or using drugs. All of these issues may increase your teen's vulnerability.

#2. ENCOURAGE EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES & HOBBIES: Athletics, arts, and organized volunteer activities can all serve to help a child build their self-esteem, self-worth, and to develop empathy. Keeping your child active and busy leaves little room for your teen to get into trouble or be with the wrong crowd.

#3. TEACH MEDIA LITERACY: Teach your teen how to identify, analyze, and evaluate media messages in TV shows, movies, song lyrics, magazine articles & photos, apps, slogans, and social media posts. Teens should be able to understand that many images they see have been edited and do not represent a real or "healthy" body image.

#4. KNOW WHO IS REACHING OUT TO YOUR TEEN: Knowing who your teen is talking to or regularly spending time with will help you protect him/her and allow you to give him/her guidance about someone who may be a negative influence. Traffickers often times have contacted their victims online through social media or in locations where teens gather.

#5. IT'S OK TO SAY "NO": Teach your teen that it is always OK to say "NO" and there is no situation that is so terrible you wouldn't be there to help. Have a contact plan that includes a way for your teen to ask for help to get out of a bad situation without getting in trouble.

#6. TEACH YOUR CHILD ABOUT SEX: By reinforcing and supplementing what your teen learns in school, you can help your teen develop important attitudes and information about healthy sexuality. Teens are naturally curious and are likely to search for information about sex online, and can be exposed to sexually explicit pornography either as a search result or by accident. Teach your child it is OK to say "NO" to sex and that it is not OK to have sex out of feelings of fear or obligation.

#7. SPEND TIME WITH YOUR TEEN: Teens require quality time with their parents so they can talk about what is going on in their daily lives. Spend time going for a walk, talking while cooking dinner, or volunteering together, which can also teach about empathy and perspective about other people's circumstances and suffering.

#8. KNOW WHERE AND WHEN YOUR CHILD GETS NEW THINGS: Sex traffickers will use the things your teen wants to lure him/her. Take a regular inventory of your teen's belongings and ask questions if you see expensive new items that you didn't purchase or know your teen cannot afford.

#9. TEACH ABOUT THE WORLD: Traffickers will often use "seeing the world" or "getting out of town" as a lure with teens. Expose your children to other places, cultures, and languages so they don't feel isolated or ignorant about the world around them. Make sure your teen knows how to ask for help or contact you if separated from you.

#10. GET HELP IF NEEDED: If your child starts having depression, anger, anxiety, or other disruptive issues, get professional help. Ignoring your teen's signals may lead him/her further away and possibly lead to seeking comfort from a stranger.

For urgent or life-threatening situations, or if you suspect someone is in immediate danger, call 911. It is unsafe to attempt to rescue a human trafficking victim.





"WHAT WOULD YOU DO?" & RED FLAGS FOR PARENTS



PARENTS SHOULD TRUST THEIR INSTINCTS. IF SOMETHING FEELS WRONG WITH THEIR TEEN, IT PROBABLY IS. "WHAT IF?" SCENARIOS ARE A GREAT OPPORTUNITY TO PRACTICE HOW TO HANDLE DIFFICULT SITUATIONS WITH YOUR TEEN. THESE "WHAT WOULD YOU DO?" CONVERSATIONS HELP EASE APPREHENSION ABOUT THE SUBJECT AND GET YOUR TEEN USED TO HANDLING SITUATIONS THAT MAY ARISE. YOU MAY HEAR "SERIOUSLY?" BUT IT'S BETTER TO UPSET YOUR TEEN NOW THAN DEAL WITH A DANGEROUS SITUATION LATER.

WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

"WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF A GOOD LOOKING OLDER GUY CAME UP TO YOU AT THE MALL AND SAID YOU OUGHT TO BE A MODEL?"

"WOULD YOU GIVE SOMEONE YOU JUST MET YOUR CELL PHONE NUMBER OR ADDRESS?"

"IS IT OK FOR STRANGERS TO TAKE PICTURES OF YOU?"

"HAVE ANY OF YOUR FRIENDS TALKED ABOUT HOW IT'S OK TO GET PAID TO GO ON DATES?"

"DO YOU KNOW WHAT SEXTING IS?"

RED FLAGS FOR PARENTS:

- * MISSED A LOT OF SCHOOL WITHOUT YOUR PERMISSION OR RUNNING AWAY FROM HOME FOR PERIODS OF TIME.
- * A NEW "OLDER" BOYFRIEND
- * SUDDEN POSSESSION OF EXPENSIVE CLOTHING, HANDBAGS, ELECTRONICS, ETC., THAT YOU DIDN'T PURCHASE AND THEY CAN'T AFFORD.
- * SUDDEN CHANGE IN APPEARANCE
- * UNUSUAL NEW TATTOO

- * UNEXPLAINED CASH
- * "SECOND" CELL PHONE IN THEIR POSSESSION
- * HOTEL ROOM KEY IN THEIR HANDBAG OR WALLET
- * POSSESSION OF A FAKE ID
- * REFERENCE TO NEW "MODELING" JOB
- * SUDDEN CHANGE IN BEHAVIOR
- * SUDDEN ACADEMIC DECLINE
- * SUICIDE ATTEMPT

- * SURPRISE CHANGE IN FRIENDSHIPS OR RELATIONSHIP
- * UNCHARACTERISTICALLY SEXUAL OR PROMISCUOUS BEHAVIOR
- * SIGNS OF PHYSICAL ABUSE OR RESTRAINT
- * GANG AFFILIATION
- * SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASE
- * USE OF TERMINOLOGY LIKE "DADDY," "THE GAME," "MANAGER," OR "TRICK"

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PARENTS... ARE YOU CONCERNED YOUR CHILD MAY BE A VICTIM OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING?



STEP 1: CALL THE POLICE.

Report your suspicions with as much supporting evidence as possible. Pimps are violent and dangerous criminals and your child is not safe in their presence. Think about the physical safety of your child and your family. Teens often reconnect with their trafficker so be sure to explain why this is a bad idea and consider restricting or monitoring all communication channels.

STEP 2: LEARN ABOUT YOUR CHILD'S RIGHTS AS A VICTIM. Continue to offer support, compassionate listening, and let your child know that he/she is a victim of a crime and that you love him/her. Sex trafficking victims have endured a high level of trauma and require specialized services and interventions. Victims of trauma can experience extreme stress that impacts the person's ability to cope and function.

STEP 3: HAVE YOUR CHILD TESTED.

Make sure to have your child tested for sexually transmitted diseases right away. If left untreated, normally curable disease can cause long-term complications and infertility.

STEP 4: SEEK LONG-TERM COUNSELING.

Counseling with a trusted provider who is trained in trauma and has experience working with victims of sex trafficking will be beneficial for long-term healing.

STEP 5: THINK ABOUT PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY. You can help your children feel safe by helping them identify things that instill feelings of safety and help them stay away from people, places, and things that make them feel unsafe. If your children are involved with people at school that are influencing their behavior, consider changing schools to avoid daily interactions and pressure from peers.

STEP 6: MONITOR SOCIAL MEDIA OR CONSIDER A BREAK FROM ALL SOCIAL MEDIA. Monitor internet usage and website/data history.

STEP 7: BE PREPARED TO DEAL WITH DRUG ADDICTION, PTSD, DEPRESSION, ANXIETY, LOW SELF ESTEEM, AND FEELINGS OF WORTHLESSNESS DURING THE RECOVERY PROCESS. Avoid blaming your child for his/her role in the abuse. Do not use words that suggest his/her behavior caused the trauma.

STEP 8: FIND SUPPORT IN YOUR LOCAL COMMUNITY WITH A PEER MENTORING PROGRAM. Peer support and group therapy is helpful and sex trafficking victims can be coached to feel less like a victim and more like a resilient survivor. These interactions can foster feelings of strength and help empower youth to rebuild self-esteem and make positive choices going forward.

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Errol D. Toulon Jr., Ed. D



Suffolk County Sheriff



WARNING SIGNS YOU MAY BE A VICTIM OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING



91% of Sex Trafficking Victims Are Female

33% of Victims Are Minors

2.4 Million People Are Being Trafficked

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NOT ALL INDICATORS LISTED ARE PRESENT IN EVERY HUMAN TRAFFICKING SITUATION, AND THE PRESENCE OR ABSENCE OF ANY OF THE INDICATORS IS NOT NECESSARILY PROOF OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING.

WHERE DO YOU EAT & SLEEP?

Are you sleeping in a bed, on a cot, or on the floor?
Have you ever been deprived of food, water, sleep, or medical care?
Are you required to ask permission for physical necessities?

WHAT ARE YOUR WORKING & LIVING CONDITIONS LIKE?

Are you able to come and go as you please?
Can you leave your working situation if you want?
Are there locks on your doors and windows so you can't leave?
Are you allowed to talk to people outside your home or job?

HAS ANYONE EVER PHYSICALLY HARMED YOU?

Have you ever been threatened if you try to leave home or work?
Has anyone ever threatened your family?

HAS YOUR IDENTIFICATION OR DOCUMENTATION BEEN TAKEN AWAY?

Is anyone forcing you to do anything you don't want to?
Have you been forced to have sex or perform sex acts?

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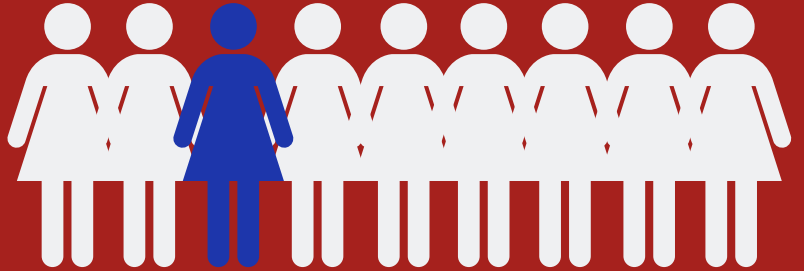
GROOMING

FOR SEXUAL EXPLOITATION



TARGETING A VICTIM

TRAFFICKERS TARGET VICTIMS WHO HAVE NOTICEABLE VULNERABILITY: EMOTIONAL NEEDINESS, LOW SELF-CONFIDENCE, ECONOMIC STRESS, OR ALCOHOL OR SUBSTANCE USE DEPENDENCY.



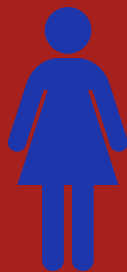
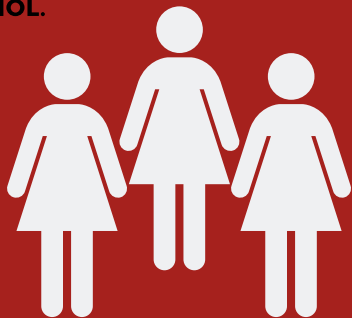
FILLING A NEED

THE INFORMATION GAINED ALLOWS THE TRAFFICKER TO FILL A NEED IN THE VICTIM'S LIFE, MAKING THE VICTIM DEPENDENT ON HIM/HER IN SOME WAY: BUYING GIFTS, BEING A FRIEND, BEGINNING A LOVE RELATIONSHIP, OR BUYING THEIR TARGETED VICTIM DRUGS OR ALCOHOL.



GAINING TRUST & INFORMATION

OBTAINING INFORMATION ABOUT THE VICTIM IS KEY. THIS CAN BE DONE THROUGH CASUAL CONVERSATIONS WITH THE VICTIM OR PARENTS. TRAFFICKERS OFTEN MIX WELL WITH OTHER ADULTS.



ISOLATION

THE TRAFFICKER CREATES TIMES TO BE ALONE WITH THE VICTIM. THE TRAFFICKER WILL BEGIN TO HAVE A MAJOR ROLE IN THE VICTIM'S LIFE AND ATTEMPT TO DISTANCE THE VICTIM FROM FAMILY & FRIENDS. ALCOHOL AND SUBSTANCE USE CAN PLAY A LARGE ROLE IN ISOLATION.

ABUSE BEGINS

THE TRAFFICKER BEGINS CLAIMING THAT A SERVICE MUST BE REPAYED WHETHER MONEY WAS SPENT ON DRUGS, CAR RIDES, MOBILE PHONES, ETC. THE TRAFFICKER DEMANDS SEX AS PAYMENT FOR SERVICES. IN MANY CASES, THE TRAFFICKER MAINTAINS CONTROL OF THE VICTIM THROUGH THREATS, VIOLENCE, OR BLACKMAIL.



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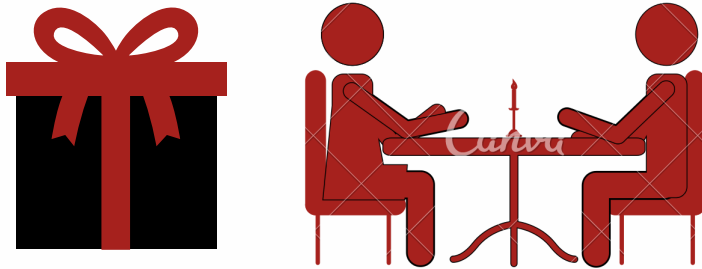
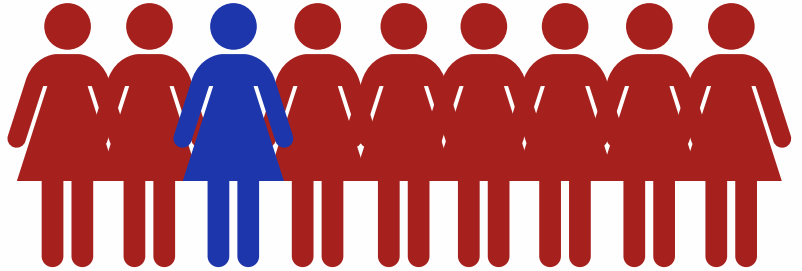
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WAYS TO SAFEGUARD YOUR TEENS ON

SOCIAL MEDIA

1. TEACH YOUR TEEN NEVER TO USE HIS/HER FULL NAME OR PERSONAL INFORMATION ON SOCIAL MEDIA.

2. MAKE SURE YOUR TEEN KNOWS YOUR PHONE NUMBER BY HEART. PHONES CAN GET LOST OR CONFISCATED AND YOUR CHILD NEEDS TO KNOW HOW TO CONTACT YOU.

3. MANY TEENS COLLECT FOLLOWERS OR PAY FOR THEM TO INCREASE THEIR POPULARITY AMONG PEERS. TEACH YOUR CHILD TO ONLY ACCEPT FOLLOWERS HE/SHE KNOWS.

4. MAKE SURE YOUR TEEN KNOWS THAT ANYTHING POSTED TO THE INTERNET STAYS THERE FOREVER. THERE IS NO WAY TO PERMANENTLY DELETE A POSTING, PICTURE, OR VIDEO FROM SOCIAL MEDIA.

5. MAKE SURE YOUR TEEN KNOWS TO NEVER POST A NUDE OR RACY PHOTO ON SOCIAL MEDIA OR THROUGH A LIVE CHAT LIKE FACETIME. THESE CAN BE RECORDED AND USED FOR BLACKMAIL OR TO MANIPULATE YOUR TEEN INTO DOING SOMETHING TO AVOID THE IMAGE BEING CIRCULATED.

6. KNOW YOUR TEEN'S PASSWORDS FOR ALL DEVICES AND ACCOUNTS. MAKE THIS MANDATORY OR YOU WILL NO LONGER PROVIDE A CELL PHONE, COMPUTER, OR INTERNET ACCESS.

7. MONITOR YOUR TEEN'S ACCOUNTS BY CREATING YOUR OWN ACCOUNT FOR EACH TYPE OF SOCIAL MEDIA YOUR CHILD HAS. MAKE SURE YOUR TEEN DOES NOT BLOCK YOU OR ONLY ALLOW YOU PARTIAL ACCESS.

8. MAKE SURE YOUR CHILD IS INSTRUCTED NEVER TO ALLOW "LOCATION SERVICES" FUNCTIONS INSIDE GAMES, APPS, OR SOCIAL MEDIA. DISABLE LOCATION TRACKING THROUGH THE SETTINGS ON YOUR TEEN'S DEVICE.

9. TEACH YOUR TEEN NEVER TO POST SOMETHING THAT INDICATES TROUBLE, SUCH AS "I JUST RAN AWAY" OR "I HATE MY PARENTS." THESE ARE MESSAGES TRAFFICKERS MAY USE TO BECOME A PERSON WHO CAN "HELP."

10. ACTIVATE PHONE TRACKING DEVICES ON YOUR TEEN'S PHONE, SUCH AS LIFE 360 OR FIND MY FRIEND, AND TRACK YOUR TEEN'S LOCATION AT ALL TIMES.

11. CHECK THE APPS ON YOUR TEEN'S PHONE TO MAKE SURE HE/SHE ISN'T UTILIZING A LOCATION "SPOOFER" PROGRAM TO TRICK YOU INTO THINKING HE/SHE IS AT ONE LOCATION, BUT IS ACTUALLY IN ANOTHER PLACE.

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