



Parent Guide For Teens





WHAT IS HUMAN TRAFFICKING?

DEFINITION

Human Trafficking is the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of people through force, fraud or deception, with the aim of exploiting their bodies or their labor for profit. It is modern-day slavery and affects millions of men, women, and children around the world; it also happens in our community.

According to U.S. law, any minor under the age of 18 who is induced to perform a commercial sex act is a victim of human trafficking, regardless of whether there is force, fraud, or coercion.¹

INDICATORS

Minors can be lured into trafficking by a relative or a trusted family friend. They can be recruited through social media platforms, video games, at school, parks and other places where teens may spend time.

It is important to know the signs to look for in order to protect your teen from being trafficked or groomed for trafficking.

- Acts uncharacteristically promiscuous and/or makes references to sexual situations or terminology that are beyond age-specific norms
- Displays sudden changes in their academics, behavior, or attire
- Acquires new and oftentimes older friends or has a noticeably older “boyfriend” or “girlfriend”
- Leaves home frequently and/or for significant periods of time
- Does things out of character like drinking or drugs
- Owns new items that they would not be able to afford on their own (e.g., cell phones, new clothes, beauty products, manicures, or digital items such as avatar skins for online gaming)
- Chats frequently online, over social media platforms, or within video games (they often try to hide this behavior)

**This list of red flags is not all-encompassing, nor is it meant to be used to profile potential victims. If observed, consider asking more questions or making a report to the human trafficking hotline in your country. We recommend you take a look at further resources and references in this guide.*

¹Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000 (TVPA), Pub. L. No. 106-386, 103(8)(A), 114 Stat. 1470 (2000), 22 U.S.C.A. 7102(8)(A)

IF YOU SEE SOMETHING, SAY SOMETHING

National Center for Missing and Exploited Children

Child trafficking and online exploitation
Call: 1-800-THE-LOST (1-800-843-5678)
CyberTipline: MissingKids.org

National Human Trafficking Hotline

All forms of trafficking, all ages
Call: 1-888-373-7888
Text: BeFree (233733)

Talking With Your Teen

HOW DO YOU TALK WITH YOUR TEEN ABOUT HUMAN TRAFFICKING?

Open communication and creating an environment that builds trust is key to safeguarding your teen. Empower your teen to protect themselves by building trust so that they know they can come to you with their concerns, vulnerabilities, and experiences. The goal is to create a safe place where your teen feels comfortable to discuss any topic.

- ▶ **SAY:** “I love you, and nothing you tell me will surprise me, even if it is as bad as you think it is. Don’t be afraid to tell me things that reveal you broke rules or didn’t listen to me. I care about you and I’m concerned because there are people you may meet online or in person who act as if they care for you, but their intention is to get something from you. You may meet or talk to someone who promises to love you, buy you things, or be a listening ear, but then asks you to do something that makes you feel uncomfortable. Then, you may feel scared to tell me once these things have happened. But I’m here for you, and I want to help guide you through life, no matter what happens. I want to help you avoid uncomfortable or harmful situations and I want you to feel safe. Let’s talk.”

WHAT ARE SOME TOPICS YOU CAN BRING UP WITH YOUR TEEN?

PERSONAL VALUE

Explain how their body is never meant to be used to get something or to pay for something (e.g. showing body parts for money or gifts).

PERSONAL BOUNDARIES

Discuss how they have a right to their personal boundaries and how they can put up these personal boundaries with others to feel comfortable. In addition, it would be helpful to explain why an individual may try to push or test those boundaries.

HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

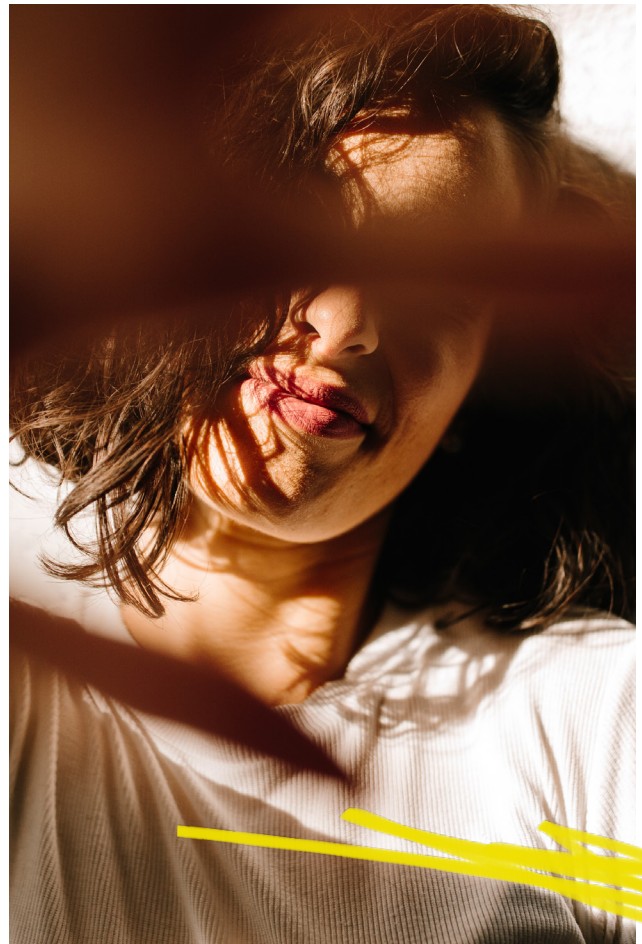
Examine healthy vs. unhealthy relationships. For example, explaining that in a healthy committed relationship, a partner should not ask you to do something you are not comfortable doing or isolate you from your family and friends.

SEXTING & SEXTORTION

Explain that once they share a picture, anyone can screenshot it and share it with others. Someone might try to take advantage of them once they have shared intimate photos or videos, threatening them to make them public if they don’t do what they’re being told to do.

PEER PRESSURE

Discuss how they might sometimes feel the need to do what their friends are doing to be accepted or have a place in the group. However, decisions that are influenced by other people can be dangerous and lead to situations that could make them uncomfortable.



Preventative Safety Measures

Human Rights: Empower your teen with the ability to say no when they feel uncomfortable. Remind them that they have the right to say no to anyone if they feel unsafe or are feeling pressured or uncomfortable.

Safe and Unsafe Online Conversations: Discuss how there can be people trying to deceive them online and/or through social media. (Note: These examples can apply to other types of conversations as well.)

Safety Plan: Create a Safety Plan and talk to your teen about a safe route and ways to avoid danger, including places to go if they feel uncomfortable, key people, and safety words to ask for help. Additionally, have them share their location with you on their cell. One way to practice safety plans is based on “what if?” questions or scenarios.



“Individuals can now use websites and social media to advertise, schedule, and purchase sexual encounters with minors. The Internet and mobile devices also allow pimps and traffickers to reach a larger clientele base than in the past, which may expose victims to greater risks and dangers.”²

²The United States Department of Justice, “Child Sex Trafficking,” 2017, <https://www.justice.gov/criminal-ceos/child-sex-trafficking>



Online Safety Tips to Discuss

Identity and Location

- Use a screen name different from your real name
- Avoid posting any identifiable information (e.g. pictures of you in front of your home, school, or places that you frequent)
- Keep your profile private and only add people you know
- Block someone if they make you feel uncomfortable or have repeated unwanted or uninvited communication

Photos

- Remember images you post online can never really be deleted
- Photos and screenshots can be easily saved and shared
- Ask yourself before sending a photo, “would it be ok if everyone at school saw this photo?”
- Tell someone if you receive a photo that includes unwanted or uninvited content

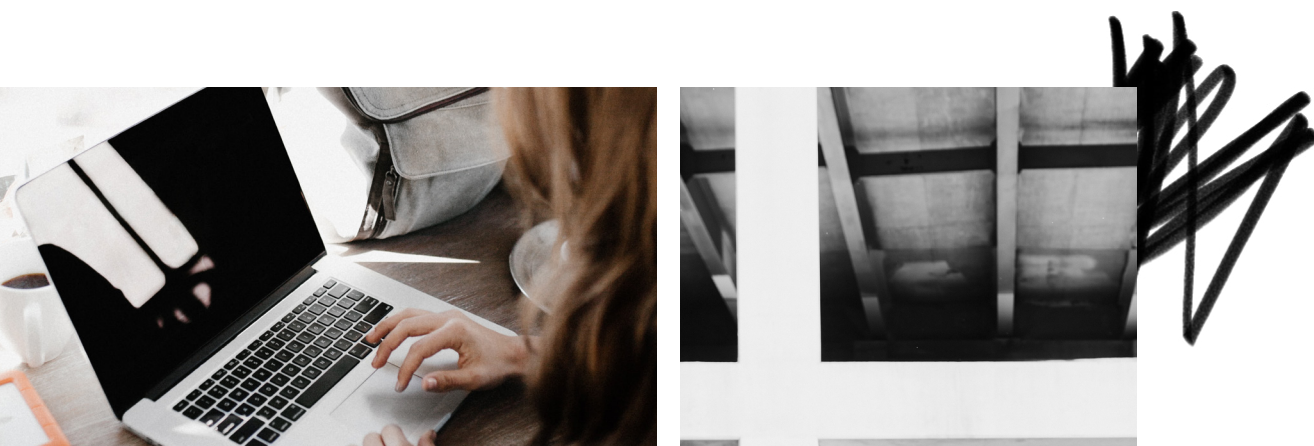
Public Online Sites

- Discuss the differences between sites that make you feel safe or unsafe
- Avoid talking to untrusted or unknown people on chat rooms or private messenger apps
- Remember that you never really know who is on the other side of the screen; their intentions may be different from what they say they are

Safety Routes

- Examine your teen’s routes and discuss ways they can avoid danger
- Determine safe places to go and safe people to call if they feel uneasy
- Ensure that your teen knows the address of where they are and where they are going in case they need to be picked up because they feel uncomfortable
- Have your teen share their location with you on their cell

Group Safety: Stay in a group as much as possible and never accept a ride from a stranger or anyone you do not trust or who makes you feel uncomfortable.





WHAT PROTECTIVE MEASURES CAN I TAKE TO SAFEGUARD MY TEEN FROM HUMAN TRAFFICKING?

- Spend quality time with your teen
- Monitor your teen's activities online and offline
- Be mindful of your teen's personal items and ask questions if you see expensive electronics, clothing, purses, makeup, or items that you did not pay for and your teen could not afford on their own
- Know who your teen hangs out with and who they are texting
- Foster a healthy relationship with your teen so they will communicate and come to you about uncomfortable or unsafe situations
- Create a contact plan that includes a way for your teen to ask for your help if they get into an uncomfortable situation (without getting in trouble)
- Have your teen memorize 2-3 trusted adults' phone numbers in case of an emergency
- Provide guidelines for safe online measures (e.g. designated locations for using technology devices in the home, access to certain websites, and social media)
- Stay up to date with technology and popular apps amongst teens
- Add the trafficking hotline numbers into your phone's contact list (and into your teen's phone)
- Tell your teen that if they are in an emergency situation, or an unsafe situation, they need to call 911

For additional resources on preventing child trafficking, visit:

A21.ORG/EDUCATION-RESOURCES

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