

NOT A #NUMBER

A CHILD TRAFFICKING AND EXPLOITATION PREVENTION CURRICULUM

DEVELOPED BY LOVE **146**



GUIDE FOR PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS

NOT A #NUMBER

*Resources to support
a whole-school or
entire-system response*

WRITTEN BY

Elaine Kim

Action Coordinator, Love146

Jo MacLaughlin

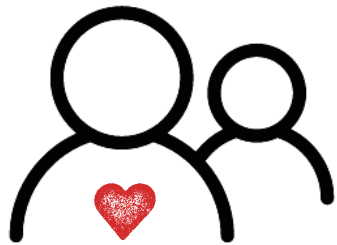
Action Coordinator, Love146

Carolina Fuentes, LMSW, M.Div.

Senior Prevention Advisory Specialist, Love146

PLEASE FIND THESE RESOURCES AVAILABLE FOR DOWNLOAD AND PRINT:

- [AT-A-GLANCE: #PARENTS & #CAREGIVERS](#)  R-A
- [A GUIDE FOR #PARENTS & #CAREGIVERS](#)  R-B
- [AT-A-GLANCE: #PROFESSIONALS](#)  R-C
- [A GUIDE FOR: #PROFESSIONALS](#)  R-D



WHAT A PARENT/CAREGIVER CAN DO TO PROTECT CHILDREN FROM TRAFFICKING

A RESOURCE FROM THE CHILD TRAFFICKING AND EXPLOITATION PREVENTION CURRICULUM

NOT A  #NUMBER
DEVELOPED BY LOVE146

Child. Sex. Trafficking. These three words should never be used in the same sentence, much less be a reality for many of the world’s most vulnerable—including children in the United States. Human trafficking is modern-day slavery. It is the practice of using force, fraud, and coercion to exploit people through labor or commercial sex. It is the third-largest criminal enterprise in the world, and it is estimated that millions of men, women, and children are enslaved globally.

As a parent/caregiver, you can help your child and other children in your community feel empowered to protect themselves from exploitation and know that they can come to you with their concerns, vulnerabilities, and experiences.

MUST-KNOWS

Many people think, “How could a child possibly be trafficked in America?” Some are children from other countries who are brought to the United States, but many are American children. They’re girls who fall in love with a man who turns out to be a pimp, boys who end up in desperate situations, or children who are vulnerable in other ways. Here’s the story of Sarah. While this story is fictional, it was written based on hundreds of real stories we’ve heard about children trafficked in the United States:

Her best friend introduced them. Things got serious quickly, and David asked Sarah to be his girlfriend. It felt like a big step and Sarah was nervous about it. But it made sense after having felt lonely for so long. He gave her those butterfly feelings every time she saw him. He said he would do anything for her, and she would do the same.

As soon as they became boyfriend/girlfriend, David changed. He started telling Sarah she was stupid and that she was lucky he was willing to take care of her. After a while, David started asking her to do favors for him, like having sex with his friends or people he knew. He told her they needed the money to do things together. Sarah didn’t like it, but she loved David and believed it was her responsibility because of everything he had done for her.

What factors do you think put Sarah at a greater risk of trafficking?

One of the factors is that Sarah is lonely and finds emotional support in David. Perhaps she hasn’t been exposed to examples of what a healthy relationship looks like. She is being emotionally abused by David. She is emotionally dependent on him and has been led to believe that she “owes” him for his support.

TAKE ACTION - KEEPING YOUR CHILD SAFE!

1. TALK TO YOUR CHILD ABOUT HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

Read through the following list with your child and ask them if they think the relationship is healthy or unhealthy. Use it as an opportunity to start the conversation about what a healthy relationship looks like, and let them know that they can come to you with any questions.

- I gave up hobbies when I started dating my boyfriend so I could spend all my time with him.
- I can make my girlfriend do anything I want.
- My girlfriend reads all my texts and says I don’t love her if I won’t share them.
- My boyfriend wants me to have sex with his friend because it will show I am in control of my body.

2. KEEP YOUR CHILD SAFE ONLINE

These questions can help you determine a standard for your home: Where will Internet-enabled devices (computers, laptops, tablets, gaming consoles, electronic books) be located? What times throughout the day is the Internet allowed? What types of websites are people allowed to access both in and outside of the home? How is social media (e.g., Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, Omegle) used?

3. KNOW THE RED FLAGS

Grooming for trafficking and exploitation can be masked in everyday conversations and latch onto an individual’s normal needs and desires. Signs to look for include the following:

- The sudden presence of an older boyfriend/girlfriend
- The sudden addition of a lot of new stuff or the appearance that a lot of money has been spent on them (e.g., new clothes, new hair styles, manicures/pedicures)
- Being secretive about who they are talking to or meeting
- Becoming more and more isolated from their regular friends (the groomer often does this to have as much control as possible over the child)
- Unexplained changes in behavior, temperament, or personality (e.g., chaotic, aggressive, sexual, mood swings)

LEARN MORE

Love146 has a free guide for parents/caregivers that covers what you can do to protect children from exploitation. The topics covered include:

- Examples of what child sex trafficking looks like
- Cultural norms that promote sexual violence
- The power of words and perceptions
- Online exploitation
- What makes children vulnerable to trafficking
- What you can do to protect your child

Access the entire guide at www.love146.org/parents-caregivers

ABOUT LOVE146

Love146 is an international human rights organization working to end child trafficking and exploitation through survivor care, prevention education, professional training, and empowering movement. The *Not a #Number* curriculum from Love146 is an interactive program that equips youth to protect themselves through information, critical thinking, and skill development on the issue of human trafficking and exploitation.

LOVE146

A GUIDE FOR #PARENTS AND #CAREGIVERS

Dear parent/caregiver,

Child. Sex. Exploitation. These three words should never be used in the same sentence, much less be a reality for many of the world’s most vulnerable.

Victims of trafficking and exploitation are not a number. They are not a statistic. They are individuals—young children, as well as adults of all social and economic backgrounds. It’s possible you may have come across a child at risk of exploitation at some point in your life and did not know it. In the most unfortunate of circumstances, the victim may be your own child.

This curriculum includes information to help participants understand the reality of human trafficking and exploitation, and most importantly, what you can do as a parent/caregiver to safeguard your children and others in your community.

The information and stories shared here are difficult to read, and I understand that it can be especially challenging to read this information while considering how your own child, or those you might know, could be at risk. I’d like to ask you to press through those uncomfortable moments—because I know how important this conversation will be. Our team has seen how the discussions and activities suggested in the following pages help children feel empowered to protect themselves and open up about their fears, vulnerabilities, and experiences of abuse and exploitation. As a parent/caregiver, your voice and understanding in this process is irreplaceable.

If your child is participating in a *Not a #Number* session, this curriculum corresponds to the five sessions they will receive through discussion and activities facilitated by a teacher/counselor. Thank you very much for journeying with us.

Kind regards,

Kimberly Casey

U.S. Programs Director, Love146

ABOUT LOVE146

Love146 is an international human rights organization working to end child trafficking and exploitation through survivor care, prevention education, professional training, and empowering movement. Slavery is still one of the darkest stories on our planet. But for us, the hope of abolition is a reality. Love146 believes in helping grow the movement of abolition while providing effective, thoughtful solutions. We believe in the power of love and its ability to effect sustainable change. Love is the foundation of our motivation.

Our Vision: The abolition of child trafficking and exploitation. Nothing less.

Our Mission: Abolition and Restoration! We combat child trafficking and exploitation with the unexpected and restore survivors with excellence.



DEFINITIONS

What are human trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation?

The Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) defines human trafficking as any labor or commercial sex act induced through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the profit of a third party (i.e., a trafficker). In the case of sex trafficking, the trafficker receives something of value (e.g., money, goods, drugs) for the sexual exploitation of the victims. When a minor is exploited by a third party for sexual purposes, there does not need to be any force, fraud, or coercion present for the situation to be considered human trafficking, because according to federal law, children under 18 cannot consent to engage in commercial sex.

The terms human trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation (CSE) are often used interchangeably. For the purposes of this curriculum, CSE is defined as the abuse of power differentials or the exploitation of a person's vulnerabilities in order to induce a sexual act(s) in exchange for something of value (e.g., money, a place to stay, goods). The CSE of children is defined as any sexual act(s) involving a child (under 18) in exchange for something of value. This includes child pornography, child sex tourism, and child marriage (when something of value is exchanged). Therefore, the difference between human trafficking and CSE is that human trafficking always involves a third party that is benefiting from the situation.

What is force/fraud/coercion?

For labor or commercial sexual exploitation to be trafficking, it must involve some element of force, fraud, or coercion:

Force refers to physical restraint, such as beating, rape, or confinement of the victim.

Examples of **fraud** include false promises, posing as an agent or other service provider, and even lying about living/work conditions or wages.

Coercion occurs in the form of threats, blackmail, confiscation of a passport or other important documents, or making a person afraid to seek help.

Under U.S. law, if any person under the age of 18 is used for commercial sex, they are considered a victim. Because a child is inherently vulnerable, the use of force, fraud, or coercion does not need to be present.

SECTION 1

AN INTRODUCTION TO CHILD TRAFFICKING AND EXPLOITATION

Just as “it takes a village to raise a child,” it takes a community that’s aware and looking out for its children to keep them protected from child trafficking and exploitation. Understanding the definitions of human trafficking and exploitation is the first step to helping prevent them from happening in your own neighborhood. So this curriculum starts with question number one: what *is* human trafficking?

THIS SESSION WILL:

- Define key terms: human trafficking, commercial sexual exploitation, force/fraud/coercion
- Identify causes, consequences, and who is vulnerable
- Challenge assumptions regarding sexual abuse and how youth become involved in commercial sex

EXAMPLES OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND EXPLOITATION

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER WHILE YOU READ THESE STORIES

- In what ways are these children vulnerable?
- Who could have done something differently?
- What are the negative effects that the exploited children experience?

Sarah



Her best friend introduced them. Things got serious quickly, and David asked Sarah to live with him after only a month. It felt like a big step and Sarah was nervous about it, but it made sense after having felt lonely for so long. He gave her those butterfly feelings every time she saw him. He said he would do anything for her, and she would do the same.

As soon as she moved in, David changed. He started telling Sarah she was stupid and she was lucky he was willing to take care of her. After a while, David started asking her to do favors for him, like having sex with his friends or people he knew. He told her they needed the money to pay the rent. Sarah didn't like it, but she loved David and believed it was her responsibility to help because of everything he had done for her.

One day, they had a fight about whether or not she would work that night. It was so loud that the neighbors called the police. The officer spoke briefly with David and Sarah, and said he would file a report indicating a domestic dispute.

Leo



Leo is 16 years old and is attracted to other boys. He finally decided to come out to a few close friends. They were supportive, and so he told his sister, even though he knew his family would disapprove. His sister was furious and, despite his begging her not to, she told their parents. Leo's parents were so upset that they kicked him out of the house. Leo slept his on friends' couches as long as he could, but eventually he became homeless.

At a local park where he sometimes slept, Leo met Max, who was also living on the street. Max and Leo became friends and eventually boyfriends. Max knew a lot more about surviving on the street than Leo. One night, the temperature outside was unbearable and they couldn't get into the shelter. They wanted to get a hotel room but didn't have any money. They went to an area Max knew about and they had sex with two men who promised to pay for dinner and a hotel room.

TAKEAWAYS

Looking at these two stories, we can see a wide range of vulnerabilities that can put a child at risk for exploitation.

In the first story, what factors do you think put Sarah at a greater risk of trafficking?

Sarah is lonely and finds emotional support in David. Perhaps she hasn't been exposed to examples of what a healthy relationship looks like. She is being emotionally abused by David and is experiencing a lot of pressure to move in. She is emotionally dependent on him and doesn't have a reliable source of income.

What about Leo? What factors put him at a greater risk?

Like Sarah, Leo's young age made him more vulnerable to the pressures and influences of others. His lack of family support, his family's disapproval of his sexuality, and the emotional hurt stemming from these factors also put him in a vulnerable position. His homelessness, and thus his need to meet basic survival needs such as food and shelter, is an important factor that led to his exploitation.

As a parent/caregiver, you have the unique opportunity to know what impacts your child, as well as the peers they connect with. Do Sarah and Leo's stories and vulnerabilities remind you of any children in your neighborhood? What are the unique vulnerabilities that may put your child at risk for exploitation?

SECTION 2

MYTHS AND MISCONCEPTIONS

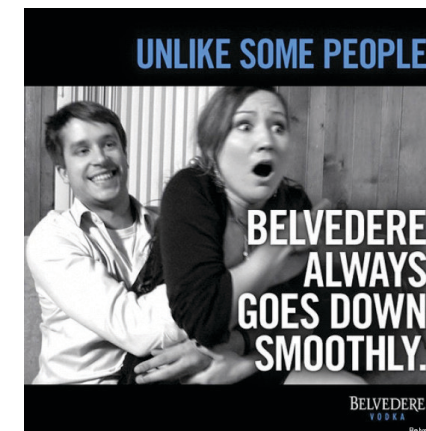
What myths about sex and violence are mainstream media teaching children, and how do these myths relate to trafficking and exploitation? What assumptions do you have about what a “trafficker” or “victim” looks like? We all have preconceived ideas about what human trafficking looks like. If left unchallenged, these assumptions may keep you from identifying incidents of trafficking.

THIS SESSION WILL:

- Examine the cultural norms and media sources that promote sexual violence
- Compare and contrast the common misconceptions to the realities of human trafficking

CULTURAL NORMS

Mainstream media (print, television, radio, etc.) uses sexual images and stereotypes to sell products. Often these images include violence. Research has shown that these images can play a powerful role in shaping a child’s understanding of sex and violence.



The language of “pimps” and “pimping,” for example, is commonly used in films and music to describe a wealthy man surrounded by women rather than a man who abuses women.

Note: To hear an example of a popular song that uses “pimp” language, listen to “P.I.M.P.” by 50 Cent. Keep in mind that the language in this song is explicit.

LANGUAGE

As a parent/caregiver, you probably hear your child using words or phrases that they have learned outside the home. While this language may be common in their generation, some of this language can have negative implications. It is important to empower your child to make good choices about the way they use words.

Below are examples of powerful words that have been suggested by students that Love146 has worked with, along with a brief explanation that you can share with your child about the negative impact these words can have. These words hold a lot of power in shaping ideas around gender and sexual exploitation.

Pimp: The word “pimp” is used to describe something that’s “cool” indirectly suggests that it’s acceptable to be someone who sells another person’s body for sex.

Slut: Words like “slut” are used to refer to girls who wear certain types of clothes. This implies that girls should be identified by what they’re wearing.

Bitch: The word “bitch” is often used to call a male weak or feminine, implicitly suggesting that women are weak and that being considered “a girl” is be offensive.

Gay: Using the word “gay” as a way to tell a boy that he’s acting “girly” or “stupid” creates stereotypes about homosexuality and implies that it’s a negative/unwanted quality, which can be isolating.

TRAFFICKER STEREOTYPES

When you hear the words “human trafficker,” who do you picture in your head? In reality, a human trafficker may look very different:



Montia Marie Parker

Montia, eighteen, was a high school senior on the cheerleading team who was charged for trafficking a teammate in Minnesota. Parker was convicted of creating an online ad for her teammate, taking her to see customers, and accepting money in exchange for sexual acts.

If you saw Montia walking down the street, would you think that she was a human trafficker?

Displacing myths about who may exploit someone else and what a trafficker may look like can help you better identify potential dangers.

TAKEAWAYS

There are many opportunities for you as a parent/caregiver to reinforce what your child learns through this session. This can help them better identify the differences between media portrayals and reality.

When you encounter an advertisement on TV or a song on the radio that portrays sexual violence or promotes positive, respectful behavior, encourage your child to take a critical look/listen. These questions can help spark conversation:

- How do these images/words make you feel?
- What do these images/words tell you about women/men/sex?
- Do you think this can be harmful?
- Why would the advertiser choose to use these images/words?

It’s impossible to monitor all of the media that your child is exposed to on daily basis, which is why being able to talk to them about what they watch/listen to is so important. By asking them questions about the messages they receive, you can help them develop a broader understanding of cultural norms and how/why we portray gender, sexuality, and violence.

THE POWER OF WORDS

Language has the power to influence social behavior and create change, both positive and negative. What does “be a man” or “like a girl” mean to you? The following video illustrates how children/youth are labeled, and the potential harm those labels can cause.

“YOU ARE MORE” (4:17)



www.youtube.com/watch?v=7iZXDCqXAm0

After watching this video, consider what other words or phrases can be harmful when referring to children.

WORDS/PHRASES MENTIONED IN THE VIDEO:

- ho
- whore
- prude
- abomination
- mistake
- disgrace
- conceited
- spick
- “it’s your fault”
- “be a man”
- “loud because I’m Hispanic”
- “you can’t be a girl if you don’t have boobs”

As a parent/caregiver, what kinds of topics/themes could you discuss with your child to prevent or counter the potential effects of the language referenced in the video?

SUGGESTED TOPICS/THEMES:

- Respect/Acceptance
- Feelings/Emotions
- Communication
- Relationships
- Sexuality
- Caring/Empathy
- Masculinity/Behavior
- Self-esteem
- Anger management

SECTION 3
THE POWER OF
WORDS AND
PERCEPTIONS

There’s the old saying that goes like this: “sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me.” Try to remember a time in your own past when you’ve been called a name that hurt you, or when you heard your child called a name that you knew would hurt their feelings. Is the saying always true? This session focuses on how the everyday words we use have the potential to harm others as well as ourselves, and how this relates to exploitation.

THIS SESSION WILL:

- Address potentially harmful language
- Discuss the power of words and how they influence people and their actions
- Discuss the concept of victim blaming



GENDER STEREOTYPES AND ABUSE

In an interview in 2013, singer Chris Brown discussed the age at which he lost his virginity. He was eight, he says, and the girl was 14 or 15.

“‘Yeah, really. Uh-huh.’” He grins and chuckles. ‘It’s different in the country.’ Brown grew up with a great gang of boy cousins, and they watched so much porn that he was raring to go. ‘By that point, we were already kind of like hot to trot, you know what I’m saying? Like, girls, we weren’t afraid to talk to them; I wasn’t afraid. So, at eight, being able to do it, it kind of preps you for the long run, so you can be a beast at it. You can be the best at it.’”

What if the tables were turned, and Chris Brown was Christine Brown talking to an interviewer about how she had sex with a 14-year-old boy when she was eight? No matter how much she laughed off the experience, the writer would not refer to the experience as “losing her virginity.”

Girls/women and boys/men face different expectations and stereotypes: a female who has many sexual experiences is considered a slut while a male is considered a stud. Because of this double standard, men who have been abused often feel ashamed to come forward and seek help. Many don’t recognize what happened to them as abuse until much later in life when they’re dealing with the after-effects of sexual abuse such as depression, anger management, and difficulty forming emotional bonds.

Challenging gender stereotypes with children, especially around expectations surrounding sex, can help victims acknowledge the abuse and seek help.

VICTIM BLAMING

Victim blaming occurs when the victim of a crime, or any wrongful act, is held entirely or partially responsible for the offenses committed against them.

A common example of victim blaming is the phrase, “Well, look at what they were wearing—they were practically asking for it.” Commenting on what the victim was wearing in this way suggests that the assault was their fault.

Here are two examples from incidents of sexual assault that happened in Steubenville, Ohio and Sayreville, New Jersey:

RIPPED FROM THE HEADLINES STEUBENVILLE

A 16-year old girl, Amy, left a party around midnight with several football players, including Tyler* and Michael.* Her friends tried to talk her out of leaving. She had drunk a lot of alcohol and was already stumbling and slurring her words. The group left to go to a second party where people said Amy looked “out of it.” They only stayed about 20 minutes before leaving. Some say Amy needed help walking. Others say she had to be carried out. She woke up long enough to throw up in the street, a witness said. They also said her shirt had been taken off.*

On the way to a third party, Tyler sexually assaulted Amy in the back seat while his friends took video and pictures. When they arrived at the last party, Tyler assaulted her again. Now unconscious, Amy was stripped and assaulted by Michael. One of Tyler’s friends said he told them to wait until she woke up, but Tyler said, “It’s alright. Don’t worry.” The boys took more photos of her and some went back to the second party and shared them with friends.

Later, Amy said she couldn’t remember much about the night, except for a short time at the second party. She said she woke up the next morning in a basement living room with Tyler and others, and couldn’t find her underwear, flip-flops, phone, and earrings.

The boys—and others—shared comments, video, and photos from the night through Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Youtube, and text messages. One photo posted on Instagram shows two boys carrying Amy, who had passed out, around by her wrists and ankles.

**Name has been changed to protect victim identity. Names of the perpetrators have also been changed because of their age at the time of the assault.*

**Name has been changed to protect victim identity. Names of the perpetrators have also been changed because of their age at the time of the assault.*

RIPPED FROM THE HEADLINES: SAYREVILLE

Harassment in the locker room at Sayreville War Memorial High School was not an uncommon thing for freshmen members of the football team. They were constantly harassed by varsity players, and many would actually rush to the locker room to get dressed before more senior players could push them around. “They slinked away when the older varsity boys barreled in, blasting their music, shooting each other with Nerf guns and stripping down with the kind of confidence that freshmen could only fake.”

But the harassment didn’t stop there; one night, after the second game of the season, it went too far. It started with a howling noise from a senior football player, and then the lights would flicker until the locker room went completely dark. Two witnesses reported that the seniors “tripped a freshman in a t-shirt and football pants, letting loud music muffle any noise the boy made as he fell. Two pinned the younger boy’s

arms, while others punched and kicked him—not viciously, but hard enough to matter, two witnesses said.”

In the darkness, the freshman football player was sexually assaulted by multiple upperclassmen. Some pinned the boy to the floor while the others committed the sexual assault.

Three similar locker room assaults occurred later in the season. In total, four boys have shared stories of their assault—some were as young as 13.

**Quotes from The New York Times, “Football Players in Sayreville, N.J., Recall Hazing” By Nate Schweber, Kim Barker and Jason Grant.*

Questions to consider:

- To what extent do you think the victims were at fault for the incident?
- In what ways could blaming the victim of the incident be harmful to the victim?
- What is the role of the bystanders who may have seen/heard about the abuse?
- How could this incident have been prevented?
- If you heard reports of a similar incident about teenagers at your child’s school, how would you react? What questions would you ask?
- How would you feel about the incident if your child was the victim?
- How would you feel about the incident if your child was one of the perpetrators or bystanders?
- How do you teach your children to respect others and find value in every human being?

When a guilty verdict was announced in the Steubenville case, mainstream media coverage was full of victim blaming. CNN discussed how the boys were “promising students.” ABC made excuses for the rapists, saying that they were “in a celebratory mood” the night of the assault. NBC lamented the boys’ loss of “promising football careers.” The Associated Press and USA Today stressed that the victim was drunk. Yahoo News went so far as to say that the victim forced the town into an emotional situation.

Helping children question victim-blaming language and reporting can help victims disclose information about their own abuse. This is an important step for healing and preventing future exploitation.

TAKEAWAYS

Talk to children about the power their words have over how their peers feel about themselves and their situation. Taking a critical look at the words we use to talk about others is an important step in addressing exploitation. Language can make someone feel powerless and vulnerable, or can be used to twist a story so that the victim is blamed for their own exploitation.

While it is important talk to your child about how their words have the potential to cause harm or support others, it is also important as a parent/caregiver to help your child feel empowered to stand up against the words used to harm them.

Encourage them to think critically about the names and words that they’ve been called. These questions can help spark discussion:

- How do these words make you feel?
- What stereotypes do you feel like you’re expected to fit into because of your gender or someone who is black/Asian/white/etc.?
- Did you ever believe these things?
- Do you find yourself trying to live by any of these social expectations?
- How does this affect your life positively/negatively? What have your experiences been?



DEFINITIONS

Consent

Consent is giving permission for something to happen, or agreeing to do something. Being silent, or not directly saying the word “no,” does not mean consent: consent means communicating “yes” on your own terms.

Coercion

It can look different in different situations, but ultimately, coercion is manipulation. It can happen through the following ways:

- Pressuring (repeatedly asking someone until they are worn down)
- Threatening (“I’ll break up with you if you don’t have sex with me”)
- Intimidating (punching the wall when someone says “no”)
- Blackmailing (“I’ll tell everyone you’re gay if you don’t”)
- Guilt-tripping (“If you really loved me you would have sex with me”)

It’s important to understand that the person was not given space to freely say “no.” It’s not that they didn’t say “no,” but that they couldn’t say “no.” (*Definition from: www.consented.ca*)

Grooming

Grooming is preparing or training someone for a particular purpose or activity.

Sometimes grooming for trafficking and exploitation can be masked in everyday conversations and latch onto individuals’ normal needs and desires. There are signs to look for in your child or in your child’s friends:

- A new older boyfriend/girlfriend
- They suddenly have a lot of new stuff or seem to have had a lot of money spent on them (e.g., new clothes, new hair styles, manicures/pedicures)
- Being secretive about who they are talking to or meeting
- Becoming more and more isolated from their regular friends (the groomer often does this to have as much control as possible over the child)
- Responding to a job offer online for modeling/acting

SECTION 4 WHAT MAKES US VULNERABLE?

Ken “Pimpin Ken” Ivy, a notorious trafficker, writes in his book *Pimpology: The 48 Laws of the Game*, “It doesn’t matter to a pimp what hoes’ weaknesses are, so long as they have them. Then he uses those weaknesses to his advantage....” The definition of exploitation is to take advantage of vulnerabilities. So it’s important to ask the question: what makes your child vulnerable?

THIS SESSION WILL:

- Define consent and grooming
- Compare healthy and unhealthy relationships
- Identify vulnerabilities and risk factors online

HEALTHY OFFLINE/ONLINE RELATIONSHIPS

Making decisions can be a difficult emotional process for youth who are bombarded with competing images of what a relationship is “supposed” to look like.

An exploitative relationship can develop over time. People gain trust by offering things that youth often crave, such as a listening ear, compliments, gifts, and promises of love. Relationships can be complicated, and when the interactions are happening online, it can be especially hard for youth to recognize risky situations.

Here is a dialog that might be exchanged between a teen and trafficker online. What are the red flags?

Alex15: ugh, my parents are being ridiculous. I wanted to go to this party tonight but they're telling me I can't go. It's so unfair.
JustJake17: that sucks, why'd they say no?
Alex15: they think im too young or whatever.
JustJake17: how old are you?
Alex15: 15
JustJake17: you don't seem 15. you're so mature for your age. They really shouldn't treat you like a kid
Alex15: that's something I love about you, you never treat me like im a baby..I feel like I can tell you anything and i've only known you for a few weeks
JustJake17: we understand each other
Alex15: exactly. I bet your parents aren't super strict like mine
JustJake17: they were when I was your age
Alex15: wait how old are you?
JustJake17: 26. something wrong? You don't trust me?
Alex15: no no, nothing like that, I was just curious
JustJake17: hey, I'm actually gonna be in your town soon. we can finally meet in person
Alex15: that would be awesome! Why are you coming out here?
JustJake17: work
Alex15: what do you do?
JustJake17: boring stuff, you wouldn't care. Where do you want to meet?
Alex15: you pick, I just want to see you!

They meet up to watch a movie and have pizza. The chats continue:

JustJake17: I cant wait to see you again
Alex15: I know, I had so much fun!
JustJake17: can you come over tonight? I need to see you again before I go
Alex15: what about my parents?
JustJake17: they won't have to know, I can pick you up at the end of your street, just sneak out once they're asleep.
Alex15: what time?

They agreed to meet at the hotel where he was staying. When Alex walked in the door, Alex was surprised that there were two other men in the room. Alex asked what was going on, and Jake said they were friends from town that just wanted to hang out. They started talking and someone offered Alex a drink.

About an hour later Jake said that his friends had paid to have sex with Alex. Alex said no, but Jake said Alex would do it if Alex really cared about him.

Having read the scenario, consider the following questions:

- In what ways was Alex vulnerable?
- What emotions might have influenced Alex's decision?
- Is Alex to blame for what happened? Why or why not?
- Who would you blame?

We might imagine an “online predator” to be a creepy old man with a mustache sitting at his computer pretending to be a young teen online. But studies and interviews with victims of exploitation have shown that more often than not, the abused minors were aware of the offender's age when they chatted online and thought of them as a romantic partner. They thought that they were in love, and in many cases met with the abuser on multiple occasions (Crimes Against Children Research Center, 2000).

Go beyond “stranger danger” and teach them what kind of questions could be a warning signs: “Are you alone?”; “Where do you live?”; “Do you have a photo of yourself?”; and “Do you want to meet up in person?”

Also, teach your child to not go looking for thrills online. Risky online relationships more frequently evolve in chat rooms or in private chats where teens go to talk to people they don't know (Berkman Center for Internet & Society at Harvard University, 2008).

ADDRESSING ONLINE-INITIATED AND ONLINE-BASED EXPLOITATION

Pornography

Pornography is more anonymously accessible than ever before, and the potential for pornographic exposure (both unwanted and sought-out) among youth is far larger than most of us realize. The types of pornography that can be easily accessed has also changed with extreme/deviant forms being much more easily found online.

Recent studies on the effects of viewing pornography suggest that youth who watch porn may develop unrealistic ideas and expectations about sex. Youth themselves are identifying that pornography could be problematic. When a leading research group asked 500 18-year-olds in the UK about online pornography, 72% of them said that they felt like it lead to unrealistic attitudes towards sex, and 77% the young women in the study said they felt like it pressured them to look and act a certain way.

The conversation about pornography needs to start early and needs to be an ongoing process. Don't expect it to be a one-time conversation. Keep an open dialogue, and be there for them. When they recognize it as a problem or come across disturbing images online, they'll know that they can talk to you about ways to deal with it.

Sexting

Most youth now have a camera with them 24/7. It is important to talk to your children about images they should and shouldn't ask for or share. According to a recently survey, 21% of teen girls and 18% of teen boys have sent/posted nude or semi-nude images of themselves (The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy, 2013).

Sending and receiving "naked selfies" is a part of everyday life for many teens. And it's likely that sexting is a common practice at your child's school. But it can have negative consequences when a photo meant for one person is passed around the whole school. The consequences of sexting can have lasting implications, including bullying, humiliation, and expulsion from school.

Even if a youth is taking and sending explicit material of themselves, they can be charged with the production and distribution of child pornography by law enforcement. In one example, a 17-year-old male who sent a photo of his genitalia

to his girlfriend was charged with two felony charges. This could lead not only to incarceration, but also to being listed on the state sex offender registry. Although it is unlikely for a teenager to face charges in court for sexting, it is important for youth to be aware of the realities of the possible legal consequences.

Internet use

As a parent/caregiver, you can protect your child by monitoring how they use their phones/tablets/laptops. It can be helpful to make a plan with your child on what types of media and how much media will be allowed. Then follow the standards together.

These questions can help you determine a standard for your home:

- Where will Internet-enabled devices (computers, laptops, tablets, gaming consoles, electronic books) be located?
- Where in the home can mobile Internet-enabled devices be used?
- What times throughout the day are the Internet allowed?
- If you restrict your home network, are there other open networks that devices can connect to (i.e., a neighbor's network or nearby coffee shop)?
- What types of websites are people allowed to access both in and outside the home?
- How is social media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, etc.) used?

How do you know if your child is having problems online?

It is difficult for children to talk about sexual concerns or sexual exploitation whether it's committed by a stranger, someone they know, or a peer. Many tell no one at the time, and even as adults many victims feel they can't tell anyone.

Here are signs that a child or young person may be the target of sexual exploitation online:

- Spending increasing amounts of time on the Internet
- Becoming increasingly secretive—particularly around their use of technology
- Shutting the door and hiding what they have on screen when someone enters the room
- Not being able to talk openly about their activity online
- Agitated behavior when answering their cell phone and needing to take the call in private
- Developing a pattern of leaving the home for periods of time with no explanation of where they are going
- Vague talk of a new friend but offering no further information

IDENTIFYING VULNERABILITIES

Here’s a story told by the mother of a 17-year-old girl who was posting online ads as an escort:

I can’t say for certain when I first suspected my teenager daughter was involved in the “adults only” world of Craigslist. However, I can say with certainty there were many red flags: some very obvious and some, I admit, I ignored as too preposterous to believe. “Not my daughter” doesn’t let you think of your own child “that way.”

My daughter was the last person I’d worry about getting into prostitution. She is sweet, funny and smart. We live in a great community. We are a loving family; we support her dreams. Yes, we have our share of troubles, but no more than many. Outwardly, she was zero-risk, but she never felt like she fit in well with her peers. She’d been bullied in grade school, which I believe made her more vulnerable.

When she became very interested in her computer and online games, we monitored her well, or so we thought. We checked her email and chats to see if we needed to confront her with anything. By high school, she was very clever and learned to hide things from us. I think it started with predators having inappropriate chats and asking for pictures in exchange for money. Then, she began meeting strangers online whom she felt she knew and could trust. We took her to therapists and psychiatrists, hoping they could get to the root of why she trusted the Internet more than real life. It would have been great to remove the Internet from her life altogether, but access through smartphones and friends’ houses made that impossible.

By the time she graduated from high school at 17, her online life had crossed over to her real life. She’d hidden strip club attire in her room. She was using drugs. Her phone had calls to numbers that didn’t belong to friends we knew. I knew things had escalated, and I needed to take action. I installed keylogger software on our computer and found that she had begun posting online ads as an escort. (From Your Teen Magazine, 2013)

TAKEAWAYS

What are the vulnerabilities specific to your child and neighborhood?

Here are examples of vulnerabilities that you might identify in your child, or in other children in your area.

INDIVIDUAL/ PSYCHOLOGICAL	RELATIONAL	CULTURAL/SOCIETAL
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Low self-esteem● History of sexual abuse● Loneliness, wanting to fit in● Drug or alcohol abuse/addiction● Questioning their sexuality● Struggling with porn addiction● Homelessness	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Early sexualization● Lack of good role models● Pressure to always look put-together and strong● Pressure to receive good grades and perform well in school● Pressure from peers to do drugs, drink, have sex● Familial neglect● Victim of bullying/cyber bullying● Unhealthy romantic relationship(s)● High-conflict friendships/relationships with family members or caregivers● Family breakdown; possible child welfare intervention (e.g., foster care home placement)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● The thinking that exploitation doesn’t happen in the neighborhood; a “that doesn’t happen to us” mindset● High levels of gang activity● Presence of massage parlors, strip clubs, street prostitution, etc.● Pressure to own material items● Pressure to be involved in sexual activity at a young age● Glamorization of pimps● Glamorization of drug use

Make joint decisions with your child about their safety. Let them know that you as a parent/caregiver agree to participate in making sure not only they but also other children around you are protected.

DEVELOP A SAFETY PLAN TOGETHER

Read through the following situations and action steps, and work together to develop a safety plan. Agreeing on specific action steps ahead of time can save your child the difficulty of trying to figure out what to do in the moment.

In addition to reading through the scenarios together, work with your child to make a list of trusted peers and adults in their life that they can talk to in an uncomfortable situation.

You met a really nice person online, but they live a few hours away. One day they message you and say that they're coming to your town for the day. They want you to meet them at the mall.

- If the request makes you uncomfortable, don't respond to the message.
- If the person continues to try to make contact, tell a friend or a trusted adult.
- If you feel that the person is truly trustworthy and want to meet them, ask a trusted adult to go with you. You should never meet someone for the first time alone. Never make plans to meet with someone without talking to an adult first.
- As a general rule, remember that you should never disclose personal information, such as your phone number or where you live, to someone you've met online.

You're at a party hosted by a classmate whose parents are gone for the weekend. You're having fun until someone starts to follow you around the dance floor and touch you in a way you're uncomfortable with.

- Step away from the situation and think about your reaction. If you are feeling upset or angry, take a pause and control your emotions. Do you want to walk away or talk to the person? Either way, your safety is the top priority.
- Leave the party—if you need a ride, ask a friend or call a trusted adult.
- Even if you didn't tell your parents/caregiver that you were going to the party, call them if something goes wrong and you need help. It's better to be honest and take the consequences rather than be in an unsafe situation.
- As a general rule, talk to a friend and make an agreement before you enter the party that if either person feels uncomfortable, you can leave the party together.

SECTION 5

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO PROTECT YOUR CHILD

We've covered a lot of ground on the vulnerabilities children face and the ways these may be taken advantage of. Once you've identified the ways your child and their peers may be vulnerable to exploitation, what are ways you can help protect them?

THIS SESSION WILL:

- Explain steps to help overcome personal vulnerabilities or exploitation
- Explain the risks associated with runaways and homelessness
- Describe how to talk to a child you suspect has been/is being sexually exploited

You texted suggestive pictures of yourself to your boyfriend/girlfriend. They shared them with a bunch of friends from school.

- If the picture was shared on a social media website such as Twitter or Facebook, report the image to the company immediately; social media companies have policies to protect children.
- Tell a trusted counselor or a teacher at school. It’s better to be embarrassed for a moment than to have the situation get worse. You may want to talk to the counselor about what disciplinary consequences you and the people who have shared the photo will face.
- If you feel comfortable, confront your boyfriend/girlfriend directly. Talk with a friend or a trusted adult to figure out what you want to say, and ask them to come with you if you want their support.
- Do not continue to send them photos, even if they threaten to send the photo to others or break up with you if you don’t. Talk to a trusted adult for support, even if it’s hard to tell them that you sent a picture at all.
- As a general rule, never send revealing photos of yourself to another person, whether you know them in person or not. Once it’s sent, it’s impossible to control what they do with it, and you could end up being charged with the production of child pornography!

A girl you sometimes talk to at school tells you that her boyfriend is getting her into modeling, and he’s taking her to meet agents in L.A. next week.

- If the situation seems suspicious, continue to engage the girl in conversation and find out more details about what’s going on.
- Before you end the conversation, tell her to save the National Human Trafficking Hotline Number in her phone 888-3737-888, and say that if the trip ends up being different than what she expected and she finds herself in a dangerous situation, she can always call the number for help.
- Tell an adult about what you heard so that they can also follow up with her and make sure that she stays safe.

GENERAL TIPS AND RULES TO DISCUSS WITH YOUR CHILD TO HELP THEM STAY SAFE:

- Always know the address of wherever you are going so that if you need to ask someone to pick you up, you can easily tell them where you are. It’s a good idea to tell at least one person who is not going to the same party/event the address ahead of time.
- Have money for a cab or bus with you. Keep it in a separate location from your wallet (such as in your shoe or pocket) so that you’ll be able to get home even if your bag is stolen.
- Do the clothes you’re wearing not have any pockets? Keep your ID and money with you instead of asking a friend to carry it for you in their pocket/bag. It’s important to make sure you have those items with you in case you are separated from your friends.
- Most likely, you have phone numbers saved on your phone but not memorized. Memorize the phone number of 3 or 4 trusted adults you can call in case of an emergency so that you can reach them even if your phone is stolen or out of battery.

RUNAWAYS AND HOMELESS YOUTH

Homelessness has a strong connection with child trafficking and exploitation. Here are signs to look for if you think your child or a friend of your child is at risk of running away from home, along with advice what to do if your child threatens to run away:

Changes in behaviors or patterns

Look for changes in behaviors such as suddenly stopping eating or beginning to overeat, sleeping all day or never sleeping, sudden mood swings or restlessness. This all could be normal teen behavior, but check in with your child to make sure nothing is troubling them.

Rebellious behavior

Not doing well in school, picking fights, or missing classes can all be symptoms that your child is having problems, especially if it’s out of character for your child. Make time to talk through these behaviors with your child and listen for any underlying reasons that could be causing the behavior.

Accumulation of possessions

If you suspect your child is hoarding money, hoarding food or keeping a packed bag, it is important to talk to your child right away.

If your child does run away, contact the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children immediately: 1-800-THE-LOST (1-800-843-5678). The hotline is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

TALKING TO A CHILD

Would your child feel comfortable coming to you about something that happened to them? Would you feel comfortable talking to one of your child’s friends if they opened up to you about being exploited?

Here are a few Do’s and Don’ts when talking to a child you suspect has been/is being sexually exploited.

DO

- Be non-judgmental when listening to the child, and make sure to avoid shaming the child in the way you ask questions.
- “I” questions can be very helpful. Rather than beginning your conversation by saying, “You (the child) did something/said something that made me worry...” consider starting your inquiry with the word “I.” For example, “I am concerned because....”
- Pay attention to your body language. Face the child and make eye contact. Show interest, empathy, and understanding through words, nods, and facial expressions. Speak calmly.
- Pay attention to your child’s body language during and after their response to your question. Their body language should be congruent with what they are verbalizing.
- Label the behavior, not them. For example, “you’re involved in prostitution” rather than “you’re a prostitute.”
- Ask if anyone has been touching them in ways that don’t feel OK or that make them feel uncomfortable.
- Know that sexual abuse can produce a physical response that feels good to the victim, so asking your child if someone is hurting them may not get the information that you are looking for.
- Emphasize the child’s own choices and wishes in the recovery process.

DON’T

- Dispute facts or comment on the child’s motivations. This is likely to stop the flow of information.
- Expect the child to recognize their situation as exploitative or to present themselves as a victim in need of immediate intervention or rescuing.
- React verbally or physically in a way that communicates disgust or disdain. Refrain from displaying a “shocked” face or talking about how “awful” the child’s experience was—this may shut the child down.
- Expect the child to disclose all of the details of their abuse. Sometimes difficult information will need to be gathered in stages.

KNOW THE RESOURCES AVAILABLE FOR YOUTH

Your child or a friend of your child may come to you for help with a topic that you feel unequipped to talk about. For example, a friend of your child may be questioning their

sexuality and looking for a listening ear, or you may suspect that they are planning to run away from home and that it may be difficult to stop them.

In these situations, you can talk to the youth about support services such as the National Runaway Safeline number or youth homeless shelters in your area so that they will know where to go for the help they’re looking for.

It is important to encourage youth to reach out for help and let them know that in spite of their circumstances, they are valuable and there are people who want to help them find their way out of unsafe situations.

Important resources

HUMAN TRAFFICKING <i>(this includes youth who have been in “the life”)</i>	The National Human Trafficking Resource Center: 1-888-3737-888 (Text “Be Free” 233733)
RUNAWAY	National Runaway Safeline: 1-800-786-2929
RAPE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT	National Sexual Assault Hotline Rape Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN): 1-800-656-4673
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE	National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-7233
SUICIDE	Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-8255
ALCOHOL AND DRUGS	Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA): 1-800-662-4357
PREGNANCY	American Pregnancy Helpline: 1-866-942-6466
HEALTH	Planned Parenthood Federation of America Counseling and Referral: 1-800-230-7526
LGBTQ	GLBT National Youth Talk Line: 1-800-246-7743
POISON	National Capital Poison Center: 1-800-222-1222
GENERAL SUPPORT AND INFORMATION	Crisis Text Line: Text “LISTEN” to 741-741

APPENDIX

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR ONLINE SAFETY

Internet filtering software options

- **Net Nanny**
Net Nanny shows you what your children do online and lets you identify information that is never to leave the computer, such as your home address or credit card numbers. You can manage the account from any computer with a web connection and a browser.
www.netnanny.com
- **AVG Family Safety**
AVG Family Safety software monitors chat rooms and social networking sites, filters websites based on age appropriate content, sends you to text/email reports on web usage, and allows you to set up unique accounts for every child.
www.avg.com/us-en/avg-family-safety
- **WebWatcher**
WebWatcher collects data about user activity on computers or mobile devices and creates detailed time tracking and activity reports that are available online.
www.webwatcher.com

Online safety guide for teens

- **Love146's Online Safety Guide**
This page, written to be a resource for teens, walks the reader through conversational red flags, safety guidelines to follow online, and advice for what to do if you feel uncomfortable.
www.love146.org/online-safety

Tools for addressing pornography

- **The Guideline**
This 20-page guide from Fight the New Drug is for parents/caregivers who want to address pornography with teenagers. The guide is based on the feedback that Fight the New Drug has received from thousands of teenagers and research on the effects of pornography.
www.store.fightthenewdrug.org/products/the-guideline-pdf

LEGAL ACTION

You may be wondering what legal actions you can take as a parent/caregiver if you suspect sex trafficking in your neighborhood or find out that your child has been sexually exploited or involved in commercial sex.

In case of immediate danger, call 911

If you witness a situation of exploitation, or are told by a child that they are facing threats of immediate danger, contact 911.

If you suspect human trafficking, call The National Human Trafficking Hotline, 888-3737-888

The hotline is available to answer all calls 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, every day of the year. Calls received by the hotline are always anonymous unless the caller chooses to provide the NHTRC with his or her name and contact information and authorizes its use. This information is not given to law enforcement, other individuals, or other agencies without prior consent.

What happens after I report a tip?

After receiving a tip, the National Human Trafficking Resource Center (NHTRC) team jointly conducts a thorough internal review process to determine appropriate next steps. Crisis calls and urgent tips receive immediate follow-up. Before reporting, the NHTRC will consider the needs and stated preferences of the caller as a primary consideration. Additional considerations include the specificity of the information provided, the presence of indicators of severe forms of trafficking in persons, the involvement of minors, and the anti-trafficking services and law enforcement available in the caller's area. When known, the preferences of the potential victims involved will be taken as a primary consideration.

Follow-up may involve any of the following actions:

- An additional call to the caller to confirm the accuracy of information (with the caller's consent);
- Provision of materials and/or referrals to organizations in the caller's area serving trafficking victims;
- A report to a local anti-trafficking organization, service provider, or law enforcement. (Please refer to the NHTRC's [Confidentiality Policy](#).)

Find out the age of consent in your state

The legal consequences of sexual exploitation or involvement in

commercial sex for a minor can depend on the age of consent, which varies from state to state. For example, the age of consent in California is 18, while in Connecticut it's 16.
www.age-of-consent.info/

Become familiar with the laws in your state

The laws regarding human trafficking also vary state by state. While federal law defines any minor involved in commercial sex as a victim of human trafficking, each state varies in how human trafficking charges are handled.

The State Map from Polaris shows a list of current state laws and service providers for human trafficking victims/survivors for each state.

www.polarisproject.org/state-map

Understand child abuse images laws

Images of child abuse images (i.e., child pornography) are not protected under First Amendment rights and are illegal contraband under federal law. Section 2256 of Title 18, United States Code, defines “child pornography” as any visual depiction of sexually explicit conduct involving a minor (someone under the age of 18).

Visual depictions include photographs, videos, or digital or computer-generated images that are indistinguishable from an actual minor. This also includes images created, adapted, or modified, but which appear to depict an identifiable, actual minor.

Visual depictions of a minor created by the minor or by another minor are also considered child pornography.

To report an incident involving the production, possession, distribution, or receipt of child pornography, file a report on the website for National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) at www.cybertipline.com or call 1-800-843-5678. Your report will be forwarded to a law enforcement agency for investigation and action.

You should also report the incident to federal, state, or local law enforcement.

Understand statutory rape laws

If a minor under the age of consent has engaged in sexual activity with someone over 18, but it did not involve an exchange of money or goods, it is possible that the abuser can

be charged for statutory rape.

In cases of statutory rape, it's possible that the child may see it as sexual/romantic relationship with an older person rather than abuse or exploitation.

In statutory rape, overt force or threat need not be present, because a minor is legally incapable of giving consent to the act.

<http://aspe.hhs.gov/hsp/08/sr/statelaws/summary.shtml>

LOVE146
END CHILD TRAFFICKING AND EXPLOITATION