

A GUIDE FOR CAREGIVERS

TO PREVENT CHILD TRAFFICKING

DEVELOPED BY

LOVE146

END CHILD TRAFFICKING AND EXPLOITATION

Love146 is an international human rights organization working to end child trafficking and exploitation through survivor care, prevention education, and strategic collaboration. We believe in the power of love and its ability to effect sustainable change. Love is the foundation of our motivation.



OUR CHILDREN NEED TO KNOW WE'RE LISTENING AND THAT WE CARE.

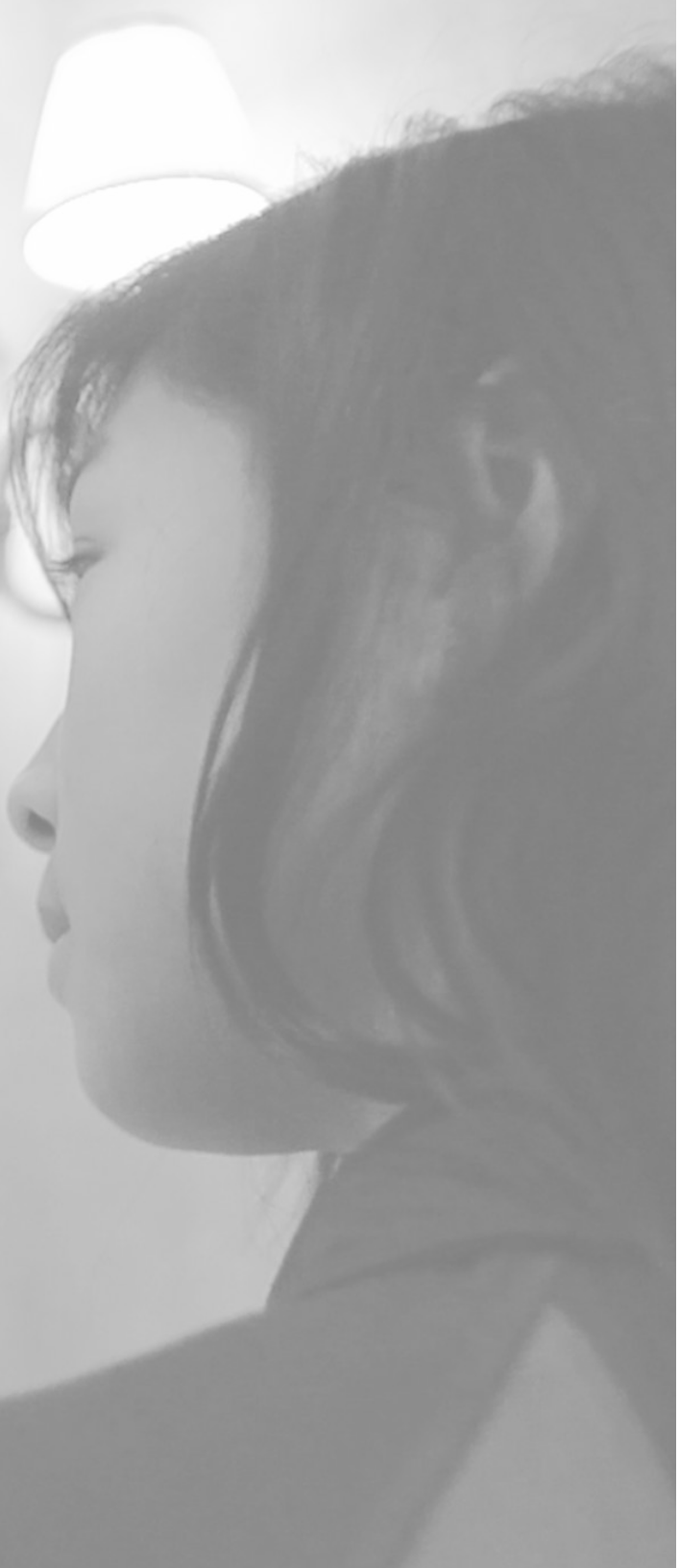
Dear Caregiver,

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.

This resource guide includes information to help you understand the reality of human trafficking, and most importantly, what you can do to safeguard your youth and others in your community.

The information and stories shared here are difficult to read. I ask you to press through those uncomfortable moments — because I know how important this conversation is to helping children feel empowered to protect themselves and open up about their fears, vulnerabilities, and experiences of abuse and exploitation. Our children need to know we're listening and that we care. As a caregiver, your voice and understanding in this process is irreplaceable.

Thank you very much for journeying with us.



HUMAN TRAFFICKING CAN BE IDENTIFIED IN TWO CATEGORIES...

Child sex trafficking

is the sexual abuse of a child (under the age of 18) by another person in exchange for something of value.

Labor trafficking

is a form of exploitation that occurs when a person is forced, tricked, or coerced to perform work or provide services.

THIS GUIDE FOCUSES ON SEX TRAFFICKING.

Child sex trafficking is a form of human trafficking. You may also hear child sex trafficking referred to as *commercial sexual exploitation (CSE)*. The terms are often used interchangeably.



IDENTIFYING VULNERABILITIES

Traffickers often look for vulnerabilities in youth to exploit, or take advantage of. Those vulnerabilities may be age, having disconnected relationships with caregivers or peers, depression, bullying, addiction, and more. In helping youth understand how they may be at risk for trafficking, we have to first help them understand the ways in which they are vulnerable. Using the two case studies of different trafficking stories below, try to identify the vulnerabilities that made Sarah and Leo at a greater risk for trafficking.

Case Study: 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. She loved 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 him and believed it was her responsibility to help because of everything he did 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.

What Factors Put Sarah at Risk for Trafficking?

- Sarah is lonely and finds emotional support in David
- She may not have a strong understanding of healthy relationships
- She is experiencing pressure to move in
- She is emotionally abused by David
- She is financially dependent on him and doesn't have an independent source of income
- David is taking advantage of all of these vulnerabilities
- David's friends are taking advantage of all of these vulnerabilities



Case Study: 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. Leo started sleeping on friends' couches but eventually 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.

What Factors Put Leo at Risk for Trafficking?

- 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 their rejection
- His homelessness — which led to his need to meet basic survival needs, such as food and shelter — is an important factor that led to his exploitation

DISCUSSING VULNERABILITIES WITH YOUR YOUTH

Try engaging the youth in your life about what could make them vulnerable. Consider asking the following questions:

- What kind of vulnerabilities do you think you have?
- How could someone take advantage of your vulnerabilities?
- What would you do if you realized someone was trying to take advantage of you or a friend's vulnerabilities?



OTHER COMMON TERMS

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 a person has given consent: consent means clearly communicating "yes" on your own terms.

REMINDER – *legally, a minor cannot "consent" to exchanging sex for something of value.*

Coercion

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 what you did if you don't")

Grooming

is preparing or training someone for a particular purpose or activity through trust and relationship building. Sometimes grooming for trafficking can be masked in everyday conversations, and may overlap with an individual's needs and desires. Here are some examples of signs to look for in your youth or in your youth's friends:

- A new older boyfriend/girlfriend/friend
- A person who is giving the youth a lot of time, attention, or gifts (more than is appropriate for the relationship)
- Youth suddenly has a lot of new stuff, or they seem to have had a lot of money spent on them
- Appear secretive about who they are talking to or meeting
- Becoming more and more isolated from their regular friends
- Have a new person in their life who has convinced them that they are, "the only person who understands them or what they're going through"



CULTURAL NORMS AND LANGUAGE

Media (print, television, radio, etc.) uses sexual imagery and stereotypes to sell products. Often, these images include violence. Research has shown that these images can play a powerful role in shaping a youth'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. 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.

When you encounter an advertisement on TV or a song on the radio that portrays sexual violence or promotes positive, respectful behavior, encourage your youth to take a moment and ask:

- How do these images/words make you feel?
- What do these images/words tell you about sex and how different genders should behave?
- Why would the advertiser choose to use these images/words?

It is impossible to monitor all of the media that your youth is exposed to on a daily basis. By asking questions about the messages they receive, you can help develop a broader understanding of cultural norms and how we portray gender, sexuality, and violence.



GENDER STEREOTYPES

People of all genders face different expectations and stereotypes. Some youth who have many sexual experiences may be called words like “slut,” while others, with similar sexual experiences, may be referred to as a “player.” Because of this double standard, youth 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. They may even feel at fault. Challenging gender stereotypes with youth, especially around expectations surrounding sex, can help victims recognize abuse and seek help.

TRAFFICKER STEREOTYPES

When you hear the words “trafficker,” who do you picture in your head? A trafficker may look very different than the stereotypes we have created in our mind:

Montia Marie Parker *(pictured left)*

Montia, 18, 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, you would not think of her as a potential trafficker. Dispelling myths about who may exploit someone else, and what a trafficker may look like, can help your youth better identify potential dangers and warning signs instead of forming impressions based on looks and stereotypes.



VICTIM BLAMING

Victim blaming occurs when the victim of a crime, or any wrongful act, is held entirely or partially responsible for the abuse they experienced. 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. Helping youth challenge victim-blaming language can help victims feel more comfortable sharing information about their own abuse. A great response to the statement above would be, "The person who abused them made a choice to assault someone. What they were wearing is not important."

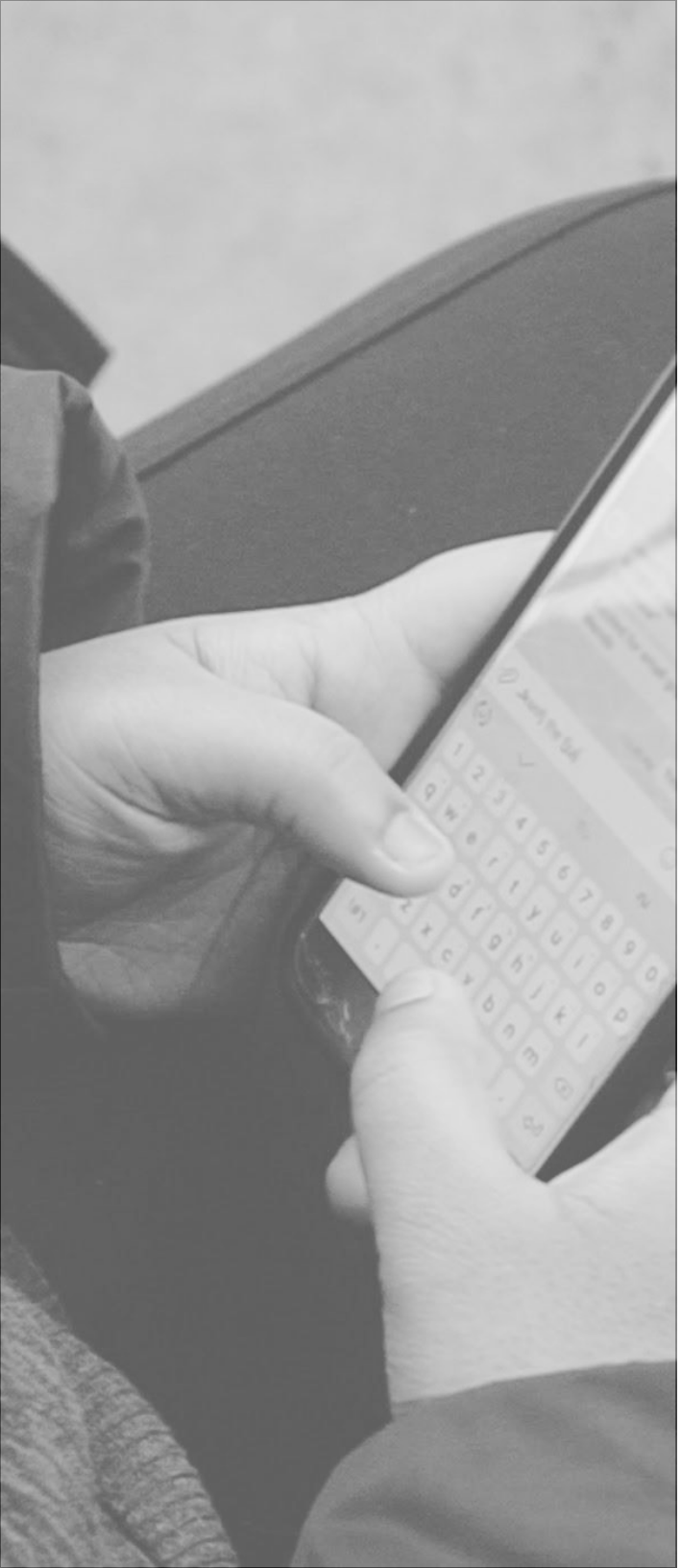
Helping youth understand that abuse of any kind is never their fault, and only the responsibility of the abuser, is an important step for healing and preventing future exploitation.



ONLINE COMMUNICATIONS

An abusive 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.

Traffickers may connect with youth online, through social media platforms or gaming consoles, to learn more about them, build trust, and eventually take advantage of their vulnerabilities. These relationships may develop slowly over time, and they may make it more likely for youth to trust this person as a safe “friend,” and to even engage in risky behavior, such as sneaking out of their homes or meeting up with this person face to face.



FIND THE RED FLAGS

Read the following online conversation, and spot the red flags, or indicators that something does not feel right.

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?

(continued on the next page...)



Alex & Jake agreed to meet at the hotel where he was staying. When Alex walked in the door, he 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.

Red Flags Recap:

We might imagine an "online predator" to be a creepy old man 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).



Sexting

Most youth now have a camera with them 24/7 on their phones. Sending and receiving “naked selfies” is a common practice for many teens, but it can have significant negative consequences. Sexting can have lasting implications, including bullying, humiliation, expulsion from school, and legal repercussions.

Even if a youth is taking and sending explicit material of themselves, they can be charged with the production and distribution of child pornography. This could lead to legal repercussions including being listed on the state sex offender registry.

Youth have significant potential for pornographic exposure (both unwanted and sought-out), and the types of pornography accessed may include extreme forms. Recent studies suggest that youth exposed to pornography may develop unrealistic ideas and expectations about sex.

Sextortion

According to Thorn, an organization working to stop online sexual exploitation, “Sextortion involves threats to expose a sexual image in order to make a person do something or for other reasons, such as revenge or humiliation. Perpetrators are often current, former or would-be romantic or sexual partners attempting to harass, embarrass and control victims.” Given how easy it is to share sexually explicit pictures or videos online, sextortion has become a major struggle and a key component in the exploitation of youth. The impact of youth sextortion can be life changing. Talking with your youth and knowing where to get help is key. (www.stopsextortion.com)



IS YOUR YOUTH HAVING PROBLEMS ONLINE?

It is difficult for youth to talk about sexual concerns or sexual exploitation. Many feel they cannot tell anyone because of the shame they feel or the fear that something worse will happen. Here are some signs a 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
- Appearing scared, secretive, or agitated when answering a cell phone
- Vague talk of a new friend, but offering no further information



SAFETY PLANNING

A safety plan is a personalized, practical plan that can help youth avoid dangerous situations and know how to react should they find themselves in one. Caregivers can play a significant role in helping youth understand potential dangers that they may not have anticipated, and to provide support for them to navigate those situations.

Some Practice With Safety Planning...

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

- If the request makes you uncomfortable, you don't have to respond. You could block the contact.
- If the person continues to try to make contact, tell a friend or a trusted adult.
- If you do want to meet this person, ask a trusted adult to go with you. It could be dangerous to meet someone for the first time alone or meet with someone without talking to an adult first.
- As a general rule, remember that you shouldn't disclose personal information, such as your phone number or where you live, to someone you've met online.



You texted suggestive pictures of yourself to your romantic partner. They shared the pictures with friends at 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, and they may take it down.
- Tell a trusted adult. It might be embarrassing, but you deserve help and support. You may want to talk through about what disciplinary consequences you and the people who have shared the photo will face. (Text "THORN" to 741741 for support from the Crisis Text Line.)
- If you feel comfortable, confront this person 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 support.
- Do not continue to send them photos, even if they threaten you. Talk to a trusted adult for support, even if it's hard to tell them that you sent a picture at all.
- Remember, this is not your fault. Someone has decided to violate your trust — and they are in the wrong!
- For more tips, visit www.stopsextortion.com.

A girl you 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.
- Suggest she save the National Human Trafficking Hotline Number in her phone (888-3737-888) and tell her if she finds herself in a dangerous situation, she can 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.



RUNAWAY AND HOMELESS YOUTH

Youth who have run away or are experiencing homelessness are at very high risk for child trafficking and exploitation. Here are signs to look for if you think your youth is at risk of running away from home:

- Staying out later and later
- Pushing boundaries
- Changes in their behavior
- Secretive conversations
- Lying about whereabouts
- Out with friends longer and more frequently
- Accumulation of possessions or signs of packing

If your youth 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.



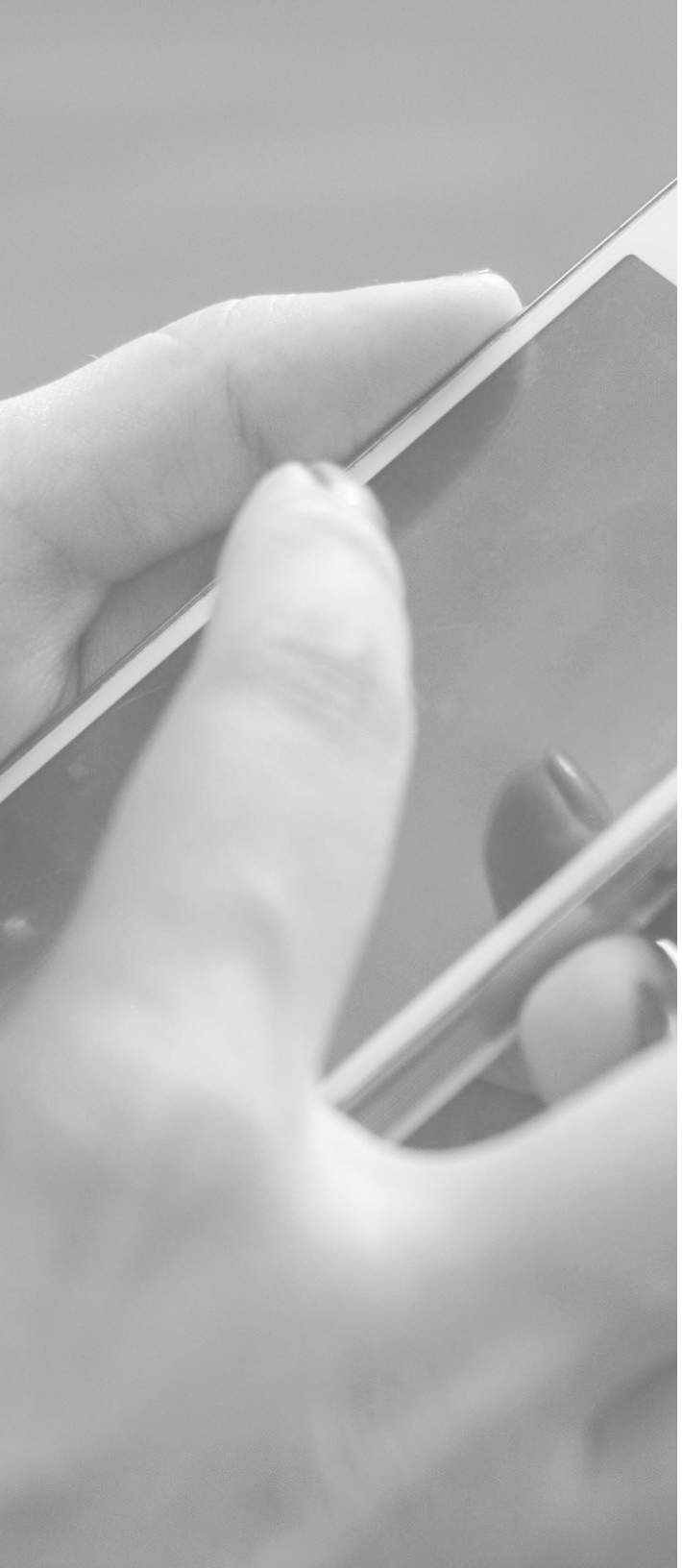
TALKING TO YOUR YOUTH

Would your youth feel comfortable coming to you about something that happened? Here are some things to consider when talking with your youth:

- Be non-judgmental when listening to your youth, and make sure to avoid language that could make them feel shame or rejection.
- Avoid beginning your conversation by saying your youth did something/said something wrong. "I" statements can be very helpful. For example, "I am concerned because…."
- Pay attention to your body language. Face your youth, make eye contact, show interest and empathy. Show understanding through words, nods, and facial expressions. Speak calmly.
- Pay attention to your youth's body language during and after their response to your question. Their body language should match what they are sharing.
- Label behavior, not the youth. For example, an "angry youth" is a "youth who is angry."
- Remember language matters. There is no such things as a youth "prostitute." That youth is a victim of human trafficking.
- Ask your youth if anyone has touched them in ways that don't feel OK. Know that sexual abuse can produce a physical response that feels good to the victim, so asking your youth if someone is hurting them may not get the information that you are looking for.

Remember to Not…

- Question what they've shared or why they have decided to share this information with you. This could shut down communication.
- Expect the youth to believe their situation is unhealthy or abusive.
- React verbally or physically in a way that shows disgust or disdain. Try not to show that you're "shocked" or talking about how "awful" the youth's experience was. This may prevent them for sharing more or believing that you can "handle" the information.
- Expect the youth to disclose all of the details of their abuse. Sometimes difficult information will need to be gathered in stages.



HELPFUL RESOURCES

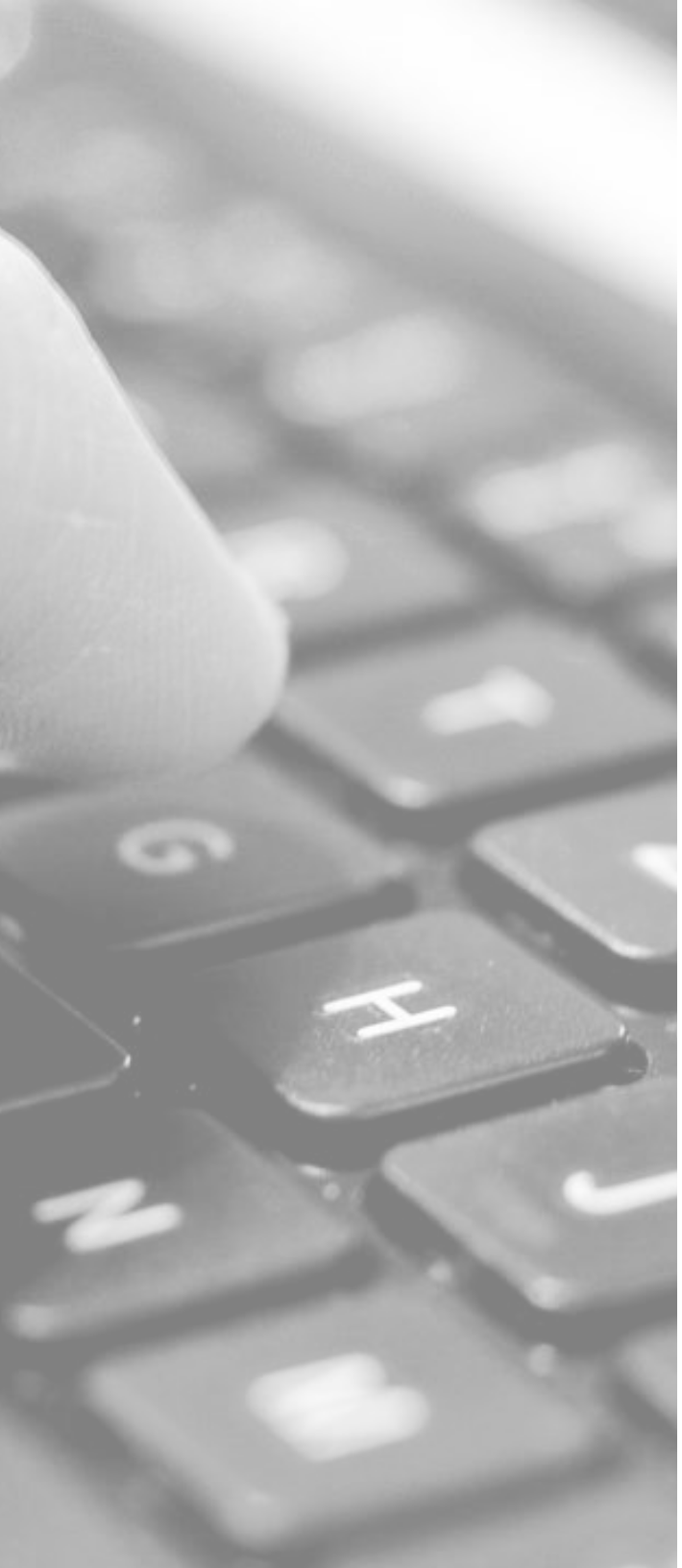
Immediate Help

If you find out your youth has been sexually exploited or involved in commercial sex, or if you witness a situation of exploitation or are told by a youth they are facing threats of immediate danger, ***call 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 their name. After receiving a tip, the hotline team conducts a thorough review to determine next steps. If the call includes information about the exploitation of a youth, law enforcement will be notified and any information provided will be shared with law enforcement.

Become familiar with the laws in your state

The laws regarding human trafficking 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 sexual abuse image laws

Images of child sexual abuse (i.e., child pornography) are not protected under First Amendment rights and are illegal 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). 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.

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 youth may see it as a sexual/romantic relationship with an older person rather than abuse or exploitation. The legal consequences of sexual contact with a minor can depend on the age of consent, which varies from state to state. For more information about your state's laws, visit *www.age-of-consent.info*

Know the resources available to you

Your youth or a friend of your youth may come to you for help with a topic that you feel unequipped to talk about. It is important to encourage youth to reach out for help. These resources are also available to you, and it may be helpful to offer to call these hotlines alongside them.



AVAILABLE ONLINE SAFETY RESOURCES FOR CAREGIVERS

The resources listed on this sheet are just a few of the many available internet safety resources. This sheet is for informational purposes only; Love146 does not endorse any particular resource, product, or software.

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

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*



HUMAN TRAFFICKING *(this includes youth who have been in "the life")*	The National Human Trafficking Hotline 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
TEEN DATING VIOLENCE	National Teen Dating Abuse Helpline: 1-866-331-9474
SUICIDE	Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-8255
ALCOHOL AND DRUGS	Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA): 1-800-662-4357
LGBTQ	GLBT National Youth Talkline: 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



LOVE LISTENS

It may be difficult to have these conversations with your youth, but your efforts to engage and connect will be invaluable and go a long way towards building stronger relationships in their life.