



# SEXUAL EXPLOITATION EDUCATION

## FAMILY SECRET

by WALKING WISE



Presentation Updated: May 8, 2026

### NOTE TO PRESENTER

Log in to [WalkingWise.com](https://WalkingWise.com) and refer to the Implementation Toolkit for classroom teaching tips.

Most importantly:

#### DEFINE SCHOOL POLICY

Establish a sexual exploitation reporting protocol with a trauma-informed response. The Walking Wise Implementation Toolkit provides a sample protocol.

#### AGE & AUDIENCE

This presentation can be edited by following the procedures on page 3 to align with your school policies, specific age groups, and the involvement of at-risk audiences.

#### SUPPORT PROCEDURE

Provide your students with guidance on how to access immediate help or arrange a private meeting with a social worker, counselor, nurse, school resource officer, or another trustworthy staff member to report concerns about themselves or a peer.

#### SECOND SAFE ADULT

Ensure a second trustworthy adult, such as a teacher, is present in the learning setting to observe student reactions and identify those who may benefit from a follow-up meeting. This person should remain focused and free from other duties during the presentation.

## NOTE TO PRESENTER

This PDF contains the same content as the PowerPoint presentation but has been condensed into fewer pages for easier reference. For live presentations, please use the PowerPoint version. It reveals bullet points one at a time.

Meaningful learning takes time. By introducing topics gradually over several years, educators can create steady growth in awareness and understanding.

Our recommended teaching plan offers a long-term path for middle and high school students to build knowledge and confidence.



## 5-YEAR TRACK

### PARENTS & STAFF

#1 Myths & Reality

### 6<sup>th</sup> GRADE

#2 Trustworthy vs. Unsafe Adult  
#3 Grooming Process

### 7<sup>th</sup> GRADE

#4 Pornography Link  
#5 Sextortion Scheme

### 8<sup>th</sup> GRADE

#6 Male Victims  
#7 Runaways as Targets  
#8 Rural Risks

### 9<sup>th</sup> GRADE

#9 Human Traffickers  
#10 Female & Peer Recruiters

### 10<sup>th</sup> GRADE

#11 Family Secret  
#12 Hidden Buyers

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- Always add your organization's name or logo to each new slide.

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For revision requests, please email us at: [support@WalkingWise.com](mailto:support@WalkingWise.com).

SENSITIVE TOPICS WILL BE DISCUSSED

# CONTENT NOTICE

We'll be discussing serious safety issues today.

Some topics may be difficult to hear.

If you ever feel uncomfortable, you can step out and speak with a trustworthy adult for support.

You're not alone—help is available.

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## NOTE TO PRESENTER

### Trauma-Informed Delivery Guidelines

To support a safe and effective learning environment, please follow these guidelines:

- Present the information in a calm, matter-of-fact way and avoid sensational or alarming language.
- Avoid graphic details. Focus on helping students understand behaviors, risk, and ways to stay safe.
- Never blame victims. Responsibility always belongs to the person who caused harm.
- Maintain a steady, composed tone. Students often mirror the presenter's emotional cues.
- Do not ask students to share personal experiences or disclosures.
- If students laugh or react awkwardly, respond neutrally and gently redirect the focus.
- Pair all risk information with needed resources, practical solutions, and support options.
- Reinforce that students are not alone and that trustworthy adults are available to help.

# STATISTICS

## Why Study Results Can Vary

- **Some crimes are never reported, making it hard to reveal the entire issue.**
- **Studies collect information in different ways, leading to different results.**
- **Small studies may not represent everyone.**

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In this presentation, we'll discuss statistics, but it's important to note that while statistics provide valuable insights into an issue, they cannot be relied upon entirely.

Here are a few reasons:

### UNREPORTED

Victims often do not report the crimes committed against them due to fear, shame, retaliation, or manipulation. Also, many don't realize that what is happening to them is a crime.

### INCONSISTENT COLLECTION

Areas may define sexual crimes in various ways or use different methods to collect data, making it hard to compare information.

### FOCUS GROUPS

Small or specific focus groups participating in a study or survey may not accurately reflect the diversity or experiences of the broader population.

# WHY LEARN ABOUT THIS



**KNOWLEDGE** serves as a powerful defense against sexual predators.

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Education is one of the strongest tools for preventing exploitation.

When young people understand how predators operate, they are better able to recognize manipulation and avoid dangerous situations.

Reinforce that awareness increases safety.

# PREVENTION EDUCATION



## SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

includes grooming,  
sextortion, pornography  
& sex trafficking.

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## SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

Taking advantage of another person for their own benefit, especially in a sexual way, often using pressure, tricks, or control.

Below are different forms of exploitation:

### GROOMING

Building trust, dependency, or an emotional connection to manipulate someone.

### SEXTORTION

Threatening to share embarrassing or sexual images, videos, or information to pressure someone into following demands.

### PORNOGRAPHY

Involving someone in creating sexual images who is under 18, or someone who is pressured, or unable/unwilling to give consent.

### SEX TRAFFICKING

Manipulating or forcing someone into sexual activity in exchange for money or something of value.

Trafficking and Violence Protection Act (TVPA) of 2000 (Legal Definition):

SEX TRAFFICKING is the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, obtaining, patronizing, or soliciting of a person under the age of 18 for the purpose of a commercial sex act.

TVPA link: Retrieved April 14, 2026, from <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/BILLS-106hr3244e nr/pdf/BILLS-106hr3244enr.pdf>

# VOCABULARY



## Words to Understand

- Family Secret
- Mind Control
- Generational
- Influence
- Predator
- Family Trafficker
- Child Abuse
- Child Exploitation



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Understanding vocabulary terms related to the behaviors of sexual predators can empower young people to recognize warning signs of harmful situations.

Knowing these terms helps them identify manipulative tactics that unsafe people (predators/traffickers) use to build trust and exploit vulnerabilities.

With this knowledge, young people are better equipped to spot red flags, understand that these behaviors are abusive, and feel more confident reporting predators to trusted adults or authorities, potentially preventing further harm.

# VOCABULARY

## FAMILY SECRET

When family members are told to keep information hidden from others.

This can include situations involving harm, unsafe behavior, or illegal activity.



# VOCABULARY

## **PREDATOR**

A person who abuses, manipulates, or takes advantage of others for personal gain or control.



# VOCABULARY

## SEX TRAFFICKING

To force (violence), fraud (trick/lies), or coerce (pressure) someone into sexual activity in exchange for money or something of value;

or to give someone sexual access to a child (under 18) for something of value.



# VOCABULARY

## FAMILY TRAFFICKER

When a family member or caregiver allows or arranges for others to have sexual access to the family's child/teen in exchange for something of value, such as money, drugs, or housing.

Referred to as a familial trafficker



# WHAT DO YOU THINK?

**What family member can be involved in trafficking a child within their family?**

# WHAT DO YOU THINK?

What family member can be involved in trafficking a child within their family?

- A) Uncles**
- B) Fathers**
- C) Mothers**
- D) Grandparents**

# ANSWER

**Many different types of family members**  
can be involved in trafficking children in  
their family.

Most family members are safe and caring.

However, in cases where trafficking does occur within a family, there is no single type of person responsible.

The key takeaway is that unsafe situations are not limited to one type of family member.

## Source

Allert, J. (2022). Domestic Minor Familial Sex Trafficking: A National Study of Prevalence, Characteristics, and Challenges across the Justice Process, p. 21. Institute for Shelter Care. Retrieved March 15, 2024, from <https://instituteofsheltercare.org/familial/>

# FAMILY TRAFFICKERS

## Traffickers can be Any Family Member

- **Immediate Family Members:** Mothers, fathers, and siblings
- **Caregivers & Guardians:** Stepparents, adoptive parents, or foster parents
- **Extended Family:** Uncles, aunts, grandparents, stepfamily, cousins, or other relatives

## FAMILY TRAFFICKERS

Research shows that trafficking within families can involve a wide range of individuals, including parents or guardians, siblings, and extended family members.

In these situations, traffickers often take advantage of the trust, authority, or dependence that naturally exists in family relationships to control or manipulate a child.

Understanding this helps clarify that exploitation is based on the actions of the offender, not the child's family structure, and reinforces that the child is never at fault.

### Source

Allert, J. (2022). Domestic Minor Familial Sex Trafficking: A National Study of Prevalence, Characteristics, and Challenges across the Justice Process, p. 15. Institute for Shelter Care. Retrieved March 15, 2024, from <https://instituteforsheltercare.org/familial/>



This 3-minute Walking Wise animated video series teaches how sexual predators use manipulation, intimidation, and coercion to exploit young people.

#### NOTE

Log in to Walking Wise.com to watch the three-minute animated video with audiences.

Is animation appropriate for teens?

Yes, even businesses worldwide use explainer-style animation as a training tool for their employees.

# WHAT DO YOU THINK?

**About what percentage of victims are recruited or trafficked by a family member?**

# ANSWER

**About one-third (33%)** of victims are recruited or trafficked by a member of their own family.

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Polaris. (2022). 2021 U.S. national human trafficking hotline statistics. Polaris Project.

n=10,500

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Human trafficking is often underreported because it is hidden, and trafficking within families can be even more difficult to identify.

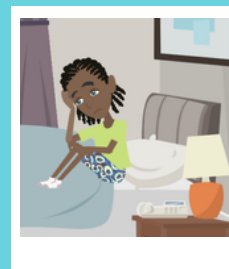
Data from the National Human Trafficking Hotline shows that in cases where the recruiter was known, about one-third, or 33%, involved a family member.

This helps us understand that while not all cases involve family, a significant number do.

## Source

Polaris. (2022). 2021 U.S. National Human Trafficking Hotline statistics. Polaris Project. Retrieved April 30, 2026, from <https://polarisproject.org/2021-us-national-human-trafficking-hotline-statistics/>

# ABUSE VS. EXPLOITATION



How is child abuse different from child exploitation?



# VOCABULARY

## CHILD ABUSE

Any act (or failure to act) that causes harm, potential harm, or risk of harm to a child under 18, including physical, emotional, or sexual abuse or neglect.



# VOCABULARY

## CHILD EXPLOITATION

Taking advantage of a child (under 18) in an unfair or harmful way for personal gain, often by using power, trust, or a child's vulnerability.



# ABUSE VS. EXPLOITATION

## Forms of Child Abuse

- **Sexual Abuse:** Inappropriate sexual behavior toward a child
- **Physical Abuse:** Intentional physical harm or injury
- **Emotional Abuse:** Harming a child's sense of safety or self-worth
- **Neglect:** Failure to provide basic needs, supervision, or protection
- **Exploitation:** Taking advantage of a child for gain or profit

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Joan A. Reid, Juliana Huard, & Rachael A. Haskell (2015). Family-facilitated juvenile sex trafficking, *Journal of Crime and Justice*.

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## CHILD ABUSE

Child abuse includes actions—or a failure to act—that cause harm or risk of harm to a child. This can include physical, emotional, or sexual abuse, as well as neglect.

Abuse can be carried out by an adult or, in some cases, by another young person, such as a peer or an acquaintance.

Sexual abuse involves inappropriate sexual behavior toward a child and is based on power and control. A child cannot give legal or informed consent to sexual activity, which is why any sexual behavior involving a child is considered abuse.

Exploitation, including labor or sex trafficking, is also a form of child abuse because it involves taking advantage of a child for personal gain.

These forms of abuse can happen in any type of family or community, and a child is never responsible for the harm done to them.

## Source

Joan A. Reid, Juliana Huard & Rachael A. Haskell (2015). Family-facilitated juvenile sex trafficking, *Journal of Crime and Justice*, 38:3, 361-376, DOI: 10.1080/0735648X.2014.967965  
<https://www.tandfonline.com/eprint/ZBS7nZCXxC3VqqUaHZ3k/full>

# ABUSE VS. EXPLOITATION

## Forms of Child Exploitation

- **Grooming:** An adult or peer builds trust to manipulate or prepare a child for sexual abuse or trafficking.
- **Sextortion:** Threatening or blackmailing a child to obtain sexual images, videos, or sexual activity.
- **Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM):** Creating or sharing sexual images or videos of a child (aka: child pornography).

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National Center for Missing & Exploited Children. (n.d.). Child sexual exploitation and prevention resources.

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## CHILD EXPLOITATION

Child exploitation occurs when a child is used for someone else's benefit, profit, or advantage. This includes sexual exploitation, where abuse is exchanged for something of value, such as money, drugs, housing, or protection.

Exploitation often involves manipulation rather than physical force. For example, grooming involves building trust to prepare a child for harm, and sextortion involves threats or blackmail to gain sexual images or control.

Child sexual abuse material, or CSAM—also known as child pornography—refers to sexual images or videos of a child. CSAM is considered exploitation because the child is being used for someone else's benefit, whether that is financial gain, control, or the sharing of images with others.

Exploitation often involves someone the child knows and trusts, and it is important to remember that all exploitation is abuse, but exploitation also includes an added element of gain for the offender.

## Source

National Center for Missing & Exploited Children. (n.d.). Child sexual exploitation and prevention resources. Retrieved May 2, 2026, from <https://www.missingkids.org/theissues>

# ABUSE VS. EXPLOITATION

## Forms of Child Exploitation

- **Sex Trafficking:** Involving a child in sexual activity in exchange for something of value.
- **Child Labor:** Forcing or manipulating a child to work in harmful or unsafe conditions.

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U.S. Department of State. (2024). Trafficking in Persons Report.

25

## CHILD TRAFFICKING

Child exploitation can take different forms, including sex trafficking and child labor.

Sex trafficking involves using a child in sexual activity in exchange for something of value, such as money, drugs, housing, or favors.

Child labor involves forcing or manipulating a child to work in conditions that are harmful, illegal, or unsafe.

In both cases, the child is being used for someone else's benefit. These forms of exploitation are serious violations against children.

## Source

U.S. Department of State. (2024). Trafficking in Persons Report. Retrieved May 2, 2026, from <https://www.state.gov/trafficking-in-persons-report/>

# VOCABULARY

## INFLUENCE

The ability to affect someone's thoughts, decisions, or actions without using force or direct control.



# EXTERNAL PRESSURE



**Who might pressure or influence some family members to exploit their child?**



# EXTERNAL PRESSURE

## Who Can Influence Harmful Decisions

- **Traffickers:** Family members under the control of a trafficker may be pressured to involve their child in harmful situations.
- **Gangs:** Involvement in gangs may create pressure through threats or expectations to engage children in illegal activity.
- **Drug Dealers:** Debt or dependence on drugs may be used to pressure a family member into making harmful decisions.

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1. Kinnish, K., Barba, A., Blacker, D., Dierkhising, C., Garrett, R., Grady, J.B., Greenbaum, V.J., Griffin, D., Rubiales, R., Spring, G., Wozniak, J., and Child Sex Trafficking Collaborative Group. (2021). Child sex trafficking: Who is vulnerable to being trafficked? Los Angeles, CA, and Durham, NC: National Center for Child Traumatic Stress.

2. Henderson, M. F. (2022). Human trafficking by families (Public Management Bulletin No. 24). University of North Carolina School of Government.

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## HIGH RISK SITUATIONS

In some cases, parents or caregivers may experience pressure or influence from others, including individuals involved in criminal activity.

Research shows that factors such as financial stress, housing instability, and substance misuse can increase vulnerability and make it easier for others to influence harmful decisions. This pressure may involve manipulation, threats, or debt.

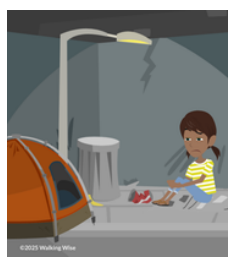
While these circumstances can increase risk, there is never a valid reason to exploit a child, and responsibility always remains with the person causing harm.

### Source

Kinnish, K., Barba, A., Blacker, D., Dierkhising, C., Garrett, R., Grady, J.B., Greenbaum, V.J., Griffin, D., Rubiales, R., Spring, G., Wozniak, J., and Child Sex Trafficking Collaborative Group. (2021). Child sex trafficking: Who is vulnerable to being trafficked? Los Angeles, CA, and Durham, NC: National Center for Child Traumatic Stress. Retrieved January 25, 2026, from [https://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/resources/fact-sheet/child\\_sex\\_trafficking\\_who\\_is\\_vulnerable\\_to\\_being\\_trafficked.pdf?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/resources/fact-sheet/child_sex_trafficking_who_is_vulnerable_to_being_trafficked.pdf?utm_source=chatgpt.com)

Henderson, M. F. (2022). Human trafficking by families (Public Management Bulletin No. 24). University of North Carolina School of Government. Retrieved May 4, 2026, from [https://www.sog.unc.edu/sites/default/files/reports/PMB%2024\\_Henderson.pdf](https://www.sog.unc.edu/sites/default/files/reports/PMB%2024_Henderson.pdf)

# RISK FACTORS



**What are examples of 'harsh circumstances' that increase the risk of family trafficking?**



# RISK FACTORS

## Family Trafficking Risk Factors

- **Substance Misuse:** Family members misuse drugs or alcohol
- **Financial Hardship:** Family experiencing extreme poverty
- **Unstable Housing:** Difficulty paying rent or frequent moves
- **Crime:** Caregiver involved in gangs or illegal activity

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• Joan A. Reid, Juliana Huard & Rachael A. Haskell (2015) Family-facilitated juvenile sex trafficking, *Journal of Crime and Justice*, 38:3, 361-376.  
• Allert, J. (2022). Domestic Minor Familial Sex Trafficking: A National Study of Prevalence, Characteristics, and Challenges across the Justice Process, p. 18. Institute for Shelter Care.

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## RISK FACTORS

Harsh circumstances can increase a young person's vulnerability to exploitation by creating unmet needs or limiting access to support.

Situations such as substance misuse, financial hardship, unstable housing, or exposure to criminal activity can make it easier for someone to misuse power or control within the family.

It is important to understand that these are risk factors, not causes. Having one or more of these experiences does not mean exploitation will occur, but it can increase risk when protective support systems are limited.

### Source

Joan A. Reid, Juliana Huard & Rachael A. Haskell (2015) Family-facilitated juvenile sex trafficking, *Journal of Crime and Justice*, 38:3, 361-376, DOI:

10.1080/0735648X.2014.967965

<https://www.tandfonline.com/eprint/ZBS7nZCXxC3VqqUaHZ3k/full>

Allert, J. (2022). Domestic Minor Familial Sex Trafficking: A National Study of Prevalence, Characteristics, and Challenges across the Justice Process, p. 18. Institute for Shelter Care. Retrieved March 15, 2024, from <https://instituteforsheltercare.org/familial/>

# RISK FACTORS

## Youth Risk Factors

- **Mistreatment:** Experiencing abuse, neglect, or violence
- **Isolation:** Limited social or emotional connection with others
- **Running Away:** Leaving home or lacking a safe place to stay
- **Child Welfare:** Receiving care outside the home (foster care)
- **Justice System:** Involved in the juvenile justice system

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• Joan A. Reid, Juliana Huard & Rachael A. Haskell (2015) Family-facilitated juvenile sex trafficking, *Journal of Crime and Justice*, 38:3, 361-376.  
• Allert, J. (2022). Domestic Minor Familial Sex Trafficking: A National Study of Prevalence, Characteristics, and Challenges across the Justice Process, p. 18. Institute for Shelter Care.

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## YOUTH RISK FACTORS

Some young people may face personal challenges that increase their vulnerability to exploitation. Experiences such as abuse, neglect, or violence can affect a young person's sense of safety and support.

Running away is often a response to unsafe conditions, not simply a choice, and can increase risk when basic needs are unmet.

Involvement in systems like foster care or the juvenile justice system can also reflect instability or limited access to consistent protection.

It is important to remember that these are risk factors, not causes, and having these experiences does not mean exploitation will occur.

### Source

Joan A. Reid, Juliana Huard & Rachael A. Haskell (2015) Family-facilitated juvenile sex trafficking, *Journal of Crime and Justice*, 38:3, 361-376, DOI:

10.1080/0735648X.2014.967965

<https://www.tandfonline.com/eprint/ZBS7nZCXxC3VqqUaHZ3k/full>

Allert, J. (2022). Domestic Minor Familial Sex Trafficking: A National Study of Prevalence, Characteristics, and Challenges across the Justice Process, p. 18. Institute for Shelter Care. Retrieved March 15, 2024, from <https://instituteforsheltercare.org/familial/>

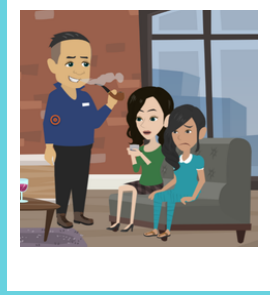
# VOCABULARY

## MIND CONTROL

The use of manipulation to influence a person's thoughts, feelings, and beliefs to control their behavior or actions, often without them realizing it.



# MIND CONTROL



**How do family traffickers control young people to keep the abuse hidden?**



# MIND CONTROL

## Authority & Fear

- **Parental Authority:** Children are taught to trust and obey adults, making it harder to question unsafe behavior.
- **Threats & Fear:** Threats and punishment to control behavior and to keep abuse hidden.
- **Loss of Family:** Children may fear being rejected, losing their home, or losing the support of their family

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Henderson, M. F. (2022). Human trafficking by families (Public Management Bulletin No. 24). School of Government, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.  
Allert, J. (2022). Domestic Minor Familial Sex Trafficking: A National Study of Prevalence, Characteristics, and Challenges across the Justice Process, p. 21. Institute for Shelter Care

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## FAMILY AUTHORITY

Family traffickers often take advantage of the natural trust and authority that exists between children and caregivers.

Young people are often taught to trust and obey adults in their family, which can make it harder to question unsafe behavior.

Traffickers may also use threats, punishment, or fear to enforce control and keep the abuse hidden.

In some cases, young people may fear being rejected, losing their home, or not being supported by other family members.

These pressures can make it difficult to speak up or seek help, even when something feels wrong.

## Source

Henderson, M. F. (2022). Human trafficking by families (Public Management Bulletin No. 24). School of Government, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Retrieved January 25, 2026, from

[https://www.sog.unc.edu/sites/default/files/reports/PMB%2024\\_Henderson.pdf](https://www.sog.unc.edu/sites/default/files/reports/PMB%2024_Henderson.pdf)

Allert, J. (2022). Domestic Minor Familial Sex Trafficking: A National Study of Prevalence, Characteristics, and Challenges across the Justice Process, p. 21. Institute for Shelter Care. Retrieved March 15, 2024, from <https://instituteforsheltercare.org/familial/>

# MIND CONTROL

## Pressure & Substance Use

- **Financial Pressure:** A child may be told they must help provide money for basic needs such as housing and food.
- **Substance Use:** Drugs and alcohol may be used to lower resistance, create confusion, or build dependence.

## SUBSTANCE USE

Family traffickers may also use financial pressure and substances as ways to control young people.

A child may be told they must help meet the family's basic needs, such as paying for housing or food, which can create a sense of responsibility or fear if they do not comply.

In some cases, drugs or alcohol may be introduced to lower resistance, create confusion, or build dependence. Over time, this can increase control and make it harder for a young person to recognize the abuse or seek help.

It is important to understand that substance use in these situations is part of the exploitation and not the child's fault.

### Source

Henderson, M. F. (2022). Human trafficking by families (Public Management Bulletin No. 24). School of Government, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Retrieved January 25, 2026, from [https://www.sog.unc.edu/sites/default/files/reports/PMB%2024\\_Henderson.pdf](https://www.sog.unc.edu/sites/default/files/reports/PMB%2024_Henderson.pdf)

Allert, J. (2022). Domestic Minor Familial Sex Trafficking: A National Study of Prevalence, Characteristics, and Challenges across the Justice Process, p. 21. Institute for Shelter Care. Retrieved March 15, 2024, from <https://instituteforsheltercare.org/familial/>

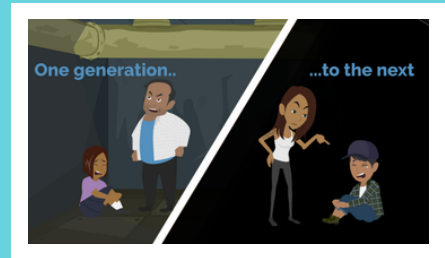
# VOCABULARY

## GENERATIONAL

Patterns of behavior, beliefs, or experiences that are repeated and passed down within the family over time—from parents to their children, to grandchildren, etc.



# GENERATIONAL



**How does sexual exploitation continue from one generation to the next?**



# GENERATIONAL

## How Family Influences Behavior

- **Learned Behavior:** Young people learn what they believe is “normal” based on what they see or experience at home.
- **Exposure to Risk:** When harmful behavior continues, it can increase the likelihood that the child will repeat it.



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Henderson, M. F. (2022, September). Human Trafficking by Families. University of North Carolina School of Government, Public Management Bulletin, No.24, Sog.unc.edu, pp. 4,5.

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## GENERATIONAL

Sexual exploitation can continue across generations when harmful behaviors are seen as normal or are not addressed.

Young people often learn from what they see and experience at home, which can shape their understanding of relationships and boundaries.

When unsafe behavior continues in an environment, it can increase the risk that similar patterns are repeated. However, these patterns can be broken through awareness, education, and support from safe and trusted adults.

### Source

Henderson, M. F. (2022, September). Human Trafficking by Families. University of North Carolina

School of Government, Public Management Bulletin, No.24, Sog.unc.edu, pp. 4,5.

Retrieved January 25, 2026, from

[https://www.sog.unc.edu/sites/default/files/reports/PMB%2024\\_Henderson.pdf](https://www.sog.unc.edu/sites/default/files/reports/PMB%2024_Henderson.pdf)

# WHAT DO YOU THINK?

**Who is most likely to report suspected sex trafficking of a child to police?**

# WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Who is most likely to report suspected sex trafficking of a child to police?

- A) Community Members**
- B) Family Members**
- C) School Staff Members**
- D) Medical Staff Members**

# ANSWER

**Community members** are more often the ones who report suspicions of child trafficking to police.

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Emily E. Edwards, Jennifer S. Middleton, & Jennifer Cole, "Family-Controlled Trafficking in the United States: Victim Characteristics, System Response, and Case Outcomes," *Journal of Human Trafficking*, p. 12.

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Research shows that suspected cases of familial trafficking are often reported by community members rather than professionals.

This may be because the abuse is hidden within the family and can be difficult for systems or agencies to detect.

Neighbors, friends, or others in the community may notice warning signs, making them more likely to choose to report concerns.

This highlights the importance of awareness, as anyone who recognizes unsafe situations can help protect a child.

## Source

Henderson, M. F. (2022, September). Human Trafficking by Families. University of North Carolina School of Government, Public Management Bulletin, No.24, Sog.unc.edu, p. 12. Retrieved March 3, 2024, from [https://www.sog.unc.edu/sites/default/files/reports/PMB%2024\\_Henderson.pdf](https://www.sog.unc.edu/sites/default/files/reports/PMB%2024_Henderson.pdf)

# PROTECTIVE FACTORS



**What are examples of living in a healthy family environment that helps protect children?**



# PROTECTIVE FACTORS

## Safe Living Environments (Charmed Life)

- **Reliable Adults:** Trustworthy, supportive adults who provide guidance and protection
- **Basic Needs:** Confident that food, clean clothing, and housing will be provided every day
- **Relationships:** Strong connections and positive relationships with parents, siblings, and friends

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## PROTECTIVE FACTORS

Protective factors are positive conditions that help reduce risk and support a young person's safety and well-being.

Having reliable, trustworthy adults can provide guidance, support, and protection.

A stable home environment, including consistent routines and basic financial security, can also help reduce vulnerability.

Strong, healthy relationships with family, peers, and other supportive individuals can create a sense of connection and belonging.

While these factors can lower risk, it is important to remember that exploitation can happen in any environment, and a young person is never at fault.

# PROTECTIVE FACTORS

## What Helps Keep Children Safe

- **Well-being:** Enjoys strong physical and emotional health
- **School Support:** Encouraged to learn, grow, and succeed
- **Awareness:** Able to recognize unsafe or manipulative situations

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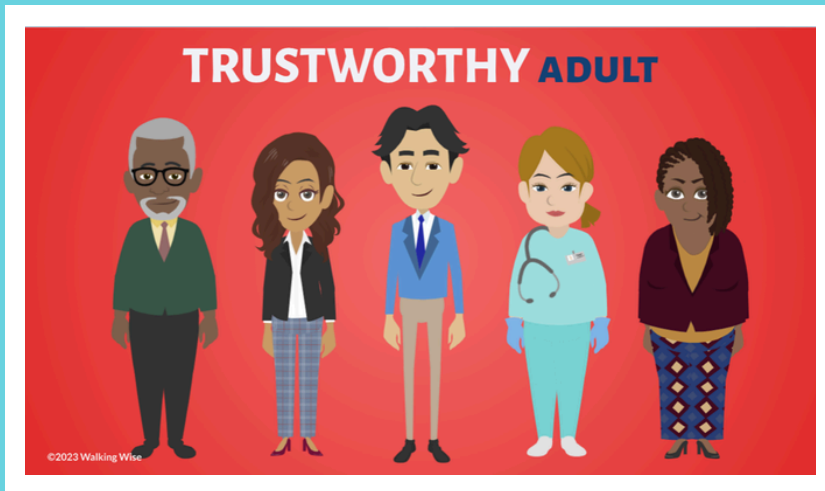
## PROTECTIVE FACTORS

Good physical and emotional health can help young people feel more confident and better able to recognize when something is not right.

A supportive school environment encourages learning, growth, and connection with trusted adults.

Awareness of unsafe or manipulative situations also plays an important role in protection, helping young people recognize warning signs and seek help when needed.

# ASK FOR HELP



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Walking Wise asked a focus group of survivors:  
What do you think young people should know about sex trafficking?

## ANSWER

The survivors agreed that the most vital information teens should know is how to ask for help.

At the top of their list:  
Tell a TRUSTWORTHY adult.

# ASK FOR HELP



**What are ways young people can ask for help?**

# ASK FOR HELP

## How to Ask for Help

- If you are in immediate danger, dial 911.
- If the sexual predator IS a family member, tell a trustworthy adult.
- If the sexual predator is NOT family, tell a parent or guardian
- If you are a student, tell a trustworthy teacher, coach, school nurse, social worker, counselor, resource officer, or principal.
- To gain internet access for help, use a computer at school or a public library.



# 24-Hour Hotline for Help

- ✓ National Human Trafficking Hotline 888-373-7888 or TEXT 233733
- ✓ Rescue America 833-599-FREE (3733)
- ✓ National Sexual Assault Hotline 800-656-HOPE (4673)
- ✓ National Center for Missing & Exploited Children 800-THE-LOST (843-5678)
- ✓ National Domestic Violence Hotline 800-799-SAFE or TEXT 88788
- ✓ National Runaway Safeline 800-RUNAWAY (786-2929)

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## NOTE TO PRESENTER

Presenters may ask their audience to consider adding a few "hotline for help" phone numbers to their cell phone contacts or take a photo of this slide.

# HAND SIGNAL FOR HELP



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Source: Canadian Women's Foundation, April 2020

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Although the hand signal for help has not yet achieved universal recognition, it may quietly get someone's attention in urgent situations.

## SILENT

It can be used silently.

## UNTRACKABLE

It leaves no digital footprint.

## CONCEALED

It can be done secretly when a perpetrator is in the vicinity.

## SIGNALS DISTRESS

A distressed facial expression can help others recognize that help is needed if the hand signal is not understood—but it is important not to alert the predator/trafficker, causing harm.

## Source

Canadian Women's Foundation, April 2020

# Thank you!

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## NOTE TO PRESENTER

To access additional resources about familial trafficking, please refer to the last page of Lesson Plan #11 on the Walking Wise EducLearning Platform.

We welcome your feedback at [support@WalkingWise.com](mailto:support@WalkingWise.com).