



SEXUAL EXPLOITATION EDUCATION

HUMAN TRAFFICKERS

LESSON #9



NOTE TO PRESENTER

Log in to [WalkingWise.com](https://www.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

6th GRADE

#2 Trustworthy vs. Unsafe Adult
#3 Grooming Process

7th GRADE

#4 Pornography Link
#5 Sextortion Scheme

8th GRADE

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

9th GRADE

#9 Human Traffickers
#10 Female & Peer Recruiters

10th GRADE

#11 Family Secret
#12 Hidden Buyers

NOTE TO PRESENTER

This presentation is exclusively for Walking Wise® subscribers and not for redistribution.

Walking Wise encourages the use of Slido.com, an interactive digital tool, to enhance audience engagement. For more information, contact us at support@WalkingWise.com. Once configured, integrate Slido polling and add a post-evaluation to the PowerPoint presentation.

Presenters are encouraged to edit speaker notes to match their speaking style (viewable in presentation mode). You can also delete slides and content from this Walking Wise presentation to ensure the information aligns with your school policies, is age-appropriate, and fits within available class time. However, the slides are copyright-protected and may not be reworded without prior written permission from Walking Wise.

We encourage you to add your own content by following these instructions:

- Insert new PowerPoint slides.
- Remove the Walking Wise logo and copyright "©2026 Walking Wise" from the new slides.
- Always add your organization's name or logo to each new slide.

Please delete this instruction page before presenting to audiences.



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For revision requests, please email us at: support@WalkingWise.com.

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, or manipulation.

INCONSISTENT COLLECTION

Geographical areas have different legal definitions for sexual crimes, which may make data hard to compare.

FOCUS GROUPS

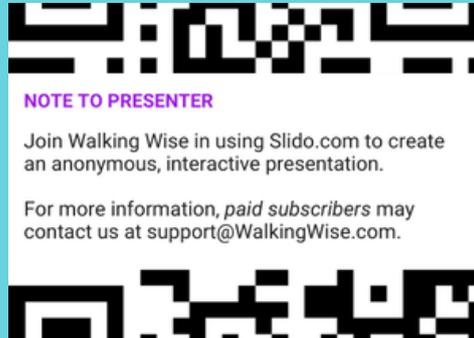
Small or specific focus groups participating in a study or survey may not accurately reflect the diversity or experiences of the broader population.

INTERACTIVE PARTICIPATION

Use Slido for Anonymous Questions

Presenter Instruction

After setting up Slido for this lesson, add the assigned access code or QR code to this slide so participants can join at Slido.com using their computers or phones.



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NOTE

For Online Interactive Polling with audiences:

Join Walking Wise in using Slido.com to create an anonymous user experience.

Contact us at support@WalkingWise.com for more information.

Upon activating Slido.com:

Determine whether the Q&A feature will be enabled. If activated, a staff member should monitor questions and comments to ensure they remain appropriate for the audience. Slido's moderation tools allow administrators to delete or hide inappropriate submissions.

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

Presenter Guidelines for Delivery

Present the information in a calm, matter-of-fact way and avoid sensational language.

Avoid graphic details. Focus on understanding behaviors and staying safe.

Never blame victims. Responsibility always belongs to the person who caused harm.

Maintain a steady tone. Students often mirror the presenter's emotional cues.

Do not ask students to share personal experiences.

If students laugh or react awkwardly, stay calm and continue teaching.

Always pair risk information with solutions and support.

Remind students they are not alone and help is available.

FORMS OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

WALKING WISE



KNOWLEDGE serves as a powerful defense against human traffickers.

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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.

CONFRONTING SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

WALKING WISE



SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

includes grooming,
sextortion, pornography
& sex trafficking.

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Sexual exploitation can include:

GROOMING

Building trust to manipulate someone.

SEXTORTION

Threatening to share private images.

PORNOGRAPHY

Involving vulnerable people in creating sexual images or videos.

SEX TRAFFICKING

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

VOCABULARY



VOCABULARY

- **Human Trafficker**
- **Pimp**
- **Persona**
- **Coercion**
- **Prostitution**
- **Flatter**
- **Seduce**
- **Vulnerable**



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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 terminology helps them identify manipulative tactics predators 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

HUMAN TRAFFICKER

Someone who tricks, pressures, or forces victims to work (labor) or sell sexual acts for the traffickers' financial gain.



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Assisting Source

OpenAI. (2025). ChatGPT (GPT-4) [Large language model]. <https://chatgpt.com>

VOCABULARY

PIMP

A criminal who operates an illegal business requiring vulnerable people to perform sex acts, often using force, fraud, or coercion.

While the word “pimp” is used as slang and glamorized in some songs and movies, in real life, pimps are traffickers who harm people.

Assisting Source

OpenAI. (2025). ChatGPT (GPT-4) [Large language model]. <https://chatgpt.com>

ILLEGAL INDUSTRIES

What are two of the largest illegal industries in the United States?



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Online Interactive Polling
SLIDO.com Open Text Poll

What are the two largest illegal industries in the United States?

ANSWER

#1 Drug Trafficking
#2 Human Trafficking
(sex & labor trafficking)

Illegal activities involve extremely large, organized industries that generate billions of dollars each year.

According to estimates, drug trafficking is the biggest illegal industry in the United States, involving the movement and sale of illegal drugs. It is difficult to estimate profits generated in the U.S., but the global drug trade is estimated to be worth \$426-652 billion each year.

Human trafficking – including both forced labor and commercial sexual exploitation – is often considered the second-largest illegal industry by profit, generating an estimated \$52 billion annually in the U.S. (\$236 billion globally).

These industries harm individuals and communities by promoting addiction, exploitation, violence,

and the abuse of basic human rights. Understanding the scale and impact of these crimes helps students see why awareness, prevention, and safe reporting are so important.

Source

Major Cities Chiefs Association (2025 April). Reference Guide. Highest Grossing Criminal Trades: Volume 5, Sections 5 and 6. Retrieved January 20, 2026, from https://majorcitieschiefs.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/MCCA_Highest-Grossing-Criminal-Trades-Reference-Guide_April-2025.pdf?utm_source=chatgpt.com

ANSWER

#1 Drug Trafficking ~ #2 Human Trafficking
are the two largest illegal U.S. industries.

#2 includes Sex & Labor Trafficking

Online Interactive Polling
SLIDO.com Open Text Poll

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ANSWER

#1 Drug Trafficking
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Major Cities Chiefs Association (2025 April). Reference Guide. Highest Grossing Criminal Trades: Volume 5, Sections 5 and 6. Retrieved January 20, 2026, from https://majorcitieschiefs.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/MCCA_Highest-Grossing-Criminal-Trades-Reference-Guide_April-2025.pdf?utm_source=chatgpt.com

ILLEGAL INDUSTRIES



Why would criminals choose human sex trafficking over drug trafficking?



ILLEGAL INDUSTRIES

Trafficking Industries

- A drug can only be sold once, but a person can be **sold repeatedly** for money or something of value.
- It is common for traffickers to **engage in both human and drug trafficking**.

Traffickers often believe they can make more money trafficking people compared to selling drugs, since an individual can be sold repeatedly.

Human traffickers often perceive drug dealing as riskier in terms of legal penalties compared to trafficking vulnerable or young people, where they believe the risk of arrest is lower. (1)

Sex traffickers often coincide peacefully with each other, compared to the territorial behavior of drug dealers.(1)

Source

1. Dank, M., Khan, B., Downey, P. M., Kotonias, C., Mayer, D., Owens, C., Pacifici, L., & Yu, L. (March 2014). Estimating the Size and Structure of the Underground Commercial Sex Economy in Eight Major US Cities. The Urban Institute. Retrieved May 8, 2025, from <https://www.urban.org/research/publication/estimating-size-and-structure-underground-commercial-sex-economy-eight-major-us-cities>



Message Especially for Teens:

Explainer-style animation is widely used by businesses worldwide for employee training.

Similarly, the Walking Wise animated video series is designed for teenagers (ages 11+) and adults to understand 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.

TRAFFICKERS



Who can be a human trafficker?



TRAFFICKERS

Types of Human Traffickers

- Family Members
- Caregivers
- Authority Figures
- Acquaintances
- Strangers
- Third-Party Exploiters (Pimps)



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Sprang, G., Cole, C. (2018, February 13). Familial Sex Trafficking of Minors: Trafficking Conditions, Clinical Presentation, and System Involvement, p. 1.

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Source

Sprang, G., Cole, C. (2018, February 13). Familial Sex Trafficking of Minors: Trafficking Conditions, Clinical Presentation, and System Involvement, p. 1. Retrieved March 9, 2024, from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/323158066_Familial_Sex_Trafficking_of_Minors_Trafficking_Conditions_Clinical_Presentation_and_System_Involvement

VOCABULARY

PERSONA

The image or personality that a person presents in public or to another person, which may be different from their true self.

PERSONA

Hidden Persona

- Some people have **two very different sides** to their personality (persona), for example:
 - **First Persona:** Kind & Friendly
 - **Second Persona:** Cruel & Scary
- The person might act kindly at first, then **suddenly change** and become controlling and aggressive.

TRAFFICKER BEHAVIORS



What are some common character traits and behaviors of human traffickers?



TRAFFICKER BEHAVIORS

Common Behaviors

- Sense of entitlement or **rules don't apply to them**
- Expect others to **meet their demands**
- Lacks empathy or has **no concern for others**
- Exploits or **uses others** for personal gain
- Displays **sexual aggression** or hostility



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American Psychiatric Association (2022); Zeigler-Hill, V. et al. (2013).

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• CHARACTERISTICS

Traffickers often exhibit narcissistic traits, including an inflated sense of self-importance and a strong need for excessive attention and admiration.

Common characteristics among traffickers may include: a sense of entitlement, expecting others to meet their demands, along with a lack of empathy, a tendency to exploit others for personal gain, feelings of resentment, and displays of sexual aggression or hostility.

Source

American Psychiatric Association (2022, March 18). APA releases Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition, Text Revision (DSM-5-TR).

Sprang, G., Cole, C. (2018, February 13). Familial Sex Trafficking of Minors: Trafficking Conditions, Clinical Presentation, and System Involvement, p. 1. Retrieved April 17, 2025, from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/323158066_Familial_Sex_Trafficking_of_Minors_Trafficking_Conditions_Clinical_Presentation_and_System_Involvement

VOCABULARY

COERCION

To pressure, manipulate, threaten, or intimidate someone into acting against their will.



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Assisting Source

OpenAI. (2025). ChatGPT (GPT-4) [Large language model]. <https://chatgpt.com>

CRIME AGAINST MINORS



What tactic must be used before someone is charged with trafficking a child (under 18)?



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Online Interactive Polling
SLIDO.com Multiple Choice

What tactic must be used before someone is charged with trafficking a child (under 18)?

- A) Force (violence)
- B) Fraud (lies)
- C) Coercion (threats)
- D) None of the above

ANSWER

D) None of the above.

Force, fraud, and coercion are often grouped together because they explain how exploitation happens.

When a minor is involved in a sex act for anything of value, the law considers it trafficking even if none of these tactics are used.

Source

One Hundred Sixth Congress of the United States of America at the Second Session (2000, January)

24) Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000. GovInfo.gov. Retrieved January 20, 2026, from <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/BILLS-106hr3244enr/pdf/BILLS-106hr3244enr.pdf>

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

What tactic must be used before someone is charged with trafficking a child (under 18)?

- A) Force (violence)**
- B) Fraud (lies)**
- C) Coercion (manipulation)**
- D) None of the above**

NOTE TO PRESENTER:

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MULTIPLE CHOICE: D

ANSWER

None of the above. A child (under 18) never has to prove they were forced, tricked, or manipulated.

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One Hundred Sixth Congress of the United States of America at the Second Session (2000).
Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000. GovInfo.gov.

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Source

One Hundred Sixth Congress of the United States of America at the Second Session (2000, January

24) Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000. GovInfo.gov. Retrieved January 20, 2026,

from <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/BILLS-106hr3244enr/pdf/BILLS-106hr3244enr.pdf>

TRAFFICKING LAWS



How do U.S. laws protect people from human sex trafficking crimes?



TRAFFICKING LAWS

Legal Accountability

- **Illegal Exchange:** No one can cause another person to take part in a sex act in exchange for anything of value.
- **Adults 18+:** If force, fraud, or coercion is used to exploit an adult, the abuser is charged as a sex trafficker.
- **Minors (Under 18):** Any time a child is involved in a sex act for something of value, the abuser is charged as a sex trafficker.

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H.R.3244 - Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000

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In the United States, human sex trafficking is addressed through both federal and state laws.

Federal laws (Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act) create a nationwide standard for identifying trafficking crimes and prosecuting offenders, especially when crimes cross state lines.

Individual states also have their own laws that may add protections, increase penalties, or provide specific support for victims.

Together, these laws are designed to protect victims and hold abusers legally accountable.

Source

One Hundred Sixth Congress of the United States of America at the Second Session (2000, January 24). Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000. Govinfo.gov. Retrieved May 8, 2025, from <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/BILLS-106hr3244enr/pdf/BILLS-106hr3244enr.pdf>

TRAFFICKER STYLES

Which term is NOT used to describe how human sex traffickers operate?



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Online Interactive Polling
SLIDO.com Multiple Choice

Which term is NOT used to describe how a human sex trafficker operates?

- A) Romeo Pimp
- B) Liberty Pimp
- C) Gorilla Pimp
- D) CEO Pimp

ANSWER

B) Liberty Pimp is not a real trafficking term because trafficking involves taking away a person's freedom, independence, and ability to choose.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Which term is NOT used to describe how a human sex trafficker operates?

- A) Romeo Pimp
- B) Liberty Pimp
- C) Gorilla Pimp
- D) CEO Pimp

NOTE TO PRESENTER:

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MULTIPLE CHOICE: B

ANSWER

Liberty Pimp is NOT a real term.
Trafficking involves depriving a person of their
freedom, independence, and ability to choose.

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TRAFFICKER STYLES



What strategies might the 3 types of traffickers use to maintain control over their victims?



TRAFFICKER STYLE

Romeo Pimp

- **Builds Trust First:** Gives attention, kindness, and fulfills unmet needs.
- **Creates Emotional Bonds:** Uses gifts, promises, and affection to manipulate.
- **Shifts to Control:** Gradually isolate victims and harm their self-esteem to increase dependence.

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- ROMEO PIMPS

“Romeo” refers to the famous romantic character in the tragic love story by William Shakespeare, Romeo and Juliet, published in 1597.

These “styles” describe patterns of behavior, not labels traffickers use for themselves. A trafficker may use more than one style over time, and all styles are forms of manipulation and control.

TRAFFICKER STYLE

Gorilla Pimp

- **Uses Fear & Violence:** Relies on physical force, threats, and intimidation to control victims.
- **Maintains Control:** Instills fear by punishing victims if they disobey or try to leave.

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- GORILLA PIMPS

Gorilla pimps commonly isolate victims from family and friends and force them into criminal activity such as drug trafficking and theft.

These “styles” describe patterns of behavior, not labels traffickers use for themselves. A trafficker may use more than one style over time, and all styles are forms of manipulation and control.

TRAFFICKER STYLE

CEO Pimp

- **Business-Like Manipulation:** Presents exploitation as a business opportunity or partnership.
- **Appears Confident & Influential:** Brags about connections in industries such as entertainment, fashion, or travel.

- CEO PIMPS

They use a business-like approach to fool their victims. They display confidence, demonstrating intelligence and connections to influential people across industries such as entertainment, fashion, and travel.

The acronym "CEO" stands for Chief Executive Officer, the highest-ranking person in a company.

TRAFFICKER STYLE

CEO Pimp

- **False Promises:** Promises of success, money, fame, or a better life.
- **Isolation & Control:** Separates victims from family and friends to maintain dependence.
- **Forces Criminal Activity:** May pressure or force victims to commit crimes, like theft or selling illegal drugs.

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- CEO PIMPS

They use a business-like approach to fool their victims. They display confidence, demonstrating intelligence and connections to influential people across industries such as entertainment, fashion, and travel.

The acronym "CEO" stands for Chief Executive Officer, the highest-ranking person in a company.

VOCABULARY

VULNERABLE

One who is at risk of physical or emotional harm due to a lack of knowledge, support, or protection.



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Assisting Source

OpenAI. (2025). ChatGPT (GPT-4) [Large language model]. <https://chatgpt.com>

VOCABULARY

FLATTER

To give excessive or insincere praise to a vulnerable person as a form of manipulation.



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Assisting Source

OpenAI. (2025). ChatGPT (GPT-4) [Large language model]. <https://chatgpt.com>

VOCABULARY

SEDUCE

To persuade or tempt someone using manipulation, like charm and flattery, to do something they might not normally do.



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Assisting Source

OpenAI. (2025). ChatGPT (GPT-4) [Large language model]. <https://chatgpt.com>

POWER OF LOVE

What percentage of female victims are exploited by 'boyfriends' or husbands?



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Online Interactive Polling
SLIDO.com Multiple Choice

What percentage of female victims were trafficked by 'boyfriends' or husbands?

- A) 9%
- B) 19%
- C) 29%
- D) 39%

ANSWER:

D) 39% of female victims are trafficked by a boyfriend, romantic partner, or husband.

According to the Polaris Project, about 39% of female trafficking victims were trafficked by a boyfriend, romantic partner, or husband. This highlights how traffickers often use romantic relationships and trust as a way to groom, control, and exploit victims rather than relying only on force.

Source

Polaris Project (n.d.). Love and Trafficking: Grooming, Exploitation, and Control. Retrieved May 8, 2025, from <https://polarisproject.org/love-and-trafficking/>

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

What percentage of female victims were trafficked by 'boyfriends' or husbands?

- A) 9%
- B) 19%
- C) 29%
- D) 39%

NOTE TO PRESENTER:

Delete this slide if you are using Slido.com for audience interaction.

MULTIPLE CHOICE: D

ANSWER

~39% of female victims were trafficked by a boyfriend, romantic partner, or husband.

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Polaris Project (n.d.). Love and Trafficking: Grooming, Exploitation, and Control.

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NOTE TO PRESENTER:

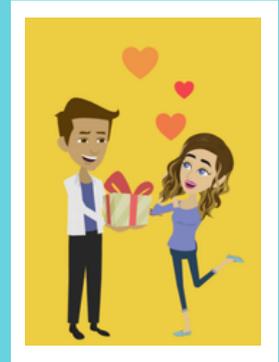
Delete this slide if you are using Slido.com for audience interaction.

Source

Polaris Project (n.d.). Love and Trafficking: Grooming, Exploitation, and Control. Retrieved May 8, 2025, from <https://polarisproject.org/love-and-trafficking/>

POWER OF LOVE

Why can feelings of 'love' make it harder for victims to break free from traffickers?



POWER OF LOVE

Love's Chemical Reaction

- **Brain Reward System:** The brain releases chemicals like dopamine, which create feelings of connection and trust.
- **Emotional Bond:** These brain-driven feelings can form a powerful bond that makes separation feel painful.
- **Love Bond:** Traffickers can create this bond by acting like a romantic partner, caring adult (parent figure), or close friend.

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Love and the Brain (2015), Harvard Medical School, hms.harvard.edu.

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• TRAFFICKER'S BONDS

This bond is not real or healthy love. It is a form of manipulation that uses normal brain responses to control someone. The victim is not choosing this bond—it develops because of how the brain responds to attention, care, and attachment.

• LOVE & THE BRAIN

Love is chemically induced through the brain's reward circuit, where dopamine and other potent hormones flood the brain.[1]

Traffickers often insincerely romance their victims because they understand that the brain-triggered emotions involved with falling in love create a bond that is extremely difficult to break.

Traffickers patiently nurture their victims with false love until this manipulation takes control over the victim's emotional independence.

Source

Love and the Brain (2015).

Harvard Medical School

<https://hms.harvard.edu/news-events/publications-archive/brain/love-brain#:~:text=Being%20love%2Dstruck%20also%20releases,use%20of%20cocaine%20or%20alcohol>

POWER OF LOVE

Trauma Bond Process

- **Trust:** Traffickers build trust by being supportive and caring.
- **Love:** They 'act' romantic or protective, making victims feel valued and special.
- **Fear:** Over time, threats or violence are introduced to gain control.

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Cleveland Clinic (2023, March 29). Here's What Trauma Bonding Really Is and How To Recognize the Signs.

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• TRAUMA BOND

This bond can occur through repetitive cycles of abuse, followed by moments of affection. These patterns create a psychological response in the victim, leading to a cycle of love and fear.

Ultimately, the dynamic can cause victims to form an attachment and be loyal to the trafficker due to their need to recapture the love they thought was genuine.

SOURCE

Cleveland Clinic (2023, March 29). Here's What Trauma Bonding Really Is and How To Recognize the Signs. Retrieved April 23, 2025, from <https://health.clevelandclinic.org/trauma-bonding>

POWER OF LOVE

Trauma Bond Process

- **Loyalty:** By switching between kindness and abuse, traffickers create emotional confusion and dependence.
- **Trauma Bond:** The confused victim cannot escape their need to recapture the love they once felt.

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Cleveland Clinic (2023, March 29). Here's What Trauma Bonding Really Is and How To Recognize the Signs.

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• TRAUMA BOND

This bond can occur through repetitive cycles of abuse, followed by moments of affection. These patterns create a psychological response in the victim, leading to a cycle of love and fear.

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SOURCE

Cleveland Clinic (2023, March 29). Here's What Trauma Bonding Really Is and How To Recognize the Signs. Retrieved April 23, 2025, from <https://health.clevelandclinic.org/trauma-bonding>

CONTROL STRATEGY

Which is NOT a common bond used by traffickers to control victims?



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Online Interactive Polling
SLIDO.com Multiple Choice

Which is NOT a common bond used by traffickers to control victims?

- A) Trauma Bond
- B) Debt Bond
- C) Support Bond
- D) Drug Bond

ANSWER

C) Support bond is NOT a recognized form of bonding used by human traffickers to gain control.

Traffickers often maintain control by creating bonds that make it difficult for a young person to leave. These bonds are not healthy relationships; they are ways of tying someone to the trafficker through fear, obligation, or emotional attachment.

Examples include trauma bonds, where harm and kindness are mixed; debt bonds, where a person is told they owe money or favors; drug bonds, where substances are used to create dependence; love bonds, where affection is used to manipulate; and family bonds, where a trafficker presents themselves as a caregiver or protector. Understanding these bonds helps students recognize how control can be hidden behind feelings of loyalty, fear, or attachment.

Source

Baird, K., & Connolly, J. (2023). Recruitment and Entrapment Pathways of Minors into Sex Trafficking in Canada and the United States: A Systematic Review, *Trauma, violence & abuse*, 24(1), 189–202. Retrieved January 20, 2026, from <https://doi.org/10.1177/15248380211025241>

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Which is NOT a common bond used by traffickers to control victims?

- A) Trauma Bond**
- B) Debt Bond**
- C) Support Bond**
- D) Drug Bond**

NOTE TO PRESENTER:

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MULTIPLE CHOICE: C

ANSWER

Support Bond is NOT a recognized form of bonding used by human traffickers to gain control.

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Source

Baird, K., & Connolly, J. (2023). Recruitment and Entrapment Pathways of Minors into Sex Trafficking in Canada and the United States: A Systematic Review, *Trauma, violence & abuse*, 24(1), 189–202. Retrieved January 20, 2026, from <https://doi.org/10.1177/15248380211025241>

CONTROL STRATEGY

Debt Bond Process

- **Financial Dependence:** Victims may have no money, relying on the trafficker for basic needs, making it hard to leave.
- **Unending Debt:** Traffickers often create fake or growing debt for things like food, housing, or transportation.
- **Stolen ID:** Traffickers take legal documents, preventing victims from leaving or earning money outside of their control.

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End Slavery Now (n.d.). Bonded Labor. Retrieved April 23, 2025.

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• DEBT BOND

Debt bonds are designed to make victims feel they can never “catch up” or leave. The debt is not real or fair—it is a tool used to maintain control.

Traffickers create a debt bond or economic dependence on their victims by imposing debt that continually accumulates and can be difficult or impossible to repay.

Traffickers often withhold victims' legal documents, demanding sex work until they pay a debt in full or simply preventing them from working outside of the traffickers' control.

SOURCE

End Slavery Now (n.d.). Bonded Labor. Retrieved April 23, 2025, from <http://www.endslaverynow.org/learn/slavery-today/bonded-labor>

CONTROL STRATEGY

Drug Bond Process

- **Grooming:** Traffickers may offer free drugs to gain trust or start dependence.
- **Exploitation:** Victims may be forced to trade sex to obtain drugs.
- **Targeting Vulnerabilities:** Traffickers often prey on people who are recovering from addiction.

• DRUG BOND

Drug bonds are a form of control. Traffickers use substances to create dependence, fear, and shame, making it very difficult for victims to leave. The goal is always to manipulate and exploit, not provide help.

Drug bondage can occur when drug dealers coerce users into sex trafficking in exchange for drugs. Some sex traffickers are known to loiter outside drug rehab centers, seeking recruits.

SOURCE

Langton L, Planty M, Banks D., Witwer A., Woods, D., Vermeer M., Jackson, B. (2022, February 24). Sex Trafficking and Substance Use, Rand.org. Retrieved April 23, 2025, from https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RRA108-13.html

RECRUITMENT LOCATIONS



Where do traffickers commonly target vulnerable people?



RECRUITMENT LOCATIONS

Targeted Areas

- Locations with little to **no adult supervision:**
 - Near Schools & Bus Stops
 - Parks & Playgrounds
 - Malls & Convenience Stores
 - **ONLINE**



RECRUITMENT LOCATIONS

Targeted Areas

- **Outside facilities** where vulnerable people spend time:
 - **Juvenile Centers**
 - **Rehab Clinics**
 - **Homeless Shelters**
 - **Drop-in Centers**



UNDERREPORTED

Why do victims often hesitate to report traffickers to law enforcement?



UNDERREPORTED

Silenced Victims

- **Emotional Bond:** Victims may feel loyal or attached to the trafficker through love bonds or trauma bonds.
- **Obligation:** Victims may feel indebted to the trafficker who provided their basic needs.
- **Fear & Intimidation:** Victims may be afraid of physical harm or retaliation if they seek help.

UNDERREPORTED

Victims' hesitation is not a sign of consent or weakness. Bonds created through manipulation, fear, and control make it extremely difficult for them to leave or ask for help.

Understanding these barriers helps society see why victims need support and safe options, rather than judgment.

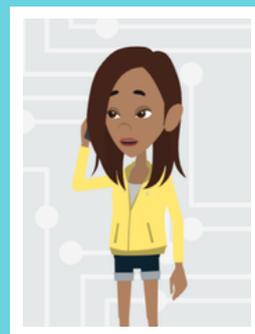
ASK FOR HELP



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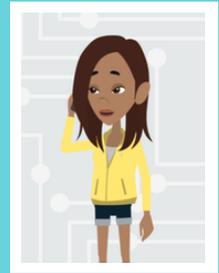
ASK FOR HELP



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, consider telling a trustworthy adult.
- If the sexual predator is NOT family, consider telling a parent.
- If you are a student in school, consider telling a trustworthy teacher, coach, school nurse, social worker, counselor, resource officer, or principal.
- To gain internet access for help, consider using a computer at your 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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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 discreetly 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

Combining the hand signal with a distressed facial expression might help attract the attention of an individual unfamiliar with the signal's meaning.

Source

Canadian Women's Foundation, April 2020

EVALUATION



NOTE TO PRESENTER

If you would like to conduct an online student evaluation, *paid subscribers* may contact us at support@WalkingWise.com for information about using Slido.com.

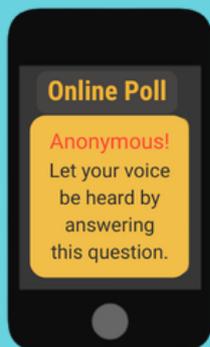
Otherwise, refer to the Walking Wise lesson plan on this topic to access a pre- and post-student survey.



Two ways to conduct a pre-/post-student evaluation:

- 1) Use the pre/post survey in the Walking Wise lesson plan for this topic.
- 2) Activate Slido.com to conduct an online survey.

SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS



1. How would you rate this lesson?
2. What was the one thing you liked?
3. What one thing should we improve?

slido.com
#XXXX

If using Slido: Replace "#XXXX" with your organization's custom Slido code.

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Online Interactive Polling
SLIDO.com: 3-Question Survey

IF SLIDO IS ACTIVATED:

Follow the instructions provided on WalkingWise.com to access your school or organization's custom Slido QR code and #code, which the audience will use to complete the 3-question evaluation.

Please encourage your audience to scan your organization's custom QR code to share what they enjoyed and what could be improved about the lesson.

Please send any feedback you want to share to Walking Wise at support@WalkingWise.com.

Thank you!

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To access additional resources about human traffickers, please refer to the last page of Lesson Plan #9 on the Walking Wise Learning Platform.

We welcome your feedback at support@WalkingWise.com.