



SEXUAL EXPLOITATION EDUCATION

MALE VICTIMS LESSON #6



NOTE TO PRESENTER

Log in to 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

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

Please delete this instruction page before presenting to audiences.



NOTE TO PRESENTER

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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 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.

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

- **Vulnerable**
- **Predator**
- **Sterotype**
- **Humiliation**
- **Disgrace**
- **Survival Sex**



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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

VULNERABLE

At risk of physical or emotional harm due to a lack of protection, support, or awareness.



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Assisting Source

OpenAI. (2024). ChatGPT [Large language model]. <https://chatgpt.com>

VOCABULARY

PREDATOR

Someone who injures, abuses, or takes advantage of others for personal gain or profit.



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Assisting Source

OpenAI. (2024). ChatGPT [Large language model]. <https://chatgpt.com>

MALE VICTIMS

What percentage of sex trafficked victims in the U.S. are believed to be MALE?



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Online Interactive Polling
SLIDO.com Multiple Choice

What percentage of sex trafficked victims in the U.S. are believed to be MALE?

- A) Up to 6%
- B) Up to 16%
- C) Up to 36%
- D) Up to 46%

ANSWER:

C) Up to 36% of U.S. trafficking victims are believed to be male.

Coercion into the commercial sex trade is more common among females. However, a national report found that 36% of sex trafficking victims are male, while 4% are transgender females, and less than 1% are transgender males. Traffickers exploit similar vulnerabilities to groom and coerce young males as they do with females.[1]

Source

1. Swaner, R., et al. (2016, June). Youth involved in the sex trade: A national study, p. 36. U.S. Department of Justice. Retrieved November 23, 2024, from <https://www.ojp.gov/pdffiles1/ojjdp/grants/249952.pdf>

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

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- C) Up to 36%**
- D) Up to 46%**

NOTE TO PRESENTER:

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MULTIPLE CHOICE: C

ANSWER

Up to **36%** of U.S. trafficking victims are believed to be male.

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Swaner, R., et al. (2016, June). Youth involved in the sex trade: A national study, p. 36. U.S. Department of Justice.

n = 341

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Source

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Message Especially for Teens:

Businesses worldwide use explainer-style animation as a training tool for their employees. So, this 3-minute Walking Wise animated video is appropriate for both teens (ages 11+) and adults to learn 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.

VOCABULARY

STEREOTYPE

An untrue or inaccurate belief about a group of people or things.



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Assisting Source

OpenAI. (2024). ChatGPT [Large language model]. <https://chatgpt.com>

STEREOTYPES

What are common stereotypes of males versus females?



STEREOTYPES

Common Stereotypes

- Boys are considered better at **math and science**, while girls are assumed to be better at **reading and the arts**.
- Boys are expected to **hide their feelings**, while girls are thought to be **emotionally expressive**.

- STEREOTYPES

These stereotypes reinforce the idea that males should suppress their emotions, leading many to feel ashamed or emasculated if they share experiences of victimization. As a result, male survivors may be less likely to report sexual abuse and commercial exploitation and seek help.

STEREOTYPES

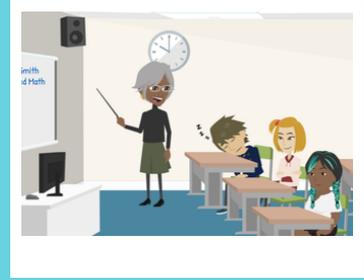
Common Stereotypes

- Boys are often believed to be **sexual aggressors**, while girls are assumed to be the **victims**.
- Boys are thought to be victims of **labor trafficking**, while girls are assumed to be victims of **sex trafficking**.

- STEREOTYPES

These stereotypes reinforce the idea that males should suppress their emotions, leading many to feel ashamed or emasculated if they share experiences of victimization. As a result, male survivors may be less likely to report sexual abuse and commercial exploitation and seek help.

TRAFFICKING MYTH



How does the myth that only girls are sex trafficked impact boys?



TRAFFICKING MYTH

Impact of the Myth

- Male victims are more likely to be **overlooked or dismissed**.
- Sexual harm against boys is often **taken less seriously**.
- **Fewer resources** for support and recovery are available for boys.



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United States Department of State (2023, June). Overlooked for Too Long: Boys and Human Trafficking. Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking In Persons.

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• OVERLOOKED CASES

Stereotyping often causes adults, including law enforcement and medical professionals, to overlook young males being sex trafficked.[1]

• UNDERESTIMATED IMPACT

Sexual crime is just as devastating for males as it is for females, but society tends to underestimate the traumatic effects sexual abuse and exploitation have on males. As a result, there tends to be a misconception that young males enjoy experiencing unlimited or unrestricted sex.

• LACK OF RESOURCES

Because of underreporting and a lack of awareness of male vulnerability, resources are often not allocated to support the needs of young males. Instead, the focus tends to be on females.

Source

1. United States Department of State (2023, June). Overlooked for Too Long: Boys and Human Trafficking. Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking In Persons. Retrieved on December 30, 2024, from <https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Overlooked-for-Too-Long-Boys-and-Human-Trafficking.pdf>

VOCABULARY

HUMILIATION

The feeling of shame or embarrassment caused by being degraded or dishonored.



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Assisting Source

OpenAI. (2024). ChatGPT [Large language model]. <https://chatgpt.com>

VOCABULARY

DISGRACE

A deep sense of shame or loss of respect, often caused by a specific event or action.



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Assisting Source

OpenAI. (2024). ChatGPT [Large language model]. <https://chatgpt.com>

GENDER EXPECTATIONS



How do gender expectations impact boys who experience sexual abuse or trafficking?



GENDER EXPECTATIONS

Impact of Social Messages

- Boys may **blame themselves** because vulnerability is often associated with girls.
- Boys may **fear** their sexual identity will be questioned or misunderstood.
- Boys may feel **shame** for not being able to stop or escape the abuse.

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United States Department of State (2023, June). Overlooked for Too Long: Boys and Human Trafficking. Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking In Persons.

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• MALE IDENTITY

As young as toddlers, boys receive social messaging that implies males are a symbol of physical power and mental strength. The superheroes in today's entertainment can reinforce this notion while using female characters to portray vulnerability, submissiveness, and victimization.

• FEAR & SHAME

National studies identify that most male victims are heterosexual; however, victimized young males often fear others will make an inaccurate conclusion about their sexual orientation. As a result, they struggle with confusion and shame, often questioning their own gender identity after becoming forced into having sex with men.[1]

• SELF BLAME

Most young males keep sexual abuse or sex trafficking a secret because of their sense of shame and humiliation. Gender expectations often magnify the self-blame experienced by males.

• PORN CONDITIONING

Most often, pornography displays forced sex upon young women, conditioning male teens to believe men are dominant or even sexual aggressors (Alexander, 2016).

Source

1. United States Department of State (2023, June). Overlooked for Too Long: Boys and Human Trafficking. Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking In Persons. Retrieved on December 30, 2024, from <https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Overlooked-for-Too-Long-Boys-and>

AGE GROUP

What are the most common ages for males to be sex trafficked?



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Online Interactive Polling
Slido.com: Multiple Choice

What is the most common age for males to be sex trafficked?

- A) 9 to 12 years old
- B) 13 to 17 years old
- C) 18 to 24 years old

ANSWER

B) 13 to 17 years old was the most common age for males to be sex trafficked.

NOTE

A 2016 national study reported:

UNDERAGE YOUTH

77% of all respondents (199 underage youth) indicated that their first experience trading sex took place while under the age of 18. The average age was 15.8 years old.

AGES 13 to 17 YEARS

The percentage of study respondents who were first trafficked during childhood:

Cis Males: 66%

Trans Females: 62%

Trans Males: Unknown

Cis Females: 74%

AGES 18 to 24 Years

The study indicated the percentage of young adults who were first sex trafficked by gender:

Cis Males: 28%

Trans Females: 32%

Trans Males: No Data

Cis Females: 19%

AGES 0 to 12 YEARS

The study revealed the percentage of small children who were first sex trafficked by gender:

Cis Males: 7%

Trans Females: 6%

Trans Males: No Data

Cis Females: 7%

Source

Swaner, R., Labriola, M., Rempel, M., Walker, A., & Spadafore, J. (2016, March). Youth Involvement in the Sex Trade: A National Study, pp. 40, 41. CourtInnovation.org. Retrieved November 25, 2024, from <https://www.ojp.gov/pdffiles1/ojjdp/grants/249952.pdf>

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

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- B) 13 to 17 years old**
- C) 18 to 24 years old**

NOTE TO PRESENTER:

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MULTIPLE CHOICE: B

ANSWER

66% of males were trafficked between the ages of 13 and 17 years.

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Swaner, R., Labriola, M., Rempel, M., Walker, A., & Spadafore, J. (2016, March). Youth Involvement in the Sex Trade: A National Study.

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LGBTQ+ TRAFFICKING RISKS

What factors increase the risk of sex trafficking for LGBTQ+ (cisgender male) teens?



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NOTE

The 2023 Thorn study quantified the attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors of teens and young adults, focusing on how LGBTQ+ youth's online experiences are different from those of non-LGBTQ+ youth. The study involved 658 LGBTQ+ youth, of whom 69% were aged 13 to 17, and 31% identified as male.

Secondary online accounts, often called "finstas," are created by young people to share content more privately or outside their usual social circle. Thorn reports, "Among teens, the rate of reporting secondary accounts was higher for LGBTQ+ respondents than non-LGBTQ+ respondents, with LGBTQ+ teens were twice as likely to have a secondary account (36% vs. 18%). Among teen respondents with a secondary account, 1 in 3 reported creating it before the age of 13."

Source

Thorn. (2023). LGBTQ+ Youth Perspectives: How LGBTQ+ youth are navigating exploration and risks of sexual exploitation online, p. 5. Retrieved November 26, 2024, from https://info.thorn.org/hubfs/Research/Thorn_LGBTQ+YouthPerspectives_June2023_FNL.pdf

LGBTQ+ TRAFFICKING RISKS

Increased Risk Factors

- Some teens spend **more time in online communities**, increasing contact with people they have not met in real life.
- Many teens try to **handle unsafe situations** on their own rather than ask for help.
- These teens are more likely to **receive unsolicited sexual images**, which predators may use for pressure or blackmail.

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Thorn. (2023). LGBTQ+ Youth Perspectives: How LGBTQ+ youth are navigating exploration and risks of sexual exploitation online.

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UNRECOGNIZED

Why can male victims be harder to recognize?



UNRECOGNIZED

Often Overlooked

- Boys are often **assumed to be the initiators** rather than the victims of sexual activity.
- Adults may be **less watchful or protective** of boys than girls.
- Warning signs of abuse or trafficking in boys may be **missed or misunderstood**.



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NPR News, 2021. <https://www.npr.org/2021/05/24/999726614/growing-number-of-male-survivors-talk-about-being-a-sex-trade-victim>

32

Some survivor advocates believe social awareness around the sex trafficking of boys is about 15 years behind that of girls.[1]

- **SEXUAL INSTIGATORS**

Society can perceive teenage boys as sexual instigators, making them more easily mistaken as “willing participants” when becoming victimized by sex traffickers.

- **REDUCED PROTECTION**

Community members can be less watchful over the well-being of boys compared to that of girls, causing at-risk young males to go unnoticed, even when surrounded by suspicious strangers.

- **LACK OF AWARENESS**

Society’s limited awareness about the victimization of males can cause adults to overlook the key indicators of trafficking or sexual abuse that may appear.

Source:

1. NPR News, 2021. Retrieved January 15, 2026, from <https://www.npr.org/2021/05/24/999726614/growing-number-of-male-survivors-talk-about-being-a-sex-trade-victim>

UNREPORTED CRIME

What happens when boys keep sexual crimes a secret?



UNREPORTED CRIME

Impact of Secrecy

- When crimes aren't reported, information is not included in research data, leading to **less funding for support services.**
- Without support, boys may face long-term effects like **depression, substance use, or trouble with the law.**

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- UNADDRESSED EFFECTS

If left untreated, male victims are at a greater risk of depression, suicide, substance abuse, and even incarceration.

- DATA IMPACT

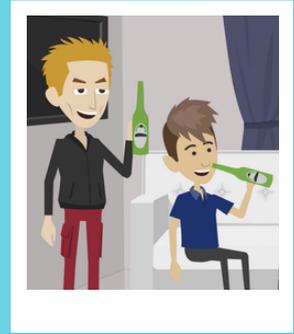
When sex crimes against young males go unreported, the incidents are omitted from law enforcement data that is reported to the government and advocacy agencies, which also negatively impacts research studies.

- UNDERFUNDED

Underreporting prevents the allocation of government funds for the support services needed to rescue and recover young males.

VULNERABILITIES

What vulnerabilities do traffickers target in boys?



VULNERABILITIES

Risk Factors: Unstable Conditions

- Unable to access **basic needs** like food or shelter.
- Living in foster care or **without stable housing**.
- **Experiencing family rejection** due to sexual orientation.



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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.

36

Groomers often build close relationships with young males, using the personal information shared to manipulate, coerce, or brainwash them into engaging in sexual acts. The likelihood of a young male being trafficked increases with the number of vulnerabilities he faces.

Risk factors of sex trafficking include:

• ONLINE RELATIONSHIPS

Predators prey on young males seeking online friendships and those who exchange nude images online.

• LIVING CONDITIONS

Predators seek to befriend young males who live in poverty, lack basic needs, or live in foster care.

• EMOTIONAL RISKS

Predators build relationships with males experiencing loneliness, low self-esteem, or those being bullied.

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 16, 2026, from https://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/resources/fact-sheet/child_sex_trafficking_who_is_vulnerable_to_being_trafficked.pdf

VULNERABILITIES

Risk Factors: Social & Behavior Challenges

- Facing **bullying, loneliness, or low self-esteem.**
- Easily influenced by **peer pressure.**
- Spending a lot of time with **online-only friends.**



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. Thorn. (2025). Sexual Extortion & Young People: Navigating threats in digital environments.

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2. Thorn. (2025). Sexual Extortion & Young People: Navigating threats in digital environments. Retrieved January 16, 2016, from <https://www.thorn.org/research/library/sexual-extortion-young-people/>

VULNERABILITIES

Risk Factors: Emotional & Physical Challenges

- **Lacking motivation** to participate in school or other activities.
- Experiencing **neglect** or physical or sexual **abuse**.
- Living with physical or mental **health challenges**.
- Using **drugs or alcohol**.



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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.

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RISKY ACTIVITIES

In one or two words, name a risky activity that can increase vulnerability.



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Online Interactive Polling
Slido.com: Word Cloud

NOTE

The more frequently a word is used, the larger it appears in the cloud, making it easy to see which words or ideas are most common among the audience.

POSSIBLE ANSWERS

Online Relationships

Gaming Platforms

Sexting

Homelessness

Substance Use & Addiction

RISK ACTIVITIES

Common Risks Factors for Males

- Online Relationships
- Gaming Platforms
- Sexting
- Running Away



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1.Thorn. (2025). Sexual Extortion & Young People: Navigating threats in digital environments.
2.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.

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TRAFFICKING RISK FACTORS

- Experience neglect, mental, physical & sexual abuse
- Food insecurity, unhoused, or lack of basic needs
- Poor self-esteem
- Struggles academically or has learning differences
- Lacks peer relationships or is a target of bullying
- Submits to peer pressure
- Unmotivated to achieve in school or activities
- Unprotected use of social media platforms
- Intellectual disabilities or mental health issues
- Older boyfriend, girlfriend, or partner
- Family rejection over sexual orientation
- Drug and alcohol use
- Romantic partner uses drugs
- Isolated by a romantic partner or friend
- Family member abuses drugs or alcohol
- Unstable home life or unhealthy family dynamics
- History of running away
- Lives in Foster Care or a group home
- Unhoused or lives in a homeless shelter
- Lives near a wealthy tourist location
- Targeted by cults or gangs, or is a cult or gang member
- Family member participates in trafficking

- Exposed to prostitution within the neighborhood
- Involved in the Juvenile Justice system

Source:

1. Thorn. (2025). Sexual Extortion & Young People: Navigating threats in digital environments. Retrieved January 16, 2016, from <https://www.thorn.org/research/library/sexual-extortion-young-people/>

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 16, 2026, from https://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/resources/fact-sheet/child_sex_trafficking_who_is_vulnerable_to_being_trafficked.pdf

RISKY ACTIVITIES

Online Relationships

- Predators may pretend to be the **same age** and have **things in common**.
- They try to **build trust** before making unsafe or uncomfortable requests.



RISKY ACTIVITIES

Gaming Platforms

- Playing online video games with strangers can increase the **risk of being manipulated**.
- Victims are often persuaded to **move the conversation** to a private platform.
- Victims may be enticed to **meet in person** or to **run off together** on an adventure.

RISKY ACTIVITIES

Sexting

- Teen males and LGBTQ+ youth are **more likely to engage in sexting** with online connections.
- They may believe the person is **romantically interested** in them, which lowers their guard.
- Predators **send a nude photo FIRST** and request a **nude** in return.

RISKY ACTIVITIES

Homelessness

- **Running away** from home leaves boys without basic needs like food and shelter.
- **Staying temporarily with friends (couch surfing)** often doesn't last and can lead to homelessness.
- **Teens without housing may feel pressured to engage in "survival sex" to access food, shelter, and protection.**

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• HOMELESSNESS

The reason young males run away, couch surf, and become homeless is often due to family rejection, abuse, or disapproval over their sexual orientation. All of which can cause them to be heavily preyed upon.

VOCABULARY

SURVIVAL SEX

Engaging in sexual activity under desperate circumstances in exchange for basic needs like food, shelter, and protection.



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Assisting Source

OpenAI. (2024). ChatGPT [Large language model]. <https://chatgpt.com>

RISKY ACTIVITIES

Substance Use & Addiction

- Some teens use drugs and alcohol to **cope with stress, pain, or past trauma.**
- Groomers may use substances to **build trust or gain control.**
- Predators may target teens who use substances by giving them **access to drugs.**

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• ADDICTION

Addiction creates a form of bondage to the victims' abuser or trafficker.

Illegal drugs often serve as a coping mechanism for victims to numb the pain of the physical and emotional trauma of sexual abuse or sex trafficking.

Groomers often use drugs and alcohol as tools to coerce young people to become addicted to substances.

Traffickers can exploit an addict's existing drug or alcohol habit by becoming their supplier or preying on those who are exiting treatment or recovery facilities.

BRAIN DEVELOPMENT

At about what age is the male brain fully developed?



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Online Interactive Polling
Slido.com: Multiple Choice

At about what age is the male brain fully developed?

- A) 16 years old
- B) 18 years old
- C) 20 years old
- D) 25 years old

ANSWER

D) 25 years old is when a male's brain is typically fully developed.

- BRAIN DEVELOPMENT

Although the brain's size may no longer grow, it is not fully developed until young people are in their twenties. Some studies suggest that for males, the age is closer to twenty-five.

Source:

Casey, B., Jones, R. M., & Somerville, L. H. (2011). Braking and Accelerating of the Adolescent Brain. *Journal of Research on Adolescence: The Official Journal of the Society for Research on Adolescence*, 21(1), 21–33. Retrieve January 15, 2026, from <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1532-7795.2010.00712.x>

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

At about what age is the male brain fully developed?

- A) 16 years old
- B) 18 years old
- C) 20 years old
- D) 25 years old

NOTE TO PRESENTER:

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

MULTIPLE CHOICE: D

ANSWER

The male brain is fully developed
at about **25 years old.**

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Casey, B., Jones, R. M., & Somerville, L. H. (2011). Braking and Accelerating of the Adolescent Brain. *Journal of Research on Adolescence: The Official Journal of the Society for Research on Adolescence*, 21(1), 21–33.

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BRAIN DEVELOPMENT

How the Brain Matures

- During adolescence, the brain stops growing in size but **continues to develop**.
- In males, brain development continues until about **age 25**.
- **Prefrontal Cortex**: This part of the brain, which helps with **choices and self-control**, develops last.

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• BRAIN DEVELOPMENT

Although the size of the brain may no longer be growing, the brain is not fully developed until young people are in their twenties. Some studies suggest that for males, the age is closer to twenty-five.

• BRAIN FUNCTION

The front part of the brain, the prefrontal cortex, is one of the last regions to mature. [1] The brain's prefrontal cortex "is responsible for skills such as planning, prioritizing, and controlling impulse. Because these skills are still developing, teens are more likely to engage in risky behaviors without considering the possible results of their decisions" (National Institutes of Mental Health).

• IMPULSIVENESS

Since traffickers understand the impulsive nature of young people, they exploit this vulnerability to manipulate teens into making decisions that keep them under their control.

Source:

Casey, B., Jones, R. M., & Somerville, L. H. (2011). Braking and Accelerating of the Adolescent Brain. *Journal of Research on Adolescence: The Official Journal of the Society for Research on Adolescence*, 21(1), 21–33. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1532-7795.2010.00712.x>

BRAIN DEVELOPMENT



How can slower brain development increase vulnerability in boys?



BRAIN DEVELOPMENT

Brain Development in Boys

- Teens may **take more risks** because decision-making skills are still developing.
- The prefrontal cortex, which helps with impulse control, planning, and judgment, is **not fully mature yet**.
- This can make it harder for teens to **pause**, think through consequences, and **avoid** risky situations.

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• BRAIN FUNCTION

The prefrontal cortex, the front part of the brain, is one of the last regions to mature.[1] The brain's prefrontal cortex "is responsible for various skills like planning, prioritizing, and controlling impulse. Because these skills are still developing, teens are more likely to engage in risky behaviors without considering the possible results of their decisions" (National Institutes of Mental Health).

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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)

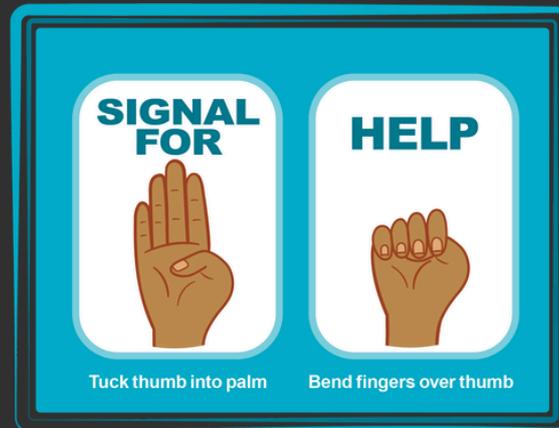
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NOTE

Presenters may ask their audience to consider adding a few "hotline for help" phone numbers in 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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Interactive Online 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!

WalkingWise.com



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Postgraduate Institute for Medicine
Academy of Forensic Nursing



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To access additional resources on male victims, please refer to the last page of Lesson Plan #6 on the Walking Wise Learning Platform.

We welcome your feedback at support@WalkingWise.com.