



SEXUAL EXPLOITATION EDUCATION

RURAL RISKS

by WALKING WISE



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.



6-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

11th GRADE

#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.

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NOTE TO PRESENTER

The presenter is welcome to customize this Walking Wise presentation according to the instructions provided on this page.

For revision requests, please email us at: 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

- Rural
- Bond
- Tight Knit
- Rumor
- Family Trafficking
- Poverty
- Desolate
- Isolate



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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

RURAL

Areas located outside of cities with low populations, open spaces, and an emphasis on agriculture and natural resources.



WHAT DO YOU THINK?

What percentage of U.S. land and population is considered rural?

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

What percentage of the U.S. land and population is considered rural?

- A) 57% Land & 40% Population**
- B) 77% Land & 50% Population**
- C) 87% Land & 60% Population**
- D) 97% land & 20% Population**

ANSWER

97% of land and 20% of the population
make up the rural communities in the U.S.

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U.S. Census.gov, 2020. <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/geography/guidance/geo-areas/urban-rural/2020-ua-facts.html>

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LANDMASS

In the United States, 97% of its land area is rural.[1]

POPULATION

Approximately one in five (20%) Americans, or 66.3 million, live in rural communities.[2]

Source

1. U.S. Census.gov, 2017

2. U.S. Census.gov, 2020

<https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/geography/guidance/geo-areas/urban-rural/2020-ua-facts.html>

U.S. COMMUNITIES



What are the differences between rural, urban, and suburban communities?



U.S. COMMUNITIES

What Makes Each Community Different?

- **Rural Areas:** Small towns and farmlands with fewer people, long distances between places, and limited transportation.
- **Urban Areas:** Large, busy cities with many people, public transportation, and crowded spaces.
- **Suburban Areas:** Neighborhoods outside cities where people often have easier access to nearby schools, jobs, and services.

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Where a person lives can affect the types of risks they may face related to human trafficking.

RURAL: In rural areas, distance and isolation may make it harder to get help.

URBAN: In urban areas, crowded spaces may make it easier for traffickers to blend in and target people without being noticed.

SUBURBAN: In suburban areas, risks may come from people who are known or trusted.

These differences do not mean one type of community is “safe,” and another is “dangerous,” but they do show why prevention and awareness may vary across communities.



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?

In which communities might young people face higher risks of human trafficking?

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

In which communities might young people face higher risks of human trafficking?

- A) Urban Cities**
- B) Suburbs**
- C) Rural America**
- D) All Communities**

ANSWER

All Communities. Human trafficking impacts people living in ALL types of U.S. communities.

COMMON RISKS



What conditions can make young people vulnerable in any community?



COMMON RISKS

Trafficking Across Communities

- **Traffickers use similar tactics in rural, suburban, and urban areas.**
- **The location may look different, but the risks are often the same.**

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Polaris Project (n.d.). Human Trafficking During the COVID and Post-COVID Era. Polarisproject.org, p. 6.

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Even though communities may look different—whether rural, suburban, or urban—the risks of trafficking can exist everywhere.

It's important to understand that no community is completely safe or completely unsafe. Trafficking can occur in any setting, but some groups of people are at greater risk than others.

While the environment may change, traffickers' behaviors remain very similar. They use the same kinds of tactics and look for similar situations, no matter where they are.

Source

Demand Abolition (2018, November). Who Buys Sex? Understanding and Disrupting Illicit Market Demand. DemandAbolition.org. Retrieved December 31, 2024, from <https://www.demandabolition.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Demand-Buyer-Report-July-2019.pdf>

Polaris Project (n.d.). Human Trafficking During the COVID and Post-COVID Era. Polarisproject.org, p. 6. Retrieved December 31, 2024, from <https://polarisproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Hotline-Trends-Report-2023.pdf>

AT GREATER RISK

Although anyone can be trafficked, what groups face a higher risk?



AT GREATER RISK

Groups More Vulnerable to Exploitation

- People living in poverty
- People who are foreign-born or immigrants
- People who identify as LGBTQ+
- People from racial or ethnic minority groups
- Migrant and seasonal farm workers

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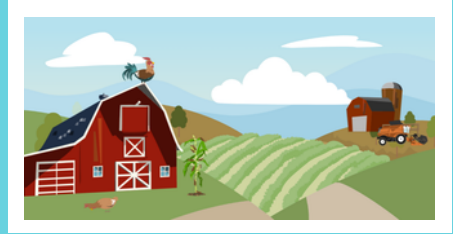
Cole, J., & Sprang, G. (2015). Sex trafficking of minors in metropolitan, micropolitan, and rural communities. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 40, 113–123.

22

Source

Cole, J., & Sprang, G. (2015). Sex trafficking of minors in metropolitan, micropolitan, and rural communities. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 40, 113–123. Retrieved April 13, 2026, from <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2014.07.015>

COMMON RISKS



Traffickers often look for the same risk factors, no matter where someone lives.



COMMON RISKS

Traffickers Target Vulnerability

- **Harm:** Young people who have experienced harm or past sexual abuse.
- **Poverty:** Not having enough money or basic needs like food, housing, or even a shower.
- **Pressure:** Feeling pressure from unsafe people, including family members, peers, or a romantic partner.

TAKING ADVANTAGE

Traffickers often look for certain situations that can make young people more vulnerable. These situations can happen in any community—rural, suburban, or urban.

HARM: Young people who have experienced emotional, physical, or sexual abuse may be looking for support, safety, or connection. Traffickers may take advantage of this by pretending to care or offering help.

POVERTY: When someone does not have enough money or basic needs like food or housing, traffickers may offer money, gifts, or a place to stay. These offers may seem helpful at first, but they are often used to gain control.

PRESSURE: Sometimes pressure can come from people a young person knows, such as family members, friends, or a romantic partner. This pressure can make it harder to say no or recognize that something is unsafe.

Remind students:

Traffickers look for situations, and not necessarily specific types of people. Anyone can be at risk, and help is always available.

Source

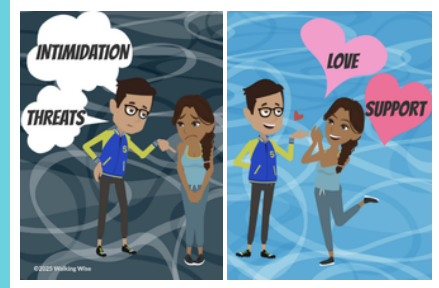
Demand Abolition (2018, November). Who Buys Sex? Understanding and Disrupting Illicit Market

Demand. DemandAbolition.org. Retrieved December 31, 2024, from <https://www.demandabolition.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Demand-Buyer-Report-July-2019.pdf>

Polaris Project (n.d.). Human Trafficking During the COVID and Post-COVID Era. Polarisproject.org, p. 6. Retrieved December 31, 2024, from <https://polarisproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Hotline-Trends-Report-2023.pdf>

COMMON TACTICS

How do traffickers gain control over someone?



COMMON TACTICS

Traffickers Use the Same Tactics Everywhere

- **Force:** Using threats or violence
- **Fraud:** Making false promises or lying
- **Coercion:** Pressuring someone into something they don't want to do

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Polaris Project (n.d.). Human Trafficking During the COVID and Post-COVID Era. Polarisproject.org, p. 6.

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TRAFFICKING CONDITIONS

Even though communities may look different, the situations that make young people vulnerable and the ways traffickers take advantage of them are often very similar everywhere.[1]

FORCE: This means using physical power, threats, or violence to make someone do something against their will.

FRAUD: This means using lies or false promises to trick someone. For example, a trafficker might offer a fake job, make promises about money or opportunities, or pretend to help, when their real goal is to take advantage of the person.[2]

COERCION: This means pressuring someone through threats, fear, or manipulation to make them do something they do not want to do.

Source

Demand Abolition (2018, November). Who Buys Sex? Understanding and Disrupting Illicit Market Demand. DemandAbolition.org. Retrieved December 31, 2024, from <https://www.demandabolition.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Demand-Buyer-Report-July-2019.pdf>

Polaris Project (n.d.). Human Trafficking During the COVID and Post-COVID Era. Polarisproject.org, p. 6. Retrieved December 31, 2024, from <https://polarisproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Hotline-Trends-Report-2023.pdf>

COMMON TACTICS

Coercion Tactics

- **Shame:** Making the victim feel responsible for what is happening.
- **Attachment:** Using relationships, trust, or feelings to stay in control.
- **Bonds:** Using things like love, money, drugs, or family pressure to control the victim.

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Polaris Project (n.d.). Human Trafficking During the COVID and Post-COVID Era. Polarisproject.org, p. 6.

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COERCION TACTICS

Traffickers often use emotional and psychological tactics (or mind games), not just threats, to stay in control. These can be harder to recognize because they may not seem dangerous at first.

SHAME: Traffickers may try to make the victim feel like what is happening is their fault. They might say things like, “You chose this,” or “No one will believe you.” This can make the victim feel guilty or too embarrassed to ask for help.

ATTACHMENT: Sometimes traffickers pretend to care about the victim. They may act like a friend, a romantic partner, or someone who understands them. This creates a sense of trust or emotional connection, which makes it harder for the victim to leave.

BONDS: Traffickers may use different types of pressure related to love, money, substances, and family.

Source

Demand Abolition (2018, November). Who Buys Sex? Understanding and Disrupting Illicit Market Demand. DemandAbolition.org. Retrieved December 31, 2024, from <https://www.demandabolition.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Demand-Buyer-Report-July-2019.pdf>

Polaris Project (n.d.). Human Trafficking During the COVID and Post-COVID Era. Polarisproject.org, p. 6. Retrieved December 31, 2024, from <https://polarisproject.org/wp-content/u>

VOCABULARY

BOND

A bond is something that makes a person feel connected, dependent, or unable to leave.



VOCABULARY

FAMILY TRAFFICKING

A family member pressures the family's child into sexual exploitation or forced labor.

Also called Familial Trafficking



COMMON TACTICS

Coercion Tactics May Include Bonds

- **Love Bonds:** Making the victim feel emotionally attached
- **Debt Bonds:** Saying the victim “owes” them repayment
- **Drug Bonds:** Controlling access to substances
- **Family Bonds:** Using family relationships as pressure

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Polaris Project (n.d.). Human Trafficking During the COVID and Post-COVID Era. Polarisproject.org, p. 6.

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TYPES OF BOND

Traffickers often use different types of “bonds” to confuse and control a victim.

These bonds can be confusing because they may feel real or important to the victim.

LOVE BONDS: A trafficker may pretend to care about the victim, showing attention, kindness, or affection. This can make the victim feel valued or loved, even though the relationship is unhealthy and controlling.

DEBT BONDS: A trafficker may tell the victim they “owe” money for things like food, clothing, or transportation. The trafficker may keep adding to this debt, making it feel impossible to pay off and leave.

DRUG BONDS: A trafficker may give or control access to drugs or alcohol. This can create dependence, making it harder for the victim to leave or think clearly about the situation.

FAMILY BONDS: A trafficker may be a family member or may use family relationships to control the victim. The victim may feel pressure to stay loyal, protect the family, or follow what they are told.

Source

1. Demand Abolition (2018, November). Who Buys Sex? Understanding and Disrupting Illicit Market Demand. DemandAbolition.org. Retrieved December 31, 2024, from <https://www.demanda>

abolition.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Demand-Buyer-Report-July-2019.pdf

2. Polaris Project (n.d.). Human Trafficking During the COVID and Post-COVID Era. Polarisproject.org, p. 6. Retrieved December 31, 2024, from <https://polarisproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Hotline-Trends-Report-2023.pdf>

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Who are the more common traffickers in rural communities?

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Who are the more common traffickers in rural communities?

- A) Friends**
- B) Family Members**
- C) Neighbors**
- D) Strangers**

ANSWER

Family Members are the more common traffickers in rural communities.

Source

Sibo, Nancy & Cudjoe-Mensah, Yvonne. (2025). The Impact of Rural Community Awareness and Social Work Interventions in Addressing Underage Sex Trafficking in the United States. International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications. Retrieved January 20, 2026, from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/391806782_The_Impact_of_Rural_Community_Awareness_and_Social_Work_Interventions_in_Addresssing_Underage_Sex_Trafficking_in_the_United_States

COMMON TRAFFICKERS

Rural vs. Urban Traffickers

- **Common types of traffickers may be different depending on the community.**
- **Rural Areas:** Traffickers are often someone the victim already knows, such as a family member or trusted person.
- **Urban Areas:** Traffickers are often peers or romantic partners, like a boyfriend, friend, or friend's connection.

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Perkins, E.B., Ruiz, C. (2016, August 16) Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking in a Rural State: Interviews with Adjudicated Female Juveniles. Child Adolescent Social Work Journal Vol 34, pp. 172, 177.

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COMMON TRAFFICKERS

Even though trafficking can happen in any community, the type of person involved may look different depending on where someone lives.

It's important to understand that traffickers are not always strangers. In many cases, they are people the victim already knows.

RURAL AREAS: In rural communities, traffickers are often someone the young person already knows. This could be a family member or another trusted person. Because communities are smaller and more connected, it can be harder to recognize when someone is unsafe.

URBAN AREAS: In urban areas, victims are often introduced to a trafficker by someone they know. Or, the trafficker is more often a peer or romantic partner. This might include a boyfriend or girlfriend, a friend, or someone connected to a friend group. These relationships can make it easier for traffickers to build trust and influence.

Source

Perkins, E.B., Ruiz, C. (2016, August 16). Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking in a Rural State: Interviews with Adjudicated Female Juveniles. Child Adolescent Social Work Journal Vol 34, pp. 172, 177. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10560-016-0455-3> Retrieved May 27, 2024, from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/306244427_Domestic_Minor_Sex_Trafficking_in_a_Rural_State_Interviews_with_Adjudicated_Female_Juveniles

VOCABULARY

TIGHT KNIT

A group of closely connected and supportive people who maintain strong relationships.



VOCABULARY

RUMOR

A story or statement that spreads from person to person, often as gossip, and can lack evidence to support it.



SOCIAL PRESSURES



What social pressures in rural communities can increase risk for young people?



SOCIAL PRESSURES

Why Some Victims Don't Speak Up

- **Mistrust of Adults:** Past harm or family secrets may make it hard for young people to trust adults or ask for help.
- **Fear of Gossip:** In small communities, young people may worry that others will find out and talk about them.
- **Knowing Whom to Trust:** It may be hard to tell which adults are safe to trust and who might protect the person causing harm.

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SOCIAL PRESSURES

In rural communities, people are often closely connected. While this can be a positive thing, it can also create challenges when someone needs help.

MISTRUST OF ADULTS:

If a young person has experienced harm in the past or if there are family secrets, they may feel unsure about trusting adults. This can make it harder to ask for help, even when they need it.

FEAR OF GOSSIP

In small communities, information can spread quickly. A young person may worry that others will find out about their situation and talk about them. This fear can keep them silent.

KNOWING WHO TO TRUST:

Because many people know each other, it can be difficult to tell who is truly safe. Some people may ignore warning signs or protect someone who is causing harm, while others will help and support. This uncertainty can make it harder to reach out.

If something feels unsafe, it's important to keep reaching out until you find a trustworthy adult who will listen and help.

VOCABULARY

POVERTY

The lack of money or resources to meet basic needs and having fewer possessions than is socially acceptable.



MONEY CHALLENGES

What money-related challenges can increase risk in rural communities?



MONEY CHALLENGES

Trafficking Risk Factor

- **Financial Stress:** When families struggle to afford basic needs, it can create unsafe situations for some young people.



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FINANCIAL STRESS

When families are under financial stress, it can create difficult and sometimes unsafe situations. Traffickers may take advantage of these challenges by offering money, help, or basic needs as a way to gain control.

MONEY CHALLENGES

Challenges That Can Increase Risk

- **Limited Jobs:** Fewer local jobs can make it harder for families and teens to earn money.
- **Lower Wages:** Some jobs may not pay enough to meet basic needs.
- **Limited Transportation:** Without reliable transportation, getting to work can be difficult.

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Economic challenges can affect families in many communities, especially in rural areas where there may be fewer jobs and resources.

LIMITED JOBS: When there are fewer job opportunities, it can be harder for families and teens to earn money.

LOWER WAGES:

Even when jobs are available, they may not pay enough to cover basic needs like food, housing, and transportation.

LIMITED TRANSPORTATION:

In rural areas, places are often far apart. Without reliable transportation, it can be difficult to get to work or school, or to access help and services.

VOCABULARY

DESOLATE

A place or situation that is empty, lonely, or abandoned, often making people feel isolated.



VOCABULARY

ISOLATE

To separate or cut off from a support network, such as family, friends, or trustworthy adults.



HIGHWAY SYSTEM



How can highways increase risk for trafficking in rural communities?



HIGHWAY SYSTEM

Risks Along Highways

- **Easy Movement:** Highways enable traffickers to move people quickly, making it easier to avoid being noticed.
- **Out-of-Town Drivers:** Highways bring people from other areas into small towns, increasing the risk for unsafe situations.
- **Isolated Locations:** Rest areas, welcome centers, & truck stops are often long distances from towns, making unsafe situations easier to hide.

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1. Jarrell, K. L., Pulvino, C., Kimmel, A., Stark, B., Khokhar, H., Janneck, L., & Santen, S. A. (2023). A Case of Human Trafficking in Appalachia and What Emergency Physicians Can Learn from It. *Western Journal of Emergency Medicine*, 24(3), pp. 465-466.

2. Federal Highway Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation (n.d.). National Highway System. [Fhwa.dot.gov](https://www.fhwa.dot.gov).

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Highways connect many different places, including small towns and rural areas. While highways are helpful for travel, they can also create risks.

EASY MOVEMENT: Highways make it possible to travel long distances quickly, making it easier for traffickers to move people and harder to track or locate them.

OUT-OF-TOWN DRIVERS: Highways bring in people from outside the community. Some unsafe people may take advantage of this by entering rural areas to participate in harmful situations without being identified.

ISOLATED LOCATIONS: Places such as rest areas, welcome centers, and truck stops are often dark at night and isolated, far from towns. Because there are fewer people around, unsafe situations may be harder to notice or report.

Source

1. Jarrell, K. L., Pulvino, C., Kimmel, A., Stark, B., Khokhar, H., Janneck, L., & Santen, S. A. (2023). A Case of Human Trafficking in Appalachia and What Emergency Physicians Can Learn from It. *Western Journal of Emergency Medicine*, 24(3), pp. 465-466. Retrieved May 26, 2024, from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC10284530/>

2. Federal Highway Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation (n.d.). National Highway

System. Fhwa.dot.gov. Retrieved March 25, 2024, from <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/ohim/onh00/onh2p6.htm>

LOW POPULATION



Why can living in a low-population community make it harder to get help?



LOW POPULATION

Challenges in Rural Communities

- **Law Enforcement:** There may be fewer police officers and less training to recognize trafficking.
- **Healthcare:** Some doctors and nurses may not recognize the signs of trafficking.
- **Support Services:** There may be fewer nearby places to get help, and it can be hard to get there without transportation.

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1. Cole, J., & Sprang, G. (2015). Sex trafficking of minors in Metropolitan, Micropolitan, and Rural Communities. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 40, 114.
2. Jarrell, K. L., Pulvino, C., Kimmel, A., Stark, B., Khokhar, H., Janneck, L., & Santen, S. A. (2023). A Case of Human Trafficking in Appalachia and What Emergency Physicians Can Learn from It. *Western Journal of Emergency Medicine*, 24(3), p. 463.

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Even when someone wants help, it's not always easy to get it, especially in rural areas.

LAW ENFORCEMENT: In smaller communities, there may be fewer police officers. That means it might take longer for someone to respond, or they may not have as much experience recognizing trafficking situations.[1]

HEALTHCARE: If someone goes to a doctor or hospital, the adults there may not always recognize the signs right away. This can make it harder for someone to be identified and helped.[2]

SUPPORT SERVICES: In big cities, there are often shelters, counselors, and support centers nearby. In rural areas, those services might be far away.

“Which situation would make it harder to get help?”

- In a city → help might be 5 minutes away.
- In a rural area → help might be 60 minutes away.

“If someone doesn't have a car, how would they get there?”

Source

1. Cole, J., & Sprang, G. (2015). Sex trafficking of minors in Metropolitan, Micropolitan, and Rural

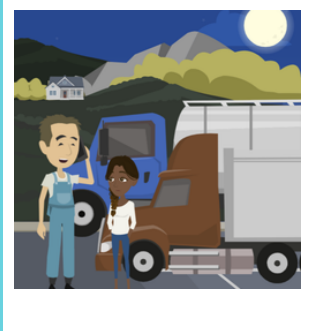
Communities. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 40, 114.

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DRIVER TRAINING

How can truck and bus drivers recognize and help stop human trafficking?



DRIVER TRAINING

Truckers Against Trafficking (TAT)

- **Training:** Drivers are taught how to notice warning signs.
- **Reporting:** They learn how to safely report situations that may involve trafficking.

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TAT - Truckers Against Trafficking (2024), tatnonprofit.org

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Some trucking organizations educate their drivers to recognize suspicious activity along their driving routes and train them on how to report suspected instances of human trafficking to law enforcement and the National Human Trafficking Hotline.

TAT FREE APP: A free app is offered by Truckers Against Trafficking (TAT) to help drivers learn red flags and report suspicious activity.

TRANSPORTATION INDUSTRY: TAT trains employees from the various industries:

- Trucking companies
- Truck stop companies
- Bussing companies
- Public transit agencies
- Energy companies
- Moving companies

Source

TAT - Truckers Against Trafficking (2024), tatnonprofit.org. Retrieved December 14, 2024, from https://truckersagainsttrafficking.org/app/?gad_source=1&gclid=CjwKCAiAOPuuBhBsEiwAS7fsNSq5oE6knuvrvM82A3hQizmWflNfJ5m_MohWoOz5cnTTF5nhibztyBoCj3YQAvD_BwE

DRIVER TRAINING



Why might truck and bus drivers notice things others don't?



DRIVER TRAINING

Why Drivers Notice More

- Drivers **use the highways** all day and night
- They often **travel long distances** and see many places
- They **use truck stops** to get gas and eat
- They often **use rest areas** and welcome centers
- They may **have radios** to communicate

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TAT - Truckers Against Trafficking (2024), tatnonprofit.org

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DRIVERS: Truck and bus drivers travel long distances and see many different places. Because of this, they are in a unique position to notice when something doesn't seem right. They are trained to recognize warning signs and report concerns safely.

SCHOOL BUS DRIVERS:

Some school bus drivers also receive this training. Since they work closely with students, they may notice signs that someone needs help and are trained on how to take action to protect them.

Source

TAT - Truckers Against Trafficking (2024), tatnonprofit.org. Retrieved December 14, 2024, from https://truckersagainsttrafficking.org/app/?gad_source=1&gclid=CjwKCAiAOPuuBhBsEiwAS7fsNSq5oE6knuvrvM82A3hQizmWfINfJ5m_MohWoOz5cnTTF5nhibztyBoCj3YQAvD_BwE

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?

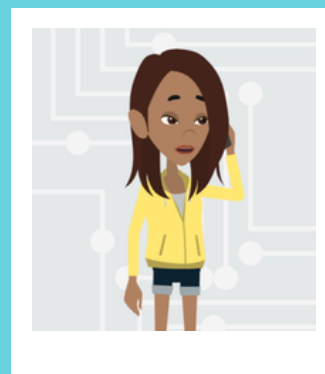
ANSWER

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.

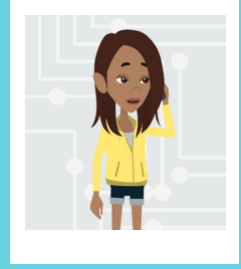
ASK FOR HELP

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)

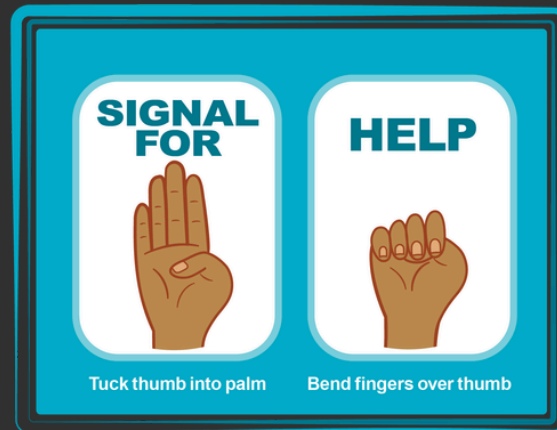
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NOTE TO PRESENTER

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!

WalkingWise.com



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Academy of Forensic Nursing



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NOTE TO PRESENTER

To access additional resources on rural risks, please refer to the last page of Lesson Plan #8 on the Walking Wise Learning Platform.

We welcome your feedback at support@WalkingWise.com.