



CHILD EXPLOITATION EDUCATION

Trustworthy vs UNSAFE ADULT

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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- Insert new PowerPoint slides.
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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

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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 helps keep us safe.

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Education is one of the strongest tools for prevention.

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

Reinforce that awareness increases safety.

VOCABULARY



Words to Understand

- Trustworthy
- Unsafe Adult
- Honorable
- Authentic
- Boundaries
- Obligated
- Favoritism
- Disguise

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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

TRUSTWORTHY

Deserving of being relied on as honest, loyal, responsible, dependable, consistent, and safe.



VOCABULARY

AUTHENTIC

Someone or something that is true to its nature or beliefs and displays trustworthy, genuine, and real qualities.



VOCABULARY

HONORABLE

A person who deserves respect because they are honest, fair, and try to do the right thing consistently.



VOCABULARY

UNSAFE ADULT

Someone who puts others at risk by being unkind, harmful, manipulative, or does not provide protection.





This 3-minute Walking Wise animated video series teaches the difference between trustworthy people and unsafe behaviors.

NOTE

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

Is animation appropriate for teens?

Businesses worldwide use explainer-style animation as a training tool for their employees.

NOTICE BEHAVIOR



When should we pay close attention to someone's behavior?



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NOTE TO PRESENTER

Explaining that sexual abuse affects many young people can help students understand they are not alone. When discussed carefully and respectfully, this information can reduce shame and encourage students to seek help if they or someone they know is being harmed.

Education can help:

- Reduce stigma around talking about abuse
- Encourage open conversations with trusted adults
- Support students in asking for help
- Reduce self-blame among victims
- Build resilience and confidence
- Reduce victim blaming
- Encourage students to speak up when someone needs help

NOTICE BEHAVIOR

When to Pay Attention

- Choosing friends
- Meeting new people
- Deciding whom to trust
- Selecting role models
- Asking someone for help

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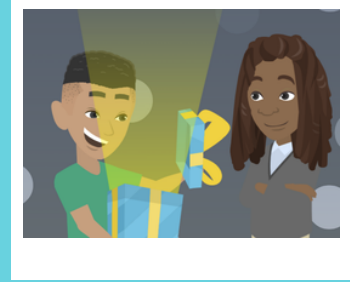


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Explain that students evaluate behavior every day, often without realizing it.

The question to ask yourself is, "Does this person's actions match what they say?"

EVALUATE BEHAVIOR



How to decide if someone is 'real' or authentic.



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NOTE TO PRESENTER

Teaching children as young as 10 years old that many girls and boys experience sexual abuse may help victims realize they are not alone and could potentially lead to asking for help.

Education will help:

- 1) Reduce stigma
- 2) Encourage openness
- 3) Empower reporting
- 4) Reduce self-blame
- 5) Build Resilience
- 6) Reduce victim blaming
- 7) Encourage advocacy

EVALUATE BEHAVIOR

Observe People We Know

- **Watch Actions:** How do they behave in public and private?
- **Evaluate Choices:** Do they make good decisions?
- **Ask Questions:** Do their answers stay consistent?
- **Notice Reactions:** Do they respect boundaries or create pressure to get their way?

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ACTIONS

Watch how people act over time, both in public and private. Trustworthy people usually behave consistently. Someone who behaves very differently depending on who is watching may not be trustworthy.

CHOICES

Notice whether someone makes good decisions, even when no one is watching. Trustworthy people are good role models because they follow rules, treat people fairly, and take responsibility for their mistakes.

QUESTIONS

Ask questions and see if their answers stay consistent. Dishonest people often change their stories, but trustworthy people usually provide clear and consistent answers.

REACTIONS

Notice how someone reacts when you set boundaries. A trustworthy adult will respect boundaries. Unsafe adults may become angry, pressure the young person, or try to make them feel guilty.

EVALUATE BEHAVIOR

Trustworthy Behavior

- Honest
- Fair
- Respectful
- Dependable
- Kind
- Consistent



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TRUSTWORTHY BEHAVIOR

Safe adults are consistently caring, thoughtful, loving, and gentle.

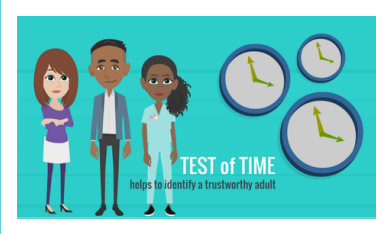
They behave in ways that demonstrate they are dependable, respectful, and honest.

Safe adults look for ways to be helpful and kind, and they treat young people fairly.

They do not pressure children to keep secrets and encourage them to talk with other safe adults.

TRUSTWORTHY VS. UNSAFE

How can you tell if someone is trustworthy?



TRUSTWORTHY VS. UNSAFE

Trust Takes Time

- **Reliable:** Can people depend on them to do what they say?
- **Fair:** Do they have fair rules, and is everyone treated the same?
- **Good Choices:** Do they make responsible decisions?
- **Honest:** Do their stories stay the same, or do they change?
- **Safe:** Are they protective, or do they encourage risky behavior?

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RELIABLE: Trustworthy people keep their promises whenever possible. They are people you can count on to do what they say they will. Adults who are unsafe may often break promises or fail to follow through.

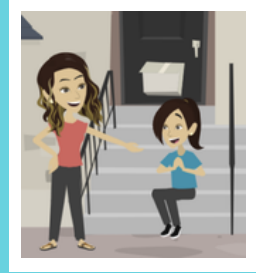
FAIR: Fair people treat others equally and follow the same rules they expect others to follow. Favoritism happens when someone gives special treatment to one person while ignoring others. Sometimes, favoritism is used to manipulate or control young people.

CHOICES: Trustworthy people usually make responsible choices that help or benefit the people around them. Responsible decisions often lead to positive and healthy outcomes.

HONESTY: Honest people usually give answers or tell stories that stay consistent over time. Dishonest people may change their stories or give different answers. Inconsistent stories can be a warning sign.

SAFE: Safe adults usually look out for others' well-being. Unsafe adults may encourage risky or rule-breaking behavior.

SUPPORT SYSTEM



How can strong relationships with trustworthy adults improve a young person's life?



SUPPORT SYSTEM

Why Trustworthy Adults Matter

- Provide emotional support
- Offer guidance and advice
- Help keep young people safe
- Build confidence
- Model healthy relationships



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PROTECTIVE FACTOR

Young people with supportive adults in their lives are more likely to ask questions, report concerns, and seek help.

Predators often avoid children and teens who have strong relationships with safe adults.

VOCABULARY

OBLIGATED

To feel like something is owed to another person.



VOCABULARY

FAVORITISM

To unfairly give one person (or a group) better treatment than others.



VOCABULARY

DISGUISE

To hide one's appearance or true identity.



VOCABULARY

BOUNDARIES

A personal limit that protects our body, feelings, and values.
It helps us decide what behavior is acceptable or unacceptable.



UNSAFE BEHAVIOR



What behaviors might indicate that an adult, older teen, or peer is unsafe?



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Safety is about behavior.

Safety is not about how someone looks.

Safety is also not about whether the person is familiar or well-known.

UNSAFE BEHAVIOR

Inappropriate Behaviors

- Dishonest
- Ignores Boundaries
- Break Rules
- Negative Influence
- Unprotective



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UNSAFE BEHAVIORS

Children should focus on a person's behavior, not their appearance, when deciding whether an adult, older teen, or even a peer is safe.

Unsafe people can be dishonest, uncaring, or irresponsible. They can also be a negative influence by breaking rules.

All of these behaviors can make a young person vulnerable or unprotected.

UNSAFE BEHAVIORS

Warning Signs

- Ignore Boundaries
- Ask Personal Questions
- Cause Awkward Feelings
- Give To Many Gifts
- Create Obligation
- Show Favoritism
- Encourage Secrets
- Work to Isolate

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RED FLAG BEHAVIORS

Someone may seem friendly or appropriate at first, but over time, an unsafe person may show warning signs through their behavior.

Sometimes they change how they act depending on the vulnerabilities of the young person they are targeting.

They can use flattery or show favoritism to make a young person feel more important than others, often by granting special treatment not available to their peers.

They can cause a youth to feel confused, isolated, awkward, or embarrassed.

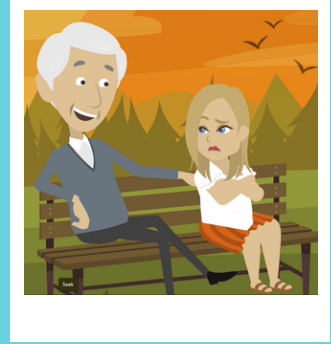
They may give expensive or frequent gifts to instill a young person's sense of loyalty and obligation.

Unsafe adults can pressure youth to keep secrets and share private or personal information.

They can ask a young person to help them solve their problems.

TRICKY PEOPLE

Who can be an unsafe person?



TRICKY PEOPLE

Who Can Be Unsafe?

- **Someone the child or teen knows**
- **A peer or older teenager**
- **A stranger**
- **An online contact**

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Nurture Therapy (n.d.). Tricky People: A Better Way to Teach "Stranger Danger" to Kids. nurture-therapy.com.

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NOTE TO PRESENTER

SOMEONE KNOWN

The CDC reports that at least 90% of child sexual abuse is committed by someone the child and the child's family know and trust.[1] Hence, understanding that strangers commit about 10% of child sexual abuse helps to put the concept of 'stranger danger' into perspective. However, online or 'virtual' strangers have significantly increased the risk for young people using electronic devices.

'Stranger Danger' is a concept that instructs children and young people to exercise caution and be aware when interacting with individuals they do not know personally. The concept emphasizes that strangers can pose a threat to their safety and well-being.

MISLEADING

The Stranger Danger concept implies that strangers pose the greatest threat to young people's security. Still, statistics show that incidents of abduction, sexual abuse, and human trafficking often involve individuals known to youth, like family members, neighbors, or family acquaintances.

DISTINCTION

Young people must know that not all strangers pose threats, and not all familiar people are safe.

ONLINE

Online or 'Virtual' Danger is an ever-growing threat, making it imperative for young people to understand the unique risks associated with online interactions and to have the guidance they

need to navigate potential dangers online.

Source

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2024, May). About Child Sexual Abuse. CDC.gov. Retrieved November 20, 2024, from https://www.cdc.gov/child-abuse-neglect/about/about-child-sexual-abuse.html?CDC_AAref_Val=https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/childsexualabuse/fastfact.html
2. Katzenstein, J. (n.d.). Stranger Danger and Stranger Safety. HopkinsMedicine.org. Retrieved November 20, 2024, from <https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/wellness-and-prevention/stranger-danger-and-stranger-safety>
3. Nurture Therapy (n.d.). Tricky People: A Better Way to Teach "Stranger Danger" to Kids. nurture-therapy.com. Retrieved November 20, 2024, from <https://www.nurture-therapy.com/blog/tricky-people-a-better-way-to-teach-stranger-danger-to-kids>

ONLINE CONTACTS

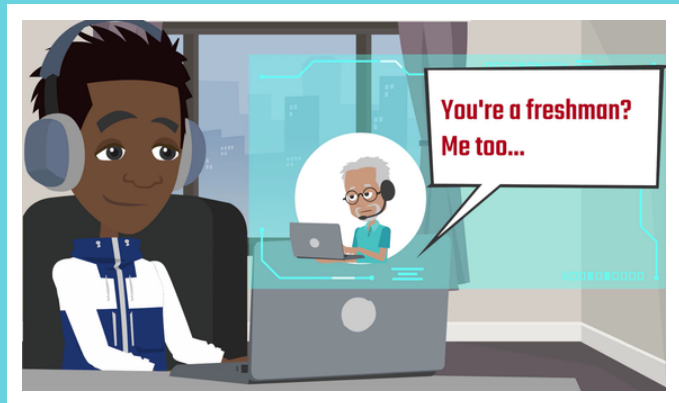
Why can online-only friends be dangerous even if they seem safe?



ONLINE CONTACTS

Virtual Stranger

It's usually impossible to know for certain who an 'Online-Only Friend' really is.



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Offenders sometimes spend weeks or months building trust online before asking for inappropriate photos or requests.

Young people often do not view an online acquaintance as a mysterious stranger. Instead, they identify online connections as friends, just like in-person relationships. [1]

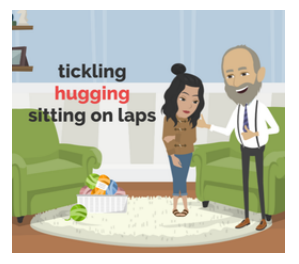
It is usually impossible to be sure that an 'online-only friend' is who they say they are. So, young people should not assume they are interacting with an honest, trustworthy, or safe acquaintance.

Online predators are often patient, investing considerable time in developing relationships during the grooming process before victimizing a young person.

Source

1. THORN (2022, April). Online Grooming: Examining risky encounters amid everyday digital socialization, p. 10. Benenson Strategy Group. Retrieved November 12, 2024, from https://info.thorn.org/hubfs/Research/2022_Online_Grooming_Report.pdf

BREAK BOUNDARIES



What tricks might an unsafe person use to break a child’s physical boundaries?



BREAK BOUNDARIES

Tricky Behavior

- Try to spend time **alone** with the young person.
- Give **gifts** and special **attention**.
- **Share secrets**, then require promises not to tell others.
- **Invade personal space to break physical boundaries.**
- **Make sexual activity seem normal.**

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TIME ALONE: Unsafe adults look for opportunities to spend time alone with a young person to gain trust.

INDEBTED & OBLIGATION: Unsafe adults may claim the young person owes them for gifts, attention, favoritism, affection, etc., and eventually demand repayment.

SECRETS: They often share personal secrets to make the young person feel like a special confidant.

NORMALIZE INVADED BOUNDARIES: Unsafe adults may attempt to normalize their inappropriate behavior by invading a victim's personal space, expressing romantic interest, violating physical boundaries, and finally involving the young person in sexual activity.

UNSAFE SECRETS

How might an unsafe adult try to stop a young person from telling someone?



UNSAFE SECRETS

Using Fear to Keep Secrets

- **Blame:** They usually blame the child, saying it is their fault.
- **Shame:** They often make the child feel embarrassed or guilty.
- **Isolate:** They may separate the child from trustworthy adults.
- **Threaten:** They may threaten to harm their family or pets.

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These tactics are used to control and scare victims into staying silent.

It is never the victim's fault.

Unsafe adults are responsible for their actions.

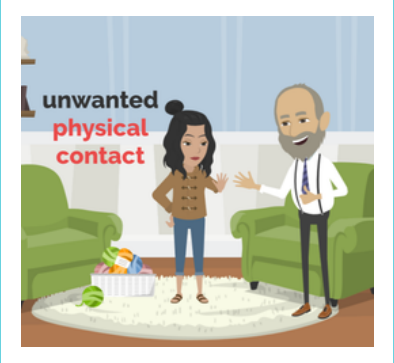
BLAME & SHAME: They use blame and shame to manipulate the young person, making them feel responsible for the abusive actions.

ISOLATION: They gain control by distancing the young person from family and friends to limit outside influences.

THREATS: Unsafe adults may threaten to harm the young person or their loved ones, including family members or pets, to keep them from reporting the abuse.

SETTING BOUNDARIES

How can setting boundaries be empowering for young people?

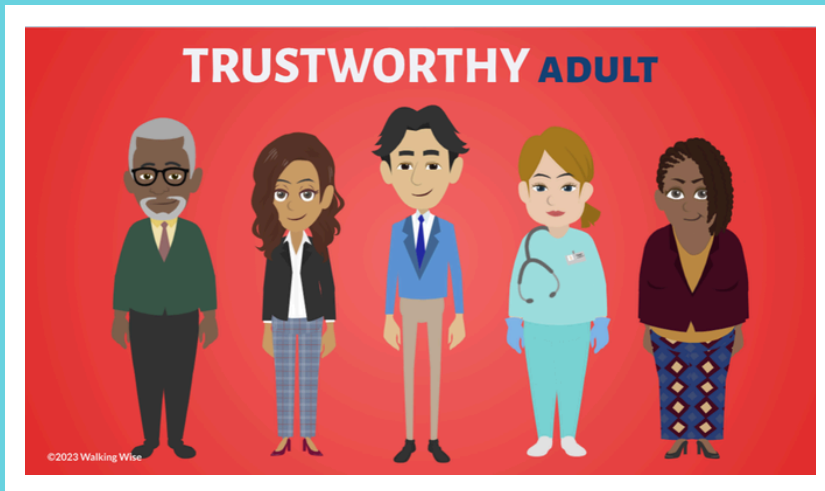


SETTING BOUNDARIES

Youth Empowerment

- **Trust Your Instincts:** Listen to your gut feelings and leave situations that seem wrong.
- **Say "NO":** Feel confident to say no if someone makes you feel uncomfortable, whether online or in person.
- **Stop the Pressure:** Immediately end all conversations when feeling pressured or made to feel guilty.

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?

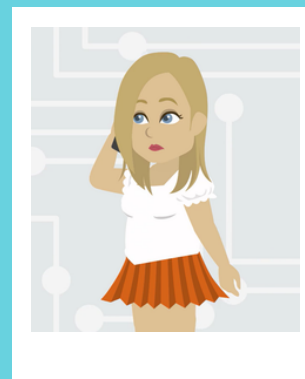
ANSWER

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.

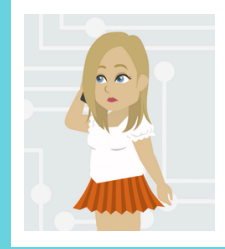
ASK FOR HELP

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 in school, tell a trustworthy teacher, coach, school nurse, social worker, counselor, resource officer, or principal.
- To gain internet access for help, use 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)

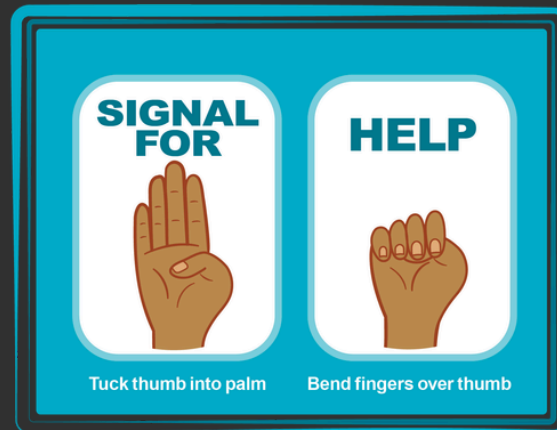
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NOTE TO PRESENTER

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

HAND SIGNAL FOR HELP



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Source: Canadian Women's Foundation, April 2020

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

SILENT

It can be used silently.

UNTRACKABLE

It leaves no digital footprint.

CONCEALED

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

SIGNALS DISTRESS

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

Source

Canadian Women's Foundation, April 2020

Thank you!

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NOTE TO PRESENTER

To access additional resources about Trustworthy vs. Unsafe Adult, please take a look at the last page of Lesson Plan #2 by logging in to the Walking Wise Learning Platform.

We welcome your feedback at support@WalkingWise.com.