



WALKINGWISE

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EDUCATION GUIDE

Holding Candid Conversations on Child Exploitation

EMPOWERING YOUTH
to Recognize Sexual Exploitation

Education for Middle, High School, College-aged Youth & Adults

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Quick Start Guide

I. Prepare for the Lesson

Educators: Before teaching this lesson, review the Walking Wise *School Teaching Guide* for implementation guidance. Walking Wise is designed as a prevention program; therefore, discussions about grooming, abuse, and exploitation may prompt some students to disclose past or current victimization. Before presenting the lesson, ensure appropriate support personnel and referral resources are available. Follow all mandatory reporting requirements and school protocols when responding to disclosures.

Create a safe and respectful classroom environment. *Explain that the purpose of the lesson is to increase students' knowledge and help keep them safe—not to create fear.* Remind students that they should not share personal experiences with the class. Instead, explain how they can ask for help. If appropriate, consider using an exit ticket that allows students to request a private conversation with a school counselor or school support staff for themselves or a friend.

Parents & Caregivers: Begin by reviewing the *Home Teaching Guide* on WalkingWise.com. Talking with your child about sexual abuse and exploitation is one of the most important protective steps you can take as a parent. These conversations should continue over time to build trust, awareness, and resilience. You do not need to be an expert. What matters most is creating a safe environment where your child feels comfortable asking questions and seeking help. The Home Teaching Guide can help you create a safe, age-appropriate, and effective learning experience.

Child Disclosure: The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that parents take every disclosure of sexual abuse seriously and contact one of the following: the child's pediatrician, a local child advocacy center, a child protection service agency, or the police. For more information, visit [HealthyChildren.org](https://www.HealthyChildren.org). In addition, if you suspect child sex trafficking, contact the National Human Trafficking Hotline at 1-888-373-7888.

II. Lesson Materials

Educators

- Consider completing the adult learning module for additional background.
- Download and adapt the classroom presentation to fit your students' age and school policies.
- Begin with open-ended "Let's Get Started" questions to build curiosity and engagement.
- Log in to WalkingWise.com to present the animated video during the classroom presentation.
- Measure learning with the student survey before and after the lesson when appropriate.

Parents & Caregivers

- Review the vocabulary and discussion questions.
- Begin with the open-ended "Let's Get Started" questions to help engage your child.
- Select the vocabulary words you want to review with your child before watching the video.
- Watch the animated video together.
- Use the lesson plan's discussion to talk with your child about the information shared in the video.
- Consider using the student survey to reinforce learning.

III. Legal Disclaimer

The Walking Wise curriculum and related educational materials ("Education Program") are provided for educational purposes only. Although Walking Wise strives to provide accurate and current information, it cannot guarantee that all information will remain complete, accurate, or up to date under every circumstance. The Education Program is not a substitute for legal advice, and users should not rely on it when making legal decisions. Walking Wise LLC assumes no liability for actions taken or not taken based on the Education Program or any referenced external resources.

LESSON #5



Rev. 9-1-2026

LESSON PLAN #5

The Sextortion Scheme

I. Objective: To provide ideas for fostering a deeper conversation about how online predators use technology, manipulation, and threats to control victims through sextortion.

II. Total Lesson Time:

Typical lesson time: approximately 35–55 minutes, depending on the content selected.

Lesson Component	Suggested Time
Let's Get Started	3–5 min.
Classroom Presentation (Lesson Plan Content & Student Engagement)	25–40 min.
Student Survey	3–5 min.

III. Let's Get Started



Directions: Select one or two introductory questions below. Have students work in pairs or small groups for 2–3 minutes to create a brief list of responses. Ask each group to share one response that has not already been mentioned. Refer to page 9 for additional possible student responses.

Let's think about how the choices we make online can affect our safety and privacy.

1. Why do you think it can be harder to know whether someone is trustworthy online than in person?
2. Why is it important to think carefully before sharing personal information, photos, or videos online?
3. Why do you think people often make rushed decisions when they feel scared, embarrassed, or pressured?

IV. Vocabulary

1. **Sexting:** To send, receive, or share sexual messages, photos, or videos using a phone or digital device.
2. **Extortion:** To threaten or pressure someone to get money, property, or something else.
3. **Sextortion:** To threaten to share a person's sexual images if they do not obey demands.
4. **Grooming:** Building trust with a person to control, manipulate, or harm them.
5. **Blackmail:** Threatening to use private information to make someone do something.
6. **Circulating:** To share something from person to person or place to place.
7. **Pornography (Porn):** Pictures, videos, or other media that show sexual behavior to create excitement.
8. **Predator:** A person who harms, abuses, or takes advantage of others.
9. **Manipulation:** Influencing or controlling someone in a dishonest, tricky, or unfair way.
10. **Intimidation:** Using fear or threats to control someone's behavior.
11. **Coercion:** Using pressure, threats, or tricks to make someone do something they do not want to do.
12. **Catfishing:** Creating a fake online identity to trick another person.
13. **Warning Sign:** A clue that something may be unsafe, risky, or not right.

V. Classroom Presentation & Animated Video

Log in to WalkingWise.com to download the classroom presentation and access the animated video in the Walking Wise Learning Platform.

Plan Your Lesson: The lesson plan contains the same core instructional content as the classroom presentation. Review the lesson plan, select the content and discussion questions you want to cover, then delete any corresponding slides you do not plan to use. Allow approximately 2–4 minutes per discussion question.



Student Engagement: The presentation includes “What Do You Think?” multiple-choice questions. Before revealing the answer, have students work in pairs to discuss the choices and select an answer. Invite a few pairs to briefly explain their thinking, then display the “Answer” slide and discuss.

VI. Discussion Questions

1. What are some ways a young person can become a victim of sextortion?

Sextortion often begins when a predator gains a young person's trust and then uses threats to control them.

- **Online:** Sextortion often starts on social media, online games, or messaging apps. This is where predators often pretend to be someone else.
- **In Person:** Sometimes the predator is someone the young person already knows, such as a friend or peer. Sextortion may begin when a private image gets shared and later used to make threats.
- **Fake Images:** Predators may use AI or editing tools to create fake images that look real. They often claim that the image is real to embarrass or scare someone.

2. Why do sextortionists use threats, and what do they want?

Sextortionists use threats to create fear and pressure victims to act quickly.

- They may demand money.
- They may demand gift cards.
- They may demand more private images.
- They may demand video chats.

Even if a victim follows orders, the threats may continue, and the images may still get shared.

3. What types of apps or online platforms do sextortionists use to find victims?

Sextortionists often use popular online platforms that young people use.

- Social media
- Online games
- Messaging apps
- Photo and video-sharing apps
- Live-streaming platforms
- Dating apps

They use online platforms to start conversations, build trust, and look for people who may respond.

4. What type of online post can increase risk?

Predators often use online posts to start conversations and build trust.

- **Personal Information:** Sharing details such as age, school, location, daily activities, or family information.
- **Seeking Attention:** Asking for compliments or sharing private or suggestive images.
- **Emotional Posts:** Posts that reveal feelings like loneliness, sadness, or low self-esteem.
- **Personal Struggles:** Posting about family conflict or personal struggles that may encourage someone to offer help or start a conversation.

5. How do predators begin communicating with someone they target?

Predators often start by trying to gain trust or create fear.

- **Fake Identity:** They may pretend to be around the same age and show romantic interest.
- **False Claims:** They may say they have a private image even when they do not.
- **Fake Images:** They may use AI or editing tools to make images that look real.
- **Hacking Claims:** They may claim they hacked an account or device to create fear, even if it is not true.
- **Secret Recordings:** They may ask for a video chat and secretly record anything shared.

6. What are the laws about sexual images?

Each state has its own laws about sexual images, but below are important rules everyone should know:

- **Requesting Images:** It is against the law for someone to ask a minor (under 18) to send sexual images.
- **Sharing Images:** It is illegal to send, receive, or share sexual images of anyone under 18.

- **Targeted Youth:** The law protects young people who are pressured or tricked into sharing sexual images. The person making the threat is the one breaking the law ([FBI website](#)).

7. How can young people reduce the risk of online predators?

Young people can reduce their risk by using safe online habits.

- **Limit Screen Time:** Spend less time online.
- **Use Privacy Settings:** Control who can contact you.
- **Think Before Posting:** Avoid sharing personal information such as your location, school, or daily activities.
- **People You Know:** Only accept friend requests and messages from people you know in real life.
- **Watch Out for Strangers:** Do not respond to messages from people you do not know. Block and report them if needed.

8. How can a young person stop contact with a sextortionist?

- **Tell a Trustworthy Adult:** Ask a parent, family member, school resource officer, school nurse, counselor, social worker, teacher, coach, or another trustworthy adult.
- **Do Not Send Anything:** Do not send money, images, or anything else they demand.
- **Block the Person:** Block them on all apps and platforms.
- **Save Evidence:** Keep all messages, images, and account information. This information can help adults or law enforcement provide protection.

9. What should students do if someone shares their private image at school?

- **Tell a Trustworthy Adult:** Tell a parent, guardian, or family member.
- **Report It at School:** Tell a school resource officer, school nurse, counselor, social worker, teacher, coach, or another trustworthy staff member.
- **Get Help from Police:** Adults can help with contacting law enforcement about broken laws.
- **Get Emotional Support:** Talk to a counselor or trustworthy adult to help cope with stress and difficult emotions.

10. How can young people and parents stop a private image from spreading online?

It may not be possible to completely stop an image from spreading, but acting quickly can help.

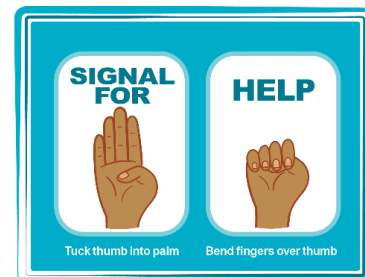
- **Report Threats:** Report blackmail, threats, or harassment to local police.
- **Use "Take It Down":** Report images created before age 18 that are spreading online through NCMEC's Take It Down Program at [Report.CyberTip.org](https://www.reportcybertip.org).
- **Report Predators:** Report suspicious or threatening activity to the app or website used to share an image with the FBI at tips.fbi.gov or Homeland Security at 1-866-347-2423.
- **Act Quickly:** The sooner the image gets reported, the better the chances of limiting how far it will spread.

VII. How to Ask for Help

There are safe ways to get help if you or someone you know is being threatened or harmed. Sometimes it's important to speak up for a friend because they may not be able to ask for help on their own. Remember, if something doesn't feel right, trust your gut feelings and take action.

Options:

- If you are in immediate danger, dial 911.
- If you are experiencing harm, tell a trustworthy parent or caregiver.
- If the person causing harm IS a family member, tell other trustworthy adults.
- If you are a student, tell a trustworthy counselor, nurse, social worker, teacher, school resource officer, coach, or principal.
- If using the internet is unsafe, use a computer at school or a public library.
- If you are in public, consider hand-motioning the “Signal for Help” to quietly alert others that you need help. Someone nearby may recognize it and call the police.



Keep Asking: If the first trustworthy adult cannot provide help or protection, keep telling other trustworthy adults until someone listens and takes action. Everyone deserves to be safe, including you.

24-Hour Hotlines for HELP

National Center for Missing & Exploited Children CyberTipline.org or 1-800-THE-LOST (843-5678)

Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) [IC3.gov](https://ic3.gov), or contact your local office

National Human Trafficking Hotline 1-888-373-7888 or Text “BEFREE”: 233733

Homeland Security 1-877-4-HIS-TIP

App or Internet Platform Select the “Report” menu option

Suicide & Crisis Lifeline [800-273-TALK \(8255\)](https://800-273-TALK) or [TEXT 988](https://text988.org)

VIDEO SCRIPT #5

The Sextortion Scheme

Note: Log in to [WalkingWise.com](https://www.walkingwise.com) to watch the video. The bolded words are defined in the vocabulary list.

Ever think **extortion** only happens to wealthy people on TV? The evil villain uses humiliating photos to blackmail the successful politician for money.

Cell phones make kids vulnerable to a similar crime called “**sextortion**.” Kids are pressured to send naked photos of themselves. Then they’re threatened to comply with ruthless demands to prevent humiliation.

Sextortion can be committed by anyone, including exes, cruel classmates, and dangerous online predators. They often threaten to reveal photos to family and friends – as **blackmail**.

Sexting photos can seem harmless, especially to kids who have been exposed to online **porn**. But it’s illegal to text or email nude pictures of kids, even self-produced images. Law enforcement classifies these photos as child **pornography**.

Social media apps create a dangerous entryway for sexting and sextortion.

Here’s how electronic devices create the perfect storm for sextortion:

- First, young people can have a natural tendency to trust and share.
- Second, the hidden sex traffickers ooze with kind, reassuring, and inquisitive replies.

Posting photos and comments is like dropping breadcrumbs for **manipulative** strangers to follow.

Over time, posts reveal your age and activities, where you live and attend school, and the stability of your relationships with family and friends.

Child sex traffickers have a knack for recognizing lonely, unhappy, or self-doubting kids. They gather the breadcrumbs shared online, then cleverly engage them in conversation. This is called the “**grooming process**.”

“Nobody gets me...”

“I’m so bored...”

“I’m so ugly...”

“Really, you think I’m pretty?”

“I understand you.”

“Is your family ignoring you again?”

“You’re the prettiest girl I know.”

“Yeah, and you have a hot body.”

Once the request for sexual photos begins, the pressure doesn’t let up until kids give in. These private photos are prone to being **circulated** as a weapon against them. The demands for more photos, money, or in-person meetups are enforced with threats against kids and their families. After all, social media posts can give “sextortionists” a roadmap to our homes.

What sextortionists don’t want kids to know is... They’re victims of **coercion**! But the law is on our side!

If this is your experience, reach out to a trustworthy adult.

Dial 911 if you’re in immediate danger.

Or hand-motion the ‘Signal for Help’ to alert bystanders.

Otherwise, contact a 24-hour hotline for help.



STUDENT SURVEY #5

The Sextortion Scheme

*Please mark an **X** in the box next to the best answer:*

1. How does sextortion often begin?

- | | |
|--------------------------|---|
| ☐ | A. A stranger sends money first. |
| ☐ | B. Someone often builds trust first and then makes threats. |
| ☐ | C. A friend sends a friend request. |
| ☐ | D. Someone sets up privacy settings. |

2. How should someone respond if they are experiencing sextortion?

- | | |
|--------------------------|--|
| ☐ | A. Delete the messages right away. |
| ☐ | B. Only tell a classmate for emotional support. |
| ☐ | C. Tell a trustworthy adult to get help reporting the situation. |
| ☐ | D. Send money to make the threats stop. |

3. Why do sextortionists use threats?

- | | |
|--------------------------|--|
| ☐ | A. They are unhappy people. |
| ☐ | B. They were not taught how to be polite. |
| ☐ | C. They want to create fear to pressure people to respond quickly. |
| ☐ | D. They don't understand how to be a good friend. |

4. What can help reduce the risk of sextortion?

- | | |
|--------------------------|---|
| ☐ | A. Using privacy settings and being careful online. |
| ☐ | B. Talking only to strangers online. |
| ☐ | C. Sharing your home or school location online. |
| ☐ | D. Posting personal information online. |

Answer Key: See page 9.

LET'S GET STARTED RESPONSES & STUDENT SURVEY KEY #5

The Sextortion Scheme

Student Survey – Answer Key

The survey can be administered either after the lesson discussion or as a pre- and post-survey before students watch the video.

Let's Get Started – Possible Student Responses

The following are examples of responses students might provide:

SURVEY KEY #5

- 1) B
- 2) C
- 3) C
- 4) A

1. Why do you think it can be harder to know whether someone is trustworthy online than in person?

Possible responses:

- You can't always tell who they really are.
- People can pretend to be someone else.
- They may not tell the truth.
- You don't know them in real life.
- Some people seem nice at first.

Discussion Opportunity: Explain that people online are not always who they claim to be. Sometimes it is impossible to verify someone's identity online.

2. Why is it important to think carefully before sharing personal information, photos, or videos online?

Possible responses:

- Other people might see them.
- Someone could share them without permission.
- Information can spread quickly.
- It can be hard to remove something once it is posted.
- It could be used in ways you didn't expect.

Discussion Opportunity: Explain that once something is shared online, it may be difficult to control who sees it or where it goes. Thinking before posting helps protect privacy.

3. Why do you think people often make rushed decisions when they feel scared, embarrassed, or pressured?

Possible responses:

- They often panic.
- They want the problem to go away.
- They don't know what to do.
- They feel nervous.
- They worry about what other people will think.

Discussion Opportunity: Explain that strong emotions can make it harder to think clearly. Taking a moment to slow down and asking a trustworthy adult for help often leads to better decisions.

RESOURCES #5

The Sextortion Scheme

Research Studies & Reports

Thorn (2025). *Sexual Extortion & Young People: Navigating Threats in Digital Environments*.

Free Report: <https://www.thorn.org/research/library/sexual-extortion-young-people/>

THORN & NCMEC (2024). *Trends in Financial Sextortion: An investigation of sextortion reports in NCMEC CyberTipline data*.

Free Report: <https://www.thorn.org/research/library/financial-sextortion/>

THORN (2023). *Deepfake Nudes and Other Trends in Youth Behavior Online in 2023: New Research from Thorn*.

Free Report: <https://www.thorn.org/blog/deepfake-nudes-and-other-trends-in-youth-behavior-online-in-2023/>

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

Free Report: https://info.thorn.org/hubfs/Research/Thorn_LGBTQ+YouthPerspectives_June2023_FNL.pdf

Patchin, J. W., & Hinduja, S. (2024). *The nature and extent of youth sextortion: Legal implications and directions for future research*. *Behavioral Sciences & the Law*, 42(4), 401–416.

Free Report: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/380784225_The_nature_and_extent_of_youth_sextortion_Legal_implications_and_directions_for_future_research

Professional Organizations & Government Resources

FBI (n.d.), *Sextortion – How We Can Help You*

<https://www.fbi.gov/how-we-can-help-you/scams-and-safety/common-frauds-and-scams/sextortion/sextortion>

Homeland Security – ICE.gov: *SEXTORTION. It's more common than you think*.

<https://www.ice.gov/features/sextortion>

National Center for Missing and Exploited Children – *Take It Down*.

<https://takeitdown.ncmec.org>

National Center for Missing and Exploited Children – *NCMEC CyberTipline Data (2025)*.

<https://www.ncmec.org/gethelpnow/cybertipline/cybertiplinedata>

National Center for Missing and Exploited Children: *MissingKids.org – Sextortion*.

<https://www.missingkids.org/theissues/sextortion#overview>

National Center on Sexual Exploitation (2024) – *The Dirty Dozen List*.

<https://endsexualexploitation.org/dirty-dozen-list-2024/>

National Center on Sexual Exploitation (2025) – *The Dirty Dozen List*.

<https://endsexualexploitation.org/dirty-dozen-list-2025/>

Broken link? Please notify us at support@WalkingWise.com. **Thank you!**

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