



**WALKINGWISE**<sup>®</sup>

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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

# Walking Wise Learning Platform

## Legal Disclaimer

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## Parents & Caregivers

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that parents always treat a child’s 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 there are any suspicions of child sex trafficking, contact the National Human Trafficking Hotline at 1-888-373-7888 or Rescue America at 833-599-FREE (3733). For more information, visit [HumanTraffickingHotline.org](https://www.HumanTraffickingHotline.org) or [RescueAmerica.ngo](https://www.RescueAmerica.ngo).

# LESSON #10



## LESSON PLAN #10

### The Female & Peer Recruiters

**Objective:** To provide ideas for creating a deeper conversation that explores how females, peers, and acquaintances work with traffickers to lure new victims into the commercial sex trade.

#### I. Emotional Readiness Acknowledgment

- A. **Educator:** To ensure readiness for exploitation prevention education, refer to the *Walking Wise Implementation Tools* and the U.S. Department of Education's guide, *Human Trafficking in America's Schools (ed.gov)*. Also, please review the classroom teaching tips to prepare for educating students about exploitation.
- B. **Parents:** To prepare for educating your children about exploitation, please review the home teaching tips.

#### II. Animated Video & Classroom PowerPoint Presentation

- A. **Educator:** Consider completing the adult learning module on this topic for additional background. Download and adapt the classroom presentation to fit your students' age and school policies.
- B. **Parents:** Review the vocabulary words (below) with your child, then watch the animated video. After discussing the lesson, consider having your child complete the student survey in this lesson plan.

#### Vocabulary

1. **Recruiter:** A person who encourages or convinces others to join a group, activity, or organization.
2. **Shrewd:** Being clever and strategic, sometimes in ways that are not completely honest or fair.
3. **Bottom Girl:** An exploited person given a leadership role by their trafficker (pimp) to help control others and manage the operation.
4. **Pimp (Trafficker):** A person who uses force (violence/held captive), fraud (tricks/lies), or coercion (pressure), or targets someone under 18, to make them engage in commercial sex or forced labor for something of value.
5. **Peer Pressure:** Influence from friends or peers that encourages someone to act in a certain way to fit in or be accepted.
6. **Masquerade:** To pretend to be someone else by using a false appearance or identity.
7. **Seduce:** To persuade or pressure someone, often using charm, attention, or manipulation, to do something they might not normally do.
8. **Flaunt:** To show off something in a way meant to attract attention, envy, or admiration.
9. **Exploitation:** Taking advantage of someone in an unfair or harmful way for personal gain, using power, trust, or a person's vulnerability.
10. **Mentoring:** To guide, advise, or support someone less experienced.
11. **Prestige:** A high level of respect or status gained through success or influence.
12. **Treacherous:** Dangerous in a way that is not obvious or is hidden.
13. **Brainwash:** To strongly influence someone's thoughts and beliefs until they accept ideas without question.
14. **Love Bombing:** Overwhelming someone with attention, affection, or gifts to gain control in a relationship.
15. **Trauma Bond:** An overwhelming emotional attachment that forms through repeated cycles of kindness and harm, making it extremely difficult to recognize abuse or leave a situation.
16. **Ringleader:** A person who organizes or leads others in illegal activity.

#### III. Post Video Discussion

##### 1. What types of groups or organizations use recruitment to attract people or new members?

Recruiters work for various legal and illegal organizations.

- **Legal Organizations:** Many legal organizations use recruitment, such as hiring employees, enlisting people in the military, selecting strong athletes, or encouraging top students to apply to colleges. These organizations are transparent and allow people to make informed choices.
- **Illegal Groups:** Unlawful groups, such as organized crime, street gangs, labor trafficking, and the commercial sex trade, use recruitment to target young or vulnerable people using deceit, pressure, or manipulation.

## 2. What does a “wolf in sheep’s clothing” mean, and how can it relate to unsafe recruiters or traffickers?

- The phrase “wolf in sheep’s clothing” comes from a story where a wolf disguises itself as a sheep to secretly enter and attack the flock. Dressed as a sheep, the wolf appears harmless on the outside but is dangerous underneath. This metaphor describes people who hide their true intentions by grooming victims, pretending to be kind, trustworthy, or safe. Their goal is often to manipulate, control, or take advantage of someone. Over time, their true intentions are revealed through their actions.
- In real life, traffickers and unsafe recruiters often act in similar ways. They might pretend to be friends, romantic partners, mentors, or even safe adults. They often build trust by giving attention, offering help, or showing special interest in a young person. While their behavior may seem caring at first, it can be part of a strategy to gain control and later exploit the person.

## 3. Who is the “bottom girl,” and what are her responsibilities?

- In some sex trafficking operations, the pimp assigns a victim to a leadership role often called the bottom girl. She is placed in a position of control over others and is considered second-in-command. This person often has a longer history with the trafficker, may be seen as “trusted,” and is expected to meet high financial demands. While she may appear to have power, she is still being controlled and exploited.
- Her responsibilities may include managing parts of the traffickers’ operation, recruiting others, arranging meetings with buyers, collecting money, and monitoring or controlling other victims. She may also be required to enforce rules or face punishment if expectations are not met. These actions are often driven by pressure, fear, or manipulation rather than free choice.

## 4. Can women operate as sex traffickers?

- Yes. While most traffickers are male, women can also take on this role and profit from exploiting others in the commercial sex trade. Often, female traffickers were once victims.
- Although males are more common traffickers, women of different ages can also recruit and control others. Instead of appearing as a boyfriend or father figure, female traffickers may take on roles that seem supportive or protective, such as a friend, a mentor, a boss, or a mother figure.

## 5. How can a peer recruit their friends or acquaintances into sex trafficking?

*Peer Pressure Trafficking* is when someone, female or male, from the same social group, lures a “friend” to the trafficker (pimp). Female recruiters often refer to their pimp as their “boyfriend.” (Baird K. et al., 2021).

- **Imposter:** The peer pretends to be a friend during the recruiting process. Pimps (traffickers) also pretend to be boyfriends, often grooming younger acquaintances by using a fake romantic relationship.
- **Role Model:** A “peer” who “teaches the ropes” to normalize trading sex for money or something of value.
- **Double Dating:** The “peer” organizes double dates to help a friend transition into the business.
- **Runaway:** The “peer” encourages a friend to run away from home to pursue freedom or a better lifestyle.
- **Glamour:** The “peer” glamorizes a life of selling sex, drug dealing, or gang involvement to friends.
- **Connections:** The “peer” arranges for a friend to meet with an acquaintance, boyfriend, boss, employer, or job recruiter.
- **Easy Money:** The “peer” uses common peer pressure tactics to convince a young person to take advantage of earning money easily.
- **Substance Use:** The “peer” targets a young person using drugs or alcohol or promotes access to free substances through high-pressure invitations to parties.
- **Befriending:** The “peer” grooms others who are vulnerable: younger, lack a support network, live in poverty, are developmentally delayed, have mental health concerns, or have other disabilities.
- **Innocence:** The “peer” may unknowingly invite friends into a harmful situation, without realizing it is a setup that could lead to exploitation.

**6. Why might a person or “bottom girl” who is being trafficked recruit or involve other young people?**

Over time, pimps groom their victims through repeated cycles of intense attention (love bombing) and cruelty. This pattern can confuse victims and lead them to seek the trafficker’s approval, believing that cooperation is necessary for their safety or survival. A psychological (mental) response known as trauma bonding often develops, especially when the victim has been under control for a long period. This bond can cause the victim to feel both fear and loyalty, strengthening the trafficker’s control and influencing their actions.

**7. Why do traffickers (pimps) instigate rivalry among the people they control?**

The “bottom girl” may appear to have status or special treatment, which can make others want her position. The trafficker may show favoritism by giving her more attention or authority over others. This can create jealousy and competition among the group. As a result, others may feel pressure to work harder or take greater risks to gain approval to move into that role. Traffickers create rivalry to make more money.

**8. How do some peer recruiters or “bottom girls” see their actions as helping rather than harming others?**

They are often survivors of earlier harm, such as neglect or emotional, physical, or sexual abuse. These experiences can shape how they view relationships and may make exploitation seem normal. As a result, they may not fully recognize that bringing friends into the trafficker’s circle is harmful. Instead, they may believe they are helping others by offering access to money, stability, or a more glamorous lifestyle. In some cases, they may even think they are helping friends who are struggling with poverty, homelessness, or substance use.

**9. How does the legal system determine whether a peer recruiter or “bottom girl” is considered a trafficker?**

Under the law, a person may be identified as a sex trafficker if they recruit someone under the age of 18 or use force, fraud, or coercion to involve others in commercial sex. Legal penalties are decided on a case-by-case basis, considering factors such as the recruiter’s age, level of control, and whether the individual was also being exploited. In some situations, a recruiter may be prosecuted as a trafficker, while in others, they may be recognized as a victim in need of protection and support.

**10. How can a “bottom girl” or peer recruiter be just as victimized?**

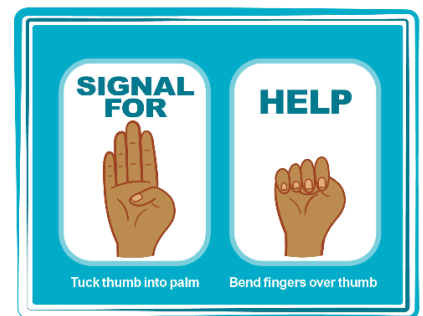
Recruiters can be exploited just like other victims through manipulation, intimidation, and coercion. For example, a trafficker may threaten or punish them if they fail to control others, meet financial demands, or recruit new individuals.

**IV. How to Ask for Help**

There are safe ways to get help if you or someone you know is being threatened or harmed.

**Options:**

- If you are in immediate danger, dial 911.
- If the sexual predator is NOT a family member, tell a parent or guardian.  
If the sexual predator IS a family member, tell a trustworthy adult.
- If you are a student, tell a trustworthy teacher, coach, school nurse, social worker, officer, principal, or guidance counselor.
- To gain internet access for help, use a computer at school or a public library.
- If you are in public, consider hand-motioning the “Signal for Help” to alert bystanders to call the police.



**24-Hour Hotlines for HELP**

- National Human Trafficking Hotline ..... 1-888-373-7888 or Text “BEFREE”: 233733
- Rescue America ..... 833-599-FREE (3733)
- National Sexual Assault Hotline ..... 1-800-656-HOPE (4673) or [Hotline.RAINN.org/online](https://www.hotline.rainn.org/online)
- National Center for Missing & Exploited Children..... 1-800-THE-LOST (843-5678)
- National Domestic Violence Hotline..... 1-800-799-SAFE (7233) or TEXT: 88788
- National Runaway Safeline ..... 1-800-RUNAWAY (786-2929)

## VIDEO SCRIPT #10

### The Female Recruiters of Child Sex Trafficking

**Link:** [The Female Recruiter of Child Sex Trafficking](#)

**Note:** The bolded words are defined in the video vocabulary list under section II.

Ever heard the fable *A Wolf in Sheep's Clothing*? The clever wolf disguises himself in sheep's wool to **shrewdly** invade an unguarded flock.

Just as wolves hunt in packs to outsmart their prey, Traffickers team up with their most trusted girl. She's often called the **Bottom Girl** and works in partnership to lure unsuspecting kids into the sex trade. These female **recruiters** control new victims using the same manipulative tactics they experienced from their **pimps**.

Bottom Girls are trained to use a technique known as **peer pressure** trafficking. They **masquerade** as caring friends to lure victims into the arms of their traffickers. Sometimes she **seduces** girls by **flaunting** her lifestyle filled with fancy clothes, hairstyles, and glittery nails.

Because female recruiters are often survivors of childhood **exploitation**, they can mistakenly believe they are **mentoring** a young person instead of victimizing a child.

Here's how victims evolve into Bottom Girls:

- Pimps are often called 'daddy' and refer to their victims as 'family.'
- They dictate the rules that everyone must obey to avoid punishment.
- A Bottom Girl is often second in command and can be envied by the other girls.
- Glamorizing a Bottom Girl as the family favorite, pimps stir rivalry among their victims. The girls strive to prove their loyalty and demonstrate their worth by working to be the top money-maker.

Although a Bottom Girl often appears to enjoy power and **prestige**, her life can be **treacherous**. Traffickers' expectations are set high, and the penalties can be brutal.

Traffickers **brainwash** victims by repeating patterns of **love bombing** and cruelty. Eventually, the victim lives in an emotional state of fear and loyalty to her trafficker. This is called **trauma bonding**.

A Bottom Girl often manages her pimp's prostitution business: she trains victims, schedules 'dates' with sex buyers, and delivers profits to her pimp. She is typically held accountable for the family's behavior and endures abuse when girls step out of line.

Bottom Girls appear to be **ringleaders**, but it's a great deal of sacrifice with little financial gain.

What traffickers don't want you to know...is that women can be just as dangerous as men!

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

Dial 911 if you're in immediate danger.

Or hand-motion a 'Signal for Help' to alert bystanders.

Otherwise, contact a 24-hour hotline for help.



## STUDENT SURVEY #10

### The Female Recruiters

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

**1. Women and female teenagers are always safe adults and trusted friends.**

A. True

B. False

**2. How might a female friend or woman try to recruit someone into sex trafficking?**

A. She talks about her older boyfriend and invites friends to parties with his friends.

B. She shows off expensive items or a glamorous lifestyle to attract interest.

C. She encourages friends to make safe and healthy choices.

D. Both A & B

**3. Which tactic is NOT used by traffickers to control the person they put in charge to lead others, called the bottom girl?**

A. Brainwashing

B. Love Bombing

C. Secure Bonding

D. Trauma Bonding

**4. What is NOT a common expectation placed on a female recruiter (bottom girl)?**

A. She may be expected to participate in the trafficker's illegal activities.

B. She may be pressured to recruit others or meet financial goals.

C. She may be punished if others do not follow the traffickers' rules.

D. She is expected to focus on school activities and academic success.

## **STUDENT SURVEY #10**

### **The Female Recruiters**

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

### **ANSWER KEY**

KEY #10
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- |      |
|------|
| 1) B |
| 2) D |
| 3) C |
| 4) D |

## RESOURCES #10

### The Female & Peer Recruiters

Visit us online at [WalkingWise.com](https://www.walkingwise.com).

#### Other Resource Links – Websites accessed 11/2022

Shared Hope International – SharedHope.org: *Unavoidable Destiny | The Reality of the “Bottom Girl”*  
<https://sharedhope.org/2012/03/23/unavoidable-destiny-the-reality-of-the-bottom-girl-part-i/>  
<https://sharedhope.org/2012/03/30/unavoidable-destiny-the-reality-of-the-bottom-girl-part-2/>

ASU Office of Sex Trafficking Intervention Research: *Trick Roll Study: Forced Criminality in Sex Trafficking Situations*  
[https://socialwork.asu.edu/sites/default/files/2022-08/asu\\_lvmpd\\_amber\\_alert\\_trick\\_roll\\_report\\_january\\_2020-reduced.pdf](https://socialwork.asu.edu/sites/default/files/2022-08/asu_lvmpd_amber_alert_trick_roll_report_january_2020-reduced.pdf)

A F Levy, ‘*Innocent Traffickers, Guilty Victims: The case for prosecuting so-called ‘bottom girls’ in the United States*, *Anti-Trafficking Review*, issue 6, 2016, pp. 130–133, [www.antitraffickingreview.org](http://www.antitraffickingreview.org)  
<https://www.antitraffickingreview.org/index.php/atrjournal/article/view/178/181>

Psychology Today – PsychologyToday.com: *In the Sex Trafficking World, the “Bottom” Is in the Middle*  
<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/end-human-trafficking/202106/in-the-sex-trafficking-world-the-bottom-is-in-the-middle>

TraffickingConference.com: *The Correlation Between Stockholm Syndrome and the “Bottom Girl”*  
<https://www.traffickingconference.com/previous-conferences/2016/9/22/title-here-t826b-sg9z7-plgaa-4ledb-pypre-6mb5p-zmfh7-agybh-pp8yh-9rsg5-hdmzr-ip6eg-zmhdy-4pdm4-w9xch-8fnfj-95gly-5yz5r-lzfjn-prpzy-bcxtm-28slf-4h5w7-pj6z4-nmgvy-rjas9-sttmt-jgg54-84ft-azwny>

Human Trafficking Search – *HumanTraffickingSearch.org: How Street Traffickers Recruit Young Girls*  
<https://humantraffickingsearch.org/how-street-traffickers-recruit-young-girls/>

WePapers.com: *Research Paper on Stockholm Syndrome and the Bottom Girl*  
<https://www.wepapers.com/samples/research-paper-on-stockholm-syndrome-and-the-bottom-girl/>

York University: *Recruitment and Entrapment Pathways of Minors into Sex Trafficking in Canada and the United States: A Systematic Review*. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9660274/>

**Broken link?** Please notify us at [support@WalkingWise.com](mailto:support@WalkingWise.com). **Thank you!**