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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 Education Center

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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 #6



LESSON PLAN #6

The Male Victims

Objective: To provide ideas to create a deeper conversation that explores why male victims are often overlooked and the reasons boys hesitate to seek help when experiencing abuse or trafficking.

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. **Stereotype:** An idea or belief about a group of people that is not always true.
2. **Myth:** A false belief commonly held by a group of people.
3. **Typecast:** To repeatedly treat someone as a certain type of person, or to place a person in a certain role, even if it is not accurate.
4. **Breadwinner:** The person who earns most or all the money used to support others.
5. **Disgrace:** A strong feeling of shame or loss of respect caused by something that happened.
6. **Humiliation:** A strong feeling of embarrassment or shame caused by how someone is treated.
7. **Predator:** A person who harms, abuses, or takes advantage of others for personal gain.
8. **Devious:** Using dishonest or sneaky behavior to trick others.
9. **Instigator:** A person who starts or encourages something, especially trouble or conflict.
10. **Vulnerable:** More likely to be hurt, tricked, or taken advantage of by others.
11. **Coerce:** To pressure or threaten someone to make them do something they don't want to do.
12. **Survival Sex:** When someone is pressured to exchange sexual activity for basic needs like food, shelter, or safety.
13. **Manipulation:** To control or influence someone's thoughts, feelings, or actions in an unfair or dishonest way.
14. **Sexting:** Sending, receiving, or sharing sexual messages, photos, or videos using a phone or other device.
15. **Blackmail:** Threatening to share private or embarrassing information to make someone do something.
16. **Brain Development:** A process of the brain growing and maturing over time, especially during the teen years.

III. Post Video Discussion

1. Referring to the video's opening scene, what are common stereotypes of boys versus girls?

Here are some examples:

- Boys are better at math and science, while girls are better at reading and the arts.
- Boys dress for comfort, while girls care more about style.
- Boys get in more trouble, while girls are better behaved.
- Boys are expected to earn money, while girls are expected to take care of others.
- Boys hide their feelings, while girls show their emotions.
- Boys are seen as the ones who cause harm, while girls are seen as the ones who get hurt.
- Trafficking Myth: Males are victims of labor trafficking, while females are victims of sex trafficking.

2. How does the myth that ‘only girls are sex trafficked’ impact boys?

- **Overlooked Cases:** Some adults may not realize that boys can be victims, so boys who need help may go unnoticed.
- **Misunderstood Impact:** Harmful experiences affect boys just as seriously, but people may not always understand how deeply they affect them. This can lead to wrong ideas about what boys are going through.
- **Fewer Resources:** Because fewer cases involving boys are reported, there may be less awareness and fewer support services available for boys who need help.

3. How do gender expectations impact young males regarding sexual abuse or trafficking?

- **Male Identity:** Early on, boys may receive messages that they should be strong, tough, and in control. Movies and media can reinforce these ideas, making it harder for boys to see themselves as victims.
- **Fear or Shame:** Boys may worry about what others will think or say if they speak up. They may feel confused or embarrassed, which can make it harder to ask for help.
- **Self-Blame:** Some boys may blame themselves for what happened or feel like they should have been able to stop it. This can cause them to keep the abuse a secret.
- **Media Influence:** Sexualized media and pornography can portray unhealthy or unrealistic behaviors, which may confuse boys' understanding of relationships, respect, and appropriate behavior.

4. Why can it be harder to recognize boys as victims?

- **Misunderstood Behavior:** Some people may assume boys are always in control or making their own choices, which can cause others to overlook when they are being harmed.
- **Less Watchfulness:** People may not look out for boys' safety as closely, so warning signs can be missed.
- **Lack of Awareness:** Many people are not aware that boys can be victims, which can make it harder to recognize signs of abuse or trafficking.

5. What are the consequences of young males keeping sexual crimes a secret?

- **Unaddressed Effects:** Without help, the effects can last longer. Boys may feel very sad or stressed, or struggle to make safe choices.
- **Missing Information:** When situations are not reported, they are not counted. This makes it harder for adults and law enforcement to understand how often this happens.
- **Less Support Available:** If people don't realize how big the problem is, fewer programs and services may be created to help boys.

6. What are the vulnerabilities of young males that someone might take advantage of?

Groomers and other unsafe people may try to build trust with boys to use personal information to pressure or control them. The more challenges someone faces, the easier it may be for others to take advantage of them.

Risk factors may include:

- Spending time online with people they don't know well or sharing private images
- Not having basic needs or living in unstable housing situations
- Feeling lonely, having low self-confidence, or being bullied
- Experiencing neglect or abuse
- Using drugs or alcohol, or feeling strong peer pressure
- Struggling in school or not being involved in activities
- Having learning differences, mental health challenges, or physical disabilities

7. What risky activities or situations can make boys more vulnerable?

- **Online-Only Friendships:** People may pretend to be someone they are not online to gain trust. They may act like they are the same age or share similar interests.
- **Gaming Platforms:** Talking with strangers while gaming can lead to unsafe situations, especially if someone tries to move the conversation to a second online location or meet in person.

- **Sharing Private Images:** Someone may build trust and then ask for private images. Once shared, those images may be used to threaten or control the targeted person.
- **Running Away or Homelessness:** Boys who leave home or do not have a safe place to stay are often at risk, especially if they are trying to meet basic needs like food or shelter.

8. Why is it important to understand brain development when considering vulnerability?

- The brain is still developing during the teen years.
- Skills like planning, self-control, and decision-making are still growing.
- This can make it harder for young people to pause and think in the moment when in risky situations.

9. How can brain development affect choices and risks?

- Strong emotions or excitement can lead teens to make quick decisions.
- It may be harder to think about consequences in the moment.
- People who want to take advantage of teens often pressure them to act quickly or keep secrets, knowing that their brains are still developing and they are less likely to stop and think things through.

10. What are ways teens can make safer decisions?

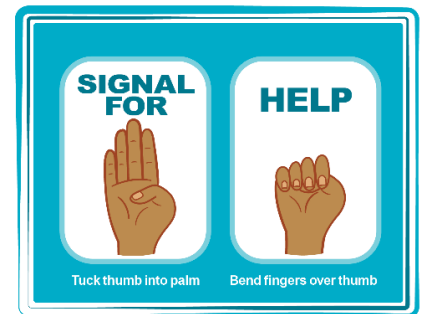
- **Pause:** Take a moment before responding.
- **Think:** Ask yourself if it feels safe or right.
- **Check:** Talk to a trustworthy adult before deciding.
- **Walk Away:** It is always okay to say “no” and leave the situation.

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
- 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 #6

The Male Victims of Child Sex Trafficking

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

Ever wonder how **stereotypes** impact kids today? Females were once **typecast** as homemakers, spending their days cooking and cleaning. While males were labeled as “**breadwinners**,” responsible for earning a weekly paycheck.

A common assumption is that girls are victims of child sex trafficking, while some assume boys are only trafficked to perform hard labor. These stereotypes are far from reality, as there is a significant population of boys being sex trafficked in the United States today.

Boys tend to keep this vile crime a guarded secret because their sense of shame, **disgrace**, and **humiliation** can be magnified due to gender expectations.

Early on, boys are taught that superpowers can fight off evil villains! They’re often encouraged to exhibit strength, toughness, and independence. Giving the impression that boys are less likely to be duped by **predators**.

But **devious** sex traffickers look for the same vulnerabilities in boys as they do in girls. A trafficker’s ability to take advantage of kids increases when they live in poverty or have experienced sexual abuse, violence, or drug use.

Here’s why boys might get overlooked as victims of child sex trafficking:

- More often, boys are viewed as the **wrongdoers** – and girls are the victims.
- When it comes to sex, society can perceive teenage boys as sexual **instigators**. Making them more easily mistaken as “willing participants” when being victimized by predators.
- Community members can be less watchful over the well-being of boys compared to girls. So at-risk boys can go unnoticed even when surrounded by suspicious strangers.
- Dangerous pathways that make boys more **vulnerable** to traffickers include homelessness, video games, and nude selfies.
- Like girls, boys can be **coerced** into trading sexual acts for food, housing, and basic needs while homeless. This is known as “**survival sex**.”
- Playing prolonged video games with online strangers increases the threat of a child becoming **manipulated** into risky in-person meetups.

Also, boys can be more susceptible to engaging in **sexting** with online connections. Nude photos are easily circulated and sold through porn sites. These images are often used by traffickers to **blackmail** their victims and make kids feel powerless.

What sex traffickers don’t want you to know is that men and boys are victims too!

If this is your experience, ask a trustworthy adult for help.

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 #6

The Male Victims

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

1. Why can it be harder to recognize boys as victims?

- | | |
|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | A. Boys are not targeted. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | B. Boys are never in unsafe situations. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | C. Boys never show any warning signs. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | D. People often think boys can protect themselves. |

2. Why might some boys keep harmful situations a secret?

- | | |
|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | A. They may feel embarrassed or worried about what others will think. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | B. They always feel safe. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | C. They are always good at solving problems. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | D. Safe adults do not want to help. |

3. Which situation may increase a boy's risk of being taken advantage of?

- | | |
|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | A. Spending time with trustworthy adults. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | B. Talking to online-only friends. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | C. Participating in school activities. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | D. Spending time with family. |

4. What is the safest response if something feels wrong or uncomfortable?

- | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | A. Ignore the situation. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | B. Try to handle it alone. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | C. Talk to a trustworthy adult. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | D. Keep it a secret. |

STUDENT SURVEY #6

The Male Victims

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 #6

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

RESOURCES #6

The Male Victims

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

Other Resource Links – Websites accessed 8/7/2025

US Department of Education – *Human Trafficking in America’s Schools*

<https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/sites/default/files/NCSSLE-2021HumanTraffickingGuide-508.pdf>

National Center for Youth Law – Understanding the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Boys & Young Men

https://youthlaw.org/sites/default/files/attachments/2023-06/NCYL_Issue%20Briefs_Boys%20and%20Young%20Men%20CSE_v5.pdf

GBH News Investigative Series (6-part series) – GBHNews.org: *Unseen: The Boy Victims of the Sex Trade*

<https://www.wgbh.org/news/series/unseen>

Growing Number of Male Survivors Talk About Being A Sex Trade Victim: NPR

Fight the New Drug – FightTheNewDrug.org: *Did You Know Men and Boys Can Be Victims of Sex Trafficking, Too?*

<https://fightthenewdrug.org/men-and-boys-who-are-sex-trafficked/>

Trafficking in America Task Force – *TraffickingInAmericaTaskForce.org: Resources for Males*

<https://traffickinginamericataskforce.org/resources-for-males/>

American Psychological Association – apa.org: *Unseen victims of sex trafficking*

<https://www.apa.org/monitor/2017/04/sex-trafficking>

USA Today: *Boys – The silent victims of sex trafficking*

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/nation-now/2018/02/08/boys-silent-victims-sex-trafficking/1073799001/>

Center for Court Innovation: *Youth Involvement in the Sex Trade – A National Study, p. 10*

<https://www.ojp.gov/pdffiles1/ojdp/grants/249952.pdf>

Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons: *The Intersection of Human Trafficking and Addiction*

https://2017-2021.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/TIP_Factsheet-The-Intersection-of-Human-Trafficking-and-Addiction-1-508.pdf

U.S. Department of State – *Overlooked for Too Long: Boys and Human Trafficking, 2023*

<https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Overlooked-for-Too-Long-Boys-and-Human-Trafficking.pdf>

MaleSurvivor.org: *For Survivors – Dialogue, Information and More*

<https://malesurvivor.org/for-survivors/>

National Institute of Mental Health: *The Teen Brain: 7 Things to Know*

<https://www.hopi-nsn.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Teen-Brain-7-things-to-know.pdf>

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