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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 #10



Rev. 9-1-2026

LESSON PLAN #10

The Recruiters (Females & Peers)

I. Objective: To provide ideas for fostering a deeper conversation about how female recruiters, peers, and acquaintances work with traffickers to recruit young and vulnerable people into commercial sexual exploitation.

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 people influence each other.

1. What qualities make someone influential?
2. What makes someone more likely to trust or follow someone they know than a stranger?
3. How can you tell the difference between healthy influence and unhealthy pressure?

IV. Vocabulary

1. **Recruiter:** A person who encourages others to join a group, activity, or organization.
2. **Shrewd:** Clever and good at making careful decisions, sometimes gaining an advantage over others.
3. **Bottom Girl:** An exploited person whom a trafficker (pimp) places in a position of authority to help recruit, control, or manage other victims.
4. **Commercial Sex:** Sexual activity that people exchange for money, goods, or something of value.
5. **Pimp (Trafficker):** A person who uses force (violence or captivity), fraud (tricks or lies), or coercion (pressure, threats, or manipulation), or targets someone under 18, to make them engage in commercial sex or forced labor for money or something of value.
6. **Peer Pressure Trafficking:** A recruitment tactic that uses friendship, peer pressure, or social influence to lure someone into sexual exploitation.
7. **Masquerade:** To pretend to be someone else by using a false identity or appearance.
8. **Seduce:** To use charm, attention, or pressure to get a person to do something they normally would not do.
9. **Flaunt:** To show off something to attract attention, envy, or admiration.
10. **Exploitation:** Taking advantage of someone in an unfair or harmful way for personal gain.
11. **Mentoring:** To guide, advise, or support someone less experienced.
12. **Prestige:** Respect or status gained through success or influence.
13. **Treacherous:** Dangerous because the risk is hidden or too difficult to recognize.
14. **Brainwash:** To strongly influence someone's thoughts and beliefs until they accept ideas without question.
15. **Love Bombing:** Overwhelming someone with attention, affection, or gifts to gain control in a relationship.
16. **Trauma Bond:** A confusing emotional attachment that forms through repeated cycles of harm followed by kindness or affection, making it difficult to recognize abuse or leave a relationship.

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 types of groups or organizations use recruitment to attract new members?

Many organizations (legal and illegal) use recruiters to attract new members.

- **Legal Organizations:** Organizations recruit employees, enlist people in the military, select strong athletes, or encourage top students to apply to colleges. Legal recruitment provides honest information so people can make informed choices.
- **Illegal Groups:** Organized crime, street gangs, labor traffickers, and sex traffickers use unlawful recruitment to target young or vulnerable people through lies, pressure, manipulation, or false promises.

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

The phrase “a wolf in sheep’s clothing” comes from a story where a wolf disguises itself as a sheep to secretly enter and attack the flock. The metaphor describes someone who hides harmful intentions behind a kind or trusted appearance.

- **False Appearance:** Recruiters may pretend to be a friend, romantic partner, mentor, or trusted adult.
- **Building Trust:** They often gain trust (or groom) by giving attention, offering help, or showing special interest before trying to manipulate or control someone.
- **True Intentions:** Over time, their actions reveal their real goal of exploiting another person.

3. Who is the “bottom girl,” and what role might she have in a trafficking operation?

In some trafficking operations, a trafficker places a trusted female in a position of authority known as the **Bottom Girl**. She may be a victim who has earned the trafficker’s confidence over time.

- **Leadership Role:** The trafficker expects her to help manage or supervise other victims while remaining under the trafficker’s control.
- **Responsibilities:** She may be expected to recruit others, arrange meetings with buyers, collect money, monitor victims, or enforce the trafficker’s rules.
- **Continued Exploitation:** Although she may appear to have authority or freedom, the trafficker often continues controlling and exploiting her through pressure, fear, or manipulation.

4. Can women become sex traffickers?

Yes. Although most traffickers are male, women can also recruit, exploit, and control others.

- **Trafficking Pathways:** Female traffickers come from a variety of backgrounds. Some are involved in family trafficking, some were previously victims of exploitation, and others become involved through different circumstances.
- **Recruiting Roles:** Female traffickers may appear as friends, mentors, coworkers, mother figures, or other supportive adults to gain trust.

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

Sometimes a peer recruits someone from the same social group on behalf of a trafficker. The peer may knowingly help the trafficker or may not fully understand the danger of the situation ([Baird K. et al., 2023](#)).

- **False Friendship:** The peer pretends to be a trusted friend.

- **Romantic Relationship:** The peer encourages trusting a trafficker while pretending to be a boyfriend.
- **Easy Money:** The peer convinces someone to take the opportunity to make quick money.
- **Role Model:** The peer makes trading sex for money or something of value seem normal.
- **Double Dating:** The peer arranges group dates to introduce someone to a trafficker.
- **Running Away:** The peer encourages someone to leave home for freedom or a better life.
- **Glamourizing Crime:** The peer makes selling sex, gangs, or drug dealing seem exciting or profitable.
- **Making Connections:** The peer introduces someone to a trafficker, presenting them as an acquaintance, boyfriend, boss, employer, or job recruiter.
- **Substance Use:** The peer targets someone who uses drugs or alcohol or invites them to parties where substances are available.
- **Targeting Vulnerability:** The peer grooms others who are younger, lonely, isolated, or lack support.
- **Unknowingly Recruiting:** The peer invites someone into a dangerous situation without realizing a trafficker is involved.

6. Why might a trafficked person or “bottom girl” recruit other young people?

Traffickers often use repeated cycles of attention, kindness, and cruelty to gain control over victims.

- **Love Bombing:** The trafficker builds trust (grooms) with victims by giving attention, gifts, or affection.
- **Trauma Bond:** The trafficker combines kindness with abuse to create a strong emotional attachment that makes it difficult for the victim to recognize the abuse or leave the situation.
- **Survival:** Some victims recruit others because they fear punishment, hope to gain approval, or believe cooperating may be the safest way to avoid further harm.

7. How can a peer recruiter or “bottom girl” also be a victim?

Some recruiters are young people who are being controlled by traffickers through manipulation, intimidation, and coercion. A trafficker may threaten or punish the recruiter if they fail to control others, meet financial demands, or bring new individuals into the trafficker’s operation.

8. Why might traffickers create rivalry among the people they control?

Traffickers sometimes create competition to strengthen their control and make more money.

- **Special Treatment:** The recruiter may receive more attention and responsibility from the trafficker, making others want the same role.
- **Competition:** Other victims may compete for the trafficker’s approval or the leadership role.
- **Control:** Competition keeps victims focused on pleasing the trafficker instead of helping one another.
- **Financial Gain:** Traffickers often use rivalry to increase the amount of money victims earn for them.

9. How might some recruiters believe they are helping others?

People recruit others for different reasons.

- **Victims:** Some recruiters experienced harm or sexual abuse before being exploited by a trafficker. These experiences can shape how they view relationships, making exploitation seem normal.
- **False Beliefs:** They may believe they are helping others find money, protection, or a better lifestyle.
- **Personal Gain:** Others may knowingly recruit people for money, status, or approval from a trafficker.

10. When can the law consider a recruiter a trafficker?

The law looks at each situation individually.

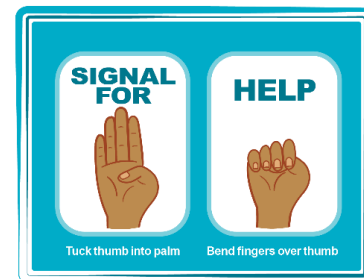
- **Trafficking Laws:** The law may identify a person as a sex trafficker if they recruit someone under the age of 18 or use force, fraud, or coercion to involve others in commercial sex.
- **Individual Circumstances:** The law considers factors such as the recruiter’s age, level of control, and whether the recruiter was also being exploited.

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

National Sexual Assault Hotline 1-800-656-HOPE (4673) or [Hotline.RAINN.org/online](https://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) or TEXT: 66008

VIDEO SCRIPT #10

The Recruiters (Females & Peers)

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

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 **mentor-ing** 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 Recruiters (Females & Peers)

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

1. Which statement about recruiters is TRUE?

- A. All recruiters are victims.
- B. All recruiters knowingly choose to exploit others.
- C. Traffickers control some recruiters, while others choose to help traffickers.
- D. Recruiters never face pressure or threats from traffickers.

2. How might a peer try to recruit someone into sex trafficking?

- A. Invites friends to meet an older boyfriend or girlfriend.
- B. Shows off expensive gifts or a glamorous lifestyle.
- C. Promises quick money or exciting opportunities.
- D. All the above.

3. Which tactic is NOT used by traffickers to control a bottom girl?

- A. Brainwashing
- B. Love Bombing
- C. Healthy Attachment
- D. Trauma Bond

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

- A. The trafficker expects her to participate in illegal activities.
- B. The trafficker may pressure her to recruit others.
- C. The trafficker may punish her if she fails to enforce rules.
- D. The trafficker expects her to focus on grades and school activities.

LET'S GET STARTED RESPONSES & STUDENT SURVEY KEY #10

The Recruiters (Females & Peers)

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.

SURVEY KEY #10

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

Let's Get Started – Possible Student Responses

The following are examples of responses students might provide:

1. What qualities make someone influential?

Possible responses:

- They are confident and persuasive.
- They are friendly and easy to talk to.
- They are popular or well-liked.
- They are respected by others.
- They seem successful or admired.
- They make others feel accepted or valued.

Discussion Opportunity: Explain that influence is not always positive or negative. People with influence can encourage others to make good decisions or pressure them into unsafe situations. That's why it's important to think independently and make decisions based on your own values.

2. What makes someone more likely to trust or follow someone they know than a stranger?

Possible responses:

- The more time they spend together, the more trust is earned.
- Familiar people usually feel safer than strangers.
- Shared experiences can make someone seem more trustworthy.
- People often assume someone they know has good intentions.
- People often feel more comfortable taking advice from someone they know.

Discussion Opportunity: Explain that knowing someone can help build healthy trust, but familiarity alone does not guarantee someone is safe or trustworthy. It's important to evaluate a person's advice, actions, and decisions carefully, even when they come from someone you know.

3. How can you tell the difference between healthy influence and unhealthy pressure?

Possible responses:

- Healthy influence respects your choices and boundaries.
- Healthy friends accept "no" without making you feel guilty.
- Healthy influence supports your well-being.
- Unhealthy pressure makes someone feel guilty, afraid, or rushed.
- Unhealthy pressure encourages risky or harmful behavior.
- Unhealthy pressure benefits someone else at your expense.

Discussion Opportunity: Explain that good friends encourage one another to make safe, healthy decisions. If someone pressures you to ignore your values, hide information, or do something that feels wrong, it is a warning sign that the relationship is becoming unhealthy.

RESOURCES #10

The Recruiters (Females & Peers)

Research Studies & Reports

Baird, K., & Connolly, J. (2023). *Recruitment and Entrapment Pathways of Minors into Sex Trafficking in Canada and the United States: A Systematic Review. Trauma, Violence, & Abuse.*

Free Article: <https://doi.org/10.1177/15248380211025241>

Reid, J. A. (2016). *Entrapment and Enmeshment Schemes Used by Sex Traffickers. Sexual Abuse.*

Free article: <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC5017896/>

Polaris. (2018). *The Typology of Modern Slavery: Defining Sex and Labor Trafficking in the United States.*

Free Report: <https://polarisproject.org/resources/the-typology-of-modern-slavery-defining-sex-and-labor-trafficking-in-the-united-states/>

Dank, M., Khan, B., Downey, P. M., Kotonias, C., Mayer, D., Owens, C., Pacifici, L., & Yu, L. (2014, March). *Estimating the Size and Structure of the Underground Commercial Sex Economy in Eight Major US Cities.* The Urban Institute.

Free Report: <https://www.urban.org/research/publication/estimating-size-and-structure-underground-commercial-sex-economy-eight-major-us-cities>

Professional Organizations & Government Resources

Shared Hope International – SharedHope.org: *Unavoidable Destiny | The Reality of the “Bottom Girl”*

Part 1: <https://sharedhope.org/2012/03/23/unavoidable-destiny-the-reality-of-the-bottom-girl-part-i/>

Part 2: <https://sharedhope.org/2012/03/30/unavoidable-destiny-the-reality-of-the-bottom-girl-part-2/>

Arizona State University 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

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

<https://www.antitraffickingreview.org/index.php/atrjournal/article/view/178/181>

United States Department of State (2020, June). *Trauma Bonding in Human Trafficking.* State.gov.

https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/TIP_Factsheet-Trauma-Bonding-in-Human-Trafficking-508.pdf

United States Department of State (2018, June). *Protecting Victims from Wrongful Prosecution and Further Victimization.* State.gov.

<https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/283800.pdf#:~:text=In%202010%2C%20New%20York%20became%20the%20first%20U.S.,ofense%20committed%20while...%20a%20victim%20of%20human%20trafficking.%E2%80%9D>

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

Links accessed 7/19/2026