



WALKINGWISE
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IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE

Transforming Culture to End Child Exploitation

COMPREHENSIVE TOOLKIT
for Prevention & Intervention



Implementation for School Districts and Youth Organizations

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Walking Wise® Implementation Guide (Excerpt)

IMPLEMENTATION

Five-Step Implementation Model

Walking Wise recommends a five-step implementation process for launching a child exploitation prevention education program. This flexible model can be adapted to fit the specific needs of school districts and youth organizations, ensuring accessibility and sustainability across diverse communities.

The initial phase of implementing the Walking Wise education program begins by educating school district and organization leaders on the societal conditioning that contributes to sexual abuse and exploitation of children and adolescents at the national, state, and local levels. These issues impact rural, urban, and suburban communities alike, making it essential for schools and youth organizations to take a proactive approach.

To assess child susceptibility to sexual predators, groomers, and sex traffickers, Walking Wise encourages schools and youth organizations to collaborate with external partners, such as local law enforcement, children's advocacy centers, child welfare agencies, anti-trafficking coalitions, and services for runaway and homeless youth.¹

Once school district leadership approves the implementation of prevention education, the U.S. Department of Education recommends forming a safety team of professionals trained to assess students' social, emotional, and behavioral well-being.¹

Laying the Groundwork

To establish a strong foundation, schools should work with their threat assessment team or student services staff to form a dedicated safety team in each school.

This team is responsible for:

- Expanding their knowledge of sexual exploitation and trafficking prevention.
- Reviewing and strengthening existing school policies and protocols.
- Consider implementing youth assessment surveys to understand risk factors among the student population.
- Delivering education for school staff, parents, and students to build a culture of prevention.

This streamlined structure ensures an efficient, informative, and action-driven safety team, equipping participants to create a safer school environment.



STEP ①

Gain Leadership Approval

Superintendents, Administrators, & Board Members



Presenters

School Leaders, Local Advocates, Healthcare Professionals, Parents, or Community Members

Participants

Superintendents, Principals, Curriculum Coordinators, School Administrators, or School Board Members

Meeting Purpose & Objectives

This meeting will present the critical need for a district-wide sexual exploitation prevention education program and secure district or school leadership approval. By demonstrating the prevalence, risk factors, and legal requirements, this discussion will provide decision-makers with the information and options needed to implement a customized and scalable program.

Leadership Meeting Agenda

- 1. Understanding the Need for Districtwide Prevention Education**
 - Discuss the benefits of a districtwide approach to prevent child sexual abuse and exploitation.
 - Present local, state, and national data on sexual abuse and exploitation.
 - Discuss risk factors that make youth vulnerable and common indicators of exploitation.
- 2. Legal & Guidance Framework**
 - Explain that the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act of 2015 (Sec. 104) expanded the definition of 'child abuse' under the Victims of Child Abuse Act of 1990 to include human trafficking and the production of child pornography.¹
 - Highlight the U.S. Department of Education's recommendations for implementing trafficking prevention education – Human Trafficking in America's Schools.²
- 3. Introducing Walking Wise**
 - Present the Walking Wise youth curriculum, the education course for adults, and its alignment with national guidelines.
 - Explain how the program can be customized to fit a school or the district's needs and resources.
- 4. Needs Assessment**
 - Introduce the availability and option of a needs assessment tool for conducting an anonymous youth survey.
 - Discuss the potential of anonymous youth assessment surveys to identify the prevalence of risk factors and trafficking indicators within the student population.
- 5. Tailoring Program Implementation**
 - Implement the complete Walking Wise program to educate the safety team, school staff, parents, and students.
 - Customize the Walking Wise curriculum by selecting topics for the safety team to address with school staff, parents, and students.
 - Prioritize adult-focused education, delivering training exclusively to school staff and optionally to parents.

Meeting Duration

 1-hour presentation.

Outcomes & Next Steps

1. Leadership approves expenditure, program parameters, and the implementation date.



STEP ②

Establish a Safety Team

School Social, Emotional, & Wellness Staff



Presenters

Curriculum Coordinators, School Leaders, Local Advocates, or Healthcare Professionals

Participants

Student Service Staff & Threat Assessment Team Members: Social Workers, School Resource Officers, School Nurses, School Psychologists, Counselors, Administrators, and Educators (e.g., Health Teachers)

Meeting Purpose & Objectives

The meeting will establish a dedicated safety team responsible for the implementation, education, and long-term sustainability of the school's education program to prevent sexual exploitation.

Safety Team Meeting Agenda

1. **Understand the Issues**
 - Present local, state, and national data on child sexual abuse and exploitation.
 - Discuss risk factors that make youth vulnerable to predators and common indicators of sex trafficking.
2. **Guidance & Policy Overview**
 - Review the U.S. Department of Education's *Human Trafficking in AMERICA'S SCHOOLS* guidelines.
 - Access and strengthen the school's trafficking response protocols and policies, using the Walking Wise Implementation Toolkit as a guide.
3. **Safety Team Training**
 - Engage in the 12-part Walking Wise Sexual Exploitation Education course to develop a deeper understanding of the complex challenges children face due to the rising rates of sexual crimes.
4. **Program Implementation**
 - Access the Walking Wise learning platform for educational tools, classroom teaching tips, interactive classroom presentations, and an animated video series.
 - Collaborate with Walking Wise at support@WalkingWise.com to integrate an online tool that provides interactive classroom engagement with students and anonymous youth surveys.

Meeting Duration

 1-hour presentation.

Outcomes & Next Steps

1. **Gain Insight:** Understand the impact of sexual exploitation at the local, statewide, and national levels, including risk factors and indicators.
2. **National Guidelines:** Understand the DoEd-commissioned guidelines on implementing a sex trafficking prevention education program.
3. **Policies & Protocols:** Strengthen the school's sexual exploitation policies and trafficking response protocols.
4. **Online Course:** Utilize the WalkingWise.com learning platform to prepare the safety team to educate the school staff, parents, and students.



STEP ③

Educate School Staff



Teachers, Coaches, Transportation & Other Staff

Presenters

School Safety Team Members

Participants

School Staff, Educators, Curriculum Coordinators, and Administrators

Meeting Purpose & Objectives

This training is designed to equip school staff with a comprehensive understanding of sexual abuse, grooming, and child sex trafficking. The sessions include common myths, realities, risk factors, and indicators of trafficking. Participants will also learn about the Walking Wise education program, school district policies and protocols, and available tools to identify and support at-risk or victimized youth.

By the end of this training, participants will:

1. Understand the scope and impact of child sexual abuse and exploitation.
2. Recognize the risk factors and indicators of trafficking.
3. Learn about federal laws and school district policies on sexual exploitation.
4. Explore Walking Wise resources to support prevention education and student safety.

School Staff Training Agenda

1. Overview of the Walking Wise Education Program

- Present the *Myths & Reality of Child Sex Trafficking* classroom presentation for school staff.
 - i. Introduce an online interactive tool to enhance classroom engagement.
 - ii. Discuss federal laws related to child sexual exploitation.
 - iii. Share the Walking Wise animated video about *the Myths of Child Sex Trafficking*.
 - iv. Review the eleven key topics covered in the Walking Wise education program.
 - v. Discuss the various ways young people can ask for help.

2. Need for Prevention Education

- Review local, state, and national data on child sexual exploitation.
- Discuss risk factors that make youth vulnerable.
- Identify common indicators of exploitation.

3. School District Policies & Protocols

- Review the district's existing mandatory reporting policies.
- Discuss the school district's sexual exploitation policies and trafficking protocol.
- If applicable, explore Walking Wise assessment tools for risk factors and indicators.

Meeting Duration

- 🕒 1-hour Training: Walking Wise presentation about trafficking myths & realities.
- 🕒 30-minute Training: The need for prevention education and policies & protocols review.

Outcomes & Next Steps

1. **Continued Education:** School staff are encouraged to take the Walking Wise online course for adults, called Walking Wise: Sexual Exploitation Education.
2. **Classroom Support:** Teachers are prepared to monitor student reactions during student education sessions, ensuring students receive immediate support, and identify students who may benefit from follow-up.



STEP ④

Host Parent Awareness Event

Parents, Caregivers, & Community Members



Presenters

School Safety Team Members

Participants

Parents, Caregivers, and Community Members

Event Purpose & Objectives

This event is designed to provide parents with a comprehensive understanding of sexual abuse, grooming, and child sex trafficking. The awareness education includes common myths, realities, risk factors, and indicators of trafficking. Participants will also learn about the Walking Wise education program.

Parent Awareness Event Agenda

1. Overview of the Walking Wise Education Program

- Present the *Myths & Reality of Child Sex Trafficking* classroom presentation for school staff.
 - i. Introduce an online interactive tool to enhance classroom engagement.
 - ii. Discuss federal laws related to child sexual exploitation.
 - iii. Share the Walking Wise animated video about *The Myths of Child Sex Trafficking*.
 - iv. Review the eleven key topics covered in the Walking Wise education program.
 - v. Discuss the various ways young people can ask for help.

2. Distribute Handouts

- Overview of local, state, and national data on child sexual exploitation.
- Walking Wise Handout: Risk Factor & Indicator document.
- If applicable, Walking Wise Handout: Sexting Acronyms Parents Should Know.

Awareness Event Duration

🕒 1-hour presentation

Outcomes & Next Steps

1. **Recognizing Indicators:** Parents will learn the indicators that appear when a child is under the control of a trafficker.
2. **Child Disclosure:** Parents will understand the importance of treating a child's disclosure of sexual abuse or sex trafficking seriously and seeking immediate help on behalf of their child.
3. **Parental Consent:** Parents will understand the relevance of sexual exploitation education for adolescents to recognize manipulation and intimidation and know how to seek help.
4. **Continued Education:** Parents and community members are encouraged to learn more by taking the Walking Wise online course for adults: Sexual Exploitation Education.



STEP ⑤

Kick Off Student Education

Sexual Exploitation Education for Youth (Ages 10 – 19)



Presenters

School Safety Team Members

Participants

Middle School Students & High School Students

Educational Purpose & Objectives

This program will educate students on the twelve topics covered in the Walking Wise sexual exploitation prevention series. Students will learn about the vulnerabilities that groomers exploit, identify manipulation and intimidation tactics, and recognize signs of sex trafficking. Ultimately, students will understand how to seek help by reporting concerns to a trustworthy adult.

Student Prevention Education Program

1. **Administer Anonymous Youth Survey** (Optional)
 - Conduct a self-reported assessment to measure students' awareness, behaviors, and attitudes related to sexual exploitation before and after the program.
 - Utilize insights from the survey to improve the program's effectiveness.
2. **Coordinate Student Support**
 - Provide students with clear instructions on how to request a private meeting with a safety team member to report concerns about grooming, sextortion, or trafficking—whether for themselves or a peer.
 - Ensure students who report concerns receive appropriate support and referrals according to school policies and procedures.
3. **Parental Consent**
 - Determine the parental consent requirements for participation in trafficking prevention education and anonymous youth surveys.
 - Distribute notification letters or consent forms based on state or school district requirements (passive or active consent).
4. **Set Up Interactive Learning Tools**
 - Request access to an online tool that integrates interactive elements into classroom presentations, youth assessments, and lesson surveys by contacting support@WalkingWise.com.
5. **Administer Pre- and Post-lesson Surveys** (Optional)
 - Each Walking Wise lesson includes a four-question survey to gauge student understanding and engagement.
 - Surveys can be conducted in print, in the Walking Wise Education Guide, or digitally using an online interactive tool.
6. **Deliver Walking Wise Classroom Lessons**
 - Educators are encouraged to customize each classroom lesson to ensure the content aligns with their school policy, is age-appropriate, and fits within the class period.
 - Slides may be deleted, or educators may upload their own slides if they identify the author of the content and include the school's name or logo.
 - Classroom teaching tips are outlined in the Walking Wise Education Guide.

LEARNING JOURNEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Explaining sexual exploitation to young people can be complex, as predators use manipulative tactics to overwhelm victims. The Walking Wise animated video series and classroom presentations break down these methods, delivering the information clearly and in a structured format. Topics can be strategically tailored to suit the needs and capacity of each school or district, ensuring age-appropriate content.

Districtwide Approach:

- Walking Wise recommends a district-wide approach where students (grades 6 through 10) receive two or three 45-minute lessons per school year, covering topics that span middle and high school grade levels.

Schoolwide Approach:

- Students receive up to four 45-minute lessons per school year, spanning three consecutive grade levels (e.g., 6th, 7th, and 8th grades).
- Similar to the Walking Wise online course for adults, the schoolwide approach organizes topics into three parts: 1) The Groomers, 2) The Vulnerable, and 3) The Predators.

3-YEAR TRACK

THE GROOMERS

- #1 Myths & Reality: Parents & Staff
- #2 Trustworthy vs. Unsafe Adult: 6th grade
- #3 Grooming Process: 6th grade
- #4 Pornography Link: 6th grade

THE VULNERABLE

- #5 Sextortion Scheme: 7th grade
- #6 Male Victims: 7th grade
- #7 Runaways as Targets: 7th grade
- #8 Rural Risks: 7th grade

THE PREDATORS

- Human Traffickers: 8th grade
- Female & Peer Recruiters: 8th grade
- Family Secret: 8th grade
- Hidden Buyers: 8th grade

5-YEAR TRACK

THE GROOMERS

- #1 Myths & Reality: Parents & Staff
- #2 Trustworthy vs. Unsafe Adult: 6th grade
- #3 Grooming Process: 6th grade
- #4 Pornography Link: 6th grade

THE VULNERABLE

- #5 Sextortion Scheme: 7th grade
- #6 Male Victims: 7th grade
- #7 Runaways as Targets: 8th grade
- #8 Rural Risks: 8th grade

THE PREDATORS

- Human Traffickers: 9th grade
- Female & Peer Recruiters: 9th grade
- Family Secret: 10th grade
- Hidden Buyers: 10th grade

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- **#1 Myths & Reality:** Examine how myths contribute to overlooking the signs that appear when a young person is trafficked or groomed.
- **#2 Trustworthy vs. Unsafe Adult:** Explore how young people can identify trustworthy adults by understanding the inappropriate behaviors of unsafe adults.
- **#3 Grooming Process:** Identify ways young people can recognize the grooming tactics predators use to manipulate and exploit victims for sexual harm and trafficking.
- **#4 Pornography Link:** Explore the connection between emotional harm caused by viewing pornography and its role in growing the commercial sex industry.
- **#5 Sextortion Scheme:** Examine how groomers and traffickers use technology and sexting to manipulate and control victims.
- **#6 Male Victims:** Discuss why male victims are often overlooked and the reasons boys may hesitate to seek help when experiencing sexual abuse or sex trafficking.
- **#7 Runaways as Targets:** Discuss how running away from home increases vulnerability to human trafficking due to factors like homelessness.
- **#8 Rural Risks:** Examine the unique factors of living in a rural community that increase a young person's vulnerability to sexual predators and sex traffickers.
- **#9 Human Traffickers:** Discuss tactics and behaviors of those who prey on young people to make money through trafficking vulnerable individuals.
- **#10 Female Recruiters:** Identify how peers or acquaintances work with traffickers to lure new victims into the commercial sex trade.
- **#11 Family Secret:** Explore how circumstances can increase the risk of a family member trafficking children within the family and the manipulative tactics they use.
- **#12 Hidden Buyers:** Examine how young males are groomed to become sex buyers as they transition into adulthood.

RESOURCES

Below is a list of additional resources and tools to help school districts, schools, and other youth organizations craft anti-trafficking policies, protocols, assessments, and survey tools. Walking Wise provides the links for educational purposes only and makes no guarantees about the included content.

U.S. Department of Education – *Human Trafficking in America’s Schools (2nd ed.)*, January 2021.
<https://www2.ed.gov/documents/human-trafficking/human-trafficking-americas-schools.pdf>

WestCoast Children’s Clinic – *Validation of the Commercial Sexual Exploitation – Identification Tool (CSE-IT) Technical Report*
<https://www.westcoastcc.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/WCC-CSE-IT-PilotReport-FINAL.pdf>

The Office of Trafficking in Persons / Kent ISD – *Kent County Human Trafficking School Safety Protocol*
<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1M8yZr03Ptr7cl-4EsFUj-L5mIgShO8Rq2gVBA28lwfQ/edit>

The Office of Trafficking in Persons / Kent ISD – *Human Trafficking School Safety Protocol: Student Re-engagement and Re-entry: Welcome and Support Plan*, accessed 4/2023.
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1mHcH0qDrs3T38drzITBMAuOTow3Y0yZD/view>

The National Child Traumatic Stress Network – *Screening for human trafficking among homeless young adults*, 2019. <https://www.nctsn.org/resources/trafficking-screening-tools>

National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments – *Trauma-Sensitive Schools*, June 2018.
<https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/trauma-sensitive-schools-training-package>

Polaris Project – *In Their Shoes: Understanding Victims’ Mindsets and Common Barriers to Victim Identification*, 2009. <http://humantraffickingsearch.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Understanding-Victims-Mindsets.pdf>

U.S. Department of Education – *The Human Trafficking Framework for Instructional Programming*, June 2017. https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/sites/default/files/USDOE_UseCase_HT_2017.pdf

The Vera Institute of Justice – *Out of the Shadows: A Tool for the Identification of Victims of Human Trafficking*, 2014. <https://www.vera.org/news/out-of-the-shadows-and-into-the-field-the-trafficking-victim-identification-tool-at-six-months>

Family & Youth Services Bureau – *TIPSHEET: Peer-to-Peer Human Trafficking Recruitment in RHY Settings: Trauma-Informed Response*, 2022.
<https://www.childrensmentalhealthmatters.org/files/2022/11/Tipsheet-on-Peer-to-Peer-Recruitment-human-trafficking.pdf>

REFERENCES

1. Congress.gov (2015). *S.178 – Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act of 2015, (Sec 104)*. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/senate-bill/178>, accessed 8/9/2025.
2. U.S. Department of Education, Office of Safe and Supportive Schools. (2021). *Human trafficking in America's schools: What schools can do to prevent, respond, and help students to recover from human trafficking (2nd ed.)*. U.S. Department of Education, p. 11. <https://www2.ed.gov/documents/human-trafficking/human-trafficking-americas-schools.pdf>, accessed 8/9/2025.

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