

Human Trafficking Awareness & Family Safety

Protecting our students is a shared priority. Raising awareness about human trafficking helps parents and caregivers protect young people from exploitation both online and offline.

Who Is Most Vulnerable and How Are They Targeted?

Traffickers actively seek out youth who are looking for acceptance, connection, or financial independence. While any student can be targeted, risk factors increase for youth in foster care, unhoused or runaway youth, LGBTQ+ students, and teens experiencing social or emotional isolation.

Common Recruitment Methods:

- **Online Grooming:** Contacting youth via social media, gaming platforms, or messaging apps with flattery, gifts, or job promises.
- **"Love Bombing":** Posing as a supportive romantic partner who provides affection and gifts, then slowly isolates the youth from family and friends.
- **Exploiting Needs:** Offering money, shelter, or modeling/influencer opportunities to youth facing financial or family stress.

Warning Signs to Watch For

While individual behaviors vary, a sudden combination of these changes can be a sign of concern:

- **Unexplained items:** Possessing additional cell phones, costly gifts, or money from unknown sources.
- **Social withdrawal:** Pulling away from long-time friends, family activities, or favorite extracurriculars.
- **Secretive connections:** Interacting online or in person with significantly older individuals or strangers.
- **Behavioral changes:** Expressing extreme fear, anxiety, or sudden drops in school attendance.

Simple Steps for Parents

- **Talk Regularly:** Have open, non-judgmental conversations with your children about personal safety, healthy relationships, and boundaries.
- **Stay Involved Online:** Know the apps, games, and social media platforms your child uses and set clear rules for communicating online.
- **Report Suspicions:** If you suspect a young person is in immediate danger, contact local law enforcement or the National Human Trafficking Hotline right away.

Helplines & Helpful Resources

- [National Human Trafficking Hotline](#)
 - **Call:** 1-888-373-7888 | **Text:** "HELP" or "INFO" to 233-733
 - Free, confidential support available 24/7 in over 200 languages.
- [NCMEC CyberTipline](#)
 - **Hotline:** 1-800-843-5678
 - Report online child exploitation or safety concerns directly through the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children.
- [DHS Blue Campaign Parent Guides](#)
 - Downloadable toolkits and guides for talking to youth about human trafficking.
- [Love146 Caregiver Resources](#)
 - Practical online safety guides, brochures, and webinars for parents and caregivers.