

HUMAN TRAFFICKING PREVENTION AND RESOURCE INFORMATION

Website link for this information can be found here:

<https://lacounty.gov/residents/public-safety/human-trafficking/know-to-say-no/>

Know to Say No to Child Trafficking

Our letter writing campaign is an opportunity for local youth to lead the way in the protection against human trafficking. We believe that education, awareness, and action are the keys to preventing this terrible crime.

Through powerful videos showcasing kids writing letters to themselves, their parents, teachers, friends, and the community at large, we aim to raise awareness of the risks of human trafficking and the signs to look for. Our goal is to empower you, the community, to take action and prevent human trafficking in our neighborhoods. Join us in this important mission and take the first step towards creating a safer future for our children and youth.

What to Look for: Learn the Signs of Human Trafficking

It's important to know the signs of human trafficking because it can help prevent this terrible crime. Exploiters often use tricks like giving gifts and making false promises to lure people into dangerous situations.

Sometimes, it can be hard to tell if someone is in trouble because the signs might seem like normal teenage behavior. But if you notice something unusual or suspicious, it's important to speak up and get help.

Exploiters who do this often work slowly and carefully, so it's important to pay attention to the warning signs. They might also try to use kids to recruit their friends into bad situations, so it's important to be aware of what's going on with the people around you.

By knowing the signs of human trafficking, you can help keep yourself and your community safe. Remember, if you see something, say something.

BEHAVIORAL SIGNS

- Running away from home or school frequently.
- Sharing nude or explicit pictures or information online.
- Giving a false name or age when asked personal information.
- Having expensive items that are unexplained.
- Spending time in places where sex work happens like hotels, streets or specific addresses.
- Traveling out of the state often, especially without a guardian or family member.
- Being involved in gangs, especially girls.
- Not being able to explain where they have been or being secretive about their whereabouts.
- Staying out late or keeping unusual hours.

- Using slang words to describe people in “the life”, calling their abuser daddy, referring to other girls/boys under the same pimp as being in their stable, and using the word square to describe anyone who doesn’t understand the situation.
- Showing signs of trauma such as being overly alert, scared, tired, or anxious.
- Being distrustful of adults.
- Feeling mixed emotions about the person who is exploiting them or their “boyfriend”.
- Suddenly becoming quiet and less expressive.
- Responding defensively when questioned or expressing concern.
- Suddenly doing poorly in school.
- Having a lot of money or prepaid cards without explanation.

PHYSICAL SIGNS

- Having multiple sexually transmitted infections (STIs).
- Showing signs of physical or sexual assault, or unexplained injuries.
- Having tattoos or markings that they may not want to reveal or that don’t belong to them.
- Struggling with substance abuse or addiction.
- Going through a drastic change in appearance, such as a sudden change in hair color or style, or wearing clothing that is different from their usual style.
- Not taking care of personal hygiene as before.

EMOTIONAL SIGNS

- Feeling scared, nervous, tired, or worried all the time.
- Not trusting adults, including parents or caregivers.
- Having mixed feelings about someone who is hurting them, like feeling both angry and affectionate towards them.
- Suddenly becoming quiet and not talking as much as they used to.
- Getting defensive or upset when asked about things that might be happening to them.

What to Know: How Recruiting Happens

Exploiters use various tactics to lure vulnerable children and youth into human trafficking, often masquerading as friendly or supportive individuals. These tactics can be particularly effective because they prey on the dreams and aspirations of young people, who may be willing to do anything for a chance at success.

Exploiters might offer gifts, money, or false promises to gain the trust of youth. The process can often take weeks or months for an exploiter to be “grooming” their victim. They may even use peer recruitment by manipulating exploited children into recruiting their friends.

Often masquerading as friendly or supportive individuals, they may also offer supposed educational opportunities to lure children into their trap. Others choose to recruit through fake ads, offering kids money for jobs, including acting, modeling, and other opportunities. Sometimes even posing as boyfriends (usually much older) these individuals prey on our youth, gain their trust and then use their power to force them into sex or labor.

We’re providing you with a few examples of the most common ways recruitment happens. By teaching our youth the dangers of offers that sound too good to be true, we can help prevent human trafficking before it happens.

EXAMPLES OF HOW KIDS ARE RECRUITED

- **Fake job offers:** Traffickers may offer job opportunities to young people that seem too good to be true, such as high paying modeling or acting gigs. For example, a young person might receive a message on social media from someone claiming to be a modeling agent and offering them a chance to audition for a big-name brand.
- **False promises:** Traffickers may create false promises of fulfilling youth’s hopes and dreams. For example, a trafficker might make false promises to the youth, such as offers of modeling, music, or acting opportunities.

- **Online grooming:** Traffickers may use social media or online gaming platforms to groom and befriend young people. For example, a trafficker might pose as a young person online and strike up a conversation with a young person, gradually building trust and manipulating them into meeting up in person.
- **Using peer pressure:** Traffickers may use peer pressure to get young people to participate in illegal activities. For example, a trafficker might pressure a young person to sell drugs or perform sex acts in order to fit in with their group.
- **Exploiting vulnerabilities:** Traffickers may prey on young people who are experiencing homelessness, drug addiction, or other difficult situations. For example, a trafficker might offer a young person a place to stay or drugs in exchange for sex.
- **False promises of romance or love:** Traffickers may use false promises of love or romance to manipulate young people into trafficking. For example, a trafficker might pose as a romantic interest online and convince a young person to meet up with them, only to then force them into having sex for money.
- **Impersonating authority figures:** Traffickers may impersonate authority figures, such as police officers or government officials, to gain the trust of young people. For example, a trafficker might pose as a police officer convincing them they know certain information about them and asking them to perform sex acts to not be arrested.
- **Using blackmail:** Traffickers may use blackmail to control young people and force them into trafficking. For example, a trafficker might threaten to release compromising photos or videos of a young person if they don't comply with their demands.
- **Promising adventure or travel:** Traffickers may offer young people the promise of adventure or travel as a way to lure them into trafficking. For example, a trafficker might offer a young person the chance to travel to a new city or country, only to then force them into having sex for money.
- **Using drugs or alcohol:** Traffickers may use drugs or alcohol to incapacitate young people and make them more vulnerable to trafficking. For example, a trafficker might offer a young person a drink laced with drugs, then take advantage of them while they're unconscious.

11-14

The average age a girl enters the commercial sex trade is 12-14 years old.

For boys, it's even younger – just 11-13 years old.

*ACLU, Human Trafficking: Modern Enslavement of Immigrant Women in the United States

70%

The vast majority of sex trafficking victims were **U.S. citizens or permanent U.S. residents**

*U.S. Office of Justice Programs, Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children and Sex Trafficking

10 Ways YOU can make an impact.

We believe that education, awareness, and community involvement are key to ending this terrible crime, and we're committed to providing you with the information and resources you need to make a difference. In this section, we've compiled a list of ten things parents, teachers, and the community can do to help prevent child trafficking, as well as a list of ways to work with children and youth to empower them to recognize and respond to potential dangers. From education and advocacy to direct involvement and support, there are many ways you can join the fight against human trafficking in our community.

As our kids mention in their letters, this is OUR community, and it is our responsibility to get involved, and help protect our youth from human trafficking. This is an issue that is happening in every community, often right in front of us. Being aware, educated and taking action can make the difference in the life of a youth.

Engage with our Youth

1. **Help children and youth understand** the tactics and dangers of human trafficking through age appropriate conversations and educational material.
2. Teach children and youth **how to recognize and respond to suspicious activity**, and encourage them to speak up if they feel uncomfortable or unsafe.
3. **Foster a safe and supportive environment** where children and youth feel comfortable sharing their experiences and concerns
4. **Provide children and youth with** access to resources and support networks, such as **trusted adults, counselors, or peer groups**.
5. Encourage children and youth to **get involved in community efforts** to prevent human trafficking, such as volunteer work or advocacy campaigns
6. **Empower children and youth to be leaders** in the fight against human trafficking by giving them opportunities to share their experiences and ideas
7. **Teach children and youth** how to access and use resources such as the **National Human Trafficking Hotline** and the Los Angeles County **Child Protection Hotline**
8. **Foster a culture of respect and kindness**, and discourage behaviors that objectify or devalue others
9. Help children and youth **develop strong social and emotional skills**, such as empathy, self awareness, and assertiveness, to help them navigate potentially dangerous situations

10. Encourage children and youth to take care of themselves **physically, emotionally, and mentally**, and provide them with resources and support to do so.

Educate Yourself and your Community

1. **Educate yourself and others about the signs** and risks of human trafficking in children and youth. Spread awareness through social media, school events, and community meetings
2. Talk to the children in your life about the risks of human trafficking and **teach them how to identify potential dangers**. Encourage open and honest communication.
3. **Keep an eye out for suspicious activity** in your community and report any potential cases of human trafficking to local authorities.
4. **Stay connected with local schools and community organizations**, and communicate regularly with teachers, counselors, and other leaders.
5. **Get involved with community organizations** that work to prevent human trafficking and support victims
6. **Volunteer your time** and resources to organizations that work with at risk youth and trafficking survivors.
7. **Advocate for stronger laws** and policies that protect children and youth from exploitation.
8. **Attend trainings and workshops** on how to identify and respond to human trafficking.
9. **Support local law enforcement agencies** in their efforts to identify and prosecute human traffickers.
10. If you suspect a child or youth is being trafficked, **call the Los Angeles County Child Protection Hotline at 1 800 540 4000**

Help spread the word

Join the fight against human trafficking by sharing the 'Know to Say No' campaign on social media. With just a few clicks, you can help us educate the community about the signs and risks of human trafficking and empower parents, teachers, and youth to take action. By sharing campaign videos and images, you'll be helping us to spread the word and encourage others to get involved. Together, we can make a difference in the lives of vulnerable children and youth in Los Angeles County. Share the campaign today and help prevent human trafficking in our community.

Resources:

[Law Enforcement First Responder Protocol \(FRP\) for CSEC](#)

[FRP 4 Year Report](#)

[FRP 6 Year Report](#)

[Detention Interagency Identification and Response Protocol for CSE Children and Youth](#)