

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

A Message to Teens: 8 online safety tips for protection against traffickers

- 1. Your personal information is...personal, keep it that way.**
Social networking sites are awesome, but you do not want just anyone knowing where you live, where you go to school, or how old you are. This is your personal information. People that you know will already know this information anyway, so there's no reason to post it.
- 2. Maximize your security settings on your social networking site.**
Use the highest security settings on social networking sites.
- 3. Only add people that are your true friends to your Friends list.**
Anyone can take a picture from the Internet of an attractive teenager and say it is them. A good rule of thumb is to only become "friends" with people who are your true friends. Ignore or decline friend requests from males or FEMALES that you don't know well, especially if it is a flirty friend request. Traffickers may try to connect with you by posing as your acquaintance or as a friend of a friend. Female strangers or acquaintances online cannot be trusted any more than males. Here is why: 42% of human trafficking recruiters are women OR it could be a man using a female profile to lure teens.
- 4. Establish your boundaries.**
Don't worry about the possibility of "offending" someone that you may know or don't know for ignoring or declining their friend request. You can send a simple message of: "Sorry, but I am not comfortable with friending people I don't know very well." Clearly setting boundaries and stating your discomfort is a good habit to have, so practice now!
- 5. Protect your pictures!**
Do you really want human traffickers and pedophiles across the world to see a picture of you in your swimsuit? Or at your high school? Or with your family on vacation? Or you dancing with your friends at that party? Posting pictures on your social networking profile is a great way to keep your friends updated with your life -- but you do not want to keep STRANGERS up-to-date with everything in your life! Facebook photos draw in the predators. Another measure to protect your photos is to ask your friends to not tag you in photos, or untag the photos. NEVER send a photo of yourself to someone that is not a friend that you know in person. Traffickers befriend youth online, they are patient, taking their time to build an online friendship or relationship. NEVER send a sexually compromising photo of yourself on a phone app or online. Traffickers will use these photos to blackmail people into forced sex or labor.
- 6. Know the red flags of online trafficker behavior.**
Red flags include showering you with compliments, sending you gifts, making grand promises, encouraging/supporting you in running away from home or moving in with him, making you doubt your family and friends' loyalty, love, or concern for you, or any comments that undercut your relationship with family, mentors, friends, teachers, etc.
- 7. What to do if you've already accepted friend requests from strangers or acquaintances.**
If you've accepted a friend request of a stranger or acquaintance that you don't really know or trust, unfriend them or at the very least block this person, here is how:
<https://www.facebook.com/help/116326365118751/>
- 8. You gotta report!**
Report inappropriate messages or persistent strangers/acquaintances to the social networking site. See link above in #7 for instructions on how to file a report with Facebook. If you are using other social networking sites or applications and you witness someone being harassment or bullied by a compromising photo, immediately report it to your school or the police. Again, traffickers will use compromising photos of teens to blackmail them into sex or labor trafficking.

Learn more: www.endhumantrafficking.org

A Message to Parents: Tip to help keep your children and teens safe from human traffickers

- 1. Know who their friends are.** Your child may be friends with someone who is involved in a sex trafficking ring. Watch your child's friends closely. If you do not know who they are...find out! Middle school children are the prime target for human trafficking, so get involved in your child's school so that you know who is who.
- 2. Remind your child and teen to keep their Facebook pages and any social media profile pages private.** Predators use social media sites to find girls and boys they want to traffic.
- 3. Keep your child busy with healthy extracurricular activities that they enjoy.** Pimps and predators surf malls, parking lots, fast food restaurant parking lots and quick stop gas stations to find their next victims. They are recruiting kids where there is little adult supervision. Getting your kids involved in organized and supervised after school programs is the best prevention method. If your child is telling you they are going to "hang out", ask questions and check in with them frequently.
- 4. Educate your child about human trafficking.** It is a reality in our world and inform them of the forms of human trafficking, the reality of the dangers in our own community, typical recruitment methods, the red flags of human trafficking, and that recruiters can be male, female, strangers, or acquaintances. One of the main things for your child to know is that the pimp or predator will more than likely call them by name over to the car. They have usually found them on Facebook or through conducting some research. Tell your child to never walk over to a car that they do not know. Having said this, it is not uncommon for you and your child to know the pimp/predator. When your child heads out for the night, ask them who their safety buddy will be, and tell your child/teen to stick with this person.
- 5. Look into a GPS device for your child.** Many professionals recommend the Amber Alert GPS system. The software can be added to a smart phone or can be a small device that your child keeps in a pant or coat pocket.
- 6. If you have suspicions, comb your child's computer, cell phones, iPads or any digital devices and their bedrooms looking for clues.** If you have a hunch that something is going on with your child that could put them in danger, your hunches are probably right. Cell phones, computer, and other mobile devices are privileges, not rights. Don't let your child make you feel guilty for keeping them safe. You are their parent...not their best friend. While you may also be a great friend, as a parent, it is your responsibility to keep your child safe.

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THE PROJECT TO END
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