



# **ONLINE SAFETY TOOLKIT** FOR PARENTS



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT  
OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

# What is Human Trafficking?

Human trafficking is a crime that involves exploitation of a person using force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of forced labor and/or commercial sex. Victims of human trafficking include men, women, boys, and girls. The victims can be American citizens or foreign nationals.

If the sex trafficking victim is under the age of 18, it is human trafficking regardless of whether force, fraud and/or coercion was used. This is called commercial sexual exploitation of a child (CSEC).

## What are Warning Signs?

- Frequent, unexplained absences from school
- Sudden academic decline
- Running away from home
- Dissociation
- Unexplained bruises or scars
- Tattoos or markings, branding
- Withdrawn behavior, or anxiety/fear
- Anger outbursts, panic attacks, post traumatic stress disorder
- Knowledge of sexual situations or terms beyond what is normal for the child's age
- Signs of drug use, addiction
- Sudden changes in clothes, friends, or access to money
- Possession of items or services child generally unable to afford
- Hotel keys
- Youth has two or more cell phones
- Inappropriate, prolonged online activity, sexual activity on-line
- Use of multiple chat rooms and adult apps, chat features in gaming devices
- Exchange of photos
- Have their own website/secretive
- Having a "boyfriend" or "girlfriend" who is noticeably older and/or controlling
- Partner will not meet you or make themselves available to you
- Expressing concern for family members' safety if she or he shares too much information.
- Working unusually long hours without proper wages
- "Owing" boss work hours for no or minimal wages

## What are Risk Factors?

It's important for parents and caregivers to understand factors that place children at a higher risk for trafficking. Knowing these factors equip parents with information that allows them to educate themselves, their families and trusted networks, and their children, to prevent victimization. The more you know, the more opportunity you have to protect your children from this horrific crime.

Risk factors alone do not mean that your child will become a victim. How a family manages for these factors is the key to ensuring a healthy environment exists for their child.

- Isolation
- Homelessness or unstable living environments/lack of consistent supervision
- Substance Abuse by Parent or Child (untreated and leading to neglect/absentee parenting)
- Incarcerated Parent(s) / Absent Parent(s)
- Mental Illness (that is untreated or leads to neglect or absentee parenting)
- Developmental Delay
- Childhood Sexual Abuse\*
- Promotion of sexual exploitation by friends of family
- Lack of social or familial support
- Learning disabilities
- Poverty
- Lack of personal safety

\*Most Common Risk Factors

## How to Protect my Child?

Human trafficking is a serious concern for parents. Here are some effective ways to keep your children safe and reduce the risk of them being targeted by traffickers:

- Monitor your child's online activities and social media accounts.
- Use the On-Line Parent resource tools and controls available to limit use of internet and know what apps are being used by your child.
- Be the parent. Set parameters and boundaries. Help your children develop and maintain healthy relationships and good self-esteem.
- Teach your children how to cope with stress and crisis situations.
- Know your child's location, friends, and activities.
- Have open communication with your child and show them that you're there for them to talk to.
- Let them know it is NOT their fault if they get into a situation that they need help getting out of.
- Talk to your child openly – this particularly relates to sharing images on-line and being honest about it and reporting so they are not held hostage to further demands of a trafficker.
- Seek out assistance for substance abuse prevention, treatment and intervention at the earliest point.
- Take suicidal statements seriously and get help.
- Foster relationships with fathers and father figures who provide a safe and supportive environment for the child/youth.
- Be cautious of boyfriends/girlfriends you bring into your family home – traffickers can and will target those with children.
- Understand that females are traffickers too. Many females recruit other females into trafficking so pay attention to new "friends".

**Learn More About On-Line Safety** – Traffickers use a variety of on-line apps to target children and youth. How they react determines next steps in the grooming and luring process

***Attorney General Toolkit available here:***



**RECOGNIZE AND STOP  
HUMAN TRAFFICKING**

**To report**

allegations of human trafficking or abuse, neglect or abandonment of a  
**child** or a **vulnerable adult** to the

**Florida Abuse Hotline**

*please call*

**1.800.962.2873**

*-or-*

**myflfamilies.com**

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**To report**

**human trafficking  
to law enforcement,**

*please call*

**1.855.FLA.SAFE**

*-or-*

**Report**

**to local authorities  
IMMEDIATELY**

