

# PROTECT YOUR KIDS FROM HUMAN TRAFFICKING

## Background

Child trafficking of boys and girls exists in EVERY community, and it can even happen in your own home. Educate yourself about how children become victims to child trafficking. Engage and set boundaries. Know where your child is at all times (location apps such as Life360 or Find My I-Phone are helpful). Familiarize yourself with your child's friends and friends' family members and consider limiting sleepovers. Do NOT make your child hug or kiss others - especially when they do not want to. It is important to teach them they are in control of their body. Discuss the dangers of using drugs and alcohol. Tell your child he/she can tell you anything without being afraid or embarrassed. Traffickers are men and women of all professions, and they sometimes recruit children to assist in luring victims. Traffickers could also be boyfriends, girlfriends, family members, etc.



**Research people surrounding your child (friends, friends' parents/siblings, teachers, counselors, pastors, coaches, neighbors, employers, youth leaders, etc.).**

Check Wisconsin Sex Offender Registry ([www.appsdoc.wi.gov/public](http://www.appsdoc.wi.gov/public)) and Wisconsin Circuit Court Access ([www.wicourts.gov/casesearch.htm](http://www.wicourts.gov/casesearch.htm)). Type names into internet search engines for articles about crimes expunged on perpetrators' records.

## Online safety - social media is #1 recruitment tool used by traffickers to lure victims

Any child with access to a smart phone, computer, tablet or gaming device is a potential target for traffickers. Traffickers also search non-private social media accounts. Limit YOUR posts about and photos of the children in your life.

- Educate yourself about the websites, software, apps, games (especially with headsets) your child uses, check their social media and gaming profiles often, and take their devices away from them overnight
- Tell your children they should NEVER share personal information with others (address, where they go to school/work, who they are friends with, contact information, who their family members are, etc.)
- Explain to your kids that once images or comments are posted online or shared with others, they lose control over who will ultimately have access to them, and they can never truly be erased
- Stress to your child that sharing inappropriate photos/videos of others could be considered criminal and sharing inappropriate videos/photos of themselves could be used for sextortion by traffickers
- Traffickers can pretend to be children online to befriend a child and patiently groom them
- Remind your child never to meet in person anyone they have met online without your permission
- Require your child to use privacy settings, non-identifying screen names and strong passwords that you have access to, and consider blocking apps on their device (Snapchat, Instagram, TikTok, etc.)
- Use parental control apps (Radlee and Bark, etc.) to monitor child's social media activities
- Report any inappropriate contact between an adult and your child, and create screen shots of inappropriate communications, if possible

# DOING NOTHING IS NOT AN OPTION

## Remind children to be aware of their surroundings

- Do not use phone while in a parking lot or on a walk
- Do not let strangers pet the family dog as they can obtain your family's name and address from dog tags
- Park in bright areas, lock doors immediately upon entering car, and when arriving home, check car door handles for zip tie or other branding items traffickers use to identify vulnerable individual(s) in vehicle for others to target
- Do not touch Kleenex, money, notes, items left near or on vehicle or accept business cards or free items from strangers as they could contain debilitating poisons/drugs that are absorbed into skin
- Gas stations - look past the lighted areas into the dark corners where people could be hiding in parked cars and stay in locked car while pumping gas

## Signs an individual is a trafficking victim

### Teenagers

- Exhibit behavioral changes, sudden drop in grades, wearing more provocative clothing and make up, showing interest in new older boyfriend or girlfriend, abusing alcohol/drugs
- Have physical signs such as bruising, teeth missing, injuries, tattoos and branding marks
- Are not being truthful about where they are going or who they are with
- Have new material items they cannot afford or you have not purchased for them

### Younger Children (signs of molestation/abuse)

- Vaginal discharge, genital soreness, rashes, fear of the dark, sleep disturbances, nightmares, bed wetting
- Inappropriately touching or sexual behavior with self or sibling or younger child
- Using inappropriate or sexually provocative language
- Exhibiting behavioral changes such as temper outbursts, poor impulse control, mood shifts or are fearful
- Talking about Satanic Ritual Abuse (SAR), animals being killed, blood, dismemberment, child abuse

### Identifying victims in public places

- May be shopping, dining or traveling with an adult or another person who seem mismatched together
- Exhibit branding with tattoos (barcodes, initials, etc.) or other identifiers (such as color coded bracelets) indicating they are "owned" by others
- Repeated clinic visits for STD treatment or physical abuse (health care professionals should monitor)
- Inability to make eye contact with strangers who talk to them when their trafficker is present
- Have a rehearsed or coerced response when asked a question
- May be masked when with their handlers to keep them silent or hidden in plain sight

If you suspect someone is a victim of human trafficking, TAKE ACTION!