

# HUMAN TRAFFICKING: TIPS FOR PARENTS

## What is human trafficking?

Human trafficking is when someone is commercially exploited for work or sex by using force, fraud, or coercion; OR if someone under 18 years old is participating in commercial sex.

### Red Flags

*Understand that these don't necessarily mean your child is being trafficked, just that it might be an indicator that something isn't right.*

- Unusual absences from school
- Running away from home
- Frequent travel to other cities
- Withdrawn behavior and fear
- Much older boyfriend/friend
- Signs of drug addiction
- Suddenly have unexplained expensive clothing/gifts
- Dressed inappropriately for the surroundings or weather
- Previously untreated injuries
- Multiple or botched abortions/STIs
- Branding by tattoos or burning/cutting
- Attempts to hide online activity
- Calls, texts to unknown numbers

**If you suspect someone you know might be in a trafficking situation, call the national hotline at 1-888-373-7888 or send a text to BEFREE (233733).**

### Tips for Parents:

#### Talk early and talk often about tough decisions they may face

- Here are some resources to help you start the conversations:
  - Drugs & Alcohol: <http://www.talksooner.org/parents/>
  - Online Safety: [www.netsmartz.org/Parents](http://www.netsmartz.org/Parents)
  - Sex:
    - Ages 3-12 <http://www.parenting.com/article/talking-to-kids-about-sex-21335549>
    - Ages 12+ [https://www.cdc.gov/healthyouth/protective/pdf/talking\\_teens.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/healthyouth/protective/pdf/talking_teens.pdf)
  - Human trafficking: Discuss "Staying Safe Tips for Teens" handout
- Get to know their friends
- Make sure a trusted adult is supervising your child when they are away from home.
- Connect them with a mentor\*. Sometimes it's easier to talk to someone who isn't your parent.
- If your child has experienced abuse or engages in self-harm, connect them with a counselor.

#### The Internet & Phone

- Check your child's phone regularly, and have access to all passwords. See [www.protectyouneyes.com](http://www.protectyouneyes.com).
- Have your child show you what apps they have and how they work on their phones.
- Install filtering programs and parental controls on all internet-connected devices. Check out [www.teensafe.com](http://www.teensafe.com) or [www.covenanteyes.com](http://www.covenanteyes.com).
- Talk to your child about any warning signs you observe, and reach out to a counselor or school staff member.

#### Show Unconditional Love

- The more they feel loved at home, the less likely they will search for love from someone else. Discover their love language: [5lovelanguages.com/resource/the-five-love-languages-of-children](http://5lovelanguages.com/resource/the-five-love-languages-of-children)

\*Agencies that provide mentors to youth: Big Brothers Big Sisters, The Hope Project, Some schools/churches



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