

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- Withdrawn behavior and fear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
 - Sex:
 - Ages 3-12 <http://www.parenting.com/article/talking-to-kids-about-sex-21335549>
 - Ages 12+ https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/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.
- 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 or 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

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



www.lhttf.org

www.facebook.com/lakeshorehumantraffickingtaskforce