

# Teen SEX trafficking

make a difference by understanding the issue, recognizing the warning signs and knowing how to seek help

Most people think sex trafficking is something that happens in other countries. Movies and documentaries show scenes of foreigners or tourists being sold in far away countries.

A lot of people don't know that human trafficking is a real and growing problem all over the United States, including here in your community.

Sex trafficking is a hard issue for most of us to grasp - partly because it's so disturbing —and because it forces us to address some uncomfortable issues.

Teens can be commercially sexually exploited through prostitution, pornography, stripping, erotic entertainment or other sex acts.

The commercial aspect - an exchange of money or something of value - is critical to separate the crime of trafficking from sexual assault, dating violence or rape.

Sex trafficking of minors is a severe form of child abuse, and victims endure significant trauma through repeated rape and physical violence.

(National Plan, 2012)

The best way to handle this crisis is to equip students and teachers with the right knowledge about the issue, so they can prevent it from ever happening or get help when its needed.

Teen sex trafficking is real, scary and has devastating physical and mental health consequences for victimized youth.

At least  
**100,000**  
U.S. children  
are exploited  
in prostitution  
every year in  
America.

National Center for Missing and Exploited Children

ASU School of Social Work

**Office of Sex Trafficking  
Intervention Research**

**ASU** School of  
Social Work  
ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

# WHAT IS SEX TRAFFICKING?

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Under federal law, the crime of human trafficking is defined as the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision or obtaining of a person for the purpose of a commercial sex act where such an act is induced by force, fraud or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such act has not attained 18 years of age.

## WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

trading sex acts for anything of value is sex trafficking

- food
- money
- drugs
- alcohol
- gifts
- place to stay
- rent

this includes any type of sex act and stripping, or other types of erotic entertainment

**TARGETED** Pimps “shop” for their victims online, in shopping malls, bus stops, schools, after school programs, foster homes, parks, restaurants and other places where teens gather.

**TRICKED** Pimps invest a lot of time and effort in forming a bond with their victim. They buy girls gifts, provide a place to stay and give affection before revealing their true intent- to sexually exploit them.

**TRAUMATIZED** The pimp’s use of psychological manipulation, physical violence and rape can make the victim feel trapped and powerless.

(National Center for Missing and Exploited Children)

Vulnerable girls can be lured into prostitution and other forms of sexual exploitation using promises, psychological manipulations, provision of drugs and alcohol, and violence or threats of violence against family and friends.

**HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN THE U.S. IS A \$9.8 BILLION INDUSTRY**

International Labor Organization

The bad guys are selling underage girls because it is an easy way to make a lot of money.

Thirteen years old is the average age a child is first exploited through prostitution.

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If you suspect human trafficking, call the National Human Trafficking Hotline  
1-888-3737-888



# Pimps are predators

Pimps are predators and referred to as traffickers, as they commit the crime of human trafficking.

A pimp is someone who forces another person into prostitution, and then keeps some or all of their earnings.

A pimp makes arrangements for customers to have sex with their victim.

Pimps often tattoo or “brand” their victims to show that they are property, much like a rancher might brand their cattle.

Pimps sometimes sell or trade their victims to other pimps.

Pimps can look like an ordinary guy or girl. Pimps may be non-traditional, like a family member who pimps out their child for drugs or rent money. Yes, pimps can be girls, too and often times couples work together to recruit young girls.

# 90%

Up to 90% of minor victims are under the control of a pimp. (Shared Hope, 2014)



**PIMPS SPEND A LOT OF TIME LOOKING FOR AND GROOMING THEIR VICTIMS.**

•  
**PIMPS OFTEN PRETEND TO BE AN “OLDER BOYFRIEND,” AND PROMISE FAME, EXCITEMENT, TRAVEL AND LOVE.**

ADULTS ONLY  
MAGAZINES  
TOYS DVDS  
KRATED

MOTEL



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## When does it happen?

Girls (and boys) can be recruited “into the life” during school, after school, while online, on the weekends, in the morning before school...basically **anytime**



## Where does it happen?

Pimps shop for their victims online, at shopping malls, bus stops, at school, at after school functions, foster homes...basically anywhere teens hang out.

## How does it happen?

The trafficker will use psychological manipulation, physical violence and rape to make

the victim feel trapped and powerless.

The pimp may also threaten to harm the victim’s family or close friends, as a way to maintain control.

The pimp may take modeling “photos” and suggestive videos and use them to advertise the victim for sexual services online.

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## Did you know?

In 2013, multiple cases of human trafficking were reported in **all 50 states** and Washington, DC (Polaris Project).

Between 244,000 and 325,000 American teens are considered “at risk” for sexual exploitation, and an estimated 199,000 incidents of sexual exploitation of minors occur each year in the US. (Estes and Weiner, 2001).

# Role of Social Media in Sex Trafficking

Be safe with social media!



- Never use your full name when creating an ID.
- Never give your phone number to an older guy you meet at the mall or some other place where you like to hang out.
- Never post nude or racy photos online or share them via snap chat or email. Also know that what you say or do on FaceTime could be recorded.
- Never disclose your address or telephone number or other personal information like your birthdate.
- Never post questionable photos or videos on Youtube, Vine, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram or other popular sites.
- Never post a status such as “just ran away from home” or “I hate my parents” or “I wish I could get out of here” or “I hate school.”
- Never allow someone you do not know well to be your “friend” or “follow” you on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, or other popular sites. Only allow people you really know and trust as “friends” or followers.
- Never fall for the lie that a photo or video can eventually be deleted. Once its online, its forever.



Always turn “location services” off on your cell phone, so your whereabouts are not easily tracked.



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# WHAT MAKES TEENS VULNERABLE?

## History of child abuse

According to national statistics, a majority of underage trafficking victims have a history of sexual abuse from earlier in their childhood.

(National Report on DMST, 2009)

## Runaways/ Being “thrown out” of the house.

Traffickers target teens who are having trouble at home. Runaway youth are at an increased risk for predators because they have few resources. It is common for teens who have run away to trade sex for basic survival needs like food, clothes, or a place to stay.

While some teens run away from home without permission, others are “thrown out” or told to leave by their parents or guardians. Youth who have recently left home are most vulnerable within the first 48 hours.

## Foster care/group home

Youth in foster care move around a lot, and are prone to victimization because they may not have someone looking for them or making sure they are safe. They may crave the attention a pimp can provide. The pimp/trafficker will provide a false sense of safety and security and will quickly establish himself/herself as a person that is essential to the victim’s ability to survive.

## Gang membership

Increasingly, gangs are moving to prostitution as a means for income, much like selling drugs or guns. While drugs or guns can be sold just once, a human body can be sold over and over. Some girls are told they must sell their bodies as part of gang initiation, membership or for protection.

## Juvenile justice system involvement

Youth who have been arrested or are currently on probation are at a higher risk for trafficking. Juveniles are most commonly arrested for related crimes such as loitering, curfew, runaway or minor in possession of drugs or alcohol.

1.68  
million

Over 1.68 million  
American children run  
away each year.

(National Incidence Studies of  
Missing, Abducted, Runaway, and  
Thrownaway Children, 2002)



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# What can boys do?

- Take care of the girls in their life - sisters, friends, cousins, neighbors!
- Don't glamorize "pimping" or the word "pimp".
- Be respectful of girls!
- Don't buy sex or pay for stripping or porn!



## Ways to protect yourself from becoming a victim:

Develop good social media habits

Maintain your friendships and be a true friend

Don't trust people you meet online

Stay in school

Work to keep good relationships with your family

Don't get hooked on drugs or alcohol

Don't runaway from home

Don't trade sexual favors for money or something of value

Don't accept expensive gifts from a stranger

Seek help if you are feeling depressed or angry

## IF YOU SEE SOMETHING, ALERT THE PROPER AUTHORITIES

Why don't victims identify as victims? Why don't victims get help or go to the police?

Victims often feel shame, self-blame and feeling of unworthiness of a better life. Victims may have formed a trauma bond with their trafficker are unable to see themselves as victimized.

Although it's hard to believe, a victim may have deep feelings of loyalty and "love" for their abuser.

Sometimes victims do not come forward for help because they fear for their own safety or the safety of their loved ones.

Victims may be fearful of law enforcement, or told by their abuser that they will get arrested if they say anything, which is not true.

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There have been multiple reports of sex trafficking incidences happening to students who attend high school.

*Here are some true stories from a high school like yours:*

A girl was having a fight with her parents. She left the house and went to a neighborhood restaurant. While she was crying at a table, a good looking guy in his 20's approached her, was really friendly, offered to buy her dinner and then suggested she stay at his place for just one night to get away from her parents. He drove her 50 miles away to a part of town she had never been to. He took her phone. She didn't know how to reach her parents or how to get home. Eventually he told her she owed him and he began selling her for sex.

A girl went shopping at a local mall. A guy offered to buy her an expensive purse if she would agree to have sex with him in his car. She did it. He kept buying her nice stuff and took her to get her hair and nails done at an expensive salon. She did it again. She thought he was her boyfriend. Eventually, he started selling her to other clients.

A girl's family was behind on their rent. The landlord told the parents that he would "forgive the debt" if their daughter would have sex with him. She did not want her family to be homeless. She did it. He asked her to do it again and again and eventually made her do it with his friends.

**Trust your instincts. If something "feels" wrong, it probably is. If something seems too good to be true, it probably is.**

# Warning signs/ What to look for with your friends/classmates

- dating an older guy (he might give you the creeps)
- she's super secretive about him
- he buys her lots of expensive presents
- he made her get a weird tattoo
- she has lots of unexplained cash
- she shops for clothes and stuff you know she cannot afford
- she has a second cell phone
- you find hotel room keys in her purse
- she has cuts and bruises
- she has a fake ID
- she has been really depressed, nervous, tense or afraid
- she misses a lot of school or dropped out of school
- she runs away a lot and avoids her family and friends
- you never know when she's telling the truth
- she started drinking or doing drugs
- you feel like she is brainwashed

[www.droppingbombs.com](http://www.droppingbombs.com)



If you see something or hear something, say something. If someone is in immediate danger, call 911

"A real friend will say what needs to be said, even if you don't want to hear it."

Friends need to look out for each other. If something is wrong, tell your school counselor, nurse or resource officer. Don't try to handle the problem yourself, as you or your friend could be in real danger.

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