



# A GUIDE FOR CAREGIVERS

TO PREVENT  
EXPLOITATION

DEVELOPED BY  
**LOVE146**  
END CHILD TRAFFICKING AND EXPLOITATION

Love146 is an international human rights organization working to end child trafficking and exploitation through survivor care, prevention education, and strategic collaboration. We believe in the power of love and its ability to effect sustainable change. Love is the foundation of our motivation.



# HUMAN TRAFFICKING CAN BE IDENTIFIED IN TWO CATEGORIES...

## Sex trafficking

is the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, obtaining, patronizing, or solicitation of a person for the purposes of a commercial sex act, in which the commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, OR the person induced to perform such an act is under 18 years of age. ([www.humantraffickinghotline.org](http://www.humantraffickinghotline.org))

## Labor trafficking

is the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purposes of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery. ([www.humantraffickinghotline.org](http://www.humantraffickinghotline.org))

## FORCE, FRAUD, OR COERCION

According to the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000, an indicator of force, fraud, OR coercion must be present to justify a case of human trafficking, with the exception of individuals under the age of 18 engaging in a commercial sex act.

**Force** is essentially physical harm or anything affecting the body such as rape, violence, kidnapping, transportation, malnutrition, etc.

**Fraud** is a false promise like a false job offer or a fraudulent romantic relationship.

**Coercion** includes (A) threats of serious harm to or physical restraint against any person; (B) any scheme, plan, or pattern intended to cause a person to believe that failure to perform an act would result in serious harm to or physical restraint against any person; or (C) the abuse or threatened abuse of the legal process. (22 USC § 7102(3))

# MORE IMPORTANT TERMS

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## Consent

is giving permission for something to happen, or agreeing to do something. Being silent, or not directly saying the word “no,” does not mean a person has given consent: consent means clearly communicating “yes” on your own terms.

**REMINDER** – *An individual under the age of 18 cannot “consent” to exchanging sex for something of value.*

## Grooming

is preparing or training someone for a particular purpose or activity. Sometimes grooming for trafficking and exploitation can be masked in everyday conversations, and may latch onto individuals’ normal needs and desires. Here are some examples of signs to look for in your youth or in your youth’s friends:

- A new older boyfriend/girlfriend/friend
- Youth suddenly have a lot of new stuff, or they seem to have had a lot of money spent on them
- Appear secretive about who they are talking to or meeting

Becoming more and more isolated from their regular friends

## Child Labor Exploitation

is a violation (repeated or willful) of child labor standards provided by the Department of Labor

- that jeopardizes their health, well-being or educational opportunities
- that causes the serious injury or death of a minor

**REMINDER** – *Youth can begin working before they turn 18 with restrictions on what jobs they can do and how many hours they can work. ([www.youthrules.gov](http://www.youthrules.gov))*

## Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children

is any activity that includes sexual abuse and/or exploitation of a child in exchange for something of value or for the financial benefit of any of the persons involved.

**IMPORTANT**– *The TVPA defines the commercial sexual exploitation of anyone under the age of 18 as human trafficking, regardless of whether a trafficker is involved.*

# Sexting

Most young people now have a camera with them 24/7 on their phones. Sending and receiving naked “selfies” or “nudes” is a common practice for many teens, but can have significant negative consequences. The consequences of sexting can have lasting implications, including bullying, humiliation, expulsion from school, and legal repercussions.

Even if an adolescent is taking and sending sexually explicit material of themselves, they can be charged with the production and distribution of child pornography. This could lead to legal repercussions including being listed on the state sex offender registry. Although it is unlikely for a teenager to face charges in court for sexting, it is important for youth to be aware of the possibility.

Youth have significant potential for sexually explicit content exposure (both unwanted and sought-out) and the types of explicit content accessed includes extreme/deviant forms. Recent studies suggest that young people exposed to pornography may develop unrealistic ideas and expectations about sex.

## Sextortion

According to Thorn, an organization dedicated to fighting online sexual exploitation, “Sextortion involves threats to expose a sexual image in order to make a person do something or for other reasons, such as revenge or humiliation. Perpetrators are often current, former or would-be romantic or sexual partners attempting to harass, embarrass and control victims.” Given the easy distribution of sexually explicit pictures or videos online, sextortion has become a major struggle and a key component in the exploitation of youth. The impact of youth sextortion can be life changing. Talking with your adolescent and knowing where to get help is key.

([www.wearethorn.org](http://www.wearethorn.org))

## Runaway and Homeless Youth

Runaway and homeless youth are at very high risk for child trafficking and exploitation. Here are signs to look for if you think your youth is at risk of running away from home:

- Staying out later and later
- Pushing boundaries
- Newly developed rebellious behavior
- Secretive conversations
- Lying about whereabouts
- Out with friends longer and more frequently
- Accumulation of possessions or signs of packing





# DISCUSSING VULNERABILITIES WITH YOUR YOUTH

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Traffickers often look for vulnerabilities in youth to exploit, or take advantage of. Those vulnerabilities may be age, disconnected relationships with caregivers, depression, bullying, addiction, and more. In helping young people understand how they may be at risk for trafficking, we have to first help them understand the ways in which they are vulnerable. Using the following two case studies of different trafficking stories, try to identify the vulnerabilities that made Sarah and Leo at a greater risk for trafficking.

Try engaging the youth in your life about their perceived vulnerabilities, or risk factors for trafficking. Consider asking the following questions:

- What kind of vulnerabilities do you believe you experience?
- How could someone take advantage of your vulnerabilities?
- What would you do if you recognized someone was targeting your vulnerabilities?

## CASE STUDY: SARAH

*Her best friend introduced them. Things got serious quickly, and David asked Sarah to live with him after only a month. It felt like a big step and Sarah was nervous about it, but it made sense after having felt lonely for so long. She loved him. He said he would do anything for her, and she would do the same.*

*As soon as she moved in, David changed. He started telling Sarah she was stupid and she was lucky he was willing to take care of her. After a while, David started asking her to do favors for him, like having sex with his friends or people he knew. He told her they needed the money to pay the rent. Sarah didn't like it, but she loved him and believed it was her responsibility to help because of everything he did for her.*

*One day, they had a fight about whether or not she would work that night. It was so loud that the neighbors called the police. The officer spoke briefly with David and Sarah, and said he would file a report indicating a domestic dispute.*

### What Factors Put Sarah at Risk for Trafficking?

- Sarah is lonely and finds emotional support in David
- She may not have a strong understanding of healthy relationships
- She is experiencing pressure to move in
- She is emotionally abused by David
- She is financially dependent on him and doesn't have an independent source of income
- David is taking advantage of all of these vulnerabilities
- David's friends are taking advantage of all of these vulnerabilities

## CASE STUDY: VINCENT

*Vincent was 16 years old when his mom lost her job and started having a hard time taking care of Vincent and his sisters. Vincent wanted to help, so he dropped out of school and started doing odd jobs around town. His family had to move into a small apartment, and there wasn't really room for him, so he started sleeping on friends' couches. Sometimes he had to sleep on the street. He did find a drop-in center for homeless youth, and the people there were very nice.*

*One day Vincent told a volunteer at the center that he was excited because he had gotten a job and was moving to a different state. After asking some questions that Vincent didn't know how to answer, the volunteer told him that it sounded risky and that he should try to learn more before making a decision. But Vincent felt desperate and decided to take the risk.*

*Now Vincent works for a magazine sales crew but he makes very little money and often doesn't have enough to eat. Sometimes his boss doesn't pay him at all because he says Vincent owes him for his travel expenses. Vincent works very long days, and feels that his situation is worse than before. The managers are often mean. They say they will not help him get home if he quits. Vincent is confused and too embarrassed to ask his mom or anyone at the center for help.*

### What Factors Put Vincent at Risk for Trafficking?

- Vincent's age and unstable housing situation
- He is experiencing pressure to help his family and is forced to be independent
- He may be experiencing pressure to "be a man"
- His lack of social support and education
- He is in a new state and is away from family and friends
- He may be experiencing shame and is too embarrassed to ask for help



# GENERATIONAL NORMS

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Mainstream media (print, television, radio, etc.) uses sexual images and stereotypes to sell products. Often, these images include violence. Research has shown that these images can play a powerful role in shaping a youth's understanding of sex and violence.

The language of “pimps” and “pimping,” for example, is commonly used in films and music to describe a wealthy man surrounded by women rather than a man who abuses women. To hear an example of a popular song that uses “pimp” language, listen to “P.I.M.P.” by 50 Cent. Keep in mind that the language in this song is explicit.

When you encounter an advertisement on TV or a song on the radio that portrays sexual violence or promotes positive, respectful behavior, encourage your youth to take a moment and ask:

- How do these images/words make you feel?
- What do these images/words tell you about women/men/sex?
- Why would the advertiser choose to use these images/words?

It is impossible to monitor all of the media that your youth is exposed to on a daily basis. By asking questions about the messages they receive, you can help develop a broader understanding of cultural norms and how we portray gender, sexuality, and violence.

# GENDER STEREOTYPES

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Youth face different expectations and stereotypes based on gender. A young girl who has many sexual experiences may be called words like “slut” while an adolescent boy may be referred to as a “player.” Because of this double standard, young people who have been abused often feel ashamed to come forward and seek help. Many don’t recognize what happened to them as abuse until much later in life when they’re dealing with the after-effects of sexual abuse such as depression, anger management, and difficulty forming emotional bonds. They may even feel at fault. Challenging gender stereotypes with youth, especially around expectations surrounding sex, can help victims recognize abuse and seek help.



## TRAFFICKER STEREOTYPES

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When you hear the words “trafficker,” who do you picture in your head? A trafficker may look very different than the stereotypes we have created in our mind:

**Montia Marie Parker** (*pictured left*)

Montia, 18, was a high school senior on the cheerleading team who was charged for trafficking a teammate in Minnesota. Parker was convicted of creating an online ad for her teammate, taking her to see customers, and accepting money in exchange for sexual acts.

If you saw Montia walking down the street, you would not think of her as a potential trafficker. Dispelling myths about who may exploit someone else, and what a trafficker may look like, can help your adolescent better identify potential dangers and warning signs instead of forming impressions based on looks and stereotypes.



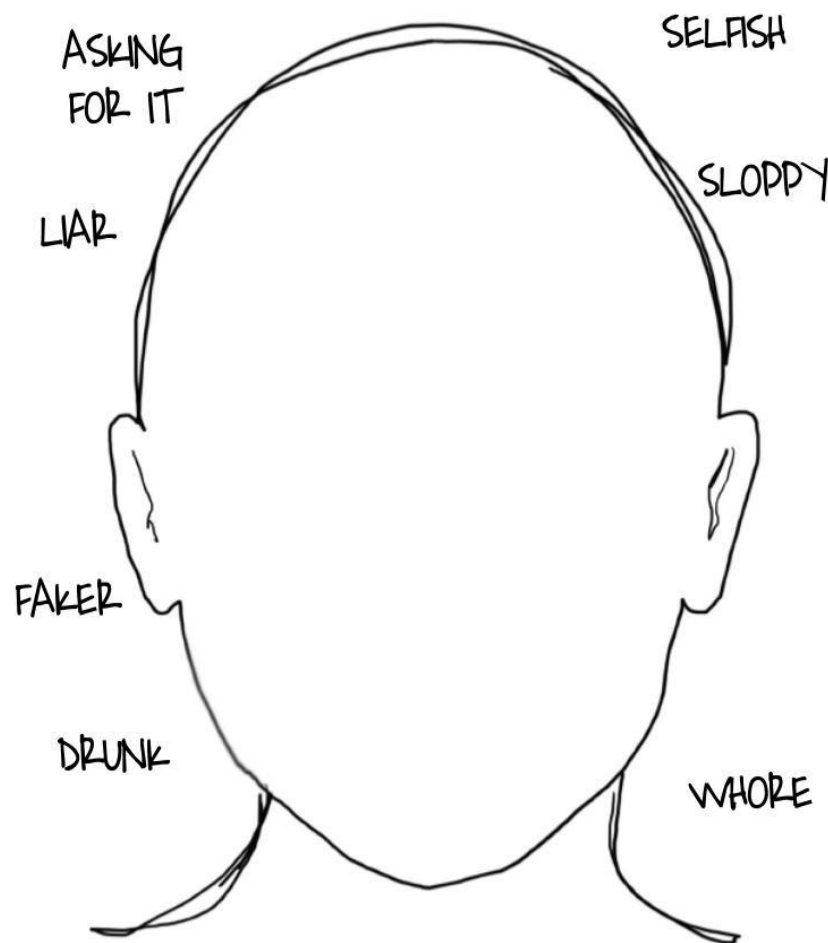
# VICTIM BLAMING

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Victim blaming occurs when the victim of a crime, or any wrongful act, is held entirely or partially responsible for the offenses committed against them. A common example of victim blaming is the phrase,

**“Well, look at what they were wearing – they were practically asking for it.”**

Commenting on what the victim was wearing in this way suggests that the assault was their fault. Helping youth challenge victim-blaming language can help victims feel more comfortable disclosing information about their own abuse. This is an important step for healing and preventing future exploitation.





INSTAGRAM



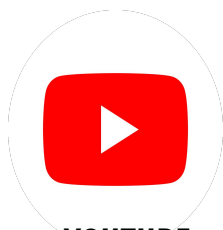
SNAPCHAT



TIK TOK



HOUSEPARTY



YOUTUBE



WHATSAPP



TWITTER



HANGOUTS

## ONLINE COMMUNICATIONS

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An exploitative relationship can develop over time. People gain trust by offering things that youth often crave, such as a listening ear, compliments, gifts, and promises of love. Relationships can be complicated, and when the interactions are happening online, it can be especially hard for youth to recognize risky situations.

Traffickers may engage in conversations online, through social media platforms or gaming consoles, with young people with the purpose of forming connections to learn more about them and take advantage of their vulnerabilities. These relationships may develop slowly over time, and they may make it more likely for youth to trust this person as a safe “friend,” and to even engage in risky behavior, such as sneaking out of their homes or meeting up with this person face to face.

# FIND THE RED FLAGS

Read the following online conversation, and spot the red flags, or indicators that something does not feel right.

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**Alex15:** ugh, my parents are being ridiculous. I wanted to go to this party tonight but they're telling me I can't go. It's so unfair.

**JustJake17:** that sucks, why'd they say no?

**Alex15:** they think im too young or whatever.

**JustJake17:** how old are you?

**Alex15:** 15

**JustJake17:** you don't seem 15. you're so mature for your age. They really shouldn't treat you like a kid

**Alex15:** that's something I love about you, you never treat me like im a baby..I feel like I can tell you anything and i've only known you for a few weeks

**JustJake17:** we understand each other

**Alex15:** exactly. I bet your parents aren't super strict like mine

**JustJake17:** they were when I was your age

**Alex15:** wait how old are you?

**JustJake17:** 26. something wrong? You don't trust me?

**Alex15:** no no, nothing like that, I was just curious

**JustJake17:** hey, I'm actually gonna be in your town soon. we can finally meet in person

**Alex15:** that would be awesome! Why are you coming out here?

**JustJake17:** work

**Alex15:** what do you do?

**JustJake17:** boring stuff, you wouldn't care. Where do you want to meet?

**Alex15:** you pick, I just want to see you!

*They meet up to watch a movie and have pizza. The chats continue:*

**JustJake17:** I cant wait to see you again

**Alex15:** I know, I had so much fun!

**JustJake17:** can you come over tonight? I need to see you again before I go

**Alex15:** what about my parents?

**JustJake17:** they won't have to know, I can pick you up at the end of your street, just sneak out once they're asleep.

**Alex15:** what time?

*(continued on the next page...)*

*Alex & Jake agreed to meet at the hotel where he was staying. When Alex walked in the door, Alex was surprised that there were two other men in the room. Alex asked what was going on, and Jake said they were friends from town that just wanted to hang out. They started talking and someone offered Alex a drink. About an hour later Jake said that his friends had paid to have sex with Alex. Alex said no, but Jake said Alex would do it if Alex really cared about him.*

## Red Flags Recap:

We might imagine an “online predator” to be a creepy old man sitting at his computer pretending to be a young teen online. But studies and interviews with victims of exploitation have shown that more often than not, the abused minors were aware of the offender’s age when they chatted online and thought of them as a romantic partner. They thought that they were in love, and in many cases met with the abuser on multiple occasions (Crimes Against Children Research Center, 2000).

# IS YOUR YOUTH HAVING PROBLEMS ONLINE?

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It is difficult for youth to talk about sexual concerns or sexual exploitation. Many feel they cannot tell anyone for fear of repercussions, consequences, or feelings of shame. Here are some signs a young person may be the target of sexual exploitation online:

- Spending increasing amounts of time on the Internet
- Becoming increasingly secretive — particularly around their use of technology
- Shutting the door and hiding what they have on screen when someone enters the room
- Not being able to talk openly about their activity online
- Appearing scared, secretive, or agitated when answering a cell phone
- Vague talk of a new friend, but offering no further information





# SAFETY PLANNING

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A safety plan is a personalized, practical plan that can help youth avoid dangerous situations, and know how to react should they find themselves in one. Caregivers can play a significant role in helping youth understand potential dangers that they may not have anticipated, and to provide support for them to navigate those situations.

## Some Practice With Safety Planning...

You met a nice person online, but they live a few hours away. They message you and say they're coming to your town for the day. They want you to meet them at the mall.

- If the request makes you uncomfortable, you don't have to respond. You could block the contact.
- If the person continues to try to make contact, tell a friend or a trusted adult.
- If you do want to meet this person, ask a trusted adult to go with you. It could be dangerous to meet someone for the first time alone or meet with someone without talking to an adult first.
- As a general rule, remember that you shouldn't disclose personal information, such as your phone number or where you live, to someone you've met online.

You texted suggestive pictures of yourself to your romantic partner. They shared the pictures with friends at school.

- If the picture was shared on a social media website such as Twitter or Facebook, report the image to the company immediately; social media companies have policies to protect children, and they may take it down.
- Tell a trusted adult. It might be embarrassing, but you deserve help and support. You may want to talk through about what disciplinary consequences you and the people who have shared the photo will face. (Text “HELP” to 233-733 for support from the Human Trafficking Hotline)
- If you feel comfortable, confront this person directly. Talk with a friend or a trusted adult to figure out what you want to say, and ask them to come with you if you want support.
- Do not continue to send them photos, even if they threaten you. Talk to a trusted adult for support, even if it’s hard to tell them that you sent a picture at all.
- Although it can be tempting, remember it is impossible to control what someone will do with a picture you sent, and you could have your trust violated or get into trouble with law enforcement.

A girl you talk to at school tells you that her boyfriend is getting her into modeling, and he’s taking her to meet agents in L.A. next week.

- If the situation seems suspicious, continue to engage the girl in conversation and find out more details about what’s going on.
- Suggest she save the National Human Trafficking Hotline Number in her phone (888-3737-888) and tell her if she finds herself in a dangerous situation, she can call the number for help.
- Tell an adult about what you heard so that they can also follow up with her and make sure that she stays safe.



# TALKING TO YOUR YOUTH

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Would your youth feel comfortable coming to you about something that happened? Here are some things to consider when talking to your youth:

- Be non-judgmental when listening to your youth, and make sure to avoid shaming language
- Avoid beginning your conversation by saying your youth did something/said something wrong. “I” questions can be very helpful. For example, “I am concerned because....”
- Pay attention to your body language. Face your youth, make eye contact, show interest and empathy. Show understanding through words, nods, and facial expressions. Speak calmly.
- Pay attention to your youth’s body language during and after their response to your question. Their body language should be congruent with what they are verbalizing.
- Label behavior, not the youth. For example, an “angry youth” is a “youth struggling with anger”
- Remember language matters. There is no such thing as a youth “prostitute.” That youth is a victim of commercial sexual exploitation — a victim of human trafficking.
- Ask your youth if anyone has touched them in ways that don’t feel OK. Know that sexual abuse can produce a physical response that feels good to the victim, so asking your youth if someone is hurting them may not get the information that you are looking for.

## ***Remember to Not...***

- Dispute facts or comment on the youth’s motivations. This will shut down communication.
- Expect the youth to recognize their situation as exploitative.
- React verbally or physically in a way that communicates disgust or disdain. Refrain from displaying a “shocked” face or talking about how “awful” the youth’s experience was.
- Expect the youth to disclose all of the details of their abuse. Sometimes difficult information will need to be gathered in stages.

## Understand child abuse image laws

Images of child abuse (i.e., child pornography) are not protected under First Amendment rights and are illegal contraband under federal law. Section 2256 of Title 18, United States Code, defines “child pornography” as any visual depiction of sexually explicit conduct involving a minor (someone under the age of 18). To report an incident involving the production, possession, distribution, or receipt of child pornography, file a report on the website for National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) at [www.cybertipline.com](http://www.cybertipline.com) or call 1-800-843- 5678.

## Understand statutory rape laws

If a minor under the age of consent has engaged in sexual activity with someone over 18, but it did not involve an exchange of money or goods, it is possible that the abuser can be charged for statutory rape. In cases of statutory rape, it’s possible that the youth may see it as sexual/romantic relationship with an older person rather than abuse or exploitation. The legal consequences of a sexual relationship with a minor can depend on the age of consent, which varies from state to state. For more information about your state’s laws, visit [www.age-of-consent.info/](http://www.age-of-consent.info/)

## Know the resources available to you

Your youth or a friend of your youth may come to you for help with a topic that you feel unequipped to talk about. It is important to encourage youth to reach out for help. These resources are also available to you. Offer to call these hotlines with your youth; your role is important. Thank you for all you do!



**Chipotle fined \$1.3 million over thousands of child labor abuses**

**Wendy's whacked with \$400,000 fine after 2,100 child labor violations**

## ***Wal-Mart Agrees to Pay Fine in Child Labor Cases***

### **US Dept. of Labor uncovers child labor law violations at restaurant locations in Wisconsin**

**POOL COMPANY PAYS PENALTIES FOR CHILD LABOR VIOLATIONS FOLLOWING A U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR INVESTIGATION**

# **KEEPING YOUNG WORKERS SAFE**

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Child labor exploitation is more common than people think. Labor exploitation happens when a youth's workers' rights are violated and their wellbeing is jeopardized. It's important to teach young workers about their rights and normalize a healthy and safe work environment.

Youth can consent to begin working at a younger age, but there are restrictions regarding the type of work they can do and how many hours they can work:

- 13 or younger: baby-sit, deliver newspapers, or work as an actor or performer
- Ages 14-15: certain jobs permitted in such establishments as office work, grocery store, retail store, restaurant, movie theater, and amusement parks
- Age 16-17: Any job not declared hazardous
- Age 18: No restrictions

When youth know their workers' rights, they are better equipped to advocate for themselves, report abuse, and leave harmful situations. Learn more at [www.youthrules.gov](http://www.youthrules.gov).

**Note:** Labor exploitation and labor trafficking are not the same. Child labor trafficking cases can include instances of child labor exploitation, but is only considered labor trafficking if an element of force, fraud, or coercion is present.



# HELPFUL RESOURCES

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## Immediate Help

If you find out your youth has been sexually exploited or involved in commercial sex, or if you witness a situation of exploitation, or are told by a youth they are facing threats of immediate danger, **call 911**.

*If you suspect human trafficking, call **The National Human Trafficking Hotline, 888-3737-888**.* The hotline is available to answer all calls 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, every day of the year. Calls received by the hotline are always anonymous unless the caller chooses to provide the National Human Trafficking Resource Center (NHTRC) with his or her name. After receiving a tip, the NHTRC team conducts a thorough internal review process to determine appropriate next steps. If the call includes information about the exploitation of a youth, law enforcement will be notified and any information provided will be shared with law enforcement.

## Become familiar with the laws in your state

The laws regarding human trafficking also vary state by state. While federal law defines any minor involved in commercial sex as a victim of human trafficking, each state varies in how human trafficking charges are handled. The State Map from Polaris shows a list of current state laws and service providers for human trafficking victims/survivors for each state. [www.polarisproject.org/state-map](http://www.polarisproject.org/state-map)

# AVAILABLE ONLINE SAFETY RESOURCES FOR CAREGIVERS

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## Net Nanny

Net Nanny shows you what your children do online and lets you identify information that is never to leave the computer, such as your home address or credit card numbers. You can manage the account from any computer with a web connection and a browser. [www.netnanny.com](http://www.netnanny.com)

## AVG Family Safety

AVG Family Safety software monitors chat rooms and social networking sites, filters websites based on age appropriate content, sends you to text/email reports on web usage, and allows you to set up unique accounts for every child. [www.avg.com/us-en/avg-family-safety](http://www.avg.com/us-en/avg-family-safety)

## WebWatcher

WebWatcher collects data about user activity on computers or mobile devices and creates detailed time tracking and activity reports that are available online. [www.webwatcher.com](http://www.webwatcher.com)

## Love146's Online Safety Guide

This page, written to be a resource for teens, walks the reader through conversational red flags, safety guidelines to follow online, and advice for what to do if you feel uncomfortable. [www.love146.org/online-safety](http://www.love146.org/online-safety)

## The Guideline

This 20-page guide from Fight the New Drug is for caregivers who want to address pornography with teenagers. The guide is based on the feedback that Fight the New Drug has received from thousands of teenagers and research on the effects of pornography. [www.store.fightthenewdrug.org/products/the-guideline-pdf](http://www.store.fightthenewdrug.org/products/the-guideline-pdf)

**HUMAN TRAFFICKING** The National Human Trafficking Resource Center:  
*(this includes youth who have been in “the life”)* 1-888-3737-888  
(Text “Be Free” 233733)

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**RUNAWAY** National Runaway Safeline: 1-800-786-2929

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**YOUTH WORKERS’ RIGHTS** Department of Labor’s (DOL) YouthRules!: [www.youthrules.gov](http://www.youthrules.gov)  
General DOL Wage and Hour Assistance: 1-866-4-USA-DOL

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**RAPE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT** National Sexual Assault Hotline Rape Abuse & Incest National  
Network (RAINN):  
1-800-656-4673

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**DOMESTIC VIOLENCE** National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-7233

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**SUICIDE** Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-8255

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**ALCOHOL AND DRUGS** Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration  
(SAMHSA): 1-800-662-4357

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**REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH** American Pregnancy Helpline: 1-866-942-6466

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**LGBTQ** GLBT National Youth Talkline: 1-800-246-7743

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**POISON** National Capital Poison Center: 1-800-222-1222

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**GENERAL SUPPORT AND INFORMATION** Crisis Text Line:  
Text “LISTEN” to 741-741



# LOVE LISTENS

It may be difficult to have these conversations with your youth, but your efforts to engage and connect will be invaluable, and go a long way towards building stronger relationships in their life.