



Tips for Keeping Kids Safe

WHAT WE CAN DO AS PARENTS AND ADULTS TO PROTECT OUR KIDS:

1. **Educate your children about human trafficking.** That it is here, what it looks like and to talk to you or another responsible adult if they think they see it. If they are able, have them read In Our Backyard. It will help them recognize the indicators.
2. **Communicate with your children, and let them talk to you without judgment.** They need to know they are safer with you than anywhere else. One rule we had with our children was that if they did something wrong and they told us before we found out, they might have some consequences but their punishment would be less than if we found out another way.
3. Technology is a big part of how sex trafficking happens with youth. **Know your children's passwords, know what is on their phone.** A good rule is "as long as you live under our roof, we have access to passwords, emails, texts, etc." Your child's privacy is important but so is their safety. If you talk to parents whose children have been sex trafficked, without exception, they will all tell you they wish they had monitored their computers, cell phone and activities on social media.
4. Technological devices now exist which include:
 - **GPS tracking devices** which can be placed on phones, clothes, and in backpacks which help parents and authorities track your child and find them when they first go missing.
 - **DNA scent kits** which can be used to help authorities and dogs track a scent trail.
5. **Know your children's friends.** Have them over to your home. Feed them a pan of brownies, a batch of cookies and sit down and talk with them. Know where they hang out and what they are like.
6. **Get youth involved in positive things,** community groups, sports, music, community service, and church youth groups. Surround them with positive peer pressure.

How to Identify a Human Trafficking Danger

Ordinary citizens can be trained to recognize the signs and what they can do to stop it, particularly at crowded events like the Super Bowl. Possible situations to look for include:

- **A young girl who is with someone who is older**, partying and/or romantically involved and that person seems to be in charge of where she goes, what she does and who she talks to.
- **Someone who appears to be soliciting for prostitution** (majority are sex trafficked, even though they may claim to be on their own.)
- **Those dressed in a provocative way, are exceptionally flirty and repeatedly check in with someone else on a cell phone or in person.**
- Someone who seems to have a **bodyguard, or friends watching from a distance.**
- Someone who is **avoiding normal eye contact** with others, unless soliciting
- Someone who **acts a bit skittish, fearful, or appears drugged or drunk**
- Many people **coming and going from a single hotel room at all hours**
- Teens who are **trying to appear as adults and carry and present fake ID**
- Physical appearance shows **signs of injuries, abuse or torture.**
- Hotel housekeeping staff **notices unusual amount of condoms, lubricants, etc. in hotel rooms.**

What are the Most Important Red Flags to Look for?

There are several red flags people should look for and if present pay very close attention. You should pay heightened attention to people you see who:

- **are not free to leave or come and go as he/she wishes**
- **are under 18 and are providing commercial sex acts**
- **work long hours with no breaks or unusual restrictions**
- **avoid eye contact and show signs of physical abuse or restraint, confinement or torture**
- **are unable to clearly explain where they live**
- **are fearful, anxious, depressed, submissive, or paranoid**

Indicators of Human Trafficking in the Lives of Those Around You:

- **Situation:** Teens whose circle of friends change completely and their new friends may have a gangster or provocative look
- **Solution:** Know your children's friends, don't be afraid to be the parent and say no.

- **Situation:** Teen receives an offer that sounds too good to be true — a dream life, fancy cars, fancy clothes, fast living for seemingly nothing
- **Solution:** Keep in good communication with your children, do things with them to build relationship and help them understand it's important to discuss with you any opportunities such as the one in this situation.

- **Situation:** Children have increased and unexplained absences from school.
- **Solution:** Work with school to ascertain what is happening and cooperate with the school so you can find your child immediately in an unexplained absence.

- **Situation:** Children are bringing home new cell phones as gifts from a new friend.
- **Solution:** Find out where the cell phones came from, confiscate them, and contact authorities if necessary.

- **Situation:** Girls, especially teens with a new boyfriend who may be several years older
- **Solution:** Restrict contact with him. If that doesn't work consider relocating your child to protect them. (You may contact In Our Backyard) if you need information about relocation services.

- **Situation:** Children/teens come home with unexplained money or gifts.
- **Solution:** Find out where they came from. Bring in outside help from counselors, relatives or others who can help. Don't ignore or hide this to save reputation. Get help!

- **Situation:** New tattoos
- **Solution:** Find out who did the tattoo, find out who was with them for the tattoo and what does it mean? Who else has the same tattoo?

How Can We Help the Victims?

Victims that have been rescued ... are hoping that they can get the help needed to find a new, safe, happy life. Sex trafficking victims, particularly minors, have a tough road in front of them even under the best circumstances. They need trauma-based treatment, kindness, understanding, a stable and non-threatening environment and lots of time. Professional counseling and medical or mental health services will help them to recover from the atrocities that have happened to them.

Anyone who suspects human trafficking should call local authorities or the toll-free 24-hour hotline for the National Human Trafficking Resource Center: 888-3737-888, or text BeFree (233733). Its website is www.acf.hhs.gov/trafficking/.