CRIME STOPPERS CYBER SAFETY RESOURCE GUIDES:

Human Trafficking and the Internet

We remain committed to our mission to **solve** *and* **prevent** *serious crime in the Greater Houston Area.*

CRIME STOPPERS
CALL 713.222.TIPS

MODERN DAY SLAVERY

Human Trafficking is modern day slavery that involves exploiting a person through force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of forced labor, commercial sex, or both.

There is an inseperable link between Human Trafficking and the Internet. Predators are online looking for vulnerabilities. 75% of minor sex trafficking interactions begin online *(thorn.org)* and ½ of the minor sex trafficking investigations in Harris County in 2019 had coinciding online adds (*Houston Police Department*).

Because 10-14 years old is the target age for online victimization, it is important to know the signs of trafficking and to openly communicate with your student about this.

Mitigating Victimization:

- Know the stages of grooming
- Actively monitor all technology
- Set clear and consistent boundaries for technology usage
- Have open, and honest conversations about online victimization, and human trafficking

TERMS TO KNOW

Bottom Girl: A female appointed by the trafficker/pimp to supervise the others and report rule violations. Operates as the pimp's "right hand."

Grooming: Any form of manipulation used to control or take advantage of another individual. Grooming typically involves befriending and gaining the trust of another individual prior to exploitation.

John/Buyer/Trick: Someone who pays for or trades something of value for sexual acts.

Madame: A women in charge of coordinating all human trafficking activities, managing finances, and recruiting new victims.

Pimp/Trafficker: A person who controls and financially benefits from the exploitation of another human.

Pornified Culture: A hypersexualized society that causes an increase in demand for the sex industry and human trafficking.

Recruitment: This is the first stage of trafficking process where a person is targeted by a trafficker and often involves deception or abuse of power.

Renegade: Someone who is involved in prostitution without a pimp.

Social Media Pimp: A trafficker who grooms and exploits their victim through the internet. They are extremely well versed in the intricacies of social media and typically does not fall into a specific age range.

Identifying Grooming

Stages of Grooming:

- Targeting a Victim
- Befriending/Gain Trust
- Fulfilling a Need
- Sexualizing the Relationship
- Isolating the Victim
- Capitalizing

Online Perpetrator:

- Sends repeat messages
- Gives gifts
- Asks if student is alone
- Encourages secretive conversations
- Requests Inappropriate pictures
- Manipulates pictures
- Blackmails victim

Suspect Grooming if Student:

- Spends increased time online
- Secretive about Internet activity
- Secretive about communications
- Switches screens when you walk in
- Uses unexpected sexual language
- Has new items that you did not buy
- Increased volatile emotions

A Look at Capitalization:

Trafficking happens at the point of **capitalization.** This is when the victim is no longer in control of their situation and their power has been given to another.

When victims find themselves in this situation, it is hard but necessary to **seek help immediately.**

Victims are often unaware of victimization due to psychological manipulation. Look for changes in behavior in your student and seek outside help if you suspect victimization.

Report Human Trafficking

If you suspect trafficking:

- In a life-threatening emergency, call **911.**
- National Human Trafficking Hotline: **888-373-7888**
- Report Anonymously to Crime Stoppers of Houston: **713-222-TIPS (8477)**
- Report child abuse to Texas Department of Family and Protective Services: **1-800-252-5400**

TALKING ABOUT TRAFFICKING

Ages 2-6:

- Have ongoing conversations about the value of self as well as the value of other people.
- Begin conversations about respecting your body. Make sure to identify private body parts by the scientific name.
- Teach the roles of adults in your students' life. Talk about what is appropriate for a parent to do versus a teacher, coach, doctor, etc.

Ages 7-12:

- Teach problem solving skills and discuss what they should do when inappropriate content shows up on their screen.
- Have conversations about the importance of expressing themselves in a respectful way.
- Begin encouraging goal setting to promote healthy relationships and achievements.

Ages 13-18:

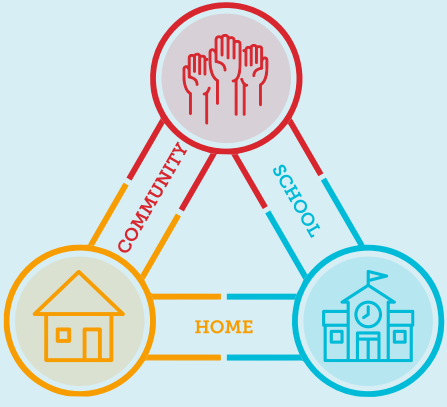
- Have candid conversations about human trafficking.
- Educate your student about the grooming process and what to do if they think they or anyone they know is being groomed.
- Be honest with them about how you feel and what you know. Have consistent conversations about technology usage.

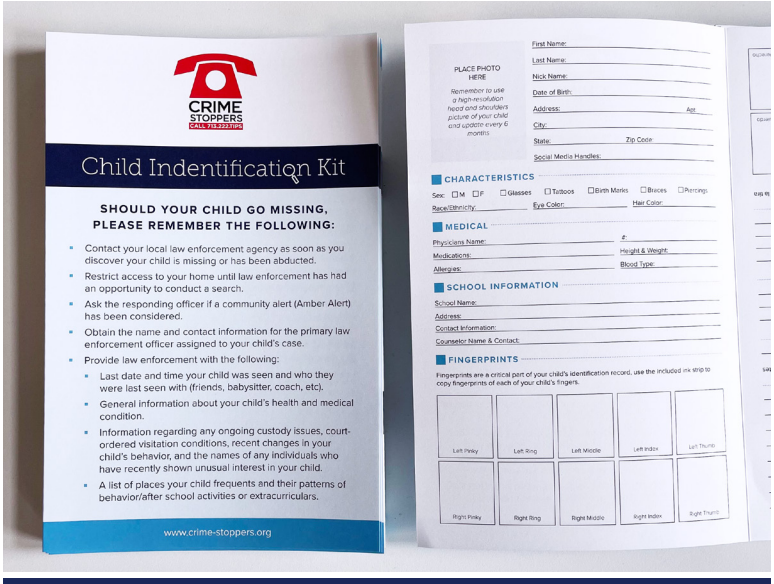
Trusted Triangle:

Help your child identify a network of trusted adults at home, at school, and in the community. It is okay if a child discusses things with adults other than the parent. The goal of the "trusted triangle" is have someone who can help a child, regardless of where they are.

Trusted adults should be a positive connection in a child's life from whom they can seek advice or assistance. Ask your child what qualities they should look for in a trusted adult, such as **respectful of boundaries**, **trustworthy**, **patient**, **caring**, etc.

Lastly, discuss with them what to do if they feel they need to change who their trusted adults are and what reasons would cause that to happen such as breaking a boundary.





CHILD IDENTIFICATION KITS

In the unforeseen event of a missing child or suspected trafficking scenario, time is of the essence.

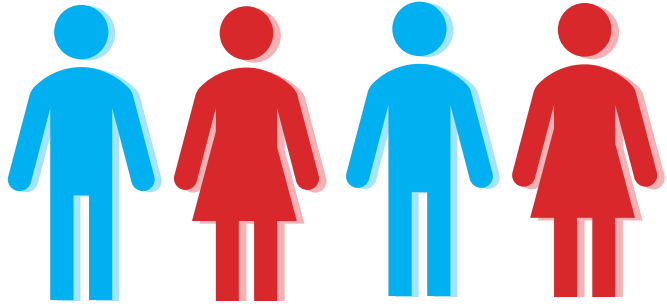
It is critical to keep identifying information about your student up to date to expedite the search and recovery process. Collect this critical information with our Child Identification Kit. To request a Child Identification Kit, email our Safe Community Program at scp@crime-stoppers.org.

DID YOU KNOW?

75%

of minor sex trafficking begins online. *Thorn Survivor Insights, 2018*

89% of sexual advances online occur in chat rooms *(FBI)*. **1 in 3** runaway youth are approached by a trafficker within **48 hours** *(Polaris)*. Of trafficking victims worldwide, **71% are girls/women** and **29% are boys/men** *(Free the Slaves)*.



SOCIAL MEDIA SAFETY

Social media platforms are everchanging. While **Snapchat, Instagram**, **TikTok**, and **YouTube** are the top apps of concern at this time, that could change at any moment. Make sure to pay attention to platforms that:

- Track location
- Allow direct messages
- Allow disappearing content
- Have a significant amount of inappropriate content
- Provide ample opportunities for cyberbullying or victimization

Location Services

Most apps and social media platforms do not actually need your location to function correctly, but they automatically track your location when you download the app anyways. Make sure to go into settings and turn off location services.

Apple Devices:

- Settings > privacy > location services

Android Devices:

- Settings > security & location > location

Snapchat SnapMap:

- Go to your profile > settings > see my location > check off **ghost mode**

Direct Messages

Direct messages (DM) provide ample opportunity for victimization. Direct messages are easier to erase and harder to monitor than text messages, so it is important to set rules and guidelines surrounding direct messages.

Questions to Consider:

- Who is your student allowed to direct message with?
- What is expected of your student when they receive a direct message from a stranger?
- Is your student allowed to delete direct messages?
- What are the consequences for failing to adhere to the agreed upon guidelines?

Inappropriate Content

On average, students see pornography online for the first time between 8-10 years old. Inappropriate content appears across all platforms even those that are labeled kid-friendly.

Questions to Consider:

- What is the platform doing to combat inappropriate content?
- What safety settings are available on the platform to reduce inappropriate content?
- What should your student do when they happen upon inappropriate content?

Disappearing & Ephemeral Content

Students tend to utilize platforms like **Snapchat** that provide the opportunity for disappearing content to engage in risky behaviors. 1 in 4 students take part in some form of sexting or sending sexually provocative images online *(JAMA Pediatrics)* and often this is done via disappearing content.

Know the Risks:

- Any naked, partially naked, or image that appears to contain nudity of a minor is considered child pornography and is punishable by law.
- Content sent via social media is saved and owned by that platform. Even though the content may appear to be gone on the user's device it is still on a server and is not gone forever.

Cyberbullying:

Cyberbullying is the electronic version of bullying and can be punishable by law. It occurs when individuals engage in bullying using any electronic communication devices including a phone, computer, tablet, gaming console, or camera.

Cyberbullying Includes:

- Sending viscous text/instant messages or comments
- Spreading rumors or gossip by posting it to social networking sites
- Sending embarrassing pictures or videos without permission
- Creating a fake profile and pretending to be someone else

Social Media Monitoring Tools:

Bark Technologies (best for social media monitoring): Analyzes text, emails, social media and then sends you concerning content along with suggestions on how to address the situation and talking points. You must have device to install OR the user must accept all push notifications to connect with all social media, text, and email platforms. Stays up to date on language and signs of bullying, suicide, violence, adult content, depression etc so more passive content of concern can be monitored. Options for $5/month ($49 annually) or $14/month ($99 annually). Visit: **Bark.us**

Qustodio (best for teens): See what websites are visited, block dangerous content, see communications, protect privacy, manage how and when to be online. Automatically reports activity back to you and has a dashboard where you can view and manager online activity. Free option. Visit: **Qustodio.com**

Net Nanny (best for young kids): Limits the type of content and websites your kid can access and allows you to schedule when your child can access the internet and social media. You must have the physical device to install software. Various plans, but the most common option is for a 5-device plan for $79.99. Visit: **Netnanny.com**

Contact Us

We hope that this resource guide is beneficial to you, your family and your community. Please reach out if you have any questions, would like more information or would like to request a presentation.

For a student related presentation requests and questions, contact: ssi@crime-stoppers.org

For parent & community requests and questions, contact: scp@crime-stoppers.org

How to Report

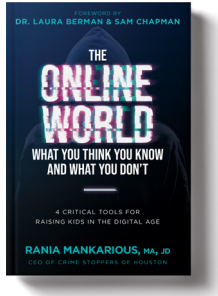
Call 713.222.TIPS (8477)

Use our Mobile App
Download app name: Crime Stoppers Houston

Go to crime-stoppers.org

CRIME STOPPERS
CALL 713.222.TIPS

CRIME STOPPERS OF HOUSTON
P.O. Box 541654 | Houston, TX 77254
(713) 521-4600
www.crime-stoppers.org



A CYBER SAFETY RESOURCE FOR ALL FAMILIES:

THE ONLINE WORLD

WHAT YOU THINK YOU KNOW AND WHAT YOU DON'T

4 CRITICAL TOOLS FOR RAISING KIDS IN THE DIGITAL AGE

BY RANIA MANKARIOUS, MA, JD
CEO OF CRIME STOPPERS OF HOUSTON

THEONLINEWORLDBOOK.COM

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