

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

SEX TRAFFICKING AND SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

A TRAINING TOOL FOR PARENTS OF TEENS

ASU School of Social Work

**Office of Sex Trafficking
Intervention Research**

THE MCCAIN INSTITUTE

for INTERNATIONAL LEADERSHIP

ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

ASU School of
Social Work

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Many parents have a limited understanding of the issue of sex trafficking and sexual exploitation and how it might show up within your family. As the parent of a teen, you are constantly required to navigate your child's behavior, progress at school and keep a watchful eye for warning signs that could indicate your child is headed down a dangerous or destructive path or in trouble.

Most adolescents spend more time at school than anywhere else. Certain behaviors that take place before, during and after school, as well as on weekends and breaks are important for parents to monitor. Parents can begin to recognize warning signs and changes in behavior and appearance that may indicate underlying problems with teens in their care.

Daily interaction with teens gives parents the opportunity to prevent, identify and respond to sexual exploitation appropriately.

This training brochure explores the topics of sex trafficking and sexual exploitation. With proper awareness, parents can begin to understand the warning signs and help their children avoid behavior and people and places that could lead to exploitation and abuse.

For those parents who suspect their teen has already been a victim of exploitation, this brochure guides you how to seek help for your child and offer the right kind of guidance and support to avoid further risk and abuse.

According to the National Coalition to Prevent Child Abuse and Exploitation, the sex trafficking of minors is a severe form of child abuse with lasting effects on the health and wellbeing of individuals, families and society.

Sex trafficking, much like other forms of child abuse, can be difficult to detect because victims often hide their victimization and are reluctant to come forward and tell a parent or trusted person at school.

Also, common myths and stereotypes about sex trafficking can affect a parent's judgment and response. The reality is that anyone, regardless of race, age, gender, sexual preference or socio-economic status can be a victim of sex trafficking.

For sex trafficking to occur, there are two primary actors- the victim and the abuser. The abuser can be a traditional sex trafficker or a pimp. Or the abuser can be someone who has traded anything of value for sexual favors from an underage minor.

Police report instances where perpetrators have offered expensive clothing, cell

phones, electronics, accessories and even food in exchange for sex acts.

Vulnerable youth can be lured into sex trafficking and other forms of sexual exploitation using promises, psychological manipulation, provision of drugs and alcohol and violence.

Teens can be commercially sexually exploited through prostitution, pornography, stripping, erotic entertainment, erotic massage or other sex acts. The commercial aspect- exchanging money or something of value- is critical to separate the crime from sexual assault, dating violence, or statutory rape.

Source: Shared Hope training materials



*Keep a watchful eye
for warning signs*

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