

10 WAYS TO PROTECT

YOUR CHILD

FROM BECOMING A VICTIM OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING



Know where your teens are at all times. You can easily track their cell phones with a free "Find My Phone" app like Life 360.

GET TO KNOW YOUR TEEN'S FRIENDS. OPEN YOUR HOME TO BE A "HANG OUT" SPOT WITH SNACKS AND A COMFORTABLE ATMOSPHERE SO THEY WANT TO HANG OUT THERE.

ACCORDING TO COMMON SENSE MEDIA, TEENS SPEND NEARLY 9 HOURS A DAY CONSUMING MEDIA. MORE THAN THEY TYPICALLY SLEEP!

#1. LISTEN & BE PROACTIVE: Talk to your teen and ask questions about how they feel about their peers and the people around them. Teens sometimes struggle with peer pressure, bullying, and other social pressures like drinking or using drugs. All of these issues may increase your teen's vulnerability.

#2. ENCOURAGE EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES & HOBBIES: Athletics, arts, and organized volunteer activities can all serve to help a child build their self-esteem, self-worth, and to develop empathy. Keeping your child active and busy leaves little room for your teen to get into trouble or be with the wrong crowd.

#3. TEACH MEDIA LITERACY: Teach your teen how to identify, analyze, and evaluate media messages in TV shows, movies, song lyrics, magazine articles & photos, apps, slogans, and social media posts. Teens should be able to understand that many images they see have been edited and do not represent a real or "healthy" body image.

#4. KNOW WHO IS REACHING OUT TO YOUR TEEN: Knowing who your teens are talking to, or regularly spending time with, will help you protect them and allow you to give them guidance about someone who may be a negative influence. Traffickers oftentimes have contacted their victims online through social media or in locations where teens gather.

#5. IT'S OK TO SAY "NO": Teach your teen that is always OK to say "NO" and there is no situation that is so terrible you wouldn't be there to help. Have a contact plan that includes a way for your teen to ask for help to get out of a bad situation without getting in trouble.

#6. TEACH YOUR CHILD ABOUT SEX: By reinforcing and supplementing what your teen learns in school, you can help your teen develop important attitudes and information about healthy sexuality. Teens are naturally curious and are likely to search for information about sex online, and can be exposed to sexually explicit pornography either as a search result or by accident. Teach your child it is OK to say "NO" to sex and that it is not OK to have sex out of feelings of fear or obligation.

#7. SPEND TIME WITH YOUR TEEN: Teens require quality time with their parents so they can talk about what is going on in their daily lives. Spend time going for a walk, talking while cooking dinner, or volunteering together, which can also teach about empathy and perspective about other people's circumstances and suffering.

#8. KNOW WHERE AND WHEN YOUR CHILD GETS NEW THINGS: Sex traffickers will use the things your teen wants to lure him/her. Take a regular inventory of your teen's belongings and ask questions if you see expensive new items that you didn't purchase or know your teen cannot afford.

#9. TEACH ABOUT THE WORLD: Traffickers will often use "seeing the world" or "getting out of town" as a lure with teens. Expose your children to other places, cultures, and languages so they don't feel isolated or ignorant about the world around them. Make sure your teen knows how to ask for help or contact you if separated from you.

#10. GET HELP IF NEEDED: If your child starts having depression, anger, anxiety, or other disruptive issues, get professional help. Ignoring your teen's signals may lead him/her further away and possibly lead to seeking comfort from a stranger.

For urgent or life-threatening situations, or if you suspect someone is in immediate danger, call 911. It is unsafe to attempt to rescue a human trafficking victim.