



Human Trafficking: Parents & Prevention

Victim Services of Durham Region knows that caregivers' attention, love, and awareness is the biggest defense against Human Trafficking. Here are some tips on how to keep children safe.

Online Safety: 101

The internet is important for socializing and learning for children, youth and adults. As social networks and chat rooms are spaces where pimps message youth; take steps to promote safety

Create a Conscious Plan with Your Youth
Decide where internet-enabled devices will be kept

Tip: Consider keeping internet devices in public spaces in the home

Decide on times Internet is allowed

Tip: Consider phones charging out of the bedroom to limit late night use

Decide on websites youth are not allowed to access

Tip: Consider parental blocks on sites with unsafe content and discuss boundaries to be respected outside of the home

Learn about social media and plan with your children

Tip: Consider having access to youths' passwords, to use if you have serious concerns about safety

Discuss Safety and sharing personal information online

Tip: Share that disclosing personal information, such as a phone number or address, to someone met online is not safe

Tip: Share the risks of sending sexual photos online

Tip: If someone makes a request such as sending sexual photos, encourage youth not to respond and consider blocking the contact

Tip: If youth are meeting someone they met online, bring a trusted adult

Victim Services of Durham Region
905 721 4226

Know The Red Flags For Trafficking

Signs for caregivers to look for can include the following:

- Spending an extreme amount of time on the Internet
- Hiding their screen when someone enters the room
- Appearing scared, secretive, or agitated when answering a cell phone
- Vague talk of a new friend, but offering no further information
- An older boyfriend/girlfriend
- Being secretive about their boyfriend/girlfriend
- The boyfriend or girlfriend seems 'controlling' of the youths' decisions
- New things they can't afford (ex. new bag, hair styles, manicures/pedicures, clothes)
- No longer seeing previous friends
- Unable to give answers about where they go, or what they are doing
- Their story does not add up
- Skipping school or running away
- Appears to have low self esteem
- Experimenting with risky sexual behaviors or drugs
- Using substances such as alcohol, or drugs to cope and/or is coping with psychological disorders, sexually transmitted diseases, or chronic illnesses
- Carries multiple hotel key cards
- Has a tattoo with a name that is not their own
- Taking sexual photos for unknown purposes

How To Intervene

When Speaking to Children about Sensitive Topics (including Human Trafficking)

Do:

- Tell your youth they can always come to you to discuss any concerns
- Tell your youth you love them NO MATTER WHAT
- Stay calm; if you are feeling too upset in a conversation take a break
- Use statements such as "I noticed the boy who picked you up is older. Can you tell me about this?"
- Be aware of your body language, and facial expressions. Reflect openness and non-judgement when youth are sharing
- Label feelings without labelling youth, for instance "It seems you feel angry vs. you're an angry person"
- Ask questions directly. "Has anyone ever touched you in a way that didn't seem ok?"
- Sometimes sexual abuse can produce a positive physical reaction, so avoid asking if someone hurt them
- Reflect empathy and understanding in your words, by statements such as "It can be hard to be a teenager" "Relationships can be really confusing"
- Make a list of specific trusted people, beyond parents, that youth can talk to if they need to
- Be aware of vulnerabilities specific to your child (such as low self-esteem, previous abuse, academic or social challenges). Pimps will try to take advantage of vulnerabilities
- Reach out for help for yourself and your child

Don't

- Expect youth to know if they are being trafficked
- Judge or shame youth by statements such as: "How could you do that?" "That is disgusting," "I thought you would know better."
- Expect the youth to disclose right away in a discussion (often this takes time)
- Cope alone

*If you suspect a youth is being trafficked or if you have concerns about how to reduce the risk of human trafficking, please call Victim Services of Durham Region: Telephone Number **905 721 4226**.*

Ask to speak to VSDR's Human Trafficking Prevention Facilitator

