



EXPLOITED: Understanding and Preventing Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking

as required by Washington State Law RCW
28A.320.168

Battle Ground Public Schools



Objectives:

EXPLOITED



01 What is Human Trafficking?

■ **02** Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking (DMST)

■ **03** Types and Tactics of Human Trafficking

■ **04** Online Exploitation

05 Identification and Response

Part 1: What is Human Trafficking?

- Definitions of human trafficking
- Quick Facts
- Response



What is Human Trafficking?

Labor

Trafficking

Labor trafficking occurs when work or labor is induced by **force, fraud or coercion**. Some common work places where labor trafficking occurs in the United States are construction, massage parlors, and agriculture. This type of trafficking could also include domestic servitude and debt bondage elements.

Sex Trafficking

Sex trafficking occurs when a commercial sex act is induced by **force, fraud or coercion** if the victim is 18 years of age or older. Any minor who performs a commercial sex act is federally defined as a victim of sex trafficking, regardless of the use of **force, fraud or coercion**. The term “commercial sex act” is the giving or receiving of **anything of value (money, drugs, shelter, food, clothes, etc.)** to any person in exchange for a sex act.

QUICK FACTS

(Human Trafficking Hotline, 2024)



Cases Identified in 2024

11,999 Identified Cases

6,647 Sex Trafficking

2,220 Labor Trafficking

1,360 Sex and Labor

Case Demographics

8,233 Adults

2,666 Minors

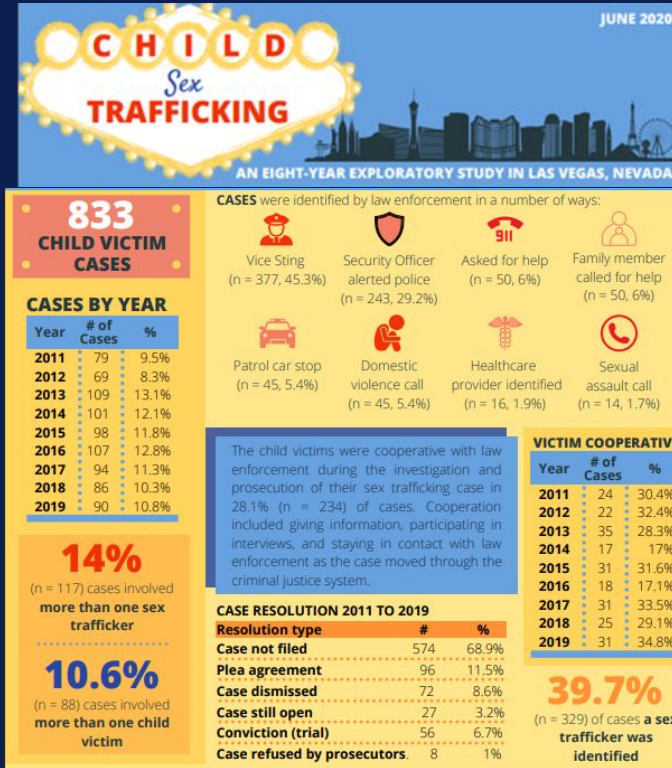
8,359 Females

1,972 Males

149 Gender Minorities



Child Victim Stats – Las Vegas - 2020

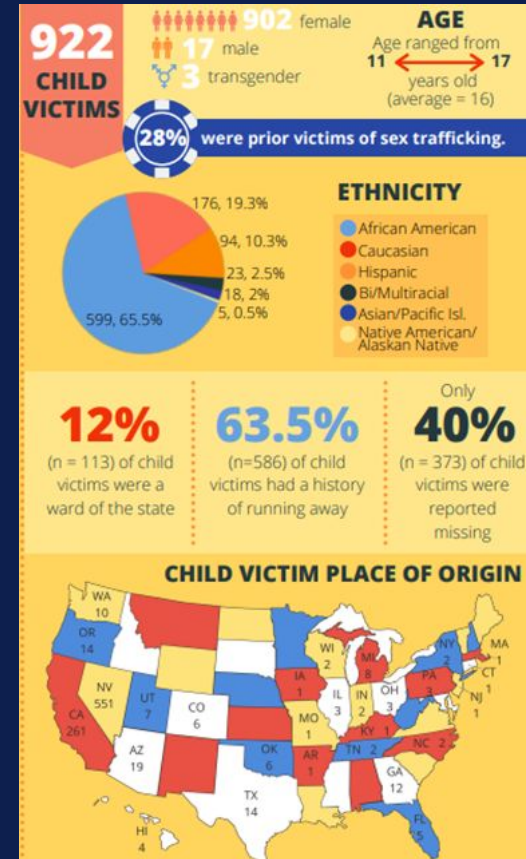


8-year study

922 child victims with 833 cases (14% had multiple victims)

-Average age 16 (some as young as 11)

-Many ID'd thru stings
-Many recruited on social media

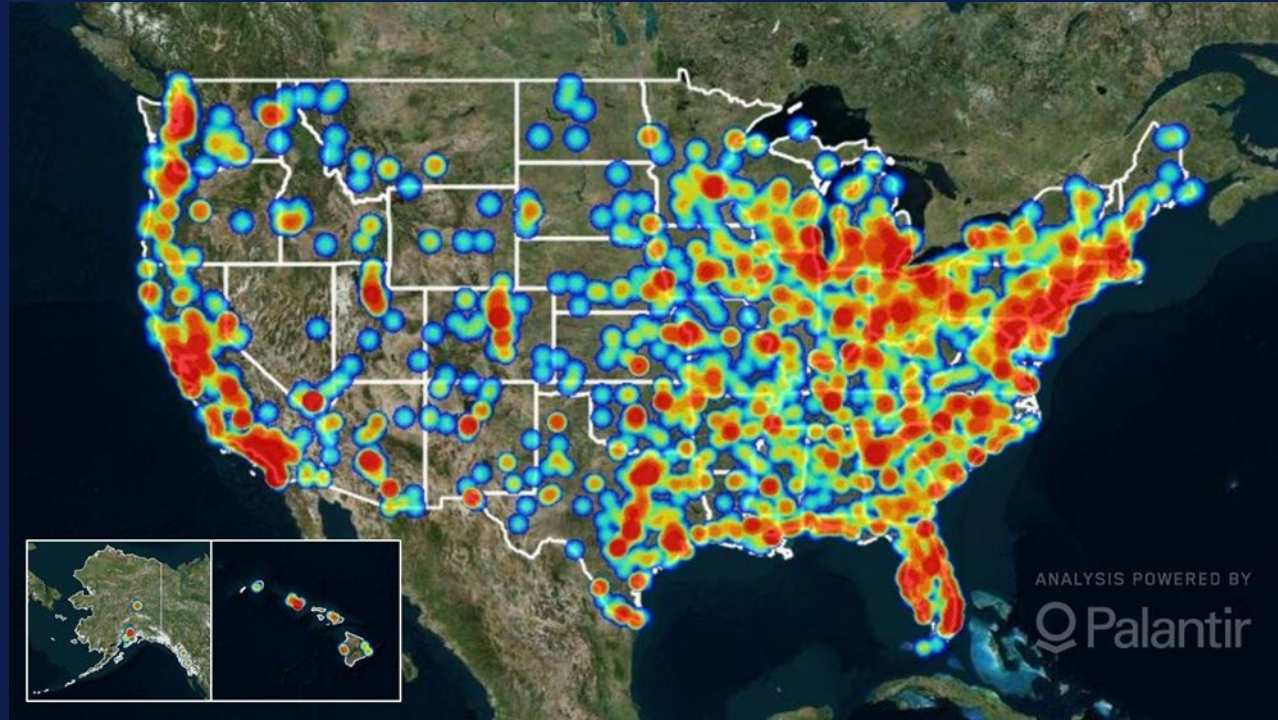




The Demand

Human Trafficking is the 2nd largest criminal industry in the world, behind only drug trafficking.

It is the fastest growing criminal industry in the United States.





I-5 Corridor Connection



I-5 runs 1,300+ miles from Vancouver, BC to Tijuana, Mexico



Traffickers move victims up and down I-5 on rotating circuits; often setting up dates mid-drive between cities, BC to Tijuana, Mexico



Washington & Oregon are recognized hubs within a national AND global sex trafficking circuit



WA/OR Stats from

National Human Trafficking Hotline

WA Stats 2024

Key numbers:

- 659 total signals (tips, reports, chats, etc.) received in 2024.
- 191 signals were from victims or survivors.
- 271 cases of human trafficking identified in 2024.
- 441 victims were involved in these cases.

Trafficking type:

- Sex trafficking: 151 cases
- Sex & labor: 43 cases
- Labor only: 37 cases
- Top venues for sex trafficking: Illicit massage/spa: 35
- Hotel/motel: 16
- Street-based: 14
- Residence-based commercial sex: 7

OR Stats 2024

Key numbers:

- 368 total signals were received in 2024.
- 119 signals were from victims or survivors.
- 160 cases of human trafficking identified in 2024.
- 227 victims were involved in these cases.

Trafficking type :

- Sex trafficking: 107 cases
- Labor trafficking: 22 cases
- Sex & labor: 17 cases
- Top venues for sex trafficking: Street-based: 15
- Illicit massage/spa: 13
- Residence-based commercial sex: 8
- Hotel/motel: 8
- Pornography-related exploitation: 5



11 Months Prior

RS
70000

The Reflector

The Newspaper With Integrity Since 1909

Battle Ground Police serve search warrant in illicit massage parlor operation



Battle Ground Police officers served a search warrant for alleged prostitution at the Relax Health Spa, 909 W. Main St., Suite 102, in Battle Ground during the evening of Sept. 4.



Operation Battle Ground

Conducted over four days, “Operation Battle Ground” brought more than **20** law enforcement agencies together, (including WSP, FBI, Secret Service, and Homeland Security), combining more than **70** officers, agents, and troopers to conduct the operation).

Using covert techniques, alleged child sex predators were contacted by undercover operators, many of whom were purportedly seeking sexual contact with minors.

2026 World Cup



‘Operation Guardian’ - Multi-Agency Child Exploitation Operation Leads to 21 Arrests

- Operation conducted during the 2026 Fifa World Cup in Seattle, WA
- Washington State Patrol, Edmonds Police Department, local Snohomish County law enforcement agencies, and several state and federal partner agencies
- **21 individuals** taken into custody for alleged sexual abuse and exploitation of children

Part 2: Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking (DMST)

- What is DMST
- Supply and Demand
- Risk Factors



Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking (DMST)

Domestic: Born in the United States or American Citizens



Minor: Any person under the age of 18

Sex Trafficking: The buying, selling, and exploitation of children for sexual acts, favors, or materials

Minors are VICTIMS by definition!

Even if

- No force, fraud, or coercion is present
- The minor does not identify as a victim
- There is no trafficker present
- The minor exchanges sex acts for food, shelter, or other survival needs

Supply and Demand

BUYER



TRAFFICKER/"PIMP"



VICTIM

- **The buyers' demand is the main cause of sex trafficking**

- 99% Male
- Leading cause=Porn consumption
- Often repeat buyers or "clients"

- Can be male or female
- Family member(s)
- Develops trauma bond through trust, loyalty, drug addiction
- Exploits victims to earn revenue from buyers

- Bought and sold for profit
- Rarely identifies as a victim
- Often charged for crimes associated with their trafficking
- Recruited online through common apps and games

Supply and Demand



Common Risk Factors

Environmental and Social

- Low Socioeconomic Status
- Unstable Homelife
- Homelessness

Systemic and Institutional

- System Involvement (e.g., child welfare, juvenile justice)

Behavioral and Lifestyle

- Substance Abuse
- Gang Involvement

Developmental and Psychological

- Brain Development
- ACEs (Adverse Childhood Experiences)





ADDITIONAL RISK FACTORS

- BULLYING
- SOCIAL PRESSURES
- CULTURAL NORMS
- GAMING PLATFORMS WITH CHAT FEATURES (EX. ROBLOX, MINECRAFT, ETC.)
- ACTIVE ON SOCIAL MEDIA
- LGBTQ+
- INSECURE ABOUT SELF
- LACKING LOVE
- LACKING A STABLE ADULT
- ISOLATION & SHAME

Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking (DMST) Victims...

- Aren't responsible for crimes they were forced to commit.
- Shouldn't be held in places meant for criminals.
- Should get medical care and support.
- Should be protected if they're in danger or at risk
- of being harmed again.



Part 3: Types and Tactics of Human Trafficking

- Traffickers and Survivors
- Types of Human Trafficking
- Grooming
- Methods of Control



Video Clip: Traffickers and Survivors



Types of Traffickers

- **Loverboy/Romeo/Finesse**

- Makes victim fall in love with them and then uses psychological manipulation to exploit them.



- **Gorilla (Guerilla)**

- Controls victim almost entirely through physical violence and force.



- **CEO**

- Runs operation like a business and present as professional business owners



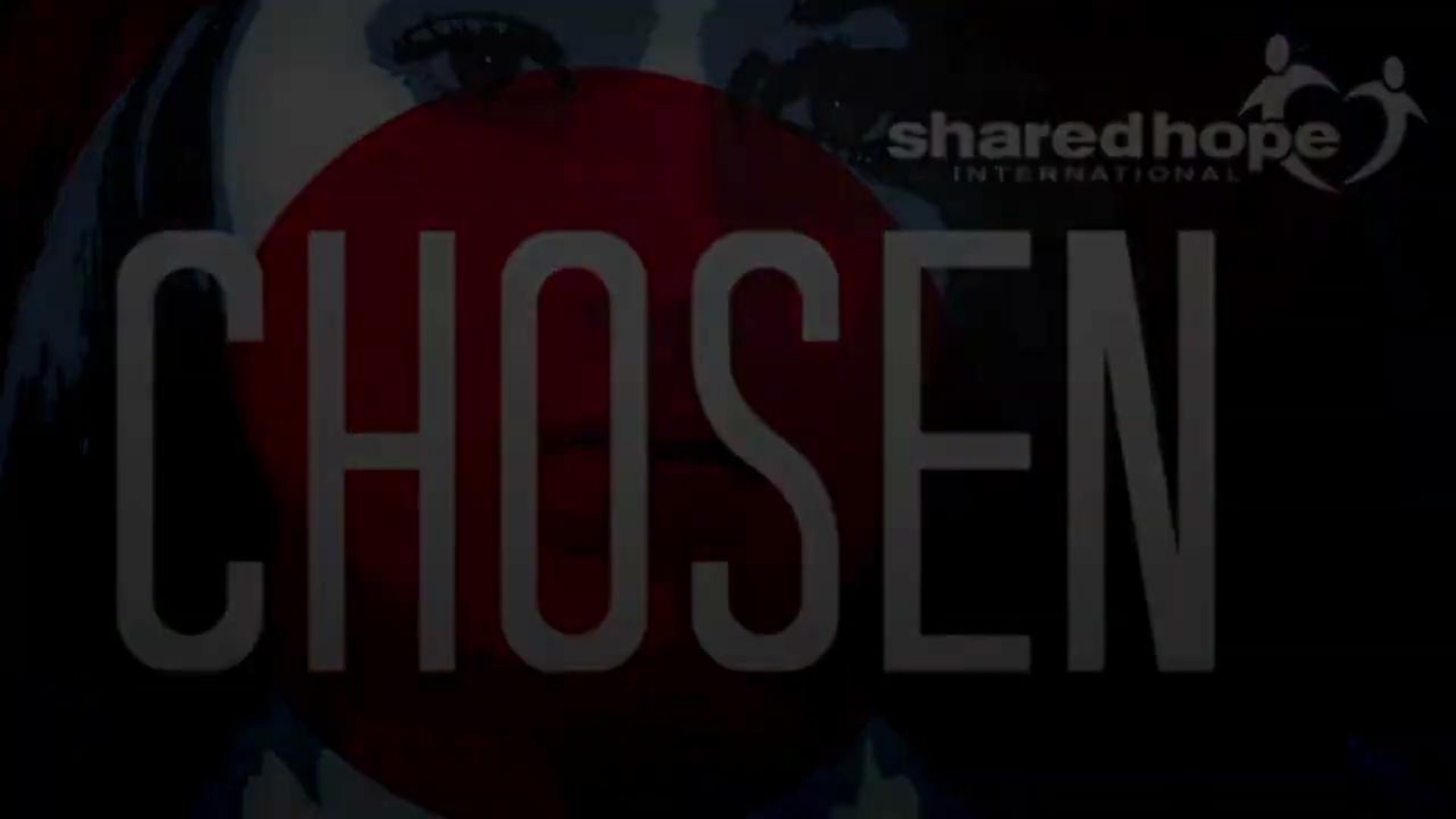


Types of Sex Trafficking

Traditional Trafficking

- Can take place both in-person or online
- Often a “single controller”
- Traffickers may work with others to communicate information
- Traffickers may join forces to provide victims for large events





sharedhope
INTERNATIONAL

CHOSEN



Brianna Now

Brianna's life was saved by an informed friend who recognized that something was wrong and told a trusted adult.

For a long time after being groomed to be trafficked, Brianna struggled with fear, especially in everyday public settings. After being misled by people she thought she could trust, even simple situations could feel overwhelming. Healing has taken time, patience, and support.

Shared Hope has had the privilege of walking alongside Brianna on her journey toward restoration. As she grew stronger, Brianna came to realize that her story could help others. With courage, she began sharing her experience to raise awareness and advocate for change, helping protect others from similar harm.

Today, Brianna's story is one of hope. She is happily married, has started a family, and has pursued her dream of becoming a nurse. Her life is a powerful reminder that with the right support, healing is possible and a bright future can be rebuilt.

Lacey Now

After the events shared in the video, Lacy's story continued in a way that sadly reflects what many victims experience. Instead of being recognized as someone who needed help, she was arrested for prostitution.

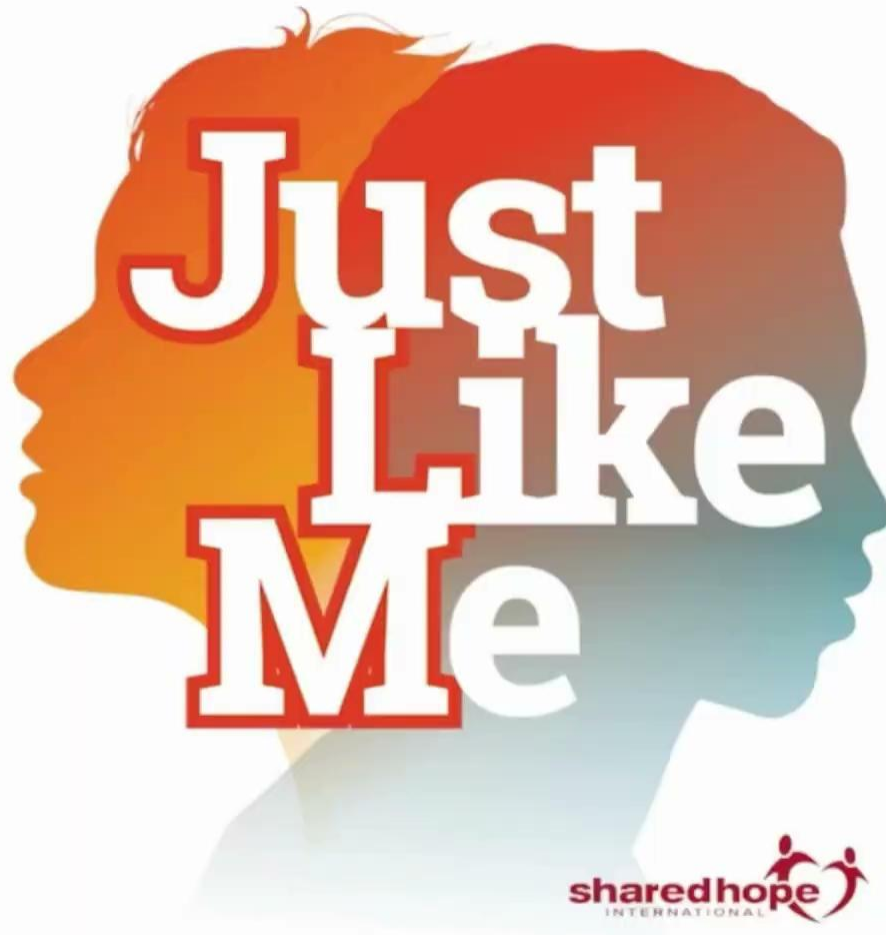
When Lacy was later released on probation, she returned to a situation where she was still not safe. Her trafficker remained controlling and abusive, which made it urgent for someone to step in and help her find a way out.

Thankfully, Lacy's probation officer had been trained by Shared Hope to recognize the signs of trafficking. Because of that training, she understood that Lacy was a victim in need of protection, not punishment. She quickly took action and contacted Shared Hope for help.

With the support of caring partners, a plan was put in place to move Lacy to a safe location across the country. She was provided with transportation, a safe place to live, and the basic essentials she needed to begin again, this time in a place where she could be protected and supported.

Today, Lacy's story has a hopeful ending. She is safe, stable, and building a healthy life on the East Coast. She has a family, and she has even found the courage to use her voice to help others who have experienced similar situations.

Lacy's story reminds us that even in very difficult circumstances, there is always hope, and that the right support can help change the course of someone's life.

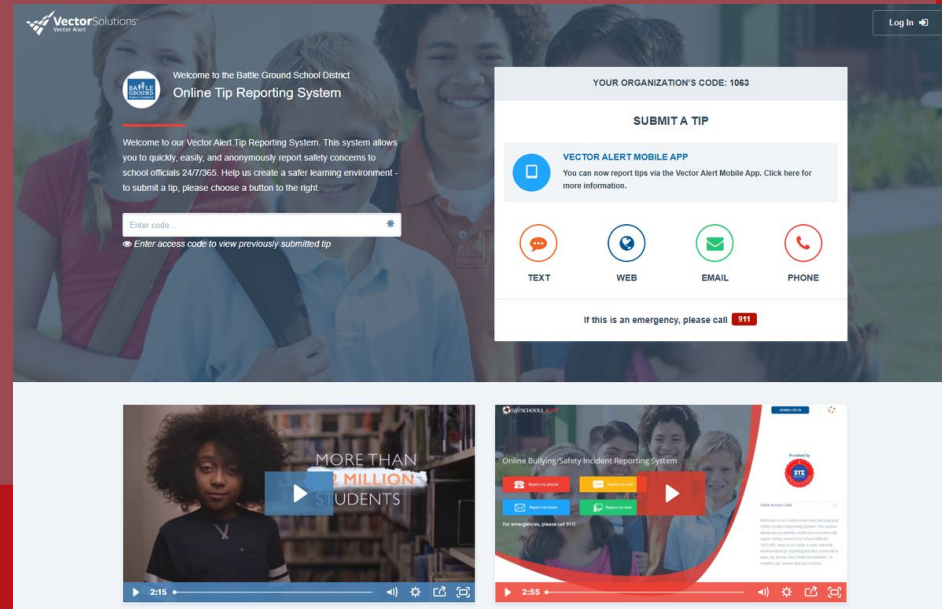


John Michael mentioned schools not taking the time to do background checks on coaches and volunteer coaches. Battle Ground does take the time to do background checks through local and national databases as well as requires them to participate in Safe Schools trainings. However, if a BG coach or teacher ever makes you feel unsafe, it should be reported.

This can be done by:

- Phone Call or Text: 360-558-3351
- Web: bgd-wa.safeschoolsalert.com
- Email: 1063@ALERT1.US

This is what our website looks like



Survival Sex

- Youth trades sex directly with an adult buyer(s) for housing, food, gift cards, digital currency, drugs, protection, etc.
- Can have multiple buyers
- Does not have a specific trafficker

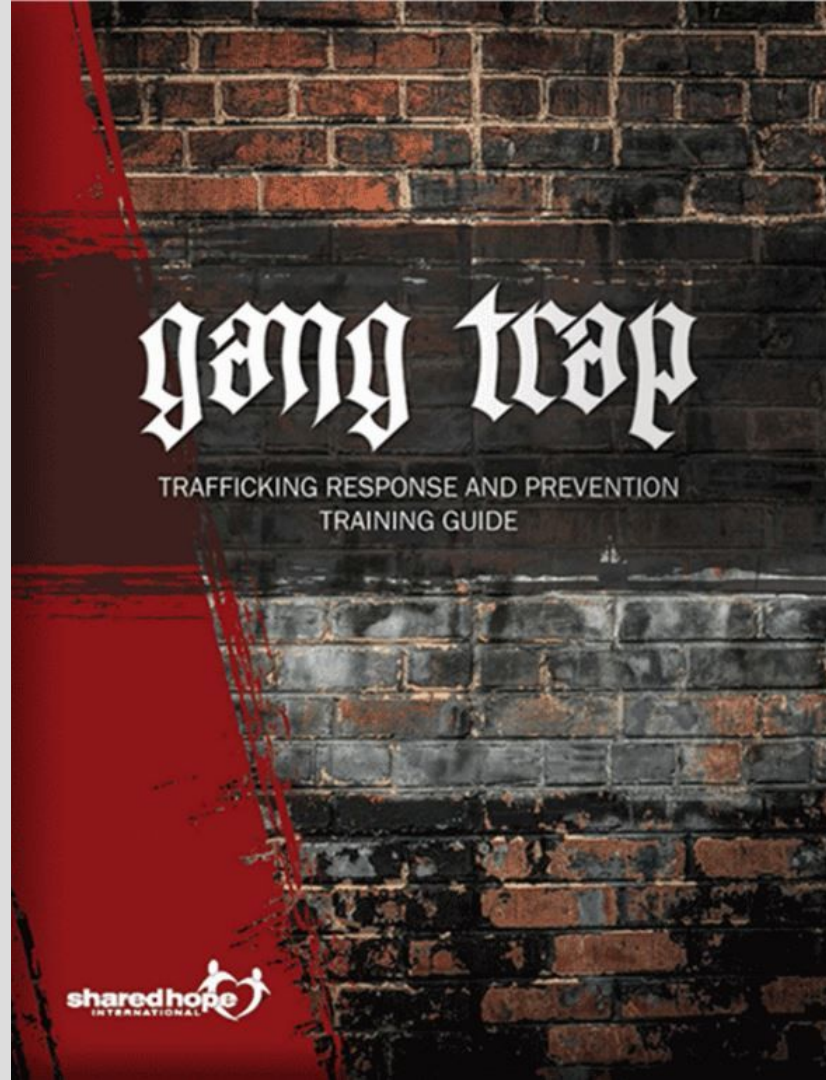




INVADING *the* DARKNESS

Gang-Involved Trafficking

- Traffickers lure victim into the gang-lifestyle
- An often seen “jump-in” for girls is having to participate in commercial sex with other gang members, law enforcement, or other men.
- Multiple offenders and victims
- Variety of crimes and violent acts



Familial Trafficking

- Parent or other family member exploits a child in their care for their own gain
- Hidden in plain sight
- Victims tend to be very young and unable to express what is happening to them
- Drugs are a frequent element
- Ritualistic Abuse
- Child Sex Rings





Recruitment: Grooming and Control





What is Grooming?

Grooming occurs when a predator slowly works to gain a young person's trust so they can get control over them later. It can happen in person or online.

Examples of Grooming

Brianna

Brianna's trafficker began by building a relationship with her at her waitressing job. He would visit regularly, striking up conversations and taking time to learn about her life, her hopes, and her dreams. Over time, Brianna began to trust him and saw him as a friend.

As that trust grew, he started encouraging her to do things she normally wouldn't, like sneaking out and traveling out of town with him. What felt like harmless friendship gradually became something more controlling, drawing her deeper into a situation she wasn't prepared for.

Examples of Grooming

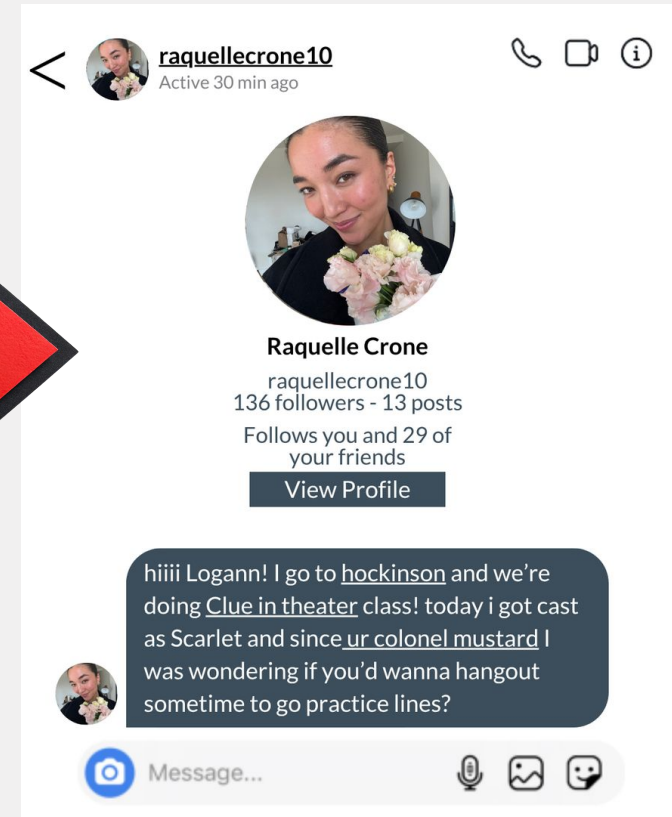
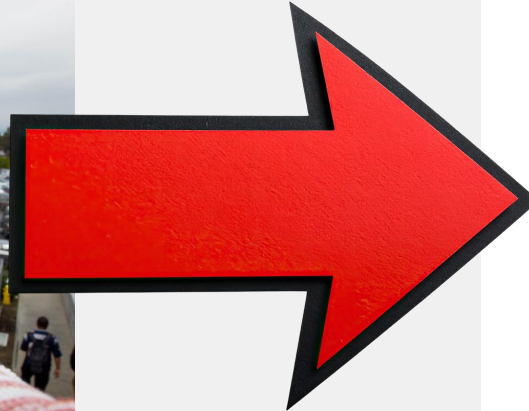
Lacy

Some older boys she met at a convenience store invited Lacy to a party, where a younger man began talking with her. Soon after, he “ran into” her again and started building what felt like a genuine friendship. He took her to movies and the mall, bought her gifts, and gained her trust, and Lacy began to see him as her boyfriend.

Over time, he talked about a future together, saying he wanted them to move in and build a life. Then he began asking her for help making money, pressuring her to strip. When she hesitated, he became angry. Gradually, he pushed her further by isolating her from family and friends, encouraging her to skip school, and increasing his control. What had seemed like care and attention turned into manipulation, leaving Lacy feeling trapped and without a choice.

Examples of Grooming

Online

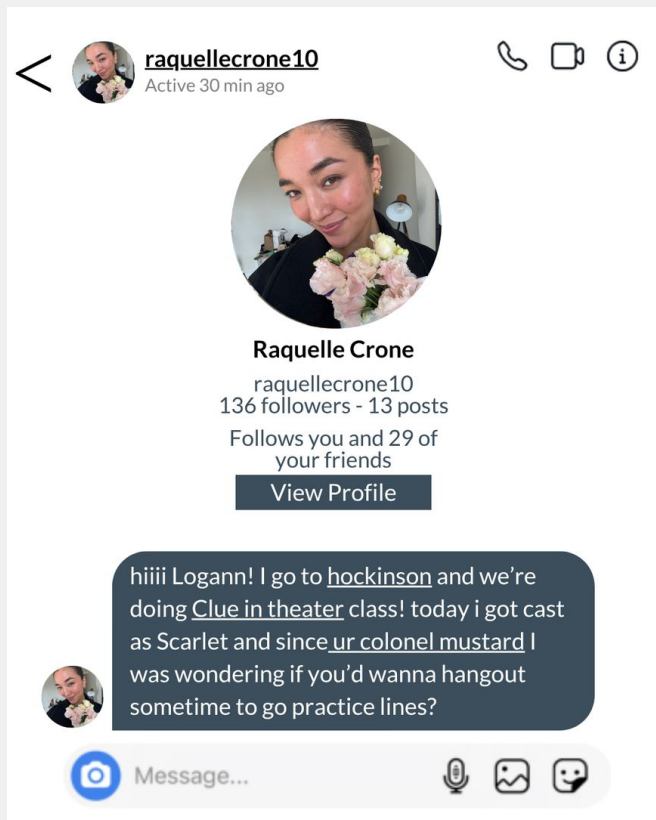


Examples of Grooming

Online

Traffickers may start conversations online using information they find to make it seem like they know you or share common interests. They might use fake profiles and pretend to be your age to gain your trust. Over time, they build a relationship that feels real and safe.

Once trust is established, they may begin testing boundaries by asking for private photos or videos, or by suggesting meeting in person. What starts as a friendly connection can gradually turn into a situation that is unsafe or controlling.



Grooming Process



- 1 Initial Grooming
- 2 Isolation and Dependency
- 3 Control and Coercion
- 4 Exploitation
- 5 Trauma Bonding
- 6 Ongoing Manipulation

01. Initial Grooming

Trafficker builds trust and meets unmet needs.

Victim feels seen, cared for, and special

02. Isolation and Dependency

Trafficker severs ties to outside support

Victim becomes dependent on trafficker for survival and validation

03. Control and Coercion

Abuse begins under the guise of love

Victim learns that obedience may bring temporary affection

Video Clip: Grooming



04. Exploitation

Victim is manipulated or forced into commercial sex

“Breaking” process begins through physical and emotional abuse

05. Trauma Bonding

Victim forms psychological attachment to trafficker

Abuse is normalized and victim may resist rescue

06. Ongoing Manipulation

Trafficker uses abuse to reshape how the victim sees the world and continues using multiple forms of control

Video Clip: Abuse and Manipulation



Methods of Control

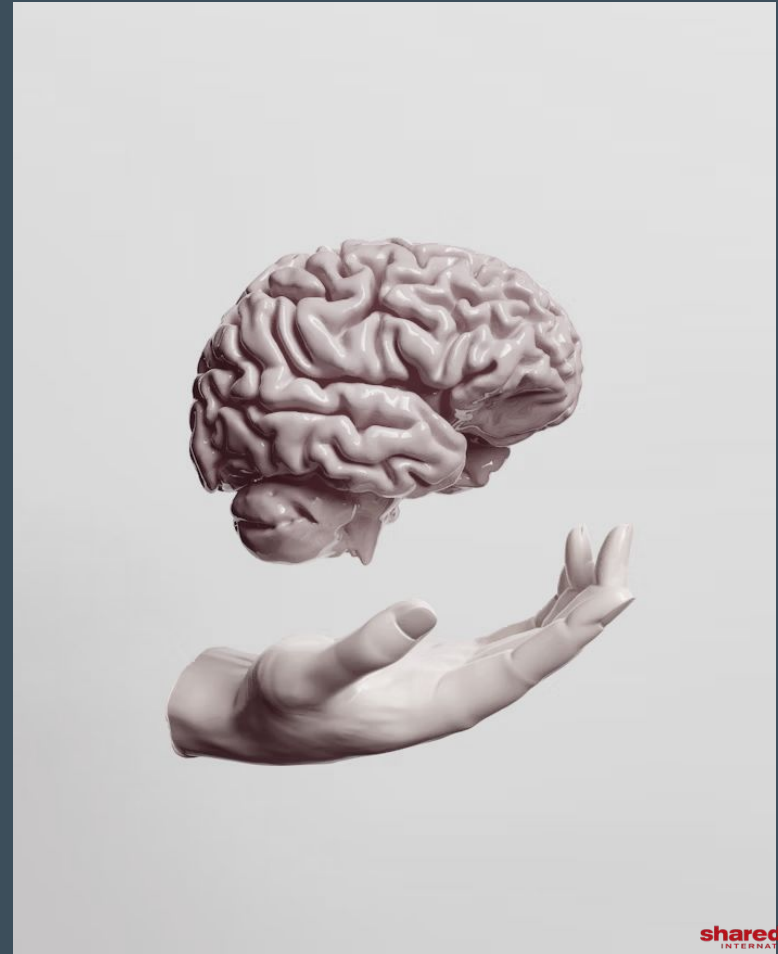
- Physical Force and/or confinement
- Threats against the victim or their loved ones
- Sexual Assault and Abuse
- Emotional and/or psychological abuse
- Random acts of violence
- Forced drug/substance use
- Deprivation of drugs



Psychological Manipulation

Traffickers convince their victims that...

- Exploitation defines who they are
- Exploitation was their own choice
- They will face public stigma
- They will be criminalized and put into jail





**Why don't
victims
leave?**

Why don't victims leave?



Victims fear...

- Physical Abuse
- Harm to their loved ones

Traffickers control victim's...

- Finances
- Location
- Identification
- Children

Victims have been...

- Brainwashed into “loving” their trafficker
- Taught to distrust law enforcement and social services
- Self-deprecated
- Taught they have nowhere else to go

What does a *Safe Adult* look like?

Shows physical affection only when appropriate and/or initiated by the child.

Treats all of the children close to them equally. Although they might be closer to a certain child due to the child's personality or their relationship with the parent, they will not neglect other children present in order to pay attention to any one child in particular.

Spends time with the child around a parent, other adults, or in public. They won't seek out alone time with the child but might agree to do so if requested by a parent.

Respects a child's right to privacy – especially concerning nudity.

Contact on social media will be minimal and public, if at all. Any private conversations will be conducted with the knowledge and consent of a parent or guardian.

Avoids inappropriate conversation and keeps discussion centered on child-friendly content while children are present.

Respects parents' rules and boundaries concerning their child's safety.

What does a *Sexual Predator* look like?

Demonstrates excessive or unusual touching – especially near the legs, chest, stomach, or genital region.

Singles out one “favorite” child with whom they spend significant time, giving them special attention or even gifts. This behavior can be especially evident while other children (including siblings) are present.

Searches for reasons to be alone with the child. This could include enthusiastically offering to babysit, give the child a ride, or host a sleepover.

Lacks modesty around children, sometimes undressing in front of them or walking in while a child is using the restroom or changing.

Privately contacts the child on social media. Conversation will be personal, frequent, and, in most cases, secret.

Discusses or mentions sex, sexual acts, or private body parts while a child is present.

Questions parents' rules and decisions, accusing them of being overly protective – especially when those rules restrict the amount of time the child spends with the predator.

Part 4: Online Exploitation

- Sextortion
- Cybersex Trafficking
- Online Risk Factors
- Control Tactics of Online Predators



Sextortion

Threatening to expose someone's nude photos or texts.

Email or text scams:

A sextortionist may send a message claiming they took sexual photos or videos from your device. They'll demand payment to keep these photos a secret.

Extorting money or sexual favors from someone by threatening to reveal evidence of their sexual activity--mostly online or via sexting

Cybersex Trafficking

- Internet and social media make it easier for predators to remain anonymous
- Exploitation can be done via live video using a webcam, recorded video, images, or sexual messages
- Controls: Sextortion, manipulation, promises of wealth, fame
- Risk: May be less immediate physical risk but cybersex trafficking is extremely traumatic and dangerous for victims



What does cybersex trafficking and sextortion look like?

Sara's Story



Sara and Joey

SARA, a **high school freshman**, began talking **online** with a boy named **JOEY**.

Their relationship started off safe, innocent, and fun, as **they connected** over shared interests and personal struggles.

Sextortion begins

JOEY starts **exploiting SARA's** trust, he demands of revealing pictures. **SARA** believes this is normal and sends photos via a social media app that she and **JOEY** text on.

What does cybersex trafficking and sextortion look like?



Sara's Story

Sextortion

JOEY becomes **aggressive** and moves their chats to a **location-sharing app**. He **threatens** to harm **SARA** and her family, even sending a photo of their front door, unless she sends nude videos.

Sara Seeks Help

SARA understood the **risks** of sending explicit content to someone threatening her. She told her **MOM**, and together they reported **JOEY's** online grooming to **law enforcement**.

Online Risk Factors - Dangerous Oversharing

Posts about

- Troubles at home or school
- Depression
- Loneliness and isolation
- Unstable homelife
- Change of schools
- Live posting about current locations

TRAFFICKERS & TECHNOLOGY

SAFETY MEASURES

- *Turn your location setting OFF on apps where you chat*
- *Set all of your accounts to private and only accept requests from people you know in real life*
- *Don't accept digital money, tips, or gifts in exchange for pictures or videos*
- *Regularly monitor your followers and delete anyone who makes you feel uncomfortable*
- *Don't send nudes- You never know who will see it. Keep your personal information personal (location, school, address, phone number, etc.)*

- For help removing or stopping the online sharing of nude, partially nude, or sexually explicit images or videos taken of you when you were under 18 years old, visit <https://takeitdown.ncmec.org/>



Control Tactics of Online Predators

Online Scams

Predators use social media or gaming sites to disguise recruitment techniques.

Traffickers may promise victims

- More followers
- electronic transfer of money
- E-gift cards

Moving to Different App or Platform

- Different apps can provide traffickers with different information (e.g. location sharing)
- Online traffickers attempt to gain complete control over as many digital areas of the victim's life as possible

Building Trust

After establishing trust, the trafficker uses different language to signify their loyalty to the victim

- "I understand you."
- "You can tell me anything"
- "This can stay between us"

Pushing Boundaries

After trust is built, the trafficker begins to push boundaries

- Bringing up uncomfortable sexual topics
- Asking personal questions
- Exposing the victim to sexual imagery and language (sexting, photos, messages)



Part 5: Identification and Response

- Identification
- Your role in Response
- How to Respond to suspected and disclosure of DMST
- Trauma informed care



**What do you think are
factors that make
identifying victims
challenging?**



Challenges to Identification

Fear they will not
be believed

Have formed a
trauma bond with
their trafficker

Don't self-identify

Distrust authority
figures or fear they'll
be arrested

Feel ashamed
or guilty

Fear retaliation
from trafficker

Video Clip: Challenges to Identification



Other things to remember

Victims are moved around frequently, so community members don't get to know them

Victims' age may be disguised with "adult" makeup, clothing, and a fake ID

Victims are trained to give a fake name and birthdate if picked up

Victims may have been previously abused by adults in key positions of power, furthering their distrust and fear of those that offer help

Victims may be aggressive, react violently, or be distant and reserved

VICTIMS ARE OFTEN MISLABELED AS...

- Criminal
- Delinquent
- Child Prostitute
- Gang Member
- Drug Addict

Instead of a trafficking victim



REMEMBER

Minors are VICTIMS by definition!

Even if

- No force, fraud, or coercion is present
- The minor does not identify as a victim
- There is no trafficker present
- The minor exchanges sex acts for food, shelter, or other survival needs



POTENTIAL RED FLAGS

- Truancy
- Running away
- Theft
- Loitering
- Curfew Violation
- Assault
- Narcotics Possession

Video Clip: Victim Misidentification and Criminalization



WA State Trafficking Laws

Some of the things WA state is doing well (as of 2025)...

- Any child who is bought or sold for sex can be identified as a trafficking victim—regardless of whether a trafficker is involved. This enables access to services and protections that hinge on formal trafficking victim status, no matter who exploited the child.
- In Washington, children under 18 cannot be charged with prostitution.
- In Washington, child sex trafficking survivors who are incarcerated due to their trafficking victimization can seek to be released from prison under a resentencing law, **but** they face a significant barrier because the petition can only be filed by the prosecutor.
- Survivors can petition courts to vacate* convictions for misdemeanors, gross misdemeanors, and Class B or C felonies resulting from their trafficking

*“Vacatur” or to vacate a conviction means to erase the conviction itself from the victim’s record

Learn more about WA state’s trafficking laws



WA State Trafficking Laws

Where WA state laws could improve (as of 2025)...

- Washington law does not prevent child sex trafficking victims from being criminalized for status offenses, misdemeanors, or felonies resulting from their trafficking victimization.
- Washington law does not guarantee age-appropriate juvenile court responses for all minors accused of unlawful conduct resulting from their trafficking.
- Survivors cannot petition for vacatur for many non-misdemeanor offenses resulting from their trafficking.
- Survivors must meet multiple eligibility conditions to petition for vacatur, creating additional barriers to relief.

Learn more about WA state's trafficking laws



Response



HOW CAN YOU HELP RESPOND TO HUMAN TRAFFICKING?

Talk to a Safe Adult

- Parent/guardian, trusted adult
- Teacher, counselor, coach, mentor
- Faith-based leader, medical professional

Stay Informed and Educated

- Learn signs of trafficking and abuse
- Follow reputable organizations on social media

Use Social Media for Good

- Share awareness and call out misinformation
- Educate peers and be loud!

Be a Safe Contact

- Look out for friends and be nosey!
- Know the Human trafficking hotline:
National Human Trafficking Hotline: 1-888-373-7888

Advocate for Change

- Join or start school clubs focused on HT
- Contact local representatives to support anti-trafficking practices!

Be Smart Online

- Protect your own digital footprint
- Help others understand the risks of oversharing or responding to suspicious DMs



WHAT TO DO IF YOU SUSPECT TRAFFICKING



1. *If it is an emergency, CALL 911*
2. *Talk to a safe adult*
3. *NCMEC 1-800-843-5678 (1-800-THE-LOST)*
 - a. *Cyber Tip Line and Take it Down*
4. *National Human Trafficking Hotline 1-888-373-7888*
 - a. *Text BeFree to 233733*
5. *Local Law Enforcement*



Take a Photo of this Slide!

OTHER RESOURCES

Learn what human trafficking really looks like, listen to **INVADING THE DARKNESS**



Learn how to be safe online, access our free **INTERNET SAFETY TOOLS**



Learn what domestic minor sex trafficking really looks like, read **RENTING LACY**



Get the official certificate of completion, take our **OFFICIAL EXPLOITED TRAINING**



VISIT OUR WEBSITE: SHAREDHOPE.ORG





Thank You!

