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# PREVENTING CHILD TRAFFICKING AN EDUCATOR'S RESOURCE GUIDE

# GOING UPSTREAM



Dear Educators,

Desmond Tutu once said, " There comes a point where we need to stop just pulling people out of the river, we need to go upstream and find out why they are falling in." This quote is one of my favorites, and truly hits home for me. As a survivor of familial sex trafficking, I often think about what could have been done differently to prevent the violence and trauma I endured. When I was in the midst of my trafficking, school was my safe haven. It was a place I could come and be myself and be around safe adults that truly cared about my well-being. As a teacher, you have an incredible opportunity to make an impact and I encourage you not to take this lightly. Preventing human trafficking involves addressing root causes, and changing systems. No one entity can do this alone. This is a global issue solved on a local level. Join us in looking upstream to acknowledge factors that make certain groups more vulnerable to trafficking and be a part of the work to prevent exploitation in our communities.

Kat Wehunt



**"In order to effectively eradicate the buying and selling of human beings, we must teach young people about the risks and tactics traffickers use to exploit people. Prevention is so important because it is removing cycles of poverty and generational trauma."**



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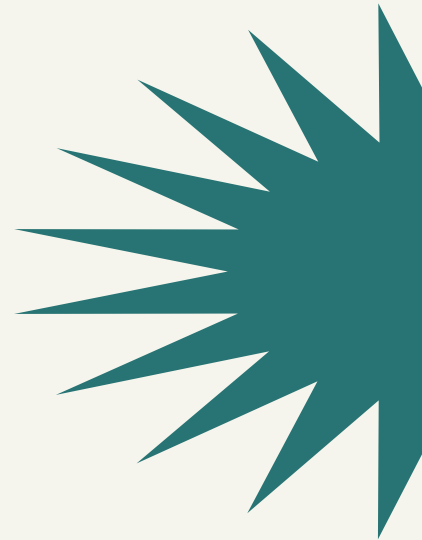
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Illuminate Justice

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# CONFRONTING THE MYTHS ABOUT HUMAN TRAFFICKING



## TRAFFICKING TODAY

### What Hollywood Didn't Teach Us

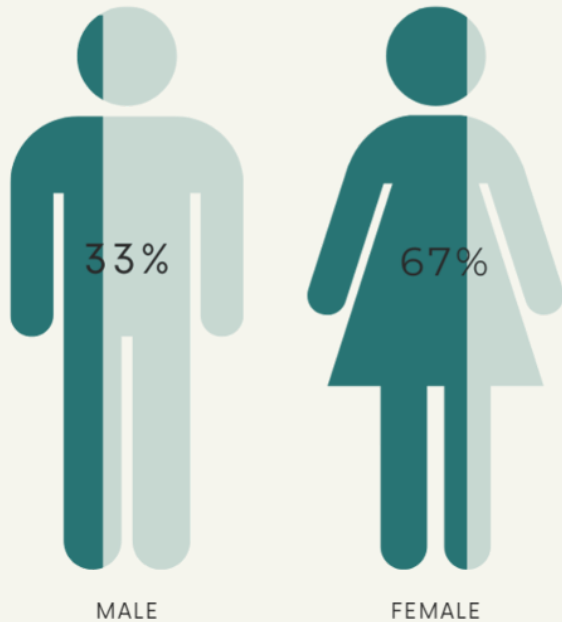
The misconceptions about trafficking are harmful for a number of reasons. Ideas that the trafficking of youth looks like kidnapping or being handcuffed in a basement somewhere prevent us from seeing the real signs that a teen is being exploited. Traffickers prey on vulnerable teens. They are skilled at recognizing youth who are not having their emotional or basic needs met. This is why a high number of youth that are sexually exploited have prior sexual abuse, foster care experience, or are experiencing homelessness and hunger. Traffickers see these youth as easy targets, knowing that youth with these vulnerabilities are often easier to manipulate and exploit. Traffickers might pose as a loving boyfriend, supportive employer, or caring friend to manipulate victims to perform sex acts in exchange for anything of value. They usually take a long time to groom their victims, taking 6 months or even a year to build trust with victims before they try to sexually exploit them. Trauma-bonds and Stockholm Syndrome sometimes lead teens to forming deep emotional attachments with their abusers. It is not uncommon for teens to run away with their trafficker, even when help is offered.

But replacing the myths is a powerful tool for educators and parents alike to see the signs and help recognize when a teen might be in danger. As you continue to learn and seek training in this area, keep in mind that most children who are experiencing trafficking are enrolled in school at the time they are being exploited, coming into contact on a regular basis with teachers and administrators.

Most importantly, all children have vulnerabilities and can be at-risk for trafficking. While some youth are more vulnerable than others, children from all ages, ethnic backgrounds, economic statuses, legal statuses, and genders can be at-risk.

# TRAFFICKING TODAY

The Global Report on Trafficking In Persons estimates one in three victims of child sex trafficking are boys.



The average age of a girl sold into sex trafficking in Georgia for the first time is just

**14** YEARS OLD

## Risk Factors



**MORE THAN 54%**

of metro Atlanta's homeless youth experienced human trafficking in their lifetime.

**MORE THAN 91%**

of Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking victims in Georgia were enrolled in school at the time of their exploitation.

**MORE THAN 50%**

of sex trafficking victims in Georgia were recruited by friends and family.

# TYPES OF TRAFFICKING



## FAMILIAL TRAFFICKING

### Not Stranger Danger

Familial trafficking takes place when someone is victimized by a member of their own family. Parents, spouses, older siblings and cousins, and extended family members are sometimes the ones to exploit a child. Sometimes the reason is financial. Sometimes there are other abusive factors.



## PIMP TRAFFICKING

### The Romeo Tactic

Pimps often times control younger victims with the promise of relationship and romance. They see what a victim has been deprived, and strive to provide the things they are eager to gain- family, career, a chance to get out of poverty, and love can all be lures traffickers use to coerce and manipulate thier victims.



## GANG TRAFFICKING

### Organized Recruitment

Gang trafficking is becoming increasingly more common with gangs luring youth into commercial exploitation through the internet. In addition to trafficking drugs and weapons, it is now just as common for gangs to be trafficking minors and adults for sex.



## SURVIVAL TRAFFICKING

### Not Really A Choice

Sometimes youth who are being sexually exploited do not have a traditional trafficker. Their traumatic past or difficult present circumstances may be the factors that pushed them to engage in commercial sex to survive, and the people who purchase them perpetrate the cycle of exploitation in their lives.

# PREVENTION STRATEGIES

## PREVENTION EDUCATION

### 01.

Evidence-based prevention curriculum can be a great aid in helping youth today understand predatory behavior, and the tricks and traps traffickers use to coerce youth into trafficking. Prevention education can also help youth evaluate healthy and unhealthy relationships, practice using social media responsibly, and understand personal choices that might perpetuate exploitation of vulnerable people. Prevention education helps teens think about situations that could be harmful to them and create a plan for what they might do in a variety of difficult scenarios.

To implement prevention education in your classrooms, get in touch with our partners at Freekind to implement the award-winning Prevention Project™ program at your school.

[www.freekindva.org/prevention](http://www.freekindva.org/prevention)



## GET TRAINING

### 02

Training that covers recognizing the warning signs of human trafficking and knowing the appropriate steps to take if you suspect a child is being exploited can help prevent further violence from happening to the child.

Advocate for all professionals who work with youth in your community to learn more and get trafficking prevention training.

## CREATE SAFE, SUPPORTIVE SPACES FOR YOUTH

### 03

Love, safety, and a sense of belonging all help prevent the trafficking of young people. Offering safe spaces for youth to talk about what is going on in their lives, programs and extracurricular activities where youth can build relationships, taking proactive steps to prevent bullying, and mentoring opportunities to provide care are all important aspects of preventing trafficking.

# WHEN CHILD VICTIMS ARE CRIMINALIZED

- ◆ Human trafficking is a terrible violation of human rights, but sadly many child victims of human trafficking are arrested as a result of their trafficking experience instead of receiving needed medical and social services
- ◆ Black and Brown girls are more likely to be arrested as a result of their trafficking than their white peers
- ◆ Children being exploited for sex are often incorrectly labeled "child prostitutes" which perpetuates this idea that the child is a criminal rather than a victim of a serious crime



## YOU CAN ADVOCATE FOR VULNERABLE YOUTH

- ◆ You can talk with community members, local law enforcement, and your elected representatives, and let them know our community must take more seriously giving proper care to victims of human trafficking, and that criminalization of victims will not be tolerated.



**SHOW US WHAT YOU LEARNED**

Take The Quiz

# RESOURCES FOR VICTIMS

You can be empowered to help protect the children in your community.

## LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT

Contacting local law enforcement is often the first step if you suspect a child is being exploited or trafficked. You can also make a report to federal agents at Homeland Security by calling 1-886-347-2334.

## CHILD PROTECTION SERVICES

If you suspect a child is being trafficked or exploited by someone that they live with, you'll need to make a report to the Department of Family and Children Services or other child protection agency.

## LOCAL MEDICAL AND SOCIAL SERVICE PROVIDERS

Children who have experienced any exploitation will most likely need medical care, counseling services, and additional resources to support their healing and safety. To prepare for any situations that may arise, keep a list of local medical providers and child psychologist that have a good reputation in your community for providing trauma-informed care.

## HUMAN TRAFFICKING HOTLINE

For additional support, you can call the National Human Trafficking Hotline at 1-888-373-7888. They can provide additional information about steps to take and available resources in your area.



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