

Talking to Your Children About Human Trafficking and Pornography

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Introduction

Overview of the Presentation

- Importance of discussing human trafficking and pornography
 - Analyzing where the danger lies
 - Goals: Empowering parents, grandparents, and guardians to have safe, respectful conversations with your children and grandchildren
 - Emphasize creating a safe environment for dialogue
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Why Talk About These Issues?

Human Trafficking in the U.S.

- 1 in 6 runaways reported to the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC) were likely victims of sex trafficking in 2020. *(Source: NCMEC)*
- The average age of a trafficking victim is 12-14 years old. *(Source: Polaris Project)*

Prevalence of Pornography

- 87% of teens have been exposed to pornography. *(Source: National Center on Sexual Exploitation, 2021)*
 - 93% of boys and 62% of girls have seen pornography by the age of 18. *(Source: Barna Group, 2021)*
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The Impact on Children

Physical and Emotional Consequences

- Trafficking victims suffer physical and psychological trauma, including PTSD, depression, and anxiety. *(Source: U.S. Department of Justice)*
- Exposure to pornography can alter brain development, increase risky sexual behavior, and lead to unhealthy expectations about relationships. *(Source: American Psychological Association)*

Social and Legal Consequences

- Children who are trafficked are often disconnected from family, education, and community, increasing vulnerability to exploitation. *(Source: Polaris Project)*
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TECHNOLOGY AND THE INTERNET



**“Hi, I’m Amanda!
I’m 10 years old and
I like puppies and
kittens and playing
Roblox!**



And online “

**“...I can be
whoever I want
to be when I’m
talking to your
kids.”**



The Role of Technology

- **Online Risks**

- 70% of children have experienced at least one form of cyberbullying, and many are exposed to explicit material online. *(Source: Cyberbullying Research Center, 2021)*
- 60% of teens have encountered online pornography by accident. *(Source: National Center on Sexual Exploitation)*

- **Safety Tips for Parents**

- Install parental controls on all devices.
 - Educate your child about online dangers, including sexting, grooming, and explicit material.
 - Encourage your child to talk to you about anything uncomfortable they encounter online.
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Risky Apps Used for Exploitation & Pornography

Apps That Could Expose Youth to Inappropriate Content

- **Kik Messenger**
 - Has been associated with trafficking cases and has a history of being used for sending explicit content.
 - **Snapchat**
 - While Snapchat's disappearing message feature is popular, it's also been used for sexting and sharing explicit content, leading to potential exploitation.
 - **Discord**
 - Although originally for gamers, some Discord servers have been exploited by traffickers to share inappropriate content and recruit victims.
 - **Tiktok**
 - Has been a platform where explicit content and inappropriate behavior are sometimes shared or uploaded to vulnerable users.
 - **Telegram**
 - Telegram offers private groups and channels where explicit and illegal material can be shared, sometimes targeting vulnerable teens.
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Dangers of Human Trafficking in Video Games and Online Servers

Human Trafficking Risks in Online Video Games and Virtual Spaces

- **Traffickers Use Video Game Platforms to Groom Victims**
 - Online games with chat features (e.g., **Fortnite, Minecraft, Roblox**) are commonly used to groom minors by traffickers who gain their trust and eventually manipulate them into exploitation.
 - **Polaris Project** reports that traffickers often target children and teens in online multiplayer games to recruit them, posing as friends or potential romantic partners.
- **Recruitment and Exploitation Through Voice and Text Chats**
 - Video game chats (voice and text) are unmonitored spaces where predators can reach out directly to minors and make contact under the guise of casual gaming.
 - Traffickers may offer "help" with in-game issues, leading to off-platform conversations and eventually real-life exploitation.

Dangers of Human Trafficking in Video Games and Online Servers

Statistics:

- In 2020, 47% of parents reported that their child had been approached by a stranger online while gaming. (Source: *National Center for Missing & Exploited Children*).
- Human trafficking cases involving online platforms have increased by 28% since 2019, with many cases originating from gaming environments. (Source: *Polaris Project*).

Popular Games and Platforms Under Scrutiny

- Games like **Fortnite**, **Minecraft**, and **Roblox** are especially popular among children and are therefore prime targets for grooming and trafficking.
 - **Discord** (a voice chat and text messaging platform) has been linked to several trafficking cases where predators use it to communicate privately with minors.
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Warning Signs of Trafficking

Recognizing Potential Victims

- Sudden changes in behavior or appearance (e.g., withdrawal, anxiety, or fearfulness).
- Unexplained gifts or money from unknown sources.
- Secretive or unusual online activity.
- Consistent absence from school or activities.

Steps to Take

- Encourage children to trust their instincts and report any concerns.
 - Discuss the importance of contacting a trusted adult immediately if they feel uncomfortable or at risk.
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How to Protect Children and Teens from These Risks

Steps to Keep Children Safe Online

- **Monitor and Limit Screen Time**
 - Regularly check your child's browsing history and app usage.
 - **Install Parental Controls**
 - Use apps like **Norton Family** or **Bark** to block inappropriate content and set usage limits.
 - **Educate Your Children**
 - Talk openly about the dangers of pornography and trafficking, and empower them to say "no" to any situation that feels unsafe.
 - **Report Suspicious Behavior**
 - Report any inappropriate content or interactions to the platform's safety team, or use the **National Human Trafficking Hotline: 1-888-373-7888**.
 - **Encourage Open Dialogue**
 - Foster trust so your child feels comfortable reporting anything unusual or concerning they encounter online.
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THE TALK



Talking to Your Children

Your approach will depend on your own family values and the maturity of your child.

You can build up to conversations about sex and pornography by talking first about things like puberty, gender, body image and body safety.

Focus more on how your child is feeling rather than on what they may have seen.

Age-Appropriate Conversations Young Children (Ages 5-10)

- Teach body safety: "Good touch, bad touch" and appropriate boundaries.
 - Teach children to speak up when they feel uncomfortable.
 - Explain that not all people have good intentions, but they can always talk to a trusted adult.
 - Give your child protective messaging, but don't overwhelm them with too much information, especially if they're not already aware of sex and pornography.
 - Focus more on how your child is feeling rather than on what they may have seen. Children at this age may feel 'yucky' and scared by sexual content — even violated — but they may also feel curious. Try to respond to your child's curiosity calmly, so they will always feel comfortable about coming to you for help.
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Age-Appropriate Conversations: Pre-teens (Ages 11-13)

- At this age, kids may be curious about sex and sexuality. As they enter puberty, changes in the brain and body combined with other hormonal changes can increase your child's interest in this area.
 - They may hear things from friends. They might want to know more but feel embarrassed to ask. They may look for information online.
 - Try to balance your child's need for privacy with providing clear and helpful information.
 - You may have already talked with your child about things like puberty, gender, body image and body safety. Now is a good time to link these conversations to sex and pornography, as well as giving them age-appropriate information about online risks like child sexual abuse and sharing intimate images without consent.
 - Begin discussing the dangers of online grooming and inappropriate relationships.
 - Teach about human trafficking and pornography in terms they can understand.
 - Encourage open dialogue about their online activities.
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Age-Appropriate Conversations: Teenagers (Ages 14+)

- Discuss the dangers of sex trafficking, social media exploitation, and online pornography.
 - Emphasize respect in relationships, boundaries, and the potential dangers of digital content.
 - Encourage critical thinking about media and peer pressure.
 - This is a particularly hard time, as your children now have freedom and are growing eager to leave the nest. Make sure your child knows that they can come to you for support
 - As teens hang out more with friends, learn to drive, and make new friends with all sorts of diverse backgrounds and upbringings, encourage them to be aware of their surroundings, and to let you know if they or their friends find themselves in difficult or confusing circumstances.
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Creating a Safe Environment

Where and when you talk is just as important as what you say

- Going somewhere with your child where you can talk privately without being interrupted can help keep the conversation focused. It may be less awkward if you chat while you're doing something else together, like taking a walk or a car trip.
 - Having lots of little chats that match your child's age and stage of development can be more effective than one big conversation, if you realise they are not comfortable. This helps normalize a safe environment.
 - a. For children, love is often spelled T-I-M-E
 - Your child may find it easier to speak with another trusted adult, such as Grandpa or Aunt Frances. Talk with your child about who they feel most comfortable talking with, and make them feel safe and supported, even if that person isn't you.
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How to Approach the Conversation

Start Early, but Don't Wait Too Long

- Timing is key. Start with simple concepts and build as your child grows.
- Don't shy away from talking about difficult topics; keeping the door open to these discussions can protect your child.

Use Real-Life Examples

- Share statistics and stories (anonymously) that relate to their age and experience.
- Use the media (news articles, movies, etc.) to open discussions.

Be Honest, but Protective

- Use age-appropriate language to avoid scaring your child while still being truthful.
 - Teach them how to protect themselves, and make sure they understand they are not to blame for any abuse or exploitation.
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What to Say to Start the Conversation

Sometimes the hardest part is figuring out where to begin

- “I find it really difficult to talk about these topics, but I want you to know some information that will help keep you safe online.”
 - “I read an article today that said kids are seeing pornography/ sexual content/ nudes at young ages. Can we talk about it?”
 - “I want to talk with you about one of those awkward topics. Is that OK?”
 - Children rarely say no but if they do, respect that, and reapproach the topic later
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Keeping the Conversation Going

- After your child has agreed to talk with you, here are some ways to keep things moving
 - a. “Have you heard the word pornography/ sex/ sexting? What do you know about it? Have you seen it online?”
 - Sometimes questions about your child's behaviour may be too confronting, so asking about their friends or classmates can feel safer.
 - a. “Have any of the kids at school seen it?” or “Do any of the kids at school ever talk about it? What do they say?”
 - If you know your child has seen sexual content, ask: “Did someone show it to you? Or did you find it yourself?”
 - Try to find out what you can about how they found it and why they were searching for it, without getting upset or angry. **Reassure them that they are not in trouble.**
 - a. Ask: ‘When you saw it, how did it make you feel?’ Discuss those feelings.
 - Also try to discuss related issues, including consent, respectful relationships, and online risks
 - Check if your child has any other questions or if you have explained things enough for them.
 - Let your child know that any question is OK to ask — nothing is off limits.
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Be Curious

- Asking questions about what your child knows and how they feel about it may help you work out how much they understand. It can also stop it sounding like a lecture. You can also balance the questions with your own observations, so it doesn't sound like you're interrogating them.
 - a. "Do kids at your school talk about watching online porn?"
 - b. "What do your friends think about sending nudes? Do you agree with them?"
 - c. "Have you ever been sent a nude? How did you feel? What did you do?"
 - d. "Has anyone asked you to send a nude? How did that make you feel?"
 - e. "Have you ever felt uncomfortable about someone contacting you online?"
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Preparing for Questions or Worries

- Let your child know you are there to help them whenever they have questions about issues like pornography, sex and sexting — even if you find out that something has gone wrong online or they think they've made a mistake. This will help them understand they can trust you, and that you love them.
 - Prepare for any possible response. This can help you respond calmly and support them to recover or learn from the experience.
 - Use reassuring language
 - "I understand what you're saying, and I'm glad you came to me about this. You're not in trouble, we can deal with this together."
 - "What help do you need at the moment? Would you like me to answer some questions or sort out a problem with you?"
 - "You might not want to tell me all the details, but if we can talk honestly about what's happened I promise I'll listen and stay calm. No matter what happens, we can do this and I will continue to love you."
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RECAP

Discussing Pornography

Understanding the Digital Landscape

- Pornography is readily available: 28,000 users are actively watching pornography every second. *(Source: Pornhub 2021 Year in Review)*
- Teens who view pornography are 3 times more likely to engage in early sexual activity. *(Source: American Academy of Pediatrics)*

Impact on Relationships

- Pornography distorts expectations around sex, consent, and intimacy.
 - Research indicates that teens who consume pornography have a higher likelihood of unhealthy attitudes toward relationships and body image.
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Creating a Safe Environment

Trust and Communication

- Keep an open line of communication without judgment.
- Let children know they can come to you with questions or concerns anytime, and you will listen without punishment.

Involve the Whole Family

- Set family rules for internet usage and screen time.
 - Share family values around respect, privacy, and body safety.
 - Be a model of healthy relationships and respect for boundaries.
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Encouraging Healthy Self-Esteem

- **Building Confidence**

- Teach children the importance of self-worth and respecting others.
- Discuss healthy relationships, consent, and personal boundaries.

- **Resisting Peer Pressure**

- Help children develop skills to stand up to peers who might pressure them into sharing explicit content or engaging in risky behavior.
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RESOURCES

Resources for Parents and Children

Organizations to Contact

- National Human Trafficking Hotline: 1-888-373-7888 (Source: Polaris)
- National Center for Missing & Exploited Children:
<https://www.missingkids.org>
- National Center on Sexual Exploitation: <https://endsexualexploitation.org>

Books and Materials for Parents

- “The Child Safety and Protection Handbook” by Elizabeth Anderson
 - “Good Pictures, Bad Pictures: Porn-Proofing Today’s Young Kids” by Kristen A. Jenson
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Arkansas Organizations for Parents to Contact

Local Resources for Support and Assistance

- **Arkansas Coalition Against Sexual Assault (ACASA)**
 - Provides resources and advocacy for individuals affected by sexual violence, including human trafficking victims.
 - **Contact:** <https://acasa.us>
 - **Hotline:** 1-800-441-0669
- **Arkansas Human Trafficking Task Force**
 - A collaborative initiative between law enforcement, state agencies, and nonprofit organizations to combat human trafficking in Arkansas.
 - **Contact:** <https://www.arkansas.gov>
 - **Hotline:** 1-888-373-7888 (National Human Trafficking Hotline)
- **The Next Step: Arkansas Coalition Against Trafficking**
 - Provides support services to trafficking survivors, educates the public, and works to reduce trafficking through prevention and advocacy.
 - **Contact:** <https://www.thenextstepnc.org>
 - **Hotline:** 1-844-832-4421

More Organizations for Parents to Contact

- **Arkansas Children's Advocacy Centers (CACs)**
 - Offers services for children who have been victims of abuse, including human trafficking and exploitation.
 - **Contact:** <https://arkansas.gov/dhs/cac>
 - **Polaris (National)**
 - A national organization working to combat human trafficking, including in Arkansas. They provide support, resources, and a 24/7 hotline.
 - **Contact:** <https://polarisproject.org>
 - **Hotline:** 1-888-373-7888
 - **Bark for Parents (Parental Monitoring App)**
 - A parental monitoring app that helps track online activity and protect children from inappropriate content, including pornography and exploitation.
 - **Contact:** <https://www.bark.us>
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Conclusion

- Early, respectful conversations with children can empower them to protect themselves.
 - Be aware — but not oppressive — when monitoring your child's internet activity
 - a. Have boundaries on what ages they are allowed access to certain technologies, devices, or the internet.
 - Creating a trusting environment encourages children to speak up about concerns.
 - Parents and caregivers play a crucial role in preventing trafficking and pornography exposure.
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"Since it is so likely that (children) will meet cruel enemies, let them at least have heard of brave knights and heroic courage. Otherwise you are making their destiny not brighter, but darker."

Thank you!

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Q & A