

WHAT STARTS OFF FRIENDLY... GETS SCARY REAL FAST



Teen Sex Trafficking Awareness

REAL SAFETY BEGINS WITH REAL TALK.

Social media has become one of the most common tools traffickers use to identify, recruit, and groom teenage victims. What often begins as friendly messages, compliments, or shared interests can quickly escalate into manipulation, pressure, and threats. Traffickers may exploit a teen's desire for connection, validation, or independence, gradually isolating them from trusted adults and peers. They often use secrecy, emotional dependency, or blackmail—such as threatening to share private photos—to gain control, making it difficult for teens to recognize the danger until they feel trapped.

Open, honest conversations between parents, caregivers, and teens are one of the strongest defenses against online exploitation. Talking regularly about social media use, online boundaries, and warning signs empower teens to trust their instincts and seek help early. Creating a safe, nonjudgmental space for discussion helps teens feel comfortable sharing concerns or mistakes without fear. Real safety begins with real talk—because when teens know they can come to you, traffickers lose their power.



85% OF CONTACT IS ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Approximately 85% of initial contact between trafficker and victim happens on social media.

20% NATIONWIDE FOR OUR AREA

Looking at human trafficking across the country, Long Island occurrences put us in the top 20% nationally, according to the Dept. of Justice.

16,554 VICTIMS REPORTED

The Polaris Project found that just 4 years ago, there were 10,359 human trafficking situations, with 16,554 victims reported across the country, but that count does not touch the actual number of victims since it is grossly underreported. Child exploitation and human trafficking are steadily increasing on Long Island.