

HUMAN TRAFFICKING TODAY

106

TRAFFICK  STOP

Discuss the scenarios below and determine whether the scenarios represent sex trafficking, labor trafficking, both, or some other type of violation or misconduct. Discuss the type of perpetrator, recruitment method, and behaviors, signs, or scenarios that indicate that something is wrong.

Pose the following question in each scenario: If you were in this situation, what would you do? Talk about why individuals in these scenarios might initially feel safe, whether grooming techniques were used, and the first sign of something concerning or potentially unsafe. Facilitators should talk about school resources (such as counselors and reduced-fee lunches) and other sources of support (such as community centers and local organizations) that assist with human trafficking and other crimes.



FATIMA

Fatima began dating Ali, who is a member of a local gang, after meeting him online a few months ago. Fatima is 15 and hasn't dated anyone before. Ali is very attentive to her and she really likes him. Fatima's family doesn't have a lot of money; at times they don't have enough food to go around. They live in an area that is sometimes unsafe, largely because of the criminal activity. Ali often takes Fatima out to eat and pays for her food, and he even bought her a new iPhone recently. After a while, Ali tells Fatima that he won't continue to buy things for her unless she chips in. She agrees, but then later realizes that by "chipping in," he meant that he wants to post explicit photos of her online and for her to have sex with individuals who are willing to pay the gang.

Talking points: sex trafficking, gang-related trafficking, romantic recruitment method, survival sex (in exchange for basic necessities, like food and protection), online safety



ELANI

Elani is an honors student and has always gotten very good grades. However, she has been struggling with her AP Biology class, so she decided to seek out help from a tutor after school. The tutor is a college student, only a few years older than her. Elani begins meeting up with him at her house after school. One day, when her parents are not home, the tutor starts flirting with Elani – she flirts back, and they begin texting every day. Elani even starts meeting up with him on the weekends and sometimes sends him some nude photos. After a few months of hanging out, he asks Elani to hook up with his friends. He tells her that they will pay for her to have sex with them, and he really needs money to continue to pay for college. He says that he

will give her some of the money, and that if she really cares about him, that she will do what he asks. He also threatens to post the photos online if she refuses.

Talking points: sex trafficking, online safety (threat of online exploitation), romantic recruitment method, sextortion



FRANKY

Franky's dad always talks about their financial struggles, and Franky sometimes works with his dad on weekends because he feels obligated to help his family. One night, Franky's dad tells him about a potential opportunity to make some extra money through a contact that he recently made - a woman named Malia. Franky talks with Malia, who implies that she needs help with a routine work project and asks Franky to meet her at a motel the following Friday. She also tells Franky to text her a few photos of him for administrative purposes. When Franky arrives, Malia is there with a group of men, and there is a camera set up near the bed. Malia tells Franky that he must have sex with them and that he will be expected to show up for "work" every Friday night. Franky tries to tell his dad what is happening, but his dad doesn't want to hear about it and keeps telling Franky how much they need the money.

Talking points: sex trafficking, trafficking by a family member, child sexual abuse material (CSAM)/pornography, sextortion



SOFIA

Sofia's mother is a fieldworker. One day, her mother's supervisor tells her that she isn't working as efficiently as she used to, and that she needs to bring in a family member to work with her to increase productivity. The supervisor says that if she doesn't, he will have their family deported. The next day, Sofia's mother reluctantly takes Sofia to work with her. The supervisor sexually harasses Sofia, making comments about her appearance; he also touches her inappropriately. He pays them very little and expects them to work long hours, threatening to call the police if they don't comply.

Talking points: labor trafficking, intersection with other crimes (sexual assault), familial-related recruitment, threat of deportation



MATT

Matt is a sophomore softball player. One of his goals is to be the youngest player on the varsity team, so he often stays after the team's practice to work on his pitching and batting techniques. One of Matt's coaches notices his efforts; he also notices that Matt is usually alone on the field and walks home by himself afterwards. He offers to help Matt hone his skills so that he might make the varsity team - he says that he usually charges a lot of money for private training sessions, but that he admires his drive and will work with him for free. Training goes well for a few weeks, but then he insists on driving Matt home afterwards. He tells Matt that he can't keep coaching him for free, but that Matt could pay in another way - by having sex with him. The coach says that if Matt doesn't get extra training, he won't have a chance at making varsity.

Talking points: sex trafficking



YAN

Yan is a nanny living in the U.S. She knows some English, but she is from China and primarily speaks Mandarin. She recently began working full-time for a new family. The mother and father asked for Yan's passport to make a copy, but then said they needed to keep it. They do not permit Yan to speak freely with her family members, who still live in China. Yan lives with the family, and sleeps in a very small room. She previously had a mattress, but it was taken from her room after she broke an expensive family heirloom, even though it was just an accident. Yan spends most of her time caring for the kids, cooking, and cleaning. Yan doesn't cook meals for herself – she is only allowed to eat the family's leftovers, and she doesn't really get breaks to eat meals during the day. Yan gets paid less than minimum wage but sends almost all of her money to her family in China, as she isn't allowed to leave the house without permission.

Talking points: labor trafficking, threat of deportation



ANA

Ana was born and raised in Honduras. She remembers moving to the U.S. a few years ago – her family traveled across the border with many other people. They never received green cards or other documentation after they arrived in the U.S. Ana's parents work in the farming industry, planting and harvesting crops, for the people that brought them to the U.S. They work during all daylight hours, and sometimes longer; Ana has never seen them being paid for their work. Ana's family lives in trailers near the farm. Ana does go to school but has overheard her parents talking with their supervisors about taking Ana out of school and having her work as well.

Talking points: human smuggling, labor trafficking, threat of deportation



LEO

Leo was raised in a household with a lot of domestic violence. When he turned 16, he left home to live with one of his friends. After staying there for a while, Leo's friend said that he couldn't keep living there, but thankfully Leo made some friends online who were in similar situations. They were living together at an abandoned property and invited Leo to stay with them. After staying there for a few nights, Leo found out that there was a lot of drug use and other illicit activities going on around the property. Then, an older man approached him and said if he wanted to keep living there, he would have to engage in sexual activities with the property owner. Leo doesn't want to do that but doesn't think he has anywhere else to go, nor does he have any other friends for emotional support.

Talking points: sex trafficking, survival sex



BILLY

Billy is a freshman in high school. One of his favorite after-school activities is playing video games with his friends online; some require additional purchases to complete the game. Billy's mother prohibited Billy from making these purchases. While playing in multiplayer mode, Billy befriends another fellow gamer named Chuck, who is a more advanced player.

Billy and Chuck begin forging a friendship - Chuck meets with Billy whenever he is online. Chuck spends his time listening to Billy talk about his day. Chuck rarely shares information about himself but is always finding a way to provide compliments and positive affirmations to Billy. Chuck invites Billy to play together, but Billy feels limited in his skill-level because he cannot purchase “expansion packs” to boost his playing ability. Chuck begins buying these expansion packs for Billy and jokingly says, “You’ll owe me later.” One day, Chuck asks Billy to meet him in the lobby area of their favorite game. Before starting, Chuck speaks to Billy in a very different tone and says that it is time for Billy to “pay off his debt.” When Billy questions what Chuck is talking about, Chuck tells Billy that because he has been paying for all of Billy’s in-game purchases, a debt looms over his head and if Billy does not pay Chuck back, Chuck will contact the police. Billy is scared and says that he will find a way to pay. Chuck demands explicit pictures of Billy as “payment” and says this is the only way to clear the debt.

Talking points: debt bondage, sex trafficking, labor trafficking



ALEX

Alex is a senior in high school. Alex recently got accepted into college, which comes with a high tuition and other expenses. Although their family is supportive, family members can only assist by co-signing for student loans. Alex wants to be as self-sufficient as possible and begins looking for job postings on social media. Alex finds an opportunity to sell kitchen knives door-to-door. The pay range is well-above minimum wage and appears to have flexible hours. Without hesitation, Alex calls the phone number on the ad and is hired. Alex’s supervisor, Jerry, begins the onboarding process and lets Alex know that they will start next week. A few days later, Jerry calls Alex for their first assignment: Alex must travel overnight to a town a few hours away to sell in an “upscale neighborhood.” When Alex asked about the pay range, Jerry explains that Alex is only paid by commission, depending on the amount of merchandise sold. Although skeptical, Alex agrees to travel. Three months later, Alex is still working with Jerry, but the company’s name has changed. Alex is now being required to travel out of state to help the company expand to new markets. Jerry has become verbally abusive to Alex because Alex has not sold enough knives. Jerry told Alex that they are not allowed to take breaks and that Alex must spend longer hours advertising the knives. Based on their sales record, Alex has been making below minimum wage. In addition, Jerry is not paying for Alex’s hotel stays because they aren’t meeting daily sales quotas.

Talking points: debt bondage, labor trafficking