

"Grooming"

The shady techniques of online traffickers



1

Identifying a target

Traffickers always try to find young people that show some kind of vulnerability. If your online post shows that you are lonely, depressed or anxious about money, you will become a prime target! A trafficker will pretend that he/she wants to be your friend.

2

Establishing a relationship

Does it sound as if this new online friend really cares about your situation? Does he/she ask personal questions? A trafficker will study everything that is available about you online and build up a profile of who you are! His/her ultimate goal is to win your trust, even if it takes weeks or months to do so.

3

Meeting your needs

A trafficker will pretend to be interested in your current situation, and try to meet your immediate needs. For example: If you want to run away from home, he/she will offer to provide food and shelter. If you are lonely or have a low self-esteem, he/she might pretend to have a romantic interest and start showering you with praise.

4

Isolating you from friends and family

The trafficker wants to be alone with you. He/she will set up a meeting with you and attempt to isolate you from other people by pretending to be your new best friend or even your romantic partner. Often, he/she will start to buy you gifts, alcohol or even drugs, and consume more and more of your time.

5

Starting the abuse

The trafficker will start to claim that you need to do things to pay back the money that he/she has spent on you. Very often, he/she will push you to participate in sexting (sending nudes), or to sell your body for sex. A trafficker will claim that he/she has debt that needs to be paid off, that he/she loves you and that by selling your photos or body, you can help to pay off the debts quickly.

6

Manipulating your mind to maintain control

Do you feel like you owe him/her? Are you constantly pushed to send more photos, have sex with multiple people or appear in porn films? Do you feel like there is no way out? Traffickers are master-minds at making you feel ashamed, trapped and guilty. They make you think that you deserve the pain and suffering.