



5 Warning Signs of Exploitation

Every Student Should Know

A Free Training Resource

Introduction

Exploitation and **trafficking** rarely begin with “kidnapping.” More often, it begins with subtle patterns of **manipulation**, **grooming**, and **vulnerability**. By learning the **signs**, students can **protect** themselves, look out for their friends, and have the courage to **say something**.

This resource is designed as a quick training tool for:

Students: to recognize red flags

Parents & Teachers: to spark conversations

Youth Leaders & Pastors: to guide discussions in groups

The 5 Warning Signs



1 Isolation

When someone is being slowly cut off from family, friends, and trusted adults. Exploiters want victims to feel alone.

→ Ask yourself: Am I (or is my friend) avoiding normal relationships or hiding new ones?

2

Grooming with Gifts

Free rides, new clothes, cash, or even promises of opportunities. These “gifts” often come with strings attached.

→ Ask yourself: Am I (or my friend) receiving things that seem “too good to be true”?

3

Control of Communication

A new “friend” insists on secrecy — hiding DMs, deleting messages, or telling you not to share things with parents or teachers. → Ask yourself: Who in my life is asking me to hide conversations or lie about where I’ve been?

4

Emotional Manipulation

Threats, guilt-tripping, or constant flattery meant to create dependency. One day they praise you, the next they pressure you. → Ask yourself: Does this relationship make me feel anxious, scared, or trapped?

5

Sudden Changes in Behavior

Dropping grades, new risky behaviors, or secretive routines. Often, these changes are a cry for help.

→ Ask yourself: Have I (or my friend) changed in ways that seem out of character — and am I ignoring the warning signs?



What To Do Next

If you notice these warning signs:

1

Say Something.

Find a safe adult you trust – a teacher, parent, counselor, or coach.

Don't Stay Silent.

Your voice could save your life – or someone else's.

2

3

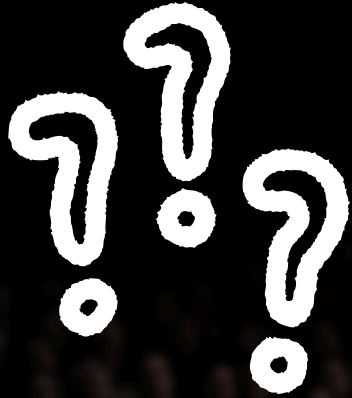
Pray for Courage.

God gives wisdom and strength when we feel powerless.

📖 “Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute.” – Proverbs 31:8

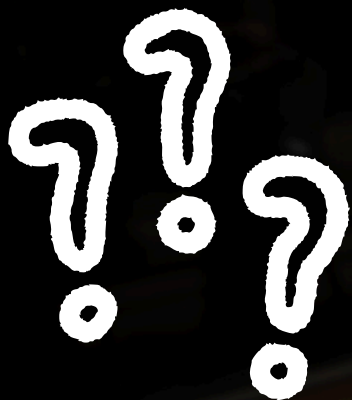


Reflection & Conversation



Which warning sign stood out the most to you? Why?

Who in your life could you turn to if you saw these warning signs?



What can you do this week to help create a safer environment for your friends and school?

Encouragement for You



This is just the beginning. Say Something provides school assemblies, church trainings, and community resources that equip people to stand against exploitation.



“Direct your children onto the right path, and when they are older, they will not leave it.” – Proverbs 22:6



Call to Action

👉 Want more free resources?

Download our [Parent & Teacher Guide: How to Talk About Online Safety in 10 Minutes](#)

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