



SOCIAL MEDIA AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING



Social media has been used by traffickers to recruit victims, to proliferate their trafficking operations, and to control victims through restricting their social media access, impersonating the victim, or spreading lies and rumors online. (Polaris Project)



150,000

New escort ads are posted online every day. (Thorn)



55%

of domestic minor sex trafficking survivors who became victims in 2015 or later reported meeting their traffickers for the first time using text, a website, or a mobile app. (Thorn, 2018)



75%

of survivors who were recruited (in 2004 or later) were advertised online. (Thorn)



50

women said that they were sexually abused as victims of Backpage, an online sex marketplace that pleaded guilty to human trafficking charges. (Business Insider, 2019)



82%

of online sex crimes against minors, the offender used the victim's social networking sites to gain information about the victim. (Internet Safety 101)



APPS

The National Human Trafficking Hotline has recorded recruitment for sex and labor trafficking on social media platforms including, but not limited to, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Kik, Meetme.com, WhatsApp, and dating sites/apps like Tinder, Grindr, and Plenty of Fish. (Polaris)





SOCIAL MEDIA SAFETY

How to Stay Safe Online

- Keep all social media profiles private and only accept follow requests from trusted friends and family.
- Never give out personal information or pictures online, even to followers who are friends and family.
- Avoid online strangers, especially those who ask for personal information or pictures, offers to send gifts or money, or anyone who makes sexual references, statements or requests.
- Disable location services for social media apps.
- Avoid posting that you are going on vacation or posting pictures while on vacation until you are back home.
- Block or report accounts that share sexually explicit content.
- Never agree to meet anyone in person that you only know from social media.
- Be aware of friends and family who are particularly vulnerable to recruitment.
- Risk factors include: substance abuse, mental health concerns, involvement with the child welfare system, runaways, and homeless youth.