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OHIO ATTORNEY GENERAL

# Human Trafficking: AN ONLINE THREAT

**Human traffickers often use the anonymity of the web to find and victimize vulnerable members of society, especially young people, but anyone can be targeted.**

## **Traffickers use social media as a tool by:**

- Recruiting people with fake or misleading job posts.
- Posing as a peer to try to make friends and gain trust.
- Befriending those who seem lonely and emotionally vulnerable.
- Providing comfort for those being cyberbullied.
- Asking for sexually explicit photos and using them as blackmail.

## **Protect yourself and your children by:**

- Staying current with apps, social media and websites that your children may be using.
- Letting your children know that it is OK to talk to you about unsafe interactions with others.
- Never giving out personal, identifying information, such as your address or Social Security number.
- Never sending sexually explicit photos of yourself online or by phone.
- Monitoring your child's internet usage and talking to them about their activities, including online gaming.
- Never agreeing to meet someone you don't know in a private place.

**PROTECTING ★ THE ★ UNPROTECTED**

For more information on human trafficking, visit  
[www.OhioAttorneyGeneral.gov/HumanTrafficking](http://www.OhioAttorneyGeneral.gov/HumanTrafficking).

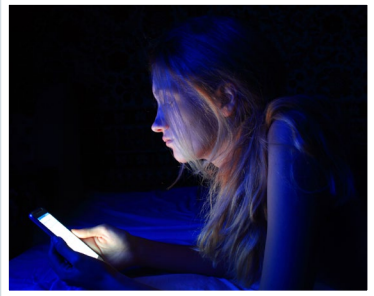


About **85%** of teen social media users agree that people can show different sides of themselves on social media that they cannot show offline.

Source: Pew Research Center

## Here are some signs that a youth may be being groomed for trafficking:

- The youth's behavior or personality has changed drastically after online contact.
- The youth is isolated and spending all of his or her time online, often with "new" friends.
- The youth has lost interest in old friends and activities.
- The youth is hiding online activity and being secretive about online friends and/or his or her cellphone.
- The youth is relying on social media connections for emotional support and love.
- The youth is spending time talking to adults who offer flattery or compliments.
- Online users are sending the youth inappropriate materials.



About **42%** of teens have seen someone else post something about them that they cannot change or control.

Source: Pew Research Center

## Report Suspicious Activity

Call 9-1-1 if you think someone faces immediate harm; do not intervene. To report other suspicious activity, call the nonemergency number of your local police or the 24-hour

**NATIONAL HUMAN TRAFFICKING HOTLINE (888-3737-888),**

which sends information directly to Ohio's anti-human trafficking response team.



**Ohio Attorney General's  
Human Trafficking Initiative**

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