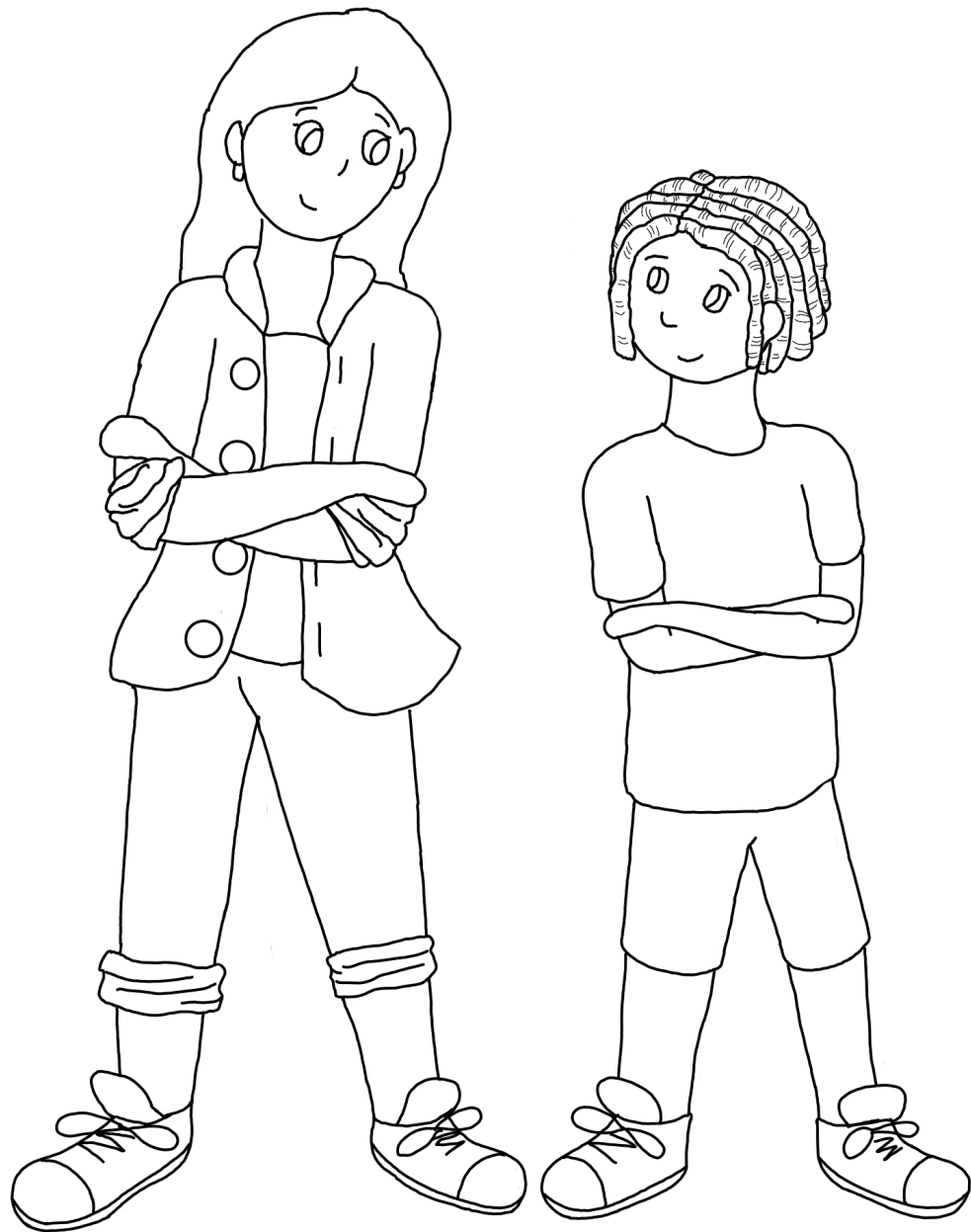


Safe and Healthy Relationships Leader's Guide



Psalm 139:1-14

You have searched me, LORD, and you know me.
You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar.
You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways.

Before a word is on my tongue, you, LORD, know it completely.
You hem me in behind and before, and you lay your hand upon me.
Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain.

Where can I go from your Spirit?
Where can I flee from your presence?

If I go up to the heavens, you are there;
if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.
If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea,
even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast.

If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me,"
even the darkness will not be dark to you;
the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you.

For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb.
I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made;
your works are wonderful, I know that full well.

Safe and Healthy Relationships

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Healthy Relationships

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Session 2:

Online Safety

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Understanding and Preventing Sexual Exploitation and Trafficking

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Making a Safety Plan and Additional Resources

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YOUTH GUIDE PROJECT TEAM:

Writers:

Deacon Erica Larson, Director of Faith Formation, Lake Nokomis Lutheran Church, Minneapolis, Minnesota

Joy McElroy, Executive Director, Cherish All Children – Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota

Illustrator:

Sarah Zaepfel, Artist, member of Lake Nokomis Lutheran Church, Minneapolis, Minnesota

Youth Focus Group:

Gabriel, Jonah, Knute, Mareta and Vicar Anne, Christ on Capitol Hill, Saint Paul, Minnesota

See full biographies and pictures at the end of the guide.

Questions or request for assistance may be directed to info@cherishallchildren.org.

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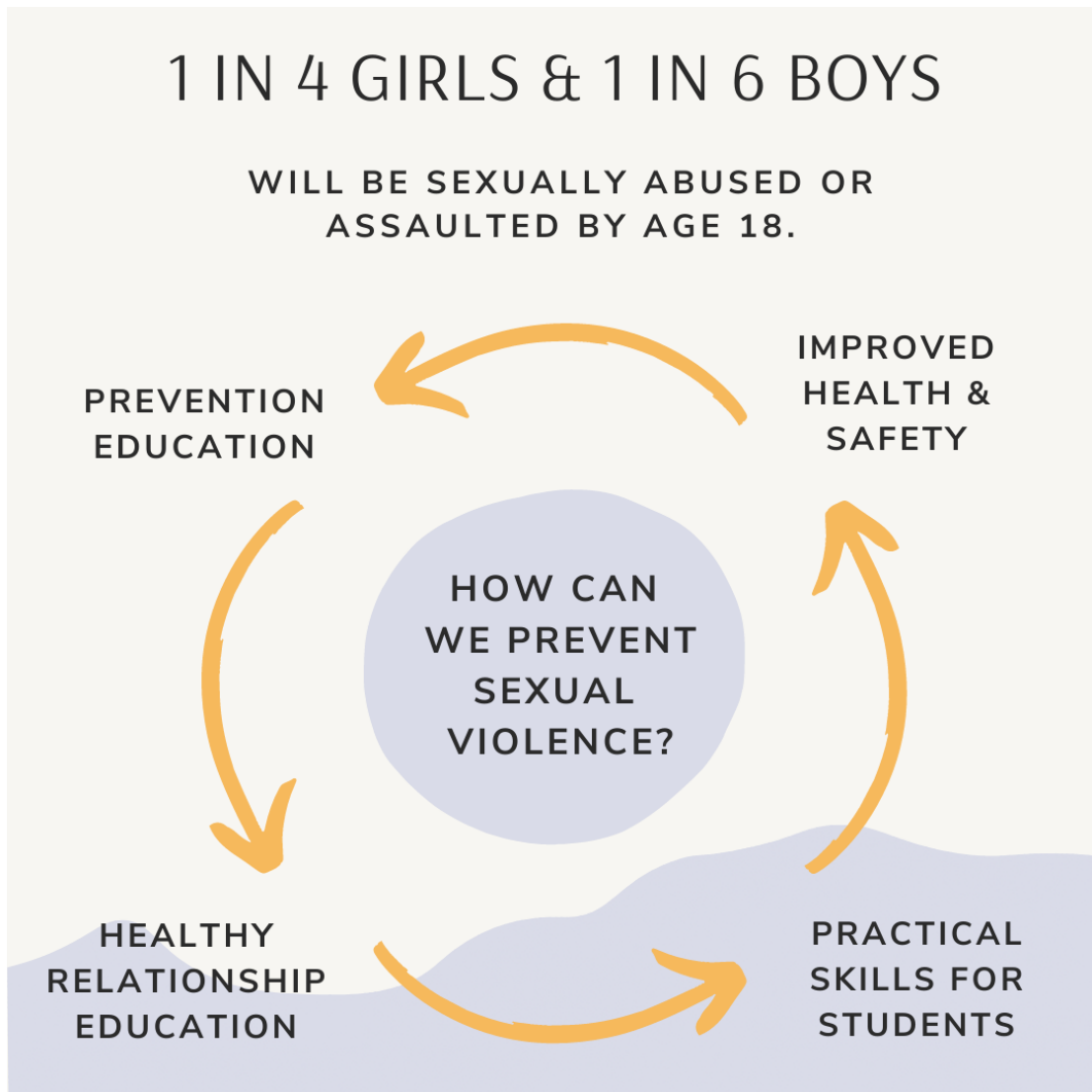
This leader's guide may be printed for educational use and youth guides may be printed for participants to use and to take home.

Leader Introductory Information

Thank you for bringing this valuable series to the youth at your church! By engaging young people in discussions around safe and healthy relationships, they can gain lifelong skills that prepare them to make safe and healthy choices.

These sessions were created for middle school and high school age youth, to be used in confirmation classes and youth groups. You can adapt some of your language or the exercises to best fit your group. While schools and individual homes may be covering some of the content in these sessions, oftentimes these discussions are not happening, and youth seek out the information themselves through the internet. Offering this learning in our faith communities offers a unique opportunity to connect with youth in a safe space while reinforcing their value as a child of God.

Cherish All Children's vision is raising healthy generations free from sexual exploitation. We partner with churches by providing education, resources and tools to both adults and youth to promote healthy and safe relationships, guided by our Christian values. We are committed to preventing child sexual exploitation and trafficking, and we are saddened by the realities of why this work is so critical. Here is an image from one of our community partners, the Minnesota Coalition Against Sexual Assault (MNCASA):



Disclosure

Entering into these conversations may evoke strong emotions from a young person who has experienced abuse, neglect, victim-blaming, violence or exploitation. Allow youth to “pass” and not participate in an activity if that’s their choice, and offer them an opportunity to talk with you or another trusted adult. It is also best practice to have two unrelated adults present for the safety of the youth and the adult leaders.

In each session, there’s a sample mandated reporter statement you can read to let the youth know your role in helping to keep them safe. In the last session, there is a list of resources you may wish to look at in advance, and look up local resources as well, such as your county’s child protection services. If your church has a child safety policy, be sure you follow the guidance for reporting and getting the appropriate people involved in any potential investigation. If your church does not have a child safety policy, this would be a good time to get that process started! Your synod office can provide guidance and Cherish All Children has supported churches in this process as well.

What if a participant reveals they or someone they know is a victim or survivor of abuse, exploitation or trafficking?

1. Listen with respect in a nonjudgmental way, expressing appreciation for their willingness to share this with you.
2. If this is a reportable situation, remind them of your responsibility as a mandated reporter (you can even read the statement you’ve shared each session). Let them know you will keep this confidential from anyone who is not a part of the reporting process. Ensure them you are here to support them in getting safe, but don’t overpromise things you may not be able to do.
3. It is not your role to investigate the situation, but asking key questions about their immediate safety may be important such as:
 - a. How safe do you feel right now in your situation?
 - b. Is there any specific information I can help you find?
 - c. Would you like to talk with someone else, such as a counselor or therapist?
 - d. Are you currently being threatened or feel you are in a dangerous situation?
4. Report the situation according to your child safety policies, or to your pastor who may involve local law enforcement or a child welfare organization as appropriate.
5. Continue to support the youth in your role as a trustworthy, safe adult in their life.

Partnering with You

Cherish All Children is here to offer support as you lead these sessions. If you’re interested in having us come to co-lead a session, lead a parent/caregiver session, speak to the congregation on this topic or have any other questions before getting started, you can reach out to us at info@cherishallchildren.org.

Session 1 Healthy Relationships

Supplies Needed

- Starbursts (or another candy with multiple colors)
- Youth guides
- Small paper or notecards
- Pens or pencils
- Colored pencils or fine markers for the coloring/doodling page
- One red flag for each person (template for copying found on page 30)
- Internet connection
- Computer
- Projector and screen
- A box that reflections can be put into (Reflections Box)

Ice Breaker (10 minutes)

- Distribute one Starburst to each youth. Divide the youth into groups of four or five according to what color Starburst they received. You may need to adjust if siblings end up in the same group. Once in small groups, have them introduce themselves to each other.
 - Option for larger groups: You could have two or more yellow groups, pink groups, orange groups and red groups.
- *Now that you're in groups, think for a moment about what a really good friendship or dating relationship looks like. With your small group, make a list of the top ten qualities or characteristics you look for in a healthy friendship or relationship.* Have them work as a group for three to four minutes to come up with ten qualities. They can write them in their own youth guide on page 3 or have one person act as a recorder. Come back together and have each group introduce themselves and read their list.
 - Option for larger groups: When reporting, start with a group and have them name one quality from their list. The next group reads one quality and so on, with each group sharing one quality that hasn't been said by any previous group. You can do one round of this or continue as time allows.

Introduce the topic: *For the next four weeks we will be talking about safe and healthy relationships. We'll talk about friendships and dating relationships, social media and online safety, and abusive relationships and sexual exploitation. We'll also make a safety plan for ourselves and talk about resources and people we can reach out to for help. Today our focus is on healthy relationships, which includes friendships and dating relationships. Some of you may not even be thinking about dating at this point in your life and that's okay. Having healthy friendships can lead to healthy boundaries and interactions in our dating relationships.*

There's also a coloring or doodling page for each session, so feel free to grab some colored pencils or markers!

Team Agreements (10 minutes)

During these four sessions, we are going to think of ourselves as a team so that we can have helpful and positive group interactions. If you've ever been on a team before, what makes a group of people a team? Get two or three ideas from the group. A successful team is typically one that is in agreement about how they will interact and work together. So, let's create some team agreements for our group. What are some agreements or promises we can make to each other that will help guide our time together?

Post the team agreements in a place where everyone can see them and they can remain posted throughout all four sessions. Be sure they include the following, or add them as the leader:

- **Respect** – be kind when speaking and listening to one another, recognizing that we all come with our own experiences and perspectives.
- **Safe Space** – respect and keep confidential any personal information shared during these sessions; also choose the information you want to share carefully. If you want to share what you've learned, do so without sharing people's names or other personal information.
- **Take care of yourself** – seek support when you need to.
- ...others the group decides upon.

Share a statement about being a mandated reporter, such as the following:

Together we'll be learning about ways you can keep yourself safe and engage in healthy relationships. It is also my job to help keep you safe. If you tell me someone is hurting you or someone you know, or if you are going to hurt yourself, it is my job to report this confidentially, and with your knowledge. Together we will find the support needed.

Topic Content and Skill Building (25–30 minutes)

We started out by making lists of healthy relationship qualities. Raise your hand if you've seen those qualities in your own relationships or in others. How many of you have seen some unhealthy behaviors in relationships or friendships?

Let's get back in our same small groups. This time, talk about unhealthy relationship characteristics you have seen and make a list of those characteristics in your guide on page 3. You might even share a story about something you've seen or experienced.

- Give groups five to seven minutes to list unhealthy characteristics and then share them with the larger group.

Consent

How many of you have heard the word “consent” when talking about relationships? Can anyone give a definition of consent?

- Get feedback on these two questions and then share this definition and have them fill in the blanks in their guide on page 3.

Consent is permission for something to happen or agreement to do something.

- Continue discussion, and share:
Consent includes a clearly stated yes. Part of what we want to learn about healthy relationships is that your body belongs to you! We get to choose what happens with our own body, whether we are with family, friends, strangers or a dating partner.
- **Video Options:** Choose one or more of these short one to three minute videos to show your group depending on their age and maturity level.
 - a. Consent Explained: What Is It? youtu.be/5vmsfhw-czA (geared towards teens, specifically addressing sexual consent)
 - b. Consent for kids - YouTube (recommended for younger or older youth, bodily autonomy including hand holding, hugs and kisses)
 - c. Consent is a Yes - YouTube Anything Else is Just a Guess (full title) (recommended for younger or older youth)
- After watching the video, ask if they have any reactions, or if they’ve learned something new about consent. For example, acknowledging that someone can say yes, but can also change their mind.

Read Psalm 139:1-14 to share our worth as children of God, and 1 Corinthians 13:4-7, explaining that it was given to a community of faith as a guide for how to treat one another. It is a fitting guide for friendships and dating relationships.

Psalm 139:1-14

I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made!

1 Corinthians 13:4-7

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

Healthy and Unhealthy Relationship Qualities

In your small groups you all came up with some wonderful lists of healthy and unhealthy relationship qualities. Let's look at some specific characteristics that we want to highlight...many of which you already shared!

- Have participants take turns reading the healthy and the corresponding unhealthy relationship qualities and take time to discuss or answer questions.

HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS	UNHEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS
<p>Equality Making decisions together.</p>	<p>Control One person makes all the decisions, is demanding and tells the other what to do.</p>
<p>Honesty and Communication Sharing your feelings and thoughts with each other, making decisions together and disagreeing in a constructive way.</p>	<p>Dishonesty and Poor Communication One person lies, hides things from the other, or steals the other person's things. There is miscommunication and the inability to talk about difficult things.</p>
<p>Physical Safety Feeling safe with each other and not scared of getting hurt.</p>	<p>Physical Abuse One person hits, slaps, grabs or shoves the other.</p>
<p>Respect Listening and accepting each other's opinions, friends and interests.</p>	<p>Disrespect One person makes fun of the other's looks, feelings, thoughts and opinions.</p>
<p>Comfort Feeling good being yourself and being comfortable saying "I'm sorry."</p>	<p>Intimidation and Discomfort One person makes threats like "I'll break up with you if..." The other may be afraid to disagree.</p>
<p>Sexual Respectfulness Practicing consent and never pressuring or forcing each other to do things that make the other uncomfortable.</p>	<p>Sexual Abuse One person pressures or forces sexual activities the other does not want to do.</p>
<p>Independence Having friends and hobbies outside of the relationship and not depending on the other to feel good.</p>	<p>Dependence One person thinks they can't live without the other and even makes threats to do something drastic if the relationship ends.</p>
<p>Humor Having fun in the relationship.</p>	<p>Hostility One person is mean to the other.</p>

Red Flags Exercise

Unhealthy relationships don't typically start out with such obvious characteristics as what we've just read. Before that point, there might be some unsettling behaviors or "red flags" to pay attention to. For example, one red flag might be that one person in the relationship often criticizes the other, saying it's just in fun.

Read through this list of relationship situations, telling the group to raise their red flags each time they think the friend/partner's behavior is a possible "red flag." Have them circle the red flag behaviors in their guide. A red flag template to copy and use in this exercise can be found on page 30.

1. They encourage you.
2. There is a large age gap in the relationship. (This can indicate a power imbalance and is a red flag for potential exploitation.)
3. They ask what you want to do on the weekend.
4. You constantly feel nervous or anxious about the relationship.
5. They use guilt to get you to do what they want.
6. They cheer you on at games or recitals.
7. You have a gut feeling that the relationship is not going in a good direction. (Trust your gut — our bodies tell us things.)
8. They are condescending or belittling.
9. You feel pressure to engage in risky behavior.
10. They make you laugh when you're sad.
11. You feel pressure to share things you don't want to share.
12. They use bribery or pressure to get you to do what they want.
13. They become jealous when you spend time with other friends or with family.
14. They are proud when you succeed.
15. They check in on you multiple times a day and want to know where you are at all times. (Controlling vs. caring)
16. They have constant mood swings.
17. They seem obsessed with you.
18. They respect your opinions.
19. They comment when you look "too good" when going out with others.
20. They say "I love you." (This could be a healthy characteristic or a red flag depending on the depth of the relationship. If it's said too soon, it could be a red flag, or it can also be used to manipulate.)

Watch Video "Because I love you – Deflecting responsibility" joinonlove.org/videos/

(Preview to determine if suitable for your group.)

- Can you think of other possible red flags we should pay attention to in our relationships?

Discussion Questions (5–10 minutes)

Depending on the size of your group and the amount of time you have, you can break into smaller groups or ask questions in the larger group.

- *What have you learned from those you look up to about healthy relationships? What's the best example of a healthy relationship that you know? What makes it so good?*
- *What makes us vulnerable to entering into unhealthy relationships?*
(Possible answers: Having low self-esteem, growing up in an unsupportive or abusive environment, seeking self-worth from outside sources are some things that make us vulnerable. You can point out that the artwork for this session has "I Am" statements from scripture that remind us of our worth as children of God. When we know that we are beloved children of God, we realize that we deserve to be treated well, and that we are called to do the same.)

If you have additional time:

- *What would our world look like if we intentionally honored each other, simply because of our worth and value as human beings and children of God?*
- *What is one thing you've learned during this session that you want to remember?*

Closing Prayer and Reflections Box (5 minutes)

- Close in prayer.
- Hand out Session 1 Family Follow-up Resource for youth to take home.
- Each participant places a word, sentence or question into a box (Reflections Box) as they exit. The leader will keep these confidential, while allowing for addressing them as needed in future sessions or talking with a youth individually if requested.

Resources

Resources are included at the end of each session for youth to engage and learn more.

Follow on Social Media: @loveisrespect, @amazeinternational, @join1love

Websites:

loveisrespect.org/

amaze.org/?topic=healthy-relationships

scarleteen.com/

joinonelove.org/

Session 2 Online Safety

Supplies Needed

- A healthy snack or treat
- Youth guides
- Youths' phones for Ice Breaker
- Small paper or notecards
- Pens or pencils
- Colored pencils or fine markers for the coloring/doodling page
- Internet connection
- Computer
- Projector and screen
- A box that reflections can be put into (Reflections Box)

Ice Breaker (10 minutes)

The Instagram Ice Breaker

- Stay in the full group for this ice breaker, unless the group is too large to do this in 10 minutes, then break into smaller circles.
- Ask youth to scroll through their Instagram, Facebook, or whatever social media they use to share one photo with the group and explain why they picked it. If someone doesn't have a phone or use social media, have them draw a quick image in their guide on page 7 of anything they'd like and explain why they chose to draw that.
- Don't give any more details, such as answering if it has to be a picture of themselves or if it can be anything. This will help their personality shine through and tell others a little something about themselves.

Review Team Agreements (5 minutes)

- Review agreements the group created last session.
- Also answer any questions that may have been placed into the Reflections Box. Protect anonymity by paraphrasing what the participants had written.
- Share the **mandated reporter statement**:
Together we'll be learning about ways you can keep yourself safe and engage in healthy relationships. It is also my job to help keep you safe. If you tell me someone is hurting you or someone you know, or if you are going to hurt yourself, it is my job to report this confidentially, and with your knowledge. Together we will find the support needed.

Topic Content and Skill Building (25–30 minutes)

Last week we talked about healthy relationships together, and today we're going to talk about how this translates into relationships in the online world. This can include social media, gaming, apps, direct messaging (DM), sending photos or any other ways of engaging in a relationship using the internet. Relationships and friendships can be confusing sometimes, and when you're talking to someone online, it can be even more complicated.

We also want to recognize that social media and gaming give you great ways to stay connected with friends and family. The purpose of today's topic is to give you the tools to keep yourself safe in online spaces, recognize the potential dangers, and seek help if needed.

Individual Exercise: Do you know...?

- Have youth open their guides to page 7. Instruct them to draw a line to match each term with what they believe is the correct definition in their guide. Give students a few minutes to complete this exercise. Here are the correct answers:
 - **Catfishing:** When a person creates a fake online identity to trick someone into thinking that they want to have a relationship.
 - **Sextortion:** When a catfish or other predator threatens to spread sexual images of you unless you do as they say (a form of blackmail).
 - **Revenge porn:** When someone shares private pictures (meant only for them) typically after a break-up.
 - **Grooming:** A process an exploiter uses to win over a person's trust and even love, in order to control and sexually exploit them.
 - **Sexting:** When someone sends a sexual photo or message to another person.
- Once all have matched the terms and definitions, go through each term and have them share which definition they matched it with to see if they matched them correctly. Provide the correct definitions and share the additional learning below.
- Understand that youth may have more knowledge and experience than adults realize as youth have grown up in the digital age. Help them understand that talking about this in youth group and at home are ways we are here to support them, especially if or when anything gets uncomfortable.

Additional learning for each term:

- **Catfishing:** A catfish will watch what someone posts on social media or game chats to figure out the best way to manipulate them. This can include false promises, gifting physical or virtual merchandise and acting like a real, trusted friend. Once trust has been built, the catfish pressures you to do things to prove your friendship or love, or dares you to do things, grooming you into exploitation.
- **Sextortion:** This form of blackmail happens when a catfish or exploiter threatens to spread sexual images of you unless you do as they say. They may ask for more explicit photos or videos in order to keep quiet. In the meantime, they may be sharing what you send in the underground market or dark web.
- **Revenge porn:** The newer term for this is image-based sexual abuse, as that is what an ex-partner is doing by sharing a photo that was meant to stay private. There are legal consequences for this activity.
- **Grooming:** Exploiters and traffickers are excellent manipulators, using grooming to win over someone, building trust, promising acceptance and even love. They will look for a vulnerability – desires, fears, loneliness, addiction, difficulties at home or with friends, mental health issues, anything that they can promise you to fill that need. We'll talk more about vulnerabilities in our next session and how we can be there for each other and for our friends.

- **Sexting:** While it may seem harmless to share a photo with someone you're in a relationship with, there are many potential consequences.
 - It is a crime to make, send or receive sexually explicit images of anyone under the age of 18, even if both people are under the age of 18. Some cases have led to prosecution of minors possessing these images.
 - Even if the image "goes away" like in some apps, the image can be screenshot or captured in other ways, and then shared with others you never intended to have seen it. Consider if the photo you're thinking of sharing was shown to your family, youth group or the whole school.

Video "Your Photo Fate"

We're going to watch a two-minute video and then talk through any questions you have about what we've talked about so far. You can also share any situations you know about that happened at school, with a friend, or to you.
Your Photo Fate: [youtube.com/watch?v=d5b1XZAKTIk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d5b1XZAKTIk)

- After watching, instruct youth to write one or more responses they could give to someone who asks them to share something they're not comfortable with. (Youth Guide page 7. Give a couple minutes for writing.)
- Then have the group discuss these together:
 - What else happened in this video that could have worked out differently?
- Responses may include: the individual could have kept the photo private, the first friends could have stopped it "That's not cool", friends or classmates could have stopped it by reporting it to a trusted adult, the Mom can work with the daughter and the school to stop the spread of the image, and get authorities involved to remove it from the internet.
 - Without revealing the person, has this ever happened to someone you know? What were the consequences? This can include consequences for the person exploited, the exploiter or anyone else involved.

Have youth go back into their guide and write what they could tell a friend who's thinking about sending a nude or partially nude image to another person. (Give a couple minutes for writing.)

No one has the right to decide who should see someone else's body. Sharing and forwarding images violates trust, and exposes the person to potential ridicule, shame and even danger. As we learned when we discussed sexting, it is illegal to make, send or receive sexually explicit images of anyone under the age of 18, even if both people are under the age of 18. There's also help available if you or someone you know has shared pictures. This is not about shaming anyone – we're here to support you and your family.

In the next session, we're going to talk more about the harms of pornography, which is also called online child sexual abuse material when it involves anyone under 18 years of age.

For information about reporting and removing explicit content depicting minors online, go to [MissingKids.org/GetHelpNow](https://www.MissingKids.org/GetHelpNow).

Reflect on Bible verses that speak to honoring one another, acting as disciples in the world (being a good friend) and loving one another.

Romans 12:10

Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves.

Ephesians 4:2

Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.

John 13:35

By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.

Small Group Exercise: Staying Safe Online – Five Things I Can Do

Let's think about what we've learned so far today, including the terms we learned and the "Your Photo Fate" video. Get back together in the small group you were in earlier, and come up with a list of five things you can personally do to stay safe online. You can write these in your guide on page 8. Then we'll come back together as a group to share and learn from each other.

Hear from the groups, and add these key points if not shared:

- Set your accounts to private so you get to approve your followers.
- Be careful who you approve – everyone isn't who they seem to be online.
- Don't share things online that can reveal your location.
- Trust your gut. If you feel uncomfortable, remove yourself from the conversation or game, block the person, talk to a trusted adult or report it.
- Avoid hashtags like #lonely, #hatemylife – anything a predator may look for to expose a vulnerability.
- Be cautious about sharing pictures.
- Be aware of and pay attention to red flags, such as, "u alone?"
- Talk to a friend or trusted adult if you feel uncomfortable about something.
- Have an exit plan to leave the conversation or game.
- Report it – even if, or especially if, someone is threatening you.
- Support your friends and be sure you have people who will support you.

Discussion Questions (5–10 minutes)

Depending on the size of your group and the amount of time you have, you can break into small groups or ask questions in the larger group.

- *What are some red flags you can be aware of with someone you meet online?*
- *Do you know who you would go to if you needed to talk about something uncomfortable or unsafe happening online?*

If you have additional time:

- *What impressions and ideas about sexuality do we get from video games, social media and other online content?*
- *What is one thing you've learned during this session that you want to remember?*

Closing Prayer and Reflections Box (5 minutes)

- Close in prayer.
- Hand out Session 2 Family Follow-up Resource for youth to take home.
- Each participant places a word, sentence or question into a box (Reflections Box) as they exit. The leader will keep these confidential, while allowing for addressing them as needed in future sessions; or, talking with a youth individually if requested.

Resources

Resources are included at the end of each session for youth to engage and learn more.

Follow on Social Media: @netsmartz, @netflixandconsent, @thorn

Websites:

missingkids.org/NetSmartz

love146.org/online-safety/

youthonline.sharedhope.org/

wearepact.org/guides

connectsafely.org/parentguides

stopsextortion.com/

Session 3

Understanding and Preventing Sexual Exploitation and Trafficking

Supplies Needed

- A healthy snack or treat
- Youth guides
- Small paper or notecards
- Pens or pencils
- Colored pencils or fine markers for the coloring/doodling page
- Internet connection
- Computer
- Projector and screen
- A box that reflections can be put into (Reflections Box)

Ice Breaker (10 minutes – This is a full session, let's get started!)

Dare to Name Three Emotions

- Divide into smaller groups of 4-5 by birth months. Jan-March birthdays are one group, etc., based on the size of your group.
- Ask youth to share with each other three emotions they've felt in the past couple days. They can also share how one or more of these emotions affected them in that moment. You can share that the primary emotions include anger, fear, sadness, disgust, surprise, anticipation, trust, and joy. These branch off to include many more which they may have felt. If members of your group have difficulty naming emotions, you can let them know this list is on page 10 in their youth guide to get them started.
- Return to the full group and have individuals share one of their emotions or ask just a few to share depending on time.

Review Team Agreements (5 minutes)

- Review agreements the group created.
- Also answer any questions that may have been placed into the Reflections Box. Protect anonymity by paraphrasing what the participants had written.
- **Share mandated reporter statement:**
Together we'll be learning about ways you can keep yourself safe and engage in healthy relationships. It is also my job to help keep you safe. If you tell me someone is hurting you or someone you know, or if you are going to hurt yourself, it is my job to report this confidentially, and with your knowledge. Together we will find the support needed.

Topic Content and Skill Building (30-35 minutes)

Last week we talked about keeping yourself safe in online spaces, and today we'll continue some of that discussion along with keeping yourself safe when in person. We'll learn about sexual exploitation, what that involves and how it can happen, and about sex trafficking of minors. This session may bring up more difficult emotions if someone has experienced any form of sexual abuse or violence, or knows someone who has. Please know that you can take a break if you need to or come and talk with me later if you'd like.

In our Ice Breaker, we identified emotions we've felt. Sometimes, we hide our emotions from others or even from ourselves. We may do this for many reasons, such as protecting ourselves if we've been hurt, or as a result of social conditioning, such as being told "boys don't cry" or other messages that keep us from being our true selves. Being able to identify and share our emotions with safe people will help us handle difficult emotions and allow us to experience positive emotions more fully! In a healthy relationship, this may be called "being vulnerable with each other" as we open up and share our true selves with each other.

Vulnerabilities

- *Today, we're going to talk about vulnerabilities in a different way, in terms of how they might play a part in someone being taken advantage of.*
- *Here's a definition we're going to use in this context, that you can write in your guide on page 10. A vulnerability is something that can make it easier for someone to be taken advantage of, or to be harmed physically or emotionally.*
- *We don't want to think of vulnerabilities as weaknesses, as we all have vulnerabilities and they are a part of who we are. Just being young can be a vulnerability, but I sure don't consider that a weakness!*
- Have youth turn to page 10 and write down some vulnerabilities they see in their friends, classmates, or in themselves. (Give students a few minutes to write in their guides, and then ask some to share out loud with the group.)
- As the leader, you may choose to share a vulnerability you have as part of the discussion, being careful to keep this focused on the youth and relating to them. Here's a list from previous Cherish All Children small groups you can also use to add to their lists:
 - Low self-esteem
 - Wanting to fit in
 - Lonely
 - Naive, too trusting
 - Issues at home
 - Few or no friends
 - Depression or other mental illness
 - Drug or alcohol use/abuse

In addition to those we've discussed, significant vulnerabilities that may be present in youth who are exploited or trafficked also include:

- Homelessness
- Poverty
- History of sexual abuse
- Parental instability - drug/alcohol abuse, emotional, physical or sexual abuse
- Individuals living with a disability
- Individuals who identify as LGBTQIA+ due to oppression, social stigma, lack of family or community support
- BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) youth due to oppression, systemic racism, and generational trauma

It's important to recognize and understand our own vulnerabilities so we can seek healthy, positive support when needed.

What is Sexual Exploitation and Trafficking?

We'll define these terms and gain a deeper understanding of how you can keep yourself safe or support a friend who may be at risk at some point. (These definitions are also in the youth guide, page 11.)

- **Sexual exploitation** happens when anything of value or a promise of value (like money, drugs, food, a place to stay, rent, or higher status in a gang or group) is given to you or another person in exchange for any type of sex. A grooming process is often used.
 - This includes involving minors in pornography, threatening to or sharing sexually explicit photos or videos, strip clubs and exotic dancing.
- **Online sexual exploitation** includes grooming, coercing, and blackmailing minors for sexual purposes (sextortion); and consuming, sharing, and live-streaming child sexual abuse material (child pornography).
- **Trafficking** may involve a third party who facilitates and profits from the exploitation. However, any child under 18 who is involved in a commercial sex act is legally a victim of trafficking, regardless of whether there is a third party involved.

Oftentimes a young person doesn't even realize they're being exploited, or doesn't realize the situation they're in might lead to exploitation or trafficking.

Video "30 Second Facts About Child Trafficking"

We're going to watch a 5-minute video from Love146, an international organization that educates youth to protect themselves from exploitation, and works with young people who have been trafficked. They'll share 10 quick facts about child trafficking. It's important to seek out facts from reputable organizations rather than believing and even re-posting sensationalized stories often shared on these topics. Video: [30 Second Facts About Child Trafficking - Love146](#)

How Does Sexual Exploitation and Trafficking Happen?

- People looking to exploit youth will prey on any vulnerability a youth might have.
- They are expert manipulators, working to create a relationship, building trust and loyalty, promising love, acceptance, excitement or just fulfilling basic needs such as food and shelter.
- This can happen in person or through online recruitment, often over time to build trust. This is called the grooming process.

Individual Exercise: Who Are My Safe People?

In the next session you'll be developing a safety plan for yourself. One important part of this plan is identifying two to three adults and one to three friends who can be part of your support network. These are people you can go to and talk about anything difficult that may be going on in your life.

- Direct youth to open their guide to page 11 and take a few minutes to think about who the safe adults and safe friends are in their lives, and then write these in their guide.

Hopefully you were able to identify some safe people in your life, and next I encourage you to talk with them and let them know they are one of your people! If you had a hard time coming up with some people, let me know and we can work through this together. You could leave a note in our closing Reflections Box for us to talk more if you'd like.

Talking About the Harms of Pornography

Depending on your group and your comfort level, you can say you're just going to read some information, and then allow for discussion as the group chooses. However, please don't skip this altogether — hardly anyone, if anyone at all, is talking to kids about this.

Another serious type of online child sexual abuse is pornography. While we could spend an entire session on the harms of pornography, today we'll just bring an initial awareness to this. In a 2008 University of New Hampshire survey, 93% of male college students and 62% of female students said they saw online pornography before they were 18¹. This does not necessarily mean pornography involving minors, which is illegal child sexual abuse material.

Curiosity is normal. This is not about shaming, but about talking about what is healthy and real in a relationship.

There are two categories of harm I'm going to share today. The first involves teens expectations of sexual relationships based on what they see through pornography. Imagine you are a 14-year-old who comes across a pornographic image online. You're curious, so you search a bit and end up on one of the many pornography sites. Algorithms now get to work, and you begin to receive more pop-ups, videos and additional graphic content than you ever intended. You haven't even been in a relationship yet, and you may begin to believe this is how sexual relationships are. You know about consent, but what you see makes it look like rougher sexual relationships are better and what both people want, when in fact, the pornography industry is based on aggression, power and violence. It shapes ideas about masculinity, femininity and intimacy. Here are some quotes from a high schooler about online porn, "There's nowhere else to learn about sex, and porn stars know what they're doing" and "I've never seen a girl in porn who doesn't look like she's having a good time." This teen may not have understood that this was a performance, which may have also included force, fraud or coercion. Or that the videos show nothing of open and honest conversations between a couple before they start to figure out what they want together.

- Does anyone have any questions before we move on to the second category?

The second category of harm involves using minors in sexually explicit online content, which is child sexual abuse and legally referred to as child pornography. U.S. federal law defines child pornography as any visual depiction of sexually explicit content involving a minor (under 18 years old). These images and videos document actual exploitation and abuse of children, and then further harm children as they are shared across the internet — through platforms we may use every day including social media, online gaming, email, websites and more.

Studies cited by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children found²:

- Girls appear in the overwhelming majority of child sexual abuse material (CSAM)
- Prepubescent children are at the greatest risk to be depicted in CSAM
- When boys are victimized, they are much more likely than girls to be subjected to very explicit or egregious abuse
- On average, boys depicted in CSAM are younger than girls and more likely to have not yet reached puberty

The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children operates a national CyberTipline for the public and companies to report incidents of suspected online child sexual abuse: missingkids.org/gethelpnow/cybertipline.

The CyberTipline received 18.4 million reports in 2018, with a vast majority containing child sexual abuse material³. Technological advances are helping to find the images, which can then lead to helping survivors rebuild their lives. But the extent of the problem is so great, it's important to know you can turn to someone if you come across images unknowingly and are struggling with what you saw, or if you know someone who is at risk of or involved in online sexual abuse material.

Your guide lists the CyberTipline reporting link as well as a link to a brochure "Coping with Child Sexual Abuse Material Exposure." This brochure gives resources and strategies for coping for children, adults and families. missingkids.org/content/dam/missingkids/pdfs/NCMEC_0022-20_CSAM%20Brochure_Digital.pdf

¹ Jones, Maggie. February 7, 2018. "What Teenagers Are Learning from Online Porn." New York Times Magazine.

² missingkids.org/theissues/csam#overview

³ missingkids.org/content/dam/missingkids/pdfs/Captured%20on%20Film.pdf

You can ask youth if they have anything they want to discuss relating to this, or remind them they can always leave a question or comment to talk with you in person in the Reflections Box at the end of the session.

1 John 4:18

There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.

Joshua 1:9

Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.

Individual Exercise: My Strengths

We're going to end today's session thinking about our own strengths.

- Direct youth to think about their own strengths, and how these can act as a protective barrier to keep them safe in various situations in their lives. Ask them to circle some of the strengths listed in their guide on page 13, add their own, and then pick two to fill in the blanks in the boxes:

I am/I have _____, and I can _____.

- Examples:

- I am creative, and I can think of ways to get out of a difficult situation.
- I have good judgment, and I can sense when someone's not being honest with me.

Discussion Question (5 minutes)

- *What is one new thing you learned today that you could share with a trusted adult or friend?*

Closing Prayer & Reflections Box (5 minutes)

- Close in prayer.
- Hand out Session 3 Family Follow-up Resource for youth to take home.
- Each participant places a word, sentence or question into a box (Reflections Box) as they exit. The leader will keep these confidential, while allowing for addressing them as needed in future sessions; or, talking with a youth individually if requested.

Resources

Resources are included at the end of each session for youth to engage and learn more.

Follow on Social Media: @polarisproject, @love146, @mncasa, @worldwithoutexploitation

Websites:

lssmn.org/services/youth/education/cherish-all-children/resources

missingkids.org/HOME (National Center for Missing & Exploited Children) missingkids.org/gethelpnow/cybertipline

nsvrc.org/ (National Sexual Violence Resource Center)

rainn.org/ (Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network)

Session

4

Making a Safety Plan and Additional Resources

Supplies Needed

- A healthy snack or treat
- Youth guides
- Youths' phones for Ice Breaker
- Small paper or notecards
- Pens or pencils
- Colored pencils or fine markers for the coloring/doodling page
- Internet connection
- Computer
- Projector and screen
- A box that reflections can be put into (Reflections Box)

Ice Breaker (10 minutes)

Since we have been talking about online safety and this session is about making a safety plan, this icebreaker will reinforce the need to ask questions, be discerning and not assume that everything we see and read online is the truth.

- Break into small groups and have the youth find memes in their small groups. One group finds images that are clearly true, one group finds images that are clearly false and one group finds images that could be true, but it is hard to tell. Share an example to help them get started: *An obvious example of a meme that is clearly false shows a picture of Abraham Lincoln saying, "You can't believe everything you read on the internet." Did Abraham Lincoln say this?!*
- Come back to the large group and have each group share at least one of the memes they found.
 - *What makes it difficult to know whether or not something shared on the internet is true or false? (Things sound credible, making it difficult to know whether they are true or false. When they are posted by trusted family or friends, we don't always question their authenticity.)*
 - *What is the easiest way to determine whether or not something is true? (Look for credible sources of information. Ask someone for the source of their information, and take the time to look it up before reposting or sharing.)*
 - *Why don't we do this more often? (Because we don't want to take the time. Sometimes we are so emotionally charged by what we see that we share it without stopping to think.)*

Our hope is that this exercise will serve as a reminder that people can share anything they want to on the internet, and we have no idea whether or not the information is true or false unless we take the time to do our research and stay informed.

Review Team Agreements (5 minutes)

- Review agreements the group created.
- Also answer any questions that may have been placed into the Reflections Box. Protect anonymity by paraphrasing what the participants had written.
- Share **mandated reporter statement**:

Together we'll be learning about ways you can keep yourself safe and engage in healthy relationships. It is also my job to help keep you safe. If you tell me someone is hurting you or someone you know, or if you are going to hurt yourself, it is my job to report this confidentially, and with your knowledge. Together we will find the support needed.

Topic Content and Skill Building (25–30 minutes)

Making a Safety Plan

We've spent three weeks talking about safe and healthy relationships. We started out by talking about healthy and unhealthy relationship qualities and red flags, we explored online and social media safety, and we learned about sexual exploitation and trafficking. Before we move on to our topic for today, let's take a minute to reflect on what we've learned so far. Have the group open to the front of their youth guide and look through the first three sessions, one session at a time.

- *What is something you learned and want to remember from the session on healthy relationships?*
- *What is something you learned and want to remember from the session on online safety?*
- *What is something you learned and want to remember from the session on sexual exploitation and trafficking?*

For our final session we're going to be creating a safety plan.

- *What is a safety plan?* (Possible responses: Thinking about bad things that could happen and making a plan for what to do. Planning what to do if something bad happens or you are in a difficult situation. Knowing who to call or reach out to if you feel unsafe.)
- Have them fill in the blanks in their guide on page 15.
 - *A safety plan is a personalized and practical plan that can help you lower your risk of being hurt by another person, avoid dangerous situations, and know the best way to react when you feel you are in danger. This plan will include information specific to you and your life that will increase your safety at school, home and other places you regularly go.*

Challenging Situations

One of the ways we will begin to create a safety plan is to think about challenging situations that you or your friends might encounter in your daily lives. On page 16 in your youth guide you will see a list of scenarios. In your small groups you are going to discuss the scenarios and decide how you would respond. As you discuss them, think about the healthy relationship qualities we've learned and look for possible red flags in the situation. As you decide on a response, think about what you might say, who you might talk to and what resources might be helpful.

- Break them into their small groups and assign them one or more scenarios to discuss, giving them at least five minutes for conversation.

Scenario 1:

You are excited to be invited to a party, but when you arrive, you see there are drugs and alcohol present, and a couple girls are passed out. What would you do?

What would you have done if you had known before you arrived that this might be the scene?

Scenario 2:

You and your friends enjoy gaming together. An older kid at your school joins sometimes and says sexual things to one of your friends in the chat. Others joke or laugh along, and you know all of this makes your friend really uncomfortable.

Scenarios 3–10 found in Youth Guide

- Bring the group back together to process the exercise. Have each group read one of their scenarios and briefly report their answers. Validate their ideas, and gently challenge or give additional options, particularly if their answers involve any unhealthy or risky behavior, or any form of dangerous or violent actions. Use this as a learning tool to help them problem solve.
 - *Was it difficult to think of safe and healthy ways to respond?*
 - *In what ways was this exercise helpful?*

Making Your Safety Plan

Turn to page 17 in your youth guide. You are going to create your own safety plan now. As you worked through the challenging situations in the previous exercise, you may have realized that you needed to know what people and resources are available to you. Your plan will help provide some of those answers. As we go through each of these questions, write your answers in your guide. If you have the phone numbers of the people you list, include those in your answer.

- Who could you call or text to let them know where you are going with your friends or on a date?
- If you're not comfortable where you're at or you are stranded and need a ride home, who could you call to pick you up or meet you?
- Where else could you go to stay safe (this could be a nearby police station, a store or any other place that's open and has people around)?
- If you decide to end an unhealthy relationship, how can you do it safely? What family member, friend or trusted adult could you talk to about your situation?
- When you are feeling down, who can you call to listen and support you?
 - A friend I can talk to:
 - An adult I can talk to:
- What word or phrase can you use as a code in a phone call, text or direct message to ask your family, a friend or a neighbor to call for help without the other person knowing about it?

Don't skip this: Have kids add important phone numbers to their cell phones. They can choose the ones they want from the list. You may also provide numbers and websites for local organizations geared towards vulnerable youth.

One of the things youth could do is create an emergency/safety plan card to keep in a safe place in their wallet or purse and phone. (If you have time, you could have them do this during the session.)



Important Phone Numbers and Websites

- **Emergency Number:** Always call this number first if you are in immediate danger.
911
- **MN 2-1-1 United Way:** Free, confidential information to access services such as food and housing support, mental health, substance abuse, youth programs and more.
211
211unitedway.org
- **Minnesota Safe Harbor Day One Hotline:** Statewide resource support for local shelter and services for potential or current victims of exploitation or trafficking.
dayoneservices.org
1.866.223.1111 or text 612.399.9995
- **National Center for Missing and Exploited Children:** Their mission is to help find missing children, reduce child sexual exploitation and prevent child victimization.
missingkids.org/home
1.800.843.5678 (1.800.THE.LOST)
- **National Human Trafficking Hotline:** If you or someone you know is in a potential human trafficking situation, call or text this hotline for help and services.
humantraffickinghotline.org
1.888.373.7888 or text HELP to 233733
- **National Runaway Safeline:** Offers expertise in all youth-related issues and provides resources, support and connections to help and hope.
1.800.RUN.AWAY (1.800.786.2929) or online chat nationalrunawaysafeline.org
- **NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness):** Provides advocacy, education, support and public awareness so that all individuals and families affected by mental illness can build better lives.
nami.org
1.800.950.NAMI (6264) or in a crisis, text "NAMI" to 741741
- **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:** Free, confidential support for people in distress, prevention and crisis resources for you or your loved ones.
1.800.273.8255 or online chat suicidepreventionlifeline.org
- **RAINN (Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network):** Partners with local sexual assault service providers across the country to prevent sexual violence and help survivors. Operates National Sexual Assault Hotline.
1.800.656.HOPE (4673) or online chat rainn.org/
- **The Trevor Project:** Helpline for LGBTQIA+ youth providing crisis intervention and suicide prevention services; also, support and resources for educators and parents.
1.866.488.7386, text START to 678-678 or online chat thetrevorproject.org

Discussion Questions (5 minutes)

- *How do you communicate with another person when you see red flags in the relationship?*
- *How do you distance or protect yourself from unhealthy relationships? (Be aware of red flags. Use assertive communication so that you are setting healthy boundaries. Talk to a trusted adult who could listen and possibly help you navigate difficult situations.)*

Closing Prayer and Reflections Box (5 minutes)

- End this learning experience by reading Psalm 139:1-14 and reminding the group that they are beloved children of God. *When we remember that we are fearfully and wonderfully made, and that we have a God who cares and knows us intimately, it changes how we view others, and how we view ourselves. We are worthy of safe and healthy relationships because God has created each one of us and we are precious!*
- Hand out Session 4 Family Follow-up Resource for youth to take home.
- Each participant places a word, sentence or question into a box (Reflection Box) as they exit. The leader will keep these confidential, while allowing for addressing concerns an individual youth may raise, such as requesting to meet and talk more with the youth leader.

Psalm 139:1-14

You have searched me, LORD, and you know me.
You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar.
You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways.

Before a word is on my tongue, you, LORD, know it completely.
You hem me in behind and before, and you lay your hand upon me.
Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain.

Where can I go from your Spirit?
Where can I flee from your presence?

If I go up to the heavens, you are there;
if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.
If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea,
even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast.

If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me,"
even the darkness will not be dark to you;
the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you.

For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb.
I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made;
your works are wonderful, I know that full well.

Resources

Additional resources for making a Safety Plan: scarleteen.com/article/abuse_assault/the_scarleteen_safety_plan.

Resources were shared as part of this safety plan session. If there's additional time, you could ask if anyone has other resources to share or if they've checked out any of the social media resources from the past sessions on their Instagram or other social media.

Contributor Biographies



Deacon Erica Larson (she/her), Director of Faith Formation, Lake Nokomis Lutheran Church, Minneapolis, Minnesota

Erica Larson has served as the deacon at Lake Nokomis Lutheran Church since she was called to be the Director of Faith Formation in August of 2010. She started as a youth director fresh out of college, and now has 30 years of ministry experience. She particularly enjoys her role at Lake Nokomis because she works with people of all ages and employs a wide variety of gifts and passions as she teaches, leads and works with others to share God's love and create meaningful experiences for her community. For several years, she was the e-News editor for Cherish All Children.

Erica received her master's degree in Congregational Ministries and Leadership from Luther Seminary, with an emphasis in ministry in daily life. She is usually reading at least two books at any given time, loves spending time with friends and family, looks forward to snuggling with her cat Simon at the end of the day, and has recently taken up watercolor painting.



Joy McElroy (she/her), Executive Director, Cherish All Children – Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota

Joy McElroy has served as the executive director of Cherish All Children since 2017, building and deepening partnerships with churches and community organizations. As a part of Metro Homeless Youth & Family Services within Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota, she has enjoyed how the prevention work of Cherish All Children complements the direct service provided to youth. She is dedicated to raising up individuals into their full and authentic God-given selves.

Joy holds a master's degree in human resources from the University of Minnesota, with a focus on training and development. Her more than 30 years of leadership experience in business, education and non-profit organizations, and passion for serving others keeps the ideas flowing in her work and personal life. She lives in Saint Paul, Minnesota with her family, is active in her faith community and finds peace while kayaking or cross-country skiing.

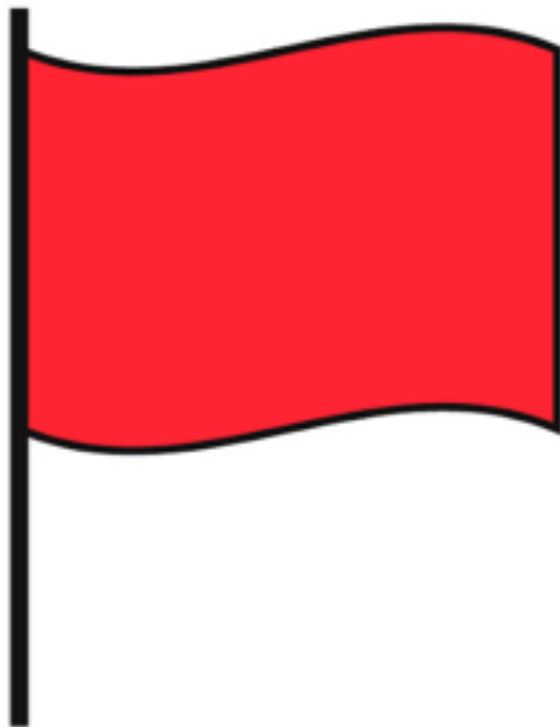
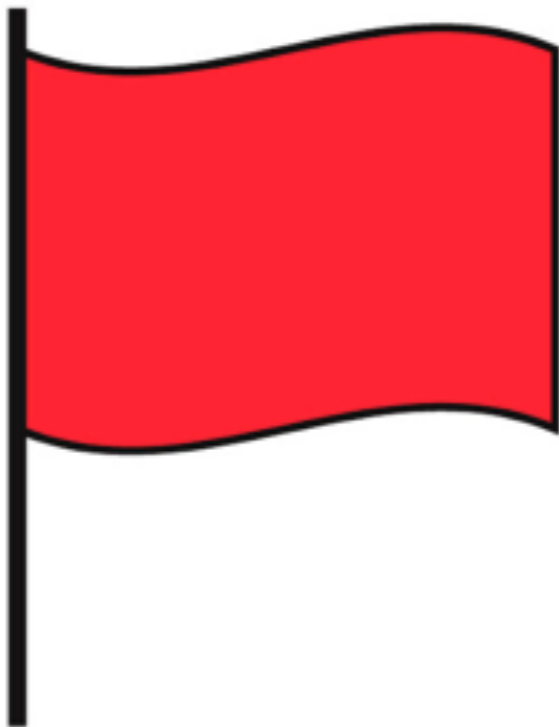
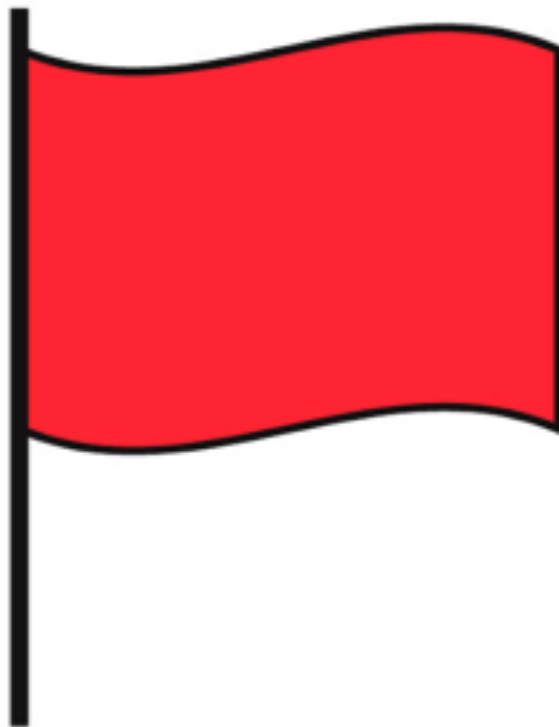
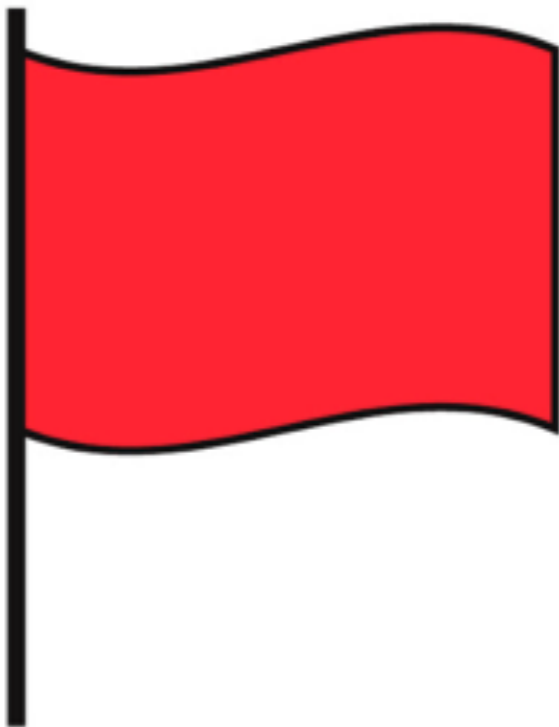


Sarah Zaepfel (they/them), Artist, member of Lake Nokomis Lutheran Church, Minneapolis, Minnesota

Sarah Zaepfel is a 2020 graduate of Saint Olaf College, and has been a member of Lake Nokomis Lutheran Church since 2006. Sarah has been drawing since they were little and has been exploring the world of digital art since 2018. Recently, one of Sarah's digital pieces was displayed in the Minneapolis Institute of Art's 2020 Foot in The Door exhibit. Sarah has enjoyed the opportunity to combine their faith life and artistic abilities to contribute their artwork for this guide!



Jonah, Joy, Vicar Anne, Knute, Mareta, Gabriel, Youth Focus Group from Christ on Capitol Hill, Saint Paul, Minnesota





1605 Eustis Street
Saint Paul, MN 55108

cherishallchildren.org
info@cherishallchildren.org