

**Please note that there are protocols in place for each school, when discussing these scenarios, please keep those in mind. If unsure, this would be a good time to discuss.** *(Please note that it would be easier to communicate with parents if they, too, are aware of human trafficking and the tactics used to recruit youth. It is highly recommended to schedule a presentation for parents at your school.)*

## **Risk Scenario I**

Billy is an 8<sup>th</sup> grade student at St. Xavier Catholic School. He is an average student but a strong athlete. He is not a “troubled” student; however, he has had a few disciplinary actions in his time at St. X, mostly attributed to inappropriate use of the internet; i.e. playing online video games at school and using his smart phone during school hours. Most of these actions are the result of adolescent misbehavior. He is popular and well-liked among prominent families. He is also popular among students and some teachers and is a bit of a “ladies’ man” and often can be seen with older male students.

Recently, Billy “jilted” his 7<sup>th</sup> grade girlfriend, Mary. With typical middle school heartbreak, Mary went to the guidance counselor to talk about her broken heart. In the course of the conversation, she spoke of Billy’s new girlfriend who was “older.” When pressed, she said Billy had bragged to her that his new girlfriend was 17 and more mature than Mary. The guidance counselor asked you, his classroom teacher, whether you had heard anything about this. You told the counselor no, who determined to dismiss this as adolescent boy bragging.

What do you do?

## **Risk Scenario II**

There seems to be an issue with the girls in your 6<sup>th</sup> grade classroom. A particularly tight clique of popular girls has been talking about a new friend, Megan whom they met through an online game. Megan’s family is moving to the area and she will be attending your school. Snippets of playground and lunchroom conversations reveal that Megan’s family has bought an expensive home and will be inviting the girls to a welcome to the school party to get to know the new friends. One afternoon, another girl from this class reported to you that she was hurt that she had not been invited to this party – the “clique” had mentioned that it was only for the “cool” girls. Pressing for more information, you discover that Megan had already sent friendship rings to the clique. You decide to check on the status of this potentially new family and discover there is no Megan moving to the school.

What do you do?

## Risk Scenario III

Brandi, an 10<sup>th</sup> grade student at your Catholic high school, is a pretty, popular cheerleader. She has always had a wide circle of friends and is a consistently good student. Recently, her parents split in what is turning out to be a very ugly divorce situation. The parents are battling over custody and seem to be vying for Brandi's attention with clothes and devices. Brandi's new smart phone is an expensive top-of-the-line model that she says her Dad bought for her. As the weeks go by, this pattern increases, and you notice Brandi's grades slipping as well as her distancing herself from her circle of friends. You, as her homeroom teacher, try to reach out to her but she blows you off, telling you that her parents are making her crazy. One day, at dismissal, a young man arrives to pick Brandi up while you are on duty at dismissal. You question Brandi and she tells you it is her cousin visiting from out of town.

What do you do?

## Risk Scenario IV

Aliyah, an 11<sup>th</sup> grade student, is an above average student and runs track for her school. She stays out of trouble but likes to follow her crowd of friends. One day they tell her about a party that night, which she rarely gets to go to, and she feels special because she was invited. She decides to go to the party where there was food and drinks. She imitates her friends, drinks what she was served, and ends up losing consciousness later in the night. The next day at school she brushes the events of last night off, but in her 2nd class, she receives a text. It states that there are pictures of her from last night that she probably wouldn't want others to see, but that the anonymous texter wouldn't send them to anyone if she met them after school instead of going to track practice. Aliyah decides not to show anyone and follows along, so the pictures won't get out. Aliyah is usually quiet, and you don't realize anything is wrong until you see a new tattoo on her. She also seems more tired throughout the day and her grades are declining all around. The track coach also comes to report to you that Aliyah has been missing quite a few practices for track and may risk being kicked off the team.

What do you do?

## Risk Scenario I

**Suggested Responses:** The counselor could speak with the student as well to find about his new girlfriend in a conversational manner asking how they met? Parents could also be contacted about whether they know about the relationship with this new girlfriend and whether they have met her. Further information could be passed along to the parents about online grooming if they have met on the internet and encourage them to monitor their sons' devices. Could share the story of Tevan Tobler and his case of sextortion. Let them know you don't want to jump to conclusions but share this is something that is very much happening in today's world. If Billy met his new "girlfriend" outside the internet or has been seeing her in person, share concerns with parents about the grooming process that takes place from older females and males and relay this is concerning as his guidance counselor.

## Risk Scenario II

**Suggested Responses:** Once you confirm that there is no Megan in the school, ask the room about whether they would want to contact all the parents of identified girls in the clique. The outlier may be the target as she feels strongly about wanting to be included which would make her more susceptible to the traffickers' manipulation, but all the girls are now at high risk. Staff could have a conversation with the parents on what has happened in this scenario and encourage them to monitor their online activity and to be careful if dropping off their child at someone's house they don't know. Notify the administration and contact law enforcement with your concerns, who could further investigate. Speak to the classroom about the dangers of sharing personal information online and that not everyone is who they appear to be on the internet. Have the DOHTTF come do a presentation in the classroom. 😊

## Risk Scenario III

**Suggested Responses:** Speak to the parents about what you observed whether their daughter does have a cousin visiting from out of town. You could also mention the expensive gifts and want to make sure they came from the parents. If this is not the case, then share that you know this is a difficult time for all of them and you have some concerns you would like to bring to their attention. You could explain your concern that their daughter is vulnerable right now because of her situation and is an easy target for someone who will tell her everything she wants to hear and can manipulate her by

buying her things, which is part of the grooming process. If the parents are receptive, you could come up with a game plan on how to best address this situation. Connect with them and offer ongoing support and resources for the family. Speaking with the daughter together as a united front about concerns should be part of the plan. Notify the administration and document any observations and discussions you have had with the parents and student. The plan could also include contacting the Department of Children & Families to initiate an investigation and contacting authorities if the situation progresses. Clarify when that needs to happen. Ask the room about mandated reporting to make sure all are on the same page.

## Risk Scenario IV

**Suggested Responses:** Set up a meeting with the parents to discuss anything that may be going on in her personal life. Are the parents go through a divorce? Has someone close to her recently passed away? You can also arrange for a counseling session with Aliyah. Here it is important for the staff to know who the best person is (the one who has the best relationship with student to initiate the conversation). Might be the coach. Here it is important to practice engagement and nonjudgmental listening skills as the student will be reluctant to share what is highly shame laden in her perception. It may take a couple of tries to get her to engage. It's important to let the parents know when they should communicate with their daughter how they love her unconditionally and that if anything is going on, they should feel free to tell them. She won't get in trouble or be judged, but they just want to help her. When meeting with Aliyah, it's important to ask if there's anything going on that she's not supposed to tell anyone. Ask if anyone is threatening her or her family and that it's o.k. to tell and she will be protected. If parents are not responsive, and Aliyah refuses to cooperate, look at the school's protocol for further intervention such as contacting the DCF hotline, law enforcement or the National Human Trafficking Hotline. It's important to document all observations, actions, and risk/victim signs and report those to the administration and diocese.

***(Please note that it would be easier to communicate with parents if they, too, are aware of human trafficking and the tactics used to recruit youth. It is highly recommended to schedule a presentation for parents at your school to bring about awareness on this issue.)***