- Human Trafficking Webinar Series –

Protecting Young People from Online Exploitation

Wednesday, October 26, 2022 | 3:00 – 4:30 PM ET
Transcript

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Good afternoon everyone, and welcome to our webinar, Protecting Young People From Online Exploitation. This is the 10th webinar in a series of webinars sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education since January 2020 to focus on the critical role America's schools play in addressing human trafficking. We're glad to have you with us today. My name is Cindy Carraway-Wilson, and I'm a training specialist for the National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments or NCSSLE. NCSSLE is funded by the Office of Safe and Supportive Schools and the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education at the U.S. Department of Education. Our aim at NCSSLE is to build the capacity of state education agencies, districts, and schools to make school climate improvements and foster school safety as well as to maintain supportive, engaging, and healthy learning environments to support the academic enrichment and success of all students. To learn more about NCSSLE and to access the wide range of resources that address school climate and conditions for learning, we encourage you to visit our website.

To give you a sense of what our website looks like and what it includes, here we show some of our most popular products on the left and an image of our homepage on the right. We also share the latest resources and events coming out from the field via social media, so we do encourage you to please follow us. Please note that all materials you see today, including the slides, reference materials, and archive version of this recording will be available on the event webpage later on this week. In fact, some of those items, including slides and bios have already been posted. Please also note that you can access previous recordings of webinars from the Human Trafficking Series by visiting the webinars series webpage, which is also listed here and is now being posted in chat.

You can see on this slide that there's a wide distribution of rules that people reported when they registered for this event. In that other category, which is at

33%, you will have folks who identified as advocates, attorneys, case managers, people who work with community-based organizations, counselors, family liaisons, and other family supports. We also have forensic interviewers and law enforcement personnel and people who work with more vulnerable populations such as foster care professionals and folks who work with runaway and homeless young people. We also have prevention specialists, public health nurses, and several students and people who identify as family members.

The second question we ask when you registered was to tell us a little bit about your primary reason for participating in this webinar. This chart showing on your screen now gives you that distribution of the reasons that folks gave for attending the webinar, and you will note that most people came because they have a personal interest in the topic of human trafficking. That other category includes folks from community-based coalitions and associations that address trafficking, people who report needing more information for personal education or to support clients in particularly vulnerable populations. We also have a variety of folks who are providing mental health, legal supports, and other people who are providing supports within their faith communities.

I'd like to share a little bit about who is going to be talking with you today. We have a diverse selection of subject matter experts here in the room with us today. Rather than spending time to do full introductions here, we do encourage you to click the link with being posted in the chat right now to read the full speaker bios and to learn more about the folks who are bringing the valuable information to you today. I'd like to briefly review the agenda. Right now, we are in the introduction and logistics area of the agenda, and in just a moment, we'll be getting a formal welcome from the Department of Education. Once that is complete, we will move into some information that gives us facts about online exploitation and some prevention information. From there, we move into our panel discussion and we'll do a formal wrap up of the content section of the webinar and spend about the last 10 to 15 minutes in that live Q&A.

And again, we do encourage to stay through that section so you can hear what some of your colleagues are asking and get the responses from our subject matter experts. Now, I'd like to take a few minutes to hear about the work that the Department of Education is doing in addressing human trafficking, and I'd like to introduce Ruth Ryder, who serves as a deputy assistant secretary in the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education at the Department of Education. Ruth continues to be a champion on the topic of human trafficking and getting the information out to all of you. Ruth?

Ruth Ryder: Thank you, Cindy, and welcome to all of you. We really appreciate you joining us today for this important discussion. I welcome you on behalf of the U.S. Department of Education and extend our sincere appreciation to you all for your continued commitment to ensuring a positive school climate for all students. I hope you find today's content helpful in your continued efforts to build a safe supportive learning environment for every student, including those who have been impacted by human trafficking or who are at risk of being trafficked.

Today we're going to be focusing on learning more about how technology can be used to facilitate the exploitation of young people. This is an important topic given current trends. Based on a recent study conducted by the Family Online Safety Institute or FOSI, 87% of their respondents, these are young people considered to be part of Generation Z or Gen Z have a significant social media presence. 56% of them responded, "I spend too much time on social media." And this is just one way young people are online. Young people are going online to watch videos, play games, connect with other people, and engage in activities related to work or school. In reading the results from the FOSI study, we also learned another important detail. Only 18% of young people reported feeling very safe online.

In response, today, we will hear from subject matter experts and a person with lived experience about the various risks inherent in young people's engagement in online activities, from social media to gaming, to surfing the web. Our experts and panelists will share approaches you might use to increase the safety of young people online. This webinar reflects the department's ongoing commitment to addressing human trafficking. As a member of the Inter-Agency Task Force to monitor and combat trafficking in-persons, we, here at the department are committed to helping educators support students affected by trafficking. Since early 2020, the department has led a series of projects to strengthen that support. Let me tell you a little bit about them in hopes that you will benefit from them, the prospective, the respective, as I mentioned each, the respective links will be posted in the chat for you. They are also posted on the event web page.

First, we have produced with the support of the National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments this webinar series addressing human trafficking. These webinars range in focus from understanding the signs a young person may be experiencing trafficking to how to intervene when you suspect trafficking, and how to support students who are particularly vulnerable to trafficking or who have been identified as having been trafficked. Today's webinar is the 10th in the series. We hope you'll check out the archived webinars of this series at the link now appearing in the chat box, which is also posted on the webpage for this event, and that you will join us for future human trafficking webinars in this series.

Second, we have also produced three critical resources related to human trafficking. These documents include human trafficking in America schools, addressing the growing problem of domestic sex trafficking of minors through PBIS and how schools can combat human trafficking and partnership with people with lived experience. These documents touch on issues related to what to look out for and what you can do, including how to ethically and appropriately engage with people who have lived experience.

Third, we've produced the Human Trafficking in America's Schools: Staff Development Series. It's in designed to compliment the human trafficking in America school's guide. It is comprised of three brief online videos with subject matter experts, including those with lived experience in trafficking who share information you need to know and discuss questions, individual staff or teams

of staff can explore afterwards along with posters and social media website graphics to reiterate key messages.

All these resources are rooted in the latest research and best practice information available while drawing from the wisdom of individuals with lived experience and trafficking prevention advocates and can be found on a dedicated human trafficking webpage on the U.S. Department of Education's website.

Next slide, please. With that, I would like to thank you again for joining us. I, along with the entire team at the U.S. Department of Education recognize the important work you are all undertaking to create safe supportive environments for all students, including those who have been trafficked or who are at risk of being trafficked. Thank you again for all that you do. Back to you, Cindy.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: As always, Ruth, thank you so much for those opening comments, we greatly appreciate those and your ongoing support. And now it's my pleasure to introduce Dr. Jennifer O'Brien, assistant professor in the Department of Social Work and a faculty affiliate in the Crimes Against Children Research Center at the University of New Hampshire, and Dr. Wendy Walsh, research associate in the Crimes Against Children Research Center at the University of New Hampshire.

Jennifer O'Brien: Hello. Thank you so much. So my name is Jennifer O'Brien, as Cindy just said, and I'm here today with my colleague Wendy Walsh, and we're going to talk about technology and the commercial sexual exploitation of children. As we get started, I just wanted to take a moment to talk about the language that we use to talk about this crime. Our research center has mindfully chosen the term commercial sexual exploitation of children. You might also hear terms like domestic minor sex trafficking or child sex trafficking. Really, these are all talking about the same crime, essentially this is a commercial exchange of sex or sexual acts for items of value, goods, services, drugs, or money. We've mindfully chosen the term commercial sexual exploitation of children because human trafficking can sometimes conjure images of movement, which is in fact not needed for the crime to occur. It can also conjure images of a third-party, which is also not necessarily true.

But there are a lot of things that can fall into this broad definition, so things like survival sex wherein sex or sexual acts are exchanged for things like a place to sleep or food, more traditional commercial sex where sex is exchanged for money or drugs. It can also be sexual acts that are exchanged entirely online, things like live videos or chats. Importantly, and as I noted, there may be a third-party involved or there may not be. Sometimes these events can happen or this exploitation can happen between a child and a John without the presence of a third-party. And that's an important differentiation because in adult human trafficking, you have to prove force fraud of coercion, but because individuals under the age of 18 in the United States cannot consent to commercial sex, the force fraud of coercion is implied simply as a function of their age.

We know from anecdotal evidence from research with service providers and law enforcement as well as survivors themselves, the technology is related to all phases of CSEC or commercial sexual exploitation of children. So it's related to the grooming wherein maybe a youth is connecting with a John or maybe a third-party is connecting with a youth online via social media or via a gaming platform. Sometimes that grooming is happening entirely online. Sometimes that grooming is happening face-to-face, and then an extension of that is happening online. We know that technology can facilitate perpetration, both in terms of setting up dates if there is a third-party posting ads. Sometimes all of it's happening online as is the case with sexual images or live feeds. Payments are coming through online, sometimes those payments are in the form of cryptocurrency or gaming currency, so that can happen as well.

We also know that sometimes technology is involved in that recovery and exit. Many survivors connect with survivor communities online and get a lot of great support from peers and mentors, they can connect with resources like the human trafficking hotline or different service providers that are in their area. So in that way, technology is sort of a double-edged sword. There's sort of a way that we think about it as really being negative, but there's also ways that it can be really positive and be really helpful for these youth. Certainly the COVID pandemic has impacted all of this. Youth were in front of their computers a lot more than maybe they had been before, and sometimes with much less supervision. Because it's happening online, there may or may not be that face-to-face component at all. And so this is a quote from one of our research participants who just said, "There's no boundaries. There's no limits."

There can really be a child in one place and a perpetrator, either a John or a trafficker in another city, another state, another country, and so all of that is piece of that technology facilitation. Importantly, many youth don't necessarily self-identify as being victims of commercial sexual exploitation. They may themselves see themselves as being active or having agency in that exploitative experience, and there might be a lot of shame wrapped up in some of that perpetration as well and that exploitation. And so, because of that, technology also adds this piece of evidence, all those private messages, we can see how that grooming is happening, how that perpetration is happening, and can add to a more holistic picture of what's going on for these youth.

In thinking about technology and how technology is facilitating CSEC, it's also important to note that CSEC isn't happening in a vacuum, that there is kind of a media bend sometimes to think about trafficking as happening out of the blue, there's nothing else happening with this kiddo and all of a sudden they're being commercially sexually exploited. But all of the research that we have tells us that that most often is not the case. Most survivors that we know of have a history of child maltreatment, homelessness, running away, substances use, school issues in truancy, some delinquency issues, and then of course, health issues as well. And so these are kids, for folks who are working with youth, who may already of be on your radar as having a lot going on. And it's important to note that we think about these and maybe we talk about them in research as being risk factors, and that implies that maybe they happen before exploitation

would occur. And yet the truth of it is we don't really have enough research to be able to say the directionality of the relationship.

What we do know is that they often co-occur, and I think substance use is a great example of that. So we understand that youth who are using substances maybe at greater risk of initial exploitation. We also know that youth who are being exploited may use substances as a way to cope with the trauma of their exploitation. And so, this is just sort of one more thing in the many things that may be going on in the lives of these youth.

Wendy Walsh: So it's important to keep in mind that most existing research on CSEC is based on police cases, but we all know that many, many CSEC cases do not reach the police. So, that is only one small segment of the larger population. Other research is using intervention programs, some studies are convenient samples using particular networks. So it's really important to recognize that these samples might not be representative of what is actually occurring when we think about the larger youth population more generally. So what's really exciting about the study that we conducted is it is the first study that has used a national representative sample to explore this topic. We had over 2,600 respondents in our sample. We conducted an online survey and we asked about experiences that young adults may have experienced before they were 18, so it's a retrospective online survey.

I'm going to quickly read the questions that's targeted at technology facilitated CSEC, which is also on your screen here, but just so everyone has a clear understanding of what we measured. The question is, have you done any of the following things over the internet or a cell phone, including texting in exchange for money, drugs, or other valuable items things like sexual talk making, sending, or posting sexual pictures or videos of yourself and/or any other sexual activity? We also asked, how old were you the first time you did any of these things? So for this analysis, we included respondents who disclosed at least one episode of commercial sex before the age of 18. It is important to note that this does not include other ways that technology might be used in CSEC, so that this might be in advertising or recruitment, control or grooming, things like that. So our study focuses on whether you use the internet for sexual trade. So, was there that exchange based on the internet?

Okay. So a few key takeaways from our study. Again, because we had a nationally representative sample, we were able to calculate a prevalence rate of internet facilitated CSEC, and that was 1.7% with a range of 1.4% to 2%. So if you think about the context of the total U.S. Youth population, it really does suggest that there's tens of thousands of youth experiencing this. So it seems like a small percentage, but when you think about the larger context of the youth population, it really is impacting tens of thousands of youth.

Some of our findings kind of debunk some common assumptions, so I wanted to highlight a few here. So although internet facilitated CSEC is disproportionately impacting girls, it is important to recognize that 30% of youth engaged in CSEC were boys. So it's not all girls, 30% were boys and 7% of our sample define themselves either as gender fluid or transgender. A second finding I wanted to

highlight is that sexual minority youth made up a disproportionately large share of youth engaged in CSEC, it was 42% of youth identified as sexual minority. We found that nearly one in five of the exchanges were with current or former intimate partners, and that is really important to keep in mind as we think about crafting effective prevention and intervention programs that...

1 in 5 are with current or former intimate partners.

Another finding that was somewhat surprising is that in our study we found only 8% of the current sample described having a third-party facilitator who actually brokered the activity in any way. So another way of thinking about that is that most of these exchanges, 92% were self-negotiated. And, again, that's really important to think as we think about what's effective prevention. So although, however, 92% were self-negotiated, it's still important to remember that about half of the participants talked about fairly consequential negative reactions. They described being anxious, being ashamed of what they were doing, being embarrassed. So although it was self-negotiated, it still had negative consequences, it appeared, on their wellbeing. And I think that's important to keep in mind.

We also asked participants to describe what happened in their own words. And what we heard was it was happening in a variety of contexts. Some youth described needing money. Others described the interaction as just something really casual. And other stories really described threat and abuse. I'd just like to share a few examples here. So this is someone, a 17-year-old female. She says, "I was 17 and needed money for one of my legitimate prescription medications because my mother had put me out on the street and several adult men online said they would PayPal me money for dirty pictures."

Another example, this is an example of what we're talking about as a more casual exchange. This is a 15-year-old male. He says, "I had an older girlfriend when I was about 15 to 16, and we used to sext and talk sexual over the phone. She would usually would give me weed and money and other perks, like rides and stuff, for keeping her satisfied."

And the last example is this more extreme abuse situation that we heard about. This is from an 11-year-old female. She says, "I had been molested since I was 5 until the age of 11. Then when I was 11, the person started raping me. As an out and to have some kind of control, I felt that I could choose to have phone sex with men I was meeting on phone sex lines, hookup apps and chat rooms online. The man would send me money through electronic pay cards that he set up for me and mail them to me under a fake name."

So I think what's really exciting about this is that it captures the voices of youth. And it really just shows just the wide diversity of context in which this seems to be occurring.

We would like to share just a couple of implications from our findings. First, technology applications do seem to be facilitating the entry of juveniles into

commercial sex. So it's clear that technology companies really need to develop better methods of verifying age, as well as policing those age restrictions. So although, Only Fans and other similar sites claim that they ban minors from their sites, there have been a number of journalistic investigations that actually show individuals under the age of 18 do frequently end up on these platforms. So clearly, technology companies, policymakers, really need to do more to limit the entry of juveniles into some of these platforms that really seem to be facilitating technology facilitated CSEC.

Another implication is that it's clear that we need more prevention education directed directly towards youth. We're at a stage right now that we don't know exactly what that effective message would be. What kind of message is really going to resonate with youth? And we need more research to help understand that. One thought, one message might be to educate youth that they are actually criminally endangering an adult partner, if they're actually sending a self-made sexual image of themselves while under the age of 18 to an adult. But we don't know if that message would be helpful or not. It's just very unknown what kind of messages would be heard and would be effective.

One of the interesting studies in our finding is that we did find a majority of CSEC survivors, it was 59%, actually continued this activity into their adulthood. So it kind of raises the question as to whether if they had never started doing the sex trade when they were children, would they therefore, not continue as adults? But it also shows us that we really need to craft these messages to fairly young people in our society. So to help, again, prevent this behavior from actually starting.

Another implication from our findings is that the dynamics of these episodes were really quite diverse and it's really important to keep that in mind. And we also need to understand the words we use and the terminology that we use. We hear this word sex trafficking, trafficker, and that conjures a certain image. But it seems to really poorly characterize some of the dynamics of youth that are making money by posting self-made sexual images of themselves. So there's really different types of CSEC going on. And it's really important to be reflective of the words that we're using as we think about crafting effective prevention and intervention programs.

Some of those engaged in technology facilitated CSEC might not actually define themselves as victims, if they're actively going out and seeking this and they might be happy with what they're getting in exchange. And we just really need to be cognizant of that as we think about how to develop effective programming messages.

Jennifer O'Brien: So where do we go from here? I want to take a moment to talk a little bit about CSEC programming that's out there. And as I'm talking about this, I kind of want to help frame it a little bit that there are lots of different kind of programs that are out there. There's CSEC programming specifically, and then there's programming that maybe is for youth and children who are experiencing some of those co-occurring issues that we talked about earlier, like maltreatment, homelessness, delinquency. And then, there's a whole set of programming that

is around online safety. So you can kind of think about these as separate pots. And I want to talk about each of these different pots. And then, also maybe that place in the middle where they all meet.

So, on this slide, we're talking specifically about CSEC programming. And, in general, there's two types of CSEC programming that's out there. There's some school-based programming. And that tends to be primary prevention oriented. And what I mean by that is that it's geared at raising awareness about what CSEC is, the different dynamics that are inherent in that. It's really for youth and children who have not been exploited, or at moderate to low risk of exploitation. And then, we have tertiary prevention. And these are community-based programs that tend to be for youth who have been identified as either confirmed survivors of CSEC, or at very high risk of being exploited.

So, as I mentioned, for school-based programming, generally, that programming has information about CSEC, the dynamics that are inherent to that. And so that includes things. There may or may not be that third-party. The third-party might be somebody that you consider an intimate partner, it might be a friend, it might be a family member. Thinking about risk factors, some of the risk factors that I mentioned, yes, but also other risk factors like safety online, maybe not having folks who are watching what you're doing online particularly closely, spending a lot of time with folks who are older than you, or things of that nature.

Some help seeking. So keeping in mind that we don't seek help for things that we don't think are problems. Giving some context of what help seeking would look like, how you might create a safety plan, who are some safe people in your school that you could talk to. And then, some programs also cover healthy relationships. So, what do healthy relationships look like? And so, what might we view as a red flag for a relationship?

For community-based programming, again, these are four children and youth who are either confirmed, suspected at very high risk of exploitation. These tend to be a little bit more intensive models of programming and include things like housing. Often, there's a survivor mentorship component. Therapeutic groups, particularly cognitive behavioral therapy sorts of groups. Intensive case management, vocational training. And then, medical evaluations with follow-up care. So over 90% of known survivors of CSEC have pressing medical needs and may or may not be getting adequate care for those needs. So many community-based programs have both those initial evaluations, but then also kind of a plan for follow-up care.

So, many of these are really great, rich programs that just don't have very much evaluation yet. So we have to remember that in the grand scheme of all of the intervention research that we have on children and youth, CSEC is really considered to be a pretty new problem that we've only defined really within the last 20 years or so. And so, by contrast, some of these co-occurring issues like delinquency, like child maltreatment, we've been researching interventions and programmings for those issues for many, many years. And so, many of those programs have a very robust evidence base by comparison. So, in some ways, it

might be useful to think about some of the programs that we know have this great evidence base that we believe are probably likely being delivered to youth, who are either at risk for, or confirmed victims of exploitation, who may or may not have self-identified as victims, or be known to be victims. But what can we learn about some of the components of these programs and how they work for these maybe similar youth?

One of the really big things that we've learned is that mentorship matters. We see mentorship in interventions around maltreatment, delinquency, truancy. We see that that age range/race match is extremely useful in mentorship. And also, that shared experience. "I know what you've been through because I've been through it too." That really helps create an initial rapport more quickly. There's that positive interpersonal relationship, and that can be extremely healing. It also gives an opportunity to practice some of those safe help seeking behaviors. Not just to learn about them, but to practice them and to have somebody to practice with.

The development of positive coping, specifically around CBT. CBT is probably one of the most robustly evidence-based practices that we have. There is an emerging evidence base for survivors of commercial sexual exploitation. And what we see is that development of those coping skills can be useful. And then, practicing them to cement them is extremely useful. You have that education about safe behaviors, and then opportunities to practice. And that includes that help seeking, as I've said. So I see that this is a problem now, I see that this relationship doesn't look or feel like these relationships that I'm fostering, and I would like some help with that. All of this collectively feeds into a holistic model of treatment.

So with all of these, all of the evidence base that's out there what we see again and again is that bringing in people from your community, family, friends, making sure that we're addressing medical needs, as well as psychological needs, as well as spiritual needs, all of these things together absolutely result in the best outcomes in the short-term, but also the long-term. So not just as soon as you're done with the program, or as soon as you're done learning whatever the new skill is. But that you're able to practice that long-term and move from that survivorship into thriving, which I think is what we all want for our children and youth.

So I've talked a little bit about CSEC programming, what we learned from these programming related to some of these other at risk co-occurring issues. Now, I want to talk a little bit about online safety. So we know a lot about, actually, programming for online safety. And I want to say that with the caveat that the online environment is constantly changing. So one of the things that as researchers we're really mindful of is that it can take at minimum about a year to collect the data, analyze the data, publish the data, and in a year a lot can change online. And, certainly, a lot that's happening for youth online is changing. It's changing month to month. But, as we talked about at the very beginning of this webinar, over 98% of youth have access to technology via smartphones. That means they're online all the time. So online safety is extremely important.

What we know about online safety programming is that those really condensed one hour modules don't do a whole lot for us, that really these online safety conversations need to be happening all the time. And that in conjunction with what we know about these risk factors and other things that are happening in these youths' lives means that schools and service providers are in such a unique position to help facilitate those conversations because they may or may not really be happening at home.

So staying safe online includes things like staying safe from sexual exploitation. Generally, the researched base online safety stuff, programming talks about things like disclosure of personal information, not a great idea. Harassing behaviors, both in terms of being harassed and also harassing others. Meeting and friending people online. If you're only meeting people online, if they're only friends online, how safe is that? How do we gauge how safe that might be? Sexual behaviors online, sending pictures, receiving pictures, uploading things, engaging in video chats with an individual that you may or may not know face-to-face, downloading and uploading images from file sharing programs, again, going both ways. So these are key points, but there are specific behaviors within each of these points.

Our research looking at online safety programming suggests that youth who are at most risk for online technology facilitated exploitation are not just doing one of these things. They're doing four or more of these behaviors. So it's not just one thing. It's not that you're going to just miss one thing and that that's going to be the thing that tips that this is a pattern. There's a lot going on. They're doing a lot of these things. And so, again, just that conversation of having it come up all the time, what does it mean to be safe online?

And while the results that I'm pulling for this slide come from a paper that talk about interpersonal victimization rather broadly, CSEC is a form of interpersonal victimization. And so, we can certainly intuit that reduction of interpersonal victimization more broadly would also translate to a reduction of victimization specifically related to commercial sexual exploitation.

So, with that, I just want to thank you all for your time. We've included a link here for our website where you can see a lot more of the research that we do at the Crimes Against Children Research Center. Thank you so much.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Jennifer, Wendy, thank you so much for all of that information. We greatly appreciate hearing some of the evidence base and the research that's going on around online exploitation and CSEC in general.

I particularly appreciated some of that discussion around programming and that focus on those various different types of relationships that can help be a protective factor for young people as they are going online. And how we can perhaps, build some stronger relationship with our young folks to help protect them from exploitation.

Now, I'd like to welcome our panelists for today. Joining us today would be Ms. Stacey Robinson, who oversees the implementation of Not a Number Curriculum, which is a Love 146 curriculum in the Cobb County School District in Stone Mountain, Georgia. We also are joined by Special Agent Dave Alley from Homeland Security Investigations. He's the acting supervisor of Child Exploitation Group out of Detroit, Michigan. And Ms. Rachel Thomas, who's a member of the US Advisory Council on Human Trafficking and is our lived experience expert. And she also writes curricula and is in Los Angeles, California.

Welcome to all of you. We appreciate you being here today.

So I'd like to begin with our panel discussion by asking a little bit about the importance of being aware of how common online recruitment is. And Ms. Rachel, I'd like to start with you.

Rachel Thomas: All right, thank you so much, Cindy. And also Jennifer and Wendy, what a eye-opening presentation. I am so honored to be here.

And when we're talking about online exploitation, there are buyers, Johns, who will want to approach youth and get pictures, or videos and things like that. But also online, there are traffickers that are actively recruiting.

I do have one slide. Thank you, Daniel. And a little bit, very briefly about my background. So I'm a survivor of human trafficking. I am a former high school teacher. I've been in the anti-trafficking field for 10 years working directly with CSEC youth, trafficked adults. And now I work very closely with foster youth doing prevention for human trafficking. And so, as was mentioned in the presentation, there's not a whole lot of research. This is a relatively new field when we're talking about data. Not in practice, human trafficking has been going on for forever. But as far as data, we don't have the numbers, facts, and stats. But I do have my lived experience. And having worked with well over, I would say, 2 or 300 survivors personally. And I do not know a CSEC youth that does not have social media. I do not know any CSEC youth whose trafficker does not also have social media. And so, when we're thinking about the online threat, we have to think about not only the buyers, the pedophiles that may want the pictures and be the end users, but also those who are seeking to facilitate.

On the next slide here, I just briefly included one recent headline here from my hometown in LA. And I do know actual youth who were recruited by this woman. She was young herself, only 22 years old, and she termed herself "Pretty Hoe." And so, she's someone who is glorifying human trafficking, who their memes and everything that they talk about glorifies it. And that's how they're recruiting young women in. But there's also traffickers online who are acting like boyfriends, or girlfriends, or platonic, and they're not touting that they're traffickers. And so, we see a host of people who are traffickers and recruiters that are also preying on kids online. So I'll stop there.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Yes, thank you so much for that. It's really important to keep in mind that it happens in both ways, and that there are traffickers out there looking to get in

touch with these young folks and they may not have the life experience to be able to protect themselves. Excellent, thank you for that.

Now I'd like to move to Dave, if you could tell us a little bit about your thoughts about the importance of being aware of online recruitment.

Dave Alley: Yeah, absolutely. So, first and foremost, Jennifer and Wendy, thank you so much for a great presentation. Just to piggyback on what was just said earlier, we see almost always an online component to this. Even if it were to begin as person-to-person, face-to-face, we're going to see some movement in the online realm. We see it frequently on social media webpages that purport to be for adults. But, we see it moving to minors without much issue. And again, just to reiterate, these are youth who may not be as sophisticated as are adults, who may not realize they are being captive, being talked to someone they think may be a romantic partner, may be another young teen, but in reality, it's a grownup adult moving to exploit them.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Pardon me, Dave, can you lean forward a little bit more when you speak? Can you say that last little bit again?

Dave Alley: Yeah, is that any better?

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Much better.

Stacey Robinson: Yes.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Yes.

Dave Alley: Well, very sorry about that. No, just to piggyback on what was said earlier, we see young teens, young adults are not as sophisticated as some of us who have seen more and done more, and may not realize that someone who purports to be someone in their age group is seeking to actively exploit them. So we see that quite often where they are moved from another platform, possibly a gaming platform, somewhere they feel safe to, "Hey, there's a friend you might like here, someone else's Snapchat information you might want to talk to," but it is a bad guy that just recommending them to a new platform, and purporting to be someone of their age group.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: So, they get them into a platform where they can maybe do some private messaging and things like that, and maybe get them into other areas where other folks can engage with them as well.

Dave Alley: That's correct.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Thank you. And Ms. Stacy, would you like to share?

Stacey Robinson: I would like to share. So the one thing I was going to add to both of their comments was that we are seeing teachers who aren't as savvy as our students, they're really not as aware that these things are happening. It's happening more

often than they really actually know. One of the things they need to probably just become a little more aware about is the messaging apps, the social medias, and how they have different names, so they'll have different things. The gamings that the kids are using are also enticing our kids, and recruiters or people grooming them are in those apps. And even consensual sexting is happening. So, it's happening more than we're aware of.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: And then when you add onto that, that we may not be as up on the technology, it can almost feel like we're swimming upstream to try to help young people.

Stacey Robinson: To catch up, yes.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Thank you for that. The next question I'd like to hear a little bit from you each is, when you think about the stuff that's going on online, what are some of the more dangerous sites or activities that young people might be getting engaged in online? Dave, I'd like to start with you on that question.

Dave Alley: Yes, thank you very much. The best answer to this is, there's an entire presentation on some of our heavy hitters. Social media applications like Kik, like Dips, Scored, like Snapchat are often used by predators to speak to children. And that's where predators feel comfortable and they know that's where kids are. The more frightening answer is, I can say this about almost any application. Almost any safe space we see for children, any place children congregate is where bad guys are.

Any fun game with a chat function that children enjoy, bad guys are there. Bad guys aren't necessarily speaking to them and doing bad guy things, say, on Minecraft, on Roblox. But they are out there and they are redirecting our children to other known social medias, to a Kik chat, to a private place where they feel comfortable. So I guess my best answer to that question is, while we can go in-depth on, this application's bad, this application's good, what I would say is, be aware of any and all applications because wherever the kids are, the bad guys are.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: So that speaks to the need for providing education to our young people. That's really about digital literacy and being aware of how they can analyze a site or a place where they might be engaging. And you've got lots of responses from that, Dave, including one face, because people don't always think about that, right?

Dave Alley: Yeah, it's something that even we see, experienced investigators. We're shell-shocked by, you think an app is fine, you think there's nothing on there, and then we see a case that involves a bad guy using that app. So, it shocks us from time to time.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: And Stacey, would you like to add to that?

Stacey Robinson: I was going to say there's no real cookie-cutter answer to that question, because any site can be a dangerous site. Any activity can be dangerous. So, what's

dangerous for one youth may not be dangerous for the other youth. It's just one of those things.

And the other thing we have to think about, the kids that are navigating adult sites, like just say LinkedIn. And they have their own businesses, and they're in an adult conversation and not even knowing how to navigate that. We really need to be aware what our youth are having access to. And then, like you said, having digital literacy so if there's something they need to report, they can.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Excellent. Thank you.

Stacey Robinson: You're welcome.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: And Rachel?

Rachel Thomas: Yes, I agree with what was said, that there's not just one site. I think, the sites I think are most dangerous are the ones that offer disappearing messages and anonymity. And so if I had to choose, the top danger for disappearing messages is Snapchat. Now that's very popular, it's going to be hard to get a kid off of there, but just know that all the conversations can be wiped away. And that just adds a level of, "Oh, it's not that big a deal for kids." They feel, "Because it disappeared from my chat, now it's going to be gone forever." And also predators, their messages will disappear. So, if you do follow-up and check your kid's phone, you don't see what the past conversations were.

And I would say, I think the most dangerous one for being able to anonymously chat with people, this is Whisper, and it's the Whisper app. And this one is most dangerous I think, because it's anonymous and you can chat with people in your geographic location. Literally you can say, "I want to chat within a five mile radius." And so, now there's no picture, there's no name. You can be totally anonymous and just start talking with people that are in your area, and how quickly that can escalate. And so, I think Snapchat and Whisper would be two of the top, but there are many tops.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: And that can quickly morph into a face-to-face, which can up the ante to the danger level for sure. Now, just for our audience, I'm not sure if the rest of the audience is as ignorant as I am. Can you say a little bit more about the disappearing feature?

Rachel Thomas: This is a popular feature that a lot of apps have. And Snapchat, I think was the first that became popular. So the disappearing... you could send somebody a message and once they open it's there for 20 seconds and then it disappears. And if somebody takes a screenshot, it supposedly notifies you, "Oh, somebody took a screenshot." Because that was the way that kids were getting around the disappearing, so they still have it. And so that makes kids feel more protected that, "Oh, I could send this picture and it'll go away." And I think now a lot of apps are experimenting and doing more of the disappearing. Even on Instagram, you can have a disappearing message. So that's one of those features that is just dangerous.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: And David looks like you're leaning into that conversation,

Dave Alley: So if I can expound upon that a little bit, and that's a fantastic explanation. We're seeing a lot more apps utilizing this disappearing message. And one of the things that we try to educate youth on is there are a number of ways that bad guys or bad actors can capture these messages, to include taking pictures with another device, with a camera, with a phone, with something else. So then they have it and they'll use it against our kids who again may not think through, "Well I've sent it, it disappears." That's the promise it made.

The other thing that I'd make sure to tell children is it may alert you that bad guy is taking a snapshot but that guy still has that snapshot. That does not stop them from having this information. So just because, "Hey, now I know you have it." Well bad guy is just happy to switch from good guy fast. "All right, well I have it. Now here's what I want from you." And so I think that that's sort of eye opening for a lot of schools that I talked to that kids never really, "Oh, I didn't think that through. I didn't think about somebody taking it with another device." Or even, "Oh, once they have it, well now that I know the power's still out of my hands with the bad guy has it.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: So it can turn into an exploitation angle, which can lead to almost anything. Let's move into our third question. How might a victim act, maybe act differently, or signs that they might show that they're being groomed or trafficked online that we can notice? Give us a clue to do something. And I'd like to start with you Miss Stacey.

Stacey Robinson: In the education world, we notice truancy. We can notice a kid being exhausted, lack of interest in things that are age appropriate for them, just how they handle situations in the classroom. Those are some of the things that as educators, we look for these things, but this can look different from youth to youth because they could just be tired because they're working. So it's just knowing who's sitting in front of you and having conversations. But one of the big things is truancy and changing the language that they're speaking, not coming to school. And when they do, they're maybe agitated. So just paying attention to those students in your classroom.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Thank you. Rachel, what would you like to add to that?

Rachel Thomas: I think from the perspective of maybe a parent or aunt could be a teacher also, if you have that rapport and relationship with youth, any self-isolation or distance that is being created, especially if it involves secrecy about a certain relationship.

I know that when my trafficker was grooming me, whenever he would call, I would leave the room really quickly. And it's like, what's the big deal? How come this is such a secretive thing? And also another sign of grooming is if your child starts showing evidence that somebody's trying to draw a wedge between you and them. "You don't love me," or "You think I'm a child." These are some of the things that groomers will say to draw that wedge between children and

their parents or their support system. "Oh, they gave you an 11:00 curfew, they don't trust you. They don't think that you're mature enough to handle responsibility."

And so if they start reiterating some of those things, it's like, "Okay, who put that in your head?" And then the last that I'll mention here is sudden changes in dress or sexuality. One of the young ladies that I work with started being groomed and the person would comment under her pictures, "Your legs are gorgeous, you have beautiful legs, you should show them off more." And so this young lady, that was the first sign that unfortunately nobody saw. She went from wearing jeans and long skirts or just a variety of clothes to every day showing her legs because now she believes that they're her best asset and someone is encouraging her to dress more sexually in that way. So those are some signs.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Thank you Rachel. Then David, do you have anything that you would like to add?

Dave Alley: Yeah, those are all fantastic points. As law enforcement, we're not teachers, we're not educators, we're not counselors. We're typically on the reactive side, not the proactive side. So the best thing I think we can do is alert parents to some of these signs. You talk about changing behavior. One thing that we tend to say, if you have a kiddo, if you're a parent, a caregiver, an educator, and you know they're on Instagram all the time, they're on Snapchat all the time. And then suddenly, they're not. Suddenly they're not because that's where bad guy is. Something has happened. Those are good times to ask questions. You know have a kid who is Snapchatting, constantly taking pictures themselves-

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Pardon me, Dave, can you lean forward again?

Dave Alley: Absolutely. I'm sorry. I'm not sure how that works with that. So if you have a kid who's on some form of social media all the time, you're constantly seeing them making YouTube videos, TikTok videos and that behavior suddenly stops. That's a good opportunity to ask questions. It's a good opportunity to find out why. Because it's possible that's where bad guy is and I don't want to be there anymore.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Excellent, thank you. In preparation for this webinar, we also have looked up some other things that we sometimes hear about, and I'm just curious if you've heard this. The other signs for online stuff is also around young people using geolocation sites. Like you had mentioned, that site that you mentioned, Rachel, that gives you that radius that when young people suddenly start using those sites, be aware. Who are you sharing your location with?

And also this idea of people who unfriend or block or unfollow people who used to be past supports and now they're drifting into different areas online. Being aware of those kinds of changes can also help. We're going to pause in our conversation for a minute. We have a brief video that's going to set us up for the next section of our conversation.

Rachel Thomas:	So baby girl just got solicited. Solicitation is when someone approaches you, they could offer you money, they could offer you an opportunity, they offer you something that they think you want. And whether they come right out and say it or not, usually it's for something sexual. Solicitation is one of those things that the media has taken to a whole new level because now it doesn't have to be somebody in your neighborhood. It could be somebody across the world that has access to you through your phone. So when we're talking about the streams of influence into trafficking, solicitation cuts out that trafficker piece where it's a buyer saying, "Hey, I'll give you this if you give me this sexual thing." It's just one of those things. It's like, oh, how can you be a trafficking victim if you don't have a trafficker?
	First of all, anybody 17 and under doing anything sexual for money, it's automatically called human trafficking. Being solicited as a youth, what's the big deal?
	At first, it can feel good to be wanted or lusted after. Somebody all in your DMs obsessed with you like, "Oh my gosh, please, please, please. You're so beautiful, you're so this. Let me send you this." And it feels like, ooh, I'm it. What it does though, is it gets you used to putting a dollar amount on yourself. And so if I will do this for 20 bucks, then when somebody offers me 500 bucks, it's like, ooh, I'm kind of already in that mindset, and then those boundaries get violated again.
	The danger of being solicited is that it desensitizes you. That just means that something happens over and over. So now instead of it being a shock, it's like, "Oh, I'm used to it." So when you're being solicited online by all these people looking at your body and offering you all these things, maybe you'll turn it down the first 50 times, but now you really want to upgrade that phone. Or they caught you on a day where you feeling a little bit froggish and now it's starting down that path, getting away from yourself as a person and turning into more of a sex object or product.
Cindy Carraway-Wilson:	So Rachel, that's a super powerful video and so realistic. You could see that happening so quickly and so easily. And as a young person, I can imagine myself when I was a young person, have somebody tell me I'm beautiful and you're online and it feels safe. You could easily get drawn into that.
	So our next question is, how important is it to educate young people for online safety? And for this question, what I'd like each of you to do is take a few minutes to share specifically things that you might be doing. And Rachel, we'll start with you.
Rachel Thomas:	This has been, like I said, an eye opening presentation. And for me, this is personal. For me, I have dedicated the last 10 years to human trafficking prevention and intervention working with survivors. And I firmly believe if someone had come to my high school, to my college freshman orientation and told me what human trafficking is and the signs to look out for, I would not have been trafficked.

And so Wendy, earlier you posed a question in your presentation when you were talking about prevention education, it needs to be directed at youth. It's great to train the adults, but we got to get to the kids. And the question you posed is, what message will youth listen to? And I have thought long and hard about this, and in our experience, we created the Cool Aunt series in 2020, and what we are finding? Youth listen to messages about boundaries. They have some experience where they know what it feels like to get those boundaries violated. And talking about things that help them see themselves as valuable, "Who deserves you? Can $20 afford you. Why?"

And the one clip that we showed is from an hour and a half prevention course, the Cool Aunt series, and we talk about many different risk factors, but at the end of it's very... Breaking it down for kids in a way that they're going to listen to. It's not this buttoned up PowerPoint presentation, it's non-judgmental, it's solution focused. It's talking about, "Yeah, these are the dangers," but it's yes-focused. Less of "Don't do that, stay off that website, don't talk to those people, don't do that." And let's look at "What kind of life do you want to live? What makes you feel alive? What makes you feel proud and safe? Let's do more of that."

And so focusing on the great parts of when you get to be a healthy young adult and navigating the world and the internet and less focused on the dangers. You got to know about the dangers, but really what we find? Youth want that mentorship. We do offer a mentorship component with the Cool Aunt series. We're currently working with the state of California to reach all 80,000 foster youth in California. And so it's a great opportunity and we are finding ways that youth will listen and we've gotten a great response. And I think it's just important, and I appreciate everyone here today as we're all trying to figure out how to reach our kids before the predators do.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: And again, I appreciate that the mentorship piece keeps coming up. That comes back to human relation and the importance of human relationships and how oftentimes people are victimized in so many ways because they lack that sense of belonging. So that's excellent. Thank you so much for that overview of what you're doing. And now I'd like to go ahead and move to Dave, if you can tell us a little bit about what you're doing.

Dave Alley: Yeah, absolutely. And Rachel, I love what you said about get to the kids before the predators do. As I said before, as law enforcement, oftentimes we find ourselves in a reactive capacity. We're finding out about crimes after they've occurred because they've been reported to us. Two of the big nationwide programs that Homeland Security Investigations are involved in are the Blue Campaign and the I Guardian Program.

The Blue Campaign is a national public awareness campaign that is in partnership with a number of non-government organizations. It's designed to educate the public law enforcement, other industry partners about the indicators of human trafficking and how to respond to things. The I Guardian program is more focused on child online exploitation in partnership with the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children and their Net Smarts

program and the Internet Crimes Against Children Task Forces. It is a number of resources that are available to parents, educators, other community partners to again, help to educate our caregivers, those in the best position to reach our children and see these warning signs before victimization happened or before it goes too far.

On a more local level... Those are obviously our nationwide campaigns. On a local level, we have special agents all over this country who love giving these presentations and are happy to give them on a large scale or a small scale. I know I've personally have done them for churches as small as five, six congregants. I've done them out for a webinar this large. So those are things that we love to provide. Again, as Rachel so eloquently put it, if we can get to the kids before bad guy does, we're in a much better position. We'd rather fill their heads with knowledge than bad guy fill their heads with a bunch of lies. So that's what we can do to help.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Now, David, there was one other thing that you mentioned, and when we were talking in preparation for this webinar, you mentioned the barrier that sometimes you've heard survivors mention to you about why they didn't come forward quickly or maybe sometimes at all. You had mentioned that they were worried about the criminality or the criminal aspects. Can you tell the audience a little bit about what you told me when that came up in our conversation?

Dave Alley: I absolutely can. So this is something that some of you may have heard before. This may be fears that some of our partners may have, that a child who has sent pictures to a bad guy is going to be charged with producing child pornography, right? That's a fear we hear over and over. "I didn't go to my parents because I thought I was going to get charged with producing child pornography. Bad guy told me that. I heard it sometime, and it stayed in my head." And we have parents say, "You know what? I don't want to go to the police because I had heard that my child produced child pornography and they're going to get charged."

What I can tell you is from ... And I can't speak to every police department in the world. I can't. But from HSI standpoint, from a federal standpoint, our kiddos are victims. They are victims. They will never be in trouble with the police. They will never face legal repercussions from us. I want that put out of parents' heads. If you're being told that, I will provide my contact information. I can help with that. That is not something that a victim should have to be afraid of. There is so much trauma associated with what is happening to them in trafficking and sexual exploitation, commercial exploitation. A bad guy is happy to let a child believe that, because that's just one more threat. It's one more way to exert control. "Hey, listen. You're already in trouble, right? Just take some more pictures. I take some more videos. Nobody has to know about this, let alone the cops." And that's the last thing we want our kiddos thinking. So please, I want to dispel that myth. That, "Oh, we're getting that bad guy, but we're getting kiddo, too." We're just plain not.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Thank you for clarifying that.

Dave Alley: Absolutely.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Thanks. And Ms. Stacey, what would you like to add to the conversation, what you're doing?

Stacey Robinson: Okay. It's funny that Rachel mentioned that if she'd been told in the 9th grade or in high school, she might not have been trafficked. So that was one of the things that we decided in DeKalb through our social work department, is that we need to get to our kids. So we partnered with an anti-trafficking group Love146, and we did the curriculum Not A Number. We do that in our 9th grade classes to make sure that our kids are having conversations and having real conversations about what could be expected if they're online and someone's trying to groom them. We show them what a trafficker can look like, and they're surprised that it could be somebody sitting right next to them in the classroom. So we do a lot of activities through the Not A Number program to get our students to having these conversations. A lot of times it's a lot of aha moments when you're in there, and they're having these conversations.

The other side to that, we do a three-hour training with our staff. Anybody who is going to touch our students, we try to prepare them so they can have these conversations, or if they see something, they can say something. We decided because in Atlanta that's one of those places that we're seeing an increased amount of trafficking and exploitation. So not only just sexual, but also using the labor trafficking. We had those conversations, too.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: And Stacy, thank you so much for bringing up the labor trafficking angle. We have been talking a lot about online sexual exploitation. We do know that recruiters are online also engaging young people in forced labor. It follows a similar pattern where they're groomed. They're identified. They're groomed. They're pulled in. They're thinking they're going to be working legitimately. And we know that sometimes they're being forced into criminal behavior like selling drugs or carjacking or other things, which is a form of labor trafficking, and they're being forced into that as well. So I appreciate that you brought in that angle for us today.

I'm going to pause our panel discussion just so we can do a little bit more on the ... close the content in. Then we're going to come back and finish the panel and go into our live Q&A, so if we can share the slides again. We've recognized that some folks might need to jump off on the quarter hour, and so we do want to do a huge thank you to everybody for your participation. The questions have been coming in, the Q&A. We are seeing the icons come up, and we greatly appreciate that.

We also want to thank our speakers and panelists for all of the wisdom that you've shared and the time that you've taken to really talk to us about the realities of being online and the needs that we have to really help engage young people in safety online and digital literacy and understanding the things that can happen. But also on that flip side, the things that they can gain that are healthy from being online and in face-to-face relationships.

We want to encourage you guys to all go to the websites, the event webpage here. It's a place where you can go to get the recording and all the resources mentioned. And you can also see the human trafficking series and other resources related to human trafficking on the other websites here. We have our next human trafficking webinar scheduled to take place in January, and we're hoping to be able to see all of you there.

We will also want to remind, if you do need to leave before the Q&A ends, we'd like to invite you to provide us feedback on the feedback form. The link for that is now going into the chat. And it's really important for us to hear from you, because your information, these topics that we're giving to you have come from you. They're questions that we've heard from you. They're requests that we've gotten from you. So we really do take this information very seriously and hope that you can take a few minutes to complete that form. This link will be posted a few more times in our time together.

On that note, I'd like to go ahead back to our panel and finish that last question before we go into the live Q&A. So the last question that we had before I invite Jennifer and Wendy to join us. We know that young people are going online for so many reasons. We've heard why they go online. We know why we go online. We also know that there are things there that are healthy locations and not so healthy locations. Can you share other information that you might have that maybe hasn't already been shared about what adults can do to help keep kids safe online? Or conversely, how might we talk to them, broach this subject? For this, I'd like to begin with you, Dave. We can't hear you.

Dave Alley: I'm still mute. Of course I am. Right. So again, like we've talked about before, the most important thing is education, education, education, right? This webinar has been extremely eye-opening for me, as I assume it has been for a number of people. That just speaks to how much a little bit of information can change your worldview. Just educating our kids about disappearing messages and why that may not be as safe as they think they're can make a huge, huge difference.

Letting them know. One of the things we say is that good kids, smart kids make bad choices. Letting them know that it's not the end of the world, because predators will try to convince them bad kids. Letting them know there are resources, there are people to help, that it's not too late. A predator is happy to say, "Hey, it's too late. You're too far down this rabbit hole. Just keep doing what I'm telling you. Nobody has to find out, right?" The more they can hear they have the support system from parents, from teachers, from family members, from loved ones that know that, "Hey, I might have messed up here. I'm in over my head."

We see exploitation, sexual exploitation, both monetary and for additional content, and in tragic situations, and in self-harm situations, and in just a rabbit hole of terrible things we know happen to our kids. You just wonder if kids know, "Hey, there's resources." There's things we can do, right? It's not the end of the road. Just the more that we can tell them that, the more that we can provide them both tools to protect them from predators, let them know there

are people out there who are not the nice person they seem to be, the friend they seem to be.

Let them know, "Hey, if something should happen, if they should have a picture of you, a video of you, compromising information of you, there are tools. There are resources. It's not the end of the world." A child's world is so much smaller than ours. An obstacle like that where it may be a source of embarrassment for an adult may feel like the end of the world to a child. So it's important to before this stigmatization happens, or if they come to you saying, "I'm being victimized," let them know, "Hey, all problems are solvable, right? We can get past this." Just letting them know that, letting them know that it's not the end is a huge, huge step in the right direction.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Excellent. I heard a couple of key elements there. First and foremost, that relationship. Relating with young people, being in relationships so that they can have these conversations. But I also really like the way that you're talking about this hopefulness. That yes, this happened, and there's a place forward from here. Right? I see Rachel's doing a lot of nodding, and she was nodding a lot in response to what you're saying, because it can feel like the end of the world. So it's important to kind of keep that hopefulness alive for the young person to know that there's a method to go forward. I'd like to move to Ms. Stacey.

Stacey Robinson: Okay. We acknowledge that online is going to happen, because they are having projects that they have to do, research they have to do. So there are healthy connections when it comes to being online. So our goal is to engage them online safely by encouraging them to put on privacy in their settings when they're online so that people can't potentially get any information, because they could happen to go somewhere thinking it's safe and it's not. I mean, the other thing is to also let them know that they can have uncomfortable conversations with people surrounding them. So if something has happened, they should share it with whomever they feel comfortable to get getting help with this. So we're there for support, and we make sure that we teach them how to do privacy things and create those privacy settings.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Oh, yeah. Those privacy settings are so important. Yes.

Stacey Robinson: Mm-hmm.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: And a lot of folks don't know, because sometimes they're pretty buried in an app. You have to really look for them sometimes, for sure. Thank you so much.

Stacey Robinson: Mm-hmm.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: And Rachel?

Rachel Thomas: Yes. Great points mentioned. With the Cool Aunt Series, we have a parent and resource caregiver guide that has links to over 60 resources. I just want to share probably two of the most important that are coming top of mind. When we tell children, "Okay, if someone breaks into the house, you call. Everyone knows to

call 911. If somebody breaks into your chat room or your inbox messages or somehow online, who do you call?" And they're going to, "Hmm, I don't know." So we need a safety plan for that, also.

You can let them know that there's CyberTipline to report creditors online, and it's linked with the FBI. So that's kind of like calling 911 on a person that is a danger online. But also, call a safe adult and identify. If you don't feel comfortable telling me about some of this stuff, would you talk to Aunt Sally or Uncle Ron? Have them identify who they would feel safe enough talking to so that's part of your safety plan. If something goes down online, you know who to call. And also, there are websites such as Thorn's Stop Sextortion where they have resources to help families get explicit photos of their children down and go through that whole process, legal and just the online process.

So there are a lot of resources out there. And for those who are the macro or more into legislative, our advisory board, we created our annual report for this year, and we do have a whole section in there on addressing child exploitation. This is just a link to that. It'll be added to the resource page as well.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Excellent. Thank you. Thank you. So now I'd like to invite Jennifer and Wendy to also join us for a few questions that we're going to pull from the live Q&A. And thank you so much for everybody in the audience who sent in comments or questions. We greatly appreciate that.

One question that is coming up in themes that I'm seeing up here is around how K through 12 programs that teach kids about the internet in a way that doesn't scare them. Do any of you know of any of those internet safety educations for young people that you would put out there as a known entity that you might suggest?

Dave Alley: I can speak first...

Stacey Robinson: Can you repeat your question? Oh, go ahead.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Oh.

Dave Alley: I feel the iGuardian program does a fantastic job of doing this in a way, and they have presentations for all age groups. The presentation that we would give parents certainly would not be appropriate for a group of grade-schoolers. I can provide that resource as well in the chat to download these materials, but it does give age appropriate resources. Again, the presentation for a 1st grader is going to be vastly different than the one that I would provide to a 12th grader. And it's going to delineate those and provide those resources to give to caregivers.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Excellent. Well, I like that it has that caregiver element also. A school could potentially give it to students and also offer something to the caregivers so that when they go home the message is being repeated. That's wonderful. Thank you so much.

And the question was K through 12 programs to teach this internet safety and teach about trafficking online in a way that doesn't scare the young people so much so that they can't incorporate. Go ahead, Stacy.

Stacey Robinson: So the program we use, the Love146.org, they could actually go on there because they provide things for online. They also provide things for caregivers. So there are a number of things that they give to the larger audience other than the curriculum. That's a good resource, the Love146.org.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Mm-hmm. Good. Excellent. Okay. I'll pull another question. There's a question about how to engage the community, ways to engage the entire community outside of the school also in this messaging in working to keep kids safe online. Does anybody want to speak to that prompt? Ways that you can partner with or engage communities, faith communities or community-based orgs?

Rachel Thomas: Yeah. I think hosting events that will spread this information into after school programs, churches, parent groups, all types of groups. You can have a film screening so that you don't have to learn the program and then teach the program. You can screen a film. Usually, they come with discussion questions afterwards. Wake Up official movie is one that I think does a great job of this, but there are so many great movies out there. Also, it's been said before, but if you see something, say something. I think that still brings true. And if we are going to keep our communities safer, if you see something that does not look right or feel right, make the report to the National Human Trafficking Hotline number, 888-373-7888.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Okay. And you have it in your head. Thank you so much for that. Can you say that one more time so people can hear it?

Rachel Thomas: Sure. And I'll put it in the chat, too. So 888-373-7888.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Thank you. Thank you. Another question that's come in. There's a question about the size of the problem. Is internet exploitation big and getting bigger? Has it been holding steady? Does anybody want to try to speak to that question?

Dave Alley: I would be happy to. It's a problem that we are inundated with. It's something that is sort of pervasive across all corner of the internet, both the clear web, the dark web. This is not a problem that is happening on one small corner of the internet. It's happening sort of everywhere that we see our kids. So it's something that it is a large problem. We expect it to grow larger with the proliferation of social media, with the expectation that our kiddo will be dialed in during school, after school, turning in assignments. The more they're connected, the more bad guys know that. This isn't a niche problem. This is a worldwide epidemic that we're seeing of it. It's bigger. Bigger and expected to get bigger would be the shortest answer to that question.

Cindy Carraway-Wilson: Okay.

Jennifer O'Brien:	I'm happy to also comment. Prevalence and incidents and scope are sort of what we talk about in research when we think about the size of the problem, and it's extremely hard to look at that in a reliable way when it comes to human trafficking. So whether or not that's commercial sexual exploitation of children, adults trafficking, labor trafficking, what's perpetrated online. I just want to put that out there, that really prevalence estimates are extremely hard to come by for a lot of the reasons that we've talked about here today. It's a very hidden crime. A lot of times victims and survivors don't necessarily self-identify as victims or survivors. There's a wide variety of victimizations that occur that kind of fall under the umbrella term of commercial sexual exploitation. So these incidents don't all look the same, right?
Cindy Carraway-Wilson:	Mm-hmm.
Jennifer O'Brien:	So I exchange a sexual act for a sandwich. I have been routinely sold for money for years. These are both commercial sexual exploitation, but they're not necessarily the same victimization experience. And they may not identify with one another with that experience, right? I just encourage people to keep that in mind. And at the same time, we as a community are beginning to understand that better, and because of that are able to recognize it more than I think we ever have before. So I think it's a both/and, right?
Cindy Carraway-Wilson:	Mm-hmm.
Jennifer O'Brien:	We are recognizing it more, and hopefully we'll continue to recognize it more. That doesn't necessarily mean that it's happening more. It probably means that we're getting better at seeing it. So really, these increasing numbers should not be something that causes us huge amounts of anxiety, but should be something that makes us say, "Oh, we're finally seeing it. This is a really good thing." Because for a survivor, a youth who is disclosing, for that to be poo-pooed or minimized or not recognized can be an extremely invalidating and harmful experience. So just this idea that hopefully we're getting better at validating those experiences and recognizing them, I think is a really encouraging, wonderful thing.
Cindy Carraway-Wilson:	Thank you. So it's a yes/and. Absolutely. Thank you so much.
	I cannot believe that we are at 4:30. Again, we've got dozens, another good dozen or so questions here. I would love to ask all, but we are at time. I do want to thank each and every one of you for all the resources you've given, all of the insights you've provided and your passion. All of you showed a passion for this topic and for the work. We greatly appreciate everything you're doing to help keep young people safe.
	For those of you in the audience, we want to encourage you to provide us that feedback on the feedback form. And we'll leave that feedback form link up for a little bit so that you can see it, so you can give us your feedback. By way of reminder, we hope that you can join us for our next Human Trafficking Webinar, which is scheduled to take place in January. And speakers and panelists, look at

all of those icons. Wonderful. Thank you all so much and have a great rest of the day.