

# COULD THIS BE YOU?



WRITTEN BY THE MY LIFE MY CHOICE LEADERSHIP CORPS

## ANNA, AGE 14, RAN AWAY FROM HOME.

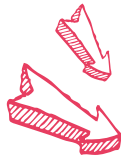
She met Chris through a friend of a friend. He fed her, bought her clothes, and promised to take care of her. And then he expected that she would pay him back by making money for him. He posted a seductive picture of her online with a cellphone number and men began to come over.

## JILL, AGE 16, MET A GUY, JAMES, ONLINE.

They messaged each other for a little while, before James asked her if she wanted to hang out in person. James was 30 years old, but he said that age was just a number. James told her he loved her. After a few months of hanging out, James said that he owed some guy \$500 and if he didn't pay him, this guy was going to kill him. He asked Jill if she'd help him get this money. He explained what she would have to do.

## JOE, AGE 15, BECAME HOMELESS WHEN...

his parents kicked him out on a cold night in January. He met a man, David, at a 7-11 who invited him to come to his apartment to get something to eat and warm up. At the apartment, Jim explained that Joe could stay with him, if...



THIS IS COMMERCIAL SEXUAL EXPLOITATION.  
THIS IS HUMAN TRAFFICKING.



### COMMERCIAL:

Something of value is exchanged like money, a ride, food, shelter, drugs, new sneakers, etc.

### SEXUAL:

Involving a "sex act" or a "sexual favor"

### EXPLOITATION:

Someone with more power taking advantage of controlling/using somebody

### HUMAN:

Involving a person

### TRAFFICKING:

Being bought and sold

## THE TRUTH.

People may feel that it is not exploitation if money is not involved. This is not true. **Any time anything of value is exchanged, it is commercial sexual exploitation.**

Trafficking can happen to girls, **boys, transgender, and nonbinary youth.** **Anyone is at risk.**

Exploiters can be any **gender, race or age.**

You can't tell if someone is being exploited by how they look or how they dress. **There is no dress code.**



# EVERYONE IS AT RISK OF EXPLOITATION, ESPECIALLY YOUTH!

There are people who specifically try to prey on minors. But some people are at greater risk than others. Here are a few of the reasons why:



## RUNNING AWAY.

When you don't have a place to go, you are really at risk of being approached by a trafficker. Being on your own can put you in survival mode. And that puts you at risk of someone taking advantage of you.



## HAVING GONE THROUGH ABUSE AT HOME.

Some of us were hurt at home, and so we looked for love elsewhere. Some of us had been through so much trauma, we didn't think anything else could hurt us.








## NOT GETTING ALONG WITH FAMILY OR NOT FEELING ACCEPTED.

Some of us were looking for independence and freedom when we met the person who exploited us.

SOMETIMES WE DON'T EVEN KNOW THIS IS HAPPENING TO US. HERE ARE SOME OF THE QUESTIONS TO

## ASK YOURSELF

-  Do you feel scared to say no to things that your partner asks you to do?
-  Have you been asked to do a sex act in order to get something you want or need?
-  Has your partner asked you to do something sexual with their friends?
-  Has your partner asked you to do something sexual with their friends?
-  Have pictures of you been used to make money or used against you or posted online?

## REMEMBER:

YOU ARE NOT WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO YOU. DON'T LET YOUR PAST DETERMINE YOUR FUTURE. WE'VE BEEN THERE AND BECAME STRONGER BECAUSE OF IT. NO ONE DESERVES TO GO THROUGH THIS.

HERE ARE SOME WAYS TO GET HELP:

## TALK TO AN ADULT YOU ARE SURE YOU CAN TRUST.

This could be someone in your family, at school, wherever. For us, it helped not to go through this alone.

## CALL 1-888-373-7888 OR TEXT BE FREE.

There is someone there 24/7 to talk to. They will connect you to help in your area. And there are survivors like us who would love to help you get through this too.

