



## High School Training Program Tenth Grade Lesson – Grooming

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### Introduction

Introduce yourself and any additional staff that are present to assist with the presentation.

Lead the group in prayer.

Explain the purpose of this personal safety training lesson. Some students learned about grooming by sexual predators in grade lessons. However this topic is important and we will discuss it in depth so that students are better able to spot the behavior and protect themselves.

### Training session goals:

1. Review basic personal safety lessons learned in Catholic grade schools.
2. Define grooming by a sexual predator and describe the process
3. Learn tactics of a groomer and how to avoid them thus keeping yourself safe

### Review basic personal safety lessons learned in previous training sessions.

- God created you and loves you. God made your bodies for good purposes.
- You each have personal space that is to be respected by others.
- You should treat yourselves and others with respect and care (the golden rule).
- Some touches are safe, some are unsafe.
- You have internal warning signs or sirens that let you know when you are in danger.
- If you are ever in danger, are not being respected, or are being touched in an unsafe way, you should get away. Sexually using or abusing another person is morally and legally wrong and will not be tolerated.
- There are adults in your life to care for and protect you.
- Get help from one of these adults. Keep telling and asking until you get the help you need.
- Where to go for help at our school...(fill in with names)

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### Topic: Define grooming and describe the process

**Grooming** is a subtle, gradual and escalating process used by a potential abuser to build trust and an emotional connection with a targeted victim. The **goal** of the perpetrator is to gain control of the victim emotionally and physically to achieve sexual encounters or some form of sexual behaviors. The **process** may last a week, months, or years before the sexual abuse



begins. Those who want to abuse will be patient and methodical. This type of relationship is abusive and manipulative.

Grooming may be used by an adult on a minor, adult on adult, or a minor on minor. Our goal is to reveal some of the tactics used by perpetrators so that you are aware of this process and information. Then you can protect yourself from those who want to control and use you. You may see grooming in other relationships and possibly aid a friend or family member who is caught up in an abusive relationship.

Let's watch a video based upon real life events..... Approx. 10 minute video portrayal of true story of soccer coach successfully grooming high school student and her parents

### Description of the Grooming Process

#### Overview

- The groomer/abuser/perpetrator – has no physically identifiable characteristics; they are identified by their actions and words; mostly male but some female also
- The perpetrator works to create an unhealthy dependence by the victim using manipulation and deceit.
- The victim/target – the second person in the relationship who the groomer manipulates to meet his/her own wants/desires
- Sometimes a person is emotionally vulnerable and is an easy target. A person may be vulnerable if the person is longing to belong, seeking attention; has poor or weak boundaries; had a recent painful experience; Groomers are skilled in spotting people when they are vulnerable and will take advantage of it for their own gain
- Why do groomers do it? It may be a learned behavior; they do not understand healthy relationships or normal emotional, social, physical or sexual boundaries; may have been abused themselves
- Two “must haves” for a groomer to be successful – Groomer must have TRUST of the victim and SECRECY; this is a false notion of trust
- Emotional manipulation will include language meant to control the victim. It may make the victim feel special; threaten the victim or family members; or persuade the victim through repetition to do something that the groomer wants
- Use of prohibited things – alcohol and drugs affect decision making for both persons; Groomer will use these for her/his own gain.



### The grooming timeline

1. During early stage of process, language to gain trust and develop secrecy.
2. Then the groomer will begin to use sexual phrases.
3. If there is no resistance to the sexual language, the content will become stronger and more graphic.
4. Next the sexual act will be described. The groomer is testing the boundaries of the victim noting how much the victim tolerates.
5. Ultimately sexual contact will begin.

### What it feels like to be groomed, used or abused

- Emotional pain, devastation, hurt
- Loss of security, sense of self-esteem, loss of dignity
- Depression

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### **Topic: Learn tactics of a groomer and how to avoid them**

#### How groomers control their victims

Groomers choose a vulnerable target and create a manipulative relationship in which they have the power. Use of language, gifts, and prohibited items such as alcohol, pornography, drugs help the groomer control the victim. The groomer creates confusion in the victim and dependence upon them for acceptance, "love", specialness, caring

- Use of Language to manipulate
  - ✓ Convince the victim that love and sex are the same thing
  - ✓ Graphic references to sex
  - ✓ Controlling language that create the power in the relationship with the groomer
  - ✓ Possessive language that suggests the victim is less than, an object
  - ✓ Threatening language to control and intimidate
  - ✓ Repetition of language to convince
  - ✓ Reference to sex as a duty or proof of love
- Reference to the culture that portrays "love, sex, abuse, use, and self-serving behaviors"
- Use of their power as the "adult"; most children taught to respect and obey authority figures

Fact: 1 in 4 girls will be sexually abused before 18

1 in 6 boys will be sexually abused before 18



Signs that a person is trying to control another person:

- Tells you how to dress, who to be friends with, how to spend time or money
- Makes demands or gives orders
- Forces you to do something that you do not want to do
- Uses anger to control; is physically violent
- Uses violence or intimidation to get his/her way
- Sends harassing messages, texts, notes
- Threatens suicide or self-harm to make you do something
- Humiliates you in public or private
- Wants you to keep certain things secret
- Gives gifts as bribes
- Refuses to listen to what you want or compromise
- Keeps you away from other family or friends who support you
- Spreads rumors about you

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**Topic: Grooming – Impact on Victim**

What it feels like to be groomed, used or abused

- Emotional pain, devastation, hurt
- Loss of security, sense of self-esteem, loss of dignity
- Depression
- Difficulty forming healthy relationships with others in the future
- Difficult to trust others
- Use of alcohol or drugs to cope with pain

Video: Two survivors tell their stories of how the abuse affects them

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**Topic: Protecting Yourself**

How you can spot grooming, respond to it and protect yourself or others

1. Learn about the language used to manipulate or coerce you
  - a. Examples – at what point do you realize that this makes you feel unhappy, hurt?
2. Be able to identify the tactics used by groomers – unhealthy behaviors used to dominate
  - a. Jealousy and possessiveness – the groomer treats the victim as an object that he owns
  - b. Insecurity



- c. Anger
  - d. (note: the first three are emotions that only become grooming tactics when used by a person to control another)
  - e. Intimidation/ Misuse of Authority
  - f. Accusations – false or exaggerated accusations to control
  - g. Flattery – exaggerated and insincere compliments to get what he wants
  - h. Status – the popularity or stature of the groomer is used to control
  - i. Bribery – giving to get something in return
  - j. Control – the goal of the groomer, to control every thought and action of the victim
3. Learn and practice good social and communication skills, especially how to say no when you need to
  4. Do not blame yourself for falling for manipulative language
  5. Do not make excuses or accept excuses of a groomer
  6. Do not give in
  7. You have permission to disobey anyone who tries to force you into unsafe, illegal, or inappropriate activities
  8. Create healthy relationships with people of the same gender and opposite gender
  9. Know several adults who can help you if needed
  10. Learn how to deal with negative emotions
    - a. NAME it – Identify the emotion that you are feeling
    - b. CLAIM it (use I language) - “I feel this way because...”
    - c. Feelings are not right or wrong, bad or good. It is how you respond to them that matters.
    - d. TAME it (find a way to express it without hurting yourself or others.) “I feel...(insert feeling) when you (insert what this person did).
  11. It all matters. A Chain Reaction
    - Examine and screen your thoughts
    - Because your thoughts become your words
    - Your words become your actions
    - Your actions become your habits
    - Your habits become your character
    - And your character helps you become the person you are meant to be
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## Conclusion

Discussion: Now think back to the video of the grooming scenario.

How did the groomer succeed? Name tactics he used.

- Chose vulnerable victim
- Took his time to build a relationship; built trust with victim and parent(s)
- Began to touch victim "harmlessly"
- Use of gifts; praise
- Demanded secrecy
- Controlled victim by offering access to something that she really wanted

What could have the victim or parent done to protect her/himself? Note: Being groomed and abused is NEVER the fault of the victim.

- Not allow time alone with unknown adult
- Question friendship between adult and student
- Disobey when prohibited items used; keep open communication with parent
- Keep open and ongoing communication about relationships
- Ask for help when began to realize he/she was in too deep

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Conclusion: Why are we talking about this and why does it matter?

- You matter.
- You are a child of God, created for a life of friendship and love with God and others.
- It matters to us and everyone who cares for you that you are safe, cherished, protected, and able to live without abuse, fear, depression, shame, guilt.
- And we are here to help you achieve that.