

## Important Information For Teens About Predators



A predator will groom you. Know what that means?

- The word “groom” means to prepare—only in this case we are not talking about starting your day by brushing your teeth! A predator will “groom” you by talking with you for a long period of time preparing you, making you into what he wants you to be—his victim. You become his puppet on a string.
- Predators may talk with several kids at the same time. They are very patient and work to build a solid bridge of trust between the two of you and at the same time he is building a wall between you and your family.
- They will use your problems to get you to trust them and make you believe that they are the only one who understands you.
- They *can* convince you that you will be better off with them.
- Once they have succeeded in doing all of the above, they try to get you to meet them... NEVER, NEVER, NEVER agree to meet anyone you only know online.
- IF someone tries to get you to meet them and you are afraid to go to your parents, go to a teacher, your principal, or your guidance counselor. Go to someone at your church. Someone, anyone you can trust to help you.

Let's be sure we understand the word predator.

- A predator is someone who preys on other people.
- They steal your innocence, your life.
- They want to be your friend! After talking with you for a long period of time, you begin to trust them. Once they build a friendship with you, they will tell you that you have to keep the relationship a secret and no one can know. Not even your siblings or your best friends. This is a sure sign that something is wrong.

Going into a chat room is like going to a park alone at night. You never know who is there in the shadows, and on the Internet you never know who you will come in contact with. You don't know what their intentions are. If you remain with them, talking with them, they will grow stronger as you grow weaker. Their goal is to rob you of your innocence and they are prepared to carry out this plan.

Anything you would not tell to a stranger on the street or a stranger in the

park, you should not tell to someone online. If you did not know this person before meeting them online, DO NOT trust anything they say to you. If they send you a picture of themselves you can't be sure it is really them unless you know them in real life. Predators wear a mask—they hide behind their computers. *You have to remember to be safe and you have to remember that there are people out there that don't care about you. All they care about is meeting their needs.*

If you think you are talking online with a child predator, tell your parents immediately. They need to call the police or the State Bureau of Investigation ([www.ncdoj.gov](http://www.ncdoj.gov)) immediately. DO NOT delete any conversations with this person. The police may be able to locate this person using the information on your computer. Don't be afraid to tell your parents about this. ***Doing this may save the life of another teen.***

What is inappropriate conversation?

- Any time someone discusses sex with you online is absolutely inappropriate.
- You may think it is cool to pretend you are older than you are or for someone to discuss sex with you, but keep in mind that this person is not there just to have fun. They are serious about this. They are doing this for one reason.
- You may think becoming the victim of a sexual predator can never happen to you, but it can. One in 5 teens will be approached online by a predator.

How can online predators be stopped in their tracks?

- Catching all of the child predators on the Internet is more than law enforcement can ever accomplish.
- ***YOU CAN STOP THEM!*** By being aware and smarter than they are by using your mouse to say "NO!" By doing this there is no one for them to prey on. There is no one for them to take advantage of.
- ***Safety On The Internet ALL STARTS WITH YOU!!!!*** It starts with you telling your friends how dangerous it is to talk with strangers over the Internet. You can help stop another child from being abused and becoming a victim.

Show your parents that you are willing to be responsible on the Internet. Remember being Smarter will make You Safer!!