

Hyde County Hotline, Inc.

24-Hours Crisis Line 252-925-2500

Visit us at: HydeCounty-Hotline.org Facebook: [Hyde County Hotline](https://www.facebook.com/HydeCountyHotline)



As we tackle #COVID19, many children's worlds have shrunk to just their screens. This leaves them vulnerable to online sexual exploitation, grooming, and violence.

During this time of isolation when children are spending more time online, predators will also be spending more time online, targeting children through the various social media platforms, gaming platforms, and other apps.

We, as parents and caregivers, need to be aware of what is happening with our children online. Predators target kids online and now that most students are participating in virtual learning, predators have more access. This can happen on any electronic device- phone, tablet, computer, or even gaming systems.

Is your child messaging, watching videos, gaming, doing schoolwork on an electronic device? Does your child play Minecraft on the computer or have Xbox Live or other gaming systems? Are they on Tik Tok or do they have an Instagram, Kik or Snapchat account? They are at risk for exploitation.

**You say, "My child is...
too young."
knows better."
doesn't talk to people they don't know."
isn't on chat sites."
wouldn't know how to get into those apps."
is a boy."**

The truth is – any child who has access to technology is a potential target. ANY CHILD!

According to the U.S. Department of Justice, 1 out of 7 children will receive unwanted sexual solicitations on the internet by online predators. That is crazy! You want to hear something even scarier – 1 out of 25 children will be enticed to meet online predators in person.

EDUCATION IS KEY TO KEEPING OUR CHILDREN SAFE!

Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest and Tumblr are microblogging apps where users are able to post short text and video messages. Users also utilize instant messaging and group chats to share information and chat with others.

Other apps, such as Instagram, Snapchat, Tumblr, and Tik Tok, allow users to share, edit, and tag people in photographs and videos.

All of these platforms allow private messaging between users, and children may develop a false sense of security with the individuals they are communicating with online.

Predators will target youths who are vulnerable by searching for online posts that describe personal struggles, relationship problems, and family problems. Predators will collect information from pictures and posts and then begin to communicate with their victim by sharing a sympathetic post or words of encouragement.

Predators will appear to be concerned about the youth's problems and will build common themes with children. This is the beginning of the "grooming" process, which predators adopt to develop trafficking targets. Once the grooming process begins, youths will develop a false sense of security with the so-called 'friend' they are communicating with online.

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Predators will develop a false relationship with children, and will use rewards available through the apps, or online gift cards, to help strengthen the relationship.

Apps such as Whatsapp, WeChat, Viber and GroupMe are Wi-Fi capable messaging apps that allow users to communicate with each other without requiring internet provided services. These apps also allow group chat rooms, which predators will monitor to search for potential victims. Chat rooms are also utilized to buy, share, and trade pictures of victims among predators.

Once a relationship is established, predators will attempt to get the youth to use more secure means to communicate and will emphasize the need for secrecy between them. Vault apps can be used to hide pictures, videos and messages that are shared between the predator and youth. These apps, such as Fake calculator, Calculator+, Secret photo vault and Private photo vault, can be accessed after a secret code is entered.



Online gaming is also very popular with youths, and predators will play games to build relationships. After building relationships with the youth, predators will offer to buy 'loot boxes' or send in-game currency to show affection and compassion. This is another way predators build trust during the grooming process.

Parents can be proactive by ensuring their children stay safe online.

Helpful tips include:

- ✓ Teach children boundaries online, and to never share personal information with anyone they do not know personally.
- ✓ Make sure they know never to send pictures of themselves or family members.
- ✓ Play games with your children. Know whom they are communicating with through the games.
- ✓ Encourage children to keep conversation solely about the games they are playing with other players, and not to engage on a deeper level.
- ✓ Set parental controls. Step-by-step instructions for setting these up are available at www.internetmatters.org.
- ✓ Install a Wi-Fi filtering system on your devices.
- ✓ Check devices regularly to see whom children are communicating with.
- ✓ Teach kids why sexual content in games is harmful and what to do if they encounter it.
- ✓ Teach kids about body safety boundaries, and be clear that the rules apply to anyone of any age, even their friends.
- ✓ Teach kids to respect other kids' body safety boundaries.

(Source: hopeforjustice.org)

Please take the time to educate your kids and keep them safe from online predators. If you have any concerns that your child is being groomed by a predator online, please make a call and report it.

North Carolina State Bureau for Investigation (SBI) Main Line (919) 662-4500
National Human Trafficking Hotline (888) 373-7888 / SMS: 233733 (Text "HELP" or "INFO")
Website: humantraffickinghotline.org

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Hyde County Hotline 24- Hour Crisis Line (252) 925-2500



“It is not an enemy who taunts me – I could bear that. It is not my foes who so arrogantly insult me – I could have hidden from them. Instead, it is you – my equal, my companion and close friend. What good fellowship we once enjoyed as we walked together to the house of God.” Psalm 55:12-14

We have long known that domestic violence exists, affecting one in three women. There are no racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, educational or age-related boundaries when it comes to abuse – nor is it defined by religious affiliation. Domestic violence is a worldwide epidemic, and in order to end it, we need to understand that it affects all of us, including those within the church and within every congregation.

Faith communities are often the first responders for those experiencing domestic violence, as many people turn to their faith for answers before seeking support or counseling outside of their place of worship. Unfortunately, leaders and members of the church are often ill equipped to know how to respond to abuse, or do not think it happens within their own congregations. The truth is that women in faith communities are at higher risk of being abused, less likely to leave the abusive relationship, and least likely to reach out to experts for help.

Although the faith community may have the best intentions in responding to domestic violence situations, too often, victims hear blaming or are given advice that unintentionally perpetuates the abuse and excuses the abuser. Abusers may manipulate scriptures like Ephesians 5 or Proverbs 31 to keep women in abusive homes for fear of displeasing their God. Given the escalation patterns and potentially lethal nature of domestic violence, it becomes an even greater responsibility for all intersections of the faith community to respond effectively by turning to the experts, establishing a church-wide commitment against domestic violence and actively taking an individual stance by getting involved.

RELY ON THE EXPERTS

The church is not immune to secular problems like alcoholism or domestic violence. Considering that, domestic abuse is the leading cause of injury to families, all faith communities – including both leaders and members – need to be prepared to face this issue. We cannot ignore it when it happens, nor can we pretend it does not happen in the church.

To end this epidemic, the church is not expected to be an expert on the issue, but rather to stand beside victims, believe them, tell them there is help and hold abusers accountable. There are resources available through advocacy agencies like Hyde County Hotline. We exist to give men, women and children in abusive situations a path to lead independent and safe lives. These agencies are the experts so you do not have to be, providing staff trainings and materials on how to respond to domestic violence from the pulpit to the pew.

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ESTABLISH A CHURCH-WIDE COMMITMENT AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

We are called to hold abusers accountable: if you suspect something, say something. The Bible says again and again “Whoever has ears to hear, let them hear.” Suppose the news of the Gospel was only talked about at church once a year; imagine the missed opportunity. Similarly, domestic violence shouldn’t only be discussed one Sunday a year during October for Domestic Violence Awareness Month. In order to truly make an impact, the church needs to be blanketed with this message, from informational cards in restrooms to sermons on Sunday and in Sunday school classes. For men and woman to hear and believe that they are worth it, they must receive the same message everywhere they go – Hotline, during interaction with law enforcement and the courts and from their faith community.

TAKE AN INDIVIDUAL STANCE BY GETTING INVOLVED

Understanding the intersection between faith and domestic violence is the first step in responding effectively. At Hyde County Hotline, we recognize the incredible opportunity and responsibility we have to partner with faith communities to support our mission. If we ever hope to end the epidemic of domestic violence, we cannot ignore it when it happens and we cannot pretend it does not happen in our church. Both abusers and victims are in our choirs, in our pews and in our congregations. If you or someone you know is experiencing domestic violence, call Hyde County Hotline’s 24-hour Crisis Line at 252-925-2500. If you would like to discuss ways your congregation can take a stand against domestic violence, please reach out to our agency by calling 252-925-2502.

(Source: Information adapted from genesishelter.org)

Let’s work together to bring HOPE to victims of abuse!

The purpose of Hyde County Hotline, Inc. is to work to eliminate domestic abuse, sexual victimization, and human trafficking and provide safe shelter in Hyde County, North Carolina through the collaborative efforts of a compassionate community. We promote dignity, respect and safety at home resulting in safer communities.

What We Do:

- Crisis Intervention
- Domestic Violence, Sexual Victimization & Human Trafficking Advocacy
- Survivor Services
- Safe Shelter
- Safety Planning
- Support Groups and Referrals
- Program Presentations for Adults & Children in Churches, Businesses and Schools
- Referrals

How You Can Help:

- Ask Us About Community Presentations
- Tell Others About Us
- Become a Crisis Line Volunteer
- Donate to Our Thrift Store
- Ask For a Copy of Our Shelter Needs List
- Monetary Donations are Accepted

Thank you to the N.C. Council for Women, Youth Involvement-Family Violence Prevention, Services Act Program, and US DHHS for financial support.

FYSB Family & Youth
Services Bureau

**Family Violence Prevention
& Services Program**



**Council for Women &
Youth Involvement**
Department of Administration