

Whitney

Age: 16

Grade: 11

Pronouns: She/Her

Whitney grew up in an upscale residential neighbourhood in Toronto, Ontario. She lives with her biological parents. She is student council president and was once a straight-A student in the International Baccalaureate (IB) Program. Now, she is in jeopardy of remaining in this program.

Whitney is known as one of the most popular girls in school and used to invite her classmates over to her house for pool parties. Those parties were often unsupervised.

Whitney's mother runs a charity foundation that provides prom dresses and suits for those who are in need. Whitney's father works in finance and is frequently away on business in New York City for extended periods of time. Whitney has older siblings who are away at university in Los Angeles and Boston.

The relationship between Whitney and her mother is strained; however, her mother is often at school as she volunteers at several school functions. When a parent or guardian is required to attend school functions, their strained relationship is often noticed. Due to his work schedule, Whitney's father is rarely present for school functions.

Recently, Whitney has been spending a lot of time alone at home with access to all forms of electronics. She is engaging with many men online who give her a lot of attention. She rarely invites her friends over anymore. While alone, she engages online with many men who give her a lot of attention.

Whitney met a 21-year-old man online and did not realize he was a human trafficker. She developed a close bond with the man, and he became her new "boyfriend." He listened carefully to everything she poured out of her heart. He pretended to know what she needed better than anyone else. The trafficker love-bombed Whitney and she would never turn on him in the early stages of their relationship. He convinced her to engage in sex work and she found it exciting to be in this type of relationship with him. She did not know that she was being groomed for trafficking.

At school, Whitney is overheard talking about her boyfriend to her classmates. In recent weeks, she has been spoken to and disciplined for her inappropriate clothing, as she has been rolling her kilt up higher than permitted and tying her shirt up into a cropped top.

Teachers notice that Whitney spends a lot of time on her cell phone and seems overly giddy when reading texts and engaging with her new boyfriend.



What are the immediate concerns?

What are your long-term concerns?

In your role as school administrator, what future staff development arises as a result of this case study?

Ask yourself

- Is there a duty to report anything at this point? To whom?
- What is your approach with her and then with her parents?
- What do you do about her status in the IB Program?

What would it look like if...?

- Whitney did not come from a wealthy family.
- Whitney was a boy or gender fluid.
- Whitney's new boyfriend was the same age as Whitney?

Whitney's new boyfriend also attended your school.