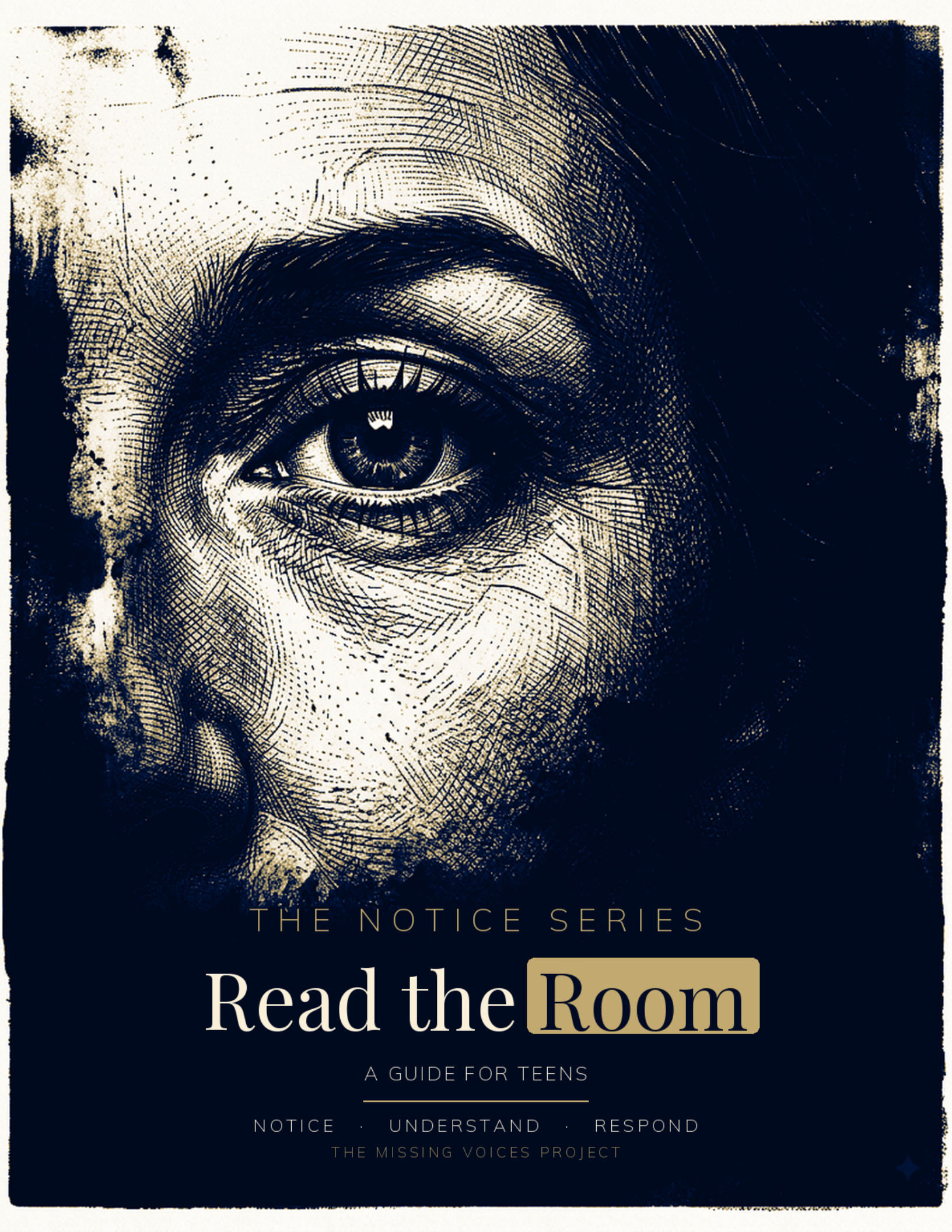




THE NOTICE SERIES

Read the Room

A GUIDE FOR TEENS

NOTICE · UNDERSTAND · RESPOND

THE MISSING VOICES PROJECT



Real talk

No lecture. Just the moves, so you can see them coming.

Forget the movie version with the van and the stranger grabbing someone off the street. That is not how this usually works, and watching for it means missing the real thing.

The real thing looks like a person being really nice to you. Usually online. Someone who makes you feel seen, or offers you something good, and slowly turns that into control. It is a con, and cons work on smart people. Getting pulled in does not mean anything is wrong with you.

This guide is about reading the room: spotting the moves early, trusting your gut, and knowing you have always got options and people you can go to. That is the whole thing.

How the con actually works

It starts with attention

Someone makes you feel special fast. Really seen, really understood, like they get you in a way no one else does. That rush is the hook. It can come from a crush, a new online "friend," or someone who just seems to care a lot, quickly.

Or it starts with an offer

Money, clothes, a modeling or music opportunity, game credits, a place to stay, a way out of something hard. If it sounds too good to be true, that is a red flag, not a lucky break.

Online, people can be anyone

Filtered photos, borrowed photos, a fake age ("almost 18"), a whole fake life. You cannot actually verify a person you have only met through a screen, no matter how real it feels.

Sextortion, and the thing you need to know

Sometimes someone gets a private or nude picture of you, or just claims they have one, and threatens to share it unless you send more, or money. Here is what matters most: if this happens, it is not your fault, even if you sent something. The person threatening you is the one committing a crime. You are not going to be "in trouble," they lie about that to keep you scared and quiet. It can be stopped, and pictures can be taken down. The next pages show how.

Under all of it is one goal: control. Get you hooked, isolated, in their debt, or scared, and then use it.

NOTICE

The moves to watch for

QUICK NOTE

Any one of these on its own might be nothing. Several together, or a gut feeling that something is off, is worth paying attention to.

- ◆ They come on strong and fast. Lots of "no one understands you like I do."
- ◆ They message constantly and become really important to you really quickly.
- ◆ They want secrecy, and try to get between you and your family or friends.
- ◆ They turn out to be older than they said, or you have only ever met online.
- ◆ They ask for personal info, photos, or video calls pretty early.
- ◆ They give you gifts, money, or a dream opportunity, then act like you owe them.
- ◆ They want to move the conversation somewhere private.
- ◆ They push past your "no," guilt-trip you, or get angry when you pull back.

Reading the room means noticing the pattern, not just the person. Patterns tell the truth.

Your moves

Trust your gut

If something feels off, it probably is. You do not owe anyone your photos, your secrets, your location, or even a reply. That is not rude. That is you keeping yourself safe.

You can always stop and walk away

You can stop replying, block, and leave any time, no reason needed. Never send nudes, even if it feels like they would never leak, even if it feels like a real relationship. Once an image is out, it is out of your hands.

If someone is pressuring or threatening you

- ◆ Do not pay, and do not send more. It does not make it stop.
- ◆ Stop replying. Take screenshots so you have proof. Then block them.
- ◆ Tell a trusted adult: a parent, a teacher, a coach, a counselor, a relative, anyone you trust. You are not in trouble, and this is not your fault.
- ◆ Get the images taken down using the tools on the next page. They really can help.

Feeling scared, embarrassed, or alone is exactly what they are counting on. Telling someone breaks their power. You are not alone, and this can be undone.

Where to get help

You can reach these any time

If you are in immediate danger, call 911.

Kids Help Phone (Canada) · 1-800-668-6868

Free, confidential, 24/7. Or text 686868. You can talk about anything, no problem is too small.

NeedHelpNow.ca (Canada)

Helps youth stop the spread of a sexual picture or video and get support. Report online exploitation at Cybertip.ca.

Take It Down (United States) · takeitdown.ncmec.org

Helps remove nude or sexual images of people under 18. You can also call NCMEC at 1-800-843-5678.

Human trafficking help

Canada 1-833-900-1010. United States 1-888-373-7888, or text 233733.

If you ever feel like you cannot go on, please reach out. Call or text 988 anytime in Canada and the United States. You deserve support, and people want to help.

REMEMBER THIS

Four things to keep

- ◆ It is not your fault. Not even if you sent something, went along with it, or missed the signs.
- ◆ You do not owe anyone access to you.
- ◆ You can always tell someone, and you will not be in trouble for asking for help.
- ◆ It can be undone. There are people and tools that fix this every day.

**Trust your gut. You do not owe anyone access to you.
And you can always tell someone.**

SOURCES

Drawn from Polaris Project; the U.S. National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (Take It Down, CyberTipline); the Canadian Centre for Child Protection (NeedHelpNow.ca, Cybertip.ca); Kids Help Phone; Public Safety Canada; and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

The Missing Voices Project · Missing does not mean forgotten. Silenced does not mean unheard.