

Single mothers are a target for sexual predators

In today's society, sexual predators are finding more and more ways to find access to innocent victims. Recently, it has become apparent that one tactic being used more by sexual predators is gaining access to children through their single mother. Many sexual predators/pedophiles go onto online dating services just to look for profiles of single women with children. This is disturbing in a sense that most of the time these women are so thrilled to be in a relationship that they overlook any red flags or warning signs in regards to their new significant other. Most dating sites do not run background screening on their members so it is hard to even know who these people really are. There are some tips on "Dating as a Single Mother" that women can follow that will not only protect them, but will protect their children as well.

*Accept the fact that some guys will not want to date you because you do have children. In that case, just know that you don't want to date them either.

*NEVER date a guy who makes it clear to you that he DOES NOT WANT CHILDREN. Just let him find a woman who does not want children either. It is more common in these cases where the children fall victim to physical, mental, and sexual abuse due to the non parent's resentment. Remember the old saying-there are plenty of other fish in the sea.

*Don't apologize for being fertile. Realize that being a mom-single or not-is the best thing in the world! There are some women who aren't lucky enough to have children of their own. Children are a gift!

*When you do start dating someone, take things slowly. Make sure you get to know the person before you bring him into your home life.

*Take a long time to introduce your children to your new flame. Talk to your kids about him and ask if they like him. Always listen to what your kids have to say.

*Be willing to protect your children before getting the love and satisfaction you think you need. If you or even a family member notices your new beau acting strange around your kids-talk to your kids and call off the relationship immediately!

*Don't leave your kids alone with a new boyfriend! Be careful! Until you know what kind of person he is, don't assume he is the typical nice guy.

*Believe in yourself! Don't feel as if you have to settle for less than what you deserve just because you are a single mother. There are plenty of nice guys out there that would be lucky to have you and your children in their lives-just make sure he is worthy.

*Last but not least-many women are always in search of finding 'true love', I have come to realize that no matter what any man would be able to offer me, the truest meaning of the term 'true love' could only be described as my love for my kids and their love for me. Children cannot control the decisions that are made in their homes, it is the parents' responsibility to protect and love them!

It seems that the only time sexual offenses against minors get any public attention is when the perpetrator is a stranger to the victim. Please be aware that in most cases, the victim knows their assailant. Child molesters are usually family members, neighbors, or friends of the family.

As a parent or guardian, it is best to be aware of all of your children's surroundings and be cautious of who you even allow in your home. It has even become a risk to allow your child to have a sleepover at a friend's house these days. It is hard to know what type of environment you are sending your child into.

As we all know, people do not like to talk about sexual abuse-especially if it happens in their own home. The scary part of this is children and teens are starting to sexually abuse other children and teens which goes on and on-a continuous cycle of abuse. These young offenders are looked at strictly as perpetrators when they have been victims themselves. Talk to your children! If they get upset because they can't spend the night at a friend's house- you're only doing what's best for them.

Many child molesters take the time to "groom" their victims before actually committing the crime. It is in these situations where single mothers get charmed by the sexual predators. The child molester will not take action right away. They will spend time trying to gain their victim's trust before they commit the crime. Many women have said, "Well my boyfriend and I have been together for one year and this is the first time my child has ever said anything about it." Chances are the sexual predator used that first year to gain the woman's trust as well as the child's trust. Once the child molester feels they are in the comfort zone is when they commit their horrible crime. Although it is hard to identify a child molester, here are some traits that help identify them:

- *Molesters tend to seek out playgrounds or other places that kids frequent.
- *Molesters entice kids with games, toys, or money.
- *Molesters supply alcohol, drugs, and pornography to their victims to lower inhibitions.
- *Molesters prey not only on the child's/teenager's desire to excel in a sport, they also prey on the child's/teenager's parent's desire.
- *Molesters entertain kids and take them on outings.
- *Molesters tend to operate or work at businesses that employ teens.
- *Molesters seek employment that puts themselves in contact with children.
- *Molesters seek out single mothers intending to victimize their innocent children.

Please remember that we need to be aware of not only our own surroundings, but the surroundings of our children. A child's life can be shattered in the blink of an eye due to sexual abuse. The damages caused by such criminal acts are suffered throughout an entire lifetime!

If you have any questions regarding this article or any topics regarding sexual abuse, domestic abuse, stalking, or general crimes, please call the DOVE office at (218) 935-5554. Our 24 Hour Crisis Line number is 1-877-830-DOVE (3683). Our program provides direct services to victims/survivors of these crimes.