



[iEmpathize.org/empower/teens](https://www.iempathize.org/empower/teens)
an iEmpathize Campaign



iEMPATHIZE

iEmpathize is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization dedicated to combating crimes against children. Our mission is to evoke empathy and empower people to eradicate child exploitation.

THE PROBLEM: EXPLOITATION

The exploitation of minors is an alarming reality in the United States, and it comes in many forms: Bullying has evolved into an issue with often severe consequences. One in four girls and one in six boys will be sexually abused by age eighteen.* And the commercial sexual exploitation of children in the U.S. is part of a thirty-two billion dollar criminal industry.^ Perpetrators of crimes of sexual exploitation see our nation's schools as a prime location to recruit new pimps and lure new victims. These youth often have no idea what is really happening to them until it is too late. The purpose of the Empower Youth Program, therefore, is to educate students about the very real threat of exploitation so that they can stay safe.

STRATEGY

At the heart of our curriculum is the concept of empathy. Empathy is an active response to the suffering of others, and it is a characteristic that our culture is in great need of cultivating. Few of us are completely apathetic (choosing to disregard another's suffering), but many of us get stuck in sympathy (feeling badly for the suffering of others). Empathy (understanding and actively engaging another's suffering) is the solution to issues of exploitation, from forms as familiar as bullying in a school's hallways to more extreme acts like human trafficking. By inspiring students to develop empathy for those around them, our curriculum distinguishes itself as an exploitation awareness tool as well as a character education program with far-reaching transformative potential for your school, classroom, or youth program.

PROGRAM FEATURES

- **Flexibly designed** for environments ranging from traditional academic classrooms to after-school youth programs to individual counseling sessions.
- Intended for youth in **7th grade and up**.
- **Five lesson unit** comprised of two short films per lesson, discussion questions, classroom activities, and assessment options.
- Each lesson is **20 minutes** in length with optional extension activities up to 60 minutes.
- **Supplemental Friendly:** The program can be integrated into existing curricula or existing initiatives. Aligns with Health Education standards and Common Core Career Readiness standards.
- The most impactful feature of the program is its **teen showcase**. The media content is led by youth who speak from their experiences of learning to navigate vulnerability.

"I was personally moved by the Empower Youth Program...The stories portrayed seem authentic. I see our kids in the stories. The program demystifies the powerful nature of life's pushes and pulls and their profound influence on whether or not our kids become victims of exploitation."

-School Counselor, San Bernadino, California

*Centers for Disease Control, ^U.S. Dept. of Justice



1200 Pearl Street Suite 65 Boulder CO 80302 | 303.625.4074 | info@iempathize.org

DEVELOPMENT

The Empower Youth Program was first developed in 2011 to address the great need for prevention programming with at-risk youth. Through collaborative efforts with survivors of human trafficking, experts in the field of education and educational psychology, law enforcement, and victim advocacy experts, iEmpathize developed content that addresses issues of child exploitation without sensationalizing the concepts.

After piloting the content in several U.S. cities, we released The Empower Youth Program in a media package that allows any facilitator to deliver the content. Accessible through the facilitator's choice of either an online platform or a physical DVD and guide-book package, the program addresses the following prevention-focused concepts:

- Module One: Empathy – What is empathy, and why is it important in my life?
- Module Two: Negative Pushes – How can I navigate negative personal and cultural pushes in my life?
- Module Three: Negative Pulls – How can I navigate negative personal and cultural pulls in my life, especially when people sometimes wear deceptive disguises?
- Module Four: Positive Pulls – How can I determine the difference between a disguise and a real positive pull in my life?
- Module Five: Choosing Empathy – What plan can I put in place to help both myself and the people in my life safely navigate pushes and pulls?

To view a preview of the program's media, visit:
www.iempathize.org/empower/teens

MEDIA PARTICIPANTS

As noted previously, the program is driven by two people in particular, Taylor and PJ, who are featured in the media of all five modules. They are both young people who speak from the experience of having learned how to navigate the individual push and pull factors of their own lives. However, while they both allude to the obstacles they have overcome, neither shares full personal details pertaining to the challenges or vulnerabilities they experienced. This program aims to serve youth who are looking for authenticity; today's youth connect with the credibility and empathy that Taylor and PJ bring.

IMPACT

"I think the most helpful part of this program was learning about all the different disguises people wear and how to tell real from fake. I think this has already helped me a lot relationship wise."

-17 year-old female student

"I learned how to be a better person and stop hurting the people I care about."

-14 year-old male student

"As a survivor of domestic minor sex trafficking, no one saw what was happening to me. If there had been a program such as The Empower Youth Program, adults and peers in my life would have been aware of the indicators of exploitation and would have been able to intervene. Now, there is awareness and prevention available so that no other will have to be exploited in the ways that I was. Students, teachers, friends and community members are now able to know what to look for and how to intervene for help; you can literally change the course of someone's life."

-Christine Cesa

