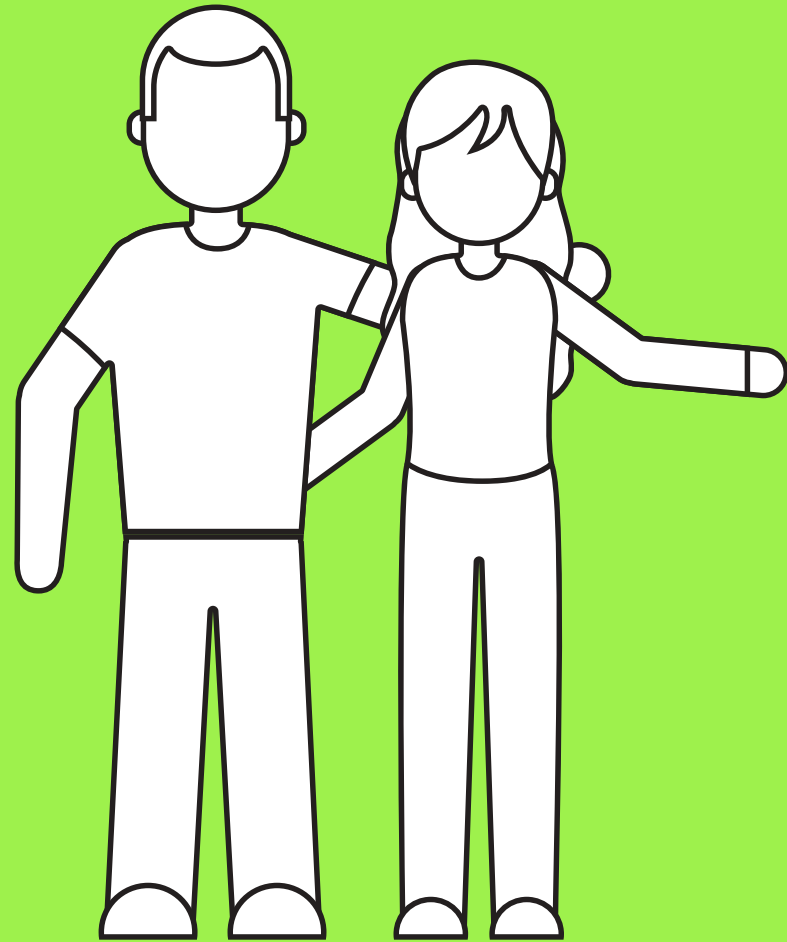


WHAT IS GROOMING?

#ExploitationWeek



People forming relationships with young people to use you for financial gain or other benefits. They want you to believe they are your friend to gain your trust & then use that power to make you do things for them - such as moving drugs

It can happen online or in real life & can be someone you know or a stranger

They might use threats, humiliation, bribes or even violence to control you

Anyone can be exploited- if it happens to you it is not your fault - you are a victim of a crime

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WHO'S AT RISK

Any young person is at risk - both boys & girls can be groomed



The groomer builds an emotional connection with you to build your trust. They form a relationship with you to manipulate you to do things for them



Groomers will exploit any vulnerability to increase the likelihood a child or young person will become dependent on them and less likely to speak out

If you are in care, have disabilities or experience neglect you may be more at risk of being groomed as exploiters target vulnerable young people

RED FLAGS

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These are some of the things that someone who is trying to groom you might say - keep an eye out for these early warning signs

Don't tell anyone else

We treat you like an adult not a child

You'd be really good at this

It's easy money

We've got your back

I can look after you

Someone will get hurt if you don't

You belong to our family

You could have everything I have one day

I'm the only one that really understands you

You'll get more money if you do



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STAGES OF GROOMING

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There are four main recruitment stages when somebody is trying to groom you

Knowing what signs to look out for can help you to keep safe - but it's not always easy to spot when it's happening to you



Due to being manipulated you might have complicated feelings about the person grooming you - like loyalty or admiration - as well as fear, distress & confusion

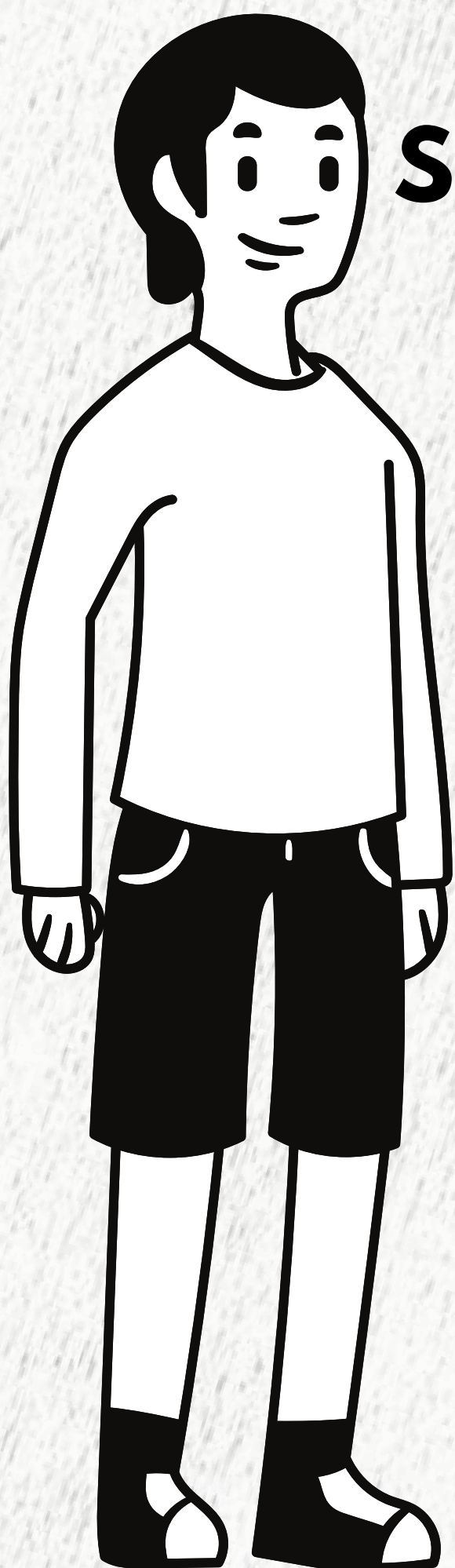
It's important to remember grooming isn't your fault - you have done nothing wrong & don't deserve to be abused

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1 - TARGET

Exploiters pick their targets based on things like your age, strength or situation

An exploiter targets a young person who is vulnerable, reducing their chances of getting caught



SIGNS:

- **Watching you & your friends & seeing where you go**
- **Asking you about things you need or want**
- **Asking about things that make you vulnerable**
- **Telling you they have chosen you as you are special**
- **Talking about their life & glamourising it**
- **Gaining your trust**
- **Telling other people in their gang about you**
- **Recruiting you to their gang or friendship group**
- **Marking you out as someone to watch**

2 - TEST

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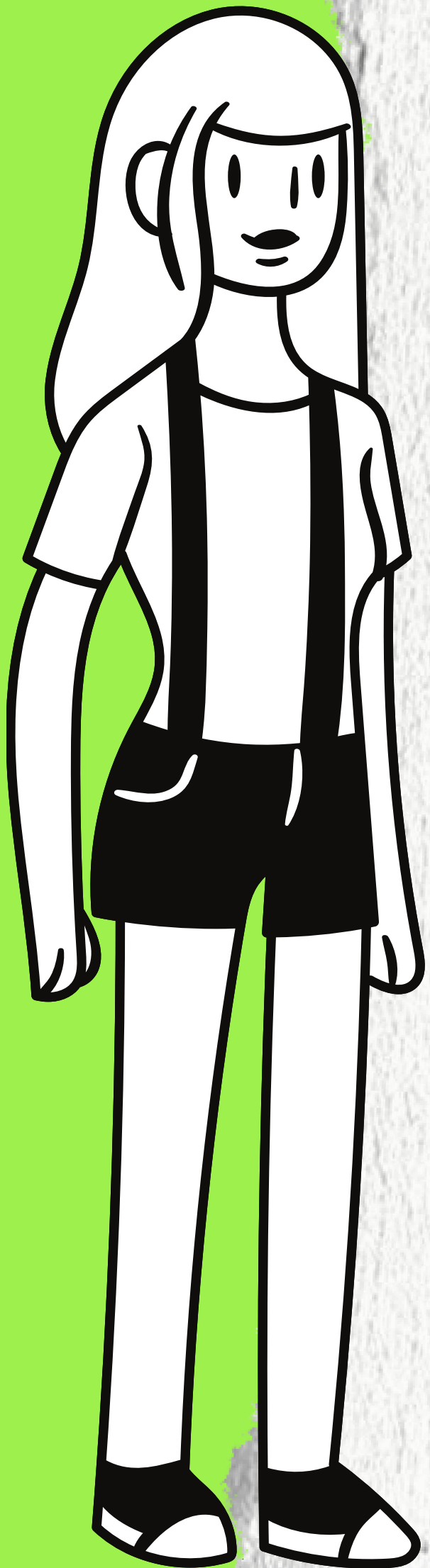
Getting you used to their lifestyle & training you up in what they're doing

They're testing you to see if they can use you



SIGNS:

- **Making you feel wanted**
- **Giving you gifts & rewards**
- **Including you in their activities**
- **Testing your loyalty**
- **Listening to & remembering what you say**
- **Offering you protection**
- **Relating to you & offering advice**
- **Giving you a sense of belonging**
- **Saying nice things to you**
- **Giving you a weapon**
- **Introducing you to more established members of their gang**
- **Asking to see your skills**



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3 - HOOKED

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Making you feel you're a member of their gang -even though they're just exploiting you

SIGNS:

- **Having an identity in the group**
- **Being given a bigger role in the group - like having people run for you or getting more money**
- **Engaging in risky behaviour/activities such as violence, sex or low level crime**
- **Feeling more powerful & that you've progressed within the ranks of the group**
- **Other people knowing your name - helping you feel more powerful**
- **Making you feel you need them - or the drugs or alcohol they give you**
- **Allowing you to see some of the bad stuff that happens as a result of drug dealing**
- **Being asked for favours, to keep secrets or recruit others to the gang**
- **Becoming involved with trap houses**

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4 - TRAPPED

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Where you feel dependent on the group - your relationship with your exploiter may start to become unpleasant as their true intentions & character are revealed

SIGNS:

- **Threatening you**
- **Making sure you are indebted to them so you can't leave**
- **Organising fake 'muggings' to create a debt you must pay back**
- **Physical violence or sexual assaults**
- **Giving you strip searches**
- **Isolating you from family & friends through fear, guilt & shame**
- **Forcing you to abuse & assault others - or even shoot people**
- **Humiliating you by exposing your mistakes to others**
- **Becoming addicted to drugs & others encouraging you to use**
- **Feeling trapped**
- **Progressing to Class A drugs**
- **Getting you to run a trap house**
- **Forcing you to plug drugs**

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GROOMING & CRIMINAL EXPLOITATION

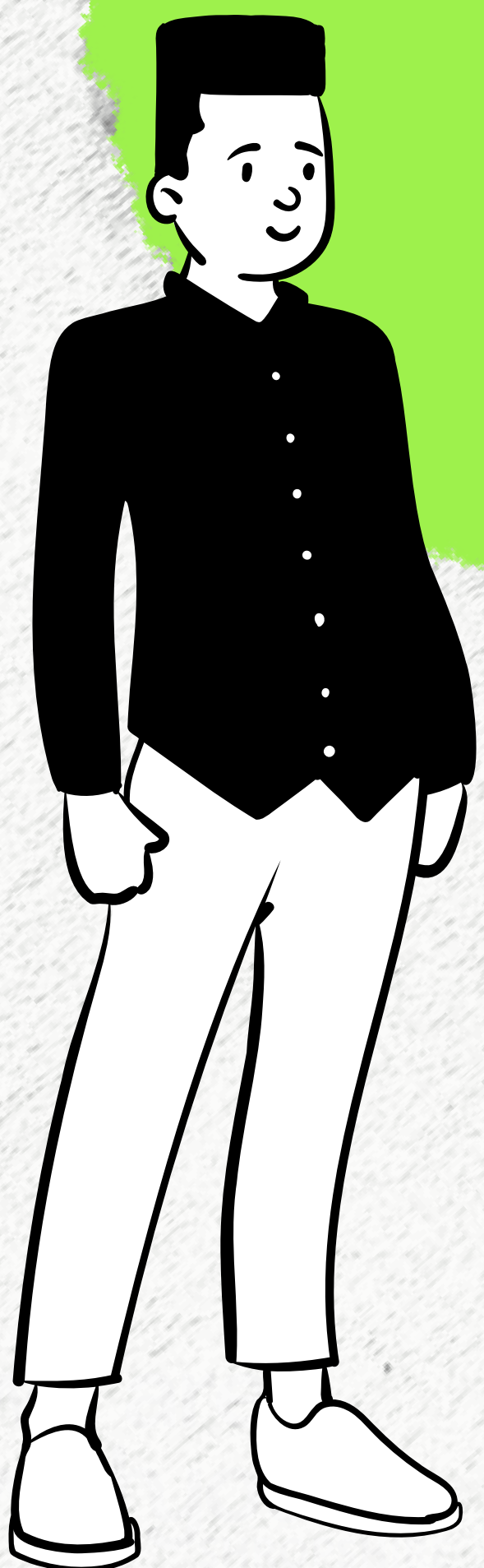
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With criminal exploitation groomers are always looking for the next person to exploit

If a young person has been stopped by police, isn't making enough profit or is seen as no longer useful the gang will drop them - there is no loyalty or protection & the gang will have other young people ready & waiting to take on the role

Often they get young people to recruit their friends - so it's useful to know what exploitation can look like from the outside too

Keep an eye out for the following signs among your mates - if you're worried speak to them or a trusted adult to get them help



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SIGNS YOUR MATES ARE BEING EXPLOITED

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Spending more time away from home or going missing

Being upset, withdrawn or distressed – or even self-harming

Taking less care of their appearance, losing weight or having injuries

Having older or new friends

Receiving more calls or having more than one phone or SIM card

Using more drugs or alcohol

Talking about drugs

Becoming more guarded about their phone

Hanging around with people involved in drug dealing

Having money or new things & not being able to explain where they came from

Having car or house keys

Telling you that you could make lots of money like them too

Having lots of drugs or money on them

Saying nobody can touch them & that they don't care what happens to them

Getting in trouble with the police

Being secretive about what they're doing

Visiting other areas

Carrying a weapon

Getting into cars with people you don't know

You & their family see changes in them & are worried

