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The modelling industry has had a reputation for many things. Young women, depending on what part of the world they come from, economics, and support at home plays a large part in whether they have a positive or negative experience. Globally it has been recognized as one of the most glamorous and sought after careers for young women. The winnipeg free press published a study this past weekend that showed the different careers that opposite sexes looked for in a partner. Models ranked as number 1 for men.

I am not anti modelling. I think it can be a wonderful experience for young people to travel, live in other cultures, make money and develop life long friendships. However given the lack of restrictions applied to model agents and scouts, one must be very careful. Did you know that,

The average age of a model is 14 years old

The average age of a model traveling and working as a model is 16 years old

Canadian model agencies require no license, back ground checks, etc. (despite working with minors)

There are at least 250,000 young women in our country that explored the possibility of modelling this year.(we lost count after that)

The RCMP have recognized that the modelling industry is a avenue in which young women are trafficked around the world.(as well as many other international police and security organizations)

Did you know there are countless websites that young people can submit there photo's, and personal information in the hopes of being scouted by big model agencies.(there are thousands of pictures on these sites)

Did you know that this year in Canada there were reports of teenage girls that were raped by a man who frequents these sites.

In order to protect our children and provide them with opportunities like modelling,we must keep them safe. There should be laws and back ground checks, as well as we need to raise awareness and educate our kids. Educate our schools, police and neighbours. Human trafficking is a huge problem that effects all of us. Do not think because we live in Canada we are sheltered. We know it exists and we must work together to end these horrible crimes against women and children.

In conclusion, the modelling industry is a perfect umbrella for predators to hide under. It is lawless, the industry targets young teenage girls, and when it comes to fashion, the lines are really very grey. When does fashion become pornography. How easy would it be to convince a 15 year old girl with stars in her eyes to disrobe in the name of fashion. How easy is it to convince a 14 year old girl from Romania to come to Paris and model? (many never even come close to a catwalk) The answer is NOT HARD!!!!!!

Liz Crawford's presentation at the PCWM Semi Annual meeting, November 2006