



Workbook

Chasing the Shadows


The Realities of Running away and going Missing.



Name:

Date:





THE DREAM OF FREEDOM

Alex is, a 14-year-old girl feeling trapped at home. She is thinking about running away. Alex believes this will help by escaping rules, seeking adventure, and has the belief that life will be better outside the confines of home. Alex has been having conflicts with family, friends, and school pressures.

How might Alex resolve the conflicts at home, with family, friends, and at school to avoid running away.

Write your answer here.

THE DECISION TO GO

Alex had made the decision to runaway after having an argument with her mom. Alex had wanted to go to the mall with her friends afterschool. Her mother said she could not go without another parent. Alex was upset. Her friends didn't have to have a parent go. After experiencing this emotional moment she had a sense of urgency that she needed to leave home. She packed a bag with essentials and had reached out to someone she had met online who seemed nice, his name was Joe.

Why do you think Alex's mother wanted an adult to go to the mall with her? Write your answers here.

Why is it not safe to meet with a stranger from online? Write your answers here.



THE FIRST NIGHT

Alex successfully left her home for her first night on the streets. She was filled with excitement but quickly this turned to anxiety and fear.

Joe the boy she met online ended up not being a boy her age like she thought.

He was a older adult man. The conversations she had with him the weeks leading up to meeting all of a sudden felt creepy and wrong.

She decided to runaway from Joe and now needed to find a place to sleep, scavenge for food, and she did not feel safe or comfortable.

What do you think Alex should have done after running away from Joe?

Write your answer here.

THE PEOPLE YOU MEET

The first 24 hours was scary with different encounters with various individuals. The first night she met a lady named Sally.

She was a kind stranger who offered her temporary shelter in her car to sleep. Sally had mental health issues and screamed all night having nightmares in her sleep. Alex decided to leave early in the morning.

Alex took Sallys kindness and stayed with her, how could taking someones kindness not be safe?

Write your answer here.

What other types of people could she encounter while on the street?

Write your answer here.

THE DANGERS OF SURVIVAL

The ongoing threats Alex faced running away were:
Hunger, drugs, exposure to violence, exploitation, and mental health struggles.

Alex had encountered drug dealers and they presented the appeal of substances as a means of coping with her emotions.

Highlight the short-term solutions that come with long term consequences, such as turning to drugs or theft?

Write your answer here.

THE DARK ALLURE OF ADDICTION

Alex was introduced to dangerous drugs. She had a moment where escapism felt necessary to cast out the overwhelming feelings of loneliness . A girl named Rachel introduced her to stimulants, and opioids—detailing their immediate effects.

How do drugs become a way to numb the pain of reality rather than facing the problems head-on?

Write your answer here.

What others things could Alex have done to help her emotional state without using drugs?

Write your answer here.

THE THREAT OF TRAFFICKING

Alex is approached by someone named Rick. He tells Alex she is really beautiful. He seems helpful but also has ulterior motives. He offered Alex food, clothes, and a cell phone. He wants her to go back and meet his friends at his place. He promises to take care of her. He says he is falling in love.

Are you familiar some tactics that traffickers use to lure vulnerable individuals?

Write your answer here.

Are you aware of the emotional and psychological manipulation that occurs in trafficking, and that runaways are at a much higher risk of trafficking?

Write your answer here.

THE HARSH REALITY OF TRUST

Alex becomes involved with people who do not have genuine intentions. Alex is taken advantage of by Rick and his friends, both physically and emotionally. They also introduce her to some gang members as a way for her to have protection which lead Alex to a deeper involvement in crime.

How do you think Alex could have been more cautious in these situations?
Write your answer here.



SURVIVING BY ANY MEANS

Alex faces extremes to survive, including stealing food and money. Alex was scared of being caught by authorities and the potential for legal trouble, including arrests and juvenile detention. She was constantly having internal conflict of her morals versus survival, showing her how desperate circumstances can lead to poor choices.

What are the legal implications of stealing and the actions Alex did to survive?

Write your answer here.

THE RIPPLE EFFECT

Alex's mom was on a desperate search for finding her daughter. She went to the police to file a missing person report on the day she went missing. Organized community searches, rallied friends and family to form search parties. Appeared on local news programs to share her story, hoping to reach a wider audience. Posted flyers and billboards across the city, including Alex's picture and description. Drove around day and night, combing neighborhoods, checking places where Alex might have gone.

How did Alex's disappearance affect her family and friends.

Write your answer here.

THE LONGING FOR HOME

Alex started to see her missing person posters, and she began to have growing nostalgia for home and the realization that running away didn't solve problems but created new ones.

She reflected, on memories of family, and the support that was taken for granted. She started to fear being recognized as her search grew.

Why do you think that Alex did not go home after feeling memories of her family?

Write your answer here.

A TURNING POINT

Alex had a crisis moment that lead Alex to reconsider the choice to run away. She witnessed a dangerous situation related to drug use where one of the people she was with overdosed and died. Alex realized her life was in jeopardy. Alex starts to remember a mentor figure Lori at school who shares their story and warned Alex about addiction and the importance of seeking help.

Do you think after this experience, that Alex should seek help?

Write your answer here.

Who are safe people that Alex can seek help from?

Write your answer here.

THE JOURNEY BACK

Alex decided she needed to get back home. She was a few towns away from home. She decided to go to a library and ask a librarian for help. The librarian called the police who contacted her parents. The librarian knew of a program that gave free bus tickets for runaway children to return home. Her mom arranged to meet Alex at the bus station in her home town. On the bus ride Alex had fears of facing her mom and the desire to mend broken relationships.

What is the importance of communication, understanding, and addressing issues rather than running away from them?

Write your answer here.

HEALING AND MOVING FORWARD

Alex and her mom took steps together to help toward Alex's healing journey. They attended family therapy, support groups, and worked on rebuilding trust. During this time Alex had tremendous personal growth.

Do you think it is important to acknowledge your personal struggles, and the development of coping mechanisms, including overcoming addiction?

Write your answer here.

What are some coping skills you are familiar with?

Write your answer here.

A NEW PERSPECTIVE

Alex reflected on her experiences, recognizing that home may not be perfect, but it's a place to seek support and love.

Think critically about your own situations, what are ways you could communicate and seek help rather than run away.

Write your answer here

HIGHLIGHTS

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NOTES

RESOURCES

Runaway Hotline

1-800-786-2929

Suicide and Crisis Lifeline

Call 988

National Human Trafficking Hotline

1-888-373-7888, or Text "HELP" to 233733)

ARIZONA
MISSING CHILD
TASK FORCE



(844)642-5678

*A collaborative partnership between three nonprofit organizations,
uniting their resources and expertise to provide a comprehensive range of
services to families of missing children in Arizona.*

