

Human Trafficking Indicators

Human trafficking is the use of force, fraud, or coercion to exploit someone for labor or commercial sex. Here are some of the most common indicators:

- Is the victim in the company of someone who appears much older or controlling, providing the victims information or doing all the communicating?
- Does the victim seem submissive or fearful, refuse to make eye contact, or seem afraid to speak?
- Does the victim appear to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol or show signs of drug dependency?
- Does the victim show signs of having been denied food, water, sleep, or medical care?
- Is the victim disoriented, confused, or exhibit a loss of sense of time or their whereabouts?
- Are they able to clarify where they are staying or claim to be "just visiting"?
- Does the victim exhibit poor personal hygiene?
- Does the victim have any personal belongings, identification, or control of their own money?
- Are there security measures around the victim, designed to restrict movement or communication?
- Does the victim show signs of physical or sexual abuse, confinement, or torture?

It is unsafe to attempt to rescue a possible human trafficking victim. If you suspect someone is a victim of human trafficking, call (866) 347-2423 or if you suspect immediate danger, call 911

Grooming for Human Trafficking

- **TARGETING A VICTIM**

Traffickers target victims who have noticeable vulnerability: emotional neediness, low self-confidence, economic stress, or substance use dependency.

- **GAINING TRUST & INFORMATION**

Obtaining information about the victim is key! This can be done through casual conversations with the victim or parents. Traffickers often mix well with other adults.

- **FILLING A NEED**

Information gained allows the trafficker to fill a need in the victim's life, making the victim dependent on them: buying gifts, being a friend or confidant, a love relationship, or drug dependency.

- **ISOLATION**

The trafficker creates time to be alone with the victim and will begin to have a major role in the victim's life. The trafficker will attempt to start distancing the victim from family and friends and substance use can start to play a large role in the victim's life, furthering the isolation.

- **ABUSE BEGINS**

The trafficker begins claiming that a service or debt must be repaid, whether it's due to money spent on drugs, car rides, mobile phones, housing, etc. The trafficker demands sex or labor as payment for services. In many cases, the trafficker maintains control of the victim through threats to the victim or their family, violence, or blackmail.

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Compliments of Dr. Errol D. Toulon, Jr., Suffolk County Sheriff