

Human Trafficking

FACT SHEET



WHAT IS YOUTH SEX TRAFFICKING?

According to federal law, any minor under the age of 18 engaging in commercial sex is a victim of sex trafficking, regardless of the presence of force, fraud, or coercion. "Commercial sex" is defined as any sex act on account of which anything of value is given to or received by any person. The sex act can be for money, food, shelter, drugs or alcohol, or safety.

WHO IS AT RISK?

All youth are at risk, although some youth are more at risk. It is a statewide issue. Youth can be recruited online and in public spaces. Trafficking occurs in cities, suburbs, and rural areas. Most teens are not choosing to engage in these behaviors. What might look like a personal choice is most often not. In most cases, it is for survival. Many youth who are being trafficked do not see themselves as victims. They may not realize they are being trafficked.

HOW DO I IDENTIFY HUMAN TRAFFICKING?

Identifying if a youth is being trafficked is not always easy. Creating a relationship with youth is the best way to understand if they may be at risk or need help. Human trafficking is often "hidden in plain sight." There are a number of red flags, or indicators, which can help alert you to human trafficking. Recognizing the signs is the first step.

CHILDREN AND YOUTH AT HIGH RISK OF EXPLOITATION

Children with a history of involvement in the child welfare system

Youth living in group homes or residential treatment facilities

LGBTQ-identifying youth

Runaway and homeless youth

Children living in homes with drug use, maltreatment, or extreme poverty

Youth with a history of child sexual abuse

INDICATORS

Are you or someone you know being trafficked? Is human trafficking happening in your community? Recognizing potential red flags and knowing the indicators of human trafficking is a key step in identifying more victims and helping them find the assistance they need. Not all indicators will be present in all situations.

Poor Mental Health or Abnormal Behavior

Lack of Control

Poor Physical Health

Is frequently monitored

Has few or no personal possessions

Appear to have lost sense of time

Is not allowed or able to speak for themselves

Shares scripted, confusing, or inconsistent stories

Is fearful, anxious, depressed, submissive, tense, or nervous/paranoid

Lack of knowledge of whereabouts and/or do not know what city he/she is in

Exhibits unusually fearful or anxious behavior after bringing up law enforcement

Shows signs of substance use or addiction, poor hygiene, malnourishment, fatigue

Is not in control of their own money, financial records, bank account, or identification

If you suspect that a person may be a victim of human trafficking, please call **9-1-1** or the **National Human Trafficking Hotline at 1-888-373-7888**.

The Department of Children and Families is an equal opportunity employer and service provider. If you have a disability and need to access services, receive information in an alternate format, or need information translated to another language, please call the Division of Safety and Permanence at (608) 422-8787. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, deaf-blind or speech disabled can use the free Wisconsin Relay Service (WRS) – 711 to contact the department.