

HUMAN TRAFFICKING AWARENESS

KNOW THE TRUTH

DEFINITIONS

Sexual Exploitation: Actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, power, or trust, for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another.

Sextortion: The practice of extorting money or sexual favors from someone by threatening to reveal evidence of their sexual activity.

Sex Trafficking: Is the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, obtaining, patronizing, or solicitation of a person for the purpose of a commercial sex act, in which the commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, OR the person induced to perform such an act is under 18 years of age.

Labor Trafficking: Is the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purposes of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery.

Who are traffickers?

Perpetrators of human trafficking & exploitation span all racial, ethnic, and gender demographics and are as diverse as survivors. They include individuals, business owners, parents or family members of the victim, intimate partners, owners of farms or restaurants, persons of authority, or a peer.

Virtually all victims had some type of relationship with their trafficker before they were trafficked.

Traffickers gain their victims trust by offering things that youth often crave, such as a listening ear, compliments, gifts, and promises of love. Traffickers may engage in conversations online, through social media platforms or gaming consoles, with young people with the purpose of forming connections to learn more about them and take advantage of their vulnerabilities.

7 Signs of Grooming

- Identify & target the victim
- Gain the victims family's trust and access (sometimes this can be done through gaining the trust of a parent)
- Fill a need in the person's life - become important to them
- Isolate the victim from family and friends
- Create secrecy around the relationship
- Initiate sexual contact of some kind
- Controls the relationship

Risk Factors of Vulnerabilities

- Poverty / Homelessness
- Family background of violence, abuse & conflict
- Desperation
- Immigration status
- Loneliness
- High levels of incarceration
- Mental health issues
- **Sexualizing our Youth**
- **Lack of Parental or Adult Supervision**

Key Statistics 2020

Source: Polaris Project

- Online recruitment via social media and gaming apps became the top recruitment method of traffickers.
- Facebook is the #1 app of trafficking recruitment with a 125% increase from 2019 to 2020.
- Recruitment by family members increased 47% in 2020.
- The average age of child sex trafficking victims are between the ages of 11-14.

The Facts About Human Trafficking

- Human trafficking is any situation of exploitation that a person cannot refuse or leave because of threats, violence, coercion, deception, and/or abuse of power. In the case of child sex trafficking, force, fraud, or coercion do not need to be present, and the crime is simply the exchange of any sex act with a child for anything of value.
- Under US federal law, all children involved in commercial sex are victims of human trafficking. Only about half of US states have laws that protect children from being prosecuted for prostitution. (Indiana has laws in place to protect our youth)
- You'll often hear about trafficking "hotspots." The truth is that trafficking occurs wherever there are people. If you look at a map of trafficking referrals, major highways, and human population density, they are often closely aligned. (Indiana is considered a hotspot due to its location, transportation crossroads, and influence in hosting sporting events)
- Sex trafficking is not just a "women and girls issue." About 15% of those in our US survivor care have been boys and non-binary youth. (LGBTQ youth and young men are especially susceptible) Traffickers can look like anyone and don't fit one stereotype.
- Traffickers have been family members, peers, romantic partners, educators, employers, community leaders, and clergy.
- Sometimes, youth continue attending school, living at home, and participating in extracurricular activities – even while trafficked.
- Often, a "rescue" isn't the only (or best) way to freedom. Training to recognize & respond appropriately to trafficking and trauma-informed spaces to heal help create pathways for more victims to exit exploitation.

Tips for talking to your child about exploitation and trafficking...

- Be non-judgmental when listening to your child, and make sure to avoid shaming language.
- Avoid beginning your conversation by saying your child did something/said something wrong. "I" questions can be very helpful. For example, "I am concerned because...."
- Face your child, make eye contact, and show interest and empathy. Show understanding through words, nods, and facial expressions. Speak calmly. Pay attention to your body language and your child's body language during and after their response to your questions. Their body language should be congruent with what they are verbalizing.
- Label behavior, not the child. For example, an "angry youth" is a "youth struggling with anger."
- Remember that language matters. There are no such things as a child "prostitute." That youth is a victim of commercial sexual exploitation and human trafficking.
- Ask your child if anyone has touched them in ways that don't feel OK. Know that sexual abuse can produce a physical response that feels good to the victim, so asking your child if someone is hurting them may not get the information that you are looking for.
- Disputing facts or commenting on your child's motivations will shut down communication.
- Don't expect your child to recognize a situation as exploitive; they are seeking out everyday needs - to be seen, heard, loved, and valued for who they are.
- Try not to react in a way that communicates disgust and refrain from displaying a "shocked" face or talking about how "awful" the experience might have been for your child - allow them to share their feelings.
- Don't expect your child to disclose all the details at once; sometimes difficult information will need to be gathered in stages.