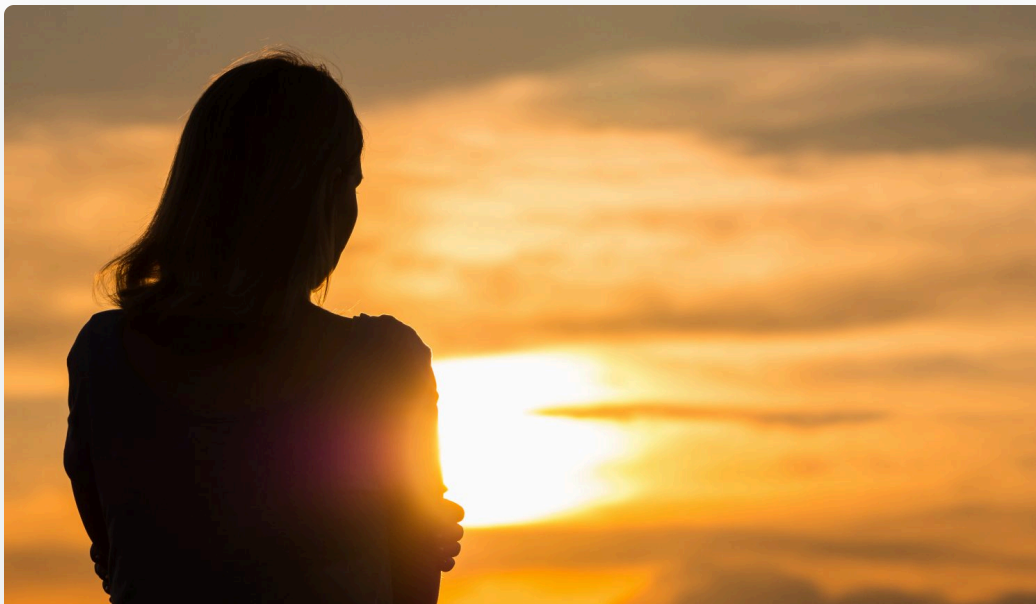




# What is Human Trafficking?



by Admin on November 21, 2021

Human trafficking is a form of modern slavery — a multi-billion dollar criminal industry that denies freedom to 20.9 million people around the world. No matter where you live, chances are it's happening nearby. From the girl forced into prostitution at a truck stop, to the man discovered in a restaurant kitchen, stripped of his passport, and held against his will. All trafficking victims share one essential experience: the loss of freedom.

Human Trafficking is an exploitive violent, criminal enterprise in Indiana and the Midwest; 178 trafficked youth were identified and served by one Indiana service provider in 2016 alone, with victims first trafficked as young as age 7. The Indiana Protection for Abused and Trafficked Humans (IPATH) task force began its work in 2005 and is now a thriving statewide coalition of state agencies, law enforcement, service providers, faith-based and community groups collaboratively working to prosecute traffickers, protect and serve victims and prevent future trafficking.

The SHARE Group collaborates with IPATH and Northwest Indiana Anti-trafficking Coalition (NWIAC) by sponsoring educational training events. More than three thousand five hundred plus (3,500+) professionals and the public in our region have attended our workshops, bringing awareness to human rights, abuses and being an advocate to do everything we can to fight against it.

Labor trafficked victims are primarily foreign-born and typically do not know English, have no community in the U.S., have extremely limited financial resources, and are lied to about their rights in the States. Traffickers often know the victim's family and can use threats of violence against the victim or the victim's family. Sex trafficked victims often come from situations of abuse where they have previously experienced trauma. The impact of trauma, particularly for children, is severe and causes them to be developmentally delayed in ways that make them easier to manipulate.

In both sex and labor trafficking, once victims have been recruited, they typically do not have meaningful social networks. Traffickers maintain control by isolating victims, keeping them from getting support and also from being able to ask for help. Trafficking victims are often ashamed of the horrific acts they have been forced into and are extremely fearful of the trafficker, who uses violence and threats against the victim and their loved ones in order to maintain control. Due to this shame and fear, victims may be hesitant to receive services or participate in an investigation of their perpetrator. Further, individuals rarely self-

identify as a victim of human trafficking, similar to other situations of abuse where the victims blame themselves for what has been done to them by their handlers.

Ongoing training is critical to building awareness to identify, refer, and respond effectively to human trafficking in Indiana.

Collaboration is critical for preventing the exploitation of vulnerable groups, identifying trafficked persons in our communities, as well as facilitating safe pathways to seek help and receive services. We have come a long way in fighting against human trafficking, but much is still needed in battling this horrific crime through Prosecution, Protection, and Prevention.

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