

Recognizing the early stages of sex trafficking

	RECRUITING <i>1 – 4 weeks</i>	TRAUMA BONDING <i>1-3 days</i>	TRAINING <i>1 – 2 weeks</i>
What it is	Identifying and befriending victim/s to build their trust and gather information	Breaking down barriers of victim/s and establishing dependence on the abuser	Preparing the victim for commercial sex (stripping, pornography and prostitution). S/he learns the ropes of the 'business' and consequences of non-compliance
How it works	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Too good to be true opportunity (eg, modeling) • Affectionate and generous older boyfriend who claims to understand and side with her against 'unreasonable' parents • Friend asks her to go along to meet new friends 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical and emotional violence, threats • Forced criminal activity • Other trauma, including rape • Victim is blamed and convinced that s/he deserved it • Could include abduction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Once victim has been 'broken' (traumatized), abuser works to create the trauma bond by villainizing family and friends and creating dependence • Uses ongoing physical and emotional abuse to instill fear and get compliance • May create drug/alcohol dependency • Other victims, already well-trained, take over the roles of teacher and enforcer
What it looks like to you	Sudden change in behavior Expensive gifts Secretive behavior Short disappearances	Runaway, rebellion. Absent from usual functions and events. Often escorted or monitored	Most often extended disappearance from home. If already at college or living away from home, contact (if any) is infrequent. Details about day to day events vague and incomplete.
What you need to know	The early stages are a small window of opportunity to disrupt the trafficker – the next stage is a lengthy fight to get him/her back	It is was not your son/ daughter's fault, s/he did not 'ask for it' but s/he now appears willing due to the psychological coercion	Your son/daughter is now emotional fragile and not able to think clearly. S/he is not acting as the person you know. The abuser is waging psychological warfare against you, and s/he is an expert.
How we can help	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Validate the situation and level of danger • Offer immediate explanation of the tactics • Establish an appropriate support network in your area to continue your efforts to restore your family 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct you on what information to collect • Assist in developing a clear and effective timeline that can be used to report the crime • Provide counseling and mentoring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hire and direct private detectives and other specialists to find your son /daughter, identify the abuser, and gather information • Deliver evidence to prosecute the abuser • Provide legal assistance and expert witness, eg, if s/he was arrested for criminal activity • Provide counseling and mentoring

Victims of commercial sexual exploitation often:

- Disappear for hours at a time with flimsy explanations
- Have much older boyfriends
- Begin to fall behind in schoolwork
- Begin to isolate from family and friends

Contrary to popular stereotypes, victims of commercial sexual exploitation:

- May not be defined by socio-economics, such as poor, uneducated, single-parent families. We are seeing more and more victims coming from upper middle class families where parents are still married and have advanced degrees (MA, PhD)
- May not have a history of trouble behavior or poor academics. Recent interventions have involved college students who were previously 'A' students and high school stand-outs

If you suspect that your child is being exploited:

- Document everything: names, phone numbers, license plates, times, locations, computer screen shots, even 'lingo' you don't understand. Many things can help identify abusers and confirm trafficking activity
- Call [210.882.2259](tel:210.882.2259) and set up an appointment for professional evaluation

About Dottie and Laster Global Consulting,

Dottie Laster triggered the largest rescue of trafficking victims in the United States in 2005. She assisted in developing the **U. S. Attorney's Human Trafficking Rescue Alliance**, a human trafficking task force often noted as a model for the nation. As a part of this task force, she trained over 5,000 police officers and worked directly with adult and child victims.

Ms Laster has also been a consultant on the **Long Island Serial Killer** case, brought in by the family of then missing mother, Megan Waterman. As more remains are being found, and the killer not yet caught, the case continues to make headlines. Because most of the victims are recognized as sex workers, and possibly coerced, Ms Laster is using her expertise in the characteristics of human trafficking to assist law enforcement agencies in producing information that may eventually lead to a suspect.

Laster Global Consulting provides consulting, private investigation, media appearances and expert witness testimony in domestic and international trafficking cases