



## RECOGNIZE AND RESPOND

### HOW TO SPOT HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN YOUR COMMUNITY

#### POTENTIAL INDICATORS & RED FLAGS

The following is a list of red flags to keep in mind when indicating a potential situation of or a victim of human trafficking. Taken individually, each indicator may not necessarily imply a trafficking situation. Furthermore, items on this list are not meant to be interpreted as present in all trafficking cases, nor is the list intended to be exhaustive. This is a list of “potential” indicators of “red flags” that have been common in human trafficking cases domestic and abroad. The most important tools that you have are your intuition or “gut feeling,” and your voice. USE THEM BOTH!!

#### Common Work and Living Conditions:

##### The Individual(s) in Question...

- Is not free to leave or come and go as he/she wishes
- Is under 18 years of age and is providing commercial sex acts
- Is in the commercial sex industry and has a pimp/manager
- Is unpaid, paid very little, or paid only through tips
- Works excessively long and/or unusual hours
- Is not allowed breaks or suffers under unusual restrictions at work
- Owes a large and/or increasing debt and is unable to pay it off
- Was recruited through false promises concerning the nature and conditions of his/her work
- Is living or working in a location with high security measures (e.g. opaque or boarded-up windows, bars on windows, barbed wire, security cameras, etc.).

##### Poor Mental Health or Abnormal Behavior: The Individual(s) in Question...

- Exhibits unusually fearful, anxious, depressed, submissive, tense, or nervous/paranoid behavior
- Reacts with unusually fearful or anxious behavior at any reference to “law enforcement”
- Avoids eye contact
- Exhibits a flat affect

##### Poor Physical Health: The Individual(s) in Question...

- Exhibits unexplained injuries or signs of prolonged/untreated illness or disease
- Appears malnourished
- Shows signs of physical and/or sexual abuse, physical restraint, confinement, or torture

##### Lack of Control: The Individual(s) in Question...

- Has few or no personal possessions
- Is not in control of his/her own money, and/or has no financial records, or bank account
- Is not in control of his/her own identification documents (e.g. ID, passport, or visa)
- Is not allowed or able to speak for him/herself (e.g., a third party may insist on being present and/or interpreting)
- Has an attorney that he/she doesn't seem to know or to have agreed to receive representation services from

##### Other: The Individual(s) in Question...

- Has been “branded” by a trafficker (e.g. a tattoo of the trafficker's name)
- Claims to be “just visiting” and is unable to clarify where he/she is staying or to provide an address



Often times victims are afraid of help. There are barriers that are in place because of the mental manipulation that they have endured over time. Some of those things might be;

- \* Fear of arrest or deportation
- \* Fear of retribution by exploiter
- \* Exploiter controls movement of victim
- \* Language Barriers
- \* Fear of being returned to family (Minor)
- \* Fear of placement in social services (Minor)
- \* SHAME

If you notice an individual presenting with one or more red flags, you may want to try to obtain more information about his or her situation by asking additional questions.

Some rapid assessment questions include:

- “Who is the person who came with you today? Can you tell me about him or her?”
- “Did you ever feel pressured to do something that you didn’t want to do or felt uncomfortable doing? How did you feel pressured?”
- “Do you feel you were ever tricked or lied to? Were you ever promised something, but it did not happen?”
- “Has anyone approached you asking you to get involved in prostitution?”
- “Have you ever had to trade sex for money or something else you needed?”
- “What is your job like? Do you like your job?”
- “If you want to leave your job and find another one, can you do that?”
- “How often do you get to visit/speak to your family and friends?”
- “Does anyone supervise or monitor your conversations with your family or friends?”
- “Did anyone ever take and/or keep your legal papers for you, such as your ID, passport, or visa?”

“When working with a someone who is potentially a victim of human trafficking, it is recommended that you adopt a victim-centered mindset. You may need to reassure the him/her that your role is to help them. Keep in mind that victims of trafficking may not self-identify for a variety of reasons – they may not know the term “human trafficking”, or may believe that no one can help them.”

- **Reassure the Potential Victim-** You are there to help and you care about them- they may have been taught to distrust any authority figure. Let them know that you are not trying to arrest, punish or judge them
- **Build Trust-** May take 3-5 encounters but often little pieces of the true story begin to emerge
- **Be Conscious-**Keep in mid that many victims do not self-identify



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- **Remain Alert**-One on one interactions are ideal especially because traffickers may insist on being present to control what a victim will say. So look for opportunities to get time alone with the victim.

What **NOT** to do:

- Make assumptions about the person or the situation
- React verbally or physically in a way that communicates disgust or disdain
- Contact other providers or law enforcement without telling the victim and explaining your reporting obligations
- Force the individual to make decisions he or she is comfortable with.

If you are with a potential victim and they indicate that they are ready to leave the life and ask for your help **MAKE THE CALL!!**

If there is any chance that they are being watched or followed by their pimp/trafficker/exploiter, immediately **dial 9-1-1** and explain to them that you are with an individual who is being trafficked and is needing immediate help. Take that person to a “public place” that is well lit and a lot of people.

If there is no emergent danger you can call your state human trafficking hotline or you can call the national human trafficking hotline, (888-373-7888).

**IN MONTANA, THE STATE HUMAN TRAFFICKING HOTLINE NUMBER IS:**

# 833-406-STOP

CALL/TEXT  
**833-406-STOP**

LIVE CHAT  
**406STOP.COM**

**HELD AGAINST YOUR WILL?**  
**READY TO LEAVE THE LIFE?**  
**WANT TO FEEL SAFE?**

**YOU ARE NOT ALONE**

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

People ask us all the time, “How do you do it...how do you emotionally deal with the terrible stories of these young kids lives?”

“How do we not deal with them?” We can’t just turn our heads and pretend that we don’t see the devastation. To be honest...somedays the darkness is so thick-it seems like nothing can be done. But when the challenge seems too big we are reminded of 2 indisputable facts.

**#1. Our children are being horrifically abused right before our eyes.**

**#2. We can make a difference one victim at a time. For in the pain there is promise and in the hurting there is hope.**

We are so thankful for your willingness to find your place in the fight. If you would like to volunteer for any aspect of our mission, please take some time to reach out to us on any social media platform, or by emailing us at [info@thelifeguardgroup.org](mailto:info@thelifeguardgroup.org) and we will be sure to get back to you.

