

Did you know?

ALL MINORS ARE CONSIDERED VICTIMS WHETHER THEY GIVE CONSENT OR NOT.

By federal definition, the crime of sex trafficking is defined as the recruitment, harboring, transportation or obtaining of a person for a commercial sex act where such an act is induced by force, fraud or coercion or in which the person has not attained 18 years of age.¹

Did you know?

Sex trafficking happens to **boys** too.

In Arizona, researchers estimate 1 in 5 sex trafficking victims are males.³ Boys are less willing to self identify as sexually exploited due to the shame and stigma associated with being gay.⁴

Examples of FORCE, FRAUD and COERCION used by traffickers:²

FORCE

- ✦ Slapping and beating with objects
- ✦ Burning
- ✦ Sexual assault
- ✦ Rape and gang rape
- ✦ Confinement and physical restraint
- ✦ Seasoning/initiation
- ✦ Torture practices

FRAUD

- ✦ False promises
- ✦ Deceitful enticing and affectionate behavior
- ✦ Lying about working conditions
- ✦ Lying about the promise of a better life

COERCION

- ✦ Threats of serious harm or restraint
- ✦ Intimidation and humiliation
- ✦ Creating a climate of fear
- ✦ Enforcement of trivial demands
- ✦ Occasional indulgences
- ✦ Intense manipulation
- ✦ Emotional abuse
- ✦ Isolation
- ✦ Dependency for basic needs
- ✦ Creating fear of independence
- ✦ Control of children
- ✦ Establishing quotas
- ✦ Convincing victim that they are a criminal
- ✦ Threatening legal action
- ✦ Removal from family

Tip: Drugs and alcohol may be used to control victims.

MINDSET OF A SEX TRAFFICKING VICTIM

- ✦ VICTIMS OFTEN DO NOT SEE THEMSELVES AS VICTIMS
- ✦ VICTIMS MAY FEEL SHAME, SELF-BLAME AND FEELINGS OF UNWORTHINESS
- ✦ VICTIMS MAY DECEIVE PROFESSIONALS AND GIVE SCRIPTED STORIES
- ✦ VICTIMS ARE OFTEN FEARFUL AND DISTRUST LAW ENFORCEMENT AND GOVERNMENT SERVICES OUT OF FEAR OF ARREST
- ✦ VICTIMS MAY HAVE FORMED A TRAUMA BOND RESULTING IN DEEP FEELINGS OF LOYALTY FOR THE TRAFFICKER
- ✦ VICTIMS OFTEN FEAR FOR THEIR OWN SAFETY AND THE SAFETY OF THEIR LOVED ONES DUE TO THREATS OF VIOLENCE
- ✦ DRUGS OFTEN PLAY A ROLE IN SEX TRAFFICKING SITUATIONS - SOMETIMES AS A WAY TO COPE OR SUPPORT A DRUG ADDICTION

Sources:

1. The Victims of Trafficking and Violence Prevention Act of 2000 (TVPA)
2. Polaris Project Training Materials
3. Youth Experiences Survey: Exploring the Sex Trafficking Experiences of Arizona's Homeless and Runaway Young Adults (2014)
4. Homelessness, Survival Sex and Human Trafficking: As Experienced by the Youth of Covenant House, New York (2013)
5. National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) Training Materials
6. The National Child Traumatic Stress Network (2013)
7. Sabella, D. Heath Issues and Interactions with Survivors (2013)
8. National Institute of Mental Health
9. US Department of Health and Human Service Rescue & Restore Campaign
10. Gang Criminal Activity Expanding into Juvenile Prostitution Report. National Gang Intelligence Center and FBI Crimes Against Children Unit 2012

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW
JUVENILE PROBATION & DETENTION
SEX TRAFFICKING & SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

Identifying minor victims of sex trafficking can be challenging. Teens may hide their victimization to avoid consequences. This reference guide will help you understand sex trafficking victimization, red flags, risk factors, and warning signs of minor victims of sex trafficking.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU SUSPECT SEX TRAFFICKING

1. Call the National Human Trafficking Hotline at 1-888-3737-888
2. If you believe the youth is in immediate danger, call 911
3. It is far better to report suspicious activity than to overlook a trafficking situation

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"A lot of victims do not identify themselves as being a victim. Some may feel like they got themselves in this situation and it's their responsibility to get out."
- Jane, survivor

MOST COMMON PATHWAYS TO VICTIMIZATION

- ✦ Recruitment by "Romeo/boyfriend" who convinces victim that they are loved.
- ✦ Recruitment by a female trafficker "bottom" who befriends the victim.
- ✦ Kidnapped by a trafficker who forces the victim into "the life" using violence.
- ✦ Gang related sexual exploitation either as a means of membership, initiation or for protection by the gang.
- ✦ A parent or family member trafficks their child for drugs, money or needs such as food or rent.

Runaways living on the street may resort to exchanging sex for basic needs.

GOOD TO KNOW

Officers should be trained to know the signs of sex trafficking so signs are not overlooked when the youth has been charged with something other than a sex related offense such as:

- ⊕ TRUANCY
- ⊕ GANG ACTIVITY
- ⊕ DRUG SALES OR DRUG USE (OFTEN DRUGS ARE USED TO CONTROL VICTIMS)
- ⊕ THEFT (A TRAFFICKER MAY COERCE A VICTIM INTO STEALING FOR EXTRA INCOME)
- ⊕ RUNAWAY STATUS OFFENSE

Vulnerable Youth

VULNERABLE YOUTH CAN BE LURED INTO SEX TRAFFICKING AND OTHER FORMS OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION USING PROMISES, PSYCHOLOGICAL MANIPULATION, PROVISION OF DRUGS AND ALCOHOL, AND VIOLENCE.

RUNAWAY Traffickers target runaway teens or those who are having trouble at home. These youth are at an increased risk to be trafficked as they have few resources, may not be old enough to legally get a job, and are often running away from difficult situations.

FOSTER CARE Youth in foster care move around a lot, and are prone to victimization because they may not have someone looking for them or making sure they are safe. They may crave the attention a trafficker can provide.

LGBTQ Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning youth can also be victims.

Terminology

Bottom — Usually a female appointed by the trafficker to supervise the others and report rule violations. Operating as his “right hand,” the “bottom” may help instruct victims, collect money, book hotel rooms, post ads, or inflict punishments. The bottom has often been trafficked as a minor and is in

a complex relationship with the trafficker.

Daddy — The term a trafficker will often require his victim to call him.

“John” (Buyer or “Trick”) — An individual who pays for or trades something of value for sexual acts.

Quota — A set amount of money that a trafficking victim must make each night before coming home.

Squaring Up — Attempting to escape or exit sex trafficking.

Stable — A group of victims who are under the control of a trafficker.

The Game/The Life — The subculture of sex trafficking.

Track (Stroll or Blade) — An area of town known for sex trafficking activity. This can be the area around a group of strip clubs and pornography stores, or a particular stretch of street.

The three Ts of trafficking⁵

TARGETED Traffickers “shop” for their victims online, in shopping malls, bus stops, schools, after school programs, foster homes and other places where teens gather.

TRICKED Traffickers invest a lot of time and effort in forming a bond with their victim. They often buy gifts, provide a place to stay, and give affection before revealing their true intent to sexually exploit them. Traffickers use a powerful technique pioneered by religious cults known as “love bombing” in which a teen is showered with affection as a means of manipulation.

TRAUMATIZED The trafficker’s use of psychological manipulation, physical violence and rape can make the victim feel trapped and powerless. **The “trauma bond” is very difficult to break and may require intensive long term treatment and counseling.**⁶

TIP

Tip: When working with youth, listen for sex trafficking terminology that could give clues about possible recruiting behavior among peers. Be concerned if you hear about significantly “older boyfriends” or “dates” or excessive discussion of money or items that can be earned through trading.

PHYSICAL INDICATORS⁷

1. CIGARETTE BURNS
2. UNUSUAL BRUISES OR SCARS
3. MALNUTRITION OR POOR DIET
4. DEHYDRATION
5. INJURIES TO HEAD AND MOUTH
6. BITE MARKS
7. STAB OR GUNSHOT WOUNDS
8. BALD PATCHES FROM HAVING HAIR PULLED
9. DENTAL PROBLEMS
10. TATTOOS THAT MAY SERVE AS A “BRAND” THAT INDICATES THAT THE VICTIM BELONGS TO A CERTAIN TRAFFICKER. USUALLY, TATTOOS ARE SIMPLE SCRIPT OR REFERENCING MONEY. LOOK FOR TATTOOS ON THE NECK, ACROSS CHEST, OR PRIVATE LOCATIONS.

Look for

RISK FACTORS⁹

1. POVERTY
2. HISTORY OF SEXUAL ABUSE
3. FAMILY SUBSTANCE/PHYSICAL ABUSE
4. INDIVIDUAL SUBSTANCE ABUSE
5. LEARNING DISABILITIES
6. LOSS OF PARENT/CAREGIVER
7. SEXUAL IDENTITY ISSUES
8. LACK OF SUPPORT SYSTEMS
9. HISTORY OF RUNNING AWAY
10. INVOLVEMENT WITH JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM
11. OLDER BOYFRIEND
12. INCARCERATED PARENT
13. SIGNS OF PHYSICAL VIOLENCE
14. TATTOOS OR BRANDING MARKS

EARLY IDENTIFICATION LEADS TO EARLY INTERVENTION

Warning Signs:⁸

- ⊕ Suicidal thoughts
- ⊕ Extreme anger
- ⊕ Running away
- ⊕ Guilt and low self-worth
- ⊕ Self-harm and/or self-mutilation
- ⊕ Multiple sexual partners
- ⊕ Eating disorders
- ⊕ Mood swings
- ⊕ Difficulty forming relationships
- ⊕ Flashbacks and/or nightmares
- ⊕ Confusion
- ⊕ Depression
- ⊕ Withdrawal and isolation
- ⊕ Somatic complaints
- ⊕ Sleep disturbance
- ⊕ Academic decline
- ⊕ Dramatic change in behavior
- ⊕ Truancy or school avoidance
- ⊕ Substance abuse and overdose
- ⊕ Antisocial behavior

Increasingly, gangs are moving to sex trafficking as a means of income, much like selling guns and drugs. While drugs or guns can be sold just once, a human body can be sold over and over. Gangs operate sex trafficking rings as a relatively low risk, high profit criminal enterprise.

Gangs use promises of protection, status, easy money, loyalty and material possessions to lure girls into the gang. Girls are asked to “give back” and “support the family” by selling their bodies. Some gang members will offer up their own sisters to move up in the gang.¹⁰

Tip: Be mindful if you hear terminology such as “crew” or “protection” as these words could indicate gang involvement.

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