



Human Trafficking For Sexual Purposes

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RECOGNITION

What is it? Sexual human trafficking is any sex act that has been induced by recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, obtaining, patronizing, or soliciting of a person for the purposes of a sex act in which anything of value is given to or received by any person. Sexual Human Trafficking is any sex act that is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such an act has not attained 18 years of age. Sex trafficking is a modern day form of slavery.



Who are the survivors? Victims of sex trafficking can be women, men, children, and LGBTQ (lesbian/gay men/bisexual/transgender/questioning) individuals. Vulnerable populations are frequently targeted by traffickers, including runaway and homeless youth, as well as victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, war, or social discrimination. Women and children are the most common victims found to be trafficked for sex. More recently, LGBTQ identifying individuals, especially transgender individuals, are increasingly found to be victims of sexual exploitation across international borders. The average age of a trafficked child is 15 years old.

The situations that sex trafficking survivors face vary dramatically. Many survivors become romantically involved with someone who then forces or manipulates them into prostitution. Sexual exploitation occurs in various settings, including (but not limited to) brothels, strip clubs, massage parlors, fake massage businesses, via online ads or escort services, on the street or at truck stops, at hotels and motels, or in private homes. Others are lured in with false promises of a job, such as modeling or dancing. Some are forced to sell sex by their parents or other family members. Individuals can be trafficked domestically and across international borders. They may be involved in a trafficking situation for a few days or weeks — or may remain in the same trafficking situation for years.

Who are the perpetrators? Sex traffickers use threats, manipulation, lies, debt bondage, and other forms of coercion to compel adults and children to engage in commercial sex acts against their will. Under U.S. law, any minor under the age of 18 years induced into commercial sex is a victim of sex trafficking — whether the trafficker used force, fraud, or coercion. The Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (TVPA) recognizes that traffickers use psychological and physical coercion as well as bondage, and it defines coercion to include: threats of serious harm to or physical restraint against any person; any scheme, plan, or pattern intended to cause a person to believe that failure to perform an act would result in serious harm to or physical restraint against any person; or the abuse or threatened abuse of the legal process.

What about prevention? Learn the indicators of human trafficking and report suspicions to the National Human Trafficking Hotline (1-888-373-7888).

RESCUE

The Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) is the first comprehensive federal law to address trafficking in persons. The law provides a three-pronged approach that includes prevention, protection, and prosecution.

RECOVERY

Many victims of sex trafficking benefit from mental health services. Providers can help victims in dealing with their trauma while helping them become survivors through mental health support, job training, and stability. Issues of affordable care and access to services are first identified while gaining the trust of survivors.

RENAISSANCE

What you can do:

- January is Human Trafficking Awareness Month, participate in awareness campaigns in your community.
- Educate yourself about human trafficking. Take this quiz to learn how social media is used by traffickers: www.polarisproject.org/human_trafficking_recruitment_quiz.
- Advocate to stop legislation that decriminalizes pimping, brothel-keeping, and sex buying.
- Help unmask human trafficking networks and urge Congress to pass legislation that will help find traffickers and hold them accountable.

RESOURCES

Current Federal Laws / Polaris – www.polarisproject.org/current-federal-laws

National Human Trafficking Hotline – www.humantraffickinghotline.org; 1-888-373-7888

U.S. Department of Justice National Strategy to Combat Human Trafficking – www.justice.gov/humantrafficking/page/file/922791/download

Department of Homeland Security (ICE) Most Wanted Sex Traffickers Photos (updated daily) – www.ice.gov/features/human-trafficking

Covenant House – www.covenanthouse.org/homeless-issues/human-trafficking

Erase Child Trafficking: Human Trafficking Victim Recovery – www.erasechildtrafficking.org/human-trafficking-recovery

U.S. Institute Against Human Trafficking (usiaht) Safe Homes – www.usiaht.org/our-safe-homes

U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services – <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/trauma-toolkit/victims-of-human-trafficking>

Sustainable Recovery for Trafficking Survivors (THORN) – www.thorn.org/blog/sustainable-recovery-trafficking-survivors

