



You may know someone who has a job where he or she works long hours for little or no pay. You may have heard that his or her “boss” keeps promising to pay or to give your friend more money, but never does. When your friend tries to quit or tell someone what is happening, the “boss” threatens to hurt him or her, and/or his or her family.



Or, maybe you know someone in foster care or who lived at home but has “run away” and is staying with an adult “boy/girlfriend” who is older, or maybe they were abducted. You may have heard that this “boy/girlfriend” makes your friend sleep with his or her friends or other people to pay rent or to make money.

Did you know that the scenarios above are some examples of situations that may be human trafficking? Did you know that human trafficking is illegal?

This brochure is designed to help you learn more about the topic of human trafficking, and about valuable information to help protect you and your friends from this crime.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING: SEX & LABOR TRAFFICKING

What Can I Do To Promote Awareness About Human Trafficking?

If youth are interested, there are many ways to get involved. In any social movement, the most important “stakeholders” are the population that is directly affected—in this case, YOU and your friends! If you would like to take a stand against human trafficking, here are a few ideas to get you started:

- read a book written by a former victim of human trafficking;
- host a human trafficking movie night with your friends;
- use social media to promote awareness of the issue;
- speak with your caseworker, friends, family, and community about human trafficking—and if they don’t know what it is, educate them!;
- talking to other kids in foster care or at a shelter about it and let them know how to get help;
- contact your local legislator and tell them your stance on human trafficking; or
- challenge your friends and the media when they glorify “pimp culture,” or other themes that condone human trafficking.



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Need to Know series:



What is Human Trafficking?

Human trafficking is a form of modern-day slavery. One myth about human trafficking is that it only happens in other countries and not the United States. This is simply not true. Trafficking happens in the US, as well as other countries, and is probably happening in your community. Human trafficking is a serious crime. State and federal laws are designed to protect victims and seriously punish those who are convicted of human trafficking offenses. The New York State Anti-Trafficking Law defines two types of human trafficking: **1. sex trafficking;** and **2. labor trafficking.**

1. Sex Trafficking happens when a person profits by inducing, forcing or threatening another person to engage in sexual acts for money, or through impairment of the person's judgment. This can include, but is not limited to, providing certain drugs to impair a person's judgment, making false statements to induce the person to engage in prostitution, withholding government identification documents (like a passport or immigration document), requiring that prostitution be performed to repay a debt, or

using force or engaging in a plan to have the person to engage in prostitution by instilling fear in the person that the trafficker will cause physical injury/death, cause damage to property, accuse the person of a crime or cause them to be deported, expose a secret to subject the person to hatred, contempt or ridicule, or perform an act that is intended to harm the person with respect to his/her health, safety, or immigration status.

Note: You may also hear people refer to sex trafficking as "commercial sexual exploitation of a child" (CSEC) or "domestic minor sex trafficking" (DMST).



SEX TRAFFICKING

This could be someone you know right now. This could be you. You find yourself without a place to stay (maybe you ran away or maybe you couldn't make your rent anymore because you lost your job). You meet up with this person who says you can stay with him or her and everything is great in the beginning. He or she even provides food for you to eat. Then things started to change, he or she started expecting you to "do your part" and help out with the rent, after all you are staying there and you owe him or her. He or she tells you that you have to sleep with some people he or she knows to make your contribution. You don't want to do it, but you are desperate, you have nowhere else to go and you don't feel safe on the streets. He or she gives you some alcohol and pills to make it easier, so you do it. What choice do you have?

LABOR TRAFFICKING

2. Labor Trafficking occurs when a person compels or induces another person to engage in labor, or recruits, entices, harbors or transports a person by impairing his or her judgment with drugs, threatening him or her withholding, destroying or confiscating his or her identification, or forcing him or her to be part of a plan of labor trafficking. In addition, this can include, but is not limited to, requiring that labor be performed to repay a debt, or using force or engaging in a plan to have the person engage in a labor activity by instilling fear that the trafficker will cause physical injury/death, cause damage to property, accuse the person of a crime or cause them to be deported, expose a secret to subject the person to hatred, contempt or ridicule, or perform an act that is intended to harm the person with respect to his/her health, safety, or immigration status. You may find yourself in a situation or a relationship that at first you thought was somewhere you wanted to be, but if later someone forces, threatens, or manipulates you to work for no pay, have sex with them or others, it may be considered trafficking.

You may also have heard about someone in this situation or it could be you. Someone offered you work that seemed like a good job and you need money to pay for things like clothes and rent. The job ends up being a lot harder than you thought, and they make you work crazy hours, almost every day of the week. The boss keeps telling you your paycheck is coming, but you haven't seen any money yet, and when you tell the boss you think you are going to look for another job, he or she threatens "to make it so you can't work somewhere else." You are not sure what the boss means, but it sounds like a threat to hurt you, so you are scared and stay at the job. Or, if you are from another country, maybe the boss threatens to take away your passport or other form of identification, making it impossible for you to leave or get another job.



Where Do Traffickers Find Their Victims?

Traffickers look for victims in places that youth hang out:

- foster homes/group homes;
- runaway/ homeless shelters;
- outside of schools;
- outside of youth programs;
- bus stations and truck stops; halfway houses;
- restaurants, bars, and exotic dance clubs;
- shopping malls; or
- parks and playgrounds.

Traffickers also sometimes use newspaper ads and social media to recruit victims.

Who Are Traffickers?

Traffickers can really be anyone you come into contact with. They may be a stranger or they could be someone you are in an intimate relationship with; a family member; someone you work for; a gang or gang member; a pimp; or any other person involved in committing crimes.

Sometimes traffickers may start a relationship with you by acting like your boyfriend or girlfriend. They may act like they are “taking care” of you, do nice things for you, give you special attention and/or buy you gifts that make you trust them before they start to traffic you. This is called “grooming.” Then they may start asking you to do things for them (like have sex with people or work for them with no pay) and these requests may turn into threats, force or manipulation where you feel like you have to do what they want you to do. You may feel like you have no choice. All of this may make it harder for you to seek help because even though you know what they are doing is wrong; you may love or feel a sense of loyalty for the trafficker. It may be hard, but if you are being trafficked, it is important that you seek help and safety. You can do this by discussing your situation with a trusted adult, and/or calling the resources listed under the section titled “Who Do I Call or Contact to Get Help?”

What are some signs to look for if I think someone is a victim of human trafficking?

A victim of human trafficking may:

- have excessive amounts of cash;
- frequently have hotel keys;
- run away a lot or is homeless;
- lie about their age and/or carry a false ID;
- engage in prostitution or receive money or things of value to engage in sex acts;
- mention a pimp; or refer to an employer using a slang term like “Daddy;”
- have tattoos with a pimp’s name;
- be physically exhausted from working long hours, but has no money to show for it;
- always be doing “chores” for someone (taking care of children, tending to elderly family members, and/or cleaning);
- be isolated from friends and family and only spend time with a person who seems to be controlling them, including telling them who they can talk to, where they can go, and what they can do.

It is important to know that these are just some possible signs of human trafficking or sexual exploitation. Many victims don’t know they are a victim or may refuse to identify themselves as a victim of human trafficking. They may not trust anyone other than the trafficker out of fear of being hurt or deported (if they are not a citizen). Human trafficking may sometimes appear to be something else, like domestic violence, substance abuse, sexual abuse, or medical or mental health issues. Also, sometimes a trafficking situation may appear to be one where the victim is choosing to be involved in prostitution, when the reality may be that a trafficker is prostituting that person by forcing, threatening or manipulating the victim to perform sex acts and prostitution. Even if the victim initially was willing to be a prostitute or received money in exchange, he or she may become a victim when another person starts trafficking them or making them remain “in the life” when they want to get out.



Are You or Someone You Know at Risk of Being Trafficked?

Anyone can be a victim of human trafficking. It doesn’t matter what your age, job, income, nationality, education-level, sexuality, or gender is. Traffickers often prey on those who are hoping for a better life, lack employment opportunities, have an unstable home life, or are seeking a new or exciting opportunity.

Traffickers target people who are vulnerable. Those who are at a higher-risk are those who:

- Have histories of being abused (physical, sexual, emotional) or abusing substances;
- Are in foster care or in the juvenile justice system;
- Are a runaway, or homeless;
- Have limited education or disabilities;
- Are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender or Questioning (LGBTQ); or
- Are refugees, immigrants, and/or non-English speaking.

Sex traffickers frequently target runaways or homeless youth because these youth often need food, clothing, shelter, and money. You or someone you know could be at higher risk of being trafficked if you run away from home or are absent without consent/AWOL from your current placement.

What Happens if I am a Victim?

Depending on the circumstances, you may qualify to be confirmed or certified as a human trafficking victim. Under the Anti-Trafficking Law, victims can be referred to the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) and the Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) to see if their circumstance qualifies for official status as a victim based on the definition in the law. If you are confirmed or certified as a victim of human trafficking, you may be eligible for the following services: safety/protection; foster care/shelter; legal services; medical care; mental health counseling; and other forms of victim assistance.

Even if you don’t meet the definition of human trafficking in the law, there are other ways you may receive services and there are other laws to protect you. The Safe Harbour Act recognizes that children who are charged with prostitution are actually victims of commercial sexual exploitation. Instead of being charged criminally, victims can be treated through family court as a Person in Need of Supervision (PINS). Safe Harbour also provides for many of the services listed above and, in addition, establishes safe houses for youth victims.

If I am a victim, how can New York State protect and provide services to me?

Anti-Trafficking Law: NYS established human trafficking as a state crime and has a process to “confirm” if you are, or have been, a victim of human trafficking. If you are “confirmed” to be a victim of human trafficking, you may be eligible for the following services: safety/protection; foster care (if no appropriate resource); legal services; basic needs: food, shelter, medical care (including prescriptions); mental health counseling; and other forms of victim assistance. Even if you are an immigrant, you may be eligible for similar services.

Safe Harbour (Harbor) Law: The Safe Harbour Act recognizes that children who are charged with prostitution are actually victims of human trafficking.

It is important to know that these are just some possible signs of someone who might be being trafficked. Some people may refuse to identify themselves as a victim and will not trust anyone other than the trafficker out of fear of being hurt or deported (if they are not a citizen). If you believe you or someone you know may be a victim of human trafficking it is important that you seek help from your worker or a trusted adult.

What Can I Do to Avoid Becoming a Victim of Human Trafficking?

- Educate yourself on the dangers of human trafficking and the warning signs.
- Don’t go to unfamiliar places without people you know.
- Develop your transition plan to help you find employment, secure safe and stable housing, and build a support network.
- Make a safety plan so you know what to do— and who to call— in unsafe situations or emergencies.
- If someone offers you a job, do some research online or ask around about the employer if you are not familiar with them.
- Follow your gut, if something doesn’t feel “right,” be cautious.

One of the most important things you can do if you are approached by someone with a situation that sounds like it could be or could lead to human trafficking is to stop and think and then talk to a supportive adult. If someone offers you a place to stay or to take care of you in return for some “favors,” be cautious and ask questions about what will be expected of you in return.

Who Do I Call or Contact to Get Help?

If you or someone you know is a victim of human trafficking, you should contact an adult you trust, such as, your caseworker, a teacher, the police, your counselor/therapist, or a staff person.

If there is immediate danger, call 9-1-1.

If the victim is a minor (under 18 years of age) you, your parent/guardian, or caseworker should also call the Statewide Central Register of Child Abuse and Maltreatment (SCR) at 1-800-342-3720 (TDD/TTY: 1-800-638-5163). The SCR will make a determination if an official Child Abuse/Maltreatment report can be filed and an investigation can be initiated.

If you are uncertain if you or someone you know has been a victim of human trafficking, or if you need additional services, support, referrals, or have questions about human trafficking, you can call the free and confidential National Human Trafficking Resource Center (NHTRC) hotline below.

Resources

National Human Trafficking Resource Center (NHTRC) Hotline 1-888-373-7888 or text INFO or HELP to 233733

(BeFree)
www.traffickingresourcecenter.org
or email them at nhtrc@polarisproject.org

NYS Office of Children and Family Services
http://ocfs.ny.gov/main/humantrafficking/

*Check back for ongoing updates to the website



See more about this topic at
www.YouthInProgress.org