

## Support for Victims of Human Trafficking

If you are concerned that you or someone you know may have experienced forced labor or commercial sexual exploitation, call the National Human Trafficking Hotline at 888-373-7888 to report what you see, access resources, and connect to local services. The toll-free hotline, operated by a nongovernmental organization, is available 24 hours a day, every day of the year, in more than 200 languages. The hotline can connect victims to services including:

- Safety planning
- Housing and shelter
- Mental health
- Health care
- Case management
- Interpretation/Translation
- Food
- Transportation
- Education/job training
- Legal assistance

Victims of human trafficking who are not U.S. citizens can receive help, including immigration assistance, to obtain federal and state benefits and services to the same extent as refugees. Victims who are U.S. citizens or lawful permanent residents are already eligible to receive many of these benefits.

**National Human Trafficking Hotline:**  
**888-373-7888**  
[www.acf.hhs.gov/endtrafficking](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/endtrafficking)

For more information about human trafficking visit  
[www.acf.hhs.gov/endtrafficking](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/endtrafficking).

## Health Indicators and Consequences of Human Trafficking

Victims of trafficking may experience one or more physical, mental health, or social and development indicators due to violent actions by their traffickers or dangerous work and living conditions:

- Sexually transmitted diseases or infections
- Pregnancy resulting from rape or prostitution
- Signs of physical abuse or unexplained injuries
- Substance use disorders
- Malnourishment and poor dental hygiene
- Undetected or untreated infections and diseases
- Depression, suicidal ideation, anxiety, post-traumatic stress, hostility, dissociation, or panic attacks
- Increase engagement in high risk behaviors, trauma-bonding, delayed physical or cognitive development, or impaired social skills

**Interviews with survivors of human trafficking indicate that 50 to 88 percent of victims saw one or more health care providers while they were trafficked, yet most victims are misidentified.**

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF  
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
Administration for Children and Families



**Can you recognize victims of human trafficking among the patients you see each day?**

**Healthcare providers have a unique opportunity to identify victims of human trafficking and connect them with services to rebuild their lives.**

## Human Trafficking is Modern-Day Slavery

It involves the exploitation of someone for the purpose of compelled labor or a commercial sex act through the use of force, fraud, or coercion.

If a person younger than 18 is induced to engage in a sexual act for money or something else of value, it is a crime regardless of whether there is any force, fraud, or coercion.

Victims can be anyone from around the world or right next door: women and men, adults and children, U.S. citizens and noncitizens. Some populations are at higher risk for human trafficking, including victims of other forms of violence, disconnected youth, and racial and ethnic minorities.

Some of the methods traffickers use to compel their victims into commercial sex or forced labor include:

- **Force** – Rape, beatings, confinement
- **Fraud** – False offers of employment, marriage, better life
- **Coercion** – Threats, debt bondage, climate of fear, abuse of legal system

### Victims of trafficking can be found in:

- Brothels, massage parlors, strip clubs
- Street prostitution, truck stops, online
- Domestic service, nannies, elder care
- Construction, landscaping
- Farms ranches, fisheries
- Manufacturing, factories
- Hotels, hospitality industry
- Restaurants, other food services
- Bars, spas, salons
- Sales crews, peddling, begging rings

## Identifying Victims of Human Trafficking

Victims of trafficking do not often disclose their trafficking situation in a clinical setting. It is critical for health care providers to assess potential safety risks, use trauma-informed practices, and create a safe and non-judgmental space to identify trafficking indicators and assist the patient.

- **Is the patient accompanied by another person who does not let patient speak for themselves, refuses privacy, or interprets for patient?**
- **Is the patient unwilling or hesitant to answer questions about the injury or illness?**
- **Can you detect any physical or psychological abuse or neglect?**
- **Does the patient seem submissive, nervous, fearful, or hostile?**
- **Is the patient under the age of 18 and engaged in commercial sex?**
- **Is the patient unable to provide his/her address or unaware of location and time?**
- **Is the patient not in possession of his/her money, identification, or other personal items?**

**Gaining the trust of a victim of human trafficking is an important first step in providing assistance.**

## Sample Questions to Ask Potential Victims of Human Trafficking

Asking the following questions can help you determine if you may be talking to a victim of human trafficking:

- Did you ever feel pressured to do something you didn't want to do?
- Are you being paid what you were promised?
- What would happen if you left your job?
- Were your communications or movements ever restricted or monitored?
- Have you or someone you know been threatened?
- What are your working, living, and sleeping conditions like?
- Have the conditions of your work changed from what was promised?
- Did you have to pay any fees to get your job or stay in your workplace?
- Did anyone ever promise or give money or anything of value to you or someone else in exchange for a sexual act?
- Is someone holding your money, identification documents, or other personal possessions?

**Healthcare providers can create a safer space before questioning a patient by discretely separating the patient from the individual accompanying her/him, since this person could be posing as a spouse, family member, friend, or employer.**

