

EXAMPLES OF QUESTIONS TO ASK SUSPECTED HUMAN TRAFFICKING VICTIMS

- 1) **With whom do/did you reside? How are they related to you?** Many people in human trafficking situations do not live alone. A trafficker may have several victims living together in a small space so that he/she can control them.
- 2) **What kind of work do/did you do, and where were you employed?** Vague responses like housecleaning and other under-the-table jobs are often a cover-up. Ask for more details, such as the manager's name and dates worked. If a victim indicates "a boyfriend" or "friend" took care of him/her, that is a possible indicator.
- 3) **If the victim mentions a boyfriend or friend, ask what that person does for work.** Statements such as, "He does side jobs" or "He's not working now" are indicators that the "boyfriend" or "friend" is a trafficker. Many traffickers rely financially on their victim's income and convince the victim it is best for the trafficker to stay home to protect the victim.
- 4) **How do you perceive yourself and what led to this belief?** Human trafficking victims are often brainwashed to believe they are worthless and no one but their trafficker cares for them. They may believe they are responsible for their decisions and situation, and do not believe they are actually a victim.
- 5) **Have you ever engaged in prostitution? If so, how were you introduced to it? What did you do with the money you made?** Asking blunt questions like this can possibly get to the issue at hand.
- 6) **What is your past criminal history? What other charges do you have?** Many victims - female, male, children - are mules for their traffickers, engaging in crimes on the trafficker's behalf, which puts the victim at an increased risk of arrest. Charges of drug trafficking or weapons offenses may indicate a human trafficking victim is under someone else's control.
- 7) **Are you concerned for your safety or well-being, or that of a loved one?** This may elicit information pertaining to their actual or perceived physical safety, risk for deportation, and/or law enforcement action, or that of someone they care about.
- 8) **How can I help you?** This may sound overly simplistic, but sometimes is what a victim needs to hear.



National Human Trafficking Hotline - (888) 373-7888 or text 233733 (Befree)

THE TRAFFICKING VICTIM'S MINDSET

A key factor in interacting effectively with a human trafficking victim is understanding their mindset. A trafficker will use manipulation to gain control of the victim, possibly under the guise of an intimate relationship. Frequently, traffickers monitor their victim's movements and dictate who the victim can speak to, and will use violence to punish the victim for disobeying the "rules." Some key points:

Distrust of outsiders, especially law enforcement - Fear is usually instilled in HT victims, who are often told they cannot trust a person of authority and will get in trouble or may be deported. HT victims may also develop a sense of loyalty to their trafficker.

Cultural differences may exist between the victim and the law enforcement officer, such as language barriers or differences in cultural customs, e.g., avoiding eye contact or restrictions on interactions between men and women.

Victims may fear for their own or loved ones' lives if they were to speak up or try to leave. If the victim has a child (and sometimes the trafficker is the other parent), the trafficker may control if/when the victim is allowed to see the child.

The victim may be moved frequently from city to city in order to prevent the victim from seeking out help or developing bonds.

Victims may not view themselves as victims, know their rights, or believe what is happening to them is a crime. The trafficker may lie to the victim and convey that the victim will be in legal trouble if he/she were to go to the police for help.

INVESTIGATIVE TIPS

- Subpoena and/or extract cell phone data
- Obtain Instagram or other social media user names
- Conduct surveillance
- Corroborate family members
- Engage trusted victim advocate/NGO to provide victim-centered resources early on, if available
- Partner with other groups, such as tax, employment, and/or other regulatory agencies that may enhance investigation
- Document any visible tattoos as related to ownership or prostitution activity
- Check priors on subjects for commercial sex arrests
- Photograph victims and belongings to note dress/commercial sex items
- Obtain hotel room receipts/video footage if applicable
- Research LPR data on vehicles. Do the vehicles visit local areas of prostitution?
- Deconflict subjects in WSIN RISSIntel database



COMMON ADULT & MINOR HUMAN TRAFFICKING INDICATORS*

ADULT

- Shows signs of malnourishment or dehydration
- Subjected to threats of violence against themselves or loved ones
- May have tattoos indicating ownership or prostitution
- Lack of freedom to come and go as they please
- Defers to someone else, such as a an older “boyfriend” or “relative” to speak on their behalf
- Sudden and dramatic changes in personality
- Shows signs of emotional and physical abuse
- Relationship doesn’t make sense (claim to be relatives, but don’t know last names, etc.).
- Not from area and no legitimate reason to be traveling
- Appears fearful, timid, anxious, or submissive
- Has no control over ID, travel documents, schedule
- Responses to questions appear scripted
- Bruises at various stages of healing
- Disconnected from family and friends
- Unstable living situation
- Shows signs of lack of sleep
- Disoriented or confused
- No access to their money
- May not speak English
- Lack of concern for own wellbeing
- Lack of personal belongings

MINOR

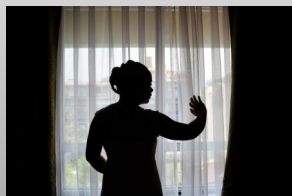
- Extensive travel, possibly in groups that are not relatives
- Inappropriate clothing or clothing typical of manual labor or sex work
- Children’s items in businesses where a child would not normally be (i.e., factory, sex shop)
- New clothing or items and inability to explain how they were paid for
- Displaying a new look, manicure, clothing style inappropriate for age
- Stopped attending or not registered in school
- No/limited access to their parents or guardians
- Behaves in a manner dissimilar to a child their age
- Chronic runaway may make them a target
- No/limited access to food and/or water
- Minor engaged in commercial sex acts
- Minor in possession of hotel key cards
- Sexually explicit profiles on social media
- Possession of prepaid cell phones
- Boyfriend older than minor
- Overly sexualized behavior or language

**Not a comprehensive list. Not all indicators will be present, and many indicators cross over between adult and minor human trafficking.*

COMMON LABOR AND SEX TRAFFICKING INDICATORS

Labor Trafficking Indicators*

- Works excessively long and/or unusual hours
- Is not allowed breaks or has unusually harsh restrictions at work
- Owes a large debt and is unable to pay it off
- Salary is garnished to pay off a debt
- Recruited under false promises and/or conditions
- Unable to move freely or leave work freely
- Lives in a group setting and/or has no choice over personal accommodations; sleeps in shared or inappropriate places
- Lacks adequate training and equipment for the job
- Limited or restricted access to food and/or water
- Wears inappropriate clothing for the job
- Employer cannot provide appropriate documents/paperwork for employees
- Employer cannot provide proper documentation of wages paid to employees
- May not be able to identify true name(s) of people they are with



Sex Trafficking Indicators*

- Tattoos or branding of a name or symbol known to be associated with prostitution or a pimp
- Inappropriate clothing for situation or climate
- Sexual paraphernalia in purse or on person, such as condoms, lubricant, sex toys
- Possession of multiple hotel key cards
- Lives or travels in groups
- Cannot move around freely
- Signs of physical injuries or abuse
- A group or person under the control of other people
- No control over personal identification
- No access to their own money
- Money given for sex acts turned over to another person

**Not a comprehensive list. Not all indicators will be present, and many indicators cross over between sex and labor trafficking.*