

Working with UAC survivors of Human Trafficking



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Human Trafficking Is On The Rise

- Average age of children targeted by traffickers 12-14 years old. *–U.S. Department of Justice*
- In 2013, 1 out of every 7 endangered runaways reported to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) was likely a child sex trafficking victim.
- 14,500-50,000 foreign nationals trafficked into the United States annually

–U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)



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Legal Definition of Human Trafficking

Labor Trafficking

The use of force, fraud or coercion to harbor, transport or recruit a person for the purpose of exploiting his or her labor

Sex Trafficking

- A commercial sex act obtained by force, fraud or coercion
- Any commercial sex act obtained from a person under the age of 18



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Three Elements Necessary to Meet Trafficking Definition

PROCESS/ACTION

Recruiting
OR
Harboring
OR
Moving
OR
Obtaining
a person

PARTICULAR MEANS

by

Force
OR
Fraud
OR
Coercion

PARTICULAR END

For the purposes of
Involuntary Servitude
OR
Debt Bondage
OR
Slavery
OR
Commercial Sexual Act



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Risk Factors for Youth

- Chronic Runaways
- Homelessness
- Youth with histories of childhood sexual abuse/sexual assault
- Youth within the Child Welfare system
- Youth in families with substance abuse
- Individuals with severe substance abuse issues
- Individuals with developmental delays



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Where are Trafficked Youth?

- Domestic services
- In servile marriages
- Construction
- Factories
- Agricultural fields
- Laundromats
- Motel housekeeping
- Massage parlors
- Hair and nail salons
- Strip clubs
- Brothels

POTENTIALLY ANYWHERE!



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How Youth Are Recruited

- Acquaintances or family
- Internet
- Front businesses
- Word of mouth
- Abduction



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What Does Human Trafficking Look Like?

The victims do not have (or are convinced that they do not have) the freedom to leave their situation through various control mechanisms:

- Confiscated documents
- Little or no pay and/or working off debt
- Inhumane living conditions
- Isolation
- Threats of deportation/fear of police and immigration
- Threats to family members
- Psychological manipulation
- Disorientation
- Physical or sexual abuse



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Trafficking versus Smuggling

TRAFFICKING:

- Contains the element of coercion (cannot consent to enslavement)
- Subsequent exploitation and/or forced labor
- Those trafficked are seen as victims by the law

SMUGGLING:

- No coercion
- Unauthorized crossing of borders
- Those smuggled are seen as criminals by the law



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Let's Consider some Scenarios...

1) Maricela is a 16 year old girl from San Pedro Sula, Honduras. Her grandmother was her only caretaker and she passed away earlier this year so Maricela planned to come to the United States to reunite with her mother in Maryland. Maricela left Honduras and made it to Mexico where she and two other young female migrants were kidnapped and separated from their travel group. Maricela was taken to a house in Reynosa which she quickly realized was a brothel. The man who kidnapped her told her if she did not work her mother and younger siblings would be harmed. Maricela was forced to engage in commercial sex in the brothel in Reynosa and eventually her trafficker brought her across the border to work in brothels in South Texas.



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Scenario # 2

- Tomas is a 14 year old boy from Veracruz, Mexico. Tomas was abandoned by his mother and his father kicked him out of the house because he got in trouble at school. Tomas decided to make his way north to the United States where he has two older cousins who were working in construction. Tomas began riding on the roof of the trains to make his way north through Mexico. One day a man approached him and told him he knew of a way that Tomas could cross the border for free. When they got to Tamaulipas the man took Tomas to a house. He gave Tomas two backpacks and said if he carried them across the border he would not have to pay the smuggler's fee. When Tomas crossed the border he was met by a man who took the two backpacks and told Tomas he had to go back and make more trips in order to pay for the cost of his trip to Houston. Tomas knew he couldn't make it to Houston by himself so he went back across the border and continued carrying backpacks across the border until he was apprehended by Border Patrol.



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- ❖ Do you identify any red flags?
- ❖ What else do you want/need to know?
- ❖ What might be preventing the child from telling you the whole story at this time?
- ❖ How can you help the child?



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Some other common scenarios

- Young girls who are brought to the United States by older men they met on the internet
- Young people who are forced to work as guides



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Practical Tips for interviewing

- Set up the interview in a space that is familiar to the youth
- Ask simple questions
- Use maps or drawings to highlight locations where important events occurred



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Factors to Consider: Fear

- Fear of Traffickers
 - Physical, sexual, and psychological abuse
 - Threats to themselves
 - Threats to family back home
- Fear of Law Enforcement: police, ICE
 - Many come from places with little to no rule of law
 - Many fear the police or ICE b/c traffickers have taken their passports, etc.
- Fear of Returning Home
 - Risk of being re-trafficked – think about why they came to the US in the first place.



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Factors to Consider: Isolation

- Isolation
 - Physical isolation
 - No ability to come and go
 - No support network
 - Cultural barrier



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Factors to Consider: Language

- Language barrier
 - How can one communicate if one does not speak the same language?
 - Traffickers hold great power over the trafficked
 - Authorities tend to speak to whomever speaks English



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Some Questions to Ask a Potential Victim of Human Trafficking

- Can you leave if you want to?
- When you are not working, can you come and go as you please?
- Has the trafficker threatened you or your family?
- What are the conditions where you work or live?
- Is your job what you expected it to be?
- Where do you eat/sleep?
- Are there locks on the doors/windows to keep you from leaving?
- Has your identification been taken from you?
- Have you been forced to perform any sex act in exchange for money?
- Have you been told you need to keep working in order to pay a debt?



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Questions

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