Victims may be too fearful to accept your help. Know the red flags of human trafficking and report to the National Human Trafficking Resource Center hotline at 1-888-373-788 or send a text to “BeFree”

The following is a list of red flags to keep in mind when indicating a potential situation of or a victim of human trafficking. Taken individually, each indicator may not necessarily imply a trafficking situation. Furthermore, items on this list are not meant to be interpreted as present in all trafficking cases, nor is the list intended to be exhaustive. This list is intended to encompass transnational and domestic trafficking, as well as both sex and labor trafficking. Some indicators may be more strongly associated with one type of trafficking.

Working and Living Conditions: The potential victim...
- Has limited freedom of movement and cannot leave or come and go as they please.
- Is transported to and from work by employer or manager with co-workers.
- Lives with employer or at place of employment.
- Lives in cramped quarters with multiple people.
- Is a minor and providing commercial sex acts.
- Is unpaid, paid very little, or paid only through tips.
- Works excessively long and/or unusual hours.
- Is not allowed breaks or suffers under unusual restrictions at work.
- Owe a large and/or continuous debt to employer or recruitment agency.
- Was recruited through false promises concerning the nature and conditions of his/her work.
- Works or lives where high security measures exist (e.g. opaque windows, boarded up windows, bars on windows, barbed wire, security cameras, etc.).
- Lives in housing with hidden passages and trap doors.

“BETWEEN 14,500-17,500 HUMAN BEINGS ARE TRAFFICKED INTO THE U.S. ANNUALLY”
(Polaris Project)

Poor Mental Health or Abnormal Behavior: The potential victim...
- Is fearful, anxious, depressed, submissive, tense, or nervous/paranoid.
- Exhibits unusually fearful or anxious behavior after bringing up law enforcement.
- Avoids eye contact.

Poor Physical Health: The potential victim...
- Lacks health care.
- Appears malnourished or otherwise unhealthy.
- Shows signs of physical and/or sexual abuse, physical restraint, confinement, or torture.
- May have brands, scars, or tattoos indicating someone else’s ownership.

Lack of Control: The potential victim...
- Has few or no personal possessions.
- Is not in control of his/her own money, no financial records, or bank account.
- Is not in control of his/her own identification documents (ID or passport)
- Is not allowed or able to speak for themselves (a third party may insist on being present and/or translating)
- Is kept under surveillance when taken to a doctor, hospital or clinic for treatment; trafficker may act as a translator.
- Appears to be coached on what to say to law enforcement or other officials.
- Isn’t allowed to socialize with neighbors, friends, family or attend community events.

Other: The potential victim...
- Claims of just visiting and inability to clarify where he/she is staying.
- Lacks knowledge of whereabouts and/or do not know what city he/she is in.
- Loses their sense of time.
- Has numerous inconsistencies in his/her story.

“At least 100,000 U.S. children are trafficked in the U.S.”
(Shared Hope International)

Pimps/traffickers are often:
- Jealous, controlling, and violent
- Significantly older than victim
- Making promises, buying expensive gifts or own expensive items
- Vague about their profession.
- Pushy or demanding about sex
- Encouraging inappropriate sexual behavior
- Making victims feel responsible for his/her financial stability

Signs of sex and child sex trafficking:
- Large amounts of cash and condoms at the location.
- Mattress instead of massage table at parlor
- Men come and go frequently
- Unexplained school absences and overly tired in class
- Less appropriately dressed than before
- Sudden sexualized behavior
- Brags about making or having lots of money and displays expensive clothes or accessories
- New tattoo (tattoos are often used by pimps as a way to brand victims)
- Older boyfriend
- New friends with a different lifestyle
- Talks about wild parties or invites other students to attend parties

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