



5 STAGES OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING

The 5 Stages of Human Trafficking

Human Trafficking is not black and white, it is not easy to comprehend, and there are many different approaches a trafficker will take when it comes to grooming a new victim. When a trafficker begins to prey on a new victim, there is a 5-stage approach they will take to "train" the victim. The 5-stages of human trafficking are *luring, grooming and gaming, coercion and manipulation, exploitation, and lastly, recruitment.*

Stage 1: Luring

Sex traffickers approach potential victims in various ways, including pretending to be a potential boyfriend or friend, posting newspaper or Internet ads for jobs and opportunities, or even threatening or kidnapping them. Often, false promises are made to the victims about money, new clothes, work or education opportunities, and financial aid for their families.

Luring:

- Assessing the right person
- Testing their vulnerabilities and boundaries
- Determine whether that person is looking for what they are selling
- Testing the waters to see if that person is open to dating
- Collecting as much information as possible about them
- Making them feel special

One of the most modern ways for a trafficker to begin luring a victim is through social media. Social media allows easy access for predators to connect with naive and needy victims. Traffickers search through apps like Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, and Tik Tok, looking for vulnerable

children and teens. They then will begin liking posts and possibly even start sending them private messages through these apps.

Stage 2: Grooming & Gaming

In the "honeymoon stage," or as most know it, the grooming and gaming stage, the trafficker will do anything to make the potential victim fall in love with him.

Often when an individual is emotionally attached to someone, they tend to care and do things for them that they wouldn't do for anyone else. The trafficker wants the potential victim to be emotionally attached to him to manipulate the victim.

Grooming & Gaming:

- The victim feels as though they are in love
- The victim has found their dream partner who will make their dreams come true
- The trafficker promises a future with a family, home, etc.
- The trafficker makes them feel special, loved, and cared for
- They may engage in physical intimacy
- The trafficker continues collecting personal information about the victim's dreams and aspirations, family, what they love and care about the most
- The trafficker may introduce the victim to illicit drugs under the guise of loosening up, having fun

Once the victim has fallen in love, the trafficker will move onto the next stage.

Stage 3: Coercion & Manipulation

The trafficker will use the information/material gathered to take advantage of the potential victim. The trafficker will also try to convince the victim that if they do what the trafficker wants, they will go back to the "good times," which essentially is the honeymoon phase; this is a lie and part of the manipulation aspect of stage 3.

Coercion and Manipulation:

- Trafficker starts sending mixed messages
- Trafficker begins withdrawing, causing confusion
- Trafficker uses information gained against the victim
- Trafficker starts reducing information and compliments
- Toys with the victim's emotions and behaves erratically to cause them to question the relationship
- The trafficker begins asking the victim to do things sexually that they may be uncomfortable with desensitizing them to these actions
- Draws on their drug addiction (if relevant) to make them have sex for drugs or money, make the victim feel indebted to the trafficker
- Has sex with the victim then does something for them (take shopping, give money, etc.) to make sex have a price

With these mind games, the trafficker is trying to make the victim believe they did something wrong that ruined the love and affection and that the victim owes the trafficker to get it back. This way, the victim will do anything to get back to the love and warmth, eventually setting up the next step.

Stage 4: Exploitation

In the exploitation stage, the trafficker has wholly broken down their victim's self-esteem. The trafficker will emotionally, psychologically, and physically manipulate and force the victim into sex work. Using the information gathered from the earlier stages, the trafficker will threaten to expose her to her family or friends if she tries to leave.

Exploitation:

- Trafficker has broken down the victim's self-esteem
- Threatens the victim and their loved ones based on information collected previously
- It makes the victim feel indebted to the trafficker/ suggests that they owe them financially
- This leads the victim to believe they need help financially
- The victim is at the point where they feel obligated to contribute in some way
- Emotional, mental, and physical abuse-intimidation and control
- Confinement and isolation from family, friends, etc

The trafficker, at this point, will convince the victim that they need to do sex work to support them financially. While isolating the victim from family and friends to ensure there is no one to help them.

Stage 5: Recruitment

Stage 5 of human trafficking is considered the recruitment stage. At this point, the trafficker has fully manipulated the victim into working for them. They will use the victim to contact younger women, sometimes even friends and family, and introduce them to the trafficker. This makes the initial victim feel indispensable to the trafficker and feel as though they are less of a worker and more of a girlfriend once again.

Recruitment:

- In charge of "teaching other girls"
- Recruiters feel powerful and important
- Befriend vulnerable girls and show them how great the life is
- They have fewer clients, so they feel as though they are regaining power and control over themselves

This document was produced for the purpose of creating awareness about Human Trafficking in Wellington County.

If you are aware of someone trafficking individuals, report it to the Wellington County OPP at 1-888-310-1122.

If you wish to remain anonymous, contact Crime Stoppers Guelph Wellington on their website www.csgw.tips, or you can also call and leave an anonymous tip at 1-800-222-TIPS (8477). If your information leads to an arrest, you may be eligible for a cash reward of up to \$2,000.

Victims of Human Trafficking are encouraged to seek support from Victim Services Wellington via email at victim@vswguelph.on.ca or by calling (519) 824-1212 Ext. 7304.

We Stand With You

