



I'M NOT
FOR SALE

DO YOU KNOW THE
SIGNS OF
HUMAN TRAFFICKING?



What Are the Signs of Human Trafficking?

The business of human trafficking is often characterized as a "low risk/high reward activity" because the crime is secret and difficult to detect and investigate. This means that there are relatively low prosecution rates worldwide. Unlike the sale of drugs or guns, human beings can be sold repeatedly for the financial or material benefit of the traffickers, making this crime extremely lucrative. Modern justice systems still rely heavily on witness testimony to prove that the trafficking has occurred. Due to the trauma experienced during the trafficking, many victims will have gaps in their memories or become overwhelmed or afraid in court.

There are cases of recruitment occurring in high schools. It is important to discuss human trafficking with your children regardless of their gender, as human trafficking can happen to anyone. Traffickers will sometimes use older children to recruit younger children by befriending them and introducing them to the trafficker.

Parents need to recognize the signs of human trafficking and consider these criminals' luring tactics with their children.

Signs that your child could be in a trafficking situation include:

- Older boyfriend in their life who is controlling.
- They frequently visit places that are unusual for their age group to attend, such as hotels or motels, clubs, etc.
- Dressing more seductively, expensive/designer clothing.
- Staying out late or all night.
- Hanging out with new older friends.
- Ignoring childhood friends and family members.
- Drinking or using drugs.

- Skipping school, skipping meals, not showering, or stop changing clothes.
- Exhibiting anxious behaviour, lack of sleep, depression, and mental health issues.
- Ignoring rules and instructions at school or home.
- Lying or unable to recall where they have been or where they are going.
- Carrying false ID, multiple cellphones with blocked numbers, and different taxi service numbers.
- Has expensive or new clothes, shoes or jewellery.
- Spending more money and possessing expensive gifts from a new friend or partner. Declining grades and withdrawal from social activities.
- Lacks personal health care, appears malnourished, shows signs of abuse.
- Becomes protective of siblings.
- Expensive/designer clothing.
- Refers to specific websites and bitcoin/ cryptocurrency.
- Inability to clarify where they are staying, can't provide an address.
- Change in language/ use of slang terms.
- Refers to boyfriend as "daddy" or self as "mama" or "baby."
- Making a quota or a "bill" or a "bag."
- Being in the "game" or living in that "life."
- Refers to friends as "wives, sisters," being a part of a "stable."
- Talking about modeling or other job contracts waiting in another town or city.
- Becoming more secretive about spending time online or on their cell phone.
- Becoming frightened of being online or on a cellphone/telephone.

Some characteristics of human trafficking in rural communities:

- Some victims of trafficking still return home every night.
- Emotional manipulation is used to recruit and condition the victim.
- Incriminating photos are taken and then used as leverage to ensure victims will do what they are asked in fear of exposure.

- Social media is used as the primary recruitment tool in rural areas.
- Many victims identify their trafficker as their "boyfriend" and think that they are in love. Showing attention and interest can be confusing to a young girl that is looking for acceptance.
- Rental properties, Airbnb's, hotels, abandoned farms, or barns can all be used to isolate the victim and keep the person trapped in the life.
- Female friends will befriend a victim and then introduce them to the "party scene" and new young men that pay attention to them.
- Youth who struggle with low self-esteem, bullying, discrimination, poverty, abuse, isolation, and other social or family issues tend to be targeted.

Signs you could be in a human trafficking situation:

- Are you being controlled by threats, force, or deception?
- Are you being told to keep in constant contact? For instance, were you given one or more cell phones?
- Are you receiving expensive gifts?
- Are you being isolated from your family and friends?
- Are you earning or making money and not being able to keep it?
- Are you forced to give your ID to someone else?
- Are you told to look sexy and always have your nails and hair done, dress a certain way?
- Are you being denied food and sleep?
- Are you being forced to have sex for money?

When looking for signs of Human Trafficking, there are three different categories to pay attention to physical health, behavioural health, and the individual's social environment.

Physical Health

- Regular treatment for STIs
- A high number of sexual partners
- Multiple pregnancies/abortions
- Introduction to illicit drugs
- Dental issues

- Bruising and burns
- Signs of self-harm
- Weight loss or malnourishment
- Respiratory issues
- Suicide attempts
- Physical and sexual abuse

Behavioural Health

- Confusing/contradicting stories
- Inability to focus or concentrate
- Unaware of current date, location, or time
- Protects person who hurt them
- Downplays abuse
- Guilt and shame about experiences
- Suicidal ideations
- Extreme Nervousness
- Aggressive, antagonistic, or defensive
- Heightened stress response
- Post-traumatic stress disorder
- Withdrawn
- Depressed

Social/Environmental

- Absent from school
- Failing grades
- Increase in drug use
- Change in dress/style
- Romantic partner is much older
- Change in friends
- Repeat runaway
- Not able to speak for oneself or share information
- Evidence of being controlled
- Multiple people in confined living space

Signs of Abuse & Control:

Coercion and Threats:

- Threatens to harm family/friends
- Threatens to expose pictures or videos to shame the victim
- Threatens to report the person to the police or, in some cases, immigration

Intimidation:

- Harms the victim's pets, sometimes even their children
- Displays or uses weapons
- Destroys property
- Lies about police involvement threatens to kill them if they call the police

Emotional Abuse:

- Humiliates the victim in front of peers and associates
- Calls names
- Plays mind games
- It makes the victim feel guilty/ blames them for the situation they are in
- Convinces the victim they are the only one who truly loves and cares for them

Isolation:

- It keeps the victim confined
- Accompanies the victim everywhere they go
- Convinces the victim to distrust the police, friends, and family
- Constantly moves victim to different locations
- Will deny the victim access to their phone
- Will forbid victim from communicating with friends and family

Physical Abuse:

- Will physically harm the victim
- Burns, tattoos, brands the victim
- Will use torture tactics

- Force drug use as a way of controlling the victim

Sexual Abuse:

- Uses sexual assault as a form of punishment/control
- Forces victim to have sex multiple times a day with strangers for money
- Normalizes sexual violence and sex trafficking
- Uses sex for financial gain

Economic Abuse:

- Creates debts that can never be repaid
- Takes all the money the victim earns
- Limits the victim to a small daily/weekly allowance
- Forbids the victims to access to bank accounts and finances

Denying & Forcing Blame:

- Makes light of abuse and exploitation
- Denies that what is being done is illegal and exploitative
- Blames the victim for being in a sex trafficking situation

Risk & Vulnerability Factors

Here are some risk and vulnerability factors to consider.

Individual Factors:

- Low self-esteem/self-worth
- Lack of confidence/ insecurity
- Issues with family
- Do not feel adequately loved

- Lack of social support networks
- Difficulties at school/ bullying
- Previous abuse

Social/Systemic Factors:

- Social marginalization
- Poverty/ low economic opportunities
- Isolated neighbourhood/ proximity to crime
- Racism/ discrimination
- New Canadian resident/ language barriers
- Gender/ being female
- Indigenous
- LGBT2S+

Those who struggle with addiction, mental illness, and developmental disabilities are at greater risk of being victims of human trafficking. This happens because traffickers know they can manipulate the victim by using their addictions and disabilities against them.

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

