



HUMAN TRAFFICKING TATTOOS & BRANDING

Tattoos & Branding Used on Human Trafficking Victims

Tattoos on trafficking victims can vary widely, depending on the trafficker, the context of the trafficking, and several other factors. Quite often, the trafficker will use tattoos as a form of branding on the victim for various reasons. The brands signify that that victim belongs to a particular trafficker, she's his property, and other traffickers and other girls will know that she belongs to him. It is an alarming revelation, and there are numerous "themes" to be vigilant of.

Common themes include:

Bar codes: They often have numbers that may not necessarily mean anything.

Initials: Are used to indicate that a victim is the property of a specific person. The trafficker will tattoo his name (or nickname) on the victims, signaling that they are property. Victims are often coerced into getting these tattoos to show they belong to a group and are looked after. Similar tattoos can include a crown with the trafficker's initials.

Crowns and roses.

Currency: While not always the case, sometimes, the amount of money tattooed on the victim is the asking price. Currency can include a money bag, coins, dollar bills, or currency symbols.

Common Tattoo Areas: While the victims can have numerous tattoos in various areas, common tattoo locations linked to human trafficking include the neck, arm, and above the groin area.

Additionally, be aware of bruises on a victim's body that seems like they are in different stages of healing. More often than not, this is a sign of abuse.

Victim Services Wellington can assist victims, and survivors find adequate tattoo removal. For more information on how Victim Services Wellington can help you, visit their website and view the VQRP+ program. www.vswguelph.on.ca

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

