

Faces of Human Trafficking: An Introduction to Sex Trafficking

This video provides an overview of sex trafficking. It features survivors and professionals—including law enforcement, judges, and social service, legal, and health care providers—who share information on victim indicators, ways victims are often identified, how professionals may come into contact with victims of sex trafficking, and industries where sex trafficking is more common. This video is intended for a general audience but will be especially useful for professionals who may be in a position to identify victims, such as legal and social service providers, law enforcement, judges, juvenile justice personnel, child welfare personnel, code enforcement personnel, school personnel, health care providers, migrant worker organizations, immigrant service providers, faith-based communities, and community-based organizations.

Key Points

- Under federal law, any minor engaged in commercial sex is a victim of sex trafficking, regardless of force, fraud, or coercion.
- Everyone—including community members and professionals—can play an important role in identifying victims by knowing what sex trafficking is, what to look for, and whom to contact.
- General awareness of sex trafficking remains a barrier to identifying victims and referring them for services. There are many creative outreach strategies to build awareness among the public.
- Service providers may already be working with trafficking victims but on a different presenting issue, such as domestic violence, sexual assault, or child abuse. Many victims have experienced polyvictimization—exposure to multiple kinds of victimization—such as sexual

abuse, physical abuse, bullying, and exposure to violence.

- Once trained, members of law enforcement and the criminal and juvenile justice systems may experience a paradigm shift as they realize that those caught in human trafficking are victims, not criminals.

“Law enforcement can be very proactive when it comes to combatting sex trafficking, especially if you know where to look.”

— Keith Bickford, Detective
Multnomah Sheriff’s Office, Oregon

- Professionals and community members need to understand what sex trafficking is and believe victims when they disclose their experiences. Believing and supporting victims is critical in their healing process.

Discussion Questions

1. How would you define sex trafficking? While there is an overlap, how is sex trafficking different from prostitution?
2. What might make someone vulnerable to sex trafficking?
3. What are the “red flags” or indicators that someone might be a victim of sex trafficking?
4. Why might victims hesitate to come forward and disclose that they are victims of sex trafficking? How might this be different for specific populations, such as minors; males; females; individuals who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer (LGBTQ); American Indians and Alaska Natives; foreign nationals; and U.S. citizens?
5. Who in your community might come into contact with victims of sex trafficking?
6. For service providers and first responders, what are some of the issues that a victim of human trafficking may present with?
7. For law enforcement, what are some of the crimes you respond to where human trafficking may be present, if given a closer look?
8. What services might a victim of sex trafficking need once they are out of the exploitative situation? How might the needs differ for victims who are minors; male; female; individuals who identify as LGBTQ; American

Indians and Alaska Natives; foreign nationals; or U.S. citizens?

9. What can be done in your community to raise awareness of sex trafficking?
10. What can you do with the knowledge that you have gained today?

Supplemental Training Materials

- Provide the federal definitions, from the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) of 2000, of “a victim of a severe form of trafficking in persons” and “sex trafficking” (found at 22 U.S.C. 7102).
- Provide a brief history of modern human trafficking legislation in the United States, including the TVPA of 2000 and its reauthorizations, the Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act of 2014, the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act of 2015, and relevant legislation in your state.
- Discuss industries and areas within your community where sex trafficking might be found.
- Describe sex trafficking cases that have been successfully prosecuted in your area.
- Describe the systems and resources currently available in your community (including gaps and challenges) for runaway and homeless youth, abused and neglected youth, sexual assault victims, and formerly prostituted individuals.

For more information, including additional training resources, please visit www.ovc.gov/trafficking or www.ovcttac.gov/taskforceguide.