



Human Trafficking **Red Flags**

What to Look for During a Medical Exam/Consultation

The following is a list of potential red flags and indicators that can be useful in recognizing a potential victim of human trafficking. It is important to note that this is not an exhaustive list. Each indicator taken individually may not imply a trafficking situation and not all victims of human trafficking will exhibit these signs. However, recognition of several indicators may point toward the need for further investigation.

General Indicators That Can Apply To All Victims of Human Trafficking:

- Individual does not have any type of legal documentation, i.e., license or state issued ID for US citizens; Green Card or other ID for foreign nationals.
- Individual claims to be “just visiting” an area but is unable to state where he/she is staying or does not know the city or state of their current location.
- Individual has many inconsistencies in their story.
- Someone is claiming to speak for or on behalf of the individual - not allowed to speak for themselves.
- Individual exhibits behaviors including fear, anxiety, depression, submission, tension, or nervousness.
- Individual exhibits a loss of sense of time or space.
- Individual avoids eye contact.
- Individual uses false ID papers - may not be victim’s real name.
- Individual may be high on drugs.
- Individual is not in control of his/her own money.

Specific Health Indicators:

The following indicators may present in the context of a physical exam or similar health assessment or treatment.

- Malnourishment or generally poor health.
- Signs of physical abuse - in particular, unexplained injuries or signs of prolonged abuse:
 - Bruises
 - Black eyes
 - Burns
 - Cuts
 - Broken bones
 - Broken teeth
 - Multiple scars (including from electric prods)
- Evidence of a prolonged infection that could easily be treated through a routine physical/check up.
- Addiction to drugs and/or alcohol.
- Individual has no idea when his/her last medical exam was.
- Victims may not admit they are victims and may not ask for help.

Specific Indicators That Apply to Sex Trafficking Victims:

- The age of the individual has been verified to be under 18 and is involved in the sex industry.
- The age of the individual has been verified to be under the age of 18 and has a record of prior arrest(s) for prostitution.

Source: www.polarisproject.org and New Jersey Human Trafficking Task Force.



Alabama Human Trafficking Task Force www-ENDITALABAMA.org
 If you need help, call **1-888-373-7888** or **1-800-991-0948**.

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- Discrepancies in behavior and reported age—i.e., clues in behavior or appearance that suggest the individual is underage, but lies about his/her age.
- Evidence of sexual trauma.
- Multiple or frequent sexually transmitted infections (STIs), especially evidence of a lack of treatment for STIs.
- Multiple or frequent pregnancies.
- Individual reports an excessively large number of sexual partners, especially when it is not age appropriate (i.e., 15 year old girl reporting dozens of sexual partners).
- Individuals who are under the age of 18 who express interest in, or may already be in, relationships with adults or older men.
- Use of lingo or slang relating to the individual's involvement in prostitution - i.e., referring to a boy friend as "Daddy" or talking about "the life".
- Evidence of controlling or dominating relationships - i.e., repeated phone calls from a "boyfriend" and/or excessive concern about displeasing a partner.
- Individual is dressed in inappropriate clothing (i.e., lingerie or other attire associated with the sex industry).
- Presence of unexplained or unusual scar tissue - potentially from forced abortions.
- Tattoos on the neck and/or lower back that the individual is reluctant to explain—i.e., a man's name or initials.
- Other types of branding - cutting or burning.
- Evidence that the victim has had to have sexual intercourse while on her monthly cycle - i.e., use of cotton balls or other products that leave residual fibers.
- Family dysfunction - i.e., abuse in the home (emotional, sexual, physical), neglect, absence of a caregiver, or substance abuse.

Victim Identification:

How do I conduct an assessment or exam with a potential victim of human trafficking?

- Utilize existing assessment and examination protocols for victims of abuse/sexual abuse.
- Utilize existing culturally sensitive protocols.
- Use age-appropriate language if working with minors.
- If you ask about sexual history, be sure to distinguish between consensual experiences and non-consensual experiences.
- If possible, choose a comfortable space which is conducive to confidentiality.
- If appropriate, separate the individual from his/her belongings and escort/interpreter. The victim may be wearing/carrying some sort of tracking/communication device such as a GPS transmitter, cell phone or other small device - you can separate the victim from these devices by getting him/her into a gown and into an x-ray room.

What do I do if I think I have identified a victim of human trafficking?

- Be sensitive, every incident of human trafficking is different.
- Make sure you are not putting yourself or the individual in danger (i.e., take care to notice who is around when you are asking questions or providing resources).
- If you suspect the victim is in immediate danger, notify the police by dialing 9-1-1.
- Try to record as much information about the situation as possible - being careful not to put yourself or the individual in any danger.
- Call **1-888-373-7888** or **1-800-961-0948** to report the incident.

As a health practitioner, you are in a unique position to recognize, identify, and reach out to victims. This list is intended to be a guideline only.



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