

Social Services Indicator Card to help identify possible child victims of sex trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation.

Child victims of sex trafficking may look like the children you help every day.

Children engaged in commercial sex are victims of trafficking.

Children rarely disclose they have been sexually exploited. Children often do not realize they are victims of trafficking. Many view their exploiter as a boyfriend, and the process of breaking that trauma bond is time and resource intensive.

Children who are trafficked may still be under the control of a pimp/trafficker, even after they are returned to foster care, a family home, or are rescued.

Children who are trafficked may have a history of repeated sexual exploitation or running away.

Trafficked children often suffer from depression, hostility, stress, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, and fear of authority, as well as fear of those who victimize them.

Outward symptoms of depression, anxiety, or hostility may present as difficult behavior or resistance to assistance.

Other physical symptoms, such as pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, and drug addiction, may mask the fact they have been exploited.

The presence of the indicators noted below does not definitively mean the child is a trafficking victim. These indicators serve as clues to be assessed within the broader context of all information presented.

Look for the possible trafficking indicators and red flags noted below.

- Chronic runaway/homeless youth
- Excess amount of cash in their possession (may be reluctant to explain its source)
- Hotel keys and key cards
- Lying about age/false ID
- Inconsistencies when describing and recounting events
- Unable or unwilling to give local address or information about parent(s)/guardian
- Presence or fear of another person (often an older male or boyfriend who seems controlling)
- High number of reported sexual partners at a young age
- Sexually explicit profiles on social networking sites
- Injuries/signs of physical abuse (that they may be reluctant to explain)
- Inability or fear of social interaction
- Demeanor exhibiting fear, anxiety, depression, submissiveness, tenseness, nervousness
- Is not enrolled in school or repeated absence from school
- Does not consider self a victim
- Loyalty to positive feelings toward pimp/trafficker
- May try to protect pimp/trafficker from authorities
- Prepaid cell phone

For further assistance contact the
National Center for Missing & Exploited Children® at 1.800.843.5678
National Human Trafficking Resource Center at 1.888.373.7888