

## Common Needs of Victims

Victims of human trafficking have a variety of needs that include the following:

- ◆ Personal Safety Planning
- ◆ Legal services
- ◆ Housing
- ◆ Medical/Mental Health Care

Collaboration is key to helping these victims and it is often through multiple agencies and service providers that transitioning can be accomplished.

*Texas Young Lawyer Association*

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## Report Human Trafficking

Call the National Human Trafficking Resource Center and a specialist can help connect victims to local services and resources.

**1-888-373-7888**

All calls are confidential & toll-free  
24-hours a day/7 days a week.  
Language interpretation is available.

**TRUST** (Training and Resources  
United to Stop Trafficking) Arizona  
non-profit  
[www.trustaz.org](http://www.trustaz.org)

**The Polaris Project**  
International non-profit  
[www.Polarisproject.org](http://www.Polarisproject.org)

**To Learn More About  
Human Trafficking**  
U.S. Department of Health and Human  
Services—Campaign to Rescue and  
Restore Victims of Human Trafficking  
[www.acf.hhs.gov/trafficking](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/trafficking)

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# Coming Out of Hiding

*Human  
Trafficking  
Resources for  
Medical  
Professionals*



## What is Human Trafficking?

Human trafficking is a form of modern day slavery. The United States Criminal code, 18 S. 1170 has defined it as the act of compelling or coercing a person's labor, services or commercial sex act. The coercion can be subtle or overt, physical or psychological, but it must be used to coerce a victim into performing labor, services, or commercial sex acts.

*Victimology, 6th ed. Doerner and Elsevier*

## Labor Trafficking?

The recruitment, harboring, provision transportation, or obtaining of a person for labor or services through the use of force, fraud, or coercions for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery.

*Polaris Project*

## Sex Trafficking?

The recruitment, harboring, provision transportation, or obtaining a person through force, fraud, or coercion (psychological, physical, financial) for the purpose of benefiting financially from the commercial sex act of that person. Transporting, obtaining, or providing of a person can happen within cities and states as well as across state or international lines.

*Office of Sex trafficking, ASU School of Social Work*



## Health Issues for Victims

Victims of human trafficking often suffer from a wide range of health issues due to the conditions they are living in and the nature of the work they do. In most cases healthcare is almost nonexistent, thus leaving victims more vulnerable to illness. Some common red flags in health care settings are:

### Medical indicators

- ◆ Untreated injuries, and explanations inconsistent with injuries
- ◆ Delayed medical care
- ◆ Infections or mutilations
- ◆ Chronic back pain, hearing or respiratory problems from long days in outdoor work environments
- ◆ Severe/untreated dental problems
- ◆ Scars and bruising in shielded areas (such as lower back)
- ◆ Multiple STIs or abortions
- ◆ Evidence of sexual abuse
- ◆ Drug or alcohol addiction



### Trauma Indicators

- ◆ Unusual reactions to gynecological exams (appearing fearful, screaming, sobbing, tensing up as if expecting intense pain, hyper-ventilating, and or fainting)
- ◆ Unusual reactions to disrobing in the doctor's office (trembling, sweating, upset stomach)
- ◆ Sexualized behavior or seductiveness, in a child (seeking inappropriate proximity to nurse or doctor)
- ◆ Lack of responsiveness (appearing checked out as if in another place, not responding to verbal prompts or their name)

*Safehorizon*

## Understanding & Communicating with the Victim

Many times victims of human trafficking show an outward fear or distrust of an outside individual such as health care providers. He or she does not believe they are a victim so they will not be the first to identify themselves as victims and will not openly discuss the trauma they have Suffered. In order to identify and help these victims, health care providers need to work creatively in obtaining the necessary information from the victims to provide them with the assistance they need.

Initially, one should attempt to secure a private setting (and potentially an interpreter) to speak to the victim. Often times victims enter hospitals, ER's, etc. in the company of their aggressor. One example of a way to get privacy is to insist that hospital policy requires you to examine the patient alone.

Once a private setting is secured, asking open ended questions can begin. Building a rapport is critical to engage the victim and enabling him/her to feel safe enough to disclose to you their struggles. This may not happen in one visit but if you can, secure a follow-up visit with the person in order to continue the dialogue.

Once a rapport and trust is developed with the victim, begin to ask more specific questions as to their home and work environment. Do not use the specific phrase "trafficking" as most victims do not relate to this word. If you hear information that matches any of the indicators mentioned earlier, then you have identified a trafficking victim and can begin the process of assisting them to obtain the services they need.

*Human Trafficking and the Health Care Professional, Barrows & Finger*