

HUMAN TRAFFICKING FACTS

WHAT IS HUMAN TRAFFICKING?

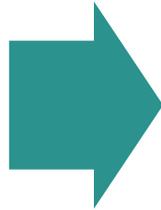
Human trafficking is the exploitation of people through manipulation, force, fraud, or coercion in exchange for anything of value. Trafficking includes human rights abuses such as debt bondage, deprivation of liberty, and lack of control over freedom and labor. Trafficking can happen through sexual exploitation or labor exploitation. Commercial sexual exploitation includes forcing an individual to engage in commercial sex acts, including prostitution or the production of pornography. Any time access to a minor's body or sexuality is exchanged for anything of value, commercial sexual exploitation is occurring.

DID YOU KNOW?

Overwhelmingly, the majority of victims of human trafficking are not kidnapped. Instead, most victims of trafficking know their trafficker prior to exploitation. Through manipulation, deception, and fraud, traffickers gain trust from the victims they exploit; this trust allows for traffickers to convince their victims to willingly go to the first place they are trafficked. The initial illusion of choice to go with the trafficker in the beginning is often used to falsely convince victims that the exploitation was their fault.

WHO DO TRAFFICKERS EXPLOIT?

Anyone can be exploited by a human trafficker. Men, women, boys, and girls are exploited every day in the United States. Traffickers seek out individuals who have a lack of social support and other vulnerabilities for the purposes of exploitation.



VULNERABILITIES FOR COMMERCIAL SEXUAL EXPLOITATION:

Any involvement, past or present, with the child welfare system or criminal justice system

History of running away

Poverty

History of abuse or neglect

Unstable housing or homelessness

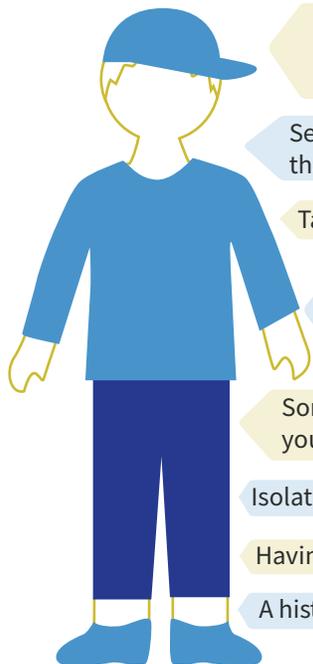
Substance use

Mental health concerns or disability

Lack of social supports: few close friends, family, or community supports

LGBTQ+

SIGNS A YOUTH MAY BE EXPERIENCING EXPLOITATION:



Sudden changes to appearance, clothing, school attendance, social groups, or level of engagement in activities

Sexually provocative clothing or wearing clothing that is not appropriate for the weather

Tattoos that the youth does not want to talk about

Has items that do not make sense in the context of the youth's life and income: hotel keys, unexplained cash, designer clothing or purse, a new phone, access to substances

Someone else outside of caregivers controls the youth's schedule, social contacts, or location

Isolation from caregivers, family, friends, or other social supports

Having a much older boyfriend or girlfriend

A history of multiple STI's or pregnancies

2019 the Human Trafficking hotline identified

22,326 VICTIMS AND SURVIVORS

through outreach to their hotline.

From these calls and texts, they were able to identify

11,500 TRAFFICKING SITUATIONS

(some involving multiple victims)

& 4,384 traffickers*



CRISIS TRAFFICKING SITUATIONS INCREASED BY

40% DURING THE PANDEMIC**

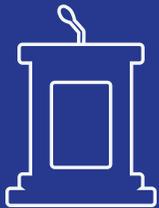
*polarisproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Polaris-2019-US-National-Human-Trafficking-Hotline-Data-Report.pdf

**<https://polarisproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Crisis-in-Human-Trafficking-During-the-Pandemic.pdf>

TEXAS'S RESPONSE TO THE COMMERCIAL SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF YOUTH:

A 2020 Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Youth (CSEY) Statewide Assessment conducted by the Texas Center for Child and Family Studies found that 39 (of the 125 agencies that responded) **“currently provide specialized CSEY programming within their service array. This does not mean all of the services each agency offers are specialized for CSEY, but rather at least one service type or program offered within the agency is specialized.”** Additionally, 35% of responding agencies who do not offer specialized services for youth who have undergone commercial sexual exploitation have identified CSEY victims among their clients.*

The Office of the Governor’s Child Sex Trafficking Team (CSTT) is engaged in comprehensive statewide efforts to end commercial sexual exploitation of youth and to heal victims. **The CSTT’s mission is to “build sustainable capacity, enhance expertise, promote policies, and create new and leverage existing collaborations to: protect children from sexual exploitation, help the public recognize signs of sexual exploitation, help victims recover, support healing, and bring justice to those who exploit children.” ****



Attorney General of Texas, Ken Paxton, formed the Human Trafficking and Transnational/Organized Crime Section (HTTOC) in 2016. The HTTOC has undertaken various anti-trafficking efforts, including being involved in the closure of Backpage, the largest purveyor of escort ads in the United States prior to its closure. HTTOC has also aided in the prosecution of criminal trafficking cases.

In 2021, the Texas Legislature passed numerous bills to continue fighting trafficking within the state. Solicitation of prostitution is now a state jail felony, and human trafficking is first degree felony if the trafficker recruited the victim from a shelter or treatment center for runaways, foster children, or the homeless. Additionally, only those 21 and older will be allowed on the premises of any sexually oriented business, such as strip clubs.



In 2021, the Texas Center for Child and Family Studies provided 15 free trainings on human trafficking topics for 841 individuals throughout the Texas foster care system, including foster parents, direct care staff, clinicians, and executives to continue increasing knowledge and capacity for working with exploited youth. Through trainings on prevention, recognizing and responding to exploitation, developing clinical skills, and trauma-informed care, the Center is helping organizations to adopt best practices in responding to the needs of victims and survivors.

RESOURCES

If you or someone you know might be experiencing human trafficking, call The Human Trafficking Hotline: **1-888-373-7888** or Text **“BEFREE” (233733)**

The Office of the Governor’s Child Sex Trafficking Team
gov.texas.gov/organization/cjd/childsextrafficking

Lighthouse: A Texas-based software to help organizations understand statewide trends in human trafficking, screen victims of exploitation through an integrated CSE-IT tool, and coordinate care for those identified.
www.alliesagainstslavery.org/lighthouse/

The Polaris Project
polarisproject.org/

The Texas Center for Child and Family Studies
tacfs.org/project/commercial-sexual-exploitation-of-youth-csey/

My Life My Choice’s Exploitation Prevention Program
mylifemychoice.org/prevention

*tacfs.org/publication/commercial-sexual-exploitation-of-youth-statewide-assessment/section-5

**gov.texas.gov/organization/cjd/childsextrafficking