

YOUTH AND COMMUNITY AGAINST TRAFFICKING

What is human trafficking and how to start safe, informed, and effective prevention groups in schools and communities.



FAIR Girls

Free Aware Inspired Restored

WHAT IS HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND HOW DOES IT WORK



Human Trafficking

Human trafficking happens in our schools, neighborhoods, and online spaces.

It does not always look violent. It does not always involve movement. And most victims *know* their trafficker.

This site is a practical guide for students and communities who want to take action safely, responsibly, and effectively.

You do not need to be an expert to make a difference. You need **information, structure, and support.**



Under U.S. law, any **minor** involved in **commercial sex** is automatically considered a **trafficking victim**, even if no force is visible.

That means if a **minor** is involved in any **sexual activity in exchange** for **money, gifts, housing, drugs, protection, or favors**, it is **trafficking**, even if

- No one used violence or threats
- It looked like a relationship
- The young person agreed or did not say 'no'

Two Forms of Trafficking

LABOR TRAFFICKING

Occurs when someone is forced or deceived into **work** through threats, debt, or control.

It often happens in *domestic work, agriculture, restaurants, construction, and informal labor.*

SEX TRAFFICKING

Occurs when someone is pressured, manipulated, or coerced into **commercial sexual activity**.*

This can involve *romantic partners, online grooming, or exchanges for housing, protection, or money.*

KEY REMINDER

Trafficking is not the same as smuggling. Smuggling involves consent and border crossing.

Trafficking is about exploitation and control and can happen without movement.

Who Is Most at Risk and Why

Traffickers target vulnerability, not weakness.

Youth at higher risk include

- Young people in foster care
- Runaways or unhoused youth
- LGBTQ+ youth
- Youth experiencing bullying or isolation
- Heavy social media users

Community risk factors include

- Economic instability
- Immigration-related fear or language barriers
- Informal or unregulated work
- Lack of access to trusted services

Warning Signs and Red Flags

Trafficking indicators are usually patterns, not single events.

In schools

- Sudden absences
- Secretive phone or social media behavior
- Older or controlling relationships
- Unexplained money, clothes, or gifts
- Fatigue, anxiety, or fear

In communities

- Someone else controlling money, work, or transportation
- Working excessive hours with little freedom
- Fear of authorities or speaking for oneself
- Isolation from friends or family



Seeing one sign does not mean trafficking. Seeing multiple signs over time means it is worth paying attention.

How Do Traffickers Recruit Today?

Most recruitment today starts online.

Traffickers use social media, gaming platforms, and messaging apps to identify vulnerability.

They often pose as friends, romantic partners, mentors, or employers.

Common tactics include

- Emotional grooming
- Promises of love or belonging
- Fake job or quick money offers
- Gradual isolation
- Debt ("you owe me") or dependency



KEY REMINDER

If you have access to the internet, the internet has access to you.

Why Students and Communities Matter

Young people and community members are often **the first to notice** when something feels wrong.

- Research shows that *adolescents usually talk to friends before adults.*
- This makes **peer-based and community-based prevention essential.**

Schools, neighborhoods, youth centers, and faith spaces **are often the only stable environments in someone's life.** When awareness exists in these spaces, *exploitation is harder to hide.*

Student-led and community-led groups **do not replace professionals.** They **extend prevention, reduce silence, and help people reach support earlier.**

Useful Links and Sources



U.S. TRAFFICKING VICTIMS PROTECTION ACT
READ MORE →



CHILD SEX TRAFFICKING 101
READ MORE →



HOW AND WHY IT HAPPENS IN SCHOOLS
READ MORE →



TECHNOLOGY AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING
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POLARIS HUMAN TRAFFICKING TRAINING
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HUMAN TRAFFICKING IS MODERN SLAVERY
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