



American Counseling Association

School Counselor Connection

Human Trafficking Awareness for School Counselors

There are currently over 20.9 million slaves in the world, more than at any other point in history (International Labour Organization, 2017). Modern-day slavery, human trafficking (HT), involves the force, fraud, or coercion to compel a person into commercial sex, labor, or services against their will (Trafficking Persons Protection Act [TVPA], 2000; [TVPRA], 2013).

HT is the second largest criminal industry in the world and the fastest growing. In the U.S., children under the age of 18 are the largest group of those trafficked for sex. This includes girls, boys, and LGBTQ+. HT is often unrecognized, but can happen anywhere – including your area/school.

Screening Tool

Screening tool to identify kids **at particularly high-risk** of being trafficked (Williams, Perdue, Belton, & Burns, 2012):

- **R** - Runaway or otherwise un-housed
- **E** - Educational problems
- **S** - Sexual assault
- **C** - Court appearances
- **U** - Using drugs and/or alcohol
- **E** - Emotional abuse

- **C** - Childhood abuse/neglect
- **H** - Homelessness
- **I** - Influential others
- **L** - Loving someone much older
- **D** - Difficulty making friends

Common Characteristics

Common indicators of a minor who is already being trafficked:

- Runaway or otherwise un-housed
- Hotel room keys
- Numerous school absences
- False IDs
- Lying about age
- Teens dating much older, abusive, or controlling partner
- Having large amounts of cash, jewelry, new clothes, etc.
- Recurrent STIs and/or need for pregnancy tests
- Signs of physical assault including branding/ tattooing, broken bones, black eyes, etc.

Be ever mindful of your students' risk. Increase your knowledge about HT. Counselors are needed with anti-trafficking work – get involved! Check your area for anti-trafficking coalitions and taskforces. For additional information, including resources available for use in schools, look further into the following:

- National Human Trafficking Resource Center
- Hotline: **888.373.7888 / TraffickingResourceCenter.org**
- National Educators to Stop Trafficking: **NestEducators.org**
- Excellent resource for education materials for school administrators, teachers, and students. Many of which are free downloads.
- Polaris Project: **PolarisProject.org**
- National Center for Missing & Exploited Children: **NCMEC.org**
- Shared Hope International: **SharedHope.org**

Quick reference awareness sheet provided by Dr. Jared S. Rose, LPCC-S (OH), NCC, EMDRC President, Association for LGBT Issues in Counseling