



# LOOK BE NEATH THE SURFACE



Can you recognize victims of  
human trafficking among the  
people you help everyday?

**As a *social service* provider,  
you can help liberate victims  
of human trafficking.**



## Human Trafficking is Modern-Day Slavery

Human trafficking is a modern-day form of slavery, widespread throughout the United States today. Trafficking of humans is one of the largest criminal industries in the world, and the fastest growing. Many victims of trafficking are made to engage in prostitution, pornography, or exotic dancing.\* But trafficking also occurs in forms of labor exploitation, such as domestic servitude or restaurant work, sweatshop factory work, or migrant agricultural work.

Force, fraud and coercion are the methods used by traffickers to press victims into lives of servitude and abuse:

- Force – Rape, beatings, confinement
- Fraud – False offers of employment, marriage, better life
- Coercion – Threats, restraint, psychological abuse

### Victims of trafficking can be found in:

- Commercial sex
- Domestic situations (nannies or servants)
- Factories
- Construction
- Farming or landscaping
- Fisheries
- Hotel or tourist industries
- Panhandling
- Janitorial services
- Restaurant services

## Identifying Victims of Human Trafficking

Victims of trafficking may look like many of the people coming to your organization for assistance every day. Victims are young children, teens, men and women. By looking beneath the surface and asking yourself these questions, you can help identify potential victims:

- Is the person accompanied by another person who seems controlling (possibly the trafficker)?
- Is the person rarely allowed in public (except for work)?
- Can you detect any physical or psychological abuse?
- Does the person seem submissive or fearful?
- Does the person lack identification or documentation?
- Is someone else collecting the person's pay or holding their money for "safe keeping"?

Knowing what clues to look for and what questions to ask can help you identify potential victims.

\* Any child induced to perform a commercial sex is a victim of trafficking.

## Sample Questions to Ask Potential Victims of Human Trafficking

If you get the opportunity to speak to the person alone, asking the following questions can help you determine if you may be dealing with a victim:

- Can you leave your job or situation if you want?
- Can you come and go as you please?
- Have you been threatened if you try to leave?
- Has anyone threatened your family?
- What are your working or living conditions like?
- Where do you sleep and eat?
- Do you have to ask permission to eat, sleep or go to the bathroom?
- Is there a lock on your door so you cannot get out?
- Does someone prohibit you from socializing or attending religious services?

Before questioning a person who may be a victim of human trafficking, discretely separate the person from the individual accompanying her/him, since this person could be the trafficker posing as a spouse, other family member or employer.





## Support for Victims of Human Trafficking

If you suspect someone is a victim of trafficking, call the National Human Trafficking Resource Center at 1.888.3737.888 to obtain information and to access supportive services through the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (TVPA). This hotline can help victims safely and securely begin to rebuild their lives by connecting them to basic services including:

- Housing
- Health care
- Immigration assistance
- Food
- Employment
- Legal assistance

Victims of human trafficking who are not U.S. citizens are eligible to receive benefits and services through the TVPRA to the same extent as refugees. Victims who are U.S. citizens may already be eligible to receive many of these benefits.

**National Human Trafficking  
Resource Center**

**1.888.3737.888**

For more information about  
human trafficking visit  
[www.acf.hhs.gov/trafficking](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/trafficking).