



## **UNDERSTANDING THE LINK BETWEEN PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING**

# HUMAN TRAFFICKING

## Federal Law Defines:

- **Sex trafficking:** the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, obtaining, patronizing or soliciting of a person for the purpose of a commercial sex act, in which the *\*commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion or in which the person induced to perform such act has not attained 18 years of age;*
- **Labor Trafficking:** the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of subjection to *involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery.*
  - Per s.787.06(3), F.S. coercion is not required to be present in labor trafficking of minors (Florida State law only)



# GENERAL INDICATORS & IDENTIFICATION OF LABOR TRAFFICKING

- Possibly lives in groups, in the same place where they work, and leave those premises infrequently, if at all.
- Live in degraded, unsuitable places, such as agricultural or industrial buildings.
- Not dressed correctly for work.
- Be only given leftovers to eat.
- Have no access to their earnings
- Have no labor contract.
- Work excessively long hours.
- Depend on their employer for a number of services, including work, transportation and accommodation.
- Have no choice of accommodation.
- Unable to move freely.



# COMMERCIAL SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

## Forms of Sex Trafficking

**Pimp-controlled trafficking** - There is a third party who is “brokering” the exchanges of the sexual act for a tangible item, typically money. Pimps can be of any age, any gender, and any background.

**Gang-controlled trafficking** - The trafficking is a source of generating money for the gang, and the gang member is involved in the trafficking of the victim. This might be a local, state, national or transnational gang. A gang is defined as “an association of three or more individuals whose purpose, in part, is to engage in criminal activity.”

**Familial trafficking** - This type of sex trafficking occurs when a family member or guardian sells the minor for a sex act. This is becoming an increasing issue due to the opiate epidemic. The family member or guardian may receive money, drugs for the sexual act with the child or exchange/sell child pornographic images of the minor.

**“Survival sex”** - This type of sex trafficking that does not involve a third party where commercial sex acts are exchanged for basic needs including food, shelter, safety, or in some cases to support drug addiction.



# INDICATORS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING

A variety of indicators can be “red flags” of trafficking. Some of the ones below are not the only ones, nor will apply to every individual.

## Physical

- Untreated injuries
- Bruising and burns
- Frequent STDS
- Physical and sexual abuse
- Substance use
- Dental issues
- Memory loss
- Exposure to toxic chemicals



## Behavioral

- Confusing stories
- Inability to concentrate
- Unaware of location
- Guilt and shame about the experience
- Depression and Anxiety
- Protects the person that hurt them, minimize the abuse



## Environmental

- Accompanied by someone that will answer for them
- In school settings, changes in behavior, wearing wrong clothes, not coming on time
- Living at overcrowded areas



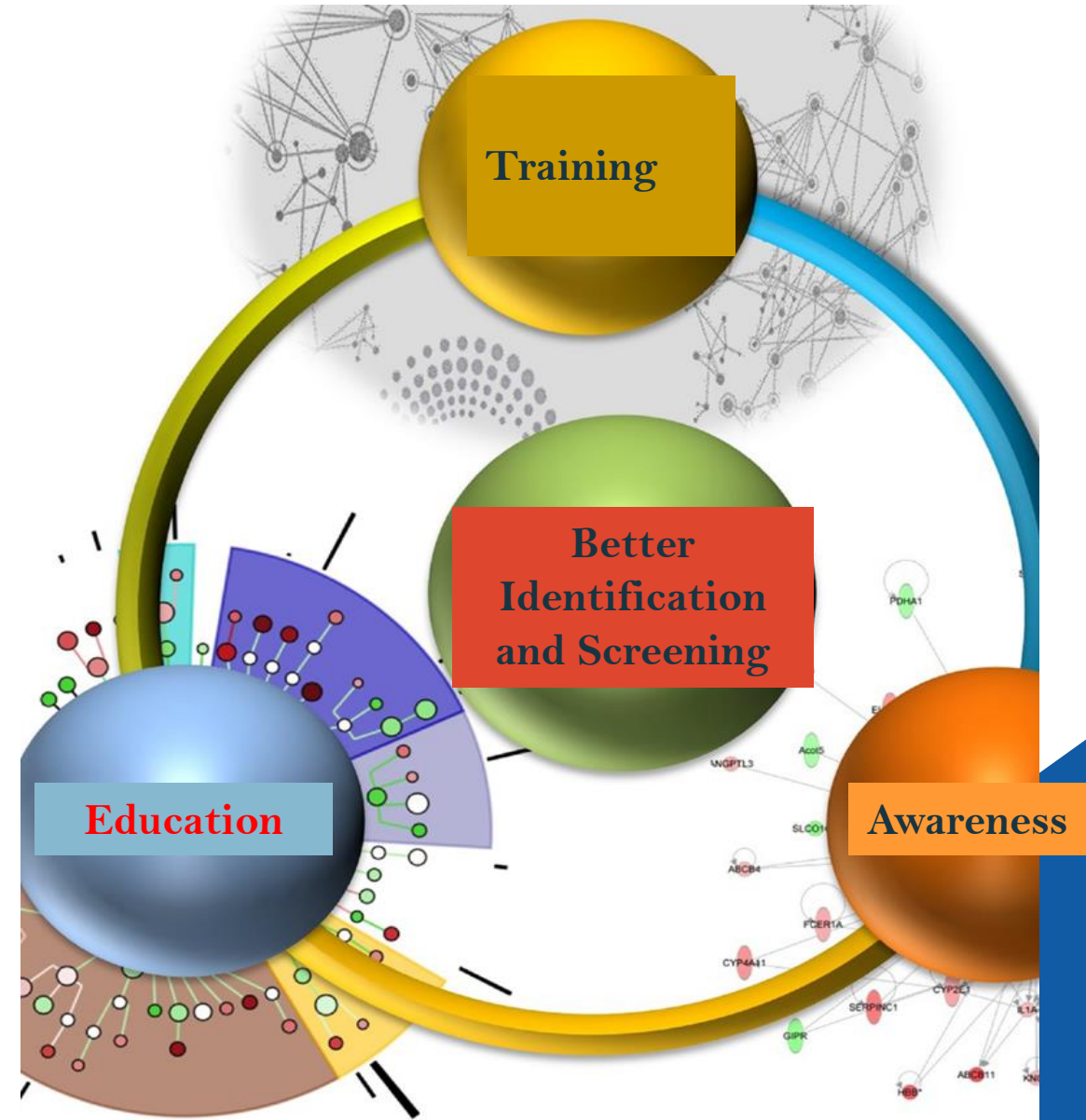
# Awareness Leads to Better Identification

## Training

- For all responders: child welfare, law enforcement, medical personnel, school personnel

## Screening

- Several screening tools used to assess children who may have experienced trafficking will identify labor trafficking
- Others focus specifically on indicators and interview questions related to sex trafficking



# What does Human Trafficking Look Like?



Refugees

Homeless adults and youth

Youth in Care

Substance Addiction

Mental Health

Persons with Disabilities

# Vulnerable Populations At Risk of Human Trafficking





# Global Vulnerabilities: Human Traffickers Often Target



## Addictions

Traffickers use substance dependency and addiction to keep control of the trafficked person.

## Disabilities and Mental Health

People with mental health issues face a variety of challenges including isolation, diminished capacity to consent or offer informed consent, and limited ability to assess risk and detect ill-intentions.

## Gangs

For gangs, the exploitation of men, women, and children is lucrative and less risky than other trades such as weapons or drugs.



## Psychological/Emotional Impact of CSEC

Disruption of healthy psychological development

- Self-concept, intimacy, beliefs and goals

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

- Impulse to revisit traumatic events, intrusive emotions & memories, flashbacks, hyper arousal, exaggerated startle reaction, panic symptoms

Self-injurious and suicidal behavior

Dissociative disorders

Anxiety

Paranoia

Clinical depression

Explosive outbursts

Sleep disturbance & nightmares

Bond with perpetrators

Hyper-sexualization

## Emotional Impact of CSEC

Anger and rage

Deep emotional pain/grieving

Feelings of humiliation/shame

Stigma of exploitation

Self-blame/Self-loathing

Loss of sexual desire, feelings, or response

## Social Impact of CSEC

Isolation from peer group

Disconnection from community

Isolation from mainstream society

Homelessness

Incarceration/Criminal record as obstacle

Disempowerment

Lack of life skills

Trust issues/Difficulty maintaining relationships

Obstacles to vocation

- Lack of access to legal economies, lack of job experience/skills

Educational deprivation

- Missed school, disconnection with school system

## Spiritual Impact of CSEC

Despair

Hopelessness

Lack of belief in humanity

Lack of faith in spiritual power

## Physical Impact of CSEC

Continuous physical abuse

Rape & gang rape

STDs & STIs

HIV & AIDS

Loss of bowel control

Pregnancy (wanted and unwanted)

Sterility

Facial/dental reconstruction

Tattoos & branding

Brain damage

Substance abuse/addiction

Self-cutting

Suicide/Death



# UNDERSTANDING WHY PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES CAN BE TARGETED FOR HUMAN TRAFFICKING

- Victim lack of awareness of exploitation and its endangerments
- Inability of victims to self-identify
- Persons with disabilities can be manipulated easily
- People with physical disabilities, cognitive or intellectual disabilities, sensory disabilities, and mental illnesses all need special attention and protection.



# THERE ARE SEVERAL FACTORS THAT MAKE PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES VULNERABLE TO TRAFFICKING.

- People with disabilities often rely on others to meet their basic needs.
- People with disabilities may lead isolated lives and crave friendship and human connection. Because of this need, they may be persuaded to perform sexual acts if they are promised friendship or money as a reward.
- Because of the level of touching that accompanies intimate care and medical procedures, people with disabilities can become desensitized to touch and/or may be unsure about whether they have the right to object to and report unwanted touch, sexual abuse, and sexual acts..
- People with disabilities may not be believed if they report abuse and violence.
- **Task forces should promote awareness of these trends when training service providers, police, fire/rescue departments, prosecutors, and judges.**



# MINDSET OF A VICTIM



- May believe no one can help
- May have been very isolated - disoriented
- PTSD emotional numbness, detachment, “flat affect”
- Addiction needs
- Conflicting loyalties - traumatic bonding
- Fear – *of trafficker – threats to self or family members back home– of INS and deportation – of police – police may be corrupt/part of trafficking in country of origin*
- May not speak English or understand our culture  
(or that there is help available)
- May not understand “trafficking” or identify with concept

## ADDRESSING THE NEEDS



- Delay in seeking care for illness/injury
- Vague/inconsistent history
- Lack of follow-up from previous care
- Hospital hopping (may have different patient name)
- May have a coached cover story about being a student or tourist or “just visiting” – unable to clarify an address
- Appears younger than stated age (younger than 18 coached to say they are older than 18)
- Child/adolescent traveling with older companion who is not a guardian
- Age-inappropriate familiarity with sexual terms or practices
- Dressed inappropriately for stated work, weather



## OBSERVE INTERACTION

- Observe body language and interaction
- Seems afraid/submissive of person with them, doesn't speak
- Person with them answers questions and seems controlling
- "Handler" may pose as spouse, partner, family member or employer
- Lack of ID, or person with them handles ID
- Few personal possessions
- Cash payment



## PHYSICAL SIGNS OF ABUSE

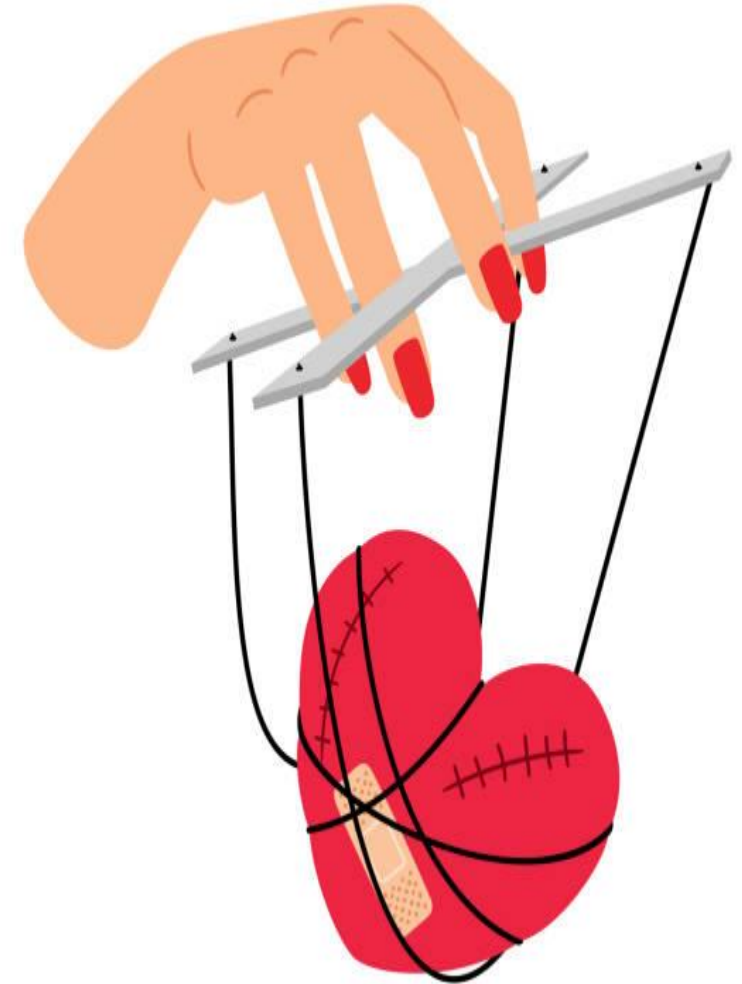
- Injury doesn't match history
- Neglect/delay in care, advanced stage of disease/injury
- Evidence of prior poor attempt to treat
- Serious industrial injury
- Chronic back, hearing, vision, skin, respiratory problems from work conditions or toxic exposures
- Persistent or untreated STIs, UTIs
- Cotton debris in vagina (from stuffed cotton padding to hide menstruation during sexual encounters)
- Neck & jaw problems (from oral sex)
- Repeated abortions/miscarriages, or no prenatal care





## OTHER SIGNS

- Dizziness, headaches, memory loss from traumatic brain injury/concussion
- Chronic pain syndromes
- Poor dentition
- Weight loss, malnourished, children stunted growth Undetected diseases such as diabetes, hypertension
- Evidence of inflicted injury (multiple, old and new) – Bruising, scarring, burns, ligature marks, broken bones
- Branding, tattooing of “ownership”, won’t talk about
- Complications from attempt at induced abortion
- Vaginal/anal trauma



## MENTAL/EMOTIONAL:

- Depression, hopelessness
- Suicidality
- Anxiety, panic attacks
- PTSD, dissociation
- Disoriented/confused
  - may be purposely moved from city to city and not know where they are
- Addiction
  - forced drugs to maintain control
  - numbness as a coping mechanism



# INDEPENDENT LIVING: HOW YOUTH MAY BE VULNERABLE

Extended Foster Care

PESS (Postsecondary Education Support Services)

Aftercare Services



You are participating in a qualifying activity like;  
Attending high school or working on GED;  
or  
Enrolled in college or vocational education program; or  
Employed at least 80 hours per month; or  
Participating in a program designed to promote or eliminate barriers to employment.; or  
Have a diagnosed and documented disability that would prevent you from participating in any of the activities listed above.

**To stay in the program, you must:**  
Meet with a caseworker every month  
Continue to participate in at least one of the activities listed above  
Attend Court reviews every six months

\*Typically, this program is used as a bridge in or bridge between EFC or PESS. Aftercare requires a plan to include specific activities for the young adult in order to make a successful transition.

Services may include:

- Mentoring
- Tutoring
- Mental Health
- Substance Abuse
- Counseling
- Parenting
- Job and career skills training
- Temporary financial assistance for necessities.

**EXTENDED FOSTER CARE:** IN 2013, A LAW PASSED IN FLORIDA ALLOWING YOUTH WHO WOULD NORMALLY AGE-OUT OF LICENSED CARE AT AGE 18 TO OPT TO STAY IN UNTIL AGE 21 (OR 22 WITH A DOCUMENTED DISABILITY) WHILE FINISHING SCHOOL OR GAINING WORK SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE.

You turned 18 while in the legal custody of the Department and who you have spent a total of at least six months in licensed out-of-home care before turning 18.

**OR**

You are at least 18 and you were adopted after the age of 16 from foster care or placed with a court-approved dependency guardian after spending at least 6 months in licensed care within the 12 months immediately preceding such your placement or adoption.

**AND**

You have earned a standard high school diploma, or its equivalent.

If the school you are attending is NOT a Florida Bright Futures-eligible School, you are NOT eligible for PESS; however, you may be eligible to receive ETV funding. ETV is a federal grant provided to states to help fund eligible former foster youth who are enrolled in postsecondary programs. There are specific eligibility requirements for funding and states have some discretion to limit or expand eligibility. Florida has determined that funding may be provided to youth who have reached 18 years of age but are not yet 23 years of age. The initial application for these funds must be received before the young adult's 21st birthday. ETV grant funds are limited; therefore, financial assistance will be administered on a first come, first served basis.

DEPENDING ON CERTAIN STATUTORY CONDITIONS, ELIGIBLE YOUTH MAY RECEIVE A MONTHLY FINANCIAL PAYMENT OF \$1,256; THIS MAY INCLUDE APPLICABLE EDUCATION AND TRAINING VOUCHER (ETV) FUNDING. THE FINANCIAL AWARD IS TO SECURE HOUSING, UTILITIES, AND ASSIST WITH COST OF LIVING WHILE ATTENDING A FLORIDA BRIGHT FUTURES-ELIGIBLE POSTSECONDARY EDUCATIONAL

### Eligibility Determination

Because Florida's Child Welfare System is comprised of CBC Lead Agencies which combines the outsourcing of foster care and Independent Living services, eligibility is determined by staff at the local level, specialized in Independent Living services. This design provides community ownership over the programs and services designed to help older foster youth and young adults who have spent time in Florida's System of Care.

### Aftercare Services Requirements

Reached the age of 18 while in licensed foster care, but is not yet 23 years of age. A young adult is considered to have been living in licensed care on the date of his or her 18th birthday if the young adult was in the legal custody of the Department on the date of his or her 18th birthday AND

Is not in Extended Foster Care (EFC) pursuant to Section 39.6251, F.S.\* **AND**

Is not in Postsecondary Education Services and Support (PESS) pursuant to Section 409.451(2), F.S.\*

\*Typically, this program is used as a bridge in or bridge between EFC or PESS. Aftercare requires a plan to include specific activities for the young adult in order to make a successful transition.

### Services may include:

- Mentoring
- Tutoring
- Mental Health
- Substance Abuse
- Counseling
- Parenting
- Job and career skills training
- Temporary financial assistance for necessities.

# AFTER CARE SERVICES FOR YOUTH THAT WERE IN FOSTER CARE

Medical Evaluations

Safety

Food, clothes, temporary shelter

Detoxication

Mental Health Evaluations

Transportation and/or relocation

## **SHORT TERM NEEDS**



Healthcare Coverage

Healthy and Safe Living Conditions

Employment

Socialization/Integration

Accessibility

Transportation and/or relocation

## **LONG TERM NEEDS**





Physical and emotional safety

Assistive technology for disability

Interpreters/translators

Community-Sense of belonging

Education/life skills

Physical mobility aids

**MORE LONG-TERM  
NEEDS**



# INVESTIGATIVE TIPS WHEN INTERVIEWING A PERSON WITH A DISABILITY

- **Use a forensic interviewer or subject matter experts that specialize in working with people with disabilities to conduct law enforcement interviews.** Forensic interviewers conduct non-leading, victim-sensitive, neutral, and developmentally appropriate interviewing. They can be particularly critical when interviewing victims with cognitive or development disabilities, which might require extended interviews.
- **Accommodate for unique needs.** When working with victims with disabilities, speak directly to the victim utilizing simple language that is not filled with organizational jargon. Give time to ask questions and repeat them when necessary.



# WHEN TO CALL THE DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES TO INVESTIGATE?

- “Vulnerable adult” means a person 18 years of age or older whose ability to perform the normal activities of daily living or to provide for his or her own care or protection is impaired due to a mental, emotional, sensory, long-term physical, or developmental disability or dysfunction, or brain damage, or the infirmities of aging.
- “Exploitation” means to use or obtain a victim’s funds, assets, or property by a person who stands in a position of trust and confidence through deception or intimidation with the intent to temporarily or permanently deprive the victim of the funds, assets, or property for the benefit of someone other than the victim.
- often people try to call in reports about a used car dealer or a telephone scammer, etc and the Hotline will not accept those types of reports because the alleged perp would not be in a position of trust and confidence.
- If the venerable adult is being exploited, then a person can call the Department of Children and Families to Investigate 1-800-96-ABUSE



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# HOW CAN PEOPLE BE FINANCIALLY EXPLOITED:

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Extended Foster Care and Independent Living Payment

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EBT –EBT card monies

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Applying for Loans

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Applying for credit cards

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Cable/Electrical Bills

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Applying for Housing

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Coercing a person to sign over financial power of attorney

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Taking pension, SSI payments or other benefit away from someone

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# FINANCIAL EXPLOITATION



# HOW TO REPORT IF YOU SUSPECT A MINOR OR AN ADULT IS BEING EXPLOITED OR TRAFFICKED

- If it is a minor, please report to the Florida Abuse Hotline at 1-800-962-2873 or [Abuse Hotline | Florida DCF \(myflfamilies.com\)](https://www.myflfamilies.com)
- If it is an adult, please report to 1-855-FLA-Safe or [See Something, Say Something \(state.fl.us\)](https://www.state.fl.us)
- If the adult is requesting services, please contact the National Human Trafficking Hotline at 1-888-373-7888 or [Home | National Human Trafficking Hotline](https://www.nhthotline.org)
- **Local Law Enforcement 911 if immediate danger or non-emergency number**
- The Senior Protection Team will also attempt to identify emerging scams, spot trends and stay ahead of changes in technology used to prey on seniors. For more information about how to tell if a senior may be a victim of financial fraud and how to guard against senior scams.
  - To report an emergency please call 911. To report any nonemergency scam or abuse, please call (866) 9NO-SCAM or file a complaint at [Florida Attorney General - Citizen Services Contact Form \(myfloridalegal.com\)](https://www.myfloridalegal.com)





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