


# Atrium Health

## Human Trafficking It IS in your hospital

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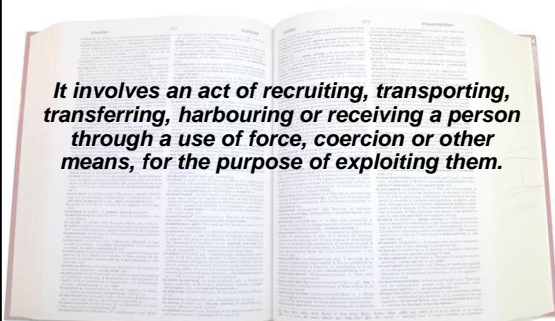


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### Definition: Human Trafficking



***It involves an act of recruiting, transporting, transferring, harbouring or receiving a person through a use of force, coercion or other means, for the purpose of exploiting them.***

### Elements of Human Trafficking:


Force  
Fraud  
Coercion

### Types of Trafficking

**Sex trafficking** is the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, obtaining, patronizing, or soliciting of a person for the purposes 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 an act has not attained 18 years of age (22 USC § 7102).


**Labor trafficking** is the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purposes of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery, (22 USC § 7102).




### Sex Trafficking

**Sex Trafficking:**  
**Commercial sex act** induced by force, fraud or coercion, or in which person performing the act is under age 18.

*Victims can be found working in massage parlors, brothels, strip clubs, escort services, internet pornography*




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### Types of Trafficking

- Sex Trafficking - 84%
- Labor Trafficking - 9%
- Sex and Labor Trafficking - 3%



### Myth #1


- Trafficked persons can only be foreign nationals or are only immigrants from other countries.
- **Reality:** The federal definition of human trafficking includes both U.S. citizens and foreign nationals. Both are protected under the federal trafficking statutes and have been since 2000. Human trafficking within the United States affects victims who are U.S. citizens, lawful permanent residents, visa holders, and undocumented workers.



### It IS in Your Hospital


- Researchers found that 87.8% of surveyed trafficking survivors encountered a healthcare professional during captivity and went unidentified, resulting in a missed lifesaving opportunity. Of those surveyed, 63.3% were specifically seen in an emergency department.

(Lederer, L. J., & Wetzel, C. A. (2014). The health consequences of sex trafficking and their implications for identifying victims in healthcare facilities. *The Annals of Health Law*, 23(1), 61-91.)



### When Do Victims Seek Medical Services

- In an emergency
- After an assault
- After a workplace injury
- For a gynecological exam
- For neonatal care
- For routine checkups
- For unrelated health issues



### Identification and Communication











- Frontline service providers play an important role in identifying and helping trafficking victims
- While trafficking is largely a hidden social problem, many victims are in plain sight if you know what to look for
- Very few places, other than the hospital, where someone from the outside has an opportunity to interact with a victim


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### Red Flags: Force and Abuse

 Hematoma or Contusions	 Dislocated limbs or Fractures
 Lacerations or Scarring	 Bald spots
 Missing or broken teeth	 Burns (e.g. cigarette burns)
 Injuries to the head or black eyes	 Miscarriages caused by potential abuse

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### Red Flags: Coercion and Control

-  Inability to keep appts. or follow care instructions
-  Malnutrition, untreated medical problems
-  Unable to present identification documents
-  Inconsistent or canned stories
-  Addictive behaviors
-  Branding or tattoos
-  Accompanied by a person that does not let patient speak
-  Hyper-vigilance, fear, paranoia, anxiety, depression



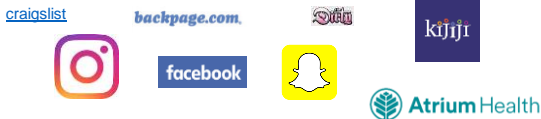
### Indicators of Sex and Labor Trafficking

- Demonstrates mental health concerns such as self-destructive behavior, exhaustion, depression, or PTSD
- Suffers from untreated medical issues such as STIs, occupational injuries, or exposure
- Physical or sexual abuse, neglect, malnourishment, or poor hygiene
- Has frequent absences/truancy or is not allowed to enroll in school
- Has a history of running from care; record of arrests related to commercial sex, gang activity, or other status offenses
- Lives with "parents" that are not biological or legal guardians
- Pays family for rent/basic needs or is relegated to isolated, inadequate living quarters
- Has received threats of harm to self/friends/family, deportation, or reports to law enforcement
- Provides scripted responses or is hesitant to speak on own behalf

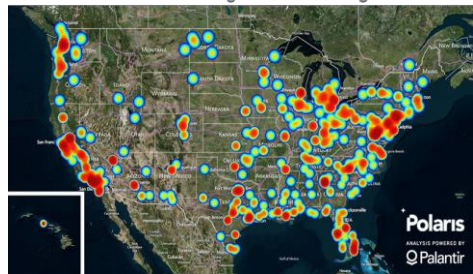


### Indicators for Sex Trafficking

- Is under the age of 18 and engaged in commercial sex, regardless of force, fraud, or coercion
- Feels they must provide commercial sex in exchange for money, housing or other necessities
- Frequently stays at or is seen at hotels/motels
- Has tattoos or markings indicating the ownership or control by another individual
- Photos of the youth have been placed online for advertising purposes



### Potential Human Trafficking Cases Involving Minors



### Child Trafficking

- Children may be trafficked by:
  - Caregivers
  - Intimate partners
  - Or others who use violence, threats, or other manipulative tactics to victimize children.



### Child Trafficking

- Without proper intervention, the trauma of human trafficking can have a profound impact on children and their long-term developmental success.
- It is imperative that professionals learn best practices to effectively serve trafficked children involved with the child welfare system.



## Risk Factors

- Lack of personal safety
- Isolation
- Emotional distress
- Homelessness
- Poverty
- Family dysfunction
- Substance abuse
- Mental illness
- Learning disabilities
- Developmental delays
- Childhood sexual abuse
- Promotion of sexual exploitation by family members or peers
- Lack of social support



## Identification and Communication

- Always attend to medical needs of the patient
- Once medical needs are assessed and treated, some helpful questions are:
  - Can you leave your work or job situation if you want?
  - When you are not working, can you come and go as you please?
  - Have you been threatened with harm if you try to quit?
  - Has anyone threatened your family?
  - Where do you sleep and eat?
  - Does anyone hold your identify documents for you? Why?
  - Have you ever been forced to do work you didn't want to do?
  - Have you ever been forced to have sex to pay off a debt?



## Identification and Communication

- Gaining patients trust is an important first step in providing assistance
- Important Messages to Convey:
  - We are here to help you
  - Our first priority is your safety
  - We will give you the medical care that you need
  - We can find a safe place for you to stay
  - If you are a victim of trafficking and you cooperate, you will not be deported



## Identification and Communication

### Remember:

In working with victims of trafficking, consider their immigration status, language barriers, their lack of trust and fear of law enforcement, and the fact that victims of human trafficking might not view themselves as victims.

Make sure adult patients consent to reporting their case to other agencies, including law enforcement!

Social services must be called for minors



## Barriers to Accessing Medical Services

- Fear of arrest, incarceration, or deportation
- Fear of retribution by exploiter
- Control of movement by exploiter
  - i.e., cannot leave house without accompaniment by controller
- Language barriers
- For Minors:
  - Fear of being returned to family
  - Fear of placement in Social Services



## Myth #2

- Human trafficking is essentially a crime that must involve some form of travel, transportation, or movement across state or national borders.
- **Reality:** Trafficking does not require transportation. Although transportation may be involved as a control mechanism to keep victims in unfamiliar places, it is not a required element of the trafficking definition. Human trafficking is not synonymous with forced migration or smuggling, which involve border crossing.



### Identify Common Health Care Issues Associated with Victims

- One study of women trafficked into sex work found that 95% had experienced physical or sexual violence in relation to that work
- Study found that victims reported being:
  - Kicked while pregnant
  - Burned
  - Punched
  - Thrown against a wall or floor
  - Hit with bats or other subjects
  - Dragged by their hair

(American Journal of Nursing, Feb 2011)



### Identify Common Health Care Issues Associated with Victims

- Physical Problems
  - Sexually Transmitted Infections
  - Vaginal and Rectal Trauma
  - Pregnancy
  - Infertility
  - Urinary Tract Infections
  - Bruises
  - Burns
  - Lacerations
  - Muscle strains
  - Cardiovascular and Respiratory Conditions
  - Malnutrition
  - Dehydration
  - Dental Issues



### Identify Common Health Care Issues Associated with Victims

- OB/GYN
  - Abnormal vaginal bleeding or discharge
  - Abdominal pain
  - Pregnancy or recent abortion
  - Recent sexual assault
    - If last sexual assault has occurred within 72-120 hours it is important that patients are taken to the Emergency Department for a Sexual Assault exam to possibly obtain DNA evidence



### Identify Common Health Care Issues Associated with Victims

- Physical Signs of Trauma
  - Patient reports physical assault
  - Patient has any signs of physical assault
    - If patient has signs of physical trauma, forensic trained nurses may be available in the Emergency Department to utilize digital photography to document injuries



### Identify Common Health Care Issues Associated with Victims

- Psychological Problems
  - Depression
  - Anxiety
  - Suicidal ideation
  - Post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
  - Addiction



### Identify Common Health Care Issues Associated with Victims

- Suicidal Ideation
  - Thoughts of killing themselves
  - Feelings that they would be better off dead
  - Wanting to die
- Homicidal Ideation
  - Thoughts of killing someone else



## Identify Common Health Care Issues Associated with Victims

- Study on prostitution and trafficking in nine countries
  - Found 68% of interviewed participants met criteria for PTSD
  - Other emotional problems characterized as “severe”
    - Mood swings
    - Anxiety
    - Terror
    - Depression
    - Wanting to die as a means of escape

(American Journal of Nursing, Feb 2011)



## Myth #3

- Victims of human trafficking will immediately ask for help or assistance and will self-identify as a victim of a crime.
- **Reality:** Victims of human trafficking often do not immediately seek help or self-identify as victims of a crime due to a variety of factors, including lack of trust, self-blame, or specific instructions by the traffickers regarding how to behave when talking to law enforcement or social services.



## What to do Next

- Provide a safe and comfortable space for the patient to wait
- Provide a social worker for the patient to speak to
- Contact DSS or an appropriate service provider if the patient is a minor
- Assist the patient in contacting law enforcement, if adult patient desires



## Myth #4

- Human trafficking victims always come from situations of poverty or from small rural villages.
- **Reality:** Although poverty can be a factor in human trafficking because it is often an indicator of vulnerability, poverty alone is not a single causal factor or universal indicator of a human trafficking victim. Trafficking victims can come from a range of income levels, and many may come from families with higher socioeconomic status



## Case Studies

- 16 year old female present to the ED under IVC for suicidal ideation
- 13 year old discloses to school teacher about being sexually abused by her mothers friend
- 17 Year old run away recovered by Law Enforcement brought in for medical clearance



## Helping Trafficking Victims

- This hotline will help you:
  - Determine if you have encountered victims of human trafficking
  - Identify local community resources
  - Coordinate with local social service organizations
- **Call local police if victim at risk of imminent harm**

**1.888.3737.888**

[www.polarisproject.org](http://www.polarisproject.org)





<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aTAVZChvLR4>

