



HUMAN TRAFFICKING

IDENTIFYING THE SIGNS

Recognizing human trafficking is the first step in making a difference in your tribal community.

What is Human Trafficking?

Human trafficking is a crime. It involves the use of force, fraud, or coercion to compel a person to perform forced commercial sex or labor. Anyone under the age of 18 involved in the commercial sex industry exchanging any item of value for a sex act with or without force, fraud, or coercion IS protected by the law as a victim of human trafficking.

While human trafficking can happen to anyone in any community, American Indians and Alaska Natives experience increased risks. Traffickers often target vulnerabilities such as financial or housing insecurity, individuals with a prior history of abuse, and those in unsafe situations seeking safety and an opportunity to leave their current situation.

Barriers to Identifying Human Trafficking

Several barriers exist to reaching individuals experiencing trafficking including—

- Individuals may remain silent due to fear for their safety or safety of loved ones.
- Traffickers may control what an individual says or does making it difficult to seek support.
- Individuals may be taught not to trust authority.



Understanding the Terms Force, Fraud, and Coercion

Force - Physical and sexual assault, isolation, and confinement are considered force.

Fraud - False employment offers, promises of love and a better life, withholding wages, and taking documentation are signs of fraud.

Coercion - Threats of violence, threats of arrest, debt bondage, withholding legal documents or identification are coercion. Additionally, withholding food, basic needs, or addictive substances is also coercion.

- Individuals may not identify as a victim of human trafficking.
- Stigma and shame keep some individuals silent about their victimization.
- Lack of awareness of available support and services for victims of crime.

Possible Circumstances of Human Trafficking

Individuals experiencing human trafficking often lack control and work in dangerous environments. Do not approach a human trafficking victim or situation yourself. This can put your life and the victim's life in jeopardy. If you suspect someone is in a human trafficking situation seek support on how to respond from the [National Human Trafficking Hotline](#) at 1-888-373-7888 or text 233733. If the situation is currently happening, write down all the information you can such as the descriptions

Lack of Control - Individuals experiencing human trafficking may have few or no personal possessions; are not in control of their own money, records, or bank accounts; owe a large debt and are unable to pay it off; are not in control of their own identification documents; their movements and/or communication are monitored.

Work Conditions - Human trafficking can occur anywhere. Individuals experiencing human trafficking may work excessively long and/or unusual hours; were enticed with false promises about the conditions of the work; or are unpaid, paid very little, or paid only through tips.

of the individuals involved, vehicles, and location where the situation is happening. Share this information with local law enforcement or a [victim service provider](#).

Building Human Trafficking Knowledge

Offering community education and developing a collaborative response are vital to breaking the patterns of intergenerational trauma intertwined with human trafficking. Knowing who to call when you encounter an individual experiencing human trafficking and understanding trauma-informed care is critical in supporting victims and survivors on their healing journey. Survivors are strong and resilient and can bring about healing for themselves and their children and families.

The Human Trafficking Capacity Building Center

The Center works with tribes and tribal organizations to start, sustain, or grow their anti-trafficking work developing approaches that align with cultural values while honoring and respecting American Indian and Alaska Native practices. Contact the Center at contact@ovc-htcbc.org or 1-844-682-0411 to request no-cost assistance.