

Information Sheet:

Red Flags – Indicators of Human Trafficking

These red flags are indicators that can alert a person to what a human trafficking situation might look like; they are not a checklist for determining a human trafficking case. The presence of one or more of these indicators suggests it is worth looking further into the situation.



Red Flags: Indicators of abuse and control

You learn or suspect that the potentially trafficked person:

- Must work against his will.
- Cannot leave his current situation.
- Has been threatened with:
 - Violence, against her or her loved ones.
 - Arrest or deportation.
 - Even worse working conditions.
 - No pay.
- Is punished when he does something wrong.
- Can only leave home to go to work or that his activities outside of work are highly controlled
- Sleeps where he works, or has no private space.
- Has moved from place to place often
- Has limited or no control over his working conditions.
- Works excessively long hours with few breaks or days off.
- Has no money or access to money, or hands over his money to someone else.
- Is bonded by debt to another person.
- Does not have access to medical care.
- Has limited contact with friends or relatives.

The person shows other signs that they are being abused or controlled – for example, the person:

- Is fearful or anxious in general, or is afraid of the police or other authority specifically.
- Is always accompanied by someone else.
- Allows that other person to speak for her, even when you address her directly.
- Acts as if she's following instructions, or talks as if she's reading from a script.
- Cannot make an appointment on her own (she does not have control over her own schedule)
- Has visible scars or injuries, such as bruises around her wrists from being tied up, or cigarette burns on the inside of her arms or legs.
- Does not have any identity documents, even false ones, or a health card or other documentation.
- Is reluctant to tell you her name or other details about herself, or the names of others.



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Red Flags: Indicators of trafficking for sexual exploitation

You find out the person is suffering from:

- A sexually transmitted infection or disease.
- Pelvic, rectal, or urinary trauma (evidence of unprotected or violent sex and multiple or forced abortions)
- Mental health issues, including depression
- Post-traumatic stress disorder.
- Memory loss.
- Drug and/or alcohol addiction.
- Malnutrition.
- Other health issues, such as back, hearing, cardiovascular, or respiratory problems.

You notice that the person:

- Has scars or injuries or other signs of abuse or torture.
- Uses her cell phone to call the same person at regular intervals.
- Has a tattoo of a gang symbol or a name on her neck or elsewhere that suggests ownership, or wears gang colours or jewellery (such as a necklace in the shape of a gang symbol).



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Red Flags: Indicators of Trafficking for forced labour

You learn or suspect that the person:

- Lives in the same place he works, possibly with a number of others.
- Lives in an unsuitable place, of sub-standard quality, such as a basement, old barn, or storage shed.
- Works for very long hours – more than eight hours a day or more than five days a week.
- Works in unhealthy or unsafe conditions.
- Does not have a contract for the work he is doing, or was forced to sign an illegal contract.
- Cannot leave his current job, but won't say why.
- Receives no pay or receives less than minimum wage for his work, or is required to pay a portion of his wages to someone else.
- Receives no benefits from his work, such as sick leave or overtime.
- Has fines taken off his pay if he does something wrong.
- Must pay for tools, food, accommodation, and/or transportation out of his wages.

You may also notice that the person:

- Does not have the right clothing or protective gear for his job, for example steel-toed boots and a helmet for someone who works on a construction site.
- Is qualified for a particular job, but is working in a different one – for example, a qualified plumber is working to clear brush in the forest.

If you go to a job site, you may see:

- The absence of health and safety notices on the walls.
- The absence of health and safety equipment.
- A room with one or more beds in it.
- Evidence that people are cooking meals, in a place where that would not normally be done.
- Workers dressed in inappropriate clothes for their jobs.



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Red Flags: Indicators of trafficking for domestic servitude

You learn or suspect that the person:

- Does not eat with the family, or eats only leftovers.
- Is unable to leave the home at all, or may only leave in the company of a member of the household.
- Is expected to be available to work up to 24 hours a day, with few or no days off.
- Has been physically or sexually assaulted by her employer or members of the household.
- Does not know anything about the community around them (due to being unable to leave the house)



Red Flags: Indicators of child trafficking

Many of the signs that a minor has been trafficked are the same as those for adults, but there are also some signs specific to children and youth.

You learn or suspect that the minor:

- Does not have or cannot reach a parent or guardian.
- Is not going to school or is working during school hours.
- Lives with someone not related to him and not a guardian.
- Does not have any friends his own age outside of work.
- Has no time for playing.
- Is engaged in work that is not suitable for children, such as heavy lifting or working with dangerous chemicals
- Travels unaccompanied, or in groups who are not relatives
- Has someone in her life (not a parent or guardian) who arranges where she lives and how she travels, or who buys her everything she needs.

In cases of child trafficking for sexual exploitation, you may notice that the child or youth:

- Dresses more provocatively than a typical minor.
- Has more cash, more expensive clothes or gadgets that were received as “gifts” from an unknown source.
- Has fake identification that states she is older than she really is.
- Has a hotel room key or other items that a typical minor would not have.
- Behaves in a way that is not typical of her age, for example too quiet or too mature.
- Regularly travels in taxis and has taxi numbers programmed into her cell phone.



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Red Flags: Indicators of child recruitment for sexual exploitation

You notice that the child or teenager has started to:

- Dress more provocatively.
- Stay out later or all night.
- Hang out with new friends who are older than them.
- Ignore childhood friends and family members.
- Drink or use drugs.
- Skip school.
- Skip meals.
- Skip showers or stop changing clothes.
- Ignore rules and instructions at school or at home.
- Lie.
- Wear new clothes, shoes, or jewellery of unknown origin.
- Spend more money on toys, such as iPods or video games.
- Receive gifts from a new friend or boyfriend.
- Talk about a modeling or other job contract waiting in another town or city.



Red Flags: Indicators of International Trafficking

The person:

- Has paid a fee to come to Canada.
- Came to Canada for a specific job, but may not have that job now.
- Travelled a long and possibly indirect route to get to Canada.
- Won't say how he came into Canada.
- Does not have access to his passport or travel documents.
- Is reluctant to tell you his immigration status or show you his travel or immigration documents if he has them.



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