

PATIENT POPULATION COMPETENCY - HUMAN TRAFFICKING

What is Human Trafficking?

Human trafficking is the use of **force**, **fraud**, or **coercion** for the recruitment, transportation, harboring, provision, or obtaining of a person for **labor** or **commercial sex**. A minor involved in commercial sex is a victim of human trafficking, regardless of the use of force, fraud, or coercion. **There is no single face of a trafficking victim.** Men, women, trans or gender non-conforming people, adults, minors, U.S. citizens and foreign nationals are all affected. Likewise, both men and women can be traffickers. Human trafficking is modern day slavery and occurs in a variety of settings.

Sex trafficking:

- Hotel-based commercial sex
- Fake massage businesses
- Street-based commercial sex
- Residential brothels
- Truck stops
- Escort services

Labor trafficking:

- Domestic work
- Restaurants
- Construction
- Agriculture
- Traveling sales crew
- Health and beauty services

Reasons people remain or keep their trafficking status secret:

- Fear of retaliation from the trafficker directed at the victim, friends, or family
- Fear of being released back to the trafficker
- Previous unsuccessful attempts to escape
- Minor
- Stigma and shame
- Uncertainty of their geographic location
- Prior criminal record or fear law enforcement
- Language barrier
- Physical illness, mental illness, disability or substance abuse
- Cultural or religious practices or norms that do not support speaking up
- Sexual orientation or gender identity
- Distrust of medical professionals and authority figures
- Financial concerns
- Fear of deportation

Signs of Trafficking

Individual signs may not indicate a person is trafficked. However, multiple signs or a feeling that “something just isn’t quite right” may indicate a more serious problem. A trafficked person often:

- Is accompanied by someone who speaks for them, refuses the person privacy, or seems controlling of the person
- Gives a scripted or inconsistent story
- Appears unaware of their surroundings including location, time, date
- Seems anxious, submissive, or hostile; may avoid eye contact
- Is reluctant to answer questions about illness or injury
- May have tattoos or branding
- Compulsively checks phone; multiple phones
- Has an inconsistent appearance (ex. appears malnourished but with multiple phones and manicured nails; clothing is inappropriate for the weather)

Human Trafficking in Washington State

In 2020, the National Human Trafficking Hotline received over 800 calls from Washington State. These included both sex and labor trafficking reports. The actual number of people being trafficked is likely higher. Because of our geographical location, ports, population growth, and agricultural regions, Washington is a hub for both sex and labor trafficking.

Trafficking, Health Care and Seattle/King County Clinic

Many survivors of human trafficking report visiting health facilities multiple times during their time in captivity. Because the Seattle/King County Clinic sees such a large number of people, is free, and does not ask for identification, there is a chance that volunteers may encounter patients who are being trafficked. Although it is not expected, in the event that a trafficked person comes to the Clinic, it is important to **know the signs, offer support, demonstrate compassion and resist the impulse to rescue. Victims are the experts of their own situation and safety.**

Where to Turn

The National Human Trafficking Resource Center (NHTRC) hotline at 1-888-373-7888 offers 24/7 guidance and support for victims of trafficking and care givers.