



Human Trafficking Awareness Month *Things to Look For* Tip Sheet

Kali Jackson, LMSW-C, CAADC-DP,

Therapist for Wedgwood's Manasseh Project Trauma Recovery Center

Human Trafficking Red Flags

- Subtle mention of a dysfunctional home life
- References to sexual situations, especially use of terms beyond age-specific norms.
- Excuses for a family member, boyfriend, or girlfriends potentially abusive behaviors.
- Evidence of trading sex for money, drugs, or anything of value.
- Tattoos, burns, or other marks on their body.
- Frequent travel
- Homelessness or running away
- Reporting multiple sex partners
- Sudden decline in academic performance
- Change in behaviors or relationships
- Change in personal hygiene
- A lot of cash and/or new material items (clothes, shoes, cell phone, jewelry)
- Evidence of partner appearing to control conversation and/or speak for them
- Substance addiction
- Unmet needs/lack of social or family connection
- Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) – things like:
 - *experiencing violence, abuse, or neglect, witnessing violence in the home and/or community, or having a family member attempt or die by suicide*
 - *Growing up in a household with substance use or mental health problems and/or Instability due to parental separation or household members being in jail or prison*
- Malnourishment/poor physical health

Important Notes

- Any case involving a child under 18 who is engaged in a commercial sex act is a crime regardless of force, fraud, or coercion.
- Family members are involved in nearly half of the child trafficking cases worldwide
- Family involvement in exploitation of children is nearly 4x higher than in cases of adult trafficking.
- Child Trafficking IS Child Abuse. Laws are worked on to better protect children against this crime.
- There are often barriers for children to disclose.
 - They may not see themselves as victims and those in position to help, may not identify it as exploitation. If a child has not been taught about human trafficking, they are unlikely to seek out help from a trusted adult.
 - Children also may have fears about disclosing, including fear of law enforcement, fear about returning to an abusive home, fears of being deported, fears of harm to themselves or their loved ones, guilt, or shame.
- Language is important. It's important to use words like trafficker, buyer, and victim.
- Trafficking is highly relational. It is important to create healthy and safe relationships while using a trauma informed response.
- Often traumatic events involve loss of control and/or chaos.
- National Human Trafficking Hotline | 888-373-7888 or text BEFREE 233733