

RECOGNIZING HUMAN TRAFFICKING VICTIMS

Human Trafficking Victims (Sex/Labor)

1. Lack of control over personal schedule, money, or personal possessions like bags, IDs or documents
2. Transported to and from work
3. Someone speaks on behalf of them if they are asked a direct question
4. Always accompanied by a controlling person or boss
5. Does not know what city they are in
6. Has a tattoo with a barcode or pimp's name
7. Chooses to use an alias or goes by "Jane Doe"
8. Debt owed to employer/crew leader; inability to leave job
9. Poor physical health, tired or malnourished
10. Shows signs of long-term physical abuse or torture
11. Avoids eye contact, especially with men
12. Suddenly has more expensive clothing or jewelry without change of employment
13. Sudden change in group of friends
14. Becomes depressed, withdrawn or combative with family
15. House has a strange look such as boarded up windows or curtains constantly drawn
16. If arrested, sex victim may actively seek out others who do not have anyone to pay their bond. This may indicate they are recruiting for their pimp

Checklist courtesy of John Meekins, Member of International Association of Human Trafficking Investigators and the Florida Gang Investigators Association as well as a contributor to AMU blog at InPublicSafety.com

Questions to ask suspected human trafficking victims and why

1. With whom did you reside? What relation are they to you?

Someone in a human trafficking situation does not live alone. Many pimps have several women who live in small living spaces, so he can easily control them.

2. What kind of work did you do and where were you employed?

Vague responses like “house cleaning” and other under-the-table jobs are often a cover-up. Ask for more details like manager’s names and dates worked. If she says a “boyfriend” took care of her, that is a good indication of HT.

3. If she mentions a boyfriend or friend, ask what that person does for work.

Statements like, “He does side jobs” or “he’s not working now” are indicators that he is a pimp. Many pimps survive solely on their women’s income. They convince women it is best for them to stay at home to protect them.

4. How do you perceive yourself and what led you to this belief?

HT victims appear dehumanized and believe nobody cares about them. Many are brainwashed to think they are worthless.

5. Have you ever engaged in prostitution? If so, how were you introduced to it? What did you do with the money you made?

Asking blunt questions like this can get to the issue at hand.

6. What is your past criminal history? What other charges do you have?

Many women are mules for their pimps. Charges like drug trafficking or gun trafficking may indicate a human trafficking victim is under the control of someone.



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