



CHILD TRAFFICKING



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WHY IT MATTERS

One study found in a one-year review of 149 local trafficking victims from Alameda County, California, that 55% of the victims were from group homes for youth in foster care, and 82% had previously run away from home multiple times.¹⁹

Sex trafficking occurs when a child under the age of 18 is involved in a commercial sex act, including prostitution, sexually explicit performance or production of pornography in exchange for something of value (money, food, clothing, shelter, drugs, alcohol, etc.).¹ Labor trafficking is the exploitation of a person for labor or services through force, fraud or coercion. Labor trafficking victims are often forced into domestic servitude, agricultural work, restaurant work or factory work.²

According to the [*National Human Trafficking Hotline*](#),³ child trafficking occurs in every state across

rural, suburban and urban communities as well as American Indian communities. Women and girls are victims in 85% of sex trafficking cases.⁴ Traffickers seek out vulnerable victims, particularly runaways or children placed in out-of-home care including shelter care, family foster care, group homes, residential treatment centers, and transition living group homes or apartments. One study found in a one-year review of 149 local trafficking victims from Alameda County, California, that 55% of the victims were from group homes for youth in foster care, and 82% had previously run away from home multiple times.⁵

Tracking the number of child sex trafficking victims is challenging at best. Child welfare agencies across the country report a range of tracking practices from agencies that don't track at all, agencies that are in the process of developing tracking systems, and agencies that have informal tracking such as case notes in files.⁶ A small, but growing number, of child welfare jurisdictions are now including trafficking questions in their state reporting systems (SACWIS systems).⁷

Children and youth who are trafficked are vulnerable to severe sexual, physical, and emotional injuries that can lead to life-long consequences. They are more likely to experience depression, anxiety, substance abuse, unplanned or forced pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, suicide, incarceration, school drop-out, unemployment, and re-victimization.^{8,9}

Children and youth who are trafficked are often difficult to engage and identify in services. Since many survivors have had multiple, often negative contacts with formal systems such as child welfare, they may associate these systems as unsafe and unsupportive. As such, advocates may be in better positions to offer help to survivors.

ADVOCATES IN ACTIONS

Children in foster care are disproportionately victimized by human trafficking. Despite widespread acknowledgement of the connection between foster care and human trafficking – it is estimated that 60 percent of child sex trafficking victims have a history in the child welfare system.¹⁰

ACTIONS

- **Participate in training and education** to learn more about the issues survivors of child trafficking experience and the specific ways you can help. Ideally, training will be alongside others who you can partner with to address concerns (e.g., educators, trauma specialists, child welfare professionals, public health providers).
- **Learn from the experiences of survivors themselves.** Ask for your local program to invite a survivor who is willing to talk about their experiences and the kinds of supports that were helpful to them.
- **Identify the multi-pronged services that survivors will need in order to move forward.** Housing, educational and vocational supports, mentoring programs to connect survivors to caring adults, and evidenced-based trauma-focused mental health treatment, medical care and reproductive health are just some of the many services needed.
- **Recognize and learn about the under-identified and underserved populations** which include trafficked boys, LGBTQA youth, youth who are homeless or runaway, American Indian, and refugee, immigrant and youth who are undocumented. In addition to all of the other concerns about supporting children and youth who are trafficked, there will be additional considerations for these populations.

If a child discloses information that leads you to believe they are being trafficked, follow the same guidelines you would if they disclosed they were being abused.

- **Understand “Safe Harbor” laws and find out if they are active in your state.** Safe harbor laws were developed by states to address inconsistencies with how children who are exploited for commercial sex are treated. Safe harbor laws are intended to address the inconsistent treatment of children and ensure that victims are provided with services.
- **Learn what the potential indicators of a child or youth who is trafficked.** The child may:
 - » Show signs of physical harm;
 - » Become depressed, fearful or withdrawn;
 - » Have a history of running away or currently be on the run;
 - » Have expensive clothing, jewelry, manicures, etc. that you haven’t seen before;
 - » Begin spending time with an older boyfriend or girlfriend;
 - » Be found in a hotel/motel;
 - » Have new tattoos or branding;
 - » Be performing work inappropriate for his or her age or not being compensated for work performed;
 - » Become isolated from family, friends or sources of support;
 - » No longer have control of his or her identification documents; and,
 - » Makes reference to having a “pimp” or “daddy.”
- **If you see something suspicious, say something.** If you suspect a child is a victim of trafficking, call 911 and the *National Human Trafficking Resource Center* at: 1-(888)-373-7888. To report sexually exploited or abused minors, call the *National Center for Missing and Exploited Children’s*¹¹ (NCMEC) hotline at 1-800-THE-LOST, or report incidents at <http://www.cybertipline.org>.
- If a child discloses information that leads you to believe they are being trafficked, follow the same guidelines you would if they disclosed they were being abused. Assume that they are telling you the truth. Don’t promise that you won’t tell anyone else. But do reassure them that you will support them and stand by them.

BRIGHT SPOT

THE RICHLAND COUNTY ANTI-HUMAN TRAFFICKING TASK FORCE RICHLAND COUNTY CASA, COLUMBIA, SOUTH CAROLINA

Richland County CASA (RCCASA) developed an initiative aimed at combating human trafficking, an effort that has strengthened working relationships with law enforcement, prosecutors, and social service providers. RCCASA provides special training to raise awareness and help people to spot warning signs of human trafficking. Since October 2016, the program has trained 657 participants.

RCCASA devotes staff solely to advocate for child victims of human trafficking. The program coordinated training for the community of advocates, assisted law enforcement with prosecution, and helped social service agencies identify appropriate placements and provide heightened training to foster families.

Housed at RCCASA, the Richland County *Anti-Human Trafficking Task Force* has grown from 15 members to more than 130. The *Task Force* has helped to change how law enforcement responds to children who have run away. This creative and collaborative approach has increased RCCASA's organizational capacity through the creation of many community partnerships. Prior to the initiative, many child advocates were working in isolation within their respective agencies.

- In 2017, Richland County's Anti-Human Trafficking Project Coordinator presented to a total of 573 individuals on human trafficking – over 100 were CASA's!
- The *National Human Trafficking Hotline* reported an increase in calls regarding incidences of human trafficking in Richland County by 55%.
- During the January 2018 *Human Trafficking Awareness Month* campaign, multiple events were implemented in Richland County to inform residence of this horrendous crime that preys on any one, regardless of their age, race, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, gender or sexual orientation.

Recognized by the South Carolina Attorney General's Office, this initiative gives children and youth at risk of human trafficking better educated and influential advocates on their side and a community of people looking out for them.

For more information, contact training@casaforchildren.org

SELECTED RESOURCES

Name	Description
<u>Implementing the Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act (P.L. 113-183) to Benefit Children and Youth</u> ¹²	A collaborative effort of the <i>Children’s Defense Fund</i> , <i>Child Welfare League of America</i> , <i>First Focus</i> , <i>Generations United</i> , <i>Foster Family-based Treatment Association</i> and <i>Voice for Adoption</i> , this document provides a summary of the legal requirements around act.
<u>National Center for Missing and Exploited Children</u> ¹³	The <i>CyberTipline</i> provides the public and electronic service providers (ESPs) with the ability to report online (and via toll-free telephone) instances of online enticement of children for sexual acts, extra-familial child sexual molestation, child pornography, child sex tourism, child sex trafficking, unsolicited obscene materials sent to a child, misleading domain names, and misleading words or digital images on the Internet. NCMEC continuously reviews <i>CyberTipline</i> reports to ensure that reports of children who may be in imminent danger get first priority.
<u>National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN)</u> ¹⁴	NCTSN is a federally funded child mental health service initiative designed to raise the standard of care and increase access to services for traumatized children and their families. They have developed resources for professionals, policymakers, and the public, including the <u>12 Core Concepts for Understanding Traumatic Stress Responses in Children and Families – Adapted for Youth Who are Trafficked</u> ¹⁵ and <u>NCTSN Bench Card for the Trauma-Informed Judge to Address Child Trafficking and Trauma</u> ¹⁶ , which assists judges in their work with youth who have been trafficked.

Name	Description
<i>National Human Trafficking Resource Center</i> ¹⁷	This site provides legal and social services to children, youth and adults who are survivors of trafficking as well as help to children, youth and adults currently being trafficked. It houses the national and state hotline for calls and tips related to human trafficking as well as a statistics related to the number of reports made state by state.
<i>Polaris, Human Trafficking Issue Brief, Safe Harbor Laws</i> ¹⁸	Under federal law, a child under eighteen that is induced into providing commercial sex is a victim of trafficking and must be treated as such. State laws criminalize adults that have sex with children under statutory rape laws, however these laws were not consistently applied in cases where the adult purchased sex. The result was children, recognized under both state and federal law as victims of a crime, were arrested and convicted of prostitution. This site provides detailed information on safe harbor policies.

CHILD SEX TRAFFICKING & CHILD WELFARE

Name	Description
<u>Child Welfare Capacity-building Center for States, <i>Child Welfare Response to Child and Youth Sex Trafficking</i> (n.d.)</u>	This 3-part curriculum package builds capacity with caseworkers, supervisors and administrators to identify and serve survivors of child and youth sex trafficking in order to support the provisions of the <i>Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act of 2014</i> (P.L. 113-183) provisions.
<u>Child Welfare Information Gateway, <i>Child Welfare and Human Trafficking</i> (2015)</u>	This issue brief highlights the crossover between child welfare and the work currently being done to prevent and respond to human trafficking of children and youth in the US, with a focus on child sex trafficking and ways child welfare agencies can address it.
<u>Louis de la Parte Florida Mental Health Institute, University of South Florida, <i>Citrus Helping Adolescents Negatively Impacted by Commercial Exploitation (CHANCE)</i></u> <u>Pilot Study: Progress Report (2016)</u>	This pilot treatment program implemented in Miami-Dade County, FL provides commercially sexually exploited children with individualized clinical treatment centered on trauma-focused care, cognitive behavioral treatment and motivational interviewing. The <i>Citrus Health Network</i> also places these children in specialized therapeutic foster care, and provides prospective foster parents with required trainings for licensing, and additional training on specialized therapeutic foster care for commercially sexually exploited victims.
NYC Administration for Children's Services, <i>Summary of Resources on Human Trafficking</i> (n.d.)	This document contains a comprehensive list of promising practices that jurisdictions have used in order to serve this population.
<u>Virginia Child Protection Newsletter, <i>Sex Trafficking of Children</i> (2015)</u>	This newsletter highlights strategies in Virginia and Maryland to address sex trafficking of children.

ENDNOTES

- 1 Ibid.
- 2 Ibid.
- 3 <https://humantraffickinghotline.org/>
- 4 The Polaris Project tracking report. <http://polarisproject.org/human-trafficking/facts>
- 5 MISSEY Resources <http://missey.org/myths-and-facts/>
- 6 Casey Family Programs, *Addressing Child Sex Trafficking from a Child Welfare Perspective*, (September 2014).
- 7 Ibid.
- 8 IOM (Institute of Medicine) and NRC (National Research Council) (2013). *Confronting commercial sexual exploitation and sex trafficking of minors in the United States*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. Available at: <https://www.ojjdp.gov/pubs/243838.pdf>
- 9 Lederer, L.J., & Wetzel, C.A. (2014). The health consequences of sex trafficking and their implications for identifying victims in healthcare facilities. *Annals of Health Law*, 23, 61-91.
- 10 Ibid.
- 11 <http://www.missingkids.com/gethelpnow/cybertipline>
- 12 <http://www.childrensdefense.org/library/data/implementing-the-preventing.pdf>
- 13 Ibid.
- 14 <http://www.nctsn.org/>
- 15 http://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/assets/pdfs/12_core_concepts_for_understanding_traumatic_stress_in_children_and_families_trafficking.pdf
- 16 NCTSN Bench Card for the Trauma-Informed Judge to Address Child Trafficking and Trauma
- 17 https://humantraffickinghotline.org/?gclid=EAlaIQobChMI7LvEwq_22AIVk-NkCh2AEwk6EAAAYASAAEgJaRPD_BwE
- 18 <https://polarisproject.org/sites/default/files/2015%20Safe%20Harbor%20Issue%20Brief.pdf>
- 19 MISSEY Resources <http://missey.org/myths-and-facts/>