

Preventing Child Sex Trafficking in Maryland

Dr. Nadine Finigan-Carr, PhD
Director, Prevention of Adolescent Risks Initiative
nfinigan-carr@ssw.umaryland.edu

What is human trafficking?

Human Trafficking

Sex Tra

or
king

Human Trafficking is the exploitation of an individual for profit through forced labor or commercial sex.

Adult Victims

Victims (under 18)

Sex trafficking is the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, obtaining, patronizing or soliciting of a person for a commercial sex act in which the act is induced by ***force, fraud or coercion, or in which the person performing the act is under 18.***

Trafficking Victims Protection Act, 2000

Federal Human Trafficking Laws



- Define minors involved in commercial sex as victims of trafficking (TVPA, 2000)
- Require state child welfare agencies to identify and provide services for trafficked youth and those at risk (PL 113-183, 2014)

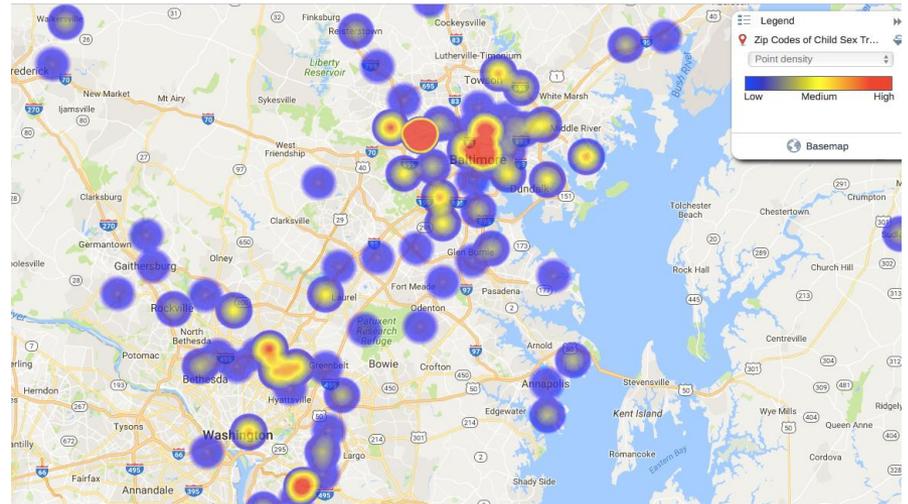
Child Sex Trafficking

- Refers to the trafficking of anyone under 18 years old and is considered a form of child abuse.
- Criteria to be considered sex trafficking for a minor:
 1. Victim is 17 or under
 2. Involves a commercial sex act
 3. Does **NOT** require force, fraud, or coercion

- **In Maryland**, child sex trafficking is defined as a form of sexual abuse, including cases in which the trafficker is NOT a caretaker, relative or household member, or the victim doesn't have a trafficker.
- Requires mandated reporters to report suspected child sex trafficking to LDSSs who are to investigate and respond.
- Law enforcement and LDSS must report suspected victims to a Regional Navigator.
- Victims will have access to immediate child-centered and trauma-informed services.

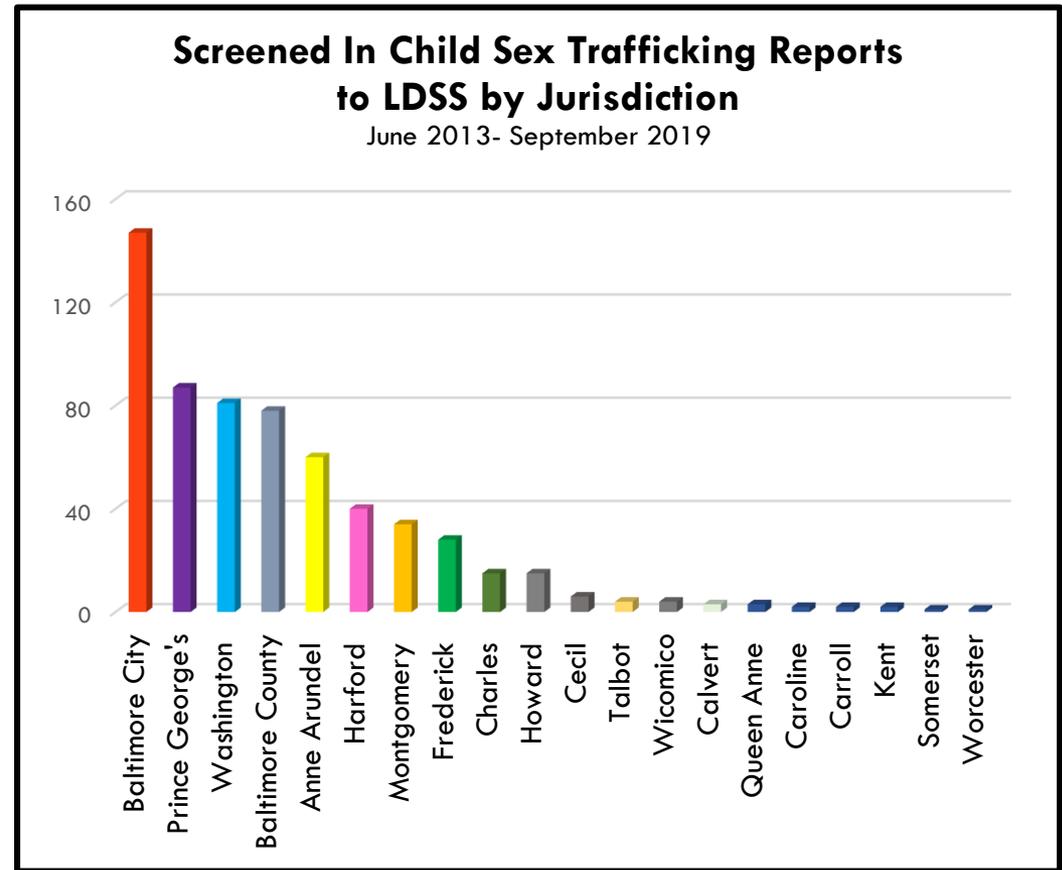
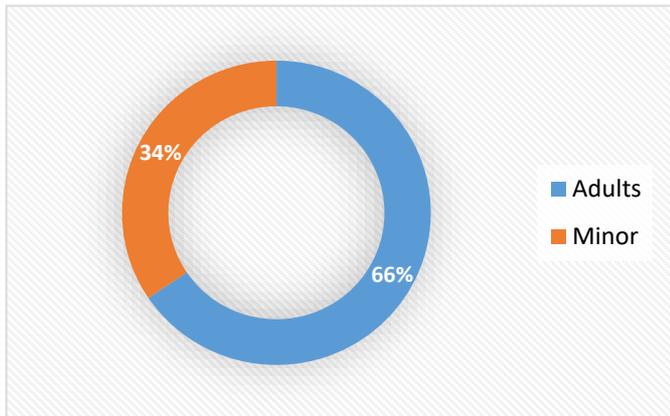
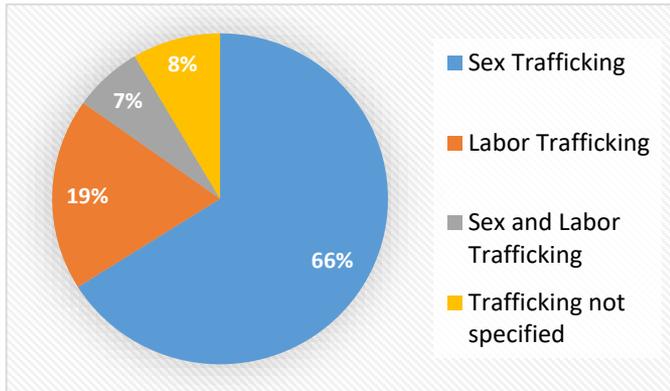
Why Maryland?

- Centrally located: I-95 corridor, I-270, I-70
- International airports
- Numerous rest stops, bus stops, bus stations
- Multiple vulnerable populations: Foster youth, unaccompanied minors, domestic servants, agricultural workers
- Proximity to international institutions & embassies
- Transnational gang presence

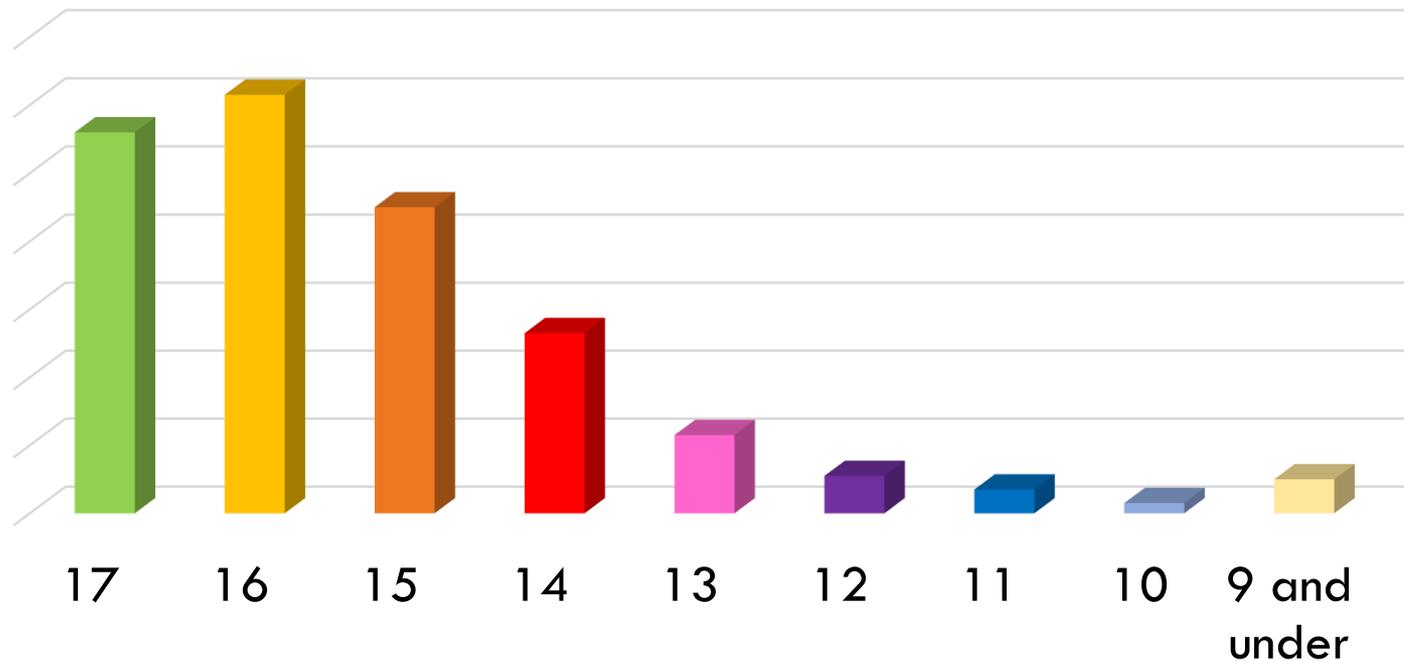


Credit: University of Maryland School of Social Work, Ruth Young Center. Child Sex Trafficking Victims Initiative

Maryland Statistics



Age of Suspected Victim at Time of Child Sex Trafficking Report

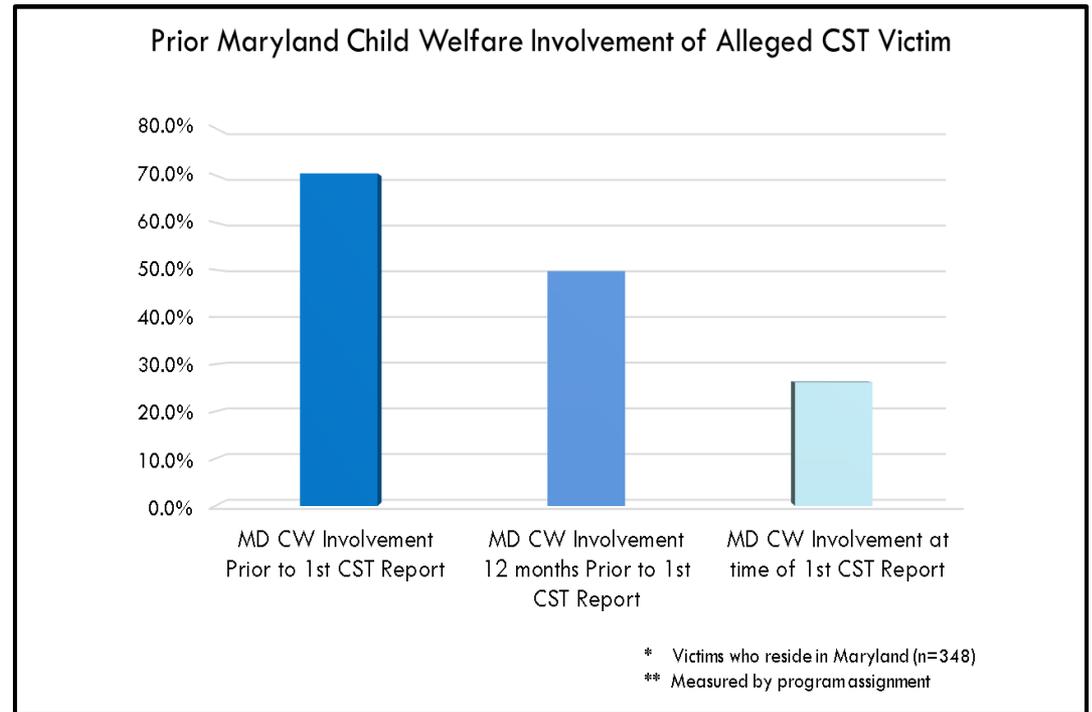


87% of suspected victims were 14-17 years old at the time of the CST report.

Child Sex Trafficking Victims Initiative, University of Maryland School of Social Work June 2018

Child Trafficking in Maryland

- **70%** of alleged victims* had prior involvement** with Maryland's child welfare system before the first CST report
- **50%** had child welfare involvement in the year before the first CST report
- **26%** had an open child welfare case at the time of the first CST report

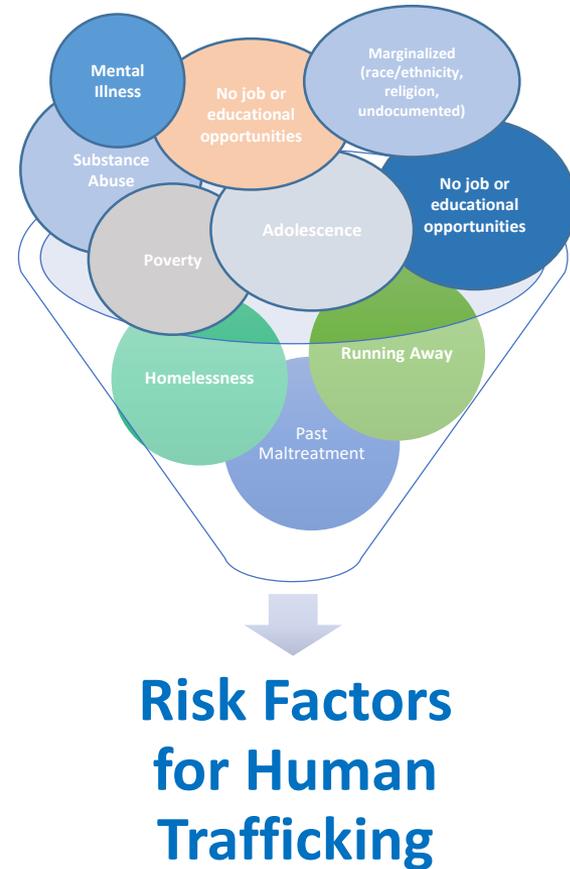


Credit: University of Maryland School of Social Work, Ruth Young Center.
Child Sex Trafficking Victims Initiative

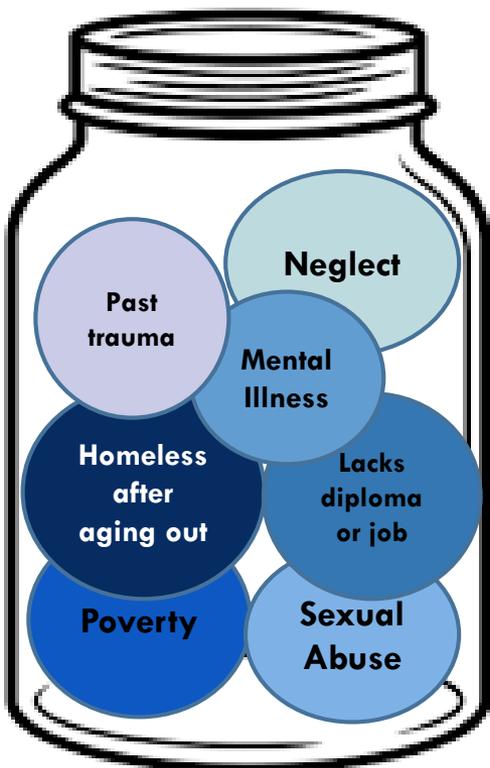
Risk Factors

Our Most Vulnerable

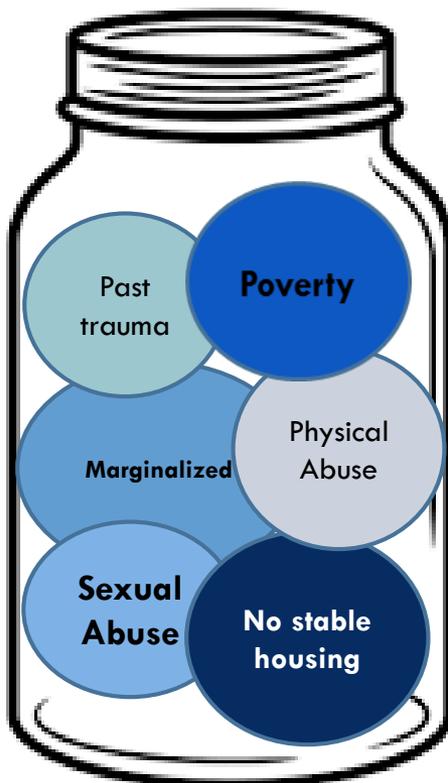
The average age of a person that is targeted and commercially sexually exploited is between **12 and 14 years old**.



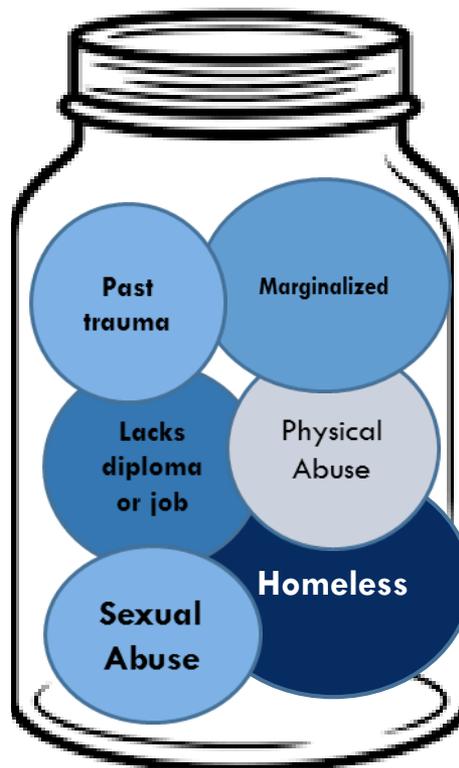
Source: University of Maryland, School of Social Work (CSTVI) Estes, Richard J. and Neil A. Weiner. *The Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in the U.S., Canada, and Mexico*. The University of Pennsylvania School of Social Work: 2001.



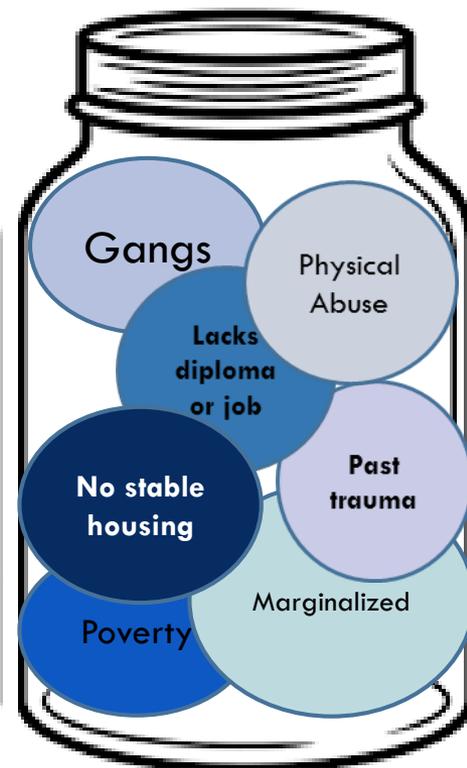
Foster Youth
(and those in Out of Home care)



**Runaway &
Homeless
Youth**



LGBTQ Youth



**Undocumented
Youth**

What is Prevention?

What is Prevention?

Primary

- Intervening before through measures such as altering risky behaviors or providing information about the risks
- Examples – classroom education for youth; general public awareness campaigns

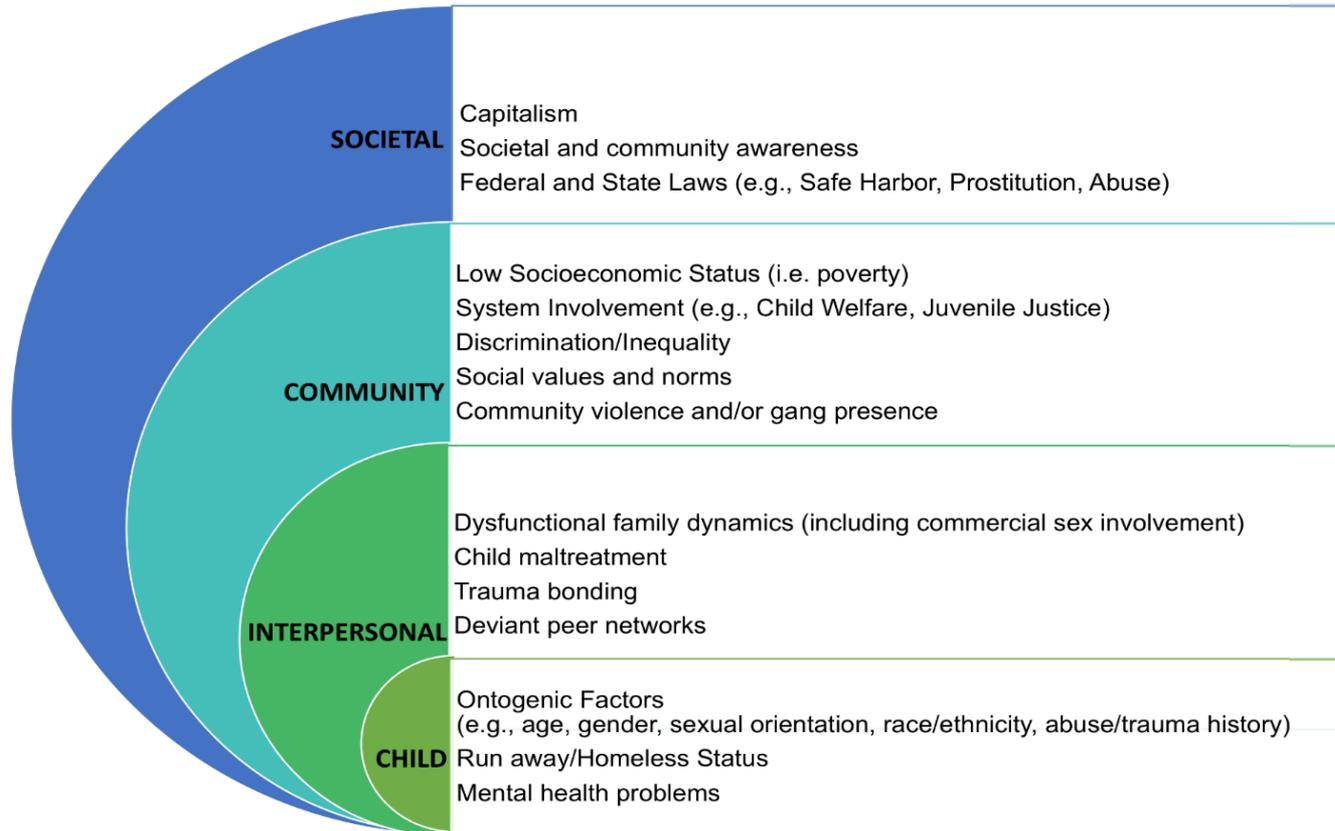
Secondary

- Screening to identify risks in the early stages and/or reduce further injury
- Examples – stakeholder trainings

Tertiary

- Preventing additional trauma after human trafficking has occurred (Last resort)
- Example – physical and mental healthcare

Traumagenic Ecological Framework for Understanding & Intervening with Child Sex Trafficking Victims



Finigan-Carr, N.M., Johnson, M.H., Pullmann, M.D. *et al.* (2019). A Traumagenic Social Ecological Framework for Understanding and Intervening with Sex Trafficked Children and Youth. *Child & Adolescent Social Work* **36**, 49–63.

Primary Prevention Efforts

**JUST DOWN THE STREET
SEX TRAFFICKING IN MARYLAND**

It's using

- Force
- Fraud
- Coercion

...to exploit someone for a commercial sex act

What is sex trafficking?

What might it look like?

A minor involved in commercial sex is automatically a victim of trafficking, whether or not force, fraud, or coercion were used.

this is exchanging sex for something of value like money, drugs, shelter, or food

- ◆ A pimp controls someone's activities and makes them engage in commercial sex
- ◆ A family member has the victim have sex for something of value
- ◆ A gang exploits people to have sex for valuables, as part of their activities
- ◆ A minor engages in commercial sex to earn income or meet basic needs

If you think someone is being sex trafficked, here are some clues you can look for:

Access to money/ Sexual or romantic Sexualized

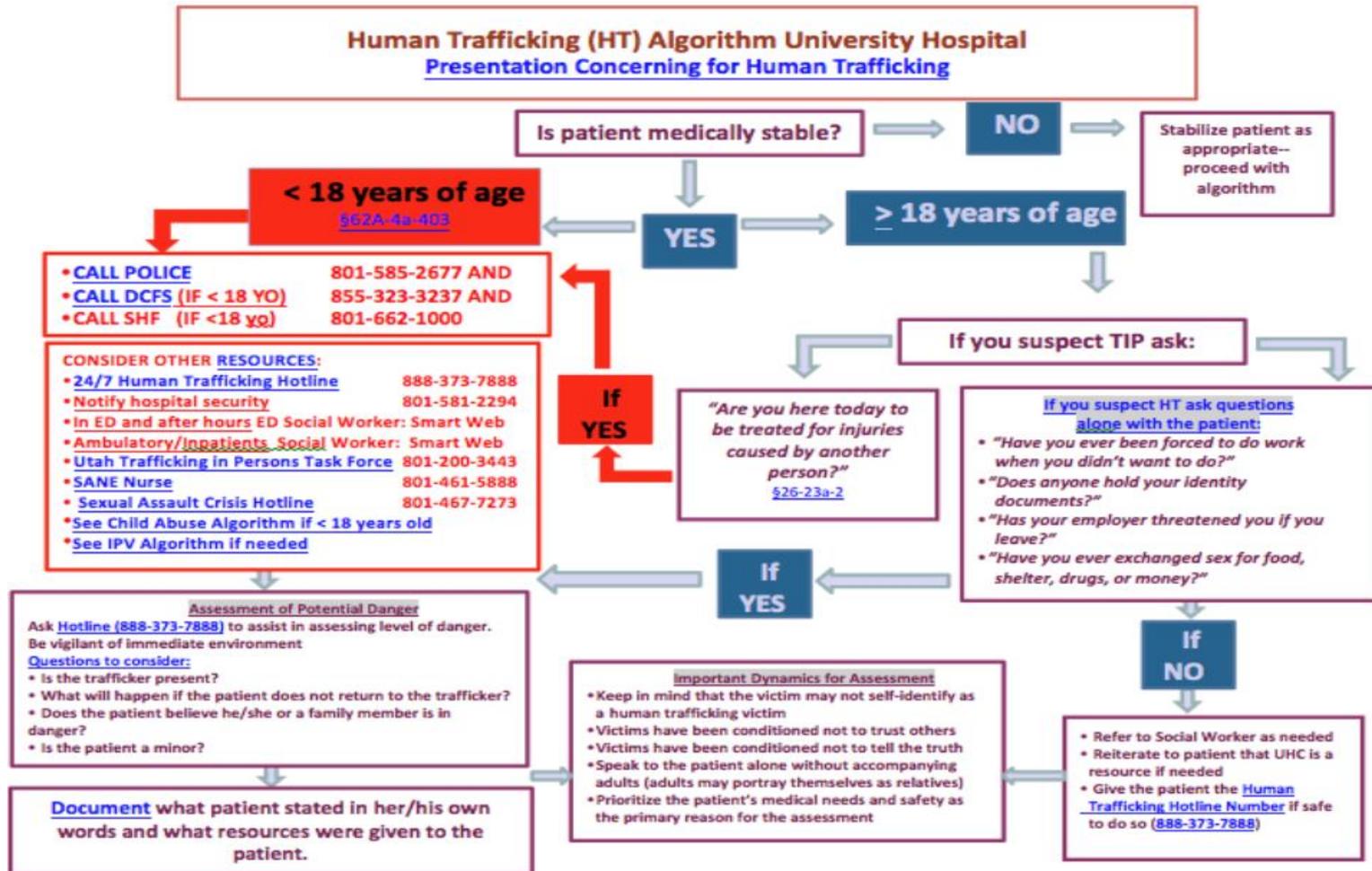
Credit: University of Maryland School of Social Work, Ruth Young Center. Maryland Human Trafficking Initiative

- **Infographics** – Sex trafficking in MD; Signs of labor trafficking
- **Billboards** – Worked with Baltimore City on a series of billboards which were displayed around the city to promote public awareness about trafficking

Secondary Prevention Efforts



Tertiary Prevention Efforts



Credit: Utah Trafficking in Persons Task Force from OVC TTAC March 2017 Webinar

The Impact of Child Sex Trafficking

The Impact of Child Sex Trafficking

Physical

- Extreme fatigue from excessive work or the use of force by traffickers
- Serious health risks such as reproductive health problems
- Rape/sexual assault
- Malnutrition
- Serious communicable diseases (Tuberculosis, Hepatitis)
- Drug use/abuse/addiction/overdose
- HIV/AIDS, Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)
- Chronic pain/health problems associated with beatings or rape

Psychological and Emotional

- Trauma Bonding (strong emotional dependency on trafficker)
 - Abusive behavior from trafficker is normalized
 - Not identify as being trafficked
 - Develop false sense of control over situation
- Shame/Stigma
- Anxiety
- Insecurity
- Fear/Difficult to trust others
- Depression/PTSD
- Trauma
- Despair and hopelessness
- Suicidal Ideation/Suicide



**WHY
DO
VICTIMS
STAY?**

Breaking Away is Harder Than You Think

Trafficked persons may be reluctant to report or seek services because they:

- Do not know or understand that they are being exploited or trafficked
- Are threatened if they tell anyone, or threatened their families will be hurt
- Have complex relationships with their traffickers that involve deep levels of psychological conditioning based on fear or misplaced feelings of love
- Are unfamiliar with their surroundings and do not know whom to trust
- Do not know help exists, how to access it or where to go for it
- Are unfamiliar with the laws, cultures, and languages of the destination location or country
- Fear retribution and forcible removal or deportation
- Fear law enforcement and other authorities
- Are addicted to drugs
- Are in debt to their traffickers
- Are sending money back “home”

Engaging Victims of Human Trafficking Effectively

Victim Contact with Health Care Provider

Treatment Source	% Reporting (N=98)
<i>Any contact with healthcare</i>	87.8%
<i>Any type of clinic</i>	57.1%
Hospital/ER	63.3
Planned Parenthood	29.6
Regular doctor	22.5
Urgent care clinic	21.4
Women's health clinic	19.4
Neighborhood clinic	19.4
On-site doctor	5.1
Other	13.3

Credit: Lederer, L. J., & Wetzel, C. A. (2014). The health consequences of sex trafficking and their implications for identifying victims in healthcare facilities. *Annals Health L.*, 23, 61.

How You Can Help

- In order to effectively work with youth, ***educate yourself.*** Find out how you can help a youth who might be in a trafficking situation. Get to know the resources and national hotlines.
- ***Be an ally to youth.*** If you think someone is being exploited or you witness sex trafficking, ***report it.***
- ***Listen and offer assistance.*** Engage youth in a nonjudgmental manner. Keep in mind that even peer to peer traffickers may also be survivors of sexual exploitation.
- ***Encourage youth to seek assistance*** if they feel uncomfortable with certain situations or personal relationships.

Challenges

- Distrust of authority figures or service providers
- May present as hostile or refuse assistance
- Fear criminal or child welfare response
- Intensely loyal to trafficker and “family”
- Face significant shame and societal stigma
- Significant physical and mental health effects
- Do not self-identify as victims
- Are often hard to locate or contact

Safety Planning

- Be the ***trusted ally*** or connect the youth with a trusted ally that they can talk to, particularly for LGBTQ victims.
- ***Report suspected human trafficking*** to National Human Trafficking Hotline.
- ***Report suspected child sex trafficking*** to the Maryland Department of Human Services (local DSS).
- ***Identify and prepare*** for events that may trigger the victim (events, situations, feelings) or that may cause the child to want to run away.
- ***Involve the victim in safety planning***, as experts in their own safety.
- Risks related to keeping victims safe:
 - Trafficker seeking victims in placements, detentions centers, or contacting them on social media.
 - Trauma bonding and intense loyalty may cause the victim to reconnect with trafficker.
 - Mental and emotional distress, loneliness, and guilt. Critical to monitor for self-harm and suicidal ideation.

Questions?

End child trafficking today, call the hotline:

888-373-7888

or text INFO or HELP to "BeFree" (233733)

*Call to report a potential case, get information, or request training.
It's 100% confidential, and interpreters are available.