

## UNDERSTANDING SEX TRAFFICKING

"Perpetrators of human trafficking span all racial, ethnic, and gender demographics and are as diverse as survivors. Some use their privilege, wealth, and power as a means of control while others experience the same socio-economic oppression as their victims." <sup>15</sup>

- Polaris Project



# WHAT IS SEX TRAFFICKING?

Sex trafficking is “the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, obtaining, patronizing, or soliciting of a person for the purpose of a commercial sex act...” 22 U.S.C. § 7102(12).

When a defendant “benefits, financially or by receiving anything of value, from participation in a venture which has engaged in” one of the sex trafficking crimes, they are liable for sex trafficking. 18 U.S.C. § 1591 (a)(2).

## SEVERE SEX TRAFFICKING:

Severe sex trafficking is “[s]ex trafficking in which a commercial sex act is **INDUCED BY FORCE, FRAUD, OR COERCION**, or in which the person induced to perform such an act has not attained 18 years of age.” 22 U.S.C. § 7102(11)(a) (emphasis added).

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# THE ELEMENTS OF SEVERE SEX TRAFFICKING

AN ACT, VIA MEANS, FOR THE PURPOSE OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION. <sup>12</sup>

## MEANS

Force, fraud, or coercion.

*This is NOT an element of trafficking for minors; only an act and purpose are necessary. <sup>13</sup>*

## ACT

Inducement, recruitment, harboring, transportation, providing, obtaining.

*An adult victim's consent is irrelevant to whether trafficking occurred. <sup>15</sup>*

## PURPOSE

Commercial sex.

*Payment is irrelevant to whether trafficking occurred. <sup>15</sup>*

### Important Notes:

- Movement is NOT an element of sex trafficking <sup>14</sup>
- An analysis of sex trafficking requires considering the totality of the circumstances for each victim.
- Trafficking operations can vary from one trafficker to a global enterprise with recruiters, business managers, and money managers.

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# SEX TRAFFICKING AROUND THE WORLD

## PREVALENCE

Sex trafficking is a largely hidden crime,<sup>16</sup> but it happens all over the world.<sup>18</sup> Prevalence is hard to determine as a result, but the number of people who are trafficked for sex is estimated to be in the millions.<sup>17</sup>

## TRAFFICKING TRENDS

Trafficking for sexual exploitation is the most detected form of trafficking globally. 83% of all trafficked women and 72% of all trafficked girls were trafficked for sex in 2018.<sup>20</sup>

## DEMOGRAPHICS

Traffickers mainly target girls and women. Women and girls comprise 94% of all victims of sex trafficking.<sup>19</sup>

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# SEX TRAFFICKING IN THE UNITED STATES

IN 2018:

**213**

Non-child Sex  
trafficking  
prosecutions  
initiated by the DOJ <sup>21</sup>

**501**

Defendants  
convicted of  
sex trafficking <sup>21</sup>

**8,913**

Open cases of  
trafficking in the DOJ,  
71% of which were for  
sex trafficking cases <sup>22</sup>

**10,949**

Cases reported to the Polaris-operated U.S.  
National Human Trafficking Hotline <sup>23</sup>

These cases involved nearly:

**23,078**

Individual  
survivors

**5,859**

Potential  
traffickers

**1,905**

Trafficking  
businesses

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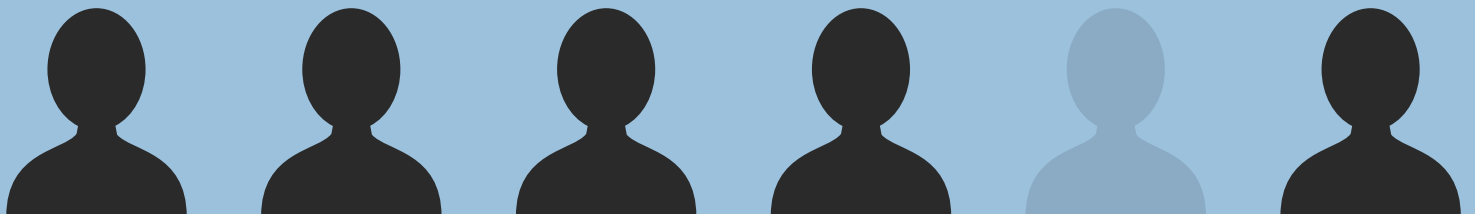
# REMEMBER:

## HUMAN TRAFFICKING IS NOTORIOUSLY UNDERREPORTED.

The numbers are likely only a fraction of the actual problem of sex trafficking in the United States and across the globe.

### 1 OUT OF 6

1 out of 6 children reported missing to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children is “likely [a victim] of child sex trafficking” based on case information.<sup>24</sup>



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# VULNERABILITIES OF SEX TRAFFICKING VICTIMS

**TRAFFICKERS PREY ON THE VULNERABILITIES OF THEIR VICTIMS. COMMON FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO VICTIM VULNERABILITY INCLUDE:**

- Age
- Sex
- Race
- Financial insecurity
- Prior sexual or physical abuse
- Family structure
- Prior runaway
- Prior neglect
- Homelessness
- History of drug dependency or substance abuse

**TRAFFICKERS LEVERAGE VULNERABILITIES AND CREATE DEPENDENCE AS A WAY TO DRAW IN VICTIMS. GROOMING METHODS INCLUDE:<sup>25</sup>**

- Offering gifts, i.e. paying for travel, money
- Charisma, charm
- Filling an emotional need
- False promises of connections
- Offering a job opportunity that may seem too good to be true
- Offering an opportunity that takes the victim far away from their community, leading to isolation

## GROOMING AND RECRUITMENT TACTICS PREY ON THE UNIQUE VULNERABILITIES OF EACH VICTIM

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# POWER & CONTROL DYNAMICS BETWEEN VICTIMS AND THEIR TRAFFICKERS



Once a victim has been trafficked, a trafficker *and his associates* commonly employ coercion to maintain the cycle of abuse.

## COERCION

- a) serious harm or physical restraint,
  - b) any scheme, plan or pattern intended to cause someone to believe they were in danger of serious harm or physical restraint, or
  - c) abuse or threatened abuse of the law or legal process.
- 18 U.S.C. § 1591(e)(2).

**THIS CAN INCLUDE PHYSICAL FORCE OR NON-PHYSICAL COERCION** <sup>26, 27, 28</sup>

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# DULUTH MODEL POWER AND CONTROL WHEEL



## DOMESTIC ABUSE INTERVENTION PROGRAMS

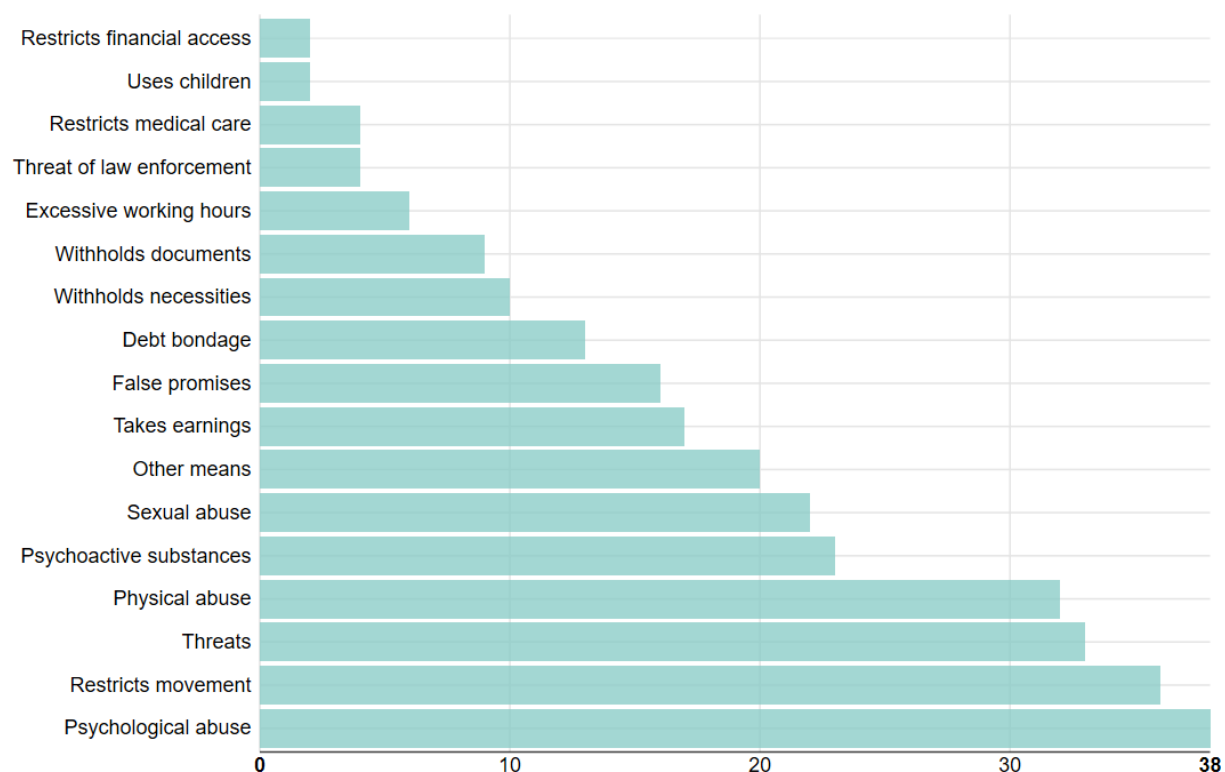
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# VICTIMS OF SEX TRAFFICKING ARE MORE OFTEN CONTROLLED BY PSYCHOLOGICAL ABUSE

Common control tactics include restriction of free movement and threats

## MEANS OF CONTROL USED ON VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING FOR SEXUAL EXPLOITATION <sup>29</sup>



Victims of sex trafficking can experience *trauma bonding*, where they develop positive feelings and loyalty toward their trafficker, taking internal responsibility for their abuse.<sup>30, 31, 32</sup>

Many victims are led to participate in behavior that violates state or federal laws through actions that relate to their victimization.<sup>33</sup> It often takes a long time for victims to come forward because of a lack of trust, shame, self-blame, or fear of arrest.<sup>34</sup>





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