"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."

- 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. ¹²

MEANS
Force, fraud, or coercion.

This is NOT an element of trafficking for minors; only an act and purpose are necessary. ¹³

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

An adult victim's consent is irrelevant to whether trafficking occurred. ¹⁵

PURPOSE
Commercial sex.

Payment is irrelevant to whether trafficking occurred. ¹⁵

Important Notes:

- Movement is NOT an element of sex trafficking ¹⁴
- 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.
SEX TRAFFICKING AROUND THE WORLD

PREVALENCE

Sex trafficking is a largely hidden crime, but it happens all over the world. 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.

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.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Traffickers mainly target girls and women. Women and girls comprise 94% of all victims of sex trafficking.
SEX TRAFFICKING IN THE UNITED STATES

IN 2018:

- **213** Non-child Sex trafficking prosecutions initiated by the DOJ

- **501** Defendants convicted of sex trafficking

- **8,913** Open cases of trafficking in the DOJ, 71% of which were for sex trafficking cases

**10,949** Cases reported to the Polaris-operated U.S. National Human Trafficking Hotline

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.²⁴
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
- Homlessness
- History of drug dependency or substance abuse

Traffickers leverage vulnerabilities and create dependence as a way to draw in victims. Grooming methods include:

- 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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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.


**This can include physical force or non-physical coercion** 26, 27, 28
DULUTH MODEL POWER AND CONTROL WHEEL

VIOLENCE

PHYSICAL

USING COERCION AND THREATS
Making and/or carrying out threats to do something to hurt her • threatening to leave her, to commit suicide, to report her to welfare • making her drop charges • making her do illegal things.

USING INTIMIDATION
Making her afraid by using looks, actions, gestures • smashing things • destroying her property • abusing pets • displaying weapons.

USING ECONOMIC ABUSE
Preventing her from getting or keeping a job • making her ask for money • giving her an allowance • taking her money • not letting her know about or have access to family income.

USING EMOTIONAL ABUSE
Putting her down • making her feel bad about herself • calling her names • making her think she’s crazy • playing mind games • humiliating her • making her feel guilty.

USING MALE PRIVILEGE
Treating her like a servant • making all the big decisions • acting like the “master of the castle” • being the one to define men’s and women’s roles.

USING ISOLATION
Controlling what she does, who she sees and talks to, what she reads, where she goes • limiting her outside involvement • using jealousy to justify actions.

USING CHILDREN
Making her feel guilty about the children • using the children to relay messages • using visitation to harass her • threatening to take the children away.

MINIMIZING, DENYING AND BLAMING
Making light of the abuse and not taking her concerns about it seriously • saying the abuse didn’t happen • shifting responsibility for abusive behavior • saying she caused it.

DOMESTIC ABUSE INTERVENTION PROGRAMS
202 East Superior Street
Duluth, Minnesota 55802
218-729-2781
www.theduluthmodel.org
Victims of sex trafficking are more often controlled by psychological abuse. Common control tactics include restriction of free movement and threats.

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

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


