

Human Trafficking Indicators

Medical indicators for human sex trafficking include physical signs of abuse such as tattoos, brands, rashes, and bruising, as well as sexually transmitted infections, pregnancy, and trauma from forced sexual activity. Victims may also exhibit signs of control, such as a controlling companion, lack of control over their own money and identification, or an inability to speak freely. Healthcare providers are often on the front lines of identifying victims and should screen all patients for potential trafficking indicators.

Physical Signs of Trafficking

- Sexually transmitted infections (STIs): and other health issues like HIV/AIDS, especially if there are multiple, inconsistent exposures.
- Pregnancy: resulting from sexual assault.
- Pelvic, rectal, or urinary difficulties, possibly indicating past trauma from sexual exploitation.
- Bruising, cuts, rashes, and branding or tattooing, which can be signs of coercion, control, or self-injury.
- Poor hygiene: and signs of neglect.

Behavioral and Social Indicators

- Fearful or nervous behavior, or appearing overly submissive to a companion.
- Lack of freedom of movement: or lack of personal identification, money, or phone.
- Scripted answers or hesitant to answer questions: about their condition or injuries.
- Someone else speaking for the patient, or providing all the information on their behalf.
- Lack of knowledge about their own health history or address.
- Signs of chronic abuse, such as unexplained injuries or signs of a controlling relationship.

What Healthcare Providers Can Do:

- Conduct routine screenings: for human trafficking with every patient.
- Ask direct questions, such as if they have ever been trafficked or had sex for money.
- Be aware of their surroundings: and look for indicators of control by a companion or trafficker.
- Understand the trauma: that a victim may have experienced and ask what has happened to them, rather than just what is wrong.
- Know the referral resources for human trafficking victims in your area.
- Contact the National Human Trafficking Hotline for assistance and resources at **1.888.3737.888**

