

Maine Human Trafficking Identification and Response

Screening Guide

Human trafficking, as defined by the federal Trafficking Victims Protection Act, is the recruitment, harboring, transportation, providing, or obtaining of a person, through force, fraud, or coercion, for labor services or commercial sex - OR any commercial sexual activity by a minor.

Introduction

Some indicators of trafficking can be observed during one encounter with a client, while others may be observed over time. The following tool may help to assess whether trafficking is present and to provide supportive questions you may consider asking to find out more. This tool is intended for service providers who have had training in recognizing victims of human trafficking and exploitation.

Indicators

If you have observed (or a client has disclosed) the following indicators, they may indicate that an individual is experiencing or is at risk to experience trafficking or exploitation. The list is not exhaustive, and the presence – or lack of – indicators cannot confirm concretely whether trafficking is occurring.

General and Labor Trafficking

- Referral from law enforcement or community partner with suspicion of trafficking.
- No access to personal identification, especially passports for foreign nationals.
- Mentions of quota or debt in reference to employer/family member/partner.
- Travel across state lines (without known resources to do so).
- Frequenting hotels or areas known for criminal activities.
- Unexplained physical injuries or signs of untreated illness or disease.
- Disconnected or cut off from any family or support system.
- Works excessively long hours or usual hours and is unpaid, paid very little or paid only through tips.
- Cannot identify address or residence.
- Not allowed to speak for themselves—a 3rd party speaks or translates for them.
- Untreated medical needs (including STIs and a history of pregnancies).
- Evidence of a controlling, abusive or dominating employer, partner or older adult.

Sex Trafficking

- All of the above, as well as:
- Indicates involvement in commercial sex work (or witnessed by others or prostitution arrest).
 - History of involvement in the foster care or juvenile justice system.
 - Evidence of brands or tattoos.
 - Drug charges/substance abuse.
 - Unexplained expensive items (cells phones, clothing, etc).

Assessment Questions

The following questions may support you to better understand a client's circumstances, in order to better address their needs and plan for safety.

- Does someone control, supervise or monitor what you do?
- How did you meet this person/how did you find out about this job?
- Is your communication (calls, emails, conversations) ever restricted or monitored?
- Do you have access to all your identification/personal documents?
- Do you have access to any money or the money that you earn? Does anyone take all or some of your money?
- What did you expect of this situation/relationship? Has it been as promised?
- What would happen if you didn't do what this person asked of you?
- What would happen if you left this person/situation?

How to Respond

If the indicators or assessment questions above lead you to suspect that trafficking or exploitation is occurring:

- Follow your internal agency protocol; and/or
- Call the National Human Trafficking Resource Center 24-hour hotline at 1-888-373-7888. The hotline can help you to safety plan, and connect you with Maine's local anti-trafficking service network.
- If the individual is a minor, mandatory reporting procedures may apply, and the Dept. of Health and Human Services can be reached at 1-800-452-1999

Additional Resources

- **Polaris Project** -- www.polarisproject.org
Information on trafficking assessment, data and statistics, and response resources.
- **National Human Trafficking Resource Center** – 1-888-373-7888
Connection with local resources, as well as support for victims/survivors and providers.
- **Maine Dept. of Health and Human Services** – 1-800-452-1999
Mandatory reporting for minors, connection and referral with child welfare services.
- **Maine Sex Trafficking and Exploitation Network** -- www.mainesten.org
Information on Maine laws, local resources, a victim fund, and other tools.

Maine's Human Trafficking Response
National Human Trafficking Resource Center Hotline
1-888-373-7888