

What is Human Trafficking?

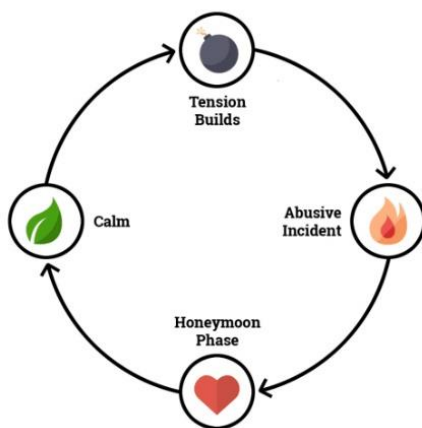
Human trafficking involves the recruitment, transportation, harboring and/or exercising control, direction, or influence over the movements of a person to exploit that person, typically through sexual exploitation or forced labour. It is not biased in its victims. Anyone from any walk of life can fall victim.

Key Indicators Someone might be being groomed for Human Trafficking. Someone might be being groomed for **sex trafficking** if they:

- are withdrawing from family and friends
- are being secretive about their activities
- have a new boyfriend, girlfriend, or friend who they won't introduce to friends and family
- suddenly spend time with an older person or people
- begin staying out more often and later
- are absent from school or there is a decline in school performance
- begin wearing more sexualized clothing
- have new clothing and jewelry that they can't afford to buy
- suddenly have a new or second cell phone with a secret number

Common Indicators Someone might be a victim of Human Trafficking:

- are not allowed to speak for themselves and their activities are controlled by someone else or no longer know how to answer for themselves
- are under 18 and involved in prostitution or sex work
- are unpaid or paid very little to work and seem to be treated poorly (long or unusual hours, not allowed breaks or forced to live in poor conditions)
- are repaying a large debt through labour or sex
- seem fearful, anxious, depressed, submissive, tense, nervous or paranoid (they may avoid eye contact or seem fearful around police)
- show signs of abuse, such as bruising, cigarette burns or fractures
- have tattooing or branding symbols, particularly names
- don't have their own belongings or money, and don't control their own passport or other documents
- seem malnourished or lack medical care
- move frequently and may not know their surroundings well
- have been reported missing



Tension Builds
Stress begins to grow from the pressures of daily life, or other points of conflict. The victim may attempt to reduce tension by complying with the abuser.

Abusive Incident
Verbal, emotional, physical, or sexual abuse occurs. This includes anger, intimidation, threats, and other forms of abuse.

Honeymoon Phase
The abuser apologizes, shows remorse, and often begs for forgiveness. They may shower the victim with love and affection, and promise that the abuse will never happen again.

Calm
The relationship enters a period of calm where the abuse stops or slows. The abuser may continue to ask for forgiveness, or make positive gestures, but these tend to reduce in sincerity over time.

Cycle of abuse:

A client centred approach from a Survivor perspective:

- Think about things from our point of view. Never ever say you “understand,” because you haven’t been there. But still, try to put yourself in our shoes.
- Language counts. The words you use make a difference. Calling us “prostitutes or human trafficking victims” hurts.
- Kindness and empathy go a long way. Even if we appear high, angry, homeless, or dressed a certain way.
- Don’t make assumptions; showing you care lets us know we can come to you for help.
- We might/will probably mess up again. There are many things that push us back into the life. Give us many chances. At some point, we will hit rock bottom, and will need your help. Please be patient; don’t give up on us.
- We are good at reading people. We have to be. So we can tell if you really want to help us because you care, or if you’re just saying you want to help us so we can help your case.
- We know things. Sometimes we might want to tell you. A lot of times we won’t, at least not right away.
- We don’t want to be out there doing what we’re doing. You have to understand that. We’re just doing this for survival; we’re homeless and/or stuck or we just need some way to keep going.
- We may act “hard,” but we have to have that “wall” up for survival. Deep down we know we need help.
- Most of us didn’t get rescued as little girls. That doesn’t mean we don’t need your help now as adults.
- We need more housing. We need more information about your services, and we need it to be in places where we can see it (hotels, hospitals, clubs, condo buildings, public restrooms, bus stops, shelters, clinics, etc.)
- We have experienced more fear than you can imagine. Putting our pimp away doesn’t always get rid of our fear.

Trauma Informed Care



Victim Services of York Region is a not for profit organization that works in partnership with York Regional Police and the Aurora detachment of the O.P.P to provide 24 hour emotional support and practical assistance to persons who have experienced a crime or tragic circumstance.

How to Reach Us:

PHONE: (905) 953-5363 – 24 hour telephonic and on scene support

EMAIL: victimservices@yrp.ca