

# 10 WARNING SIGNS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING

*AND WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP.*

A resource by:



**HOUSE OF  
CHERITH**

# INTRODUCTION

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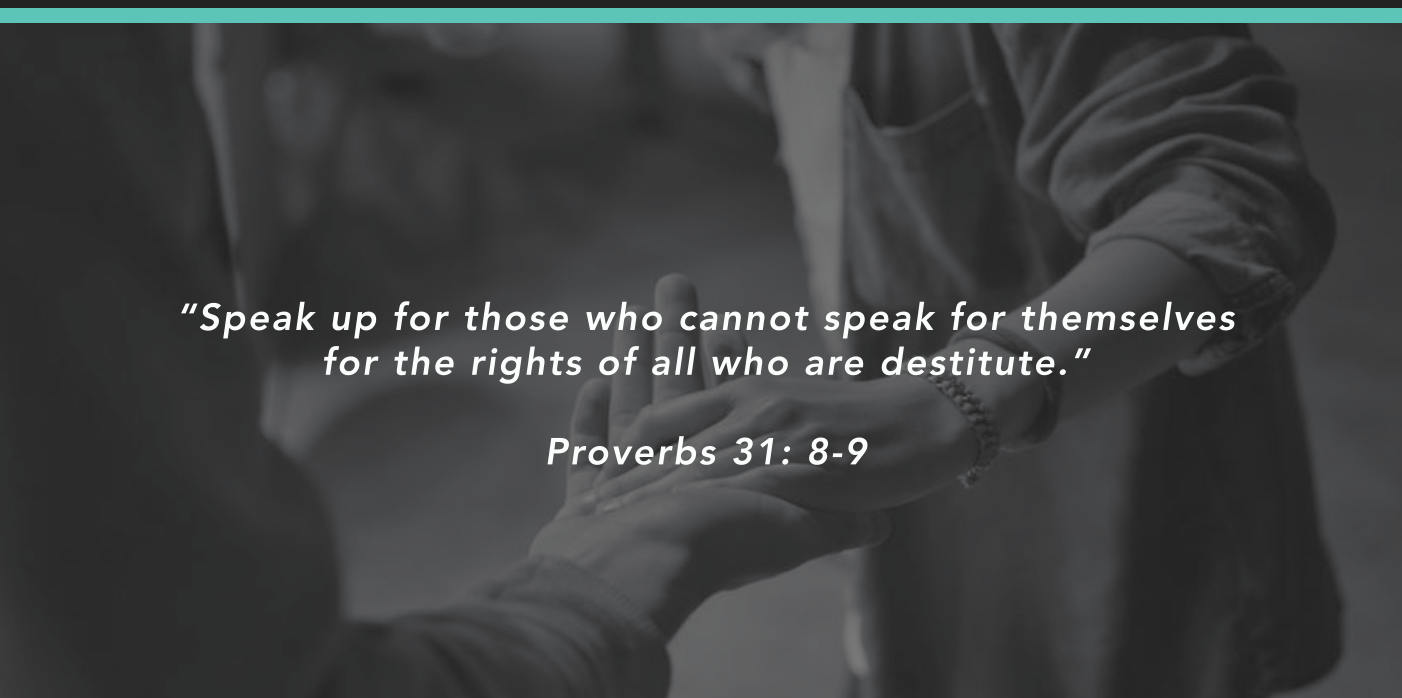
## AWARENESS CAN SAVE LIVES.

Victims are often times hidden away, but it is possible that you will encounter individuals or situations of concern. Knowing how to accurately 'spot the signs' has the power to save lives.

Please note that the list contained in this document is not exhaustive and represents only a selection of possible indicators. The signs in this list may not be present in all trafficking cases and are not cumulative. These signs reference conditions a potential victim might exhibit. Each indication taken individually may not imply a trafficking situation and not all victims of human trafficking will exhibit these signs.

The recognition of several of following signs may point to the need for referrals and further assessment. If you have any suspicions about human trafficking in your area you should report it with the assistance of the resources outlined in the final page of this document.

**\*Please Note:** Information presented in this document has been written and compiled by House of Cherith and contains information contributed by Shared Hope International, Polaris Project, Second Life Tennessee, United Way of Greater Atlanta, National Human Trafficking Resource Center (NHTRC), and Hope for Justice.



*"Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves  
for the rights of all who are destitute."*

*Proverbs 31: 8-9*

# 10 SIGNS OF TRAFFICKING

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## 1 EVIDENCE OF BEING CONTROLLED

A victim of sex trafficking often appears to be under someone else's control and is not free to leave or come and go as he/she wishes. Since they are unable to travel freely, they may be picked up and dropped off at work location by another person. They are frequently monitored and high security measures may exist in their work and/or living locations such as opaque windows, boarded up windows, bars on windows, barbed wire, security cameras, etc. They may be living and working on site and appear to work excessively long and/or unusual hours. They are not allowed or able to speak for themselves and a third party may insist on being present and/or translating. There may be evidence of controlling or dominating relationships and they may experience verbal or physical abuse by their supervisor. The victim may have excessive concerns about pleasing a family member, romantic partner, or employer. The victim is in the commercial sex industry and has a pimp/manager. The money for their services provided is collected by another person.

## 2 LACK OF IDENTIFICATION/DOCUMENTATION

The victim is not in control of his or her own money, and has no financial records, or bank account. Similarly, the victim is not in control of his or her own identification documents establishing identity or citizenship (ID or passport). He or she may state that they have no passport or mention that someone else is holding their passport.

## 3 UNFAMILIAR WITH SURROUNDINGS

Ordinary residential housing and hotels are being used more and more for brothels. Victims are often moved between hotels and sometimes from city to city. Traffickers regularly move them to avoid detection. A victim will often have a lack of knowledge of whereabouts and/or what city he or she is in and a loss of sense of time. They may state claims of just visiting and inability to clarify where they are staying or the specific address.

#### **4 SUBSTANCE ABUSE**

The individual will often show signs of substance abuse or addiction in the form of alcohol or drug use. This is typically as a means of dependency by the trafficker. He or she may appear malnourished or show signs of repeated exposure to harmful chemicals.

#### **5 SUBMISSIVE OR FEARFUL BEHAVIOR; AVOIDANCE OF EYE CONTACT**

Since victims will experience threat or actual physical harm they can exhibit signs of physical and/or sexual abuse, physical restraint, confinement, or torture.

#### **6 EMOTIONAL DISTRESS; FEAR OR DEPRESSION**

The individual is fearful, anxious, depressed, submissive, tense, or nervous/paranoid. They may exhibit angry and aggressive or depressed and anxious behavior. Other emotional distress they exhibit may include panic attacks, confusion, phobias, disorientation, self-harming behaviors, and suicidal ideation.

#### **7 PARANOIA ABOUT SHARING PERSONAL INFORMATION, AND LAW ENFORCEMENT**

The victim will exhibit unusually fearful or anxious behavior in the mentioning or presence of law enforcement. They can be fearful of the trafficker, and believe their lives or family members' lives are at risk if they escape. As a result, they may be resistant to assistance or demonstrate hostile behavior and have numerous inconsistencies in their story.

## 8 BRANDINGS OR TATTOOS

Tattoos or branding after often used by pimps as a way to brand victims. Tattoos of a name, symbol of money or barcode could indicate trafficking. Suspicious tattoos or branding can also indicate signs of gang affiliation such as a preference for specific colors, images of gang symbols, etc. The victim may have suspicious tattoos or other forms of branding, such as tattoos with initials or names that say "Daddy," "Property of...," etc.

## 9 RECURRENT PREGNANCIES AND/OR LOSSES

Victims lack medical care and/or are denied medical services by employer. They are overly tired and may have advanced health problems that should have been treated earlier but were not. Pregnancy and abortion at a young age may be common, as well as repeated unwanted pregnancies. Victims may have frequent emergency care visits, but conflicting stories about injury or health issue.

## 10 SUDDEN CHANGE IN ATTIRE/MATERIAL POSSESSIONS

Individuals may have few or no personal possessions. They may have a limited amount of clothing, of which a large proportion is sexual. They may be less appropriately dressed than before or have inappropriate dress for the weather, venue, or situation. Sometimes the victim may begin wearing expensive clothes, accessories or shoes.

### TRAFFICKERS FIND VICTIMS THROUGH:

SOCIAL NETWORKS

HOME NEIGHBORHOOD

CLUBS / BARS

INTERNET

SCHOOL

### AND LURE THEM THROUGH PROMISES OF:



PROTECTION



LOVE



ADVENTURE



OPPORTUNITY



HOME

INFORMATION FROM SHARED HOPE INTERNATIONAL  
(WWW.SHAREDDHOPE.ORG)

***“Where there is darkness, there is an immense opportunity for light.”***

- Kelsi Deel

*Founder & Director of House of Cherith*

**RECLAIM.  
RENEW.  
REKINDLE.**



# WHAT CAN I DO?

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The recognition of several of the signs outlined in this document point to the need for referrals and further assessment.

If you have any suspicions about human trafficking in your area you should report it to one of the following resources.

- **HOUSE OF CHERITH**

404.665.0024

[intake@hocatl.org](mailto:intake@hocatl.org)

- **OUT OF DARKNESS**

404.941.6024

- **NATIONAL HUMAN TRAFFICKING HOT-LINE**

1.800.373.7888

Call 1-888-373-7888 or text BeFree (233733)

- **THE NATIONAL HUMAN TRAFFICKING RESOURCE CENTER (NHTRC)**

The (NHTRC) is a national, toll-free hotline, available to answer calls and texts from anywhere in the country, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, every day of the year.

# A HOUSE OF CHERITH RESOURCE

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House of Cherith provides safe housing and supportive services where women can recover from the trauma of sexual exploitation.



SAFE HOUSING



LONGTERM CARE

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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