



CDC's website is being modified to comply with President Trump's Executive Orders.

## About Sex Trafficking

### KEY POINTS

- Sex trafficking exploits people of all races, ethnicities, sexual orientations, citizenship statuses, and income levels.
- Learn to recognize the signs of sex trafficking, prevention opportunities, and know where to get help.

## What is sex trafficking?

Sex trafficking is a type of [human trafficking](#) and is a form of modern-day slavery. It is a serious public health problem that negatively affects the well-being of individuals, families, and communities. Human trafficking occurs when a trafficker exploits an individual with force, fraud, or coercion to perform commercial sex acts or work.



Sex trafficking is defined by the [Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000](#) as "the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, obtaining, patronizing, or soliciting of a person for the purpose of a commercial sex act." It involves the use of force, fraud, or coercion to make an adult engage in commercial sex acts. However, any commercial sexual activity with a minor, even without force, fraud, or coercion, is considered trafficking.

This type of violence exploits women, men, and children across the United States and around the world. Trafficking victimization and perpetration share risks and consequences associated with [child abuse and neglect](#), [intimate partner violence](#), [sexual violence](#), and [youth violence](#).

## People at increased risk

Perpetrators often target people experiencing poverty, living in an unsafe situation, or searching for a better life. Victims can come from all backgrounds and become trapped in different locations and situations.

Many victims are women and girls, though men and boys are also impacted. Victims include all races, ethnicities, sexual orientations, citizens, non-citizens, and income levels. Victims are trapped and controlled through assault, threats, false promises, perceived sense of protection, isolation, shaming, and debt. Victims do not have to be physically transported between locations to be victimized.

The consequences of sex trafficking are similar to the consequences of sexual violence. Consequences can be immediate and long-term including physical and relationship problems, psychological concerns, and negative chronic health outcomes. Read more about [common issues seen in victims of trafficking](#)  .

## Prevention

Sex trafficking is preventable. Many prevention and response efforts are focused on increasing community awareness of human trafficking and addressing exploitation after it occurs. To prevent trafficking from occurring, more research is needed to evaluate programs and policies that reduce factors that put people at risk.

Understanding the shared risk and protective factors for violence can help us prevent trafficking from happening in the first place. Strategies based on the best available evidence exist to prevent related forms of violence, and they may also reduce sex trafficking. Read more about [HHS' National Human Trafficking Prevention Framework](#), which outlines a public health approach to preventing human trafficking.

States and communities can implement and evaluate efforts that:

- Encourage healthy behaviors in relationships.
- Create safe homes and neighborhoods by addressing factors like economic conditions, housing, and education.
- Identify and address vulnerabilities during health care visits.

- End business profits from trafficking-related transactions.

Everyone can learn to [recognize the signs of trafficking](#) and know where to get help.

### Need help? Know someone who does?



If you are a victim of trafficking or have information about a potential trafficking situation, contact the [National Human Trafficking Hotline](#). Call 1-888-373-7888 (TTY: 711), text 233733, or use the [online live chat](#). If you or someone else is in immediate danger, call 911.

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#### SOURCES

##### CONTENT SOURCE:

[National Center for Injury Prevention and Control](#)