

HUMAN TRAFFICKING AWARENESS MONTH

JANUARY 2023



#WearBlueDay

 *Wednesday*
January 11th

Download our January Human Trafficking Awareness Activity Calendar [HERE!](#)

January is Human Trafficking Awareness Month. According to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, last year there were more than 17,200 reports of possible child sex trafficking in the United States. **Locally, in Niagara County, 35 children received Safe Harbour services for human trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) in 2022.**

But there is **HOPE!** Learn the risk factors and red flags of trafficking and know what to do if you suspect trafficking or CSEC. We can all make a difference by increasing the protective factors that reduce the risk of trafficking and build resiliency in youth.

Positive self-esteem Stable housing
Nurturing caregivers Strong social supports
Access to services **SAFE ADULTS AND ROLE MODELS**

Risk Factors for Trafficking

High risk doesn't necessarily mean specific warning signs of trafficking but provides us with insight on which communities are best to target for education and assistance. Youth tend to be at higher risk for child trafficking when:

- Low socioeconomic status
- History of abuse and/or neglect
- Exposure to violence
- History of alcohol or substance abuse
- Social media risk taking
- Mental health diagnosis
- Risky behavior
- Displaced from home
- Low self-esteem or self-worth
- Lack of resources and natural supports

Many people confuse human trafficking with smuggling. In human trafficking, no transportation or border crossing is required. People can be trafficked by people they know or even family members right in their own homes.



THE
CHILD ADVOCACY CENTER
OF NIAGARA
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Red Flags of Trafficking

These warning signs signal something may not be right. One of these alone doesn't necessarily indicate trafficking but can be a red flag for other issues such as abuse. If some of these ring true for a youth you know, you should reach out to our Safe Harbour Coordinator.

- Is under 18 years old and performs commercial sex acts
- Is excessively monitored by an adult who is not a parent or guardian, such as an older partner or "sponsor" who claims to provide for their upbringing and needs, or who insists on speaking for them or being present at all times
- Detached or (suddenly) isolated from majority of family members and friends
- Is unable to give answers about their schedules or living and work locations/conditions; appears to possibly work and live in the same building or location
- Has numerous inconsistencies in his/her story; contradictory personal information (age, place of birth, family life)
- Has excessive security measures at his/her home or work (i.e., security cameras, boarded or covered windows); constant traffic of men at his/her home or work location
- Noticeable change in dress, jewelry, hair, or nails without explainable source of income
- Shows signs of physical or sexual abuse (bruises, cuts, burns, submissiveness, jumpy, malnourishment); appears fearful, anxious, depressed, overly submissive, and avoids eye contact
- Suffers from substance abuse problems (alcohol and/or drugs), an array of other psychological disorders, sexually transmitted diseases, or chronic illnesses
- Carries multiple hotel key cards, lots of money, sharp objects (weapons)
- Sudden presence of an older boyfriend
- Tattoo with a name that is not their own; or that he/she is reluctant to explain

Buyer-Perpetrated Trafficking

Child is being trafficked but does not have an identified trafficker. Instead, the buyer is directly exploiting the child's vulnerabilities by offering money, food, and/or shelter in exchange for the sexual exploitation. - NCMEC

Familial Trafficking

Child is trafficked by a relative or a person who is perceived by the child to be a family member such as individuals referred to as "auntie" or "uncle" but are not directly related to the child. - NCMEC

FBI and DHS report an increase in online sexual exploitation targeting boys ages 14-17.



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Safe Harbour Program

The New York State Safe Harbour for Exploited Children Act recognizes that minors who are commercially sexually exploited are victims – not perpetrators of crimes.

The Child Advocacy Center of Niagara's Safe Harbour Project has tools and resources to assist organizations and front-line professionals to identify and respond to children and youth who have been trafficked or who are at a high risk of being trafficked.

The Safe Harbour Project provides intensive case management services for child survivors of trafficking and at-risk youth, ages 12 to 18.



Services include:

- safety planning
- needs assessment
- service planning
- linkages with external service providers
- emergency wrap around services

Safe Harbour also provides "safe packs" for boys and girls to provide support items and necessities and to encourage the youth to remain in contact with staff.

Professionals who are referring a youth to Safe Harbour must fill out the referral form and email it to dayna.starks@nfmmc.org. Other individuals who are not eligible to make a referral (parents, teachers, etc.), are welcome to get in touch with the Safe Harbour Project Coordinator directly using the information provided below:

Contact the CAC if you are interested in a training for your organization!

Dayna Starks
Safe Harbour Project Coordinator
(716) 285-0045
dayna.starks@nfmmc.org

For more information on Safe Harbour, visit:

cacofniagara.org/services/safe-harbour/



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