



## FSA - Keeping You Safe

### How to Recognize the Signs of Human Trafficking

Human trafficking is a crime that is often difficult to identify, which is why it's important to know the warning signs and learn what you can do to prevent it. According to Florida law, human trafficking is defined as "the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of subjugation to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, slavery, or a commercial sex act."

It is important to note the words force, fraud and coercion in this definition when considering the crime of human trafficking. According to YouCanStopHT.com, a site developed by the Florida Department of Legal Affairs and Attorney General Ashley Moody, it is a common misconception that this crime always involves violence and kidnapping.

While many instances of human trafficking do involve violence, many perpetrators use psychological means to trick or manipulate their victims into bondage. It is also untrue that victims of human trafficking are only targeted by strangers. In reality, many victims have been trafficked by someone they know, such as a family member or romantic partner.

**According to YouCanStopHT.com, it's crucial to know both the physical and verbal signs of a potential human trafficking victim so that you can report it to authorities.**

**Physical Signs:** If you suspect that an individual may be a victim of human trafficking, pay attention to their physical appearance. Note if they appear to be malnourished, disoriented, confused or deprived of sleep. Other signs include branding (which could include scars, burns, or tattoos), dental issues, infections or apparent drug addictions.

**Verbal Signs:** It's also possible to detect a human trafficking victim through the way they speak. Pay attention to whether the individual seems fearful, anxious, paranoid, and reluctant to discuss any injuries they may have. It's also a warning sign if they speak as though they have been coached, or allow someone to speak on their behalf.

In addition, there are a number of potential signs of human trafficking that are specific to a school environment. These are especially important to know if you are a teacher, school administrator or even a student.

For more tips please visit the Florida Sheriffs Association's Crime Prevention Tips: [flsheriffs.org/crime-prevention](https://flsheriffs.org/crime-prevention).

**At School:** If you notice that an individual has made a sudden change in attire, behavior or relationships, or seems to have a sudden increase of material possessions, they could possibly be a victim of human trafficking. It's also important to note if they have unexplained absences or if they repeatedly run away.

If you observe any of these signs and suspect someone may be a victim of human trafficking, it's crucial to report it as soon as possible. First, report what you have seen to Florida Law Enforcement.

**Florida Law Enforcement:** 1-800-342-0820

Next, it's important to report the incident to the National Trafficking Hotline.

**The National Human Trafficking Institute:** 1-888-373-7888

If you don't know who to call, [contact your local sheriff](#) for assistance. Most of all, it's important to remember that human trafficking can happen to anyone, anywhere. If you see someone that you suspect could be a victim of human trafficking, it's imperative to report it to the appropriate authorities as soon as possible. Your quick action could very well save a life.

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