WI, we need to talk.
FACT SHEET

WI, We Need to Talk is about raising awareness that youth in Wisconsin are being sex trafficked or may be at risk of being sex trafficked. Talking about human trafficking is hard. It's OK to talk about it. In fact, we encourage it.

WHAT IS YOUTH SEX TRAFFICKING?

According to federal law, any minor under the age of 18 engaging in commercial sex is a victim of sex trafficking, regardless of the presence of force, fraud, or coercion. "Commercial sex" is defined as any sex act on account of which anything of value is given to or received by any person. The sex act can be for money, food, shelter, drugs or alcohol, or safety.

WHO IS AT RISK?

All youth are at risk, although some youth are more at risk. It is a statewide issue. Youth can be recruited online and in public spaces. Trafficking occurs in cities, suburbs, and rural areas. Most teens are not choosing to engage in these behaviors. What might look like a personal choice is most often not. In most cases, it is for survival. Many youth who are being trafficked do not see themselves as victims. They may not realize they are being trafficked.

HOW DO I IDENTIFY HUMAN TRAFFICKING?

Identifying if a youth is being trafficked is not always easy. Creating a relationship with youth is the best way to understand if they may be at risk or need help. Human trafficking is often "hidden in plain sight." There are a number of red flags, or indicators, which can help alert you to human trafficking. Recognizing the signs is the first step.

CHILDREN AND YOUTH AT HIGH RISK OF EXPLOITATION

- Children with a history of involvement in the child welfare system
- Youth living in group homes or residential treatment facilities
- LGBTQ-identifying youth
- Runaway and homeless youth
- Children living in homes with drug use, maltreatment, or extreme poverty
- Youth with a history of child sexual abuse

INDICATORS

Are you or someone you know being trafficked? Is human trafficking happening in your community? Recognizing potential red flags and knowing the indicators of human trafficking is a key step in identifying more victims and helping them find the assistance they need. Not all indicators will be present in all situations.

- Poor Mental Health or Abnormal Behavior
- Lack of Control
- Poor Physical Health
- Is frequently monitored
- Has few or no personal possessions
- Appear to have lost sense of time
- Is not allowed or able to speak for themselves
- Shares scripted, confusing, or inconsistent stories
- Is fearful, anxious, depressed, submissive, tense, or nervous/paranoid
- Lack of knowledge of whereabouts and/or do not know what city he/she is in
- Exhibits unusually fearful or anxious behavior after bringing up law enforcement
- Shows signs of substance use or addiction, poor hygiene, malnourishment, fatigue
- Is not in control of their own money, financial records, bank account, or identification

The indicators listed are just a few that may alert you to a potential human trafficking situation. No single indicator is necessarily proof of human trafficking. If you suspect that a person may be a victim of human trafficking, please call 9-1-1.

Wisconsin Department of Children and Families

Find out more at **WisconsinTalks.org** or call **211**.

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