

HUMAN TRAFFICKING HEALTH AND MEDICAL SCREENING

Orange County Human Trafficking Task Force
www.ochumantrafficking.com

Health Service Providers play an important role in helping to identify and assist human trafficking victims. Victims of both labor and sex trafficking may seek medical assistance at some point due to the dangerous, unsafe and risky nature of their work environment. Proper training and having competent screening measures can help better prepare for appropriate responses that may help victims out of their trafficking situation and/or cope with their post-trafficking recovery process.



MAY SEEK MEDICAL HELP FOR:

Pregnancy, Untreated STD, Vaginal Pain, Physical Injuries

- 54% have signs of depression
- 48% have signs of anxiety
- 77% have signs of PTSD
- 93% have signs of sexual violence
- 78% have signs of physical violence



Stat Source: Hossain and Zimmerman, 2010, "The Relationship of Trauma to Mental Disorders Among Trafficked and Sexually Exploited Girls and Women."

WHAT TO LOOK FOR:

False appearance of relationship: Victims may be accompanied by their trafficker and indicate they are a family member, friend or romantic partner. Foreign victims may be especially vulnerable if there is a language barrier or other challenges to communication. Take note of:

- *Controlling behavior*
- *The person accompanying the patient doing most or all of the talking*

Fear: Victims have a difficult time trusting people as it is not uncommon for victims to have known their trafficker before the trafficking situation. Fear can stem from:

- *Not knowing who is "in" on the crime*
- *Misconception of legal consequences or not being aware of victims' rights*
- *Real or perceived retaliation or threats*

Mental health: Anxiety, tension, depression, PTSD

Physical health: Malnourishment, fatigue, dehydration, sleep deprivation, dental damage

Embarrassment: Victims may feel shame or fear of being judged

Body language: Cold sweat, not looking at a person, trembling, voice tremor, muscle tension

Signs of physical abuse: Bruises, cigarette burn marks, fractures, suspicious injuries indicating torture

Tattoo branding: Markings indicating gang affiliation, pimp name, ownership/property

IF YOU SUSPECT POSSIBLE HUMAN TRAFFICKING:

- Separate the victim from the potential trafficker for full or partial examination
- Provide a trained language interpreter whenever possible
- Have a female nurse or doctor do examinations for suspected sex trafficking, sexual trauma, sexual exploitation
- Call the National Human Trafficking Resource Center Hotline **1-888-3737-888**
- Call your local police department
- For emergencies, call 911
- Call the Orange County Child Abuse Hotline (714) 940-1000
- Ask victim-centered trauma informed questions:
 - * *Are you afraid of someone or something?*
 - * *How are you sleeping? Are you sleeping well?*
 - * *Are you ok? Do you need help?*
- Ask human trafficking related questions:
 - * *Where do you work? Sleep?*
 - * *Do you know what city or state you're in?*
 - * *Do you owe money? Paying off a debt to someone you work for?*
 - * *Are you allowed to go whenever you want?*
 - * *Where is your ID (drivers license, passport)? Who has your ID?*
 - * *When was the last time you saw a doctor? When was the last time you ate?*

PHYSICAL AND MENTAL SYMPTOMS

| Constitutional | Neurological | Gastrointestinal | Urogenital | Musculoskeletal |
|---|--|---|---|---|
| Easily Tired Weight Loss Loss of Appetite | Headaches Dizzy spells Memory Difficulty Fainting | Stomach Pain Upset Stomach Diarrhea Constipation | Urination pain Pelvic pain Vaginal discharge Vaginal bleeding Gynecological Infection | Back Pain Fractures/Sprains Joint/Muscle Pain Toothache Facial Injuries |

| Depression | Anxiety |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lacks interest in things • Hopelessness about future • Feeling worthless • Loneliness • Extreme sadness • Suicidal thoughts | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fearful • Tensed up • Terror or panic spells • Restlessness • Scared abruptly • Nervousness or shakiness |

| Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder | | |
|--|---|---|
| Re-experiencing event | Avoidance | Increased arousal |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flashbacks or feelings of reliving the event • Intense distress when reminded of event • Nightmares • Physical responses to memory of event (e.g., sweating, trembling, heart pounding) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoiding thoughts, places, and people that remind of trauma • Detached and withdrawn from others • Emotionally numb • Loss of interest in once-enjoyed activities • Loss of memories associated with event • Sense of limited future | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficult breathing • Feeling jumpy • Hyper vigilance, state of being constantly on alert of danger • Insomnia • Irritability, hostility, anger |