



# Sex Trafficking

Developed in collaboration with



Our Mission: To empower those victimized by violent crime through education, advocacy, and understanding.

You Have the Power ... Know How to Use It, Inc.

This program is funded under an agreement with the State of Tennessee, Office of Criminal Justice, VOCA 26659

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## Welcome

You Have the Power...Know How to Use It, Inc. is a non-profit organization founded in 1993 in Nashville, Tennessee, with a mission of advocacy, support, and empowerment for those victimized by crime. Collaboration with other community organizations is an ingrained part of You Have the Power, and we're honored to work with partners like End Slavery Tennessee, the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation, the Davidson County Office of the District Attorney, and the Junior League of Nashville.

You Have the Power provides training for facilitators and educational Programs on issues such as domestic violence, elder abuse, sexual abuse, bullying, and human trafficking. Our presentations typically include original video documentaries of crime survivors and criminal justice system professionals sharing their experiences. In addition, resource books are broadly distributed free of charge.

This resource guide addresses the issue of human sex trafficking. For more information on this topic or about our organization, please contact us at (615) 292-7027 or our website at [www.yhtp.org](http://www.yhtp.org)

Sincerely,



Andrea Conte  
Founder, You Have the Power

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## What is Sex Trafficking?

The federal Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 defines sex trafficking as:

**the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for the purpose of a commercial sex act. (1)**

Sex trafficking occurs when someone uses fraud, force, or coercion to make someone commit a commercial sex act.

A commercial sex act includes prostitution, pornography, or sexual performance done in exchange for any item of value, such as money, drugs, shelter, food, or clothes.

When an adult is forced to commit a commercial sex act by or for someone else, it is considered human trafficking. (2)

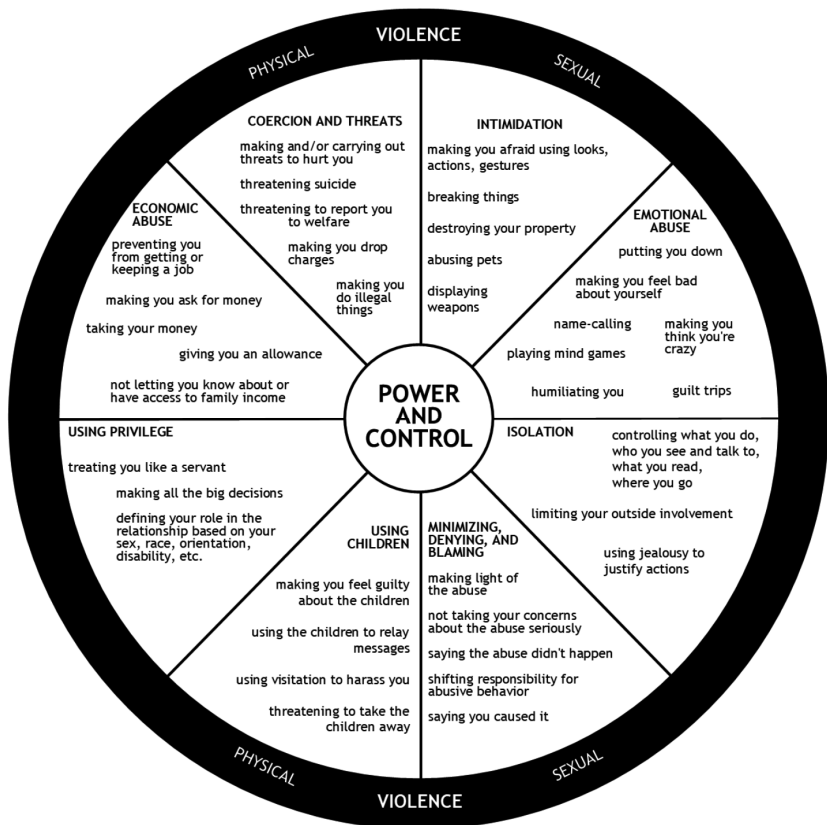
Whenever a minor (someone under the age of 18) is involved in a commercial sex act, it is automatically considered human trafficking even if the minor was not explicitly forced. (1)

Acknowledgements to the activists and survivors at Domestic Abuse Intervention Programs in Duluth, Minnesota, developers of the original Power and Control Wheel on the opposite page. Visit [theduluthmodel.com](http://theduluthmodel.com) to learn more about the different parts and variants of the Wheel.

This version of the wheel was created by You Have the Power to incorporate gender-neutral language.

## Power & Control Wheel

The Power and Control Wheel was originally developed to illustrate the tactics that domestic abusers use over their partners. But human traffickers use many of the same tactics to instill fear and powerlessness in their victims. Traffickers use a combination of these tactics, along with physical and sexual violence, to gain power over their victims and prevent them from breaking free from their control.



## A Global Problem In Our Own Backyard

People of **any age, gender, race, nationality, or background** can be victims of sex trafficking. But some people are especially vulnerable:

- Victims of child abuse or domestic violence
- Runaway youth
- People without homes
- Foreign nationals
- People who have experienced trauma or violence  
People fleeing economic upheaval, political instability or natural disasters

Of the more than 23,500 endangered runaways reported to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children in 2018, one in seven were likely victims of child sex trafficking. (3)

**2<sup>ND</sup> & FASTEST  
LARGEST CRIME**  
**GROWING ON EARTH**  
(#1 IS DRUG TRAFFICKING)

Today's slaves are forced into labor, service, or sex slavery to make money for their "owners." The same people who used to deal in drugs or illegal weapons realized that selling people was more profitable and less risky. People can be sold repeatedly—and in the case of a sex slave, that might be 10 to 20 or more times a day. (4)

Sex trafficking can happen in any country, region, city, or neighborhood... wherever people are willing to pay for sex and other people are willing to capitalize on this demand and provide victims for the market.

## A Global Problem In Our Own Backyard

Most sex trafficking victims in the United States are young women and girls, often lured into the trade between the ages of 11 and 13 years old (although boys can be trafficked, too). According to the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation, a child is bought or sold for sex every two minutes somewhere in the United States.

**There is no typical sex trafficker profile.** A trafficker can be a parent selling their children for sex, a pimp who exploits vulnerable young people, or an international crime organization that controls hundreds of people. It is important to note that both men and women can be traffickers. (5)

Increasingly, gangs are conducting trafficking operations rather than solitary pimps. Additionally, they often force their victims to commit crimes on their behalf (e.g., carjacking, holding guns or drugs, robbing would-be customers) so they end up taking the rap instead of the gang members. (6)



## A Global Problem In Our Own Backyard (continued)

In 2011, the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation (TBI) and the Vanderbilt Center for Community Studies released a report on sex trafficking in Tennessee, outlining the extent of the crime in our state.

The study found that sex trafficking had been reported in 78 out of 95 of Tennessee's counties within the 24 months before the study, and that number has likely increased in the years since.

Sex trafficking is primarily associated with interstate highways through which traffickers move their victims from city to city, in and out of Tennessee. (Atlanta, ninety minutes away from the state line, is a major trafficking hub.) But rural counties, especially those near an interstate, also reported instances of trafficking.

Many victims are not native-born citizens. They often stay invisible within "ethnic" communities, may not speak English, and don't trust law enforcement and other potential helpers. (7)

“Working with females I have learned that somehow the ‘pimps’ know where to find girls in DCS custody. Talking to girls I have learned that once they are in that game they are taken all over the US. ”

*Anonymous Shelby County law enforcement officer  
quoted in the 2011 TBI report*

## Facts and Figures

- Statistics vary on the median age at which children enter the sex trafficking trade, but consensus puts the figure at 15 years. (8, 9)
- Within the state of Tennessee, females accounted for 87% of all sex trafficking victims in cases reported in 2018. (8)
- An estimated 27% of all sex trafficking victims are minors. (10)
- 84% of people trafficked for sex were sexually abused as children. (11)
- In 2017, an estimated 1 out of 7 endangered runaways reported to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children were likely child sex trafficking victims. Of those, 88% were in the care of social services or foster care when they ran. (12)
- The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime estimates that 76 percent of transactions for sex with underage females start on the Internet. (13)
- African-American & Latino youth are overrepresented in child sex trafficking cases. According to the FBI, 52% of all juvenile prostitution arrests are African-American children. (14)
- Homelessness increases the chances of exploitation. A study conducted by Covenant House New York, a shelter and service provider for youth, found that 1/5 of the homeless youth they surveyed in the U.S. and Canada were victims of human trafficking. (15)
- The average sex trafficking victim only lives seven years after they first enter "the life," either as a result of homicide, suicide, or substance abuse. (11)
- 92% of sex trafficking victims are physically assaulted at some point, either by their traffickers or their buyers. (16)
- 8% of trafficking survivors are arrested at some point, compared to less than 10% of sex buyers. (17)

# ~~MYTHS~~ & FACTS

**Myth:** Sex trafficking only happens in illegal or underground industries.

**Fact:** Trafficking can happen within legitimate businesses as well as underground markets. Sex trafficking doesn't just happen in brothels or on street corners. It can happen in hotels, restaurants, nightclubs, nail salons, massage parlors, manufacturing plants, and any other number of supposedly legitimate businesses.

**Myth:** It isn't sex trafficking if the person involved agreed to the initial situation, or if they knew they would be having sex for money.

**Fact:** It doesn't matter if the person involved consented to commercial sex, or put themselves in a situation where they "should have known better," or if they received money or other payment. If a commercial sex act takes place, and there is an element of force, fraud, or coercion (or if the victim is a minor) it's still human trafficking.

**Myth:** Sex trafficking victims always come from situations of poverty or small or rural areas.

**Fact:** Anyone under the wrong circumstances can find themselves trapped in a human trafficking situation (see the Survivor Stories on pages 12-13.)

**Myth:** Trafficking always involves physical force, restraint, or bondage.

**Fact:** Trafficking does not require physical or bodily harm. According to Tennessee state law, if any kind of coercion was used (such as threats or blackmail) to make someone perform a sex act, then it counts as trafficking.

**Myth:** Victims of human trafficking will immediately ask for help or assistance and will self-identify as a victim of a crime.

**Fact:** Tragically, victims of human trafficking often do not ask for help due to a variety of factors, including a lack of trust, self-blame, or specific instructions from their traffickers on how to behave when interacting with law enforcement or the public. Trust takes time to build, so it is important not to judge anyone based on first encounters.

**Myth:** Sex trafficking always involves transportation across state or national borders.

**Fact:** Victims of sex trafficking do not have to be moved from place to place, although it is often used to keep victims in unfamiliar territories for better control.

## Survivor Stories

*The following stories were related to us by partner agencies that work with victims of sex trafficking. All names in this story and other identifying details have been changed.*

“My name is Rebekah. I attended a great school in Williamson County. One of my best friends, Taylor, called me one night to come have some fun and party. At the party, I met Taylor’s friend who gave us drugs. I had never done drugs before this party, but it only took this one night and I was hooked.

From that point, we found ourselves going to him when we needed more. Our parents had no idea this was going on and we couldn’t ask them for the money needed to pay. So, he made it clear, if we wanted the drugs we will pay in other ways. We were both then under the control of him and had to sell ourselves in order to pay for the drugs we wanted.”

## Survivor Stories

I grew up in an affluent home in another state. My parents moved here when I was 12. I grew up in a very controlling home where my parents had rules and I had to live by them.

At the age of 16 I began working. I met a man at my job who seemed wonderful. He gave me such a different perspective from the life I had always lived. We started to date and I ran away to be a family with him and raise children the right way.

We were together for a few months and before I knew it, he convinced me that the only way we could continue to be together was for me to sell myself so we could have money. This turned into a dark spiral I wish I would have never started.

*Anyone, under the right circumstances, could find themselves being sold for sex, made to do things they don't want to do and ordinarily wouldn't... for drugs, for money, for their own safety, or because they don't have the ability to say no.*

## Warning Signs

The following warning signs of sex trafficking are courtesy of ITHasToStop, an outreach project of the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation, powered by grant funding from the State of Tennessee Office of Criminal Justice Programs.

### Physical Appearance

- Has injuries or other signs of abuse and is reluctant to explain them
- Appears malnourished
- Branded or marked with a tattoo, such as a man's name, symbol of money, or a barcode
- Dressed in a provocative manner or in the same clothes, regardless of weather or circumstance

### Possessions

- Has very few personal possessions
- Has an unexplained, sudden increase in money, clothing, or possessions like jewelry without explanation
- Doesn't carry identification
- Has a number of hotel keys or key cards
- Has a prepaid cell phone

### Behavior

- Fears authority figures
- Claims to be an adult, though their appearance suggests adolescence
- Seems to move frequently from place to place
- Talks about an older boyfriend or sex with an older man
- Has inconsistencies in their story
- Claims to be visiting, and can't state what city they're in or for how long
- Isn't able to speak for themselves
- Has sexually explicit profiles on social networking sites

## Warning Signs

- Is not enrolled in school or is consistently absent
- Seems to be withdrawn, depressed, or “checked out”

### Lack of Control

- Accompanied by someone who seems to control their every move
- Seems scripted in the way they speak
- Doesn't have control over their own money
- Can't come and go from place to place on their own

#### Illicit Massage Parlors and Spas

Many sex trafficking operations function under the cover of massage parlors or spas. While not all such businesses are fronts for trafficking, you should take notice of the following characteristics:

- Permit or license for something other than actual business
- Largely or exclusively male clientele
- Location may have a guarded entrance
- Open at unusual hours compared to the businesses on either side
- Cameras both inside and outside
- Location storefront may be curtained off/blocked, etc.
- Location may be locked and opened only when someone at the door with a phone
- “Employees” may be ferried to and from work by the “spa” or may live at the location
- Men walking through the parking lot who seem to be confused and/or talking on their cell phones
- Condoms in the parking lot, drains, or pipes (18)



## What Should You Do?

If you suspect someone is being sold for sex, you might want to reach out to the victim(s) or confront the trafficker directly.

**This is a bad idea.** The trafficker might retaliate by hurting the victim(s) or you personally.

Instead, contact local law enforcement or a human trafficking hotline and let them respond. They are the people best equipped to get the victim(s) out of danger and provide them with the help they need. In Tennessee, you can contact the **Tennessee Human Trafficking Hotline** by calling

**1-855-55-TNHTH  
(1-855-558-6484)**

or texting

**233733 (BeFree)**

This hotline is for both victims trying to escape, people who have information about trafficking operations, or people who want to learn more about the issue. Each call is confidential (you don't have to give your name or your number) by a trained operator who can take down the information and refer you to additional services.

Calls in languages besides English will be connected to the National Human Trafficking Hotline, which is another helpful resource. This hotline is available at 1-888-373-7888, and you can also communicate with them by e-mail ([help@humantraffickinghotline.org](mailto:help@humantraffickinghotline.org)) or via live chat (<https://humantraffickinghotline.org/chat>).

## How NOT to Become a Victim

Although some people are more vulnerable than others, theoretically anyone can become ensnared in sex trafficking.

Urban legends often describe people (especially women and girls) abducted from parking lots, rest stops, and other public places. But these stories obscure the real, more insidious tactics traffickers use.

**Be suspicious of "instant love".** Does your new love interest shower you with gifts and attention, even though you've only known them a little while? Do they suggest running off to start a new life where everything will be perfect? Say no to the offer to go someplace else and see how they react. Watch to see if they get abusive or possessive,

**Ask family and friends for advice, if you can.** Watch out if they try to isolate you from family and friends. Also, try searching for them online or running a background check. Is this person who they say they are?

**Don't make decisions under the influence.** Traffickers looking for "fresh meat" will take advantage of someone who is intoxicated and take them someplace else. They may advantage of an existing addiction, or try to get someone addicted so they will "work" for more drugs or the money to buy them.

## How NOT to Become a Victim (continued)

Be careful about the job offers you receive. Some traffickers (especially those recruiting from overseas) lure people using job offers in the hotel, restaurant, and domestic work sectors. They may also use opportunities to go to school or college as bait.

Check to see if the people and agencies making the offer are reputable. If you'll have to move someplace, get references from people living where they want you to go. Make sure any contracts are signed in your native language and you understand them completely. Find out all you can about any money you have to pay upfront, like travel and other expenses. You can never ask too many questions, and traffickers (and other scammers) avoid people who do.

**If you are desperate for money or shelter,  
you have other options besides selling yourself.**

If you have to leave home because of abuse or unsafe conditions, find shelter before you go.

Children of the Night offers a 24-hour toll-free national hotline for runaway and throwaway children:  
1-800-551-1300.

If fleeing a domestic violence situation, you can call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-7233 (TTY 1-800-787-3224) or consult the resources available in *When Violence Hits Home*, You Have the Power's domestic violence resource guide.

## How NOT to Become a Victim (continued)

**Take steps to protect your kids.** Children and teens are prime targets for sex traffickers and are increasingly using social media to lure unsuspecting victims.

Keep track of who your child's friends are, IRL (in real life) and online. Teach your children never to post their personal info (phone numbers, addresses, locations) on their socials. (That includes potentially revealing usernames and ages like "Bella2003" or "ethan11").

If your child meets someone on the Internet and wants to meet them IRL, insist on meeting them too. Make sure your children understand that people can lie about who they say they are online, use fake photographs of themselves, etc.

Get approval of any picture of themselves your child posts online... and teach them that it's never okay to post inappropriate pictures of themselves. Pictures like these are not only used by traffickers to engage victims—they can also lead to cyberbullying, and the pictures might find their way onto porn sites.

Find out about the social media apps your kids use and their privacy settings (making sure all location settings are turned off). You can make this fun—get them to teach you the latest technology.

Perhaps the best and easiest way to keep your children from getting involved in trafficking situations is maintaining a loving, open relationship with them, where they can tell you anything and can come to you if something upsets them or they get in trouble. If serious problems develop, it is better that they enter counseling, mentoring programs, or rehab than ending up on the streets.

## The Sex Trafficking Triangle

One area where you can and should take direct action is educating yourself. By learning about the warning signs, how to help, and about the local and state issues related to sex trafficking, you can educate family, friends, neighbors, and the community.

The Sex Trafficking Triangle on the opposite page shows how sex trafficking relies on the same elements as most other businesses: supply, distribution, and demand.

To meet the **demand** of their customers, traffickers lure unsuspecting people into their networks, creating the **supply**. They then **distribute**, or rather, offer, these victims to their customers.

International policies and inter-governmental efforts can help to reduce **distribution** through the illegalization of human trafficking. Federal and state policies that illegalize prostitution, decreasing the operations by traffickers, weaken the amount of **supply**. The public can make a difference by not participating in prostitution and not supporting its legalization, therefore removing the **demand**.

Weakening any or all of the three legs of the Sex Trafficking Triangle can reduce the incidence of sex trafficking locally and nationally.

## The Sex Trafficking Triangle

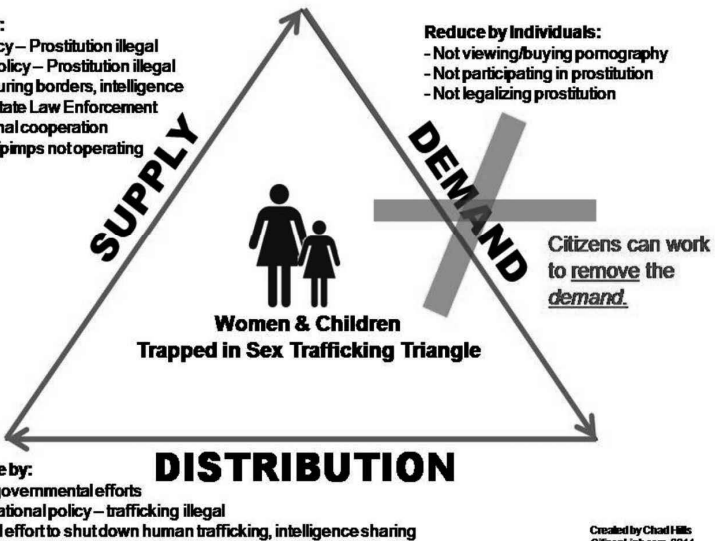
# HUMAN SEX TRAFFICKING

### Reduce by:

- State Policy – Prostitution illegal
- Federal Policy – Prostitution illegal
- Govt. securing borders, intelligence
- Federal/State Law Enforcement
- International cooperation
- Criminals/pimps not operating

### Reduce by Individuals:

- Not viewing/buying pornography
- Not participating in prostitution
- Not legalizing prostitution



"The economic reality is that human trafficking is driven by profits.  
If nobody paid for sex, sex trafficking would not exist."

Ark of Hope for Children

## The Tennessee Anti-Slavery Alliance

In 2013, then-Governor Bill Haslam mandated the creation of the Tennessee Human Trafficking Services Coordination and Service Delivery Plan, a statewide plan to help survivors of trafficking. As part of this plan, the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation (TBI) handles the response to any human trafficking crimes in the state of Tennessee.

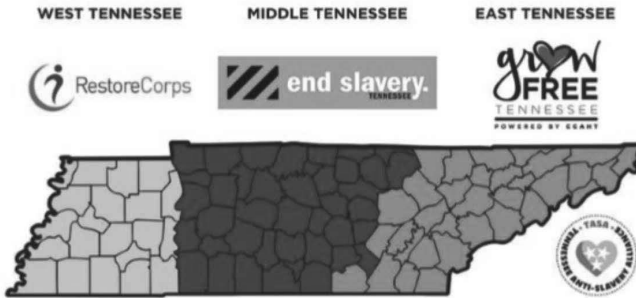
This plan includes a single-point-of-contact system. Depending on the Grand Region where a trafficking report comes in, the TBI refers the victims to a specific non-governmental organization (NGO) that provides them with the services and help they need. These NGOs work together and with other non-profits, service providers, and law enforcement agencies in their areas.

The map on the opposite page names the NGOs that help sex trafficking survivors in different parts of the state, the areas they serve (corresponding to TBI administrative divisions), and their contact information.



Additionally, the TBI runs ITHastoStop, an outreach project to raise public awareness of the problem of sex trafficking, the warning signs, and what people should do if they have suspicions or information about trafficking operations. It also operates the Tennessee Human Trafficking Hotline. Find out more via the official website: [ithastostop.com](http://ithastostop.com)

## The Tennessee Anti-Slavery Alliance



### Restore Corps

(901) 410-3590

[info@restorecorps.org](mailto:info@restorecorps.org)

[restorecorps.org](http://restorecorps.org)

### End Slavery Tennessee

(615) 806-6899

[info@endslavery.org](mailto:info@endslavery.org)

[endslaverytn.org](http://endslaverytn.org)

### Grow Free

(865) 236-1046

[info@growfreetn.org](mailto:info@growfreetn.org)

[growfreetn.org](http://growfreetn.org)

### Other State and National Agencies to Know

Second Life Chattanooga

[secondlifetn.org](http://secondlifetn.org)

Human trafficking prevention agency headquartered in Chattanooga.

Red Sand Project:

[redsandproject.org](http://redsandproject.org)

An interactive educational project that seeks to draw attention to sex trafficking's often invisible or hard-to-spot victims.

Polaris Project: [polarisproject.org](http://polarisproject.org)

An international nonprofit that operates the National Human Trafficking Hotline, advocates for stronger state and federal anti-trafficking legislation, and engages community members in local and national grassroots efforts.



## The Freedom Strategy

You Have the Power is an advocate of the Freedom Strategy, an initiative of the Alliance for Freedom, Restoration, and Justice, Inc. (ARFJ). This global anti-trafficking network has directly assisted over 7,000 justice advocates and rescue operations.

The Freedom Strategy explains what communities, cities, states, and nations need to do to stop human trafficking.



Information in the following section is available from the AFRJ Freedom Strategy Handout: <https://engagetgether.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Freedom-Strategy-Handout.pdf>

### **Prevention**

Much of the fight to stop human trafficking involves **preventing** it in the first place. People need to know that this evil exists and what puts people at risk. While there is no one face of a trafficking victim, certain populations are more vulnerable. Understanding and addressing factors that put people at risk will help prevent exploitation.

Furthermore, human trafficking would not exist without people who purchase sex. We must address this root problem in the lives of individuals, in our culture, and our laws and policies.

### **Identification**

Next, we need to **identify** victims of trafficking. People who are the most likely to be in contact with victims – law enforcement officers, health care providers, teachers, parents, service industry workers, and others – need training on how to identify and report trafficking. Additionally, we need to reach out to vulnerable populations in order to identify trafficking operations and rescue possible victims.

### Rescue

While it is the responsibility of law enforcement officials to intervene and **rescue** victims from dangerous circumstances, civilians can still help. People rescued from trafficking situations need temporary shelter for immediate and safe housing; services such as medical, dental, legal, and counseling; and victim advocates who can connect them to the community resources they need. Increasing the availability of these resources ensures that these victims receive instant and effective care.

### Restoration

Survivors need access to appropriate **restorative** aftercare, tailored to meet their specific needs. They might need medical treatment, foster care, counseling, housing, or even job training. The end goal, however, is the same – a solid foundation for a healthy, safe, and fulfilling future.

### Reforms

Finally, we need to **reform** our laws and policies to fix broken, overburdened, or under-resourced systems that encourage trafficking or fail to prevent it. We need to enact laws and policies that protect victims and provide significant deterrents to those who would buy or sell other people for sex. We also need to figure out whether our policies – at the legislative level and in our communities and businesses – address this issue appropriately. Further, we have to monitor the effects of these reforms to know whether these efforts are working.

All these areas need to be covered simultaneously. Gaps in the process will allow the problem to continue or return. For example, if we rescue victims without having any resources available for them (i.e., restoration), they may go back into “the life.” And laws against trafficking are of little help if the public does not realize the problem exists (prevention) and/or does not recognize the warning signs (identification).

## Tennessee State Law on Human Trafficking

From the *Tennessee Code, Annotated*, © 2017  
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Title 39 Criminal Offenses  
Chapter 13 Offenses Against Person  
Part 3 Kidnapping and False Imprisonment

### Tenn. Code Ann. § 39-13-309 (2017)

39-13-309. Trafficking for commercial sex act.

(a) A person commits the offense of trafficking a person for a commercial sex act who:

(1) Knowingly subjects, attempts to subject, benefits from or attempts to benefit from another person's provision of a commercial sex act; or

(2) Recruits, entices, harbors, transports, provides, purchases, or obtains by any other means, another person for the purpose of providing a commercial sex act.

(b) For purposes of subdivision (a)(2), such means may include, but are not limited to:

(1) Causing or threatening to cause physical harm to the person;

(2) Physically restraining or threatening to physically restrain the person;

(3) Abusing or threatening to abuse the law or legal process;

## Tennessee State Law on Human Trafficking

(4) Knowingly destroying, concealing, removing, confiscating or possessing any actual or purported passport or other immigration document, or any other actual or purported government identification document, of the person;

(5) Using blackmail or using or threatening to cause financial harm for the purpose of exercising financial control over the person; or

(6) Facilitating or controlling a person's access to a controlled substance.

(c) A violation of subsection (a) is a Class B felony, except where the victim of the offense is a child under fifteen (15) years of age, or where the offense occurs on the grounds or facilities or within one thousand feet (1,000') of a public or private school, secondary school, preschool, child care agency, public library, recreational center, or public park, a violation of subsection (a) is a Class A felony.

(d) It is not a defense to a violation of this section that:

(1) The intended victim of the offense is a law enforcement officer; or

(2) The victim of the offense is a minor who consented to the act or acts constituting the offense.

# THE LANGUAGE OF THE LIFE

This glossary not only includes legal terms relevant to sex trafficking, but vocabulary commonly used by sex traffickers, street prostitutes, and escorts. We are including this section because it may help law enforcement, social workers, and the public understand the experiences of people being sold for sex.

**BCD:** Behind Closed Doors. Represents the portion of the “date” which is spent in the bedroom.

**BFE:** Boy Friend Experience. A client may be described as this if he is nice and easy to deal with.

**Blackmail:** threatening to expose or reveal the identity of another or any other information that might subject a person to hatred, contempt, loss of employment, social status or economic harm. Victims of trafficking are frequently blackmailed into silence for fear of being arrested or disgracing their family.

**Bottom or Bottom Bitch:** A female appointed by the trafficker/pimp to supervise the others and report rule violations.

**Branding:** A tattoo or carving on a victim that indicates ownership by a trafficker/pimp or gang. Common elements of these tattoos or brands include names, nicknames, or initials of the trafficker; dollar signs, crowns, roses, and bar codes.

**Breaking Bad:** When a victim is so strung out on drugs they can't go out.

**Business Manager:** The term a victim may use for their trafficker.

**Caught A Case:** A term that refers to when a pimp or victim has been arrested and charged with a crime.

**Circuit:** A series of cities among which prostituted people are moved. For example, a common route involves moving victims between Memphis, Nashville, and Atlanta.

**Choosing Up:** The process by which a different pimp takes "ownership" of a victim.

**Chopped:** Beaten up, e.g. for not bringing in enough money or breaking a rule.

**Commercial Sex Act:** any sex act on account of which anything of value is given to or received by any person.

**Coercion:** Causing or threatening to cause bodily harm to any person or causing or threatening to physically restrain any person.

**Daddy:** The term a pimp will often require his victim to call him.

**Date** — The exchange when prostitution takes place, or the activity of prostitution. A victim is said to be "with a date" or "dating."



## The Language of “The Life” (continued)

**DNS:** Do Not See. Personal list of men an escort refuses to see because of personal experience, warnings from other sex workers, or statements made on review boards.

**Donation:** Another term (usually used online) for the fee for a victim’s services.

**Escort Service** — An organization, operating chiefly via cell phone and the internet, which sends a victim to a buyer’s location (an “outcall”) or arranges for the buyer to come to a house or apartment (an “in-call”); this may be the workplace of a single person or a small brothel. Some escort services are networked with others and can assemble large numbers of prostitutes for parties and conventions.

**Exit Fee:** The money a pimp will demand from a victim who is thinking about trying to leave. It will be an exorbitant sum to discourage her from leaving. Most pimps never let their victims leave freely.

**Family/Folks:** The term used to describe the other individuals under the control of the same pimp. He plays the role of the father (or “Daddy”) while the group fulfills the need for a “family.”

**Finesse Pimp/Romeo Pimp:** One who controls victims primarily through psychological manipulation. Although they may shower their victims with affection and gifts (especially during the recruitment phase), the threat of violence is always present.

**Fresh Meat:** A new, young victim.

**Full Service:** Intercourse.

## The Language of “The Life” (continued)

**GFE:** Girl Friend Experience. An escort will cuddle, kiss, refrain from obvious clockwatching or otherwise make the experience seem much more natural and less mechanical.

**Greek:** anal sex.

**Gorilla (or Guerilla) Pimp:** A pimp who controls his victims almost entirely through physical violence and force.

**Ho-partner:** A girl who is controlled by another pimp.

**Hitting a Lick:** Tricking a buyer and stealing their money without performing sex acts.

**Hobbyist:** Someone who frequently makes online appointments to meet with prostitutes. They frequently interact with others to discuss prostitutes, offering “reviews”, etc.

**John:** Used mostly by law enforcement, the media and others outside of “the life” for a customer.

**Kiddie Stroll:** An area known for prostitution that features younger victims.

**LEO:** Law Enforcement Officer.

**Lot Lizard:** Derogatory term for a person who is being prostituted at truck stops.

**Lurker:** A “hobbyist” who reads escort advertisements online, but doesn’t post on them.

**NCNS:** No Call, No Show.

## The Language of “The Life” (continued)

**Madam:** A woman who manages a brothel, escort service or other prostitution establishment. She may work alone or in collaboration with other traffickers.

**Minor:** an individual who is less than eighteen (18) years old.

**Outing:** Publicizing the real name of a client or escort, usually to that person’s family (see “blackmail”).

**Out of Pocket:** The phrase describing when a victim is not under control of a pimp but working on a pimp-controlled track, leaving her vulnerable to threats, harassment, and violence in order to make her “choose” a pimp. This may also refer to a victim who is disobeying the pimp’s rules.

**Pimp Circle:** When several pimps encircle a victim to intimidate through verbal and physical threats in order to discipline the victim or force her to choose up.

**Popped:** Arrested.

**Provider:** Internet term for an escort as in “provider of services.”

**PSE:** “Porn Star Experience.”

**Quota:** A set amount of money that a trafficking victim must make each night before she can come “home.” Quotas are often set between \$300 and \$2000. If the victim returns without meeting the quota, they are typically beaten and sent back out on the street to earn the rest. Quotas vary according to geographic region, local events, etc.

## The Language of “The Life” (continued)

**Reckless Eyeballing:** A term which refers to the act of looking around instead of keeping your eyes on the ground. Eyeballing is against the rules and could lead an untrained victim to “choose up” by mistake.

**Renegade:** A person involved in prostitution without a pimp.

**Roses:** Slang term for “dollars” used by some escorts.

**Seasoning:** A combination of psychological manipulation, intimidation, gang rape, sodomy, beatings, deprivation of food or sleep, isolation from friends or family and other sources of support, and threatening or holding hostage of a victim’s children. Seasoning is designed to break down a victim’s resistance and ensure compliance.

**Stroll Ho:** Terms used to objectify a trafficking victim by her pimp.

**Squaring Up:** Attempting to escape or exit prostitution.

**Stable:** A group of victims who are under the control of a single pimp or gang.

**The Game/The Life** — The subculture of prostitution, complete with rules, a hierarchy of authority, and language. Referring to the act of pimping as “the game” gives the illusion that it can be a fun and easy way to make money, when the reality is much harsher. People will say they’ve been “in the life” if they’ve been involved in prostitution for a while.

**Time Waster:** A man who has no real intention of paying for an appointment.

## The Language of “The Life” (continued)

**Track (a/k/a Stroll or Blade):** An area of town known for prostitution activity. This can be the area around a group of strip clubs and pornography stores, or a particular stretch of street.

**Trade Up/Trade Down:** To move a victim like merchandise between pimps. A pimp may trade one girl for another or trade with some exchange of money.

**Trick:** Old slang for a session with a client as in “turn a trick”.

**Troublemakers:** Police.

**Turn Out:** To be forced into prostitution (verb) or a person newly involved in prostitution (noun).

**Wet Behind the Ears:** refers to a new victim (see “fresh meat”).

**Wifeys/Wife-in-Law/Sister Wife** — What women and girls under the control of the same pimp call each other. (see “Family/Folks”)

**Work the Red Carpet:** Refers to being trafficked in hotels, considered too good for the streets.



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