

# CURRICULUM GUIDE

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This curriculum addresses the major concepts of human trafficking, aiming to provide a foundation of knowledge to empower individuals to recognize, prevent, and combat this issue. The curriculum covers key topics such as the definition of human trafficking, its forms, misconceptions, the relevance of the problem, and the role of social media in increasing vulnerability. It emphasizes the importance of being vigilant, recognizing warning signs, and utilizing available resources. The curriculum concludes with actionable steps for viewers to raise awareness, advocate for legislative changes, and actively participate in the fight against human trafficking.

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## Chapter 1: The Facts

In this video, we will discuss the major concepts you need to know about Human Trafficking. We will define Human Trafficking and discuss how human trafficking affects you and those around you. By the end of this video, you will have a foundation of knowledge about Human Trafficking.

To talk about human trafficking, we first have to understand what it is and who it affects. Human trafficking is the use of force, fraud, or coercion to obtain some kind of labor or commercial sex act. In simple terms, human trafficking is the exploitation of someone for the profit or benefit of someone else. There are many forms of human trafficking, but we will discuss two of the most common forms- sex and labor trafficking. Sex trafficking is forcing a person to participate in commercial sex acts for the perpetrator's personal or monetary benefit. While labor trafficking is forcing a person to work in dangerous conditions for little to no pay through threats or economic abuse. Both of these types of Human Trafficking happen everywhere around the world, including the United States.

Many view Human Trafficking as an issue that rarely occurs in the United States or other first-world countries, but that's simply untrue. Human Trafficking is a growing issue within the states that we all must be aware of. It is difficult to find concrete statistics about Human Trafficking due to the nature of the problem. However, the Human Trafficking Hotline received over 13,000 signals from victims of Human Trafficking just in 2021. 22.7% of which were minors. Since its creation in 2007, the United States' National Human Trafficking Hotline has identified over 87,000 cases of human trafficking with nearly 165,000 victims.

The International Labor Organization and the Walk Free Foundation estimate that there are over 27.5 million people trafficked each year. For comparison the country of Madagascar has a population of 28 million people and ranks 51 out of 195 countries in population size around the world.

You might be thinking that this could never happen to you, but anyone can be a victim of human trafficking.

There is no single profile for victims, victims range from all classes, races, sexes, or citizenship status. Although, there are some things that make individuals more vulnerable. People living in poverty or with unstable housing conditions are often more vulnerable to trafficking because they are more easily lured by the promise of monetary compensation or a safe place to live. Your peers who have run away from home are vulnerable; a common example of how they get lured is because they fear to sleep on the streets, and a trafficker will offer shelter and then recruit them into trafficking. Youth in the foster care system, have been to juvenile detention centers, or experience mental health issues are also more at risk. Human trafficking comes in many different forms and affects all kinds of people.

Raising awareness of the signs of human trafficking and how to prevent it is the first step in eradicating the issue altogether and ensuring we can keep our friends, families, and peers safe. This curriculum will be your first step in taking action against human trafficking and making your community a safer place.

### **Traffick Cues:**

Traffick cues are the most important points you should take away from this chapter! They are to cue you into the world of human trafficking.

- 1) Be cautious of the people you surround yourself with: certain relationships, circumstantial life events, etc. can come to heighten vulnerability. A large percentage of human trafficking, moreover, along with varying forms of manipulation and extortion may come from people close to you.
- 2) Sex trafficking can have many forms, not only forced prostitution but any sexual exploitation for personal or monetary benefit – it can exist online as well as in person.
- 3) Human trafficking can affect anyone and everyone – there isn't one particular trait or characteristic that will shield you from falling victim to HT.

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## **Chapter 2: The Misconceptions**

One of the first and most important steps in educating yourself about human trafficking is addressing any misconceptions you may have about the issue. There are four major misconceptions many teens hold about this issue that we will address in this video.

The first misconception about Human Trafficking is that only women and girls can be victims of trafficking. Although women and girls make up the majority of Human Trafficking victims around the world, 29% of victims are male. It is important to note that men and boys are trafficked in both the labor and sex industries.

Another misconception is what human trafficking looks like to the outside world. Many view trafficking as children kept in chains and cages, and although this is

certainly an example of trafficking, it is not what the majority of human trafficking looks like. Oftentimes, victims have been so heavily manipulated by their abusers that they do not need to be held hostage in order for the abuser to keep them compliant, or do not think of themselves as victims at all. Another point that often goes unaddressed is the imbalance in victims that are minorities. The Congressional Black Caucus Foundation found that in 2020, 57.5% of all juvenile prostitution arrests are Black children. Overall, the U.S. Department of Justice found that 94% of sex trafficking victims in the US are female, 40% are Black, and 24% are Latinx.

The third misconception is that the human traffickers are strangers to the victims. More often than not, the perpetrators are people the victims knew or trusted. This could be a family member, friend, or romantic partner. Having a close connection with the victim means that the victim may rely on them in some way (financially or emotionally), which means the perpetrator might not have to physically restrain their victim to keep them trapped. Victims could still be present at school or work.

This leads into the fourth misconception: victims of human trafficking will seek help in public. There's a multitude of reasons trafficking victims cannot or will not seek help publicly, including but not limited to: having their finances controlled by their trafficker, relying on their trafficker for food or shelter, being blackmailed by their trafficker, not even being aware they are being trafficked, or, if their trafficker is someone they know, they might feel a sense of loyalty towards the perpetrator.

In conclusion, human trafficking looks much different than the media might portray it to. It can happen in communities people think of as "safe" and to people that might not seem vulnerable at first glance. Knowing these misconceptions is key to gaining a deeper understanding of what human trafficking truly is, which is more important than ever.

### Traffick Cues:

- 1) Anyone and everyone is at risk of being trafficked. Even if you think that you live in a safe area, there are many ways to become a victim, especially with the rise of social media.
- 2) Those who are born into trafficking often are not even aware of a reality where they have autonomy and control over themselves.

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## Chapter 3: The Why

Human Trafficking is a prevalent issue targeting teens that is frequently ignored and forgotten. Here in Oklahoma, human trafficking is not taught or talked about within our school systems. The lack of conversation about this huge threat is making Oklahoma teens increasingly vulnerable to trafficking. In this chapter, we will discuss

how human trafficking is relevant in your own city and why it is important to understand and be aware of.

Oklahoma has an extremely high poverty rate, and as discussed in Chapter 1, people living in poverty are more vulnerable to human trafficking, meaning a large portion of Oklahomans are already at risk of being trafficked. The state is also known for some of its major events and attractions. Tulsa's newly constructed Gathering Place is ranked #12 in the world for public playground attractions. We are also home to the nationally recognized BOK Event Center which brings in many major events and performances. Additionally, one of the largest highway systems in America, Route 66, dwells in Oklahoma. These mass highways lead to an abundance of travel through our state. Trafficking that occurs in surrounding states (Texas, Louisiana, Kansas, Missouri, etc) often finds its way to Oklahoma through these highways. For example, in January 2023, a fifteen year old girl was kidnapped from a Dallas Mavericks basketball game. Just a few days later, she was trafficked and forced into prostitution in Oklahoma City. This is just one example of why it's so important for Oklahomans to stay vigilant about the dangers of human trafficking, especially because of all the trafficking hotspots within Oklahoma.

While human trafficking is relevant to Oklahoma due to its location, it is also extremely important for teens and women specifically to be aware of. Minors account for half of the trafficking victims, and girls/women make up  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the victims. With the rise of social media in today's society, the risk of being trafficked has increased by 90%. 40% of all human trafficking victims are trafficked from social media and online platforms, and 43% of social media users in Oklahoma are under the age of 18. Social media has created a way for traffickers to access victims that live thousands of miles away. From their phone alone, traffickers can communicate with and manipulate teenagers across the globe, while viewing what the teen shares online, like their appearance and location. Because of how interconnected the internet has become, anyone of any sex, race, ethnicity, background or socioeconomic status is at risk of being trafficked simply due to their presence online. No demographic is safe from the danger of human trafficking; however, young women are the most trafficked online. In 2020, the Human Trafficking Hotline found 125% more people were trafficked through Facebook than in person and 95% more people through Instagram. In many cases, the trafficker contacts a victim through Facebook and Instagram Direct Messaging capacities, as well as through commenting and interacting with their posts. A user with a public account can be messaged by any other user, which allows traffickers to reach victims with ease and sometimes without a trace. However, a user with a private account can only be contacted by their own followers, which they must approve, which is why we stress the importance of having a private account. It is so important to only accept users that you know! It is very important to be wary of people messaging you, and who you are talking to on social media.

Human trafficking is incredibly relevant in all teenagers' lives, and especially for Oklahomans. We hope this chapter helped you to realize that human trafficking has the

potential to affect you or your loved ones, which is why educating yourself on the topic is important.

### **Traffick Cues:**

- 1) Keep your social media accounts private, and only accept people you know and trust.
  - 2) Even with private social media accounts, don't post personal information like where you live or go to school.
  - 3) Pay attention to those around you and trust your gut! You can make Oklahoma a safer place by staying vigilant and talking to a trusted adult if you see anything out of the ordinary, especially at large events.
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## **Chapter 4: The Signs**

One of the most important ways to combat human trafficking is to be equipped with the ability to recognize potentially dangerous situations. Online, be wary of job advertisements on sites like Craigslist, Facebook, or other social media platforms that sound too good to be true with exceptional pay or benefits, especially for jobs like modeling or dancing. Any online interaction with strangers could be dangerous. Some perpetrators may even reach out to you individually via private messaging offering a job. Even though the idea of being “scouted” may be flattering and exciting, no professional business would operate this way. In person, be suspicious of new friends or relationships that lavish you with excessive and expensive gifts for seemingly no reason. Healthy friends will not try to separate you from other relationships and support systems. If you're meeting up with a new friend, and they randomly ask you to accompany them to a place you have no other reason to go to, be suspicious. The places they suggest could be points for trafficking networks, and new places are harder to escape from.

It is also important to recognize situations in others' lives that may be signs of trafficking. Pay attention to your friends, especially if they start exhibiting different behaviors (like fear, anxiety, depression, or hyper-vigilance) after they enter a new relationship. Appearing destitute, showing signs of physical abuse, poor health, poor hygiene, or malnutrition is cause for immediate concern. Even suddenly having a lot of considerably “nice” things such as expensive clothes, shoes, and their nails done could be a sign of someone being exploited. Limited social interactions or rehearsed responses could be signs your friend is being trafficked, and that their trafficker is purposefully limiting their contact with the outside world.

If any of these scenarios sound familiar to you, or seem like they might be happening to someone else, tell a trusted adult. Coming forward can be hard, but remember that community members speaking up keeps everyone else safe.

### Traffick Cues:

- 1) Don't talk to people you don't directly know online. You never know someone's true intentions.
  - 2) Report any possible trafficking of yourself or others, even if you're not 100% sure, it's better to be safe.
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## Chapter 5: The Resources

In the United States, the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 “equipped the U.S. Government with new tools and resources to mount a comprehensive and coordinated campaign to eliminate modern forms of slavery domestically and internationally.” (See DOJ). Mainly, this protects victims of human trafficking by expanding HT relief to all victims regardless of immigration status. It also strengthened HT prevention, and further criminalized the activities of traffickers. To learn more about the TVPA and history of HT legislation in the US, visit the US Department of Justice website.

Even with the TVPA, there is still work to be done.

The Trafficking Survivors Relief Act is a bill introduced in 2022 that protects survivors from criminalization on account of having been a victim of trafficking. The Polaris Project has many resources for action supporting survivors, including petitions. Currently, The Polaris Project provides resources to contact representatives and advocate for the reintroduction of the bill. Legislative actions like the Trafficking Survivors Relief Act and so many others help victims and survivors of human trafficking, and are another step in the fight to end trafficking.

A resource for you to personally add to your reservoir of knowledge is this curriculum. Know the warning signs of possible trafficking so you and those you know can remain safe and secure in your community. Additionally, always remember to have empathy and don't judge. All victims of human trafficking, regardless of their situation, deserve support and love.

To keep you and the people around you safe, it's important to know the resources that are available to you. There are many resources accessible for every step, from trafficking prevention, intervention, and rehabilitation. If you or someone you know is being trafficked - or suspected of being trafficked - seek help immediately. The National Human Trafficking Hotline is an American anti-trafficking organization partnered with Polaris Project and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. They offer both domestic and international hotlines that are available 24/7 for you to voice any urgent concern you may have about yourself or someone you know being trafficked.

The fight against human trafficking does not end with prevention. Supporting survivors of human trafficking and anti-trafficking organizations helps to liberate victims of trafficking and exploitation. There are many non-profit organizations that accept



donations to further the impact of their resources for victims, such as The Polaris Project, Love 146, and The Dragonfly Home. Donating to these organizations helps ensure that victims of human trafficking have the necessary resources to successfully exit and navigate the situation.

All of these organizations are there to support victims of trafficking and to spread awareness. While there are some laws in place to support victims and prevent trafficking, there are still great strides to be made at a government level, so it's important to use your vote to help victims as well.

Some important things to take away from this chapter are that these organizations are there to help or your loved ones and are rooted in the mission of stopping Human Trafficking and supporting those who have been a survivor of Human Trafficking.

### **Traffick Cues:**

- 1) Remember that you can always call the Nation Human Trafficking Hotline at any time if you do not know how to get help. 1 (888) 373-7888
- 2) Continue to fight for better legislation so that we protect ourselves and those around us.
- 3) Make others aware of these resources to protect yourself and others

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## **Chapter 6: The Takeaways**

Now that we have gone through the different aspects of human trafficking and have formed a stronger understanding of what it actually is, we will review the key takeaways from each chapter.

**Chapter 1:** Human trafficking has many forms, the most common being sex and labor trafficking. It can occur anywhere and to anyone, which is why it's important for everyone to be able to protect themselves against Human Trafficking and be aware of it. The most vulnerable people are those with unstable situations in any form, but it is crucial to remember that anyone can be trafficked, especially with the rise of social media.

**Chapter 2:** There are many misconceptions of human trafficking; for example, many believe that the only form is sex trafficking, but forced labor makes up a large percentage of trafficking as well. Furthermore, it's common to believe that there aren't hotspots near you, but there are way more than you might think.

**Chapter 3:** Human Trafficking is extremely relevant to teenagers, but it could always happen to anyone. Social media has caused an immense increase in trafficking rates, and online trafficking is more common than in person. There are also hotspots everywhere; Oklahoma has many victims brought in because of the highway system. Large venues are the most common hotspots, so it is vital to always beware.

**Chapter 4:** It is vital to be aware of warning signs of trafficking. Online, these can include fake job applications, online relationships, and other places where you share your private information. In person and online, it is important to be aware of manipulation. Recognition of how someone is treating you, whether that's excessive flattery or the exact opposite, is very important to be conscious of.

**Chapter 5:** Reading this curriculum is taking the first step in preventing the epidemic of human trafficking. Share this and other information to others. There are trafficking hotlines that anyone can use; report a tip if you know or suspect that someone is being trafficked. To advocate, start petitions, and try to make legislative change; spreading awareness is key!

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## Next Steps

First, share this curriculum with anyone you know, especially other teenagers to increase their TraffickQ. Awareness is power, and it will heavily aid in the prevention of human trafficking.

Second, stay aware of the signs of trafficking and look out for others and yourself. Make sure you completely understand the myths/misconceptions and know what to look out for. Know where trafficking hotspots around you are, and avoid them or be more vigilant while in those areas.

Start advocating! Ensure that you and your friends are aware of the resources available if they need help, such as the National Human Trafficking Hotline. Go a step further and become involved in your community by helping anti-trafficking communities/organizations in your area in any way you can. For example, there have been acts passed in counties throughout the nation, such as the "No Trafficking Zone" bill; its purpose is to engage sports organizations, schools, government leaders, corporations, key influencers, and more in the work to end the scourge of trafficking in the area. Work to see if you can have a similar bill passed in your county to help stop human trafficking. Refer back to Chapter 5 for more ideas on how to advocate!

Do additional research and be an informed consumer. Many products you buy, such as groceries or clothing, could be products of companies that use labor trafficking. It is vital to not support these companies and let others know not to, in order to end labor exploitation and trafficking.

Remember, trafficking can happen to anyone, anywhere, at any time. Feel empowered that you are now aware of how to prevent human trafficking, and can spread your knowledge throughout your community.