



Human Trafficking in its most basic form is fraudulently, forcibly, or coercively using another for purposes of exploitation. There are two main types of human trafficking: sex trafficking and labor trafficking. Victims can come from all backgrounds and become trapped in different locations and situations. The majority of victims are women and girls, though men and boys are also impacted; they include all races, ethnicities, sexual orientations, gender identities, citizens, non-citizens, and income levels; they are trapped and controlled through assault, threats, false promises, perceived sense of protection, isolation, shaming, and debt; and they do not have to be physically transported between locations to be victimized. In general, human trafficking involves exploitation and the exchange of money. In 2012, the definition of sexual abuse in Maryland was changed to include human trafficking. No community—urban, rural, or suburban—school, socioeconomic group, or student demographic is immune.

## Why is this important?

Many child victims of human trafficking are students in our school systems. School administrators and staff need to be aware that cases of child trafficking are being reported in communities across the nation and Maryland is not immune.

## What can educators do about it?

If you work in a school in any capacity, the law states that you are a mandated reporter. Schools can and should be safe havens for students and even more so for students whose lives are otherwise characterized by instability and lack of safety or security. In these cases, school personnel are uniquely well-positioned to identify and report suspected abuse and connect students to services—actions that can prevent trafficking and even save lives. Everyone who is part of the school community has the potential to be an advocate for child victims of human trafficking. In order to build healthy learning environments, educators and school personnel must be knowledgeable about the signs and symptoms of trafficking, ways to support disclosure, and the steps to take if there is a strong suspicion of trafficking.

Learn about your school's policies and protocols. If the school does not have clear policies and protocols, talk to the principal about instituting them. Share this information with school staff, administrators, school boards, and members of the community. The first rule is to always "pay attention."

Maryland State Department of Education recommends schools have an effective anti-trafficking protocol. Schools should, at a minimum develop, adopt, enforce, and implement a policy to address child abuse in general and trafficking in particular;

- make sure all school personnel are properly trained on the school's human trafficking policy;
- make certain campus security is in place so that all visitors are screened;
- provide programs and guidelines for parents and guardians;
- assess the child's environment and take every possible step to help make it safe;
- partner with local law enforcement experts and agencies to provide a parent awareness program on the dangers and warning signs of child sex trafficking.

## Who is at risk?

Though there is no standard profile of a child trafficking victim, several risk factors make certain children more susceptible. Reports indicate that traffickers often target children and youths with a history of sexual abuse, dating violence, low self-esteem, and minimal social support. Runaway and homeless youths are at particularly high risk for becoming victims. There is also a strong correlation between sexually exploited youths and childhood sexual abuse, chronic maltreatment, and neglect and otherwise unstable home environments. Research findings estimate

that between 33 and 90 percent of victims of commercial child sexual exploitation have experienced these types of abuses. Evidence also suggests that lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBTQ) youths can be up to five times more likely than heterosexual youths to be victims of trafficking due to the increased susceptibility that comes with the feelings of rejection and alienation that are often experienced by LGBTQ youths.

## Risk Factors

- Lack of personal safety
- Isolation

- Emotional distress
- Homelessness
- Poverty
- Family dysfunction
- Substance use
- Mental illness
- Learning disabilities
- Developmental delay
- Childhood sexual assault
- Promotion of sexual exploitation by family members or peers.
- Lack of social support

## Resource Links

### Maryland State Department of Education – Child Abuse, Neglect & Human Trafficking

<http://marylandpublicschools.org/about/Pages/DSFSS/SSSP/CAN-HT/index.aspx>

### Maryland’s Resource for Mandated Reporters

<https://www.reportabusemd.com/>

### Baltimore Child Abuse Center

<http://www.bcaci.org>

### MSDE Child Abuse, Neglect, and Mental Injury

<http://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/system/files/filedepot/3/childabuseneglectandmental injury2015.pdf>

### Maryland Child Protective Services

<http://dhr.maryland.gov/child-protective-services/>

### U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/otip>

### National Center for Missing and Exploited Children

<https://www.missingkids.org/> 1-800-843-5678 (1-800-THE-LOST)

### National Human Trafficking Resource Center

<http://www.polarisproject.org/what-we-do/national-human-trafficking-hotline/the-nhtrc/overview>  
Hotline: 1-888-373-7888

### Code of Maryland Regulations

COMAR 13A.15.07.02

<http://www.dsd.state.md.us/comar/comarhtml/13a/13a.15.07.02.htm>

## Trainings

### U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Anti-Trafficking in Persons Division, Office of Refugee Resettlement, National Human Trafficking Resource Center, “Safe Harbor” Laws: A Systemic Approach to Addressing Child Sex Trafficking

<http://polarisproject.adobeconnect.com/safeharbor/>

### U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Blue Campaign, Human Trafficking Awareness Training

<http://www.dhs.gov/blue-campaign/awareness-training>

*Adapted from Resources found on:*

*[www.marylandpublicschools.org](http://www.marylandpublicschools.org) and*

*<https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/sites/default/files/HumanTraffickinginAmericasSchools.pdf>*



an initiative of



The Children’s Mental Health Matters Campaign, an initiative of the Mental Health Association of Maryland (MHAMD), receives funding from the Maryland Department of Health – Behavioral Health Administration, the Maryland Family Network, and community sponsors. Together with the Maryland Coalition of Families, National Center for School Mental Health, MANSEF, and hundreds of community champions, we work to raise public awareness and acceptance of the importance of children’s mental health to overall child and family wellbeing. We are grateful to the National Center for School Mental Health for their collaboration in creating these resources for families.