



We Were Slaves:

The Jewish Community Unites Against Sex Trafficking

Sex Trafficking 101

1. What is sex trafficking?

Sex trafficking is a form of modern slavery that exists throughout the United States and globally. The Federal Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 defines sex trafficking as the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for the purposes of a commercial sex act, where such an act is induced by **force, fraud, or coercion**, or in which the person induced to perform such an act has not attained 18 years of age. All trafficking victims share one essential experience – the loss of freedom.

2. How prevalent is sex trafficking in New York?

New York City is consistently recognized as being a hub of trafficking and has some of the highest rates of trafficking in the United States. Incidents of trafficking are underreported due to the crime's hidden nature as well as limited awareness by law enforcement and social services providers. **The trafficking of women and children is the fastest growing criminal enterprise in the world.** The number of children being sold for sex has increased in recent years because criminals have learned it is more profitable and less risky to sell children than drugs.

3. Where does sex trafficking happen?

In 2013, the **National Human Trafficking Resource Center** hotline received multiple reports of human trafficking cases in **all 50 states and D.C.** In the **United States**, sex trafficking commonly occurs through online escort services, in residential brothels, brothels disguised as massage businesses or spas, and in street prostitution. On the Internet, buyers can purchase sex with ease, anonymity, and impunity.

4. What tactics are used by traffickers to lure and control their victims?

Pimps initially lure their victims with **false promises of a better life, fast money, warmth, intimacy and gifts** but ultimately they resort to other forms of manipulation and control including violence, threats of harm to the victim's family and friends, shaming, forced drug or alcohol abuse, isolation, food and sleep deprivation and degradation.

5. Who is at risk of being a victim of sex trafficking?

Anyone can become a victim of trafficking and trafficking exists in every community and among people of all races, religions and ethnicities, but certain populations are particularly vulnerable: **undocumented migrants; runaway and homeless youth; and oppressed, marginalized, and/or impoverished groups and individuals.** Traffickers specifically target these populations because they are vulnerable to recruitment tactics and methods of control. Some of our youth – boys and girls – are trafficked as young as 12 years of age. Common recruiting locations include junior high and high schools, courtrooms, bus stations, malls, parks and playgrounds and homeless shelters. It is a misconception that the majority of trafficking victims in this country are foreigners. It's believed that the majority of sex trafficking victims in the U.S. are United States citizens.

How do I recognize a Sex Trafficking Victim?

The US State Department advises individuals to look for the following indicators in identifying victims of trafficking:

- Living with employer
- Poor living conditions
- Multiple people in cramped space
- Inability to speak to individual alone
- Answers appear to be scripted and rehearsed
- Signs of physical abuse

- Submissive or fearful
- Unpaid or paid very little
- Under 18 and in prostitution
- Lack of identification documents

6. Why don't trafficked victims leave "the life"?

Traffickers use **violence, threats, deception, debt bondage, and other manipulative tactics** to trap victims in horrific situations every day in America. Victims face many challenges in accessing help. Traffickers may confiscate a victim's identification and money. Victims may not speak English. They may not know where they are because they have been moved frequently. They are often not allowed to communicate with family or friends. **And they may have trouble trusting others, due to their traffickers' manipulation and control tactics.** For many, their trafficker has provided the only "home" they know. If a victim is able to escape, they usually have no other means to support themselves, and have neither a place to live nor a support system on which they can depend. Consequently, even when help is offered, victims often return to their traffickers time and again.

7. What does New York State do to combat sex trafficking?

New York State has been a leader in the battle against trafficking, passing several laws to stiffen criminal penalties for traffickers and to assist victims, for example providing a way for victims to vacate their prostitution convictions. In 2015 New York State passed the **Trafficking Victims Protection and Justice Act (TVPJA)**. The TVPJA improves New York State's efforts to end human trafficking by enhancing protection for trafficking victims - particularly for sexually exploited children. The TVPJA increases accountability for buyers and traffickers who fuel this criminal industry and prevents re-victimization of trafficking victims by the justice system through the following measures:

- Recognizing that buying children for sex is child abuse
- Defending trafficked people from criminal prosecution
- Strengthening cases against traffickers via wiretaps
- Eliminating stigmatizing language

8. What can I do to help?

- Know the facts about trafficking
- Pass this information on to others
- If you suspect a person has been trafficked, call the **National Human Trafficking Resource Center Hotline: 888-373-7888** or text INFO or HELP to: **BeFree (233733)**
- Attend events hosted by We Were Slaves: The Jewish Community Unites Against Sex Trafficking. Follow us on Facebook and Twitter@wewereslaves or at our website <http://we-were-slaves.org/>
- Join the NY State Anti-Trafficking Coalition for updates on action and advocacy work

Sources: <http://www.polarisproject.org/index.php>,

<http://www.traffickingresourcecenter.org/>.

<http://www.tvpja.com/>,

<http://www.state.gov/j/tip/id/>,

<http://we-were-slaves.org/>,

<http://www.ncjw.org/trafficking/>