RED FLAGS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Interview Markers for Exploitation

As a victim begins to open up and share parts of his/her story, they may not yet be in a place of healing or understand coercive, fraudulent or forceful patterns, tactics or behaviors of their trafficker. They may be still in the midst of their brainwash/trauma bond and regurgitating information through that lens.

As the victim shares, mark off areas where you, as the healthy adult, can identify force, fraud or coercion in their lifetime:

Red Flags: Individual
Did the victim experience one or more of these prior to or during their exploitation?
- Physical, Emotional or Sexual abuse/trauma
- Homelessness or runaway
- Mental Instability: illness or disability
- Language barriers/immigration status
- Criminal activity affiliation

Red Flags: Societal
Does the victim have exposure or raised in an environment that exhibits:
- Acceptance of sexual and/or violence against women
- Cultural tolerance for inequality
- Cultural tolerance for exploitation of women/girls
- Glamorization of pimp or gang culture
- Hyper-sexuality

Indicators at Recruitment
- Deception/fraud
- Threats of harm to person or family member /coercion
- Abuse or threats of abuse
- Abuse of vulnerability
- Seclusion from family/friends
**Indicators at Point of Destination**
- Abuse upon arrival of destination
- Violence or threats of violence (witness to or recipient)
- Abuse of vulnerability
- Coercive tactics

**Indicators of Exploitation**
- Abuse or threats of abuse
- Violence of threats of violence
- Abuse of vulnerability
- Coercive tactics

**Trafficking Indicators**
- Exchange for money, drugs, goods or favor
- Inability to choose, inability to say no
- Third party involvement

**How They Will Interact with You**
- Manipulated and Trained to Lie
- Hesitant to talk due to mistrust
- Feel they can’t rely on police
- Victims can be in the life for so long that they don’t know how to express themselves
- By telling her what she “has to do” it comes across as no different than her trafficker
- Fear is never a good motivator for this type of victim
- Hearing a story worse than hers may help; allows her to reflect on her future

- **Fulfilling the threats of the trafficker, reinforces that he is the truth teller.**
- **Undo the “us vs. them” mentality by doing the opposite; reinforcing your desire to help and to assist them to become self-sustaining and economically empowered.**

**Challenges Facing Victims**
- Work to Develop a Relationship of Trust
- Be alert to Symptoms of Psychological Distress
- Strive to Mitigate the effects of recounting traumatic events
- avoid exacerbating feelings of shame, embarrassment or self-blame
- be sensitive to issues of gender
- be attentive to their material needs.

**Don’t Ask Obvious Questions**
- “Do you need to contribute financially to the home you live in?”
- “How old is your boyfriend?”
- “What happens if you don’t want to work tonight?”
- “Are you in the game?”
- See “Power of Coercion” & “Red Flags” to help these women identify factors.