Signs and Indicators of Human Trafficking

Be alert for signs that may indicate trafficking in persons is taking place and follow the appropriate procedures for reporting this type of incident.

Physical/Environmental Indicators

- Bruising, burns, scars, broken bones
- Tattoos, burns, or scarring to indicate "branding"
- Rape, sexual assault, sexual abuse
- Serious communicable diseases
- Injuries from violence or hazardous work conditions
- No ID (i.e., passport and/or papers)
- Escorted or closely monitored at all times
- Someone speaks for them
- In debt bondage to employer
- Live or work in unsafe conditions
- Live at or are confined to their worksite
- Exposure to toxic or hazardous materials
- Signs of lacking food, water, and/or medical care

Behavioral Indicators

- Reserved/ avoiding interaction or providing limited information
- Confusing or contradicting stories
- Inability to focus or concentrate
- Knowledge and behavior outside of typical range for age
- Wearing the wrong clothing based on the season

Emotional Indicators

- Angry
- Hostile
- Hardened
- Agitated
- Frightened
- Silent
- Anxious
- Hypervigilant
- Depressed
- Suicidal ideation
- Suicidal
- Eating disorder behaviors
- Addictions

Other Indicators

- Chronic runaway or homeless youth
- Unexplained access to large amounts of cash, prepaid cards or hotel keys
- Close association with an overly controlling adult
- In possession of material goods inconsistent with socioeconomic status
- Secret or duplicate cell phone or cell phone numbers
- References on-line escort ads, "Only Fans" postings, or uses language often associated with prostitution such as "trick", "the life", "the game"

Please note that these signs and indicators are a guide to assist in recognizing trafficking. Not all indicators listed above are present in every human trafficking situation, and the presence or absence of any of the indicators is not necessarily proof of human trafficking. It is up to law enforcement to investigate suspected cases of human trafficking and confirm cases of trafficking.