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MCHD HEALTH BLOG

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MORGAN COUNTY HEALTH DEPT.



HUMAN TRAFFICKING AWARENESS MONTH

January is Human Trafficking Awareness Month. So, what is human trafficking? According to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), human trafficking involves the use of force, fraud, or coercion to obtain some type of labor or commercial sex act. Every year, millions of men, women, and children are trafficked worldwide – including right here in the United States. It can happen in any community and victims can be any age, race, gender, or nationality. Traffickers might use violence, manipulation, false promises of well-paying jobs or romantic relationships to lure victims into trafficking situations. Language barriers, fear of their traffickers, and/or fear of law enforcement frequently keep victims from seeking help, making human trafficking a hidden crime.

Recognizing key indicators of human trafficking is the first step in identifying victims and can help save a life. Here are some common indicators the DHS shares to help recognize human trafficking:

- Does the person appear disconnected from family, friends, community organizations, or houses of worship?
- Has a child stopped attending school?
- Has the person had a sudden or dramatic change in behavior?
- Is a juvenile engaged in commercial sex acts?
- Is the person disoriented or confused, or showing signs of mental or physical abuse?
- Does the person have bruises in various stages of healing?
- Is the person fearful, timid, or submissive?
- Does the person show signs of having been denied food, water, sleep, or medical care?
- Is the person often in the company of someone to whom he or she defers? Or someone who seems to be in control of the situation, e.g., where they go or who they talk to?
- Does the person appear to be coached on what to say?
- Is the person living in unsuitable conditions?
- Does the person lack personal possessions and appear not to have a stable living situation?
- Does the person have freedom of movement? Can the person freely leave where they live? Are there unreasonable security measures?

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.

If anyone is a victim or has information/ tips of child sex crimes please contact the Morgan County Sheriff's Office at 740-962-4044 or you may submit an anonymous tip to the Southeastern Ohio Human Trafficking Task Force at <https://washingtoncountysheriff.org/tip-inquiry-form/>.