



INTRODUCTION TO HUMAN TRAFFICKING: A GUIDE FOR TEXAS EDUCATION PROFESSIONALS

Texas Human Trafficking Prevention Task Force
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AN INTRODUCTION TO HUMAN TRAFFICKING

"Every student in Texas deserves an effective and safe learning environment."

Texas Commissioner of Education Michael Williams¹

Human trafficking is a crime that is difficult to detect and the misconception is that it is only found in shady corners of city streets or dark motel rooms. Victims of this heinous crime can be found living among us. These abused women, men, and children can be found shopping in our grocery stores, riding next to us on the bus, and even attending our schools.

Human trafficking destroys a person's dignity and strips away an individual's humanity. Traffickers hold men, women, and children against their will and, through force, fraud, or coercion, make them work – many times in the sex industry – for little or no income. Victims are faced with severe and constant abuse – in some cases leading to death – and are deprived of their self-determination. At its core, human trafficking reduces humans to property and erodes the value of human life.

Under Texas and federal law, human trafficking is the recruitment, harboring, transporting, or procurement of a person for labor or services for the purpose of involuntary servitude, slavery, or forced commercial sex acts. Simply put, trafficking is the buying and selling of people for forced labor or sexual exploitation. It shares similarities to the slave trade of antiquity – being just as dangerous and damaging – but has become more hidden and more widespread. The lucrative business of human trafficking has made the crime more alluring to traffickers and the growth of everyday uses of technology has made the crime more far-reaching than ever before. A 2014 International Labour Office report estimates 18.7 million people across the globe are victims of human trafficking.² From the exploitation of those individuals, traffickers reap illegal profits in excess of \$150 billion annually.³

Texas has taken on the challenge to fight human traffickers with full force, and we have made great strides in addressing the needs of victims who are trapped and exploited in the underworld of sex and labor trafficking. Through collaborative efforts across disciplines and jurisdictions, law enforcement, policy makers, educators, non-governmental organizations, and concerned citizens have developed laws, tools, and procedures to identify, rescue, and support victims, as well as apprehend and prosecute traffickers.

In 2013, the Texas Legislature made human trafficking training for educators and other school-based personnel a priority for Texas. This manual, prepared especially for education professionals, affirms the important role school personnel play in Texas' statewide, cross-disciplinary anti-trafficking efforts. Specifically, this manual is designed to help education professionals **recognize** and **report** instances of suspected human trafficking. When you successfully **recognize** and **report**, Texas children reap the rewards.

While this crime negatively impacts society and various populations within it, this manual specifically focuses on Texas school-aged children. Each year, nearly 5,000,000 students attend Texas public or charter schools.⁴ These students are served by over 600,000 teachers, administrators, and other staff.⁵ The nearly 5 million Texas students, along with the 600,000 plus education professionals deserve safe, productive learning environments free from the influences of those who may exploit our children. Within this large student population, certain children are more at risk than others.⁶ Unfortunately, there are students who are being victimized by labor or sex traffickers in and outside of our schools. These students represent innocent children – sons, daughters, grandsons, granddaughters, nieces and nephews – yet traffickers see these children as a commodity to exploit for profit.

A well-informed professional is a tremendous ally in the efforts across Texas to protect children and can play a part in reducing the negative impact of this crime. Education professionals and school districts of all sizes have long been champions in providing safer schools for our children. Most schools are equipped to handle various security issues; however, human trafficking is an emerging threat to our schools. Schools must meet this new challenge by proactively addressing human trafficking. Just by being aware and taking added steps to **report**, members of the education profession can serve a special role in the fight against human trafficking.

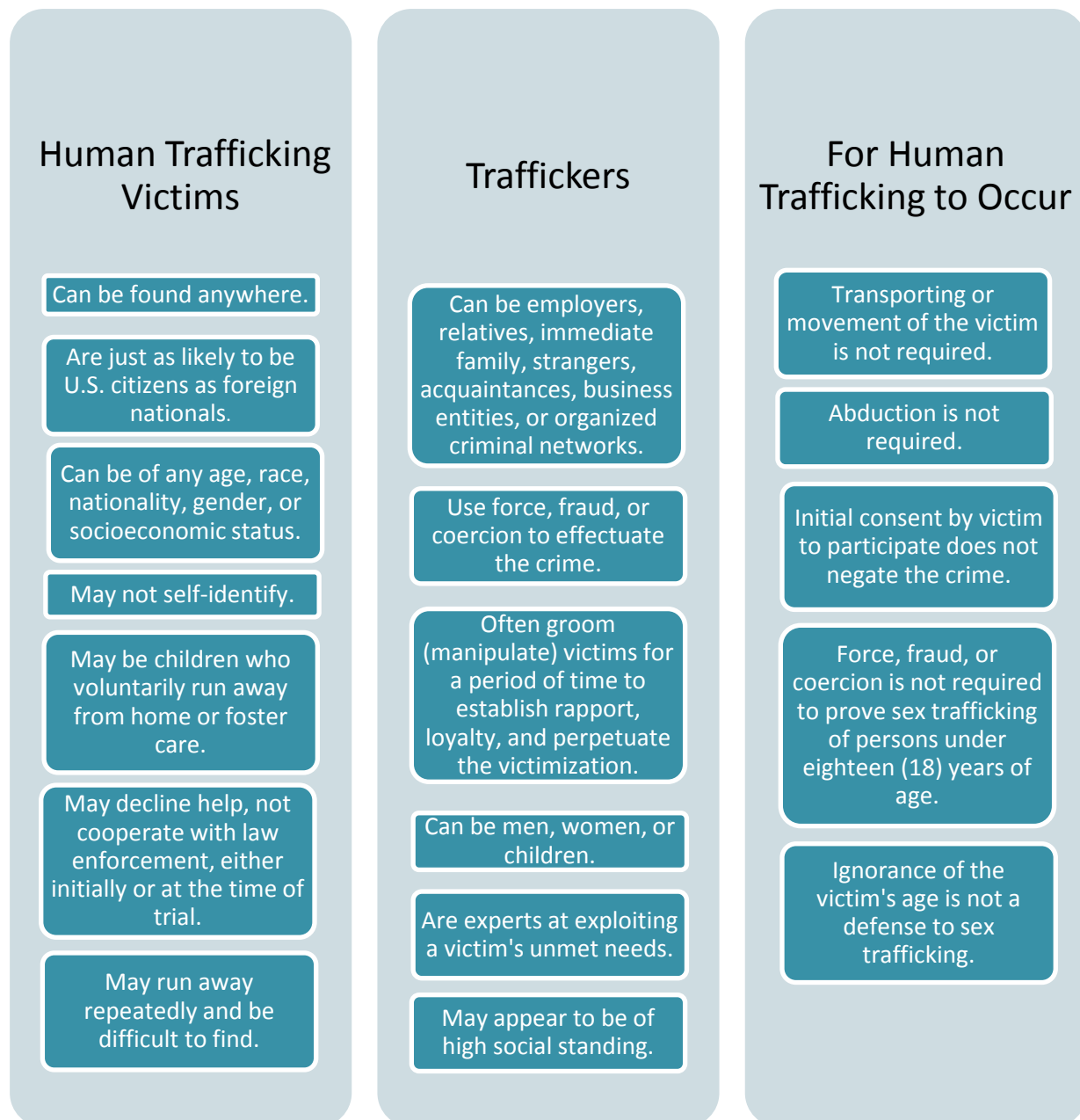
The purpose of this manual is to equip you with the knowledge you need to understand human trafficking, **recognize** how it might look for children in your school, realize why this pervasive crime must be **reported**, and take the proper steps when reporting the crime. While the topic of human trafficking may be a new subject, education professionals are well trained in identifying and reporting child abuse. Human trafficking is a form of child abuse under Section 261.001, Texas Family Code, and it must be reported to law enforcement or the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) within 48 hours of suspected abuse. While the indicators of human trafficking may be different – though not markedly – from the abuse and neglect indicators you are trained to identify, the reporting mechanism will likely be identical. This means the reporting framework is already in place to help you create a more secure learning environment that will counter the efforts of traffickers. As an educator, administrator, counselor, law enforcement officer, or other staff member in a Texas school, we ask you to **recognize and report** human trafficking when you suspect it.

In this manual you will be provided with information on:

- The realities of human trafficking,
- Federal and state laws defining and prohibiting human trafficking,
- Human trafficking as a form of abuse,
- Risk factors for school-aged children,
- Indicators of human trafficking,
- Approaches to responding to an outcry,
- How to report human trafficking,
- Proactive approaches for school districts, and
- Resources for further information.

REALITIES OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Using this specifically prepared educators' manual, you will be able to recognize common risk factors and indicators related to trafficking and understand how to report suspected trafficking. However, there are several common misconceptions about the crime that must first be countered. The chart below highlights several realities of human trafficking which counter those misconceptions and provides you with a broad foundation to guide you as you read through this manual. Understanding these realities is the first step in **recognizing** and **reporting** human trafficking.



TYPES OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Human trafficking can be difficult to identify, which is why it is important to understand the types of trafficking so you can **recognize** and subsequently **report** the crime. Human trafficking is classified as either labor or sex trafficking – with some individuals exploited for both labor and sexual services.

Texas has seen many human trafficking cases involving labor and sex, with men, women, boys, and girls being victimized. It can occur anywhere and to anyone. While it may be easy to assume your community is immune from the occurrence of human trafficking, individuals have been recruited, victimized, and rescued from all across the state.

LABOR TRAFFICKING

Labor trafficking may be present in many settings – examples from Texas cases include forced labor in door-to-door sales, domestic servitude, magazine sales, agriculture, beauty salons, restaurants, and bars. Victims are required to work long hours in often inhumane conditions. Labor trafficking victims may speak of working long hours, appear malnourished, wear dirty clothing, or lack even minimal amounts of sleep.

Texas' geography and economic environment makes it an attractive location for labor trafficking. In addition to the examples listed above, labor trafficking can be found in factories, manufacturing, construction, or the hospitality industry. Workers may be fraudulently offered legitimate work; however, it becomes trafficking when the trafficker withholds pay or requires the workers to pay exorbitant fees for food and housing – essentially sending the person into debt bondage. Instances of labor trafficking are complex and may not be obvious.

SEX TRAFFICKING

Commercial sex trafficking is generally managed by a trafficker often referred to as a “pimp.” Pimps are not the flamboyant hustler as portrayed in a Hollywood movie. Pimps in the sex trafficking trade are violent, ruthless, and view trafficking victims as property – inanimate objects to be sold over and over.

Sex trafficking victims may be lured into the commercial sex business by a trafficker who pretends to befriend them and appears to be willing to meet all of a victim's needs only to later repeatedly brutalize him or her. Every aspect of the victim's life is controlled by the trafficker. Traffickers often use alcohol or drugs to develop the victim's dependency as a form of control and/or to desensitize the victim to the exploitation.

Sex trafficking victims also rarely self-identify. They may not see themselves as a victim, or they may see themselves as worthless. They typically fear retribution from their trafficker. Many

are taught to distrust law enforcement, further hindering their desire to report their victimization or to ask for help.

CHILD SEX TRAFFICKING

Traffickers are motivated to exploit children through the trading or buying of illegal sexual acts for profit. Traffickers target vulnerable children and lure them into prostitution through psychological manipulation, drugs, and/or violence. Traffickers create seemingly loving and caring relationships with their victim in order to establish their trust and allegiance. The bond the trafficker creates with the child victim ensures the child remains loyal to the trafficker even after the child is rescued.

Children are at an inherent risk of being sought out and recruited by traffickers. In its report, *The National Report on Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking: America's Prostituted Children*, Shared Hope International reported the average age a child is first exploited is as young as 12 to 14.⁷ Once the child is indoctrinated into the life of prostitution, they accept the fact that a lifetime of sexual exploitation is what is expected.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND HUMAN SMUGGLING: KNOW THE DIFFERENCE

It is important to note there is a difference between human trafficking and human smuggling. Some individuals who are smuggled do become victims of human trafficking; however, not all victims of trafficking have been smuggled. The chart below lays out the important distinctions between the two crimes.⁸

Human Trafficking	Human Smuggling
Traffickers use force, fraud, or coercion to recruit and manipulate victims. The initial consent of victims who might agree or appear to agree to forced labor or sex acts does not negate the crime.	Individuals agree to be smuggled.
Human trafficking is a crime committed against an individual.	Human smuggling is a crime committed against a country.
A victim of trafficking does not have to be moved or transported.	Human smuggling requires being transported across an international border.

FEDERAL AND STATE HUMAN TRAFFICKING LAWS

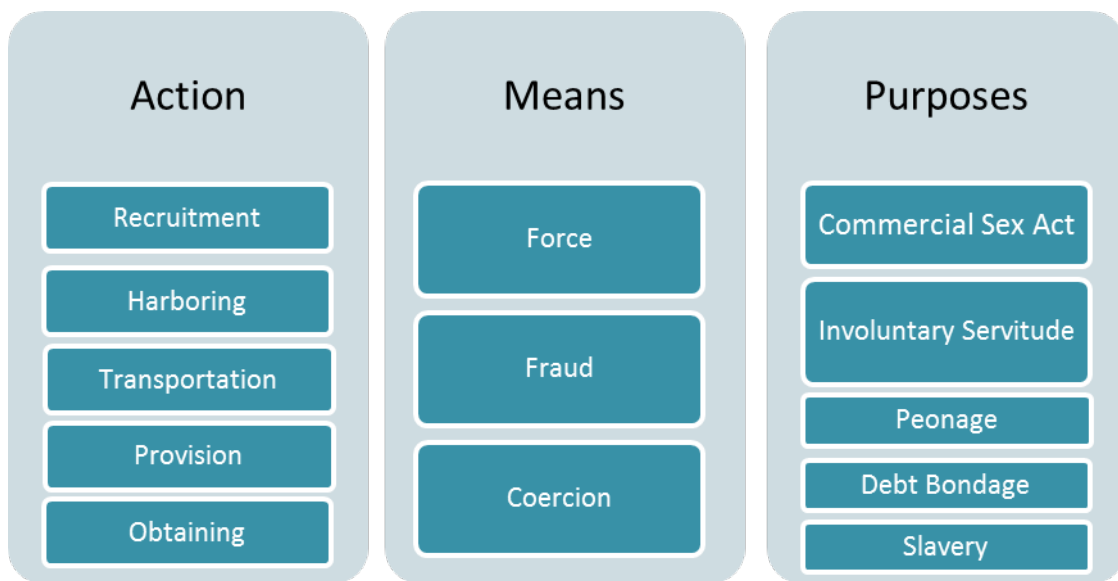
Human trafficking is a serious crime under both federal and Texas state law. While it is not your role as an education professional to investigate human trafficking, your understanding of these statutes is necessary to appropriately recognize and report human trafficking, thus increasing the likelihood of victim identification.

FEDERAL LAW

The federal human trafficking law, known as the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA)⁹ defines human trafficking as:

- the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for the purposes of a commercial sex act, in which a commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or ***in which the person induced to perform such act has not attained 18 years of age***; or
- labor or services, through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery.

Traffickers may employ emotional or psychological manipulation, physical violence, sexual assault as a means of force. Fraud may occur with traffickers enticing children or adults with employment opportunities, only to end up performing other forced labor. Traffickers may also use blackmail or threats against victims or their families as coercive methods to force individuals to work for them. **When the victim of sex trafficking is a child, proof of force, fraud, or coercion is *not* required.**



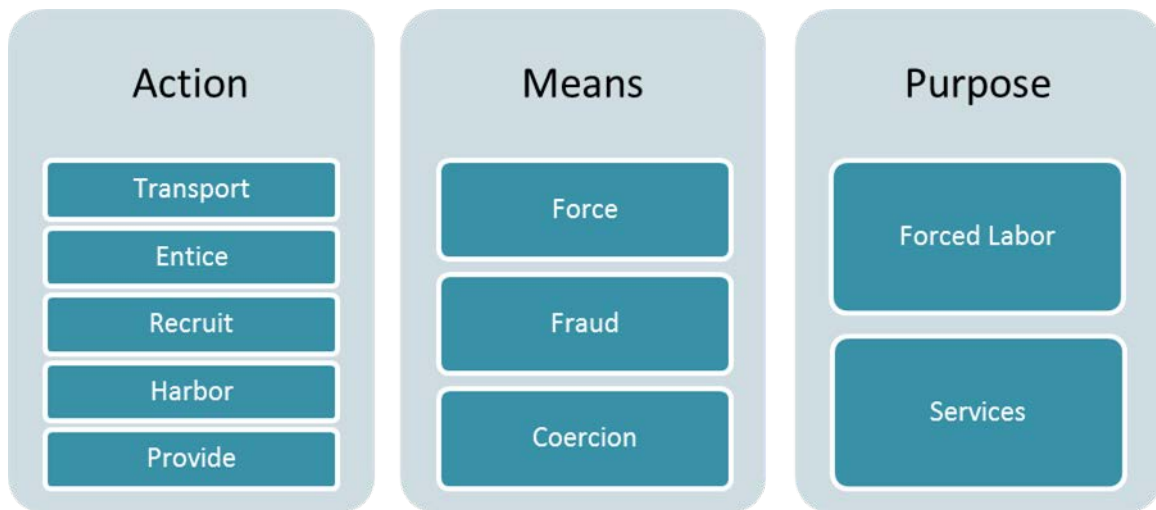
STATE LAW

The Texas Penal Code defines the crime of trafficking of persons as the use of force, fraud, or coercion against an individual to receive or benefit from labor or commercial sex acts.¹⁰ Human trafficking is divided into four categories. There are two main categories – sex and labor – with separate subcategories within each for children and adults. Texas recognizes the seriousness of the crime, and those accused of trafficking may be tried and punished as felons.

LABOR TRAFFICKING

Under Texas law, labor trafficking occurs when a person:

- knowingly traffics another person (transports, entices, recruits, harbors, **or** provides)
- **with the intent** that the trafficked person engage in forced labor or services
- utilizing force, fraud, or coercion in cases involving both adults and children¹¹



SEX TRAFFICKING: ADULTS

While it is less likely educational professionals will encounter adult victims in an educational setting, unless a student is over the age of 18, you may encounter adult sex trafficking in your work with families or in other settings. Since one of the goals of this manual is to increase your overall understanding of this issue, the inclusion of adult victim is important. As it appears in the Texas law, sex trafficking occurs when a person:

- knowingly traffics another person (transports, entices, recruits, harbors, or provides)
- utilizing force, fraud, or coercion in cases involving adults
- causes the person to engage in prostitution, promotion of prostitution, aggravated promotion of prostitution, or compelling prostitution¹²

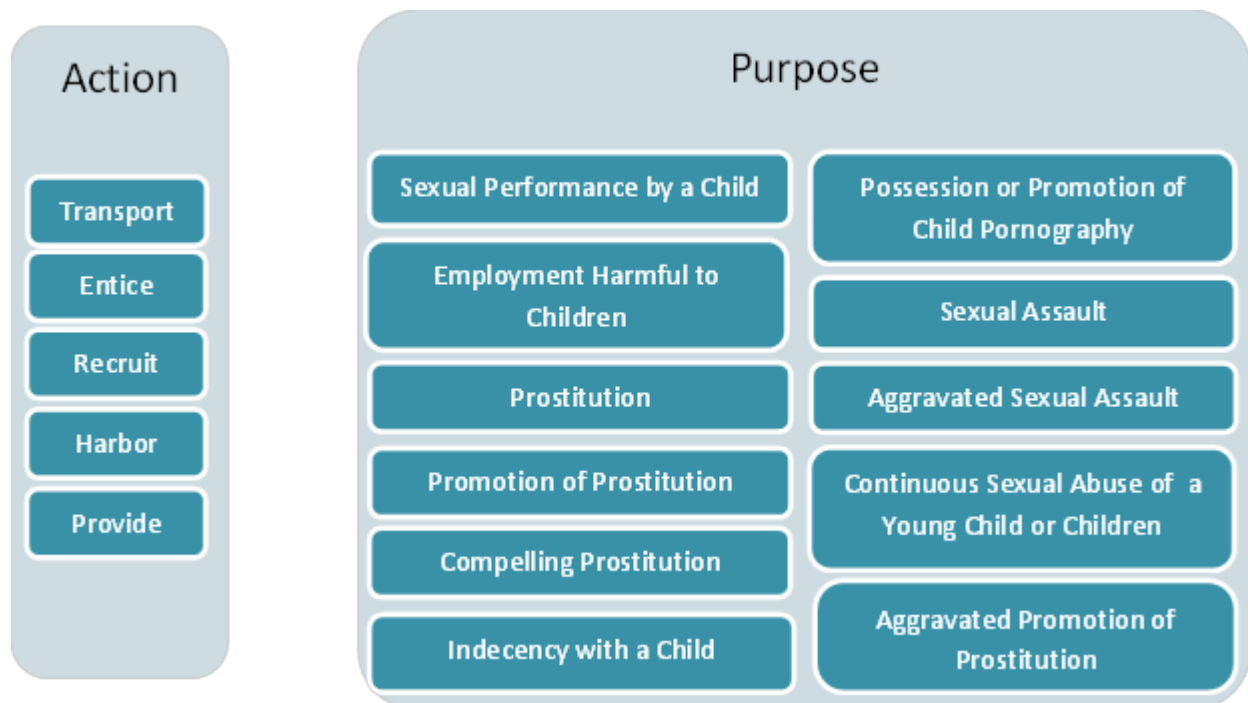
Again, the traffickers use force, fraud, or coercive means to make victims perform sexual services. Victims who were forced to sell sex have been found in bars, massage parlors, other sexually oriented businesses, and on the Internet.

SEX TRAFFICKING: CHILDREN

Texas provides the laws to help respond to child sex trafficking. In part, the law applies when a person:

- traffics a child (transports, entices, recruits, harbors, or provides) under the age of 18
- and causes by any means
- the child to engage in or become the victim of: continuous sexual abuse, indecency with a child, sexual assault, aggravated sexual assault, prostitution, promotion of prostitution, aggravated promotion of prostitution, compelling prostitution, sexual performance of child, employment harmful to children, or possession/promotion of child pornography¹³

The primary difference between adult and child sex trafficking is child sex trafficking does *not* require force, fraud, or coercion. The chart below illustrates the legal requirements of child sex trafficking through the use of “Action” and “Purpose.” Notice that unlike adult trafficking, “Means” are not required for child sex trafficking to occur. **Note that a child under 17 cannot consent to engage in a sex act. This means even a victim who is perceived to be a willing participant in sex acts is still a victim under the law.**



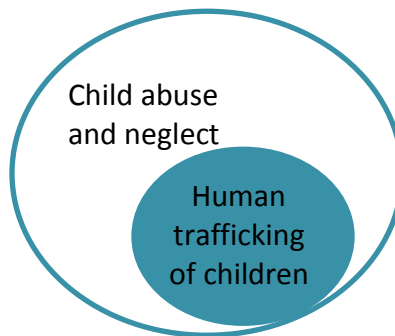
HUMAN TRAFFICKING: A FORM OF ABUSE

Since 2003, Texans have put forth a tremendous effort to strengthen our laws and provide protection for trafficking victims. Your ability to **recognize** and **report** suspected trafficking plays a significant role in helping child victims. With an understanding and working knowledge of child abuse and mandatory reporting, education professionals are already equipped to **recognize** a victim of human trafficking and make a **report** to the proper authorities.

As depicted in Figure 1 below,¹⁴ sex and labor trafficking of children are included within Texas Family Code, Section 261.001, which defines abuse to include – among others – the following human trafficking-related acts or omissions by a person:

- compelling or encouraging the child to engage in sexual conduct, including conduct that constitutes an offense of trafficking of persons, prostitution, or compelling prostitution;¹⁵ or
- knowingly causing, permitting, encouraging, engaging in, or allowing a child to be trafficked or the failure to make a reasonable effort to prevent a child from being trafficked.¹⁶

FIGURE 1: HUMAN TRAFFICKING AS A FORM OF CHILD ABUSE



The Texas Family Code also addresses the mandatory **reporting** of child abuse, including human trafficking. The law provides any person who has reason to believe that a child has been abused or neglected shall make a **report** to law enforcement or DFPS.¹⁷ As you may already be aware, for teachers and other certain education professionals, the duties for **reporting** are more stringent – requiring **reports** to be made not later than the 48th hour after the professional has suspected the abuse.¹⁸ The law also prohibits the delegation of the child abuse **report**. For example, if a teacher suspects child abuse or neglect, then he or she may not delegate the **report** to the school principal regardless of school policy.

Once a **report** has been made, the investigative process commences. Those cases involving abuse or neglect at the hands of a traditional caretaker will be investigated by DFPS. All other cases must be handled by a law enforcement agency. In some regions, these instances of suspected trafficking may be forwarded to law enforcement personnel who specialize in human trafficking cases. Your **reporting** is crucial to providing a timely and appropriate response that can benefit potential victims.

TRAFFICKING OF OUR YOUTH

While it is difficult to list all of the ways in which individuals can be exploited by traffickers, the charts below provide some guidance.¹⁹ It provides examples of the services youth are forced to provide by traffickers, and the places the victims are often found. Thinking about trafficking in these contexts may provide you with additional ways to **recognize** victims.

TRAFFICKING OF OUR YOUTH: Forced Services

Sex Trafficking

Street Prostitution

Brothel Prostitution

Escort Services

Exotic Dancing, Stripping

Pornography

Labor Trafficking

Domestic Servitude

Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing

Construction, Service Industry, Manual Labor

Peddling and Begging (Sales Crews)

TRAFFICKING OF OUR YOUTH: Places

Sex Trafficking

Streets

Commercial—Front Brothels

Residential Brothels

Online

Hotels, Motels

Truck Stops

Hostess Clubs, Bars

Massage Parlors

Sexually Oriented Businesses

Small Businesses

Labor Trafficking

Homes

Farms, Ranches

Construction Sites, Factories

Neighborhoods, Public Places

Hotels, Restaurants

SCHOOLS: LOCATIONS OF OPPORTUNITY

Human trafficking is not an abstract concept that occurs in a faraway land. It occurs in Texas, and most often to our most vulnerable children – those who are missing, in foster care, have run away from home, or have been abused and neglected.²⁰ Traffickers may not hold their victims captive, but rather employ physical, psychological, and emotional controls over them. When out of the trafficker’s presence, the child may participate in normal social activities during the day and interact with people in their community.²¹ Many trafficking victims continue to attend school even during their victimization, which is why your ability to **recognize** and **report** is important. In some cases, victims are also recruited or manipulated while on school grounds. In many ways, schools are the ultimate location of opportunity for traffickers, similar to other child offenders, as schools are populated by vulnerable students. However, schools also provide an opportunity for individuals to notice risk factors and indicators related to trafficking, which may assist in the prevention of human trafficking or facilitate the rescue of a victim by law enforcement. Your role as an education professional should not be overlooked as Texas continues its efforts to combat human trafficking.

Victim Considerations: School-based Trafficking

Traffickers assert control over every aspect of a victim’s life. Because of this, school personnel should be aware that individuals seen with students may be responsible for their continued exploitation. Children may be dropped off or picked up at school by their traffickers – to include parents, relatives, boyfriends or girlfriends, other students, or community members. Students may also be contacted while in school by their traffickers through in-person appearances, mobile or Internet-based technology, or other means.

TRAFFICKERS RECRUIT AND PROFIT

Often times the victimization of children by human traffickers is a crime of opportunity driven by the motivation for profit. Traffickers commit this crime to earn money for themselves or the criminal networks for which they are a part. Children in general, and specifically at-risk children, are susceptible to the lure of a better life (material goods, attention and/or affection) that the trafficker represents. The concentration of children in the vicinity of schools provides the trafficker ample opportunities to target children and offer the facade of happiness. This phenomenon highlights the important role education professionals play in the **recognition** and **reporting** of trafficked children. This role is of such importance to the future of our children that efforts are underway across Texas to train educational professionals on the issue.

Schools have been and will continue to be recruiting grounds for those who exploit school-aged children. Because traffickers prey on the vulnerabilities of potential victims, school settings provide an environment where those vulnerabilities can be readily identified by those who could do harm to children. Traffickers may be adults, parents, gang members, and,

unfortunately, even fellow students. Traffickers may recruit the victim themselves, or use other victims who attend the school to serve as recruiters.²²

Cases exist where victims have been recruited during recess, and others were victims have been forced to provide commercial sex acts during lunch breaks.²³ Other examples of traffickers preying upon children at schools are listed below.

- An Irving, Texas, teenager was charged with human trafficking, compelling prostitution, and sexual performance by a child after it was discovered he had drugged a 15-year-old classmate, held her against her will for three days, and sold her for money and drugs. She was repeatedly forced into illegal sexual acts with men over the three-day period.²⁴
- In League City, Texas, a teenage student was charged with compelling prostitution related to a case in which the 17-year-old student drove fellow students as young as 14-years-old to the house of a man who then paid them for sex.²⁵ At least nine girls ages 14-17 are believed to have been lured into the prostitution ring.²⁶
- In Minneapolis, Minnesota, a female high school student was charged with human trafficking and promoting prostitution for posting ads for sexual services on Backpage.com and forcing a 16-year-old classmate to provide the advertised acts.²⁷
- In Fairfax, Virginia, a 26-year-old male and several associates forced multiple teenage girls into prostitution. The gang-operated sex trafficking ring forced at least eight 16-17-year-old girls into prostitution by sedating them with alcohol and drugs and repeatedly choking, beating, and sexually assaulting them to assert control. The girls were recruited at several locations, including schools.²⁸

Traffickers are increasingly using technology to facilitate their crimes. Due to the proliferation of smart phones and an internet-savvy population, through the course of the day, children can be contacted by traffickers whom they have never met. According to the Pew Research Internet Project 2010 report on social media and youth, 93% of 12-17-year-olds go online, and 63% of them do so every day.²⁹ Additionally, 75% of 12-17-year-olds now possess cell phones.³⁰ Sixty-four percent of 12-17-year-olds who own phones report being able to text while in class, and 25% report having made or received a call during class.³¹ Finally, 54% of teens have received unwanted texts or spam, 26% have been bullied or harassed via texts and phone calls, and 15% have received sexually suggestive texts, including nude images.³²

A 2012 study by the University of Southern California Annenberg Center on Communication and Policy confirms the link between trafficking and technology, saying,

“Digital and networked technologies impact visibility, coordination, transaction, exchange, and organization. These technologies therefore can impact various aspects of trafficking, from grooming, recruitment, and control of victims, to advertising, movement, and financial transactions.”³³

In other words, the nearly ubiquitous nature of the Internet and the availability of mobile technology to children make them vulnerable to all facets of a trafficking operation even if the students are considered safe within the walls of a school classroom.

Schools provide an environment heavily populated by vulnerable individuals – all of whom are subject to possible exploitation, and traffickers know this. Through technology, traffickers also have the ability to communicate with almost any student in any district. This means students in your classroom may be actively trafficked during class, or that you may be able to identify potential trafficking as it occurs.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR EDUCATION PROFESSIONALS

School settings also provide education professionals with unique opportunities to **recognize** potential trafficking victims. Because students spend a large amount of time at school, teachers, administrators, counselors, school-based law enforcement, and other staff members are in positions to observe students over long periods of time. In some instances, the observations education professionals make regarding behavioral and social changes in a child may serve as key indicators something is wrong. These observations can produce opportunities for school personnel to make difficult, yet life-altering, decisions on behalf of students by **reporting** instances of suspected abuse or neglect. In 2013, the Texas Commissioner of Education highlighted the important role the public education system plays in abuse reporting, noting that the 35,100 investigations of suspected child abuse and neglect completed by DFPS in 2012 were a result of **reports** from school personnel.³⁴ In fact, school personnel “represent the largest professional resource for reporting suspected child abuse and neglect in Texas.”³⁵

The National Human Trafficking Resource Center (NHTRC) has identified school personnel as a source of “highly valuable information on trafficking trends and potential human trafficking cases” because many victims still attend school, and educators are trained to observe changes in a child’s emotional, physical, and social well-being.³⁶ One of the goals of this manual is to leverage the important role education professionals play in enhancing our children’s futures.

Success Story

A middle school teacher in Richmond, Virginia, helped facilitate the rescue of two sisters who were being trafficked by their parents. The girls – ages 13 and 14 – were in front of a local movie theater when the teacher saw them. It was 30 degrees, and the girls were dressed in revealing clothing the teacher felt was inappropriate. The teacher also overheard a man ask the girls’ father “how much he wanted for both of them?” She called local authorities. The police investigated and found the parents had been forcing the girls to provide sexual services to men in exchange for money, food, and clothing.³⁷

It is essential for the future of Texas that children – not traffickers – have the opportunity to thrive in schools. For this to occur, it is important education professionals are knowledgeable of the risk factors and indicators related to human trafficking and on the appropriate responses to possible incidents of trafficking.

RISK FACTORS FOR SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN

As an education professional, you should be aware that any child can be vulnerable to human traffickers. Victims are even recruited and lured from families who assume trafficking is too dark a crime to happen to them and from communities that consider trafficking to be too harsh an offense to occur in their neighborhoods. Human trafficking victims can be of any age, sex, race, religion, socioeconomic status, or country of origin. They can be found in inner-cities, suburbs, rural areas, and even schools.

While there is no definitive victim type, research shows there are certain factors that can place an individual at a higher risk of being trafficked. For example, according to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, from January 1, 2004, to June 30, 2012, 59.7% of over 7,000 missing children cases – which include runaways – involving possible sex trafficking nationwide involved children in foster care or group home settings, suggesting foster children are especially at risk for becoming a victim of trafficking.⁴² In 2013, Texas had 30,740 kids in foster care – a sizeable population of at risk youth.⁴³

Texas also has a large runaway population that is at risk. In 2012, the Texas Youth and Runaway Hotline received 9,011 calls.⁴⁴ Additionally, according to the Texas Department of Public Safety, Texas law enforcement officers took into custody 10,254 juvenile runaways in the same year.⁴⁵ Because children who are runaways typically lack resources, they are vulnerable to many forms of exploitation, including trafficking.⁴⁶ Additionally, those children who frequently runaway may be at even greater risk of being recruited and lured into trafficking.⁴⁷

Relatedly, in Texas during the state fiscal year 2013, Child Protective Services completed 160,240 investigations of child abuse or neglect with 66,398 confirmed victims of child abuse or neglect.⁴⁸ These children may end up in foster or group homes or choose to runaway to escape the abuse and neglect they are suffering at the hands of their caretakers. This, too, makes them a target for traffickers.

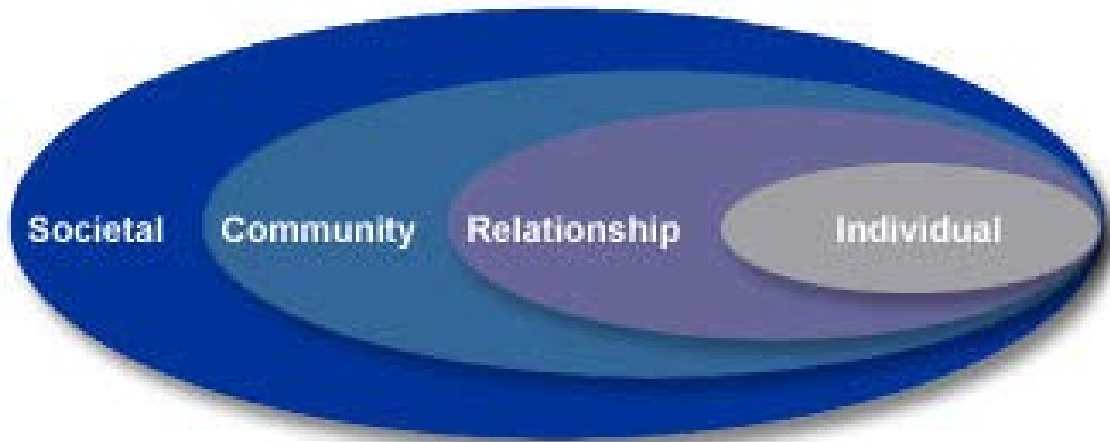
Foster Care in Focus

According to the Texas Education Agency, “On any given day, there are approximately 16,000 school-aged children and youth in Texas schools who are in foster care”.³⁸ These children may have come from “chaotic home environments” and move frequently, causing them to have lagging emotional or academic development.³⁹ Students in foster care are also almost twice as likely as other students to receive in-school suspensions and three times as likely to receive out-of-school suspensions.⁴⁰ Because these factors are similar to those that are often exploited by traffickers, school personnel should work to address the needs of foster children in their district. One way to do this is by partnering with your district’s Foster Care Liaison. The Foster Care Liaison is a statutorily mandated employee who works with DFPS to facilitate the enrollment and transfer of records of children in DFPS custody.⁴¹ For more information on the role of the Foster Care Liaison or on foster children in Texas schools, please see [Foster Care & Student Success Resource Guide](#) published by the Texas Education Agency.

All of these children are at a higher risk of being exploited by traffickers due to the compounding effects of several at-risk variables, such as but not limited to: physical, emotional, or sexual abuse, neglect, and their presence in the foster care system.⁴⁹

Figure 2 depicts risk factors traffickers identify and use to manipulate potential victims.⁵⁰ The risk factors included are not all-inclusive, nor must a student possess a certain number of risk factors. Anyone can become a victim of trafficking, but the figure provided below may help you to identify those students at the highest-risk of becoming exploited by traffickers.

FIGURE 2: HUMAN TRAFFICKING RISK FACTORS FOR SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN



Societal Risk Factors	Community Risk Factors	Relationship Risk Factors	Individual Risk Factors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of awareness of trafficking • Sexualization of children • Lack of Resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social norms • Gang involvement • Under resourced schools, neighborhoods, and communities • Lack of willingness to address trafficking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family conflict, disruption, or dysfunction • Peer pressure • Unhealthy relationships • Social isolation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • History of child abuse, neglect, or maltreatment • Homeless, runaway, or “thrown-away” • Stigma and discrimination • History of being systems involved (e.g., juvenile justice, criminal justice, foster care) • LGBT • Truant • Delinquency • Substance abuse • Adolescent development • Disability • Poverty • Mental health • Low self esteem

TRAFFICKERS EXPLOIT RISK FACTORS

Traffickers prey upon vulnerabilities they can exploit to maintain control, and at-risk populations, by definition, are susceptible to this type of manipulation. Therefore, school personnel need to be sensitive to possible exploitation and conditions lucrative to trafficking within these groups. While most cases involve at-risk populations, many individuals not necessarily considered to be part of an at-risk population may also become victims.

Just like trafficking may occur in many different places and under many different circumstances, traffickers are also not the same. For example, pimp-controlled sex trafficking can be at the hands of a pimp who acts as a boyfriend, father-figure, or a manager.⁵¹ The pimp gains and maintains control through false love, brutal beatings, or a combination of the two.⁵²

Sex traffickers also exploit vulnerabilities. Child sex traffickers will use false love, false affection, flattery, gifts, violence, threats, lies, or false promises as a form of manipulation, then control to ensure the child is successfully recruited into and remains involved in the commercial sex

Victim Considerations: Vulnerabilities and Recruitment

Whether for labor or sex trafficking, no child is immune from the threats posed by traffickers. Traffickers prey on the vulnerabilities of individuals, and as such, children from all backgrounds may become vulnerable to the recruitment and grooming techniques of traffickers. Even students lacking perceived vulnerabilities could become susceptible to traffickers due to unforeseen circumstances – like the death of a family member, issues with their parents, loss of economic support, sexual or physical abuse, unmet emotional needs, low self-esteem, or other variables. Once the child has been exploited, many acquiesce to their trafficker because they feel helpless, do not believe they have options, and may believe they are not worthy of better treatment.

industry. Furthermore, the conditions a victim may suffer at the hands of a trafficker may be perceived to be better than the conditions the victim suffered at home. For example, a child victim may choose to run away from physical, sexual, and emotional abuse at home only to suffer an alternative sexual exploitation by a pimp.

When an individual is trafficked by their parent, guardian, extended family member, or spouse, it is referred to as familial trafficking.⁵³ Just like other traffickers, this type of trafficker exploits victims for labor or sexual services.⁵⁴

Some labor traffickers force victims into begging or peddling. Often times, they prey on homeless youth or foreign

nationals.⁵⁵ Many times, they recruit their victims by promising love, safety, and economic security, and they control them through physical, sexual, and verbal abuse.⁵⁶

Finally, it is worth noting that traveling sales crews may be run by traffickers posing as managers.⁵⁷ Like other labor traffickers, they recruit victims by promising them good-paying work.⁵⁸ Once recruited, the victims are forced to work long hours for little or no pay, and are controlled through physical, sexual, or verbal abuse.⁵⁹

Often, victims are lured by the trafficker with promises of a better life, money, or love. This exploitation of risk factors may be similar for labor and sex trafficking victims. For example, an international victim of labor trafficking may have come to Texas under the false promise of a high-paying job only to be forced into domestic servitude. Similarly, a teenager who was living on the streets may have agreed to sell magazines door-to-door for what he understood to be a livable wage, only to find out he was being charged an exorbitant amount for rent and food costs, thereby relegating him to debt bondage.

Traffickers are professional manipulators. They frequently create bonds with their victims that may make the victim not contemplate escape, or have no desire to be rescued. Additionally, many victims who are rescued suffer from “trauma bonding” meaning they have positively identified with their trafficker and view the abuse they have suffered as love.⁶⁰ This “trauma bonding” means some trafficking victims may return or seek to return to their trafficker after rescue.⁶¹ It is important to realize this behavior is a result of the exploitative actions – and often physical, sexual, and mental abuse – of the trafficker and should not be a reason to invalidate the seriousness of the crime or create negative perceptions of the victims. It also underscores the need for victims receive the appropriate services.

Child sex trafficking victims may display certain characteristics and vulnerabilities that differ from adult victims. Making accurate and early assessments of this vulnerable population is critical. The table on page 20 highlights some of the risk factors for children and the means by which traffickers manipulate them.

Child Victim Backgrounds

Troubled youth looking for a sense of belonging

Insufficient attention and affection in the home

Lack of supervision in the home

Unstable or lack of family structure

Drugs or alcohol abuse in the home

History of physical or sexual abuse in the home

Exposure to the juvenile justice system

Placement in foster care

Peer pressure

Child Sex Trafficking Recruiting Grounds

Schools (word of mouth through other students)

Youth sports events

Social networking

Shopping malls

Concerts

Group foster care homes

Juvenile detention centers

Shelters

Bus stops, train stations, or subway system

Courthouses

Common Methods of Child Manipulation

Promise of love or a relationship

Sexual contact and sexual assaults to desensitize child to commercial sex

Transport child to new town

Abandon child with other victims to provide instruction

Violent beatings of other victims in child's presence (intimidation)

Threats to harm child's family

Blackmail child with pornographic images

Branding or tattooing pimp's name on child

HUMAN TRAFFICKING INDICATORS

School personnel are especially situated to **recognize** children who are victims of human trafficking. Specifically, counselors and teachers already monitor the academic, physical, social, and emotional progress of students through the duration of the school year. If education personnel and school staff understand the indicators of human trafficking, they are more likely to **recognize** victims and **report** appropriately. Below are some indicators of human trafficking.⁶² No one indicator or combination of indicators necessarily signals trafficking is occurring; however, these indicators may serve as warning signs, especially if the indicator represents a significant change in the child.

Academic

- Academically unengaged
- Performs noticeably under grade level
- Exhibits sudden changes in academic performance

Behavioral

- Avoids eye contact
- Inconsistencies in story
- Gaps in memory
- Paranoid
- Unexplained or regular absences from school
- Resists being touched

Physical

- Branded / tattoos, scars, or bruises they cannot explain or are hesitant to explain
- Appears malnourished or dehydrated
- Burns
- Shows signs of drug or alcohol addiction or abuse
- Has a sexually transmitted infection or disease
- Pregnancy – especially if they hesitate to mention who the father is
- Shows signs of physical abuse
- Sudden change of attire or material possessions (i.e. has clothing or items they cannot likely afford)
- Appears to lack basic medical attention

Emotional

- Low self-esteem
- Exhibits depression, anxiety, or fear, mood swings, erratic or defiant behavior

Social

- Has a “boyfriend” or “girlfriend” significantly older than them
- Lives in unstable or abusive home environments
- History of running away or homelessness
- Inability to look people in the eyes when speaking with them
- Has overtly sexual online profile
- Possesses sexual knowledge beyond what is normal for their age group
- Tells inconsistent stories or provides scripted answers
- Hesitant to change clothes in front of others
- Uses terms relating to prostitution such as “daddy,” “John,” “trick,” or “the life”
- Teased by other students for being sexually active or being associated with commercial sex
- Has expressed need to pay off debt
- Sudden changes in interests or friend groups
- Changes in the way the child treats others

Other

- Gang affiliation
- Has a history of living in many locations
- Does not have control over their schedule
- Possesses large amounts of cash
- Possesses hotel keys
- Possesses fake identification or no identification

As an education professional, you may notice many of the human trafficking indicators are similar to those indicators of child abuse or neglect. By familiarizing yourself with these indicators and understanding each in the context of human trafficking, you may be able to positively influence the life of a Texas school-aged child through your **recognition** and **reporting** efforts.

Please remember the role of school personnel is not to investigate human trafficking or rescue victims, but to recognize and report suspected trafficking to the appropriate authorities.

Human traffickers are likely dangerous; therefore, it is important to focus on the safety of yourself and the child. The best solution is to immediately **report** any incident to law enforcement or DFPS as required by law.⁶³ With these reports, law enforcement and DFPS can initiate the appropriate investigations into whether abuse has occurred and the child is being exploited by a trafficker.

SCHOOL PERSONNEL: MAKING A DIFFERENCE

There are many roles within an education system. Each is unique, but as a whole, the system is designed to serve the best interests of the students. Teachers, administrators, counselors, staff members, and school-based law enforcement all play major parts in providing a positive and successful learning environment. Members of each group may also personally encounter or suspect human trafficking as it relates to students. Your ability to **recognize** and **report** suspected human trafficking is essential to protecting the integrity of our classrooms and the innocence of our children.

TEACHERS

To students, classroom instructors are the face of most schools. Teachers interact the most with students, teaching them and witnessing their development over the course of the school year. Teachers may also have the most firsthand knowledge of students' relationships, family life, stressors, and successes. It should be no surprise, then, that teachers may be able to most easily identify possible victims of human trafficking in schools.

When applying trafficking indicators to the classroom, teachers would most likely notice several indicators. The student's academic performance may drop and their anxiety and fear over going home, to work, or what they will do after school may increase. Bruises, scarring, and tattoos may also be noticeable. These are especially significant if the student cannot or refuses to explain their origin. A dramatic shift in the way the child dresses – perhaps wearing clothes they would not typically be able to afford – could signal they are being groomed by a trafficker.

ADMINISTRATORS

Even though they are mostly removed from the classroom, administrators also have a significant role to play in anti-trafficking efforts. Administrators by definition have a “big picture view” of the school and its surroundings. Administrators likely know of any types of threats, gangs, or individuals who may be lingering around the school who should not be. Additionally, administrators may be more familiar with those students who are part of an at-risk population. By observing the major trends of students who are part of an at-risk population and understanding the surroundings of the school, administrators may be able to **recognize** trafficking recruitment efforts, potential trafficking victims, or possible offenders before the child is harmed.

COUNSELORS

Unlike teachers who may have a view of students in the classroom and halls, school counselors may be able to recognize student trends across all aspects of their academic, social, and emotional development. This broad view of a student's performance may provide school counselors with additional information that could serve as indicators of human trafficking. For example, a student who has a sudden drop in grades in one class may not be as troubling as the student whose academic performance has dropped across all classes. The former may be a problematic outlier, but the latter may be evidence of a larger issue in the life of the child.

School counselors are also often responsible for guiding students through difficult personal or emotional stressors and finding unique ways to engage students or build relationships with and between students. Since part of their job function is relational, school counselors may be presented with information other school personnel would not. For example, a student may be called into the counselor's office to discuss their poor performance in class only to tell the counselor they are spending a lot of time with their new boyfriend or have moved in with this boyfriend. Further questioning may reveal the boyfriend to be much older, leading the counselor to suspect something possibly harmful could be occurring in the life of the child.

SCHOOL-BASED LAW ENFORCEMENT

Many schools now have been assigned full-time law enforcement officers whose duty is to serve and protect those individuals in or around the school. School-based law enforcement personnel are unique in that they have arrest and investigatory powers other school personnel do not. In September 2013, the [Texas Office of the Attorney General](#) published a human trafficking manual specific to law enforcement officers. The [Introduction to Human Trafficking: A Guide for Criminal Justice Professionals](#) will provide you with the information necessary to identify victims of human trafficking, understand the unique needs of victims, interact with victims of human trafficking, and create a Response Plan to quickly address the needs of victims and begin the investigative process. A list of resources is also enclosed.

SUPPORT STAFF

Other members of the education community may also be in a position to identify and report a possible victim of human trafficking. Librarians, janitors, bus drivers, school nurses, maintenance workers, and other school staff may be faced with situations in which they noticed possible indicators of human trafficking. Any of these staff may overhear conversation that is overly sexualized in nature and not age appropriate, find a lost cell phone with explicit pictures or text messages, notice physical signs like bruises or tattoos, or even take note of older individuals loitering around the school waiting to pick up school children to whom they are not related. Like other education professionals, support staff can play an important role in identifying possible victims of human trafficking and reporting them to the appropriate authorities.

TRAFFICKING SCENARIOS

Human trafficking can manifest itself in many ways. Each instance is full of different indicators, victim characteristics, and offender types. Below are a few scenarios that represent possible ways trafficking may occur in schools or with school-aged children. These scenarios do not represent the entire universe of trafficking. Instead, they are used here solely as examples. Education professionals will need to rely on their training, ability to **recognize** trafficking, and methods of **reporting** to best serve Texas' children.

SCENARIO ONE: TEACHER

Chris is a 12-year-old boy who recently moved to the area and enrolled in the local middle school. After a few weeks in his new school, his teacher realizes he is performing well below grade level and his attendance is spotty. He misses class at least twice a week, but never provides an explanation. When Chris is in class, his clothes are always dirty; he is exhausted, and appears malnourished.

One day, Chris was caught by his teacher sneaking some extra snacks from the cafeteria into his bag. While the teacher had compassion for Chris' situation, other students had also seen his attempt to steal the food, and he had to face disciplinary action. The teacher gave him after-school detention. Chris became very agitated – insisting that he had to get home right after school. Through the multiple conversations between Chris and his teacher, the fear of not getting home on time was evident. Chris never elaborated on why he could not be late, and in tears, stated he had to get home to work. After the exchange, his teacher let him go home instead of serving detention.

Chris' teacher was unable to get information from Chris on his work, but the teacher was concerned by his very real fear coupled with his general appearance and the high number of absences. In addition, he was 12, and he was working at a job he would not elaborate upon. She immediately called DFPS to **report** what she believed to be a case of possible abuse or neglect. DFPS referred to the case to law enforcement after it was determined the agency did not have jurisdiction because the abuse and neglect was not at the hands of a parent, guardian, or caretaker. After a law enforcement investigation, it was determined that Chris was a victim of labor trafficking along with his two brothers and their mother. The four of them were required to work in a field for most of the night or face physical beatings. Food and water was also withheld as a tool for forcing the victims to work.

SCENARIO TWO: ADMINISTRATOR

A high school principal had reoccurring meetings to discuss academic progress with a 15-year-old sophomore named Lexi. Lexi was an average student, but in the last couple of months, her academic performance started to drop. In addition, her attitude towards teachers and other

administrators had turned to one of rebellion. Being a well-seasoned administrator, the principal assumed the issue was likely related to typical teenage behavior. But, the principal's concern increased when he realized Lexi was dating an older man – a student who was in the same high school at least 10 years ago.

The principal also began hearing rumors from students and faculty regarding Lexi's sexual behavior – specifically that she would have sex with anyone who would pay for it. The administrator did not believe the rumors. He assumed other students were bullying Lexi. One day, another student was caught looking at sexually explicit pictures on his phone, and he was sent to the office. The principal realized the student was looking at an online profile of Lexi. Lexi had taken provocative pictures of herself and posted them on Backpage.com and other social networking sites advertising what the principal interpreted to be sexual favors in exchange for money.

When the principal asked Lexi if the pictures were of her, she unapologetically said yes. She said her boyfriend wanted her to post those pictures, so she did. She also said the online responses from men made her feel beautiful and wanted. She added that she liked making money for her boyfriend. Lexi showed no signs of physical distress. Even given her outward demeanor, the principal felt Lexi was being exploited – and he knew this type of exploitation was a form of abuse.

Following state law, the administrator contacted DFPS to **report** that Lexi may be a victim of some sort of abuse. DFPS determined the case did not fall under their jurisdiction as it did not involve a parent, guardian, or caretaker and referred it to local law enforcement. After law enforcement's investigation, it was determined that Lexi was a victim of child sex trafficking, including child pornography. The administrator's intuition was correct. Lexi's boyfriend – who was almost 25 years old – had used false affection to lure her into the sex trade. While Lexi may have **appeared** to willingly engage in commercial sex acts, as an individual under 17 years of age, she cannot legally consent to such actions nor should her behavior be viewed as voluntary since she is a child who was manipulated by an offender. The "boyfriend" was ultimately arrested on charges of human trafficking, promotion of prostitution, and possession and promotion of child pornography.

SCENARIO THREE: COUNSELOR

Michelle had a troubled background that was widely known at school. She began running away from home at the age of 10. She had been in and out of DFPS custody and had been detained several times at the local juvenile detention center. Now 17, she was living in a group home and back in the foster care system. Her academic record was checkered with multiple absences, failed classes, and several alternative education programs. The guidance counselor met with Michelle frequently to try to keep her in school and to help minimize the impact of being in foster care. One day, Michelle came into the counselor's office beaming. She had just gotten a new job. When the counselor inquired where she would be working, Michelle simply replied the job was with a man she had recently met in her neighborhood. Michelle did not

seem to have a lot of information on the job – perhaps because she had not yet started– but the counselor was glad to see Michelle taking on more adult responsibilities.

Hoping the job would help provide some stability for Michelle, the counselor was troubled when Michelle began to miss school for days at a time. It had also been reported to the counselor that Michelle had left class multiple times after receiving text messages and not returned. The counselor called her into her office to check on her. Michelle was visibly upset about the questioning and only stated that she was working – providing the names of several cities to which she had traveled in the last few weeks for work. Not only was Michelle irritable, she was borderline hostile toward the counselor. When the counselor asked if there was anything she could do for Michelle, Michelle’s response was that she was not worth helping. Then, Michelle promptly left.

Michelle’s counselor was concerned for her. Though she had a history of academic disruptions, the teacher was worried something more serious was at play – Michelle just was not herself. Michelle’s foster care status also raised concerns with the counselor given the fact that she was traveling to different cities and away from the group home. She called DFPS and made a **report**. DFPS began its investigation – bringing in the case manager and the regional investigator. The facts indicated that Michelle was likely being exploited, so the team worked with the local regional human trafficking task force to investigate further. The law enforcement investigation yielded evidence that Michelle was a victim of labor trafficking. The job she had secured from the man in her neighborhood was selling magazines door-to-door in cities across the state. She worked long hours with no pay. She was also beaten and had food withheld when she failed to obey her trafficker’s commands or produce enough revenue.

SCENARIO FOUR: SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER

Reserved, with a lack of self-confidence, Teresa – at 14-years-old – seemed like most high school freshman. However, unlike most high school freshman, within a matter of weeks after the start of school, Teresa had become known to a group of juniors and seniors. A school resource officer noticed Teresa had made friends, but he was concerned because the older students had been suspected of having gang affiliations. Every day, Teresa would leave school with two of the older students – one male and one female – both known around school for their disruptive behavior. Teresa never appeared to enjoy her time with the two, but she also never complained about them to anyone and appeared to go willingly.

As the officer began to observe Teresa over a series of weeks, he began to wonder about her safety. Teresa’s long-sleeved clothing seemed out of place for the warm weather conditions, and she was hanging around a rough crowd, but never engaging with them. When the officer mentioned his concerns to the girls’ basketball coach, it was brought to her attention that lately she has always been the last student in and out of the dressing room and she has become very physical with the other girls during practice. It was as though she feared being seen changing, but was very aggressive when given the opportunity. The coach had also overheard students questioning if she was pregnant, but was unsure if it was true.

The police officer's instincts about Teresa's situation were only validated after speaking with the coach. The officer spoke with his supervisor, and he began to look into the matter. After speaking with several other school personnel and other law enforcement officers familiar with the older students involved in the gang, he uncovered information suggesting Teresa was a victim of child sex trafficking. He immediately contacted local law enforcement to handle the investigation. Thanks to officer's quick actions, Teresa was rescued from the traffickers – her fellow students. At trial, it was shown that Teresa was forced into prostitution on a daily basis by the older students as a way for the gang to make money. She was subjected to multiple sexual assaults a day and beatings if she did not make as much money as required by the gang.

SCENARIO FIVE: SCHOOL NURSE

Mrs. Johnston was a school nurse at a small, suburban school. Although she didn't know all of the students, she knew most of them fairly well. During her career, Mrs. Johnston had seen almost everything from abdominal pain to vertigo. Most of the ailments she addressed were minor and routine; however, one incident in her school stood out as different from the rest.

As school began for the new academic year, Mrs. Johnston noticed a 12-year-old seventh grader named Amanda. Amanda had only moved to town and started school there near the end of the previous academic year. While Mrs. Johnston did not know a lot about Amanda, she did notice her appearance. She consistently looked very tired and emotionally beleaguered. Other faculty and staff had also noticed the same things and had discussed whether or not she might be having a tough time transitioning into her new school.

A couple of weeks into the new school year, Amanda came to Mrs. Johnston's office. Amanda was clearly in pain. She was complaining of nausea and pain in her lower abdomen. Mrs. Johnston asked Amanda several questions to help figure out what may be ailing her. During their discussion, Mrs. Johnston felt Amanda may be suffering from the effects of pregnancy and possibly a sexually transmitted infection. Mrs. Johnston thought she was misreading symptoms given Amanda's young age, but felt obligated to ask if she was sexually active so she could take the proper next steps.

Responding to the question, Amanda began to cry and kept saying "This wasn't supposed to happen. It was just supposed to be a couple of times". Unsure as to what she was referring, Mrs. Johnston asked Amanda what she was talking about. At that point, Amanda confided that since she was 9-years-old, her mother had been forcing her into prostitution to support her drug habit and help pay the bills.

Recognizing the seriousness of the situation, and her obligation to report, Mrs. Johnston immediately called the DFPS abuse hotline where she repeated her story to intake personnel. DFPS promptly began investigating the claim, and, in consultation with local law enforcement, determined Amanda was a victim of child sex trafficking. The crime was facilitated by her mother and had been occurring for over three years in two different towns.

RESPONDING TO AN OUTCRY

As an education professional, you may be the first – and only – person a victim of trafficking confides in regarding their victimization. If you are the first person a child complains to of abuse or neglect, including trafficking, you may be interviewed by law enforcement and called as an “outcry witness” in courtroom proceedings.⁶⁴ This means (1) you may be called to testify, and (2) the information you gather from the child is exceedingly important. While the outcry or abuse disclosure may not last more than a few minutes, the actions taken by professionals can make a tremendous difference for the child. The 33,146 DFPS investigations of suspected abuse and neglect which were initiated by a **report** from school personnel in 2013 represent 33,146 instances in which education professionals rose to the occasion to make a positive difference on behalf of a child.⁶⁵

TIPS FOR RESPONDING TO OUTCRY

1. **Make sure you and victim are safe.** While the chances of being harmed by the trafficker at school are small, attempt to ensure the safety of yourself and the victim. This may be done by simply asking the victim if anyone is waiting on them or if they are currently in danger. You might also contact your campus security. Always call 911 and follow your local policy and procedure if immediate danger is identified.
2. **Remain calm.**⁶⁶ The bravery a victim of human trafficking must exhibit to ask for help and the trust placed in you by the victim is often tenuous. By remaining calm, you send the message that you are supportive, present, and dependable. This will encourage the child to continue with the outcry and increase the likelihood that the child would confide in you later.
3. **Assure the child they did the right thing by telling you.**⁶⁷ Let the child know they are doing the right thing by speaking with you. The child likely is saddled with self-doubt and uncertainties. Your reinforcement may be key in preventing further victimization.
4. **Do not make promises.**⁶⁸ Your role is to listen to the outcry, then report it. It is very tempting to tell a child that everything is going to be okay, but you cannot assure this. It is appropriate to tell the child that you care about their safety and want to help them.
5. **Let the child tell their story, but leave the questioning to the professionals.**⁶⁹ You should never put words into a child’s mouth or lead them to respond a certain way. Let the child tell their story the way they feel most comfortable and allow them to share what they have to say without interruptions. Only ask questions if you do not have enough information to make a report. Human trafficking victims have every aspect of their lives dictated by their trafficker. Allowing a victim to tell their story on their own terms with their own words empowers them and helps with recovery.

6. **Never confront the suspected trafficker.** Traffickers have little respect for life. Individuals are replaceable, and their victims are mere commodities bought and sold at bargain prices. Confronting a trafficker may put you and the student's life in immediate danger. ***If you believe you or the child is in immediate danger, follow your local policy – either to call 911, local law enforcement, or your campus police.***

7. **Report as required by law.**⁷⁰ After an outcry has been made, report the information to the appropriate authorities within the required 48 hour-time frame.

REPORTING SUSPECTED HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Educators are mandated reporters of suspected abuse and neglect under Texas law.⁷¹ As stated earlier, human trafficking is a form of child abuse under the Texas Family Code, meaning your requirement to **report** abuse or neglect within 48 hours of suspecting it also includes incidents of human trafficking. It is also important to note, this duty cannot be delegated to anyone else.

REPORTING MISCONCEPTIONS AND PROTECTIONS

While reporting suspected abuse or neglect is mandatory under state law, it is not necessarily easy due to misconceptions about reporting. Some people fear reporting will make the situation worse for the victim.⁷² However, victims of trafficking may be in extreme danger and often have a short life expectancy – seven years for females – once their exploitation begins, so reporting suspected abuse may save a child’s life, not make it worse.⁷³ Others fail to report because they believe such matters are private or that if the victim is really concerned, they will self-report.⁷⁴ Because of the methods of control used by traffickers, human trafficking victims rarely self-report their victimization, and many do not even self-identify as victims after their rescue, so your role as reporter is crucial to that child.⁷⁵ Finally, others may fail to report suspected abuse because they fear personal criminal or civil repercussions, especially if they are unsure if abuse has really occurred.⁷⁶ Texas law provides you with immunity from civil or criminal liability if your report was made in good faith.⁷⁷ This immunity extends even to instances in which the abuse was unfounded, but the report was made in good faith. These misconceptions about reporting serve as barriers to ending the cycle of exploitation that must be overcome.

Education professionals make important decisions every day. They train students to be productive members of the community, teach life lessons, and provide mentoring services to children entrusted to them over the course of a school year. While educators, administrators, counselors, law enforcement officers, and other school personnel take pride in their professional skills and abilities, the most influential and life-changing action they may take on behalf of a child may be to report suspected abuse. In Fiscal Year 2013, school personnel were the reporting source for 33,146 (17.5%) completed investigations of possible abuse or neglect.⁷⁸ This number was second only to medical personnel who make up 17.6% of all reports.⁷⁹

Traffickers use selfish financial interests as a basis for exploitation; however, Texas is fortunate to have a multitude of selfless, dedicated education professionals who consistently work to enhance the lives of Texas’ children. While your role as educator and mentor to Texas school children will have a lasting impact on the state, your function as a reporter of suspected abuse in the form of human trafficking will have an immediate impact on the lives of those children who are unable to defend themselves. Regardless of your initial apprehensions to report, or

your uncertainty as to whether trafficking has definitively occurred, your proactive responses to suspected incidents of trafficking will help provide for the safety of Texas children.

HOW TO REPORT TO DFPS⁸⁰

By law, all reports – including those directly to law enforcement – involving abuse or neglect in which the suspect is a “person responsible for the care, custody, or welfare of the child” must be referred to DFPS.⁸¹ While it may sound unlikely, many victims of trafficking are abused by their caretakers. Texas law also requires law enforcement to immediately inform DFPS of alleged incidents of abuse or neglect that involve the person responsible for their child’s care, custody, or welfare.⁸² To report suspected incidents of human trafficking – or another abuse and neglect to DFPS – you must use one of two reporting options.

To report by telephone, call the **Texas Abuse Hotline at 1-800-252-5400**. The hotline operates 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. During the phone call, you will be asked to provide your name and contact information, explain your concerns, and answer questions regarding the situation being reported.

The Texas Abuse Hotline operates a secure website located at <http://www.txabusehotline.org>. When reporting via the Internet, you will be asked to provide your name and a valid email address. After your report has been submitted, an email will be sent to the email address you provided. The email will contain a confirmation number indicating the report was received in the system. A second email will be sent when the report has been processed by Hotline staff. This email will indicate whether or not the report was forwarded to the local DFPS office for further investigation. It will also contain a Call Identification Number for your records, to verify your report.

It is important to note that the Internet reporting option is for non-urgent situations *only*. Reporting through the Internet should ***not*** be used in emergency situations, including but not limited to:

- Injuries to a child age 5 or under or serious injuries to any age child
- Immediate need for medical care (including suicidal child)
- Sexual abuse where the perpetrator has access or will have access to the child in the near future (including human trafficking)
- A child age 5 or under who is alone or is likely to be left alone in the next 24 hours
- Any other situation you feel requires a response within 24 hours

If you suspect human trafficking, the chances the situation is urgent is likely high. Trafficking victims suffer major injuries and often need extensive medical and psychological care. While some injuries are obvious (e.g. bruises, scarring, etc.), other injuries are more hidden, and more deadly. Injuries related to human trafficking can include sexually transmitted diseases or infections, untreated yet normal illnesses that develop into life-threatening infections (e.g. dental problems or ear infections), and the progression or complications of pre-existing illnesses and diseases through the withholding of medication by the trafficker (e.g. diabetes).

Additionally, sex trafficking victims are likely required to spend nights working for their trafficker or pimp. They may be repeatedly sexually assaulted or work in unsafe conditions, thus meeting the requirement of urgency. Finally, **if you believe the student is in imminent danger, follow the appropriate safety policy or contact local law enforcement immediately.**

DFPS REPORTS

When making a report to DFPS, you may be asked to provide additional information. Your responses will help determine if there is enough information to open an investigation. You will likely be asked to provide information including, but not limited to the following:

- The names of household members living in the child's home
- The name of the suspected offender
- The names of other individuals who may have pertinent information
- Birth dates, addresses, and telephone numbers for individuals listed above⁸³

You should also expect to be asked questions about why you think some form of abuse or neglect has occurred. Your knowledge of the indicators of human trafficking and your ability to apply those indicators to the students you interact with should provide you with the tools necessary to make an informed report.

REPORTS TO LAW ENFORCEMENT

As an education professional, if you do not report to DFPS, you are mandated to report the suspected human trafficking of children to law enforcement. Such reporting done within 48 hours of suspecting trafficking will meet the statutory reporting requirements for those in the education profession. Reports to law enforcement may occur when you believe the student or yourself are in immediate danger due to the trafficking, or if you believe the trafficker is not the person responsible for the care, custody, or welfare of the child.⁸⁴

There are numerous agencies in Texas that investigate allegations of human trafficking. Some local law enforcement agencies may have human trafficking units or be part of an anti-trafficking regional task force or coalition. Furthermore, many school districts have independent police departments on-site that can quickly respond to and investigate any reported crimes. These school-based law enforcement agencies can serve as an immediate resource for reporting and investigating allegations of possible human trafficking. Many of the entities that investigate human trafficking are listed on the Resources page of this document, but contacting your local or school-based law enforcement agency would likely be the most effective and efficient course of immediate action.

OTHER AVAILABLE ASSISTANCE

Additionally, many law enforcement agencies and non-profit organizations can provide further resources and training for those seeking more information related to human trafficking. One such entity is the National Human Trafficking Resource Center (NHTRC) Hotline. This national

hotline is dedicated solely to human trafficking issues. It provides information and can connect callers with anti-trafficking services in their area. It also provides referral services for law enforcement and collects data on calls to help track the prevalence of human trafficking throughout the nation. The NHTRC Hotline can be reached by phone at **(888) 373-7888** or by **texting BeFree (233733)** 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. It should be noted, that **contacting the NHTRC Hotline will NOT meet the qualification of reporting under Texas state law. If you suspect human trafficking, please notify local law enforcement or DFPS first.**

THE ESSENTIAL ROLE OF SCHOOL PERSONNEL

School personnel play a pivotal role in promoting the well-being of Texas' school-aged children. Educators are trained to identify potential abuse and neglect even when the victims do not come forward on their own. Similarly, victims of human trafficking rarely self-identify as victims – and further may not attempt to escape their trafficker for many reasons. Victims may:

- fear retaliation from the trafficker,
- fear their family members may be harmed by the trafficker,
- fear or distrust law enforcement,
- have psychologically bonded to the trafficker despite repeated abuse, and
- have trafficker-induced drug or alcohol dependencies.⁸⁵

As with other forms of abuse and neglect, when the child does not self-identify, your ability to **recognize** indicators and **report** suspected trafficking is crucial. With the **report**, the child has a far greater chance for rescue and an end to their exploitation.

Your **report** may also provide an opportunity for law enforcement to link the child to critical victim services. Victims of trafficking need various types of services – many of which victims may not have access to until after their rescue – such as, but not limited to:

- Counseling and mental health services,
- Medical care,
- Immigration services,
- Safety planning,
- Education and training,
- Legal services.

Without your efforts to **recognize** and **report**, victims may be unable to seek and secure the services and resources they need to end the cycle of exploitation and to build a better life. Your actions may be the first stage in a multi-step, multi-agency effort to assist victims.

PROACTIVE APPROACHES FOR SCHOOL DISTRICTS

"School safety is the key to establishing a positive school environment where teaching and learning can occur."

Texas School Safety Center Director Dr. Victoria Calder⁸⁶

Many school systems around the country have taken proactive approaches to addressing human trafficking of school-aged youth. These approaches can range from a simple posting of awareness posters in schools, to training of personnel by human trafficking experts, providing training to at-risk students, and developing response plans for when trafficking is suspected or reported. Whatever the strategy, a proactive approach can help districts know how to best handle possible instances of human trafficking to preserve the welfare of students and the security of all individuals within a school system.

AWARENESS AND TRAINING

- The Alamo Area Coalition Against Trafficking (AACAT) developed presentations and brochures specific to school personnel on the issue of domestic minor sex trafficking. The program uses real stories of children in the Bexar County area to emphasize the need for awareness and early intervention. It is estimated between 750-1000 school counselors, social workers, and teachers from the 18 school districts in Bexar County have been trained on human trafficking by the AACAT.
- The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) Texas Regional Office provides free presentations and training to educators, school administrators, counselors and other professionals to help them identify indicators and initiate conversations with youth about human trafficking. Their presentations recognize that school-based law enforcement, educators, and counselors are often the first line of defense in identifying children and teens with known risk factors or early signs of grooming by traffickers. Materials focus on age-appropriate stories and activities to share with students, including real teen stories for the secondary age groups.
- Traffick911, based out of the Dallas-Fort Worth area, developed a training and awareness program for many professions and interested groups. These include educators, parents, and at-risk youth. Traffick911's efforts to combat Human Trafficking have yielded documented instances of victim identifications and rescues.
- Florida's Miami-Dade County Public Schools developed a website dedicated to human trafficking awareness for their district. The website contains a fact sheet for schools on trafficked children in the United States, resources for the prevention of human trafficking, and a human trafficking awareness poster.⁸⁷
- Ohio's Department of Education developed a human trafficking prevention website specifically for educators with PowerPoint presentations for various populations within schools, a fact sheet on human trafficking, and other resources.⁸⁸ Additionally, in 2013, Ohio mandated human trafficking as a required topic in its Safety and Violence Prevention Curriculum in-service training.⁸⁹

- Idaho’s Department of Education has realized the unique and dangerous role technology plays in trafficking. In an effort to address this challenge, the Idaho Department of Education has asked schools to establish protocols addressing computer and cell phone usage on campus.⁹⁰

In addition, in Texas there are several regional human trafficking prevention coalitions, government agencies, and non-governmental organizations that may be willing to assist with training or informational requests regarding human trafficking. A list of some, but not all, of those entities is on the Resources page at the end of this manual.

RESPONSE PLANNING

Developing policies and procedures related to how to respond to suspected human trafficking may be a key step schools and school districts can take. While school personnel are mandated by state law to **report** suspected trafficking, school districts may also need to have in place policies related to such **reporting**. Those policies and procedures may be similar to those already in place for instances in which abuse or neglect are suspected, but should be considered in the context of human trafficking to ensure the best possible response by all school personnel.

Additionally, school districts should consider creating or modifying a current safety plan to include possible trafficking incidents. Developing a safety plan which takes into context human trafficking will help districts protect students and staff. Traffickers are manipulative and often violent, and many have recruited on school grounds. Having an appropriate safety plan in place can help prevent trafficking and protect those on school grounds in the event a suspected trafficker arrives at a school to recruit, threaten, or coerce students or staff.

Given the vicious nature of human trafficking, when crafting such policies, procedures, and safety plans, school districts may wish to consult law enforcement or other partners who may be able to provide their expertise. To best do this, school personnel should familiarize themselves with the resources available to them in their area. A list of resources is available at the end of this manual, but it is not all-inclusive. School personnel may benefit from engaging other members of their community to fully determine what resources can be brought to bear to help them in their efforts to protect and serve students and staff.

Knowing, understanding, and **recognizing** the indicators of human trafficking – and how to take appropriate follow-up steps for **reporting** – are key to the safety of school students in Texas. School boards, administrators, teachers, counselors, school-based law enforcement, and even students and parents can play an important role in developing a district-wide awareness, prevention, reporting, and response strategies that will best serve Texas children.

CONCLUSION

Your role as an education professional places you in a unique position to positively influence the lives of Texas children. While you already do that through educating and mentoring students, you also have an opportunity to serve children by **recognizing** and **reporting** any suspected instances of abuse or neglect – including human trafficking. Sadly, human trafficking does occur in schools and to Texas’ school children. Your role as a teacher, administrator, counselor, law enforcement officer, or staff member can prove pivotal in Texas’ fight against human trafficking.

As you go through your work day, you may personally come into contact with dozens or hundreds of students. As part of your day-to-day duties, you are observing students develop socially, academically, and emotionally. You are familiar with the reporting requirements related to abuse and neglect; and since human trafficking falls under the definition of abuse, you are already equipped with the knowledge and training needed to understand how to address suspected instances of trafficking.

While your role is not easy, your partnership with other agencies who serve to protect children, your knowledge of human trafficking indicators, and your follow-through in **reporting** are necessary and relevant in Texas’ fight to eradicate human trafficking from our state. Only through your efforts to **recognize** and **report** suspected trafficking will Texas be able to provide the strongest deterrent against those who wish to harm its children.

RESOURCES

TO REPORT ABUSE OR NEGLECT, INCLUDING HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Contact:

- Local law enforcement
- If situation is urgent or there is immediate danger: **9-1-1**
- Texas Department of Family and Protective Services:
 - Texas Abuse Hotline: **1-800-252-5400** (24 hours a day, 365 days a year)
 - Online: [Texas Abuse e-Report Hotline](#) (only for use during *non-urgent* or *non-emergency* situations)

GUIDANCE ON IDENTIFYING AND REPORTING ABUSE OR NEGLECT

Texas Department of Family and Protective Services:

- [Online Training for Reporting Suspected Abuse or Neglect of a Child Training](#)
- [Reporting Abuse/Neglect: A Guide for School Professionals](#)
- [Reporting Suspected Abuse or Neglect of a Child in Texas: Reporting Basics](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions about Reporting Abuse](#)

Texas Education Agency:

- [Child Abuse Prevention Overview](#)
- [Foster Care & Student Success](#)
- [Foster Care & Student Success Resource Guide](#)

U.S. Department of Health & Human Services:

- [Sexual Abuse Prevention Programs](#)
- [Study of HHS Programs Serving Human Trafficking Victims: Final Report](#)

American Humane Association

- [Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect](#)

EDUCATION AGENCY GUIDANCE ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING

U.S. Department of Education:

- [Human Trafficking of Children in the United States: A Fact Sheet for Schools](#)
- [Human Trafficking of Children in the United States: A Fact Sheet for Schools](#) (pdf)
- [The Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children and Forced Child Labor or Human Trafficking](#)

Ohio Department of Education:

- [Human Trafficking Prevention](#)
- [Fact Sheet for Child Victims of Human Trafficking](#)
- [Safety and Violence Prevention Training Now Required of K-12 Professionals](#) (Module 4)

Virginia Department of Education:

- [Human Trafficking](#)

Idaho Department of Education:

- [Human Trafficking: Protecting Idaho's Youth](#)

Miami-Dade County Public Schools

- [Human Trafficking awareness](#)

OTHER RESOURCES

[Children's Advocacy Centers of Texas](#)

Texas Office of the Attorney General:

- [Introduction to Human Trafficking: A Guide for Criminal Justice Professionals](#)

[Polaris Project](#)

- [Student Toolkit](#)
- [Educators and Human Trafficking: In-Depth Review](#)
- [Tools for Educators](#)
- [Gang Involved Sex Trafficking](#)

[National Human Trafficking Resource Center](#)

1-800-373-7888 or text BeFree (233733)

[National Center for Missing and Exploited Children – Texas Regional Office](#)

- [NetSmartz® Workshop](#)

Department of Homeland Security:

- [Blue Campaign](#)
- [Human Trafficking 101 for School Administrators and Staff](#)

[Shared Hope International](#)

LOCAL AND REGIONAL RESOURCES

Several locations around the state have regional human trafficking task forces, coalitions, and service providers that may be able to assist you with regards to human trafficking. Please consider proactively contacting those resources.

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¹¹ Texas Penal Code chapter 20A (trafficking of persons).

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- ¹² Texas Penal Code chapter 20A (trafficking of persons).
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- ¹⁵ Texas Family Code section 261.001 (1)(G)(definitions).
- ¹⁶ Texas Family Code section 261.001 (1)(L)(definitions).
- ¹⁷ Texas Family Code section 261.101 (persons required to report; time to report).
- ¹⁸ Texas Family Code section 261.101 (persons required to report; time to report).
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- ⁵³ Ibid., PowerPoint Slide 32.
- ⁵⁴ Ibid.
- ⁵⁵ Ibid., PowerPoint Slide 24.
- ⁵⁶ Ibid.
- ⁵⁷ Ibid., PowerPoint Slide 27.
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- ⁶⁰ United States Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families. No Date. *Identifying Victims of Human Trafficking Fact Sheet*. Retrieved June 20, 2014, from http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/orr/fact_sheet_identifying_victims_of_human_trafficking.pdf.
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