

Signs or “Red Flags” of Trafficking

Cheat Sheet

The following lists possible indications a child or adolescent may be trafficked.

- Signs of physical/sexual abuse or neglect
- Frequent or long runaways
- Out-of-state travel
- Reports of being homeless
- Multiple cell phones
- Stays at hotels or attends hotel parties
- New tattoos of initials/logos
- Uses prostitution-related terms
- Suddenly has expensive gifts/cell phones
- Sexualized social media posts
- Posts to websites known for trafficking (Ex: Backpage, Eros, Seeking Arrangements, etc.)
- Significant change in appearance (new clothing/hairstyles)
- Unexplained income, cash, gift or prepaid credit cards (ex: Visa Vanilla or GreenDot)
- Controlling romantic partner
- Withdrawal/isolation
- Loss of interest in activities
- STIs or pregnancy
- Recent sexual assault
- Multiple or significantly older sexual partners
- Peer or family member involved in commercial sex
- Gang involvement
- Not free to come and go as they wish
- Not allowed to speak for themselves or 3rd party insists on being present
- Doesn't control personal items or documents
- Numerous inconsistencies in story
- Employed but not paid/paid very little/paid only in tips
- Presents as fearful, anxious, tense, and/or avoids eye contact