

# Sex Trafficking in Tribal Communities

The Minnesota statute defines sex trafficking as receiving, recruiting, enticing, harboring, providing, or obtaining by any means an individual to aid in the prostitution of the individual or receiving profit or anything of value, knowing or having reason to know it is derived from an act of trafficking.



**Force**



**Coercion**



**Fraud**



**Digital Abuse**



**Consent & Choice**



**Tracking & Stalking**



**Culture and Spiritual Abuse**

## Sex Trafficking

**92%**

Violent Rape During SxTr  
-OVW-

**84%**

Physical Assaults During SxTr  
-DOJ-

Of an urban prostitution study

**40%**

Identified as Native who had been forced into SxTr.

- Prostitution Research & Education Fund -

## Sovereignty

*“They knew the local laws were NOT protecting us. They groomed my 13-year old to leave the rez, and her friends, to ‘party’. We couldn’t locate her for weeks.”*

-Native Parent of Sex Trafficked Teen-

## COVID-19

During the pandemic, trafficking was more violent and profitable. With empty streets, traffickers transitioned much of their criminal activity to online buyers.

-United Nations-

## Youth

US federal law: under the age of 18 in a commercial sex act is a victim of Sex Trafficking without prosecution. Safe Harbor Laws in MN instead offer support services to 24 years and under.

-Department of Justice-

## Minnesota

In the midst of the pandemic during 2021, the highest rate of crisis calls were survivors of sex trafficking pornography (more than hotel, commercial, street, or massage parlor callers).

-National Human Trafficking Hotline-

## Grooming & Cultural Endangerments

- Digital “dating” and “cat fishing” to recruit youth *into the life*
- ‘Hunting the Reservation’ and vulnerable rural areas
- Runaway and/or homeless youth in urban areas for food or basic needs
- Love-Bombing, starting an exploitive relationship as a grooming strategy with a goal of future trafficking --



**MENDING THE SACRED HOOP**



## WHAT DO TRAFFICKERS LOOK FOR?

Anyone can be a victim of trafficking, regardless of gender, gender identity, race or ethnicity, sexual orientation, or socioeconomic status. Poverty exacerbates trafficking. Traffickers use violence and exploitation in a multi-million dollar industry to groom vulnerable populations, often for basic needs.

According to Safe Voices & Office on Trafficking in Persons Traffickers, traffickers target people who are vulnerable, at-risk, and often exposed to other forms of violence such as:

- child abuse/neglect or maltreatment
- domestic violence and sexual assault relationships
- friends or family recruitment of those already being trafficked
- unmonitored and dangerous youth community activities or gang violence
- individuals disconnected from stable support networks
- homeless, hungry, addicted (exploitation exchanges place to stay, food, drugs/alcohol)
- depressed, vulnerable, or individuals appearing to have no support/monitoring
- incarcerated adults in re-entry or youth in foster care systems
- luring victims with false promises like modeling, acting, dancing, drumming, or ceremony

## INTERVENTION, WHAT TO LOOK FOR

Sex trafficking is preventable. Efforts have focused on increasing community awareness of human trafficking and addressing exploitation after it occurs. Know how to identify grooming & trafficking by understanding the signs and taking the right steps.

### SIGNS

- controlling or dominating partner or friend
- explicit photos on phone or social media
- prepaid or multiple cell phones
- unexplained injuries or STI/STDs
- unusual tattoos, branding, or scars
- unexplained new clothes, gifts, or money
- using drugs or alcohol to medicate mood/emotions
- late nights/unusual hours

### STEPS

- reducing risks and risky behavior
- monitoring phone or social media
- immediate response to medical needs
- be clear about love, forgiveness, & support
- identify unique and present risk factors
- increase buffers to violence and danger
- expand family & community awareness
- report strangers or unusual people around
- know who to contact to report or get help



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