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*In Maryland, the trafficking of a minor is considered child abuse and the same child abuse mandatory reporting laws apply.*

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## GBMC's SAFE Program and Services Available to Human Sex Trafficking Victims

The Sexual Assault Forensic Examination (SAFE) Program at GBMC is coordinated by Registered Nurses specifically trained and certified by the Maryland Board of Nursing to care for victims of rape, sexual assault, human trafficking, child abuse, and intimate partner violence. GBMC's SAFE nurses are available 24/7, 365 days a year.

### The program offers several important services to human sex trafficking victims including:

- Medical forensic examinations, which can also collect potential evidence following sexual assault to aid in the prosecution of a trafficker.
- Sexually transmitted infection (STI) and HIV prophylaxis.
- Medical treatment.
- Connections to victim resources.
- Assistance with contacting law enforcement and explanation of victim rights.
- Face-to-face advocacy services to provide a victim with resources such as shelter to assist with safety planning.

Contacting GBMC's SAFE Program  
is always confidential.

SAFE nurses and patient  
advocates are available 24/7.



If you or someone you know needs  
help, call the SAFE Program at  
GBMC at 443-849-3323.

### Health. Healing. Hope.

The mission of GBMC is to provide medical care and service of the highest quality to each patient leading to *health, healing and hope.*

### VISION

*To every patient, every time, we will provide the care that we would want for our own loved ones.*

### GREATER VALUES

The values of GBMC are our GREATER Values of *Respect, Excellence, Accountability, Teamwork, Ethical Behavior and Results.*

# GBMC

6701 NORTH CHARLES STREET  
BALTIMORE, MARYLAND 21204

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# GBMC

## What is Human Sex Trafficking?

Human sex trafficking involves a controlling individual that uses coercion, force, or fraud to facilitate a commercial sex act. It is also considered sex trafficking when any person under the age of 18 engages in a commercial sex act, regardless of whether a controlling individual is involved or not. Human sex trafficking often entails the recruitment, transport, or receipt of a person by means of a threat, force, or deception for the purpose of exchanging sexual acts for money or other items of value. Victims of human sex trafficking are often vulnerable, afraid, and have been threatened or deceived into engaging in sexual acts for money to benefit the trafficker.

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*The average age of a human sex trafficking victim that is targeted and first exploited is between 12 and 14 years old. It is estimated that 50 percent of sex trafficking victims are under the age of 18.*

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## How Prevalent is Human Trafficking?

Human trafficking is a problem in all 50 states. It is an underground crime, meaning that it is often hidden and even misunderstood.

### Consider these staggering statistics:

- There are an estimated 21 million victims of human trafficking worldwide.
- An estimated 200,000 people are trafficked within the U.S. each year.
- It is estimated that more than half of sex trafficking victims are minors.

While many human trafficking victims are under the age of 18, any age, sex (female more often than male), race, and socioeconomic status can be affected. This crime is also more predominant in at-risk youth in foster care, those who have troubled home lives, as well as teen runaways. Human traffickers often target these youths because of their increased vulnerability.

## Risk Factors for Victims

**There are several risk factors for human sex trafficking victims including:**

- Young age
- Poverty
- Drug use/abuse
- Family dysfunction
- Runaways
- Mental health problems
- Emotional distress
- Lack of social support
- Involvement in the foster care system
- Desperation for emotional attention and love



## Life as a Human Sex Trafficking Victim

A person who falls victim to a calculating human trafficker is often at first lured by the trafficker's physical affections, compliments, and gifts. This is what's known as the "grooming process" where the trafficker gains a victim's trust through manipulation. Soon after, the trafficker begins to exert control over the victim, sometimes by intimidation, physical and/or emotional abuse, forced drug abuse, threats against a victim's family, deprivation of food and basic needs, and even beatings and sexual assault. It's this cycle of positive reinforcement and violence that often keeps victims within the control of the traffickers.

## The Mind Frame of a Trafficking Victim

Many human trafficking victims are fearful of those who control them and may feel ashamed. Victims may not ask for help or even identify as a victim. In some cases, an individual may become brainwashed and exhibit symptoms of "Stockholm syndrome" and "trauma bonding" where they begin to identify with the traffickers and even become loyal to them. Many victims have no identification or other documents to prove their real identities and may feel trapped, helpless, or feel that they have nowhere else to go and that no one can help them.

## How to Identify a Trafficking Victim

Many human sex trafficking victims live in fear, isolation, and are constantly afraid that they are being watched.

**Signs that someone may be a human sex trafficking victim can include:**

- An individual (usually a young female) who is accompanied by a person who seems to be controlling them.
- A person who does not or cannot speak for themselves.
- An individual whose responses seem rehearsed.
- Signs of branding, which is a tattoo that traffickers put on their victims to signify "ownership."
- Signs of physical abuse.
- An individual who appears much younger than their stated age.
- An individual who appears withdrawn or exhibits extreme anxiety or fear when in the presence of others, such as a healthcare provider.
- Adolescents or children with a history of repeated sexually transmitted infections.

## What to do if You Suspect Someone is a Human Sex Trafficking Victim

Whether you are a community member, friend, family member, or healthcare provider, it's critical to ensure the safety of the person if you suspect they may be a victim of human trafficking.

### What to do:

- If you or someone you know is in immediate danger call 911.
- Offer to help them.
- Attempt to speak to the individual alone, especially if they are accompanied by an older adult or even another suspected victim who is resistant to leaving them.
- Never approach an individual if they are with another person and ask them if they need help. Try to get the suspected victim alone so you do not put them in danger.
- If you or someone you know is being trafficked, call the **National Human Trafficking Hotline for assistance: 1-888-373-7888. Text INFO or HELP to 233733.** The helpline is available in more than 200 languages, is confidential and open 24/7.



### Local resources for victims also include:

- Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault: [www.mcasa.org](http://www.mcasa.org)
- Sexual Assault Resource Center: 410-836-8431
- Turn Around: [www.turnaroundinc.org](http://www.turnaroundinc.org); 24/7 helpline - 443-279-0379
- Maryland Human Trafficking Taskforce: [www.mdhumantrafficking.org](http://www.mdhumantrafficking.org)