

Definition: Actions to identify and prevent acts of recruiting, harboring, transporting, providing, or obtaining a person through use of fraud, force, or coercion

Activities:

- Determine at-risk populations (e.g., people who endured emotional, physical and psychological trauma)
- Identify indicators of possible trafficking (e.g., bruises or wounds consistent with application of physical restraints; untreated infections; urinary difficulties, pregnancy, rectal trauma, malnourishment, lack of health care)
- Be alert for person accompanied by another person who is controlling, provides all information, or does all communicating
- Note unusual circumstances such as persons with no identification or fake identification, or controller has person's identification with them
- Identify persons who seem confused, submissive or fearful, refuse to make eye contact, seem afraid to speak in presence of others, or are reluctant to discuss injuries
- Be alert for persons who do not state an address, claim to just be visiting, or seem unable to identify their location
- Consider risk factors for possible trafficking (e.g., frequent truancy or runaway, recurrent sexually transmitted infections, reports high number of sex partners, far along in pregnancy with no prenatal care, inappropriately dressed, accompanied by someone who will not leave person alone or let person speak, improper dress for weather)
- Address any emergency regarding person's physical needs or immediate safety concerns (i.e., call authorities if indicated)
- Provide safe, non-judgmental environment
- Speak to person alone in appointment and address any concerns, in private room with closed doors
- Ask partner to fill out forms in separate lobby or firmly state need for private exam
- Communicate with person using professional interpreter and do not permit family member or accompanying partner to translate
- Make eye contact, practice active listening, and convey attitude of caring
- Provide with confidential questionnaire with human trafficking screening questions if indicated
- Determine potential danger and care needs
- Involve authorities when person is a minor, reports self or family in danger, trafficker present, or staff or other persons are in danger
- Respect limits of confidentiality, but explain legal requirements to report suspected abuse, neglect, or violence to external agencies, including mandated reporting obligations
- Do not violate Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) regulations

- Gain consent and permission from any adult patient before disclosing personal health information (PHI)
- Report PHI in known or suspected child abuse or neglect to public health authority or other appropriate government authority authorized by law to receive such reports
- Offer methods to seek help when ready, if unwilling to discuss captive situation, or if declines or denies need for assistance
- Use discreet methods of help to avoid further danger to person if abuser discovers (i.e., hide National Human Trafficking Hotline number on barcode of personal item, such as lipstick, soap, box of bandages)
- Document all findings and suspicions to create legal record for future reference
- Ensure yearly education for staff concerning red flags to identify possible trafficking victims and, if indicated, assist them to report
- Ensure ability to offer victims community supports and resources to meet needs revealed during health care encounter
- Work to develop policies and protocols within organizations to streamline screening, assessment, and response and ensure systematic approach to human trafficking identification and intervention
- Promote community health and wellness, child welfare, gender equality, and violence prevention with community leaders

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Background Readings:

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<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nurpra.2020.10.031>
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- Washburn, J. (2018). What nurses need to know about human trafficking: Update. *Journal of Christian Nursing*, 35(1), 18–25.
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