



## Human Trafficking and Child Welfare: A Guide for Caseworkers

Child welfare caseworkers can be an invaluable resource in helping communities respond to the human trafficking of children. Children involved with child welfare are at risk for being targeted by traffickers because of their potentially unstable living situations, physical distance from friends and family, traumatic experiences, and emotional vulnerability. Therefore, it is imperative that child welfare caseworkers be at the forefront of efforts to identify, respond to, and prevent human trafficking. This bulletin explores how caseworkers can identify and support children who have been victimized as well as children that are at greater risk for future victimization. It provides background information about the issue, strategies caseworkers can use to identify and support victims and potential victims, and tools and resources that can assist caseworkers.

### WHAT'S INSIDE

Background

Working with victims

Working with other  
systems

Conclusion

Additional resources

References

Child Welfare Information Gateway developed a companion guide to this publication to assist child welfare agencies in developing and coordinating a response to human trafficking. It includes a detailed discussion of Federal legislation and initiatives to address this issue. *Human Trafficking and Child Welfare: A Guide for Child Welfare Agencies* is available at <https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/trafficking-agencies>.

## Background

Although human trafficking is by no means a new issue, in recent years public agencies have strengthened their focus on its identification and prevention as well as treatment for its victims. The following provides information about the definitions of human trafficking, the scope of the problem, the connection with child welfare, risk factors, and the needs of its victims.

## Definitions

Both U.S. citizens and foreign national children can be victims of human trafficking within the United States. Federal law generally categorizes severe forms of trafficking in persons into either labor trafficking or sex trafficking.

- Labor trafficking.** Per the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (TVPA), which is part of the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000 (P.L. 106-386), labor trafficking is the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services through the use of force, fraud, or coercion in order to subject that person to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery. The definition of labor trafficking in the TVPA does not distinguish between children and adults, which means that children also must encounter force, fraud, or coercion to be victims of labor trafficking. Examples of labor trafficking include agricultural or domestic service workers and travelling sales crews that force children to sell legal items (e.g., magazines) or illegal items (e.g., drugs).

- Sex trafficking.** The TVPA, as amended, defines sex trafficking as “the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, obtaining, patronizing, or soliciting of a person for the purpose of commercial sex.” While adults must be compelled to perform commercial sex by force, fraud, or coercion in order for it to be considered a severe form of trafficking in persons, this is not the case for children. By law, children under the age of 18 who are induced to engage in a commercial sex act are considered victims of sex trafficking. In addition to a minor engaging in a sex act in exchange for money, examples of sex trafficking include a minor engaging in “survival” sex (i.e., the victim engages in sex in order to obtain basic needs such as food, shelter, or clothing, which are considered something of value) and participating in certain types of pornography.

Professionals in child welfare and related fields typically use the words “victims” or “survivors” to refer to individuals who have experienced or were experiencing human trafficking. The use of the term “victim” often has legal implications for foreign nationals in terms of their eligibility for services, legal standing, and rights, whereas the term “survivor” is frequently used to connote the strength and resilience of individuals who were exploited through human trafficking. Although the terms are sometimes used interchangeably in the field, this bulletin uses the term “victim” while still acknowledging the strength and resiliency of those who have been trafficked.

There are several common misperceptions about trafficking (Center for the Human Rights for Children & International Organization for Adolescents, 2011):

- Myth:** Trafficking always involves transporting the victim across State, country, or other borders.  
**Reality:** This is not included in the Federal definition of trafficking. An individual can be recruited and exploited for labor or commercial sex without having crossed any borders.
- Myth:** All human trafficking victims in the United States are from other countries.  
**Reality:** Trafficking victims may be U.S. citizens or foreign nationals.

- **Myth:** Individuals must be physically restrained or locked up to be a victim.  
**Reality:** While some victims may be physically held by their trafficker, psychological means of control (e.g., trauma bonds, threats, coercion) are far more common.

For more information about how States classify human trafficking, view Information Gateway's *Definitions of Human Trafficking* at <https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/systemwide/laws-policies/statutes/definitions-trafficking/>.

## Scope of Human Trafficking

The exact number of child victims of human trafficking in the United States is unknown, and trying to determine the number is difficult. The number of exploited children or children at risk for exploitation varies widely from source to source, often due to differences in definitions and methodologies (Finklea, Fernandes-Alcantara, & Siskin, 2015). Challenges to data collection include victims of trafficking not self-identifying due to factors such as complex trauma, trauma bonds, and normalization of victimization. Additionally, victims may fear talking to authorities, distrust service providers, or may have been coached by their traffickers on what to say while talking to others. These factors, among others, often make it difficult for those screening for trafficking victims or collecting data to recognize victims. For a more thorough discussion of the issues surrounding data collection, see Chapter 2 of *Confronting Commercial Sexual Exploitation and Sex Trafficking of Minors in the United States*, a product of the National Academy of Science, at <https://www.ojjdp.gov/pubs/243838.pdf#page=58>.

Nonetheless, there are various studies and organizations that provide a glimpse at how many children may be victims of human trafficking.

- The National Human Trafficking Hotline, a resource supported by the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), received reports for 5,544

potential cases of human trafficking in 2015, with 1,621 of those cases referencing minors. For all cases, 75 percent involved sex trafficking, 13 percent involved labor trafficking, and 3 percent involved both types (National Human Trafficking Resource Center, 2016).

- One in six of the more than 18,500 children reported to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (2017a) as missing were the victims of child sex trafficking.

It is important to remember that existing national data are not reliable indicators of the prevalence of human trafficking. The true prevalence of sex and labor trafficking is unknown, and most service providers believe that these statistics underestimate the scope of the problem.

## Intersection With Child Welfare

Children in out-of-home care are at a particularly high risk of being trafficked. Estimating the number of trafficking victims who are or were involved with child welfare faces similar challenges to determining the overall number of victims, but many studies have shown a strong connection. A 2013 report by the HHS Administration on Children, Youth and Families cited a number of alarming statistics, including several studies showing that 50 to more than 90 percent of children who were victims of child sex trafficking had been involved with child welfare services (HHS, ACF, 2013).

A background of abuse and trauma—coupled with the impermanence of foster care or congregate care—can make children in out-of-home care especially vulnerable. A number of research and newspaper articles have pointed to the fact that traffickers target children in foster care because of their increased vulnerability (see, for example, Menzel, 2013). Traffickers exploit the fact that children in foster care—or those who have run away from care—may not be having their familial, emotional, or basic needs met. The traffickers promise to meet those needs—often using psychological manipulation and financial incentives to woo them—and then use violence or physical control to retain and exploit them (Innocence Lost Working Group, 2010).

## Risk Factors

Victims of human trafficking are as diverse a group as any other child welfare population. They may be of any race or ethnicity, be U.S. citizens or foreign nationals, or identify with any sexual orientation or gender. Additionally, human trafficking can occur in any type of geography (e.g., rural, urban).

Although there is not a comprehensive set of characteristics that define who will be a victim of human trafficking, there are factors that increase a child's risk (HHS, ACF, Family and Youth Services Bureau [FYSB], 2017; Child Welfare Capacity Building Collaborative, 2016; Greenbaum & Crawford-Jakubiak, 2015):

- History of maltreatment at home, especially sexual abuse
- Involvement with the child welfare or juvenile justice systems
- History of running away
- Homelessness
- Financial problems
- Inadequate family or other relationships
- Self or familial substance use or mental health problems
- Identification as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender
- Unmet intangible needs (e.g., love, belonging, affection, protection)
- Low self-esteem
- Lack of identity

The preceding risk factors are not exhaustive, and a child's experience with one or more of these factors is not a definite indication that they have been or will be trafficked. Additionally, the absence of these risk factors is not an indication that a child has not been trafficked or is not at risk of being trafficked. If your agency does not require screening for trafficking in all cases, you can use these risk factors as an informal way of assessing risk and determining if additional screening or assessment is necessary.

## How Victims Are Recruited and Controlled by Perpetrators

There is no single pathway for how children become victims of human trafficking. Victims of human trafficking may be coerced by peers, recruited by traffickers directly in-person or online, abducted, or sold or forced by family members (Ijadi-Maghsoodi, Cook, Barnert, Gaboian, & Bath, 2016). Some may be groomed by perpetrators, whereby the perpetrator seeks vulnerable children and coerces them using a variety of methods, such as gifts and compliments, normalizing the exploitation, providing drugs or alcohol, or establishing intimate "relationships" with them. Caseworkers should remember, however, that no child chooses to be exploited (HHS, ACF, FYSB, 2016). It is a situation into which they have been forced, coerced, or tricked.

Children may be kept in exploitative situations through the use of physical force or violence (e.g., beatings, rape, imprisonment), psychological coercion and intimidation (e.g., fear of violence toward themselves or loved ones), or dependence on the trafficker for housing, money, food, and other basic needs, as well as substances to which the child may be addicted (at times due to the trafficker forcing the child to take them). Additionally, some children may develop an emotional connection with their traffickers, which is often referred to as trauma bonding or Stockholm syndrome (Hardy, Compton, & McPhatter, 2013). This trauma bond may cause the victim to support or protect the trafficker, which may make it difficult for child welfare personnel, law enforcement, or other service providers to assist the victim in escaping or receiving services or to prosecute the perpetrator. In some cases, victims who have been removed from their exploitive situations make attempts to re-establish emotional or physical contact with the perpetrator, going so far as running away from their care settings to be with them (West & Loeffler, 2015). When child welfare caseworkers are aware of these types of bonds and work with foster families and other care and service providers to address them, they will be better able to ensure children remain safe in their placements.



## Understanding Victim Needs

Children who have been victims of trafficking have many needs similar to those of children who enter the child welfare system because of substantiated abuse or neglect by their parents or caregivers. For instance, children who have been trafficked need health care, mental health services, a safe place to live, help with education, and facilitated reconnections with family members, when appropriate. These are discussed below, along with some of the aspects that distinguish trafficking victims' needs from those of other children receiving child welfare services.

**Physical health.** Children who have been trafficked often have experienced physical abuse, neglect (including medical and dental neglect), emotional abuse, and sexual abuse. Associated with this abuse, they may suffer from broken bones and other untreated internal and external injuries; sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV; and malnutrition. Their overall health may show the consequences of long periods of poor or no medical or dental care. Child welfare caseworkers can help by ensuring that victims have access to medical screenings and treatment to address both immediate and long-term concerns. Connecting with a trauma-informed health-care provider who has experience with victims of trafficking may also provide reassurance to victims who may be reluctant to seek care.

**Behavioral health.** Children who have been trafficked often have an array of complex behavioral health needs. Victims may have experienced regular beatings, sexual assault, and other acts of violence. Most children who have been trafficked have a need for long-term, intensive behavioral health services that can help them move forward into a new, healthier life. Studies have identified a number of mental health symptoms associated with trafficking, including posttraumatic stress disorder, panic attacks, obsessive-compulsive disorder, generalized anxiety disorder, major depressive disorder, dissociative disorders, and substance use (Williamson, Dutch, & Clawson, 2010). Screening by qualified behavioral health providers who have experience with youth who have been trafficked can be the first step to getting help. Screening

can help determine the type of therapy that might be most useful, and child welfare workers can facilitate access to treatment providers.

**Housing.** Children who have been trafficked and come into the care of child welfare almost always have an immediate need for a safe place to live. Their background may make them particularly vulnerable in a traditional foster care setting, and many foster families may be unprepared to parent a child who has been trafficked. Some localities have developed specialized foster home programs or provide training to foster parents about issues affecting victims of trafficking. Additionally, some shelters and group homes may develop their programs specifically for children who have been trafficked.

**Education.** Children who have been trafficked may require educational screening and may also require remedial services. While some children may feel comfortable in a traditional school, others may prefer more nontraditional education options. Child welfare caseworkers can help by collecting records, exploring education options, and facilitating enrollment.

**Employment.** Youth who have been trafficked may need assistance obtaining employment, especially if they lack legal work experience or have not acquired a high school diploma or GED. They also may have been arrested for crimes committed while being trafficked, which could prevent them from passing background checks required for employment. Additionally, victims of sex trafficking may have had the experience of making a large amount of money in a short time period and may not view the pay in an entry-level position as a viable option (Lutnick, 2016). Caseworkers can seek out programs in their communities that connect youth with job training, job skills and application support, internships or externships, or other supports.

**Legal services.** There are a number of circumstances that might require the child who has been trafficked to hire or otherwise secure legal assistance. Children need lawyers if they are charged with crimes as a result of their victimization. They may also need legal counsel to protect themselves from their pimps or traffickers or to establish

their legal identity. Some children involved with the justice system may require an attorney for victim advocacy, while those who are not citizens may require an immigration attorney.

**Other needs.** Youth who have been trafficked will often need help with basic life skills (e.g., opening a bank account, keeping medical records). For many, having a mentor or someone who is willing and available to provide guidance over the long term is often essential to ensure that the youth is able to pursue a life away from trafficking.

## Working With Victims

Victims of human trafficking have already experienced a wide range of trauma and may be hesitant to speak with authorities, provide detailed information about their situations, or even self-identify as victims. To properly determine whether a child is a victim of human trafficking and which services they may need, caseworkers need to be able to build rapport and implement comprehensive screening tools.

### Building Rapport

Many of the same techniques and approaches to working with children involved with child welfare are applicable to working with children who are victims of human trafficking, such as active listening, being empathetic, using interpreters when necessary, being nonjudgmental, maintaining open body language, and mirroring the terms used by the child. There are some strategies to building trust and rapport, however, that may be particular to working with children who are victims of trafficking or that should be emphasized when working with them (Vera Institute of Justice, 2014; National Human Trafficking Resource Center, 2011; HHS, ACF, FYSB, 2017):

- Ensure the child feels safe and has his or her basic needs met
- Be prepared to build a relationship with the child over multiple meetings before he or she is ready to divulge details of the exploitation
- Recognize that many victims do not view themselves as victims
- Let the child know if you have experience with similar cases, as appropriate

- Be sensitive to any fears the child may have about retribution by the trafficker toward the child or the child's family
- Ensure the child understands he or she is viewed as the victim and is not responsible for the exploitation or not leaving the situation
- Be aware that children who are victims of trafficking often are provided with a false story to tell authorities and are conditioned not to trust them
- Do not speak negatively about the exploiter, with whom the child may still have a complex relationship

Caseworkers can apply these techniques throughout their time with children who are victims of human trafficking—or who are potential victims—including during intake, screening, investigation, and service provision. Additionally, caseworkers can partner with other organizations and individuals that may already have developed a trusting relationship with the victims, such as drop-in centers, sexual violence advocates, and survivor-led organizations. This may help victims, who may be distrustful of authority figures, develop a rapport with caseworkers.

A potential barrier to caseworkers building rapport is that some victims of human trafficking actively try to avoid contact with the child welfare system. Some victims of human trafficking have had previous negative experiences with child welfare and do not want to be involved again (Gibbs, Walters, Lutnick, Miller, & Kluckman, 2014). Even victims who have no previous child welfare involvement may view it as a system that will not improve their situations (Lutnick, 2016). Some victims may have been instructed by their traffickers to avoid the child welfare system or coached on what to say if they encounter representatives of the system. They may withhold information from child welfare caseworkers or other service providers in order to evade a child maltreatment report or to thwart a child welfare investigation. Similarly, child victims may avoid contact with shelters or other social services so they do not have to provide information that may attract the attention of the child welfare system (Gibbs, Walters, Lutnick, Miller, & Kluckman, 2015). This potential avoidance highlights the importance of caseworkers building trust with victims and assuring them that they can provide help and support.

## Resources to Assist With Identifying Victims and Building Relationships

The following resources each offer screening tools applicable to child victims of human trafficking as well as tips for building rapport and interviewing victims:

- Comprehensive Human Trafficking Assessment (National Human Trafficking Resource Center): <https://humantraffickinghotline.org/sites/default/files/Comprehensive%20Trafficking%20Assessment.pdf>
- Rapid Screening Tool for Child Trafficking and Comprehensive Screening and Safety Tool for Child Trafficking (Center for the Human Rights for Children and the International Organization for Adolescents [IOFA]): <http://www.luc.edu/media/lucedu/chrc/pdfs/BCWRHandbook2011.pdf#page=50>
- *Screening for Human Trafficking: Guidelines for Administering the Trafficking Victim Identification Tool (TVIT)* (Vera Institute of Justice): <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/246713.pdf>
- *Intervene: Identifying and Responding to America's Prostituted Youth* (Shared Hope International) <https://www.thresholdglobalworks.com/pdfs/sex-trafficking-guide.pdf>

A more comprehensive list of screening tools is available in the Child Welfare Capacity Building Collaborative publication titled *Identifying Minors and Young People Exploited Through Sex Trafficking: A Resource for Child Welfare Agencies* at <http://go.usa.gov/x92Md>.

## Identifying Victims

Many screening tools exist to help caseworkers and other professionals determine whether a child is the victim of human trafficking. Screening tools may be standalone and specific to human trafficking (sex, labor, or both), or they may be universal or broader tools that have questions related to trafficking. In a recent study by Casey Family Programs (2014), only 44 percent of respondents indicated their agencies had a policy to address child victims of sex trafficking.

It is also important to know the potential indicators of sex or labor trafficking so that you can be aware of the possibility of a child being a victim even when you are not administering a formal screening. The following are examples of indicators of possible sex and/or labor trafficking (Center for the Human Rights for Children & IOFA, 2011; National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, 2017b):

- Is not allowed to speak while alone or seeks another's approval before answering
- Appears to have been coached about how to speak with law enforcement or other authorities
- Does not possess identification or lies about identity
- Describes inconsistent life events
- Cannot provide evidence of a legal guardian
- Is not enrolled in school
- Works long hours
- Uses terms related to sex work (e.g., "daddy," "the life")
- Possesses hotel keys, large amounts of money, or multiple cell phones
- Describes multiple unexplained trips to other cities or States
- Lives with employer or other "employees"
- Is paid little or nothing for work or services provided
- Mentions that "pay" goes toward a debt to "employer," fees for travel, or housing provided by employer

For a more complete set of indicators, refer to *Building Child Welfare Response to Child Trafficking*, which was developed by the Center for the Human Rights for Children at Loyola University Chicago and IOFA. The publication is available at <http://www.luc.edu/media/lucedu/chrc/pdfs/BCWRHandbook2011.pdf#page=40>. For a glossary of sex trafficking-related terms that caseworkers may hear when talking with clients, visit the Shared Hope International website at <http://sharedhope.org/the-problem/trafficking-terms/>.

## Children Running Away From Foster Care

Children who have runaway, as well as those who are homeless, face an increased risk of becoming victims of trafficking (Countryman-Roswurm & Bolin, 2014). On September 30, 2015, more than 4,600 children in foster care were classified as having run away from placement (HHS, ACF, Children's Bureau, 2016). Caseworkers should be aware of any protocols at their agency regarding steps to take in case a child in care runs away or is suspected of running away. Federal law requires agencies to have procedures in place to locate children missing from foster care and determine what the child experienced (e.g., trafficking) while away from care. It also requires agencies to report to law enforcement, within 24 hours, information on children who have been missing or abducted so it can be entered into the National Crime Information Center database of the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

A study of youth in foster care who had run away found that youth typically run away because they want to be with family or friends or they dislike their placements, often due to wanting more freedom, trust, respect, and fewer rules (Pergamit & Ernst, 2011). The study also reported that youth often do not feel supported by their caseworkers and believed that caseworkers should visit them more and take additional time to talk with the youth and understand their points of view, including why they may be displeased with their current placements.

Caseworkers also can help support foster parents, as well as residential center staff, who care for victims of trafficking. They can ensure care providers are aware of the unique experiences and needs of children who have been trafficked and know how to react if they suspect a child has run away from care.

The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children has a microsite devoted to children missing from care. It includes information about how to report a missing child to the center. To view the site, visit <http://cmfc.missingkids.org/home>.



## Connecting Victims With Services

After determining a child is a victim of human trafficking, it is imperative for caseworkers to connect the child with services that can meet their complex needs. Caseworkers should seek out services and supports within their agencies and in the community that can meet the short- and long-term needs of this population. Two obstacles facing caseworkers, however, are the scant evidence base about how to serve this population and the lack of effective and available services (Institute of Medicine & National Research Council, 2013). Frequently, when services are available in communities, they are not specialized for victims of human trafficking.

The following information may help caseworkers when seeking out available resources or working with service providers to establish effective supports:

- Although trauma-informed services were not necessarily developed for trafficking victims and have not been evaluated thoroughly for this population, many professionals believe they are critical to successful interventions with trafficking victims (Hardy, Compton, & McPhatter, 2013). Caseworkers should ensure that service providers use trauma-informed practices and are knowledgeable of issues related to trafficking.
- Children and service providers may not agree about what are the child's most pressing needs. For example, a provider may view mental health services as the foremost need, but the child may prioritize "survival" needs, such as food, housing, and employment (Lutnick, 2016).
- Children are more likely to utilize services when they are provided in-house (i.e., where the child is placed) or are co-located with other services (Gibbs et al., 2015). This is particularly important because children may leave a service program if the services they desire are not immediately available (Lutnick, 2016).
- Children who have been trafficked often desire independence or view any restrictions placed on them as reducing freedoms to which they may have become accustomed (West & Loeffler, 2015). They may view these restrictions, including those designed to keep them safe, as being punitive, which could increase noncompliance or decreased utilization. One strategy to ameliorate this belief is to empower victims to be partners in their case planning.

## Human Trafficking Training for Caseworkers

A variety of training resources about human trafficking, including supporting victims, are available online. The following training resources may be of particular interest to child welfare professionals:

- Capacity Building Center for States: Multiple trainings (free registration required) and webinars on a variety of human trafficking topics (<https://capacity.childwelfare.gov/states/focus-areas/preventing-sex-trafficking/>)
- Florida Center for Child Welfare: Multiple trainings on a range of human trafficking topics (<http://centerforchildwelfare.fmhi.usf.edu/SexualExploitation/SexualExploitation.shtml>)
- National Center for Missing and Exploited Children: Multiple trainings on a range of human trafficking topics (<http://www.missingkids.com/NCMECUniversity>)
- National Human Trafficking Hotline: Assortment of trainings on issues related to human trafficking (<https://humantraffickinghotline.org/nhtrc-hhs-online-trainings>)
- National Human Trafficking Training and Technical Assistance Center: Training and technical assistance to inform and enhance the public health response to human trafficking (<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/otip/training/nhttac>)
- Postgraduate Institute for Medicine and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services: Links to register for the S.O.A.R. (Stop, Observe, and Respond to Human Trafficking) training (<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/otip/training/soar-to-health-and-wellness-training>)

## Working With Other Systems

Preventing, identifying, and responding to human trafficking requires a multidisciplinary, communitywide approach. It is beyond the scope of a child welfare agency to serve all the needs victims of human trafficking may have. Any group or professional that comes into contact with children is a potential partner, but common partners in collaborations addressing the trafficking of children include law enforcement, district attorneys' offices, juvenile justice agencies, court personnel, guardians ad litem, educators, health-care and behavioral health providers, policymakers, and community members, as well as survivors of human trafficking.

Knowing that you will need to coordinate with multiple service providers and agencies, it is important to be familiar with your agency's confidentiality and information-sharing policies. Some jurisdictions have established task forces or other groups to help develop and enhance relationships among staff from multiple agencies and organizations. These teams can help coordinate services for individual cases as well as set up a framework for addressing and preventing trafficking on a community-wide level. The Office for Victims of Crime Training and Technical Assistance Center within the U.S. Department of Justice developed a guide to assist agencies in creating and coordinating human trafficking task forces. The guide is available at <https://www.ovcttac.gov/taskforceguide/eguide/>. Jurisdictions also may use multidisciplinary teams during the investigation of maltreatment, including trafficking, and utilize forensic interviewing techniques to gather information in a legally defensible manner. For more information about forensic interviewing, refer to Information Gateway's *Forensic Interviewing: A Primer for Child Welfare Professionals* at <https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/factsheets/forensicinterviewing/>.

## Conclusion

The scourge of human trafficking has recently garnered greater attention from social service providers, law enforcement, and the general public. Agencies and communities across the nation have been developing or enhancing their response to human trafficking, and research on the detrimental effects of trafficking and treatments to address them is growing. Child welfare professionals can play an essential role in identifying child victims of human trafficking and coordinating services that can support them. They can also assist in helping service and care providers better understand victims' experiences and the complex trauma they may face.

## Additional Resources

- Human Trafficking (Child Welfare Information Gateway) <https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/systemwide/trafficking/>
- Polaris [website] <https://polarisproject.org/>
- National Center for Missing and Exploited Children [website] <http://www.missingkids.com>
- Human Trafficking Awareness Month (National Child Traumatic Stress Network) <http://www.nctsn.org/resources/public-awareness/human-trafficking>

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