

Human Trafficking in the Tourism and Hospitality Industry

By Tourism Saskatchewan

Human Trafficking is a complex issue that affects people from all walks of life around the world regardless of their migration or citizenship status.

Human Trafficking is the exploitation of a person using force, fraud or coercion for control to engage in commercial sex for profit against their will.

Facts about Human Trafficking

- It does not require crossing borders or leaving one's home.
- It is more often a complex crime of coercion and manipulation to create and maintain exploitive relationships.
- Adults make up the majority of the world's victims
- It happens to all people regardless of gender, as well as their migration or citizenship status.
- Traffickers are often people the victims know and trust (Combating Human Trafficking: A United Way Strategy Guide, 2023, p.17).

Stages of Human Trafficking

- **Luring:** Traffickers take advantage of the victim's vulnerabilities and lure them into a friendship or romantic relationship by giving them false hope in promise of a better life.
- **Grooming and Gaming:** The trafficker lavishes the victim with expensive gifts or meets the basic needs of the person. The victim may be introduced to substances and explicit sexual content at this stage.
- **Isolation and Distance:** The victim is separated from family and friends giving the trafficker more control of their life.
- **Coercion and Manipulation:** The trafficker toys with the emotion of the victim by withdrawing communication and pleasantries. Rewards are continued when the victim complies with the traffickers demands.

- **Exploitation:** The victims has been manipulated emotionally, psychologically and or physically into sex work which becomes their new reality.
- **Recruitment:** The victim after enduring exploitation and is deemed "trustworthy" is used to recruit others. These victims paint a picture of a glamorous lifestyle and lure other unassuming, vulnerable individuals

Indicators of Human Trafficking

- Not allowed to speak for themselves
- Scripted stories
- Fear
- Anxiety
- Nervousness
- Hypervigilance
- Avoids eye contact
- Submissive
- Sleep deprived
- Dissociation or learned helplessness
- Trauma-bonding
- Drug abuse/addictions
- Little to no personal possessions
- Lacks freedom of movement
- Unsure of their surroundings
- Does not have access to ID or travel documents
- Multiple cell phones
- Multiple hotel keys
- Branding tattoos

Human Trafficking Specific to the Hospitality Industry

Hospitality and Tourism provide anonymity which traffickers take advantage of this. Here are a few signs that an individual is being trafficked:

- Paying in cash
- Asking for a room near entry or exit doors away from the front desk
- High volume of visitors (most often men) who may use a side entrance to avoid the lobby
- Younger female's hair, makeup or clothing are not age appropriate
- Declining cleaning services
- Requesting extra linens often
- Numerous condoms or wrappers in the trash
- Significant age difference between the person paying and others with them
- One person booking multiple rooms
- Rooms booked for very long-term stays
- A younger person who may seem unfamiliar with their surroundings or where they are
- Use of "Do Not Disturb" sign constantly
- Refusal of staff entry into the room
- Loitering in the hallways and appearing to monitor the area
- Guests who are not in possession of their own ID or travel documents
- An individual who is never left alone
- Excessive amounts of alcohol or drugs in the room

Tourism and Hospitality and Human Trafficking
Human trafficking may go unnoticed in tourism and hospitality as the industry offers anonymity and privacy to traffickers. Traffickers are able to move covertly leveraging huge events such as conferences, concerts, etc as many people are able to come and go freely.

Combating Human Trafficking

- Training programs for all staff to recognize, respond, and report
- Develop policy and procedures along with clear reporting protocols for staff
- Create partnerships with anti-trafficking organizations
- Clearly posted anti-trafficking signage throughout the establishment
- Establish ethical recruiting policies
- Hire staff directly rather than using third-party contractors
- Empower workers to know their rights