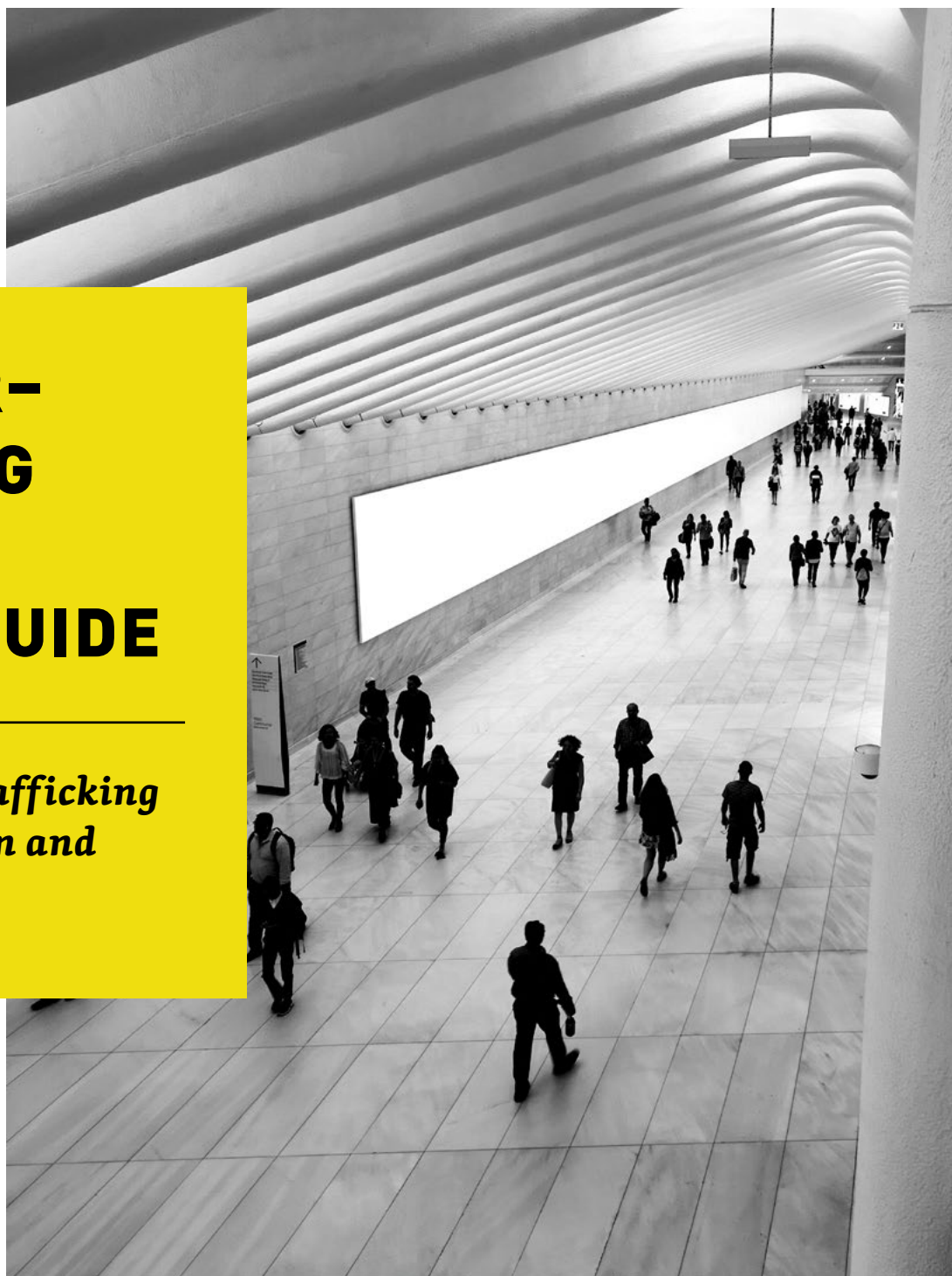


US COUNTER- TRAFFICKING TOOLKIT RESOURCE GUIDE

*Combating Human Trafficking
Through Identification and
Intervention*



About the Toolkit

A21's Counter-Trafficking Toolkit ("Toolkit") serves as a resource for frontline sectors seeking to increase their understanding of human trafficking in the United States. Frontline sectors, for purposes of this Toolkit, refer to certain industries which, by virtue of their type of work, are more likely to encounter a victim of human trafficking. Frontline professionals, as used in this toolkit, refers to the forward-facing employees in these sectors most likely to encounter a victim of human trafficking. Through the "tools" provided in this Toolkit, frontline sectors can apply practical strategies in employing human trafficking intervention efforts, such as implementing counter-trafficking policies and processes for identifying and engaging with victims and potential victims of human trafficking.¹

This Resource Guide in the Counter-Trafficking Toolkit is designed to provide a broad overview of human trafficking as well as the basic principles of identification and intervention. The "tools" or supplemental resources referenced in this central guide provide further in-depth information regarding the principles set forth in this document.

1. The term "potential victims" is used to encompass those who may be victims of human trafficking but for whom there has not yet been a screening to determine their victim status definitively. The term can also refer to those who have not yet been exploited but are in the process of being initially approached, groomed, or recruited.

What is Human Trafficking?

Across the world, men, women, and children are being used as commodities, with their fundamental human rights stripped away for the financial gain of exploiters. Human trafficking is a violation of basic human rights that centers on the exploitation of another human being through force, fraud, or coercion for labor, sexual or other commercial gain, or through the induced commercial sexual exploitation of a child.

Where does Human Trafficking happen?

Human trafficking takes place both domestically, within national borders, and internationally, with few countries, if any, escaping its effects either as points of departure, destination, transit, or a combination of all three. Human trafficking can occur in every system and structure globally; this can be seen in practical terms as labor exploitation in a company's supply chain or in the exploitation of people in the commercial sex sector.

Human Trafficking in the United States

- ▶ Reports of human trafficking have occurred in all fifty states, and the three primary countries of origin of victims of human trafficking in the United States are the United States, Mexico, and Honduras.^{2*}
- ▶ American citizens are trafficked internally within the United States and abroad, and foreign national victims are also brought to the United States to be exploited.² Foreign national victims of human trafficking also flee to the United States for refuge.
- ▶ Domestic sex trafficking of children and adults is the most common type of human trafficking in the United States. Labor trafficking of foreign national victims affects agricultural, construction, massage and salon services, hospitality, manufacturing, and food processing industries. Labor trafficking victims may also be victims of sexual abuse.³
- ▶ Traffickers exploit vulnerabilities such as poverty, homelessness, broken families, and addiction to recruit victims through promises of a better life. Traffickers will also frequently use control mechanisms such as psychological and emotional abuse, physical and sexual abuse, the confiscation of personal identification documents or money, threats, forced consumption of drugs, isolation, and renaming their victims. The extent and methods of control can differ significantly from one trafficking situation to another, as does the duration of abuse.

While the data from the US Trafficking in Persons Report is the most robust data source currently available in the United States, it is important to note that the true reality of the scope of trafficking in the United States is probably more diverse. For example, law enforcement and counter-trafficking non-governmental organizations (NGOs) routinely encounter victims of certain nationalities that may extend beyond what is currently reported and knowledge of trafficking trends continues to expand.



RESOURCE: HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN THE US

Explains human trafficking laws in the United States, as well as the types of trafficking most prevalent in the United States.

**as identified by the TIP report from federally funded providers in FY2021.*

2. U.S. Department of State, Trafficking in Persons Report 22nd Ed., July 2022, <https://www.state.gov/reports/2022-trafficking-in-persons-report/>.

3. According to data from A21 and the U.S. Department of State, Trafficking in Persons Report 22nd Ed., July 2022, <https://www.state.gov/reports/2022-trafficking-in-persons-report/>.

REPORT HUMAN TRAFFICKING

- For **emergency services** call **911**.
- To report known or suspected human trafficking call the **National Human Trafficking Hotline 1 (888) 373-7888**.
- Suspected child sex trafficking can be reported to the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC) at **1-800-THE-LOST** or **cybertipline.org**.
- Report incidences of human trafficking to local law enforcement.

SERVICES AVAILABLE FOR HUMAN TRAFFICKING VICTIMS AND SURVIVORS

- Call the **National Human Trafficking Hotline 1 (888) 373-7888**. Trained call specialists are available 24/7 to provide local resources for victims or survivors of human trafficking.
- Local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies can provide referrals and services through victim assistance programs. A report must be made to the Department of Child Protective Services and law enforcement to connect minors to appropriate resources.
- Foreign nationals require an **Eligibility Letter (minors)** or **Health and Human Services Certification Letter (adults)** to access certain benefits and services. A report must be made through the Office on Trafficking in Persons to obtain these letters.
- Familiarize yourself with **local non-governmental organizations** that provide services for victims of human trafficking. A list of resources can be found at **humantraffickinghotline.org/training-resources/referral-directory**.
- Access other **local community services**, such as food or housing, by dialing **211**.

RESOURCE: DEVELOPING A COUNTER-TRAFFICKING STRATEGY

Provides an overview of best practices in adopting a holistic counter-trafficking strategy, including identification and safeguarding efforts by frontline sector organizations.

How Can ‘Frontline Sectors’ Combat Human Trafficking?

Frontline professionals play a pivotal role in identifying and combatting human trafficking within their particular sector. See below for just a few examples of how different sectors can make an impact within their area of influence.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

- ▶ Law enforcement is a key frontline profession for identifying victims of human trafficking. A victim-centered approach to policing can lead to trauma-informed and effective safeguarding interventions that may result in the discovery of both victims, as well as the arrest of the actual perpetrators.

TRANSPORTATION

- ▶ At times, public transportation can play a role in the facilitation of a victim’s movement from origin to destination locations. With appropriate training and the right procedures in place, the transportation sector can play a vital role in raising public awareness, identifying trafficking situations, and safeguarding victims in transit who are in various stages of exploitation.

HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS

- ▶ Victims have limited, if any, time apart from the perpetrator. However, such occasions may arise when victims require medical care as a result of ongoing exploitation. Healthcare workers in hospitals, urgent care facilities, and sexual health clinics are in a unique position to observe, identify, and engage with potential victims of human trafficking.

HOSPITALITY

- ▶ The hospitality industry often unwittingly harbors victims in transit or being actively exploited. With increased training on recognizing potential key indicators, along with established protocols and resources to assist trafficking victims once encountered, the hospitality industry can help safeguard victims.

IMMIGRATION

- ▶ Both documented and undocumented migrants can be victims of human trafficking. Immigration officials are in a key position to be able to interview and identify potential victims of human trafficking crossing the border.

FINANCIAL INDUSTRY

- ▶ Banks can unknowingly facilitate the financial exploits of trafficking. Traffickers often use the credentials of victims to open bank accounts or access credit cards to launder money and avoid detection. Through closer monitoring of financial transactions and increased training on human trafficking and fraud detection, the banking sector can stop the monetary profit that is the core motive of human trafficking.

EDUCATION SYSTEM

- ▶ Educators often have the best insight into the well-being of students in their classrooms, including potential changes in behavior that signal the existence of a possible exploitative situation. As educators have the unique ability to observe students almost daily, those in the education system may be able to identify and intervene to assist a student who is being groomed or actively being exploited.

The list above is not exhaustive, but merely highlights the multiple industries that might encounter a potential victim of human trafficking.

INCREASING AWARENESS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Understanding the modus operandi of human trafficking, such as vulnerability factors, recruitment, and grooming, will assist frontline professionals in identifying victims and potential victims. As anyone can be exploited, this understanding of vulnerability is also vital in preventing trafficking. Frontline sectors can use public awareness campaigns and general education as a method of both prevention and intervention for those who use their services, including the general public and those at-risk, warning of the signs of possible trafficking.

RESOURCE: DEVELOPING A COUNTER-TRAFFICKING STRATEGY

Provides guidance on creating an organizational counter-trafficking strategy, including the importance of awareness and the use of awareness campaigns.

RESOURCES: A21'S SAMPLE AWARENESS CAMPAIGN – CAN YOU SEE ME?

- **RESOURCE OVERVIEW OF THE CAN YOU SEE ME? AWARENESS CAMPAIGN:** Provides an overview of the purpose and the methodology of A21's *Can You See Me?* awareness campaign. This resource also provides guidance on how to implement the campaign to spread awareness and support intervention efforts.
- **CAN YOU SEE ME? INDICATORS POSTERS:** Summarizes the key signs and exploitation types for each type of trafficking illustrated in the campaign scenarios; these posters can be placed in strategic locations such as on the backs of toilet stall doors.
- **STORY-TELLING RESOURCES**
- **EXPLOITATION TYPE RESOURCES**
- **CAN YOU SEE ME? SCENARIO GUIDE:** Explanatory handout accompanying each scenario to be utilized in a training context which provides further insight into the specific scenario as well as information about the featured type of trafficking.



UNDERSTANDING HOW HUMAN TRAFFICKING CAN HAPPEN

VULNERABILITY

Traffickers often prey on those most vulnerable in society to recruit and exploit as victims. Certain vulnerability factors explored below may make individuals or communities more vulnerable to exploitation. Understanding this intersection between vulnerability and human trafficking allows for a better understanding of survivors and implicitly supports preventative and safeguarding efforts.

VULNERABILITY FACTORS

Vulnerability factors include but are not limited to:

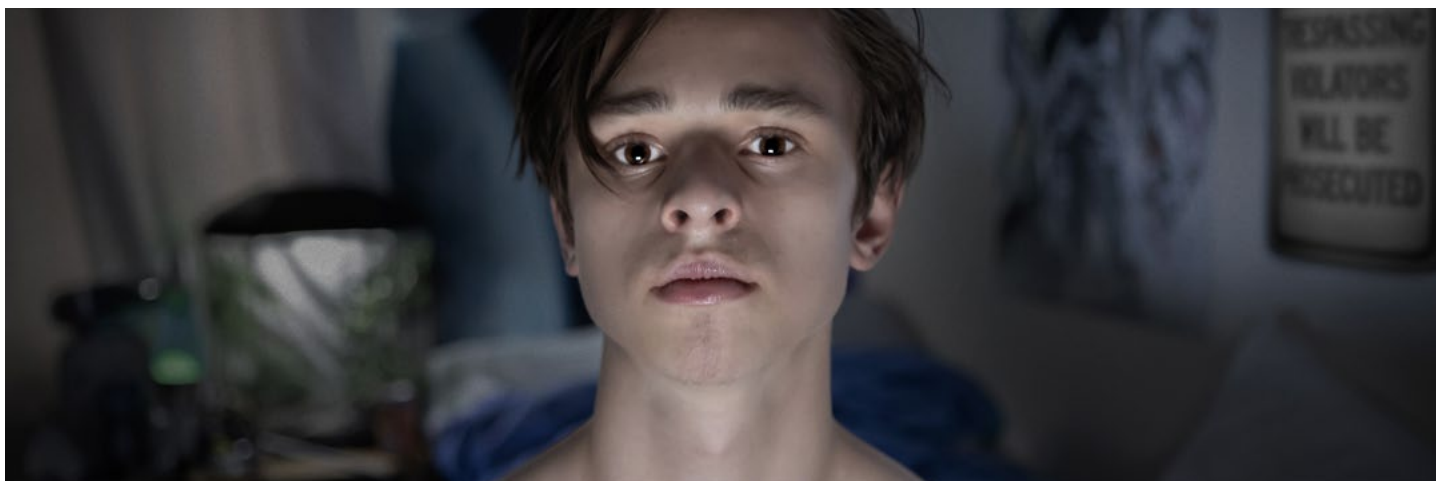
- | | | |
|---------------------|-----------------|---|
| ▶ Age | ▶ Unemployment | ▶ Unstable political and/or social conditions |
| ▶ Homelessness | ▶ Legal status | ▶ Substance addictions |
| ▶ Substance misuse | ▶ Poverty | |
| ▶ Lack of education | ▶ Mental health | |

Lack of employment options or dysfunctional and abusive home environments may lead people to seek alternative employment away from home. In this way, many people are exploited in attempts to improve personal financial situations, where economic turmoil can increase vulnerability to trafficking through desperation and acceptance of unregulated or informal work. Conflict or unstable political conditions also increase vulnerability, as seen in migrant and refugee populations.

While these external factors provide some context, it is important to note that there are wider cultural, political, and socio-economic barriers that may also play a role in exploitation. Namely, it may be the lack of socio-economic protections to combat vulnerabilities that leads to trafficking. For example, many do not have access to further education, may lack social support networks, or do not have access to social protection measures that may safeguard against potential exploitation. Newer studies suggest a minority of victims are from the LGBTQ+ community, who suffer from social exclusion and are often not afforded adequate protections or are excluded from gaining equal opportunities, affecting economic mobility.

RECRUITMENT AND GROOMING

Traffickers utilize a variety of recruitment methods to deceive and coerce victims into exploitative situations. A common method may involve posting a false job opportunity online with little-to-no information regarding the details of the employment opportunity, which is in another country. However, a competitive salary with accommodations and a guaranteed work visa are promised. Another may involve a trafficker profiling and targeting an emotionally vulnerable youth to engage in a “romantic relationship” with the ultimate goal of emotionally manipulating them into sexual exploitation. As the “romantic relationship” doesn’t happen immediately, the trafficker will set aside time to “groom” the victim - that is, build a relationship and establish rapport for the sole purpose of manipulating and exploiting the victim at a later time. The grooming process in that “romantic relationship” situation, also known as the “romeo pimp” scenario, may involve the trafficker/“boyfriend” showering the targeted victim with gifts and building a fast emotional connection. The trafficker may also isolate the targeted victim from friends and family so the trafficker soon becomes their sole emotional support.



While the grooming process can happen quite quickly, it can also take place over long periods. The trafficker builds trust during this critical grooming period, so that at a later date, the trafficker can create a future situation where the targeted victim will be trapped with minimal-to-no opportunity to seek assistance. They use deception and manipulation to make their victims feel ashamed or responsible for their own exploitation, and in the process, create the perception of a willing victim. After a victim has been groomed, traffickers are able to control their every movement.

The prevalence of the online world has increased the ease at which vulnerable people can be manipulated and exploited and has created other avenues to facilitate the crime of human trafficking. As a result of the development of information and communication technologies, victims of human trafficking no longer need to be recruited and exploited in person; social media expands the reach of perpetrators from local to global. For example, a young man could be offered a job opportunity in another country through an online job advertisement that turns out to be false, or a new friend request on social media could lead to a young person being groomed and trafficked for sexual exploitation.

RESOURCE: ONLINE CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

Provides information about how to safeguard against online child sexual exploitation.

- **ADULT GUIDE**
- **YOUTH GUIDE**

CONSIDERATIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL INTERVENTION EFFORTS

As frontline sectors have an increased probability of encountering potential victims of trafficking through regular work-based activities, such organizations may consider developing their own counter-trafficking strategies to incorporate training and best practices.

RESOURCE: DEVELOPING A COUNTER-TRAFFICKING STRATEGY

Provides an overview of best practices in adopting a holistic counter-trafficking strategy in frontline sector organizations.

IDENTIFYING A HUMAN TRAFFICKING SITUATION

Internal organizational training for frontline professionals should include guidance on identifying a possible trafficking situation and the potential victims being exploited. Identifying a victim of trafficking requires understanding the nuances and complexities of a victim's self-identification process. As explained in the previous "Recruitment and Grooming" section, manipulated victims may blame themselves for their victimization or, alternatively, they may still be trauma-bonded to their trafficker. These complex issues underlying the exploitative situation may manifest in a way that means a victim can appear to be complicit in the exploitation. At other times, self-blaming victims may not realize that the trafficker had planned every step resulting in their exploitation. There are numerous reasons why an individual may not self-identify. In some cases, individuals may recognize that they are a victim of abuse or exploitation, but they may not perceive that the harm they are experiencing is actually human trafficking.

Certain vulnerability factors may make a victim feel as if they are unable to leave an exploitative environment. For example, a victim may be aware of the unfair treatment but may be hesitant to leave because of an inability to return home, likely homelessness, or the lack of alternative employment options. Foreign national victims face additional hurdles such as immigration status, language barriers, and unfamiliarity with a foreign country. Therefore, a victim may perceive that it may be better, or in some ways safer, to stay in a hostile or exploitative situation rather than to leave and face the unknown. Individuals who have been "identified" as human trafficking victims may continue to be re-victimized if certain vulnerability factors are not adequately addressed. While identification may be the first step, without further support, the likelihood of re-victimization remains high.

RESOURCE: RECOGNIZING HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Explores how to recognize a possible trafficking situation, illustrating red flag indicators and guidance on engaging with a potential victim.

RESOURCE: IDENTIFICATION VS. RECOVERY

Provides insight into the barriers of victim identification. Explains the point of identification and recovery as two distinct parts of a survivor's journey out of a trafficking situation and the nuances of each stage.

ENGAGING WITH A POTENTIAL VICTIM OF TRAFFICKING

Training should also contain guidance on proper engagement with potential victims of trafficking. Frontline professionals may find interactions with potential victims challenging when a victim may refuse to self-identify, despite clear signs of trafficking. Understanding that victims of trafficking may also be predisposed to ongoing complex trauma, which could impact their memories, their behavior, or social interactions, will assist when engagement actually occurs. The impact of trauma varies by person and can be compounded when an individual does not recognize their own victimization. The coping responses to trauma could be detected through observing intense outbursts of emotion, or for others, it might be that they are completely emotionally detached. Utilizing a victim-centered approach requires considering the impact of trauma by interacting compassionately and sensitively to prioritize the victim's needs above all else.

RESOURCE: VICTIM-CENTERED APPROACH

Explains the use of the victim-centered approach when engaging with potential victims of trafficking. The victim-centered approach involves taking a trauma-informed perspective to support victims of human trafficking and ensure the needs and concerns of a victim are prioritized.

RESOURCE: INDICATORS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Provides guidance on some of the key indicators or red flags that might suggest a potential trafficking situation. This resource can be placed in easily accessible locations to act as quick reference guide for frontline professionals.

Industry specific indicator cards are also available for follow following industries:

- ▶ Law Enforcement
- ▶ Healthcare
- ▶ Aviation
- ▶ Bus
- ▶ Rideshare
- ▶ Hospitality
- ▶ Rail

Once engaged with a potential victim of trafficking, the potential victim may or may not want further assistance. Often, a potential victim may express a desire not to further engage. In either situation, you can provide resources for them to access at a later date.

RESOURCE: ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY SAFEGUARDING

Tailored for those working in the entertainment industry in the United States, this resource helps workers recognize if someone might be trying to exploit them. This card can be distributed to individuals in the entertainment industry or potential victims who have refused other assistance.

RESOURCE: PREVENTATIVE LABOR EXPLOITATION PASSPORT

Provides information about labor exploitation in the United States. This resource can be disseminated to potential victims of labor exploitation and at-risk communities.

RESOURCE GUIDE



Learn more about Human Trafficking

The resources in this category provide an in-depth understanding of human trafficking in the United States, the complexities of victim identification, and the basic foundations of a counter-trafficking strategy. This includes the importance of incorporating a trauma-informed, victim-centered approach when creating a strategy for your organization.

→ **HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN THE US:**

Explains human trafficking laws in the United States, as well as the types of trafficking most prevalent in the United States.

→ **RECOGNIZING HUMAN TRAFFICKING:**

Explores how to recognize and identify a potential victim, illustrating key indicators and guidance on engaging with a potential victim.

→ **VICTIM-CENTERED APPROACH:**

Explains the use of the victim-centered approach when engaging with potential victims of trafficking. The victim-centered approach involves using a trauma-informed perspective to support victims of human trafficking, ensuring the victims' needs and concerns are prioritized.

→ **IDENTIFICATION VS. RECOVERY:**

Explains the stages of identification and recovery as two distinct parts of a survivor's journey out of a trafficking situation and the nuances of each stage.

→ **DEVELOPING A COUNTER-TRAFFICKING STRATEGY:**

Provides an overview of best practices in adopting a holistic counter-trafficking strategy, including how to approach identification and intervention efforts in frontline sector organizations.

Resources for Potential Victims of Trafficking and Victim Identification

The resources in this category are designed for frontline professionals who might encounter a potential victim of trafficking.

→ INDICATORS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING:

Provides guidance on some of the key indicators that might suggest a potential trafficking situation. This resource can be placed in easily-accessible locations to act as a quick reference guide for frontline professionals.

- ▶ Law Enforcement
- ▶ Healthcare
- ▶ Aviation
- ▶ Rail
- ▶ Bus
- ▶ Rideshare
- ▶ Hospitality

→ LAW ENFORCEMENT RESOURCES:

Specific resources to support a victim-centered approach to sex and labor trafficking investigations. These resources are only available for those working in law enforcement.

→ ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY SAFEGUARDING RESOURCE:

Helps workers in the entertainment industry to recognize if someone might be trying to exploit them.

→ PREVENTATIVE LABOR EXPLOITATION PASSPORT:

A practical resource containing warning signs of exploitation. This resource can be handed out to potential victims of labor exploitation and at-risk communities.

Public Awareness Campaign – Can You See Me? Resources and Training Materials

Can You See Me? is a global awareness campaign that can be seen across transportation hubs around the world. The resources in this section provide information regarding the campaign and examples of human trafficking. The resources can be used to implement the campaign or as training materials.

→ **RESOURCE OVERVIEW OF THE CAN YOU SEE ME? AWARENESS CAMPAIGN:**

Provides an overview of the purpose and the methodology of A21's *Can You See Me?* awareness campaign. This resource also provides guidance on how to implement the campaign to spread awareness and support intervention efforts.

→ **CAN YOU SEE ME? SCENARIO GUIDE:**

Explanatory handout accompanying each scenario to use in a training context which provides further insight into the specific scenario as well as general information about the featured type of trafficking.

→ **CAN YOU SEE ME? INDICATORS POSTERS:**

Highlights the key signs of primary forms of trafficking illustrated in the campaign scenarios; these posters can be placed in strategic locations such as on the backs of toilet stall doors.

- ▶ Story-Telling Resources
- ▶ Exploitation Type Resources

→ **ONLINE CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION – ADULT AND YOUTH GUIDES:**

Age-appropriate information about online child sexual exploitation and safeguarding methods.



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