

# Press Release

Hamilton County Health Department



Web: [health.hamiltontn.org](http://health.hamiltontn.org)

**\*\*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE\*\***

July 28, 2020

## Health Department Raises Awareness of Human Trafficking

HAMILTON COUNTY, TN - The Hamilton County Health Department has partnered with local community organizations to raise awareness to human trafficking through the Red Sand Project.

The [Red Sand Project uses artwork](#) to create conversations about Human Trafficking here in Hamilton County. It is an opportunity for people to learn about vulnerabilities that can possibly lead to human trafficking and exploitation.

“We cannot end human trafficking without the vigilance of everyone in our community,” said Health Department Health Educator Calvin Bibbs, “The clues are subtle, and if you notice something or suspect something then report it.”

The [Trafficking Victims Act of 2000](#) defines Sex Trafficking as “the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision or obtaining of a person for the purpose of a commercial sex act, in which the commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion; or in which the person induced to perform such act has not attained 18 years of age.”

Labor Trafficking, another form of human trafficking, is defined as “the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery.”

According to [Polaris](#), 180 cases of human trafficking have been reported this year in Tennessee.

Human trafficking can happen to anyone with the most vulnerable being:

- Victims of child abuse; runaway youth
- Homeless
- Victims of domestic violence
- Individuals who come from conflict areas or experience social discrimination.

Warning signs that someone is being trafficked include the following:

- Physical Appearance
- Malnourishment
- Brandings
- Injuries

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- Provocative clothing or same clothing on multiple days
- Very few personal possessions
- Unexplained increases in money, clothing or jewelry without explanation
- No identification
- Prepaid cell phone
- Multiple hotel keys and key cards.

Behavioral characteristics of trafficking victims:

- Fears authority figures
- Avoids eye contact
- Claims to be an adult, though appearance suggests adolescence
- Seems to move frequently from place to place
- Has inconsistencies in their story
- Isn't able to speak for themselves
- Has sexually explicit profiles on social networking sites
- Is not enrolled in school or is consistently absent
- Seems to be withdrawn, depressed, or "checked out"
- Talks about an older boyfriend or sex with an older man
- Claims to be visiting, and can't state what city they're in or for how long.

Trafficking victims lack control:

- In terms of someone accompanying them controlling their every move
- A pre-scripted manner of speaking
- Doesn't have control over their finances
- Cannot come and go between locations on their own.

Common work and living conditions of trafficking victims:

- Is unpaid, paid very little, or paid only through tips
- Works excessively long and/or unusual hours
- Is not allowed breaks or suffers under unusual restrictions at work
- Owes a large debt and is unable to pay it off
- Recruited through false promises concerning the nature and condition of his/her work
- High security measures exist in the work and/or living locations.

If you suspect or know someone who may be trafficked, please contact the Tennessee Human Trafficking Hotline: 1-855-558-6484 or Text 'BeFree' to 233733. To contact the National Human Trafficking Hotline, please contact 1-888-373-7888 or by email at [help@humantraffickinghotline.org](mailto:help@humantraffickinghotline.org).

Local resources in the Hamilton County area include the [Partnership for Families, Children and Adults](#) Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Crisis Hotline (423) 755-2700, [Street Grace](#) at (888) 373-7888, and [Love's Arm](#) at (423) 580-6553.