

Anti-Human Trafficking: Information Sheet for Parents

This Info-Sheet on Human Trafficking provides guidance for parents to protect their children from Human Trafficking. For more information, refer to the Government of Ontario's information page found at www.ontario.ca/page/human-trafficking.

Human Trafficking is an unjustifiable violation of the victims' freedom and dignity, which are integral dimensions of the human person willed and created by God. This is why it must be considered, without a doubt, a crime against humanity. —Pope Francis

WHAT IS HUMAN TRAFFICKING?

- Human Trafficking is an indictable offence under the Criminal Code of Canada.
- It includes sex trafficking, which is the sexual exploitation, recruiting, harbouring, transporting, obtaining, or providing of a person for the purpose of sex.
- It involves the use of force, physical or psychological coercion, or deception.
- Human Trafficking is NOT prostitution or sex work. It does not involve consent. Young people under the age of 18 cannot consent to participate in prostitution or sex work.
- Some people who are trafficked are controlled and monitored constantly; others may not realize or acknowledge what is happening to them. Fear of their trafficker or law enforcement may prevent them from seeking help.

WHO CAN BE AT RISK?

Anyone can be at risk of human trafficking, however, some children and youth face increased risk, including those who are female-identified, Indigenous, Black, racialized, 2SLGBTQ+, differently-abled children, and those with language barriers or other systemic vulnerabilities and insecurities.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN ONTARIO AND THE REGION OF PEEL

Human trafficking is one of the fastest-growing crimes worldwide, and Ontario is a hub.

- 62% of Canadian human-trafficking cases originate in the GTA.
- The majority of all police-reported incidents of human-trafficking in Canada occur in Ontario.
- 22% of police-reported victims of human trafficking are children under the age of 18.
- School-aged children and youth are prime targets for sexual exploitation.

POSSIBLE SIGNS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING

- Change in personality (e.g., attitude, new friends, being withdrawn)
- Change in appearance
- Being secretive about their activities
- Having more than one cell phone that you have not approved
- Appears extremely tired
- Change in school performance and attendance
- In possession of hotel or Airbnb keys
- Dating someone and/or having friends that you do not know
- Not knowing who is following your child's social media account, or who your child interacts with online

WHO IS TRAFFICKING?

Strangers, acquaintances, friends, social media friends, intimate partners, and family members are trafficking. Traffickers may pose as romantic interests or present as a professional.

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PREVENTION & SUPPORT RESOURCES FOR PARENTS

WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE WORRIED THAT YOUR CHILD MAY BE INVOLVED IN HUMAN TRAFFICKING?

- Talk to your child about your worry. Be open in your dialogue.
- Get more information from credible resources. Refer to section *Where to go for Help in The Community?*
- Keep having open communication with your child.
- Consider monitoring your child's online activity.
- Reach out for help from the community and/or your child's school.
- Engage in self-care – this is a sensitive topic for parents and children alike, so take time to ensure you are emotionally ready for these conversations.
- Inspire hope – help students leave with a sense of hope and a plan for sharing concerns with a trusted adult, rather than carrying the concerns alone.

WHERE TO GO FOR HELP IN THE COMMUNITY?

- National Human Trafficking Hotline: 1-833-900-1010
- Peel Children's Aid Society: 905-363-6131
- Dufferin Child & Family Services: 519-941-1530
- Your child's School Principal
- Peel Police VICE Unit: 905-453-3311 ext. 3555
- Peel Police Community Mobilization: 905-453-2121
- Elizabeth Fry Society Peel/Halton: 905-459-1315
- Police/Fire/Ambulance: 911 (if there is an immediate safety concern)
- OPP: 1-888-310-1122

HELPFUL LINKS

- Region of Peel – Human/Sex Trafficking
<https://www.peelregion.ca/human-sex-trafficking>
- Peel Regional Police – Human Trafficking
<https://www.peelregion.ca/en/safety-tips/human-trafficking.aspx>
- Catholic Family Services of Peel-Dufferin
<https://cfspd.com/community-programs/human-trafficking/>
- Caledon/Dufferin Victim Services
<https://www.cdvs.ca/trafficking>
- Ministry of Education – Keeping Students Safe
<https://www.ontario.ca/document/education-ontario-policy-and-program-direction/policyprogram-memorandum-166#>
- Canadian Human Trafficking Hotline
<https://www.canadianhumantraffickinghotline.ca/>
- Speak Out: Stop Sex Trafficking Campaign – Addressing, preventing, and ending the sexual exploitation of Indigenous Women and Youth
<https://endindigenoustrafticking.com/>

"For surely I know the plans for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope." Jeremiah 29:11