What is human trafficking?

“Trafficking”:

“to deal or trade in something illegal.”
Two Primary Types of Human Trafficking

- Labor trafficking
- Sex trafficking
Sex Trafficking = Recruiting, Facilitating, Transporting, Persuading, Coercing, or Enticing someone to Engage in Sexual Acts
Common Myth # 1

Sex trafficking looks like the movie Taken.
I DON'T KNOW WHO YOU ARE
I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU WANT
BUT IF YOU DON'T LET MY DAUGHTER GO
I WILL FIND YOU... I WILL FIND YOU

LIAM NEESON

TAKEN

FROM THE WRITER-PRODUCER OF "THE TRANSPORTER"
Google Images Search: “Human Trafficking”
Human trafficking does not typically look like this.
Human Trafficking **does** typically look like this.
If sex trafficking doesn’t require physical violence, kidnapping, or restraint, then how do traffickers get their victims?
Manipulation, control, and targeting the vulnerable.
Vulnerabilities that lead to targeting by traffickers

- Drug-seeking/alcohol
- Running away/homelessness
- Foster care
- Distrust of authority figures
- Difficult and/or abusive home life
- Low self-esteem/seeking validation in unhealthy ways
- Cutting
- Needing money or other basic needs
- Craving love and validation
- Learning difficulties
Continuum of Vulnerability

Child Sexual Abuse
- linking of "love", sex, and abuse
- violation of boundaries
- guilt & shame
- view self as sexual object
- low self esteem
- run away/homeless
- poverty & need

Sexual Exploitation of Children (SEC)
- unequal power dynamics of adult/child relationship
- media influence
- demand: billion dollar sex industry
- approached by recruiters, pimps, traffickers

Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC)
How can you tell someone is being trafficked?

- Gut reaction: Does something feel off?

- Ask:
  - Are you ok?
  - Who is that person with you?
  - Are you traveling/on vacation?
  - Are you by yourself?
  - Are these your friends?
  - Can I help you out with anything?

Kids are the eyes and ears

- Educate tweens and teens on red flags

- It is NEVER too late to tell. You are never in too deep to get help.
Red flags

- New influx of cash
- Missing school
- Hair/nails out of the ordinary
- Hotel keys
- Condoms
- Older “friends” or “boyfriend” (including online)
- Offers or online chats about making money “modeling” or “dancing”
- “Strung out”
- Despair

- Rotting teeth, unhealed injuries, or other signs of physical neglect
- Walking into hotel/motel with no luggage
- Cell phone contacts only with nicknames or physical descriptions
- Lingerie
- Multiple cell phones or cell phone from someone unexpected as a “gift”
- Fake ID or no ID
- Tattoos with trafficker’s name, brand, or moniker; or concepts like “love” and “loyalty.”
Common Myth # 2

Statistics show Michigan is a “hub” for sex trafficking or #2 in the nation.
Experts in this field DO NOT rely on statistics.

Why?

We know that we DO NOT KNOW the extent of the problem.
How to talk about human trafficking

- Experts in the field do NOT rely on statistics.
  - Victims do not come forward and report.
  - Pimps do not come forward and report.
  - We know there are more pimps and victims than reports.
- Wherever there are people, there is a market for sex.
- Trafficking is about control and manipulation, not about kidnapping and smuggling.
- Kids who have low self-esteem, are unhappy at home and school, are bullied, and lack support are vulnerable to targeting.
- If you see something, say something to:
  - Guidance counselors
  - Parents
  - Teachers
  - Police
  - FBI/Homeland Security
  - YWCA confidential human trafficking hotline
Common Myth # 3

Sex trafficking mainly happens during big events where outsiders come to town, like Art Prize, the auto show, and professional sports games.
Sex trafficking mainly happens at hotels and street corners you pass on a daily basis. Traffickers are typically hiding in plain sight.
Common Myth # 4

Sex trafficking doesn’t happen in West Michigan.
Reality

Sex trafficking happens here. The United States Attorney’s Office for the Western District of Michigan has prosecuted 18 defendants for sex trafficking since 2013. Many others are prosecuted at the state and county level.
Examples of Cases Prosecuted
From July to August 2012, Jackson recruited teenage girls in Muskegon to work for him as child prostitutes. He drove them back and forth to Grand Rapids, where he put them out on the street to solicit men for sex. He also took them to semi-vacant houses to perform acts of prostitution with men. The teens were in 8th, 9th, and 10th grades.
Sentence: 30 years in federal prison
Christopher Bryant

In 2014, Bryant met and sex trafficked three teenage girls in Lansing, Michigan. Bryant posted prostitution ads for these girls online, and he arranged commercial sex dates for them in cars, homes, and hotels. Bryant typically kept all of the money, and he provided food, drugs, cigarettes, and alcohol to the minor girls.
Sentence: 40 years in federal prison
Michael Clayton

In 2017, 33-year-old Clayton met a 16-year-old runaway. Clayton initially showered her with affection and hooked her on cocaine. Clayton later told her that she could not expect to keep receiving cocaine for free, and that she needed to have sex for money. When the girl attempted to escape, Clayton threatened her with a gun and forced her into his basement so the police would not find her.
Sentence: life in federal prison
Female Pimp's Exist Too

Judge: Teen's role in sex-trafficking ring 'sickening'

By Matt Mencarini, Lansing State Journal
12:28 p.m. EDT July 15, 2015

LANSING – An Ingham County judge called a Lansing teen's role in a sex-trafficking ring "sickening" before sentencing her this morning to at least four years in prison.

Mariah Haughton, 17, pleaded guilty to human trafficking and transporting of a female for prostitution last month. Several other charges were dropped as part of her plea agreement, among them human trafficking, child sexually abusive commercial activity and prostitution.

Ingham County Circuit Court Judge Joyce Draganchuk sentenced Haughton, who will turn 18 later this month, to four to 20 years on both counts. She will serve the sentences at the same time.
Holland woman sentenced for sex trafficking of teens

24 Hour News 8 web staff
Published: August 4, 2016, 6:56 am | Updated: August 4, 2016, 10:14 am

Stephanie Martin’s mug shot from the Kent County Correctional Facility. (October 2015)

Related Coverage
3 plead guilty to sex trafficking of minors
GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. (WOOD) — A Holland woman was sentenced to four years in prison for her role in the prostitution of two teens in West Michigan.