What is human trafficking?

The Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 defines trafficking as:

**Action:**
- INDUCE
- RECRUITS
- HARBORS
- TRANSPORTS
- PROVIDES
- OBTAINS

**Means:**
- FORCE
- FRAUD
- COERCION

**Purpose:**
- COMMERCIAL SEX (sex trafficking)
- OR
- LABOR/SERVICES (labor trafficking)

Additionally, minors induced into commercial sex are trafficking victims—regardless of whether force, fraud, or coercion is used.

**Common Red Flags**

**Individuals**
- Sudden acquisition of lots of cash or expensive items
- Not in possession of ID or other important documents
- Inappropriate clothing for age or climate
- Fearful, anxious, or paranoid behavior
- Frequent travel to other cities
- Unexplained injuries
- Noticeably older significant other

**Homes/Businesses**
- Unusual security measures such as cameras, barbed wire, or blacked-out windows
- Odd entrances and odd hours
- Employees live where they work or come and go as a single group by the same means of transportation
- Lots of coming and going, particularly by men
- Women enter but rarely leave

**Recruitment and Entrapment**

Those vulnerable to trafficking are those who feel isolated because of factors such as homelessness, low self-esteem, LGBTQ+ identity, mental illness, immigration status, or past abuse. Traffickers are adept at exploiting these vulnerabilities by using promises of love and security to lure victims into trafficking situations.

Traffickers then use a variety of methods to keep victims trapped including violence, threats, isolation, blaming, intimidation, and debt. Many victims even form powerful attachments to their traffickers called trauma bonds, making exiting even harder.