

Human Trafficking in Canada **A Literature Review**

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Executive Summary

Human trafficking is a human rights violation that occurs around the world, including Canada. There are multiple types of human trafficking. The most prevalent forms of human trafficking in Canada are sex trafficking and labour trafficking. The primary focus of this literature review is on sex trafficking and child sex trafficking; where applicable, information on labour trafficking will also be covered. Current research is presented on risk factors for trafficking victimization, entrapment methods used by traffickers, consequences for victims, and victims' service needs. Evidence-based best practices for human trafficking prevention and intervention are also presented to help provide guidance for efforts in Saskatchewan.

Common misconceptions of human trafficking are that it requires the transportation of individuals out of province or internationally and that perpetrators are strangers to victims. In Canada, however, the majority of victims of sex trafficking still live at home or within their local community and know their trafficker beforehand (e.g., romantic partner, friend, peer, family). One of the most common entrapment methods for sex and child sex trafficking involves a trafficker posing as a caring romantic partner before using manipulation, coercion, and/or threats to force the victim into performing sex work. Additionally, while human trafficking is considered an invisible crime, 50%-88% of human trafficking victims come into contact with a health professional while being trafficked. Therefore, training for health professionals on risk factors and signs of human trafficking, as well as education to dispel common myths, is important for intervention efforts.

Shared risk factors for sex trafficking, child sex trafficking, and forced labour trafficking include unmet economic needs, homelessness, lack of social support, and family dysfunction (e.g., caregiver mental health issues, caregiver substance abuse, experiencing physical and/or emotional abuse, and/or neglect). Individuals who are homeless, due to financial or family reasons, are at particular risk. Traffickers will frequently provide them with housing, along with promises of quick financial gain. This results in victims being indebted to and reliant on their trafficker. Many victims report having nowhere else to go as a key barrier to escaping. Additional methods of luring and entrapment by traffickers are described in this literature review. Populations at greater risk of human trafficking victimization include individuals who experience trafficking risk factors (e.g., homelessness) at higher rates than their peers. In Canada, these populations include Indigenous People, sexual and gender minorities, and newcomers and immigrants. Additionally, young women and individuals with disabilities are frequently targeted by traffickers due to being viewed by traffickers as more easily manipulated.

Understanding risk factors and signs of human trafficking are critical for prevention and intervention efforts. Health professionals in particular can play a key role in identification. As discussed, up to 88% of victims come into contact with a health professional while being trafficked. However, health professionals report low levels of training and/or confidence in identifying human trafficking victims. Additionally, unprompted self-disclosure from trafficking victims is uncommon. Therefore, training of health professionals on signs of human trafficking and methods of promoting self-disclosure are critical for intervention. For example, once a patient is identified as a potential victim, they should be

interviewed in a safe and private space, away from the potential trafficker, using non-judgmental language and a trauma-informed approach. Additionally, continuity of care has been linked with an increased likelihood of an individual self-disclosing their victimization.

The consequences of human trafficking victimization are severe and long-lasting, impacting mental and physical health. Young children are especially vulnerable to the impacts of trafficking. Psychological outcomes include anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and suicidal ideations and/or attempts. Child victims are at risk of developing complex PTSD and/or dissociation. Therapies most used to treat victims of human trafficking include behavioural, cognitive, psychodynamic, and trauma-focused cognitive behaviour therapy (TF-CBT). Victims of sex and child sex trafficking are also at risk of sexually transmitted and blood borne infections (STBBI), infertility due to untreated chronic STBBI, unplanned or unwanted pregnancy, and/or pelvic and rectal trauma. Due to the various needs and comorbidities among human trafficking victims, comprehensive trauma-informed care that involves interdisciplinary and collaborative teams is needed. Additionally, victims of human trafficking often need safe housing to initially leave their trafficker and to prevent future victimization. For more information about resources and support services available in Saskatchewan and Canada for victims and survivors of human trafficking, see <https://skprevention.ca/product/human-trafficking-in-canada-environmental-scan/>.

1. Introduction

Human trafficking is a worldwide human rights violation; however, the majority of Canadians are not aware that human trafficking occurs within Canada (Canadian Centre to End Human Trafficking [CCEHT], 2021b). Human trafficking is “the recruitment, transportation, harbouring and/or exercising control, direction or influence over the movements of a person in order to exploit that person, typically for sexual exploitation or forced labour” (Public Safety Canada, 2024a, para. 1). According to Statistics Canada, there were 3,996 human trafficking incidents reported to police between 2012 and 2022 (Heidinger, 2023). Between 2019 and 2022, the Canadian Human Trafficking Hotline received 12,706 calls resulting in 1,500 human trafficking cases identified with 2,170 victims¹ (CCEHT, 2023). Approximately 37% of callers to the Hotline identified themselves as victims of trafficking. The majority of reported human trafficking incidents come from large urban centres (87%) and provincially from Ontario (67%), Alberta (10%), British Columbia (9%), and Quebec (7%) (CCEHT, 2023; Conroy, 2022; Heidinger, 2023). Saskatchewan’s human trafficking incident rate from 2012-2022 was 1.2 per 100,000 population, which was not statistically different from the national rate of 1.4 per 100,000 population (Heidinger, 2023). Saskatchewan has been identified by the Canadian Centre to End Human Trafficking as a land corridor (through Regina) and air corridor (through Saskatoon) for traffickers to take their victims through the “western circuit” of Calgary, Edmonton, Fort McMurray, and Grande Prairie (CCEHT, 2021a).

A common misconception is that human trafficking requires the transportation of individuals out of province or internationally. Human trafficking, however, does not require this type of movement (CCEHT, 2021a). Human trafficking in Canada is primarily domestic (e.g., does not cross international borders), with victims often still living at home or within their home community (CCEHT, 2021a; Marwaha, 2017). One of the most prominent forms of entrapment involves a trafficker posing as a caring and loving romantic partner before using manipulation, coercion, and/or threats to force the victim into performing services (Allan, Winters, & Jeglic, 2023; Baird & Connolly, 2021; CCEHT, 2021a; Fraley, Aronowitz, & Stoklosa, 2020; Hodgins, Mutis, Mason, & Du Mont, 2022; Marwaha, 2017). Similarly, most victims of human trafficking in Canada (91%) know their trafficker ahead of time (e.g., romantic partner, friends, peer, or family member) (Heidinger, 2023). Consequences for victims are typically severe and long-lasting with trafficking impacting both mental and physical health (Du Mont et al., 2024; Department of Health and Human Services [DHHS], n.d.; Recknor, Di Ruggiero, & Jensen, 2022; Toney-Butler, Ladd, & Mittel, 2023).

A thorough understanding of human trafficking in Canada is essential to successfully meet the needs of victims, as well as to develop effective prevention and intervention strategies. This literature review will examine current research on risk factors for human trafficking victimization, entrapment

¹ Data collected from the Canadian Human Trafficking Hotline only represents cases where a victim or witness overcame barriers to reaching out, and thus, are not representative of all trafficking incidents that are occurring across Canada (Heidinger, 2023).

methods by traffickers, consequences for victims, and victims' service needs. Evidence-based best practices for prevention and intervention strategies will also be presented to help provide guidance for efforts in Saskatchewan. Peer-reviewed research literature was the primary source for this report, but other evidence-based documents from reputable organizations (e.g., Canadian Centre to End Human Trafficking) and government websites were also consulted. Attempts were made to consult more current literature (i.e., within the last ten years), but in some cases older literature was examined. Keywords and phrases used in combination were Canada, human trafficking, sex trafficking, child sex trafficking, forced labour, labour trafficking, review, prevention, and intervention.

1.1 Types and Prevalence

There are multiple types of human trafficking including sex trafficking, child sex trafficking, labour trafficking, child labour, and forced marriage. The most prevalent forms of human trafficking in Canada are sex trafficking and labour trafficking² (CCEHT, 2021b; Conroy, 2022; Heidinger, 2023). Sex trafficking is the focus of the current literature review. However, information on forced labour trafficking is included where relevant, as women and girls trafficked for labour in domestic work are at risk for sexual assault and negative health outcomes (e.g., sexually transmitted blood borne infections [STBBI]) similar to sex trafficking victims (James, 2023; Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, n.d.). It is important to examine human trafficking information by type as victims, methods of entrapment, signs of trafficking, consequences, and victim needs vary based on the type human trafficking they experience.

Additionally, it is important to note that human trafficking statistics are likely underestimations due to the covert nature of the crime and the barriers victims encounter in reporting their victimization (Olson-Pitawanakwat & Baskin, 2020; Recknor et al., 2022). Victims are sometimes unwilling to report their trafficking to law enforcement due to fear, coercion, and/or feeling ashamed, and/or because they have been manipulated by their trafficker to believe it was their choice (Olson-Pitawanakwat & Baskin, 2020; Public Safety Canada, 2019; Public Safety Canada, 2024a; Roudometkina, & Wakeford, 2018; Office of Drugs and Crime [ODC], 2021). Among forced labour trafficking victims, barriers to reporting typically include language and/or a lack of knowledge about workers' rights in Canada (Public Safety Canada, 2019; Public Safety Canada, 2024a; ODC, 2021).

1.1.1 Sex Trafficking

Sex trafficking involves obtaining, transporting, detaining, and/or using coercion for the purposes of sexually exploiting individuals (Royal Canadian Mounted Police [RCMP], 2024). Traffickers may use threats, emotional and/or physical abuse, and/or

² For information about all types of human trafficking reported in Canada, see CCEHT's *Human Trafficking Trends in Canada 2019-2020* report: <https://www.canadiancentretoendhumantrafficking.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/ENG-Human-Trafficking-Trends-in-Canada-%E2%80%93-2019-20-Report-Final-1.pdf>.

manipulation to coerce victims into providing sexual services (Public Safety Canada, 2022b). Victims of sex trafficking may be forced to participate in escort services, outdoor solicitation, illicit massage parlours, remote interactive sexual activities, pornography, and/or personal sexual servitude (CCEHT, 2021b). Sex trafficking is the most encountered and prosecuted form of human trafficking in Canada with 69% of calls coming to the Canadian Human Trafficking Hotline between 2019 and 2022 being for incidents of sex trafficking with adults or minors (CCEHT, 2023; Heidinger, 2023; Public Safety Canada, 2022b). Women and girls (93%) make up the vast majority of human sex trafficking victims in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2024), whereas both girls and boys are victims of child sex trafficking (International Labour Organization [ILO], 2022).

1.1.2 Child Sex Trafficking

Child sex trafficking involves trafficking for the purpose of sexually exploiting minors as defined as any persons under the age of 18 (Department of Justice Canada, 2024). In Canada, legislation and federal consent laws state that those under the age of 18 are unable to consent to commercial sex work, and therefore, are also victims of sex trafficking (Hodgins et al., 2023). The United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime (2024) states that it is “irrelevant whether a child appears to have ‘consented’ in some way to being exploited, especially when force, deception, coercion, or abuse of power or vulnerability are being used” (para. 1). In Canada from 2012 to 2022, 24% of human trafficking victims were under the age of 18 with sex trafficking being the predominant form of trafficking (Heidinger, 2023).

1.1.3 Forced Labour Trafficking

Forced labour trafficking involves the recruitment, transportation, detention, and/or control of individuals to work in unsafe or hazardous work environments, under harsh conditions, and/or unreasonably long hours for little or no pay (ILO, 2022). Forced labour trafficking can occur in a variety of work settings as well as private homes. In Canada, victims of forced labour may work in construction, agriculture, domestic servitude, landscaping, mining, food service, health and beauty services, hospitality, and/or commercial cleaning services (CCEHT, 2021b). Trafficking for forced labour is the second most prevalent form of human trafficking in Canada making up 6% of all incidents reported to the Canadian Human Trafficking Hotline (CCEHT, 2023). For forced labour trafficking, victim demographics depend on the work sector the person is trafficked into. For example, women and girls make up the majority of domestic servitude victims, and men and boys are the main victims of forced physical labour (Heidinger, 2023; ODC, 2021).

2. Victims of Human Trafficking

There are factors that make individuals more vulnerable to being trafficked. Understanding factors that increase vulnerability to human trafficking is critical for protecting individuals from exploitation

and for prevention and intervention efforts. Sex trafficking, child sex trafficking, and forced labour trafficking share the following risk factors: basic needs not being met, including housing (Allan et al., 2023; Baird & Connolly, 2021; Hodgins et al., 2022; Public Safety Canada, 2022b; Rapoza 2022); lacking social supports (Department of Homeland Security [DHS], 2022; Public Safety Canada, 2022b); and experiencing family dysfunction (Allan et al., 2023; Baird & Connolly, 2021; Doiron & Peck, 2022; Hodgins et al., 2022; Rapoza 2022).

Basic needs not being met typically involves living in poverty or experiencing homelessness. Victims may experience homelessness before being trafficked due to financial reasons or family dysfunction. Victims often report running away from an unsafe home or foster home environment or that they were told to leave by a caregiver (Baird & Connolly, 2021; Hodgins et al., 2022; Rapoza 2022). Traffickers will target individuals in these situations and manipulate them into believing that they are being offered an opportunity to quickly secure needed finances. Later, traffickers will use coercion, threats, and force to exploit the individual (Allan et al., 2023; Fraley & Aronowitz, 2021; Public Safety Canada, 2022b). Individuals who are homeless are at particular risk as traffickers will target them not only with promises of quick financial gains but also offer them housing. This creates an additional level of reliance on the trafficker with victims often citing the fact that they have nowhere else to go as a barrier to leaving the trafficking situation (Baird & Connolly, 2021; Hodgins et al., 2022; Rapoza 2022).

As discussed above, family dysfunction and unsafe home environments are related to homelessness and an increased risk of trafficking. Family dysfunction can involve caregiver mental health issues, caregiver drug or alcohol abuse, experiencing physical and/or emotional abuse or neglect, exposure to intimate partner violence, and/or a difficult relationship with caregivers (Baird & Connolly, 2021; Doiron & Peck, 2022; Hodgins et al., 2022; Rapoza 2022). Perpetrators of human trafficking look for individuals experiencing family dysfunction as these individuals may be looking for a way to leave home or have already left with unstable or no housing (Public Safety Canada, 2022b). Family dysfunction can also lead to involvement in the child welfare and/or foster care system. Disproportionately high numbers of individuals in these systems experience trafficking victimization (Doiron & Peck 2022; Fraley & Aronowitz, 2021; Fraley et al., 2020). Traffickers view these individuals as vulnerable to luring tactics because of a lack of care and/or stability in their lives that the trafficker can pretend to offer (Baird & Connolly, 2021; Doiron & Peck 2022; Fraley et al., 2020).

Experiencing family dysfunction is also associated with having low levels of support, which is another risk factor for trafficking (Baird & Connolly, 2021; Hodgins et al., 2022; Public Safety Canada, 2022b; Rapoza 2022). Traffickers target individuals with little to no social support at home, socially (e.g., friends, classmates, co-workers), and/or from non-familial adults (e.g., teachers, coaches) (DHS, 2022; Public Safety Canada, 2022b). Perpetrators will then act to fulfill the support needs of their victims to foster a close connection (CCEHT, 2021a; Fraley & Aronowitz, 2021; Fraley et al., 2020). Traffickers will also intentionally isolate victims from any existing social supports the victim does have to cause them to rely solely on the trafficker (Allen et al., 2023). Isolating victims from supports also leaves them with fewer avenues to escape once the trafficking begins (DHS, 2022;

Public Safety Canada, 2022b). Traffickers will use connection, dependency, and isolation to exploit their victims. Further details on how traffickers lure and exploit victims are described in the *Methods of Entrapment* section of this literature review.

2.1 Additional Risk Factors for Victimization

2.1.1 Sex Trafficking

Risk factors specific to sex trafficking victimization include a history of childhood sexual abuse, experiencing adolescent dating violence, and substance use (Allan et al., 2023; Baird & Connolly, 2021; Hodgins et al., 2022; Rapoza, 2022). Experiencing childhood sexual abuse has been linked with low self-esteem and the inability to form healthy relationships (Stone & Ashcraft, 2024). These are vulnerabilities traffickers use to lure and entrap victims. Experiencing adolescent dating violence also puts an individual at greater risk for sex trafficking. When early romantic relationships are abusive, it can lead adolescents to normalize unhealthy treatment. This can limit a victim's ability to notice early red flags and/or clearly identify that they are involved in a trafficking situation (Fraley et al., 2020).

Traffickers will also sometimes leverage an existing substance addiction to lure a victim into trafficking (Allan et al., 2023; Baird & Connolly, 2021). By providing victims with the drug and/or alcohol they need to avoid withdrawal symptoms, the trafficker can appear to be a caring support for victims. Through this process, traffickers position themselves as a person their victims need and depend on for withdrawal relief. It is also reported that perpetrators will intentionally introduce potential victims to substances in order to elicit an addiction, creating an additional means by which to control them and build dependency (Allan et al., 2023; Baird & Connolly, 2021; DHHS, n.d.). Traffickers do this by withholding or supplying the now needed substance in order to make demands of their victims and to build gratitude when the substance is provided. Addiction also makes it more challenging for victims to leave once the trafficking begins. Service providers, law enforcement, and victims themselves have cited substance use as a major barrier to reaching out for help (CCEHT, 2021a). Reasons for this include victims feeling ashamed, worried they will not be believed, and/or getting in trouble due to their substance use.

2.1.2 Child Sex Trafficking

Victims of child sex trafficking experience the same risk factors as adult sex trafficking victims, as detailed above. Unique risk factors for child victims of sex trafficking include early and/or violent sexual abuse by a family member and a family member having access to them who intends to exploit them (Fraley et al., 2020; Pacheco, Buenaventura, & Miles, 2023; Sprang & Cole, 2018). Typically, caregivers and family members protect their children from harm, whereas familial traffickers will exploit children's dependence on them to traffic children for money and/or drugs (Pacheco et al., 2023; Sprang & Cole,

2018). In some cases, child sex trafficking victimization occurs due to intergenerational sex work. In these situations, family members who are involved in sex work themselves manipulate or force young family members into performing sexual services as well. However, as discussed earlier, anyone under the age of 18 cannot consent to sex work and is therefore in a trafficking situation (ODC, 2024). While familial trafficking is thought to be rare, it is harder to detect due to the lack of awareness that sex trafficking victimization can occur at such young ages. Information about the signs of sex trafficking among young child victims is provided in the *Intervention* section.

2.1.3 Forced Labour

Risk factors unique to forced labour trafficking include unstable immigration status (e.g., lack of permanent residence, no visa or work permit), language barriers, working in isolated areas, and lack of knowledge about workers' legal rights in Canada (DHS, 2022; Holman & Godden, 2022; Public Safety Canada, 2022a). Forced labour traffickers take advantage of individuals with unstable immigration status by threatening deportation to prevent victims from reporting mistreatment (Allen et al., 2023; Holman & Godden, 2022; Public Safety Canada, 2022a). However, while forced labour trafficking is typically assumed to occur among individuals who enter the country illegally, research shows that most forced labour trafficking victims in Canada entered the country legally and were then exploited through threats or violence (Holman & Godden, 2022). Traffickers will also often confiscate a victim's work permit, passport, and other documentation to gain and maintain control over victims and force them to continue providing services (Allan et al., 2023; Beatson, Hanley, & Ricard-Guay, 2017; Holman & Godden, 2022). Additionally, if victims are not knowledgeable about the legal rights of workers in Canada, they may not understand that they are being trafficked (DHS, 2022; Public Safety Canada, 2022a).

Perpetrators also target individuals who do not speak or speak fluently the local language as these individuals can be easier to manipulate. These individuals may not understand the conditions they are agreeing to with the trafficker and/or exploitative contracts they are asked to sign (DHS, 2022; Public Safety Canada, 2022a). Language barriers while working in isolated areas create further challenges for victims seeking help (CCEHT, 2021b; DHS, 2022; Public Safety Canada, 2022a). Isolated work areas are present in Saskatchewan, including those with limited access to services (James, 2023). In addition to language barriers, victims in these areas face the challenge of being able to reach needed supports once contact is established.

2.2 Vulnerable Populations

Populations who experience risk factors associated with human trafficking at higher rates than the general public also experience more trafficking victimization. In Canada, populations with elevated risk factors and rates of human trafficking victimization include young women,

Indigenous people, sexual and gender minorities, individuals with disabilities, and newcomers and immigrants (Public Safety Canada, 2019; Public Safety Canada, 2024a).

2.2.1 Young Women

Young women are overrepresented among victims of human sex trafficking. Between 2012 and 2023, 93% of the 3,558 police-reported human trafficking incidents in Canada were women or girls (Statistics Canada, 2024). Approximately 1 in 5 (23%) of these victims were under the age of 18 (Statistics Canada, 2024). There are several factors that contribute to young girls' vulnerability to being victims of human trafficking. Traffickers target young girls because they are thought to be easier to influence and control, and there is a demand for sex with those who are or appear young (Baird & Connolly, 2021). From a developmental psychology perspective, traffickers can take advantage of the developmental vulnerabilities in young women associated with identity formation, low self-esteem, evolving problem-solving skills, and the need for belonging, autonomy, and romantic connections (Baird & Connolly, 2021). Perceived bonds with their traffickers may fulfill young girls' needs for validation and emotional assurance. This is particularly true when traffickers implement the strategy of "boyfriending" in which they enter into a romantic relationship with their victim (Hodgins et al., 2022). In Canada, "boyfriending" is the most utilized method of human trafficking entrapment with 34% of victims being trafficked by a romantic partner (Heidinger, 2023). "Boyfriending" and other entrapment methods are discussed further in the *Methods of Entrapment* section of this literature review.

2.2.2 Indigenous People

While Indigenous people make up 4% of Canada's total population, it is estimated that 50% of human trafficking and sex exploitation victims are Indigenous (Olson-Pitawanakwat & Baskin, 2020; Public Safety Canada, 2022b; Statistics Canada, 2022b). Additionally, Indigenous women and girls in Canada experience human trafficking victimization at higher rates than any other demographic (Olson-Pitawanakwat & Baskin, 2020; Native Women's Association of Canada, 2023; Public Safety Canada, 2019). Due to the lasting impacts of colonization, the residential school system, and ongoing racism and discrimination, Indigenous people in Canada experience severe economic need, poor living conditions, and homelessness more prevalently than their non-Indigenous counterparts (National Collaborating Centre for Indigenous Health, 2020; Statistics Canada, 2022a, Statistics Canada, 2022b). As discussed, unmet basic needs and homelessness are risk factors for human trafficking victimization (Allan et al., 2023; Baird & Connolly, 2021; Hodgins et al., 2022; Public Safety Canada, 2022b; Rapoza 2022).

Additionally, the residential school system and the Sixties Scoop in Canada separated Indigenous children from their families for multiple generations and exposed children to

trauma, neglect, and emotional, physical, and/or sexual abuse (Lavalley, Kaster, Valleriani, & McNeil, 2018; Olson-Pitawanakwat & Baskin, 2020; Roudometkina & Wakeford, 2018). These systemic abuses caused long-term negative impacts on the children, their families, and future generations, including negative psychological impacts (Lavalley et al., 2018; Olson-Pitawanakwat & Baskin, 2020; Rocke, MacKenzie, & Keast-Wiatrowski, 2017; Roudometkina & Wakeford, 2018). Due to harms to mental health from this intergenerational trauma, Indigenous people are at greater risk for substance use and addictions, which further increases their vulnerability to human trafficking victimization (Lavalley et al., 2018). Substance use and addictions can lead to further dysfunction within the family. Rocke and colleagues (2017) reported that family dysfunction is a prominent risk factor among Indigenous youth for being exploited by sex traffickers. As discussed previously, dysfunction at home can also lead individuals to run away from home, opening them up further to being the target of traffickers (Allan et al., 2023).

The Canadian Center to End Human Trafficking identified unique travel patterns of Indigenous women and girls as an additional vulnerability to human trafficking victimization. While other populations are more likely to be sexually exploited through human trafficking networks across Canada, Indigenous women and girls are more prone to being at risk of trafficking while travelling to urban centers from rural communities for routine tasks such as healthcare appointments, vacations, school, or seeking employment (CCEHT, 2021a). Traffickers use victims' unfamiliarity and lack of connections within the urban center to befriend, entrap, and traffic them (CCEHT, 2021a).

2.2.3 Sexual and Gender Minorities

Sexual and gender minorities, including Two-Spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex persons (2SLGBTQI+), are disproportionately victimized by human traffickers, representing 2% of all victims identified while only representing 0.24% of the Canadian population (Allan et al., 2023; CCEHT, 2021b). 2SLGBTQI+ youth are also at increased risk of child sex trafficking due in part to experiencing homelessness at disproportionately high rates (CCEHT, 2021b; Hogan & Roe-Sepowitz, 2020). In Canada, approximately 25-40% of homeless youth self-identify as 2SLGBTQI+ (CCEHT, 2021b). Related to homelessness and an increased risk of running away, sexual and gender minorities may experience familial rejection, emotional abuse, and/or physical abuse due to homophobic and transphobic beliefs (Dalton & Harper, 2023). Sexual and gender minorities also experience poverty at a higher rate than their heterosexual and

cisgender counterparts³, which also increases their vulnerability to human trafficking victimization (CCEHT, 2021b; Dalton & Harper, 2023).

2.2.4 Individuals with Disabilities

Research in Canada and the United States shows that those who have cognitive, intellectual, psychological, and/or physical disabilities are at an increased risk of human trafficking (Allan et al., 2023; DHS, 2022; Grand'Maison, Medford-Williams, & Huntjens, 2023). Girls with intellectual disabilities are 4-8 times more likely to experience sex trafficking victimization than girls with average intelligence (Reid, 2018). It is hypothesized that perpetrators view those with disabilities, especially women and girls with disabilities, as more vulnerable, easier to control, less likely to be believed, and less likely to report violent crimes (Grand'Maison et al., 2023). Those with intellectual disabilities may also not be aware that they are being exploited or violated (Wolfson et al., 2023). Specific vulnerabilities include communication difficulties, social isolation, limited social skills, difficulties with executive functioning, lack of inclusive and affirming sexual health education, and limited understanding of concepts such as choice, healthy relationships, and consent (Grand'Maison et al., 2023; Reid, 2018; Wolfson, Harding, & Pepin, 2023).

2.2.5 Newcomers and Immigrants

Newcomers and immigrant workers in Canada are another population at an increased risk of human trafficking victimization (Holman & Godden, 2022; Public Safety Canada, 2022a). They more commonly experience the risk factors associated with forced labour trafficking discussed previously (i.e., language barriers, lack of knowledge about the rights of workers in Canada, and/or unstable immigration status) (DHS, 2022; CCEHT, 2021b; Public Safety Canada, 2022a; Toney-Bulter et al., 2023). Unfamiliarity with the local culture can also be a barrier to newcomers and immigrants recognizing the signs of trafficking (Toney-Bulter et al., 2023). For example, red flags during interactions with a trafficker may be misinterpreted as cultural differences in behaviour rather than exploitive behaviour (Toney-Bulter et al., 2023).

Newcomers and immigrants in need of employment to stay in Canada are especially targeted by traffickers as they are more easily controlled with threats of firing and deportation (DHS, 2022; Public Safety Canada, 2022a). Individuals with unstable immigration status may also be more willing to accept work offers in geographically isolated areas, which can limit their access to supports if they need help or want to escape (James, 2023). Traffickers will also take advantage of newcomers' and

³ The disproportionately high rates of poverty among 2SLGBTQI+ individuals is a complicated issue. One proposed explanation is that sexual and gender minorities report experiencing discrimination in their school systems and not feeling connected to school, which negatively impacts their academic achievements (Kia, Robinson, MacKay, & Ross, 2021). Poor educational attainment in turn can decrease employment opportunities and increase the risk of poverty.

immigrants' need for housing once they move to Canada. Specifically, they will provide victims with housing, especially domestic servitude victims. Traffickers then threaten victims with being fired if they do not continue to work under harsh conditions, knowing that the victim has nowhere else to live (Public Safety Canada, 2022a). It is important to note that many newcomers and immigrants come to Canada due to few economic opportunities in their home country, increasing the likelihood that they will stay with exploitative employers to remain in Canada (CCEHT, 2021b; Holman & Godden, 2022; Vecchio, 2024).

Women who are newcomers or immigrants are especially targeted by human traffickers (Holman & Godden, 2022). In many cases, women are offered jobs at seemingly legitimate places of employment like restaurants, hotels, or as nannies (Holman & Godden, 2022). These positions are advertised through newspapers, employment agencies, magazines, and the internet (Holman & Godden, 2022). It is only when they are in Canada that they find out that these job offers are a front for brothels, massage parlours, and/or forced prostitution (Holman & Godden, 2022).

3. Characteristics of Human Traffickers

In Canada, the majority of traffickers (91%) are known to their victims beforehand (e.g., romantic partners, close friends, roommates, classmates, family members, employers) (Allan et al., 2023; Baird & Connolly, 2021; Heidinger, 2023; Public Safety Canada, 2022b). Approximately one-third (34%) of victims reported that their trafficker posed as a romantic partner, 24% were trafficked by someone they had a business and/or criminal relationship with, and 22% were trafficked by a casual acquaintance (Heidinger, 2023). Fewer individuals reported being victimized by a friend (6%) or family member (3%) (Heidinger, 2023). Traffickers can be of any gender, age, race, educational background, or economic or social demographic. In Canada, however, the majority of accused traffickers are men, making up 82% of accused adult traffickers between 2012 and 2022 (CCEHT, 2021b; Heidinger, 2023; Statistics Canada, 2024; Toney-Butler et al., 2023).

This trend does not cross over into the small proportion (4%) of accused traffickers between the ages of 12 and 17 (Heidinger, 2023). In the youth-accused population, 55% of traffickers were girls (Heidinger, 2023). While there is limited research available on female traffickers, it is hypothesized that older male traffickers may take advantage of societal perceptions that young women and girls are more trustworthy (Heidinger, 2023). Therefore, adult traffickers will coerce and/or manipulate girls into trafficking others for them. Another reason proposed for why young women engage in trafficking is that they do it as a means of escaping their own trafficking victimization (Baird & Connolly, 2021). Traffickers using their female victims to lure and recruit other women and girls for exploitation creates a scenario where the victim becomes the perpetrator (Baird & Connolly, 2021).

Traffickers can be motivated by the promise of economic survival, quick profit, and/or a luxury lifestyle, as well as the power, influence, control, and status that come with it (CCEHT, 2021b). The

commercial sex industry also increases the occurrences of sex trafficking by motivating commercial sex ventures (e.g., strip clubs, pornography, and prostitution) to recruit and traffic vulnerable women and children in order to meet demand (Gould, 2017). Among forced labour, growing customer demand for cheap products motivates businesses to seek cheap labour, increasing the likelihood that companies at the bottom of the supply chain may exploit their employees (Gould, 2017).

4. Methods of Entrapment

As mentioned previously, the vast majority of human trafficking victims in Canada report knowing their perpetrator before trafficking begins (Allan et al., 2023; Baird & Connolly, 2021; Heidinger, 2023). Often in trafficking situations, the trafficker will initiate a romantic partnership and/or friendship with the victim. Another method that is less commonly reported is the familial tactic, where family members use their position of authority and family loyalty to coerce victims into the sex trade or forced labour (Baird & Connolly, 2021). Traffickers who are strangers to victims will most frequently use online platforms (e.g., Facebook, Snapchat, TikTok, Tinder, Twitch) to make initial contact (Baird & Connolly, 2021). The trafficker will use the anonymity of the internet to pose as an old friend, develop a new friendship, and/or offer false work opportunities (Baird & Connolly, 2021; Public Safety Canada, 2022b). Less frequently, traffickers will target strangers in physical locations where people are in transit (e.g., homeless shelters, youth shelters, malls, schools, nightclubs, bars, bus stops, train stations) (Baird & Connolly, 2021; Public Safety Canada, 2022b). Perpetrators will approach individuals with false promises of being able to make money quickly and/or a caring relationship. For individuals without stable housing, traffickers will also sometimes offer victims a place to stay. Victims of trafficking often initially become involved to fulfill a need (e.g., economic, a caring relationship, romantic connection) but then cannot leave due to force or threats once the trafficking begins (Allan et al., 2023; Baird & Connolly, 2021; CCEHT, 2021b). Specific methods traffickers use to lure and keep victims in a trafficking situation are described below.

4.1 Romantic Partnerships

The romantic partner entrapment method is most commonly used in sex trafficking and child sex trafficking. It frequently involves male traffickers and female victims and is commonly referred to as “boyfriending” (Allan et al., 2023; Baird & Connolly, 2021; CCEHT, 2021a; Fraley & Aronowitz, 2021; Fraley et al., 2020). A sex trafficker will identify and target an individual who has a dysfunctional home life, few social supports, a substance addiction, and/or unmet basic needs (Allan et al., 2023). Traffickers entice victims by promising a happy, stable future together and work to satisfy victims’ unmet needs by offering support, money and gifts, and/or housing by asking them to move in together (Baird & Connolly, 2021; Fraley & Aronowitz, 2021). Eventually, the romance shifts and becomes exploitative, manipulative, and coercive (Baird & Connolly, 2021; Fraley & Aronowitz, 2021). This strategy unfolds in a series of stages (CCEHT, 2021a; Fraley & Aronowitz, 2021).

The first stage involves targeting and luring vulnerable individuals. Traffickers assess how vulnerable the individual is by collecting information about their targets directly and/or online (CCEHT, 2021a). In the second stage, traffickers use the information they have gathered to create dependency. Using deception and lies, traffickers role-play the perfect, safe partner, meeting all unmet needs. They romance their victims through affection and positive emotional affirmation as well as gifts, money, and/or drugs (CCEHT, 2021a). In this stage, the goal is to create a deep sense of trust and intimacy while simultaneously isolating victims from their family, friends, and support systems. Isolating victims creates further dependency and makes it harder for victims to escape once the relationship turns exploitative (Baird & Connolly, 2021; CCEHT, 2021a). Often traffickers will encourage substance dependence at this stage (Allan et al., 2023; Baird & Connolly, 2021; DHHS, n.d.; Toney-Butler et al., 2023). By continuing to supply the substance to victims, traffickers can instill dependency and gratitude from victims who view their traffickers as helping by preventing them from experiencing withdrawal symptoms (Allan et al., 2023; Baird & Connolly, 2021).

In the third stage, traffickers become demanding, exert their dominance, and often become abusive. At this time, traffickers will pressure, demand, and/or manipulate their victims into providing sexual services (CCEHT 2021a; Public Safety Canada, 2022b). They may pressure their victims into sex work in return for love, insisting that their victim owes them a debt for everything they have provided for them (Baird & Connolly, 2021; CCEHT, 2021a). Traffickers may also begin oscillating between withholding and providing items and actions that make victims feel loved and cared for (e.g., emotional intimacy, physical affection, and/or gifts) (CCEHT, 2021a). This is often done in response to the victim refusing or complying with demands from their trafficker. Traffickers may also use the information they gathered about their victims to alter victims' goals and trick them into believing that engaging in commercial sex work is a temporary necessity to achieve a better life (CCEHT, 2021a). The manipulation may be so severe that victims do not realize that what is happening to them is sex trafficking and instead believe their trafficking situation was their own choice (Baird & Connolly, 2021; CCEHT, 2021a).

Stage four involves coercion and control. At this point, the trafficker will likely have full control over their victim's phone, movements, basic survival needs, money, and drugs and/or alcohol (CCEHT, 2021a). Traffickers embed themselves into the center of their victims' lives causing some victims to lose a sense of self (CCEHT, 2021a). Having established control, traffickers use fear tactics and physical and emotional threats to keep their victims trapped in their trafficking situation (Baird & Connolly, 2021; CCEHT, 2021a). Traffickers may also extort their victims by blackmailing them with intimate pictures (CCEHT, 2021a).

4.2 Grooming

For child sex trafficking specifically, a model of victim grooming was developed by Winters and colleagues (2022). This five-stage model, called the *Sexual Grooming Model of Child Sex Trafficking* (SGM-CST), combines information about techniques used by child sex offenders to

groom children to sexually abuse them with findings on child sex traffickers' behaviours. The first stage involves perpetrators selecting their victim. Both child sex offenders and child sex traffickers look for vulnerabilities (e.g., family dysfunction, unmet basic needs). In stage two, perpetrators will look to gain access to their potential victim. This may involve manipulating a child's caregiver or creating situations in which they can be alone with the child. They will use pre-existing relationships with the child's caregiver (e.g., neighbour, mutual friend, family member) or their status in the community to gain access and alone time with the victim. In stage three, child sex traffickers work to develop trust with the child and those surrounding them. This may include relying on their good reputation within the community, providing attention and affection, giving gifts, and/or engaging in the child's favourite play activity. Stage four involves desensitizing the child victim to sexual content and physical contact. Child sex traffickers will gradually increase physical touch with the victim and expose them to sexual content. Traffickers will also use sexual language around the victim, show them pornography, and/or take sexually explicit pictures of them. While stage four is proposed to be when perpetrators are preparing their victims for sex work, stage five occurs after the trafficking begins. Stage five involves traffickers maintaining control over the child and preventing them from disclosing the exploitation to others. Child sex traffickers will use threats of harm to the victim and/or victim's family, verbal and physical abuse, neglect, and/or sexual violence to force compliance among their victims. Traffickers may also tell their victims that their families will no longer love or want them if they find out what the child has done, using fear of abandonment to manipulate and entrap the child.

4.3 Befriending

The befriending entrapment method is used in cases of sex, child sex, and forced labour trafficking. One of the reasons the majority of human trafficking victims report knowing their perpetrator beforehand is because most traffickers establish a close friendship with their victims before the trafficking begins (Baird & Connolly, 2021; CCEHT, 2021b; Toney-Butler et al., 2023). They may also assign individuals they are already exploiting who are peers of potential victims (e.g., classmates, acquaintances) to befriend them. Typically, through this entrapment method, sex and/or labour trafficking is normalized and promoted to victims as a means of quick cash or a glamorous lifestyle (Baird & Connolly, 2021; CCEHT, 2021b; Toney-Butler et al., 2023). Part of the befriending process involves helping to meet the needs of the victim (e.g., money, social support, housing). Once a friendship has been established, the trafficker or the assigned peer convinces the victim to engage in sex and/or labour work; often teaching them how to supply services and even promoting the victims' services (Toney-Butler et al., 2023). It is not until after they begin performing these services that victims learn the trafficker will be keeping the money (Allen et al., 2023; Marwaha, 2017). Shame and/or blackmail is also used by traffickers to exert control over their victims and force them to continue providing services, especially in cases of sex and child sex trafficking (CCEHT, 2021a).

4.4 Debt Bondage

Debt bondage involves traffickers initially telling victims that they will cover the costs associated with the victim being able to work. For example, traffickers will pay for victims' flights, cosmetic services, and/or hotel rooms. Traffickers later use these costs as a debt the victims must repay in order to keep victims entrapped (Allan et al., 2023; Beatson et al., 2017). Debt bondage is most commonly used by forced labour traffickers (Allen et al., 2023). First, victims begin performing services the trafficker promised would result in quick financial gain (e.g., sex work, domestic servitude). The trafficker then demands to be repaid before the victim can earn any money for themselves (Allan et al., 2023; Beatson et al., 2017). In some cases, traffickers will encourage victims to keep providing services as they are close to paying off the debt and will even begin to give victims small portions of money to keep (Marwaha, 2017). Victims have reported staying because they were finally earning some money and did not want to leave the situation without gaining anything for themselves (Marwaha, 2017).

Individuals trafficked in domestic servitude often live in an employer's home, further indebting them to their trafficker (Allan et al., 2023). This also makes escape harder as victims have nowhere else to live (Allan et al., 2023). In some cases, traffickers will also confiscate a victim's personal identification and/or passports as a way to force victims to continue providing services (Allan et al., 2023; Holman & Godden, 2022).

5. Consequences of Trafficking

The consequences of human trafficking are substantial and long-term, impacting every aspect of a victim's life (Allan et al., 2023; CCEHT, 2021b). Victims of trafficking can suffer from physical, psychological, behavioural, and social trauma due to deplorable living conditions, insufficient nourishment, inability to maintain personal hygiene, dangerous work conditions, severe physical and/or emotional abuse by their traffickers, and/or an absence of appropriate healthcare (Recknor et al., 2022). Young children and adolescents who are trafficked are especially vulnerable to negative impacts on their overall physical, psychological, behavioural, and cognitive development (Crisp & Bellatorre, 2024).

5.1 Physical Health

Most human trafficking victims do not have access to preventative healthcare (DHHS, n.d.), meaning that they rarely have the power to treat health issues in the early stages. Any untreated conditions can potentially become critical and life-threatening, such as diabetes or cancer (DHHS, n.d.). When treatment is administered, it is often done so by unqualified perpetrators who have little regard for victims' health outcomes, risking further infection and complications (DHHS, n.d.). Victims are also at risk of injuries sustained due to trafficker violence and/or work conditions, infectious diseases, chronic body pain, and serious respiratory and cardiovascular problems (DHHS, n.d.; Du Mont et al., 2024; Recknor et al., 2022; Toney-Butler et al., 2023). Young victims may be more prone to illness due to their still developing bodies and immune systems (DHHS, n.d.; Hodgins et al., 2022). For example, research has shown that young

victims of human trafficking are more likely to experience infectious diseases such as tuberculosis, hepatitis, and pneumonia (Deshpande & Nour, 2013; DHHS, n.d.; Hodgins et al., 2022). Similarly, malnourishment and poor dental care impact child victims more severely, stunting growth and causing poor formation of teeth (DHHS, n.d.).

Victims of sex and child sex trafficking are at risk of STBBI, infertility due to untreated chronic STBBI, pregnancy, urinary tract infections, and/or pelvic and rectal trauma (DHHS, n.d.; Du Mont et al., 2024; Recknor et al., 2022; Toney-Butler et al., 2023). Sex trafficking victims are also often physically harmed in areas that will not show or affect their appearance (e.g., their lower back) (DHHS, n.d.). Women and girls trafficked for labour in domestic work are also at risk of physical and/or sexual abuse by their traffickers, increasing their risk of pregnancy and STBBI (James, 2023; Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, n.d.).

5.2 Psychological Well-Being

Another serious consequence of human trafficking is the emotional and psychological toll it can have on the victim (DHHS, n.d.; Recknor et al., 2022; Toney-Butler et al., 2023). Victims of human trafficking are exposed to severe psychological trauma from repeated mental abuse (Recknor et al., 2022). Research shows they experience psychological outcomes of depression, stress-related disorders, disorientation, confusion, phobias, panic attacks, and suicidal ideations and attempts. Exposure to repeated traumatic events also causes higher rates of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) among survivors (Recknor et al., 2022). Child victims are at risk of developing complex post-traumatic stress disorder (CPTSD) as well as dissociative disorders (Crisp & Bellatorre, 2024). Human trafficking survivors are considered to have more complex traumas to overcome as they commonly face co-morbidities of two or more psychological conditions (CCEHT, 2021a). Survivors can be diagnosed with psychological conditions months or years post-trafficking (DHHS, n.d.; Recknor et al., 2022; Toney-Butler et al., 2023).

Victims of human trafficking are also vulnerable to substance use problems (Baird & Connolly, 2021; CCEHT, 2021a; DHHS, n.d.; Toney-Butler et al., 2023). As discussed previously, a common strategy used by traffickers is to lure or coerce their victims into a drug and/or alcohol addiction. Traffickers will use that addiction to manipulate their victims to depend on them, incur debt, and/or relinquish control to receive the substance (Allan et al., 2023; Baird & Connolly, 2021; DHHS, n.d.; Toney-Butler et al., 2023). Victims may also begin using substances as a coping mechanism during and/or after their trafficking experience (Rapoza, 2022).

5.3 Housing and Employment

Another potential consequence of trafficking is unsafe housing. As described, traffickers will sometimes offer housing to victims as a way to entice, control, and manipulate them. Once a victim is living with a trafficker, the trafficker will claim that the victim owes them some form of payment. Perpetrators will recommend or demand sex work as a means to repay the trafficker (CCEHT, 2021a; Baird & Connolly, 2021), putting the victim in an unsafe and exploitative housing

situation. If the victim was homeless before the trafficker provided them with housing, fear of having nowhere else to live can be a barrier to leaving (CCEHT, 2021a). Another consequence of being trafficked is a criminal record due to illegal activities their trafficker forced them to do (CCEHT, 2021a; Toney-Butler et al., 2023). Having a criminal record makes it more difficult for survivors to find employment as well as rent an apartment (CCEHT, 2021a; Toney-Butler et al., 2023). Trafficking also disrupts academic achievement, especially among youth victims (CCEHT, 2021a). Lower educational attainment in turn reduces the jobs available to victims and survivors.

6. Victim Support and Service Needs

In order to determine trafficking victims' support and service needs, there is a critical need for a comprehensive evaluation as they typically have multiple needs (Du Mont et al., 2024; Toney-Butler et al., 2023). The needs vary from person to person and one treatment and/or intervention will not apply to all victims and survivors (Hodgins et al., 2022). For example, a victim may need medical services, dental care, tattoo cover up, treatment for addictions, and help hiding from a trafficker (CCEHT, 2021a). Therefore, it is important that victims and survivors of trafficking receive support that is comprehensive, interdisciplinary, and collaborative (CCEHT, 2021a). This involves professionals from different disciplines working together on one team to connect the victim to all of the different supports they need (e.g., housing, medical, counseling) (Du Mont et al., 2024). Services and resources need to be available and implemented as soon as a victim escapes trafficking to prevent revictimization and to improve the chances of recovery (CCEHT, 2021a). As discussed, human trafficking has negative physical and psychological consequences requiring medical and therapeutic treatments. Additionally, the multiple layers of trauma experienced by victims can make it difficult for them to acquire the skills needed to reintegrate into their old lives, find a job, or become economically stable (Du Mont et al., 2024). Addressing these fundamental needs will enhance the probability of victims using and continuing to use services, helping them maintain their treatment and path towards recovery (CCEHT, 2021a). Continued care is also needed as victim and survivor needs may vary over time (Hemmings et al., 2016; Toney-Butler et al., 2023).

Unfortunately, victims often do not receive the services and support they need. Half of all service providers interviewed by the Canadian Centre to End Human Trafficking say there is a lack of funding for sustainable appropriate services, limiting how adequately they can meet the needs of victims and survivors (CCEHT, 2021a). In the absence of necessary support services, victims may find themselves returning to the trafficking system (CCEHT, 2021a). For more information about resources and support services available in Saskatchewan and Canada for victims and survivors of human trafficking, see <https://skprevention.ca/product/human-trafficking-in-canada-environmental-scan/>.

6.1 Physical Health

As discussed, victims of human trafficking are exposed to multiple physical harms. These harms may be caused by the traffickers, individuals the victims are engaged in sexual activity with, or

from unsafe work environments. Thus, immediate acute care for physical injuries is often needed for victims and survivors. They may also need treatment for infectious diseases and STBBI (Fraley & Aronowitz, 2021; Fraley et al., 2020; Nyhus-Runtz et al., 2021; Toney-Butler et al., 2024), as well as other untreated conditions (Deshpande & Nour, 2013; DHHS, n.d.). Victims and survivors may also require corrective medical care for procedures that were performed by unqualified people with minimal care about the outcome or risk of infection or complications (DHHS, n.d.). Individuals still being sex trafficked may need repeated treatment for STBBI, urinary tract infections, and/or pelvic or rectal trauma (DHHS, n.d.; Du Mont et al., 2024; Recknor et al., 2022; Toney-Butler et al., 2023).

6.2 Psychological Health

The severe psychological impact of human trafficking makes therapeutic interventions for survivors imperative. Behavioural, cognitive, psychodynamic, and trauma-focused therapies are among the most prominent psychological interventions utilized for human trafficking victims (CCEHT, 2021a; Hemmings et al., 2016). When working with survivors of child sex trafficking, trauma-focused cognitive behavior therapy (TF-CBT) is a recommended approach (Allan et al., 2023). This treatment involves “gradual exposure to help youth and caregivers acknowledge and process trauma while learning and applying coping skills” (Allan et al., 2023, p. 179). Effective therapeutic interventions positively impact the patient by changing the way they feel, behave, understand, and process their experiences and trauma (Hemmings et al., 2016). Survivors are also encouraged to take up independent healing activities such as yoga, art therapy, animal-assisted therapy, breathing techniques, writing, music, aromatherapy, and/or mindfulness practices (Hemmings et al., 2016). Such activities have been shown to increase feelings of hope and self-awareness and reduce trauma symptoms like anxiety and dissociation (Hemmings et al., 2016).

Some survivors of human trafficking may not be open to acknowledging their exploitation and may suppress their trauma to avoid the pain of their experiences (Perry et al., 2022). Because of this, some may their own needs and avoid treatments and interventions (Perry et al., 2022). In these instances, connecting them with other survivors of human trafficking may help their recovery (Allan et al., 2023; Perry et al., 2022). Survivors may feel more at ease expressing themselves and opening up to an individual who has similar lived experience. Other survivors of trafficking can relate and give advice from a place of inherent mutual understanding and validation (Hemmings et al., 2016). Research shows support for inclusion of other survivors in human trafficking treatment programs as a way of improving coping skills among attendees (Allan et al., 2023).

As discussed previously, victims of human trafficking are also vulnerable to substance use problems (Baird & Connolly, 2021; CCEHT, 2021a; DHHS, n.d.; Toney-Butler et al., 2023). Therefore, special efforts should be taken to address the underlying causes of substance use and addiction and the persistent trauma that the survivor has experienced (CCEHT, 2021; Du Mont

et al., 2024). Supporting individuals who are currently being trafficked to deal with their substance addictions is especially important as it is a leading cause for not leaving and/or seeking help as reported by service providers, law enforcement, and victims themselves (CCEHT, 2021a). Community service agencies, detox centers, treatment centers, hospital programs, and combined therapy-substance abuse rehabilitation have all been found to be beneficial for victims (Du Mont et al., 2024; Hemmings et al., 2016).

6.3 Housing and Employment

Perhaps the most important need for victims to initially escape trafficking is safe, affordable, and stable housing (CCEHT, 2021a). As discussed, victims may find it hard to escape from their traffickers due to fear of homelessness (CCEHT, 2021a). Once victims do escape, housing services need to provide safety planning and long-term housing that their traffickers cannot find (CCEHT, 2021a). Aside from physical safety, housing services must also be emotionally safe for victims, creating a non-judgmental, harm-reduction environment without shame or stigma (CCEHT, 2021a). Shelter and housing services that also offer a support network to assist survivors in securing steady employment are also critical to prevent revictimization due to unmet economic needs (CCEHT, 2021a; Hemmings et al., 2016; Toney-Butler et al., 2023). Unfortunately, shelters and housing services often do not fit the specific needs of trafficking victims. Their locations are often known to the public, have limited or no security measures in place, and/or offer limited or no therapeutic services or mental health services that are trauma informed (Du Mont et al., 2024; Polaris, 2018).

6.4 Social Support

Victims often become isolated from their friends, families, and peers due to their trafficker intentionally separating them from their support systems during the luring process (Allen et al., 2023). Once trafficking begins, perpetrators will instill feelings of shame, guilt, and/or humiliation among victims to maintain control over them. These feelings, along with a loss of trust in others, can cause survivors to continue to experience isolation even after escaping (Ballucci & Stathakis, 2022). Including family members and friends in treatment and recovery can be helpful, as long as these individuals were not involved in either the risk factors that made the individual vulnerable to trafficking (e.g., abuse) or the trafficking itself. Safe, healthy family members and friends can provide a strong, foundational support system for survivors (Ballucci & Stathakis, 2022). Therefore, it is important to involve them as much as possible within the comfort level of the survivor.

It is important to note that family members may not understand the extent of the trauma that the individual has experienced or how human trafficking works (Ballucci & Stathakis, 2022). This misunderstanding can lead survivors to feeling stigmatized and/or cause them to withdraw (Ballucci & Stathakis, 2022). Therefore, it is recommended that family members and friends also receive support as they help survivors through their recovery (CCEHT, 2021b). Survivors may be more likely to confide in and share their trafficking experiences with friends than family,

especially among youth (CCEHT, 2021b). This highlights a particular need for supports for friends of child sex trafficking survivors. Building a strong and healthy support system around survivors of trafficking is incredibly important, as a lack of social support is a risk factor for revictimization (DHS, 2022; Public Safety Canada, 2022b).

7. Prevention

Canada's legislation to prevent human trafficking includes the *Criminal Code* and the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* (IRPA). This code forbids both the trafficking of individuals and other activities connected to human trafficking (Department of Justice Canada, 2021; Heidinger, 2023). Penalties to deter trafficking include maximum penalties of life imprisonment as outlined by the *Criminal Code* (Department of Justice Canada, 2021). Benefitting from human trafficking, even if not directly trafficking the victim, has a maximum imprisonment of 10-14 years dependent on if the victim was an adult or child (Department of Justice Canada, 2021). Additionally, the Canadian government developed a *National Strategy to Combat Human Trafficking 2019-2024* to coordinate efforts across government agencies and implement new strategies to prevent trafficking (Public Safety Canada, 2022b). The *National Strategy* was influenced by the International Labour Organization and is based on five main pillars with pillars focused on Prevention, Protection, and Partnerships (Public Safety Canada, 2022b). Key activities included under each pillar are highlighted in Table 1. Since the conception of the *National Strategy*, there has been the development and implementation of government-endorsed public health awareness campaigns, the Migrant Worker Support Program, and evidence-based training for healthcare, government, law enforcement, and legal professionals (Public Safety Canada, 2024b). Various organizations also offer human trafficking training for service providers or educational programming for youth to raise awareness. For more information on these prevention and awareness resources, please see <https://skprevention.ca/product/human-trafficking-in-canada-environmental-scan/>.

Researchers, service providers, and anti-trafficking advocates call for the addressing of risk factors of human trafficking as a key part of prevention strategies (Allan et al., 2023; CCEHT, 2021a; James 2023). Specific efforts include addressing economic factors of housing, food, and education; supporting families through affordable counseling for parental mental health issues; and increasing social supports for youth by creating spaces and activities that can promote connections (e.g., after school programming) (Allan et al., 2023; James, 2023). Drug and alcohol prevention and intervention efforts are also important for sex and child sex trafficking prevention (Allan et al., 2023; Baird & Connolly, 2021; CCEHT, 2021a). For forced labour trafficking, advocates recommend that settlement supports be made available in multiple languages and include information on labour laws and rights of workers in Canada (Holman & Godden, 2022; James, 2023). The risk factors associated with human trafficking also need to be addressed among survivors of trafficking to prevent revictimization (Hemmings et al., 2016; Toney-Butler et al., 2023).

Table 1: Key Activities of The National Strategy to Combat Human Trafficking 2019-2024 (Public Safety Canada, 2019)

<p>Prevention</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launching a national public awareness campaign to educate Canadians about human trafficking • Implementing pilot programs for at-risk youth to address core drivers and risks of exploitation • Enhancing data collection and research and filling data gaps in order to appropriately inform program planning and policy to help victims and survivors • Supporting international anti-trafficking efforts
<p>Protection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing a national case-management standard for organizations • Developing multi-sectorial, interdisciplinary, culturally-relevant and gender-responsive training tools that are evidence-based • Enhancing capacity under the Victims of Human Trafficking program to better detect potential human trafficking cases • Assessing existing immigration processes to evaluate the different impacts of gender-based violence
<p>Prosecution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holding international conferences to compile and assess change, as well as further refine national and international strategies • Delivering bilingual online training for law enforcement, prosecutors, and criminal justice practitioners to increase awareness of human trafficking • Compiling an expert group of border officials to strengthen human trafficking policies • Enhancing Project Protect to increase financial intelligence on money laundering related to human trafficking
<p>Partnerships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appointing high-profile advisors of human trafficking to advise, evaluate, and provide recommendations for laws and policies • Strengthening the international engagement approach to better leverage multilateral and bilateral partnerships • Hosting annual stakeholder gatherings and outreach meetings
<p>Empowerment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compiling a victim- and survivor-led advisory group • Providing increased funding for community-led empowerment programs and support services • Empowering youth against human trafficking through technology • Building a centralized website for human trafficking knowledge translation, health promotion, and resources for victims, professionals and service providers • Improving ethical behaviours and preventing human trafficking in federal procurement supply chains

8. Intervention

8.1 National Strategy and Provincial Efforts

In 2015, the Government of Canada adopted the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development which includes the commitment to “eliminate abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence and torture of children” by 2030 (Global Compact, 2020, para. 1). Through the *National Strategy to Combat Human Trafficking 2019-2024*, the Canadian government aims to better identify trafficking situations, enhance victim protections, and increase prosecution of perpetrators (Public Safety Canada, 2019). The intervention-related pillars of the *National Strategy to Combat Human Trafficking 2019-2024* focus on Prosecution and Empowerment (see Table 1). Since the implementation of the *National Strategy*, there has been an investment of over \$70 million towards addressing human trafficking including the development of support services and organizations across Canada and the creation of the Canadian Human Trafficking Hotline. The Canadian Human Trafficking Hotline, run by the Canadian Centre to End Human Trafficking, is confidential, multilingual, and uses a person-centered, trauma-informed approach to connect victims and survivors with supports including housing/shelter, medical attention, counseling, and legal assistance (CCEHT, 2021a).

Canadian legislation and federal consent laws have shifted the perspective of underage sex work criminalization, declaring that those under the age of 18 are unable to consent to commercial sex and, therefore, are victims of sex trafficking (Hodgins et al., 2023). These legislation reforms have changed the way that youth involved in sex trafficking are viewed by governments and law enforcement (Baird & Connolly, 2021; Hodgins et al., 2023). Similar shifts have occurred in the United States with both youth and adult commercial sex workers. Data showed success in the early 2000s with individuals arrested for prostitution being viewed as victims instead of criminals (Marcin, 2013). This paradigm shift was based on police data that the majority of commercial sex workers being arrested were not willing participants but instead were victims of sex trafficking (Marcin, 2013). The federal government also has campaigns to help individuals self-identify if they are being exploited by an employer and are in a situation of forced labour (Public Safety Canada, 2022a). For example, this campaign identifies red flags, like being threatened with deportation, living in fear of danger if they do not work long hours and/or for low wages, and/or the employer withholding their personal identification (e.g., passport). Anti-trafficking advocates call for such resources to be made available in multiple languages (James, 2023).

The Government of Saskatchewan also introduced new legislation in 2020 called the *Protection from Human Trafficking Act* which helps provide additional protections for victims (Vittorelli, 2020). Specifically, the *Act* streamlines the process by which victims can seek a protection order against the person who had trafficked them. The legislation also includes strong penalties for perpetrators who violate a protection order including driver’s license suspensions and jail time. The *Act* also makes it easier for law enforcement to search residences or vehicles in which a victim might be held (Vittorelli, 2020). In addition, the provincial government launched a sex

trafficking campaign in both rural and urban areas in high traffic establishments (e.g., restaurants, gas stations, and libraries) (Government of Saskatchewan, n.d.⁴). The campaign materials were created in collaboration with the Status of Women Office and the Ministry of Justice and Attorney General and were funded in part by the federal government's *National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence*. The goal of the campaign is to let victims know they are seen and believed, and that this life was not their choice (Government of Saskatchewan, n.d.). The campaign also addresses "boyfriending", the most common form of sex and child sex trafficking, by letting victims and others know that even if the relationship started with attention and care, it can devolve into control and exploitation (Government of Saskatchewan, n.d.).

8.2 Identifying Signs of Trafficking

Human trafficking is mainly an invisible crime (Public Safety Canada, 2022b), but signs of trafficking do exist. Public Safety Canada has organized these signs into four categories: situation, possessions, behaviour, and appearance (Public Safety Canada, 2022b). Appendix A provides examples of signs of human trafficking for each of these four categories by type of trafficking. The Government of Canada's human trafficking resources also identify signs to look for regarding sex trafficking and forced labour⁵ (Public Safety Canada, 2025). Provincially, the Saskatchewan RCMP have highlighted additional signs parents should look for with their children. These signs include mood swings, secretive behaviour, withdrawing from family and friends, lying about their whereabouts and activities, developing new friendships that they are reluctant to talk about, and becoming verbally combative and ignoring rules, particularly ignoring curfews and instead staying out all night (Saskatchewan RCMP, 2021).

Law enforcement recommend that hotel and motel staff and management receive training in signs of human trafficking to help with identification of cases. This is important for intervention efforts as perpetrators often use short-term stay accommodations to decrease the likelihood of detection by police (CCEHT, 2021a). In 2022, Hospitality Saskatchewan created training for accommodation sector employees on human trafficking signs by position (e.g., front desk staff, hotel security, and housekeeping staff) (see Appendix B).

Health professionals can also play a critical role in helping to identify potential victims of human trafficking as 50%-88% of victims will come into contact with a health professional during the time of their trafficking (Administration for Children and Families [ACF], 2020; CCEHT, 2023; Fraley & Aronowitz, 2021; Lederer & Wetzel, 2014; Toney et al., 2023). Signs for health professionals to look for during interactions with patients can be found in Appendix C. Signs specific to school settings include poor school attendance, violent behaviour, and frequently

⁴ To view the Government of Saskatchewan's human trafficking awareness campaign posters, visit: <https://www.saskatchewan.ca/residents/justice-crime-and-the-law/victims-of-crime-and-abuse/human-trafficking-and-sexual-exploitation>.

⁵ To view the Government of Canada's human trafficking infographics, visit: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-safety-canada/campaigns/human-trafficking/sexht-infg-2022.html> and <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-safety-canada/campaigns/human-trafficking/labht-infg-2022.html>.

presenting to the school nurse (Doiron & Peck, 2022; Fraley & Aronowitz, 2021). For the youngest victims of child sex trafficking, which can begin as early as age 3 through familial trafficking, important signs include a chief complaint of stomach pains that are due to a genitourinary infection and hypersexual behaviour with others (Fraley & Aronowitz, 2021; Pacheco, Buenaventura, & Miles, 2023; Sprang & Cole, 2018). The 6-item *Short Screen for Child Sex Trafficking (SSCST)* was developed for use by pediatric healthcare professionals in emergency departments, clinics, or child advocacy centers (Greenbaum, Dodd, & McCracken, 2018). The tool has been validated by additional researchers and can be viewed in Appendix D (Greenbaum et al., 2018; Kaltiso et al., 2018).

8.3 Training for Health Professionals

Although health professionals have an important role in human trafficking identification and intervention, the majority of health professionals report a lack of training in this area (Fraley & Aronowitz, 2021; Nyhhus-Runtz et al., 2021). This may be particularly true for child sex trafficking, as 89% of health professionals surveyed across Saskatchewan reported not receiving training in this identification (Nyhhus-Runtz et al., 2021). Additionally, approximately half of Saskatchewan health professionals surveyed reported not feeling confident in their ability to detect child sex trafficking. Up to a third of respondents (16%-34%) also could not correctly identify where to report suspected cases. While health professionals are better trained and confident in signs of child maltreatment or abuse, there is a lack of awareness of signs unique to trafficking (Fraley & Aronowitz, 2021; Fraley et al., 2020; Nyhhus-Runtz et al., 2021). Therefore, researchers and health governing bodies are calling for training for health professionals in the area of human trafficking specifically (Allan et al., 2023; Fraley & Aronowitz, 2021; Fraley et al., 2020; Toney-Butler et al., 2024). A review of human trafficking trainings has shown that such trainings can increase attendees' knowledge and confidence (Fraley et al., 2020; Shadowen, Beaverson, & Rigby, 2021). Additionally, even short 25-minute educational opportunities, such as during grand rounds, have shown promise (Fraley et al., 2020). The majority of Saskatchewan health professions (74%) reported interest in child sex trafficking training, with 71% preferring online learning (Nyhhus-Runtz et al., 2021).

8.4 Supporting Self-Disclosure

Victims of human trafficking face numerous challenges to reporting their victimization and reaching out for help. Only 37% of callers to the Canadian Human Trafficking Hotline identify as victims themselves (CCEHT, 2023). The majority are individuals concerned that someone they encountered or know is being trafficked (CCEHT, 2023). Unprompted self-disclosure of victims to health professionals is uncommon (Peck & Meadows-Oliver, 2019), which has been highlighted by health professionals and law enforcement as an added challenge for intervention (CCEHT, 2021a). Barriers to self-disclosure include victims being concerned they will not be believed, feeling ashamed, fear of prosecution, fear of deportation, and/or risk of violence from their trafficker (CCEHT, 2021a; DHHS, 2024). Fear of stigmatization and mistrust of the law and health

care systems are added barriers to victims reaching out for help (CCEHT, 2021a). This is seen especially among sex trafficking victims and victims with addictions (CCEHT, 2021a).

Other times, victims do not want to report or leave their trafficker as they are a romantic partner or family member (Baird & Connolly, 2021; CCEHT, 2021a). Victims may also be reluctant to report if they have formed a trauma bond with their perpetrator. Trauma bonds are especially problematic for intervention services as individuals may not understand or believe that they are a victim (Baird & Connolly, 2021; CCEHT, 2021a). Law enforcement and psychologists report that the manipulation involved can be so severe that victims believe their trafficking situation was their choice (CCEHT, 2021a). Victims may also have misconceptions that human trafficking must involve transportation. Victims who still live at home may not realize what is happening to them is human trafficking or criminal, especially if their trafficker is a family member (Baird & Connolly, 2021).

Actions to help overcome these barriers include talking with a potential human trafficking victim in a safe and private space away from the potential trafficker, using non-judgmental language, and using a trauma-informed, culturally sensitive approach (Allan et al., 2023; CCEHT, 2021a; Du Mont et al., 2024; Greenbaum, 2018; Peck, 2020; Toney-Butler et al., 2023). Additionally, having the same health professional see a potential victim at each of their visits has been found to increase the likelihood of self-disclosure (Du Mont et al., 2024; Hemmings et al., 2016; Toney-Butler et al., 2023). Sharing information about available support and intervention services with victims during visits has also been linked with supporting self-disclosure (Du Mont et al., 2024; Hemmings et al., 2016; Toney-Butler et al., 2023). When a victim does self-disclose, health professionals should adhere to procedures designed for vulnerable populations (e.g., victims of sexual and physical violence) as well as obtain informed consent to help gather information for prosecution (CCEHT, 2021a; Greenbaum, 2018; Peck, 2020).

9. Conclusions and Recommendations

Human trafficking is a serious human rights violation that occurs across the globe and in Canada. Sex trafficking, child sex trafficking, and forced labour are the most prevalent types within Canada (CCEHT, 2021b; Conroy, 2022; Heidinger, 2023). Prevention of human trafficking, intervention, and post-intervention care are critical for vulnerable populations, victims, and survivors. Prevention effort recommendations include addressing the risk factors associated with human trafficking that cause individuals to be vulnerable to traffickers (Allan et al., 2023; CCEHT, 2021a; James 2023). These include basic needs not being met (Allan et al., 2023; Public Safety Canada, 2022b), homelessness (Allan et al., 2023; Baird & Connolly, 2021; Hodgins et al., 2022; Rapoza 2022), lack of social supports (DHS, 2022; Public Safety Canada, 2022b), and experiencing family dysfunction (Allan et al., 2023; Baird & Connolly, 2021; Doiron & Peck, 2022; Hodgins et al., 2022; Rapoza 2022). Recommended efforts to address these risk factors include providing affordable housing, food, and education; supporting families including parental mental health through affordable counseling; and

increasing social supports by creating spaces and activities that can promote connections for youth such as after school programming (Allan et al., 2023; James, 2023).

Intervention recommendations include educating the public on how to recognize the signs of human trafficking so that parents, siblings, teachers, and friends can help identify if someone is a victim (CCEHT, 2021a). Education and awareness campaigns focused on the stages of romantic partner trafficking will help individuals identify for themselves or others the early signs of this entrapment method before trafficking begins (e.g., dependency and isolation). Additionally, since up to 88% of victims will come into contact with a health professional and health professionals self-report low levels of training and/or confidence in human trafficking identification, training in this area is recommended. The majority of Saskatchewan health professionals surveyed across the province are interested in online human trafficking training (Fraley & Aronowitz, 2021; Fraley et al., 2020; Lederer & Wetzel, 2014; Nyhhus-Runtz et al., 2021). Such training could include the stages of romantic partner trafficking, signs of human trafficking in clinical settings (see Appendix C), and the *Short Screen for Child Sex Trafficking* by Greenbaum and colleagues (2018) (see Appendix D).

Promoting self-disclosure is also important for intervention efforts as victims rarely report their trafficking situation (Peck & Meadows-Oliver, 2019). Self-disclosure can be supported by speaking with potential victims in a safe and private space, away from the potential trafficker, using non-judgmental language, and using a trauma-informed, culturally sensitive approach (Allan et al., 2023; CCEHT, 2021a; Du Mont et al., 2024; Greenbaum, 2018; Peck, 2020; Toney-Butler et al., 2023).

After identification, most victims need safe shelter and housing to be able to escape their trafficker (CCEHT, 2021a). Shelters for human trafficking victims are recommended to have locations that are not known to the public, have security measure in place, and mental health professionals on staff who utilize a trauma-informed approach (Du Mont et al., 2024; Polaris, 2018). Victims and survivors of human trafficking need comprehensive, interdisciplinary, collaborative, and trauma-informed care due to their various needs (CCEHT, 2021a). Experiencing human trafficking impacts individuals both physically and psychologically. When working with survivors of child sex trafficking specifically, trauma-focused cognitive behavior therapy is a recommended approach (Allan et al., 2023). Building up survivors' social support systems is also recommended in order to prevent revictimization (DHS, 2022; Public Safety Canada, 2022b). Ways to do this include providing support to family and friends of survivors and connecting survivors to treatment groups with other survivor attendees (Allan et al., 2023; Perry et al., 2022). Meeting the physical, psychological, housing, employment, and social support needs of victims and survivors will help to ensure their recovery, while also reducing the risk of revictimization.

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Appendix A: Signs of Human Trafficking

(Adapted from CCEHT, 2021a; Doiron & Peck, 2022; Fraley & Aronowitz, 2021; Public Safety Canada, 2022b; RCMP, 2024; Toney-Butler et al., 2023)

	Signs of Trafficking	Sex Trafficking	Child Sex Trafficking	Forced Labour
Situation	Develop a close, sudden relationship with someone older and/or wealthy (in person or online)	x	x	
	Sudden influx of money, clothing, and gifts without having money	x	x	
	Distancing themselves from support system and spending time with a new group of friends	x	x	
	Controlling relationship	x	x	
	Constantly monitored or escorted everywhere	x	x	x
	Receive a job offer or contract in a language they do not understand			x
	Required to pay to start 'job opportunity'			x
	Job/benefits seem too good to be true			x
	Asked to relocate to foreign country			x
	Given vague job description/details			x
	Unable to leave job			x
Threats of deportation			x	
Possessions	Provocative clothing inappropriate for their age and/or weather	x	x	
	Excess hotel keys	x	x	
	No money or excessive amounts of money	x	x	
	No control over their own phone or have multiple phones	x	x	x
	Using falsified IDs	x	x	x
	Do not have their identification documents (passports, ID, etc.) or confiscated by partner or employer	x	x	x
	Few or no personal belongings			x
Behaviour	Avoids eye contact	x	x	x
	Scripted speech or rehearsed answers	x	x	x
	Anxious or withdrawn	x	x	x
	Unable to explain their circumstances	x	x	x
	Have someone speaking for them	x	x	x
	Unable to speak with family/friends	x	x	x
	Loss of interest in things they were previously passionate about	x	x	x
	Afraid to upset their partner or boss	x	x	x
	Scared of law enforcement	x	x	x
	Unaware of time, where they are or where they work despite being there for an extended period of time			x

	Unable to speak languages of the country they are in			x
Appearance	Have tattooing that appears to be branding to show ownership (traffickers name, symbol, etc.)	x	x	
	Sudden change in makeup or style	x	x	
	Suddenly having expensive clothes, purses, shoes, nails, and jewelry	x	x	
	Appear to be dressed older than they look	X	x	
	Dressed inappropriately for the weather/season	x	x	
	Dirty, unhygienic	x	x	x
	Unexplained signs of abuse and/or confinement (e.g., bruises, cuts, burns, etc.)	x	x	x
	Appear fatigued and signs of malnutrition	x	x	x

Appendix B: Signs of Human Trafficking in the Accommodation Sector

(Adapted from Hospitality Saskatchewan, 2022)

Signs for Front Desk Staff	Person pays with cash and checks in for several days or a week
	Person asks for a room with a view of the parking lot, at end of hall, or away from main entrance
	Person appears to have very little or no luggage
	An older man or woman checks in with a younger female
	Younger female appears dazed or distant from their companion, avoids eye contact
	Younger female does not have any ID or travel documents or their companion has their identification
	Younger female’s appearance is not indicative of their age (make-up, expensive clothing, nails manicured, etc.)
Signs for Hotel Security	Guest checks into a room alone and later moves others into the room
	Numerous male visitors coming and going from the room(s)
	Congregation of males outside of room(s) or in the parking lot
	Reports of excessive noise, telephone use, and/or music throughout the day
	Suspected victims have indications of physical and/or emotional abuse
Signs for Housekeeping Staff	Rooms where guests decline cleaning services for extended periods of time
	Constant use of “DO NOT DISTURB” sign on door
	Increased demand for new towels or bedding
	Large quantity of used condoms in trash
	Large quantity of computers or cell phones in room
	Numerous children in room
Signs for Hotel Restaurant and Bar Staff	Lack of adequate language skills for foreign suspected victims
	Young person asking staff or patrons for food or money
	Young person who is anxious or nervous and avoiding contact with staff
	Young person who has no identification, cell phones, or money of their own
	Male entertaining young female at bar that he did not come in with
	Young female waiting at a table or at bar and picked up by male
Guest requesting information about adult services	
Young female soliciting male customers	

Note. Presence of just one of these signs does not immediately indicate Human Trafficking is occurring.

Appendix C: Signs of Human Trafficking in Clinical Settings

(Adapted from Doiron & Peck, 2022; Fraley & Aronowitz, 2021; Nyhhus-Runtz et al., 2021; Toney-Butler et al., 2024)

Reason(s) for Medical Attention and/or Symptoms	Anxiety
	Depression
	Suicide attempt
	Disordered sleep
	Substance use or addiction
	Physical traumatic injury
	Presenting with physical or sexual abuse
	Pregnancy
	Frequent use of emergency contraception
	STBBI
	Genitourinary infection
	Lack of prenatal care
Behaviours of Patient	Avoids eye contact, nervous, fearful, and/or withdrawn
	Inconsistent history or history appears rehearsed
	Resistant to answer questions about injury
	Provides a cover story to reason away injuries (e.g., rare blood condition)
	Resistant to care, may initially consent but then change their mind after asking to undress for exam
	Hypersexualized behaviour
	Early sexual activity
	Multiple sexual partners
Characteristics and Behaviours of Accompanying Adult	Unrelated to patient
	Older romantic partner
	Controlling
	Will not let patient speak for themselves or be alone during care
	Forces patient to leave before treatment is received or completed
	Insists on being the translator if one is needed

Appendix D: *Short Screen for Child Sex Trafficking*

(Greenbaum et al., 2018)

1. Is there a previous history of drug and/or alcohol use?
2. Has the youth ever run away from home?
3. Has the youth ever been involved with law enforcement?
4. Has the youth ever broken a bone, had traumatic loss of consciousness, or sustained a significant wound?
5. Has the youth ever had a sexually transmitted infection?
6. Does the youth have a history of sexual activity with more than five partners?