

Role of Corrections Officials in Combating Human Trafficking in Prisons

Corrections officials can become valuable resources in the fight against human trafficking:

Recognize Evidence of Human Trafficking

Corrections officers, particularly those working in a jail or prison environment, provide a vital tool in screening for and identification of potential evidence of human trafficking.

As jail or prison staff process a new arrival's property at intake, they may come across indicators of trafficking, which can include:

- Tattoos or brands indicating a person is someone's property;
- Large quantities of condoms and/or cash;
- Hotel receipts, key cards;
- Prepaid cards;
- Business cards;
- Multiple cell phones;
- Signs of malnutrition, physical or sexual abuse;
- Lack of identification or fraudulent identification;
- Evidence of employment by an employer with a history of labor violations.

Corrections Staff Can Use Various Security Processes to Identify Trafficking

- Cell and property searches may reveal letters or other correspondence showing the person has been under the control of someone else. This could be an indicator of trafficking.
- Telephone calls can reveal the same type of relationships as found in letters. Phone calls could also be revealing in regard to the tone and manner in which parties communicate.

By themselves these items do not indicate a human trafficking situation, however, when put together with other variables they may indicate the likelihood of trafficking.

If you suspect evidence of human trafficking, you can call the National Human Trafficking Hotline at: 888-373-7888.



**U.S. Catholic Sisters
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USCSAHT is the U.S. member of Talitha Kum.

National Human Trafficking Hotline:

888-373-7888

INCARCERATION

Cyclic Pipeline Into Enslavement

HUMAN TRAFFICKING...



THE "HUNT" Jails and Prisons

Inmates are vulnerable targets for recruitment.

Traffickers do their homework and set traps:

- Use prison recruiters to "spot" victims.
- Use government websites to get prisoners' personal info.
- Look at inmates' arrest history and bail charges.
- Target those with history of drug abuse or prostitution.
- Write letters expressing love, future housing, jobs.
- Post bail and arrange pick up upon release.

RELEASED INTO ENTRAPMENT

Twist Relationships

Reminders of the favors given over time.

Trafficker: Turns tables — "You owe me!"

Released inmate: New cycle of exploitation begins



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Human Trafficking: Its Relation to Incarceration

Human trafficking is a multibillion-dollar criminal industry. It exploits men, women and children using them as merchandise to be bought and sold. Traffickers use force, fraud and coercion over victims for sexual exploitation, forced labor, indentured servitude, and domestic servitude.

Traffickers identify and leverage women's vulnerability by creating false expectations and eventual dependency. Traffickers "sell" women on a global market to make money for themselves and satisfy customers.

The trafficker seeks "money" and "power over" human merchandise. The buyer seeks "pleasure" and "power over" women's bodies through sexual transactions. One buyer told his young victim, *"I bought you. I can do anything I want to you."*

Trafficking exists within jails and prisons. Inmates can be sexually exploited for commissary, phone cards, hygiene items and other benefits for the person demanding favors.

Whatever the language they use, whatever gifts they offer to lure women, traffickers and buyers ultimately demean, abuse, traumatize, and enslave women.

Human trafficking can happen to anyone, anywhere in cities, suburbs, and rural towns. Some persons may be even more vulnerable than others—incarcerated women, for example. How?



The "Hunt": Jails & Prisons

Many women have endured abuse from an early age. Such abuse may have put them out on the streets where living became survival. Survival behavior then set them up for dependency on and loyalty to someone who "cares." Traffickers use such cycles of abuse, manipulation, and dependency to their own advantage. Such relationships ultimately lead victims toward drug abuse, crime and incarceration.

Having lost meaningful relationships outside and now inside prison, the incarcerated woman realizes that getting out will put her back in a survival mode.

Traffickers understand that vulnerability and realize that jails and prisons are ideal settings from which to recruit vulnerable women. A former pimp, now serving a lengthy prison term, admitted that *"Jails and prisons are good recruiting places because women come out of jail and have nowhere to go. They have no family, no friends, no money, no food."* As one person explained, *"Once they have figured out how to work the system, these institutions become like big fish bowls for traffickers."*

Traffickers may need inside help to reach these "recruits." Fellow inmates may be willing to refer other women to awaiting pimps in exchange for money. Prison staff members may be tempted to make a few extra dollars by turning names and information over to pimps who will "take it from there." One can then find further details about inmates from prison websites.

Traffickers use the trauma and isolation experienced by incarcerated women to their own advantage—namely, by starting a relationship through letter writing and phone visits. The pimp assures her of his interest in making her stay in prison tolerable. He provides cash for her prison account, which enables her to purchase food, toiletries, or other essentials. He offers her a place to stay once she gets out. He provides remote companionship and diversion from the isolation and boredom of prison. He offers hope.



Released Into Entrapment: Twist Relationships

Pimps share information and techniques with one another as would anyone in a professional "business." A "pimp pipeline" uses online social media to make recruiting from prison easier and more lucrative for traffickers. However, for incarcerated victims this may be deadlier.

Establishing relationships is a time-consuming but necessary step in recruiting vulnerable women. Communicating about future housing, job opportunities, friendship or love break open the idea of a new life unfolding once free of prison. How could she doubt someone who offers to pay her bail or to pick her up upon release and bring her to a safe place to stay?

What she is headed into however may not turn out the way she envisions it. In the movie, *The Trap*, one person described release, *"as a taxi line coming to pick women up from prison."* As a former prosecutor from the Orlando, FL district attorney's office said, *"They come out of jail and there's someone waiting. That person says, 'I posted your bond – now you owe me.'"*

Unless the woman does as she is told, the pimp may threaten to rescind the bond sending the woman back into prison. And so the cycle of enslavement continues.

