

Lakeview Center

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH • FAMILIESFIRST NETWORK • GLOBAL CONNECTIONS TO EMPLOYMENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

National Human Trafficking Awareness Month 2022

Pensacola, Fla. (January 4, 2022) – Often, human trafficking predators look for people with psychological or emotional vulnerabilities, those experiencing economic hardship, trauma, language barriers or have no social safety net. According to U.S. Homeland Security, these criminals are so skilled at coercion and manipulation, the victims often don't try to escape, even in highly public places. Help dispel a few common myths, and help a victim:

MYTH: Human trafficking victims are only foreign born individuals and those who are poor.

Truth: Victims can be any age, race, gender or nationality. They may come from any socioeconomic group.

MYTH: Human trafficking victims will attempt to seek help when in public.

Truth: Human trafficking is a hidden crime. Victims may be afraid to come forward and ask for help. They often live under threats imposed by the trafficker and don't want to put family and friend in danger either.

MYTH: Human trafficking is only sex trafficking.

Truth: Forced labor is another type of human trafficking. Sex and labor trafficking involve exploitation of people. Victims often are found in illegitimate businesses, massage parlors, restaurants, hotels and domestic service.

Ask yourself these questions when you see someone whom you think might be in trouble:

- Does the person appear disconnected from family, friends, church or community?
- Has a child stopped attending school?
- Does the person have bruises in various stages of healing?
- Is the person fearful, timid or submissive and appear to lack possessions and stable living conditions?

Ways you can help:

- Report suspected human trafficking to federal law enforcement at 866.347.2423.
- Call the National Human Trafficking Hotline at 888.373.7888 or text HELP or INFO to BeFree (233733).
- Follow information and partnerships at Facebook/Human Trafficking Task Force.
- Visit Circuit 1 Trafficking at <https://ir.uwf.edu/islandora/object/uwf:C1HTTF>.
- Help is available from Lakeview Center Victim Services at 850.469.3800 (Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.) or at the 24-hour helpline: 850.433.7273.

CONTACT BELOW IS FOR MEDIA USE ONLY

For more information about this press release or to schedule an interview, please contact Tish Pennewill at 850.469.3621 or Tish.Pennewill@bhcpns.org.

About Lakeview Center, Inc. Behavioral Health

The Mission of Lakeview Behavioral Health is to help people throughout life's journey. We specialize in providing effective, research-based services for children and adults with mental illnesses, drug and alcohol dependencies, and intellectual disabilities. Our services range from inpatient and residential treatment to outpatient counseling, psychiatry, case management, day treatment, and round-the-clock support for those with serious mental illnesses. Additionally, Lakeview Behavioral Health provides specialized trauma services, medication-assisted treatment for opiate dependency, and medically supervised drug and alcohol detoxification. In all, Lakeview Behavioral Health offers more than 60 programs and services for people in the northwest Florida area. To learn more, go online to eLakeviewCenter.org.

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