



MENTAL HEALTH and RECOVERY BOARD

Serving Belmont, Harrison and Monroe Counties

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January is recognized as National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month in the United States. Human trafficking is illegally transporting men, women, and children to be used in forced labor or forced sexual exploitation that profit their “owners.” Since 2012, the Governor’s Ohio Human Trafficking Task Force has coordinated resources and partnerships to help identify victims of human trafficking, support law enforcement efforts, and provide the necessary treatment services for survivors to regain control and rebuild their lives. In 2014, the Governor’s Task Force launched a statewide campaign to raise public awareness about the crime of human trafficking.

Human trafficking affects more than 1,000 Ohio children every year, and more than 3,000 Ohio children are considered to be at high risk for trafficking. According to the U.S. Federal Bureau of Information Crime Reports, Ohio has ranked as high as fifth among all states in total reported human trafficking cases.

- Average age of victims is 13 years old.
- Ohio is ranked 42nd for children's vulnerability to homelessness, which in turn contributes to a higher vulnerability to child sex trafficking.
- Runaway children are the most vulnerable for sex slavery, being approached by a trafficker or recruiter within 48 hours to a little over a week after running away.

Ohio Mental Health and Addiction Services (OhioMHAS) is implementing a statewide social marketing campaign focused on primary prevention of mental health issues among youth and young adults. The **Be Present** campaign educates and empowers peers, friends, siblings, classmates of at-risk youth to ‘step up’ and respond to those challenges and provide the needed support. The **Be Present** campaign will be able to link young people to local and state resources, information, crisis intervention and more.

Each person has a role in ending human trafficking. One of the most important ways to make a difference is to learn more about the common signs of human trafficking in our community. Here are several ways to increase awareness about human trafficking.

- Learn more about major organizations and the types of trafficking they combat. Read up on their statistics.
- Host a speaker/event OR attend an event or participate in an awareness week
- Get involved on a local level
- Learn to spot signs of human trafficking

For some ideas on ways to help, please visit www.humantraffickinghotline.org. Contact the National Human Trafficking Hotline 1-888-3737-888 or text **INFO** or **HELP** to 233733. Throughout Ohio, individuals can be connected to a Crisis Counselor by texting the keyword “4hope” to 741741. Additional resources can be found at www.bhmboard.org