

# IT HAPPENS HERE

## Myth-busting Human Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation in Nova Scotia



**MYTH** Human Trafficking only happens overseas and always involves crossing international borders

**FACT** In Nova Scotia, human trafficking is largely domestic and can involve girls and women from rural and urban areas being transported across provincial borders. Traffickers' tactics often involve isolating someone from their family and community. Nova Scotia is known as being the source location for young girls working in the sex trade across the country, particularly in New Brunswick, Quebec, Ontario, and Alberta.

**MYTH** Only girls are exploited

**FACT** There is limited information about the experiences of boys, men, and transgender individuals involved in the sex trade, but we do know that they are not immune to sexual exploitation. Although it happens differently and may be more underground, the victimization and trauma of exploitation is not gender exclusive.

**MYTH** Privileged youth from supportive families are immune to exploitation

**FACT** All youth are vulnerable to human trafficking and sexual exploitation. Youth from supportive families with financial stability can also be victims. It is important to remember that racism, poverty, and other systemic problems cause some people to be more at risk because of their gender, race, class, Indigeneity, and experiences within the child welfare system.

**MYTH** Traffickers and Exploiters are always male

**FACT** All perpetrators of human trafficking work from the same playbook; they are predators who target vulnerable youth who lack life experience. They do not all look like the stereotypical pimp we see in pop culture. Sometimes youth are even recruited by their peers, who are also often victims themselves. In Nova Scotia, the human trafficking cases which have gone through the courts have involved men and women, from communities all over the province, with no typical profile.

**MYTH** Youth prostitution is a choice

**FACT** Choice to participate in the sex trade as an adult is complex and complicated. When it comes to human trafficking and sexual exploitation, however, it's important not to view youth sexual exploitation as the same as prostitution or sex work. According to the Criminal Code of Canada, no person under the age of 18 can legally consent to participation in the sex trade and therefore any and all participation in it is considered exploitative.

For many, 'human trafficking' sparks images of sex tourism and slave labour in places far from here. While it may play out differently around the world, human trafficking and sexual exploitation is happening in Nova Scotia. Challenge your assumptions and learn more about this important issue.

### OUR POSITION

There is a spectrum of exploitation that occurs within the sex industry. YWCA Halifax believes all people have the right to dignity, safety and well being in their lives. Our role is to support their efforts towards attaining dignity, safety and well being, as they define it for themselves.

For more information contact  
[NSTAY@ywcahalifax.com](mailto:NSTAY@ywcahalifax.com)

