

UNDERSTANDING EXPLOITATION



Definition:

Exploitation is when someone takes something from us or forces us to do something for them or others against our will. It can range from demanding small bribes, stealing monthly benefits, financial scams, wage theft, and more. Human trafficking is also a form of exploitation, where people are exploited for labor, services, or commercial sex. Often the exploiter will use physical, emotional, or financial threats to get their way, or perpetrate abuse or violence. Exploitation can make us feel powerless, unsafe, ashamed, hopeless, and disconnected from other people.

Every day, 27.6 million people worldwide endure forced labor, including 6.3 million people in forced commercial sexual exploitation.¹

Citations: ¹International Labour Organization, 2022.

Victims of exploitation may:

- Be forced to live in subpar conditions
- Not be allowed to talk to anyone alone or without supervision
- Be coached on how to respond to inquiries from others including police and other authority figures

Exploiters use a variety of coercive methods to control their victims including:

- Luring their victims with false promises of economic opportunity
- Using or threatening to use violence against a person or their loved ones
- Withholding identification, work authorization, or travel documents
- Demanding repayment for a real or alleged debt
- Monitoring and surveillance activities
- Paying very little or not paying at all for work

Our Resources:

Safe Horizon provides victims and survivors crisis support, including shelter, access to basic care and respite, immigration support, legal support following trafficking, and advocacy with police and courts. Immediate and long term supports include counseling, support groups, accompaniment to appointments, assistance completing forms to replace IDs and important documents, restitution and financial support, and information and partnership finding safe, stable housing. Safe Horizon also advocates to raise awareness, change laws, and expand anti-exploitation programs.

Each year, we advocate for safety and justice for 200 trafficking survivors, and an additional 2,000 who have experienced exploitation in the form of financial crimes, robbery, sexual exploitation, and more.



Our Programs:

- **Anti-Trafficking Program:** Legal and social services to victims of human trafficking
- **Child Advocacy Centers:** Support for children who have experienced severe abuse
- **Criminal and Civil Justice Programs:** Assistance navigating criminal and civil justice systems
- **Hotline:** 24/7/365 personalized support and safety planning via phone and chat
- **Immigration Law Project:** Support for immigrant survivors of violence and abuse in securing secure status and protection
- **Streetwork Project:** Housing, healthcare, community, and more for youth experiencing homelessness

GET HELP:

**Call our 24-Hour Hope Hotline
1-800-621-4673 (HOPE).**