**What to look for:**

* Met someone (i.e. boyfriend) who treats the victims like a prince or princess.
* Starts to withdraw from family and friends (i.e. limits social media use).
* Constantly having to check in with someone via cell phone with an urgency to call or text a response.
* Changes in physical appearance (such as having hair and nails done).
* Unexplained gifts.
* New clothing, lingerie, designer shoes and handbags.
* Can be escorted and/or watched.
* Is isolated from friends and family.
* New tattoos (can indicate branding or ownership).
* Moves addresses frequently and/or often stays in hotels.
* Unexplained injuries or bruises.

**Stages of Human Trafficking**

1)   Luring – A trafficker will seek out a victim potentially using a vulnerability the person has to gain access into their life. They will collect as much information about the victim as possible. It can be about their family situation, relationships they have with family and friends, personal issues; anything that helps the trafficker be in a better position to develop a relationship with the victim.

2)   Grooming – The trafficker will begin to treat the victim as special to him or her. They may bring them places, take them on trips, buy gifts or allow them to experience a more glamourous life than what they have had. Many victims develop feelings of love, trust and loyalty to their trafficker. During this stage, the trafficker continues to gather more information. That information allows the trafficker to manipulate the victim further. They gain access to some of the victim's most personal experiences. Illicit drugs, alcohol and petty crimes may be introduced in this stage. Isolation from friends and family can occur.

3)   Coercion and manipulation – The trafficker will start sending mixed messages and using the information gained against the victim. The traffickers make the victim believe they are mad so that the victim tries to please the trafficker and get back into their good books. They are made to feel that without the trafficker, they have no one, no one understands them and no one else will love or help them.

4)   Exploitation – The victim’s self-esteem is broken by the trafficker. Threats may be made against the victim, family and/or friends, pets and personal belongings, which can result in the victim being compliant. The victim is made to feel indebted to their trafficker. The exploitation happens when the victim is put in a position to do something they would not normally do. Although the trafficker may make the victim feel it is their choice, no choice is given and the victim is made to do this against their will due to coercion and manipulation.

As an example of what this might look like, you may have a victim who was singled out in their teens by a trafficker who entices them into believing their relationship would have them sharing a future together. This relationship can isolate the victim from family and friends, where the trafficker is the only person they can connect with and rely on. During this stage, the victim may be discouraged from legitimate means of employment and forced into exotic dancing and prostitution where profits earned by the victim have to be provided to the trafficker. They may become pregnant by the trafficker, suffer physical, mental and emotional abuse and/or be branded by their trafficker. The expectation within this relationship is that the victim will work into their late twenties or early thirties, at which time they may be abandoned for younger women.

People may be trafficked for any labour or service.

**Nova Scotia RCMP Human Trafficking Tip Line:**

* If you are or have been trafficked, or believe someone you know is being trafficked, the RCMP has a support line you can call or text. It is monitored 24 hours a day by a police officer: 902-449-2425. All calls are confidential.
* Should you wish to remain anonymous, you can also contact Nova Scotia Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-TIPS, submit a secure web tip at [www.crimestoppers.ns.ca](http://www.crimestoppers.ns.ca) or by using the P3 Tips app.