

Signs of Sexual Exploitation

Identifying a victim can be very difficult. They usually don't trust anyone, can be moved frequently and will often avoid law enforcement in fear. Often these victims face Stockholm Syndrome and don't refer to themselves as victims

Some of the signs to watch for are:

- Highly controlled or restricted schedule, money or communications
- Unidentifiable source of income
- Unexplained absences
- Unexplained source of new clothing and personal items
- Bruises or other physical signs of abuse
- A tattoo that the young person is reluctant to explain (for instance, being "branded" with an exploiter's name on the neck, chest or arms), burns
- Isolation from family, friends or other social networks
- Secrecy or vagueness about whereabouts
- Gaps in life story or defensiveness in response to questions or concerns
- Paranoia or lack of trust
- Self-blame or feelings of humiliation or shame
- Disassociation or lack of connection to the outside world
- Malnourishment
- Untreated health and dental problems

