



PARTNERS IN POLICING

HALIFAX

Human Trafficking

**Special Victims Section,
Integrated Criminal Investigation Division**

HRM Women's Advisory Committee

April 7, 2022

Special Victims Section

- The Special Victims Section is a division of the HRP/RCMP Integrated Criminal Investigation Division.
- In 2020 Halifax Regional Police recognized the need to bring investigators of sex crimes together, within one unit with a dedicated Staff Sergeant.
- This was to improve the quality of investigations, share investigative expertise/techniques, improve supervision and increase information sharing.

Special Victims Section

The Special Victims Section is made up of the following teams:

- Sexual Assault Investigative Team (SAIT)
- Internet Child Exploitation (ICE)
- Human Trafficking & Missing Persons

What is Human Trafficking?

- Human trafficking is a criminal offence that involves controlling, forcing, intimidating, or deceiving a person of any age in order to exploit them through various forms of sexual exploitation or forced labour.
- Human trafficking does not necessarily require physical movement.
- Human trafficking and sexual exploitation can happen in communities of all sizes.

Factors Associated to Exploitation

- Abuse or lack of support within the family
- Mental Health Concerns
- Addictions
- Violence in the home
- Survival
- Desire for a better life

Role of Policing

- **The role of police in response to allegations of Human Trafficking is that of enforcement. However, effective response to this issue takes the involvement of many partners, subject matter experts and various sectors.**
- Investigations are complex and require a significant amount of engagement with and support of victims.
- Preliminary investigations are often received and forwarded to the unit for further investigation.
- Community partners are engaged to offer support and resources to victims to assist them in exiting trafficking.

How police respond:

- **Our first priority is the safety of victims.** As part of this and recognizing every victim's needs are different, we also reach out to our community partners and work together with these agencies to support the victim.
- Once some of these basic needs are being addressed, we then focus on the criminal investigation. The decision to participate in the investigation is the victim's and we will respect their wishes.
- Investigations typically include obtaining as much information and evidence as possible to support charges.

Key Resources

To reach out for support or share information:

- **902.490.5142** to contact the integrated Human Trafficking Team. Please note this line is *not monitored 24/7*. To file a report and have an officer follow up with you, please call 902.490.5020. If safety is of immediate concern, please call 911.
- **902.449.2425** to contact the Nova Scotia Human Trafficking Team, 24/7.
- **1.833.900.1010** to contact the Canadian Human Trafficking Hotline, 24/7.
- **Visit** the Trafficking and Exploitation Services system website for a list of non-profit and government agencies that have specialized knowledge and training on the issue of human trafficking.

Questions/Discussion