

## **What Does Sexual Exploitation Look Like in Kandiyohi County?**

*Safe Avenues and Lutheran Social Services (LSS) assist victims of sexual exploitation. LSS assists victims up to the age of 24. Safe Avenues assists victims over the age of 18 years for shelter, and any age for advocacy.*

“In the last year our programs have worked with local youth and adults that have struggled through trafficking and/or exploitation situations. Rather than provide a single story of one victim, we felt it was more impactful to describe multiple situations. Through this lens, the community can see just how multifaceted trafficking and exploitation is.” *-Safe Avenues and LSS*

### **We have seen local youth and adults struggle with:**

- Youth has very little family support at home and turns to the Internet to find connections and meet people who “care.” Ultimately, the youth ends up in an exploitation situation.
- Youth spent a majority of life in foster care and doesn’t know how to identify “dangerous” situations. Youth “trades” sexual acts for basic needs such as shelter, food, and transportation.
- Youth fights with family at home and turns to the streets to escape. Ultimately, the youth trades sexual acts for a safe place to stay.
- Young adult struggles with mental health and is unable to work. Young adult turns to exploitation to meet the needs of themselves and their children.
- Adult marries young and soon has children to care for. Adult is suspicious that she is being drugged by her husband. She “loses” time and doesn’t remember things; she often wakes up with no clothes on. She is afraid to stay at the house.
- Adult has a custody agreement with child’s father. The father lives in a home with multiple adults. Child comes home from parental visits displaying signs of sexual assault and sexualized behavior. Child is 4 years old. Adult is concerned child is being trafficked during parental time with the other parent.