

# From Survival to Leadership: My Journey Out of Trafficking

by Miya

For seven years, I was trapped in a cycle of human trafficking in Idaho. It began when I was homeless and vulnerable—my trafficker approached me with promises of shelter, food, and clothing. But those promises quickly turned into demands: sexual acts, nude photos, housekeeping duties for him and his guests. Soon, I was forced to surrender my personal information so it could be used to open credit accounts, book hotels, and purchase prepaid debit cards—all under the guise of “bettering our situation.” I even got in trouble with law enforcement and the judicial system for doing things that would supposedly make my traffickers happy.

But our situation was anything but better. I was drugged to stay compliant while strangers came into our room and violated me. I was passed between two men who controlled every aspect of my life—what I ate, drank, wore, and did each day. They convinced me that their abuse was love, that my faults made me unworthy of anyone else’s care, and that I couldn’t survive without them. I was brainwashed into believing I needed their permission to exist.

Every knock at the door filled me with dread. I knew what was coming. And after each encounter, my traffickers walked away with money or drugs, while I was left more broken than before.

But I survived.

Thanks to the unwavering support of Idaho COBS and their rehabilitation program, I found my path to freedom. They stood by me as I reclaimed my life, reconnected with my children and family, and rediscovered my self-worth. Their advocacy didn’t stop at emotional healing—they helped me navigate and resolve complex legal challenges that once felt insurmountable.

Once you become part of the COBS family, you’re never alone. Their compassionate staff offers enduring love, support, and guidance—it’s not just a program, it’s a lifelong bond of unity and empowerment.

Today, I’m proud to hold stable employment and serve as a Certified Peer Support Specialist, using my lived experience to uplift others who are still finding their way out. My journey is proof that recovery is possible—and that no one is beyond hope.

I share my story not to relive the pain, but to remind every survivor: you are not alone. There is hope. There is healing. And there is a future beyond the trauma. Use that fear to fuel the fire for change. If I made it out, so can you.

— Miya