Speaking for the Silenced: Human Trafficking in Clinical Practice

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Objectives

1. The participant will have an understanding of the types and venues of human trafficking in the United States.

2. The participant will be able to describe potential warning signs that a victim of human trafficking might exhibit.

3. The participant will be able to describe screening questions and tools that might be useful to identify victims of human trafficking within the healthcare setting.

4. The participant will be able to identify resources to be utilized to assist victims of trafficking.
Background
Understanding Trafficking

- If an international border has not been crossed, it is not ‘human trafficking’.
- Abduction is a common feature of trafficking, especially for children.
- Estimates suggest that men comprise a significant proportion of trafficking victims.
- Legal migration generally protects people from becoming trafficked.

True or False
If an international border has not been crossed, it is not ‘human trafficking’.

Abduction is a common feature of trafficking, especially for children.

Estimates suggest that men comprise a significant proportion of trafficking victims.

Legal migration generally protects people from becoming trafficked.

**True or False**

- Human Trafficking is:
  - Sex trafficking in which a commercial sex act is induced by *force, fraud, or coercion*, or in which the person induced to perform such an act has not attained 18 years of age;
  - The recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of *force, fraud, or coercion* for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery.
  - A victim need not be physically transported from one location to another for the crime to fall within this definition.
21 million people victims of forced labour

International Labor Organization, 2012

Trafficking Hot Spots in the U.S.

https://polarisproject.org/facts
Hot Spots for Trafficking in Michigan in 2016

Types of Trafficking

- Labor Trafficking
  - Begging
  - Domestic Servitude
  - Industrial Fishing
  - Agriculture
  - Construction/Landscaping
  - Hospitality

- Sex Trafficking
Three Elements of Sex Trafficking

Process
- Recruiting
- Harbouring
- Moving
- Obtaining
- Patronising
- Soliciting
- a person,

Means*
- by
  - Force
  - Fraud
  - Coercion

End
- For the purposes of
  - Sex Trade
    - Commercial Sex Act

*No force, fraud, or coercion required when a child is induced to perform a commercial sex act.

Three Elements of LABOR Trafficking

Process
- Recruiting
- Harbouring
- Moving
- Obtaining
- a person,

Means
- by
  - Force
  - Fraud
  - Coercion

End
- For the purposes of
  - Involuntary Servitude
    - Debt Bondage
    - Slavery
Is it still trafficking?

• What if the victim isn’t physically hurt?
  
  • Force, fraud, and coercion don’t have to be physical at all. Psychological coercion is enough.

Is it still trafficking?

• What if the victim can leave?
  
  • Just because the victim can technically leave doesn’t mean they are staying by choice. A small gap in freedom doesn’t mean trafficking never happened.
Is it still trafficking?

• What if the victim took the job voluntarily?
  
  • Many victims of trafficking take a job or consent to be smuggled only to later discover the true nature and conditions of the work.

Is it still trafficking?

• What if the victim doesn’t identify their experience as trafficking?
  
  • Many victims do not recognize that what is happening is exploitation – whether due to trauma, mental illness, or other reasons.
Background
Consequences of Trafficking

Violent Victimizations

• Many cases only include psychological coercion; however, violent victimizations can occur.

• Research shows that human trafficking victims experience extensive violent victimizations across their lifetimes:
  • 6 in 10 have been threatened with a weapon
  • 7 in 10 have been physically assaulted
  • 6 in 10 have been raped or sexually abused
  • 5 in 10 reported physical injury due to violence
  • 7 in 10 reported having freedom of movement restricted

(Farley et al., 2003; Zimmerman et al., 2008)
Identifying Victims of Human Trafficking

**Missed Opportunity!**

88% of domestic sex trafficking survivors said they came in contact with a health care provider during their trafficking and were not recognized.

(Lederer & Wetzel, 2014)

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Health Care use by Trafficking Survivors

- Healthcare providers are one of the few professionals likely to interact with trafficked individuals while they are still in captivity.

- Healthcare providers are in a unique position to identify victims of trafficking and provide important physical and psychological care for victims while in captivity and after.

(Dovydaitis, 2010)
Screening & Services
In the Healthcare Setting

Where do victims seek services?

- Emergency Room/Urgent Care for emergent issues such as injuries
- OB/GYN for prenatal care, gynecological care
- Substance Use Treatment Facility for addiction treatment
- Family Practice for routine checkups or pre-existing conditions
- Health Department for immunizations, routine healthcare
- Dentist for injuries, tooth pain
- Social worker/Psychologists for mental health services
- Pharmacy for prescriptions, medical supplies
### RED FLAGS: SEX TRAFFICKING

- Persistent or untreated STIs or UTIs
- Trauma to vagina or rectum
- Problems with jaw or neck
- Repeated abortions or miscarriages
- Presence of cotton or debris in vagina
- Pelvic pain
- Bruises, scars, burns marks, missing or broken teeth

### RED FLAGS: LABOR TRAFFICKING

- Dehydration
- Water and sanitation related illness
- Heat stress/stroke
- Air quality or respiratory problems
- Musculoskeletal and ergonomic injuries
- Untreated skin infections/irritations
- Pesticide or chemical exposure
- Sleep deprivation
### RED FLAGS: BEHAVIOR

- Inability to keep appointments or follow care instructions
- Unable to present identification documents
- Moves frequently
- Accompanied by a person that does not let individual speak
- Malnutrition, untreated medical problems
- Inconsistent or canned stories
- Branding or Tattoos
- Hyper-vigilance, fear, paranoia, anxiety

### HEALTH INDICATORS: MENTAL HEALTH

- Depression
- Suicidal ideation
- Self-harming behaviors
- Anxiety
- PTSD
- Nightmares, flashbacks
- Lack of emotional responsiveness
- Feelings of shame or guilt
- Depersonalization
- Hostility
### Subjective & Objective Findings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subjective Findings</th>
<th>Objective Findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Missing legal documentation or using false identification; lacking insurance</td>
<td>Avoiding eye contact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inconsistencies in history</td>
<td>Exhibiting paranoia, anxiety, fear, or submission during visit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not speaking for self</td>
<td>Malnourishment or poor health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loss of sense of time/space</td>
<td>Signs of physical abuse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large number of sexual partners, history of STIs, frequent pregnancies*</td>
<td>Signs of sexual abuse or trauma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adolescent reporting relationships with older adults/men*</td>
<td>Evidence of addiction to drugs or alcohol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of controlling or dominating relationships</td>
<td>Inappropriate dress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History of abuse of familial dysfunction</td>
<td>Presence of unexplained or unusual scar tissue, tattoos, or branding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of language consistent with involvement in prostitution*</td>
<td>Evidence of residual fibers or other unusual findings during vaginal examination*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Specific to sex trafficking

### Screening Tools/Response Protocols
Follow-up Questions

- Can you leave your job if you want to?
- Can you come and go as you please?
- Have you been hurt or threatened if you tried to leave?
- Has your family been threatened?
- Do you live with your employer?
- Where do you sleep and eat?
- Are you in debt to your employer?

(Pardee, Munro-Kramer, Bigelow, & Dahlem, 2016)

Protocol Framework

Patient presents for healthcare

Healthcare services provided

If presents with red flags or indicates yes to screening questions call NHTRC (888-373-7888) or local resources

Assessment of potential danger

Utilize local resources and NHTRC to determine next steps

If no red flags or screening indicators, refer to local services as appropriate

What is a healthcare provider to do?

- Trust your gut
- Trauma-informed care
- Patient/victim-centered care
- Become familiar with resources in your area to provider comprehensive care

Reporting Requirements

- The clinician is not mandated by law to call anyone (either the referral line or law enforcement) unless the client is under 18 years of age.

- While the clinician may call the referral line anonymously without the client’s permission, it is not advisable to make an official report without the client’s consent.

- Please note that this is a gray area and that each clinician will have to make his/her own moral decision regarding the reporting of suspected trafficking.
Mandatory Reporting: Michigan

- Mandatory reporting laws apply in human trafficking cases when a victim is a minor.
- Special attention is required in cases involving 16 and 17 year old who are participating in the commercial sex industry.
- These minors may be arrested rather than treated as victims.

Response Protocols

- Put a team together before a case happens.
- Build off of existing child abuse and domestic violence protocols. Make sure your team is aware of dependency process for minors.
- Consult with your own lawyer about conflict between mandatory reporting obligations and risk of arrest.
- Have the hard conversations in advance – will a victim be arrested?
- For foreign national cases be aware of the need for a lawyer and the special role of federal law enforcement.
## Resources

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Contact Information</th>
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</table>
| National Human Trafficking Resource Center (NHTRC) Hotline | To report an incident or locate local services  
  Training for healthcare professionals                                                                                                               | 888-373-7888  
  Text HELP or INFO to BeFree (233733)  
  http://www.traffickingresourcecenter.org  
| Polaris                                   | Global leader in fighting to end human trafficking                                                                                                                                                          | http://www.polarisproject.org                                                      |
| Michigan Human Trafficking Task Force     | Aims to facilitate a collaborative approach to preventing human trafficking within the State of Michigan                                                                                                   | http://mhttf.org/                                                                   |
| UM Law School Human Trafficking Clinic    | Provides legal services to victims of human trafficking                                                                                                                                                   | https://www.law.umich.edu/clinical/humantraffickingclinicalprogram/Pages/humantraffickingclinic.aspx |

### Human Trafficking Clinic

Represent clients, regardless of:
- Type of victimization
- Gender
- Age
- Nationality

Provide Comprehensive Legal Services:
- Immigration
- Family
- Public Benefits
- Post Adjudication Criminal Relief
- Tax
- Identity Protection

https://www.law.umich.edu/clinical/humantraffickingclinicalprogram/Pages/humantraffickingclinic.aspx
References


