



Responding to Human Trafficking: An Interdisciplinary Approach

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1

Presenters

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2

Training Objectives

Participants will be able to:

1. Define human trafficking.
2. Identify at least 3 examples of human trafficking.
3. Identify at least 3 responses to patients who may be at risk of or are being trafficked.

Penobscot Community Health Center

- Creating access to healthcare
- Addressing needs with a comprehensive approach



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- Branch of Saint Andre Home located in Maine
- Residential home for survivors of human trafficking and exploitation
- Community based support for survivors of human trafficking, exploitation, domestic and sexual violence

5

What does Human Trafficking Look Like Globally?

- Estimated 25 million people are labor trafficked annually around the world (Dept. of Labor)
- Of these, 4 million are children with many trafficked in hazardous labor like mining, fishing, construction (Dept. of Labor)
- Estimated 4 million adults worldwide are sex trafficked (United Nations)
- Estimated 1 million children worldwide are sex trafficked (United Nations)

6

Human Trafficking

Trafficking Victims Protection Act 2000

Labor Trafficking

Recruitment, harboring, transporting, provision or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purposes of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage or slavery.

Sex Trafficking

Commercial sex act induced by force fraud or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such an act has not attained 18 years of age.

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7

What's happening in the United States?

- In 2019, Polaris, a national hotline for victims of trafficking and to report trafficking, identified:

22,326 victims and survivors of human trafficking

14,597 were sex trafficked

4,934 were labor trafficked

1048 were sex and labor trafficked

1747 were unspecified

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8

What's happening in Maine?

- Hornby Zellers research on behalf of the Maine Coalition Against Sexual Assault (2015)
- 200 to 300 cases per year of sex trafficking in Maine
- Average age of entry into commercial sex industry in Maine is 14 to 16
- Victims come from across the state

What's happening in Maine?

- Labor trafficking: No concrete numbers for Maine
- No federal prosecutions of labor trafficking yet in Maine

What's happening in Maine?

- Research conducted by the Muskie School in collaboration with DHHS:
 - From January 1, 2015 - July 25, 2019, there were 4943 cases of child abuse or neglect involving sexual abuse
 - Of those, 23 unique reports were identified to have an allegation of trafficking
 - Next steps: DHHS & Maine Coalition Against Sexual Assault collaborating on training for staff

What we know

- Trafficking is underreported and underidentified
- There are many cases of exploitation, where someone is taking advantage of another, but it does not reach the federal or legal definition of trafficking. We still have an obligation to respond.
- For adults, over 80% access medical care during the time they are being trafficked.

How does trafficking happen?

- Traffickers prey upon vulnerabilities and the breakdown of systems
- When people’s basic needs are not met (food, housing, safety, etc.), this makes them vulnerable
- Majority of victims know their traffickers
 - Family & Friends/Neighbors
 - Romantic partner
 - Met on-line
 - Organized operations

How does trafficking happen?

- For children particularly, trafficking is inter-connected with sexual abuse
- Foster children and those who have aged out of foster care are at higher risk/targeted for trafficking
- Youth who have “runaway” or forced to leave home are at higher risk of being trafficked or exploited
- LGBTQ youth who are homeless are at particularly higher risk of being trafficked (Urban Institute)

How does trafficking happen?

- Most often:
 - Grooming process
 - Traffickers offer or promise to meet needs
 - The public often focuses on the danger and risk of strangers, overlooking the immediate risks

Where does trafficking happen?

The short answer...

Anywhere and Everywhere

Where does trafficking happen?

Top 5 industries where trafficking most occurs
(Polaris Project)

1. Escort Services
2. Illicit Massage/Health & Beauty
3. Outdoor Solicitation (Also found to be most violent)
4. Residential: Trafficking people through homes/residential networks
5. Domestic Work

Case Example

Ellie, a 14yo girl presents with her aunt to the clinic for her yearly physical. Her aunt reports that there are no concerns except that Ellie has been complaining for the last week of burning when she goes to the bathroom.

Wt 98 lb Previous Wt 110 lb BP 102/78 P 77 Temp 98.6

A: Ellie appears to be more withdrawn than she has been previously and looks to her aunt to answer questions for her. She has lost weight since her last visit. This is her third suspected UTI in the last 4 months.

Indicators in the clinical setting

- Delay in medical care/lack of treatment
- Stated history and clinical presentation don't match
- Scripted text, memorized or mechanical
- Subordinate, hyper-vigilant or fearful behavior
- No documents or identification
- "Companion" who answers questions, speaks for the patient, refuses to leave
- Provides own translator

Indicators in the clinical setting

- Inability to speak for self
- Tattoos or brands
- Physical trauma
- Recurrent STIs
- Multiple or frequent pregnancies
- Frequent or forced abortions
- Frequent relocation

Interconnections with other violence

- Sexual abuse
- Child pornography
- Domestic violence in the home
- Higher rate of parental ACES
- Generational trauma
- Family substance use and mental health needs that impacted the child's safety

Reasons why a patient may not report trafficking or abuse

- Fear
 - Traffickers' threats of harm to self or others
 - Legal repercussions
 - Deportation of self or others
 - Judgement or won't be believed
- Trauma bonding with trafficker
- Does not know it's "wrong" or a crime
- Does not know how or where to access help
- Does not think there are any other options

An Interdisciplinary Approach

23

Needs of survivors: Adults and Children

- Trauma
- Medical and health
 - Acute and chronic
- Mental health
 - Acute and chronic
- Substance use
- Basic needs
- Economic
- Spiritual
- Social
- Emotional
- Legal
 - Civil
 - Criminal
 - Immigration status
- Housing
- Education
- Life Skills

24

Overall Goals

- Provide care to address the immediate need with a non-judgmental approach
- Establish rapport and connect
- Screen
- Refer & Safety Plan: National Hotline; Local Resources; Include immediate and basic needs in the plan
- Utilize your team
- Welcome and invite the patient to return
- This is often a lengthy & involved process, no quick fix

Reporting

- As a mandated reporter, we have to report real and suspected child abuse or neglect. Contact Child Protective Services (1-800-452-1999)
- Document what you see, what you were told
- Can also access the 24 hour National Human Trafficking Hotline: 1-888-373-7888 or Text "Be Free" to 233733

Resources

- Maine Coalition Against Sexual Assault *mecasa.org*
- Maine Sex Trafficking Education Network *mesten.org*
- Maine Coalition to End Domestic Violence *mcedv.org*
- Preble Street Anti-Trafficking Services
- Child Advocacy Centers
- Anti-Trafficking Coalitions
- Child Protective Services
- SAFE nurses

27

Resources

- Immigrant Legal Advocacy Project (ILAP)
 - Can help answer questions regarding T Visas for trafficking victims
- Pine Tree Legal
- Mass General Freedom Clinic, Boston
- Maine Medical Center, Portland
- St. Joseph Healthcare, Bangor
- Polaris Project and National Human Trafficking Hotline
 - Polarisproject.com 1-888-373-7888*
 - Text "Be Free" to 233733*

28

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29

Thank you!



30