Human Trafficking, Trauma, and the Impact on School Communities

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Acknowledgement

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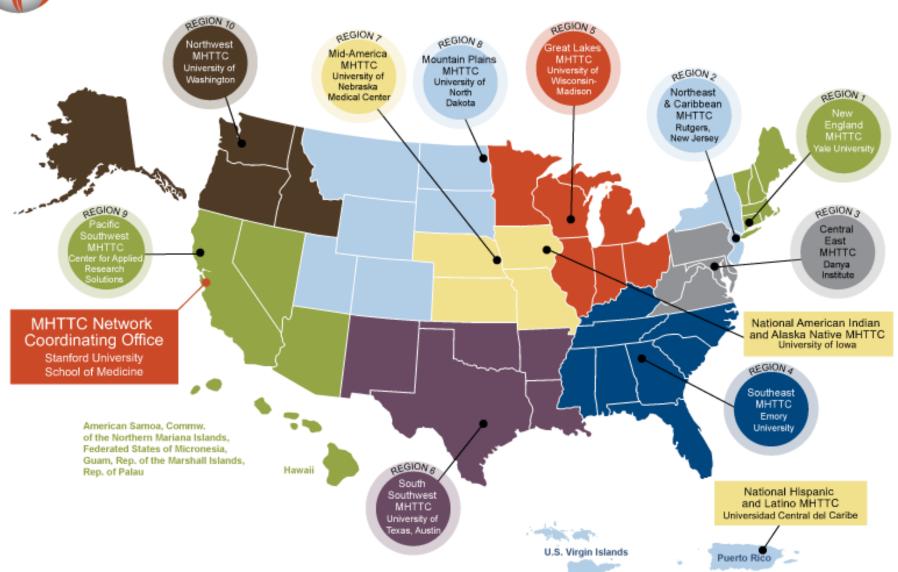
At the time of this publication, Miriam E. Delphin-Rittmon Ph.D., served as Assistant Secretary for Mental Health and Substance Use in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the Administrator of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

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The MHTTC Network uses affirming, respectful and recovery-oriented language in all activities. That language is:

STRENGTHS-BASED AND HOPEFUL

INCLUSIVE AND
ACCEPTING OF
DIVERSE CULTURES,
GENDERS,
PERSPECTIVES,
AND EXPERIENCES

HEALING-CENTERED AND TRAUMA-RESPONSIVE

INVITING TO INDIVIDUALS PARTICIPATING IN THEIR OWN JOURNEYS

PERSON-FIRST AND FREE OF LABELS

NON-JUDGMENTAL AND AVOIDING ASSUMPTIONS

RESPECTFUL, CLEAR AND UNDERSTANDABLE

CONSISTENT WITH OUR ACTIONS, POLICIES, AND PRODUCTS

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- Have a comment? Use the Chat.

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https://988lifeline.org/chat/

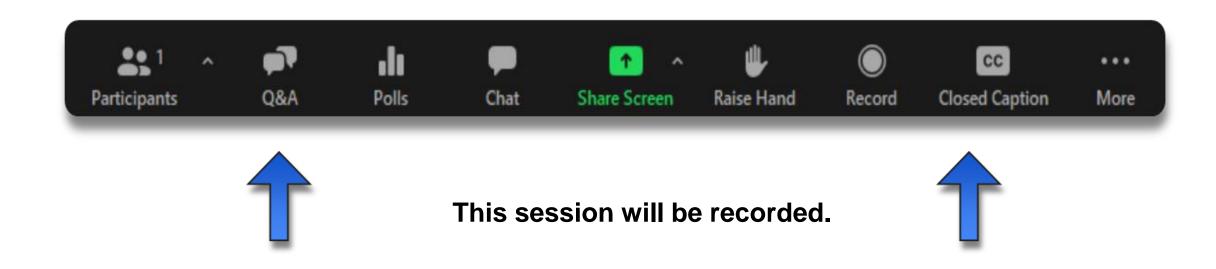
NATIONAL HUMAN TRAFFICKING HOTLINE

Housekeeping Items

- https://humantraffickinghotline.org
- Text *233733
- 24/7 Confidential

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Presenter
Dr. Heather Curry, Ph.D.



Presenter Dr. Marianne Thomas, Ph.D.



HUMAN TRAFFICKING, **TRAUMA AND** THE IMPACT ON SCHOOL COMMUNITIES



SETTING THE STAGE

- Agenda Review
- Getting to Know Each Other
- A Note About Vulnerability
- Overview of Human Trafficking

HUMAN TRAFFICKING, TRAUMA, AND SCHOOL SCHOOL COMMUNITIES PART I: AGENDA

Time	Activity
10:00 AM	Introductions and Motivated Icebreakers:What makes for a good conversation?What helps you be present today? What might be standing in the way?
10:15 AM	Discussion of Brené Brown video on vulnerability
10:30 AM	Human Trafficking 101
11:10 AM	Mindfulness break
11:20 AM	Human Trafficking 101 continued
11:40 AM	Human Trafficking and School Communities
12:00 PM	Break for Lunch



Heather Curry, Ph.D.



Marianne Thomas, Ph.D.

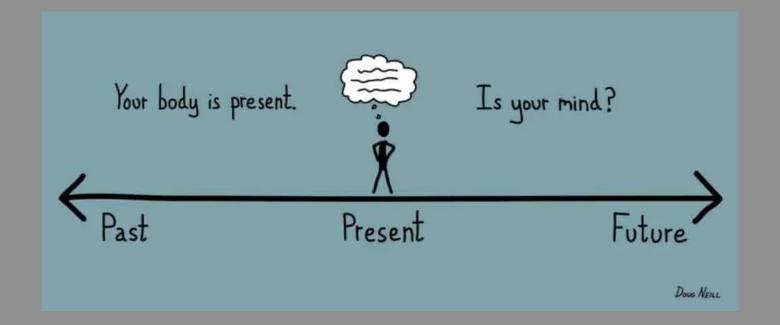


GETTING TO KNOW EACH OTHER

- What makes for a good conversation?
 - o Respect for the other's dignity
 - Curiosity and humility
 - o No judgment
 - o Active listening
 - Listening to hear and understand, not to respond
 - Leaning in
 - Reflecting for understanding
 - Cognitive Empathy
 - o Grace
 - Vulnerability
 - o Courage

BEING PRESENT

- What helps you be present today?
- What might be standing in the way?





THE POWER OF VULNERABILITY



- How is vulnerability a strength?
- Why is it critically important for this discussion?
- Why is it critically important for educators and school professionals?
- How can embracing vulnerability help create healing spaces within school communities?

"The other thing that they had in common was this: They fully embraced vulnerability. They believed that what made them vulnerable made them beautiful."



MY NAME MY VOICE

CREATING CONVERSATIONS TO COMBAT TRAFFICKING

DOMESTIC HUMAN SEX TRAFFICKING 101

Marianne Thomas, PhD

Lived Experience Expert

Marianne@mynamemyvoice.org

LEGAL DEFINITION

Human Sex Trafficking is the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of people through force, fraud or coercion, with the aim of exploiting them for the exchange of **anything** of value

For minors, there is no need to prove force, fraud, or coercion as minors cannot consent to commercial sex

PROPER TERMINOLOGY

- CSEC- commercial sexual exploitation of children (not child prostitution)
- SAM- sexual abuse material (not pornography)
- CSAM- child sexual abuse material (not child pornography)
- Exploited person (not prostitute)
- Exit trafficking (not rescue, recover, save, etc)

THE TRUTH ABOUT HUMAN SEX TRAFFICKING

Most people are trafficked by someone they know (29% partner related, 46% familial)

Most people are lured away by a trafficker rather than being kidnapped (97% are lured)

Most people are recruited and groomed in early childhood (avg age of recruitment is elementary school)

Most trafficking starts in early teen years (avg age of entry into trafficking is 12 years old)

The US is the number one purchaser of people for sex (for both inside the US and sexual tourism)

*POLARIS.ORG

Demand driven- without buyers of people/sex, there would not be trafficking

HOW IT WORKS

Greed driven- traffickers can sell a person multiple times, whereas they can only sell a drug or weapon once (trafficking of persons is second in illicit gains only to trafficking of drugs- \$150 billion per year)

THE PLAYERS INVOLVED

Trafficker- a person who exploits another person through sex/labor for personal gain

Buyer- a person who purchases another person for sex

Exploited person- a person who is being trafficked/exploited

May be called a pimp, "daddy", significant other/spouse

May be called "date", "trick", "john", "customer"

May be called "victim", "survivor", "prostitute", "whore"

COMMON METHODS OF ENTRY INTO TRAFFICKING

Social media Friends & Family

Sexual abuse material

COMMON IDENTIFIERS OF EXPLOITED PERSONS

Obvious power differential

 holding identification papers, controlling speech, controlling movement

Brandings/Tattoos/Jewelry

 Trafficker's name, the number 16, "loyalty", "queen", "daddy's girl", Kool-aid red hair dye

Vulnerabilities

4 or more ACEs

ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES (ACES)

Emotional abuse

Physical abuse

Sexual abuse

Lack of safety/security

Lack of food/shelter/clothing/medical attention

Single parent homes

Domestic violence in home

Drug/alcohol abuse in home

Mental illness/depression/suicide in home

Caregiver imprisoned



COMMON CONTROL TACTICS

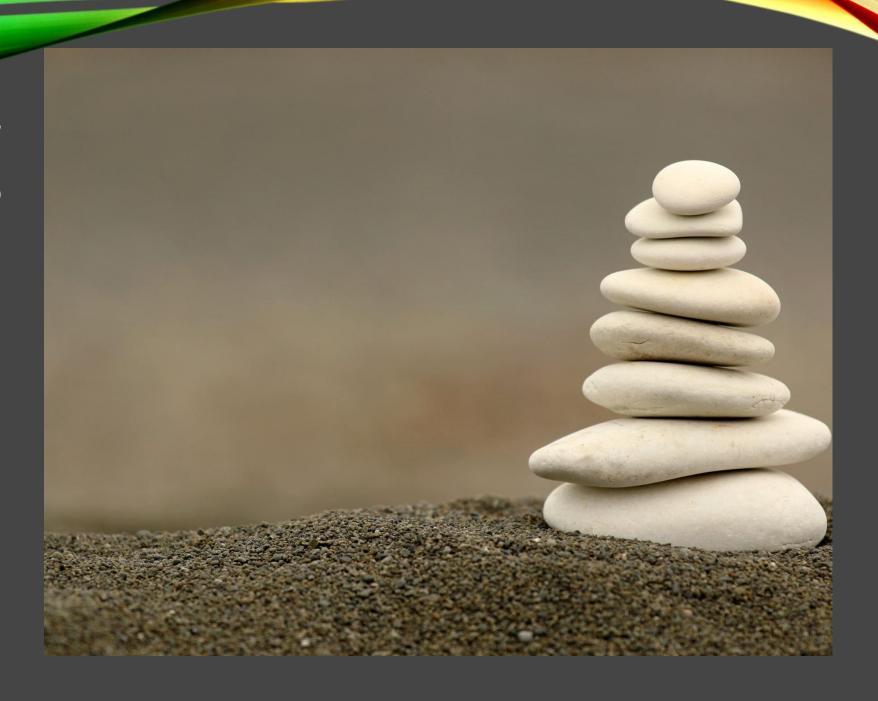
- physical and emotional abuse and threats
- isolation from safe people
- economic abuse

LEAVING THE LIFE-THE CRITICAL INTERVENTION

- Law enforcement
- Detox
- Service provider
- Church
- Emergency room
- Educators
- School Professionals

BUILDING A STRONG FOUNDATION AFTER BEING TRAFFICKED

- Trauma
- Addiction
- Medical
- Housing
- Education
- Economic stability
- Criminal charges
- Healthy community
- Parenting



TRAUMA

Trauma bonds- These are very real connections to people who have been abusive/hurtful.

Common diagnoses- PTSD,
Bipolar Disorder, Borderline
Personality Disorder,
Depression, Anxiety,
Oppositional Defiant Disorder

Finding a competent trauma therapist- Complex trauma is different than singular trauma; very few therapists are trained in complex trauma.

Willingness to participate fully in therapy- It hurts to heal.

Reconnecting with the body-Sexual trauma often forces a person to disconnect their mind from what is happening to their body. Healing occurs when those connections are restored properly.

ADDICTION

May exit the life with drug/alcohol addictions

May require detax and/or rehab before addressing their trauma Most addiction treatment centers do not recognize/understand the trauma of human trafficking

Most people attempt to quit their addiction multiple times before they are successful

MEDICAL



May never have seen a doctor/dentist



May have overused medical professionals (doctor shopping, pill searching, multiple Baker Acts)



May have undiagnosed medical issues



May use attention seeking behaviors concerning medical diagnoses or exaggerated symptoms/diagnoses

HOUSING



Safe homes are for people who have safety concerns/need a lot of oversight



Transitional housing options are for people who need some oversight



Affordable housing communities that offer wrap around HT services are the best option

EDUCATION

May not have completed high school/gone beyond high school

Trauma may have changed how a person learns

ECONOMIC STABILITY





May need to learn new skills to be employable in today's market

May need to learn to budget for the first time

CRIMINAL CHARGES

May have criminal charges from the life

May not be easily employable due to those charges

There are
expungement
processes for those
who qualify

*but they take time

Family unit may not be healthy/safe

HEALTHY

May need to learn how to build a healthy community

Should be involved in survivor support groups

Many people exit the life with children who they have not learned to parent well

PARENTING

Many of the children have their own trauma that needs to be addressed

May have to learn to co-parent with a former abuser

WHEN HELPING HURTS

Savior Complex

Boundaries & Enabling

Lack of understanding of HT

Confidentiality

SAVIOR COMPLEX

- "I want to rescue the victims."
- "I want to help the less fortunate."
- "I want to give them a life they never had."
- "I know what's best for the victim."
- "I can fix them or the problem."
- "I am a voice for the voiceless."

BOUNDARIES & ENABLING

Have appropriate boundaries that match the nature of the relationship. (i.e. Is this your friend or a student or those who may be experiencing human trafficking

Allow the survivor to gently fail sometimes. (They do not learn if you always fix the problem.)

Do NOT have a stronger emotional reaction to the person's story than the person does (i.e. Do not cry when you hear their story- this puts the survivor in the position of having to make you feel better about the horrible things that happened to them.)

Ask permission before any touch, including hugs, every time.

Don't do it for them. Teach them to do it for themselves.

LACK OF UNDERSTANDING OF HT

Human trafficking is not like other traumas, including other sexual traumas.

Human trafficking is always a complex trauma.

Often wellintentioned people retraumatize a person when trying to help.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Never share a name, picture, or story of a minor.

Never share a name, picture, or story of a person who is in a program.

When changing identifiers to share a story, the person in the story should not be able to recognize themselves.

Ask a person before sharing the details of their story with anyone.

Properly compensate a person who shares their story publicly.

WHO TO CALL IF YOU SUSPECT HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Anywhere in the US, call The National Human Trafficking Hotline 888-3737-888 or text BEFREE (233733)

Be prepared to share as many details as you can to help law enforcement find the person.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND SCHOOL COMMUNITIES

- Understanding community vulnerabilities
- Community vulnerabilities are school community vulnerabilities
- How do you identify a potential trafficking situation?
 - It's often not what you see, it's what you hear
- How can you engage the principles of a good conversation in your conversations with students and colleagues?

BREAK FOR LUNCH!



HUMAN TRAFFICKING, TRAUMA, AND THE IMPACT ON SCHOOL COMMUNITIES PART II: AGENDA

Time	Activity
1:00 PM	Agenda Review
1:10 PM	Labor Trafficking Overview
1:30 PM	Trauma-Informed Care and Trauma-Responsive Care
1:55 PM	Mindfulness Break
2:05 PM	Trauma-Informed Care and Trauma-Responsive Care
2:15 PM	Pointing Toward Healing-Centered Care
2:30 PM	Session Adjourned

LABOR TRAFFICKING OVERVIEW



- Addressing binary thinking about trafficking: it is not an either/or proposition
- The cautionary tale of statistics
- Setting the context: understanding community vulnerabilities as relevant to both sex and labor trafficking

SERVING SURVIVORS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Understanding Trauma, Triggers, and Tough Behaviors

Presented by: Marianne Thomas, PhD

Created with: Meagan Heller, LMSW and Rebecca Whitman, LEE

QUICK DISCLAIMER

- There is a lot of overlap between the dynamics of HT and other abusive dynamics (DV, child abuse, etc.), and some similarities in presentation.
- Don't mistake the overlap for uniformity.
- If your <u>method</u> is ineffective or harmful, your <u>intention</u> means nothing.



STRENGTHS PERSPECTIVE

How they've been viewed:

- Hypersexual
- Prostituting themselves
- Defiant, having bad attitudes
- Manipulative, attention seeking
- Untreatable, lost cause, too far gone
- Fooled/Brainwashed

How we will view them:

- Over sexualized
- Being exploited
- Self-protective and strong-willed
- Resourceful, clever, intelligent
- Having unique needs and challenges
- The subject of highly skilled manipulators w/ selfish motives

EXTREMELY PERCEPTIVE TOWARD US

- Observation of body language is a survival skill.
- Students or those who may be experiencing human trafficking can tell if professionals:
 - Don't really care, just looking for a paycheck
 - Feel uncomfortable, nervous, scared
 - Are lost or "in over your head"
 - Have an agenda (i.e. rescue, evangelize, make them do what you want, etc.)

- Be authentic
- Stay non-reactive when they are trying to push buttons
- Honesty is good
 - Admit when you don't know, don't understand, or mess up.
 - With integrity comes vulnerability. (Maybe this is why students or those who may be experiencing human trafficking struggle). We must model the path.
- Just because you know the lingo doesn't mean you need to use it

THE EFFECTS
OF
COMPLEX
TRAUMA



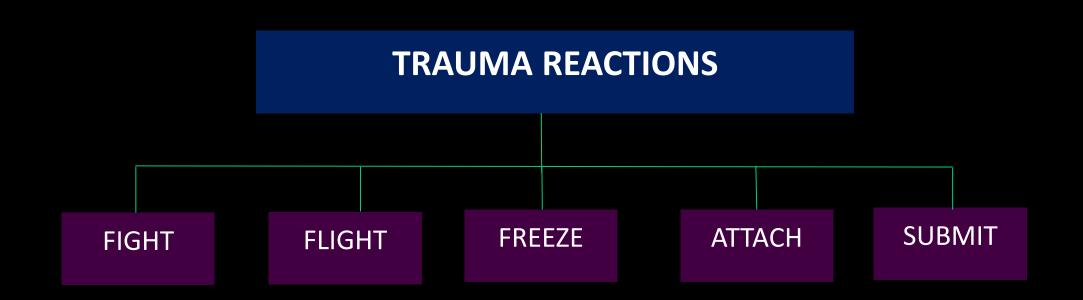
TRIGGERS

Explicit

- Tied to memories/images they can visualize in their mind
- Students or those who may be experiencing human trafficking often recognizes that they are triggered.
- Examples:
 - Songs, phrases, places, people, scents, etc.
 - Anniversaries, holidays

Implicit

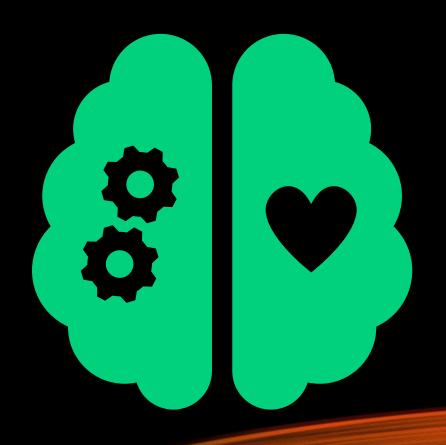
- Tied to a body memory
- Students or those who may be experiencing human trafficking often doesn't realize they're triggered, but their reaction seems extreme
- Examples
 - Emotions (i.e. shame, fear)
 - Situations (feeling cornered, lacking control, being ignored, being part of a family, etc.)





FACTORS TO CONSIDER WHEN ASKING:

"WHY DO THEY



FREQUENT PLACEMENT DISRUPTIONS

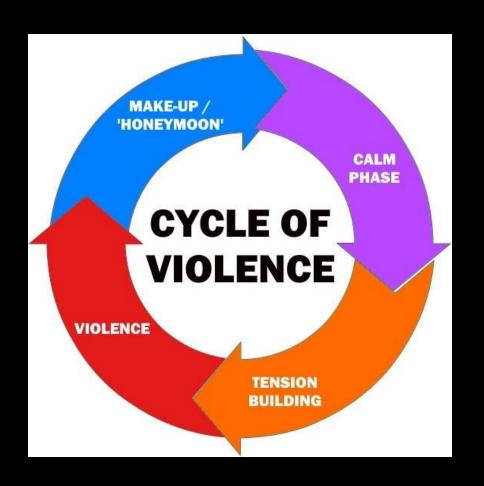
Honeymoon periods

Night-to-nights

Common exit causes:

- Violence, threats, destruction of property
- Running, recruitment, inappropriate sexual behavior
- Suicidal threats, self-harm
- Persistent insubordination

This pattern can continue well after the youth ages out, but with less supervision/support



BEING UNAWARE OF WHAT APPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR IS



Examples

- Invasive questions; honest (but rude) comments
- Not understanding privacy
- Inappropriate attire in public
- Not understanding the difference between personal and professional

What do we do?

- Don't assume they are knowingly behaving inappropriately; they may not know another way
- Nonjudgmentally explain the effect of the behavior on others and on them
- Kindly educate them on appropriate behavior and boundaries

THERE ARE BASIC LIFE SKILLS THEY MAY NOT HAVE BEEN TAUGHT



Examples in life

- Hygiene & basic health
- Money management, budgeting
- Ordering food, knowing their likes/dislikes
- How to shop for clothes, groceries, etc.
- Knowing their personal info (i.e. SSN, diagnoses, etc.)

Examples in services

- Keeping appointments on a calendar
- Calling and setting up appointments; leaving voicemails
- Informing us of cancellations rather than no-showing
- Signing forms electronically and returning
- Future planning, identifying goals

SELF-SABOTAGE

Examples

- Asking for services, then not showing up or not following through on their word
- Disappearing from or damaging relationships with healthy people
- Deliberately disobeying placement rules knowing they'll get kicked out
- Making progress, then regressing

What do we do?

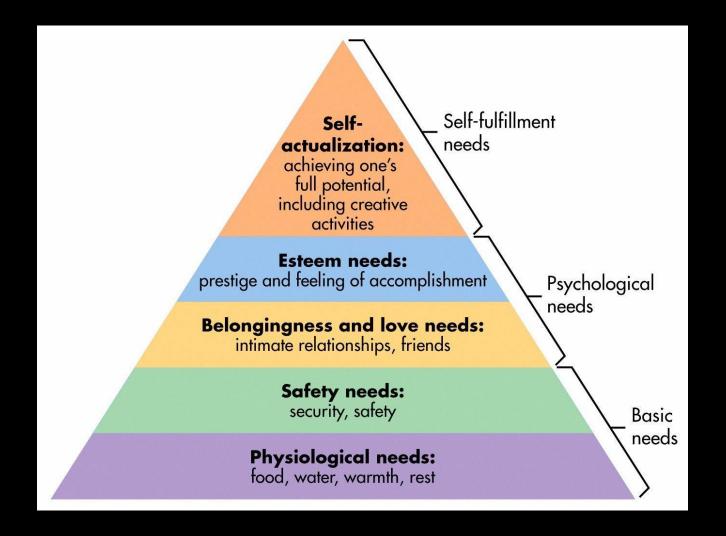
- Remain patient and consistent
- Be self-aware when you are becoming frustrated with them. You may need to change your expectations or your boundaries.
- Discuss as a team and make a plan for how to address it with the students or those who may be experiencing human trafficking.
- Evaluate whether your services are enabling the students or those who may be experiencing human trafficking to deflect feeling the full effect of their choices. Stopping services is sometimes necessary, but this should be a team decision.



STUDENTS OR THOSE WHO MAY BE EXPERIENCING HUMAN TRAFFICKING SEEMS LIKE THEY'RE MAKING NO PROGRESS.



MASLOW'S HIERARCHY OF NEEDS



STUDENTS OR THOSE WHO MAY BE EXPERIENCING HUMAN TRAFFICKING HAVE AN UNUSUALLY STRONG ATTACHMENT TO HIS/HER PHONE



Examples

- Phone, headphones, music
- Backpack
- Bedroom/safe space
- Items connected to a loved one or with sentimental value

What do we do?

- Understand the "thing" represents their security, stability, safety, family, etc. so their reaction to losing it will seem extreme
- Be empathetic without bending boundaries unnecessarily
- Don't try to reason when they're escalated
- Offer alternatives or compromise if ever possible

STUDENTS OR THOSE WHO MAY BE EXPERIENCING HUMAN TRAFFICKING MAY TALK ABOUT BEING PREGNANT OR WANTING TO BE PREGNANT.



- Need for family; unconditional love
- Being nurtured, cared for, and protected while pregnant
- Falsified pregnancies can happen
 - Consider whether they know how pregnancy happens (not every time you have sex)
 - Consider intellectual ability
 - Consider what need/desire would a pregnancy fill

- When appropriate, educate students or those who may be experiencing human trafficking that this is a common <u>control tactic</u> by abusive partners
- Stay non-reactive
- Don't instruct them on what choices to make or not make; respect their self-determination
- Determine who is most appropriate to explore it with them (i.e. therapist, safe parent, etc.)

STUDENTS OR THOSE WHO MAY BE EXPERIENCING HUMAN TRAFFICKING JUST DISAPPEAR OR "GHOST" PROFESSIONALS FOR A WHILE, BUT SEEMED ENGAGED BEFORE

- Chaotic lives, crisis (incarceration, elopements, etc.)
- Testing you. Seeing if you'll abandon them once they don't meet your expectations.
- Feeling "too seen"
- Services may not be a priority to them
- Self-sabotage abandon before they are abandoned

- Don't get angry or make it personal
- Check in regularly a few times, then place the ball in their court and back off
- Expect that they will likely return when ready if you've made them feel safe enough
- Don't assume the worst (i.e. back in the life).

STUDENTS OR THOSE WHO MAY BE EXPERIENCING HUMAN TRAFFICKING SEEM COMPLETELY UNINTERESTED IN TALKING TO US/ARE RESISTANT TO SERVICES, BUT DON'T WANT US TO LEAVE



- To test their ability to trust you
- To see if you can "handle" their feelings/challenges
- To test your reaction to their difficult behavior (i.e. if you become controlling, angry at them, etc.)
- To see how much they can get away with (like children testing the rules)

- Stay very consistent
- Communicate boundaries clearly and respectfully so they know what to expect from you and what you expect from them
- Remain calm and non-reactive as you enforce the boundaries
- Balance firmness and flexibility in a reasonable manner and teach them why

STUDENTS OR THOSE WHO MAY BE EXPERIENCING HUMAN TRAFFICKING NO-SHOW APPOINTMENTS RATHER THAN CANCELING, AND DON'T SAY WHY

- If they have a good relationship with you, they don't want to disappoint
- Fear that saying no = losing the relationship
- Boundary setting is a learned skill.
 Have they learned it?

- Provide options but still set boundaries (i.e. move meetings to virtual, etc.)
- Give them space to change their mind and check in about this along the way
- Empower students or those who may be experiencing human trafficking to say no and voice their discomfort/concerns
- Pay attention to their non-verbal communication (missing appts, sickness, etc.)

STUDENTS OR THOSE WHO MAY BE EXPERIENCING HUMAN TRAFFICKING MOVE BETWEEN DIFFERENT FORMS OF EXPLOITATION



- Gaining exposure to more methods of exploitation
- Controlling one's own exploitation can be a stepping stone to exiting the life fully.
- Some forms of exploitation have a higher level of physical safety.
- Environmental factors (i.e. financial pressure, etc.)
- Sometimes not recognizing the different avenues trafficking can take.

- Educate when appropriate
- Focus on safety, not morality
- Harm reduction safety planning
- Assess for potential financial strains and address early.
 - Do they know how to budget?
 - Might they feel pressure to help pay household bills parents are struggling with?
 - Do they feel pressure to pay court fines/fees?

EXPERIENCING HUMAN TRAFFICKING WHO KEEPS JUMPING FROM TRAFFICKER TO ABUSIVE BOYFRIEND TO ANOTHER TRAFFICKER, AND SO ON...

- New partner may be viewed as better/safer than the last
- Abusive people find vulnerable targets. students or those who may be experiencing human trafficking may not yet know how to protect their vulnerabilities.
- Safety: jealousy/violence can <u>look</u> protective but be controlling
- Toxic relationships may be all they know. That's what's familiar. Different is scary and change takes time.

- Be understanding of the internal struggle between their true desire to change and simultaneous fear of it
- Be patient. Meet them where they are. Lose your agenda.
- Set reasonable and realistic expectations
- Be non-judgmental (even when you have a good relationship, don't speak too freely)
- Understand the complex nature of what the abuser does to manipulate/control. It's not all on the students or those who may be experiencing human trafficking.

SOME STUDENTS OR THOSE WHO MAY BE EXPERIENCING HUMAN TRAFFICKING SEEM VERY DISTRUSTFUL, LIKE THEY HAVE THEIR GUARDS UP 24/7

OTHERS WILL TRUST TOO FREELY AND HAVE NO BOUNDARIES

EACH END OF THE SPECTRUM

Overly Guarded

- Highly self-protective
- Often secondary to repeatedly having trust broken
- It can take MONTHS to establish enough rapport for them to open up. Sometimes a year or more.
- Just keep showing up.

Not Guarded Enough

- Highly attachment oriented (also self-protective)
- Often secondary to feeling repeatedly unprotected
- May overshare, lack boundaries
- We need to teach/enforce boundaries, without making them feel judged for not knowing

COMBINATION

- Don't trust daycares, but will leave kids with abusive boyfriend
 - The devil you know vs the devil you don't
 - Fear of "the system" and associating daycare with DCF
 - Feeling confident in their ability to screen people in their life for danger.
 - "Safety" means something different. Danger is all relative.
 - Believe they have a greater ability to protect self/child than a professional.
- Hard time trusting professionals, but overly trusting of strangers
 - Professionals don't understand. The people around them do.
 - Mutual hardship and trauma establishes a level of understanding and legitimacy, trust can build on that easily.
 - What meets the need. Can a professional meet these needs: love/affection, belonging, safety, family, etc.?

STUDENTS OR THOSE WHO MAY BE EXPERIENCING HUMAN TRAFFICKING "MANIPULATE", OR SKEW/WITHHOLD INFORMATION, EVEN WHEN IT'S NOT NECESSARY

EXAMPLES

- Shock-value comments
- Telling us they're doing better than they are (i.e. school, relationships, etc.)
 - Not wanting to disappoint
 - Fear of accountability (accountability vs blame/shame)
 - Seeking praise, approval, belonging
- Exaggerating details of a situation while omitting their part
 - Desire to be believed and sided with (protection)
- Repeatedly insisting they want to change while running at every chance
- Controlling the subject
 - "I want to work on this" and then "I don't want to talk about that anymore"

What do we do?

- Trust but verify
- Connect before you correct
 - Validate their feelings, thoughts, perceptions that may have led them to lie
- Extend grace WITH accountability
- Teach them their actions speak louder than words, and how relationships are impacted
- Empower them to strengthen their voice by boosting their credibility

- Expect ALL students or those who may be experiencing human trafficking will lie, omit, and manipulate at least some of the time
 - All humans do, too.....
- Understand these are SURVIVAL SKILLS that in non-traumatic environments are unhelpful. <u>They</u> are not character defects.
- Extend forgiveness

TRUST IS HARD TO BUILD. IT'S BROKEN <u>VERY</u> EASILY. ON THE OTHER HAND, SECOND CHANCES <u>DON'T</u> COME EASILY.



Examples

- Saying you'll do something and not following through
- Not preparing a students or those who may be experiencing human trafficking for a sudden change, triggering event, etc. that you know is coming
- Doing something you know will cause the students or those who may be experiencing human trafficking suffering, even if unavoidable (calling the abuse hotline, etc.)
- Going too long without contact, or being inconsistent

- Set very CLEAR expectations/boundaries
 - When do we call the abuse hotline, what do we tell their guardian, our boundaries, etc.
- Never make promises or guarantees
- Set their expectations lower and then over-deliver
- Be very patient and intentional in everything you say and do, don't rush the trust-building process



POINTING TOWARD HEALING-CENTERED CARE

• The arc from Trauma-Informed to Trauma-Responsive to Healing-Centered: An Overview

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Stay in touch with us!











