Human Trafficking 101: Dispelling the Myths

2020

CommonSpirit
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Special thanks to HEAL Trafficking for reviewing the content in this module. HEAL Trafficking is a united group of multidisciplinary professionals dedicated to ending human trafficking and supporting its survivors, from a public health perspective. Join the HEAL network and learn more: https://healtrafficking.org/.
Trigger Warning

This module contains information about violence and other trauma-related material. Please practice self-care and step away as needed.

If you experience signs or symptoms of traumatic stress or re-traumatization, please seek support from a colleague or supervisor, the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), or from other counseling/supportive services.

Contact the EAP via the CommonSpirit Employee Central Contact Center at (855) 475-4747, press 1, then 1.

For tips about mindfulness and other coping skills, visit dignityhealth.org/hello-humankindness/mindfulness. Self-care is essential to your own health and to a healing ministry.
Introduction

Health care personnel are among the few professionals who may encounter victims when they are being trafficked.

A 2017 survey report found that over half of labor and sex trafficking survivors reported at least one health care encounter during their victimization. Nearly 97% of this group reported they received no information from the health care system about human trafficking or related victim support/services.¹

This report underscores how health care professionals are too often unprepared to identify and appropriately assist victims. **Together, we can change that!**
United Against Violence

CommonSpirit Health® was created by the alignment of Catholic Health Initiatives (CHI) and Dignity Health. As a single ministry, CommonSpirit is committed to building healthier communities, advocating for those who are vulnerable, and innovating how and where healing can happen—both inside its hospitals and in the community.


Learn more: https://commonspirit.org/united-against-violence/.
Human trafficking, or *trafficking in persons*, is a particular type of violence that is pervasive yet widely misunderstood. In order to prevent this crime and respond to affected patients, we must first understand it. In the following slides, we will cover basic information about human trafficking. The learning objectives are to

- Define human trafficking
- Recognize myths/misconceptions associated with this type of violence
- Identify vulnerable populations and high-risk industries, and
- Take action to prevent trafficking and respond to victims appropriately
Tips Reported in Every State

In 2019, there were 11,500 tips reported to the National Human Trafficking Hotline (NHTH), nearly 2,000 of which involved U.S. citizens or lawful permanent residents. Keep in mind: These numbers represent only those cases reported to the NHTH. Actual numbers are likely much higher. For additional information, visit humantraffickinghotline.org. (The NHTH is operated by a national anti-trafficking organization called Polaris).
Human trafficking is a crime based on exploitation. Although people of all ages, sexual orientations, cultures, genders, races, and ethnicities are affected by this crime, traffickers typically target people in situations of vulnerability.

Additional reading: In her memoir, *Hidden Girl: The True Story of a Modern-Day Child Slave*, Shyima Hall describes a true account of child labor trafficking in the U.S. Shyima was moved to the U.S. and forced to work as a domestic servant in CA.

Polaris: 25 types of human trafficking have been identified in the U.S., including labor trafficking in domestic work, commercial cleaning services, and hotels & hospitality. Note: Trafficking can also occur within the cycle of intimate partner violence and in forced marriage. Learn more: https://polarisproject.org/typology.
In 2000, the United States passed the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA), which outlaws two common forms of human trafficking: **Sex trafficking** and **labor trafficking**.\(^9\)

The TVPA’s definition of **human trafficking**, aka, **severe forms of trafficking in persons**, can be broken down into three parts: an action, a means, and a purpose (see the A-M-P Model). **All three** must be present in order for a trafficking case to qualify as a U.S. federal crime. **Additional actions** that constitute sex trafficking, but not labor trafficking, include patronizing, soliciting, and advertising an individual.\(^{10}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Means*</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Induce</td>
<td>Force</td>
<td>Commercial Sex (Sex Trafficking)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recruits</td>
<td>Fraud</td>
<td>or</td>
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<tr>
<td>Harbors</td>
<td>Coercion</td>
<td>Labor/Services (Labor Trafficking)</td>
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<td>Transports</td>
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\(^{9}\)Minors induced into commercial sex are human trafficking victims—regardless if force, fraud, or coercion is present.

**Commercial sex** – Any sex act on account of which anything of value is given to or received by any person (e.g., money, drugs, survival needs). (A-M-P Model, NHTH)
Force, Fraud, and Coercion

**Force** can involve physical restraint or serious physical harm like rape, beatings, and physical confinement. **Clinicians:** Watch for signs of abuse, neglect, and violence.

**Fraud** can involve false promises about employment, wages, working conditions.

**Coercion** can involve threats of harm against any person (e.g., the victim’s loved ones) or the abuse or threatened abuse of the legal process (e.g., threatening to call law enforcement to have the person arrested).11

Additional types of human trafficking in the U.S. include labor trafficking in the agriculture and animal husbandry industry (e.g., cattle/dairy farms).12 Is there an agriculture/farming industry in your community? Learn more: https://polarisproject.org/typology.
Angela Guanzon was recruited from the Philippines to work in a nursing facility in Los Angeles, CA. Her passport was taken for “safekeeping”, and she was told she owed $12,000 to her employer as a recruitment fee. She wasn’t allowed to leave the facility, and she was forced to sleep on the floor. For two years, Angela was threatened and forced to work with little pay. After someone reported a tip to authorities, Angela and other victims were recovered by law enforcement.

A-M-P Examples: Angela was recruited for labor, transported to and harbored in the work facility, and then induced to work via force, fraud, and coercion.

Angela Guanzon is now a Medical Biller and Coder, a member of the National Survivor Network, and former board member of HEAL Trafficking. (Photo courtesy of Angela Guanzon, Leslie Menocal, and Runaway Girl, Inc.)
EXCEPTION: Sex Trafficking of Minors

TVPA: Use of force, fraud, or coercion is NOT required in any case involving a person under age 18 who is induced to perform a commercial sex act.14

- Traffickers often target young people, in-person or online, and lure them into relationships or running away.

“Romeo pimps” shower victims with love and affection before breaking down boundaries. Example: A trafficker may ask a young person to perform a commercial sex act in order to gain money for their new life together. This person may then become more coercive and even violent. Adult victims are often first trafficked as minors.

Myth buster: Victims may be moved from city to city. However, movement is NOT required. A person can be trafficked for labor and/or commercial sex without leaving their home or community. Human trafficking is NOT the same crime as human smuggling.
Are all victims abducted & held against their will?
In Plain Sight

Labor/sex trafficking cases have been reported in visible settings such as: 

- Strip clubs, bars, and cantinas
- Landscaping services
- Carnivals and recreational facilities (e.g., amusement parks)
- **Health and beauty services** like massage parlors and hair/nail salons

Regardless of the type of setting, if a person is induced to provide labor or commercial sex via force, fraud, or coercion, then that person is a victim of trafficking. Annie Lobert’s memoir, *Fallen: Out of the Sex Industry & Into the Arms of the Savior*, is a true account of trafficking via **escort services**. 

Additional types of human trafficking in the U.S. include labor trafficking in restaurants and food service, as well as in arts and entertainment (e.g., aspiring models, singers, and athletes). Learn more: [https://polarisproject.org/typology](https://polarisproject.org/typology).
True or False: Trafficked persons will always ask for help.
Victims Often Do NOT Self-Identify

Trafficked persons may not disclose for many reasons, including fear of traffickers or authorities. Other reasons:

- Victims may blame themselves, may not recognize/understand force or coercion, or may not know their rights.
- Victims may view their situation as their only means of survival, or they may feel obligated to an employer.
- Victims may have complicated relationships or trauma bonds with a trafficker. This person may be a family member, friend, or significant other.
- Victims may feel stigmatized or isolated by society. As such, they may feel reluctant to reach out for help.
Three Victim Populations

As defined by the TVPA, there are three victim populations associated with the U.S. federal crime of human trafficking (aka, severe forms of trafficking in persons):18

- Anyone under age 18 induced to perform a commercial sex act under any circumstance
- Anyone age 18+ induced to perform a commercial sex act through use of force, fraud, or coercion
- Anyone, of any age, induced to provide labor or services through the use of force, fraud, or coercion. Labor trafficking includes situations of debt bondage, forced labor, and involuntary child labor. Angela Guanzon’s case is an example of debt bondage: she was told she owed $12,000 and had to work until it was paid off. Shyima Hall’s case is an example of involuntary child labor.

If you suspect a patient may be at risk of victimization, refer to your facility’s Abuse, Neglect, and Violence Policy, which includes the PEARR Tool.
Risk factors in your community?

**Note:** Sex trafficking can also occur via residential brothels and personal sexual servitude. In organized residential brothels, victims tend to be women and girls, often from Latin America and Southeast Asia. In sexual servitude cases, most reports involve U.S. citizen victims.¹⁹ Learn more: [https://polarisproject.org/typology](https://polarisproject.org/typology)
Immigrant Workers May Be Vulnerable

Traffickers often target vulnerable immigrants with whom they can communicate and build trust – those with whom they share a similar ethnicity.

Any person (regardless of immigration status) can be vulnerable to exploitation if lacking in support/resources. Victims may be brought to a health care setting by a trafficker, who may identify as a family member, friend, employer. Foreign national victims may not be in control of their identification or documentation.

Additional types of human trafficking in the U.S. include labor trafficking in construction, forestry & logging, and in factories & manufacturing. Learn more: https://polarisproject.org/typology.

Note: The TVPA authorizes federally-funded benefits and services for foreign national victims of human trafficking to the same extent as refugees.

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Women and Minorities May Be Vulnerable

Survivors of sex trafficking via outdoor solicitation are often **U.S. citizens**. **Women and girls of color** are disproportionately represented.\(^{22}\)

In **cities**, outdoor solicitation often occurs on a block or at cross streets known for commercial sex and often referred to as a ‘track’ or ‘stroll’. In **rural areas**, it may take place at truck stops or rest stops along major highways.

**Additional risk factors:** History of trauma and abuse, addiction, and/or chronic mental health issues.\(^{23}\)

**Additional types of human trafficking** in the U.S. include sex trafficking via pornography and remote interactive sex acts (e.g., via a webcam).\(^{24}\)** Note:** In many cases victims, including minors, can become recruiters for traffickers. Learn more: [https://polarisproject.org/typology](https://polarisproject.org/typology).
Runaway/Homeless Youth & Young Adults

Teens and young adults from marginalized and economically disadvantaged communities are also targeted. Example: At Covenant House, an agency that provides services to runaway and homeless youth/young adults, studies have shown that:

- **Nearly one in five clients** reported labor or sex trafficking victimization.
- Of those trafficked for commercial sex:
  - 10% were **young men/boys**
  - 27% identified as **LGBTQ**

Additional types of human trafficking in the U.S. include labor trafficking in illicit activities (e.g., selling drugs), traveling sales crews, and peddling & begging rings. Additional risk factor: Young people who have been in **foster care**/group homes.

* LGBTQ stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer or questioning.
Watch for Red Flags

Human Trafficking

10 Red Flags that Your Patient Could be a Victim

1. Clinical presentation and oral history don’t match up
2. Oral history is scripted, memorized or mechanical
3. Someone with the patient exerts an unusual amount of control over the visit
4. Patient appears fearful, anxious, depressed, submissive, hyper-vigilant or paranoid
5. Patient is concerned about being arrested or jailed
6. Patient is concerned for his/her family’s safety
7. Evidence that care has been lacking for prior or existing conditions
8. Tattoos or insignia’s indicative of ownership
9. Occupational-type injuries or physical ailments linked to their work
10. Sexually transmitted infections

Resource adapted from materials developed by Catholic Health Initiatives.
Take Action

If you suspect a patient may be at risk or may be a victim, refer to your facility’s Abuse, Neglect, and Violence Policy, which includes the PEARR Tool.

Note: The National Human Trafficking Hotline (NHTH) is available 24/7 to
- Speak with patients over the phone about possible victimization.
- Provide information about local, state, and national resources, including resources focused on prevention.
- Receive anonymous tips of possible human trafficking in the community.

Call 1-888-373-7888. (888-3737-888)
Thank you.
References 1-4


4. The Global Slavery Index estimates there are over 400,000 people living in conditions of “modern day slavery” in the United States. Learn more: Global Slavery Index, United States Prevalence, https://www.globalslaveryindex.org/2018/findings/country-studies/united-states/ (accessed January 22, 2020)
References 5-10


8. Ibid.


References 11-16

11. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), *Human Trafficking*,

   Report, March 2017 (accessed July 20, 2020)

13. Email correspondence between Angela Guanzon and Holly Gibbs, Director of Violence and Human
    Trafficking Response, CommonSpirit Health, November 22, 2015


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References 17-21


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References 22-27

22. Ibid.
23. Ibid.
24. Ibid.
25. Ibid.