Trafficking of Youth with Disabilities
What Providers Serving At-Risk Youth Need to Know

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Meet the Presenters

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The Trafficking of Youth with Disabilities
Outreach & Education Project

► International Organization for Adolescents (IOFA)
► National Human Trafficking & Disabilities Working Group (NHTDWG)

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Learning Objectives

Participants will gain an understanding of:

► The role of a provider serving youth with disabilities in addressing human trafficking

► Sex and labor trafficking

► Ways to identify and support potential or confirmed youth survivors of human trafficking with disabilities

► The intersection between human trafficking and disability
Why do providers serving at-risk youth need to learn about youth with disabilities and human trafficking?
Youth, Children, & Minors
Children with disabilities are at least three times more likely to be abused or neglected than their peers without disabilities.¹

What Do You Know About Youth Trafficking?  
True or False?

Please reply to the following statement as True or False:

STATEMENT 1

Human trafficking only takes place in large cities or in other countries

ANSWER:
FALSE - Human trafficking takes place all around the world, including throughout the United States, in cities, suburbs, and rural areas
Please reply to the following statement as True or False:

STATEMENT 2

In order to be considered trafficking, a person must be moved across a city, state, or country border.

ANSWER:

FALSE – Human trafficking does not require any movement
What Do You Know About Youth Trafficking?
Part 3
True or False?

Please reply to the following statement as True or False:

STATEMENT 3

Most youth who experience trafficking were initially kidnapped by their trafficker.

ANSWER:
FALSE – Physically taking someone rarely happens in a trafficking situation.
Please reply to the following statement as True or False:

**STATEMENT 4**

Youth under the age of 18 who trade sex acts for something of value are considered victims of crime.

**ANSWER:**

TRUE – The crime of sex trafficking includes youth under the age of 18 who trade sex acts for something of value. These youth are a victim of a crime.
What is human trafficking?
Definition of Human Trafficking


(A) Sex trafficking in which a commercial sex act is induced by \textit{force, fraud, or coercion}, or in which the person induced to perform the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt form such act \textit{has not attained 18 years of age}; or

(B) The recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud, or coercion bondage, or slavery
How do we define disability?

The ADA is the legal way to define disability.

- Physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activity
- Record of impairment
- Is regarded as having an impairment
The social model of disability considers the role our attitudes and inaccessibility have on functional differences.¹

¹Thomas, P., Gradwell, L., & Markham, N. (n.d.). *Defining impairment within the social model of disability.*
Medical Model of Disability

Physical & Mobility

- **Movement** is functionally limited
- May use a mobility device (cane, wheelchair, walker)
- Examples: amputation, paralysis
Medical Model of Disability (2)

Sensory Impairment

- One or more senses are functionally limited
- May use an adaptive device (glasses, hearing aid)
- Examples: blindness, Deaf
Medical Model of Disability (3)

Developmental & Intellectual

- Physicality, learning, behavior, or **communication** may be functionally limited
- Needs will vary
- Examples: cerebral palsy, Autism
Medical Model of Disability

Mental & Emotional

- Functional limitations vary
- Needs will vary according to impairments
- Examples: mood, eating, personality, or behavioral disorders
Why are youth at risk for trafficking of sex and labor?
All youth can be targeted by traffickers

Why?

► Access to internet
► Desire to connect
► Feeling misunderstood
► Family conflict
► Crave independence
► Risk-taking behaviors
► Lack experience
While all youth may be targeted by traffickers... some groups are at **much higher risk**

**What traits indicate higher risk?**

- Foster care/group homes
- Justice system/multiple placements
- History of abuse & neglect
- Young people of color
- Undocumented
- Runaway & homeless
- Youth with disabilities
- LGBTQ+ youth
Why are youth with disabilities at higher risk for trafficking?

- Able-bodied = Authority
- Social Powerlessness & Isolation
- Myths & Stereotypes
Risk Factor: **Gaps in Education**

**Personal Safety**
Risk Factor: **Gaps in Education**

**Online Safety**
Risk Factor: **Gaps in Education**

Healthy Relationships
Risk Factor: **Gaps in Education**

Human Trafficking
Risk Factor: **Gaps in Education**

Legal Rights
Risk Factor: **Gaps in Education**

Value of Labor
Risk Factor: Supports

- Communication
- Assistive/Mobility Devices
- Personal Care
Risk Factor: Supports

- Educational
- Housing
- Benefits
A trafficker might be:

► Any gender or sex
► Any race or religion
► Any economic background
► Family members

► Religious leaders
► Authority figures
► Someone the youth knows and trusts
Traffickers Can Be Anyone

Case Example: Interfamilial Trafficking
Recruitment of Youth with Disabilities

Traffickers recruit victims:

- Online
- Malls
- Schools
- Social Security offices
- Group homes/foster care
- After school/youth programs
Grooming and Control of Youth with Disabilities

Grooming involves:
- Identifying youth
- Building rapport
- Gaining information
- Filling a need

Control involves:
- Social Isolation
- Physical Isolation
- Physical Harm
- Coercion
- Threats
Grooming of Youth with Disabilities

Case Example: Youth Programs
Considering the Factors – What did you find?

Case Example – “Youth Programs”

Grooming Elements:
- Identify group home
- Identify struggling young men and befriend them
- Provide friendship and drugs

Control Elements:
- Provide drugs
- Threaten police involvement
- Force into debt bondage
- Withhold drugs
Youth Labor Trafficking: Putting it All Together

Case: Administrators

Process: Recruitment
Means: Fraud
End: Labor
Role of the Provider

- Awareness
- Identification
- Follow Protocol/Report
- Support & Referral
Service Provider Role: **Prevention**

- **Educate** youth with disabilities on:
  - Personal and online safety
  - Healthy relationships
  - Human Trafficking
  - Legal rights
  - Value of their labor
- **Share community resources**
Disability Provider Role: Identification

- Understand **risk factors**
- Look for **red flags**
- **Disclose** to the youth that you are a mandated reporter

Human trafficking too often goes undetected!
Red Flags of Human Trafficking in Youth

Red flags can be:

- Behavioral
- Physical
- Situational

IMPORTANT: What do you know about them already? And has something changed?
Red Flags of Human Trafficking in Youth

Behavioral

- frequently missing school
- Reduced or changed communication
- Fear, exhaustion, or depression
- Sudden inability to perform tasks
Red Flags of Human Trafficking in Youth

**Situational**

- Much older boyfriend/girlfriend
- Does not discuss work
- Has new possessions or items of value that you may question
Red Flags of Human Trafficking in Youth

Physical

- Unexplained injuries
- Untreated injuries
- Injuries related to exposure
- Frequent pregnancies/STIs/UTIs
Disability Provider Role: Follow Protocol

- **Safety** is first priority
- Explain *mandated reporting*
- Interpreters and supports ready *before* you need them
- Provide *choice* and autonomy
- Trauma-informed language and *take your time*

Contact the National Human Trafficking Hotline for further guidance.
At-Risk Youth Provider Role: Support & Referral

Know who to call in your community.
Supporting Youth with Disabilities

- Staff trainings
- Connect with community supports
- Acquire assistive technology
- Put myths and perceptions aside
- Ask to help. Wait for acceptance. Follow instructions
- Respect a person’s equipment
- Accepting and welcoming tone
Community Supports: Centers for Independent Living

Find your local Center for Independent Living
Community Supports: Protection & Advocacy Centers

More information, about Protection & Advocacy Centers
Community Supports: Regional ADA Centers

More information about the Regional ADA Centers
Community Supports: Vocational Rehabilitation

To find your state’s VR program, simply use any search engine and type: “your state” + “vocational rehabilitation program”
Community Supports: Advocacy Programs

Sibling Leadership Network

► Provide siblings of individuals with disabilities information, support, & tools

► Family resources
Community Supports: Advocacy Programs

ARC of U.S. and State Chapters

- Services, classes, & support for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities
- Research/resources
Community Supports: Advocacy Programs

Self Advocates Being Empowered (SABE)

- Advocacy services for people with all different types of disabilities
- Promotes self-advocacy
Anti-Trafficking Resources
National Human Trafficking Hotline

Toll-free
Confidential
24/7
Interpreters
Available

Call: 1-888-373-7888
TTY: 711
Text: HELP to 233733 (Befree)
Web: humantraffickinghotline.org
Resources for Healthcare Professionals

HEAL Network

► Email healtraffickingnow@gmail.com
Human Trafficking Resources Nationwide

Freedom Network USA

- **Call:** 202-504-9602
- **Email:** info@freedomnetworkusa.org
Resources and Trainings on Persons with Disabilities who Have Experienced Trafficking

National Human Trafficking and Disabilities Working Group

• Email: nhtdwg@iofa.org
We are here to help!

If you need assistance with:

- Identifying Human Trafficking
- Resources
- Training
- Technical Assistance

Contact info@iofa.org
Thank you to our partners

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