Trafficking of Youth with Disabilities
What Providers Serving Youth with Disabilities Need to Know

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Meet the Presenters

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The Trafficking of Youth with Disabilities Outreach & Education Project

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► National Human Trafficking & Disabilities Working Group (NHTDWG)

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Participants will be introduced to:

► What human trafficking is
► How youth with disabilities may be impacted by human trafficking
► The role of a provider serving youth with disabilities in addressing human trafficking
► Ways to identify and support potential or confirmed youth survivors of human trafficking with disabilities
A Note on Youth, Children, & Minors
Why do providers serving youth with disabilities need to learn about human trafficking?
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
What Do You Know About Youth Trafficking?  
Part 2 
True or False?

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.
What Do You Know About Youth Trafficking?
Part 4
True or False?

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 force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt form such act 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
Elements of Human Trafficking

Process → Means → End
Why are youth at risk for trafficking of sex and labor?

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

Who is at higher risk?

- Undocumented
- Runaway & homeless
- Youth with disabilities
- LGBTQ+ youth
- Foster care/group homes
- Justice system/multiple placements
- Abuse & neglect
- Persons of color
Children with disabilities are at least three times more likely to be abused or neglected than their peers without disabilities.\(^1\)

Why are youth with disabilities at higher risk for trafficking?

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

Traffickers know these gaps exist, and exploit that fact.

- Personal Safety
- Online Safety
- Healthy Relationships
- Human Trafficking
- Legal Rights
- Value of Labor
Risk Factor: **Gaps in Education**

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

**Personal Safety**

**Topics for Teaching:**

- Safe touch
- Body anatomy
- Physical boundaries
- Consent
Risk Factor: **Gaps in Education**

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

**Online Safety**

**Topics for Teaching:**

- Passwords are private
- Keep Personal Information Personal
- Identifying inappropriate requests and behavior from online “friends”
- What images are appropriate to share
Risk Factor: **Gaps in Education**

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

**Healthy Relationships**

**Topics for Teaching:**
- Red flags in friendships and physical relationships
- Correcting the myth that people with disabilities may not be interested in sex
- Stigma
Risk Factor: Gaps in Education

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

**Topics for Teaching:**
- Definition of human trafficking as a crime
- Signs of human trafficking
- Reporting
- Ways to seek help
Risk Factor: **Gaps in Education**

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

Legal Rights

**Topics for Teaching:**
- Knowledge as empowerment
- Legal rights to education, supports, and rights of all people
Risk Factor: **Gaps in Education**

**Value of Labor**
Risk Factor: **Gaps in Education**

**Value of Labor**

**Topics for Teaching:**

- Labor laws
- Typical wages and what they legally must be paid
- What a typical work day looks like
- Knowledge of labor market
- How to interview
Risk Factor: Supports

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

- Educational
- Housing
- Benefits
Who Are the Traffickers?

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
Trafficickers Can Be Anyone

Case Example: Interfamilial Trafficking
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
Disability 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

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
- Controlling friend, boss, partner
- 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**

Hotline for further guidance.
Disability Provider Role: **Support & Referral**

Know who to call in your community.
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
- **Visit** https://healtrafficking.org
Resources and Trainings on Persons with Disabilities who Have Experienced Trafficking

National Human Trafficking and Disabilities Working Group

- **Email** nhtdwg@iofa.org
- **Visit** http://iofa.org/national-trafficking-disabilities-working-group/
We are here to help!

If you need assistance with:
- Identifying Human Trafficking
- Resources
- Training
- Technical Assistance

Contact info@iofa.org

info@iofa.org
Thank you to our partners

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