



Office for the
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Domestic Violence

The Role of Schools and Communities in Recognizing and Responding to Adolescent Trafficking

NYS Council on Adolescent Pregnancy March 21, 2017

The NYS Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence is an executive level state agency, created in 1992.

Primary areas of focus:

- advise the governor and legislature on policies and practices for the State;
- train NYS professionals from all areas about the intersection of domestic violence and their daily practice;
- serve as a resource regarding the issue of domestic violence by disseminating regular public awareness campaigns publishing materials used by non-profits and victims, distributing local assistance funds, and highlighting best practices in the field.

Agenda

- Defining adolescent trafficking
- The role for youth serving adults
- Red flags and indicators
- The role of digital and social media
- Creating safety
- Resources





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Defining Adolescent Trafficking

Video

- OVS/Youth Trafficking

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SM76xeJNCs4>



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What is Human Trafficking?

Two major types:

- Sex trafficking
- Labor trafficking



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Sex Trafficking

NYS Definition: *Profiting from prostitution by providing drugs, using false or misleading statements, withholding or destroying government documents, debt servicing, force, a plan or pattern of coercive conduct, or other acts.*

<http://ocfs.ny.gov/main/humantraffic/default.asp>

Labor Trafficking

NYS Definition: Compelling or inducing another to engage in labor, or recruiting, enticing, harboring or transporting another by providing drugs, withholding or destroying government documents, debt servicing, force, or a plan or pattern of coercive conduct.

<http://ocfs.ny.gov/main/humantrafficking/default.asp>



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Trafficking Myths

- Requires a border crossing (international or state)
- Victims are foreign-born or persons of color
- Are physically restrained or locked up
- Smuggling is required for Human Trafficking



Human Trafficking is Modern Day Slavery

- Human trafficking is fast surpassing drug and arms sales
- Slavery is frequently both labor and sex trafficking
- Children and women bear the brunt of the industry
- It is a trade and there is a market







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Why Is It Important For Youth Serving Professionals To Address Adolescent Trafficking?

Advocates in Place

- Youth serving professionals are positioned to identify and report child trafficking
- All youth serving professionals have the potential to be advocates for child victims of human trafficking



ILO estimates that:

- Children represent 26% (or 5.5 million) of the 20.9 million victims worldwide.
- Many child victims of human trafficking are students in the American school system.
- No community—urban, rural, or suburban—school, socioeconomic group, or student demographic is immune
- School personnel are in a position to identify and report child trafficking.

ILO estimates from 2012

<https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/human-trafficking-americas-schools>



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STATS

- 63% of underage sex trafficking victims said they had been advertised or sold online
- 325,000 children are at risk for becoming victims of sexual exploitation in North America
- The average age of entry into the sex trade in America is 14 – 16 years old

Thorn: <https://www.wearethorn.org/child-trafficking-statistics/>



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Risk Factors and Indicators

Who are the Victims?

- Most victims US citizens
- Frequently victims of childhood sexual abuse, chronic maltreatment and unstable home environments
- Most found through care systems, runaway & homeless youth networks
- Invisible victims: boys and trans persons



Potential Risk Factors:

- Lack of personal safety
- Isolation
- Emotional distress
- Homelessness
- Poverty
- Family dysfunction
- Substance abuse
- Mental illness
- Learning disabilities
- Childhood sexual abuse
- Promotion of sexual exploitation by family members or peers
- Lack of social support



Indicator Activity

- Break out into small groups.
- List some red flags that might indicate a young person could be a trafficking victim.
- Compare results.

Indicators

- Inability to attend school regularly, unexplained absences
- Frequently running away
- References about frequent travel
- Symptoms of physical trauma, withdrawn behavior, depression, anxiety, or fear
- Lack of control over a schedule, identification or travel documents
- Hunger, malnourishment, inappropriate dress (based on weather conditions or surroundings)



Indicators, 2

- Signs of substance abuse
- Rehearsed responses to questions
- Change in attire, behavior, relationships, or material possessions (e.g., expensive items)
- Uncharacteristic promiscuity and/or references to sexual situations or terminology beyond age-specific norms
- “Boyfriend” or “girlfriend” who is noticeably older and/or controlling
- Attempts to conceal scars, tattoos, or bruises



Indicators, 3

- Hyper arousal, symptoms of anger, panic, phobia, irritability, hyperactivity, frequent crying, temper tantrums, regressive behavior, and/or clinging behavior
- Daydreaming, inability to bond with others, inattention, forgetfulness, and/or shyness



Indicators, 4

- Pressure to pay off a debt
- Concern for the safety of others if he or she shares too much information
- Works long hours with little or no payment
- Cares for children outside the family



Working with Youth

- Client centered & trauma informed
- Cultural competency
- Relationship based
- Basic needs assistance
- Crisis intervention
- Safety planning
- Homelessness prevention



Who are the Traffickers?

- Surprisingly little is known about traffickers
- 77% are family members, friends and others known to victims
- The perpetrators of this crime don't fit a single stereotype



Among Others They Are:

- Criminals
- Individual pimps
- Family operations
- Small businesses
- Loose knit decentralized criminal networks
- Organized criminal operations



Recruitment

- 14 year olds recruiting others through social media and grooming
- Faith based communities
- Residential settings
- Back page ads/Craigslist





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The Role of Digital and Social Media in Adolescent Trafficking

Of the domestic minor sex trafficking survivors that participated in Thorn's 2013 national survey:

- 63% were sold via the Internet at some point during their trafficking situation.
- 62% had access to a cell phone while they were being trafficked.
- 42% had access to the Internet while they were being trafficked.

Social Media as a Tool

- Technology has become the single greatest facilitator of the commercial sex trade.
- From recruiting and grooming sex workers to finding customers, the internet is being used in every stage of the sex trafficking game.

Social Media, 2

- Predators can fix on a potential victim, do their research online, mining social media accounts for information that can help them exploit victims



Social Media, 3

Traffickers are willing to provide whatever they identify as the victims needs. If the victim needs

- A place to live – they provide shelter
- A friend – they are the friend
- Protection – become a “Daddy”
- If they are poor – the dream of status and material goods





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Creating Safety

Safety Planning and Collaboration

Safety Planning

- Youth centered approach
- Discuss strategies for physical and sexual safety
- Define and discuss consent as a segue into exploitation
- Be aware that safety plans will change frequently
- Non-consensual placement can backfire



Our Responsibilities To Youth

- Increase staff awareness
- Increase parent and youth awareness
- Develop and articulate policies and protocols for recognizing and responding
- Create an environment where vulnerable youth feel safe



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Collaboration

Activity

Who in your community can you collaborate with to identify and respond to adolescent trafficking?



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Concerted Community Effort

Collaborate with:

- Community groups
- Organizations that work with youth
- Schools
- Health Clinics
- Law Enforcement
- Social Centers (bowling alleys, sports clubs)



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Community Awareness and Education

- Community partnership works together to identify nature, scope and prevalence
- Comprehensive awareness program
- Protocol development
- Evaluation of protocol

Human Trafficking in American Schools, Jan 2015, US Department of Education



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Federal Laws

The Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) of 2000 was the first comprehensive federal law to address trafficking in persons. TVPA has been reauthorized several times since 2000.

3 prong approach:

- Prevention
- Protection
- Prosecution

NYS Anti-Trafficking Law

- NYS Anti-Trafficking Law enacted in 2007
Passed to enhance and accelerate investigations by local and state police
- Created new state crimes of sex trafficking and labor trafficking
- Created a process in which victims are “confirmed” as trafficked victims
- Confirmed trafficking victims are eligible for benefits and services

NYS Safe Harbor Law

- NYS Safe Harbor for Exploited Children Act signed in 2008
- Created to protect sexually exploited children under 18
- Defines children who are involved in these crimes as victims, not perpetrators
- Provides services to children who have been sexually exploited



NYS Protocol

- 2015 law established social and legal service providers to also make referrals to the NYS Confirmation Process . Victims do not have to report to law enforcement but can still get all the services and supports. <https://otda.ny.gov/programs/bria/trafficking.asp>
- Trafficked person identified and referred to law enforcement or DA.
(Only if victim wishes to proceed with this process)
- OTDA/DCJS receive referral, assess and review
- Victims confirmed as trafficked and referred to social services or human trafficking programs if undocumented
- If appropriate, referral is sent for certification as a victim under Federal Law

Resources



Provided on CD-ROM

Questions

