Intersection of Human Trafficking & Substance Use Disorder

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Content Overview

- Human trafficking
- Intersection with SUD
- Victim identification
- Practical tools
What is human trafficking?

Definitions, misconceptions, and elements
Misconceptions

• **Mentimeter:** Ask audience what are things you’ve heard about HT? (True, unsure, or false?) free form question

• **Mentimeter:** have you ever served a human trafficking survivor before? Yes/no/not sure

• **Mentimeter:** Culturally specific, type of demographic you primarily serve? Men/women, rural, other, etc. (check all the boxes)

• **Mentimeter:** Questions or what you’re hoping to learn (leave this open during presentation so folks can ask/ we revisit at end)
Definitions - Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA)

The term “severe forms of trafficking in persons” means—

• **Sex trafficking** in which a commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such act has not attained 18 years of age; or

• **Labor trafficking** the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery.
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Components

FORCE = VIOLENCE / THREAT OF VIOLENCE
Components

FRAUD =

DEBT BONDAGE, DECEITFUL RECRUITMENT
Components

COERCION
EMOTIONAL MANIPULATION, THREAT OF LAW ENFORCEMENT/IMMIGRATION, THREATS AGAINST FAMILY
Dismantling misconceptions

• Labor trafficking is real
• All gender identities / all ages are vulnerable
• Human trafficking happens in the US
• Trafficking does not require movement
• Sex work and sex trafficking are not the same
• Regardless of industry (legal or not) can be trafficking
Who Experiences Human Trafficking

- **Disclaimer:** Statistics and prevalence of human trafficking are challenging given the hidden nature of this crime.
National Human Trafficking Hotline Contacts

2016

7,742 situations of trafficking identified

2020

10,583 situations of trafficking identified

7,648
Sex Trafficking

334
Sex & Labor Trafficking

1,052
Labor Trafficking

1,549
Unspecified

1,883 incidents of human trafficking reported

1,607 Commercial Sex Acts
274 Involuntary Servitude
2 Unspecified
Anyone can experience human trafficking. However, some people are at higher risk because of systemic vulnerabilities and historic oppression.

- Foster system involvement
- Immigrants/ non-English speakers
- LGBTQIA2+
- Racial minorities
- Unhoused/ unstably housed
- Child abuse experience
- Substance use disorders
Intersection with Substance Use

Understanding the overlap between trafficking and substance use
National Human Trafficking Hotline (NHTH) Cases

According to Polaris, Substance Use Concerns were named one of the Top 5 Risk Factors / Vulnerabilities for both sex and labor trafficking cases reported to the NHTH in 2020.

Substance use is a top vulnerability factor for trafficking.
Substance Use

Percent of survivors who used substances during their trafficking experience (survey of US survivors of sex traffickers).

84.3%
Arrests of trafficking survivors

Percent of trafficking survivors who reported having a criminal record as a result of their trafficking experience.

91%
Means of Recruitment and Control

- Push and Pull Factors
- Intersecting Vulnerabilities
- High-Risk Industries
Push and pull factors

push factors
why they leave

pull factors
what they move toward

exploitation

Graphic designed by Leanne McCallum Desselle
Push and pull factors

Traffickers recruit people with substance use disorders
Traffickers use substances as a means of control

push factors: why they leave
pull factors: what they move toward
exploitation
High-Risk Labor Industries

**Sex Trafficking**
- Street-based sex work
- Pornography/CSAM
- Brothel-based trafficking

**Labor Trafficking**
- Gang-based trafficking
- Forced criminality
- Familial/family-facilitated trafficking
- Massage parlors
- Strip clubs/exotic dancing
- Cantinas

- Panhandling, begging
- Marijuana farms
- Substance use treatment facilities
Identification
Barriers and facilitators to identification
Barriers to self-identification

- Danger and fear
- Shame, guilt
- Cultural norms
- Trauma
- May not know their rights
- Misconceptions about human trafficking
- Trafficking may not be the primary trauma in their life
- Fear of engaging with systems
Documented barriers to SUD care access

- Sobriety requirements
- Program duration/ length
- Judgement
- Stigmatizing language
- Lacking acknowledgement of racism/oppression
- Limited beds/ spots available
- Criminal record barriers
- Mental health diagnoses
- Rules & requirements
- Re-engagement / relapse rules


Provider barriers to identification

Time  Education  Misdiagnosis
Trauma-Informed Care

• **Trauma-informed care seeks to:**
  - Realize the widespread impact of trauma and understand paths for recovery
  - Recognize the signs and symptoms of trauma in patients, families, and staff
  - Integrate knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures, and practices
  - Actively avoid re-traumatization

Adapted from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration’s “Trauma-Informed Approach.”
Trauma-Informed Care

Adapted from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration’s “Trauma-Informed Approach.”
Positive attributes of care for trafficking survivors

• Open environment to disclose sex trade (or other crimes related to trafficking experience)
• Maintaining sobriety requirements
• Prioritizing self-identified needs
Disclosure is not the goal

High quality care is the goal

• Treat the client’s immediate needs
• Offer resources & referrals
• Disclosure highly unlikely and delayed disclosure is normal
Practical Tools
Screening, partnerships, and applying skills
Human trafficking survivors have many identities.

You are skilled and already have many tools to support them!
Practical Tools

- Screening tools
- Multidisciplinary collaboration
- Ongoing education
Benefits of screening tools

• **Documenting** relevant information to serve a client appropriately
• **Validating** the client qualifies for your program or benefits
• **Removing** bias & assumptions of a screener
• **Standardizing** approach to our clients

Graphic designed by Leanne McCallum Desselle
Validated screening tools

- Human Trafficking Interview and Assessment Measure Tool (Covenant House Tool, HTIAM-14)
- Quick Youth Indicator Tool (QYIT)
- Trafficking Victim Identification Tool (TVIT, Vera tool)
- Comprehensive Human Trafficking Assessment Tool (Polaris tool, NHTRC tool)
Multidisciplinary partnerships

• Trafficking survivors engage with many different systems
• Collaborative partnerships:
  • Improve client outcomes
  • Prevent duplication of efforts
  • Improve criminal legal outcomes
Creating partnerships

• **Consider** your highest-risk populations, internal gaps serving those clients

• **Engage** with survivor leaders and people with lived experience

• **Identify** community champions of anti-trafficking work to partner with

• **Establish** boundaries around roles, responsibilities, and engagement
Ongoing education

SOAR To Health and Wellness (ACF)
www.nhttac.acf.hhs.gov/SOARtoHealthandWellness

HEAL Trafficking Network
www.healtrafficking.org

OVCTTAC
www.ovcttac.gov

Polaris (formerly Polaris Project)
www.polarisproject.org
Questions and Answers
Contact information

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