Human Trafficking:
What Every Nurse Should Know…

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Before the Conversation Begins

• Assumptions
• What do we bring to the conversation?
• Sensationalism
• How does this effect our conversation?
• Language
• Is it more than semantics?
• Purpose
• What is the purpose of the conversation?

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Types of Conversations

- Talking about numbers – statistics
  - Sources, accuracy, purpose
- Anecdotal
  - Lived experiences
  - Friends and loved ones
  - Providers
- Research
  - E.g. ACE Study (Adverse Childhood Experiences)

Human Trafficking

Human trafficking is a form of modern slavery where people profit from the control and exploitation of others.
Human Trafficking

Victims can be divided into three general populations:

- Children <18 induced into commercial sex
- Adults 18 and older induced into commercial sex through force, fraud or coercion
- Children/adults induced to perform labor or services through force, fraud, or coercion

Increased vulnerability to victimization:

- Runaway and homeless youth
- Victims of domestic violence or sexual assault
- Victims of war or conflict
- Victims of social discrimination
- Foreign nationals paying large sums to recruiters

Commercial Sexual Exploitation

When something of value is given to or received by any person in exchange for a sex act.
Commercial Sexual Exploitation

Commercial sexual exploitation of children:
- Sexual activities exchanged for cash or something of value
- Sex trafficking
- Child sex tourism
- Production, promotion and/or distribution of pornography
- Child “sex shows”

The Web Analogy

- Exploring the unknown
  - A child and a stick
  - Entangled without knowing it
  - A surprise walking through the woods
- Living in a world of webs
  - The web as “normal” environment

Becoming Entangled
This Conversation

- Identifying and responding to potential victims in the healthcare setting
- Biopsychosocial dimensions of health
  - Short-term health effects
  - Long-term health effects
- Thinking in terms of continuums
  - A continuum for each dimension
  - A continuum for severity
Where do we fit in?

Identification

Intervention

Multi-sector collaborations

A very common question...

What does a victim of human trafficking look like? Are they...

Let's rethink this:

- What does a victim of domestic violence look like?
- What about a victim of sexual abuse?
- What does a sex offender look like?

Do you see a common theme here?
### Why is identification difficult?

We are referring to patients/victims who often:
- Do not self-identify as being a victim
- Do not voluntarily disclose their victimization
- Do not trust people and systems (e.g. legal, healthcare)
- Are being monitored or believe they are being monitored

### We like categories…but,

- There is no one setting or job
  - Commercial sex
  - Industrial/factory work
  - Domestic work (e.g. housekeeper, nanny)
  - Construction work
  - Restaurant services
  - Hospitality (e.g. hotels, tourist industries)
  - Panhandlers or door-to-door sales (e.g. magazines, donations)
  - Janitorial services
  - Fishing industry

### Be alert for the following clues:

- Evidence of being controlled
  - Where is their cell phone?
  - Inability to move or leave a job
  - Bruises or other signs of abuse
  - Tattoos and branding
  - Fear or depression
  - Not allowed to speak for self
  - No form of identification
Questions about their work:
- What type of work do you do?
- How do you get paid?
- Can you leave your job?
- What are your working conditions?
- Do you owe money to your boss?
- Are your boss and landlord the same person (or related or friends, etc.)

Questions about living conditions:
- Who else lives with you?
- Can you come and go from home?
- Are their locks on the rooms? Windows?
- Do you have to ask permission to eat or go to bed?
- Do you owe money to your landlord?

Questions about their safety:
- Do you feel safe at home? At work/school? Right now?
- Has anyone threatened you or your family or your friends?
- Do you have control over your personal items such as ID and money?
- Has anyone hurt you or made you do something you didn’t want to do?
Questions about what you observe:

- Visible injury/injuries
- Scars
- Tattoos
  - A message of ownership oriented for him/her to read or see
- Branding
- Be aware of cell phone
  - A means of monitoring the healthcare encounter

So what does all of that mean:

- For the health of a person being exploited at this very moment?
- For their family, friends, close relationships?
- For their community?
- For society?

Nikki

- 17 years old
- Tells her story in the context of addiction
- What did Nikki want to talk about?
Maria
- 34 years old, mother of four children
- Tells her story in the context of abuse and exploitation of others
- What did Maria want to talk about?

Jada
- 17 years old
- Tells her story in the context of health and “the way I am”
- What did Jada want to talk about?

Reality of Confounding Factors
- Environment
- Societal response
- History
- Duration and exposure
- Technology
Technology revisited…

- Entry point
- Means of control
- Exit point
- Use in exploitation
- Forever memorialized on the internet
- And more…

Role of Nurses & Forensic Nurses

- Healthcare Encounter
- Planned Law Enforcement Intervention
- Unplanned Law Enforcement Intervention

Healthcare Encounter

- Barriers to disclosing to a medical provider
- Type of medical interventions needed
  - Emergent care
  - Acute forensic medical evaluation
  - Non-acute/chronic forensic medical evaluation
  - Non-urgent healthcare needs
- Referrals
  - Special considerations
A few considerations for the healthcare encounter:

- Pregnancy and complications from abortions
- Sexually transmitted infections and UTIs
- Infectious diseases
- Untreated injuries (acute and old injury)
- Undiagnosed conditions
- Substance abuse or addiction
- Untreated dental needs
- Psychological health needs (e.g. depression, stress related disorders, confusion, phobias, anxiety, and more)

A few more considerations for the healthcare encounter:

- Malnutrition and vitamin deficiencies
- Injuries resulting from unsafe working conditions
- Scars from previous injuries
- Exacerbations of chronic conditions

Services and referrals:

- Housing and food
- Healthcare
- Emergent care, urgent care, acute and non-acute injuries or health conditions, chronic or undiagnosed conditions – don’t forget mental health services
- Immigration assistance
- Means of income/employment
- Legal assistance
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Forensic Medical Exam</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Based on the needs of the individual patient</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Acute evaluation</td>
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<td>• Non-acute/chronic evaluation</td>
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<tr>
<td>• History</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Mandated reporting considerations</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Medical history includes biopsychosocial histories</td>
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<td>• Types of “evidence”</td>
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<tr>
<th>Sexual exploitation cases</th>
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<tr>
<td>• This is NOT the same thing as an acute sexual assault forensic examination</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Need for specialized training</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Understanding the phenomenon</td>
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<td>• Understanding the special dynamics</td>
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<td>• Special considerations related to photodocumentation</td>
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<th>Planned Intervention</th>
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<tr>
<td>• FBI and other federal agencies</td>
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<td>• Local law enforcement</td>
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<td>• Forensic medical provider *</td>
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<td>• Shelter representative *</td>
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<td>• Community advocates *</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Means for referrals to other medical specialists, therapists, social service providers *</td>
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* With expertise in serving persons who have been trafficked.
### Special Considerations
- Forensic nurse
  - Know your role and others’ expectations of your role
- Planned Intervention
  - Organizational strategy
  - Roles and responsibilities
  - Response strategy
- Unplanned Intervention
  - Single patient/victim or multiple patients/victims
  - Response strategy

### Cross-sector collaborations

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<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
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<tr>
<td>National Human Trafficking Resource Center</td>
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<td>Victim Assistance Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>Child Protective Services</td>
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### Who do you call?
- Depends on situation or circumstances:
  - National Human Trafficking Resource Center
    - 1-888-3737-888
  - Local law enforcement agency
    - 911
  - Dedicated unit or taskforce
  - Social services
  - Child protective services

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A Few Last Thoughts

• Trafficking has no boundaries
• Global descriptions of the phenomenon are not a substitute for understanding the needs of an individual or a community
• Adverse effects can be seen across all dimensions of health - biopsychosocial effects
• Be mindful and present...it is not about you

Thank you!

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