January 26, 2016

The Culture of Family-Controlled Trafficking

Co-Sponsor Family & Youth Services Bureau FYSB
Family Violence Prevention & Services Program
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
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How to Use the Technology

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**Rey Naik:** Asian Pacific Institute on Gender-Based Violence (Oakland, CA)

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How to Use the Technology

1. Audio Options
2. Chat Box
3. **PowerPoint Presentation**

The PowerPoint slides for today’s presentation will be shared via email to everyone who registered in advance.

Participants will also receive a link to materials and to a link to the recording of the webinar following the session. It will take a couple of hours for us to make it available, so please check later tonight or tomorrow. I will also send a follow-up email to let everyone once it is available.

**LAST BUT NOT LEAST**

Once you exit, you will see a brief survey about this webinar. Please, please take a moment to respond. We do take your feedback and suggestions into account as we think about our future webinars and how we present them.

**With that, I will pass the floor to our presenter, Chic Dabby.**
Core Value in Federal Plan: Survivor-Centered

Victim services should promote safety, healing, justice, and rights for victims, and should empower them to participate in efforts to bring traffickers to justice.

Survivors play a key role in elevating understanding and awareness of human trafficking, improving service delivery, and informing policy.

Anti-trafficking efforts should be victim-centered and culturally-relevant, holistic, comprehensive, evidence-based, gender-responsive, and trauma-informed.

Federal Strategic Action Plan on Services for Victims of Human Trafficking in the United States 2013-2017
Definition

**Trafficking** is defined as:

- **Actions:** Recruitment, harboring, provision, receipt, transportation and/or obtaining of individuals
- **Means:** Using force or threats, coercion, abduction, fraud and/or systems of indebtedness or debt bondage
- **Purposes** can include:
  - Fraudulent adoption
  - Forced labor as domestic, industrial, agricultural workers
  - Prostitution, pornography, and sex tourism
  - Organ removal/harvesting
  - Involuntary servitude, including servile marriages
  - Serving as drug mules

Definitions, cont.

**Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking (DMST)** is defined as:

- Commercial sexual abuse and exploitation of minors through buying, trading or selling their sexual services
- A commercial sex act refers to anything of value – money, drugs, food, shelter, rent, higher status in a gang – exchanged for sex.

**Purposes** include:

- Prostitution: street prostitution, escort services, internet-aided prostitution, strip clubs, massage parlors, peep shows
- Pornography where minor is sold/rented/provided something of value to perform sex acts on camera.
Definitions, cont.

**Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC)** refers to a range of crimes including:

- Recruiting enticing, harboring, transporting, providing, obtaining, and/or maintaining (acts that constitute trafficking) a minor for the purpose of sexual exploitation;
- Exploiting a minor through prostitution;
- Exploiting a minor through survival sex;
- Using a minor in pornography;
- Exploiting a minor through sex tourism, mail order bride trade, and early marriage; and
- Exploiting a minor by having her/him perform in sexual venues (e.g., strip clubs, peep shows).

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**Sex Trafficking: Root Causes**

**Gender oppression:** Culture of gender violence, sexism and devaluation normalizes objectifying female bodies, abusing women and girls, LGBTQ individuals

**Exploitation of vulnerability, poverty:** Abuse, neglect, poverty can increase vulnerability to predation

**Male demands for commodified sex:** Trafficking relies on

- Extent of male demand e.g., an estimated 100 k DMST victims, turning 10 tricks/day = 1 million male buyers/yr;
- Trends amongst buyers e.g., paying higher prices for sex with younger girls.

**Predation, impunity:** Nexus of (mostly) male predatory behavior and impunity is seen as normal masculinity

**Money:** organized crime, pimps find it lucrative w/ fewer penalties and losses than drugs and arms trafficking.
Who is trafficked?

- Minors
- Adults
- Native women and girls
- U.S. and foreign born individuals
- Refugees and immigrants
- LGBTQ youth

Who are the traffickers?

- Crime syndicates
- Employers
- Family members, friends of family
- Gang members
- Intimate partners (boyfriends, husbands)
- Pimps
Family-Controlled Trafficking: Elisabeth Corey MSW, BeatingTrauma.com

The Culture of Family-Controlled Trafficking
ELISABETH COREY, MSW

BeatingTrauma.com
The Culture of Family-Controlled Trafficking

- How does a family culture of trafficking, abuse and domestic violence render young victims hopeless and voiceless?
- What factors cover up the truth behind the family cult?
- What are the symptoms of chronic trauma perpetrated by those we are supposed to trust most?
- What are trauma-informed approaches to easing the burden of these young people through relationships of trust and understanding?

The Stereotypes of Families that Traffic

- It doesn’t happen in the United States.
- They are criminals and are constantly in trouble with the law.
- They are poor & need to make money in unethical ways.
- They are of certain ethnic backgrounds.
- They lack power in society.
- The family dysfunction is obvious.
- The trafficked children are failing in school and obviously need psychological intervention.
My Story

- Generational
- Suburban, Middle-Class
- Physical abuse starting in infancy
- Sex abuse starting in the toddler years
- Trafficked between ages 7 to 9
- Brief interaction with child welfare
- Broken by age 9

The Trafficker

- The familial trafficker will become well-known in the community: power and control are fundamental.
  - May join associations and organizations for power.
  - May join boards of trustees to make powerful contacts.
  - Values powerful friendships in authoritative roles: judges, police, officials in government.
  - May have a powerful job.
  - Always trying to climb the ladder.
  - Obsessed with power.
The Trafficker

- The familial trafficker will live a double life with connections to unlawful authoritative figures.
  - The familial trafficker may have connections to gangs and/or pimps.
  - The familial trafficker will use money and other tactics to control them.
  - The familial trafficker may be their customer but will also ask them to do dirty work for money. This dirty work will include the intimidation of witnesses or victims.

The Trafficker

- The familial trafficking keeps the family in upheaval at all times: constant trauma means constant control over all members of the family.
  - The trafficker invokes competition between siblings as a pimp would with his/her victims.
  - All forms of violence are used to control: neglect, physical, sexual, verbal and emotional.
  - The sexual abuse and physical abuse start as soon as children are born. Normalizing rape and violence is critically important for the brainwashing.
  - Threats of death, injury and financial destitution are common for older children and other adults.
The Enabler

- The enabler is responsible for removing the hope of rescue by reinforcing the powerlessness.
- The enabler uses emotional and mental abuse, manipulation and gas-lighting to make the child question their memories and beliefs.
  - “Nobody will ever trust you when you talk that nonsense.”
  - “Women and children are here to please men.”
  - “You cannot survive without this family.”
  - “We will not love you if you don’t comply.”
  - “Don’t make things up.”
  - “You are crazy.”

The Enabler

- Most enablers are aware of the abuse and trafficking on a conscious or unconscious level.
- Some enablers may be coordinating or arranging the trafficking as well.
- The enabler will manipulate the child to gain trust until they reveal plans or secret friendships.
- They will encourage sibling competition also.
  - They will compare siblings and their talents or lack of talent.
  - The favorite sibling can change on a daily basis.
The Enabler

- The enabler will treat the abused and trafficked child as “the other woman” or “the other man”.
  - The child is shamed as the cause of the abuse and trafficking.
  - Competition between the enabler and the child starts when the child is very young.
  - As the child gets older, there may be competition around financial earnings, material possessions, traveling and “pretend happiness”. This continues into adulthood.

The Family on the Outside

- The key to living in this family is to look as normal as possible. There is an art to wearing the mask of normalcy.
  - Children attend regular schools and are threatened to do well.
  - Children do activities and sports: good performance is critical.
  - Family is financially viable: middle & upper class is common.
  - Families are particularly interested in material things and status symbols.
  - The house can look immaculate.
The Family on the Outside

- The entire family will have power and control in the community. They will have connections with important families.
- There is a language for discovering others with the same criminal minds. They find each other. They will not only traffic and sexually abuse within their family, but will trade children.
- The entire family will work to discredit anyone who questions the illegal activities.

Adult family members will always accompany children to meetings with other adults: teachers, doctors, dentists, coaches. There is no one-on-one time with other adults unless they are part of the trafficking network.
- They will do much more of the talking than usual.
- They will make many excuses for behaviors or medical issues with children.
- They won’t listen well to other adults with suggestions.
- “Therapists are for crazy people. We don’t need therapy.”
- If any adults get too close to the children, the family will pull them from the activity, switch doctors, etc. Children learn not to get close to others.
The Family on the Inside

- The family is trafficking through generations. Uncles, aunts, cousins and grandparents are all a part of the problem.
- The brainwashing is strategic and calculated.
- The family environment works on a barter system.
  - You do for me and I will do for you.
  - You screw up, you pay.
  - Sex is traded for love, favors, money and toys.
  - The punishment for bad behavior, bad grades or talking too much is always rape.

Why is nobody talking about family-controlled trafficking?

- Make no mistake: this is a cult!
- The brainwashing runs deep.
- Leaving a family like this requires you to question your entire understanding of how the world works.
- Families make it clear that children will be cut off financially if they speak up or leave.
Why is nobody talking about family-controlled trafficking?

- **Beliefs/Brainwashing**
  - You are a worthless human being. You deserve to be abused. It is your fault.
  - You cannot survive on your own. You are tied to the family forever. Without the family, you will die.
  - You are powerless to make change in your life. You are a victim.
  - If you step out against the family, retaliation will be fierce.
  - Nobody on the outside can be trusted.

How can we help? Be aware.

- Break through the stereotypes in your mind.
- Just because a “buddy” is a bona fide family member doesn’t mean they are safe.
- Anti-trafficking work CANNOT be a silo.
- Social services and domestic violence organizations should be front and center in the fight against family-controlled trafficking. If they aren’t involved, you are not identifying all victims of trafficking.
How can we help? Be trauma-informed.

Transformational Relationships Remove Vulnerabilities

*Be the relationship that breaks the pattern*
*Sandy Skelaney with Ignition Fund*

- Safety
- Understanding
- responsiveness
- Empowerment
- Flexible
- Non-Judgmental
- Empathetic

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How I help survivors in my work?

- Building Awareness: Reaching the Unconscious
- Inner Family Systems: Understanding the Unconscious
- Belief Systems: Re-wiring the Brain
- Body Work: Moving the Trauma Up and Out
- Community: Reducing Isolation
- Taking Small Steps: Changing Behavior

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### Understanding Help-Seeking

Past negative experiences influence future attempts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exposure to multiple forms of abuses by range of abusers</th>
<th>Shrinks the pool of potential helpers; increases danger</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contexts of societal oppressions e.g., poverty, racism</td>
<td>Diminishes access, increases barriers to services; increases abusers’ impunity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative actions and attitudes of helpers</td>
<td>Colors ability to trust others and/or one’s own judgment;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victim-blaming, not believing victims, believing perpetrators</td>
<td>Diminishes credibility, deepens internalized devaluation, causes confusion, shutting down</td>
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</tbody>
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### Help-seeking, cont.

Interconnected Histories of Abuse and Help-Seeking: By the time we encounter survivors, they already have...

- Negative & positive histories of help-seeking
- Histories of physical and/or sexual abuses and neglect that can start early in the life-course
- Experienced multiple types of victimization and victim-blaming from various abusers
- Endured repeated victimization on a daily basis
- Dangers and threats of violence from traffickers, buyers, employers, others in the life, etc.

In some situations, doing nothing can be self-protective
Questions?

Resources

Trauma Institutes and Organizations
- The National Center for Trauma-Informed Care
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
- National Child Traumatic Stress Network
- International Society for the Study of Trauma and Dissociation
- The Institute for Safe Families
- Adverse Childhood Experiences Study
- Multiplying Connections
- National Center on Domestic Violence, Trauma & Mental Health

BeatingTrauma.com
Asian Pacific Institute on Gender-Based Violence
Formerly Asian & Pacific Islander Institute on Domestic Violence
A national Resource Center providing training and technical assistance on trafficking and other forms of gender-based violence.
Contact: Chic Dabby cdabby@api-gbv.org
www.api-gbv.org/violence/trafficking.php 415 | 568 | 3315