Human Trafficking: A Communications Approach

Presentation by: Michaela Killon
What is Human Trafficking?

“The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation”

– United Nations Definition
Statistics:

➔ 45.8 million
The estimated number of people being trafficked around the world.

➔ More slavery today than ever before
The most people are enslaved now than ever before in human history

➔ 79% of trafficking cases are sexual exploitation
These cases predominantly affect women and girls
How does communication technology have an impact on human trafficking?

**Hint:** As technology has gotten smarter, so have traffickers.
→ Internet provides fast/global connection.
   Traffickers use the internet for both selling and recruiting.

→ It is cheap to facilitate and an “easy” source of income.
   Abusers can easily earn over $100 per “show” and internet is becoming much more accessible.

→ The “Dark Web”/new currencies make cyber trafficking virtually impossible to track
   Multi-layer encryption technology makes it nearly impossible to track consumers.
Case study: Philippines

- **3 scales**: Individual Operations, Family-run Operations, Large Scale Operations (Dens)
- **40% of the victims** have family members involved in the cybersex trafficking or are at least aware of the child’s exploitation
- **Price**: $56/minute
- Solicitors are not passive and usually have an active role in the “show”
- More than **2,600 cases/month** reported from US Customers alone.

**Fact:**
Online exploitation of children often leads to offline abuse and street prostitution.
Technology is not all bad...

- Spotlight (created by Thorn & Digital Reasoning)
- International Child Sexual Exploitation Image Database (created by INTERPOL)
- Copyright Recognition Program to detect child pornography (created by Google & NCMEC)
- PhotoDNA: analyze many images quickly to detect modified versions of child pornography (created by Microsoft and NCMEC)
Human Trafficking: An Economic Approach

Presented by:
Aalliyah Perkins & Monet Lawton
What factors help hide human trafficking?

- Legitimate Businesses
- Unstable Economies
- Corrupt Governments
How are victims targeted in human trafficking cases?

- Loss of homes from natural disasters.
- Lack of economic opportunities.
- Less income opportunities for women.
What are some reasons why traffickers choose to partake in this industry?

- More profitable in today’s time
  - In 1850 the price of a slave was $1,000 to $1,800
  - Today, the price of a slave is $90
- Low risk
- Less work
Establishments that are associated with Human Trafficking

- Karaoke Bars
- Spa Parlors
- Street Areas
- Restaurants/Bars/ and Dance Clubs
- Hostess Bars
How can businesses be more aware and mindful to help combat human trafficking?

- Businesses can help people in these situations by modeling the hotel industry’s infrastructure
  - Having an anti-human trafficking policy
  - Training the employees on how to detect and respond
  - Developing a reporting system
  - Having a response plan
  - Hiring employees
  - Knowing where suppliers get their products
  - Contacting the resource center
Human Trafficking: A Public Health Approach

Presentation by: Sarah Bragdon, Jasmine Dee, Grace Lodholz & Danielle Saine
88% of trafficking victims interface with healthcare professionals

- Opioid crisis drastically impacts human trafficking
  - U.S. makes up less than 5% of the world’s population and consumes 30% of the world’s opioid drugs
  - “Familial sex trafficking”
  - Drug addiction can be leveraged by traffickers to exploit user’s children
  - Traffickers use opioids to keep victims in check → acute threat of withdrawal
- Criminal and immigration approach vs. health approach
- Violation of human rights
The Visible

- External bruises and harm
- Withheld by physical chains.

- Forced to work long and unreasonable hours
- Refused medical care and treatment
- Denied of basic necessities such as food and water
- Beaten and abused physically
- Forced to live in overcrowded and unsanitary living spaces
- Bound in various forms of physical chains
How to Identify Victims in a Healthcare Setting

● Thorough social and reproductive history
● Trauma-informed approach
● Interview: inconsistent stories, unsure of the time and/or location, not allowed to speak for themselves, not in control of identification
  ○ Refuses to follow up with a specialist
● Physical signs: burns, fractures, bruises/contusions, respiratory infections, tuberculosis, STIs, pregnancy, HIV, abortion complications, abnormal discharge, chronic vaginal and cervical infections, PID, malnourishment, repeated exposure to harmful chemicals, untreated chronic conditions
The Invisible

- Internal Wounds
- Withheld by mental chains

- Loss of social contact to outside world
- Humiliation, threats, and verbal abuse
- Exposure to violent atrocities performed on others
- Forced to betray or harm others
- Establishment of conditions that lead to learned helplessness
Control and Manipulation

- Traffickers utilize organized methods of disempowerment and disconnection to distort victims’ sense of self, instill fear, and elevate feelings of helplessness
  - Get to create a new, isolated environment where they make their own rules and pressures to which victims must conform to
Systematic Coercion Stages

**Traffickers identify and target vulnerable populations**
- Use of fraud, deception, and threats

**Victims are initiated into the culture of trafficking**
- Victims experience isolation in an environment where exploitation is expected and accepted

**Traffickers deepen control over victims**
- Traffickers further establish control from an authoritarian position

**End Goal**
Mental Health Aftermath

- Trauma
  - Unaddressed trauma can lead to re-victimization
  - Complex trauma
  - Trauma symptoms: attachment, emotional regulation, dissociation, behavioral control, cognition, self-concepts

- Stress and anxiety
  - Fight, flight, or freeze
Recovery

Physical is #1 priority

- Safe network of people and services
- Confidentiality
- Screening for suicide risk, PTSD, depression, and anxiety
- Therapy
  - Mental health service
  - Safety planning
  - Future planning
- Continued support
- Rebuild identity, skills, and self-esteem
- Reunification with family and society
Our Role in Solving the Problem on a Global Scale

Focus on the root causes
- Feminization of poverty
- Immigration policies
- Societal and cultural norms
- Demand

Address health needs throughout the stages of trafficking
- Pre-departure/recruitment, travel and transit, destination, criminal proceedings, reintegration

Engage multiple stakeholders
- Utilize resources and strengths of the community
  - HCP + law enforcement
  - Nigeria's National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons
  - TechCamps
Our Role in Solving the Problem on a Global Scale

Build an evidence base

● Underground nature + social stigma + insufficient resources dedicated to monitoring and evaluation = unknown impact of anti-trafficking interventions
  ○ Sound evidence and scientific assessments are necessary
    ■ South-Eastern Europe

Adapt to the contexts that shape trafficking patterns and responses

● Rescue and Restore Regional Program


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