

Human Trafficking Awareness and Safety

CASEL Core Competencies: Self-awareness, social awareness, responsible decision-making

State Health Standards: Standard 4, Standard 5, Standard 6, Standard 7, Standard 8

Learner/Participant Objectives: Coping skills and resilience, Increased knowledge of human trafficking prevention, identify tools to stay safe

Content Warnings: Physical and sexual abuse, predatory behavior, human trafficking, sex trafficking, slavery, labor trafficking

Facilitator Tips: Although it is encouraged that Facilitators be available for Participants outside of the ROOTS space, it is not recommended that a Facilitator and child are alone one-on-one. While meeting with a child in a private setting may be necessary at times, it is strongly recommended that another child or mentor be in the same room/space to ensure safety. Keeping in mind the Participant's privacy, the "witness" can be within clear site of both the Facilitator and the Participant, but with enough distance where the conversation is inaudible. Always be trauma informed!

Key Terms:

- Human trafficking: use of force, fraud or coercion to obtain labor or a commercial sex act
- Sex trafficking: commercial sex acts performed by force, fraud or coercion
- also referred to as: commercial sexual exploitation
- Labor trafficking: a form of human trafficking where victims are made to perform work through force, fraud or coercion
- CSEC: commercial sexual exploitation of children. Does not require force, fraud or coercion. Does include paid rape or molestation of children and child pornography creation, distribution and consumption
- Victim: a person currently being sexually exploited
- Survivor: a person who has exited the life of commercial sexual exploitation
- Human smuggling: illegal facilitation or transportation of humans across borders
- Victim Service Organization: VSO, non-profits serving victims & survivors of sex trafficking

Time: 60 minutes

Materials needed: writing utensils, whiteboard or poster paper, crayons or markers

Background: Like slavery in the United States before the Civil War, human trafficking involves forcing other people to work for an exploiter's own personal and/or financial gain. It is often referred to as a form of modern-day slavery. According to the International Labor

Organization, in 2016 there was an estimated 40.3 million victims of human trafficking/modern day slavery. While slavery in both contexts is extremely inhumane, this means more slaves exist today than at any other time in human history. Sex trafficking is an international and domestic issue, one that also effects San Diego County. One of the factors that cause children to be more susceptible to being victims of sex trafficking is their socio-economic status. However, this does not mean that adolescents from higher socio-economic status are not actively recruited. This problem exists in San Diego. It is important that we empower adolescents by providing them with red flags or signs of exploitation to make them more resilient against recruitment.

Discussion Questions

- What does freedom mean to you?
- Is everyone free?
- What are some characteristics that define a person who is free versus unfree?

Procedure

- Ask Participants what being free means to them. Explain to the group that today's topic is sensitive, and it may be a bit frightening. Explain to them that the purpose is not to scare them, but rather to inform them so they may recognize a potentially harmful situation and ask for help.
- Explain to participants that human trafficking is a real and growing problem not only globally, but here in America. Youth are often the target of traffickers, and they rely on children not knowing what to look for to target them. So, our purpose for today's lesson is to teach youth about trafficking so that they can stay safe.
- Share with participants the definition of human trafficking.
 - **Human trafficking:** the use of force, fraud or coercion to obtain labor or a commercial sex act
- Discuss what trafficking looks like:
 - Loss of freedom
 - Disrespect of boundaries or consent
 - Being told to do something that's unsafe or dangerous
 - Being controlled by someone else
 - Asked to perform sexual acts or labor
- Ask the group, "What kind of people do you think are most likely to be sexually exploited or trafficked into prostitution?" Write the question on a piece of poster paper and jot down the Participants' answers. If prompting is needed, ask "Are they boys? Girls? Young? Old? Students?"

- Show the group Polaris, America’s Daughters (04:00) and allow time for reflection: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aTAVZChvLR4>
 - Ask the group if they were aware that this was happening in the United States, and whether they think it happens in San Diego?
 - Ask the group who the victims were in the videos? What were some common themes that they noticed amongst the victims? For example, she was sexually abused, she wanted love, she was American, and she was 12 years old.
- Next, show the group MSNBC, Young, LGBT, Homeless in NYC (03:17) and allow time for reflection: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wNvWGuLRenE>
- Finally, show the group the Project Unbreakable, Victims of Sexual Assault (02:53) and allow time for reflection: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l892WPTYUDc>
- Now redefine who the victims are by asking the group by re-asking these same questions: “What kind of people do you think are most likely to be sexually exploited or trafficked into prostitution?” Write the question on a piece of poster paper and jot down the Participants’ answers. If prompting is needed, ask “Are they boys? Girls? Young? Old? Students?”. Stress that anyone can be a victim regardless of the following: age, race, gender, socioeconomic status.
- Discuss some of the statistics of human trafficking in San Diego. Emphasize the average age of exploitation in San Diego is 16 years old, but victims can be much younger.
 - Many more girls than boys are trafficked (based on the current statistics).
 - Traffickers and pimps often target children who run away from home or are in foster care
 - Traffickers may target children who drop out of school
 - Trafficking is likely to happen in neighborhoods where gang activity, prostitution, and sex crimes already take place.
- Ask the group if anyone has heard of something like this happening in their own community or school? Does anyone have friends who have been in situations where they may have been exploited?

Note: Be aware of the requirements of mandated reporting of child abuse. This discussion may prompt a Participant to self-identify as a victim of abuse or trafficking or share stories about others who may be victimized. Be prepared for this situation and know the protocols before implementing this activity.

- Now move to a Facilitator-led discussion and define what a Perpetrator/ Exploiter/ Trafficker/ Pimp means.

- Then identify who a perpetrator could be making sure to emphasize that like a victim, a perpetrator can be anyone regardless of income, profession, race, religion, economic status, age, etc. Inform the group that an exploiter could be a stranger, a “boyfriend” or “girlfriend, or someone they have known for an extended period i.e. A “friend” they met over the internet and two years later they begin the exploitation.
- Reinforce the distinction between a mutual and manipulative relationship:
 - Forced to have sex in exchange for money or other goods, such as a place to sleep
 - Someone promises you love, but physically and emotionally inflicts harm
 - Isolates you from loved ones and friends
 - Branded with a tattoo
 - Forced to take drugs
- With your group, write down a list of risks or dangers associated with being prostituted or exploited. Call on Participants to share their thoughts. These may include:
 - Loss of freedom
 - Loss of contact with family and friends
 - Unwanted pregnancies
 - HIV/AIDS and other STDs
 - Severe violence, or even worse
 - Threatened or actual violence against family and friends
 - Shame, depression, suicide ideation
 - Others
- Now brainstorm with the group how they can avoid these dangers.

Note: that some of the characteristics which describe some vulnerabilities of a victim, may be the realities in any or all the Participants’ lives. Stress to the group that some of the best things they can do to avoid exploitation is to know and practice the many skills they are learning in ROOTS. These include:

- Identify and reach out to your list of trusted adults
- Do not share private information on social media
- Know your boundaries and speak up if someone does not respect them
- Pursue your positive passions
- Set goals that will help you succeed

- Ask Participants to think of different types of helpful people. Explain that people whom they can trust and who can help in times of need might be very different for

everyone such as, a parent, a sibling, a cousin, a friend's parent, a teacher, etc. Inform Participants that not all people you know are necessarily trustworthy.

- Pass out one flashcard and a writing utensil to each Participant. Have Participants create a list of three people whom they trust the most on their flashcard. Encourage them to write down specific people and their phone numbers, and to keep it somewhere safe.
- Stress to the group that they should always call 911 in an emergency. Always!
- Have Participants write down the National Human Trafficking Resource Center number below and remind them that the people on their cards will help them seek help/call the appropriate people if they are in danger or suspect someone else is in danger. Reinforce people you trust do not force you to keep secrets that make you feel worried, scared, or uncomfortable.
- As the Facilitator, it is crucial to review each Participant's list of trusted people since some may write down their peers, who may not necessarily be able to help them contact police, etc. If Participants do not know a phone number, leave that as a 'homework' assignment and follow up at the next ROOTS session.
- Remind Participants that the purpose of today's activity was not to scare them, but rather to inform them so they may recognize a potentially harmful situation and ask for help.
- Reassure the group that you are available after today's activity should they have any questions or comments. Remind them that you are also someone they can reach out to for help.