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# Human Trafficking: A developmental perspective on treatment

# Objectives



Define human trafficking and the different types of trafficking



Identifying victims & survivors; Resources for reporting suspected victims



Describe the physical and emotional effects of trafficking



Multicultural considerations



Discuss the needs of survivors



The importance of effective strategies for assessment and engagement

# Human Trafficking



Modern-Day Slavery



An invisible crime



Multi-billion-dollar  
industry



The recruitment, transportation, transfer,  
harboring or receipt of human beings through  
force, fraud or coercion for exploitation

# Most Common

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Labor

Sex Trafficking



Accounts for 69% of human trafficking victims in USA and 66% of worldwide profits



Most trafficking occurs domestically, within the same country and does not necessarily involve moving locations



Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking (DMST) is flourishing in every region, state, and community in the United States



Internet traffickers recruit victims on social media platforms, such as Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, X or TikTok.

# Where Does it Occur?

## Women and children

Increase in girls and women since the pandemic.  
Trafficked girls has surged 38% since 2019.



## Especially vulnerable:

**Child welfare & Juvenile Justice Systems**  
**Runaway & Homeless Youth**  
**Victims of domestic abuse or sexual assault**  
**Substance abuse within families**  
**Victims of war**

# Who is Most Vulnerable?

# Multicultural Considerations

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Individuals who experience social discrimination

Higher rates of violence against women of color

Most often to victims of poverty

Individuals with intellectual disabilities

Sexual minority status plays a key vulnerability

LGBTQ homeless youths are two times more likely to become victims.

# Role of Addiction



FAMILY WITH SUDS MAY  
FORCE A YOUTH INTO  
SEXUAL EXPLOITATION



TRAFFICKERS OFTEN  
FORCE SUBSTANCE USE  
ON VICTIMS



A WAY TO COPE WITH  
THE ABUSE THEY  
ENDURE



HIGH RISK BEHAVIOR &  
DEATH



COMMIT DRUG-  
RELATED CRIMES & ARE  
TRAPPED IN A CYCLICAL  
EFFECT

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- From a high-risk group
  - Poor physical health and disheveled appearance
  - Substance use
  - Reported homelessness
  - Inability to identify support networks
  - Traumatized responses; disconnected, disassociation, flat affect, guarded
  - Not allowed to answer question on own
  - Wearing clothing more than they can afford
  - Tattoos of name
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## How to Identify Victims/Survivors

# Impact on Physical Health

- Lack of routine medical care
- Pregnancy and lack of prenatal care
- Lack of dental care or eye care
- Sexually transmitted infections – often untreated
- Broken bones, bruises, physical abuse
- Nutritional deficiency
- Sleep deprivation - neglect

# Impact on Mental Health



The goal of traffickers is to physically & psychologically breakdown victims



Victims endure high rates of physical and emotional trauma



Depression, Anxiety, PTSD, SUDs



Development of Trauma Bonds



Victims have a strong correlation of a history childhood abuse

# Impact on Development



## **Educational deprivation**



## **Emotional development**

Attachment styles  
Wide array of emotions  
Identity development  
Career development  
Family development



## **Psychological development**

Formal operations development  
Stage II and III moral development



## **Physical development**

STIs  
Reproductive health problems  
Fractures  
Genital lacerations,  
Malnutrition  
Dental Problems  
Growth delays in minors

# Survivor Account

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# Needs of Survivors

Nonjudgmental & Empathetic Attitudes



Culturally-sensitive interventions



Affirmation

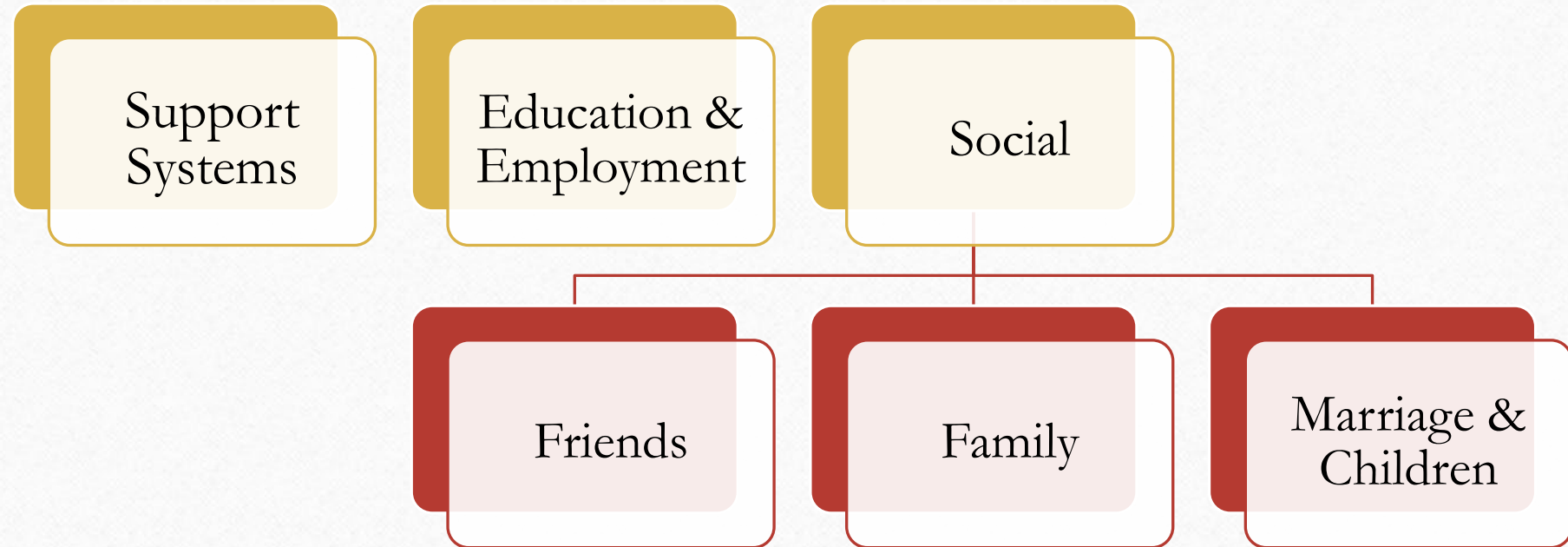


Empowerment



Creativity, humor, flexibility and movement

# Needs of Survivors Cont.



# Assessment

The need for a holistic approach is essential

Four significant practices for providers include:

Safety & Confidentiality

Trauma-informed Care,

Comprehensive Needs  
Assessment

Comprehensive Case  
Management

Conduct a needs assessment to identify the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of victims

Similarly, survivors are often resistant to help from health providers

Due to fear of physical violence or threats of retaliation if they disclose their circumstances

## Client-centered Approach

Acknowledge & Validate

Gives Survivor Control

Build Safety & Trust,

Engages the Survivor their own healthcare

# Assessment

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## Freeze response

Lack of emotion/flat affect

Lack of eye contact

Difficulty concentrating or responding to questions



## Fight response

Defensiveness

Argumentative/Angry/Hostile

Refusing support

# Case Study Small Groups

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# How to question and engage



Speak with patient alone



Avoid using anyone  
the person came  
with as a translator

Use google  
translate if  
needed.



Open questions

Tell me about  
your life  
Tell me about  
your injuries  
What do you  
need?

# Psychological First Aid

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## Validate experience

You have a right not to answer my questions.



## Empathy statements

I wonder if you feel scared

I wonder if you are worried about what will happen if you report.

# Grounding Exercises

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- 54321
- Distraction
- Physical body engagement
- scribbling

# Reporting Procedures & Feedback

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- <https://humantraffickinghotline.org/report-trafficking>
- 1 (888) 373-7888: National Human Trafficking Hotline
- 911
- Child Protective Services or vulnerable adult: **855-444-3911 (Michigan)**
- Please [click this link](#) to complete an evaluation of this training

# Interventions

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Psychological First  
Aid

Creative Therapies

Trauma focused  
cognitive behavior  
therapies (CBT,  
DTF)

Group counseling

Peer support

Family therapy  
models



# Questions

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