Human Trafficking Information for Medical Professionals

DSHS Grand Rounds Presentation
April 19, 2017

Role of the Medical Profession

- Studies indicate that between 28-50% of human trafficking victims encounter medical professionals during the time they are trafficked.
- Most of those individuals are not identified as victims, let alone offered potential rescue or services.
- Be aware that the problem exists, be looking for it, and add it to the list of things for which you already screen.
- Have a plan for what you will do if you find it.
- Report: Human Trafficking of children under the age of 18 is considered a severe form of child abuse and medical professionals are mandatory reporters.

Victim Issues

- Typically do not self-identify as victims
- Abused previously and nothing done to help them
- At odds with law enforcement because they are a runaway or because of criminal conduct
- Shame/worthlessness/rejected by “decent” people
- Fearful of consequences to themselves or family from trafficker
- Fearful of consequences from culture or family
- Cognitive Distortion: believe this is “life choice” or they deserve it, or have no power to change it
- Believe that this is the fastest and easiest way to earn money
- Habituated to sexualization of self
- Maladaptive coping mechanisms: addiction, lies, adrenaline, street life
See their trafficker elevated while victims diminished

**Red Flags in Medical Setting**

- Child/adult presents inappropriately dressed for age, weather
- Child or adult with child lies about the child’s age
- Child presents with an adult who does all the talking
- Child appears submissive, passive, little eye contact
- Adult does not want the child to be left alone with health care professionals
- Child is depressed, frightened, anxious
- History does not make sense or correlate with injuries
- While able to answer initial questions, child or adult is not able to answer follow-ups or adequately able to describe where they live, go to school, work, etc.
- General signs of abuse/neglect present
- Child or adult with them presents a questionable identity claiming to be the new wife, a boyfriend/girlfriend relationship, visiting cousin, a family friend, visiting student, or uncle
- Lack of knowledge about alleged “family” relationship
- Child has a knowledge of sexual terminology or a number of sexual partners that is not age appropriate
- Payment in cash rather than insurance
- Minimizing health concerns or other risk factors
- Inability to speak English
- History of hospital hopping
- Vague medical history
- Failure to make previous follow-up appointments
Distrust of law enforcement or anything that appears related to “the system”
Child may be openly hostile, refuse to answer questions, give attitude

Medical Specific Red Flags

- Bald patches where hair pulled out
- Lacerations or bruises
- Scars
- Ligature marks
- Burns (cigarette or otherwise)
- Bite marks
- Partial dentures where teeth were forcibly knocked out or in
- Stab marks
- Malnutrition, dehydration, exhaustion, stunted growth
- Dizziness, headaches, memory loss from traumatic brain injury
- Untreated disease
- Dental/visual problems
- Chronic back pain, muscle strains, cardiovascular and respiratory issues related to exposure to chemicals, serious industrial injury
- Persistent or untreated STIs or UTIs
- Vaginal or rectal trauma
- Multiple pregnancies/repeated abortions or miscarriages
- Infertility
- Abnormal discharge or odors
- Pelvic Inflammatory Disorder
- Cotton fibers or sponge pieces in the vaginal vault
- Previous SANE exams
Multiple sexual partners
- Jaw and neck problems from repeatedly giving oral sex
- Back problems or red marks/blisters on feet from high heels

**Medical Mental Health Red Flags**
- Trauma bonding
- Depression, hopelessness
- Anxiety, panic attacks
- Suicidal ideation
- Addiction/forced or used as maladaptive coping mechanism
- PTSD
- Affective, behavioral and cognitive problems
  - Many teen victims diagnosed as bipolar, oppositional defiance disorder, personality disorder not otherwise specified
- Low self-esteem
- Dissociation

**Role of the Medical Professional**
- Trust your gut. If something doesn’t feel right then find a way to obtain more information.
- Develop rapport and trust. Health care professionals have a unique opportunity because of their role in the system.
- Question potential victim away from their trafficker/minder—“Hospital policy requires me to talk to each person individually.”
- Obtain translators unrelated to the people the victim came with.
- Do not promise more than you can provide.
- Have patient talk to the national hot line at 1-888-373-7888
Potential Interview Questions for Child Victims

- Use indirect questions that spark conversation. Victims often don’t self-identify, nor do they recognize themselves as “trafficked people.”

- What grade are you in, where do you go to school, favorite subject, etc.

- Relationship to the person that brought them—ask some questions that require more knowledge than just a title: boyfriend, uncle, aunt, brother, friend

- Have you been physically hurt by someone else?

- Have you ever been pressured to do something that you don’t want to do?

- Can you come and go as you please?

- Have you been threatened if you try to leave?

- Have you ever run away from home?

- How often do you see or talk to your family and friends?

- Have you ever had to trade sex for money, food, a place to stay?

- Have you had more than 5 sexual partners?

- Do you have enough to eat and drink?

- Where do you sleep? On a bed, a cot, the floor?

- Is anyone forcing you to do anything that you do not want to do?

- Did someone tell you what to say today?

Your Response

- Receive the information without judgment or negative reaction regardless of the language with which it is delivered.

- Focus on the victim’s safety. “Our first priority is your safety.” “We are here to help you.”
- We want to make sure that what happened to you doesn’t happen to anyone else.
- We can help get you to a safe place.
- We can help meet your needs for food, shelter and medical care.

**General Red Flags for Sex Trafficking**

- Visible injuries: bruising, swelling, redness
- Inconsistent stories
- Descriptions of multiple sexual partners in SANE exams on “normal sex cases”/sexually transmitted disease
- Failure to make eye contact
- Overtly sexual online profile/Sexually provocative pictures on the phone or online accounts
- Teased by other students for being sexually active or a prostitute
- Backpage ads are linked to a person or business name or phone number on Google
- Gang signs/affiliation
- Branding/Tattoos
  - Back of neck
  - Underarm
  - Ankle
  - Above the breasts
  - Above the vaginal line
- Matching Tattoos/Look at your suspect
- “Daddy”/“Break Yourself”
- “Pimpin”/“OG”
  - “Mrs or Ms”
- Business Cards lacking address: tire shop, shoes, repairs, fresh flowers
• Third party control of identity documents
• Contents of the vehicle/location
  • Hotel receipts
  • Drug-store receipts
  • Lingerie
  • Condoms
  • Female personal hygiene items in a place of business
• New high-end clothing recently purchased
• Hotel keys
• Rolls of money
• Prepaid credit cards
• Child has multiple runaways within a short period of time
• Child or teenager with older person who is not related to them
• Child appears much older than stated age in appearance
• Child has story that is pat but not logically coherent throughout
• Child has in-depth knowledge of life on the streets
• Child thinks that “adult life” and “independence” greatest value
• Evidence of controlling relationship
  - schedule/activities dictated by someone else
  - isolation from friends and family
  - unable to make simple decisions without boyfriend
• Claim of boyfriend or girlfriend relationship with older individual
• Fake or no identification
• Multiple phone or social media accounts
• Language: Backpage, Eccie.net, stable, family, Daddy, incalls, outcalls
Changes in the child’s appearance, friend groups, socio-economic status, level of sexualization, activities, relationship to authority.

General Red Flags for Massage Parlors/Spas

- Permit or license for something other than actual business
- Identify clientele: Is it only men that receive services at the “spa”? 
- Location may have a guarded entrance
- Cameras both inside and outside
- Location storefront may be curtained off/blocked, etc.
- Location may be locked and opened only when someone at the door with a phone
- “Employees” may be ferried to and from work by the “spa” or may live at the location
- Men walking through the parking lot talking on their cell phones
- Condoms in the parking lot

General Red Flags for Labor Trafficking

- Is not free to leave or come and go as he/she wishes
- Is unpaid, paid very little, or paid only through tips
- Works excessively long and/or unusual hours
- Is not allowed breaks or suffers under unusual restrictions at work
- Owes a large debt and is unable to pay it off
• High security measures exist in the work and/or living locations (e.g. opaque windows, boarded up windows, bars on windows, barbed wire, security cameras, etc.)
• Malnutrition, dehydration, exhaustion, stunted growth
• Dizziness, headaches, memory loss from traumatic brain injury
• Untreated chronic infections
• Dental/visual problems
• Chronic back pain, muscle strains, cardiovascular and respiratory issues related to exposure to chemicals, serious industrial injury
• Is fearful, anxious, depressed, submissive, tense, or nervous/paranoid
• Exhibits unusually fearful or anxious behavior after bringing up law enforcement
• Avoids eye contact
• Lacks health care
• Appears malnourished
• Shows signs of physical and/or sexual abuse, physical restraint, confinement, or torture
• Exhaustion
• Living where they work and in space not zoned for living space
• Living in squalid conditions, too many people to the space, insufficient beds and sanitation
• Transported to and from work by the employer
• Food, hygiene, living conditions provided by the employer
• Do not have the proper licensing whether for driving, soliciting, running the equipment, providing the services or even to have a business within city limits
• Claims of just visiting and inability to clarify where he/she is staying/address
• Lack of knowledge of whereabouts and/or do not know what city he/she is in
- Loss of sense of time
- Has numerous inconsistencies in his/her story
- Answers appear scripted or rehearsed
- Withdrawal from the community
- Has few or no personal possessions
- Is not in control of his/her own money, no financial records, or bank account
- Non-English speakers
- Recruited through false promises concerning the nature and conditions of his/her work
- Multiple middle men in the recruitment scheme
- Recruitment fees—may be in one or multiple payments
- Promises of green cards and permanent residency or citizenship
- High fees for substandard living arrangements
- Is not in control of his/her own identification documents (ID or passport)
- Is not allowed or able to speak for themselves (a third party may insist on being present and/or translating)