The Impact of Bias, Inequities, and Injustices in Supporting Students Impacted by Human Trafficking

June 29, 2022
To access previous webinars in the Human Trafficking Series, go to https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/human-trafficking-webinar-series.
Webinar Logistics

Zoom Control Panel

Technical Issues

For assistance during the webinar, please contact Shoshana Rabinovsky at srabinovsky@air.org.

For webinar materials, visit the event webpage:

The content of this presentation does not necessarily represent the policy or views of the U.S. Department of Education, nor does it imply endorsement by the U.S. Department of Education.
Which of the following best describes your role?

- Other: 33%
- Specialized instructional support personnel (e.g., school counselor, school nurse, school psychologist, social worker, substance-abuse prevention specialist): 20%
- State education agency (SEA) staff: 9%
- Community stakeholder: 8%
- School administrator: 8%
- Federal grantee (e.g., School-based Mental Health Services, Project Prevent, Trauma Recovery, Promoting Student Resilience, Mental Health Service Professional): 7%
- Local education agency (LEA) staff: 6%
- Classroom teacher: 5%
- Parent: 2%
- Student: 1%

N = 1,096
Which of the following best describes your primary reason for participating in this webinar?

I have a personal interest in addressing human trafficking: 36%

I am part of a team addressing human trafficking within a local education agency (LEA): 13%

I have leadership responsibility to address human trafficking within a local education agency (LEA): 9%

I am part of a team addressing human trafficking within a State education agency (SEA): 8%

I have leadership responsibility to address human trafficking within a State education agency (SEA): 4%

N = 1,096
Webinar Agenda

1. Introduction and Logistics
2. U.S. Department of Education Welcome
3. Setting the Context
4. Panel Discussion
5. Wrap Up & Closing
## Prior Webinars in the Human Trafficking Series


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Support from U.S. Department of Education Related to Human Trafficking
Addressing Human Trafficking in America’s Schools: A Staff Development Series by the U.S. Department of Education

Human Trafficking

Combatting Human Trafficking in America's Schools

Of 22,328 trafficking victims and survivors identified through contact with the National Human Trafficking Hotline in 2018, at least 5,798 were under age 18.¹ Many underage victims of human trafficking are students in the American school system. No community, school, socioeconomic group, or student demographic is immune to the threat of human trafficking. Cases of child trafficking are found in every area of the country—in rural, suburban, and urban settings alike.

The U.S. Department of Education recognizes these facts and stands ready to support America's schools in preventing, responding to, and helping students recover from human trafficking. It is listing that schools talk on this challenge: of all social institutions, schools are perhaps the best positioned to identify and report suspected trafficking and connect affected students to critical services.

To support schools' efforts to combat trafficking, the Department offers helpful resources, for administrators, teachers, specialized instructional support personnel, parents, caregivers, and students.

Guides

- **Human Trafficking in America's Schools, 2nd Edition (2017)**: This guide provides:
  - Awareness of the current prevalence of child trafficking and the forms it takes;
  - Information on risk factors and indicators of child trafficking;
  - Details about the prevention tools and the implications for schools’ role in addressing child trafficking;
  - Information on how professional development of school staff and prevention education for students and families can reduce the likelihood of trafficking and
  - Details on how policies, protocols, and partnerships with other community sectors can help prevent trafficking.

- **Human Trafficking in America's Schools (2015)**: This guide was developed to help school officials:
  - Understand how human trafficking impacts schools;
  - Recognize the indicators of possible child trafficking; and
  - Develop policies, protocols, and partnerships to address and prevent the exploitation of children.

Briefs

- **Addressing the Growing Problem of Domestic Sex Trafficking in Minors through Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (2019)**: Particularly relevant to schools or districts currently utilizing multi-faceted systems of supports, this resource provides information on how to utilize such existing support strategies to support students impacted by sex trafficking.

Webinars

- **Identifying and Supporting Students Affected by Human Trafficking (January 2020)**: This webinar focused on how to effectively identify and support students impacted by trafficking activity.
- **Human Trafficking: Online Safety (June 2020)**: This webinar focused on trauma-informed and student-centered strategies for protecting students from falling prey to online trafficking activity.
- **Addressing Human Trafficking: An Expanded Look at Online Safety (August 2020)**: This webinar focused on trauma-informed and student-centered strategies for protecting students from falling prey to online trafficking activity.

How Do I Find...?

- Student loans, forgiveness
- Higher Education
- Authorization
- College accreditation
- Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)
- FERPA
- FASFA
- 1098 tax forms
- More...

Information About...

- Transforming Teaching
- Family and Community Engagement
- Early Learning
- Constitution Day

Addressing Human Trafficking in AMERICA’S SCHOOLS | A Webinar Series by the U.S. Department of Education
Setting the Context

Dr. Jacquelyn Meshelemiah
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The Ohio State University
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The Impact of **Bias, Inequities** and **Injustices** on the Identification, Treatment, and Support of **Diverse Students** Impacted by Human Trafficking

Dr. Jacquelyn Meshelemiah
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Today’s Focus

Explore how **intersectional identities** (race/ethnicity, gender, class, and identification with the 2S-LGBTQ+ community) increase adolescent vulnerability to trafficking

Review the ways **bias** (explicit and implicit) affect the identification of students who are at risk of or are being trafficked

Explore how factors of identity play into **system responses** to trafficked young people

**RECOMMENDATIONS**: Describe a **whole-school response** to human trafficking from a social **justice** and **equity** lens

- **Dismantling barriers**
- **Allocation of resources to overcome “-isms”**
Sex Trafficking is the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, obtaining, patronizing, or soliciting of a person for the purposes of a commercial sex act, in which the commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such an act has not attained 18 years of age (22 USC § 7102).

Labor Trafficking is the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purposes of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery (22 USC § 7102).
Human trafficking thrives on the “-isms” and the precariousness of marginalized and intersectional identities of students.

Marginalized identities are used to justify inequalities and inequities.

Justifications for marginalization are reinforced and embedded into the infrastructure of this society.
Complex Web of “-Ism’s” and Systems

- Complex Web of “-Ism’s” and Systems
  - Health
  - Social
  - Military
  - Outcomes
    - Lack of digital access
    - Fatal shootings by LEO
    - Disparate home ownership
    - High unemployment rate
    - Poverty
    - Wage earning gaps
    - Involvement with child serving orgs
    - Underfunded schools
    - Poor health
  - Political
  - Capitalism
  - Racism/Nativism
  - Classism
  - Sexism
  - Heterosexism
  - Ableism
  - Human Trafficking
  - Internalized -isms
  - Judicial
  - Educational
  - Religious
  - ACEs
    - Mental illness
    - Substance use
    - Incarcerated relative
    - Abuse: physical, emotional, or sexual
    - Neglect: physical or emotional
    - Domestic violence
    - Divorce or separation
  - Health outcomes:
    - Poor health
    - Underfunded schools
    - Involvement with child serving orgs
    - Wage earning gaps
    - Poverty
    - High unemployment rate
    - Disparate home ownership
    - Fatal shootings by LEO
    - Lack of digital access

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INTERSECTIONAL IDENTITIES (Race/Ethnicity, Gender, Class, and Identification with the 2S-LGBTQ+ Community) Increase Adolescent Vulnerability to Trafficking

- In a national study of youth involved in commercialized sex, **Black girls** composed of 23% to 92% of victims in six cities while representing 6% to 38% of the population in those respective cities (Swaner et al., 2016).

- **American Indian, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander girls** are also much more likely to be sexually exploited than their non-native peers (U.S. Department of Education, 2021).

- **Latinx persons** as a group are disproportionately affected by human trafficking, especially labor trafficking (Polaris Project, 2020).

- The U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics report that between 2008 and 2010, **nonwhite children** accounted for 77.8% (358 of the 460) cases of child sex trafficking investigated by the U.S. Department of Justice; the majority of these confirmed victims were Black and Latinx (Butler, 2015).

- **Trans children** experience systemic oppression and exclusion and therefore may have to trade sex for housing, food and work (Chang, Tsang & Chisolm-Straker, 2022).

- **Traffickers** tend to target economically or socially vulnerable people like **impoverished youth, housing insecure youth** and youth who have experienced or are experiencing **abuse** (physical or sexual abuse) or **severe drug use** (Polaris Project, 2020).

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• Hartinger-Saunders et al. (2017) found that out of 557 mandated reporters, 57.2% believed that some **adolescent girls choose** to engage in prostitution.

• Epstein et al. (2017) found that Black girls are perceived as more adult than their White peers at almost every stage of childhood—starting at age 5. [This **adultification bias** makes them less innocent and victims of harsher treatment in schools.]

• Blake and Epstein (2017) found that adults overwhelmingly **hypersexualized** Black girls—Jezebel portrayal.

• Native women and girls suffer physical and sexual violence in the U.S. and in Canada more than any one group of people. **Hyper-invisibility** of suffering is the norm (Pierce & Koepplinger, 2011).

• There is a tendency in the United States to only **view trafficking from a sex trafficking lens**—therefore missing potential victims in a myriad of settings (Harvard Law Review, 2013).

How Factors of Identity Play Into **SYSTEM RESPONSES** to Trafficked Young People

**Victim Blaming**
- In one study of 557 mandated reporters, (Hartinger-Saunders et al., 2017) found that:
  - about 1 in 10 mandated reporters believed that child sex trafficking is “blown out of proportion”
  - 1.3% to 18.5% of mandated reporters indicated that “it would depend on the situation” if they would report a 17-year-old engaging in commercialized sex activities even if it involved rape, sexual exploitation, a pimp, pornography, pressure by a peer to engage in sex work or work in a strip club.

**Punitive**
- Chang, Tsang and Chisolm-Straker (2022) report that children of color are disproportionately suspended and expelled, making them vulnerable to dropping out and being victimized as trafficked persons.

**Dismissive**
- “The victim could be anybody.”
- Gerassi and Pederson (2022) found in their study with 24 social workers that some did not believe that 2S-LGBTQIA+ students were at increased risk for ST.

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Recommendations
A Whole-school Response to Human Trafficking From a Social Justice and Equity Lens

Macro

• Create district wide policies on human trafficking protocol related to prevention, identification, and intervention
• Utilize federal and state level data to inform district policies on suspensions, expulsions, student arrests, child welfare referrals, etc.
• Assess and monitor systems of privilege and oppression on an annual basis
• Help to identify and amend state legislation that is biased, non-inclusive or harmful to marginalized students
A Whole-school Response to Human Trafficking From a Social Justice and Equity Lens

Mezzo

- Hire skilled and culturally competent social workers, counselors and nurses
- Hire diverse staff, teachers and administrators
- Formally partner with community agencies that serve trafficked persons
- Formally partner with child serving organizations

- Institutionalize human trafficking (sex and labor) training for students, staff, faculty and administration
- Offer annual training on microaggressions, implicit bias, and cultural competence
- Monitor, reflect, and act on data that show:
  - chronic absenteeism/truancy
  - disparities related to punitive measures for “disruptive” classroom behaviors
A Whole-school Response to Human Trafficking From a Social Justice and Equity Lens

Micro (Interpersonal relationships)

- Offer course content to students on socioemotional development
- Offer content/activities that include interest of diverse students
- Get to know families and communities of students
- Refer and assist students and families in accessing needed services
- Individually take responsibility in creating an environment where all students can thrive and feel a sense of belonging
- “Check-in” with your students; offer support
In closing,

“The CDC treats all forms of violence as connected and deeply rooted in poverty and inequality. Individuals who experience one type of violence are more likely to experience other types, and certain factors are known to predispose individuals to being victims, perpetrators, or both.”

(Human trafficking in America’s Schools. What schools can do to prevent, respond and help students to recover from human trafficking (2nd edition). January 2021. p.11)
Setting the Context

Lugine Gray
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## What Does That Mean?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th><strong>FRAUD</strong></th>
<th><strong>COERCION</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kidnapping</td>
<td>False or deceptive work offers</td>
<td>Threats of violence</td>
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<tr>
<td>Physical violence</td>
<td>Promises of employment, marriage, or a better life</td>
<td>Control of children</td>
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<tr>
<td>Drugging</td>
<td>Debt bondage</td>
<td>Photographing in illegal situations</td>
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<td>Threats with weapons</td>
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<td>Long hours without reprieve</td>
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<tr>
<td>Denial of medical care and disability support</td>
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<td>Controlling communication</td>
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*Inability to walk away*
Labor, Child Labor, & Labor Trafficking

**Labor Exploitation**
- A person is working legally but is denied basic legal rights such as fair compensation.

**Child Labor**
- Youth working under the legal working age or engaged in work that is harmful to their health, development, or education.
- 14 is the legal working age in Louisiana; some types of employment are off limits to youth under ages 16 & 18.

**Labor Trafficking**
- A person who is forced, defrauded, or coerced into providing labor or services.
Youth Forced into Criminal Activity

- Requires that there be an element of force, fraud, or coercion
- Often begins when youth are very young or vulnerable
- Trafficker could be family member or friend or neighbor
- Usually involves threats, implied violence, or acts of violence

Murphy, Laura. Labor and Sex Trafficking Among Homeless Youth. Loyola University New Orleans, Modern Slavery Research Project, 2016.
Louisiana has Safe Harbor laws that protect minors from being arrested or charged with prostitution-related offenses.

What this means:
Any person under the age of 18 that is involved in commercial sex is considered a victim of human trafficking - force, fraud or coercion does not have to be proven.
Grooming Process

1. Target the victim
2. Befriend/ gain trust
3. Fill a need(s)
4. Isolate/ create dependence
5. Abuse while meeting needs
6. Maintain control
Barriers to Identification

Victims often don’t self-identify as victims.

- Fear
- Safety
- Shame, humiliation
- Trauma-bond to the trafficker
- Distrust in systems/ individuals
- Do not see the trafficking as trauma compared to other life events
- Language barriers
- Cultural barriers
Meet our Panelist

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Tanya Gould
Lived Experience Expert
Founder, Identifiable ME
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Bios for the speakers are archived at the following location:
Panel Discussion
Closing Comments & Webinar Feedback
Thank you!

Need Help? Reach out to NCSSLE at NCSSLE@air.org.

Event Webpage:

Webinar Series:

ED’s Human Trafficking Webpage:
https://www.ed.gov/human-trafficking
Feedback Form

Thank you for attending the webinar, The Impact of Bias, Inequities, and Injustices in Supporting Students Impacted by Human Trafficking on June 29, 2022. To best serve you, we would greatly appreciate receiving your feedback on the webinar.

1. Prior to the webinar, how knowledgeable were you about the webinar’s topic?
   - Not at all knowledgeable
   - Somewhat knowledgeable
   - Very knowledgeable

2. Overall, this webinar was a good use of my time.
   - Strongly disagree
   - Somewhat disagree
   - Somewhat agree
   - Strongly agree

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