



Human Trafficking in **AMERICA'S SCHOOLS**



- Human Trafficking Webinar Series –

Part 2: Engaging Families in Preventing and Addressing Human Trafficking

Wednesday, January 25, 2023 | 3:00 – 4:30 PM ET
Transcript

Cindy Caraway-Wilson: Welcome to today's webinar, engaging Families in Preventing and Addressing Human Trafficking. This is the second in our two part series on the roles of families in human trafficking, participation, prevention and intervention. We're excited to have over 1,200 people register for this event, so we expect more to log in shortly. And thank you for logging in early. If you miss the first part of this series focused on supporting students who have been trafficked by a family member or caregiver, please visit the Human Trafficking Series of our website to watch that recording and to access the resources. That link is being in being posted in chat now. This is the 12th in a series of webinars sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education since January of 2020 to focus on the critical roles that America's schools play in addressing human trafficking. We're so glad to have you with us today.

My name is Cindy Caraway Wilson, and I'm a training specialist for the National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments or NCSSLE. NCSSLE is funded by the Office of Safe Supporter Schools in the office of Elementary and Secondary Education at the U.S. Department of Education. Our purpose at NCSSLE is to help build the capacity of state education agencies, districts, and schools to make school climate improvements, foster school safety and maintain supportive, healthy and engaging learning environments to support the success of all of America's students.

To learn more about NCSSLE and to access a wide range of resources that address school climate and conditions for learning, we encourage you to visit our website. To give you a sense of our website and what it looks like, here We share our picture of our most popular products on the left of this slide and an image of our current homepage on the right. We also share our latest resources and events coming out of the field via social media, so please follow us.

Please note all materials you see today, including the slides referenced resources, and the archived version of this recording will be available on the event webpage within this website. In fact, some of those materials are already posted such as the slides and the speaker bios. Please also note that you can access previous webinars in the Human Trafficking series by visiting the webinar series webpage, which was posted previously and is listed here on this slide.

Now I'm pleased to introduce briefly our speakers for today. You can see them listed on this slide, and they represent a wide range of experience and expertise in the field of human trafficking and in education. We're pleased to have all of our speakers with us today and you can go to the bio area of the event webpage to read their full biographies.

Now I'd like to briefly give us the roadmap for our webinar today. We are currently in that introduction, the logistics section, which will be done within a minute or two. Next, we will hear from Ms. Ruth Ryder from the Department of Education, who will give us a welcome and then move from there into a brief presentation setting the context and a rather robust panel discussion. Then we will officially close the delivery content of the webinar and move into our live Q&A where we pull questions posted by you, our audience. So again, please remember to use the Q&A to post those questions and comments.

As I just mentioned, joining us today from the U.S. Department of Education is Ms. Ruth Ryder. Ruth serves as the Deputy Assistant Secretary and the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education at the Department of Education. She continues to provide significant leadership to the department's efforts to address human trafficking as she has over the past several years. For a more detailed bio for Ruth, you can go to that website, the NCSSE website and look at it there. Ruth.

Ruth Ryder:

Thank you so much Cindy, and welcome to everyone who has joined the webinar today. On behalf of the U.S. Department of Education, I extend our sincere appreciation to you for joining the second of a two-part mini-series focused on the roles of families in human trafficking. This is part of our human trafficking webinar series and also in recognition of human trafficking prevention month. I hope you find today's content helpful in your continued efforts to build a safe, supportive learning environment for every student, including those who have been impacted by human trafficking or who are at risk of being trafficked.

Since family connection and engagement can be powerful protective factors, today we're going to talk about how schools can work with families to help prevent, interrupt and recover from trafficking. For example, schools can provide primary tier or universal prevention supports, including educating families on understanding the signs of trafficking. Schools can also provide secondary and tertiary levels of prevention by working with families to protect and support their children who are at higher risk or have been identified as being involved in trafficking. We know that engaging families can be challenging, especially about a sensitive topic like human trafficking.

In this webinar, our matter experts will share a variety of strategies to strategically and sensitively engage families in human trafficking prevention work and in protecting their vulnerable children. The webinar reflects the department's ongoing commitment to addressing human trafficking. As a member of the inter-agency task force to monitor and combat trafficking in persons, we here at the department are committed to helping educators support students affected by trafficking. Since early 2020, the department has led a series of projects to strengthen that support. Let me tell you a bit about them in hopes that they will benefit you. As I mentioned, each, the respective links will be posted in the chat for you. They're also posted on the event webpage.

First, we produce with the support of the National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments, this webinar series addressing human trafficking. These webinars range in focus from understanding the signs that a young person may be experiencing trafficking to how to intervene when you suspect trafficking, and how to support students who are particularly vulnerable to trafficking or who have been identified as having been trafficked. We hope you'll check out the archived webinars of the series at the link now appearing in the chat box, which again is posted on the webpage for this event. And join us for future human trafficking webinar in this webinar series.

Second, we have produced three critical resources related to human trafficking. These documents include human trafficking in America's schools, addressing the growing problem of domestic sex trafficking of minors through PBIS and how schools can combat human trafficking in partnership with people with lived experience. These resources touch on what to generally look out for and what you can do, including how to engage people with lived experience ethically and appropriately in your work.

Third, we produce the Human Trafficking in America School Staff Development series as a compliment to the human trafficking in America's School Guide. It is comprised of three brief online videos with subject matter experts, including those with lived experience in trafficking. Sharing information you need to know and discussion questions, individual staff or teams of staff can explore afterwards, along with posters and social media website graphics to reiterate key messages. All these resources are rooted in the latest research and best practice information available while drawing from the wisdom of individuals with lived experience and trafficking prevention advocates. And these also can be found on a dedicated human trafficking webpage on the U.S. Department of Education's website.

With that, I would like to thank you again for joining us today. Myself and the entire team at the U.S. Department of Education recognize the important work you are all undertaking to create safe, supportive environments for all students, including those who have been trafficked or are at risk of being trafficked. We hope this webinar provides the information and strategies you need to engage families in your community with preventing, interrupting and recovering from trafficking. Back to you, Cindy.

Cindy Caraway-Wilson: Ruth as always, thank you for your welcoming remarks. We appreciate that ongoing support. It's important for all of us to really keep this issue on the front burner so that we can protect our young people. Now it's my pleasure to welcome back Dr. Kate Price. Kate is a person with Lived Experience Expert and a Visiting Scholar for Women at Wesley College. Kate.

Kate Price: Thank you so much Cindy, and thank you so much to Secretary, Ryder and to the U.S. Department of Education for your ongoing efforts regarding human trafficking, particularly thinking about schools and families. I had the pleasure of presenting in the previous webinar. So for those of you who are double-dipping and attending both, thank you so much. I will be sharing some of my story, but also some new things as well.

So I first just want to say I really appreciate this webinar and thinking about how families can engage with in addressing human trafficking in our schools. Because as someone, and I said this last time, whose child is about to graduate from public high school, which I still cannot believe our family has been incredibly involved in his schooling since pre-K, and yet at the same time, I want to pose the question though, or just make the point that we presume that families are safe places for children. That's what we hope. That's what we want. And at the same time as teachers, as educators, as people who spend so much time with children, you know that not all families are safe.

That was certainly the case for myself. I was trafficked by my father from about age three until age 11. At the time I was in public schools the entire time, and for me school and particularly our town library were my absolute safe havens. I make a joke, I have a PhD. It's like I clearly love school and always have, and it's been such a safe place and it's so important to me to address the forums of teachers, educators, administrators, everyone involved with education because it was actually a teacher... My seventh grade teacher was the one adult who ever said anything to me ever through the entire time that I was being trafficked. And I really had started getting help when I was in high school and a guidance counselor did a little bit, but it was really this one teacher.

So that's incredibly important to me to really think about and talk about ways that schools do interface and work with kids who are being trafficked or who are at risk of being trafficked. I'm very happy to say actually that I presented with my seventh grade teacher who is now 84 years old. We presented together for the first time ever. I'm actually in my hometown right now in Northern Appalachia, and she and I presented to our local town police and to the U, there's a state university here as well. So we presented, no one in the audience had ever had Mrs. Spade as a teacher, but someone was a parishioner with her. She's very active in her church as well. And it was extraordinary to me to be speaking with Mrs. Spade so many years after. I was 12 at the time, I had just turned 12 at the time when she noticed that I was crying in the classroom next to her and she asked me what was wrong and I said nothing.

And she said to me, "Well, nothing doesn't go bump in the night." But she stopped asking questions right there, and I wish she had continued to ask questions, but she didn't. And what was surprising to me, and I learned this, just

a couple summers ago, she, and we have lunch now whenever I'm in town, we stay in close contact. That she had actually helped another young student escape her father who was being trafficked in a nearby town 10 years earlier. So that was in the sixties. I was trafficked all throughout the seventies and the early eighties.

So even if I had, I think we expect young people to have the language to explain what's happening to them and we can't. I mean, that's all I had known, but even if I did have the words to describe what was happening to me, it's extraordinary to think that Mrs. Spade would've known exactly what I was talking about. And clearly she's an extraordinary teacher. She's an extraordinary person and makes no bones about really standing up for her children as a teacher, as I know so many children do.

So people always say, "What do I do?" And I will be getting into my warning signs, what can we do as families and also as teachers? But for me, it's always keep asking questions, keep asking questions. I always say this quote that I learned from an assistant district attorney that I was presenting with a couple about a year ago. She said, "The eyes can't see what the brain doesn't know." So that's what I always really appreciate when people are attending trainings, we're incredibly busy. I know a lot of people have snow days right now if you're in the northeast. I'm on the eastern seaboard. So I really appreciate you taking the time to learn because again, the eyes can't see what the brain doesn't know.

And we as a family, you would never have know... I did not fit the typical "what we expect of for a victim." I was not disheveled, I was not unkempt. I had longish blonde hair that was usually brushed. I was a bit of a tomboy later in life. So it got a little ruffled then. But really at the height of my trafficking, I would say six 17, I didn't look what we would expect to see as a victim. So what can families do? We can keep an eye out. And even if a child says something that seems so unbelievable, believe a child, absolutely believe a child. And I recently completed a 10 year investigation with a Boston Globe reporter and we investigated my history and found out that a family member did know and various things, but one of the people that she interviewed, she interviewed a lot of my former neighbors.

And the one neighbor said, "Well, I would've known I was a teacher." And yet she didn't know. And even more so, she went on to saying that she thought that I was making these allegations up, that my father had trafficked me because she knew my father and that she called me attention seeking when I was a child. So she really just discriminated against me right off the bat and that it was I was not someone to be believed because I was attention seeking. And to be quite honest, I was attention seeking. I was trying to tell people that there was something wrong.

Warning signs were that I cried a lot in school, particularly later once my father had actually left, which is very interesting. But I didn't understand my role as a family member after my father left because that was who I was. It was to be trafficked. And I was given very special, very special role in our family. And then when he left, all heck broke loose and other people in my family. We were cold,

we were hungry for the first time. And I really felt that it was all of my fault. I also came to school with black eyes that had actually been given to me not by my father, but someone else in the family because it really was a survival of the fittest and a lot of that I was said to be the perfect child. So a lot of that anger for people who did not feel like the perfect child was taken out on me.

I also picked injuries a lot at school because again, I was attention seeking. I was trying to let people know that something was very, very wrong. There was substance abuse in our family. All families have had substance abuse, do not have trafficking. And at the same time, the drug trade and the sex trade are very symbiotic, even for adults and for children. I'm going through a lot of this very quickly given the time, but we do have a lot of time for questions later in the presentation. So I'll be going into some of those things as well.

And then similarly, what I was saying in terms of black eyes, I was taken to the ER quite a bit. I was not tested for STIs. I wish I would've been. I had my tonsils taken out at age nine, and I'm certain it was that very thing was because of STIs. I would often go to the nurse saying I was sick. And I would also often ask to leave gym class because I was just in a lot of pain. I didn't have any visible bruises. My trafficker certainly made sure of that. And yet I was constantly in pain. And I know there was this sense of, "No, I'm faking it." I was on the swim team as well and I would leave swim practice a lot or say I had you go to the bathroom and I really didn't. And I would just go sit in the locker room because I was in pain.

So what other things that can families do being mindful, but I just have a couple more minutes. Honestly, you can just really be models. Say like, "How am I going to know if a child's being trafficked?" Chances are really good you're not. And yet it was going to a friend's birthday party when I was about 10, and her mother was an educator, was a teacher at the local university in my hometown. And I walked in, and their house was filled with books and there was art on the wall and there was just a happy place. And it was clearly a life of the mind. It was clearly the home of people who live the life of the mind. And I wanted to be a part of that.

So having that vision and knowing that that was exactly what I wanted to be doing for the rest of my life, that's really what saved me truly. And just really, I knew my family was not safe. I knew it was really messed up even though I didn't have the language for trafficking for quite some time. And yet I had a vision of what I knew my life was going to look like. And now as a 52 year old, I'm happy to say my life looks exactly like I had envisioned it, and school and libraries and families were a really big piece of that. Not only families in my school, but so many of my friends were friends that I had made in school and their families couldn't necessarily tell what was wrong, but they could certainly take me in. And they took me in, some took me on vacations, some would buy me lunch. Just being that loving support is tremendous. And that's not just for human trafficking. I mean, we have so many kids are going through so many things in this country.

So I'm going to stop right there. I do have a couple other things, but I know thanks to the wonderful questions that have already been thought out for the rest of the webinar, that I'll be able to answer a lot of those things as well. So thank you so much.

Cindy Caraway-Wilson: Okay. Thank you so much for sharing your stories and those elements of things that families can do to support students who may be in difficult situations such as trafficking. I think that that was incredibly valuable information. And I do use that quote of yours, "The eyes cannot see what the brain doesn't know." I use it all the time now because it's so relevant to a lot of the work we do. Now, I'd like to welcome all of our speakers and panelists into the space.

So we're welcoming in Ms. Linda Chamiec-Case, Mr. Harold D'Souza, Ms. Liz Williamson and Ms. Colette Junod and I probably mispronounce that name. Sorry, Colette. And what I'd like to do now is I'd like to begin our conversation about what families can do to support and prevent human trafficking. So I'd like to begin with that follow up on that piece that Ruth mentioned about how engaging families is an important protective factor and we know that generally. But I'd like to hear a little bit more specifically from each of you why you feel it's important to educate families and caregivers about human trafficking. And I'd like to begin with you, Colette, for this one.

Colette Junod: Hi everyone. Thank you so much for allowing me to be here today. Just a little bit about me real quick. My role is a school social worker at Prince William County Schools in Virginia, right outside of Washington DC. And my role really is to have a coordinated effort from a school level on how we're addressing this very important issue that we're here for today. And I would say from my perspective, the importance of engaging families and how we kind of roll that out at the school level is, really, just about educating the students. We educate all the ninth graders in our district about signs and things to look out for human trafficking, and then during the rollout of that, of course, we send out informational tidbits to the parents about what the presentation is. If the parents want to meet with me individually or as a group to discuss the presentation or have questions or concerns, I'm certainly always available for that.

Really, the importance of the family piece is just really critical. Family to me doesn't necessarily mean the bio mom and dad. Family to me means any caretaker, can mean cousin, aunt, fictive kin, any person that is considered by the student to be family. Those are avenues for support, but also information. A lot of times when I'm engaging with a student who's either at high risk or is currently being trafficked, the key to kind of really getting updates about what's going on or how to reach the student in order to engage them to make a change is that special person in their life, whether it be their parent or otherwise, so very critical, very critical for the change process for our students.

Cindy Caraway-Wilson: Excellent. Colette, thank you so much also for bringing up that family of choice model. It's a language that I frequently use and have heard used with others, that it's not always the biological family. It's the people we bring around us, as well, so thank you for that.

Colette Junod: Sure.

Cindy Caraway-Wilson: Now, I'd like to hear from you, Harold. What would you like to add to the conversation?

Harold D'Souza: Yeah, good morning, friends. My name is Harold D'Souza. I am a survivor of labor trafficking and debt bondage in the United States of America, but this happened 20 years back. My kids were like four years and seven years old. This, what U.S. Department of Education is doing, and Cindy, what you are doing is very, very important. This can save the life of the child. More important, I'll go one step further, it can change and transform the life of the parent's who's a victim of labor trafficking or sex trafficking. The kids are the red flags and these are very important. I just want to give you a couple of examples. I think that it is a snow day here in Ohio. 20 years back we never saw had electricity in the house when I grew up as a child, so there's no refrigerator. When we saw for the snow for the first time, we were so super excited.

But we got a note from the school teacher that both my sons cannot come to school if they do not wear snow jackets. There's sweaters from India. There are some certain red flags which can be identified, and not only that, in the school bus drivers and administrative office or the parents, because each time my kids used to stay back for some extracurricular activities, the school bus was not there, so I'm very thankful and grateful to the American parents who used to always give rides to my kids to my apartment. That is so that is also some identification, red flags. About 20 years back, many parents were not aware of this, but today, I think the community members and parents are aware of this and things are changing. I always believe that it is better to be safe than sorry. It is. Precaution is better than cure. So, thank you very much.

Cindy Caraway-Wilson: Excellent. You bring up that excellent point there, Harold, that sometimes we are talking about an entire family being in a position of trafficking and noticing it by the school personnel or by other families that, like you mentioned in this example, other families noticing the needs of your sons, they can intervene in. They can not just help one person but they might help a whole family unit. Thank you so much. Now I'd like to move on to Linda. What would you like to add?

Linda Chamiec-Case: Sure. Hi, everyone, my name is Linda Chamiec-Case. Linda is just fine. I work at the North Carolina Coalition Against Sexual Assault. I'm also a social worker. I've done a lot of work in anti-violence spaces, relationship education, crisis work. I've taught sex ed. I've taught people how to teach sex ed, so it's wonderful to be a part of this conversation. Colette, I'm so glad you named that about the importance of how we think about families and parents and making sure we're being really expansive in that in terms of how we're approaching families and chosen families and caregivers, and also, just in the messages we're sending about that.

I think something we talk about in sex ed is when you're talking about reproduction, right, you're talking about starting a family. Let's make sure that that's a really inclusive conversation, that we're talking about biological

children, we're talking about blended families, we're talking about adoption and fostering, because I think so much of human trafficking prevention is making sure that young people feel seen and safe and connected and supported in their communities. They've got to have a strong understanding that whoever they are and whatever their family structures are that that's supported and valued.

A lot of the work that I do is around kind of primary prevention. I think oftentimes conversations around prevention really focus on identifying red flags and intervening, which is so, so essential and is incredible life-saving work, and I'm so grateful to you all who do it. A lot of the work that I do is to say, "Okay, what can we do to make sure these red flags never even pop up? How do we create communities in which young people and their families are getting everything they need such that folks really aren't experiencing vulnerability to exploitation?" I think a big piece of that parent/family education is having conversations with them around how do we support the positive development of your child and helping them connect that those things are also human trafficking prevention.

Cindy Caraway-Wilson: Excellent, excellent. Again, I appreciate that switch on the angle, as well, talking to parents about the strengths and about how we can build those resilience and build the strength base of young people as a protective factor. I also appreciate that you mentioned the importance of being so open in that definition of family and being willing to educate that broad definition of family so that folks can feel seen and heard. Thank you. Kate, let's go ahead over to you. What would you like to add? You're on mute.

Kate Price: Sorry about that. Thanks so much. I would just like to really pick up on the thread that was just brought in terms of foster care, really thinking about the importance of families. Again, it's that we're making that assumption that family is safe, or that even everyone does have a permanent family. One wonderful group in Boston called My Life, My Choice that I do a lot of work with for child sex trafficking in Massachusetts and particularly around the Boston area, their numbers change, but the majority of kids that have been trafficked have been or are involved in the foster care system. Granted, that's more controlled and external person-controlled, really using that desperation and that, not desperation, but that desire to connect as a way to manipulate children.

I will say this, we're pack animals. For me growing up, I was so drawn to families because I wanted a healthy family, and not only did I want that house filled with books, I wanted a healthy family. That was part of my vision and I have that now. But really thinking about the ways that we can really think about family, the nuclear family, the heterosexual nuclear family as the norm, particularly white, upper middle class, suburban family. That's what the norm is, that. Anyone who doesn't fit in that is just automatically vulnerable. So, really thinking about that in ways, not only for trafficking but for all risk factors for anything for children.

Cindy Caraway-Wilson: Excellent. This is a definite theme here. It's this expansive view of family, and also recognizing that some folks don't have those permanent families. We do know that young people in foster care are at a higher risk for many things,

including trafficking, so keeping that in mind. Liz, what would you like to add to the conversation?

Liz Williamson:

Thank you so much. I've enjoyed listening to what others have had to share. Something I'd like to highlight, is just the desperate need for connection that we all have. I cannot speak to whether you can train parents to really recognize human trafficking within their own home, because some parents will not receive that information. However, I had amazing friends of parents who I latched onto. I was desperate for that connection. To them, I speak to that community piece, that there are caring adults in every child's life, no matter how removed it may feel from that nuclear family unit. I think that if we can get the information out to the caring adults at large, someone is going to see something and connect those dots.

Cindy Caraway-Wilson:

Yeah, that human connection is essential. It is so essential for all kinds of protective pieces. There're some studies that have shown even that being ostracized or having that kind of sense of social connecting is taken away, triggers the same spots in the brain that physical pain does. It's no wonder then that we will reach out for connection even when we've been hurt by connection. That's so valuable and important.

Let's go ahead into our next question. We kind of talked about the why. Let's talk a little bit about the what. If you had to name just a few elements in a minute, this is sort of a lightning round, what would you think would be some of the most important elements of education to include for families? You may also think about how much might be a good amount of information versus too much information. Let's go ahead and start with you, Liz.

Liz Williamson:

I'd like to say that for information to include from my personal vantage point, I didn't know anatomically correct names for body parts. If I was going to disclose about sexual abuse, I would've used pet names for my body parts, because that's what I was told, so adults would miss what I am trying to disclose with my limited language. I definitely want to highlight that. Then another thing... oh, how do I say this because it might feel silly... but we have to believe children. I was told so many times, just like Kate mentioned, that I was over the top, that I was making it all up, that I was very imaginative. I had report cards that said I was imaginative. How do you imagine details about a person's body parts and that you're sharing that people come into your bedroom? To me, that's not in my factual brain as a child to be able to imagine. So, just to be careful about the labels that we use for children.

No person in our community is too important to not screen for this type of abuse. Whatever position they hold, they should be held to the same level of accountability and scrutiny. My mom was a cheerleading coach, but she was my trafficker. Please understand the urgency of the fact that she could have influence to so many beyond our home. I'm not saying the trafficking happened to them, but I am saying that they usually have a cover of, I'm going to pretend to be this wonderful person so you don't see what's happening in my home.

Cindy Caraway-Wilson: Right, making sure that when you're providing education to families, that you're including the education that sometimes family members are trafficking families and that they have these images that are put out to the public, but also the importance of giving different types of language and words and names that young people, children, young children especially, might use when they're trying to describe what's going on with them in their home. Thank you. Let's go ahead over to Colette. When you talk about the engagement you were doing, what kind of stuff do you ensure you're teaching families about?

Colette Junod: Well, I mean I really liked this question, because I feel like it really kind of gets to the meat of what's important and making sure that when you're engaging someone, you really are making sure that the message takes hold. I've seen it done in a couple ways. Sometimes people do presentations with very shocking images or very emotive things that try to connect people. Personally, in my experience, I mean I liked what Liz had to say. I did CPS for 20 years and interviewed sexual assault victims, and what I will tell you is exactly what Liz said. Many times, the people who should be protecting our children are not protecting our children. Sitting across from kids who I know have been sexually abused or trafficked, I think the most important thing anyone can do is so simple, be present and listen.

I think in terms of educating ourselves, if this is a topic that... We can push out materials all day long. We can do all those things, but really, teaching someone how to listen to their child and engage with them is so important. Not just this topic, but any topic. So many times, kids, the wording piece, calling the right body parts, all those things, are important. But I just think sometimes we get caught up in pushing out a big educational portion where we're missing the basics of connection, like how to teach parents how to talk to their kids, how to teach kindness and being intuitive listeners and all those really important things. I think that's where it really starts.

I won't take a lot of time, but it made me really think when Liz was talking about sitting across from a kid who I knew, because of some other underlying evidence, had been sexually abused, but she didn't want to talk about it, but we just took the time to sit there in silence, being available to listen to whatever the child wanted to talk about at that time, and patience and connection. Those are all things that just really are invaluable when you're trying to connect with kids at any age, really. I don't know if I made a lot of sense. I feel like I did a lot of talking, but thank you, Liz. I really appreciated what you were saying.

Cindy Caraway-Wilson: Absolutely. Colette, it seems to me that what you were describing is social/emotional education for parents because a lot of parents, a lot of us didn't have that when we were coming up to school. It just didn't happen all that much at schools-

Colette Junod: Right.

Cindy Caraway-Wilson: ... and now many districts do. If we can start to put some of that out to parents, so they can learn to sit with a young person and really be present in the moment,

Colette Junod: Thank you for making me sound smarter than I made myself sound.

Cindy Caraway-Wilson: Harold, can we go to you?

Harold D'Souza: Yeah, thank you. I always believe that all kids, whether you are Black, white or brown, are angels. Like what Kate and Liz said, I always tell that, look, listen, learn, live, love and laugh with your kids. That's very important, and most important that many parents in the U.S. and many Americans in the U.S. even today believe or think that labor trafficking does not happen in the United States of America. It happens in some other country, but it's happening in your backyard. That's one which we have to accept it and realize it and educate our own family that does happen, so look out for the red flags. That's very important.

I always believe, and I just always recommend here, Cindy, to all my audience who are watching today, that every school district in the U.S., whether it's a public school district or a small school district, once a year, they should have a conference on human trafficking and invite people like Liz, or Kate, or other people to do a presentation and invite all the school bus drivers, the teachers and the parents. This will help a lot and will change the entire concept, because I've seen, to be honest, that many kids whose parents were victims of labor trafficking, now the kids are a victim of labor trafficking. They're working in a gas stations/convenience stores. That really is killing me. I'll be very honest, Cindy and all my friends watching, that I was so heartbroken that's what I thought my kids will end up, but the blessing of all the Americans today, both my kids are doing good. I just want to share on this platform that both my sons, due to all your blessings, good wishes and prayers are working for Tesla. Thank you.

Cindy Caraway-Wilson: Great, okay. I think that is important, also, because you're right. Sometimes the concept of labor trafficking gets lost. When people think human trafficking, a lot of people will go to that sexual exploitation, sex trafficking side and forget that labor trafficking happens, as well, and is damaging. It's very damaging to families, to young people, and so for us to keep that in mind, as well. Now, let's go ahead over to see Linda. I haven't heard from you yet.

Linda Chamiec-Case: Yeah. I think in thinking about what information is important to include, sometimes it can be helpful to answer questions with more questions. This is kind of an approach that we take in prevention sometimes, asking why, why, why, to get it some of the root causes. Y'all have really named so beautifully that we need to believe children and that children and young people need connection. Why don't young people have connection in their communities? Why don't they feel like they're being believed? A lot of the work that we do kind of on the primary prevention end is to say, "Okay, what does it take for a young person to feel seen and safe and supported? How are we supporting their positive identity development? What does it take for Black and indigenous and students of color to feel safe and seen in their schools?

When Black and brown children are seeing themselves and their peers being expelled and suspended for behaviors that white kids aren't getting disciplined for, what does that do to their connections in schools? Are young people with

disabilities and disabled students seen as valued integral parts of classrooms? Do students in their gender identity and their sexuality, do they feel seen and represented in their curricula? I think a lot of times... Sometimes we do this work and people will say, "Why are we talking about the adultification of Black girls? I thought this was about human trafficking prevention." It's like this, absolutely. I think oftentimes parents are already doing that work. Parents are advocating for their kids who are being discriminated against in schools or whatever system they're interacting in and helping them make the connection that that work and valuing and affirming your child for who he, she, they are, that is prevention.

Cindy Caraway-Wilson: Excellent. Perhaps even helping parents to help their children to become advocates for themselves and their peers. I mean, you talk about empowerment there. Great. Thank you so much. Kate, we'll come over to you.

Kate Price: Thank you. I just want to echo a couple of things and then say a couple of new things that Liz was saying exactly in terms of believing children. My father was a very much a beloved community member, and actually even, I've had some relatives say like, "Oh yeah, your father could have done that to you, but he's still a great guy." There is a mask there. He knew exactly what he was doing to create, to protect himself.

Also, to Linda's point in terms of the adultification of Black girls, I think it's so incredibly important. I had mentioned that in the first webinar, that some kids aren't even allowed to be children. They are Black and research shows that Black girls and boys, girls more so, but have the perception that they are multiple years older than what they actually are.

Finally, I would just add in terms of families that, as Liz had said, to be one of those families, be a parent that you glom onto, a kid would glom onto, I certainly did that. When a parent would show me just basic love, I really did that. I'm grateful to say, now that happens with some of my son's friends, will come over and it's just like, "Oh, Mom, you ask so many questions." It's like, yet, who are the kids that show up? They want to talk to me. I do think that it would be age appropriate for a child who is older, certainly in their teens, to be able to explicitly ask, "Is someone asking you to trade sex for food, for a ride, for anything of value?" I think that is an appropriate question, not in a prying way, but just if the child self-discloses in that way.

I'm sure, you're not going to ask that obviously upon meeting a child for the first time, but once you've really gotten to know a child for years, that is certainly something that you could definitely ask. Granted, it'll also depend on what state. State legislation really is in terms of what laws are being broken. But a child, someone who does demand sex to give a child a ride, that's human trafficking. It's as simple as that in most states, but not all.

Cindy Caraway-Wilson: Absolutely. What I heard you say around family education here, is to give family skills to be able to have those difficult conversations. Of all types. And so then there's not a subject, like human trafficking, that might be taboo. That you can engage your own child with, you can engage other people, children who are

coming into your home. To check in with young people and help, and let them know that you're an adult that can hear and see what's going on. Excellent.

Now I'd like to move into, we're going to make this another lightning round question, about one minute response if possible. Engaging families we know is so hard because of the busy schedules and just all kinds of other barriers that exist. My question for you all is, what are some barriers that you're aware of in engaging families as human trafficking prevention people, and people to support children who've been trafficked? What are the barriers to engaging them that we should be aware of, and what strategies might we use to get around those barriers? And here, I'll start with you, Kate. Nice brief responses here.

Kate Price: Yeah, of course. I would just say to so many people, well, that's a private family matter. I'm not going to talk about that. That's not my child. I can't do anything.

Cindy Caraway-Wilson: And how do you get around that barrier if somebody says that to you?

Kate Price: You're a human being, the child is a human being. You do have a right. There are hotlines, there are... Granted, this is where I could go down the whole line in terms of DCF being overworked, underpaid, all of those things. And at the same time, I just needed somebody to pay attention. Someone paid attention to me for five minutes, and I still remember them all of these years later. So, it's important.

Cindy Caraway-Wilson: Excellent, excellent. Absolutely. So if the barrier is, it's not my business, it's somebody else's child, then you go back to the general humanity. As a member of the human rights it is your business. All right, Liz, what would you say would be a barrier that comes to mind and a strategy to get around that barrier in engaging families?

Liz Williamson: One barrier that just came to mind is the parentification of children. And I was treated as a little adult from forever because I was responsible for younger siblings. That meant that you weren't looking at me as a child, even though you should have been. Because I was still a child, and I had things going on that needed attention. One barrier that I could see circumvented is I had an adult that I trusted who was my dance teacher, but also my gym teacher. There was a person that you could have said, "Hey, what's going on with her?" And she probably would've known on a deep level. So someone who is acting in the adult capacity, and it's probably not the parent.

Cindy Caraway-Wilson: Right. So having that importance of having the young person feel connected to an adult in the school. So maybe having a school-wide approach of making sure that every child in the school has at least somebody who knows what's going on a little bit. Not just, are they in my classroom and what have you, but perhaps deeper relationships, maybe. Okay, great. And let's go over to Colette.

Colette Junod: A few of the barriers that I see in the work for prevention, and even intervention once someone has been identified with risk factors, or even that they've been trafficked. A lot of times there are language barriers, financial

barriers, health insurance barriers, if they need some treatment. The way to get around those are really using a community wraparound model to find resources for families, to make sure that there's ways that we can get funding for whatever the student may need, or even just funding for an interpreter. But really making sure that we take away those societal barriers to addressing the issue.

Cindy Caraway-Wilson: Excellent. And that wraparound model's a pretty robust model because you can get so many different connections with different types of providers and supports in the inner community. Wonderful. Thank you. And going over to Colette. Oh.

Colette Junod: I just--

Cindy Caraway-Wilson: You just did it, my apologies. Harold.

Harold D'Souza: Yeah, I think this is a good question. There are a lot of barriers, but I'll talk in terms of barriers for foreign national parents and kids. Because for foreign national parents, they don't know the culture, they don't know the people, they don't know how the law enforcement agencies operate in the US. When we came, we didn't know what it was like, Valentine's Day, Mother's Day, Father's Day, small things like that. And we do not know the resources available because we are very scared of Americans, because we are manipulated, tricked, and trapped by the traffickers that do not talk to any American because they'll get arrested, handcuffed, jailed, and deported. So these are things which has to be realized by the American parents if there is a foreign national child. There are a lot of challenges that is being faced by the child and by the parents. Thank you.

Cindy Caraway-Wilson: Right, absolutely. Especially, I remember you mentioning that those are the messages that you and your children heard. That if you say something, you're going to be arrested and deported. And you're the criminal and you're the illegal. And those are powerful messages for anyone to hear.

Harold D'Souza: And we were told that never ever call 911. Because if we call 911 we'll get deported. And can you believe that job and family came to pick up my kids, in the case of child abuse, which was a false one. And I was very shocked because when they came in... Sorry to interrupt. But that lady, and my son just walked in, the younger son from school. And the first question she asked my son, "Do you know 911?" And he said, "No." Because I want to just tell everyone that even if you keep a gun on immigrant's head, he's not going to call 911. They are so scared. Thank you.

Cindy Caraway-Wilson: Right. Absolutely. So then a barrier is just to be aware of how much information the family might have that is factual versus false, in order to maintain that trafficker and trafficked position. Yeah. All right. And then we're going to go ahead over to you, Linda.

Linda Chamiec-Case: Yeah. Harold, I'm so grateful that you named that and spoke to that. I think a big barrier oftentimes can be that there's really warranted and mistrust between families and communities, and people who are trying to help or who are

helpers. I think about myself, I'm a social worker, I'm a White woman. And White women social workers have legacies of violence that we need to reckon with within child welfare, within eugenics. And it oftentimes is very dangerous for people to ask for help within our current systems. And we need to recognize that historical reality and the current reality, and be accountable to that and do different.

Cindy Caraway-Wilson: Excellent. And Linda, I'd like to stay with you for a moment. Because when we spoke, a couple times, but when we spoke initially, you mentioned the importance of choice points that families and community members have. Where they can make a choice to create protective factors to protect against trafficking or not. You also mentioned that at the beginning of this webinar. Can you speak a little bit about how we can create such communities where that trafficking doesn't happen, it can't happen?

Linda Chamiec-Case: Sure. Did you want me to use my slides here, or no?

Cindy Caraway-Wilson: Yeah. Yes. We'll pull those slides up for you.

Linda Chamiec-Case: Okay, cool. That sounds good. I want to just talk a little bit about this idea around choice points. And this is an idea that was originally named by Race Forward, talking about the ways that we have all been taught to move through our society with all these different forms of oppression. And we've been embedded with all of these biases, and we are all taught and programmed to go through on autopilot. And when we're out here on autopilot, oftentimes we are enabling and perpetuating lots of different forms of harm and violence. And so Race Forward really challenges us to recognize choice points, which are opportunities for us to disengage and pop out of this autopilot, and to do something different moving forward.

And my predecessor, Chris Croft, took this idea and related it to human trafficking and human trafficking prevention. The idea here is to really notice the context in which trafficking happens instead of just focusing on exploitation. So taking that burden off of young people and families, and shifting them onto systems and schools and communities to really call on us to identify these choice points where we can pop out of autopilot and provide wraparound supports to make sure that we are decreasing vulnerability to exploitation.

It's my next slide, Non. Thank you so much. Again, the idea here is that when a student's status or support changes, that we as educators, as parents, as caregivers, as supportive people in young people's lives, again, have an opportunity to choose to provide supports.

Thank you. I want to invite us to think about... And you can click one more time. You can think now, and I challenge you to take this back to your families, your communities, your schools, your spaces. To think about, what are some examples of some of these choice points? Some that I'll offer is when a student has a lot of absences and truancy. One response might be, okay, we got to get a juvenile justice petition ready and going here. And, what's going on for this student? How can we respond in a supportive way? Similarly, around

suspensions and expulsions, when you have new students who are transitioning to the area, if you've got family changes in transitions going on. We've talked a lot about foster care. And so often we know that young people who are transient in the child welfare system oftentimes are not getting their needs met.

And we, as adults and educators, and families and foster parents, and guardians ad litem, we have opportunities take these choice points and to respond with support. And again, I spoke to a number of these pieces, but again, thinking about in particular as schools. Do students see themselves in the curricula that's getting taught? Are students getting unfairly penalized for dress codes that target students of color, girls of color, LGBTQ+, young people, transgender and non-binary young people? When students are experiencing discrimination and bias at school, we talked about how important it's that students feel like they can be believed. And so you might be like, why are we talking about dress code? What does this have to do with human trafficking? And students need to know that when they talk about their really hard experiences, that adults are going to believe them. And if they feel like they are getting discriminated against at school and not seen for who they are, that's going to be a huge barrier and impediment to them sharing that.

Yeah, one more slide and then I'll stop talking. Maybe two more slides. Really quickly, I'm supposed to also talk about curricula, right? A lot of the things I've talked about are these big systems level things that are really hard to do. And I want to name and recognize that in our roles as educators, as parents, as caregivers. It's like, this stuff is super hard and we cannot do this as individuals. All of us together still can't do all of these things. And I think that we can do a lot together. And a piece of this is certainly having these conversations in schools. I'll offer the NC CASA has worked with some folks on this Teach2Reach program. And on the next slide there's a link for information about that curricula and program.

You can the next slide. If you're interested in that. And I think these resources are going to go in the chat, but I just wanted to offer them. We've got some different toolkits on trafficking prevention. We also have toolkits on here on supporting LGBTQ+ students. There's a link in here about a, Let's Talk About It video. So it's a video and discussion guide for doing with parents and caregivers in talking with their young people about online literacy and things. And then there's some resources in here on anti-racist education, and ways to affirm students' gender and sexuality at schools. Again, getting at that primary prevention. That was a lot on choice points. Thank you for letting me share that framing.

Cindy Caraway-Wilson: Absolutely. Absolutely. Because each of those little steps where folks feel included, where they feel seen, where they feel valued, where they know that they have a person that they can reach out to and talk to about anything, creates those environments where trafficking becomes harder. Because those relationships can be brought to light in conversations with other people who might be able to intervene. For sure. And I also appreciated that you provided all those resources. And they are all going into chat, everyone, and they will be also on the event webpage. Other conversations, thoughts about this concept of

creating a community, or creating a world if we would, where trafficking can't happen. What are some other thoughts that you might have, Kate? Things that we can do at that huge level.

Kate Price: At the huge level? Smash the patriarchy. Just, I know it's very reductive to say that, and yet, we live in a White male body supremacy, capitalistic culture that doesn't value most people on this planet. And that is exactly that margin at the margins. That vulnerability is exactly that. Plus, people feeling entitled to do whatever they would like to do to particular people's bodies. To me, that's the nexus of human trafficking right there. That's a really big answer. And at the same time, I've been at this for a long time now, as a 52-year-old woman, and it's just like, that's really it. That's what it really comes down to. And so I always say, "I'm under no illusion that I'm going to stop trafficking in any way." But at the same time, man, I can certainly disrupt systems, and disrupt those dynamics. And that's what I go for. And to make that one-on-one human connection as well.

Cindy Caraway-Wilson: So bringing the focus into the systems and looking at how we can revamp systems to make it more difficult for trafficking to occur, because the systems are serving in the ways that we hope that they would serve. So we revamp things at that larger level. Thank you. And how about, Liz, do you have anything you want to add to that?

Liz Williamson: This may make people uncomfortable, as I put my headphones back in, but I would like to say that we need to have an honest, genuine conversation about the consumption of pornography because it is inexplicably inextricably linked. And whether you have an appetite for this age or that age, if we can't talk about this, we're not going to make a dent in trafficking. Because the images on a screen are never enough, they have to search out the product. So somewhere we have to get uncomfortable and talk about it in our homes and our churches, and hold each other accountable.

Cindy Caraway-Wilson: Excellent. So being aware that, A, we have to have the hard, uncomfortable conversations. And one of them will be around pornography, and the access that everyone has to pornography. And what can we do to shift that in some way that we can create that environment where the communities are safer and it doesn't lead into that trafficking area, or that consumption of somebody who's being trafficked. Thank you. That's another big answer. And how about, let's see, Colette. Do you have anything that you would like to add?

Colette Junod: Yeah. I think just from my context of my career, the thing that I think needs the most work to address human trafficking, sex abuse, labor trafficking, is a revamp of our judicial system. It does a disservice to our children when they come forward. They become responsible for talking in court in front of the abuser or the trafficker, or whoever it may be. And most of us, as adults, couldn't get into court and do those testifying. And the way that children are treated, it is really something that I hated as part of the system at the time to be a part of. Because kids will disclose to you knowing... And you know the next thing that's going to happen is court involvement and what that can do to children. So there has to

be a better way than the way that it's currently set up for our children who are brave enough to disclose and want some accountability for the perpetrators.

Cindy Caraway-Wilson: Right. So figuring out how we can be more trauma informed in those court systems to support young people as they are telling their stories. And not putting them in a position where they're being re-traumatized and sometimes re-victimized in a court system, based on the questions that they're being asked by other folks at the courts. So that's an important thing to also keep in mind, how can we support our young people there as well? And then, I'd like to go ahead over to you, Harold. Do you have anything you want to add?

Harold D'Souza: Yeah. I think this is very important. I think you got to share with your own kids. You go to empower them, enlighten them, encourage them, and educate them on whether it is human labor trafficking or sex trafficking. When I started talking, and my younger son was in middle school. The news spreads in the school, they put some article of mine on the notice board, and my son was very upset. He came back to me, he went into depression. And he said, "Dad, what are you doing?" Then I explained him, I never knew that it was happening for a long time, but I never recognized. Then I told him, "You know that Vincent uncle? You know that Roshan uncle from Nepal?" Because I worked with lot of victims from Mexico. "You know what they have gone through?" I said, "I'm not doing it for me, I'm doing it for them."

And two of the victims died over here. So that is, not okay. I get it. And to end this, whether it is human labor trafficking, child abuse, or sex trafficking or, supporting the LGBTQ community, we got to educate our kids. Because I'm here for another, I don't know how many years. I'm gone. But I want my kids and the young students, and the boys to continue this legacy, because they are our future. And they can stop this. And they have a lot of creative, have innovative ideas. And today I'm so blessed that my same younger son, who was so depressed, and now he is a big motivation for me. So how you can flip the mind of a child from total negative to now he is all positive. Thank you.

Cindy Caraway-Wilson: Thank you. Yeah. So educate. You came back to the idea of one of the big things that we can do to create this new society is to educate, educate, educate. Make people aware. But what I also heard in what you said is that by educating our young people that they might carry that forward. And I know that your sons are engaged in quite a bit, or have been engaged in quite a bit of community service in a variety of ways, as a way of paying it forward. So that's an important element of that as well.

Okay. We are going to move on to our next question. And this one is about students who are already involved in trafficking or at elevated risk. What are some ways to work with families who need to protect those children? Their child who already has been identified as having been trafficked or at higher risk for being trafficked? Harold, I'd like to start with you on this one.

Harold D'Souza: This is a very, very good question. And again, I'll focus again on the immigrants, foreign national students. I know so many parents of the students who are here for the last 15 years. Not born in the US, but they came when they were two

years or four years. But today they're in college who are struggling to get admission. I know during Obama's time he started that DACA thing for the students. But I still feel that we have to work together with Department of Education, with the immigration department. Okay, the parents were a victim of labor trafficking, or maybe sex trafficking, whatever it is, and they didn't get justice. But why should the kids be penalized? If they're here for the last 15 or 20 years, and they're studying, they're good citizens or good human beings. They should be given status. They cannot go back to their own country now because they've been here for the last 20 years, and there are so many cases. Thank you.

Cindy Caraway-Wilson: Great. Thank you so much. So it comes back to the idea of being able, for folks who've come into the country from other countries, looking at how can schools and others support citizenship efforts sounded like is what you said.

Harold D'Souza: Right.

Cindy Caraway-Wilson: All right, thank you. Linda, would you like to add, what are some ways to specifically help maintain safety for young people at higher risk or involved in trafficking?

Linda Chamiec-Case: Yeah, absolutely. I think it's important just to name. We've named it, but we'll keep naming it, that oppression, make sure that people who are on the receiving end of oppression are at most at risk and are least likely to be getting their needs met because of the ways that oppression steals resources and victimizes people. And so when young people aren't getting their needs met, it creates opportunities for exploitation. And so I think in the same way, if we can keep shifting off of young people and instead onto those systems, so think about systemically, why are young people not able to get their needs met? And there's been lots of talk about the child welfare system. And so one that I think about, and I know this is different in every state, but in North Carolina, most kinship providers, so a young person needs to be removed from their home. That young person maybe could go live with an aunt or a grandmother or a chosen family member, et cetera. So we pay stipends to licensed foster parents. But those informal kinship providers, they don't get monthly stipends.

And so if you have families who have historically experienced economic disadvantage. You're setting up this system where it's really hard for young people to stay living in their families and community. What would it look like if we paid the same stipend to kinship providers? What would it look like when a family came into investigation within Child Protective Services, we gave that family the foster care stipend to prevent getting to the place where you have 14-year-olds who are living in group homes, who are living in EDs, who are living in psychiatric residential treatment facilities. Let's put the systemic things in place that they have connection and family and community within their communities of origin. But in order to do that, we've got to look at why are they not getting it and why do we have all these 16-year-olds in foster care getting trafficked?

Cindy Caraway-Wilson: So then part of what I'm hearing there is a way that to work with, to support the families whose children are already at higher risk or have been trafficked, is to find a way to keep young people within their family context, if there's a safe family member and to support that family member. And I hear that you have this systematic approach as well, but also we had heard some folks speak in the past about things, I think, Liz, you brought this up last webinar, even things like if a child is in kinship care and funds are being able to provide supplies and things like that, or if they're being withheld by the traffickers, the context that you provided, Liz, last time, but schools are able to have gear and things like that that folks can use and students can have access to.

Now I'd like to go over to Kate, please. Do you have anything that you want to add to this?

Kate Price: I do. You know in terms of the question, and please correct me if I'm wrong, but even the question itself is predicated on the fact that the family is safe. And so that really is in terms of controlled trafficking, someone from outside of the family. And so really thinking about what that would look like within the family, that's really tough. That's you having to address how did trafficking even happen in the family to begin with? In my experience with familial trafficking, it is largely intergenerational. While I have no empirical evidence of this, I am certain that my father was trafficked by his mother who was commercially sexually exploited as well. And so this is in the '50s and the '60s. And so just thinking about that, I think just in general as a children's advocate and as a researcher, a lot of the work that I do is interrogating that notion of that the family is the end all, be all or the goal or that is a place of safety. That is not the case whatsoever, particularly going back to when we think about patriarchal systems that women and children are property.

And so thinking about that sense of that a father can do whatever they want to a child and within familial trafficking, then you have to think about your trafficker's trafficker, traffickers, is the very person who has the legal right over your life until you're 18. And so those are really big questions. And at the same time I think they're incredibly important because we also have to think about as a country, we are the only United Nations member state who has not ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. And a reason for that is yes, some states want to retain the right, or as a federalist society, states are the ones who are deciding in terms of criminal justice. And so thinking about the ways that we treat kids.

But the other piece is that sense of keep your laws out of my family, that this is my family,... I have the right to do whatever I want, and yet at the same time leaves kids like me completely vulnerable. And so if we don't even have this basic ratification that literally, literally the majority of the world has agreed upon, kids are just basically really vulnerable in our country. And it's just to Liz's point in terms of having those very difficult conversations about pornography, we need to have those difficult conversations about the ways that we say we protect kids and we care about kids in our country, but really when it comes down to it, we really don't.

Cindy Caraway-Wilson: So what we can go ahead and talk about here then is the US hasn't ratified that, for sure. And what we can still do though is we can all educate ourselves on what those rights for the child, the UN rights for each child says and live those as much as we can as individual folks or as school communities or as geographic communities as well, for sure.

We are pushing our time limit here, so I'm going to go ahead and move us forward. Colette, I'd love to hear from you a little bit more about what you're doing in your district. I know that you had talked about a pretty robust approach to supporting students. So would you like to go ahead and have that conversation with us?

Colette Junod: Sure, absolutely. So our program is comprehensive in the sense that it's about prevention, but it's also that tertiary need that we work with in the secondary at all levels for students. The first portion is, of course we do a push out to all of our staff members around sex trafficking. So that's part of onboarding new employees to our school system. That's one component of the program. Another component of the program is the education portion that we do as part of the Virginia Department of Education curriculum points that for health and PE teachers that they have to teach about all these topics. And so we push that out to all of our ninth graders. And so a really important piece of this that I want to make sure that people understand is schools are very insular. And coming from a social worker who worked in child welfare into the school system, it's really hard to, somehow the schools are separate in a lot of ways from the other part of public government.

So being able to be in a position where I have the connections with detectives, with tasks force in our community with FBI agents, all those things we work hand in hand. We've done MOUs so we can share information. Those things are really important, too. Part of the program in terms of the school, we provide that lesson to the students, but we also have a triage component. So there are approximately, I think 6,000 to 7,009 ninth graders that we roll this out to. And I try to be present at the high school that's rolling it out to triage any student that's coming forward, with the help of obviously the school social worker at the school, to talk with kids, just one-on-one about if they have any questions, concerns, anything like that. So that triage piece is super important.

And then I provide services directly with students who have self-identified or been identified as having risk factors by school staff. And we track those cases and students, and you'd be really amazed to see this web that's created of students and families and adults and names. And we really work hand-in-hand with law enforcement with respect to information sharing for that as well. We track attendance. We track runaway status because we know that that's a lot of times when the trafficking flags are going up for everyone, the truancy piece and the runaway status piece of it.

So I think there's a number of ways that we target and we try to just really again, do that wraparound model so that we're connecting with the community for services. We're making sure that we're trying to touch every area that we see as a need.

Cindy Caraway-Wilson: Excellent, excellent. All right. So I think that those were some great examples of things that you can do to support students who have been identified who are at higher risk. I know that that truancy piece and the absenteeism, especially chronic absenteeism, has been brought up by a previous presenter of ours. And they created a whole program to actually go out and look for the young people who aren't showing up at school or who disappeared after COVID and then never came back in. Where did these young people go? As opposed to waiting for them to come back in and ask for help. So there's all kinds of things that can happen both inside of the school building, the brick and mortar building, and that wraparound piece that you mentioned earlier, Colette.

So I'm going to go ahead into just some questions. We've got a ton of questions coming in and we're going to come back around to get a little bit more detail from Liz in the moment as well. But I'd like to jump over to some questions first, to address those. The one question that came in is does training about human trafficking for students and parents, does it result in greater concealment? So if we educate a parent or a family about it, might it result in having an adverse effect? Has anybody had conversations about that or thoughts about that? Kate, please.

Kate Price: And I said this more as a parent to be quite honest, is that in my experience no. I think, and research says, that kids are really concerned about each other and maybe it's just my son's friends. I don't think so. But in terms of, I think that particularly as kids live online more and more, seeing risk factors that I'm really concerned. I don't know what's going on particularly with this person and I don't want to get them in trouble and at the same time I'm really scared, and to call attention. I see that more certainly than when I was growing up and that's my experience that I don't think there would be concealing. That's not my experience.

Cindy Caraway-Wilson: Excellent. Did anybody else want to add anything into that? It was an interesting question to think about, the flip side of might be a result of a training. A follow up to that question, and maybe this will result in others wanting to jump in. Is there anything that should be avoided in that training of families to avoid or prevent concealment, better concealment.

Kate Price: Really, I think it's just in terms of that idea of punitive. Well, if you tell this, you're getting in trouble or something. This was certainly my experience growing up and it's my experience with my, again saying this as a parent, that sometimes telling another adult that it's like, I'm not your parent. I'm not your teacher. I can't ground you or I can't take the car away from you or something like that. And yet at the same time, I need to talk to somebody. We see that. I see that as a parent. Also, we see that in social science research. I'm doing an evaluation right now on a program for families experiencing homelessness, which really does intersect with the trafficking community as adults more so, but we're really finding that having that safe relationship that has a non-punitive, they're not a social worker, they're not a shelter staff. They're not DCF, they can't take your children away from you, just having that trusted adult really matters. And so going back to that connection and so being able to just, you can tell me and I'm going to support you.

Cindy Caraway-Wilson: Right. Excellent. Another question from the audience, and this is sort of a theme of questions that I'm seeing here, is what do you think are the best ways to support children and families around trafficking that haven't maybe already been mentioned, beyond training and educating about the topic? Is there anything else that comes to mind?

Liz Williamson: Something that comes to mind is having non-religious and religious, but having community resources available saying hey, there's free counseling here. There's free after school programs. Here's where you could get plugged in. For so many of us that have felt isolated during our trafficking experiences, if you have a youth shelter, hey, there's a youth shelter. If you're ever not safe at home, it could be an avenue of resource.

Cindy Caraway-Wilson: So perhaps if the schools had... Some schools I'm sure have a resource booklet or what have you of community resources, but making that very public and accessible perhaps so that people know that there's things out there that they can connect to. That's a great idea. What else? Anything else come to mind?

Kate Price: I would also just add that knowing the trafficking, it's really layers, and again, I'm going back to familial trafficking. That's my experience, it's my research. But to Liz's point again about pornography, what we are finding with the nascent research that's being done on familial trafficking is that it really does start, it starts with child sexual abuse or incest particularly. And then there's pornography usually in the home. And so there could be pornography, child sexual abuse imagery being taken from the child and then maybe traded for additional child sexual abuse imagery or access to other children. And then, exactly as Liz was saying, then it is like, okay, then how do I make this happen in person? And so that is usually what we're finding in terms of trafficking. So not looking necessarily for trafficking. This isn't the movie Taken or Stolen or all of the various things. It really could be, if you see anything, you're going to see signs particularly more of child sexual abuse or neglect. And that would be a starting point. And so that's where the importance of trust building and play the long game. Keep asking questions.

I would say the best parental advice I ever, ever got, it was around sex education was don't have a 100 minute conversation, have 100 one-minute conversations. And that is exactly what I'm saying. You can ask it, "Are you trading sex." If someone asked you, say a comment and then when you see the child again, maybe in two weeks or whatever, ask another question. But it's that establish the pattern of I'm a safe adult. I am not going to penalize you. I care about you. You matter. I see you. I see something's going on and I am not giving up on you.

Cindy Caraway-Wilson: Excellent. And you had mentioned that before, you'd wished that your teacher had asked more than once. Yeah, absolutely. Well we are at time pretty much, pretty close to that. And we have a lot of resources still to go out. Liz, can you give a quick one minute overview? Sorry about that, of that school bus driver, because that was another piece that had come out of the last webinar. Go for it.

Liz Williamson:

Sure. Can you actually just skip to the third slide? They're fantastic slides. I can send to you if you want or do a presentation at your school. I don't mind. But here's where the crux of it, this is where what's important. I am featured in a 22-minute documentary that you could use to train your school bus drivers and support staff at your school. We have everything free. We have an app for your phone. We have wallet cards to either hold on your person or reminders of what trafficking can look like and how to report it to the National Hotline. And then we also have posters to put up in the break room or around the schools and then bumper stickers for the buses themselves that also have the National Hotline for the US and Canada. If you want any more information, please feel free to go to truckersagainstrafficking.org and we are happy to send all of that out for free. We just want to put it in the hands of people that care about children. So thank you.

Cindy Caraway-Wilson:

That was super fast, Liz. Thank you so much for that. I appreciate that. So again, this is another example of a way to have a curricular approach to educating about trafficking and to ensure that all kinds of adults can receive the education and be that one person who has the impact on a young person that helps them to speak up, helps them to become safe and feel connected in their school environment.

And on that note, I'd like to thank everybody for being here today. We appreciate all of the questions and the reaction icons that we've been seeing. We are excited that our speakers shared so many robust approaches that can be taken to help protect young people from trafficking and to try to work to engage families in these important conversations. We are also going to be offering additional webinars coming up. Our next human trafficking webinar is April 26th, and that will be focused in on the forced criminality nature of human trafficking.

We also wanted to make sure everyone was aware of several webinars coming out of our Lessons From the Field series. We have a webinar coming up February 8th on fentanyl use prevention for students, among students. February 22nd, we'll be focusing in on the sensitive topic of female genital mutilation and cutting and how we can support students who may have been impacted by that. In March, we will have two webinars, one focused on student nutrition, another on marijuana use among students, and then finally in April, we have a full-service school communities webinar coming up that will be running alongside our human trafficking webinar. We hope to see you at all of these webinars, or at least some of them.

If you can't make it live, please do remember that you can access all of our webinars via our website at NCSSE. And also be aware that we are very interested in hearing from you about what you're doing out there to help protect young people from trafficking of all types. Please do feel free to reach out with those ideas. And also if you need help with anything to NCSSE at air.org. And also you can visit our websites which have a variety of information on human trafficking and human trafficking prevention.

So again, I want to thank our speakers. You guys were offered wonderful information and lots of passion that came across loud and clear today, so we appreciate you as well. Look at those icons flying up the screen. And you as the audience, we also greatly appreciate you and would love to hear feedback from you about this webinar. We take your feedback seriously and we actually use it to create content for you. So please click the link and provide that information to us. We'll just take a few minutes. And on that note, we'd like to thank you again one last time for being here today and for participating in our webinar and we hope that you have a wonderful rest of your day.

Harold D'Souza:

Thank you.