Human Trafficking: The Lost Children

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Powerful Words
Protecting our most vulnerable children
Who Are The Lost Children?

- Understanding Human Trafficking
- Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children
- Children who Live with Disabilities
- Human Trafficking of Children who Experience Disabilities
- How Do We Help?
Human Trafficking

- Under U.S. federal law, human trafficking is a form of modern-day slavery where people profit from the control and exploitation of others.

- Victims are exploited for labor, services or a commercial sex act.

- Force, Fraud and Coercion
Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children

- The Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 [TVPA] and its subsequent reauthorizations define sex trafficking as, “the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for the purposes of a 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.

- ... on account of which anything of value is given to or received by the person
Risk Factors for Human Trafficking

- Prior abuse in the home; including sex abuse
- Involvement with county children services
- Involvement with illegal activities
- History of running away from home
- Drug use
- Previously living in a home where one or both parents have abused drugs
- Mental or physical disability
How Do Traffickers Exploit Their Victims

- Traffickers use the control they exercise over victims to force them to carry out activities for the traffickers profit.
- They compel victims to engage in criminal activities such as; prostitution, pick-pocketing, or drug trafficking
Targeted – Tricked - Traumatized

- Targeted – runaways or children experiencing trouble at home

- Tricked – break down a victim’s natural resistance and suspicion before revealing their true intent

- Traumatized – a bond with their trafficker that is difficult to break and makes victims feel powerless and trapped
How it Happens: The Trauma Bond

- Lure children into prostitution and other forms of sexual exploitation using psychological manipulation, drugs, and/or violence

- Promises to meet his or her emotional and physical needs

- Create a seemingly loving and caring relationship with their victim in order to establish trust and allegiance

- This manipulative relationship tries to ensure the youth will remain loyal to the exploiter even in the face of severe victimization
Indicators of Human Trafficking

- A person whose movement and activities appear to be closely controlled or monitored by another

- A person who works excessive hours but receives little or no pay
  
  - A person who works excessive hours and is fearful of discussing working conditions or is unaware that unsafe conditions are unlawful
  
  - This person may be told that payment is on its way or that their pay is being used for expenses, like housing or food.
Indicators of Human Trafficking

- An able-bodied person who never leaves home without an escort
- A person who is fearful of discussing their relationship to a person who appears to have physical control over them
- A person with unexplained physical injuries or signs of abuse
- A person who has little or no idea where they are and is always transported to and from the worksite
- Reluctance to explain a tattoo
Behind The Scenes: Common Characteristics

- Threatening to harm the victim or his/her family
- Physically harming the victim
- Promise of employment or housing
- Controlling the victim's finances
- Exorbitant travel and recruitment fees
- Withholding of victim’s visa and other identifying documentation
- Threatening deportation
Where are Victims Forced to Work?

- Domestic workers in households
- Sweatshops
- Brothels
- Homes
- Farms and fields
- Restaurants
- Nail salons
- Massage parlors
- Hotels
- Construction sites
People with disabilities often must trust others completely...
What is a Developmental Disability (DD)?

- A disability that is manifested before the person reaches 22 years of age. This disability results in a significant impairment to a person’s daily functioning.

- Is life-long

- Not all developmental disabilities involve cognitive limitations. (for example, Asperger’s syndrome and CP)

- Persons may have co-occurring conditions.
Major types of Developmental Disabilities

♦ Intellectual Disability (ID) or Cognitive Impairment (CI)

♦ Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

♦ Behavior Disorders

♦ Learning Disabilities

♦ Epilepsy

♦ Cerebral Palsy (CP)

♦ Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) or Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD)
Mental Illness

- Mental illness covers a wide variety of symptoms affecting perception, emotions, impulse control, hostility, etc.
- Has nothing to do with intelligence
- May be improved/controlled with therapy and/or medication
- May recover completely from mental illness
- May occur at any age
- May vacillate between normal and irrational behavior
Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders

- Affects up to 1 in 20 school age children in the U.S.
- Difficulty with memory, attention, and thought processing
- Dysmaturity
- Poor impulse control; it affects one’s ability to connect actions between cause and effect
- Sensitivity to pressure, sound, and bright lights
- Poor motor skills
- Impaired Executive Function and Adaptive skills
The Perfect Storm

Trafficked People who live with Disabilities

- TVPA in 2000- Trafficking Victims Protection Act
- Force, Fraud, Coercion now add in theft of government benefits
- Predators may perceive a person with disabilities as weak, vulnerable or less likely to report abuse.
- People with limited abilities to communicate and have cognitive disorders may find it difficult to report abuse effectively.
- Biases against people with disabilities
Beyond the Scope of our Imagination

- Victims with disabilities and mental illness remains overlooked.

- A trafficker’s exploitation of humans for profit also encompasses; organ removal, child military conscription, false marriages, and beyond.

- Traffickers prey on human vulnerabilities fueled by conflict, corruption, weak rule of law, poverty, and discrimination, making certain groups particularly susceptible to victimization.
An Easily Targeted Population

◆ They might become submissive to caregivers and comply with their wishes.

◆ They might live isolated lives and therefore are easily drawn to any type of friendship and connection.

◆ Sometimes their level of care requires close, intimate physical contact, and they might become desensitized to touch or unaware of boundaries.

◆ They might not be believed when they report abuse.
Specific Risk Factors for Individuals with an Intellectual Disability

- Social powerlessness
- Communication skill deficits
- Inability to detect who is safe to be around
- Diminished ability to protect oneself due to lack of instruction and/or resources
A Confluence of Factors

- Occurring at the individual, societal, and structural level.

- Individual – Unequal power relations can develop to secure acceptance and survival – families may “lend” their children to perpetrators

- Societal - Limits the access of persons with DDs to systems of justice, unable to provide effective statements and report abuse

- Stigma experienced by those with disabilities also creates structural barriers despite their equal protection under the law

- Structural - The inability of law enforcement to make the necessary accommodations for victims to report exploitation,
Victims with Disabilities:

- Forced begging – especially if the disability is highly visible, victims draw sympathy and charity from the public.

- School dropouts and are on the street and people may not notice because they’re accustomed to seeing children.

- Regarded as undesirable – even by their own families.

- And the experience of being subjected to trafficking substantially increases the risk of victims acquiring more disabilities as a result of physical and psychological trauma.
CASE STUDIES

- Jane Weston
- U.S. v. Kozminski
- U.S. v. Kaufman
- EEOC. v. Henry’s Turkey Service: *The Boys In the Bunk*
The Boys in the Bunk House
Intersection with the Justice System

- There are societal and structural barriers that keep people with disabilities from contacting the justice system.

- People with disabilities may not be believed if they report abuse and violence. If they are believed and their cases are prosecuted, their abusers may be given shorter sentences than abusers of able-bodied people.
Keeping my son safe
How to Advocate

- Task forces should promote awareness of these trends when training service providers, police, prosecutors, and judges.
What Should You Do as an Individual?

- If you believe the person is in immediate danger, call the police.

- If you think a person with DDs is being trafficked contact your local county board of DDs.

- You do not need proof to file a report.

- All states have laws requiring professionals, such as case managers, direct caseworkers, police officers and teachers to report abuse.

National Human Trafficking hotline 1-888-3737-8888
Task Forces

- Key Issues to consider:

- Where are the resources in your state?
  - Medical
  - Safety

- Access appropriate psychological and legal assistance

- Health Care Screening Tips for Human Trafficking victims

- Protocol for SCEC Victims
Victim-Centered Approach developed by OVC TTAC

- Central Tenet: is that victims of trafficking should not be held criminally responsible for their involvement in unlawful activities that are a direct consequence of their victimization.
Iyal and his brothers
Resources

- The Human Trafficking Legal Center – Sarah L. Bessell
- National Disability Rights Network
- Innocence Lost National Initiative
- Disability and Abuse Project. Sexual abuse of people with developmental disabilities. Sexuality and Disability (1991) - Nora Baladerian,
- National Human Trafficking Resource Center
- National Center for Missing & Exploited Children
- The Arc - Leigh Ann Davis, M.S.S.W., M.P.A
- Disability Justice Center
- Innocence Lost Working Group
Resources

- Office on Trafficking in Persons
- Human Trafficking Project
- U.S. Department of Justice’s Office of Victims of Crime
- The Polaris Project
- Hidden in Plain Sight: Human Trafficking in the United States, Stephanie J. Simon 2010
- Conspiracy of Hope, 2013
- The State Department
- U.S. Justice Department
- Disability Rights International (DR)I