

Introducing Human Trafficking to Runaway and Homeless Youth (RHY) Programs *Tips, Guidelines, and Experiences from the Field*

As victim identification continues to be an ongoing challenge for the anti-trafficking field, it is increasingly important for trafficking victim service providers to strategically reach out and engage other service fields that are highly likely to come into contact with potential victims of human trafficking in their daily work. Runaway and homeless youth (RHY) are at high-risk to both labor and sex trafficking due to their age, likely histories of trauma, displaced living situations, and lack of access to traditional support networks. The entire field designed to serve the RHY population is a critical example of a robust national network of service providers that could join and greatly contribute to the victim identification efforts of the anti-trafficking field. RHY providers are well-skilled in providing outreach, shelter, and services to runaway and homeless youth populations and they are often well-grounded in the communities they serve, creating a space for a key area of need for stronger collaboration and partnership for the anti-trafficking field. The following document outlines a general approach for introducing the topic of human trafficking to the RHY field, provides relevant tips and advice, and offers a sample questionnaire of pertinent questions for RHY providers.

PART I – GENERAL APPROACH FOR INTRODUCING HUMAN TRAFFICKING TO RHY PROVIDERS

The following approach has been effective in multiple previous human trafficking presentations targeted towards audiences of runaway and homeless youth (RHY) providers:

Step 1 – Provide a Macro-level Overview of Human Trafficking

The goal of this first part of the presentation is to shape each audience member's "lens" on human trafficking by helping them to understand the definition of trafficking that they can then apply in their daily work. It is important that the session be interactive and allow ample opportunity for audience members to ask questions.

- Step 1A - Introduce the *Action-Means-Purpose (AMP) Conceptual Model* to provide a baseline understanding of the Federal definition of "severe forms" of human trafficking;
- Step 1B - Introduce Polaris Project's *Human Trafficking Cheat Sheet* to touch on some general points and offer statistics about human trafficking;
- Step 1C - Introduce Polaris Project's *Common Myths and Misconceptions* document to specifically address ten frequently held misunderstandings

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about the definition of human trafficking and generate dialogue about how and why these myths have emerged;

- Step 1D - Review Polaris Project's *Synthesis of Types of Human Trafficking Cases* in the United States to provide a brief overview of the different types of labor trafficking and sex trafficking cases that may arise;
- Step 1E - Introduce Polaris Project's *Understanding Victims' Mindset* document to provide a comprehensive summary of reasons why trafficking victims may not or can not leave their trafficking situation;
- Step 1F - Introduce Polaris Project's *Indicators and Red Flags* document to provide practical tips and examples of things that outreach workers, service providers, and community members should look out for to identify potential human trafficking cases.

Step 2 – Provide a Macro-level Overview of the Anti-Trafficking Movement and its History on a National Scale

This second part of the presentation is designed to give audience members a broad general overview of the types of initiatives and responses that have occurred to combat human trafficking on a national scale. This part of the presentation should cover an array of initiatives and give a sense of the general “ingredients” that are part of the anti-trafficking movement in the United States. Recommended points to cover include:

- The Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) of 2000 and its Reauthorizations in 2003 and 2005;
- T-visas, Continued Presence, and the Certification Process for foreign national victims of human trafficking;
- Anti-trafficking efforts within State policy - States that have passed laws making human trafficking a State crime and laws that create Statewide human trafficking task forces;
- Comprehensive services grants from DOJ/OVC and HHS/ORR to provide services to foreign national victims of trafficking in the U.S.;
- HHS' Rescue & Restore Initiative, including Rescue and Restore materials and 21 Rescue and Restore coalitions in selected cities nationwide;
- HHS' National Resource Center, including the National Trafficking Hotline;
- HHS' Street Outreach Grantees
- HHS' National Per Capita Victims Services contract through USCCB to provide services to foreign national victims of trafficking;
- DOJ/BJA-funded law enforcement/NGO task forces in 42 major cities and regions throughout the United States;
- Grassroots community-based initiatives in the anti-trafficking movement;

Step 3 – Describe Relevant Current Efforts, Resources, and Initiatives that are Underway in a Particular State or Locality

After providing a macro overview of the issue (Step 1) and of the general ingredients of a counter-trafficking response (Step 2), the third part of the presentation brings it home for the audience and describes the fabric of the anti-trafficking movement in their State or local community. This part of the presentation becomes most relevant and specific for the audience because it gives concrete examples of anti-trafficking initiatives and resources that they can tap into. Suggested specific points to cover include providing names and points of contact (POCs) for:

- Local Anti-Trafficking Coalitions;
- Local Rescue & Restore Coalitions;
- Local Anti-Trafficking Task Forces;
- Local Anti-Trafficking Hotlines;
- Local NGOs Working on Anti-Trafficking Initiatives or with Anti-Trafficking Grants;
- Local Anti-Trafficking Meetups or citizen groups;
- Key non-governmental organization (NGO) contacts;
- Key law enforcement contacts;
- Key anti-trafficking State laws and Statewide legislated task forces or research commissions;
- HHS Street Outreach grantees;
- HHS Intermediaries;

Step 4 – Facilitated Interactive Dialogue on How RHY Providers Can Apply the Human Trafficking “Lens” in their Work and Integrate into Human Trafficking Initiatives

While the first three steps focus primarily on imparting information, the fourth step focuses on receiving information from audience members and generating an interactive dialogue. It is important to receive feedback from RHY audience members about their reactions to the information and their perspectives on human trafficking in their area. Sample questions are included in Part IV.

The facilitator can start by introducing Polaris Project's *Reference Sheet on Trafficking of Youth in the U.S.* to provide an overview of relevant statistics and intersection between human trafficking and RHY populations. Depending on the specific audience, the discussion may also incorporate the following programs that are part of the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act and address how they may be relevant to victims of human trafficking (both opportunities and challenges):

- **Basic Center Programs** – Provides short-term shelter and basic services (food, clothing, counseling, and referrals) to runaway and homeless youth, ages 18 or younger, with the goal of reuniting them with their families whenever possible or locating appropriate alternative placements.
- **Transitional Living Programs** – Provides up to 18 months of shelter, basic services, and life-skills training to homeless youth, ages 16-21, who are not able to return to their families.
- **Street outreach programs** – Provides resources for shelter staff to go into the community and build relationships with youth on the streets who have been, or are at risk of being, sexually abused and/or exploited with the goal of helping them leave the streets.
- **The National Runaway Switchboard (NRS)** – Assists youth who have run away or are considering running away by linking youth and families to crisis counseling, programs, and appropriate resources through a national communications system.
- **Research and Demonstration Programs** – Allows the Family and Youth Services Bureau (FYSB) to conduct research on new and promising ways to address the needs of runaway and homeless youth, to enhance knowledge about key issues, or to build capacity in the youth service field.

PART II – TIPS AND GUIDELINES FOR INTERACTIONS WITH RHY PROVIDERS

The following tips and guidelines are based on reflections and experiences from past presentations to RHY providers.

- 1) **Expect Cultural Differences and Be Flexible** – It is important to recognize that different fields have a slightly different “feel” to them and that each field has developed a unique culture with certain words, phrases, patterns, norms, assumptions, and expectations. Any time an individual from one field is making a presentation to a relatively unfamiliar field, it is advised to be prepared for a healthy amount of cultural differences to emerge which will require openness and flexibility to handle. These differences may pertain to certain words and phrases, jargon terms, ideologies, or different values.
- 2) **Assess the Most Relevant and Applicable Forms of Trafficking and Focus On Them** – In a presentation of limited time and content, it is important to select the most relevant information to present that has the highest likelihood of being applicable to your audience. With local RHY providers, it is advised to have an understanding of different forms of potential trafficking that are prevalent in a given local area so that

a presentation on human trafficking can be tailored to the audience. Past experience has demonstrated that domestic sex trafficking and various forms of pimping will often be a likely topic of conversation with RHY providers given their work in urban areas and the vulnerability of runaway and homeless youth to be recruited into the sex trade.

- 3) **Avoid Excessive Acronyms and Jargon** – Individuals immersed within a given field often grow accustomed to using a fairly large array of acronyms in their daily conversations. These acronyms may pertain to relevant government agencies, pieces of legislation, or other initiatives within the field. Because other peers within the field are likely to know these acronyms as well, it is easy to fall into patterns of discussion where neither participant is aware of how many acronyms they are using. When conducting a presentation or workshop on human trafficking to an entirely different field, it is important to be sensitive to excessive acronym use and to recognize that the presenter may be flowing through different acronyms that are entirely unfamiliar to the audience. A degree of empathy is required for the presenter to put himself or herself in the shoes of the audience members to gain a better understanding of what terms and acronyms they may not know. Insensitivity to these issues may shut down audience members and cause them to stop listening.

- 4) **Be Ready for Many Nuanced Questions About the Definition of Trafficking** – Presenting the definition of human trafficking to a new audience is akin to giving them a new “lens” from which to view their clients or to view the world. Once audience members acquire this lens and begin to apply it towards different clients they are serving, they are likely to have a number of questions about what qualifies as human trafficking and what does not. It is important for the presenter to expect an array of questions and be prepared to speak knowledgeably about nuances in the definition of human trafficking. Questions may include:
 - If an older man directly solicits a minor for commercial sex and provides jewelry, housing, drugs, or other gifts in exchange for commercial sex acts, does it meet the definition of human trafficking?
 - If a family member is selling their child for commercial sex acts to generate income to feed a drug habit, does it meet the definition of human trafficking? Would that family-member be prosecuted as a human trafficker?
 - If a homeless youth begins to act as a pimp or manager of other minors engaging in commercial sex acts with older customers, is it human trafficking?
 - If two homeless youth arrange commercial sex acts for each other to feed their “meth” habit, can they both be prosecuted as human traffickers for trafficking each other? Are they both trafficking victims and traffickers at the same time?

- If a woman is in a domestic violence situation married to an abusive husband who beats her, controls her access to money, threatens her with violence, and forces her to engage in house-keeping labor in the house each day, is it human trafficking?

- 5) **Avoid Lecturing and Keep it Interactive** – It is important to recognize that audience members from other fields may not be interested in some of the micro-level details of the human trafficking field, such as details of specific grants, or details of certain inter-agency dynamics. Presenters are cautioned to be vigilant of sharing different types of content and are encouraged to always keep the content as relevant to the audience as possible.
- 6) **Be Ready for Immediate Questions About “What Do We Do if We Think We Have a Case?”** – After a presentation on human trafficking is given to RHY providers, one of the most pressing questions that is likely to arise is: “What do we do if we think we have a case?” It is likely that RHY providers are currently serving or aware of human trafficking cases in their area, and they will likely voice a desire to start treating the case as human trafficking, especially if they had not realized the case met the definition of human trafficking to date. Individuals preparing to make a presentation on human trafficking to RHY providers should anticipate this question and be ready with concrete information and referrals to local hotlines or anti-trafficking service providers.

PART III – CASE STUDY

During the National Network for Youth’s Northwest Regional Symposium on Street Outreach, an audience of approximately 50 runaway and homeless youth (RHY) providers from Washington State, Oregon, Idaho, and Alaska had the opportunity to receive a thorough presentation on human trafficking for the first time. After listening to the presentation and gaining the “lens” to identify human trafficking, many of the providers were shocked to realize that the definition of human trafficking included U.S. citizens, and specifically U.S. citizen children involved in the sex trade who had pimps. Until the presentation at the symposium, the majority of the RHY providers in attendance were operating under the misconception that human trafficking only occurred to foreign nationals or immigrants. In Seattle, two of most visible organizations working on human trafficking to date both predominantly served foreign nationals, and the DOJ-funded Task Force on human trafficking in Seattle also historically focused primarily on foreign nationals. In seeing the focus of these service providers and the task force, the RHY providers concluded and/or assumed that human trafficking was not an issue that pertained to their primary service population of U.S. citizen runaway, “throwaway”, and homeless youth. As a result, despite working with hundreds of pimp-controlled juveniles

in the sex trade in the Seattle area, none of these victims were considered by the RHY providers to meet the Federal definition of human trafficking, as outlined in the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) of 2000, because they were not foreign children. The human trafficking presentation at the symposium helped to correct this misconception and to remind the RHY providers that human trafficking was an issue that they were most likely working with almost every day. Since the symposium, the RHY providers are now committed to start attending task forces, coalitions, and other meetings related to human trafficking.

PART IV – SAMPLE QUESTIONNAIRE AND POINTS TO LEARN FROM RHY PROVIDERS IN A GIVEN COMMUNITY

The following are useful questions to ask local RHY providers in a given community that may generate informative answers about the current state of services and responses to trafficking. The list of questions is intended to function as a “grab-bag” of possible questions to ask. Questions can be asked while on site visits, in informal one-on-one conversations, and during more formal workshops or presentations.

Encountering Trafficking and Presence of Trafficking in the Community

- 1) What types of human trafficking do you think are prevalent in this community?
- 2) Have you ever heard of past cases of human trafficking in this local area? If so, what were they?
- 3) Are there many pimps in this community? How many would you estimate? Do you know of any names or descriptions of pimps that operate in this community? Have you shared this information about pimps with law enforcement?
- 4) What are some of the common operations of pimps in this area? What are some of the local “street rules”? Where are some of the primary locations where pimps recruit in this community?
- 5) How many runaway and homeless youth on the streets have pimps?
- 6) Is there any estimate of total runaway and homeless youth in this community?
- 7) What percentage of youth that you have worked with do you think meet the definition of human trafficking?
- 8) Have you encountered any RHY who are from other countries or who do not speak English? What was their situation?
- 9) Are there girls or boys in juvenile detention who you think have pimps?
- 10) Are you aware of any pimps who are pimping out young boys?
- 11) Are you aware of or have you encountered any situations of interfamilial pimping where a family member is pimping out another family member, potentially to feed a drug habit?
- 12) Is “meth” a big problem among RHY in this community? Do you think addiction to meth (or other substances) ever is correlated to human trafficking in this area?

- 13) Is there a known "track" in this area where street prostitution occurs? Where is it? Is there more than one track? Describe the track and how active it is.
- 14) How many children in this area would you estimate are engaged in the commercial sex trade? How large is the problem of commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC)?
- 15) What escort services are you aware of in the community? Do they involve minors?
- 16) What are some of prominent strip clubs in the community? Do they involve minors?
- 17) Have active is Internet-based prostitution (e.g., Craigslist) in this community? Does it involve minors? What other sites other than Craigslist are red-flagged?
- 18) What are some hotels in the community that are known to have a heavy presence of commercial sex acts? Do they involve minors?
- 19) Are you aware of any youth brothels in your area?
- 20) Have you heard of any private parties or house parties where minors are involved in commercial sex acts?
- 21) What are some of the primary demographics of children involved in the sex trade in this area? Ethnicity? Where are they from?
- 22) What are some of the primary demographics of RHY in general in this area? Where are they from? What are some of the main causes of their homelessness?
- 23) Have you heard of traveling magazine sales crews operating in or recruiting youth from this area? What do you know about the magazine sales crews?
- 24) Are you aware of any red-flagged begging or peddling rings in this area?

Assessing Current Services Available and the Current Counter-Trafficking Response

- 25) How are children in the sex trade treated by law enforcement in this community? Are they arrested for child prostitution or child solicitation? What units of law enforcement mostly deal with children in the sex trade?
- 26) How active is law enforcement in arresting and prosecuting commercial sex buyers (johns)? Is there a "john school" or some other type of john diversion program?
- 27) How active is law enforcement in arresting and prosecuting pimps?
- 28) What shelters for youth are available? Do they have available capacity?
- 29) Who's currently doing outreach to RHY populations? What types of outreach are targeted towards which populations?
- 30) Are there drop-in centers for youth?
- 31) What GED programs are available for youth?
- 32) What are some of the mental health providers that specialize in working with traumatized youth?
- 33) Who are the main substance abuse providers for substance abusing youth?
- 34) Are there secure "lock-down" shelters for youth in this area?
- 35) Are there resources for parents who have had children that have runaway?
- 36) What prevention efforts in schools are currently underway?
- 37) What services are currently provided to youth in juvenile detention?
- 38) What diversion programs are available for youth?

- 39) What are the teen pregnancy resources here?
- 40) Who are the main non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working with youth?
- 41) What coalitions or collaborations currently exist in this community that focus on serving youth?

Laws and Policies

- 42) How are the laws in this State related to child sexual abuse, child solicitation, pandering, pandering a minor, and human trafficking?
- 43) Are there any laws that you are trying to change? If so, which ones, and why? What changes are you advocating for? What are the challenges you face due to current laws or institutional policies?
- 44) Are there any laws that you think are particularly good or unique?

Training Needs

- 45) Have your colleagues from your organization ever been trained on trafficking?
- 46) Who else in this community do you feel it is important to be trained on trafficking?
- 47) What has the child welfare system's response to trafficking been? Have CPS investigators been trained on trafficking?
- 48) Are law enforcement that you work with trained on trafficking?