

DMU Grand Rounds: Human Trafficking in Healthcare
Thursday, November 5, 7-8 am CT

Unanswered Attendee Questions

1. Is there police involvement in trafficking? How do you know they are trustworthy?
 - a. Sadly, yes - I have been told by some survivors they have been bought by police. I have also had many survivors unwilling to get the police involved because a) they think they are involved, b) they think they will be arrested or deported or c) they have gone to the police before and not gotten appropriate assistance. As well as creating an Internal Response Team (a team of individuals within the organization that respond to a [potential] Human Trafficking situation during the time they are in the hospital or clinic), I also recommend creating an External Response Team (a team of community organizations and individuals that can help an identified victim of Human Trafficking once they leave the hospital or clinic). This External Team includes police. In Cedar Rapids I have specific officers I believe are trustworthy, identified and trained. They are invaluable in helping me assist victims and arrest and prosecute traffickers (which is very difficult and not often attained).
2. Do you think the wide access of porn is aiding children to be more comfortable in situations where they should be noticing that something isn't right? Do you have advice to talking to children about the dangers of porn?
 - a. I do. There are many studies that show detrimental effects of pornography on children's (and adult's) brains. There can be many scenes of violence in one pornography video. This can "normalize" violence for the child watching porn. Consent can also be "implied" in pornography. Survivors have spoken with me about the "rape culture" in pornography, which they say can normalize rape in people's mind. Depending on the age of the child, there is an excellent book called "Good Pictures, Bad Pictures" by Kristen Jensen and Debbie Fox. I heard one man addicted to pornography say "My parents taught me to stay away from cigarettes, alcohol and drugs. They never talked to me about pornography, yet porn ruined my life more than anything else."
<https://fightthenewdrug.org> has some good resources as well.



[Home - Fight the New Drug](https://fightthenewdrug.org)
A Quick Overview. An interactive, research-based introduction highlighting porn's negative impacts on individuals, relationships, and society—breaking the issue down to the basics.
fightthenewdrug.org

3. What would be the best way to start the conversation about human trafficking with our peers?
- a. If you are rising to the challenge of sharing what you learned today with 10 people, you can start by telling them you can't stop thinking about some of the startling facts you learned in the presentation. Keep it short (unless they are asking for more information, which is likely). The following are some key points of the presentation:

- Human Trafficking (HT) is happening all over Iowa - even in small towns
- Victims of HT don't always look like we think - sometimes they look like you and me
- Victims of HT may not realize they are being victimized or exploited, through fraud (lies and manipulation) and/or coercion (threats against themselves or someone they care about)
- Traffickers groom their victims by 1) targeting a vulnerability, 2) gain their trust and information, 3) fill their needs, 4) isolate them and then maintain control through abuse
- Traffickers are targeting our youth and vulnerable populations (low self-esteem, isolated, disabled, foster care or social services, economically disadvantaged, gangs, etc.)
- The number one place traffickers are grooming and recruiting their victims is online!
- Traffickers come in all shapes and sizes; even doctors and nurses have been arrested in Iowa as traffickers
- COVID-19 has created a perfect storm for Human Trafficking due to increasing vulnerabilities and people's time online
- Pornography is linked to Human Trafficking and has significantly increased due to COVID-19
- In one study, almost 88% of survivors stated they saw a medical professional during the time they were being trafficked. None of them were helped
- Most people who get into Human Trafficking, never get out
- Hospitals and clinics are one place victims could go to get help. We must be able to identify them, and have a plan of action once identified
- Teresa can help hospitals and clinics with training and creating a protocol

If you are wanting to start a conversation with someone you think may be trafficked, my suggestion is to start with general questions and let the answers to those questions lead to deeper questions. For example, if you are worried about a friend because they have someone controlling them, you can say "Tell me about _____ (the person)" "What do you like about them?" "How does he/she treat you?" Let the answers lead to more involved questions. Be careful, as they will be very defensive of this person. My advice is to just gather information, and not make any derogatory remarks about the person or the relationship until you have established a firm relationship with the person you are worried about. Even then, use questions with the goal to get your friend to see for themselves.

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