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Human Trafficking in Orlando, Florida

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COUN 6785: Social Change in Action:
Prevention, Consultation, and Advocacy

Social Change Portfolio

Danielle Cador

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OVERVIEW

Keywords: Human Trafficking, Prevention, Orlando, Relational-Cultural Theory (RCT), Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT), Intervention, Diversity, Caucasian Males, Men and boys, Advocacy, Florida, Marginalized Population, Stigmas, Awareness

Human Trafficking in Orlando, Florida

Goal Statement: My goal for my social change portfolio is to bring heightened awareness to my community through proper training, education, and community involvement to increase the prevention of human trafficking in Orlando, Florida.

Significant Findings: Human Trafficking has become a \$150 billion industry globally (Toney-Butler et al., 2023). It has become a type of pandemic that either no one seems to be talking about or gets overlooked. Florida is listed as one (1) of the top three (3) states following California and New York where human trafficking is prevalent (Human Trafficking Hotline, 2021). Women and young girls typically come to mind when discussing human trafficking, but young Caucasian males are also victims of human trafficking. This social change portfolio will discuss this marginalized population that is suffering in silence, as well as the risks and protective factors from a social-ecological model view. This portfolio will also discuss how combining Relational-Cultural Theory (RCT) and an evidence-based program, Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT) can assist in helping to establish and foster a necessity that is needed in their lives...connection and healthy relationships. Advocacy and Ethical Considerations will also be discussed in the pursuit of dismantling the stigmas and myths that men and young males cannot be human trafficked.

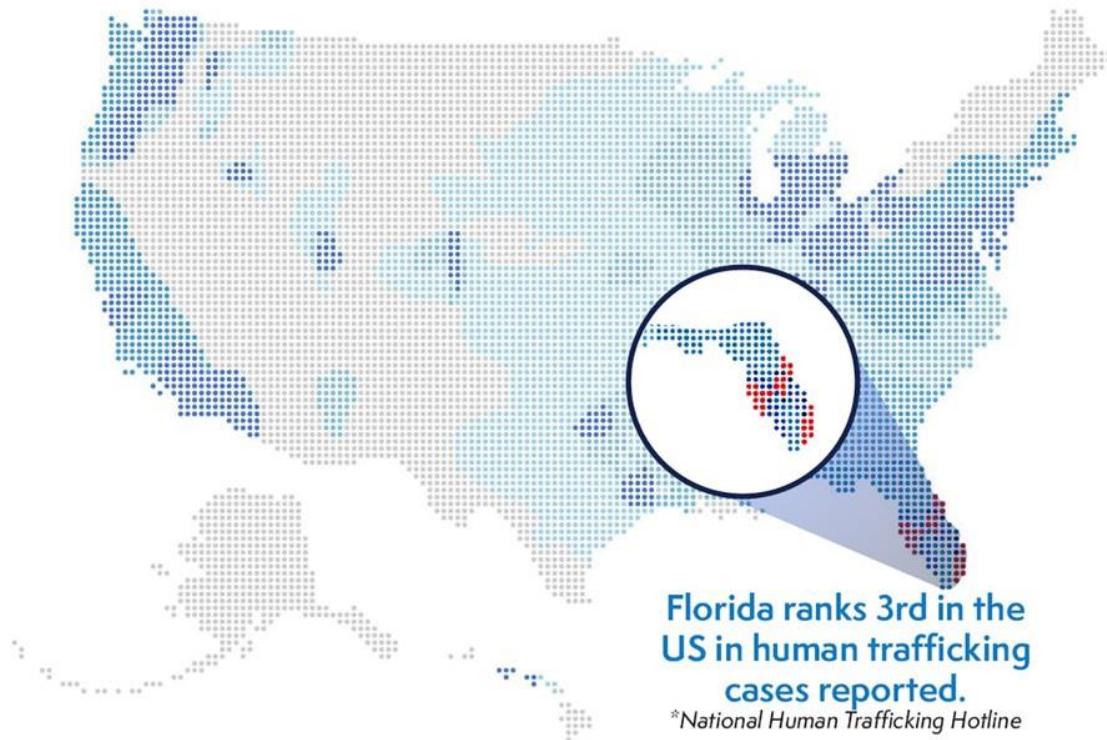
Objectives/Strategies/Interventions/Next Steps: Human trafficking is a silent pandemic that is becoming a growing concern, particularly in Florida. Human trafficking stems from a history of systemic racism and colonization which was globalized during the transatlantic slave trade through chattel slavery and regional practices of indigenous dispossession (www.state.gov). When discussing human trafficking, women, young girls, and people of color are typically brought up, but not young Caucasian males, as some may not think this subgroup would be considered victims of human trafficking as is evident with the current human trafficking programs that primarily focus on women and children. Not having programs, policies, and preventive measures that are non-gender specific further perpetuates the stigma of young Caucasian males becoming trafficking victims. It is imperative to meet the needs of male survivors as there are few anti-trafficking programs provided for them. Stop, Observe, Ask, and Respond (SOAR) is a program that can provide training in awareness of young Caucasian males being human trafficked beginning at the community level, from teachers to professional counselors. Creating and establishing services such as medical, safe housing, mental health and policies that are non-gender specific can allow young Caucasian males to feel safe in seeking these services, share their stories, and feel seen and heard. These steps can begin the process of debunking the myths and stigmas that males cannot become victims of human trafficking.

INTRODUCTION

Human Trafficking in Orlando, Florida

Human trafficking has become a cause of public concern for Orlando, Florida, rates have steadily been increasing throughout the years. Florida is listed as one (1) of the top three (3)

states following California and New York where human trafficking is prevalent (Human Trafficking Hotline, 2021).



Trafficking victims that suffer from physical and mental health issues/disorders do not have much if any mental health assistance. Trafficking victims are at an elevated risk of struggling with anxiety, depression, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), as well as greater chances of physical and sexual violence and suffering from Traumatic Brain Injuries (TBI) (www.apa.org).

According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (2021), boys and men are victims of human trafficking as well, though most individuals identified as trafficked for both labor and commercial sex are women and girls. For every ten (10) victims detected globally, five (5) are adult women and two (2) are girls, according to a report released in 2021 (Centers for Disease Control). Youth and women are at elevated risk of being coerced into human trafficking due to

characteristics such as lack of family support, vulnerability, runaways, foster care, and isolation here in the so-called, “Sunshine State.”

PART 1: SCOPE AND CONSEQUENCES

Human Trafficking in Orlando, Florida

Target Problem in the Community

There are factors that play into the increase of human trafficking such as the targets being vulnerable and isolated, their socioeconomic status (SES), use of substance abuse, and lack of social support, and there needs to be a focus on how the community can become more aware of the signs (by proper education and training) of human trafficking and help this population that is in dire need of the community’s awareness (Florida Department of Education, 2019).

Prevalence Rates in the Community

Those who have been exposed and forced into human trafficking can be exposed to many physical and psychological health issues which leave them in complete shock from the trauma that they have endured (Department of Health & Human Services). More than 27 million people are trafficked worldwide at any given time, according to the United States Department of Health (2023). Human trafficking slowed down in 2020 due to COVID-19 as most of the world was on lockdown, but as restrictions started to lift and people began to venture back out into the world, the numbers began to rise again with numbers high in 2019 with reported cases at 896 (Florida Health Charts). According to the National Human Trafficking Hotline (2021), the major type of trafficking that was reported was sex trafficking at 574 cases with forced labor at 99 cases. In 2021, sex trafficking was at 60%, while labor was at 40%, according to the Trafficking Institute with 63% of the victims being adults and 37% being minors. Tourism also plays a factor with

human trafficking to why the numbers are high in Central Florida with 2021 seeing a risk factor increase in Emergency Medical Service Responses to a suspected drug overdose including Opioids with a count of 106,891, which is an increase of 15,882 or 17% from 2020 which was 91,009 (Trafficking Institute) (2021).

Consequences of Human Trafficking

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) (2021), the consequences of sex trafficking are like the consequences of sexual violence. Consequences can be immediate and long-term including physical and relationship problems, psychological concerns, and negative chronic health outcomes. The physical and mental health effects of human trafficking are serious. It can cause a loss of basic human rights, loss of one's childhood, disruption in families, and severe mental health consequences, which can include several types of anxiety disorders, PTSD, depression, and substance abuse (American Psychological Association, 2023). Being that most of the victims are women, they can become more susceptible to struggling with fear which can happen at higher levels, as well as feel more isolated and suffer more with mental health issues. This could lead to the victims not seeking assistance, whether physical and/or mental, due to the lack of trust which would stem from the trauma they have experienced.

PART 2: SOCIAL-ECOLOGICAL MODEL

Human Trafficking in Orlando, Florida

Ecological theory may provide a framework for understanding the individual, relational, social and environmental impacts of phenomena like trafficking (Bronfenbrenner, 1981).

According to the CDC (2022), the social-ecological model is a framework that includes the use

of interconnected levels, such as individuals, relationships, community, and societal.

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory touches on five (5) ecological aspects including microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem (Guy-Evans, 2023).

Combining the framework and Bronfenbrenner's theory will help gain a better understanding of how society is connected at each level and the key role it plays in the prevention of human trafficking.

The first level of the social-ecological model is the individual which can help identify the biological and personal history factors that can help the prevention specialist become aware of the increase of one becoming a human trafficked victim (CDC, 2022). This could include age, socio-economic status (SES), education, history of abuse, isolation, and lack of support (CDC, 2022). This leads to the next level, relationships. As relationships play an integral part, counselors must consider the areas they impact because some relationships can be more important and/or impactful than others, such as family, peers, and close friends as described by the CDC (2022). According to Guy-Evans (et al., 2023), Bronfenbrenner's Microsystems relationships are described as those who have direct contact with a person like a peer, parent, or teacher. Young people, especially those with risk factors, are vulnerable to human trafficking (Youth.Gov. n.d.). The Administration for Children and Families at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services issued new guidance on child trafficking to child welfare systems and runaway and homeless youth programs because of increased vulnerability to trafficking for youth who have experienced prior abuse or who have run away from home (Youth.Gov. n.d.). This level is crucial that the relationships the youth are in are healthy and positive as this can be a considerable step in the prevention of human trafficking.

Community and society are the levels where one begins to look at the outside factors. The ecological model puts significant emphasis on the contexts of place, space, and community (Bronfenbrenner, 1981). Youth are the most vulnerable to human trafficking and the communities/settings, such as schools and neighborhoods that youth commonly frequent can be a means to ensure that practices are maintained, laws and accords are enforced, and public education on the issue is encouraged through the use of existent networks and niches (Barner et al., 2017). Society focuses more on cultural and social norms (CDC, 2022). Under Bronfenbrenner's Theory, society would be included under the macrosystem (Guy-Evans, 2023). Society affords a bigger opportunity to address the prevention of human trafficking by promoting societal norms that can protect against human trafficking, awareness by ways of education and training, researching policies and grants/funding that comes from the government, involving the political leaders (state legislators) (CDC, 2022). The lack of policies and protocols for identifying and responding to youth at risk for victimization, as well as the lack of awareness about the problem among educators, health personnel, businesses, and the general public, provides additional challenges for addressing the problem effectively (<https://youth.gov/youth>).

PART 3: THEORIES OF PREVENTION

Human Trafficking in Orlando, Florida

The prevention of human trafficking in Orlando, Florida could help set a course of prevention in other states which is crucial in helping to protect the lives of youth and adults. It is estimated that 27 million people are currently victims of some form of human trafficking worldwide. About 80% of trafficking victims are estimated to be female and half are children

(Okech et al., 2018). Survivors of human trafficking suffer from trauma in the form of mental illness, which can become debilitating. The combined intensity and chronicity of their trauma can deprive these individuals of the ability to function independently, creating enormous barriers to both their reintegration into society and the provision of adequate medical care (Oram et al., 2012). The trauma experienced by victims of trafficking includes anxiety, depression, alienation, disorientation, aggression, suicide ideation, attention deficit, and PTSD (Okech et al., 2018).

Human trafficking represents a unique challenge to healthcare providers (Dovydaitis, 2010). The ability to hone in on or identify the needs of the trafficking victims can vary to include their mental needs. Depending on the individual's experience, he or she may feel a great deal of shame, embarrassment, fear of stigma, and denial of their circumstances, which could negatively affect engagement in services such as lack of trust (Marquez et al., 2020).

A theory that could be applied to human trafficking is Relational-Cultural Theory (RCT). RCT reveals the key role of relationships in human sex trafficking dynamics (Hershberger, 2021). RCT highlights the deeply anti-relational aspects of this human rights abuse, not only between trafficker, victim-survivor, and sex buyer but also within the larger cultural context. "Human sex trafficking presents the most grievous social injustice of our time and is the manifestation of intersectional marginalization, including sexism, racism, classism, and unfettered commodification. Human sex trafficking is the ultimate anti-relationship" (Hershberger, 2021). RCT posits that individuals grow through and toward authentic relationships across the lifespan (Miller & Stiver, 1997).

RCT reveals how authenticity, mutual empathy, and mutual empowerment are the hallmarks of growth-fostering relationships for survivors of sex trafficking and serve as a vehicle for healing (Hershberger, 2021). RCT will help human trafficked victims learn to build

relationships that will foster growth and authentic support and professional counselors would need to incorporate authenticity into their sessions being there has been a lack of it in the victims' lives (Hershberger, 2021). Mutual empathy is another step within RCT as it allows the counselor to feel and think along with the trafficking victim as this can help foster growth rather than dominance between the counselor and trafficking victim. From mutual empathy comes mutual empowerment which also helps to foster growth in the relationship.

RCT also focuses on connection and disconnection. Connection requires mutual empathy and mutual empowerment (Miller & Stiver, 1997). At the same time, disconnection comes into play when mutual empathy and empowerment have not been shown. As disconnection is a normal part of a relationship but can also be an opportunity for increased relational resilience and growth (Jordan, 2008). When the counselor, or the individual with greater power, chooses to address a misunderstanding or an empathic failure, the survivor, or the individual with less power, can participate in a corrective experience of mutual empathy and empowerment. To facilitate this growth-fostering experience, it is essential the counselor address disconnection with a stance of openness and curiosity as well as a nonjudgmental, non-blaming approach. The ability to address power, disconnection, and foster connection in relationships is essential given that victim-survivors report that relationships were both what led them to sex trafficking and what helped them heal (O'Brien, 2018).

The result of a growth-fostering relationship is zest, clarity, a sense of worth, productivity, and desire for more connection which are known as "the five good things" proposed by Miller & Stiver (1997). These things help provide and show the trafficking victim how to have an authentic relationship. According to Miller and Stiver (1997) zest or energy is related to the feeling of real and authentic connection with another that in turn creates movement,

as opposed to stagnation, in a relationship. In authentic connection, each person experiences mutually created momentum to act. In other words, productivity in growth-fostering relationships (Miller & Stiver, 1997). It is important for the trafficking victim to understand who she/he is as this happens to allow the individual to experience and have a greater connection with another individual. Sense of worth is a form of positive labeling that the trafficking victim did not experience while being trafficked. The trafficking victim was being dehumanized and did not have a sense of worth. Reminding the trafficking victim that he/she is valued, heard, and seen can lead to fostering an authentic relationship with others. According to Miller and Stiver (1997) the combined experience of zest, action, knowledge, and sense of worth leads to a culminating desire for more connection. Disconnection is also part of building relationships, but it can be done in a healthy way to highlight how to grow healthy experiences with other individuals. Traffickers use connection as bait to exploit the trafficking victim because he/she has that ardent desire for connection yet has not been able to find it which leads to disconnection. To facilitate this growth-fostering experience, it is essential the counselor address disconnection with a stance of openness and curiosity as well as a nonjudgmental, non-blaming approach (Hershberger, 2021). The ability to address power, disconnection, and foster connection in relationships is essential given that victim-survivors report that relationships were both what led them to sex trafficking and what helped them heal (O'Brien, 2018). When the relational connection is sufficiently strong, counselors will find the opportunity to challenge and re-work strategies of disconnection (Hershberger, 2021).

An evidence-based program that has been proven to be an effective treatment for those that have experienced human trafficking, especially for youth is Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT). TF-CBT was originally developed to address the therapeutic

needs of children and their caregivers in the aftermath of child sexual abuse (Cohen et al., 2006; Deblinger & Heflin, 1996). TF-CBT is an evidence-based model with the intrinsic strengths and flexibility needed to address the needs of youth who have been sexually exploited (Marquez et al., 2020). TF-CBT has also been identified by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) as a model program due to documented efficacy in alleviating the mental health effects of traumatic events in the life of children and their families. (Marquez et al., 2020). The treatment consists of the acronym *PRACTICE* (see chart below for breakout).

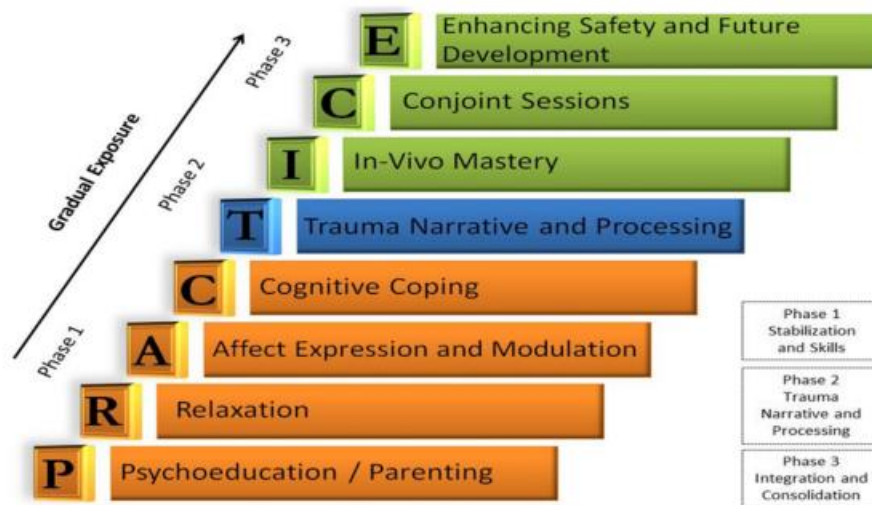


Figure 1. TF-CBT Model

TF-CBT builds on cognitive behavioral principles and integrates concepts from attachment theory, developmental neurobiology, and family systems, as well as empowerment and humanistic approaches (Cohen et al., 2006, p. 32). This treatment could be conducted in an individual setting but would be more beneficial within a group setting being that it would provide the trafficking victims the opportunity to hear from others, share their experiences, and begin to start a support group with each other. Sharing in a group setting could help with reducing feelings of stigma, shame, and guilt.

Phase One (1) is called Stabilization and the first step within TF-CBT is psychoeducation. Psychoeducation is a crucial step in the gradual exposure process that continued throughout treatment. Gradual exposure within the context of TF-CBT refers to the process of exposing the youth gradually to trauma reminders that are increasingly anxiety-provoking (Marquez et al., 2020). This step helps in normalizing and not diminishing the perception of the trafficking victim's traumatic experiences. Parenting skills would be the next step. Parenting skills would fall in line more with the caregivers of younger trafficking victims, thinking more of like a foster parent. The caregiver would go through extensive training in how to parent one who has endured such trauma. There will be challenges such as non-compliance, pushback, and arguments being that structure was not a part of their environment. The caregiver will focus on establishing positive rituals, routines, and consistency regarding rules and expectations in the home (Marquez et al., 2020).

Relaxation is the next step of the process. Within TF-CBT, the use of relaxation skills is designed to help the trafficking victim reduce the physiological manifestations of stress and PTSD (Cohen et al., 2017). Relaxation can be in the form of breathing skills, quietness, yoga, prayer, reading, and how to relax the muscle as in to better prepare for how to respond to a situation. Relaxation can also help one cope with everyday stressors, as well as trauma reminders that lead to behavioral problems, anxiety, depression, and other issues in day-to-day functioning (Marquez et al., 2020). Affective expression and modulation skills are the next step as this assists the trafficking victim in expressing and managing their emotions more effectively (Cohen et al., 2017). There could be difficulty in being able to express oneself after experiencing such trauma, especially times when the trafficking victim did express his/herself to the trafficker, there were consequences. Individuals with a chronic history of traumatic experiences may fear being

overwhelmed by the strength of the emotions that a trauma reminder causes in their minds and bodies (Marquez et al., 2020).

Cognitive coping skills include a set of strategies that encourage the trafficking victim and their caregivers to explore their patterns of thinking to identify and correct cognitions that may be inaccurate or unhelpful (Marquez et al., 2020). Next, is Phase Two (2) which is Trauma Narrative which leads into trauma narration and processing. Trauma narration in the context of a safe therapeutic relationship not only leads to reduction in the negative emotions and physiological feelings of arousal associated with such memories but it sets the stage for therapeutic cognitive processing (Marquez et al., 2020). The basic principle is that it is not necessary to process each event to find healing, but for the TF-CBT therapist to help the client process a representative number of traumas that underlie the troubling cognitive distortions that may contribute to their emotional and behavioral difficulties. By processing a subset of traumas that drive their unhealthy thinking and behavior patterns, youth can begin to internalize more adaptive ways of thinking about themselves, their experiences, and their relationships with others, thereby producing more optimistic attitudes about the future (Marquez et al., 2020).

Phase Three (3) is Integration/Consolidation. Memories and reminders of the individual's trafficking experience can be painful and debilitating which leads to In-vivo mastery. In-vivo mastery helps the trafficking victim to overcome his/her avoidance of generalized reminders and work towards mastering more specific reminders (www.positivepsychology.com). Moving into Conjoint Child-Parent Sessions is beneficial for the caregiver and trafficking victim to connect as this begins early in the treatment plan. This provides the trafficking victim the opportunity to share his/her trauma narrative with their caregiver. This begins the process of building trust,

healthy communication, support, and encouragement between the two (2) which would lead to the decisive step of the process, enhancing safety.

Enhancing safety is when the trafficking victim has applied all that he/she has learned and applied to his/her daily life. Plans are established to help manage stressors that may come about and any reminders of the trauma he/she experienced. It is important for the trafficking victim and caregiver to continue to practice and enhance what was learned while in treatment for progression to take place.

PART 4: DIVERSITY AND ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Human Trafficking in Orlando, Florida

When collaborating with clients, in any capacity, it is important to consider diversity and ethical considerations. With the world becoming more diverse, it is important to consider and understand the cultural needs of the clients. With diversity comes multiculturalism which is a term that describes, or refers to, the elements of race, ethnicity, language, sexual orientation, economic status, and other cultural dimensions (Reese & Vera, 2007). The ethical considerations should show the professionalism and understanding of the counselor as this ensures that the client receives the proper treatment/interventions that will not cause any further potential harm.

Human traffickers do not discriminate when it comes to their targets, as the victims could be male, female, children, or adults, from different demographics, and backgrounds (45+ Most Alarming Florida Human Trafficking Statistics, 2021). But, with more research, there has been a history of systemic racism and trafficking. In many ways, the United States and other governments face human trafficking challenges and trends today that reflect the living legacy of the systemic racism and colonization globalized during the transatlantic slave trade through chattel slavery and regional practices of indigenous dispossession (www.state.gov). U.S. and

global data show human traffickers disproportionately target those in positions of socioeconomic or political vulnerability due to discriminatory policies, who are often people of color or part of a racial minority (www.state.gov). This could make up the majority of those who are human trafficked. Traffickers often seek out individuals with weaker community or family connections, knowing they have fewer safeguards (www.state.gov).

There are also systemic reviews of which individuals would be considered falling into the category of seeking family connections and safety which would be the minors. Recent systematic reviews of the literature identify child maltreatment as a prominent risk factor for minor sex trafficking victimization (Choi, 2015). The age of the minors being trafficked ranges from 10-16 years of age. According to Gibbs (et al., 2018) children with allegations of human trafficking were more likely to be female (OR= 5.68), to be Black or other race (OR= 1.76), and to be non-Hispanic (OR= 1.19). Evidence suggests that it reflects the root causes of child maltreatment, such as dysfunctional family relationships and unsafe environments, and reflects sequelae of maltreatment, such as difficulties in coping and relationships, risky noncommercial sexual behaviors, substance use, and runaway episodes (Choi, 2015; Clayton et al., 2013; Wilson & Widom, 2010).

From the measurements mentioned, it would seem obvious to focus on young girls of color, but there is a subgroup that will be the focus of this section that seems just as susceptible to falling into human trafficking yet gets overlooked which are young Caucasian males. Males who are minor victims of sex trafficking may be under-represented in research and service populations because of an unwillingness to self-identify as engaged in commercial sex or under-identification by law enforcement and service providers (Friedman & Willis, 2013). Trafficked boys may become vulnerable to human trafficking because of emotional abuse rather than

neglect (Reid et al., 2017). This is to say that both boys and girls who are trafficked succumb to emotional and physical abuse, but boys could become more susceptible to emotional abuse which could lead to isolation, withdrawal from others, and alienation (social). Sexual abuse was the strongest predictor of human trafficking: the odds of human trafficking were 2.52 times greater for girls who experienced sexual abuse, and there was an 8.21 times greater risk for boys who had histories of sexual abuse (Reid et al., 2017). The table below is a study that was conducted to show the characteristics and demographics of youths that have been reported with and without human trafficking.

TABLE 1—Descriptive Statistics and Bivariate Analyses Comparing Youths Who Had Human Trafficking Abuse Reports With the Full Sample and With the Matched Sample: Florida, 2009–2015

Demographics and Matched Variables	With Human Trafficking Report, % (n = 913)	Without Human Trafficking Report, % (n = 67 305)	<i>P</i>	Without Human Trafficking Report Matched Sample, % (n = 913)	<i>P</i>
Gender			< .001		≥ .99
Male	12.3	78.2		12.3	
Female	87.7	21.8		87.7	
Race/ethnicity			.43		≥ .99
Non-Hispanic White	36.8	36.1		36.8	
Non-Hispanic Black	49.5	48.3		49.5	
Hispanic	13.4	15.3		13.4	
Other	0.3	0.4		0.3	
Age at first offense, y			< .001		≥ .99
≤ 12	28.9	27.0		28.9	
13–14	47.4	38.0		47.4	
15	14.9	16.9		14.9	
16	7.3	11.5		7.3	
> 16	1.4	6.6		1.4	
Need of special education	36.8	33.0	.02	36.8	≥ .99
Family income is < \$15 000	44.1	29.1	< .001	44.1	≥ .99
Judicial circuit, rank			< .001		≥ .99
Top	17th/Broward, 12.5	11th/Dade, 9.7		17th/Broward, 12.2	
2nd	11th/Dade, 10.1	13th/Hillsborough, 8.2		11th/Dade, 10.0	
3rd	9th/Orange/Osceola, 9.7	6th/Pasco/Pinellas, 8.1		9th/Orange/Osceola, 9.7	
4th	13th/Hillsborough, 9.0	9th/Orange/Osceola, 8.0		13th/Hillsborough, 9.0	
5th	6th/Pasco/Pinellas, 8.0	17th/Broward, 7.6		6th/Pasco/Pinellas, 8.0	

(Table can be found in peer-reviewed article, “Human Trafficking of Minors and Childhood Adversity in Florida Reid, J. A., Baglivio, M. T., Piquero, A. R., Greenwald, M. A., & Epps, N. (2017). Human Trafficking of Minors and Childhood Adversity in Florida. *American Journal of Public Health, 107*(2), 306–311. <https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2016.303564>)

There are many ethical considerations that a professional counselor could align when building that therapeutic alliance with a trafficking victim. The first three (3) ethical standards may seem obvious, but could often get overlooked, Section § A.1.a., Primary Responsibility speaks to the primary responsibility of the professional counselor which is to “respect the dignity and promote the welfare of clients,” and Section § A.2.a, Informed Consent speaks to the “client having the freedom to choose whether to enter or remain a counseling relationship and need adequate information about the counseling process and the counselor” (ACA Code of Ethics, 2014, p. 4). This would be looked at if the client were an adult but was coerced into human trafficking at an early age. If the client is a minor, Section § A.2.d., Inability to Give Consent states that “When counseling minors, incapacitated adults, or other persons unable to give voluntary consent, counselors seek the assent of clients to services and include them in decision making as appropriate” (ACA Code of Ethics, 2014, p.4). Professional counselors should keep in mind that their clients (trafficking victims) could vary in age, which makes it important to keep in mind those who are not able to give consent to seeing a counselor.

Trafficking victims have experienced harrowing trauma, which means that a support system/network should be implemented. Section § A.1.d., Support Network Involvement speaks to considering enlisting the support, understanding, and involvement of others (e.g., religious/spiritual/community leaders, family members, friends) as positive resources, when appropriate, with client consent” (ACA Code of Ethics, 2014, p. 4). It is important for the professional counselor to not cause any harm and/or impose his/her personal beliefs/values. Sections § A.4.a, Avoiding Harm, and A.4.b., Personal Values speak to these. Being that the client could be struggling with guilt, shame, fear, and rejection, the professional counselor should not disrespect his/her client, as well as to not insult, belittle, or force his/her own values (ACA

Code of Ethics, 2014, pgs. 4-5). These ethical standards and being culturally aware could be starting points in helping to bring awareness to young Caucasian boys being human trafficked which could help with preventive measures to the stakeholder such as minors, adults, caregivers, law enforcement, survivors, policymakers, foster care services, and communities.

Section § B.3.b., Interdisciplinary Teams, “When services provided to the client involve participation by an interdisciplinary or treatment team, the client will be informed of the team’s existence and composition, information being shared, and the purposed of sharing such information” (ACA Code of Ethics, 2014, pg. 7). If a professional counselor believes that a clinician would be able to provide a treatment plan, it will behoove the counselor to inform the client as to what is taking place and why. This would help to alleviate any fears and confusion of the client, yet still maintain the trust the counselor has gained throughout their sessions.

As mentioned earlier, it is not the “norm” to hear of young males, young Caucasian males, being human trafficked which can bring about discrimination. The professional counselor must not discriminate against any client, as Section § C.5., Nondiscrimination, “counselors do not condone or engage in discrimination against prospective or current clients...based on age, culture, gender, ethnicity, race...” (ACA Code of Ethics, 2014, pg. 9). Due to the sensitivity and nature of what the trafficking victims have encountered, they should not be exploited as stated in Section § C.6.d., Exploitation of Others, “counselors do not exploit others in their professional relationships” (ACA Code of Ethics, 2014, pg. 10).

Practice efforts can build on evolving and imperfect research that highlights areas in which prevention and intervention efforts can be directed, as in these examples. Elevated risks for trafficking victimization during runaway episodes suggest the potential impact of increased

access to emergency and short-term youth shelters. In addition, associations between trafficking and delinquent behavior (Reid & Piquero, 2014b; Warf et al., 2013) underscore the ongoing need for a strong partnership between child welfare and juvenile justice agencies, including shared prevention programming and assessment protocols. Such partnerships could also improve attention to male victim trafficking, which has been frequently noted as under-identified (Friedman & Willis, 2013). The fact that trafficking allegations frequently occur while children are in child welfare placements supports the need for training on human trafficking for foster care provider agencies and foster parents. Finally, although associations between congregate care placements and trafficking victimization, reported here and elsewhere (Armstrong et al., 2016; Havlicek et al., 2016), may reflect placement patterns rather than causal pathways, these are ideal settings for offering universal and targeted prevention programs such as *My Life, My Choice* (CEBC, 2016).

Another preventive measure for human trafficking would be for counselors, social advocates, healthcare professionals, and teachers to continuously educate themselves on human trafficking by taking courses. Stop, Observe, Ask, and Respond (SOAR) to Health and Wellness Training would be a recommended training for professional counselors, healthcare professionals, and public health professionals due to the many individuals who have experienced trafficking come into contact with individuals during and after their exploitation, but still remain unidentified (www.acf.hhs.gov). The SOAR training equips professionals with skills to identify, treat, and respond appropriately to human trafficking. By applying a public health approach, SOAR seeks to build the capacity of communities to identify and respond to the complex needs of individuals who have experienced trafficking and understand the root causes that make individuals, families, and communities vulnerable to trafficking (www.acf.hhs.gov). Combining

the preventive measures, interventions, training, and ethical standards will help elevate the awareness of human trafficking, especially for young Caucasian males. This would also help create and establish cultural awareness and begin to remove the stigma that males cannot be human trafficked. Section A.7.a., Advocacy states. “when appropriate, counselors advocate at individual, group, institutional, and societal levels to address potential barriers and obstacles that inhibit access and/or the growth and development of clients” (ACA Code of Ethics, 2014, pg. 5).

PART 5: ADVOCACY

Human Trafficking in Orlando, Florida

One can see that the Multicultural and Social Justice Counseling Competencies (MSJCC) believes that privileged and marginalized counselors intervene with, and on behalf, of clients at the intrapersonal, interpersonal, institutional, community, public policy, and international/global levels (MSJCC, 2015). The purpose and theme of the MSJCC are to support and advocate for individuals that have been mistreated to be treated equally and receive support from others. We can look more into this concept from the institutional, community, and public policy levels.

Institutional Level

The Institutional level represents the social institutions in society such as schools, churches, and community organizations (MSJCC, 2015). It is important for professional counselors to recognize any barriers that could cause a detrimental impact on their clients. This would be to include any biases, personal beliefs and values, and judgments from the professional counselor that could be witnessed by the client. When collaborating with survivors of human trafficking it is important to remember that they have been exposed and experienced what many

have not, particularly young Caucasian males. They have been abused, used over and over, and have lost their sense of worth and being. They have become someone's property. As these men begin their journey in transitioning from being someone's property to becoming their own and regaining their sense of identity and power, it can be an arduous process. As mentioned in the previous section, there is the stigma and belief that males cannot become trafficking victims which can affect their mental and physical health. Gender-specific anti-trafficking programs, female-centric services, and awareness campaigns that use non-inclusive language and imagery can contribute to harmful stigma affecting a male's willingness to disclose the trauma they experienced (<https://htcbc.ovc.ojp.gov/>).

The professional counselor would need to have both cultural awareness and an understanding of the barriers of this marginalized population, as well as the willingness to advocate for them. Preconceived notions would need to be addressed at the personal level of the professional counselor as that could flow into the professional level and which could cause further psychological harm to the client. Also, the professional counselor would need to keep ethical considerations in mind throughout the sessions.

Community Level

The community as a whole represents the spoken and unspoken norms, values, and regulations that are embedded in society. The norms, values, and regulations of a community may either be empowering or oppressive to human growth and development (MSJCC, 2015). When it comes to human trafficking, it seems normal to only think that women and children are the only ones to become cultural norms where grooming can lead to traumatic bonding and subsequent exploitation (<https://htcbc.ovc.ojp.gov/>). Male survivors of human trafficking suffer in silence due to self-denial, self-victim-blaming, not being able to accept that they have been

forced into labor and sex trafficking against their will, and/or facing the obstacle of victim-blaming by others, as well as the stigma of males being trafficked (www.preventht.org). As a community, the first step in the awareness of males being human trafficked is overcoming the biases and dismantling the stigmas that males should not share their feelings. Men who share their feelings and/or asking for help are not weak. Doing so could help to begin their emotional, mental, and relational aspects.

Why Males May be Reluctant to Seek and Accept Services	Why Males May Not Be Provided Services or Unable to Find Services
1) Cultural norms may minimize the sexual exploitation and abuse of teen and pre-teen boys and adult men.	1) Disclosure is often required to access services, and providers may not consider that men could be victims of human trafficking. This bias puts the responsibility on male clients to self-identify to receive services that can help in their healing.
2) There are societal beliefs that a man must be strong and that a victim is weak.	2) Outreach and marketing cater to a female victim narrative. This reinforces the bias across providers that men cannot be victims of human trafficking.
3) There is the perception of shame in asking for help.	3) Human trafficking services are not gender-responsive to males.
4) Female-centric language in outreach and awareness-raising materials may limit males from recognizing what they experience as human trafficking.	4) Most services available to clients experiencing trafficking are female-focused. The lack of male-specific services may lead some to tolerate abusive behavior and not seek help.
5) There is a lack of awareness about workers' rights, especially in industries that hire males primarily.	5) Masculinity and gender role expectations devalue mental health services for males. Toxic ideas of masculinity stigmatize and limit male clients' engagement in services.
6) There are cultural norms by which males are not seen or accepted as victims of sexual abuse, assault, or rape.	
7) There is a perception and normalization that low-wage jobs usually include dangerous work conditions in industries that hire males primarily.	

(Table can be found in article, “How to Improve Services for Males Experiencing Trafficking,” National Human Trafficking Training and Technical Assistance Center, 2019. https://nhttac.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/2021-11/How%20to%20Improve%20Services%20for%20Males%20Experiencing%20Trafficking_508_Final_2.pdf)

A professional counselor could assist his/her client by researching and educating himself/herself on the awareness of young Caucasian males being human trafficked, as well as

their mental awareness, and the fact that there are few programs and treatments for this overlooked population. Service providers have a responsibility to ensure males have equitable access to gender-responsive services. By creating a gender-responsive environment that welcomes clients from all genders experiencing human trafficking, they can minimize the stigma male clients face when accessing services (<https://htcbc.ovc.ojp.gov/>).

Public Policy Level

Public policy reflects the local, state, and federal laws and policies that regulate or influence client human growth and development (MSJCC, 2015). Policies, mandates, and laws are consistently being developed being that there is always added information concerning awareness of situations. These policies are to help and advocate, not to exploit. For male trafficking victims, there are few policies put into place, primarily due to the stigma or societal norms that males cannot become victims of human trafficking. The most frequently cited global statistics on human trafficking indicate that men and boys represent nearly half of the total number of human trafficking victims, yet the identification and proper care of male victims remains an enormous challenge to governments and care providers around the world (United States Department of State, 2017). Most programs established to assist trafficking victims do not focus on meeting male survivors' needs. In many countries, even when authorities identify a male trafficking victim, there are few anti-trafficking programs able to provide men or boys specialized assistance, especially safe housing (www.state.gov/wp). According to the United States Department of State (2017), male survivors of trafficking need access to comprehensive and culturally appropriate assistance to meet their needs, such as housing, medical care, mental health services, legal support, and employment assistance, offered through centers that tailor services to individuals, for example:

- Housing: Access to housing that is safe and has resources to meet their unique needs. The use of homeless shelters is often inadequate for traumatized male survivors.
- Health: Access to a wide range of trauma-informed physical and mental health services, including alternatives to traditional care such as peer-to-peer counseling.
- Legal Support: Access to legal support to ensure male survivors are aware of their rights, have access to legal proceedings, and are assisted in contacting consular services from their home country and seeking compensation for lost wages and injuries and other forms of restitution.
- Employment Assistance: Access to employment assistance that includes education, skills training, and job placement.

(<https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Assisting-Male-Survivors-of-Human-Trafficking.pdf>)

While some governments have made progress to improve the anti-trafficking response for male victims, much work remains to ensure men and boys are not overlooked or under-served. Governments should ensure services are sensitive to the needs of all victims, regardless of gender, and adapt methodologies as needed. All trafficking victims should be offered high quality individualized assistance, supported in regaining control of their lives, and empowered to make informed decisions about the options available to them (United States of Department of State, 2017). It is imperative to have more policies about human trafficking for both genders as this would begin to debunk the myth and stigma of young Caucasian males being human trafficked and shed more light on this marginalized population.

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