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LSS Streetworks Beyond the 101

Avoiding Shock and Awe:
Best Practices in Building Reality-Based Awareness
About Human Trafficking in Your Community

May 8, 2019
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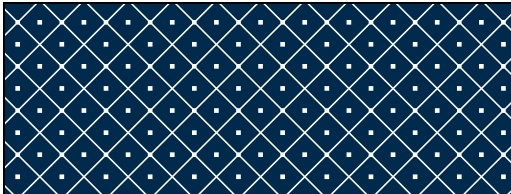
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Objectives

- Describe how representation of human trafficking can be harmful to survivors and the anti-trafficking movement
- Apply positive representation of human trafficking in ways that are helpful to survivors and the anti-trafficking movement
- Reflect survivor-centered, trauma-informed representation in protocol and community response team work

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**Rethinking Representation:
Framing Human Trafficking for Anti-
trafficking professionals**

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Commitment to a Survivor-Centered, Trauma-Informed Approach

- We care deeply about combatting human trafficking, and we are committed to a victim-centered and trauma-informed approach that considers how representation impacts victims/survivors
- We are stewards of knowledge— expertise and sensitive information— and we want to be sure **our message is clear**
- **As practitioners and allies we commit to self-reflection** in how we try to grow and engage people with this movement to improve our response
- This is a framework for thinking, it's not rigid— **disagreement is okay!**

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What is Representation?

rep-re-sen-ta-tion
/ reprəˌzɛnˈtɑːʃ(ə)n/ ⓘ

noun

1. the action of speaking or acting on behalf of someone or the state of being so represented.
"asylum-seekers should be guaranteed good legal advice and representation"
2. the description or portrayal of someone or something in a particular way or as being of a certain nature.
"the representation of women in newspapers"
synonyms: portrayal, depiction, delineation, presentation, rendition
"Rosselli's representation of women"

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"Do I Use Representation?"

WHERE:

- **Digital spaces:** Social media sites, online campaigns, website
- **Public spaces:** Media, training, working with people outside of anti-trafficking movement
- **Private spaces:** Response protocols, training

HOW:

- Outreach and training materials
- Public awareness campaigns
- Development and fundraising content
- Statistics, facts and data
- Testimonials, quotes
- Web content, social media
- Anecdotal information and stories




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Representation is a Double-Edged Sword

| | |
|---|--|
| BENEFITS TO THE MOVEMENT | DRAWBACKS TO THE MOVEMENT |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">Increases awareness and focus on the issueImproved policy and proceduresIncreased fundingMore victims identified, survivors served | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Can hurt survivorsCan lead to fewer victims recognizedCan hurt movement:<ul style="list-style-type: none">Incorrect facts lead to misinformed publicMisallocation of resources & effort |



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Storytelling: Common THEMES

- "Ideal victim"
- US citizens (often white females) being trafficked by foreign nationals
- There is a Savior
- Females desperate to escape
- Rescuing victims is the end of the process for "saving" someone
- Emphasis on law enforcement approach
- Victims know they are victims
- Perpetrators are men (black men)
- Victims are always kidnapped and physically restrained
- Only women and girls are trafficked
- Human trafficking is just sex trafficking
- Conflation of sex work and sex trafficking
- Transportation/smuggling of victims across borders

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Common missteps: anti-trafficking practitioners

- Word choice
- Telling stories that are not our own
- Sensationalizing
 - Using suffering to fuel development
 - Focusing on the worst of survivor experiences
 - Emphasizing victimization and harm
- Not being trauma-informed



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Data, Statistics, and Facts



Bill Gates @BillGates Follow

We can't address what we can't measure. To end modern slavery, we need the best available data: b-gat.es/2fDhLHb

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Common missteps: prevalence data

- Different sources have wildly different estimates due to methodology, definitions of trafficking, and scope
- Creating data is challenging when we still don't know:
 - how many victims
 - average duration of trafficking experience
 - average amount of wages lost
 - how often the same person experiences trafficking situations,
 - which countries have higher incidences of trafficking among their populations, etc.
- Extrapolating samples across different contexts is tricky

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Commonly Shared Faulty Statistics

Average trafficking age of entry into sex trade is 12-14 years old [12]

80% of all trafficking victims are children [15]

Runaways will be trafficked within 72 hours of running [16]

There are 100,000-300,000 child prostitutes/ sex trafficked youth in the US [17]

Super Bowl is the biggest trafficking event in the world [13, 14]

(insert city/county/state name) is one of the top places for trafficking in the US [19]

There are 2 children sold every minute in the US/ every 26 seconds a child's sold into slavery [15]

Trafficking is \$9.8 billion industry in the United States [18]

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Common missteps: Misunderstanding Methodology

- **Sample size**
 - The "n" or number of data points measured in a study
- **Sample variety**
 - Who participated? How were participants chosen?
 - Age, location, nationality, gender
- **Bias:**
 - What is the point of view of the people conducting the study?
 - EXAMPLE: TIP Report holds countries to the US definitions of trafficking, rather than the global definitions, and rankings can be influenced by relationships with the US
- **Age of study**

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Common missteps: professional opinions

Presenting professional estimates, opinions, and/or guesswork as hard facts

- HT researchers often do not use the same rigorous data standards as researchers from other human rights fields
- Professionals may try to fill information void with their opinions

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Why does this matter?



- Framing the issue for community and systems to understand the crime
- Influences policies, funding, and response protocols
- Determines "who is trafficked" and "what trafficking looks like"
- CONSIDER: Who's missing from the dominant narrative? How does this affect their experiences as victims?

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Allan Bakke – Southwest MN Safe Harbor Regional Navigator 


Reality Based Awareness



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DOES EXPLOITATION/TRAFFICKING HAPPEN IN RURAL COMMUNITIES?

Safe Harbor Statewide Services



2017-2019 exploitation and trafficking case consults logged in Apptool for SV Minnesota Regional Navigator.

| County | Population | Youth Cases |
|------------|------------|-------------|
| Lincoln | 5,709 | 2 |
| Murray | 8,344 | 2 |
| Pipestone | 9,127 | 5 |
| Rock | 9,491 | 4 |
| Jackson | 9,951 | 3 |
| Watonwan | 10,839 | 4 |
| Cottonwood | 11,320 | 3 |
| Fairbault | 13,671 | 3 |
| Sibley | 14,869 | 3 |
| Redwood | 15,278 | 6 |
| Martin | 19,865 | 5 |
| Nobles | 21,963 | 6 |
| Brown | 25,245 | 5 |
| Lyon | 25,823 | 6 |
| Le Sueur | 27,881 | 4 |
| Nicollet | 33,892 | 6 |
| Blue Earth | 47,220 | 8 |

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Survivors: Misrepresentation and Reality Redirecting Representation

Stereotype Representation 

Reality Based Representation 

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Survivors: Misrepresentation and Reality
Redirecting Representation

Infantilizing Representation Reality Based Representation

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Survivors: Misrepresentation and Reality
Redirecting Representation

Oppression Representation Reality Based Representation

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Sexual
Exploitation
and sex
Trafficking in
Southwest MN

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Committing to ethical representation

GENERALIZATION

ETHICAL REPRESENTATION

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What can we do with this information?

Use it in your teams and day-to-day life

- Apply this framework to content you share
- Choose to avoid common missteps, regardless of whether other organizations use them
- Implement tools or framework to guide future content
- Ask for a second opinion
- Include survivor-leaders in process of editing and publishing content
- Focus on medical aspects or public health aspects of victimization
- **Create a representation protocol**

Spread the word to other anti-trafficking community members

- If you see something, respectfully say something
- **Kindly and respectfully** use teachable moments if colleagues use questionable content
- Share this information with other practitioners in the movement
- **Publicly post your commitment to ethical representation**

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