

Transcript for Webinar 3

Trafficking of Youth with Disabilities: What Providers Serving At-Risk Youth Need to Know

JODY HASKIN: Welcome and thank you for joining us today for this important webinar on the intersection of human trafficking and youth with disabilities. I'm Jody Haskin and with me today is Jae Jin Pak. We are with the International Organization for Adolescents, or IOFA, and we will be co-presenting on the training today on the trafficking of youth with disabilities.

This webinar is brought to you as a partnership between IOFA, the National Human Trafficking and Disabilities Working Group, the National Resource Center for Reaching Victims, and Vision 21. This is an Office of Victims of Crime funded project.

We're thrilled you're joining us today and we'd like to take a moment to introduce ourselves and our work on the topic of today's webinar. My role at IOFA for the past seven years has focused on youth who've experienced sex trafficking or labor trafficking. My work centers on partnering with direct service organizations and helping them to build capacity to be better equipped to understanding human trafficking, identify young people who might be trafficked, and to provide appropriate

services or referral for young people who have experienced trafficking.

JAE JIN PAK: Thanks, Jody. Hey there, everybody. My name is Jae Jin Pak. I've worked in the areas of gender based violence prevention, crisis intervention, disability, cultural competency, and anti trafficking. I'm grateful for the opportunity to be the project coordinator for this project. I also am a person living with multiple disabilities. Vision impairment and epilepsy. Well, supporting people with disabilities, it is a personal matter to me.

JODY HASKIN: As you'll learn today, human trafficking is a complex crime and addressing it requires communities to work together in ways that they may not have before. We know that no single agency can do it alone. This project is a collaboration of organizations with varying areas of expertise. Including addressing the trafficking of children and youth, working with persons with disabilities, and addressing violence and crime.

Jae Jin and I represent IOFA, which is a US based non-profit organization working globally since 1999 to address human trafficking and exploitation. And also the National Human Trafficking and Disabilities Working Group. The working group's mission is to prevent the trafficking of individuals with disabilities and deaf individuals and also to advance the health and well-being of survivors with disabilities and deaf survivors of

trafficking through research, policy analysis, technical assistance, and training.

This presentation was created in collaboration with survivors of trafficking, advocates, and self advocates in the disability community.

As a result of participating in this webinar today we hope that you'll gain the following. The role of a provider serving youth with disabilities and addressing human trafficking, sex and labor trafficking, ways to identify and support potential or confirmed youth survivors of human trafficking with disabilities, and understanding the intersection between human trafficking and disability.

You might be wondering why providers serving at risk youth need to learn about human trafficking. What's the connection there? As providers serving youth with disabilities and their families and at risk youth, you're in a unique position to help prevent, identify, and address potential human trafficking situations. Our goal is to arm you with the tools to understand how youth are trafficked so you can recognize a potential trafficking situation with the young people you work with. Addressing human trafficking among youth in your program is consistent with supporting and empowering the youth you work with to live healthy and positive lives.

IOFA has worked for over 20 years to help organizations respond to youth trafficking. There is a lot of information that currently exists to train professionals who work with youth in child welfare with runaway homeless youth, with LGBTQ plus youth, and many other programs that serve young people. And there are significant gaps in the systems and protocols available specifically to identify and serve trafficked youth with disabilities.

Anecdotally we know that this crime is happening to youth with disabilities and we understand that there are many identifiers and promising practices to address youth trafficking that can be applied to all youth. We also know that the traffickers target, groom, and control young people based on various needs that the young people have.

In this presentation, we'll discuss some of the ways that youth with disabilities are trafficked and some universal red flags that can be applied to all communities of youth.

Throughout this presentation, you'll hear the terms youth, children, or child, and minor. For the most part we will be using the term youth because it is the broadest way to define young people with regard to the population you serve. We know that young people of all ages are trafficked and the guidance we are giving today will fit best with the definition of youth that includes young people from grade school to their mid '20s.

We will use the term minors to describe youth under the age of 18. This is important when defining human trafficking because there is a special clause for minors who are sex trafficked. For example, a minor youth who trades sex for anything of value is automatically considered a victim of a crime of human trafficking. We'll talk more in depth about this later.

Jae Jin?

JAE JIN PAK: Sorry about that. All youths are at risk of being exploited by traffickers. However, research indicates that youths with disabilities are at least three times more likely than children without disabilities to be sexually abused. Children with intellectual and mental health disabilities appeared to be the most at risk with 4.6 times the risk of sexual abuse as their peers without disabilities.

Many of the same factors that put young people at risk for sexual exploitation also puts them at risk for trafficking. Researchers agree that there is a growing number of sexually exploited and trafficked children with disabilities in the United States. Yet few programs emphasize the unique experiences and needs of this population.

We understand through anecdotal evidence and from some research from the field that trafficking is happening in our disabled disability communities. We know the risk factors, we

know that traffickers are targeting young people with disabilities, but we are still at the formative stages of research, identification, and programming for youth with disabilities impacted by trafficking.

The literature suggests that although the number of exploited children with disabilities is increasing, we still have very few programs that can adequately and confidently meet the unique care and service needs of this population. That is where you come in. This training will provide you with the guidance on understanding what trafficking is, how it impacts young people with disabilities, and how to support children and youth with disabilities who are also survivors of trafficking.

The start will describe the crime of human trafficking and talk about how it works in terms of youth with disabilities.

JODY HASKIN: Almost everyone has heard of human trafficking in popular media including in movies and viral online posts.

However, many of these claims are not actually cases of human trafficking at all. To help get a better understanding of what human trafficking is and isn't, we'll start with a few true or false questions. As I ask each question you can jot down your own response to compare to the final answer.

The first statement is human trafficking only takes place in large cities or in other countries. Take a moment now and consider

whether this is true or false. Now we'll reveal the answer, which is false. Human trafficking takes place all around the world, including throughout all communities in the United States in cities, suburbs, and in rural areas.

Cases of human trafficking have been identified in every state in the nation and no community is immune, including the disability community. Human trafficking happens in our schools, restaurants, and even within people's homes. Let's try another statement.

The second statement is in order to be considered trafficking, a person must be moved across a state, city, or country border. Take a moment and consider whether this is true or false. Now we'll reveal the answer, which is false. Human trafficking does not require any movement. The term trafficking may seem misleading in this case because we may be used to hearing the term trafficking in conjunction with moving illegal items across a border such as arms or drugs.

All right, let's try one more statement. Here's statement number three, most youth who experience trafficking are initially kidnapped by their trafficker. Take a moment to consider if this is a misconception. Now we'll reveal the answer, which is false. Physically taking someone rarely happens in a trafficking situation. In most trafficking situations, traffickers use tactics or trick or coerce a young person into the trafficking situation. They

want the youth to be compliant and easily controlled so the trafficker can use them to make money long term.

Did you get the answers right? If you didn't get all the answers right, that's OK. We hope you learned something new from this little exercise.

Now let's learn exactly what youth trafficking is. Generally speaking youth trafficking is the exploitation of an individual by a trafficker for the purposes of gaining either labor or sex at the expense of the youth. This is a crime both at the federal and state levels.

Before we move on, I'd like to take a moment now to make a note on the language we use in this presentation. Human trafficking is a crime. The youth, the children, and the adults who are trafficked are victims of a crime so the word victim may sometimes be used in order to ensure that they are not seen as complicit in any criminal acts that they may have been forced to perform.

When discussing anyone who has been trafficked we know that individuals who have experienced trafficking sometimes would prefer to be referred to as a survivor or a person with lived experience among others. Based on the input we hear from those we work with, we will be using the term survivor, person with lived experience, or person who has experienced trafficking.

What you see here is an excerpt of the Federal Trafficking Victims Protection Act, or the TBPA. Now, this is the definition of human trafficking that makes it a crime across the United States on a federal level. Now also, each state in the United States has its own level of law but the state laws are not consistent with each other and often do not have as severe penalties for traffickers as the TBPA does. For these reasons we'll use the federal definition for the purposes of this presentation.

Trafficking can take the form of sex or labor and there is often an overlap of sex and labor trafficking, a combination. In adults, force, fraud, or coercion is used to exploit a person to perform sex acts or to provide labor for the benefit of the trafficker. Benefits can be money or anything of value.

In individuals under the age of 18 force, fraud, and coercion do not need to be present in sex trafficking. However, for all ages force, fraud, and coercion does need to be present in order to be considered a crime of labor trafficking.

It's less important that you understand that the definition of trafficking and more important that you get a sense of what the cases look like and feel like so you can intervene if you suspect that one of the youth you work with might be trafficking situation. So first we'll talk about some of the basic elements of trafficking and this should help you recognize not only the actions associated

with trafficking, but also to identify the risk factors and the youth that you serve.

Now, in these circles are the three main elements of human trafficking. The first element is process and refers to a way that a trafficker might obtain or harbor, recruit, transport, or provide, or obtain a person which might be directly or through use of peers. Please notice that any one of these elements need to be a part of the process and that movement is not necessary to the crime of trafficking. We know there are many cases in which young people are trafficked within their own homes by a relative or a caregiver.

The next part is the means, which is force, fraud, or coercion. And we already know that in order for there to be a crime of sex trafficking if a person is under the age of 18 there needs to be no sign of force, fraud, or coercion.

Let's take a moment and talk about what force, fraud, and coercion do mean. Force means something that's physical force or torture, it can be beating, abuse, sleep or food deprivation.

And fraud is the act of deceiving someone. A common example of fraud in trafficking is offering somebody a position for a job and then that position does not exist or the person is not paying for that position but forces them to do it anyway. They might trick a young person into a relationship or friendship, in return the

trafficker may require the youth to turn over money from a job they're forced to do or to provide commercial sex acts.

And finally, coercion refers to the attempts to get someone to do something including blackmail or threats. In youth with disability this often means exploiting trust with relationships or insecurities in general. A trafficker might say, you don't have any friends, if you do this, you will get lots of friends. Or, I won't get your mobility device unless you do this one thing for me.

Coercion often includes threats of violence when it comes to trafficking, such as, if you don't perform sex acts with this person, I will hurt your younger sister.

Then this leads to the last element, which you see in the last circle, which is the end. The end describes why the traffickers would want to use the person in the first place. In labor trafficking a person is forced to work or provide services without compensation or for an adequate compensation. Labor trafficking is often in unregulated industries or low paid industries. And these include landscaping, agriculture, carnivals, it can also include any industry or fields.

Sex trafficking, the end is commercial sex acts. So, a commercial sex act is any sex act in exchange for money or something of value. So examples of commercial sex include pornography, webcams, exotic performance, and prostitution. There can be a

situation where a youth is being photographed nude and the pictures are distributed for money, drugs, or something else with a value attached to it.

We'll go over some examples shortly but first, let's consider some of the social structures that puts a youth with disability at risk for trafficking in the first place. Now that we have an understanding of what human trafficking is, let's learn more about how we define disability and how having a disability can be a risk factor for youth trafficking. Thanks,

JAE JIN PAK: Jody. So, how do you define disability? So, on the slide is information about the ADA or the Americans with Disabilities Act. ADA is the legal way to define disability and it has three general main criteria. First, physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. So these are any kind of physical or mental impairments that interfere with a person's ability for everything from going to school, going to work, eating, socializing, any kind of what everyone likes to do and is entitled to do.

Secondly, has a record of such an impairment. If they have a diagnosis from a doctor or their assessments from other credentials and professionals saying disability, they would because they're having a disability.

And thirdly, is the criteria of is regarded as having an impairment. Meaning if a reasonable person through just by observation or interaction with somebody can reasonably assume that that person has a disability because of what they-- whether it's a person's movement or communication style, a person can feel that this person has a disability or would have record of having a disability.

Now, it is that the definition of the ADA is included here not just so you have the verbiage, but also to have as a reminder that the ADA is a source at the federal level for all guidelines that service providers have a legal responsibility to follow in regards to being accessible. And accomidating to people with disabilities.

Now, in addition to the ADA, there is a another definition, which is the social model of disability. The social model of disability is recognized in the convention of the rights of persons with disabilities under the United Nations. The social model of disability defines disability as a social construct based upon societal structures and expectations. It is these structures, both physical and intangible, that limit a person with functional differences rather than an impairment. It is simply part of the individual.

For example, buildings were built with ramps rather than stairs. A person requiring a wheelchair for mobility would not be functionally limited in that particular space.

It's important to remember that disability can be physical, mental, emotional, sensory related, or the result of a social construct. What is most important to recognize is that we are all unique and a youth individualized support needs should be identified and respected.

Talk about some different types or categories of disabilities. Now, for the next few slides these are under the medical model and the medical model is the model of disability that are really looking at functional differences of individuals and the different individuals may have. These impairments are only important in society or culture that requires defining on diagnostic level. It's important to kind of think about it that way.

In your role as a service provider, you should not be screening for impairments in the way a physician might. What is important for you is to be aware of any functional supports a youth may require.

In terms of physical or mobility impairments, the main criteria is that people in terms of movement and is functionally limited, so if the ability to move their arms or limbs is limited. They may use mobility devices, such as canes, wheelchairs, or walkers, for example. In addition, somebody who has a limb amputated or has some type of paralysis would be considered having a mobility disability.

So in terms of sensory impairments or sensory disabilities, these are ones where one or more senses are functionally limited. A person with a sensory disability or sensory impairment may use an adaptive device, be it glasses, a hearing aid, a white cane for someone who is blind, and so on. And again, examples could be someone who was blind or deaf. It also is important that individuals who are no sense-- who lost their sense of smell or touch are also can be considered sensory-impaired.

Moving on to developmental and intellectual disabilities. These can be-- certain developmental disabilities could have physical characteristics-- affect a person's body or physicality. Other disabilities in this category-- in this type can also affect learning, processing, behavior, or communication may all be limited in functionality. Keep it-- It's important to keep in mind that in developmental disabilities, the needs of individuals with disabilities vary tremendously, can be all kinds of different types of service needs and abilities themselves under this umbrella. Some examples of developmental or intellectual or disabilities could be cerebral palsy and the autism spectrum disorder.

And then we'll also highlight mental and emotional disability. So some of the main criteria are functional limitations vary, in terms of what type of disability this person, as well as their needs and access of service. And their needs for different types of services will vary tremendous well. Examples of mental health and

emotional disabilities would be mood disorders, eating disorders, personality or behavioral disability.

JODY HASKIN: Thanks Jae Jin. We're going to talk now about some risk factors for all youth of trafficking of sex and labor. And youth, just by virtue of their age, lack of experience, and developmental stage, are at risk for human trafficking. This includes young people from all ethnic groups, socioeconomic backgrounds, and abilities.

We know that all youth can be targeted by traffickers, but why? Some of these common situations and characteristics or traits of youth include having access to the internet, a desire to connect with others, the feeling of being misunderstood, having family conflict. Young people crave independence. They may have risk-taking behaviors, and also their lack of experience in the world.

It's important for you to learn about the risk factors of trafficking in youth, because all can be targeted and exploited for the reasons you see here, although this is not an exhaustive list. I would especially like to highlight what is often unsupervised access to the internet, coupled with a desire to develop romantic relationships or friendships, or simply to connect to others-- to understand them, perhaps better than the youth feels that their parents or their family members can. Traffickers may pose as a friend or romantic interest online to build rapport during the grooming process.

While all youth may be targeted by traffickers, there are some groups that are at much higher risk. These include young people who are undocumented, who are runaway and homeless youth, youth with disabilities, LGBTQ+ youth, youth placed in foster care or group homes, youth involved with the justice system or with multiple placements, youth with a history of abuse and neglect, and young people of color. Yet these identified higher risk groups are even more vulnerable, as they've been historically marginalized. The systemic disenfranchising of these groups often happens today, and traffickers exploit the fact that these particular youths belong to chronically underserved communities.

You can see that youth with disabilities has been highlighted. Let's talk a little bit more about the specific risk factors that make it more likely for youth with a disability to be targeted.

JAE JIN PAK: So why are youth with disabilities at higher risk? There are a number of reasons that youth with disabilities are at higher risk for trafficking that we know of and we will share. We also know that there may be many factors that we haven't yet explored. Because the identification of this intersection is new, much of the knowledge that we provide is based on cases, anecdotal experiences, and focus group interviews, with members of the disability community.

Trafficking, in itself, is a clandestine by nature, so it is often underreported in both youth with and without disability. By

sharing what we know so far, we hope that you will be able to contribute to the accuracy of reporting of human trafficking in those you serve. In short, the numbers of-- the members of the anti-trafficking community are working together with stakeholders in the disability community to learn more about this issue, but what we provide in this training will not be exhaustive.

To transparently discuss risk factors for trafficking in youth with disabilities, we have to start with an uncomfortable truth.

Although everyone participating in this webinar works to ensure access and equity for youth with disabilities and at-risk youth, it cannot be ignored that many factors present in our society have contributed to an environment that is not supportive of this population.

While we as community members and service providers are working to bridge some of the gaps and barriers you see here, traffickers zero in on and exploit these same factors when targeting their victim. It is important to understand that it isn't so much the person that is vulnerable here, but the system we have created around them that may not adequately meet their needs.

Let's talk about the aspects the culture, of society, that contribute to making youth with disabilities a higher risk target of traffickers. In the first box, you see that youth with disabilities are socialized to follow an able-bodied authority. A common message sent to youth is that able-bodied adults and peers know

better, and you should trust their judgment simply because they are able-bodied, while you are not.

There are also a number of myths and negative stereotypes surrounding the disability community. A negative picture of dependency is often painted of these individuals. And this reinforces the incorrect message that people with disabilities are somehow less than their typically-abled peers and will require an able-bodied person to take care of them.

Another concerning myth is the youth with disabilities don't need to be taught about their bodies, because they will not be sexually active. This often can mean that a youth will have never been taught about body autonomy. 97% to 99% of abusers are known and trusted by their victims. So not informing all youth of their rights and boundaries is incredibly dangerous. Myths and stereotypes also serve to promote the othering of disability, which allows for disabled youth to be seen as an outsider that is different and should be ignored by society.

This brings me to the third factor, which is social powerlessness and isolation. Social powerlessness is a concern with all youth, but is especially problematic in youth that have been disenfranchised or historically viewed and treated as less valuable to society than their typically-abled peers. Society does not often see youth, especially those with intellectual disability or developmental disability, as having power.

This may lead to overall experiences of social powerlessness, which might be exploited by the trafficker, or may be responsible for the youth not reporting their situation, because they have been isolated, or they have been socialized in a climate where they are often not believed or told that their situation is normal because of their disability. The continued promotion of powerlessness and lack of the voice may lead to a youth with disabilities to be isolated by peers, providers, and even family.

If they have communication differences as well, this may lead to further lack of social integration and increase the risk of experiencing powerlessness to speak up about something being wrong, or becoming more isolated and less likely to be identified by anyone that [INAUDIBLE]

Fortunately, however, many people such as yourselves work to promote and improve the support we provide for youth. The problem, however, is that we still have gaps that must be filled in order to be successful in keeping youth with disabilities safe from crimes like human trafficking. One of the ways that we can do this is through education. As of now, considerable gaps in education have been identified that are known to and exploited by traffickers.

The box you see here lists the main areas, which we'll go over, and adequately provide for youth with disabilities. Traffickers know these gaps and exploit them. Let's talk about the

implication of each. First, let me talk about how many of-- let's see. How many of you feel that the youth you serve have a solid understanding of personal safety? Do you currently, at your agency, provide specific teaching to youth on safe touch, body anatomy, physical boundaries, or self-defense?

Other topics that should be covered are how to keep your money safe, how to avoid physical injury, and who to reach out to for help if injury does occur. All individuals with disabilities are simply that-- individuals. It is vital that we do learning needs assessments and develop or seek out accessible learning materials that can meet the learning needs of the individual. A youth that knows not to interact with strangers, or how to exit a situation that feels uncomfortable will be considerably more protected from traffickers

The next box here is online safety, and the importance of this topic-- of this type of training cannot be overstated. We know that youth use the internet, and it is often unsupervised. Do the youth you serve know how to be safe online? Do they know not to share passwords or personal identifying information? Traffickers especially look for people that share locations, private information, and details of their personal life that can be used to exploit the person during the grooming process, or connect and bond with a youth.

Youth with disabilities, like any other youth, should be taught to navigate social media. Education should cover topics like what images are safe to share, how to make an account private, and when to report inappropriate behavior. This leads to the topic of healthy relationships, both online and off.

Traffickers very often still target youth online in chat rooms, discussion boards, and social media sites-- Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and Snapchat. Youth with disabilities may use the online or physical world to reach out. In either setting a young person must be taught what a disability relationship looks like. This would be a great opportunity for peers or other youth to speak with peers both with and without disabilities about what red flags would be in friendships, along with physical relationship.

The misconception that youth with disabilities do not have or are not interested in sex is false, and should never be assumed. If youth are not educated on healthy relationships in both the romantic and even in workplace situations, a trafficker may be able to convince the youth that they are not a victim, but an employee, a girl or boyfriend, or friends, and so nothing illegal or bad is happening.

Youth with disabilities require the same level of training that we give youth without disabilities. And all education should, of course, be accessible to accommodate a wide variety of learning needs. It goes without saying that youth with disabilities should

also be educated on human trafficking. They should know what it is, that it is a crime, and what it looks-- and what to look for.

They should also be educated on how to report this crime and how to get help if they are involved already in a trafficking situation. Please be sure to reiterate that trafficking is a crime and not the youth's fault, no matter what. The youth who is trafficked is a victim of a crime, but also a survivor of trafficking.

While many individuals with disabilities understand their rights and serve as advocates to empower others in the community, youth with disabilities may be less likely to know what their rights are. Without this information, a trafficker can say anything to the potential victim and justify it as normal or fair for someone like them. These include legal rights to education, supports, and the rights of all people. An example of this, especially in labor trafficking, is their right to be paid the same as anyone else.

This brings me to the last box we'll cover on this, which is the education on the value of labor. Youth with disabilities-- especially those who are 15, 16, and beginning to look for their first job-- need to understand what they must be paid under the law, along with what a typical wage would be for the job to which they are applying. It is essential to talk about labor laws and to describe what a typical workday looks like, including breaks in meals.

All people should know what they are worth, and the sad reality is many do not. This includes adults and youth. Helping youth with disabilities and at-risk youth to learn more about the labor market, how to interview for a job, what to expect in the workplace, and more will set them up for a truly successful future-- while avoiding dangerous criminal situations like labor trafficking.

We just covered some areas where we as providers may be lacking in how we serve youth with disabilities. There are also risk factors that are related to the support we do provide, as these are also known to traffickers and may be exploited at any opportunity.

Let's start with communication. Some agencies are highly accessible and provide interpreters, translators, speech and language pathologists, and other team members that can communicate in a variety of individual ways, in order to support the unique challenges experienced by some youth with disabilities. In both labor and sex trafficking, the trafficker is always in control. They control documents, money, emotions, and situations.

When youth live with a disability affecting their communication, the trafficker may very well present as an interpreter, possibly even stating that the youth speaks a language or signs in a

language that no other interpreter can understand. The trafficker controls aspects of communication, but also support in general.

Any youth that needs an assistive tech device to communicate or manage sensory and mobility needs will be at risk for exploitation by a trafficker. Initially, the trafficker may try to relate to the youth by saying that they don't care if the youth has a wheelchair, or that it's totally cool if the youth has a hearing aid. They might shame other people for bullying the youth for their differences, and treat the youth as if they are the one person who will never see them as different or less valuable.

Once a bond is once a bond is created between the youth and the trafficker, having the need for any kind of assistive support may be exactly what the trafficker exploits. If the youth does not do as they're told, the trafficker can then threaten to not allow the youth access to what they need in order to see, hear, walk, or communicate until they comply.

Healthcare can also be needed. Healthcare can also be a need for some youth with disabilities, and this goes back to the importance of educating youth about space, touch, and physical boundaries. A trafficker may abuse or allow others the opportunity to abuse a youth requiring personal care. They may also withhold necessary personal care, such as changing soiled briefs, or feeding, or helping to transition from a bed to a chair to force compliance from the youth.

The last three boxes you see here are also very much related. Youth with disabilities are entitled to a fair education, safe housing, and benefits to pay for whatever supports they may need to live successfully-- happy lives in the community. A trafficker may exploit these supports, especially with regard to benefits. They may set up direct deposit, collect a youth disability benefit check, or force the youth to sign their checks over to them in exchange for living in the house run by the trafficker.

They may also tell the youth that they don't deserve to go to school, or that they will be caught and treated as a criminal if they tell anyone about their job or living arrangement. A youth living in a group home that is unhappy, there may be offered a quote, "better living arrangement," unquote by a trafficker, and then not allowed to leave.

JODY HASKIN: Thank you, Jae Jin. I really appreciate all of the information about some of the risk factors that youth with disabilities might have. Now that we've discussed some of those risk factors that place youth with disabilities in situations at high risk for trafficking, let's talk about who the traffickers are.

Often when we talk about trafficking, people are surprised to know that anyone can be a trafficker-- men, women, caregivers, and persons of all backgrounds can be traffickers. What is key here, however, is that the trafficker is very often someone who is

known to the youth, and someone the youth trusts. Let's take a look at a case that highlights this fact.

Here the trafficker was the youth's mother and full time caregiver. She was charged with sex trafficking her 14-year-old daughter, who lives with mental and physical disabilities, and she trafficked her in exchange for money and drugs. This is a case-- this case is an example what of what is called interfamilial trafficking because the trafficker is a family member. Even outside of the family, however, caregivers can be traffickers, and use the role of authority and trusted relationship to break down barriers with youth as they bathe, dress, and assist with other hygiene needs.

In this case, the youth's multiple disabilities and dependence on care from her mother made it more likely for her to be targeted for trafficking and less likely for her to be able to leave her situation. Young people who depend on a parental caregiver may also be isolated from others much more easily, as they already live with their trafficker, who also happens to have control of their documents their mobility, sometimes their communication, and more.

Even if the young person is abused, it doesn't mean that the youth is not able to form a bond with their caregiver or their trafficker, and in this case with their mother. This also makes it harder to leave. The trafficker may use coercion through threats

that the young person will be taken out of the home, and that the only caregiver they know will be taken away as well, if they tell anyone what is happening.

This case also highlights that the trafficker also just needed to receive something of value in order to meet the trafficking definition. Receiving drugs as a form of payment would still be considered trafficking, even without money exchanging hands.

Traffickers often engage with youth with disabilities online, because it's an anonymous and low risk place to begin the process of building trust with the young person. Traffickers will often present themselves as potential friends, or romantic partners, or even employers. In the online environment they may also present as younger peers, or youth with similar interests.

Youth with disabilities who might require more advanced care than their family's able to provide, or they may have grown up in a-- that means they may have grown up or currently live in a group home or placement for youth with disability. If this information gets to a trafficker online, or they can learn from this young person what they don't like about their living situation, the trafficker might offer the young person a different one in order to lure them away from that living situation.

Traffickers might also use young people to befriend a youth with a disability, and recruitment can happen anywhere, not just

online. It's more likely to happen in a place where there are many youth who were out and about, such as the mall. Sometimes maybe social security offices, or especially key for older youth and young adults-- if anybody might be accessing money or checks that a trafficker can coerce the victim to cash for them on top of whatever other labor or sex services they're exploiting them for.

Once the trafficker identifies a youth to target, either in person or online-- and online can include interactive video games, or chat rooms, or social media-- the traffickers will get to know the youth through befriending them and acting like they care about them. Traffickers will build trust with the youth, and learn more information about the youth's needs and desires, and gain necessary information so they can determine what would be easiest to exploit.

At this point, they're often making promises of whatever the youth needs the most-- be it love, friendship, independence, a sense of belonging, food, or simply a better life. Traffickers may make false promises, offer gifts, or pay for things in order to indebt the youth to the trafficker. Blackmailing and gaslighting are common tactics used by traffickers to control youth. Youth may be told that they are now criminals and can't tell anyone or they will be arrested.

Youth are often convinced that they got themselves into the situation, and feel guilt and self blame. Traffickers may also force or threaten to hurt a family member to coerce a young person to do as they're told. In this case three traffickers targeted young men at a group home with programs for youth with developmental disabilities and substance abuse rehabilitation programs.

In this case, the traffickers befriended the youth and learned that they felt lonely, disconnected, and were struggling with addiction to drugs. When the traffickers discovered this, they began to offer a sense of belonging by communicating often and being friendly toward the youth. They also supplied the young men with drugs. The youth were reminded by the traffickers that if they told anyone else about what was going on, it would be found out that they were doing drugs illegally, and that they could get kicked out of their program, and they could also get in trouble with the police.

When the youth built up enough debt to the trafficker because of the drugs they provided them, the trafficker forced them into performing commercial sex acts for strangers, and the traffickers kept the money. Soon the traffickers began to withhold the drugs that they were providing to the youth. While youth were experience withdrawal, the traffickers would then withhold drugs from the youth until they agreed to perform commercial sex acts.

They continued this cycle, including using their addiction to drugs to continue the commercial sexual exploitation. Now this was an actual case that took place over decades with multiple young men who were targeted as victims of sex trafficking. Let's take a look at some of the grooming tactics that the trafficker used over the years.

First, he identified a group home for young men. He knew that the young men in the group homes were already struggling, so the next part was to target and befriend some of the young men. He used friendship and drugs to get close to them, by providing something that they desired. He used that same tactic of providing drugs as a control tactic.

Another tactic was to tell the youth that he'd snitch that they were using drugs. Once the young men were hooked on the drugs, the trafficker would force them into sex trafficking to pay off their drugs. When they refused, he would withhold the drugs until they complied.

Now let's do one last case study to determine if this is a case of youth labor trafficking. Remember, there needs to be an element of process, means, and an end, so keep that in mind as we go through with this case study. Now, in this case, a group of school administrators at a school for youth with disabilities identified students who wanted to get a job. Then the administrators deceived these students into thinking they were not good enough

to work anywhere else, and the jobs at the school would be their only option.

The administrators forced the students to assemble, tag, bag, and sell jewelry for a nearby factory. The students sometimes need at most between \$0.50 to \$2 per hour. The administrators told the students that they would not be able to find jobs, even after they graduated, so they would need to stay there. So was this a case of labor trafficking? Let's take a look.

OK, so in this case the process involved was recruitment. The administrators targeted and recruited their own student body to exploit for the administrators' gain. As you recall, the next element is the means of trafficking, and although some of them were minors, labor trafficking still require an element of force, fraud, or coercion to be present in order for the situation to be considered specifically a trafficking situation.

In this case, fraud was used to deceive the students into thinking they were not good enough to work anywhere else, and that jobs at the school would be their only option. And the end, of course, is labor. Here, labor was provided for free or for very low compensation, with students making very little money. The youth were controlled through gaslighting techniques, where the administrators told the students they would not be able to find jobs even after they graduated. So yes, this turns out it is a labor trafficking situation, and this is based on a real case that

happened on the east coast in the early-- in the mid 2000s-- around 2013.

JAE JIN PAK: Thanks, Jody. So talk about the role of the provider. So now that you may have identified a trafficking situation, let's talk about your role as a provider. Education and awareness of staff and clients, of the elements of human trafficking, and understanding how it impacts youth is the important first step.

The next role is identification. Having knowledge of risk factors and the red flags to understand-- or I'm sorry. Red flags to watch for will allow young people to receive appropriate services. Upon identification of a suspected case of human trafficking, please remember to follow your agency's protocol.

Protocol should include safety procedures and mandated reporting requirements. If there is not a protocol in place, follow established mandated reporting guidelines in your state. Aside from reporting to your local agencies, you should also contact the National Human Trafficking Hotline. There will be additional information about how to do this in the following slides.

Finally, you will offer support and referrals. Support youth by letting them know you care and will do what you can to support them. Let them know it's not their fault. Refer them to appropriate services for themselves and any non-offending family members. Connect with anti-trafficking agencies in your area, or

join local human trafficking task forces to connect to trauma-informed and youth-centered services.

So in terms of, again, your provider role around prevention. As service providers for youth, you are in a key position to help prevent trafficking of the youth in your care. Through the education of youth in terms of-- excuse me. In terms of educating youth around personal and online safety, healthy relationships, disabilities, human trafficking, legal rights, and the value of their labor, as well as shared community resources.

Terms of your role, provider roles around identification.

Identification can be complex in terms of human trafficking, and perhaps more so when we think about youth with disabilities. We do not recommend-- or actually, I take that back. We do recommend that you should always be aware of potential red flags.

If you become concerned, talk to the youth to learn more about their situation, in order to determine what their youth's needs are. Again, be sure the youth understands the implication of mandated reporting. Even if a youth does not disclose trafficking, there may be needs that the youth still needs, in terms of services. Now let's move on to the red flags you should be looking for that might indicate trafficking.

JODY HASKIN: Thanks, Jae Jin. As we mentioned, there are some red flags to be on the lookout for in youth with disabilities, and in youth in general. These red flags might be reported by the youth, but are more likely to be observed by staff, or you. You might observe some of these things as well.

While these red flags are not exclusive, necessarily, to youth with disabilities, they are some of the more commonly seen red flags that we know of. So the most important thing that we want you to focus on-- because we don't know a lot about the very unique red flags that pertain specifically and only to youth with disabilities, we know that it's very important to look out for changes that have been happening. And this means really getting to know the young people you serve, so you can see what kind of changes-- you would be able to make note of the changes if they were to happen.

Now let's talk about some behavioral changes first. Something like missing school or not being home is a red flag in all youth. If the youth is not normally home at a certain time and now-- or they're normally home at a certain time, and now they don't show up until hours later-- how did they explain that behavior to you? If there is some sort of reduction or a change in communication with trusted family, friends, or caregivers-- for youth with disabilities, this might be challenging to determine.

However, if you notice that a youth previously was very open with you, and now they're not, it is important to find out why.

Something to think about that is specific to youth with developmental disabilities are which tasks they have achieved. So if a youth who has achieved toilet training is now having accidents, this should warrant further assessment. If a youth is asking questions about their bodies, graphic information, or questions about sex and relationships, but it's not age-appropriate for them to do so, this may also be a red flag. You may also notice signs of fear, exhaustion, or even depression in the young people you serve.

It's important to recognize that the youth with disabilities can be and are connected to each of these situations. So disability does not exclude the risk of runaway, or abuse, or engaging at risk activities. In fact, in some ways, engaging in these activities could be linked to the youth attempting to rebel against being labeled with a disability identity.

Some situational red flags to look after might not necessarily-- you don't necessarily have to be familiar with the youth's typical pattern of behavior. So it should always trigger further investigation by a trained professional if youth has a much older partner, or shows signs of injury related to violence, or the youth is reluctant to discuss their job or explain the presence of new belongings they might not have the means to buy. A much older

partner who appears controlling is always going to be a good idea to find out how they met, and maybe more information about how the youth is being treated. Education on safe and healthy relationships is critical here.

Next we'll talk about some physical red flags of trafficking, and these can be slightly more obvious, but not always. Any injury or illness that has no explanation should be treated by a medical professional and reported for your state's mandated reporting guidelines. And because youth may have sexual partners, if they are-- many sexual partners if they're being commercially sexually exploited, they may contract, multiple STIs. Traffickers may also impregnate their female victims as a way to control them.

As mentioned previously, you'll want to make sure that any agency protocols are accessible, and that they consider the needs of all youth. And when it comes to protocol, safety should be your highest priority. If the suspected trafficker is present, please practice discretion and safety. If you, your staff, or the youth are in immediate danger, please call 9-1-1.

If you are a mandated reporter, tell the youth that you are. Explain what mandated reporting is, why you must do it, and who you're required to share any further disclosed information with. And it's important that you share this information to maintain the trust of the youth through all of your transparency. And it's

advised that you share this information early on, before a youth feels the need to disclose something.

As you explain your role as a mandated reporter, check for understanding as you explain, and take your time. The purpose of sharing your mandated reporting requirements early is so youth can choose what they share with you. If they don't want to continue with a conversation, they don't have to.

A youth with disabilities might disclose trafficking, or you might suspect it. Either way, you should be ready. Make sure to have translators, assistive technology, mobility devices, and any other potential support devices accessible to you if possible, at any time, so the youth can have this already difficult conversation with you free of barriers.

If the youth decides to continue the conversation, use trauma-informed language that is supportive, and empowering, and youth-centered. Do not make promises to them that you are unable to keep, such as offering help that you can't provide. Try to refrain from showing shock, or surprise, or disgust. This conversation may need to take time, and the youth deserves patience and empathy during this process.

We'll cover this in greater detail when we talk about referring youth with disabilities to supports, but during your conversations with youth, it is a good idea to consider any functional barriers

that they might encounter in the community, and what supports might look like or be required in order for these referrals to be accessible. As you're going through this process as a service provider and you need any assistance, please remember that you're not alone. It always takes a community mindset to support youth survivors of trafficking, and please remember that you can contact IOFA at info@iofa.org, or the National Human Trafficking Hotline for further assistance. And we'll provide this information again in the resource slides at the end of the presentation.

JAE JIN PAK: At-risk youth, or at-risk youth provider role, in terms of support and referral. In case you do learn that a youth you work with may be trafficked, it is important to understand their immediate needs, while engaging the youth in the plan and their path. They have rights to autonomy and to be engaged in the process of their services.

Not all organizations are in a position to provide comprehensive services to youth who may be trafficked. As we mentioned previously, it takes an entire community of concerned groups and individuals to support a youth with disabilities who has been trafficked. And you can help by ensuring a connection to referrals, to appropriate services. This list includes some of them supports and needs to survivors of human trafficking might require.

We encourage you to assess the resources you refer to for these needs for accessibility. Please get to know your community, and

be sure to have a way to assess for accessibility when you call out to youth services and community supports.

It is important to note that some group homes, transportation services, and more may not be able to accommodate the youth you wish to refer. So be sure to call ahead to confirm available services for the youth's individual needs. Having prior relationships with community-based organizations and supports can help ensure a timely referrals and successful, warm hand-offs.

In terms of supporting youth with disabilities. Key things to keep in mind are have staff trainings. So have staff trainings that address working with youth with disabilities. Connect with community supports, to support youth with disabilities. Be proactive to acquiring assistive technologies. Put myths and misperceptions aside.

Make eye contact with the youth. Ask how you can help them, and then follow their instructions of the youth. Respect a person's equipment. Again, if they have a wheelchair or cane, respect their equipment. And be sure your attitude is one of accepting and welcoming.

This list is not exhaustive, but it is a starting point. How comfortable do you feel in supporting a youth with disabilities? You may have worked with youth who had less visible functional

support needs and did not know it. It is vital to focus on not only the trafficking aspect of the youth in front of you, but also their uniqueness and individual situation.

These are merely guidelines, and we encourage you to reach out to other members of the community who support youth with disabilities for additional training at your organization. In order to consider your own organization disability-inclusive, you must make sure you are accessible at all levels and have access to support to assist with a variety of functional needs. Becoming disability-inclusive is in line with providing trauma-informed care. And collaborating with your colleagues in the community will be to the benefit of all that you serve, in your role as a service provider for at risk youth and survivors of trafficking and youth with disabilities.

So these slide's are going to highlight some important community resources and supports around disability, or disability resources. The first one is centers for independent living. So centers for independent living are a great gateway resource. They provide a variety of ranges of services for anyone with disability, from youth to adulthood and seniors. So they are-- if nothing else, I would encourage you to contact your local center for independent living, and they can be a great starting point to connect the world of Disability Services.

Another resource for disability advocacy is the Protection and Advocacy Center. Disability protection advocacy centers are based in every state and territory, and their role is to provide legal advice, and in some cases legal attorney's assistance, for people with disabilities a variety of bill or policy or other type of advocacy issues Every state in the US and territory has a P&A center in it. So a simple Google search of protection and advocacy center in your state will find that's in your region.

The regional ADA, center or the regional Americans with Disabilities Act center, is a great regional center scattered throughout the US that can provide your organization and other organizations great information, and technical support on what the ADA is and how to be accessible and meet ADA guidelines of being accessible. They can give you assessments, and tools and all kinds of guidebooks as well. And again, do a simple Google search of regional ADA center in your state, you can find one-- you'll find that the one that's closest to you.

Another resource that's available in every state is the state vocational rehabilitation agency. So again, every state has a VR, Voc Rehab program. Their program is essentially an agency that provides services to anyone with a disability to help them go to school or find employment. So they, again, work with youth from high school age on up to adulthood, and if you do a search of

vocational rehab agency for your state, you can find your local offices.

In terms of advocacy programs, a great nationwide network and agency for siblings or people with disabilities is the Sibling Leadership Network, or SLN. It is primarily for siblings of individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities. There are chapters scattered throughout different states, but it's a great resource for siblings, brothers and sisters, as well as family members of individuals with disabilities for resources, information, and other supports.

Another great organization and resource is the ARC of the US. The ARC of the US is a national organization with resources and services for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The ARC of the US has chapters in almost every state. Again, if you want to find out your chapter, your state chapter, you can just do a search-- Google search for ARC of fill in your state, and you will find your local Arc chapter. Again, they are a great resource for anyone or those family members of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

A national organization for-- that is a great resource for support and connection for people in the disability community is Self Advocates Being Empowered, or SABE. Again, SABE is a national organization that does a lot of advocacy and policy work for

people with all types of disability. And if you go to sabe.usa.org, you can get more information on meetings and also any local.

JODY HASKIN: This site is all about the National Human Trafficking Hotline and resource center. The hotline has call center agents who can provide information and resources and can assist in assessing whether you should suspect human trafficking in a potential victim, identify local resources to help survivors, and to coordinate with local service organizations to further support survivors.

You can call the confidential hotline, toll-free, 24 hours a day, seven days a week the phone number is 1-888-373-7888. The tty number is 711, or you can text the word "help" to BEFREE, or the numbers that it corresponds with is 2 3 3 7 3 3. You can also visit them at the web at humantraffickinghotline.org. They can assist with coordination with local social service organizations and help to provide support for survivors or referral.

Next is the Heal Trafficking Network, which is a great resource for healthcare professionals. The Freedom Network USA provides resources and assistance for survivors of trafficking nationwide. The National Human Trafficking and Disabilities Working Group is a collaboration of professionals, self-advocates, and survivors of trafficking from across the country who work to identify gaps, and to improve services, policy, research, and training on adults and children with disabilities who have experienced trafficking. We

would invite anyone to become involved through the work that we do. It's free to join and we encourage you to learn more, or apply by emailing nhtdwg@iofa.org.

We thank you for attending this introductory webinar on supporting youth with disabilities who may have experienced trafficking. We hope this information helps you consider some of the ways that you may improve your services to be open and accessible to youth with disabilities. We at IOFA are always more than happy to answer any questions you may have about the content of this training. Please feel free to contact us at info@iofa.org with any questions or for more information.

We would also like to thank our partners for the opportunity to create and to coordinate this material, to advance the work that you all do for youth and for youth with disabilities who may experience trafficking. These include the National Resource Center for Reaching Victims, and Vision 21, an OVC-funded project. Jae Jin and I would like to take this time to thank you again for watching, and have a great day.

JAE JIN PAK: Thank you, everybody.