Human Trafficking: clinical presentation and treatment
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Objectives

• Identify victims of human trafficking who present at the VA

• Recognize the correlation between Intimate Partner Violence and Human Trafficking

• Construct an appropriate assessment of trafficking victims
How could this happen?
A-M-P Model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Means</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Induce</td>
<td>Force</td>
<td>Commercial Sex (Sex Trafficking)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruits</td>
<td>Fraud</td>
<td>Labor/Services (Labor Trafficking)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Harbors</td>
<td>Coercion</td>
<td>Organ procurement (Organ Trafficking)</td>
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<td>Transports</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Provides</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Obtains</td>
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Polaris Project, 2002
Am I being trafficked?

- Many people do not identify as “trafficked” or relate to the term “human trafficking”—and may use other words to describe their situations such as:
  - “booing,” “being in the life” or “being in the game” to describe their hookups or sex with clients
  - “my boyfriend,” “daddy” or “uncle” when referring to the person in control of them (among others).
- Lack of knowledge of the crime itself, power and control dynamic
- Conditioned not to trust law enforcement or providers
Parallels between IPV and Human Trafficking client

- Similar definitions (VHA Directive 1198) IPV Program
- In addition to shared experiences of abuse and manipulation, IPV is a demonstrated 'push factor,' making individuals vulnerable to trafficking.
- Exposure to intimate partner violence during childhood increases risk for victimization in sex trafficking during young adulthood.
- The element of coercive control facilitated by power imbalance and intermittency of abuse has been documented in offender-victim interactions involving IPV and human trafficking.
- Fear, shame, guilt, low self esteem
- History of risk factors
- Strong bond to trafficker/abuser
- Conflicted about leaving situation
- Exposure to various forms of abuse
- Abuse often leads to health problems: mental, physical, sexual/reproductive; acute, chronic
- Reluctance to disclose situation
- Vulnerable to re-victimization
Barriers to identification?
- Escorted to appointment, under surveillance: third party translate for them
- Unknown address or phone number, no NOK, not in control of money or payments, few personal possessions (lack of ID or passport)
- Exhibit signs of abuse: branding, bruises in various stages of healing, mutilation, or infections due to improper medical care
- Prolonged lack of healthcare or malnourishment
- Mental Health symptoms: fear, anxiety, depression, nervous, hostility, flashbacks, nightmares, addiction, disorientation, confusion, phobias, panic attacks in addition to other red flags
- Commonly avoid eye contact (not culturally associated)
- Inconsistences in their story and timelines
- Multiple of frequent sexually transmitted infections and/or lack of treatment for STIs
- Multiple of frequent pregnancies/abortions
- Flinching or jerking away from contact, guarded affect

Missing the red flags: Raise Awareness
Correlation between IPV and Human Trafficking health risks

- Physical injuries, including traumatic brain injury, strangulation, and other serious injuries
- Gastrointestinal conditions
- Chronic pain
- Neglect of chronic health conditions
- Unexplained somatic symptoms
- Lower rates of contraceptive & condom use
- Pregnancy complications, miscarriage
- Unwanted or unsafe abortions
- STIs & HIV
Reproductive and sexual health needs in both Human Trafficking and sexually coerced/forced IPV situations

- STD and HIV testing and treatment
- Cervical cancer prevention - colposcopy, cryo, LEEP
- Contraception counseling & provision
- Preconception counseling & services
- Pregnancies: unintended, unwanted, or desired
- Healthcare counseling: prenatal care, adoption, abortion
Correlation between IPV and Human Trafficking mental health risks

- Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
- Sleeping and eating disorders
- Self harm and suicide attempts
- Poor self esteem
- Substance abuse
- Complex core beliefs
- Unwilling or unable to leave their situation
- Stockholm syndrome
The Perpetrator: VA case studies

**Perpetrator**
Definition: (NOUN)
a person who perpetrates, or commits, an illegal, criminal, or evil act.

Example in a sentence:
The *perpetrators* of this heinous crime must be found and punished to the fullest extent of the law.

Ponder this…..
How does perspective influence the interpretation of who the perpetrator is?

Are perpetrators always brought to justice?
Where does RISK fit in? Power? Control?
## Construct an appropriate assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identifying victims</th>
<th>Referral and safety plan</th>
<th>Reporting</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Address the elephant in the room</td>
<td>• Address basic needs</td>
<td>• National Human Trafficking Resource Center 1-888-373-7888.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Recognize fear of disclosing</td>
<td>• Crisis intervention</td>
<td>• Vulnerable adult:** APS**</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Victim may not be ready to seek or allow assistance</td>
<td>• Counseling referral</td>
<td>• All children suspected: CPS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Encourage them to call the hotline regardless if ready for help</td>
<td>• Shelters and safe environments</td>
<td>• If in immediate danger, call 9-1-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Self determination to contact law enforcement</td>
<td>• Protective orders</td>
<td>• (E.g.) Any patient from a wound or other injury inflict by means of a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Accurately document in chart</td>
<td></td>
<td>knife, gun, pistol, or other deadly weapon, or by other means of violence,</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>have a duty to report that fact immediately, both by telephone and in</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>writing, to local law enforcement authorities (MI code)</td>
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Case studies: Do you think that this is likely a case of human sex trafficking?
Scenario 1:
A 32 y/o OIF female presented to VA Urgent Care after being brought in by a girlfriend because of recent trauma reportedly at the hands of her fiancée. All the Veteran would say was that her fiancée hit her and she did not want to get him in trouble. On her intake form she indicated that she used marijuana and other drugs nearly every day. Physical examination revealed fingerprint marks on her neck, a tooth broken off and three other loose teeth. Further examination revealed bruising on all her extremities most of which appeared fresh as well as a barcode tattoo on her thigh. The VA Provider discussed with the Veteran reporting this assault to the local police department but she declined saying, “I stay away from the police as much as possible. I don’t like them!”

Do you think that this is likely a case of human sex trafficking? Yes/No
Scenario 2:
A 56 y/o peacetime era male Veteran presented to the VA for 10-10 appointment. Veteran presented with signs of decreased appetite, frequent vomiting, and weight loss. Eventually, the Veteran’s pain became “unbearable.” Veteran appeared to have cognitive impairment. A SLUMS was completed with a score of 25, indicating mild neurocognitive disorder. When asked about waiting so long for medical care, he states that his cousin would not let him get care until now.
Further questioning indicated that he performs house cleaning, animal care, and purchases food items with his benefits card for his cousin. When asked about payment, he states “I’ve never gotten paid.”

Do you think that this is likely a case of human trafficking? Yes/No
Questions to ask

- What were some signs of being involved in trafficking?
- What questions should the Provider ask?
- What might the Provider do?
- Should the local police department be notified?
- What information should be given to the Veteran?
- What other resources should be explored?
- What should the Provider do if the Veteran is non-cooperative?
How do we choose the right treatments?

- Healthcare
- Seeking Safety
- Substance Abuse Treatment
- Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR)
- Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT)
- Prolonged Exposure (PE)
- Trauma-focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT)
- Whole Health-complementary treatment: mindfulness, meditation
- Skills Training in Affective & Interpersonal Regulation (STAIR)
- Strengths-based trauma-informed approaches
- Equine therapy (Recreational Therapy)
- Expressive Arts (Recreational Therapy)

Multidisciplinary team approach
Implementation at the VA

- No national initiative (as to date) for human trafficking screenings
- Intimate Partner Violence (IPV): Relationship Health and Safety Screen (some sites are conducting)
- Homeless/Food Insecurity Screen (Physicians, NP, PA, SW, RN/LPN)
- Abuse/Neglect (Pact RN and LPN)
- MST (Physicians, NP, PA, SW, RN/LPM)
- HOMES assessment (Homeless program)

*Use current screens as conversation starters*

*Meet basic needs first*
Know the signs and identify red flags during direct care or case consultation

Stay informed and debunk myths about human trafficking

Learn the local community resources that serve human trafficking victims and survivors

Become familiar with your state human trafficking laws

Join a human trafficking task force
Resources

**National Referral Directory:** [https://humantraffickinghotline.org/training-resources/referral-directory](https://humantraffickinghotline.org/training-resources/referral-directory)

**Office for Victims of Crime funded programs and task forces:** [https://ovc.ncjrs.gov/humantrafficking/traffickingmatrix.html](https://ovc.ncjrs.gov/humantrafficking/traffickingmatrix.html)


- National Sexual Assault hotline: 1-800-656-4673
- Trafficking in Persons & Worker Exploitation Task Force hotline: 888-428-7581
- FBI reporting: 866-347-2423
References


References


Trafficking Terms

The following list of key terms used in sex trafficking is published in Renting Lacy: A Story of America’s Prostituted Children by Linda Smith. Buy on Amazon: [http://amzn.to/1OOFcb3](http://amzn.to/1OOFcb3)

**Automatic** — A term denoting the victim’s “automatic” routine when her pimp is out of town, in jail, or otherwise not in direct contact with those he is prostituting. Victims are expected to comply with the rules and often do so out of fear of punishment or because they have been psychologically manipulated into a sense of loyalty or love. All money generated on “automatic” is turned over to the pimp. This money may be used to support his concession/phone account or to pay his bond if he’s in jail.

**Bottom** — A female appointed by the trafficker/pimp to supervise the others and report rule violations. Operating as his “right hand,” the Bottom may help instruct victims, collect money, book hotel rooms, post ads, or inflict punishments on other girls.

**Branding** — A tattoo or carving on a victim that indicates ownership by a trafficker/pimp/gang.

**Brothel (a/k/a Cathouse or Whorehouse)** — These establishments may be apartments, houses, trailers, or any facility where sex is sold on the premises. It could be in a rural area or nice neighborhood. Most brothels have security measures to prevent attacks by other criminals or provide a warning if law enforcement are nearby. The security is two sided—to keep the women and children in, as well as robbers out. The places often are guarded (and open) 24 hours a day, but some have closing times in which the victims are locked in from the outside. Victims may be kept in this location for extended periods of time, or rotated to other locations every few days.

**Caught A Case** — A term that refers to when a pimp or victim has been arrested and charged with a crime.

**Choosing Up** — The process by which a different pimp takes “ownership” of a victim. Victims are instructed to keep their eyes on the ground at all times. According to traditional pimping rules, when a victim makes eye contact with another pimp (accidentally or on purpose), she is choosing him to be her pimp. If the original pimp wants the victim back, he must pay a fee to the new pimp. When this occurs, he will force the victim to work harder to replace the money lost in transaction. (See Reckless Eyeballing)

**Circuit** — A series of cities among which prostituted people are moved. One example would be the West Coast circuit of San Diego, Las Vegas, Portland, and the cities between. The term can also
refer to a chain of states such as the “Minnesota pipeline” by which victims are moved through a series of locations from Minnesota to markets in New York.

**Daddy** — The term a pimp will often require his victim to call him.

**Date** — The exchange when prostitution takes place, or the activity of prostitution. A victim is said to be “with a date” or “dating.”

**Escort Service** — An organization, operating chiefly via cell phone and the internet, which sends a victim to a buyer’s location (an “outcall”) or arranges for the buyer to come to a house or apartment (an “in-call”); this may be the workplace of a single woman or a small brothel. Some escort services are networked with others and can assemble large numbers of women for parties and conventions.

**Exit Fee** — The money a pimp will demand from a victim who is thinking about trying to leave. It will be an exorbitant sum, to discourage her from leaving. Most pimps never let their victims leave freely.

**Family/Folks** — The term used to describe the other individuals under the control of the same pimp. He plays the role of father (or “Daddy”) while the group fulfills the need for a “family.”

**Finesse Pimp/Romeo Pimp** — One who prides himself on controlling others primarily through psychological manipulation. Although he may shower his victims with affection and gifts (especially during the recruitment phase), the threat of violence is always present.

**Gorilla (or Guerilla) Pimp** — A pimp who controls his victims almost entirely through physical violence and force.

**“John” (a/k/a Buyer or “Trick”)** — An individual who pays for or trades something of value for sexual acts.

**Kiddie Stroll** – An area known for prostitution that features younger victims.

**Lot Lizard** — Derogatory term for a person who is being prostituted at truck stops.

**Madam** — An older woman who manages a brothel, escort service or other prostitution establishment. She may work alone or in collaboration with other traffickers.

**Out of Pocket** — The phrase describing when a victim is not under control of a pimp but working on a pimp-controlled track, leaving her vulnerable to threats, harassment, and violence in order to make her “choose” a pimp. This may also refer to a victim who is disobeying the pimp’s rules.

**Pimp Circle** — When several pimps encircle a victim to intimidate through verbal and physical threats in order to discipline the victim or force her to choose up.

**Quota** — A set amount of money that a trafficking victim must make each night before she can come “home.” Quotas are often set between $300 and $2000. If the victim returns without meeting
the quota, she is typically beaten and sent back out on the street to earn the rest. Quotas vary according to geographic region, local events, etc.

**Reckless Eyeballing** — A term which refers to the act of looking around instead of keeping your eyes on the ground. Eyeballing is against the rules and could lead an untrained victim to “choose up” by mistake.

**Renegade** — A person involved in prostitution without a pimp.

**Seasoning** — A combination of psychological manipulation, intimidation, gang rape, sodomy, beatings, deprivation of food or sleep, isolation from friends or family and other sources of support, and threatening or holding hostage of a victim’s children. Seasoning is designed to break down a victim’s resistance and ensure compliance.

**Squaring Up** — Attempting to escape or exit prostitution.

**Stable** — A group of victims who are under the control of a single pimp.

**The Game/The Life** — The subculture of prostitution, complete with rules, a hierarchy of authority, and language. Referring to the act of pimping as ‘the game’ gives the illusion that it can be a fun and easy way to make money, when the reality is much harsher. Women and girls will say they’ve been “in the life” if they’ve been involved in prostitution for a while.

**Track (a/k/a Stroll or Blade)** — An area of town known for prostitution activity. This can be the area around a group of strip clubs and pornography stores, or a particular stretch of street.

**Trade Up/Trade Down** — To move a victim like merchandise between pimps. A pimp may trade one girl for another or trade with some exchange of money.

**Trick** — Committing an act of prostitution (verb), or the person buying it (noun). A victim is said to be “turning a trick” or “with a trick.”

**Turn Out** — To be forced into prostitution (verb) or a person newly involved in prostitution (noun).

**Wifeys/Wife-in-Law/Sister Wife** — What women and girls under the control of the same pimp call each other. (See Family/Folks and Stable.)