

Human Trafficking Training

Part 4 Transcript

[Whitney Cloin]: So there are a lot of reasons why victims won't disclose. And so often, they feel a lot of shame and self-blame. So they feel like they got themselves into this situation. So with trafficking being a crime there usually is some type of connection between the perpetrator and the victim, before they experience trafficking and exploitation, really leads to shame and self-blame. They think that if they hadn't gone with this person, if they hadn't run away if they would've told someone sooner. If they had not done X, Y, Z, for that person, this wouldn't have happened. So even though we understand that they are a victim and that they are not to blame in this situation, a lot of times, especially as youth, they see that it is their fault that they got themselves into this situation. And so it's hard for them to disclose because they think that it is what they deserve, or they are embarrassed by what they have been involved with.

[Whitney Cloin]: Also a lot of times, they believe that they are the ones that can get in trouble. So they think that since they have engaged in commercial sex, since they have run away. if they have been involved in stealing or any other crimes while they were being trafficked and exploited, then they see themselves as criminals. And so they think, well if I disclose, I'm just gonna get in trouble. And so it seems easier to not disclose. The biggest thing is just not realizing that they are a victim of trafficking. So they think that since they got themselves in this situation or because this person loves them or this person is taking care of them, that they are not a victim. They're just doing what they have to do for this person that they care about, or that they want this person to continue taking care of them.

[Whitney Cloin]: Fear of retaliation is another big one. The trafficker may threaten to tell friends or family or put on social media that this person has been involved in commercial sex or other activities that they shouldn't be involved in. And so they are fearful of that happening. So they continue to do what's being asked of them so that they don't have that retaliation. There also have been situations where traffickers know a lot about the victim and their family. And so they will tell them that if they are going to leave, or if they don't wanna work for them, they are going to harm their family. They know where their like siblings are, so they will get their siblings to be involved instead if they won't. And so that can be another part of the fear of retaliation.

[Whitney Cloin]: And then also just lack of trust. So the trafficker has often isolated the individual, have told them that they can't trust other people. That they are the only ones that they can trust, that they know what's best. And so if they have not built a trusting relationship with someone outside of that situation, then it's gonna be really hard for them to disclose. And it's sometimes hard for them to know who they can trust because of the things that the traffickers or other individuals that are involved are telling them. If they are in your school, in your classroom and you have the opportunity to build trust with

them, just having a trusting relationship could be a big step of them opening up to disclose.

[Whitney Cloin]: And so some things just to think about if a student or a youth did disclose to you, is just to try to get them into a private setting. So, you want them to be as comfortable as possible so that other students are not going to overhear. And just being sensitive to what they've experienced with trafficking and exploitation. Being really careful not to jump too much into talking negatively about the person, because sometimes they may be ready to disclose that certain things have happened to them. But they may not be ready to completely separate themselves from that situation. And so you would not want to shut them down by immediately jumping into talking negatively about that person. To where they would no longer feel... Even though you know that that person is bad, that could really quickly kind of shut down that trust if they feel like that you're just quick to want to pull them out of that situation. Which is what you want to do, but just be careful in that situation to make them feel comfortable. And to follow their lead of what they are disclosing to you and just giving them the opportunity to share what they are ready to share.

[Whitney Cloin]: If it does go further to where there is more like interviewing that needs to be involved, or there's more information that you need before making some type of report, then just always be mindful of if there needs to be an interpreter. If there needs to be someone else involved in the conversation, a school social worker, things like that. Just think about what is the best way to support the student, and also to get the information that you need.

[Whitney Cloin]: As an educator, you are very essential to helping students who may be experiencing trafficking and exploitation. Oftentimes, students are going to continue coming to school while they are experiencing trafficking. So we see a lot that missing school a lot or being late can be red flags of trafficking. But not necessarily that they just disappear from school. So they are still in your classrooms, sometimes while they're experiencing trafficking. So you are in an ideal situation to be recognizing some of those red flags because they are spending so much time in school throughout the week. They are not with their trafficker when they are at school. Sometimes other peers might be involved as well, but they're not with their trafficker.

[Whitney Cloin]: So they are in a situation where they are in a school building for so many hours during the week, away from their trafficker. And so that is a great opportunity to be able to identify some of the red flags that we have talked about. And providing you with the opportunity to identify and report, if you think that a student has experienced trafficking or exploitation. You also have a lot of time in your classrooms that you're building that trust with them, to where you may be the person that they decide to disclose to. They are spending so much time with you during the year, that you are able to instill and create that trust. To where if they get to a point where they're ready to ask for help, then you are an adult, a safe adult, that is accessible to them.

[Jessica Evans]: Learning about trafficking and thinking about the fact that maybe some of the kids in your class could be affected by this, could really seem overwhelming as an educator. You already have so many things on your plate that you're trying to accomplish. So many things that you're already trying to look out for, for your kiddos. And this might just seem like one more thing. And it might seem overwhelming like you're not really sure exactly what to do about it. If you do have a kid that you suspect might be in a trafficking situation or could be vulnerable to it, what in the world do I do? We don't want you to feel overwhelmed. We want you to feel empowered to know what to do.

[Jessica Evans]: And really there are two main things that you can do. One is be a supportive person in their life. Don't feel like you have to go in and investigate and save the day. You can make a report, which is appropriate to do and really important to do. But you can also just be a supportive person in their life. You can let them know that you are around, you are available, you see them. You understand that they might be going through some things, and you're a safe person that they can come to. And I think it's important too, not to overlook or to put in a box those kids that you think are maybe troublemakers. Or they're out to ruin my class. And it's easy, as an educator I know this, to just wanna put them aside and just label them as a certain type of kid. And sometimes, those are the ones that we need to pay attention to the most. And those are the ones that are seeking attention and relationship the most because there's something going on there.

[Jessica Evans]: And so you as an educator, again, have a really unique window to look into these situations and be a positive influence, a positive role model. And get them the help that they might need. Or just be someone that they can come to for advice, to vent, to just be with them. Maybe they just need someone to come sit and eat lunch with them and have them feel seen and heard for the day. And that will fill in them something that was missing and they won't go seek it out somewhere else. And so not to add things to your plate, but just to empower you with some tools and some things that you can do that might make a really big impact on one kid in your class.

[Whitney Cloin]: There are a lot of needs that they may have, it's gonna be different for what each individual needs. But besides just reporting that they have been a victim and maybe getting them removed from that situation, and hopefully getting them some therapy and counseling. There are a lot of other things that they might need. Sometimes they might go to a shelter or placement if it's no longer safe for them to be at home. A lot of times they're gonna need medical care. If they're going to be involved with the court system, then they might need advocacy and support for that. The kind of support sometimes, if they've gotten off track with school, then there might be some support that's needed for them to finish school, move into college, or some type of vocation. They may need a little extra support in that area, as well as other things like substance abuse treatment.

[Whitney Cloin]: Like I already mentioned, we hope that they're going to be getting some type of therapy or counseling. There is so much that can go into it, depending on what they have experienced while they were being trafficked. That sometimes it doesn't always just stop with the reporting. There's gonna be a lot of things that they need. And there are resources for this, for individuals in Indiana.

[Yvonne Moore]: When we look at child sexual abuse and child labor trafficking, we really have to look at, how can we identify this. How can we ensure that we are able to identify it and report it, so that it can be investigated and we can get these children safe, and we can provide the services that are necessary? And that key factor is everyone in the community. And especially educators who see the children day in and day out, because these children are still going to school. They are still having contact with community members, with educators, with doctors, and with people in their community.

[Yvonne Moore]: Indiana is a mandated reporting state. And so if you suspect a child, a minor under the age of 18 is a victim of sex trafficking or labor trafficking, you must report that to the Indiana Department of Services Hotline. Our state law requires that we protect the identity of those reporting abuse or neglect allegations. DCS keeps this name and contact information confidential. When you do make a report to the child abuse and neglect hotline, an intake specialist will ask you for your information about the circumstances creating your risk of harm to the child, including who was involved, what occurred, when, and where it occurred, the extent of any injury sustained, and any other relevant information. You may be asked for detailed information, including names, addresses, and phone numbers of the child, the parent, or the alleged perpetrator. Even if you are unable to provide all of this information, please still contact the hotline to make the report if you suspect a child is a victim of sex trafficking or labor trafficking.

[Yvonne Moore]: When contacting the Indiana Department of Child Abuse Hotline, please make sure to provide every detail, no matter how small you think it may be. It is very important that we get all the detailed information so that we can do a thorough assessment and ensure the safety of the child. If you find yourself on hold, please do not hang up. Your call will be answered by the next available intake specialist. If you are calling regarding an emergency situation or if you believe the victim is in imminent danger, please dial 911 immediately.

[Whitney Cloin]: If a student does gain that trust and decides to report to you, just keep in mind that as a mandatory reporter, you know what reports you're gonna end up having to make after that conversation. And it can go a long way in keeping the trust between you and that individual. Just let them know that you're going to have to do that. Just reminding them that since they are under the age of 18, you have to disclose and report some of the things that they have disclosed. And just really letting them know that you are happy that they trust you enough. And then let them know that you want to take steps to help support them and keep them safe. And so just really trying to keep that trust, while also reminding them that you do have things that you do have to report. So that that trust isn't lost, if they

end up having to talk to law enforcement, or Department of Child Services, or whoever might get involved later. It can just go a long way to keeping that trust if they know that that's going to be happening.

[Elaine Banter]: The National Human Trafficking Hotline exists to provide resources to folks and be another space where people can make reports of potential situations of human trafficking. And they work really closely with local service providers like us. We can call them, they can call us. And they are a resource to you as well. So please have their number available in your resources too. When we reviewed the map from Polaris, that's where those numbers are reflected. So we can see that that makes a direct impact on our community when we call them as well.

[Elaine Banter]: It really takes all of us, right? We are working alongside lots of other amazing service providers here locally, to make sure that we get folks access to the resources that they need. And that we're implementing the resources that they need as well. So that when those reports come in, we're prepared to effectively identify that situation as trafficking and respond well to meet their needs.

[Elaine Banter]: As educators, you are in the perfect position to help identify and respond to potential trafficking situations in the students that you are building relationships with every day. But the beautiful part about that is you're not alone. We have so many great local community resources that are also working to help assist and serve these folks. Working alongside law enforcement, service providers, community leaders, mentors, and victim advocates. We are all in this together, to help serve victims and survivors of trafficking. So there are lots of resources available to you. Next, you will see a link to an evaluation. This evaluation will allow us to gather data so that we can strengthen the way that we address trafficking in the State of Indiana. We have found that the more education that we do, the more victims we see identified.