

HUMAN SEX TRAFFICKING SYMPOSIUM

they are NOT FOR SALE



Human Trafficking *A Clinician's Perspective*

Rachel Anderson, M.D.

Assistant Professor

TTUHSC Dept. of Pediatrics



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY
HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER™

they are
NOT FOR SALE

Educational Objectives

- ✓ Meet objectives for HHSC (*meeting the human trafficking requirement for Texas medical licensing*)
- ✓ Cover the basics of human trafficking
- ✓ Discuss how legislation impacts us as clinicians caring for trafficking victims
- ✓ Discuss how to identify potential victims
- ✓ Discuss the language to provide trauma informed care
- ✓ Examine the personal impact trafficking can have on all of us as clinicians

Laura W. Bush

INSTITUTE *for* WOMEN'S HEALTH
TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER

they are NOT FOR SALE

Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 *Landmark Legislation*

First comprehensive federal law to provide protection of trafficking victims. The law has been updated five times (*Last Jan 2019*)

It is the national framework for the federal response to human trafficking

Three-pronged Approach;

- Prevention
- Prosecution
- Protection

they are NOT FOR SALE



they are
NOT FOR SALE

Fraud, Force, Coercion

In cases > age 18

U.S. law defines human trafficking as the use of force, fraud, or coercion to compel a person into commercial sex acts or labor or services against his or her will. The one exception involves minors and commercial sex. Inducing a minor into commercial sex is considered human trafficking regardless of the presence of force, fraud or coercion.

Coercion:

- *Threats of serious harm to or physical restraint against any person;*
- *Any scheme, plan, or pattern intended to cause a person to believe that failure to perform an act would result in serious harm to or physical restraint against any person; or*
- *The abuse or threatened abuse of the legal process*

Major Forms of Trafficking

Labor and Sex Trafficking

Under U.S. federal law, “severe forms of trafficking in persons” includes both sex trafficking and labor trafficking:

Sex trafficking is the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, obtaining, patronizing, or soliciting of a person for the purposes of a commercial sex act, in which the commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such an act has not attained 18 years of age. (22 USC § 7102).

Labor trafficking is the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purposes of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery. (22 USC § 7102).

they are NOT FOR SALE

they are
NOT FOR SALE

Myth: Trafficking Requires Crossing International or State Borders

FALSE: Human smuggling and trafficking are sometimes confused. These are distinct criminal activities and the terms are not interchangeable.

- ✓ [Human smuggling](#) is the business of transporting people illegally across an international border.
- ✓ Human trafficking, by contrast, is involuntary and is integral to its very definition. Traffickers use force, fraud or coercion to get someone to sell sex or work in exploitative conditions. Trafficking – unlike smuggling – does not necessarily involve movement or transportation at all.

Commercial Sex vs Human Trafficking

All commercial sex involving a minor is legally considered human trafficking. Commercial sex involving an adult is human trafficking if the person providing commercial sex is doing so against his or her will as a result of force, fraud, or coercion.

Some enter the sex work industry willingly as sex workers but may eventually become victims of trafficking. The concept of willing prostitution, or “sex work,” has been altogether refuted by some activists, particularly prostitution abolitionists, who argue that prostitution is always a form of exploitation and never a choice. U.S. law; however, recognizes the existence of willing prostitution, an illegal activity in every state except Nevada.

they are NOT FOR SALE



they are
NOT FOR SALE

Limitations of Human Trafficking Data

Our data on human trafficking is limited. **Why?**

- ✓ This section of the population is exceedingly hard to study
- ✓ Law enforcement struggle to identify local trafficking offenses
- ✓ Inadequate reporting of offenses

Overall numbers most likely underestimate the problem in addition to failing to cover a representative target population but also over-exaggeration can lead to an equally inappropriate response to the problem.

- ✓ Overall Numbers
- ✓ Gender Gap
- ✓ Race and Age

Vulnerabilities to Trafficking

- ✓ Racial and ethnic minorities
- ✓ Poverty
- ✓ Runaway youth
- ✓ Homeless youth
- ✓ Young people who were or are in the child welfare system
- ✓ Young people who are or have been in the juvenile justice system
- ✓ Students who drop out of school
- ✓ Neuro-atypical patients
- ✓ LGBTQ youth
- ✓ Unaccompanied migrant youth

they are NOT FOR SALE

Trafficker Profiles

A universal profile of a trafficker does not exist. Traffickers can be corporations, legal entities, private persons of various ages, genders, nationalities, races or lone actors.

Defendant Demographics according to US Federal Prosecutions in 2020

- ✓ Men 81%
- ✓ US Citizens 55%
- ✓ Known to victim prior 57%
- ✓ Family of victim 14%



Laura W. Bush

INSTITUTE *for* WOMEN'S HEALTH
TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER

they are NOT FOR SALE

Recruitment Techniques

Traffickers are experts at finding those moments when people are vulnerable, of working the angles, manipulating reality and leveraging fears. The process is called grooming. The purpose of the grooming process is for a trafficker to be able to gain full control over their victim and manipulate them into cooperating in their own exploitation.

Target the
Victim

Gain
Trust

Meet
Needs

Isolation

Exploitation

Maintain
Control

they are
NOT FOR SALE

A Clinician's Perspective



they are NOT FOR SALE



they are NOT FOR SALE

Importance of Health Care Worker in Intervention and Response

- ✓ The health care field may be one of the few places where victims may intersect with the rest of society.
- ✓ Clinicians can be the “first contact” and are poised to make a difference for their patients. If you can recognize indicators and know the initial action steps, you can change that person's life for the better. Your visit may be that individual's first step toward safety and recovery.

Clinical Settings



A large range of health care personnel may come into contact with victims.

- ✓ Primary care providers
- ✓ Sexual and reproductive healthcare workers
- ✓ Dentists
- ✓ Providers of traditional or alternative remedies
- ✓ Front Desk Staff
- ✓ Nursing
- ✓ Therapists
- ✓ Students

they are
NOT FOR SALE

Clinical Indicators



- ✓ Patient may appear afraid of adult or overly submissive and anxious
- ✓ Gives false demographic information, lacking ID
- ✓ Cannot describe where he/she is staying, doesn't know city
- ✓ Paying cash or no health insurance
- ✓ Inconsistent History
- ✓ Bizarre or hostile behavior
- ✓ Inappropriate attire for the environmental conditions
- ✓ Tattoo or branding sign

they are
NOT FOR SALE

Challenges When Facing a Potential Victim

- ✓ Lack of information about past history
- ✓ Coercion attempts in the room
- ✓ Language Barrier
- ✓ Mindset of fear or distrust
- ✓ Fear of deportation or jail



they are NOT FOR SALE

Safety Measures

- ✓ Traffickers and victims may be involved in various criminal enterprises.
- ✓ Maintain professionalism
- ✓ Do not give out personal contact details.
- ✓ Clinic Policies for protection
- ✓ Know your resources

they are
NOT FOR SALE

Separate Potential Victim and Trafficker

- ✓ When possible, if the patient is accompanied by others, attempt separation. It is important to have a private conversation with potentially trafficked victims;
 - Interview all teenagers alone in clinic.
 - If you are feeling resistance, a patient may need to “fill out more forms,” “get an x-ray,” “get lab work done”
- ✓ Know yourself and your own personality
- ✓ Think about when to escalate and when to draw back

Acute Injuries



- ✓ Acute assault
 - Bruising or wounds in various stages of healing
 - Burns
 - Broken bones, broken teeth
 - Scars, mutilations from injury at a job site
 - Infections or mutilations caused by unsanitary or dangerous medical procedures
- ✓ Reproductive Issues
 - STIs, repeated undesired pregnancies, pregnancy complications, injury during pregnancy, retained foreign body
 - If you suspect a sexual assault, the patient is stable and you have a SANE nurse available, they should be utilized
- ✓ Dental emergencies

they are
NOT FOR SALE



Chronic Medical Problems

- ✓ Untreated chronic illness like diabetes, autoimmune diseases or cancer
- ✓ Infectious diseases spread in unsanitary environments like hepatitis or tuberculosis
- ✓ Reproductive health problems, STIs, UTIs, pelvic pain, injuries
- ✓ Malnourishment
- ✓ Serious Dental Problems
- ✓ Growth retardation in younger children

Mental Health Problems and Indicators

- ✓ Depression, suicide attempts, self harming behaviors, anxiety disorder, PTSD
- ✓ Addiction issues to drugs or alcohol
- ✓ Sleep or eating disorders
- ✓ Lack of emotional responsiveness, attachment disorders, depersonalization, dissociation disorders
- ✓ “Culture Shock”



they are NOT FOR SALE

Long Term Impact

- ✓ Human trafficking has a PROFOUND and PROLONGED negative impact on victims.
- ✓ Overall quality of life is impacted by inherent health and mental health risk. After a trafficking encounter, the survivor may fear autonomy and independence.
- ✓ The long term mental and physical health consequences of being a victim of trafficking are immeasurable.



they are NOT FOR SALE

Barriers to Disclosure

- ✓ Fear/Safety issues
- ✓ Shame
- ✓ Distrust of authority
- ✓ Language barrier
- ✓ Fear of deportation
- ✓ Lack of identification
- ✓ Mental health issues
- ✓ Not self-identifying as a victim
- ✓ Involvement in criminal enterprises

they are NOT FOR SALE



Patient Centered Approach

- ✓ Your initial goal should not be to get a disclosure. Investigation is best left to the authorities. Your main goal should be to build rapport and trust and report if you need to. Create a climate that allows every patient to feel safe and secure and cared for. This will empower disclosure.
- ✓ In victim-centered care, focus your attention on the victim, catering to the patient's needs to ensure delivery of care in a compassionate, culturally sensitive, linguistically appropriate, non-judgmental, caring manner.
 - Always use a medical interpreter
 - Take the victim's wishes, safety and well being into account

Trauma Informed Care

- ✓ Allow the patient to decide if he or she would feel more comfortable with a male or female practitioner.
- ✓ If the patient requires interpretation, always use professional interpreters who are unrelated to the patient.
- ✓ Ensure that the patient understands confidentiality policies and practices, including mandatory reporting laws.



they are
NOT FOR SALE

Challenges and Opportunities

Challenges

- ✓ Fear
- ✓ Time Crunch
- ✓ Threat of violence
- ✓ Difficulty identifying victims
 - Patients may not want to be identified
 - Bias
- ✓ Patient views on deportation, finances, freedom
- ✓ Myths surrounding human trafficking

Opportunities

- ✓ Policy makers are starting to open their eyes to the horrors of human trafficking.
- ✓ There are more resources than ever to help combat human trafficking.
- ✓ You can recognize and respond to trafficking victims in a trauma-informed way and make a difference in their life.



they are NOT FOR SALE

The Importance of Language

Language can harm victims by preventing them from recognizing they're in a trafficking situation.
"Words like 'rescue' turn people off from getting help. It's too dramatic, like you're hanging off a side of a cliff. But when you are in the situation, you don't think you are being trafficked, you just think this is your life. So you don't recognize yourself."

Language can shape public perception of how human trafficking happens.

"Understanding what happened to you as trafficking is a really important part of healing, but it took me 10 years to realize: Hey. Wow. I was trafficked, because my situation was so different from what I had seen represented as trafficking."

Language can place blame on victims and survivors

"One thing I find hard to take is language or pictures or stories about 'innocence lost.' I feel like that means some victims are worthwhile and some are 'guilty.'"

Language can perpetuate saviorism.

"You can't rescue a person being trafficked. What you can do is create an opportunity for that person to leave."

Language can neglect to recognize the inherent strength of survivors.

"It's long past time to replace "rescue" with resiliency. I mean do we really think that these programs... are the reason a person who has experienced such trauma is successful? No. Not at all. A person's success in healing belongs to them and is thanks to them. Period."

POLARIS PROJECT

Multidisciplinary Approach

- ✓ Stay in your lane
- ✓ Survivor-centered Multidisciplinary Referrals
- ✓ Social Workers
- ✓ SANE Nurses
- ✓ Child Abuse Pediatricians
- ✓ Forensic Interviewers



Laura W. Bush

INSTITUTE *for* WOMEN'S HEALTH
TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER

they are NOT FOR SALE

Mandated Reporter Obligations

- ✓ Texas law requires any person who believes that a child, or person 65 years or older, or an adult with disabilities is being abused, neglected, or exploited to report the circumstances. In addition, any individual who is licensed or certified by the State is held to a higher standard and may face harsher punishments if they have not reported their suspicions within 48 hours of contact.
- ✓ Life-threatening danger needs to be reported immediately to law enforcement. In other cases in Texas, call the abuse and neglect hotline at **1-800-252-5400**.
 - Report may be made to local or state law enforcement or DFPS
 - Cannot just report this to your supervisor, manager, or social worker without follow up
- ✓ If the patient is an independent adult, explain options to the patient and gain the patient's permission. You **MUST** get explicit informed consent from the patient.

Laura W. Bush

INSTITUTE *for* WOMEN'S HEALTH
TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER

they are NOT FOR SALE

they are
NOT FOR SALE

Documentation


- ✓ It is crucial for medical documents to accurately reflect complex trafficking dynamics to effectively litigate issues at trial. While documentation of abuse may be helpful in building a case against a trafficker, information about the victim can also be used against them in a court proceeding.
 - “Use quotations when able”
 - Read through your entire document in detail with a critical eye
- ✓ Document physical findings in detail. This may assist the victim in prosecuting their trafficker if health records are subpoenaed.
 - If possible, include photo documentation

they are
NOT FOR SALE

Secondary Traumatic Stress

- ✓ Emotional duress that results when an individual hears about the firsthand drama experiences of another
- ✓ Know what STS is, be prepared that it is going to happen to you, learn how to cope with it.
- ✓ Debrief these cases with colleagues and staff as you are able.

Local Resources

- **The Bridge**
 - ✓ *Amarillo's Child Advocacy Center*
 - **Family Support Services**
 - ✓ *Freedom in the 806 Coalition against Trafficking*
 - helping to bring awareness and prevention campaigns to Amarillo
 - ✓ *Crisis Services*
 - providing assistance to victims of sexual assault, family violence and human trafficking
 - **No Boundaries International of Amarillo**
 - ✓ *Nonprofit organization dedicated to helping the victims of sex trafficking*
- 



they are NOT FOR SALE

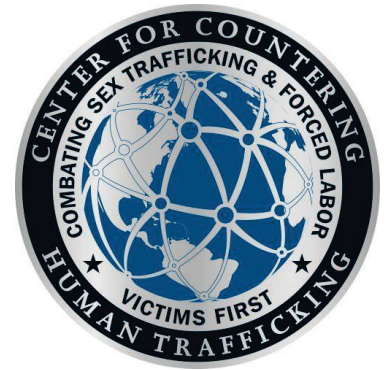
Texas Resources

- Texas Office of the Attorney General
 - ✓ humantrafficking@oag.texas.gov
 - ✓ 512-463-1646
- Texas Child Protective Services
 - ✓ 800-252-5400
- Texas Department of Public Safety, Victim Services
 - ✓ 512-424-2211
 - ✓ dps.texas.gov/administration/staff_support/victimservices/pages/index.htm



they are NOT FOR SALE

National Resources



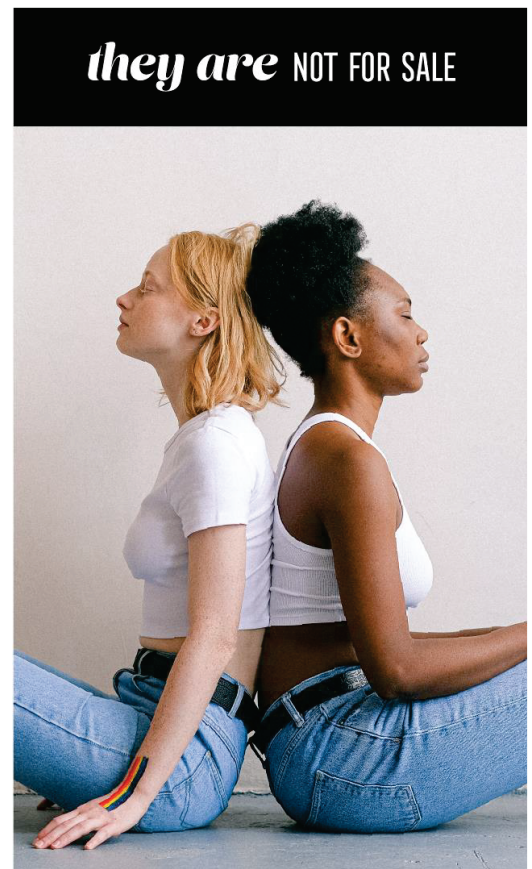
- Polaris Project
✓ www.polarisproject.org
- Caring for Trafficked Persons: A Guide for Health Providers
✓ <http://publications.iom.int/books/caring-trafficked-persons-guidance-health-providers>
- HEAL Trafficking
✓ <https://healtrafficking.org>
- Suicide & Crisis Lifeline | 988

they are NOT FOR SALE

National Human Trafficking Hotline Number

- ✓ The hotline number is **1-888-373-7888** provided by Polaris's BeFree Textline.
- ✓ Text "**HELP**" to 233733 (BEFREE).
- ✓ Email help@humantraffickinghotline.org.

they are NOT FOR SALE



Build Your Community

There is a robust anti-trafficking and anti-child abuse community in Amarillo. The resources are here, you just need to know how to access them.

Our goal is for you to identify potential victims, allow them to feel heard and safe during your clinical encounter and connect them with resources.

they are NOT FOR SALE

References

- American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. Human Trafficking. Committee Opinion No. 507. Obstet Gynecol. 2011;118:767-770.
- American Medical Association. Policy Statement: Physicians Response to Victims of Human Trafficking H-65-966. <https://policysearch.ama-assn.org/policyfinder/detail/H-65.966?uri=%2FAMADoc%2FHOD.xml-0-5095.xml>. Published 2015. Accessed May 6, 2023.
- Countryman-Roswurm, 2015; Raben Group & Rights for Girls, nd; U.S. Department of State, 2014. <https://antitraffickingreview.org/>
- Greenbaum, J. Child Sex Trafficking and Commercial Sexual Exploitation: Health Care Needs of Victims. Pediatrics.
- Human Trafficking Search. <https://humantraffickingsearch.org/>
- Lederer LJ, Wetzel CA. The health consequences of sex trafficking and their implications for identifying victims in healthcare facilities. Annals of Health Law. 2014;23:61-91.
- National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. missingkids.org
- National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments. <https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/>
- National Human Trafficking Hotline. <https://humantraffickinghotline.org/>
- Polaris Project. polarisproject.org
- Tyldum G. Limitations in Research on Human Trafficking. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/j.1474-3525.2009.00597.x#:~:text=In%20particular%2C%20data%20production%20efforts,identified%20and%20distinguished%20from%20non%2D>

they are NOT FOR SALE

thank you

Laura W. Bush

INSTITUTE *for* WOMEN'S HEALTH
TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER



**Northwest Texas
Healthcare System**

Behavioral Health



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY
HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER™



Amarillo College®
Continuing Healthcare Education