A Multi-Disciplinary Approach

to Human Trafficking

from an Indigenous Lens

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Learning Objectives

- Examine the core elements of successful collaboration

- Contrast traditional multidisciplinary models with community-led models

- Discuss strategies for developing Indigenous-centered responses to sexual exploitation and sex trafficking

The Need for a New Approach to Collaboration

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What is a Multidisciplinary Team?

A team of agencies working to ensure an effective, coordinated community response that is victim/survivor centered.

- Development and maintenance of consistent response protocols and policies

- Sharing of information between systems partners

- Problem solving, case consultation, training and education

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Need for Collaboration

- Prosecutors often cannot prove their case without victim testimony
- Requires a different approach than other crimes
  - Contrast with evidence in drug case
- Requires a reframing of stereotypes, both for victim services and law enforcement
- Groups that have very different priorities and philosophies must get to know each other and work together
- LE must work across jurisdictions

Team Formation

- How are agencies in your community already working together/intersecting to address sexual exploitation or related forms of gender-based violence?

- What obstacles have partners experienced as a result of not having a multidisciplinary collaboration?

- What questions do multidisciplinary partners and agency leaders have about forming a team?

Who Should Be Involved?

- Youth Service Providers
- Advocacy and CACs
- Child and Adult Family Services
- Health Care/SANES
- Probation
- Law Enforcement
- Prosecution and Public Defenders
- Victims/Survivors
- Tribal Services and Other Cultural Representatives
- Public Health
- Schools
- Judicial
- Housing and placement

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Who Sits At The Table: Tangible Needs of Clients

- Crisis housing

- Long-term housing

- Food

- Clothing

- Education

- Job or income

- Viable alternatives for employment

- Transportation

- Legal representation and/or advocacy

- Opportunities to develop new skills and strengths

- Medical and/or dental care

- Health education

- Mental health care

- Counseling and/or case management

- Safety planning
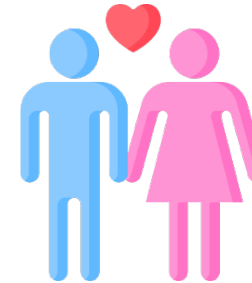
- Child care and/or parenting skills

Who Sits At The Table: Intangible Needs of Clients

- Safety and Protection

- Nonjudgmental environment

- Respect

- Acceptance

- Engagement in positive community

- Healthy adult relationships

- Mentors and/or positive role models

- Supportive peers

- Understanding of the recovery process

- Affirmation of skills and strengths

- Recognition of abuse and trauma

- An opportunity to not be defined solely by abuse and trauma

- Options

- A sense of empowerment in one's own healing and restoration process

- Youth leadership opportunities

- Love and holistic care

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Shift to Community-Centered Response
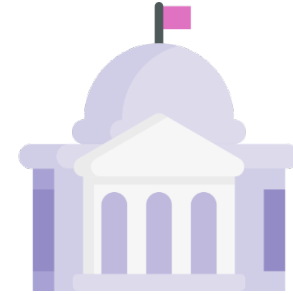
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Types of Privilege

- White privilege
- Religious privilege
- Gender privilege
- Heterosexual privilege
- Socio-economic privilege

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Types of Power

- Legitimate power
- Coercive power
- Expert power
- Power of reward
- Referent power

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Inequitable Access to Resources

"Nonprofits in America were conceptualized by religious groups in colonial America who first imposed the British "'poor laws,' creating a distinction between the deserving and undeserving poor. From inception to now, minority groups were often denied by state and local entities at the encouragement of the federal government. … Indigenous, transgender, undocumented, and certain CSE/Sex Worker groups face the same exclusions today." *(Samimi, 2010)*

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Community-level Safeguards That Support Resilience

- Peer relationships
- Non-family relationships
- Non-family social support
- Spirituality
- Community cohesion
- Civic Engagement
- Economic Development

Conflicting Responses to Trafficking and Exploitation

What is a public health approach to human trafficking?

Criminal Justice Framework

Public Health & Prevention Framework

- Uphold Legal Framework
- Victims
- More Defined Timeframe
- Justice Orientation
- Government Based
- Punish Traffickers/Recover Victims

- Advance Individual/Population Health
- Patients/Clients
- Long-Term Process
- Individual, Family, and Community Orientation
- Community Based
- Prevent/Treat Harms

Adapted from Chang, K. & Hang, R. (2017). *Public health approach to preventing human trafficking*
https://healtrafficking.org/resources/public-health-approach-to-prevent...

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Strategies for Successful Collaboration

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Successful Collaboration

- Understand and respect unique roles and responsibilities
- Ongoing education and training opportunities
- Regularly scheduled team meetings and check-ins
- Strong internal processes
- Frequent evaluation and revision
- Open and honest communication
- Using conflict as an opportunity to strengthen trust

Building Relationships

- Start each meeting with an icebreaker
- Make time for one-on-one rapport building
- Spend time together outside of meetings
- Recognize the expertise of each team member
- Collaborative decision-making

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Building Trust

- Meet regularly and have each agency talk about their role

- Keep commitments and stay honest

- Talk through misunderstandings as a team

- Practice forgiveness

- Recognize differences - in ethical responsibilities, priorities, measures of success

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Building Relationships with Culturally-Specific Organizations

"People come to us for consultation and ideas and then it's kind of like, thanks, bye. While sometimes that is totally fine and makes sense depending on the context, regular communication is really important. [Additionally,] we need to be really careful in who we are asking to do free labor. People will ask us to do a 30-minute training for free and tell us that we need to teach them everything there possibly is to know."

Excerpt from *Authentic Community Engagement in Safe Harbor*, MNCASA 2021

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Building Relationships with Culturally-Specific Organizations

"Unless you are an organization or system that is specifically set up to treat and to address and to partner and to sojourn with [the community] in terms of healing from sexual violence, most systems have a built in prejudice and [have a] disrespect and disregard for victims of sexual violence."[43]

Excerpt from *Authentic Community Engagement in Safe Harbor*, MNCASA 2021

Building Relationships with Culturally-Specific Organizations

- Authentic community engagement begins with having critical conversations

- Develop meaningful partnerships with the community

- Clear lines of communication

- More funding for culturally specific organizations

- Work to eradicate white supremacy and systemic forms of oppression

From *Authentic Community Engagement in Safe Harbor*, MNCASA 2021

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Potential Barriers

- Competition or "turf" issues
- Past experiences between organizations and the community
- "Professionals" dominating the stage
- Disconnection from community
- Poor organization
- Lack of collaboration
- Conflict management

Address Tension Points and Conflicts

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Centering Indigenous Communities

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Indigenous Communities

- Client-centered approaches
- Communication
- Facilitation
- Jurisdictional considerations
- Generational trauma
- Cultural considerations

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Center Needs of Native American Youth and Families

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Questions?

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Thank You!

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