

CWL Presentation on Human Trafficking at St. Agnes Church- March 3, 2020

Maya Mounayer a family counsellor from Anishinabe Women's Crises Home & Family Healing Agency began the presentation with a definition of What is Human Trafficking.

It is 'the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction. Of fraud of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation"

Human Trafficking is a severe violation of human rights through the exploitation of vulnerable people for profit. This definition contains three major elements: control, exploitation and threat to safety. According to the law, no one can "consent" to any of the activities that are part of the definition of human trafficking.

Who are victims?

Anyone can become a victim of human trafficking, irrespective of nationality, ethnicity, age, gender or socio-economic status. However, there are categories of the population that are more vulnerable like our Youth, Indigenous population, Immigration and Refugee, Children in foster care, Runaways & Homeless and the LGBTQ population. Young people are targeted by traffickers to get their need for love and acceptance. Often approached with promises of caring and affection, shower them with gifts and attention in a process referred to as "grooming" or "love bombing"

Statistic numbers show that the Indigenous communities are more at risk due to their lack of awareness, acknowledgment and understanding of sexual exploitation and several other factors like family violence, lack of social support, childhood abuse, poverty and the child welfare system.

Why does it happen?

Low socioeconomic neighbourhoods in bigger cities are exposed to a disproportionate amount of legal prostitution (strip clubs and pornography stores) which crates an environment where female children especially, adolescents and women are not only harassed by traffickers but are also actively recruited in the sex trade. The United Nations estimates that women make up 66% of he world's workforce.

Three phases to "The Game by the Trafficker:

1) Recruitment and Luring- this can be done in schools, malls, group homes, bars, social media and movie theaters

2) Isolation- victims are removed from family and friends, feeling of entrapment or put into compromising situations and exploited for control.

3) Control and Exploitation- victims are intimidated, threats to family & friends, psychological, physical and sexual abuse.

Method of control by Traffickers:

Isolation, Denial of necessities, Psychological manipulation and Threats.

How to recognize a trafficked person:

They will have no access to personal identification documents or have fake ones, have no personal possessions or money, not know their address or unfamiliar with the surroundings, have limited or no contact with family or social interaction, distrust authorities, be accompanied by someone else who speaks on their behalf, wear inappropriate clothing for the weather or situation, show signs of poor health & hygiene, the person is repaying a large debt through sex, or the person has been reported missing

Human trafficking and youth:

The average age of a child entering human trafficking is 13 years of age. Trafficked children live a life continuously threatened with violence and physical abuse. 30-46% of juveniles involved in prostitution attempt suicide. They have mortality rates 40 times higher than national average and are also 18 times more likely to be murdered. The Youth are particular vulnerable due to the rise in exposure to social media as this shows mainly only the glamorous side of life and traffickers can lure their victims with these materialistic things and lifestyles.

Goals to help victims and stop Human trafficking:

Educate and Develop a safety plan with and for the youth which contains how to identify an emergency escape plan for various situations. Assessing safe use of technology such as cell phones and internet particular the use of social media. Making a list of contact information for support persons, crises lines, drop in centers and law enforcement. Creating self care plans and safe words.

Support the Thunder Bay Coalition to end Human Trafficking Organization which helps to build partnerships in the community and develop a holistic strategy for the survivors and also focus on prevention and awareness.

Be aware of the National Canadian Human Trafficking Hotline and keep copies to hand out to anybody might be in need of these numbers which is toll free, 24/7, multilingual service nationwide, confidential, social, emergency & law enforcement available. Call 1 833 900 1010 or online canadianhumantraffickinghotline.ca

Educate, Educate and Educate the youth again.