



What is Needed to Address Child Trafficking in North Carolina

Summary of Responses from Participants
Shedding Light on Child Trafficking in North Carolina Conference

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1. **Statistics.** North Carolina needs a standardized method of recording reports of possible human trafficking, and a central data collection center. Advocates are asked daily “How many victims are in North Carolina?” and the sad answer is “We don’t know.” The child trafficking victims are identified by different organizations by many different labels including: prostitutes, runaways, child abuse victims, child sexual abuse victims and others.

Hard data would establish how large the problem is in North Carolina, so that we can strategically plan how to address it. When applying for funds, organizations are always asked for statistics, and we just don’t have them.

2. **Law Enforcement Training.** The “Safe Labor” law protects victims and increases penalties for the traffickers and their clients; but, for the law to be effective, our law enforcement personnel have to know that. The level of training and awareness of Law Enforcement varies widely across the state. Many municipalities have multiple officers/staff trained in identifying Human Trafficking, and many have none. A two-hour block of Human Trafficking Training was added to Basic Law Enforcement Training in 2011. Optional training is available as continuing education, but isn’t mandatory, even for law enforcement personnel who have never received Human Trafficking training.

For North Carolina to provide child trafficking victims with the services they deserve, our law enforcement must understand “Safe Harbor” and other laws pertaining to Human Trafficking.

3. **Central Source for information about Human Trafficking Resources.** (Could this be 211?) There should be an easily accessible list of the Rapid Response Teams, as well as lists of shelters, case managers and other service providers. A list of individual law enforcement officers in each county who have received training would be helpful. Having one person in each county to be the source for current information in that county would be helpful.

There seems to be even fewer resources available for boys than for girls. The resources available for boys need to be listed, as well.

4. **Specific Protocol for Child Protective Services.** This was requested by social workers. They indicated that Safe Harbor is a “great start”, but the “more specific legislation we have the more DSS can do if this (is) mandatory.” Questions that would screen specifically for Human Trafficking were suggested. (We know these changes are already underway.) There is concern that the person

prostituting the child may have caregiver status. They need guidelines to determine if kinship care is appropriate, foster care or a group home. Can/should a victim be required to stay in a shelter or safe house for a certain amount of time to ensure they don't return to the trafficker?

There is great concern about the Foster Care Program. Many exploited children report being abused or exploited while in Foster Care, either by the foster family or others. Foster families should be carefully vetted and trained to deal specifically with traumatized and exploited children.

5. **Training for School Personnel.** Teacher/School Personnel should receive training in how to identify a victim and how to report it, and how to identify potential victims, so that preventive services can be offered. This should be part of their annual training.
6. **Training for Emergency personnel.** Fire, EMS and Emergency Management staff and volunteers should receive training in how to identify a victim and how to report it. This should be part of their annual training.
7. **Prevention Education.** Prevention is more effective and efficient than rescue and restoration.
 - a. Prevention Education for children in school should include two main ideas.
 1. How to avoid being victimized. (Teaching self-worth, "I own my own body", what consent means, how traffickers manipulate children, include the dangers of running away and the ways they can be victimized; not just "running away is bad.")
 2. Avoid being the victimizer—preventing demand. (Teaching the relationship that porn has to sex trafficking, and that all people have value.)
 - b. Mentor at-risk kids. Train men to mentor boys: The best deterrent for porn use, gang involvement and purchase of sex is a strong positive male role model for boys. Train women to mentor girls: The best anecdote for victimization is a strong sense of self and the ability to say "no".
8. **Collaboration**
 - a. Rapid Response teams and task forces are good opportunities for collaboration across professions and agencies. We need more of them. Perhaps they could be organized by the "go-to" person in each county proposed in #3 above.)
 - b. Agencies should collaborate BEFORE interviewing the victim to discuss how to approach the situation as a team. One person should interview, and attempt to ask the questions to get the information that all the agencies need. (Victim shouldn't have multiple interviews asking the same questions.) Understand that discussing this is difficult for the victim/survivor. Always treat the individual with respect and trust that they are doing their best. Believe them.
9. **Demand Reduction.** This needs to begin in middle school (or before), since the average age of exposure to pornographic images is 11.
 - a. Educate children about the dangers of porn addiction, as well as how it harms others. (See #7a2.)
 - b. When people are charged with paying for sex, they should have higher penalties, have their pictures on TV and in newspapers, and letters to their home address about the charge. (This strategy is called "John shaming".)
 - c. "John schools": When a person is arrested for buying sex, they can choose/be forced to pay to attend a "john school" to learn about how people end up prostitution, as well as health and legal consequences of continuing this crime.
 - d. Services for Johns: Many were victims themselves, perhaps there should be mandatory treatment/services.