

The Damaging Myths of Human Trafficking



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Speaker Biography

Samantha Searls is a program manager at the Intercommunity Justice and Peace Center (IJPC). At IJPC, Samantha's education and advocacy work focuses on breaking down unjust systems. As part of her work to end human trafficking, Samantha chairs the Public Education and Awareness Committee of End Slavery Cincinnati's Anti-Human Trafficking Coalition. Samantha has her Master of Social Work from Washington University in St. Louis and her Bachelor of Social Work from the University of Indianapolis. Prior to her time at IJPC, Samantha served as a community organizer working on environmental, economic and social justice issues.



Intercommunity Justice and Peace Center (IJPC)



- Founded in 1985 by five communities of religious women
- Greater Cincinnati & Northern Kentucky
- **Mission** : The Intercommunity Justice and Peace Center educates and advocates for peace, challenges unjust systems, and promotes the creation of a nonviolent society

Intercommunity Justice and Peace Center (IJPC)



- **Vision**: A just and peaceful world
- Education & Advocacy
 - Lens of Peace & Nonviolence
- Three current programs:
 - Death Penalty
 - Immigration
 - Human Trafficking

Human Trafficking Program



- **Overall Goal of IJPC's Human Trafficking Program:**
To bring visibility to the issue of human trafficking by educating young people, elected officials and the general public about the realities and needs of trafficked people in order to create systemic change.

Human Trafficking Program



- Community Education & Advocacy
 - Offer interactive presentations
 - Runs advocacy campaigns to address systemic issues
 - Occasional individual case advocacy to illustrate issues
- End Slavery Cincinnati Coalition, member
 - Public Education & Awareness Committee, chair
 - Legislation & Policy Committee, member

Content Warning



- This presentation includes examples of situations that describe or depict people in situations of harm, bondage, and distress.
- Warnings will specifically be given before images appear to allow for participant self-care. We encourage community care and support for those who may be activated by this content.

Why Myths & Facts?



- Relatively “new” concept for the general public
 - Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000
- Organizations continually adapting to new information
 - Better data, emerging trends, diverse stories
 - More resources, effective interventions
 - Deeper understanding of systems that perpetuate exploitation

Why Myths & Facts?



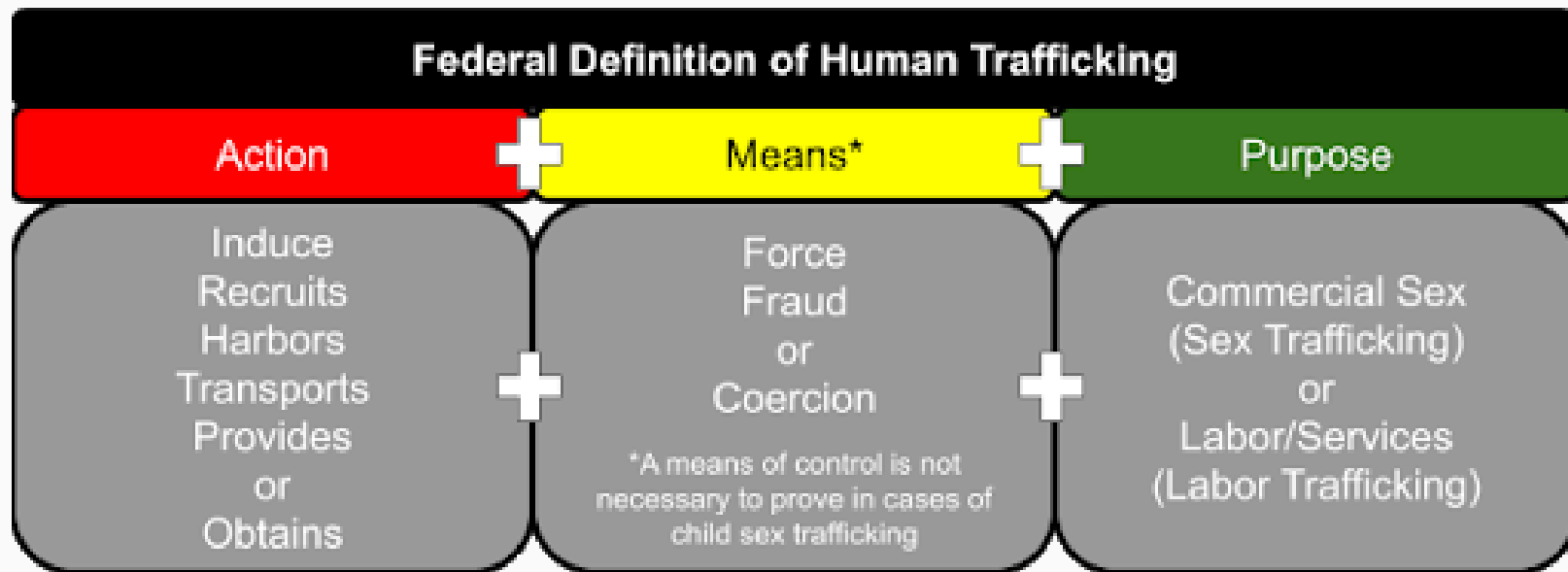
- Counteract false narratives
 - Entertainment industry, media reporting, viral social media posts
 - Persons in authority, political agendas
 - Major anti-human trafficking organizations
- Acknowledge how emotions have played a role in response

What's at Stake?



- Victims and survivors ability to see themselves in the narrative, seek help
- Redirecting resources and energy to populations that need it most
- Building lasting relationships with other social movements to address root causes

Helpful Tools: AMP Model



Using the AMP Model: Is It Trafficking?



- Missing persons?
- Kidnapping?
- Teens who run away from home?
- Intimate partner violence?
- Human smuggling?
- Commercial sexual services?

Helpful Tools



- **Polaris** : polarisproject.org & **National Human Trafficking Hotline (Hotline)** : humantraffickinghotline.org
- **International Labour Organization (ILO)** : ilo.org
- **Counter Trafficking Data Collective (CTDC)** : ctdatacollaborative.org & **Peace-Work** : peace-work.org
- Trends: Local law enforcement, partner organizations
- Snopes.com

Top 10 Myths



- Each myth will be accompanied by a stock photo image that was retrieved after a simple web search
- **Activity** : As we go, you will be asked to explain how the image perpetuates the myth
- Please ask questions, share concerns, push back
 - This will help us practice responding to myths!





Myth #1:

Ohio is the 6th worst state in the nation for high human trafficking rates.



Fact:



- Ohio is ranked 6th in the nation for the number of human trafficking **cases reported** to the **National Human Trafficking Hotline** in 2020.
- **Peace-Work** suggests using per-capita data
 - Ohio not even in Top 10
 - Hawaii, Nevada, Florida, Mississippi, Georgia



Myth #2:

Only women and girls can be victims and survivors of sex trafficking.



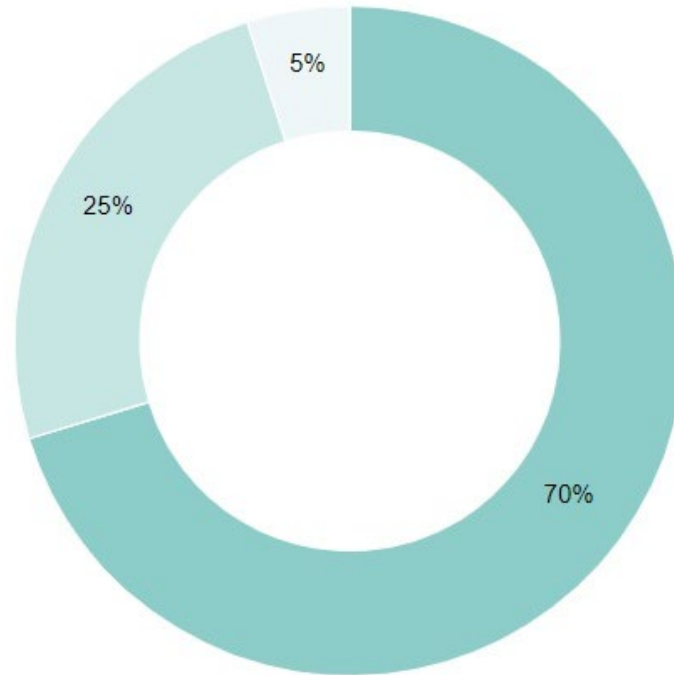
Fact:



- Men and boys are also victimized by sex traffickers. LGBTQ boys and young men are seen as particularly vulnerable to trafficking. (**Polaris**)

GENDER

● Female ● Male ● Unknown, Transgender ...



CTDC



Myth #3:
All human trafficking involves sex.



Fact:



- Worldwide, experts believe there are more situations of labor trafficking than of sex trafficking, but there is much wider awareness of sex trafficking in the U.S. than of labor trafficking. (**Polaris**)
- Estimated 27.6M victims of trafficking worldwide (**ILO**)
 - 77% Labor Trafficking (21.2M)
 - 23% Sex Trafficking (6.3M)



Myth #4:

Human trafficking only happens in illegal or underground industries.



Fact:



- Human trafficking cases have been reported and prosecuted in industries including restaurants, cleaning services, construction, factories and more. (**Polaris**)
- See **Polaris** ’ “The Typology of Modern Slavery” Report



Myth #5:

Labor trafficking is only or primarily a problem in developing countries.



Fact:



- Labor trafficking occurs in the United States and in other developed countries but is reported at lower rates than sex trafficking. (**Polaris**)
- See **Polaris'** “The Typology of Modern Slavery” Report:
 - Agricultural & Animal Husbandry, Domestic Work, Health & Beauty Services, Health Care, Hotels & Hospitality, Landscaping and more.



Myth #6:

Human trafficking involves moving, traveling or transporting a person across state or national borders.



Fact:



- Human trafficking is often confused with human smuggling, which involves unauthorized border crossings. In fact, the crime of human trafficking does not require any movement whatsoever. Survivors can be recruited and trafficked in their own home towns, even their own homes. (**Polaris**)



Myth #7:
Traffickers target victims
they don't know.

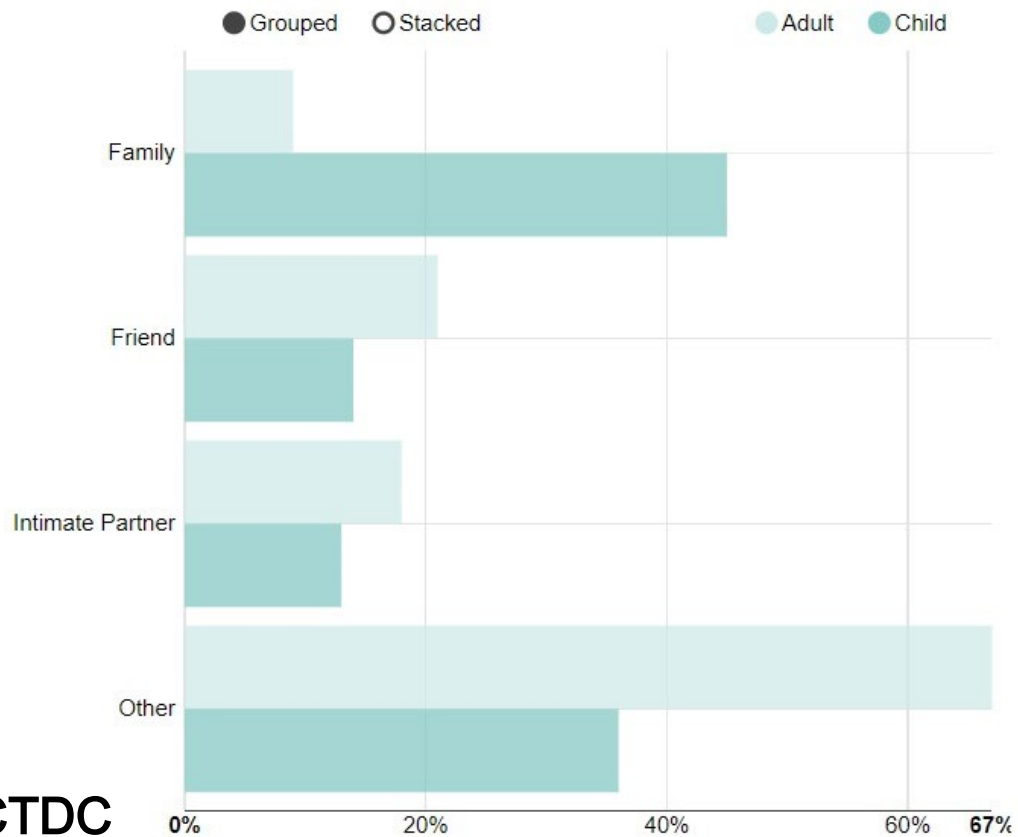


Fact:



- Many survivors have been trafficked by romantic partners, including spouses, and by family members, including parents. (**Polaris**)
- Over 40% of children were recruited by a family member or relative. (**CTDC**)
 - Other categories to consider: friend, intimate partner

RECRUITER RELATIONSHIP ADULTS AND CHILDREN



CTDC



Myth #8:
Human trafficking is always
or usually a violent crime.



Fact:



- The most pervasive myth about human trafficking is that it often involves kidnapping or physically forcing someone into a situation. In reality, most traffickers use psychological means such as, tricking, defrauding, manipulating or threatening victims into providing commercial sex or exploitative labor. (**Polaris**)

Sexual and Labour Exploitation

Victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation are controlled primarily by psychological control tactics.

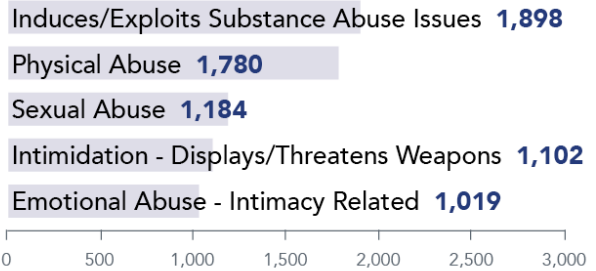
CTDC



TOP 5

Forms of Force, Fraud and Coercion

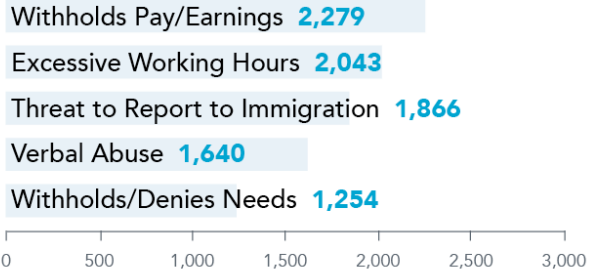
SEX TRAFFICKING



TOP 5

Forms of Force, Fraud and Coercion

LABOR TRAFFICKING





Myth #9:

People being trafficked are physically unable to leave their situations/locked in/held against their will.



Fact:



- That is sometimes the case. More often, however, people in trafficking situations stay for reasons that are more complicated.
 - Some lack ... transportation or a safe place to live.
 - Some are afraid for their safety.
 - Some have been so effectively manipulated that they do not identify ... as being under ... control (**Polaris**)



Myth #10:

People in active trafficking situations always want help getting out.



Fact:



- Every trafficking situation is unique and self-identification as a trafficking victim or survivor happens along a continuum.
 - Fear, isolation, guilt, shame, misplaced loyalty and expert manipulation ... keep a person from seeking help or identifying as a victim even if they are, in fact, being actively trafficked. (**Polaris**)

Review & Reflection



1. Ohio is the 6th worst state in the nation for high human trafficking rates.
2. Only women and girls can be victims and survivors of sex trafficking.
3. All human trafficking involves sex.
4. Human trafficking only happens in illegal or underground industries.
5. Labor trafficking is only or primarily a problem in developing countries.
6. Human trafficking involves moving, traveling or transporting a person across state or national borders.
7. Traffickers target victims they don't know.
8. Human trafficking is always or usually a violent crime.
9. People being trafficked are physically unable to leave their situations/locked in/held against their will.
10. People in active trafficking situations always want help getting out.

Questions & Evaluation



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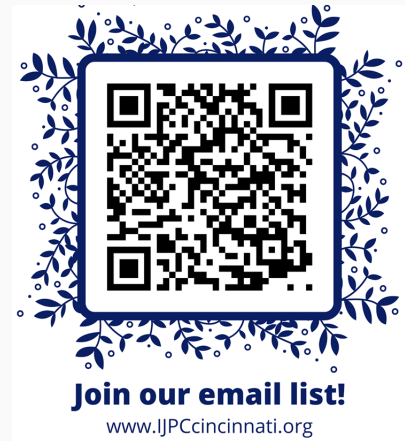
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Human Trafficking, Health Equity, and Academic Collaborative

For more information, please visit [website](#) and contact Dr. Suk-hee Kim, Ph.D., COI, MSW, Associate Professor in the School of Social Work & NKU's Diversity Faculty Fellow at kims16@nku.edu