

Human Trafficking and the Opioid Epidemic: Trauma-Informed Safety Recommendations

Presenter credentials: Marti MacGibbon, CADC-II, ACRPS, I-CADC, is a well known professional speaker/trainer, a nationally award-winning author, and an expert on trauma resolution and addiction, holding five professional certifications in her specialized field. A survivor leader, she serves on the Board of Directors at HEALTrafficking.

Abstract:

The power of addiction in trafficking has been recognized by the criminal justice system. Addiction can exacerbate a trafficked person's vulnerability, be part of a trafficker's means of coercing the captive person to submit, be a tool the trafficker uses to control the captive, and can be used by the captive person as a means of coping with the physical and mental traumas of being trafficked.* Opioids in particular are an effective coercion tool for traffickers. Some traffickers recruit directly from substance use treatment facilities. After exiting the trafficking situation, survivors with substance use issues need safety and support to recover. This session dispels myths about addiction and provides evidence-based information and trauma-informed recommendations for service providers. The presenter is a speaker, author, and survivor leader who holds five professional certifications in addiction treatment and is in long-term recovery from severe drug addiction. Her expertise is both clinical and experiential.

Definition of Addiction Re: ASAM, the American Society of Addiction Medicine

"Addiction is a primary, chronic disease of brain reward, motivation, memory and related circuitry. Dysfunction in these circuits leads to characteristic biological, psychological, social and spiritual manifestations. This is reflected in an individual pathologically pursuing reward and/or relief by substance use and other behaviors.

Addiction is characterized by inability to consistently abstain, impairment in behavioral control, craving, diminished recognition of significant problems with one's behaviors and interpersonal relationships, and a dysfunctional emotional response. Like other chronic diseases, addiction often involves cycles of relapse and remission. Without treatment or engagement in recovery activities, addiction is progressive and can result in disability or premature death."

Attendees will:

Understand the links between human trafficking and the current opioid epidemic, the dangers for exited survivors with substance use issues, and the recommended means of finding safe, trauma-informed treatment options for them

Review signs/symptoms of addiction, how it affects the brain and increases vulnerability for being trafficked, how early substance use is a risk factor for addiction, and how recovery reverses the disease process

Comprehend how trauma and addiction work together, how shame and fear can fuel the cycle, and list at least two trauma-informed ways to support victims and survivors in seeking recovery