

ABSTRACT

Background:
Florida is a major hub for human trafficking (HT) (U.S. Department of State, 2010, p. 339). Reports indicate that there is a need to train healthcare professionals and make them aware of their preventative role in HT (Chisolm-Straker & Richardson, 2007; Clawson and Dutch, 2008; Cole, 2009; Dovydaitis, 2010; Garza, 2007). In an effort to develop interprofessional education focused on HT and the role of the health care professionals, a need assessment guided by the Transtheoretical Model of Change (Porchaska & DiClemente, 1983) was conducted to determine Nova Southeastern University's College of Allied Health and Nursing (CAHN) faculty's readiness to change. Results from the needs assessment revealed a strong faculty need and willingness for HT training. To provide evidence from the field local governmental and non-governmental partners participated.

Level of Educational Program:
The level of educational program is faculty.

Targeted Learning Outcomes:
The participants attended information dissemination sessions that included the presentation of these quantitative and qualitative findings. This strategy was used to produce buy-in support for the creation of a professional development program focused on HT knowledge and skills that influence both faculty's willingness to adopt HT curriculum and governmental & nongovernmental partners to participate in the creation of said curriculum.

Targeted Learning Activities:
The respondents (NSU CAHN faculty and local governmental & non-governmental partners) participated in a need assessment that determined their need, awareness and, skill in health care professionals' identification of victims of HT, as well as of their students.

Evaluation Approach:
Cross-sectional quantitative and qualitative data collected on both NSU CAHN faculty and local governmental & non-governmental partners demonstrated both believed that faculty should be aware, knowledgeable and skilled in identifying victims of HT, as well as students of health care educators. Hence, NSU is primed for curriculum development in HT for the production of future health care professionals skilled in the management of present day challenges in clinical practice.

DESIGN

Two mixed-method need assessments were conducted. Participants included Nova Southeastern University Faculty (n=58, 62% female, Mage=51, 72% white) and local Community Partners (n=41) who provide services. Both groups were recruited via e-mail to participate in an anonymous, self-report need assessment. Most faculty (38%) had 21 to 30 years of clinical experience. The majority (51%) of community partners reported their organization as having 50+ employees, that they provided several services for 11+ years (61%) and that they provided services specifically for victims of human trafficking for 5 or less years (83%).

Faculty human trafficking awareness, knowledge, and skills were assessed by three likert type measures. Faculty qualitative inquiries included: "Describe the training and/or education you have received in identifying victims of human trafficking.", "What steps would you take after identifying a victim of human trafficking?"

Community partners' perception of a health care professionals' awareness, knowledge and skills were measured. Qualitative items included: "In your opinion, in what ways do health care professionals show their awareness of human trafficking?"; "From your observation, how do health care professionals respond when they identify victims of human trafficking?"

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FINDINGS

Faculty reported that there is very much to a great need to be aware of human trafficking (72%), knowledgeable of human trafficking (74%), skillful in identifying victims of human trafficking (67%).

Faculty reported that they had very little to no awareness of human trafficking (93%), knowledge of human trafficking (98%), skills in identifying victims of human trafficking (97%).

Qualitative Responses*

Participants provided an incomplete description of human trafficking, including only one or two aspects such as, "prostitution against one's will," "kidnapping," and "selling for sex or labor."

Equated victims of human trafficking to "drug mules."

No formal training in human trafficking.

Anecdotal experiences that informed their knowledge of the issue were general training in working with victims of abuse and/or torture; emergency medical service experience in a border state dealing with human trafficking; and self study on human trafficking.

A course of action when a victim of human trafficking was identified, would involve contacting "authorities," such as "law enforcement."

* The qualitative data analysis strategy utilized the interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA) approach, which means these open-ended survey data were compared, coded, and interpreted.

Community partners reported that there is very much to a greatly perceived health care professional need to be aware of human trafficking (97.5%), knowledgeable of human trafficking (97.5%), skilled in identifying victims of human trafficking (95%).

The majority (51.22%) of community respondents reported that they perceived health care professionals as somewhat aware of human trafficking.

The majority (53.65%) of community respondents reported that they perceived health care professionals as very little to not at all knowledgeable of identifying human trafficking victims.

The majority (51.22%) of community respondents reported that they perceived health care professionals as very little to not at all skillful in identifying human trafficking victims.

Qualitative Responses

Health care professionals are not aware of the problem.

Health care professionals attempt to demonstrate awareness by educational programs attendance, "cases of abuse," reports, or reports of "situations that might seem suspicious" to law enforcement authorities.

Health care professionals contacted law enforcement or emergency hotlines.

Health care professionals do not know the physical signs of a trafficked person.

Health care professionals identify vague physical symptoms such as, "bruises," "fatigue," "malnourishment," or "mental confusion."

Table 2

Summary of Correlations of Inferential Measures

Variable	Awareness	Knowledge	Skill
Awareness	1.00		
Knowledge	.54**	1.00	
Skill	.23	.56**	1.00

Pearson Product Momentum correlation was conducted to assess the associations among perceived health care professionals awareness, knowledge and skill in human trafficking. Findings indicate that Awareness and Knowledge are associated, as well as Knowledge and Skill (** p<.01)

Community members feel that awareness is not enough for the development of skills to identify victims of human trafficking. There is a sentiment that knowledge and practical skills would make health care professionals equipped to identify victims of human trafficking.

FINDINGS AS EVIDENCE

These findings were presented to community members and institution leadership in the form of information dissemination sessions and reports. This strategy of providing evidence for the need for human trafficking curriculum for health care professionals was used as a teaching tool to produce collaboration, partnership buy in and the demonstration of a common goal.

CONCLUSIONS

Both need assessments lay the groundwork necessary for the development of a victim centered curriculum to increase healthcare professionals' ability to recognize and identify victims of human trafficking. Findings support that Nova Southeastern University faculty resemble much of society with minimal awareness and knowledge of human trafficking. Findings support that community members have similar concerns about health care professionals ability to identify victims of human trafficking in clinical practice. There is a serious gap between knowledge that is available and what is needed to develop health care professionals to identify victims of human trafficking.

IMPLICATIONS

Nova Southeastern University faculty and Community Partners are instrumental in the collaborative effort of the development of health care professionals trained and educated on human trafficking. Nova Southeastern University is primed for curriculum development in human trafficking for the production of future health care professionals skilled in the management of present day challenges in clinical practice. The community and the institution have already taken a step toward collaboration in their preventative role of human trafficking. Evidence of this effort has resulted in an intramural grant award for Human Trafficking Prevention through Faculty Professional Development.