



November 2023 Updates: Mercy Care Statewide Collaborative for Preventing and Treating Trafficked Youth

Presented by

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Purpose of the Statewide Trafficked Youth Collaborative

- Coordinate prompt treatment for all youths in child welfare custody who are suspected or confirmed of sex trafficking victimization in Arizona
- Communication channels between all stakeholders related to the child
- Build capacity for responding to trafficking victims everywhere in Arizona
- Centering survivor voices and best practices
- Capturing data and trends in order to understand the unique experiences of trafficked children and use this data to craft solutions

Structured partnerships

- Mercy Care
- Dept of Child Safety (DCS)
- DCS Comprehensive Health Plan (DCS CHP)
- Lived Experience Experts
- Local, Tribal, State and Federal law enforcement agencies
- Courts and Juvenile Probation
- Child and Family Advocacy Centers
- Hospital/medical providers
- Behavioral Health Homes and specialty providers



Trafficked Youth Collaborative Process:

1) Identification as suspected or confirmed

- Identifying a child as a victim or possible victim of trafficking (Law Enforcement/Forensic Interview or Self-Disclosure to Guardian/Therapist/Probation/Survivor Advocate)
- File a police report with local jurisdiction

2) Multi-disciplinary communication

Guardian, law enforcement, medical/behavioral health, Court/JPO, health plan

3) Documentation

Upkeep of trafficking log (Mercy Care)

4) Immediate Treatment

- Medical and/or Behavioral Health Assessment
Mind24-7 or Emergency Depts (outside of Maricopa)

5) Ongoing Therapeutic Interventions

Services recommended by the clinical team (Child's assigned provider)

Outcomes of Collaborative partnerships

- Stakeholders assist in law enforcement investigations
 - Timely interviews and exams
 - Preventing re-traumatization; fewer disclosures needed
- Painting comprehensive picture of the youth's experience to guide treatment
 - HT victimization not misidentified as behavioral problems
 - Earlier intervention and better clinical documentation
- Child feels more supported
 - Continuity of care
 - Positive, trusting relationships with HT-specialized professionals
 - Fewer and shorter AWOLs
 - Transition to adulthood and access to HT support services

Statewide Expansion Efforts

- Partnered with the McCain Institute, Arizona State University's STIR Office, Arizona Anti-Trafficking Network, law enforcement, DCS, Juvenile Probation, Courts, Child Advocacy Centers, and regional task forces to expand to all counties
- Southern Arizona Collaborative (est. 2021)
 - Partnership with the Southern AZ Child Advocacy Center
- Eastern AZ Human Trafficking Coalition (est. 2023)
 - Collaboration and training for Navajo, Apache, Gila, Graham and Greenlee counties

Challenges Facing Rural Communities

- Lack of specialized victim services
- No 23-hour Crisis facilities
- Geographical issues; large regions, travel time for victims
- Staffing shortages which do not allow time for training
- Dynamics of sex trafficking are different
 - Familial trafficking
 - No-3rd Party; substance addiction, poverty
 - Fewer disclosures due to stigma

Bigger Picture...

Mercy Care's non-identifying data has been utilized as part of the evaluations completed by the Arizona State University Sex Trafficking Intervention and Research Office. The data is and has been used for the following purposes:

- Justified funding for HT-specialized positions including Survivor Mentors
- Identified the need for a specialized treatment court for trafficking victims
- Building capacity for the treatment of trafficking victims around the state of Arizona
- Understanding the volume of trafficking victimization occurring for Mercy Care members
- Assisted in securing funding for the Southern Arizona Child Advocacy Center

Thank You



mercy care