

The Colorbook

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Introduction

In reading about sex trafficking, I represented the effects of sex trafficking in a painting. This poster will provide information on the effects of sex trafficking and explain how it is connected in my painting. The colors of her body represent an aspect of sex trafficking as it “paints” who she is as it covers her body. There are three primary foci in this art. First, interactions with outsiders, specifically healthcare workers. Second, the process and experience of being trafficked including tactics used to entice and bring someone into sex trafficking as well as the experience during the sex trafficking period. Lastly, the outcomes for those who have been victims of sex trafficking.

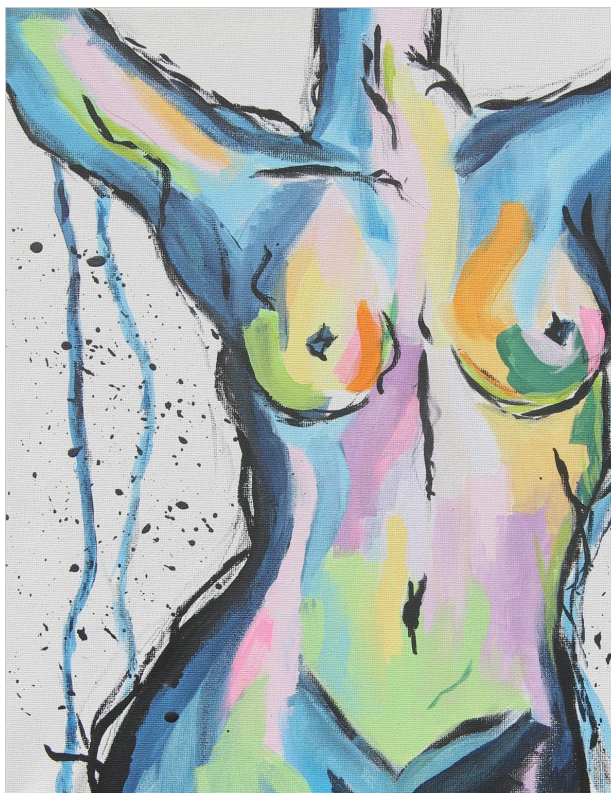
Those who are sex trafficked interact with their pimp or sex traffickers. They interact with those who are purchasing time with them. But the most alarming, is that victims of sex trafficking (28% to 88%) have some interaction with healthcare professionals (Talbot, 2020) demonstrating a time of intervention and rescue may be missed quite often.

The process of recruiting, coercing, or enticing one into sex trafficking includes tactics used by the trafficker. Traffickers are skilled in identifying the weaknesses and needs of the youth and exploit those vulnerabilities to entrap and control their victims (Moore, Houck, Hirway, Barron, & Goldberg, 2020). Promises are often utilized to bring someone into sex trafficking such as flattery, romance, friendship, love, care, and protection, false promises of money, exciting lifestyle, and normalizing sex through jokes or sexually assaultive sex with their victims (Evans, 2020; Moore et al., 2020; Roe-Sepowitz, 2019). Once the person is being trafficked interactions did not stay positive. Evans (2020) found that interactions with victims also included threats and violence. Roe-Sepowitz (2019) found that retention techniques included blackmail, control over their phone, and convincing them this is what they were supposed to do.

Those who have been sex trafficked experience physical, psychological, emotional, and economic trauma (Rajaram & Tidball, 2018). Roe-Sepowitz (2019) found that physical violence such as punching, kicking, hitting with weapons, and torture were used in almost one third of the cases. Slapping and kicking were prevalent in 66.5 % of cases. These large numbers and percentages show how prevalent abuse is in sex trafficking. Women are seen as objects and must do what they are told.

Methods

Literature between 2015 and 2020 was searched using EBSCO and Google Scholar. Articles ($N = 5$) were chosen based on covering a different effect from sex trafficking so that it could be represented in the painting. Colors chosen included: yellow, black, orange, green, purple, pink, and blue. As trafficking is mostly women and girls (71%; <https://www.safehorizon.org/get-informed/human-trafficking-statistics-facts/#statistics-and-facts/>) the figure drawn is of a nude female body. The body has no head as sex trafficking dehumanizes and turns the victim into an object.



Practice

Using art to express knowledge is helpful in opening up discussion. I plan to work in the medical field and I believe that having this art or types of art like this available in my office with clear descriptions of the colors may allow victims to approach the topic more openly. This may also allow a patient/victim to tell me they are “feeling” a color or experiencing a color allowing a cry for help without explicitly saying that they are a victim. This can be used to open a dialogue to help gain assistance and help.

Conclusion

The recruitment into sex trafficking and outcomes of sex trafficking is an ongoing crisis issue in this country. More understanding and training of professionals is needed to help bring an end to this criminal activity. For example, training of healthcare workers to recognize and intervene with sex trafficking is important to help remove victims from dangerous and unwanted situations.

As traffickers use enticing language and then controlling behavior to continue to control victims is part of this understanding that is needed. These opposing behaviors create distrust and distortion in relationships for these women. Being able to open up and talk to a medical professional is challenging due to trust issues that stem from promises broken. While some women go towards these false promises to escape hostile home environments others are enticed or lured in believing they will have a positive experience (Evans, 2020; Moore et al., 2020). Some may hold onto the hope that it will be better and fear talking to a health professional. This topic is important for families because girls were in group homes or who runaway are at a greater risk for being trafficked (Roe-Sepowitz, 2019). Practitioners who work with families must be able to recognize risk, offer education, and provide interventions for victims of sex trafficking. In addition, as parents educate their children on safety and on sex education, sex trafficking can be part of these discussions.

Table 1: Description and explanation of colors

Color	Representation
Yellow	light that the medical professionals could bring to sex trafficking victims
Black	darkness and deception
Orange	fantasy and false promises
Green	manipulation and blackmail
Purple	physical abuse and bruises
Pink	weaknesses and needs of the youth, exploited vulnerabilities, entrapment and control
Blue	sorrow, depression



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