

Planning Summit -- Feasibility of Training/Education of Tattoo Artist in Human Trafficking Prevention

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Abstract

Background. Women who are sex trafficked within the U.S., often are made to have tattoos such as bar codes, a dollar sign or the name of the trafficker – the person who is selling them for sex. Tattoo artists may routinely encounter a sex trafficking survivor while she is being trafficked. As front-line professionals, they are in a unique position to detect, identify, and report of any abuse, including sex trafficking.

Approach. This project is based on principles of Community Based Participatory Research (CBPR). CBPR is a collaborative research process that seeks to address a topic that is important to the community and equitably involves all partners in the research process. The aim of this T4 translational project is to engage the tattoo artist community in Nebraska and hold a planning meeting.

Expected Outcomes: Determine the feasibility of training/education of tattoo artist on prevention of sex trafficking including the content and preferred mode of training on sex trafficking. Form an ad-hoc committee of tattoo artist to assist in developing training/education materials for tattoo artists on sex trafficking.

Introduction

Sex trafficking occurs when a person is induced by force, fraud or coercion to do a commercial sex act or where the person forced to perform such an act is below 18 years of age. Racial/ethnic minority and low-income women and girls, particularly those who have experienced adverse childhood experiences are at a higher risk for being sex trafficked.

As front-line professionals, tattoo artists can, through the timely identification of survivors, can help stem the violence and injury. They can connect survivors to support services in the community, so they can start to heal from the emotional and physical trauma and rebuild their lives. Despite the significant role that tattoo artists can play in the secondary prevention of trafficking, there are no initiatives at the local or national level that work collaboratively with tattoo artists to develop and implement training/education of tattoo artists on the prevention of sex trafficking.

Therefore, it is crucial that public health build a collaborative partnership with tattoo artists using principles of CBPR to develop interventions to enhance the education/training of tattoo artists.



Methods

Aims

The aim of this T4 translational project is to engage the tattoo artist community in Nebraska and hold a planning meeting to determine the feasibility of training/education of tattoo artist on prevention of sex trafficking including the content and preferred mode of training on sex trafficking.

Research Approach

This project is based on principles of Community Based Participatory Research (CBPR). CBPR is a collaborative research process that seeks to address a topic that is important to the community and equitably involves all partners in the research process. To attract tattoo artists, we will open the summit with a keynote speaker, a well-known and respected in the tattoo artist community. Next, we will have a session on sex trafficking incorporating public health and law-enforcement perspectives. We will use ToP (Technology of Participation, an evidence-based facilitation method) to facilitate a discussion among tattoo artists on preferred content and mode of delivery of the training on sex trafficking prevention. We will also use a method called ORID (Objective, Reflective, Interpretative, Decision) or Focused Conversation. This will allow participants to reflect on what they have learned from the presentation on sex trafficking, voice questions or concerns they may have, and weigh-in on preferred training/education strategies which will allow them to take ownership of the issue.

We will also collect pre- and post-data from summit participants on their knowledge, attitudes and beliefs of sex trafficking and their overall satisfaction with the summit (venue, format, topics, and length of each session, and overall summit). Lastly, we will ask for volunteers to serve on an ad-hoc advisory board to guide us in developing, implementing and evaluating training/education of tattoo artists on sex trafficking prevention in Nebraska.

Expected Outcomes

Short-term Outcomes

- Through the ToP mediated discussion, create an action plan on key topic areas to be addressed and best method(s) to train/educate the tattoo artist community on sex trafficking.
- Form an ad-hoc committee of tattoo artist to assist in developing training/education materials for tattoo artists on sex trafficking.
- Expect a positive change among participants on the knowledge, attitudes and beliefs on sex trafficking (including warning signs, reporting protocol and services for trafficking survivors), following the presentation on sex trafficking.
- Majority of the participants will be satisfied with the summit.
- At the end of the summit, we expect to have strengthened community-campus partnership between the tattoo artist community and UNMC.

Long-term outcomes

- Timely identification of girls and women who might be sex trafficked, and connect them with supportive services in the community.
- Dissemination of the training, regionally and nationally, working collaboratively with other professions are represented on the Board of Cosmetology (e.g., nail technology, cosmetology, electrology, and estheticians) to develop, implement and evaluate training on sex trafficking, and possibly other health issues.

Future Directions

Include development, implementation, and evaluation of training and education of sex trafficking for tattoo artists in Nebraska using RCT.

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