Module Four Violence Against Children: Child Abuse and Human Trafficking

Objectives

- 1. Understand the warning signs of child abuse and human trafficking;
- 2. In the case of suspected child abuse, understand each educator's role as mandated reporter and the process of making a report;
- Define human trafficking and the scope of the problem. Understand the components of the business and factors associated with human trafficking of minors. Have solutions to intervene and report human trafficking of minors; and
- 4. Discuss the connection between school climate and safety issues.
- 5. Know how to make referrals to school professionals for helping the student.

Materials Needed

- 1. Computer
- 2. LCD projector
- 3. A Safety and Violence Prevention Curriculum
- 4. PowerPoint presentation handout: "Violence Against Children: Child Abuse and Human Trafficking"

Background Information for Facilitator

This module covers topics that relate to violence against children. Specifically, it covers recognizing and intervening in incidents of child abuse and human trafficking. While these are very broad topics and each deserves its own separate training, the top issues of importance for each are highlighted in this module.

Child abuse and human trafficking share some characteristics. Each happen frequently and represent serious barriers to learning for young people. Whether a student is a target of violence by adults or by other students, the impact on the student's life, and his or her learning, can be profound. For some young people, being a target of violence can result in other mental health issues such as depression, substance use, post-traumatic stress disorder, hyper-vigilance, self-injurious behaviors and suicide as addressed in module two and substance abuse addressed in module one. Other young people who are targets of violence can become aggressive, abusive and violent toward others as described in

module three. School professionals can interrupt the destructive cycle of violence through proactive referrals.

It is important to *recognize, reach out, and refer* before problems escalate to life-altering levels such as suicide, violence against others, abduction or murder. Noticing behavior that *isolates the target* is critically important for school professionals, who are mandated by law to report suspected child abuse. In many cases, students living with abuse have been conditioned by their abusers to believe that no one can help them. Because of this, school professionals may be their only hope.

Child Abuse

Child abuse is an extremely serious topic and one that many educators will address at some point throughout their careers. With 5 to 25 percent of students experiencing some type of abuse or neglect each year, teachers are often the de facto reporters of child abuse suspicions. School professionals are at times in a position to identify and report such abuse. However, several barriers to reporting do exist. School personnel may struggle with what constitutes abuse. They may also struggle with personal reactions to learning of a young child's abuse, unclear guidelines for reporting the alleged abuse, and with fear regarding the outcome of making a report. These barriers pose a threat to today's youth, many of whom are at risk for neglect and abuse.

Child abuse also manifests in various behaviors affecting a child, including neglect (neglect of physical, emotional or educational needs), verbal and emotional abuse (calling the child names or disparaging the child), physical abuse (including slapping, kicking and hitting that goes beyond normally accepted parameters of discipline), and sexual abuse (involving the abuser's sexual gratification gained as a result of contact).

According to a 2010 report on child maltreatment by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, child protective service agencies received reports of approximately 3.3 million cases of suspected child abuse in 2010, and about one fifth of the cases were substantiated as abuse. The majority of these cases were neglect (78.3 percent), followed by physical abuse (17.6 percent), sexual abuse (9.2 percent) and psychological maltreatment (8.1). Additionally, in the United States, approximately five children die each day due to child maltreatment. Children are most vulnerable to sexual abuse between the ages of 8 and 12, with the average age for first abuse at 9.9 years for boys and 9.6 years for girls.

In response to the need for child advocacy, Congress passed the Child Abuse and Treatment Act in 1974. This law mandated that school personnel and other professionals report child abuse. Since that time, all state legislatures have incorporated laws requiring the reporting of abuse and neglect. Child abuse laws

state that these reports do not require absolute proof of abuse; rather, they must reflect reasonable cause for suspecting or believing it has occurred.

Such laws seem to have resulted in increased reporting, particularly by school personnel. In Federal Fiscal Year 2010, three-fifths (58.6 percent) of all reports of alleged child abuse or neglect were made by professionals. The most common report sources were education personnel (16.4 percent), legal and law enforcement personnel (16.7 percent), social services staff (11.5 percent), and medical personnel (8.2 percent). Professionals have submitted more than one-half of all reports for the past five years, and that percentage has increased slightly each year since 2006.

The Fourth National Incidence Study of Child Abuse and Neglect showed that public schools report more cases of child abuse and neglect than any other institution (52%). These findings reflect the central role school professionals play in identifying children who are abused and neglected. Educators play a unique role because they have access to children and expertise in child development. Providing educators with the tools to *recognize*, *reach out*, *and refer* in cases of abuse and neglect can help prevent or minimize the damaging effects of these violent behaviors.

Types of Child Abuse

There are several types of child abuse, but the core element that ties them together is the emotional effect on the child. Children need predictability, structure, clear boundaries and the knowledge that their parents and other caring adults are looking out for their safety. Abused children cannot predict how their parents or other caring adults will act. Their world is an unpredictable, frightening place with no rules. Whether the abuse is a slap, a harsh comment, stony silence, or not knowing if there will be dinner on the table. The end result is a child that feels unsafe, uncared for and alone.

Emotional child abuse

Sticks and stones may break my bones but words will never hurt me? Contrary to this old saying, emotional abuse can severely damage a child's mental health or social development, leaving lifelong psychological scars. Examples of emotional child abuse may include:

- Constant belittling, shaming and humiliating a child.
- Calling names and making negative comparisons to others.
- Telling a child he or she is "no good," "worthless," "bad," or "a mistake."
- Frequent yelling, threatening or bullying.
- Ignoring or rejecting a child as punishment; giving him or her the silent treatment.

- Limited physical contact with the child—no hugs, kisses or other signs of affection.
- Exposing the child to violence or the abuse of others, whether it be the abuse of a parent, a sibling or even a pet.

Child neglect

Child neglect—a very common type of child abuse—is a pattern of failing to provide for a child's basic needs. These needs can range from adequate food, clothing, hygiene or supervision. Child neglect is not always easy to spot. Sometimes, a parent might become physically or mentally unable to care for a child, such as with a serious injury, untreated depression or anxiety. Other times, alcohol or drug abuse may seriously impair judgment and the ability to keep a child safe.

Older children might not show outward signs of neglect, becoming used to presenting a competent face to the outside world, and even taking on the role of the parent. But at the end of the day, neglected children are not getting their physical and emotional needs met.

Physical child abuse

Physical abuse involves physical harm or injury to the child. It may be the result of a deliberate attempt to hurt the child, but not always. It can also result from severe discipline, such as using a belt on a child, or physical punishment that is inappropriate to the child's age or physical condition.

Many physically abusive parents and caregivers insist that their actions are simply forms of discipline—ways to make children learn to behave. But there is a big difference between using physical punishment to discipline and physical abuse. The point of disciplining children is to teach them right from wrong, not to make them live in fear.

Physical abuse vs. Discipline

In physical abuse, unlike physical forms of discipline, the following elements are present:

- **Unpredictability.** The child never knows what is going to set the parent off. There are no clear boundaries or rules. The child is constantly walking on eggshells, never sure what behavior will trigger a physical assault.
- Lashing out in anger. Physically abusive parents act out of anger and the desire to assert control, not the motivation to lovingly teach the child. The angrier the parent, the more intense the abuse.
- Using fear to control behavior. Parents who are physically abusive may believe that their children need to fear them in order to behave, so they use physical abuse to "keep their child in line." However, what children are really learning is how to avoid being hit, not how to behave or grow as individuals.

Child Abuse - How Do I Know What to Look For?

All types of child abuse and neglect leave lasting scars. Some of these scars might be physical, but emotional scarring has long lasting effects throughout life. They can damage a child's sense of self, ability to have healthy relationships and ability to function at home and school.

Warning signs of emotional abuse in children

- Excessively withdrawn, fearful, or anxious about doing something wrong.
- Shows extremes in behavior (extremely compliant or extremely demanding; extremely passive or extremely aggressive).
- Doesn't seem to be attached to the parent or caregiver.
- Acts either inappropriately grown-up (taking care of other children) or inappropriately infantile (rocking, thumb-sucking, throwing tantrums).

Warning signs of physical abuse in children

- Frequent injuries or unexplained bruises, welts or cuts.
- Is always watchful and "on alert," as if waiting for something bad to happen.
- Injuries appear to have a pattern such as marks from a hand or belt.
- Shies away from touch, flinches at sudden movements, or seems afraid to go home.
- Wears inappropriate clothing to cover up injuries, such as long-sleeved shirts on hot days.

Warning signs of neglect in children

- Clothes are ill-fitting, filthy or inappropriate for the weather.
- Hygiene is consistently bad (unbathed, matted and unwashed hair, noticeable body odor).
- Untreated illnesses and physical injuries.
- Is frequently unsupervised or left alone or allowed to play in unsafe situations and environments.
- Is frequently late or missing from school.

The earlier child abuse is caught, the better the chance of recovery and appropriate treatment for the child. Child abuse is not always obvious. By learning some of the common warning signs of child abuse and neglect, you can catch the problem as early as possible and get both the child and the abuser the help that they need.

Human Trafficking

Human trafficking is the recruitment, harboring, provision, or obtaining of a person for the purpose of forced labor or a commercial sex act, in which a commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion or the person forced to perform such an act is under the age of 18 years (sex trafficking only). Human Trafficking is a lucrative industry. It has been identified as the fastest growing criminal industry worldwide. With all 50 states reporting cases of human trafficking, 200,000 people have been trafficked in the U.S. with an estimated 100,000 children involved in sex trafficking. In Ohio 50 cases have been reported in the past nine years with 1,078 U.S. born Ohio youth that were sex trafficked in 2011.

The average age that a person first enters into the commercial sex industry is 12-14. Victims of human trafficking are not permitted to leave upon arrival at their destination. They are held against their will through acts of coercion and forced to work or provide services to the trafficker or others.

The work or services may include anything from bonded or forced labor to commercialized sexual exploitation. Studies suggest that up to 90% of runaway youth become involved in the commercial sex industry. There are currently about 700 to 800 active missing children cases in Ohio, and about 90% are runaways. On average, there are 19,000 to 20,000 missing children reports per year in Ohio, with about 90% as runaways.

In the business of human trafficking there is the seller, the buyer and the product or victim. The sellers or trafficker are men and women from all walks of life. The seller could be an individual or an organized criminal syndicate. Often a predatory romantic involvement is used to lure in a victim. The seller may also offer seemingly legitimate work opportunities or food, housing, clothes and drugs in exchange for sex. The buyers or "Johns" also come from all walks of life. The buyers feel as if they own the victim they purchase and subject them to painful, abusive fantasies. The buyers and sellers drive the sex trade and profit from the demand for commercial sex. The victim has typically run away or is homeless. Therefore, most minor victims "willingly" go with their trafficker or seller. Many minor victims do not think they are a victim and learn to not trust social services and law enforcement. In addition, online solicitation is increasing with the use of social media and commercial sex websites.

Factors associated with human trafficking of minors are:

- Presence of pre-existing adult prostitution markets in communities where large numbers of street youth are concentrated.
- Prior history of child sexual abuse and child sexual assault.

- Large numbers of unattached and transient males.
- Membership in gangs, runaways and homeless youth
- Recruitment by organized crime groups.
- Possess large amounts of cash and hotel room keys.
- Have unexplained school absences and are unable to regularly attend school.

Parents, educators and community members should model healthy relationships and create environments that counter risk factors. To prevent minors from participating in human trafficking, educators can draw on local violence prevention agencies to access effective prevention programs and best practices. In addition, adults can contact their local coalition or violence prevention organization to have a speaker talk with students about avoiding the exploitation and violence against minors. To intervene and report the human trafficking of minors, adults can contact local law enforcement, county children services, the local Rescue & Restore Coalition and the National Human Trafficking Resource Center at 1-888-373-7888.

Human Trafficking - How Do I Know What to Look For?

The child or youth involved in human trafficking...

- has run away or is homeless
- looks young, but claims to be an adult
- possesses large amounts of cash
- possesses hotel room keys
- has indicators of being "branded" (e.g. tattoo)
- lies about her/his age and/or possesses false identification
- tells life stories with inconsistencies
- has little knowledge of his/her community or his/her location
- is involved with an abusive or controlling partner/"boyfriend"
- has signs of physical abuse and/or injury
- has trouble walking or sitting.
- appears to be engaging in scripted communication
- has fearful or an anxious demeanor
- has unexplained school absences and is unable to attend school regularly
- often runs away
- talks about traveling to other locations
- shows signs of physical abuse
- Is withdrawn, fearful and/or depressed.
- does not have control over his/her own schedule
- does not have control over his/her ID forms
- Displays knowledge or interest in sexual acts inappropriate to his or her age, or even seductive behavior.

- Makes strong efforts to avoid a specific person, without an obvious reason.
- Doesn't want to change clothes in front of others or participate in physical activities.
- has an STD or is pregnant, especially under the age of 14.

Agency staff members are uniquely positioned to identify trafficking victims. The needs of trafficking victims are complex and vary from individual to individual. Agencies should develop specific policies for direct referrals and advocacy efforts when assisting victims of human trafficking. Without proper training, many agency staff will not have the tools necessary to identify a situation as one of human trafficking.

How to Respond - Recognize, Reach out, and Refer

The most important thing you can do is to *recognize* in students the signs and symptoms of distress, *reach out* to them, tell them you care and make the appropriate *referral* so that they can get the help they need to be successful in school and in life. Once aware of a student's child abuse or human trafficking issues, the following key messages will assist educators as they respond to student disclosure.

- 1. Key messages to use with a student once disclosure has occurred:
 - Thank you for sharing something so personal with me.
 - You deserve to be safe.
 - I appreciate that you trust me with this information.
 - Allow me to explain the limits of confidentiality and of the Mandated Reporter Role.
 - Let's talk about our next steps.
 - I am glad you brought this issue to my attention. I may not be able to answer all your questions, but I will get you connected to someone who can help.
 - I am concerned about you. Can we talk about this more with the guidance counselor (or other trusted adult at school)?
- 2. Before a disclosure (abuse, mental health issues, bullying, etc.):
 - Know your own biases about these issues
 - Practice how you will respond to a student disclosure, incorporating youthcentered and non-judgmental approaches
 - Be open to learning and incorporating new information that challenges your own beliefs
 - Know to whom students should be referred and which school supports/services are available.

- Support and appropriately refer the student; you will not be expected to investigate a student's situation/claims.
- Prepare how you will take care of yourself after a disclosure by a student of suicidal intention, abuse, trafficking, etc.
- Is there a staff-convened task force or working group on these issues? If so, does it make sense at this time to join or consult with them?

Tips for talking to an abused child

- Avoid denial and remain calm. A common reaction to news as unpleasant and shocking as child abuse is denial. However, if you display denial to a child, or show shock or disgust at what they are saying, the child may be afraid to continue and will shut down. As hard as it may be, remain as calm and reassuring as you can.
- Don't interrogate. Let the child explain to you in his or her own words
 what happened, but don't interrogate the child or ask leading questions.
 This may confuse and fluster the child and make it harder for them to
 continue their story.
- Reassure the child that they did nothing wrong. It takes a lot for a child to come forward about abuse. Reassure him or her that you take what is said seriously, and that it is not the child's fault.
- Safety comes first. If you feel that your safety or the safety of the child would be threatened if you try to intervene, leave it to the professionals. You may be able to provide more support later after the initial professional intervention.

Just remember, you can make a tremendous difference in the life of an abused child, especially if you take steps to stop the abuse early. When talking with an abused child, the best thing you can provide is calm reassurance and unconditional support. Let your actions speak for you if you're having trouble finding the words. Remember that talking about the abuse may be very difficult for the child. It's your job to reassure the child and provide whatever help you can.

School Responses

In what direct ways can schools reduce violence and promote a safe environment for all students and staff? One important answer is that schools can create and reinforce a respectful school climate. In *Creating Emotionally Safe Schools: A Guide for Educators and Parents,* Bluestein (2001) cites research from around the country that highlights the connection between effective learning and academic safety, emotional safety, social safety, behavioral safety and physical safety. According to the U.S. Departments of Education and Justice and

the American Institutes for Research, effective school violence prevention builds a school-wide foundation of safety for all children. This involves:

- Modeling healthy relationships;
- Calling out and rewarding positive behavior;
- Countering the risk factors in your classroom and schools;
- Supporting positive discipline, academic success, and mental and emotional wellness through a caring school environment;
- Teaching students appropriate behaviors and problem-solving skills;
- Providing positive behavioral support;
- Intervening when students inappropriate say things (and with other adults, as needed);
- Delivering appropriate academic instruction with engaging curricula and effective teaching practices;
- Training for staff to recognize early warning signs and make appropriate referrals; and
- Drawing on local violence prevention programs to access effective programs.

As an educator in the state of Ohio, you are a mandated reporter of suspected child abuse. According to the Ohio Revised Code, you must report knowledge or suspicion of child abuse to your local child protective services agency. Such reports, which can be made anonymously, should be made following your school district's policies and procedures.

Note that a March 2007 amendment to the Ohio Revised Code states that an educator's failure to report suspicion of child abuse is a first- degree misdemeanor, punishable by up to six months in prison and up to a \$1,000 fine.

If you suspect a child is being abused, it's critical to get them the help he or she needs. Reporting child abuse seems so official. Many people are reluctant to get involved in other families' lives.

Understanding some of the myths behind reporting may help put your mind at ease if you need to report child abuse.

- I don't want to interfere in someone else's family. The effects of child abuse are lifelong, affecting future relationships, self-esteem and place even more children at risk of abuse as the cycle continues. Help break the cycle of child abuse.
- What if I break up someone's home? The priority in child protective
 services is keeping children in the home. A child abuse report does not
 mean a child is automatically removed from the home unless the child is
 clearly in danger. Support such as parenting classes, anger management
 or other resources may be offered first to parents if safe for the child.

- They will know it was me who called. Reporting is anonymous. In most places, you do not have to give your name when you report child abuse. The child abuser cannot find out who made the report of child abuse.
- It won't make a difference what I have to say. If you have a gut feeling
 that something is wrong, it is better to be safe than sorry. Even if you don't
 see the whole picture, others may have noticed as well, and a pattern can
 help identify child abuse that might have otherwise slipped through the
 cracks.

There are school wide efforts to ensure schools are safe places – places where kids who are depressed or suicidal can get help, where kids who are using alcohol and drugs are noticed, and where bullies, their targets, and children living in abusive homes are helped. This is the kind of school our children deserve and that we can all work to achieve. We hope that you will work with your school improvement team, or school climate committee, to create schools like this.

The most important thing you can do is to recognize in students the signs and symptoms of distress, reach out to them, tell them you care and make the appropriate referral so that they can get the help they need to be successful in school and in life.

What can teachers and other educators do?

- 1. What experiences have you had with students that display signs and symptoms of child abuse or human trafficking in your classroom or school building?
- 2. How comfortable and confident do you feel about **identifying** a student displaying the signs and symptoms of child abuse or human trafficking?
- 3. How comfortable and confident do you feel about **referring** a student who displays the signs and symptoms of child abuse or human trafficking?
- 4. What is the referral process for students in your building?

This training is one of the efforts that the Ohio Department of Education is making to provide safe schools for all Ohio children.

Quiz

Q1: It is not important to <u>recognize</u>, <u>reach out</u>, <u>and refer</u> before problems escalate to life-altering levels, such as suicide, violence against others, abduction or murder.

A. True

B. False

Q2: Which of the following are barriers to reporting child abuse?

- A. School personnel may struggle with what constitutes abuse.
- B. School personnel may struggle with personal reactions to learning of a young child's abuse.
- C. School personnel may struggle with unclear guidelines for reporting the alleged abuse.
- D. School personnel may have fear regarding the outcome of reporting.
- E. All of the above

Q3: Children do not need predictability, structure, clear boundaries and the knowledge that their parents and other caring adults are looking out for their safety.

- A. True
- B. False

Q4: Abused children cannot predict how their parents or other caring adults will act. Their world is an unpredictable, frightening place with no rules.

- A. True
- B. False

Q5: Emotional abuse does not severely damage a child's mental health or social development, leaving lifelong psychological scars.

- A. True
- B. False

Q6: Child neglect is a pattern of failing to provide for a child's basic needs and a very common type of child abuse.

- A. True
- B. False

Q7: Physical abuse involves physical harm or injury to the child. In physical abuse, unlike physical forms of discipline, the following elements are present:

- A. Unpredictability
- B. Lashing out in anger
- C. Using fear to control behavior
- D. None of the above

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Q8: Human trafficking is the recruitment, harboring, provision or obtaining
of a person for the purpose of forced labor or a commercial sex act, in
which a commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion or the
person forced to perform such an act is under the age of 18 years.

- A. True
- B. False

Q9: The average age that a person first enters into the commercial sex industry is:

- A. 11-13
- B. 15-17
- C. 12-14
- D. 16-18

Q10: Currently, there are approximately _____active missing children cases in Ohio:

- A. 100 to 200
- B. 700 to 800
- C. 300 to 400
- D. 500 to 600

Q11: In the business of human trafficking there is the seller, the buyer and the product or victim.

- A. True
- B. False

Q12: The victim has typically run away or is homeless.

- A. True
- B. False

Q13: Most minor victims "willingly" go with their trafficker or seller and learn not to trust social services or law enforcement.

- A. True
- B. False

Q14: Online solicitation is increasing with the use of social media and commercial sex websites.

- A. True
- B. False

Q15: Parents, educators and community members should model healthy relationships and create environments that counter risk factors.

- A. True
- B. False

Q16: To prevent minors from participating in human trafficking, educators cannot draw on local violence prevention agencies to access effective prevention programs and best practices.

- A. True
- B. False

Q17: Human trafficking situations are easy to identify and an adequate response requires no specific policies or training of staff.

- A. True
- B. False

Q18: Which of the following are possible indicators of human trafficking?

- A. Has run away or is homeless
- B. Looks young, but claims to be an adult
- C. Possesses large amounts of cash
- D. Possesses hotel room keys
- E. None of the above
- F. All of the above

Q19: Tips for talking to an abused child include which of the following?

- A. Avoid denial and remain calm
- B. Don't interrogate
- C. Reassure the child that they did nothing wrong
- D. Safety comes first
- E. None of the above
- F. All of the above

Quiz - Answer Key

Q1: It is not important to <u>recognize</u>, <u>reach out</u>, <u>and refer</u> before problems escalate to life-altering levels, such as suicide, violence against others, abduction or murder.

- A. True
- B. False

Answer: It **IS** important to *recognize, reach out, and refer* before problems escalate to life-altering levels, such as suicide, violence against others, abduction or murder.

Q2: Which of the following are barriers to reporting child abuse?

- A. School personnel may struggle with what constitutes abuse.
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- E. All of the above

Q3: Children do not need predictability, structure, clear boundaries and the knowledge that their parents and other caring adults are looking out for their safety.

- A. True
- B. False

Answer: Children **DO** need predictability, structure, clear boundaries and the knowledge that their parents and other caring adults are looking out for their safety.

Q4: Abused children cannot predict how their parents or other caring adults will act. Their world is an unpredictable, frightening place with no rules.

- A. True
- B. False

Q5: Emotional abuse does not severely damage a child's mental health or social development, leaving lifelong psychological scars.

- A. True
- B. False

Answer: Emotional abuse **DOES** severely damage a child's mental health or social development, leaving lifelong psychological scars.

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and a very common type of child abuse.	

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Q15: Parents, educators and community members should model healthy relationships and create environments that counter risk factors.

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Q16: To prevent minors from participating in human trafficking, educators cannot draw on local violence prevention agencies to access effective prevention programs and best practices.

- A. True
- B. False

Answer: To prevent minors from participating in human trafficking, educators **CAN** draw on local violence prevention agencies to access effective prevention programs and best practices.

Q17: Human trafficking situations are easy to identify and an adequate response requires no specific policies or training of staff.

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- B. False

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National, State and Local Resources

To intervene and report child abuse of minors, adults can contact their county job and family services. Additionally, the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services has launched 855-O-H-CHILD (855-642-4453), an automated telephone directory that will link callers directly to a child welfare or law enforcement office in their county.

As an additional state resource, Ohio Children's Trust Fund is Ohio's sole, dedicated public funding source for child abuse and neglect prevention. Ohio Children's Trust Fund is in the forefront of prevention activities throughout the state. From establishing guidelines for program development to accessing up-to-date prevention curricula to producing educational and public awareness materials – to impacting related social policy initiatives, OCTF provides expertise and resources for legislators, the media, state agencies, and the public. http://ifs.ohio.gov/OCTF/Index.stm

To intervene and report human trafficking of minors, adults can contact their local law enforcement, county children services, local Rescue & Restore Coalition, Ohio Department of Public Safety, Office of Criminal Justice Services, Anti-Trafficking Coordinator at 614.995.7986 or the Office and the National Human Trafficking Resource Center at 1-888-373-7888.