January is National Stalking Awareness Month & National Human Trafficking Prevention Month

Stalking

Merriam-Webster dictionary provides the definition of stalking as the “act or crime of willfully and repeatedly following or harassing another person in circumstances that would cause a reasonable person to fear injury or death especially because of express or implied threats.”

Stalking is serious, often violent, and can escalate over time. Over 7.5 million people are stalked each year in the United States and 85% of people are stalked by someone they know.

Some common reactions to being stalked include fear, anxiety, stress, confusion, frustration, isolation, and depression. A victim of stalking may be experiencing appetite loss, overeating, or forgetting to eat. A victim of stalking may feel vulnerable and may not know who to trust. Flashbacks about traumatizing thoughts, feelings, or memories are common in these circumstances.

For more information, visit the Stalking Resource Center website: www.victimsofcrime.org/src.
What to do if you are being stalked

- Trust your instincts if you feel unsafe
- Take threats seriously and do not downplay the danger
- Call the police if you are in immediate danger or want to discuss legal response
- Contact a victim services program for support and options
- Create a safety plan for yourself
- Inform your friends, family, co-workers, and neighbors about what is happening
- Don’t communicate with or respond to the stalker
- Keep a record of phone calls, messages, sightings, cars, mail, etc.

Human Trafficking

Human trafficking involves the use of force, fraud, or coercion to lure victims into forced labor or sexual exploitation. Human trafficking occurs all over the world, including in the United States. Sex trafficking is a form of human trafficking where force, fraud, or coercion is used to cause a commercial sex act. A commercial sex act can include prostitution, pornography, and sexual performance done in exchange for money, drugs, shelter, food, or clothes.

People often have misconceptions that human trafficking only involves those from other countries being smuggled for specific exploitation. The reality is victims can be found and exploited within their own community. Traffickers frequently first use the promise of protection; financial and career opportunity; shelter; excitement or adventure; or love to lure victims. Once the relationship is established, traffickers use threats, violence, and intimidation to keep victims in their control. Trafficking victims are found through various ways, including social networks, their local neighborhood, bars and nightlife spots, school, and other internet channels. After being lured by traffickers, it is difficult for victims to find opportunities to seek support or escape from the situation. Because victims may be under heavy control, they may suffer in silence and only interact with others on necessary basis. Therefore, we may only see trafficking victims when they are being treated for other issues such as STDs, abortion, pregnancy, drug or alcohol abuse, or serious medical health problems.

Stalking in the media: Netflix’s "You"

Potential Red Flags for Identifying Human Trafficking Victims in Health Care Settings

- History provided by patient/client seems scripted or inconsistent
- When asking questions about injuries or illnesses the patient/client is unwilling or hesitant to answer
- The patient/client is accompanied by someone who does not let them speak for themselves, does not allow them to have privacy, or interprets for them with a seemingly controlling or domineering relationship
- Patient/client avoid eye contact or seems fearful/nervous
- Patient/client is unable to provide his/her/their address
- Patient/client is unaware of current time, place, or date
- Patient/client is not in control of his/her/their money or identification documents
- Patient/client has tattoos or other forms of branding that say “Daddy,” “Property of…,” “For sale,” etc.
- Patient/client reports an unusually high number of sexual partners
- Patient/client does not have appropriate clothing on for the weather or location

 Spotlight on RBHS VPVA’s Director: Kerry Camerer, MSW, LSW

Kerry Camerer has been working in the field of addressing sexual and dating violence for the past decade. Kerry started as a volunteer advocate before serving as the AmeriCorps Confidential Sexual Violence Advocate Coordinator for the Middlesex County Center for Empowerment. Kerry also previously worked at the New Jersey Coalition Against Sexual Assault and the Rutgers Center on Violence Against Women and Children before joining the RBHS community to build their Office for Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance. Kerry describes the RBHS VPVA Director position as her dream role, being able to support survivors of interpersonal violence and provide crucial education to create a safer and more respectful culture on campus.
Crossword of the Month

Across
3. The term a sex trafficker will often require his victims to call him
6. A term denoting the victim's routine when his/her trafficker is out of town, in jail, or otherwise not in direct contact with those s/he is prostituting.
7. A series of cities among which prostituted people are moved
8. A set amount of money that a trafficking victim must make each night before s/he can come “home.”
11. An older woman who manages a brothel, escort service or other prostitution establishment
13. A type of trafficker who controls his/her victims almost entirely through physical violence and force
15. An individual who pays for or trades something of value for sexual acts
16. Two words explaining the exorbitant sum of money a trafficker will demand from a victim who is thinking about trying to leave
17. Committing an act of prostitution (verb), or the person buying it (noun)
18. These establishments may be apartments, houses, trailers, or any facility where sex is sold on the premises
20. What women and girls under the control of the same trafficker call each other
22. An area of town known for prostitution activity

Down
1. The term used to describe the other individuals under the control of the same trafficking
2. A combination of psychological manipulation, intimidation, gang rape, sodomy, beatings, deprivation of food or sleep, isolation from friends or family and other sources of support, and threatening or holding hostage of a victim’s children
4. A trafficked individual appointed by the trafficker to supervise the others and report rule violations.
5. Two words to explain an area known for prostitution that features younger victims
9. Two words to describe the moving of victims like merchandise between traffickers
10. A tattoo or carving on a victim that indicates ownership by a trafficker
12. The exchange when prostitution takes place, or the activity of prostitution
14. A group of victims who are under the control of a single trafficker
17. Two words to explain being forced into prostitution (verb) or a person newly involved in prostitution (noun)
19. A type of trafficker who prides oneself on controlling others primarily through psychological manipulation
21. Two words to explain attempting to escape or exit trafficking

References