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By Donna Younkin

About Human Trafficking – Newsletter #16

Starting this month!

In 2013, DCF embarked on an ambitious initiative to train staff on the “basics” of human trafficking through a course entitled *Human Trafficking 101*. This course was well received, and it has proven itself in assisting staff identifying potential situations of trafficking and responding to them.

To further enhance the skills of staff, beginning this month a second course titled ***Human Trafficking: Engagement and Interviewing Skills*** is being offered. This is a two-day course that will be offered throughout the State. While targeted to CP&P staff, some sessions may also have law enforcement and contract providers in attendance in order to provide cross-training opportunities on this important topic.

The course was developed with the assistance of Polaris, a respected national organization that operates the National Human Trafficking Hotline and Resource Center. The curriculum devotes significant attention to the impact of trauma on a victim of trafficking as well as engagement and interviewing skills for staff. And, while the course is focused on trafficking, much of the content related to trauma informed practice is applicable to other situations encountered by staff.

More details, and registration, are available on the Training Academy website.

Prevention

Human trafficking takes a tremendous toll on survivors, both physically and mentally. While it is important for the Department to identify and respond to possible trafficking situations, the Department also supports public awareness and prevention efforts.

New Jersey is fortunate to have “Project Stay Gold” which is a youth-led initiative to end this form of modern day slavery. Started in Morris County, this initiative has recently expanded to colleges, as well as serving middle and high school students. The aim of Project Stay Gold is to empower students

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to recognize the risk factors and warning signs of trafficking. In this regard, they are encouraging the establishment of school chapters across the State. The launch is occurring with an event on April 15th at the County College of Morris. Student groups from across the State are invited.

For more information, please see their website at ProjectStayGold.org or email them at ProjectStayGold@gmail.com

Have you seen this research?

An excellent study on the health consequences related to sex trafficking was published this winter:

The Health Consequences of Sex Trafficking and Their Implications for Identifying Victims in Healthcare Facilities
Laura J. Lederer and Christopher A. Wetzell

Among other things, it found that survivors reported the following:

- 92.2% at least one form of physical violence
- 91.5% at least one neurological symptom
- 54.3% had dental problems
- 41.5% had attempted suicide
- 87.8% had contact with a healthcare provider while trafficked
- 63.3% of the contacts with a healthcare provider occurred in the hospital/emergency department
- Pregnancy, miscarriage, abortion, birth control, STIs all bring victims into contact with health care providers