

**Schools and  
Anti-Trafficking  
Awareness:  
Education/Training  
Key Influencers & Students**

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# Executive Summary

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This exploratory study was conducted by researchers Ms. Sriyani Tidball in the College of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of Nebraska at Lincoln (UNL), and Dr. Shireen S. Rajaram in the College of Public Health at University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC) and was funded by the Lincoln Community Foundation, Nebraska Humanities, UNL and some community individuals.

The purpose of this study was to document the perspectives of educators and key influencers of students in the Lincoln Public Schools (LPS), on how best to design, produce and implement a prevention intervention education on human trafficking that can be used by them to educate students about trafficking and the risk of sex trafficking of minors. The goal of the study was to include the voices of school personnel so that their perspectives would be

incorporated in the design and implementation of a school curriculum on human trafficking in Nebraska.

The main objectives of this study were to: a) conduct an environmental scan to gather data on promising practices regionally and nationally to raise awareness among key influencers in middle- and high-school; and b) conduct a needs/asset assessment of sex trafficking awareness among key influences in the LPS, using a qualitative research approach.

The first author of the study conducted the environmental scan with UNL students and also collected the qualitative data through focus groups and interviews with 44 participants. All the sessions were audio-recorded with permission of participants, transcribed and analyzed by the second author for key themes.

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## Key Findings

The environmental scan on policies on human trafficking education in other states, highlighted that many states had no programs, while other states had multiple programs that were conducted in the schools. Some programs were mandated by law, and others were voluntarily implemented by schools. Some were very comprehensive while others were informative. The findings from the qualitative data revealed that participants had varied levels of knowledge and training on human trafficking. Participants were interested in

receiving further education and training for both school personnel and students in the prevention of trafficking, recognition of signs of trafficking, and protocols on survivor-centered response to trafficking situations in partnership with community resources. Training needs to be incorporated into the standard operating procedure of the school system, and can be both in-person and online. It needs to be informative and interesting, and sensitive to the needs to students and parents.

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## Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on results of secondary data collected through the environmental scan and primary data collected through interviews and focus-groups.

### School Personnel

- Educate all school personnel on human trafficking as staff have varied levels of knowledge of human trafficking.
- Training needs to be a sustained effort, and incorporated into the standard operating procedure of the LPS system.
- Using promising-practice guidelines, develop district-wide training guidelines to educate teachers, counselors, social workers, school administrators and other school personnel.
- Training needs to be incorporated into flex sessions, and other professional development sessions for all staff, and repeat training sessions need to be interesting and engaging.
- Training needs to be in-person, supplemented by online materials. Include testimony from survivors in the training.
- Develop response-protocols in partnerships with community resources that are survivor-centered and supportive of vulnerable students and families. Disseminate protocol to students and staff.

### Students and Parents

- Using promising-practice guidelines, develop human trafficking prevention curriculum that includes students in the conversation, and is approved by the district that teachers can use in the classroom.
- All students (elementary school through high school) need to receive sensitive, and age-appropriate education on human trafficking prevention. Training needs to be incorporated into existing classes, such as health, that all student need to take.
- In addition to the curriculum, incorporate human trafficking in other school activities such as community service and student clubs and organizations.
- Include posters around the building on human trafficking.
- Develop an anonymous and straightforward reporting system for students to alert trusted school personnel of possible trafficking situations.
- Provide language-appropriate training for students and parents who are not fluent in English.
- Develop training for parents, especially parents of young children.

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This study provides important insights into the perspectives of key influences at LPS on the development and implementation of human trafficking education and training for student, school personnel and parents. The next phase of the study is to develop a training curriculum (online and in-person), in collaboration with key influencers to raise awareness of sex trafficking among LPS

key influencers, pilot test the curriculum in the LPS high schools and middle schools, and develop and provide online curriculum resources for teachers and other staff to use in the classroom in educating their students of the issue. We hope to take this to other schools in Nebraska. This will help enhance on-going statewide prevention efforts.

# Introduction

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Sex trafficking, forced prostitution, pornography, and other forms of commercial sex are a multibillion dollar industry in the USA. They make a small minority of predators very rich, while the larger community, comprising of school-aged youth and other marginalized young people, are left to pay for the damage.

“Sex traffickers use violence, threats, lies, debt bondage, and other forms of coercion to compel adults and children to engage in commercial sex acts against their will. Under U.S. federal law, any minor under the age of 18 years induced into commercial sex is a victim of sex trafficking—regardless of whether or not the trafficker used force, fraud, or coercion.” (Polaris)

Human trafficking is a multi-billion-dollar industry and has been reported in all states in the U.S. Human trafficking is termed as modern-day slavery.<sup>1</sup> The Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000 defines human trafficking as the recruitment and commercial exploitation of people for labor or service through the use of force, fraud or coercion. Sex trafficking is when a commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud or coercion or when the person made to perform such acts is below 18 years of age.<sup>2</sup>

Children are especially vulnerable to becoming victims of sex trafficking. The Institute of Medicine<sup>3</sup> states that sex trafficking of minors is often overlooked and misunderstood and occurs in the margins in society. Minors may not be aware that they are being trafficked and may not identify as such. They may fear retaliation from the traffickers who control and exploit them. The lack of awareness and training among people who routinely come in contact with victims such as teachers and other school personnel ensures that these crimes remain undetected and unaddressed.

In 2012, President Obama launched a new effort to tackle human trafficking that included raising awareness among teachers and other educators.<sup>4</sup> Schools need to be a haven for children, especially those who are vulnerable and marginalized. School personnel as front-line professionals are in a unique position to interact daily with students, build a trust-relationship with them, and be

able to identify and report any suspected abuse, including that of human trafficking. They can help prevent trafficking, and connect vulnerable students to support services.<sup>5</sup> Training and building core capabilities of school personnel is necessary for the prevention and identification, and response to these crimes. Victims of sex trafficking often remain in school despite their trafficking experience outside school. Hence, it is critical that teachers and school personnel be knowledgeable about sex trafficking so they can respond and provide help in a timely manner. Also, they can adequately educate children about human trafficking in general.<sup>3,6</sup> Indeed, some states, such as Ohio, require all individuals seeking a teacher’s license to receive human trafficking training.<sup>8</sup>

More recently, findings from a qualitative study of 22 survivors in Nebraska, conducted in 2016 by the authors of this proposal, underscored the need to raise public awareness in the middle- and high-schools.<sup>7</sup> In this study, *Nebraska Sex Trafficking Survivors Speak*<sup>8</sup>, it was documented that many of the 22 trafficked female survivors that were interviewed were attending school while being trafficked. The report stated, “To increase public awareness, women stressed the need for schools to educate children on sex trafficking” (pg. 14). One of the key recommendations was to, “Develop, implement, and systematically evaluate programs to raise awareness of sex trafficking among all segments of society . . . schools . . .” (pg. 36). Indeed, reaching the key influencers of students, their teachers, coaches, counselors, social workers or other personnel, to give them the necessary tools to prevent or detect trafficking, would be ideal.

Since 2012, the Nebraska State Legislature has put forth bills to combat sex trafficking in the state. In October 2015, the State Attorney General’s office released a report titled, “Report and Recommendations Regarding Establishment of the Nebraska Human Trafficking Task Force (NHTTF).” In 2016 and 2017, laws were passed that decriminalize the prostituted person and prosecute the buyers and traffickers.

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1 U.S. State Department. Trafficking in persons report. 2016.

2 TVPA. Victims Trafficking and Violence Protection Act 2000. <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/10492.pdf>. Published 2000. Updated 2014. Accessed Dec 15, 2016.

3 Institute of Medicine. Confronting commercial sexual exploitation and sex trafficking of minors in the United States. Institute of Medicine. 2013.

4 Flock E. President Obama unveils landmark action to fight human trafficking. U.S. News and World Report. 2011. Available from: <http://www.usnews.com/news/articles/2012/09/25/president-obama-unveils-major-actions-to-fight-human-trafficking>. Accessed June 2016.

5 U.S. Department of Education, Office of Safe and Healthy Students, Human Trafficking in America’s Schools, Washington, D.C., 2015)

6 Lookadoo R. Human trafficking and teacher awareness: Equipping teachers with knowledge and resources to combat human trafficking. campbellsvilleuniversity.edu. 2011.

7 Safer Schools Ohio. K-12 schools training. Safer schools Ohio. Safety and violence prevention training now required of K-12 professionals. [https://saferschools.ohio.gov/content/k\\_12\\_schools\\_training](https://saferschools.ohio.gov/content/k_12_schools_training). Updated 2016. Accessed 6/1, 2016.

8 Rajaram S, Tidball S. Nebraska sex trafficking survivors speak – A qualitative research study. Final report submitted to the Omaha Women’s Fund. Unpublished study. 2016.

# Main Objectives

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The main objectives of this study (Phase 1) are: a) to conduct an environmental scan to gather data on promising practices regionally and nationally to raise awareness among key influencers in middle- and high-school; and b) conduct a needs/asset assessment of sex trafficking awareness among key influences in LPS (Lincoln Public Schools).

In subsequent phases of the study, **not included** in the study, information from Phase 1 will be used to tailor promising practices to LPS context, develop a training curriculum (online and in-person)

to raise awareness of sex trafficking among LPS key influencers, pilot test the curriculum in 6 schools in the LPS, and develop and provide online curriculum resources for teachers to use in the classroom in educating their students of the issue. The protocol used to develop the training curriculum at LPS can be used in other school districts across the state to raise awareness of sex trafficking among key influencers. This will help enhance on-going statewide prevention efforts in Nebraska.

# Environmental Scan Across the Nation

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For the Environmental Scan, we collected secondary data on programs across the country in the area of prevention education of human trafficking with students. The information about programs that have been included in this environmental scan is by no means complete, but it does give an idea of what kinds of programs are going on in the country. The programs that we have included are as simple as posting the National Human Trafficking Reporting Hotline on the walls in the schools, to legislated programs for school teachers, to well-developed units of study on trafficking. There were many states that had no programs, while other states had multiple programs. Here are some of the programs that are worth highlighting.

Kentucky House Bill 524 requires public schools to display the National Human Trafficking Reporting Hotline.<sup>i</sup>

In Ohio, it is mandated that school districts incorporate trafficking content into their safety and violence prevention training plans for school personnel. The law requires “Each person employed by any school district or service center to work in a school as a nurse, teacher, counselor, school psychologist, or administrator” to “complete at least four hours of the in-service training within two years of commencing employment with the district or center, and every five years thereafter.”<sup>ii</sup>

While the training has to meet certain criteria, and a sample program is available for school districts to use, they can use a different program if they choose to. The law in Ohio states: “Each board shall incorporate training in school safety and violence prevention, including human trafficking content, into the in-service training. . . For this purpose, the board shall adopt or adapt the curriculum developed by the department or shall develop its own curriculum in consultation with public or private agencies or persons involved in school safety and violence prevention programs.”<sup>iii</sup>

While no student participation is required by this legislature, the Ohio Attorney General’s Office provides a manual with “guidelines, resources, and best practices to assist with development of anti-human trafficking youth education and outreach” for those who choose to use it.<sup>iv</sup> The guidelines are aimed primarily at middle and high school students, but include resources for students in younger grades as well.

Additionally, the Ohio Department of Health has developed a School Nurse Human Trafficking Protocol with specific signs and indicators to look for to help nurses identify victims. The protocol also provides basic screening questions.<sup>v</sup> In 2013, the Ohio Department of Health’s School Nursing and Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Prevention programs provided a training course to help school nurses identify signs of human trafficking and learn about prevention methods, and an on-line course based on the training is available for Ohio nurses.

Texas has also passed legislation to assist school personnel in identifying trafficking victims. In 2013, the 83rd Texas Legislature passed House Bill 1272, requiring the Texas Human Trafficking Prevention Task Force to work with the Texas Education Agency to develop a list of key indicators, develop a standardized curriculum and train school personnel to identify and assist victims of human trafficking.<sup>vi</sup> The training that resulted from the legislation is called Rise to the Challenge.<sup>vii</sup> All education professionals in Texas are also required to report suspected human trafficking to law enforcement or the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services within 48 hours of suspecting abuse.

In 2012, Virginia passed Senate Bill 259, requiring the Board of Education, with assistance from the Department of Social Services, to “provide awareness and training materials for local school division staff on human trafficking, including strategies for the prevention of trafficking of children.”<sup>viii</sup>

In 2016, Virginia included trafficking in the standards of learning for family life education.

In 2017, Virginia enacted a new law requiring the Board of Education to actually develop the guidelines for training school counselors, school nurses, and other relevant school staff on the prevention of trafficking of children.<sup>x</sup>

Ohio, Texas, and Virginia all have legislation requiring school staff be educated on human trafficking. California, however, is the first state to require trafficking prevention education be provided to students in the public-school system.

In June 2014, Senate Bill 855 established the Commercially Sexually Exploited Children Program (CSEC). The program is adminis-

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i <https://education.ky.gov/school/sdfs/Pages/Human-Trafficking.aspx>

ii <http://codes.ohio.gov/orc/3319.073>

iii <http://codes.ohio.gov/orc/3319.073>

iv <http://www.ohioattorneygeneral.gov/getattachment/b9c18117-5136-4538-b115-b5105a550fdf/Human-Trafficking-Prevention-Education-FINAL.aspx>

v Ohio school nurses: <https://www.odh.ohio.gov/en/health/sadv/School-Nurses-Human-Trafficking-Protocol>

vi <http://www.legis.state.tx.us/tlodocs/83R/billtext/pdf/HB01272F.pdf#navpanes=0>

vii [https://tea.texas.gov/About\\_TEA/Other\\_Services/Human\\_Trafficking\\_of\\_School-aged\\_Children/](https://tea.texas.gov/About_TEA/Other_Services/Human_Trafficking_of_School-aged_Children/)

viii <http://www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us/Docs/FA/htm/FA.261.htm>

ix <https://lis.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/legp604.exe?121+sum+SB259>

x <http://lis.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/legp604.exe?ses=171&typ=bil&val=hb2282>



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tered by the State Department of Social Services, which is required to develop a methodology to distribute funding for the program, whose purpose is to serve children who have been sexually exploited. The bill authorized these funds to be used for “certain prevention and intervention activities and services to children who are victims, or at risk of becoming victims, of commercial sexual exploitation.” Each county electing to receive these funds was required to develop an interagency protocol, “to be developed by a team led by a representative of the county human services department and to include representatives from specified county agencies and the juvenile court.”<sup>xi</sup>

Later that year, in September 2014, California passed Senate Bill No. 1165, which authorized and recommended, but did not require, all public schools to implement sex trafficking prevention education. It also required that upon the next revision of the health curriculum framework, the commission consider including sex trafficking prevention education.<sup>xii</sup>

In October 2015, a groundbreaking bill actually requiring public schools to offer sex trafficking prevention education was passed. Assembly Bill No. 329 required a comprehensive sexual education

curriculum for grades 7-12 be taught once in middle school and once in high school, including “information about sexual harassment, sexual assault, adolescent relationship abuse, intimate partner violence, and sex trafficking.”<sup>xiii</sup>

Finally, in October 2017, Assembly Bill 1227 was passed. The Human Trafficking Prevention Education and Training Act built on the foundation laid by AB 329, amending the Education Code to include information on labor trafficking, not just sex trafficking. It also requires school personnel be trained to identify signs of trafficking, and requires and county that is a part of CSEC to include the county office of education and the sheriff’s office to be represented on the CSEC team.<sup>xiv</sup>

One program that is being used to educate California students is PROTECT. While it is not the only program available in the state, it is the only program that currently provides education for teachers and students on both sex trafficking and labor trafficking. They provide state standard-compliant materials for 5th, 7th, 9th and 11th grades.<sup>xv</sup>

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## Other Programs

While Ohio, Texas, and Virginia have trafficking awareness or prevention education legislated for staff in their school systems, and California has it legislated for students, some schools and school districts across the nation have independently implemented anti-trafficking programs or extended awareness programs to their students.

For example, after Virginia passed Senate Bill 259, the Superintendent of the Prince William County Public Schools decided to bring trafficking awareness education to students. The William County Public Schools hired a new Human Trafficking Prevention Specialist who, along with other individuals, spent the majority of the 2012-2013 school year developing a curriculum designed specifically for the school system. The school system received a grant from the Potomac Health Foundation in 2012. This grant only allowed the curriculum to be provided to half of the school division, which was six high schools.

In 2016 Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services began funding the program, providing funds to the Commonwealth of Virginia through the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.<sup>xvi</sup> This grant allowed the program to double in order for all twelve high schools in the school system to receive the curriculum. In addition, a high school level alternative center was included as well as two middle schools, which receive a slightly different curriculum.

Since its establishment in 2013, the program has been presented to more than 29,000 students. In that time, 514 students have come forward as a result of this program. Of these students, 201 of them have been recognized as victims of sexual assault, been groomed for trafficking, or been victims of trafficking.<sup>xvii</sup>

The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) has since invited Prince William County Public Schools to participate in a focus group to help develop a statewide curriculum for human trafficking.<sup>xviii</sup>

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xi [https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill\\_id=201320140SB855](https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201320140SB855)

xii [https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill\\_id=201320140SB1165](https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201320140SB1165):

xiii [https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill\\_id=201520160AB329](https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201520160AB329)

xiv [https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill\\_id=201720180AB1227](https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=201720180AB1227)

xv <https://protectnow.org/protect-3/overview/>

xvi [https://www.pwcs.edu/departments/STUDENT\\_SERVICES/teen\\_trafficking\\_prevention/](https://www.pwcs.edu/departments/STUDENT_SERVICES/teen_trafficking_prevention/)

xvii [https://www.pwcs.edu/departments/STUDENT\\_SERVICES/teen\\_trafficking\\_prevention/](https://www.pwcs.edu/departments/STUDENT_SERVICES/teen_trafficking_prevention/)

xviii [https://www.pwcs.edu/UserFiles/Servers/Server\\_340140/File/Student%20Services/Trafficking/Human%20Trafficking%20Program%20Summary%202017-18.pdf](https://www.pwcs.edu/UserFiles/Servers/Server_340140/File/Student%20Services/Trafficking/Human%20Trafficking%20Program%20Summary%202017-18.pdf)

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In Washington D.C., an anti-human-trafficking organization called FAIR Girls, founded by Andrea Powell, offers prevention education to junior high and high school classrooms as well as in youth shelters and group homes. They educate high-risk girls and boys using video, illustrations and song to define what human trafficking is, identify risk factors, and draw links between intimate partner violence and human trafficking. Outside of Washington D.C., FAIR Girls has also provided trafficking prevention education to teens in Maryland public schools and Connecticut.<sup>xix</sup>

In Iowa, a program called Teens Against Human Trafficking works with schools to provide awareness education, create advocates and help young people identify potential human trafficking victims. It is part of a larger program called Youth Standing Strong, which hopes to use the program to reach 140 schools in 15 counties across the state by 2019.<sup>xx</sup>

The Chicago Alliance Against Sexual Exploitation (CAASE) created a prevention education curriculum directed at boys. It is the first curriculum in the country specifically designed to educate young

men about the harms of prostitution. Their curriculum targets high school youth from grades 9-12. Since they launched it in 2010, they have reached over 2,300 students. The instructor brings a multi-session course to the students' classroom. They cover three main topics: gender roles, sexual exploitation, and human trafficking. They invite these young men to examine masculinity and challenge their view of women, culture, peer pressures, and sex in an informative and interactive way with exercises and conversation. They also offer one-session workshops for free, which can be presented in 45 minutes or extended to 60 or 90 minutes.<sup>xxi</sup>

The *Set Me Free* Project provides prevention education to schools in the Omaha area, as well as some schools in other districts. Southeast High School in Lincoln has their program implemented through the health curriculum, where they reach all the students in the school once each year.

Some of the programs mentioned, along with some additional programs, can be found on the National Educators to Stop Trafficking (NEST) website.<sup>xxii</sup>

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## Nebraska Programs (Non-Trafficking)

The Lincoln Public Schools at this time do have some other programs that are implemented to help students with other issues such as suicide prevention and anti-bullying. This shows that educational programs in prevention can be successfully implemented in the

school system. The suicide prevention program is a legislated program (LB 923) that every LPS teacher has to go through once each year. Information about the different programs implemented in the LPS system are in the Appendix.

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xix <http://www.fairgirls.org/prevention-education/>

xx [http://www.youthstandingstrong.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/YSS\\_2016\\_ImpactReport\\_spreads.pdf](http://www.youthstandingstrong.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/YSS_2016_ImpactReport_spreads.pdf)

xxi <http://caase.org/prevention>

xxii <https://setmefreeproject.net/prevention-education/>

xxiii <http://nesteeducators.org/curriculum-summaries/>

# Needs Assessment

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## Research Approach

To conduct a needs assessment of human trafficking awareness among school personnel at the Lincoln Public Schools (LPS), we used a qualitative research approach. We did in-depth one-on-one interviews with teachers, social workers, counsellors, coaches, ESL (English as a second language) teachers, administrators, and resource staff who address diversity, homelessness, and other needs of marginalized students.

The size of the sample was determined by theoretical saturation; we stopped data gathering when no new insights or information was gained from the interviews and focus groups. The inclusion criteria for the study was current or former LPS school personnel. The project was approved by the LPS school authorities before we began the study.

The participants were directly contacted by the researchers (first author of the report) and interviews and focus groups were set up at a time and place convenient for both participants and the interviewer. All interviews were conducted in person by the first author.

The questions followed an interview guide and focused on knowledge about human trafficking, strategies to educate key influencers (LPS school personnel) and students on human trafficking, and how to keep children safe from human trafficking, specifically sex trafficking. See Appendix A for interview guide.

In the focus group sessions, participants were provided with a light lunch or snack, as a token of appreciation for their participation in

the study. We completed nine interviews with school administrators including teachers, principals, head of security, head of student services, head of Teammates, and the LPS Superintendent. The seven focus groups were with non-administrators, including teachers, social workers, counselors, etc. We conducted a focus group in each of the six high schools in Lincoln—Lincoln High School, Lincoln East High School, Lincoln Southeast High School, Lincoln North Star High School, Lincoln Northeast High School and Lincoln Southwest High School. One more focus groups was conducted in the LPS head office with special resource staff who worked with homeless students, diverse students and other marginalized students.

The number of focus group participants in each group ranged from three to six participants. There were a total number of forty-four participants in the study. The majority of participants were female. See Appendix B for socio-demographic information on participants.

All interviews were audio-recorded with the permission of participants and the recordings were transcribed, verbatim. The researchers (second author of the report) analyzed the transcripts for key themes using a qualitative software package. All names of participants have been redacted from the results to protect the privacy of participants. In the results below, “administrators” are school personnel who occupy an administrative position and do not teach, and “non-administrators” include teachers, social workers, counselors, etc.

# Results

## Knowledge, Attitudes and Beliefs of Human Trafficking

Participants had varied levels of knowledge of human trafficking. Some were quite knowledgeable about human trafficking and the vulnerabilities that put students at risk for trafficking, while others had very little knowledge about the topic.

*When you talk about sex trafficking I think, it doesn't exist in isolation. It exists with substance abuse, it exists with mental health, it exists with poverty, it exists with bad relationships. (administrator)*

A participant stated that the underlying factors that keep students from other problems helps protect them from sex trafficking.

*Yeah, I think this is the same positive factors in kids lives that keep them away from drugs and alcohol keep them away from dating violence, crime, gangs, would also keep them away from trafficking or other high risk behaviors or the people involved in that. (administrator)*

This participant further elaborated that addressing the underlying risk factors that make students vulnerable for other issues such as drugs, dating violence, suicide, etc. would help prevent sex trafficking.

*I would think so many of the risk factors that are present for kids who fall into trafficking are the same risk factors for kids that fall to other things... maybe there's a tie in that if you prevent those common risk factors that you really make an impact on those outcomes. (administrator)*

One participant articulated that students may not be aware that they are being trafficked.

*Oftentimes girls might not know they're being trafficked. So, it could be a young girl with an older boyfriend saying like, if you do these things for me, it could be like girls but boys as well... there's not always that option to get out and that's where it could become dangerous or coercive. (non-administrator)*

Another participant stated that she was aware of the distinction between sex trafficking and prostitution, but acknowledged that this may not always be clear from the point of view of the general public.

*There's also a kind of weird sort of murkiness between what is trafficking and what is prostitution, because one of them is defined and should be seen as more of a voluntary thing and is, "I am involved in the business of being a prostitute," versus someone's forcing me or coercing*

*me or whatever... I think that it skews people's perception because it seems like it's a choice. (non-administrator)*

Most participants believed that sex trafficking occurred in Lincoln, and in other more rural areas in Nebraska, but it was well hidden. Many felt that in the past, the understanding was that it occurred in other parts of the world and not in the U.S. Also, some participants stated that this is a topic that makes people uncomfortable and people might shy away from discussing it.

*It's a subject that's difficult and unpleasant and people don't want to think that that's happening in Nebraska or Lincoln. (administrator)*

*In regards to sexual health and stuff... especially in the Midwestern culture, where we shy away from talking about a lot of things, because we think if we talk about it, kids will do it. (non-administrator)*

A few participants had very little knowledge of trafficking and were shocked to learn that it happened in Nebraska. They expressed concern that it might involve students within the LPS system.

*Could you explain a little bit more what you mean by sex trafficking... because my idea is that they were being kidnapped from one area and taken to another but I don't know what that looks like, locally then. So they are displaced from their home? (non-administrator)*

*I have no idea what the signs and symptoms are. (administrator)*

*Mostly, I'm unaware and uneducated on the level of impact it's having on my school. I don't really know too much. (non-administrator)*

Overall, participants were pleased about the increase in attention to this problem. Some participants had prior training on sex trafficking at LPS. Most found the training to be very beneficial and it made them more aware of the problem.

*I was literally blown away by this presentation in the fall. I could not believe the numbers that I was seeing. Just absolutely the whole time, like how in the world do we not know about this and I just felt very naïve... I've definitely become more astute. (non-administrator)*

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However, some participants felt that the training was more general, and while it did a good job in raising awareness of the issue, it did not provide them with specific information on what to look for so they could detect sex trafficking among their students.

*Well we've been trained, I don't think classroom teachers have been trained as specifically on what to look for, but what to be aware of. (non-administrator)*

One participant stated that the training they received needed to be less graphic, and more realistic and authentic.

*It was kind of good and bad in a presentation because they showed these images. It was basically, these sexual predators can look like any of these people but then the majority of the images that they showed was of minority individuals [African American males] in the actual photos, and so I think they sent one message and then gave another message. (administrator)*

Many participants had not received training on human trafficking at LPS, but some acquired information about sex trafficking on their own. They stated that they were aware of the problem but did not consider themselves to be very knowledgeable about the issue.

All participants were anxious to receive more information about the problem so they could properly address the issue in the schools, particularly by preventing it from happening.

*And I don't think it should be that way that after a person has been abused at a certain level and then people start paying attention. You need to start paying attention early on. (administrator)*

A few participants indicated they had first-hand experience of addressing sex trafficking within the LPS system.

*This other young woman I had had as a young student one of our police officers had found her ad on the Backpage*

*and she was very nonchalant about it. Nobody is pimping me and she got very defensive. (non-administrator)*

*I think it's happening with young girls and young men. And I've experienced it with just a student sharing something with me personally. I took that information to [name redacted] ... there was a website out there that girls and guys sold themselves on. (non-administrator)*

A couple of participants later suspected that sex trafficking might have been involved in student issues, although, they said that at the time the incident occurred, they lacked adequate knowledge of sex trafficking to respond appropriately.

*Specifically this year we have had three suspicions that a student might be a victim of sex trafficking or at risk of becoming a victim of trafficking. (non-administrator)*

Some of the suspicious behaviors they observed included students using multiple phones, high frequency use of social media, changes in the way they dressed, and high truancies including "randomly leaving school in the middle of the day..."

The participants felt that the issue of sex trafficking would be easy to get across to people compared to other more controversial topics. Overall, they felt that an increase in awareness among all school personnel and parents is needed.

*It starts with awareness on two sides. Number one it starts with the awareness of the students, of, what this concept is, this is why it's not okay... then the other side it's the awareness of the adults, whether that's parents, teachers, coaches, administrators, counselors, to know this is what it looks like. These are the red flags, these are the things that I should be looking for, to know or to tip me off that something might be going on here (administrator)*

# Awareness of Human Trafficking

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## Community Awareness

To improve awareness and recognition of the problem, a few participants felt that it was important to educate the general public about the issue. They indicated that the approach needed to be holistic, involving all segments of society. They stated that this increase in awareness would also help reduce the stigma associated with the issue.

One participant stated that a culture change is needed across society through increased awareness.

*[It] takes for culture change. . . . So to make people aware of what trafficking looks like and give people permission to say no to it or this isn't okay. . . . the awareness to say no, I think is what makes the change. (administrator)*

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## Awareness of Key Influencers

Participants indicated that all school personnel need to be trained, including staff such as security personnel and other key influencers. They stated that sometimes, students might be more comfortable with other staff members, such as the security guard, rather than teachers and counselors.

*Personally, I feel that it starts at school and we need to teach the educators what to notice and what to see and what to be suspicious of. (non-administrator)*

Some felt that school personnel did not understand the severity of the problem. Participants stated that they were in a unique position since they work closely with students within the school system and could help identify vulnerable students, provide them with support and prevent trafficking from occurring.

*As school personnel, we're in a great position to see these kids every day in their normal environment, so to speak, and to be able to know and see changes over time and to be able to say. . . something's not quite right here, but I think that's where education and training can come in for us to know these are the things I'm looking for. (administrator)*

*They [school personnel] do a great job recognizing when there is a change in our students and they tell the people in the counseling center. . . and say, "Hey can you check in with this student?" (non-administrator)*

Also, participants indicated that with the proper training, they would be able to detect and appropriately respond to students who might be under the control of a trafficker. One participant emphasized that in addition to increasing awareness of the problem, school personnel need to be given a solution to the problem.

*If you're educating somebody new, about a topic so horrifying, people will shut down mentally. . . it has to be, here's an example of this happening, and here's what we can do about it. (administrator)*

One administrator stated that a champion of the issue is needed to move the issue forward.

*One of the things that we're notoriously guilty of is we can get excited about something, but if we don't have a champion to help us see it through and follow it through, it doesn't [get done]. (administrator)*

Also an administrator stated that support from the school principal is very important. In addition to teachers, participants stated that parents need to be educated as well. One participant indicated that they might receive push back from parents who might be trafficking their children.

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## Strategies—Increasing Awareness of Key Influencers

Participants provided different strategies to increase their awareness of sex trafficking, including incorporation of the training into flex sessions, other professional development sessions, staff meetings, etc.

*Honestly a flex session [professional development] would be phenomenal because then people need that anyway. . . as educators we are required to do 21 hours of staff development outside of our contract time and we are offered different opportunities. (non-administrator)*

*But then every school has PLC the last Tuesday of the month. . . and that time is supposed to be spent working on collaborating and stuff. . . everybody has it, and it's required time and they're getting paid, and it would be a great time to. . . [discuss human trafficking]. (non-administrator)*

*I think most principles if they had enough time to work into our staff meetings, I think that really raises awareness. (administrator)*

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Another suggestion was to include it in their trauma informed presentations where they learn about trauma and the impact of trauma. Also, participants shared that for different staff, such as counselors and social workers, there could be other educational opportunities to learn more about sex trafficking.

*Now there's workshops at the counseling level. . . we did like a district trauma training district-wide where everybody was involved. I think something like this [sex trafficking] would fit that bill where you do a district-wide sex trafficking program. (non-administrator)*

*One thing that social workers must complete every year is the child abuse and neglect presentation. So you know, just a refresher of the signs of what to look for. (non-administrator)*

One participant indicated that they should work with the equity liaison of each school and incorporate this as part of the training each month.

*Something that would be right up that alley working with the equity liaisons of the different schools. We do the training's once a month and we report out to everyone so that could at least be a starting point. (non-administrator)*

Another suggestion was to include it in the start of the year, perhaps in a large-group setting, followed by small discussion sessions during the year.

*I wonder too if it's something that is introduced at the beginning of the year and some portion of those all day meetings, and to make it more intimate or for continuity it is touched on at the quarter where administrators come into the department, and you know you can delve into more. (non-administrator)*

*Any type of in-service, you know or like when we're coming back and it's the first week where teachers report back, things like that to help the awareness of what it is, how to see signs. (non-administrator)*

However, another participant (non-administrator) shared that timing is important, and perhaps training should be in spring, because teachers have several training requirements at the start of the year in September. He stated, "... we get so slammed at the first of the year." (non-administrator)

A participant (administrator) emphasized that the training cannot be a one-time session, but has to be a sustained effort.

*Whether that's annually, whether that's twice a year, it has to be part of the regular operating procedure of the school district to be sustainable. (administrator)*

A few participants suggested that it would be powerful to hear directly from survivors about their stories.

*If you could find someone who is willing to speak openly about their experience to teachers that maybe will help. (non-administrator)*

Most participants preferred in-person delivery of training, supplemented by online training.

*For me it's seeing you guys talking to us and being more personal it means something more. . . With maybe a resource online, either through social media or just a website that we can go to that has reminders of what was talked about or things that we can do or things to look out for. (non-administrator)*

*The general start of it [training] has to be face-to-face. . . then I think it is fine to have some online follow-up resources. (non-administrator)*

One participant stated that a list of resources close at hand would be helpful.

*If we had some sort of training whether it was electronic or in person and then we were given resources to keep at our desk an easy list of numbers like I'm going to put you in touch with. (non-administrator)*

In addition to trainings, a participant suggested sending reminders throughout the school year of what to look out for.

*If there was a way to have a constant notification or reminder like, hey, look out for those things like we do for technology or in our PLC meeting. If we have these a little things during our staff meeting... a half-sheet of paper reminding me of ten things that I'm looking for that I post at my desk. . . . a laminated half-sheet. (non-administrator)*

They indicated that training on human trafficking should be a district level requirement akin to their training on suicide prevention. Participants emphasized that repeat training requirements needed to be made more interesting with new information. They shared that while they very much appreciated the required yearly suicide training, they felt that it was rather repetitive, and failed to fully engage them in the material.

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## Challenges—Increasing Awareness of Key Influences

Some of the challenges they highlighted included the lack of time in their busy schedules to incorporate one more training. An administrator was reluctant to mandate any kind of training, but felt that getting the buy-in from school principals would be a good first step to implement training.

One participant suggested reaching out to the principal's council that included elementary, secondary and high school principals.

*They have what's called the principal's counsel, where they will bring like the high school principals, all the secondary principals together, all of the elementary principal's together...that's where you want to reach the principals, in those meetings and give them an opportunity...get them behind it. (administrator)*

Some participants acknowledge that it is a sensitive topic that many may not want to deal with. A couple of participants cautioned that not all teachers would be comfortable leading a discussion on this topic, especially a male teacher.

*Not all teachers would be comfortable leading any kind of discussion on this at all. Some would. But there are plenty who would not. (non-administrator)*

*I think some of our colleagues wouldn't do it based on comfort, particularly men. We have a lot of male teachers who won't address the dress code with female students because they feel like, "I don't want her to think, like, hey, I'm checking her out, so I'm not going to say anything because it makes me feel uncomfortable." (non-administrator)*

Teachers raised the issue that they might need to obtain permission from the parents to discuss the topic of human trafficking. If parents requested, students could opt-out of such discussions.

*Passive-permission, it's written in a policy that everybody will get it...so basically what we do is say, this is what's happening, if you object, call us. (non-administrator)*

A few participants suggested to keep the topic of human trafficking out of a discussion on sexual health because of possible opposition by parents.

Also, participants articulated that the issue of culture and language barriers in communicating the complex topic of human trafficking to students and parents who may not be fluent in English would be a challenge. They stated that a liaison or an interpreter would be needed.

*And their conversational English might be good, but some terminology might be beyond them that they're not accustomed to hearing...interpreters...to make sure we don't have mixed messages or confusion. (non-administrator)*

However, another participant (non-administrator) cautioned that, "...with 20 different languages in the building you can't always have a translator in the room."

Participants raised the issue that educating students in high school might be a bit late given the early age of entry into sex trafficking and suggested that perhaps providing age-appropriate information on human trafficking to students and parents in middle-school and elementary school might be needed.

*And high school might be a little late. I think it should still be here, maybe middle school. ...what does it look like at the end of elementary school, beginning some of that education at the end of fifth grade? (non-administrator)*

*Just playing devil's advocate here, but I mean if you're talking just to catch them before ten or eleven you're talking elementary, and how elementary [school children] receive that information compared to how high school receives that information because you want a balance between not scaring them... (non-administrator)*

A suggestion was to include human trafficking in the social and emotional learning curriculum that is part of Second Step, an evidence-based program that goes from pre-kindergarten to 7th grade and higher, and focuses on the positive things that students can do to stay safe.

Participants discussed educating parents, particularly those with young children, before educating children.

*I think that pre-educate the parents on where this is going ... were going to be talking to the kids and this is why. (non-administrator)*

*They need to have some tools, and also adults in their life that they can keep in the loop and feel comfortable...they [parents] need to have pre-education... if you educate the parents first, they'll have that conversation and then maybe you don't tell the students about it as in-depth as you would in a high school situation...and then middle school it gets more serious. (non-administrator)*



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## Increasing Awareness of Students

School personnel emphasized the importance of educating students about sex trafficking and predatory behavior of traffickers.

*We cannot control what happens out there. We can at least arm them with education.” (administrator)*

*And if they can learn certain things at school... to be able to put those things in place... to be able to learn this information, and just not say, “Well just go find it out on your own, learn it on your own.” (non-administrator)*

Participants stated that oftentimes students are the ones who might notice changes in their peers and report to authorities.

One participant emphasized that equipping students with the knowledge of trafficking might even help them against other forms of child abuse.

*So it goes to like, step one when it comes dealing with these kids, because all of these steps, you know, sexual harassment, child molestation, you know, sex trafficking, all of these things go hand in hand. (non-administrator)*

Teachers mentioned that the academic curriculum is already packed and there may not be much room to introduce a new class on sex trafficking. However, they shared that there were many possibilities to include the subject matter of human trafficking into the existing curriculum and also in other non-curriculum activities.

For example, many teachers stressed that the topic of sex trafficking could be covered in classes relating to Health, English, Government and Politics, Human Behavior, Sociology, Psychology, Advanced AP Psychology, Criminal Justice, Family and Consumer Science, etc. They suggested that “mini-units” could be provided for them to use in these classes.

*We generally deal with themes in English and introducing something thematically and bringing it to the kids that way. (non-administrator)*

*I teach mostly government and politics... it has been a natural thing that has come up quite a bit and some kids really enjoy. I had a presentation today over it, and it was wonderful. I think the interest is there, and kids would be amazed by it and the issues around them... human trafficking is one of the easiest topics that I bring up in class that everyone is like, “Yes this is a problem.” (non-administrator)*

Another suggestion was to incorporate human trafficking into PBIS (Positive Behavior Intervention Strategies) messages that is “over-arching for the entire district.”

*Our school overall runs a behavior program that is called PBIS, positive behavior intervention strategies, but that focuses on making good behavior choices. It’s also focused on the staff side, interacting with the students, building*

*good relationships with the students so that they don’t get defensive. (non-administrator)*

One participant suggested using social media with PBIS to increase awareness of the topic.

*If we incorporate it into the PBIS lessons and, say, use this hashtag and go to the LPS Instagram and Facebook page... So every Tuesday we do PBIS lessons. Instead of doing regular announcements, all the teachers are sent a lesson to put out to students... That would be a good venue. (non-administrator)*

Some teachers mentioned that this needs to be a topic discussed around cyber safety since students are very active on social media.

*We do some work with kids around cyber safety, and I think those kinds of things will help keep some kids away from being drawn in by something that they participated in online, and all of a sudden they’re meeting someone, and [got] involved in something they didn’t expect. (administrator)*

*It looks like it’s harmless by doing a couple of Snapchats, and how that snowballs into something that could be really dangerous for them. And actually giving them those real stories. (non-administrator)*

One participant recommended including students in the conversation since they are more knowledgeable about accessing online information.

*I think there is a way to address that with kids that includes them in the conversation because they know more about what they see online than we do probably. So they... feel like they’re a part of it. And I think you could really learn a lot about how people are trying to traffic kids and engage kids online by using kids in that conversation and talking to them about it because I think... they’re way more savvy about apps and stuff. (non-administrator)*

Participants stated that it was important to include the topic in classes that are required of all students, such as health or history instead of focusing on classes that only a few students might be required to take.

*One that comes to mind is our health class, every student is required to take it. It already deals with some topics that deals with human sexuality. I think that’s maybe a place that might work. (non-administrator)*

*There’s required classes for them to take, so for example health, it would be lovely if it were part of the curriculum and that would be a district level choice, and even getting teachers on-board to do a short curriculum. I don’t even know if “curriculum” is the right word for that, but a short*

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*series of mini-messages or lessons talking about keeping oneself safe (administrator)*

However, another participant cautioned that the health curriculum is already overloaded and might get into the politics of addressing sexual health.

One participant shared that a strategy might be to provide general information on human trafficking to all students, but more education to students who are deemed to be high risk, such as students who have high truancy, teen parents, students who are homeless, students who have behavioral or academic challenges, and in some after school programs such as Lighthouse, Girls Up, etc.

*In LPS... Tier 1 and Tier 2...providing resources and education for all students and then having things available here at school for students we identify that may be at risk or involved in sex trafficking so that we can provide support for them here at school. (administrator)*

One participant stated that while they could embed information into existing courses, permission from the district, and perhaps from parents might be needed for that. However, she emphasized that first, staff have to be educated so they can teach students about the problem.

*I could work that into my curriculum really easily but because of the kind of sensitivity of the topic, I don't necessarily have the lesson plan structure that have gone through the parameters that the district would like us to have gone through to make sure we have, not because of other political entities, you know. I guess we don't have an approved kind of curriculum to do that. (non-administrator)*

Participants also suggested incorporating human trafficking in other topics such as dating violence.

There were other opportunities to cover the topic in non-curricular activities such as community service, and student clubs and organizations such as the Health Occupation Student Association (HOSA), SALT, SHOWS, SASI, Hope squad, Red Cross club, etc.

*Each year kids have to do 20 hours of community service sort of things...And have them develop some of the materials for reaching kids...have some do something about educating parents, have some work on educating school staff, because they're gonna know how to reach the adults in the building as well. (administrator)*

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## Strategies—Increasing Awareness of Students

Participants felt that students would be receptive to information about sex trafficking, compared to other high-risk behaviors.

*Probably because it's a high energy, it's dramatic...kids will perk just because the nature of it...drugs and alcohol, it's kind of boring but we still need to teach. At least, at the start, human trafficking, it's new, it's high impact so the kids will pay attention to that. A great deal, I think. (administrator)*

*Well it's different than, you know, some of the other things that we want to bring to kids, like anti-alcohol and drugs...they're going to be more receptive to a message like this...with drug and alcohol...they're not receptive. (non-administrator)*

Participants stated that it would help if the information were presented by an outside speaker who may be close in age to the students.

*And, it's nice sometimes for students to be hearing this stuff from people outside of the school. Well because sometimes they want to hear something from a different perspective. (non-administrator)*

One participant stated that even if students were not aware of trafficking they could identify situations where they might have been uncomfortable.

*They're not educated on it. And so it's a shock to some of them...but I bet every kid can think of a creeper that they knew that was trying to get close to them and, maybe, they had a gut instinct to back away...I would think they'd be able to connect to that and be receptive. (non-administrator)*

One participant cautioned not to use the word, "trafficking" since this may not be a word that students are familiar with.

*I think students don't know what the word trafficking means...I would not even use the word "trafficking" in the first ten minutes. I would use words that the kids understand...has your boyfriend or parent or girlfriend or uncle ever asked you to do something you don't feel comfortable doing physically... you love your boyfriend and he wants you to do this. And you don't even use words around it. It's just something you do because he asked you to...I think you just have to be super careful with the language...kids*

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*are sexually active 12, 13, 14 years old. It doesn't mean they know what the words are." (administrator)*

While the use of technology to disseminate the information was seen as being effective, participants emphasized that in-person presentations would be more effective, rather than a presentation without any opportunity to discuss the information.

*Students respond pretty well to, to things that are that they can see or watch. So I think some visuals along with some reflection kinds of questions or pair-and-share activities...you show them something, and then hit pause. Give people a little chance to process and talk with their peers. Next, show their partner or whatever, and then have some discussion following that. (administrator)*

*So you show a YouTube video to the kids, let them have some discussion about it, instead of just, kind of, here's information. I would say the kids need to talk about it because if they're talking to each other about it I think they're, they come up with some really great ideas and great, great information and just sharing with each other. (non-administrator)*

An administrator stated that educating the whole group allows them to share information and call it out any time they see it, so they can keep each other safe, and compared it to domestic violence and dating violence.

*And I think they want to protect each other. And at its core you want to prevent kids from trafficking each other also...It kind of goes along with domestic violence and dating violence you. The more people that recognize unhealthy behavior and call it out, the safer we all are. So I think that's where the educating the whole group and allowing them to talk among themselves and think about it as a group, rather than a presentation, and no chance to verbalize and interact with the material is missing the point. (administrator)*

A few participants suggested sharing the information in an assembly format, while others did not think that a presentation to a large group would be effective.

*No, I don't think kids pay attention to the severity of something when it is an assembly. I think they are distracted by their phones by their peers. I feel like it would have to go through a small group setting in the classroom or maybe a small group event that they would come to. (non-administrator)*

Personal testimony presented by a survivor was seen as being effective rather than a power-point presentation.

*That depends on how it's presented. If it's a lecture, no. If it's a girl who stands up and says, "My name is Michelle, I started in Lincoln High, I'm 23 years old...here's what, here's my story." And then from there, that's how you capture kids' attention. When you show them power-point slides, they're not paying attention... It better be engaging. Continuous and real-time, real life. (administrator)*

*You know, if you can't get this young lady [sex trafficking survivor] to come into the classroom, but you can put her on video, and you can do it that way, I think that's probably the second choice, the second option. (administrator)*

One participant suggested they have posters around the building like dating relationship posters that used to be in schools.

*A few years ago, we had dating violence posters and we placed them around the building and I did I had one girl tell me she was grateful for it and it did make her go for some help...Or post it in the bayou. Or commons area or the lunch room. While they're all standing around in there. LNS*

Also involving students in developing and disseminating the information was seen as an effective method of both increasing awareness, engaging students, building leadership-skills, and allowing them to take ownership of the information.

*I think if you develop the program where you had peers doing the education. If you had a peer education group I think that would be far more powerful and impactful to really have these strong female teenage girls reaching out to other girls about this to say hey let's talk about this. (non-administrator)*

*Educate your peers...the other thing that you're doing, you're also creating those leaders of tomorrow, you've given them a cause that they can take beyond high school. (administrator)*

One participant suggested that students would have the best ideas, since they are the ones that might have more experience with online activities.

*That's probably where you could get some of your best ideas about things that kids are going to respond to is having the kids do it... Because we are, we're really guessing when we talk about these, kids are going to appeal to. But the kids are going to know, have a better sense. (non-administrator)*

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## Challenges—Increasing Awareness of Students

One of the challenges mentioned was the possibility of push-back from parents who may not want any discussions related to sex in the school curriculum.

Also, one participant cautioned that the instructor needs to be careful and sensitive discussing this topic in the classroom especially in the presence of a student who might be sex trafficked to avoid triggering them.

*You don't want to assume that a kid is in sex trafficking, you know, has been a part of sex trafficking. And if I bring it up that way, I've just lost that kid. They've left my room and they'll never talk to me again about stuff like that. So it's very touchy. (non-administrator)*

One participant (administrator) stated that students might be quite desensitized to such information, and he felt that they think it would not happen to them. He suggested that relating the information to their lives would be important.

*Giving them facts and safety tips and things to look for and stuff like that can be effective, but I think starting with... this is how it could potentially affect you, or this is how this starts, and this is the road it could go down... the more we can get people to buy into the fact that that is something that can happen to me, is something that can happen here, has potential to engage them. (administrator)*

# Identification and Response

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## Key Influencers—Identification and Reporting

Participants stressed that in addition to general training of awareness of sex trafficking, they would need information on the signs and symptoms to look for among the students. They emphasized that they need a protocol in place within LPS and each school system, so they can confidently connect students to available resources.

*Before we started teaching, I'd really want there to be supports in place already, so that as students start recognizing like, oh I'm going through that, or oh my friend is doing that or whatever, that there's somewhere to send them and resources to give them instead of being like, "Oh crap, I don't know what to do." (non-administrator)*

*Providing the training and understanding, that's what builds that awareness, but once you're aware...you have to have some kind of strategy to be able to take it to the next level...once you identify it, like, what can you do...professionally, and also in parenting if they knew how to address that I think that it would be a lot more effective and it would help. (non-administrator)*

They stated that without this information, they would be at a loss on how to respond if they suspected sex trafficking.

*Once you've identified the student and identified the issue and identified the feelings...what happens next that's pretty important. You have to have time and a system to deal with that. Otherwise you haven't really done anything other than sort of make it a little scarier for the teacher and student. (administrator)*

A couple of participants stated that partnerships were important with people who have worked through these situations such as law-enforcement, psychologists, and community based organizations such as the BAY, Planned Parenthood, Cedars, etc.

One participant (non-administrator) stated that she would like to have a list of resources close at hand and she stated, "So I'm going to put you in touch with this resources officer or this social worker or someone, because that's really our job...to pass the parent or

the child on to the right person."

Participants suggested that they could use existing systems such as PBIS and SCIP (School Community Intervention) that uses student data to identify students that may not be doing well academically or behaviorally so they could take proactive steps to address underlying issues that contribute to students' vulnerability.

One participant stated that they knew how to deal with mental health issues and this might help in identification and reporting of human trafficking.

*We've done a lot of work with mental health and I think our staff...is very, very aware of what mental health may be affecting students and reporting that to the people that need to know. (non-administrator)*

Several participants emphasized that information about the red-flags for trafficking was important, but the first step in both preventing trafficking from occurring or detecting was "building solid relationships with kids, and having adult mentors in their lives."

Participants emphasized that a close relationship between school personnel is a key factor in whether students disclose the trafficking experience or not. They stated that without trust, students will not disclose and they cautioned that further probing by teachers, counselors or other school staff will cause students to withdraw and shut down.

*Building those relationships and, hopefully getting some of those details that we might have missed with the flags, that we didn't know to look for or weren't there. That's that personal relationship piece. (non-administrator)*

*Well you gotta be able to have that relationship to be able to ask them what's going on. If they don't trust you they're not gonna tell you what's going on...They're not going to discuss problems with you unless they trust you...really have to trust you, and otherwise they're pretty hush hush and keep it to themselves. (non-administrator)*

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## Challenges—Key Influencers Identification and Reporting

Many participants stated that the ability to stay hidden through the use of social media and use of pseudonyms made detection of sex trafficking, challenging.

*I think the social media part of this allows it to stay really quiet and undetectable and kind of laying low. (non-administrator)*

*I think another obstacle to kind of going back to the social media, so many kids are using alias names on social media and not their true name...when she showed me her social media account and she showed me profiles, those people were under alias names. (non-administrator)*

*While we have technology-wise the most connected kids ever, we also have some of the most disconnected kids in*

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*terms of socially, and so this vulnerability is prompting kids to seek out friends and connections online, and sexual predators are preying on that. (administrator)*

While attendance was seen as a red-flag they did not know how to discern if truancy was due to other reasons.

Participants emphasized that another challenge in identification and reporting was that they were mandatory reporters and hence would be required to disclose a trafficking situation to law enforcement. They were concerned that this would risk damaging their trust-relationship with the student.

*It's a real tricky place, and where mandatory reporting starts and stops can be difficult. We do our best to serve the needs of the student. It's tough though. (administrator)*

One participant indicated that students were aware that school personnel were mandatory reporters and this already makes them think twice about divulging personal information even if their safety might be at risk.

Another problem mentioned was that students might share information with their mentor outside the school system, but schools are not permitted to share personal information with outside entities.

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## Student Identification and Reporting

Some participants felt that students would have the best information about possible sex trafficking issues among their peers and would be able to reach out to a trusted adult within the school system.

This adult could be a teacher, counselor or security staff.

*They see things that are going on with their friends, that they might not recognize as something bad, and then when they do, they're like, they'll be the first ones that want to protect their friends...this student might not come to a teacher or an authority figure, but one of their friends might come to an authority figure. (non-administrator)*

*Students needing as much training as anybody else, because unfortunately, our kids are the ones who experience it, and know it oftentimes, before adults do, and so, oftentimes, we have kid's friends come to us and say, "Hey my friend is really struggling, and could you guys have somebody, somebody check in on them." (administrator)*

This administrator further elaborated that he felt bad that they were, "...putting more responsibility on our kids," but stated that, upon further reflection he concluded that, "the responsibility is already there, it's just giving them more support and more training and more awareness to be [safe]."

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## Challenges—Student Identification and Reporting

Some participants cautioned that students may not want to "snitch on" their peers and hence would be reluctant to report issues of suspected trafficking among their schoolmates.

*From a kid's perspective, if they think it's serious enough they'll bring it to somebody that they trust. They also will not snitch on their friends. That is, that's not a term I use, it's a term they use. (non-administrator)*

Setting up a system by which they can report the information is important. A few participants mentioned that they would like to set up an anonymous reporting system using a straightforward process such as sending an email.

*You know every time we get a gun out of the school, invariably it is because another student has told us... so if we can give students an awareness and a reporting mechanism to a trusted person, a trusted adult or an anonymous reporting system...they are more than willing if you see something say something it. (administrator)*

Also, participants felt that creating an anonymous reporting system might help decrease the likelihood of being labeled a "snitch."

# Recommendations

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The following recommendations are based on results of primary data collected through interviews and focus-groups, and secondary data collected through an environmental scan of existing policies pertaining to school and human trafficking.

## School Personnel

- Educate all school personnel on human trafficking as staff have varied levels of knowledge of human trafficking.
- Training needs to be a sustained effort, and incorporated into the standard operating procedure of the LPS system.
- Using promising-practice guidelines, develop district-wide training guidelines to educate teachers, counselors, social workers, school administrators and other school personnel.
- Training needs to be incorporated into flex sessions, and other professional development sessions for all staff, and repeat training sessions need to be interesting and engaging.
- Training needs to be in-person, supplemented by online materials. Include testimony from survivors in the training.
- Develop response-protocols in partnerships with community resources that are survivor-centered and supportive of vulnerable students and families. Disseminated protocol to students and staff.

## Students and Parents

- Using promising-practice guidelines, develop human trafficking prevention curriculum that includes students in the conversation, and is approved by the district that teachers can use in the classroom.
- All students (elementary school through high school) need to receive sensitive, and age-appropriate education on human trafficking prevention. Training needs to be incorporated into existing classes, such as health, that all student need to take.
- In addition to the curriculum, incorporate human trafficking in other school activities such as community service and student clubs and organizations.
- Include posters around the building on human trafficking.
- Develop an anonymous and straightforward reporting system for students to alert trusted school personnel of possible trafficking situations.
- Provide language-appropriate training for students and parents who are not fluent in English.
- Develop training for parents, especially parents of young children.

## Conclusion

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This study provides important insights into the perspectives of key influencers at LPS on the development and implementation of human trafficking education and training for student, school personnel and parents. The next phase of the study is to develop a training curriculum (online and in-person), in collaboration with key influencers to raise awareness of sex trafficking among LPS

key influencers, pilot test the curriculum in the LPS high schools and middle schools, and develop and provide online curriculum resources for teachers and other staff to use in the classroom in educating their students of the issue. We hope to take this to other schools in Nebraska. This will help enhance on-going statewide prevention efforts.

# Interview Guide—one-on-one interviews and focus-group sessions

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## About Human Trafficking

■ Please can you tell me what do you know about human trafficking? What are your thoughts on human trafficking in Nebraska? How about Lincoln? In the local school system?

■ How can trafficking be reduced locally?

■ What might be the best way to educate “key influencers” in LPS such as teachers, administrators, and staff about human trafficking? Please can you tell me more? (Probes: What kind of media do you like to use? Do you use social media?)

How about website? Would you download information as teaching tools online?

■ Where would you use this? Mobile, Laptop or Tablet?)

■ What might be the best way to provide information on human trafficking for key influencers that they can use in their class to keep children safe?

■ How do you think information should be shared with students?

■ Do you think students would listen to information on awareness of trafficking and ways to stay safe? How would be the best way to share this information?

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## About the Public School System

■ Are there opportunities during the school year for a student to hear about life skills?

■ Are there opportunities during the school year for a student to learn more about social/life skills so they can stay safe? Please can you tell more about this?

■ Are there opportunities during the school year for a student to report any suspicious behavior? What can the student do?

■ Are there any programs that schools have to share information with students during school? Do you think these programs are successful?

■ Are counselors, teachers, educators governed by any laws that do not allow them to help at-risk students with their problems?

■ Is there a forum where educators can plan and design programs outside the curriculum to help lives of students?

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## School Programs

■ Do you know of any good programs to keep students informed about staying safe? About getting information about social or life skills issues?

■ What programs exist in LPS or other schools where students are empowered personally to make good decisions to stay safe?

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## At-risk Students

■ What about homeless kids, are there programs that keep them in school?

■ How about students who are not doing well in school?

■ What programs exist within the LPS system to help vulnerable students and how do they work?

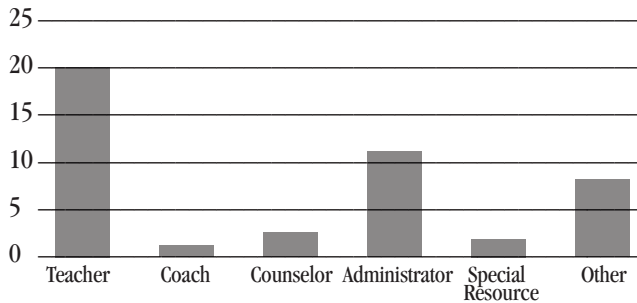
■ Can similar programs be set up to help students stay safe from sex trafficking?



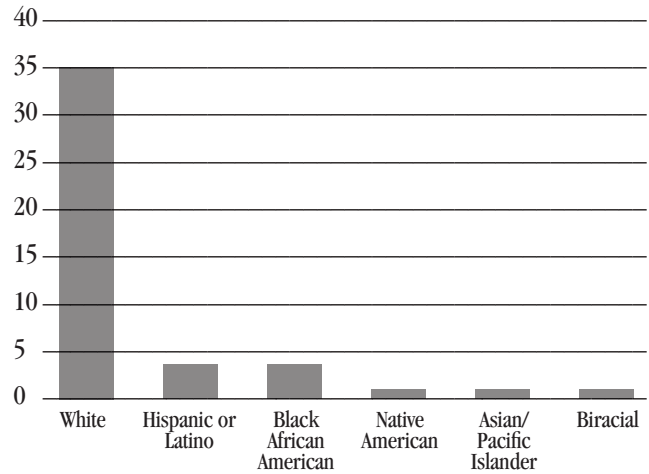
Appendix B

# Demographic information of LPS staff who participated in the study

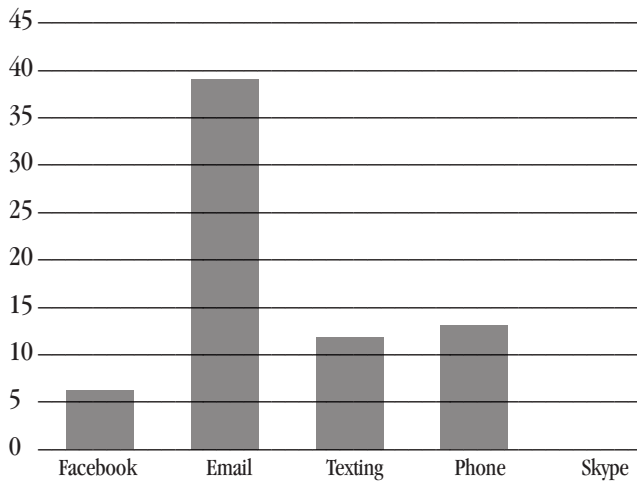
**Type of Employment**



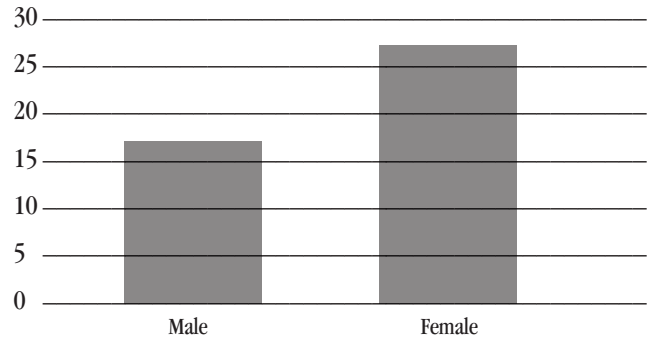
**Ethnicity Origin or Race**



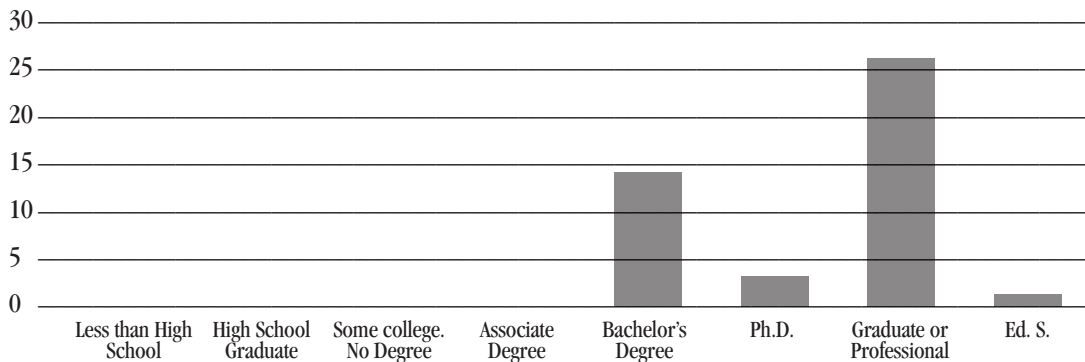
**Communication Preference**



**Gender**



**Highest Level of Education Completed**



# Programs on anti-trafficking that are run in different states for school systems in those specific states

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## Ohio Program/Legislation

### Who implements the program?

### Is it in the whole state or just your school district?

#### If whole state, is it legislated?

Training is legislated, but there is not one specific program that is required. It is mandated that school districts incorporate trafficking content into safety and violence prevention training plans, and the school districts administer the training. They have to meet certain criteria, and a sample program is available for school districts to use, but they can use a different program if they choose to. The law states: "Each board shall incorporate training in school safety and violence prevention, including human trafficking content, into the in-service training required by division (A) of this section. For this purpose, the board shall adopt or adapt the curriculum developed by the department or shall develop its own curriculum in consultation with public or private agencies or persons involved in school safety and violence prevention programs."

### Do you change/supplement programs each year?

### What grade levels are the programs taught and for how long?

It is not taught to students, teachers at all grade levels are required to take it.

### What languages does the program accommodate?

English

### Do you require parental permission?

N/A

### Who developed the curriculum?

### Is it designed specifically for your school, district, or state?

### State (guidelines are given)

### Is it available online?

### Is social media used?

N/A

### Is teacher training required?

Yes, the law requires "Each person employed by any school district or service center to work in a school as a nurse, teacher, counselor, school psychologist, or administrator" to "complete at least four hours of the in-service training within two years of commencing employment with the district or center, and every five years thereafter." This training includes a training on human trafficking.

### Is it a graded curriculum or what student participation is involved?

No student participation is required by legislature, but the Ohio Attorney General's Office provides a manual with "guidelines, resources, and best practices to assist with development of anti-human trafficking youth education and outreach" for those who

choose to use it. (<http://www.ohioattorneygeneral.gov/getattachment/b9c18117-5136-4538-b115-b5105a550df/Human-Trafficking-Prevention-Education-FINAL.aspx>)

### What is the overall focus of the curriculum?

It is a part of the school safety and violence prevention training, but there is a module specific to human trafficking.

### Do you receive feedback from students, parents, or faculty members?

The Ohio Department of Education does not receive feedback because it is administered at the school district level.

### Is there any additional information you would be willing to share with us?

Anti-Human trafficking efforts work mainly out of the Attorney General's office

### CAASE

I called twice and no one was in the office.

### Who implements the program?

CAASE staff and volunteers implement the program. Others are also able to take the curriculum and adapt it for their needs.

### Is it in the whole state or just your school district?

#### If whole state, is it legislated?

No and no. It is a nonprofit who is able to go into schools and share their presentations with students.

### Do you change/supplement programs each year?

Wasn't able to answer because I couldn't speak with them. The main tool kit they have online has 10 steps to it but each presentation is 45 minutes to 60-90 minutes so I don't know how they distribute those lessons.

### What grade levels are the programs taught and for how long?

Mainly grades 9-12 are being taught this curriculum. The presentations are either 45 minutes or 60-90 minutes.

### What languages does the program accommodate?

Unable to find this information.

### Do you require parental permission?

Unable to find this information. I am going to guess no because it isn't a school or statewide requirement. It is optional additional curriculum.

### Who developed the curriculum?

CAASE developed the curriculum after they completed research.

### Is it designed specifically for your school, district, or state?

It doesn't have a specific setting. It can be developed for any scale to take place at anytime. It is developed by a non-profit and they

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can come to school and present or teachers and counselors and coaches can take tool kits on line and use them. Parents also can use this curriculum to teach their child.

**Is it available online?**

They have an online tool kit with the materials they developed for their staff and volunteers. The tool kits include the information they present on. They also include their posters they used in the End Demand, Raise Awareness campaign online. High school teachers also have a specific curriculum available to them to use in the classroom. In addition to that they also have information that college students can use and information for faith communities as well. They also have developed high school curriculum coaches. A lot of their work deals with men so they have programs for that as well. Parents and guardians also have a specific tool kit available for them. Finally, they have a curriculum available for mental health practitioners and massage therapists.

**Is social media used?**

It doesn't appear that social media is used. Although the poster program is statewide.

**Is teacher training required?**

This also doesn't look like it happens. The tool kits are made available to anyone who would like to use them and are self explanatory and are follow along lessons.

**Is it a graded curriculum or what student participation is involved?**

When CAASE provides the training it is a presentation which is either 45 or 60-90 minutes. When teachers do it it appears to be in whatever way they want to present the material.

**What is the overall focus of the curriculum?**

The focus of the program is young males and preventing them from becoming buyers. The tool kits have expanded this as mentioned above and can be adapted for anyone to hear the curriculum. High school ages boys is the main target.

**Do you receive feedback from students, parents, or faculty members?**

Can't answer because they didn't answer when I called.

**Is there any additional information you would be willing to share with us?**

Can't answer because they didn't answer when I called.

**A21 Prevention Education**

**Who implements the program?**

The curriculum is designed for teachers to teach the program. The standard alignments are for social studies and English.

**Do you change/supplement programs each year?**

We develop new programs, such as our prevention and awareness program and shinehope prevention program. Currently we are

working on a new presentation program that will release the first half of 2018. Then we will be looking at revising the curriculum. The goal is to release a new curriculum every 3 years or so.

**What grade levels are the programs taught and for how long?**

9th and 10th grade. The program is 5, 45 minute sessions with 2 optional learning labs, which means it can take anywhere from 5-15 class periods.

**What languages does the program accommodate?**

English and Spanish

**Do you require parental permission?**

This will depend on the school's standards.

**Who developed the curriculum?**

Team of educators and curriculum specialists in collaboration with myself from A21.

**Is it designed specifically for your school, district, or state?**

Designed to fit nationally in the USA, Australia, and Mexico (different versions)

**Is it available online?**

Yes

**Is social media used?**

Optional

**Is teacher training required?**

No—all included in the front matters section of the facilitator guide.

**Is it a graded curriculum or what student participation is involved?**

Yes, there are rubrics, pre/post test, and exit slips each day. Students have a student guide workbook.

**What is the overall focus of the curriculum?**

Human rights, history of slavery to modern-day, and human trafficking in the USA. Equipping students to see indicators, say something, and do something to make a difference and become a modern-day abolitionist.

**Do you receive feedback from students, parents, or faculty members?**

Yes, there is a student and a teacher feedback form. Our team also speaks to people on the phone and at events often.

**Is there any additional information you would be willing to share with us?**

There is an online sample session that you can access here: <http://www.a21.org/offer.php?intid=367>

## Appendix D

*Programs that have been implemented in the Lincoln Public Schools on Suicide Prevention and Anti Bullying that confirm that education on social issues could be implemented in the schools.*

# Suicide awareness

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Answers from Brenda at LPS, Jolene at the Nebraska Department of Education and the LPS website.

### **Who implements the program?**

#### **Is it in the whole state or just your school district?**

Brenda: Every school in the state

#### **If whole state, is it legislated?**

Brenda: Yes, it is legislated. LB 923- Jolene Palmer (school safety director) jolene.palmer@nebraska.gov

#### **Do you change/supplement programs each year?**

Jolene: Across the state, there are different evidence based curricula being implemented (Kognito, QPR, etc.), For the first five years, they will have a different evidence-based curriculum offered, and in year 6 they plan to have a list of the curricula that the schools can choose from. Brenda: LPS uses Kognito, they use the same program each year.

#### **What grade levels are the programs taught and for how long?**

Brenda: Teachers in all grade levels are required to take the training. There are different trainings for each level- Elementary, Middle, and High School levels. Each of the three trainings are similar, but each is catered toward the appropriate age-level. (Kognito/LPS)

Jolene: In some curricula, the trainings vary based on grade level.

#### **What languages does the program accommodate?**

Jolene: English and Spanish

#### **Do you require parental permission?**

N/A

#### **Who developed the curriculum?**

Brenda: The Nebraska Department of Education designed the plan of what school districts would do, but not the content of the program. The actual curriculum was designed by Kognito (LPS). Jolene: There are 3 evidence-based curricula that meet the parameters set forth by the Nebraska Department of Education. Other groups can also get added to list if their curricula meet the parameters (variety is important).

#### **Is it designed specifically for your school, district, or state?**

Jolene: There are different curricula, but the parameters are set by the Nebraska Department of Education.

#### **Is it available online?**

Brenda: Yes

#### **Is social media used?**

N/A

### **Is teacher training required?**

Brenda: Yes

LPS website: "Those required to take the online training include: nurses, teachers, counselors, school psychologists, administrators, social workers, health technicians, treatment nurses, occupational therapists, physical therapists, sign language interpreters, service coordinators, SLPs, Bilingual Liaisons, Youth Development Team members and para educators." (Quoted from the LPS website: <https://lps.org/post/detail.cfm?id=10042>) Jolene: The law states that all "certified staff" must take the training, but all staff are encouraged to take it. 38,000 staff members take the training state-wide.

### **Is it a graded curriculum or what student participation is involved?**

Brenda: No, it is not graded. There is a packet that teachers can print off at the end if they need to talk to students, but there is no student participation in the training. Jolene: Kognito has a portion available to students if schools want to use it, but they haven't jumped on it (they have licenses for 5,000, but haven't come close to that). The law is about training adults and has nothing to do with students.

### **What is the overall focus of the curriculum?**

Suicide prevention

### **Do you receive feedback from students, parents, or faculty members?**

Faculty members can provide feedback.

### **Is there any additional information you would be willing to share with us?**

I spoke with Brenda at LPS. She said she had taken each of the three trainings for the different levels. She said she thought that they did a good job of catering the material to the appropriate age, and that she felt like she was interacting with students of that age. She personally thinks the training is good and says some people say they would feel more comfortable talking about the material with kids than they would have felt had they not taken it. However, she also said that some people think that the training is ridiculous and basically a waste of time.

Jolene: There has been an increased number of reports of students at risk since the legislation, (there has also been an increased number of suicides.) Teachers are trained to recognize the signs and encourage students to talk to their counselors, then the counselors report.

The schools always want to just have an assembly where the parents of a child who committed suicide comes in and talks to the school about it. But this is not effective and actually makes the problem worse, so they (NDOE) are constantly having to fight against this idea.

# Anti bullying prevention program

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**Who implements the program?****Is it in the whole state or just your school district?**

All schools in LPS, LPS chooses if they want to use the program. Graduate students in the school of psychology at the University of Nebraska. Training goes beyond Nebraska, it is available nationwide.

**What languages does the program accommodate?**

LPS provides interpreters, also have 3 graduate students who are fluent in Spanish

**What grade levels are the programs taught and for how long?**

All grades. LPS has used it for ten years (annually)

In their research, they study prek-12 grade, session is 4 hours long with an hour long follow up session.

**Do you require parental permission?**

Parents have to consent.

**Who developed the curriculum?**

Susan Swearer (the supervisor)

**Is it available online?**

No, it is not available online.

**Is teacher training required?**

No teacher training is required, it is more of a mental health program.

**What is the overall focus of the curriculum?**

With older kids they talk about dating violence and aggression and with younger kids they talk about self worth and respecting others. Mostly, the focus is for kids who bully others- to try to understand why kids are bullying others and to encourage them to participate in prosocial behavior.

All student participation it is voluntary

**Do you receive feedback from students, parents, or faculty members?**

Yes, most of the feedback is positive. It's on a 0-45 scale, most students rate the program.

The website: [cehs.unl.edu/empowerment](http://cehs.unl.edu/empowerment) (under intervention, involvement program)

## Biographies of the researchers

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### Sriyani Tidball

Ms. Sriyani Tidball teaches social justice and human rights at UNL and she is a subject matter specialist on human trafficking in the US. She is an advocate and an activist in anti-trafficking of women and children in Nebraska, the U.S. and internationally. In 2015, she received a Fulbright Award and investigated the labor exploitation of vulnerable Sri Lankan women in the Middle-East. In 2013, she was a part of a UNL team with the Chancellor, the Vice Chancellor for Research and UNL professors who visited Mumbai, India and Sri Lanka to establish collaborative research partnerships on women's empowerment and human trafficking. Locally, she has been closely involved in statewide efforts to combat human trafficking in Nebraska. In 2013, she testified in support of an anti-sex traffick-

ing bill put forth by former Nebraska Senator Amanda McGill. In 2012 she received a grant from Microsoft to conduct a qualitative study of buyers of sex and published the result in a peer-reviewed journal. From 2009 to 2017 she has been the faculty adviser for UNL's Resident Student Organization, NUSAMS—Nebraska University Students Against Modern-day Slavery. Since 2009, I have been a member (founder member) of the UNL Annual International Human Trafficking Research Conference Team.

She has lived in Nebraska for the past 25 years and as an assistant professor of practice in the College of Journalism at UNL until December 2016, she has taught a class on human rights and social justice.

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### Shireen Rajaram

Dr. Rajaram is a medical sociologist, health promotion faculty and a public health researcher with expertise in qualitative research methodology and community based participatory research, focusing on social determinants of health and health equity including human trafficking and domestic violence. As the former Director of UNMC's Center for Reducing Health Disparities, and as a health disparities faculty in the College of Public Health, she has worked with underserved communities locally, regionally and internationally in conducting community based research projects.

For the past 4 years, she had served with Ms. Tidball on the planning committee for the Annual Human Trafficking conference held at her institution—UNL. In April 2016, she collaborated with Ms. Tidball on the first of its kind qualitative study based on interviews with 22 women sex trafficking survivors in Nebraska. This project, funded by the Women's Fund of Omaha, was in partnership with

key community based organizations that work with survivors of sex trafficking across Nebraska.

She is the faculty leader of a student-led group, EMPOWER that focuses on domestic violence, sex trafficking and sexual assault. She has testified in the Nebraska state legislature in support of bills on human trafficking.

In the College of Public Health, she teaches Masters and PhD level courses including Program Planning, Implementation and Evaluation, and Health Behavior. In 2016, she received the College of Public Health Excellence in Teaching Award at UNMC. In 2017, she received the UNMC Visionary Educational Leader Award. Dr. Rajaram was Professor of Sociology and former chair of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at the University of Nebraska at Omaha.



**Schools and Anti-Trafficking Awareness: Education/Training Key Influencers & Students**

*Submitted by Sriyani Tidball, M.A. & Shireen S. Rajaram, Ph.D.*

A Qualitative Study • December 31st, 2017



University of Nebraska  
Medical Center

UNIVERSITY OF  
**Nebraska**  
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Department of Health Promotion, College of Public Health, University of Nebraska Medical Center  
College of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of Nebraska, Lincoln