Executive Summary

Introduction

Human trafficking, which involves the use of force, fraud, or coercion to compel a person into commercial sex acts, labor, or services against their will, is an issue facing many female inmates. Trafficking may be a part of women's life histories before entering correctional settings. They may be contacted by recruiters and traffickers during their time in correctional facilities. Women may also be victimized by traffickers as they leave correctional facilities and return to their home communities. Despite growing attention to the issue of human trafficking in the United States broadly, less practice or research attention has been given to identifying and responding to human trafficking in correctional systems.

An important first step toward addressing human trafficking in correctional settings is identification. Unfortunately, identifying human trafficking is complicated by the reality that those experiencing trafficking may rarely disclose their situation to people who might be able to help. Thus, it is important for correctional leaders and staff to be aware of the characteristics, conditions, and factors that may indicate that a woman is experiencing or at risk of human trafficking.

Research Aims

To determine the prevalence of human trafficking among adult women in the North Carolina (NC) correctional system, and to ensure that victims are identified and connected to needed services, it is necessary to develop human trafficking screening and identification instruments, procedures, and training tailored to NC correctional settings. Given that women are at particular risk for trafficking and because criminal justice involvement among women is on the rise, this project focused on women in NC correctional systems.

Project Team

A research team from the School of Social Work at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC-CH) partnered with the NC Department of Public Safety (DPS), Reentry Programs and Services to inform the development of a draft, evidence-informed human trafficking identification and response guide and training materials for NC DPS correctional leaders and staff.

The UNC-CH research team included:

- Rebecca J. Macy, Co-Principal Investigator
- Cynthia Fraga Rizo, Co-Principal Investigator
- Tonya B. Van Deinse, Co-Investigator
- Christopher J. Wretman, Co-Investigator/Data Analyst
- Jia Luo, Project Manager
- L. B. Klein, Doctoral Research Assistant
- Corey A. Shuck, Graduate Research Assistant

Project Activities

The UNC-CH research team carried out the following project activities:

Conducted a literature review of existing human trafficking instruments, tools, and protocols for screening, identification, and response.

Collected exploratory survey data from correctional leaders and anti-trafficking leaders nationally to identify existing human trafficking instruments, tools, and protocols for screening, identification, and response that may be in use in U.S. correctional settings.

Conducted a literature review of human trafficking risk factors and indicators.

Explored existing NC DPS data to examine the degree to which current NC DPS assessments, data tracking systems, and data indicators might be relevant for assessing trafficking risk among female inmates.

Key Findings

- There is not yet clear practice or research consensus concerning what specific questions should be asked as part of trafficking screening.

- Very few of the screening instruments currently in use have been evaluated, and little of this work appears to be occurring in correctional settings.

- There is growing interest in examining risk factors and indicators of human trafficking. However, much of this work has focused on the individual and interpersonal levels, and little research has examined human trafficking among people in correctional settings.

- Future efforts to identify communities and/or geographical locations in which human trafficking is prevalent could help with prevention and response.

- Findings from the national survey of correctional and anti-trafficking leaders suggest that despite stakeholders' perceptions regarding the importance of addressing human trafficking in correctional settings, there are currently limited efforts related to human trafficking screening, response, and training being carried out in these settings.

- NC DPS data currently being gathered on female offenders provide some ability to examine human trafficking at both the individual and interpersonal levels. Four primary types of data have been identified within the DPS system with potential relevance to identifying human trafficking factors.

- Investigations of how specific types of DPS data may be used, both uniquely and in combination, to inform a trafficking checklist and/or screening tool might be a useful next step for DPS consideration.

Products

The project activities informed the development of the *NC Correction Human Trafficking Identification and Response Guide* and *Understanding and Responding to Human Trafficking in Correctional Settings Training* tailored for NC DPS correctional staff.

NC Correction Human Trafficking Identification and Response Guide

To ensure that NC correctional staff are prepared to screen for human trafficking, provide follow-up, and support human trafficking victims and women who are at risk of trafficking, **a human trafficking identification and response guide** was developed to provide strategies for identifying female inmates who have been, are being, or may be at risk of human trafficking.

The guide includes an overview of human trafficking, human trafficking indicators, recommended human trafficking interview practices, example interview questions, and a full list of references that were used to inform the development of the guide.

NC Correction Human Trafficking Identification and Response Training

To help support NC correctional leaders and staff's efforts to follow recommendations for increasing human trafficking awareness among staff, the UNC-CH team created training and awareness-raising materials, which include **an informational flyer** and **a two-part training presentation** titled *Understanding and Responding to Human Trafficking in Correctional Settings Training.*

With engaging group activities, the training covers human trafficking indicators, reasons why correctional settings might be poised for identifying and responding to human trafficking, and recommendations for identifying and responding to human trafficking using the study-developed tools and protocols.

Recommendations

Based on all project activities, as well as our team's efforts to develop a draft trafficking identification and response guide and related training materials for NC correctional settings, the UNC-CH team offers the following recommendations as next steps:

- Seek NC DPS leadership and staff input and feedback on project findings, products, and recommendations to ensure that draft products are subsequently tailored to NC correctional systems.
- Plan and evaluate a pilot anti-trafficking initiative in one correctional site.
- Informed by the pilot, plan and launch an anti-trafficking initiative throughout all NC DPS correctional facilities.
- Using NC DPS data, explore the development and testing of a trafficking checklist and/or screening tool.

Building from this project, including its findings, products, and recommendations, North Carolina could become a leader in addressing human trafficking in correctional settings and help ensure that women in correctional settings receive the assistance and support they need to escape human trafficking.

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