

APA Official Actions

Position Statement on Human Trafficking

Approved by the Board of Trustees, December 2018

Approved by the Assembly, November 2018

“Policy documents are approved by the APA Assembly and Board of Trustees. . . These are . . . position statements that define APA official policy on specific subjects. . .” – *APA Operations Manual*

Issue: There are estimated to be 40 million victims of human trafficking worldwide; however, only 1% of victims have been identified^{1,2}. One study indicates that 88% of human trafficking victims have been seen by a medical provider while in captivity³. Those who are identified have high rates of mental illness^{3,4}.

POSITION:

1. **The American Psychiatric Association recognizes that human trafficking is a public health issue with profound mental health consequences impacting individuals of all ages and genders both domestically and internationally.**
2. **Human trafficking is an issue with legal, social, economic, and educational impacts. The American Psychiatric Association encourages mental health providers addressing this issue to collaborate across disciplines.**
3. **The American Psychiatric Association advocates for increased education of mental health providers on how to identify victims of trafficking in their clinical practices, how to appropriately refer to resources, and how to provide trauma-informed care for this population with unique needs.**
4. **The American Psychiatric Association advocates for increased research into how to address the mental health needs of this population.**
5. **The American Psychiatric Association advocates for legislation that focuses on prevention of human trafficking, protection of identified victims and increased partnership between civil and government agencies to facilitate access to mental health care for identified victims.**

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References:

1. International Labor Organization and Walk Free Foundation. Global Estimates of Modern Slavery: Forced Labour and Forced Marriage. 2017; http://www.alliance87.org/global_estimates_of_modern_slavery-forced_labour_and_forced_marriage.pdf. Accessed Dec 4, 2017.

2. US State Department. Trafficking in Persons Report. 2017.
<https://www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/2017/>. Accessed Dec 4, 2017.
3. Lederer, Laura J., and Christopher A. Wetzel. "The Health Consequences of Sex Trafficking and their Implications for Identifying Victims in Healthcare Facilities." *Annals of Health and Law* 23 (2014): 61-91. Print.
4. Ijadi-Maghsoodi, R., et al. (2016). "Understanding and Responding to the Needs of Commercially Sexually Exploited Youth: Recommendations for the Mental Health Provider." *Child Adolesc Psychiatr Clin N Am* 25 (1): 102-122.