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Ruby A. Navarro  
*California State University, Monterey Bay*

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Increasing High School Students' Awareness of the Risks of Human Trafficking

Ruby Navarro

A Capstone Project for the Bachelor of Arts in Human Development and Family Studies

## Increasing High School Students' Awareness of the Risks of Human Trafficking

### **Introduction**

Many adolescents are unaware of human trafficking, the signs of trafficking, the risk factors of becoming a victim, and the detrimental effects. Given that adolescents are often targets of human trafficking, it is important to raise awareness to prevent these crimes.

Therefore, I created a one-day workshop on how to recognize signs and risk factors of human trafficking for freshman students in Sociology classes at Overfelt High School in San Jose, California.

### **Needs Statement**

It is likely that high school students are not aware of the high rate of human trafficking occurring in the community. Legally, human trafficking is defined as “anyone who deprives or violates the personal liberty of another with the intent to obtain forced labor or services, procure or sell the individual for commercial sex, or exploit the individuals in obscene matter, is guilty of human trafficking” (California Penal Code, §236.1(a)). Traffickers are beginning to lure and exploit their victims through different social media platforms, clubs/bars, schools, airports, or family attractions. Trafficking victims can involve school-aged youths, homelessness, childhood abuse, or youth who identify as LGBTQ (Gottchling, 2016).

Homelessness within young adults is becoming a major problem with nearly one-fifth of youth who are victims of human trafficking (Haynie, 2017). Traffickers are constantly searching for homeless youth because they are presented as a low-risk business proposition (Thorn, 2018). Homeless youth are easy for traffickers to manipulate because they can promise the youth safety, food, shelter, financial security, and protection (Covenant House, 2020). Pilnik (2019) estimated

that youth and young adults who are homeless range between 19% to 40% of the human trafficking rates. In a recent study, youth who age out of the foster care system become homeless without support nor resources to help them transition for a life on their own (Haynie, 2017). Nevertheless, many adolescents who have aged out of the foster care system have found assistance to help them find resources for shelter, food, and job opportunities. One study found that foster care youth who do not have the resources to help them transition become victims of human trafficking when they become young adults (Haynie, 2017). Advocating for foster care youth to receive resources to help them with guidance to live a proper life off the streets, is highly important.

Childhood abuse is a severe tragedy that occurs throughout the world to one in 10 children before their 18th birthday (Darkness to Light, 2017). Parents who sexually abuse their children, begin to introduce the children into domestic sex trafficking by involving them into prostitution. Children who have been sexually abused throughout their lives are forced to face a larger number of sexual assault while they are trafficking victims (Goodman & Leidholdt, 2013). Victims of sex trafficking recruit their peers by promising them monetary gain. In recent studies shown, sexual abuse occurs both before and during trafficking, these horrific events are what causes victims to become vulnerable and not allowing themselves to leave if they ever have a chance to do so. However, labor trafficking victims encounter sexual abuse as well as any victim that is in sex trafficking (Goodman & Leidholdt, 2013).

Youth who identify as part of the LGBTQ community are considered high risk for human trafficking victimization because they are extremely vulnerable and seeking acceptance if they do not receive it from their family (Covenant House, 2020). Recent studies have shown that

LGBTQ youth are twice as likely to become homeless because many of their families do not accept their sexual orientation. Suffering from physical harm or violence occurs when a youth that identifies in the LGBTQ community becomes homeless, causing traffickers to pull them into their human trafficking business. Indeed, there is youth that does not identify within the LGBTQ community that are victimized but their percentage is not as wide (Whalen, 2013). As a result of this youth that is in the LGBTQ community who do not have a stable household with emotional and financial support causes the youth to be victimized in prostitution or the human trafficking industry (Goodman & Leidholdt, 2013).

Given that adolescents who suffer from neglected or abusive households, it is likely that they are not aware of the consequences that may arise if they are seen as being vulnerable. In order to increase their awareness, I intend to provide a one-day presentation about human trafficking risk and prevention factors for freshman students at William C. Overfelt high school in San Jose, California.

### **Theory**

Developmentally, adolescents are in a stage that Albert Bandura describes as social learning theory which is the “importance of observing others and modeling their behaviors, attitudes, and emotional reactions of others” (Culatta & Kearsley, 2018). This theory integrates continuous interactions from the reciprocal causation model between three factors behaviors, personal factors, and the environment. As part of this project, I focused on environmental influences and personal influences. The environmental influence is defined that adolescents learn what is being taught to them. This supports my project by showing that the students were able to complete a survey at the end of the presentation about human trafficking. Personal influence is

defined as if the students do not understand something they will raise their hands and influence behaviors. This was confirmed throughout the presentation because when the students did not understand something they would ask questions for clarification or to explain terms further. In my project, I described multiple risk and protection factors that youth need to be aware of and pass the information they learned to others. Therefore, creating this presentation helped adolescents understand the risk and protection factors that human trafficking may cause.

### **Consideration of Diversity**

My project will be conducted at William C. Overfelt High School in freshman sociology classes. According to the School Accountability Report Card (SARC; 2019), William C. Overfelt High School is 2% African American, 0.2% American Indian, 8.8% Asian, 6.4% Filipino, 80.2% Hispanic or Latino, 1% Pacific Islander, 0.7% White, and 0.8% two or more races. In addition, 85.4% are considered socioeconomically disadvantaged. I would expect that the participants would reflect the same ethnic and socioeconomic background. The issue of diversity was the lack of understanding of what is human trafficking. A small number of students were confused about what the difference was between human trafficking and kidnapping. This project is geared towards high school students and is able to apply in the same ways to younger children or older adults.

### **Learning Outcomes**

I intend to provide a 50- minute lesson throughout the entire day to freshmen students at William C. Overfelt.

By the end of the project, the participants will:

1. Identify two signs of human trafficking.

2. Describe two places where human trafficking occurs.
3. Describe two strategies that human traffickers use to recruit victims.

### **Method**

#### **Day 1**

I conducted my presentation on February 28, 2020, at William C. Overfelt in San Jose, California. I presented to the entire freshman class that ranged on average from 260 students throughout the entire day from the 1st period until the 7th period. For each class period, I conducted the same layout from start to finish. The demographics of the students were mainly Hispanic or Latino.

As I first entered the classroom I shared my presentation with the teacher and as she was setting up the PowerPoint and audio, I introduced myself to the class and told the class why I am there. Then, I asked the class if anyone had an idea of what is human trafficking. After two students explained what they believed human trafficking was I agreed to what they stated. I then began my presentation starting off with the definition of human trafficking along with some statics. See Appendix A. Then, I explained the four different types of human trafficking. Then, I showed the video: [https://youtu.be/raMUI\\_\\_7lac](https://youtu.be/raMUI__7lac), ending the video at 1 minute and 10 seconds. Then, I led a 5-minute discussion on what did the students notice while hearing the video. Then, I showed the video: <https://youtu.be/Z1IU2EX4OrM>, starting at 42 minutes and ending it at 47 minutes and 45 seconds. Then, I led a 5-minute discussion on what did the student notice about the victim and what clues did she provide to the 911 dispatcher. Then, I asked a few questions to the students to clarify any clues they did not identify. Then, I continued with my presentation explaining who can traffickers be, who can become a victim, where are traffickers, how

traffickers are using social media to lure victims, red flags to look out for, explaining the difference between Romeo pimps and guerrilla pimps, what should they do, and who to contact. Then, I ended my presentation and gave the students an opportunity to ask me questions about the presentation. Then, I distributed a human trafficking survey that was on a half sheet of paper for the participants to complete before the class period was over. See Appendix B. Afterward, I closed my presentation and collected the half sheet of paper.

### **Results**

Learning outcome 1 was that the participants would identify two signs of human trafficking. I believe that my findings do support that this learning outcome was partially met. The participants focused on the presentation after I showed them both of the short videos of human trafficking victims that occurred in two nearby cities. In total, the participants named 18 different signs to identify human trafficking, which was fully represented in the slides. Meaning that 70% of the students were able to mention two signs of human trafficking and 19% of the students were unable to mention 2 signs of human trafficking.

Learning outcome 2 was that participants would describe two places where human trafficking may occur. I believe that my findings do support that this learning outcome was fully met. However, there was a small percentage of 5.3% that described locations that were not mentioned in the presentation.

Learning outcome 3 was that participants would describe two strategies that human traffickers use to recruit victims. I believe that my findings support that this learning outcome was fully met. The participants were able to remember strategies that were mentioned in the



slides and a few participants wrote some that were not mentioned but that is correct. There were 84% correct responses and 6.8% incorrect.

### **Discussion**

Overall, I believe this project was successful. The participants were engaged in the topic and learned a lot from the experience. I believe when I explained the slides and videos more in detail is when it became simpler for the participants to understand and grasp the concepts. The concepts that were confusing for the participants to understand are the difference between kidnapping and trafficking, along with the difference between Romeo pimp and guerrilla pimp.

I think the discussion about the two videos that were shown about trafficking victims made the largest impact because the cities that were mentioned in the video were about an hour or two away from where the participants live. The reason why locations are significant to the participants is that they did not believe that it happens anywhere near them, they stated that it happens out of California or in Los Angeles around. The participants were able to recognize risk and protection factors that can be used for human trafficking, those factors that they learned reflected on Alberto Bandura's social learning theory.

In terms of diversity, I think my project included everyone. Due to these students growing up in lower economic community violence is constantly displayed. Letting the students learn the risk and protection factors of trafficking will help many students stay safe in their everyday life. Also, discussing how the participants will report trafficking occurring was surprising because many adolescents do not have a good experience when it comes to law enforcement. But, I was glad that almost everyone said they will report it to the police or someone they trust.

If I had to do this over again, I would switch the word strategies on the survey. It would have been easier for the participants to understand correctly what I was trying to ask. Another thing that I would have changed in my presentation was to add a few more examples of human trafficking so I can end my presentation exactly at 45 minutes instead of 5 minutes earlier. But ending 15 minutes early gave the students a chance to complete the survey and ask me additional questions if needed. Nevertheless, I felt like the participants learned and retained the human trafficking information that was provided to them.

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*Table 1**Demographics of the participants*

<b><u>Grade:</u></b> 9th	N = 133
<b><u>Age:</u></b>	
14:	71%
15:	26%
16:	0.08%
Did not answer:	2.2%
<b><u>Gender:</u></b>	
Male:	49%
Female:	50%
Did not answer:	1.6%
<b><u>Ethnicity:</u></b>	
Latino/ Hispanic:	50%
African American:	4.5%
Native American:	0.8%
Indian American:	0.8%
Asian American:	6.8%
Mexican American:	12.8%
Mixed/ Multicultural:	6%
Did not Answer:	18.8%

*Table 2**Responses of two signs of human trafficking*

	<b><u>N= 133</u></b>	<b><u>Percentage out of 133 (%):</u></b>
Correct:	93	70%
Incorrect:	25	19%
Did not answer:	15	11%

*Table 3**Responses of two signs of human trafficking*

	<b><u>N= 133</u></b>	<b><u>Percentage out of 133 (%):</u></b>
Correct:	100	75%
Incorrect:	18	14%
Did not answer:	15	11%

*Table 4**Responses of two places where human trafficking takes place*

	<b><u>N= 133</u></b>	<b><u>Percentage out of 133 (%):</u></b>
Correct:	120	90%
Incorrect:	7	5.3%
Did not answer:	6	4.5%



*Table 5**Responses of two places where human trafficking takes place*

	<b><u>N= 133</u></b>	<b><u>Percentage out of 133 (%):</u></b>
Correct:	117	88%
Incorrect:	7	5.8%
Did not answer:	9	6.8%

*Table 6**Responses of two strategies that human traffickers use to recruit victims*

	<b><u>N= 133</u></b>	<b><u>Percentage out of 133 (%):</u></b>
Correct:	112	84%
Incorrect:	9	6.8%
Did not answer:	12	9%

*Table 7**Responses of two strategies that human traffickers use to recruit victims*

	<b><u>N= 133</u></b>	<b><u>Percentage out of 133 (%):</u></b>
Correct:	106	79.7%
Incorrect:	8	6%
Did not answer:	19	14.3%

*Appendix A*

## Human trafficking survey

What grade level are you in? 9      10      11      12

How old are you? \_\_\_\_\_

What is your gender? \_\_\_\_\_

What is your ethnicity? \_\_\_\_\_

1. Identify 2 signs of human trafficking?

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

2. Describe 2 places where human trafficking takes place?

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

3. Describe 2 strategies that human traffickers use to recruit victims?

a. \_\_\_\_\_

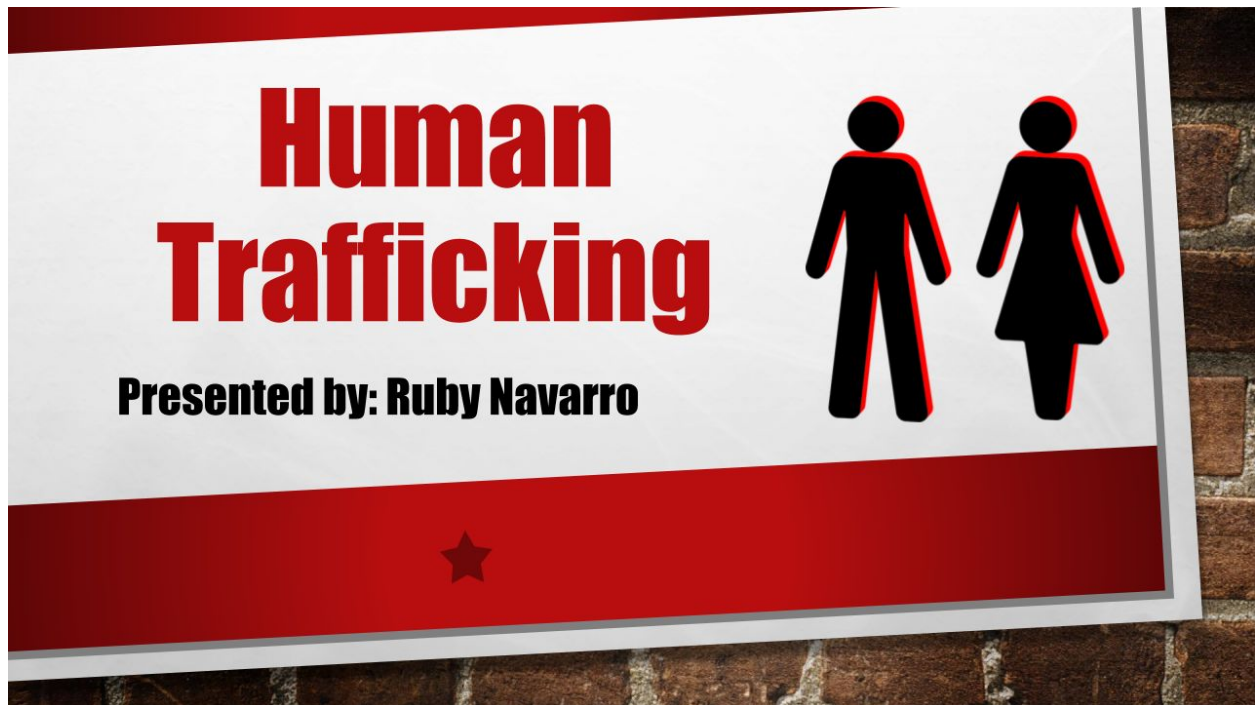
b. \_\_\_\_\_

4. What should you do if you notice human trafficking occurring?

a. \_\_\_\_\_

*Appendix B*

*Powerpoint on human trafficking awareness*



## What is Human Trafficking?

- ❖ Human Trafficking is a form of modern-day slavery, in which human beings are controlled and exploited for profit. Perpetrators use force, fraud, or coercion to manipulate and establish control over individuals.
- ❖ Second largest criminal industry in the world and is the fastest growing
- ❖ Estimated worth \$150 billion annually worldwide

## Types of Trafficking:

- Labor trafficking
- Sex Trafficking
- Organ Trafficking
- Athletic Trafficking



## Videos:

- ❖ [https://youtu.be/raMUI\\_7lac](https://youtu.be/raMUI_7lac)
- ❖ <https://youtu.be/Z1IU2EX40rM>





## **Traffickers can be anyone:**

- ❖ Family Members
- ❖ Boyfriend/Girlfriend
- ❖ Community Members
- ❖ Figures of Authority
- ❖ Business owners/  
modeling/ music/ acting
- ❖ Massage parlors/ Beauty  
Parlors
- ❖ Hotel/ Motel Industry
- ❖ Domestic Servitude
- ❖ Agriculture
- ❖ Construction Companies
- ❖ Bars/ Night Clubs/ Strip Clubs

## **Anyone can become a victim:**

- Males
- Females
- LGBTQIA+
- Children
- Teens
- Adults
- Citizens and Immigrants



## Where are traffickers?



Malls



Outside & inside of Schools



Movie Theater



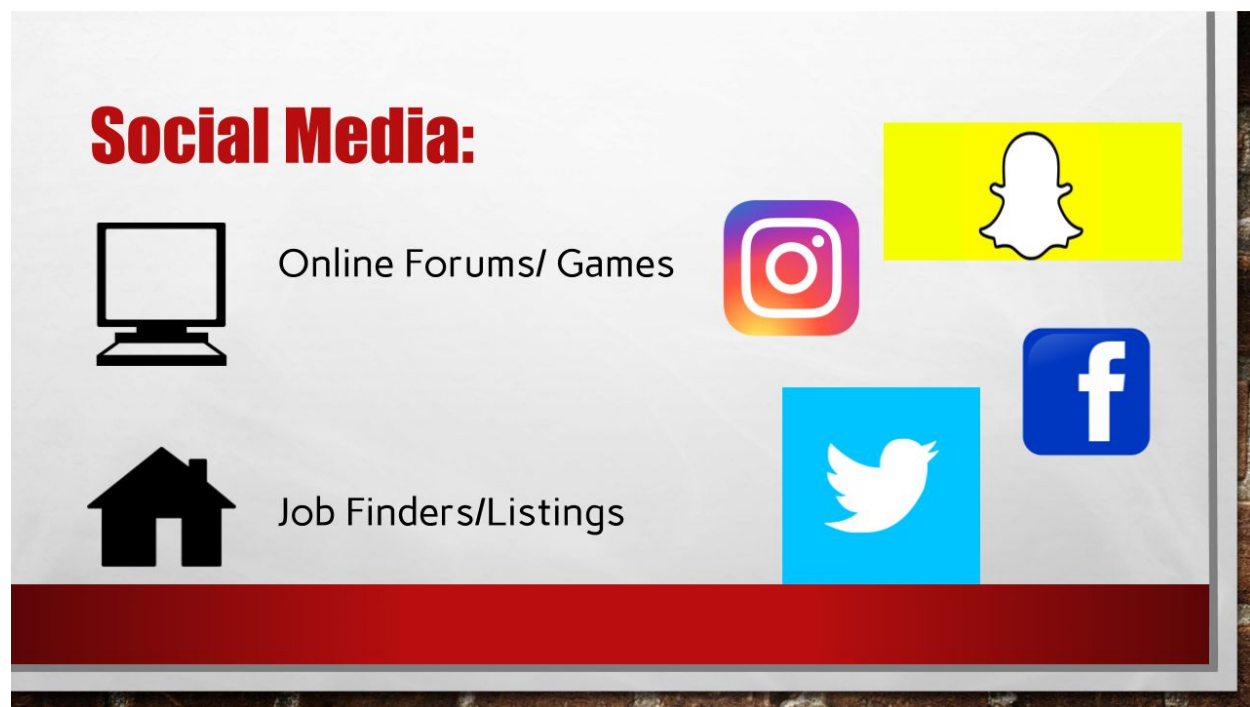
Bus Stops & Train Station



Places of Worship



Airports



## Red Flags:



- Not free to leave/ come and go as they wish
- Under 18 in commercial sex industry
- Tattoos or Branding
- Anxious, Timid, Fearful
- Not enrolled/ Truant from school
- Inconsistencies in their stories
- Bruising, lacks medical care
- Refers to someone as "Daddy"
- Not being paid or paid very little
- Has few/ no personal possessions, No ID
- High security measures at work
- Someone always intent on speaking for them
- Was recruited through false pretenses

## Tactics of Trafficking:

### ROMEO PIMP:

- Finds a vulnerability and exploits it
- Friendly and smooth talking
- Sometimes become a boyfriend
- Shows false affection through gifts or manipulation
- May not become violent, uses intimidation

### GUERRILLA PIMP:

- Sometimes starts off as a boyfriend
- Kidnapping
- Threats
- Beating/ Torture/ Sexual Violence
- Doesn't always show this side until trust is established

## Tactics Continued:

- Through manipulation convinces persons they have choices-
- Phrases like: No chains, You can Leave, but who will want you?
- Make as much money as they can off of a person
- Builds false hope- "Only a few more jobs and it's over."
- Constantly looking for new persons to exploit
- Uses youth to recruit other youth

# What can you do?





## Who to contact:



Local Law Enforcement



Local Crisis Center/ 24  
Hour Crisis Line



National Human  
Trafficking Hotline  
1-888-373-7888



Text "HELP" to BEFREE  
(233733)

*Appendix C*

*Presentation for Capstone Festival*



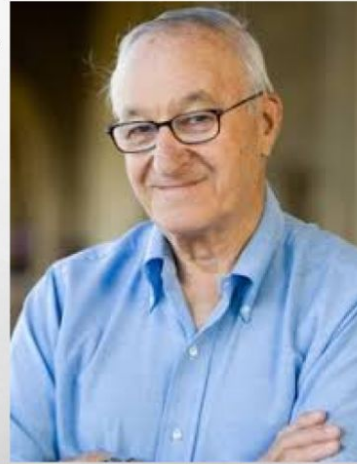
## Needs Statement

This project is intended to make adolescents aware of human trafficking and to void being a victim of human trafficking. Along with how to intervene if adolescents believe they notice human trafficking occurring.

# Theory

Albert Bandura's Social learning Theory

- Observing others and modeling their behaviors
- Reciprocal causation model
  - Behaviors
  - Personal influences
  - Environment influences
- Presentation focused on environmental influences and personal influence



## Learning Outcomes

At the conclusion of my project participants will:

1. Identify two signs of human trafficking.
2. Describe two places where human trafficking occurs.
3. Describe two strategies that human traffickers use to recruit victims.



## Methods

- High school freshmen at William C. Overfelt High school in San Jose, CA
- 50 minute presentation with videos to groups of freshmen students throughout the day





## Format Includes

- Having a discussion on the definition of human trafficking
- Watching 2 videos that demonstrate examples of human trafficking
- Having a discussion about the videos
- Finishing the presentation
- An exit survey

What grade level are you in? 9 10 11 12

How old are you? \_\_\_\_\_

What is your gender? \_\_\_\_\_

What is your ethnicity? \_\_\_\_\_

## Exit Survey

1. Identify 2 signs of human trafficking?

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

2. Describe 2 places where human trafficking takes place?

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

3. Describe 2 strategies that human traffickers use to recruit victims?

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

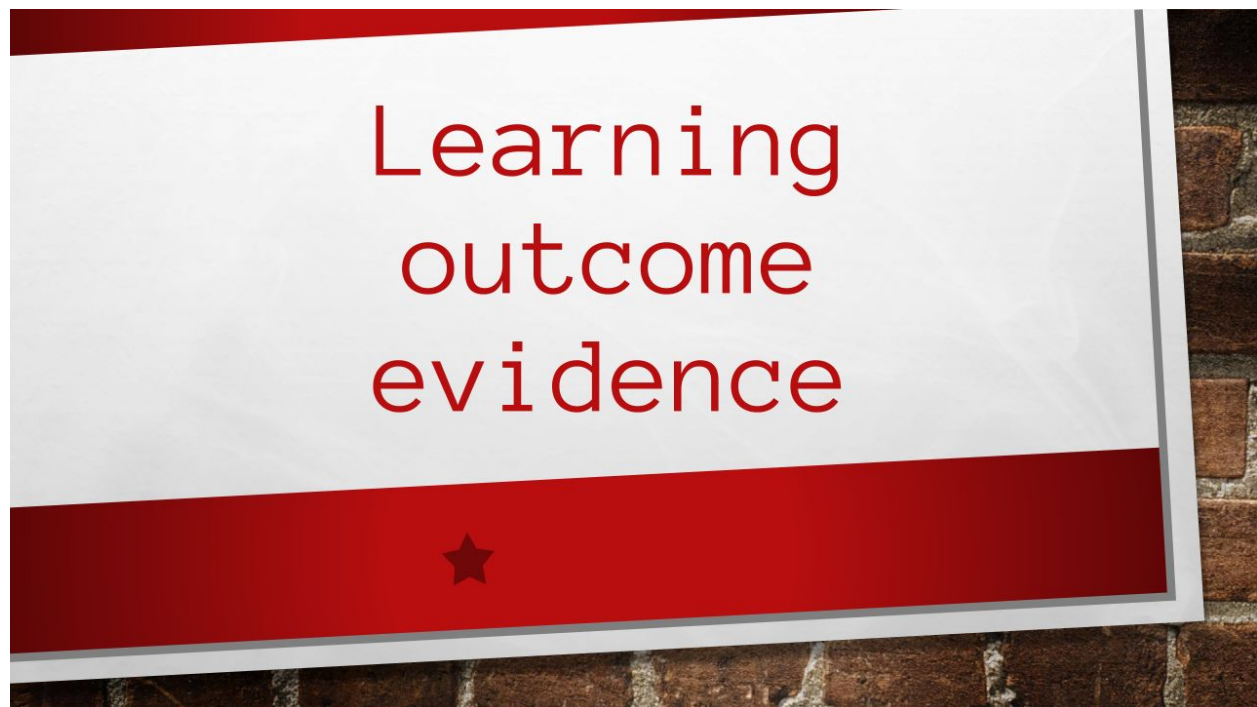
4. What should you do if you notice human trafficking occurring?

a. \_\_\_\_\_



## Results

- Learning outcome #1: Partially met, there were 70% correct responses and 19% of the responses were incorrect
- Learning outcome #2: Fully met, there was 90% correct responses and 5.3% of the responses were incorrect
- Learning outcome #3: Fully met, there were 84% correct responses and 6.8% of the responses were incorrect



## Learning outcome #1

	<u>N= 133:</u>	<u>Percentage out of 133 (%):</u>
Correct:	93	70%
Incorrect:	25	19%
Did not answer:	15	11%

## Learning outcome #2

	<u>N= 133:</u>	<u>Percentage out of 133 (%):</u>
Correct:	120	90%
Incorrect:	7	5.3%
Did not answer:	6	4.5%

## Learning outcome #3

	<u>N= 133:</u>	<u>Percentage out of 133 (%):</u>
Correct:	112	84%
Incorrect:	9	6.8%
Did not answer:	12	9%

## Discussion

- Participants were engaged in the topic
- Participants learned a lot from this topic
- Anything I would do differently?

