NYC Children | Child Trafficking Prevention and Policy

Program may be subject to change based upon unexpected events.

2026
NYC Child Trafficking Prevention Conference

"Developing Safety Strategies As New Dangers Emerge"

22 Virtual Workshops

Conference Registration Instructions:

- **Registration is directly through each workshop's individual Teams link**
  - The virtual platform will be Microsoft Teams.
  - Individual Teams registration links are listed directly after each workshop's description.
  - To enter a workshop, you will be required to register by entering your name, title, agency, city, state and email. Attendees should always register and enter at least 10 minutes before the workshop start time in case troubleshooting is needed. We cannot assist with troubleshooting after a workshop has started.
  - Our Teams program permits registration of up to 1,000. Once 1,000 register, there will not be any availability unless a registrant cancels their registration. If you register and cannot attend, please cancel so someone else can attend. We average 50% attendance of registrants, which means 50% do not show up. That's 500 others who could have attended, so please cancel if you cannot attend. We cannot cancel your registration. Use the link in the email sent from Teams. Even if you cancel one hour before the workshop with the Teams reminder email, someone else will be happy to take your seat.
  - After you register, Teams will send an email with the workshop entry link. Save the email with the Teams link to enter the workshop on its scheduled day. Teams will also send a reminder email with the entrance link one hour before the workshop begins.
  - There is no password required. Anyone with the join link can attend.
- **All workshop hours are scheduled for Eastern Standard Time (EST).** Please adjust for your time zone.
- **For all questions and troubleshooting, email Traffickingtraining@acs.nyc.gov**

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January 11th is
National Human Trafficking Awareness Day
#Wearblueday

Workshop Descriptions and Registration Links:

Jan 7 (Wednesday) from 12:30 pm to 4:30 pm EST:

Understanding Child Trafficking: A Bio-Psycho-Social Perspective

- **Selina Higgins, MA, MSW, LCSW-R, DBT-C**, Executive Director,
  Office of Child Trafficking Prevention and Policy, NYC Administration for Children's Services

To understand trafficked children, you must first understand cognitive and social-emotional child development and the impact of trauma upon the developing psyche. This workshop will provide an extremely comprehensive view into the developmental etiology of child trafficking, beginning with cognitive development, infant attachment and behavioral learning influences. The attachment pattern developed between an infant and the primary caregiver can have extensive influence across the entire life cycle, as the deficits and resultant needs that develop through early attachment can unconsciously impact upon subsequent relational and safety choices.

This workshop will demonstrate how cognitive and social-emotional developmental impacts can lead to juvenile trafficking vulnerability, and how traffickers fulfill the inherent emotional deficits to trauma bond with and exploit youth. The presentation will proceed to the impact of trauma, teen development, social learning, relational influences, media impact (advertisements, social media influencers, music videos) upon choices and decision making, recruitment techniques, exploiter dynamics, trauma bonding, gaslighting, the neuroscience of recidivism, red flags and language affiliated with the commercial sex industry. The workshop concludes with engagement and language tips for work with trafficked and traumatized youth. PowerPoint, video clips, and media cases will be utilized to facilitate learning. This proprietary workshop, updated every time it is presented, has been provided at multiple national and regional conferences.

Register Here for Understanding Child Trafficking: A Bio-Psycho-Social Perspective

Jan 8 (Thursday) from 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm EST:

Trauma-Informed Art Therapy for Kids

- **Crystal Chen, ATR-BC, LCAT, LMHC-A**, Board Certified Licensed Creative Art Therapist, Eating Recovery Center of Washington, and Garden of Hope and Center for all Abilities, New York (virtual)

Art therapy provides clients with an alternative method of communication and understanding of oneself. The art work that one creates is a reflection of the self, which can be more intimate in nature but also less intrusive. This makes it effective when working with clients who have experienced trauma. In this workshop you will learn about how art therapy can be utilized to explore the depths of trauma in children and adults, explore the benefits of art therapy, and get to do your own self-care art therapy exercise led by Art Therapist Crystal Chen,

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ATR-BC, LCAT, LMHC-A. No art skills or knowledge is necessary to participate in the art therapy exercise. This is a hands-on workshop, so the following art supplies will make it fun and productive:

- 4 sheets of paper
- Scissors
- Pens/pencils
- Coloring utensils

Register Here for Trauma-Informed Art Therapy for Kids

Jan 9 (Friday) from 11:00 am to 1:00 pm EST:

Gangs and Sex Trafficking in New York City

- **Detective Liam O'Hara,** Human Trafficking Squad, Special Victims Division - Detective Bureau, New York City Police Department

Gang involvement with human trafficking has been on the rise as one of the fastest growing criminal operations in New York City. Gangs have moved past violence and other criminal enterprises to often concentrate on trafficking, which is more profitable, since unlike drugs or guns that account for only one sale per item, sex trafficking victims can be sold multiple times a day. Victims of sex trafficking are often forced or coerced into silence to ensure minimum detection and maximum profit. This workshop will discuss the ongoing connection between gangs and sex trafficking in New York City, and why it is so important for social services, law enforcement, criminal justice, and so many other providers to maintain a heightened awareness, to better recognize gang involvement with trafficking and in assessing and supporting victims.

Register Here for Gangs and Sex Trafficking in New York City

Jan 12 (Monday) from 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm EST:

Internet Safety & Warning Signs of Online Grooming

- **Nathan LaChine,** Founder, Evergreen Caregiver Support

It can be challenging for caregivers to know how to guide children to appropriate technology use to keep them safe from online sexual grooming. Ready access to smartphones, tables, and computers has created a whole new world of challenges for caregivers. Easy access to devices means that youth do not need to leave their bedrooms to be introduced to risky situations.

This training provides a basic overview of commercial sexual exploitation of children, framing the extent of the problem and discussing technology interventions, terminology, pathways, warning signs, and prevention. In this training you will:

- Gain an understanding of how access to smartphones, tablets and computers has created a whole new world of challenges for parents of pre-teens and teens.
- Learn how you can guide children to use technology in ways that will keep them safe from online grooming.
- Overview of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC) within the larger framework of the

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- Trafficking Victims Protection Act.
- Followed by review of current statistics about Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC).

Receive tools and techniques to manage resistance to boundaries and restraints of technology use

Register Here for Internet Safety & Warning Signs of Online Grooming

Jan 13 (Tuesday) from 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm EST:

Sextortion: Digital Warfare - Our Kids on the Front Line - A Look at the Global Exploitation of Minors

- **Opal Singleton Hendershot,** President & CEO of Million Kids, Author, Instructor, Radio Host

Online exploitation may be the fastest growing crime in the world. The national hotline processed nearly 30 million reports of potential online exploitation of minors in 2024. That is over 80,000 reports a day. Criminals especially focus on minors because they are ever present online, use the latest apps and technologies that few adults understand, and are easy to manipulate into sending nudes or blackmailing for money. This must change.

This is a three hour hard-packed education session based on Opal's latest e book "Digital Warfare" on how crimes like sextortion, social media exploitation, generative A I -deep fakes, and chat bot manipulation are used by organized criminal groups, terrorist groups as well as individual pedophiles/predators to access, groom, recruit and exploit young people. Most important, we will explore how to create and implement multiple prevention and intervention techniques to keep kids from falling prey to online predators in a globally connected world.

Register Here for Sextortion: Digital Warfare - Our Kids on the Front Line - A Look at the Global Exploitation of Minors

Jan 14 (Wednesday) from 11:00 am to 12:30 pm EST:

The Use of Cannabis Edibles to Recruit and Control Youth for Sexual Abuse and Exploitation

- **Kevin Walsh**, Investigative Consultant Manager, Office of the Commissioner - Investigations Division, NYC Administration for Children's Services

An ongoing phenomenon has been the use of cannabis edibles by child sex abusers to recruit and control children for the purpose of sexual exploitation. Using redacted case studies to protect confidentiality, this workshop will:

- Identify the duplicitous packaging of cannabis edible products
- Discuss the upswing in cannabis edible ingestion in children younger than age 6 years with regard to toxicity
- Discuss how sex abusers and traffickers can use substances for victim exploitation and recruitment of youth, including:
    - providing cannabis without the victim's knowledge

- inducing a euphoric mood prior to exploitation
- rewarding victim trafficking productivity
- withholding to commence withdrawal towards asserting control

Register Here for The Use of Cannabis Edibles to Recruit and Control Youth for Sexual Abuse and Exploitation

Jan 14 (Wednesday) from 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm EST:

Brave Spaces: Supporting LGBTQ+ Youth in a Shifting World

- **Khush Mathur**, Training and Capacity Building Coordinator, The Hetrick Martin Institute

LGBTQ+ youth are navigating a world where their rights, safety, and well-being are under unprecedented attack. Brave Spaces: Supporting LGBTQ+ Youth in a Shifting World is a dynamic, solutions-focused workshop designed for educators, advocates, and anyone committed to standing with LGBTQ+ youth in this critical moment.

This workshop is meant to be a call to action. We'll confront the harsh realities of anti-LGBTQ+ policies, amplify the resilience of queer and trans youth, and equip you with concrete tools to create spaces where they can thrive. Whether you're pushing back against discriminatory laws, supporting a young person facing rejection, or simply asking, "How can I do better?", this workshop will meet you where you are and help you take meaningful steps forward.

This workshop will include:

- An overview of the current political climate and its impact on LGBTQ+ youth, including anti-LGBTQ+ legislation, shifts in social attitudes, and media representation.
- Exploration of key challenges, such as legislative barriers, mental health disparities, school environments, family rejection, and intersectional identities.
- Strategies and best practices for validating, affirming, and empowering LGBTQ+ youth, including how to foster allyship and address backlash.
- Practical tools for creating inclusive environments, with examples of small but meaningful actions.
- Resource sharing, including organizations and up-to-date information for continued learning and support.

Register Here for Brave Spaces: Supporting LGBTQ+ Youth in a Shifting World

Jan 15 (Thursday) from 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm EST:

Learning How to Successfully Utilize National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) Resources for Child Sex Trafficking Prevention & Response

- **Kimberly Parks-Bourne & Jacqueline Gavette** – Missing Children's Division
- **Brittany Butler** – Child Sex Trafficking Recovery Services Team
- **Casey Jones** – Outreach, Training, & Prevention

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In 2023, 1 out of 6 missing children reported to the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC) who had run away were likely victims of child sex trafficking. Many of these cases involved children missing from the care of child welfare. Child welfare professionals, law enforcement, and service providers are increasingly on the front lines of coordinating care, services and emergency response for survivors of child sex trafficking. At NCMEC, we've learned that trafficking prevention efforts must start at a young age and address online safety and prevention of running behavior.

This presentation will highlight examples of effective reporting and successful application of NCMEC resources when children go missing. We will cover NCMEC resources available to support parents, child welfare, law enforcement, and community partners in trafficking prevention and intervention efforts. Finally, we will cover legal criteria of federal reporting requirements for children missing from care, as well as promising practices in prevention efforts. This includes assessing for the reasons why youth run away or go missing from care, strategies for building rapport and engaging with survivors of child sex trafficking, and approaches for proactive recovery planning when youth do go missing.

Learning Objectives:

- Understand how to make an effective report to NCMEC, and how to successfully collaborate with NCMEC to improve case outcomes
- Learn about NCMEC child sex trafficking prevention resources including online safety education
- Demonstrate trauma-informed and victim-centered recovery and response considerations for survivors of child sex trafficking
  Recall NCMEC resources that can assist with locating, recovering, and supporting child sex trafficking survivors

Register Here for Learning How to Successfully Utilize National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) Resources for Child Sex Trafficking Prevention & Response

Jan 16 (Friday) from 11:00 am to 2:00 pm EST:

Digital Exploitation and Trauma Informed Care of Trafficked Youth

- **Dr. Natasha Jouk, MD, MSc, FAAP,** Associate Medical Director, NYU Langone Child Abuse Pediatrics
- **Dr. Madeline Zito, DO, FAAP,** Child Abuse Pediatrician, Maimonides Children's Hospital

This interactive workshop equips professionals with practical, trauma-informed strategies for recognizing and responding to youth who have been exploited or groomed online. Through case-based discussions, participants will explore real-world scenarios involving online trafficking, coercion, sextortion, and digital harm. The session emphasizes a multidisciplinary, survivor-centered approach, safety planning, and linkage to appropriate services. By the end, attendees will feel more confident navigating the complex dynamics of online exploitation and supporting affected youth with compassion and competence.

Register Here for Digital Exploitation and Trauma Informed Care of Trafficked Youth

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Jan 20 (Tuesday) from 10:00 am to 11:30 am EST:

Turn Up The Lights! Recognizing and Constructively Responding to Gaslighting

- **Selina Higgins, MA, MSW, LCSW-R, DBT-C**, Executive Director,
  Office of Child Trafficking Prevention and Policy, NYC Administration for Children's Services

Gaslighting is a form of psychological abuse that occurs when a person or group manipulates one or more people into questioning their sanity and perception of reality. It is a power exertion tactic used to gain control for the purpose of emotional and psychological manipulation. Utilizing techniques that distort facts and memories, deny experiences and exacerbate confusion, gaslighting can lead people to distrust their own thoughts and question their decision-making abilities. Gaslighting has been noted as a productive tool within toxic intimate relationships that can successfully result in victim control and dependency. It has been used by traffickers to achieve and maintain power, but it is also used by other control zealots, including Cluster B personality disorders.

This workshop will:

- Examine the historical roots of gaslighting, its purpose, and the subliminal signs that gradually become bolder and more visible.
- Recognize how love bombing can serve to reinforce abuse and develop a traumatic bond
- Survey the relationship between gaslighting behavior and Cluster B personality disorders
- Identify typical gaslighting phrases
- Present comparison and contrast between unhealthy phrasing and more salubrious language
- Provide response strategies to increase empowerment and alleviate exploiter control
- Utilize video clips to provide language and control examples.

Register Here for Turn Up The Lights! Recognizing and Constructively Responding to Gaslighting

Jan 20 (Tuesday) from 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm EST:

Human Trafficking: An Organized Criminal Activity

- **Opal Singleton Hendershot,** President & CEO of Million Kids, Author, Instructor, Radio Host

Many people are aware of the heinous nature of sex and labor trafficking that is taking place across America every day. Less well known or understood is how gangs join with cartels and organized crime to prey on naïve and innocent victims forcing them into a life of prostitution or slave labor in the U.S.

During this intense three-hour session, we will explore several cases of foreign national trafficking taking place in the U.S. where the proceeds are laundered to cartels and organized crime. We will examine the impact of state laws regarding trafficking that impede investigation and prosecution and how Federal Legislation and the RICO Act can make a difference in bringing down large scale trafficking rings. We will also look at the case studies of California SB 357 and how minimizing law enforcement involvement in street solicitation can result in

massive increases of sex trafficking of adults as well as minors. We will look at cases of sex and labor trafficking that has been connected to illegal marijuana grows.

Finally, we will discuss the power and flexibility of investigations and prosecutions when local law enforcement joins with Federal Agencies to form a Multi-Disciplinary Team that has been successful in bringing down organized criminal enterprises. To be success, these teams will include financial and corporation investigators, victim service coordinators and providers, Federal, State, and Local investigators and Law Enforcement agency as well as State, and Federal Prosecutors.

Register Here for Human Trafficking: An Organized Criminal Activity

Jan 22 (Thursday) from 10:30 am to 12:00 pm EST:

Keeping our Communities Safe Through Awareness and Prevention – HSI New York's Child Exploitation Investigations Team: Utilizing Technology and Investigative Techniques to Combat Sextortion, Trafficking, and other Sex Offenses on Social Media and the Dark Web

- **Richard Stepien,** Supervisory Special Agent, Homeland Security Investigations
- **Joseph Brodsky,** Forensic Interview Specialist, Homeland Security Investigations

The mission of the HSI NY Child Exploitation Investigations Team (CEIT) is to protect children from crimes of physical and online sexual abuse. The unique skillsets of the team allow HSI NY CEIT to employ cutting-edge investigative techniques to cases involving the dark web, cryptocurrency transactions, child sex tourism, social media applications facilitating online enticement of minors, and identifying administrators of sites that advertise and distribute child sexual abuse material (CSAM). HSI NY CEIT is continuously pursuing new ways to reveal the true identities of predators who attempt to maintain anonymity by utilizing social media applications and the dark web to victimize children through the production, live-streaming, distribution, and purchase of CSAM. In order to achieve a more victim-centric approach, HSI has deployed Forensic Interview Specialists (FIS) to all field offices. The HSI NY FIS is housed within the CEIT and serves both CEIT and the entire field office with victims of child exploitation and human trafficking. Learn about how CEIT's work has made a huge difference in protecting children and identifying predators.

Register Here for Keeping our Communities Safe Through Awareness and Prevention – HSI New York's Child Exploitation Investigations Team: Utilizing Technology and Investigative Techniques to Combat Sextortion, Trafficking, and Other Sex Offenses on Social Media and the Dark Web

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Jan 22 (Thursday) from 2:00 pm to 3:00 pm EST:

New York County Family Court's Wraparound Part: A New Approach to Family Court and Human Trafficking

- **The Hon. Amanda E. White, JD,** Manhattan Family Court, Wraparound Part

This training introduces a pilot initiative in Manhattan Family Court—the Wraparound Part—which applies a strategic, coordinated model to better serve litigants who are survivors of, or at heightened risk for, human trafficking. By fostering collaboration among attorneys, agencies, and service providers, the Wraparound Part delivers holistic, trauma informed support designed to improve outcomes and promote long term stability. Participants will gain insight into:

- The unique collaborative case conferencing model and trauma informed court appearances.
- The court's establishment process: how this problem-solving part was conceived and implemented.
- Operational structure: the day-to-day functioning of the Wraparound Part.
- Case types and emerging issues: patterns observed and challenges encountered.
- Successes and lessons learned: what has worked, and where opportunities remain.

This session offers a unique opportunity to explore how family courts can innovate at the intersection of justice and human trafficking, ensuring survivors receive comprehensive, compassionate, and effective support.

Register Here for New York County Family Court's Wraparound Part: A New Approach to Family Court and Human Trafficking

Jan 23 (Friday) from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm EST:

Safety Planning WITH Trafficked Youth

- **Dr. Ann Marie Pendleton, Psy.D.,** Clinical Director, Little Flower Children and Family Services
- **Jessie Boye-Doe, LCSW,** Vice President of Clinical and Mental Health Services, Good Shepherd Services
- **Selina Higgins, MA, MSW, LCSW-R, DBT-C**, Executive Director, Office of Child Trafficking Prevention and Policy, NYC Administration for Children's Services

Safety plans are integral to optimizing safety at every stage for survivors of trafficking and youth at-risk of sexual exploitation. Planning should occur regularly, relate to whether the survivor plans to leave or remain with the trafficker, and address multiple criteria. Since youth are the experts of their situations and experiences, they should always have an opportunity to be engaged directly in safety-planning. This workshop will discuss the importance of safety planning WITH youth and provide strategies to encourage them to take ownership of and participate in the development of their own personalized plans. The workshop will suggest dos and don'ts, discuss short-term versus long-term planning, and provide strategies to engage youth who may be reluctant to participate in planning. It will also provide an opportunity to practice individualized plan development through case scenarios and role play opportunities.

Register Here for Safety Planning WITH Trafficked Youth

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Jan 26 (Monday) from 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm EST:

Becoming The Keeper of Your Own Light: A Youth Journey of Identity, Emotion & Exit Pathways - A Youth Group Showcase

- **Gabrielle (Gigi) Prieto,** Senior Peer Navigator, EMPOWER Center, Sanctuary for Families

This workshop will provide guidance in how the presenter guides youth in reclaiming their inner light, identity, and emotional power in a world that often tries to define their worth. Through trauma-informed reflection, creative emotional literacy tools, and NYC grounded prevention practices, participants will learn ways in which youth can recognize grooming behaviors, choose healthy pathways, and protect their boundaries with confidence. This workshop will provide knowledge and skills to develop a transformative session for young people ready to choose themselves, protect their inner light, and claim their future. This workshop will demonstrate how to blend emotional literacy, creative reflection, and real-world prevention strategies to guide youth in recognizing harmful influence, owning their identity, and choosing safer pathways forward. A gentle yet powerful experience of sovereignty, self-value, and inner illumination.

Register Here for Becoming The Keeper of Your Own Light: A Youth Journey of Identity, Emotion & Exit Pathways - A Youth Group Showcase

Jan 27 (Tuesday) from 11:30 am pm to 1:00 pm EST:

Foster Care Unplugged Presents: Turning Trauma into Talent: The Journey to Empowerment in "The Academy, Part III" - Video and Discussion

- **Melody J. Centeno, LMSW,** Founder and CEO, Foster Care Unplugged (FCUP)

Join us for an engaging and transformative workshop centered around our latest film, The Academy.
This workshop will dive into the powerful and symbolic storytelling of youth navigating the child welfare system while discovering that their perceived vulnerabilities are, in fact, their greatest strengths.
The Academy tells the story of Rosario, the head of a residential boarding school, who covertly seeks out young individuals displaying signs of unique abilities. Through careful mentorship, Rosario helps these youth understand that their trauma holds the key to their superhuman talents, shifting the narrative from victimhood to empowerment. Raven, Rosario's protégé, embodies the doubts and struggles that many youths face in recognizing their worth and potential until pivotal moments unlock her true identity.

Key Themes to Explore:

- Understanding Identity and Resilience: Reflect on how the characters' journeys symbolize the real-life resilience and adaptability of youth in the foster care system. For example, a character with mind-reading abilities symbolizes heightened awareness, essential for youth to navigate their environment safely.
- Building Self-Awareness for Safety Planning: Discuss how trauma-informed approaches, represented by the film's superpowers (e.g., foreseeing the future, mental withdrawal), can strengthen safety planning and decision-making for youth at risk of trafficking.

- Creating Safe Spaces for Growth: Highlight the importance of fostering environments that not only protect but empower young people, helping them reclaim their identity and sense of belonging despite past adversities.
- Trauma as a Catalyst for Strength: Engage in activities that connect participants to the film's underlying message: trauma does not solely represent pain but can be harnessed as a source of strength and talent to thrive and contribute to society.

Through this workshop, participants will gain insights into the complex realities of youth navigating foster care and human trafficking vulnerabilities, while exploring practical ways to support their growth and empowerment.

Register Here for **Foster Care Unplugged Presents: Turning Trauma into Talent: The Journey to Empowerment in "The Academy, Part III" -**

Jan 27 (Tuesday) from 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm EST:

Working with LGBTQ+ Youth Who Have Experienced or are At-Risk for Sex Trafficking

- **Steven Gordon,** Director of LGBTQAI+ Equity Strategies, NYC Administration for Children's Services
- **Selina Higgins, LCSW-R,** Executive Director, Office of Child Trafficking Prevention and Policy, NYC Administration for Children's Services
- **Veronica Moreno, LMSW,** Child Trafficking Social Worker, Office of Child Trafficking Prevention and Policy, NYC Administration for Children's Services

Co-developed by the Hetrick Martin Institute and the NYC Administration for Children's Services' Office of Child Trafficking Prevention and Policy and Office of LGBTQAI+ Equity Strategies, this workshop will offer both awareness and practical guidance on how to identify and provide the necessary support and resources LGBTQ+ youth who have experienced trafficking or are at risk for trafficking. Participants will:

- Develop an understanding of what is child sex trafficking.
- Gain insight into the unique vulnerabilities faced by LGBTQ+ youth and the intersection with trafficking.
- Learn about trauma-informed approaches and their application in supporting sex trafficking survivors.
- Develop cultural competency and sensitivity to better understand and connect with LGBTQ+ trafficking survivors.
- Learn how to create safe and inclusive spaces where LGBTQ+ survivors can access needed help.
- Learn about the NYC child welfare system's policies that support LGBTQ+ and trafficked youth.
- Learn about the primary resources within NYC's child welfare system (Office of Child Trafficking Prevention and Policy and Office of LGBTQ+ Equities) that can assist with information, service referrals and other needed help.

Register Here for **Working With LGBTQ+ Youth Who Have Experienced or Are At-Risk for Sex Trafficking**

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"Developing Safety Strategies for an Increasingly Unsafe World"

Jan 28 (Wednesday) from 10:00 am to 11:00 am EST:

FIFA World Cup 2026 - Child Safeguarding & Trafficking Prevention

- **Katie Hanna,** Head of North America, Centre for Sport and Human Rights
- **Claudia Villa-Hughes,** Head of Safeguarding, Centre for Sport and Human Rights

With many known preventable safeguarding and trafficking risks at mega-sporting events, presenters will highlight safeguarding efforts in local host cities and across North America leading up to the FIFA World Cup in the summer of 2026. Through case studies, data insights, and sharing one new tool currently being piloted, attendees will have an increased understanding of the risks at the tournament, safeguarding approaches for prevention, and identify at least one new resource for collaborating on safeguarding legacy with sport organizations, venues, and city governments.

Register Here for FIFA World Cup 2026 - Child Safeguarding & Trafficking Prevention

Jan 28 (Wednesday) from 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm EST:

Law & Order NYC - From Arrest to Conviction: NYPD Human Trafficking Squad & District Attorney Human Trafficking Bureaus - Case Discussions

Law and Order - Brooklyn:

- **Detective Paul Mastronardi,** NYPD/FBI Child Exploitation and Human Trafficking Task Force
- **ADA Mary Monahan, Esq**. Deputy Chief**,** Kings County District Attorney Human Trafficking Bureau

Law and Order - Manhattan:

- **Detective Liam O'Hara,** NYPD Human Trafficking Squad
- **ADA Jonathon Junig, Esq.** Chief of the Human Trafficking Unit, New York County District Attorney

Law and Order - The Bronx:

- **Detective Denis Regimbal,** NYPD/FBI Human Trafficking and Child Exploitation Task Force
- **ADA Stephen Knoepfler, Esq.** Chief of the Human Trafficking Unit, Special Victims Division, Bronx County District Attorney

Law and Order - Queens:

- **Detective Kevin DeLeon,** NYPD Human Trafficking Squad
- **ADA Jessica L. Melton, Esq.** Bureau Chief, Human Trafficking Bureau, Office of the District Attorney, Queens County

Case discussion and panel presentation on real NYC trafficking related media cases (information restricted to that which has been released in the press to protect confidentiality). There will be four 30-minute Detective/District Attorney pairings, starting with the investigation, then progressing to the trial and sentencing. Individual case related questions may be submitted in the Chat for response at the end of each segment. General questions may be submitted in the Chat for full panel discussion following the four case segments.

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Register Here for Law & Order NYC - From Arrest to Conviction: NYPD Human Trafficking Squad & District Attorney Human Trafficking Bureaus - Case Discussions

Jan 29 (Thursday) from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm EST:

NYC's Child Welfare Trafficking Policy and Screening Children for Sex Trafficking in ACS' Child Trafficking Database (CTDB)

- **Selina Higgins, LCSW-R,** Executive Director, Office of Child Trafficking Prevention and Policy
- **Clifton Robertson, LMSW**, Child Trafficking Specialist Residential Social Worker, Office of Child Trafficking Prevention and Policy

In September 2020, ACS released Policy and Procedure 2020/05: Identifying, Assessing, and Safety Planning with Child Sex and Labor Trafficking Victims, which articulates guidelines and procedures for ACS and provider agency staff in identifying children and youth for sex and/or labor trafficking, and for safety planning, coordinating with law enforcement, and making referrals for appropriate services. The Child Trafficking Database (CTDB) is the electronic mechanism that all ACS and provider agency staff must use to screen children for sex trafficking. This training will provide an overview of child trafficking, a description of the legislation that led to mandated sex trafficking screenings for children in the NYS and NYC child welfare systems, a detailed overview of the policy and a step by step walk through of CTDB screening procedures, including a hands-on demonstration of CTDB screenings. This training is a must for all NYC child welfare staff and any other professional who needs to understand ACS' trafficking policy and to perform the screenings correctly.

Register Here for NYC's Child Welfare Trafficking Policy and Screening Children for Sex Trafficking in ACS' Child Trafficking Database (CTDB)

Jan 29 (Thursday) from 2:00 pm to 5:00 pm EST:

Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C): What You NEED To Know

- **Dr. Deborah Ottenheimer,**
- **Danny Salim,** Deputy Director for Solution Based Casework, Arab-American Family Support Center
- **Dr. Mariama Diallo,** LCSW, DSW, Clinical Director, Midway Living

Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C) comprises all procedures that involve partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injuries to the female genital organs for NON-MEDICAL REASONS. FGM is a violation of Human Rights and part of a continuum of gender-based violence. This training will discuss the types of FGM, tools used, false assumptions, highest risk cities, and physical and psychological consequences. It will also focus upon cultural awareness and effective strategies (Dos and Don'ts) to use in preventive engagement with families and in sensitive engagement with survivors. It will also highlight ACS' FGM@acs.nyc.gov e-mailbox where child welfare professions can obtain information, case guidance and resources from the Office of Child Trafficking Prevention and Policy.

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Register Here for Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C) Awareness: What You NEED to Know!

Jan 30 (Friday) from 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm EST:

Simple Strategies for Self-Care, Self-Kindness, and Emotional Resiliency

- **Marti MacGibbon, CADC-II, ACRPS, CAPMS,** President of Mentari Human Trafficking Survivor Empowerment Program, Inc., Human Trafficking Expert Consultant at the US Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, and Expert Consultant at the US Office for Victims of Crime.

January 30th is Marti's birthday, and an annual part of her celebration is to provide Human Trafficking presentations when given the opportunity. So come celebrate with Marti!

Sometimes in the anti-trafficking movement we work so hard for others and for the cause that we become overcommitted, overstressed and exhausted. Exposure to trauma can cause us to turn the pain inward, resulting in self-criticism and self-judgment. When that happens it's easy for us to be too harsh with ourselves, even while we're showing compassion, kindness and generosity toward others. This inspirational humorous presentation focuses on simple strategies for reducing trauma and stress using daily, consistent self-care and self-empowerment skills. The solutions and information provided in this session reveal new research on stress management and explore how mindfulness and self-kindness practices can refresh your spirit, mind and body. Participation in mindfulness meditation, visualization, and discussion is encouraged, but not required. Presenter Marti MacGibbon is a behavioral health professional who is living in long-term recovery from substance use disorder, trauma, and complex post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Her knowledge is both clinical and experiential. And she's funny.

Learning Objectives:

- Comprehend how trauma and stress interact, and how to use that knowledge to self-empower, to better employ trauma-informed practices, and to effectively manage ongoing daily stress.
- Disseminate facts and self-care recommendations re: personal trauma, vicarious trauma, secondary trauma, and burnout.
- Describe how to re-think your relationship with stress, and how to harness beneficial stress responses to connect better with others, achieve goals, and avoid burnout
- Discover how self-kindness, mindfulness, positive visualization and other self-care and emotional resiliency skills benefit you "in the moment" and keep you energized, focused, and empowered at home, at work, and in all your personal relationships

Register Here for Simple Strategies for Self-Care, Self-Kindness, and Emotional Resiliency

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Presenter Bios:

Bios provided by presenters have been listed alphabetically by first name.

The Hon. Amanda E. White currently presides in Manhattan Family Court, as the Wraparound Part Judge. The Wraparound Part is NYC Family Court's first part specializing in addressing trafficking issues as they arise in family court proceedings. Judge White was originally appointed to the bench in January 2011. Prior to her current role, Judge White served as Supervising Judge in Kings County Family Court from 2015 until 2024, when she was offered the opportunity to focus on this important issue.

Over the years in Brooklyn, Judge White co-chaired the Juvenile Justice and P.I.N.S Advisory Committee to the NYC Family Court Administrative Judge and Chaired the Advisory Committee for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Matters of the NYC Family Court Advisory Council to the Administrative Judge. For many years, Judge White was one of two Judges in Kings County Family Court who presided over a "Crossover Youth" Part, handling juvenile delinquency and child protective cases for young people who are dually involved in those systems. Prior to her appointment to the bench, Judge White was Attorney-in-Charge of the Bronx Trial Office of the Legal Aid Society's Juvenile Rights Division, where she had worked in various capacities for 18 years. She received her undergraduate degree from the University of Iowa and her law degree from New York University School of Law.

Dr. Ann Marie Pendleton, Psy.D. is a New York State Licensed Psychologist and Clinical Director at Little Flower Children and Family Services. She has worked in the NYS Care/Child Welfare setting since 2007 and specializes in trauma-informed evidence-based practices with a particular emphasis on partnering with children and families. Her training includes: Trauma-Focused CBT, The Sanctuary Model, Trauma-Focused Therapy, Play Therapy, CBT+, EMDR and PCIT.
In 2008, Dr. Pendleton obtained her Doctorate in Clinical Psychology from the Minnesota School of Professional Psychology. She obtained a B.A. in Music and Psychology from Gonzaga University in 2003. Over the past 15 years, Dr. Pendleton has worked in and collaborated with multiple settings including residential centers, outpatient clinics, foster care, private practice, schools, law enforcement, hospitals, and nanny agencies. She has participated closely with the Office of Children and Family Services and NYS Department of Health surrounding practices and policies around children's Medicaid initiatives. Dr. Pendleton is a liaison with the New York State Office of Mental Health, and with the Administration for Children's Services'

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Mental Health Coordination Unit, Complex Case Committee, and Office of Child Trafficking Prevention and Policy.

Brittany Butler is a Resource Specialist with the Child Sex Trafficking Recovery Services Team (RST) at the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC). RST is a team of regionally assigned Resource Specialists who support child welfare professionals when they report a child missing from care to NCMCE who is suspected or confirmed to be a victim of child sex trafficking. RST provides resources and troubleshooting around safety planning, youth engagement, trauma-informed recovery planning, and connection to specialized resources for child sex trafficking survivors.
Brittany has eight years of experience and an expertise in the topics of domestic violence, child abuse, and human trafficking. Brittany's focus has always been on uniquely vulnerable populations, and she passionately advocates for those that she serves. Her educational background includes an undergraduate psychology degree from the University of Virginia, and a master's degree in forensic psychology from Marymount University. Throughout her career, Brittany has served survivor populations in Northern Virginia, Atlanta, New York City, and Baltimore. Presently, in her role as Resource Specialist, Brittany has been able to broaden her impact by supporting child sex trafficking survivors and child welfare professionals across the Northeast (10 states and Washington, DC).

Casey Jones is an Outreach Manager at the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) Headquarters in Alexandria, Virginia. She began her journey with NCMEC as an intern in 2019 and progressed to a Call Center Specialist role for two years before joining the Outreach team in 2021. Casey holds a BA in Human Development and Family Studies, with a concentration in Research, Policy, and Advocacy from George Mason University. A seasoned presenter, Casey has dedicated her career to advocating for children across the nation.
Casey's commitment to her work is deeply personal, having experienced the Social Services system firsthand as a child. This unique perspective drives her passion and effectiveness in her current role, where she collaborates with law enforcement, communities, and children to recognize, address, and prevent issues related to NCMEC's mission."

Claudia Villa-Hughes is an International Safeguarding Specialist & Consultant with experiences working in humanitarian and sport safeguarding, including International Sport Federations, National Governing Bodies, Sport Governance and Management as well as Major Event Hosting.

As the Centre's Head of Safeguarding, Claudia leads and coordinates safeguarding initiatives within the organisation and the broader sports community. She is responsible for establishing and implementing robust safeguarding policies and procedures, ensuring alignment with organisational governance frameworks and strategic objectives. In addition, Claudia is part of the Council of Europe pool of international experts on safe sport and International Safeguards for Children in Sport working group.

Claudia was the inaugural lead for the Commonwealth Sport Safeguarding agenda and designed, developed and implemented safeguarding policies and procedures from the beginning, including the safeguarding frameworks for the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games and Trinbago 2023 Commonwealth Youth, using a multi-agency approach that sees local and international organisations embedded in the response mechanisms.

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Claudia's safeguarding approach has been shaped by over a decade of leading services to support children who were trafficked and suffered abuse and exploitation. Working closely with Local Governments, Law Enforcement Agencies, and Education, Claudia covered strategic advisory roles for Safeguarding Children Partnerships where she influenced and supported the development of local governments' policies and procedures on child sexual abuse and exploitation, including criminal exploitation.

Claudia is also a recognised humanitarian sector expert; leading and developing support services for refugees and asylum seekers at both the UN Migration Agency (IOM) and British Red Cross where she still volunteers as a member of the Psychosocial Support Team to support people in crisis. Her passion and dedication in this field has been recognised with the Queen's Award.

Clifton Robertson, LMSW is the Residential Child Trafficking Specialist with the ACS Office of Child Trafficking Prevention and Policy. He earned his Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from the State University of New York College at Old Westbury, and a Master of Social Work degree from Adelphi University. He is accredited as a Licensed Master Social Worker. As the Residential Child Trafficking Specialist, Clifton is the point person for the residential, group home, and foster care staff that support and provide services to trafficked youth and youth at-risk for trafficking. He also works directly with vulnerable youth, providing psychoeducational awareness, groupwork sessions which includes Dialectic Behavioral Therapy, Creative Arts in Psychotherapy, and Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, and a variety of prevention strategies individualized as per each child's needs and strengths. In addition, he provides support, guidance, and training to NYC child welfare stakeholders. Clifton has over a decade of cumulative experience in the fields of mental health, developmentally disabled and other vulnerable populations.

Crystal Chen, ATR-BC, LCAT, LMHC is a board-certified art therapist working at Eastside Counseling Center. Crystal Chen provides bilingual art therapy for individuals and groups that have behavior disorders, experienced trauma, or struggle with eating disorders. In addition, Crystal provides supervision for creative arts therapists. She is a women's rights advocate, having spoken at two United Nations NGO CSW conferences, at the 4th World Conference of Women's Shelter in Taiwan, and is a Pratt Taconic Fellow. With her Pratt Taconic Fellowship, she developed an art therapy program, known as Garden of Gems, a project that combines art therapy with jewelry making to provide a sense of community and economic empowerment for women at Garden of Hope.

Danny Salim serves as the Vice President of Antiviolence and Child Welfare Programs at the Arab-American Family Support Center (AAFSC). In this role, Danny oversees a wide range of initiatives focused on harm reduction, violence prevention, restorative justice, and family support services. Throughout his tenure at AAFSC, Danny has been instrumental in shaping programs that address systemic inequities and promote community resilience. His leadership has driven the organization's growth in delivering culturally responsive services that prioritize safety, healing, and empowerment for vulnerable families. Before joining AAFSC, Danny worked with several national and international organizations, including Nonviolent Peace-force and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). At UNDP, he led the design and development of the Conflict Prevention Community of Practice Teamwork's Platform (CP-CoP), an innovative digital forum that facilitated dialogue and resource sharing between UN agencies and civil society organizations. Danny holds a master's degree in Conflict Transformation from Eastern Mennonite University. He was awarded the Fulbright Scholarship in 2009 and received the UCONN & UNESCO Chair and Institute of Comparative Human Rights Award in 2011 for his winning article on human rights and conflict resolution.

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Dr. Deborah Ottenheimer, MD is currently the Director of Ambulatory Care for the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at Lincoln Medical and Mental Health Center. The practice is located in the South Bronx, providing high quality, evidence based obstetric and gynecologic care to a diverse population of at-risk women in some of the poorest zip codes in the US, including a large immigrant population composed primarily of women from the Caribbean, Central America, Bengal and West Africa. The focus of Dr. Ottenheimer's work is the development of culturally competent and linguistically appropriate women's health services including cross sectoral collaboration with other medical specialties and community organizations.

In addition to her clinical practice, Dr. Ottenheimer has spent a significant portion of her professional time assisting asylum-seeking women who have suffered sexual and gender-based violence and other human rights violations. She is an active member of Physicians for Human Rights, and serves as faculty at the Human Rights Program at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, the Weil Cornell Clinic for Human Rights, and the CUNY School of Medicine Human Rights Collaborative, aiding survivors of female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C), domestic violence, forced sterilization, sexual violence and human trafficking in their applications for asylum. To date she has performed 140 forensic medical evaluations. She has published and lectured extensively on human rights violations against women, with a focus on FGM/C and forced sterilization. She has also worked in Haiti, Rwanda, and Democratic Republic of Congo, helping to improve the health and lives of women in low resource settings.

Detective Denis Regimbal is a 13-year member of the New York City Police Department (NYPD). He joined the NYPD in 2011 and began his career at the 44th Precinct in the Bronx, where he served in various roles across patrol, conditions, and Neighborhood Coordination Officer (NCO) assignments. In 2017, Detective Regimbal transitioned to the Vice Enforcement Unit within the Detective Bureau, focusing on investigating crimes related to gambling, prostitution, and human trafficking. His experience in Vice led to a 2021 assignment to the Vice Major Case Squad, and in 2022, he joined the Citywide Human Trafficking Squad. Detective Regimbal is currently assigned to the joint NYPD/FBI Human Trafficking and Child Exploitation Task Force.

Throughout his career, Detective Regimbal has conducted hundreds of human trafficking investigations, many of which have led to the recovery of minor victims and the arrest and indictment of over 50 individuals involved in trafficking related crimes. His work has centered around complex, long-term undercover operations targeting trafficking rings, as well as short-term investigations aimed at rescuing victims, connecting them with essential support services, and dismantling trafficking networks. His work in these investigations has earned him multiple awards and recognition.

Detective Regimbal has extensive experience in the analysis of digital evidence, securing hundreds of search warrants to access electronic data vital to human trafficking prosecutions. This experience has played a crucial role in exposing trafficking operations and bringing perpetrators to justice. He has also undergone extensive training in human trafficking, special victims, and interview techniques to ensure the highest level of proficiency in his investigations. He holds a bachelor's degree in Political Science from the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C.

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Gabrielle (Gigi) Prieto is a compassionate advocate, speaker, educator, and mentor who supports survivors of sex trafficking and exploitation through community-based initiatives. As the Senior Peer Care Navigator at Sanctuary for Families' EMPOWER Center, Gigi works closely with women, children, and LGBTQ+ clients to provide trauma-informed care, emotional support, and wellness-focused services. She guides her clients through healing with customized case management, empowerment-focused workshops, outdoor wellness events, and sisterhood support groups. Drawing from her own lived experience, she creates safe spaces that center dignity, resilience, and restoration.

In addition to her daily client work, Gigi also serves as a Human Relations Survivor Leader within the NYFEM Coalition, where she participates in policy advocacy and survivor leadership across New York City. She uses the term "society trafficked" to raise awareness about how survivors are often exploited not just by individuals, but by broken systems—such as child welfare, education, transportation, and nightlife—that neglect or contribute to harm. Her goal is to uplift survivor voices, challenge harmful narratives, and promote a human rights-based approach to justice and healing.

Gigi speaks from the heart as a survivor, advocate, and leader who challenges the normalized neglect and exploitation woven into our everyday systems. She coined the phrase "society trafficked" to describe how communities, institutions, and industries often play a silent role in exploitation—through indifference, profit, or broken promises. Gigi's work shines light on these patterns while building pathways for healing, truth, and transformation.

Jacqueline (Jackie) Gavette is a Case Manager with the Missing Children's Division Critical Risk Unit at the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. She is responsible for managing a case load of 100+ cases at any given time. She is tasked with the handling of leads and intake information as assigned by Missing Children Division Leadership. Working from these leads and information she is able to analyze, collate and disseminate information concerning missing and exploited children to the appropriate investigative agencies. Her role as a Case Manager includes providing after-hours assistance as well as on-call hours as assigned. She also provides reunification and post-recovery support to families in a timely and professional manner and assess each individual case for criticality and high-risk patterns.

Jackie joined NCMEC in August 2022 and brings over 9 years' experience working inside the school districts from Administration to Security. She is deeply committed to the safety and welfare of the community and has a wealth of knowledge providing technical assistance to parents, police and other authorized agencies as well as establishing and maintaining close working relationships with her peers. She has the ability to manage, prioritize and complete numerous tasks in a fast paced environment under tight deadlines and holds herself to a high degree of accountability.

ADA Jessica L. Melton, JD graduated from St. John's University School of Law, cum laude, in 2000. She serves as the Chief of the Human Trafficking Bureau of the Queens County District Attorney's Office which was established in May of 2020 by District Attorney Melinda Katz. Jessica Melton has been a prosecutor with the District Attorney's Office for the past twenty-four years. Since 2007, when New York State's first Sex and Labor Trafficking laws took effect, she has focused her career solely on the prosecution Human Trafficking and related crimes and advocated for the creation of a specialized Human Trafficking Unit which she led. Most notably, she was the first prosecutor to obtain a conviction for Sex Trafficking in a New York State Court. Additionally, in 2017 she obtained the first four Labor

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Trafficking convictions in Queens County. In 2013, she was awarded the prestigious Thomas E. Dewey medal by the New York City Bar Association for her work in combating Human Trafficking, as well as being awarded the 2023 Freedom Award from Lifeway Network.

Since the implementation of New York's Human Trafficking Statutes, ADA Melton has developed innovative approaches to investigate and prosecute trafficking offenses that are centered on the victims of these demoralizing and demeaning crimes. Through the Human Trafficking Bureau, she ensures that trafficking victim who come into contact with the criminal justice system at any time of the day or night are responded to. She has been consulted on and participated in advocating for improvements and amendments to New York State's trafficking laws which were successfully amended in 2016 and again in 2018 to strengthen the law and enhance the penalties for trafficking, promoting and patronizing persons for prostitution.

Chief Melton shares her expertise around Human Trafficking by lecturing and conducting training for the New York City Police Department, New York State Prosecutor's Training Institute, the District Attorney's Association of New York, and for numerous City and State Agencies about in techniques to improve trafficking prosecutions and the collective response to human trafficking survivors. In addition to investigating and prosecuting trafficking crimes, ADA Melton also works to combat trafficking by collaborating with numerous city, state, and non-governmental organizations and agencies to facilitate services for trafficking survivors. More recently, in addition to training and

lecturing, ADA Melton has made additional efforts to combat human trafficking and advocating for preventative outreach programs aimed at the identification and prevention of trafficking. Specifically, she has developed trainings for the public to identify trafficking situations and target education for vulnerable children and members of our community who are most at risk to traffickers.

Jessie Boye-Doe, LCSW is the Vice President of Clinical and Mental Health Services at Good Shepherd Services in New York City where she leads the agency's mental health initiatives and the Trauma Informed Practice team. A strong advocate for quality mental health care for all, Ms. Boye-Doe was formerly the Director of JCCA's Outpatient Behavioral Health and Center for Healing.

A clinical expert and leader in the field of mental health treatment, Ms. Boye-Doe has supervised and trained hundreds of clinicians who, in turn, have gone on to provide care for children in NYC who are. In addition to her therapy and advocacy on behalf of young people, Ms. Boye-Doe has helped various agencies become more trauma informed for both their staff, and participants. She has also developed cutting-edge clinical approaches to working with victims of trafficking, translating her comprehensive clinical expertise into modalities that address the underlying issues that make young people vulnerable to commercial exploitation. She has created training series that not only teach providers how to deliver innovative and trauma-informed mental health care, but also to prevent, identify, and treat child sexual abuse and exploitation. Ms. Boye-Doe also created workshops for young people, to help them identify the warning signs of sexual abuse and to address the issues that make them vulnerable to trafficking. In the past, Ms. Boye-Doe was the Director of the Child Sexual Abuse Response Team at the Child Guidance Center of Southern Connecticut, which is a nationally accredited child advocacy center. She was also a Victim Advocate at the Office of Victim Services in Stamford, CT and provided crisis and long-term counseling at the Kings County District Attorney's Office, where she developed, launched

and ran the African Immigrant Victims of Violence Program. Ms. Boye-Doe earned her BA from Baruch College and her MSW from the Columbia School of Social Work.

ADA Jon Junig, JD is a graduate of The University of Rochester and the University of Texas School of Law. Prior to joining to the Manhattan District Attorney's Office, Jon clerked for the Honorable Cathy Cochran on the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals. Jon joined the District Attorney's Office in 2014, where he has focused on investigating and prosecuting crimes of violence, sexual assault, child abuse, and human trafficking. In 2022, Jon served as the Deputy Chief of the Hate Crimes Unit. Jon was appointed Chief of the Human Trafficking Unit in March of 2023.

Joseph Brodsky, LMSW is the Forensic Interview Specialist for Homeland Security Investigations in New York, NY (HSI NY). Joseph is assigned to the Child Exploitation and Investigations Team, however he serves all teams and offices HSI NY offices and teams which are located in Manhattan, Queens, Long Island, and Hudson Valley. Prior to his federal appointment, Joseph was a forensic interviewer with the Brooklyn Child Advocacy Center where he worked alongside the New York City Police Department's Special Victims Unit. Joseph holds a Bachelor of Psychology from Brandeis University and a master's degree in Social Work from Yeshiva University.

Katie Hanna is the Centre for Sport and Human Rights' Head of North America. Katie leads CSHR's Generation 2026 initiative, which aims to promote safer and more inclusive environments for youth in sport in the lead-up to the FIFA World Cup 2026 in Canada, Mexico, and the United States. In this role, she represents CSHR across North America, advancing collaboration among stakeholders to drive systemic change in safeguarding and abuse prevention in sport. Generation 2026 is the largest multi-year programme developed to date by CSHR, with Katie overseeing all elements, including managing key donor relationships, programme design, financial management and line management of a project team across North America.
Katie brings nearly two decades of experience in sexual abuse prevention, youth protection, and public policy, with a particular focus on child safeguarding in sport. Her leadership has contributed to the passage of four U.S. federal and state laws addressing sexual violence, the development of national safeguarding policies, and the implementation of over 13 online prevention training programmes, reaching more than three million people. She has managed large-scale projects, co-led a national athlete climate survey, and served on expert panels, including for the CDC and FIFA's global safe sport initiative.

Katie has held leadership roles across government, civil society, and sport, including as Vice President of Education & Public Policy at the U.S. Center for SafeSport, Visiting Fellow at the U.S. Department of Justice, and Executive Director of the Ohio Alliance to End Sexual Violence. She has authored several academic publications on abuse in sport and contributed to national toolkits on campus and youth safety. Her work has been recognised with the Visionary Voice Award for Ohio by the National Sexual Violence Resource Center in 2017.

Based in Denver, Colorado, Katie holds a BFA in Photography from the Rochester Institute of Technology and an M.Ed. in School & Community Counselling from Ohio University. Katie has served on the Board of Directors for the National Alliance to End Sexual Violence (2013–2017) and has been an active board member of the National Coalition to Prevent Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation (Prevent Together) since 2020, including in executive leadership roles. She joined CSHR in 2022, bringing with her a deep commitment to advancing safe, inclusive, and rights-respecting sport environments.

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Detective Kevin DeLeon was appointed to the New York City Police Department in July 2007 and has served New York City for over eighteen years. He is a Brooklyn Native and proudly began his career in the 77th Precinct located in Crown Heights, Brooklyn. In May of 2014 he was assigned to Patrol Borough Brooklyn North Anti-Crime, where he patrolled areas of Northern Brooklyn with high incidents of violent shootings, gang violence, and robberies. In September of 2016, he was chosen for an investigative assignment with the 115 Precinct Detective Squad, which covers the diverse neighborhoods of Jackson Heights, Elmhurst, and Corona in Queens. As of March 2023, Detective DeLeon is assigned to the Human Trafficking Squad where he conducts investigations into sex trafficking, labor trafficking, as well as child exploitation.

Detective DeLeon has also served in our United States Military. He enlisted in the New York Army National Guard Component of the United States Army in 2001 and entered the Army Reserves Component in 2008. He has twice deployed to Iraq serving in various operations - Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation New Dawn, and Operation Inherent Resolve. In 2021 he deployed to Afghanistan in support of Operation Freedom Sentinel.

During Detective DeLeon's time with the Detective Bureau, he has investigated over 1,000 cases including homicides, non-fatal shootings, stabbings, robberies, sex crimes, and human trafficking. He is of Puerto Rican descent and is a fluent Spanish speaker who has leveraged his language skills to support victims and the community, as well as assist colleagues with investigations throughout the 5 Boros.

Kevin Walsh, Investigative Consultant Manager, Office of the Commissioner – Investigations Division, Administration for Children's Services (ACS), has been with the New York City Administration for Children's Services for 14 years as part of the Investigative Consultant Program. This program enlists retired law enforcement personnel who assist Child Protective Specialists with their investigations, including locating missing families and children. He also provides training on child abuse topics for ACS personnel, as well as NYPD supervisors, detectives, and patrol officers at the Police Academy. Prior to that he served 25 years in the NYPD, with assignments in patrol, narcotics, internal affairs, and management analysis and planning, retiring as a Captain in 2009. He helped develop the NYPD's Domestic Violence Prevention Officer Program, and its participation in the city's Child Advocacy Centers. He has BA and MS degrees in Criminal Justice from Long Island University, and an MPA from the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard.

Khush Mathur is the Training & Capacity Building Coordinator at the Hetrick-Martin Institute, where they are dedicated to empowering LGBTQ+ BIPOC youth through education and advocacy. With an M.S.Ed. in Adolescent Education, Khush brings a strong foundation in curriculum development and resource sharing to their role. They are passionate about creating impactful, needs-based curricula and fostering collaborative learning environments through resource sharing. Based in Queens, NY, Khush believes that understanding and engaging with the community is essential to driving meaningful change and building a more inclusive future.

Kimberly (Kim) Parks-Bourn is the Program Manager for Children Missing from Care at the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. She is responsible for working with all 50 states to implement federal policy requiring child welfare to report missing children and youth to NCMEC. Her work entails identifying and problem-solving cross-system pain points to improve serving children missing from care. She joined NCMEC in July, 2023 and brings with her over 28 years of experience as a frontline social worker, clinician, trainer, clinical supervisor as well as an administrator in the child welfare and mental health systems in the State of Maryland. Kim has served numerous children, adolescents, and families throughout her career ranging in

these capacities. She also has experience in developing and monitoring legislation as well as assessing needs and strategic planning.

She was most recently the Deputy Executive Director for Permanency and Placement Services with the Department of Human Services, Social Services Administration in Baltimore, MD. Her two other recent positions were Director for Protection, Preservation and Prevention Services as well as Program Manager for Practice Innovations. The latter position she held was responsible for developing, implementing and training a new practice model in Child Welfare in Maryland.

Detective Liam O'Hara is a graduate of Binghamton University. He graduated in 2008 and joined the New York City Police Department a few months later. Detective O'Hara began his career in Harlem and Washington Heights. He has worked Patrol and Street Narcotics in the 25th Precinct in East Harlem, before earning his detective's shield in the Manhattan North Gang Squad. While at the Gang Squad, he was first introduced to human trafficking investigations. After first working alongside the Human Trafficking Squad, he was given the opportunity to join the team and exclusively work trafficking investigations. Since becoming a member of the

Human Trafficking Squad, Detective O'Hara has worked with each of the City's five District Attorney's Offices, the NY Attorney General's Office, the Eastern and Southern Districts of NY, the FBI, HSI, and more to investigate, indict, arrest, and convict perpetrators of sex trafficking, child sex trafficking, and child (sexual) exploitation.

Dr. Madeline Zito is a child abuse pediatrician at Maimonides Children's Hospital in Brooklyn, New York. She completed both her pediatric residency training, as well as her Child Abuse Fellowship at Maimonides Children's Hospital. Dr. Zito is dedicated to the evaluation, protection, and advocacy of children affected by maltreatment. With expertise in assessing abuse, neglect, and trauma, Dr. Zito delivers a trauma-informed, prevention-focused, and evidence-based approach to every child and family she serves. She works closely with multidisciplinary teams to ensure accurate diagnoses, compassionate care, and the highest standard of child safety. She regularly provides training to healthcare professionals and allied partners on child maltreatment recognition and response.

Dr. Mariama Diallo, a licensed clinical social worker (LCSW) based in New York. She received her Master of Science in Social Work (MSW) from Columbia University, and her DSW from Rutgers University. Currently, Dr. Diallo is an Adjunct Professor at Hunter College (NYC) and at The Montclair State University, in New Jersey. Dr. Diallo has over 20 years of experience in the field of gender-based violence, including Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C), Intimate Partner Violence, Early and Forced Marriage. Dr. Diallo provides trauma-informed individual and group therapy to survivors of gender-based violence. She has extensive experience in federal and State Advocacy for policy changes on behalf of survivors of FGM/C, which involved working closely with the U.S House of Representatives in connection with the "Girls Protection Act" that was signed into law by President Obama in 2013. In addition, Dr. Diallo worked closely with New York State Assembly woman, Amy Paulin in connection with State laws that protect victims of gender-based violence.

Dr. Diallo conducts research studies and develops curricula and other training materials; provides expert knowledge and testify in courts in the area of FGM/C, forced marriage, and domestic violence. She facilitates a leadership group training for African girls' survivors or at risk of experiencing gender violence. Dr. Diallo is the founder and Chair of the New York Coalition to end FGM/C; a member of the NYC Mayor's Office Advisory

Board on FGM/C, where she is co-chairing the subcommittee on training and education; a recipient of the Global Woman Award from P.E.A.C.E Foundation in 2022; a member of the UN working group on Girls. Dr. Diallo was born in Guinea, and she started her career at the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Department of Universal Values in Paris.

Marti MacGibbon, CADC-II, ACRPS, CAPMS is an internationally known author and an expert on trauma resolution and addiction. She's a humorous inspirational speaker, and a mental health professional who holds five professional certifications in addiction treatment. Marti is a Human Trafficking Expert Consultant to the US Dept. of State's Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons and is an Expert Consultant to the US Office for Victims of Crime. She is co-author of the widely cited article published in the American Medical Association Journal of Ethics, Human Trafficking, Mental Illness, and Addiction: Avoiding Diagnostic Overshadowing (2017), and is a contributing author of the Springer Nature 2020 textbook, Medical Perspectives on Human Trafficking in Adolescents: A Case-Based Guide.

Few speakers have a personal comeback story as riveting and inspirational as Marti's. She has recovered from and triumphed over nightmare experiences such as being trafficked to Tokyo and held prisoner by Japanese organized crime, homelessness, domestic violence, childhood sexual assault/abuse, severe PTSD and hard-core drug addiction. Marti employed simple, effective strategies to transform her life, and shares them to motivate, encourage, and energize listeners to create positive changes in every area of their lives. In addition to speaking to businesses, medical professionals and mental health professionals on overcoming adversity, empowerment, addiction recovery, and inspiration, Marti speaks on human trafficking, domestic violence, and other violence against women, and trains service providers. She has spoken at The 2023 United Nations World Day Against Trafficking in Persons Event (organized by UN Women), The 2021 UN Commission on the Status of Women, The Museum of Tolerance, The National Underground Railroad Freedom Center, at colleges and universities, and even from the center of an MMA octagon at, "Fight Traffick," an anti-human trafficking cage-fighting event. She's been interviewed in Investor's Business Daily, Entrepreneur, and Glamour, on ABC-TV, CBS-TV, FOX-TV and numerous radio stations, and articles she wrote have appeared in over 150 corporate and trade magazines.

An advocate for victims and survivors, in 2015, Marti spoke at the White House, the State Department, the Department of Health and Human Services, and the Office for Victims of Crime, on mental health and policy advocacy. From 2012-2017, Ms. MacGibbon served on the Indiana Attorney General's state-wide anti-trafficking task force IPATH, Indiana Protection for Abused and Trafficked Humans. From 2013-2017, she developed curriculum for and taught a life skills class for women with trauma history in Marion County Jail. In 2014, she spoke to California State Legislature in support of new and successful legislation aimed at eradicating child sex trafficking.

Marti is an engaged leader who served for two years on the Board of Directors at HEAL Trafficking, Inc. She currently serves as President of MENTARI Human Trafficking Survivor Empowerment Program in NY, NY, and on the Advisory Board at Justice At Last in San Francisco. Marti is a Speaker Trainer Consultant at the National Human Trafficking Training and Technical Center.
From 2011 to 2019, Marti was founder, producer, and emcee of Laff-Aholics Standup Comedy Benefit for Recovery, an annual charity fundraiser in Indianapolis that features nationally headlining comedians. One hundred percent of the profits from the show went to transitional housing facilities in Indy that provide access to addiction treatment and mental health services for the recovery community's most vulnerable.

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The Indiana Addictions Issues Coalition (IAIC) honored Marti with the 2015 Indiana Lifetime Recovery Advocate Award, and the 2014 Recovery Advocate of the Year Award, for outstanding accomplishments in support of recovery, and her work in breaking away the stigma surrounding addiction, mental illness, and human trafficking.

Marti has performed at the world-famous Hollywood Improv and at the Comedy Store in Hollywood, and has traveled the U.S. as a professional standup comic. She is a member of the National Speakers Association, the Behavioral Health Association of Providers, the California Consortium of Addiction Programs and Professionals (CCAPP), and the Indiana Counselor's Association on Alcohol and Drug Abuse.
Marti MacGibbon is author of two award-winning and critically acclaimed memoirs, Never Give in to Fear: Laughing All the Way Up from Rock Bottom and, Fierce, Funny, and Female. Fierce, Funny, and Female, Marti's recent memoir, is winner of the Beverly Hills International Book Award, in Women's Issues, and winner of the National Indie Excellence Awards, in Women's Health. It is the winner of the 2018 Independent Press Award, in Humor and Women's Studies. In June 2018, the book was announced winner of the Foreword Book of the Year Awards, in both Humor and Women's Studies. https://martimacgibbon.com/

ADA Mary E. Monahan, JD is the Deputy Unit Chief of the Human Trafficking Unit at the Office of the Kings County District Attorney, where she works as part of a specialized team dedicated to investigating sex trafficking of adults and children as well as labor trafficking.

Beginning her career in 2012, Mary handled all types of violent crime cases. In 2016, she focused on short- and long-term narcotics investigations, including multiple wiretap cases, during her time with the Office of the Special Narcotics Prosecutor. Since 2019, she has focused exclusively on human trafficking. She has successfully investigated and prosecuted traffickers and IMB owners for exploiting both children and adults.

Working collaboratively with law enforcement and social workers from the outset to build the strongest cases possible, ADA Monahan focuses on finding innovative ways to corroborate survivor accounts, taking the full weight of a successful prosecution off their shoulders so they can focus on recovery and healing.

Melody Joanne Centeno, LMSW is a remarkable individual who wears many hats. Not only is she a motivational speaker, public advocate, and psychodrama practitioner, but she's also an ABA therapist, talk show host, actress, film director, film editor, and producer.
Melody's passion for helping others led her to graduate from Adelphi University's School of Social Work, where she is recognized as a NYS Licensed Master Social Worker approved by the State Association of Social Work Boards. She now shares her expertise as an Adjunct Professor at Adelphi University's Field Education department, where she supervises undergraduate and graduate social work students. She also uses her SIFI certification and platform to supervise students at New York University.

As a former foster youth herself, Melody founded Foster Care Unplugged in 2016 with the goal of enriching the lives of children in care through the development of positive resiliency skills. Her personal experience has

driven her to share her story around the world, empowering youth and enlightening professionals in the field about the importance of being culturally responsive within the culture of child welfare.
Melody's unique style of leadership is a result of her ability to model and teach through the lens of personal experience, merged with professional practice. Her passion for helping others, combined with her expertise

and experience, make her an invaluable asset to the Foster Care Unplugged team and to the children and families they serve.

Melody Joanne Centeno, also known as "the Plug," is a role model to many and has made a lasting impression on those who have had the privilege of working with her. She is highly esteemed for her leadership qualities, ability to motivate, and her dedication to improving the lives of those around her.
Melody's goal is to inspire and educate individuals to become their best selves. She uses her platform as a motivational speaker, public advocate, and psychodrama practitioner to stimulate minds, stir hearts, and activate the will within people to achieve greatness.

When she is not working on community projects, Melody devotes her free time to developing her skills as an aspiring actress. Her daughter, Savannah Arielle Acree, is her greatest motivation in life, and she hopes to serve as a blueprint for her daughter and for other young people who look up to her as a role model.
Melody has an impressive portfolio of producing youth-focused projects that aim to empower and inspire young people. One of her notable projects is "Foster Care Unplugged: The Stage Play," which highlights the experiences of current and former foster care youth through theatrical performances. She has also produced short films featuring foster care youth, which shed light on their unique struggles and triumphs.
Foster Care Unplugged is not only dedicated to producing creative projects, but also to hosting annual events that foster a sense of community among young people. These events include a toy drive, a fashion show, and a basketball game with the NYPD.

Melody's dedication to supporting foster youth has expanded to include those who are at risk of being human trafficked. She co-created and facilitated the grant-funded "Mitigating Trauma Through Drama" group therapy model, which combines psychodrama techniques with human trafficking awareness to help mitigate the impact of trauma on young people's lives. Through her work, Melody has become a beacon of hope for many foster youth and vulnerable populations, providing them with the tools and support they need to thrive.

Dr. Natasha Jouk is a Child Abuse Pediatrician and the Associate Medical Director of the NYU Langone Child Protection Team, serving Bellevue Hospital and NYU Langone. Dr. Jouk completed her residency at BronxCare Hospital and her Child Abuse fellowship at Maimonides Hospital in Brooklyn. She specializes in the medical evaluation of suspected child abuse. Dr. Jouk is actively involved in national leadership through the American Academy of Pediatrics Council on Child Abuse & Neglect, where she is co-chair of the communication subcommittee. A passionate educator, she leads trainees, and multidisciplinary teams on mandated reporting, gray-zone cases, adolescent safety, and trauma-informed approaches.

Nathan LaChine is a third-generation foster parent with 20 years of experience providing therapeutic foster care to some of Washington state's most vulnerable youth. His frontline experience provides unique insights into the challenges young people face, particularly in navigating the digital world, making him a sought-after internet safety expert.

For over 25 years, Nathan has been a key volunteer and board member for the nonprofit MaleSurvivor, supporting male survivors of sexual abuse. He also founded Evergreen Caregiver Support, an organization dedicated to empowering caregivers through education and community resources. Through his organization Nathan has developed trainings on Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC), Child Sexual Abuse Material Industry (CSAM), LGBTQIA+ ; SOGIE, Harm Reduction, among many other trainings.

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A passionate advocate for youth and families, Nathan has shared his expertise on various platforms. He co-hosted the live radio show Real Family Matters, providing resources to community members. He frequently speaks to legislators and policymakers at the local, state, and national levels on issues affecting foster care, and has been featured on numerous podcasts and in interviews. His work with youth has shown him how important internet safety is for this population, and he provides training and support to caregivers on this topic.

Nathan serves as a Foster Parent Mentor and Support Group Facilitator with the University of Washington, providing guidance and support to caregivers across the state. He is also a member of the Department of Children, Youth, and Families' Foster Parent 1624 Consultation Team.

Nathan's work is driven by the principles of Educate, Empower, and Harm Reduction, inspiring meaningful change through his trainings, lectures, and advocacy. He is also a published author, professional speaker, international trainer, community advocate, and avid collector of modern and historic queer art.

Opal Singleton Hendershot Opal Singleton Hendershot is the President and CEO of Million Kids, a 501(c)3 organization dedicated to keeping kids safe from predators.

Million Kids serves as the Advisor to the Training and Outreach Coordinator for the Riverside County Anti Human Trafficking Task Force (RCAHT) and works with the Riverside County Sheriff's Department. Opal has completed tens of thousands of hours of research over the past fifteen years on those subjects and dealt with real cases making her an expert on human trafficking crimes and online exploitation of minors.

With her expertise, Opal has educated and trained more than 750,000 government and individual leaders as the keynote speaker and workshop presenter on **labor trafficking, adult and child sex trafficking, foreign national trafficking, gang trafficking, advanced technologies used in sex crimes, sextortion and social media exploitation, global financial sextortion, crypto currency and money laundering, the Dark Net and bulletproof hosting, and CSAM (child sexual abuse materials)**. She often appears on television and radio talk shows across the United States.

Opal is the author of two books**. *Seduced: The Grooming of America's Teenagers***. The second book, ***Societal Shift: A World Without Borders****... A Home Without Walls*. She is in the process of releasing her new e-book/audio book**, *Digital Warfare: Our Kids on the Front Line*** which explores the crime of sextortion and the technology transformation that is driving that crime including artificial intelligence, mass audience live streaming, global digital currency, geo location software, and encryption.
Opal is an Instructor at USC Price Safe Communities Institute. Opal has completed the Robert Presley Institute of Criminal Investigation Instructor Course and served on the Peace Officers Standardized Training panel to develop the training curriculum on human trafficking for law enforcement in California.

Opal is the Co-Executive Producer of a global documentary "Sextortion: The Hidden Pandemic" which premiered at the Pentagon and is available for download on Amazon, Apple TV and iTunes. The film has been edited for school classrooms and is being distributed across the U.S. through the Netsmartz program.

Opal hosts a weekly podcast titled "Protect and Prevent" P3Kids to educate the public about the latest trends in human trafficking, CSAM and online exploitation.

Simply stated: Opal cares deeply about the safety of young people and their families.

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For more information:

https://millionkids.org https://insideralerts.org
https://Instagram.com/_millionkids_ https://Facebook.com/iemillionkids
https://www.youtube.com/c/MillionKids/videos

Detective Paul Mastronardi joined the NYPD in 2013 and began his career in Bushwick, Brooklyn. After serving in the 83 Precinct he was assigned to the Vice Enforcement Division and served from 2018 to 2022, before being assigned to the NYPD Human Trafficking Squad. Currently Paul is assigned to the NYPD /FBI Child Exploitation and Human Trafficking Task Force. Paul has worked on both state and federal cases involving both sex trafficking of minors and adult victims.

Supervisory Special Agent Richard Stepien is the current Supervisor of the Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) New York's (NY) Child Exploitation Investigations Team (CEIT) since August 2024. In this supervisory position, Mr. Stepien provides operational insight of all Child Exploitation investigations within the five boroughs of New York City, and oversees HSI personnel as well as federal, state, and local law enforcement task force personnel operating within his purview. Prior to this assignment, Mr. Stepien investigated numerous Child Exploitation investigations at HSI NY while working closely alongside HSI NY's Dark Web and Cryptocurrency Groups. Mr. Stepien led Operation Innocence Bought, a nationwide, multi-agency investigation against a dark web vendor selling child sexual abuse material (CSAM). This investigation resulted in identifying over 70 suspects all across the United States, leading to many federal or state prosecutions, as well as, identifying many victims worldwide.

Mr. Stepien began his federal law enforcement career in 2010 with the Vermont State Police as a State Trooper and served four and a half years as a Detective Trooper assigned to Special Investigations Unit, which included crimes of child sex abuse and the exploitation of vulnerable adults. In 2019, Mr. Stepien was hired as a Special Agent with Homeland Security Investigations and was assigned to the New York Field Office where he served as a member of the Child Exploitation Investigations Team. While with HSI, Mr. Stepien was the recipient of multiple Awards; Director's Leadership Award, ICE Director's Humanitarian Award, and HSI New York's Dennis P. McCarthy Act of Valor Award.

Mr. Stepien obtained his Bachelor of Science Degree from St. Lawrence University.

Selina Higgins, MA, MSW, LCSW-R, DBT-C, United States Army Veteran has been the inaugural Executive Director of the NYC Administration for Children's Services' Office of Child Trafficking Prevention and Policy (OCTPP) since its creation in 2015 as the first office within a NYC public agency dedicated to trafficked and at-risk youth. OCTPP coordinates all aspects of policy and practice concerning children involved in human trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation, including identification, assessment, prevention, intervention, mitigation and service coordination for the entire NYC child welfare system. OCTPP also consults with and supports other City and community-based agencies, provides training for professionals and communities, facilitates a variety of trafficking awareness and prevention groupwork models for youth and administrates the NYC Safe Harbour Program, and a large-scale Child Trafficking Awareness Campaign. Originating with Selina as its only staffing, across the past ten years OCTPP has incrementally expanded to a talented team of seven clinical and administrative members.

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Selina has worked in the field of child welfare for 34 years, beginning as a Child Protective Specialist investigating abuse and maltreatment reports, then rising to a variety of clinical and administrative roles. She is directly responsible for the creation, production and administration of:

- The annual NYC Child Trafficking Prevention Conference
- The annual NYC Child Trafficking Prevention Spring Training Series
- The annual NYC Child Trafficking Prevention Fall Training Series
- "Movin' On": The NYC Child Tattoo Eradication Project
- The "Here for You" Vulnerable Youth Credible Messenger Program
- The 40-Page Toolkit: Child Trafficking and What YOU Can Do About It: Tools for NYC Child Welfare Professionals (now available as a free web-based pdf)
- ACS' first Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT) Consultation Team

Selina also envisioned and provided critical input to the development and continual upgrade of the *Child Trafficking Database* (CTDB), and the animated, virtual *CTDB e-Learning* training.
In addition to policy and procedure development, Selina is a huge believer in hands-on filling of identified gaps. She works directly with youth in providing therapeutic services through a wide variety of group work models (some self or co-designed). Since 2015, trainings she has created and presented or produced for other experts have filled over 64,000 seats, including attendees from over 40 states and other countries.
A decorated veteran of the United States Army, Selina is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW-R) with a Master of Arts in Forensic Psychology, a Master of Social Work, and post-graduate certifications in Infant-Parent Dyadic Therapy and Trauma Assessment, Dialectical Behavioral Therapy, Trauma Focused-Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (partial) and Social Work Administration. Additional substantial clinical training includes Play Therapy, Suicide Prevention, Creative Arts Therapy, Dissociative Identity Disorder (DID) and Other Specified Dissociation Disorder (OSDD) and LGBTQ Familial Therapy. She has been an MSW Practicum Instructor for over 20 years, firmly believing in professional development and the social work tradition of "giving back".

Publications include a variety of articles, the *Child Trafficking and What YOU Can Do About It: Tools for NYC Child Welfare Professionals* toolkit, and co-authoring *Human Trafficking in the Foster Care System* for the Springer Nature 2020 textbook, *Medical Perspectives on Human Trafficking in Adolescents: A Case-Based Guide*. Presentations include international, national and regional conferences, including multiple original workshops at the International Association of Social Work with Groups' annual symposiums and Shared Hope International's Juvenile Sex Trafficking (JuST) conferences, the largest and most renowned annual conference on child sex trafficking in the United States.

Selina has been honored as a 2020 Advocate of New York City, a 2023 Liberators Award finalist, and provided expertise as a Program Advisor for Shared Hope International's 2023 JuST Conference. Selina was selected as "Outstanding ACS Staff" for the 2024 Ally Awards for innovative contributions to the LGBTQAI+ community. In 2025, she was honored with the Workforce Institute's 2025 Social Work Month Award, and received a Distinguished Service Award for "Partnering with Respect". You can learn more about the work at https://www.nyc.gov/site/acs/youth/traffickedyouth.page

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Stephen Knoepfler, JD has been the Chief of the Bronx County District Attorney's Human Trafficking Unit (HTU) since it was created in June 2019. The Human Trafficking Unit focuses on rescuing and providing social services and resources to victims of sex trafficking and labor trafficking, as well as investigating, apprehending, and convicting those who promote, profit from, or patronize the commercial sex trade. HTU consists of a close-knit group of 3 to 4 felony ADAs, a designated Crime Victims Advocate, and a trial preparation assistant.
A graduate of New York University School of Law, Steve has worked at the Bronx D.A.'s Office since October 2010. Prior to joining the Special Victims Division as HTU's Chief, Steve spent his entire career in the Investigations Division, beginning with the Rackets Bureau where he handled organized crime and public integrity cases.

Steve has led or second-chaired seventeen trials—including seven felony trials, and nine jury trials—including a fifteen-witness sex trafficking and witness tampering jury trial. In 2018, he led a Frye hearing on whether the psychological phenomenon of traumatic bonding is generally accepted in the psychological community; the favorable ruling will set a precedent for allowing this testimony in all future special victim cases.

Steven Gordon has over 18 years of government, nonprofit direct service, administrative, development, and technical assistance/capacity building experience. His areas of expertise include, but not limited to HIV/AIDS, youth development, homelessness, sexual and behavioral health, program development and implementation, grants management, race equity, social justice, community organizing, LGBTQAI+ equity, gender equity, and policy/advocacy. Currently, as the Director of LGBTQAI+ Equity Strategies at ACS, Steven leads the agency's LGBTQAI+ equity efforts. Steven's past professional experiences includes:

- Principle of Steven Gordon Consulting where his primary functions were development, fundraising, grant writing, technical assistance, and capacity building to private companies, nonprofits, hospitals/healthcare centers, and colleges/universities. Some of his clients include: Gershwin Lehman Group, Sage Publishing, Howard University, Vera Institute of Justice, Substance Abuse Mental and Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), etc.
- Executive Director of The Pride Network, a small Brooklyn based non-profit whose mission is to empower and support the next generation of LGBTQ Leadership through social justice education, workforce development and leadership training.
- Director of Drop-In for Ali Forney Center. There he managed a large program budget, 6 grant contracts, a team of staff, interns and consultants of over 20, and a very busy triage center for youth in crisis.

Veronica Moreno, LMSW is a Child Trafficking Social Worker with ACS' Office of Child Trafficking Prevention and Policy. She earned her Bachelor of Arts in International Criminal Justice with a Minor in Psychology from John Jay College of Criminal Justice, and a Master of Social Work degree from Silberman School of Social Work at Hunter College. She is accredited as a Licensed Master Social Worker. As the Child Trafficking Social Worker who works with Division of Child Protection involved youth, Veronica is the point person for Child Protective Specialist staff that support and provide services to trafficked youth and youth at-risk for trafficking. She also works directly with vulnerable youth, providing psychoeducational awareness, and crisis counseling to families, and a variety of prevention strategies individualized as per each child's needs and strengths. In addition, she provides support, guidance, and training to NYC child welfare stakeholders. Veronica has over a decade of cumulative experience in various areas within ACS working with vulnerable populations.

NYC Children | Child Trafficking Prevention and Policy

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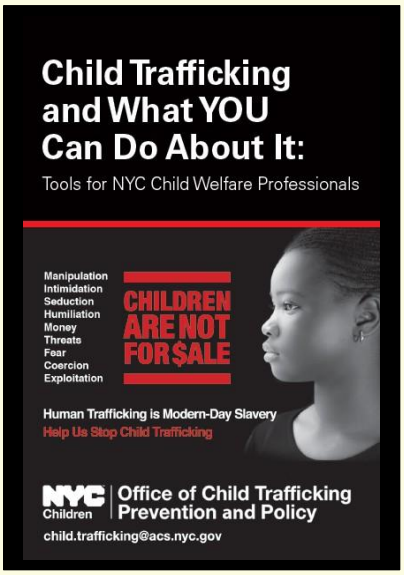
How to Contact the Office of Child Trafficking Prevention and Policy (OCTPP)

- **For NYC child notifications: Child.trafficking@acs.nyc.gov**
- **For information on upcoming trainings: Traffickingtraining@acs.nyc.gov**

Access our Resources:

***Child Trafficking and What YOU Can Do About It: Tools for NYC Child Welfare Professionals*.**

Link available on the Preventing Youth Trafficking webpage, or click here: https://www.nyc.gov/assets/acs/pdf/youth/childtrafficking/2024/what-you-can-do-about-it.pdf



Webpages with Downloads:

- **About the Office of Child Trafficking Prevention and Policy: https://www.nyc.gov/site/acs/youth/traffickedyouth.page#about-octpp**
- **Preventing Youth Trafficking: https://www.nyc.gov/site/acs/youth/traffickedyouth.page**
- **Resources for Professionals (training handouts): https://www.nyc.gov/site/acs/about/child-trafficking/resources.page**
- **Trafficking Awareness Contest for Youth: https://www.nyc.gov/site/acs/youth/trafficking-awareness-contest.page**
- **Virtual Resource Fair (anti-trafficking providers): https://www.nyc.gov/site/acs/youth/virtualresourcefair.page**
- **Awareness Campaign Materials (posters and brochure in 12 languages!): https://www.nyc.gov/site/acs/youth/virtualresourcefair.page#AwarenessCampaigns**