

# Human Trafficking: Ready to Respond

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## Project Description

As Awareness of Human Trafficking in our community increased and I cared for youth who were currently being trafficked, I knew our county medical system needed to be ready to respond. How might we address the total health needs of victims and survivors of human trafficking in San Mateo? The first challenge was for providers to recognize the existence of human trafficking—labor and sex trafficking, among all ages and genders—and the need for a trauma-informed response.

## Objective

By September 2020, providers at SMMC would demonstrate a 50% improvement in their collective knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors for recognizing and responding appropriately to patients who may be trafficked.

## Solution

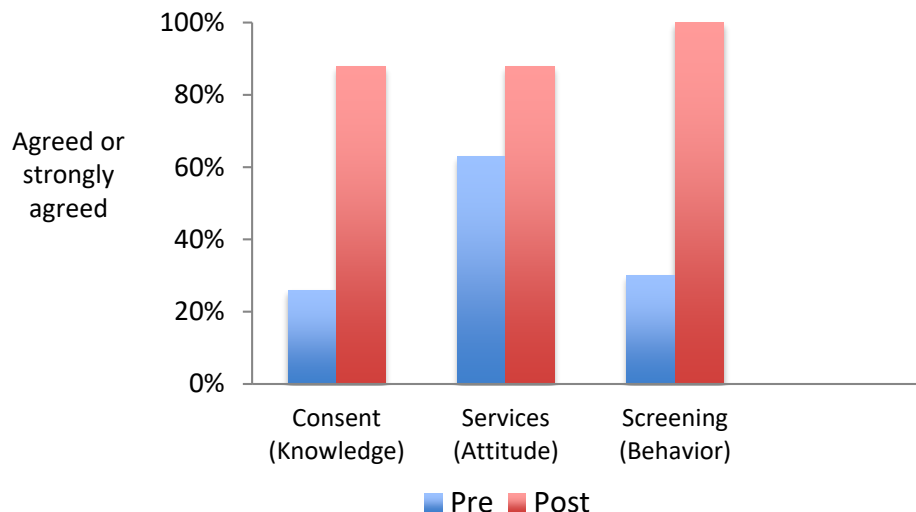
I initially proposed a 3-pronged approach: Taskforce, Training, and Tools. Through interviews, I learned that support for a taskforce was lacking, but there was great interest from front-line staff in training and point-of-care tools. With COVID-19 and a job change for me, I focused in on one key tool and one training forum. I also developed inroads at SMMC for community partners to facilitate future efforts to address Human Trafficking.

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## Results

- I started the project in January 2019 and completed my direct work with SMMC in July 2020.
- I collected measures of providers' Knowledge, Attitudes, and Behaviors for responding to Human Trafficking. ED providers were queried in December 2019, prior to any interventions, and attendees were queried following an educational forum in July 2019.
- Priming and a brief training **increased** the percent of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed with measures of Knowledge, Attitudes, and Behaviors.



## Next Steps

- My personal involvement at SMMC is complete. I have paved the way for the San Mateo Human Trafficking Program (<https://stophumantraffickingismc.org/>) to join forces with SMMC in the future.
- I am submitting Public Health Reporting Guidelines on Human Trafficking to San Mateo County Health.
- I am now creating resources and tools for Kaiser Permanente through the Child Abuse Services and Prevention Program to address Human Trafficking in a trauma-informed way.

## Lessons Learned

- Design screening tools that mimic those for other forms of violence, to “**shrink the change**” required of providers.
- The **priming effect** was profound; simply participating in an interview or completing a pre-intervention survey increased providers' awareness of Human Trafficking.
- Human Trafficking, like other forms of interpersonal violence, requires a multidisciplinary approach and **building bridges** with community partners is key.