ALLIANCE TO END HUMAN TRAFFICKING
Founded and Supported by U.S. Catholic Sisters

Conference Session Descriptions

Responsible AI for Child Protection and the People Who Power It

Artificial intelligence is rapidly changing both the risks facing children online and the tools available to protect them. This session will explore how responsible AI can help identify patterns of exploitation, strengthen prevention and intervention efforts, and support professionals on the front lines of child protection. Participants will also examine the ethical considerations around AI, including privacy, bias, transparency, and human monitoring, and the importance of protecting and supporting the people whose expertise and labor make these technologies possible.

The Schoolyard-to-Exploitation Pipeline: Identifying Peer Victimization as a Gateway

Bullying, social exclusion, harassment, and other forms of peer victimization can leave young people seeking acceptance, connection, and belonging—vulnerabilities that may be exploited by people seeking to manipulate or harm them. This session will examine the potential connections between peer victimization and vulnerability to grooming and exploitation. Participants will learn to recognize warning signs, identify opportunities for earlier intervention, and consider how schools, families, and community organizations can work together to strengthen protective factors before exploitation occurs.

Not What It Looks Like: Rethinking Trauma and Human Trafficking

Trauma does not always present in ways we expect. Individuals who have experienced trafficking or exploitation may appear angry, withdrawn, defiant, detached, protective of an exploiter, or reluctant to accept assistance. This session challenges common assumptions about what victimization "looks like" and explores how trauma can influence behavior, decision-making, relationships, and engagement with services. Participants will consider how trauma-informed approaches can reduce judgment, strengthen trust, and create more effective pathways to safety and healing.

Preventing People from Becoming Traffickers via Early Values

Human trafficking prevention must include protecting people from exploitation while also examining how harmful attitudes and behaviors develop in those who exploit others. This session will explore the role that early values formation—including respect, empathy, healthy relationships, personal dignity, boundaries, and accountability—can play in preventing exploitative behavior. Participants will consider opportunities for families, schools, faith communities, youth programs, and other trusted institutions to foster values and behaviors that reject exploitation before harmful patterns become established.

Human Trafficking Data Unpacked: Employing a Multi-Dataset Approach

No single dataset tells the complete story of human trafficking. Reports from law enforcement, service providers, hotlines, health care systems, researchers, and community organizations each capture different populations and experiences, and each has limitations. This session will demonstrate how combining and comparing multiple data sources can provide a more discerning understanding of trafficking patterns, populations, and emerging trends. Participants will also learn how to interpret trafficking statistics responsibly, recognize gaps and shortcomings in available data, and use evidence to inform prevention, services, advocacy, and resource utilization.

Breaking the Brainwashing: A Way Out of Active Trafficking

Leaving a trafficking situation is rarely as simple as walking away. Manipulation, coercive control, threats, isolation, dependency, fear, and trauma can create powerful psychological barriers to leaving and remaining

safely separated from an exploiter. This session will examine the dynamics that can keep individuals trapped in exploitation and explore approaches that help restore autonomy, trust, and a sense of personal agency. Participants will gain a greater understanding of why individuals may return to exploitative situations and how survivor-centered support can offer meaningful pathways toward safety and long-term recovery.

Human Trafficking in Schools: Building a Coordinated Response

Schools are uniquely positioned to recognize vulnerability, identify concerning changes in behavior, and connect young people with appropriate support. Yet an effective response requires more than awareness—it requires coordination. This session will explore the process by which educators, administrators, counselors, school resource personnel, families, child protection professionals, service providers, and community partners can develop a coordinated prevention and response approach. Participants will consider protocols for recognizing potential indicators, responding appropriately to disclosures or concerns, making referrals, securing student privacy, and building safer school environments.

Advocacy: Dismantling the Systems that Perpetuate Victimization

Human trafficking does not occur in isolation. Economic insecurity, unstable housing, discrimination, gaps in child protection and social services, education and healthcare barriers, and other structural conditions can amplify vulnerability and make recovery more difficult. This session will examine advocacy as a tool for addressing the systems and policies that can contribute to exploitation or compound harm after victimization. Participants will explore ways to translate frontline experience and survivor-informed perspectives into constructive advocacy, strengthen cross-sector collaboration, and advance policies and practices that reduce vulnerability, improve access to services, and support sustained stability.