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Implementing an Honors Nonprofit Internship: Hub of HOPE

An honors internship submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the  
degree of Bachelor of Science in Nursing

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### Abstract

Human trafficking is the term used to describe modern-day slavery, which is a global problem, but it is also present here in the United States. During this last year, I have worked with the Northwest Arkansas nonprofit Hub of HOPE. This organization, founded in 2016 by Jennifer Sorey, supports victims of human trafficking and raises awareness by educating Arkansans on the pervasiveness of human trafficking and its implications for our community. As part of my work, I completed the Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner training to understand how to work with human trafficking victims who are also victims of sexual assault and to provide education to local student nurses. This internship gave me expanded training on the rewards and challenges of working in the nonprofit arena.

## Background

Human trafficking is divided into several different categories including forced sexual exploitation, forced labor, and domestic servitude. This is a global problem, but what many don't realize is that it is also present here in the United States. The most common form of human trafficking in the U.S. is forced sexual exploitation, which can range from forced prostitution and exotic dancing to pornography and mail order brides. It is important to note that while this phenomenon is called human "trafficking," the victims of it may never cross state lines or leave their hometowns. Even though females make up an estimated 80% of trafficking victims, men can be victimized as well. Other demographics highlight the groups who are at greater risk: runaways, homeless and orphaned adolescents, foreign nationals, individuals with a history of trauma or violence, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender individuals (Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses Board of Directors, 2016).

It is difficult to provide accurate statistics on this issue due to lack of awareness and underreporting. The International Labor Organization's 2017 report estimates that there are 24.9 million victims of modern-day slavery, with 16 million in forced labor, 4.8 million being sexually exploited, and 4.1 million in state-imposed labor. It is estimated that between 14,500 and 17,500 people are trafficked across international borders each year against their will ("Human Trafficking by the Numbers," 2017). Most of the estimates of human trafficking are focused on international trafficking victims, and further data is needed to have a clearer picture of domestic trafficking. The National Human Trafficking Hotline is the best resource of comprehensive statistics but it is only based on calls and tips received. The hotline reported 8,524 human trafficking cases in 2017, with 4,687 calls coming from victims and survivors. Until awareness of this issue increases and

people are better able to identify potential victims, statistics on human trafficking will not be representative of the expansive scope of this problem.

Many people are surprised that slavery still exists in the world and in our country after the outlawing of slavery after the Civil War. But slavery continues in the current day as a booming business. The International Labor Organization 2014 report estimated that about \$150 billion in profit is earned by traffickers annually (“Human Trafficking by the Numbers,” 2017). One of the focuses of current anti-slavery efforts is to reduce the market for human trafficking, so that slavers are no longer able to market their victims.

The Hub of HOPE was founded on four pillars – Healing, Opportunity, Prevention, and Education. The National Human Trafficking Hotline website lists Arkansas as having 442 total victims identified in the state, but a major issue is lack of awareness and underreporting (“Arkansas,” 2017). Our mission is to provide resources to identified victims in the northwest Arkansas area to help them escape enslavement and to support each victim in her or his journey towards a free life. We work to provide this support by bringing together the services of existing agencies and raising awareness of gaps in the victim support network that need to be filled. This coalition also puts an emphasis on educating the community, from lay people to medical professionals, on the existence of human trafficking and on learning how to identify those victims (Sorey, 2016).

### Training Development

One of the key components of my internship was to assist with the development of a training targeted at healthcare professionals that could serve as the basis for a continuing education credit. Continuing Education Credits are required by all healthcare workers to be able

to reapply for their licenses every few years. Much of my first few months of this internship was devoted to better understanding the process of accreditation for continuing education trainings, and after months of research, and emails and calls that were left unanswered, it became clear that the process would not be as easy as my supervisor had hoped. As technology has become better integrated into our society and healthcare, many continuing education opportunities have moved online. Due to the busy schedules of today's workforce, healthcare employees prefer the flexibility offered by these options to fulfill their requirements for continuing education. As the training opportunities have moved from classroom to online, the number of organizations that are approved to accredit new continuing education trainings have decreased. In the state of Arkansas, only 2 institutions retain this power, UAMS and the VA, but the collaboration was unsuccessful. After consulting with a nurse who serves on the board of directors for Hub of HOPE, she encouraged me to seek out existing continuing education opportunities that the Hub of HOPE could recommend to healthcare professionals at their trainings. This would be more efficient than focusing on getting the Hub of HOPE training through the lengthy approval process. Following a recommendation by an advanced practice nurse and Hub of HOPE volunteer, we were able to find a free continuing education course to recommend to any healthcare professionals interested. While I was not able to get the Hub of HOPE's training accredited, I was able to work with Ms. Sorey to develop and deliver training targeted to helping healthcare providers understand how they could affect the life of trafficking victims that passed through the healthcare system.

The role of the nurse is imperative to ending human trafficking. In one study, 88% of victims reported that they had encountered health care workers during their enslavement, yet they were not identified as victims (Lederer & Wetzel, 2014). Nurses are often the first point of contact

for victims in a health care setting and have the best chance of intervention. Nurses must become aware of warning signs associated with trafficking, which include:

- jaw or neck problems,
- tattoos or branding,
- inability to keep appointments,
- lack of identification,
- being accompanied by someone who does not let them speak or will not leave during the health assessment,
- inconsistent stories, and
- a lack of documentation of previous health care encounters

(National Human Trafficking Resource Center, 2012).

Beyond needing training in identification of these victims when they come through health care facilities, the nurse needs to be able to provide specialized acute care for the multitude of medical and mental health issues. Patients may need specialized services such as substance abuse treatment, ongoing assessment, dental care, and access to chronic illness management for issues such as HIV, hepatitis, diabetes, asthma, depression, and anxiety. The nurse must be able to refer the patient to other specialists and local organizations or agencies that can help meet their physical and mental health needs (Institute of Medicine/National Research Council, 2013). The most important thing to consider is patient safety. During an interview with a suspected trafficking victim, the nurse must be:

- aware of how they use phrasing,
- able to provide resources and follow-up care immediately,
- able to assess cultural aspects and norms of care,
- able to recognize possible risks for victims in reporting, and
- be respectful and non-judgmental

(Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses Board of Directors, 2016). The role of the nurse begins with being able to identify victims, but she or he must then be able to

provide care for their medical needs as well as be knowledgeable regarding how to report to the National Human Trafficking Hotline and connect patients with local resources and agencies.

One aspect of my internship that allowed me to be a better resource in developing the healthcare professionals training was my completion and application of a Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) training. This online training is the beginning of the course work that a SANE nurse must do to become certified to work with victims of sexual assault, both as a medical professional, performing medical triage and conducting a forensic exam if the victim chooses, as well as a forensic professional being trained in the legal aspects so that they can testify in court and aid the victim in a case against their abuser. As Hub of HOPE often works with women being manipulated or coerced into performing sexual acts, they may need the assistance of a SANE healthcare professional to be able to receive care and support. The information gained from this training was integrated into the Hub of HOPE's ongoing community and healthcare professional training.

Even though I was able to gain and apply knowledge from the SANE training, there were some drawbacks associated with this course. First, I would have preferred a free, online training specific to the state of Arkansas but I was unable to find any online Arkansas trainings that fit these requirements. The free online education I identified was through the state of West Virginia (West Virginia Foundation for Rape Information and Services [WVFRIS], 2014). There were sections that specifically spoke to demographics and laws in West Virginia. The training would have been more beneficial to have had specific information for the Arkansas community. Also, the training I utilized was from 2014 and some of the information was not up-to-date. If I could go back to the beginning of my internship, I would have interviewed an Arkansas SANE nurse to better target information about the realities, obstacles, and laws affecting our target population.

Also, after discussion and reflection on the need to be able to connect potential human trafficking victims with a SANE, the Hub of HOPE connected and formed a working relationship with the NWA Center for Sexual Assault, which offers a crisis help line, and 24/7 access to a SANE and counseling services. As victims of sex trafficking may be found in their facility and benefit from services offered by both nonprofits, this professional connection was a valuable addition to the Hub of HOPE's network to support victims.

During my internship, I often served as a bridge to bring the healthcare professional training we developed in front of nursing groups. I used my connections within my nursing school's chapter of the Student Nurses Association (SNA) to provide a platform for the Hub of HOPE training to reach future nurses. During this session in October 2018, Ms. Sorey was able to use the updated training for medical professionals to spread awareness to more than 40 student nurses at the University of Arkansas. Following this training, many students reached out hoping to learn of more ways to get involved in Hub of HOPE, or to find ways to use their newfound knowledge to aid potential victims as they entered the nursing field. I was also able to step into a more visible role, by being a co-presenter at a SNA meeting for nursing students at Northwest Arkansas Community College.

Due to the success we found in presenting to local student nurses. I approached Ms. Sorey about applying to present a focus session for the Arkansas Student Nurses Association (ANSA) state convention. I spearheaded the application process and acted as a liaison between the ANSA representative and Hub of HOPE. In late October 2018, Ms. Sorey and I travelled to Little Rock, AR to provide a 30-minute focus session on the role of nurses in the fight against human trafficking, and our presentation was so in demand, that we were asked to present a second unscheduled focus session later that day.

Through all of these presentations, I continued to develop my ability to speak publicly on the importance of this issue. I was blown away by how few people knew about this issue (including myself at the beginning of this internship) and it was inspiring to see the passion and determination our presentations ignited in healthcare professionals. At the end of our presentations, when the floor was opened up to questions, people always wanted to know, “How can we do more?” This information, that I was able to assist in compiling and presenting, was clearly effective in bringing the awareness of human trafficking to the community and sparked a desire in many healthcare professionals and community members to change how they approached interactions with individuals in need.

### Legislation, Law, & Enforcement

The Hub of HOPE works on a local level to increase awareness of this issue, but this is not a new crime and there are several laws that have been set in place to target human trafficking on local and national levels. The Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (TVPA) was the first comprehensive federal law on this issue. It has a three-pronged approach: prevention through public awareness campaigns overseas and State Department-led monitoring and sanctions programs; protection through new visas and services for foreign national victims; and prosecution through federal crimes. This law focused more on the international component of this issue, as opposed to the domestic issues, but as the law has been reauthorized in 2003, 2005, 2008, and 2013, there has been an increase in protections provided for domestic victims.

There is also legislation called The Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act of 2015, through which victim services have increased, including changes to the criminal consequences for buyers of commercial sex from victims of human trafficking, the creation of a survivor-led U.S. Advisory Council on Human Trafficking, and implementing new focuses on the national strategy

for fighting human trafficking. This law made more funds and grants available for state resources and individual support.

The last major national law is The Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act of 2014. The goal of this legislation is to specifically decrease the incidence of sex trafficking among youth in the foster care system. This law targets child welfare agencies to improve screening, identification, and response to sex trafficking. This law also incorporates mandated reporting by child welfare agencies to law enforcement. (“Federal Law,” n.d.).

These national laws also require law makers at the state level to create legislation that addresses human and sex trafficking. There are 4 major laws targeting human trafficking that have been passed by the state of Arkansas: Arkansas Safe Harbor Bill, Civil Cause of Action for Victims of Human Trafficking, Prevention Training on Human Trafficking for Commercial Driver License Qualification Standards Act, and Trafficking of Persons. The Arkansas Safe Harbor Bill was passed in 2014 and sought to protect children by presuming that any child found to be involved in prostitution or solicitation is a victim of sex trafficking and by protecting them from being further traumatized within the court system. This bill also established the Safe Harbor Fund for Sexually Exploited Children and created a committee to study the prevalence of child sex trafficking and sexual exploitation in the state (2013). The Civil Cause of Action for Victim of Human Trafficking is in the Arkansas legal code and states that an individual who is a victim of human trafficking is eligible to bring civil action in any state court and outlines the plaintiff’s rights in those instances (Civil Cause of Action for Victim of Human Trafficking). The Prevention Training on Human Trafficking for Commercial Driver License Qualification Standards Act requires additional training in prevention of human trafficking be completed in order to obtain a Class A commercial driver’s license (2017). The 2014 Arkansas code defines the

criminal offenses of human trafficking and outlines the requirements and guidelines for criminal offenses in the state of Arkansas. Even with the strides the state of Arkansas has taken, the Arkansas Task Force for Prevention of Human Trafficking published a report in 2014 which found that 2/3 of law enforcement agencies surveyed did not feel that their personnel were adequately trained to recognize indicators of human trafficking (2014). It is also difficult to determine how effective these state laws are since there are no published statistics on the prosecution of human trafficking and commercial exploitation crimes in the state of Arkansas. The prosecution of human traffickers on a global scale is very low. According to the 2017 US State Department Trafficking in Persons (TIP) report, there were only 14,894 prosecutions and 9,071 convictions globally in 2016 (“Human Trafficking by the Numbers,” 2017).

Despite the legislative steps that have been taken both nationally and at the state level in recognizing, preventing, and prosecuting human trafficking, many of the laws have been criticized for not being aggressive enough. The TVPA was praised for being the first piece of legislation to recognize trafficking as a criminal offense. But due to the language of the law, in cases of adult victims of trafficking, the burden lies on the prosecution to prove that force, fraud, and coercion *ALL* took place to be able to send a trafficker to prison. This means that far fewer adult victims may ever see their cases taken to court. Also, the unique nature of the relationship between the trafficker and the victim often makes victims less likely to be willing to testify against them, either due to a romantic attachment or fear of retribution. These state laws are considered positive steps in combatting human trafficking and bringing awareness to a previously hidden criminal industry, but the actual number of convictions seen by the Department of Justice following the TVPA were quite low compared to the estimated prevalence of trafficking in the world and the United States (Elrod, 2015). As the issue of trafficking is brought to light,

legislation will need to make it easier to target and prosecute traffickers, as well as find ways to reduce the market for sexual exploitation so that it becomes less profitable for criminals.

### Nonprofit Management

Through this experience, I was able to gain a better understanding of the inner workings of a nonprofit. Before my introduction into this organization, I knew very little about what is required for a nonprofit to function and achieve its goals. Ms. Sorey said that the priorities in the early years of their nonprofit were getting trusted and passionate volunteers involved, creating bylaws for the board of directors, beginning never ending searches for funding to achieve Hub of HOPE's goals, and gaining 501c3 designation. Many of these things had been accomplished in order to give Hub of HOPE more credibility in the nonprofit world and allow it to have an organized foundation to build on.

One of the first things I experienced was attending their Board of Directors meetings. Due to the youth of the nonprofit, it has taken several years to get organized so that roles on the board can be filled by people other than the founder. All of the board members are volunteers who take time to serve because they are passionate about the organization's mission. I was impressed by the Hub of HOPE's organization regarding how meetings were run and documented, as well as dedication to following the bylaws in making decisions. All meetings were conducted using Robert's Rules of Order to keep the meeting concise and allow the board to work through topics efficiently. I also appreciated their commitment to diversity among board members, who include men and women, healthcare professionals and a law enforcement officer, and individuals with varied levels of experience in the nonprofit realm. I hadn't realized before the importance of including individuals with different backgrounds and strengths to ensure that the board is making better and more thoughtful decisions. The board operated respectfully, even in disagreements, and

I felt that my big takeaway from observing the board meetings was learning the need to bring together a group of people who will provide different insights and skills, but all work towards a common goal ensuring that the best decisions were being made. I do feel that the board would benefit from a younger member. It may not be as easy to recruit a young adult to serve on a nonprofit's board, but I felt that my increased awareness and familiarity with using social media, enabled me to provide insight on how younger community members might interpret and react to Hub of HOPE initiatives. I saw firsthand how excited college aged individuals were about being involved in the work that Hub of HOPE was doing, and I feel that the board could better reach young adult volunteers if they had representation on their board from that generation. Having a younger voice might also provide insight in contributing to the Hub of HOPE's fundraising efforts.

When one mentions the work of a nonprofit, they often only consider the service they strive to provide the community. But I had not realized how much time and energy within the nonprofit is devoted to fundraising and soliciting funds to help keep the organization financially viable and allow it to perform its outreach. Without donations, Hub of HOPE would not be able to provide victims with services such as safe transport, counseling, clean clothes and food. The Hub of HOPE is unique in that a lot of what it does is connecting survivors with other organizations that can help them, such as homeless and women's shelters or food pantries, but they still have expenses associated with keeping the organization going. The next big step in victim response that the nonprofit hopes to achieve is owning a transition facility that can serve as a short-term place for survivors to stay and feel safe while they create a plan for how to move forward with their lives. However, this endeavor entails being able to pay for a lease and utilities, as well as hiring staff to be there both for security and for support. To aid in reaching these goals, I assisted

in planning and carrying out fundraising events in my internship. This included many odd jobs from creating ticket vouchers to sell for a local baseball game's nonprofit night to contributing insight on utilizing profit-share nights at local restaurants and harnessing the power of social media to raise awareness for an upcoming telethon. I feel that Hub of hope still has room to grow in their fundraising efforts by utilizing social media to reach a wider audience. Also, I learned that one avenue for procuring funding for nonprofits includes applying for grants, but that more time has to be dedicated to both finding grants that the nonprofit is eligible for as well as spending time writing and documenting how the nonprofit is meeting the needs of the Northwest Arkansas community. I witnessed strides being made in this arena, as the board welcomed a member with experience in the nonprofit area and grant writing who was prepared to help with this aspect of fundraising for Hub of HOPE. I recognized that the supportive leadership which allowed the nonprofit to network with community members and recruit volunteers and board members for their needed skills was a strength that the Hub of HOPE had in making progress towards their goals.

A key player in keeping this nonprofit functioning is Jennifer Sorey, founder and executive director of the organization. She is heavily integrated in all the processes of the nonprofit on a volunteer basis. She made it a priority to continue delegating and appointing leaders within the organization to allow for more work to be done by those with different strengths. In the year I worked with her, I learned about the skills that make for a successful leader and contribute to the progress of this organization. As the facilitator of the coalition, she is incredibly charismatic. She is able to communicate and present information about human trafficking and the mission of Hub of HOPE in way that lights a fire in everyone around her. She builds connections with individuals and businesses in the community, and she wasn't afraid to

reach out when she needed help. She told me that many who create and run nonprofits in their early years have difficulty letting go of their control and allowing others to come in and help, but she often said that she feels her presence is much less important than the nonprofit's mission itself. She hopes to get the organization to a place where she can step down and someone else can move into her place in a paid role to keep Hub of HOPE going. She inspires many with kindness and passion, and I think these are essential characteristics that help her to grow Hub of HOPE and get more people involved to ensure its continuation. I have learned a great deal from my year shadowing and working with her about building others up as a leader and harnessing the skills of those involved in the organization to succeed as a team.

I learned that work in the nonprofit arena is hard. There are many challenges to keeping a nonprofit running. It requires extreme sacrifice by many, especially early on, to even begin to serve the community in the way it plans to. There has to be more than just passion and desire to keep a nonprofit going as a business, and there is much more to learn about ways in which one can create and manage a nonprofit so that it in turn can serve those around it.

## Conclusion

My time working for the Hub of HOPE allowed me to gain experience far beyond what I ever expected. Beyond what I might have gained simply through participation in my school classes and clinicals, I have gained skills that I can carry on in my future career. I improved my ability to communicate professionally with supervisors and staff within the organization, local leaders, and community members, as well as to present to large groups confidently, educating them on the local and global issue of human trafficking. I became knowledgeable on the topic and used this knowledge to spread awareness within my community. As previously discussed, I spent time researching the prevalence of human trafficking locally and globally, to better highlight this issue often ignored or missed by the public. I was able to do this by bringing information specific to the medical setting that better equips our area's health professionals to recognize potential victims and give recommendations on how they can act to help these individuals.

In addition, I gained a new appreciation for the struggle, skill, and sacrifice involved in serving the community through nonprofit organizations. I came to see my supervisor as a mentor helping me to grow and develop. I learned the power of servant leadership in inspiring action in others.

While it was initially difficult to navigate the somewhat vague expectations of this internship, it was an irreplaceable experience that I would recommend to future nursing students in garnering a more holistic education. To improve the experience, I would recommend that future interns be given a more concrete project or set of responsibilities, as well as a schedule of typical events they can participate in through the internship such as coalition meetings, board of director meetings, and education and speaking opportunities. More concrete expectations could have helped in the beginning of the internship to make the most of the opportunities available.

Moving forward, I hope to use the information I learned to make changes in the opinions and policies of my future place of employment. I hope to advocate for creating trainings for employees and policies that make it easier for healthcare workers to prevent and stop human trafficking. The experience I have gained has been vital in being able to move forward and make a difference as a nurse in my community.

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