

Social action proposal of communities'

[Sociology](#), [Community](#)



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Overview of Social Issue

Third-year Social Work students, Vija, Rachel and Cassandra (the team), have chosen to address the social issue of human trafficking (HT) in the Durham Region. In short, HT involves “ the coercion of others for material gain ... often based on false relationship manipulation, money, drugs, physical abuse or any combination of these” (SafeHope Home, 2018). The issue is widespread, underreported and continues to grow (SafeHope Home, 2018), with trafficking into the sex trade the most prevalent form of HT in Durham (SA Foundation, 2018). Two-thirds of Canadian cases of HT occur within Ontario (Ibrahim, 2018) and Durham Regional Police Services (DRPS) estimate that 75 percent of victims are under the age of 18 (Follert, 2018). DRPS further reports that “ 41 girls have been lured into HT in Durham” over the past six months and those targeted are often marginalized within society, such as Indigenous and homeless youth (Follert, 2018), creating deeper-rooted oppression of youth.

Strategies to Address Human Trafficking

While efforts have been made to address HT nationally and internationally, the most significant and relevant strategies within Durham have occurred at the regional and provincial levels. In an effort to combat HT at a macro level, DRPS created a Human Trafficking Unit in 2014 (Szekely, 2018) and have since focused on education, awareness-raising and prosecution of traffickers in the community. DRPS partnered with community collaterals, such as Victim Services Durham, Victim Witness Assistance Program and Durham Rape Crisis Centre, to form the Durham Region HT Coalition (DRHTC, 2018). Several grassroots organizations, such as Men Ending Trafficking, exist within Durham in support of one another (Cassells, n. d.). SafeHope Home, an organization that aims “ to break the cycle of exploitation by offering a long-term recovery program of three to seven years that includes housing, child-care services, counselling recovery, life skills, job preparedness and more” (Szekely, 2018), opened its doors to the first long-term holistic treatment program in the community for women escaping sex trafficking (SafeHope Home, 2018). The provincial government provided SafeHope Home with a \$1. 25 million grant toward their initiatives (Szekely, 2018).

Macro level strategies stem from the launching Ontario’s Strategy to End Human Trafficking in 2016 which aimed to establish culturally-relevant and effective strategies to combat HT (OMCCSS, 2018). The Anti-Human Trafficking Liaison Program was established in partnership with the Ontario Native Women’s Association and the Indigenous-Led Initiatives Fund was launched (OMCCSS, 2018). Canada’s first Human Trafficking Lived Experience Roundtable was established to allow the voices of HT survivors to

be heard in provincial efforts. Additionally, the Anti-Human Trafficking Act was enacted and Ontario declared February 22 as the annual Human Trafficking Awareness Day (OMCCSS, 2018). SafeHope Home's model is based off of SA Foundation, an international non-profit organization in Vancouver, British Columbia (SafeHope Home, 2018) which aims to offer refuge, restoration, reintegration and women with the opportunity to rewrite and replicate their lives (SA Foundation, 2018). Despite continuous efforts made at all levels to address HT in the Durham Region, a need for funding and more long-term holistic treatment options for victims of HT in Durham Region still remains. The team's vision is an end to HT in the Durham Region and its mission is to support SafeHope Home in their endeavours to provide holistic long-term support to women who have escaped HT in the Durham Region. Therefore, the two primary goals of the team's social action plan are to fundraise for SafeHope Home and to generate an increased level of awareness of HT.

The target audience of this action is the Trent community. SafeHope Home's primary goal at this time is raising funds to cover the "ongoing costs associated with our [their] front-line housing property", as well as to financially support the eventual addition of housing properties (SafeHope Home, 2018). The team will intervene at the mezzo level by planning and implementing a fundraiser Hope Walk at Trent University Durham (Trent), during the final week of October. The walk is a 2.1 kilometer loop from Trent to the Oshawa Centre, an area where DRPS have witnessed surveillance footage of pimps approaching young girls (Szekely, 2018). Participants will be encouraged to wear blue as this colour represents HT awareness (UNODC,

2018). Fundraising will occur through monetary donations made by Trent students and any sponsors they have obtained, as well as through the sale of cookies which will have the SafeHope Home logo or hashtag “#thereishope” imprinted on them. The team will intervene at the macro level by working with the Trent community to raise funds to support an organization within the larger community which supports women in their recovery. In order to increase awareness within Trent, the team will post educational posters around Trent and on social media around the prevalence of HT, warning signs, prevention and culturally-relevant community supports and resources available to those impacted by HT. Additionally, an information table will be set up on the day of the Hope Walk. Since awareness-raising has been a predominant strategy within Durham, the focus of this action will be on sparking discussion and encouraging students to join in making a positive change in the community.

Ethical and Culturally Safe Implementation of Social Action

At both the mezzo and macro levels of intervention, the Canadian Association of Social Workers (CASW) Code of Ethic (the Code), will be used as a guideline to ensure adherence to the values and principles of the profession. The team will seek to be ethical and culturally grounded in all phases of the social action plan. At the mezzo and macro levels, the team will demonstrate respect for all involved in the social action, including respect for others' time, money, social location and right to choose whether or not they wish to participate in the action. The team will foster a respectful and culturally safe environment by highlighting the strengths and resiliency of those currently or historically impacted by HT. Providing Trent students

with details surrounding the social issue, the work of the SafeHope Home organization, and culturally-relevant community resources and supports, as well as event specifics ensures that informed consent to participation is achieved (CASW, 2005). All information will be portrayed with objectivity, accuracy and consideration for the audience in order to maintain professionalism and prevent the emotional upset of viewers.

The team will seek to remain culturally grounded at the mezzo level by promoting an inclusive and collectivist approach to the fundraiser, whilst supporting students' individual goals and rights. The Code (2005) encourages social workers to “ promote individual development and pursuit of individual goals, as well as the development of a just society” (p. 6). By distributing sponsorship forms, students can include their own social networks in fundraising toward the collective goal. The team's role will be one of facilitators, rather than leaders, with the ongoing goal of reducing power imbalances with participants through the encouragement of individual self-expression. In an effort to uphold the CASW (2005) value of dignity and worth of all, the team will ensure that those who are physically unable to participate in the Hope Walk are still provided alternative roles within the event.

At the macro level, the team will seek to uphold the Code's (2005) value of service to humanity by putting the needs of others first and pursuing the social justice of those impacted by HT (p. 6). In order to be culturally grounded at the macro level, the team will recognize the diversity within Trent and acknowledge that Trent is part of the larger community of

Durham. By promoting awareness of the social issues impacting the larger community and providing an opportunity to get involved, Trent can make an impact on the macro level. Students will have the opportunity to support and advocate for oppressed groups within the community and the organizations which seek to support these groups.

Ethical Issues, Strengths and Weaknesses and Cultural Safety

The team recognizes that start-up costs are necessary in order to implement a bake sale and offer prizes for the highest donors within Trent. It would be unethical to utilize donated funds to offset these costs, therefore the team will work within their own means to fund this event. Another potential ethical issues arises with regards to advertising the Hope Walk and bake sale in order to aid in its success. Caution must be used when determining what information to share regarding HT, victims of HT, frequency of advertisement, as well as privacy issues pertaining to social media. The team will ensure that advertising is considerate of respectful engagement, individual's trauma experiences and potential triggers, as well as privacy. This will be accomplished by not sharing visually disturbing material or information to instill fear or cause harm, publicly utilizing strengths-based language such as " survivor" rather than " victim", limiting advertisement to appropriate levels and not pressuring social media engagement.

Another ethical concern is targeting students as potential donors due to the likelihood that students have their own financial commitments and debts.

This concern will be addressed by acknowledging other ways of supporting.

The team will also address the issue of allergies by publicizing the list of

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ingredients used in baking to ensure consumer's physical safety and well-being. The team has worked diligently to formulate a thorough plan of action through critical reflection and analysis of all components. In communicating with both the VPCL at Trent and the Director of Community Development at SafeHope Home, the involved collaterals have been made aware of the team's goals and have approved the plan approval on all levels thus far. By implementing the social action at Trent, students are provided with an opportunity to support a disadvantaged group as a community. While the funds raised will be a strength of the plan if successful, engaging the community is essential in supporting the reduction of stigma surrounding victims/survivors of HT and the hopeful reduction of HT in Durham. Potential unforeseen circumstances, student participation and unpredictability of donations are weaknesses of the social action plan. While the team will do their best to plan, advertise and physically walk the Hope Walk route to scout for potential safety risks the morning of the walk, there are factors beyond the team's control that may impact the success of the fundraiser. Every effort will be made to promote success despite this uncertainty.

A priority must be to ensure that all individuals “ feel respected and safe from discrimination” (Northern Health BC, 2017) in order to promote cultural safety. When engaging with a diverse population comprised of students and community collaterals, the team has a responsibility to be inclusive and accommodating students' ability (physical, financial, emotional) to participate, as well as to use culturally-safe verbal and written communications. The team will make a continuous effort to be mindful of power imbalances and to reflect on how their social location and life

experiences (Northern Health BC, 2017) may impact interactions. In an effort to ensure inclusivity and effectiveness, the team will attempt to engage both men and women. The team acknowledges that HT impacts everyone, therefore all have a right to get involved in the process of putting an end to HT.