Human trafficking training gears up at mental health center

Teams, training programs put in place at Community Reach Center

(Westminster, Colorado - Dec. 5, 2018) The National Human Trafficking Training and Technical Assistance Center (NHTTAC) credited Community Reach Center as the first mental health treatment organization in the country to incorporate a human trafficking awareness curriculum into its training programs for clinical and non-clinical staff members, which followed formation of pilot teams at Community Reach Center treatment sites to establish protocols for identifying and aiding human traffic victims. Community Reach Center provides mental health services to more than 20,000 people each year in Adams County at the north side of Denver.

The nationally-endorsed curriculum titled SOAR to Health and Wellness (SOAR) was first released to Community Reach Center in response to its ongoing efforts to address human trafficking in its community. The SOAR training equips behavioral health, health care, social service and public health professionals with skills to identify, treat and respond appropriately to human trafficking. SOAR is funded by the Department of Health and Human Services Office on Trafficking in Persons and the Office of Women's Health. The training modules are up and running in the organization’s training rotations as of Nov. 28.

“Community Reach Center is an obvious choice for us to pilot our first partnership to place these human trafficking modules (SOAR) into an organization's internal training. CRC demonstrates a purposeful commitment to establish protocols and expand its staff's capacity to help victims of human trafficking when identified in their centers,” said Ashley Garrett, NHTTAC director. “It is our hope and intent to collaborate with organizations, government agencies and health systems to expand exponentially the level of knowledge and skills on human trafficking across the United States.”

Community Reach Center conducted human trafficking training sessions over the past year with support from NHTTAC’s Survivor Fellowship. About 30 managers and numerous staffers worked to establish initial pilot programs with protocols customized to each treatment center or setting. The detailed protocols identify and intervene for victims
of human trafficking – teamwork that involves front desk employees and clinical staff members.

The pilot teams include JAR (Justice, Accountability and Recovery Program), Jail Based Services Team, Mobile Crisis Team, ACT (Assertive Community Treatment Team), Front Desk Team and school-based teams for school districts 12 and 50. The teams were chosen due to the nature of their programs and the likelihood they would have a potential victim of human trafficking come through their sites. The school programs were significant to include in the pilot due to being able to identify and report minor sex trafficking.

“It has been an honor to be part of a project that is so uniquely innovative, embracing the trauma informed survivor perspective in everything from our organizational analysis to identifying the key programs to create systems change to support potential survivors of human trafficking,” Community Reach Center Project Lead Elaine Cooper said. “This type of work cannot move forward without the passion and dedication of the people creating the change, and I am grateful for the managers and staff who have stepped up to add their voice to this movement.”

Cooper emphasized the importance of the fight against human trafficking in Colorado. She said there were 93 investigations (86 domestic minor sex trafficking and seven foreign national adults trafficked) in 2015, and these investigations represented roughly 12 percent of cases nationally. Additionally, she said Colorado had the 17th highest call volume in the U.S. according to the national Colorado Network to End Human Trafficking (CoNEHT) hotline at 1-866-455-5075.

Cooper was originally contacted by NHTTAC in April of 2017 via Colorado Behavioral Health Council (CBHC) to see if Community Reach would host a SOAR pilot training in Colorado. She said the internal process at Community Reach Center has involved obtaining legal clearances and great attention to detail, but she emphasized that training and establishment of protocols is replicable for other organizations. The three SOAR curriculum staff instruction modules are available to the nearly 600 employees at the organization and will help to support the protocols for consistency, Cooper added.

Clinical Director of Intensive Services Abigail Tucker was the Community Reach Center Leadership Team sponsor for the program.

“The Human Trafficking Fellowship reinforces our agency’s mission to enhance the health of our community by not only educating our own system and providers but actually changing how we respond to individuals who have been subject to or at risk of human trafficking,” Dr. Tucker said. “In collaboration with our local, state and national partners we are honored to be a part of this fellowship.”

Community Reach Center intends to engage in a way that utilizes a comprehensive response to human trafficking through prevention, protection, prosecution and partnership, also known as the 4P frame work. Human trafficking is impacting communities, families and consumers, evidenced via sources like the Colorado Network to End Human Trafficking (CoNEHT) hotline, referrals and collaborative relationships with those who work with the state’s anti-trafficking efforts. The CoNEHT website is (https://combathumantrafficking.org/about-lcht/our-work/coneht-hotline/).
Community Reach Center is a top-tier behavioral health and wellness provider serving people of all ages at seven outpatient offices and more than 100 community-based sites throughout Adams County, Colorado. The Center has worked diligently to preserve and promote a commitment to excellence, professionalism and integrity within our community healthcare system for 60 years – currently serving more than 20,000 people annually. We employ about 600 highly trained professionals committed to health and wellness. Community Reach Center is a leading integrated care partner in Colorado – meaning that mental healthcare, primary medical care and dental services are provided in one location at clinics throughout the north Denver metro area.

The National Human Trafficking Training and Technical Assistance Center (NHTTAC) delivers training and technical assistance (T/TA) to inform and enhance the public health response to human trafficking. By applying a public health approach, NHTTAC holistically builds the capacity of communities to identify and respond to the complex needs of all survivors of human trafficking and address the root causes that make individuals, families, and communities vulnerable to trafficking. NHTTAC is funded by the Office on Trafficking in Persons at the Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families. For more information on NHTTAC go to https://www.acf.hhs.gov/otip/training/nhttac or email info@nhttac.org.

Attachment: Training photo and pilot center locations

Mary Landerholm, an action plan manager for the Laboratory to Combat Human Trafficking, conducts a training session about identifying human trafficking July 2017 at the Community Reach Center site in Northglenn, Colorado.
Community Reach Center centers and school district sites administering the human trafficking pilot program:

Jail Services/Justice Accountability and Recovery
1) **Jail Services:** The mission of the Jail Services program is to assist inmates in the stabilization of mental health symptoms and ensure they have a smooth transition into community-based mental health services upon release.

2) **Justice Accountability and Recovery:** To provide services to our consumers with compassion, accountability, and respect, with the goal to assist them in achieving personal growth and understanding about behavioral health disorders.

Outpatient/Case Management/Front Desk
1) **Outpatient:** To enhance the social/emotional/mental well-being of children, adolescents, adults, and families. To provide a wide range of services for those age 7 and older in therapeutic and community settings to support the health and success of children and families.

2) **Case Management:** To serve individuals in a collaborative process with internal and external providers, addressing consumer’s specific needs to promote positive outcomes around establishing basic benefit acquisition and resource needs. Case management focuses on supporting consumers in achieving life balance and wellness by assisting them with gaining access to needed medical, social, educational, financial, and other services.

3) **Front Desk Staff:** All staff whose role is to greet or be the frontline face of services to consumers.

Peer Support/Assertive Community Treatment/School-Based Teams
1) **Peer Support:** The Peer Specialists program is composed of individuals using their lived experience with mental illness, substance use, addiction, or a combination of all three to work alongside peers/consumers enrolled in services at CRC. The goal of peer support is to provide person-centered and strength-based approaches to build trusting relationships with consumers to assist them on their path of recovery and wellness. Peer support services are guided by key concepts of recovery and building resiliency skills.

2) **Assertive Community Treatment:** The goal of the Assertive Community Treatment team (ACT) is to provide integrated services to individuals with serious and persistent mental illnesses. These services are provided at the right time, in the right place, and at the right frequency by a multidisciplinary team.

3) **School-Based Teams:** The School-Based Services team offers services to students ages 4 to 21 who are attending preschool through grade 12 in identified schools in Adams County School Districts 1, 12, 14, 27J, and 50, Charter Schools, and Front Range Community College (Westminster location). District 14 and 27J also includes school-based health care clinics and one pediatric primary care office. All services are evidenced-based/informed and tailored to fit populations with behavioral health needs. It is the goal of the program to enhance the quality of life, promote resiliency, and support recovery, health, and the overall well-being of the person and offer family services. Frequencies of services at CRC are dependent on medical necessity.