

# NORTHEASTERN ONTARIO RESEARCH ALLIANCE ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING

## All Community Engagement Sessions Are Complete:

North Bay (June 26th)  
Sudbury (June 28th)  
Sault Ste. Marie (October 4<sup>th</sup>),  
Little Current (October 5<sup>th</sup>),  
Kirkland Lake (October 11<sup>th</sup>),  
Cochrane (October 12<sup>th</sup>),  
Dokis First Nation (October  
26<sup>th</sup>)  
Parry Sound (November 24th)

Thank you, once again, to all  
who participated!

## Ongoing Projects:

We are developing an online questionnaire for community outreach workers and persons with lived experience who could not attend a session in person. We hope to have it ready for distribution early in the new year. We are also developing an online survey to gauge police officer perceptions of human trafficking and sexual exploitation in our region. We hope to have the police survey complete and ready for distribution by Spring 2018.



The Northeastern Ontario Research Alliance on Human Trafficking (NORAHT) is a partnership between Amelia Rising Sexual Assault Centre of Nipissing, the Union of Ontario Indians: Anishinabek Nation, the AIDS Committee of North Bay and Area and Nipissing University that formed in 2013 to examine human trafficking and sexual exploitation in northeastern Ontario specifically. In the fall of 2017 we hosted community engagement sessions in six communities in our region, thereby completing this phase of our project. The purpose of each of these sessions was to determine gaps and services as well as to identify existing resources across the region. Based on this research, NORAHT plans to initiate the development of service provider networks, toolkits and other resources specific to northeastern Ontario. If you and/or your organization is interested in helping to develop these resources we invite you contact us at [noraht@nipissingu.ca](mailto:noraht@nipissingu.ca).

Sessions were attended by representatives from various community outreach and service provider agencies as well as by persons with lived experience. Across the region, participants expressed a need for survivor-centric services, including peer support, addictions support and safe housing. Participants also determined a need to generate greater awareness of human trafficking and sexual exploitation. ***Importantly, participants identified the need to create platforms for persons with lived experience to share their expertise.***

## Next Steps Suggestions:

- Advocacy and Education:**  
 generate awareness about the ways in which human trafficking and sexual exploitation is occurring in northeastern Ontario. Suggestions include: creating educational pamphlets, poster campaign, presentations in schools. Generate dialogue within communities. Work to eliminate stigma and silence surrounding the topic.
- Create Regional Network:**  
 share information and resources as well as to strategize about how to directly address human trafficking and sexual exploitation.
- Compile Database on Existing Resources.**
- Culturally Safe Resources for Indigenous Peoples:**  
 create awareness about the complex ways in which settler colonialism affects Indigenous peoples and communities host healing and drum circles. Generate greater dialogue with Chiefs and councils
- Research & Dissemination of Findings:**  
 continue to do research specific to northeastern Ontario. Host conference.

### *Lack of Funding a Major Barrier to Addressing Human Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation in the North*

Each community identified lack of funding as a major barrier to addressing the specific needs of persons who are being/have been trafficked. Funding was also cited as an issue in terms of generating awareness. Participants shared ideas such as creating poster campaigns to educate the public and creating educational programming to be delivered to community service procurers, schools and police; however, lack of funding is a barrier. Further, participants identified the need for a safe house and/or transition house in the north, which would require significant funding to build and operate.

Amelia Rising Sexual Assault Centre of Nipissing applied to the Ministry of Community and Social Services Anti-Human Trafficking Community Supports Fund, unfortunately the application was unsuccessful. Through this initiative up to 18.7 million dollars will be distributed to community partners over three years, the majority of which has been allotted to communities in southern Ontario. Nevertheless, there were some agencies in northeastern Ontario who were successful in securing funds including: Ontario Native Women's Associations (Thunder Bay and Sudbury), Centre Passerelle pour femmes du Nord de Ontario (Timmins). The Temiskaming Native Women's Support Group in Kirkland Lake and the Missanabie Cree in Sault Ste. Marie each received grants under the Indigenous-led Initiative Fund (one-year projects). For more details visit: <https://news.ontario.ca/mcss/en/2017/09/ontario-funding-specialized-services-for-human-trafficking-survivors.html>.

### *Creating Culturally Safe Spaces & Resources*

Across the region, participants emphasized the need for culturally safe spaces and resources, specifically for Indigenous and francophone peoples. This means ensuring that support workers are respectful of Indigenous life ways and protocols, including holistic approaches to healing. One participant noted that many existing resources fail to acknowledge the importance of spirituality within Indigenous practices; thus, healing, talking and drum circles were recommended.