

Katie Montague 0:11

Welcome back to the gwelf Wellington, women in crisis podcast or the quick add podcast. We're publishing this on July 30, as it is World Day against trafficking persons. Here at quick we are passionate about bringing more attention to human trafficking within the gwelf Wellington area. Every month we're going to bring you episodes discussing something that's going on in the world, and how it may be affecting human trafficking. Today's episode will be discussion on the relationship between human trafficking and immigrant services. Within this chat Emma Callen the past anti human trafficking counselor interviews Diane Ramirez, the program manager of immigrant services Guelph Wellington topics covered our race, immigration and how this all intersects within human trafficking services. According to stat can data collected between 2006 and 2016 but 32% of reported human trafficking involves an element of immigration, these industry With intersecting identities faced barriers such as surface language, stigma and uncertainty around status. Understanding the unique needs of human trafficking survivors with immigration service needs is something Diane Ramirez is passionate about herself. And with that I let her and Emma take it away. immigrant service Guelph Wellington programs can be offered thanks to the contribution of funders from different levels of government, the main one being immigration, refugees and citizenship Canada, which allows addressing the needs of permanent residents and protected persons. The Government of Ontario United Way and the city of Guelph also make contributions that allow other immigration categories access, support and care our community.

Dayami Ramirez 1:35

My name is Danny Ramirez and I'm the program manager at immigrant services in wealth. Yeah, thank you for inviting me to be part of these.

Emma Callon 1:42

Thank you. Thank you. So um, yeah, we like we've worked together to support clients that have access services through the anti human trafficking program at Guelph, Wellington women in crisis and I'm just wondering what your experiences Experience is with either labor trafficking or sex trafficking and the immigration system like what are some of the patterns? Or what are some of the things that you see and the ways that you support people who have experienced trafficking?

Dayami Ramirez 2:20

Well, during the last few years, we have been more involved with the anti human trafficking initiative in gwelf. Basically, as members of the Action Committee Against Domestic violence and sexual assault for women in crisis, we have had quite a lot of exposure to trainings and educational workshops and, you know, resources for staff to be prepared for when we have we may come across cases of human trafficking or labor trafficking. So we haven't had disclosure from clients directly in the last few years a lot. So pretty much we are a point of referral for individuals who are experienced in the trafficking. So we have been able to support the different service providers in Wales by making sure that the immigration questions are answered in a way that are going to be meaningful for the individuals. I have

been personally part of a few cases and I've been working closely with women in crisis and the sexual assault Center at the hospital. Most of the cases are for individuals who may be vulnerable because they do not know their rights, because they are not sure about where they stand in the immigration process and what would be the implications if they decide to come out and talk about it and maybe proceed against the perpetrators. So oftentimes, for example, if you are a permanent resident of Canada, and you have been sponsored, and then you're evicted because either your spouse or a family member who has supported you to come is one of the persons involved in this situation. Oftentimes you come with a passport, that would be your proof of ID, and down the road, you're going to get a permanent resident card, which is a temporary document that will expire in five years. So if you are dispossessed of your passport, you may feel that you have chances to be deported. So and that is not the situation. So having that conversation, oftentimes with the clients when they first come for services at our agency, is the one opportunity we have to talk about these situations right. So we talk to our new comer clients about the importance of having ownership of your document. What it is what it means to have your passport with you if your passport is taken away from you what to do in a situation where your permanent resident card is lost or somebody takes the Permanent Resident Card for you, and what are your rights if you need to replace these documents. So, you can be surprised on times when for example, it could be as simple as coming for a language assessment. So if you we have hired, especially women who come to the language assessment and through the assessment, they start to talk about some situations that may be a flag for the assessor. So we have a system where the settlement counselor will be brought up into the conversation so that we can provide information about the rights that the the newcomers have. So sometimes we talk about

the passport is is a personal ID that you have to have with you If you don't have the Permanent Resident Card, it doesn't mean that you're going to lose your rights, you are still a permanent resident of Canada, and we can always help you to replace those documents. So pretty much what we do is to try to navigate the system. And yeah, when it is a permanent resident is an easy one, because we know the rights but they don't know their rights. So just giving that educational piece in the initial session make a difference for so many. But there are some other situations when if you are coming to Canada, and you seek refugee protection, for example, those cases are even more vulnerable because they don't have a permanent status yet. So they can be falling through the cracks of the system like because they need to go to a hearing and they need to wait for a decision from the IRB and then they may think that if they don't do what they are forced to do, they are not going to have a chance to get the prediction of the governor And because they don't have a permanent status, it could be more complicated. Mm hmm. So, this, I think it is in any stages of the process, even if you are if you have the right to become a Canadian citizen, but you don't know what you will, for how long you have to be in Canada before you can apply for Canadian citizenship or if you have been a victim and you don't have any of your IDs with you, you may think you are unable to apply for Canadian citizenship. So having that conversation and supported supporting the other service providers with the proper information will make a difference down the road. So I think our role at immigrant services here in Wales is to work closer with your organization so that the staff working frontline know that they we are a point of contact if you have any questions related to immigration. So we are Always happy to assist in any ways. And if we are the first point of disclosure, then we also know who to reach out to. So I think we are very lucky to be in a city that really cares about these issues that we have a system in place that we have an amazing committee

that is leading the leadership of the committee with women in crisis is has really made a difference and we know each other, we know who to reach out. And that is, that is amazing because I don't I'm not aware that every city may have a system like ours. And you know, just having a face to a name will make a difference and as sly usually called it is the warm transfer what makes a difference, and we love that. So we want to be part of the process. We want to be one of the enabling pieces in the puzzle that will make the warm transfer a reality. So we always encourage service providers to contact us. And for clients, what we try to do is to make sure that our staff frontline are trained, that they know their resources that they know who to reach out if they need any support, because we don't have all the answers and some cases can be very complicated again, because the system is set up in a in a way that it takes a lot of efforts from all parts bodies to navigate the system. So I think we are in the right track.

Emma Callon 9:33

I think guelph is pretty unique is pretty unique.

Dayami Ramirez 9:35

And every I feel that we all care and we want to do more and more. So I hope this is an initiative that will continue to grow here and that then hopefully, we wouldn't need to have this in place. Right. So ideally, there shouldn't be a need for these but that's not a reality, but what we have to Do we still be ready to provide the best services that we can? And that immigrants services? were really happy to be part of the process?

Emma Callon 10:08

Oh, that's so great. Thank you. Um, in your experience, are there certain ways that somebody who might have the intention of trafficking somebody can explain a precarious immigration status? So if somebody has is either refugee status, maybe they are not in Canada legally, maybe they have a temporary work permit? Maybe they? I don't know if I said permanent resident. But if you are in Canada, under those circumstances, are there certain ways that

somebody can exploit that?

Dayami Ramirez 10:47

Yeah, and we see that a lot. We see that not only for trafficking, but for domestic violence so the perpetrators will use that this is you don't have a status in Canada. They can see Switch the information they can be misleading even if you have a status they can tell you know, you don't have a status in Canada because I have your passport. So if you don't know that you will never lose your rights just because you don't have your passport, you're going to be a victim. And unless you come across someone who can tell you know, you, you keep your rights. And even if you don't have a passport, you

can move on. So for sure people manipulating information a lot. And unfortunately for those who, who don't have the knowledge of where they stand in the process, it can be really tricky because if you don't know what you're entitled to, if you don't know your rights, how can you fight back? So

that's why the education that you provided is so important,

it is really important and we I we have embedded that in the in the initial sessions within your within your clients. So we have a neat assessment checklist. And we talk about the 24 seven crisis, phone number, we talk about emergency services, even if they're brand new, and they there is no indication that the clients may need that information or the initial session, we have learned from experience that probably that is the only opportunity we're going to have to sit with that person and let them know there is help. There are services in wealth that you can access. It is a very soft conversation, but we try to make sure that they know that they can come back to us if they need more information. And usually, even if it is a couple, we we tell them at the beginning, so that you understand in Canada, privacy works. So we try to explain with simple words. What that means because the countries where we come from, that's not always the case. Right? So we don't understand that confidentiality term, or we don't trust the systems. We don't trust them. Government and then when we come to Canada we need an education about confidentiality means this so we try to put it in simple words. We say you are today we are coming together so it all the information that we share with you. It is okay to share in front of this person who is here with you. But if tomorrow you want to come back and you want to have a conversation just with me, even if your husband comes and asked me was such and such here today, with by law, we cannot tell him we have to protect you. We that's what confidentiality means. Anything that you tell me is going to stay with us. Unless a special circumstances for sure. But we don't have to disclose to a family member or a friend if you were here and what what was the need that you have to access the services. So it is important that you know that Canada is a different country and this is how this system works because That may be the only opportunity you have to tell this person, if you need help come back, and this is going to work. Right. So that's why we have embedded that in danisha sessions with the clients. And it has, in our view, it has made a difference for some. It's so

Emma Callon 14:16

wonderful. Thank you. You're very welcome. I think that's so important. And just maybe on the the few cases that you are familiar with, has anything stood out as being unique or common? Like, either in terms of like, vulnerabilities or, you know, I don't know, what are your like, personal reflections on maybe trafficking in what it might look like in Guelph and what it might look like in communities of newcomers to Canada. If you have any thoughts on

Dayami Ramirez 14:54

that, yeah. From from my point of view, I think, again, I have to ask To celebrate the the system we have in wealth, I think things move quickly we we connect quickly we check in and we try to get the

information at the right time so that we can help the individuals I find that from the cases that we have been working together that there is some I think for newcomers especially, there may be a clash in the VA in the family values of newcomers especially for the youth. What I can see is that um because youth again are vulnerable, when you are at home you may be trying to assimilate and follow the family values that come from a different cultural background. So when you are exposed to the daily life out there in the schools or in you know, they everywhere in In in your daily life, you are going to try to integrate in the Canadian system. So there may be a clash in values and oftentimes, newcomers are afraid because they don't have the power is in the knowledge you have about the system and how things work and how to ask for help. So, I can for example, I can tell you that some cases, there may be a lot of conflicts and family dynamics that may be position in the US or the individuals into a more vulnerable position. And he's again, not being able to have an open conversation about what's going on, because the stigma or because he will have a repercussion with my my parents in a way that is going to be worse than what I'm going through. Right so you don't want to hurt the family members. You Don't you don't want to be the one that is going to be pointed out. So, oftentimes, things happen because you, you are you are, you are not empowered, you don't know what to do, you don't know who to go to. And you are trying to be part of the new your new home in Canada. And at the same time you're, you know, you cannot go back to your to your home country because of many different situations. So you don't want to be the shame of your family. You don't want to to add to the the trauma that the family has gone through in some cases already, right? Or that you have gone as an individual if you have come from a war country or from a refugee, who has been for so many years in a refugee camp, and then you're ready come with your own biases your own traumas. When you are here, you are already prepped to be vulnerable. And you can be falling victim of those who have already more knowledge and who are who are going to make sure that you are going to be doing what they want you to do if you don't have the right information, or if you don't know who to go for help. And it is sad, especially for the youth, because I see some of the cases is that family if the family was aware on how to support how to have those conversations, how the system works, so many things could be done differently. So I think the the most the role that we all have is pretty much been in the proactive side of the of the spectrum. So we have to make sure that the information is out there. We have to make sure that we provide sessions in different languages like we need To provide interpretation services so that not only the parents, the youth, everyone has access to this information, and then they can,

they can understand how the system works and what supports are out there in the community. And I think that is for newcomers to Canada, this is a key point. So you will need interpretation services so that we can make a difference because if we have all the information in English, and we have just these conversations in English, and we don't bring the parties that can support that extra help in the in the other languages, I don't think we're going to be as effective. So, again, information sessions is is crucial and part of our settlement workers program in schools. We try to make sure that we touch on these topics with the youth with the newcomer youth. And oftentimes we provide interpretation so that we can bring that extra that schools are to In a lot of communities doing a lot, but we bring that differently lens by providing interpretation services so that we can ensure that the kids know what we want them to learn. So, yeah, I think we're on the right path. But there's a lot of work that needs to be done. And I think studying from improving the immigration system improving. I would say that the application process for so many different streams of immigration can be improved a lot so that people are not so

vulnerable. Having a refugee claim goes through years and years before having a permanent resident status or having so many challenges for individuals with children who are born in Canada, but the parents do not have a permanent status is again, an opportunity for for these things to happen. Right. So I think we all can do our part. I'm pretty happy to be part of an organization that works every day to make a difference. So it is a privilege to be able to do that. And, yeah, if I can be of more help,

Emma Callon 21:14

I feel similarly I feel like this work is a privilege. I'm a just you mentioned, it'd be great for parents to be able to have certain conversations with their kids. The Fcj refugee refugee center recommended this podcast be available in different language languages, which I think is

Dayami Ramirez 21:33

excellent.

Emma Callon 21:34

Yeah. But I was wondering like, what might some of those conversations be that parents could be having with their kids? Would it be what the information you're providing to parents so just about how the immigration system works and, and your rights as a person living in Canada, like, what would be some of those conversations?

Dayami Ramirez 21:53

I think we're missing in. I attended one of the presentations. You did I learned so much myself. And I remember in the room, there were doctors, immigration doctors, there were social workers at high schools, there were at least at the table that I was sitting in, there were people from many different organizations. And we all were surprised to learn about the things you presented, for example, that terms and the the situations that if I, as a parent, I go through the text messages and I see that maybe I'm not it's not gonna click in with me like, I will not have a clue that this is what this is about. So parents need to learn the situation with the parents, and it could not only for newcomer parents, but in general. So we need to have more exposure to these. It's not for just the people in in our social services. And you know, for us, this is this is everyday information and we breathe this but for parents in Generally on the community, there has to be more information about what is happening. And I would suggest to make it locally if you talk in general about what's happening in Canada and this and that. So sometimes you feel that that's so distant from my reality that you don't think this is going to happen to, to your neighborhood, to your, to your family, to the to your kids school. So I think sharing what is happening locally is crucial for parents to understand that this is something that can happen to any of us. And having more information sessions, like like the ones that you presented would make it a big difference. Because even for us who work in in the social services, you see, you know, this is happening and you but at the same time, if you don't have those conversations at home, our kids are gonna grow with really a

lot of resources. Because we talk about these we take precautions, we have our, you know, if we don't tell them everything most things can happen. But for for many new commerce, this is some they have so many things that are priorities that they don't think about this, they are thinking about how am I going to get a job? How can I learn English so that I can find a meaningful job? How can I have my credentials assessed so that I can you know, have the satisfaction to provide for my family and at the same time, how can I juggle with my kids education? How can I be, how can I understand the system? Should I do more at the schools or is it okay to ask these questions to the teacher so there are so many things that you are worried about that you are pretty much not going to make learning about what is happening and then the vulnerability of our children. And then ourselves, you're not gonna probably, this is not gonna be one of the things that you want to learn about on the first stages of your settlement in Canada. So, but I think that it is our duty to make sure that those sessions are embedded in our programs. And those who need the sessions are going to have access to that information and that the information is available in different languages. And then there is a problem, the outreach, the promotion that needs to take place is is there that we something like these, these initiatives that you're doing the podcast should be in all the websites for all the services in wealth? Right. So yeah, I think we have to do a lot too. But for sure, more on the proactive. We have to work more before things happen. And yeah, there's where we have to pretty much center our efforts.

Emma Callon 25:59

You're absolutely Right, I mean,

a parent who is looking for a job, who's maybe spending time learning English or dealing with this immigration system that we have, they might not have time to look through their kids text messages and, you know, try it, you know, look at Urban Dictionary, but what does this really mean? It's who is my kid talking to what is Snapchat?

Dayami Ramirez 26:21

And they trust the system, you trust the system, you you think this is not going to happen in Canada, right? You know, the school This is everything is good or not. The system is is set up so that our kids are successful and that they are safe and protected. And how often do we come across information about you know, bullying and the critical cases that are taking place in our region because the kids they don't know who to go to our data know what to say or they don't know how to answer when they are coming across situations that have danger. So, yeah, that's true. Thank you.

You're very welcome.

Emma Callon 27:09

So if there is one thing that you wanted people to know, either families that are new to Canada, families that are new to wealth, or individuals, if you wanted them to know one thing about trafficking or about immigrant services, what would you say like what is a take home piece of information?

Dayami Ramirez 27:33

there is help.

Never stop looking for information. Feel confident to ask all the questions. All questions are good questions. And if you have the right to ask for help in your language, so you are always welcome to come to us and rest assured that we're going to. If we cannot help, we're going to find a way to make a referral for someone who can help you. So I would say always, never give up. Keep your hopes that tomorrow is going to be a better day. There's always a tomorrow. And then if you need help, just ask.

Emma Callon 28:21

Awesome, that's so lovely. And is there anything you wanted to promote or plug? Like, does immigrant services have social media or a website, you have any upcoming events, anything like that?

Dayami Ramirez 28:32

Yes, we do have a Facebook page where most of our events are posted. And we also have a website where we have a calendar, a monthly calendar with all the events and the workshops. I would say, always check the website or just give us a call. And if you don't speak English, just say your name and your language and we're going to make sure that we can get back to you. If you need any help. information. Coming up, we have the income tax season. So we're going to be helping all newcomer families and low income families to file taxes for free. It is a busy time of the year for us. So you are going to be able to access help in your language. Because we have over 23 volunteers now who speak many different languages. So just reach out and at least this is an important stage, especially for families with children to ensure that you continue to receive the benefits and yeah,

Emma Callon 29:33

thank you so much. You're very welcome. I appreciate your time.

Katie Montague 29:47

This podcast was recorded in February March 2020. Then as you all know, the pandemic is changing everyone's day to day lives. Therefore some information has changed and how to keep up with both quick and immigrant services. If you're interested in updates on this offices of immigrant services

qualified. You can find them on their website www.isw.ca and their service tab. And feel free to follow global into women in crisis on Instagram at [quick or G ww IC](#) and the same Twitter handle or [@facebook.com slash GW women in crisis](#). Thanks so much and see you next time.

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