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Human Trafficking Public Awareness Campaign Research Executive Summary

Prepared for Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada

Prepared by Narrative Research

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Canada 

Human Trafficking Public Awareness Campaign Research

Summary Report

Prepared for Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada

Supplier Name: Narrative Research

November 2020

This public opinion research report presents the results of focus groups conducted by Narrative Research on behalf of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada. The research study was done using qualitative focus groups, specifically 25 online Netfocus discussion groups. Five groups were conducted in each of five regions, namely Western Canada (BC and AB), Prairies (SK and MB), Ontario, Quebec, and Eastern Canada (NB, NS, PE and NL). Within each of those regions, one group was conducted with each of four audiences: male youth 16-19 years old; female youth 16-19 years old; male young adults 20-25 years old; and female young adults 20-25 years old. In addition, two groups were conducted with Indigenous women 19 to 24 years old (Ontario/Atlantic and Prairies/West) and three groups were conducted with parents of youth 13-19 years old (Quebec, Ontario/Atlantic and Prairies/West). Each group included a mix of ages (within range), education level, employment status and household income. Groups also included some representation of people with disabilities, members of the LGBTQ2+ community, newcomers less than 10 years and cultural backgrounds. Quebec sessions were conducted in French while other focus groups were conducted in English.

Across groups, 221 individuals were recruited, while 183 people participated in the sessions – averaging 7 per focus group. Each group discussion lasted approximately two hours and participants received a cash incentive of \$100 in appreciation for their time. The focus groups were conducted between October 19th and 28th, 2020.

Cette publication est aussi disponible en français sous le titre:

Recherche sur la campagne de sensibilisation du public à la traite de personnes : FR Sommaire

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Executive Summary

Narrative Research Inc.

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POR Registration Number: 031-20

Contract Award Date: September 4, 2020

Contracted Cost: \$107,474.30

Background and Research Methodology

In 2019, the Government of Canada announced its commitment to invest new federal funding in the *National Strategy to Combat Human Trafficking* as a means to strengthen Canada's response to human trafficking. The National Strategy aims to frame all federal activities under the internationally-recognized pillars of prevention, protection, prosecution and partnerships, and adding a new pillar of "empowerment". Moreover, the Strategy will support broader Government of Canada commitments, prevent and address gender-based violence, and support the safety and security of Indigenous peoples. The financial commitment proposed includes an initial investment of \$57 million over five years beginning in 2019-2020, and \$10 million annually thereafter.

Insights obtained from 2018 nationwide Human Trafficking consultations indicated the pressing need for increased public awareness and knowledge to help communities and stakeholders better recognize the early signs of human trafficking, reduce the stigmatization of victims, and improve proactive response to incidents. As the first step in addressing public awareness needs, Public Safety's Marketing team conducted research in March of 2020 to establish baseline levels of awareness about Canadians' perceptions, behaviours, and understanding of human trafficking, as well as to help identify optimal target audiences.

As part of the National Strategy, a qualitative project was undertaken across the country, to inform a multi-year public awareness campaign. At this stage in the campaign development, Public Safety is interested in evaluating the relative effectiveness of proposed ad concepts with four target audiences, to ensure that the concepts will draw the attention of those vulnerable populations. The research findings will guide the final choice and development of a campaign creative concept. More specifically, research objectives include:

- Evaluation of three ideas for a public awareness campaign (each including one video animatic and a sample print ad) to determine if the content is clearly understood; credible; relevant and of value; appealing and attention-grabbing; memorable; and able to motivate to take intended action(s).
- Determine which concept is best at raising the public's awareness about the issue of human trafficking.
- Assess the perceived impact of ten related messages.
- Determine the best terminology to speak of various types of human trafficking.

To achieve these objectives, a qualitative research approach was undertaken. Specifically, 25 online Netfocus (online, real-time) discussion groups were conducted. Five groups were conducted in each of five regions, namely Western Canada (BC and AB), Prairies (SK and MB), Ontario, Quebec, and Eastern Canada (NB, NS, PE and NL). Within each of those regions, one group was conducted with each of four



audiences: male youth 16-19 years old; female youth 16-19 years old; male young adults 20-25 years old; and female young adults 20-25 years old. In addition, two groups were conducted with Indigenous women 19 to 24 years old (Ontario/Atlantic and Prairies/West) and three groups were conducted with parents of youth 13-19 years old (Quebec, Ontario/Atlantic and Prairies/West). Each group included a mix of ages (within range), education level, employment status and household income. Groups also included some representation of people with disabilities, members of the LGBTQ2+ communities, newcomers less than 10 years, and a variety of cultural backgrounds. Quebec sessions were conducted in French while other focus groups were conducted in English.


Across groups, 221 individuals were recruited, while 183 people participated in the sessions – averaging 7 per focus group. Each group discussion lasted approximately two hours and participants received a cash incentive of \$100 in appreciation for their time. The focus groups were conducted between October 19th and 28th, 2020.

All participants were recruited per the specifications for the Government of Canada. Recruitment was conducted through qualitative panels stored on Canadian servers, with follow-up calls to confirm the details provided and to ensure quotas were met.

This report presents the findings from the study. Caution must be exercised when interpreting the results from this study, as qualitative research is directional only. Results cannot be attributed to the overall population under study, with any degree of confidence.

Political Neutrality Certification

I hereby certify as a Representative of Narrative Research that the deliverables fully comply with the Government of Canada political neutrality requirements outlined in the ***Directive on the Management of Communications***. Specifically, the deliverables do not include information on electoral voting intentions, political party preferences, standings with the electorate or ratings of the performance of a political party or its leaders.

Signed 

Margaret Brigley, CEO & Partner | Narrative Research
Date: November 17, 2020



Key Findings and Conclusions

Findings from the *Human Trafficking Public Awareness Campaign Research* reveal that there is limited awareness and knowledge of issues related to human trafficking, and it is primarily perceived to be more prevalent internationally than in Canada. As such, the idea of a public education campaign was well received, especially if it were combined with initiatives incorporated into the school curriculum. With the Internet, social media, and news outlets being heavily relied upon for information, the public education campaign on human trafficking would benefit from a strong online presence.

During the testing, three concepts for a public awareness campaign were reviewed and discussed. The one referred to as 'Uncontained' was clearly preferred across English-speaking audiences, for being thought-provoking and addressing misconceptions regarding human trafficking. The opinions of French-speaking participants were mixed, with each of the three concepts equally selected for different reasons, as most effective in raising the public's awareness about human trafficking.

Looking at reactions to each idea individually, the 'Uncontained' concept was considered as clearly communicating that human trafficking 'is not what you think it is' and that it can begin with a healthy and happy romantic relationship or work situation. Identifying human trafficking as the topic of the campaign upfront in the print ads' headlines and in the narration of the video, contributed in part to the campaign's message clarity. The images and scenario debunked the myth that human trafficking involves smuggling or kidnapping of people and conveyed that human trafficking can happen in more familiar and seemingly normal situations. That said, the labour image did not clearly show a Canadian context nor did it establish a hierarchical work relationship. Across both video and print, the visuals reinforced gender stereotypes.

Despite clearly identifying human trafficking as the topic, the 'Uncontained' concept failed to effectively explain the signs leading to the abusive relationship, as well as not showing the dire consequences it may have on victims. As such, this concept did not communicate the severity and seriousness of the situation and thus, it failed to emotionally engage viewers. The presence of statistics, however, helped grab attention and establish some relevance. This concept appeared to have a broader target audience, though as with the other concepts, it lacked a strong call to action.

Reactions to the 'Hard to See' concept were mixed, and although the message lacked clarity and broad relevance, seeing how the victim reacts to the abuse, and better explaining the progression from a positive to a negative situation, was felt to be more emotionally engaging. The print ads were less effective than the video at suggesting the seriousness of the situations. Nonetheless, the appearance of consent caused confusion and the scenario spoke more closely of kinky sex, abuse or rape, than what is conceived as human trafficking. As such, in its current form, there is a risk of normalizing or trivializing sexual exploitation, especially in how the concept presents the idea of consent. Further there is a risk that this concept could act as an emotional trigger to those impacted by sexual violence. The campaign's target audience was felt to be more narrowly including young women and victims of sexual abuse, and to a lesser extent friends and relatives. The visuals in the print ads spoke to a younger audience, as they were reminiscent of cropped images they use when posting on social media.



The 'Changed' concept elicited mixed reactions, though it failed to effectively engage participants. Moreover, while relatable to many and providing an emotional connection, the 'Changed' concept elicited confusion and did not succeed overall in achieving the intended call to action. Indeed, some felt it difficult to understand the scenario in the video, and the print ads' headlines did not clearly highlight a negative or abusive situation, nor were the bright colours deemed appropriate to convey the seriousness of the issue. The lack of visuals and wordiness in the print ads further affected the message clarity. Nonetheless, hearing the victim's voice in the video, and the familiarity with the claims made in the print ads' headlines, caused some to feel more emotionally connected to this concept than to the other two.

Results suggest that consideration should be given to further develop the 'Uncontained' concept, with some modifications. Specifically, the campaign should more clearly show what leads to an abusive relationship and what type of abuse is considered human trafficking. It should also show how victims are impacted and more clearly establish the seriousness of the situation through visuals and additional statistics.

Regardless of the concept selected, there is merit in campaign materials addressing myths in terms of who is most at risk and how human trafficking manifests itself. Consideration should also be given to include a stronger call to action, notably in understanding why it is important for everyone to get involved, and what can be done to address the issue. This could be done by inviting the public to visit the website to learn how to identify possible situations or indicators of human trafficking; learn what are unacceptable behaviours to report; or how victims are impacted, as examples.

Incorporating statistics and facts about the human trafficking situations in campaign materials is also an important component to grab attention and address misconceptions. It would also have the added benefit of explaining the choice of featuring certain audiences in the ads, to avoid a perception that the campaign reinforces stereotypes in who is victimized. Nonetheless, it will be important for the campaign to balance the portrayal of the most common types of human trafficking, while demonstrating diversity.

When reviewing ten statements about human trafficking, messages with facts or statistics and those with clear direction on what people can do to address the issue, were felt to be stronger and more engaging. By contrast, more general, broad or vague statements were felt to be less powerful.

Perhaps not surprising given the lack of awareness regarding how human trafficking manifests itself, there is a preference for more specific terminology to identify various types of human trafficking. That said, opinions were divided with the use of the term 'slavery' in the context of human trafficking. It was either thought to stress the severity of an abusive situation, or to be more appropriate when speaking of discrimination. Mixed opinions were offered in the best term to describe the traffic of people, between "modern slavery" and "human trafficking" in English, while the French term "traite des personnes" was deemed most appropriate. Terms like "sex slavery" or "sex trafficking" in English, and "esclavage sexuel" in French were considered as more precisely illustrating the concept of sexual exploitation. The terms "domestic labour trafficking" in English and "trafic de main d'oeuvre domestique" in French were preferred to speak of the exploitation of someone in a private household. Finally, the traffic of organs was considered as best described by the term "organ trafficking" in English and "trafic d'organes" in French.