

FREEWAYNC

AWARENESS & PREVENTION

HUMAN TRAFFICKING CURRICULUM

PILOT STUDY SUMMARY 2018-2019

FreewayNC is an awareness and prevention human trafficking curriculum developed by AbolitionNC. It provides facilitators with age-appropriate materials to equip students with critical safety education. Videos and activities are designed to engage students in personal ownership and application. The FreewayNC series includes animated videos for students, an online teacher training module, and a teacher guide (available in print and downloadable form) with printable student activity sheets. The curriculum also incorporates a trauma-informed approach.

AN EVIDENCE-BASED APPROACH

The FreewayNC curriculum was developed using research-based data on human trafficking. The curriculum has been reviewed and approved by experts in the field of human trafficking, education, law enforcement, psychology, counseling and law to ensure the content is thorough, accurate and age-appropriate. In addition to these measures, the creators of FreewayNC wanted to ensure that the curriculum materials effectively produce the desired results in actual classroom environments. AbolitionNC has created an evidence-based curriculum, meaning that its beta content has been tested in North Carolina classrooms in a way that produced data demonstrating its effectiveness, and was further refined based on feedback from those classrooms.

A pilot study was conducted during the 2018-2019 school year with curriculum materials in beta version, utilized and evaluated by two county-wide North Carolina public school districts (one rural and one urban). Middle school and high school health and safety teachers were provided with training prior to using the curriculum in order to prepare them for the topic. In one district, the teachers at the training were given the opportunity to take packets of tests to give students before and after being taught from the curriculum in order to gauge their pre-and-post curriculum knowledge about human trafficking. Approximately eighty teachers were also given a survey before the training to gauge their awareness of the topic, and then were encouraged to follow up with an evaluation of the curriculum and of the awareness in their classroom (student and teacher) after teaching the curriculum.

Significant adjustments were made based on the initial results of educator feedback and pretests/posttests, in addition to the continued pursuit of known best practices in education, further research, evaluation, and expert feedback. The curriculum in its beta version, called *Extraordinary You*, was largely structured as a teacher guide with slide decks for presentation by the teacher, paired with corresponding classroom activities, activity sheets, and suggested dialogue. As a result of the piloting phase of curriculum development, several significant changes were made to materials. The content was

expanded into three separate, age-appropriate levels designed for early middle school (*Incredible You*), late middle school (*Extraordinary You*), and high school (*Empower You*) audiences. The structure was adjusted to provide a three-lesson format for each level with guidance provided for teaching in one or two lessons as needed. The slide deck content was expanded and developed into animated videos with themes specific to each level. All three levels in the series include core critical safety content and new information to deepen student knowledge and encourage their engagement of issues to protect themselves as well as others.



A still-frame from an "Empower You" animated video

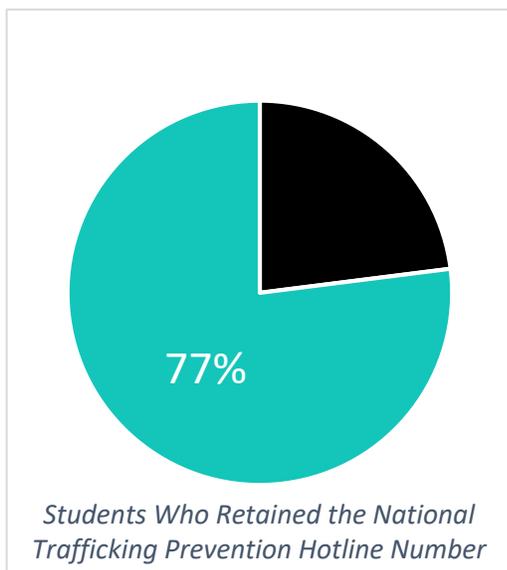
PILOT-STUDY FINDINGS

Data from analyzing 90 student pretests and 92 student posttests indicates that student knowledge and preparedness to protect themselves or a friend from human trafficking does significantly improve as a result of this curriculum as presented in its beta version. **Students who could give a reasonably complete and accurate definition of human trafficking increased by 38 percentage points, and students who could articulate an understanding of who a human trafficker might be increased by 54 percentage points. After the curriculum, 92% of students could list up to three relevant steps they could use to protect themselves from traffickers on the Internet, representing a 38 percentage point increase. Students who could identify some relevant ways a trafficker might trick someone into**

human trafficking increased by 56 percentage points, to 93% of students overall after completing FreewayNC.

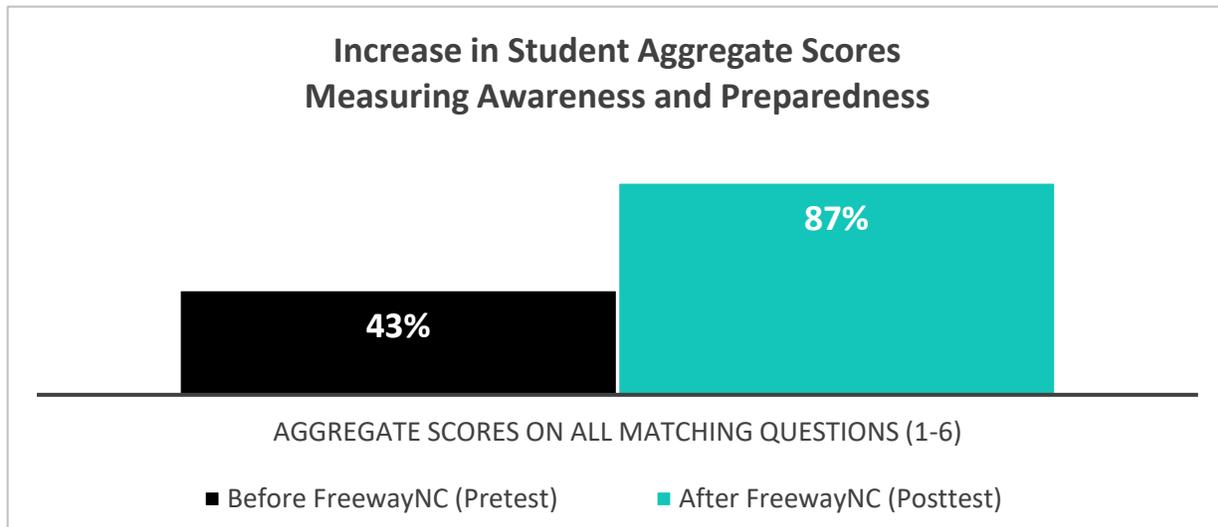
Students who could list up to three possible warning signs of a human trafficking victim increased from 30% to 82% (a 52 percentage point increase). It was found that prior to learning the curriculum, 70% of students could already name at least one of the things a trafficked person should do to get help, even without knowledge of human trafficking context. This figure was increased by an additional 25 percentage points, to 95% of students who, after participating in FreewayNC, correctly named at least one of the recommended things a trafficked person should do. Student responses could be considered correct on the pretest even if only one way to get help

was listed, so it should be noted that more students were able to list multiple correct options on their posttest, even though this was not quantified in the student test analysis. Students also frequently mentioned the national human trafficking hotline when responding to this question, but only after



participating in the curriculum. After the curriculum was completed, 77% of students overall could recall the national help hotline for human trafficking from memory (98% among 9th graders).

When comparing student responses to the first six questions from student pretests versus posttests, which were the same questions worded the same on both tests, students produced an aggregate score of 43% on these questions for the pretest, and 87% for the posttest. It can therefore be said that this represents a 44 percentage point overall increase in key human trafficking awareness and preparedness benchmarks among participating students.



Though the sample size was small and not statistically significant, early findings indicate that teachers also were successfully equipped through administering the FreewayNC curriculum and being trained beforehand. At the beginning of the pilot study, only 20% of teachers felt either sufficiently or very well informed about the issue of human trafficking, compared to 92% after implementing FreewayNC.

After using the curriculum, 83% of teachers ranked perceived relevance of the topic to their students at either four or five out of five stars, and none perceived it to be below three stars on the relevance scale. Small post-curriculum sample size could have skewed results on relevance because it is plausible that teachers finding the topic to be strongly relevant to their students would be more likely to complete the follow-up assessment, however it must be noted that even before their training, 56% of all participating teachers gave the four or five stars on the relevance scale and only 18% gave one or two stars. It is safe to say that findings indicate the majority of teachers understand the relevance of trafficking prevention for their students; this is important, as teachers are trusted adults uniquely positioned to identify warning signs and assist students with accessing help.

Before FreewayNC, only 6% of teachers would estimate that their students were either sufficiently or very well informed on the topic of human trafficking, while 56% said they either had no idea or would estimate their students were not at all informed. After FreewayNC, 75% estimated their students were either sufficiently or very well informed, and none responded that they had no idea or that their students were not at all informed.

Teachers were asked to give an overall estimation of overall how well-prepared and motivated their students were in regard to key abilities and actions that help prevent human trafficking. The chart below summarizes these estimations before and after FreewayNC. On every key item, teachers assessed that their students would fall heavily into the “Not at All” or “Somewhat” prepared categories before engaging this curriculum, while in all but one item the teachers assessed the majority of their students were either “Sufficiently” or “Very Well” prepared and motivated, having been taught using this curriculum. The one exception was on students sharing what they have learned with others, which was a 50/50 split, still representing a notable increase.

Teacher Estimation of how Well-Prepared and Motivated their Students Were for Key Human Trafficking Prevention Actions/Abilities				
Key Actions/Abilities	Not at All	Somewhat	Sufficiently	Very Well
Identify the warning signs of trafficked or at-risk youth	37%	54%	9%	0%
	0%	25%	42%	33%
Identify a trafficker and grooming/recruiting behaviors	38%	52%	10%	0%
	0%	33%	42%	25%
Share what they have learned with others	35%	54%	11%	0%
	0%	50%	25%	25%
Make wise personal choices to protect themselves from trafficking danger	27%	64%	9%	0%
	0%	17%	50%	33%
Warn a friend who may be getting caught up in a trafficking situation	30%	63%	7%	0%
	0%	33%	42%	25%
Speak up for or help a friend report a potential trafficking-related concern	28%	63%	7%	1%
	0%	42%	33%	25%

= Before FreewayNC

= After FreewayNC

How Equipped Teachers Felt to Engage in Key Trafficking Prevention Practices in the Classroom				
Key Practice	Not at All	Somewhat	Sufficiently	Very Well
Identify the warning signs of trafficked or at-risk youth	17%	53%	20%	10%
	0%	8%	50%	42%
Identify a trafficker and grooming/recruiting behaviors	22%	46%	23%	9%
	0%	8%	58%	33%
Educate students on human trafficking using a trauma-informed approach	32%	47%	15%	6%
	0%	42%	33%	25%
Assist a student with response and reporting of a potential trafficking-related concern	20%	48%	27%	5%
	0%	8%	67%	25%

= Before FreewayNC

= After FreewayNC

Teachers, after using FreewayNC, felt better equipped to practice the items related to human trafficking prevention for their students, as shown in the preceding chart. After teaching the curriculum, no teachers responded that they felt “Not at All” equipped, and on every item the majority felt either “Sufficiently” or “Very Well” equipped to engage in key human trafficking prevention practices in the classroom. It is also worth noting that even in the small sample size of a dozen teachers, there were two instances in which teachers indicated they were able to help a student that shared something which made them aware of a potentially trafficking-related situation.

Overall, these findings demonstrate that not only are students significantly more informed about human trafficking and how to stay safe, their teachers are better equipped to help their students as a direct result of implementing FreewayNC (beta) in the classroom. As a great deal of further development and enhancements have been accomplished over the duration of this pilot study, it is expected that pre-and-post measurements of the same variables would show even greater differences upon replication of the assessments.

NEXT STEPS

The FreewayNC curriculum will continue to be evaluated on an ongoing basis and refined according to findings in a growing body of data as to what works best and where potential for improvements lie. This will create the opportunity to establish metrics in support of relevant legislative mandates, and to demonstrate how these metrics are reached in a given school system or organization. Longitudinal analysis can provide additional insight as students and teachers experience the content over multiple school years where the curriculum becomes established across grade levels.

The fully developed FreewayNC curriculum series will be available at no cost to schools and youth organizations beginning in August 2019. Free printed teacher guides will be available to NC public schools while supplies last. Free or at cost printed teacher guides may also be made available to other schools or organizations. Registration through the website is required to access the full curriculum. For more information, contact AbolitionNC.FreewayNC@gmail.com or visit FreewayNC.org.