

Vulnerable Youth and Human Trafficking



OARTY – KIND
Knowledge, Information
and Networking Day

October 19, 2017

Through a HT lens...



Our Goal Today

- Increase awareness of issue of sex trafficking, local/national
- Discuss the intersection between child welfare and sex trafficking
- Assist with identification tools for at risk and youth engaged in sex trafficking
- Discuss strategies for support
- Provide and review local/national resources

Covenant House Toronto

- Canada's largest homeless youth agency, as many as 250 daily
- Wide array of wrap-around services and supports:
 - 24/7 crisis shelter
 - Transitional housing on-site and in the community
 - Education, counselling, health care, employment assistance, job training and aftercare
- Serves youth aged 16-24
- Over past 35 years, served more than 90,000 youth
- Specific, Anti-Trafficking Services included in 2013

Statistics

- Ontario identified as a hub
- Between 2011-13, 551 human trafficking cases in Ontario (majority are sex-trafficked)
- 90% of victims in Ontario are female; most are Canadian citizens as young as 13, and on average 17
- A recent study found that over 1/3 of victims were recruited by men they considered to be their boyfriends; another 25% were lured through friends, most often victims themselves

Statistics – Covenant House Toronto

2014- 15	45
2015-16	64
July 2016- Present	81

- Approximately 26 (27%) identified previous involvement with the child welfare system.
- 26 of the 81 young women are involved in HT related cases

Toronto Police Services – HTET Stats

	2015	2016
Occurrences	170	236
Arrests	61	77
Charges	463	529
Victims	30	67

Shared Definitions

Sex Trafficking has 3 major elements:

- Control
- Exploitation
- Threat to Safety

Shared Definitions

In 2005 Criminal Code added the following section, 279

- 1 Trafficking in persons
- 2 Material benefits
- 3 Withholding documents
- 4 Trafficking in Persons under 18



Survivor/Victim Profile

- Demographic (age, gender, socio-economic)
- Low self-image, poor self-esteem
- Mental health challenges (cognitive, psychiatric)
- History of abuse (sexual, mental, neglect)
- Isolation, lack of connectedness
- Substance use or addictions
- Precariously housed

Victim/Survivor Profile- digging a little deeper, looking specifically at Child Welfare

Pathways from Care to Exploitation

1. Run away
2. Aging Out
3. Lured directly from care site

"An Unholy Alliance. The Connection between Foster Care and Human Trafficking". [Human Trafficking Search](#), 2016.

Common and shared experiences – Echoes of Survivor Profiles

- a) Histories of sexual abuse
- b) Family or parental abandonment or neglect
- c) Homelessness
- d) Time spent as a runaway or on the street

"An Unholy Alliance. The Connection between Foster Care and Human Trafficking". [Human Trafficking Search](#), 2016.

Sexual Abuse

- Run away to escape
- Lowered thresholds of age appropriate sexual behaviors/attitudes
- Higher levels of depression, guilt, shame, dissociative patterns

Attachment Issues

- Strong need to belong
- Desire to please
- Yearn for family, community and connections
- Issues around trust, fear of rejection

Runaway experiences, precariously housed

- Belief (real or not), that people are not looking for them – Amber Alerts
- Lack of connections
- Visibly vulnerable
- Survival Mode engaged
- Their lack of stable housing puts them in places and circumstances where Traffickers congregate and hunt

Trafficker Profile

- Predator/socio/psychopathic personalities
- Opportunistic
- Pro-social traits manipulated
- Transcends race, gender, socio-economic backgrounds
- Often same backgrounds as victims/survivors

Trafficker Tactics

Boyfriend/Romeo

- period of courtship
- selling 'dream'
- create attachment
- create trust, dependency, isolation
- breakdown further sexual mores
- just one more thing....



Trafficker Tactics

“Gorilla Pimp” – Violence

- immediate physical threats to Y or their family
- immediate use of violence
- kidnapping and forcible confinement
- use of drugs and alcohol to ensure compliance
- gang rapes to ensure fear
- use psychological manipulations, prey on vulnerabilities (isolation, lack of connections)



Trafficker Tactics

Technology, Social Media

- be-friend, expressed “shared” experiences
- outright deception
- promises of partnerships to earn money, achieve lifestyle
- shared images for blackmail
- party, social attendance leads to drugs, blackmail (shame, guilt)



Trafficker Tactics

Friend or Family

- created friendships (real or false)
- created sense of belonging, normalized
- Peer networks
- coercion, blackmail
- fear
- drugs, alcohol
- money, lifestyle
- normalized, familial norms, sub-cultures



Emerging data

... “agencies surveyed estimated that 51%” of individuals they served were involved in Child Welfare.

Report on National Task Force on Sex Trafficking of Women and Girls in Canada, 2013.

Emerging Data

... “over 50% (57.8%) of youth who have experienced homelessness, disclosed previous involvement in Child Protection”.

Without a Home: The National Youth Homelessness Survey, The Homeless Hub. 2016.

Emerging Data

...“children trafficked from foster care are well above 50%”.

“An Unholy Alliance: The Connection between Foster Care and Human Trafficking”, Human Trafficking Search 2016.

Victims of Sex Trafficking

Red flags – signs to help identify a victim:

Environmental/Situational

- Suspicious employment situation/claims to work nights
- Arrives at meeting with “companion” who tries to speak for them
- Has more than one cell phone

Verbal/Emotional/Psychological

- Providing contradictory information
- Suicidality, depression
- Fearfulness, anxiety, displays trauma symptoms

Physical

- Untreated injuries, explanations inconsistent with injuries
- Multiple STIs or abortions
- Evidence of sexual abuse and/or violence – bruises, **branding, unusual tattoos**

Best Practices: Engaging a Victim of Trafficking

- Use the same words the youth is using and do not correct them
- Be open to unfamiliar narratives and stories
- Create a safe space for talking. Always speak to your youth privately.
- Always use professional interpreter services when a language barrier exists. DO NOT rely on a friend, associate or family member of the victim for interpretation services.
- Use a trauma-informed, non-judgemental approach.
- Keep them informed. Be as transparent as possible.

Ask simple, direct /language questions

- Is anyone forcing you to do anything that you don't want to do?
- Are you feeling safe? Is there anything that I can do to help you feel safe?
- Sometimes people get into situations that can get out of control. Have you ever felt this way? Do you feel this way right now?

If you think a youth is being exploited: **DO**

Communicate messages of hope

- You have rights.
- You are not alone and not to blame.
- You are entitled to services and help.

Make referrals

- Connect your youth with an appropriate service provider

If you think a youth is being exploited: **DON'T**

- **Do not** try to rescue the youth.
- **Do not** ask about the youth's immigration status.
- **Do not** contact authorities without youth's permission (unless mandated to do so).
- **Do not** make promises you can't keep.

Risk Assessment

- What are their immediate needs?
- Are they feeling safe? Is there imminent danger?
- Do they require sanctuary?
- Are they under the influence and detoxing?
- Do the police need to be involved?

Approaching Community Organizations

- Call police, only with youth permission (unless imminent, child protective issues)
- Escort survivor to the referral site (hospital, shelter etc.,)
- Be transparent, keep survivor informed
- Be an advocate
- Make calls on their behalf in their presence

If individual isn't ready...DO

Validate/normalize their feelings

- Reassure them that they have the choice not to accept your offer of support at this time
- Talk about 'readiness' for change, that change is difficult

Provide information

- Many trafficked persons will seek assistance for their situation when they feel safe and able to do so...not a 'prescribed or predictable' time
- Tell your youth where they can go in the future, when they are ready
- Make sure to communicate options verbally, since traffickers are likely to destroy written instructions/numbers if found

Resources

Crisis/Immediate

- Victim Services Toronto (or other) 416-808-7694
- Toronto Police Services/Human Trafficking Team
416-808-7474
- Covenant House Toronto, Shelter 416-593-4849
endht@covenanthouse.ca
- Women's Shelter of York Region, 905-722-4043, Ex
113
- Central Intake Shelter Referral, 416-338-4766
- Moberly Home, 416-324-2360
- Gerstein Centre, 416-929-5200

Resources

Medical

- Women's College Sexual Assault Centre, 416-323-6040 + after hours Mobile units
- Sick Children's Hospital, SCAN, 416-813-6275
- Trillium Health Centres. SA/DVCC , 1-866-863-0511
24 hours. + Chantel's Place.

Substance and Detox

- Breakaway, 416-234-1942
- Jean Tweed, 416-255-7359
- Women's Own, 416-603-1462
- Toronto Withdrawl Management Services System Central Access Number, 1-866-366-9513, Toronto #, 416-864-5040

Community Service Supports

Community Case management consultations:

Anderson@covenanthouse.ca

Dodson@covenanthouse.ca

diFrederico@covenanthouse.ca

The Rogers Home Referrals/inquiries:

Neubauer@covenanthouse.ca

416-204-7049

School Presentations:

tarlattini@covenanthouse.ca

Community Trainings:

Neubauer@covenanthouse.ca



Covenant House

Opening Doors for Homeless Youth

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