

Lenore Walker  
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Kalyani Gopal *Editors*

# Handbook of Sex Trafficking

Feminist Transnational Perspectives

 Springer

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## Preface

We called this book *Handbook of Sex Trafficking: Feminist Transnational Perspectives* to reflect the most recent scholarship and practice for mental health clinicians working with survivors of the commercial sex trade. We have brought together authors from a variety of perspectives who have knowledge of working within the commercial sex trade industry. Given the recent focus on the topic of sex trafficking, we have included chapters with information from both academic scholars and those who are working in this area in various countries.

The term *transnational feminism* is now being used to denote what is perhaps the fourth wave of feminist scholarship that originated with the social science studies of the global economy and politics that transcends national and even regional borders. This is often due to supply and demand, with the demand for sex workers taking place in countries with resources to afford the trafficking industry and the supply that can be filled by those poorer countries, often in the Third World or colonized areas, where the supply is available and people are willing to emigrate to another country. Although the politics of the various governments continue to play a role, in fact, movement across borders for both people and goods has become much easier than ever reported previously.

The *feminist* part of the definition includes the study of power relationships and how gender, economics, and class impact on migration. In this book we particularly study the sex workers, many of whom migrate with or without knowing what the sex work will entail. We also discuss the conditions that give rise to the desire for migration, the economics that particularly impact women and the LGBTQ population, and the gender politics that intersect with vulnerability and recovery. We understand that our analyses come from sex workers who have left what is called “the life” and not from sex workers currently inside, often working under the belief that they stay because of free choice. We have read their reports in the literature but have not been persuaded that they entered the life all that voluntarily. Many sex workers have witnessed or experienced other forms of gender violence such as child abuse, domestic violence, sexual exploitation and harassment, and rape in addition to poverty, hunger, poor or no education, and lack of opportunity. Some are kidnapped and sold into trafficking, while others are lured and recruited in specific

ways, but most go through certain similar stages of commitment to their new work that are visible when we study large numbers of girls and women. One stage of commitment occurs when the sex worker makes the choice to remain in the life without coercion and with the knowledge of what the work will encompass. After all, if everyone entered the commercial sex trade voluntarily because it is such a desirable job, why would it be necessary for traffickers to lure, trick, purchase, kidnap, and enslave the women into their stables? Nonetheless, we continue to explore and respect the discussions of choice and consent provided by those active sex workers themselves.

The issue of sex trafficking has been added to the list of gender-based violence topics during the past 20 years following a period of about 30 years of feminist discourse around the issue of consent and choice for those women (and some heterosexual men and identified LGBTQ persons). Both groups of feminists believe that sex trafficking comes about because of the sexual, economic, and inequitable development and globalization of the world causing some girls and women to believe they have no other future. Both groups believe in the feminist understanding that the inequality between women and men causes men to have more power than women and therefore more options to earn money and have a future in the world. This is a social construction of the problems we are discussing. The divergence comes about with the issue of whether or not some sex workers have consented to work in the commercial sex industry with understanding of what is required. One group, often referred to as the “transnational anti-trafficking networkers,” believes that such consent is impossible because of the intersecting conditions that cause the lack of other choices, while the other group, often referred to as the “sex worker activists,” claims that a large number of sex workers who migrate know what the work entails and freely choose it.

The differences between these two groups, despite their feminist similarities, are important for those of us who are interested in prevention and recovery when working with survivors of sex trafficking. If our portrayal of the typical sex worker is one who is naively duped into their life of horror from which escape is nearly impossible, we miss the positive parts of the experience that keep these girls and women going back to what they call “the life.” Human rights networks suggest that prostitution should be seen as a form of labor engaged with self-determination and not as a result of violence against women although they do concede that sex trafficking may not be voluntarily entered into by many young girls, boys, and LGBTQ-identified persons. In these discussions there is often a distinction made between prostitution and sex trafficking with the former being voluntary and the latter coerced. Other feminists conclude that the gendered structure of life prohibits true free choice. We include these discussions in various articles throughout this book, hoping that readers will form their own opinions, listening to both sides of the story.

In the first part, we include chapters that describe many of the compromises made internationally with the two most important actions taken: the *UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons* (2000) and the *US Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act (PL-106-386)* (2000) which has been reauthorized every 5 years with the latest in 2015 titled *Justice for Victims of Trafficking*

*Act (PL-114-22)* in response to desiring a greater emphasis on programs for victims rather than criminalization of traffickers. Belle gives an excellent account of the typical definitions used in the field of study and explains some of the differences in philosophy, while Walker and Gaviria further describe the US actions around the world. Dryjanska argues that sex trafficking is akin to modern-day slavery, while Pataki and Robison argue just as forcefully that choice and consent must be considered. Mesa adds the view of a government agency creating policy and offering services. Drain looks at sex trafficking from an organizational systems view. We believe this is the essence of *transnational feminism*: understanding these issues from all sides of the discussion.

There is no question that sex is power for women. But does commercial sex work actually give power to women? Those of us who are mental health workers see so many who are harmed by their work, similar to others who have been victims of other forms of violence against women. The stigmatization and degradation are all part of the job. The activist sex workers claim that decriminalizing it and providing prostitutes with the human rights and labor conditions typically found in a job would eliminate the negative effects of prostitution. The finances behind what is sometimes called the transnational shadow market of trafficking make it difficult to combat and demand change. Yet, legalization of prostitution in the Netherlands has not had such an impact although health conditions for the workers and police protection have definitely improved some job conditions.

One of the issues needing more information is the impact racism has had on part of the sex worker's conditions. We explore the question of who are the victims in the second part looking at race, culture, ethnicity, poverty, and war as they intersect with children, gender, and sexual orientation. Until recently, before the collapse of the Soviet Union, the typical sex worker was a woman of color, usually from Asia or Africa. Today, Russian women, especially those from the Ukraine, are in demand even in Iowa.<sup>1</sup> Gill and Gaviria describe the high risk factors that make a girl vulnerable to being seduced by a trafficker, and Barron describes the risk factors for boys and men as well as those identifying as LGBTQ. Sarachaga-Barato writes about child brides who are forced into marriages with adult men who have raped them and then sexually exploit them for their own commercial gain. War has always been associated with the rape and pillage of the women in a country. Antonopoulou describes the plight of the Syrian children who are forced to flee their war-torn country in search of a better life. With or without their families, many of these children end up being trafficked as a way to survive.

In the third part, we turn our attention to the traffickers about whom less is known. Sidun describes what we do know about the traffickers and presents some ideas about what to do about them. We include issues around the seduction of

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<sup>1</sup> See, e.g., Erin Murphy, Sex Trafficking in Iowa Widespread, Experts Say, *The Gazette*, Aug. 26, 2016 <http://www.thegazette.com/subject/news/government/sex-trafficking-in-iowa-widespread-experts-say-20160826>; Lee Rood, Des Moines Identified as Top 100 Human Trafficking Site, *The Des Moines Register*, Nov. 16, 2016 <http://www.desmoinesregister.com/story/news/2016/11/16/des-moines-identified-top-100-human-trafficking-site/93952890/>.

children by other children and gangs, an important source of those sex trafficked. Lambine and Gaviria suggest that sex trafficking is more lucrative than even the drug trade for gangs as it is not a commodity that gets used up. We also include several stories by Antonopoulou about missing children and a possible sex trafficking ring with parents who themselves may have been trafficked at one point in their lives, engaging in selling their boys in Greece. Sarachaga-Barato and Walker attempt to understand the phenomenon of women who were once victims and then become the victimizer of other girls and women. Many of those who are arrested cover for the usually male head trafficker, so the statistics make it appear that there are more women who are in charge than actually are. Finally, Alicea and Gopal describe the role of financial institutions and economic structure that keeps trafficking a flourishing business despite all the laws and policies outlawing it.

Preventing people from being trafficking victims must start when boys and girls are young, learning to recognize the signs of seduction. Gopal describes the Safe Schools curriculum used in the schools that both boosts the youth's self-esteem and mood and educates them of the dangers behind the seduction. The SAFECHR group led by Gopal has worked with community leaders to help them be aware of these dangerous lures. A fascinating new program developed by groups of long-distance truckers and airline flight attendants has saved many of those trafficking victims being transported when recognized by a trained person who had learned what to do is described in Trimble, Rivard and Gopal's chapter.

In Part V, we present the discussion about trauma treatment and Walker's STEP and Mahler's description of Complex Trauma Treatment, two evidence-based treatment programs with the caveat that most of the psychotherapy treatment has been studied in the United States and not in other countries around the world. Nonetheless, it is important to provide these tools for clinicians who will see survivors needing help in recovery from their time as a sex worker. Meichenbaum describes the most important evidence-informed core therapeutic tasks that those who were sex trafficked need to become survivors. It is important to identify these survivors as experiencing complex post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms rather than personality disorders that do not lend to designing helpful interventions.

Survivors who get out describe their feelings from the abuse, degradation, and harm done to their health and well-being. Dealing with the feelings of betrayal when the man (or sometimes woman) who made them promises reneged or failed to mention the rest of the deal when luring them into "the life" is similar to battered women who feel betrayed by the loving partner who turns abusive when he doesn't get her to do what he wants or the child who feels betrayed when her father or his priest demands sex in return for love. These are difficulties psychotherapists trained in trauma-specific approaches have learned to help clients deal with. Re-empowerment, a specific feminist therapy intervention, is helpful in these situations as are many of the other techniques working with regaining power and control to rebuild a future with choice. Adapting many of the trauma-specific techniques to the sex trafficking victim seeking recovery is still a daunting task. Needle applies her work with women and couples who have had sexual issues to those survivors who may want to engage in a negotiated couple relationship also in this part.



One of the major areas affected when people are exposed to trauma is their ability to recover with resilience should a future trauma occur. Meichenbaum has explored the various approaches to restore resilience in survivors who are known to succumb to new traumatic experiences without rebuilding their capacity to heal and recover. He also includes a chapter on special ways to bolster resilience in LGBTQ youth who have come from homes where they witnessed or experienced abuse even prior to having been trafficked. In that chapter, he presents a checklist of core tasks that can help rebuild resilience.

In Part VI we present Dykstra's chapter discussing the program utilized by many religious organizations in attempting to restore hope, faith, and spirituality in those recovering from being sex trafficked. Her organization has developed this curriculum used to train others in countries around the world where the culture trusts their religious advisors more than a psychotherapist. Gopal shares the Safe Village Project where the girls and women go from having been trafficked to safe homes as a transition step toward recovery.

We end the book with Part VII where we examine what else is known about sex trafficking and the most recent statistics provided by the various groups dealing with this issue around the world. Obviously, Mahler, Sarachaga-Barato, and Gaviria's compilation is incomplete; these numbers change daily despite our best efforts to document the help given to those who wish to leave the life. Nonetheless, they give an important glimpse into the enormity of the problem around the world. Lambine gives us a glimpse of the work going on in the United Kingdom, while Antonopoulou focuses on Greece and Gaviria and Masias on Latin America as an attempt to describe the similarities and differences in each of these regions. We close with Cook's description of the plight of the Yazidi who are enslaved in the world of the Islamic terrorists. Women's rights are woefully absent in many regions of the world and compromised in other areas including those of Europe and the United States where it is often thought that there is more freedom than actually experienced.

In the end, if we truly come from a perspective of transnational feminism, we must consider the possibility that the middle-class values of obtaining gender equality, which may indeed help eradicate the commercial sex trade industry or at least sex trafficking, may be highly oppressive to poor women of color and further cause them to be trapped in the role of sexual servants if the other intersections are not also addressed. These include the intersection of poverty, race, economics, politics, class, as well as gender issues. We hope you keep this perspective in mind as you read through the various chapters in this book.

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**Dugal Trimble** is from Columbus, Ohio, a 17-year veteran of the trucking industry and now he currently works in the hospitality industry. He founded the Truckers Missing Child Project in 2012 to bring awareness to the transportation industry of all the missing children in the United States and hopefully help bring them home along the way.



**Lenore Walker** is a pioneer in studying the psychological impact of interpersonal violence and trauma. She began her early work when she was on the faculty at Rutgers Medical School at the University of Medicine and Dentistry in New Jersey in the early 1970s at first studying psychological effects from child abuse, then added battered women, and now sex trafficking and other forms of gender violence. Her later research funded by the U.S. National Institute of Mental Health named the Battered Woman Syndrome (BWS) and helped introduce it into the courts around

the USA and the world. In the 1980s it was her work on BWS that helped battered women who killed their abusive partners in self-defense get that testimony admitted in criminal trials. She had an independent practice of psychology for many years as well as contributed to policy development in many countries around the world as Director of the International Domestic Violence Institute. Although she has now retired from her long academic career at Nova Southeastern University's College of Psychology, she continues her research there as Professor Emeritus. She also maintains a small forensic private practice specializing on cases where gender violence issues are raised and is a keynote speaker and consultant around the world. Walker has published over 20 books on psychology covering women's issues, gender violence, and forensic psychology. Her most recent is the *Battered Woman Syndrome, 4th Edition*, in 2017 and in 2018 she has two new books in press: one co-edited on *Sex Trafficking* and one co-authored with her husband, David Shapiro, on *Forensic Practice for the Mental Health Clinician: Getting Started, Gaining Experience & Avoiding Pitfalls*. A master clinician and trainer, she has joined together with Dr. Rachel Needle to present the new trauma program for *Innovative Professional CEs*. To learn more about Dr. Walker and all her activities, please visit her website, [www.drlenoreewalker.com](http://www.drlenoreewalker.com).



**Yvonne G. Williams** has been working in the anti-trafficking field since 2004 and is the screenwriter and Second Unit Director for the first feature film produced about human trafficking in the USA, *A Dance for Bethany*. She is the co-founder of Trafficking in America Task Force, Inc. founded in 2011 and currently is a member of the Advisory Board with Jerome Elam, sex trafficking survivor; she served as co-host of the weekly television program, *Trafficking in America Now*, in 2011–2012. She served as the Coordinator for National Educators to Stop Trafficking (NEST) from 2013 to 2016. Yvonne has spoken at universities, conferences, churches, schools, and other organizations

across the USA bringing education and awareness about human trafficking in America. She is the recipient of the Middle TN and the State of Tennessee’s Professional Advocate of the Year Award of 2011 presented by the Tennessee Conference on Social Welfare, and the Visionary Award presented by TIATF in 2014.

**Part I**  
**What Is Sex Trafficking?**

# Defining Sex Trafficking



Nita Belles

Sex trafficking is a form of human trafficking, and although it is illegal in every country in the world, it is the second largest and fastest-growing crime worldwide (US Department of Health and Human Services, 2006). The definition of human trafficking set forth by the United Nations was universally adapted in the year 2000 (Dempsey, Hoyle, & Bosworth, 2012); prior to this, there was no internationally accepted definition. The definition of human trafficking set forth by the United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons (UN Protocol) will be used throughout this publication and is defined as follows:

- (a) “Trafficking in persons” shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.
- (b) The consent of a victim of trafficking in persons to the intended exploitation set forth in subparagraph (a) of this article shall be irrelevant where any of the means set forth in subparagraph (a) have been used.
- (c) The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation shall be considered “trafficking in persons” even if this does not involve any of the means set forth in subparagraph (a) of this article.
- (d) “Child” shall mean any person under 18 years of age.<sup>1</sup>

Human trafficking consists of labor trafficking as well as sex trafficking, which involves the exchange of commercial sex acts, such as pornography, striping, or

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<sup>1</sup><http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/ProtocolTraffickingInPersons.aspx>.

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prostitution, for something of monetary value. Sex trafficking involves a vulnerable person (often called a victim) who is controlled and sold by a trafficker (often called a pimp). It also will involve some sort of force, fraud, or coercion, because the victim does not have a choice in their participation. The victim is virtually powerless in defining the terms of the relationship, and the trafficker maintains power and control over what the victim does, wears, where she goes, how many sex buyers she will service, where, when, and for how much. The trafficker also controls all the financial proceeds from any sex that is sold. Although in most cases the trafficker is a male and the victim is a female, there are female traffickers and male victims as well as transgender victims and traffickers. For the purposes of our discussion, I will refer to the trafficker as a male and the victim as a female.

Sex trafficking victims may or may not admit that they are being forced to perform the sex act, and sometimes it requires further investigation into the history of the relationship between the potential sex trafficking victim and the potential sex trafficker. Often the victim comes to believe through continual force, fraud, or coercion that they are willingly participating. They may even refer to themselves as a “prostitute” or claim they are doing it on their own volition. Oftentimes a trafficker has multiple victims, and the group of people he controls are often called the trafficker’s stable. The trafficker has ultimate control over all his victims and just about every aspect of their lives. There is a hierarchy within the stable where every victim is vying to be the trafficker’s favorite, a position that is often referred to as “bottom bitch,” “bottom girl,” or just the “bottom.” In addition to providing dates, the trafficker gives the “bottom” authority to do things within the stable such as recruiting other victims, punishing victims when they do not conform to expectations, arranging dates, and collecting money.

Both sex trafficking and labor trafficking are often intertwined. For instance, a victim who is being sold for sex may also be required to do cleaning, cooking or other household chores, or run errands at the traffickers’ direction. A victim may be trafficked at times for labor (agriculture, nail salons, restaurant work, etc.) and at other times for sex acts by the same trafficker. She may also be forced to commit other crimes as a result of being under the traffickers control such as stealing, involvement with drugs, or transporting minor victims to sex trafficking dates. According to the UN protocol, sex trafficking does not require cross border movements of humans<sup>2</sup>. A person can be born, raised and trafficked in the same house without ever having left; it’s the crime of trafficking, not the movement of a person that comprises human trafficking.

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<sup>2</sup> [http://www.publiclegaled.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/English\\_Human-Trafficking-In-Canada\\_2010.pdf](http://www.publiclegaled.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/English_Human-Trafficking-In-Canada_2010.pdf).

## **What Are the Different Stages of the Crime of Sex Trafficking?**

There is sometimes a misconception that sex trafficking victims are kidnapped, trapped, and transported to a life of sexual servitude. In some countries, parents will sell their children into sex trafficking, and in some cultures, it is honorable for a young woman to allow herself to be overtaken by sex traffickers who reportedly send a portion of the funds to her family for living expenses. While this happens occasionally, for the most part, sex trafficking victims are wooed using lures by a person who pretends to care about the potential victim. That process happens over a series of stages, and while the exact details of the stages may vary from case to case, the intent and purpose of the stages are very similar.

### ***Gaining Trust/Recruitment***

It is common for the trafficker to learn of a need of the potential victim and offer to fill that need in glamorous ways in order to motivate her to trust and become closer to him. For instance, if a potential victim needs love, he may woo her with words that cause her to feel loved and to trust him. If she needs shelter, the trafficker will offer her safe shelter and may even offer travel and glamorous hotels. If she needs family, the trafficker will offer to be her family and show her evidence of how he can satisfy her needs. This is the first stage of recruitment of a victim, gaining her trust which will help her begin to associate more closely with the trafficker.

### ***Seasoning/Breaking***

During the seasoning phase, the victim may feel that she is “falling in love” with the trafficker and that he is returning her affections. He will spend time learning about what and who she loves. While this may seem to be a development of their relationship to her, he is storing all of this information and will use it to control her at a later date in time. In this stage, the trafficker is fully aware that he is manipulating her for his ultimate goal of using her as a sex trafficking victim. There will usually be an attempt to separate the potential victim from her support system which often consists of family and friends. During this time, sexual contact with her increases as does the manipulation. Sometimes the trafficker will facilitate a new style of dressing for her that includes very seductive clothing or ask her to “dance” in a strip club to help them earn money. The trafficker’s goal during this stage is to get the victim to the point that she will do anything for him. This may involve some conflict between them and can lead the trafficker to demand that the potential victim prove her love for him.



## ***Turning Out***

During the turning out stage, the trafficker seeks an opportunity to coerce the victim into performing commercial sex for the first time. Once she has been prostituted by him, the trafficker takes control as her trafficker. Once the trafficker has persuaded the victim to “turn her first trick,” which is sex trafficking slang for the first time she has had sex with a sex buyer, he feels he has complete control over the victim.

## ***Maintaining Control***

Next, the trafficker must maintain the control he feels he has achieved. During the recruitment and seasoning phases, he has already gathered information from her about who or what she cares for deeply. He might threaten to, or even actually hurt or kill those she loves, if she decides to resist his control in any way, such as trying to escape. He will take advantage of her emotions because she most likely still believes she loves him and will try to please him to earn his love and affirmation. He now uses affection and affirmation, interspersed with manipulative control or violence against her and others to maintain control by keeping her off balance and to maximize the profits he can gain from selling her for sex.

Once the trafficker has gained control over the victim, there may be many short-term or long-term outcomes. She may be under his control, being sold for sex by him for many years, or may be traded to another trafficker in a deal which probably won't consider her feelings at all. She may have children by her trafficker which increases his control over her and may prolong their relationship. She may be forced to have an abortion if the trafficker finds out she is pregnant and he does not want her to have the child. She may contract a disease or be injured by a sex trafficker or sex buyer and die. On very rare occasions, she may determine she no longer wants to be trafficked and find help and services which allow her to get out of the life and begin rebuilding her life outside of sex trafficking.

## ***Recovery***

Recovery for those who have been sex trafficked and have somehow managed to get out of this life is difficult at best. They may suffer from many physical ailments and injuries that they have sustained while being sex trafficked. Common injuries or ailments include STDs, head injuries, sexual injuries, and physical ailments from

drug overdoses. Often, as a result of their feeling trapped or hopeless, they may attempt suicide, or death may occur as a result of physical assaults. As horrific as the physical injuries and ailments are, the psychological injuries are much more difficult from which to heal. Some of the commonly diagnosed conditions are posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), dissociative disorders, and many other deep emotional scars as a result of the severe trauma they have suffered while being sex trafficked. Many have been being sex trafficked after a life of abuse as a child, (which makes them more vulnerable to sex trafficking) and these childhood wounds may have not been healed either. Professional help physically, emotionally, and spiritually is often a necessary part of their healing. The healing may take years or even a lifetime.

## **How Is Sex Trafficking Different from Prostitution or Smuggling?**

Sex trafficking is often used as a term that is synonymous with prostitution; however, there are key differences between the two. Prostitution is the process of someone willingly engaging in a sex act for payment and having control over the use of that payment. While a small percentage of those engaged in prostitution are doing it willingly, the large majority are forced into prostitution. Therefore, when prostitution occurs as a result of sex trafficking, it should be called forced prostitution. Similarly, smuggling of persons is a crime that is separate from sex trafficking. Smuggling is a crime against a country, in which a person enters secretly and illegally. Sex trafficking is the controlling of and selling of a person for sex who may or may not have originated from outside the country. Sometimes the two crimes occur in conjunction with one another.

## **Language Is Important**

- Prostitute—while forced prostitution may occur during sex trafficking, the person being prostituted should not be called a prostitute. She is called a victim of sex trafficking while being trafficked or a survivor once she escapes the horrors of this crime.
- Sex buyer—common vernacular for a sex buyer is often a “john” or “trick.” A more appropriate name for the person buying sex is to name them for the crime they are committing, they should be called a sex buyer.
- Sex trafficker—while traffickers have often been called pimps, society has sometimes given the word pimp, a positive connotation. Using the term sex trafficker gives a clear description of who they are and the crime they are committing.

- Sex trafficking—is often wrongly referred to as the sex industry or sex trade. Those terms indicate that it is a legitimate business, not a crime. Sex trafficking is a crime punishable by law and should always be referred to as such.

Sex trafficking has been called one of the greatest crimes against humanity, and many of its victims and survivors would agree with that assessment. It is only as the world becomes more aware of this crime, the atrocities faced by its victims, and what to do if it is seen, that society will be able to stop sex trafficking.

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# Transnational Feminism and Sex Trafficking



Lenore Walker and Giselle Gaviria

The recent interest in human trafficking, a large percentage of which involves involuntary commercialized sex or sex trafficking, has caused a new look at what is sometimes called the oldest profession, prostitution, and created a new understanding of how people are crossing national borders around the world to support the trafficking economy. Research has suggested that the global income from sex trafficking is over \$150 billion, although it varies in different sections of the world (International Labour Organization, 2017). Polaris (2015) states that trafficking has become the second most lucrative crime in the world with drugs being number one. Often called a new form of slavery, victims of sex trafficking are moved from one area of the world to another more quickly and easier than people think is possible. Building such global economies and businesses has been termed, *transnationalism*, as the national borders are ignored and regional groups are put together, sometimes with people that are not even geographically near one another. Perhaps the best recent example is the movement of the Syrian people from their country, through other countries in the Middle East, into Western and Eastern European countries until finally settled in a new home. Despite the eradication of the old geographic boundaries by this migration, the Syrian culture remains fairly stable where ever the Syrians live, at least during the initial transnational migration period.

Antonopoulou and Konstantinidis (2017) have studied the Syrians who have migrated through Greece and were then sent to other Western and Eastern European countries. They found a high rate of children who have disappeared into the global world of forced sex trafficking. Any attempts to rescue these children, many of whom have been orphaned by the death of their parents either under the Syrian regime or during their flight, have been difficult if not impossible (see Walker's chapter "[Psychological Intervention with Sex-Trafficked Persons: Assessment and](#)

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**Survivor Therapy Empowerment Program (STEP)**” in this book). A transnational approach is necessary so Greece cooperates with other countries on the trafficking route that often goes through Turkey and Bulgaria before dispersing these children to other countries.

Other transnational approaches include the attempts to locate certain cultural groups, such as Muslims, who have crossed into Western countries including the United States. Often identified by the Hijab that women wear, they are easy to trace as they migrate outside the Middle East trying to keep their culture with all its intersectionalities rather than their nationalism. In Nigeria, there is a well-known network of brothels with top-level women who take charge of the girls who are sent to Western countries to provide trafficking sex services to men who want African women (see Sarachaga-Barato & Walker’s chapter “**Victims Becoming Victimizers**” on Victim to Victimizer in this book). When adding the feminist perspective to transnationalism, it includes the addition of analysis of power relationships and how the various intersections of gender, race, culture, economics, class, poverty, and histories of colonialism impact on the individual’s lifestyle and decisions made.

There is more than one feminist perspective concerning the commercial sex industry as described by Doezema (2005, 2010) classifying the views into those held around the issue of consent and choice. A dichotomy arose during the negotiations around the *UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons* (2000) where coalitions of sex workers formed, insisting prostitution is often a choice for women and, at the same time, human rights anti-sex trafficking groups made the claims that it is not voluntary given they are frequently kidnapped, held captive, coerced, and made unwilling participants being exploited by their trafficker managers in most parts of the world. Both groups held other similar feminist values despite their differences on the sex trafficking issue. While the anti-trafficking groups prevailed in the final formulation of policy, there was room for separating non-coerced or voluntary prostitution and some voluntary sex trafficking. Belle (chapter “**Defining Sex Trafficking**” in this book) presents an interesting model that suggests there are stages of accommodation that those who are sex trafficked go through beginning with being kidnapped or lured, then trusting their recruiter, followed by “seasoning or breaking” them, being turned out commercially, and learning to maintain control or seek recovery. Each of these stages may produce different psychological adjustments that could make the sex worker begin to believe she has choice about her entire situation despite the fact that she may only have some levels of choice and consent. This is a complicated issue but needs greater feminist scholarship given the compelling arguments made by sex worker rights advocates Pheterson (1989), Kempadoo (2001) and Barry (1979), most recently, Truong (2014) who examined the sex workers who gained legitimacy and labor rights in the Netherlands.

The international and national governments including the *US Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act* (PL-106–386) (2000) reauthorized every 5 years adopted the viewpoint that many sex trafficking victims are not voluntarily providing sex. It is a feminist issue because the vast majority of those exploited are women, children, or young LGBTQ and non-gender conforming persons. Their exploiters are usually men although there are a number of women victimizers being arrested as described later in chapter “[Victims Becoming Victimiziers](#)” by Sarachaga-Barato and Walker. Both the buyers who frequent them due to their own sex role socialization about what it means to be a man and the trafficking managers get their control partly because they are male, even with both male and female victims. Some feminists, such as psychologist Farley (2004), argue that prostitutes are also held captive by their backgrounds and sex role expectations as evidenced by their severe mental health difficulties when leaving sex work although others are equally as vocal that women make a choice to engage in prostitution and it is a noble profession that has lasted for eons. We discuss the economics that trap women in the commercial sex trade elsewhere in this book, but for now, it is important to state that when women and men can earn a sustainable wage at other occupations, they do not choose prostitution. Rather, there are many commonalities with other forms of gender violence including sexual abuse, rape, sexual harassment and exploitation, child sexual abuse, and intimate partner violence (domestic violence). Trauma-focused interventions are often modified to work with survivors of sex trafficking.

After studying the transnational pathways, the US government has developed legislation and regulations to identify and prosecute the traffickers and protect the victims. So far, the third part of the triangle, the buyers, have not been as aggressively pursued, but there appears to be efforts to decrease the need for commercial sex through feminist social training. For example, young boys are being trained to think about the victims as persons with feelings and needs rather than sex objects. Although the mass media have not yet bought into this new socialization, there are groups that remain hopeful even with the new US administration that so far appears to be hostile to feminist issues as evidenced by media announcements of the disbanding of former President Obama’s White House Task Force on women’s and girl’s health issues.

The US government passed the first major comprehensive legislation to combat sex trafficking in the United States and around the world in 2000 with the *Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act* (PL 106–386). Every 5 years since then the legislation has been reauthorized, and in 2015 in the *Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act* (PL 114–22) (2015), the scope of the act was considerably broadened to include child pornography in the definition of trafficking as well as child abuse. It also increased penalties for both buyers and traffickers including forfeiture of property and raised the evidentiary burden for defendants who attempted to prove they had a reasonable belief that a minor was over the age of 18 from a preponderance of evidence to clear and convincing evidence. It was hoped that these changes would help prosecute more traffickers and also hold the buyers legally responsible for having a

sexual relationship with a minor. In addition, the funding authorization included block grants to states and local governments for a variety of remedies including funding a new cybercrimes prosecution unit in the Department of Homeland Security. Another part of this Act broadened the definition of sex trafficking to include all forms of child prostitution. President Obama had previously appointed a *Presidential Interagency Task Force to Monitor and Control Trafficking*, and this Act reauthorized it to function through 2020. It remains to be seen if the Presidential Interagency Task Force will be continued under the new Presidential administration although recent publicity suggests President Trump has plans to abolish all activities around women's rights.

In order to carry out some of the mandates in the authorizing legislation described above, the US State Department formed the Office to Monitor and Control Trafficking in Persons (TIP), which has been involved in partnering and funding activities in many international countries and transnational regions to "prevent, protect, prosecute, and partnerships" to stop trafficking. TIP is headed by a Presidential appointment at the Ambassador level giving it status in many countries around the world, necessary for the transnational approach to sex trafficking it undertakes. TIP activities are coordinated by being a member of the Presidential Interagency Task Force described above. In 2015, there were 27 projects funded by this agency around the world to nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and governments to help organize responses to child trafficking and give direct services to victims of trafficking both within countries and transnationally. Several studies were commissioned and published results were distributed (US Department of State, 2016). Although many important steps have been taken to combat sex trafficking under this authorizing legislation, feminist critique suggests that the victim/survivor often gets less attention than the prosecution of the traffickers (Noyori-Corbett & Moxley, 2017).

The US Department of State estimates that at least half of the 600,000–800,000 trafficked victims taken across international borders every year are children, many of whom are sold to the trafficker for money that the rest of the family uses to survive. Like other abused children, most of them are at high risk to experience lifelong physical and mental health conditions. A recent long-term study on the impact from traumatic events including child abuse funded by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) found that the more adverse events in a person's life, the more future health and other problems in living that will occur (Felitti et al., 1998; Kendell-Tackett, 2013). The younger the child is, the more likely they will have neurological deficits, learning problems, language deficits, developmental delays, and poor memory skills which can prevent them from escaping from their traffickers. It also makes it easier to lure some of these children with the false promises that cover the real life that awaits them. According to the *U.S. Government Efforts to Combat Trafficking in Persons Report (2007)*, trafficking victims often come to the United States from Latin America, the Caribbean, Asia, Eastern Europe, and the Pacific Islands. In Europe, migration comes through Eastern European countries, Russia, the Balkans, Syria, Turkey, and the Middle East.

Obviously, child trafficking crosses all the national borders and must be dealt with in a culturally relevant transnational feminist way. Identification of a trafficked

child is often difficult especially when there are large numbers of children fleeing from other forms of violence in countries. Nonetheless, both law enforcement and others in high-risk places such as airline flight attendants and truckers are being trained in identification. In the United States, over half to two thirds of trafficked victims are runaway youth, many of whom were first identified by the child protection agencies due to abuse and neglect in their own homes and/or foster care. Attention therefore is primarily on rescuing child victims even though adults are also kidnapped and trapped in the life. Nonetheless, many of those victims rescued as teenagers resulted from the US-funded and partnered programs around the world.

These efforts are encouraging especially since the funding has been distributed across various nonprofit groups and agencies that may have the capacity to continue the efforts transnationally over a longer period of time than the initial grants might require. The network is global and the mission broad enough to capture the various areas that are impacted by the buyers, suppliers, and victim/survivors of trafficking, especially children. Obviously, some of the economics that fuel the commercial sex industry including the selling and buying of children will also need to be addressed. Given the pandemic proportions of trafficking, a public health approach is critical, and prevention will not be successful unless the extreme poverty, violence, and hunger that exists worldwide, the need for migration in poor countries disrupted by violence, and the lucrative criminal activities are stopped.

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# Perspectives from a Victim's Center



Ivon Mesa

## Introduction

I was only 18, when I realized I wanted to help. When I was pursuing my bachelor's degree in criminal justice at FIU, I completed an internship with the Administrative Office of the Courts, 11th Judicial Circuit. As part of such, I was placed in the Domestic Violence Intake Unit (DVIU). The DVIU assisted victims of domestic violence and sexual violence who needed injunctive relief to get away from their abuser partners. There, I came in contact with thousands of women who were burned, slapped, raped, punched, kicked, and psychologically abused on a daily basis. Women, who besides being very fearful, were hopeless and did not think they had a chance to ever experience happiness or believed that they deserved what was happening to them. Many of them were homeless or about to become homeless and had no support system. I soon realized that unlike popular societal beliefs, these women had done nothing to find themselves in such predicaments and they certainly did not deserve what was happening to them. I also discovered that these women had several commonalities, one being, as I previously stated, lack of a support system. They had been isolated from any type of support, and they often felt they had no one to go to. I was surprised at some of the similarities many of them presented, and being that it was 1993, we, as a society and as the Miami-Dade community, were just learning about the phenomenon of domestic violence. At that time, human trafficking was not yet recognized as the problem that it is today.

Human trafficking is a term that has become more familiar in recent years; however, it is not a new phenomenon. It has existed since the beginning of time, occurring in different modalities or being called something different, but its origin goes back to slavery and prostitution which were highly accepted practices for decades. Despite this, we have come a long way as a society and are better able to identify

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certain practices as inhumane and unacceptable which is a step in the right direction. The crime of human trafficking is a global human rights dilemma as each day the number of victims increases. Trafficked victims can be minors, adults, males, females, foreign nationals, US citizens, and individuals identified as straight, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, or questioning (LGBTQ). This crime encompasses sexual exploitation as well as exploitation due to labor or services, and it is considered one of the fastest-growing crimes in the world along with trafficking of drugs and weapons. As evidenced by the National Human Trafficking Resource Center, “there are 27 million people enslaved worldwide.”<sup>1</sup> That is a dismal and unacceptable statistic. Nonetheless, due to the clandestine nature of the crime, accurate statistics on the magnitude of trafficking are vague. The number of identified victims is usually based on the number of victims rescued and repatriated to countries of origin, in cases applicable. Thus, there are many more victims that have not been identified and, therefore, are not being factored in the existing statistical reports. This indicates that the problem is much greater than what we really know.

Although there are currently outstanding efforts in the USA and many other countries directed at preventing and combating human trafficking effectively, we have not yet achieved the clear understanding and awareness necessary to eradicate this problem. One of the most impacting laws is, for instance, the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially women and children, the main international agreement that regulates human trafficking globally. Another example is the US Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (TVPA) which has been reauthorized several times, together with a great number of anti-trafficking work at state levels, which involve laws and measures toward reducing the crime while providing care to victims. Though we must recognize the accomplishments that have been achieved within the last decade, there is still a great deal of work that needs to take place in order to address the existing gaps in an efficient manner.

I became immensely motivated to help these victims and decided that I was going to do everything in my power to make a difference in their lives. Even though my internship was for 40 hours a week, I began to work more than 50 hours each week in order to help more victims and improve the way things were being done at the time. My extraordinary efforts, completely atypical of an intern, were noticed by my supervisor, and I was offered the position of assistant director of the DVIU before the completion of my 6-month internship; and soon after that, I was offered the position of the director. The work I was doing and the passion I felt quickly made me realize that I did not want to be an attorney because more than helping these women with their legal needs, which is of extreme importance, I also wanted to provide them with social services, empowerment, and support. I began to transform the ways in which victims were being helped in Miami-Dade County, creating different policies and procedures that would facilitate access to services by all women in need regardless of the language they spoke and the cultural barriers they faced.

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<sup>1</sup>Office of the Attorney General of Florida Pam Bondi. Available at <http://myfloridalegal.com/pages.nsf/Main/AF860EB7606CF92D85257A7D00458CD7>.

From a service perspective, advocates and other helping professionals play a fundamental role, as they are normally the ones who are responsible for addressing the needs of the victims and are also often the first ones to be made aware of the victimization. Due to the vital role that advocates play, it is imperative for them to have the proper knowledge and to be equipped with the necessary skills to perform the monumental task of assisting victims of human trafficking adequately. If a victim who does not identify herself as such arrives to an advocacy center for services, and an assessment is not conducted appropriately, the victim may be rejected for services or identified erroneously and, as a result, be deprived of the services that she is entitled to and in need of. Both a lack of services and inadequate services are scenarios that are completely unacceptable and could deter the victim from moving forward with the desire to report the crime and seek help.

Human trafficking is a crime motivated by profit. Traffickers and exploiters want to achieve high profits which force them to utilize sophisticated ways to recruit potential victims who normally are characterized by having certain vulnerabilities and needs which make them ideal candidates to become victims of human trafficking. Understanding the dynamics of this crime would increase the effectiveness of the response offered. Most people might think that domestic violence, sexual violence, and human trafficking are completely different types of crimes; even though they are, victims of human trafficking do share some characteristics with victims of domestic violence. However, they have distinct characteristics among them, and most importantly, there are different dynamics to both crimes.

In many cases, the issue of delivery of services to human trafficking victims remains very challenging because of a variety of reasons. What is clear is that human trafficking victims need to be assisted by a victim's center using a coordinated approach where the most important issue is the safety of the victims and their well-being. Ideally, all victims would cooperate with the trafficker's prosecution, so that the perpetrator can be apprehended, but it is important to note that the victim's ability to cooperate must be viewed completely separate from the services that must be provided. In working with a population that has gone through traumatic situations involving sexual slavery, drug addiction, and many other horrific and devastating experiences, I have observed that many of the victims are often evasive and may present a set of traits displaying an antagonistic attitude, evidence of intoxication, distrust, and anger toward others, which can lead to the incorrect judgment by the part of the service provider that he or she is not a true victim. Often, some of these victims also exhibit physical appearances that are far from being appropriately perceived by those trying to help them. For example, some victims dress seductively or show tattoos. Therefore, it is critical to separate the veracity of the victim's allegations from victim's physical appearance and demeanor. As we work with this population, it's very important to understand that we need to provide the same quality of services to each client regardless of how the victim looks or behaves.

As service providers, we must, at all costs, avoid making the victim repeat her story and offer details that may not even be necessary for treatment, although this might normally be done in such manner to comply with certain models of service delivery in more traditional settings. Offering a coordinated response is indispensable

to prevent client revictimization by repeating painful information as well as by having to take too many steps to seek the necessary services. A coordinated response does not mean that multiple partners have to be located in the same building; rather, it means that with the permission of the victim, those partners involved must work together to share the already available information and collaborate to put together a plan that is comprehensive and coordinated for the victim. In Miami, County government created a one-stop center called the Coordinated Victims Assistance Center where 38 agencies collectively provide 38 kinds of services to the clients who seek assistance at the Center. When we were creating the intake process at the Coordinated Victims Assistance Center (CVAC), every partner who joined had their own intake package which for the most part was required by their respective agency administration and in some other situations, by the funder or owner. After seeing the effects on the victim of having to complete several intake packages, we created one collaborative package that, with the consent of the victim, is shared among providers. Miami-Dade County absorbed the responsibility of creating a brand new service component to assist victims of human trafficking as it seemed irresponsible to ignore such an uncivilized crime and societal problem. The CVAC serves as a one-stop center where victims can come and find a variety of services ranging from the most basic services such as food to less traditional services such as financial literacy, rental assistance, and employability workshops.

Upon arriving to the Center, victims of sex trafficking participate in a brief intake process different from the intake process that other type of victims may participate in. Oftentimes, victims are seen outside the Center, at a location where the victim may feel more comfortable and that is also safe for the advocate responding to the scene. The intake process is when possible a dual process completed by an advocate and an immigration attorney who assesses the situation from both a legal immigration and advocacy perspective. Following the intake, the advocate creates a Service Referral Plan unique to each victim and begins to make all the necessary linkages to connect the victim to all available services. The different referrals and steps to follow are discussed among those partners the victim will need to meet with in order to really coordinate the delivery of service and avoid duplication. Currently, CVAC is the only one-stop center (Family Justice Center) in the country that offers assistance to victims of human trafficking, as well as for victims of domestic violence. It is the only center of its type that we know of in the State of Florida, which is considered one of the top three states where domestic and international human trafficking occurs. We have received not only county funding but also federal funding from different sources to continue to provide coordinated services to this population. Furthermore, we are also conducting research of our practices and service model with the University of Miami and will be able to share the findings at the end of the current grant.

Miami-Dade County also founded and currently manages the Miami-Dade County Human Trafficking Coalition which hosts and organizes community meetings in which human trafficking service providers get together on a quarterly basis to discuss local initiatives, challenges, and events relative to human trafficking. The County has partnered with other entities to find suitable and convenient locations

where the meetings can be held. This particular initiative has generated the creation of a response team, awareness events, and a directory of services, among others, with little funding but with great commitment and leadership by the County. This particular approach is highly replicable and can be adopted by any County government that, similar to Miami-Dade County, feels the responsibility and need to get involved in efforts to eradicate this crime, which is debilitating for all of our society.

# Toward a Sustainable Theory of Human Trafficking and Contemporary Slavery



Laura Dryjanska

## Introduction

Human trafficking has become a hot topic not only among laypeople but also among researchers all over the world, as evidenced by a growing number of publications across disciplines, creation of new journals, institution of task forces (i.e., American Psychological Association’s Task Force on Trafficking of Women and Girls), and numerous conferences. A lot of data has been produced and analyzed in relation to different aspects of this phenomenon. In this chapter, I argue that it is time for the vibrant field of social psychology to rise up to the challenge of “connecting the dots” (Ellemers, 2013) in this specific area. I discuss some particular characteristics of human trafficking that make it a problem worth addressing using a broader theory, taking into account its four core aspects: ontology, epistemology, ethics and, to a lesser degree, aesthetics. First, I elaborate on the actual nature of the issue, explaining the relationship between human trafficking and modern slavery, and emphasizing the variety of disciplines that approach these topics. Although it is not feasible to propose a full picture of theoretical approaches used in relation to human trafficking, I discuss the major ones that could be of interest to social psychologists. Second, I propose some epistemological considerations and concrete recommendations on how to “connect the dots” using the theory of social representations. In my opinion, this theory fulfills the criteria of abstraction, sequence, conditions, and range that Ellemers (2013) sets out for a sustainable theory. I also recognize the capacity of metarelational models (Fiske, 2012) when attempting to approach the issue of human trafficking using a holistic outlook. Third, I mention ethical aspects of this type of research and how they can easily hinder or jeopardize our efforts. I criticize the hypocritical approach to ethics and its reduction that occurs when designing, conducting, and analyzing research. Fourth, I introduce aesthetics in relation to

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methodological creativity that social psychologists need to demonstrate while applying a sustainable theory of human trafficking.

The aim of this paper is to encourage social psychologists to define a set of central organizing principles of human trafficking, necessary to work together on this common theme while setting clear goals (Fiske, 2006). I outline possible practical implications of such effort, in the spirit of social psychology not only as a thorough analysis of societal problems but also as a driving force to propose and assess solutions put in place by the governments and international organizations.

## **Ontological Concerns**

What is the actual nature of human trafficking and modern slavery? How are they related? A series of multidisciplinary international investigations and exchanges concerning these issues includes highly technological concerns, such as thermal detection and DNA databases (e.g., employed by some governments and discussed at the Santa Marta Group meetings). Clearly, such actions have a social psychological dimension that cannot be ignored. Moreover, there seems to be a tendency by many authors to slide away from forced labor and to target the prostitution of women. While all figures from criminology leave much to be desired, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime indicates that only approximately two thirds of trafficked persons are women and apart from prostitution, other forms of female slavery exist, such as domestic work and farming (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2016). Without doubt, feminist scholars have made major theoretical and practical contributions concerning trafficking of women and girls and their exploitation in prostitution. Although other forms of exploitation have also been extensively studied (Alvarez & Alessi, 2012; Bales, 2007; Danailova-Trainor & Laczko, 2010; De Regt, 2010), they tend to receive less attention from the media and the general public.

## ***Relationship Between Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery***

Different forms of slavery have accompanied humanity for centuries. Aggressive behavior that permeates actions undertaken during the process of human trafficking and contemporary slavery varies in terms of motivation; each case of violence may be placed on a distinct point of the continuum from instrumental to emotional aggression (Anderson & Huesmann, 2003). Concerning the two phenomena, currently many people are under the misapprehension that when commentators refer to “human trafficking,” they are talking about “modern-day slavery” and vice versa (Little, 2013). However, human trafficking and contemporary slavery are two separate but related activities. Archer (2013) contextualizes modern slavery in the light of the definition (Patterson, 1982) that includes the following main characteristics



of the phenomenon: domination, social death, dishonor, and degradation. Slavery can therefore be defined as a system that bounds human beings in servitude, forcing them to work for no pay, constrained by violence or the threat of violence and treated as property to be bought and sold. Human trafficking is a part of the global picture of slavery, a mechanism that brings people into bondage. Simply put, “trafficking is about moving someone into a situation of exploitation from which they cannot escape” (Gallagher, 2013). While human trafficking is a process of enslavement itself, it cannot be equaled to a condition or result of that process.

### *Interdisciplinary Field*

Both phenomena relate to numerous spheres of public and private life, constituting a concern of multiple disciplines. In social sciences, trafficking in persons can be contextualized through the lenses of migration studies (Tyldum & Brunovskis, 2005), foreign policy (Feingold, 2005), national and international security (Fitzgibbon, 2003), criminal justice (Kaye, Winterdyk, & Quarterman, Lehti & Aromaa, 2007), humanitarian problems (Aradau, 2016), social work (Roby & Bergquist, 2014), gender studies (Vijayarasa, 2013), ethnography (Molland, 2013), etc. Some of the greatest challenges to study modern slavery and human trafficking stem from the fact that both phenomena belong to the area of crime and deviance, deliberately kept in secret by those who are involved. Therefore, estimating the magnitude of modern slavery and human trafficking appears as the first major problem when trying to establish research questions. Numerous reports based on distinct criteria and data are produced every year in order to provide an approximate number of people who can be defined as contemporary slaves. For example, the International Labour Organization estimates that in 2016, close to 40.3 million people were in modern slavery (Zimmerman & Kiss, 2017). According to the authors and in line with the considerations above, forced labor can be defined as modern-day slavery, but not necessarily equaled with human trafficking, since the estimate does not include trafficking for the removal of organs or for forced adoption. Concerning human trafficking, a conservative estimate of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime states that a total of 63,251 victims were detected in 106 countries and territories between 2012 and 2014 (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime). Every day teams of researchers employed by international organizations, national bodies, and various nonprofit organizations work toward being able to quantify the magnitude of contemporary slavery and human trafficking, which nevertheless appears as a Sisyphean task. While the quantity of national and international reports on these issues increases, not very much attention has yet been given to the presentation of models from a purely theoretical perspective.

## ***Battle of Theoretical Assumptions***

Human trafficking and contemporary slavery can be easily instrumentalized in order to convey a certain worldview. While not every academic research on these topics is accompanied by a clear statement of its underlying assumptions, the aim of this section is to explore some of the most common theories in this context.

### **Cultural Perspective**

First, some scholars as a starting point concentrate on conceptualizing culture. Probably one of the most widespread approaches in scholarship on human trafficking and contemporary slavery refers to the underlying assumptions of the modernization theory. Kamler (2013, p. 76) attempts to redefine it as a “cultural value in and of itself” while acknowledging that the modernization theory offers a way to economic development in which the Western values of democracy, freedom, empowerment, and human rights stem from economic success. While analyzing narratives about human trafficking in Thailand, he underpins the objectification of the East by the Westerners, referring to the cultural theory of Orientalism (Said, 1979). In the light of this approach, academia and institutions appear as some of the primary structures that benefit from their relative hegemonic power relationships with the East, through Westerners writing and teaching about it. Kamler analyzes the employees’ narratives of karma and the acceptance of child prostitution in Thailand from the theoretical standpoint of Orientalism that reinforces “a self-versus-other binary between the West and the East” (Kamler, 2013, p. 82). Such framework evokes Said’s discussion of the manner in which Western actors construct the identities and knowledge about the East, based on a strategy of a flexible positional superiority.

The other side of the coin when analyzing global cultural differences may be Connell’s Southern theory (2007) that reveals the “Northernness” of research on human trafficking and modern slavery in the Global South. In particular in Latin America, the southern epistemology (de Sousa Santos, 2008) argues that many countries have been radically reshaped by crime control and post-colonialism. Modernity promoted by the Western/Northern culture has been accused of having a long history of misuse in a nationalistic way, not to construct universal norms based on equal rights but instead to enforce differences and competition for status among nations (Choo, 2006).

### **Social Justice Approach**

Contrary to the cultural psychology perspective (Valsiner, 2012), the social justice approach to contemporary slavery concentrates on a global vision of the dynamics of this phenomenon in relation to human trafficking. It emphasizes the vulnerability

of people to exploitation as a result of intransigent poverty or calamities or war (King, 2004), which decimate support networks or infrastructures that provide their basic needs such as shelter, nutrition, and safety (Zhang, 2007). Lusk and Lucas (2009) also point to a global economy and competition for profit resulting in an increased demand for cheap or free labor, which laid the groundwork for slavery. They illustrate this process by examining the dialogical relationship of the push and pull factors of contemporary slavery. Among the former, on the supply side, they enlist extreme poverty, high population density, high unemployment, and war or natural disasters, while the latter factors, on the demand side, include sexual tourism and other markets for sexual exploitation, demand for cheap labor, and armed conflict. Social justice is framed as an underlying assumption for advocating on behalf of women and children, for example, by social workers (Hodge & Lietz, 2007).

### **Feminist Perspective**

On the other hand, numerous researchers use feminist theory to frame human trafficking and contemporary slavery. The gendered nature of constructions of these issues, which “rely upon and reproduce gender and racial stereotypes,” discounts women’s agency, establishes an unrealistic standard for victimization, and prioritizes the sexual exploitation of white women (Lobasz, 2009, p. 322). According to feminist theory, gender needs to be established as a category of analysis, focusing on gender-related abuse of human rights, as well as studying the way in which gender stereotypes reproduce categories of victims (Hughes, 2001), perpetrators, and practices. According to Lobasz (2009), two essential feminist contributions to the analysis of human trafficking consist of expanding the focus of trafficking analyses to account for the exploitation of trafficked persons and emphasizing the social construction of the concept of human trafficking. The feminist theory anchors contemporary slavery “in the belief that the sexual enslavement of women is a result of ongoing patriarchal systems that institutionalize women’s diminished worth in the world, suggesting that the root cause of the abuse of women is the inequitable power relations between men and women” (Sidun, 2009, p. 497).

The discussion of human trafficking and contemporary slavery inevitably brings into focus the issue of prostitution. The ongoing debate concerning legislative aspects is actually an expression of different underlying theories of human behavior that could be placed on a continuum. Toward one extreme we may place the sustainable prostitution paradigm, which views prostitution as an economic development strategy for poor and marginalized women (Raymond, 2004). According to this approach, it is necessary to distinguish between forced and voluntary prostitution, prohibiting human trafficking and child exploitation in prostitution, but allowing and regulating sex industry. The underlying assumption of the sustainable prostitution paradigm is that “employment” in sex industry is a choice. On the other end of the continuum, we place the view that prostitution and human trafficking for sexual purposes are issues that cannot be separated, since both constitute harmful and intrinsically linked practices (Ekberg, 2004). As a result of these different underlying

assumptions, academic and public discourse against human trafficking and prostitution has developed along two lines (Outshoorn, 2005). Abolitionists consider prostitution as violence against women, rejecting the notion of choice; as a result, any form of recruitment or transportation of women in prostitution falls under human trafficking. On the other hand, regulationists claim that there is a difference between voluntary and forced prostitution, considering many trafficked women as migrant laborers who deserve legal labor protection (Bell, 1994; Chapkis, 1997). Is there a way to bring these two distinct positions together? Actually, in many cases both sides identify themselves as rooted in feminist theory. In fact, Chapkis makes an interesting claim that “despite passionate ideological differences among feminists on the question of decriminalization of commercial sex, both anti-prostitution activists (who see all sex workers as victims) and sex worker’s rights activists (who demand rights for all those engaged in prostitution) have come to agree that consent should never be a factor in determining which victims of abuse deserve assistance” (Chapkis, 2003, p. 928).

### **Theory of Delinquency**

Copley (2014) turns to Sykes and Matza’s (1957) theory of delinquency in order to understand human trafficking while considering norms and values as flexible behavior patterns that depend on place, social circumstances, and historical moment, rather than unconditional imperatives. According to this theory, “individuals compensate for criminal behavior and minimize social control by evoking forms of socially acceptable excuses and justifications called techniques of neutralization” (Copley, 2014, p. 47). The initial list of five techniques of neutralization that rationalize criminal behavior has been expanded by Maruna and Copes (2005) and currently includes denial of responsibility, denial of injury, denial of victim, condemning the condemners, appealing to high loyalties, defense of necessity, appealing to biological drives, metaphor of the ledger, denial of necessity of the law, claim of entitlement, claim of relative acceptability, claim of individuality, and justification by comparison or postponement. Copley (2014) has demonstrated that those involved in human trafficking use a variety of techniques of neutralization based on the intersecting vulnerabilities of the victims, often emphasizing their agency and complicity of society.

### **Critical Realism**

Many of the abovementioned theories refer to victims without reflecting upon this term. However, the issue of agency is becoming increasingly significant to the researchers, in particular when analyzing narratives of human trafficking. Agustin (2005, p. 107) identifies the problem of the victim-subject as related to identity: “the person designated a victim tends to take on an identity as victim that reduces her to a passive object of others’ actions.” This statement seems to be in line with the

structural-functionalist theoretical approach to behavior that nevertheless acknowledges a contingent element, which in critical realism is defined as agency and assigned a positive normative value (Kemp & Holmwood, 2012).

## **Epistemological Considerations**

Human trafficking and contemporary slavery appear as timely, in a way “popular” current topics, tackled by a wide variety of disciplines from a number of theoretical points of view. As ironically summed up by Kelly (2005), “You can find anything you want” when it comes to research on these issues. Concerning the theory of human behavior linked with contemporary slavery, numerous publications do not even present the epistemological perspective, let alone detailed methodology, tools, and data analysis.

### ***The Theory of Social Representations***

The main aim of this article is to propose a social psychological outlook on research on contemporary slavery in general, including human trafficking, within a grand theory applicable to the plethora of single approaches, attempting to “connect the dots” (Ellemers, 2013). The theory of social representations (Moscovici, 1984) allows stepping back and taking into account different types of theories, without judging the scientific knowledge as superior to commonsense knowledge, even if a degree of the latter is present in the former in any case when dealing with social sciences. The bottom line is to be aware of it and map how the issues of our interest are represented. It is necessary to emphasize that on this level of thought, the goal of this paper is not to describe the social representations of human trafficking nor social representations of contemporary slavery; the theory is applied on a meta-level, rather than dealing with social representations as phenomena or constructs (de Rosa, 1994). It meets the key criteria that characterize a theory that facilitates the connection of different findings into a cumulative science base (Ellemers, 2013).

First, the theory of social representations contains a set of constructs, such as anchoring, objectification, cognitive polyphasia, and distinction between hegemonic, emancipated, and polemical representations (Moscovici, 1984, 1990) that help reduce and compare complex phenomenon like human trafficking, by demonstrating how it emerges in different forms or situations. Second, it moves beyond a single prediction and involves a series of interrelated processes in dialogical relationships, for example, anchoring and objectification constitute processes related to the genesis of social representations, yet each of these process involves further distinguished actions, such as classifying and naming in case of anchoring. Third, the theory of social representations has been successfully applied to different contexts; while it began in Europe, numerous social psychologists from Latin America and

Oceania have been using it in diverse circumstances provided by relational interdependencies, historical developments, political circumstances, and cultural differences. Fourth, the theory of social representations constitutes “a coherent framework that applies to a broader range of outcomes” (Ellemers, 2013, p. 5), including implications for cognition, emotions, and behavior, among other levels.

### Alternative Representations

Certainly, everyone operates within his or her worldview, and the effort to take the position of the other by no means actually gives full access to the other’s social representations. What can be known to one group about other groups’ distinct theoretical approaches are alternative representations (Gillespie, 2008, p. 380): “the representations of potentially competing representations from within social representations.” What is the purpose of alternative representations? First and foremost: communication. In order to be able to carry out a dialogue, which may include a constructive criticism that is comprehensive to the other parties, there is a need to be familiar with their way of meaning making. Especially considering obscure, strongly culturally rooted and potentially emotional issues that easily evoke judgments and stereotypes, awareness and proper use of alternative representations appear as crucial for the scientific community and helpful to other stakeholders.

Gillespie (2008, 2012) identifies a number of semantic barriers to dialogue. The proposed outlook is based on a thorough acknowledgment of different approaches. The semantic barriers impede it; therefore, taking concrete steps to remove such barriers enables dialogue. First, we should avoid rigid oppositions when discussing human trafficking and contemporary slavery. For example, Bernat and Zhilina (2010) demonstrate how local and global outlook on these issues is necessary; instead of opposing local and global, they encourage an effort to understand local conditions of trafficking from a global perspective. Moreover, they interpret the Trafficking in Persons Report in a way that avoids rigid distinctions between source, destination, and transit countries, proving that the majority of the countries in the world contemporaneously fall under all three categories.

Second, the transfer of meaning and emotion from the broader framework of the alternative representation appears as a barrier to dialogue. Human trafficking is often discussed in the context of migration, for instance, by considering similar types of factors, such as migrant networks that influence the cost-benefit analysis (Jac-Kucharski, 2012). Since the topic of international migration is heavily emotionally loaded and often politically instrumentalized, in certain cases the transfer of meaning from human trafficking to migration may jeopardize a meaningful dialogue. Therefore, it is helpful to make a conscious effort to identify when and how the transfer of meaning and emotions occurs, trying to first recognize it and then limit it as much as possible.

Third, if alternative representations fall under the prohibited thoughts, communication becomes much more difficult, if not impossible. Johnson (2013) makes it clear by demonstrating how much more attention is being paid to human trafficking,

especially for exploitation in prostitution but also for labor, although it does not encompass the most prevalent forms of contemporary slavery: bondage, chattel, and contract slavery. This could be due to the fact that the thought of contemporary slavery as “both a continuation and transformation of the slave narrative tradition of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries” (Johnson, 2013, p. 243) could seem to some as a prohibited, negatively sanctioned thought. Since the economy back then benefitted from slavery, acknowledging the possibility of such a link would mean questioning at least some elements of modern production and consumption of goods produced using slave labor, thus risking to be labeled as a rebel or misfit. For the sake of dialogue, it is preferable to explore deeper how others think and represent reality, even if it may seem as a prohibited realm.

Fourth, separating the alternative representation from main representation constitutes an effective semantic barrier. In particular, when speaking of traffickers, there is a diffused tendency to think of organized criminal networks, also involved in document forgery, corruption of public officials, and money laundering. An alternative representation that acknowledges the involvement of undisciplined loose groups or individuals (Sigmon, 2008) may be dismissed as belonging to a different sphere and thus separate. In the case of a rigid separation, a dialogue with someone who sees traffickers as ranging from “truck drivers and village ‘aunties’ to labor brokers and police officers” (Feingold, 2005, p. 28) becomes virtually impossible. Therefore, a conscious effort is necessary in order to include alternative representations.

Fifth, stigmatization that marks alternative representations as not for the in-group functions as a semantic barrier. Franklin and Menaker (2014) note that girls exploited in prostitution constitute a population vulnerable to stigma, which makes it much more common to attribute blame to them. Their own representations of what occurs during human trafficking are therefore more likely to be rejected without engaging in a dialogue with such narratives. Moreover, as observed by Calandrucio (2005, p. 289), “in almost every society, social stigma plays an important role preventing victims of trafficking from divulging their stories.” Acknowledging that stigmatizing exists and taking actions to prevent its intimidating power is a way to remove this semantic barrier.

Sixth, undermining the motives of those with a different social representation can also impede dialogue. For instance, certainly not every theorist agrees with the paradigm of human development, applied to human trafficking by Danailova-Trainor and Laczko (2010). A way to cut short any communication thus diminishing the importance of alternative representation would be to undermine the motives of those who consider human trafficking in the context of development. Criticizing the motives of modernization and development theorists “who tend to focus on economic growth as the goal” (Mapp, 2014, p. 10) may lead into not even considering the view that development could “lead to higher migration and trafficking as better communication and more information raise people’s aspirations for a better life” (Danailova-Trainor & Laczko, 2010, p. 60). It is preferable to concentrate on the content and not on presumed motives behind it, in order not to risk undermining them.

Seventh, bracketing alternative representations should also be avoided. It is a way to question the point of view of the other, but not one's own. Through a use of terms such as "they claim" or "so-called," the author diminishes other's position. For example, Hughes, Chon, and Ellerman (2007, p. 907) do not enter the discussion about prostitution, describing the claim of an association lobbying the government to bring women from abroad to work in nightclubs as follows: "the claim is the same one used by the Japanese during World War II: Providing 'comfort women' to the Japanese troops would prevent them from raping or harassing the local women." Once this type of labeling is in use, there is no need of dialogue or discussion, at least not concerning that specific point, which impedes meaningful dialogue.

Finally, distrust in the source of alternative meaning (Gillespie, 2012) should also be avoided in order to dialogically engage in the other view. In the context of anti-trafficking efforts in the United States, Ditmore and Thukral (2012) demonstrate that an anti-trafficking raid, usually aimed at prostituted women, is misguided and not very effective precisely due to the lack of trust. Since a person in a coercive setting, often not aware of his or her legal rights, tends to fear the law enforcement agents, this makes communication virtually impossible due to the lack of trust.

Each scenario, with its specificities, may actually prepare the ground for further semantic barriers. For example, Gillespie, Kadianaki, and O'Sullivan-Lago (2012b) have found that essentializing differences served as a semantic barrier in the context of immigrant national identity in Ireland, while Sammut, Clark, and Kissau (2014) have identified the use of vulgarity as a further semantic barrier. The effort to avoid semantic barriers when laying theoretical grounds for human trafficking and contemporary slavery shall not be interpreted as a call for an eclectic approach. On the contrary, it ensures a conscious choice of epistemological perspective by the researcher. This shall be beneficial not only when considering other theoretical perspectives but also when selecting, approaching, and analyzing data. In particular when dealing with individuals involved in the phenomena under scrutiny, a clear statement of the researchers' perspective facilitates meaningful dialogue. The universe of scientists becomes even more interwoven with the universe of lay actors directly involved during interventions. For example, Peled and Parker (2013, p. 585) who conducted research with sex-trafficked mothers concluded that "talking, listening, and responding to the harsh life stories and the feeling of togetherness provided during intervention all have the power to help the women in their journey toward integration of the various facets of their experiences and identities as women and as mothers." The theory of social representations acknowledges that the research of social issues is permeated by lay representations that undergo transmission and transformation. Turning to one's alternative representations prior to initiating the dialogue with the other stems from the dialogical capacity of the mind, a "historically and culturally constituted phenomenon in communication, tension, and change" (Markova, 2003). The theory of social representations accounts for change that takes place within the mind, as well as through encounter with others. The tensions between individuals and collectives, which according to Moscovici (1990) constitute the essential theme of social psychology, begin in the mind that through access to alternative representations engages in such tensions. It is made possible



due to the holomorphism of social representations (Wagner & Hayes, 2005): the characteristic of spanning oppositional beliefs, embedded in alternative representations. Especially in case of controversial issues, such as human trafficking, other points of view need to be taken into consideration when the unknown becomes familiar during the participation in societal discourse (Wagner, 2012).

### *Metarelational Models*

The application of the theory of social representations to human trafficking and modern slavery requires an integrative effort of social psychologists. Certainly, it ensures a general framework, but numerous combinations with other theoretical advances are possible and necessary, depending on the aspects of the issue under scrutiny. In particular, in relation to human trafficking, I propose the integration with the metarelational model theory (Fiske, 2012), which “posits that emotion, motivation, moral evaluation, norms, identity and self, property, production, exchange, family dynamics, group formation and function, intergroup relations, political processes, and myriad other processes at the heart of social and behavioral science are crucially shaped by links among relationships and can only be understood with reference to them.” It acknowledges the role of cultural prescriptions, at the same time recognizing the evolutionary, neurobiological, ontogenetic, individually learned, socially transmitted, and culturally shared sources and the consequences of metarelational models. I suggest that metarelational models incorporate social representations; as defined by Fiske (2012, p. 4), a metarelational model “is a representation of action, reflecting an interpretive encoding of past and present configurations of relationships in the world.” At the same time, it enables imagining and generating new actions, just like social representations present “within” and “across” minds of participants and observers. Both social representations and metarelational models are dynamic: the former thanks to the dialogicality of human mind (Markova, 2003) and the latter in the sense of organizing actions that occur over time and being represented as temporally constructed (Fiske, 2012). Thanks to the incorporation of social representations in metarelational models, a further order is given to the reality, which allows the researcher to deal with moral issues. This is a crucial function when dealing with human trafficking, since metarelational models motivate cooperative moral behavior by regulating social relations (Rai & Fiske, 2012).

The above considerations by no means offer an exhaustive solution on how social psychologists should conceptually face the issue of human trafficking. On the contrary, they are meant as an example of building on the theory of social representations that offers a general framework to address a specific facet of human trafficking – its moral and thus ethical aspects.

## Some Ethical Issues

Given the ontological differences between human trafficking and modern slavery discussed in the first section, I strongly feel that ethics play a crucial role when such issues are concerned. While we may pretend that the cultural relativism applies to certain instances of modern slavery (e.g., when a Thai girl believes that she *helps* her peers by introducing them to prostitution), human trafficking by its nature implies a clash of cultures. Even if in his or her homeland the metarelational models are different, a trafficked person usually ends up in a scenario where his or her condition is deemed as morally wrong and harmful. This is where “connecting the dots” gains a new dimension and a concerted effort of social psychologists from different backgrounds becomes necessary. We are moving beyond the multiple layers of identity, inevitably touching on discussions of what is right/wrong and who should be protected/punished. In Europe, national pieces of legislation required after ratification of the Palermo Protocol regulate what happens to the victims, based on power and control dynamics related to such issues as migration, for example, through repatriation. In fact, norms play a crucial role when discussing morality, which lies at the heart of ethics. According to Pagliaro, Ellemers, and Barreto (2011), morality represents a powerful basis for social norms since it is believed to have profound implications for individuals’ social identity. The very particular situation of all individuals and groups involved in human trafficking presents a novel context to study morality, which has become one of the central concerns of social psychology (Pagliaro, 2012).

Moreover, there are numerous ethical issues related to working with crime and deviance. First of all, how do we approach and relate to the victims and predators? In some cases, how do we even distinguish them? Human trafficking is rooted in an unethical behavior, often explained by unconsciously guided acts (Banaji, Bazerman & Chugh, 2003) that present an interpretative challenge to social actors themselves.

Due to the numerous difficulties of engaging in quality contact with groups and individuals directly involved in human trafficking, and also considering the importance of context, the researchers will also have to rely on secondhand information given by other sources. Police, social workers, clinical psychologists, lawyers, relatives, and friends of victims, as well as activists, all can offer valuable information. In any case, numerous ethical issues may arise from the research design, for example, informed consent, right to withdraw, confidentiality/anonymity, deception, debriefing, and any potential risk to participants. The position of researchers also matters and should be described in detail. While dealing with human trafficking, dangerous situations may occur not only for participants but also for researchers.

To bypass the above problems, some social psychological research on human trafficking can deal with analysis of documents, media accounts, and other materials related to it. Numerous activists’ websites, such as Walk Free, Global Freedom Network, International Justice, etc., run informative campaigns and claim to offer data. While it is necessary to engage in a dialogue on a theoretical level when it

comes to human trafficking and contemporary slavery, eventually a truly meaningful exchange of ideas shall enable others to take more efficient actions. Numerous governments, organizations, and individuals spend money, time, and effort to impede human trafficking, but an underlying lack of understanding of the other's theoretical assumptions may and has already led to implementing useless or even harmful "solutions." Research can make a difference if who performs it is willing to share their practical implications with who should apply them. This is another side of ethics that goes beyond mentioning ethical clearances that were obtained for the research design.

## **Aesthetics of Human Trafficking?**

Aesthetic philosophy has explored psychological distancing (Cupchik & Winston, 1996), which can be useful in research on human trafficking. When a person distances himself/herself from the immediate situation, he or she psychologically moves away from the object of perception while also remaining connected to it (Abbey & Bastos, 2014). Such approach could be fruitful and helpful when dealing with delicate ethical situations. Moreover, researcher should carefully examine and define his or her position, which could influence the research design, data treatment, and analysis. In this way, in human trafficking aesthetic philosophy stems from the realm of ethics.

Aesthetics is also very closely related to the act of representing and creativity. In human trafficking, there is a tendency to stress the voyeurism of sexual violence that is often a part of the aesthetics of representing sexual violence (Suchland, 2013). An analysis of images, art, metaphors, symbols, and other devices used to communicate human trafficking provides a fertile ground for analysis, enabling the researchers to bypass taboos, guilt, and shame related to speaking about trafficking-related experiences of violence and objectification.

Creativity therefore has the power to guide researchers while they choose the material to be analyzed (varying from visual aspects of activists' websites, through images, movies, artwork, etc.) and also when they offer to the participants' different tools to express themselves. For example, a drawing can offer a productive window into particular strengths of an artistically talented individual (Cameron, Pinto, & Tapanya, 2014). An insight of clinical psychologists and psychotherapists involved in working with the former victims could provide numerous ideas for research materials related to aesthetics. A grand theory is needed, which allows for methodological pluralism, as opposed to the "methodological fetishism" (Ellemers, 2013). In fact, imaginative creativity of social representations has opened numerous new avenues of research, for example, based on iconic aspects (Jodelet, 2008).

## Conclusion

With the world of science moving toward big data, it sounds tempting (and academically rewarding) to perform meta-analyses in different domains. However, a complex interdisciplinary problem such as human trafficking cannot be approached in this way. On the basis of each study, there is a diverse cultural context and ethical and aesthetic considerations. The metaphor of “connecting the dots” (Ellemers, 2013), a *file rouge* of this paper, brings to mind another comparison that slightly better illustrates the task of social psychologists in relation to human trafficking. If instead of dots we imagine different research lines as stars, this encompasses the delicate issue of culture. Each star also stands for a unique facet of the problem, but there are some common characteristics. Depending on our position on the globe, the weather, and the time of the year, we see them in a distinct way, and our attention is drawn to some details more than others. I believe that the theory of social representations enables us to acknowledge such position, while the metarelational models may be likened to the attempt of drawing constellations among the stars. Not only accumulating a diversified body of research but also making sense of it, questioning the reasons for such diversity (Page, 2014) and making connections should be our task while keeping in mind the grand theory. However, I do not believe that social psychologists should restrict themselves to developing the “meta-perspective” on primary research conducted in other social scientific disciplines. Rather, this paper is a call for social psychologists to start applying themselves more directly to the topic of human trafficking, examining in concrete terms how social representations of the phenomenon are linked to different “thinking communities” with different core values, beliefs, and/or vested interests and how their distribution tracks the communicative relations between these communities.

A final word about the stars that applies to human trafficking: The stars that we see today are what they used to be like—they are light years away. A delay between our research and actual situations is inevitable, but that should not stop us. We do not wish to engage in post-human theorizing; probably the most significant ethical aspect of social psychological input (that takes into account findings of other disciplines) is precisely the practical implications transmitted to everyone engaged in fighting human trafficking worldwide.

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# The Concept of Choice



Kathryn Ariella Pataki and Kristenne M. Robison

Even under appalling conditions people exercise capacities for choice and action that deserve respect. (Meyers, 2014, p. 433)

How might we approach the concept of choice within the context of sex work and sex trafficking? All in all choice is a complicated issue particularly when discussing the contested issue of sex work. As Cianciarulo (2008, p. 67) so eloquently explains, “choice determines whether a person is a victim or a voluntary actor in a situation involving sex and sexuality.” To better understand the role of choice, we can look to the many perspectives that feminists offer on the issue of choice with consideration to the potential for harm, recognition of autonomy, the role of patriarchy, and intersecting identities. We might also consider the multiple factors that shape perceptions of choice ranging from economic opportunities to the legalization of sex work. Choice should be considered specifically within the context of the sex trafficking industry and the sociohistorical context of those located within it. While it is widely recognized that forcing or coercing anyone into sex trafficking is problematic and removes choice (Cianciarulo, 2008), this section considers that those within sex work, and more specifically sex trafficking, continue to be capable of making autonomous choices.

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## **Feminist Perspectives on Choice**

Choice is a contested and polarizing issue within feminist circles. Liberal feminism works to destigmatize sex work while improving working conditions for those involved in this line of work (Meyers, 2014). Liberal feminism recognizes that some sex workers choose not to leave sex work, even when support is available to do so. However, this perspective is often criticized for utilizing a largely White, middle-class, Western lens when analyzing choice. On the other hand, radical feminism supports the complete shutdown of the sex industry (Meyers, 2014). This “freeing” of sex workers from the industry largely fails to recognize the autonomy of the workers. Both of these feminist groups have been critiqued for their failure to integrate sociohistorical contexts of the lived experiences of those located within the sex worker industry. Transnational feminism moves away from the binary of liberal and radical feminism to a spectrum of feminism that highlights the importance of the individual sex worker located within lived intersectional experiences paying particular attention to colonized experiences. Sex trafficking must be shown within its historical context of imperialism, colonialism, and decolonization (Doezema, 2001). Transnational feminism therefore recognizes choice as one not made by those in power but by those individuals located within the sex work industry.

## **Factors that Shape the Perception of Choice**

Recognizing the factors that shape choice in sex work is important to understanding the ways that sex work potentially empowers sex workers. Locating those choices in social contexts also highlights how sex work may seem like one of few choices for the workers involved. In countries where sex work is legal and decriminalized, where workers have access to health and social services, and where sex work is not stigmatized, sex work emerges as an empowering choice for work. Sex work might be viewed as more problematic when it is chosen as a means of survival by vulnerable populations in locations of severe societal disruption with a void in social services (Rekart, 2005). These vulnerable populations then become more at risk for sex trafficking, which is typically viewed as compromising body autonomy (Meyers, 2014). The choice to be involved in sex work is often shaped by social supports for sex workers, legalization of sex work, perceived and real opportunities for work, poverty, experiences of colonization, and the need and/or desire to migrate from one’s home.

Choices are made within social contexts. Rekart (2005) approaches sex work from a public health perspective. He argues that sex workers are at risk for a number of serious potential harms such as disease, violence, criminalization, debt, and exploitation. His answer is not to eliminate the sex work industry but to instead initiate support systems for sex workers to reduce potential harms further validating sex work as legitimate work. If sex workers are at risk for various forms of harm, then

we might ask why they choose sex work. Obviously there is not a simple answer to this issue. In countries and communities that are in societal disruption, sex work might appear as a rational choice. For example, in countries with large deficits of decent work and poverty, sex work is perceived as legitimate work to support self and family (Meyers, 2014). The water gets murkier when trying to understand choice in the context of human trafficking. Some women choose sex work and to be trafficked across borders in order to leave an unstable home region and, as mentioned before, to pursue gainful employment (Kempadoo, Sanghera, & Pattanaik, 2012). Recognizing sex workers as agents of choice instead of victims of society reinforces their body autonomy and increases organizational ability to meet sex workers where they are at to provide support services.

## **Theory and Practices of Choice in the Sex Trafficking Industry**

In practice, support for sex workers and their body autonomy takes on many forms. The transnational feminist perspective would argue that the most effective form of combating the potential coercion and harm linked with the sex trafficking industry while still valuing the choices of those involved would be work done by those within the communities affected and those who are in, or have been in, the sex trafficking industry itself (Meyers, 2014). When people in power invade these communities, they take on the savior industrial complex (Cole, 2012), meaning they turn the trafficked into victims before recognizing them as autonomous individuals with their own specific backgrounds that shape their choices.

There are many organizations that eliminate the choice of sex workers by not treating them as autonomous individuals and instead viewing them as a single homogenous group in need of rescuing. The "West" often depicts the image of a sex worker as a young girl in the "Third World" who is forced into sex slavery (Sandy, 2007). This narrow view of the sex trafficking industry removes personal and historic contexts of sex workers being cast into the sex trade and instead creates a single homogenous category of victims (Sandy, 2007). This narrow view not only subjugates sex workers into a single category; it also leaves out certain groups of sex workers such as Westerners who work in the sex industry or were trafficked into it and people who do not identify as women. When Western scholars identify women and/or girls as a single homogenous category in which their oppression is all the same in the eyes of patriarchy, they eliminate the lived experiences of all "women," and instead all of their lived experiences are cast under a single narrative (Mohanty, 1988).

This single narrative of a woman in a developing nation as a sex slave is problematic when looking at the sex trafficking industry because it eliminates the body autonomy of workers and depicts them as faceless individuals that do not have any choices when it comes to their lives and bodies. The transnational feminist movement

strays away from this approach of categorization and instead emphasizes the need for specificity when dealing with sex workers. This approach takes into account the human rights violations and coercion that are all too present in the lives of sex workers trafficked into the industry while at the same time taking into account other factors such as the individual choices and life conditions of the sex workers themselves. For example, how would one approach an individual who was trafficked into sex work and does not want to leave? Is their choice completely eliminated regardless of their individual experiences and wants because they are placed into the category of “victim?” Or perhaps an individual refuses to leave the industry because of coercion. However, unless one is aware of the individual’s lived experiences and their context within the industry, they cannot know why some sex workers might choose to stay and therefore they are not in a place to “save” them.

Instead of maintaining a savior industrial complex (Cole, 2012) when combating the criminal and human rights violation side of the sex trafficking industry, liberation must come from within its own communities and nations rather than as something bestowed upon sex workers by people in power. It is of utmost importance that organizations dealing with the sex trafficking industry do so in non-paternalistic ways that avoid treating sex workers as victims in need of saving. Rather, these organizations should be run by individuals who have specific ties to the sex trafficking industry whether they were previously trafficked or not. This allows organizations to empathize with the sex workers they are dealing with and allows the organization to better accommodate and understand individual needs while still respecting individuals as autonomous and able to make their own decisions in regard to their life and bodies (Meyers, 2014).

In conclusion, choice should be made by the individual sex worker and not left to those in power. While no one can argue that sex trafficking does not violate human rights and that it is not coercive in nature (Meyers, 2014), it is vital to treat individuals in these scenarios as autonomous in their own decisions. If a sex worker was coerced and forced into this industry, that violates their body autonomy in every way shape or form, yet, it is not up to others, even with good hearts, to violate their body autonomy anymore by bestowing upon them help that is unwanted or even unhelpful in the greater scheme. The fact remains that there is no cookie-cutter experience that can be applied to all sex workers. As discussed earlier, many factors place individuals in the position of a sex worker, and many factors shape the lives of the individual there. The sex industry is a transnational industry that penetrates borders and affects different countries and communities in different ways. Therefore, there is no better approach than the transnational perspective in dealing with this issue. The transnational perspective gives back what has been taken away from trafficked individuals and that is their ability to make their own choices.

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# An Organizational Systems View of Sex Trafficking



Latrice Annette Drain

## Introduction

The history of slavery incessantly intertwines with the history of humankind and has continually transformed with the development of an economy, technology, and civilization. With the advancement of transportation, the trafficking of people persistently increases given globalization and the interconnectedness of the world. Consisting of several networks, sex trafficking is a transnational system of trade that is the third most profitable and growing industry, after the drugs and arms trades (Demarest, 2015).

The majority of research on sex trafficking highlights the physical and psychological effects on victims or the prevalence rates of the industry. However, minimal literature exists on contributing factors to sex trafficking. Such elements include the role of organized crime; legal systems, which vary within and between nations protecting criminals and/or criminalizing victims or decriminalizing all sex trade activity; social conditions (i.e., push/pull factors consisting of race and ethnicity, nationality, sex, and socioeconomic status); and cultural perspectives of a society regarding gender roles, sexual conduct, politics, and power.

## Systems Framework of Sex Trafficking

Many theoretical frameworks concerning violence against women are derivative facets of feminist theories. Feminist theory is a wide, transdisciplinary standpoint that works to understand individuals' experiences, roles, and values on the basis of sex and gender (Miriam, 2005). Commonly applied to intimate partner violence,

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which differs from the sex-trafficked population, feminist theory would frame abusive relationships between intimate partners as gender-based crimes, favoring the idea of institutionalized oppression of women globally (Nichols, 2013). Regarding sexual exploitation, a feminist framework questions whether an exchange of sexual services for financial compensation is or can be voluntary (Wilson & Butler, 2014). A transnational feminist framework applied to sex trade, however, elucidates the unique experiences of women within and across cultures given the context of their particular society's philosophical, historical, legal, and political viewpoints and practices. How sex is viewed (philosophical), how trafficking formed (historical) and continues (legal), and how women or women's rights are perceived or treated (political) are products of a system that determines the quality of life for those interacting with the system.

Views of choice, oppression, crime or abuse, and experiences may differ for individuals in different cultures or countries as opposed to violence or inequality seen solely as gender-based as is in global or international feminism, in that other contributing variables (e.g., race, religion, nationality, and socioeconomic status) also impact the perspectives and experiences of individuals, which transnational feminism strives to incorporate. To examine the industry of sex trade, from Bertalanffy's general system theory (GST) to systems psychology, GST is an interdisciplinary theory describing the nature of complex systems within nature, society, and science and explores and explains a group of objects, whether an organism, organization, or society, working toward a result together (Demarest, 2015). A systems approach generally evaluates the occurrences in a market, which affect the profitability of a business. The business of sex trade may function differently in each country, depending on the economy or the status as a source, transit, or destination country, but overall, there are rules, roles, privileges, and consequences within the industry.

A lucrative industry, sex trafficking flourishes given that the commodity being bought and sold are people, and the industry's product (i.e., people) can be used or sold multiple times as opposed to once as in the drug trade. Evaluating occurrences in the market, sex traffickers monitor consumers' preferences, maintain a supply to meet such preferences, determine rates, and work to control or accommodate market trends. Alternatively, consumers in the sex trade make purchasing decisions based on desire, motivation, and brand reputation (i.e., traffickers' goods). Loyalty and trust to some degree between traffickers and buyers, as in any industry, factor into the decision-making of conducting business together whether once or multiple times. Even with recent decriminalization laws in some nations, in such an industry historically built on imperialistic ideology and practice, manipulation, and fear, the humanity of trafficked persons is overlooked by dehumanizing, devaluing, and displacing this population for financial gain and/or power.

Sex trafficking, like other industries, operates as a hierarchical system with tenets of power and influence. The various roles and privileges are assumed or given based upon status within the system, and rules, practices, and consequences are distributed accordingly. The business of sex trafficking exists when and due to the larger societal system creating the space for it that can be seen in a culture, country, laws, or

general perspectives. Continuing with the development of a systems theoretical framework of the sex trafficking industry, systems psychology, inspired by systems theory and systems thinking and based on the work of Roger Barker, Gregory Bateson, and Humberto Maturana, among others, is a branch of psychology that studies human behaviors and experiences within complex systems. Humankind is complex as is the systems with which it interacts; thus, human behavior and experiences, specifically in sex trafficking, speak to individuals' needs, motivations, attributes, and desires when deciding to trade or exploit others for any form of compensation, tangible or intangible (e.g., money or something of monetary value, power, respect, reward, or sense of accomplishment).

Systems psychology, wherein groups and individuals are considered as systems in homeostasis, although most living systems are in a continuous disequilibrium and an illusion of homeostasis, focuses on societal systems and on motivational, affective, cognitive, and group behavior (Environment and Ecology, 2016). In systems psychology, organizational behavioral characteristics, such as expectations, needs, and rewards of those interacting with the system are considered for building an effective system. Groupthink and social learning in the sex trafficking industry may affect the behavior of traffickers regarding how one exerts or expresses the inner self (e.g., appearing or being tough, in control, or competent), the beliefs one holds about the self and others that perpetuates or allows the partaking in sex trafficking activity, how one treats others based upon teachings from the environment (i.e., the sex trade industry), and personal voids for which to overcompensate.

The expectations, individual needs, attributes, and rewards either of the trafficked or the traffickers all factor into this multifaceted system of sex trafficking, thus a system operating in disequilibrium. Each person interacting with the larger societal system as an individual system possesses different needs, motivations, and expectations, emphasizing the interactive nature and interdependence of external and internal aspects of a society and of the sex trafficking industry. Traffickers are dependent upon those they traffic for earnings, trafficked persons depend on traffickers for the fulfillment of basic needs such as food and shelter, and both depend on the society in which sex trade occurs as it makes the industry possible and profitable, illustrating the interactive and interdependence of the system.

Macro-level theories, including GST and systems psychology, of the system of sex trafficking and its functions influence other macro systems, namely, the legal system. Additionally, it even determines whether a person, specifically a woman, can choose to exchange sex for financial recompense, which the laws of a society also determines. Laws tend to influence culture and vice versa in a reciprocal process. For example, a law decriminalizing sex trafficking in one country makes for a culture that is or becomes more tolerant of sex trafficking activities, just as if there was a paradigm shift in cultural perspectives of sex trafficking, then it would influence the change in or making of laws. This culture and law reciprocation is also reflected in the countries where decriminalization of sex trafficking is not upheld in the culture or in the laws. If sex-trafficked persons are punished or unprotected, or if sex traffickers and consumers of trafficked persons are not criminalized for involvement in the sex trade, then it influences a culture that tolerates slavery.

A systems theoretical examination of sex trafficking exposes the systemic societal issues in understanding the historical, philosophical, legal, and political perspectives that pervasively influence cultural and individual positions. Whereas macro-level theories influence macro systems such as law, micro-level theories, which focus on individuals (e.g., needs, attributes, expectations, and rewards) as systems within systems, attempt to explain the process of victimization or entry to and exit from the sex trade, although not well supported empirically (Brysk, 2011). Even the definitions and terminology pertaining to sex trafficking differ based on cultural contexts, laws, and public views regarding sex, intimacy, gender roles, rights, and choice, which have been debated. Using juxtaposed theoretical positions, scholars also utilize different terminologies, for example, sex work vs. prostitution or sex trade vs. sex trafficking vs. sexual exploitation, highlighting further complications as in any system. Finally, there exists a view or an assumption that trafficked individuals are exploited due to three reasons: their mere existence in the industry automatically makes them prone to victimization; traffickers plan on high profit margins and, thus, will use any creative means to control trafficked individuals; and the clandestine spaces where trafficked individuals are typically traded subject them to exploitation.

## Psychology of Oppression

Systems psychology encompasses oppression in that human behavior that exhibits oppression represents the historical colonialist ideologies, the internal complexes developed, and the subsequently formed hierarchical structure of people's roles within a society. Therefore, the livelihood of all who interact with and within the larger societal system is dictated or determined by the interests of those controlling the system. Sex trafficking, or sex slavery (Brysk, 2011), is a representation of a slave/slave-master relationship, stemming from a system of colonialism and oppression.

The act of oppressing and the lived experience of oppression are different and show the complicated human relationship between the oppressor and the oppressed, which may explicate the behaviors and lingering effects in such relationships. An oppressor may justify the acts of oppressing with self-deceiving notions of helping, or even saving and rescuing, the other person or people. Psychologically, oppressors must dehumanize and demoralize others in order to excuse the oppression and domination and to justify the violence or manipulation enacted to control the person or group for the purpose of gaining their dependency or acquiring that which is desired (Alagbala, 2013). As time progresses, an oppressor can implant his or her will onto the will of the oppressed (Concepcion, 2009). The now oppressive, superior-inferior relationship has transformed from one of convenience, for the oppressor, to one of necessity and dependence for both the trafficker's and trafficked individual's survival. Eventually, an oppressed person's interests may align with an oppressor's interests, wherein a trafficked person might take a trafficker's will as his or her own will (Concepcion, 2009).



The act of oppressing, which formulates a system of oppression, follows a process that Kathleen Barry first explained as abducting, seasoning, and criminalizing (1979 as cited in Concepcion, 2009), illuminating the implanting process of enslavement. The strategic process is as follows:

1. First is the removal from familiar people and surroundings to limit the would-be trafficked person's resources, thus becoming dependent upon the abductor, the trafficker.
2. Secondly, the seasoning process of trafficked people is by means of frequent brutality to the extent that the trafficked person views the absence of such brutality as a gift. Those who are *seasoned* or "trained" are loyal to the oppressor partly for survival and partly as a result of misplaced gratitude.
3. The final step is when the oppressor, or trafficker, criminalizes the trafficked person by forcing participation in crimes to the degree of making it difficult to return to a noncriminal lifestyle (Concepcion, 2009), which may include immoral crimes to the self or illegal crimes in society. At the conclusion of the enslavement process, the trafficker owns the trafficked person.

Taking advantage of vulnerability, oppressors may threaten or exploit disadvantages and weaknesses of trafficked people to maintain their dependence and obedience. The extent to which the three-step process is successful indicates that the master in the relationship has successfully implanted himself or herself onto a trafficked person. Likewise, this also denotes that to be enslaved means that a trafficked individual has taken on another person's interests as his or her own. Often out of necessity, trafficked people adapt to their exploiter's interests, values, schedules, and skills more than they likely would to their own (Concepcion, 2009). On the reverse side, the trafficker/oppressor needs the trafficked person to adapt in order to continue the operation of the oppressive system. During this implanting process, trafficked people may begin to believe that their new interests, which are actually those of their oppressor, are their own; thus, any actions or decisions subsequent to the implanting process are seen as their own. Even misplaced gratitude or internalization of the trafficking experiences transpires during oppression. The more the trafficked person internalizes the exploitation, the less obvious the oppressor's manipulation needs to be. Such a process demonstrates that in systems psychology, oppression is a powerful tool to deconstruct an individual in order to construct a system of power imbalance to the level of conditioning the subordinate person or group to comply with and support the imbalanced and oppressive system.

When oppression becomes less circumstantial, such as reasons based on economy or era, and more either institutional (e.g., sex trafficking as an industry) or constitutional (i.e., the larger societal system and laws supporting oppressive acts), then the process of oppression prevails as the now-trafficked individual more likely interprets worldviews, self-injurious or criminal activities as one's own interest or decision. However, this is a lingering effect of internalized oppression, hence, leading to self-blame as a causal agent for one's own oppression, which is another effect of internalized oppression, to place blame onto the oppressed. Oppression is harmful to all involved and carries long-lasting effects to the oppressed and oppressors.

Even long after separation from oppressors, trafficked people may continue to hold the same beliefs taught during the time in possession of the traffickers or continue to self-harm or harm others and believe that such behavior is warranted or of their own volition. Additionally, feelings of rage, insecurity, or mental health issues may arise, and depending on the extent to which people are oppressed, they may find difficulty in liberating themselves. This double-bind position of being oppressed while concurrently self-oppressing reveals the power over the trafficked people. Effects of oppression that oppressors internalize include superiority or entitlement complexes, standardization or normalization of their interests only, and continued justification for actions or disregard for others, deepening power imbalances and divisions.

## **Hegemonic Feminism Perspectives**

The industry of sex trafficking contains the oppressive hallmarks of most societies' imperialistic practices and hierarchical structures, whether based upon sex, age, race/ethnicity, religion, or socioeconomic status. The manner in which a population is viewed within the cultural, legal, and political systems in a society determines the livelihood of individuals in that system and how they interact with the system. As one outcome of imperialism or oppression is standardizing and normalizing oppressors' interests solely, it cultivates a culture that functions to serve the dominant in the system. Where relevant, the patriarchal organization of both a government and society demonstrates the prevalent acceptance of sexist and patriarchal hierarchies that exclude women from equal participation in a society or exploits women (Demarest, 2015). Focusing on sex trade wherein some nations view it as a model of oppression, the central tenet of sexual commerce are male domination and the systemic disparities between men and women; sexual commerce, in this model, perpetuates women's subordination to men as it grants men the right to access women's bodies (Farley, 2015).

A transnational feminism perspective recognizes the differences in each culture regarding women's bodies, rights, and roles; thus, oppression is not viewed and experienced in the same manner cross culturally. Henceforth, the disparities between women and men encompass other factors in addition to sex. For example, such disparities may also consist of varying gender roles in a society and corresponding attitudes about sexual activity, religious and spiritual implications, racial status, or socioeconomic conditions. Feminism in the United States surrounding equal rights between men and women—and sometimes forgotten issues of race and class—in politics, employment, and health care differs from feminism in Brazil organized around military regime and efforts for democracy (Piscitelli, 2014), which differs from feminism in any other part of the globe. The historical routes that feminism or women's movements take vary based on time, region, political environment, and social issues. Equality, for example, is not viewed the same across cultures and countries as those in different regions strive for equality relevant to their culture.

Thus, historical, political, and cultural aspects must be considered in terms of equality, the specific barriers to gaining equality, and the responses that account for or fit in a certain culture.

Marxist feminism postulates that women's oppression stems from the economic dependence on men in a male-centric society and argues that capitalism is the primary oppressor of women (Mackay, 2015). This theory further posits that as long as capitalism exists, women will economically rely on men and live in a patriarchal society that is structured on social class (Beloso, 2012). Additionally, this theory suggests that economic exploitation includes pornography and prostitution and views these as oppressions of both sex and class. It is the idea in a capitalistic society that men have rights to women's bodies and that women will depend on men for economic support and will live in a patriarchal society based on class. As any worker's output is accountable to capitalists for their profits, depending on the society, in a Marxist feminist viewpoint, men who buy or control the sexual services involving trafficked persons, in this case women, dictates women's sexuality and sexual energy (Miriam, 2005).

The international political economy of sex, as Andrea Bertone (2000) suggested, shows industrial capitalism as the preferred economic system and that commodification of people drives the human trafficking network. The capitalistic roots of sex trafficking rest in the easily accessible existence of supply, which are those traded for sex, and demand, the profiteers and buyers in both developed and developing nations. To offer a behavioral approach, Easton (as cited in Demarest, 2015) suggested that a political system is both a delimited and changing system of decision-making that follows certain steps: (1) changes in the social or physical environment of a political system that produces *demands* and *supports* for action or the status quo directed as *inputs* for the political system via political behavior, which serves the interests of the majority; (2) such demands and supports arouse competition in a political system, leading to decisions or *outputs* directed at an aspect of the surrounding social or physical environment; (3) after gathering a decision, such as a policy criminalizing or decriminalizing sex trafficking, the output interacts with the environment wherein there are outcomes if it leads to a change in the environment, which relates to the reciprocation of law and culture; (4) when a new policy interacts with its environment, outcomes may generate new demands in support of or against the policy; and (5) the feedback in the final step returns to the first step, continuing the cycle. If the political system functions as described, then it is considered stable, whereas if it does not, then it is considered dysfunctional. As stated previously, most living systems operate in disequilibrium.

Given that trafficked people are commodified in the transnational sex trade system, the global commodity chain (GCC) framework wherein a commodity chain is the process of turning raw material into finished products also applies in that trafficked people initially are seen as unfinished products that undergo a process, or seasoning/training, before becoming market-ready after the distributor, or trafficker, prepares them. Regular locations of so-called production to make the product in the commodity chain market-ready include brothels, massage parlors, bars, and streets and highways (Das, Eargie, & Esmail, 2011).

## Identity Intersectionality and Sex Trafficking

Intersectionality, as Kimberlé Crenshaw coined in 1979, is a concept describing the interconnectedness of oppressive institutions (i.e., racism, sexism, ableism, classism, heterosexism, and nationalism and xenophobia) that cannot be examined independently of each other (Crenshaw, 1995). Largely used in critical theories, and especially feminist theory to discuss systematic oppression, intersectionality demonstrates the multifaceted identities of people and the manner in which such identities shape their worldviews, impact their experiences, and inform their behaviors.

In terms of sex trafficking, intersectionality of identities may explain a trafficked person's varied experiences based on race, class, sexual preference, or another identity in addition to sex (Sokoloff & Dupont, 2005). As women are typically trafficked for sex, the identity of being of female sex coupled with the gender role for women in any society trafficked from or to, the socioeconomic class even prior to trafficking, race and ethnicity, and other identities held all intertwine that shape the experience and interpretation of the experience of trafficking. Trafficked males may also struggle with the gender role for men and internalize the trafficking in addition to the other identities held. For profiteers and buyers within the sex trafficking network, intersectionality also applies to their multiple identities. The intersection of identities pertains to all who interact with the larger societal system.

Intersectionality emphasizes that the effect of sexism qualitatively differs for each person depending on race, class, sex, and other identities (Anthias, 2013). For example, women of color, a term typically used in the US to describe women other than White or European, may experience oppression and victimization of sexual exploitation differently because their bodies are typically viewed more as sexual perversions of desire and are systemically treated as a lower class than are their White counterparts (Chong, 2014). The dichotomy of social interrelatedness and divisions impacts human behavior and reveals the complexity of human relationships. Feminists and Marxist feminists who use the intersectional framework uphold that gender, or class and gender, respectively, cannot be independently used to explain a woman's lived experience of oppression and sexual exploitation or their affect (Beloso, 2012).

## Contributing Factors to Sex Trafficking

As the industry of sex trafficking contains interrelated components of the larger societal system, the industry is perpetuated by the interdependence of such factors, which all carry different implications worldwide. Several international factors influence the industry of sex trafficking, such as globalization, legal systems, cultural and social views and values, and political landscapes (Demarest, 2015). Additionally, the industry's progression stems from high illegal migration due to poor economic conditions, lower risks for sex traffickers compared to other criminal involvement, and reusable commodities.

Along with economic factors, political and sociocultural components must also be considered in a country's role in sex trafficking (Das et al., 2011). Power and inequality in a system forms socially constructed differences based on any of the institutions of "-isms" through which a superior group causes damage and deprivation to an inferior group within the system (Lutya, 2012). Societies are interconnected and thus must be viewed within their corresponding cultural and structural contexts as the nature of a society determines the type of crime in any geographical region (Lanier & Henry, 2004). Relationships between countries continue to build given trade agreements being profitable means of conducting business, thus making traveling and tourism opportunities accessible.

A host of factors combined influence and perpetuate sex trafficking (Lutya & Lanier, 2009), and the mutual relationship between variables indicates that they cannot function without each other, also representing the interconnectedness of the trafficking network. For example, the decision to buy, sell, or trade people like commodity is made with rational choice, demand, and victim vulnerability due to social conditions that fuel supply, all which are factors of the sex trafficking system.

An existing mutual relationship between free will, demand, and victim vulnerability illustrates that decision-making precedes these elements. Essentially, traffickers will not consider free will, demand, or victim vulnerability without having already decided to engage in sex trafficking activities, whether intentionally or impulsively. Likewise, the demand, or buyers and users, will not exhibit interest if traffickers have not agreed to meet their needs; thus traffickers will not lure and deceive potential trafficked individuals without such demand. With little or no information about potential trafficked individuals concerning lifestyle, sex, class, or race/ethnicity per preference of the demand, then traffickers will not recruit.

Other than rational choice, situational contexts of sex-trafficked persons must also be considered in the vulnerability to trafficking, reasons for the purchase of unfamiliar or sold sex, and a society's ambivalence regarding sex trafficking. The recruitment phase follows the decision to buy or sell sexual services, identifying potential trafficked individuals, and analyzing situational facets for luring; however, for the recruitment phase to occur, there must be a power difference between traffickers and the trafficked.

Scholars on the misunderstood and controversial matter of sex trafficking have argued for a research paradigm shift that focuses on traffickers' decisions as they are the principal decision-makers in the sex trafficking system. Such a shift would move away from prior literature that highlights migration and economic settings as determining factors. Jac-Kucharski (2012) offered a mathematical model labeling each push/pull factor, such as poverty, civil unrest, and cost-benefit analysis for traffickers as independent variables of trafficking. Although a description of this model is beyond the scope of this chapter, the results showed that inequality between men and women was influential in determining the levels of sex trafficking in source countries.

In addition, power and inequality, free will in the minds of traffickers construed as business endeavors and consumer rights, easier exploitation of trafficked persons due to a society's casual attitudes of sex trafficking, and financial or legal benefits

from trafficking provide the space and opportunity for recruitment. Essentially, power and inequality influence free will to recruit potential trafficked individuals based on any preconceived notion of the person/people or of the industry itself. Moreover, if trafficked persons exit the industry alive, the internal damage endured might lead them either to return to the sex trade as recruiters or as independent prostitutes or sex workers, continuing the cycle and demonstrating the interrelation of being oppressed and oppressing. There are numerous contributing factors to sex trafficking as discussed; others include organized crime and cultural perspectives expressed through media.

### *Organized Crime*

Sex trafficking, emanated from and within a capitalistic economic system, involves the systematic rape, enslavement, and murder of millions of people while generating millions of dollars annually (Demarest, 2015). Status of countries in the sex trafficking network is of important note to illustrate hierarchical, political, and cultural structures of the system at large. The process of sex trafficking begins in source countries, wherein recruitment occurs. Most source countries are developing nations with poor economic conditions, especially for women, thus increasing their vulnerability to accepting deceptive offers from traffickers, if not forced or abducted into the sex trafficking industry. When trafficked individuals are removed from their country of origin, as discussed in the enslavement process of removal from familiar surroundings and people, they may be transported to transit countries, which serve as layover countries for trafficked persons. Transit countries typically have loose immigration laws that allow easy smuggling in and out of the country. Sometimes, trafficked persons remain in the transit country or they are transported to a destination country, which have high demand and high profits for sex services (Demarest, 2015). The movement of people from one location to another, accessibility of the people to traffic, as well as ineffective criminal justice systems in some nations clarifies the transportation processes in sex trafficking (Lutya, 2012).

Often, traffickers confiscate traveling documents from trafficked individuals, which keeps them dependent upon the traffickers to prevent escape or seeking external assistance from authority figures (Simić, 2012). Trafficked individuals typically are deprived of medical and mental health care, humane shelter, protection from traffickers, access to information on legal rights, financial assistance, or other needs such as food, clothes, phone calls, or a safe way to return home, which are additional means of controlling trafficked individuals by dictating their livelihoods. Typically, those with vested interest in profits are corrupt governmental and political officials, attorneys, and traffickers and transnational organized criminal network (TNOCN) employees.

One view is that trafficked people are sold because sex trade produces profits just as brothel owners, for example, buy people because they are available given traffickers' harboring and transporting of them. The longer traffickers keep trafficked

individuals to perform sexual services, the more profits they generate due to the readily available supply to meet the demand (Diep, 2005); thus, traffickers apply any necessary means to control trafficked people in order to protect and prolong their own investment in the sex trade. Although all traffickers utilize different methods to retain trafficked persons, demand and constitutive theories provide insight on motives for confinement, harboring, selling, and buying trafficked persons, but GST views such practice as only one part of an interdisciplinary and complex societal system as a whole that is working toward a profitable outcome for itself. As people are individual systems, on a micro-level, within a larger societal system, the systems psychology framework finds traffickers and buyers as attempting to fulfill needs and desires based on personal or societal expectations.

The extent to which traffickers are willing to harbor trafficked persons to generate income is not only one of the factors of sex trafficking but also exhibits the imperialistic ideology of owning people as commodity, which formulates a superiority complex, and the capitalistic endeavors of profiting on others' disadvantage created through power imbalances. Systems psychology represents the interdependence of all people interacting with a system and the nature of complex relationships within and derived from such a system.

## **Sex Trafficking, Media, and Culture/Economy**

The media portrayals of sex and sex trade influences the cultural beliefs about women and their bodies, sexual activity, gender roles, and trafficked individuals' plights. Oftentimes, misinformation is provided on sex trafficking; trafficking experiences are glamorized or are told as incomplete stories, thus affecting the knowledge, awareness, laws, and treatment toward the population. The culture of a society is transmitted through its media, and media influences and is influenced by its corresponding culture. Through media, a society (law enforcement, buyers/profiteers, and the general public) is conditioned to believe the portrayed images and stories, leading to exploitation of trafficked persons, even if done so subconsciously, by becoming prone to victimizing, blaming, or violating trafficked individuals.

The publicity of sex trafficking activities gives the impression that women's bodies are exploitable. If it is a woman in the sex trade, then a buyer or trafficker of sex may engage to release or displace anger or some other void for which to fill or overcompensate, may perceive sex-trafficked women as expecting to be used, or maintain a preconceived notion that sex-trafficked peoples' provocativeness needs to be exploited, thus fulfilling internal needs and desires (Lutya, 2012). Exploitation of sex-trafficked individuals would occur despite the media's positive or negative publicity of the industry, victim vulnerability to being trafficked, and decriminalization of laws.

Economic globalization, sex and gender implications in a culture, race/ethnicity, and socioeconomic status must be considered not only as intersecting identities but also the manner in which they are affected by sex trafficking. Economic globalization occurs as nations trade, move, and network globally. Also, gender roles differ across

cultures and can make women vulnerable in economic, social, and cultural standings, depending on the culture. For example, in countries or cultures wherein men are viewed as superior to women, the widespread perception within the culture values and respects them more than their women counterparts. Additionally, those considered as minorities and those in lower economic classes are prone to be trafficked as they have less or no rights (or overlooked rights) compared to the majority race or class in the society, thus less power to protect themselves or support their families (Demarest, 2015).

Without cultural or social capital, trafficked women encounter economic, social, and sexual oppressions (Konstantopoulos et al., 2013). If the political environment was constructed for equal opportunity for all to gain social and economic capital, then it may decrease, even if not cease, women of lower social classes, ethnic groups, other identities, and women in general's vulnerability to being trafficked, confirming the interrelatedness and interdependence of all who interact with the larger societal system including the traffickers, the trafficked, and the society in which trafficking occurs.

The distribution of power in an economic system influences a culture as well as the trends and practices within a society. Although Marxist feminism, specifically pertaining to capitalism, and the political economy standpoints agree that political economy and lower social economic status together could fuel sexual commerce, the political economy framework rests in capitalistic differences solely in wealth, whereas Marxist feminism views wealth differences as a result of systemic oppression against women (Wilson & Butler, 2014). In the latter view, the political economy supports the imbalance of power and allows for unequal opportunity and pay between men and women, making women dependent upon men for survival. Transnational feminism views additional antecedent factors to such structural inequality, including the perceptions of women and of men in a culture, the historical value and experiences that led to present-day economic and political conditions, and the tenets of intersectionality.

### ***Future Research***

Much of the current literature on sex trafficking investigates the prevalence rates of trafficked individuals and the industry's growth. It also covers prevention tactics, definitions and terminology inconsistencies, victim vulnerability factors, and theoretical frameworks of human rights-based vs. choice-based. However, research could be expanded to include the education and prevention for males concerning sex trafficking, decision-making factors for trading people as commodity, systemic features of sex trafficking transnationally, and comprehension of sex trafficking in cultural and situational contexts. Knowledge and research of specific local, national, and global sex trafficking is necessary for the implementation and evaluation of anti-trafficking strategies; however, such knowledge and research that is transnationally unique to specific cultures are a prerequisite for developing culturally



competent and informed policies to suit a particular country or culture's stance on sex trafficking. The historical, philosophical, legal, and cultural characteristics of a nation and the differences within and between nations also contribute to forming sound conclusions and understandings of sex trafficking within different contexts.

Sex trafficking overall would benefit from being clearly defined so that evidence-based approaches and effective legal frameworks for a specific geographical region are enacted. The legal system variations and cultural perspectives are determinants of how sex trafficking is perceived and/or regulated. Thus, efforts to combat sex trafficking are deemed inadequate if they do not fit a specific culture or country or if attempting to apply a general approach internationally in a one-size-fits-all model. Hence, transnational perspectives and approaches are recommended in research of and practice with the sex-trafficked population for the purpose of conceptualizing, advocating, educating, implementing, and evaluating within proper context. For example, if one nation does not view sex trafficking as a crime while another nation does, then one perspective or method would be ill-advised as service delivery, advocacy, education, prevention, and so forth will differ in nature, type, and process.

Analyzing sex trafficking intelligently and comprehensively to determine effective action or counteraction can be overwhelming due to the multifaceted nature of the sex trade and the interdependence of all parts in the larger societal system. While capitalism and globalization have allowed for business and travel opportunities between nations as well as to connect the world, they have assisted in the success of sex trafficking as well (Gerassi, 2015).

A comprehensive transnational approach to sex trafficking includes: competent action, interdisciplinary strategy, and sustainability. Competent action encompasses situational and cultural approaches to research and conceptualization of the sex trade, implementation of relevant tactics congruent with the laws and culture, and evaluation of laws, programs, and attitudes that will inform action on the sex trade industry. In source, transit, and destination countries, competent action on sex trafficking must suit each nation, and although differences will exist in these countries, competent action is informed, relevant, and most importantly, consistent.

As sex trafficking is a multifaceted system, it requires not only a multidisciplinary but rather an interdisciplinary approach. Interdisciplinary suggests all parts together rather than single parts as a whole. In this approach, legal and academic scholars, researchers, advocates, media, and service providers collaborate for a coordinated and integrated effort to address the sex trade. The more efforts made to meet the objectives concluded for the sex trade industry and to view each nation uniquely and specifically, the more pointed and consistent the approach, thus competent action. Duplication of effort, separation of work, or superior perceptions of a sole method as the best increases exhaustion and complication. Finally, sustainability concerns the competent action(s) and interdisciplinary efforts that endure pressures and stresses throughout time and is adaptable to the changing societal and cultural aspects. Adopting relevant strategies or programs to respond to sex trafficking sustains the strategies or programs. Sustainability in this comprehensive transnational approach is coherent practice that transcends time and space for efficacy in policies, measurements, and interventions.

Another recommendation is to consider the intersectionality of identities for all involved in the sex trafficking industry, the traffickers and the trafficked. By doing so, it provides insight into people as systems operating within a larger societal system as well as the complexities in human dynamics. Intersectionality is commonly used to understand such an impact of multiple identities on the oppressed but is also useful for understanding oppressors as well, as both depend on one another in the overall oppressive system. Identities must be viewed together to grasp the full scope of a person and the interlocking of various components of a system highlights its impact.

Lastly, a transnational feminism framework for sex trafficking and its relation to power and inequality is recommended for research to demonstrate culturally-relevant views and establish culturally competent approaches. Additionally, factors of oppression or inequality other than sex must be considered in research and practice that extends to race, ethnicity, nationality, or identities. As the world is and continues to be interconnected, the unique cultural beliefs, histories, and practices must be at the forefront to explain or understand different experiences rather than dictated by one.

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**Part II**  
**Who Are the Victims?**

# Vulnerability Factors When Women and Girls Are Trafficked



Kelley A. Gill and Giselle Gavia

Today, we know that sex trafficking is not an isolated issue. Sex trafficking impacts foreign nationals and citizens from each and every country around the world. Statistics on the prevalence of sex trafficking is widely variable and depends on the source of information (Bryant-Davis, Adams, & Gray, 2017; Clawson, Dutch, Solomon, & Grace, 2009) and the countries being referenced. Understanding vulnerability factors associated with sex trafficking is crucial for prevention, intervention, and the effective treatment of survivors.

A variety of micro and macro risk factors increase the risk of an individual becoming a victim of sex trafficking (Kerr, 2014; Task Force on Trafficking of Women and Girls, 2014). Risk factors vary across countries and cultures; however, at least 80% of sex trafficking victims are women and girls. Microlevel risk factors include, but are not limited to, being marginalized through oppression and discrimination; a history of trauma and discriminatory experiences; developmental, emotional, and cognitive factors; and immigration status in their host country. Macro-level risk factors include lack of employment and education opportunities, low wages and/or loss of wages, lack of healthcare services, political instability within one's host country, regional conflict/warfare, and organized crime. Further, limitations related to language and culture may prevent victims from understanding and appreciating their rights and the laws that protect them.

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## Grooming and Enticement

Sex traffickers generally target vulnerable individuals by using psychological and physical grooming processes aimed at transitioning the victim to a dependent role. Traffickers target victims who have noticeable vulnerabilities such as emotional neediness, low self-confidence or economic stress, and/or lack of basic needs such as food and shelter. During the initial stages, a trafficker may obtain information about the victim's likes and dislikes through casual conversations, social media outlets (e.g., Instagram, Snapchat, and Facebook), other trending social media sites, and/or employment sites. Traffickers may also obtain information by using similar means with the victim's family and friends. Although the exact tactics may vary, a trafficker is able to use the knowledge gained to feed a need in the victim's life. For example, a trafficker may create a honeymoon stage in which gifts and tokens are exchanged, provide emotional support during a period of vulnerability, begin a romantic relationship, supply the victim with illicit substances and alcohol, or create a sense of dominance by distancing the victim from family and friends. A trafficker may then seek payment in the form of sex and exploitation and use false promises, manipulation, and violence to psychologically overpower the victim.

## Recruitment

The majority of trafficked individuals (children and adults) are recruited through fraud, deception, and other enticements that exploit basic and social needs. A typical scheme used by traffickers to coerce and manipulate their victims into the trafficking industry is to make empty promises to entice the victim into service. Internationally, women are most commonly recruited into trafficking through false-front agencies, such as individuals seeking nannies or healthcare workers from a different country in exchange for better opportunities, as well as local sex industries, struggling families, and kidnapping (Task Force on Trafficking of Women and Girls, 2014). Unfortunately, many of the methods of recruitment utilize society's glamorization and degradation of women that continue to plague our society and reinforce the sexual exploitation and victimization of women. One particularly effective method of recruitment among domestically trafficked women involves the false promise of love and affection. This promise often ends with prostitution, various forms of abuse, substance abuse, and even death. This method appears more effective in recruitment than force or violence and is similar to the grooming efforts in child molesters (Cecchet & Thoburn, 2014).

A study by Kotra and Wommack (2011) examined minor sex trafficking cases involving 153 minor victims across 115 separate incidents. Data were accrued through the US Department of Justice press releases in conjunction with media reports of sex trafficking. Criteria included minors under the age of 18 and incidents that occurred in the United States. A total of 215 traffickers were identified and most

were male (70%), although 29% were found to be female. Fifty-three percent of the traffickers had been convicted, 32% had been indicted, and 14% had been arrested. Ninety-four percent of the targeted victims were female, approximately one-fourth of the incidents involved multiple victims, and the mean age of the victims was 15 years old (Kotra & Wommack, 2011).

Shockingly, this same study found that seven minor victims had been held for between 4 and 5 years, while 20% of the girls had been trafficked for a period of time that was less than 6 months. Although there was a paucity of information available on many of the measured indices, 16% of the sample had been lured into trafficking by some type of false promise, with 60% experiencing exploitation through one activity, which was most commonly prostitution (94%). The second most common exploitative activity was found to be internet posting, which accounted for almost 25% of the sample. Texas reported the highest number of cases where victims had escaped or been rescued, with New Jersey, Oregon, and Utah reporting the lowest number of cases. Although this study identified pertinent characteristics of both traffickers and minor victims, more comprehensive research is needed to clearly decipher the specific methods of recruitment, identify at-risk youth, and effectively intervene (Kotra & Wommack, 2011).

A comprehensive European study was conducted by Zimmerman et al. (2003) to describe the discrete stages of recruitment and illuminate the manner in which young victims become engaged and trapped in human trafficking. The purpose of this study was to focus on health and interventions, but the results can also be utilized to raise awareness of the grooming and recruiting aspects of trafficking and delineate interventions for prevention. The first stage is labeled the pre-departure stage and describes the reasons that women were vulnerable to trafficking in the first place. Most women reported they left their home to earn money (17 out of 28), while two women reported being kidnapped, two women reported fleeing due to danger or abuse, and two women reported being promised marriage/love. It was found that most women reported a history of violence or abuse by men in their lives before becoming involved in trafficking. Sadly, ten of the 28 women had been recruited or kidnapped as a minor. Interestingly, many of the women who were recruited into trafficking were doing so in an attempt to prevent future abuse and maltreatment (Zimmerman et al. 2003).

The second stage of this study was entitled the travel and transit stage, which begins when a woman consents or is forced into recruitment and is finalized once she arrives at her determined destination for work. This stage of trafficking is rife with danger and uncertainty. It is noted that although the trafficker's goal is to deliver the women for their own benefit, they also wish to thwart being arrested. Therefore, the women are often put at incredible risk for harm in respect to the ways in which they are transported. For women, most reported that this is also the stage at which they began to realize the reality of their situation and the fact that there was probably little they could do to avoid their miserable fate. They reported feeling riddled with guilt and remorse and how they began to understand that they were prisoners with little opportunity to turn back their fate. The women also reported that this was the time where conditions deteriorated significantly for them

with respect to accommodations, nutrition, and basic human needs (Zimmerman et al. 2003).

In addition, given their newfound realization about their situation, many women reported they struggled with sleep deprivation and the ability to eat, mostly due to the physical demands of the journey coupled with their present state of mind. Many of the women traveled with their traffickers, but the few women who traveled alone were escorted to the departure point by their traffickers and retrieved by another trafficker at their destination point. Also, 11 out of the 28 women reported that they witnessed themselves being sold, with 5 indicating they were sold more than once and 3 indicating they were sold in an auction-like setting (Zimmerman et al. 2003).

This is also the point at which some women reported they became aware that they were now indebted financially to their traffickers for the expenses of travel, food, accommodations, etc. They were informed at this juncture that they would be denied their freedom until their debt was paid in full. According to nearly half of the women interviewed, this was also the point at which the violence against them began, in terms of both physical and sexual violence, particularly if they refused to work as prostitutes. Three of the women reported their first sexual experience consisted of being raped. Evidently, based on the reports from these women, accepting their dependence was insured by any means necessary for compliance (Zimmerman et al. 2003).

The third stage of trafficking is entitled the destination stage wherein the women began to work. Most of the women interviewed reported that this was the stage where violence and danger became a part of both their work and personal lives. Many women reported minor to serious medical issues and injuries sustained during this stage of trafficking. The reported injuries ranged from headaches, fatigue, weight loss, fevers, broken bones, complications from abortions, head and neck trauma, dental problems, and contusions. Women cited physical and sexual abuse, as well as being deprived of basic human necessities as the cause for their illnesses and injuries (Zimmerman et al. 2003).

Many of the women reported they sustained injuries from violence that served as forms of punishment for perceived disobedience to their new employers. It was also reported that women were commonly beaten in a manner that allowed the injuries to be hidden. Every woman in this study reported being raped and coerced to participate in sexual acts by traffickers, pimps, their associates, employers, and clients. Even the women employed as domestic workers and nannies reported being raped and maltreated by the men employing them as well as other men (Zimmerman et al. 2003). With respect to the women employed as prostitutes, they reported that they did not have control over the number of men or the sexual acts they were expected to perform. Eleven out of 18 women estimated that they were forced to have sex with between 10 and 25 men each night, with two women reporting numbers as high as 50 men on any given night (Zimmerman et al. 2003).

This same study noted that during the destination stage, psychological abuse is frequently employed to hold the women hostage. The abuse is often severe and persists with the goal of manipulating the women for exploitation and creating negative self-concepts. Common psychological abuse tactics included creating “unsafe,



unpredictable events” to keep the victims perpetually in fear, thus increasing their instability and anxiety, as well as other negative mental states. Also commonly reported was the pervasiveness of intimidation and threats against loved ones. More than one-third of the women interviewed reported threats against those they loved. Traffickers also utilized blackmail in the form of threatening to tell the woman’s family, thus causing rejection and shame as a result of what she was doing for work (Zimmerman et al. 2003).

The women reported being lied to and deceived. For example, they were convinced they had no recourse from their current situation and believed that they would themselves be incarcerated or their family would reject them. Interestingly, none of the women in this study reported being addicted to substances; however, there are several possible explanations for this finding. The women may have felt embarrassed to admit substance abuse, may have been unclear about what constitutes addiction, or may have underestimated their usage for fear of consequences. Some of the women reported they were drugged in order to be transported and other studies have found it commonplace for women to voluntarily take drugs to cope with the negative sequelae inherent to trafficking. These women suffered serious negative emotional states and self-hatred and felt powerless to change their current circumstances (Zimmerman et al. 2003).

## **Childhood Trauma (Girls Likes Us?)**

The psychological distress and sequelae of traumatic events have been studied and documented extensively in the research. Manifestations of these traumatic events include difficulties and impairment in emotional and affective regulation, as well as cognitive and executive functioning which can impair learning. As noted by Stoddard (2014), adolescents who experience trauma can develop symptomatology that relates to their sexuality, which, in turn, can make them more vulnerable to becoming a victim of human trafficking. With that being said, how one copes with a traumatic experience both acutely and over time can aid in determining their resilience.

## **Lack of School and/or Family Connectedness (Foster Care)**

Although there is a paucity of research addressing children involved in human trafficking or sex trafficking, it is known that they suffer and are subjected to similar treatment as women who are trafficked. It is also known that children who are runaways, live on the streets, or have had involvement in child welfare systems are particularly vulnerable to being trafficked (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2015).

It is difficult to discern an accurate estimate of how many children are currently at risk for a variety of reasons. There are many challenges in identifying victims, there is not always common definitions of trafficking, and many of the victims may not view themselves as victims given their backgrounds, as well as fear of some type of retribution from their traffickers, or jail, or even deportation (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2015). They also may not want to admit their victimization, particularly given their history of victimization. These children have experienced physical, psychological, and emotional trauma that resulted in removal from their families, to then be targeted and abused again, so the likelihood is they are also suffering from severe trauma. According to Smith et al. (2009), the average age of a child who enters into prostitution is 13 years of age.

While the true prevalence of how many children are involved in sex trafficking is unknown, it is known that there is a frightening overlap between children involved in sex trafficking and children involved in the child welfare system. Estimates documented from several studies suggest this overlap to be between 50 and 90% (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2015). Further, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children suggest that roughly 60% of runaways who became victims of the trafficking industry had previous involvement with agencies charged with protecting them (Ryan, 2013).

Children involved in the child welfare system are unfortunately easy prey for traffickers. They are displaced from their families of origin, have experienced levels of neglect and abuse that resulted in removal from their families, and may have had several foster care placements. These factors make the children increasingly vulnerable to traffickers, who may groom them by making promises to fulfill their unmet family needs.

Although there seems to be general agreement and statistics on the relationship between child welfare involvement and high risk of being trafficked, there are other populations with a high incidence of being trafficked. For example, the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning and other gender non-conforming (LGBTQ+) LGBTQ youth comprise roughly 25% of homeless youth but are five times more likely to be trafficked than their peers. Homeless youth are often targeted by traffickers because they lack protection and often lack basic needs giving traffickers an opportunity to promise housing, food, etc., and then it begins to appear as a consensual relationship (Gluck and Mathur 2014).

An overrepresentation of trafficked youths has also been noted within the American Indian and Alaska Native children (AI/AN) which can partly be explained by their high numbers of child welfare involvement and poverty. According to Gluck and Mathur (2014), almost 33% of AI/AN children lived in poverty in 2009. Also high is the incidence of sexual violence on tribal lands where women are reportedly 2.5 times more likely to experience violence of a sexual nature, as well as violence in general (Gluck and Mathur 2014).

## **Psychological Factor**

### ***Resilience***

Cecchet and Thoburn (2014) conducted qualitative research interviews on six survivors of sex trafficking in order to examine their ability to survive and persevere despite having been enslaved in the industry of trafficking. All women were recruited through agencies established to intervene and aid victims of trafficking. Although all participants were adults, they had all been recruited into the sex trade as children. Interestingly, but not surprising, women reported feeling compelled to try to exit the industry because of the common occurrence of becoming pregnant and having the burden of deciding to have an abortion or keeping the child of her drug dealer or pimp. All women reported that becoming pregnant served as a catalyst in their decision to leave (Cecchet & Thoburn, 2014).

In addition, all of the women reported experiencing mental health symptoms that were subsequently divided into the two categories of either severe trauma symptoms or dissociation. These symptoms were classified as motivating factors to leave the industry and the women reported that their symptoms contributed to their decision to leave because they felt that they could no longer live this lifestyle. All of the women reported feeling as though they were detached from their feelings and unable to interact with others, which is not surprising and may have contributed to their ability to survive such ongoing traumatic experiences (Cecchet & Thoburn, 2014).

## **Emotional and Cognitive**

### ***Challenges: Social and Economic Conditions***

#### **Survival Sex**

Survival sex is defined as the selling of sex to meet subsistence needs (Greene et al., 1999) such as food, shelter, drugs, and money. Of those who engaged in survival sex, shelter was the number one commodity traded in return (Bigelsen & Vuotto, 2013). Homelessness is one of the most common motivators for youth engagement in survival sex predominantly among individuals in the LGBTQ+ and runaway communities. Most studies show that LGBTQ+ youth make up 20–40% of the homeless population, which is more than double the LGBTQ+ percentage in the general population (Krehely, 2013). Youth reported experiencing social and familial discrimination and rejections, familial dysfunction, familial poverty, physical and sexual abuse and exploitation, and emotional trauma (The Urban Institute, 2015). The Urban Institute has focused on studying “throwaway youth” and found that 25% of the homeless LGBTQ+ youth in New York City have engaged in survival

sex; other studies have estimated the rate to be between 11% and 41% (Bigelsen & Vuotto, 2013; Halcon & Liftson, 2004; Greene, 1999). Half of all unaccompanied youth reported mental health problems, which are predictors of chronic homelessness (Burt, 2007). Gragg et al. (2007) have noted that 85% of commercially exploited youth are young women, which does not take into account the LGBTQ+ community. The current paucity of research in this area of study highlights the need for continued efforts. Currently, there is a paucity of research in this area and a continuation of research efforts is highly recommended.

## War-Torn Areas

Research on sex trafficking has demonstrated that environments impacted by armed conflict or war, the aftermath of war, and military presence promote sex trafficking (Hughes, Chon, & Ellerman, 2007; Nikoli-Ristanovi, 2002b; Task Force on Trafficking of Women and Girls, 2014; United Nations Development Fund for Women/UNIFEM, 2002). Other studies suggest militarism itself contains cultural ideals about gender that increase the vulnerability of women to become victims of sex trafficking (Nicolic-Ristanovic, 2003).

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# Men, Boys, and LGBTQ: Invisible Victims of Human Trafficking



Irma M. Barron and Colleen Frost

Gender bias, or the assumption embedded in traditional masculinity that men are not vulnerable, especially not vulnerable to sexual exploitation, impedes the understanding of the victimization of boys and men. The estimated percentage of trafficked males is unknown, which is in part due to underreporting. However, we do know that male trafficking is prevalent in the child pornography industry, which is comprised of more than half of males (Todres, 2010). Additionally, forced labor trafficking is another area in which the trafficking of men and boys is widespread. Working conditions, threats to harm families, and physical and sexual abuse contribute to victimization. As a result of their objections to same-sex behavior, faith-based organizations often contribute to the victimization of LGBTQ men and boys by turning a blind eye to their suffering. In addition, some men who are trafficked do not identify with being gay so they would not necessarily seek support from LGBTQ services either. This section will present data about what we know about the victimization of boys and men and outline the controversy between decriminalizing sex work and maintaining current criminalization.

Some believe that decriminalization may make the sex industry safer. In Rhode Island, a loophole was found decriminalizing certain activity, and statistics reported a lower percentage of rape by 31% and gonorrhea by an estimated 39% (National Bureau of Economic Research, 2014). This may glamorize the choice aspect and hide the real problems, which might have been stated by victims who are unable or in fear of speaking up. In the Netherlands, although legal brothels are regularly monitored, police only “occasionally” catch and apprehend trafficked victims. Many victims are kept in venues more difficult to spot such as massage parlors, saunas, and escorts and couple clubs. Discrepancies and different legalities make it easier for traffickers to hide the crime.

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## Men and Boys Versus Women and Girls

The spotlight on victims of human trafficking has primarily focused on women and girls. It has been assumed that the majority of victims are females and the perpetrators are males. With new laws, arrests, and victims speaking out, it is now known that we must not forget about men and boys. Males are often discounted as victims and prevented from seeking help due to overgeneralization and stereotyping. Recent findings have indicated that the number of boys and girls within child sex trafficking is closer to equal, rather than one-sided (Greenbaum, 2014). This includes global statistics in countries that often spotlight the victimization of women and girls. In Afghanistan for instance, although one of the worst places to be female, "boys are more likely trafficked than girls" (Tien, 2013, p. 209). With males comprising nearly half of the population of this horrendous and growing crime, stereotyping, biases, and overgeneralizations continue to run rampant, which can affect aspects of both physical and mental health.

Men and boys are often viewed as stronger and possessing the added ability to defend themselves, in contrast to women who are perceived as vulnerable and weak. Men are often perceived as less resistant to human trafficking and need less legal protection than women (Jones, 2010). Feminist philosophy posits our patriarchal society has negative effects for both genders. Feminism assumes an egalitarian stance and envisions a society that will one day place equal value on women and men. However, the negative effect is evident in the area of human trafficking where females are rescued more often than males. The fight for mental health is calling for equality, as it would be difficult and naïve to go on and say that the psychological damage is greater for one gender than the other, when in fact, males may be even more at risk because they face the assumption that they "should" be able to defend themselves more so than females.

Although male trafficked victims have much in common with female trafficked victims, age, economic status, sexual preference, and ethnicity hold no boundaries in who may become a victim. Most male human trafficking victims have suffered a past of abuse, have been homeless, or have been recently kicked out of their homes with nowhere to go (Surtees, 2008). They are fearful for coming out with the truth regarding their sexual preference and identity or may be nervous of what others perceive as their preference (e.g., being portrayed as gay when they are not). Many boys and men are not only sex trafficked but forced into labor, stemming from survival needs such as shelter and food. Lured with financial promises and then threatened, there is no way out for many victims (Surtees, 2008). With financial hardship comes the will to do anything to live, and under false pretenses of a legal and legitimate opportunity, they are lured in. Once victimized, threats against life, the use of drugs for sedation, and a lack of resources may make it difficult, if not impossible, to escape. Although statistics differ across countries, this is a problem both at the domestic and foreign forefront. One assumption, wrongly so, is that these victims come from uneducated and low-income backgrounds and have no family or support system. This incorrect assumption holds true for both the male and female victims.

In Belarus and Ukraine, the majority of male victims had at least some form of vocational training. Although most Belarusian men were unemployed before recruitment, only a small percentage of Ukrainian men were unemployed. These findings show that unsatisfactory jobs, not only unemployment, led to the decision to migrate unknowingly into human trafficking. Contrary to popular belief, two thirds of Ukrainian male victims were married or living with a partner, and roughly half of them had dependent children (Surtees, 2008). Supporting children was a large factor in the decision to move in what was promised to be lucrative and legal pay (Surtees, 2008). Victims are not only trying to find a way to provide food and shelter for themselves but dependents as well. UNICEF states that the number of trafficked victims in Asia represent half the world total human trafficked victims. Boys are traded for sex by foreign pedophiles in Sri Lanka (Huda, 2006).

Male sex worker victims in the commercial sex industry are often assumed to be gay. On the contrary, more males catering to males in sex establishments prefer sex with women. A study completed in Chiang Mai in Asia also found that a large reason men and boys end up in the sex or human trafficking trade is due to lack of proper government documentation (Glotfelty, 2013). Bars are advertised as “host bars” which imply the availability of sex. There are also words such as “be socially responsible” or graphics advertising the importance to put an end to the child sex trade. It appears that a combination of a lack of laws, corrupt officials, and overall ignorance leads to the ever-thriving commercial sexual exploitation of boys and men (Glotfelty, 2013). There is not only a concern for blatant ignorance in advertisement but also a lack of speaking up from those who may know the true nature of advertisement. Advertisement holds the appearance of being against trafficking, but posters are specifically worded to hide what is truly happening to prevent legal consequences of getting caught.

Once victims are subjected to trafficking, many factors keep them in captivity. One of the better known reasons is the physical abuse and threats of abuse. The abuse does not end with the victim but also goes as far as the victim’s friends and families. To avoid getting caught, perpetrators will move locations often, not only making it difficult for legal involvement but also as a way to keep victims confused and unaware of where they are. Captivity typically remains indoors, with outside ventures usually highly supervised. Communication is cut off, and the victims of prostitution are sometimes given new names and identities (Goodman & Leidholdt, 2011). The fact that one’s identity, location, and general knowledge is stripped away counters the myth that males can fight back more so than females.

Even with identities intact, the pure necessity of survival is taken away, ensuring slavery lasts longer. Most of the time, they are deprived of basic needs like secure shelter and food, keeping them hungry and exhausted. Drugs and alcohol are used as both a means of introduction and later as withdrawal. Not only does this contribute to control; it is viewed as almost an anesthesia, dulling both physical and mental pain. This reduction in pain allows the victims to service more clients, thus turning higher profits for traffickers (Goodman & Leidholdt, 2011). With something so horrendous being committed, it is shocking and almost unbelievable that conviction rates are so low. The media is often in search of the latest current events (e.g.,



shootings, murders, and politics) yet ignores these repeated acts against humanity that are being committed in our own backyards.

Without prevention and proactive responses, the human trafficking trade will gain momentum. Harsher penalties for the small percentage of convictions that do occur, although justified, are not enough to bring awareness and knowledge and fund the considerable amount of resources necessary to prevent revictimization for those who have spoken out (Surtees, 2008). Those who have previously sought help and go to shelters are often forced to return to the streets since most shelters are time-limited. As previously mentioned, abuse, neglect, and maltreatment are found in both genders; therefore, our allocation and distribution of resources must be inclusive of all victims regardless of gender or sexual orientation.

## The LGBTQ Community

A disproportionate number of youths who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning (LGBTQ) are homeless. These youths are frequently forced out of their homes due to their sexual orientation. Shunned by family, bullied by peers, and ostracized by their community, most homeless LGBTQ youths have been sexually victimized as compared to heterosexual homeless youth (Bean, 2013). As was stated earlier, reports are that within 48 hours of being on the streets, one in three homeless youth will be recruited by a trafficker into commercial sexual exploitation ([http://www.ndaa.org/ncpca\\_case\\_campaign.html](http://www.ndaa.org/ncpca_case_campaign.html)). Due to their sexual orientation and history of emotional, physical, and sexual abuse, LGBTQ youths are extremely vulnerable to being victimized again. Traffickers regularly control these youths by using fear, drugs, and/or alcohol. An estimated 200,000 LGBTQ youth are homeless. With a staggering number such as this, it appears disproportionate that there are less than 500 beds available for them (Siciliano, 2017). If there is not a bed for that night, then the youth's risk of being trafficked increases. Out of desperation, these youths will trade sex for shelter and food. Many faith-based organizations contribute to the victimization of LGBTQ youth by turning a blind eye to their suffering due to their objections to same-sex behavior. This section will present data about what is known about the victimization of LGBTQ youth and the barriers to assisting them.

The US Department of Health and Human Services reports that 26% of gay and lesbian youth are forced to leave home because of conflicts over their sexual orientation (Moxley-Goldsmith, 2005). The Seattle Commission on Children and Youth found that 40% of homeless youth are identified as gay, lesbian, or bisexual (Moxley-Goldsmith, 2005). Once homeless, these youths are at a higher risk for sexual abuse, substance abuse, and mental health problems than their heterosexual peers. These risk factors contribute to their vulnerability to CSE (commercial sexual exploitation). In fact, a disproportionate number of boys involved in CSE (25–35%) self-identify as gay, bisexual, or transgender/transsexual (Moxley-Goldsmith, 2005). Adults are not the only perpetrators; the younger population, often familiar to the victims, have a hand in coercing the minor into the sex trade.

According to a study completed by Meredith Dank (2015), between 20 and 40% of the youth homeless population in New York are identified as LGBTQ. In this study, anonymous interviews were conducted, and results indicated an overwhelming majority turned to “survival sex” for food and shelter rather than money. Contrary to popular belief, individuals who enter the sex trade are usually not by choice. More often than not, it is out of necessity; therefore, we prefer the term “forced choice” as a means to survive.

An earlier study that began in 2011 from the Urban Institute lasted 3 years also indicated LGBTQ youth often turn to sex after they have been forced on the streets with no other means of providing for themselves (Dank, 2015). While many who are homeless or who turn to sex to make ends meet all struggle tremendously, the LGBTQ community has additional stressors, such as abuse for their sexual preference or identity, as well as a lack of resources for mental and physical health.

The men and boys that fall victim to the human trafficking industry are under-researched and underfunded. The LGBTQ community falls victim to this as well, and the spotlight has been dimmed for too long. LGBTQ are more likely to be bullied by peers, ostracized, and fall victim to this horrific industry violating the most basic of human rights. With a large percentage becoming homeless for telling the truth, and almost half the youth homeless population being LGBTQ (40%), this is an unaddressed need that people do not seem to be discussing openly (Bean, 2013). This turns back to the mental health industry and the mental health struggles such as depression that often correlate with the LGBTQ community.

There is a hidden aspect to not only same-sex prostitution but also a stigma associated with LGBTQ, which makes for a double edge sword leading to severe under-reporting. Immigration status may be another concern, which adds legal concerns as well. This calls for increased awareness by both legal and health professionals (both medical and mental health). The majority of victims are trafficked domestically, although there is a portion that are trafficked internationally and must go through a migration process. Some migrations are Caribbean and Latin LGBTQs ending in Western Europe. African LGBTQs who are sex slaves for the wealthy are often located in the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia (Martinez & Guadalupe, 2013). All around the world, men, boys, and the LGBTQ community struggle in this already difficult life to endure and escape.

## **Decriminalization, Law, and Government Focus**

Amnesty International is proposing the decriminalization of sex workers, arguing that it would give more rights to the ones now working illegally. Strict laws would still be in place in regard to human trafficking. Amnesty International proposes that this move may help decrease human trafficking; however, it could be a step in the regression of human sex rights altogether. There is no clear evidence that it would sway the criminal activity one way or the other. According to Amnesty International, decriminalization is helpful by placing the rights of humans back into the hands of those who choose to enter the sex industry on their own volition. This would

supposedly lead to a better relationship with law enforcement, as opposed to being viewed as criminals (<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2016/05/amnesty-international-publishes-policy-and-research-on-protection-of-sex-workers-rights/>). Although many may agree with this argument and believe that decriminalization would promote basic human rights, this argument fails to account for the victims who are coerced into something that they are not aware of, manipulated for some means (money, food, shelter, or other), and then threatened or impaired. Many victims do not necessarily start out in the sex industry, such as prostitution or strip clubs; rather, they are lured, manipulated, and trapped. While Amnesty International proposes decriminalization, another avenue being pursued is legalization.

The Netherlands has taken the legalization approach. The Dutch have long tolerated prostitution as long as it did not grossly affect public disturbance or health. In hopes of reducing harm with the knowledge of the growth of the trafficking trade, regulation and legalization are the solution to reducing harm (from the Dutch perspective). Despite efforts to reduce criminalization and subsequently physical and emotional harm, the underground sex industry is thriving. Insufficient funding and personnel, as well as inconsistent policies, are a few of the barriers to legalization of prostitution being the answer. With most of the local police force devoted to regulating licensed brothels and legal prostitution, there are limited resources for exploitation and illegal sectors (Gibly, 2012). While one organization praises decriminalization, and some countries are regulating and legalizing, the statistics and what is known are showing that it is still a growing and massive problem without a clear end in sight.

As of now, governments have taken mostly a band-aid approach. This means that they have enacted something that may work for a small portion of the issue. The government also has been retroactive, meaning laws change after something has happened. Preventative measures are being left out of most equations, with a focus on punishment rather than services for those who present as high risk for the trafficking industry. Raising a strip club minimum age to 21 is sensible; however, those too young to participate in that particular industry are still at just as much of a risk for being solicited or lured into trafficking, especially an individual who is fighting to meet basic needs. There has been a lack of awareness and training among mental health and healthcare professionals of the warning indicators of individuals seeking treatment in medical centers primarily emergency rooms and social services. Moreover, potential victims of human trafficking are another reason that services to assist in education, vocation, and the simplest of human emotions and consequences such as depression and substance abuse need to be addressed (Todres, 2010). There has been increasing media attention and awareness to the human trafficking epidemic at least in the state of Florida where the authors of this chapter reside. A striking example is recent changes in the Florida Senate 2017 Bills Impacting Healthcare Professionals. One change advises the Florida Board of Nursing to require two hours of continuing education on human trafficking to be completed by nurses before their next license renewal (<http://www.floridahealth.gov/licensing-and-regulation/newest-legislation/2017-legislation.html>). The authors would also advocate for human trafficking curricular to be mandated in all clinical training

programs for mental health students and licensed professionals. However, there is much work to be done in this area, and together we must receive training in human trafficking and assessment and comprehensive treatment for these victims. Therefore, we believe education is a primary step in awareness, prevention, and treatment, thus, creating a more comprehensive and viable prevention plan and policies to educate students and professionals in the field.

Many laws and acts have been passed which is a step in the right direction; however, they have been done so without a great deal of education. It is imperative that research is conducted in order to know what will be the most effective. For example, although there is truth in women and children being more likely to be victimized for sexual exploitation in most regions, women also make up over 40% of recruiters in Southeast Europe (UNODC, 2014). At risk children and families thus need to be educated that recruitment may stem from the female population as well. As previously stated, females are given more attention when it comes to victimization. Within the United States, the Federal Bureau of Investigation estimates that over 50% of all child pornography depicts males (Todres, 2010). Stereotyping has assisted in not only turning a blind eye to male victims but also contributing to wrongly viewing females as only victims and never perpetrators. Education is lacking in statistics regarding trafficked males as well as knowledge in the general morals, values, and beliefs of other countries and regions.

There is a misconception regarding the values of individuals in countries other than the United States or Western Hemisphere. Some people falsely believe that the value of children is lesser or that parents “sell” their children intentionally. Not only are values misconstrued; there is a false belief that people in the United States can do better or “save” these children. Moreover, there is no evidence that children are not valued or are undervalued outside of the United States. When parents “sell” their child, they are often misled into believing that the child will be provided a job or education in exchange for domestic work or work that is not exploitive (Todres, 2010). Just as victims are misled into the industry, so too are the parents of victims. Education aside, there are risks that stem across all ethnicities, races, and genders.

Male delinquents are arrested for many nonsexual crimes, such as loitering, panhandling, and being in a location such as a park after hours. They are arrested for behavior that suggests possible commercial sexual exploitation victimization yet rarely recognized as such. Once males are identified in the juvenile delinquent system, it is important to note certain facts and be sure to always ask if they have been solicited, even if that is not the primary reason of coming into contact with the system. Police should identify if the individual is living at home and if not where he is residing and how is he providing for his basic needs. Another important factor is if the boy is chemically dependent and, if so, how that is being maintained (Moxley-Goldsmith, 2005). Simple questions about a person’s life and lifestyle may lead to awareness of the truth that victims are more prevalent than we recognize. Even when law enforcement is involved, it leaves a shocking number of people that are left without the most basic of rights and no protection from traffickers.

The picture is much bigger than most realize and goes beyond gender to legislation. With a large percentage of countries having legislation against trafficking,

there are still an insurmountable number of two billion people whom are not fully protected by human trafficking laws. Currently, there are nine countries lacking any legislation, while 18 countries have only partial legislation, which protects against some but not all human trafficking. Even with legislation in place, conviction is still low, a problem that needs to be rectified regardless of age, gender, or sexual preference (UNODC, 2014). Laws are only as good as those enforcing them, and enforcement is only as good as the education, training, and funding that is allocated and provided. Trafficking goes far beyond the sex industry with prostitution, brothels, and clubs.

## Demographics

Although most research has been done on females, there are significant findings that show age-related risks and commercial sexual exploitation. Being African American increases the risk of being trafficked. For all youths including male, maternal substance abuse as well as having sex for the first time at a young age increases the likelihood of victimization. While there is no answer as to if substance abuse is a cause or effect of being trafficked, substance use dependency at an early age contributes to an increased risk for entering into commercial sexual exploitation early on in life. Child maltreatment, specifically sexual abuse, increases the chances to fall victim to the human trafficking industry (Reid and Piquero, 2014). Maltreatment, both direct and indirect, are contributing factors. Children with caregivers who have a drug or alcohol problem are 3 times more likely to be abused and 4 times more likely to be neglected. Abuse and neglect increase the chances that the child will become a victim of commercial sexual exploitation (Reid and Piquero, 2014). Abuse and neglect in any form inevitably contribute to problems with mental health.

Whether an individual is feeling embarrassed or a threat has been made, there are risk factors that contribute to the likelihood of either early or later age onset for commercial sexual exploitation. African-American youth, however, are at a higher risk for both early and later onset compared to all other races and ethnicities (Reid and Piquero, 2014). Beside maternal drug and alcohol problems, experiencing rape or sexual assault are factors that increase likelihood for early onset in the trafficked community. Substance use dependency symptoms in males result in a higher chance of commercial sexual exploitation as well. Lower education attainment and involvement in criminal activity are typically associated with risk for later onset. Psychotic symptoms have an effect on both earlier and later onset of victimization (Reid and Piquero, 2014). At any age, these are clear risk factors for many problems, and it appears that abuse of any form serves as the highest risk factor of all.

With approximately 50% of trafficked victims being male in some areas, it is disconcerting that there is not a louder voice for the population. There are countries and different sectors of trafficking where male victims represent an even higher percentage. Trafficking is not tied to sexual exploitation alone, and forced labor is gaining awareness. Male victims share the same or similar risk factors including

abuse, neglect, and substance abuse. Victims are often coerced into believing they will be employed with a legitimate, legal company. Victims face trauma both physically and emotionally and verbally.

## **Lack of Resources**

Many males unfortunately do not see themselves as victims and therefore typically do not seek out professional help. Due to the fact that most “customers” who purchase the “goods” are looked at as professionals, the victim may not trust professionals, even if they don’t feel that the entire criminal justice system is corrupt. On the other hand, if male victims want to speak out, the lack of services available to them is shameful. One option that is typically available is to be put in the welfare system and being placed in a foster home is not considered to be a good enough alternative from the victim’s perspective (Sun Chin, 2014). Abuse and neglect are rampant in the foster system and leaving one deplorable, and oftentimes egregious environment for another seems pointless. The threats of harm to the victims and their families may also hinder victims from moving from one system to another, even if the welfare environment is viewed as slightly more appealing to them.

Most shelters are short-term, which means when their stay is up, they are either forced to return home or go back to the street. Lack of resources including shelter, education, and mental health services makes it more likely for them to return to trafficking to fulfill their basic needs such as food, shelter, money, and substance abuse dependency. This stems back to a general lack of knowledge of the male victim population. When there are a lack of statistics and facts, it is difficult to get funding to produce more resources for the male population (Sun Chin, 2014). It is our job to openly discuss this growing and problematic phenomenon. A complete mental health screening questionnaire should not only include the risk of suicide and homicide but also human trafficking as that is clearly another form of harm to the self. If we see the possibility that this may exist in the future, preventative education can be taught.

## **Mental Health**

Sexual trauma leads to many psychological factors that make it difficult to prevent or stop the cycle of human trafficking abuse for victims. When sexually abused, this leads to feelings of betrayal and mistrust which makes it difficult to form healthy relationships. When a child is abused, they instinctively feel powerless and helpless after being trapped in a situation that strips them of control over basic human rights. After abuse, many feel ashamed that they are impure or damaged, which may lead victims to believe that they are no better than what their abusers instilled in them. These psychological factors together make it difficult, if not impossible, to protect themselves against continued exploitation (Reid and Piquero, 2014).

Psychological trauma goes well beyond feelings of helplessness or shame. Sexual exploitation leads to high levels of post-traumatic stress disorder, Stockholm syndrome, memory loss, aggression, fear, depression, anxiety, hostility, anger issues, sexually transmitted infections and diseases, physical trauma from beatings, and emotional distress from engaging in unwanted sex (Greenbaum, 2014).

Both peers and adults play a role in introducing individuals into the trafficking business. Without pimps, peers are more inclined to lead boys into it, often stemming from a conversation about how the victim is not able to afford simple life necessities. Peers typically lurk around homeless shelters, bus stations, and any other place that they can find vulnerable children who they view as easy prey. With peers as a large recruiting factor, male victims may unfortunately be mistaken for offenders (Moxley-Goldsmith, 2005). Increased awareness, especially toward the men and boys, is gaining acknowledgment. It is vital to look for red flags for those who are in distress and unable to pull themselves out of victimization. Not only is education and mindfulness lacking, resources are few and far between for this population.

In finding a resolution to combat human trafficking, a key element is giving children a voice. Just as we may tell individuals in counseling that they are the experts of their lives, this also holds true for children. In a 2008 UNICEF report, children stated that they never received any information regarding trafficking and had no knowledge of how to avoid being trafficked until it was too late. They were also able to explain the reasons for leaving home. More specifically, they were also able to identify a significant point or notable event in their lives when something had occurred or changed, which eventually led to being trafficked. These notable events included change of residence or the child's interaction with peers and friends (Todres, 2010). It is often during these crucial turning points that the possibility of trafficking is overlooked and children are in need of help for depression, anxiety, and substance abuse.

Stereotyping males as more likely to be an offender than victim leads to the unfair conclusion that females should be treated differently. Police are more likely to arrest adults than juveniles; however, they are more likely to arrest males and refer females to other resources such as social service agencies. Police are also more likely to believe that male juveniles are offenders rather than victims. The statistics reported by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention demonstrate that police make more contact with sexually solicited juvenile males, possibly due to the fact that they are typically older and may therefore be more likely to operate outdoors (Moxley-Goldsmith, 2005). The police often confront and treat these males as criminals, without knowing their dire need to be rescued, protected, and sheltered.

Sexual exploitation has been the main topic when discussing human trafficking in the past years. Those involved in the awareness and fight to stop this horrific trade know that forced labor is a concern that is only growing and deserves as much attention as sex trafficking due to the fact that it occurs just as often, if not more so, around the globe. Forced labor in South America is considerably underestimated, due to the fact that it does not include a considerable portion of individuals who are

victims of slavery or slavery-like conditions. Categories that many are not aware of, but that often include more male victims than females, include begging, committing crime (often petty), child soldiers, and organ removal (UNODC, 2014). Working and living conditions for victims are inhumane, unsanitary, and underground. Men, boys, and the LGBTQ community have less resources and more shame. Moreover, not only has there been too little focus on boys and men, there is an even wider gap in awareness, empathy, and resources for the LGBTQ community.

In conclusion, underreporting and low conviction rates have been briefly discussed. Many individuals are not only unaware of the human trafficking epidemic that is occurring; there is little to no training on what to look for as red flags, as well as services when victims have been identified. Victims themselves may be unlikely to report for a number of reasons. They may feel guilty, shameful, or be so traumatized that they are unable to speak up. Due to the fact that the topic brings little awareness worldwide, victims are not sure where to go, even if they would like to report it. Victims are often threatened that not only they but their families will be hurt or killed. Victims may also come from countries that hold a general mistrust or fear of police, making them less likely to speak up (Goodey, 2008). Victims may also have a language barrier or concern that they will be ridiculed or not believed (CdeBaca & Sigmon, 2014). We have given too little attention to the men, boys, and LGBTQ community that need just as loud, if not louder of a voice, to create awareness and education as the first step to prevention of human trafficking.

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# Forced Child and Arranged Marriages



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An estimated 15 million girls will become child brides, which robs them of their childhood and denies them of opportunities and their rights in education and health (Girls Not Brides, 2014). The United Nations Children’s Fund (2018) reported that child marriages have been slowly declining worldwide over the past 30 years; however, nearly 700 million women worldwide were married as children, with nearly one-third married prior to the age of 15 (UN, 2014). Child marriage has been defined globally as the forced marriage of children or adolescents before the age of 18 and is classified as a violation of human rights (Girls Not Brides, 2014; International Center for Research on Women, 2015; Kamal, Hassan, Alam, & Ying, 2015; Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2014; United Nations Population Fund, 2015; United Nations Children’s Fund, 2001). Other terms applied to child marriage include “early marriage” and “child brides” (Nour, 2006). The involuntary nature of child marriage and forced sexual contact may be considered another form of sexual trafficking. However, given the ancient, global, and pervasive nature of this custom, it may be extremely difficult to combat or prevent such a tradition from occurring, especially in poverty-stricken or otherwise closed communities such as some religious practices.

Since 1948, the United Nations and other international agencies have considered child marriages to be a violation of human rights. The 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) under Article 16 stated, “(1) Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family. They are entitled to equal rights as to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution; (2) marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses; and (3) the family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State.” (UN General Assembly, 1948). These early marriages are seen as a violation of human rights as the child is too immature to consent to enter into marriage and cannot understand the

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implications of a lifetime commitment. In some circumstances, marriages are even arranged before the child is born. Unfortunately, most countries do not enforce these rights or oppose child marriage since it is viewed as a traditional practice, social or cultural normative, and/or exceptions that are given due to parental consent (Girls Not Brides, 2014; United Nations Children's Fund, 2001).

Ironically, those who reside in villages which maintain traditional practices will on one hand view child marriages as desirable and respected. However, that same village will look at child prostitution as a disgrace, even when the child was kidnapped or forced. Mikhail (2002) captured this dichotomy when she noted that in such settings, child marriage and child prostitution are considered to be moral opposites, yet they are essentially the same. The deleterious impact of these marriages on women as adults is many times underreported, as cultural mores may obstruct the disclosure or even recognition of the psychological and psychosocial impacts of these marriages. Many times these girls are already arranged for marriage at birth and may be removed from their families of origin, taken out of school, and required to live with their husband and his family at a very young age. This chapter attempts to present the most current research about the psychological impacts of child marriage on women. Some of the psychological and medical impacts include but are not limited to PTSD, increased suicide risk, depression, intimate partner violence (IPV), early pregnancy, and exposure to sexually transmitted infections (STIs; Gage, 2013a, 2013b; Godha, Hotchkiss, & Gage, 2013).

Child marriage is recognized as a global phenomenon, and while it is most prevalent in South Asia, it is also observed in Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean, as well as the United States. Child marriages tend to be more widespread in developing countries and are most common in poor, rural communities where gender inequalities persist, which only perpetuates the cycle of women's poverty and child marriage (International Center for Research on Women, 2015; Kamal et al., 2015; Nour, 2009; Svanemyr, Chandra-Mouli, Christiansen, & Mbizvo, 2012; United Nations Children's Fund, 2001; United Nations Population Fund, 2015). Within a system, greater social inequalities increase the risk of child marriage for girls (Nasrullah, Muazzam, Bhutta, & Raj, 2014). According to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) (2014a, 2014b), 720 million girls (e.g., 10% of the entire population) were married before the age of 18, 250 million girls (e.g., 1 out of 9) in the developing world were married before their 15th birthday, and 15 million girls are married before the age of 18 each year. While the highest rates of child marriage are in sub-Saharan Africa, the highest rates of child marriage under the age of 15 are observed in South Asia. Niger has the highest rates worldwide of marriage before age 18 at 75% as well as the highest rates of marriage before age 15 at 36%, indicating that most of the country's girls are expected to be married prior to turning 18 years (UNICEF, 2014a, 2014b). In the absence of targeted advocacy and change, and if present trends continue, 1.2 billion children will be married before the age of 18 by the year 2050 (UNICEF, 2014a, 2014b). These numbers actually may be underestimated as many developing countries do not register births or marriages (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2014; United Nations Children's Fund, 2001).

The perpetuation of poverty, particularly women's poverty, engendered by child marriage is in large part due to the resultant educational disruption (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2014; Soyulu, Ayaz, & Yuksel, 2014; Svanemyr et al., 2012; United Nations Children's Fund, 2001). The International Center for Research on Women (2007) reported that girls living in poor households or under poverty level were almost twice as likely to marry before the age of 18 compared to girls originating from higher income households. Further, girls with higher levels of education were less likely to marry prior to the age of 18, as was observed in Mozambique where only 10% of girls with secondary education and less than 1% of those with higher education married by the age of 18. This is compared to 60% of girls with no education marrying before the age of 18. In other words, the longer a girl stays in school, the longer the delay in marriage (Kamal et al., 2015; Svanemyr et al., 2012). Kamal et al. (2015) found that not only are higher levels of post-primary education among women associated with a lower probability of child marriage but also that the higher the level of education among husbands, the lower the likelihood of child marriage among their wives. However, in many poor, rural areas, the education that is offered may be considered poor quality, contains overcrowded classes, and is provided by unqualified teachers (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2014). Sabbe et al. (2015) found in their study that over 75% of rural women and 61% of urban women older than 30 years were illiterate in Morocco, with younger women illiterate at rates of 25% and 9%, respectively. In some communities, several generations will live together, which bestows older relatives with more influence on household decisions. If the older relatives themselves were forced into child marriages, it increases the likelihood of perpetuating the tradition (Sabbe et al., 2015). It is often older women within a family or tribe who are encouraging the practice of marrying off young girls and illustrate the crucial need for increased awareness of the negative impact child marriages has on a girl's life. Also, if the girl does not drop out of school on her own, she is usually discouraged or expelled from school once she becomes pregnant, which often occurs right after getting married.

Unfortunately, a girl's parents may consent because the parents view the marriage arrangement as a family-building strategy, cultural or social norm, economic arrangement, or even a way to protect their daughter (Gage, 2013a, 2013b; Svanemyr et al., 2012; United Nations Children's Fund, 2001). However, a primary contributor to the perpetuation of child marriages is the social structure of the community (Ozcebe & Bicer, 2013). The girl's lack of consent to her own marriage reinforces the presumption maintained by her husband and the village that her opinion is irrelevant, thereby maintaining the imbalance in power of the marriage (Mikhail, 2002). Gage (2013a, 2013b) found that parents would allow their daughter to choose the age of when to marry only when there was social pressure to do so and high awareness and enforcement of laws about marital age within the community. Many impoverished parents believe that marrying a daughter at a younger age will ease financial burden not only due to the monetary payment they receive but also because they are no longer financially responsible for their daughters, which is referred to as "contractual marriage." Many parents are also concerned that if they do not follow

the cultural norm or local traditions of marrying their daughter at a young age, their daughter may not marry at all (Svanemyr et al., 2012). Marriage to foreign nationals is also another option parents consider to ensure financial security for their daughters; however, this can raise the risk for trafficking as well as physical, emotional, and fiscal abuse (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2014). Paradoxically, parents may view an arranged marriage at a young age as protection for their daughter, believing that it will increase the likelihood of ensuring she is a virgin at the time of marriage and that marriage may serve as a form of protection against gender-based violence (e.g., rape). Parents also fear that their daughter would engage in premarital relations, bringing dishonor and shame to the family (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2014; United Nations Children's Fund, 2001). In Morocco, if a girl is raped, she will usually be married off to the rapist in order to not bring shame to the family. Further, the laws in most countries that have high rates of child marriage do not recognize conjugal rape, so the girl will have no recourse or protection against a lifetime of sexual violence and nonconsensual sex with her husband (Sabbe et al., 2015). Often, once a girl is married, she usually experiences conditions that would meet international definitions of slavery including servile marriage, sexual slavery, child servitude, child trafficking, forced labor, and early and frequent pregnancies. The United Nations Children's Fund (2001) has reported that when a country is in ongoing civil conflict, that country observes a significant increase in child trafficking and slavery, thereby also increasing early child marriages. Parents may also fear that their daughter or the family may not be safe and may marry their young daughter to militia members as a form of protection for the entire family, a phenomenon which has been seen in Northern Uganda and in Somalia (United Nations Children's Fund, 2001).

Early and frequent pregnancies, especially starting at such a young age, are associated with high maternal and infant morbidity rates as well as sexual and reproductive health problems (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2014; United Nations Children's Fund, 2001). History of early marriage increases a girl's risk for not only high fertility and a diminished likelihood of contraception use early in the marriage but also fertility outcomes such as unwanted pregnancies, frequent and close pregnancies, and termination of pregnancy, in the absence of adequate prenatal care or counseling, (Nour, 2009; Nasrullah et al., 2014; Godha et al., 2013). Girls under the age of 16 are at a four times greater risk of dying from pregnancy-related issues compared to women older than 20. Also, infants have a 60% greater risk of dying in their first year if they have a mother under the age of 18 compared to infants with a mother 19 years or older (Svanemyr et al., 2012). Girls in early adolescence have not yet sufficiently physically developed to endure pregnancy and childbirth, and most girls end up suffering from complications such as obstetric fistula (Svanemyr et al., 2012; United Nations Children's Fund, 2001). Further, young mothers may not be educated or mature enough to nurture a newborn properly and are often dependent on their husband's families for guidance and assistance. Child marriage is associated with increased exposure to intimate partner violence, HIV and other sexually transmitted infections, obstetric

fistula, high maternal mortality and morbidity, and depression and other psychiatric sequelae due to restricted access to education and health information, limited access to healthcare, lack of social support, and the power imbalance with husband and their extended family members (Gage, 2013a, 2013b; Godha, Hotchkiss, & Gage, 2013).

## Psychological Impact of Child Marriage

While there has been extensive research on child marriages and the impact on health and reproduction, very little research has been conducted on the psychological impact. Mikhail (2002) indicated this may be due to the sensitivity surrounding the issues with child marriages, making it extremely difficult to conduct international research. However, the few studies that have been conducted observed that lifetime psychiatric disorders were associated with child marriage (Gage, 2013a, 2013b; Le Strat, Dubertret, & Le Foll, 2011; Soylyu et al., 2014). The most commonly observed lifetime diagnoses included major depressive disorder and nicotine dependence, as well as current phobias, and some studies have described prevalence rates of one or more mental disorders as high as 44% among girls in child marriages (Le Strat et al., 2011, Bhutto, Shariff, & Zakaria, 2013; Soylyu et al., 2014). Girls forced into marriage have effectively lost their adolescence, been forced into sexual relations with someone she may not want to or before she is ready, denied freedom, confined to household responsibilities, experienced early and frequent pregnancies, and denied personal development and education (United Nations Children's Fund, 2001). Also, many girls may feel isolated as they have had to sever ties with family and friends and may become further isolated in their marriage because they are unable to share their fears and concerns since it is considered a social or cultural norm and others would support her arranged marriage. If a girl attempted to run back to her parents, she would usually be beaten by her parents and then sent back to her husband or bring shame upon the family. Therefore, most girls usually suffer in silence.

Wondie, Zemene, Reschke, and Schroder (2011) observed that the degree of PTSD symptoms were lower for girls in child marriages compared to girls that suffered child sexual abuse or child prostitutes, which is further supported by the fact that their mothers or sisters were also married as children. Soylyu et al. (2014) conceded stating that these girls may have normalized early marriages; as such, while it may be experienced as uncomfortable or ego-dystonic, it may still be consistent with the larger context in which they find themselves. Although it may be less likely to result in a post-traumatic clinical picture, a psychiatric picture characterized by anxiety, social withdrawal, affective symptomatology, and internalization may still be present (Soylyu et al., 2014). In addition, the fear of discussing their emotional experience with their husband, parents, or perhaps even peers may be met with social approbation or judicial action, placing such girls at risk for psychological withdrawal and fear. Therefore, these girls may not endorse symptomatology consistent with Western diagnostic rubrics of stress disorders and may not conceptual-

ize their marriages as a traumatic event per se. In addition, these girls may also be consistent with gender roles and collectivist assumptions, indicating that these girls may be reluctant to voice their personal concerns or objections that are considered cultural norms. The researchers also indicated that they believe that these girls would be more resistant to treatment and far more chronic in their psychiatric symptomatology than originally assumed. Further, fatalistic acceptance may also result in a phenomenology more consistent with Western classifications of helplessness and hopelessness. Other researchers also believe that women married as children will provide socially favorable answers to provide the perception of a more positive life (Bhutto, Shariff, & Zakaria, 2013). Girls married early demonstrate significantly higher personal vulnerability and lower levels of empowerment, suggesting that they are unable to make decisions in their own lives, thus reinforcing a cycle of further dependency on husbands and other male family members (Wondie et al., 2011). They also found that higher frequency of sexual relations with decreased duration between relations, the girls experienced higher levels of guilt and shame and perceived a higher level of negative reactions. Soylu et al. (2014) found that rates of suicidal behavior were at an increased risk for both victims of child sexual abuse as well as girls in child marriages. Suicidal gestures and behaviors are likely to be ignored by family members, and perhaps even met with punishment, rather than intervention.

Girls who marry before the age of 18 are twice as likely to experience domestic violence compared to women who marry after the age of 18. Nasrullah et al. (2014) reported that women married as children are more likely to be controlled by their husband as well as their in-laws and are thereby expected to ask permission to seek any type of healthcare or even to engage in daily activities such as shopping or other activities. Women who attempted to seek healthcare on their own were often met with violence from their husband. In these environments, women are often accompanied to healthcare appointments by husbands or other in-laws, which can prevent any kind of honest exchange between the woman and the healthcare provider. Further, many healthcare providers also originate from the same social groups which sanction child marriage. As such, there may be no perceived need to ask the girls about their overall sense of well-being or to question the practices in place. This can weaken the ability of the healthcare system to provide girls in these marriages essential health, mental health, and advocacy services (Nasrullah et al., 2014). Women married as children were found to experience significantly more controlling behaviors from their husbands compared to women married as adults, and more controlling behaviors from a husband increased the likelihood of physical and sexual violence against the woman (Nasrullah et al., 2014). Furthermore, the researchers found that the women married as children in their study were more vulnerable to spousal violence and specifically to severe physical violence (Nasrullah et al., 2014). Similarly, in India 43% of those married in adolescence suffered marital violence compared to 24% who married as adults (Raj, Saggurti, Lawrence, Balaiah, & Silverman, 2010). This investigation also noted that 16% of the girls married in adolescence experienced potentially life-threatening abuse compared to 6% of those married during adulthood. These child brides also exhibit signs of sexual abuse and

post-traumatic stress, such as feelings of hopelessness or helplessness and depression (International Center for Research on Women, 2015).

As the research has demonstrated, many of these girls may deny symptomology or decline services due to the cultural norms imposed for child marriages. Additionally, the parents of the child may not agree with marrying their daughter at such a young age but may fear the repercussions of not following traditions practiced in their village and may also feel that marrying a daughter early will lift some of the financial burden imposed on the family. These girls are denied a voice to their future and rely on their parents to be their voice. Unfortunately, societal pressures may rob the parents of their own voice and their child's best interest. The research presented has shown that a village will remain in a perpetuating cycle of poverty if they continue in the practice of child marriage because they are robbing these children the possibility of receiving a higher education and job opportunities that will be available with that education because these girls will be forced to care for their children and stay home instead of attending school. Therefore, to lift a country or village out of poverty, monetary incentives will need to be initiated to (1) not practice child marriage and (2) keep children in school. By implementing these practices, it will drastically reduce many of the psychological, physical, and health risks as well as early pregnancies listed above and give these girls an opportunity to earn an education to obtain more sustainable job opportunities.

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# Unaccompanied Refugee Children in Greece: Assessments, Trauma, Sexual Exploitation and the Shattering of Identity



Christina Antonopoulou

More than a million migrants have crossed the Greek borders in what has been called Europe's worst refugee crisis since WWII. Of those approximately 20,000 are unaccompanied children. Many are coming from Syria and other areas of unrest in the Middle East. Today over 68,500 refugees are stranded in Greece, unable to go forward to homes in other parts of Europe and the world. About 14,115 people, almost double the official capacity, are living in temporary facilities set up by the Greek government in Lesbos, Chios, Samos, Kos and Leros, the five Aegean Islands. Others live in places around the country called 'hot spots'. These refugees are unable to be resettled in the countries where they hope to go for many reasons including having fled with no papers, because borders are closed or because countries claim to have no room for any more refugees.

It has not been easy for Greece to accommodate this number of refugees since Greece is a country strangled by what they call the worst economic crisis to ever hit a European Union state. Four out of eight persons are unemployed with 60% unemployment among the young people age 18–28. One out of two children live below the level of poverty. The 'brain drain' has been estimated to reach the number of 350,000 Greeks seeking employment in the European Union and the United States. Poverty in Greece has increased by a shocking 40% from 2008 to 2015 (Cologne Institute of Economic Research, 2017).

Due to the inability to permanently resettle these refugees, smuggling refugees has become a big business with the income estimated for smugglers and traffickers to be over 35 billion euros per year. The conditions that the refugees face is horrible; many flee in order to escape death in their war-torn country but are unable to be resettled in another country. The number of victims drowned in the Mediterranean Sea in 2015 was estimated as over 3700, mostly children and women, and more than 5000 in 2016. Many arrive in Greece in small dishevelled and overcrowded boats

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that cannot make it across the sea. It is estimated now that over 6750 unaccompanied refugee children, ages 10–16, mainly from Syria, are in hot spots in many areas in Greece, waiting for asylum to transfer to other European countries. This does not go unnoticed in Europe, but nothing has been done to resettle these refugees more quickly.

Today marks a dark day in the history of refugee protection one in which Europe's leaders attempted to buy themselves out of their international obligations, heedless of the cost in human misery. A year ago, the Greek islands were transformed into de facto holding pens, as Europe's shores went from being sites of sanctuary into places of peril. One year on, thousands remain stranded in a dangerous, desperate and seemingly endless limbo. (John Dalhuisen, Amnesty International's Europe director, 17/3/2017)

Children migrate for many reasons. Some are asylum seekers fleeing war, gangs or persecution in their home countries, while others are victims of sex trafficking or slavery. Children may also migrate in search of economic opportunities, to join parents or relatives already living in the destination country or to flee abusive situations in their home countries. Unaccompanied children may arrive clandestinely, hidden by traffickers or paid smugglers, or they may attempt to migrate through normal immigration checkpoints. They may present false documents to border officials or arrive in desperation with no documents at all. They may be apprehended while trying to enter the destination country or evade border patrols altogether.

When the children arrive in Greece, they often travel alone to the camps from war zones in Syria, Afghanistan or Iraq, because their parents can only afford to pay for one family member to leave. Some do not start out alone but lose their families in shipwrecks and other tragedies along the way. This leaves minors vulnerable to be targeted by smugglers in the sex trade, according to Europol (Neslen, A. 2017, April 24).

“Many unaccompanied minors have been held for long periods at the hotspots in inappropriate conditions, despite the law requiring that they be prioritised” says the report by the EU's Court of Auditors (Neslen A. 24/4/2017). As a result, some of the children are turning to selling sex to try to fund their journeys. Unaccompanied children are at high risk of sexual violence given their dependence, vulnerability and high level of trust. It is difficult to convey the sense of desperation in these children who have been primed to move forward towards safety all of their young lives. Staying still in these camps and just waiting to be moved is extremely difficult for them. But, the sexual violence and exploitation they face also has potentially devastating effects on their physical and mental health.

War and armed conflict increases the danger of sexual violence and exploitation, as does additional emotional, physical, cultural and societal factors. In addition to creating a traumatic and stressful environment, such unrest causes serious disruption of societal values, which puts children at greater risk of being targeted for sexual exploitation and assault by irregular forces, military, other refugees and/or those in a position of authority as well as some of NGOs that are supposed to be supporting them. (Vogt.A June 2 2017)

A report, *Save the Children and Médecins Sans Frontières* (Smith H. 17/3/2017), warned that “there were worrying levels of mental health problems among migrants

and refugees in the Greek camps”. It said people including children as young as 9 were cutting themselves, attempting suicide and using drugs to cope with the “endless misery” (Smith H. 17/3/2017). The report also states that child refugees from conflict zones including Syria, Afghanistan and Pakistan, trying to make their way to other destinations in northern Europe, are being stranded in Greece, unable to afford fees charged by smugglers to move them across the closed borders in Europe.

Crowding and other changes leave children vulnerable to the same dangers they faced during flight and exile. According to Greek child protection agencies, in 2016, they received referrals for 5174 unaccompanied migrant children. It is this group who are at the highest risk. Almost 50% of unaccompanied children in Greece are awaiting relocation. What these numbers don’t report is the reluctance of many European countries to provide refugee children with a safe and permanent home.

Although the actual number of children who have been abused or lured to the sex trade remains unknown—few dare report it for fear of reprisals by smuggling rings—about a third, or 21,300 of the 68,375 migrants, stranded in Greece are children (Carassava A. (May 11 2017).

While the report finds that Greek authorities have made some appropriate provision for vulnerable migrant children in specialised camps and centres, many do not have access to these safer facilities and are at risk of exploitation and violence.

Europe is clearly trying to externalise refugee and migrant management by creating buffer zones around the EU or at its periphery, as is the case with Greece. This is a political choice that not only undermines international refugee law and protection but ultimately the democratic values of Europe (International Federation For Human Rights, Smith H.17/3/2017, pg).

Below are some common reactions that children and adolescents may display:

- Helplessness and passivity; lack of usual responsiveness
- Generalised fear
- Heightened arousal and confusion
- Cognitive confusion, etc.
- Sexual exploitation and abuse

How should we speak to our children about these events when they occur? Should we shield them from such horrors or talk openly about them? How can we help children make sense of a tragedy that we ourselves cannot understand? How will children react? How can we help our children recover? One problem we face is that there is little empirical research to help us answer the above questions. Information from other trauma-related events can be used to provide answers. We are responsible and must explain to them where we have gone wrong to live in a world full of fear, terror and instability.

Today the world is entering another phase in this war against sexual exploitation and trafficking. Our planet is becoming increasingly interdependent. This global transnational world must learn to deal with continuous vague and often unsubstantiated threats on our daily lives. We will need to respond to the chronic anxiety and fear in a way that is different than our more traditional approaches (Fisher G. 2005).

It will involve developing greater understanding of resilience and how to foster its development.

We know today from scientific research that no one over the age of 10 years old will ever forget the tragic effects of war and abuse. These events will influence the psychological makeup of any person for years to come. It has taken them from innocence to maturity through the traumatic eye of war and desperation. However, this legacy of violence that was forced upon them can either propel them forward and strengthen or cripple and weaken them. The war is not over. Its effects are ongoing.

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**Part III**  
**Buyers and Traffickers**

# Traffickers: Who Are They?



Nancy M. Sidun

This chapter will provide an overview of traffickers and will highlight their diversity by exploring the transnational nature of traffickers, their roles and responsibilities, the benefits of and justification for trafficking, and, lastly, the unique roles of women as traffickers. The majority of research has historically focused on other stakeholders and specific aspects in the trafficking arena, namely, people that have been trafficked and the physical and psychological health consequences of those trafficked (Burke, 2013; Dank et al., 2014; Raphael & Myers-Powell, 2010; Surtees, 2008), and there has been a minimal research focused on those trafficking humans (Aronowitz, Theuermann, & Tyurykanova, 2010; Simmons, O'Brien, David & Beacroft, 2013; Troshynski, 2012). This is in part due to significant challenges in gaining access to human traffickers (Dank et al., 2014; Troshynski, 2012). Therefore, the limited availability to this population makes the understanding of traffickers imperfect. Additionally, the complexity and diversity of traffickers compound our knowledge. Multiple variables need to be considered when attempting to understand traffickers, such as the country of origin of the traffickers and their victims, the motivations of the traffickers, and how the victims are recruited (Aronowitz, 2009; Shelley, 2010). Different business models of traffickers, depending on the geographical region they are operating from, have been identified, and, within those regions, significant differences can be found as well as exemplified by the fact that in Asia “Japanese and Indian traffickers differ greatly” (Shelley, 2010, p. 114). Each of these business models has distinctive business strategies, marketing, profit margins and goals, use of violence and corruption, and varying educational levels of the traffickers. Nonetheless, “at the heart of this phenomenon is the traffickers’ goal of exploiting and enslaving their victims and the myriad coercive and deceptive practices they use to do so” (U.S. Department of State, 2015, p. 7).

Historically, it was assumed that all traffickers were a part of well-organized crime networks; this assumption accurately defines some traffickers who function

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within organized crime groups or criminal organizations on the local, national, or transnational level (Burke, 2013; Farr, 2005; Morawska, 2007; O'Neill Richard, 2000; Shelley, 2007, 2010; Sulaimanova, 2006). However, the spectrum of people who engage in trafficking is much broader (Aronowitz et al., 2010; Surtees, 2008). A study of federally prosecuted commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) cases, for example, revealed that 90% of those evaluated had a single perpetrator (Small, Adams, Owen, & Roland, 2008). In another study conducted in Cambodia, 80% of the incarcerated traffickers were poor, uneducated women that were not a part of an organized crime ring (Keo, Bouhours, Broadhurst, & Bourhours, 2014).

What we do know about the organized trafficking criminal networks, however, is they include both economically and politically motivated criminals (Shelley, 2010). These traffickers interface with the broader community of transnational criminals; they conduct unlawful business that is planned and executed by people working in more than one country (Aronowitz et al., 2010; Burke, 2013; Reuter & Petrie, 1995; Shelley, 2007, 2010). A noteworthy advantage of being a part of the transnational criminal community is their ability to neutralize law enforcement through bribes and intimidation, coupled with the knowledge of the political systems that exist not only in their home countries but also in transit and destination countries (Shelley, 2007, 2010). Additionally, members of these transnational crime organizations may be located in origin, transit, and destination countries, thereby allowing members to provide transportation and safe houses along the way (Aronowitz et al., 2010). Trafficked persons are treated like a commodity that can be bought, sold, traded, used, and discarded (Aronowitz et al., 2010). These criminals can sell their commodity of “human flesh” repeatedly, unlike drug traffickers (Murray, 2008; Shelley, 2007); in doing so, they yield significant profits (Aronowitz et al., 2010; Blank, 2013; Burke, 2013; Haken, 2011; Wheaton, Schauer, & Galli, 2010).

Recent research has shed light on the fact that there is no set profile of a trafficker (APA Task Force on Trafficking of Women and Girls Report, 2014). A trafficker can be of either gender, varied ages, marital status, socioeconomic status, education, professions, and experiences and either related or unrelated to the victims (APA, 2014; Dank et al., 2014; Kamazima, Kazaura, Ezekiel, & Fimbo, 2011; Nagle, 2009; Raphael & Myers-Powell, 2010; Shelley, 2010). There is a dramatic array of professions involved in trafficking, including former prostitutes; military, security, and law enforcement personnel; governmental officials and diplomats; athletes; schoolteachers; and multinational peacekeeping forces (APA, 2014; Nagle, 2009; Shelley, 2007, 2010). They can be solo operators or involved in “mom-and-pop”-type operations, insignificant and loosely organized criminal systems, or large and well-organized domestic and/or international crime rings (APA, 2014; Aronowitz et al., 2010; Burke, 2013; Nagle, 2009; Shelley, 2010; Simmons et al., 2013; UNODC 2010).

The word “pimp” is frequently used interchangeably as an individual or “soloist” that trafficks humans. A pimp is defined “as someone who facilitates prostitution and profits in some way from that facilitation” (Dank et al., 2014, p. 137). A pimp becomes a trafficker when force, fraud, and coercion methods are put into action, either through the use or threat of force, abduction, abuse of vulnerability or power,



coercion, deception, or exchanging payments and/or benefits to a person in control (Dank et al., 2014). Other “soloist” traffickers tend to exploit victims in different markets, such as the acts of importing and exploiting domestic servants (Aronowitz et al., 2010). Additional “soloist” traffickers referred to as “lover boy” or “groomers” court and groom their victims with promises of love and marriage and, once recruited, psychologically manipulate or force them into prostitution. This is a well-documented form of trafficking seen in the Netherlands and the United States (Aronowitz et al., 2010).

## **Process of Trafficking**

### ***Recruitment Phase***

The process in which traffickers use to traffic is equally as diverse as the traffickers themselves. Traffickers employ an assortment of force, fraud, and coercion methods (i.e., fraudulent job and marriage offers, indebtedness, legal insecurity, drug addiction, etc.). The initial stage in the trafficking process involves recruitment of individuals that are vulnerable to deceptive offers; these offers tend to focus on the possibility of a “better life” (Aronowitz, 2009; Fleisher, Johnston, Alon, & Hunt, 2008). Traffickers continually pay attention to the changes in markets, changes in government responses, loopholes in the law, and new technology to creatively look for new ways to recruit victims (Aronowitz et al., 2010). Research has indicated that those most successful at recruiting tend to be of the same ethnic group of the person(s) they intend to traffic (APA, 2014; Free the Slaves & Human Rights Center, 2004; Shelley, 2007; Simmons et al., 2013). Frequently, traffickers are familiar with their victims; they could be relatives, neighbors, or people from the same geographical area (APA, 2014; Fleisher et al., 2008; Human Rights Center, 2005; Surtees, 2008; Zimmerman et al., 2006). The proximity and access of recruiting within the same geographical area aid in the recruitment as trust is more readily developed with someone from one’s ethnic, language, or cultural background (Shelley, 2007; Simmons et al., 2013).

Studies have also indicated that women are frequently involved in the recruitment phrase (Aronowitz, 2009; Aronowitz et al., 2010; Raphael & Myers-Powell, 2010). Recruitment techniques differ greatly depending on the education level of the victim, the expectations of the victim and their family, and the financial circumstances of the victim and/or their family. Examples include, but are not limited to, recruiters traveling to impoverished rural areas and approaching poor families, offering a nominal payment for a child, and assuring the families that they can provide a better future for their child. Other techniques include advertisements for fraudulent job opportunities or matchmaking services, frequently referred to as “mail-order brides” (Baure, 2007; Pierce, 2009; Pierce & Koepplinger, 2011; Raphael, 2004; Stoecker, 2005; U.S. Department of State, 2015). Individuals may

also be recruited from refugee camps, detention centers, and legitimate nonexploitative labor settings (Nelson, Guthrie, & Coffey, 2004). Others may be drugged and abducted; however, the most common strategy is enticement with promises of a better life (Fleisher et al., 2008).

### *Travel-Transit Phase*

After one has been recruited, the next stage of the trafficking cycle is the travel-transit or “en route” phase (Nagle, 2009; Shelley, 2007; Zimmerman, Hossain, & Watts, 2011). It is important to understand the distinction between human trafficking and smuggling, as both involve transportation and they frequently co-occur, yet the two are very distinct crimes; the crime of smuggling is against the state, whereas the crime of trafficking is against the individual person (APA, 2014; Kim & Hreshchyshyn, 2004; Nagle, 2009; Weitzer, 2014). Smuggled individuals give monetary compensation and consent to be transported across transnational borders from point A to point B. Once the smuggled individual gets to point B, their interaction with the smuggler is over (Aronowitz et al., 2010; Blank, 2013; Lee, 2007). A trafficked person may start out as a smuggled person by giving consent and money to be transported; however, it evolves into a trafficked situation when deception or coercion is involved and the individual is exploited; at this point, the relationship with the smuggler does not end at point B; rather, it is the beginning of the victim’s trafficked experience (APA, 2014; Burke, 2013; Weitzer, 2014). The travel-transit stage begins when the individual gives consent or is forced to depart with the trafficker, in which case the individual may or may not know they are being trafficked. Frequently, internationally trafficked individuals will be exposed to dangerous and unsafe situations while in transit (i.e., treacherous modes of transportation, high-risk border crossings, and unsafe environments, such as malarial jungles or deserts) (Aronowitz et al., 2010; Zimmerman et al., 2011). All forms of known transport, from feet to airplanes, are employed (Burke, 2013; Shelley, 2007). During this phase, the illegal activities or movements normally begin, including illegal entry or abduction or the use of false or forged documents. Additionally, it is during this time that the trafficked individual begins to suspect or discover they have been deceived (Zimmerman et al., 2011). Being transported to another geographical area is not required to be considered a trafficked individual; a victim can be trafficked in the same area they were recruited (USDOS, 2015). While the travel-transit phase is a common stage in trafficking, especially for individuals trafficked internationally and domestically within their country, it is not essential to be moved to be considered a “trafficked person.”

## ***Exploitation Phase***

The next phase of trafficking, which is the exploitation stage, is an essential component of being trafficked. This is “when individuals are in a labour or service situation in which their work and/or body are exploited or abused” (Zimmerman et al., 2011, p. 331). Exploitation of individuals is found frequently in what has been referred to as the 3D jobs: dirty, dangerous, and difficult or demanding (Aronowitz et al., 2010). The exploitation practices can and will differ from region to region and by trafficker (Aronowitz et al., 2010; Zimmerman et al., 2011). In the exploitative phase, the trafficker will need to control their victims. Varieties of methods are used and will depend on a combination of factors such as the gender and age of the victim, the personality of the traffickers, the culture in which the trafficker is working, and the behavior of the victims. Different methods of control include, but are not limited to, (a) violence and/or threat of violence against the victim or their family members; (b) isolation and restriction of movement; (c) no agency or sense of control over self; (d) confiscation of identification, travel documents, and money; (e) use of religious beliefs and values to manipulate; (f) drugs and alcohol; and (g) the threat of law enforcement and immigration officials (Burke, 2013; Kara, 2009).

Another frequently used method of control is to create debt for the victims. Often this will begin with the debt incurred by the cost of the trip to be transported to the final destination point (Aronowitz, 2009). Once the trip cost debt is paid, the victim is not freed as this is when financial exploitation begins; the victims are then charged for basic human needs such as food, hygiene products, lodging, etc., and frequently the charges are outrageous (Aronowitz, 2009).

Not all methods of control are openly coercive; force and coercion are sometimes extremely subtle or absent. As Williamson and Prior’s research found, the sexually exploited girls they interviewed felt they had to repay their “finesse pimping” traffickers for their kindness by engaging in commercial sex and bringing the money “home” (2009).

Additionally, there are many different trafficker roles. In larger trafficking organizations, subunits will be established to carry out specific tasks or operations, such as a set group of people recruit, others provide shelter or falsify documents, and another group provides transportation, etc. (Aronowitz et al., 2010; Kleemans & van de Bunt 2003).

## **Roles Within Trafficking Organizations**

Regardless of the level of complexity of trafficking organizations, the majority share similar structural features and follow a business plan that is made up of individuals tasked with various responsibilities (Nagle, 2009). The following list includes the most common roles but is not exclusive. *Investors* are the people that fund the operation and supervise the entire process; they are unlikely to be known

by the everyday workers as their anonymity is shielded by the organizational pyramid structure. The role of *recruiter* is essential as it seeks out and identifies potential victims. The *broker* is the person in between the recruiter and the employer. *Transporters* literally accompany and transport the potential victims by land, sea, or air from one destination to the next. The *employer (or procurer)* is the person who purchases and either sells or exploits the victims themselves. *Corrupt public officials* assist in obtaining travel documents or accepting bribes to enable trafficked person to enter and/or exit illegally. They also obscure any investigations and obstruct prosecution. *Corrupt public officials* can be found throughout the trafficking process. Information gathered in regard to border surveillance, immigration and transit procedures, asylum systems, and law enforcement activities is provided by *informers*. Those responsible for policing and maintaining order with staff and trafficked persons are the *enforcers* or “roof.” People whose sole role is to collect fees are known as the *debt collectors*. Additionally, the *money launderers* disguise the illegal profits through a series of transactions or investments into legitimate businesses. Lastly, there may be *supporting personnel and specialists*, which include local people at transit points to provide housing and other assistance (Aronowitz et al., 2010; Burke, 2013; Wheaton et al., 2010).

## Benefits and Rationale for Trafficking

Human trafficking is an extremely lucrative business where traffickers have the opportunity to make enormous amounts of money (Aronowitz et al., 2010; Hughes, 2000; Murray, 2008; Shelley, 2007, 2010). In addition to the financial rewards of being in the trafficking business, risks of being arrested, prosecuted, and convicted appear to be less than other illegal activities (Aronowitz et al., 2010). There are a number of reasons for this; human trafficking is not always recognized by law enforcement, and the victims can be poor witnesses due to being victimized and inconsistently recalling their experiences, or they may be in love or afraid of their trafficker and therefore won't testify against them, or they don't perceive themselves as being trafficked (Aronowitz et al., 2010). It is also difficult to prove coercion. Those involved in well-organized transnational crime rings have the added benefit of being able to intimidate or bribe law enforcement and essentially neutralize them (Shelley, 2007). Interviews with traffickers indicated that some were concerned about being arrested and prosecuted, while others indicated that they really did not believe their actions would carry significant penalizing risks. One such trafficker in the United States stated, “You don't get locked up for pimping. Who gets locked up for pimping? ... I didn't really think people get locked up for pimping,” whereas another US trafficker stated, “Well, I always thought that this kind of business was a misdemeanor, and I never thought I would be in prison for organized crime, or for pimping and pandering...” (Dank et al., 2014, pp. 147–148).

Raphael and Myers-Powell found in their study that some of the pimps justified their actions as they were serving the girls they were pimping, helping them by

teaching them to not give away their bodies for free (2010). Similarly Skinner interviewed a child trafficker in Haiti who claimed his actions were humanitarian in nature, “Because the child can’t eat...I don’t sell children...I place them” (2008, p. 9). Other traffickers interviewed in Blank’s research indicated they were in the business, it was “just work,” and what was enticing was “the money [and] the fun” (2013, p. 63), whereas others rationalized their involvement due to their backgrounds, suggesting that their own life experiences and exposure to people being exploited provided a path to their exploitation of others (Blank, 2013; Raphael & Myers-Powell, 2010). A small percentage of the US interviewed pimps in Raphael and Myers-Powell’s study expressed remorse for their involvement in exploiting their victims (2010). It appears from the limited studies that have focused on traffickers that motivations and justifications vary as well.

## Women as Traffickers

According to Shelly, “Human trafficking is the only area of transnational crime in which women are significantly represented—as victims, perpetrators, and as activists seeking to combat the crime (2010, p. 16).” While it is assumed that men account for the majority of traffickers, in recent years there has been an increase in women being prosecuted as traffickers (APA, 2014; Broad, 2015; Siegel & de Blank, 2010), and a recent United Nations report questioned if female traffickers may outnumber male traffickers worldwide (2009). In some countries, rates of women’s involvement in trafficking crimes are significantly higher than any other criminal activity (UNODC, 2009). One of the earliest studies by Van Dijk found 25% of all offenders on prostitution-related human trafficking in the Netherlands, between 1997 and 2000, were women (Siegel & de Blank, 2010, p. 437). In 2008, Surtees found that women recruited 40% of foreign trafficked victims in Moldova and 60% of trafficked victims in Macedonia. Another significant study found that convicted traffickers were women in over 50% of cases in 14 countries, between 10% and 50% in 28 countries, and less than 10% in 4 countries of the 46 countries analyzed (UNODC, 2009).

Other research has confirmed the significant percentage of women involved in trafficking (Coonan, 2004; Kyckelhahn, Beck, & Cohen, 2009; Shelley, 2010). Much of the research indicates that women hold varying roles in the trafficking process, ranging from positions of power (Aronowitz et al., 2010; Shelley, 2010), supporter, partner in crime, and “madams” (Siegel & de Blank, 2010) to “lower-ranking” roles (Ingrasci, 2007; UNODC, 2012). There is speculation that the relatively high involvement of women in this crime, in comparison with other types of crime, may be due to their former involvement as victims of trafficking (Shelley, 2010; Sidun & Rubin, 2013; Siegel & de Blank, 2010; Simmons et al., 2013; UNODC, 2009). A number of studies actually discuss former victims of trafficking becoming involved in trafficking crimes (Denisova, 2004; Siegel & de Blank, 2010; UNODC, 2009). Some of these women become involved to escape their own vic-

timization by agreeing to recruit more women as a path to their own freedom (Hughes, 2000; Surtees, 2008; UNODC, 2012) or have worked "...their way up the trafficking ladder to become involved as traffickers" (Aronowitz et al., 2009, p. 43). Others get involved due to relationships and acquaintances; while this is similar to men's involvement, it differs as these women get involved because of their intimate relationships (Broad, 2015; Sanchez, 2015). In US domestic pimping environments, trafficking women's roles range from being the "pimp" to being "the bottom girl" who is the prostitute that dominates and is above all prostitutes that work for a particular pimp, in addition to being responsible for handling finances and training and recruiting other prostitutes, to personal control over the entire pimping operation (Aronowitz et al., 2010; Dank et al., 2014; Raphael & Myers-Powell, 2010; Siegel & de Blank, 2010).

In conclusion, while the research on traffickers is in its infancy, we do know that traffickers are extremely diverse and are not a population that can easily be defined. Traffickers' demographics and methods differ greatly; however, vast financial gain is consistently the motivation for all types of traffickers coupled with the willingness to exploit individuals for money. While traffickers do exploit people, the motivation for the crime is linked to the profit, not to the desire to harm victims (Aronowitz et al., 2010). This chapter presents preliminary information about traffickers and illustrates the need for future research and attention to this population to fully understand the complexity of who these people are and how we can most effectively intervene to halt their exploitative behavior.

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# Organized Crime, Gangs, and Trafficking



Mackenzie Lambine and Giselle Gaviria

## Introduction

Youth gang involvement has received intensive scholarly, public, and administrative attention during the past few decades (Decker, Melde, & Pyrooz, 2013). In the USA, the modern street gang has been a significant feature of the urban landscape in various regions since around the 1950s and was found to be heavily dependent upon trends in rapid urbanization and immigration (Howell & Moore, 2010). A street gang is a variation on the traditional adolescent peer group, where most of its members engage in various violent or non-violent offending when compared to their demographically similar counterparts (Melde & Esbensen, 2013). Gang-related crime and non-gang-affiliated group crime are a worldwide phenomenon, the behavioral and psychological dynamics of which are similar (Hagedorn, 2005).

There are distinctions made between “formal” or more organized criminal groups and street gangs (Decker & Curry, 2002). Although they share some similarities, it has been argued that street gangs are far less organized and more difficult to eradicate due to the changeability of membership and motivations. Further, crimes committed by organized criminal gangs are more likely to be planned in advance, are more sophisticated, and are less emotionally based (Decker & Curry, 2002). In other words, organized crime is more akin to a business than street gang membership, which is often younger in age and based upon marginalization in an urban landscape (Densley, 2013).

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## Street Gangs and Sex Trafficking

The past 10 years has seen an increase in the use of sex trafficking by street gangs as a means of income for a number of advantageous reasons (Frank & Terwilliger, 2015). These include minimal start-up costs, ready supply of young girls, low risk for gang members, and a large customer base. Street gangs “recruit” young girls, who are often vulnerable due to age, poverty, lack of education, and/or poor familial circumstances (Beckett et al., 2013; Densley, 2013). Victims are promised any number of incentives including jobs, money, acceptance, and love and/or protection during the recruitment/grooming process (Beckett et al., 2013). Some victims are tricked into arriving at a location, where they are raped and threatened with death in order to secure compliance (Lederer, 2009).

For street gangs, sex trafficking can be considered a safer and more lucrative alternative to selling drugs (Frank & Terwilliger, 2015). With drug trafficking, gang members run the risk of being killed, robbed, or otherwise victimized not only by rival gang members but also by customers. This results in a depletion of funds and manpower to continue the enterprise. Further, the women who are being sold can be used over and over again, whereas drug supplies must be replenished more regularly. Considering the victims of sex trafficking as reusable commodities serves to underscore the advantages of the practice for street gangs. There is considerably less risk, more reliable profit, and a large consumer base from which to operate.

In the UK, street gangs have been using rape as positive and negative reinforcement in their operations. This includes the use of rape as revenge involving the girlfriends of rival gang members or the “passing around” of a fellow gang member’s significant other. While the latter is not what one would generally consider “trafficking,” the expectation and/or coercion of gang-affiliated girls to sexually service one or more gang members at a time has become commonplace (Beckett et al., 2013). This differs from what many would consider to be “traditional” notions of sex trafficking, which is done mainly for monetary gain (Frank & Terwilliger, 2015). Instead, sexual gratification itself is the “reward” for gang members and a means by which gang leaders are able to maintain control over the gang (Beckett et al., 2013; Densley, 2013). This is in addition to any material gain from other enterprises.

## Recruitment and Initiation

Girls are often targeted and groomed by gang members (Beckett et al., 2013). How they are chosen depends on what their use will be to the gang. Girls from wealthy backgrounds and/or stable home lives are rarely targeted as they have too many resources at their disposal to be beholden to the gang. Those from poor backgrounds and/or abusive family situations are the optimal target as they are easier to manipulate (Beckett et al., 2013; Fleisher, 1998; Sheldon, Tracey, & Brown, 2004). The

grooming process can vary in length but is an insidious and generally rapid period of time in which the target (who is almost always younger than many of the gang members) is treated very well. There is often a significant amount of emotional manipulation, with one boy who acts as the “boyfriend,” telling the girl he has feelings for her, buying her things, promising to help her family, etc. Feelings are deepened if the target loses her virginity. Emotional attachment is an extremely effective tool that gang members use to recruit female gang affiliates. This boy will introduce her to other gang members, who will remain friendly, respectful, etc. Once the target has spent some time with the gang, gotten close to the members, and reaped some initial “benefits,” they will begin asking her to do small tasks. These will seem fairly innocuous to the naive target (e.g., Could you drop this bag off my friend’s house?) but will likely be illegal (e.g., the bag will be full of drug money and/or weapons). The tasks she is asked to do will then become riskier as the gang tests her “loyalty.” If she refuses, they simply remind her of all the gifts, “protection,” etc. that they have given her over the past few months. By making these girls feel beholden to the gang, they solidify their influence and the notion that they are the only ones with her best interests at heart. For a vulnerable teenage girl with no money and no stable home life, the gang becomes, for some, the only means in which she might feel important, powerful, attractive, and useful (Beckett et al., 2013; Fleischer, 1998; Metropolitan Police, 2015). Obviously, this is not the only way in which girls can be recruited, but it is the most common apart from familial coercion, which involves a gang-involved family member recruiting female relatives to become a part of gang activity.

In many cases, initiation for females who express interest in joining a gang is sexual in nature. When a girl is “sexed in,” she is expected to perform sexual acts with whomever she is told in return for membership (albeit unequal) in the gang (Taylor, 2008). Once in the gang, sexual activity with female members may be “offered” as a benefit of joining for new recruits (Sheldon, Tracy, & Brown, 2004; Wang, 2000; Wolf & Gutierrez, 2012).

## **The Myth of Gender Equality**

Gangs often propagate the notion that females can achieve equal status within the gang (Miller, 2001). Indeed, a girl may be told that she will have “wifey” status or get “respect” or protection if she joins a gang (Densley, 2013). Most gangs develop and operate in deprived neighborhoods, so the need for protection and other sources of self-esteem makes for a very potent recruitment tool (Miller, 2001). Gangs perpetuate this illusion of social capital for a significant enough amount of time until there is a need for the girl to perform sexually or criminally. It is at this point that girls may feel that they have no choice, as they believe they have already reaped the benefits of the status they have gained from gang “membership,” and so they “owe” the gang whatever is requested (Firmin, 2013). This coercion is even stronger if she has a gang-affiliated family member.

In the UK, some gang-affiliated girls are being used as “setup chicks” (Beckett et al., 2013). These girls are used to lure others into a setting in which the gang is waiting, where she is then beaten and/or raped. This can be motivated by a need for retaliation for a perceived wrong (e.g., victim’s boyfriend/brother is in a rival gang) or simply as a reward for the success of a recent venture. In these instances, a gang-affiliated girl often has to choose between setting someone else up to be raped and be raped herself as a punishment for disobeying orders.

Some girls in gangs take on the appearance and persona of male gang members in order to fit in and be treated like “one of the boys” (Miller, 2001). Unfortunately, they are still seen as being less valuable than male gang members and continue to be seen as sexual objects.

## **Longevity of Girls in Gangs**

Contrary to popular belief, most gang members are only gang-involved for a brief period of time (Esbensen, Deschenes, & Winfree, 1999; Peterson, Taylor, & Esbensen, 2004). The notion that once you are in a gang, you are “in it for life” is largely untrue. This is due to a number of factors including familial responsibilities, the likelihood of jail time, actively seeking an exit, and in the more extreme cases, death. The longevity of female gang membership is significantly less than that of male members. There are a few possible reasons for this discrepancy (Curry, 1998; Curry & Decker, 1998; Kelly, 2015). Pregnancy is often a reason why female members desist from gang involvement and why they are released from continued sexual exploitation. Not only do gangs see pregnancy as an impediment to criminal enterprise generally but also to sexual desirability. The physical changes that accompany pregnancy make such women less of a commodity for the gang and no longer profitable. Contraction of potentially lethal sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV/AIDS makes female gang members no longer profitable from a trafficking perspective. Girls in gangs are also seen from the beginning as disposable. As the gang ages, older girls are the first to be seen as obsolete in the face of newer, younger recruits. Although rare, some girls who want to leave a gang can also be “sexed out,” a process by which she is brutally raped by the gang in order to secure her freedom (Brown, 2007).

## **The Aftereffects of Female Gang Membership**

The aftereffects of gang membership for females are difficult to ascertain. Although there are some powerful qualitative studies regarding the experiences of female gang members (see Beckett et al., 2013), there is a paucity of research on the topic. This could be due to severe underreporting, a lack of resources for support, and/or a distrust of law enforcement (Beckett et al., 2013). Fear drives much of the gang’s

influence on these girls, and their indoctrination into gang activity fosters a strong mistrust of authority and the protection that is available to them should they decide to leave. Until more women come forward and are willing to share their experiences, the scope of the problem and the abuse they have suffered will continue to be based largely on the testimony of a brave few.

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# Family Members and Trafficking: Story of Alex's Disappearance



Christina Antonopoulou

On February 3, 2006, a cold day in Veria, a small town in the northern part of Greece, at 7:30 at night, a boy named Alex disappeared. At the same time, there was a call for all boys of Veria from ages 11 and up to attend a concert of hip hop music in a bar called *Apollo*. This was very close to the square where Alex supposedly fell down some stone stairs, hit his head, and died. It was believed that this was what occurred after five refugee boys said they were running after to catch him to beat him up because he insulted them. But Alex's body was never found.

Alex's mother immigrated from Russia when Alex was about 5 years old. His stepfather who was from Veria met Alex's mother in a bar and married her. That night, the mother and stepfather looked all over to find Alex when he didn't come home. They reported he was missing that night. The next morning, there were pictures all over the town saying that Alex was missing. The police interviewed the mother and stepfather. When the police asked the stepfather what he thought happened to Alex, he said, "Alex is a handsome, good looking, good boy and I think he has become the victim of strange man with a deranged and sick desires."

The other five boys and their families were economic refugees who lived under miserable conditions. Two were from Albania, one was from Romania, and two were gypsy Roma. No one interviewed these boys for about 4 months afterward. But, the police did start interviewing men who had previously been accused of sexual misconduct with boys as there had been various reports of sex trafficking in Veria previously. In fact, a famous author had written about how he was sexually abused in Veria at another time. The police checked and interviewed people who were suspicious of paedophile activities and who claimed to have seen something. On the other hand they never took seriously a report of eyewitness given by a man named Christos who happened to be in Veria the night that Alex disappeared.

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Christos in his report to the police said that he saw a van and another car speeding in the square after they dragged Alex in the car. He gave information about the color of the car and later the same report was given by some of Alex's classmates.

By this time the media and television had shown a great deal of interest in what happened to Alex. Finally, one of the Albanian boys was interrogated by the police and mentioned the story that he and the four others pushed Alex down the staircase and saw him hit his head, and blood was coming out. Their story continued that the boys decided to pick him up and put him in a deserted house next to the staircase. There were a lot of children in the area going to a concert, but when asked, no one said they saw them supposedly carrying Alex after he fell. The five boys said they left him in the house because one of the boys touched Alex's head and decided he was dead. This was the first scenario told, and it was accepted by the police and the parents, and despite the fact that the five children in Veria were only 10 and 11 years old, they arrested the boys and took them to Salonika.

They kept them there for many hours interrogating them without telling their parents. During the interrogation a second scenario was told by the boys. In this version, they supposedly put him in a supermarket carriage after he fell and hit his head and died. They put a blanket over him, and all of them pushed the carriage through 17 streets to the river and threw the body there. The police and volunteers searched the river, but no one could find the body.

The police interviewed over 400 people who told many different stories of what happened to Alex. A judge finally decided to accuse (indict) the five boys for attempted murder based on what was called an "autopsy" which is really the professional opinion by a well-known coroner. When she was asked in an interview how she came to that conclusion, she said "we are obligated to serve and do things that we do not necessarily believe but they have political influence." So even without the body of Alex (because his body was never found) she testified that Alex died of brain hemorrhage and other internal bleeding. At the trial another coroner testified that it was impossible to do an autopsy without a body.

Psychologist Christina Antonopoulou was asked by a judge in the court to go to Veria to assist the court in finding out what happened to Alex and to interview the five boys who were accused of his murder. By then, five different psychiatrists were appointed by the police to examine each of the boys and their families. The psychiatrists were not pleased that Dr. Antonopoulou was appointed, fearing that there would be controversy and more media publicity. For approximately 1 year, Dr. Antonopoulou interviewed different people in Veria and reviewed the file. From other testimonies she was not convinced Alex died under the conditions said by the boys and she was finally allowed to conduct a video recorded interview with them.

During her interview, she had all the items in the room that she had read that the boys described including a figure of Alex with the same measurements, a carriage, a shovel, etc. When she asked one of the children, "If he was dead, why didn't you put the blanket over his head as is customary if someone dies?" The answer was, "because he had to breathe." When she asked a second child what would he like his mother to do if he himself was lost? This boy said, "I'd like her to look for cars with

foreign license plates.” When she asked each of them where was the blood on his head, each child said someplace different.

One of the Albanian children cried during most of the interview. He said, “Everything is a lie. I’ll tell you what happened.” Just at that moment, the policeman who was ordered to be in the room during the interview jumped over her to the child and started discussing a soccer game that was going to be in town soon. This effectively stopped the child from saying anything further.

The media and television were all interested in this case and continued coming to Veria to find out what happened to Alex. Dr. Antonopoulou was accused of playing with dolls and various gadgets, and she was criticized for having videotaped the boys. The psychiatrists asked the judge not to accept the videotapes and instead believe the police story. There were rumors that a police chief was involved in trafficking and that perhaps the families were paid to allow the children to accept blame.

The case got further publicity because for the second time in Greece, they appointed a special judge to re-interview everyone to determine if there really was support to verify the story that Alex died by the hands of the five boys.

There was a trial. The first psychiatrist wrote a 3000 word report (paid by the page), and Dr. Antonopoulou commented on the report that it was like an Italian movie. She indicated that there appeared to be an attempt to hide the fact that so many children in Veria had been sexually abused and downplayed the trafficking going on in that town. One mother talked about a 65-year-old man teaching a 9-year-old boy to ride a scooter at 2 am. But these parents did not have the money or other resources to protect their children who themselves were known to steal food from stores.

So despite the fact that there was no examination for blood on the stairs or other technologies used to verify the scenarios, the case was heard by the first court. One of the witnesses who was an ex-policeman, a friend of Alex’s mother, said that she was trying to get money to get the Russian mafia to kill the gypsy boys. Although there were two different opinions between the judge and the public prosecutor, the judge’s opinion won, and when the guilty verdict was announced, the five kids broke everything in the court as they screamed, “We haven’t done anything, this is not the truth.” Two children were sent to a reformatory school for 4 years, and the others were asked to do community welfare service to a school or agency.

Dr. Antonopoulou testified at the trial, and afterward she told the media that Alex was not dead but was kidnapped and trafficked. She also wrote a book published in Greece detailing this story. Then, bothered by not knowing the truth about what really happened to Alex, she went to Bulgaria because this was a known route for traffickers who come through Greece to Bulgaria and then distribute the children throughout Europe.

The man who had reported seeing a car pick up a child in the square on the night Alex disappeared had been involved in other cases where trafficking was known. He was in one case there where there were reports in the local bars that men admitted to marrying at least 180 women in Greece for the purposes of sexual trafficking them throughout Europe. Dr. Antonopoulou went to visit the Ministry of Justice in Bulgaria, but the person who kept the records had died and the Ministry of Interior,

where the records were kept, refused to give any further information and the case was closed. Eventually, the entire package of records was sent to Dr. Antonopoulou from Bulgaria, and they revealed details of the sex trafficking of women from there. It is possible that Alex's mother herself was a victim and was continuing to provide others with access to the established trafficking route.

Meanwhile, Alex's mother filed a lawsuit stating that Dr. Antonopoulou disrespected the dead child by saying that he was not dead and claimed he had been trafficked. The lawsuit kept getting postponed, and finally it occurred, and Dr. Antonopoulou was found not guilty. The judge accepted her statement, "This is the first time I give hope to a mother that her child might be alive and she thinks this is an insult."

Alex would be 21 years old today. Dr. Antonopoulou is still searching for him.

# Victims Becoming Victimiziers



Natalie Sarachaga-Barato and Lenore Walker

Human trafficking has been recognized as a global issue of trading and exploiting individuals against their will. Many organizations, governmental agencies, and community resources have come together to combat the ever-growing organized crime via proactive efforts, awareness, and legislation. However, there is still a lack of knowledge of who the traffickers are and their methods of operation. The Council of Europe Convention on Action Against Trafficking in Human Beings recognized that many victims might have transitioned to a trafficker role as another form of exploitation (Sembacher, 2005). Though it may seem unthinkable for sex trafficking victims to eventually become the traffickers who recruit victims into the same industry of abuse, pain, and exploitation that they had been forced to endure, it is important to understand that the identities of victims and perpetrators are not distinctly separate from one another (Siegel & Blank, 2010). Exposure to the complex dynamics and traumatic experiences of the sex trafficking industry alters the way victims behave, think, and perceive the world around them.

Neurobiological research has provided substantial evidence that the development of the brain's structural and functional capacities is directly shaped by the interactions that individuals have with their environments and their relationships with other people. Experiences directly shape neuronal circuits that are responsible for memory, emotion, and self-awareness by altering the structure and activity of the connections between neurons throughout an individual's life span. These developmental concepts are particularly relevant to child victims of the sex trafficking industry because the neural structures in the brain responsible for constructing their sense of reality will be based on violent, abusive relationships (Siegel, 2012). In fact, it is now accepted that the brain does not fully develop until somewhere in their 20s,

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especially in areas that regulate social experiences with others and impulsivity. Children deprived of healthy, secure attachment experiences with others and raised in maladaptive environments rarely have the opportunities to learn various emotional and social skills necessary for regulating emotions, relating to others, and maintaining stable mental models of reality (Cloitre, Miranda, Stovall-McClough, & Han, 2005). As a result, victims of human trafficking may have trouble conceptualizing their own identities and have learned to detach from overwhelming emotional experiences such as trauma (Van Der Kolk, 2006). Additionally, living in an environment where sexual slavery, abuse, and violent behavior have been the daily norm for a prolonged amount of time alters their ability to determine what constitutes “normal” behaviors.

Although traffickers can be men or women, reports indicate that a large number of known traffickers around the world are women. A 2012 report by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime found that female traffickers accounted for one-third of trafficking perpetrators in over 50 countries. Within the context of all crimes committed, female offending rates were less than 15%. In comparison, female traffickers accounted for 30% of human trafficking convictions. The countries that detected female trafficked victims the highest also convicted the highest amounts of female traffickers (UNODC, 2012). Furthermore, the report found that in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, an astonishing 77% of convictions were of females and the Americas had the next highest female conviction rate at 42%. While these statistics are important, it should be noted that it might be easier to catch females involved in trafficking who take the blame for the men whom they are protecting as the “kingpin” of the operation. Nonetheless, it is important to understand how and why women turn into their oppressors in this area, as this does not happen with other forms of gender violence. Fewer women are known to be rapists, sexual exploiters, sexual assaulters, child sexual abusers, or domestic violence perpetrators (Walker, 2016).

The research suggests that there are three types of female traffickers: *supporters*, *recruiters*, and *madams*. As is described below, supporters are those who often act as big sisters to the other women in the organization, which is sometimes called a “stable.” A *recruiter* is one who goes out into areas and helps choose new girls to join the stable. Oftentimes the recruiter becomes a supporter especially to the girls she brings into the organization. These two types of female traffickers, however, still have to answer to the person above them, usually a man. In some cases, the supporter becomes the top person in the organization, and she may be referred to as the *madam*, similar to others in brothels. Even when the woman runs the stable or brothel, she may be under the control of a man, especially if the operation is run by a syndicate. It must be emphasized that these organizations have an economy of their own and their structure is designed to bring in as much money as possible. Although those doing the work, the trafficking victims, hold up the entire organization, they are at the bottom of the hierarchy and get the least share of the earnings.

Victims can turn into traffickers for a variety of reasons. Individuals who are trafficked as children and are raised within these traumatic, exploitive environments are especially prone to becoming trapped within them as adults because they have been

raised without the proper resources, education, and experiences that would facilitate their successful integration into mainstream society. Recovered victims are revictimized repeatedly when they lack access to counseling and support services that would provide them with the necessary skills, education, and training to pursue careers outside the commercial sex industry. Victims often become traffickers themselves in order to try to break free of this vicious cycle of revictimization. The allure of becoming a trafficker and recruiting other children or adults may be the only way that former victims feel they can seize power in control within the world of sex trafficking, especially if it is the only world that they know.

Some children who are forced into prostitution become traffickers after developing a close relationship and dependency on their pimp. Once they reach adulthood, they aide their pimps by luring other young girls into prostitution (Siegel & Blank, 2010). Some females may accept their “promotion” from victim to victimizer because it improves their circumstances. Girls are still socialized to believe that attention from the alpha male is an important way to gain social status in their community and in many stables where more than one girl is being trafficked, it is considered high status to be the favorite. Since many trafficked women feel trapped within the sex trafficking industry without any hope of escape, assuming the role of a trafficker is advantageous because it offers protection through the control of newly captured victims. New victimizers will be able to benefit financially, physically, and emotionally by exploiting new recruited girls. However, recently promoted female traffickers are more vulnerable to law enforcement detection as they transition into their new role due to their increased involvement with trafficked women. Thus, they are, in a way, protecting the top man in their group and making it worthwhile for him to appoint his favorites and give them a little more of the rewards than the others in their stable.

In comparison, the master trafficker possesses the highest level of anonymity among most counterparts of the organization, therefore, significantly decreasing the likelihood of their capture or prosecution (United Nations Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking, 2008). The main or master trafficker’s identity may never be revealed to the victim because there are so many key players within the organization. A successful trafficker will utilize this complex method of operation to ensure that no illegal activities will be traced back to them, allowing the key players to be singled out for arrest and conviction. While not all trafficking groups are organized with such complex schemas, many do have some parts of a system to function.

As stated, female traffickers play a variety of different roles within human trafficking organizations. Some women act as the supporters who execute orders given by the group’s leaders or the networks’ other members. Women who feel a sense of loyalty to the group or for a specific member of the group may voluntarily assume supportive roles believing they are actually helping the other victims by acting nicer and teaching them how to behave. However, many women are forced to act as supporters through the use of threats and violence (Siegel & Blank, 2010). Many of these women may be used in activities such as guarding a place or retrieving money from victims, thereby placing them in more vulnerable positions to be exposed for arrest and/or prosecution.

Other female traffickers may be given the role of recruiters and recruit new victims by some false pretense. These women are able to establish trust quicker and are perceived to be more credible and authoritative, which can make them more effective than their male counterparts. Some of these female traffickers may be given the role of “grassroots intelligence gatherers” where they gather information about potential victims in locations visited and then report back to the master trafficker (United Nations Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking, 2008). These women may also tell themselves that they are really helping the new recruits escape from a life of child abuse and maltreatment without realizing that the life they are offering them may have even more dire consequences including lack of escape.

Unlike the more marginal roles of supporters and recruiters, madams or the top female offenders are considered the central, leading roles within their criminal organization. The madam is in charge of coordinating all human trafficking activities, managing finances, and recruiting/managing the victims who often are considered to be prostitutes in those commercial sex organizations that are run like typical brothels. Many madams were once prostitutes themselves. However, after discovering that there is a great demand for Asian or African girls in Western Europe, they began opening up brothels in order to increase their profits. Several different organizations have been studied. For example, Kara (2010) has studied a Nigerian organization, and the madam-in-charge of the entire trafficking organization always remains in Nigeria to recruit young women into the commercial sex industry. The Nigerian madam then facilitates the migration of the women and girls to various countries in Europe, where another madam will be waiting for them. Upon arriving in their destination countries, these new victims will be greeted by the madam who is responsible for controlling, supervising, and organizing the group’s activities. European madams are usually victims of sex trafficking themselves, and the profits that they collect from each of these girls forced into prostitution is used to repay a debt to the madam back in Nigeria (Kara, 2010). Once the debt has been repaid, European madams continue to run brothels and force girls into sexual slavery but now keep the profits for themselves (Siegel & Blank, 2010). Nigerian trafficking victims also are subject to the same exploitive debt bondage system that may take years for them to pay back. In many cases, these debts can never be repaid because the trafficked victims are also responsible for covering the costs of their food, rent, and other living expenses with their earnings from prostitution (Aronowitz, 2009). However, many victims will continue to work as prostitutes for their trafficker after their debts have been repaid because they have become dependent on the trafficker over time.

Others who have described the Asian organizations, especially during the Chinese-Japanese wars, found that even when a woman is the head of a particular brothel, she is still beholden to a man somewhere above her in a national or international organization. In the USA, brothels are only legal in Nevada where several exist in the Las Vegas and Reno area. They openly advertise their services and bring buyers from these more popular tourist destinations to their premises or *ranches*. One of us (LW) visited one of the ranches and learned that while the women were the managers of that particular ranch, the actual owner was a man who had diversified

into other lucrative businesses as well as prostitution. One of the women, let's call her Vera, spoke with LW and described her role in an organization that was similar to those described in the literature. This particular woman was impressed with the silk sheets that she was awarded for serving a higher number of men than previously. Her own self-esteem was being rewarded by what Vera regarded as under her control; that is, she could control servicing more men and, therefore, earn more rewards. Interestingly, Vera was awaiting trial in a local jail when I first met her. There she complained that the sheets were too rough for her rather than her inability to leave the detention center. When she described her time at the ranch, she did not focus on her inability to leave there either. Although the ranch managers described to LW the system they had devised for women to leave whenever they were able to financially do so, it seemed as unattainable to Vera as was her ability to leave the jail.

It is interesting to understand the psychology of systems that can permit women to also trap other women into a lifestyle that offers little other than a continuing victim type of status. However, as Pataki and Robison describe in their chapter earlier in this book, many of these women believe they do have choice in what they do. Like Vera, however, it is possible that these women have adopted what social psychologists call *learned helplessness*. Although a poor label for the theory that describes how people learn that their responses do not necessarily result in what they are supposed to, this loss of contingency between response and outcome has been found to cause people to lose the ability to think they can escape and rather adopt more adaptive coping strategies, so they are less likely to be hurt (Seligman, 1975). Walker studied the construct of learned helplessness in relation to battered women who believed they were unable to leave the relationship without being killed (which turned out to be more accurate than not) and found that these women also developed adaptive coping strategies in order to survive the horrendous abuse from their intimate partners (Walker, 2016). Although it makes theoretical sense, it has not yet been empirically studied as applied to sex trafficking victims.

Using another social psychology theory, cognitive dissonance, may help explain how the victims can turn into victimizers when applied with learned helplessness or loss of the belief they can escape from the trafficking lifestyle. When you are forced to live with something that you do not believe in, people may start to adopt that very thing as having some redeeming qualities (Festinger, 1957). So, although you might believe that it is wrong to trap a woman into being trafficked, someone using cognitive dissonance may start to believe that it is not totally wrong; rather, they can live better than before and even earn silk sheets like Vera, and therefore they do have control over their lives.

In conclusion, it is important to study these women who have gone from victim to victimizer for several reasons. Given the high number of male perpetrators of gender violence, regardless of whether the victims are female or male, is there a genetic component to such aggression that makes females less aggressive as a group? If so, then the more aggressive of the gender would be expected to rise to the top of the trafficking hierarchies. Or, is aggressive behavior by one victim used against another victim a socially constructed activity that is modeled and engaged



in for desired rewards? If so, then what happens to the compassion some may have for other victims if they are forced into a victimizer role for their own survival? These questions of essentialist versus socially constructed behavior dominate the field when trying to understand how and why humans hurt other humans (i.e., Levant, 1996). Anthropologists tend to take the essentialist viewpoint emphasizing the survival nature of behavior. Certainly engaging in any form of commercialized sex is considered survival behavior in today's lexicon. On the other hand, psychologists are more likely to try to analyze motivation and behavioral choices as more complex and feminist psychologists will do these analyses from a gender viewpoint. It is certainly understandable why a woman might want to gain higher status in an organization. The fight for equality of opportunity has been a cornerstone of the feminist movement for the last 50 years. But there are still many unanswered questions. Is it more difficult for a victimizer to be "rescued" from a stable? Or can she adapt pretty quickly to a new lifestyle? Does being victimized by a woman make it more difficult for a victim to heal? These and other questions still need to be answered if we are to truly understand and prevent women from becoming victimizers.

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# My Experience as a Human Trafficking Financial Crime Investigator



**Joann Alicea**

My name is Joann Alicea and I am a Certified Financial Crimes Investigator (CFCI) and Certified Human Trafficking Investigator (CHTI). I came to understand about the horrific crime of Human Trafficking back in 2010. I was sitting at my desk cubicle when I received an email from an analyst who had flagged a Visa account for Human Trafficking that had many advertisement charges on Craigslist. I had heard of the Human Trafficking term and understood it to be very bad, but did not have an education background in understanding Human Trafficking and how underage girls and boys were being sold online via the worldwide web. This one incident is what began my Human Trafficking investigations and education. I became very focused in studying news articles on Human Trafficking and watching Human Trafficking News Coverage such as *Selling the Girl Next Door* on CNN. My job evolved into Human Trafficking Investigations in speaking to hundreds of customers who had transaction activity on their prepaid cards for Craigslist and then [Backpage.com](https://www.backpage.com) advertisements. I got an opportunity to write an article on my experience in investigating suspected Human Trafficking activity on prepaid cards which lead to my article being published entitled: *\$5.00 to Ruin the Life of Children and Women: Internet Sites used to launder money in promoting Prostitution/Human Trafficking*. My goal in writing this article was not to write an article of only facts but I was looking to write a CALL TO ACTION. This is when I came up with updating the United States Treasury Financial Crimes Enforcement Network known as FinCEN Suspicious Activity Report (SAR) for a Human Trafficking Checkbox category. Little did I know at that time that updating the SAR would take an act of Congress! I have the honor of being published in the 23rd Edition of the SAR Activity Review, Trends, Tips, and Issues FinCEN publication on page 67 of which my article is entitled: *FinCEN SAR Checkbox for Human Trafficking by Joann Alicea*. The FinCEN SAR (suspicious activity report) is a form used by all US Financial Institutions to report on Fraud, Money Laundering, and Terrorist Financing activity including Human Trafficking. The issue is that Human Trafficking is not DIRECTLY

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addressed on the SAR form with its own category checkbox so we have to use an OTHER box and write in Human Trafficking. My position is that this is NOT good enough. Human Trafficking which is largely crimes against children should not be thought of in such a little way as just OTHER. The Suspicious Activity Report MUST be updated for a Human Trafficking Checkbox category. What a lot of people do not realize is the effect that updating the Suspicious Activity Report (SAR) for Human Trafficking will do in such a POSITIVE way in helping in the fight to end Human Trafficking by simply following the money. The trickle-down effect of updating the FinCEN SAR for Human Trafficking will help in financial investigations education of this illicit crime. In addition to financial institutions hiring subject matter experts in Human Trafficking including Compliance Officers. Human Trafficking must be taken seriously for the horrible crime that it is and we must fight it 100% and not ½ way. My position is that Compliance Programs must address Human Trafficking in its own separate category with no longer putting Human Trafficking under the Money Laundering Category but calling out Human Trafficking on its own for the horrific crime against humanity that Human Trafficking is.

I worked with Congressman Ted Poe's office who sent a letter to FinCEN in 2015 requesting that the SAR be updated for Human Trafficking. Congressman Poe (TX) with Congresswomen Maloney's (NY) letter to FinCEN is the following:

The Financial Crimes Enforcement Network's Suspicious Activity Report (FinCEN SAR) plays an important role in the detection of various types of criminal conduct. Accordingly, the SAR is integral in putting a stop to serious criminal activity by simply following the money.

The current suspicious activity categories, which include fraud, money laundering, and terrorist activity, are sensible and important, but we write today to request that the SAR also includes Human Trafficking. As the agency's September 2014 guidance notes, financial institutions have a critical role to play in identifying and reporting transactions that may be related to Human Trafficking and Human Smuggling. Given the financial aspect of this crime, it is logical and critical to add this category. The addition will help to identify human traffickers and save victims as well as aid in the collection of much needed statistics of this widespread crime.

While many believe that Human Trafficking only happens overseas, it also happens in our own country using US financial institutions, perpetrated by both international and domestic criminals. Human Trafficking is a modern day slavery and involves the buying and selling of boys and girls, women and men, for sex or labor. The average age of a trafficked child in our country is 13 years old, and at least 100,000 children are at risk of trafficking in the USA each year. Cases of trafficking of men, women, and children have been reported in all 50 US states and the District of Columbia. Trafficked drugs and guns can only be sold once, but a human can be sold over and over again. Consequently, the criminal enterprise of Human Trafficking is financially lucrative for those involved. We must do everything we can to stop this crime, and the FinCEN SAR is one powerful tool that can be used to disrupt these networks and this is why I have been working since 2010 to update the United States Treasury FinCEN SAR for Human Trafficking. The good news is that US Treasury FinCEN released in February 2017 in the Federal Register a newly revised

Suspicious Activity Report (SAR) that includes a checkbox for Human Trafficking/Smuggling. Therefore in 2018, I am hoping and waiting for the new updated SAR form to be released that will address the crime of Human Trafficking in the form of the checkbox so that all financial crime investigators will now have an easier process to report on the horrific crime of Human Trafficking by simply following the money and report through the US Treasury FinCEN SAR process to Law Enforcement.

- My experience as I travel throughout the USA to Anti-Human Trafficking Conferences in being the ONLY financial crimes investigator at the conferences. I believe as time goes on this will change once the SAR is updated for Human Trafficking.
- My experience as manager of Human Trafficking Investigators Social Media Group on LinkedIn with Law Enforcement and our goal in keeping traffickers out of the group to create an environment that is SAFE for group members to post articles and comments about fighting Human Trafficking.
- My experience in being a national speaker on fighting Human Trafficking at both Financial Crimes industry conferences and Anti-Human Trafficking Conferences. I would like to see more people attend Anti-Human Trafficking Conferences as I noticed we are the minority and not the majority in attendance.

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# **Part IV**

## **Prevention**

# The SAFESCHOOLS Skills-Set Human Trafficking Resilience Program™



Kalyani Gopal and Sandra Demos-Kelley

## History

The SAFESCHOOLS Curriculum was developed by the author in collaboration with Sandra Demos-Kelley, Ed.D., who worked in the Chicago public schools for 30 years in the Inglewood area as an assistant principal and as a licensed clinical social worker. The purpose of developing the SAFESCHOOLS program has been to train children at a very young age to develop self-awareness, resilience, and ability to recover from trauma. While this is primarily a prevention program, the SAFESCHOOLS program is also meant to support recovery from traumatic events by teaching fundamental cognitive processes and skills. It was piloted in October 2015 in Michigan City, Indiana, on 31 high school students. All these students recognized and then reported that they had been approached for grooming in social media or in person. The pilot study highlighted the dire need to build coping and resilience skills in our school population. An important aspect of the curriculum is that it is not an awareness program in itself but rather a resiliency building program to protect youngsters from being vulnerable to victimization. Since many schools are hesitant about introducing the dangers of sex trafficking, this program circumvents these concerns while still accomplishing the need to protect youngsters.

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## The SAFESCHOOLS Workbook

In applying the SAFESCHOOLS workbook, trainers focus on increasing self-awareness and how to develop friendships that help youth grow and feel good about who they are. In each chapter students do activities centered around four areas:

- PREVENTION from finding yourself in unsafe relationships
- PROTECT yourself from unsafe relationships
- PROSECUTION if involved in unsafe situations
- PARTNERSHIPS with those with whom you can learn to feel safe and secure

## SAFESCHOOLS Curriculum

SAFESCHOOLS curriculum is based on ten modules for 2 hours each session for 10 weeks. Each module covers the following topics:

Feeling safe
Feeling important
Making friendships
Taking punches
Tough choices
Snapping back
Being self-aware
Hanging loose (social skills)
Zone of trust
Stand up, speak up

## Main Attributes of Resilient Youth

Research has shown that there are four main attributes of resiliency.<sup>1</sup> These are:

- Social competence
- Critical problem-solving skills
- Autonomy
- Sense of purpose

<sup>1</sup> Ref: <http://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/iscs13.pdf>.

## Preventive/Protective Factors

Protective factors serve the purpose of insulating children from environmental hazards and influences and prevent later onset mental disturbances. A review of research has shown two main factors that serve to prevent and protect youth from outside harm.

Protective factors are those that act as a shield during times of stress and anxiety and keep us from spiraling downwards into depression and sadness. Like a warm and cozy blanket on a cold night keeping the cold and chill at bay. There are four areas in your life where you have control and can develop a stronger sense of self-protection. These are in your families, school, with friends, and in your neighborhood where you live. (SAFESCHOOLS Curriculum, 2015).<sup>2</sup>

These are:

### *Family Connectedness*

Stronger family ties help keep us together especially as there may be times that are not easy. Youth who are closely connected and feel a part of their families with a sense of belongingness are less likely to engage in juvenile delinquency and anti-social behaviors.

### *School Connectedness*

Children who feel a strong sense of connectedness to their schools are at lower risk levels for isolation, alienation from peers, and higher levels of personal self-esteem and confidence. To be smart in this world and succeed, feeling connected to school is the single most important factor.<sup>3</sup> It reduces risk of mental illness and depression and its consequences, improves academic success, improves earning potentials later in life, and reduces chances that you will be vulnerable and be labeled “high risk.”

Ways to increase school connectedness include identifying a teacher as a mentor and involvement in school extracurricular activities such as clubs, sports, guilds, and events.

## SAFESCHOOLS Pilot

The SAFESCHOOLS Human Trafficking Resilience Program was piloted on October 1, 2015 on 31 high schoolers from Michigan City, Indiana. All 31 students reported being approached for sexual contact and friendship in some way. Twelve students were approached via social media, four on the street, one was followed back and forth on the street, and some were threatened with pictures, and the three boys who participated had no idea that they were being groomed. They viewed

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<sup>2</sup>Gopal & Demos-Kelley (2015).

<sup>3</sup>Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2009).



themselves as “protectors.” All the students recommended that a program such as SAFESCHOOLS would have helped them cope with their experiences and SHOULD be a part of their high school curriculum. Each module can be done in an hour or two of class time or in blocks of two to two and a half hours after school.

## SAFESCHOOLS Skills-Set Modules

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*Feeling Safe Module:* The focus is on identifying one’s own self and place within the environment. “What makes me feel safe and how can I feel safe?” are questions that are explored in this 2-hour module

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*Feeling Important Module:* Self-esteem is shaped by experiences of how we view ourselves in relationship to others who impact our lives and how they view and treat us. The goal of this module is developing a sense of personal importance and self-respect via hands on interactive exercises for students

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*Making Friendships Module:* “Social relationships and how to navigate these delicate relationships is definitely an art. Learning how to have positive influences in your life, and how to handle the negative forces within yourself and your friends can be difficult especially when the demand to conform is great. Between the different forms of social media, with the fear of being bullied, made fun of for taking an unpopular stand, having an opinion that is unique to you, and refusing to engage in certain “risk-taking” activities can leave a student quite lonely unless you have a strong social group that is supportive of you as a person. Which makes becoming socially competent vitally important to learn” (SAFESCHOOLS Curriculum, Skills Set 3). In this module students develop the basic building blocks of thinking about, recognizing, and discriminating between the different forms of friendships

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*Taking Punches Module:* Every day, individuals engage in social interactions at varying levels of power or “punches.” These can be emotional, physical, spiritual, or verbal, for example. The personal experience depends in part on whether the person has an external or internal loci of control. This concept and tools to develop internal versus external locus of control are taught during this module

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*Making Tough Choices Module:* Coping with stress, gangs’ involvement, family stress, school-related stress, and survival skills are addressed in this module. Students are given exercises in metacognitive thinking and decision-making abilities to train them to learn about the conscious and subconscious choices they make and the consequences of these actions

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*Snapping Back Module:* In this module, students learn skills related to assertiveness training versus aggressive actions. “Assertiveness Is taking control of your life whereas aggression is losing control over your body.” (SAFESCHOOLS Curriculum, Skills Set 6)

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*Being Self-Aware Module:* Raising awareness of why, how, and when we tend to act and learning about ourselves increases knowledge about strengths and weaknesses so that we are more aware of our surroundings. Part of feeling safe and protecting oneself includes being self-aware and taking responsibility for actions however misguided they might be

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*Hanging Loose (Social Skills) Module:* The goal of this module is to develop and enhance social adjustment and social engagement in a prosocial and healthy interactive style. The exercises focus on the above with vignettes, self-examination, and interactive role plays

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*Zone of Trust Module:* Each person has a zone of trust in terms of whom they trust and to what extent. Examining these relationships, the values, and our beliefs that make us choose these individuals is explored in this module. The goal is to develop strong support system for each student

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*Stand Up, Speak Up Module:* This final module is a synthesizing stage of the building blocks of social and emotional education that took place during the previous skills-sets. It can last from 2 hours to a time that all students feel secure in their SAFESCHOOLS education and ability to protect themselves

Each student leaves the program with a repertoire of new and old skills that are consolidated over the period of 10 weeks during the curriculum training period

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# Human Trafficking Prevention Efforts for Kids (NEST)



Yvonne G. Williams

When we talk about prevention, whether it is preventing more victims of sex trafficking, preventing youth from becoming pimps, traffickers, and johns—yes these are victims too—or preventing victims of any other types of abuse brought on by cultural expediency in the United States, we must talk about the roots and how to pull them out. While education is a starting point, it will not be enough to end the brutality of human trafficking in America and/or around the world. In order to rid our soul of the deficiencies that cause us to hate ourselves to such a degree that we abuse others in these forms, we need to ask some hard question. How does globalization affect the human condition? How does capitalism affect human trafficking? How can we transcend the pull to adapt to a world created by a manipulative mass media that is bent on stamping a bar code across our foreheads signifying our worth? While education is not the end-all, it is indeed the beginning point.

In earlier chapters we learned what human trafficking is by definition. We cannot repeat it enough. “Severe forms of trafficking in persons” is defined by Federal law thusly: “(a) sex trafficking in which a commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such act has not attained 18 years of age; or (b) the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery” [U.S.C. §7102(8)]. In addition, those who recruit minors (those under

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The original version of this chapter was revised. The correction to this chapter is available at [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-73621-1\\_33](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-73621-1_33)

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the age of 18 in the United States) into commercial sexual exploitation (or prostitution) violate federal anti-trafficking laws, even if there is no force, fraud, or coercion. In short, human trafficking is a form of modern slavery.

Education must include gender issues relating to a traditional patriarchal ideology, systemic race and class issues, healthy sexuality, and the like. It must include the effects that capitalism has had on our economics and how this method of generating income might be at the root of all of the issues connected to human trafficking.

## **What Is the Extent of Human Trafficking in the United States?**

Many believe human trafficking is transporting girls out of their home country into another or moving them from point A to point B to point C. While it can include a literal physical movement from country to country, state to state, or city to city (a small part), most victims are trafficked in their own cities, and some even remain living in their own homes. An unknown number of US citizens and legal residents are trafficked within the country for sexual servitude and forced labor. Contrary to a common assumption, human trafficking is not just a problem in other countries. Cases of human trafficking have been reported in all 50 states, Washington, D.C., and the US territories. Victims of human trafficking can be children or adults, US citizens or foreign nationals, and male or female ([NESTeducators.org](http://NESTeducators.org)).

The myth that victims are strictly female must be debunked. In some US cities, as high as 50% of victims are boys. Police officers tell us that boys are typically viewed as the perpetrators, particularly if they are already in the youth justice system and have committed an offense. And while, historically, women have been identified as the overwhelming majority of victims of human trafficking, recent studies have shown that male victims of trafficking have been severely overlooked (see the earlier chapter by Barron and Frost in this book). In a 2008 study by the John Jay College of Criminal Justice, of those who were sexually exploited in New York, 50% of victims were found to be boys from the United States, being trafficked domestically. Until recently anti-trafficking organizations have been focused on female victims, but that tide is now starting to turn. A 2013 study by the organization ECPAT discovered males are more likely to be arrested for shoplifting or other petty crimes without being aware that they are also being trafficked sexually (Trafficking in America Task Force, [traffickinginamericataskforce.org](http://traffickinginamericataskforce.org)).

## **How Does Human Trafficking Affect Our Schools?**

An alarming study revealed that the average age of entry into prostitution, which is often confused with sex trafficking, is 13, and there are 100,000 children (those under the age of 18) exploited through prostitution annually in the United States (Smith, Vardman, & Snow, 2009). Traffickers know that children are the most

vulnerable due to their age and a variety of other issues, and therefore, American schools are major targets for traffickers. These other issues that play a role in forming a youth population ripe for the pickings of cunning traffickers include children who are made vulnerable as a result of family conditions, those who have already been sexually abused and have a lower ability to defend themselves, and societal conditioning from mass media. Some traffickers have even been known to stand outside of our schools scanning the children for signs (red flags) or using other children to help recruit the next target.

Pimps or traffickers are known to prey on victims as young as 9 years old. Social media websites, telephone chat lines, after-school programs, shopping malls, bus depots, clubs, sports events, music events, and especially areas where children play without adult supervision are some of the many areas where traffickers seek victims. Boyfriending and girlfriendsing is a method used for recruitment, youth recruiting youth. We have heard from many survivors who considered themselves “not popular” and were befriended by someone who “made them feel special.” It is imperative that families and society work to instill a sense of intrinsic worth and value in our children.

The simple growth process of a teenager is a very real issue that needs to be talked about on a large scale. “Puberty, for example, is accompanied by physical changes and the onset of sexual maturity, but it also sparks new drives, impulses, emotions, motivations, changes in arousal, and behaviors and experiences that challenge an adolescent’s self-regulation abilities. Changes in arousal and motivation tend to outpace more slowly than developing self-regulation abilities—a situation scientists liken to starting the engine of a car with an inexperienced and unskilled driver behind the wheel. Much of the brain develops during the first few years of life, shaped by both biology and experience. However, important stages of development continue through a child’s adolescent and early adult years.” (<http://www.ocd.pitt.edu/Child-Development-and-the-Court-Justices-Look-to-Science-to-Determine-Children%E2%80%99s-Culpability/272/Default.aspx>).

Let’s look at some statistical data that shows us the extent of human trafficking and how American schools may be affected.

- As many as 300,000 children are at risk for sexual exploitation each year in the United States (Estes & Weiner, 2001).<sup>1</sup>
- In 2010, an estimated 12.3 million adults and children were in forced labor, bonded labor, and forced prostitution around the world; 56% of these victims were women and girls (US Department of State, 2010) (see footnote 1).
- In 2001, 49% of confirmed child sexual abuse URLs were hosted in North America.<sup>2</sup>
- The average price tag for an underage girl sold on the streets is \$400 per hour.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>US Department of Justice—Office of Justice Programs ([http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/newsroom/factsheets/ojpfhs\\_humantrafficking.html](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/newsroom/factsheets/ojpfhs_humantrafficking.html))

<sup>2</sup>International Watch Foundation (<http://www.iwf.org.uk/resources/trends>)

<sup>3</sup>Shared Hope International and the Washington Attorney General’s Office ([http://www.shared-hope.org/Portals/0/Documents/2011\\_NewWashingtonlaw.pdf](http://www.shared-hope.org/Portals/0/Documents/2011_NewWashingtonlaw.pdf))

- Children are sold an estimated 10–15 times a day (see footnote 3).
- One in four girls and one in six boys will be sexually assaulted by the age of 18 (Finkelhor, Hotaling, Lewis, & Smith, 1990).<sup>4</sup>
- The average age of entry into pornography and prostitution in the United States is 12.<sup>5</sup>
- The life expectancy of the commercially exploited “prostitute” is 7 years (see footnote 5).
- Of the approximately 800,000 children reported missing to law enforcement each year in the United States, approximately 350,000 of them are runaways (see footnote 5).
- Sixty percent of those forced into prostitution are runaways (see footnote 5).
- Approximately one in seven youth online (10–17 years old) received a sexual solicitation or approach over the Internet (Wolak, Mitchell, & Finkelhor, 2006).<sup>6</sup>
- Human trafficking and exploitation generate an estimated \$150 billion a year worldwide (<http://www.ilo.org/global/topics/forced-labour/lang%2D%2Den/index.htm>) (forced labor—includes sex trafficking—in the private economy).<sup>7</sup>
- Sex Trafficking generates \$99 billion a year worldwide (<http://www.humanrightsfirst.org/resource/human-trafficking-numbers>).<sup>8</sup>

<sup>4</sup>National Center on Domestic and Sexual Violence (<http://www.ncdsv.org/images/sexualassault-statistics.pdf>) Finkelhor et al. (1990)

<sup>5</sup>US Department of Justice—Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (<http://www.cops.usdoj.gov/html/dispatch/01-2011/FromTheField.asp>)

<sup>6</sup>National Center for Missing & Exploited Children ([http://www.missingkids.com/missingkids/servlet/PageServlet?LanguageCountry=en\\_US&PageId=2815](http://www.missingkids.com/missingkids/servlet/PageServlet?LanguageCountry=en_US&PageId=2815)) (Wolak et al. (2006), pp. 7–8, 33)

<sup>7</sup>International Labor Organization (<http://www.ilo.org/global/topics/forced-labour/lang%2D%2Den/index.htm>)

Almost 21 million people are victims of forced labor—11.4 million women and girls and 9.5 million men and boys.

Almost 19 million victims are exploited by private individuals or enterprises and over 2 million by the state or rebel groups.

Of those exploited by individuals or enterprises, 4.5 million are victims of forced sexual exploitation.

Forced labor in the private economy generates US\$ 150 billion in illegal profits per year.

Domestic work, agriculture, construction, manufacturing, and entertainment are among the sectors most concerned.

Migrant workers and indigenous people are particularly vulnerable to forced labor.

<sup>8</sup>Human trafficking earns profits of roughly \$150 billion a year for traffickers, according to the ILO. The following is a breakdown of profits, by sector:

<http://www.humanrightsfirst.org/resource/human-trafficking-numbers>\$99 billion from commercial sexual exploitation

\$34 billion in construction, manufacturing, mining, and utilities

\$9 billion in agriculture, including forestry and fishing

\$8 billion dollars is saved annually by private households that employ domestic workers under conditions of forced labor.

## What is Our Motivation to Address Sex Trafficking as a Current-Day Crisis?

The web of human trafficking has been spun by those whose greed cannot be quenched and will be fulfilled at any cost. They have an insatiable thirst for more and more. Their prey; both victim and victimizer. Those who have developed an unbridled sexual passion fueled by mass media (pornography, illicit advertising of corporate products, films, music), and/or who are vulnerable to the conditions that American culture has created in order to feel valued, are caught in the web: the supply and demand of sex trafficking. Should we fail to include the onslaught of men and boys as targets (the buyers), we will miss the mark of prevention. So, let's look at this first. The epidemic of modern-day slavery is a manifestation of a continued theme that, at its root level, is still a by-product of the class war and prejudices of old, driven by greed and a lack of value for one's self.

If we break down the number of victims and the population, we can see a broader picture. There are 27 million total victims, and 2 million of them live in the United States (US Department of State, 2011). There are an estimated 7 billion people worldwide which equates to 1 in 259 total people who are enslaved as victims of human trafficking. There are 312 million people in the United States which equates to 1 in 156 people who are enslaved as victims of human trafficking there. This gives us a greater perspective into the numbers; the United States, by far, is more enslaved than the rest of the world, which in turn, equates to more buyers.

Pedophilia is on the rise. According to an article in *The Washington Post*, "pedophilia in the U.S. is 'unprecedented' and has reached an almost 'epidemic level,' according to assistant director of the FBI's Criminal Investigative Division Joseph Campbell" (Boland, 2015). Further, "The level of pedophilia is just unprecedented right now," Campbell said. "We have so many cases constantly of individuals in all walks of life, from the very wealthy ... to all other levels engaged in child pornography, child exploitation ... it just seems to be almost at an epidemic level" (Boland, 2015).

About 14% (43,680,000) of American men said they paid for sex at some point in their lives, but just 1% (3,120,000) said they visited a prostitute in the past year (2010), according to the study, which is, in part, based on data collected as part of the General Social Survey by researchers at the National Opinion Research Center (Megan Gannon, News editor: <http://www.livescience.com/28169-men-who-use-prostitutes.html>). Hence, the demand, those who are buyers of sex are targets of traffickers as well. They seek out men and boys who are willing to pay for sex and target them via explicit marketing, pornography, and the like.

Studies also show that pornography is a slippery slope. A person looks at porn for the first time, then looks again, and a cycle of addiction ensues. Then some begin to act out because looking does not satisfy. They begin to purchase. The slope takes some further down into a sick perversion where they begin to want victims who are younger and younger, and the end takes them down a path of wanting violent sex experiences. Catherine Mackinnon, a professor at Harvard Law School,

says that “consuming pornography is an experience of bought sex” and thus, it creates a hunger to continue to purchase and objectify, and act out what is seen (*Mackinnon, Pornography as Trafficking, 34*). In a very literal way, pornography is advertising for trafficking, not just in general but also in the sense that traffickers and pimps use pornographic images of victims as specific advertising for their “products” (Farley, 2007).

Who are the buyers of sex? A 2011 study done by interviewing 3902 men reveals that those who purchased sex (white papers written by Lindsay Anton) come from the following ethnic groups: 72% Caucasian, 14% Hispanic, 8% African-American, 3% Asian, and 3% undisclosed. Anton’s subjects ranged from ages 14–87 and included fathers, sons, teens, doctors, pastors, priests, and more. The average frequency of patronage was seven times a week.

John Pace, a former male madam who ran high-end brothels in Cleveland, OH, and Detroit, MI, revealed through his work the ethnicity of men who purchased sex from his brothels between 2006 and 2009 (<http://johnpace.org/the-redemption-of-mr-madam/>). Of his 202 escorts, there were 186 Caucasians, 7 African-Americans, and 9 who identified as Other. Of the 3173 male customers, there were 3121 Caucasians, 5 African-Americans, and 47 who identified as Other; of the 17 female customers, there were 12 Caucasians and 5 who identified as Other. Pace stated, “I cannot comment on street level prostitution, however, as it relates to escorts (online prostitution). African-Americans and Latinas have trouble finding dates except in select cities like Atlanta, Dallas/Fort Worth, Charlotte, and Chicago where there’s a population of black and brown professional men. In fact, a number of gentlemen’s clubs don’t hire women of color and in many cases those that will hire very small numbers.”

Taking it to a higher level, we can see from some results from the US Department of Justice, Bureau of Statistics (1997 Sex Offenses and Offenders Study.1997). RAINN is the acronym for Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (<https://rainn.org/get-information/statistics/sexual-assault-offenders>).

- The average age of a rapist is 31 years old (see footnote 2).
- 52% are white (see footnote 2).
- 22% of imprisoned rapists report that they are married (see footnote 2).
- Juveniles accounted for 16% of forcible rape arrestees in 1995 and 17% of those arrested for other sex offenses (see footnote 2).
- In 1 in 3 sexual assaults, the perpetrator was intoxicated—30% with alcohol, 4% with drugs (see footnote 3).
- In 2001, 11% of rapes involved the use of a weapon—3% used a gun, 6% used a knife, and 2 % used another form of weapon (see footnote 2).
- 84% of victims reported the use of physical force only (see footnote 2).

Who are the victims and what made them vulnerable to traffickers? Studies show that prostitution is human trafficking since a vast majority of those selling their bodies are not doing so by choice; instead, they are forced. Therefore, we can conclude that the industry of prostitution is indeed sex trafficking by definition.



Estimates of the prevalence of incest among prostitutes (prostituted people) range from 65% to 90%. The Council for Prostitution Alternatives, Portland, Oregon, Annual Report in 1991 stated that “85% of prostitute/clients reported history of sexual abuse in childhood; 70% reported incest. The higher percentages (80–90%) of reports of incest and childhood sexual assaults of prostitutes come from anecdotal reports and from clinicians working with prostitutes” (as cited in <http://www.rapeis.org/activism/prostitution/prostitutionfacts.html>). The vast majority of prostituted people are not there by choice, hence paid rape. Many of these victims have told their “johns” they were being forced, yet the men do nothing to help them, rather continue to get what they paid for. Does familial rape equate to pedophilia? Yes.

We cannot fail to look at youth caught in gangs across America who are included in the industry of human trafficking. An exceptional study, which was published in the Protection Project Journal of Human Rights and Civil Society and titled *Sold for Sex: The Link between Street Gangs and Trafficking in Persons*, gives a thorough overview of how street gangs are involved in sex trafficking (Lederer, 2010). For example, Lederer states:

Today, gangs use a variety of methods to recruit women for trafficking, ranging from romancing and manipulating young girls to marketing over the Internet. Often, one gang member recruits a new girl by giving her expensive gifts, taking her on dates, and taking her to gang-hosted parties where drugs and alcohol are plentiful. Later, the boy who recruited her can use her feelings of indebtedness to manipulate her into coerced commercial sex acts. According to one expert, gang members use their knowledge of a girl’s insecurities to make her feel vulnerable, allowing one gang member to manipulate her more easily by showing her affection. Girls are lured and enticed into the gang and then coerced, threatened, and intimidated into prostitution. It is the price they pay for love and affection (p. 6).

The horrendous abuse that children endure as a result of being trafficked, coupled with the overwhelming costs to society in finance, criminal activity, and loss of human productivity, makes sex trafficking a modern-day crisis and one of the greatest tragedies of all times. The cost to society in human capital is so staggering we can barely understand it from a general overview. Many youths who are trafficked do not complete high school, although some do continue to attend school while being trafficked as was the case of Teresa Flores (Flores & Wells, 2010).

Simply from a fiscal perspective, an alarming yet eye-opening study revealed that dropouts from the class of 2008 in the state of Tennessee will cost the state almost \$7.3 billion in lost wages over their lifetimes, that is, one state, one year. Imagine the cost to our entire country in the next 50 years. Now add to that the cost of maintaining homeless shelters, safe houses, rescue and law enforcement, prison and incarceration, legal, and psychological, therapeutic, and medical care. These are very real costs to our country and across the world.

What do we lose as a culture, as a human family? What is the greatest cost of all? The loss of human talent and resources. When we add up the costs—an impossible feat—we can conclude that the cost of prevention is far less than the cost of restoration. The general population still needs a tremendous amount of education, espe-

cially on the root causes mentioned in this chapter. So much of society still believes that pornography is a victimless crime, that video games are harmful to their children, and that watching violent and sexually explicit movies is harmful to not only adults but our children, yet research proves the contrary.

## **What Approach Do We Need in Order to Prevent More Victims of Human Trafficking?**

Heather Tuininga, founder of the National Educators to Stop Trafficking, conducted research on the demand side of human trafficking. In her analysis of the field data, Tuininga found that 74–86% of the men who purchase sex did so for the first time before the age of 25 and concluded that if we can prevent boys from purchasing, we can end the abuse for the next generation. Therefore, beginning to educate boys at a very young age is a key to prevention; the most agreed-upon approach by anti-human trafficking advocates across the nation.

The National Educators to Stop Trafficking (NEST) created a mission that would empower and equip youth in America with the knowledge and skills to stand up against sex trafficking and ultimately create a culture that is free of gender-based violence, the goal being to get human trafficking prevention education in every school and youth organization in the United States. The tool would be a comprehensive clearinghouse that serves to empower and equip educators by providing youth-focused prevention resources to those committed to eliminating sex trafficking in their communities. Below are some suggested ideas that we can incorporate into our prevention programs:

1. Strengthen families:
  - (a) 95% of runaways come from fatherless homes; 87% of youth with behavioral problems come from fatherless homes; 75% of high school dropouts come from fatherless homes.
  - (b) Strategic work must be done to strengthen the family unit. This is the womb of development for every single person on earth, and what happens within this unit affects us all.
2. Mass media approach during a high season of television participation—PSAs to run on prime time television and on social media outlets:
  - (a) Survivors to reach youth—“This is how it happened to me”
  - (b) Fathers speaking out to strengthen families
  - (c) Youth to reach youth—it’s just not cool
  - (d) NFL and other sports figures to speak to youth/to men
  - (e) Representatives from the music and entertainment industry creating PSA

3. NGOs need legislative support for developing strategic plans with resource support for NGOs working on the ground.
4. States need to make human trafficking a platform and create policies and ultimate legislation to address human trafficking from a prevention and restorative stance for victims:
  - (a) Make human trafficking prevention curriculum mandatory in all American schools.
  - (b) Move from a punitive system of justice to a restorative model.
  - (c) Expungement of criminal records for victims forced to sell drugs, serve as recruiters, etc.
  - (d) Retry convicted felons based on the child culpability studies as a means of supporting their restoration process.
5. Churches, synagogues, mosques, and faith organizations:
  - (a) Create and implement after-school programs with activities and meals for those kids whose parents work.
  - (b) Deal with the abundance of their congregations involved in pornography (men and women) by offering support groups for healing and restoration, including accountability programs.
  - (c) Pastors supporting pastors who are dealing with pornography issues (47% of Christians say they have a problem of porn in their home). 72% male and 28% female visit pornography sites.
  - (d) Youth pastors create programming and implement curriculum to teach their youth about the realities and dangers of human trafficking.
6. Schools:
  - (a) Utilize the existing resources such as the National Educators to Stop Trafficking web-based platform of evidence-based data, resources, and curriculum for K-12.
  - (b) Create disclosure protocols to enable victims a safe journey through restoration including the empowerment to endure court proceedings. Basic disclosure protocol should include:
    - Protocol—Ask your principal or organization director about current reporting protocol for other issues. If a reporting protocol does not exist, one should be created and sent to the educators in your school.
    - Training—Training on the subject is ideal for all school administrators, educators, and youth leaders (even if they do not implement a curriculum in their classroom or organization) since disclosures can occur with anyone. Also, it's important for key school/youth organization employees to understand the different types of trafficking and sexual exploitation that exist (gang, familial, survival, pimp).

- State legislation—Review your state’s laws on human trafficking. There may be a mandated aspect of disclosure that you need to be aware of.
- Disclosures—It requires a great deal of courage for a youth to disclose. How the child is received and how his or her story is heard are very important. Some of the youth who disclose may have to disclose information about a peer, and that may be extremely problematic for them. Before implementing a curriculum, have a school/organization plan of action including appropriate questions to ask a trafficking victim or youth who is being sexually exploited (your local anti-trafficking organization can help with this), knowing the appropriate reporting and confidentiality structures in place, knowing where the victim should go next, etc.

## Results from Utilizing Prevention Efforts

While the electronic platform of human trafficking prevention education for educators is not the be-all and end-all, it is a major step in offering a source for educators in American schools and youth program as well as concerned individuals in any field including law enforcement, social services, church and faith organizations, and government.

Finding actual results from prevention education programs takes years of record keeping at an evidence-based level. Since the anti-human trafficking movement has only been engaged on a collaborative national stage for less than two decades, and curriculum has only been developed in the past few years, that data is simply not available to include here. However, the curriculum providers who have been working in the area of education in schools and communities across the country have supplied some encouraging success stories that prove prevention education may be thwarting the influx of potential victims.

## Success Stories from Curriculum Providers on the NEST Electronic Platform

**Prevention Curriculum Helps Trafficked Youth Begin the Path to Restoration** A21 Campaign: *Bodies Are Not Commodities* program was presented. “I had one of the boys approach me later to ask if a certain ‘hypothetical’ scenario was sex trafficking. I said that it would be considered trafficking, and he shared with me that it had happened several years ago to him and his sister. I was able to report this. (The trafficker is already in prison for life for other crimes.) He now has a name for what happened to him and can talk to his therapist about what happened.” Even though the trauma that happened with this young boy and his sister was not prevented, they were able to seek support and help to begin the restoration process.

**Prevention Curriculum Changes Gender-Biased Attitudes** *Chicago Alliance Against Sexual Exploitation (CAASE): Empowering Young Men to End Sexual Exploitation.* I (Caleb Probst) was asked to come into a high school in Chicago to work with their ninth grade boys. The school indicated that they were troubled by the behavior exhibited in the halls by some of the boys toward some of the girls and thought the boys would benefit from going through our program. At the start of the first day, I asked the boys to write down words they would use to describe “a prostitute.” The majority of the responses were words like “slut,” “hoe,” “THOT” (that hoe out there), “easy,” “nasty,” “dirty,” and “worthless.” Many of these words were the same words that the administration reported hearing directed at the girls in the school. At the end of the four-session program, I asked the same question. This time, however, the responses were words like “abused,” “raped,” “alone,” “desperate,” “depressed,” and “victim.”

As these young men went through our four-session program, they had an opportunity to examine the constructs of masculinity and think critically about how they influence their own decision-making. They also had a chance to consider how their behavior, and the behavior of their peers, can impact their community. One student wrote, “I’ve learned that men treat women like crap, they use them as an object... I know that this puts girls in danger of becoming a prostitute.” He and his classmates began to see that objectifying women and degrading them with words like “slut” can have serious consequences. When asked how girls end up in prostitution, many responded with “they had a traumatized life,” “they had a rough childhood,” or “[society says] they have less power.”

Now, not every girl who is objectified and degraded will end up being commercially sexually exploited, and these young men acknowledged that. But as one student said, “we [never] know her story.” At the end of the final session, I asked the young men if there was anything that they would do differently now, based on what they had learned during the program. The two most common responses were “I will stop saying words like ‘thot’” and “I am going to respect women more.”

**Prevention Programs Make Advocates Out of Youth** *Human Trafficking Awareness Partnerships’ ARTREACH* program. Jane Doe is a 10-year-old first-generation Haitian-American girl. She is the eldest of three sisters. She attended two ARTREACH programs in the summer of 2014, one through her church and one through a summer program. As part of the ARTREACH program, we not only inform the participants about human trafficking, but we strive to ignite creativity and empower the children to be leaders.

Jane Doe is a reserved, shy little girl, quiet and keeps to herself. After attending the last session of ARTREACH, we saw visible changes in her demeanor. In October 2014 we invited her and some of our summer ARTREACH participants to attend our ribbon cutting ceremony for our new location at United Way. To our surprise, we saw Jane guiding a tour of attendees through our building. She was showing the different artwork and explaining her two projects. The attendees were delighted with her knowledge and pride in her work. Jane Doe has since attended other public

showing of the paintings and has been a peer educator. Recently we heard that she was chosen to attend a 4-day conference in Washington, D.C., through People to People ambassadors on October 2015. She mentioned her work with the ARTREACH program as part of her application.

**Prevention Curriculum Is Needed (and Desired) by Youth** *Deceptions: The Aware* program exposes the lures of child sex trafficking and internet dangers. I'll always remember the 14-year-old girl coming up to me after a presentation with tears in her eyes. She waited for the crowd of other students to leave before approaching me. She looked up to me and said "I want to thank you for coming to our school and sharing this program with us." She went on to say "I was pulled into this (trafficking) last year and had horrible things happen to me. I'm only here because my parents and police fought so hard to find and rescue me. Girls *have* to know this is going on in our community...so thank you for taking the time to come to our school."

We are constantly hearing stories of young people being approached by strangers on the Internet, malls, or on the streets of our city. Students now know what the "grooming" process looks like, so they can recognize it when they are being set up or manipulated. We must prepare our students with the education and provide the support they need to be protected and *aware* of this horrific assault on our young people!

**Prevention Curriculum Changes Peer to Peer Attitudes** *Fair Girls: Tell Your Friends*. We were teaching at a middle school with seventh and eighth graders. The students were loud and talkative, especially one girl, \*Maya, who was about 11 years old. Maya continued to blame the victim in the Trip Uptown Story, and she said "Some girls get raped because they are asking for it." This type of backlash is nothing new; however, this time we were hearing it from a girl who was barely 80 lbs. and the only sixth grader in our class. The next day, at the end of module 4, Maya slipped us a note telling us she was raped by her mother's boyfriend when she was 6. We made a report with Maya and notified the counselor. Maya started seeing the school counselor regularly.

**Prevention Curriculum Is Praised by Educators** *Frederick Douglass Family Initiatives* (Cassata High School, Fort Worth, TX): Cassata student Leslie said, "I would like to thank the FDFI foundation for teaching me that slavery is still alive, and that human trafficking is a bad issue that needs to be addressed and conquered. I understand now why we have modern day abolitionists to work on these problems."

Benedictine Academy, Elizabeth, NJ: We absolutely loved your curriculum and plan on enhancing our work with your plan. We had a meeting with our principal and will be meeting this week with all the staff regarding the implementation of the educational material.

Prologue Early High School, Chicago, IL (100 Days to Freedom project): Dear colleagues at the Frederick Douglass Family Initiatives, I'm writing to let you know

that “What is Freedom?” by Prologue Early College High School, created for the National Video Challenge of the Frederick Douglass Family Foundation has won the 1st Place Trophy for Best Film on an Issue of Urgent Concern in the Chicago Youth Community Film Festival, taking place on Thursday, June 6th, 2013 at the Chicago Cultural Center.

**Prevention Program Designed for the Arts *Human Trafficking Awareness Partnerships*.** *ARTREACH*, Nola Theiss, Director: We’ve conducted our ARTREACH program over 25 times in schools, after-school programs and summer camps over the last 4 years. We’ve been asked to return to facilities every year for 3 years. We’ve been asked to work at 4 of the local Boys and Girls Clubs in our area (South, Florida) as news of the success of our program spreads from one to another. The script of play that was written at a Magnet School for the Arts 4 years ago has been used by numerous groups around the country. We have signed formal memorandums of understanding with a number of agencies to ensure that we will return with our program on a regular basis. What we are most gratified by is the fact that a number of students have gone to school or facility counselors afterwards to seek help as they self-identified as trafficking victims. (Refer to the Disclosure Protocol for suggested guidelines on the NEST website).

This summer, 2014, we are conducting six ARTREACH programs. We are using this opportunity to test some pilot programs for boys and trying different models at summer camps. In some programs, the boys and girls are together through the entire five sessions. In others, they are together for the introductory session and the final session only. In others, the classes’ format is different, but the material is the same for both boys and girls. Pre- and post-student evaluations will be used as well as facility staff and HTAP staff, and volunteer’s evaluations and observations will be considered. We recognize the need for education and awareness for boys, and we are working on determining which approaches are the most effective.

We began our program in 2010, averaging 4–5 programs a year. This summer, we have been asked to conduct six programs, mirroring the growth of demand for the program. We have also conducted seven Train the Trainer programs so as to spread the program not only in SW Florida but also in Savannah, GA, and neighboring communities, Milwaukee and Tampa. We have created a template of the program that is updated to show the changes in the program as circumstances change, allowing others to see the way the program can adapt and to learn from our experiences.

**Prevention Curriculum Comments from Youth** *iEMPATHIZE: Empower Youth*. After participating in the Empower Youth curriculum, students wrote:

- “This has completely changed the way I see the world.”
- “What is happening to those girls...isn’t their fault. It’s not fair. I want to know what is being done to stop this.”
- “This can help me find ways to be safe.”
- This workshop was really great, and I am grateful that I can receive this information because many others do not receive it.”

- “Very interesting. Want to know more to get more involved.”
- “Thank you for spreading the word in this.”
- “Thank you! This really opened my eyes.”

**Prevention Curriculum Truly Prevented a Youth from Becoming a Victim** Prince William County Schools: *Project Hope*. The first three are student/teacher responses, and the last one is a story of a student that was “wrapped around” by our partners and I to ensure that services were implemented.

Student response 1: “When I first heard this lesson on sex trafficking I was shocked and sad because I didn’t know it happened where I lived. It is terrible to know that people my age get convinced into doing these things. Thanks to the lesson I know what I need to do about sex trafficking. I know what to do if something like this happens to my friends, family, or even myself.”

Student response 2: “The presentation really helped me understand what sex trafficking is. It makes me very upset seeing that kids my age are being influenced to become a prostitute. This meeting helped me understand how kids are influenced and how I can see it coming.”

Teacher responses: “Your program is instrumental in stopping the process by making our students aware of the process and its warning signs. We would be honored if you came back next year.”

Due to community collaborative efforts with partners, a 13-year-old middle school student was identified as a potential trafficking victim through family and gang control. Contact and case management have been initiated by the project coordinator. This involves tracking, visitation, and service implementation. The student was recently released from the Juvenile Detention Center (JDC) and was re-enrolled in a new middle school. The project coordinator was able to provide a seamless transition with supports in place within the school. The student is also now receiving trauma-based in-home services. The student’s response to the team involved, which includes the project coordinator, a detective, and a counselor, was “you guys saved my life.”

**Prevention Curriculum Empowers Youth with Protection Tools** *Prevention Project*: “Once I learned about the issue of teen human trafficking, I wanted to help! The things we learned in class through the Prevention Project lets you know how to protect yourself and others and also how to make a difference!” ~Prevention Project Student, Henrico, VA

I didn’t know a lot about teen human trafficking or how serious an issue it is before the Prevention Project program. After attending all the lessons, the Prevention Project really made the issue real for me. Now, I try to tell as many people as I can, whenever possible. ~Prevention Project Student, Henrico, VA

The Prevention Project program was easy to teach. I had everything I needed in the program to properly relay information to the students. Classroom discussion was lively and the students really responded well to the content of the curriculum, learning the realities of human trafficking nationally and locally. ~A. Bryant, Teacher, Henrico, Virginia



## Conclusion

We have heard from survivors of sex trafficking (before it was called sex trafficking) as far back as the 1950s. Striving to understanding the who, what, where, why, and when of this crime is paramount in the creation of cutting-edge resources that will give the tools to work toward completely eradicating it. The end will come when we implement strategic programming infused with curriculum and resources for educators in the classroom, in youth groups, in churches, and throughout our communities. We will gain the data we need from the bold and courageous survivors on all three sides of this issue: supply, distribution, and demand. Additionally, working toward equality in every facet of our lives will combat the deadly forces that traffickers, those who are behind this egregious crime against humanity, have infiltrated into American society and across the world. We have created a culture that falsely presents the idea that humans are products and are necessary to lining the pockets of those who are filled with greed and super-egos. Our human rights at times have created a double-edged sword, giving us the right to do with our lives what we will, while conversely giving us the right to exploit others, whether through subtle or blatant means. Lastly, the current response to the human trafficking prevention efforts for kids is extremely favorable. Now, anti-human trafficking advocates are at a place where we need to move from education and awareness to action in order to make lasting changes. What that looks like will be determined by those working in this field of activism. If we all work to do our part by becoming educated and transforming our own understanding about the value of each soul, we will begin to see a reversal of statistical data and eventually an end to human trafficking. It will take a greater understanding of the root causes and viewing this issue as the challenge of our times.

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# Transportation, Hospitality, and Trafficking



Dugal Trimble, Nancy Rivard, and Kalyani Gopal

The SAFECHR Global Task Force on Human Trafficking was formed in October 2016 during the SAFE 2016 Global Conference on Human Trafficking. Within this task force, a Transportation and Hospitality Task Force was developed under the chairmanship of Mr. Dugal Trimble, a former trucker and founder of The Truckers Missing Child Project, joined by Airline Ambassadors International founder, Ms. Nancy Rivard, and Senator Karen McConnaughay, the Illinois senator from District 33 who has been instrumental for passing a legislation to create a statewide coalition for human trafficking. In the following sections, Truckers against Human Trafficking is written by the first author, Mr. Dugal Trimble, followed by Airlines against Human Trafficking written by Ms. Nancy Rivard.

In the following narrative, Mr. Dugal Trimble, the pioneer of the Transportation and Hospitality Task Force, addresses trucking, hospitality, and trafficking.

## Truckers Against Human Trafficking

There are a lot of great organizations involved in the fight against human trafficking. Each one has a unique mission or focus ranging from education to training, legislation, rescue operations, and victim resources. It is very important that while these organizations operate separately from one other, they continue to work together toward the same goal—ending human trafficking. Over the past few years,

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the trucking industry has made great progress in the fight against human trafficking. Founded in 2009, the organization “Truckers Against Trafficking” has educated hundreds of thousands of truck drivers and trucking industry personnel. They have built several coalitions and helped to form legislation against human trafficking. In July 2016, Ohio was the first state in the United States to require all new CDL applicants to receive TAT’s training. This is an important step going forward in the fight against trafficking, and other states are now beginning to follow in Ohio’s footsteps.

I personally was “reeducated” by TAT in 2009 and began to pass along their wallet cards to other truck drivers and the public during my travels. I was shocked to find what I had seen out there on the road over the years, but did not know what I was seeing. I couldn’t help but think back to all the young women that had come knocking on my truck door at night in the truck stops and rest areas. Were they victims? If I had known what was going on, could I have helped them? As I did more research on human trafficking, I found that runaway children were at a high risk of being caught up in human trafficking. I pondered this realization for some time and finally decided that there needed to be some type of focus on this spectrum of trafficking. In 2012, I founded the Truckers Missing Child Project. Our mission is to utilize social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter to relay important information about missing children and AMBER Alerts to US truck drivers and the general public. We also conduct missing children awareness campaigns and network with other missing groups around the United States. Since the founding of my group, we have built a social media following of more than 12,500 people, and our average post reach on Facebook alone is 2000 views. Imagine how fast this important info can travel from coast to coast, merely minutes.

In October of 2016, I was invited to speak at the SAFECHR Global Human Trafficking Conference in Washington, D.C. During this conference, I was also asked to sit on a transportation roundtable discussion. It was during this conversation that I proposed building a committee of the already existing SAFECHR Task Force that focused on combining the transportation industry and the hospitality industry in the fight against human trafficking. Today we are working on building this committee on a regional level in the Chicago/Northwest Indiana area. Future plans are to take it to a national and global level.

Imagine for just a moment that you are a trafficker and you must move your victims on a semi-regular basis to avoid getting caught. What resources will you use along your travels? Will you rent a car? Will you stay at a hotel or motel? Where will you eat? If you are driving, will you have to stop for gas? All of these things involve the hospitality industry. Now imagine having almost every employee at these establishments trained to recognize the signs of a possible human trafficking victim. It will make the traffickers uneasy and not want to go there. If we can get everyone on board and trained to remain in an observe and report mode, then the traffickers have lost their resources when traveling. Now add the transportation industry to that mix, not just trucks but taxi cabs, planes, trains, and busses as well. Now you have just added more watchful eyes to the highways and travel routes. Relinquishing the

trafficker's resources when transporting victims is the goal of the SAFECHR Transportation and Hospitality Task Force on human trafficking.

As I stated earlier, everyone must work together to fight against this evil. All these wonderful organizations are out there working hard and doing great work. However, until the time comes that everyone can come together on this issue, we will never eliminate human trafficking. When we work together as one, we can build a huge fire together, rather than the individual campfires that are currently burning. It will be then and only then that our work will be the fuel of the forest fire that completely eliminates human trafficking for good.

## **Airlines Against Trafficking**

Nancy Rivard founded Airline Ambassadors International in 1996 which began as a small group of flight attendants (FAs) using their flight benefits to help children. Her goal was to inspire the public to follow our example, "Traveling to Make a Difference." Here is her story in her own words:

Each month we escort children for life-changing surgeries and hand deliver aid to orphanages. Every month we saw vulnerable children, but we didn't know about human trafficking until we saved a little girl in Cambodia in 2009. I was contacted by Deborah Sigmund of Innocents at Risk about the issue of human trafficking and invited her to join our Mission coordinators training in Miami in July of 2009. We were all appalled about the issue and shocked that traffickers move their victims frequently using all forms of transportation—including airlines. We as flight attendants and frequent travelers could play a critical role to detect and discern trafficking incidents. A simple phone call to report such incidents, could save lives.

## **Cambodia: How It All Began**

On our humanitarian mission to Cambodia the following month, part of our team was traversing the poor neighborhoods near Angkor Wat. The simple wood houses lined the dirt road, and they were all built on stilts to protect them from monsoon flooding. We came upon a little girl who looked to be about 3 years old. She was stark naked—she had no clothes, no hair, and no name. She had used red marking pen to try and draw clothes on her own body. We had nothing to give her, but a small orange balloon, and she seemed pleased that someone showed her attention. A haggard face of a woman that looked to be about 40 appeared in the door of the shack. We asked where the little girl lived and what her name was. In broken English the woman standing in the doorway replied: "She live there—under house... her mother work for Cheng Vorn at karaoke bar. Please take her... we have no money I have three children already and can't feed her. She have no name. Cheng say mother went to Pnom Pen."

We looked at the little girl scrounging on the ground for crumbs with the chickens and thought, but where could we take her? We turned to go, and as we looked back, the little girl lifted her hand to say goodbye and thank you. How could we leave her? We scooped up the little one and got her to a local doctor who examined her bloated belly and lice-filled head and stated “Good thing you got her here now, before malnutrition and poverty did irreversible damage.”

Through local friends working in the area, we placed her in a house with a loving foster family and decided to call her “Somnang” which means “lucky” in Khmer. She wasn’t trafficked, but her mother probably was, and if we hadn’t intervened, she may have ended up as a trafficking victim as well.

Next our team stopped in Bangkok where we clearly saw the dark reality of human trafficking in the infamous night markets where girls are brought in from the villages to provide sex for American tourists. That was it; as Airline Ambassadors president, I knew we could not ignore this issue and we had to get involved.

## **Travel Industry Can Help (Dominican Republic)**

I invited Deborah Sigmund to join us on our next mission to the Dominican Republic, where we had delivered clothing, shoes, and school and hygiene supplies to children in local orphanages, as we do every month, but during this trip, we also used the time to discuss the reality of human trafficking. It was not only happening in Cambodia and Thailand; the statistics demonstrated that it was happening all over the world. Our humanitarian team of 12 promised each other to be aware on our flights as we left the country. Amazingly, we correctly identified trafficking on two of our flights home.

Patty McPeak, Chairman of the Board of Airline Ambassadors International, left a day early from our mission trip. She got settled in the Delta Air Lines boarding lounge in Santo Domingo, and the man next to her was traveling with a little girl. “What a cute little girl,” Patty said, “How old is she?” “I think she is two,” the man replied. “Well she looks more like a four-year-old to me,” said Patty. She smiled at the little girl and then asked, “Where is her mother?” The girl looked like she was going to answer, but the man got nervous. “You sure ask a lot of questions Lady,” he said, followed by “Hey, could you do me a favor, could you watch my bags for a minute?” “Sure,” Patty said and watched as the man acted “odd” as they walked off together. Five minutes later, the man returned carrying the little girl, who was collapsed and limp. In horror Patty thought, “He is stealing this little girl and has just drugged her!” The man wouldn’t look at her as he grabbed his bag and walked to the boarding gate.

Patty frantically told the flight attendant what she thought. The flight attendants spoke to each other and said, “Even if you are right, what can we do about it?” Patty said, “I’ll tell you what you can do—Ask the pilot to use the air phone to radio ahead to Atlanta and alert Customs that the man in 14c may be trafficking the girl in 14b.” The flight attendants did so, and Patty watched closely as the pair deplaned

and went through Customs and saw the man pulled into the briefing room. When she got to the Customs agent, she asked what happened, and the agent said he couldn't say; then he leaned in close and said, "Ma'am—what I can tell you is you made a good call. Thank you for caring enough to get involved."

The following day most of the group left, and six travelers had tickets on JetBlue to New York. We had all promised each other to be observant, and one of our team, Sridhar Chillara, noticed a little Dominican boy and girl (about 9 and 11) with an American man waiting while a woman checked in. He noticed the little girl was crying. He wandered over and dropped his passport, so he could bend down and speak to her. "What's wrong honey?" he asked. The man moved over right away and answered for her—"She's just sad to be leaving her friends." Sridhar then asked, "Where are you going?" and the man replied, "We are going to New York City where I am from." He responded, "Oh that will be a nice vacation—you must take the kids to Canal St. They will love it," to which the man replied, "This is not a vacation—this is permanent. And never heard of Canal St."

Sridhar knew right then and there that the man was lying. He was not from New York City, or he would have known about Canal Street. Sridhar rushed back to our group and said "Something is wrong... see the two kids with the American couple... lets watch them." Suddenly, a Custom's official said to the "family," "These are the kids right?" and the man nodded and replied, "Yes, yes," and they high fived each other as the Customs official said, "Come, come children, come this way, I shall escort your family."

By this time our whole team was onboard and watching closely. They noticed that once through the first checkpoint, the man disappeared, and the two children were just in the boarding line with the woman behind them. Daniel Sheth, another leader from our team, got in line behind them and as if in friendly conversation said, "Where are you and the children going?" "Boston," the woman answered, "We are going to Boston."

Daniel, Sridhar, and our team were now fully convinced there that this situation was not "right" and alerted the flight attendants. The flight attendants walked by the woman and children and noticed the girl was still crying and the boy had bruises on his arms. "We don't know what to do if you are correct," said the JetBlue flight attendants, "What shall we do?" Daniel replied, "Alert the pilots to radio JFK Airport about the woman and kids and let them know the seat numbers." The flight attendants were hesitant but followed the advice, and the pilots radioed in an alert.

Once at JFK our team got in the Customs line behind the woman and two children and watched as they went through and disappeared into the airport. Daniel asked "Did you get our message from the plane?" and the Customs agent answered, "Yes, we received the tip from the pilot, but they had all the paperwork in place and we had to let them go. This appears to be an inside job. However, we are sending an undercover agent to follow them." According to follow-up ICE reports, this first tip led to the bust of a pornography ring in Boston, saving 82 children.

Our same team, by the end of the month, had identified trafficking on two more airlines which totaled *four* airlines—Delta Air Lines, JetBlue, US Airways, and American Airlines—in 1 month. I knew as a flight attendant that all airlines have

infrastructure to train both pilots and flight attendants, and this issue could be included in annual emergency procedure training, saving thousands of lives. We worked closely with the Department of Homeland Security, Customs and Border Protection, and Department of Transportation to develop the first industry-specific training on human trafficking awareness for the airline industry.

It just takes paying attention to the world around you and knowing what to do if you see something that does not feel right. We teach people to be observant of the world around them and to notice young women and men traveling alone or someone who appears to be under the control of another. Our FA job requires us to talk and be friendly with passengers, so we have a perfect excuse to ask targeted questions such as “Why are you coming to LA?”; “Oh you were offered a job in the movies or in television?”; and “Do you know the person meeting you?”

You see, a Customs agent has about a minute to make an assessment of a passenger, but a flight attendant has 1–8 hours. Our trained FAs have correctly identified dozens of cases and reported hundreds of others. A flight attendant comes in contact with about 24,000 passengers each year, so the training of frontline staff to recognize and report human trafficking is essential.

We made wallet cards with the number to report, but many times these were lost. My husband Dave saw a trafficking incident in the Philadelphia airport and was unable to find our wallet card, but he had his phone. It gave him the idea to develop our TIP Line app which is free on Google Play Store and iTunes and connects you directly to the phone numbers you need.

If we see something and do not report it, we are as guilty as the trafficker; therefore, we teach frontline personnel that their duty is to recognize and report incidents as soon as they see them, but to *never* accuse anyone of trafficking or try to rescue a victim, because this is a very dangerous business.

Most people are unaware that there are more slaves in the world today than there was in the United States in 1860. This is an issue linked to drugs, weapons, and terrorism. And for the airlines, it is an issue of cabin safety as well. The 2017 report from Walk Free Foundation, International Labour Organization and International Organization of Migration estimates there are 40.3 million victims globally trapped in labor, domestic servitude, or sex trafficking. They also estimate human slavery as a 150-billion-dollar industry. This issue is only getting larger, as drug traffickers are turning to human trafficking – either labor, sex, or domestic servitude. Approximately 52,000 children came across the United States border last year alone, and it will take all of us being vigilant and alert, to protect them.

So far, Airline Ambassadors International has provided 75 training’s at airports around the world. There is some progress. The FAA Authorization Act of 2016 now requires all flight attendants in the US to be trained and in 2018 both the International Civil Aviation Organization and the International Air Transport Association also recommend this to airlines throughout the world. However, most airlines still want to pretend the issue does not exist, and we need the support of the travel industry to make all travelers aware of this issue, committed to recognize and report, and involved in fighting the greatest human rights issue of our time.



# **Part V**

## **Intervention**

# Evidence-Based Psychotherapy Programs for Complex Trauma



Chelsey Mahler

Evidence-based mental health is governed by the philosophy that treatments should be assessed using scientific evidence to determine quality treatment options for clients (Drake et al., 2001; Howard, McMillen, & Pollio, 2003; Williamson, Dutch, & Clawson, 2010). It also emphasizes the importance of using empirically validated treatments with various symptoms, populations, and levels of psychological functioning. Clinicians who use evidence-based psychotherapy programs (EBPP) are trained extensively to ensure fidelity and client safety (Drake et al., 2001; Williamson et al., 2010). Evidence-based therapeutic treatment options for posttraumatic stress include cognitive therapy, cognitive-behavioral therapy, exposure therapy, eye movement desensitization and reprocessing, and stress inoculation therapy. Clawson, Salomon, and Grace (2008) report that cognitive-behavioral therapies have been the most studied and therefore have the most evidence to suggest treatment effectiveness in reducing PTSD symptoms with victims of sex trafficking (Feeny, Foa, Treadwell, & March, 2004; Foa & Rothbaum, 1998). Anti-trafficking efforts are fairly new to the field of mental health, and so there are few evidence-based research studies that show the effectiveness of EBPP with victims of sex trafficking.

Upon writing this chapter, I began to reflect upon my graduate school training and how my colleagues and I have used empirically supported interventions with our clients to achieve the best possible results (read: decrease in symptoms). Some psychologists argue that reducing symptoms is only half of the work in treatment and that improving the client's quality of life is the other important part of treatment that often gets neglected when one strictly adheres to EBPP. Psychologists are bound by ethics to provide the best possible care to the clients and to do no harm when providing treatment. However, there is some controversy, within the field of psychotherapy, as to what constitutes as "best possible care" because therapists range depending on their theoretical orientation and use of clinical judgment. In

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addition, every individual client is different and manifests symptoms depending on a number of factors: childhood, education, development, cognitive capabilities, physical health, frequency and duration of symptoms, mental state, and so forth. The client's presentation may also vary from session to session in terms of body language, speech pattern or content, appearance, emotionality, and behaviors.

Evidence-based psychotherapy programs (EBPP) are meant to be standardized across all settings, clients, and situations regardless of the therapist who is providing the treatment. This is also known as the gold standard of treatment. Many, but not all, of these treatments include a session-by-session manual or provide a general framework where the therapist is given some flexibility in delivering the interventions. It is also important to consider that every client has their own unique individual qualities, characteristics, and life events that they bring into the session. It is up to the therapist to make decisions in the moment to best deliver the treatment without deviating from the manual or framework. If a therapist does not adhere strictly to the manualized treatment, it raises questions about the fidelity of the EBPP being provided. In this chapter, I will review what constitutes a treatment as an EBPP and its limitations. It is my intention that you will come away with a general understanding of the main components that are most common among EBPP for complex trauma. I will explain what additional topics need to be modified or added in order to best meet the mental health needs for victims of sex-trafficking who bring very unique circumstances and experiences into the therapy room.

## **What Constitutes as an EBPP?**

According to the online database for the National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN, n.d.), there are currently 35 empirically supported interventions that have been identified for the purposes of treating trauma among children and/or adolescents and their families. Of these 35 interventions, only a small number are described as specifically targeting what is known as complex trauma. This type of trauma applies to individuals who have experienced multiple traumas during his or her lifetime. An example of complex trauma may include a client who was sexually abused as a young child, witnessed domestic violence during his or her childhood, and was raped as a young adult. Research indicates that complex trauma manifests differently than someone who may have experienced one trauma in his or her lifetime, meaning that there are additional symptoms that are beyond the scope of post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, or anxiety. According to the Illinois Coalition Against Sexual Assault (ICASA, 2007), 90% of adolescent girls who become sex trafficked have reported experiencing childhood sexual abuse in their home, and 75% reported experiencing rape incidents as adults that were not related to sex trafficking.

When looking at the list of empirically supported interventions, the interventions that describe themselves as specifically addressing complex trauma are Structured Psychotherapy for Adolescents Responding to Chronic Stress (SPARCS), Attachment,

Self-Regulation, and Competence (ARC): A Comprehensive Framework for Intervention with Complexly Traumatized Youth, Trauma Affect Regulation: Guide for Education and Therapy (TARGET), Strengthening Family Coping Resources: Multi-Family Group for Families Impacted by Trauma (SFGR), Child and Family Traumatic Stress Intervention (CFTSI), Integrative Treatment of Complex Trauma for Children (ITCT-C), and Integrative Treatment for Complex Trauma for Adolescents (ITCT-A). However, this is not to say that the other empirically supported treatments would not be appropriate when treating complex trauma. On the contrary, research has demonstrated that other programs can be implemented with individuals who have multiple traumatic experiences. A second look at the same list shows that a number of other programs target populations who have a “wide range of traumas” such as: Alternatives for Families: A Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (AF-CBT), Assessment-Based Treatment for Traumatized Children: Trauma Assessment Pathway (TAP), Child-Parent Psychotherapy (CPP), Cognitive Behavioral Intervention for Trauma in Schools (CBITS), Culturally Modified Trauma-Focused Treatment (CM-TFT), Early Pathways (EP), Real Life Heroes (RLH), Trauma-Adapted Family Connections (TA-FC), Trauma and Grief Component Therapy for Adolescents (TGCT-A), Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT), Trauma Systems Therapy (TST), and Trauma Systems Therapy for Refugees (TST-R) (NCTSN, n.d.).

By now you’re probably wondering that with so many empirically supported treatments to choose from, how might a therapist decide which empirically supported treatments to implement with his or her clients? The first step is to decide which population the treatment has been shown to be most effective depending on sex, age, and setting. The next step is to determine which treatment modality is most appropriate, whether it be group, individual, or family system therapy. The final step is to read the literature about each program that best fits the targeted client population and review materials to ensure that the treatment fits most appropriately to the client’s needs and clinical presentation. While this all sounds well and good, putting it into practice is another story. Firstly, therapists must spend money to undergo hours of training if they want to become properly qualified in just one particular evidence-based intervention. It is likely that once a therapist becomes trained in one EBPP, they continue to use that particular intervention with all of their clients while taking external factors into account (e.g., race, ethnicity, sex, gender identity, (dis)ability, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, cultural implications, (non)religious affiliation, etc.). Secondly, research suggests that 25% to 50% of therapists are eclectic or integrative in their approach to therapy, meaning they will use more than one way to conceptualize and treat the client (Norcross, 2005).

Cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) is currently the leading evidence-based treatment that psychotherapists implement because it is the most widely researched and has been shown to be effective in treating a range of disorders including, but not limited to: anxiety, depression, posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), and obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD). A meta-analysis, meaning a statistical method that combines the results of several studies to find patterns, has shown that CBT is effective in maintaining long-term results (Butler, Chapman, Forman, & Beck, 2006). However, the *New York Times*

reported that when it comes to treating depression and anxiety, about 69% of the 2,300 therapists surveyed use CBT some of the time or in combination with other types of therapy modalities instead of solely using CBT in their practice (Brown, 2013). Dr. Glenn Waller (2008), Head of the Psychology Department at the University of Sheffield, refers to this phenomenon as “therapist drift.” This is when a therapist chooses to shift away from evidence-based therapies during and/or between sessions.

Some reasons why therapists might drift away from using evidence-based therapies are as follows: (a) the therapist feels evidence-based therapies limit creativity and innovation, (b) the therapist believes that these treatments devalue the therapeutic alliance (e.g., warmth, empathy, communication), (c) the therapist pushes aside the agenda for that session because the client presents him or her with a crisis, or (d) the therapist wants to avoid short-term negative consequences (e.g., increase in the client’s anxiety) (Brown, 2013; Waller, 2008). Research that supports the effectiveness of CBT does not take into account therapists who might be combining CBT with other therapies. Also, Chambless and Ollendick (2001) report that when comparing studies that the use manualized treatment as opposed to an individualized treatment program, none of the studies indicated that flexible treatment is better (statistically speaking) to standardized treatment. Another problem with therapist drift is that by deviating from empirically supported treatments, therapists have little way of knowing if they are treating the client competently. Brosan, Reynolds, and Moore (2008) decided to see if therapists were able to accurately self-evaluate their level of competency. They report that therapists, especially those who were less competent, significantly overrated their ability to carry out cognitive therapy techniques compared to an expert rater who observed a taped session of the therapist (Brosan et al., 2008). It appears that therapists who succumb to the therapist drift are providing services based upon their own experiences, as opposed to providing treatment that is based on research outcomes, which has an effect on patient care. Brosan, Reynolds, and Moore (2006) recommend that therapists seek out formal postgraduate training to remain competent in EBPP.

## Limitations of EBPP

Historically, there has been much controversy over what constitutes as an empirically supported treatment. In response, the American Psychological Association (APA) created a Task Force in 1995 called the Task Force on Promotion and Dissemination of Psychological Procedures (henceforth known as the Task Force on PDPP) to address the controversies surrounding EBPP. The Task Force on PDPP explored the research and distinguished four levels of evidence-based treatments: (1) well-established treatments, (2) probably efficacious treatments, (3) possibly efficacious treatments, and (4) experimental treatments. Well-established treatments have *two* randomized-controlled trials (RCTs), meaning that the participants were randomly assigned to two or more groups, and the trials were conducted by different

independent investigators who report that there is a statistically significant advantage of one treatment over no treatment at all or another treatment entirely. Probably efficacious treatments meet the same requirements as the well-established treatments; however, the treatment has only *one* RCT by an independent researcher or two experiments showing the treatment is superior to a wait-list or no treatment condition by the same investigator. Treatments that have at least one promising experimental study or case series by the same investigator are considered to be possibly efficacious treatments. Finally, experimental treatments are those that have not yet been tested or do not meet these methodological criteria (Chambless & Ollendick, 2001).

One of the criticisms of EBPP has been that by categorizing clients by diagnosis or a set of behaviors for the purposes of research is dehumanizing and devalues the uniqueness of each client; however, the Task Force on PDPP responded that it would be nearly impossible to conduct research for any treatment without some way of organizing the participant sample. Another criticism of EBPP is that relying solely on RCTs to determine best practices is limiting in that (a) some knowledge can be best attained through qualitative research, (b) cognitive-behavioral therapy has an unfair advantage of being considered EBPP because it has undergone more RCTs than any other types of therapy, and (c) individuals in the community cannot be randomly assigned to treatment so the studies that use RCT cannot be generalized to real-world situations (Chambless & Ollendick, 2001). The Task Force on PDPP argues that while the research literature in the past has focused on efficacy data (derived from studies that explore if the intervention yields the desired results under ideal conditions), there is an increasing number of researchers who are now focusing on effectiveness data (derived from studies that explore if the intervention yields the desired results under “real-world” clinical settings) as well that validate using empirically supported treatments (Chambless & Ollendick, 2001; Gartlehner et al., 2006).

Another body of psychological literature has been exploring other factors that may be contributing to positive therapeutic outcome. Lambert’s (1992) research states that improvements in psychotherapy are attributable to the following therapeutic factors: therapeutic relationship (30%), treatment techniques (15%), expectancy (15%), and extra-therapeutic change (40%). Expectancy is how much the client expects that the therapy will be helpful (otherwise known as the placebo effect), whereas extra-therapeutic change refers to the characteristics that the client brings to therapy (e.g., knowledge base, life experiences, strengths and abilities, readiness to change, etc.). Considering that this research indicates that the therapeutic relationship accounts for more improvements in psychotherapy than the particular treatment being used, a separate Task Force known as the Task Force on Evidence-Based Therapy Relationships (further known as Task Force on EBTR) was developed (Norcross & Wampold, 2011).

One of the goals of The Task Force on EBTR is to explore the research that supports how the therapeutic relationship contributes to positive outcome in psychotherapy, regardless of the type of treatment being conducted. The Task Force on EBTR has categorized the elements of the psychotherapeutic relationship into four

levels: (1) demonstrably effective, (2) probably effective, (3) promising but insufficient, and (4) research to judge. Characteristics that have been determined as demonstrably effective are alliance in individual/youth/family psychotherapy, cohesion in group therapy, empathy, and collecting client feedback (Norcross & Wampold, 2011). Ardito and Rabellino (2011) explored the meta-analysis research regarding the link between the therapeutic relationship and positive therapeutic outcome and argued that “the quality of the client-therapist alliance is the most consistent predictor of positive clinical outcome independent of the variety of psychotherapy approaches and outcome measures” (p. 9). An argument can be made that if only 15% of the therapeutic change can be accounted for by the treatment techniques, then perhaps therapists should focus more on improving the therapeutic relationship with their clients instead of becoming trained to use empirically supported treatments. However, the Task Force on PDPP cautions therapists to avoid dismissing the research that supports particular types of treatments over others and to consider the rigorosity of the methodologies that are being presented by researchers who minimize the importance of treatment type.

## What Is Complex Trauma?

Complex trauma is generally defined as the exposure to multiple traumas that occur concurrently or consecutively that begin in early childhood and are chronic in nature (NCTSN, 2015). The psychological effects of complex trauma typically result from interpersonal violence, such as domestic violence, child neglect, as well as physical, emotional, and sexual abuse that occurs repeatedly from childhood to adulthood (NCTSN, 2015). After a comprehensive analysis of the literature, Cook et al. (2005) explain that a diagnosis of PTSD does not fully encompass all of the symptoms which are present in children and adolescents with a history of complex trauma. Complex trauma can have negative effects on a child or adolescent’s prefrontal cortex area of the brain, which is in charge of executive functioning (i.e., one’s ability to plan and carry out decisions, monitor one’s own behaviors, and ability to shift focus from one task to another). The negative effects on a child or adolescent’s prefrontal cortex are likely to be maintained if the trauma continues over time because their brains are constantly developing (Cook et al., 2005). Children and adolescents with a history of complex trauma have difficulty making decisions, regulating their emotions, self-awareness, and self-concept integration, especially while enduring stressful situations (Cook et al., 2005). They have difficulty identifying, managing, and expressing their emotions given that they have been unable to share their emotions safely. They also have trouble with self-soothing and regulating their own behaviors and emotions responses due to living in an insecure environment (Cook et al., 2005). Children and adolescents eventually may engage in maladaptive coping strategies, such as drug and alcohol use to cope with the feelings associated with the trauma (Cook et al., 2005). The authors reported that children and adolescents who are exposed to complex trauma are impaired in various domains of functioning,

including attachment, biology, affect regulation, dissociation, behavioral control, cognition, and self-concept (Cook et al., 2005; NCTSN, 2015). Children and adolescents whose parents were distant, unpredictable, and/or unreliable were more likely to become distressed, develop insecure attachments, and have difficulty collaborating with others (Cook et al., 2005). Group and individual therapy are considered to be treatment interventions that will help those with complex trauma to form secure attachments with others and build relationships (Briere & Lanktree, 2012; Briere & Lanktree, 2013).

Research shows that the effects of complex trauma on youth as a result of sexual assault include, but are not limited to the following: an eight times higher rate of depression, a twelve times higher rate of suicide attempts, and depression occurring earlier, longer, and with poorer response to treatment when compared to children who have not experienced sexual abuse (Fergusson, Horwood, & Lynskey, 1996; Putnam, 2003; Zlotnick, Ryan, Miller, & Keitner, 1995). Children and adolescents with complex trauma may experience symptoms of dissociation (Briere & Lanktree, 2012; Briere & Lanktree, 2013; Cook et al., 2005). According to Mental Health America, dissociation is a “mental process that causes a lack of connection in a person’s thoughts, memory, and sense of identity” and “falls on a continuum of severity” (MHA, 2015). Briere and Lanktree (2012) report that dissociation includes depersonalization (i.e., feeling detached from one’s self), derealization (i.e., feeling detached from one’s surroundings), and disengagement (i.e., spacing out) which can have an adverse effect on the youth’s identity and make it difficult for them to be self-aware of their internal states. This is why therapists need to allow the client adequate time and space for the client to engage in self-exploration while also providing a structured, supportive role (Briere & Lanktree, 2012).

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services developed a project to explore the needs of domestic sex trafficking victims, especially adolescents. The project is a compilation of research literature, studies, and data related to services provided to victims (Clawson, 2010). In 2008, Clawson, Salomon, and Grace studied the effects that trauma has on victims of human trafficking. They recognized that victims of sex trafficking have some of the most complex trauma histories (Briere & Spinazzola, 2005; Clawson et al., 2008). Researchers reported that the trauma endured by victims came from a number of experiences, including but not limited to being held captive and brainwashed by their trafficker as well as multiple traumas from family members, community violence, or countrywide violence (Clawson et al., 2008; Stark & Hodgson, 2003; Ugarte, Zarate, & Farley, 2003). Trauma-induced stress can also have physical effects, with victims reporting that they experience stomach pain, headaches, and other unexplained physical pain.

Clawson et al. (2008) also report that there are several barriers that limit appropriate care for victims of sex trafficking. One barrier is that many victims have trouble accessing affordable mental health services, feel ashamed as a result of their experiences, believe there is a mental health stigma, seek medical help for physical issues and ignore mental health concerns, and have fears regarding confidentiality. Another barrier to treatment is that long-term care is restricted to a limited number of sessions by third-party payers such as insurance companies. It is difficult to



establish trusting relationships with the victim when domestic violence shelters and homeless youth runaway programs only allow the individual to stay for a specified amount of time (Clawson et al., 2008). This does not allow the victim to build lasting relationships with service providers. Their mistrust of law enforcement is compounded by the fear that their trafficker will eventually find them, they will be deported, or they will be sent back to an abusive home. Other obstacles include possible re-traumatization with mandated services, language barriers, and isolation from social support systems (Clawson et al., 2008). Addressing the previously mentioned concerns will help to prevent relapse and ensure safety.

## Major Tenants of EBPP for Complex Trauma

Mental health providers need to ensure that the EBPP they choose is based on trauma-informed care when treating clients with complex trauma. Trauma-informed care is the most appropriate framework when providing mental health services to victims of sex trafficking given their prevalent abusive history and multiple traumatic experiences (Clawson et al., 2008; Harris & FalLOT, 2001). Trauma-informed services require having full knowledge of the client's past and current abuse (Harris & FalLOT, 2001). It also involves understanding the role that victimization plays on the client's life and how services can be tailored and delivered in a way that is suitable given the client's vulnerabilities and encourage the client's involvement in treatment (Harris & FalLOT, 2001). There are particular interventions and techniques that are used to treat trauma, which are considered to be trauma-specific services. For example, many trauma-specific treatments integrate grounding techniques to help the client cope with dissociative symptoms or perhaps engage the client in a trauma narrative to help them become desensitized to the trauma (Harris & FalLOT, 2001). Recognizing the needs of the victim and assisting them with other areas that may not be related to the trauma, such as food, shelter, and substance abuse treatment along with legal, medical, and/or financial assistance, are all part of trauma-informed care.

A common theme among EBPP for complex trauma is the concept that there are three phases of treatment: (1) safety and stabilization, (2) trauma processing, and (3) reconnection and integration. Each phase has its own purpose for the therapeutic process and can be broken down into several key elements depending on the program. Cook et al. (2005) have identified six core components of complex trauma intervention, including "(1) Safety, (2) Self-regulation, (3) Self-reflective information processing, (4) Trauma experiences integration, (5) Relational engagement, and (6) Positive affect enhancement" (p. 355). Safety involves creating an environment where sex trafficking survivors feel comfortable in experiencing and sharing their thoughts, feelings, and emotions. This will allow survivors to learn and execute skills that will help them to manage affect, behavior, physical reactions, and cognition dysregulation. Cognitive restructuring through the use of trauma narratives and trauma processing is another major component, as it allows the victim to reflect on

his or her experiences without judgment and to find meaning (Cook et al., 2005). These strategies, coupled with coping skills, will assist the client in the healing process. Developing effective interpersonal skills such as assertiveness, creating boundaries, collaboration, mutual exchange, empathy, and the ability to form intimate social and emotional connections, are necessary for treatment to remediate the effects of the victim's lack of experience with safe, secure attachments. The final step of complex trauma intervention involves the client creating meaning from the traumatic event through positive experiences and life enhancement (Cook et al., 2005). Additional considerations for treatment include the integration of family as a support network, which has been shown to be a good predictor of symptom relief and self-efficacy for children and adolescents who have complex trauma (Cohen, Mannarino, Berliner, & Deblinger, 2000). Family integration involves having the family validate the child's experience, tolerating his or her affect dysregulation, and managing each family members' response to the trauma.

Black, Woodsworth, Tremblay, and Carpenter (2012) compared different forms of trauma-informed therapy and discovered six major components of treatment, including (a) psychoeducation, (b) coping skills, (c) affect regulation and methods of expression, (d) trauma narrative, (e) cognitive restructuring, and (f) creating a future plan. Psychoeducation is used to teach the client about what a traumatic event is, the effects of trauma, how it can affect the brain, and how symptoms are maintained over time. It is also beneficial to explain to each client the developmental stages and how these can be disrupted by trauma. Coping skills are taught and practiced throughout the treatment, including relaxation skills, identifying the client's triggers, anxiety management treatment, and stress inoculation training. The purpose of teaching these early on is so that clients can use them at times when they are feeling triggered and when they are engaging in exposure techniques. Black et al. (2012) mentions that teaching emotional regulation and expression can help the client focus more on positive emotions since they regularly focus on negative ones. Interventions may involve self-soothing techniques, relaxation skills, "checking" one's emotions, writing in a journal, and/or creating a piece of art. Clients are then introduced to the trauma narrative technique in which the client either writes about or talks about the trauma in detail. This allows the therapist to assist the client with processing their emotions regarding the traumatic event and also challenge any cognitive distortions (i.e., negative thinking) they may have about the event. Toward the end of therapy, clients are encouraged to develop plans for their future. This may include a workbook to help them practice their skills after post-therapy and/or including caregivers in treatment goals.

## Recommendations for Modifying EBPP for Victims of Sex Trafficking

Currently, there are no RCTs that demonstrate the effectiveness or efficacy of EBPP when working with victims of sex trafficking who report symptoms of PTSD and other mental health symptoms resulting from complex trauma (Abas et al., 2013). However, as previously discussed, there are several EBPP that have been effective in treating marginalized populations (e.g., migrant laborers, victims of sexual abuse, victims of torture, and domestic violence) with multiple traumas. For example, Cohen, Mannarino, and Deblinger (2006) recognize that TF-CBT could be extended to 16 to 20 sessions when treating victims of sex trafficking. Cohen, Mannarino, Kliethermes, and Murray (2012) suggest extending the total treatment time in TF-CBT for those with complex trauma from the typical 8 to 16 sessions to a total of 25 to 28 sessions, depending on the needs of the client, with 50 minutes per session. The authors note that the therapist may adapt the treatment plan by choosing from multiple components that vary in manner, intensity, and duration based on the client's needs as opposed to a rigid session-by-session structure. Instead of spending equal time on each of the three phases of treatment, Cohen et al. (2012) suggest that the stabilization phase consists of half of the treatment time in cases of complex trauma. The reason being is that it takes longer for a trusting therapeutic rapport to be established with youth who have experienced complex trauma. The client also usually has many areas of functioning where there are deficits and need more time to build and master coping skills (Cohen et al., 2012). The National Child Traumatic Stress Network's Child Sexual Abuse Task Force and Research & Practice Core (NCTSN CSA Task Force, 2004) reports that traumatized children with presenting problems that include severe externalizing behavioral disorders and internalizing disorders such as defiance, disobedience, aggression, law breaking, severe depression, and suicidal ideation should be specifically addressed using other forms of treatment before implementing an EBPP for complex trauma. Youth who are highly dysregulated will find greater benefit from coping skills when they are not associated with the trauma at first. Over time, the therapist introduces phase two of the treatment and will recommend that the client uses his or her coping strategies when feeling dysregulated.

Establishing a therapeutic rapport with the client takes time and effort. Many times, victim of sex trafficking do not define their experiences as abuse (US DOJ, n.d.; Polaris, 2010). Many do not think of themselves as victims because they obeyed their trafficker who provided them with gifts, affection, and attention, which is a method of power and control used by the trafficker to foster a psychological bond (Fong & Cardoso, 2010; Rosenblatt, 2014; Williamson, Chen, Moore, Burke, & Waldrop, 2012). Many times, having a trained advocate or survivor of sex trafficking to assist in the co-facilitation of group therapy is helpful for victims to become comfortable and open up about their experiences. Becoming familiar with street terms can also foster trust with the client because it shows that the therapist has some knowledge of the sex trade culture (Chisolm-Straker, 2007; Shared Hope International, 2015).

Physical needs such as shelter, food, water, and clothes must also be addressed to establish safety and stabilization. In most situations, the client's fear that their trafficker will attempt to find them is well-founded because they are usually in danger once they leave the trafficker (Rosenblatt, 2014; Williamson et al., 2012). Confidentiality, therefore, is of utmost importance when working with survivors of sex trafficking. In order for therapy to be effective, the client's immediate safety needs must be met prior to engaging in treatment. Safety and stabilization also includes adequately assessing for suicidality, homicidality, and other non-suicidal self-harming behaviors (e.g., cutting, burning, hitting body parts, scratching, etc.) (Chisolm-Straker, 2007; Clawson et al., 2008). It is important to remember that it is common for the victim to go back to the trafficker even if all of their immediate needs have been met. The psychological bond is powerful and the benefits of returning to the trafficker often seem to outweigh the negatives from time to time. It is imperative that the therapist working with victims of sex trafficking remains transparent and honest about the therapeutic process as well as validates the client's feelings (Macy & Johns, 2010). Once there is adequate rapport between the therapist and client, and safety standards have been met, the other two phases of trauma-informed care can be implemented. Much like battered women who may return to the batterer several times, most of the victims of trafficking will benefit from therapy even if they do go back and forth in the relationship (CDC, 2012; Rosenblatt, 2014; Walker-Rodriguez & Hill, 2011).

Victims of sex trafficking will most likely benefit from treatment only after a safe therapeutic relationship has been established. It is common for victims of sex trafficking to report feeling distrustful toward service providers, given that their trafficker might threaten them if they are to talk to anyone about their experiences (Macy & Johns, 2010; Rosenblatt, 2014). Many times, victims feel a sense of distrust because they believed the person who recruited them into trafficking was a friend (Clawson et al., 2008). Victims may have also had negative experiences with law enforcement which may make them suspicious of anyone who could potentially criminalize them, judge them, or try and provide false stories to get them to comply. There is also systemic distrust since sex trafficking victims traditionally have been viewed as offenders or delinquents (Fong & Cardoso, 2010; Kotrla, 2010). Using motivational interviewing skills at the beginning of therapy may be helpful in encouraging the client to make informed decisions regarding going back to their trafficker and realizing that they are a victim of abuse (Meichenbaum, 2015).

Providing treatment within the trauma-informed framework during the second phase, namely trauma narrative and trauma processing, means acknowledging the victim's trauma as a defining life event or set of events that have shaped the individual's identity and perceptions of others (Clawson et al., 2008). The NCTSN Child Sexual Abuse Task Force (2004) reports that when there is more than one trauma present, the client will usually share the worst trauma later in therapy. Cohen et al. (2012) report that it might be difficult for therapists to know when to move on to trauma processing when the client has experienced multiple traumas. They suggest focusing on the stabilization phase until the client reaches a "stably unstable" phase in treatment (Cohen et al., 2012, p. 536). It is considered to be impractical to expect youth with complex trauma to have mastery of their coping

skills. The time to continue to the next phase in treatment is dependent upon the client's ability to use coping skills and when the therapist notices that the client has reached a plateau in improvement.

During the second phase of treatment, the authors report that it is more helpful to focus on trauma themes since the client has experienced multiple traumas (Cohen et al., 2012). This makes treatment more manageable rather than processing all of the client's specific traumas. The client processes their trauma through writing their life story, and the therapist is able to identify the traumatic themes that occur in the story. An example of a trauma theme is "It's hard to believe anyone cares about me when no one's been here before" (Cohen et al., 2012, p. 532). It is recommended that the client also identify positive experiences while creating a chronological narrative of their traumas to instill hope (NCTSN CSA Task Force, 2004).

If a client has trouble writing a story, having them make a timeline of events can be useful in integrating a trauma narrative. Creating a fear hierarchy and gradually exposing them to trauma reminders are helpful for youth who actively avoid thinking about their trauma. There are certain traumatic experiences that are common among victims of sex trafficking that a therapist might not necessarily hear about from other victims who have complex trauma. Johnson (2012) wrote an adapted version of the TF-CBT manual to specifically treat victims of sex trafficking. The author indicated that in addition to being the victim of abuse and torture, those who have been sex trafficked report being forced, coerced, or manipulated into inflicting violence onto others. Examples include holding someone down while he or she is being abused, being forced to perform abusive acts onto others, or recruiting others into sex trafficking. The author also cautions against the use of family in treatment, considering that sometimes family members can serve as traffickers. Johnson (2012) proposes training residential staff members or a non-offending adult figure to be used as extended parents during conjoint sessions. It is imperative that the staff member or non-offending adult figure be willing to maintain the same levels of confidentiality as the therapist so as to not break the client's trust during treatment. Johnson (2012) also recommends creating a workbook for clients to keep track of their learned skills and reflections during treatment. This workbook can serve as a reminder of their therapy experiences and assist them with practicing the skills between sessions and at posttreatment.

Once the trauma narrative has been established in therapy, the therapist uses Socratic questioning to assist the client with challenging their core maladaptive beliefs as a result of the traumas while also validating the client's feelings. The purpose is for the therapist to help the client create alternate thoughts and beliefs that reflect more on their current life and less on past trauma. The client identifies which core beliefs contribute to creating his or her trauma themes (Cohen et al., 2012). Chard (2005) reports that Cognitive Processing Therapy for Sexual Abuse (CPT-SA; Chard, Weaver, & Resick, 1997), a manual adapted from cognitive processing therapy for treating adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse, addresses beliefs concerned with five primary trauma-related themes: safety, trust, power, esteem, and sexual intimacy (Chard, 2005; Chard et al., 1997; McCann, Sakheim, & Abrahamson, 1988). The client identifies, analyzes, and challenges old beliefs in regard to these five topics through the use of worksheets and the therapist's ques-

tioning. It is common for victims of sex trafficking to feel that their self-worth is tied to their sexuality. The therapist can assist the victim with identifying other examples or fostering alternative ways to enhance his or her self-worth.

The last phase of treatment, namely reconnection and integration, is when the client considers his or her future hopes, goals, and dreams (Johnson, 2012). This usually involves having the client reflect upon his or her progress in treatment and the gains they have made. It may also include processing the end of treatment and traumatic grief elements (Cohen et al., 2012). During this phase, clients write a new narrative about their trauma, identify social support systems, and discuss how the skills they have learned can be used to overcome possible future obstacles (Chard et al., 1997).

The therapist can help the victim become more prepared for relapse prevention at posttreatment by building resiliency, increasing well-being, and fostering hope throughout treatment. Integrating techniques used in positive psychology can take EBPP for complex trauma to the next level. Positive psychology focuses not on the client's suffering but, rather, their potential for happiness (Duckworth, Steen, & Seligman, 2005; Seligman, 2011). According to Seligman (2011), well-being is a construct that is made up of several elements which can be measured independently from each other and combats the issues of making happiness the primary goal of life satisfaction. The acronym PERMA is used to identify and describe the elements of well-being which include (P) positive emotion, (E) engagement, (R) positive relationships, (M) meaning, and (A) accomplishment. Each of the five elements of well-being has several components that are subjective to the individual. The author upholds that the gold standard for measuring well-being is flourishing, which Seligman (2011) states can give mental health professionals a more rigorous understanding to the human condition. Flourishing involves having three of the following additional features in conjunction with PERMA: self-esteem, optimism, resilience, vitality, self-determination, and positive relationships (Huppert & So, 2013; Seligman, 2011). When one is able to flourish, the individual will subsequently increase his or her productivity, health, and sense of peace (Seligman, 2011).

Building resiliency after a traumatic experience allows the client to thrive, adapt, and enhance overall mental and physical health (Newman, 2005). Meichenbaum (2015) provides several examples of how service providers may be able to build resiliency within clients who have a history of sex trafficking. The author suggests that the therapist uses "change talk" with phrases such as "so far" and "as yet" to point out that there are a range of possibilities when the client is making decisions (p. 6). The author also suggests using "re" verbs such as reconnect, reduce, restore, recreate, and rebuild in sessions to instill hope in the client's ability to change his or her circumstances (Meichenbaum, 2015, p. 6).

Another intervention suggested by Meichenbaum (2015) is having the client compare two timelines, one that identifies significant life events and another that identifies their achievements. This can help the client compare and contrast how he or she has been resilient in spite of life circumstances and victimization (Meichenbaum, 2015). A third timeline that represents how the client would like to see their future, along with goals that they have for themselves, provides direction for the course of therapy and fosters hope. Through these exercises, the client will

also be able to identify priorities, personal values, and pro-social pleasant activities for a life worth living. Identifying the victim's strengths is a tool which will allow them to recognize that he or she has self-worth. It is important the therapist focuses on the client's *efforts* and not outcomes of treatment in order for victims to consistently and compassionately view themselves as agents of change. Meichenbaum (2015) suggests that relapse prevention procedures will need to be discussed and agreed upon by the client to avoid setbacks. If relapse occurs, reframing the relapse as a learning experience and developing new procedures to anticipate future potential obstacles will increase the client's sense of self-efficacy and decrease catastrophizing thoughts (Meichenbaum, 2015). Building resiliency takes time and is a delicate balance between motivational interviewing, collaboration, empathy and understanding, and use of language in session. Over time, victims will become empowered and begin to view themselves as a survivor of trauma.

## Conclusion

The first step in treating victims of sex trafficking using EBPP for complex trauma is to conduct further research with this population. Future research directions regarding sex trafficking that are recommended include psychological effects of trauma using structured clinical diagnostic interviews, measuring the effectiveness of trauma-informed treatments with victims of sex trafficking, and identifying trauma-related themes that are specific to this population. In order to develop a well-rounded intervention, we must first look at what the needs are of the population. This would include a combination of qualitative and quantitative data. Another area of research would be to implement EBPP that have been adapted or targeted toward populations with multiple trauma histories and to report the findings when an EBPP is used to treat victims of sex trafficking. Client feedback after an EBPP has been implemented would also be helpful in understanding the psychological needs of this population. Lastly, understanding the obstacles that clients face during treatment can help therapists develop plans to anticipate barriers to treatment before they happen.

It is proposed that an empirically supported, manualized treatment specifically for victims of sex trafficking would be beneficial to the clinical professionals who need direction in treating this unique population who are deserving of quality mental health care. The most appropriate program would be trauma-informed while also taking into account the methods (individual, group, residential, outpatient, and/or family) and particular topics and skills that would be best suited for victims of sex trafficking. Examples of topics and skills that might be explored in the manualized treatment include: boundary setting, communication, emotional regulation, effects of substances use, healthy versus unhealthy relationships, types of abuse, sex education, intimacy and sexual issues, support systems and why they matter, interpersonal effectiveness, identity formation, and physical reactions to psychological concerns.

Recommendations for an empirically supported, manualized treatment for victims of sex trafficking victims include creating a manual that is developmentally appropriate for adolescent girls and young adult women ranging from ages 13 to early 20s that uses relatable language. Having the client identify his or her vulnerabilities for exploitation, normalizing his or her experiences, and creating a safety plan to help prevent the client from going back to their trafficker are paramount for client safety. It is proposed that the first few steps of treatment include learning and practicing various coping skills, such as distraction exercises, thought stopping techniques, grounding techniques, self-soothing exercises, mindfulness skills, and relaxation techniques, prior to psychoeducation about violence and the effects of trauma. This will allow participants to use their learned coping skills at times when they might feel triggered by some of the later material.

The manual would also include psychoeducation about the role that emotions have in our lives, how to identify emotions, and common emotional expressions prior to collaboratively entering phase two of treatment. This will allow the client to use what he or she has learned about emotions to help them process their feelings regarding the traumatic event(s). During the traumatic processing phase, the client will identify trauma themes that have affected the way he or she perceives the world, self, and others. The therapist will assist the client in determining which beliefs are considered to be maladaptive and in need of restructuring. The final phase of treatment would address how the client can reconnect with healthy relationships and integrate into a safe environment. The combination of EBPP for complex trauma techniques along with a stable, positive, and collaborative therapeutic alliance will benefit victims of sex trafficking as they transition into survivors who are able to create meaningful lives that foster well-being and resiliency.

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# Psychological Intervention with Sex-Trafficked Persons: Assessment and Survivor Therapy Empowerment Program (STEP)



Lenore Walker

Although interventions with those who have been trafficked as adults and children have only just begun to appear in the literature, there are already some common areas with other victims of gender violence that are considered “best practices.” While the US Institute of Medicine (IOM) requires all treatment guidelines to only include evidence-based intervention programs, given the scarcity of them being available for those who have been trafficked, the standard for inclusion in this chapter is that a program is successful if more often than not, the trafficked persons remain in treatment, heal from the symptoms caused by their experience, and go on to a successful and meaningful life.

Most persons who have experienced being trafficked do not come into treatment voluntarily. Rather, they are usually referred to psychotherapy as part of their intervention program, often by the courts after they are rescued or found by law enforcement. Some begin the psychological intervention while still in a safe home provided by the local government entities, whether it be a special foster home or a residential treatment center. Others voluntarily seek psychotherapy once they feel safe enough to do so. Often psychotherapy consists of individual and group interventions after a comprehensive assessment. For children and teens, psychotherapy is accompanied with school to help them reach their full educational potential. Many adults also choose to return to school as their earlier education may have been interrupted by the trafficker. In one local juvenile detention center, it has come to the attention of the authorities that a large number of the girls have been trafficked. As they usually can stay there a maximum of 21 days, the chances are that there will not be any meaningful psychotherapy provided, although psychoeducational groups may be available.

For many who have been trafficked, going into psychotherapy is quite scary. They fear that they will be labeled “crazy” especially if their trafficker has already

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told them that no one will believe them because they act like a crazy person. Most have adopted defenses that protect them emotionally, and like for everyone, giving up what we know for what we do not know is frightening. For some, who have learned to deny, minimize, and rationalize what has happened to them, it is difficult to give up that psychological protection. Most importantly, they have lost the ability to trust that anyone really will help and protect them, no matter what techniques a psychotherapist may employ. Perhaps the two most important qualities that a psychotherapist who works with those who have been sex trafficked must have are the ability to be authentic and the ability to be patient.

## **Assessment and Interview Techniques**

Similar to working with other victims of gender violence, it is important to make sure that the questions asked are nonjudgmental and cannot be misinterpreted to blame the victim. This means open, honest, and thoughtful questions that call for open-ended responses rather than yes/no or a transparent preferred response. Questions that call for multiple answers should be used sparingly and restated them if they do occur. The language used should be consistent with the person's age, culture, and situation or completely neutral which is often difficult to do. It is important to go from the general to the specific when following up on the responses to questions. First use neutral prompts such as those cited below when working with children and only ask for a specific answer after exhausting the issue. For example, first ask, "What happened?" before asking, "How did he tie you up?"

Listening skills become important, especially being able to listen to the details of horrible abuse. Responses can include empathy for the victim, but do not ally with her against the trafficker. Like battered women, many trafficked victims still have loving feelings for the trafficker in addition to their anger at being abused. Do not interrupt their narrative with too many questions although it will be important to go back over what has been said for clarification of various parts by asking for further explanation. Rephrase the person's response to make sure you heard them correctly. Use the person's name when addressing them and ask for permission to take notes of the most important details. Sometimes a taped recording is permitted but not always depending upon where the interview is conducted. For example, in a residential treatment center, jail, or detention center, it might not be possible to tape the interview.

Ask about the specific details of all forms of abuse that the person has experienced including all types of maltreatment such as a child abuse, sexual abuse, exploitation, intimate partner abuse, rape, and the experiences while being trafficked. It may be easier to begin with questions about the family during childhood such as,

- "Describe your family life while growing up?"
- "Who did you live with?"

- “How were you disciplined as a child?”
- “Were you hit with an open hand, closed fist, objects?”
- “Did you feel like you were being abused as a child?”
- “Did you ever have to stay home from school because of bruises?”
- “Did anyone else in your family also get abused?”
- “What do you remember seeing or hearing?”

Questions about domestic violence are also appropriate to ask here.

- “How did your parents deal with their own conflicts?”
- “Was there a lot of yelling?”
- “Did it feel like chaos and out of control behavior?”
- “What do you remember about their anger?”
- “When you were frightened, what did you do?”
- “What did you want to do?”
- “Were the police ever called?”
- “Was either parent arrested?” “What happened?”

Asking about the sex trafficking may occur at any time, either before or after talking about other traumatic experiences.

Child abuse may need further follow-up questions.

- “Were you ever touched in unwanted ways as a child?”
- “What happened?”
- “By whom?”
- “How was it handled?”
- “How did it affect you?”
- “How did you handle your fears?”
- “How did it stop?”

The American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children (APSAC) has published several guidelines on interviewing in cases where abuse has been alleged including the *Practice Guidelines on Investigative Interviewing in Cases of Alleged Child Abuse* (2002) and the *Forensic Interviewing in Case of Suspected Child Abuse* (2012) that give excellent suggestions on the types of questions that need to be asked during these interviews. It is recommended that these be reviewed before beginning an interview as they set forth what should be done prior to the interview, questioning strategies and interview components, and special issues for law enforcement investigators. Spoiling an interview with biased questions or techniques may hamper the ability to learn accurate details to assist the person in healing. It also can cause problems with admissibility of testimony in court when abuse details are learned through evaluation or psychotherapy.

Some guidelines suggest using a structured interview protocol for avoiding bias and gaps in information elicited, especially for those new to the field. The National Institute of Child and Human Development (NICHD) has published investigative prompts that are especially valuable to review before the interview begins (Lamb, Orbach, Hershkowitz, Esplin, & Horowitz, 2007). They suggest six different types

of prompts to be used with children who are suspected of being sexually abused, but they are useful in working with adults who also are recalling both child and adult abuse and exploitation. They are used in the following order from least suggestive to most suggestive: (1) facilitator type, (2) invitation type, (3) cued invitation, (4) directive, (5) option posing, and (6) suggestive. Examples of each are as follows:

1. Facilitator-type questions are non-suggestive to continue a response that is ongoing such as “uh hum” or “ok,” repeat what was just said, or even nonverbal cues like a smile or shaking of the head or hand to suggest the interview should keep going.
2. Invitation-type questions use an open-ended request to recall information about an incident stated as a statement, question, or imperative such as “tell me everything that happened,” “Tell me more!,” or “Can you describe that?”
3. Cued invitation-type questions refocus on the details of something already mentioned and use what was said as a cue to prompt further free recall of the event to get more information. An example is “You mentioned that your father got very angry with you when you stayed out late at night, tell me more about what happened?” or “You mentioned the trafficker came to see you at school, but you didn’t want to talk with him, then what happened?”
4. Directive-type questions use a prompt that cues the recall to focus attention on information already mentioned and requests more specific information using the “who, what, where, when, and how” types of questions. This information may be necessary in cases that involve law enforcement for prosecution. Examples can include “What color was his shirt?,” “When did he take you to the park?,” or “Where did he touch you?”
5. Option-posing prompt questions are more specific than the others as they attempt to get the person to describe other aspects of the incidents or give details that require confirmation or negation of a particular part of the issue by the person being interviewed. For example, “Were your clothes on when he touched you?,” “Did he touch you under or over your clothes?,” or “Did it hurt when he touched you?”
6. Suggestive-type prompt questions imply the answer by the question itself and are only used when something is not mentioned but appears to be needed to better understand the incident/abuse. For example, “Did it hurt when he put his fingers inside you?” can be asked when digital penetration was not previously mentioned in the interview but was in a report. Or “He wanted you to kiss him, didn’t he?” might be used when a person suggests this but is struggling for words to describe something. These types of details may be needed for prosecution or for healing techniques in psychotherapy but should not be asked directly until other ways of obtaining the data are unsuccessful.

Gathering information from young children or from adults who are trying to remember what happened to them when they were younger can require special interview skills as they remember less information and give briefer accounts of what happened, but the research suggests that their memories are still as accurate as older children. Open-ended questions are less useful for them, but using aids such as drawings, stuffed animals, and other props may enhance recall. It is important to

remember that although young children can answer who, what, and how questions, those requiring “when” or time sequencing should not be expected prior to ages 8–10. Cued interviewing does not always signify bias, but rather it can trigger recall without contamination if the question is structured into smaller units or segments of time attached to a particular event such as “before you went on the bicycle trip.”

Talking about the sex trafficking can occur at any time, either before or after the questions about family history. Interview questions that help facilitate the narrative include:

- “Were you involved with someone who got you into sex trafficking?”
- “How did that occur?”
- “Did a friend introduce you?”
- “Can you describe what happened the first time you met the trafficker?”
- “What were some of the good parts about the relationship?”
- “What were some of the bad parts about the relationship?”

Similar to asking about the abuse in intimate partner abuse relationships, it is important to collect details of at least four incidents: “the first time sex was demanded?,” “the last time you were trafficked prior to your seeing me?,” “the worst time or one of the worst if the last time was the worst?,” and “tell me a typical trafficking event?” Follow-up questions about how the person’s fears were handled, all the feelings experienced, and if the trafficker or the life was still missed at times give acceptance to the feelings along with the caution that feelings do not have to be acted on. However, given the fact that many sex-trafficked victims do elope back to the trafficker during therapy, it is important to let them know that these ambivalent feelings are not unusual and they can always return to therapy when they wish.

## **PTSD Issues in Psychotherapy**

Although victims of sex trauma may have a variety of psychological diagnoses, the first-line issues that need to be addressed in psychotherapy are those that make up the diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). The evidence-based treatment of PTSD suggests using a cognitive behavioral approach; in fact, most clinicians who treat gender-based violence victims suggest that a feminist- or relationship-based approach is also necessary as culture and situational context must be accounted for beyond the symptoms of PTSD listed in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 5th Edition* (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). Rebuilding trust in relationships, safety, validation of the person’s narrative of their traumatic experiences, cognitive clarity, emotional regulation, reducing trauma responses, and increasing resilience are all goals of the interventions used to heal from PTSD.



## STEP Program for Sex Trafficking Survivors

The *Survivor Therapy Empowerment Program, Second Edition (STEP-2)* designed by Walker and Jungersen (2015) (Walker, 2016) is an example of addressing the above issues in a systematic manner using a manualized approach with lots of exercises accompanying each unit. Combining trauma and feminist theories, the program can be used in individual or group treatment with both women and men who have been exposed to trauma such as having been trafficked whether they are heterosexual, lesbian, gay, or bisexual. It has not yet been adapted for use with transsexual or gender non-conforming individuals although that is under development. The use of feminist therapy theory and techniques was added to deal with the abuse and inequality of power and control between the victim and the perpetrator using a positive and strength-based model. An interesting side issue of using STEP when it was adapted for sex trafficking victims was gaining a better understanding of how a victim gains power by becoming a victimizer herself, since sex trafficking is the one gender violence trauma where there are known women victimizers studied, most of whom were originally victims (see Chap. Sarachaga-Barato & Walker on Victims Becoming Victimizers earlier in this book).

Although STEP was originally developed for psychotherapy with domestic violence victims/survivors, those experiencing other gender violence traumas began to attend the groups and research has found it to be beneficial for healing from all forms of gender trauma exposure. It was theorized that a particular order of presentation of the units would be the most helpful for the participants, but the research showed that success was based more on the number of units completed (at least 9 out of the 12 available) rather than the order in which they were completed (Jungersen et al., [in submission](#)). The issues presented in the order in the manual are described below.

STEP has been used as a group therapy treatment with incarcerated and residential populations as well as in community groups such as mental health centers and battered women shelters. There are strict policies often enforced in the detention and residential treatment centers although even in the community groups, special permission to conduct the program may be required. Some psychotherapists take a unit out of the entire program and use it within individual psychotherapy when a particular issue is being addressed. When using STEP with a group, the optimum size is usually 12 people, but it often has been used with a variety of sizes ranging from 8 to 45 in some jails. To fully utilize the group process that helps the healing, the members should be fairly stable, but in most cases that is difficult to achieve given the often chaotic lifestyles of the survivors. As was mentioned earlier, elopement is not unusual within the trafficking survivor population, so it is expected that some will be in and out of the groups depending on the site. Confidentiality is always an issue both with the group but also with the survivor who may regret saying “too much” in a session. It is hoped that STEP will only be used in a treatment center that understands and tolerates the needs of trauma victim/survivors and can provide trust, safety, choice, collaboration, and empowerment for them. When using

the materials provided in the STEP manual, it is important to check on the language and comprehension of the handouts and exercises by the participants. Resilience is built by giving strength-building experiences rather than focusing on deficits. The goal is competency and mastery.

One difference in the goals for domestic violence and trafficking victims concerns their relationships with the perpetrator. For the domestic violence victim, the goal should not be to leave the abuser and the abusive relationship but rather to live a violence-free life. For the sex-trafficked victim, the goal is also to live a violence-free life, but it is understood that in order to do so, that person must leave the trafficker and the life. Therefore, it is necessary to provide more than psychotherapy especially for those who have been trafficked. They will need shelter or a safe home initially, a home (maybe special foster care) to complete the developmental tasks they missed growing up, educational and occupational/vocational services, medical care, and individual and group psychotherapy. One model program where these wraparound services are provided for girls and boys usually up until they are in their early 20s is the CHANCE Program at the Citrus Health Center in Miami, Florida (Rivas-Vasquez & McGrath, 2016).

After introducing each session, the STEP Program utilizes a tripartite method within each group that should last between 1 and 1.5 to 2 hours. Although it is possible to complete each STEP unit in one session, it is more likely that two or more sessions will be needed to complete most of the units, especially when the group is larger than 12 members. Each session should still be split into the three sections, psychoeducation of something about trauma led by the facilitators (usually two or more depending on the size of the group), processing how what is discussed in the psychoeducation section is relevant to each participant, and learning a new skill with practice exercises.

Safety planning is important throughout the program. Most survivors will need help in adapting to the new environment and tasks expected of them. Although limits and boundaries must be set for the group, there needs to be a certain amount of flexibility on some issues but not on others such as confidentiality and respectful treatment of others. Helping them feel a sense of belonging to a community, group, or cause larger than themselves may assist in developing new meaningful interpersonal relationships. Constant monitoring and checking about the internal feelings and safety of the group members is important to avoid a crisis later. Psychological safety is different from physical safety especially since the survivor rarely thinks about it. The trafficking survivor needs to partner with at least one other trusted person in order to be encouraged to make disclosures at their own pace. It is important for the therapist to look at the person's world through their trauma lens. Make eye contact when talking but give the person space to respond in their own way. Most survivors, especially children and youth, have valid fears of their own safety and loved one's safety, find it difficult to trust adults to protect them, are hyperaware of potential threats, and have problems controlling their emotional reactions and behavior to perceived threats. Many misinterpret the therapist's own moods as being caused by themselves and worry about pleasing the therapist. Some will test the therapist's loyalty to them by engaging in unacceptable behavior, so it is important

to help them realize that they are not defined by their behavior but rather by who they are. Honesty and authenticity are of critical importance in order for the therapist-client relationship to be established and therapeutic for the client. Ask directly what the survivor needs to feel safe, and discuss whether it is possible to give it to them. Take all the survivor's concerns seriously, and empathize and acknowledge feelings that make sense based on the past experiences described. It is important to let the person know what is realistic to expect in therapy, but at the same time, be reassuring that they will eventually heal from most if not all of their symptoms.

The 12 units in the STEP program include the following:

#### STEP 1—Labeling, validation of the trauma and abuse, and safety planning

In this first unit, participants learn the many different types of physical, sexual, and psychological abuse that frequently occur with gender violence during the first psychoeducation section. It is not unusual for the participants to begin to identify different types of abuse that they have experienced once the definitions are discussed during the group process section. Most victims underreport abusive incidents, so the exercises in this STEP unit help them remember what has occurred. Learning how to anticipate their safety needs is the skill that is taught in the third section of this STEP unit. Self-defense techniques may also be suggested in some cases. Participants are asked to create their own safety plan, and it is discussed during the following session.

#### STEP 2—Relaxation training and reducing stress

In this unit the psychoeducation section includes various causes of stress and how to recognize them. Common stressors are discussed including ways to recognize them as the tension is building. The discussion section includes the participants learning to recognize the sources of stress present in their own lives.

In the skill-building section, participants are taught the various methods of relaxation including deep breathing, imaging, and progressive muscle tension and relaxation. They are encouraged to practice relaxation techniques between sessions on their own, and practice may be repeated during other STEP units to make sure they are using the techniques to reduce anxiety and stress.

#### STEP 3—Cognitive restructuring: thinking, feeling, and behavior

One of the areas affected by trauma is the ability to think clearly and use thoughts to change behavior. In this unit, the differences between feelings and thoughts are clarified and the mechanisms by which each may impact behavior is described. Identification of cognitive distortions commonly seen in trauma survivors and unhelpful thinking styles are also covered during the psychoeducational section. The group then processes their own thinking patterns and identifies how both positive and negative thoughts can impact on their mood and their behavior. In the skill-building section, participants practice exercises in thought stopping techniques to deal with intrusive thoughts that may be a part of their PTSD symptoms. Research suggests that introducing cognitive behavioral techniques to change behavior early

in psychotherapy rather than focusing on understanding feelings will reduce PTSD symptoms and help contain strong affect later on when emotional regulation is the goal of that unit (Walker, 2016). Learning to keep a “thought journal” is the exercise that accompanies this STEP.

#### STEP 4—Boundaries, assertiveness, and communication

Dealing with anger is an important issue for trauma survivors. It paralyzes some, while others are overwhelmed by fear when they experience their intense feelings. For many, they have not learned appropriate boundaries between themselves and others. These issues impact their ability to trust and communicate with some becoming pleasers, others staying away from people, and still others going back and forth in their relationships but never really trusting anyone. Learning to differentiate being assertive and being able to ask for what is wanted and not becoming angry when they do not get it is an important skill in learning how to trust again. During the group discussion topics such as situations where it is more or less possible to ask for what is needed, those that are culturally determined, and those that women find particularly difficult may also be raised. During the skill training, the participants learn and practice assertiveness training and taking a time-out when feelings of anger become especially intense.

#### STEP 5—The cycle of violence and battered woman syndrome

Although not all the participants have experienced or been exposed to intimate partner abuse, enough of them have curiosity about how to avoid violent and abusive relationships to learn more about the cycle of violence that includes tension-building, an acute battering incident, and loving contrition afterward. The symptoms found in the battered woman syndrome research are described and discussed including how abuse can disrupt their relationships with others, difficulties with body image and health problems, and sexual and intimacy problems. An examination of the courtship period and the reinforcers for staying in the relationship applies to sex-trafficked victims as well as those experiencing domestic violence. Identification of their own cycles of abuse occurs during the discussion section, and the skill-building section includes actually drawing their own cycles.

#### STEP 6—Trauma triggers and PTSD

The discussion about battered woman syndrome symptoms is continued with more explicit examples of PTSD and complex PTSD symptoms that continue to impact trauma survivors during the intervention period. Common trauma and PTSD reactions are described and the impact they have on survivors’ thinking, feeling, and acting. The goal is to accentuate the positive growth as the participants begin to control some of the symptoms that they can. Identifying those thoughts and situations that trigger the symptom responses and managing them are the goal during this unit. Skill-building tools to reduce trauma triggers and thereby reduce anxiety are taught and practiced during that section of the unit. Identifying trauma triggers is added to the thought journal that participants have been keeping.

### STEP 7—Numbing behaviors and substance abuse

Learning to identify what most victim/survivors do to control the intensity of their feelings is the subject of this unit. The various tension-reducing and emotional numbing behaviors are identified and their mechanisms of action described. Alcohol and other substances are the primary focus although other behaviors used by sexual assault survivors such as cutting themselves and other self-injurious acts are also described. These self-injurious behaviors usually relieve and provide distraction from negative emotions, calm the survivor, provide a rush or thrill-seeking experience, and end the deadened state of depersonalization. It is rarely intended to be a suicide action, but sometimes the intensity by which it is committed leads to accidental death. Therapists help the victim/survivor determine what the person accomplishes with this behavior and try to offer substitutions as an antidote to feelings of helplessness and powerlessness as well as other adaptive ways to deal with intense feelings. Adding another column to the thought journal to detail what if any substances or other types of numbing and self-injurious behaviors are used is one of the exercises used in the skill-building section.

### STEP 8—Empathy and emotional re-regulation

In this unit the re-regulation of the survivor's feelings is the primary focus. Discussion of the various ways emotions manifest themselves and how to control them so that they do not dictate moods and behaviors by themselves is important in this section. The concept of empathy or feeling what someone else is feeling even if it is different from oneself is an important skill that many trauma victims/survivors forget as they focus exclusively on their own fear and anxiety. If they can figure out what they did to make someone treat them abusively, then they may be safe for a short period of time. Therefore, while they may be excellent at reading what are other people's emotions, they often believe how someone else is feeling has been caused by themselves rather than trying to figure out what actually might have caused the problem. For example, if the therapist didn't sleep well the previous night and seems a bit foggy in the session, the typical trauma victim's reaction is to take the blame for boring the therapist rather than trying to figure out what really might be going on. Taking on self-blame makes it possible to gain more control over a situation. However, it also may lead to blaming others rather than truly understanding and just empathizing with the others' feelings. Discussion leads to identification of ways each person might engage in this behavior. Skill building uses many of the skills from mindfulness training so that participants learn to observe, describe, and participate rather than making quick conclusions with limited data. Learning to achieve core mindfulness is an important goal to regulating their own feelings.

### STEP 9—Impact of abuse and trauma on children

This is one of the most difficult sessions for those survivors who have children of their own. Many of them feel guilty that their parenting behavior has not been good for their children. If the program is used with women in the jail, many of their

children are being cared for by the perpetrators' families or even the state child protection agencies. Some men and women feel badly that they have lost custody or even just contact with their children due to their lifestyle. The other part of this unit is dealing with their own childhood and the impact of abuse in their home of origin. Many survivors have ambivalent feelings about their parents and families. They are angry and untrusting due to the abuse but also still trying to win their parent's love and approval. Helping the survivors learn how to live with these contradictions can occur by dealing with attachment issues in general. Examining their own attitudes, values, and behaviors learned in their childhood homes and how they impact on their current relationships is an important discovery process during the discussion section. Adding culture and religion often provides for a lively session. Skill-building exercises help participants connect their childhood experiences with their own ideas of parenting skills. For those who are too young to have any children yet, examination of what kind of a parent they want to be and what skills they think they still need to learn is an important topic.

#### STEP 10—Legal issues

It is a rare trauma survivor who does not have some contact with the legal system. More likely, the survivor has had a lot of contact with different parts of the legal system including the criminal courts, juvenile justice, family courts, and dependency courts. Juveniles under the state care may need 6-week follow-up appointments with caseworkers and other court personnel. Survivors of trafficking may be involved in prosecution of their trafficker similar to domestic violence victims who are asked to testify against their batterers. It is important to understand that there is both love and abuse in these relationships and to ignore the love bond will inevitably make the legal prosecution difficult if not impossible. Explanation of the legal system in each of these proceedings is part of the education section. Discussion of access to resources and ways to evaluate if they are helpful or not is often part of this section. The group often has stories of legal wrongdoings that help understand their lack of trust in adults who only pretend to be helpful. How to prepare for a court battle is the skill taught in the last section. Keeping good timelines and notes about every incident that has occurred is important and participants are taught how to protect themselves in court.

#### STEP 11—Grieving and letting go of old relationships

In this unit the participants deal with the emotions that accompany giving up old relationships as well as other types of loss. Different models of dealing with loss and grief are explored. Survivors share their own stories about giving up the good as well as bad relationships and what helps them move on with their lives. Each provides a description of what they think would be qualities in an ideal relationship. Learning to do a relationship assessment listing pros and cons of a relationship can help survivors make better choices as they develop new intimate relationships and other personal friendships.

## STEP 12—Wellness, resilience, and termination

Principles that underlie striving toward wellness and renewing their resilience are the final psychoeducation unit in the program. It helps participants understand that just healing from the PTSD trauma symptoms is not enough; rather, they learn to use the experience to build more successful life goals and opportunities. Discussion follows showing how significant life events can bolster or detract from rebuilding resilience. Meichenbaum's steps to rebuild resilience described later in this book (chapter "[Resilience: A Constructive Narrative Perspective](#)") are used to build the needed skills for survivors to thrive. These include making positive attachments and emotional connections with others, continuing to develop cognitive and emotional self-regulating abilities, holding positive beliefs about oneself, motivation to act effectively in one's own environment, developing effective organizing strategies, working on creativity and spirituality, and working on an easy going disposition with a positive temperament without letting anyone take advantage of your kindness.

## Assessment of Effectiveness

It is important to assess the effectiveness of whatever psychotherapy techniques are selected. Obviously, if the victims/survivors drop out of treatment, it is not meeting their needs at the time. However, exactly what are their needs may not necessarily be known. The CHANCE program has stated that it may take at least 1 year of interventions including individual and group psychotherapy for many adolescent survivors of sex trafficking to begin to trust the psychotherapist and move beyond supportive therapy to reducing the effects of trauma in the treatment (Rivas-Vasques & McGrath, 2016). In some cases, the trauma symptoms disappear as the client feels stronger and takes more control of her life. If possible, it may be helpful to use more formal assessments such as the Beck Anxiety Inventory (BAI; Beck & Steer, 1990), Beck Depression Inventory (BDI-II; Beck, Steer, & Brown, 1996), and Beck Hopelessness Scale (BHS; Beck & Steer, 1988) to measure mood and the Trauma Symptom Inventory (TSI-2; Briere, 2011) and Detailed Assessment of Posttraumatic Stress (DAPS; Briere, 2001) to assess impact from trauma. If there are other co-occurring psychological diagnoses, assessments such as the Personality Assessment Inventory (PAI; Morey, 2007) may also be administered periodically. In our programs in the jails and other facilities, we teach and use the Subjective Units of Distress (SUDs) ranking emotions such as anxiety from 1 to 100 as an informal measure after each session.

## Conclusions

Psychotherapy in the USA is a successful method of helping sex trafficking survivors heal from their experiences. There is little information about psychotherapy for survivors in other countries. It is often said that the most difficult problem is to get

the victim/survivor to the psychotherapist's office more than one time. Difficulties with early attachment issues interact with a lack of trust in all adults to create barriers no matter what the psychotherapist qualities and psychotherapy goals. Nonetheless, once the connection is made, the bond can help a victim become a survivor and go on to live a very successful life. Training conferences to teach first responders and psychotherapists about sex trafficking are often co-facilitated with the survivors together, with each learning from the other. Many survivors go on to become trained psychotherapists although they also have trained in almost every other profession and career depending on their talents and interests.

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# Rebuilding Healthy Sexual Lifestyles for Trafficking Survivors



Rachel Needle and Elizabeth Bessette

For many, our sexuality is used to identify who we are. It can influence our attraction to others and ourselves and be a source of freedom and pleasure, but just as easily sexuality can become an outlet for a negative sense of self, evoking feelings of shame, and ostracism. Sexual exploitation and sex trafficking are considered a form of modern slavery. Many victims of sex trafficking were forced into committing sexual acts during childhood. Thus, their developing years were spent in an environment surrounded by manipulation, coercion, violence, and control. To those unaware of such conditions and its impact, these sex workers are criminalized as adults and seen as prostitutes, are often unable to identify themselves as victims, and have limited, if any, ability to escape. The negative stereotypes surrounding female sex workers (FSW) impose a cultural frame of reference strongly influenced by politics, religion, family of origin, morals, and ethics. What many fail to understand is the involvement and impact of organized crime in the sex trade. Sex traffickers will often find children who are vulnerable as a result of homelessness or foster care, neglect, and abuse and low self-esteem and/or who have experienced sexual and physical abuse. Individuals who attempt to escape from this business are often forced or lured back into prostitution; many women who may have been coerced, forced, kidnapped, or threatened into sex work find themselves unable to escape. Many female sex workers who have been trafficked experience various adverse mental and physical health impacts, such as exposure to violence, post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety, panic attacks, substance abuse, depression, STI/HIV, unplanned pregnancies and abortions, pelvic inflammatory disease, and an increase in untreated urinary tract infections. Additionally, because many FSW are coerced into trafficking as children (between the ages of 10 and 17), this population has a lack of education about disease prevention and female health.

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## Mental Health and Sexuality

By its very definition, sex trafficking involves oppressed individuals. While there are male victims of sex trafficking, their prevalence is unknown as they are less likely to report being trafficked. Some are heterosexual, while others are homosexual and choose to live a homosexual lifestyle if they escape being trafficked. Women and children who are victims of sex trafficking are exposed to increased violence, often to control them and restrict their freedom. The exposure to violence, unwanted sexual acts, and lack of freedom causes many victims to experience depression, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety and panic attacks, suicidal ideations, and substance abuse. As a means of coping, victims may also align with their traffickers (a condition known as Stockholm syndrome). When an individual escapes from her captor and attempts to assimilate to life as a former slave of the sex industry, they may attempt to redefine their identity. Their intense history of trauma and exploitation affects their ability to form attachments and build self-esteem, as well as their ability to make decisions. FSW who have been trafficked are at a greater risk of exposure to violence and in particular sexual violence during initiation (Decker, McCauley, Phuengsamran, Janyam, & Silverman, 2011). The increased exposure to violence increases the probability that the victim will develop PTSD, depression, suicidal ideation, and obsessive-compulsive disorder (Hammond & McGlone, 2014). Feelings of low self-esteem, loss of self, dissociation, and demoralization are often a part of the psychological impact of the sex industry on a woman who has been brought into it by force or coercion, which is most often the case.

As sex traffickers recruit, many will use tactics that exploit the vulnerabilities of females they are interacting with. It is a common manipulation tactic for traffickers to develop a relationship with an individual. The females are often in search of a better opportunity, have often been exposed to physical or sexual abuse as a child, may be in the foster system, have run away from home, or are homeless. The trafficker creates an opportunity to lure the individual in with promises of a better situation and deceives the young woman until they are unable to escape. This often involves threats and physical violence. Traffickers will isolate girls from their support network, including family, friends, and the public, limiting their ability to be rescued.

Women who were forced into sex trafficking as children are more likely to have experienced dissociation, which can result in greater issues with sexual arousal in adulthood. In a study comparing women who have experienced childhood sexual abuse (CSA) to those who have not, researchers found that women with a history of CSA are more likely to report problems with sexual arousal and show lower physiological sexual responses when measured in the laboratory (Bird, Seehuss, Clifton, & Rellini, 2014). As a symptom of PTSD, dissociation can be characterized as derealization and depersonalization. Victims who have experienced trauma may dissociate during the traumatic event, and consequently the individual is triggered by stimuli reminding them of the trauma. Women who have experienced sexual abuse

through trafficking may have heightened vulnerability to triggers due to the nature of their restrictive, often violent, environment.

Survivors of sex trafficking may experience a lack of self-esteem, particularly sexually, mental health conditions, and overall decreased well-being. Low sexual self-esteem may affect the survivor's ability to form attachments with others. The relationship between well-being, self-esteem, and attachment is based on Robert W. Lent's theory of well-being that an individual who experiences greater subjective well-being will be able to process the trauma better than an individual who does not (Barnum & Perrone-McGovern, 2017). Survivors of CSA are more likely to experience a lack of sexual self-esteem than individuals who were not abused. To parallel CSA with the experience of sex trafficked FSW (many of whom are trafficked during childhood and adolescence), this population was exposed to complex trauma by means of sexual activity and exploitation. Former FSW would be less likely to develop high sexual self-esteem and well-being due to violations of trust and boundaries. This population may experience dissociative symptoms during sexual activity as well as during normal activities of daily functioning. Because of their experience in the sex industry, combined with the traumatic experience of being trafficked and the violation of their body and freedom, females are at heightened risk for comorbid mental health issues as well as challenges with their sexual identity.

Some survivors of CSA report a phenomenon referred to as "the feeling of being contaminated" (FBC) in adult survivors of CSA. Victims of sexual abuse develop somatic symptoms relating to their sexual trauma that can often be mistaken by clinicians as obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD). The obsession that is experienced by the individual can prohibit intimacy or cause issues with affection, as those with FBC feel as though their abuser left behind traces of themselves such as semen, scent, or even genetic makeup that imprints on their individuality. In one extreme case, the individual believed that what her abuser left behind was changing her personality into something different than it was (Jung & Steil, 2012). Presenting symptoms include an obsession with cleanliness (an attempt to remove the remnants of their attacker), obsession with smell, and overuse of perfumes to mask any smell related to the sexual abuse. What is interesting to note in relation to complex PTSD, which was not included in the most recent *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, is that FBC was one of the characterizing symptoms for this classification of PTSD (Jung & Steil, 2012). Many survivors of sex trafficking who have been victims of continuous exploitation and trauma report feeling permanently damaged or contaminated. According to Lent's theory of well-being, these feelings can lead to isolation and feelings of inferiority. An individual experiencing FBC may not become intimate with someone out of fear that their contamination would be exposed.

The impact on an individual who has been sex trafficked can be influenced by the age at which the sex trafficking began. The younger the individual, the greater the chance that they will have difficulties with healthy attachments later in life. A survivor of CSA was subjected to relationships structured on manipulation, violations of trust and boundaries, and exposure to violence and coercion. In adulthood, if the individual could escape or was somehow released, the unstable attachment to their

trafficker can impact their ability to identify companions that would provide stability, comfort, and safety. A pattern of unhealthy relationships may result as the survivor will often be attracted to a companion that mirrors traits of her trafficker, pimp, or “john” as this is the type of attachment that became normative during their childhood.

Embedded with diagnostic presentations, we often see a fear of intimacy in victims of sex trafficking. Individuals may have a strong desire for relationships, yet a strong fear of relationships at the same time. We often see survivors of sex trafficking alternate between dependency and detachment. This can lead to intense and unstable relationships. Getting close to someone is scary for them as they have not been able to be vulnerable and trust, so they are likely to pull away when they begin getting close to a partner.

## **Impact on Physical Health**

Among the most prevalent issues regarding the sexuality and sexual functioning of a victim of sex trafficking is the high susceptibility to contracting sexually transmitted infections and HIV. A study focusing on the health of female sex workers in Thailand concluded that due to limited access to preventative measures and a lack of education, trafficked sex workers were at higher risk of contracting HIV compared to non-trafficked workers. If the victim can escape or is released, an HIV diagnosis can cause intimacy problems in future relationships as well (Psaros et al., 2012). The risks associated with this population included “compromised agency to refuse sex or negotiate condom use, restrictions on mobility and access to preventative health services, limited knowledge of STI/HIV, and isolation and limited access to prevention messages” (Decker et al., 2011, p. 334). Since many of the females who are forced into trafficking are between the ages of 10 and 17, this population often is uneducated about prevention methods and health care. Several women reported that they didn’t feel they had the freedom to deny sexual acts without condom use. Trafficked women report higher frequencies of pelvic inflammatory disease, fertility issues, unplanned pregnancies, and abortions (complications are common as many abortions are performed illegally).

## **Treatment Interventions and Implications**

Trauma, including sexual trauma, is difficult to treat. With victims of sex trafficking, treatment is more challenging as there is the additional dimension of being exploited, often from a very young age, including regular sexual and often physical abuse. The psychological trauma faced by victims of sex trafficking often leads to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, anxiety, phobias, shame, and self-hatred fueled by the discrimination and stigmatization from society. Additionally,

sex trafficking victims are susceptible to sexually transmitted infections, vaginal and anal trauma, and other gynecological and reproductive issues. It is important that clinicians are aware of the sexual, psychological, and gynecological challenges that sex trafficking victims often face. In addition, helping victims get to a point where they are sexually healthy is an important goal of treatment.

Some of the potential sexual symptoms of sex trafficking include avoiding or being afraid of sex; approaching sex as an obligation; feeling disconnected from or feeling shame about one's body; experiencing negative feelings such as anger, disgust, or guilt with touch; having difficulty becoming aroused or feeling sensation; feeling emotionally distant or not present during sex; experiencing intrusive or disturbing sexual thoughts and images; engaging in compulsive or inappropriate sexual behaviors; experiencing difficulty establishing or maintaining an intimate relationship; experiencing vaginal pain or orgasmic difficulties; and experiencing erectile or ejaculatory difficulties.

It is recommended that clinicians utilize a biopsychosocial model that allows the provider to capture the ever-changing blend of biological, psychological, relational, and contextual factors that interact to precipitate and maintain the dysfunction. Due to the traumatic nature of the survivor's experience, treatment should include the following: forming a healthy, collaborative therapeutic alliance, reducing the overall level of distress, fostering experiential presence and continuity, breaking and replacing maladaptive patterns, and exploring trauma as related to current problems.

Therapy should first focus on establishing and reinforcing safety within the therapeutic relationship, with self and with others (Miller, 2017). To do this, therapists should work toward developing a healthy, collaborative, therapeutic relationship. Many survivors of sex trafficking experience a loss of self-esteem, empowerment, and safety that impacts their ability to form secure attachments and find healthy relationships. Survivors of sex trafficking may present to therapy when experiencing challenges within their current relationship but might also have difficulties finding compatible companionship.

For individuals seeking therapy together with a partner, it is important for clinicians to first identify the couple's goals. Often, individuals who have experienced CSA or were former FSW due to sex trafficking will be triggered by sexual intimacy resulting in symptoms of dissociation and PTSD. For these individuals, there is often a lot of anxiety around intimacy. It is helpful if clinicians first work with clients on anxiety reduction techniques and utilize dialectical behavior therapy including skills building. Healthy communication is often one goal of therapy. Many individuals with a history of being sex trafficked will experience feelings of abandonment and loss which will need to be processed in therapy. Supporting the client in regaining control of her sexual identity and preferences is often another focus of therapy. Clinical interventions for sex trafficking survivors often involve increasing sexual self-esteem and increasing attachment security to promote overall subjective well-being (Barnum & Perrone-McGovern, 2017).

Other common goals of therapy with individuals with a history of sex trafficking include gaining a deeper understanding of what happened and how it influenced

sexuality; increasing body and self-awareness; developing a positive sense of one's sexuality; learning new skills for experiencing touch and sexual sharing in safe, life-affirming ways; learning about healthy sexuality; learning to handle automatic reactions to touch; and stopping unhealthy sexual behaviors.

Lastly, because sex trafficking victims have often been dehumanized, objectified, and controlled by their traffickers, their natural sense of power is frequently confused. They have had little to no power and control in their own lives. Thus, it is important for clinicians to work collaboratively with the client to cultivate an empowering environment and allow the individual to be an active participant in treatment. Restoring power and control should occur first within the therapeutic environment with the therapist and if and when a partner is present, within the relationship.

## Conclusion

This chapter has presented the impact of sex trafficking on an individual's mental and sexual health. Goals for therapy when working with individuals with a history of sex trafficking and who are experiencing sexual and relationship problems were also reviewed.

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# Ways to Treat Victims of Human Trafficking: Core Therapeutic Tasks



Donald Meichenbaum

It is not unusual for homeless often runaway adolescents, especially those with histories of childhood sexual, physical or emotional abuse to become involved in prostitution (human trafficking). In some cases, they are recruited and controlled by a pimp. In others, the survivor may exchange sex for drugs, food or shelter. Such prostitution is associated with an elevated risk of assault, disease, depression and posttraumatic stress. Entreaties that the adolescent just stop such behavior is often “less than effective. (Briere & Lanktree, 2014)

If entreaties to change do not work, then what can individuals and society do to be of assistance? What do we know about behavior-change principles and core psychotherapeutic interventions that can be implemented to help individuals who are “victims” of human trafficking? This presentation will describe the core tasks of such psychotherapeutic interventions. (*Also, see the multimodal, multi-component treatment manual by John Briere and Cheryl Lanktree Integrative Treatment of Complex Trauma for Adolescents—ITCT-A* [www.attc.usc.edu](http://www.attc.usc.edu).) The National Human Trafficking Resource Center website (<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/trafficking>) has a number of informative reports and helpful resources. See the report on “Human Trafficking into and Within the U.S.” (<http://aspc.hhs.gov/hsp/07/Humantrafficking/>).

## Core Psychotherapeutic Tasks

1. The overarching critical therapeutic core task is the ability to develop, maintain, and monitor a nonjudgmental, caring, and trusting therapeutic alliance. The Health Care Provider (HCP) needs to meet the client/survivor where he/she is at

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and “take the individual as he/she is.” The HCP needs to convey an authentic, emotionally attuned caring and supportive relationship. There is a need to be patient, using a gentle form of inquiry of open-ended questions, conveying a keen compassionate curiosity, a type of Socratic questioning. The survivor needs to feel “heard and respected.” The therapeutic alliance is critical to the effectiveness of any intervention.

In order to maintain the therapeutic alliance, there is a need to consider what, if any, therapeutic-interfering behaviors may undermine participation and engagement (fear, hopelessness, depression, and practical concerns about safety).

The HCP needs to engage in “outreach” efforts and go to the individual in need. Persistent efforts to engage the client is necessary. Convey a willingness to help. Moreover, it is important to have the clients provide regular feedback on the degree to which the intervention sessions are perceived as being helpful in achieving the agreed-upon goals. Also, ask about the quality of the therapeutic alliance (“the fit”). Maintain continuity of care.

2. There is a need to ensure that any interventions are culturally sensitive, gender-specific, and sensitive to the sexual orientation and gender identity of the youth. For instance, Meredith Dank, in a study of LGBT youth, found that they were often victimized and that this contributed to their engaging in prostitution and human trafficking. They reported engaging in “survival sex.” (See [www.urban.org](http://www.urban.org) for more details of the study.)
3. Where indicated, there is value in incorporating the youth’s spirituality, religious beliefs, practices, and rituals. For instance, in her biographical account *Stolen*, Katariina Rosenblatt (Revell Publishers) describes how her religious beliefs that “God wanted me to have a good life that I deserved” helped her to escape from sex trafficking.
4. Safety issues are key to treatment engagement. There needs to be a “safe place,” away from the clients’ “handlers” to meet. This safety assessment should be ongoing. In addition, a variety of other safety domains need to be addressed.
  - (a) Assess for the presence of any present or past incidence of suicidal and self-injurious behaviors and accompanying depression, polysubstance drug abuse, and other “high-risk” reckless behaviors. (See King, Foster, Rogalski, 2013. *Teen suicide risk* Guilford Press.) Keep in mind that the failure to report suicidal ideation does not necessarily indicate the absence of risk for suicidal behaviors.
  - (b) Assess for the presence of any criminal, antisocial behaviors, and aggressive behaviors that could get them into trouble with the law. Assess for the history of various forms of substance abuse, sexual activities, and other high-risk behaviors.
  - (c) Assess for possible ways to engage in safer sex practices (protection from HIV, other sexually transmitted diseases). Use a “harm-reduction” approach. Support safer sexual behaviors. Be nonjudgmental.
  - (d) Help the client have in place a pre-planned detailed safety plan for exiting the environment when imminent danger is present (prepacked bag, planned



escape route, how to find a new safer environment, hotline telephone numbers, friend's home, local shelter).

These assessments should be conducted using the “art of questioning” consisting of a compassionate curiosity, gentle inquiry, and Socratic questioning. Focus on “what” and “how” questions. Stay away from “why” questions. Such probes should convey a concern for the client's well-being and safety.

5. Assess for developmental and current risk and protective factors. The **risk** factors for being vulnerable to becoming a victim of sexual trafficking include:
  - (a) Coming from a low SES disadvantaged environment (single-parent home)
  - (b) Having experienced cumulative forms of victimization (physical, sexual abuse neglect, exposure to domestic violence) and family members similarly being victimized
  - (c) Runaway and rejected by your family, as in the case of one's sexual orientation.
  - (d) History of substance abuse and the use of drugs when engaging in sexual activities (engaging in sexual activities to survive)
  - (e) Feelings of low self-worth, lonely, and feeling unlovable
  - (f) Parents involvement in prostitution and in the sex trafficking trade
  - (g) Being a school dropout
  - (h) Poor development of attachment relations (belief that no one cares and what has been called a “daddy hole”)
  - (i) Engagement in other high-risk activities (antisocial behavior, sexual acting out behaviors). Determine the cumulative impact of such risk factors.

There is also a need to obtain a behavioral picture of **developmental protective factors**.

6. Engage the youth in a discussion of how he/she got involved in sex trafficking? How were he/she lured, groomed, recruited, and may have placed misguided trust in others? How may have individuals taken advantage of the youth's vulnerabilities? Also, permit the youth to relate any instances of what he/she considers “positive aspects” of their associations and experiences. Ask how the youth developed “street smarts” and “survival skills”? What social network did he/she develop? Who could the youth depend on if in need? What would the youth like to see changed? (See below on ways to use time lines to solicit this account.)

Finally, the assessment should also solicit information for any evidence of the client's “strengths,” “survival skills,” and “resilience.” There is a need to highlight the “rest of the story” of what the youth has done, and is doing, to protect oneself. It is critical to obtain the survivors' perspective, walk in their shoes in order to better appreciate how they negotiate their lives in terms of basic needs (shelter, food, safety protection). For example, ask the following questions:

*How are things going right now in your life and how would you like them to be? [Be present-focused.]*

*What have you tried to do to accomplish that goal? How has that worked?*

*How do you think we could work together to help you be X (safer, more in control, less depressed, stay out of trouble, be less exploited)?*

When asking such questions, solicit the individual's permission, and put him/her in charge of disclosing only that which he/she feels comfortable in sharing. Indicate that he/she is "in charge" and should feel free to stop the interview at any time and tell you when you overstep the bounds.

*Is it okay if I ask you some questions about X, since I want to make sure you are safe? (Not being exploited, controlled, abused?)*

7. Use motivational interviewing procedures as a way to engage the individual in a therapeutic relationship. Avoid argumentation, express empathy, help develop discrepancies, and support self-efficacy. In order to highlight discrepancies, ask the youth the following questions:

*What is it that they liked about their life (experiences) with their handler, their lifestyle of being part of the sex trade, and times with your friends?*

*I now better understand what you liked about your lifestyle. What don't you like about it?*

Keep in mind that the individuals may not see themselves as a "victim" and not be motivated to change. Some may hold an implicit theory that change is not possible ("no escape") or that the so-called benefits (pros) of their current lifestyle far outweigh the costs (cons). They may hold an "entity" versus an "incremental" theory of change. The social discourse should highlight the "language of possibilities and becoming," "change talk," and nurture hope for the future. Bathe the discussion with phrases such as "so far," "as yet," and personal agency metacognitive **re** verbs such as:

*Are you telling me, are you saying to yourself, that you can notice, sense when you are unsafe, catch yourself, plan ahead of time, use your back up plan and make smart choices? [Choose one verb.]*

*Can you give me an example when you can do that?*

*Are you saying that in spite of... you are able to do that?*

*How do you pull that off? Where did you learn such survival skills?*

Also use "Re" verbs, as part of the dialogue.

*Are you saying one of the things you want in your life is to...? Reconnect with X; reduce X; restory your life? Write a new chapter? Rebuild a life. (See Meichenbaum's Road map to Resilience book, e.g., for ways to conduct such resilience-engendering discussions—[www.roadmaptoresilience.com](http://www.roadmaptoresilience.com).)*

8. Engage the individual in collaborative goal-setting that nurtures hope. Help individuals develop "SMART" goals (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant to their situation and consistent with their values, and timely). Be very practical, realistic, and present-oriented. Work on sub-goals and small steps. Use foot-in-the-door procedures. Facilitate exploration of other possible safer options for survival that are less self-injurious. Identify specific behaviors that require immediate attention. Collaboratively set behavioral priorities on what should be worked on.

9. Conduct ongoing psychoeducation. This is neither a mini-lecture nor a didactic discussion. Out of the art of questioning, inform the individual about the services that you and your agency can provide; where and how to access safe shelter, medical, and legal services, hotline telephone numbers; and the like.

Have a discussion of what happens in therapy and counseling, who you are and your background, and how such discussions can help you help others. (“Make a gift” of their experiences and survival skills with others you see but always protecting their privacy and anonymity.) A key is establishing and maintaining trust. Share any books, films, or TED Talks and websites of how individuals have been able to escape from sex trafficking, and make a “gift” of their experiences, so others can benefit. Use peer mentors who have successfully escaped sex trafficking as counselors and provide them with ongoing supervision.

10. Conduct timeline analyses. Have the individual walk you through their developmental timelines, from birth to the present day. Draw a physical line, and have the individuals note when and where any form of “victimization” occurred (abuse, neglect, etc.). Have the individual indicate on the Timeline, what, if any, formal or informal treatment services were provided.

*When and how did the individual come into the sexual trafficking/prostitution?*

Normalize and validate their experiences. Ask, “How did they make such choices?” Convey empathy. Help the individual better appreciate how he/she has “internalized the voice,” or “repeat the messages” of those who have abused him/her. Have them consider what, if any, “exploitation” is occurring in their present relationships with their “handlers.” Highlight the concepts of their being “in charge,” “in control,” and “making personal choices.” Where are all those instances where the individuals have made “choices”? Ask how did they come to make such choices?

Generate a second timeline of what the individuals have been able to achieve “in spite of” the timeline 1 history of victimization. Document any examples of evidence of resilience and survival skills. Follow this up with probes of “how” he/she was able to engage in such behaviors and accomplish such personal goals, “in spite of” experiencing “victimization” experiences?

*What lingers from such a life history?*

*What beliefs and conclusions does the individual hold about self, others and the future, as a result of these experiences?*

*What story does he/she tell him/herself and tell others, as a result of this life history?*

*What resources (people) can the individual call upon now to help achieve his/her goals?*

A third timeline can be generated that begins in the present and projects how the individual would like things to be in the future. Help the individual develop practical short-term, intermediate-term, and long-term goals and sub-goals. Goal-setting is a critical way of nurturing hope.

11. Help the individuals better appreciate the interconnectedness between their feelings, thoughts, and behaviors. Use a **clock** metaphor: **12 o’clock**, how

appraise external and internal triggers; **3 o'clock**, primary and secondary emotions and the implicit theories about the experience and expression of their feelings; **6 o'clock**, automatic thoughts and images, beliefs, attributions, schema, scripts, and “self-talk”; and **9 o'clock**, behaviors and actions and resultant consequences. Discuss how these four components can become a *vicious cycle*, and what are the *impact, toll, and price* he/she and others pay as a result?

*Is this the way he/she wants things to be? If not, what could be done? How has he/she been able to break the “vicious cycle” in the past? What alternatives now exist to break the “vicious cycle”?*

12. Teach and nurture the individual’s intra- and interpersonal coping skills. These skills include ways to:

(a) Increase trigger awareness, identification, and intervention

- Identify instances when she is being triggered. (*What triggers me? How do I know I have been triggered?*)
  - Reframe triggered reactions. *These are old movies being replayed. “Can I check this out? What can I do if I get triggered?”*
  - Cope with such triggers. *What I do or say to myself can lessen the impact of the trigger? What has to happen for the situation to be less emotional?*
- I can analyze the trigger, increase my social supports, engage in positive self-talk, use my breathing exercises, use distraction, remember how I handled this in the past, change my facial expressions that send messages to my brain, and change my posture and activities. I can relabel my flashbacks, intrusive thoughts as “old movies,” and use acceptance and mindfulness activities and watch nonjudgmentally as they come and go—like “a wave.”
  - Become an “emotional detective” and self-regulate negative emotions and engage in opposite actions (e.g., ground myself; disengage; use visualization, relaxation, mindfulness activities; distress tolerance skills; control impulsivity).
  - Increase positive emotions and pursue pro-social safe pleasant activities; increase my well-being; and help the individual identify their values—what is really important. Build a life worth living. Attend to relationships and end “destructive” relationships and establish safe boundaries.
  - Use social problem-solving skills. Help individuals develop a Goal-Plan-Do-Check approach. Help them break goals into smaller steps, brainstorm ideas, make choices using a pros and cons analyses, anticipate barriers, develop backup plans, and troubleshoot.

It is not enough to “train and hope” for generalization. There is a need to build into the training program-specific guidelines for generalization. For example, put the trainees in a “consultative role,” so they can describe, explain, demonstrate, and teach such skills to others and offer self-generated reasons why engaging in such behaviors is necessary. Bolster self-efficacy. Engage the individual in self-attributional training, or ensure that they “take credit” for any changes they initiate.

Reinforce effort, not outcome. Use “How” and “What” questions to encourage them to describe the specific steps they took to achieve their goals. It is not enough to have individuals change; they need to alter the “story” of what such changes mean about them.

13. Help victims of human trafficking develop a coherent narrative and “re-story/reauthor” their lives. Individuals who are engaged in human trafficking likely have had a long history of multiple and complex victimization experiences. The intervention steps include:

- (a) Following the individual’s lead, and at his/her own pace, and with permission, obtain a victimization history and evidence of any formal or informal interventions. Explore what is the “lingering impact” of such victimization experiences? What conclusions does the individual draw about him/herself, other people, and the future? What are the “stories” that he/she tells himself/herself and others, as a result of such victimization experiences?
- (b) Decide collaboratively with the individual on whether the intervention focus should be on present-day issues and/or relating, retelling, and reliving (sharing) past trauma experiences with “safe” others.
- (c) Conduct prebriefing discussions about the trauma-exposure-based intervention, namely, the rationale, procedures of repeatedly describing his/her trauma story in order to develop a more coherent account.
- (d) Have the client engage in prolong exposure and in writing and journaling activities (cognitive processing therapy procedures). Describe events in as much detail as tolerable, including thoughts and feelings experienced during and after victimization. Reread the account at home and then share it with the therapist (and group members).
- (e) Conduct cognitive restructuring in order to consider any faulty cognitions and attributions of self-blame, deservingness, and responsibility. Address emotional issues of guilt, shame, humiliation, anger, and the tendency to “internalize” the perpetrator’s comments. Provide an opportunity for exploration and guided reconsideration and reinterpretation in the form of imagery rescripting and restorative retelling (Gestalt “empty chair”). Use gentle open-ended questioning. Use specific cognitive behavioral interventions tailored to each dominant affective state—guilt ala Kubany, shame ala Smucker and Dancu, and anger ala Novaco and Chemtob. As Briere and Lanktree observe: *“The process of remembering painful (but not overwhelming) events in the context of safety, positive relatedness, emotional expression, opportunities for introspection, and minimal avoidance can serve to break the connection between traumatic memories and associated negative emotional and cognitive responses.”*

As a result of such repeated retelling, the individual’s narrative is likely to become more organized, chronologically structured and integrated and contextualized into a larger life story. Sharing one’s victimization account will highlight the likelihood of soliciting the “rest of the story” of what one did to survive and pull for signs of resilience. Keeping one’s victimization

story a “secret” exacerbates distress and acts as a block to undertake behavior changes.

- (f) Conduct titrated exposure in order to address avoidance behaviors that can exacerbate distress. See Briere and Lanktree on how to work in the client’s “therapeutic window.” Use imagery-based and/or in vivo exposure activities. Ensure that the client is safe when undertaking such activities.
14. Focus interventions on identity issues in order to help develop a positive sense of oneself and a sense of self-efficacy, self-validation, self-worth, and self-exploration. Involve significant others in this journey, as indicated. Help the client avoid revictimization by learning how to determine, establish, and maintain appropriate boundaries in relationships.
  15. Conduct relapse prevention procedures in order to help the client handle possible lapses and avoid relapse and anticipate and plan for possible barriers and setbacks. View these as “learning opportunities,” instead of “catastrophizing” and relapsing. Discuss what is needed to avoid going back into the same lifestyle of prostitution and sex trafficking.
  16. There is need to act as an advocate for the youth and refer them to shelters and convey ways to access medical and legal services, where indicated. Also, provide life skills and job training, and help them access employment opportunities. Help them access services in the community who treat victims of human trafficking. Be proactive in conducting follow-up. Do not let the youth “fall through the cracks.” Continuity of interest and care is critical. Conduct active outreach interventions.
  17. Help the helpers who have to deal with such challenging cases.

## Summary of Core Therapeutic Tasks to Bolster Resilience

1. Develop, maintain, and monitor a therapeutic alliance.
2. Implement culturally sensitive, gender-specific, and sexual orientation/gender identity interventions, and where indicated, incorporate the client’s spirituality, religious, and cultural beliefs, practices, and rituals.
3. Address any therapeutic-interfering behaviors.
4. Assess for safety issues and concerns. Provide safety planning.
5. Assess for both developmental and current risk and protective factors (evidence of survival skills and resilience).
6. Use the “art of questioning” in the form of compassionate curiosity. Use timelines to assess for the history of victimization, substance abuse, involvement in sex trafficking activities, and for the “rest of the story” of the client’s strengths and evidence of resilience.
7. Use motivational interviewing procedures to ascertain the pros and cons of being part of sexual trafficking activities.
8. Engage the individual in collaborative goal-setting that nurtures hope.

9. Conduct ongoing psychoeducation. Use the clock metaphor to educate the individual about the interconnectedness of appraisal processes, emotions, thoughts, behaviors, and resultant consequences (“vicious cycle” and ways to break this cycle).
10. Teach and nurture intra- and interpersonal coping skills. Build in generalization, self- attribution and maintenance guidelines. Teach how to become an “emotional detective.”
11. Address the “lingering impact” of past and current victimization experiences. Help individuals develop a “coherent narrative.” Obtain a history of victimization experiences and interventions using the timelines, conduct prebriefing, cognitive exploration, reconsideration and retelling, writing activities, titrated exposure, and cognitive restructuring interventions.
12. Help individuals avoid revictimization and conduct relapse prevention.
13. Provide ongoing coaching, where indicated, and follow-up contacts. Take on the role of being supportive, engaged, and a helpful advocate.
14. Help the helpers.

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# Clinician-Survivor-Driven Mentor Model™



**Kalyani Gopal**

The Clinician-Survivor-Driven Mentor Model™ was developed from the joint discussion that took place in a conference hosted by the SAFE Coalition of Human Rights (SAFECHR) in 2014. This was a global conference in Chicago during which survivors spoke about their greatest need, which was the need to be employed. Jobs were at the top of the list for survivors of human trafficking.

Critical components of the Clinician-Victim-Survivor model are that the clinicians and survivors work directly with victims in helping them heal, while survivors receive treatment for triggers. The protection of survivors and victims, by the treatment team, helps attenuate the effects of treatment by the clinicians alone so much so that the victims who have been newly rescued and placed have role models from those who have “been there.” Who better to provide hope than our survivors? Yet, they struggle almost daily with bills, their histories of exploitation, guilt, shame, and anger and are at times competing with their fellow survivors for recognition via demands to speak at conferences, with the need to be out there so they can get recognized and their contributions valued. Many quietly move on with their lives resenting the intrusion of press or others asking about their “stories.” There are a few very courageous few who humble those of us in the field with their “experiential expertise”.

It is in recognition of the unique dynamics of survivors and their survival needs that the survivor mentor model was developed in 2014. By building villages for youth and adult survivors to live in, survivors assigned to each cottage form the link for each victim rescued to the outside and often frightening world. By putting our survivors in the driver’s seat, the hope is to empower not only the survivors but also the victims who observe their skill sets and find a mentor to model after. For youth, being viewed as “bad” versus a “victim” is a transition that is helped by survivors who understand that chaos is natural and feels acceptable, while “calm” is terrifying.

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The Clinician-Survivor-Driven Mentor Model™ has these primary components:

1. Each clinician and survivor agrees to work with the victim during the phases of transition for a period of 3–5 years depending on which phase the victim is at in his or her development.
2. Each clinician agrees to provide the designated survivor therapy and on-call services for a period of 5 years due to the risk of relapse due to triggers, sometimes emanating from victims' behaviors.
3. Each survivor agrees to engage in treatment during the period of providing supportive mentorship services to victims in their care.
4. Each survivor agrees to engage in survivor workshops that address trauma-focused treatment effects and recognizing their own strengths and limitations.
5. Each survivor agrees to work with law enforcement and provide information as needed with regard to the victims they work with.
6. Each survivor agrees to develop safety plans for themselves and those under their care.
7. Each survivor agrees to work with the strictest ethical conduct per state, federal, and association laws in addition to the qualifications and guidelines provided in the Survivor Mentor Manual.
8. Each clinician and each survivor will be trained and credentialed in the human trafficking basic and advanced training and eligible for therapeutic work directly with victims.
9. All clinicians will be subject to detailed background checks at the highest levels prior to engaging with direct services with victims of human trafficking.
10. All clinicians and survivors will agree to sign the agreement and abide by the therapeutic contract with victims, due to the sensitive nature of treatment and seriousness of abandonment issues. In exceptional cases where the contractual terms requiring modifications the administrative and clinical teams would meet and develop an alternative plan.

The Clinician-Survivor-Driven Mentor Model is unique in the use of clinicians as adjunctive but critical players in the healing of victims of human trafficking and in outpatient settings which can serve as a very powerful and empowering vehicle in the restoration of human dignity.

# Resilience: A Constructive Narrative Perspective



**Donald Meichenbaum**

The New York columnist Nicholas Kristof (May 5, 2017) tells the story of Susan Burton, who he describes as the “Harriet Tubman of the twenty-first century.” At the age of 4, Ms. Burton was sexually assaulted by her aunt’s boyfriend. Soon she fell under the control of a violent pimp and began cycling through jails, prisons, addictions, and crime for more than 20 years. “Yet today she is a national treasure.” She leads a nonprofit organization helping people escape poverty and start over when leaving prison.

His fellow New York Times columnist David Brooks (Nov. 12, 2015) tells the story of Kennedy Odede, who grew up in a slum in Nairobi. He developed a school for girls “Shining Hope for Communities.” In childhood, he experienced severe poverty, hunger, physical and sexual abuse, and tragic losses. He joined a street gang to survive. How does someone survive, if not thrive, following such a horrific childhood? As Mr. Odede describes in his biography:

My mom taught me that while there is a God, that one God might be very busy, so we have to rely on people we encounter in our life who become what she called “small Gods.

While I was the victim of violence, I learned to appreciate sunrise – something in the world everyone shares.

Starting the school gave me a sense of power, feeling connected to an universal humanity.

Both Ms. Burton and Mr. Odede evidence resilience, and post-traumatic growth, as they transformed their victimization into a meaning-making mission to help others. Their stories are *not* unusual.

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Research indicates that in the aftermath of victimizing and traumatic experiences, most individuals are impacted, but some 75% go onto evidence resilience, while approximately 25% evidence long-term debilitating and chronic psychiatric disorders (depression, PTSD, substance abuse disorders, and other conditions) (Bonano, 2004; Southwick & Charney, 2012).

In fact, resilience is the normative response to traumatic victimizing experiences. PTSD can be viewed as a disorder of non-recovery. PTSD is a reflection of an autobiographical set of memories of some distal past or recent traumatic events that individuals have experienced. Such victimized individuals invariably tell themselves, as well as others, “stories” of what happened and what lingers from such experiences that affect their current functioning.

Individuals are “storytellers” or “homo-narrans.” I have proposed elsewhere, Meichenbaum (2012), that the stories that individuals tell themselves and that they tell others will determine whether they will fall into the 75% resilient group or fall into the 25% chronically distressed group. (See Table 1 for a description of the specific narrative features that characterize the 25% group of individuals who are “stuck,” who focus on “hot spots,” and who have difficulty incorporating their victimizing experiences into a coherent narrative that has redemptive features.)

In contrast, resilient individuals evidence the ability to “bounce back,” “beat the odds,” and “transform one’s emotional pain into something positive.” They move from viewing themselves as “victims” to become “survivors,” or even “thrivers,” handling ongoing adversities (Tsai et al., 2017).

Ann Masten (2001) indicates that resilience does not come from some special qualities but from the everyday magic of ordinary normative resources such as rela-

**Table 1** What individuals need to do (and not do) in order to develop PTSD

1. Engage in self-focused cognitions (“storytelling”) that reflect a “victim’s” mindset. See oneself as continually vulnerable, mentally defeated, and ruminate about the negative future implications of victimizing experiences. Engage in contra-factual thinking and hindsight bias, worst world scenarios, and upward social comparisons
2. Incorporate into one’s stories emotionally charged metaphors that undermine resilience. ( <i>I am prisoner of the past. A pariah. Emotionally dead. Trapped.</i> )
3. Hold belief that the world is unsafe and that all people are untrustworthy and that life is purposeless and helpless in changing my situation. Life is hopeless
4. Have feelings of self-blame, guilt, shame, humiliation, and unresolved anger that undermines emotional processing
5. Be continually hypervigilant, easily triggered. Clam up and keep trauma experiences a secret, and avoid seeking help. Engage in high-risk behaviors that sustain and exacerbate distress
6. Have overgeneralized, sensory-driven thinking processes that undermine social problem-solving. Use substances, and associate with a peer group that maintains and reinforces maladaptive behaviors
7. What <i>not</i> to do
(a) Access social supports
(b) Engage in benefit finding and benefit remembering
(c) Develop a coherent-narrative or a “healing” story
(d) Undertake meaning-making activities, nor use ones faith/religion

tionships with supportive peers, mentors, families, and communities. Resilience is *not* a sign of exceptional strength but a fundamental feature of everyday coping skills.

However, resilience and post-trauma responses can coexist. It is not an either-or stance. Individuals may be resilient in one domain, but not in other domains of their lives. Individuals may be resilient at one time in their lives, but not at other times of their lives (Brooks & Goldstein, 2003).

The building blocks that contribute to a resilient mindset include:

- (a) The perceived availability of social relationships and the ability to access and use social supports
- (b) The degree of perceived personal control and the extent to which individuals focus their time and energies on tasks and situations over which they have some potential influence and control
- (c) The degree to which they can experience positive emotions that have neuro-physiological benefits and can self-regulate negative emotions
- (d) The ability to be cognitively flexible, use both direct-action problem-solving and emotionally palliative acceptance skills as the situations call for
- (e) The ability to engage in activities that are consistent with their values and life priorities that reflect a stake in a hopeful future

There is no one pathway to achieving resilience. Any intervention programs designed to bolster resilience in victims of human trafficking need to operate at multiple levels.

## **At the Individual Level**

Reduce risk factors and address safety issues on an ongoing basis. Address health-related issues.

Nurture skill development – emotion regulation skills and interpersonal competence; build on “islands of competence”; and encourage the experience of positive emotions.

Strengthen positive self-efficacy and a future hopeful orientation. Have the individual answer questions of “I have ...”; “I can ...”; “I am...”).

## **At the Relationship Level**

Provide outreach programs, and develop strong therapeutic alliances that are monitored on a session-by-session basis.

Nurture connectedness, and provide mentoring programs.

Be a strong advocate for your client, and provide needed follow-up coaching and assessment.

Help the individual develop a “life worth living” that fulfills his/her collaboratively generated treatment goals.

Help the individual undertake a meaning-making journey and a survivor's mission. Make a "gift" of his/her experience designed to help others.

## At the Community Level

Initiate and support group programs and activities that provide services for victims of human trafficking. The implementation of such varied and comprehensive interventions will help bolster the resilience of victims of human trafficking.

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# Ways to Bolster Resilience in Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning (LGBTQ) Youth



Donald Meichenbaum

## The Challenges LGBTQ Youth Confront<sup>1</sup>

- Some 6–10% of youth identify themselves as LGBTQ. Youth are “coming out” at earlier ages; as early as 13 years of age.
- Eighty percentage of LGBTQ high school students report being verbally harassed and teased, and 70% report being targets of sexual harassment and recipients of threats of physical harm because of their sexual orientation.
- Eighty percentage report having been the target of mean rumors or lies. Some have been physically harmed.

As a result, they experience school as a “hostile environment,” and they are more likely to miss days attending school. Sixty-three percentage felt unsafe at school because of their sexual orientation.

- Twenty-nine percentage skipped a day of school in the past month because of safety concerns. Twenty-eight percentage of LGBTQ youth drop out of school due to harassment.
- LGBTQ youth often feel stigmatized, marginalized, excluded, ridiculed, victimized, and fear disclosure (“outing”). (see Kosciw, Greytak, Bartkiewicz, Boesen, & Palmer, 2012; Ryan & Rivers, 2003.)

The impact of such verbal and physical assaults are lower self-esteem, loneliness, isolation, lower academic performance, increased risk of anxiety, depression, and suicide attempts. (See D’Augelli, 2002.)

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<sup>1</sup>See Reference List and Websites for Resources and the results of the 2011 National School Climate Survey conducted by GLSEN.

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- LGBTQ youth have a greater risk for suicide ideation and higher rates of suicide attempts than their heterosexual peers.
- LGBTQ youth are more than twice as likely to attempt suicide as their heterosexual peers, according to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention. The presence of comorbid psychiatric disorders such as depression, conduct disorders, and substance abuse significantly increase suicidal risk.

Approximately, 30% of LGBTQ youth attempt suicide at least once. Among those, approximately half have reported that the suicide attempt was related to their sexual orientation. Rates for suicide attempts in this population are commonly higher for male teenagers compared to their female peers. Factors associated with LGBTQ-related suicide attempts include early openness about sexual orientation, being considered gender atypical in childhood by parents, and parental efforts to discourage gender atypical behaviors. In a longitudinal study of specific risk factors in LGBTQ youth aged 16–20, a history of suicide attempts, impulsive behaviors, LGBTQ victimization, and low social support were associated with greater suicidal ideation (D’Augelli et al., 2005; King, Foster, & Rogalski, 2013; Lui & Mustanski, 2012; Russell & Joyner, 2001).

- This higher rate of suicide attempts occurs, especially if their gender identity has remained secret and there is accompanying anxiety over disclosure.
- In a typical high school class of 30 students, one student will seriously consider suicide, 2 or 3 (one boy and two girls) will attempt suicide, and one student will make an attempt sufficiently harmful to require medical attention. (see [www.melissainstitute.org](http://www.melissainstitute.org) for a discussion of adolescent suicide assessment and interventions.)

The challenges and impact vary for different subgroups, whether the youth is gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender. For instance, transgender youth have the highest risk of self-harm and can be more stigmatized by peers than gay and lesbian youth. Sexual minority youth are particularly vulnerable. There is a need not to lump all of the LGBTQ youth into one group and a need to address their unique challenges. (See D’Augelli & Patterson, 2001; Ryan & Rivers, 2003; Stieglitz, 2010; Varjas et al., 2008.)

- It has been estimated that 1 in 8 youth in the USA run away from home before age 18, and 40% do not return home. Forty percentage of homeless youth are LGBTQ.
- The families’ rejection of the youth’s sexual orientation is often a major factor contributing to runaways. (see Ray, 2006 for a website on homelessness on LGBTQ youth.)
- In a recent study of LGBTQ youth who live on the streets of new York City, Meredith Dank reported that they often use “survival sex” in order to cope with homelessness and poverty. (see [www.urban.org](http://www.urban.org) for details.)

- Twenty to sixty percentage of youth in child welfare identify themselves as LGBTQ.
- Thirteen percentage of the detention population identify themselves as LGBTQ.
- Twenty to thirty-three percentage of girls in the juvenile justice system have self-identified as being homosexual.
- LGBTQ youth are less likely to receive psychotherapeutic treatment, where it is indicated. For instance, one half of those who are clinically depressed do not receive any treatment.

In spite of these cumulative stressors, LGBTQ youth evidence a wide range of RESILIENT-ENGENDERING BEHAVIORS.

## **Examples of Resilience-Engendering Behaviors Used by LGBTQ Youth**

(See Harper, Brodsky, & Bruce, 2012; Toro-Alfonso, Varas Díaz, Andújar-Bello, & Nieves-Rosa, 2006; Meichenbaum, 2013 and Appendix A for *LGBTQ YOUTH EMPOWERMENT STRATEGIES*.)

Research has indicated that LGBTQ youth employ a variety of coping resilience-engendering strategies. These include:

1. Acceptance and Resistance of Stereotypes
2. Connectedness with Supportive Others
3. Self-care Behaviors
4. Social Activism
5. Cognitive and Behavioral Flexibility

## **Examples of Coping Strategies**

### ***Acceptance and Resistance of Stereotypes***

Resist stereotypes associated with sexual attitudes of what it is to be masculine or feminine.

Consider what is good about being LBGTQ.

Experiment with gender roles, the ability to display both masculine and feminine traits. Free oneself from ideas of what it means to be a “man” or a “woman.”

Believe in being who I am. Find enjoyment in being LGBTQ. Have a sense of freedom. Feel stronger for rejecting stereotypes. Not conceal sexual orientation and gender identity behind something or someone.



## *Connectedness with Supportive Others*

The presence of at least one caring, emotionally available person at some point (even briefly) in the person's life is a necessary prerequisite to the development of resilience (Dyer & McGuiness, 1996, p. 277).

Have someone to share daily experiences. Develop a supportive network. Find an "ally" at school and at home.

Seek support from others (school, counselor, psychologist, social worker, and supportive minister), or from a Website that provides advice from teens. For example, consider the following information provided by the Website [www.reachout.com](http://www.reachout.com).

*Ten Things to Consider When Coming Out* (Source [www.reachout.com](http://www.reachout.com)):

1. How comfortable are you with your sexuality?
2. Can you discredit common stereotypes?
3. Is it your decision to tell someone or is someone pressuring you?
4. How does the person you plan to tell view gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender people?
5. Do you have social support?
6. Is this the right time to talk to your family?
7. Are you financially dependent on people you want to tell?
8. Can you be patient with the person you tell in order to allow him/her time to process this information?
9. Are people likely to respect your privacy?
10. How sure are you about your sexual attractions, gender identity, and sexual orientation?
11. Feel connected with others who are going, and who have gone through, similar experiences. Benefit from others' experiences.
12. Be a member of social support group. Hang around with other LGBTQ people.
13. Visit Websites, read books, and attend concerts and meetings that help you become more resilient.
14. Contribute to Website and chat lines.
15. Participate in Challenge Day Organizational Activities (*see* [www.challengeday.org](http://www.challengeday.org)).
16. Join Gay-straight Alliance Club and "It gets better" groups at school.
17. Attend local support centers (for example, Cape and Islands Gay and Straight Alliance drop in house—*see* [www.cigsya.org](http://www.cigsya.org)).
18. Make a "gift" of your experiences and share them with others, especially younger people who are "coming out."
19. Where possible, (re)connect with family members. At school, find an ally (teacher, coach, counselor, and peer) who can be supportive and nonjudgmental.

## ***Self-Care***

Be safe and responsible to take care of one-self.

Make “smart” decisions about sexual activities. Use condoms and avoid risky situations to avoid sexually transmitted diseases and HIV.

Engage in physical self-care. Avoid “high-risk” activities such as drug use, risky sexual activities, antisocial delinquent activities, and the like.

Avoid unsafe places.

Be careful who you disclose to about your sexual orientation. The world is filled with homophobic and transphobic individuals and groups. Be vigilant and cautious when necessary.

Use your risk assessment skills.

Check to see if your personal space is safe and positive. Sometimes you may need to hide who you are and be safe, and that is “okay.”

Engage in emotional self-care (seek help when needed, use relaxation, mindfulness, and meditation procedures, and seek opportunities to experience positive emotions of empathy, compassion, forgiveness, joy, gratitude, and the like).

*“Learn to talk back to the amygdala” that can hijack your critical thinking processes (The amygdala is the lower part of your brain that sets off impulsive emotional acting out risk-taking behaviors). (See [www.roadmaptoresilience.com](http://www.roadmaptoresilience.com).)*

## ***Engage in Social Activism***

Have a desire to be knowledgeable about issues that affect the LGBTQ community.

Learn about the history of the LGBTQ community activities and sacrifices of others. Collect a list of names of famous people who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender in the past and present. Look to them as role models.

Educate and support other LGBTQ individuals. Promote well-being in younger LGBTQ youth. Educate others about the need to fight stereotypes, myths, and misconceptions. (See *My Identity, Myself Project, MIMS*—see below for a description of this program.)

Participate in community activities such as political rallies, public forums, gay activities, and educational endeavors. Gain strength through advocacy. Engage in empowerment projects. Look up GLAAD website.

Be assertive, where you think it is appropriate. For example, how do you respond when you hear people say, “That’s so gay,” or when you witness discrimination because of sexual orientation and gender?

## ***Cognitive and Behavioral Flexibility***

Resilient LGBTQ youth demonstrate flexibility in selecting from the various coping strategies in meeting varied demands and challenges. They evidence metacognitive executive skills of “noticing, planning, monitoring, evaluating, reflecting, sharing with others, enlisting help, and engaging in behaviors that contribute to their acceptance and self-care.”

## **Ways to Nurture Resilience in LGBTQ Youth**

It takes a village to address the needs of LGBTQ youth

### ***What can Schools and Educators Do to Help LGBTQ Youth?***

Actively implement anti-bullying and sexual harassment policies and practices. (See [www.teachsafeschools.org](http://www.teachsafeschools.org), a Melissa Institute Website on bullying and [www.prevnet.ca](http://www.prevnet.ca).)

In any School Policy Mission Statements, explicitly include reference to sexual orientation and gender identity. (See Website addresses below.)

Designate a Safe Place and Safe Person in Schools. Create an inviting environment with visible posters, books, magazines, and symbols that are LGBTQ-friendly. (See [www.glsen.org/safespace](http://www.glsen.org/safespace).)

Create an inclusive inviting environment for LGBTQ youth and their families. Provide administrative supports for teachers who are confronted by parents who challenge the presence of LGBTQ materials.

Have a student-led Gay Straight Alliance with accompanying activities.

Incorporate LGBTQ information and history as part of the curriculum.

Run educational groups for parents and other guardians. Involve PFLAG (Parents and Friends of Lesbian and Gay Youth) and Family Acceptance Project. (See Website addresses.)

Provide training for all educators (including administrators) about LGBTQ issues. (See Dhawan, Duwyn, Meichenbaum, & Smith, 2004 for lesson plans.)

Train “gate keepers” about warning signs of depression, suicidal intent, and referral resources.

Keep in mind the following assessment mnemonic.

*Assessment Mnemonic IS PATH WARM*

- *I*deation: Threatened, communicated, or otherwise hinted at looking for ways to kill oneself (note, however, that suicidal attempts and suicide may occur in the absence of expressions of suicidal intentionality).

- *S substance use: Excessive or increased use of alcohol or drugs.*
- *P purposelessness: Feelings of lacking in purpose, value, meaning, or increased feelings that there is no reason for living.*
- *A anxiety: Increased anxiety, agitation, or insomnia.*
- *T trapped: Feeling like there are no alternatives, no way out other than suicide to escape intolerable emotional pain; need to kill oneself in order to end feelings of shame or guilt. Belief of being a “burden” on others.*
- *H hopelessness: Feelings and thoughts that nothing can or will ever change for the better.*
- *W withdrawal: Increased isolation from family, friends, work, or usual activities. Feeling a “thwarted belongingness.”*
- *A Anger: feelings of rage, wish to seek revenge against alleged evil others, uncontrolled anger.*
- *R recklessness: Acting with disregard for consequences, engaging in risky activities.*
- *M Mood changes: experiencing dramatic mood changes, cycling.* Identify teachers who can act as supportive “allies” for LGBTQ youth and encourage LGBTQ students to access such assistance. Develop and encourage peer-based support groups. Be sensitive to all forms of diversity issues. Use inclusive language and gender-neutral language and activities and respond actively to expressions of discrimination such as “That’s so gay,” and other expressions of stereotypical thinking and homophobia. Be careful about using pronouns “he” and “she.” use neutral pronoun “them.”
- Encourage and support youth activities designed to combat various forms of discrimination including homophobia. For example, Morsillo and Prilleltensky (2007) describe ways to engage LGBTQ youth in community projects such as devising and performing a drama presentation for teachers and community members that address homophobia and ways to become youth consultants with local government officials. These social action activities were viewed by youth as liberating experiences that contributed to their self-acceptance, assertiveness, and peer support. Such social action projects (SAY) enhanced the LGBTQ youths’ Well-being and resilience.

### ***What can Clinicians Do to Help LGBTQ Youth?***

Clinicians need to highlight that they are LGBTQ friendly.

Help the LGBTQ youth appreciate that they do not have to “come out,” as a prerequisite at this time. Moreover, convey that “coming out” is a process and that individuals may do this many different times and with different individuals and in different settings. Each time they tell their “story,” it will be different. Convey that the youth should choose to “come out” when he/she is ready. “Coming out” is part

of a journey and is an ongoing process. Convey the need not to give up and become part of the “It gets better campaign.”

Train “gate keepers” and first responders on ways to interact and engage LGBTQ youth and their families. For instance, consider accessing Website guidance on how individuals can respond to youth’s disclosure about his/her sexual orientation.

### ***How to Respond when a Youth Comes out to you***

(From West Virginia Health Conference Website [www.dhhr.wv.gov/bhhf/Documents/2013](http://www.dhhr.wv.gov/bhhf/Documents/2013))

- Anticipate feelings of vulnerability
- Affirm, validate, and show acceptance
- Start where the youth is
- Avoid labeling
- Follow the youth’s lead in terminology
- Provide accurate information that avoids myths and stereotypes
- Provide supports to assist youth and their families
- Do not assume that their problems/issues are necessarily related to their sexual orientation/gender identity

Curriculum consists of: My Identity, Myself Program.

[www.sanctuaryweb.com](http://www.sanctuaryweb.com) and [www.nctsn.org](http://www.nctsn.org)

Psychoeducation that helps LGBTQ youth address myths and facts about sexual orientation (LGBTQ is not a choice).

Experiential Group Activities

Resilience and pride-oriented activities (*Feel proud about who you are. Be strong*).

Coming Out—Circle of Trust (Consider issues of safety, emotions, possible losses and gains, and future).

Address “healthy living” activities. Use role playing.

Coping Skills Training: Ways to enhance coping skills and bolster resilience. Use future orientation imaginal and discussion activities—5 and 10 years in the future.

Conclusions: Consider lessons learned and celebration.

Appendices Use True–False Pre- and Posttests considering Myths about LGBTQ people.

Work with members of the media, political, and community leaders on ways to combat homophobia and on ways to create a more inviting supportive environment.

Work with leaders of the LGBTQ community to develop outreach programs for LGBTQ youth such as homeless youth.

Learn ways to bolster resilience. (See [www.roadmaptoresilience.org](http://www.roadmaptoresilience.org).)

## **Appendix a LGBTQ Youth Empowerment Checklist Donald Meichenbaum**

LGBTQ youth are often confronted with a number of challenges including bullying, sexual harassment, family and societal rejection, and discrimination. Research has indicated that LGBTQ youth are not passive recipients in the face of assaults but rather have a variety of coping strategies in order to remain resilient, having the ability to confront such adversities and “grow.” The following list of coping strategies has been offered by LGBTQ youth. There are multiple ways to cope. There is no one right way to cope. Each youth is unique and his or her situation is different. This list of Coping Strategies has empowered LGBTQ youth in their personal journeys.

We suggest that you look through this list and put a check mark by the coping strategies you have tried. Hopefully, these strategies have helped you. But, if you feel you could use a little extra help, we suggest that you look through the entire list and then choose any new strategies that you would like to try. This list of coping strategies is intended to help you discover new ways that you can move forward on your personal journey to feel more empowered.

If there are additional things that you have found helpful that are not on this list of Coping Strategies, please add them at the end so we can share them with other LGBTQ youth. Thank you for taking the time to fill out this Empowerment Checklist.

The Coping Strategies fall into five categories: **(I) Self-acceptance, (II) Connecting with others, (III) Physical and Emotional Self-care, (IV) Being Socially Active, and V Being Flexible.** Please review all five lists, indicating which one’s you have tried.

### ***I. Self-Acceptance***

1. I understand what LGBTQ means (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, and questioning).
2. I can list what is good about being a member of LGBTQ.
3. I resist accepting stereotypes associated with what it means to be male or female.
4. I experiment with gender roles, being able to display both male and female traits.
5. I sometimes choose to hide my sexual orientation and gender identity.
6. I have a sense of freedom and feel stronger for rejecting societal stereotypes.

### ***II. Connecting with Others***

7. I have the courage to believe in being who I am and reject the negativity others try to put on me.
8. I can define myself by positive traits, not only in terms of my sexual orientation and gender identity.

9. I share my daily experiences with supportive others (friends and adults).
10. I developed an “ally,” and thus, not feel alone.
11. I have searched out the services and support of members of the LGBTQ community.
12. I feel connected with others.
13. I visit places that are tailored to LGBTQ youth.
14. I talked to others who have had similar experiences of “coming out” and learn from their experiences.
15. I am a member of a social support groups such as a gay-straight alliance; hanging around people who are nonjudgmental and accepting.
16. I volunteered (or plan to volunteer) to help LGBTQ groups. I have attended (or plan to attend) a pride day event.
17. I have visited (or plan to visit) various websites, read books, watch movies, attend concerts, and listen to music that helps me feel connected and more empowered. (*See the list of Website addresses at the end of this Checklist.*)
18. I share my coming out experiences with others, who are just coming out as a way to help them through a difficult time.
19. I can just enjoy myself like any other youth.
20. At school, I can find a person (teacher, counselor, coach, and peer) who can be supportive.
21. I can answer the following questions: *“If I were absent from school, who besides my friends would notice I am missing and would miss me?” “If I had a problem in school, who besides my friends could I turn to for advice and guidance?” “How can I build more school friendships and allies?”*

### ***III. Physical and Emotional Self-Care***

22. I am responsible and take care of myself.
23. I know what to do and say if someone calls me names, teases, or bullies me (for example, calls me “a fag”).
24. I make smart decisions and avoid risky situations.
25. I avoid unsafe places. I have risk assessment skills that I can use.
26. I am careful about who I disclose to about my sexual orientation. The world is filled with homophobic and transphobic individuals and groups. I can be vigilant and cautious, when necessary.
27. I have a plan of what to do if “coming out” is a negative experience. I know how to get help and whom to talk to (*for example, Youth’s Helplines on PFLAG and [www.reachout.com](http://www.reachout.com)*).
28. I have a plan on what to do if someone “outs me.”
29. I engage in emotional self-care. I ask for help when I need it. I can use relaxation and mindfulness and meditation activities; engage in activities that I like to do and find enjoyable, either alone or with others. (listen to music, text and use my computer, read, be with friends, exercise, dance, etc.)

30. I do activities that give me “positive feelings” such as feelings of joy, gratitude, forgiveness to myself and others, and awe by enjoying nature.
31. I engage in some form of exercise on a regular basis in order to make me feel better.
32. I plan for the future and have hope about how things are changing and improving. For instance, how attitudes are changing toward the LGBT community (laws about same-sex marriage and public acceptance). Keep things in perspective.
33. I have learned to “talk back” to the emotional part of my brain. I can learn to exert control over my impulses, and emotional urges that may get me into trouble.

#### ***IV. Being Socially Active***

34. I have a desire to become more knowledgeable and aware about issues that affect the LGBTQ community.
35. I can learn about the history of the LGBTQ community. What sacrifices others have made in the past to address the needs of LGBTQ individuals.
36. I can list famous people in the past and present who are homosexual, bisexual, or transgender. I can look to them as inspirational models and mentors.
37. I can educate and support other LGBTQ youth as well as “straight” peers.
38. I can work to bring about changes in my school. For instance, become part of a gay-straight alliance; encourage my school to reduce bullying and sexual harassment offering specific recommendations; and how teachers and principals can become more sensitive to the needs of LGBTQ youth. I can work with others to bring about these changes. I see myself as a “change agent.” I can make a difference.
39. I can become more vigilant about homophobic comments such as “That’s so gay,” and educate others about gender stereotypes.
40. I can participate in school and community activities such as public forums, political rallies, LGBTQ activities, and student-led drama groups that devise and perform plays about homophobia in order to educate others.
41. I can gain strength through advocacy and by engaging in empowerment projects.

#### ***V. Being Flexible***

42. I can pick and choose from this list of coping strategies and use what I think will work for me in a particular situation. I can evaluate how well it worked and learn from the outcome.
43. I can be flexible in how and where I spend my time and with whom I share my story.



44. I am comfortable with my gender identity and sexual orientation.
45. I can be “in charge” by having “**SMART**” goals—Specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-limited goals. What is it that I value most and what is my **ACTION PLAN** to achieve these goals and help myself and others.
46. List any other strategies or activities you have used to feel more empowered about your sexual orientation or who you are. \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

[www.glaad.org](http://www.glaad.org), [www.reachout.com](http://www.reachout.com), [www.glsen.org](http://www.glsen.org), and [www.glsb.org](http://www.glsb.org)

### *Helpful Websites*

Possible Ways to Use the LGBTQ Youth Empowerment Checklist: This **CHECKLIST** can be used in many different ways by youth and those who serve them:

1. LGBTQ youth can be asked, “If they are at all interested in learning how other youth like themselves have become more empowered being a member of the LGBTQ community?” if they answer “yes,” then the empowerment checklist can be given to the youth. This should be followed up with a discussion of what the youth thought of the checklist items? Which coping strategies did he/she check and a discussion of examples how the youth used that coping strategy and how did it work? “Were there any coping strategies on the Checklist that the youth thought he/she might want to try?” discuss where and how this coping strategy might be employed? What barriers or obstacles might get in the way? How could the youth tell if the coping strategy was working? “Is there anyone the youth would like to show the empowerment Checklist or share what he/she has learned?”

It is not **JUST** taking the empowerment checklist that **WILL** be helpful, but the discussion that follows that **WILL** be **MOST** valuable.

For instance, if there is a group of LGBTQ youth who meet, they each can be asked to fill out the checklist and then they can discuss the notion of coping strategies in the group which coping strategies did they already use and are there any others on the list that they could try? In future group sessions, they can discuss this “strengths-based approach” to building resilience.

They need to focus their story telling on sharing the “**REST OF THEIR STORIES**” of what they are doing to cope, in spite of whatever distress they are experiencing in school, home, and in the **COMMUNITY**.

2. The **LGBTQ YOUTH EMPOWERMENT CHECKLIST** can be added to various websites, as a self-assessment tool. As a result of going through this list, there is

the possibility of providing suggestions for ways to cope more effectively and build resilience.

3. Those who want to be of support to LGBTQ youth such as family members, educators, ministers, and friends can become familiar with the items on the checklist and in the process of providing help incorporate some of the coping strategies listed. Provide LGBTQ user-friendly resources and create an inviting learning safe environment.
4. Parents of LGBTQ youth can review this youth empowerment Checklist and glean examples of ways to support their children. Parents need to be encouraged to convey that **“I love you, I accept you, be who you are.”**
5. Members of the LGBTQ community when providing information and guidance to LGBTQ youth can give explicit examples of how they used the various coping strategies and how engaging in that coping activity proved helpful. These accounts should be engaging and instructive. Highlight the LGBTQ “It gets better” campaign.

STORY TELLING IS a POWERFUL MEANS OF BEING SUPPORTIVE. The empowerment Checklist can act as reminder in the guidance of such “story-telling,” as a form of modeling or mentoring.

Members of the media and governmental officials can use the Checklist as a guide to evaluate what supportive resources are indeed available in schools, in the community, and the like to provide ways for LGBTQ youth to navigate successfully their personal journey? Encourage the use of gender-neutral language.

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## GLAAD

[www.glaad.org](http://www.glaad.org)

## Websites

- Cape & Islands Gay and Straight Youth Alliance (CIGSYA). [www.cigsya.org](http://www.cigsya.org)
- Challenge Day Organization. [www.challengeday.org](http://www.challengeday.org)
- Family Acceptance Project. <http://familyproject.sfsu.edu/overview>
- Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN).
- GLSEN Safe Space Kit: Be an ally to LGBT Youth. [www.glsen.org/safespace](http://www.glsen.org/safespace)
- LGBT Health Access Project: Massachusetts Dept. Public Health. [www.glbthealth.org/index.html](http://www.glbthealth.org/index.html)
- LGBT National Help Center: Hotline 1-888-843-4564. [www.glnh.org](http://www.glnh.org)
- Mermaids: Family and Individual Support for Teenagers and Children with Gender Identity Issues. <http://www.mermaidsuk.org.uk>
- NAMI Multicultural Action Center LGBT: Mental Health Resources. [www.nami.org/LGBT-Resources.htm](http://www.nami.org/LGBT-Resources.htm)
- National Child Traumatic Stress Network - - Click on LGBT Pride Month to access resources such as “My Identity, MYSELF Program [www.nctsm.org](http://www.nctsm.org) [www.sanctuaryweb.org](http://www.sanctuaryweb.org)
- National Help Center. [www.glnh.org](http://www.glnh.org)
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- Support Website for Teenagers. [www.reachout.com](http://www.reachout.com)
- The Trevor Hotline: 24 hour toll free hotline for LGBT Youth (866-488-7386). <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/>
- [www.glsen.org](http://www.glsen.org)
- Youth Resource. <http://youthresource.com>

**Part VI**  
**Healing and Rehabilitation**

# Healing and Hope



Linda H. Dykstra

## Introduction

Human slavery or trafficking is an ever-increasing, worldwide crime against humanity. According to statistics from the human rights organization Equality Now (2011), 20.9 million people are bought and sold for forced labor, bonded labor, and commercial sex. Eighty percent are being sexually exploited (DoSomething.org, 2012). Per Equality Now, 98% are women and girls; two million are children. These statistics reflect a total disregard for human value—and particularly the value placed on females. In an effort to understand the major factors involved, three questions are being asked and addressed:

1. What are the most basic and impacting *factors* contributing to sex trafficking?
2. Once enslaved, is there any possibility of escape or *rescue*?
3. If freedom is gained, can there be *recovery* and *rehabilitation* for the survivors?

## Culture: A Major Factor in Female Degradation

### *Three Major Cultures*

In his book entitled *Honor and Shame*, Muller (2000) describes three major world cultures and gives their general geographic locations and their immutable cultural tenets. The three major cultures are Eastern, Tribal, and Western. Eastern culture spans an area from Morocco in North Africa, through the Middle East, to Japan in the Far East. The cultural beliefs in the majority of this part of the world are *honor*, *shame*, and *retribution*. Tribal culture is found in the tribes of Africa, Asia, Central

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and South America, and some islands in the Far East. The cultural principles in much of this area are *power* and *fear*—*honor*, *shame*, and *retribution* are frequently added. Western culture includes Northern Europe, North America, Australia, and New Zealand. The cultural tenets are *guilt*, *innocence*, and *forgiveness*.

**Eastern Culture** In Eastern culture, girls are often considered of less value than boys at the moment of birth. Journalist Jenny Nordberg highlights this in her book, *The Underground Girls of Kabul, In Search of a Hidden Resistance in Afghanistan* (2015). She reports that in families that only have daughters, the parents may decide to create a “pseudo-boy” in order to remove shame and gain honor. One of the girls is designated to dress, act, work, and behave like a boy until puberty. Although the larger community is aware of this pretense, honor is given, and the pretense is maintained until this “pseudo-boy” reaches puberty. At that point, the “boy” is to return to the female role.

At the appointed time, she is required to enter into a marriage arranged by her father, uncle, or some other male relative. The primary value of a girl is related to the fact that she can be sold to a man—a man who may already have other wives. She is to be available for her husband’s pleasure and to bear children—ideally sons. She is to remain at home with the other wives and children. She may leave the house only if accompanied by a male family member. When she goes out, she is to be fully covered to avoid providing sexual temptation to other men.

A woman is to strictly abide by the rules and roles of her culture. If she steps outside of the boundaries and does something that causes shame to her family, retribution is needed in order to remove this shame and restore the family’s honor. This retribution can be severe enough to cause death.

The practice of honor killing is illustrated in the autobiography entitled *Burned Alive, A Survivor of an “Honor Killing” Speaks Out* by Souad (2004). Because the author fell in love and had sex before marriage, she greatly dishonored her family. In order to regain her family’s honor, retribution was required. Hence, her brother-in-law doused her with gasoline and set her on fire. Miraculously, she lived to tell her story.

Cultural tenets are no respecter of class or social status. Royals as well as commoners are subject to the cultural rules, regulations, and expectations. In the book entitled *Princess, A True Story of Life Behind the Veil in Saudi Arabia*, a member of the royal family had the courage to ask writer Jean P. Sasson to describe life and relationships in the “world” of the royal family (1993).

One of the most devastating stories relates a deep friendship between the women in the royal family and their dear friend, Sameera. Sameera fell in love with a Christian man which caused shame to her family. She married him and moved to the United States with no expectation of ever being able to return to her native country. When the marriage failed, she was told by relatives that it would be safe for her to return home.

Upon doing so, her uncle, who was the male in charge of the family, arranged for her marriage to a man who already had several wives. When her husband discovered that she was not a virgin, intense shame resulted both for him and for her uncle and

his family. Accordingly, her uncle needed to determine the appropriate retribution to remove the shame:

In a bottomless black rage, the uncle sought guidance through the pages of the Koran; he soon found verses that cemented his decision to shut away the one who had shamed his family name. The former husband, still smarting from the insults on his manhood, furthered the decision by vowing to announce to all who would listen the lack of honor in the home of Sameera's uncle, unless serious punishment were meted out to the girl.

...Sameera...[was] sentenced to "the woman's room," a particularly cruel punishment. A special room on the top floor of her uncle's villa had been prepared for her. A windowless padded cell had been completed for the purpose of imprisoning Sameera. The windows were obstructed with cement blocks. Insulation had been installed so the cries of the one imprisoned could not be heard. A special door had been hung, with a bottom panel adjusted to serve as entry for food. A hole in the floor had been built for disposal of body wastes.

My sisters and I [all members of the royal family] had gathered....Each of us was in pain, for Sameera who was one of us, a Saudi woman with no recourse against injustice.... There was no hope of extricating Sameera from the isolation of her fading life. (p. 193)

**Tribal Culture** *Tribal culture* countries are often Muslim. Accordingly, added to the tribal tenants of *power* and *fear* are the tenants of *honor*, *shame*, and *retribution*. In both Tribal and Eastern cultures, female genital mutilation is a common practice. Ayaan Hirsi Ali, born in Somalia, tells her life story in the book entitled *Infidel* (2007):

...The man, who was probably an itinerant traditional circumciser from the blacksmith clan, picked up a scissors....Then the scissors went down between my legs and the man cut off my inner labia and clitoris. I heard it, like a butcher snipping the fat off a piece of meat. A piercing pain shot up between my legs, indescribable, and I howled. Then came the sewing: the long, blunt needle clumsily pushed into my bleeding outer labia....When the sewing was finished, the man cut the thread off with his teeth. (p. 32)

It was dark and my bladder was bursting, but it hurt too much to pee. The sharp pain was still there, and my legs were covered in blood. I was sweating and shivering. It wasn't until the next day that my Grandma could persuade me to pee even a little. By then everything hurt. When I just lay still the pain throbbled miserably, but when I urinated the flash of pain was as sharp as when I had been cut. (p. 33)

When she grew older, her marriage was arranged. She was to travel to Canada and marry a man she had never met. When her plane landed in Germany, she sought asylum. From there, she made her way to the Netherlands where she learned the language and ultimately was elected to the House of Representatives in the Dutch Parliament. She and a colleague, Geert Wilders, began to speak out about the abuse of women—including the practice of female genital mutilation. She and filmmaker Theo van Gogh made a short movie about the inhumane treatment of females. The movie, *Submission* (2004), was hosted on the Internet, but because of the resulting cultural shame, it was quickly removed, and retribution was required. Filmmaker Theo van Gogh was murdered, and a fatwa was issued for Ayaan Hirsi Ali.

She escaped to the United States and now works at a major think tank. Even as she remains under constant protection, she writes and lectures about the abuses perpetrated on girls and women. Geert Wilders continues to fight for the rights of women in the Netherlands and throughout the world.

**Western Culture** In Western culture, the basic tenants are *guilt*, *innocence*, and *forgiveness*. Operationally, this means when an offensive or illegal action occurs, personal and/or legal guilt and responsibility follow. Forgiveness occurs either through an apology or some other restorative action or with legal consequences based on the rule of law. The matter is finished; restoration is complete.

Western culture is founded on Judeo-Christian biblical principles. The basic belief is that God created both male and female in His own divine image and therefore both are intrinsically valuable. Traditionally, women have been respected. However, child sexual abuse, rape, sex trafficking, and prostitution occur all too frequently.

Authors tell their survival stories in books such as Katariina Rosenblatt's *Stolen* (2014); Theresa L. Flores in *The Slave Across the Street, A True Story of How an American Teen Survived the World of Human Trafficking* (2010); and Anny Donewald in *Dancing for the Devil* (2014). Each autobiography is disturbing. After Anny was raped, she became a stripper and ultimately a high-priced call girl. She describes a particularly devastating experience and concludes with a critical question—a question that this chapter is seeking to address:

The clang of the lock on the door jolted me. Despite the gallon of alcohol I had poured into my frame, I was suddenly very alert. I eased down on the bed as he counted out a thousand dollars in hundred-dollar bills....Like an animal led to the slaughter, I was about to be carved up piece by piece. Every time I offered myself for sale like this, I left a piece of me behind. Tiny morsels of humanity, my soul, were being sliced off to satiate the devil, one scavenging meal at a time. Eventually there would be nothing left. And what then? (p. 3)

All three of these women—Katariina, Theresa, and Anny—have become activists seeking to help women who have been sexually abused including those coming out of human trafficking. Now, however, due to the advent of the Internet, the sex industry has dramatically increased. Pornography is available 24/7. Sex is only a click away. With this ever-present availability, more faces and bodies are required, and trafficking victims can meet this need. In the article entitled “Get the Facts about Sex Trafficking” on the website *She's Somebody's Daughter* (2005), this connection is clearly described:

- Pornography drives the demand for sex trafficking.
- Trafficking victims are exploited in the production of pornography.
- Pornography is a form of trafficking.
- Pornography is used as a training tool with sex-trafficked victims.

The article entitled “Internet Pornography Numbers; A Significant Threat to Society,” posted on *Webroot* (2015), underscores the reality of this situation:

- Every second 28,258 users are watching pornography on the Internet.
- Every second \$3075 is being spent on pornography on the Internet.
- Search engines get 116,000 queries every day related to child pornography.

This frequent use of pornography yields another devastating result: sexual addiction. According to a recent article, “Sexual Addiction” (2011) on the website of the American Association of Marriage and Family Therapy, nearly 12 million people



suffer from sexual addiction in the United States. Due to the accessibility of sexual material on the Internet, cable television, and videos, these numbers are increasing.

The Western world is inundated with sex which means women—and men—are being denigrated and dehumanized. By using pornography, Western culture is supporting sex trafficking and creating sexual addiction.

## ***Beyond Culture***

Understanding both the impact of culture and the increase in demand for pornography, how can sex trafficking be combated? Organized crime makes huge amounts of money from human trafficking. In the United States alone, the pornography industry generates \$13 billion per year (Covenant Eyes, “Pornography Statistics: Annual Report 2015”). Unlike drugs which can be sold only once, human beings can be sold for sex over and over—often 20–30 times per night, year after year. If the victim eventually dies of AIDS or some other disease, she can be easily replaced.

Government corruption supports this industry as well. The economic benefits to a country and/or the extra money in the pockets of individuals or law enforcement agencies serve to protect trafficking and prostitution operations. Parental duplicity also contributes. Children may be sold by parents when money is needed or luxuries are desired. Children and young women may be duped or under the pretense of employment. They may be drawn in by “false love,” raped, beaten, and abducted—and the list goes on. Victims may be from any culture, country, or social-economic class.

The documentary, *Nefarious: Merchant of Souls* (2011), which can be found on the Internet, gives an overview of the problem of sex trafficking around the world ([nefariousdocumentary.com](http://nefariousdocumentary.com)). This film adds new perspective and understanding of the methods of trafficking and the objectification of women and children. The filmmaker visually demonstrates the human fallout from war and civil unrest. Using Eastern Europe as an example, as women and children try to make their way to safety, they are abducted.

Then a three-step process begins. First, the girls and women are sent to the “breaking ground” where they are “seasoned” for the profession. Their bodies, souls, and spirits are broken. Next, the buyers gather, and the girls and women are required to walk down a fashion runway naked. The buyers make their purchases, documents are forged, and trafficked women and children are sent to the country designated by the buyer.

Also included in this documentary is an interview with a man named Slim who manages several of the rooms used by the women in the windows of the red-light district in Amsterdam. At the time of the interview, he indicated that the available women were primarily from 27 Eastern European countries. In an emotionally detached fashion, he suggested that the process of johns selecting a prostitute is similar to a man ordering a pizza. As an aside, this documentary also includes insightful comments and observations by several knowledgeable psychologists.

## Rescue

Knowing the issues related to the various cultures and understanding the impact of pornography in terms of the increasing demand due to the Internet, how can the sex trafficking supply line be cut and the victims be rescued? Many organizations are getting involved including International Justice Mission (IJM). Confronting sex trafficking is a huge task, especially since slavery ranks equally with drugs in being the number one income source for the worldwide mafia. Working against organized crime is both challenging and dangerous.

However, organizational commitment runs deep as illustrated by the founder of IJM. In 1994, attorney Gary Haugen was on loan from the US Department of Justice directing the UN's genocide investigation in Rwanda. In his book, *Good News About Injustice: A Witness of Courage in a Hurting World* (2009), he summarizes the impact of that experience in these words:

Rwanda might seem far away, and these Rwandan children might seem different from my own, but I do not know anything about my God or the truth of my own childish choruses if I do not understand that, truly, "red and yellow, black and white, they are precious in his sight"...God hates injustice. (pp. 45-46)

This compelling experience coupled with his understanding of both God's love and His hatred of injustice inspired him to found IJM which now has 18 offices around the world and over 600 employees. Over the years, IJM has developed a four-pronged approach to combating slavery including sex slavery. This approach includes (1) victim rescue, (2) perpetrator accountability, (3) victim aftercare, and (4) structural transformation.

IJM has highly trained investigators who are seasoned police, undercover agents, and special operation personnel. They carry high-tech equipment and record conversations with both traffickers and victims. They are thorough and detailed in their work because the lawyers on the team need precise and clear evidence in order to get local law enforcement members to join them on rescues and work with them on prosecutions. In the book *Terrify No More* (Haugen, 2005), the rigorous nature of the data collection is described.

He [the investigator] had videotaped individual transactions of forty separate girls being sold for sex, all between the ages of five and fourteen. Each videotaped transaction featured a specific perpetrator and could be traced to a specific location, a numbered brothel...and a global positioning satellite setting...Each videotaped transaction recorded the elements of the crime necessary for clear prosecution and conviction. (p. 132)

Even as information gathering is occurring, aftercare planning is being done. It is essential that the women and children are taken to a safe place. Finding suitable safe houses is challenging because there is a significant shortage of appropriate aftercare facilities. IJM clearly recognizes that safe houses and effective aftercare programs are critical for both safety and healing.

The girls who have been in the brothels are not just victims of rape or even serial rape; they have been sold and purchased for this purpose like animals or other property. It doesn't take long...to lose their whole sense of self. They simply begin to see themselves as merchan-

dise....The wide-ranging needs that must be met by an aftercare facility, then start with an assurance of safety, attention to serious medical needs...and psychosocial needs for trauma recovery....Without good aftercare, it is nearly impossible for the girls to find a life outside the brothel. (p. 79)

Once the investigation is complete and aftercare is arranged, the rescue occurs. The perpetrators are brought to trial, and the structural transformation begins. Transformation involves local authorities and communities realizing that prostitution cannot continue with immunity and without consequences. It is not uncommon that the trial and the transformation are slow in coming. However, IJM is methodical and persistent. They work with both the government officials and local law enforcement and provide additional legal and/or police training if needed and desired. Often, countries in which IJM works have appropriate anti-trafficking laws in place, but they are not enforced. As discussed previously, due to organized crime, corruption, and the money involved, law enforcement is often minimal.

## Recovery and Rehabilitation

Once victims are rescued and safely situated in an aftercare facility, what can be done to facilitate recovery and restoration? Considering the impact of culture and pornography, plus the soul-wrenching abuse and degradation that have been endured, what are the best ways to assist these women and children to heal and gain a semblance of wholeness and hope?

### Theory

Psychologist Erik Erikson lists and describes the emotional and psychological tasks which must be completed in order for a person to develop a sense of individuality, autonomy, and self-worth. In his landmark book, *Childhood and Society* (1963), Erikson sets forth his psychological theory called developmental psychology and describes the stages or tasks that need to be accomplished in order to reach healthy, fully developed adulthood. Also included in this framework is the ideal chronological order in which they would be accomplished. Both the tasks and the ideal order are summarized in the following table:

Life stage	Task
Infancy, early childhood	Trust, hope
Early childhood	Autonomy
Late childhood	Initiative, assertiveness
School age	Self-confidence, competence
Adolescence	Interpersonal relationships, cooperation

Life stage	Task
Young adulthood	Love, belonging
Adulthood	Productivity
Maturity	Wisdom, sense of worth

When human beings are reduced to sex objects and repeatedly used and abused, healthy emotional development is precluded, and sequential order is even more improbable. In fact, considering the threatening and vicious nature of daily life for a trafficked person, the very first task on this list—developing trust and hope—is impossible. Consequently, the rest of the list becomes irrelevant. There is little chance that the victims are able to develop a connection to their own feelings or have any sense of self or self-worth.

In 1943, psychologist Abraham Maslow wrote his classic paper, “A Theory of Human Motivation” which was published in *Psychological Review*. He described what is now called Maslow’s hierarchy of needs. In sequential order, he established the crucial needs that must be fulfilled to become a self-actualized or an emotionally healthy person. In order of priority, they are as follows:

- Basic necessities of life, e.g., food, water, shelter, sleep, etc.
- Safe environment
- Relationships and a sense of belonging
- Self-respect/self-esteem as well as respect for and from others
- Development of personal potential.

Beginning with the baseline issues of food, water, shelter, and sleep, it quickly becomes apparent that these are problematic for a trafficked person. The first priority is to simply survive. By being in a safe house, a trafficked person has the basic necessities of life—and with no price attached. With a safe, predictable environment and these basic needs met, the development of trust is possible, and the journey to emotional health and spiritual healing can begin. The process of accomplishing the tasks laid out by both Erikson and Maslow can move forward.

As noted by both of these theorists, developmental stages are ideally completed in sequence. However, with trafficking survivors, this order does not apply. Many of the safe house residents may be adolescents or adults, and therefore the designated developmental ages and corresponding stages have already passed. However, this is not necessarily a complicating factor.

Consider a jigsaw puzzle. Each person puts the pieces of the puzzle together in a different order. Similarly, the pieces of each resident’s life will be assembled in an individual fashion and on God’s timeline. Adults learn in unique ways and at different paces. Each resident will integrate the relevant learning at the appropriate time.

So, what are the most effective methods to facilitate the achievement of these developmental tasks? Kevin Bales makes a significant point in his 2007 book, *Ending Slavery, How We Free Today’s Slaves*. He states,

The obvious course of action [in terms of recovery and rehabilitation] would be to consult the body of knowledge and expertise built up by doctors and psychologists about how to help freed slaves – except this body of knowledge does not exist. (p. 23)

Without this body of knowledge, many educational, counseling, and other methods are being tried.

## ***Education***

In terms of education, various resources and approaches are being used, as illustrated by the list below:

- Anny Donewald not only wrote *Dancing for the Devil* (2014) but also authored *Eve's Angels Bible Study* (2012), a Bible study specifically for women coming out of prostitution.
- Faith Alliance Against Slavery and Trafficking (FAAST) has published three manuals and a resource CD called *Hands that Heal: International Curriculum to Train Caregivers of Trafficking Survivors* (2007), edited by Beth Grant and Cindy Lopez Hudlin. The first two manuals are specifically for the caregivers, and the third is an academic edition.
- The book *Dear Jesus: Seeking His Light in Your Life* (2007) by Sarah Young is being used in a sex trafficking rehabilitation program in Asia.
- Mary Frances Bowley wrote *The White Umbrella, Walking with Survivors of Sex Trafficking* (2012) in which she describes the program she has developed.
- CRU (Campus Crusade for Christ) has two films, the first is *Magdalena: Released From Shame* (2010), and the second is *Rivka* (2013); both have corresponding Bible studies. *Reflections of Hope Bible Study Leader's Guide* and film clips (2009), and *Rivka Leader's Guide and Participant's Guide* (2012)
- Liz Dickson created the program and materials for *Love Unveiled: Transforming Women into God's Image of Beauty* (2011).
- *Women of Value, for Women Who Need a Place of Safety to Begin Healing* is "A Sampler of 12 God-Centered Sessions," author unknown but published by David Cook (2015).
- The American Bible Society Trauma Recovery Institute has published several books including *Healing the Wounds of Trauma* by Harriet Hill, Margaret Hill, Richard Baggé, and Pat Miersma (2013), as well as a pair of books for working with children.
- *Healing Hearts Club Story and Activity Book* and *Healing Children's Wounds of Trauma: Facilitator's Book* by Harriet Hills, Margaret Hill, Debbie Braaksma, and Lyn Westman (2014).

## *Counseling*

In addition to education, a counseling approach can be beneficial. Melissa Farley, editor of the book, *Prostitution, Trafficking, and Traumatic Stress* (2003), states that based on the complexity of the PTSD issues for sex trafficking survivors, counseling, preferably trauma-focused cognitive behavioral therapy (TF-CBT), would need to proceed in a gentle and minimally intrusive manner in order to avoid re-traumatizing the victims.

Psychologist, Becca Johnson, Ph.D., worked with various organizations including IJM teaching the leaders and staff around the world how to structure their safe houses based on TF-CBT. Her manual, *Adapted TF-CBT Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy Step-By-Step Overview and Checklists* (2012), is a model based on the TF-CBT work done by Drs. Cohen, Manarino, and Deblinger. Recently, she has expanded her outreach by becoming the International Program Director for Rescue: Freedom.

## *An Innovative Combination*

Education and counseling are helpful, but what would happen if they were innovatively combined? Based on the statistics in the article “Global Illiteracy & Global Literacy” (2014) on the website [www.speakingbooks.com](http://www.speakingbooks.com), 785 million, or 1 in 5 adults worldwide are illiterate. Two-thirds of them are women. Since storytelling bypasses the issue of literacy and for generations has been a major way to teach, learn, and pass on traditions throughout the world, could a totally visual, oral, and experiential safe house program be created—and be effective?

To explore this option, the *Stories in Grace (SING)* curriculum (Dykstra, 2016) was developed, and a pilot study was done in a safe house in Central America. The “textbook” for the program is the film *Magdalena: Released From Shame*. It was created by the Jesus Film Project at Campus Crusade for Christ (CRU) in 2007. The film portrays the ministry of Jesus to the women of His day. The stories demonstrate His compassion and healing to women who had been shamed, victimized, and ostracized. Each lesson in the *Stories in Grace* curriculum is inductive (rather than deductive) and taught using the standard six-step lesson format.

**Pilot Program** Upon arrival in the Central American country in which the pilot program was to be done, an initial meeting was held with the safe house leaders. An overview of the *SING* curriculum was given. As the program was discussed, two specific concerns surfaced. First, although a list of feeling words was suggested in the *SING* program, this list was quickly dismissed as falling far short of the words necessary to describe the severity and intensity of the abuse the women and children had endured. Second, the leaders unanimously indicated that there was no way the residents would label or talk about emotions—especially not their own. They noted that the only time and only way that feelings could be addressed would be in an emotional catharsis or breakdown. The program and the process would prove whether their assumptions were correct.

After this initial discussion, the program was described in greater detail. They were informed that the “textbook” for the class is the *Magdalena* film and the first step, which precedes teaching the 36 individual lessons, is showing the film in its entirety. This step was completed before the author arrived.

By seeing the entire *Magdalena* film, the class members understood the subservient role of women in the culture and times of Jesus. In contrast to the culture, Jesus valued women, healed their shame, and gave them hope.

After viewing the entire film, the *Stories in Grace* six-step lesson format for teaching each story was reviewed. The six steps are as follows:

1. Show the individual film segment, and learn the story.
2. Study the story via the specific, open-ended questions in the lesson plan.
3. Discuss the feelings of the people in the story as well as their own personal feelings.
4. Do the class activity which includes using a picture, asking open-ended questions, and learning a Bible verse.
5. Give homework so participants can share the stories learned and practice the skills and insights gained with others not in the class.
6. Conclude with a prayer reviewing the lesson.

The leaders were then asked if they wished to have the author teach them a lesson. They declined. They wanted to practice by teaching each other. Following their practice, they taught the lesson to their respective survivor groups. Very quickly, their concerns were resolved. The groups comfortably studied the designated story, and both labeled and discussed the feelings of the various individuals. Using the questions incorporated into the lesson plan, they began to identify with the people in the story and talk about their own perceptions and feelings. They participated in the class activity (using a picture, which is a gentle, non-threatening projective technique), memorized the Bible verse, agreed to do the homework, and participated in the prayer which summarized the lesson. The leaders were surprised and pleased. It quickly became apparent that the program was easy to learn and teach—and it worked as designed.

Within a day or 2, the leaders developed a broader vision for the program. They quickly determined to use it in other settings such as with at-risk youth, the local prostitutes, their cell groups, the residents of their newly developed safe house in a nearby country, etc. They expanded the vision for the program far beyond the initial goals.

### ***The Stories in Grace Curriculum***

The visual, oral, and experiential educational process used in the *SING* program is built on the TF-CBT model. Perhaps the best way to describe how TF-CBT is used is to demonstrate it. In the initial session, the entire *Magdalena* film is shown. Thereafter, each of the individual film segments or stories is shown, and the standard six-step lesson format is applied. The process works as follows:

Step one: An individual film segment is shown. In the story, the participants can see the trauma and shame endured by the people in the story. They can watch as the events unfold and see how Jesus offered mercy, healing, and hope.

They can observe the process of restoration and rehabilitation. This is a non-threatening, trauma-sensitive way to learn the stories and begin to understand the emotional/psychological concepts of trust, love, self-worth, and hope (*trauma focused*).

Step two: The various people and situations in each film segment are discussed.

Step three: The events, the individuals and their feelings, and the compassion of Jesus are studied. Learning occurs (*cognitive*).

Step four: Using a picture and open-ended questions, the feelings of the various people are further explored, and a Bible verse is learned. This activity moves the focus from the emotions and behaviors of the people in the story to the feelings, insights, and behaviors of the participants.

Step five: At the close of each lesson, homework is given. The participants are asked to share the story or verse or practice their new insights, learning, and skills with someone not in the class (*behavioral*).

Step six: The session is concluded with prayer, thanking Jesus for what has been learned. The prayer serves not only to model gratefulness but also to review the lesson. The leader can review the story, the feelings identified, insights gained, skills practiced, and the Bible verse they learned. These reminders serve to gently move the participants toward accomplishing the necessary developmental tasks and gaining a sense of self-worth. By being in a supportive environment and using the TF-CBT approach, emotional healing and spiritual growth can occur (*therapy*).

In summary, in a *non-threatening manner*, stories about Jesus are taught and learned. The people and events in the story are discussed, and *cognitive learning* is gained. As the feelings of the people are studied, emotions—including personal emotions—are better understood. Using class activities which include pictures, discussion, Bible verses, homework, and prayer, *personal and interpersonal insight, skills, and new behaviors* can be gained. Ultimately, *change and growth* can occur. With the secure, consistent, supportive environment of a safe house coupled with the *Stories in Grace* curriculum, story by story, lesson by lesson, survivors can experience healing and hope and become the special individuals God created them to be.

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# From Trafficked to Safe House: Phases of Transition the Safe Village Project™



Kalyani Gopal

The SAFE Coalition for Human Rights (SAFECHR) was established in 2014 to address the needs of key players in the struggle to prevent human trafficking. SAFECHR not only facilitates the identification, rescue, and rehabilitation of victims but also the education of others in education, health care, mental health, law enforcement, and emergency response to properly identify and respond to crises. SAFECHR and its active partners work to target human trafficking when and where it lives and to rescue, rehabilitate, and facilitate a safe future for all victims.

The motivating purpose of the SAFECHR Protocol is to join together all actors in the treatment of human trafficking victims. Each group is significant: the Protocol recognizes the survivors' role in the successful treatment of victims, the clinicians' role in the stabilization of victims, and the community's role in the prevention and protection of its citizens. Through conferences and other community outreach opportunities, SAFECHR is building an ever-growing network of individuals and organizations and pooling efforts, resources, and information in the fight against proponents of human trafficking. SAFE provides direct and collaborative services from the time the victim is identified and rescued to the placement in safe houses around the country. We strive to help individuals through this restoration process to become empowered survivors in society. The goal is not only to provide transitional placement and protection but also to create personal transformations so that victims do not return to "the life" of human slavery. Collaborative meetings with law enforcement, schools, hospitals, physicians, clinicians, residential treatment centers, and job skill resources are utilized in skill building and reentry into former communities or safer communities of choice. At each step along the way, the healing of the survivors will be facilitated and monitored by partnerships of victim-survivors, mentor-clinicians, and case manager/mentors. Victims are seen as equal partners in their journey toward health and are provided equal responsibility in their healing.

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## Protocol Overview

### ***The SAFECHR I-RETT-IN-SAFE (IRIS) Protocol Key Components***

*Identification:* Using current tools.

*Intervention and rescue*

*Assessment*

During their transition from the initial phase of intervention, victims will be placed briefly for a minimum stay of 5 days in a specialized treatment facility housing area during which they will receive:

- (a) A full physical examination, including lab workups and follow-up exams
- (b) Forensic trauma-based assessment for current and future risk exposures
- (c) Drug addiction and withdrawal needs assessment, if required
- (d) Assessment for exposure to physical abuse and violence

*Placement*

Safe house placement.

### ***Safe Houses: A Critical Need***

There are only 32 safe houses totaling 2000 beds in the entire United States. Until the University of Texas-Austin study published in 2016, there were 100,000–300,000 children trafficked in any given year in the United States. Now, as the study has shown, there are 179,000 victims in the state of Texas alone. The need for effective “safe houses” is dire.

Beyond the identification of trafficking victims, the critical question has been *what to do next*. This question has been raised countless time in the conferences SAFECHR has held over the past year and for a decade previous to that in the private practice of SAFECHR founder, Dr. Kalyani Gopal. Even if we do return the children to their homes, there is a 78% likelihood that they will return to “the life” as they call it. In speaking with individuals in law enforcement, since there are not the adequate safe house resources for victims to transition into, they will run away “even from hospitals... risking jumping fences and broken bones to get back to their pimp” (a direct quote from a Northwest Indiana Detective).

## ***What Is a SAFE HOUSE?***

The SAFECHR vision of a physical facility, or SAFE HOUSE, has the following features:

- *24/7 security*
- *Intake center* for victims
- *Welcome center* for staff—survivors, clinicians, direct staff, and house parents
- *Dormitory rooms* with attached bathrooms (or separate and central) in dormitory style or house style. Two girls per room in bunk beds each with a study and closet area
- *Houses* that are less restrictive with two girls per room with greater personal space. Shared common areas in each house.
- *Gym* with facilities for learning sports and martial arts.
- *Classrooms*
  - Arts and sciences programs and activities
  - Trade education, training, and apprenticeship
  - Day school and high school equivalency classes
- *Rehabilitation center*
  - *Intensive therapy*: For high-risk escape risk youth and women, drug/sex addictions, and severe mental illness—24/7 monitoring for cutting, self-harm, abuse, and escape.
  - *Semi-intensive therapy*: For recent rescues with long-term trafficking histories, withdrawals, self-harm (lower), and isolated and disoriented youth and women.
  - *Transitional therapy*: Group-home-style facilities with 24/7 monitoring for survivors who have been newly rescued, low risk for runaways.
  - *Therapeutic homes*: Homes on campus with amenities of a house with six children per home and two house adult caretakers that live there and two others that do shift work with a ratio of three to six (1:2) victims.
  - *Creative rehabilitation*: Nontraditional techniques such as sand tray therapy and dance and music therapies.
  - *Physical therapy* and spiritual healing.

*SAFE houses programming will have the following components:*

1. *Immediate health and safety*—We respond to the immediate emotional and physical needs (excluding medical care) of the minor crime victims of human trafficking such as crisis intervention; accompaniment to hospitals for medical examinations/food, clothing, transportation, mental health counseling, and long-term rehabilitation; and safe house shelter that is purposed to restore the victim’s sense of security. We obtain emergency custody/visitation rights when such actions are directly connected to family violence cases and taken to ensure the health and safety of the victim.

2. *Mental health assistance*—Those services and activities that assist the primary victims of the crime human trafficking in understanding the dynamics of victimization and in stabilizing their lives after victimization such as counseling, group treatment, and therapy.
3. *Assistance with participation in criminal justice proceedings*—This includes offering collaboration and cooperation with participation in the criminal justice system. These services may include advocacy on behalf of crime victims; accompaniment to criminal justice offices and court transportation to court; notification of victims regarding trial dates, case disposition information, and parole consideration procedures; and assistance with victim impact statements.
4. *Educational opportunities*—Child victims of the crime of child sex trafficking are sent to attend private schools for education to keep them safe and have a more focused training directed toward children with post-traumatic stress disorder.
 

*Skill training for staff*—We offer direct services designated for training directly and exclusively developing the skills of direct service providers including paid staff and volunteers, so they are better to offer quality services to crime victims.
5. *SAFECHR*—Provides direct victim's services until the child reaches the age of 18. SAFECHR utilizes a gentle, proven comprehensive program developed by the author for intervention of victimized individuals with severe post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

### ***How Will the Proposed SAFE HOUSE PROGRAM Alleviate the Stated Problem?***

*The United States is the second largest destination for sex trafficking and has grown from a \$9.5 billion to a \$32-billion-dollar criminal industry.*

UIC Fact Sheet 2012:

[http://www.uic.edu/jaddams/college/research\\_public\\_service/files/TraffickingInPersonInIllinois\\_FactSheet09202010.pdf](http://www.uic.edu/jaddams/college/research_public_service/files/TraffickingInPersonInIllinois_FactSheet09202010.pdf)).

SAFECHR is the grassroots, citizen-driven, and survivor-involved charity organization that focuses on human trafficking. *Advocacy, training, prevention, and rehabilitation* are the four areas through which we believe that we can protect our child, adolescent, and adult victims. By increasing awareness through education, creating critical support systems, and facilitating cognitive, psychological, and emotional healing, SAFECHR and its partners work to reverse the destructive trends of human trafficking. Currently, less than 1% of victims are rescued, and approximately 80% of those return back into the lives of slavery. State systems continue to have difficulty treating children or protecting them from further harm. Given this deeply troubling lack of resources and defined solutions, SAFECHR developed this protocol from intervention to the restoration of individual human dignity based on 30+ years of clinical and evidenced-based experience. Through its protocol, SAFECHR can fill in the gaps in victim identification and service delivery. The

SAFECHR Protocol and implementation of the program are the first of its kind in the world. Utilization of the survivor-clinician mentorship model opens venues of healing and employment which are two areas that when lacking have been reported by survivors to frequently lead to relapse and suicide.

**Part VII**  
**Views Around the World**



# Statistics on Human Trafficking Around the World



Chelsey Mahler, Giselle Gaviria, and Natalie Sarachaga-Barato

There is a continuous need to research the psychological effects of sex trafficking on victims and survivors around the world. In 2000, the United States became the primary leader in combating issues of human trafficking, including sex trafficking, by passing the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000 (TVPA). This anti-trafficking legislation authorized the establishment of the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons (TIP) in the U.S. Department of State (TIP, 2015). The TIP Annual Report is based on the efforts of complying countries that participate in new legislation and support anti-trafficking efforts. Despite this compliance, many have criticized the reliability of statistics disclosed by each individual country, and some have argued that “Human trafficking remains a hidden crime” (CdeBaca & Sigmon, 2014).

In 2000, the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, was established to supplement the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (TIP, 2015). As of 2013, a total of 186 countries accepted the terms to prevent and combat trafficking in persons by paying particular attention to women and children, protecting and assisting the victims of trafficking with complete respect for their human rights, and promoting cooperation among States in order to meet anti-trafficking objectives (TIP, 2014; UNODC, 2012). Each country was evaluated and classified into one of the following tiers: (a) tier 1, which includes countries whose governments fully comply with

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the TVPA minimum standards; (b) tier 2, which included countries whose governments did not fully comply with minimum standards but were making significant efforts to move in the direction of completing the minimum standards; (c) the tier 2 watch list, which included countries that did not fully comply with the TVPA minimum standards but were making efforts toward compliance in attaining “absolute number of victims and commitment by the country to take additional future steps over the next year” but have proven “a failure to provide evidence of increasing efforts”; or (d) tier 3, which included countries whose governments did not fully comply with the minimum standards and were not making a significant attempt to do so (TIP, 2014; TIP, 2015).

It was noted that 80% of 27 million trafficked victims were being trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation (Department of State, 2007). According to a report published by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (2012), 76% of trafficked individuals were women and girls. In a review of the TIP Report of 2014, which was based on data collected in 2013, each country had their own way of identifying victims, and some countries were more consistent than others in their efforts. Services that were available to victims within each country were explored and ranged from temporary visa status, legal assistance, shelters, mental health counseling, medical treatment, food allowances, and living arrangements. The prevalence regarding how many sex trafficking victims have taken part in these government efforts were compared across countries (TIP, 2014). Of the 28,263 sex trafficking victims that were identified across 186 countries, about 52% received government services, 57% received medical services, and 55% of the individuals were allocated a translator in their host country in 2013 (TIP, 2014; Mahler, Gaviria, Sarachaga-Barato, & Walker, 2015).

The U.S. Department of State publishes the Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Annual Report which documents how foreign governments address human trafficking. Each country has their own written narrative that includes an explanation of the country’s presenting human trafficking problem, recommendations, prosecution measures, protection, and prevention. Of the total 196 countries around the world, the TIP Report of 2015 included narratives from 188 countries. This means that about 96% of countries were represented in the US Department of State’s TIP Report of 2015. The following charts were compiled from the TIP Report of 2015, representing information from 2014, and were organized by continents. The available data (Chart C) were compiled from these country narratives to determine what services are provided in each continent for both human and sex trafficking victims. The country narratives mentioned that trafficking victims could be provided with several services, including housing (i.e., long term, not shelters), medical, mental health, immigration, translator, vocational/employment, education, financial, reintegration, child care, referrals to providers, witness protection, and exemption from legal status.

Chart A represents the total number and total percentage of countries within each continent that were classified as tier 1, tier 2, and tier 3.

Chart A

Continent	Total number of countries	Number of tier 1 countries (% total)	Number of tier 2 countries (% total)	Number of tier 3 countries (% total)
Asia	50	4 (8%)	38 (76%)	8 (16%)
Africa	55	10 (18%)	44 (80%)	1 (2%)
South America	16	1 (6%)	14 (88%)	1 (6%)
Europe	45	22 (49%)	21 (47%)	2 (4%)
North America	20	3 (15%)	16 (80%)	1 (5%)
Australia	10	2 (20%)	7 (70%)	1 (10%)

Chart B represents the total number and total percentage of countries within each continent that did not include information in each of the identified categories.

Chart B (missing data)

Continent	Total number of countries	Total number of victims identified (labor and sex trafficking)	Total victims who received services (labor and sex trafficking)	Total sex trafficking victims identified	Total sex trafficking victims who received services
Asia	50	25 (50%)	30 (60%)	31 (62%)	32 (64%)
Africa	55	15 (27%)	35 (64%)	47 (85%)	54 (98%)
South America	16	3 (19%)	9 (56%)	7 (44%)	11 (69%)
Europe	45	5 (11%)	9 (20%)	21 (47%)	38 (84%)
North America	20	2 (10%)	9 (45%)	13 (65%)	19 (95%)
Oceania (Australia)	10	7 (70%)	9 (90%)	9 (90%)	10 (90%)

Chart C represents the total number and total percentage of countries within each continent that were included in the data we compiled.

Chart C (data available)

Continent	Total countries	Total number of victims identified (labor and sex trafficking)	Total serviced victims (labor and sex trafficking)	Sex trafficking victims identified	Sex trafficking serviced victims
Asia	50	25 (50%)	20 (40%)	19 (38%)	18 (36%)
Africa	55	40 (80%)	20 (36%)	8 (15%)	1 (2%)
South America	16	13 (81%)	7 (44%)	9 (56%)	5 (31%)
Europe	45	40 (89%)	36 (80%)	24 (53%)	7 (16%)

Chart C (data available)

Continent	Total countries	Total number of victims identified (labor and sex trafficking)	Total serviced victims (labor and sex trafficking)	Sex trafficking victims identified	Sex trafficking serviced victims
North America	20	18 (90%)	11 (55%)	7 (35%)	1 (5%)
Oceania (Australia)	10	3 (30%)	1 (10%)	1 (10%)	0 (0%)

It is important to note that only when a country narrative mentioned that one or more services were provided to any trafficking victim, that country was allocated one point for providing a particular service. However, if the country narrative did not mention that a particular service was provided to victims, the country was not awarded one point for providing a particular service. This does not necessarily mean that the country does not provide this service to victims; rather, it could mean that this information was simply not included in the narrative for the TIP Report of 2015. It also is important to note that each country's data were organized into the continents: Asia, Africa, South America, North America, Europe, and Australia (Oceania). Antarctica is not included in the list of continents because there are no recognized countries on the land mass. Additionally, some countries were transcontinental, meaning that their regions spanned across more than one continent. If this was the case, then that country was counted once for each continent it spanned across. These countries were, namely, Azerbaijan (Europe and Asia), Egypt (Africa and Asia), Spain (Europe and Africa), Kazakhstan (Europe and Asia), Russia (Europe and Asia), Turkey (Europe and Asia), and Georgia (Europe and Asia).

Continent	Total number of victims identified (labor and sex trafficking)	Total victims who received services (labor and sex trafficking)	Sex trafficking victims identified	Sex trafficking victims who received serviced
Asia	11,623	4,808	1,628	330
Africa	5,458	1,526	870	2
South America	4,709	455	450	237
Europe	9,296	4,899	3,014	732
North America	5,795	3,144	374	20
Oceania (Australia)	71	18	25	0
Total	36,952	14,850	6,361	1,321

Continent	Housing (long term; not shelter services)	Mental health services	Legal services	Immigration services	Translator
Asia	7	29	26	18	5
Africa	5	32	16	15	0
South America	2	10	9	8	0
Europe	14	33	30	27	2
North America	2	11	7	11	1
Oceania (Australia)	3	4	5	6	1
Total	33	119	93	85	9

Continent	Transportation assistance	Vocational services	Medical services	Educational services	Financial assistance
Asia	3	14	27	8	9
Africa	2	7	29	11	7
South America	0	3	10	1	4
Europe	2	16	33	9	14
North America	3	6	12	4	1
Oceania (Australia)	2	2	5	0	2
Total	12	48	116	33	37

Continent	Reintegration services	Child services	Referrals to providers	Witness protection	Exemption from legal problems
Asia	6	8	17	7	13
Africa	11	16	4	5	12
South America	4	4	6	3	8
Europe	8	16	9	15	20
North America	3	6	2	2	8
Oceania (Australia)	0	0	1	2	2
Total	32	50	39	34	63

Unfortunately, a significant number of individual countries compiled labor trafficking and sex trafficking together instead of discretely listing the data. It is, therefore, recommended that one global sex trafficking definition be created for the purposes

of identifying victims/survivors and to gather reliable, consistent, and accurate data. It would be essential for countries to develop an internationally recognized reporting database to document identified labor vs. sex-trafficked victims/survivors and the services provided to trafficked persons, as well as, establish structured policies that include a thorough follow-up system to enforce accountability and transparency with countries' victim service efforts. The following recommendations are being proposed, given the current research that is available, in order to increase sex trafficking prevention efforts worldwide:

- Construct an international legal standard and/or policy to protect trafficked victims from being deported or charged with a crime as a result of being trafficked.
- Train law enforcement to identify sex trafficking victims to prevent unnecessary imprisonment and/or deportation.
- Establish more government-run shelters, and allocate more funding to non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to maintain current services being offered and improve conditions.
- Foster long-term care for trafficked victims and reintegration.

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# Sex Trafficking in the UK: An Overview



Mackenzie Lambine

In the UK, sex trafficking is considered a form of “modern slavery”. The Modern Slavery Act of 2015 was intended to consolidate and simplify offences considered to be a part of modern slavery. Among these were bonded labour, withholding of travel documents and physical and sexual abuse. Recent figures indicate that the number of potential victims is increasing, particularly those individuals exploited for sex. From 2014 to 2016, the UK has seen a 40% rise in the number of potential victims of trafficking reported to local authorities and trafficking agencies. According to a 2015 summary from the National Crime Agency’s Modern Slavery Human Trafficking Unity (MSHTU), the top six most common recorded countries of origin for potential victims of trafficking were Albania, Vietnam, Nigeria, Romania, the UK and Poland, with potential victims originating from Albania representing 18% of all referrals. At present, the number of people being reported as potential victims of trafficking in general has increased from a total of 1745 in 2013 to 3805 in 2015 (National Crime Agency, 2016). When looking at the reported adult sex trafficking statistics specifically, there were 880 reported sex trafficking victims in 2016, the overwhelming majority of whom came from Albania ( $N = 391$ ) followed by Nigeria ( $N = 95$ ) and China ( $N = 50$ ). The NCA (2016) estimates that people are trafficked from approximately 108 countries worldwide, making it extremely difficult to coordinate intervention initiatives with some governments that might be unstable or in conflict (e.g. Afghanistan). It should be noted that estimations of the extent of trafficking in general, and sex trafficking in particular, should be taken with caution, because it is extremely difficult to identify and track victims, as victims are often reluctant to report their victimization. This is due to a number of factors including, but not limited to, language barriers, lack of education, deceit, intimidation, threats to self or family, etc.

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## Child Sex Trafficking and Exploitation

It is estimated that more than one-third of all trafficking victims in the UK are under the age of 18, and there has been a 103% rise in child sex trafficking specifically from 2015 to 2016. During this time period, the most common country of origin for child sex trafficking victims was within the UK, followed by Albania, Vietnam, Afghanistan and Eritrea.

Terminology around sex trafficking of children can be confusing at times, as many government and non-profit publications use the terms “trafficking” and “child sexual exploitation” interchangeably (Brayley & Cockbain, 2014). Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is defined by the UK government as:

A form of child sexual abuse where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology. (p. 5)

## Prevention and Intervention

The Sexual Offences Act of 2003 established a framework for intervening in cases of child sexual exploitation through the ability of agencies to issue Sexual Risk Orders (SROs) and Sexual Harm Prevention Orders (SHPOs) for children believed to be victims or potential victims of CSE (HM Government, 2017a, 2017b). However, these are also umbrella measures that focus not only on trafficked victims but also on any form of sexual abuse.

In 2015, the hospitality industry became the focus of law enforcement initiatives to combat sex and other forms of trafficking. COMBAT, a recent research project led by the University of West London, estimated that 110,000 sex slaves and labour slaves are exploited in hotels and restaurants every year in the European Union (University of West London, 2016).

In 2015, the Metropolitan Police launched Operation Makesafe, an initiative to highlight the role of community businesses in educating employees regarding the identification of children who might be at risk of sexual exploitation. Those targeted were employees of hotels, serviced apartments, bars and pubs and taxi companies. Traffickers often take children to venues like these to meet with potential abusers, and employees are encouraged to remain vigilant for warning signs so that they might intervene or prevent abuse from occurring.

Although there have been some steps taken in the UK, there is still a substantial dearth of resources for victims and potential victims of trafficking. Organizations such as Parents Against Child Sexual Exploitation (PACE), the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC), Unseen UK and the Human



Trafficking Foundation provide information, raise money and employ experts to influence public policy, but there is still a long way to go towards providing straightforward referral pathways for victims. In a report published by the Work and Pensions Committee, “inexcusable” failures in the UK system included allowing victims to suffer, while perpetrators remained free (2017). This was the result of insufficient support for victims and lack of training of agencies for recognizing and alerting authorities of potential incidents of trafficking.

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# Latin American



Giselle Gaviria and Estefania Masias

Latin American countries have served as a “primary source region” for transit and destination for victims of sex trafficking who are victimized within their own country and then smuggled or transported to the United States and Canada (Seelke, 2016). The US Department of State’s Trafficking in Persons’ Report (TIP, 2015) reviewed data using country narratives across 15 victim services provided by 20 different Latin American and Caribbean countries where individuals considered themselves Latinxs. The countries from Latin America are generally understood to consist of the continent of South America in addition to Mexico, Central America, and islands of the Caribbean, but information is not available from all of them.

In the TIP Report of 2015, a total of 7238 individuals were identified as labor and sex trafficking victims; however, only 574 sex trafficking victims were identified across 20 countries. This appears to be a gross underestimate considering that in Colombia alone approximately 70,000 individuals are trafficked every year (Lozano, 2015). Chile was the only country considered to be Tier I which indicates that “that the government has acknowledged the existence of human trafficking, has made efforts to address the problem, and meets the TVPA’s minimum standards” (US Department of State, 2015, p. 45). Like in other regions of the world, both individual factors and outside circumstances contribute to human trafficking throughout Latin America. As in other areas, individual risk factors include poverty, unemployment, membership in an indigenous group, illiteracy, a history of physical or sexual abuse, homelessness, drug use, and gang membership (TIP, 2015).

According to the TIP (2015) Report, “When large populations of workers migrate for employment, especially to isolated locations, such as mining, logging, and agricultural camps, the incidence of sex trafficking in those areas may increase” (p. 18).

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The TIP Report further states, “Bolivian and Peruvian girls are subjected to sex trafficking in mining areas in Peru, and women and girls are subjected to sex trafficking near gold mines in Suriname and Guyana” (p. 19) and a history of “armed groups, violent extremists, and militias fuel conflicts that devastate communities and weaken social and governmental structures, leaving adults and children defenseless and vulnerable among Latin America. Women and children in armed conflicts are particularly vulnerable to multiple abuses including those involving human trafficking and sexual and gender-based violence” (p. 37), as can be seen in countries such as Colombia and Mexico.

## Colombia

According to an interview with Betty Pedraza Lozano, director of *Corporacion Espacios de Mujer*, an organization working with marginalized groups of women working as sex workers and who have been trafficked within the city of Medellin, Colombia, “about 70,000 people are trafficked every year in Colombia” (Global Alliance against Traffic in Women (GAATW, 2015; Pedraza Lozano, 2017). Although trafficking occurs across Colombia, the departments (states) of “Valle del Cauca, Risaralda (part of the coffee zone) and Antioquia, are the three main areas of trafficked persons and an internal trafficking destination” (GAATW, 2015). It is also important to note that voluntary sex work itself is legal in the county of Colombia if an individual is over the age of 18.

Pedraza stated that there was a significant increase in sex trafficking during the beginning of the 1970s when drug trafficking was at its beginning stages in the Department of Antioquia and drug lords popularized Colombian women within this region. These three particular departments have been impacted by drug trafficking as well as “the presence of armed groups that have been operating outside the law since the late 1980s” and which the government has been trying to come to an agreement of peace in recent years (GAATW, 2015; Pedraza Lozano, 2017). Pedraza also stated that “Here, sexual exploitation, forced labor and slavery are the most common forms of trafficking,” and she speculates that there will be an increase of victims/survivors of trafficking with the reintegration of individuals from the armed conflict (GAATW, 2015; Pedraza Lozano, 2017).

In Colombia, internal trafficking is a significant problem. This country ranks among the regions with the highest number of trafficked persons. In its 13 years of activity, *Espacios de Mujer* has served 150 trafficked people: 42 from other countries and 108 victims of internal trafficking. Of these, 97 were women and only 4 were men. The modes of abuse range from sexual exploitation to forced labor and servile marriage to domestic service.

## ***Obstacles in Providing Services and Protections***

There is a significant problem of communication and coordination with different NGOs trying to make a difference in the fight against trafficking and providing services to victims and survivors. The local and national government needs to improve their efforts in protecting victims and survivors from those who have trafficked them. There has been an effort among local governments to provide monetary support to NGOs, but it has been limited. There is a lack of commitment to coordinate and achieve legislation to protect victims and survivors of trafficking. During court proceedings, there are limited efforts in the protection of witnesses (e.g., victims and survivors).

### **Peru**

Peru is known to serve as an import, export, and transit hub of trafficking in persons (DOJ, 2016). This is facilitated by vulnerability factors within targeted populations, differing cultural views, corruption, and supply and demand (DOJ, 2016; Ministerio, 2015; Verite, 2016). Within Peru, the majority of victims that are exploited in sex trafficking are women and young girls (DOJ, 2016). Unfortunately, due to lower education levels, fear of retribution, and lack of public awareness, cases of trafficking are largely underreported (Ministerio, 2015). The demand for cheap labor (e.g., domestic services, sex workers, and farmers), the availability of victims, and cultural normalization of trafficking facilitate and encourage its occurrence (Hunt, 2012; Ministerio, 2015). Due to the primarily *machista* cultural outlook, less opportunities are available for women in the workforce leading them to take any work they are offered (Seelke, 2016).

In cases documented by the Peruvian Ministry of Justice and Human Rights (DGPCP), between 2009 and 2013, there were a total of 3129 registered cases of trafficking, 1355 of which were cases of sexual exploitation (Politica Nacional Contra). As of 2014, ten specific districts in Peru were highlighted as being responsible for the majority of trafficking cases reported. While these districts are found in southern (Cusco, Puno, Arequipa) and central (Lima, Junín) regions of Peru, the majority of cases were reported in the Peruvian Amazon (Loreto, Madre de Dios, San Martín, and Amazonas) in which levels of poverty are high, education levels are low, and illegal activities are in abundance due to a minimal presence of law enforcement (Ministerio, 2015; TIP, 2016). Most, if not all, of these regions have been associated with the occurrence of illegal mining, which has become an epidemic across Latin America (Verité, 2013). Members of organized crime groups are at the forefront of those in charge of running these mining sites as well as the trafficking rings that inevitably become part of the site (DOJ, 2016; Ministerio, 2015; Verite, 2016).

## ***Population Vulnerability Factors***

**Gender, Poverty, and Education** There are various factors that contribute to the susceptibility of certain populations within Peru to be exposed to trafficking or targeted by traffickers. It is estimated that about 21.8% of the Peruvian population lives in poverty, with the majority being made up of children and adolescents of indigenous origin living in rural areas (Instituto Nacional de Estadística e Informática, 2015). Remote rural areas of Peru, such as regions in the Peruvian Amazon or in the Andes, tend to have little to no presence of authority or law enforcement. These areas are often inhabited by indigenous or native people, who have no education and no money. Among the Peruvian population, indigenous Peruvians, specifically women and young girls, have a higher vulnerability to sex trafficking (DOJ, 2016; Ministerio, 2015). Out of the 3,129 registered cases of trafficking from 2009 to 2014, 79.6% were cases of female victims (Ministerio, 2015).

**Cultural Views** Peru, like many Latin American countries, has limited opportunities for women within the workforce (Instituto Nacional de Estadística e Informática, 2015; Seelke, 2016). Women are left to find any means possible to provide food for their families; having the knowledge of their desperation for money and work, traffickers take advantage by making false promises that lure women in (DOJ, 2016; Ministerio, 2015; Seelke, 2016). Cultural views also serve as a contributor to the maintenance of sex trafficking such as permissive views toward child labor, sexual relations with underage girls (i.e., through arranged marriages), and violence against women, which enable practices such as trafficking and normalize how it is viewed (Ministerio, 2015). The promulgation of these ideals causes severe drawbacks to the fight against trafficking since the normalization of it reduces not only the public's awareness that it is a problem but the victim's awareness as well (DOJ, 2016; Ministerio, 2015).

**Corruption** Due to elevated poverty levels in the majority of the regions in which trafficking is prevalent, there is also a preponderance of corruption among law enforcement officers (Ministerio, 2015; Verite, 2016). Often, authorities play an important role in concealing and protecting traffickers in exchange for money (Centro de la Mujer Peruana Flora Tristán, 2005; ECPAT International, 2005; Seelke, 2016; UNODC, 2012). This may also play a role in the low number of convictions that are made once a perpetrator is arrested (DOJ, 2016). As a result, many of these crimes often go unreported or are ignored, contributing to the faulty statistics and low levels of awareness within the Peruvian community.

## **Trafficking**

In Peru, there is a higher prevalence of trafficking of children and of trafficking for sexual exploitation than forced labor (UNODC, 2016). While women make up the majority of reported victims of trafficking in Peru, men around the ages of 11–18 tend to report more than men of different age groups (Ministerio, 2015). Many of the cases were reported by victims of Peruvian nationality followed by women of Chinese, Colombian, Ecuadorian, and Bolivian nationalities (Ministerio, 2015). Many women who are exploited in sex trafficking, especially in the rural regions of the Peruvian Amazon, tend to be exploited at a young age, and once they get older, they go on to join the group that exploited them in order to recruit new victims (Mujica & Cavagnoud, 2011; UNODC, 2012, 2014).

**Recruitment** The majority of people in Peru who are convicted of trafficking are between the ages of 20 and 34, and the majority is of Peruvian nationality, followed by a small number who are of American or Ecuadorian nationality (Ministerio, 2015). Recruiters, sometimes referred to as *enganchadores*, often lure victims in through public ads for job openings that are placed in markets, bus stops, busy neighborhoods, and even radio announcements (Novak & Namihas, 2009). The fact that the job openings are publicly advertised may provide the victim a sense of security that nothing suspicious is going on, while it allows the recruiter to cast a wide net.

**Illegal Mining** Among countries within Latin America, Peru's economy is vastly growing, primarily due to the country's export of base metals. Mining and exportation of metals such as copper, gold, and zinc have propelled the growth of Peru's economy over the years (Banco central de reserve, PE, wiki link). Peru is considered to be Latin America's top exporter of gold, and it is among the top ten exporters of gold in the world (Verité, 2013). It is estimated that about 28% of the gold exported from Peru is obtained through illegal mining which is a growing issue in the country (Verité, 2013). This form of mining consists of violations of a country's mining laws, such as mining in accepted areas that do not cause harm to the environment and abiding by labor and tax laws (Verité, 2013). Illegal mining has been on the rise in various countries within Latin America, with Peru falling in the top five of Latin American countries with highest percentage of gold produced illegally (Verite, 2016).

Organized crime and drug trafficking groups have been closely linked with the act of illegal mining and are prevalent in remote areas where the presence of law enforcement and government authority is not felt (Verite, 2016). It is within these regions in which forced labor, including commercial sexual exploitation, is rampant.

## *Initiatives Against Trafficking*

Within the last few years, the Peruvian government has made strides toward the movement to eliminate trafficking (TIP, 2016). An investigation by the United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime (2014) found that Peru was among one of the two countries (the other being the United States) that convicted more than 50 people accused of trafficking.

## **Conclusions**

Obtaining information about the existence of and intervention with sex trafficking has been very difficult to obtain as is evident from this report. Although there are several sites where statistics are reported, in fact, actual interviews with those in each country who are dealing with the problem claim that the official statistics are woefully inadequate and underrepresent the enormity of the problem in the Latin American countries. The data gathered from both Colombia and Peru from the authors, who have families living in these countries, indicates the enormity of the problem even in countries where there is acknowledgment of the problem and some although minimal services available. Like in the rest of the world, the problem of children being sold and other survival sex will not be resolved without understanding the economic conditions that perpetuate it.

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# Symptoms of Post-traumatic Stress Disorder in Victims of Trafficking



Christina Antonopoulou

Reincarnation flowing in me, silly and trusting, safe to be free, reclaiming my innocence finally. Reincarnation flowing in me. (MacIntosh, 2003, p. 20)

Trauma is a Greek word, meaning wound. Childhood, adolescent, and adult physical, emotional, and sexual abuse are traumas that can take the form of many different types of wounds. However, all the different types of wounds have something in common; they represent profound changes in a person's experience and in a person's relationship to the world (Fisher, 2005). It is up to psychologists and other mental health workers, through sensitive and relevant psychotherapy, to help a survivor of physical, emotional, and sexual trauma reconnect with herself and others and to begin to trust her experiences and relationships.

Physical, emotional, and sexual trauma is extremely prevalent in Western culture. In 2000, investigations by state child protective service agencies in the United States determined that 879,000 children were victims of child abuse and neglect. Of these children, 19% suffered physical abuse, 10% survived sexual abuse, and 8% endured emotional abuse (US Department of Health and Human Services, Children's Bureau, 2000). These astonishing numbers include only the known instances of abuse in the United States and do not include reports of abuse of people older than 18. Thus, these percentages are only a meager fraction of the many cases of physical, emotional, and sexual abuse that occur both in the United States and globally.

One of the most prevalent types of trauma is sexual abuse. The reported global prevalence rates of those who have experienced sexual trauma vary substantially as the prevalence ranges from 6 to 52% for women and 3 to 9% for males (MacIntosh, 2003). The large variations in the prevalence rates are due to the many different definitions of sexual trauma. The general definition of trauma as defined by the DSM-V (American Psychiatric Association, 2013) is "experiencing or witnessing an event

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that involves actual or threatened death, serious injury, or a threat to physical integrity that leads to a response involving intense fear, helplessness, or horror. In children, these symptoms may be expressed as disorganized or agitated behaviors” (DSM-V). Since the construct of trauma, including sexual trauma, is not clearly defined, what is most important in identifying trauma is the survivor’s subjective experience of the event (Perrin, Smith, & Yule, 2000).

Both the subjective and objective experience of sexual trauma varies from person to person. Many people endure years of incest by family members, while others experience assault or rape one or a few times by strangers. Despite the fact that these experiences exist on a continuum in terms of their severity, all people will be affected to some degree by the trauma and abuse. The aftereffects vary just as much as the types of sexual trauma. The emotional, psychological, and behavioral symptoms include fears, phobias, nightmares, psychosomatic complaints, development of eating disorders, guilt, anger, shame, depersonalization, dissociation, and extreme distrust of relationships (MacIntosh, 2003). A number of cognitive changes may also be observed after a sexual trauma, such as difficulties with concentrating and memory problems (Perrin et al., 2000). If not therapeutically dealt with and resolved, these symptoms become generalized into the survivor’s everyday life and relationships and may even lead to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Post-traumatic stress disorder first received official recognition in the third edition of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM-III), in which it was placed among the anxiety disorders. PTSD is defined by a cluster of symptoms, like the other disorders in the DSM-IV-TR (2000). However, unlike the other disorders, PTSD includes part of its assumed etiology, namely, a traumatic event or events that the person has directly experienced or witnessed involving actual or threatened death or serious injury to self or others. PTSD entails an extreme response to the severe stressor, which must have created intense fear, horror, or a sense of helplessness. The person’s response must also include increased anxiety, avoidance of stimuli associated with the trauma, and numbing of emotional responses (DSM-V, 2013). This disorder carries risks of chronicity, morbidity, mortality, and great physical and psychiatric impairment or disturbance in interpersonal and professional functioning. The prevalence of PTSD is on the rise, which may not come as a great surprise as we live in a time of war, natural disaster, domestic violence, physical and emotional abuse, and sex-related trafficking.

## **Etiological Theories of PTSD**

Both psychological and biological theories have been proposed to account for the development of PTSD. Learning theorists assume that the disorder arises from a classical conditioning of fear (Fairbank & Brown, 1987; Keane, Zimmering, & Caddell, 1985). There is a body of evidence in support of this view (Foy, Resnick, Carroll, & Osato, 1990) and the view of the related cognitive-behavioral theories that emphasize the loss of control and predictability felt by PTSD sufferers, such as

victims of spousal abuse (Chemtob, Roitblat, Hamada, Carlson, & Twentyman, 1988; Foa & Kozak, 1986). A psychodynamic theory proposed by Horowitz (1990) posits that memories of the traumatic event occur constantly in the person's mind and are so painful that they are either consciously suppressed or repressed. The person is believed to engage in a kind of internal struggle to integrate the trauma into his or her existing beliefs about him or herself and the world to make some sense out of it.

More recently, a biological diathesis has been suggested. van der Kolk et al. (1994), the leader in this area, has found that chronic stress due to trauma has a psychobiological impact on an individual. Not only is the person psychologically traumatized, but the physical organism is permanently altered as well. Chronically stressed organisms have lower levels of serotonin at rest and when stressed. Low serotonin is associated with irritability, hypersensitivity, and exaggerated emotional arousal to relatively mild stimuli, all of which are symptoms of PTSD. This is nicely illustrated by an experiment on exaggerated startle response conducted by Shalev, Peri, Canetti, and Schreiber (1996). In this study, the researchers created a loud noise at random times in a room full of people. At first everyone jumped at the loud noise. The second time the noise came, most people jumped. By the third time the noise sounded, most people in the room who had not experienced any trauma had gotten used to the noise and did not jump. However, 93% of the trauma survivors continued to jump each time the noise sounded even though they figured that another noise was likely to happen.

No matter what theoretical orientation one takes to explain PTSD's etiology, all mental health professionals can agree that the symptoms of PTSD are adaptations to traumatic experiences. In the past few years, prospective studies have emerged examining various traumatized populations that have shed light on the course of PTSD. Furthermore, studies have been conducted that have established that different populations may develop symptoms of PTSD caused by trauma without actually meeting all of the criteria in the DSM-IV-TR (2000). People may adapt and deal with a trauma by developing a variety of symptoms that seem most suited to them, as how one perceives and incorporates trauma into one's life is highly subjective.

### *The Subjective Experience of Trauma*

The adult literature on PTSD strongly suggests that the development of the disorder cannot be reliably predicted from the severity of the trauma itself (Breslau & Davis, 1987; Yehuda & McFarlane, 1995). Therefore, there is a possibility that the person's subjective experience of the event is at least as important if not more important than any objective characteristics of the trauma (Foy et al., 1996). The importance of subjective perception is illustrated by a report from Pilowsky (1985) who described the emergence of PTSD-like symptoms in accident victims whose perception of danger far exceeded the actual risks. Other people may deal with trauma by developing different parenting behaviors as their primary adaptation (Mowder, Gutman,

Sossin, & Rubinson, 2004) as opposed to developing pathological symptoms. Lastly, symptoms may be manifested and expressed differently from culture to culture as cultural practices and life greatly influence one's subjective experience.

### ***Problems with PTSD Conceptualization***

Several risk factors have been identified for the development of PTSD. In the Breslau et al. study (1991), predictors of PTSD, given exposure to a traumatic event, was being female, early separation from parents, family history of a disorder, and a preexisting disorder. The likelihood of developing PTSD also increases with the proximity of the traumatic event, and initial reaction to the trauma is also predictive. More severe anxiety, depression, and dissociative symptoms (including depersonalization, derealization, amnesia, and out-of-body experiences) all increase the probability of later developing PTSD (Shalev et al., 1996). Thus, certain populations with these risk factors may exhibit PTSD symptoms more frequently and more intensely than other populations who do not have these factors. It is important for all mental health practitioners to be made aware of the risk factors for developing PTSD, so that appropriate prevention methods may be implemented and available to these "at-risk" populations before the onset of PTSD occurs.

Though many risk factors for PTSD have been identified, many of them have not been incorporated into the DSM-IV-TR (2000) criteria, and concerns about the validity of the PTSD diagnostic criteria have been raised. Despite the constant revisions, the DSM-IV-TR (2000) criteria have never been particularly sensitive to the effects of trauma in very young children or to the long-term effects of sexual and physical abuse (Perrin et al., 2000). In addition to problems with the diagnostic criteria there are concerns over treatment options. For example, the treatment literature does not permit consumers or clinicians to make many of the most important distinctions among types of trauma, such as distinctions among physical and sexual assault in children, adulthood, or both, all of which are typically and inaccurately described as "interpersonal violence" (Bradley, Greene, Russ, Dutra, Westen, 2005). This lack of trauma distinction in the treatment literature may be a reflection of the lack of trauma distinction in the DSM-IV-TR (2000) criteria.

Some of the factors that have been neglected in the literature and diagnostic criteria are the nature of the trauma (Bradley, Greene, Russ, Dutra, Westen, 2005; Perrin et al., 2000), the age of the survivor of the trauma (Perrin et al., 2000), and the survivor's subjective experience of the trauma (Foy et al., 1996). A significant contribution to the PTSD literature will be made if the PTSD symptoms associated with specific types of trauma are delineated so that PTSD diagnostic criteria may be more precise, but more importantly so that treatment can be tailored to types of trauma, and as a result be more therapeutically effective. Thus, the purpose of this exploratory study was to examine the extent of trauma in females from three different ethnicities (Greek, Georgian, and Moldavian), four different decades (adolescence, twenties, thirties, and fifties), and who have survived three different types of

abuse (physical/emotional spousal, sex-related trafficking, physical family/domestic) so that each of these three factors could be teased out to determine whether each one significantly impacted these women's responses to certain trauma-related measures. This study is a prodromal step towards the direction of a precise classification and treatment for specific types of trauma.

## **Method**

### ***Participants***

There were 26 participants, ages 17–52. All of the participants were female victims of abuse who lived in a battered women's shelter. Eight women were victims of sex-related trafficking, five from Moldavia and three from Georgia. There were 14 victims of spousal abuse, 11 from Greece and 3 from Georgia. Lastly, there were four victims of family/domestic violence, all from Georgia. Confidentiality and privacy of identifiable data was stressed to all participants.

### ***Procedure***

The instructions and items of the Trauma Syndrome Inventory (TSI), Battered Women's Syndrome Questionnaire (BWSQ), and Brief Betrayal Trauma Survey (BBTS) questionnaires were read to all participants. Some participants chose to read the questionnaires' items on their own. All of the participants completed all of the questions on the TSI, BWQS, and BBTS. They were all given as much time as needed.

The TSI consists of 100 items that tap into symptoms of PTSD. Each symptom is rated according to its frequency of occurrence over the last 6 months on a four-point scale ranging from 0 (never) to 3 (often). The BBTS contains 12 items, each item consisting of two parts, which serve to identify how much trauma a woman has encountered before and after the age of 18. Each symptom on the BBTS is rated according to frequency of occurrence on a scale ranging from "never" to "over 100 times."

The BWSQ is a questionnaire that has six sections, each section examining various aspects of an abused woman's life. The first section simply asks about demographics. The second section regards childhood history and is made up of three parts: physical dysfunctions, child abuse, and sexual abuse. The third section asks about the woman's current situation and is broken up into four parts. Part one regards questions about interpersonal relationships, the second part about sexual dysfunctions, the third about physical dysfunctions, and the last part about PTSD symptoms. The BWSQ's fourth section seeks to learn about the characteristics of an

abusive relationship and consists of nine parts. The first part consists of demographic questions about the abusive relationship and the abuser. The second part discusses power issues, the third asks about sexuality, the fourth considers legal issues, and the fifth regards substance use.

General questions about the nature of the abuse are in the sixth part, followed by the parts on psychological abuse, physical abuse, and sexual abuse. The fifth section asks the woman to describe four different cases of psychological, physical, and sexual abuse. These cases are the first act of abuse, the most recent act of abuse, the worst case of abuse, and a typical case of abuse. (Each one of these cases asks the participant to describe in her own words a specific abusive situation. This part has not been analyzed and therefore is not included in the results.) Lastly, the sixth section of the BWSQ examines a woman's current functioning, such as physical condition and self-esteem.

### ***Data Coding***

Responses for the TSI were coded as such: *never in the last 6 months* (0) were coded as 0, while responses for *sometimes* (1, 2) were coded as 1. Responses for *frequently in the last 6 months* (3) were coded as 2. The responses on the BBTS were coded in a similar fashion with responses of *never* coded as 0, responses of *one occurrence*, and *two to five occurrences* coded as 1. Lastly, responses for *six or more occurrences* were coded as 2.

The items on the BWSQ were coded differently than the items on the TSI and BBTS. These items were coded with the numbers, which correspond to the experiences that the participant chose to describe. For example, item #3 in the physical complaint part of the childhood history section asks whether the participant was ever hit from birth until age 12. If the participant circled response #3, the response was coded as 3, or if the participant circled response #2, the response was coded as 2.

Lastly, on all of the questionnaires, women in their teens were coded as 1, women in their twenties as 2, in their 30s as 3, and women in their 50s as 5. There were no women in their forties in this shelter. Ethnicity was also coded. Greek women were coded as 1, Georgian women as 2, and Moldavian women as 3. On the TSI and BBTS, the types of abuse the women endured were coded as follows: victims of spousal abuse were coded as 1, victims of family violence were coded as 2, and victims of trafficking as 3.

### **Results**

The mean scores on the TSI and BBTS were 1.04 (0.1) and 0.40 (0.21), respectively. A paired sample *t*-test was conducted in order to determine whether these women's TSI mean score was significantly higher than the TSI mean score of a sample of

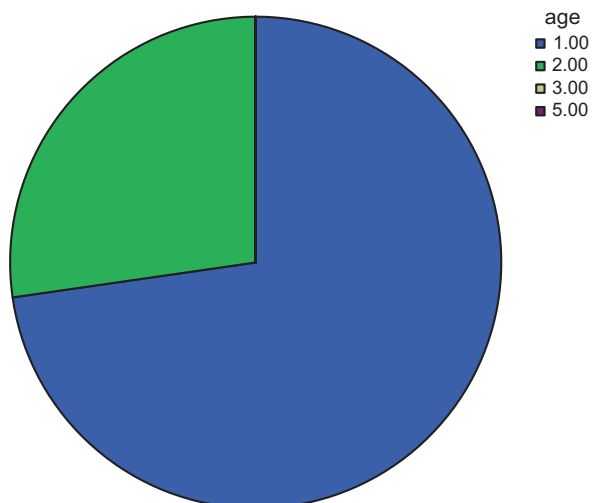
women in the general Greek female population. The TSI scores used to compare this current sample's TSI scores to were taken from a previous study (Antonopoulou & Skoufalos, 2004) where trauma as a function of age in the general Greek female population was examined. The sample used in the previous study was comparable to the sample used in this study, as it consisted of women of comparable age groups. The two samples were not matched for ethnicity, which may have confounded the results.

The paired sample *t*-test yielded significant results,  $t(26) = 10.80, p < 0.001$ , suggesting that the women in this shelter have experienced significantly more trauma than the women in the general female population of Greece. Since the women from the general female sample were never given the BBTS, a *t*-test was not conducted to see how the women in the shelter compare to the general population on this measure.

A one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was conducted in order to determine whether age was a significant factor in the participants' responses on the TSI and BBTS. The significance level was set at a standard of 0.05. On the TSI, significant results were found for items 77 ( $F = 19.8, p < 0.001$ ), 85 ( $F = 19.8, p < 0.001$ ), 87 ( $F = 19.8, p < 0.001$ ), and 88 ( $F = 19.8, p < 0.001$ ). The ANOVA also yielded significant results for certain items on the BBTS. These items were item #1 ( $F = 19.8, p < 0.001$ ), #2a ( $F = 19.8, p < 0.001$ ), #3a ( $F = 35.53, p < 0.001$ ), #4a ( $F = 48.0, p < 0.001$ ), and #10 ( $F = 20.3, p < 0.001$ ). The items found to be significant by the one-way ANOVA include experiences of "Feeling ashamed about your sexual feelings or behavior," "Feeling as if you are in a dream," "Trying not have feelings about something that has hurt you," and "having been emotionally and psychologically abused for a long period of time by someone that you were connected to emotionally." By examining the frequencies of these items, it was apparent that the women who most often endorsed these items were the women in their teens, the victims of sex-related trafficking (see Fig. 1).

Two Chi-square tests of independence were conducted in order to tease out whether the age of the participant, the type of abuse the participant survived, or both

**Fig. 1** Distribution of TSI items endorsed as a function of age

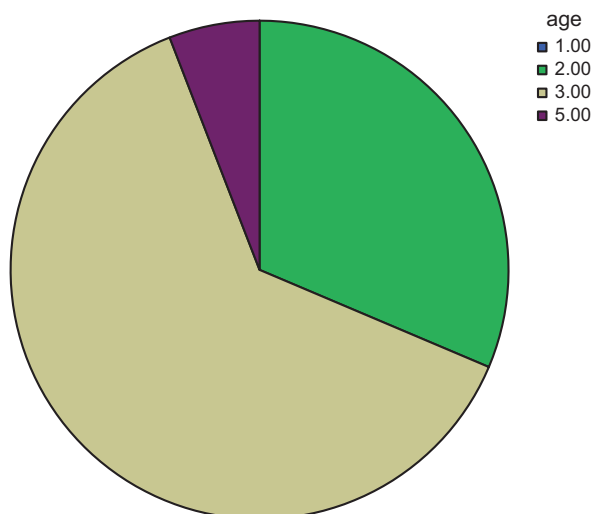


contributed to the significant ANOVA results. The Chi-square test of independence indicated that type of abuse the participant survived, and the TSI scores are not independent,  $X^2(2, N = 26) = 8.385, p = 0.015$ , suggesting that the type of abuse that the participant endured significantly affected her responses on the TSI. On the contrary, age and TSI scores were found to be independent,  $X^2(3, N = 26) = 2.615, p = 0.455$ , suggesting that the age of the participant did not significantly affect the TSI responses. Similarly, the Chi-square test of independence yielded significant results for type of abuse endured on the BBTS,  $X^2(2, N = 26) = 8.385, p = 0.015$ , but did not yield significant results for age  $X^2(3, N = 26) = 2.615, p = 0.455$ . The Chi-Square Tests for both the TSI and the BBTS also indicated that ethnicity was independent of the TSI and BBTS scores. Therefore, the results of this analysis suggest that the type of trauma survived is a significant factor that differentiated the women who endorsed certain TSI and BBTS items significantly more often, while the factors of age or ethnicity were not.

A one-way Analysis of Variance was computed on each section and part of the BWSQ in order to isolate any significant items. In the section *Childhood History*, significant results were yielded for items *oikoe* ( $F = 19.8, p < 0.001$ ), *oikoi* ( $F = 32.0, p < 0.001$ ), *oikoj* ( $F = 19.8, p < 0.001$ ), *oikok* ( $F = 12.8, p < 0.001$ ), *oikol* ( $F = 19.8, p < 0.001$ ) on the *Child Abuse* part, and item *sex10* ( $26.03, p < 0.001$ ) on the *Sexual Abuse* part. Significant results were also found in the section on *Current Situation*. Significant items in the *Interrelationship* part were *intrel7* ( $F = 14.87, p < 0.001$ ), *intrel8* ( $F = 29.31, p < 0.001$ ), and *intrel10* ( $F = 22.34, p < 0.001$ ). As shown in Fig. 2, these results indicate that the women in the thirties age group had experienced the most cases of child abuse.

The ANOVA conducted on the part on *Body Image* yielded results that indicated that the girls involved in sex-related trafficking have the most distorted body image (see Fig. 3). The significant items for this part are items *body1* ( $F = 53.8, p < 0.001$ ),

**Fig. 2** Distribution of BWSQ items indicating signs of child abuse endorsed as a function of age

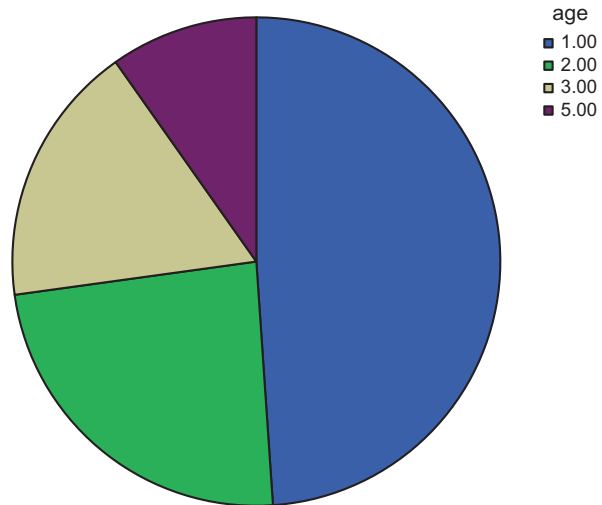




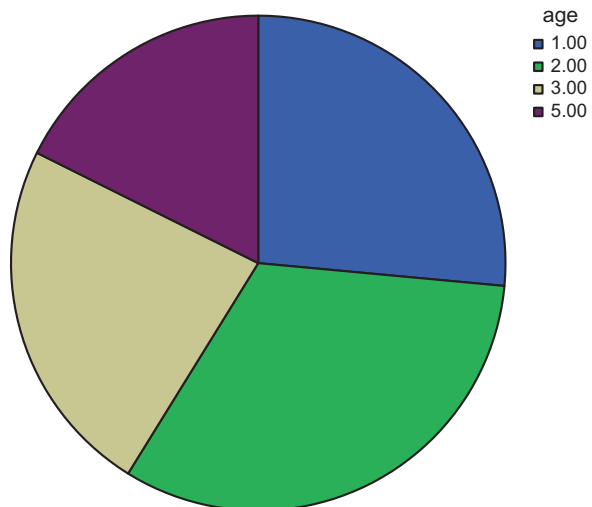
*body3* ( $F = 27.57, p < 0.001$ ), *body4* ( $F = 11.28, p < 0.001$ ), *body6* ( $F = 11.28, p < 0.001$ ), *body7* ( $F = 23.9, p < 0.001$ ), and *body9* ( $F = 12.13, p < 0.001$ ), respectively. Significant items on the last part of the *Current Situation* section, *PTSD*, were items *PTSD2* ( $F = 11.28, p < 0.001$ ), *PTSD9* ( $F = 11.28, p < 0.001$ ), and *PTSD14* ( $F = 41.4, p < 0.001$ ). As indicated by Fig. 4, these items were found to be equally significant for all of the women, suggesting that symptoms of PTSD were present in all of the participants, regardless of age group, ethnicity, or type of trauma survived.

After conducting a one-way ANOVA on the section on *Characteristics of an Abusive Relationship*, it was found that in the part on *Power*, the results yielded that the teen women, mostly victims of sex-related trafficking, experienced the least

**Fig. 3** Distribution of BWSQ items indicating signs of distorted body image endorsed as a function of age



**Fig. 4** Distribution of BWSQ items indicating signs of PTSD symptoms endorsed as a function of age

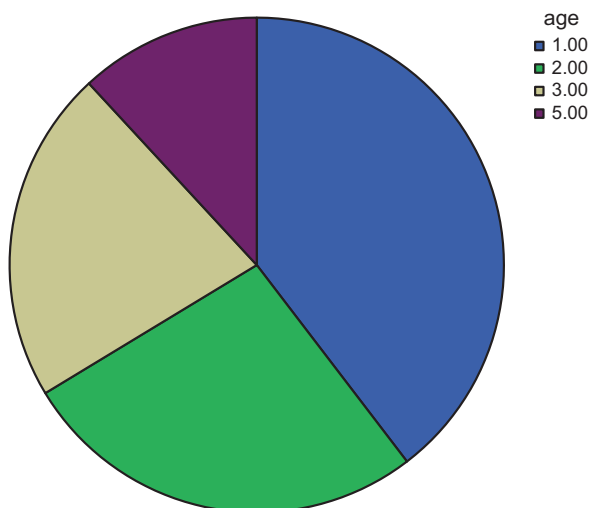


amount of power within the abusive relationship. The significant items supporting this statement are items #7b ( $F = 16.29, p < 0.001$ ), #7f ( $F = 24.11, p < 0.001$ ), #8f ( $F = 8.85, p < 0.001$ ), #10L ( $F = 8.69, p < 0.001$ ), and #18 ( $F = 21.07, p < 0.001$ ). The victims of sex-related trafficking responded to having experienced restrictions on their freedom and being cursed and yelled at much more frequently than the other participants. Other significant results in this section were item *general3* ( $F = 13.07, p < 0.001$ ) in the *General* part and item *psych3* ( $F = 17.09, p < 0.001$ ) in the *Psychological Abuse* part.

In the *Physical Abuse* part of the *Characteristics of an Abusive Relationship* section, the results indicated that women in their thirties and fifties who are victims of spousal abuse experienced certain types of physical abuse more often than the other participants. Significant items were *phys4* ( $F = 20.74, p < 0.001$ ), *phys6* ( $F = 11.02, p < 0.001$ ), *phys7* ( $F = 35.12, p < 0.001$ ), and *phys 11* ( $F = 18.08, p < 0.001$ ). These significant items represent acts of physical abuse such as “being hit on the head,” “being squeezed firmly,” “throwing and breaking objects,” and “being pulled by the hair.”

The last part of the *Characteristics of an Abusive Relationship* section, *Sexual Abuse*, gave rise to results that were endorsed significantly more often by the victims of sex-related trafficking and depict how these victims had certain encounters of sexual abuse more often than the other participants. The significant items in this part were items *sexab10* ( $F = 11.64, p < 0.001$ ), *sexab23* ( $F = 9.41, p < 0.001$ ), and *sexab26* ( $F = 6.62, p < 0.001$ ). These items represent the following experiences: “being forced to have sex with others,” “being forced to have sex very often,” and “being compared sexually to other women and criticized.” Fitting with these results is the one item found to be significant in the last section, *som4* ( $F = 9.1, p < 0.001$ ), which suggests that at the present time, the victims of sex-related trafficking display more somatic complaints associated with depression (see Fig. 5).

**Fig. 5** Distribution of BWSQ items indicating signs of somatic complaints associated with depression as a function of age



## Discussion

### *Explication and Implications of the Results*

Not surprisingly the results suggest that the women in this battered women's shelter have experienced and survived significantly more trauma than the women in the general Greek population. This result was expected given that the women were living in the shelter in order to avoid enduring any additional physical, emotional, or sexual trauma. Given that the entire basis of this study's data analysis and results are based on the assumption that these women have lived through significantly more trauma than the average person does, it was imperative that a significant difference between the two sample means was established before further analysis was conducted.

According to the results of the TSI and BBTS, the type of trauma survived is indicated as the factor that is most significantly related to what the survivor's subjective experience of the trauma was. On the contrary, the factors of age and ethnicity were not significantly related to the experiences endorsed on these measures. Sex-related trafficking was found to be the most salient indicator of experiences of shame and dissociation. Similarly, the results yielded by the analysis of the BWSQ suggest that the survivors of sex-related trafficking were more likely than the survivors of spousal abuse and family/domestic abuse to have body image disturbances, power-related issues, experiences of sexual abuse, and signs of depression. The only experience that was not reported most often by survivors of trafficking was the experience of child abuse, which was endured most often by women in their thirties, perhaps reflecting some kind of cohort effect.

There is considerable evidence that many children who are sexually abused will grow up to have difficulties as adults, including symptoms of depression, suicidal ideation, and suicidal attempts (Boudewyn & Liem, 1995; Sedney & Brooks, 1984), anxiety (Briere & Runtz, 1987; Browne & Finkelhor, 1986), dissociative disorders, and post-traumatic stress disorder. Perhaps adults who are sexually abused are also at risk for developing these symptoms. According to Herman (1997):

The survivor is left with fundamental problems in basic trust, autonomy, and initiative. She approached the tasks of early adulthood—establishing independence and intimacy—burdened by major impairments in self-care, in cognition and memory, in identity and in the capacity to form stable relationships. (p. 110)

All of the women in the sample endorsed items that represent signs and symptoms of PTSD; however, it appears that the survivors of sex-related trafficking are at most risk for developing certain additional and specific symptoms in conjunction with the "standard" PTSD symptoms. The survivors of sex-related trafficking already endorse items that suggest depression (i.e., item som4) and dissociation (i.e., trying not to have feelings of something that has hurt you); thus, it is not a stretch to consider that their risk for suicide and levels of anxiety may also be higher than those who have survived other types of trauma.

As survivors of sex-related trafficking, these women have lived through forced sex with strangers numerous times and very often. They have continuously been compared sexually to other women and have been criticized for their bodies, and they have been cursed at and yelled at for not performing adequately. Thus, it is not difficult to understand why their body image may be extremely distorted and why their sense of power is so diminutive. Essentially, what these women have survived is a combination of physical, emotional, and sexual abuse. Therefore, the range of both objective and subjective experiences, and symptoms that these women will develop, may be more expansive than those who have survived other types of trauma.

No type of trauma should be belittled. All traumas are wounds or scars that a person may have to carry with her for the rest of her life. However, it is critical that the field of mental health examines the effects of various traumas if the best treatment possible is to be provided. The sex trade is a worldwide problem that affects women from numerous countries. Until very recently little has been done by governments to stop the criminals who exploit and expose young women to such inhumane treatment. These women have been dehumanized and relabeled as merchandise and products for sale, likened to the slave trade in the late 1700, early 1800s. As professionals invested in the advocacy of vulnerable populations, mental health workers should conduct studies to provide governments with evidence of the detrimental effects of sex-related trafficking on young women's psychological and physical well-being. This study is a small first step towards a new direction.

### *Limitations and Future Directions*

One limitation of this study was the small sample size. Given the scarcity of battered women's shelters in Greece, it is difficult to gain access to such populations. Another limitation is that many of the women in the sample did not speak Greek and the questions were read by the interviewer in Greek and then translated into the language of the participant. Therefore, some of the words or phrases included in the items of the three measures may hold different meanings depending on the native language of the participant. A person whose native language was the same language as the participant's native language translated the items, so that proper translation was ensured. However, the operationalization of certain constructs may vary from culture to culture. For example, the meanings of "sexual abuse" and "body image" may mean one thing in one culture and something different in another. In the future, a larger sample size should be used, and each construct should be clearly operationalized and defined.

After a sufficient number of exploratory and descriptive studies have been conducted, and large enough samples have been identified, it would be beneficial to conduct large-scale retrospective studies in order to determine whether any accurate predictions can be made about the future well-being of these survivors. Prospective studies would be more valid; however, they would also be extremely unethical and practically impossible. The most immediate need is additional exploratory studies

so that a greater understanding of the experience of surviving sex-related trafficking may be attained, more precise classifications of the different types of trauma are made, and in effect, the door is opened for the healing process to begin:

The therapist's willingness to explore the world of the client in a fashion that seeks to remain accessible to, and respectful of, the client's unique way of being in the world. (Spinelli, 1997, p. 8)

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# Yazidi Genocide



Wendy Cook

In August 2014, the Islamic State of Iraq (ISIS) and the Levant (ISIL) brutally attacked and occupied Sinjar among other villages in Northern Iraq. This was a barbaric event that was followed by the defeat of Kurdish Forces (Peshmerga). The city of Sinjar was inhabited mainly by Yazidi people, a little known ethnic group who practice Yezidism, an ancestral religion that ISIS intends to eradicate. According to ISIS, Yezidism is a satanic religion, although ironically the name Yazidi means, “I was created by God.” However, ISIS believes that their greatest angel, “The Peacock Angel,” is in fact Satan and considers the Yazidi people to be devil worshippers. Because of their religious beliefs, Yazidis have been the target of marginalization and violence for hundreds of years (Asher-Schapiro, 2014). Through killings, sexual slavery, torture, and forcing to Islam conversion, ISIS intends to eliminate them.

According to Nareen Shamoo, a Yazidi journalist, the dispute between radical Muslims and other minority religion groups is not new. In fact, the persecution has led to nearly 23 million deaths—the majority of them being Yazidis—and at least 74 massacres and genocides in the past 700 years (personal communication, March 2017). The memory of persecution is a main component of the Yazidis’ identity according to Matthew Barber, a Yazidi scholar, mainly because of the historical subjugation to brutality against their religion (Asher-Schapiro, 2014). Yazidi religion is very different in comparison with the prominent sects practiced in Iraq. Throughout history, practicing Yezidism has led to a forced choice of death or religious conversion. This minority was also targeted by former Iraqi president Saddam Hussein’s campaign against the Kurdish race. Hussein was charged with genocide for the crimes against humanity he attempted during his power including the death of at least 50,000 civilians and the destruction of thousands of villages (Wong, 2006).

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According to Haider Elias, president of Yazda, the massacre of Yazidis in 2014 left more than 5800 dead and 6000 enslaved. Roughly 3000 remain in captivity today although the precise number is unknown and often changes because many die, get killed, escape, or are released (personal communication, March, 2017). Elias estimates that approximately 50% of Sinjar was retaken from ISIS in November 2015. This liberation resulted from the efforts of the coalition airstrike including PKK (Kurdistan workers' party), Yazidi fighters, Iraqi policemen, and Kurdish security forces. However, some areas of Sinjar still remain under ISIS control (personal communication on March 2017).

In 2016, the massacre that began in August 2014 was declared by the United Nations as genocide. During that time, some people were able to flee to Iraqi Kurdistan, Syrian Kurdistan, and Turkey which led to a mass exodus of Yazidi residents. Others were not as lucky and were tortured, abducted, and/or enslaved. Men were separated from women, and often those who refused to convert to Islam were executed in front of their families ("UN human rights panel concludes ISIL is committing genocide against Yazidis," 2016). Food and water deprivation and forced blood donation for the wounded fighters are two more examples of the crimes against humanity that Yazidi people have experienced and continue to suffer in the hands of ISIS.

The BBC News documentary titled *Slaves of Caliphate* included a video posted to YouTube during the same time Yazidi victims were held by ISIS (2015). This video demonstrated how the fighters discussed the marketing of Yazidi girls and bragged about who was buying, selling, or exchanging them. Fighters explained that prices might vary among Yazidis who have blue eyes and good teeth. In the video, a young boy, perhaps 12–14 years old, was giggling and excited about the possibility of getting a Yazidi for himself.

"Unattractive" or old women were often brutally killed, whereas those considered attractive were forced into enslavement and made to convert to Islam. For example, a mass grave was uncovered of about 80 elderly women between the ages of 40 and 80 years old who had seemingly been executed because they were too old and undesirable to be sold into slavery (Ridge, 2015). Some younger girls are believed to have been sold for as little as \$15 or even for a pack of cigarettes. Girls as young as 9 years old were taken as sexual slaves. Some were forced to marry their "owners," and some were resold or gifted in slave markets multiple times among the fighters who raped and tortured them. Often, victims were gang-raped, and sadly, many of the youngest girls did not survive. Many Yazidi survivors claimed losing consciousness during the sexual assault because of the brutality involved during the abuse. The torture, rape, and suffering of these Yazidi girls have led to thousands of deaths, and some have even committed suicide in order to be free. However, the torture against Yazidis is not considered a crime for the radical Muslims; in fact, slaying a Yazidi guarantees heavenly rewards such as 72 virgins in the next world, and raping Yazidi girls is believed to bring fighters closer to their God. Fighters offer prayers before sexual assaults and consider a woman to be converted to Islam after she is raped by ten Muslims (Alter, 2015).



Young Yazidi boys, on the other hand, are recruited as young as 5 and 6 years old to serve and be trained on how to kill as ISIS fighters. They are taught ISIS's version of Islam and to hate everyone who is a "non-believer" such as Yazidis and to become fighters of the caliphate. ISIS forced them to watch videos of executions as a part of the training. It is known that Yazidi boys have been used as child suicide bombs, or "cubs of the caliphate," for the terrorist group army (Said-Moorhouse, Elbagir, & Jambaz, 2016). Dozens of mass graves have been found in the area with dead bodies of Yazidi men and boys who were brutally killed for refusing to convert to Islam (Cumming-Bruce, 2016).

On March 2017, at the United Nations, a 1-year review took place after the declaration of "genocide," in 2016. Nadia Murad, a Yazidi activist and survivor, gave a powerful speech and asked why nothing had been done since she had first told her testimony and advocated for the Yazidis in 2016. She also remarked on a video recently posted by ISIS on YouTube to point out the urgency of international intervention to stop ISIS crimes. The video shows two Yazidi brothers, both 12 years old, who were kidnaped and trained by ISIS in 2014. The boys are smiling and joking while getting into cars loaded with explosives, driving towards ISIS enemies, and blowing themselves up in Mosul. She stated that hundreds of families have their children under ISIS captivity and would be used as suicide bombs in terrorist attacks if there was no intervention (Nadia Murad Basee Taha (UNODC Goodwill Ambassador) at event on Fight against Impunity for Atrocities: Bringing Da'esh to Justice, 2017).

ISIS crimes against Yazidis are still ongoing, and new generations of terrorists are being trained with no intervention. Victims are waiting to be rescued and are waiting for justice.

## Nadia's Story

To talk about Yazidi genocide, it is necessary to talk about "the voice of Yezidis," Nadia Murad. Nadia is a United Nations Goodwill Ambassador, a Nobel Peace Prize Nominee, a Yazidi survivor of genocide and human trafficking, and a human rights activist. Nadia was able to immigrate to Germany and has been able to tell her story all over the world advocating for ISIS victims. She is currently demanding international justice at the United Nations for the Yazidi victims and is being represented by international human rights counsel Amal Clooney.

Nadia and her family were abducted by ISIS in 2014 along with all the villagers of Kocho, near northern Iraq. She is one of the thousands of Yazidi women who was enslaved and used as a sexual weapon by ISIS. At only 21 years old, she was raped by more than 12 ISIS fighters while being held in captivity for nearly 3 months (An Interview with Yazidi Activist Nadia Murad, 2016). Nadia's six of nine brothers were executed by ISIS as well as her mother. In total, Nadia has lost 18 family members in the hands of ISIS, and some may still be alive in captivity ("Nadia's Story" n.d.).

Per Nadia's testimony, the house where she was held at was marked with blood and signs of suffering. She recalled that some women tried putting battery acid on their faces to look less appealing. However, this did not help because the fighters would ask them to wash and get pretty every morning to be photographed at the Shari'a court where they exhibited the victim's pictures on a wall with their respective "owner" contact information so that they could be swapped among fighters (Alter, 2015). There are multiple suicidal stories from women and young girls jumping from bridges and cutting their wrists because they could not resist ISIS brutalities and decided to end their lives themselves.

Here is a fragment of Nadia's interview on her personal story for *Time* magazine on December 2015:

One day, it was her turn. She was sitting in a room with all the other women, looking down. She was wearing a pink jacket. A fighter came in. "He told me, 'The woman in the pink jacket, stand up for me,'" Nadia says. "When I raised my head, I looked at him, this huge man, and I shouted and screamed." He was very big, she says, with long hair and a long beard. She was sitting with her three nieces, they all held on to each other as the big man tried to drag her from the group. "They were beating us with sticks while we were holding one another," she says. "He took me by force to the ground floor, and they were writing the names of those they were taking."

As she was struggling with the big man, she saw a pair of small feet. It was another ISIS fighter, also there to get a Yezidi slave. Nadia, desperate, wanted to go with him because he had a smaller build than the first man. "I basically jumped on his feet, and I told him, I begged him, 'Free me from this huge person, take me for yourself, and I will do whatever you want,'" she says. "Then he took me for himself."

Nadia's new captor was tall and thin, with long hair but a trimmed beard. Something flickers over her face when she describes his "ugly mouth" with "teeth coming out of his lips." I can't tell whether it is laughter or pain. This new man kept Nadia in a room with two doors. He prayed five times a day. He had a wife and a daughter named Sara, but Nadia never met them. One day he took her to his parents' house in Mosul. "Then he one day forced me to dress for him and put make-up, I did, and in that black night, he did it," she testified.

She told the hushed room that she tried to escape the rape and torture but was captured. "That night, he beat me up, forced to undress, and put me in a room with six militants," she told said in her testimony. "They continued to commit crimes to my body until I became unconscious."

Nadia tells me none of her captors exhibited an ounce of regret for what they did to her. When one ISIS fighter was asked whether she was his wife, he announced, "This is not my wife, she is my *sabia*, she is my slave," Nadia recalls. "And then he fired shots in the sky, as a sign of happiness" quoting (Alter, 2015).

The last men who bought Nadia lived alone, and one day he asked her to wash herself because he was going to sell her to someone else. She managed to flee and was helped by a family who took her to the border and gave her an Islamic ID and an "abaya" a robe-like dress worn by some Muslim women, and this is how she was able to escape ("Nadia Murad: My escape from 'Islamic State,'" 2016).

Even though repeating her story is not easy, Nadia is committed to advocating for all ISIS victims. Nadia recently stated at the United Nations that because of her role as a Yazidi activist, she puts her life and her relatives who are still in captivity at risk, and she wondered if her efforts and sacrifices are not enough because, since she started advocating for the Yazidi population, no one has brought to account any member of ISIS for the atrocities against Yazidis neither has a criminal investigation on ISIS crimes against her people been opened (Nadia Murad Basee Taha (UNODC Goodwill Ambassador) at event on Fight against Impunity for Atrocities: Bringing Da'esh to Justice, 2017).

Nadia has put aside her healing process to raise awareness about the plight of Yazidi girls still in captivity. She has traveled the world repeating her story over and over again seeking for international action.

## **What Has Been Done Since?**

The brutalities that ISIS has committed against Yazidis and other minority groups are undeniable and well known and publicized by now. However, little to no international intervention has occurred to help victims and stop the perpetrators. In June 2016, the United Nations Chairman of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro, concluded that “ISIS abuse of Yazidi man, women, and children amounts to genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes” (Cumming-Bruce, 2016).

The genocide is ongoing, and ISIS efforts to eradicate Yazidis have generated serious harm to this minority group who now suffer from homelessness, extreme poverty, and mental health issues associated with trauma and multiple orphans, yet international programs for refugees are limited, and life at the refugee camps is deplorable.

There is no more severe crime than genocide, but declaring the obvious without action is meaningless. It has been more than 2 years, and no formal international investigation has been conducted.

Nadia Murad and other Yazidi victims are being represented at the United Nations by international human rights counsel Amal Clooney, and together they are trying to bring ISIS into court to make individuals account for the crimes against Yazidis. Not one ISIS militant has been prosecuted for the crimes they are committing against Yazidis in any court in the world. ISIS is a threat to humanity, and without international intervention, we are all at risk.

## My Experience: Interview with Yazidi Survivors

I interviewed a family through a video conference who survived slavery from ISIS including the first woman who escaped from ISIS captivity. Her name is Amshe. These people were strangers in a new land seeking protection and to start a new life. There are many things I would never know about them because they must live secretly and in fear. I felt privileged to have the opportunity to interview them and am thankful for my friend Nareen Shammo, a Yazidi activist who made it possible.

I watched a BBC News documentary of Nareen's story of her helping Yazidis called *Slaves of the Caliphate* and immediately identified with her passion. Nareen resigned from her job as a journalist in 2014 when she learned that the Islamic State had abducted Yazidis and conducted genocide and has dedicated her life tracking missing girls and helping to liberate them from the hands of ISIS so that they can go home. She has helped in the release of numerous victims, and her admirable work has also given rise to death threats from ISIS and their supporters. However, Nareen is not ready to stop until the situation changes.

I managed to communicate with her via social media, and we started a "sisterhood" that changed my life completely. She agreed to help me interview a family who escaped from ISIS and translated for me during the interview. The day of the interview was the first day Nareen and I had personally met. We shared a smile of hope as well as a look full of anger and disgust mixed with compassion and sadness that did not need words to explain.

Starting the interview, I didn't know where to begin. I had read Yazidi victims' stories before but was not prepared to hear and feel what was next. The interview started with questions such as, "How do you feel now that you are safe?," and I asked how they were dealing with the new language and the country in which they lived. I had a smile on my face because I was so happy to see them alive telling their survival stories. However, my smile started to feel inappropriate, and I understood that there is nothing human about their stories, that they are alive, but their souls were taken. As they started telling me their stories, one of the women Amshe asked Nareen to please close the door because her mother-in-law was in the other room and she has never shared what she was about to tell me.

Yazidi culture is extremely conservative, and in the past, women who ran away, converted to another religion, had sex outside marriage, or who were raped were killed. Thankfully, things have changed especially after the recent horrors ISIS has done to Yazidi people, and more families are supporting and welcoming those victims who manage to escape.

Amshe, who was born in 1995, was captured for about 1 month by ISIS and is the first woman who escaped from ISIS captivity. She is a mother of two, and she was also the only woman who agreed to show her face for the BBC News documentary, *Slaves of the Caliphate*. She told me her story and how the fighters came and separated men from women and started to shoot at people and scream at them. "They were saying horrible things about my religion," she said. As she continued telling me about this horrifying event, I forgot that I was interviewing her, and I just

wanted to be there and hug her. I started feeling her pain, and it just got harder and harder to be on the other side of the computer. Amshe has this beautiful almost angelical face and smiles subtly, talks softly, and looks tender. It is almost impossible to imagine someone wanting to hurt Amshe. Fighters killed Amshe's husband who was only 24 years old, her brother-in-law, and uncle along with 53 Yazidi men from her village, while she and other girls were taken as "trophies of war" and became sexual slaves. Each fighter took a Yazidi girl for himself. She was taken by a fighter who took her to a house and locked her in a room and deprived her of water and food because she refused to marry him. Amshe told me the hardest thing from her experience was to see with her own eyes how ISIS killed her husband. The second hardest thing was a few days after the killing of her husband and relatives, she was raped. Since Amshe was the first woman who escaped from ISIS, I told her that because of her courage other girls are able to escape today. When I told her that, she smiled with innocence, like a 5-year-old, and was illuminated with joy. She told me the day she decided to escape she also decided to die because trying to escape would have more likely led to death. She took the one chance to leave because staying was worse than dying.

The second woman I interviewed was Marwa, who was abducted by ISIS alone with 57 members of her village including all members of her family. ISIS also separated the men from women, and Marwa still did not know the whereabouts of the men. She was moved from Sinjar to Mosul where they put her and another 200 Yazidis in a big palace located near Saddam Hussein's famous mosque. According to Nareen, there are huge palaces in Iraq that have been used for the trafficking of Yazidi victims. At the palace, there were more than 2000 Yazidis in captivity. Underground, there was a "big hole" where hundreds of girls were taken for fighters to choose. And after being there for 9 days, Marwa was separated from her family and sent to another big house with other Yazidi girls. She said they were visited by ISIS militants who inspected the girls and chose the girls who were beautiful to buy first. The girls who refused to go with the buyers were brutally hit with wires. Marwa was taken with her two sisters and cousins to Syria to be put for sale on the market. Her sister who was 15 at the time was terrified and begged the militants not to be separated from Marwa. An Egyptian ISIS fighter bought them and locked them in a house with the windows closed all day. "He did really bad things to us," she said. I asked Marwa about her sisters, and she told me that both are still in captivity and are getting resold everyday. Marwa was sold four times when she was held, and she told me that by the third time, she started to think about killing herself, and she even tried cutting the veins in her wrist. Marwa was severally beaten and said, "He would beat my head against the wall and hit my feet and hands with wires, I did not know what was happening with me, and I felt like I was dying."

At this point in the interview, we had been talking for about half an hour, and Marwa started crying while Nareen held her hand and Amshe looked down. I began to get conflicted as to whether to continue or to stop. It is so hard to show compassion through a computer, and I was just a human listening to inhuman stories. Marwa was able to escape from her fourth "owner" at 4 in the morning. I asked her if she tried escaping before, and her response was that all Yazidis are waiting for a

chance to escape. However, she said she was so worried about her sisters and wanted to escape with them but soon realized that this was not going to be possible since she was not able to contact them and she decided to leave on her own. She walked for several hours crying and not knowing where to go until she found a taxi that helped her get to a safe place. Marwa is hoping to see her sisters and finally enjoy freedom with them.

The family also allowed me to interview Farhad, the brother of Marwa. At 12 years old, he was held captive by ISIS for 7 months at a training camp. His little brother Sarhad, who was 9 years old, was also kidnaped with him. At ISIS training camp, they were taught how to use weapons and kill the non-believers. He was also taught how to pray, to read the Quran, and to forget about his religion. As part of his training, he was forced to watch videos of how to cut heads. "Some of us were crying, could not watch these videos and so they would give us pills that make us not feel what was happening to us," he said. I asked Farhad if he saw boys converted "for real" into Islamic State fighters, and he told me that in fact, some of them would get brainwashed and refused to help Yazidis to escape. Farhad and his brother Sarhad were brutally hit and had their hands tied for an entire day. Farhad told me he could smile from the outside but that on the inside he is sad. My hope for Farhad is that he can be a child again. Farhad is being nominated for the International Children's Kids Peace Prize 2017.

One of my main interests during this interview was to learn about the mental state of these women after having been liberated, particularly post-traumatic symptoms from the experiences they all shared. I asked specifically about this during the interview. However, I did not get the responses I was expecting, and there were no medical or psychological complaints from their end. They made sure that I understood that their minds were not full of memories of what happened to them but full of thoughts about those who are still in captivity. What happened to them is unforgettable, and as long as someone else is living what they lived, they cannot enjoy the freedom they have now. They wish to experience freedom with the rest of the Yazidis that are held by ISIS today. I realized that their bodies are free, but their minds are still in captivity and would most likely remain captive until someone does something about it.

At the end of the interview, I asked all of them what they wanted me to tell people that do not know anything about them. They told me they want everyone to acknowledge that what happened to the Yazidis is genocide and that for them to remain alive, they need global intervention. Local governments have failed to help Yazidis. Therefore, it is vital for the rest of the world to know about the atrocities faced by this community and intervene. There are still thousands of Yazidis in captivity waiting to be rescued every day, hoping that one day the world will wake-up and demand international action and protection for the victims and help eliminate the thoughts behind the ISIS actions. "We are human beings, and it is everyone's responsibility as a human being to help us," Marwa said.

## **Interview with Haider Elias, President of Yazda**

I also interviewed Haider Elias via phone call on March 2017. He is the president and board member of Yazda-USA. Yazda is a nonprofit organization for the protection of the Yazidis and the prevention of future genocides against Yazidis. It is also the organization that sponsors and supports Nadia Murad's initiative. I am thankful that Mr. Elias agreed to talk with me and he gave me so much more information that I could research. Yazda has documented the Yazidi genocide and is collecting evidence on the extent of human and material loss.

To start, I wanted to know more about the victims who are still held by ISIS and how the releases of victims who are or were in captivity are being conducted and by whom. According to Mr. Elias, no external aid is given for the release of victims being held by ISIS, and it is primarily families who are paying with everything they have to get their relatives back. He told me that the cost of liberation per person is roughly \$5,000–\$10,000 and that these “deals” are done through smugglers from both sides who do the negotiation between ISIS and Yazidi families that can afford to buy their relatives' freedom. Unless the family pays, no one is left for free, because everyone has a price.

I also asked about Yazidi refugees, and Mr. Elias confirmed that almost all people who were displaced since the genocide in 2014 are still in refugee camps in Iraq or surrounding areas. Mr. Elias told me that all Yazidis who used to live in Sinjar (approx. 380,000) were killed, kidnaped, or displaced including his own family members. He thinks close to 12,000 were kidnap or killed, and everyone else was displaced to refugee camps. He also told me about another 50,000 Yazidis who used to live in other areas near Mosul, Bashiqa, and Bahzani that were attacked by ISIS when Mosul was invaded and are now living in the refugee camps as well. He estimates that at the beginning of the crisis in August 2014, approximately 420,000 Yazidis were displaced to refugee camps, empty buildings, or anywhere else they were able to stay until the UN and other organizations founded something for them. Out of the 420,000, he believes at least 60,000 have left the country.

He mentioned at the beginning that there was a German project for women and their children. He recalls that the program did not include husbands, parents, or any relatives of the women which resulted in chaos. “It is a disaster because victims need their support system more than they need psychological support,” he said. This project included 1100 victims, and it was a psychological program; therefore, he is unsure if the participants are going to be able to apply for a reunion with their relatives or if they would need to go back to Iraq. Also, out of those 1100, he estimates that about 100 people unfortunately cheated the recruitment and pretended to be victims to take advantage of the program.

There is also an ongoing project that he told me about where 1200 Yazidis are supposed to be admitted to Canada. He has been informed that 400 Yazidis have been admitted already and the remaining 800 spots should be filled throughout this year (2017). Australia has also allowed in a couple of hundred of Yazidi refugees that he helped coordinate. He estimates that a total 2600 are legally accepted as

refugees. At the beginning of 2016, German borders were open, and thousands of refugees from Syria and some Yazidis were smuggled into Germany. He has little information about them, but he knows that a lot of people died trying to get to Germany during that time. He stated that other Yazidis were known to have migrated to Sweden through smuggling. Sweden did not have any official refugee program for Yazidi victims; however, according to the smuggler's information he has, going to Sweden was cheaper and closer than going to Germany; therefore, a lot of families opted to go there. He assumes that for some families the Swedish government made exceptions, and he knows of some who were also rejected and deported. As for the United States, he told me there are organizations trying to bring Yazidi refugees, but so far no Yazidi refugees have been admitted in the United States in relation to the genocide. As for the future of Yazidis going back to their land in Sinjar, he thinks people are afraid to go back to Sinjar because of future attacks. They have lost faith and feel unprotected by the government. Moreover, the majority of victims do not have the resources to rebuild what has been destroyed.

I asked Mr. Elias if there was anything he would want people to know about the Yazidis, and he told me that it is important to acknowledge that this is not the first time the Yazidis have been subject to genocide. Yazidi members were millions, and right now there are less than one million Yazidis as the result of the campaigns against them. "People need to know that this is not by accident," he said. There is a real risk of Yazidis extinction. He thinks that trying to kill ISIS is not the solution because another terrorist group with another name can develop—like Al Qaeda that was before ISIS—and would kill Yazidis as well. The ideology behind Yazidis genocide is what needs to be exterminated.

## **Why Talk About Yazidis?**

I wanted to tell the story of Yazidi genocide so that it hopefully touches your heart so intensely that you will want to advocate for justice. We are living in a modern world with medieval and inhumane events happening every day, and we need to stop it. Persecution for religious beliefs should not be tolerated by anyone. Enslavement, rape, and torture are horrible circumstances that human beings should never have to experience. We share this world with evil people that aim for destruction and division. Compassion and love for others are values that are lacking in our world. I hope that the painful story of Nadia, Amshe, Marwa, Farhad, and the thousands of Yazidi victims is sad enough to provoke anger like it did for me because of the horrible crimes perpetrated against this population. We all need to do something to stop injustice in the world so that the tragedies that have happened to our Yazidi brothers and sisters living today will not happen again tomorrow. We never know who can be next:

The Beauty of a book relies on the fantasy of the writer hoping to connect so deeply with the reader so that we can speak and feel the same language.—Wendy Cook



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# Correction to: Human Trafficking Prevention Efforts for Kids (NEST)



Yvonne G. Williams

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This chapter has been updated to remove identifying information.

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