

**Sex Trafficking & Sexual Exploitation in Minnesota & in The Health Care Setting.**  
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**TEREBINTH REFUGE**

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**Objectives**

- Overview of Sexual Exploitation & Trafficking -  
-Sex Trafficking in MN
- Physical/Psychological, Medical Indicators & Trauma-informed Medical Professional Response
- Understanding from a Survivors Perspective

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**Defining the Problem**

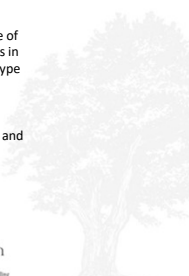

**Commercial Sexual Exploitation:**

A commercial sexual activity occurs when anything of value or a promise of anything of value (e.g., money, drugs, food, shelter, rent, or higher status in a gang or group) is given to a person by any means in exchange for any type of sexual activity. A third party may or may not be involved.

- In MN:  
Minor Commercial Sexual Exploitation occurs when someone age 24 and under engages in commercial sexual activity.
- In US:  
A Minor under 18 years

**Sex Trafficking:**

3 Parties involved- Third party facilitates & profits ( not victim or buyer)

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**NO WRONG DOOR**  
A Comprehensive Approach to Safe Harbor for Minnesota's Sexually Exploited Youth  
January 2019

Ensure Minnesota has the knowledge, skills and resources to effectively identify and serve sexually exploited and at-risk youth.

But what about adults 25 years and older?

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Terebinth Refuge is a Christ-centered shelter and safe home that brings hope, healing services and freedom to sexually exploited and trafficked women.

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**Sex Trafficking Facts**

- Human trafficking happens every day, every hour, every minute, and requires a long-term commitment to combat trafficking every day of the year.
- There are 20-30 million slaves in the world, 80% sex trafficking, 19% labor trafficking- **generates over \$32 billion**
- **There is no 'perfect victim' for this crime: it can happen anywhere, to anybody**
- It's important to recognize that victims/survivors have a wide variety of trafficking experiences.
- There is no way to accurately determine the average age of entry of human trafficking victims, but we know from the research that does exist **that many victims are first exploited as minors. (12-14)**
- There are currently no reliable estimates on the number of people in the commercial sex industry in the United States, but this is a prevalent issue in literally every city, town and state in this country, and **has been well documented all across Minnesota.**
- **Homelessness dramatically increases vulnerability** and risk of being exploited.

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### Common Cases of Sexual Exploitation in MN

- Boyfriend/pimps, on-line recruiting!
- Homeless/runaway and survival sex
- Online pornography
- Adult clubs and entertainment establishments
- Peer to peer recruitment, exploitation and solicitation, in schools
- In MN-46% trafficking-parents/guardians selling their children for money, drugs, rent
- Family operations (1980's-20+ yr operation, ages 14 on up) Evans family 24 states, Canada
- Online escorts, sexual services....."Sugaring" on college campus
- Massage front businesses
- Fishing/hunting season dancers and escort services
- Sports events or other male focused events
- Older women grooming and soliciting boys and men
- Involvement with other criminal activity – gangs, drugs, theft




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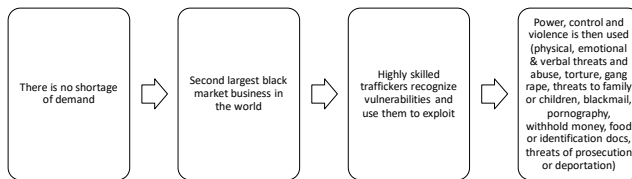
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### Recruitment




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### Traffickers



- Individuals
- Family operations
- Small businesses
- Decentralized criminal networks
- Gang-based
- International organized crime operations
- Often share same cultural background

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**The Victims,  
The Vulnerable**

- Run-aways, abused, lack of support
- Homelessness-no stable housing
- Unemployment/poverty
- Lack of identification
- History of sexual abuse
- History of mental health issues
- Addiction issues
- Criminal charges
- Lack of education/ employable skills
- Child-care
- Family members in the sex trade
- Gang affiliation
- Foster care involvement (aging out)



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**Recruitment/Grooming/Conditioning**

Flirtation/ initial contact	Victims given special attention/affirmation	Victims given gifts (phone, purse, clothes, jewelry, etc.)
Addiction or victims given drugs/alcohol	Peer recruitment	Past sexual assault or child sexual abuse
Early exposure to prostitution as a norm or option	Survival/promise of money and a better life	"Relationship" → <i>isolation</i>

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**Initiation/Breaking/ "Point of No Return"**

<i>First customer</i>	Physical abuse	Rape/gang rape
Pornography/blackmail	Making an "example" out of another victim	New name/identity
Inducing or enabling chemical addiction	Threat of "getting in trouble"/criminal prosecution	Exploiting trauma bond (loyalty towards "family" or "boyfriend")

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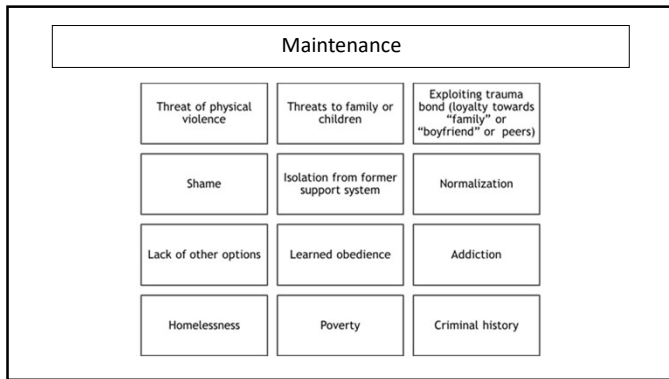
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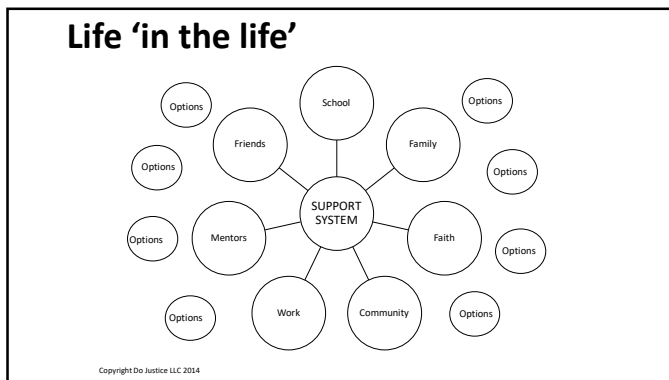
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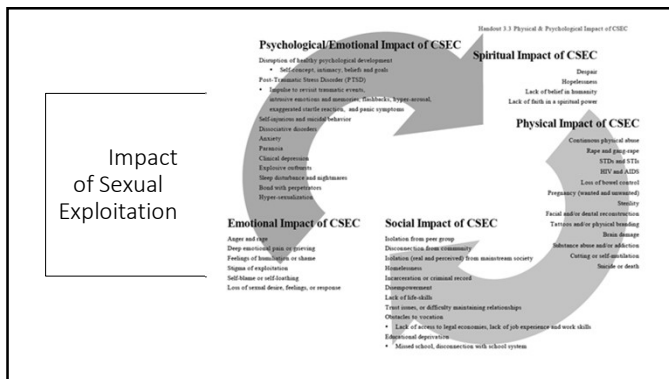
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Survivors with Addictions	Coping with the trauma
	Forced to sell
	On “the Leash”

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### Physical Indicators

- Tattoos or Branding
- Signs of physical trauma
  - Injuries in various stages of healing  
bruises, cigarette burns, scars, pulled hair
  - History of strangulation
  - Firearm or knife wounds
  - Scarring from other unattended injuries
- Malnutrition
- Drug and chemical dependency
  - Intoxicated, combative or uncooperative

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### Specific Medical Issues

- Frequent sexually transmitted infections
- History of multiple pregnancies and or abortions
- Vaginal packing
  - Cosmetic sponges or foreign bodies in vagina can hide menstruation and allow the selling of sex to continue
- Other genital trauma
- Oral cavity injuries
- Items lodged or caused damage in any body cavity

REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

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**"I was in the ER 18 times and no one ever asked me if I was really okay."**

-Jeri, Survivor

While **88%** of survivors report they have been in contact with a healthcare worker, only **6%** of healthcare workers report treating a victim of human trafficking at some point in their career.

The LIFESTORY.ORG




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**Who Can Shift The System?**

Medical emergencies are pivotal moments, when they can be separated from her/his exploiter and given both physical and social assistance

Paramedics

Nurses

Victim Advocates

Registration Staff

Doctors

Hospital Administrators

Hospital Social Workers

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**Key Interventions –**

**(& pregnancy centers)**

- Create a safe space!! (don't block door)
- If possible, meet immediate needs (food, personal supplies)
- Don't involve law enforcement without consent

**Be authentic and honest, demonstrate consistency**

- Be caring, meet them where they are at.
- Don't promise anything you cannot deliver
- Be neutral in your interactions, and mindful of your body language- victims excel at reading you!
- Don't force answers, allow them to self-disclose



**Separate client from others**

- when doing assessment or intake, or interviews –Explain to controlling men, this is "normal procedure".
- Discreetly offer numbers for emergency use and assurance they are welcome back.
- Referral to additional resources or other advocacy groups.

Safe Harbor Regional Navigator, Terebinth Refuge, CMSAC- advocate, Breaking Free Family Partnership (PRIDE program), Trafficking Justice, Action 169

**Practice in a trauma-informed and victim-centered way**

- Understand the **fear** to talk! Be prepared for push back


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**Key Interventions cont. - Building Trust**

When doing an assessment, you might say:

“I’m going to ask you some questions; some may be intrusive. If you don’t want to answer, that is ok, and we can move on.”



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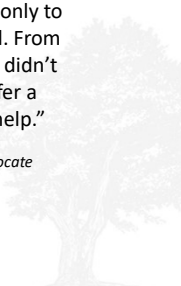
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“I have been in emergency rooms only to be treated like a common criminal. From emergency personnel to EMT’s, it didn’t seem to cross their minds to offer a resource or even that I needed help.”

-Roxanne, Indigenous Survivor and Advocate

THELIFESTORY.ORG

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### Steps Toward Change

- 1. Adopt screening and response protocols**
  - Staff training
  - Trauma-informed care, compassionate questions
  - Separating patient from possible trafficker
- 2. Find support for victims of sexual violence**
  - Sexual assault advocate
  - Safe Harbor Navigator as resource
  - Not law enforcement unless they are familiar with Trafficking investigators
- 3. Connect women/men to social services**
  - Safe Harbor Navigator and Safe Harbor shelter & services
  - Central MN Human Trafficking-Multi Disciplinary Team- many resources
  - MN Human Trafficking Task Force
  - Terebinth Refuge



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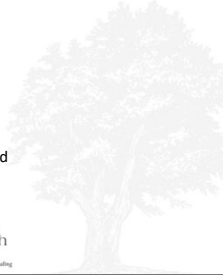


Connect with us

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