
The Tipping Point- Understanding and Treating Victims of Gang Controlled Exploitation

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TRAUMA AND HOPE OUTPATIENT PROGRAM

- ❑ Provides Evidence Based Treatment.
- ❑ Goals of the Program are:
 - ✓ Provide culturally competent/effective services
 - ✓ Empower families through healthy parenting and interactions
 - ✓ Increase overall functioning skills and stability

TREATMENT

Treatment issues include but are not limited to:

- Abuse and Neglect (Victim and Offenders)
- Attention Deficit Disorder
- Anxiety Disorders
- Attachment Disorders
- Conduct Disorder
- Domestic Violence Issues
- Mood Disorders (Depression, Bipolar)
- Oppositional Defiant Disorder
- Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
- Psychotic Disorders
- Substance Use/Abuse

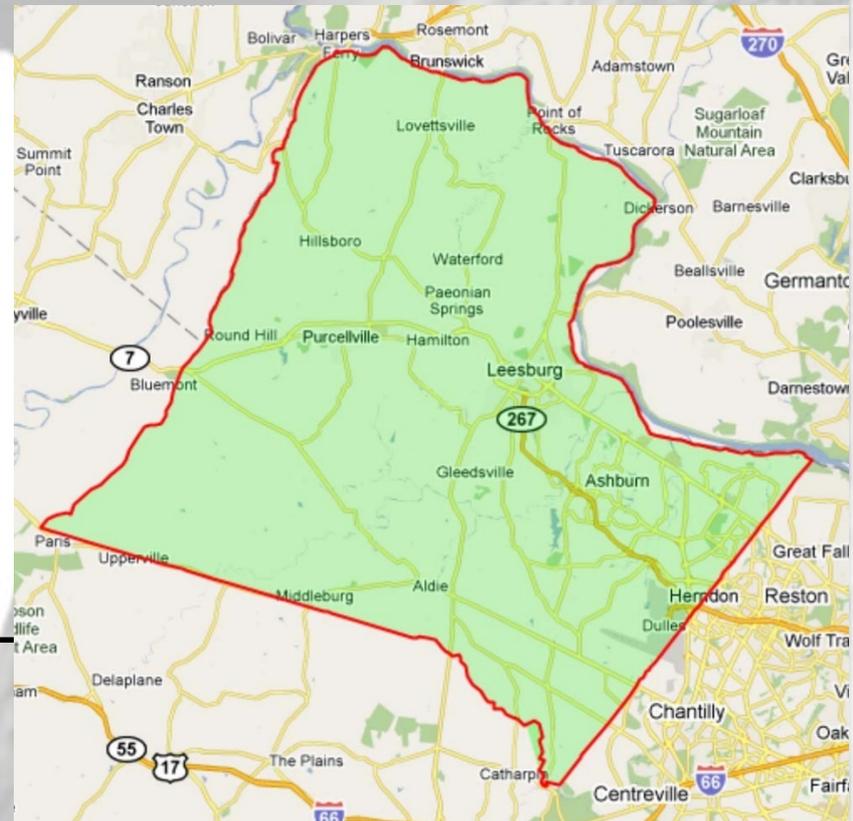
Sexual Exploitation/Gang Intervention Services

- The GIS Team is comprised of highly qualified professionals that are cross trained in multiple areas that specialize in working with gang involved youth.
 - Currently three males and two female on the GIS Team
 - Clinicians are experienced in working with antisocial, court involved, and mandated youth.
 - Specialties include Certified Substance Abuse Treatment Providers, Certified Sex Offender Treatment Providers, Gang Specialists, Employment and College coaching, Trauma Specialist, etc.
 - All are Qualified Mental Health Professionals (QMHP)

 - Services within the GIS Program
 - Home Based Services.
 - Girls and Boys Self Destructive Group.
 - Treatment for Gang Controlled Sexual Exploitation Victims.
 - Substance Abuse Groups/Individual Counseling.
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This is a story about a community. This story could be yours...

- Loudoun County is the fastest growing county in Virginia and one of the fastest in the nation
- Largest mean income in nation
- Near Dulles airport
- Increasing presence of transnational gangs



Waking Up

- Two teens brought into foster care pregnant. The father of each over 25 (turned out to be the same fellow)
 - Teen girls chronically running away with a specific individual and not being found for long periods of time. When they were found they were terrified to tell where they were.
 - Groups of teen females coming into the Youth Shelter at the same time, several different groups, at different times but same behaviors of substance abuse, and overnight runaway.
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The alarm!!!!

- Green light notification on a 16 year old female living in the Youth Shelter by Homeland Security and Loudoun County Gang Intervention Unit.
 - We had nowhere to keep her safe
 - We were terrified, no one else seemed to be
 - Social Worker in possible Danger.....
-

Our call to action:

- Minor sex trafficking is child sexual abuse.
 - It is not a party.
 - It is not a good time for the girls.
 - It is not “what kids these days do”.
 - The girls are not prostitutes.
 - Sex trafficking is sex abuse. Period. Our community will treat it as such.
 - Trafficking someone is a crime. Our community will treat it as such.
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We started looking at what we were seeing...

- Since 2012, 222 unduplicated minor age females have been identified as high risk for becoming victims of minor sex trafficking, with 128 confirmed or at highest risk.
- Thirty-four percent of these youth were identified or engaged through the child welfare system.
- Forty-nine percent of these youth were in the Juvenile Detention Center.
- This number did not capture the number of youth coming to the attention of the Juvenile Court Services Unit with Status Offenses that were not seen in Court. Intake Officers were reporting a significant increase in teen females involved in runaway, truancy, shoplifting and petty crimes.

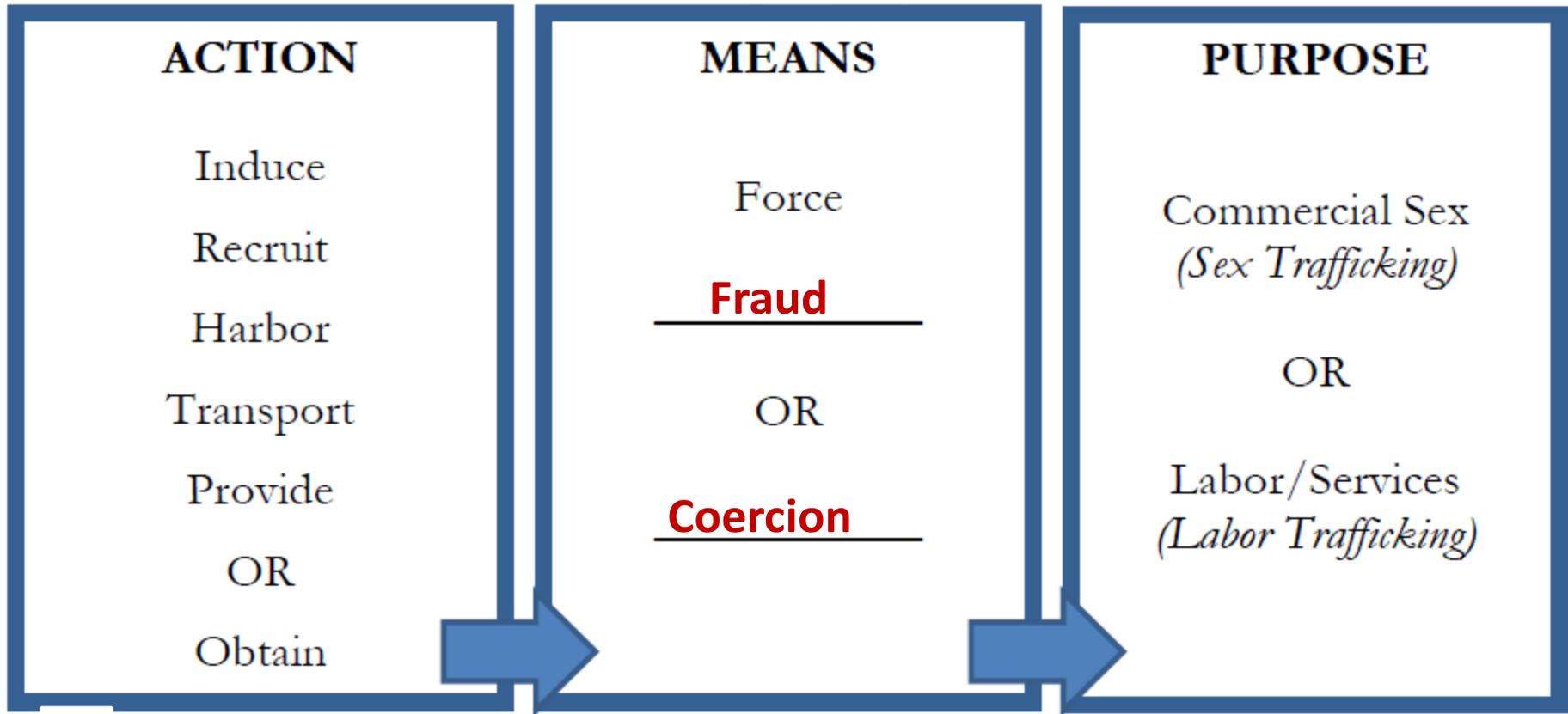
“Yet for most of the girls, the force, the violence, the gun in her face don’t come until later. Their pathway into the commercial sex industry is facilitated through seduction, promises, and the belief that the abuse is actually their boyfriend. Statistics show that the majority of commercially sexually exploited children are homeless, runaways, or the distastefully termed “throwaways.” These girls and young women have a tougher time in the court of public opinion and in the real courts of the criminal and juvenile justice systems. It is presumed that somewhere along the line they “chose” this life, and this damns them to be seen as willing participants in their own abuse.”

Girls like Us, Rachel Lloyd

What is sexual exploitation?

- The recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision or obtaining a person for the purpose of a commercial sex act where such an act is induced by force fraud or coercion; *or in which the person has not attained 18 yrs of age.*
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Human Trafficking Defined



Lets look at the Numbers

- The Northern Virginia Human Trafficking Unit (HTU)
 - Since October 1, 2013 the HTU has identified 350 victims of human trafficking
 - Of the 350 victim identified, 69 were juvenile victims and 281 were adults
 - The HTU has identified 129 suspects of human trafficking in Northern Virginia
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National Stats

- \$32 billion industry
 - As large as weapons trafficking
 - 12 million victims worldwide
 - 43% Sex; 32% Labor
 - 80% women; 50% children
 - 8.5% convicted offenders to victims identified
 - 0.4% victims identified to estimated victims
-

Common Sex Trafficking Scenarios

Renegade: individual engages in commercial sex on their own accord, sometimes individuals will operate in a group. (It should be noted that individuals in this category come from a scenario where they were exploited by a trafficker, and will commonly return to a trafficker.)

Brothel network: individuals are maintained and controlled in a brothel/bawdy place. There is one location that the girls are kept for a period of time then moved to another location within the network.

Pimp-controlled: individual is controlled by a single pimp or at times a family. The trafficker controls the individuals movements and directs all their actions.

Family-controlled: Individuals are controlled by family members.

Gang-related/motivated: girls are recruited and controlled by gang members. Personal gain and gang profit.

Why Are our Victims Drawn to Gangs

Victim At-Risk Profile

Individual

- ▶ Prior delinquency
- ▶ Desire for group rewards such as status, identity, self-esteem, companionship and protection
- ▶ Anti-social attitudes
- ▶ Aggression
- ▶ Alcohol and drug use
- ▶ Early or precocious sexual activity
- ▶ Violent victimization

School

- ▶ Poor school performance
- ▶ Low educational aspirations,
- ▶ Negative labeling by teachers
- ▶ High levels of anti-social behavior
- ▶ Few teacher role models
- ▶ Educational frustration
- ▶ Learning difficulties

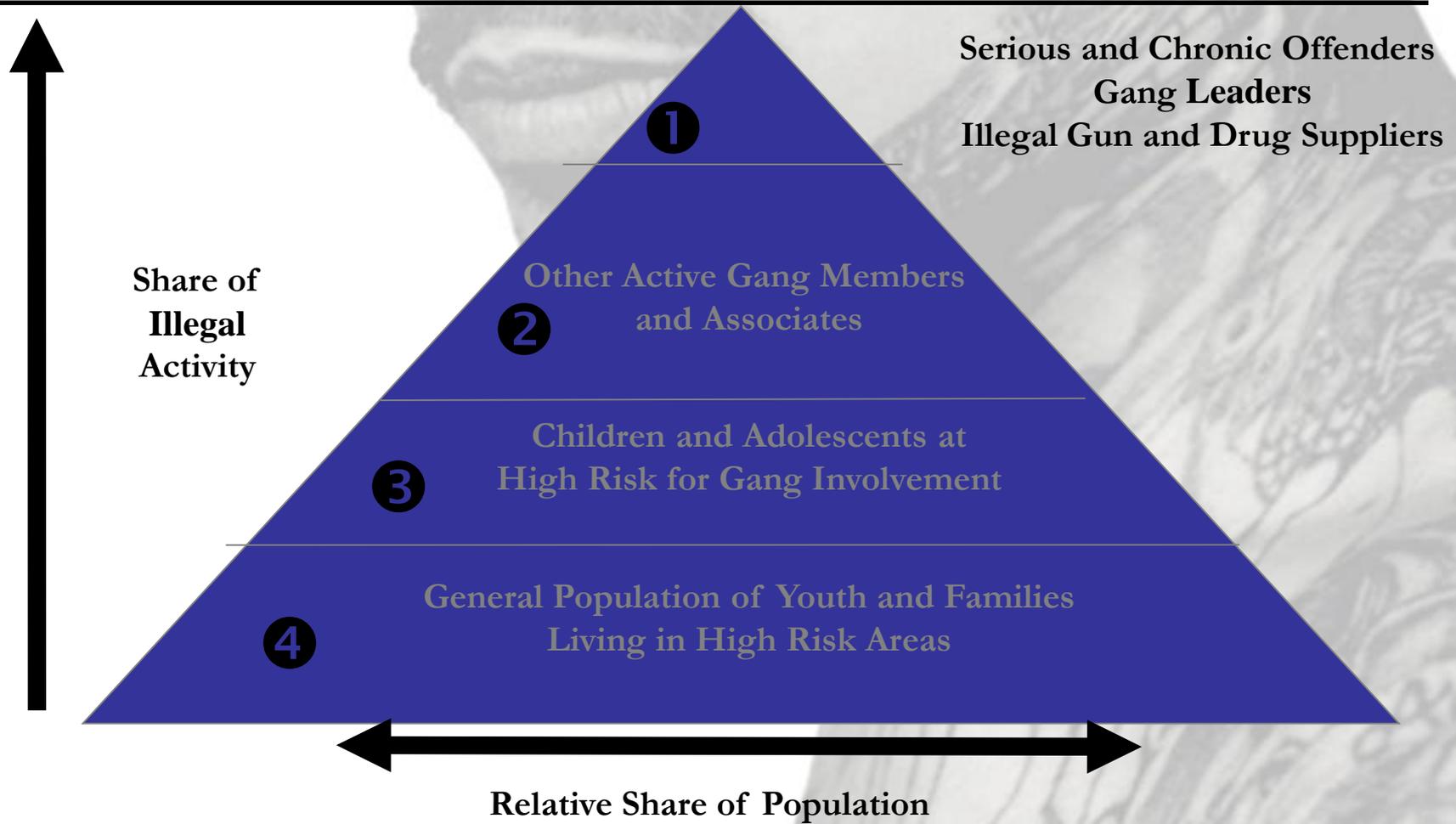
Family

- ▶ Family disorganization, including broken homes and parental drug and/or alcohol abuse
- ▶ Family violence, neglect and drug addiction
- ▶ Family members in a gang
- ▶ Lack of adult and parental role models, parental criminality, parents with violent attitudes, siblings with anti-social behaviors
- ▶ Extreme economic deprivation

Community

- ▶ Social disorganization, including high poverty and residential mobility
- ▶ High crime neighborhood;
- ▶ Presence of gangs
- ▶ Availability or perceived access to drugs in the neighborhood
- ▶ Availability of firearms
- ▶ Feeling unsafe in neighborhood

Crime and Gang Involvement



Prior Victimization

- TRAUMA

- Physical/sexual abuse
 - Witnessing community or domestic violence
 - Neglect or abandonment by a parent or caregiver
 - Physical violence, including bullying
 - Witnessing police activity or having someone close arrested
 - Witnessing another person being killed or seriously injured
 - Death or loss of someone close, especially in an unexpected or violent manner
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Draw to the Gangs

- Identity and sense of belonging
 - Protection Power and Prestige
 - Not be hurt in own neighborhood
 - Family was/are gang involved
 - Can rise in the ranks
 - Fulfill basic needs
 - Money
 - Family
 - Cares for them and will love them
 - Fun and excitement
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THE JOURNEY

- US Born Citizens
 - Permanent Residency
 - Student/Tourist Visa
 - Illegal Entry / No apprehension
 - Illegal Entry/Apprehension
 - Assylum/Protected Entry*
 - Increasing Coordination between Mexican Drug Cartels, Alien Smuggling Networks, and US Based Gangs.....2014 FBI NGTA
 - Home
 - Children are predominantly from Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador (over 90%)
 - Journey
 - Smuggler (Coyote) or unguided
 - Method of transportation
 - Potential victimization
 - ICE/ORR Custody
 - Detention and shelter placement
 - Reunification/Sponsor Home
 - Broken and restored relationships
 - Expectations and cultural adaptations
 - **POTENTIAL FOR QUADRUPAL TRUAMA EXPOSURES!**
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Why Commercial Sex?

Sex Trafficking

- Investment: Minimal recruiting cost
- 1 night: \$1,000; 1 month: \$15,000
- 1 year: \$180,000 Profit

▪ *Note: Relies on fewer people, thus less risky; less expensive; **girls rescued → girls replaced***

* Renewable Resource

Narcotics Trafficking

- Investment: \$32,000 in initial capital (1 Kilo)
- Sell: \$64,000 (1 Kilo broken down)
- Profit: \$32,000

▪ *Note: Relies on more people to cut and distribute; more expensive; **narcotics seized → narcotics lost***

* Finite Resource

Grooming or “Seasoning”

- The process of “breaking-down” from healthy sexual boundaries to commercial sex
 - The goal is to attain complete control through:
 - Beating/Slapping
 - Burning
 - Sexual assault – Rape or gang rape ☐
 - Confinement
 - Deprivation of food or water or various forms of bondage
 - Emotional abuse
 - Re-naming
 - Creating dependencies
 - Removal from familiarity and support structures
 - Document confiscation
 - Forced sexual education
-

Who are the Traffickers?

- Gang Member/Affiliate/Associates =Trafficker
- Can be a boyfriend, father, mother, brother, uncle, a coach, a teacher or anyone exerting control over a minor, even a peer or group of peers
- Men and women of varying ages
- Any ethnicity or race
- Anyone who benefits from the commercial sexual exploitation of a minor or facilitates the commercial sexual exploitation of a minor



CREATE
FEAR



Gang Mentality

- Power and Respect
- Territorial Dominance
- Paranoia about Law Enforcement
- Blood in, Blood out

Gang over All



Sex Trafficking

COERCION and THREATS

Threatens to do physical harm • Threatens to harm family • Threatens to shame victim to community • Threatens to report to police/immigration

INTIMIDATION

Harms or kills others to show force • Displays or uses weapons • Destroys property • Harms children • Lies about police involvement in the trafficking situation

ECONOMIC ABUSE

Creates debt bondage that can never be repaid • Takes some or all money earned • Forbids victim to have access to their finances or bank account • Forbids victim to go to school

EMOTIONAL ABUSE

Humiliates in front of others • Calls names • Plays mind games • Makes victim feel guilt, blame for the situation • Creates dependence by convincing victim they're the only one that cares about them

POWER & CONTROL

USING PRIVILEGE

Treats victim like a servant • Defines gender roles to make subservient • Uses nationality to suggest superiority • Uses certain victims to control other victims • Hides or destroys important papers

ISOLATION

Keeps confined • Accompanies to public places • Creates distrust of police/others • Moves victims to multiple locations • Rotates victims • Doesn't allow victim to learn English • Denies access to children, family and friends

SEXUAL ABUSE

Forces victim to have sex with multiple people in a day • Uses rape as a weapon and means of control • Treats victim as an object used for monetary gain • Normalizes sexual violence and selling sex

MINIMIZING, DENYING & BLAMING

Makes light of abuse or situation • Denies that anything illegal is occurring • Places blame on victim for the trafficking situation

domestic servants, farm workers, food service

prostitution, brothels, massage parlors

Labor Trafficking

Recruiting: Social Media

- Why social media?
 - Impersonal
 - Ability to reach a large number of people
 - Intelligence gathering
 - Numerous platforms
 - Plausible deniability
- How do they use it?
 - Profiles
 - Accounts
 - Messages
 - Groups
 - Live journals



Advertising

- Word of mouth
- Business cards
- Backpage
- Craigslist

The screenshot shows a profile on Backpage.com. At the top, it says "backpage.com" and "Post an Ad". The profile is for a user named "Amber" (display name: (~*♥*~) —o*o B—U—S—T— o*o —i—t— o*o —B—a—b—y o*o— (~*♥*~) ((WHITe GIRL)) - 19). The profile was posted on November 27, 2011, at 07:58 PM. There is a "Report Ad" link. The profile includes a bio: "I'm Amber- I'm fun, sexy, n down to have a good time... I love what i do, and so will you!". It also lists "INCALLS ONLY" and a phone number "202h2 688 5239". The poster's age is listed as 19. Location is "Northern Virginia, DMV" and the user first posted in November 2011. There are two photos: one of a woman in a pink shirt and jeans, and another of a woman in a white bikini.



How Does Gang Controlled Victimization Differ from other types of Exploitation?

- Gang controlled sex trafficking is a culture of family.
 - The gang lifestyle is controlled by a system of rules, vocabulary and customs.
 - Victims are trafficked by the group/individual gang member (Boyfriend)
 - This particular culture of family makes it challenging for the victim to stay away from the gang even after being separated.
 - Live by the “code of the streets.”
 - The Threat –”It happened to Brenda Paz”
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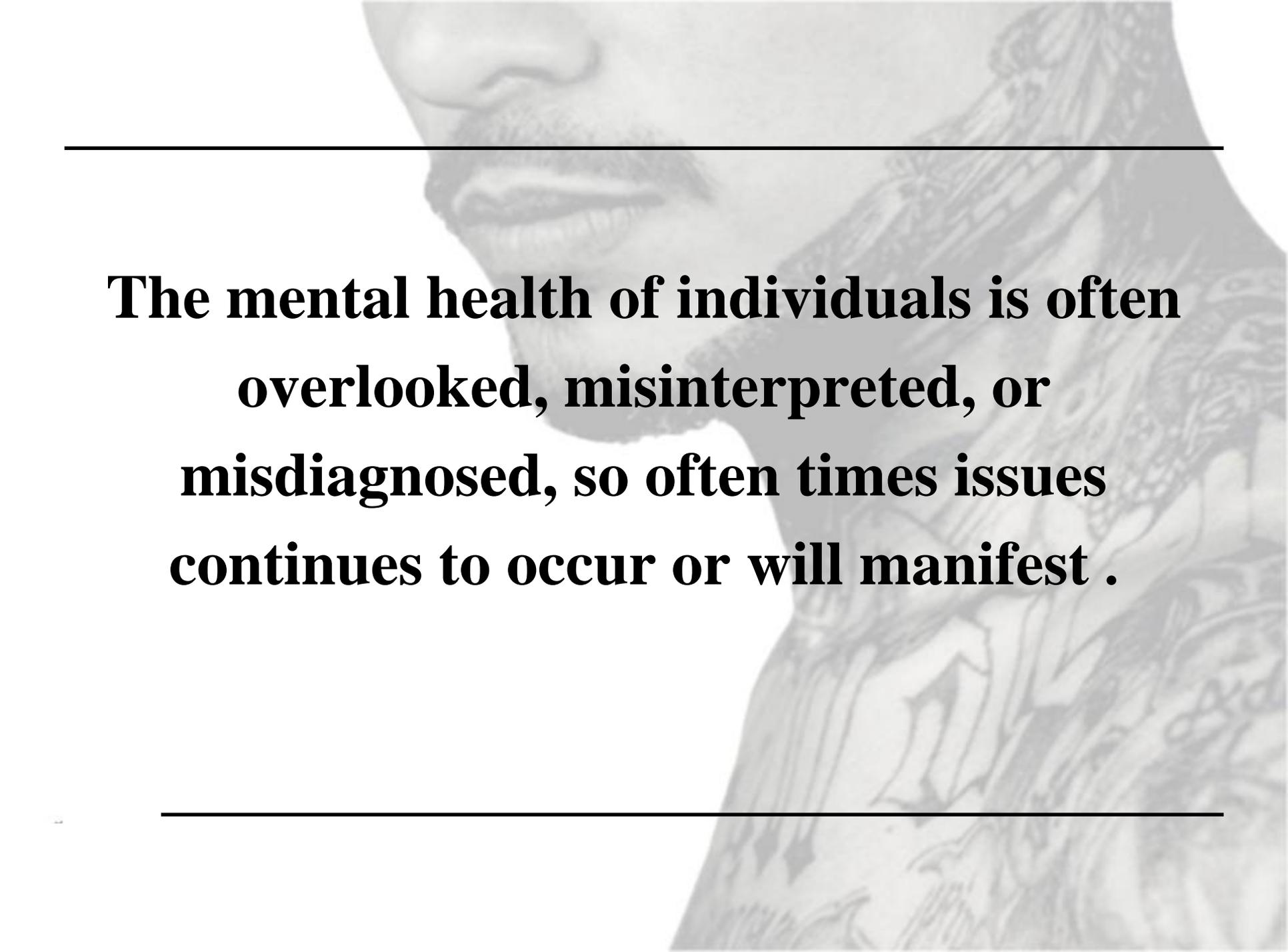
Brenda Paz Phenomenon

- Murder in 2003
- Used as a form of power and control
- Availability of media coverage
- Misperceptions



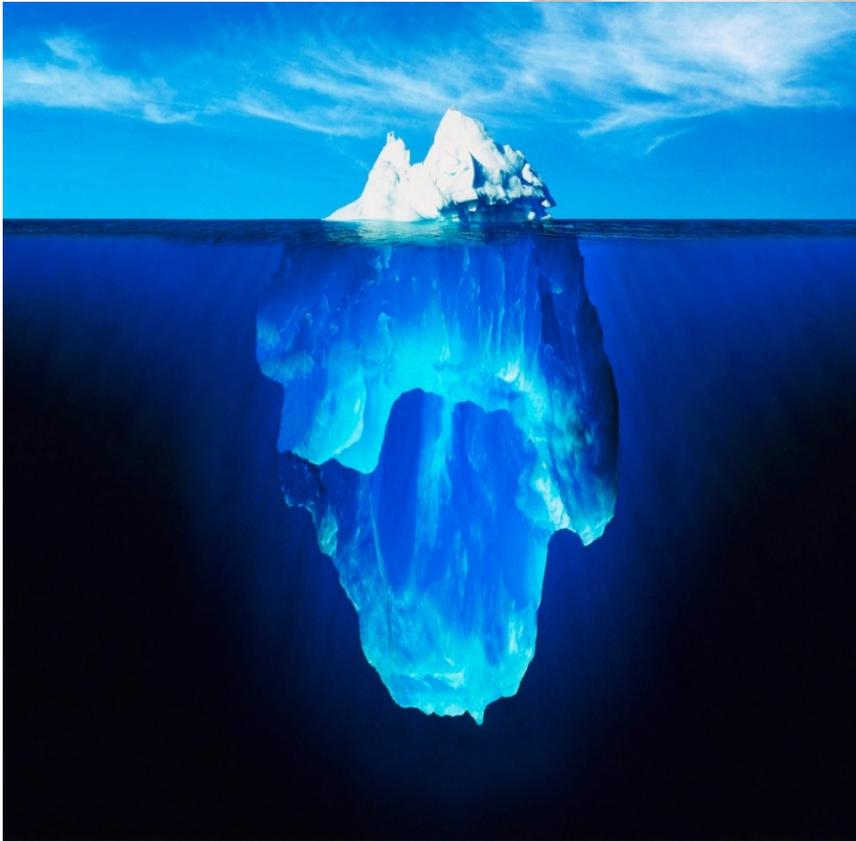
How Does Gang Controlled Victimization Differ from other types of Exploitation?

- Victims are:
 - Gang Members (Local)
 - Associates to the gang (National/Transnational)
 - Tricked that they are gang members (Victims feel no different)
 - For the most part, victims become property of the entire gang rather than an individual person
 - ▶ Victims s role in the gang can differ depending on status/affiliation
 - Among the many traumas that the victim faces, there can also be the fear an entire gang retaliating (Melissa)
 - Treatment also entails breaking the cycle of gang affiliation
-



The mental health of individuals is often overlooked, misinterpreted, or misdiagnosed, so often times issues continues to occur or will manifest .

What You See Is Not Really What You are Getting



- Anxiety disorders
 - Depression
 - Substance Abuse
 - Bipolar Disorder
 - History of sexual abuse
 - History of physical abuse
 - Victim of previous violence
-

Psychological/Emotional Impact of CSEC

Disruption of healthy psychological development

- Self-concept, intimacy, beliefs and goals

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

- Impulse to revisit traumatic events,

intrusive emotions & memories, flashbacks, hyper arousal, exaggerated startle reaction, panic symptoms

Self-injurious and suicidal behavior

Dissociative disorders

Anxiety

Paranoia

Clinical depression

Explosive outbursts

Sleep disturbance & nightmares

Bond with perpetrators

Hyper-sexualization

Emotional Impact of CSEC

Anger and rage

Deep emotional pain/grieving

Feelings of humiliation/shame

Stigma of exploitation

Self-blame/Self-loathing

Loss of sexual desire, feelings, or response

Sad, Sorry, Lost, Hurt, Scared, Hateful, Lonely,

Lovesick, Shy, Annoyed, Irritated, Cautious,

Shame, Helpless, Exhausted, Negative,

Miserable, Disappointed, Suspicious, Grumpy,

Numb, Depressed, Judged, Excluded,

Reckless, Paranoid, Isolated, Shocked,

Regretful, Withdrawn, Frustrated, Paranoid

Social Impact of CSEC

Isolation from peer group

Disconnection from community

Isolation from mainstream society

Homelessness

Incarceration/Criminal record as obstacle

Disempowerment

Lack of life skills

Trust issues/Difficulty maintaining relationships

Obstacles to vocation

- Lack of access to legal economies, lack of job experience/skills

Educational deprivation

- Missed school, disconnection with school system

Spiritual Impact of CSEC

Despair

Hopelessness

Lack of belief in humanity

Lack of faith in spiritual power

Physical Impact of CSEC

Continuous physical abuse

Rape & gang rape

STDs & STIs

HIV & AIDS

Loss of bowel control

Pregnancy (wanted and unwanted)

Sterility

Facial/dental reconstruction

Tattoos & branding

Brain damage

Substance abuse/addiction

Self-cutting

Suicide/Death

Beatings

Stabbed

Shot at

Considerations

- Often times the individual does not identify as a victim or being “trafficked.”
 - Do not use the word “Prostitution”
 - Understand the power and control dynamics these individuals faces
 - Be aware that often times the individuals are conditioned to speak and act a certain way in an interview/assessment
 - Code of the Streets: “Do not trust law enforcement/outsideers.”
-

Screening/Treatment Approach

- Safe and/or neutral environment
 - Let them talk
 - Don't limit yourself on time
 - Be relaxed and mindful of your tone, demeanor, and body language.
 - Do not make judgments
 - Try to avoid notes
 - Be clear about your role, goals, and services
- Use the language they use

Improving Childhood Opportunities for Positive Endings (ICOPE) Prevention Response



If Yes

Assessment

If Yes

Trafficking MDT:
Case Planning
Information Sharing
Safety Planning

Child Advocacy Center (CAC)

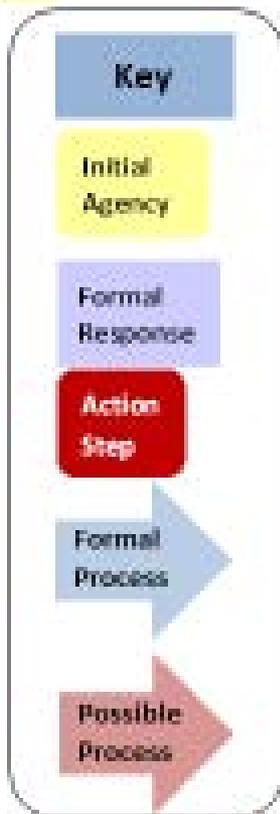
CSA
If needed

Treatment Services:
Youth and Family
(MHSADS, LAWS, Private Insurance)

Treatment Options



- Risk Factors include:**
- Runaway overnight
 - SA
 - Gang Friends
 - "older boyfriend"
 - Unexplained luxury possessions



Questions?

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