



# Effective Strategies for working with Sexually Exploited Youth and the Minnesota Safe Harbor Law

# Introduction Activity

What do you think are terms used to describe sexual exploitation and who are they used by?

# Language

- ▶ Minnesota Statutes: Prostitute, Prostitution
- ▶ Government: Sex Trafficking or CSEC
- ▶ Service Providers: Sexual Exploitation, CSEC or Sex Trafficking
- ▶ Youth themselves do not use this language and often use “Soft Words”

# Who are the victims and survivors?

Could be anyone but more likely:

Youth of Color

LGBTQ Youth

Youth who have prior sexual abuse

Youth who have run from home multiple  
times and/or are homeless

# Minneapolis Street Outreach Survey Findings

- Average age of entry into the sex trade: 13
- All youth experienced multiple types of sexual exploitation-street, private homes, spas, strip clubs, hotels, brothels & the internet.
- Most youth and pimps used the internet to advertise in addition to using above venues.
- Nearly all (92%) had or were currently working with a pimp.

# Youth Identified Trends in Sex Work:

- ▶ Use of the internet
- ▶ Younger girls being recruited
- ▶ Pimps attempting to provide medical care
- ▶ Occurs in the inner city, suburbs and rural areas
- ▶ Peer recruitment

# Common Themes Throughout the Survey

Shame

Violence

Trauma

Chemical Use

Poverty

Homelessness

# Shame

- ▶ Shame is a powerful factor that puts youth at risk.
- ▶ Every survey participant reported that being involved in the sex trade has at one point or another made them feel shame.
- ▶ Some comments we heard youth say that others felt about them: “dirty, nasty, bad, unworthy, diseased, disgusting, dumb, branded for life, you can’t turn a ho into a housewife”
- ▶ We need to be able to help youth in visualizing a different life for themselves.

# Violence

- ▶ Sexually exploited youth are often times victims of violence in different forms.
- ▶ Some examples of how survey participants experienced violence were: being raped, stabbed, jumping out of a moving vehicle, robbed, shot at, had their head busted in and been left for dead.
- ▶ This type of violence can leave youth disassociated and may make them become desensitized.

# Trauma

- ▶ Trauma is the result of an individual going through a life threatening situation.
- ▶ There is a higher prevalence of reported traumatic incidents among youth who were being held against their will or working for a pimp or another individual.
- ▶ Based on youth feedback-there are high levels of trauma therefore we should be utilizing trauma informed care approaches in street outreach.

# Chemical Use

- ▶ All youth reported some type of chemical use.
- ▶ Alcohol, Coke & Ecstasy
- ▶ The use of stimulants increases energy.
- ▶ Drugs may give a false sense of confidence.
- ▶ Drugs may be used to self medicate for anxiety, depression, PTSD, bipolar and/or ADHD.
- ▶ “...when stripping or escorting, women use thizzle or coke to loosen up and pimps will use heroin and weed to control the girls...these drugs can be used for coping too....”

# Poverty and Homelessness

- ▶ The majority (92%) of survey participants reported experiencing homelessness.
- ▶ Many youth reported entering the sex trade to get money to pay bills or secure food and/or shelter.
- ▶ Exchanging sex is a way for youth on the street to meet their immediate survival needs.
- ▶ “I started at age 14 because I was kicked out of the house and homeless and was friends with a female pimp who said she could show me an easy way to make money.”

# Best Approaches

- Trauma Informed Care
- Positive Youth Development
- Victim-Survivor-Leader Approach
- Harm Reduction

# Trauma Informed Care

## National Center for Trauma Informed Care's Definition

Trauma-informed care is an approach to engaging people with histories of trauma that recognizes the presence of trauma symptoms and acknowledges the role that trauma has played in their lives. NCTIC facilitates the adoption of trauma-informed environments in the delivery of a broad range of services including mental health, substance use, housing, vocational or employment support, domestic violence and victim assistance, and peer support. In all of these environments, NCTIC seeks to change the paradigm from one that asks, "What's wrong with you?" to one that asks, "What has happened to you?"

# Trauma Informed Care

- Mental Health Therapy
- Substance Abuse
- Working with Youth and Others
- Direct Examples of Trauma Informed Care Approach w/  
Sexually Exploited Youth

# Positive Youth Development

Positive Youth Development is a policy perspective that emphasizes providing services and opportunities to support all young people in developing a sense of a competence, usefulness, belonging and empowerment. While individual programs can provide youth development activities, the youth development approach works best when entire communities including young people are involved in creating a continuum of services and opportunities that youth need to grow into happy and healthy adults.

Youth Development is both a philosophy and an approach to policies and programs that serve young people. The underlying philosophy of youth development is holistic, preventative and positive, focusing on the development of assets and competencies in **all** young people.  
(Oregon Commission on Youth & Families)

# Positive Youth Development

- Authentic Youth Engagement
- Viewing Youth as the “Experts” on their own Lives
- Youth Leadership
- Strength Based Youth Work
- Direct Examples

# Victim-Survivor-Leader

GEMS (Girls Educational Mentoring Services)-NYC

Method of working with youth and building transformational relationships with them to help empower them from being a victim to a survivor to a leader.

Examples of Practices

# Harm Reduction

**Harm reduction** (or **harm minimization**) is a range of public health policies designed to reduce the harmful consequences associated with various, sometimes illegal, human behaviors. Harm reduction policies are used to manage behaviors such as recreational drug use and sex work (or prostitution) in numerous settings that range from services through to geographical regions. Critics of harm reduction typically believe that tolerating risky or illegal behaviour sends a message to the community that such behaviours are acceptable and that some of the actions proposed by proponents of harm reduction do not reduce harm over the long term. (wikipedia)

Direct Service Examples

## What is a respectful and effective street outreach/youth worker approach-what the youth say...

- ▶ Youth workers should listen and be genuine
- ▶ Hand out referral cards
- ▶ Allow youth to disclose involvement to youth workers when they are ready too.
- ▶ Use peer outreach workers
- ▶ Build a rapport
- ▶ Keep things general (“Are you working?”)

# What street outreach supplies are most helpful?

Safe Sex Supplies

Tampons

Bus Cards & Tokens

Hand Sanitizers

Hygiene Supplies

Underwear

Wet Wipes

# Other Helpful Things for Youth

- Food
- Clothing
- Access to Low Barrier Health Care Services
- Survivor Mentors
- Specific & Appropriate Therapy Options (art therapy, pet therapy, etc.)
- Safe and Appropriate Shelter & Housing Options
- Providers that allow youth to come in/out of services

# Perspectives to Consider to Improve your Work with Youth in the Sex Trade

- ▶ Build trusting relationships & have patience
- ▶ Be flexible & able to deal with changing locations
- ▶ Days of the week & time frames
- ▶ Offer resources that make a difference
- ▶ Be aware of language
- ▶ Supplies

# Perspectives to Consider to Improve your Work & Street Outreach with Youth in the Sex Trade

- ▶ Street outreach shift contact numbers
- ▶ Ages of youth & the importance of including the older “Street Veterans” in outreach
- ▶ Safety, Boundaries & Self Awareness
- ▶ Importance of experience in this type of street outreach
- ▶ Approach
- ▶ Pimps
- ▶ Realization that street outreach workers are never the “Expert”

# “Day in the Life” Activity

# Background & Safe Harbor Law

- Passed in 2011 and will go into effect August 1, 2014
- Decriminalizes “prostitution” offenses for youth under the age of 18
- Created the Safe Harbor Committee-multidisciplinary committee headed by DPS, DHS & MDH
- Amends the child protection code to include the definition of sexually exploited youth

# Safe Harbor Committee

- Purpose was to develop a coordinated multi-disciplinary response to CSEC youth
- Response to be developed must change from a criminal response to a victim centered comprehensive state-wide response

# Results of Safe Harbor Committee

- Recommendations for state legislature on a new coordinated response to CSEC youth
- “No Wrong Door: A Comprehensive Approach to Safe Harbor for Minnesota’s Sexually Exploited Youth” Report on Recommendations-given to legislature on 1/15/13

# Safe Harbor Implementation Research

- Minnesota Indian Women's Resource Center & U of M's Cost Benefit Study
- Garden of Truth & Shattered Hearts Reports
- RIP Evaluation Studies
- Street Outreach Intervention Research
- Bush Foundation Fellowship: Lit Review, Site Visits to other states & youth feedback

# Underlying Values and Philosophy of No Wrong Door

- Training should be provided to identify sexual exploitation
- Sexually exploited youth are victims of a crime
- Victims should not feel afraid, isolated or trapped.
- Model is grounded in trauma informed care.
- Services should be responsive to the needs of individual youth (gender-responsive, culturally competent, age appropriate, supportive for LGBTQ youth)

# Underlying Values & Philosophy of No Wrong Door

- Services should be offered statewide with services designed to reflect the specific regional needs.
- Youth have the right to privacy and self determination.
- Services are based in positive youth development.
- Prevention is critical

# Basic Model Assumptions

- Child protection and juvenile delinquency systems are not designed or adequate to address the needs of sexually exploited youth.
- Whenever possible existing services should be used to provide services and these should be based in the community.
- Peer models and supports should be made available.
- Services should be multidisciplinary and coordinated.

# Basic Model Assumptions

- Law enforcement and services providers should work together.
- Holding youth in juvenile detention is not desirable and is a last resort.
- Those working with sexually exploited youth must have the proper experience, training and skills to effectively establish relationships with the youth.

# NO WRONG DOOR TO SERVICES FOR SEXUALLY EXPLOITED YOUTH

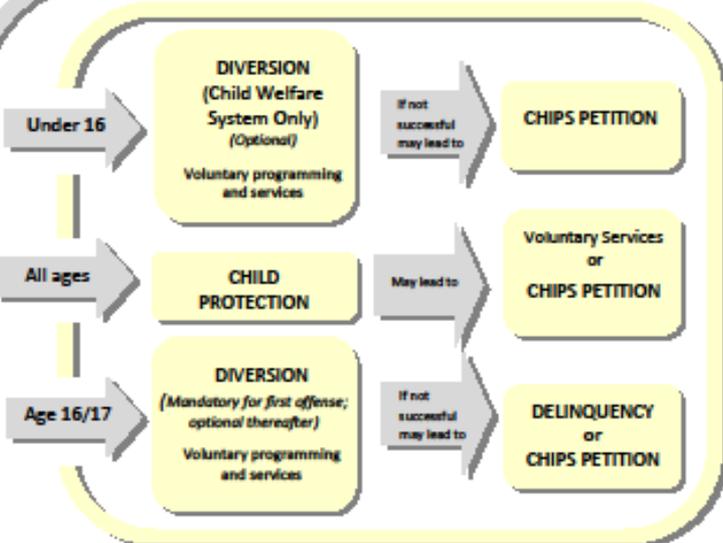
CONTACT THROUGH SOCIAL SERVICE/COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS AND BUSINESSES

## Community/social service professionals

- Medical providers/hospitals/ SANE nurses
- Social workers
- Legal Services
- Advocacy programs
- Mental health care providers
- Schools
- R & HY Programs
- Hotlines
- Youth Drop-in centers
- Chemical Dependency
- Child Protection
- Child Welfare
- Street Outreach
- Safe Place businesses
- Places of worship
- Airport security
- Public transport
- Hotel employees

## Juvenile Justice Professionals

- Law Enforcement
- Emergency Dispatch
- SROs
- Prosecutors
- Probation/corrections
- Defense attorneys
- GALs
- Judges
- Truancy workers
- Detention centers
- Child Protection
- Child Welfare



SYSTEM CONTACT AND SYSTEM INVOLVED

## SUPPORTIVE SERVICES

- Chemical Dependency
- Family Reunification
- Education
- Legal
- Prevention education
- Employment
- Advocacy
- Emergency Medical
- Ongoing Health Care
- Mental Health Care

ADVOCACY

CULTURALLY SPECIFIC

GENDER RESPONSIVE

SAFE

## HOUSING SERVICES

- Transitional Housing
- Foster home (CHIPS case)
- Emergency Housing
- Long Term Housing

SCREENING AND REFERRAL

# Coordination, Training & Outreach

- Housed in Dept. of Health
- Supported by a Select Advisory Board
- Duties include: coordinating trainings, maintaining & disseminating information on sexual exploitation, monitoring & applying for federal funding, oversight and grant management of training/outreach/housing/services/evaluation/prevention funds, oversight of regional navigator grants, technical assistance, develop comprehensive & confidentiality policies

# Coordination, Training & Outreach

- Minimum of 6 regional navigators located in the north, south, central and metro regions of the state
- One could be dedicated to tribal communities
- Regional navigators would serve as regional experts, complete victim safety and needs assessments, provide initial and potential on-going case management services, connect youth with supportive services/shelter/housing

# Coordination, Training & Outreach

- Utilize Safe Place Model
- Street outreach workers who already work with runaway and homeless youth should be trained on how to work with sexually exploited youth
- Adequate numbers of street outreach workers should be available in each region of the state.

# Law Enforcement & System Response

## Coordinated Investigations:

- Law enforcement officers be trained on best practices in victim centered investigations
- Gerald D. Vick Human Trafficking Task Force continues to expand their training to law enforcement on the protocols it has developed for human trafficking investigations
- BCA should coordinate state wide training for investigators and law enforcement
- Law enforcement should ensure community-based advocacy services be offered to victims as soon as possible and continue throughout the prosecution of the traffickers
- Law enforcement ensure advocates are not directly involved with sting operations or investigations

# Law Enforcement & System Response

- The least restrictive setting always be used when providing services and supports to sexually exploited youth.
- If, however, there is a concern that the youth's safety is in immediate danger if they are not in a secure setting there is a current provision in statute where a child can be held up to 28 hours.
- The hold provisions of Safe Harbor are currently being worked on as the proposed legislation surrounding holds for up to 72 hours was recently eliminated from the bill due to its non-compliance with federal law.

# Housing & Supportive Services

- 20 units of Specific Emergency Shelter for Trafficked Youth
- 15 units of Transitional Living Program
- 5 units of Long Term Supportive Housing
- 10 Specific Foster Family Licenses/Homes

# Supportive Services

- Services should be designed specifically meet the needs of sexually exploited youth and to address the harm caused by their trafficking experience.
- Services should be offered to youth in a variety of settings including community-based organizations, emergency shelter and housing programs.
- Services should be grounded in trauma informed care and positive youth development.
- Services should be provided by appropriately skilled and trained staff.
- Services include advocacy, civil legal services, emergency and longer term health care, education, employment, aftercare and relapse prevention and family reunification.

# Prevention and Evaluation

- It is critical to provide prevention education to youth at a younger age-addressing the demand and higher indicators such as running away, homelessness & previous childhood sexual abuse are also recognized as key prevention strategies.
- The goal of the Safe Harbor for Sexually Exploited Youth legislation is to ensure that the sexually exploited youth in Minnesota are treated as victims and provided with services that are readily available, accessible, effective and move them toward healing, stability and independence. Evaluating the model to ensure these goals are met is the ethical way to ensure these goals are being met.

# Implementation Work in Progress

- Hired Statewide Director-Lauren Ryan at Dept. of Health
- Training Fund-Ramsey County Attorney's Office
- Trainings-Law Enforcement & Hotel Staff
- Regional Navigators
- Day 1 Hotline

# Implementation Work in Progress

- Emergency Shelter and Housing (the Link, Life House, Breaking Free & Heartland Girls Ranch)
- Street Outreach & Support Groups
- Hennepin County Working Group w/ Commissioner Dorfman
- Women's Foundation-Girls are not for Sale Campaign
- Carlson Companies/Carlson Foundation

# Overview of Link Programs

Juvenile Justice Division

Housing & Homeless Youth Services Division

Safe Harbor

# Safe Harbor Shelter and Housing Model

## Model is grounded in:

- Safe Harbor Law-No Wrong Door State-Wide Response Model
- Academic Research (list included later in presentation)
- Youth Themselves
- Best Practices for working with Sex Trafficking Victims (Positive Youth Development, Victim-Survivor-Leader, Trauma Informed Care, Harm Reduction, Incentive Based Programming and Culturally Inclusive Programming)
- Multidisciplinary Approach
- Information learned from other states (Bush Fellowship Research)
- Staff experience working with Sex Trafficking Victims, Juvenile Justice Diversion & Homeless Youth Work Experience
- Feedback from many local and national stakeholders/experts

# Cities/States Consulted-Safe Harbor & Emergency Shelter, Services & Housing for Sex Trafficked Youth

- New York City
- State of Connecticut
- Boston
- State of Vermont
- State of New Hampshire
- Newark, New Jersey
- State of Georgia
- Miami, Fort Lauderdale & Orlando and state of Florida
- Houston & Dallas
- L.A., San Francisco, Oakland/Alameda County & Sacramento
- Seattle/King County
- Portland/Multnomah County
- Chicago/Cook County
- Washington, D.C.
- Esterville, Iowa (Forest Ridge)

# Link's Safe Harbor Emergency Shelter and Housing Model

- Safe Harbor Law/No Wrong Door Response: The Link is one of four agencies in the state selected to provide Safe Harbor emergency shelter or housing through Safe Harbor funding.
- The Link will work in close partnership with the other three agencies selected: Life House (Duluth), Breaking Free (St. Paul) and Heartland Girls Ranch (Benson).
- The Link will provide 6 emergency shelter beds for youth targeted between the ages of 13 and 17 (there may be some exceptions made for younger youth) who have been sexually exploited/trafficked and 5 units of longer term housing for sexually exploited youth between the ages of 16 and 24 (who are also homeless).
- Girls are expected to be the main gender served, however, program will also be open to boys. Transgender youth will be served according to best practices as their self identified gender.
- Survivor Advisory Council

# Safe Harbor Emergency Shelter: Referrals

Referrals can come from anywhere in alignment with the No Wrong Door Philosophy and can include:

- Youth Themselves
- Regional Navigators & Day 1 Hotline
- Law Enforcement (federal, local, etc.)
- Schools
- Health Care Professionals
- County Staff (child welfare, juvenile justice diversion, etc.)
- The Link's Juvenile Supervision Center and other programs,
- Other Safe Harbor Shelter & Housing Programs
- Homeless Youth Programs
- Street Outreach Workers
- Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault Services

# Safe Harbor Emergency Shelter: Service Model

- Emergency Shelter up to 90 Days (with exceptions in some cases)
- Short Term v. Long Term Shelter Services
- Intensive Staffing & Case Management (1 CM to 6 Client Ratio)
- Access to Health Care Exam w/in 24 Hours
- Access to Short & Long Term Health Care Services
- Access to appropriate Chemical Dependency Services
- On-Site Therapy specific to Sex Trafficking
- Connection to Education-Partnership with local schools & on-site education program
- Survivor Mentorship Program

# The Link's Safe Harbor Emergency Shelter Model: Prior Lake

- The Link is leasing a building from Safe Haven which is located in Prior Lake (it used to be a homeless youth housing program)
- Appropriate Security Measures will be in place
- DHS License: Emergency Shelter
- We hope to open in August or September of 2014 (pending licensing application and the rest of the fundraising)

# For more Information:

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Holger-Ambrose, B.; Langmade, C.; Edinburgh, L. *Identifying Effective Outreach Strategies for Sexually Exploited Youth*, Journal of Adolescent Health, Volume 48: Number 2S: February 2011.

Holger-Ambrose, B.; Langmade, C.; Edinburgh, L. & Saewyc, E. (2013): *The Illusions and Juxtapositions of Commercial Sexual Exploitation among Youth: Identifying Effective Street Outreach Strategies*, Journal of Child Sexual Abuse, 22:3, 326-340.

[www.journalofjuvjustice.org/JOJJ0102/article06.htm](http://www.journalofjuvjustice.org/JOJJ0102/article06.htm)

No Wrong Door Legislative Report: [https://dps.mn.gov/divisions/ojp/forms-documents/Documents/!2012%20Safe%20Harbor%20Report%20\(FINAL\).pdf](https://dps.mn.gov/divisions/ojp/forms-documents/Documents/!2012%20Safe%20Harbor%20Report%20(FINAL).pdf)

Minnesota Women's Foundation Website: <http://www.mngirlsnotforsale.org>

MN. Indian Women's Resource Center, Cost Benefit Study Link:

[http://www.miwrc.org/system/uploaded\\_files/0000/0147/Benefit-Cost-Study\\_Full\\_Report\\_9-4-2012.pdf](http://www.miwrc.org/system/uploaded_files/0000/0147/Benefit-Cost-Study_Full_Report_9-4-2012.pdf)