WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

TEEN SEX TRAFFICKING AND SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

A TRAINING TOOL FOR SCHOOL EDUCATORS AND ADMINISTRATORS

ASU School of Social Work
Office of Sex Trafficking Intervention Research

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Schools are beginning to recognize that teen sex trafficking is an emerging threat to the physical safety of students and the overall health of the school community.

Schools can work in partnership with student leaders to initiate school-wide awareness and prevention and intervention activities to help make their communities safer.

Human Trafficking is a real and growing problem all over the world, including here in the United States. It defies stereotypes and experts continue to build new knowledge about the issue. Although there is limited data to quantify the exact number of human trafficking instances or number of minor victims, we know that teen sex trafficking is happening all across America, from rural to urban environments. In 2013, multiple cases of human trafficking were reported in all 50 states and Washington, DC (Polaris Project, 2014).

Most adolescents spend more time at school than anywhere else. While some of the most vulnerable youth have dropped out of school, millions of American teens spend 6-8 hours a day at school and school related activities. Therefore, schools are an ideal place for school personnel to influence the health and safety of their students (NAS,2013).

Teachers, nurses, counselors, social workers, coaches and other officials are well positioned to recognize warning signs and changes in appearance and behavior that may indicate underlying problems with students in their care. Daily interaction with teens gives schools an ideal opportunity to prevent, identify and respond to sexual exploitation on campus and within the school community.

Teen sex trafficking can be difficult to detect unless people who interact with victims are trained to recognize the signs. In addition, teen sex trafficking can be confused with teen dating violence or other forms of abuse.

According to the National Coalition to Prevent Child Abuse and Exploitation, the sex trafficking of minors is a severe form of child abuse with lasting effects on the health and wellbeing of individuals, families and society (National Plan, 2012).

School administrators and educators may feel uncomfortable discussing controversial subjects that are related to sex. Teen sex trafficking should be treated more as an issue of violence and abuse than an issue of sex or delinquency (NAS,2013).

All school personnel are required to report suspected child abuse. Many schools offer training to help their employees recognize signs of maltreatment and know how to report instances appropriately. Sex trafficking cases can be hard to detect because victims often hide their situations and are reluctant to disclose their victimization.

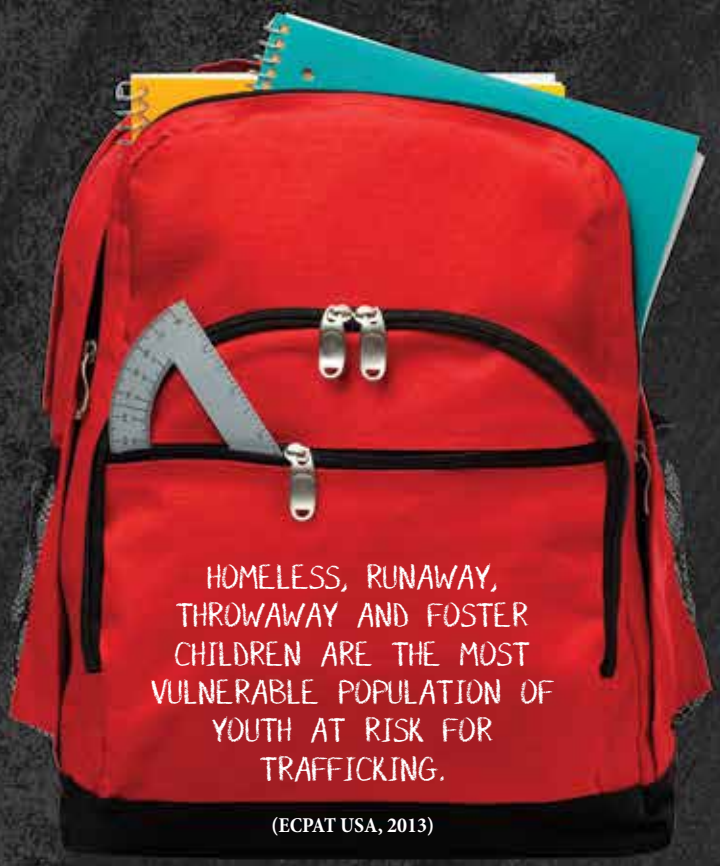
There have been reported cases in several states where students are being recruited into prostitution on campus by other students, or where traffickers seek their victims in locations close to schools, where students spend time before and after school.

Schools must be prepared to respond to suspected or confirmed cases of sex trafficking and understand that schools may be recruitment sites. Existing school-based programs focused on healthy relationships, bullying and interpersonal violence prevention give school personnel an excellent opportunity to address the topic of teen sex trafficking.

THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS

The Federal Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) defines the crime of trafficking as the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of 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 induced to perform such act has not attained 18 years of age.

The most important thing to understand from the federal definition is that anyone under the age of 18 who is induced to perform a commercial sex act is automatically a trafficking **victim**.



(ECPAT USA, 2013)

HOW DO TEENS BECOME VICTIMS?

- Recruitment by "Romeo/boyfriend" pimps who convince victim that he loves and cares for them.
- Kidnapped by a "gorilla" pimp who forces the victim into the life using violence.
- Gang related prostitution either as a means of entry, initiation or for protection by the gang.
- A parent or family member pimps out their child for drugs, money or needs such as food or rent.
- Running away and living on the streets and are forced to exchange sex for basic needs.

Examples of FORCE, FRAUD and COERCION used by pimps:

(Polaris Project, 2014)

FORCE

- Slapping and beating with objects
- Burning
- Sexual assault
- Rape and gang rape
- Confinement and physical restraint

FRAUD

- False promises
- Deceitful enticing and affectionate behavior
- Lying about working conditions
- Lying about the promise of a better life

COERCION

- Threats of serious harm or restraint
- Intimidation and humiliation
- Creating a climate of fear
- Enforcement of trivial demands
- Occasional indulgences
- Intense manipulation
- Emotional abuse
- Isolation
- Dependency for basic needs
- Creating fear of independence

"A lot of victims do not identify themselves as being a victim. Some may feel like they got themselves in this situation and it's their responsibility to get out."
- Jane, survivor

If you suspect Human Trafficking, call the National Human Trafficking Hotline at 1-888-3737-888

A WILLING CHILD PROSTITUTE

what makes teens vulnerable

1.68 million

Over 1.68 million American children run away each year.

(National Incidence Studies of Missing, Abducted, Runaway, and Thrownaway Children, 2002)

Vulnerable youth can be lured into prostitution and other forms of sexual exploitation using promises, psychological manipulation, provision of drugs and alcohol, and violence.

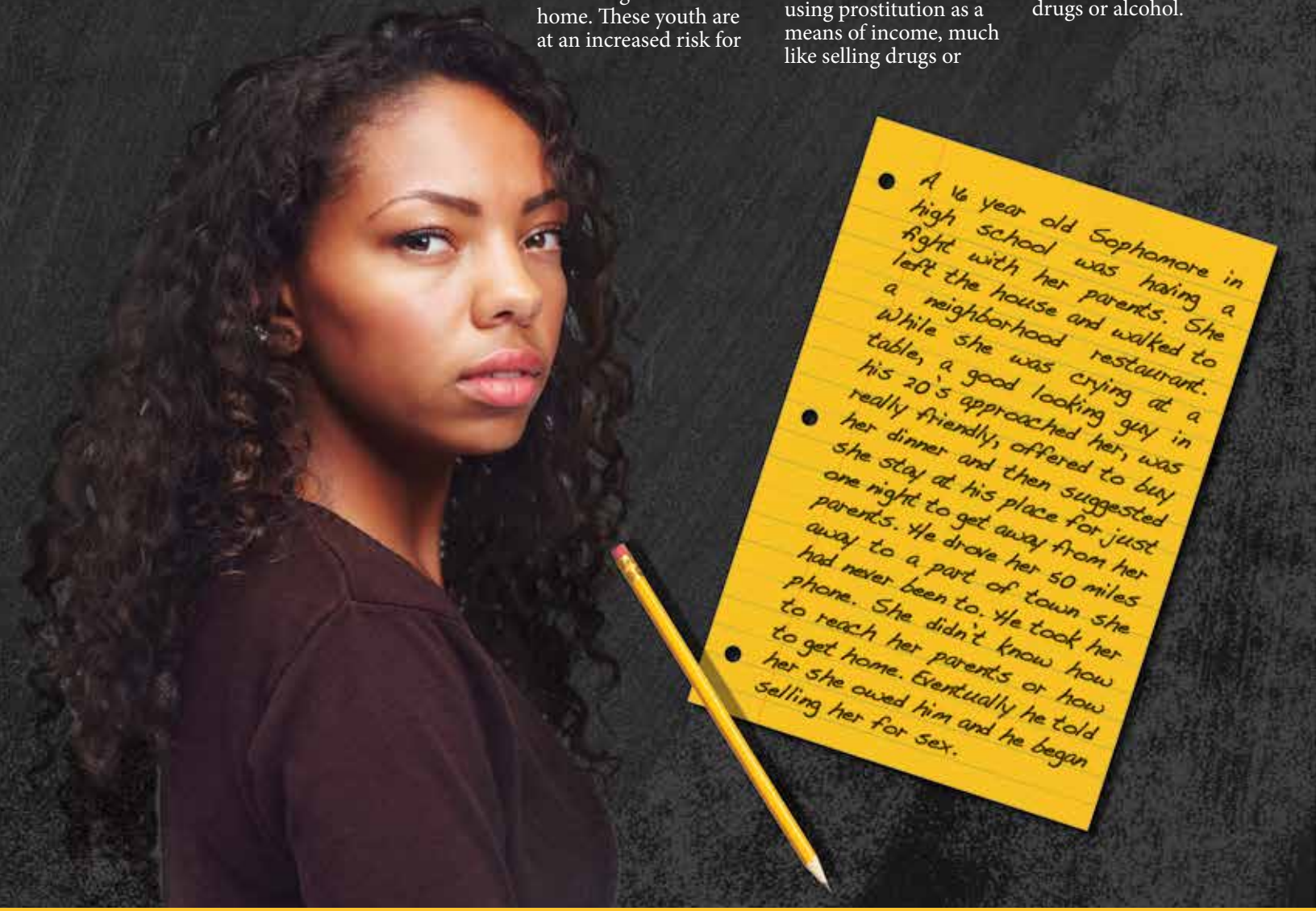
While there is no commonly accepted profile of a victim, certain populations are more vulnerable than others.

RUNAWAY
Pimps/traffickers target runaway or "throwaway" teens or those who are having trouble at home. These youth are at an increased risk for predators as they have few resources, may not be old enough to legally get a job, and are often running away from difficult situations.

FOSTER CARE
Youth in foster care move around a lot, and are prone to victimization because they may not have someone looking out for them or making sure they are safe. They may crave the attention a pimp can provide.

GANGS
Increasingly, gangs are using prostitution as a means of income, much like selling drugs or guns. While drugs or guns can be sold just once, a human body can be sold over and over. Some girls are told they must sell their bodies as part of gang initiation, membership or for protection.

JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM
Youth who have been arrested or are currently on probation are at a higher risk for trafficking. Juveniles are most commonly arrested for related crimes such as loitering, curfew, runaway or minor in possession of drugs or alcohol.



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ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND
CHILDREN
At least 100,000 U.S. children are exploited in prostitution every year in America.
(National Center for Missing and Exploited Children)
Did you k
Law enforcemen have apprehended pimps by infiltrating their attempts to contact victims on social media.
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90%

Up to 90% of minor victims are under the control of a pimp.

(Shared Hope, 2014)

THE THREE "T's of TRAFFICKING

TARGETED

Pimps shop for their victims online, in shopping malls, bus stops, at schools, at after school programs or hang-out locations like a popular fast food restaurant or park, near foster homes and other places where teens gather.

TRICKED

Pimps invest a lot of time and effort forming a bond with their victims'. They often buy gifts, provide a place to stay, and give affection before revealing their true intent – to sell them for sex.

TRAUMATIZED

The pimp's use of psychological manipulation, physical violence and rape can make the victim feel trapped and powerless. The "trauma bond" is very difficult to break and may require intensive long term treatment and counseling.

(National Center for Missing and Exploited Youth, 2012).

Pimps are predators

Pimps are predators and referred to as traffickers, as they commit the crime of human trafficking.

A pimp is someone who forces another person into prostitution, and then keeps some or all of their earnings. A pimp makes arrangements for customers to have sex with their victim.

Pimps often tattoo or "brand" their victims to show that they are property, much like a rancher might brand their cattle. Pimps sometimes sell or trade their victims to other pimps, and victims may have multiple branding tattoos.

Pimps can look like an ordinary person. Pimps may also be a family member who pimps out their child for drugs or rent money. Pimps can be girls or women, and sometimes couples work together to recruit young girls.

(National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, 2012)

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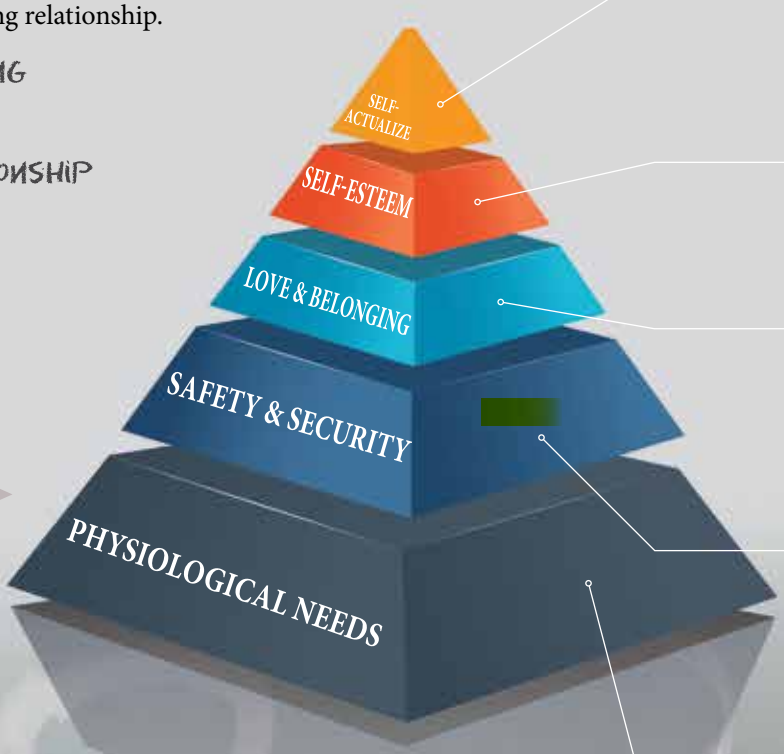
The pimp /trafficker's main purpose is financial gain and will make every effort to establish trust and allegiance in what initially seems like a loving and caring relationship.

A LOVING AND CARING RELATIONSHIP

It is helpful to revisit Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Maslow, 1943) to understand human behavior and motivation, especially in the context of how a pimp has the ability to control their victims by fulfilling their basic physical and psychological needs.



Self-actualization - Promise of fulfilled dreams or reached potential (marriage, family, career, degree, travel, adventure, fame, wealth).

Self-esteem - They buy them expensive or popular clothing and jewelry and give them compliments and flattery.

Love and belonging - Spend time with him/her, participate in their favorite activities, be present and engaged in their life, offer love, marriage, and family.

Safety and security - Offer safety and protection against abusive parents or peers. Rescue him/her from potential life threatening or harmful situations, promise protection or financial security for the youth.

Physiological needs - Provide food, shelter, clothes, etc. to a youth who may not be provided with these items at home or a homeless youth who is too young to find employment to provide these basic needs for themselves.

Basic needs: Food, clothing, place to stay

Safety and security: Protection against abusive parents or peers, and provision of financial security

Psychological needs: Love and belonging - even affection and nurturing that is missing or craved

Self esteem: Verbal praise and verbal berating or physical abuse to compromise victim's self-worth (Hall, 2014).

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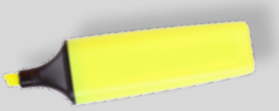
RED FLAGS FOR SCHOOL PERSONNEL

- unexplained absences and truancy
- sudden change in behavior
- sudden academic decline
- sudden possession of expensive clothing, purses, or electronics
- sudden change in dress/appearance
- surprising change in friendships/relationships with peers
- uncharacteristically promiscuous behavior or references to sexual situations
- signs of physical abuse or restraint
- signs of self mutilation (cutting)
- sexually transmitted infection/disease
- Use of terminology like "the game" "the life" "daddy" "manager" "date/trick"
- suicide attempt
- presence of, or reference to, older boyfriend
- gang affiliation
- depression
- extreme anger
- loss of or lack of school ID or other state issued ID such as a drivers license
- deprivation of food, sleep or medical care
- loss of contact with parent/guardian
- running away/couch surfing
- thrown out of house by parent/guardian

(Blue Campaign) (STIR training materials)



RECRUITING VICTIMS

Teachers and school officials should be aware that pimps use social media to recruit victims. Students should repeatedly be reminded to turn off their location services function on their cell phones and never disclose personal information such as full name, address or "check in" on social media with their current location.

WARNING SIGNS FOR TEENS

- dating an older guy (he might give you the creeps)
- she's super secretive about him
- he buys her lots of expensive presents
- he made her get a weird tattoo
- she has lots of unexplained cash
- she shops for clothes and stuff you know she cannot afford
- she has a second cell phone
- you find hotel room keys in her purse
- she has cuts and bruises
- she has a fake ID
- she has been really depressed, nervous, tense or afraid
- she misses a lot of school or dropped out of school
- she runs away a lot and avoids her family and friends
- you never know when she's telling the truth
- she started drinking or doing drugs
- you feel like she is brainwashed

(Florida campaign: droppingfbombs.com)

NEARLY ALL TEENS ARE CONNECTED ONLINE AND USE CELL PHONES AND SOCIAL MEDIA FOR A MAJORITY OF THEIR PERSONAL COMMUNICATION.

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MINDSET OF A VICTIM

VICTIMS OFTEN DO NOT SEE THEMSELVES AS VICTIMS

VICTIMS MAY FEEL SHAME, SELF –BLAME AND FEELINGS OF UNWORTHINESS OF A BETTER LIFE

VICTIMS MAY BE COACHED TO LIE TO PROFESSIONALS AND OFTEN GIVE SCRIPTED STORIES

VICTIMS ARE OFTEN FEARFUL AND DISTRUST LAW ENFORCEMENT AND GOVERNMENT SERVICES OUT OF FEAR OF ARREST

VICTIMS MAY HAVE FORMED A TRAUMA BOND WITH THEIR EXPLOITER AND MAY HAVE DEEP LOYALTIES AND POSITIVE FEELINGS FOR THEIR ABUSER

VICTIMS OFTEN FEAR THEIR OWN SAFETY AND THE SAFETY OF THEIR LOVED ONES DUE TO THREATS OF VIOLENCE

DRUGS OFTEN PLAY A ROLE IN SEX TRAFFICKING SITUATIONS- SOMETIMES AS A WAY TO COPE OR VICTIMS SOMETIMES ENTER "THE LIFE" TO SUPPORT A DRUG HABIT

(US Department of Health and Human Services)

Common myths and stereotypes about sex trafficking can affect judgment and response in a school setting:

* "She is just promiscuous"
* "That only happens in foreign countries"
* "That only happens on the border or is part of the immigration problem"
* "It was consensual"
* "Prostitution is a victimless crime"
* "She did it to herself - no one is controlling her"
* "That only happens in bad parts of town"
* "It only happens to girls - not boys"

The more teachers, counselors and other school officials learn about the sex trafficking victim population, including the mindset of a victim, the better equipped they will be to identify victims and focus on prevention strategies at school.

School personnel are uniquely positioned to notice changes in appearance and behavior among students. Teachers overhear rumors and are privy to private conversations among students that may offer clues about victimization.

If you suspect abuse or a sex trafficking situation, follow your school's reporting protocol.

If you believe a student is in immediate danger, call 911. It is far better to report suspicious activity than to overlook a trafficking situation. Teens are good at hiding their victimization and lying to avoid consequences at home or school. Trust your experience and instinct. If something seems wrong or feels wrong, it probably is.

If you hear or see something, say something.

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