



How Recovery Homes Can Help Those Who've Escaped Sex Trafficking or Sexual Exploitation

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Refuge for Women

A UNIQUE MISSION

- ▶ To provide aftercare for trafficked and sexually exploited survivors

A GOD-GIVEN VISION

- ▶ To provide a residential healing experience for women to pursue their dreams

What is Human Trafficking ?

According to the Dept of Homeland Security,

human trafficking is modern day slavery and involves the use of **force, fraud, or coercion** to obtain some type of labor or sex act in exchange for money or goods.

In the United States, any minor under the age of 18 engaged in commercial sex acts is automatically considered a victim of sex trafficking under the law.

Sex Trafficking Defined

Sex Trafficking is a subset of human trafficking and is a form of slavery that involves the use of force, fraud, or coercion to compel a person into commercial sex acts against his or her will

Sex act ↔ money, drugs, housing, gifts, food, protection

What are the numbers?

DISCLOSURE: Existing estimates, while controversial (Choo et al., 2010; Fedina, 2015), do suggest a human rights tragedy of epic proportions.

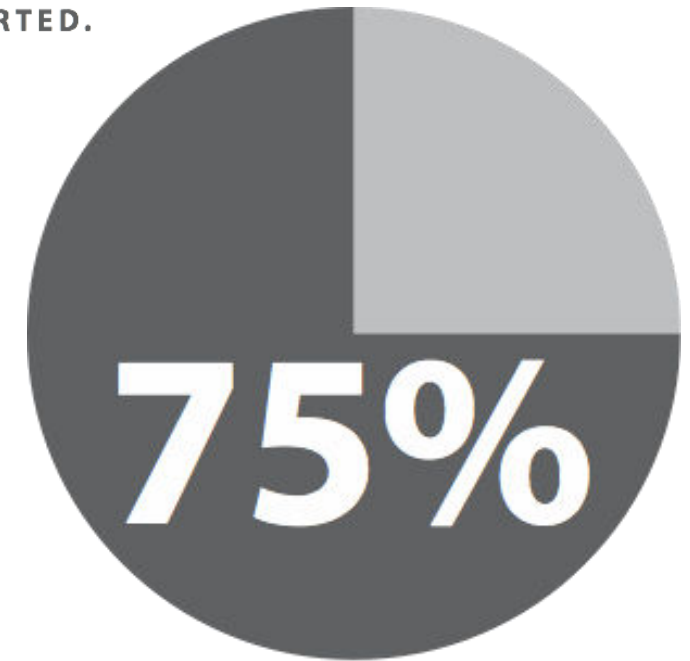
There are app. **30** million **PEOPLE** at risk FOR BEING TRAFFICKED in the world today.

Human trafficking is the **2nd** largest international **crime** industry, with profits of **\$150 billion** every year.

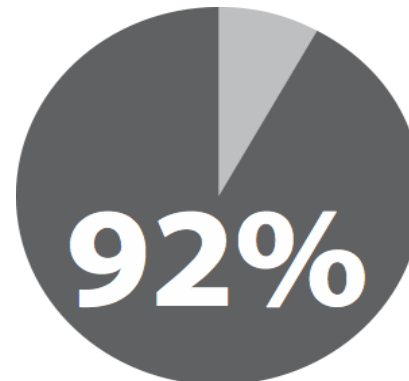
The average age of entry into the sex industry in the United States is **12-14** years old.

SEXUAL EXPLOITATION:

A NATIONAL EPIDEMIC ... AND TRAGEDY



of prostitutes were sexually and/or
physically abused as children.



of women involved in sex trafficking
want out, but they feel trapped by a
lack of basic resources like a job, a
place to stay, and health care.

Who can be trafficked?

IT CAN HAPPEN TO ANYONE

NO MATTER RACE, AGE OR GENDER



Where Does Sex Trafficking Occur?

Brothels

Escort services

Massage parlors

Strip clubs

Hotels and Motels

Prostituted on the streets

Pornography

Truck Stops

Bars and Clubs

Internet

Identifying a Victim

Work/Living Conditions

Mental Health/Abnormal Behavior

Physical Health

Lack of Control

Other



Overall Risk Factors/

- ▶ Runaway and homeless youth
- ▶ Previous abuse
- ▶ Low self-esteem/identity
- ▶ Foster care/child welfare involved youth
- ▶ LGBTQ
- ▶ Addiction
- ▶ Disability
- ▶ Undocumented foreign nationals/guest worker visa programs
- ▶ Geographic Isolation
- ▶ Corruption
- ▶ Political Conflict
- ▶ Cultural Acceptance of Practice
- ▶ Discrimination
- ▶ Chronic Unemployment
- ▶ Limited Access to Resources
- ▶ Crime
- ▶ Language Barriers

Understanding the Mindset of a Victim

- ▶ They do not see themselves as victims
- ▶ They may feel shame, self-blame, and feelings of unworthiness of a better life
- ▶ May have been coached to lie to Mental Health professionals and often give fabricated histories with scripted stories
- ▶ They are often fearful and distrust Law Enforcement and Government services due to fear of arrest
- ▶ May have formed a trauma bond with their exploiter – loyal
- ▶ They fear for their own safety and safety of loved ones due to threats
- ▶ Drugs often play a big role – either as a way to cope or they enter “the life” to support a drug habit

Psychological Impacts of Trafficking

- ▶ Depression
- ▶ Anxiety Disorders
- ▶ Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
- ▶ Substance Use Disorders
- ▶ Panic Disorder
- ▶ Stockholm Syndrome

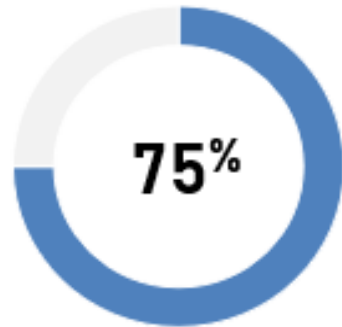


“Why don’t they leave?”

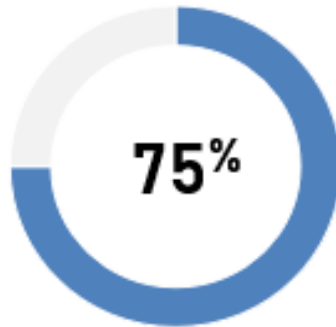
“Why don’t they just ask for help?”

**“Why don’t they leave the life the first
time?”**

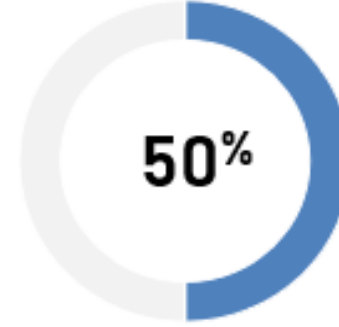
Keeping Perspective...



EXPLOITATION CONTINUED
FOR TWO OR MORE YEARS



DON'T SEE THEMSELVES
AS BEING EXPLOITED



UNDER AGE 14 WHEN
EXPLOITATION STARTED

Role of substance use disorder in human trafficking is powerful and pervasive!

- ▶ Addiction can increase a person's vulnerability to being trafficked
- ▶ Can be initiated and manipulated by the trafficker as a means of coercion and control
- ▶ Can be used by the victim/survivor as a means of coping with the physical and psychological traumas of being trafficked both during captivity and after exiting the trafficking situation

Vulnerability

- ▶ SUD involves biochemical changes to the brain and adds an additional layer of risk
- ▶ The societal stigma surrounding both the condition and the sufferer is pervasive
- ▶ Societal stigma can prevent healthcare providers, law enforcement officials, prosecutors, and other professionals from identifying victims of human trafficking when they see only the manifestations of SUD and consequently dismiss red flags
- ▶ Societal stigma and self-stigma may deter an individual from seeking help

Perpetrators use addiction as a tool of coercion

- ▶ Entrap victims with existing substance use issues.
- ▶ Initiate dependency in victims with no prior addiction history.

THEN...

- ▶ Use the threat of withdrawal to control the victims and coerce them to engage in commercial sex, compounding the victims' trauma.

Coping Mechanism

- ▶ Both during captivity AND after exiting the trafficking situation
- ▶ No other option given the mindset perpetrator has instilled in them
- ▶ Numb the physical pain... escape reality

Rural Vulnerabilities

- ▶ Isolation
- ▶ Limited Key Resources
- ▶ Poverty
 - ▶ Less jobs means more people willing to trade sex for money or drugs
- ▶ Lack of awareness and education
- ▶ Truck stops

Barriers to getting help in rural communities

- ▶ Everyone knows everyone... and their business
- ▶ Lack of transportation
- ▶ Lack of funds
- ▶ Cell phone coverage is spotty
- ▶ Lack of resources and training of law enforcement, healthcare professionals, child welfare system, etc.
- ▶ Don't know that what is happening is not normal
- ▶ Fewer services in the area – housing, advocates, etc.

How this impacts our work with victims

- ▶ Mistrust is prevalent
- ▶ Survivors may be unable to remember certain events or may confuse
- ▶ Manipulation and dishonesty are adaptive trafficking survival strategies
- ▶ Trauma bonding may be strong
- ▶ Survivor may return to trafficker multiple times before leaving for good

Working from a strength's perspective is critical!

Relationship Building

- ▶ Create a safe space
- ▶ Meet their physical needs
- ▶ Adopt open, nonthreatening body positioning
- ▶ Engage the client
- ▶ Adapt the screening process to accommodate their needs
- ▶ Avoid temptation to probe for unnecessary details
- ▶ Use respectful and empathetic language
- ▶ Be prepared for potential trauma reaction

Screening Questions – Examples

- ▶ Can you leave your job or situation if you want?
- ▶ What are your working or living conditions like?
- ▶ Where were you sleeping and eating prior to coming here?
- ▶ Have you ever been deprived of food, water, sleep or medical care?
- ▶ Has anyone threatened your family?
- ▶ Has your identification or documentation been taken from you?
- ▶ Is anyone forcing you to do anything that you do not want to do?
- ▶ Have you ever had to exchange sex for money, food, clothes, drugs?

How to Respond...

- ▶ Don't – act judgmental
 - ▶ Do – watch your nonverbal communication and your language
- ▶ Don't – talk bad about abuser/trafficker
 - ▶ Do – use empowering words for how strong they are despite difficult circumstances
- ▶ Don't – force to get help
 - ▶ Do – offer resources and be open to them saying no to your help

PA LAWS- Does your state have an equivalent?

- ▶ Identifying information may be free from public disclosure;
- ▶ Possible affirmative defense against prostitution charges
- ▶ First offenders may receive priority for diversion programs
- ▶ Individuals convicted of certain offenses directly relating from human trafficking may file a motion to vacate the convictions
- ▶ Civil action against perpetrator and those who profited from trafficking; Awards for damages; Attorney fees for the prevailing party
- ▶ Applies the same sexual assault counselor confidential privilege communication to sexual assault counselors serving as human trafficking counselors

Know your referral resources!

- ▶ National Resources
 - ▶ Refuge for Women Emergency Home Program
 - ▶ Pittsburgh – 412-567-1727 or online application
 - ▶ Las Vegas – online application
 - ▶ Safehouse Project: 507-769-0819
 - ▶ National Human Trafficking Hotline: 1-888-373-7888
- ▶ Local Resources

A unique and effective model

Through our **UNIQUE NATIONWIDE NETWORK OF HOMES**, Refuge for Women helps remove women from dangerous situations and offers up to **2 YEARS** of free, safe housing with 24/7 staffing through our Emergency, Long Term and Transitional housing models. Each compassionate staff member is trained to **HELP INDIVIDUAL VICTIMS HEAL FROM THEIR TRAUMA, RECLAIM THEIR IDENTITY, AND WALK IN GRACE WITH A LIFE FREE FROM BONDAGE—PHYSICALLY, FINANCIALLY, EMOTIONALLY, AND SPIRITUALLY.**

EMERGENCY
HOUSING

LONG TERM
PROGRAM

TRANSITIONAL
LIVING

TWO YEAR CONTINUUM OF CARE

SAFETY AND
STABILIZATION

RESTORATIVE CARE
AND HEALING

FINANCIAL STABILITY
AND HEALTHY LIVING

Refuge for Women Pittsburgh Emergency House

- ▶ Temporary housing up to 90 days
- ▶ Individual therapy
- ▶ Trafficking, substance use and violence education
- ▶ Medical accompaniment and service
- ▶ Job search and placement
- ▶ Health and wellness programs
- ▶ Advocacy and information/referrals
- ▶ Emergency local transportation
- ▶ Case Management
- ▶ 24/7 access to services
- ▶ Spiritual services
- ▶ Food and clothing
- ▶ Goal planning
- ▶ Job skills training
- ▶ Peer support services
- ▶ Safety planning
- ▶ Support groups
- ▶ Crisis Intervention services

“Having a safe place to heal has made a world of difference in my process of recovery. My night terrors are completely gone, my flashbacks do not control nor overtake me any longer, and my past no longer haunts me... which are all miracles I never even thought were a possibility.”

—Stacy



Who to contact:

- ▶ Emergency Response
 - ▶ 911
- ▶ Refuge for Women Pittsburgh –
 - ▶ Questions & Referrals: 24/7 Hotline
 - ▶ 412-567-1727
- ▶ Sarah Medina, Emergency Services Director
 - ▶ sarah.medina@refugeforwomen.org