Working for the crew: Understanding and Treating victims of gang controlled sexual exploitation

Deepa Patel, CSOTP, LCSW Co-Founder of Trauma and Hope

TRAUMA AND HOPE Springfield, VA

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

TREATMENT

Treatment issues include but are not limited to:

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

Training, Education and Certification

- Setts Certification
- Program Building specific to Victims
- Consultation

Quick Facts about T & H

- Working with this population over 15 Years...you learn a little bit
- We are licensed clinicians in the field doing therapy.....in the communities
- We combined what we do and expanded to teaching others
- My methods may not be traditional.....But they are Effective
- Please Excuse the language

"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

Why Commercial Sex?

Gang Controlled Sex Trafficking

- Investment: Minimal recruiting cost
- 1 night: \$1,000; 1 month: \$15,000
- 1 year: \$180,000 Profit
- <u>Note</u>: 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
- <u>Note</u>: Relies on more people to cut and distribute; more expensive; narcotics seized → narcotics lost
- * Finite Resource

If you have a Gang Problem, You have a trafficking Problem......

Not all Gang Members Exploit....

Not all victims acknowledge victimization....

To understand Gang Controlled Exploitation Victims.....Must understand Gang Mentality

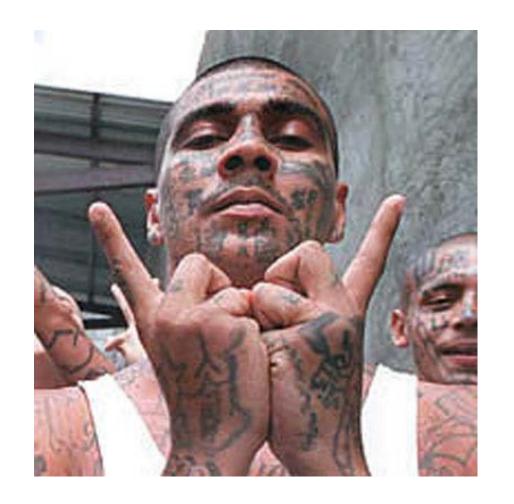
Types of Gangs

- Transnational Gangs
 - *MS13*
 - 18th
 - Mexican Mafia
- National Gangs
 - Blood,
 - Crips
- Local Gangs or Crews/Hybrids
 - 7 C's
 - Georgetown South Crew

Gang Mentality

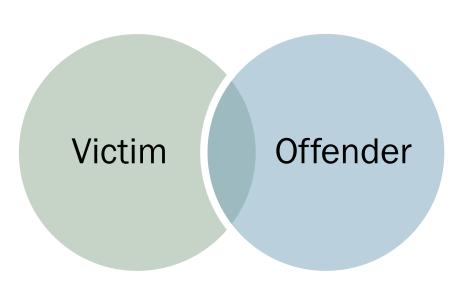
- Power and Respect
- Territorial Dominance
- Paranoia about Law Enforcement
- Blood in, Blood out

Gang over All



Traditional Ideologies of Gang Controlled Victims

- Runaway
- Problem-child
- Non-responsive to services
- Sexually promiscuous
- Homeless street youth
- Criminals/Delinquents
- Drug-user
- Antisocial



Why Are our Victims Drawn to Gangs

Victim Risk Factors

■ TRAUMA

- Physical/sexual/emotional/verbal 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

Case Study----Sammy

The Good

- Supportive grandmother
- Middle Class Family
- One Teacher Role Model
- Family Dinner/Vacations
- Leader potential

The Bad

- Childhood Sexual Abuse
- Low self esteem
- Negative views towards treatment/medication
- Rude, aggressive and hostile
- 18th Street is in the backyard

Underneath the Rough Exterior

Profile of Sammy

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
- ▶ 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

"It was love at first site"

- Met through a recruiter in JDC
- Picked her up from school everyday
- Nails, hair and make up
- Told her to go to school, make good grades and play sports
- Met her mother
- Told her that she could be something and that he loved her

Statements From A Trafficker

Initial Mental Health Effects

- Fear
- Anxiety
- Low self-esteem
- Depression
- Anger and hostility
- Sexual behavior problems

- Aggressive/delinquent behavior
- Substance use/ abuse/dependency
- Impaired social functioning
- Distorted cognitive schemata
- Impaired affective processing

Long Term Mental Health Issues

- Sexual disorders
- PTSD
- Depression
- Suicidal ideation and attempts
- Anxiety disorders
- Substance use/ abuse/dependency
- Somatic complaints

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/outsiders."

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
- 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"

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
 - Associates to the gang
 - Tricked that they are gang members (Victims feel no different)
- For the most part, victims become property of the entire gang rather then 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

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

"If I just	had a	checklis	t or set of	questions to	ask, then I
	will t	e able to	o identify	the problem	ı"
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					I WISH

The True Checklist

- History of emotional, sexual, or other physical abuse
- Signs of current physical abuse and/or sexually transmitted diseases
- History of running away or current status as a runaway (4TH TIME)
- Inexplicable appearance of expensive gifts, clothing, or other costly items
- Self Esteem Issues
- Presence of an older boy-/girlfriend
- Drug addiction
- Lack of Supervision
- Withdrawal or lack of interest in previous activities
- Gang involvement

4 OR MORE

Assessment Process

Clinical Assessment

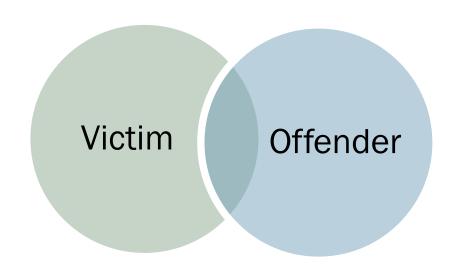
- Current Situation
- Family Background
- Developmental History
- Psychosocial History
- Mental Health History and Needs
 - Including Trauma
- Sexual History

Outcome

o Formulation of Goals/Interventions/Objectives

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

The Two Faces of these Victims

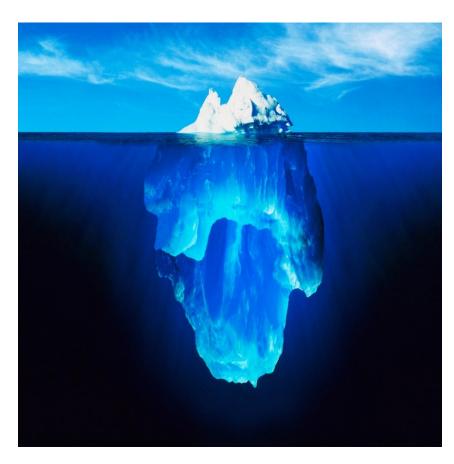


- Conduct Disorder
- Oppositional Defiant Disorder
- Borderline Personality Disorder

OR.....

■ Something entirely different

What You See Is Not Really What You are Getting



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

Certification Program

Trauma and Hope SETTS (Sexual Exploitation Training and Treatment Services) provides a five day trauma focused training focused towards sexual exploitation. The five days will provide professionals of an understanding and interventions for working with victims and offenders of exploitation. This includes screening, assessment, case management, and treatment interventions. The Five day outline includes:

- Day 1: Overview of Gangs and Exploitation
- Day 2: Understanding the Traffickers and Buyers Mindset

 John School vs. Sex Offender Treatment
- Day 3: Trauma and Hope SETTS Screening, Assessment, and Trauma Focused Interventions/Protocol
- Day 4: Trauma and Hope SETTS Screening, Assessment, and Trauma Focused Interventions/Protocol
- Day 5: Compassion Fatigue, Secondary Trauma, and Resiliency Building.
 Ensure your safe and Safety of Other

WHEN: 9-AM to 4pm on November 2, 9, 16, 29, 30, 2018.

For more information ...

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