



Research Resources

Child Sex Trafficking Team
Office of the Texas Governor

Child Sex Trafficking Team

The Texas Legislature authorized the creation of the Child Sex Trafficking Team (CSTT) in the Governor's Office to provide a collaborative and comprehensive response to child sexual exploitation in Texas (Texas Government Code §§ 772.0062 – 772.0063). CSTT's vision is a state where children and youth are free from sexual exploitation. Our mission is to build sustainable capacity, enhance expertise, promote policies, and create new and leverage existing collaborations to prevent child sexual exploitation, to help survivors heal and thrive, and to bring exploiters to justice.



In order to enhance expertise in our state and to meet our legislative charge to collect, analyze and distribute relevant research to agencies and nonprofit organizations, CSTT gathers existing research on child sex trafficking, and provides this document, *Research Resources*, on our website, gov.texas.gov/cstt. *Research Resources* is a curated list of relevant research articles, complete with summaries by CSTT, from the last three to five years. The articles are primarily from peer-reviewed journals and are organized by CSTT's five overarching goals: protect, recognize, rescue, restore, and bring justice.

CSTT will continuously update and improve this collection of research by gathering, curating, summarizing and providing the latest research in updated versions of *Research Resources*. Enhancing expertise in our state will empower Texas to implement research-based programs and practices that prevent child sexual exploitation, help survivors heal and thrive, and bring exploiters to justice.

Our mission is to build sustainable capacity, enhance expertise, promote policies, and create new and leverage existing collaborations to:

- [Protect](#) children by building their awareness of and resilience to child exploitation and by curbing demand for child sex trafficking.
- [Recognize](#) child sexual exploitation in all its forms by raising public awareness and implementing screening tools for victims.
- [Recover](#) victims with protective and empowering – not punitive – collaborative and coordinated responses spanning multiple systems.
- [Support Healing](#) survivors through trauma-informed and responsive services and supports they need to heal and thrive.
- [Bring Justice](#) for survivors by holding traffickers, buyers, and those who profit from trafficking accountable.

Protect



Protect

[Recommendations for Educating Youth About Sex Trafficking](#)

Alexandria M. Lesak, Cynthia F. Rizo, Hannabeth Franchino-Olsen, Melissa R. Jenkins, Hannah Winslow, L. B. Klein, Sandra L. Martin, Rebecca J. Macy, Robin Colbert, Chris Croft & Courtney Dunkerton (2021): Recommendations for Educating Youth about Sex Trafficking, *Journal of Human Trafficking*

Authors: Lesak, Alexandria M.; Rizo, Cynthia F.; Franchino-Olsen, Hannabeth; Jenkins, Melissa R.; Winslow, Hannah; Klein, L.B.; Martin, Sandra L.; Macy, Rebecca J.; Colbert, Robin; Croft, Chris; Dunkerton, Courtney

Publication Year: 2021

Summary: There has been an increasing focus in recent years on expanding school-based human trafficking prevention education. This study explores the perspectives of expert stakeholders regarding curriculum goals/purposes, content, delivery, and implementation. The recommendations outlined in this article can provide preliminary guidance to inform school-based sex trafficking education programs for youth.

Abstract: The need to educate youth on sex trafficking in the United States has received considerable attention; however, limited research is available to guide development of educational programming for youth. Perspectives from 32 experts in fields connected to sex trafficking and violence prevention were obtained through focus groups and interviews. Questions focused on goals/purposes of educating youth about sex trafficking, content to include in a school-based sex trafficking curriculum for middle and high school students, methods to deliver such a curriculum, and challenges to implementing a sex trafficking curriculum in schools and associated strategies. Experts recommended content on healthy and unhealthy relationships, general information about sex trafficking, factors related to sex trafficking, and identification of safe people and needed resources. Program delivery recommendations focused on delivery approach, format, facilitation, manualization, and integration throughout the school's curriculum. Lastly, experts noted implementation challenges and associated strategies relating to time and space in school curriculum, parents' discomfort with educating their children about sex trafficking, and buy-in from school administrators. Results build on existing literature by providing greater depth

Protect, continued

and context on educating youth about sex trafficking. Empowering youth with information and resources regarding sex trafficking is important for promoting just, peaceful, and inclusive societies.

[A Response to Lesak et al. \(2021\), “Recommendations for Educating Youth about Sex Trafficking”](#)

Katie M. Edwards, Teresa C. Kulig & Bridget Diamond-Welch (2022) A Response to Lesak et al. (2021), “Recommendations for Educating Youth about Sex Trafficking”, Journal of Human Trafficking, DOI: 10.1080/23322705.2022.2078593

Authors: Edwards, Katie M.; Kulig, Teresa C.; Diamon-Welch, Bridget

Publication Year: 2021

Summary: This commentary provides a response to the Lesak article included above. The authors build upon the Lesak study by offering additional key considerations for prevention education.

Abstract: We are writing in response to the Lesak et al. (2021) article regarding recommendations for educating youth about sex trafficking. Although the authors raise very important points, we want to highlight factors not discussed but which are nonetheless critical to consider in prevention. These include (1) moving beyond victimization reduction only initiatives and instead focusing on how prevention efforts can target potential bystanders and perpetrators; (2) thinking more critically about the safety and acceptability of mixed gender groups in the delivery of trafficking prevention programs; and most importantly (3) thinking about programming at the outer realms of the social ecology that move beyond a sole focus on youth.

[An Organizational Consultation Framework for School-Based Prevention of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children](#)

Erin A. Harper, Ann Cale Kruger, Kristen Varjas & Joel Meyers (2019) An Organizational Consultation Framework for School-Based Prevention of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children, Journal of Educational and Psychological Consultation, 29:4, 401-422.

Authors: Harper, Erin A; Kruger, Ann Cale; Varjas, Kristen; Meyers, Joel

Publication Year: 2019

Summary: This article presents commercial sexual exploitation of children from an ecological perspective (societal, community, school, family, and individual) and presents a framework for school-based prevention of CSEC. The framework provides phases that guide consultants on this issue.

Abstract: The commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) is a form of childhood sexual abuse involving the sexual exploitation of youth for economic gain. School-based CSEC prevention efforts have increased in recent years. While these efforts represent important progress in school-based efforts to

Protect, continued

prevent CSEC, the literature indicates that they need to be strengthened. This article presents a school-based organizational consultation framework that may help schools and support personnel to enhance existing school-based CSEC prevention efforts.

[Trauma Informed Strategies for Human Trafficking Education in Urban Schools: An Attachment Theory Perspective](#)

Albert, LS. Trauma Informed Strategies for Human Trafficking Education in Urban Schools: An Attachment Theory Perspective. Education and Urban Society. October 2021.

Authors: Albert, Lumina S.

Publication Year: 2021

Summary: This article helps to inform schools of the need for the integration of a trauma-informed practice and the use of the attachment theory perspective as a framework for providing prevention education in the schools.” One example is using Trust-Based Relational Intervention (TBRI) training alongside prevention education efforts to enhance the relational protective factors and trust by students with staff to prevent, recognize, and intervene on the student’s behalf.

Abstract: It is being increasingly recognized that providing human trafficking education (THE) in schools is an effective prevention tool. Yet, the strategies that may be utilized in delivering these programs have not been fully established. The purpose of this paper is twofold. First, the paper discusses the importance of providing human trafficking education in schools, with a particular emphasis on urban schools. Second, the paper utilizes an attachment theory perspective to suggest strategies for trauma informed human trafficking education in schools. This work draws upon recent research in trauma-informed education and practice and uses an attachment theory perspective to discuss ways to incorporate well-researched strategies and tools into potential curricula for human trafficking education. In the absence of trauma informed strategies incorporated into school education, the effectiveness of anti-trafficking initiatives may be highly compromised.

[Youth Internet Safety Education: Aligning Programs with the Evidence Base](#)

Finkelhor, D., Walsh, K., Jones, L., Mitchell, K., & Collier, A. (2020). Youth Internet Safety Education: Aligning Programs With the Evidence Base. Trauma Violence Abuse, 1524838020916257. Doi:10.1177/1524838020916257

Authors: Finkelhor, David; Walsh, Kerryann; Jones, Lisa; Mitchell, Kimberly; Collier, Anne

Publication Year: 2020

Summary: This article reviews the curriculum of youth internet safety education programs and evaluates the messaging as compared to the findings of internet safety research literature. The study finds significant mixed messaging concerning internet harms like sexual exploitation and sexting. The authors describe the implications of their findings and recommend such education programs could improve

Protect, continued

outcomes to safety online and offline by integrating the education programs with well-established evidence-based programs.

Abstract: This review critically examines the messages of youth internet safety education programs in the light of research about both the dynamics of internet dangers and the efficacy of youth prevention education. **METHODS:** Using terms “internet safety education” and “digital citizenship,” a Google search identified 12 multi-topic safety programs. Review articles were identified via Google Scholar for six forms of online harm to youth that have been targeted by many of these programs: cyberbullying (19 articles); online sexual exploitation (23 articles); sexting (19 articles); online fraud, hacking, and identity theft (6 articles); online suicide and self-harm promotion (18 articles); and internet overuse or addiction (15 articles). **FINDINGS:** There appear to be mismatches between dynamics revealed in the research about internet harms and the messages emphasized in educational programs, particularly on the issues of sexual exploitation and sexting. Overall, the review literature also suggests major advantages to integrating internet safety into already well-established and evidence-based programs currently addressing related off-line harms, for example, programs focusing on general bullying, dating abuse, or sexual abuse prevention. The advantages stem from four factors: (1) the considerable overlap between online harms and similar off-line harms, (2) the apparent greater prevalence of off-line harms, (3) the evidence that the same risk factors lie behind both online and off-line harms, and most importantly, (4) the substantially superior evidence base for the longer standing programs developed originally around the off-line harms.

[Understanding and Preventing the Sexual Exploitation of Youth](#)

Wurtele, S. K. (2017). Understanding and Preventing the Sexual Exploitation of Youth. In Reference Module in Neuroscience and Biobehavioral Psychology. Doi:10.1016/B978-0-12-809324-5.05192-0

Author: Wurtele, Sandy K.

Publication Year: 2017

Summary: This article provides an overview of commercial and non-commercial forms of sexual exploitation of youth. It covers definitions, examines the scope and consequences of the problem, reviews characteristics of victims and offenders, and describes a public health approach to primary prevention targeting children, families, youth-serving organizations, society, and cyberspace.

Abstract: Childhood sexual abuse (CSA) and commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) are significant public health problems affecting millions of individuals in the United States (U.S.) and across the globe. Both forms of sexual exploitation extract a considerable toll on victims and society and are egregious violations of children’s fundamental rights to freedom from violence and exploitation. Shamefully, ours is a world where boys and girls of all ages are sexually exploited, fondled, molested, raped, and sold for an adult’s personal or financial benefit. The purpose of this article is to provide an overview of all forms of sexual exploitation, commercial and non-commercial. This article will cover definitions and describe offenders, examine the scope of the problem, describe consequences, review

Protect, continued, and Recognize

risk factors across multiple ecological levels and present a public health approach to primary prevention. Using an ecological framework, prevention strategies targeting many segments of society, including children, families, youth-serving organizations, society, and cyberspace, will be described.



Recognize

[2021 Youth Experiences Survey \(YES\) Study: Exploring the Human Trafficking Experiences of Homeless Young Adults in Arizona Year Eight](#)

Roe-Sepowitz, D. & Bracy, K. (2021). 2021 Youth Experiences Survey (YES) Study: Exploring the Human Trafficking Experiences of Homeless Young Adults in Arizona Year Eight, https://goyff.az.gov/sites/default/files/meeting-documents/materials/finalyes2021_writtenreport.pdf

Authors: Roe-Sepowitz, Dominique; Bracy, Kristen

Publication Year: 2021

Summary: “The findings from the 2021 YES study shed light on the ongoing needs for homeless young adults in the state of Arizona: substance abuse programming and mental health support, particularly to address maladaptive coping and the significant effects of trauma. With regard to sex trafficking and labor exploitation, social serving agencies must be equipped to screen for the presence of these forms of exploitation and must strengthen their organizational programming to address this occurrence within this population.” Additionally, this study elevates the concerns mentioned as these are typically seen in other geographical locations as well. The study over time demonstrates consistency and the changes brought on by additional circumstances such as Covid19.

Abstract: The Youth Experiences Survey (YES) is a study of the experiences of homeless young adults in Arizona that has been conducted for the past eight years, from 2014 to 2021. The YES focuses on how the life experiences of Arizona’s homeless young adults (ages 18-25) increases their risk of experiencing human trafficking. The study was conducted in partnership with four agencies from Phoenix and Tucson that provide direct services to homeless persons: Our Family Services of Tucson, and Native American Connections, UMOM, and one.n.ten of Phoenix. The findings from the YES study have consistently provided insight into the challenges and needs of Arizona’s homeless young adults to better target

Recognize, continued

needed services as well as the first of its kind knowledge of the scope of the sex and labor exploitation of this population in Arizona. Identifying sex and labor trafficking among homeless young adults is confounded by access issues, which makes this population challenging to study. Topics such as that they are transient, are challenging to find, and are involved in fewer social service and medical service agencies than other homeless youth due to their status as adults. These factors, coupled with the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, has made studying this population more difficult in the past two years, resulting in lower sample sizes for the 2020 and 2021 data collection periods. This study targeted homeless young adults in multiple settings, including transitional housing, drop-in centers, and on the streets of Tucson and Phoenix.

[A Pilot Program's Healthcare Response to Human Trafficking in Houston, Texas](#)

Chen, E. Y., Robichaux, K., Gordon, M. R., Coverdale, J. H., Shah, A., Davis, M. P. & Nguyen, P. T. (2021). A Pilot Program's Healthcare Response to Human Trafficking in Houston, Texas, *Journal of Human Trafficking*, 1-11. DOI: 10.1080/23322705.2020.1865095

Authors: Chen, Eugenia Y.; Robichaux, Katherine; Gordon, Mollie R.; Coverdale, John H.; Shah, Asim a; Davis, Minal P.; Nguyen, Phuong T.

Publication Year: 2021

Summary: This article discusses the model of a public health approach to human trafficking that was created by the Baylor College of Medicine. The city implemented a bi-directional case management model that connected community agencies and the county hospital to more completely address the needs of human trafficking patients. The model had four aims, education, clinical care, advocacy, and research. The authors believed that model could be implemented in other municipalities to address the needs of human trafficking patients.

Abstract: Baylor College of Medicine, in collaboration with city of Houston officials and local healthcare and social service agencies, created a hospital-based program to better identify and address the complex and urgent needs of patients with a history of human trafficking exploitation. This article describes the development of the city-wide public health approach to human trafficking, which brings together local hospital systems, nonprofit advocacy agencies, law enforcement, faith-based groups, and legal services to create a medical, legal and social services partnership to address the complex needs of trafficked persons. The Baylor College of Medicine Anti-Human Trafficking Program's efforts at education, clinical care, advocacy, and research regarding patients with a history of human trafficking are highlighted, and an integrated healthcare framework is provided for other municipalities, health care leaders, and providers to consider in the development of their own anti-human trafficking programs.

[Online Child Sexual Exploitation: A New MIS Challenge](#)

Demetis, D. S., & Kietzmann, J. (2021). Online Child Sexual Exploitation: A New MIS Challenge, *Journal of the Association for Information Systems*, 22(1), 5-40. doi: 10.17705/1jais.00652.



Recognize, continued

Authors: Demetis, Dionysios S.; & Kietzmann, Jan

Publication Year: 2021

Summary: This article discusses a model for online child sexual exploitation (CSE). Using data from the FBI as well as from a cybercrime unit from the United Kingdom, this model shows how perpetrators use technology for online CSE.

Abstract: This paper deals with the difficult yet increasingly important Management Information Systems (MIS) phenomenon of online child sexual exploitation (online CSE). Through the use of secondary and publicly available data from the Federal Bureau of Investigation, as well as primary data from a cybercrime police unit in the United Kingdom, this study takes a grounded theory approach and organizes the role that technologies and social actors play in shaping online CSE. The paper contributes to IS theory by providing a consolidated model for online CSE, which we call the technology and imagery dimensions model. This model combines the staging of the phenomenon and the key dimensions that depict how the use of technology and imagery both fuels and defuses the phenomenon. In informing the construction of the model, the paper extracts, organizes, and generalizes the affordances of technology and discusses the role of information systems in detecting online CSE.

[Findings from the U.S. National Human Trafficking Hotline \(2021\)](#)

Tillyer, Marie Skubak, Michael R. Smith and Rob Tillyer, 2021, Journal of Human Trafficking
<https://doi.org/10.1080/23322705.2021.1925493>

Authors: Tillyer, Marie Skubak, Smith, Michael R., & Tillyer, Rob

Publication Year: 2021

Summary: Calls for assistance and information offer one vantage point of the prevalence and the needs to recognize victims and their needs. The National Hotline helps to quantify the calls and pinpoint the location of those calls for producing a geographical pattern which represents need and areas where significant education and outreach encourages individuals to reach the hotline for assistance. This report demonstrates the significant impact of Covid19 on the call volume.

Abstract: Human trafficking is a public health crisis in the United States, yet it is difficult to understand national patterns and trends as official law enforcement data often suffer from reporting and identification issues. The purpose of this study is to describe temporal, case, and geographic patterns in human trafficking help-seeking in the United States. We analyzed data collected from individuals who contacted the U.S. National Human Trafficking Hotline from January 1, 2012 to July 31, 2018. Human trafficking cases identified by the hotline increased by 165.5% during the study period. Sex trafficking cases were more prevalent than labor trafficking cases, though labor trafficking cases on average involved more victims. Among cases in crisis, the most common request was for emergency shelter. Most calls to the hotline came from relatively few high-risk counties. This study highlights how help-

Recognize, continued

seeking for human trafficking in U.S. is an important dimension that sheds light on victims' needs and service demands.

[A Scoping Review of Human Trafficking Screening and Response](#)

Trauma, Violence, & Abuse 2021, Vol. 0(0) 1–18 Rebecca J. Macy, L. B. Klein, Corey A. Shuck, Cynthia Fraga Rizo, Tonya B. Van Deinse, Christopher J. Wretman, and Jia Luo DOI: 10.1177/15248380211057273 journals.sagepub.com/home/tva

Authors: Rebecca J. Macy, L.B. Klein, Corey A., Shuck, Cynthia Fraga Rizo, Tonya B. Van Denise, Christopher J. Wretman, and Jia Lou

Publication Year: 2021

Summary: "This study offers valuable evidence concerning how service providers can best identify and respond to individuals experiencing human trafficking, even though the evidence is nonetheless formative. Notably, this review shows that many practice-based and/or nongovernmental organizations have been making important and worthwhile efforts to address the complex and challenging problem of how best to identify people who are being trafficked to connect them with resources. Likewise, this review shows that considerable, additional work is needed for the development of clear, practical, evidence-based guidance to inform both human trafficking identification and immediate response."

Abstract: Service providers are increasingly asked to identify individuals who are experiencing trafficking and to connect them with resources and support. Nonetheless, identification is complicated by the reality that those who are experiencing trafficking may rarely self-identify, and providers may fail to identify individuals who are experiencing trafficking due to lack of guidance on how to screen for trafficking capably and sensitively. With the aim of guiding practice, we undertook a scoping review to search for and synthesize trafficking screening tools and response protocols. Following the PRISMA extension for Scoping Reviews (PRISMA-ScR), we located 22 screening tools contained in 26 sources. We included any documents that described or tested human trafficking screening tools, screening or identification protocols, response protocols, or guidelines that were published in any year. All documents were abstracted using a standardized form. Key findings showed that most tools were developed by practice-based and non-governmental organizations located in the U.S. and were administered in the U.S. Few screening tools have been rigorously evaluated. The common types of screening questions and prompts included (a) work conditions; (b) living conditions; (c) physical health; (d) travel, immigration, and movement; (e) appearance and presentation; (f) mental health, trauma, and substance abuse; (g) associations and possessions; and (h) arrests and prior involvement with law enforcement. We were not able to locate specific response protocols that provided step-by-step guidance. Nonetheless, the review revealed available practice-based and research-based evidence to help inform guidance concerning how screening and identification of human trafficking may be administered.

Recover, continued, and Recover

[A Human Trafficking Educational Program and Point-of-Care Reference Tool for Pediatric Residents](#)

Garg, Anjali, Preeti Panda, Sindhoosha Malay, Jerri A. Rose MedEdPortal, The AAMC Journal of Teaching and Learning Resources (Online Publication) <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/34568551/>

Authors: Garg, Anjali, Preeti Panda, Sindhoosha Malay, Jerri A. Rose

Publication Year: 2021

Summary: "This resource was developed to address the important need for an educational program teaching pediatric health care providers how to recognize and appropriately intervene for victims of child trafficking. Case scenarios and survivor leader's input were an integral part of their curriculum."

Abstract: "This study offers valuable evidence concerning how service providers can best identify and respond to individuals experiencing human trafficking, even though the evidence is nonetheless formative. Notably, this review shows that many practice-based and/or nongovernmental organizations have been making important and worthwhile efforts to address the complex and challenging problem of how best to identify people who are being trafficked to connect them with resources. Likewise, this review shows that considerable, additional work is needed for the development of clear, practical, evidence-based guidance to inform both human trafficking identification and immediate response."



Recover

[Adolescent Experiences of Violence Victimization Among Minors Who Exchange Sex/Experience Minor Sex Trafficking](#)

Hannabeth Franchino-Olsen, Sandra L. Martin, Carolyn T. Halpern, John S. Preisser, Catherine Zimmer, and Meghan Shanahan, Journal of Interpersonal Violence 1 –25 2021. Article reuse guidelines: sagepub.com/journals-permissions. DOI: 10.1177_08862605211021967 [journals.sagepub.com/home/jiv](https://jiv.sagepub.com/home/jiv)

Recover, continued

Authors: Hannabeth Franchino-Olsen, Sandra L. Martin, Carolyn T. Halpern, John S. Preisser, Catherine Zimmer, and Meghan Shanahan

Publication Year: 2021

Summary: This study contextualizes "experiences of DMST in adolescence among community violence victimizations. Understanding that minors who experience community violence are also significantly more likely to experience DMST demonstrated the interconnected nature of trafficking violence to other forms of interpersonal violence. Awareness efforts should be delivered with clear, trauma-informed messaging that addresses the additional forms of violence minors at risk of DMST or survivors of DMST have experienced. Prevention efforts should consider how violent environments or the connection between community violence and DMST can be used to reach high-risk minors and prevent DMST. Intervention work could also include screening for adolescent violence beyond DMST and providing care and services for needs that are tied to these additional violence victimizations."

Abstract: This work investigates the associations between experiences of domestic minor sex trafficking and adolescent interpersonal violence victimizations, including intimate partner violence (IPV) and community violence. Abuse and violence in childhood are commonly proposed as risk factors for domestic minor sex trafficking. However, less is known about how interpersonal violence victimizations in adolescence connect to domestic minor sex trafficking experiences. The poly-victimization framework provides a means to understand domestic minor sex trafficking as a type of violence amid a web of additional interconnected violence victimizations. Efforts to better understand the interpersonal violence experienced by survivors of domestic minor sex trafficking are valuable in contextualizing trafficking experiences for adolescents. Data from The National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent to Adult Health, a population-based sample of adolescents in the United States (n = 12,605) were used to examine experiences of domestic minor sex trafficking for minor respondents, as measured through questions about exchanging sex for money or drugs. A multivariable logistic regression model was used to estimate the associations between domestic minor sex trafficking and IPV or community violence, while controlling for demographic variables and adolescent risk behaviors. Minors who experience community violence had significantly greater odds of having exchanged sex (aOR: 1.86; 95% CI: 1.32 - 2.64). However, IPV was not significantly associated with minors' experiences of sex exchange (aOR: 1.14; 95% CI: 0.85 -1.54). Alcohol or drug use (aOR: 1.87; 95% CI: 1.32-2.65) and having run away (aOR: 2.04; 95% CI: 1.53 -2.72) were also significantly associated with minor sex exchange. As experiences of domestic minor sex trafficking were significantly associated with community violence victimizations, prevention and intervention efforts targeting youth at high risk for or survivors of domestic minor sex trafficking should consider how community violence victimizations impact these adolescent populations, and programming/messaging should be adjusted to account for these additional violence victimizations.

[Assets and Logic: Proposing an Evidenced-based Strategic Partnership Model for Anti-trafficking Response](#)

Preble, K. M., Nichols, A. & Owens, M. (2021). Assets and Logic: Proposing an Evidenced-based Strategic Partnership Model for Anti-trafficking Response. *Journal of Human Trafficking*, 1-17. doi: 10.1080/23322705.2021.1899525

Recover, continued

Authors: Preble, Kathleen M.; Nichols, Andrea; Owens, Megan

Publication Year: 2021

Summary: This article discusses collaborative community responses (CCR) to human trafficking. The article finds that CCR process allows for interdisciplinary teams to systematically plan a response using the identified assets in their community to achieve a common ultimate goal and improve the response to human trafficking.

Abstract: Since knowledge about human trafficking has increased over the last 20 years, so have our understandings about interventions, survivor empowerment, and attention to intersectional forces that lead to trafficking vulnerability and exiting barriers experienced by survivors. An area lacking in such advancement, however, relates to collaborative community responses (CCRs), which have notably increased evidenced-based, effective responses in other public health and health equity responses. CCRs have been part of US-based antitrafficking efforts since the passage of the U.S. TVPA, but very little research has examined their effectiveness or how to standardize a unified collaborative effort in multidisciplinary antitrafficking teams around common goals. The proposed model utilizes health equity techniques to map existing community resources that could potentially respond to identified needs. Using logic models, the proposed process allows for interdisciplinary teams to systematically plan a response using the identified assets in their community to achieve a common ultimate goal and improve the response to human trafficking. Research, practice and policy implications are discussed.

[Helping survivors of human trafficking](#)

Alhajji, L., Padilla, V., Mavrides, N. & Potter, J. (2021). Helping survivors of human trafficking, *Current Psychiatry*, 20(2), 51-52. doi: 10.12788/cp.0093.

Authors: Alhajji, Lujain; Padilla, Vanessa; Mavrides, Nicole; Potter, JoNell

Publication Year: 2021

Summary: Health care in general has begun receiving more education on human trafficking. The authors call specifically for better education in mental health disciplines as crucial for identification of and appropriate responses to victimization.

Abstract: Human trafficking (HT) is a secretive, multibillion dollar criminal industry involving the use of coercion, threats, and fraud to force individuals to engage in labor or commercial sex acts. In 2017, the International Labour Organization estimated that 24.9 million people worldwide were victims of forced labor (i.e., working under threat or coercion). 1) Risk factors for individuals who are vulnerable to HT include recent migration, substance use, housing insecurity, runaway youth, and mental illness. Traffickers continue the cycle of HT through isolation and emotional, physical, financial, and verbal abuse. Survivors of HT may avoid seeking health care due to cultural reasons or feelings of guilt, isolation, distrust, or fear of criminal sanctions. There can be missed opportunities for victims to obtain help through health care services, law enforcement, child welfare services, or even family or friends. In a study of 173 survivors of HT in the United States, 68% of those who were currently trafficked visited

Recover, continued

with a health care professional at least once and were not identified as being trafficked. 2) Psychiatrists rarely receive education on HT, which can lead to missed opportunities for identifying victims.

[Improving services for youth survivors of commercial sexual exploitation: Insights from interventions with other high-risk youth](#)

Jennifer O'Brien, David Finkelhor, Lisa Jones Children and Youth Services Review, www.elsevier.com/locate/jchildyouth <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2021.106313>. CITE: Jennifer O'Brien, Children and Youth Services Review, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2021.106313>

Authors: Jennifer O'Brien, David Finkelhor, Lisa Jones

Publication Year: 2021

Summary: "Perhaps the most pressing implication was the need for new and ongoing evaluations of developing programming for CSEC-involved youth. ... given the complex and multifaceted needs of most survivors of CSEC it is likely that treatment for CSEC requires a multidisciplinary approach. Accordingly, it may be that commercial sexual exploitation could be added into the catchment of an existing MDT addressing child sexual abuse broadly or- if case levels are high - the creation of a new MDT devoted to CSEC."

Abstract: Background: There have been initiatives to develop innovative services for commercially sexually exploited children (CSEC), but there are currently no intervention strategies that have been rigorously evaluated. However, a range of evidence-based interventions have been identified for other problems that frequently co-occur with CSEC. As intervention programs for victims of CSEC develop, it is important to critically examine the research on interventions for these associated problems to ensure that what is borrowed, adapted, or prioritized is informed by research, and likely to best address the needs of victims. Objective: The current review examines evidence-based interventions from related social problem fields that may have useful content for victims of CSEC. Existing systematic reviews were primarily used for this review; however, rigorous and large-scale randomized controlled trials were also included. In total, 33 articles were included. Articles were identified via search engine (e.g., PsychInfo) and reference mining. Review: Interventions for adolescent substance use, delinquency, trauma, school dropout, and running away are reviewed for their content and evidence base. Opportunities for integration of CSEC content are discussed using current extant literature. Discussion: The most promising practices from related fields include mentorship, multisystemic treatment (MST), family programming/therapy, and kinship foster care. Skill-based interventions (e.g., CBT) have been found to be a particularly effective mental health intervention for youth with similar sequelae to victims of CSEC. Importantly, outcomes improve when interventions are paired with relationship-building strategies such as mentorship or group therapy. Implications for CSEC practice and research are discussed.



Supporting Healing

Interventions to support the mental health of survivors of modern slavery and human trafficking: A systematic review

Wright, Nicola, Melanie Jordan, Runa Lazzarino, International Journal of Social Psychiatry 1– 9 2021 DOI: 10.1177/00207640211039245 journals.sagepub.com/home/isp

Authors: Wright, Nicola, Melanie Jordan, Runa Lazzarino

Publication Year: 2021

Summary: "As a result of their experiences, survivors of modern slavery often have complex mental health needs post-release. ...there is growing recognition that mental health is an increasingly critical area for support provision, there is a lack of evidence-based interventions to underpin this. Further work is needed to develop and test appropriate mental health interventions for this population."

Abstract: Background: Modern slavery is a term which incorporates a range of exploitative situations that involve the violation of human rights and the subjugation of individuals. It presents a significant public health concern. Post-release, survivors of modern slavery have complex mental health needs. Whilst mental health provision is a component of international and national policy, the delivery of evidence-based support remains a gap in the global anti-slavery response. Aim: To identify and synthesize the evidence base for mental health interventions developed and evaluated for use in a post-slavery survivor population. Methods: A systematic literature review was undertaken. The review protocol was prospectively registered with PROSPERO and followed the PRISMA guidance in its reporting. A multi-stage search strategy was utilized to retrieve studies. Quality appraisal was undertaken using the QualSyst tool. Due to heterogeneity in study design, a narrative approach to synthesizing the findings was undertaken. Results: Nine studies met the final inclusion criteria. The narrative synthesis clustered the studies in three themes: study design and population; type of intervention; and outcomes reported. The included studies focused on specific subpopulations, namely child soldiering, child labor or sex trafficking. Conclusion: This review has highlighted not only important theory-practice gaps in relation to the provision of evidence-based mental health support, but scant evidence limited to specific sub-groups (child soldiering, child labor or sex trafficking). The emphasis

Support Healing, continued

placed on PTSD within the interventions tested risks mental health support becoming exclusionary to those with other needs. When assessing intervention efficacy, the complex socio-political context in which survivors exist as well as the increasing emphasis on holistic care, personal recovery and lived experience need to be considered. Taking this into account, the case can be made for the inclusion of a wider range of non-clinical outcomes in the assessment of mental health intervention effectiveness.

[Treatment considerations for foreign-born victims of human trafficking: Practical applications of an ecological framework](#)

Salami', T., Gordon, M., Babu, J., Coverdale, J. & Nguyen, P.T. (2021). Treatment considerations for foreign-born victims of human trafficking: Practical applications of an ecological framework, *Transcultural Psychology*, 58(2), 293-306. doi: 10.1177/1363461520983950

Authors: Salami', Temilola; Gordon, Mollie; Babu, Jeeva; Coverdale, John; Nguyen, Phuong T.

Publication Year: 2021

Summary: This article discusses the treatment of foreign-born victims of human trafficking. The article finds that to effectively meet the needs of foreign-born survivors of human trafficking, caregivers must understand the care needing to be given at the individual, interpersonal, communal, and societal levels.

Abstract: Foreign-born individuals immigrating to or residing in the United States are especially vulnerable to exploitation by traffickers. Being trafficked elevates the risk for a variety of physical and mental health problems; thus, victims will often come into contact with health professionals. Because there is a dearth of literature concerning the treatment of human trafficking victims, and especially foreign-born victims, we set out to describe the practical applications of a model that we use for the mental health treatment of victimization in this population. As has been suggested by leaders in the anti-human trafficking community, we employed a culturally sensitive version of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Model to provide recommendations and educational resources for treatment at the individual, interpersonal, community, and societal levels. Our recommendations should serve to inform and improve the provision of care for foreign-born victims of human trafficking.

[Exploring resilience through case studies of art therapy with sex trafficking survivors and their advocates](#)

Kometiani, M. K. & Farmer, K. W. (2020). Exploring resilience through case studies of art therapy with sex trafficking survivors and their advocates, *The Arts in Psychotherapy*, 67, 101582. doi: 10.1016/j.aip.2019.10158

Authors: Kometiani, Mary K.; Farmer, Kathryn W.

Publication Year: 2020

Summary: This article discusses the use of art therapy in the recovery of survivors of human trafficking as well as for the advocates who help them. The article finds that art therapy offers freedom and choice and helps both survivors and advocates build strength and resilience, promotes self-confidence, and emotional release.

Abstract: Human trafficking results in tragedy, trauma, and devastation. Sex trafficking has become a universal dilemma demanding awareness, education, and restorative treatment for the survivors of its illegal and wide-ranging crimes. Art therapy is an effective, engaging, and non-verbal treatment to provide healing support to sex trafficking survivors, and for the advocates who work with them. Art therapy facilitates emotional catharsis and empowerment, connection to others and strengthens concepts of the inner self to enhance resilience. Art therapy addresses trauma and provides hope for the future. This article presents the application of art therapy to enhance resilience within a trauma-informed approach and provides recommendations for victim and advocate programming.

[Moving Towards Self-actualization: A Trauma-Informed and Needs-Focused Approach to the Mental Health Needs of Survivors of Commercial Child Sexual Exploitation](#)

Julie Anne Laser-Maira, Donna Peach, Charles E Hounmenou, International Journal of Social Work, 2019, Vol. 6, No. 2. <https://doi.org/10.5296/ijsw.v6i2.15198>

Authors: Julie Anne Laser-Maira, Donna Peach, Charles E Hounmenou

Publication Year: 2019

Summary: Fundamental to CCSE survivors feeling valued and achieving self-actualization is the availability and accessibility of trauma-informed services for all children regardless of their nationality, ethnicity, race, or country of origin. The primacy of ensuring that any survivor's physiological needs are met is foundational to their continued access to treatment. It is vital that services have an awareness of the continued threats to safety that survivors can experience from unmet needs that can arise from both traffickers and inadequate service delivery. Survivors need for belongingness and esteem requires a service that extends beyond a trauma response to one that facilitates educational and economic well-being. Importantly services and the research knowledge that supports them must be culturally diverse and inclusive. As survivors begin to add their own voice and knowledge to our shared understanding, we learn that despite the horrors of their experiences they continue to strive to be all that they are meant to be. As service providers, we need to do the same.

Abstract: There is increasing evidence that children who are subject to commercial child sexual exploitation (CCSE) are likely to experience complex mental health needs. Failure to address the trauma experienced by victims of CCSE can lead to suicide attempts, self-harm, and long-term mental health needs (Powell, Asbill, Louis, & Stoklosa, 2018). A 'trauma-informed' approach (TIA) creates a responsive environment that improves the motivation of victims of CCSE to seek treatment and service providers to address unmet needs. Merging Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs with a TIA approach provides a comprehensive framework to assess the service requirements necessary to meet CCSE survivors' needs. Particularly, when Maslow's hierarchy of needs model is coupled with contemporary extensions, which address our greater understanding of the neurological impact of abuse on physiological well-being

greater resilience can be created. Additionally, a TIA instigates a shift from victims of CCSE being viewed as damaged, to an understanding of the impact abusive experiences have had on their development. That approach permits them and others to perceive their “survivor hood” and develop their capacity to achieve self-actualization. This paper critically examines what is constituted as best practice in trauma-informed mental health service delivery to not only meet needs but to support CCSE survivors’ attainment of self-actualization.

[A Scoping Review of Resilience in Survivors of Human Trafficking](#)

Knight, L., Xin, Y. & Mengo, C. (2021). A Scoping Review of Resilience in Survivors of Human Trafficking, *Trauma, Violence, and Abuse*, 1-15. Doi: 10.1177/1524838020985561

Authors: Knight, Logan; Xin, Yitong; Mengo, Cecilia

Publication Year: 2021

Summary: This article examines research done on resilience relating to human trafficking survivors. Resilience for trafficking survivors was found to be similar to resilience to other types of victimization. Interpersonal relationships were identified as the most common resiliency factor. It also found that future research needs to focus on establishing a definition of resilience that is culturally and contextually relevant.

Abstract: Resilience is critical among survivors of trafficking as they are mostly vulnerable populations who face multiple adversities before, during, and after trafficking. However, resilience in survivors of trafficking is understudied. This scoping review aims to clarify the current state of knowledge, focusing on definitions of resilience, how resilience has been studied, and factors associated with resilience among survivors. Five databases were searched using key words related to trafficking and resilience. Studies were included if they were published in English between 2000 and 2019 and focused on resilience with the study design including at least one of these four features: (a) use of standardized measures of resilience, (b) qualitative descriptions of resilience, (c) participants were survivors or professionals serving survivors, and (d) data sources such as case files or program manuals directly pertained to survivors. Eighteen studies were identified. Findings indicated that resilience was primarily described as emergent from interactions between the survivor and the environment. Resilience in trafficking appeared largely similar to resilience in other kinds of victimization. Nonetheless, trafficking survivors also may display resilience in alternative ways such as refusing treatment. Positive interpersonal relationships were the most commonly mentioned resilience factor. In addition, current research lacks studies featuring longitudinal designs, interventions, participatory methods, types of trafficking other than sexual trafficking, and demographic characteristics such as age, gender, and national origin. Future research needs to establish definitions and measures of resilience that are culturally and contextually relevant to survivors and build knowledge necessary for designing and evaluating resilience-enhancing interventions.

[Aftercare Services for Child Victims of Sex Trafficking: A Systematic Review of Policy and Practice](#)

Dorothy Neria Muraya and Deborah Fry TRAUMA, VIOLENCE, & ABUSE 2016, Vol. 17(2) 204-220 DOI: 10.1177/1524838015584356 tva.sagepub.com

Authors: Dorothy Neria Muraya and Deborah Fry

Publication Year: 2016

Summary: This systematic review revealed the needs of child victims of sex trafficking and described how these needs are met in various countries through different types of aftercare services. What has been evident throughout the research is that there is a scarcity of literature on the area of trafficking as a whole with even less literature focusing on child sex trafficking. Until recently, trafficking dialogue mostly took place within immigration and law discourse. While social sciences have now joined the conversation, there is a need for increased input from the social sciences and public health. There is a great need for an evidence base on which policies and guidelines can be founded. This requires comprehensive case management and tracking tools and cooperation among organizations. It also requires agreed upon definitions of rescue, recovery, and reintegration. Constant monitoring and evaluation contribute to this evidence base. Moreover, there is a great need for research on aftercare services for CSTVs. Aftercare service provision is an area that is not well documented and has a small evidence base; regardless of this, the achievements of aftercare service providers are quite commendable, as the field has experienced phenomenal progress within the last 10 years. However, there is much more room for growth in order to provide CSTVs with the quality of care that will help them recover and become active members of society. There is a small evidence base highlighting the negative outcomes of commercial sex trafficking on child victims globally such as negative mental health, physical health, sexual health, and behavioral outcomes. This systematic review highlights that in order to treat these outcomes, a combination of aftercare services should be provided which cater to the child victim's psychosocial, legal, medical, and basic needs. The review highlighted that aftercare services are offered within three stages beginning with rescue then recovery and ending in successful reintegration of the children. These services need to be trauma informed and children's rights centered. Furthermore, in order to ensure the children benefit fully from the services, aftercare services need to have comprehensive case management systems as well as multidisciplinary, multiagency, and, where necessary, multinational coordination of efforts.

Abstract: Objective: To explore aftercare services provided to child victims of sex trafficking globally based on the results of a systematic review of published and unpublished research, organizational policy, and current practice. This systematic review serves as a first step toward developing best practices for aftercare service providers. Method: A systematic search was conducted of four English language databases, two human trafficking resource libraries, and one Internet search engine for journal articles and "grey" literature published between January 2000 and May 2013 on the services offered to child sex trafficking victims globally. The search yielded 15 documents for inclusion in the review. Results: The 15 documents emphasized the need for aftercare service provision to be founded on children's rights and trauma-informed service provision. They recommended delivery practices such as case management and multidisciplinary, multiagency and multinational coordination to ensure the child victims benefit fully from the services. The systematic review revealed that there are three phases to

aftercare service provision: rescue, recover, and reintegration. Each of these phases is characterized by different needs and types of services provided. The recovery phase received the most attention compared to recovery and reintegration phases. Conclusion: The literature highlighted that aftercare service provision for child sex trafficking victims is a new area that needs an evidence base from which policy and practice can be formed. There is great need for further research and better documentation of service provision. While this research provides insight into this area, the gap in literature remains wide. The area of aftercare service provision for children who have been trafficked has experienced phenomenal growth within the last 10 years, and with more research and resources being directed to the area, the achievement of international minimum standards of care provision is possible.

[The Outcomes for Human Trafficking Instrument: Validity and Reliability Testing](#)

Cutbush, S., Charm, S., Tueller, S., Krieger, K., & Gibbs, D. (2021). The Outcomes for Human Trafficking Instrument: Validity and Reliability Testing. *Journal Of Human Trafficking*, 1-12. doi: 10.1080/23322705.2021.1928860

Authors: Cutbush, Stacey; Charm, Samantha; Tueller, Stephen; Krieger, Kathleen; Gibbs, Deborah

Publication Year: 2021

Summary: This article discusses an instrument created to track outcomes of human trafficking survivors by looking at the changes in participants statuses in relevant categories. The study of the instrument found it reliably evaluated the work of case managers and program directors. The study also found the instrument created is easy to use.

Abstract: This study supports evidence-based services for victims of HT by developing and testing an outcome instrument designed to assess changes in HT program participant status on key outcome categories. Study methods included conducting an environmental scan; expert panels of service providers, survivors, and researchers; instrument scoring and cognitive interviews with HT service providers. Hypothetical case vignettes were then used to assess instrument reliability and concurrent validity – concurrent validity - first among program directors, then among case managers, and finally, comparing case managers to program directors. Average interrater reliability across items within outcome categories among program directors was excellent (ICC > 0.90) for most outcome categories, indicating consensus ratings could serve as a gold standard for assessing the performance of less seasoned HT service providers using the instrument. Case managers had mostly moderate (ICC > 0.50) to good (ICC > 0.75) average interrater reliability across items within outcome categories among themselves, and fair (> 0.40) to good (> 0.75) average agreement across items within outcome categories with the program directors. The resulting excel-based instrument is free; user-friendly; applicable to diverse settings; relevant to victims of sex and labor trafficking, whether domestic or foreign born, adults or minors; and supports data management, visualization, export, and analysis.

Support Healing, continued, and Bring Justice

[The Importance of Maintaining Medical Professionalism While Experiencing Vicarious Trauma When Working With Human Trafficking Victims](#)

Ramirez, J., Gordon, M., Reissinger, M., Shah, A., Coverdale, J., & Nguyen, P. T. (2020). The Importance of Maintaining Medical Professionalism While Experiencing Vicarious Trauma When Working With Human Trafficking Victims. *Traumatology*. Advance online publication. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/trm0000248>

Authors: Ramirez, Jennifer; Gordon, Mollie; Reissinger, Mary; Shah, Asim; Coverdale, John; Nguyen, Phuong T.

Publication Year: 2020

Summary: This article discusses how health care professionals can maintain their mental health while working with human trafficking victims. The effects of the vicarious trauma health care providers can experience should be addressed by organizations developing a professional culture, as well as the virtues of humility, integrity, compassion, and self-sacrifice.

Abstract: Providing health care services to human trafficking victims may negatively impact the psychological wellness and decision-making process of health care providers, especially mental health providers. This article highlights John Gregory’s concept of medical professionalism and discusses how the fundamental virtues, integrity, compassion, self-sacrifice, and self-effacement can guide health care providers in managing their work with trafficked patients. Recommendations are provided to health care providers, and the leadership of their institutions, to develop and support a professional culture of prevention and intervention for health care providers who experience psychological adversities related to their work with victims of human trafficking.



Bring Justice

[Cracking Sex Trafficking: Data Analysis, Pattern Recognition, and Path Prediction](#)

Keslin, B. B., Bott, G. J. & Freeman, N. K. (2020). Cracking Sex Trafficking: Data Analysis, Pattern Recognition, and Path Prediction, *Production and Operations Management*, 30(4), 1-26. doi: 10.1111/poms.13294



Bring Justice, continued

Authors: Keslin, Burcu B.; Bott, Gregory J.; Freeman, Nickolas K.

Publication Year: 2020

Summary: This article discusses a method created to help law enforcement track down individuals and organizations that post ads for sexual exploitation. This method was able to increase the number of groups identified, as well as help law enforcement agencies track those involved.

Abstract: Human trafficking, the exploitation of humans for monetary gain or benefit, is a widespread humanitarian issue that is typically sub-classified into labor and sex trafficking. In the last decade, sex traffickers have used online classified advertisements to advertise sexual services. Although these advertisements are visible to the general public and law enforcement, the volume of ads, the frequency with which their posting locale changes, and the use of obfuscation tactics make it difficult for law enforcement agencies to react. Existing products for law enforcement focus on identifying, tracking, and correlating individual activity by performing deep searches for specific information against a database of historical posts. While this deep search capability is useful for investigating specific cases, it overlooks higher-level patterns that exist in ads. Using a website that has been linked to several sex trafficking-related arrests, we demonstrate a framework for harvesting, linking, and detecting these patterns in a dataset comprised of more than 10 million advertisements targeting U.S. cities. Our framework combines information systems and operations research concepts to identify groups of posts based on text, phone numbers, and pictures; determine circuits associated with post groups, and predict future movements using four different methods. Our description of the framework and comparison of the grouping and prediction methods provide insights that can assist law enforcement agencies to combat individuals/organizations involved in illicit sexual activities, including sex trafficking, proactively. Also, this demonstration provides researchers interested in developing advanced interdiction models targeting illicit sexual activities with a clear picture regarding available data formats.

[Exposing patterns of adult solicitor behaviour: towards a theory of control within the cybersexual abuse of youth](#)

Barber, C. S. & Bettez, S. C. (2020). Exposing patterns of adult solicitor behaviour: towards a theory of control within the cybersexual abuse of youth, *European Journal of Information Systems*, 1-32. doi: 10.1080/0960085x.2020.1816146

Authors: Barber, Connie S; Bettez, Silvia C.

Publication Year: 2020

Summary: This article discusses research of patterns in online adult behavior to better track and identify different types of cyber sexual grooming. The research mapped the communications between the adult and the child to find out how adults perpetrate abuse through online forums.

Abstract: The online solicitation of youth has been established as an unintended consequence of the connectedness afforded individuals through computer-mediated conversation. Information systems research focused on the behavioral patterns of online solicitors of youth is scant and lacks a strong

Bring Justice, continued

theoretical foundation. We address this gap through an evolved grounded theory analysis of 90 Perverted Justice transcripts to extract the behavioural patterns that emerge when online solicitors use instant messaging to enact behaviours of grooming, pre-dation, offending, and control. The aims of the research are: (1) delineate between grooming behaviour, predatory behaviour, and offending behaviour; (2) differentiate between passive and controlling solicitor language; (3) disentangle these behaviours from what the technology permits; (4) extend the current understanding of cybersexual abuse to show grooming as only one aspect of a phenomenon that also includes predation and offence; and (5) identify how these results are important for academics and software developers.

[Sex Trafficking Online Platforms and Federal Prosecutions](#)

United States Government Accountability Agency. (2021). *Sex Trafficking Online Platforms and Federal Prosecutions* (GAO-21-385). <https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-21-385>

Authors: United States Government Accountability Agency

Publication Year: 2021

Summary: This article discusses the difficulties facing law enforcement when it comes to investigating and prosecuting online human trafficking cases. The article found that since 2018 only 3 cases have been brought against online traffickers, and they are all still pending. The one civil case that was brought against traffickers was dismissed by the judge.

Abstract: Two events in April 2018 disrupted the landscape of the online commercial sex market. First, federal authorities seized the largest online platform for buying and selling commercial sex, backpage.com. Second, the Allow States and Victims to Fight Online Sex Trafficking Act of 2017 (FOSTA) was enacted. These events led many who controlled platforms in this market to relocate their platforms overseas. Additionally, with backpage.com no longer in the market, buyers and sellers moved to other online platforms, and the market became fragmented. From 2014 through 2020, the Department of Justice (DOJ) brought at least 11 criminal cases against those who control platforms in this market, including three cases against those who control backpage.com, as shown below. The current landscape of the online commercial sex market heightens already existing challenges law enforcement face in gathering tips and evidence. Specifically, gathering tips and evidence to investigate and prosecute those who control or use online platforms has become more difficult due to the relocation of platforms overseas, platforms' use of complex payment systems, and the increased use of social media platforms.

[Evaluation of the Enhanced Collaborative Model to Combat Human Trafficking, Technical Report](#)

William Adams, Jeanette Hussemann, Evelyn McCoy, Paige Thompson, Roderick Taylor, Krista White, Sino Esthappan National Criminal Justice Reference Service, US. Department of Justice, May 2021

Authors: William Adams, Jeanette Hussemann, Evelyn McCoy, Paige Thompson, Roderick Taylor, Krista White, Sino Esthappan

Publication Year: 2021

Summary: The Enhanced Collaborative Model (ECM) to Combat Human Trafficking began "in 2010 to foster a multidisciplinary approach that brought together law enforcement, prosecutors, and victim service providers in communities to work together on a coordinated response to address all forms of human trafficking. This study used a mixed-method examination of 10 diverse ECM task forces around the country [including Texas] to learn about the different approaches these task forces were taking to address human trafficking, understand which strategies had been effective, and assess the impact of the task forces on investigating and prosecuting human trafficking cases and on identifying and assisting human trafficking survivors." Findings and recommendations are highlighted in the full report.

Abstract: "Enhanced Collaborative Model to Combat Human Trafficking" (ECM). This new program took a more comprehensive approach that focused, not only on foreign national victims, but on combatting all forms of trafficking – sex trafficking and labor trafficking of foreign national and U.S. citizens (male and female, and adults and minors). Under the ECM program, two separate awards are made jointly to each jurisdiction selected for funding: one award is made by BJA to a lead law enforcement agency to coordinate the investigation and prosecution of human trafficking, and another award is made by OVC to a lead victim service provider organization to coordinate the provision of services to all human trafficking victims identified within the geographic area covered by the task force. These two grantees work collaboratively with one another to implement the ECM model and function as a comprehensive, multidisciplinary task force by coordinating the goals, objectives, and activities of the task force. This ECM program aims to support the development of effective and sustainable multidisciplinary human trafficking task forces to implement and employ victim-centered approaches to identify survivors of sex and labor trafficking, provide services to survivors, and investigate and prosecute all forms of human trafficking. A key goal of the ECM task forces is to bring together law enforcement and prosecutors at the local, state, and federal level, with service providers, mental health professionals, and labor professionals in a coordinated partnership. Relatively little research on federally funded, multidisciplinary anti-human trafficking task forces (including the ECM task forces) has been conducted to date, however, initial findings suggest that federally funded task forces may be helpful in increasing the number of prosecutions of human trafficking. An early study of federally funded task forces, conducted in 2008, found that task forces were increasing federal prosecutions and improving state involvement in trafficking investigations and convictions. Specifically, the study found that law enforcement who were participating in a human trafficking task force were more likely to perceive human trafficking as a problem, have human trafficking training and protocols in place, make more arrests for trafficking, and follow through with formal charges following arrests—out of over 1500 law enforcement officers surveyed for the study, 91 percent of the task force law enforcement agencies had received human trafficking training and 77 percent had a specialized unit to investigate trafficking cases.

[Policing Human Trafficking: Cultural Blinders and Organizational Barriers](#)

Farrell, Amy and Rebecca Pfeffer, The ANNALS of the American Academy, AAPSS, 653, May 2014 DOI: 10.1177/0002716213515835

Authors: Farrell, Amy and Rebecca Pfeffer

Publication Year: 2014

Summary: "There is important value in police identification and removal of victims from trafficking situations that should not be measured by the number of cases alone. Despite its challenges, the criminal justice system provides an important mechanism to establish antitrafficking norms within a society. Identifying and prosecuting human trafficking perpetrators under criminal law demonstrates our intolerance of slavery in any form."

Abstract: Research suggests that local police and sheriffs are woefully unaware of human trafficking and commonly lack the training necessary to investigate these crimes (Farrell, McDevitt, and Fahy 2010; Gallagher and Holmes 2008; Newton, Mulcahy, and Martin 2008; Wilson, Walsh, and Kleuber 2006). The cases that the police do identify differ from the types of human trafficking reported by victim service providers. For example, although more than 80 percent of the victims identified by law enforcement working on federally funded antitrafficking task forces between 2007 and 2010 were victims of sex trafficking (Banks and Kyckelhahn 2011; Kyckelhahn, Beck, and Cohen 2009), data from the victim service providers in these same task forces indicate that "64 percent of the victims served by OVC-funded service providers were identified as victims of labor trafficking only, 22 percent as victims of sex trafficking only, and 10 percent as victims of both labor and sex trafficking" (Banks and Kyckelhahn 2011, 7). While there are some important differences in the mandates of police and victim service providers, these differences suggest the cases these two groups identify may represent different realities of trafficking victimization in local communities and raise questions about the reasons for such discrepancies. In this article, we examine police accounts of how human trafficking cases are actually identified. The term "identification" refers to the way cases come to the attention of law enforcement and are classified as human trafficking offenses as opposed to other types of crime with similar elements, such as prostitution. We find that the culture of local police agencies and the perceptions held by police officials about human trafficking prevent the police from seeing a broad range of human trafficking cases. Local definitions of human trafficking are new and still evolving. Although the police recognize the potential for both sex and labor trafficking to occur in their community, they focus their efforts on sex trafficking of U.S. minor victims, whom they perceive to be the most vulnerable and publicly supported victims. The responsibility for the identification and investigation of trafficking is delegated to investigators in vice or child exploitation units who are trained to identify traditional forms of prostitution and commercial sexual exploitation of minors. These investigators employ routine vice tactics to identify human trafficking cases that are not particularly successful at identifying victims and make labor trafficking seem largely nonexistent. We suggest strategies to improve identification of human trafficking more broadly.