

# Human Trafficking: Overview and Practice Recommendations

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August 5, 2021



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## Authors Disclose Conflicts of Interest

- No conflicts of interest to disclose.



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## Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA)

TVPA and its reauthorizations (2003, 2005, 2008 & 2012) define a human trafficking victim as someone who is induced to perform labor or a commercial sex act through force, fraud, or coercion.



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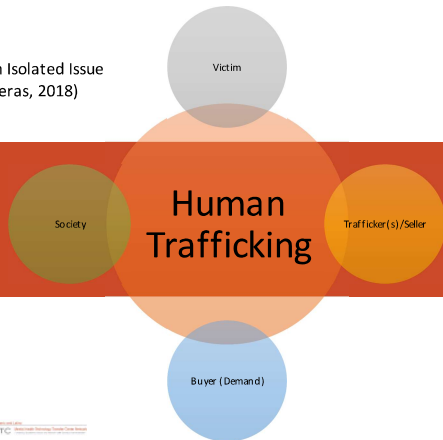
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Not an Isolated Issue  
(Contreras, 2018)



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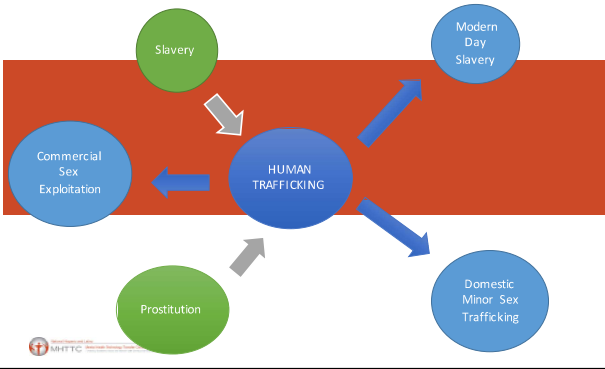
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### Language & Terms (Contreras, 2018, 2020)




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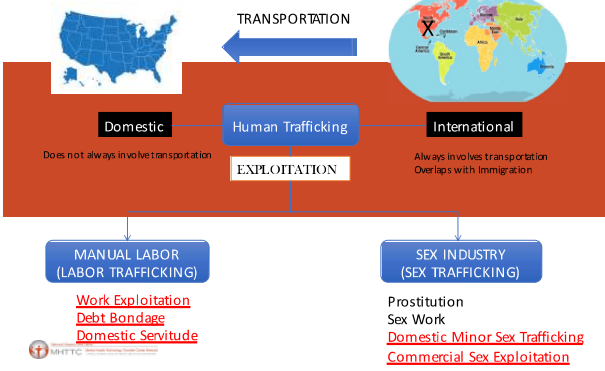
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### Prostitution & Human Trafficking




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### Society: Sex Trafficking & Prostitution

- Silver, Karakurt & Boysen (2015) studied predictors of prosocial behavior toward sex trafficked persons:
  - 223 undergraduate students provided with vignettes, follow up questions, measure of empathy, just world belief, attitudes towards prostitution, and proactive behavior.




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### Human Trafficking & Prostitution (Silver, Karakurt & Boysen, 2015)

**PROACTIVE BEHAVIORS**

- Donate Money
- Volunteer
- Become Politically Active
- Organize a Service Group
- Talk to Others about a Problem
- Alert Law Enforcement & Social Services
- Offer Personal Resources (e.g. Food & Clothing)

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### Labor Trafficking & Labor Exploitation

**Negative Assumptions**

- Broke the Law
- Taking US Citizen's jobs

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### Elrod (2015)

**Sex Work Model**

- Advocates for Decriminalization
- Opposes conflation of prostitution & sex trafficking

*Any form of commercial transaction for sex leads to an increase in market demand for sexual services. This demand for sexual services creates a "profit motive" that encourages individuals, including traffickers, to provide commercial sexual services... Given the nature of the industry and established practices, traffickers often resort to exploitive tactics in order to find sex partners to meet this demand. Thus, as the prostitution industry as a whole goes, so goes sex trafficking (Elrod, 2015, p. 5)*

pictures: Coalition Against Trafficking & neoone3.xsling.com

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### Slavery & Human Trafficking (Patterson, 2012)

Slavery

Human Trafficking

1. Patterson defines slavery as one person's use of power to exercise an extreme form of relational and physical domination over another through the use of physical and/or psychological violence.
2. Patterson argues that the worst forms of domestic servitude, child labor, and international and domestic sex trafficking identified in the United States today all hold close resemblance to the country's past institution of slavery.

SOCIAL DEATH

SHFTTC

pictures: The Guardian

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### Contextual Facilitators for Domestic Trafficking

- Structural Factors (Reid, 2012):
  - Economy Reliant on Sex Industry
  - Lacking in Educational Opportunities
  - Pimping Culture
  - Devaluation of Women & Children



SHFTTC

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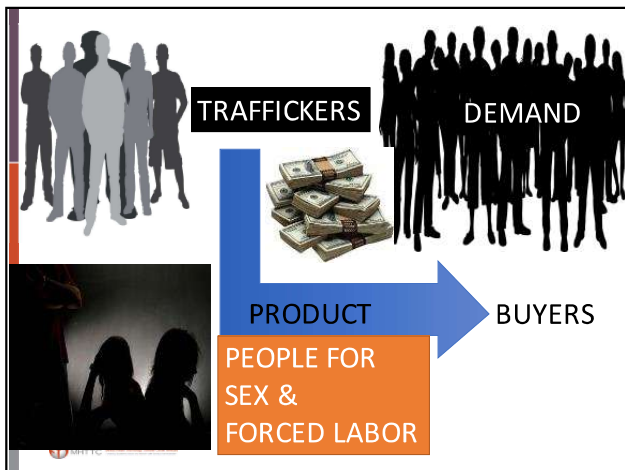
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### SEX BUYERS IN THE UNITED STATES: DEMAND

- Sex purchasing among adult men was approximately 4% (or 4 million men)
- Rate of sex buying may reach 10 million transactions a year
- Studies show that this group can exhibit high levels of aggression and violence towards trafficking victims




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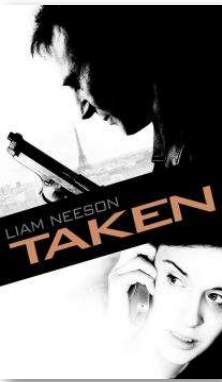
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#### "Taken" Myths About Victims of Human Trafficking

- Women
- Forced prostitution
- Kidnapped
- Only happens in other countries
- Bad guys, traffickers, are foreigners
- Good guys, the rescuers, are U.S. Citizens
- After people are rescued they are happy




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### Who are the Traffickers?: Myths

- Male;
- Criminal history;
- Part of an organized crime network;
- Looks Scary, "I would know just by seeing the person".




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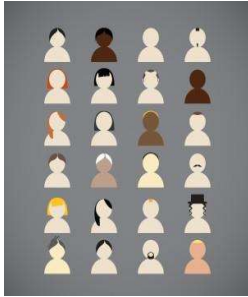
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# Who are the Traffickers?: Facts



- Brothel Business Owner
- Fake Massage Business Owner
- Employer of a Domestic Servant
- Criminal Networks
- Crew Leaders in Agricultural Work
- Pimps
- Intimate Partners
- Family Members
- Labor Contractors
- Factory Owners

(U.S. Department of State, 2015)




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# Relationship Trafficker Victim: Recruitment



United Nations, 2014

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FIG. 47: Citizenships of offenders convicted in the Americas (by sub)region, 2010-2012 (or more recent)



United Nations, 2014

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### DETECTED VICTIMS BY AGE AND SEX (U.N., 2018)

FIG. 105 Share of detected victims of trafficking in North America\*, by age group and sex, 2016 (or most recent)



Source: IHHOC elaboration of National data  
\*Based on data on sex and age of 6694 victims detected in three countries in North America




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### Trafficking is Typically not the First Trauma

- Studies estimate that as many as 70% of women involved in prostitution are trafficked into the commercial sex trade in early adolescence (11-14 years of age) or early childhood.

U.S. Department of Justice, Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section: Child Prostitution Available at: <http://www.justice.gov/criminal/ceos/prostitution.html>

- Youth most at risk for commercial sexual exploitation for monetary or nonmonetary gain are those who are **runaways, homeless, or children in or leaving foster homes.**

Fong R, Cardoso J. Child human trafficking victims: Challenges for the child welfare system. *Evaluation and Program Planning*. 2010; 33, 311-316




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### Who are Domestic Victims?

Individuals with a specific set of vulnerabilities or lacks that have developed throughout the person's life span (Reid, 2012)



- **Being in Foster Care (previous sexual and/or physical trauma)**
- Family Dysfunction (impaired caregivers)
- Family Member/Peer in Sex Work
- Domestic/Family Violence
- Drug Use
- Poor School Performance
- **Desire for Love and Belonging**
- **Need for Acceptance**
- **Desire for a Better Life**
- **Ambition**




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## Resilience as a Push Factor

**RISK FACTORS**


- Being in Foster Care (previous sexual and/or physical trauma)
- Family Dysfunction (impaired caregivers)
- Family Member/Peer in Sex Work
- Domestic/Family Violence (Red, 2012)

**RISK FACTORS = RESILIENCE**

- Desire for Love and Belonging
- Need for Acceptance
- Desire for a Better Life
- Ambition (Red, 2012)



**PUSH YOUTH INTO RUNNING FROM HOME**



**Hoping For Love  
Stuck in  
Exploitation**

NHFTTC

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## Who are the Traffickers?: Organization

**Small Local**

- One or few traffickers
- Small number of victims
- Intimate partner exploitation
- Limited investment and profits.

**Medium Sub-regional**

- Movement between local or neighboring sub-regions
- Small group of traffickers
- More than one victim
- Some investment and some profits.

**Large Transnational**

- Long distance flows between different regions
- Traffickers involved in organized crime
- Large number of victims
- High investments and high profits

United Nations, 2014

NHFTTC

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## Domestic Sex Trafficking Who is the Trafficker? Someone who Befriends




**"Boyfriend"**



Female Friend (typically a peer or older helpful woman)



Fraudulent Front (modeling agency)



Abusive/Exploitative Caregiver

NHFTTC

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Roe-Sepowitz, Hickle, Dahlsted & Gallagher (2014)

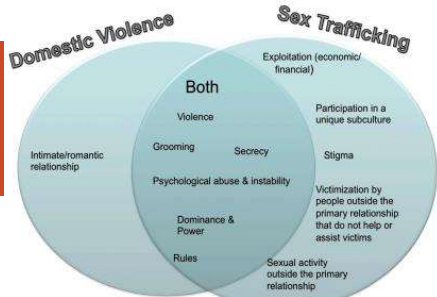


DIAGRAM IS PUBLISHED IN: ROE-SEPOWITZ, HICKLE, DAHLSTED & GALLAGHER (2014)

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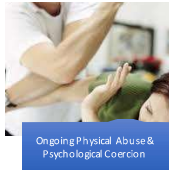
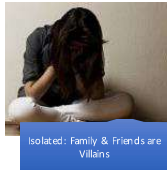
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### 3. Initiation & Exploitation

The Trafficker's Method?

A Combination of:

- Deceit
- Coercion (physical and/or psychological)
- Force



**TRAFFICKER'S OBJECTIVE**  
Preparation for commercial sex or other forms of forced labor; learns what is expected and consequences of non-compliance.

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### Trafficking Looks Like S/he



Psychological Coercion  
Makes the Victim Invisible  
and Maintained by:

- Trafficker Tactics – Feigned Relationship (Looks like DV);
- Structural Factors;
- Societal Stigma, contributes to Shame that leads to Isolation.

(Contreras, Kallivayalil & Herman, 2016)

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### RACHEL LLOYD GEMS



Rachel Lloyd  
Founder and Executive Director,  
Girls Educational and Mentoring  
Services



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### Consequences of Psychological Coercion: Mistrust & Shame



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### POST-IDENTIFICATION SYSTEMS RESPONSES



Image from PBS.org

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## The Gaps

Inconsistent Definition

Reduced Ability to Screen & Identify

Very Limited Data on Prevalence (United Nations, 2014)

Limited Funding to Create Specialized Services & Treatment for Victims

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## COVID-19 & TRAFFICKING (UNODC, 2021)

Increased **ISOLATION** & decreased **SAFETY NETWORKS**

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Increased **FINANCIAL STRAIN** & **POVERTY**

=

Greater **Vulnerability to Human Trafficking**

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## Promising Interventions

- Trauma-informed treatments –that stabilize symptoms and build coping;
- Relationally-focused approaches –that build trust
- Peer support services –that build trust
- Multidisciplinary approaches (peer, health, mental health, legal, social services) –that address multiple presenting concerns;
- Interventions that work within an ecological and human rights frame –that attend to the whole person and recognize the multiple socio-cultural-contextual issues that contribute to human trafficking.

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