

Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking

WHAT IS SEXUAL EXPLOITATION?

A sexually exploited youth is someone under the age of 18 who may be subject to sexual exploitation because they engaged, agreed to engage, or were forced into sexual conduct in return for a fee, food, clothing or shelter. A youth also can be sexually exploited if he or she has engaged in exotic dancing, been filmed doing sexual acts, traded sex for drugs, or has been found guilty of engaging in prostitution or prostitution-related crimes.

Not only does sexual exploitation lead to immediate and long-term physical, mental, and emotional harm, but until recently Minnesota could charge and treat sexually exploited youth as criminals – juvenile delinquents engaging in acts of prostitution. - **Minnesota Department of Health** ⁽²⁾

The average age that children enter into prostitution in the U.S. is **12-14** years old ⁽⁹⁾



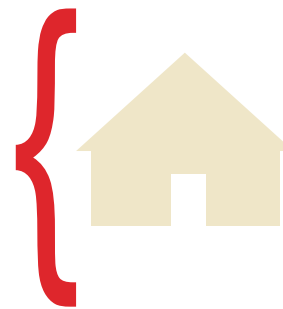
WHO IS AT RISK?

Though sexual exploitation occurs in every community regardless of age, race, socio-economic status, or other demographics, there are several factors that place certain communities at higher risk for sex trafficking:

- Poverty
- Communities of color
- A history of prior sexual abuse
- Vulnerable populations such as homeless and LGBTQ youth

SAFE HARBOR LAW

Under Minnesota Safe Harbor, Minnesota youth who engage in prostitution will no longer be seen as criminals, but instead as victims and survivors. The Safe Harbor Law treats these youth with dignity and respect, and directs them to appropriate supportive services, including shelter and housing. ⁽¹⁾



1.6-2.8 million American kids run away from home every year. ⁽¹⁰⁾

STATISTICS

80% of runaway and homeless girls reported having been sexually or physically abused. ⁽⁶⁾

An estimated 30% of youth living in shelters and 70% of street youth have report having been victimized through sexual exploitation. ⁽⁵⁾

Life expectancy after entering prostitution is seven years. ⁽⁷⁾

More adolescent girls are commercially sexually exploited in one month in Minnesota than girls who die by suicide, homicide, accidents, SIDS, AIDS and domestic violence combined in one year. ⁽⁴⁾

Within **36-48 HOURS** of being on the run, runaways will be approached by a pimp, trafficker or perpetrator looking to sexually exploit them. ⁽⁸⁾



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THE MONEY

The Polaris Project conservatively estimates that a pimp with a “stable” of three girls or women often enforces an average nightly quota of \$500-\$1,500 a night. If these quotas are met consistently, the pimp can make as much as \$547,000 (or more) in a year (\$500 per girl = \$1,500 a night x 365 nights a year = \$547,500).⁽³⁾



PORNOGRAPHY AND DEMAND



- The average age that porn is first viewed is 11.⁽¹¹⁾
- 48% of men use porn regularly.⁽¹³⁾
- Consequences are often weak or nonexistent for predators who purchase sex with minors or view child pornography.

- 83% of buyers said jail time and 79% said a letter to their family would be a deterrent to purchasing sex with a minor.⁽¹²⁾



COMMON EXPERIENCES OF VICTIMS

- Quota (certain amount of money required by the trafficker to be brought in each night)
- Violence- terroristic torture, beatings, threats to self or family
- Sleep/food deprivation
- Emotional/verbal/psychological abuse
- Rape & gang rape
- Violence, abuse and degradation from the buyers
- 90% have a pimp and few ever get to keep any of the money⁽¹⁴⁾

WARNING SIGNS

- Presence of an older, dominating boyfriend
- Multiple sexually transmitted diseases
- Tattoos or other branding marks
- Signs of violence; bruises, cuts or burns
- Masking charges such as curfew violation, truancy and other status offences
- Homelessness
- Chronic runaway
- Previous sexual abuse
- Travel with an older male
- Unexplained money, jewelry, clothes, etc.

HELP FOR VICTIMS

- Contact 911 if the suspected victims is in immediate danger.
- Call the Day One hotline for shelter and supportive services in your area 1-866-223-1111.
- Call your Regional Navigator. You can also refer victims directly to the Regional Navigator and they can call or text for help.

WEST CENTRAL REGIONAL NAVIGATOR

Navigators coordinate victim-centered resources and services throughout their region, provide training and technical assistance for professionals and community members, and provide direct case management to sexually exploited youth. Heartland Girls' Ranch serves the 21-county West Central Region.

Contact: Jennifer Fox

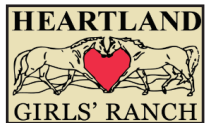
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