

CHILD SEX TRAFFICKING SURVIVORS ROUNDTABLE

United States Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs
AMBER Alert Training and Technical Assistance Program

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Conducted at Arizona State University, Phoenix, AZ
Facilitated by Dominique Roe-Sepowitz, MSW, Ph.D.



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ABOUT THE 2019 CHILD SEX TRAFFICKING SURVIVIOR ROUNDTABLE

The Child Sex Trafficking Survivor Roundtable is a one-day focus group held annually to listen to and learn from sex trafficking survivors with the purpose to best inform law enforcement training and education programs led by the AMBER Alert Training and Assistance Program. This is the third year the Child Sex Trafficking Survivor Roundtable has been led by Dr. Dominique Roe-Sepowitz from the Arizona State University Office of Sex Trafficking Intervention Research. The information and insights of the participants, all survivors of childhood sex trafficking, contributes to the framework of knowledge being built about best practices for responding to sex trafficking situations with a specific focus on informing law enforcement entities. The information and perspectives of the sex trafficking survivors in this report is critical to arming law enforcement with new tools and insights to respond to sex trafficking victim situations in a victim-informed and trauma-focused way.

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Eight sex trafficking survivors from around the United States attended the 2019 Child Sex Trafficking Survivor Roundtable held in Phoenix, Arizona on May 30, 2019. Also in attendance was Kimberly Hogan and Veronica Duffield of the Arizona State University Office of Sex Trafficking Intervention Staff, who were note-takers. Dr. Dominique Roe-Sepowitz, Director of the Office of Sex Trafficking Intervention Research and a clinically trained trauma-focused social worker, hosted and led the roundtable.

The agenda for the daylong roundtable included open-ended questions and discussions about the participants' sex trafficking experiences and advice for law enforcement regarding their insights on vulnerabilities for sex trafficking and actions of sex traffickers including: childhood maltreatment, family involvement in the 'life', recruitment techniques of sex traffickers, the use of technology by sex traffickers, the violence in the sex trafficking experiences, substance abuse, and other risk factors for sex trafficking. The survivor participants also discussed emerging issues including the unique features of family sex trafficking situations, the use of the victim as a recruiter, and force criminality as an element of sex trafficking. The participants discussed their involvement of other systems as children or during their sex trafficking experiences including child welfare, law enforcement in a domestic violence context, and the medical services system. Finally, the survivors developed recommendations for law enforcement to consider when interacting with sex trafficking victims.

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Five of the survivor participants at the Child Sex Trafficking Survivor roundtable live in Phoenix, Arizona. The other survivor participants were from Colorado, Kentucky, and Hawaii. The participants were all adult women ranging in age from 28 to 54 years old who had been sex trafficked, with six of the eight (75%) reporting being sex trafficked before they were age 18 with the youngest age of first being sex trafficked was age four. None of the participants were currently in a sex trafficking or prostitution situation and seven of the eight participants are currently work in the social service or anti-sex trafficking fields. The survivor participants had been out of their last sex trafficking situation ranging from ten years to 25 years with an average of 15.1 years. The survivor participants were sex trafficked in varied ways including by their parents, drug dealer, boyfriend, a stranger on the streets who found her when she ran away from her group home, and through a strip club.

The survivor participants represented a diversity in race, age, and type of sex trafficking experiences.

The survivor participants represented a diversity in race, age, and type of sex trafficking experiences. This diversity fostered thoughtful and robust discussions about the dynamics and methods of entry into sex trafficking situations, the techniques of the traffickers, recommendations for law enforcement, and victims and survivor issues



DYNAMICS AND METHOD OF ENTRY

The dynamics of sex trafficking situations were discussed and included topics of grooming, recruitment, and different pathways into sex trafficking situations. The participants identified specific vulnerabilities that they believe were important for law enforcement to consider as risk factors.

Vulnerabilities

These vulnerabilities for being groomed and recruited by a sex trafficker included experiences of the participants including having a parent with a drug addiction who was neglectful and abusive, being addicted to drugs, having a history of sexual abuse that distorted her view of intimacy and trust, mental health problems, being shifted from family member to family member and feeling unwanted as their parents were in prison or on the streets doing drugs, and an older sister was sex trafficked first (at age 16) and was a part of her recruitment.

The following variables were identified by the roundtable participants as increasing the vulnerability of a person to be found by a sex trafficker and exploited.

- Child victims living in group homes or foster homes often have experienced trauma and are easy prey for sex traffickers.
- Child victims are searching for a person to show them affection, make them feel a sense of worth, and pay attention to them.
- Some child victims come from homes that are filled with abuse or neglect and need a place to stay.
- Having a parent that is an addict forces the children in those homes to find a place to be because they do not want to be home.
- Aging out of the foster care system is a difficult time for young adults and they are easy targets for sex traffickers who promise stability.
- Child victims who come from homes that do not have trauma and abuse are often tricked into the situation because their parents were not aware that their child could be sex trafficked.
- Child victims who have had children themselves are a particularly vulnerable group as they often have limited resources and ability to self-sustain.
- Few child victims who are in the child welfare system have any contact with their families. The only family they feel comfortable with is their street family and that includes being exploitation.
- Sexual abuse is a strong predictor. "Every girl I knew in the club and out there working was sexually abused as a kid. It messes you up and if you have never told anyone, it is a burning secret that holds you down."
- Victims are often silenced as children to not report the abuse they are experiencing, this silencing effect their ability to report grooming or recruiting behaviors of traffickers.
- Victims of childhood emotional, physical and sexual abuse are trained by their parents to be abused for their lifetimes.
- Victims who were forced to view pornography as children to normalize sexual violence and desensitize sex.





TECHNIQUES OF THE TRAFFICKER

The group explored the tools and methods used by sex traffickers to groom and recruit their victims including drugs and alcohol, technology, the trafficker using the victim as a recruiter, family involvement, and the roles of schools, strip clubs and pornography.

Role of Substance Use

The participants spoke about the role of drugs and alcohol in their sex trafficking situations. Each participant identified a different way that drugs and alcohol were used in their sex trafficking situation. For some drugs and alcohol were given to them by their sex trafficker to calm them or to keep them compliant. For others drugs and alcohol were also used by sex traffickers to control their victims. One participant stated that she was given drugs by her parents beginning when she was four years old including being taught to snort cocaine and had pot smoke blown in her face. She reported that she immediately became dependent on the drugs and stopped fighting back when she was being sold to strangers. The drugs and alcohol were withheld from her unless she was compliant and allowed her sex traffickers to control her. Alcohol was given to another participant by her sex trafficker to help her 'relax' and have more 'courage' as well as to decrease her resistance and inhibitions and increase her willingness to participate with sex buyers.

A participant reported that drugs were used by her sex trafficker as a method of controlling her and fostering her dependency on him. Another participant described being given drugs by her trafficker as part of the 'codependency' that he created for her to be dependent on him. Other participants stated that drugs and alcohol helped them to escape the painful physical and emotional experiences within their forced prostitution experiences and that the drugs and alcohol helped them to 'numb out'. Another participant stated that drugs helped her to 'distort the reality' of how difficult and uncomfortable her sex trafficking situation was and helped her cope until she was strong enough to get away. One participant stated that 'heroin made it so you didn't feel it when they touched you.' It 'numbs you out' and 'helps you forget the shame of what you are doing'. Another survivor described her sex trafficker give her drugs prior to forcing her to prostitute. He would say things like 'you smoked all this crack, now go out there and make my money.'" She stated that she was indebted to him quickly after meeting him, he controlled the access to drugs depending on how much money she brought home from prostituting.

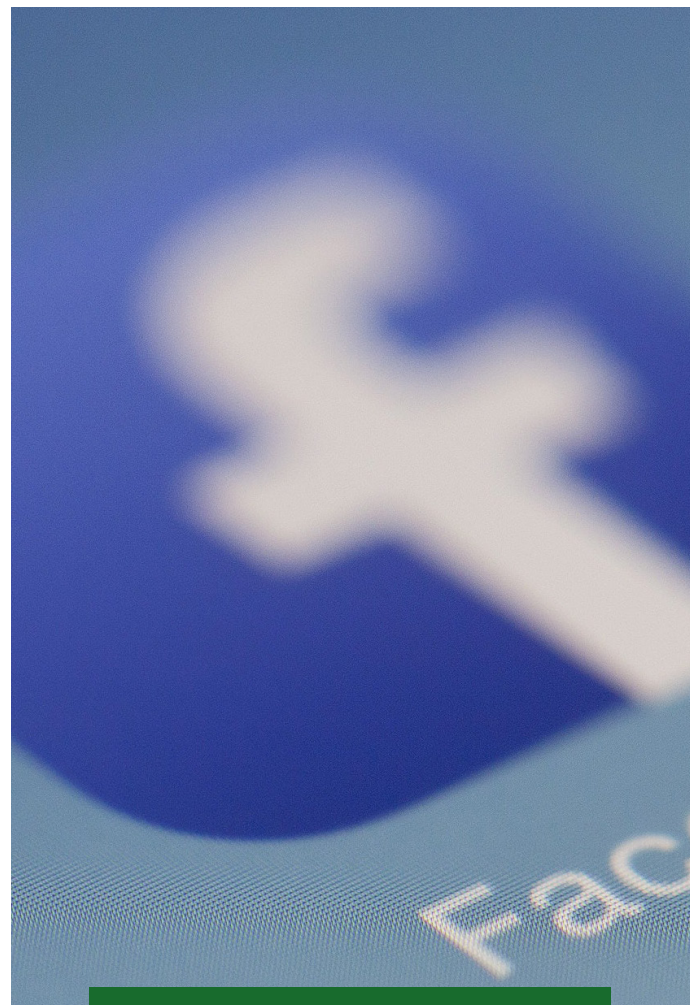
"Heroin made it so you didn't feel it when they touched you.' It 'numbs you out' and 'helps you forget the shame of what you are doing.'"

2019 Child Sex Trafficking Roundtable Participant

Some sex traffickers of the survivor participants were addicted to drugs and would force the participants to prostitute for the money to pay for the trafficker's drug use. One participant stated that she was whiffing cocaine when she met her first sex trafficker (she was 15 years old) and he turned her on to free-basing so she would want to do that too. She would prostitute and follow his rules so they could free-base together. Another described being a homeless teen with a drug addiction along with her boyfriend. He forced her to prostitute to support their addiction. She felt addicted to both the drugs and to him and she felt all alone on the street. One participant reported that being addicted to drugs prevented her from reporting any abuse she experienced by her trafficker and/or customers as she believed she would be seen by law enforcement – as an addict first. One participant stated that 'I should have reported the abuse but the drugs were a big issue and I was afraid to not be listened to so I allowed the abuse.'


Technology and Recruitment Sites

The participants stated that sex traffickers use technology to recruit victims in a number of ways. All of the participants agreed that social media was a gateway for sex traffickers to find vulnerable children. Participants described different ways that social media led to their sex trafficking. One participant reported that she responded to an online ad for a domestic help position and instead was led into prostitution by the person she interviewed with. Another participant described that a sex trafficker recognized that they were expressing frustration with their living



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2019 Child Sex Trafficking Roundtable Participant



situation (in a group home) and offered a solution. Although they were strangers, the survivor participant was eager to find an alternative to their situation and met the sex trafficker in person and was trafficked.

One participant described a trafficker using technology to monitor and track their victims as soon as they have initial contact with them. They are able to monitor who they talk to and where they go with apps that the victim may not know have been downloaded onto their smart phones. Another participant described how a trafficker was able to get her personal information including where she and her family lived and he began to threaten that he would hurt her family if she didn't comply. Other ways that technology is used in sex trafficking include using sites that sell items or drugs can be a way for a trafficker to find a victim. One participant described how her trafficker would place ads online for drugs and once he met the girls he would groom them using drugs and then turn them out into street prostitution. She described it as how he would 'trap' girls into the life.

Once the sex trafficker has groomed the victim and they are involved in prostitution, technology can be used to advertise sex services as well as to track and monitor the victim. One participant stated that in her experience, the sex ads are almost always placed by the pimp/trafficker and in her situation, he answered all the calls and set up all of the details of the 'date'. Many of the participants working in the anti-trafficking field agreed that law enforcement is far behind sex traffickers regarding technology. One participant identified technology used for trafficking includes new phone apps that include disappearing video messages, tools for tracking victims which can be used to control or punish them, and places to put advertisements including on the dark web or sites that are hard to find. A participant described having a camera program downloaded on her phone without her permission and it was used to stalk her and threaten her not to talk to law enforcement.

Online travel tools were identified as dangerous to sex trafficking victims regarding experiences such as the anonymous purchase of tickets on Greyhound buses or Lyft or Uber. These three companies enable tickets to be purchased without any identification or verification of age. One participant reported these companies were used often by traffickers instead of driving their victims in case the victim was caught, the trafficker was not with them or linked to them.

A participant described having a camera program downloaded on her phone without her permission and it was used to stalk her and threaten her not to talk to law enforcement.

The participants also discussed how technology can be useful in recovering victims in sex trafficking situations. This included one participant's experience working with a victim who was found due to her family having a family-location share app on their phones. Other ways technology was found to be helpful included a number of participants stating that they used technology to find help and resources when they were ready to exit their situations. Another participants stated that after she exited the 'life' she has found a strong online support system of other survivors through the use of technology. She stated this was additionally important because she lives in a rural area where support services are very limited.

Trafficker Using the Victim as a Recruiter

The participants discussed the technique used by sex traffickers of using victims that they already have under their control to recruit and in some cases, groom and facilitate the sex trafficking of other victims. Sex traffickers force or coerce their victims to recruit other victims as a part of the overall sex trafficking victimization. This can be considered by the trafficker as a deepening of loyalty and for the victims also acting in the role of trafficker (recruiting, grooming, trafficking) can create feelings of fear and trepidation in asking for help from others due to the awareness of their own criminal involvement. This technique, which is often categorized as becoming a 'bottom' was described by many of the participants as something they experienced in their own victimization. One participant stated it was similar to the phrase, 'eat or be eaten' which meant to them to mean that they were to comply with what their trafficker told them and what the rules were in order to minimize the brutality they would experience. Another participant described that her trafficker expected her to bring other girls home to be trafficked from the streets similarly to how he expected her to meet her quota which is the minimum level of money she must earn per day. If she didn't find any girls to bring to him, her sex trafficker would beat and sexually assault her as punishment.

One participant described the recruiting and trafficking other girls for their sex trafficker as part of the brainwashing she experienced by the sex trafficker into the sex trafficking lifestyle. She stated that she was taught that she was to always impress your trafficker with your commitment and if your 'family' or sex trafficking





group run by the trafficker was to grow, everyone benefited. She also said that she was taught that to be number one in the group, she had to get many others into the group for the trafficker to victimize and it was normalized in the 'game' or life of prostitution. Another participant described homeless boys as being the key recruiters of her trafficker, that was the role they played in the 'family' and their job was to go out each day and find girls who were desperate. One participant described her role as a trafficker as one that if she did it well, she would not get hurt as badly by her trafficker minimizing the brutality that she received anyway. Another participant described the forcing of victims into recruiting as part of the ways traffickers control their victims. She stated that and recruiting other victims was just one more of the expectations of her trafficker similar to her quota. She felt that if she did what he asked or told her to do to recruit other victims, she would survive the situation. One participant stated that traffickers having victims recruit other victims was a part of almost every sex trafficking situation and is just another demand by the trafficker. She knew everyone on the street and her trafficker knew that, and he exploited her knowledge to have her get other vulnerable girls. If she didn't, he beat her. She felt like it was helping her move towards her own feelings of freedom and it was 'solid gold' towards how her trafficker treated her. She felt more in charge and had more control if she was part of the recruiting, grooming, and trafficking of other victims. Another participant described it as a way that her trafficker kept her unstable, that the rules were always changing including the one having her recruit other girls.

Forced Criminality

The participants described being regularly forced or coerced by their trafficker to participate in criminal behaviors. This included behaviors like transporting drugs, selling drugs, trafficking other victims, stealing from sex buyers, picking pockets on the street, and shoplifting. One participant described these as the 'fringe crimes' of sex trafficking and all of the participants reported that their sex trafficker had forced them to participate in these criminal activities. The forced criminality by the sex trafficker results in the victim having a criminal history which further impedes them from exiting the sex trafficking situation. All of the participants reported that they had been instructed by their trafficker to rob their customers of everything valuable. The act of committing a 'trick roll' or robbing a customer was expected by the traffickers but the participants reported that it often put the victims in great danger from violence from the customer.

The forced criminality by the sex trafficker results in the victim having a criminal history which further impedes them from exiting the sex trafficking situation.

Another participant reported that she was forced to set up a 'date' or customer by her trafficker which included getting him into a room without his clothes and then the trafficker would come into the room and rob the customer. In another situation, she described that her trafficker gave her a gun and she pulled it on a customer and took his belongings. Other weapons that were given to the participants by their traffickers included a knife and a baseball bat to be used when robbing their customers.

Transporting drugs for their sex trafficker was reported by the majority of the participants. In some cases they cooked/made the drugs with their trafficker and then were instructed where to bring the drugs. One participant described being trafficked by a sex trafficker who was in a gang and how the gang was involved in the drug transportation and how her role was to hide the drugs and moved them. This also led to her witnessing murders and being around violence which sometimes she was involved in.

Family Involvement

Family involvement in the sex trafficking has generally been considered a vulnerability or a push factor into sex trafficking, but in some cases, the family is a participant in the sex trafficking situation. A participant described her mother's role in her sex trafficking as that her mother saw what trouble she was getting into and didn't stop it and allowed some of her (the mother's) boyfriends sexually abuse her. Soon she would do anything not to be home and a sex trafficker found her out on the street.



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Another participant described her family as the people who passed her around for sex and gave her a street prostitution name at age nine. A participant reported that her mother was her first pimp and used drugs to control her. The participant was seen by many helping professionals while growing up including medical staff, educators, social workers, and law enforcement, and none of them recognized the familial sex trafficking situation. She was often told by her mother to keep silent and she was identified as mentally ill by numerous helping professionals. The participants discussed the challenges to victims receiving services with families that deny that their child is being victimized or are ashamed and do not seek help for their child. Another participant was traded by her father for drugs from his friends and his drug dealer, she ran away and never told anyone because she was told she would bring shame to the family. The participants described being forced to stay silent as child victims of family abuse which also served to silence them when they were recruited, groomed, and sex trafficked. They stated that they knew they would be removed from their home and put into foster care if they told anyone about the abuse, which they found scarier than the abuse they knew. A number of participants reported that their histories of childhood family abuse ‘trained’ them to be victims of abuse for their lifetimes.

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School Involvement

Schools were discussed by the participants regarding how they allowed for the recruitment of victims due to the lack of awareness of sex trafficking. Participants described meeting traffickers in front of their schools as well as being recruited by classmates.

- Key issues regarding schools and sex trafficking were discussed.
- Schools are missing the opportunity to recognize patterns of truancy like arriving late or going out during school hours or changes in behavior that may indicate sex trafficking situations.
- Prevention in schools is often limited and school staff are not comprehensively trained.
- If schools do include sex trafficking prevention, although including survivor voices in prevention are best practices, there are limits on access to schools for some survivors due to their criminal records.
- School resource officers could be very helpful in identifying possible victims in a school but they are often transferred each year and have limited standardized training on sex trafficking.
- Schools should focus their sex trafficking awareness trainings on the front desk staff, school nurses, social workers, and security staff.
- Avoid the 'boogeyman' prevention technique and be more accurate about who might try to groom them into a sex trafficking situation.





Strip Clubs as a Recruitment Site

The participants discussed the role of stripping as an entry point into sex trafficking for victims. A number of participants worked in strip clubs before they turned age 18 and the strip club was how they met their first sex trafficker. Specific aspects of the strip club experience help to groom the victim to normalize the forced prostitution situations of sex trafficking. Specific issues with strip clubs that groom victims for sex trafficking were discussed by the participants including the slide from legal to illegal sex acts in strip clubs, the normalization of earning money through sex acts, and the familiarity of your work/income controlled by another person (the club manager/owner).

A participant described how she worked in a strip club as a teenager and was regularly offered high amounts of money to shift from the legal work (dancing, lap dances) to illegal work (sex acts in and out of the club) and was eventually forced by her manager who became her pimp that she had to participate in the illegal work because everyone else was and if she didn't he would fire her. She also described the feeling of earning money from people paying to see her body and how that moved quickly to feeling like getting paid to let touch her (with the help of drugs) was not that difficult to convince herself to allow.

Another participant described that seeing other girls scantily dressed and the meaning of 'sexy' was taught to her in a strip club and it normalized the selling of sex. She began waiting tables in the strip club and was slowly told by the manager 'you can make more doing this or that' and that is how he convinced her to sell sex. She could make \$1,000 per night instead of \$80. She was 18 and had no job skills or education. Another participant stated that pimps/traffickers and strip club managers often control money in the same ways including 'breaking' which is paying between customers and having to give the majority of the money to the manager for a range of expenses including security, time on the dance pole, private booth fee, the DJ, the bartender, and the bar staff. The strip club manager would also fine her up to \$500 for arbitrary reasons including turning down a sex act or not wearing the right outfit and she was often told she was in debt to the manager. In strip clubs there are often no contracts or hiring agreements and the dancers are an independent contractor and the manager/owner can control the money as they want.

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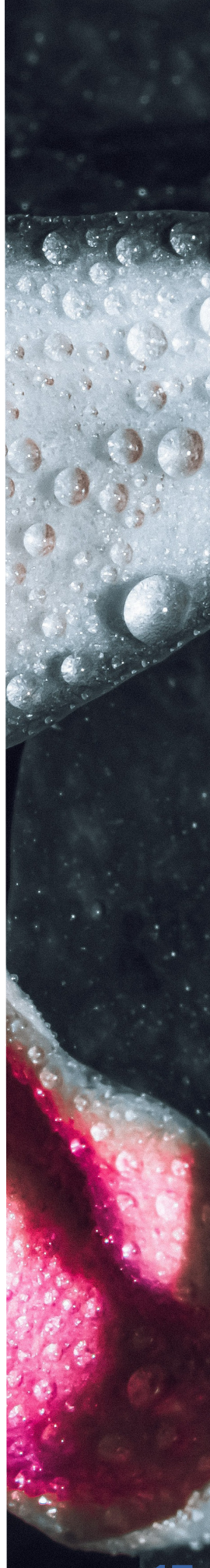
The use of Pornography for Grooming

The participants described their experiences of pornography having a role in their grooming, as a form of control, into, as well as the violence they experienced while being sex trafficked. A number of participants described being exposed to pornography as children due to the sexualizing of the children in the home which was part of their family cultures of chaos and violence. Two participants described pornography being shown in their homes as children with the whole family watching it and both experiencing sexual abuse by their parents. One participant described the addictive nature of watching pornography as a child and how it led to cravings and feelings similar to addiction. A participant described their trafficker encouraging them to watch hard core porn when they were being groomed and influenced to experiment with extreme sexual acts including violence. She believed her trafficker had her watch pornography to get rid of any of her inhibitions. Another participant described her trafficker telling her she had to watch pornography with her customers to get them to finish faster.

A number of participants reported that pornography was used to control them as their sex traffickers taped them having sex. One participant reported her trafficker threatened to show the video to her family and to her friends at school. Another stated that pornography taught her customers what they want from a prostituted person to do with them as that pornography was how the customer learned about sex.

The participants also discussed how pornography impacted them during their sex trafficking experience. A participant stated that her customers were increasingly violent due to watching violent rape-oriented pornography and paying her to re-enact it. Her trafficker would punish her if she didn't agree, and she had been violently raped by numerous customers. One participant described how customers would beat her if they were not able to perform sexually and pornography was a tool given to her by her sex trafficker to assist in the buyer's ability to perform.

A participant described their trafficker encouraging them to watch hard core porn when they were being groomed and influenced to experiment with extreme sexual acts including violence.



INSIGHTS FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT

The participants discussed a number of insights and areas for inquiry for law enforcement who work with sex trafficked children and adults. These included engaging with survivors, using victim-centered language, focusing on demand reduction, the challenges victims face when engaging in the prosecution of their traffickers, ways of supporting the healing process, and using a trauma-informed approach when working with victims.

Engaging with Survivors

The participants encouraged law enforcement to utilize survivors and their strong voices of experience and empathy with victims in their sex trafficking work. A number of participants suggested that law enforcement should regularly interact with survivors and they should support survivors to train law enforcement to increase awareness of sex trafficking and put a 'face' and story to the issues. They also agreed that law enforcement should collaborate with local survivors to support them during crisis interactions with sex trafficking victims to provide support and connection from their shared experiences. A participant stated that peer-support survivor mentoring programs have been successful in a number of U.S. cities and could be used as resources for law enforcement for victim referrals or focus groups.



Use of Victim Centered Language

The participants discussed the importance of using victim-centered language by law enforcement. The stigma and shame associated with words like survival sex, 'child prostitute', or 'hooker' are powerful and the participants requested that law enforcement use language that demonstrates respect and humanizes their experiences. A participant described the use of the above words by law enforcement during an interaction when she was in a sex trafficking situation that made her feel dirty and worthless and led her to stop participating in the police interview and refused to reach out to law enforcement again for assistance when she was experiencing violence and abuse. Another participant stated that using language that blames the victim like 'survival sex' creates and promotes a distorted view of the realities of the situation.

The participants provided the following recommendations for law enforcement.

- Use humanizing and empowering language ('this situation is not who you are but is something that happened to you').
- Use person first language like 'a person who has been prostituted.'
- Allow victims to self-identify and use their own language to describe their experience.
- Do not use the same language for victims of sex trafficking that are used by the sex traffickers (and sometimes victims) like 'hoe.'
- Mirror the language used by the sex trafficking victim if it is respectful.
- Be careful not to call a sex trafficking victim a sex worker, it implies consent and control over their situation.



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Demand Focus

The participants discussed the need for law enforcement to focus on the sex buying customers to decrease the demand for victims. The participants agreed that buyers should be arrested for their behavior but also deterrent programs need to address the sex buyers' thoughts and beliefs about buying sex from another person. A participant stated that arresting high profile customers does influence the communities' belief about sex buying and should be visible to all community members through the newspaper or signboards. Another participant discussed the need for the monetary penalties from the arrested buyers should go to a sex trafficking victim's fund.

Victim Engagement in the Prosecution of Sex Traffickers

The participants acknowledged that one of the greatest challenges faced by law enforcement regarding sex trafficking situations is the limited engagement of the victim in the prosecution of sex traffickers.

The limited involvement of victims was identified as resulting from various causes.

- Fear of violence from the trafficker or his friends/family.
- Fear of being blamed for their victimization.
- Fear of being judged by those involved in the prosecution (detectives, prosecutors, judges, court personnel and the jury).
- Fear of not being believed.
- Fear of making mistakes in their recollection.
- Fear of being punished for their actions or involvement in the sex trafficking activities (prostitution, recruiting others).
- Not being ready to talk or that they have not been able to think through their experience clearly.
- Having a strong bond with the sex trafficker.
- The sex trafficker tells them not to trust anyone including law enforcement and the control of the sex trafficker over the victim is strong.

A participant stated that arresting high profile customers does influence the communities' belief about sex buying and should be visible to all community members through the newspaper or signboards.

Ideas were discussed for increasing the involvement of victims in the prosecution of their sex traffickers.

- Victims should be allowed a period of reflection and rest before they are interviewed.
- Forensic interviewers should be used to collect the evidence from the victim.
- Law enforcement should focus on the victim's health and safety first and then collect information for prosecution.
- Victims often seek help from medical providers or social services but fear contacting law enforcement. Law enforcement should be available to meet victims through referrals that are not a crisis or emergency situation.
- Acknowledge to victims that you need to earn their trust and you will follow through on what you commit to during the interviews.
- Start all interviews by believing the story the victim tells you.

Assistance in Healing

A number of ways that law enforcement could assist victims in their healing was identified by the participant. This included: treating victims with a victim-centered trauma-informed perspective and allowing them to assist in supporting other victims.

The participants discussed their insights about the trauma-informed perspective for law enforcement.

- Acknowledging that the victim has had traumatic experiences.
- Recognizing that the sex trafficking situation is complex and does not have a simple solution.
- Using calm and thoughtful language that acknowledges the victim's participation during interviews.
- Be familiar with the recruitment, grooming, and control/retention behaviors of sex traffickers so you are not learning from the victims.
- Inquire about the victim's comfort, have warm clothes available, as well as providing food (if they are hungry) prior to an in-depth interview.
- Realize, like in any new encounter, the victim will need to build trust in you, it is not automatic and has often been discouraged by their trafficker.
- Show kindness. No one is born wanting to be sexually exploited.
- Trauma significantly impacts the memory and, in some cases, stories from victims are not linear. It takes time for the trauma symptoms to stabilize and for the story to become clearer.

A number of participants described their memories of law enforcement who were caring and supportive to them even when they were not willing to report who their sex trafficker was or were uncooperative. Eventually, they build trust with those officers and when they did need help or wanted to exit, they were able to ask go to those familiar law enforcement officers.

Participation in the healing of others was identified as the most healing experience that the participants had experienced. The participants spoke about how they would like to partner with law enforcement to assist with sex trafficking victim outreach and share their knowledge about how to find victims and how to work with victims.

VICTIM AND SURVIVOR ISSUES

The participants described three key areas that they were concerned about regarding victim identification and support from service providers. These areas include victims involved in child welfare, domestic violence situations, and victim engagement in the medical care system.

Victim Involvement with Child Welfare

Child welfare involvement prior to or during their first sex trafficking was reported by many of the participants. One participant who was sex trafficked by her mother beginning at age four reported having child welfare in and out of her life for her entire childhood but that the child welfare workers simply could not grasp what was happening. She had been trained by her mother/sex trafficker not to talk and even with physical evidence the child welfare workers were unclear about the trafficking situation. Another survivor who was sex trafficked on the street starting at age nine reported that no child welfare workers ever spoke to her and law enforcement didn't intervene. One participant reported that by telling a child welfare worker that she was being sexually abused in her home by her father, she was removed from the home but was then taken to a foster home where she ran away due to feeling hopeless and then met her sex trafficker.

Victim Involved with Law Enforcement as Domestic Violence Victims

A number of participants reported that law enforcement had been involved with their families when they were children due to domestic violence in their home. They reported that the inability to stop the violence in their homes led them to later mistrust law enforcement because they had not been able to stop the domestic violence and seemed powerless to stop victimization. Another participant reported calling law enforcement when she was being abused by a boyfriend when she was a teenager. She stated that she felt that she was treated like a 'bad girl' and that the boyfriend was never detained or punished. One participant stated that if she called law enforcement to help in a domestic violence situation and they found that she had a prostitution charge on her record, that she was always the person arrested and was not taken seriously by the officers.



Victim Involvement in Receiving Medical Care

The participants discussed their experiences receiving medical care during their sex trafficking experience. One participant described having nurses that made nasty comments about her being a 'hoe' when she needed surgery after a violent rape. Another participant stated that she went to her doctor every month for a urinary tract infection and the doctor and their staff never asked her if she was sexually active or asked if she was safe. She was 17 years old. Another participant reported going to the Emergency Room after being assaulted and no one asked any questions. During another visit she was diagnosed with Gonorrhea and her sex trafficker stayed with her in the hospital when she got her appendix out. Another participant described having to sell sex for her medication because her sex trafficker wouldn't pay for it and the hospital considered her a drug addict and did not offer financial assistance. She reported she often felt belittled by the medical providers. No participants reported that the medical providers contacted law enforcement on behalf of the victim. The participants recommended renewed partnerships between law enforcement and medical providers regarding awareness and collaboration in the detection and treatment of sex trafficking victims.



No participants reported that the medical providers contacted law enforcement on behalf of the victim.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Roundtable participants developed the following recommendations for law enforcement regarding awareness and training that may support increased engagement with victims of sex trafficking.

- Social media has created an open door for sex traffickers to find vulnerable victims. Law enforcement must use their investigatory tools to monitor social media.
- Sex traffickers use advanced technology. Law enforcement must keep up with the changing landscape of technology to find victims.
- The perceived bias of helping professionals and law enforcement regarding addiction to drugs and/or alcohol prevents persons addicted to drugs and alcohol from seeking help. It is important to increase law enforcement's understanding of the overlap of drugs and alcohol with sex trafficking victimization to increase empathy and investigative leads.
- Using trauma-informed techniques with sex trafficking victims may increase victim participation in the prosecution of their traffickers.
- Prevention efforts in schools should focus on key staff positions including front desk staff, social workers, security/school resource officers, and school nurses.
- Sex traffickers use the tool of forcing or coercing their victims to recruit other victims as a part of the overall victimization. This can be considered by the trafficker as a deepening of loyalty and for the victim it can create feelings of fear and trepidation in asking for help due to their own criminal involvement.
- Forced criminality is another technique used by sex traffickers to keep their victim under their control. Sex trafficking victims often have histories of being arrested for these 'fringe' crimes including transporting drugs, stealing from sex buyers, picking pockets on the street, and shoplifting.
- Law enforcement should receive training on how families can contribute to the sex trafficking of children. Sometimes they are the sex traffickers. In other cases families are complicit or neglectful while their child is being trafficked.
- Strip clubs are often gateways into sex trafficking situations for a number of reasons including desensitizing the sale of sexual behaviors and the normalizing of being indebted to an employer.

The perceived bias of helping professionals and law enforcement regarding addiction to drugs and/or alcohol prevents persons addicted to drugs and alcohol from seeking help.

APPENDIX: CHILD SEX TRAFFICKING SURVIVORS ROUNDTABLE AGENDA

May 30, 2019

Arizona State University, Phoenix, AZ

<i>Time</i>	<i>Activity</i>
9:00 a.m. – 9:45 a.m.	Welcome and Introductions
9:45 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.	Goals and Objectives of the Roundtable
10:00 a.m. – 10:15 a.m.	Break
10:15 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.	Discussion of the Dynamics and Method of Entry/Trafficker Techniques
12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.	Lunch
1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.	Techniques of the Trafficker
2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.	Insights for Law Enforcement
3:00 p.m. – 3:15 p.m.	Break
3:15 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.	Victim and Survivor Issues
4:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.	Evaluation and Closing