Human Trafficking—
Basic Facts about the Commercial Exploitation of Youth

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Overview:

- Theresa’s story
- Why should you learn about this?
- Definitions, language
- Who is at risk?
- The problem in the U.S.; in Missouri
- Identifying victimized youth
- Your role in the solution; why we need your help.
You were living in an upper-middle-class suburban area in Detroit, Mich., when you became a victim of trafficking. How did you become involved with the sexual slave trade?

It started with this guy that I went to school with. He actually date-raped me. He had these cousins, and they had taken pictures. He threatened that he would show the pictures to my parents and to my church group. He would pick me up at night and after school. It was manipulation.

Source: “Q & A with Theresa Flores”, Vox Magazine (The Missourian), March 27, 2008 (Interviewer: Amber Fehrenbacher)
How long were you forced to do things for them? How long did this go on?

It went on for two years. I was 15 when it started. People ask why I didn’t tell my parents. They don’t realize the type of manipulation involved. I had not even realized I had been trafficked — I didn’t even have a word for it. I didn’t know of them as traffickers, just a bunch of evil men. My dad was an executive for a large company and we moved every two years, and for me, this made me vulnerable. When he got a promotion, I asked him how fast we could leave.

Source: “Q & A with Theresa Flores”, Vox Magazine (The Missourian), March 27, 2008 (Interviewer: Amber Fehrenbacher)
Why do School Resource Officers need to learn about this?

- You may have already encountered trafficked children in your work.
- Your eyes and ears may be first to recognize a youth in trouble.
- We need professionals aware and trained in multiple sectors.
Human trafficking is the forced labor and commercial sexual exploitation of human beings –
Definitions and Language

- Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA, 2000) defines two forms of human trafficking:

  - **Labor Trafficking** = The use of force, fraud, or coercion in order to recruit, shelter, transport, obtain or employ a person for work or services in involuntary servitude, labor exploitation, debt bondage or slavery.

  - **Sex trafficking** = Commercial sex induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person performing the act is under the age of 18.
Labor Trafficking involving youth

- As yet, little information on this
- Requires evidence of force, fraud, or coercion

Potential areas:
- Door-to-door sales crews
- Panhandling, begging
- Forced criminal activity (drug mules, shoplifting)
- Agriculture and other labor
Definitions and Language

- **Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC)**
  - Use of a minor in prostitution, pornography, child sex tourism, etc. for commercial gain
  - “Sexual abuse of a minor for economic gain”
    - Jay Albanese, 2007, DOJ/NIJ Report on CSEC

- **Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking (DMST)**
  - Sex trafficking in which the victims is a U.S. citizen or Legal Permanent Resident under the age of 18
“Child prostitute” is a dangerous misnomer –

Any minor (under age 18) engaged in commercial sex is a victim of a crime, according to U.S. and Missouri state law.

Becoming mindful of language used in popular culture
Who is at Risk?

- **Children and youth who are:**
  - Angry with their parents
  - Feel lonely, alienated
  - Feel invincible
Who is at Risk?

- Increased risk for children and youth:
  - With family history of emotional, physical, or sexual abuse
  - Who are homeless, runaway, or who have been kicked out of their home
Who is at Risk?

- Potentially increased risk:
  - Children and youth with disabilities
  - Lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender youth
  - Youth in Child Protection system
What is the average age of entry into prostitution and pornography in the United States?
12-14 years old.

- NISMART (National Incidence Studies of Missing, Abducted, Runaway and Throwaway Children)
- From U.S. Department of Justice Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section [www.usdoj.gov/criminal/ceos/prostitution.html](http://www.usdoj.gov/criminal/ceos/prostitution.html)
The Problem in the U.S., in Missouri

- **Limited data**
  - Estimated 100,000+ adolescents at risk in U.S. – but questions re: reliability of estimates
    - (Univ of PA; DOJ)
  - 1998-2004, > 295,000 calls regarding child sexual exploitation
    - NCMEC
“To date, no concerted effort has been made to gather reliable data regarding the extent of the commercial sexual exploitation of children. As with other so-called ‘low visibility’ crimes, the greatest challenge in assessing the prevalence of CSEC is the size of the ‘dark figure,’ i.e., for every report of CSEC, how many cases go unreported?”

Jay Albanese, 2007, page 2
The problem in Missouri

- Prosecuted cases involving Missouri youth:
  - Chillicothe
  - Columbia
  - St. Louis
  - Lebanon
  - Kansas City

- As well as non-prosecuted incidents
The Problem in Missouri

- State wide assessment is needed
- No organized reporting mechanism yet
Risk by Legislative District

Missouri 2012 Sex Trafficking Risk Profile by Congressional Districts

State Congressional Districts

Risk Level
- Low
- Moderate Low
- Moderate High
- High

GiS Analysis by Amanda Colegrove
Identifying Victimized Youth

- Challenging
- Self-identification is rare
  - Shame
  - Groomed to keep quiet
  - Distrust of law enforcement (reinforced by trafficker)
  - Distrust of service providers, authorities in general
  - Threat of harm if they disclose
  - Trauma bond/Stockholm syndrome
Trauma Bonding

- Occurs when the torturer/captor is also the nurturer/provider/“family”
- Extremely hard to dissolve this bond
- Involves Limbic System
- Youth may defend, protect, and return to trafficker; distrust adults trying to assist
Prolonged trauma:

- Leads to dysregulation of nervous system, stress response
- Hyperarousal:
  - May exhibit anger, panic, paranoia or phobias, irritability, hyperactivity, hypervigilance, frequent crying, temper tantrums, nightmares, regressive behavior, increased clinging behavior, running away
- Hypoarousal:
  - May exhibit withdrawal, daydreaming, inability to bond with others, inattention, forgetfulness, shyness, flat affect, feeling of being cold, tired.

Sources: Shared Hope International; Dr. J. Fisher
Recognize “Red Flags”

- In behavior
- In situation
- In physical indicators
Recognize “Red Flags” in behavior

- **Trauma symptoms**
  - Cutting
  - Suicidality
  - Depression
  - PTSD
  - Withdrawal
  - Demeanor – (anxious, submissive, tense, nervous, not making eye contact)
Recognize “Red Flags” in behavior

- Changes in school performance
- Changes in peer relationships
- Sexual risk taking, ‘acting out’
- Substance use
- Hostility
- Repeated runaway (Dallas PD)
- History or habit of disappearances
- Restricted/scripted communication
Recognize “Red Flags” in situation

- Presence of overly controlling or abusive boyfriend or girlfriend
- Older boyfriend(s)/girlfriend(s)
- Dropped off/picked up at school by unrelated adults
- Living with multiple unrelated youths
- Unexplained cash
Recognize “Red Flags” – physical indicators

- Injuries/signs of physical abuse or torture
- Tattoos and branding
- Sexually transmitted infections; pelvic inflammatory disease
- Fatigue, exhaustion, poor nutrition
Your Role in the Solution

- Eyes and Ears in schools
- Learn more; additional training
- Look with new eyes; rethink “incorrigible” label
- Begin building a collaborative network
- Share your professional insights with anti-trafficking groups
- Be mindful of language used in school, community
- Consider how your communities can prevent CSEC
Questions to Consider

- Do you think you might have encountered CSEC? What would you do differently now?

- What groups or individuals would be key to help you with this in your school and community?

- What can your school and community do to combat trafficking? What action steps are you and/or your school willing to take?

- Where is demand coming from?
To Report Suspected Human Trafficking

1-888-373-7888 (National Hotline)

Local FBI Office

911 if immediate danger
Contact Information

Central Missouri Stop Human Trafficking Coalition
help@stophumantraffickingmo.com
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