

Determining the Vulnerability Factors, Lures and Recruitment Methods used to Entrap American Children into Sex Trafficking

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Abstract

This article aims at gaining insight into the lives of human trafficking victims in the United States and, more specifically, female domestic minor victims of sex trafficking. Understanding how family dynamics and the breakdown of the American family have created vulnerabilities in victims to being lured into the life of domestic minor sex trafficking in America is an important research study. Through the historical case study research here, survivors Stories and tragedies will come to life. In this study, an examination was made to understand what particular lure became effectively used to exploit the child through sex trafficking and what tactics or recruitment methods traffickers used, as well as the pimp characteristics that led to trust in the trafficker. Prior exposure to poverty, abuse in the home, exposure to drugs and alcohol, and basic needs for love and affection, food, clothing, shelter and security are all contributing factors to susceptibility, the very vulnerabilities that become preyed upon by human traffickers. This study provides insight as to how traffickers use the weaknesses and mirror needs not presently available in the child's life like parenting, romantic or home-like family relationships (thus creating the trafficking bond and pseudo family) to create the trust gained by the child. By examining how the breakdown of the family, bonds, and lack of appropriate coping and conflict resolution skills have left the child open to, and predisposed to, becoming lured into the life of sex trafficking we will prevent future trafficking of Americans. By providing this valuable insight gained in using the qualitative study research, we will be examining real life historical case studies of survivors and see the effect of trafficking on American children and the potential impact on our whole social system.

Keywords: Domestic minor sex; Human trafficking

Introduction

If domestic violence and abuse within the home is taken more seriously, then fewer children would be at risk of being recruited and sold into sex trafficking. The goal is also to bring to light the effect of domestic violence, but also to help create awareness to the need of actively teaching effective coping and conflict management skills in order to avoid future recruitment and breakdowns in our social system and avoid future trafficking of American children. Children who come from broken homes have in many cases not learned healthful ways of coping with life's tragedies. Many times children who come from broken homes where there has been a background of abuse and neglect lack effective conflict resolution skills to navigate life effectively. This dissertation aims at identifying vulnerabilities in the lives of trafficked American children as well as seeks to gain and give new insight into the issue of teaching children effective coping and conflict management strategies.

According to Abraham Maslow's [1] hierarchy of needs, the theory supports the fact that every human being has certain needs that are present in each one's life. These needs that are present in us all are Self-Esteem, Love/Belonging, Safety/Protection, and Physiological (food, shelter, and clothing) needs. Adults who have a healthy foundation can often manage their lives effectively, but imagine a child who grew up without one or more of these basic needs being fulfilled. Well, it could be compared to that of a child who was to grow up without one of their limbs; yes, it is that important. The difference is that a missing limb is evident to all, a missing internal limb such as one of these described through Maslow's hierarchy of needs, remains invisible to the naked eye. However, there are triggers in a child's life that is experiencing a 'missing internal limb', once those triggers are pulled the child becomes hooked, thinking they have found the doctor who can cure their ailment for a missing internal limb. The problem is, many of these 'rescuers' 'healers' 'friends' are actually wolves in disguise. Looking instead not to

heal or help or save, but rather to injure, to cause more harm than good, more damage to their internal psyche and with sex trafficking comes injury of physical, sexual and additional emotional trauma, enough to leave the child or adult limping for life with wounds many times unseen to the naked eye. The key is being able to draw those out who have experienced this type of confusion and trauma bonding in order to help them come to terms with the reality and at the same time, help break that trauma bond that has been created. Here, we seek to discover the safest ways to do this.

This phenomenon was examined thoroughly and one by product will be to provide those within the anti-trafficking field a better understanding of how to break the bond with traffickers and the victims, replacing it and dealing with the real issues underlying this cause and effect. The study used real life cases and historical data collected via secondary case study research which was conducted by the researcher in another role, that of a nonprofit and survivor leader. In examining the collected data, categories were formed to justify the theories of power and conflict, trust development and how to break the trauma bond formed. Understanding the effect of past familial similarities to abuse, aggression and violence, prior exposure to drugs or alcohol and poverty, will help society to see the correlation of the breakdown of that family dynamic to future trafficking. All of these theories were

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formulated into a new theory which explained the vulnerability of domestic minor children to being trafficked and the lures that were used by traffickers to trap their prey, American children.

This topic merits exploration over time in a sustained and systematic manner because the problem within our society is ever increasing. The societal needs in this area call for an American awakening to the issue and a call to action to prevent this devastation from advancing.

From survivors to survivors [1]

Considering my effort in the field to develop survivor leaders, I have had the privilege of encouraging other young women on their journey toward healing and success, and as a result they too have wanted to come forward to share their stories.

The following data collection and analysis have come out of these much needed conversations and efforts and with their permission they have granted me the use of their stories to help other survivors.

They were very reluctant to share with those who are non survivors and had not experienced trafficking so I count it a privilege when they are willing to open up and share their stories. I have had the honor of hearing the stories from boys in the public school system as well. I take every shared story to heart because some of these depictions are the most horrific stories I have heard. Many of these individuals would never have shared their stories had I, a survivor, not been first willing to share my own pain and story of victory and triumph!

As participants, they all were domestic minor victims of human trafficking. Their historical case studies were then examined by me for the purpose of discovering similar patterns among recruitment processes of domestic minor victims. I found similar lures and trafficking recruitment tactics being used as the cases studies of 37 participants were examined. All of these participants were American females who as children were recruited into the life of sex trafficking within the US borders.

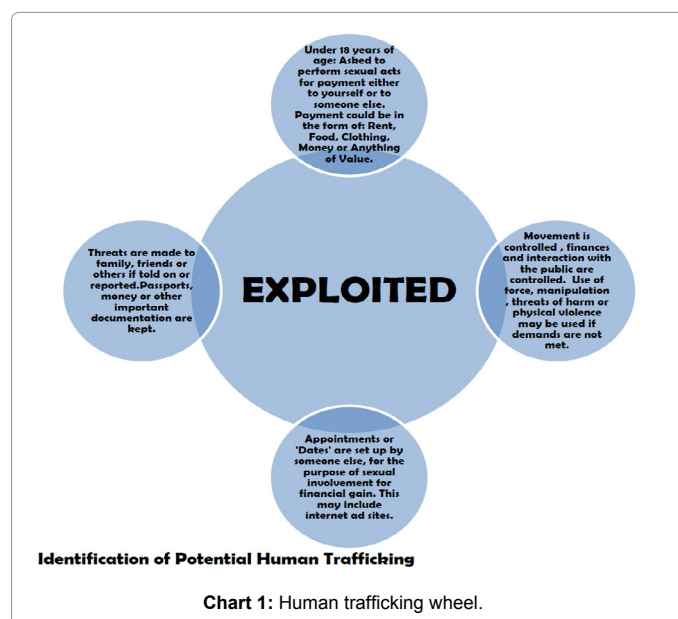
Tools used to rescue American domestic minor females out of sex trafficking

Identification of potential human trafficking: If you or someone you know can identify with any of these statements, you or they may be the victims of human trafficking. In such cases, United States law declares that you have been a victim and are not at fault (Trafficking Victims Reauthorization Protection Act of 2013). Please consider speaking with an adult to arrange for your protection or that of someone you know. Cooperation with law enforcement may save the life of you and or your family members or friends (Chart 1).

Statistics show that children who run away from abusive homes are very likely to be contacted by a trafficker within 48 hours, and they will not come across as someone whom you will suspect. Before running away from an abusive situation, please get help in finding a safe place. Call: 1-800-96-ABUSE.

For immediate Help: Dial 911 Abuse: 1-800-96-ABUSE Human Trafficking: 1-888-3737-888 Presented by There Is H.O.P.E. For Me thereishopeforme@aol.com www.thereishopeforme.org

The Human Trafficking Wheel that is indicated above is something that is used widely among social service, law enforcement and school personnel as well as detention centers to help them in properly identifying victims of domestic minor sex trafficking.



Abuse/trafficking assessment there Is H.O.P.E. For Me [2]

This survey is completely voluntary, you can remain anonymous. Please initial and date _____

Please Circle: Male Female How old are you? _____
Where are you filling this out? _____

Has anyone approached you to engage in commercial sexual activity? _____ How old were you when you were first approached for this? _____ Is this info. about you or someone else? _____

Did the person who recruited you KNOW how old you were at the time? _____ What city was this in? _____

How did they know how OLD you were? _____ Have YOU ever recruited another person into this Life? _____

What types of activity, specifically, were you asked to perform or Recruit for? _____ What is your religious background (For Example, Catholic, Christian, Jewish, other)? _____ How many sexual events took place? _____ How long were you in this life for? _____ Can you NAME some of the places this type of activity took place? _____ How long ago was it (Circle Most Recent One)? Less Than a Month 3-6 Months 6-12 Months Over One Year Where were you approached for this? In your School or other location (For Ex. Grocery, Store, Street, Church, and Park): _____

How much were you offered OR what type of payment were you offered to perform or recruit in this act or service? _____

What is Your School Grade Level? _____ Would you like to have someone help you in dealing with this issue? _____ Have you experienced any of the following growing up? Please circle ALL that apply:

Sexual abuse or rape physical abuse verbal abuse mental/emotional abuse spiritual abuse

Drugs or Alcohol in the Home Poverty/Homelessness Single Parent Home Foster Care/Group Home

Are you afraid of someone hurting you if you tell on him or her? _____ Describe the person who recruited you or got you involved in this (Ex. Boyfriend, Friend, Parent, Etc.) _____

Are you still in contact with this person? _____ How are/were you connected to this person? _____ What type of lure did they use to get you into the life? _____

Please put your information here OR any additional information that you think might be helpful such as locations, people or places where you know Trafficking to be going on OR if you would like to have someone contact you in helping you work through this in your own life: _____

What type of support/guidance do you need in your life to Help You? Circle: Abortion Recovery, Addiction Recovery, Clothing, Counseling for You or Your Family, Cutting, Domestic Violence/Sexual Abuse, Eating Disorders, Food, GED/Education, Help Talking to Parents, HIV/AIDS/STD's, Issues with Bi Sexuality or Homosexuality, Jobs, Maternity Help, Mentoring, Prayer, Safe Housing, Safety & Protection, Suicide, Other _____

For Help or Follow Up, Please Mail to: There Is HOPE For Me, Inc. 1440 Coral Ridge Dr. #208 CS, Fla. 33071 www.thereishopeforme.org You are valuable and No one deserves to be abused or exploitation Or email: info@thereishopeforme.org. There Is HOPE for Me, Inc., K.R. ©2012 [3].

These tools indicate what to look for in cases of domestic minor sex trafficking. Human trafficking survivors can read this and easily identify with the causes of their trafficking, thus coming to terms with the fact that they have been used, taken advantage of and exploited. These tools have made it easier for law enforcement, educators and others to due diligence in working with survivors of sex trafficking. By asking the right questions, children come forward and come out of the shadows, when someone finally understands that they are victims and not perpetrators of a crime.

Commonalities among Survivors

Through my research I have found a couple of common themes among survivors of domestic minor sex trafficking here within the United States. These themes have been identified through looking at the stories, quotes and phrases of the survivors themselves.

The following are the three main themes that I have found:

- Vulnerabilities
- Deceptive Recruitment
- Lures

The following are actual quotes taken from the Surveys that were historical case studies from the organization There Is Hope for Me, Inc.

The first Theme that emerged was Vulnerabilities; this theme came into view by seeing a consistent pattern of categories that fit under this theme. Those categories were:

- Lack of Family/Support System/Breakdown of the American Family

- Family Division/Conflict/Abuse
- Prior Exposure to Drugs/Alcohol/Prostitution in the Home/Basic Needs Not Met

The second Theme that emerged was Deceptive Recruitment; this theme came into view by seeing a consistent pattern of categories that fit under this theme. Those categories were:

- Recruitment Methods: Subtle Compromises
- Danger
- Familiarity Strategies

Finally, the third Theme that emerged was Lures; this theme came into view by seeing a consistent pattern of categories that fit under this theme. Those categories were:

- Money/False Fame
- False Friend/Boyfriend
- Characteristics of a Pimp: Pseudo Father/Family Met Basic Needs

Vulnerabilities

Family Division-“I was stressed out; my mom didn't help me with what I had to do and my needs”.

Family Division-“I snuck out of my house again like I usually did to go hang out with my friend”. “The situation with my mom wasn't so good. He knew that my mom and I didn't get along and that she didn't want me doing drugs when I was in the house”.

Prior Sexual Abuse – “Sexually abused by my neighbor at 11 years old”.

Family Division-“I was a runaway and I had been under a bridge. I was 14 years old”. “I had fought with my dad that night, so I was crying and really upset and stuff”.

“I had stolen a car to runaway to Miami because I wasn't from Miami, to get away from my grandfather who was also sexually abusing me”.

“I got arrested and they took me to a runaway home”.

Prior Sexual Abuse-“I was sexually abused by my grandfather from 8-14 years old”.

Alcohol in the home-Single father home, alcoholic.

Lack of Family Support/Breakdown of the American Family -“prior to meeting him, I was already on the streets. Doing like side cheap dates because I was a runaway and needed money”.

Prior Exposure to Prostitution in the Home-“My mom was in the life”. “I'd call relatives and say, I want a way out. I want to go home. But they would say no. I wanted help but I just never got it”.

Lack of Family Support/Breakdown of the American Family – “I was 15 when I first met my pimp”. “I had been in 30 foster homes by the time I was 16”.

Prior Exposure to drugs in the home-“At the time I wanted a family. Because my mother, she passed away from lung cancer when I was 12. My father passed away when I was five from diabetes. My mother wasn't there because she had mental – she was really addicted to cocaine and other drugs”. “Because when it came to basic needs that's kind of how I got into it”.

Lack of Family Support/Basic Needs Not Met-“This one particular story with a foster parent, she was obsessed with cats. Her cats peed all over my clothes; I didn’t have anything to wear to school. I asked for five dollars to wash laundry. She couldn’t supply that because she said she had to get McDonalds for breakfast for herself. I needed money for hygiene, for food, because she wouldn’t allow me to eat after 5. So I needed food, shoes. I was in foster homes from 14-16 until I ran away because, out of 30 foster parents, only one of them supplied me with clothes and shoes”.

Prior Abuse within the Home- “I was 13 I called the number for the sex abuse hotline. I had called and asked them questions. Like what would happen if I told someone, and called and asked them questions. That’s how I got into foster care. I had a grandmother who was raising me because my parents were deceased. She told me don’t tell anyone”.

“She was physically and mentally abusive. That’s where I got sexually abused. I wasn’t allowed to leave her house”.

Deceptive recruitment

Danger Online-“I was online and they had my friend’s picture, a friend I haven’t talked to in a long time. So I talked to her and then a month later one of my other friends told me that she died in a car accident a long time ago. And this person knew everything about me. It was weird. I think it was him though”.

Familiarity Strategies-Developed a close relationship in person ‘at his house’ for less than a month.

Public School Weekend Party-“And we were at a party down in the estates, we were doing drugs and everything, and he was just there. And we were talking and he offered to give me some pills. I was like oh ok, why not. And then he gave me his number and told me to come back and hang out. And then over like two month’s time”. “A girl at school who I knew him through”.

Familiarity Strategies-Developed an intimate relationship in person “I was talking to him like a normal friend or boyfriend. Then after two months he started asking me to do stuff for him”.

Recruitment Method-“A person is walking towards the corner store”. “I was walking on like a back alley kind of thing, and he pulled up in a car”. “I met him in a back alley on an abandoned road”.

Danger-“The younger you are the better for them”. The younger you are, the more money it is. Because of innocence, and that’s what everybody wants”.

Familiarity Strategies-“He invited me to his little brother’s birthday party and then he befriended me basically”.

Recruitment Method-“I met him walking to a gas station. At the time, I was a runaway. I was passing by the gas station”. He was “looking really good, and he was like, I could have bought you ten of those. And we exchanged numbers”. “I was 11”.

Recruitment Method (Subtle Compromises) Pictures-“It’s like, once I started with taking pictures, I met someone. I got introduced to the club life, and then it went from different levels”. “The massage parlor dude- he was a photoGrapher when I met him. And that’s what I went there for at first. Then he introduced the massage thing to me”.

“That led to all the others- escorting, stripping and massage parlors, porn”.

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Lures [3]

Money- “He wrote to me on Facebook asking if I liked money and I wanted to make money”. “He said that he was going to make me get money”.

False Boyfriend / False Love-“He was really nice at first. And then after like a while, I don’t know, he wasn’t as nice. But I thought he was nice. Then he’d always tell me he was sorry and would make it better”. “Like the first time it was one of his friends – told me to have sex with him for drugs and money. He told me that would make him happy”.

Money & Drugs-“He always like gave me drugs or money”

Characteristics of a pimp/pseudo family-“and helped me when I ran away or got in trouble at home”. “So he always said that I had a place to stay”.

False Friend- “He had one of those tricks come up to me, she told me to come see her and stuff like that. Long story short I did, and I just kind of like fell into the situation like that at the corner store”.

“I was crying and stuff, and he was like just come take a ride with me. I’ll take care of you, and we’ll go get something to eat. And then I did, and then it turned into that”.

Money-“I was young. I was naïve. I fell into their false statements and stuff”. “After that he took me to ... house and he was like, this is what we do, look at all this stuff that we got, and we want you to join us”.

Peer Pressure-“At first I was like no, no, I don’t want to do that. I got peer pressured in, I was like 14”.

Characteristics of a Pimp -“I always saw him around girls that kind of dressed trashy”. “I didn’t really take a look at him and judge him the way I should have”.

False Boyfriend / False Love/Money-“He would come pick me up, took me out to eat, took me to get my nails done, gave me money for clothes, would just-give me things”.

“He was 26”. “It was somewhat romantic”.

Characteristics of a pimp/pseudo family- “I felt like my relationship was the best. He made me feel like I was special and what I was doing wasn’t wrong”. “It was more of a relationship. So what made me trust him I would say is, he made everything seem like it was benefitting us. It’s to help US. Like if I ever discussed ‘I have had this many dates, I’m done’. He would remind me I had bills. He would remind me I need food, shelter and clothes. And he’d be like, is that enough to live off of? So basically ask me questions to make me think I had to keep going”.

False friend/Money- “I met him through a friend, someone who knew someone”. “The strip clubs, I was told I could make a certain amount of money with not having sex. But once you get into the business you learn that it’s a completely different story”. “And the escort business. I was just like; I’m already in it, who cares. I might as well make extra money”.

Characteristics of a pimp- “All the pimps I have ever known do not refer to themselves as pimps. They call themselves partners, business partners”.

False Fame- “With the first photoGrapher – I started thinking why is he wasting his camera roll on this – why is he wasting his time. Because those cameras aren’t cheap. Nothing’s really free. I’m 16 so why am I getting all this for free. I signed something when I was 16. I didn’t know what I was signing at the time”.

Met Basic Needs- “I was a runaway and needed a place”.

False Love- “I needed love. I never had ‘safe’ love, I never knew the difference”.

Meet Basic Needs- “At this time I was really going through a lot. I was not living at home. I barely ate so times were very hard”.

Meet Basic Needs- “I had to eat every day, every night”.

Meet Basic Needs- “Ice cream, later in life \$800”.

Money- “\$\$\$, Jewelry”

Statistical data findings

25 Participants Surveyed

Here we can see out of a total of twenty five voluntary participants surveyed in South Florida, that the highest age of recruitment into the life of sex trafficking here in the United States was 16. The second highest was age 15 then fourteen then thirteen, all attributing to the vulnerability factor being that of the age of the child.

Most cases reported for age of recruitment were from 16 (7/25 cases reported), age 15 there were 5/25 cases reported, age 14 there were 4/25 cases reported, age 13, there were 3/25 cases reported, ages 12 & 11, there were 2/25 cases reported and finally tied for least were ages 8 and 17 there were only one case reported in each of those categories (Graph 1).

Average Rate for Sex with an American Child

25 Participants Surveyed

All Female American Children who were trafficked within the US.

The depiction of average rate for sex with an American female child was approximately \$500. Prices reported by these children ranged from \$40 per for a sex act with a seventeen year old, \$150 for a sex act with a 14 year old, \$500 for a sex act with a 12 or 16 year old, \$550 for a sex act with a 13 year old, \$800 for a sex act with an 8 year old, \$2,000 for

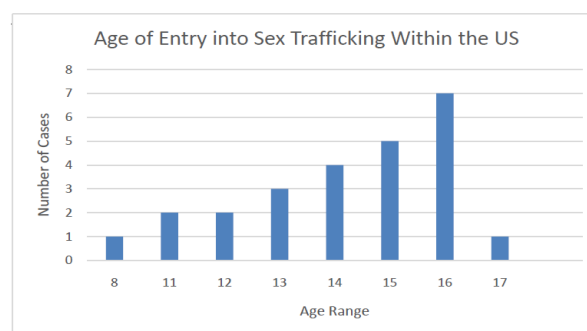
a sex act with an 11 year old to finally \$3,000 for a sex act with a fifteen year old. These prices were not all from the same pimps or trafficking ring, socio economic region and therefore do not reflect the market as a whole. However, these have simply been the accounts of domestic female minor survivors of sex trafficking here locally within the South Florida region (Graph 2).

The recruitment lures that have been documented to have been used in to exploit American children are based on Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs Assessment and therefore is grouped together to in groupings based upon those common needs (Graph 3).

Self-Actualization being the lowest and is nonexistent within trafficking cases. The second to lowest was the self-esteem (commonly seen when girls who were recruited were in the beginning believing to be lured into false modeling and acting scams).

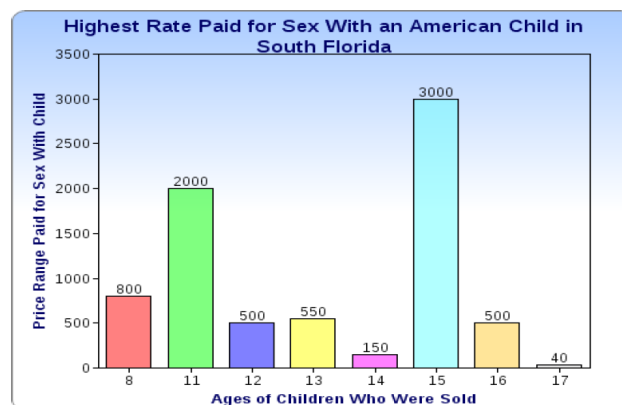
The third to lowest category was the Physiological needs that were being met. When physiological needs are present, the trafficker would use items such as the following to recruit the child into the life of sex trafficking. Such items were food, clothing, shelter (a place to stay).

Safety ranked second to highest in recruitment process, having twenty cases identified through this method. When ranking safety lures or offers for opportunities of secure work, safety and consistent needs being met were used.



25 Participants Surveyed

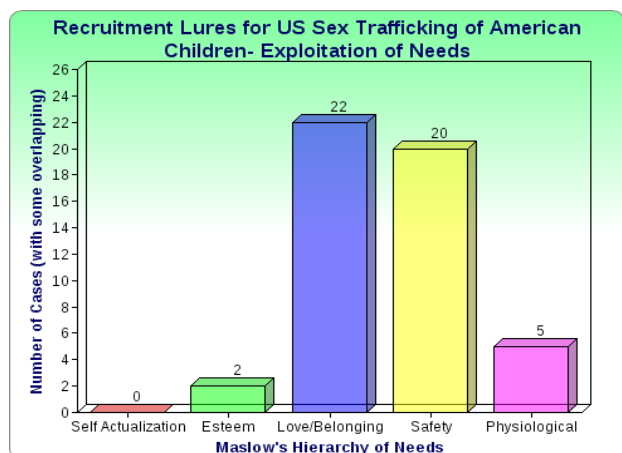
Graph 1: Statistical data analysis. Age of entry into sex trafficking within the US.



25 Participants Surveyed

All Female American Children who were trafficked within the US.

Graph 2: Highest rate paid for sex with an American child in South florida.



Graph 3: Recruitment Lures for US sex trafficking of American children - Exploitation of needs.

The final and highest category in Maslow's hierarchy of needs being used to recruit and lure girls into the life of sex trafficking was Love and Belonging. This was the highest and most effective recruitment tool that traffickers had used on young and vulnerable girls to being recruited. Out of 32 girls surveyed, 22 (that is more than half) were duped into believing the lie of a false boyfriend, false father figure, false family that mirrored their own desire for this basic human need of fulfillment. With this the traffickers momentarily succeeded to trap their prey, only later to find out they were fooled, left victims of trafficking feeling betrayed at a very deep level. Because of their basic need being met initially here, they soon found themselves attached to their trafficker in this trauma bond, hoping beyond all hope to replace the false lure with something real once it became evident of the truth and fact that there was no real love ever present there in the first place.

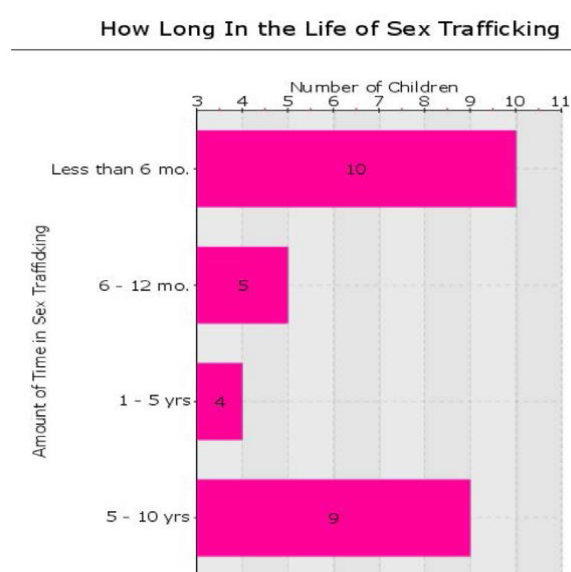
There is no formula to determine how long a child will remain in the life of sex trafficking. Most say that until someone comes along and helps them out, they did not know they were victims of a crime or that they could be helped out of it. The majority were in the life of sex trafficking for less than six months, 5 indicated 5-12 months, 4 were in it for the long haul 1-5 Years and finally 9 girls who had been recruited as children remained in the life of sex trafficking for over five years (Graph 4).

The Graph 5 chart shows the full gambit of children who have been recruited into the life of sex trafficking in the US, from less than 6 months up to 10 years in the life. Out of 28 participant's cases, the most number of participants indicated they had been in the life for less than 6 months prior to getting out of it. This is an encouraging figure especially in light of the opposite, if someone who is recruited as a child does not get too early, they are seemingly more likely to stay in the life for 5-10 years. If early anything can be gained by this, it is that early detection of trafficking will prove to be deterrence to adult engagement in the life of commercial sex. When a child is introduced to the life of commercial sexual activity, there are other effects that come along with life, the longer they are in it, the more it becomes normalized and even a part of their identity.

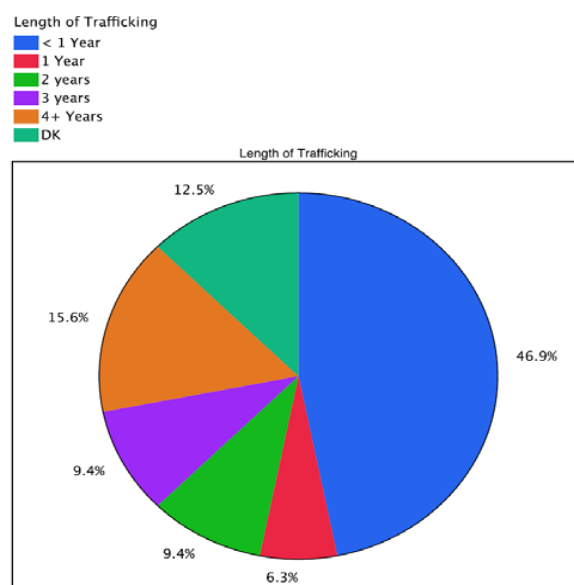
With 6-12 months having only 5 participants, there is hope for them to come out even after almost a year of involvement. 1- 5 years involvement in the life of sex trafficking showed there were four participants who had been engaged for that amount of time. Finally,

the most difficult cycle to break was the longest amount of time, 5-10 years. Having 9 participants engaged in the life at that time showed how probable it is for children who get involved in sex trafficking become many times addicted to drugs and addicted to the lifestyle and lose themselves, their identity and their future to what they have only known.

The majority of victims who were recruited into the life of sex trafficking were snatched up within only a month of talking to and communicating with their trafficker. There were 2 girls who indicated they had been recruited over the course of 1-4 months, 3 who had experienced their grooming process from 5-8 months (usually a family member or someone who was closer to the child), then only one indicated she was recruited after the passing of her mother by her mom's pimp/boyfriend after 9-12 months of gaining her trust (Graph 6).



Graph 4: How long in the life of sex trafficking.

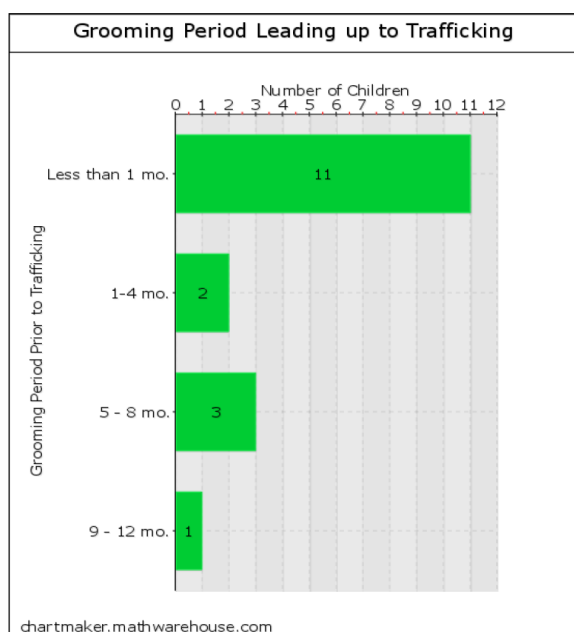


Graph 5: Length of trafficking.

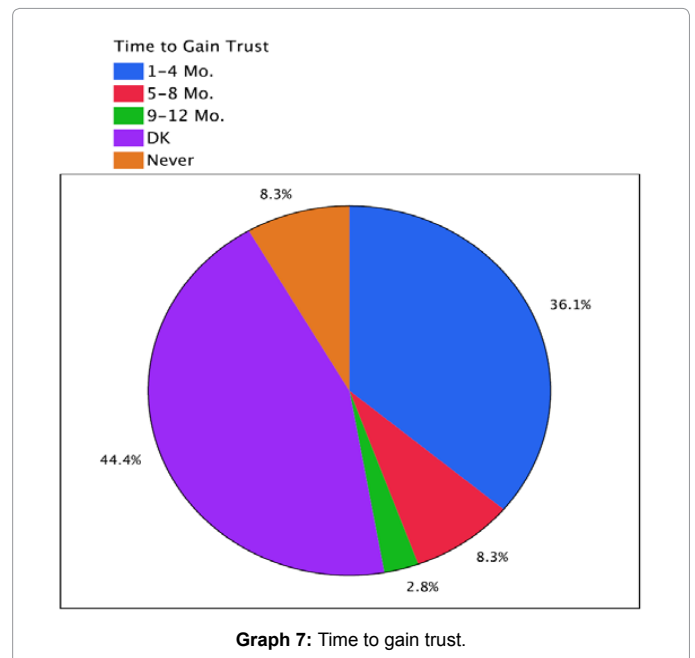
Human trafficking rings prey upon the vulnerable and innocent in society. They themselves have found a system that works in recruiting and trapping children into the life of the sex industry. These trafficking cases reveal that the least amount of grooming time it took to recruit a child and that which became most effective was less than one month, whereby 11 children had been recruited into the practice of sex trafficking. Unfortunately, when children's boundaries have been broken down, or they have a need that is present in their lives (a vulnerability), or they have been taken advantage of before by someone, they may not have the proper coping skills and become prey to the trafficker's tricks and deceitful ways (Graph 7).

Some trafficking rings may not be as proficient and will require 1-4 months to recruit a child into the act of sex trafficking. There were 2 cases that indicated their recruitment process took that many months. The third group was 5-8 months which showed 3 participants who had become engaged in sex trafficking through this time period. There may have been a family friend, or other familiar person in their lives that caused the grooming process to take 5-8 months. Finally, there was only 1 who took from 9-12 months and that was because her mom's boyfriend began recruiting her at age 17. When her mom died, then he began to pimp her out, which is the reason that her grooming process took a little longer than usual.

Here over 22 children participated in this surveyed question about what type of commercial sexual activity took place while in trafficking. The majority (20) said street prostitution where they were required to walk along common streets or the track to solicit a sale. The next was escorting either online or through some form of escorting service whereby the trafficker would set up the dates telephonically or through online services even via Backpage or Facebook or social media dating websites. 17 indicated being used in that type of trafficking, through the means of being ordered up or delivered to someone's house or location. 9 indicated that they had worked in the porn industry as a child, and 5 worked in the exotic dancing or strip club environment while only one female minor indicated working as a masseuse in a massage parlor as a US citizen (Graph 8).



Graph 6: Grooming period leading up to trafficking.



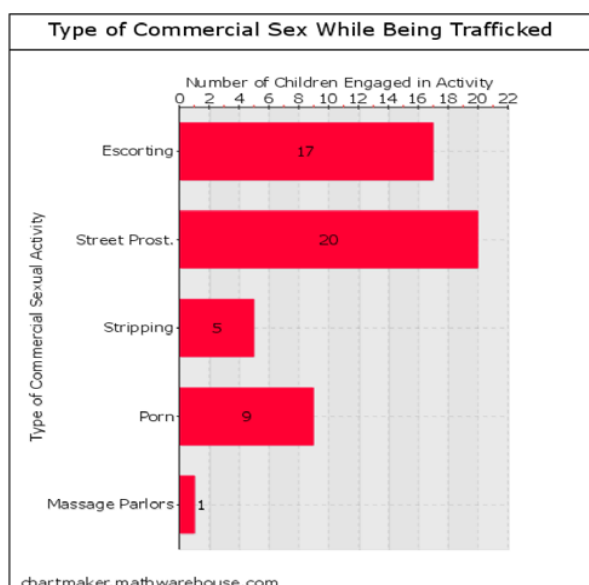
Graph 7: Time to gain trust.

Under the TVPA, anyone engaged in any type of commercial sex is automatically considered to be a victim of human trafficking. The commercial sex acts can be defined as escorting or online, street prostitution-that is walking the tracks frequented by customers looking to purchase sex, strip clubs (legally in Florida these are not allowed to hire anyone under the age of 18), pornoGraphy-that is the making of videos or taking of pictures for sexual purposes, and finally massage parlors which are used for exotic purposes (Graph 9).

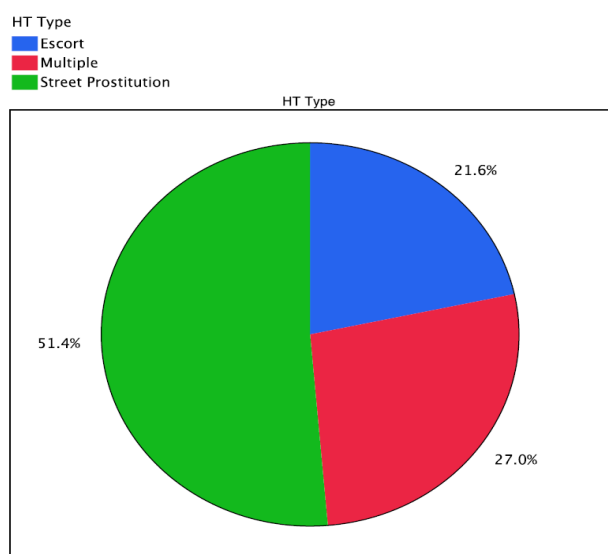
Out of the cases studied, the highest type of commercial sex that children were engaged in was street prostitution 20 cases, next was 17 cases involved in escorting (being driven to houses, hotels or locations) (either of these forms of commercial sex could have had interaction with brothels), pornoGraphy had 9 cases followed by stripping with 5 and massage parlors having one case of a domestic minor female. There were extreme cases where girls had been trapped into all forms of sex trafficking. Traffickers do not care about the girls, as long as they can use them for their own purposes and gain money from the use of their bodies, they will.

Human trafficking is a criminal act and the way patrons for this industry are recruited is listed in the above table. There were 27 participants who indicated they were being sold by their trafficker to those whom they met in person. 8 indicated they were being sold online, through websites such as Backpage.com or Model Mayhem, or even Facebook. These children had indicated their traffickers were using these outlets to solicit commercial sex for clients who were looking to purchase sex with children. Years ago traffickers used other Medias such as newspaper, 3 indicated they had been bought and sold through such media as newspapers. 1 had indicated being bought and sold in a strip club for commercial sex (Graph 10).

Most children who answered the survey question said that their number one need while being trafficked was help to Escape tied with the need for mentoring or support (someone whom they could trust). Close behind were mental health counseling for them and their families with 17 indicating that need, 16 indicated they needed basic needs like food, shelter, clothing and basic needs. 11 needed medical



Graph 8: Type of commercial sex while being trafficked.



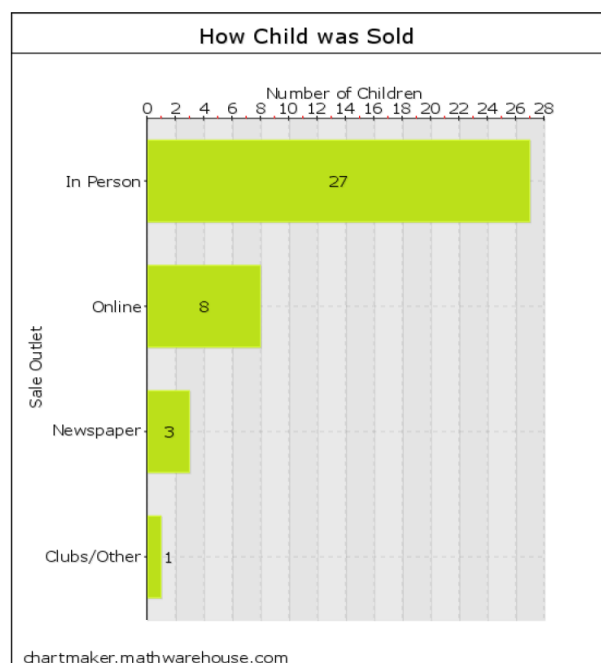
Graph 9: HT Type.

attention, 6 were seeking a way out through alternative employment, 3 needed some form of addiction treatment to help them cope with the drug abuse, 2 wanted another life through a better education, and one needed help with cutting, another with issues relating to their sexuality, one identified their need for domestic violence help and one indicated needing help sorting through spiritual abuse and need for prayer (Graph 11).

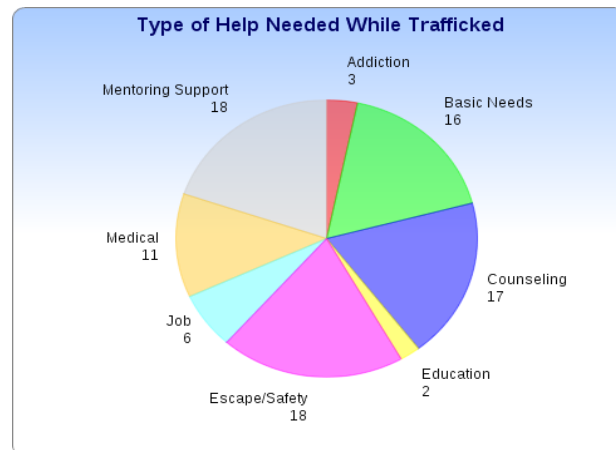
Children who get caught up in the life of sex trafficking are many times deprived of their average, everyday basic needs. Of course, they wanted help getting out as 18 participants had indicated they had wanted to get help in escaping their trafficker/trafficking situation while they were still in it. 18 also would have liked help in mentoring or support so they felt they were not alone, someone to guide them

and walk them through the process would have been helpful. 17 saw their need for individual or family counseling as a way to better their lives. There were 16 participants who indicated they had basic needs for food, clothing and shelter that were not being met while they were in trafficking (Graph 12).

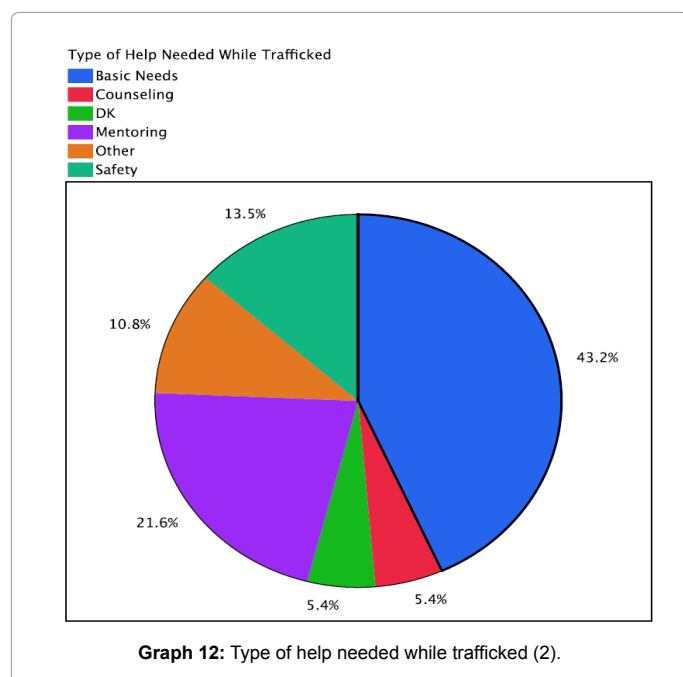
11 children needed medical attention for sexually transmitted diseases, wounds, and abrasions due to their trafficking incidents while in that life. 6 desired to gain help in another type of employment, if some other form of work came into their life they would have been more easily able to get out of the life. 3 girls were in need and desiring help with their addiction issues and 2 had desired to gain a high school or some form of education. Some struggled with domestic violence, cutting, bisexuality and need for prayer support. All of these needs



Graph 10: How child was sold.



Graph 11: Type of help need while trafficked (1).



were valid but many could not have access to them at the time of their trafficking, so these needs had gone unmet for much of their time in trafficking (Graph 13).

From 12 participants who chose to answer this question on their survey, 9 indicated that they had believed in God in some form and were believed to be born again Christians, 1 came from a Jewish home, while 1 identified with being a Catholic and 1 was of another religion. Their faith in God seemed to be in tact as they discovered the reality of their plight, and seemed to never give up hope or faith that someone would come and find them or help them to escape/get out of that life somehow. Eventually all of them were released from that prison.

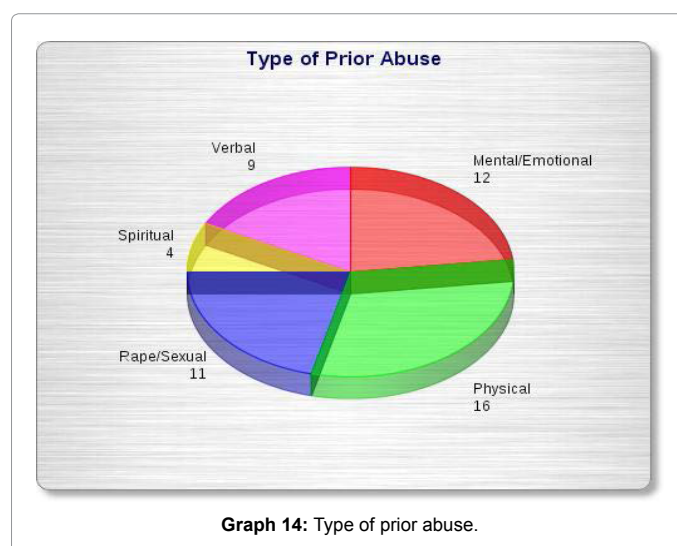
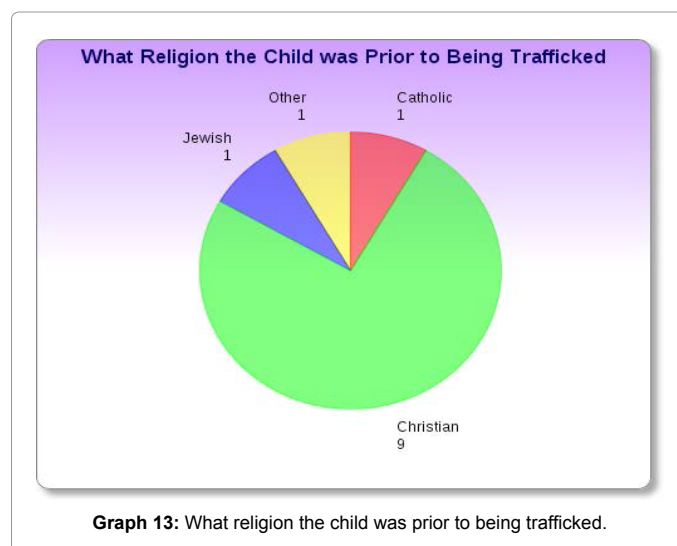
Prior abuse within the home sets a child up to be predisposed to trafficking. 16 participants indicated that they had experienced prior physical abuse within the home or by a caregiver, 12 had experienced mental or emotional abuse growing up within the home, 11 participants indicated that they had previously experienced some form of sexual abuse or rape/molestation as a child. 9 participants indicated some form of verbal abuse (the use of an adult figure's mouth to tear them down with words and anger). 4 had been spiritually abused also by an adult figure in their life. While most of these participants experienced some extreme form of prior abuse, many but not all experienced multiple effects of abuse being sexual, physical and verbal, for example. While not all had been abused by their fathers, all had some form of prior abuse within the home prior to being trafficked. When prior abuse is experienced within the home, it predisposes a child to the normalcy of it and causes children to adapt to an unhealthy environment, once again not learning how to cope effectively with the outside world. Many times when you are abused within the home, it creates a sense of where you belong; this faulty belonging can be seen as a predisposition of abuse victims to becoming trafficked (Graph 14).

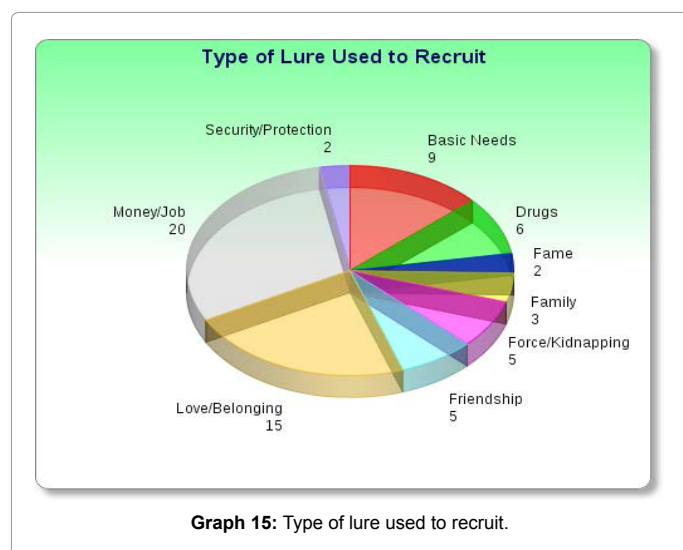
With all of the predispositions in place at this point in a child's life, from prior abuse, prior exposure to drugs & alcohol, poverty or homelessness, and single parenting (a hole missing for the absent parent), it is no wonder than why or how the trafficker/trafficking ring can then gain easy access into the heart of that child. The above Graph

depicts how and what type of lures were used to gain access into the life of the child. The greatest or most effective lure was that of money/ financial security or provision. The promise of a job or source of income for the child was what 20 participants had indicated as the biggest lure. But once a child was engaged in trafficking, that child was not fully aware or cognoscente as to what they had experienced or were engaging in Graph 15.

The next biggest lure used was a relationship which resembled love or belonging, which may have been that of a false boyfriend. These false relationships may have had some truth or genuineness, but in the end real love does not sell their loved ones.

The next category was simply food and basic needs like shelter, clothing, a clean bed or safe place to stay for the night (maybe leaving one abusive environment only to be recruited into a worse one), 9 had indicated this as a lure. A child who was just hungry became prey to the easy lure of going to get something to eat, or money for chips. It is not a crime or defect to have needs, but it is a crime to exploit a child for those needs. Children who are hungry should not be in danger of recruitment in America for human trafficking.





Some were recruited through the lure of drugs, 6 participants indicated this as way of gaining their trust into the life of sex trafficking. Once a child has been pre exposed to drugs or alcohol within the home, that child now has an added vulnerability. Some vulnerability are easier to overcome than drug addiction, however most addiction issues will require some form of intervention and lots of prayer in order to stop it. Children who have a trust wound, who are unable to bond easily to safe people because of a lack of love or true friendship/real love in their lives are more easily susceptible to being recruited through the use of false friendships. In the life of 5 sex trafficking survivors, they indicated that false friendships were their main lure of recruitment. One girl was recruited through her best friend while in foster care, when the FBI rescued her she was taken from the grip of an organized crime unit. Though her resolve was to better herself, she began to have doubts about staying safe and out of the life, when she was asked by her mentor from There Is Hope For Me, why would she return to an abusive and deadly environment where she was beaten regularly and forced to work in commercial sex while on her menstrual cycle or with fever, her response 'I can't leave my friend, she's my ride or die!' There you have it; someone who has a vulnerability of being recruited into the life through a 'Best Friend' is less likely to stay safe when they feel that is their only friend or worse, family. It is only through safe mentoring that these falsities can be broken and revealed, in this case it was recommended she work with law enforcement to help get her friend out as well, turning the tables on evil.

In the study, five children indicated that they had forced into sex trafficking through kidnappings. Mostly done through strangers, these children were lured into that life not by choice but by force. Others had some form of force but may have known who their traffickers were or where they were going initially. Three children indicated that they had been recruited through the use of family members or parents. Children who become recruited through parents were noted as having a family loyalty issue and sought to please or appease their family member in order to maintain the relationship. Other lures included fame or the promise of modeling or acting, or security-another one of Maslow's Hierarchy of needs that of protection or security. When leaving one abusive home life situation a child may be approached by a rescuer or protector only to later "owe" him and become prey to being pimped out.

Again, these children had no way of knowing what would lay ahead for them and in order to cope with their tragedy, they numbed out, died

internally and just accepted their fate, that is until fate stepped in and rescued them!

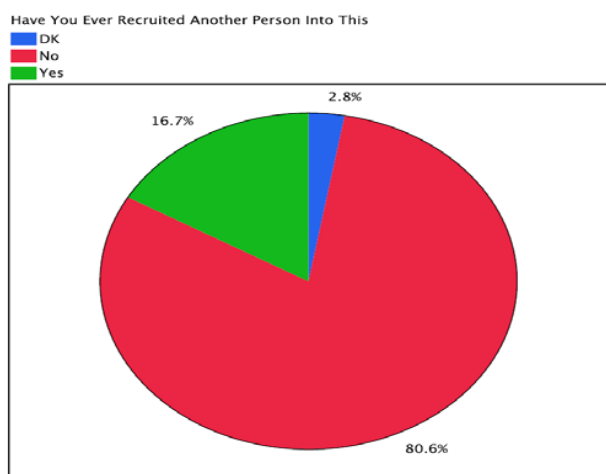
Many children who become recruited into the life of sex trafficking have done come through false friends or other children. Unfortunately, a child's need and desire for friendship/kinship can be turned on them when the trafficker send her out to 'go get that one', as was told by a fifteen year old to go and recruit a nine year old at a local park in South Florida. The child was unknowingly about to become a part of a sex trafficking ring which would take away her very innocence left at the park that day. Her recruiter knew what was waiting for her if she did not comply, beatings and more sexual exploitation. Further abuse and humiliation is what caused this teen to recruit her 'new' nine year old friend at the park that day. Being chained to a bed and sold night after night in a residential home (brothel) within the state of Florida was not what either of them had wanted or signed up for. Out of the children surveyed, six admitted to being told to or responsible for recruiting other children into the life of sex trafficking here locally (Graph 16).

On a larger scale of 36 females surveyed, only 16.7% said in the affirmative they had recruited others into the sex trade. Trafficking units use children to recruit other children for the purpose of gaining their trust. It is easier for a child to trust another child than an adult. Some children have been noted as saying they were forced into recruiting others or they themselves would be beaten or punished in some inhumane fashion as a result if they did not comply. If not all traffickers or trafficking units are the same, they may not all function in the same way as using young kids to recruit others (Graph 17).

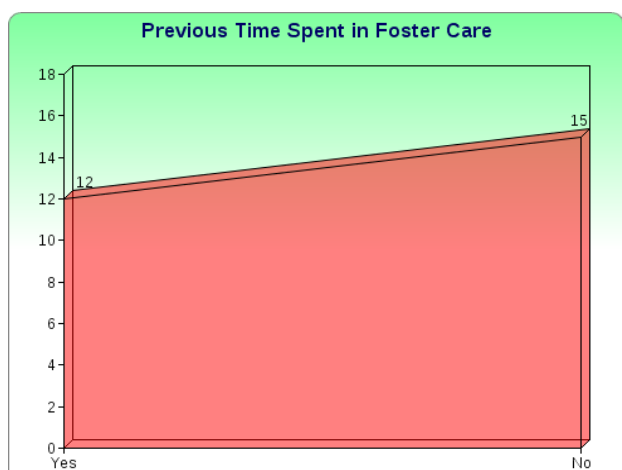
When a child is removed from their parent or home of origin, the child longs for a loving stable home life. As Maslow's [1] Hierarchy of needs points out (1962, a child has need for love/affection & belonging. When those items are not present, the child will search for any semblance of them and it can cause the child to be recruited once again into the life of sex trafficking! Sex traffickers know and understand this child's vulnerability and cause them to believe the lie of family, when in fact there is none; only disappointment and hurt await the child (Graph 18).

There is a misnomer that exists, which states that most trafficking occurs out of foster care. That most domestic minor victims of sex trafficking are foster care residents, this literature and research has proven that myth to be false. As depicted here within this Graph, it is evident that only 33.3% of domestic minor females who were surveyed





Graph 17: Have you ever recruited another person into this.



Graph 18: Previous time spent in foster care.

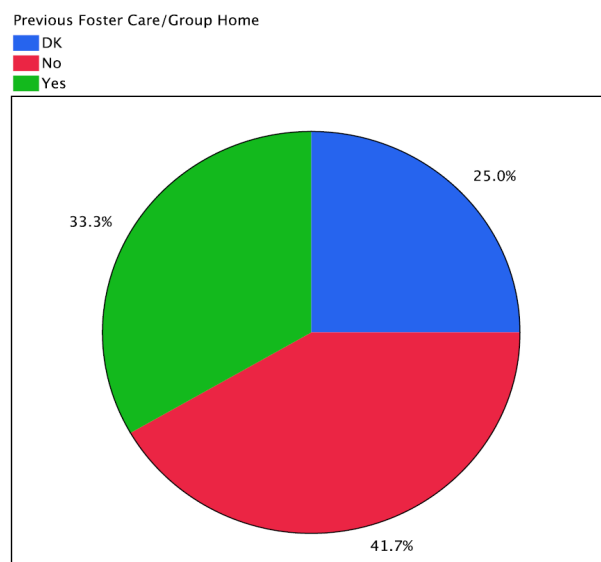
expressed any time in foster care. The majority was not in foster care or did not indicate it. Out of 36 domestic minor females who were surveyed, the majority were going home to the family not to a group home. The concern then arises as to how we as a society help the parents and families cope with the after effects of trafficking as a result of one of their family members being exploited (Graph 19).

When there is a pre exposure to drugs or alcohol within the home, the child has become normalized to the use of substances as a coping mechanism. Unhealthy conflict resolution skills are portrayed and without a healthy understanding of how to resolve conflict, the child becomes aware of an alternative unhealthy style of relating to life's challenges. Then it is only a matter of time before a trafficker can come and use this prior exposure to captivate a child into believing that their home like normal use of substances will be an acceptable way of life for coping with challenges and future conflict as well as normalizing its use, leading to addiction. With the addictive property present in substance abuse, a child will be less likely able to fight off traffickers. Once a child opens the door to drug/alcohol use, they cannot control what their bodies will do to receive the much required addiction, thus leading to an additional vulnerability to being recruited and sold into sex trafficking (Graph 20).

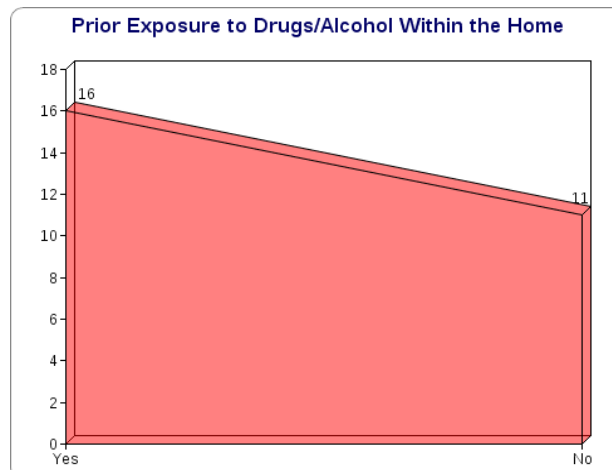
Being a single parent can be tough, having to work one or two jobs is not easy with children at home. Out of the 27 surveyed for these questions, the majority of 15 answered yes that they had come from a single parent home while 12 indicated they had two parents living at home at the time of their recruitment into sex trafficking as children (Graph 21).

When one parent is absent from the childhood home, there is a gap or 'mommy' or 'daddy' hole/wound that is left open liking a gaping wound. It will only be a matter of time before a trafficker/exploiter comes along and seduced this child through the missing piece in the child's life but in the end the child will be left with much more damage than healing, more gaping wounds than hope or help for their future. Single parent homes are also thought to struggle financially leaving the child with vulnerability, a missing parent and financial need (Graph 22).

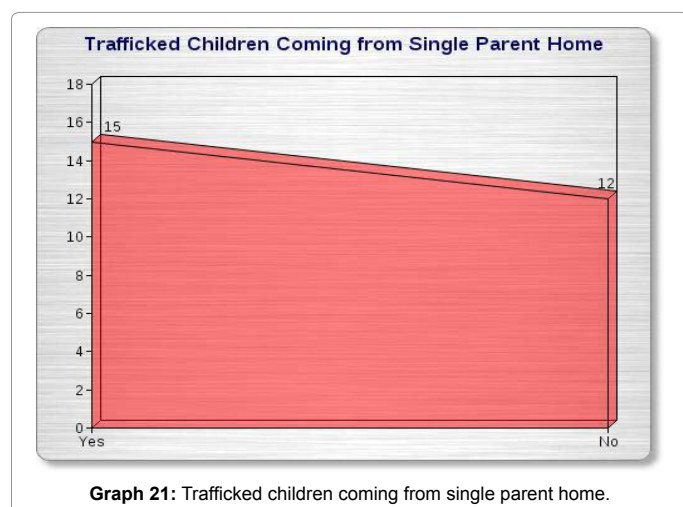
Out of the 28 surveyed for this question, half said that they had some prior exposure to poverty or homelessness, while the other half were not in need financially, growing up. The misnomer that all



Graph 19: Previous foster care/group home.



Graph 20: Prior exposure to drugs/alcohol within the home.



trafficking victims come from a poor background is broken here as light shed on this subject shows how there are just as many children who are trafficked who never experienced poverty or homelessness (Graph 23).

Out of 28 children, there were 14 who had been exposed to some form of poverty or homelessness during their childhood experiences. These children may walk away from those experiences with a lack of security financially and thus cannot overcome the fear of being homeless once again. Some children may have been recruited while homeless or have experienced extreme cases of poverty causing them to have gone without for most of their lives, so when a recruiter comes along with the intention of manipulating the child with promises of false gifts and money, this child is more susceptible to becoming recruited into the life of sex trafficking (Graph 24).

Out of 32 children who answered this surveyed question, 15 children said yes they had been forced into the life of sex trafficking. That is almost half! That is an alarming rate of children who claimed to have been forced in some way into the life of sex trafficking. While 18 said no they were not forced but the use of manipulation or some other lure to get them into sex trafficking (Graph 25).

Out of 33 surveys examined, there was almost half where children indicated that there was some use of force in their recruitment process. Many children who have gotten recruited into the life of sex trafficking are believed to be there because they are aware of their choices, however as these statistics show, almost half are forced into it through their captor/trafficker/recruiter (Graph 26).

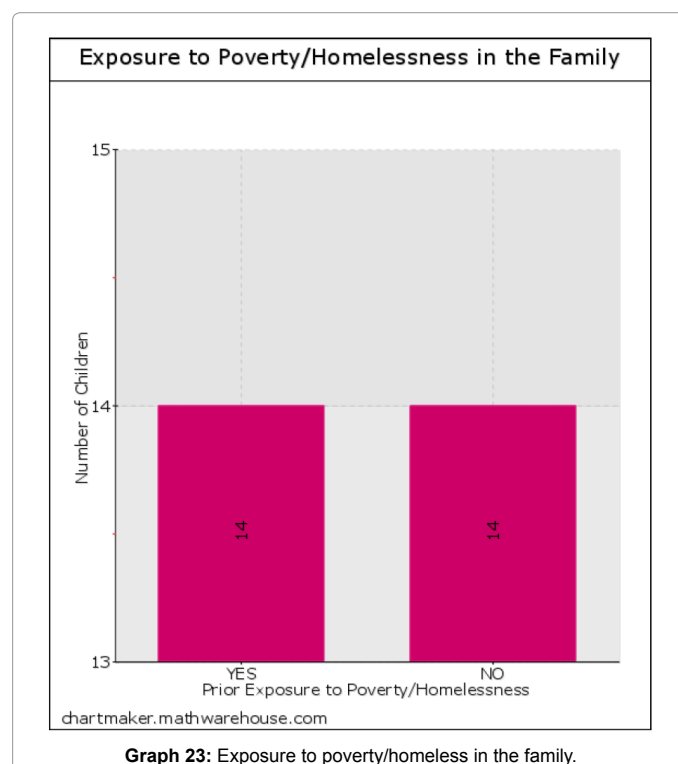
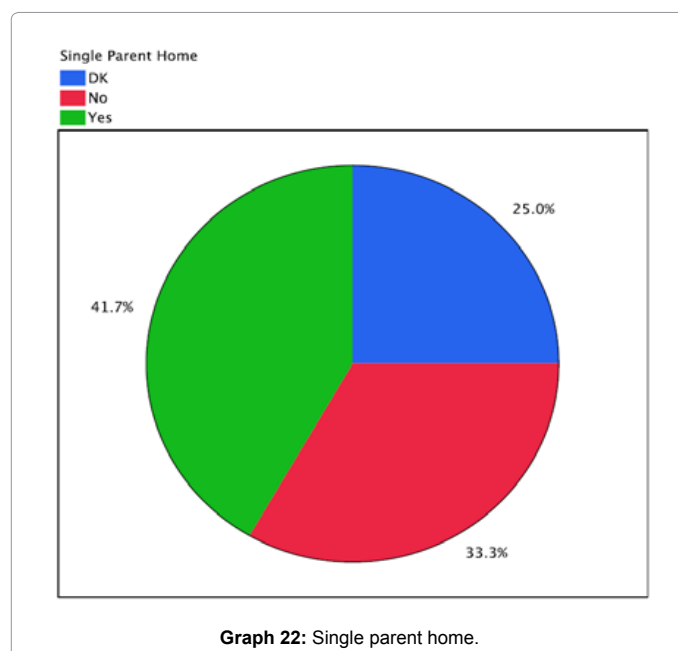
Human trafficking within the US looks different sometimes than that of international recruitment, there is usually a lot more manipulation than straight up kidnapping or by force.

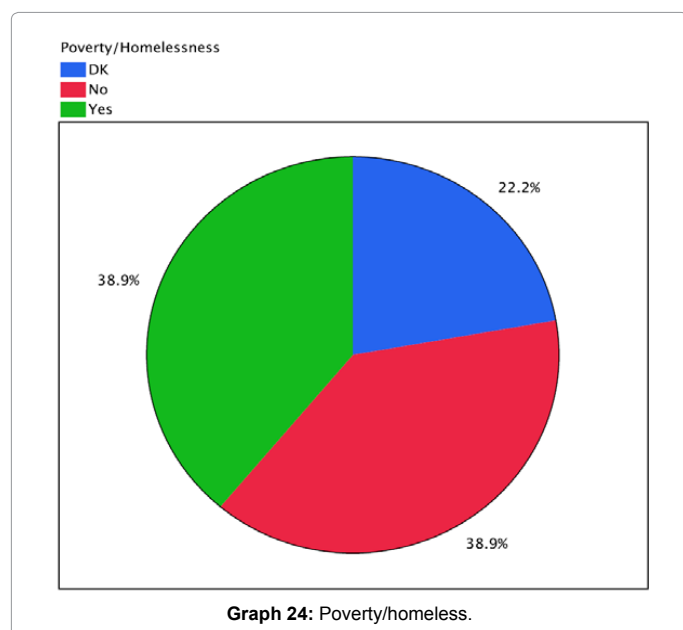
However, as indicated here, the child believed there had been force or some use of intimidation tactic used in getting the child involved in human trafficking.

Trafficking of minors is something that has cause for it to be a social concern, but especially when one's freedom of movement and liberty have become restricted.

In this Graph 27 chart, we can see that the majority of children have been recruited through someone posing as a boyfriend providing some form of false love, 12 cases. Real love does not sell their loved one. The second highest characteristic is that of a false friend, many

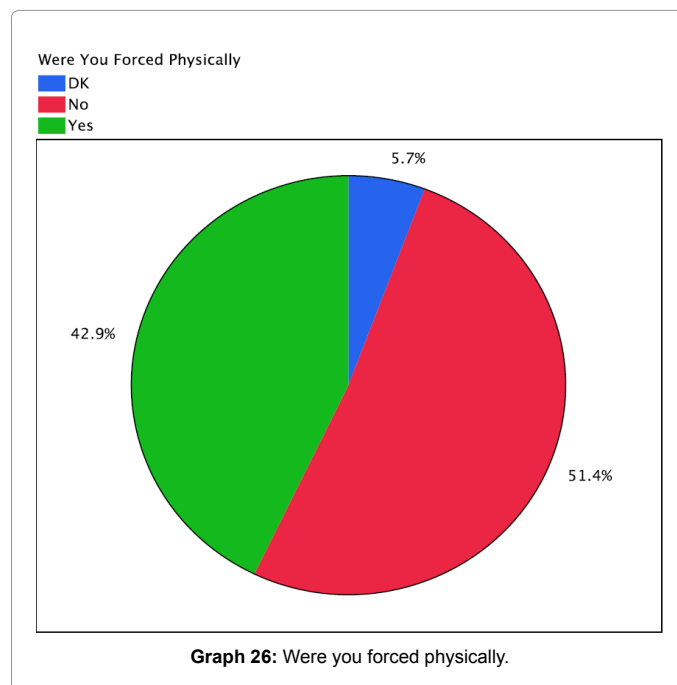
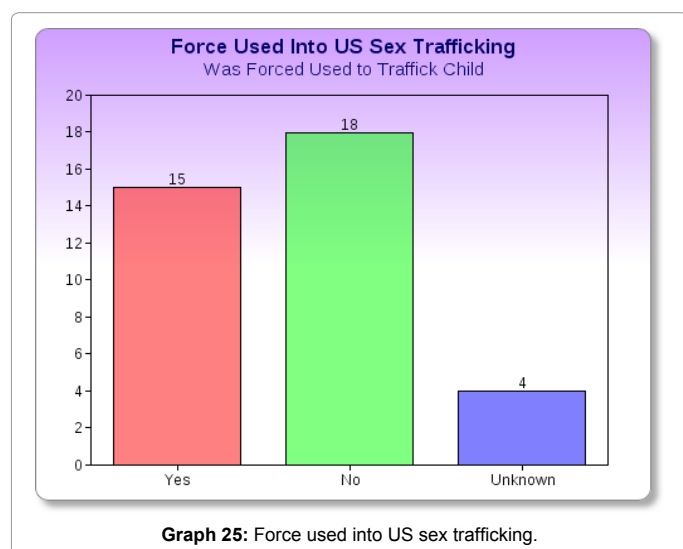
times even within their own school system, looking to recruit other vulnerable young people. There were also 12 children recruited through false friends! The third was the child's own parents. These are biological parents, not boyfriends or family members but rather the child's own mother or father or in some cases of extreme drug addiction, both parents. While parents in the US are thought to have all they need to maintain their livelihood, the sad unfortunate statistic seen here is that 6 out of 46 trafficking cases were actually induced by the victims own parents. Some of the sampling size has been repeated victims of human trafficking.





What all of these characteristics have in common is using the child's own need for love/affection, safety/protection, family/belonging, friendship and home to exploit and endanger them into the seedy life of commercial sexual exploitation. Taking their need and desire for hope and help and exposing them to harm, risk and danger.

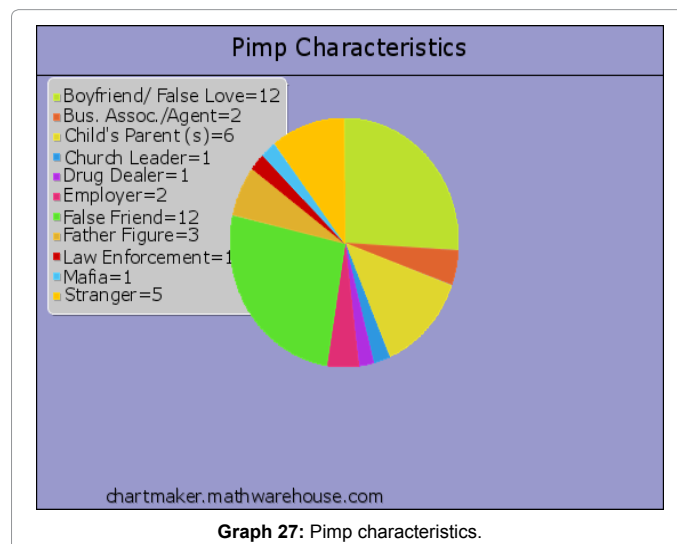
Once the child's trust was gained, the traffickers lured their prey away, sometimes far away to another state and locked them up in trailers or houses & brothels, our of all cases examined, brothels/houses used for sex purposes was the most common type of location where sex acts with children within the US have taken place. There is a notion that children are tough, but to endure sex trafficking repeated times is something that is unfathomable; such is the case for many of the survivors cases examined here. The next and seeming most obvious are hotels and motels where children are sometimes knowingly and sometimes unknowingly used for sexual exploitative purposes! An unusual place used for commercial sexual purposes, not commonly



The fourth most common characteristic is that of a stranger, someone randomly walking up to the child (an adult) and asking or offering some opportunity to the child. There were four cases of strangers approaching children and recruiting them into sex trafficking, some by force, some by manipulation, all by deceit.

Another common characteristic is a pseudo or false father figure. A child coming from an abusive home where there has only been unsafe fatherly affection does not know what the difference is between safe and unsafe love. A characteristic of a father figure was used in the lives of these girls to gain their trust then their need for love was turned on them as they became recruited into the life of sex trafficking simply because there was a safe father figure absent and missing from their lives.

Other pimp/trafficker characteristics were false employer/work looking to gain their trust from their need for financial provision/security and exploiting that for their own gain, law enforcement, church leader, drug dealer, business associate/agent, concerned couples and finally organized crime (which fuels a lot of this industry).



seen by the naked eye is in cars. Many girls who were forced into the life or being sold on streets were often approached by cars looking to purchase sex with a minor, these children were then taken to a dark place and the sex act was paid for and performed inside of the car (Graph 28).

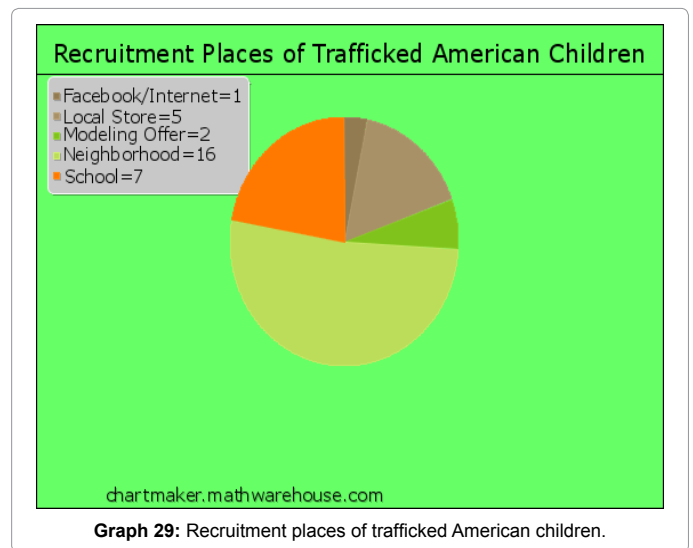
Families who engaged in commercially sexually exploiting their child allowed for their houses to be used and transformed into brothels, basements used for commercial sexual purposes. Other common locations include public school property, church property, convenience stores, gas stations, school parties and casinos, on the street or taken to the woods, offices, massage parlors or strip clubs. All of these cases indicate that human trafficking can occur right under the radar unnoticed by the average citizen, even in public places that should be safe for children and protected from criminal activity.

Top recruitment places for trafficked American children as surveyed within the South Florida region are depicted here in this Graph. The largest recruitment place is right in our own backyards, within American neighborhoods, children are being recruited. Common tactics include walking down the street in a local area and being approached by a trafficker who comes across as a neighborhood kid, friend, boy or safe person. Out of 32 participants surveyed, 16 were recruited in their very own neighborhoods. Out of 32 surveyed, seven said they were recruited in their public schools. Public schools are supposed to be safe, children are supposed to be allowed to be free and able to move about not trapped or recruited into sex slavery (Graph 29).

The next highest place for recruitment was the local convenience store where children would frequent to buy sodas and snacks. In this recruitment process, a trafficker may use the child's need for food or hunger which is why they go to the store in the first place, and instead it is used to recruit them into the life of sex trafficking.

False modeling scams and promises to boost self-esteem are being offered for recruitment into the life of sex trafficking. Once inside, children are coerced into signing, false modeling contracts. Recruiters prey on those with low self-esteem and thus use the false Hope of modeling, fame and money to recruit them into the trap and life of sex trafficking!

The final category was Facebook or Social media; this was used to



Graph 29: Recruitment places of trafficked American children.

recruit a young woman into human trafficking by traffickers setting up a false Facebook page.

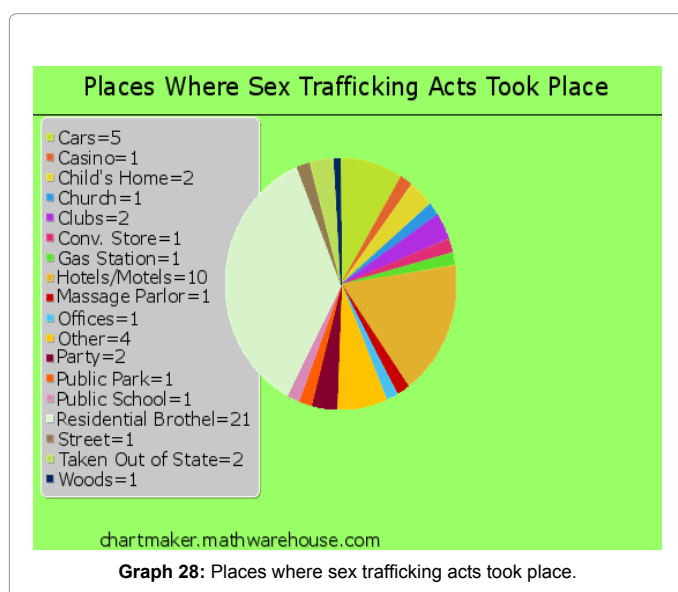
All of these recruitment methods were false and luring but in the end there was No Hope only disappointment leading to greater distrust of society as a whole.

Conclusion

I have tried my best as a survivor myself of domestic minor sex trafficking and abuse to be able to depict some of our issues, but in my opinion, it is truly only a drop in the bucket of knowledge that is ahead in facing the issue of human trafficking in America. Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking is a new term that has come out of the movement of human trafficking, the fact that it even exists is still a shock to many in our American society, let alone that our own over sexualized lust filled culture, power and money is the one which fuels this travesty and enables its existence. The study was challenging in many ways and I found myself being challenged in the role of researcher knowing what I do know about the issue. I made certain that all participants were out of the life of sex trafficking prior to using any of their information or at least were introduced to someone within the law enforcement field who could help them. I myself was in a place of vulnerability as I read through their stories knowing how challenging it has been for some of my girls to overcome their prior experiences and challenges and to come out a winner, ahead and an overcomer, there were and never have been just a statistic, they will and forever will be a success and overcomer!

The conclusion and use of this study in my opinion has brought light to something that I as a survivor have had to overcome in my own life and that is learning how to handle conflict and using conflict resolution skills to deal with and not avoid my life's problems. Learning to work through and handle life's conflicts and challenging situations can cause one to grow and mature, without taking that step though we will always remain dependent on society and others to rescue us.

In my opinion, more needs to be done within the schools, to educate educators, to help build collaborative approaches whereby law enforcement, state and federal prosecutors can do more to help enable and equip them for greater effect in stopping this crime. I am one, a forerunner, of what I hope to be many, but more importantly an over comer of this evil as an example of God's love and Hope in my life to



Graph 28: Places where sex trafficking acts took place.

bring this light to others so that they too may be set free!

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