Hand Out

Sex Trafficking: Psychoeducation Interventions Relevant to Parent-Child Attachment

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Introduction

Sex trafficking “the recruitment, harboring, transportation, and provision, or obtaining of a person for the purpose of a commercial sex act” (TVPA, PL 106-386, Par 9, 2000), is a $150 billion dollar a year industry (ILO, 2017). Trauma occurs as a result of exposure and vulnerability in stressful events (Saewyc & Edinburgh, 2010). Juveniles are the most susceptible and sought-after individuals for sex trafficking (Davy, 2014).

This research proposal focuses on the risk factors within familial systems and parent-child attachment relationships as leading to the vulnerability of juvenile sex trafficking. Interestingly, a review of the literature suggests that parent-child attachment relationships are indicative of life course dynamics leading to sex trafficking among juveniles (Reid, 2012), wherein various risk factors are realized. Among these risk factors, some are more prevalent as research attempts to investigate links that encourage juvenile sex trafficking (see Figure 1). Moreover, the literature revealed conflicts with parents before sex trafficking victimization increased the odds of a minor becoming trafficked by about 97% (Martin, Hearst, & Widome, 2010). Further, research suggests that minors who are insecure and lack a secure systemic base are at risk for being sex trafficked (Hargreaves-Cormany & Patterson, 2016). Thus, it seems necessary to explore the residual analysis of some treatment modalities for counselors to know what interventions are useful in treating sex trafficked juveniles (see Appendix A Poster Presentation).

Sample

Mental health counselors who work globally with sex trafficked juvenile survivors. Two million children are trafficked globally (international Labor Organization & Walk Free Foundation, 2017; Office of Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention, n.d.).

Discussion

Research supports our proposal that it is beneficial to provide counselors with evidenced-based interventions to decrease the trauma juveniles may experience from the inhumane crime of sex trafficking. Interestingly, in considering risk factors and vulnerabilities common among juvenile who are trafficked, various themes emerged that are indicative of pathways that may lead to sex trafficking behaviors. For example, survivors indicated that although there was often sexual, physical, and emotional abuse in their past, it was parental absence that led to their trafficking engagement. “I was bullied...my Mom was never around...When I first met [my trafficker], he looked at me and he took the time to learn my name, he said, “Hello. Hi.” And “I
was just so filled with [hands thrown up indicating excitement]-I loved that feeling so much!” (O’Brien, p. 7, 2018).

Significant risk factors such as child abuse, neglect, and running away from home can evolve from an insecure parent-child relationship (Brumariu, 2015). Outcomes reflected juvenile coping skills, mental health, and other life skills are susceptible to the downstream effects of such factors (Franchino-Olsen, 2019). Conclusively, an analysis of the risk factors and parent-child attachment data warrant a need for qualitative investigations for a deeper and better understanding of the counselor’s use of evidenced based interventions with survivors of trafficked juveniles. Thus, employing evidenced based interventions targeting trauma may be beneficial in developing standardize appropriate treatment methods.

![Figure 1. Prevalence of adverse childhood experiences among sexually trafficked and nonsexually trafficked offending juveniles (Naramore, Bright, Epps, & Hardt, 2017)](image)

References


### Appendix A Poster Presentation

#### Introduction

**Sex Trafficking:** The environment, trafficking, transport, and provision, or obtaining of a person for the purpose of commercial sex acts (TVPA, PL 106-386, Pub L 9, 2000), is a $150 billion dollar a year industry (ILO, 2017). Trauma occurs as a result of exposure and vulnerability to sexual violence (Shavers & Edmunds, 2010). Children are the most susceptible and single-offer individual cases for sex trafficking (Overy, 2014).

This research proposes to focus on the risk factors within familial systems and parent-child attachment relationships as leading to the vulnerability of youth sex trafficking. Interestingly, review of the literature suggests that parent-child attachment relationships are indicators of life course dynamics leading to sex trafficking among juveniles (Hidalgo, 2012), whereas various risk factors are found. Among these risk factors, some are more prevalent in research and may lead to identify factors that encourage youth sex trafficking.

Moreover, the literature reviewed indicates that factors leading sex victimization increased the odds of a minor becoming trafficked by about 75% (Martin, Hunter, & Wolowicz, 2010). Further, research suggests that minors who are insecure and lack a secure social base are at risk for being sex trafficked (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2015). Thus, it is necessary to explore the potential impact of parent-child attachment relationships and protective factors in order to identify risk and protective factors that may lead to a child's vulnerability, understand the patterns of attachment, and develop child protection and intervention programs. The current study examines the relationship between parent-child attachment and sex trafficking among adolescents.

**Research Question & Methodology**

**Purpose:** To examine parent-child attachment relationships and the associated risk factors that are linked to the vulnerability of youth sex trafficking and to create interventions that either the trauma experienced by the juveniles. **Does employing evidence-based psychosocial interventions and psychoeducation interventions reduce sex trafficked juveniles’ trauma?**

**Method:** The purpose of this study is to examine parent-child attachment relationships and the associated risk factors that are linked to the vulnerability of youth sex trafficking and to create interventions that either the trauma experienced by the juveniles.

### Sample

- **48 children:** Closely matched with Sex Trafficked Juvenile.
- **20 children:** Healthy children.

### Discussion

Research supports our proposal that it is beneficial to provide prevention with evidence-based interventions to reduce the trauma juveniles may experience from the inherent stress of sex trafficking. Interestingly, considering risk factors and vulnerabilities among youth who are trafficked, various themes emerged that are indicators of pathways that may lead to sex trafficking behavior. For example, services indicated that although there was often sexual, physical, and emotional abuse in the past, it was parental absence that led to their offending behavior. "I was bullied. My mom was never around. When I first met my trafficker, he asked me and he took the time to look at my name. He said, "Hello, Hi," and "I was just in love with [her] because she was so beautiful.""

### Statistics

- **Risk Factors:**
  - **Environment:** Family dynamics, parental involvement, peer influence, social support.
  - **Personality:** Low self-esteem, anxiety, depression.

### Results

**Risk Factors**

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### References