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


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)

References


Appendix A Poster Presentation

Sex Trafficking: Psychoeducation Interventions Relevant to Parent-Child Attachment
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Introduction

Sex trafficking is the “worst form of involuntary servitude, and provision, or obtaining a person for the purpose of prostitution, forced labor, or services” (TVPA, 2003, 1018). It can also be defined as a $150 billion dollar a year industry (O’Brian, 2010). Trauma occurs as a result of exposure and vulnerability to sexual violence (Sarrazin & Halsne, 2008). Children are the most susceptible, and single-child households are at increased risk for sex trafficking (Mol.V, 2014).

The research proposed focuses on the risk factors within familial systems and parent-child attachment relationships as leading to the vulnerability of juvenile sex trafficking. Interestingly, reviews of the literature suggest that parental attachment relationships are indicators of life course dynamics leading to sex trafficking among youth (Hoff, 2017), whereas certain risk factors are identified. Among these risk factors, some are more prevalent in research, while others are investigated to help understand juvenile sex trafficking. Moreover, the literature revealed narratives with children before sex trafficking victimization increased the odds of a mine becoming trafficked by about 75% (Martin, 1996). By Watson, 1996. Further, research suggests that minors who are unsupervised and lack a positive support base are at risk for being sex trafficked (Bryant & Kumar, 1985). Thus, it seems necessary to explore the familial systems and parent-child attachment relationships, because children are not able to cognitively know what interventions are useful in treating sex trafficked juveniles.

Research Question & Methodology

Research Question: What is needed to explore parent-child attachment relationships and the associated risk factors that are linked to the vulnerability of juvenile sex trafficking and to provide interventions that either the trauma experienced by the juveniles. Does employing evidenced-based psychoeducation interventions and other interventions benefit sex trafficked juveniles? Method: The purpose of this paper is to provide a PROPOSAL for qualitative exploration of the evidence-based interventions that are applicable to treating trauma in sex trafficked juveniles.

Sample

Mental health counselors who work globally with Sex Trafficked Survivors


Discussion

Counselors are beneficial to provide education with evidenced-based interventions to decrease the trauma juveniles may experience from the inherent crime of sex trafficking. Interestingly, in considering risk factors and vulnerabilities common among juveniles who are trafficked, various themes emerged that are indicative of pathways that may lead to sex trafficking behavior. For example, survivors indicated that although there was often sexual, physical, and emotional abuse, as well as past sexual abuse, it was possible that all led to their trafficking engagement. “I was bullied. My brother was never around. When I first met my trafficker, he looked at me and he took the time to listen to me. He said, ‘Hello. Hi,’ and ‘I was just in foster with [his former] and I thought we could bond that feeling so close’” (O’Brian, p. 7, 2010).

Significant risk factors included child abuse, neglect, and running away from home. Involving an interest in a romantic relationship (Blum, 2015). Outcomes offered counseling and social skills, mental health, and other life skills are susceptible to the interventions used in this study (Frampton-Smith, 2015). Conversely, an analysis of the risk factors and parent-child attachment relationships that emerge as useful for qualitative investigations for a deeper and broader understanding of the community’s use of evidenced-based interventions is worth more of a sex trafficked juvenile. Thus, employing evidenced-based interventions is beneficial in developing standards for appropriate treatment methods.

References