

# “To the Public, Nothing was Wrong with Me”

Life Experiences of Minors and Youth in Texas At Risk for Commercial Sexual Exploitation

**Final Report**

MARCH · 2019

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*I still want to go to school to be an adolescent psychiatrist and work with kids like my son. Like I still have all these [goals]. Everyone's like, "you've been through a lot," and I'm like, "yeah, but I survived it." I don't want it to control my life. People think I'm crazy, but I don't want to be that person. I want my kids and to live a semi-normal life.*

–Age 26, CH Female, Lubbock

# Contributors

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A study like this one, which is focused on giving voice to experiences that too often are ignored, misunderstood, or silenced, could not have been conducted without the help of hundreds of brave young people. Their honesty and resilience repeatedly humbled the research team; study participants sat through online screening tools and face-to-face interviews and willingly shared painful, traumatic periods of their lives as well as their goals for the future. It is our hope that the report's findings and recommendations honestly reflect and do justice to these lived experiences by reducing future victimizations and increasing awareness among service providers, healthcare workers, and child welfare advocates in Texas.

The research team recognizes the service providers, advocates, and policy leaders who are focused day and night on work to end human trafficking and to protect minors and young adults across Texas from exploitation.

We are grateful for the guidance, vision, and deep connections in the anti-trafficking field of the Child Sex Trafficking Team, Office of the Texas Governor. Todd Latiolais and Andrea Sparks, especially, were always quick to help when needed.

Camille Cain, Executive Director, and Karen Kennedy, former Deputy General Counsel, of the Texas Juvenile Justice Department recognized the value of screening adolescents in their department's care for potential trafficking experiences. Not only did they help us navigate the juvenile justice system, but they opened and then wedged stoppers under doors that we could never have opened ourselves.

Our site partners and their staff deserve special thanks for taking time away from their service work to advocate for our study among their clients and help us recruit participants. They provided quiet spaces in which to conduct screenings and interviews, and lent their credibility to our research. In an effort to protect the anonymity of our study participants, we will not thank these staff by name, but you know who you are, and we recognize the incredible contribution you make to the lives of the most vulnerable individuals across the state of Texas.

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Finally, we want to acknowledge the agencies across Texas with whom we frequently collaborate on research issues related to human trafficking in Texas, whose work to end exploitation, bring justice,

and ease suffering inspires us every day: SAFE Alliance, Allies Against Slavery, Texas Association Against Sexual Assault, Texas Council on Family Violence, Human Trafficking and Transnational/Organized Crime Section of the Office of the Attorney General of Texas, Department of Family and Protective Services, and the many local task forces statewide who have opened their doors to us.

# Findings At-A-Glance

## STUDY BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

This study describes child sex trafficking in three regions across Texas using empirically grounded qualitative and quantitative research methods. It is intended to expand the body and depth of knowledge that can help anti-trafficking professionals better identify individuals at risk for, or experiencing, child sex trafficking.

The report explores the life experiences of individuals – both young adults and minors, ages 13-27 years – who are survivors of child sex trafficking in three regions of Texas: Houston, Lubbock, and the Texas-Mexico border region. It provides data and analysis on the prevalence of trafficking and exploitation within communities at high risk for victimization. The study examines specific experiences of minor and youth sex trafficking survivors, including risk factors, push/pull factors, help-seeking behaviors, and reasons for multiple exits and re-entries into trafficking and/or exploitative situations.

To qualify for the study, a minor or youth between the ages of 13 and 27 had to have experienced at least one of the following four risk factors prior to the age of 18:

- History of child abuse and/or maltreatment.
- Placement in foster care at some point in their lives.
- Assigned a caseworker from the state of Texas or any other agency (i.e., indicates they received services from a child welfare agency, juvenile justice agency, or community service provider).
- History of homelessness and/or are currently homeless.

The research team conducted 466 screening surveys containing behaviorally specific questions, which led to more in-depth, in-person interviews with 46 child sex trafficking victims.

In general, the study finds that victims are not adequately identified, they enter and exit victimization multiple times, and they spend much of their lives being exploited. It shows that the paths into and out of child sex trafficking are complex and that there is an enduring need for services among survivors in addition to a need for more effective prevention methods.

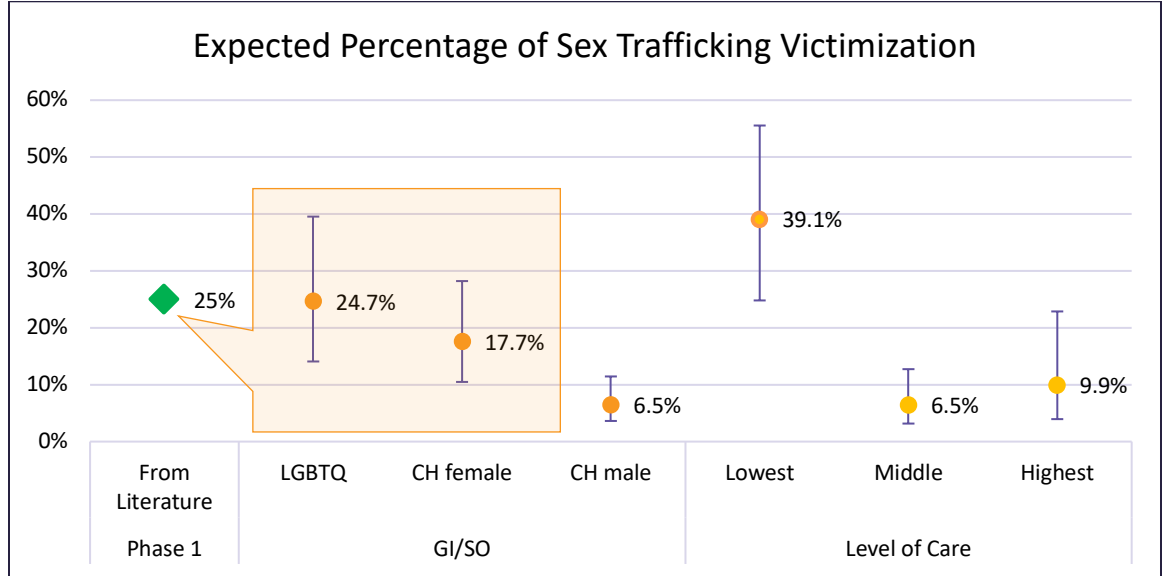
## HOW PREVALENT IS YOUTH SEX TRAFFICKING IN TEXAS?

- Expected prevalence rates for at-risk LGBTQ and women match previous research.
  - Among at-risk participants, 25% of LGBTQ and 18% of cisgender heterosexual females were victims of sex trafficking.
- Estimated prevalence rates among men and by level of care\* extend our understanding of sex trafficking.
  - Approximately 7% of at-risk cisgender heterosexual males were victims of sex trafficking.
  - Participants recruited from drop-in centers or services with low levels of care had a lifetime prevalence of sex trafficking of 39.1% compared to 6.5% among those



recruited from mid-level services and 9.9% of participants recruited from high levels of care such as residential services or lock-down facilities.\*

Figure 1. Predicted Sex Trafficking Victimization Rates from Logistic Regression Model



This figure shows the expected marginal percentage from a logistic regression model developed from data collected in this study. The model predicts prevalence of sex trafficking among at-risk minors and youth while controlling for age, gender identity, sexual orientation, race/ethnicity, and level of care. This figure shows predicted levels of sex trafficking victimization by gender identity and sexual orientation as well as by level of care while controlling for the race/ethnicity and age of participants. The predictions average across race/ethnicity and are based on participants that are 18 years of age. The figure also includes a 25% reference rate seen in other studies that focus on women and LGBTQ individuals (see Busch-Armendariz et. al., 2016 for a review of this literature). See pages 25 – 31 for more detail.

### WHAT DOES YOUTH SEX TRAFFICKING LOOK LIKE IN TEXAS?

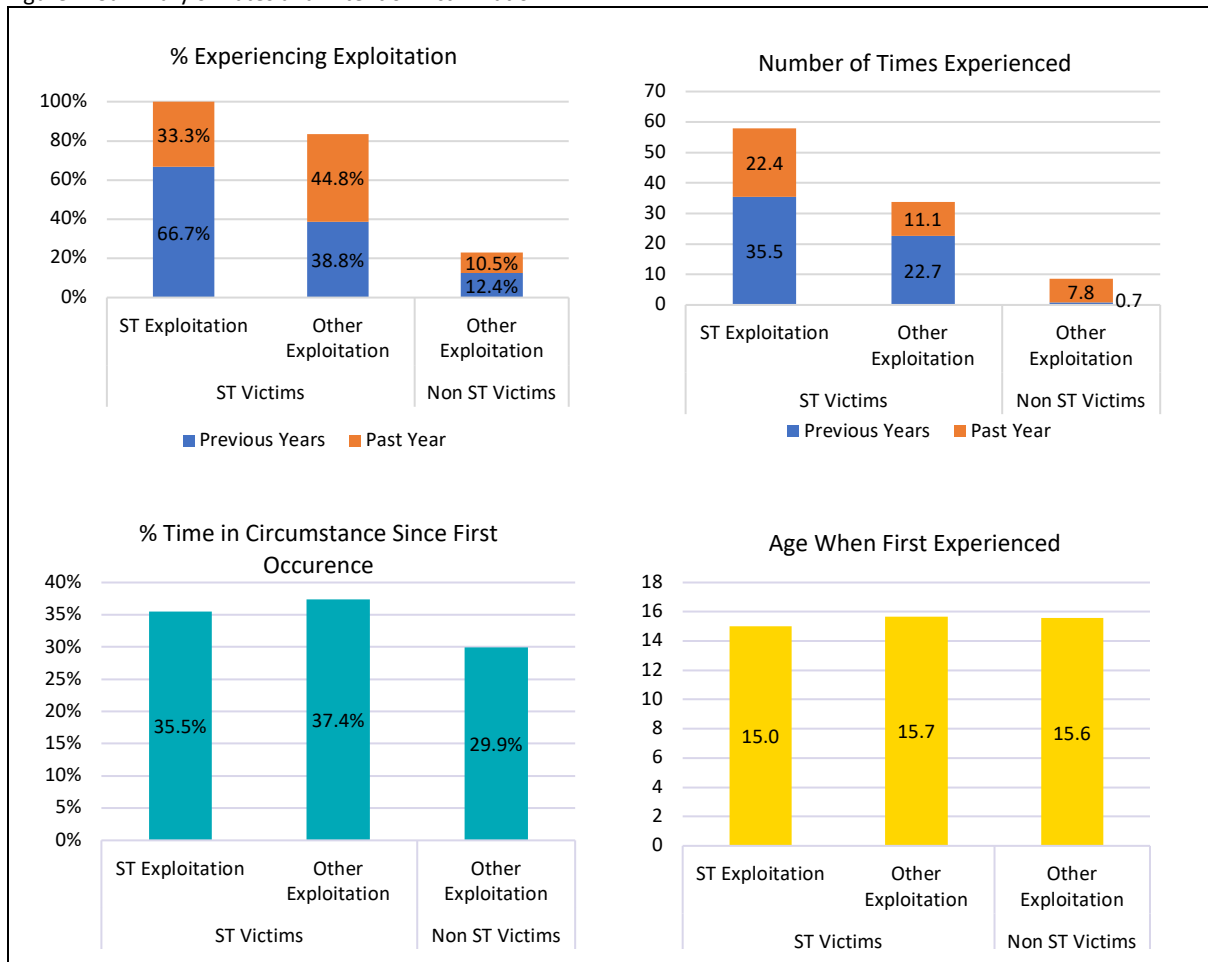
- After their first experience of exploitation, victims of child sex trafficking spend about 35% of their lives in circumstances of exploitation.
  - About 33% of victims of sex trafficking in this study were victimized in the past year.
- Of those who have experienced sex trafficking victimization, 83% have also experienced some other form of exploitation.†
  - About 45% of those who experienced other forms of exploitation, experienced those situations in the past year.
  - Just under a quarter (22.9%) of vulnerable youth in the study who were not sex trafficking victims endured some form of violence or exploitation, like wage theft or non-sexual abuse.

\*Level of Care is defined on page 20.

† Other forms of exploitation are defined on page 25.

- The average age of first sex trafficking victimization among study participants was about 15 years old.

Figure 2. Summary of Rates and Extent of Victimization



*This figure summarizes several additional measures from the study that help characterize the extent of victimization seen among study participants. Incidents of victimization endured by participants have been aggregated into those that constitute sex trafficking and those that encompass other forms of violence and exploitation but do not correspond to sex trafficking (wage theft is an example; other forms of exploitation are defined on page 25). Participants are grouped into those who have experienced sex trafficking behaviors and those who have not. By definition, all sex trafficking victims experienced some form of sex trafficking behavior at some point; non-sex trafficking victims did not. The figure also includes data on: behaviors endured during the year prior to taking the survey, the numbers of behaviors endured in their lifetime, the age at which those behaviors first occurred, and an estimate by the participant about the percentage of time they have been in circumstances involving those behaviors since they first occurred. See pages 35–54 for more detail.*

- Additional study findings include:
  - The lack of healthy, trusted relationships in participants' lives and their economic instability create ideal conditions for exploitation through force, fraud, or coercion.
  - Economic necessity appears to be a primary driver of and vulnerability for entrance into commercial sexual exploitation.
    - Around 73% of individuals who had experienced sex trafficking also engaged in un-coerced survival sex at some point during their lives.

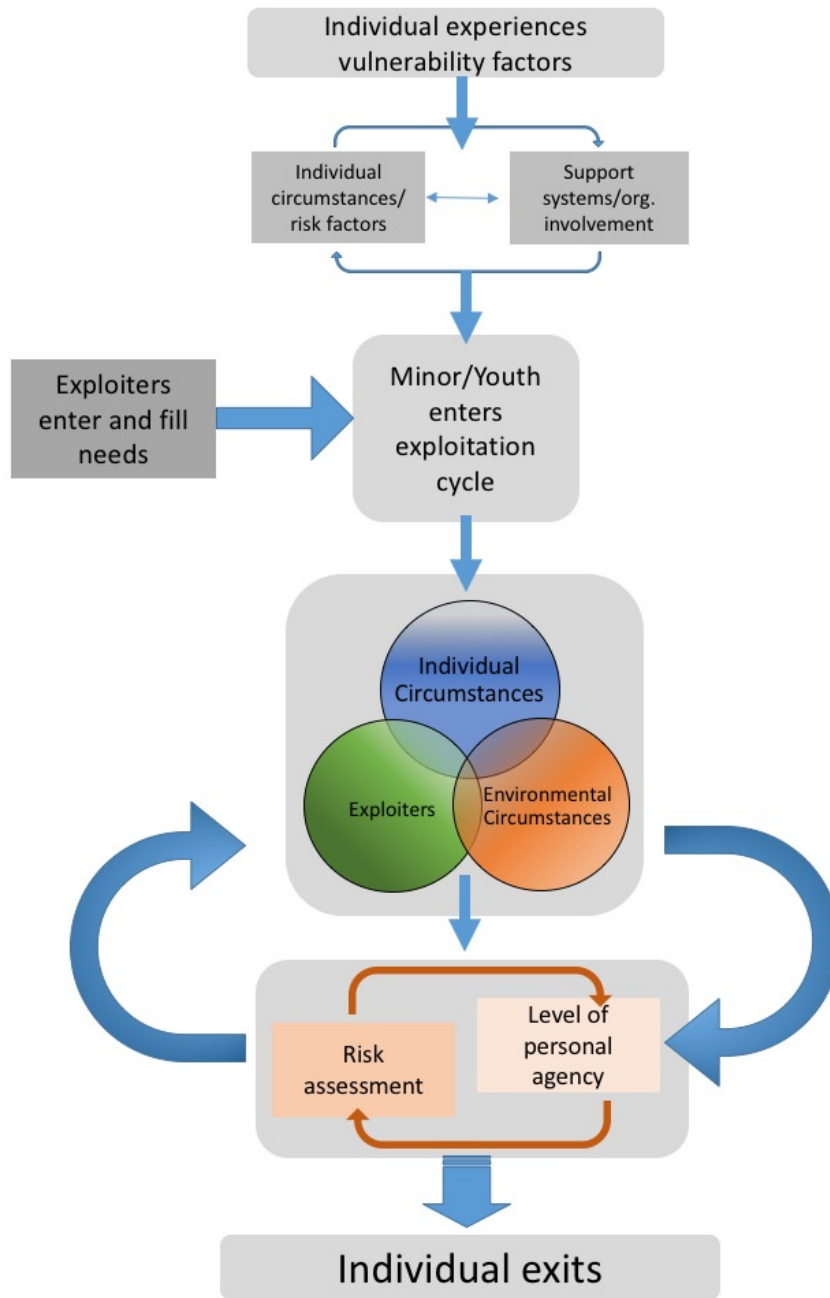
- About half of individuals who experienced sex trafficking had been forced to participate in commercial sex by a romantic partner.

### CONCEPT MAP: LIFE CYCLE OF EXPLOITATION

This Concept Map details the life cycle of exploitation. Not all minors and youth who have risk factors for trafficking become exploited, nor does system involvement guarantee exploitation. However, it is the relationship between the two that creates conditions that make exploitation possible.

Analysis of participant data from this study has illustrated relationships among intersecting forces that make certain minors and youth especially vulnerable to sex trafficking victimization. These relationships are best demonstrated in the following Concept Map. The components of the Concept Map are broken down over the next section to detail the complex interactions of risk factors. See pages 55 – 62 for more details on the Concept Map.

Figure 3. Concept Map: Life Cycle of Exploitation



## Entrance and Experience

Economic necessity appears to be a primary driver of the decisions of minors and youth to enter into an exploitative situation, such as labor exploitation and survival sex. It also is a main factor used by exploiters to draw them in to “the life” of commercial sexual exploitation.

Around 73% of victims reported they had previously engaged in uncoerced survival sex. Additionally, almost 50% of victims had been forced to participate in commercial sex by a romantic partner. Thus, both survival sex and exploitation by an external perpetrator were reported by participants to be ways they first entered into commercial sexual exploitation.

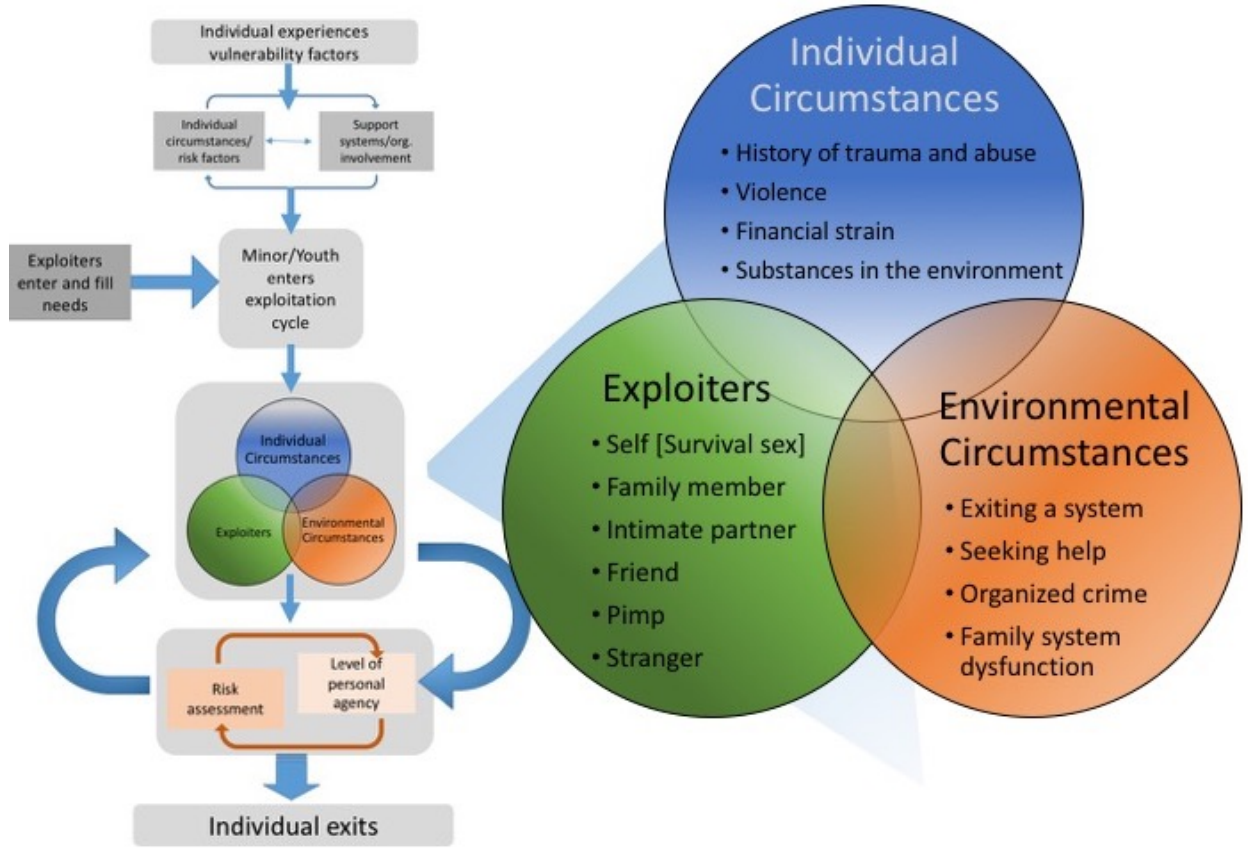
Minors in protective systems are, by definition, younger and have lower levels of victimization; however, they appear to face increased victimization rates after aging out of those systems, especially if systems are lacking adequate transition services.

### Key Finding

The rates of victimization across levels of care differ dramatically: 34.4% of participants recruited from sites where youth were receiving services with the lowest level of care compared to 7.3% and 5.2% at sites where participants were receiving services at the highest and middle levels of care, respectively.

## CONCEPT MAP: ENTRANCE AND EXPERIENCE DEFINED

Figure 4. Life Cycle of Exploitation: Entrance and Experience



**Individual Circumstances**  
The vulnerabilities and life circumstances that place the individual at risk for being exploited.  
*What environmental factors put this individual at risk for trafficking?*



**Environmental Circumstances**  
The formal and informal systems that meet the individual's needs based on their circumstance.  
*What gaps in support make an individual at risk for trafficking?*



**Exploiters**  
Individuals that use the gaps in service and unmet need to recruit individuals into exploitation through the use of force, fraud, and coercion.  
*How did the entrance into trafficking occur?*

### Key Finding

Individual circumstances, environmental circumstances, and exploiters intersect with each other in greater or lesser degrees based on the particular individual. Individuals most vulnerable to sex trafficking exist somewhere in the very middle of these three elements. However, individuals may move in and out of that middle section intermittently. Youth experience a range of exploitation including, most severely, sex trafficking.

## Exit and Future Goals

A real-time, continuous decision-making process, defined in this report as a risk assessment, is part of the daily lives of youth who are experiencing risk factors associated with entrance into trafficking. Study participants displayed a high level of functioning in unsafe and exploitative environments because of their ability to assess their personal safety, services/support needs, and basic needs at any given time.

Participants reported being in circumstances of victimization 30-40% of the time after their first victimization across all forms of exploitation. **That is, once victimized, individuals spend approximately a third of their lives in circumstances of exploitation.**

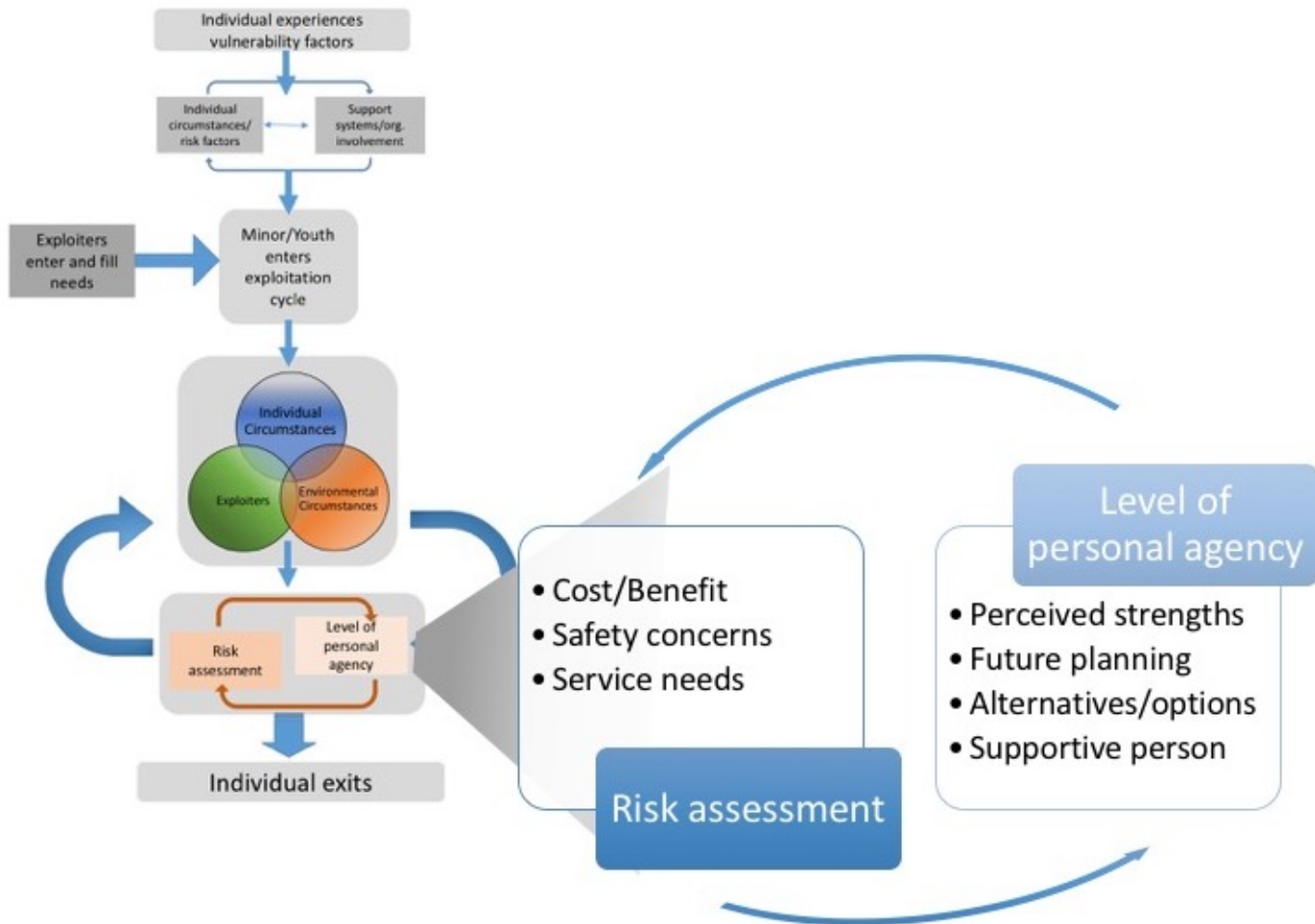
This risk assessment intersects with each individual's perceived level of personal control and/or agency in their particular circumstance. The constant balancing of the individual's own risk assessment and level of personal agency creates a cycle that either keeps individuals in situations of exploitation or creates a pathway out. Participants reported experiencing multiple exits and returns to exploitative situations due to changes in personal safety, economic stability/instability, and basic needs being met elsewhere. Chronic instability through homelessness, financial strain, or lack of consistent support services forced individuals into, or back into, these situations sometimes for an extended period of time or for multiple but limited periods of time.

### Key Finding

Individuals did not always return to the same trafficking situation after exiting "the life." Individuals experienced a range of exploitative situations that varied based on the degree to which they were experiencing intersecting risk factors. Only a portion of these experiences would meet the legal threshold for trafficking (for adults).

## CONCEPT MAP: EXIT AND FUTURE GOALS DEFINED

Figure 5. Life Cycle of Exploitation: Exit and Future Goals



### Key Finding

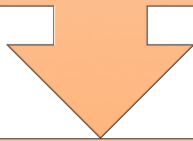
Individuals are continuously considering the cost versus the benefit of staying, leaving, or seeking help in trafficking situations. Perceived internal strengths, supportive relationships, having plans for the future, and having alternatives are all part of their decisions and subsequent actions.



# Recommendations At-A-Glance

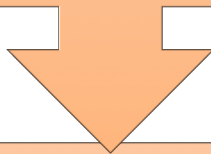
## Prevention

Education on building healthy and trusted relationships for youth who have vulnerabilities associated with sex trafficking. Training for professionals in the field on cultivating healthy relationships with youth. Increased emphasis on healthy relationships across the field.



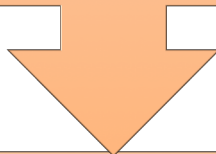
## Early Intervention

Include family in prevention and early intervention services.



## Intervention

Cultural competency training for service providers and anyone who might come into contact with youth who have been exploited. Further implementation of local care coordinators and regional continuum-of-care models.



## Overall

Continued training on the range of types of exploitation and related risk factors for community-based service professionals to close gaps in knowledge and support service provision statewide.

# Study Background

*“To the Public, Nothing was Wrong with Me.”: Life Experiences of Minors and Youth in Texas At Risk for Commercial Sexual Exploitation*, sponsored by the Child Sex Trafficking Team of the Office of the Texas Governor, is the result of a research partnership between the Institute on Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault at the Steve Hicks School of Social Work and the Bureau of Business Research at the IC<sup>2</sup> Institute at The University of Texas at Austin. The study’s principal goal is to describe child sex trafficking in three regions across Texas using empirically grounded qualitative and quantitative research methods. The aim of this report is to inform and advance the field of human trafficking research as well as to contribute to prevention, intervention, and service and policy solutions in and beyond Texas.

This report expands on the work of the research team’s 2015-2016 *Human Trafficking Mapping Project of Texas: The Initial Benchmark of Prevalence and Economic Impact for Texas*, which found that there are approximately 314,000 victims of trafficking in Texas at any given time. Of those, 79,000, or 25% of the total population of trafficking victims in Texas, are minors and youth under 25 years old who have been victims of commercial sexual exploitation, or sex trafficking, at some point in their lives (Busch-Armendariz, et. al., 2016). The study found that minor and youth sex trafficking costs the state of Texas approximately \$6.6 billion in lifetime care. Additionally, it found that adult victims of labor trafficking are exploited out of \$600 million in lost wages each year in Texas. This study elevates the voices and experiences of youth to paint a textured picture of what child sex trafficking looks like in Texas. It is grounded in the local service infrastructure in three key regions across the state and will inform the activities of the Office of the Texas Governor’s Child Sex Trafficking Team moving forward.

# Study Overview

The current study explores the life experiences of individuals – both young adults and minors, ages 13-27 – who are survivors of child sex trafficking in three key regions of Texas: Houston, Lubbock, and the Texas-Mexico border region. These three regions were chosen as research sites to provide a cross-sectional view of the different regions in Texas. It provides data and analysis on the prevalence of trafficking and exploitation within communities at high risk for victimization. This study examines specific experiences of minor and youth sex trafficking survivors, including risk factors, push/pull factors, help-seeking behaviors, and reasons for multiple exits and re-entries into trafficking and/or exploitative situations. This report is not intended to produce another statewide prevalence number nor provide a further economic impact assessment of trafficking as was the focus on the 2016 study by this research team (Busch-Armendariz, et. al., 2016). This report is intended to expand the body and depth of knowledge to inform needed prevention and early intervention efforts that can help anti-trafficking professionals better identify individuals at risk for, or experiencing, child sex trafficking.

In the 2016 study, the research team identified four risk factors for child sex trafficking victimization (Busch-Armendariz, et. al., 2016) that served as the foundation for the current study criteria. The risk factors in the current study include a history of emotional and sexual abuse (Curtis, Terry, Dank, Dombrowski, & Khan, 2008), a history of homelessness or are currently homeless, a history of running away from home (Fedina, Williamson, & Perdue, 2016), and involvement with the child welfare system (Ahrens, Katon, McCarty, Richardson, & Courtney, 2012) or having been assigned a case worker from any agency and/or organization. Throughout the current study, 346 in-person screening surveys (Rates and Extent of Victimization Survey or REVS) and 120 self-administered screening surveys (REVS) were conducted. These resulted in 46 Life Experiences Survey (LES) in-person interviews. Additionally, 19 service provider/organization discussions were conducted across the state.

## DEFINITIONS

### Survivor/Victim

Throughout this report, individuals who have been victimized by human trafficking, including child sex trafficking, may be referred to as “victims” in recognition of their status as a victim of a crime. The term victim is not meant to be demeaning or judgmental, but to relay the life experiences of minors and youth who have experienced exploitation and sex trafficking. Additionally, each individual may view themselves as being anywhere on a nuanced spectrum between victim and survivor. Therefore, victim and survivor are used interchangeably in this report.

### Participant/Respondent

Participant and respondent are both used interchangeably in this report and refer to any individual youth included in the data set.

### Rate/Proportion

The terms rate and proportion are used interchangeably in this report to describe the number of participants in the study who endorsed specific experiences, behaviors, and/or risk factors.

### Sex Trafficking

United States Federal Law defines sex trafficking as, “the recruitment, harboring, transporting, provision, obtaining, patronizing or soliciting of a person for the purposes of a commercial sex act, in which the commercial sex act is induced, through the use of force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such an act has not attained 18 years of age” (USC § 7102). Sex trafficking is sometimes referred to as commercial sexual exploitation; thus, in this report, sex trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation are used interchangeably.

### Minors and Youth

Minors are individuals under 18 years of age. In this study, youth is defined as any individual who is 18-27 years old. Any individual, aged 13-27, who met risk criteria and was living in the targeted regions, was eligible to participate in the study.

### Survival Sex

The research team defined survival sex as trading sex acts to meet basic needs of survival (i.e., food, shelter, clothes, safety, etc.) without the elements of force, fraud, or coercion that are required to meet the legal definition of sex trafficking. However, if an individual is under the age of 18 and trading sex for anything of value, they also meet the legal definition of a victim of trafficking. This definition is consistent with similar studies involving youth in similar risk groups and federal law (Bigelsen & Vuotto, 2013).

### Levels of Care

Study participants were recruited from various programs and facilities that researchers categorized as follows for the purposes of this study.

<b>High Level of Care</b>	Residential or lock-down facility that has protocols to monitor a client’s adherence to a service plan and offer long-term services.
<b>Middle Level of Care</b>	Organizations that provide some sort of assistance or case management and multiple touchpoints with clients.
<b>Low Level of Care</b>	Organizations that provide short-term assistance for basic needs or social resources with little-to-no oversight or service plan.

### Key Acronyms

<b>ST</b>	Sex trafficking behaviors included in the REVS, namely: commercial sex by force, sexual activity by force, commercial sex by force from a romantic/intimate partner, coerced survival sex, and un-coerced survival sex
<b>Non ST</b>	Forms of exploitation included in the REVS that are not sex trafficking, including, wage theft, or physical and emotional abuse at work
<b>GI/SO</b>	Gender identity/sexual orientation
<b>CH male</b>	Cisgender heterosexual male
<b>CH female</b>	Cisgender heterosexual female
<b>REVS</b>	Rates and Extent of Victimization Survey
<b>LES</b>	Life Experiences Survey

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF THE RESEARCH

### **Participant Safety**

Safety and emotional protection of participants were the research team's highest priority. All protocols were trauma-informed and reviewed prior to data collection by The University of Texas at Austin Institutional Review Board (IRB), a licensed clinical social worker practicing in the field of child trauma, and staff from each site partner. Research processes and protocols were modified, when needed, to increase the safety and protection of study participants. (For more information on Human Subjects Protection, Privacy, and IRB process, see Appendix E: Human Subjects Research and Confidentiality.)

### **Responsive and Collaborative**

All activities in this study were informed by practices in the field of youth services and social work research. The research team continuously sought out support, recommendations, and feedback from service providers during the course of the study and made modifications to processes to better align with the daily work and protocols of each site partner. Data collection was a collaborative process built on the expertise of community and site partners who provide services to vulnerable youth.

### **Focused on the Field**

This study was conducted with the express purpose of informing the anti-trafficking field (broadly defined) on best practices, service gaps, and missed opportunities. At every step of the development and implementation of this study, the research team considered and prioritized its effect on the field. All recommendations listed at the end of this report are oriented toward safe, effective, and holistic services, policies, and support for survivors and those most at risk for child sex trafficking.

## METHODS OVERVIEW

This research study employed a mixed-methods design, using both qualitative and quantitative methods to get a broader range of vulnerable youth perspectives and to explore different demographics that have been found to be at risk for trafficking victimization in other research in the field. All participants eligible for this study were 13-27 years old and fell into one or more of the identified risk segments. An endorsement of any of the experiences listed below indicated that the individual was at least minimally at risk for sex trafficking. It is important to note that these factors correlate with increased risk of sex trafficking and should not be thought of as antecedents or causes of such victimization. All participants experienced one or more of the following:

- History of child abuse and/or maltreatment.
- Placement in foster care at some point in their lives.
- Assigned a caseworker from the state of Texas or any other agency (i.e., indicates they received services from a child welfare agency, juvenile justice agency, or community service provider).
- History of homelessness and/or are currently homeless.

These risk factors can also overlap: a child experiencing abuse at home may be placed in foster care, be assigned a caseworker, and/or experience homelessness as a consequence of the abuse. That constellation of risk factors makes individuals vulnerable to sex trafficking, other abuse, and life challenges.

Participants who fit the above screening criteria first completed the Rates and Extent of Victimization Survey (REVS) through an online self-administered or an in-person practitioner-administered adapted version of Urban Institute's Human Trafficking Screening Tool (Dank et. al., 2017). (See Appendix A for complete REVS tool). Participants who completed the REVS and were identified as likely victims continued on to an in-depth interview called the Life Experiences Survey (LES), which asked more detailed questions about participants' entrance, experience, and exit from commercial sexual exploitation (See Appendix B for complete LES tool). Individuals were offered the option of completing a self-administered REVS online and were then contacted to schedule in-person follow-up LES interviews, if needed. The REVS typically took participants 5 to 10 minutes to complete. Researchers spent as much time as was needed with each of the 46 LES interview participants; interviews generally ranged from 30 minutes to 1 hour in length.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions guided this study and the research team's focus on both in-depth qualitative data about individual youth participants as well as bigger-picture information about the prevalence of sex trafficking crimes.

1. **What does youth sex trafficking look like in Texas?**  
This includes interviews with minors and young adults who are members of community segments that previous research has shown are at a higher risk for sex trafficking than others.
2. **How do we further understand the prevalence of youth sex trafficking in Texas?**  
This includes primary and secondary data collection that contributes to the understanding of the scope of the crime and the prevalence of child sex trafficking throughout the state.

## MEASURES

### Rates and Extent of Victimization Survey (REVS)

The REVS is an adaptation of the Human Trafficking Screening Tool (HTST) developed and validated by Dank and colleagues (2017). The HTST itself includes questions from both the Vera Institute of Justice Trafficking Victim Identification Tool (TVIT) and the Covenant House New York Human Trafficking Interview and Assessment Measure (HTIAM-14). Both the TVIT and HTIAM-14 have been scientifically validated. All victimization questions in the HTST were vetted by a youth advisory council convened by the Urban Institute comprised of youth in the child welfare system and youth seeking services for homelessness, some of whom have had experience with sex trafficking/commercial sexual exploitation. The youth advisory council provided feedback on the tool and reported that its questions did not trigger discomfort and were not overly invasive.

The current study adapted the HTST to contain:

- Five study eligibility questions,
- Five demographic questions, and
- A series of questions about potential victimization through sex trafficking and other forms of exploitation.

Specifically, the REVS asks the following questions for each of the behaviors experienced in specific work situations as listed in Table 1 below. The situations are listed in the order asked in the REVS; abbreviations used in this report have also been included in the table. These questions only related to experience of abuse and/or violence in work settings and did not ask about abuse endured outside of work settings. Other questions related to trading sex or being forced to trade sex.

1. Have you ever experienced this in your life?
  - a. How many times has this ever happened to you? (Best estimate)
2. Have you experienced this in the past year?
  - a. How many times has this happened in the last year? (Best estimate)
3. When did you first experience this? (Enter age in years)
4. What percentage of the time have you been in this situation since it first occurred?
  - a. Almost Never (10% of time)
  - b. Seldom (25% of time)
  - c. Sometimes (50% of time)
  - d. Often (75% of time)
  - e. Always (100% of time)



Table 1. Behavior Situations Included in the REVS

Description of Situation	Abbreviation
1. Been unable to leave a place you worked or talk to people you wanted to talk to, even when you weren't working, because the person you worked for threatened or controlled you?	unable to leave or talk
2. Someone you work for ever refuse to pay what they promised and keep all or most of the money you made?	wage theft
3. Someone you work for ever physically beat, slap, hit, kick, punch, burn, or harm you in any way?	physical abuse
4. Ever felt emotionally abused by someone you worked for?	emotional abuse
5. Someone you work for ever ask, pressure, or force you to do something sexually that you did not feel comfortable doing?	sexual activity by force or pressure
6. Someone you work for ever force you to engage in sexual acts with family, friends, clients, or business associates for money or favors?	commercial sex by force
7. Someone you were in a relationship with ever force you to engage in sexual acts with family, friends, clients, or business associates for money or favors?	commercial sex by force from partner
8. Ever trade sexual acts for food, clothing, money, shelter, favors, or other necessities for survival before you reached the age of 18?	survival sex
9. Someone ask you or make you feel like you had to trade sexual acts for food, clothing, money, shelter, favors, or other necessities for survival before you reached the age of 18?	coerced survival sex

The research team translated these situations into a sex trafficking aggregate and an aggregate for other forms of exploitation as shown below. For example, if any of the behaviors under sex trafficking were endorsed as having occurred during their lifetime, that participant was coded as a victim of sex trafficking. Note that the last two items were specifically asked in the context of having ever occurred before the age of 18 years of age.

Forms of sex trafficking exploitation:

1. Sexual activity by force or pressure
2. Commercial sex by force
3. Commercial sex by force from partner
4. Survival sex
5. Coerced survival sex

Forms of other exploitation in a work situation:

1. Unable to leave or talk
2. Wage theft
3. Physical abuse
4. Emotional abuse

**Life Experiences Survey (LES)**

The research team designed the Life Experiences Survey (LES) tool specifically for this project and it was modified from the interview protocols developed for *Domestic Minors Trafficked for Commercial Sexual Exploitation* (Cavazos, 2014), *Victims of Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking in Juvenile Custody* (Dabney, 2011), *Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking in a Rural State* (Perkins, 2017), the HTST (Dank et al., 2017), and *Latinx's in the International Sex Trade* (Torres, 2015). The LES tool contains both structured and open-ended items on the following major topics:

- Respondent demographic information (no identifying information collected)
- Living situation
- Recruitment into sex trafficking and experiences in the commercial sex industry
- Information on how the participant was able to leave the situation
- Services received in regard to trafficking/exploitation recovery
- Services needed but not received in regard to trafficking/exploitation recovery
- Missed opportunities, which includes times when victims could have been identified or helped but were not.

Respondents who screened positively as potential sex trafficking survivors on the REVS were asked to participate in an in-person LES interview immediately after. As noted, the LES interview began with a few questions to collect additional demographic information on respondents' age, race, gender identity, and birthplace as well as where they spent the most amount of time growing up, parents' highest level of education, and if they had any children or family living with them. These were followed by questions about past experiences with violence, abuse, sex trafficking, and/or commercial sex. Participants were asked behaviorally-specific questions about abusive relationships, violence, and selling or exchanging sex for someone else or of their own accord. Additionally, they were asked about how these experiences started, occurred, and (if applicable) ceased. None of the survey or open-ended questions used the term "trafficking." This allowed for participants to define the experiences from their perspectives and to determine themes that were then explored by the research team during analysis (Patton, 2002). For example, a question asked if participants had ever been in an intimate (romantic, family, etc.) relationship with a partner of whom they were afraid, with a follow up open-ended question asking if they could share more about that experience. Prompts then asked participants to share what they would like regarding their entrance into commercial sexual exploitation and to describe a typical exchange.

Interview practices were trauma-informed and included rapport-building, an understanding of how trauma may affect behavior, cultural and language accommodations, and not asking for unnecessarily detailed information about the participants' experiences with trafficking (including asking questions outside of the research aims).

## PARTICIPANTS

There were 466 minors and youth who took the REVS. Participants represented diverse experiences, backgrounds, demographics as well as differing levels of care in that they were involved in a variety of systems and services that included everything from a 24-hour lock-down facility to services at a drop-in center. The study included vulnerable populations, sometimes with overlapping risk factors, considered to be highly at risk for sex trafficking victimization based on the four criteria previously discussed. In-person interviews were conducted with minors and youth, aged 13-27 who, at the time of the survey, lived in Lubbock County, Harris County, Starr County, Hidalgo County, Willacy County, Cameron County, or El Paso County. The research team partnered with community service providers in each community to reach minors and youth who would meet the initial study criteria, and also partnered with the Texas Juvenile Justice Department (TJJD) county affiliates to reach those on county probation or being confined in county facilities across the state who were originally from Houston, Lubbock, or the Rio Grande Valley. All TJJD participants had previous experience with one or more of the stated at-risk criteria.

Complete demographics on the total sample and by region are presented in Table 2. Almost half of study participants were Hispanic/Latinx (46.4%). The other two main ethnic groups represented in this study were African Americans, at 36%, and Caucasians, at 10% of all participants. In this study, 60% of participants identified as cisgender heterosexual (CH) males, largely due to the inclusion of

juvenile justice sites. Additionally, 27% identified as CH females, and 13% identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning (LGBTQ). Participants were divided into age categories as minors (13-17 years in this study) or young adults (18-27 years). The distribution across age groups was split evenly at 52% minors and 48% young adults. Overall, in regard to the eligibility criteria, 89% of participants had been assigned a caseworker, 50% had experienced some type of abuse, 41% had been in a foster care placement, and 44% had experienced homelessness or unstable housing.

There were 211 participants from Houston, 52 from Lubbock, and 121 from the border region. Additionally, 82 participants entered the study from the state juvenile justice system, but were from one or more of the three regions included in the study. The research team requested that only youth from one of the three regions be asked to participate in the study. Accordingly, these participants have been retained in a separate juvenile justice sample category. Table 2 also provides further information about the regions and study geography. These are discussed in the next section as well.

Table 2. Sample Profile

			Regions				
			Total	Houston	Lubbock	Border	State Juvenile Justice
<b>Total Sample</b>		<b>n</b>	<b>466</b>	<b>211</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>82</b>
Eligibility Criteria (Ever Had or Experienced)	Caseworker?	%	88.8%	83.9%	78.8%	94.2%	100.0%
	Abuse*?	%	48.9%	55.9%	76.9%	38.8%	28.0%
	Foster care?	%	40.1%	46.0%	61.5%	38.0%	14.6%
	Homeless?	%	43.6%	59.7%	61.5%	28.1%	13.4%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>466</b>	<b>211</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>82</b>
Gender Identity/Sexual Orientation	CH male	%	60.4%	51.4%	46.2%	68.6%	80.5%
	CH female	%	26.4%	31.4%	38.5%	22.9%	11.0%
	LGBTQ	%	13.2%	17.1%	15.4%	8.5%	8.5%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>462</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>82</b>
Race/Ethnicity	White	%	10.1%	7.6%	28.8%	12.4%	1.2%
	Hispanic/Latinx	%	46.4%	21.8%	46.2%	79.3%	61.0%
	African American	%	35.6%	62.6%	15.4%	1.7%	29.3%
	Add'l Race/Ethnicity	%	7.9%	8.1%	9.6%	6.6%	8.5%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>466</b>	<b>211</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>82</b>
Minor or Young Adult	Minor	%	51.6%	34.3%	31.3%	72.6%	75.6%
	Young Adult	%	48.4%	65.7%	68.8%	27.4%	24.4%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>448</b>	<b>201</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>82</b>
Level of Care	Highest	%	17.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
	Middle	%	49.4%	38.4%	53.8%	100.0%	0.0%
	Lowest	%	33.0%	61.6%	46.2%	0.0%	0.0%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>466</b>	<b>211</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>82</b>
ST Victimization	Yes	%	15.2%	22.3%	21.2%	5.8%	7.3%
	No	%	84.8%	77.7%	78.8%	94.2%	92.7%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>466</b>	<b>211</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>82</b>
Earliest Age for ST Victimization	Minor	%	81.3%	79.2%	66.7%	100.0%	100.0%
	Young Adult	%	18.7%	20.8%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7</b>

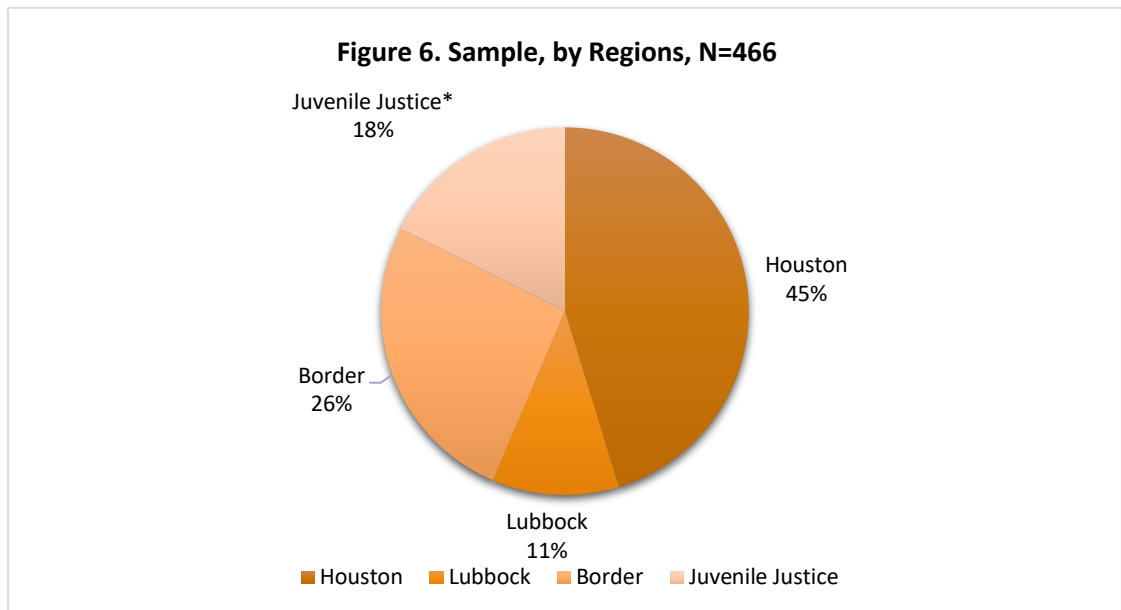
\* Physical, emotional, mental or physical

## REGIONS AND GEOGRAPHY

Lubbock, Houston, and the Rio Grande Valley were selected to provide a cross-sectional view of the different regions in Texas. The Rio Grande Valley and, later the addition of El Paso, provided information on the Texas-Mexico border in a rural area; Lubbock provided information on a rural area tied to the West Texas agricultural sector; and Houston provided information on a large, diverse urban environment.

The three regions have varied youth and community service models and service availability for minors and youth at risk of trafficking. Data collection in each region was based on what was realistic to implement on the ground based on site partner availability and what vulnerable populations were accessible to the research team through these site partners. It is important to understand that data presented in this report is based on different regional realities and availability of services for vulnerable youth. Therefore, the reader is cautioned not to draw conclusions across regions about where rates or prevalence of sex trafficking are higher or lower in Texas. Due to the differences in systems and access, rates and prevalence cannot be compared from one region to another without understanding the local context of vulnerable populations. More information is included in the Data Analysis Overview section. Figure 6 details the total sample, broken down by regions.

\*Keep in mind that 82 participants entered the study from the state juvenile justice system, but steps were taken to ensure that they were from one or more of the three regions included in the study. Accordingly, these participants have been retained in a separate juvenile justice sample category.



## COMMUNITY PARTNERS/RESOURCE ORGANIZATIONS

The research team met with youth services providers, law enforcement professionals, child advocates, and other key stakeholders in each region to identify local resources and get a better understanding of the community at large. These meetings were all conducted prior to data collection and informed processes and protocols throughout the study. The research team identified these community organizations and coalitions through prior work in each region as well as from referrals made by contacts in other regions. More information about the research team’s initial discussions with these community organizations is provided later in this section. Table 3 details the organizations, agencies, and stakeholders the research team met with throughout the study.

Table 3. Community Organization Contacts, by Region

Freedom in the 806	Amarillo
Paso del Norte, Center of Hope	El Paso
Arrow Child and Families Ministries	Houston
Foster Care C.A.N.	Houston
Love 146	Houston
MCYS Bridgeway Emergency Youth Shelter	Houston
United Against Human Trafficking	Houston
University of Texas Health Science Center	Houston
YMCA International Services	Houston
Child Advocacy Center	Lubbock
Children's Home of Lubbock	Lubbock
Department of Family and Protective Services Regional Office	Lubbock
Department of State Health Services, Lubbock Regional Office	Lubbock
Lubbock Police Department	Lubbock
START Coalition	Lubbock
City of Pharr Police Department	Rio Grande Valley
Family Crisis Center	Rio Grande Valley
Mujeres Unidas	Rio Grande Valley
Rio Grande Valley Human Trafficking Coalition	Rio Grande Valley
Tamar's Tapestry	Rio Grande Valley

## SITE PARTNERS

From the larger group of community organization contacts, the research team recruited 14 site partners for data collection across all regions. These were programs and organizations that could work with the team to provide safe, confidential rooms for the interviews and disseminate information about the study to their client base. Table 4 below details the study's site partners by region.

Table 4. Site Partners, by Region/Location

Center for Children	El Paso
El Paso County Juvenile Probation Department	El Paso
Ambassadors for Christ Transitional Living Center and Drop-In Center	Houston
Harris County Juvenile Probation Department	Houston
The HAY Center	Houston
The Landing Drop-In Center	Houston
Young Adult Resource Center, The Salvation Army of Houston	Houston
Buckner FYI Center	Lubbock
Lubbock County Juvenile Justice Center	Lubbock
Open Door Drop-In Center	Lubbock
BCFS Health and Human Services-McAllen	Rio Grande Valley
Cameron County Juvenile Probation Department	Rio Grande Valley
Starr County Juvenile Probation Department	Rio Grande Valley
Texas Juvenile Justice Department	Statewide

# Research Activities

## Relationship Building

The research team traveled and conducted site visits multiple times to each of the three regions throughout the summer and fall of 2017. (El Paso site visits were completed in spring of 2018). The team worked with these site partners over a series of months to build relationships with agency staff, gain a better understanding of their client base, and troubleshoot any concerns they expressed. Forming close and trusting relationships with site partners strengthened the data collection process and ensured that it was as safe and healthy for participants as possible. This time was also used to provide training on the study and the data collection process with each site partner prior to data collection.

**Data Collection Pilot**  
Data collection was piloted in Lubbock in January 2018 and in Houston in February 2018. This pilot phase gave the research team a chance to evaluate the

flow and appropriateness of the REVS and the LES protocols, to monitor distress levels among participants throughout the screening and interview process, and to make modifications as needed. Following this pilot, the research team did a phased roll-out of data collection, which allowed for ongoing promotion of the study as well as ongoing adjustments to protocol, and instruments to optimize the process for each organization and region.

The research team conducted the following activities to address the primary research questions:

- **346** In-person screening surveys (REVS)
- **120** Self-administered screening surveys (REVS)
- **46** Life experiences (LES) in-person interviews
- **19** Service provider/organization discussions

## Service Provider Discussions

As part of the study and to complement the lived experiences shared by minor and youth participants, service providers from 19 community organizations participated in discussions regarding sex trafficking and what they see in their region or in statewide trends. These were individual meetings or calls between service providers and the research team, often held during a regional site visit. (The full discussion guide is available in Appendix C: Service Provider Discussion Protocol.) The discussions typically lasted 30 to 45 minutes and were not recorded, but researchers took detailed notes. The discussion topics ranged from processes and protocols of service provision in the organizations to local commercial sex and/or trafficking trends that they have seen in their roles. The agencies and organizations that participated did not have to provide services specifically for survivors of trafficking in order to participate in the discussion. Rather, the goal was to understand the range of services available to youth at risk of exploitation in each region. Table 5 below details the service providers interviewed in the agency discussions.



Table 5. Service Provider Discussions, by City, Clientele Served, and Services Offered

CITY	CLIENTELE	SERVICES OFFERED
<b>AMARILLO</b>	Survivors of human trafficking	Street/jail outreach, drop-in center, food pantry
<b>EL PASO</b>	Survivors of violence	Mental health
<b>HOUSTON</b>	Anyone involved in commercial sex	Street outreach, drop-in center, case management
	Survivors of human trafficking	Residential, medical, case management
	Survivors of human trafficking	Case management, financial assistance, assessments, educational assistance, language interpretation
	At-risk youth: homeless, juvenile justice-involved, child welfare-involved, substance misuse, LGBTQ	Case management, referrals, residential treatment, mentoring
	Female survivors of sex trafficking	Residential, medical, housing, food, counseling, educational, and wellness programs
<b>LUBBOCK</b>	Minor survivors of violence	Mental health, case management
	Survivors of violence	Medical exams
	At-risk youth: homeless, child welfare-involved, substance misuse	Residential, emergency shelter, foster care
	Minor victims of violence	Law enforcement
	At-risk youth: child-welfare involved youth, survivors of child abuse and neglect	Child welfare
	Survivors of sexual violence	Case management, mental health services, clothing, housing
<b>RIO GRANDE VALLEY</b>	Female survivors of sex trafficking	Shelter, medical, case management
	Refugees	Humanitarian care, referrals, emergency shelter
	Survivors of interpersonal or sexual violence	Case management, mental health services
<b>STATEWIDE</b>	Varied	Oversees service provision in healthcare and mental health settings
	Youth in foster care	Legal services

# Data Analysis Overview

The study was based on an exploratory research design to answer the questions:

**What does youth sex trafficking look like in Texas?**

**How do we further understand the prevalence of youth sex trafficking in Texas?**

- Based on this design, the research team analyzed quantitative and qualitative data separately to build statistical results and broad themes.
- Researchers estimated the prevalence of sex trafficking victimization among participants from items in the REVS that participants endorsed specifically related to commercial sex.
  - Of the 71 participants who were identified as victims of commercial sexual exploitation as a minor, 46 participants agreed to participate in the longer interview.

Quantitative data is presented in four main categories:

1. **Sex trafficking victimization prevalence**
2. **Regional differences**, including models of care and service availability
3. **Level of care and/or service involvement**
4. **Entrance and experience**, which details the following five data points captured in the REVS that asked about participants' first and subsequent victimization experiences.
  - Average age of first victimization
  - Victimization in the past year
  - Number of times victimization was experienced in the past year
  - Lifetime number of times victimization was experienced
  - Percent of time individuals were victimized since first occurrence

Participants in the LES were asked to expand on the answers they gave in the REVS; their responses are explored in greater depth in the qualitative data findings. Researchers conducted an inductive qualitative thematic analysis, which allowed the team to identify emerging themes, providing context and depth to what child sex trafficking looks like in Texas. Qualitative data is organized into two main categories:

1. **Entrance and experience**
  - Data on participants' entrance and experience in sex trafficking are grouped into three themes: individual circumstances, exploiters, and system support.
2. **Exit and future goals**
  - Data on participants' exit from, and future goals after, child sex trafficking and exploitation are grouped into two themes: risk assessment and level of personal agency.

# Findings

This section will detail the overall findings from this study. All data come from the two main survey and interview tools (REVS and LES), including survey data from 466 minors and youth and data from in-depth interviews with 46 participants identified as victims of sex trafficking who agreed to participate in the LES. In order to protect the anonymity of participants, no personal identifying information is included. When the participant referred to a specific agency, place, or person by name, identifying information was redacted from the record. The participants in this study experienced myriad vulnerabilities that put them at higher risk for sex trafficking victimization. This section details the experiences participants discussed in the REVS and, for those who experienced sex trafficking victimization, their subsequent LES discussions. These data are based on the participants' own definitions of victimization and their understanding of their lives and the exploitation they have experienced.

## RATES AND EXTENT OF VICTIMIZATION

The REVS tool provided rich quantitative data about the 466 participants who were recruited based on risk factors for sex trafficking. Analysis of the REVS data illustrates intersectional of risk factors for sex trafficking and a range of victimization experiences. In this report, rate of victimization is used synonymously with prevalence of victimization and the percentage victimized, essentially the proportion of participants who have been victimized in their life and, as separate measure, in the past year. Extent of victimization refers to the length of time over which victimizing behaviors have been endured, the number of times that those behaviors have been experienced over time, and the percentage of time since the first victimization during which the participant was in circumstances of victimization. These data are presented by topic as follows:

- Sex trafficking victimization prevalence
- Regional differences: models of care and service availability
- Summary of rates and extent of victimization
- Entrance and experience details

### **Sex Trafficking Victimization Prevalence**

Many studies (see Busch-Armendariz et. al., 2016 for a review of this literature) have reported that approximately 25% of people in at-risk populations are victimized in their lifetimes. As previously discussed, the research team selected criteria for this study sample based on risk factors identified in literature on minor and youth sex trafficking. The REVS data collected here further confirms the literature that youth with the risk factors stated in this study are associated with higher risk of trafficking victimization than youth who do not have those risk factors.

This study helps to clarify the intersectionality of how risk factors associated with prior life experiences correlate with level of care for minors and young adults. Table 6 provides a demographic profile of the overall sample and compares the profile of victims of sex trafficking to that of non-victims of sex trafficking. Table 7 shows victimization proportions for those same demographics, including across different individual circumstances. Although about 15% of the 466 participants in at-risk groups had experienced sex trafficking victimization at some point in their lives so far, an important finding shown in Tables 6 and 7 is that the rate of victimization varies substantially depending on context. As shown in Table 7 and discussed in detail in the Level of Care section later in the report, the current study indicates that approximately 34% of homeless youth seen at drop-in centers have experienced sex trafficking victimization. The proportion of victimization among LGBTQ minors and youth is shown to be approximately 41%. The REVS tool helps to pinpoint intersections of multiple trafficking risk factors in participants' lives. Participants experiencing multiple risk factors were more likely to have experienced exploitation in their lives; victimized participants reported experiencing multiple risk factors at approximately double the rates as non-victimized participants. This was true for all population segments included in the study except for those who only endorsed having been assigned a caseworker but experienced no other risk factors. A significant percentage of the study population reported experiencing more than one risk factor. This is evidence that a constellation of risk factors can intersect to create conditions that make children and youth vulnerable to a range of exploitative situations. This intersectionality is also detailed throughout the in-depth LES interview data and is visually demonstrated in Figure 15. Phase 1: Entrance and Experience.

There was also a high percentage of participants who only reported being assigned a caseworker by the state of Texas or another agency and no other risk factors. This is likely due to the inclusion of juvenile justice participants in the study who were assigned a caseworker by nature of their probation and/or as a resident in a locked facility, but reported no other trafficking risk factors.

Table 7 below also reveals that there was a higher proportion of victimization among young adults (ages 18-27) than minors (ages 13-17), 25% vs. 5%. This is an expected finding due to the longer period of exposure among young adults compared to minors, but is also likely a function of the percentage of minor juvenile justice system participants; current system involvement lowers the possibility of victimization and thereby lowers cumulative exposure.

Although there were more CH males in this study (60% overall), among victims, the proportion of CH females and LGBTQ participants was higher than among non-victims, at 38% and 35% respectively compared to 24% and 9%. More detailed information can be found in Table 6 and Table 7 below.

Table 6. Demographics

			ST Victimization Status		
			Total	Yes	No
<b>Total</b>	<b>Sample</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>466</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>395</b>
ST Victimization	Yes	%	15.2%	100.0%	0.0%
	No	%	84.8%	0.0%	100.0%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>466</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>395</b>
Eligibility Criteria (Ever Had or Experienced)	Caseworker?	%	88.8%	85.9%	89.4%
	Abuse?	%	48.9%	94.4%	40.8%
	Foster care?	%	40.1%	63.4%	35.9%
	Homeless?	%	43.6%	85.9%	35.9%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>466</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>395</b>
GI/SO	CH male	%	60.4%	26.8%	66.5%
	CH female	%	26.4%	38.0%	24.3%
	LGBTQ	%	13.2%	35.2%	9.2%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>462</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>391</b>
Race/Ethnicity	White	%	10.1%	18.3%	8.6%
	Hispanic/Latinx	%	46.4%	29.6%	49.4%
	African American	%	35.6%	40.8%	34.7%
	Additional Race/Ethnicity	%	7.9%	11.3%	7.3%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>462</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>395</b>
Regions	Houston	%	45.3%	66.2%	41.5%
	Lubbock	%	11.2%	15.5%	10.4%
	Rio Grande Valley	%	26.0%	9.9%	28.9%
	State Juvenile Justice	%	17.6%	8.5%	19.2%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>466</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>395</b>
Minor or Young Adult	Minor	%	51.6%	17.9%	57.5%
	Young Adult	%	48.4%	82.1%	42.5%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>448</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>381</b>
Level of Care	Highest	%	17.6%	8.5%	19.2%
	Middle	%	49.4%	16.9%	55.2%
	Lowest	%	33.0%	74.6%	25.6%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>466</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>395</b>

Table 7. Victimization Prevalence\*

		ST Victim	
Overall		%	15.2%
Eligibility Criteria (Ever Had or Experienced)	Caseworker?	%	14.7%
	Abuse?	%	29.4%
	Foster care placement?	%	24.1%
	Homeless?	%	30.0%
GI/SO	CH male	%	6.8%
	CH female	%	22.1%
	LGBTQ	%	41.0%
Race/Ethnicity	White	%	27.7%
	Hispanic/Latinx	%	9.7%
	African American	%	17.5%
	Additional Race/Ethnicity	%	21.6%
Regions	Houston	%	22.3%
	Lubbock	%	21.2%
	Border Regions	%	5.8%
	State Juvenile Justice	%	7.3%
Minor or Young Adult	Minor	%	5.2%
	Young Adult	%	25.3%
Level of Care	Highest	%	7.3%
	Middle	%	5.2%
	Lowest	%	34.4%

\*Percent who have experienced one or more forms of sex trafficking ever in their life.

### Regional Differences: Models of Care and Service Availability

Among those experiencing victimization, 66% came from Houston. Across all of the minors and youth at risk of trafficking who took the REVS, the proportion of victimization in the total regional sample was higher in Houston and Lubbock, at 22% and 21% respectively. This is likely due to differing site partners and service models in regions, a finding discussed further in the Discussion and Recommendations sections.

The research team had greater access to individuals in risk segments in Houston than in any other region. Therefore, it should not be assumed that the actual proportion of victimization in the border region is lower in reality, but that Houston and Lubbock represent data collection sites that serve more individuals with substantially higher risk factors, particularly individuals who are homeless. This correlation between a higher proportion of participants who were homeless and participants experiencing sex trafficking victimization in Houston and Lubbock again confirms how risk factors often occur concurrently, particularly for runaway and homeless youth.

Additionally, the Rio Grande Valley border region is designated as an underserved area with vulnerable populations in terms of health and social markers by the Department of Health and

Human Services Health Resources and Services Administration (Health Resources Services Administration, n.d.) and has fewer service providers than the other two regions included in the study. Added to this is the cultural understanding of homelessness in the region being defined only as living on the street without any support. This understanding does not necessarily include unstable housing (e.g., informally staying with a friend or family, “couch surfing,” or in motels). Therefore, identifying and accessing individuals who are homeless and organizations that serve homeless youth in the Rio Grande Valley was more challenging. Being able to partner with agencies in the border region similar to the partners the research team had in the other two regions would have allowed for similar access to high-risk populations. That was not possible based on current service availability in the region.

The issues of differing service models and service availability in each region is discussed throughout this report. An individual’s involvement, past or current, with systems had the potential to be both harmful and protective, depending on that particular system’s efficacy and the degree of unmet need for the individual. When systems and service providers cannot provide a safety net to vulnerable populations, there is a correlation with a higher risk of those individuals being trafficked.

### **Level of Care Analysis**

As shown in Table 8 and discussed in the Rates and Extent of Victimization section earlier, an important finding of this study centers on the understanding of the level of service provision being accessed by participants at the sites where they were encountered. This section presents additional analysis on this finding. For the purposes of this study, the research team assigned a certain level of care (or oversight) based on the type of agency from which the participant was recruited into the study.

For example, organizations like drop-in centers provide services such as short-term assistance for meeting basic needs, like food and showers, and information on available services and social resources, such as activities, meals, and events. Although they may have case managers on staff, they do not generally oversee or monitor a service or treatment plan for clients, making them a lower level of care. By comparison, a residential treatment center or a lock-down juvenile justice facility provides 24/7 supervision, have protocols on follow up and monitoring the client’s adherence to a service plan, and offer more long-term services, such as therapy and educational programs. A middle level of care was defined as site partners that provide some sort of housing assistance, case management, and multiple touchpoints with clients. The rates of victimization across these levels of care differ dramatically: 34.4% at sites where participants were receiving services in organizations with the lowest level of care compared to 7.3% and 5.2% at sites where participants were receiving services at the highest and middle levels of care, respectively.

Table 8 shows the victimization rates based on care model, the percentage of participants from sites with those levels of care who also had experienced the risk factors set for this study as inclusion criteria, the average age of participants from each of those levels of care, and the average age of sex trafficking victimization among those victimized.

Table 8. Victimization Rates, by Level of Care Model

			Level of Care		
			Highest	Middle	Lowest
ST Victimization	Yes	%	7.3%	5.2%	34.4%
	No	%	92.7%	94.8%	65.6%
	<b>Base</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>230</b>	<b>154</b>
Eligibility Criteria (Ever Had or Experienced)	Caseworker?	%	100%	95.2%	73.4%
	Abuse?	%	28%	34.8%	81.2%
	Foster care placement?	%	14.6%	33.5%	63.6%
	Homeless?	%	13.4%	25.2%	87.0%
	<b>Base</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>230</b>	<b>154</b>
Age	Years	Mean	16.5	16.7	22.2
	<b>Base</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>222</b>	<b>144</b>
Age at First ST Victimization*	Years	Mean	13.9	13.0	15.7
	<b>Base</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>55</b>

\*Note: Base is reduced for this statistic to those who experienced sex trafficking.



**While the overall victimization prevalence was 15.2%, participants recruited from drop-in centers (the lowest level of care) had a lifetime prevalence of sex trafficking of 34.4% compared to 7.3% and 5.2% of participants recruited from the highest and middle levels of care, respectively.**

This study helps to clarify the intersectionality of how risk factors associated with prior life experiences correlate with level of care for minors and young adults. More specifically, the present study indicates that many participants from drop-in centers had a caseworker at some point in their lives (73%), experienced abuse (81%), had a foster care placement (64%), or had been homeless (87%). By comparison, participants from the highest and middle levels of care have almost all had and or currently have a caseworker as part of the service they are currently receiving (100% and 95%, respectively). These participants from the highest and middle levels of care, however, have much lower levels of association with the other risk factors (abuse, foster care, and homelessness) than participants from drop-in centers. On average, participants from drop-in centers were substantially older than participants from the middle and highest levels of care (22 years of age compared to age 17, respectively). However, by definition, participants from all levels of care were initially victimized when they were minors.

The correlations among these data are suggestive: many of the participants recruited from drop-in centers were once receiving a higher level of care and their increased likelihood of victimization might be associated with their transition from a higher level of care to circumstances associated with the lowest level of care or no care. This pattern is also seen in the LES interview data from participants who were victims of sex trafficking in that participants reported experiencing exploitation after leaving a system with a high level of care such as juvenile justice and child welfare.

For example, children who age out of foster care or are released from the care of the juvenile justice system may benefit from the availability of extended transitional services that allow them to avoid homelessness and other circumstances where physical, emotional, mental, or physical abuse are more common. Indeed, the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) already has a number of abuse prevention and early intervention programs that may be providing these kinds of services in a broader at-risk setting, including the Services to At-Risk Youth (STAR) program. The STAR program “provides crisis intervention, short-term emergency shelter, individual and family counseling, youth and parent skills groups, and universal child abuse and neglect prevention activities” (Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, n.d.). These services might be reviewed to assess opportunities for expansion or optimization for minors and young adults who are at high risk for or who are already victims of sex trafficking. Synergistically, in 2017, DFPS created the Human Trafficking and Child Exploitation (HTCE) division to improve DFPS’s capacity to identify, report, recover, and restore the youth it serves who are trafficked. HTCE also researches models of service and programs for child trafficking victims. An HTCE strategy includes the continued development of care coordination teams and long-term, wraparound services to expand the continuum of care for youth in foster care who are victims of trafficking.

Lastly, the Office of the Texas Governor’s Child Sex Trafficking Team is spearheading an effort with “Children’s Advocacy Centers of Texas to develop Care Coordination Teams (CCTs) across the state in the next several years, with the expectation that local children’s advocacy centers will act as care coordinating agencies...” (The Texas Human Trafficking Prevention Task Force Report, 2018). Currently these CCT efforts focus on survivors up to 18 years of age, but this report’s findings add evidence about the potential benefit of expanding these efforts to include young adults over the age of 18.

Additionally, future research should explicitly address the relationships that the current study suggests among care model, risk factors, and likelihood of sex trafficking victimization to assess to what degree a transition from a system that provides higher levels of care can be augmented with a transitional service outside of that protective system.

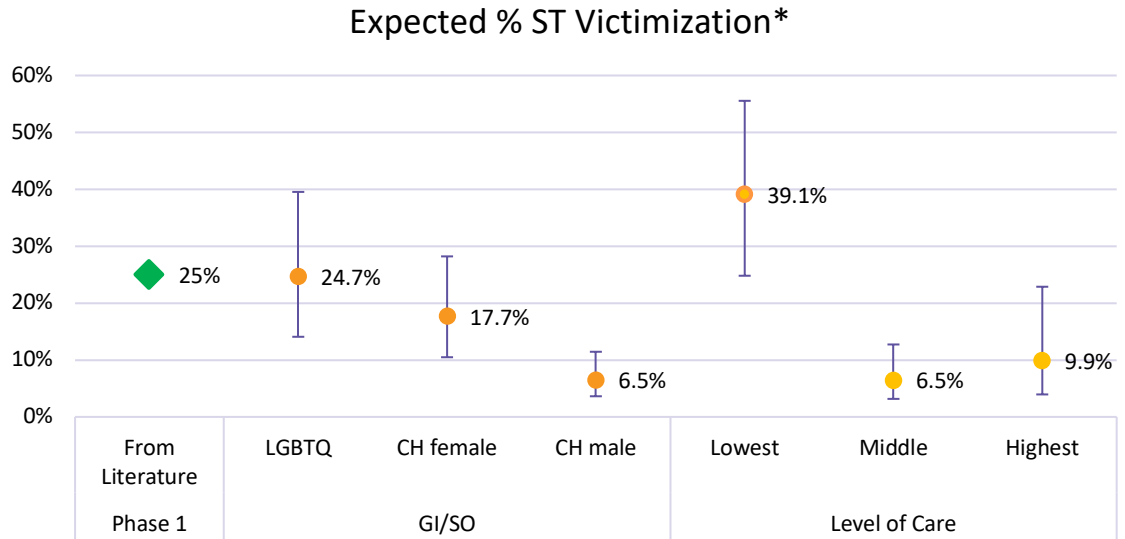
As a further attempt to characterize the relationships among these data, the research team used a logistic regression model on the REVS data to estimate the size of the effect of level of care on the risk of victimization. Researchers also included additional variables in this analysis to improve the understanding of how the effect of level of care compares to the effect of other risk factors. These other variables included gender identity and sexual orientation (GI/SO), participant age in years at the time of the survey, and race/ethnicity. GI/SO had three levels (CH male, CH female, and LGBTQ), age was measured in years, and race/ethnicity had four levels (white, Hispanic/Latinx, African American, and another race/ethnicity). See Tables 6 and 7 for more information about the sample distribution for these factors and the sex trafficking victimization rate for each.

The logistic regression model was highly significant ( $X^2 = 84.1$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), indicating that the included variables improve understanding of sex trafficking victimization risk. More specifically, the model establishes that GI/SO and level of care significantly differentiate the levels of risk of sex trafficking ( $X^2 = 16.9$ ,  $p < 0.001$  and  $X^2 = 15.9$ ,  $p < 0.001$ , respectively). The effects of interest in the model are expressed as logits which can be interpreted as the ratio of risk between two levels of the same factor. Specifically, the rate of sex trafficking victimization among CH females is almost three times the rate of victimization among CH males (logit = 3.1,  $p=0.002$ ). Similarly, the rate of sex trafficking victimization among LGBTQ participants is almost five times the rate of victimization for CH males (logit = 4.7,  $p<0.001$ ). By comparison, for the level of care, the rate of victimization among participants recruited from drop-in sites was six times that of those from sites with the highest level of care (logit = 5.8,  $p=0.007$ ). The difference between the highest and middle levels of care was not significant ( $p=0.381$ ). Table 9 displays the results of the logistic regression model, including parameter estimates, significance, and the effect size (expressed as logits). Figure 7 translates the model results into predicted levels of sex trafficking victimization for each factor (GI/SO and level of care) while controlling for the race/ethnicity and age of participants. The predictions average across race/ethnicity and are based on the average age of participants (18.4 years). Figure 7 includes 95% confidence intervals for the predicted values. The figure also includes the 25% reference seen in other studies (see Busch-Armendariz et. al., 2016 for a review of this literature).

Table 9. Logistic Regression Model Predicting Risk of Sex Trafficking Victimization

Parameter	Estimate (B)	Sig	Logit (Exp(B))
Intercept	-3.656	.004	.026
GI/SO			
CH Male (reference)	0 <sup>a</sup>	.	1.000
CH Female	1.124	.002	3.076
LGBTQ	1.546	.000	4.694
Race/Ethnicity			
White (reference)	0 <sup>a</sup>	.	1.000
Hispanic/Latinx	.396	.458	1.486
African American	-.670	.147	.512
Additional Race/Ethnicity	-.047	.943	.954
Level of Care			
High (reference)	0 <sup>a</sup>	.	1.000
Medium	-.469	.226	.625
Low	1.760	.007	5.813
Age	.035	.567	1.036

Figure 7. Predicted Sex Trafficking Victimization Rates from Logistic Regression Model



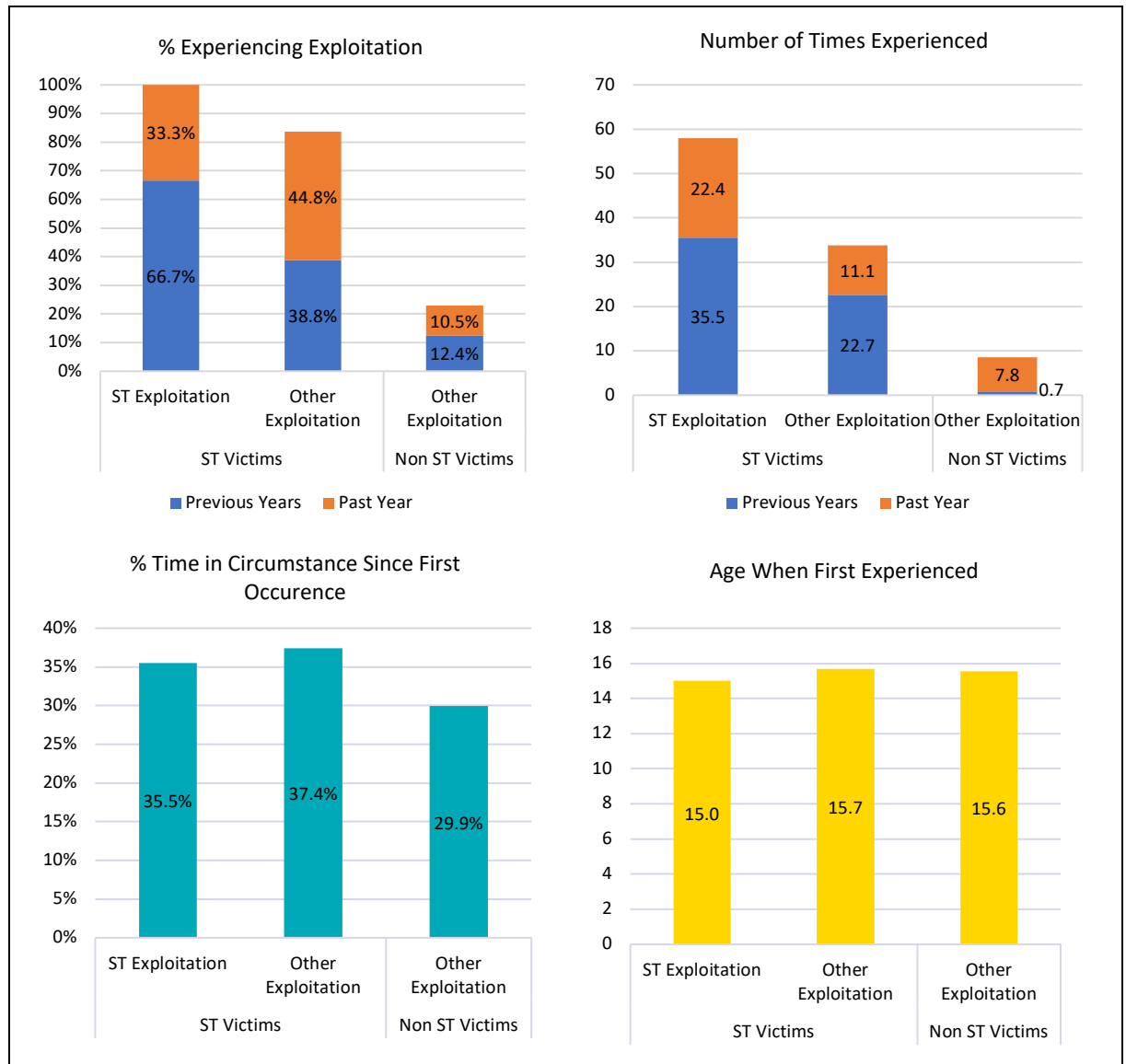
\*Expected marginal percentage from logistic regression model

### Summary of Rates and Extent of Victimization

Figure 8 summarizes the rates and extent of victimization seen among study participants. Incidents of victimization endured by participants have been aggregated into those that constitute sex trafficking and those that encompass other forms of violence and exploitation, but do not correspond to sex trafficking (e.g., wage theft). Participants are grouped into those who have experienced sex trafficking behaviors and those who have not. By definition, all sex trafficking victims experienced some form of sex trafficking behavior at some point; non-sex trafficking victims did not. However, Figure 8 also includes data on behaviors endured during the year prior to taking the survey, the numbers of behaviors endured in their lifetime, the age at which those behaviors first occurred, and an estimate by the participant about the percentage of time they have been in circumstances involving those behaviors since they first occurred.

**By definition, all sex trafficking victims have experienced sex trafficking, and Figure 8 shows that 33% of participants have experienced those behaviors in the past year. Additionally, 83% have experienced some form of other exploitation that does not constitute sex trafficking, with almost half (44.8%) having experienced those behaviors in the past year.**

Figure 8. Summary of Rates and Extent of Victimization



These data quantify the degree to which sex trafficking victims also endure other forms of violence and exploitation and provide some insight into the substantially lower rates and extent of victimization endured by non-sex trafficking victims.

**Just under a quarter (22.9%) of non-sex-trafficking victims endured some form of violence or exploitation, like wage theft or non-sexual abuse.**

The earliest age for the occurrence of both sex trafficking and non-sex trafficking victimization is about 15 or 16 years old. Once first experienced, participants estimate that they are in circumstances where they are enduring these behaviors around 35% of the time.

These data on the rates and extent of victimization provide an important contextual frame for better understanding the rich findings from in-depth LES interviews. A key finding in both the REVS and the LES is the evidence participants provided through their stories that demonstrate the intersectionality

of environmental factors, individual circumstances, and exploiters, which increase the risk for sex trafficking victimization. This will be explored in more depth later in this report.

More detailed data associated with this summary are reported in Figures 9 to 14 in the next section of the report. Those figures provide data on each specific behavior and also present the findings by GI/SO of participants.

### **Entrance and Experience Details**

This section provides additional details about the rates and extent of victimization faced by participants. Results are presented for the sample overall and for victims of sex trafficking overall with additional detail provided on specific types of sex trafficking and non-sex trafficking victimizations within the sample. The results for participants who have experienced sex trafficking victimization are also presented by GI/SO because of the significant risk differential seen among levels of that variable. All data are shown in graphic formats in this section; additional details (e.g., proportions, means, base sizes, and standard errors) are available in Appendix I: Extent of Victimization Details.

#### **Lifetime Victimization Proportion**

Participants at risk of sex trafficking who took the REVS were asked about specific victimization experiences, including commercial sex by force, sexual activity by force, commercial sex by force from a romantic/intimate partner, coerced survival sex, and un-coerced survival sex. Over half of participants who qualified as victims of sex trafficking experienced sexual activity by force or pressure.

**Around 73% of victims engaged in un-coerced survival sex and half of victims had been forced to participate in commercial sex by a romantic partner.**

Participants indicated they had experienced multiple forms of victimization, so there may be overlap in their experiences. For example, a respondent who engaged in survival sex could have also been forced to engage in commercial sex by someone else as a separate victimization experience.

The lifetime victimization data show that sex trafficking victims also experience all other forms of exploitation included in the REVS at a higher rate than non-sex trafficking victims. Sex trafficking victimization typically occurs jointly with other forms of exploitation, most commonly, wage theft. Among sex trafficking victims, CH males were more likely to experience wage theft than CH females, and sex trafficking victims who were LGBTQ were more likely than CH males to have been coerced by an employer (e.g., not allowed to leave, not allowed to talk to people with whom they wanted to talk) even when they were not working. Figure 9 shows the percentage of participants who experienced victimization in their lifetime.

#### **Average Age When Exploitation Was First Experienced**

The average age of victimization varied depending on the type of exploitative experience. The average age for participants to engage in survival sex for the first time was 15 years old. The average age of first experience with all other forms of sex trafficking victimization ranged between 14 and 17 years. Figure 8 above shows the average age at the time of participants' first experiences of exploitation.

Figure 9. Lifetime Victimization Proportion

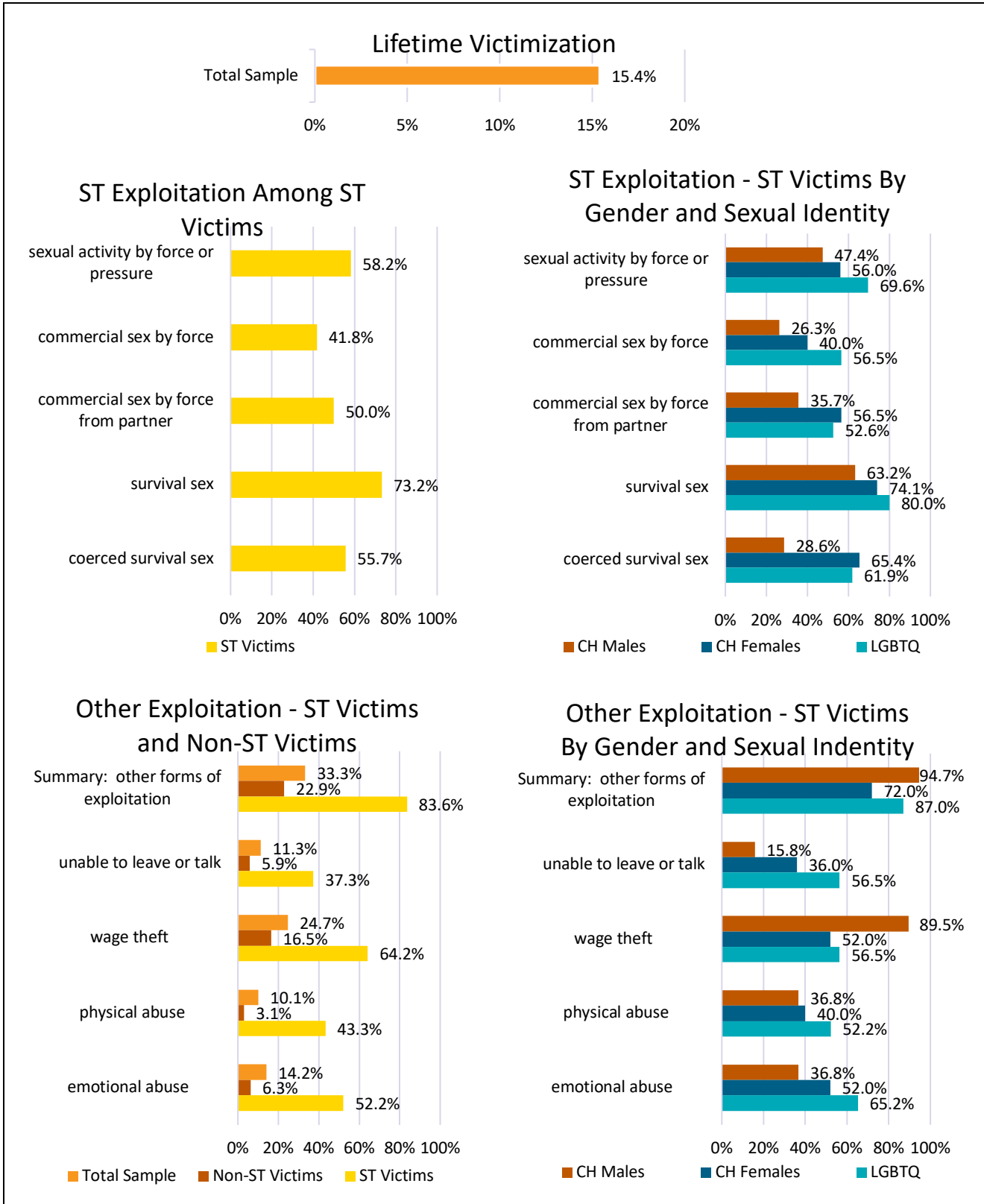
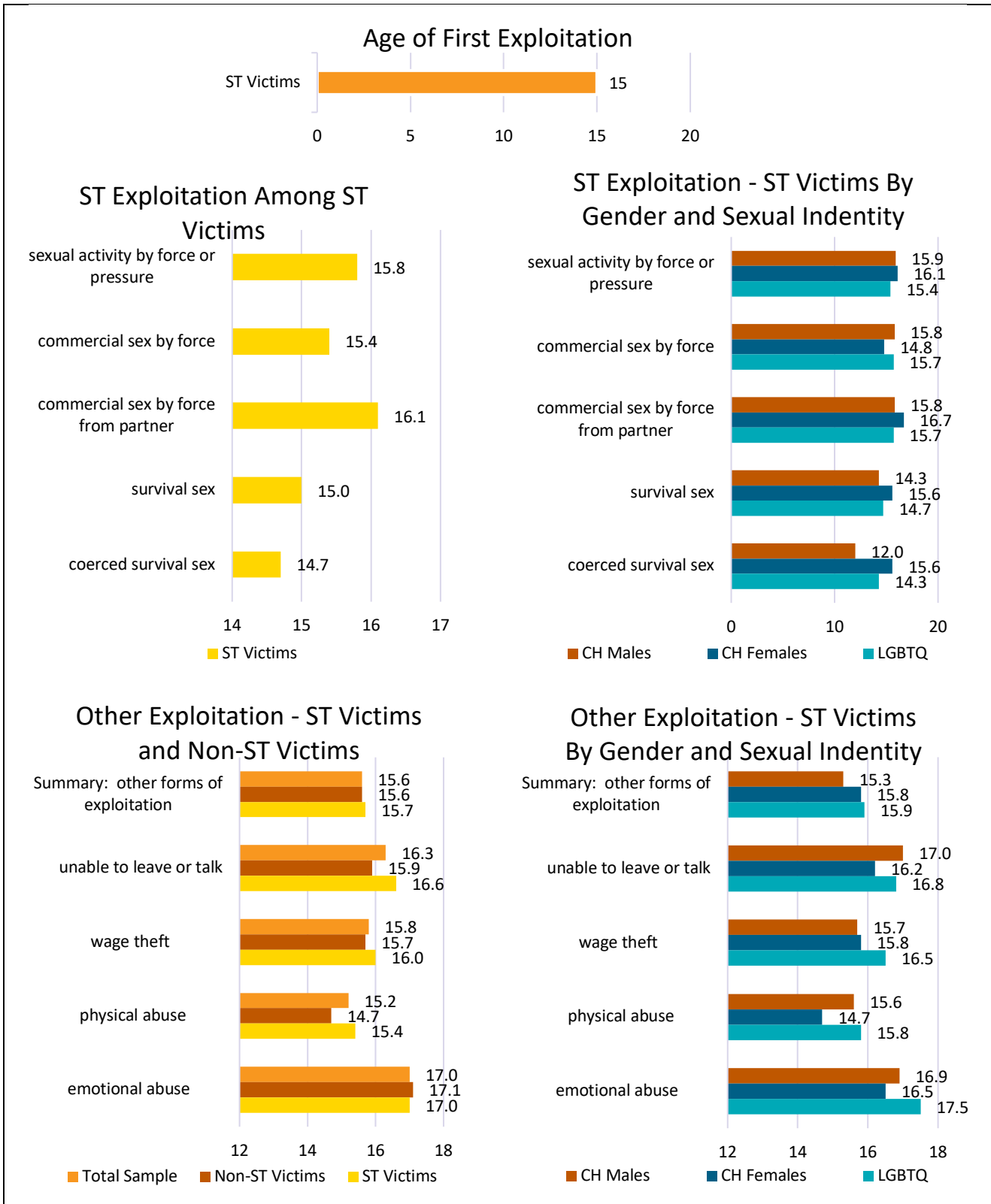


Figure 10. Average Age When Exploitation Was First Experienced



### Past-Year Victimization

Participants were also asked if they had experienced any victimization in the past year – and how much.

**On average, one-third of sex trafficking victims had experienced some form of commercial sexual exploitation in the past year. The average number of times they experienced some form of commercial sexual exploitation was 22 times in the past year.**

Figure 11 shows the percentage of overall victims who also experienced victimization in the past year and Figure 12 shows the average number of times participants experienced victimization in the past year.



Figure 11. Past Year Victimization Proportion

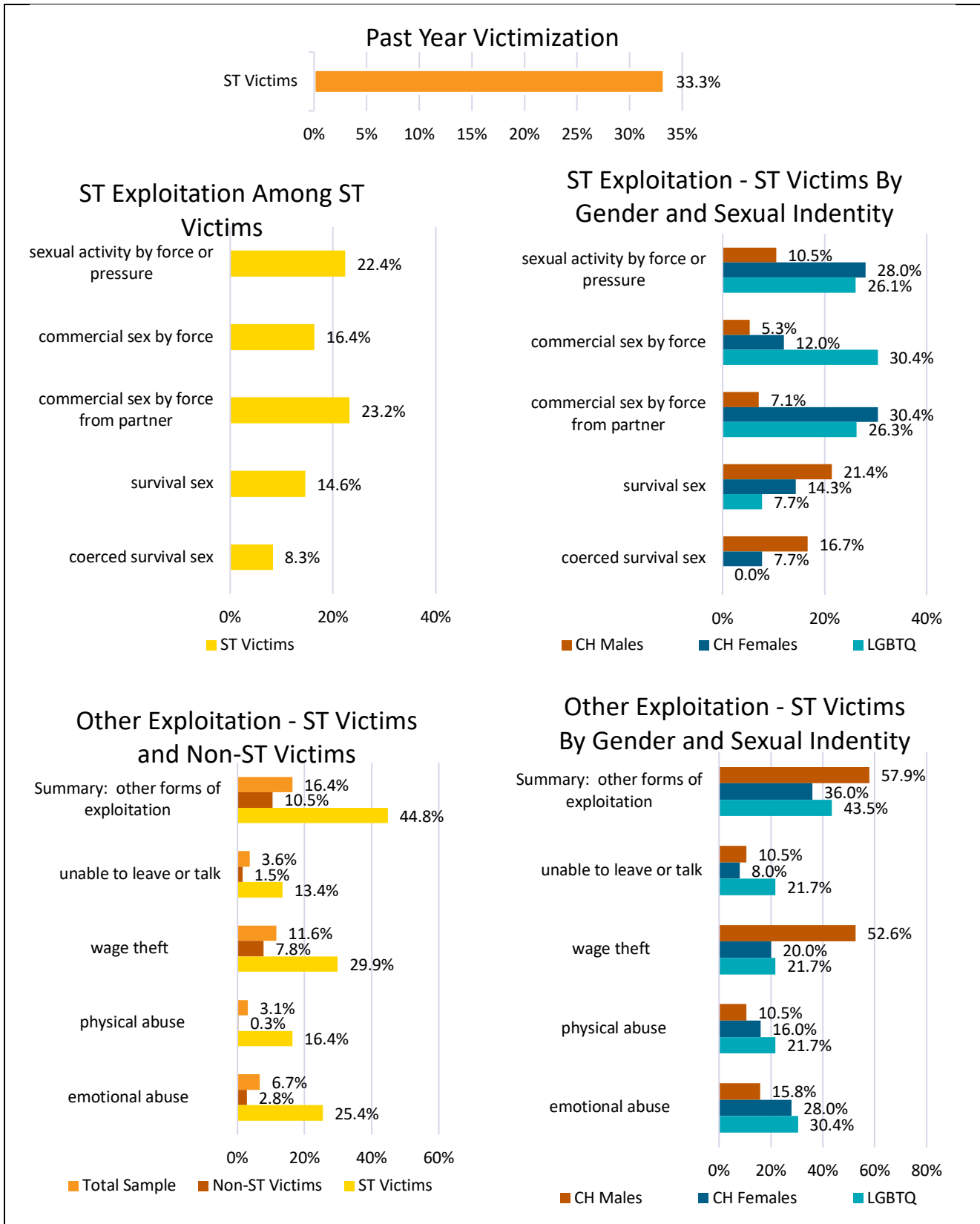
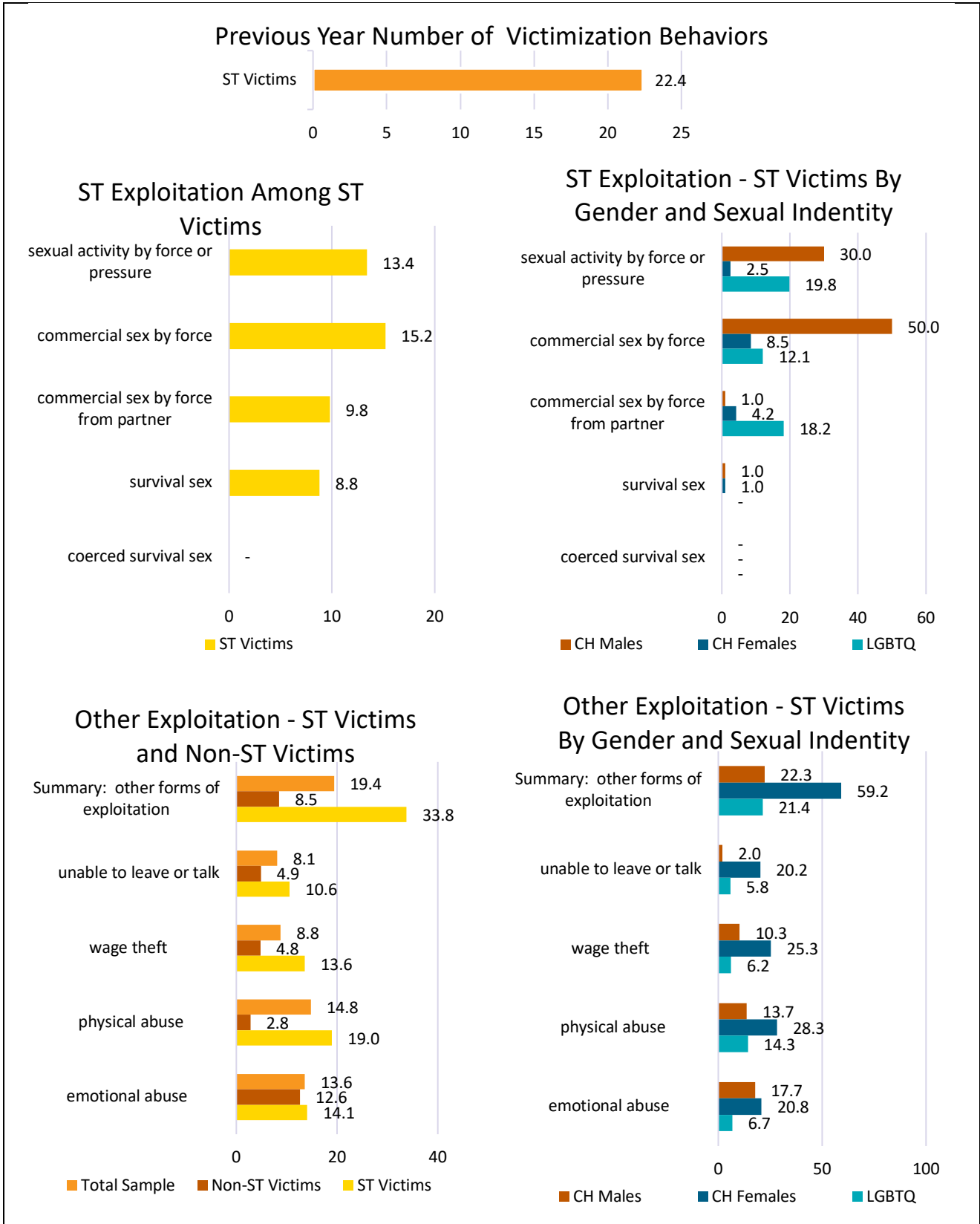


Figure 12. Past Year Number of Victimization Behaviors Experienced



#### Lifetime Number of Times Youth Experienced Victimization through Exploitation

Participants also reported data on the mean (or average) number of victimization experiences they remembered enduring over their lifetime.

**Victims experienced an average of 58 instances of all types of sex trafficking exploitation in their lifetime. CH females typically experienced 68 instances of sex trafficking exploitation in their lives and CH males experienced around 40 instances. LGBTQ participants experienced an average of 60 sex trafficking instances.**

Of note, victims of sex trafficking also experienced higher averages of other forms of exploitation – around 33 experiences on average as compared to non-victims who experienced about 8 non-sex trafficking forms of exploitation. Figure 13 shows the lifetime average number of times participants reported experiencing for each specific type of victimization.

#### Percent of Time Enduring Victimizing Behaviors of Exploitation Since First Occurrence

Participants were asked to report the percentage of time in their lives that they felt they had endured a certain experience since it first occurred. This research shows that victims report being in circumstances of victimization 30–40% of the time after their first victimization across all forms of exploitation. **That is, once victimized in some way, individuals spend approximately a third of their lives being repeatedly victimized in the same way.** This is true across participants of all genders and sexual orientations as well as both sex trafficking victims and participants who were not victims. Figure 14 shows the percentage of time that victims endured some form of sex trafficking since it first occurred.

Figure 13. Lifetime Number of Times Youth Experienced Victimization through Exploitation

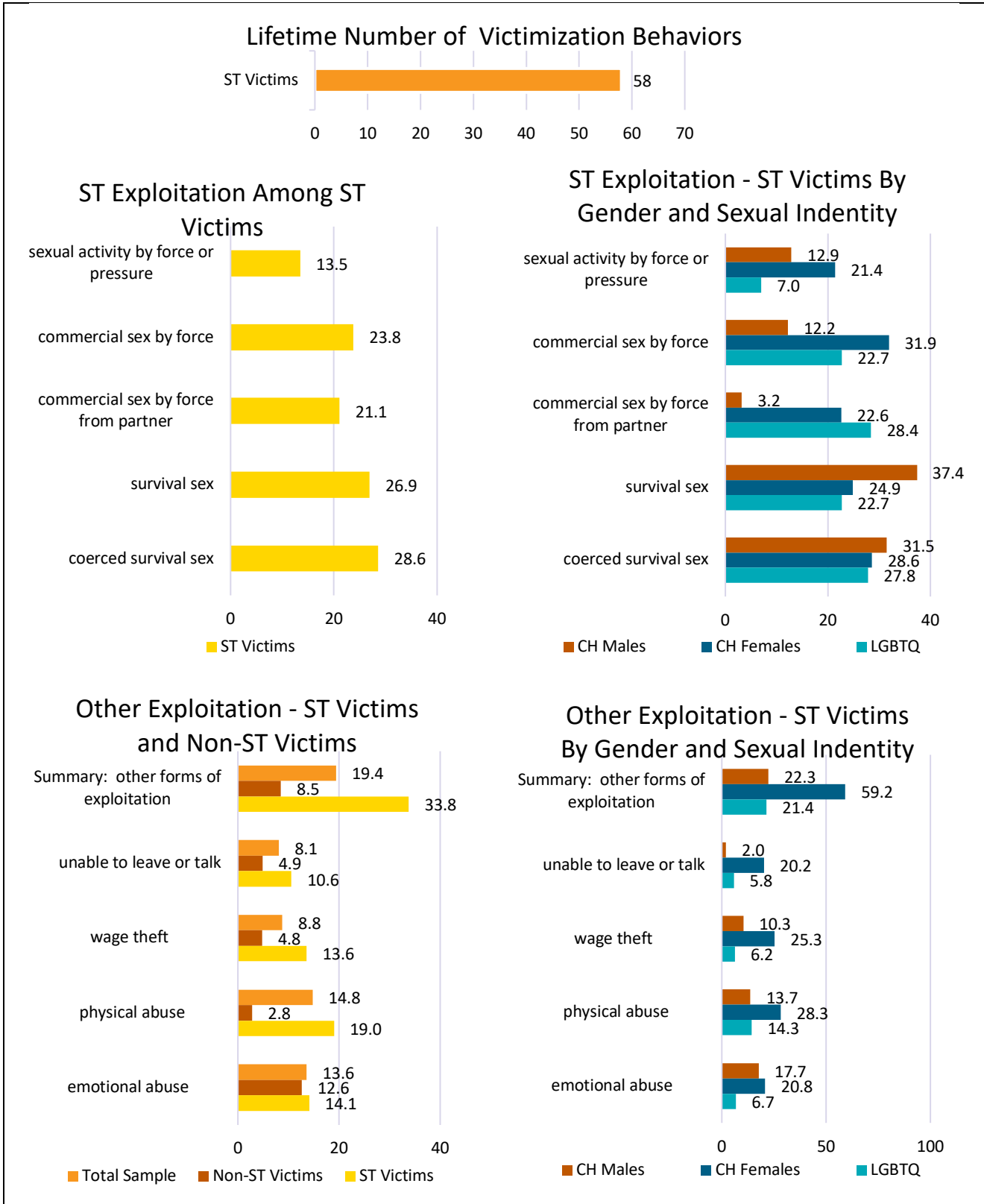
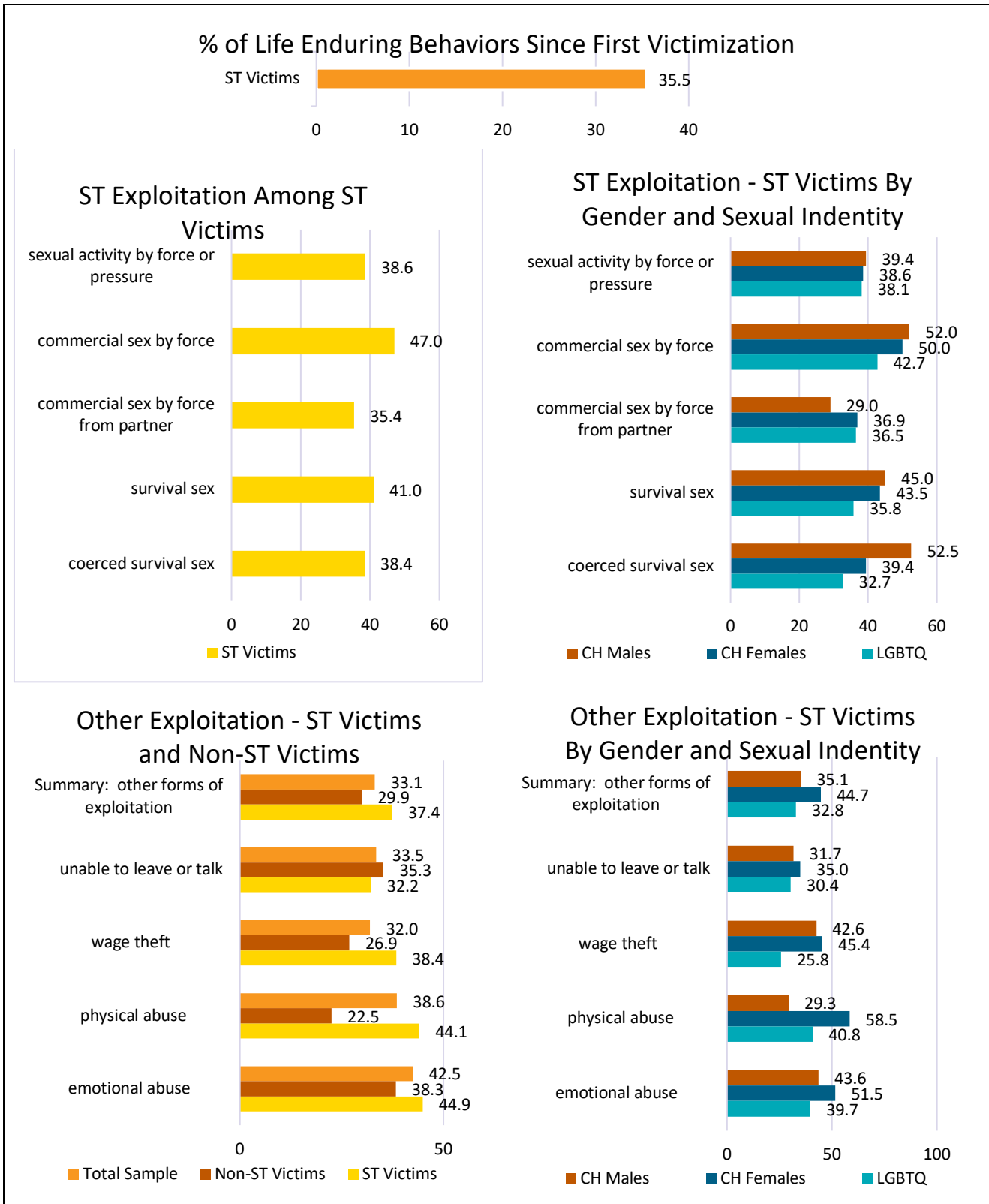


Figure 14. Percent of Time Enduring Victimizing Behaviors of Exploitation Since First Occurrence



### Work Experiences

Participants were asked about their previous and current work experience. They were asked about a variety of job types typical among minors and youth, such as serving food in a restaurant or café, babysitting, selling items door-to-door, doing nails or hair, or working in a retail store as well as other types of work, including trading sex for money, clothes, shelter, or other things they needed to survive. Individuals who had been sex trafficked were more likely to have work experience than non-victims. The data indicated that having had a job correlates with higher risk of also having been sex trafficked. Six percent of sex trafficking victims had never worked, while 18% of non-victims had never had a job.

**Having had a job is evidence of economic need and, therefore, these data suggest that economic need is likely correlated with risk for sex trafficking victimization.** This suggestion is corroborated in the LES data as well. Additionally, different types of jobs were associated with different levels of risk. An unexpected finding was that approximately the same percentage of sex trafficking victims and non-victims engaged in illicit work (e.g., selling drugs, stealing and re-selling items, etc.) – this was true for 17% of victims and 18% of non-victims, respectively. Table 10 shows the different work experience endorsed by sex trafficking victims and non-victims.

Table 10. Work Experience

		ST Victimization		
		Total	Yes	No
Serving food in a restaurant or café	%	31.1%	54.9%	26.8%
Another type of job in a restaurant or café	%	24.7%	42.3%	21.5%
In a retail store (clothing store, grocery store, convenience store, at the mall, etc.)	%	20.6%	45.1%	16.2%
Doing construction work or other home repairs (painting, plumbing, electricity, etc.)	%	30.0%	31.0%	29.9%
Mowing lawns, shoveling sidewalks, or other yard work	%	42.1%	38.0%	42.8%
Babysitting	%	34.1%	57.7%	29.9%
Office work (answering phones, filing, etc.)	%	13.3%	26.8%	10.9%
Selling items door-to-door	%	19.7%	32.4%	17.5%
Selling items, dancing, or performing on the street	%	17.0%	43.7%	12.2%
Asking for change or donations on the street	%	13.3%	35.2%	9.4%
Trading sex for money, clothes, shelter, or other things	%	10.7%	57.7%	2.3%
Participating in sexual videos or photos for money, clothes, shelter, or other things	%	6.0%	35.2%	0.8%
Stripping (exotic dancing)	%	7.5%	32.4%	3.0%
Delivering newspapers, restaurant food, groceries, or other things	%	8.8%	21.1%	6.6%
Cleaning houses	%	27.0%	49.3%	23.0%
Doing nails or hair	%	14.8%	26.8%	12.7%
Providing massage services	%	5.2%	12.7%	3.8%
Working at a bar or nightclub	%	8.6%	31.0%	4.6%
Illicit (e.g., selling drugs, stealing and re-selling items, etc.)	%	17.6%	16.9%	17.7%
Other	%	14.4%	8.5%	15.4%
None	%	16.1%	5.6%	18.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>466</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>395</b>

## CONCEPT MAP: LIFE CYCLE OF EXPLOITATION

The LES tool provided rich qualitative data about the 46 participants who were victims of sex trafficking and decided to participate in the longer in-depth interview. Analysis of the LES data illustrates the intersection of risk factors for sex trafficking and a spectrum of victimization experiences. These have been captured in a phased Concept Map (provided in full in Figure 3 in the Findings-At-A Glance section) that describes the lived experiences of victims. The research team developed this map to elevate the focus on intersectionality of vulnerabilities and missed opportunities in efforts to combat child sex trafficking. Specifically, the data collected in this study show that it is valuable and useful for anyone in the anti-human trafficking field to look separately at two phases of complex interactions a minor or youth may face:

- Phase 1: Entrance and experience with sex trafficking
- Phase 2: Exit from, and future goals after, sex trafficking experiences

The first phase of the map, **Entrance and Experience**, explores *individual circumstances*, *environmental circumstances*, and *exploiters*. The second phase of the map, **Exit and Future Goals**, details the decision-making process individuals engage in, based on their personal *risk assessment* and differing *level of personal agency* that participants felt throughout their exploitative experiences.

### Phase 1: Conceptual Map of Factors Associated with Entrance and Experience

During the interviews, the research team uncovered a complex and dynamic set of factors at play for minors and youth who have experienced sex trafficking. Figure 15 expresses these factors in a Venn diagram of discrete modalities.

Figure 16 maps the intersection of individual circumstances, exploiters, and environmental circumstance to illustrate the complexity of child sex trafficking and the difficulty of generalizing about the causes and conditions of trafficking. This portion of the Concept Map draws from research on human behavior and the social environment (Begun, 1993), socioecological theories (Campbell et al., 2009; Greenbaum, 2018), recruitment and grooming strategies employed by traffickers (Reid, 2016), and previous research on the complexities of trafficking victimization and the efforts by professionals to serve them (Busch-Armendariz et al., 2014; Busch-Armendariz et al., 2009).

These three elements intersect with each other in greater or lesser degree based on the particular context of the individual's life. For instance, the 46 interview participants screened into the LES from the REVS because they described experiences that met the legal definition of child sex trafficking victimization, but in the course of their interviews, many participants described additional life experiences of exploitation that might not have been identified as such by support systems or service providers. Figure 15 diagrams this complexity and hopefully will contribute to and help organize the field's response to exploitation. The participant examples that are provided in this section also detail the complexity of individual circumstances.

Figure 15. Concept Map Phase 1: Entrance and Experience

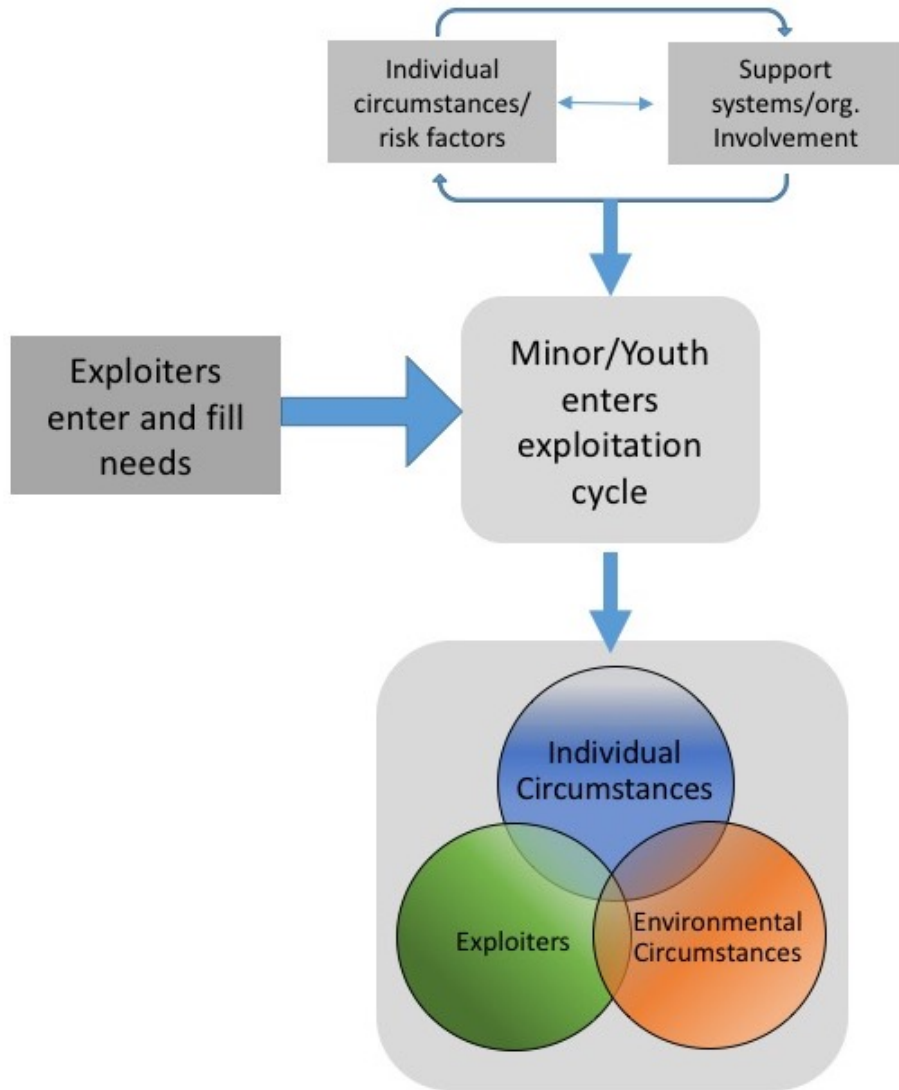
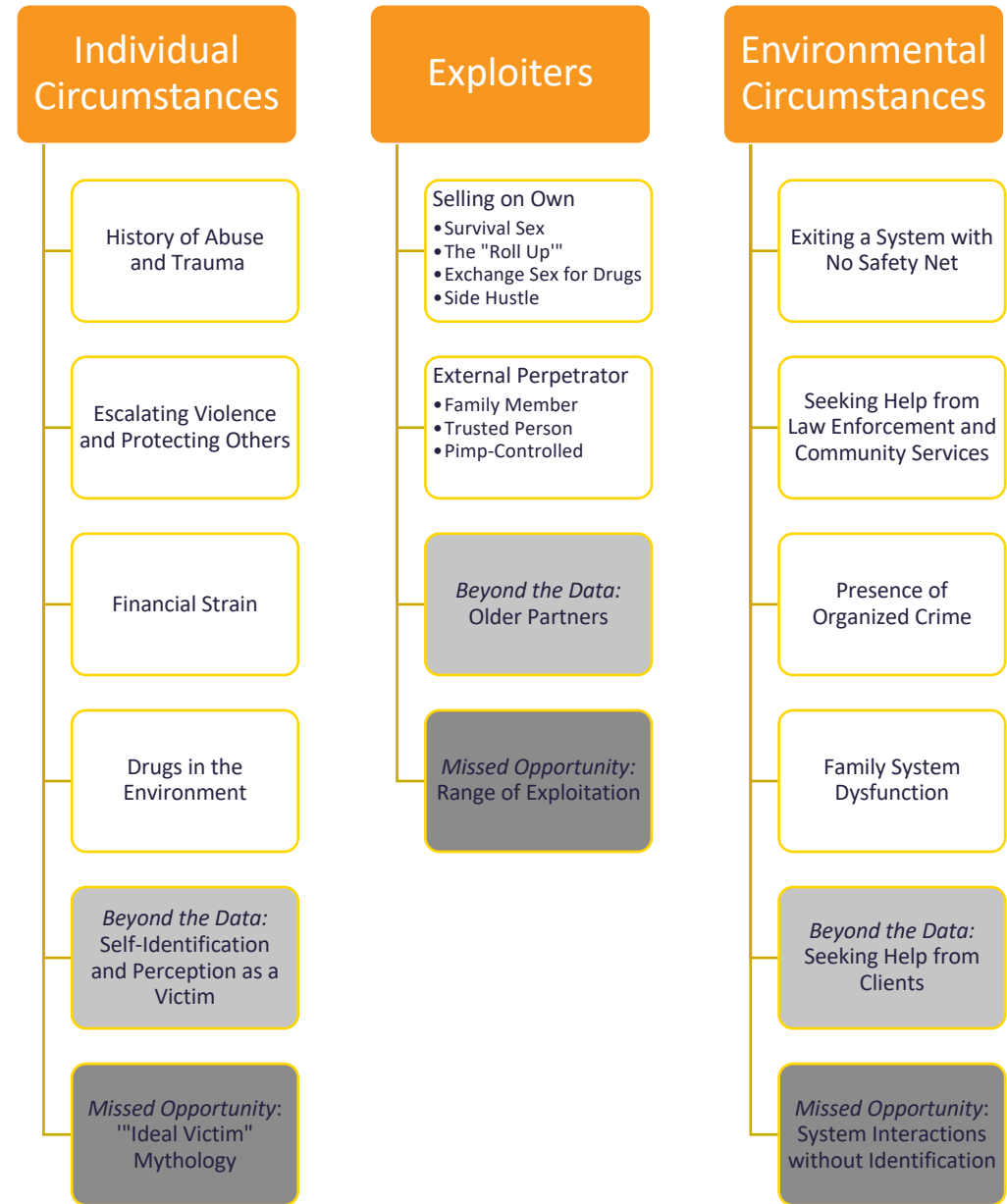


Figure 16. Entrance and Experience Factors Defined





Example: Participant 1

**Demographics**

Participant 1 is a 23-year-old, transgender woman from Houston. Her first sex trafficking victimization occurred at 16 years old. She was in the foster care system for two years as a minor.

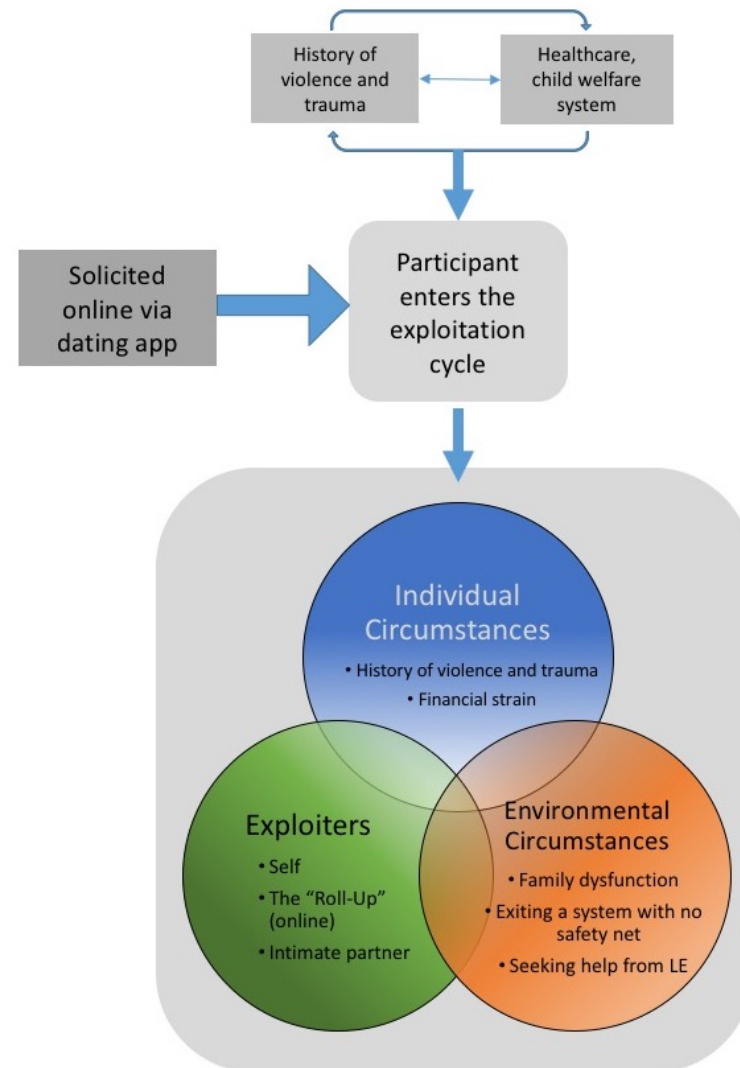
**Entrance**

When this participant first experienced sex trafficking victimization, she was on an online dating website. A man messaged her on the site and asked the participant “what he could do to get with [her].” The participant went to his house and he paid her to have sex with him. She began to see that individual regularly and started to exchange sex for money with other individuals from that site as well.

**Experience**

The participant had a boyfriend when she first started to engage in commercial sex, and he noticed that she was making more money. When she told him what she was doing for the money, “he started being [her] bodyguard and holding [her] money, and it built up” from there to him becoming her pimp. During the interview, she mentioned a previous history of sexual abuse and felt that it was one of the causes behind her engagement in commercial sex. She also mentioned that some of her family members have money, but that she was cut off from them when she came out as gay and then as transgender.

Figure 17. Participant 1: Entrance and Experience



Example: Participant 2

**Demographics**

Participant 2 is a 24-year-old cisgender male from Lubbock. His first trafficking victimization occurred at age 16.

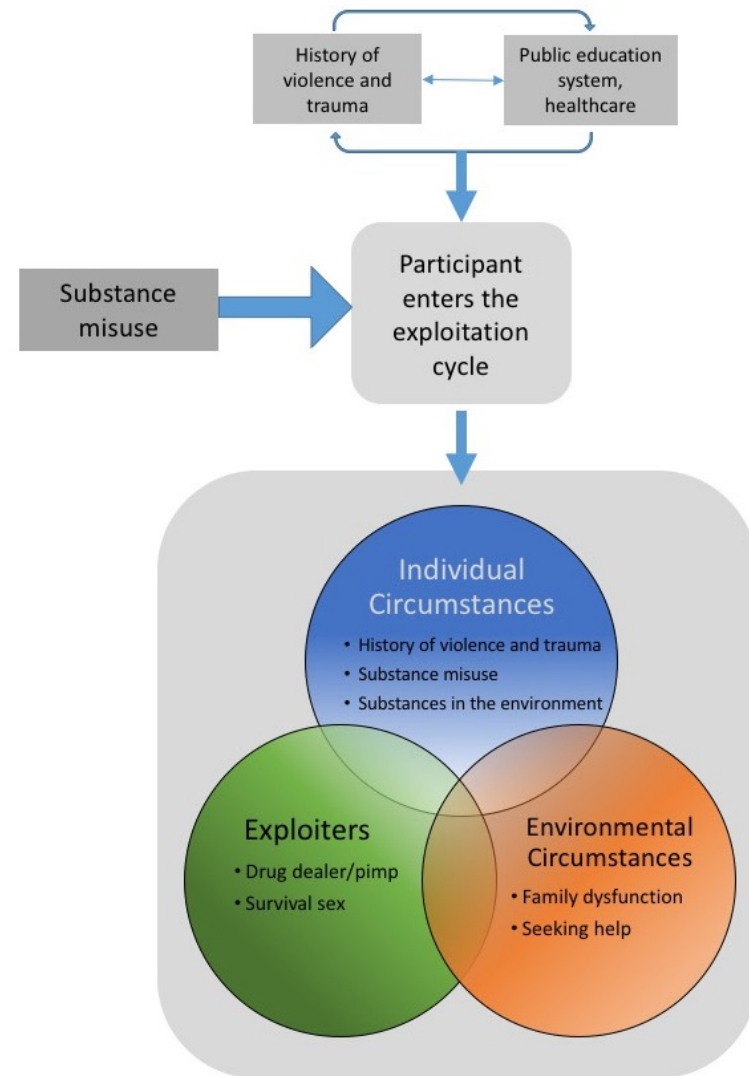
**Entrance**

When Participant 2 first experienced sex trafficking victimization, it was during spring break and the people he was hanging out with offered him crack for the first time. The people he was with said that if he wanted more, he had to do certain things to get it. He remembers saying, “Well, that’s what I got to do then.” His substance misuse was his gateway into commercial sex, and he has consistently traded sex for drugs or for money to pay for drugs since that time.

**Experience**

After his first experience with commercial sexual exploitation, this participant would hang out on the streets and wait for people to drive up. He would walk up to their cars and go to a “predestined spot” to engage in commercial sex. He primarily engages in sex with other cisgender males who identify as both gay and straight. He has had long periods of homelessness and continuously struggles with his substance misuse. He has experienced severe physical violence at the hands of his drug dealer (who also sometimes serves as a pimp) and from clients. He has endured sexual, mental, and emotional abuse throughout his trafficking experience and says that he is scared of the violence he has seen from his drug dealer/pimp.

Figure 18. Participant 2: Entrance and Experience



Example: Participant 3

**Demographics**

Participant 3 is a 17-year-old, cisgender male from the Rio Grande Valley. His first sex trafficking victimization occurred at 13 years old.

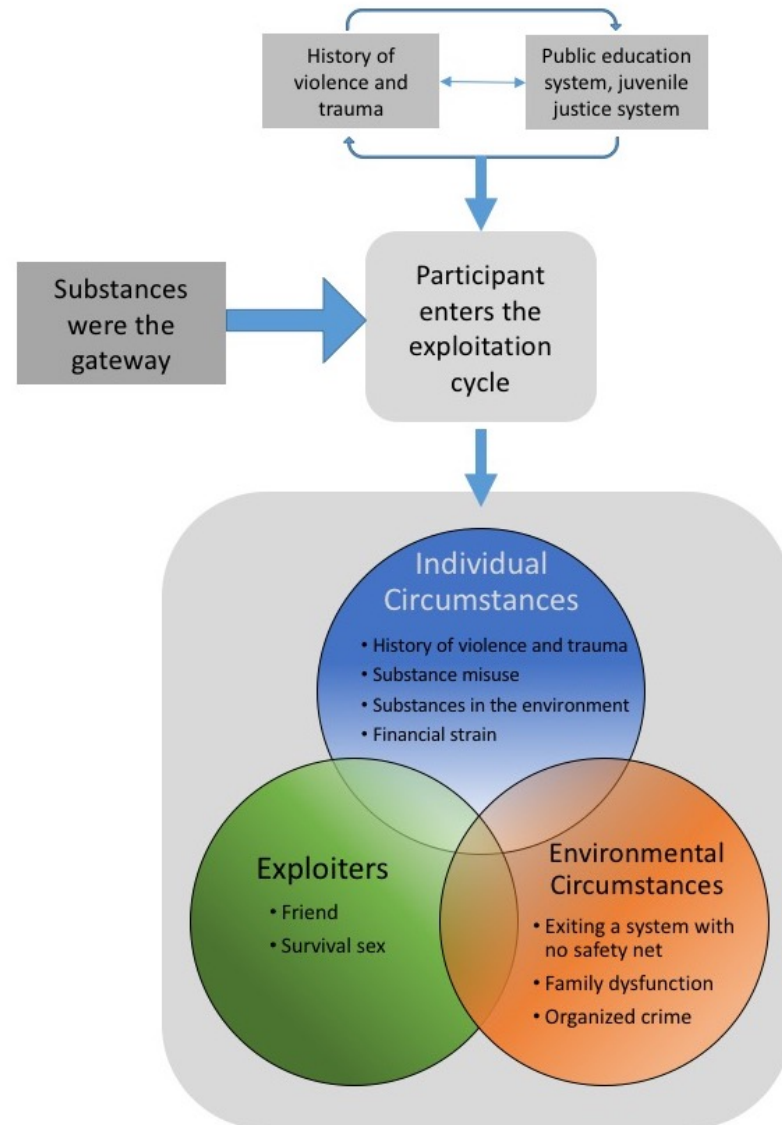
**Entrance**

Participant 3 first experienced sex trafficking when he owed his friend a favor. The friend, a drug dealer, knew of some girls who wanted to get drugs in exchange for sex, so Participant 3's friend told him to have sex with those girls to make the deal. He started engaging in commercial sex at school with other girls. Shortly after, he became involved in cartel-related activity by selling drugs and realized he could make more money both selling other girls and himself instead of the drugs.

**Experience**

This participant was kidnapped at the age of 13 and forced to commit homicide. He continued to go to school during this time and would engage in commercial sex at school in addition to selling drugs and was pimping out other girls for a period of time. This participant primarily has sex with females, but has engaged in commercial sex with males as well. He was threatened and told that, if he quit selling drugs or sex, the cartel would kill him. He ran away to Mexico and they found him there. After that, they started to threaten his family as well. He has been in and out of the juvenile justice system since the age of 13.

Figure 19. Participant 3: Entrance and Experience



Example: Participant 4

**Demographics**

Participant 4 is a 23-year-old, cisgender female from Houston. Her first sex trafficking victimization occurred at 17 years old. She was in the foster care system for 3 years as a minor.

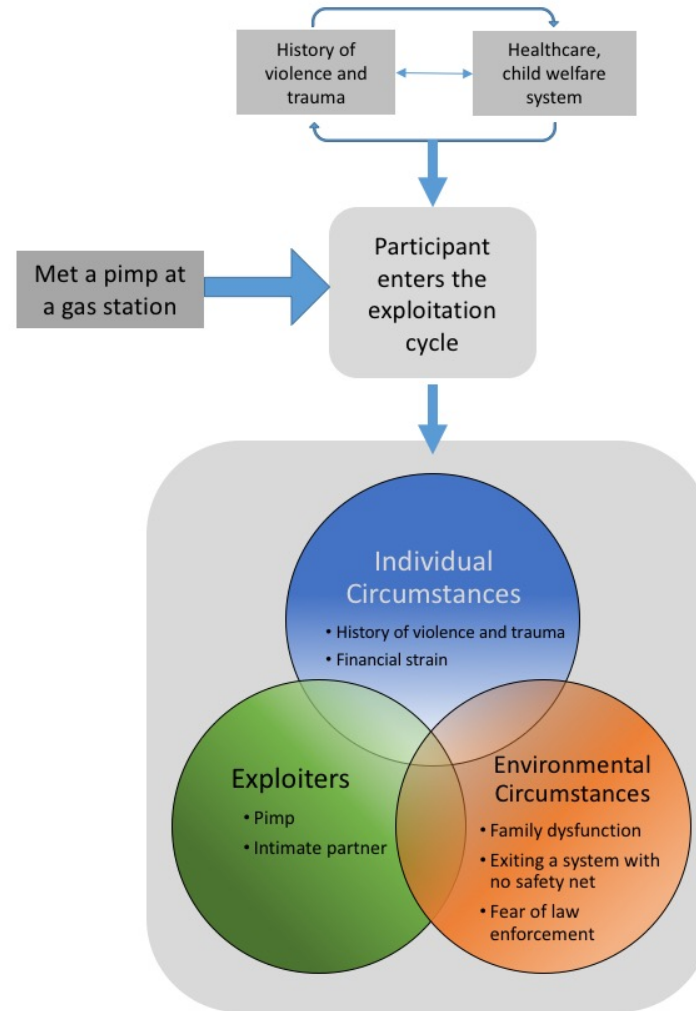
**Entrance**

Participant 4 was sexually assaulted at the age of 17. After that occurred, she went through a period of financial strain where she did not know how she was going to support herself. She had a cousin who was engaging in commercial sex and introduced her to “the life.” Participant 4 started to engage in commercial sex on her own. She met a pimp at gas station after a client had left her there and she did not have a ride back to her house. The pimp took her to Austin and she says, “That was it.”

**Experience**

Her pimp took her social security card and ID. She says that if she had just had a ride home that first night, “It could have prevented a lot.” Participant 4’s biggest fear during her exploitation was that someone was going to kill her or “get crazy cause they didn’t like what they got.” She also feared undercover cops. She worked on the street and would get hotel rooms when needed or engage in commercial sex with individuals in their cars.

Figure 20. Participant 4: Entrance and Experience



## **Phase 2: Conceptual Model for Exit and Future Goals**

In this study, exit was defined to include the way a participant was able to exit the commercial sex industry entirely and the way they were able to leave a specific trafficker. Participants reported experiencing intermittent periods of exploitation or several exits and returns to the same exploitative situation. Some participants experienced chronic instability that forced them into trafficking situations or to engage in trading sex, while others were forced into trafficking or commercial sex for limited periods of time.

The first part, **Risk Assessment**, discusses the real-time decision-making process in which participants are continuously engaging. This is a kind of cost/benefit analysis, an assessment of their safety, need for support services, and basic needs (both immediate and long-term). Intertwined with this internal dialogue were external factors that influenced the participant's level of personal agency during their decision-making process.

The second part, **Level of Personal Agency**, discusses participants' perceived level of personal agency in each experience with exploitation and throughout all of their experiences with exploitation. This process was fluid and constantly in flux related to current perceived risks. Their assessments were based on: perceived strengths, both internal and external; their ability to plan for the future; and if they had options or alternatives to their current situation. This process is detailed in Figures 21 and 22 and demonstrated in the participant examples that follow.

Figure 21. Concept Map Phase 2: Exit and Future Goals

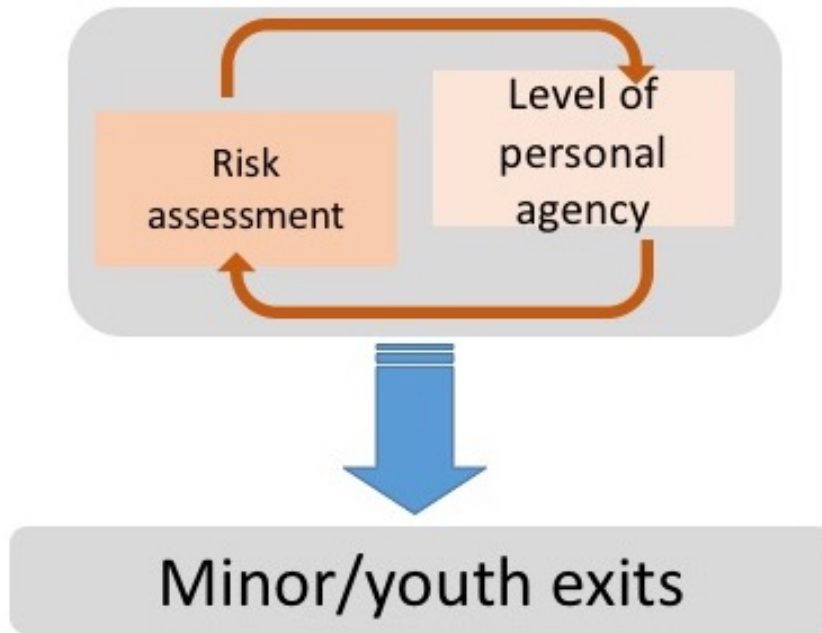
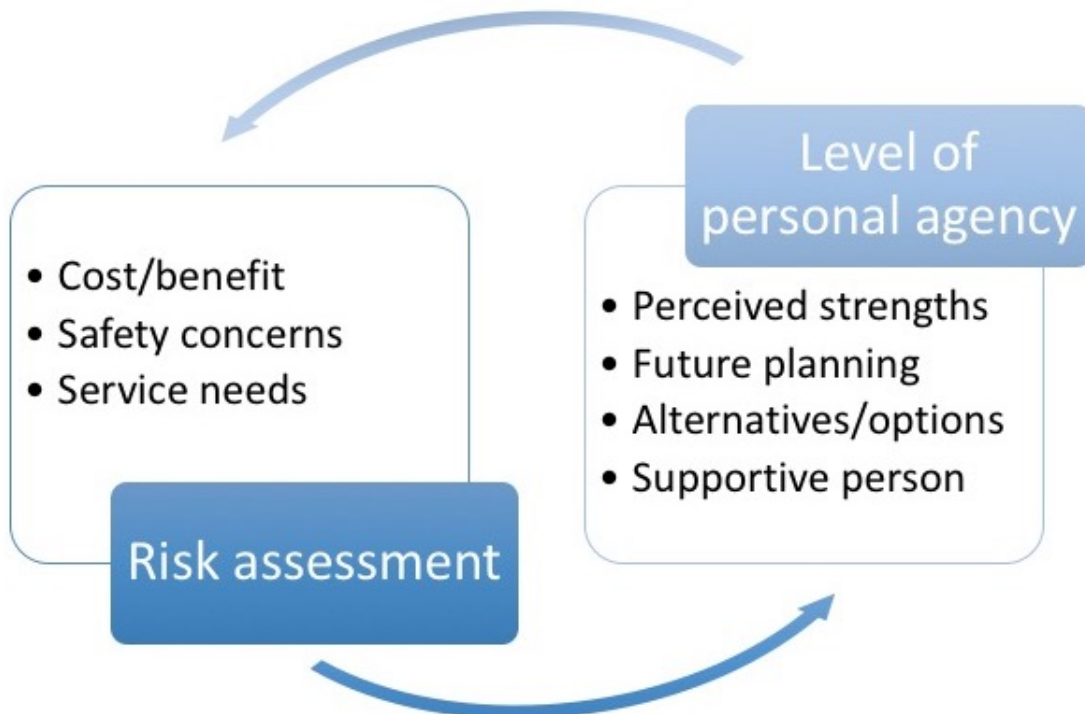


Figure 22. Factors that Influence the Possibility of Exit



Example: Participant 1

**Risk Assessment**

When considering the risks involved in engaging in commercial sex, this participant was most concerned about getting a disease. During this time, she found out that a family member had contracted HIV through their own involvement with commercial sex. However, financial strain kept her in “the life.” She had a criminal record, which made it hard to get a job that paid as well as commercial sex. She did reach out to law enforcement for help once, after she was chased around a hotel room by a client holding a gun, but law enforcement did not ask her if she had been trafficked.

**Level of Personal Agency**

Knowing that she did not have any other options or alternatives made her stay. Once a service provider helped her get her record expunged, she was able to think about different options. She did leave “the life” and return; she was unsure of how many times. She knows that her family is not supportive of her as a transgender individual. She feels like they could help her but choose not to. However, she does have plans for the future, including opening up a shelter for other youth who are transgender and owning a boutique and salon. She is going to school with plans to become a lawyer as well.

This participant was still involved in commercial sex at the time of the interview. She had trouble answering when we asked her about her own internal strengths that helped her get through life.

Figure 23. Participant 1: Exit and Future Goals



Example: Participant 2

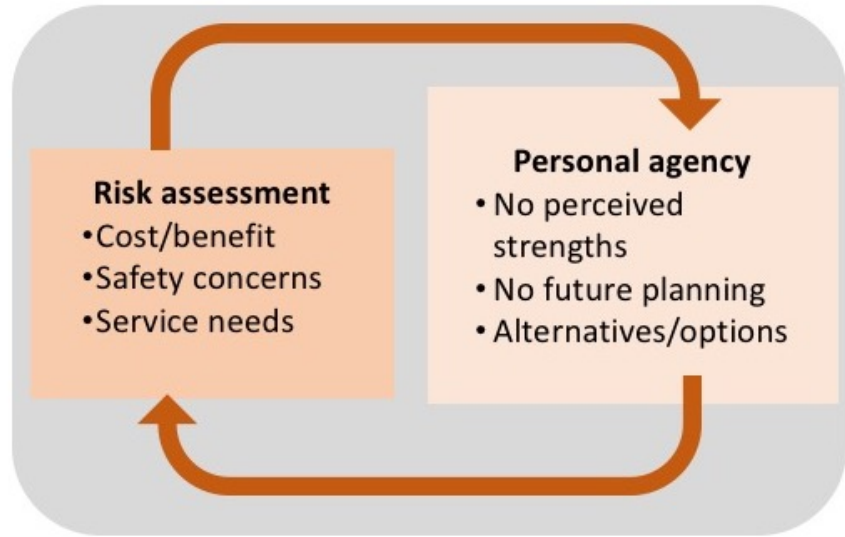
**Risk Assessment**

Participant 2 is most concerned about people finding out that he is engaging in commercial sex and, specifically, with other men. He repeatedly stated that his drug use was his main motivation for engaging in commercial sex. He said, "Everything has always been about drugs." Prior to the time of the interview, he had graduated from a drug treatment program, had been clean for a period of time, and was enrolled in a technical education program. He relapsed and was unable to access the services he needed at that point. His main concern during the times he is homeless and also engaging in commercial sex are his physical safety and not being able to see his child. He has left and returned to "the life" several times.

**Level of Personal Agency**

Although he has a relationship with the mother of his child and with his child as well, he said that he does not have anyone he goes to for support and does not have any trusting relationships. He believes that getting out of Lubbock and being able to see his child are the only things that will help him stop using drugs and engaging in commercial sex. He knows that he has options and alternatives; he feels that it is his own fault that those options have not worked out in the past.

Figure 24. Participant 2: Exit and Future Goals





Example: Participant 3

**Risk Assessment**

Participant 3 was most concerned about getting hurt, locked up, or killed if he did not stop engaging in commercial sex. However, he had not considered stopping or trying to seek services that would help him leave “the life.” Participant 3 has dealt with a lot trauma in his life and says that the mental health services he is receiving have been helpful, but that he still gets nightmares about the traumatic experiences he has survived.

**Level of Personal Agency**

This participant reported that he considers his dad a trusted person in his life and someone that he would go to for support, but that his dad is not in a place to help him leave the situation because he has also been threatened by the cartel. He says that his dad told him, “What happens to [you], happens to me,” and because the participant is young, he can take the time in the juvenile justice system versus his dad risking involvement in the adult criminal justice system. Participant 3 does not plan to stop selling sex and considers it his “side hustle” at this point. He says that he wants to work and get an education to be a mechanic.

Figure 25 Participant 3: Exit and Future Goals



Example: Participant 4

**Risk Assessment**

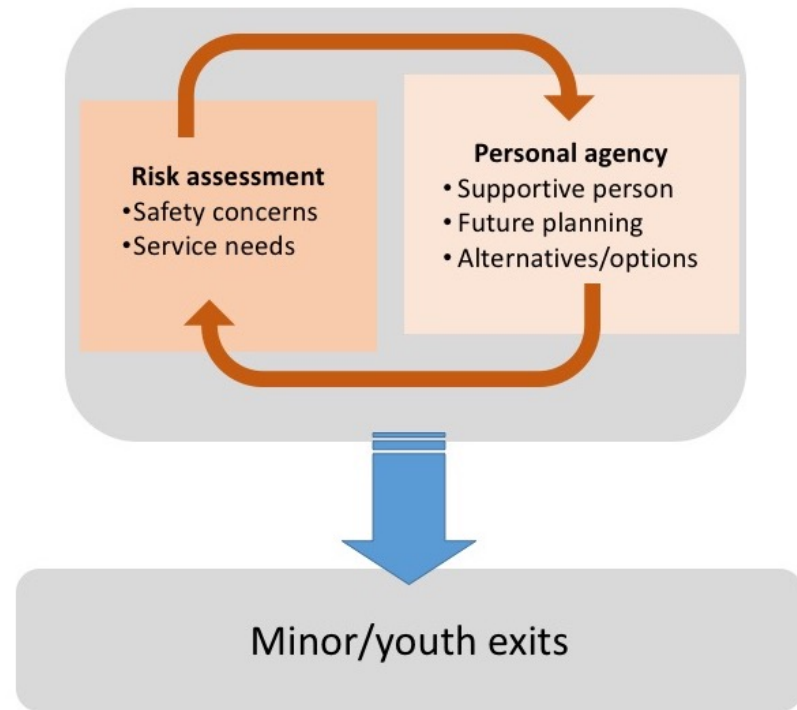
Participant 4 left her pimp three times before being able to get away for good.

The last time she returned to him, she was engaging in commercial sex on her own and he found her. He pulled up in a car with his friend and held a gun to her head and pulled her into the car. She knew that she needed housing and healthcare in order to get out of the situation.

**Level of Personal Agency**

Knowing that she did not have any other options or alternatives made her stay. She would leave one pimp and go to another and then back again trying to find someone that would “treat her right.” She found a way to leave her pimp when she took on a parenting role for her boyfriend’s daughter. She has plans for the future that include having a family and house of her own.

Figure 26. Participant 4: Exit and Future Goals



## IN-DEPTH REVIEW OF THE DATA

### Phase 1: Entrance and Experience

The following section is organized into the three elements outlined in the Concept Map model: **individual circumstances**, **exploiters**, and **environmental circumstances**. From the interview data, it was clear that participants exhibited and discussed individual circumstances that contributed to the onset of their sex trafficking or exploitation experiences. Similarly, as participants shared details of their victimizations, a set of common characteristics around **exploiters** emerged. During the interviews, as participants discussed their encounters with **environmental circumstances** around them (family, social services, law enforcement), it became clear that systems varied in their effectiveness and ability to prevent a youth from being exploited or find a way out of trafficking.

The research team identified key themes and subthemes within each of the three categories discussed. These are all illustrated with exemplary quotes from participants and described in more detail as well. Within each section, a paragraph called *Beyond the Data* details certain issues or trends emerging both from the data and overall research content, including from discussions with participants during and outside of recorded REVS and LES interviews, attending local meetings and speaking with stakeholders in the regions, field notes, and research team debriefings. Additionally, a paragraph called *Missed Opportunities* is included under each theme to illustrate and highlight issues of particular interest to social service providers, law enforcement, healthcare professionals, and others who might come into contact with child sex trafficking survivors. These are included to raise awareness so that stakeholders can better recognize the signs of trafficking and exploitation among those they encounter or serve.

### Individuals Circumstances and Intersecting Vulnerabilities

The individual circumstances and vulnerabilities faced by minors and youth that put them at risk of trafficking – or keep them in exploitative situations – are defined in previous sections of this report and are mirrored here in the data. These circumstances also align with the risk criteria for populations selected for this study.

Almost unanimously, participants reported entering into commercial sex or being commercially exploited by an external perpetrator during a period of instability in their lives. This instability was caused by a variety of intersecting conditions including: violence or abuse they were currently experiencing or had experienced in the past; financial strain; ongoing substance misuse; or exiting a child welfare system, such as foster care, and/or the juvenile justice system. The participant's environment often influenced their chronic instability. It should be noted that the youth participants live in complex realities; risk factors did not occur in silos, but often overlapped, (e.g., violence in the home along with substance misuse or financial strain). Throughout their experiences, participants reported enduring ongoing threats to their physical and psychological safety. Additionally, participants commonly reported being initiated into, manipulated, and/or controlled throughout their trafficking experiences by a need, both actual and perceived, to protect people they loved from being harmed or trafficked instead.

This is illustrated in the Concept Map as the circuit between Individual Circumstances and Support Systems. When a youth's support system left them with unmet needs, exploiters easily could enter the situation and use force, fraud, and coercion to recruit individuals into exploitation. This is also discussed in depth in the *Beyond the Data* section below.

### History of Violence and Trauma

Participants reported things that happened to them prior to or during their trafficking experience that they felt caused them to have mental health and/or substance misuse disorders.

*There was a lot of violence in my home. A lot of, like, fighting. There was a lot of drugs. I grew up on fighting and on drugs. It's how I knew how to solve problems.*  
–Age 18, CH Female, Rio Grande Valley

These discussions also included their thoughts around the trauma they experienced and how it has affected their lives.

*I've dealt with a lot of trauma in my life. What I'm getting right now helps a little bit, but I still get nightmares.* –Age 17, CH Male, Rio Grande Valley

Some participants were dealing with intimate partner violence as a precursor to engaging in commercial sex, during their exploitation, or after removing themselves from the exploitative situation.

*He told me in February that murder suicide was how it was going to end for us. We were married for 8 years, we have three kids, but it's like the psycho/stalker type. Just because he's unpredictable, I never underestimate him.* –Age 26, CH Female, Lubbock

This history of violence, abuse, and mental health issues led to feelings of instability that prompted participants to view commercial sex, or an exploitative situation, as the preferable option.

*Seeing my mom struggle and being abused and her money being taken away from her by her husband. Being kicked out of so many trailers and apartments. You have to do what you have to do. ... She couldn't help herself so I just felt like, as the oldest, I had to step in and do something and at that time I was too young to get a job. So, I had to do what I had to do.* – Age 20, CH Female, Houston

### Escalating Violence and Need to Protect Others

Participants experienced differing levels of physical and sexual violence while involved in commercial sex. Participants discussed enduring different types of violence from a trafficker, an intimate partner, and clients. Discussions also included stories of witnessing violence at the hands of their trafficker or violence being part of their environment. In this section, violence is defined as physical or sexual assault.

Participants were subjected to extreme physical violence at the hands of their pimps and some of their clients. Several participants reported being dumped or left at the scene after enduring physical and/or sexual violence and having to find their own way back home or to medical care.

*I was beat with a hammer and pistol a year and a half ago. If it wasn't for [God] I would be dead. Being beaten with a hammer and pistol 'cause I didn't let him hit it in the ass. He threw me out of his car without clothes and this guy was opening his [mechanic] garage and found me bleeding and called the ambulance. [He was] putting pressure on [my wounds]. This was in LA one and a half years ago...It was this...guy in Cali, in LA. He was like, "Do you need a ride" and I said, "No, I'm good, I'm just walking to my room." And he said, "Are you sure?" and I ended up getting in the car with him and he took me off somewhere and ended up beating me with a hammer and pistol because I would not let him fuck me in my ass. He took all my clothes and threw me out of his car at six o'clock in the morning.* –Age 21, CH Female, Houston

Participants would also often be forced to enact or witness violence being perpetrated on others.

*[My pimp] was older, he was like I don't know, above his 50's. At that time, I was into bad influences, I would go to him because he would give me money. But I would get scared because of the things he would do [to other people] and the things he worked in. But I guess I didn't really mind because I needed the money. I saw him do things to other people that I felt like if I ever did something to him it would trigger him, or he would do something to my family. The things he would do to other people – that I felt like if I ever did something wrong to him, he'd turn it around to me. Even though he didn't do nothing to my family. –Age 18, CH Female, Rio Grande Valley*

In addition to witnessing and experiencing these types of violence, several participants either witnessed or committed homicide.

*They ended up killing my friend who was playing them the whole time who I planned to run away with. – Age 18, CH Female, Rio Grande Valley*

These homicides were either committed by the trafficker or the trafficker forcing the participant to kill someone.

*I think what happened when I was 13. I think that was what triggered me. I felt like I owed a lot to girls because of what happened with her. I didn't know her. I knew her face, but I didn't know her. Knew she had hazel eyes, black hair. ... She was naked, she was hanging upside down, and they told me to do it. I wasn't gonna until they put an AK to my face and m16 to the back of my head. I felt like I had to. If I didn't want to die, I had to, so I did. Threw up for 3 weeks. Cried for a month and a half. –Age 18, CH Male, Rio Grande Valley*

Participants reported that a common motivation keeping them in a trafficking situation was explicit or perceived threats from their trafficker. Participants commonly reported a need or responsibility they felt to protect others from their traffickers and/or the situation entirely.

*My daughters. I didn't want anyone to try to do sexual things to my kids or go through what I went through. I didn't want anyone to find out I had girls because then they would try to get them to do what I didn't want to do in the past. My girls. My girls keep my mind off the stuff that happened to me. My girls are my main priority. –Age 25, CH Female, Lubbock*

Participants expressed extensively their need to protect the people in their lives that they love as well as those that may put themselves in danger in order to help the participants leave the situation, such as clients, law enforcement, and other bystanders.

*[My biggest concern was] that my brother would get raped and beat. I think they'd go after the weakest ones. I couldn't let that happen. Thankfully it just happened to me. They always told me they were gonna kill my family. ... I never reached out to police until that time my brother was raped. –Age 18, CH Female, Rio Grande Valley*

*I feel like, if I call for police, with the type of environments that I'm in, I feel like the police are just going to die. I'm all for the protecting of people, but most of these situations that I'm in, I don't think they would help me. –Age 23, CH Male, Houston*

### Financial Strain

A common theme that participants shared was a need for money or chronic financial instability. They often experienced financial strains because of insecure housing due to running away or exiting a system without a safety and/or support network, which sometimes led to being on the streets.

*When I was 15, I left my foster home. I happened to be on the streets on the southeast side... and I needed somewhere to stay and something to eat. People offered money in exchange for doing something sexual, whether it was multiple [people/clients], I still did it and that was it. –Age 24, CH Female, Houston*

Some participants also experienced instability after running away from biological family homes.

*When I was 14, I ran away 'cause I was living with my sister and I ran away from there because like we weren't getting along. And then I was homeless for awhile so I started learning how to survive, which was having sex and stuff. –Age 19, CH Female, Houston*

When asked what would have helped them exit commercial sex, several respondents suggested that ways to meet their basic needs would help.

*Stability and a place to live. I mean, if I had stability and a job and a place to live where I knew I couldn't be kicked out, I would do something else. But like I tell everyone else, I do what I do because I have to survive. Before I go without, I'm going to go do it. –Age 21, CH Female, Houston*

Some participants reported that selling sex was something they did every once in a while, in times of financial instability or when they were going through a financial hardship.

*I wanted to leave a few times, but then got turned onto it again. There was one time I did stop and then a friend of mine, I didn't think they were about that life and, as soon as I came into contact with him, he said I've got these girls and they want to pay us for that and promoted girls and asked if I wanted to help. It's like I couldn't escape. –Age 26, CH Male, Lubbock*

### Substance Misuse in the Environment

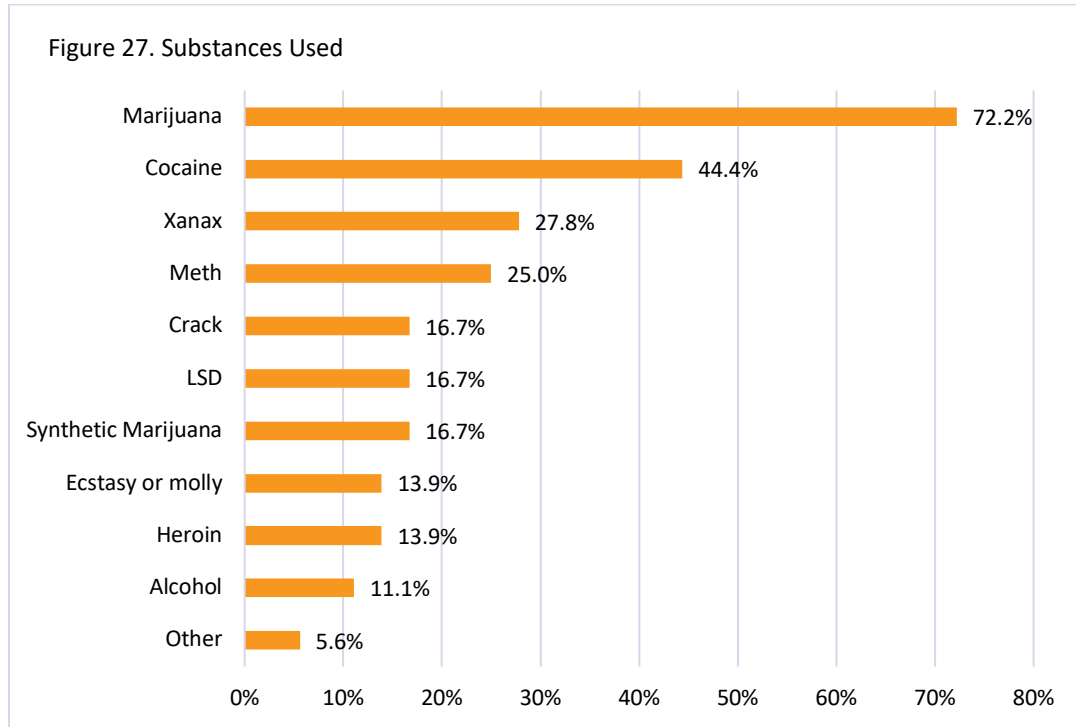
As mentioned previously, some participants reported that drugs had been a gateway into commercial sexual exploitation. When substance misuse and drugs were present in their environments, it put them at higher risk for commercial sexual exploitation.

*My biggest fear was staying on the streets. I needed money and to eat. I needed money and I put myself in that situation because I was into drugs. –Age 18, CH Female, Rio Grande Valley*

Participants reported exchanging sex for drugs and/or for money to pay for drugs. Addiction greatly contributed to them staying in a trafficking situation or continuing to trade sex.

*I didn't [stop] 'cause it was a lot harder than I thought to stop ... Drugs. The one thing that's never let me down. It's the one thing that has always kept its promise. –Age 24, CH Male, Lubbock*

Figure 27 below details which substances participants reported using while in “the life” (i.e., while in a sex trafficking situation).



#### Beyond the Data: Self-Identification and Perception as a Victim

Just as participants experienced a range of types of exploitation, there was also a range in how they understood their risk factors (e.g., homelessness, violence or abuse, exploitive relationships, and exchange or survival sex). There were gaps in understanding between how the REVS and LES defined certain experiences and how participants defined those experiences in their own lives. Many participants did not endorse certain risk factors when directly asked in the REVS or the LES, but later discussed experiencing them in different terms and/or definitions (e.g., not indicating they had experienced abuse when screening, but telling a story about their parent hitting them later in the interview within the context of another question). Therefore, the data we have on participants’ history of violence do not illustrate the entire scope of prior violence experienced by participants.

Similar gaps occurred when discussing whether respondents previously felt that they had to have sex with someone in order to receive money or anything that they needed. Participants often asked for clarification or would give an example and asked if it qualified. When discussing older partners or whenever participants explained a situation where they were having sex in exchange for something, they were encouraged to make the determination for themselves on whether they felt they had to perform sex acts specifically for receiving something they needed in exchange. It is important to note that some participants defined their experiences of violence, vulnerabilities, and sex trafficking in ways that are incongruent with standard definitions used by practitioners in the field – or did not identify themselves as victims of exploitation or violence at all.

#### Missed Opportunity: Ideal Victim Mythology

As illustrated in the Concept Map, there are factors that are constantly in flux with youth at risk of trafficking. At some points, youth may be experiencing multiple risk factors, but are enrolled in services that decrease their vulnerability to exploitation because they are interacting with a system

that provides a strong safety net against exploitation. On the other hand, youth may be experiencing only one individual risk factor or circumstance that makes them vulnerable to trafficking, but are interacting with a system that does not provide a secure safety net and are therefore at a higher risk for exploitation. By taking a nuanced view of these factors, researchers, service providers, and other stakeholders can expand the current mentality of the “ideal victim” that is seen across the anti-trafficking field. An example of an “ideal victim” is a white female minor in a violent, pimp-controlled situation who is actively trying to “escape” or wants to leave the situation. However, there is no precise checklist of factors that every individual experiencing child sex trafficking will meet, but more a constellation of factors that, when put together, create conditions ripe for exploitation. By taking an expanded view of the entire range of exploitation that may be experienced by youth at risk for sex trafficking, those in the field can better employ effective prevention strategies.

As part of this nuanced view of at-risk individuals, simultaneous perpetration and victimization came up in data collection efforts. Occasionally during interviews, participants would disclose that they had forced others into commercial sex and were, therefore, potential perpetrators of sex trafficking as well as victims. This included both male- and female-identified participants who had discussed selling female minors and youth for sex, and how it had occurred under their own volition or under direction of someone else. Participant perpetration was not included as a topic for discussion in the study measures, and all information was voluntarily disclosed in participant discussions, so this study is unable to gauge the percentage or prevalence of perpetration and only has limited anecdotes on this topic.

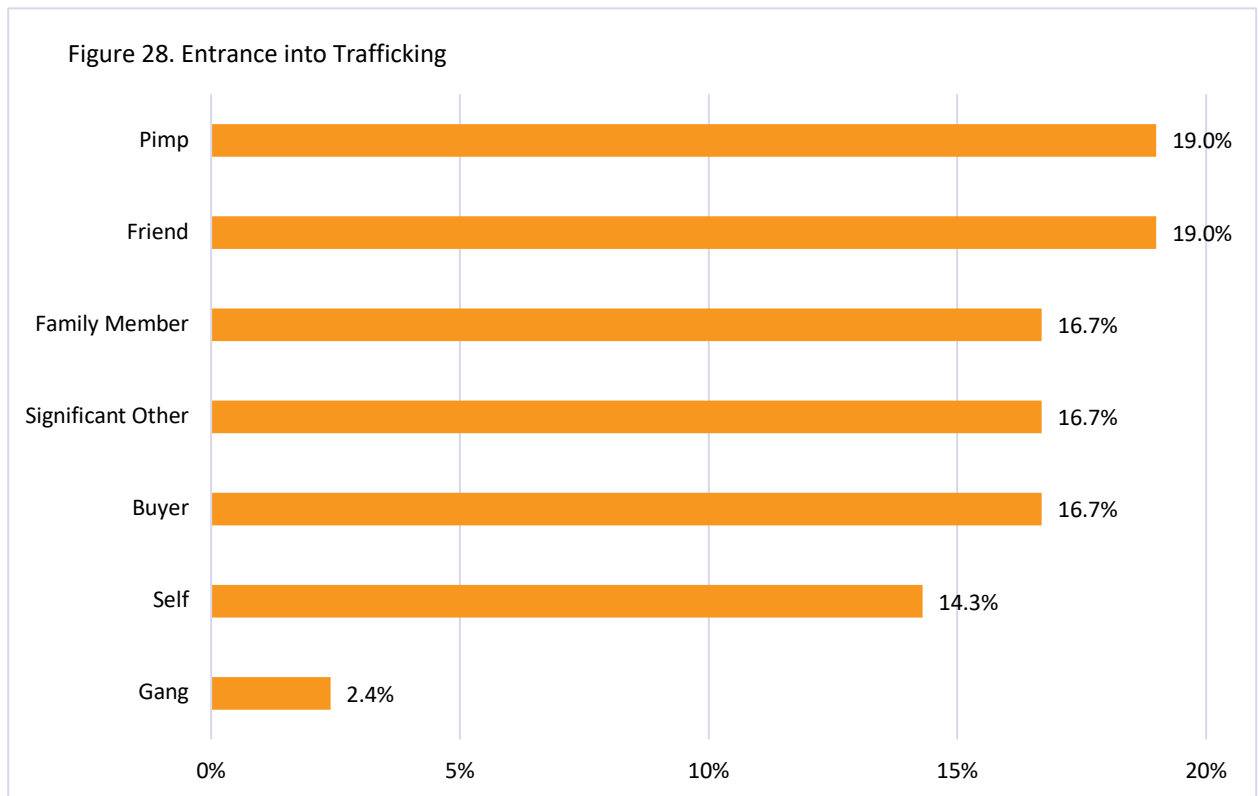


### Exploiters

Under current law, a trafficker uses another individual for commercial gain through force, fraud, or coercion. Participants reported experiencing this type of situation but also talked about engaging in survival sex and trading sex on their own without a trafficker. In some cases, participants talked about individuals who exploited their vulnerabilities in a way that made the participants feel they had to engage in commercial sex.

Most commonly, a trusted person such as a family member, friend, or intimate partner introduced participants to commercial sex, though some participants were solicited on the street by a stranger. Although exchanging sex for anything of value with individuals under the age of 18 is legally trafficking, participants delineated their experiences between times when they sold sex on their own and times in which they were forced to exchange sex. Participants reported times when they sold sex on their own in several different contexts, including as a means of survival, exchanging sex for drugs, and as a side hustle while also selling sex under the control of a pimp.

In the LES interviews, participants were asked how they were introduced to commercial sex or how their experience with commercial sexual exploitation began. Figure 28 shows how participants reported entering into a trafficking situation or commercial sex.



### Survival Sex

As previously noted, survival sex is defined in this study as any time participants exchanged sex acts to fulfill basic needs, such as for shelter, food, or for money for the purposes of securing shelter or food. Fulfilling other needs such as substance misuse were not considered to be necessary for survival and are discussed separately. Participants reported times where they felt engaging in survival sex was the only option available to them at the time.

*When you stop, your money stops, and you only gotta quit for one or two days and if you ain't eating, then you hungry. When you stop, you starve. –Age 22, CH Male, Houston*

Other participants reported needing to exchange sex as a means for survival in only a few circumstances. These happened intermittently and only in times of great need.

*Basically, when I got here on the streets, I would just try to make money or [when] I needed something. This one time I was in Dallas and me and my ex was together and I was trying to make it back to Lubbock. She was hungry one night and we didn't have food or money, so I did that and made \$15 to get us a pizza. I wasn't doing anything for myself. –Age 26, CH Male, Lubbock*

### Substance Misuse as a Gateway

Participants were also introduced to commercial sex when it intersected with the misuse of substances. This happened either through participants exchanging sex for personal substance use or because they transitioned from selling drugs to selling sex instead.

*It was basically really simple. I met her when I was selling. She already bought bud off me. She was older than me. She wasn't 18, but she was older. She was on rolls, but she bought bud off me for her boyfriend. She literally just asked me, "Do you want to fuck?" She showed me \$40 bucks and she said, "I will pay you to fuck." We were in the living room and there was a restroom upstairs and no one was going upstairs and so we just, right then and there. I guess, I don't know, she wasn't 18 cause afterwards she was looking for someone to buy blunts. I didn't know her. –Age 16, CH Male, Rio Grande Valley*

Table 11 shows the percent of substance use that participants reported while in “the life.”

**Table 11. Substance Use While in the Life (N=44)**

<b>Yes</b>	81.8%
<b>No</b>	18.2%

Substance misuse was not considered a form of survival sex because not all participants considered substance misuse as survival need. Some participants indicated that they did not need substances consistently or for their survival but exchanged sex for substances or for money to buy them every once in a while.

*Well, it just happened to be like I was on the streets and there would be just like the ones that I do it with. ...I wasn't comfortable cause I didn't know them, but I wasn't thinking 'cause I was trying to get that next hit. It didn't hit me until I finally started getting sober. –Age 26, CH Male, Lubbock*

Conversely, some participants did indicate substance misuse and/or addiction.

*I was 16. I smoked some crack for the first time and they said if you want some more, this is what you got to do for some more. So, I said, "Ok, let's do what we got to do." Everything has always been for drugs. That's how I rationalize and justify what I do. For drugs. –Age 24, CH Male, Lubbock*

#### The "Roll Up"

Participants talked about experiencing someone "rolling up" on them while they were on the street. These experiences often happened when participants were not actively seeking out a commercial exchange for sex but were, for various reasons, out on the streets. They discussed someone unfamiliar pulling up next to them in a car and propositioning them for sexual acts in exchange for cash or whatever they needed.

*I was out on my own and I was tired of being outside and an opportunity presented itself and I was skeptical, but it beat being outside so I went for it. I was just walking around trying to figure out what I was going to do and a person pulled up on me [and said,] "Hey what's going on you alright? If you got stuff going on I can help you." And it went on from there. –Age 22, CH Male, Houston*

Other participants reported that this was a common occurrence on the streets.

*You're put in that situation quite often on the streets. People approach you all the time. Very often. –Age 26, CH Male, Lubbock*

#### The "Side Hustle"

The "side hustle" is a type of exchange that happens when participants reported they were not in huge financial strain overall, but experiencing a period of financial instability. This term also applies to participants in a pimp-controlled environment who were selling additional sex acts outside of that context in exchanges of their own choosing. In both cases, side hustles were not participants' usual or consistent experience with commercial sex.

*When I did it on my own, I went to [city]. I just stood out there and there was a lot of people outside. I would wait there just to get picked up. I would make sure it was a good hotel. It would be like \$150-\$200. They would leave me at the hotel. My homeboys would come pick me up and take me back to the hotel [where my pimp was]. –Age 16, CH Female, Rio Grande Valley*

#### Trusted Person as the Perpetrator

A perpetrator is defined as a third-party individual or group who used force, fraud, or coercion to introduce the participant to commercial sex. The research team notes that though force, fraud, or coercion are not necessary to bring a charge of sex trafficking a minor, the team used this definition to understand what elements of trafficking were present in terms of who initiated the exploitation.

Often a trusted person acted as the perpetrator by introducing participants to commercial sex. Participants reported family members, friends, intimate partners, or someone they knew previously all acting as perpetrators. One participant reported that her brother regularly forced her to engage in commercial sex acts to absolve debts he accrued.

*It was always my brother [that sold me]. ...He's really bad on drugs and he just sends guys to me and they're paying him. And I'm like, this is not how this is working; if you want, sell yourself. I feel like these opportunities just come to him. Hopefully it's just people he owes*

*and he's not just doing it to do it. I try not to think about that.*  
–Age 26, CH Female, Lubbock

The following participant reported being introduced to a pimp through a friend at school.

*I was 17 and this girl I went to school with turned me on to this guy. I ran away to be with him because my parents wouldn't let me. He was taking care of me and one day he just brought up that he was spending all this money on me and I was going to have to make it back. And that's how it began.* –Age 21, CH Female, Houston

Participants also reported an intimate partner transitioning into a pimp over time. These situations often started with intimate partner violence.

*He was like, I need you to do something for me. And I was like, ok what do you want me to do? I need you to sell for me. I was already selling [drugs] for him. So, I was like, what do you mean and he said I need you to sell you for me. I told him no, but then he beat me up and said I will beat you up even more if you don't do this for me and I will kill you. So, I did it. And I believe that he would kill me cause he's done a lot of things.*  
–Age 18, CH Female, Rio Grande Valley

### Pimp Introduction

In addition to having a relationship with someone who eventually pimped them, participants also described being trafficked by a pimp they did not previously know. In several situations, participants met their trafficker at a very young age.

*I met him [pimp] and saw that he had money. He was like I can get you whatever you want if you're with me. I contacted him. I met him cause of a friend and I saw that he had money. Yeah, he was like I can get you whatever you want if you're with me. Like all these sweet things. –Age 18, CH Female, Rio Grande Valley*

In some cases, participants were in situations that initially felt safe or possible to exit, but then the situation escalated to circumstances of trafficking.

*He was actually like a friend at first, I already knew him. He knew I was struggling and he said I can help you – all you have to do is help me out. At first, I didn't know what he was talking about and I was like, well what do I got to do? And he said I'll help you, I'll show you what to do. I asked if it was illegal and he said, "No, you won't get in trouble." When I figured out what was happening, I tried to back out and he said, "Well, you already in it." –Age 20, CH Female, Houston*

For the following participant, their trafficking victimization and relationship with their trafficker led to drug use and addiction.

*I was so young and I didn't know then as much as I can see now. I was about to be 12 and he was a drug dealer, I did not know. He would be very abusive to me when I would talk to other guys. I couldn't even have friends and I was only in 6th grade. He got me into drugs and I became an addict. –Age 17, CH Female, Rio Grande Valley*

In some cases, exploitative relationships were more situationally- or needs-based in that the exploiter was not necessarily a family member, a trusted person, or a pimp, but was someone who was able to exploit the participant by promising to fulfill particular needs or wants. These exploitative exchanges were more inconsistent and intermittent than when participants reported being controlled by a pimp.

*I was 17 and had already graduated and was at college and this person was always trying to get me to come over and hang out. I wasn't really focused on him, but they presented the opportunity and I went for it. First time it was for shoes, next time was for money. They told me to go over and they'd help out, so I went. Third time was a different person for money. I got something out of it... They were about 3 and 10 years older. –Age 23, CH Male, Houston*

### Beyond the Data: Older Partners

Participants across genders reported being propositioned by older partners. Several participants reported that they engaged in commercial sex for the first time because an older person propositioned them. When participants were asked if they ever felt they had to perform sex acts in order to get something they needed to survive, a couple of participants discussed being approached or propositioned by older, adult partners for a relationship. In these cases, the participants were given a place to live, food, and clothing in exchange for sex acts. Participants indicated that, in these situations, they felt they had to have sex with these older individuals in order to continue to receive housing, food, and clothing. Overall, participants discussed that most of the individuals who approached them for sex in exchange for something were much older adults who participants felt were aware of their vulnerable situations or need.

### Missed Opportunity: Understanding the Range of Exploitation

Throughout the REVS and LES data collection, participants demonstrated a range of understanding of exploitative situations and about being forced, defrauded, or coerced into commercial sex acts. Sex trafficking was not found to be a single experience as much as it occurred in multiple instances over a period of time. For example, a youth might experience a one-time sale that they did or did not initiate, several distinct exploitative experiences, or a prolonged situation in captivity. As previously mentioned, when participants were asked about ever being put in a situation where they felt they had to have sex with someone in exchange for food, clothing, shelter, or survival, some participants (across all genders) answered that they had and described relationships with older partners (all genders) with whom they lived and who paid for all their needs (food, clothing, shelter). It was left to participants to answer whether they felt that was a consenting romantic relationship or if they felt they had to have sex in exchange for those things.

Participants regularly described relationships with unequal power dynamics related to both age and socioeconomic status (i.e., the participant did not have either money or housing), and several participants (across all genders) also discussed a one-time situation where they were in a financial bind and were approached by someone (all genders) offering them money in exchange for sex. Additionally, some participants only exchanged sex one time, some would sell sporadically, and others regularly engaged in commercial sex, either by force or on their own. The means of force, fraud, or coercion varied as did the time spent in the exploitive situation. This could be viewed as a spectrum of exploitive situations that could all be defined as sex trafficking, but not necessarily viewed as such by either the victim themselves or the systems with which they are in contact.

Opportunities for identification, prevention, and early intervention are multiplied when professionals and policymakers recognize and understand the many ways exploitation is actually experienced by vulnerable youth. A better understanding of the range of exploitation is a key preventative effort. As stated previously in the report, most of the youth who participated in the in-depth LES interviews were also receiving services at drop-in centers and had a need for short-term and immediate services such as food, a place to rest, or clothing. These are the same needs for which participants reported exchanging sex when service providers were unable to meet these needs. Expanding the understanding of exploitation and the risk for sex trafficking for vulnerable youth could help drive the design of harm reduction programs or models in drop-in centers or other settings that attract youth susceptible to or active in high risk situations.

### Environmental Circumstances

Identifying and understanding the actual or potential support systems that youth at risk of trafficking have is a key component in understanding their risk and resilience. For the purposes of this study, the research team used a broad definition of environmental circumstances that included formal and

informal systems, such as child welfare and youth services, juvenile justice, community services, an organized crime network, or a family system. As stated in the Study Overview section, participants were recruited into the study with the help of service agencies in each region. The 46 participants who were part of in-depth LES interviews had varying degrees of involvement with the systems generally tasked with keeping them safe. Participant-system involvement ranged from higher levels, such as in a juvenile justice lock-down facility with 24-hour supervision, to a lower level drop-in center with limited hours and optional service connection opportunities. Additionally, participants reported having differing levels of system involvement in the past versus what they were experiencing at the time of the interviews.

The following findings are based on data that emerged from discussions specifically on what formal services participants had sought out, what services they believed they needed but were not receiving, where they had sought help in the past, and what that interaction was like for them. The research team also asked participants about their connection to informal systems, such as organized crime and their own family systems.

#### Exiting a System with No Safety Net

Participants reported experiencing a high degree of vulnerability after exiting a formal system as it was usually followed by a period of instability such as homelessness or financial strain. When asked what could have prevented entry into commercial sex as a minor, some participants discussed system exits in detail.

*Being raised right, CPS. Foster care was a pretty bad system to grow up in. I got out of school and came right out onto the streets. I didn't have no backup system to help me with school or getting a job. –Age 26, CH Male, Lubbock*

Although they may have been safe while in the system, participants reported not knowing about or having access to effective safety nets after their exit.

*I was in their aftercare program until I was so old, but I kinda fell through the system. Nobody helped me out, I never received my PALs [foster care exit support] money. I wasn't ready for school. I barely made it through high school and everybody was pressuring me to go to college right off the bat. I'm real anti-social, I was scared and I ended up on the streets. If people had listened to me then, I probably wouldn't have had this happen. –Age 26, CH Male, Lubbock*

#### Attitudes Toward Law Enforcement and Helping Professions

Participants were specifically asked if they trusted law enforcement to help them during their exploitation and if there were times when they possibly could have been identified or assisted by law enforcement in order to exit trafficking. The research team found in their prior experience with sex trafficking victims that, while first responders (e.g., law enforcement and healthcare professionals) are assumed to be the ideal individuals to identify potential victims, participants may not perceive this to be the case. Additionally, researchers asked participants more specifically if there was ever a time that they interacted with law enforcement or healthcare professionals who attempted to identify them as a victim of sex trafficking.

Participants were asked if they trusted police or law enforcement professionals to help them and if they ever sought out help from law enforcement during their trafficking experiences and/or commercial sex involvement.

*I can't lie. No I don't. I don't trust them. It's pretty much the relationship I've built with them. We got a mutual respect for each other, but it's kind of like a love/hate relationship. I respect a few, but I don't like a whole lot of them. –Age 25, CH Female, Lubbock*

Attitudes toward law enforcement were mixed; some participants did not trust police to help them out of their trafficking situation for various reasons, but now trust them after getting out of the life.

*Now I do [trust them], but then I was always scared cause I was around bad people. But the sad thing was that all the cops did drugs too, so they [cops] knew them [traffickers]. And they knew the people I was with so they wouldn't do anything and they couldn't help me. –Age 17, CH Female, Rio Grande Valley*

On the other hand, some participants responded that, while they have an overall distrust of law enforcement, they did trust specific police officers they knew personally who had attempted to reach out and build a relationship with them.

*No, every run-in I have had with the law turned bad. I've never felt safety from them except from the Homeless Outreach Team. There is something about them, I feel like they care. But [other] cops, I don't feel like they care. Something about what they see every day, they become desensitized by it. –Age 24, CH Male, Lubbock*

Some participants had previous interactions with law enforcement through the intimate partner violence or sexual assault they experienced. When law enforcement did not act during those episodes, it led participants to believe that no action would be taken for their trafficking situation either.

*I get in trouble all the time because I don't call the police. I have a protective order against him and he violates it all the time and y'all don't do anything. I've lost my faith in that, I've lost all my faith in that. –Age 26, CH Female, Lubbock*

Several participants responded that they did not feel the police were available or supposed to protect people “like them” or in their situation.

*They're not here to help me. When they see me, they want to take me to jail. They're not here to help people like me. I'm not good people so they're not here to help me. I get kinda crazy so I can understand that they just don't want to deal with me. They aren't here to help me. When they see me, they just want to take me to jail. They always seemed against me or whoever I was with and yeah, I'm kind of crazy so they probably don't wanna deal with me, but they don't want to help me. I was told that the person murdering prostitutes around here was a cop. –Age 22, CH Female, Lubbock*

Several participants talked about their pimp using mistrust of police as a means to keep them from seeking help.

*I didn't really go to them because I was too scared. It was too overpowering and I felt like it wasn't going to do much. He was just going to jail for a short time and then he would get out and get me. –Age 20, CH Female, Houston*

They also discussed the potential consequences of seeking help, such as getting arrested and missing opportunities to make money.

*No, cause then I'm going to jail. Going to jail and not make quota and I'm going to get in trouble when I get home for not making the mark for the day. I need to make money. –Age 25, CH Female, Houston*

Participants reported that a major reason they did not trust police to help or protect them during their trafficking experience was because they either had police as their own clients or they knew



somebody else who had them as clients. This was a common trend across all regions and participant risk segments.

*No, cause some of them were clients. The time I got arrested for solicitation – the one that arrested me, I had visited him twice. And his manager, one of the directors, was one of my clients in [city]. So, I never reached out to them. I knew they were cops cause I saw their badges. They took off their pants and, in their wallet, was their badge. They didn't think I was looking when they'd get on their phone and text their wife, but I saw them.*  
–Age 18, CH Female, Rio Grande Valley

Participants also reported that there were times when they intersected with different helping professionals and were not identified as victims of trafficking.

#### Social Services

*When they put me in that emergency shelter in New Braunfels, I told my caseworker about it, my file said that I was basically a troubled CPS kid so I don't know if she didn't understand what I was trying to say or whatever. She didn't really help or do anything. She didn't really see it until I went to juvi and she saw how big of a problem it really was, she saw that this was actually a really big issue.* –Age 19, CH Female, Houston

#### Healthcare Settings

*They asked me [at the hospital if I was trafficked], but I denied it because I didn't want anyone to know it was happening.* –Age 25, CH Female, Lubbock

#### At School

*[My school attendance counselor,] he kept consistent. That was my only get away. But I knew that as soon as school was out, I better be out there when he comes because if I'm not, it's going to be punishment on top of punishment. School was kinda like my escape. I was ok at school. I didn't trust the teachers but I did my school work.*  
–Age 20, CH Female, Houston

*It was obviously hard, but it was one of those things. To the public, nothing was wrong with me. My life was normal. I was in every single sport and doing UIL [University Interscholastic League] state stuff, theater, and oral reading. I was very active in school activities but it was one of those things – if I didn't do those things, it would look off. The guys that had me were so paranoid that they made me – you better do this, you better do that. That's where even the control of my cell phone and social media came in so that even there, my life looked normal.* –Age 18, CH Female, Lubbock

Other times, participants reported that the trafficker was controlling and present even in service settings, so there was not an option for the participant to seek help.

*The guy that was trafficking me, went with me every time [to seek medical care].*  
–Age 18, CH Female, Lubbock

#### **Presence of Organized Crime**

Some participants mentioned different organized criminal networks, such as gangs and cartels, as part of their experiences. These networks function as systems and even provide an element of support to their members. However, they also made youth more vulnerable to continued exploitation and less likely to seek help from outside the organized crime network. Participants discussed varying degrees of involvement or association with both gangs and cartels.

*It started with him. I was always at his house and the first time it happened we were having sex and he left me in the restroom and he locked the door and I couldn't get out. He had his best friend come in and his friend raped me through the front and the back. He was telling me, "You're really good." I didn't really hear what he was saying, I was just crying. He let me take a shower and he brought me out of the room and when I came out there were multiple grown men in the room. They would call them by nickname. ... I think they were part of [cartel name]. My boyfriend was never there when they were doing it. He would just talk to them, he wasn't a part of it.*

–Age 16, CH Female, Rio Grande Valley

The degree of involvement of gangs and cartels within the sex trafficking victimization varied as well. Gang or cartel members may have been directly involved with the exploitation of the victim, such as in the example above, or gang and/or cartel-related activity may have been going on in the environment in which the victim was exploited. It is also noted that the perpetrators themselves may or may not have been directly involved in these criminal networks, but were involved in their activity.

*My mom worked with the cartels since she's been out of prison. Like connections, she worked with people – she had one connect in the U.K. and one in Florida, so she has a lot of people all around. And then Cuba. ... It's not cartel people, it's kinda mafia-related. They are kinda scattered everywhere. I know they are waiting for me when I get out. Do I feel safe in Texas? No. But I know they're everywhere.*

–Age 18, CH Female, Rio Grande Valley

#### Family System Dysfunction

This section discusses findings related to family systems. Family systems were defined by each participant to include their familial caregiver – whether biological, foster, etc. – and did not have to be specific to a nuclear family. Family was very important to participants. They discussed biological families and foster families as well as the families they have created within their lives. There was a dichotomy that arose out of these discussions when participants discussed family as a support system (functional or not), but often identified their family as a main contributor to their exploitation.

*I would never really sleep because I was high on crack cocaine. Every day we would go get high. My mom would always bring a rock to me and I would always have a stash with me under my pillow. I would start out each day, if I did get to sleep, I would wake up and smoke and then me and my mom would get together and go to one of the cheap salons downtown. We'd get dressed and then go to those places. Like [city in Mexico] to meet up then go work [street] or downtown or whoever we would meet online. We'd go work or if I didn't make enough money, I didn't get food. But I had crack, so I was okay without food.*

–Age 18, CH Female, Rio Grande Valley

Participants commonly reported certain family members could have helped them or who were, at least, aware that something was going on with the participant.

*Several people watched what was going on and didn't say anything. Like two cousins, my sister, and best friend. Their advice was like don't say nothing. Just get it over with.*

–Age 26, CH Female, Rio Grande Valley

Several participants reported instability in their lives because they came out to their family identifying as LGBTQ. In some cases, help and/or stability was withheld from the participant because they identified as LGBTQ.

*My family is rich so I feel like, why do I have to do sex work when my family is rich. They don't want to help me out because I'm transgender, they keep me out of the house and everything.*

–Age 23, Transgender Woman, Houston

*The acceptance of my lifestyle, being gay. The lack of acceptance growing up. It had me look for more outside support instead of support within the home and family. They are warming up to it now but in my mind, I've already built up that wall. I don't want to open that door up for rejection. - Age 23, CH Male, Houston*

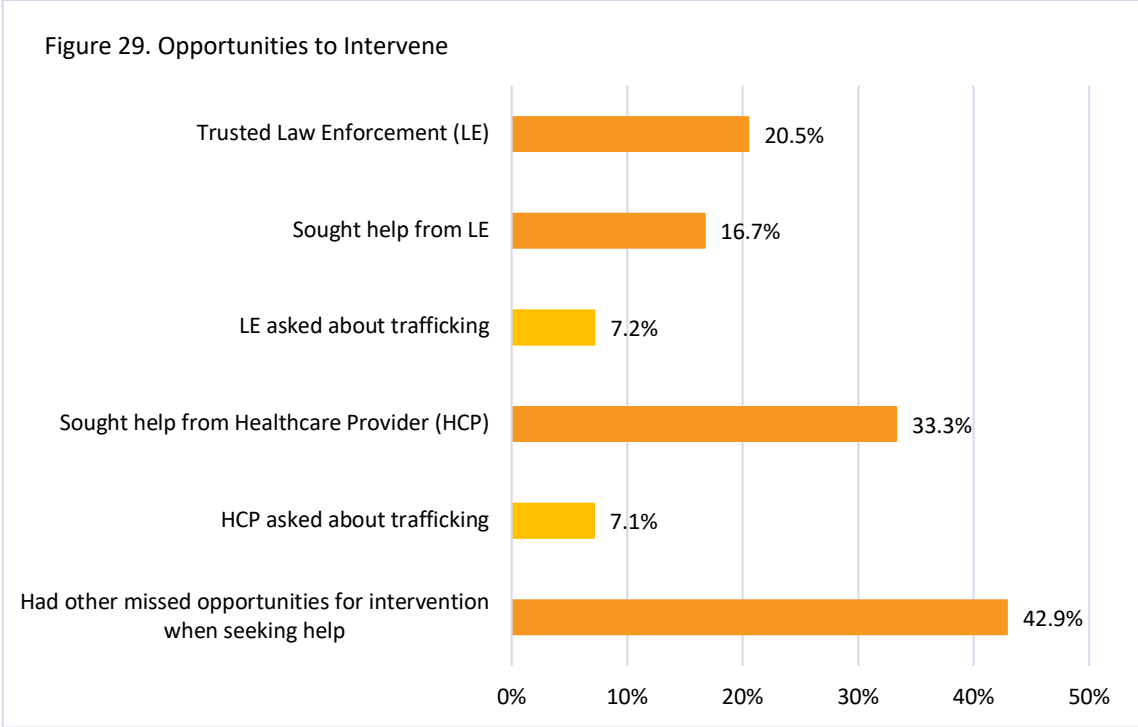
#### Beyond the Data: Help Seeking from Clients

As previously stated, researchers specifically asked participants during the LES interviews if they ever sought help from police or healthcare providers and if those individuals asked if they might have been trafficked. Participants were also asked an open-ended question about a time that they felt someone (not specified) could have helped them but did not and why. Participants reported asking clients they trusted for help periodically or that there were clients who offered to help during their trafficking victimization. It should be noted that “helping” did not necessarily mean a “rescue” or help to exit trafficking, it also meant receiving things like food or extra money that the victim would hide from their trafficker. However, participants also reported that often, when clients did not help them, it was because the clients were also threatened by the participants’ traffickers. Participants had a very nuanced understanding of the power dynamic among clients, their traffickers, and themselves.

#### Missed Opportunity: System Interactions Without Identification

The data indicate that study participants did have interactions with law enforcement, healthcare providers, and other service providers. Figure 29 shows the frequency with which these interactions occurred, and the frequency with which those individuals asked participants about circumstances of trafficking at the time the participant sought help for needs such as healthcare, housing, and other social services. If a participant said they sought help for overall needs, but not directly related to their exploitation, researchers still asked if the professional they encountered inquired about the possibility of trafficking. Healthcare providers and law enforcement were not defined by the research team unless the participant asked for clarification.

**Slightly over half of the participants who sought help from law enforcement were not identified or asked if they had been trafficked. The findings are the same with regard to healthcare providers.**



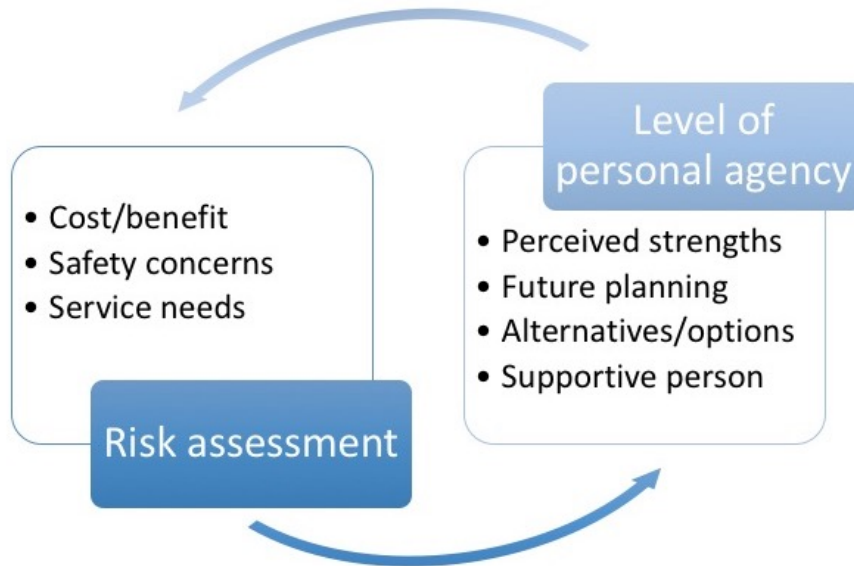
**Phase 2: Exit and Future Goals**

This section is divided into two main parts: exit and future goals. Researchers are conscious of the fact that not all participants had exited their experience in commercial sexual exploitation or trafficking at the time of the interviews. All participants were asked about future goals and how they were planning for the future. This discussion highlights the many factors at play for some participants in exiting a trafficking situation.

Participants reported experiencing intermittent periods of exploitation or several exits and returns to the same exploitative situation. As mentioned previously, this was sometimes due to chronic instability that forced them into trafficking situations or to engage in commercial sex, while others had been forced into trafficking or commercial sex for limited periods of time.

The first part, **Risk Assessment** and **Level of Personal Agency**, detail the real-time decision-making process participants reported continuously engaging in throughout their experiences with exploitation. This process, as detailed in Figure 30 below, was fluid in that participants’ level of personal agency and self-risk assessments were constantly changing.

Figure 30. Factors That Influence the Possibility of Exit



### Risk Assessment

Participants discussed if they had ever left “the life” and then returned (see Table 12 below) as well as the challenges of leaving their exploitative situation and some of the factors that forced them to go back

Table 12. Did You Ever Leave the Life and Return? (N=41)

<b>No</b>	63.4%
<b>Yes</b>	36.6%

### Cost/Benefit

Participants often talked about their experiences in leaving the situation or seeking help in leaving the trafficking situation in ways that demonstrated how they weighed the pros and cons of their decisions and actions. They were constantly considering the cost versus the benefit of staying.

*[Was there ever a time you left and then returned?] Probably like once or twice. I was just like that's what I knew how to do, how I knew how to make money. I got discouraged in the job search. Couldn't find work. I didn't really have any job skills so I wasn't really eligible for anything. –Age 25, CH Female, Houston*

Participants discussed the calculations they made in deciding whether to and how to leave a pimp. One participant reported being able to leave by securing another person to work for their pimp.

*Probably my pimp [prevented me from leaving]. I paid him off. You find another girl. I had been done but I found a girl off the blade, she was younger, he liked her, and then it was like if I want to go, I can go. –Age 25, CH Female, Houston*

Survival sex and/or selling sex only in times of financial need brought participants back into a trafficking or exploitative situation.

*I'm addicted to money. They say it's not everything, but in this world it is everything besides love. You need money to get by. Money is everything.*

—Age 16, CH Male, Rio Grande Valley

Participants stated that their pimps provided protection for them prior to, during, and after exchanges. One participant referred to their pimp as a bodyguard. Even when participants did not have a pimp, they were looking at the cost/benefit of having a pimp.

*I didn't have anyone managing me. It was just me by myself. My friend worked for somebody, but I didn't want to work for her person. I wasn't into no pimp. She had to give all her money to him and beg for what she needed with the money she made for him. She used to be starved 'til she made a certain amount.* —Age 24, CH Female, Houston

### Safety Concerns

Safety concerns came up often in discussions of experiences and vulnerabilities even though participants were not directly asked about them in the interviews. These ranged from concerns about health, survival, legal issues, and other safety matters. While chronic instability was a common theme pushing participants into the life, they were constantly analyzing their safety in the situations as well. Participants talked about the tactics they used to survive their trafficking victimization. Some participants who had exited the situation reported still feeling as though they were in “survival mode.”

*I'm constantly surviving. I got in a fight two days ago. I woke up to a dude going through my pockets.* —Age 24, CH Male, Lubbock

Participants also reported that they were continuously controlled by explicit or perceived threats. Explicit threats were those that were directly stated to the participant and/or as violence directly witnessed or experienced by the participant in order to keep the participant from leaving the trafficking situation. Threats of violence increased as the participants got older.

*They started threats when I was 8, but it would be little things like, “Oh you wouldn't want your little brother to fall would you?” and I was like yeah that would be sad as a little kid. And as I got older it turned into, “I will cut your throat if you don't do this.”*

—Age 18, CH Female, Lubbock

Participants also talked about the need to protect people from threats that they perceived to be true. These threats were not explicit, but something that participants understood as a risk of what would happen if they left.

*My family, my little brother and sister. He knew I had a brother and sister and what they looked like and where they went to school. If he can do this to me and he loves me, I'm pretty sure he can do this to them 'cause he doesn't even know them.*

—Age 18, CH Female, Rio Grande Valley

The quotes included below describe the fears or concerns participants said they had during their involvement with commercial sex.

### Harm

*Safety; my safety, not only sexual safety, but physical safety as well.*

—Age 25, CH Male, Lubbock

## Death

*If I was going to make it out of the situation or if I was going to die.*  
–Age 23, CH Female, Houston

*He would end my life. He threatened to do that.* –Age 20, CH Female, Houston

*Something bad happening to me, like either not getting away or ending up dead.*  
–Age 26, CH Male, Lubbock

## Shame

*Being on the street and reputation. I didn't want people to just – I'd be around and I didn't want them to see me. I didn't want people to know or see me and notice who I was.*  
–Age 24, CH Female, Houston

*Having my work or parents find out.* –Age 26, Transgender Man, Lubbock

## Harm to Others

*That my brother would get beat and raped. They would have gone for the weakest ones so I did what my mom said to protect him.* –Age 18, CH Female, Rio Grande Valley

## Security

*My only concern was having somewhere to lay my head at night.*  
–Age 23, CH Male, Houston

*That they wouldn't come back the next day and get me because I didn't want to have to stay outside and be cold and hungry. I didn't want to be by myself. Someone was gonna take my money. I didn't have guns back then. It took me going through a lot of stuff to accumulate that attitude.* –Age 22, CH Female, Lubbock

Although participants did not always respond with concerns for their physical safety, they sometimes described situations in which they had endured or witnessed extreme physical violence as part of their experiences – and described the reasons they did not seek help.

*They would beat me with their guns. They would pistol whip me. They would put me on a chair by myself. They would be like count to five and every time I counted to five they would beat me on top of my head. I took the beatings for her, but she never saw. They always had her drugged up. When they were done, they said you're no fun anymore, and so they got her and they put her in the chair and made me count to five and when I got to five they shot her at the same time with all of their guns.*  
–Age 16, CH Female, Rio Grande Valley

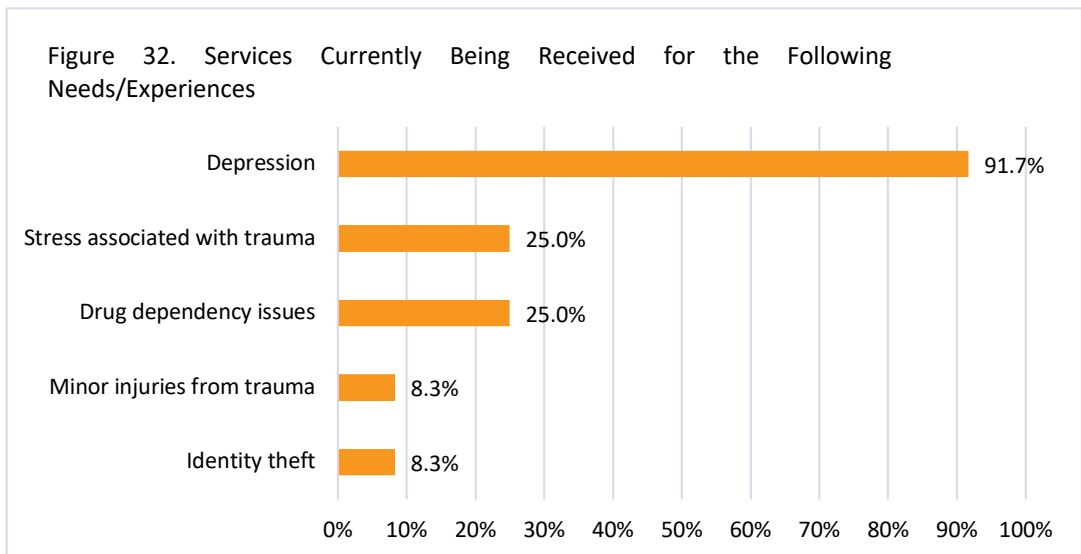
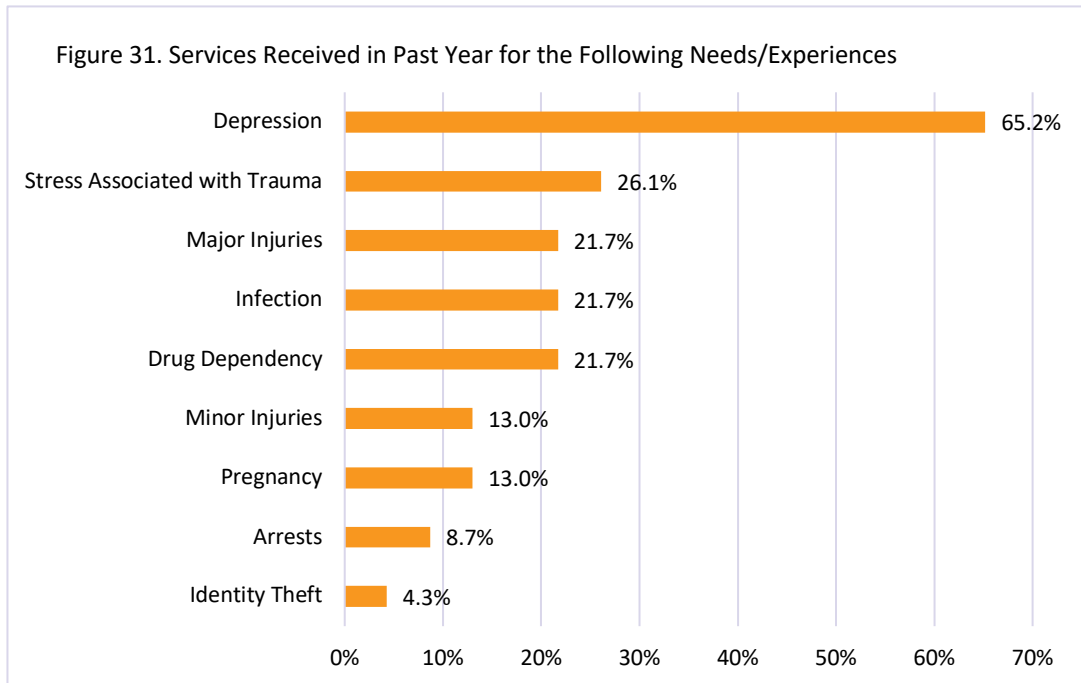
Common concerns also included fears about contracting an STD and being able to maintain their sexual health.

*You always have concerns about what is going to happen. Is this person trustworthy or do they have an STD? What is their status mentally or their intentions? In that type of business, you know, very dangerous.* –Age 26, CH Male, Lubbock

*Getting a disease. Pregnancy was scary, but not as big as diseases. You have to give them what they want. It's like crazy. –Age 20, CH Female, Houston*

**Service Needs**

Participants identified any service needs they had at the time of the interviews or had in the past during their experiences or trajectories in and out of commercial sex. These discussions helped to shape researchers' understanding of gaps in the regional service system. Figures 31 and 32 below detail the reasons or harms for which participants had received services in the past year or for which they were currently receiving services.





Participants had a deep awareness and understanding of the services they needed. Sometimes those needs were currently being filled, and sometimes a participant had identified a need, but had not yet sought out or been offered the service.

*[Are there services you feel you need that you're not getting?] Drug substance abuse counseling. Sexual abuse counseling. ... Before I wouldn't really go to anybody. I would just go to substances to help me cope. –Age 16, CH Male, Rio Grande Valley*

Participants were very cognizant of their mental health needs and were able to express them well. This was found to be true regardless of the type of services or systems they had interacted with in the past.

*I do have depression. I have pretty bad anxiety. I'm not really suicidal. I've never wished death on myself. I have PTSD and ADHD 'cause it takes too long to focus on one thing. I do have flashbacks and stuff, but I kinda have a stage where I don't dwell on it too much now like I used to. –Age 18, CH Female, Rio Grande Valley*

Several participants disclosed mental health diagnoses. Some reported having received adequate and appropriate services; however, others reported that they had not received services at all or the services received were not appropriate or adequate.

*[Agency] was pretty good, but I didn't have a caseworker or anything - it's all up to you. I got depression real bad. Some days I can't even get myself out of bed. [Agency], they obviously diagnosed me, they should have been able to realize this wasn't something I could do on my own and I needed help. [They] had me up there a couple times long enough to get me several diagnoses. They should have been able to realize this wasn't something I could do on my own and I needed help. –Age 26, CH Male, Lubbock*

Some participants expressed a desire to have family-based interventions, such as family counseling or requesting that caseworkers include family in the services they facilitate.

*[What would help] to get through what I'm going through? Family counseling. Cause me and my mom are awful. Imagine two bipolar people – a mom and a daughter. –Age 16, CH Female, Rio Grande Valley*

#### Level of Personal Agency

In addition to the risk assessment calculations they were making continually, participants also discussed the theme of “agency” or control (perceived or real) over their lives. Even in situations where their level of personal agency might be viewed by an outsider as very low, participants reported feeling like they were able to make decisions and did have some level of control over their situations. In other cases, participants reported feeling very in-control and as having a high level of personal agency within the exploitative situation. Researchers identified the following factors that helped participants feel some level of personal agency throughout their exploitation: perceived internal strengths, ability to plan and have hope for the future, and having a supportive and trusted person in their lives not connected to the trafficking situation.

#### Perceived Strengths

The research team included several questions or prompts regarding participants’ strengths, support, and hopes in order to ensure that the discussions did not focus entirely on difficulties experienced. Participants were asked about what strengths they thought they possessed that have helped them get through their trafficking experience. Participants often struggled to answer and asked for clarification or responded with external factors such as money or a place to live (the research team

then assisted these participants in identifying and naming an internal strength and encouraged them to recognize their strength).

*Money, sex, no relationship seems like the best job in the world. I needed money. It's one of the best jobs in the world, but you get tired.* –Age 16, CH Male, Rio Grande Valley

Several participants expressed a desire to help other people in the same situation.

*That I can show other people and tell other people my story – to inspire them that, if I can go through a lot of stuff, they can survive it too. I'd like to write a book about my story. I'm finishing high school. I want to go to the Navy.*  
–Age 20, CH Female, Rio Grande Valley

One participant mentioned her ability to stay hopeful.

*Just the fact that I knew that the next day would be a better day.*  
–Age 17, CH Female, El Paso

Participants often talked about their situations with a certain level of personal agency or a perceived level of choice. Additionally, participants demonstrated high levels of resilience and an understanding that they could survive their victimization. Some participants talked about ways they have been able to keep themselves safe in exploitative situations and the ways they learned to express personal agency in situations.

*I pay for my hotel room and they come in, put my money on my dresser, we already talk about the prices. That's why I don't walk no more cause I want to know how much money you come in with, I want to know your picture, I want to know what we're doing, how much time we're gonna spend. That's why I work online so I can know what my money looking like. Cause baby, when you on the streets, you don't know what you 'bout to get, you don't know if you about to go to jail. At least online you can know who come to your room. Even if it's not that person, you still know he come with this amount of money and if he don't come with this amount of money, he not gonna get seen. And if he not this picture that I've seen, he not coming in.* –Age 20, CH Female, Houston

### Future Planning

At the end of each interview, participants were asked what goals they have for the future in an effort to end the discussion of their past experiences by looking forward. Many have goals for their future that include having a family, getting married, and securing stable employment. Some participants have very clear career or educational goals as well. Future plans are included here in their entirety to honor participants' resilience in a strengths-based manner.

*I have a lot of goals. Get my LVN, move up to my RN, BSN. All that good stuff, get married have a house, have my little family, and build a good life.*  
–Age 23, CH Female, Houston

*I've accomplished a lot. I feel like the only thing left is to graduate college. Provide a home for my family, my new family. I would still like to enter the military, I would like to do that and continue my career path there.* –Age 18, CH Female, Lubbock

*Get a job, go back to school, take care of my kids. I want to study psychology.*  
–Age 21, CH Female, Houston

*Probably get back into the educational services. Get my GED, or finish getting it. Live a stable life. Just everything, happy and financially stable. –Age 25, CH Male, Lubbock*

*Get a nice job. Getting a GED at [community college] and I've got some online credits. –Age 22, CH Male, Houston*

*Own a home, I have my career job to be a chef. I want to own a car and have a college fund put up for my kids and be married. At first it was just sweets but now I cook all types of stuff now, I cook Italian, BBQ, Chinese, and Greek. –Age 20, CH Female, Houston*

*I want to be a better me. I want to be more stable and actually be doing something useful with my life in the music industry, and if not there then on somebody's TV screen making people laugh. –Age 23, CH Male, Houston*

*Graduate college and finish my real estate license. Those are my top 2 right now. –Age 23, CH Male, Houston*

*I want to get my bachelor's in social work. I really want to be a social worker because I know I can help people. Or a psychiatrist, something in the social work field. I want to help kids or I know I want to own my own business. –Age 24, CH Female, Houston*

*I want to open a nonprofit organization for homeless and unstable youth. –Age 19, CH Female, Houston*

*I really want to get my degree and try to do something with it like a business. There is this building across the street and I really want to lease it out and do something with it. –Age 25, CH Female, Houston*

*Graduate from college. I'm going to graduate from high school tomorrow. I'm already enrolled in classes for next semester. I want to be a teacher. –Age 18, CH Female, Rio Grande Valley*

*I want to work in retail again and then, later on in life, I want to own an animal sanctuary and to foster children. –Age 26, Transgender Man, Lubbock*

*I'm getting married in a year. I want to get my bachelor's. Right now I'm focused on my associate in biology. I just want to live a good life. I want to be an obstetrician-gynecologist. –Age 17, CH Female, Rio Grande Valley*

*I still want to go to school to be an adolescent psychiatrist and work with kids like my son. Like I still have all these [goals]. Everyone's like you've been through a lot and I'm like, yeah, but I survived it. I don't want it to control my life. People think I'm crazy, but I don't want to be that person. I want my kids and to live a semi-normal life. –Age 26, CH Female, Lubbock*

*I wanna be a mortician. I think it's cool and fascinating.*  
–Age 16, CH Female, Rio Grande Valley

*I plan on opening a transgender shelter, I want to open my own boutique and salon. I want to be a lawyer too. That's what I'm going to school for, to be a lawyer.*  
–Age 23, Transgender Woman, Houston

*Maintain, keep focused. Tell women who wants to do it not to do it. Help people that want to be helped get out of that situation. Be a happy mother and a loving partner and do what I have to do to protect mine.* –Age 25, CH Female, Lubbock

### Alternatives/Options

Other participants reported that they were able to stop or exit trafficking when their needs were met in other ways and/or they sought support services.

*I straight up quit. I went to Job Corps, got my CNA [credential]. I learned my lesson. This is not what I really needed. I put positive people in my circle and cut them off when I saw the same issues. When I stopped, I stopped. I learned my lesson.* –  
Age 23, CH Female, Houston

The following participant expressed frustration, wanting to do something else but feeling like she had no other skills or ways to make money.

*[What would help you leave if you wanted to?] Show me a different trade, show me something else that would help me make money. That's what would help most. I want to go to school. I actually want to become a pediatrician. I'm also looking into nursing now. I would like to be helping and go into that. I want to have a clean life. It's my goal to be a productive member of society.* –Age 22, CH Female, Lubbock

Family sometimes served as motivation to exit commercial sex, as a way to leave their trafficker, or to get services.

*Seeing that my mom went through all that and she's still here alive. I kind of wanted to change when I saw myself doing that and I wanted to be a better person cause all my family is all like that and they use drugs and do different bad stuff. My grandma kept me going. She tries to push me through the other side. I guess it was her that was in my head telling me not to overdo it.* –Age 18, CH Female, Rio Grande Valley

### Supportive Person

Participants were asked who they currently go to for support and why they trust that person. Almost always, participants responded with people they felt did not judge them or understood them in a way that other people may not. Several participants talked about a caseworker they had formed a close bond with over a few years.

*She is the director for trauma for the [agency], she runs sex trafficking survivor groups here. She comes from [city] every other week and I really, really love her. Basically, we have the same situation... and so we relate talking about that...at first I didn't like her when I first came into the group but then we just be talking and now she is like a mom figure to me.* –Age 18, CH Female, Rio Grande Valley

Participants also mentioned family members as the trusted person that they went to for support.

*My mom, because no matter what I've done wrong she loves me. She knows I'm not perfect and she still loves me. She knows she wasn't perfect at my age. My cousin is just the same like me but older than me. She's been through everything I have been through and has told me don't do that, but when I do it she still loves me. If anyone tried to do anything to me I could call her and she would come and save me. –Age 22, CH Female, Lubbock*

## SERVICE PROVIDER DISCUSSIONS

As mentioned in earlier sections, the research team conducted discussions with service providers in order to complement youth surveys and interviews and round out the team's understanding of experiences, trends, perceptions, and local systems. These discussions were conducted with 1 organization in Amarillo, 1 in El Paso, 5 in Houston, 7 in Lubbock, 3 in the Rio Grande Valley, and 2 organizations that provide statewide services. The organizations included direct service providers, legal aid agencies, law enforcement, and crisis centers. The specific organizations and their focus areas are listed in Table 5 in Research Activities (p. 33). This section details the findings and themes from those discussions.

### Regional Trends and Unique Factors

Researchers asked service providers if they had seen any trends locally regarding human trafficking and/or unique factors specific to their service provision region. It is important to note that, because not all organizations focused on service provision for survivors of child sex trafficking, the trends they see in their organizations may be due to a variety of factors not specific only to child sex trafficking in their regions. For example, an organization focused on homeless youth might see more trends based on trafficking of those in transient situations rather than solely due to transportation or routes unique to their region. Also, not all service providers responded to this question or offered much detail if they felt they did not see enough victims or survivors to identify any trends or common factors in their cases. The responses varied depending on how much time the individual provider has spent interacting directly with survivors (e.g., a case manager might have individual and focused time with a survivor for a few hours a week, while a medical provider may not have much time to get into details of the trafficking experience based on the patient's presenting needs).

Providers reported that a history of running away made youth more vulnerable to recruitment into a sex trafficking situation as many were then approached on the streets by either a pimp or someone offering a commercial sex exchange. While running away was the trend they looked for, providers felt that any time a vulnerable youth is on the street, – either as a runaway or not – there is a risk. For example, some providers knew a couple of clients who were approached by someone in a car (“roll up”) while they were ditching school for the day and hanging out in the streets. One organization in Houston reported an influx of wealthy white girls from the suburbs coming through their programs in the last few years, though they were unsure of the reasons. The provider speculated that rebelling and running away from home or involvement with drugs were factors involved in these girls' selling sex or getting involved in a relationship with someone who then pimped them out to support substance misuse. The organization in Amarillo discussed seeing several cases regarding commercial sex at the many truck stops in the region.

### **Survivor Needs**

To gain a perspective from both sides of service provision, researchers asked minor and youth participants during the LES interviews about helpful and needed services, and asked service providers what concerns and/or fears victims and survivors commonly express when seeking services. Service providers reported that fear of retribution by a trafficker was a common concern as well as finding jobs that pay enough money for living and survival expenses. The data from youth participant interviews also echoed these concerns (see prior discussions on safety and financial security). A service provider in the Rio Grande Valley shared that the biggest concern their clients express is for connection to their families, which was something that youth participants regularly expressed as well. Regardless of the immediate service needs, such as medical or shelter, their clients' first request is to contact or be reunified with their family. Other concerns heard from clients were the need for crisis placements and/or safe places that clients can be taken to immediately after leaving their trafficker as well as longer-term housing needs once they in a more stable situation. Drug detox placements were another emergency or crisis concern that providers shared as well as seeing youth in need of legal aid for various reasons. Finally, providers noted that their clients regularly express concerns about confidentiality and autonomy (i.e., youth and young adult clients want to be sure their identities and experiences are kept confidential and that they have ability to make their own choices throughout their enrollment in the program).

### **Missed Opportunities**

The research team asked service providers about trends that they do not see or, rather, what they think is missing in their region or that is impeding identifying and providing the best services to victims. Researchers also included questions on local issues of concern or unmet needs (i.e., "Is there anything happening locally that is not being addressed by either law enforcement or service providers in the area?"). The organization in Amarillo discussed seeing how some survivors were recruited or made aware of selling sex by others at school. In these cases, no pimp was involved, only other students. This was similar to a service provider in Lubbock stating that a lot of the focus is on "older guys with younger girls" and that the community may be overlooking the cases of peers either recruiting or selling together or even selling to other students (this theme arose in participant findings as well in the section on Entrance).

There was a general consensus among service providers and the research team that there needs to be more attention given to male-identified victims as well as to service provision for individuals across all gender and sexual identities. A service provider in Houston noted the lack of services for transgender or male individuals, saying that the services are "just not there" in the region. Several other agencies in various regions also noted this. Similarly, the research team noted that service providers commonly used female pronouns to discuss victims of trafficking and male pronouns to describe traffickers or perpetrators of violence. When service providers would say that they do not see any male victims, the research team asked if they knew of active efforts to locate male-identified victims. They did not. Most of the organizations in these discussions that have programs focused solely on serving survivors of sex trafficking limit their services to only females and/or female minors (this did not always include all female-identified survivors).

Provider discussions included themes around criminalization of minor victims of trafficking as well as the ways in which youth themselves identify. One service provider in Lubbock shared how they felt their region has been slow to shift from thinking about minor victims of sex trafficking as criminals to seeing them as victims (a theme also echoed by youth participants in describing their interactions with law enforcement). However, service providers acknowledged that youth often do not see themselves as victims either, a theme the research team has noted as well. The providers discussed how each of their regions needs a more nuanced view of how to treat victims of child sex trafficking with these two realities (or the range of exploitations) in mind. Another topic that came up during these discussions was the criminalization of victims by arresting them for prostitution. One organization in the Rio Grande Valley talked about how the current state of immigration laws and

services in the United States are such that victims of trafficking are being overlooked and sent back to their country without the crimes that were committed against them in this country being addressed. They discussed how the heavy focus on legal status is overshadowing immigrants' victim status for a variety of crimes, particularly trafficking.

Overall, service provider discussions mirrored what youth participants reported in the REVS and LES data. Service providers across the state identified gaps in service provision, particularly for victims of sex trafficking in the Rio Grande Valley. It was clear that there is a need to expand the current myopic view held by many service providers, policy makers, researchers, and law enforcement professionals to include indicators beyond those that are applicable to identification of "ideal victims." There are many missed opportunities for prevention and early intervention because of this myopic view. This and other missed opportunities are noted in the Discussion section.

# Challenges/Limitations

Throughout the course of the study, the research team had to navigate several challenges and limitations. At the outset of the study, researchers planned to use a referral sampling procedure. However, this shifted to a multi-site, community-based sampling method as a way to answer the research questions thoroughly and comply with the study's time constraints. The study was open to anyone eligible at each site partner organization rather than selecting a small number of minors and youth as initial seeds who then would begin the referral process involved with referral sampling methods.

Additionally, an issue of fidelity arose when site partners helped to recruit participants for the study. In some instances, potential participants were unclear about who was eligible for the study. Often researchers realized this during the consent process, talked through the misunderstanding, and asked the individual if they would still be willing to participate.

Another challenge centered around the targeted sample. The research team submitted a proposal to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) Institutional Review Board seeking permission to interview youth currently in the care of the state (e.g., foster care), which was not successful. The research team then requested permission to interview youth on probation and in facilities in both the state and county systems run by the Texas Juvenile Justice Department (TJJD) and requested permission, which was granted. The shift from youth in DFPS care to youth involved in TJJD was a natural progression. Many of the youth involved in the juvenile justice system have experience with one or more of the stated risk factors for sex trafficking (Eastman & Putnam-Hornstein, 2018; Barrett, et al. 2015; Maschi et al., 2008), including a history of foster care.

More information on challenges and limitations is available in Appendix F: Challenges and Limitations.



# Discussion

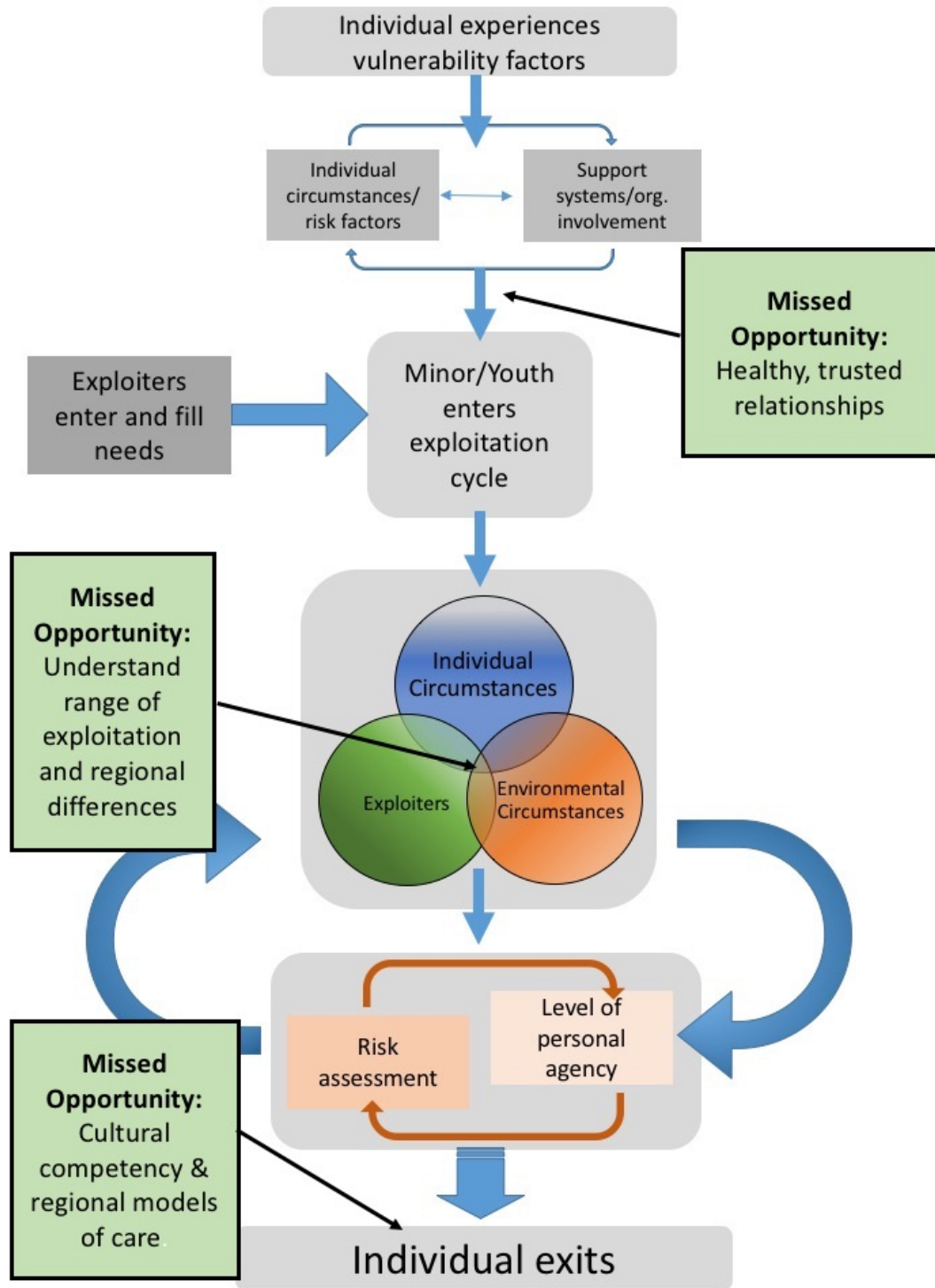
Participants in this study were a diverse group of minors and youth who have had complex lives with multiple experiences of trauma and violence. Throughout their participation in the study, they expressed an understanding of their level of personal agency in difficult or exploitative situations, and also of times when they were not identified as a potential or actual victim of exploitation. The individuals who are typically identified as sex trafficking victims fit a narrow definition of what youth sex trafficking victims “should” look like when they intersect with service providers, healthcare providers, and law enforcement. However, youth at risk for sex trafficking present in more varied and nuanced ways and, as a result, are not always identified through current prevention and early intervention efforts.

In interviews with service providers, law enforcement, and the youth participants themselves, **missed opportunities** emerged as a common theme. In both the REVS and LES data collection, participants answered questions about whether there had been specific individuals who could have identified them as a sex trafficking victim or helped them in some way during their exploitation but had not, and why the participant believed that that person had not helped. This study found that youth vulnerable to sex trafficking victimization and other forms of exploitation are everywhere and many were already involved in child welfare, juvenile justice, and healthcare systems prior to their victimization. There are many missed prevention and intervention opportunities, not just from police or healthcare, but by any number of youth and community services providers.

This section takes a broader view of missed opportunities that encompasses the entire cycle and range of exploitation and includes key opportunities to intervene in the life cycle of trafficking through prevention, early intervention, and intervention efforts. These coincide with three primary points in the cycle where missed opportunities occur: an individual’s entrance, the exploitation experience, and their exit from exploitation.

The Concept Map: Life Cycle of Exploitation is included in Figure 33 below, with missed opportunity points highlighted.

Figure 33. Missed Opportunities for Prevention, Early Intervention, and Intervention



### MISSED OPPORTUNITY: LACK OF HEALTHY, TRUSTED RELATIONSHIPS

Evidence from this study reinforces the reality that entry into sex trafficking is often facilitated by an individual with whom the victim has an interpersonal relationship. One of the aims in asking participants about times when they could have been helped was to identify individuals whom they would trust to intervene. REVS data found an average age of first sex trafficking victimization to be 15 years old, a time when interpersonal relationships are vital to growth and social skills development.

One of two situations commonly occurred among participants at the start of their trafficking victimization. They were either persuaded or forced into commercial sexual exploitation by someone they trusted or with whom they had an intimate relationship, or they were lacking a relationship with anyone to whom they felt they could turn for help or advice. Additionally, economic necessity appears to be a primary driver of entrance decisions made by minors and youth and a main factor exploited to draw them into “the life.” The lack of healthy, trusted relationships in participants’ lives along with economic instability create ideal conditions for exploitation through force, fraud, or coercion as a minor.

Participants were asked about a person they went to for support and why they went to that person. They reported that having someone they could go to for advice, be themselves around, or who would accept them no matter what they said or did was very helpful in their lives. However, their relationships with those they felt were supportive were sometimes fraught with unhealthy attributes, including violence, manipulation, and unclear or no boundaries. Participants often noted that having a healthy and trusted relationship that they could count on in their lives might have prevented them from being trafficked in the first place.

### MISSED OPPORTUNITY: UNDERSTANDING VARIABILITY OF SURVIVOR EXPERIENCES AND NEEDS

Data from the REVS shows that survivors of sex trafficking spend about one-third of their lives in situations of sexual exploitation after their first victimization. Additionally, about one-third of participants reported that they had experienced sex trafficking in the past year. This suggests that service providers, law enforcement, and healthcare providers may interact with individuals who are currently existing in different areas of the Life Cycle of Exploitation. This means that the circumstances of any individual who has been trafficked and who is seeking services and/or help may contribute to a complicated set of symptoms with typical or atypical signs of trafficking victimization. More simply, minor and youth victims of sex trafficking are in complex, evolving situations where even they have varied definitions of themselves and what is happening. Therefore, these individuals may not present as service providers, law enforcement, and healthcare providers might expect.

In discussing their experiences, participants displayed a deep understanding of the services they need, what works and what does not work for them in regard to service provision, and what gaps they see in the systems with which they have interacted. Participants understand their own internal needs and have the ability to navigate external systems. While there were similar themes across participant experiences, each individual’s perceptions of service needs varied based on personal priorities, such as finding affordable housing or job training.

Understanding and accounting for where an individual is within the Life Cycle of Trafficking and what is most important to them at that time is a missed opportunity encountered in this study. Participants reported that their priorities, such as finding a job, were sometimes undermined by service providers, law enforcement, or healthcare providers’ priorities. When the help offered or received was not relevant or meaningful to their current goals, participants were less likely to seek help from those systems again.

For example, participants across the study regions reported that family was a major factor in their lives in both positive and negative ways. Participants disclosed how family played a role in the circumstances that contributed to their exploitation, but they also expressed a desire to include family in services or find services that would help them, their children (when applicable), and their families. Other participants described how a family member was the only support system they had – whether functional or not. Participants enrolled in services at the time of the LES interviews would mention including or wanting to be connected with family and regularly felt that service providers dismissed these requests or that service providers had other goals or priorities in mind.

### MISSED OPPORTUNITY: LACK OF CULTURAL COMPETENCE AND APPROPRIATE MODELS OF CARE FOR DIFFERENT REGIONS

In collecting data throughout the Houston, Lubbock, and the Texas-Mexico border regions, the research team saw differences in the data that turned out to be based more on differences in the availability of services than on geography. For example, the research team was able to access a higher number of participants through service agencies in Houston and Lubbock than in the Rio Grande Valley. There are fewer agencies in the Valley tasked with providing services to vulnerable minors and youth – it is an underserved area. As a result, in the Rio Grande Valley, the research team relied instead on interviews with youth in juvenile detention centers. Additionally, in visiting and touring agencies and attending local anti-trafficking coalition meetings in the three regions, the research team learned of services being offered to minors who are potential or identified trafficking survivors in Houston, and plans for service extension in Lubbock, but there was a relative dearth of services planned for survivors of trafficking in the Rio Grande Valley.

Therefore, a missed opportunity is the lack of services available in the Rio Grande Valley for youth, not only youth at risk of trafficking, but also those who are in any exploitative situation. For cultural reasons as much as anything, risk factors such as homelessness were defined, recognized, and understood differently in the Rio Grande Valley than in the other regions of the state. Minors and youth experiencing episodes of homelessness are not identified in the Rio Grande Valley as quickly as they might be in other Texas regions and, therefore, are more vulnerable to exploitation and trafficking. An increased understanding of cultural definitions of risk factors as well as culturally competent service delivery to youth who have experienced exploitation is needed across the state, especially in the Rio Grande Valley.

# Recommendations

This section contains recommendations for anti-trafficking programs and the broader youth services field, including service providers, policy makers, researchers, and other key stakeholders as well as anyone who may come into contact with vulnerable youth. Recommendations for prevention, early intervention, intervention, and overall service provision are based on lessons learned from the analysis of missed opportunities. Each recommendation may be applicable across prevention, early intervention, and intervention; however, our recommendations coincide with the particular missed opportunity points identified within the data. Each recommendation can be also applied across service provision, policy, research, and law enforcement for vulnerable youth.

**Healthy relationship education** for youth who experience risk factors associated with exploitation and **training** for anti-trafficking stakeholders are both key to prevention of exploitation. High-fidelity wraparound service models that focuses on assisting the client and their family in linking to an array of services are key to early intervention, successful exit, and a break in the cyclical nature of exit and reentrance that is often reported in the field.

**Cultural competence and regionally based models of care** are key to long-term, healthy, and trauma-informed recovery from trafficking. Models of care should be tailored to each region based on survivors, community members, and service providers' self-identified needs and assessment of what will and will not work in their region.

Finally, child sex trafficking **training for community-based service professionals** is an extension and emphasis of training that is already available in the field, but should be broadened beyond identifying and reporting human trafficking to understanding the individual circumstances that can put youth at risk of exploitation and how to offer the variety of services that youth need. Prioritizing and meeting these needs helps to identify trajectories into or out of exploitation and might be just as immediate of a need in the eyes of the youth as the exploitation itself.

### PREVENTION: HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Many existing recommendations to remediate human trafficking focus on identification of victims, increasing the awareness of others about the problem so that they can identify cases, being a conscientious consumer to reduce the demand for exploitation, and providing appropriate trauma-informed care to victims. The details about how to address prevention are often trafficking-specific interventions, including recommendations to reach those vulnerable to recruitment, changes to and enforcement of labor laws, and corporate accountability. Duger (2015) critiques the current limitations of interventionist responses and proposes a human rights-based approach to prevention that additionally focuses on the rights of children, observing that, “The rights-based approach highlights the reality that a child experiences multiple rights violations before they become at risk of CSEC [sex trafficking] and later a victim” (p. 121). The current study complements this perspective with evidence that substantial opportunities exist for prevention or early intervention in trafficking through education for youth and those who regularly work with them. Such training can enlighten children and their families about healthy relationships and social norms as well as teach professionals how to build these types of relationships with youth. Increased and expanded education in K-12 educational settings that focuses on healthy relationships might help vulnerable children avoid circumstances of victimization where someone they trust attempts to manipulate them into participating in exploitation.

### EARLY INTERVENTION: INCLUSION OF FAMILY IN SERVICE PROVISION

It is broadly recognized that trauma-informed responses are essential in the treatment of trafficking victims (Hardy, Compton, & McPhatter, 2013; Macy & Johns, 2011). The findings from the current study provide additional evidence in support of such approaches. System navigation has been studied and implemented in a variety of healthcare settings (Manderson, McMurray, Piraino, & Stolee, 2011; McMurray & Cooper, 2017 for discussion). Continued evaluation of evidence-based family navigator models in service settings that focus on potential victims and identified survivors of commercial sexual exploitation and trafficking are needed in the youth services field. Additionally, addressing survivors’ and their families’ needs should be a priority in all early intervention efforts, including assisting them to navigate the range of services for meeting basic needs (e.g., housing, education), health and mental health (e.g., physicals/preventative healthcare, counseling), and legal matters (e.g., identification documents, criminal charges) that help in both prevention and recovery efforts.

### INTERVENTION: CULTURAL COMPETENCE AND SERVICE GAPS

In discussions between the research team and one of the few service agencies fully focused on sex trafficking in the Rio Grande Valley, a provider noted having difficulty getting the community to trust them and felt that it was because of the provider “not being from [the Rio Grande Valley], not being Hispanic, not being Catholic, not speaking Spanish.”

In addition, the research team found that, in interviews with both participants and service providers about which services they felt were needed or were lacking throughout victims’ vulnerable or exploitative experiences, the minors and youth who specifically requested family-involved or family-based services were from the Rio Grande Valley, a majority Hispanic/Latinx region. The research team hypothesizes that Latinx cultural values play a role in these findings as has been found in other majority Latinx populations and healthcare or service-seeking studies (Furman et. al., 2009).

Individual circumstances and service-seeking behaviors are culturally defined and, therefore, cultural values have potential influences on prevention, identification, and service efforts (Castillo & Caver, 2009). Latinx cultural values (also called Hispanic cultural beliefs) are defined as concepts that are

unique to and shared by the Latinx community, which is a collectivist culture about customs, including beliefs and attitudes toward well-being and systems of care (Cuéllar, Arnold, & González, 1995; Castillo, & Caver, 2009). *Personalismo* and *familismo* are only two of many Latinx cultural values, all of which can have both positive and negative impacts on decision-making processes in personal behavior as well as in service provision (Cuéllar et. al., 1995; Caballero, 2011). Mistrust of an outsider who does not reflect the same identities as the majority of the population can be attributed to the Latinx cultural value of *personalismo*, which is the expectation of developing a personal relationship in order to trust and respect someone outside of a Latinx individual's circle or network. Similarly, the general request from Latinx participants for family-based services can also be attributed to a Latinx cultural value of *familismo*, which is prioritizing family loyalty over the individual's needs (Caballero, 2011). Therefore, a focus on culturally competent and family-based service expansion in the Rio Grande Valley, along with mandatory training on cultural humility for service providers, supervisors, and those who audit and regulate services, is needed to reduce the risk of victimization.

### OVERALL: MANDATED TRAINING ON EXPLOITATION AND TRAFFICKING FOR COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICE PROFESSIONALS

The State of Texas currently mandates that law enforcement agencies and Child Protective Services workers receive training on human trafficking, and numerous medical professionals have enacted training for healthcare providers who may identify and care for victims (Isaac, Solak, & Giardino, 2011). However, in this study, many participants did not identify these responders and service providers as trusted resources who could have identified them or helped them as victims of sex trafficking. While training these helping professionals to identify and care for victims and survivors is necessary (Macy & Graham, 2012), addressing the broader systems with which these vulnerable minors and youth come in contact is also important. Key individuals in those systems might include teachers, school social workers, school nurses, and juvenile probation officers, all of whom have the potential to identify the range of exploitation. Expanded training serves as a corrective measure to both prevent and identify commercial sexual exploitation and trafficking of minors. These trainings should not only include the many ways a minor can be exploited and trafficked, but how to identify and properly respond to the immediate and basic needs that this study has found can be driving forces into an exploitative situation when not met (e.g., housing, food).

### IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The depth of the data presented in this study shows the breadth and range of exploitation, the need for more varied efforts and services, and the relationships among intersecting factors for both risks and vulnerabilities. In further preventing, identifying, and serving victims of commercial child sexual exploitation, the research team makes the following recommendations for additional research.

#### **Centering Vulnerability and Risk**

Industry standards in trafficking prevention and service efforts have grown over the years and do well in advocating for a more victim-centered and trauma-informed lens. In thinking about preventing trafficking, however, the understanding of what causes victimization or what trauma is currently being experienced needs to be further explored. Once a victim is identified and begins services focused on the trauma of sexual abuse or exploitation, the response may focus on the sex trafficking experience. Yet, as illustrated by the range of exploitations faced by youth participants, these experiences vary, as would the trauma. Though participants did not self-identify as victims of sex trafficking, they did discuss many unmet (and often basic) needs that helped to cause their situations,

such as a lack of food, shelter, and family support. Once exploited, the needs they have may multiply and intensify, and more trauma might occur, but these already-present traumas still remain and need to be addressed. Research on complex trauma and effective services to survivors who present it is still new, and it is recommended that more research include an understanding of the sources of trauma from the perspective of the minors and youth themselves. Centering the vulnerability created by intersecting factors in their individual circumstances and exploring the relation to a minor's degree of risk would help to understand how to best get to the root of the matter before it becomes a cause of entry into commercial sexual exploitation. Greater understanding of vulnerabilities would improve prevention efforts and help identify victims who are often overlooked.

### **Survivor-Informed Research**

Because the research team did not specifically seek previously-identified survivors of child sex trafficking to screen and interview, but rather sought out those minors and youth who prior research have shown to be at high risk for sex trafficking, the participants who did screen positive for child sex trafficking in the REVS and subsequently took part in the LES interviews discussed commercial sexual exploitation from their own perspectives and used their own definitions. There is an evident disconnect between the participants' perceptions and understanding of their individual circumstances and industry standard definitions among service providers who ask about exploitation and needs. When participants did not see themselves as having been exploited or victimized, their definitions of what they were experiencing might not have aligned with service provider or law enforcement definitions of trafficking. This disconnect could create gaps in reporting, self-identification, and needed and effective service provision as well as possible relapses into risky behavior. Further research is needed to explore how prevention, intervention, and restoration efforts for child sex trafficking victims can be most effective. Including self-identified survivors who can provide their expertise on gaps and efficacy in such investigations and evaluations can help to broaden and strengthen victim services.

### **Longitudinal Research of Victim Experiences**

The study's data on the lifetime victimization of participants offer a lens into how frequently or infrequently exploitation can occur in a victim's life, while the Concept Map on the Life Cycle of Trafficking demonstrates the many ways and intersections in which exploitation can occur. A longitudinal perspective of these experiences is needed to better understand how and when these situations occur over time.

### **Sampling**

As mentioned previously, the research team faced a challenge in navigating the protection of human subjects approval process to be able to use a referral sampling methodology, for example, Respondent-Driven Sampling (RDS), that would have helped the team to reach youth who were not already identified by service providers or the juvenile justice system. The research team's prior study (Busch-Armendariz et. al., 2016) estimated that 25% of youth at risk of sex trafficking victimization become victims, which is similar to findings from other studies. Because this study included screening vulnerable youth connected to service providers and inside state-run systems like TJJD, which generally have a protective factor for at-risk youth, the percentage of victimization found in the current study was lower. Recommendations for service provision offered in this report are based on discussions with youth who are currently receiving services at different levels of care. Therefore, further research is needed that would help researchers expand their sample within networks of youth at risk of trafficking, especially those who have not yet received services or been identified as



potential victims, in order to adequately study and evaluate service provision and service needs. Similarly, this study's findings on missed opportunities give a perspective on those not being identified in systems. Yet, these findings are based on data that include potential victims who have not yet reached any level of care or services. RDS has the support of review boards and is one methodology that would address this gap that the research team recommends be included in future studies.

### **Healthy Relationship Programs**

Findings and recommendations both addressed the need that participants voiced for building trusted relationships with someone they can go to for support or help identifying and exiting their exploitation situation. The most effective violence prevention programs focus on healthy relationship models and curriculum to help students build trusted relationships, self-esteem, and awareness of self-worth by demonstrating that no one deserves violence in any form. They emphasize the importance of having someone to go to for support in case of an at-risk situation. Though many programs are evidence-based, more research is needed to explore the long-term impact on youth enrolled in these programs and the risk of unhealthy relationships and sex trafficking. Similarly, the research team recommends further research and evaluation on the cultural competence of these programs and the importance of including young survivors in program development.

### **Transitional Services**

More research is needed on the transition that youth experience when they stop receiving services from providers or systems, whether from a lower level of care, such as a drop-in center, or a higher level of care, such as the child welfare system. Data presented in this report show that this transition out of a system can increase vulnerability for sex trafficking victimization. More insight is needed on the relationships among care models, risk factors, and the likelihood of sex trafficking victimization. This research would help providers prepare youth who are transitioning from a system with high levels of care into a less-protective environment with less structure and more risk.

### **Family Navigator Models**

Further research and evaluation is needed on family navigator models and how they can assist in meeting the various needs of survivors and their families to provide evidence-based program implementation in varied settings – medical, mental health, service linkage, and legal – where survivors are seeking services.

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# APPENDIX A: Rates and Extent of Victimization Survey (REVS) Instrument

## Eligibility

1. Are you currently between the ages of 13 and 27?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. I don't know
2. Have you ever experienced physical, emotional, or mental abuse?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. I don't know
3. Are you currently assigned or have you ever been assigned a case worker from the state of Texas or another agency?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. I don't know
4. Have you ever been in any type of foster care placement? (i.e. group home or individual home)
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. I don't know
5. Are you currently or have you ever been homeless or did not know where you were going to sleep during a given period of time?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. I don't know

## Consent Process Questions

1. Are you under the age of 18?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
2. Informed Consent for Participants Age 18 and Over
3. Do you agree to be audio recorded?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
4. Do you agree to be audio recorded?
  - a. Yes

- b. No
- 5. Informed Assent for Participants Age 13-17

### Demographics

1. What is your age?
  - a. 13
  - b. 14
  - c. 15
  - d. 16
  - e. 17
  - f. 18
  - g. 19
  - h. 20
  - i. 21
  - j. 22
  - k. 23
  - l. 24
  - m. 25
  - n. 26
  - o. 27
2. What is your race/ethnicity?
  - a. Asian/Pacific Islander
  - b. Black or African American
  - c. Hispanic or Latinx
  - d. Native American/American Indian
  - e. White
  - f. Other \_\_\_\_\_
3. How would you describe your gender identity?
  - a. Woman
  - b. Man
  - c. Agender
  - d. Genderqueer, gender fluid, or non-binary
  - e. Questioning or unsure
  - f. Trans man
  - g. Trans woman
  - h. Additional gender identity \_\_\_\_\_
  - i. Prefer not to disclose
4. What is your highest level of education?
  - a. Less than Middle School / Junior High School
  - b. Middle School/ Junior High School
  - c. Some High School
  - d. Graduated High School
  - e. GED
  - f. Technical/ Trade School
  - g. Some College/ University

- h. College/University Degree
- i. I don't know

What is your sexual orientation?

- a. Lesbian
- b. Gay
- c. Bisexual
- d. Queer/Questioning
- e. Asexual
- f. Heterosexual/Straight
- g. I choose to skip this question
- h. Other \_\_\_\_\_

### Experience Questions

1. Have you ever done any kind of work/other activity for something in return from an employer, relative, friend, or stranger?  
 This could mean that you received money, food, housing, drugs, or anything else.  
 “Work/other activity” can be something like being a server at a restaurant or working at a store or something like selling drugs or trading sex. This could include doing it for someone even though you didn’t want to.  
 Have you worked?  
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
2. Which of the following kinds of work have you ever done for someone, keeping in mind that by “work” we mean anything you did to get money or something of value—including food, clothes, a place to stay, protection, drugs, or gifts—for yourself (or your family). Please check all that apply.
  - a. Serving food in a restaurant or café
  - b. Another type of job in a restaurant or café
  - c. In a retail store (clothing store, grocery store, convenience store, at the mall, etc.)
  - d. Doing construction work or other home repairs (painting, plumbing, electricity, etc.)
  - e. Mowing lawns, shoveling sidewalks, or other yard work
  - f. Babysitting
  - g. Office work (answering phones, filing, etc.)
  - h. Selling items door-to-door
  - i. Selling items, dancing, or performing on the street
  - j. Asking for change or donations on the street
  - k. Trading sex for money, clothes, shelter, or other things
  - l. Participating in sexual videos or photos for money, clothes, shelter, or other things
  - m. Stripping (Exotic Dancing)
  - n. Delivering newspapers, restaurant food, groceries or other things to other people’s homes
  - o. Cleaning homes
  - p. Doing nails or hair



- q. Providing massage services
- r. Working at a bar or nightclub
- s. Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

3. For the following section, we will ask these five questions for each situation listed.
- a. Have you ever experienced this in your life?
    - i. How many times has this ever happened to you? (Best estimate)
  - b. Have you experienced this in the past year?
    - i. How many times has this happened in the last year? (Best estimate)
  - c. When did you first experience this? Enter age in years \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. What percentage of the time have you been in this situation since it first occurred?
    - i. Almost Never (10% of time)
    - ii. Seldom (25% of time)
    - iii. Sometimes (50% of time)
    - iv. Often (75% of time)
    - v. Always (100% of time)

### Situations

#### *Victimization*

- 10. In your **life**, have you ever been unable to leave a place you worked or talk to people you wanted to talk to, even when you weren't working, because the person you worked for threatened or controlled you?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
- 11. In your **life**, did someone you work for ever refuse to pay what they promised and keep all or most of the money you made?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
- 12. In your **life**, did someone you work for ever physically beat, slap, hit, kick, punch, burn or harm you in any way?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
- 13. In your **life**, did you ever feel emotionally abused by someone you worked for?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
- 14. In your **life**, did someone you work for ever ask, pressure, or force you to do something sexually that you did not feel comfortable doing?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
- 15. In your **life**, did someone you work for ever force you to engage in sexual acts with family, friends, clients, or business associates for money or favors?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
- 16. In your **life**, did someone you were in a relationship with ever force you to engage in sexual acts with family, friends, clients, or business associates for money or favors?
  - a. Yes

- b. No

### **Sexual Exploitation**

1. In your **life**, did *you* ever trade sexual acts for food, clothing, money, shelter, favors, or other necessities for survival before you reached the age of 18?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
2. In your life, did someone ask you or make you feel like you had to trade sexual acts for food, clothing, money, shelter, favors, or other necessities for survival before you reached the age of 18?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No

### **Contact for Support**

1. Would you like to talk to someone today about the things on this survey and find out about services that may be available to help you? **Please remember that if you agree to speak to someone and seek services available to you, your answers relating to those services you request will no longer be anonymous. For example, if you seek drug treatment services, your answers related to drug use will no longer be anonymous, but the rest of the survey will remain anonymous and confidential.**
  - a. Yes
  - b. No

# APPENDIX B: Life Experiences Survey (LES)

## Victim Experiences Interview Practitioner-Administered

### Demographics

1. Age
2. Where are you from?
3. Where did you spend the most amount of time growing up?
4. What are your parents' highest levels of education?
  - a. Less than High School
  - b. Some High School
  - c. Graduated High School
  - d. GED
  - e. Technical/Trade School
  - f. Some College/University
  - g. College/University degree
  - h. Master Degree or Higher
  - i. I don't know
  
5. Do you have children?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
6. How many children do you have?
7. How many children do you care for currently?
  
8. Where are you living now? Does anyone else live there with you?
9. How many people live with you?
10. What is the gender of the other people that live with you?
11. What is your relationship with them?

### Work

1. Have you ever done any kind of work/other activity for something in return from an employer, relative, friend, or stranger? *This could mean that you received money, food, housing, drugs, or anything else.*

“Work/other activity” can be something like being a server at a restaurant or working at a store, or something like selling drugs or trading sex. This could include doing it for someone even though you didn't want to.

Thinking about all types of “work” above, have you ever done work for someone?

  - a. Yes
  - b. No

2. What is your current occupation?
3. Employers, and people who help employers (e.g. managers, drivers, crew leaders, security, etc.), may use threats or lies to make you feel afraid to leave, complain, or seek help for your situation.

For the following section, we are going to ask about some situations that may sound repetitive, but they will give us more information about your experiences. We will ask these five questions for each situation listed below.

- a. Have you ever experienced this in your life?
  - i. How many times has this ever happened to you? (Best estimate)
- b. Have you experienced this in the past year?
  - i. How many times has this happened in the last year? (Best estimate)
- c. When did you first experience this?
  - i. Enter age in years \_\_\_\_\_
- d. What percentage of the time have you been in this situation since it first occurred?
  - i. Almost Never (10% of time)
  - ii. Seldom (25% of time)
  - iii. Sometimes (50% of time)
  - iv. Often (75% of time)
  - v. Always (100% of time)

### Victimization

1. In your **life**, did someone you work for physically force you to do something you didn't feel comfortable doing?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
2. In your **life**, did someone you work for lock you up, restrain you or prevent you from leaving?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
3. In your **life**, did someone you work for physically harm you in any way (beat, slap, hit, kick, punch, burn)?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
4. In your **life**, did someone you work for trick you into doing different work than was promised?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
5. In your **life**, did someone you work for make you sign a document without understanding what it stated, like a work contract?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No

6. In your **life**, did someone you work for refuse to pay you or pay less than they promised?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
7. In your **life**, did someone you work for restrict or control where you went or who you talked to?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
8. In your **life**, did someone you work for deprive you of sleep, food, water, or medical care?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
9. In your **life**, did someone you work for not let you contact family or friends, even when you weren't working?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
10. In your **life**, did someone you work for keep all or most of your money or pay?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
11. In your **life**, did someone you work for keep your ID documents (e.g. ID card, license, passport, social security card, birth certificate) from you?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
12. In your life, did someone you work for threaten to get you deported?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
13. In your **life**, did someone you work for threaten to harm you or your family or pet?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
14. In your **life**, did someone you work for physically harm or threaten a co-worker or friend?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
15. In your **life**, did someone you work for force you to do something sexually that you didn't feel comfortable doing?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
16. In your **life**, did someone you work for put your photo on the Internet to find clients to trade sex with?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
17. In your **life**, did someone you work for force you to engage in sexual acts with family, friends, or business associates for money or favors?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
18. In your **life**, did someone you work for encourage or pressure you to do sexual acts or have sex, including taking sexual photos or videos?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No

19. In your **life**, did someone you work for force you to trade sex for money, shelter, food or anything else through online websites, escort services, street prostitution, informal arrangements, brothels, fake massage businesses or strip clubs?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No

### **Commercial Sex**

1. In your **life**, have you on your own—traded sex for money, shelter, food or anything else? Do not count times when you were working for someone else.
  - a. Yes
  - b. No

### **Living Situation**

1. Who do you go to for support?
2. Why do you go to that person?
3. Was there anything in your living situation(s) that you feel contributed to where you are now? (Y/N) Why or why not?
4. Do you feel safe where you are living now? Why or why not?
  - a. Yes \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. No \_\_\_\_\_
5. Have you ever been in foster care?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
6. If yes, how long were you/have you been in foster care?
  - a. Years \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Months \_\_\_\_\_
7. Has anyone in your immediate family struggled with a mental illness?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
8. Has your family experienced interpersonal violence in the home?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
9. Without telling me specific names or their relationship to you, were you ever physically abused?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
10. Have you ever witnessed physical abuse against others? (Y/N)
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
11. Have you ever been sexually abused? (forced to engage in sex/sexual acts with someone)
  - a. Yes
  - b. No

12. Have you ever been in a romantic relationship?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
13. Are you currently in a romantic relationship?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
14. Are you currently afraid of anyone with whom you are in an intimate relationship?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
15. Have you ever been afraid of any partner with whom you have been in an intimate relationship?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No

### Relationship Description

1. Tell me more about the relationship(s) that you have with people whom you have feared. What were they like?  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. *For practitioner to check as participant explains their relationship. We are interested in if the person they discuss is their trafficker, a client, or someone else. Can be used as probing questions.*
  - a. Told me that I wasn't good enough \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Kept me from medical care \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. Followed me \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. Tried to turn my family, friends, and children against me \_\_\_\_\_
  - e. Locked me in the bedroom \_\_\_\_\_
  - f. Slapped me \_\_\_\_\_
  - g. Raped me \_\_\_\_\_
  - h. Told me that I was ugly \_\_\_\_\_
  - i. Tried to keep me from seeing or talking to my family \_\_\_\_\_
  - j. Threw me \_\_\_\_\_
  - k. Hung around outside my house \_\_\_\_\_
  - l. Blamed me for causing their violent behavior \_\_\_\_\_
  - m. Harassed me over the telephone \_\_\_\_\_
  - n. Shook me \_\_\_\_\_
  - o. Tried to rape me \_\_\_\_\_
  - p. Harassed me at work \_\_\_\_\_
  - q. Pushed, grabbed, or shoved me \_\_\_\_\_
  - r. Used a knife or gun or other weapon \_\_\_\_\_
  - s. Became upset if dinner/housework wasn't done \_\_\_\_\_
  - t. Told me that I was crazy \_\_\_\_\_
  - u. Told me that no one would ever want me \_\_\_\_\_
  - v. Took my wallet and left me stranded \_\_\_\_\_
  - w. Hit or tried to hit me with something \_\_\_\_\_

- x. Did not want me to socialize with my friends \_\_\_\_\_
- y. Put foreign objects in my vagina/anus \_\_\_\_\_
- z. Refused to let me work outside the home \_\_\_\_\_
- aa. Kicked me, bit me or hit me with a fist \_\_\_\_\_
- bb. Tried to convince my friends, family or children that I was crazy \_\_\_\_\_
- cc. Told me that I was stupid \_\_\_\_\_
- dd. Beat me up \_\_\_\_\_

**Recruitment Path/Experience1**

1. Please share with me how your experience with commercial sex began.  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Was there anything that could have prevented this from happening?
  - a. Yes (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. No
3. What was your biggest fear or concern during this time?
4. Who introduced you to or helped you get involved in commercial sex? (check boxes)
  - a. Pimp
  - b. Family Member (specify your relationship to this family member) \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. Significant Other (ex. partner, boyfriend, girlfriend)
  - d. Self
  - e. Friend (specify your relationship to this friend) \_\_\_\_\_
  - f. Other \_\_\_\_\_
5. How/where did you get clients? (check boxes)
  - a. Streets
  - b. Online (what website) \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. Strip Clubs
  - d. Business Front
  - e. Other \_\_\_\_\_
6. In thinking about your experience, could you share with me what a typical day or night looked like for you?
7. Tell me about your strengths that help/ed you through this time in your life?

**Experience2**

1. Where were/are you engaging in commercial sex? (Geographical locations/regions/areas rather than venues)
2. Did you use drugs while in the life? (drugs other than those prescribed by a doctor or those available "over-the-counter")
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
3. What drugs did you use?
  - a. Marijuana
  - b. Ecstasy or molly
  - c. Heroin
  - d. Crack



- e. Cocaine
  - f. Other \_\_\_\_\_
4. Do/id you trust police to help or protect you?
    - a. Yes
    - b. No
  5. Why not?
  6. Did you ever engage in commercial sex while you were attending school?
    - a. Yes
    - b. No
  7. Please tell me more about that experience.
  8. Have you ever experienced violence and/or abuse from a client/john/buyer?
    - a. Yes
    - b. No
  9. What types of violence have you experienced from a client/john/buyer?
  10. *For practitioner to fill out as participant tells us about their experience. Check and fill out as respondent answers.*
    - a. Scratched me \_\_\_\_\_
    - b. Slapped me \_\_\_\_\_
    - c. Physically twisted my arm \_\_\_\_\_
    - d. Slammed me or held me against a wall \_\_\_\_\_
    - e. Kicked me \_\_\_\_\_
    - f. Bent my fingers \_\_\_\_\_
    - g. Bit me \_\_\_\_\_
    - h. Tried to choke me \_\_\_\_\_
    - i. Pushed, grabbed, or shoved me \_\_\_\_\_
    - j. Dumped me out of a car \_\_\_\_\_
    - k. Threw something at me that hit me \_\_\_\_\_
    - l. Burned me \_\_\_\_\_
    - m. Hit me with a fist \_\_\_\_\_
    - n. Hit me with something hard besides a fist \_\_\_\_\_
    - o. Beat me up \_\_\_\_\_
    - p. Assaulted me with a knife or gun \_\_\_\_\_
    - q. Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Exit strategies/ Experience Since Exiting**

1. Are you currently involved in commercial sex?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
2. Do you want to leave or quit?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
3. Was there ever a time when you had a plan to leave or quit, but did not?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No

4. What prevented you from leaving or quitting?  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. What did or would help you leave or quit the life?  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. What was or would be your reason for leaving or quitting?  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. Did you ever leave the life and then return?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
8. How many times?
9. What were some reasons?

**Services**

1. Which of the following have you experienced in the past year associated with your involvement in commercial sex?
  - a. Minor injuries from trauma, please specify the injury or injuries \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Major injuries from trauma, please specify the injury or injuries \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. Stress associated with trauma \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. Depression \_\_\_\_\_
  - e. Illness, please specify the type(s) \_\_\_\_\_
  - f. Infection, please specify the type(s) \_\_\_\_\_
  - g. Pregnancy \_\_\_\_\_
  - h. Drug dependency issues \_\_\_\_\_
  - i. Identity theft, please describe \_\_\_\_\_
  - j. Other type of theft, please describe \_\_\_\_\_
  - k. Other health related issues, please describe what other health issues you experienced  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - l. Arrest, please specify the change(s) or see the follow-up question below  
\_\_\_\_\_

*Carry Forward Selected Choices from "Which of the following have you experienced in the past year associated with your involvement in commercial sex?"*

2. For each endorsed: What services, if any, have you received for \_\_\_?
  - a. Minor injuries from trauma, please specify the injury or injuries \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Major injuries from trauma, please specify the injury or injuries \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. Stress associated with trauma \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. Depression \_\_\_\_\_
  - e. Illness, please specify the type(s) \_\_\_\_\_
  - f. Infection, please specify the type(s) \_\_\_\_\_
  - g. Pregnancy \_\_\_\_\_
  - h. Drug dependency issues \_\_\_\_\_
  - i. Identity theft, please describe \_\_\_\_\_
  - j. Other type of theft, please describe \_\_\_\_\_

- k. Other health related issues, please describe what other health issues you experienced \_\_\_\_\_
- l. Arrest, please specify the change(s) or see the follow-up question below \_\_\_\_\_

*Carry Forward Selected Choices from "Which of the following have you experienced in the past year associated with your involvement in commercial sex?"*

- 3. For each endorsed: Are you currently receiving those services?
  - a. Minor injuries from trauma, please specify the injury or injuries \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Major injuries from trauma, please specify the injury or injuries \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. Stress associated with trauma \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. Depression \_\_\_\_\_
  - e. Illness, please specify the type(s) \_\_\_\_\_
  - f. Infection, please specify the type(s) \_\_\_\_\_
  - g. Pregnancy \_\_\_\_\_
  - h. Drug dependency issues \_\_\_\_\_
  - i. Identity theft, please describe \_\_\_\_\_
  - j. Other type of theft, please describe \_\_\_\_\_
  - k. Other health related issues, please describe what other health issues you experienced \_\_\_\_\_
  - l. Arrest, please specify the change(s) or see the follow-up question below \_\_\_\_\_

*Carry Forward Selected Choices from "Which of the following have you experienced in the past year associated with your involvement in commercial sex?"*

- 4. For each endorsed: Approximately how did that cost you?
  - a. Minor injuries from trauma, please specify the injury or injuries \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Major injuries from trauma, please specify the injury or injuries \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. Stress associated with trauma \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. Depression \_\_\_\_\_
  - e. Illness, please specify the type(s) \_\_\_\_\_
  - f. Infection, please specify the type(s) \_\_\_\_\_
  - g. Pregnancy \_\_\_\_\_
  - h. Drug dependency issues \_\_\_\_\_
  - i. Identity theft, please describe \_\_\_\_\_
  - j. Other type of theft, please describe \_\_\_\_\_
  - k. Other health related issues, please describe what other health issues you experienced \_\_\_\_\_
  - l. Arrest, please specify the change(s) or see the follow-up question below \_\_\_\_\_

- 5. Have you received any of the following services in the past year? (Services from an organization) [for each endorsed] How long have you received services for \_\_\_\_\_?
  - a. Education \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Help finding Employment (Outside of commercial sex) \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. Legal \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. Shelter \_\_\_\_\_
  - e. Other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

*Carry Forward Selected Choices - Entered Text from "Have you received any of the following services in the past year? (Services from an organization) [for each endorsed] How long have you received services for \_\_\_\_\_?"*

6. Are you currently receiving those services? (check any of the following boxes)
  - a. Education
  - b. Help finding Employment (Outside of commercial sex)
  - c. Legal
  - d. Shelter
  - e. Other, please specify

*Carry Forward All Choices - Displayed & Hidden from "Have you received any of the following services in the past year? (Services from an organization) [for each endorsed] How long have you received services for \_\_\_\_\_?"*

7. For each endorsed: Which kinds of services have you received for \_\_\_\_\_?
  - a. Education \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Help finding Employment (Outside of commercial sex) \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. Legal \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. Shelter \_\_\_\_\_
  - e. Other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_
8. Are there any barriers (policies, laws, needs) that you are aware of that prevent you from receiving services? If yes, please specify
  - a. Yes (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. No

*Display This Question:*

*If Which of the following have you experienced in the past year associated with your involvement in... = Arrest, please specify the change(s) or see the follow-up question below*

9. What were you arrested for most recently?
  - a. Curfew violation
  - b. Skipping school
  - c. Running away
  - d. Shoplifting
  - e. Drugs
  - f. Prostitution or Prostitution related charge (for example: loitering)
  - g. Soliciting
  - h. Disorderly Conduct
  - i. Assault
  - j. Stealing a car
  - k. Sneaking on public transportation
  - l. Trespassing
  - m. Other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

*Display This Question:*

*If Which of the following have you experienced in the past year associated with your involvement in... = Pregnancy*

10. If pregnancy endorsed: Did you give birth?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
11. Which services have been or would be the most helpful?
12. Are there services that you need but feel that you are not getting?

### Missed opportunities

1. While you were engaged in commercial sex, did you ever seek medical treatment in a healthcare facility (ER, clinic, etc.)?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
2. Did they ask you whether or not you may have been trafficked?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
3. While you were engaged in commercial sex, did you ever seek help or protection from law enforcement?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
4. Did they ask you whether or not you may have been trafficked?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
5. Were you arrested on the occasion that you sought help or protection?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
6. While you were engaged in commercial sex, were there any other times when you were seeking help or receiving services that someone could have helped you and did not?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
7. Who do you think could have helped you and did not? (type of organization/occupation/role/relationship to individual)

### Looking forward

1. What goals do you have for the future?
2. Would you like to talk to someone today about the things on this survey and find out about services that may be available to help you? **Please remember that if you agree to speak to someone and seek services available to you, your answers relating to those services you request will no longer be anonymous. For example, if you seek drug treatment services, your answers related to drug use will no longer be anonymous, but the rest of the survey will remain anonymous and confidential.**
  - a. Yes
  - b. No

*Display This Question:*

*If Would you like to talk to someone today about the things on this survey and find out about services... = Yes*

3. Thank you for your time and effort today. This resource list will give you information on resources that might help you or your family and friends.

*Resource Lists per region*

# APPENDIX C: Service Provider Discussion Protocol

1. Describe the purpose of your organization (ex. Mission statement, goal)?
  - a. Who is the target clientele mainly served by your agency?
  
2. Describe your professional role at your agency.
  - a. Tell us what your typical day looks like.
  
3. Around how many clients does your agency serve every month?
  
4. How often do you interact with victims of human trafficking (ex. daily, weekly, monthly basis)?
  - a. On average, how many trafficking victims would you say enroll in services annually?
  - b. How many have enrolled in your services multiple times (returning)?
  
5. Think about all of your clients – what portion of your clients fit the two archetypes of trafficking? Labor/sex/both? Is there overlap?
  - a. Best estimate, can you provide a % based on population categories? (e.g. 75% DMST, 25% immigrant adult)
  
6. What services are available / offered to a client? Do they differ for victims of human trafficking?
  - a. If you do see victims of human trafficking, what services are they usually seeking when they come in to your agency?
  - b. How do services offered to victims of human trafficking differ depending on the type of human trafficking (e.g. Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking vs. Adult Labor Trafficking)?
  - c. About how long do clients typically receive services?
  - d. Do you charge for any of your services? If so, which ones and how is payment structured?
  
7. What trafficking indicators do you look for when identifying a client who is a victim of trafficking (ex. Multiple phones, not being left alone, tattoos)?
  - a. Are they different depending on what kind of trafficking they have experienced (labor vs. sex)?
  - b. Do you use a screener or any kind of assessment tool? If so, which one?
  - c. Do you save that data (indicator data, with or without a formal assessment) in any way? If so, probe for more details on fields captured, how stored, for how long have they been doing this?

8. What concerns do victims of human trafficking express when they are seeking services?
9. What do you do/where do you refer clients if they are seeking services that are not provided by your agency?
10. Are you a member of a local task force or coalition? If so, which one?
  - a. How does your local task force or coalition work with victims of human trafficking in your area?
  - b. What are some current goals or projects of the task force or partner agencies?
11. What do you think trafficking looks like around here? How do you think it happens? Describe the elements of trafficking you see that may be specific to this area. Describe the elements of the exploitation of victims you see in this area.  
Do you think it differentiates itself by location?
12. What trends are you seeing locally regarding human trafficking?
  - a. Have clients shared anything with you regarding risks or tactics that are happening around here?
  - b. Do you feel there is anything unique happening locally that is not being looked into?
13. Is there anything you'd like to add or think that we should know about that wasn't asked?



# APPENDIX D: Study Methodology

The REVS and the LES were piloted in January 2018 over four days of conducting screening surveys and interviews with minors and youth who were homeless and seeking services at a drop-in Center in Lubbock. Researchers conducted both protocols together in order to make sure the tools were implemented with fidelity. There was a debriefing session with members of the research team each day, field notes were created, and changes to instruments were made, as needed. Eight individuals completed the REVS and six individuals completed the LES over the course of the pilot test. Emerging trends, next steps for data collection in Lubbock and other regions, and ways to improve the survey were discussed in an extended debrief session after the pilot. This pilot process was repeated in Houston at a drop-in Center in February 2018.

Custom Tables were used within SPSS Version 25 to create cross tabulations of structured data from both the REVS and LES data. Quantitative measures were summarized using percentages and means as appropriate for the measure. Significance tests were performed on the REVS data using 95% confidence level. Significance tests were performed on categorical variables to better understand the level of influence one variable might have over another (e.g., victim status compared against region). Researchers estimated sex trafficking proportions from items in the REVS that participants had endorsed that specifically related to their experiences involving commercial sex. Researchers reviewed responses to check for user-error and to ensure that victims were counted appropriately. For example, some participants endorsed that they had experienced someone pressuring them to do something sexually that they were not comfortable with, but that was the only qualifier they experienced. This experience alone would not qualify a participant as a victim of sex trafficking and therefore, they were not asked to participate in the LES interview. Significance tests were not performed on the LES data due to sample size constraints.

The LES contained both structured and unstructured questions and was primarily a qualitative protocol. This convergent mixed-methods design allowed the research team to collect both quantitative and qualitative data that were analyzed separately and compared according to the multi-method concept (Campbell & Fiske, 1959) to build both statistical results and broad themes for the study's exploratory design (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Of the 71 positive screens in the REVS, 46 participants opted to participate in the in-person LES interview that used survey and semi-structured questions including yes/no questions with follow-up questions relating to how often certain experiences occurred, multiple choice responses regarding certain types of experiences, and several open-ended questions with probes. As an exploratory study, qualitative analysis of the LES data was used to understand the context of minor and youth sex trafficking across Texas and to help answer the first research question (what child sex trafficking looks like in Texas). The research team used inductive coding approaches typical of thematic analysis to explore different ways in which minor and youth enter, experience, and exit sex trafficking.

During the LES interviews, participants were asked behaviorally specific questions about abusive relationships, violence, and selling or exchanging sex for someone else or of their own accord. Additionally, they were asked about how these experiences started, occurred, and (if applicable), ceased. None of the survey or open-ended questions used the term "trafficking." This allowed for participants to define the experiences from their perspectives and to determine themes that were then explored by the research team during analysis (Patton, 2002). For example, a question asked if participants had ever been in an intimate (romantic, family, etc.) relationship with a partner of whom they were afraid, with a follow up open-ended question asking if they could share about that

experience. Prompts would then ask if they would share what they would like regarding their entrance into commercial sexual exploitation and what they felt a typical exchange would be.

The research team used inductive qualitative thematic analysis for analyzing the data and in the development of a code book (DeCuir-Gunby, Marshall, & McCulloch, 2011; Cho, & Lee, 2014; Elo, et al., 2014). This allowed for research questions to guide the thematic analysis in an exploratory manner and for themes to both emerge and develop to provide context and depth to what sex trafficking looks like in Texas (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008; Schreier, 2012). Researchers created a data-driven codebook using an inductive approach where subsample themes were identified in the raw data, themes were compared across subsamples, and codes were then created for the themes (DeCuir-Gunby, Marshall, & McCulloch, 2011).

Themes which developed based on their inclusion in the survey design included entry (i.e., introduction to commercial sex), exchange of sex acts, reasons/motivation, safety concerns, service needs, attitudes toward law enforcement and, if applicable, exit (i.e., what led to the participant leaving commercial sex or sex trafficking). Emerging themes arose from the analysis of several survey sections and the open-ended questions asking about participants' experience with commercial sex or exploitive relationships. Both were drawn directly from the qualitative data (Padgett, 2008). (See Appendix G for Qualitative Analysis Code Book.)

With the exception of 16 participants who did not consent to being audio recorded, REVS and LES participants were audio recorded, and their responses to the interview questions were inputted into a survey template in Qualtrics. A member of the research team who had not been present at the time of the interview reviewed the recordings and the Qualtrics responses to assess for legibility, audio fidelity and coherence, and digital quality. (Digital files were uploaded immediately after the interviews and stored in a password-protected, cloud-based content management program and then deleted from the audio recorder.)

The qualitative coding team consisted of three coders, all of whom participated in data collection and reviewed audio recordings and qualitative responses entered into Qualtrics during interviews. Each coder organized the interviews by region to assess for any thematic differences among the regions. Codes were then reviewed and categorized into emerging themes by region and then overall. As stated above, researchers used a data-driven inductive approach and, therefore, the code book was developed as analysis proceeded (Padgett, 2008; Cho, & Lee, 2014; Elo, et al., 2014). The coding team met five times. The first two times the team met to discuss preliminary coding techniques. The team then individually assigned codes to all interviews and met three additional times to discuss emerging themes in the interviews. The team analyzed 46 audio files and their respective Qualtrics response data for emerging themes and documented their findings using Excel spreadsheets. The research team then compared and discussed qualitative themes in relation to quantitative data (Elo et al, 2014). Starting in the Life Experiences Survey section of this report, individual participant quotes are included under each code and sub-code to illustrate each theme. Prior to each section of quotes, there is a brief definition of each theme and codes that fall under that theme. Definitions are included to provide context around each group of quotes and why they were assigned to each code. In some cases, quotes were assigned more than one code and researchers included the code best exemplified in the quote.

Additionally, methods to enhance study feasibility included visits and presentations to local human trafficking coalitions and task forces in the Houston, Lubbock, and border region; pilot testing of both REVS and LES; and regular field notes, discussions, consultation, and review of tables and data among both quantitative and qualitative research teams to mitigate bias and assure trustworthiness.

# APPENDIX E: Human Subjects Research and Confidentiality

Human-subjects research is always thoroughly reviewed by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the University of Texas at Austin. The study underwent a full board review. The research team received IRB approval to begin data collection in December 2017. The research team was approved to conduct data collection with youth involved in the Texas Juvenile Justice Department (TJJD) system in April 2018.

## **Informed Consent**

All participants received a consent form explaining that they were voluntarily participants in the study, the eligibility criteria, the risks and benefits of participation, compensation, and the possibility of an LES interview in addition to the REVS. The consent form also assured them of their anonymity and confidentiality and notified them that the REVS and LES would be audio recorded and kept in a password secure computer. If individuals did not agree to be audio recorded, they could still participate in the study. In this case, researchers took detailed notes of the REVS and LES interview process. Consent forms, screening surveys and interviews were available in both English and Spanish and were conducted in the language preferred by the participant (either Spanish or English). Research staff fluent in Spanish conducted all Spanish-speaking interviews.

## **Privacy**

All data collected including researcher notes was and will be kept confidential. Audio files, any transcriptions of the interviews and researcher notes contain no identifying information. Additionally, electronic data collected through Qualtrics and researcher notes taken during in-person interviews, are stored on secure servers, protected by The University of Texas at Austin. Electronic data collected through Qualtrics and researcher notes will be kept indefinitely, at the discretion of the primary investigator and co-primary investigators. They will be stored on secure servers protected by The University of Texas for the life of the data. Data will be kept confidential and is coded so that individual answers to questions cannot be attributed to a specific participant or agency/organization. No participants' names were recorded and agency/organization names will be kept separate from all other information.

## **Safety Procedures and Protocol**

### **Duty to Report**

Researchers informed participants in that they are required to report to local law enforcement and child protection if they disclosed an intent to harm themselves or harm others. We also informed them that if they tell research staff about child abuse, they are committing or know to be happening, research staff are required to report that information to child protection. If a participant disclosed any of this information during the REVS and/or LES, research staff let participants know what, how and when they planned to report. If the disclosure involved an intent to harm themselves or others, research staff had to make a report to local law enforcement or the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) (depending on their status as a minor or an adult) within 48 hours of the

interview. If the disclosure involved child abuse and/or maltreatment, research staff made a report to DFPS within 48 hours of the interview, as mandated by law for social workers.

#### Appointed Advocate

As mandated by the University of Texas at Austin's IRB, the research team worked with an Appointed Advocate to ensure the highest level of protection for incarcerated individuals participating in the study that were in a locked-down juvenile justice facility. IRB requires that an advocate is appointed by the research team when conducting research with children who are wards of the state of any other agency or institution.

That person is "an individual who has the background and experience to act in, and agrees to act in, the best interests of the child for the duration of the child's participation in the research and who is not associated in any way with the research, the PI, or the guardian organization."

#### Trauma-Informed Interviewing

The research team implemented a trauma-informed victim interviewing protocol as outlined by the Office for Victims of Crime Training and Technical Assistance Center under the U.S. Department of Justice (U.S. Department of Justice, Office for Victims of Crime). All research staff are trained in trauma-informed interviewing practices including rapport-building, understanding how trauma may affect behavior, cultural and language accommodations, and not asking for unnecessarily detailed information about the participants' experiences with trafficking (including asking questions that are outside research aims).

Questions primarily focused on facts rather than emotions. Frequent breaks, water, and snacks were available to participants to help them self-regulate emotions and maintain focus on the present. Researchers sat next to participants, rather than across from them, when possible, to illustrate that it was not an interrogation. Additionally, the research team provided options, when possible, to participants to help maintain their agency. (For example, researchers asked, "Would you like some water?" instead of handing the participant a bottle of water. This also helps build a sense of safety and trust with researchers.)

At the conclusion of all interviews, participants had the opportunity to talk about their hopes for the future. The purpose of this was two-fold. First, this gave the research team unique insight into the planning, outlook, and thinking participants have for the future, which is often a sign of healing from trauma experienced as a victim of sex trafficking. Second, such a discussion ended the interview on a forward-looking note and ideally, helped the participant regain composure after talking about a traumatic episode(s) in their lives. This helped to mitigate distress the participant may have been feeling about questions that were asked in the interview.

#### Incentives

Participants were paid \$25 for completing the REVS and an additional \$40 for completing the LES.

# APPENDIX F: Challenges and Limitations

## **Changes to Sampling Procedure**

The research team initially intended to use Respondent-Driven Sampling (RDS) or some other referral sampling technique to recruit people into the study. Referral sampling, in general, and RDS specifically, are used in research studies attempting to identify hidden and stigmatized populations as a way to map social networks. RDS generates unbiased estimates of hidden populations and involves the use of incentive vouchers to recruit participants to the study. The methodology has been used successfully to study sex trafficking in minors and young adults (Curtis et. al., 2008; Dank et. al., 2015; Dank et. al., 2017) and other hidden or stigmatized populations, such as individuals who have experienced labor trafficking (Zhang, 2012), injection drug users (Rudolph et. al., 2011; Malekinejad et. al., 2011; and Wejnert et. al., 2012), HIV prevalence in sex workers (McCreesh et. al., 2012), and to assess HIV testing practices among homeless youth (Gwadz et. al., 2010). However, this method requires the referral process to evolve organically over time, with typical fielding durations of several months to a year. In fact, in young and especially hidden populations, a year or more is often the appropriate time needed for RDS seeds to fully mature into a network of study participants (Bryant, 2013). Given the current study's time constraints, the research team made the decision to switch from an RDS sampling protocol to a traditional multi-site sampling method.

## **Fidelity in Recruitment Practices**

The research team asked each site partner to advertise a flyer for the study on information boards and through listservs to their clients. In some cases, site partners would let individuals know about the study in face-to-face interactions. A script was provided to each site partner that provided information on the study, eligibility requirements, and what the participants would be asked to do. Site partners were asked to help the research team secure parental consent when required by IRB. In these cases, the research team was sure to clarify the study's purpose with the participant, the parent (when necessary), and with the site partner. For example, one participant thought they were going to be participating in a discussion on human trafficking in general and not answering questions about their own life. Additionally, one participant's parents declined to give consent for their child to participate in the study. The parent brought the individual to the data collection site on the designated day and had previously given consent, but when it was time for the individual to come into the room, the parent revoked consent. The research team was not given a reason but the site partner representative said the parent did not know the subject matter of the study prior to giving consent. On another occasion, the site partner scheduled individuals who were outside of the age limit for the study.

## **Access to Youth in DFPS Custody**

The research team submitted a proposal to the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) IRB in September 2017 seeking permission to interview youth currently in the care of the state. The protocol went through a series of revisions from DFPS in October 2017. The research team agreed that all of the requested revisions were necessary and strengthened the overall protection of participants in the study beyond just those in DFPS custody. DFPS ultimately denied the proposal in November 2017, which prevented the research team from interviewing any youth currently in DFPS

foster care and/or in DFPS custody. Therefore, the research team was able to collect data only on participants' experiences with the foster care system based on their recollection of past experiences.

#### **Expansion of Target Populations to Include Youth Involved in the Juvenile Justice System**

The research team initially met with administration and staff at the Texas Juvenile Justice Department (TJJD) in March 2018 to gain permission to interview youth on probation and in facilities in both the state and county systems. Each youth interviewed from the juvenile justice system, both from probation and lock-down facilities, had to have experienced one of the risk factors to be eligible for the study and be from one of the targeted regions. The approval processes were different in each jurisdiction.

#### **Expansion of Eligibility Questions to Include Probation Officers**

The eligibility criteria for the study included a question as to whether the participant had ever been assigned a caseworker from the state of Texas or another agency. The purpose of this question was to assess for any previous involvement with systems in the state. When the research team shifted the sampling procedures from RDS to multi-site sampling and were given permission to interview youth involved in the TJJD system, this question was modified to include probation officers and juvenile justice officers as well. We expanded this question because being assigned juvenile justice officer and/or a probation officer would indicate previous and/or current system involvement similar to being assigned a caseworker. Each youth we interviewed in TJJD facilities was from one of the three target regions for the study and had notes in their file indicating that they experienced one or more of the stated risk factors for the study. Youth in county facilities and on county-supervised probation were asked the same eligibility questions and were subject to the same eligibility requirements as those in detention centers.

# APPENDIX G: Qualitative Analysis Code Book

Theme	Code	Branches	Meta
Entry	Being Solicited on the Streets		Older Partner/Perpetrator
	Trusted Person Introducing	Familial Trafficking	Older Partner/Perpetrator
		Familiar Person	
	Intersection with Drug Use	Selling Sex for Drugs	
		Drugs in the Environment	
	Organized Crime	Cartels	Older Partner/Perpetrator
Gang Related		Older Partner/Perpetrator	
Exchange of Sex Acts			Transport
	Selling on Their Own	Survival Sex	
		Selling Sex for Drugs	
		Side Hustle	
	Pimp-Controlled	Gang Controlled	Transport
		Partner as Trafficker	
		Exploitive Relationship	
	Getting Clients	Online	
On the Streets			
Reasons/Motivation	Needing Money	Homeless/Runaway/Exiting System	
		For Drugs	
		Financial Instability	
	Protecting Others		

Safety Concerns	Protection	Health/STDs	How they perceive exploitation.
		Pimp Control	
		Screening	
	Violence while Involved in Commercial Sex	Enduring Violence	
		Witnessing Violence	
		Homicide	
Service Needs	Mental Health/Trauma	Past Violence (IPV, Sexual Assault)	How they perceive abuse/violence
		Survival Mode (Safe)	
	Importance of Family	Family as Motivation	
		Family-Based Needs	
	Strengths	Supportive Person	
		Agency/Resiliency	
Future Plans	Supportive Person		
Policing	Attitudes Towards LE	Previous Interactions	
		Not Trusting Police	
	Police as Clients	Not Trusting Police	
Exit	Cost-Benefit Analysis	Leaving a Trafficker	1 or 2 partners / 1 or 2 times
		Survival Sex as Needed	
	Missed Opportunities	Family Members Who Could've Helped	
		Clients	
		Helping Professions	



# APPENDIX H: Extent of Victimization Details

Table 13. Lifetime Proportion

			ST Victimization			ST Victimization		
			Total	No	Yes	Yes		
						GI/SO		
						CH male	CH female	LGBTQ
<b>Summary: non-ST forms of exploitation - % ever</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>33.3%</b>	<b>22.9%</b>	<b>83.6%</b>	<b>94.7%</b>	<b>72.0%</b>	<b>87.0%</b>
	<b>No</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>66.7%</b>	<b>77.1%</b>	<b>16.4%</b>	<b>5.3%</b>	<b>28.0%</b>	<b>13.0%</b>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>390</b>	<b>323</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>23</b>
• Unable to leave or talk - ever	Yes	%	11.3%	5.9%	37.3%	15.8%	36.0%	56.5%
	No	%	88.7%	94.1%	62.7%	84.2%	64.0%	43.5%
	Total	n	390	323	67	19	25	23
• wage theft - ever	Yes	%	24.7%	16.5%	64.2%	89.5%	52.0%	56.5%
	No	%	75.3%	83.5%	35.8%	10.5%	48.0%	43.5%
	Total	n	388	321	67	19	25	23
• physical abuse - ever	Yes	%	10.1%	3.1%	43.3%	36.8%	40.0%	52.2%
	No	%	89.9%	96.9%	56.7%	63.2%	60.0%	47.8%
	Total	n	387	320	67	19	25	23
• emotional abuse - ever	Yes	%	14.2%	6.3%	52.2%	36.8%	52.0%	65.2%
	No	%	85.8%	93.8%	47.8%	63.2%	48.0%	34.8%
	Total	n	387	320	67	19	25	23
<b>Summary: ST forms of exploitation - % ever</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>15.4%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
	<b>No</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>84.6%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>461</b>	<b>390</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>25</b>
• sexual activity by force or pressure - ever	Yes	%	10.1%	0.0%	58.2%	47.4%	56.0%	69.6%
	No	%	89.9%	100.0%	41.8%	52.6%	44.0%	30.4%
	Total	n	388	321	67	19	25	23
• commercial sex by force - ever	Yes	%	7.2%	0.0%	41.8%	26.3%	40.0%	56.5%
	No	%	92.8%	100.0%	58.2%	73.7%	60.0%	43.5%
	Total	n	387	320	67	19	25	23
• commercial sex by force from partner - ever	Yes	%	7.9%	0.0%	50.0%	35.7%	56.5%	52.6%
	No	%	92.1%	100.0%	50.0%	64.3%	43.5%	47.4%
	Total	n	355	299	56	14	23	19
• survival sex - ever	Yes	%	11.3%	0.0%	73.2%	63.2%	74.1%	80.0%
	No	%	88.7%	100.0%	26.8%	36.8%	25.9%	20.0%
	Total	n	460	389	71	19	27	25
• coerced survival sex - ever	Yes	%	7.9%	0.0%	55.7%	28.6%	65.4%	61.9%
	No	%	92.1%	100.0%	44.3%	71.4%	34.6%	38.1%
	Total	n	432	371	61	14	26	21

Table 14. Average Age When Victimization Behaviors Were First Experienced

		ST Victimization			ST Victimization		
		Total	No	Yes	Yes		
					GI/SO		
					CH male	CH female	LGBTQ
<b>Summary: non-ST forms of exploitation - age when first occurred</b>	mean	<b>15.6</b>	<b>15.6</b>	<b>15.7</b>	<b>15.3</b>	<b>15.8</b>	<b>15.9</b>
	SE	<b>.34</b>	<b>.48</b>	<b>.48</b>	<b>.94</b>	<b>.92</b>	<b>.64</b>
	n	<b>126</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>18</b>
Unable to leave or talk - age when first occurred	mean	16.3	15.9	16.6	17.0	16.2	16.8
	SE	.58	.86	.79	3.51	1.49	.91
	n	43	19	24	3	9	12
wage theft - age when first occurred	mean	15.8	15.7	16.0	15.7	15.8	16.5
	SE	.39	.58	.50	.90	.97	.71
	n	95	53	42	17	13	12
physical abuse - age when first occurred	mean	15.2	14.7	15.4	15.6	14.7	15.8
	SE	.59	1.25	.68	2.06	.82	.99
	n	38	10	28	7	10	11
emotional abuse - age when first occurred	mean	17.0	17.1	17.0	16.9	16.5	17.5
	SE	.60	1.08	.74	1.86	1.28	1.02
	n	51	18	33	7	13	13
<b>Summary: ST forms of exploitation - age when first occurred</b>	mean	<b>15.0</b>	<b>.</b>	<b>15.0</b>	<b>14.6</b>	<b>15.4</b>	<b>14.8</b>
	SE	<b>.38</b>	<b>.</b>	<b>.38</b>	<b>.76</b>	<b>.56</b>	<b>.68</b>
	n	<b>71</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>25</b>
sexual activity by force or pressure - age when first occurred	mean	15.8	.	15.8	15.9	16.1	15.4
	SE	.61	.	.61	1.32	1.09	.87
	n	36	0	36	9	14	13
commercial sex by force - age when first occurred	mean	15.4	.	15.4	15.8	14.8	15.7
	SE	.75	.	.75	2.29	.99	1.20
	n	28	0	28	5	10	13
commercial sex by force from partner - age when first occurred	mean	16.1	.	16.1	15.8	16.7	15.7
	SE	.73	.	.73	1.93	1.35	.78
	n	27	0	27	5	12	10
survival sex - age when first occurred	mean	15.0	.	15.0	14.3	15.6	14.7
	SE	.30	.	.30	.80	.36	.50
	n	52	0	52	12	20	20
coerced survival sex - age when first occurred	mean	14.7	.	14.7	12.0	15.6	14.3
	SE	.48	.	.48	1.15	.65	.74
	n	34	0	34	4	17	13

Table 15. Past-Year Victimization Proportion

			ST Victimization			ST Victimization		
			Total	No	Yes	Yes		
						GI/SO		
						CH male	CH female	LGBTQ
<b>Summary: non-ST forms of exploitation - % past year</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>16.4%</b>	<b>10.5%</b>	<b>44.8%</b>	<b>57.9%</b>	<b>36.0%</b>	<b>43.5%</b>
	<b>No</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>83.6%</b>	<b>89.5%</b>	<b>55.2%</b>	<b>42.1%</b>	<b>64.0%</b>	<b>56.5%</b>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>390</b>	<b>323</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>23</b>
• Unable to leave or talk - past year	Yes	%	3.6%	1.5%	13.4%	10.5%	8.0%	21.7%
	No	%	96.4%	98.5%	86.6%	89.5%	92.0%	78.3%
	Total	n	390	323	67	19	25	23
• wage theft - past year	Yes	%	11.6%	7.8%	29.9%	52.6%	20.0%	21.7%
	No	%	88.4%	92.2%	70.1%	47.4%	80.0%	78.3%
	Total	n	388	321	67	19	25	23
• physical abuse - past year	Yes	%	3.1%	0.3%	16.4%	10.5%	16.0%	21.7%
	No	%	96.9%	99.7%	83.6%	89.5%	84.0%	78.3%
	Total	n	387	320	67	19	25	23
• emotional abuse - past year	Yes	%	6.7%	2.8%	25.4%	15.8%	28.0%	30.4%
	No	%	93.3%	97.2%	74.6%	84.2%	72.0%	69.6%
	Total	n	387	320	67	19	25	23
<b>Summary: ST forms of exploitation - % past year</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>5.1%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>33.3%</b>	<b>31.6%</b>	<b>40.0%</b>	<b>28.0%</b>
	<b>No</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>94.9%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>66.7%</b>	<b>68.4%</b>	<b>60.0%</b>	<b>72.0%</b>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>454</b>	<b>385</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>25</b>
• sexual activity by force or pressure - past year	Yes	%	3.9%	0.0%	22.4%	10.5%	28.0%	26.1%
	No	%	96.1%	100.0%	77.6%	89.5%	72.0%	73.9%
	Total	n	383	316	67	19	25	23
• commercial sex by force - past year	Yes	%	2.9%	0.0%	16.4%	5.3%	12.0%	30.4%
	No	%	97.1%	100.0%	83.6%	94.7%	88.0%	69.6%
	Total	n	382	315	67	19	25	23
• commercial sex by force from partner - past year	Yes	%	3.7%	0.0%	23.2%	7.1%	30.4%	26.3%
	No	%	96.3%	100.0%	76.8%	92.9%	69.6%	73.7%
	Total	n	352	296	56	14	23	19
• survival sex - past year	Yes	%	1.4%	0.0%	14.6%	21.4%	14.3%	7.7%
	No	%	98.6%	100.0%	85.4%	78.6%	85.7%	92.3%
	Total	n	425	384	41	14	14	13
• coerced survival sex - past year	Yes	%	0.7%	0.0%	8.3%	16.7%	7.7%	0.0%
	No	%	99.3%	100.0%	91.7%	83.3%	92.3%	100.0%
	Total	n	402	366	36	12	13	11

Table 16. Past-Year Number of Victimization Behaviors Experienced

		ST Victimization			ST Victimization		
		Total	No	Yes	Yes		
					GI/SO		
					CH male	CH female	LGBTQ
<b>Summary: non-ST forms of exploitation - past year count</b>	<b>mean</b>	<b>9.3</b>	<b>7.8</b>	<b>11.1</b>	<b>15.3</b>	<b>5.4</b>	<b>11.7</b>
	<b>SE</b>	<b>2.34</b>	<b>3.19</b>	<b>3.48</b>	<b>9.00</b>	<b>1.31</b>	<b>3.31</b>
	<b>n</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>
• Unable to leave or talk - past year count	mean	2.5	2.0	2.9	1.5	3.0	3.4
	SE	.29	.45	.35	.50	.	.24
	n	13	5	8	2	1	5
• wage theft - past year count	mean	5.6	6.8	4.2	3.9	2.6	6.4
	SE	2.21	3.92	1.01	1.61	.40	2.36
	n	45	25	20	10	5	5
• physical abuse - past year count	mean	5.5	1.0	5.9	8.0	2.5	7.8
	SE	2.08	.	2.24	7.00	.65	4.33
	n	12	1	11	2	4	5
• emotional abuse - past year count	mean	9.8	9.3	10.1	36.7	3.8	4.1
	SE	4.22	5.17	6.03	31.71	1.25	1.06
	n	25	9	16	3	6	7
<b>Summary: ST forms of exploitation - past year count</b>	<b>mean</b>	<b>22.4</b>	<b>.</b>	<b>22.4</b>	<b>20.0</b>	<b>6.4</b>	<b>45.0</b>
	<b>SE</b>	<b>8.29</b>	<b>.</b>	<b>8.29</b>	<b>16.06</b>	<b>2.26</b>	<b>20.54</b>
	<b>n</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>7</b>
• sexual activity by force or pressure - past year count	mean	13.4	.	13.4	30.0	2.5	19.8
	SE	4.98	.	4.98	20.00	.76	8.90
	n	13	0	13	2	6	5
• commercial sex by force - past year count	mean	15.2	.	15.2	50.0	8.5	12.1
	SE	4.83	.	4.83	.	1.50	4.16
	n	10	0	10	1	2	7
• commercial sex by force from partner - past year count	mean	9.8	.	9.8	1.0	4.2	18.2
	SE	4.28	.	4.28	.	2.57	8.93
	n	12	0	12	1	6	5
• survival sex - past year count	mean	8.8	.	8.8	1.0	1.0	40.0
	SE	7.80	.	7.80	.00	.	.
	n	5	0	5	3	1	1
• coerced survival sex - past year count	mean	3.0	.	3.0	3.0	.	.
	SE	2.00	.	2.00	2.00	.	.
	n	2	0	2	2	0	0

Table 17. Lifetime Number of Victimization Behaviors Experienced

		ST Victimization			ST Victimization		
		Total	No	Yes	Yes		
					GI/SO		
					CH male	CH female	LGBTQ
<b>Summary: non-ST forms of exploitation - lifetime count</b>	<b>mean</b>	<b>19.4</b>	<b>8.5</b>	<b>33.8</b>	<b>22.3</b>	<b>59.2</b>	<b>21.4</b>
	<b>SE</b>	<b>4.42</b>	<b>1.98</b>	<b>9.63</b>	<b>7.49</b>	<b>27.88</b>	<b>5.94</b>
	<b>n</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>20</b>
• Unable to leave or talk - lifetime count	mean	8.1	4.9	10.6	2.0	20.2	5.8
	SE	2.67	1.76	4.48	.00	11.79	2.13
	n	44	19	25	3	9	13
• wage theft - lifetime count	mean	8.8	4.8	13.6	10.3	25.3	6.2
	SE	1.90	1.14	3.91	4.56	10.92	2.09
	n	96	53	43	17	13	13
• physical abuse - lifetime count	mean	14.8	2.8	19.0	13.7	28.3	14.3
	SE	3.86	.63	4.97	5.26	12.43	5.28
	n	39	10	29	7	10	12
• emotional abuse - lifetime count	mean	13.6	12.6	14.1	17.7	20.8	6.7
	SE	3.49	5.23	4.65	13.76	9.96	1.88
	n	55	20	35	7	13	15
<b>Summary: ST forms of exploitation - lifetime count</b>	<b>mean</b>	<b>58.0</b>	<b>.</b>	<b>58.0</b>	<b>40.4</b>	<b>68.2</b>	<b>60.2</b>
	<b>SE</b>	<b>12.58</b>	<b>.</b>	<b>12.58</b>	<b>20.63</b>	<b>23.54</b>	<b>20.13</b>
	<b>n</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>25</b>
• sexual activity by force or pressure - lifetime count	mean	13.5	.	13.5	12.9	21.4	7.0
	SE	4.47	.	4.47	10.89	9.78	2.93
	n	39	0	39	9	14	16
• commercial sex by force - lifetime count	mean	23.8	.	23.8	12.2	31.9	22.7
	SE	5.50	.	5.50	9.47	10.32	8.19
	n	27	0	27	5	9	13
• commercial sex by force from partner - lifetime count	mean	21.1	.	21.1	3.2	22.6	28.4
	SE	5.67	.	5.67	.97	8.78	10.66
	n	27	0	27	5	12	10
• survival sex - lifetime count	mean	26.9	.	26.9	37.4	24.9	22.7
	SE	5.89	.	5.89	18.21	8.18	7.44
	n	52	0	52	12	20	20
• coerced survival sex - lifetime count	mean	28.6	.	28.6	31.5	28.6	27.8
	SE	6.55	.	6.55	22.99	9.77	10.06
	n	34	0	34	4	17	13

Table 18. Percent of Time Enduring Victimizing Behaviors since First Occurrence

		ST Victimization			ST Victimization		
		Total	No	Yes	Yes		
					GI/SO		
					CH male	CH female	LGBTQ
<b>Summary: non-ST forms of exploitation - percentage</b>	<b>mean</b>	<b>33.1</b>	<b>29.9</b>	<b>37.4</b>	<b>35.1</b>	<b>44.7</b>	<b>32.8</b>
	<b>SE</b>	<b>2.14</b>	<b>2.66</b>	<b>3.45</b>	<b>5.77</b>	<b>6.55</b>	<b>5.58</b>
	<b>n</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>20</b>
Unable to leave or talk - percentage	mean	33.5	35.3	32.2	31.7	35.0	30.4
	SE	4.11	5.63	5.92	21.67	11.02	7.73
	n	44	19	25	3	9	13
wage theft - percentage	mean	32.0	26.9	38.4	42.6	45.4	25.8
	SE	2.63	3.03	4.37	7.16	8.91	5.71
	n	96	53	43	17	13	13
physical abuse - percentage	mean	38.6	22.5	44.1	29.3	58.5	40.8
	SE	4.78	5.07	5.88	7.59	9.28	10.35
	n	39	10	29	7	10	12
emotional abuse - percentage	mean	42.5	38.3	44.9	43.6	51.5	39.7
	SE	3.81	6.74	4.61	12.33	9.19	4.74
	n	55	20	35	7	13	15
<b>Summary: ST forms of exploitation - percentage</b>	<b>mean</b>	<b>35.5</b>	<b>.</b>	<b>35.5</b>	<b>38.9</b>	<b>35.1</b>	<b>33.4</b>
	<b>SE</b>	<b>3.02</b>	<b>.</b>	<b>3.02</b>	<b>6.03</b>	<b>5.23</b>	<b>4.71</b>
	<b>n</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>25</b>
sexual activity by force or pressure - percentage	mean	38.6	.	38.6	39.4	38.6	38.1
	SE	4.69	.	4.69	8.88	7.71	8.19
	n	39	0	39	9	14	16
commercial sex by force - percentage	mean	47.0	.	47.0	52.0	50.0	42.7
	SE	4.53	.	4.53	11.90	6.45	7.37
	n	28	0	28	5	10	13
commercial sex by force from partner - percentage	mean	35.4	.	35.4	29.0	36.9	36.5
	SE	4.59	.	4.59	11.98	6.37	8.47
	n	28	0	28	5	13	10
survival sex - percentage	mean	41.0	.	41.0	45.0	43.5	35.8
	SE	4.32	.	4.32	9.17	7.32	6.67
	n	51	0	51	12	20	19
coerced survival sex - percentage	mean	38.4	.	38.4	52.5	39.4	32.7
	SE	5.00	.	5.00	18.43	7.86	6.19
	n	34	0	34	4	17	13

**About the Institute on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault**

The Institute on Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault (IDVSA), located at the Steve Hicks School of Social Work at The University of Texas at Austin, is a collaboration of the Schools of Social Work, Law, and Nursing, the Bureau for Business Research, and 150 community affiliates. Over the last 18 years, IDVSA has managed more than 50 research, training and technical assistance, and curriculum development projects with external funding of more than \$13 million from federal, state, local, and foundation sponsors. The focus of IDVSA research is enhancing response to victims of violence in the community, campus, and criminal justice settings and expanding prevention approaches through research and evaluation. IDVSA has a particular aim to produce products that are Texas-specific and that focus on criminal justice reforms. IDVSA's knowledge, engagement, and contributions to best practices include extensive work with victim advocates, law enforcement, prosecutors, service providers, victims, and survivors. In the last several years, IDVSA has focused on programmatic evaluations of shelters, advocacy models, transitional housing, and campus and community-based services for victims. Researchers in its Human Trafficking Portfolio are fully competent working on an array of research and evaluation projects and are trained and experienced in engaging with various at-risk populations.

**About the Bureau of Business Research, IC<sup>2</sup> Institute**

The Bureau of Business Research (BBR), a unit of the IC<sup>2</sup> Institute at The University of Texas at Austin, was established in 1926 to provide small business owners and policymakers with applied economic research and data to strengthen the state's business environment. Throughout its history, the Bureau and its work have been characterized by objectivity and independence. The Bureau's prolific publications history includes such periodicals as *Texas Business Review*, the *Texas Manufacturer's Directory*, and numerous special research reports conducted on behalf of private sector and public-sector sponsors. The BBR is a research partner of the Institute on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, Steve Hicks School of Social Work, The University of Texas at Austin, and has collaborated on a number of domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking research grants and initiatives. Most recently, the BBR and IDVSA have collaborated on a 6-year study of campus sexual assault on University of Texas System campuses.

The IC<sup>2</sup> Institute was established in 1977 with the vision that science and technology are resources for economic development and enterprise growth. In addition to the BBR, the Institute oversees several targeted research programs that include the Austin Technology Incubator (with industry-specific incubation assistance for business start-ups in the software, clean energy, wireless, and bioscience technology sectors) and a variety of federally and foundation-sponsored entrepreneurship training projects.