

Sexually Exploited Youth

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- 12-14 is the average age of entry into pornography and prostitution in the U.S.
- U.S. Department of Justice - Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section (CEOS)
www.usdoj.gov/criminal/ceos/prostitution.html

Who is a victim of DMST?

"Child Prostitute" "Juvenile Delinquent"
"Sexually Exploited Youth"
"Commercially Sexually Exploited Youth"
"Sex Trafficking Victim" "Prostituted Youth"

- American children or lawful permanent residents, under the age of 18 exploited through prostitution, or pornography, or stripping.

TVPA – Protected not Punished

- Federal Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 and its subsequent reauthorizations make clear that all persons under 18 "induced to perform a commercial sex act" are victims and are considered victims of a "severe form of trafficking."
- As victims of a violent crime, the TVPA allows trafficking victims to be protected rather than punished, even if they participated in illegal activities, such as prostitution stating that "victims of severe forms of trafficking should not be inappropriately incarcerated, fined, or otherwise penalized solely for unlawful acts committed as a direct result of being trafficked"
- (TVPA, Pub. L. 106-386).

Rapid Assessment

- Grant from the Department of Justice to Shared Hope International
 - Western Institution Review Board (Protocol #20070540)
- 25 interviews conducted by Alexis Kennedy and Joey Pucci between June 1 – July 1, 2007
- Copies available at www.sharedhope.org

- Clark County Family Court, Juvenile Delinquency Judge
- Clark County Juvenile Division, District Attorney
- Clark County Juvenile Division, Public Defender
- Department of Justice, United States Attorneys
- Department of Juvenile Justice Services
- Nevada Department of Child & Family Services
- Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department
- Federal Bureau of Investigation
- Clark County Department of Family Services
- Court Appointed Special Advocates
- WestCare, Nevada
- Rape Crisis Center
- Nevada Child Seekers
- Salvation Army
- Nevada Partnership for Homeless Youth

Key Findings

1. Las Vegas, Nevada is a major destination for domestic trafficked children in the US

- Outreach workers identified over 400 prostituted children on the streets in May 2007 alone
- S.T.O.P. (Stop Turning Out Child Prostitutes) track minors adjudicated for prostitution related charges
 - Over 1,496 minors adjudicated in Clark County since 1994 (1,483 female, 13 male) (July 2007 count)

Figure 1. Las Vegas Metro Police Department S.T.O.P. Program (January 1994 through July 2007)
1,496 Domestic Trafficked Minors Identified

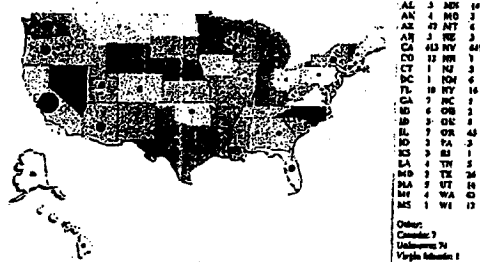
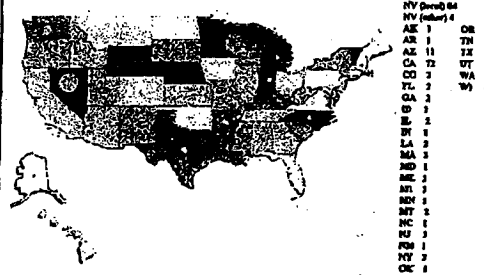


Figure 2. Clark County juvenile prostitution court (Aug 24, 2005 through May 31, 2007)
226 juveniles adjudicated on prostitution/prostitution-related offenses



- 60% not from Nevada
- nearly 20% under 16

2. Las Vegas lacks public awareness and prevention programs for youth

- Culture of tolerance of the commercial sex industry creating a high risk environment for children
- Not addressing high-risk conditions
 - Easy access to alcohol and drugs
 - 24/7 gaming
 - Hyper-sexualized entertainment industry
- No prevention programs

3. Prostituted children are identified as DTMs but treated as delinquents

- Professionals are capable of identifying DTMs as victims
- Investigative Juvenile Vice Officers (I-Team) recognize the victimization, pimp control and trauma
- DTMS were being held an average of 17 days pre-adjudication in CCJDC
 - Lack of alternative secure shelter facilities
 - DJJS Girls Expediter (Oct, 2007) reduced average stay to 7 days

4. Traffickers/pimps are familiar with the court system and use it to their advantage

- Traffickers are maximizing delays hoping the witnesses against them will flee
 - Pimps are rarely denied bail
- DTMs are being held longer than their pimps, held on Material Witness Orders
 - Geneva Brown, Little Girl Lost: Las Vegas Metro Police Vice Division and the Use of Material Witness Holds Against Teenaged Prostitutes *Catholic University Law Review*, Vol. 37, No. 2, 2008

5. Prosecution of buyers of commercial sex from minors is not a priority

- "What happens in Vegas, stays in Vegas" seems to represent the impunity enjoyed by adults who purchase sex with minors.
 - Not a separate crime in NV
 - Hundreds of transactions - children on streets serving 5-15 men per night
- Reducing the demand not considered a priority or solution to deterring domestic minor sex trafficking

6. DTMs receive harsher penalties than other minors arrested for misdemeanors

- DTMs charged with prostitution are frequently detained, although it is a misdemeanor
- first half of 2007, 12.8% of the females sent to Caliente, the state detention facility, were adjudicated for prostitution, a misdemeanor

7. There is a critical lack of safe and appropriate services and programs

- Within CCJDC (the county detention facility) and Caliente (the state detention facility), there is a critical lack of programs and services provided to DTMs
- WestCare GIRLSS intermediate residential and counseling program has ceased operations

A. Prevention

- Best Practices:
 - Juvenile Court core group, I-Team, CCJDC are adept at recognizing Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking Victims and understand the trauma and victimization that they are experiencing
 - Excellent communication and collaboration between government and NGOs
 - Data collection - S.T.O.P. program, juvenile prostitution court

Gaps in Prevention

- While DTMs are considered victims, they are being treated as delinquents
- While charges against DTMs are pled down, detention and disposition are not comparable to those for juveniles charged with other misdemeanors
- Only 10% of DTMs are repeat offenders yet the majority are detained
- CPS is not actively pursuing identification of DTMs
- Lack of public awareness and prevention programs

B. Prosecution

- Best Practices:
 - Successful state and federal prosecutions bolstered by interagency investigations provided by S.T.O.P.
 - Weekly meetings about DMTs, great communication between PDs, DAs, juvenile parole and juvenile probation

Gaps in Prosecution

- DMTs are challenging witnesses
 - Fear of retaliation by their pimps, shame and distrust of authorities
 - Witnesses are usually detained longer than their traffickers
- DMTs are adjudicated as delinquents
- No focus on investigating or prosecuting the consumers, facilitators or businesses that benefit financially from DMTs

C. Protection

- Best Practices:
 - Fundamental interest in and acknowledgement of the need to provide a broad level of services to DMTs
 - Governmental agencies and NGOs have excellent communication
 - A few girls referred to programs in other cities

Gaps in Protection

- Absolute *lack* of programming for DMTs to deal with their exploitation
 - None in pre-adjudication detention (CCJDC)
 - counselors do not engage in therapy due to transitory ideal
 - average 17 days (now 7), up to 78 days
 - None at Caliente
 - None in the Community
 - WestCare programming ceased
- Need for gender-specific programming
- Lack of community wrap-around services for all youth

Recommendation – Protective Safe House

- Assess acute or short-term needs
 - Physical, psychological, emotional
- Identify medium-term needs
 - Identify resources for physical, emotional, and mental health issues
 - Assess housing, family, education needs
 - Coordinate with other jurisdictions
- Plan for long-term needs
 - Transition back into community with support
- PSEC Nevada (Protection of sexually exploited children in Nevada)
 - www.ncradachild.com

Recommendations

- Community that is not recognizing that 28% of its population is children under 18 years old (2006 Census)
- Support for advocacy, family crisis and other wrap around services for at risk youth is critically important