

*Sex Trafficking of Girls:  
How Sex Traffickers Exploit Youth  
and System Vulnerabilities\**  
*(\*with optimal solution proposal)*



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# Florida Study (Reid, 2014)

## Data Used

- a) Review of 93 case records of trafficked girls
- b) In-depth semi-structured interviews with 10 case workers and counselors

## Site Locations – Tampa, Miami

## Frequency of Use of Tactic by Traffickers

- a) Many (10+ reports, 3+ interviews)
- b) Some (3-9 reports, 2 interviews)
- c) Few (1-2 cases, 1 interview)

# Recruitment/Entrapment Schemes (1)

ENTRAPMENT	EXAMPLES OF TRAFFICKER SCHEMES	FREQ*
<b>Flatter or Romance</b>	Show lots of love, sweet talk	Many
	Show off wealth, take on dates to Red Lobster/Olive Garden, take to Disney/Busch Gardens, give something never had	Many
<b>Become Ally/ Build Trust</b>	Help run away from home or group home	Many
	Help avoid police/authorities	Many
	Provide place to stay	Many
	Provide drugs	Some
<b>Normalize Sex</b>	Talk/joke about sex/prostitution, ask about sexual experiences	Many
	Have sex with girl, take sexually explicit pictures of her	Many
	Expose to pornography /prostitution	Some
	Recruit new girls by using girlfriends involved who normalize experience	Many
<b>Isolate</b>	Control cell phone and social media use	Many
	Take to another city/out of state	Many

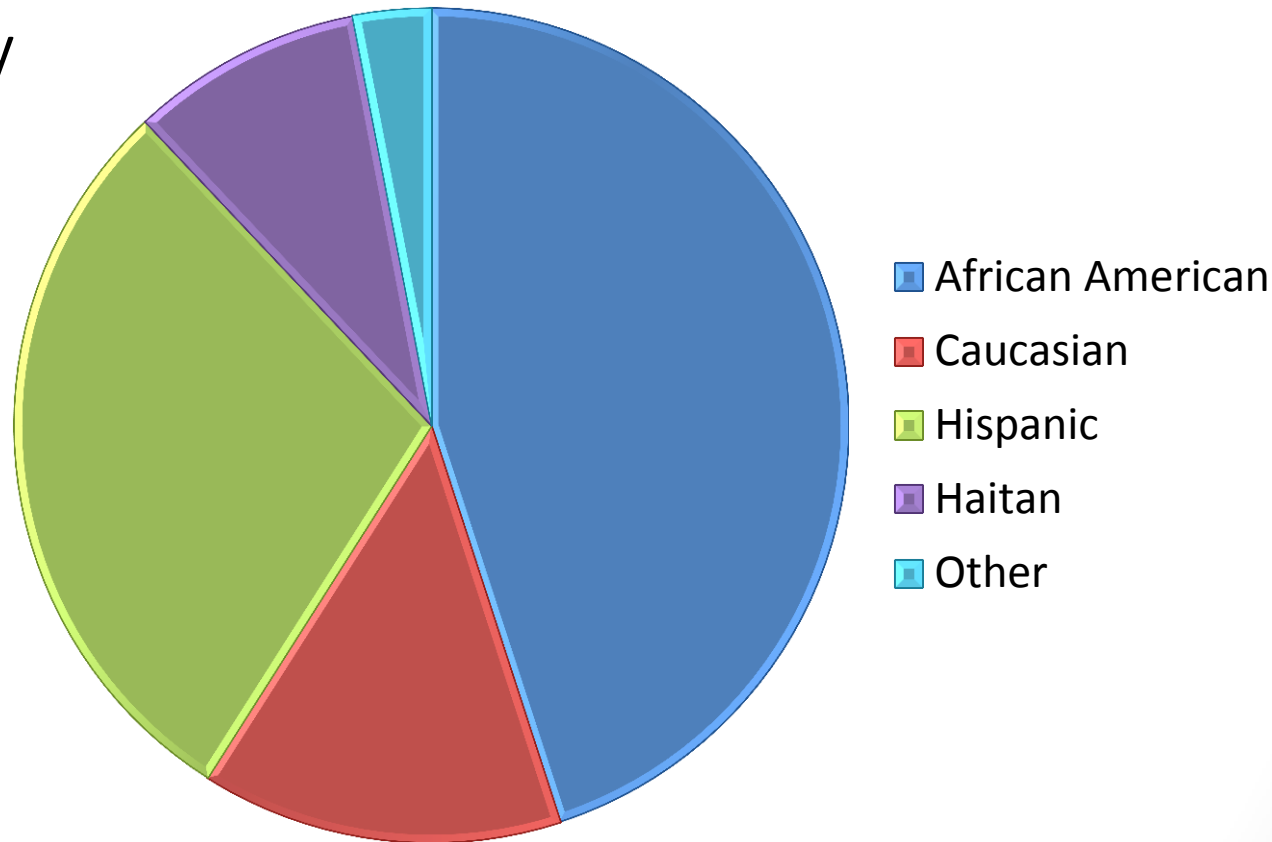
# Recruitment/Entrapment Schemes (2)

ENTRAPMENT	EXAMPLES OF TRAFFICKER SCHEMES	FREQ*
<b>Abduct and Drug</b>	Give drugs, kidnap, hold hostage; Hold in drug house; (Ex. Given alcohol, held, raped by 3 men in house w/security cameras)	Some
<b>“Bait and Switch”</b>	Given large sum of money without obligation, then trafficker returned days later for repayment, threatened to kill girls and their families	Few
	Helped runaway/travel then withheld food, cell phone, threaten Left alone in U.S. (unaccompanied minor), boss (at store) gave shelter only if agreed to prostitute	Some Few
<b>Persuaded by “Boyfriend”</b>	Persuaded by boyfriend /gang member to prostitute	Some
<b>Prey on Disabled</b>	Pick up on street, at bus stop (Ex. Developmentally delayed 15 y/o exploited by 400+); Youth unaware of exploitation, unable to distinguish boyfriend from john	Many
<b>Trafficked by Family</b>	[mother (majority), father, stepfather, mother’s boyfriend/pimp, cousin, uncle]	Many

# Victim Vulnerability

# Full Sample Descriptive Statistics

- Age first trafficked –  $M = 14.05$  years ( $SD 2.74$ ) Range 4-17
- Ethnicity



- 30% foreign-born (trafficked into the US or exploited after they arrived in the US by sex traffickers identified as citizens of other countries)

## Childhood Adversity/Maltreatment (N = 93)

Witnessed Domestic Violence	38%
Child Physical Abuse	48%
Child Neglect/Abandonment	88%
Child Sexual Abuse	49%
Sexual Assault* (in addition to exploitation in sex trafficking)	74%
Intellectual Disability (ID)	29%
Trafficked by Relatives	30%

# Trauma as Trigger/Initiating Incidents

## Raped at home or foster care

- Raped by biological father for several years starting when 11 years old
- Raped by foster brother at age 11 for 8 months
- Case manager sexually abused girl who later became “recruiter” for pimps

## Raped at school

- Boys at school have induced her to perform oral sex on school grounds with an unknown number of them who surrounded her in a circle
- School boys brought her to a house to engage in sex with a stream of random men

## Raped when skipping school or running away

- Began running away at 11, encountered 3 men who raped her
- Was kidnapped and raped one day when she was skipping school by a man she had been in contact with over the Internet

## Trauma Triggers Endangering Behavior

- Since then [rape] she has been running away frequently and has been exploited in prostitution



# Child Endangerment

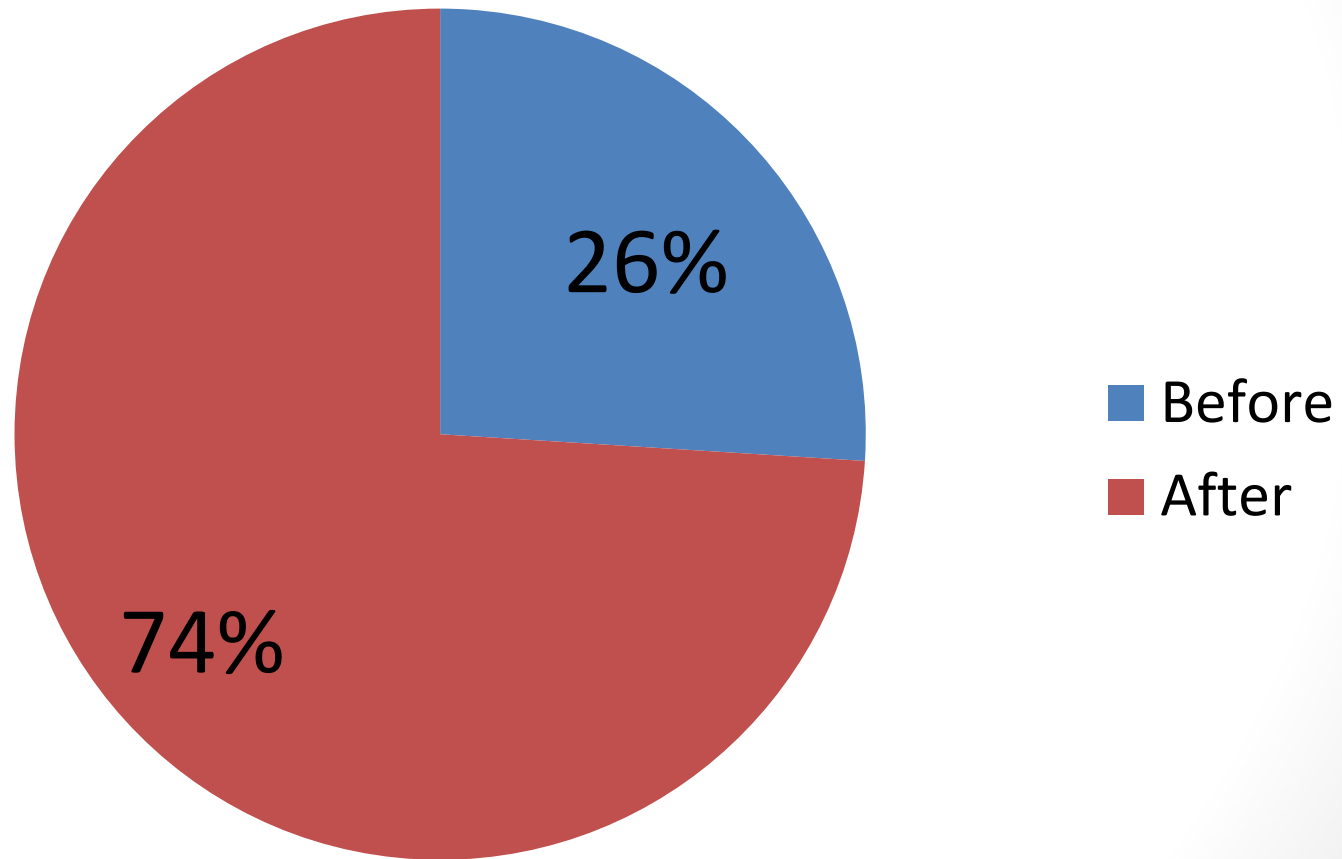
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## Endangering Circumstances of Full Sample (N = 93)

Running Away	88%
Drug/Alcohol Use	79%
Child Protective Services/DCF	63%

# Endangerment of Girls in Foster Care ( $n = 58$ )

**Exploited Before or After (while in) DCF**



## Paths of Endangerment for Girls in Foster Care Before Exploitation in Sex Trafficking ( $n = 44$ )

Ran away from foster care	44%
Recruited by other child in foster care	26%
Recruiter of others in foster care	8%
Recruited at school	3%
Recruited by noncustodial relative (mother)	19%

# System Vulnerabilities Linked to Exploitation in Sex Trafficking

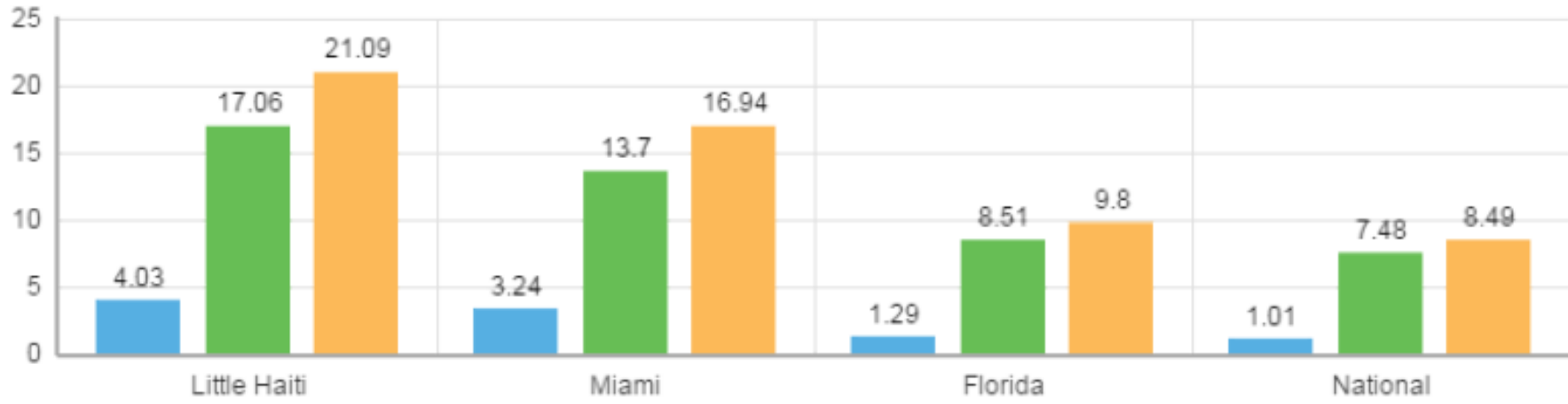
Ran  
away

Location of group homes in urban, dangerous areas

- After placement, continued to roam the streets and brought her child with her. Frequented drug houses where drugs were dealt and houses are in deplorable condition.
- Left house because couldn't sleep, seen one of her "homeboys", guy pulled up in car and took her to a house ... gang raped ... went on for days.
- Conspired with 2 other girls in foster home to run away. Returned dirty with clothes torn, had been abducted and assaulted.
- "A safe house" (in Little Haiti) for trafficked girls and 10 days after opening, one girl wandered away and was raped – home closed.

## Daily Crime In Little Haiti (per 100,000 people)

Violent Crimes    Property Crimes    Total Crimes



# Sex Traffickers Exploiting Inadequacies of Foster Care System

## Foster Family

- Had pimp/sex trafficker in previous foster home

## Group Homes

- No/little supervision, youth come and go as they please
- Men came into the group home ... caught in room with young man
- Quote of one girl “going to group homes has ‘turned me out’ ... didn’t do this until got there.”
- Young men seen jumping the fence of the group home
- Pimp found her walking **near** the group home – Sex traffickers case group homes looking for vulnerable victims [This activity repeatedly reported in Florida since 2008, see page 93 of [report](#) on DMST]
- Girls are out after curfew – staff delay reporting child missing to police

# Recruited in Foster Care

## Recruited by other girls in foster care

- Used foster girl as a recruiter of numerous girls in home. Instead of attending school girls were being exploited.
- Placed in home with girls with known involvement in human trafficking. Ran away together to pimp, prostituted at local bar.

## Recruited by family (biological mother)

- In foster care since age 3; biological mother actively involved in prostitution and girl running away to biological mother repeatedly
- Mother was in prison ..... from 1996 to 2012; after release prostituted herself and prostituted child
- Mother (noncustodial parent) encourages child to run away and prostitute and gives her a place to stay



## Cell phones/Online communication

- Since coming to group home, client ran twice and grown men are calling her at all times of day and night. Goes on chatline to meet men and has them calling the house.
- Refused to stay at group home without cell phone. Within 24 hours the cell phone used to call trafficker to arrange ride for self and 2 others who ran away with her.
- Had cell phone against the rules ... staff spoke to 34 year old man
- Members of the sex trafficking ring called girls in group home on cell phones supplied by the men and arrange for them to have sex at a building used as a kind of brothel.
- Text messages on girl's phone recovered by police included several messages from pimp involving johns, including a message that "somebody wanna pay u to [have sex]."

# Implications

# Key Findings and Implications

- Running away is #1 endangering behavior of at-risk girls
- Group home placement further endangers at-risk girls due to locations of group homes in high crime area
- To reduce risk there should be no placements of children in group homes in high crime areas
- Placements should be in a location that makes it difficult for sex traffickers to recruit and pick up girls
- Cell phones are a link to trafficker

# Heightened Level of Risk Due to Intellectual Disability

- Almost one-third of cases in both Tampa & Miami involved girls with intellectual disability
- Placement of children with intellectual disabilities in group homes places the most vulnerable girls in the least protected environment
- According to case managers, scoring 70+ on any composite score of IQ test disqualifies youth from specialized services, reducing access to services for girls at high risk for exploitation in sex trafficking

# Heightened Level of Risk Due to Unaddressed Trauma

- Mandatory treatment for victims of CSA, rape, and sex trafficking - including those with ID (to address known TRIGGERS)
- According to interview with DCF, treatment for PTSD is optional and often delayed until youth is older
- PTSD symptoms become resistant to treatment over time
- PTSD worsens with each untreated trauma
- Trauma treatment have been proven effective at reducing aggression and other externalizing behaviors in traumatized youth (link to [report](#))

# Running\Wandering off

- Runaway services for youth (greatest risk factor)
- Personally tailored safety plan for youth at risk of running away
  - If youth has cell phone, upload free app which youth can use to immediately report danger
  - If youth has cell phone, upload free tracking apps
- Need for immediate psychoeducational safety material for at-risk youth in group homes regarding grooming tactics and con games of traffickers (who are lurking outside the group homes!)

# Family-Facilitated Exploitation

- Screening for relatives with involvement in sex trafficking when assessing youth
- Additional safeguards to prevent sexual exploitation of children with mothers or other relatives who are struggling with a drug addiction or involved in prostitution.



# Legislative/Policy Implications

- No state funding for “safe homes” or children's shelters in unsafe neighborhoods with crime rates above national average.
- Mandatory Reporters – require training (as requirement for state licensure) regarding dangers of sex trafficking of children, circumstances and behaviors linked to sex trafficking, where to report suspected trafficking (similar to licensure requirement for DV training)
- Enforce Vulnerable Victim Law – impose harsher sentences for **sex traffickers** and **buyers of sex** who prey on those with disability
- Warnings against buying sex with children and children with disabilities in Florida should be part of all public campaigns focused on combatting human trafficking



# How can we make real change?

“As one youth explained:

...being in foster care was the perfect training for commercial sexual exploitation. I was used to being moved without warning, without any say, not knowing where I was going or whether I was allowed to pack my clothes. After years in foster care, I didn't think anyone would want to take care of me unless they were paid. So, when my pimp expected me to make money to support 'the family,' it made sense to me.”

California Child Welfare Council, page 6

From: “An Unholy Alliance: The Connection Between Foster Care and Human Trafficking” By Michelle Lillie

OLP Foundation

<http://humantraffickingsearch.net/wp/an-unholy-alliance-the-connection-between-foster-care-and-human-trafficking/>

# Optimal “Reid Dream Plan”

## **FIVE ESSENTIALS OF THE REID PLAN**

1. Emergency Trafficking **Triage** Foster Homes – emergency drop-offs with length of stay of 24 - 72 hours and limit of 1 child/home
2. Therapeutic/Treatment Foster Home\* (TFH) Pods - comprised of 4-6 therapeutic homes located in low crime areas with limit of 1 child /home. Homes in each Pod work together to provide foster parent support and child support with specialized on-call case manager and therapist providing 24-hour support assigned to each TFH Pod.
3. Intensive Outpatient Treatment - Weekly individual sessions and bi-weekly support group for girls and foster parents (rotating in homes within Pod) led by case manager and therapist (2X week individual session, 2X week group session)
4. Therapeutic foster homes must have sufficient outside support [a) specialized case manager and therapist, b) other TF homes in close proximity, and c) community/volunteer support – supported by church, university, or civic group] before placing child
5. Independent Oversight by committee appointed by and reporting directly to Florida Statewide Council on Human Trafficking

\*See [review](#) on effectiveness of TFH compared to group homes. Overall, TFH are less expensive with better results.

# Acknowledgements

- Research supported by AP-LS Early Career Professional Grant American Psychological Association
- In addition, presentation drew from 3 publications:
  1. Reid, Joan A. (2014). Entrapment and Enmeshment Schemes Used by Sex Traffickers. *Sexual Abuse: A Journal of Research and Treatment*, published online, July 29, 2014. DOI: 10.1177/1079063214544334
  2. Reid, Joan A., Juliana Huard, & Rachael A. Haskell (2015). Family-Facilitated Juvenile Sex Trafficking. Special Issue on Human Trafficking, *Journal of Crime and Justice*, 38(3), 361-376. DOI:10.1080/0735648X.2014.967965
  3. Reid, Joan A. (Under review). Sex Trafficking of Girls with Intellectual Disabilities: An Exploratory Mixed-Methods Study.

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