



"Warm Sun" Artwork by Tayna Dawn

YES Project

Youth Experiences Survey: Exploring the Sex Trafficking Experiences of Arizona's Homeless and Runaway Young Adults

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ASU School of Social Work

**Office of Sex Trafficking
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ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

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The Office of Sex Trafficking Intervention Research (STIR) is in the School of social work, within the College of Public Programs at Arizona State University. The STIR office staff includes academics, students, researchers and community research partners. Research from the STIR office has and will continue to significantly contribute to the knowledge base about sex trafficking by introducing innovative research methodologies and unique partnerships in the development of new knowledge, locally, nationally, and globally to inform social policies, prevention, detection and interventions.

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Summary

This study investigated the prevalence of sex trafficking experiences among homeless young adults ages 18-25 years old who received services from homeless programs in Arizona during July 2014.

The purpose of this study was to explore the unique experiences and challenges facing sex trafficked homeless young adults compared to non-sex trafficked homeless young adults. Surveys were completed by 246 homeless youth receiving services from young adult serving organizations in Arizona including: Tumbleweed Youth Services (Phoenix), One•n•Ten (Phoenix), and Our Family (Tucson).

Findings revealed 25.6% of the participants reported a history of sex trafficking, 21.8% of the male participants and 24.5% of the female participants. LGBTQ young adults were significantly more likely to report sex trafficking experiences (33, 38.4%) than heterosexual young adults (23, 19.7%).

The sex trafficked young adults were found to significantly differ from the non-sex trafficked participants with higher rates of self harm, history of suicide attempt, addictions to drugs and alcohol, history of dating violence, childhood sexual abuse, and medical and mental health problems.

Implications from these findings indicate that as many as one in four homeless young adults in Arizona has experienced sexual exploitation through a commercial sex trafficking situation, with 65.1% reporting having a sex trafficker.

These findings also demonstrate that sex trafficking is experienced by both male and female homeless young adults and is significantly more likely to be reported by youth who identify as LGBTQ.

“We believe that every young person is valued and deserves a safe place to live. The fact that over 25% percent of the population we serve has experienced sex trafficking and related trauma is both disheartening and shocking, yet ultimately motivating for us to continue to reach out and serve our community's vulnerable youth with enhanced vigor and commitment to meeting their specific needs.”

*-Cynthia A. Schuler
CEO Tumbleweed*

“Asking homeless young adults about their sex trafficking experiences is critical to assessing their intervention service needs.”

- Dominique Roe-Sepowitz

25.6%
of study participants reported a history of sex trafficking.

LGBTQ young adults were significantly more likely to report sex trafficking experiences (33, 38.4%) than heterosexual young adults.

65.1%
of study participants who had a history of sex trafficking also reported having a sex trafficker.

Introduction

Homeless young adults have been defined as those who are chronically or intermittently homeless, living in transitional shelter or temporary situations such as 'couch surfing', living in hotels, or on the streets, abandoned houses or other unsafe/unstable housing situations (National Healthcare for the Homeless Council, 2014; Woods, Samples, Melchiono, Harris, & Boston Happens Program Collaborators, 2003). Haley, et al. (2004) further defined homeless youth and young adults as persons under the age of 25 years "who have dropped out of school, are without regular employment, live in precarious conditions and often have little social support from their families or communities (p. 526).

National data on homeless youth in the United States suggests that there has been a steady increase in the number of homeless youth over the last several years (United States Interagency Council on Homelessness, 2013), and a recent estimate by the National Alliance to End Homelessness (2012) found that each year 550,000 single youth and young adults up to age 24 had experienced a homeless episode of longer than a week. In 2013, the Department of Housing and Urban Development reported 46,924 unaccompanied homeless youth under age 25. This statistic is likely an under estimation as this population is difficult to count (National Alliance to End Homelessness, 2014).

Research on homeless young adults has been complicated by the transient nature of their 'living' behavior. In some cases they do not identify as homeless as they have a place to stay, but acknowledge that it is transitional or unsafe. In other cases homeless young adults are inaccessible as they are collapsed into the adult homeless population and do not receive unique services.

Finally, some homeless young adults live without walls and are only accessible through the efforts of outreach workers, which are limited by economics and community efforts. Homeless young adults have been studied using a number of methodologies including census surveys asking about experiences of homelessness, research in centers that serve homeless young adults through drop-in services and housing, and street-level sampling (Toro, Dworsky, & Fowler, 2007).

This study utilized all of these techniques with the goal of having the findings as generalizable as possible to homeless young adults in Arizona. Specifically, survey methods included contacting youth in drop-in programs, transitional housing services, and on street outreach.

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(United States Interagency Council on Homelessness, 2013)

“each year 550,000 single youth and young adults up to age 24 experience a homeless episode of longer than a week”

(National Alliance to End Homelessness, 2012)

RISK FACTORS FOR HOMELESSNESS

Substance Abuse

Research indicates that runaway and homeless youth and young adults participate in high-risk drug use behaviors (Lankenau et al., 2004). A study of 775 runaway and homeless adolescents found that 97% of their sample reported drug or alcohol use, with 43% of them using injectable drug use at some point in their life (Kral et al., 1997). In a study of San Francisco homeless youth, a third of the youth reported having used multiple drugs and injecting drugs, over their lifetime (Van Leeuwen et al. 2004). High risk drug use behaviors (e.g. injecting drugs) are associated with increased risks for a variety of health problems (hepatitis C, hepatitis B, HIV, and tuberculosis (Kral et al., 1997) that further complicate efforts to provide stabilization and promote health among this population. According to National Longitudinal Survey of Youth, those youth who are repeat runaways are 7 to 12 times more likely than single-runaway or non-runaway youth to have a history of substance abuse (Van Leeuwen et al., 2004).

“Repeat runaways are 7 to 12 times more likely than single-runaway or non-runaway youth to have a history of substance abuse”

(Van Leeuwen et al., 2004).

Mental Health

Mental health issues have been found to be prevalent among homeless youth and young adults. Respondents from a sample of 364 homeless adolescents indicated an increased prevalence of psychopathology, including: depression, sexual problems, posttraumatic reactions, substance abuse, aggressive behaviors, and emotional problems (Cauce et al, 2000). In addition, Perlman et al (2014) estimated that suicidal ideations may be as high as 80% among homeless youth, and a history of attempted suicide as high as 67%.

“suicidal ideations may be as high as 80% among homeless youth, and a history of attempted suicide as high as 67%”

(Perlman et al, 2014)

LGBTQ

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender and questioning youth are at an increased risk for homelessness and its associated risk factors. Whitbeck et al. (2010) estimated from various studies of the homeless adolescent populations across magnet cities such as Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Seattle, that 20% of homeless and runaway adolescents are gay, lesbian, or bisexual. According to Kruks (1991), gay and bisexual male youth are at a higher risk for becoming homeless and completing suicide. Whitbeck et al. (2004) noted that homeless and runaway youth who identified as gay, lesbian or bisexual reported higher rates of mental illness when compared to their heterosexual counterparts. Gay, lesbian and bisexual homeless and runaway youth were found to be at risk for higher rates of suicidal attempts and ideation, as well as suicide completion (Whitbeck et al., 2004). Drawing from various studies, the Department of Health and Human Services found that gay youth attempted suicide at rates three to six times higher than their non-gay peers and that gay homeless youth appear to suffer from suicidal ideations at significantly higher rates than non-homeless youth (Kruks, 1991).

“20% of homeless and runaway adolescents are gay, lesbian, or bisexual” in some magnet cities

(Whitbeck et al 2010)

Amongst a data set of a consortium of agencies, including one focusing on LGBT youth, 53% of gay street youth reported suicide attempts compared to 32% of the overall sample, which includes both gay and non-gay youth (Kruks, 1991). GLB youth are unique in that they more frequently report feelings of isolation relative to other marginalized populations, thus putting them at risk for homelessness and seeking out peer support on the streets, where they form street “families” with bonds that can negatively impacts their progress to getting off the streets (Kruks, 1991, p. 517).

Child Welfare Involvement

Child welfare involvement is associated with increased rates of homelessness in adulthood (Park, Metraux, Culhane, and Brodbar, 2004), and children who have been in foster care are “far more likely than other children to commit crimes, drop out of school, join welfare, experience substance abuse problems, or enter the homeless population” (Doyle Jr., 2007, p. 1583). In a study of 10 homeless male sex workers, respondents reported a childhood history of housing instability including: separated or divorced parents, foster homes, living with grandparents or step-parents (Lankenau, 2005); this process is described as “caretaker fluidity”, and refers to a “flux among caretakers within a boy’s household” (p. 12). Four of the ten participants in Lankenau’s (2005) study were in foster care by the age of 10, and “upon entering foster care - none of these four youth found a stable or non-abusive home environment” (p. 13). In a study of 11,401 homeless adults in shelters, it was found that 29% of the participants reported a history of child welfare involvement (Park, Metraux, & Culhane, 2005). Further, of this group children directly leaving the welfare system into independent living have an increased risk for “subsequent homelessness and other negative outcomes” (Park et al., 2005, p. 534).

History of Trauma

Research consistently demonstrates that homeless youth are likely to have experienced “impoverished households, sexual abuse, and living in a substance abusing household” (Lankenau et al., 2004, p. 11). Childhood sexual abuse is a salient risk factors for running away and becoming homeless (Tyler, et al., 2001); in a study of 429 homeless and runaway youth in four Midwestern states, one quarter of respondents reported having been sexually abused by an adult caretaker at least once (Whitbeck et al., 2004). These experiences can be traumatic for children, and put them at risk for as “running from something, not running to something” (Tyler, et al., 2001, p. 153).

“Child welfare involvement is associated with increased rates of homelessness in adulthood”

(Park, Metraux, Culhane, and Brodbar, 2004)

“children who have been in foster care are far more likely than other children to commit crimes, drop out of school, join welfare, experience substance abuse problems, or enter the homeless population”

(Doyle Jr., 2007)

“Childhood sexual abuse is a salient risk factor for running away and becoming homeless”

(Tyler, et al., 2001)

HOMELESSNESS AND SEX TRAFFICKING

Making the Connection: Survival Sex and Sex Trafficking

The sex trafficking experiences of homeless young adults have most often been classified as survival sex, which has been defined as the exchange of sex to meet subsistence needs including money, shelter, food, drugs or protection (Bailey, Camlin, & Ennett, 1998; Greene, Ennett, & Ringwalt, 1999). In a large study of youth (age 12-21), Greene et al. (1999) explored sex exchange for subsistence needs among homeless street youth (n=528) and youth in shelters (n=631). They found survival-based sex exchange was reported by 9.5% of youth in shelters and 27.5% of homeless street youth. In Hudson and Nandy's 2012 study of 156 homeless youth and young adults drawn from drop in centers specific for youth and young adults, they found that 13.6% reported exchanging sex for money and 17% exchanged sex for drugs. Many of the homeless youth engaging in survival sex meet criteria established by the 2000 Trafficking Victims Protection Act, and a growing awareness of their victimization has prompted researchers, practitioners, and policy makers to re-think the context and experiences of homeless youth and young adults engaging in survival sex.

In a recent study of human trafficking among homeless youth (ages 16-21), Covenant House (2013) found that nearly 23% of their sample reported some experience of human trafficking, 8% specifically reported commercial sex exchanges (for something of value), while 48% reported a commercial sex exchange for a place to stay. They found that survival sex experiences "frequently turned into coercive and violent trafficking experiences" (Covenant House, 2013, p. 6). They also identified risk factors linked to sex trafficking experiences including 1) lack of a caring adult, 2) a history of childhood sexual abuse, and 3) a lack of an education or skills by which to earn money.

Another risk factor for sexual exploitation, specifically among young males, is sexual and gender orientation. ECPAT's 2014 report on the sexual exploitation of boys concluded that some young men and boys who identify as gay, bisexual, or transgender, may be at risk for being thrown out of their homes or rejected by families who react negatively to their sexual orientation. This experience leaves them vulnerable to homelessness and the economic need that often precedes sexual exploitation/trafficking. A recent survey of professionals working with sexually exploited young people supported this finding, and also reported that GBT young people may enter sexually exploitative relationships if they are unable or unsure of how to explore healthy same-sex relationships and thus seek out relationships in unsafe (virtual or physical/geographical) locations (McNaughton Nicholls, Harvey, & Paskall, 2014).

“The sex trafficking experiences of homeless young adults have most often been classified as survival sex, which has been defined as the exchange of sex to meet subsistence needs including money, shelter, food, drugs or protection”

(Bailey, Camlin, & Ennett, 1998; Greene, Ennett, & Ringwalt, 1999)

“Many of the homeless youth engaging in survival sex meet criteria established by the 2000 Trafficking Victims Protection Act”

Definition of Terms

Sex Trafficking:

Sex trafficking will be used in this report to mean the experience of having been compelled, forced, or coerced to perform a sex act, including sexual intercourse, oral sex or anal sex. This includes exchanging sex acts for money, drugs, protection, shelter, and for clothes. This term encompasses sexual exploitation and survival sex although survival sex will be separated out for exploration.

Homeless:

This study was targeted to explore the experiences of homeless young adults (ages 18-25). The participants who completed the survey were from a combination of situations and/or service provision locations where homeless young adults frequent including street outreach services, young adult-focused drop-in centers and young adult transitional housing serving homeless youth.

Research Goals:

The research goals of this study are:

- 1) to establish the prevalence of sex trafficking experiences of homeless young adults in Arizona,
- 2) to explore the facets of the sex trafficking experiences that inform our understanding regarding the pathways of both vulnerability and resilience, and
- 3) to understand how service needs of young adults with sex trafficking experiences may differ from non-sex trafficked homeless.

Research Questions:

1. What is the prevalence of sex trafficking experiences reported by homeless young adults in Arizona?
2. Do differences exist on demographic and life experience characteristics of young adults who report sex trafficking experiences when compared with the young adults who do not report sex trafficking experiences?
3. Do sex trafficked homeless young adults have unique service and intervention needs?

Methodology

This study is a descriptive study using a cross-sectional sampling design during a ten-day data collection period in July 2014. A total of 246 surveys were collected by three agencies in Arizona serving homeless young adults (ages 18 -25 years old). The Arizona agencies that participated in the collection of the surveys were: Tumbleweed Youth Services in Phoenix (n = 173), Our Family Services (n =60) in Tucson, and One*ten (n =13) in Phoenix.

Surveys were completed by young adult participants in transitional housing, drop-in centers, and through street outreach. The 246 surveys were completed by the young adult participants, who were given a \$5 Wal-Mart gift card for their participation. Each participant was given a consent letter, and was in a location (both in an agency or street setting) where psychological support services were available during and after they completed their surveys. Specifically, they were provided with a list of young adult-specific crisis and support resources to use if they felt they needed additional support at any point after completing the survey. This study was approved by the Arizona State University Institutional Review Board.

The Survey

The survey instrument questions were influenced by the Covenant House Survey HTIAM-14 (Covenant House, 2013) on questions about sexual exploitation and sex trafficking. The survey included the HEARTH Act categories 1-3 of homelessness to identify type of homelessness. Questions were also taken from a survey created by ASU STIR Office and used with sex trafficked and prostituted adults regarding drug use/frequency; self harm behaviors, and mental and medical health.

The gender, race, sexual identity and lifetime experiences questions were created by the research team and reviewed and modified by experts working with homeless young adults.

The survey has 24 questions that cover the following: age, gender identity, race/ethnicity, sexual identity, current housing situation, drug use history, self harm behaviors, mental health and physical health issues, sex trafficking/sexual exploitation, lifetime experiences and lifetime strengths.

SURVEY QUESTIONS

COVERED:

AGE

GENDER IDENTITY

RACE/ETHNICITY

SEXUAL IDENTITY

CURRENT HOUSING

DRUG USE

SELF HARM

MENTAL HEALTH

PHYSICAL HEALTH

SEX TRAFFICKING

SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

LIFETIME EXPERIENCES

LIFETIME STRENGTHS

SURVEY QUESTIONS

Experiences of commercial sexual exploitation

Have you ever been compelled, forced or coerced to perform a sexual act, including sexual intercourse, oral or anal contact for the following (circle all that apply): money, drugs, clothing, a place to stay, or protection?

If you circled any of the above, how old were you were you the first time this happened?

Having a Trafficker in the sexual exploitation experience:

Do you currently have a person who encourages/pressures/forces you to exchange sexual acts for money, drugs, place to stay, clothing or protection?

In the past, has anyone encouraged/pressured/forced you to exchange sexual acts for money, drugs, place to stay, clothing or protection?

Have you ever been afraid to leave or quit this situation due to fear of violence or other threats to harm you or your family?

Did the person who asked you to exchange sexual acts ever control what you earned, or kept what you earned in exchange for providing transportation, food, rent or other, without your consent?

Temporary Housing Responses Included:

“currently with mom but need to be out by the end of the month”

“emergency housing”

“halfway house”

“living with mom”

“living with grandparents”

Description of the Participants

The participants ranged in age from 18 to 25 years old (M =21.3, SD =1.96). They reported their gender identity as male (n =121, 49.2%), female (n=102, 41.5%), genderqueer (n =5, 2%), two-spirit (n =6, 2.4%), non-conforming (n=3, 1.2%), and transgender (n =1, .4%). Regarding race, a majority of participants are White (n=75; 30.5%), Hispanic (n=56; 22.3%), Black/African American (n=45; 18.3%) and biracial or multiracial (n=45; 18.3%). Regarding sexual orientation, 48% reported being heterosexual, followed by bisexual (17%), asexual (11%), gay (9%), lesbian (6%), no orientation (5%) and pansexual (4%).

Race		
White or Caucasian	75	30.5%
Hispanic/Latino or Latina	56	22.8%
Biracial or multiracial	45	18.3%
Black or African American	45	18.3%
Native American or American Indian	12	4.9%
African or Caribbean	5	2%
Asian or Pacific Islander	3	1.2%
Indian or South Asian	1	.4%
Arab	1	.4%
Missing	3	1.2%

Sexual Orientation	
Heterosexual	48%
Bi-sexual	17%
Asexual	11%
Gay	9%
Lesbian	6%
No orientation	5%
Pansexual	4%

Current housing arrangements		
temporary housing	114	47.1%
homeless	79	32.6%
couch surfing	20	8.3%
apartment/house	18	7.4%
hotel	11	4.5%
missing	4	1.2%

NOTE: Many youth consider housing paid by an agency as their own apartment/house

Drug Use History

Drug and alcohol use was reported by many of the participants, with nearly two-thirds having used drugs and nearly half using alcohol.

More than half (n =154, 62.6%) reported having ever used drugs. The reported age of first drug use ranged from age 3 to 21 years old ($M =14.13$, $SD= 3.33$). Of those reporting how often they used drugs, 49 (43%) reported daily, 34 (29.8%) reported weekly and 31 (27.2%) reported monthly drug use. Drug type reported included: 95 (39%) marijuana, 32 (13.3%) methamphetamines, 18 (7.3%) cocaine/crack, 8(3.3%) ecstasy, 2 (.8%) GHB, and 1 (.4%) MDA. Thirty-nine (15.9%) participants identified as having an addiction to drugs.

One hundred and thirteen participants (45.9%) reported using alcohol, and the frequency of their alcohol use was reported as daily (n =22, 19.5%), weekly (n =27, 23.9%), and monthly (n =64, 56.5%). Thirty-two (13%) of the participants reported an addiction to alcohol.

Mental Health Problems

Self harm behaviors were reported by 109 (44.3%) of the participants. Once they affirmed self-harm behaviors, the participants were instructed to circle all of the self-harm behaviors they had participated in (see table). Self harming was also described in narrative form by participants to include “ODing on pills”, “punching things”, “punching things like walls, doors, people and cars”, “burning”, and “burning myself”.

Self-Harm Behavior	n	%
Cutting	67	61.5%
Risk-taking	56	51.4%
Not eating for long periods of time	53	48.6%
Drug use	52	47.7%
Sex with strangers	41	37.6%
Drinking alcohol excessively	39	35.8%
Body modification	20	18.3%
Vomiting	18	16.5%
Scarification	15	13.8%

Medical Problems

Medical problems were identified by 114 (46.3%) of the participants. The medical problems identified included poor vision (64, 56.1%), chronic pain (61, 53.5%), asthma (61, 53.5%), dental issues (52, 45.6%), skin issues (23, 20.2%), bone issues (18, 15.8%), wounds (9, 7.9%), and STIs (8, 7.0%). It is important to note that only fifty-one participants (44.7%) of the 114 participants with a medical problem reported that they had received medical attention for the medical problems they identified.

43%
reported daily drug

44.3%
reported self-harm behaviors

27.2%
reported mental health issues

30.5%
had attempted suicide

53.5%
reported chronic pain

Less than half of the participants who had medical problems reported receiving medical attention

Lifetime experiences

Homelessness	216 (87.8%)
Having run away from home	122 (49.6%)
Negative law enforcement experiences	101 (41.1%)
Dating violence	98 (39.8%)
Residential treatment program	39 (15.9%)
Living in a foster home or group home	82 (33.3%)
Juvenile Justice System	78 (31.7%)
Academic difficulties	90 (36.6%)
Expelled from school	95 (38.6%)
Special education classes	72 (29.3%)
Bullying	94 (38.2%)
Harassment by their peers	79 (32.1%)
Gang affiliated	65 (26.4%)
Worked in the adult entertainment industry (strip clubs, pornographic films).	24 (9.8%)

Abuse Histories

Physical abuse by a parent or guardian was reported by approximately one third (n=79; 32.1%) of participants. Emotional abuse by a parent or guardian was reported by 114 (45.9%) of the participants, and 83 (33.6%) participants reported childhood sexual abuse. Having been molested or raped as a child (age 12 or under) was reported by over one quarter of participants (n=65; 26.4%) Having been molested or raped as a young person (ages 13-17) was reported by 50 (20.3%) participants. Bullying was reported by 94 (38.2%) of the participants and feeling harassed by peers was reported by 79 (32.1%) of the participants.

Strengths

Saying no to drugs or alcohol when they were offered was reported by 115 (63.4%) of the participants. Ninety-seven (39.4%) reported having said no when they felt like they were being forced into sex. Steady employment was reported by 87 (35.4%) participants. Being part of a youth club or organization was reported by 131 (53.3%) of the participants. Ninety-nine participants (40.2%) reported they were enrolled in school or a technical training program. Volunteering in the community was reported by 102 (41.5%) of the participants. Having a supportive family or group of friends was reported by 108 (43.9%) participants. Having safe sex was reported by 153 (62.2%) participants. Having a trusting and good relationship with law enforcement was reported by 58 (23.6%) participants. Feeling secure or safe standing up for yourself/protecting yourself was reported by 117 (47.6%). One hundred and one (41.1%) participants reported an awareness of community resources.

Nearly half reported running away from home.

38.6% of participants had been expelled from school.

33.3% reported living in a foster home.

32.1% reported physical abuse

26.4% reported gang affiliation.

33.6% reported childhood sexual abuse.

Sex Trafficking/Sexual Exploitation Victimization

Description of Sex Trafficked Homeless Young Adults

In response to the question, “have you been compelled, forced, or coerced to perform a sex act, including sexual intercourse, oral or anal contact?”, 63 (25.5%) of the participants responded “yes.”

There were 119 total male participants, with 26 (21.8%) reporting a sex trafficking experience. There were 102 female participants, with 25 (24.8%) reporting a sex trafficking experience. The other 12 (19%) sex trafficking victims identified as LGBTQ (transgender (4), two-spirit (4), genderqueer (3), and non-conforming (1)).

LGBTQ young adults were significantly more likely to report sex trafficking experiences (33, 38.4%) than heterosexual young adults (23, 19.7%). Three (75%) of the 4 participants who identified as genderqueer reported a sex trafficking experience, four (66.7%) of the 6 participants who identified as two-spirit reported a sex trafficking experience, one (33.3%) of the 3 participants who identified as non-conforming, and 4 (44.4%) of the 9 participants who identified as transgender reported having a sex trafficking experience.

Of the 63 who identified as being a sex trafficking victim, 42 (66.6%) participants reported to have been sexually exploited for money, 41 (65.1%) for shelter, 21 (8.5%) for drugs, 18 (28.6%) for protection, 14 (22.2%) for clothing. The reasons identified by the participants for the sexual exploitation experience were found to have some overlap. For example, the reports of sex exchanged for drugs only was reported by three participants, shelter only by ten participants, money only by nine participants, and combined money/shelter was reported by eight participants.

Sex trafficked = 63
Shelter only = 10
Money only = 9
Money and shelter=8



The age of first experience of sex trafficking/sexual exploitation ranged from age 5 to age 23 ($M = 15.16$, $SD = 3.76$). Participants wrote specific information about their sex trafficking experiences; example descriptions explained sex exchanged for “cigarettes when I was a young kid”, “for food”, “for food for kids”, “the last time was 3.5 years ago”, and because of a “threat to kill”.

Of the 63 participants who reported a sex trafficking experience, 40 (63.5%) reported having a trafficker at one point in time and 9 (17.6%) reported having a trafficker at the time of the study. Twenty-two (55.0%) of participants who reported having a trafficker also reported that they have been afraid to leave or quit this situation due to “fears of violence or other threats to harm you or your family”. Sixteen (40.0%) of the sex trafficked participants reported that the person who asked them to exchange sexual acts controlled what they earned, or kept what they earned in exchange for providing transportation, food, rent, or other, without their consent.

Example descriptions of sex trafficked participants’ experiences with a trafficker included:

“When I was 15-years old, I moved in with a friend and his brother. The only way I could stay was if I had sex with him and cleaned up the apartment. Drugs and sex is the only way of payment”

“My uncle took my checks”

“My father took away food or clothes”

“I did it for my safety and my siblings’ safety. Also, my mother would use me to pay off her drug debts”

“I had a pimp that took all I earned from sexual acts and used it for what he saw fit”

“Hard to explain”

“Going to kill me if I don’t give him money”

“From food to money, started from age 10”

“Pimp and mom were bad things”

Profile of Participants Who Reported Having a Trafficker

A total of nine (14.3%) of the sex trafficked participants **reported having a trafficker** at the time of the study. These participants ranged in age from 19-23, with 5 (55.6%) participants identifying as male, 2 (22.2%) identifying as female and 2 (22.2%) identifying as two-spirit. Regarding race, three (33.3%) participants identified as Caucasian, two (22.2%) as Hispanic/Latino/Latina, two (22.2%) as Black/African American and two (22.2%) as biracial/multiracial. Of the 9 participants that reported a current trafficker, 5 (55.6%) identified as heterosexual, 1 (11.1%) identified as bisexual, 1(11.1%) identified as asexual, and 2 (22.2%) identified as gay. Over half (6, 66.7%) of the participants reported being homeless. One (11.1%) participant reported temporary housing and two (22.2%) reported living in a hotel.

Forty (63.5%) participants reported having a trafficker in either the present or the past. The participants ranged in age from 18-25, with 12 (30.0%) participants identifying as male, 21 (52.5%) participants identifying as female, 3 (7.5%) participants identifying as two-spirit, 2 (5.0%) participants identifying as genderqueer, 1 (2.5%) participant identifying as transgender and 1 (2.5%) participant identifying as non-conforming. Regarding race, 12 (30.0%) participants identified as biracial/multiracial , 11 (27.5%) as Caucasian, 8 (20.0%) as Black/African American, 5 (12.5%) as Hispanic/Latino/Latina, 1 (2.5%) as Arab, 1 (2.5%) as Asian/Pacific Islander, 1 (2.5%) as Native American/American Indian, and 1 (2.5%) as African/Caribbean. Of the 40 participants that reported having a trafficker, 12 (30.0%) identified as bisexual, 11 (27.5%) identified as heterosexual, 6 (15.0%) identified as gay, 6 (15.0%) identified as asexual, 3 (7.5%) identified as lesbian, and 1 (2.5%) identified as pansexual. Almost half (18, 45.0%) of participants reported living in temporary housing. One-third (12, 30.0%) of participants reported homelessness, 5 (12.5%) reported living in a hotel, 3 (7.5%) reported owning property, and 1 (2.5%) reported couch-surfing.

9 participants reported having a trafficker at the time of the study.

40 participants reported having a trafficker in either the present or the past.

	Trafficker Now n = 9		Trafficker Ever n = 40	
	n	%	n	%
Self-harm	8	88.9%	30	75.0%
Attempted suicide	7	77.8%	24	60.0%
Medical issue	5	55.6%	22	55.0%
Addiction to drugs	5	55.6%	10	25.0%
Mental diagnosis	3	33.3%	21	52.5%

Comparing the Sex Trafficked Young Adults with Non-Sex Trafficked Young Adults

The sex trafficked group (n =63) was compared with the non-sex trafficked group (n =183) using chi square analysis and t-tests. Differences between the two groups were explored using chi square analysis and t-tests. The two groups appear to be significantly different on many domains (see Table 4)

The sex trafficked group reported significantly higher rate of negative childhood experiences (running away, being bullied, harassed by peers, and involved in gangs), negative school experiences (serious academic difficulties), and childhood abuse experiences (dating violence, physical abuse, sexual abuse) than the non-trafficked group.

The sex trafficked group also were significantly more likely to report drug and alcohol use and addiction, self harm behaviors (cutting, sex with strangers, risk taking, not eating for long periods of time, body modification and scarification).

The sex trafficked group reported significantly higher rates of mental health problems and a history of suicide attempts, physical health problems, contact with the juvenile justice system and negative interactions with law enforcement, and a history of working in the adult entertainment industry than the non-sex trafficked group.

	Not-Sex Trafficked Group	Sex Trafficked Group
Childhood Experiences		
History of running away **	81 (45.3%)	40 (64.5%)
Being bullied by peers **	59 (33%)	34 (54.8%)
Gang affiliation *	42 (23.5%)	23 (37.1%)
Harassed by peers **	48 (26.8%)	32 (51.6%)
Lived in foster care/group home	57 (31.8%)	24 (38.7%)
Residential treatment	26 (14.5%)	13 (21%)
LGBTQ	23 (19.7%)	33 (38.4%)
School Experiences		
Academic Difficulties	54 (30.3%)	34 (54.8%)
Expelled from school	71 (39.7%)	24 (38.7%)
Special Education classes in school	47 (26.3%)	23 (37.1%)
Sex Trafficking and Abuse Experiences		
History of dating violence**	57 (31.8%)	40 (64.5%)
Childhood physical abuse*	51 (28.7%)	27 (43.5%)
Raped/molested age 12 or under**	37 (20.7%)	27 (43.5%)
Raped between ages 13-17**	27 (15.1%)	22 (35.5%)
Emotional abuse	78 (43.6%)	34 (54.8%)
Sex Trafficking and Drug Use		
Excessive use of alcohol**	20 (11.1%)	19 (30.2%)
Drug use**	28 (15.6%)	24 (38.1%)
Drug addiction **	22 (15.2%)	17 (32.1%)
Alcohol addiction**	16 (9.5%)	16 (27.6%)
Average age of first drug use	14.39 years	13.41 years
Excessive use of alcohol	20 (11.1%)	19 (30.2%)
Sex Trafficking and Self Harm Activities		
History of self harm**	44 (26%)	27 (48.2%)
Cutting**	28 (15.6%)	20 (31.7%)
Sex with strangers**	14 (7.8%)	27 (42.9%)
Risk taking**	29 (16.1%)	27 (42.9%)
Not eating /long periods of time**	29 (16.1%)	24 (38.1%)
Body modification*	10 (5.6%)	10 (15.9%)
Scarification*	39 (22.3%)	35 (56.5%)
Sex Trafficking and Mental Health Problems		
Suicide Attempt**	39 (22.3%)	35 (56.5%)
Mental health problem*	42 (24%)	24 (38.1%)
Sex Trafficking and Physical Health Problems		
Medical problem*	77 (42.8%)	36 (57.1%)
Sex Trafficking and Contact with the Criminal Justice System		
Negative contact with law enforcement*	66 (36.9%)	34 (54.8%)
Juvenile justice involvement*	51 (28.5%)	26 (41.9%)
Sex Trafficking and Involvement in Adult Entertainment Industry		
Worked in adult entertainment industry**	10 (5.6%)	13 (21.3%)

Results

The finding of 25.6% of the 246 homeless young adults surveyed identifying as having experienced sex trafficking in their lifetime is similar to the prevalence rates found in previous research within the population (Covenant House, 2013; Green et al, 1999).

In this study, participants identified that their sex trafficking experiences were for money (66.6%), a place to stay (65.1%), drugs (8.5%), and protection (5.7%). These rates are higher than in the Covenant House study (2013) which found 48% of the surveyed youth reported sexual exploitation experiences for a place to stay compared to this study finding of 65.1%. When compared to the Hudson and Nandy (2012) study of homeless youth and young adults, this study had a higher reporting rate for sex trafficking for money, 66.6%, compared to 13.6%. The rate of report of sex trafficking situations for drugs was lower for this study, 8.5%, when compared to the Hudson and Nandy rate of 17%.

In this study, LGBTQ young adults were found to be at significantly higher risk for sex trafficking than non-LGBTQ young adults. These findings support the ECPAT (2014) and McNaughton Nicholls, Harvey, & Paskall (2014) reports that suggest that young people that identify as non-heterosexual are vulnerable to the homelessness and economic needs that may lead to sex trafficking situations. Although the contextual factors related to the sex trafficking victimization of LGBTQ young adults were not explored in this study, this finding is important to consider.

Nine youth identified as having a sex trafficker at the time of the data collection for this study in July 2014. Although this number represents less than 4 percent of the total participants, it represents nearly 15 percent of the sex trafficked group. These nine currently sex trafficked young adults are in dangerous situations and their engagement in street or drop in services for homeless young adults should be used as an opportunity to intervene in the sex trafficking victimization.

The childhood, behavioral and untreated issues that created risk factors for sex trafficking vulnerability were extensive. In the majority of the comparisons between the sex trafficked and non-sex trafficked young adults, significant differences were found with the sex trafficked group having many more negative experiences, behaviors and untreated issues.

“The sex trafficked young adults identified in this study are in dangerous situations and their engagement in street or drop in services for homeless young adults should be used as an opportunity to intervene in the sex trafficking victimization.”

-Dominique Roe-Sepowitz

Childhood risk factors include:

- Childhood physical and sexual abuse
- Academic problems
- Being bullied in school
- Harassed by peers
- History of running away
- Being involved in a gang
- History of dating violence
- Identifying as non-heterosexual/LGBTQ

Behavioral risk factors include:

- Using drugs and alcohol
- Addiction to drugs and alcohol
- Self harm and cutting
- Risk taking
- Having sex with strangers
- Body modification
- Not eating for long periods
- History of suicide attempts
- History of juvenile justice involvement

Possible untreated issues:

- Medical problems
- Mental health problems
- History of suicide attempts

Overall when comparing the two groups, homeless young adults who reported sex trafficking experiences and those who did not report sex trafficking experiences, appear to be quite different and have different service needs regarding substance use, self harm, physical and mental health, physical and sexual abuse, trauma histories, academic struggles, teen dating violence, contact with the criminal justice system and involvement in the adult entertainment industry.

Implications

This study has a number of limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, this was a cross sectional sample of homeless young adults in contact with homeless youth services in Arizona. The findings are not generalizable to the homeless young adult population especially those that are not in contact with any youth service organizations. Second, the study was limited to young adults who could read English and were literate which may have excluded some participation. Finally, the influence of the \$5 gift card and possible people pleasing by agreeing to complete the survey are not measureable and should be considered.

It is evident from this study that asking homeless young adults about their sex trafficking experiences is critically important to best identify their service needs as well as creating targeted prevention, intervention and treatment plans that best match their needs. This will entail that all staff interacting with youth be knowledgeable about sex trafficking situations among young homeless adults and have the skills to assess the situation and intervene with skilled prevention and treatment protocols.

THOSE CURRENTLY WORKING WITH HOMELESS YOUTH MUST BECOME AWARE OF THE INCREASED RISK OF THE YOUTH TO BE EXPOSED TO TRAFFICKERS BY SHEER OPPORTUNITY FOR EXPLOITATION (BEING HUNGRY, NO PLACE TO STAY, VULNERABLE, CANNOT WORK). HAVING ALL STAFF WORKING WITH HOMELESS YOUNG ADULTS TRAINED TO BE AWARE OF THE RISK FACTORS AS WELL AS THE UNIQUE VULNERABILITIES OF YOUTH FOR SEX TRAFFICKING VICTIMIZATION, WILL ASSIST IN A SYSTEMATIC AWARENESS, PREVENTION, INTERVENTION AND TREATMENT MODEL TO BEST SERVE EACH YOUNG ADULT RECEIVING SERVICES.

The findings from this study suggest that sex trafficked homeless young adults require targeted interventions that differ from the interventions required by their non-sex trafficked peers. This suggests that services for the sex trafficked young adults must be focused, inclusive, comprehensive, and take into consideration the likelihood of immediate physical and mental health care.

Sex trafficked youth reported significantly higher rates of addiction to alcohol and drugs. This is of particular concern when providing services and resources, active addiction can be a major impediment to obtaining and successfully utilizing services. The need to provide drug and alcohol abuse support and treatment interventions to these young adults is supported by the findings of this study. The higher rates of self harming behaviors, suicide attempts and mental health problems of among the sex trafficked young adults must also be considered when providing services. These critical needs often require attention to establish safety before any other sort of services can be effectively administered.

The significant differences in sexual orientation related to sex trafficking was startling. Nearly 20 percent of the participants that identified as heterosexual reported sex-trafficking experiences, whereas nearly double the percentage, 38.4 percent of those who identified as LGBTQ reported sex trafficking experiences. The higher rates of sex trafficking reported by young adults who identified within the LGBTQ community has significant implication regarding needed targeted services to focus on LGBTQ youth and be aware of sex trafficking to assist in prevention and treatment.

THE FINDINGS OF THIS STUDY INDICATE THAT HOMELESS YOUNG ADULTS WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED SEX TRAFFICKING ALSO HAVE EXPERIENCED SIGNIFICANT TRAUMA IN THEIR YOUNG LIVES. THE USE OF TRAUMA-INFORMED CARE AND TRAUMA-FOCUSED TREATMENTS ALONG WITH SEX TRAFFICKING RELATED INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP INTERVENTIONS WILL BEST SERVE THE SEX TRAFFICKED YOUNG ADULTS IN THIS STUDY. THIS WILL REQUIRE PROVIDING CLINICAL TRAINING AND CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT TO BE PROVIDED IN TRANSITIONAL HOUSING, DROP IN SHELTER SERVICES AND REFERRAL LOCATIONS FOR HOMELESS YOUNG ADULTS.

A number of implications of this study have emerged. It is clear that asking homeless young adults about their sex trafficking experiences can assist in developing targeted services. That one in four homeless young adults from this study reported a history of being sex-trafficked is key information to consider when planning staff trainings, screening tools and developing and designing interventions to address sex trafficking and the co-existing problems identified in this study. Sex trafficked homeless young adults significantly differed from non-sex trafficked homeless young adults in this study. This implies that the sex trafficked group requires unique and targeted services which will take time to develop and implement for the current homeless young adult service providers.

Future research on this population building on the foundation set by this and other studies should focus on pathways into sex trafficking for homeless young adults, explore the time order of homelessness and sex trafficking experiences, and evaluate innovative treatments focused on sex trafficking.

Conclusion

Increased public attention to the issue of sex trafficking and new opportunities to fund training, prevention and intervention services for homeless young adults together are poised to change the trajectory of the high service need sex trafficked homeless young adult and provide them with innovative and targeted services with the intention of providing healing services as well as transition out of the high risk situation of homelessness.

Tumbleweed Report

This survey was given to homeless young adults at two drop in centers (Phoenix and Tempe), a transitional housing program and through street outreach services. Surveys were completed by 173 homeless young adults through Tumbleweed Youth Services.

Description of Participants:

The participants from Tumbleweed Youth Services ranged in age from 18-25 years old (M= 21.6, SD= 2.07). They reported their gender identity as male (88, 50.9%), female (71, 41.0%), transgender (5, 2.9%), two-spirit (4, 2.3%), non-conforming (3, 1.7%) and gender-queer (2, 1.2%). Regarding race, participants identified as white (52, 30.6%), Black/African American (37, 21.8%), Hispanic/Latino/Latina (37, 21.8%), biracial/multiracial (30, 17.6%), African/Caribbean (5, 2.9%), Native American/American Indian (5, 2.9%), Asian/Pacific Islander (3, 1.8%), or Arab (1, 0.6). Regarding sexual orientation, over half (52%) identified as heterosexual, followed by bisexual (19%), asexual (10%), gay (7%), lesbian (7%), pansexual (4%) none (1%), and missing (5.2%).

Homelessness

Current housing arrangements reported by participants from Tumbleweed included temporary housing (62, 35.8%), homeless (69, 39.9%), couch-surfing (15, 8.7%), hotel (11, 6.4%), and own apartment/home (13, 7.5%). Participants described their temporary housing to include: “staying with my pastor”, “Tumbleweed emergency housing” and “Half-way house”.

Drug Use History

More than half (111, 64.2%) of participants from Tumbleweed reported having used drugs. The reported their age of first drug use ranged from 3 to 21 years old (M=14.11, SD = 3.42). When asked about frequency of drug use, 37 (42.5%) reported daily, 25 (28.7%) reported weekly and 25 (28.7%) reported monthly drug use. Thirty-two (22.1%) participants identified as having an addiction to drugs. See Table 2 for types of drugs reported. Eighty-eight participants (50.9%) reported using alcohol and the frequency of their alcohol consumption was reported by 21 (23.9%) participants using daily, 22 (25.0%) participants using weekly, and 45 (51.1%) participants using monthly. Thirty (18.3%) participants reported an addiction to alcohol.

What is your drug of choice?

Drug type	n	%
Marijuana	65	37.6%
Methamphetamines	25	14.5%
Cocaine/crack	16	9.2%
Heroin	10	5.8%
Ecstasy	7	4.0%
Spice	3	1.7%
Pills	3	1.7%
GHB	2	1.2%
Percocet/Percodan	2	1.2%

Self Harm

Self-harm behaviors were reported by 83 (48%) of the participants. Once they affirmed self-harm behavior, the participants were instructed to circle all of the self-harm behaviors they had participated in (see Table 2).

Types of Self-harm reported

Self-Harm Behavior	n	%
Risk-taking	49	59.0%
Drug use	42	50.6%
Not eating for long periods of time	40	48.2%
Cutting	35	42.2%
Sex with strangers	35	42.2%
Drinking alcohol excessively	28	33.7%
Body modification	15	18.1%
Vomiting	12	14.5%
Scarification	12	14.5%

Self-harming was also described by the participants at Tumbleweed to include “burning”, “overdose on pills”, “punching things” and “punching things, walls, doors, people, cars”.

Mental Health Challenges

A history of suicide attempts was reported by 54 (31.2%) participants from Tumbleweed. A current mental health issue was identified by 50 (28.9%) participants, with 50 (28.9%) reporting they had received treatment for their mental health issues. Of the 54 participants who reported a mental health problem, 26(48.1%) reported Bipolar Disorder, 12 (22.2%) reported Depression, 12 (22.2%) reported ADD/ADHD, 8 (14.8%) reported Schizophrenia, 8 (14.8%) reported Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, 7 (13.0%) Anxiety, 3 (5.56%) reported Oppositional Defiant Disorder, 2 (3.7%) reported Asperger’s, 1 (1.9%) reported Autism, 1 (1.9%) reported Dissociative Identity Disorder, 1 (1.9%) reported Borderline Personality Disorder, and 1 (1.9%) reported Antisocial Personality Disorder.

Medical Problems

Medical problems were identified by 86 (49.7%) of the participants from Tumbleweed. The medical problems identified by the participants included chronic pain (50, 58.1%), asthma (48, 55.8%), poor vision (46, 53.5%), dental issues (40, 46.5%), skin issues (18, 20.9%), bone issues (16, 18.6%), wounds (8, 9.3%), and STIs (8, 9.3%). Of the 86 participants who reported medical problems, 36 (41.9%) reported that they were receiving services for these medical problems.

Lifetime Experiences

A history of homelessness was reported by 159 (91.9%) participants from Tumbleweed, and over one-third (62, 35.8%) of participants reported living in a foster home or group home. Regarding criminal background, 61 (35.3%) participants reported involvement in the Juvenile Justice System, and almost half (78, 45.1%) reported a negative experience with law enforcement. Fifty-three (30.6%) participants reported gang affiliation. Regarding school, participants reported academic difficulty (68, 39.3%), special education classes (54, 31.2%), expulsion from school (71, 41.0%), and being bullied by school peers (71, 41.0%). Over half (88, 50.9%) of participants reported a history of running away from home. Other lifetime experiences included: dating violence (74, 42.8%), harassment by peers (61, 35.3%), residential treatment program (33, 19.1%), and work in the adult entertainment industry (21, 12.1%).

Abuse Histories

Physical abuse by a parent or guardian was reported by approximately one third (58, 33.5%) of participants from Tumbleweed. Emotional abuse by a parent or guardian was reported by almost half (82, 47.4%) of participants. Being

sexually abused as a child, as characterized by molestation or rape at age 12 or under, was reported by over one quarter of participants (47, 27.2%) and rape between age 13-17, was reported by 39 (22.5%). Combined, sexual abuse was reported by 60 (34.9%) of the Tumbleweed participants.

Strengths

More than half of the participants reported a history of saying “no” to drugs or alcohol (104, 60.1%) when it was offered to them, or when they felt sex was being forced upon them (64, 37%). One third of participants from Tumbleweed reported that they had experienced steady employment (58, 33.5%) at one point in their life. Support systems were identified by the participants and are important to them and some had experienced a support system in their lifetime. Over half (89, 51.4%) of participants were part of a club or youth organization at one point in their life, and 67 (38.7%) reported that they were enrolled in school or a technical program. Volunteering in the community was reported by 68 (39.3%) of participants. Having a supportive, loving family or group of friends was reported by 67 (38.7%) of participants. Safe sex practices were reported by over half (103, 59.5%) of participants. A trusting and positive relationship with law enforcement was reported by 38 (22.0%) of participants. Almost half (76, 43.9%) reported feeling safe or secure standing up for oneself and 67 (38.7%) reported awareness of community resources available to them.

Sex Trafficking/Sexual Exploitation Victimization

A total of 51 participants (29.7%) of the 173 participants from Tumbleweed felt that had ever been compelled, forced, or coerced to perform a sex act, including sexual intercourse, oral or anal contact. Of the 88 participants in the sample who identified as male, 24 (27.3%) reported a sex trafficking experience and of the 71 participants who identified as female, 20 (28.2%) reported a sex trafficking experience. An important finding is that almost one-quarter (21, 24.7%) of participants who identified as heterosexual and 39.3% (24) of participants who identified as LGBTQ reported a history of sexual exploitation. Although there was a higher percentage of LGBTQ participants who reported a sex trafficking experience, the difference was not statistically significant. Both (100.0%) of the participants who identified as gender-queer reported a sex trafficking experience, two (50.0%) of the four participants who identified as two-spirit reported a sex trafficking experience, one (33.3%) of the three participants who identified as non-conforming and two (40.0%) of the five participants who identified as transgender reported a sex trafficking experience. Of the 51 participants who identified as being a sex trafficking victim, 37 (72.5%) reported to have been sexually exploited for money, 19 (37.3%) for drugs, 14 (27.5%) for protection, 13 (25.5%) for clothing, and 33 (64.7%) for shelter. The reasons identified by the participants for the sexual exploitation experience were found to have some overlap with reports of exchange for ‘drugs only’ was reported by two participants, shelter only by seven participants, money only by seven participants, and money/shelter combined was reported by seven participants.

Sex Trafficked = 51

Money only = 7

Shelter only = 7

Drugs only = 2

Money and Shelter = 7



The age of first experience of sex trafficking/sexual exploitation ranged from age 5 to age 23 (M =15.13, SD= 3.59) for participants from Tumbleweed. Participants wrote specific information about their sex trafficking experiences; example descriptions explained sex exchange for “cigarettes when I was a young child” and “for food for kids”. Over a quarter (19, 37.3%) of sexually exploited participants reported having a trafficker in the past. At the time of survey administration, six participants (11.8%) reported currently having a trafficker/exploited who encouraged, pressured, or forced them to exchange sex acts for money, drugs, a place to stay, clothing or protection. A total of 20 (39.2%) reported having had a sex trafficker during their lifetime. Seventeen (33.3%) of the sex trafficked participants reported that they have been afraid to leave or quit this situation due to “fears of violence or other threats to harm you or your family”. Fourteen (27.5%) of the sex trafficked participants reported that the person who asked them to exchange sexual acts ever controlled what they earned, or kept what they earned in exchange for providing transportation, food, rent, or other, without their consent.

Profile of Participants Who Reported Having a Trafficker

Six (11.8%) participants from Tumbleweed reported having a trafficker at the time of the study. The participants ranged in age from 19-23, with 5 (83.3%) participants identifying as male and 1 (16.7%) participant identifying as two-spirit. No female participants reported currently having a trafficker. Regarding race, two (33.3%) participants identified as

Caucasian, two (33.3%) as Hispanic/Latino/Latina, one (16.7%) as Black/African American and one (16.7%) as biracial/multiracial. Of the 6 participants that reported a current trafficker, 3 (50.0%) identified as heterosexual, 1 (16.7%) identified as bisexual, 1(16.7%) identified as asexual, 1 (16.7%) identified as gay. Over half (4, 66.7%) of the participants reported being homeless, one (16.7%) participant reported temporary housing and one (16.7%) reported living in a hotel.

Nineteen (37.3%) participants from Tumbleweed reported having a trafficker at some point in the past. The participants ranged in age from 18-24, with 8 (42.1%) participants identifying as male, 8 (42.1%) participants identifying as female, 1 (5.3%) participant identifying as two-spirit, 1 (5.3%) participant identifying as transgender and 1 (5.3%) participant identifying as non-conforming. Regarding race, five (26.3%) participants identified as Caucasian, five (26.3%) as biracial/multiracial, three (15.8%) as Black/African American, three (15.8%) as Hispanic/Latino/Latina, one (5.3%) as Arab, one (5.3%) as Asian/Pacific Islander and one (5.3%) as African/Caribbean. Of the 19 participants that reported having a trafficker in the past, 8 (42.1%) identified as heterosexual, 6 (31.6%) identified as bisexual, 3 (15.8%) identified as asexual, and 2 (10.5%) identified as gay. Over one-quarter (5, 26.3%) of participants reported being homeless, 7(36.8%) participants reported temporary housing, four (21.1%) reported living in a hotel, 1 (5.3%) reported owning property, and 1 (5.3%) reported couch-surfing.

Trafficking risk factors for Participants from Tumbleweed

	Trafficker Now n = 6		Trafficker in Past n = 19	
	n	%	n	%
Self-harm	6	100.0%	16	84.2%
Attempted suicide	5	83.3%	11	57.9%
Addiction to drugs	5	83.3%	8	42.1%
Mental diagnosis	2	33.3%	9	47.4%
Medical issue	2	33.3%	8	42.1%



Our Family Report

This survey was given to homeless young adults at an informal drop in center for homeless young adults and at a young adult transitional housing program. Surveys were completed by 60 homeless young adults through Our Family Youth Services.

Description of Participants:

The participants from Our Family Youth Services ranged in age from 18-24 years old (M= 20.67, SD= 1.45). Participants reported their gender identity as female (30, 50.0%), male (27, 45.0%), transgender (2, 3.3%), and two-spirit (1, 1.7%). Regarding race, a majority of participants identified as White (19, 31.7%) or Hispanic/Latino/Latina (17, 28.3%), biracial/multiracial (11, 18.3%), Black/African American (7, 11.7%), and Native American/American Indian (6, 10.0%). Regarding sexual orientation (see Figure 1), 51.7% identified as heterosexual, followed by asexual (18.3%), bisexual (11.7%), gay (8.3%), and lesbian (5.0%).

Homelessness

Current housing arrangements reported by participants from Our Family Youth Services included temporary housing (39, 65.0%), homeless (10, 16.7%), couch-surfing (5, 8.3%), and owning one's own apartment/home (5, 8.3%).

Drug Use History

Over half (33, 55.0%) of participants reported having ever used drugs. The reported age of first drug use ranged from 6 to 19 years old (M= 13.66, SD = 3.22). When asked about frequency of drug use 12 (20.0%) reported daily, 8 (13.3%) reported weekly and 3 (5.0%) reported monthly drug use. Five (8.3%) participants identified as having an addiction to drugs (See Table 2 for types of drug use reported). Twenty-two (36.7%) participants reported using alcohol. Frequency of alcohol consumption was reported as 1 (1.7%) participants using daily, 5 (8.3%) participants using weekly, and 16 (26.7%) using monthly. Two (3.3%) participants reported having an addiction to alcohol.

What is your drug of choice?

Drug type	n	%
Marijuana	27	45.0%
Meth	7	11.7%
Cocaine/Crack	2	3.3%
Pills	3	5.0%
Heroin	1	1.7%
Special K/Ketamine	1	1.7%

Self Harm

Self-harm behaviors were reported by 20 (33.3%) of the participants from Our Family Youth Services. Once they affirmed self-harm behavior, the participants were instructed to circle all of the self-harm behaviors they had participated in (see Table 2) with 50% reporting cutting behaviors.

Types of Self-harm reported

Self-Harm Behavior	n	%
Cutting	10	50.0%
Drug use	8	40.0%
Drinking alcohol excessively	8	40.0%
Not eating for long periods of time	8	40.0%
Risk taking	6	30.0%
Body modification	4	20.0%
Vomiting	3	15.0%
Scarification	2	10.0%

Mental Health Challenges

A history of suicide attempts was reported by 12 (21.7%) participants from Our Family Youth Services. A current mental health issue was identified by 12 (20.0%) participants. Of the 13 participants who reported a mental health problem, 5 (38.5%) reported Depression, 4 (30.8%) reported Anxiety, 3 (23.1%) reported Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, 2 (15.4%) reported Bipolar Disorder and 2 (15.4%) reported ADD/ADHD. All 13 of the participants that reported a mental health problem reported that they had received treatment for the problem.

Medical Challenges

Medical challenges were identified by over one-third (21, 35.0%) of the participants from Our Family Youth Services. The medical challenged identified included Poor vision (14, 66.7%), Asthma (12, 57.1%), chronic pain (11, 52.4%), dental issues (9, 42.9%), skin issues (4, 19.0%), bone issues (2, 9.5), and wounds (1, 4.8%). Ten (52.6%) reported that they had received treatment for the medical problem.

Lifetime Experiences

A history of homelessness was reported by 46 (76.7%) participants, and one-quarter (15, 25.0%) of participants reported living in a foster home or group home. Regarding criminal background, 16 (26.7%) participants reported having involvement in the Juvenile Justice System, and almost one-third (19, 31.7%) reported a negative experience with law enforcement. Twelve (20.0%) participants reported gang affiliation. Regarding school, participants reported academic difficulty (17, 28.3%), special education classes (14, 23.3%), expulsion from school (20, 33.3%), and being bullied by school peers (16, 26.7%). Almost half (27, 45.0%) of participants reported a history of running away from home. Other lifetime experiences included: dating violence (18, 30.0%), harassment by peers (12, 20.0%), residential treatment program (5, 8.3%), and work in the adult entertainment industry (2, 3.3%).

Abuse Histories

Physical abuse by a parent or guardian was reported by one-quarter (15, 25.0%) of participants. Emotional abuse by a parent or guardian was reported by over one-third (22, 36.7%) of participants. Being sexually abused as a child, as characterized by molestation or rape at age 12 or under, was reported by 14 (23.3%) participants and being raped between ages 13-17, was reported by 8 (13.3%). Combined sexual abuse was reported by 17 participants (28.8%) from Our Family Youth Services.

Strengths

Participants reported a history of saying “no” to drugs or alcohol (43, 71.7%) when it was offered to them, or when they felt sex was being forced upon them (25, 41.7%). Over one-third of participants reported that they experienced steady employment (23, 38.3%) at one point in their life. Half (30, 50.0%) of participants reported being part of a club or youth organization at one point in their life, and 24 (40.0%) reported that they were enrolled in school or a technical program.

Volunteering in the community was reported by 23 (38.3%) of participants. Having a supportive, loving family or group of friends was reported by 32 (53.3%) of participants. Safe sex practices were reported by over half (41, 68.3%) of participants. A trusting and positive relationship with law enforcement was reported by 12 (20.0%) participants. Over half (31, 51.7%) of participants reported feeling safe or secure standing up for oneself and 24 (40.0%) participants reported having an awareness of community resources available to them.

Sex Trafficking/Sexual Exploitation Victimization

Among the participants from Our Family Youth Services, 8 (13.3%) participants felt that had ever been compelled, forced, or coerced to perform a sex act, including sexual intercourse, oral or anal contact.

Of the 27 participants in the sample who identified as male, 1 (3.7%) reported a sex trafficking experience and of the 29 participants in the sample who identified as female, 5 (17.2%) reported a sex trafficking experience. One (3.3%) of the 30 participants who identified as heterosexual reported a history of sexual exploitation, while 6 (40.0%) of the participants who identified as LGBTQ reported a history of sexual exploitation. One (50.0%) of the two participants who identified as transgender reported a sex trafficking experience and the one participant (100.0%) who identified as two-spirit reported a sex trafficking experience. Of those who identified as being a sex trafficking victim, 5 (62.5%) reported being sexually exploited for shelter, 4 (50.0%) for protection, 3 (37.5%) for money, 2 (25.0%) for drugs, and 1 (12.5%) for shelter. The reasons identified by the participants for the sexual exploitation experience were found to have some overlap with reports of exchange for 'shelter only' by two participants, 'money only' by one participant, and 'drugs only' by one participant

Sex Trafficked = 8
Money only = 1
Shelter only = 1
Drugs only = 1



The age of first experience of sex trafficking/sexual exploitation ranged from age 7 to age 18 (M =13.33, SD= 4.84). Five (62.5%) of sexually exploited participants reported having a trafficker in the past. At the time of survey administration, 2 (25.0%) participants reported currently having a trafficker/exploited who encouraged, pressured, or forced them to exchange sex acts for money, drugs, a place to stay, clothing or protection. Five (62.5%) reported having ever had a sex trafficker. Five (62.5%) of the sex trafficked participants reported that they have been afraid to leave or quit this situation due to “fears of violence or other threats to harm you or your family”.

Profile of Participants Who Reported Having a Trafficker

Two (3.33%) participants reported having a trafficker at the time of the study in July 2014. The participants ranged in age from 20-21 years old, with 1 (50.0%) participant identifying as female and 1 (50.0%) participant identifying as two-spirit. Regarding race, one (50.0%) participant identified as Black/African American, and one (50.0%) participants identified as biracial/multiracial. Of the 2 participants that reported a current trafficker, 1 (50.0%) identified as heterosexual, and 1 (50.0%) identified as gay. Both (100.0%) of the participants reported being homeless.

Five (8.3%) participants reported having a trafficker at some point in their lifetimes. These participants ranged in age from 18-21 years old, with 4 (80.0%) participants identifying as female, and 1 (20.0%) participant identifying as two-spirit. Regarding race, two (40.0%) participants identified as Caucasian, two (40.0%) as biracial/multiracial, and one (20.0%) as Black/African American. Of the 5 participants that reported having a trafficker in the past, 2 (40.0%) identified as lesbian, 1 (20.0%) identified as bisexual, 1 (20.0%) identified as gay, and 1 (20.0%) identified as heterosexual. Two (40.0%) participants reported being homeless, 2 (40.0%) participants reported owning own apartment/home and 1 (20.0%) reported temporary housing.

Two of the participants who reported having a trafficker, reported 'yes' to having a trafficker in the past and in the present.

Trafficking risk factors

	Trafficker Now n = 2		Trafficker in Past n = 5	
	n	%	n	%
Self-harm	2	100.0%	5	100.0%
Attempted suicide	2	100.0%	4	80.0%
Medical issue	2	100.0%	4	80.0%
Mental diagnosis	1	50.0%	4	80.0%

One•n•ten Report

This survey was given to homeless young adults at an informal drop in center for homeless young adults and at a young adult transitional housing program. Surveys were completed by 13 homeless young adults through One•n•ten.

Description of Participants:

The participants from One•N•Ten ranged in age from 18-23 years old (M= 20.58, SD= 1.83). Participants reported gender identity as male (6, 46.2%), female (1, 7.7%), transgender (2, 15.4%), two-spirit (1, 7.7%), and genderqueer (3, 23.1%). Regarding race, participants identified as white (4, 30.8%), biracial/multiracial (4, 30.8%), Hispanic/Latino/Latina (2, 15.4%), Black/African American (1, 7.7%), Native American or American Indian (1, 7.7%), or Indian or South Asian (1, 7.7%). Regarding sexual orientation (see Figure 1), 38.5% identified as gay, followed by bisexual (23.1%), pansexual (23.1%), heterosexual (7.7%), and lesbian (7.7%).

Housing Situation

All participants from One•N•Ten (n=13, 100%) reported temporary housing as their current housing situation.

Drug Use History

More than three-fourths (10, 76.9%) of participants from One•N•Ten reported having ever used drugs. The reported age of first drug use ranged from 13 to 19 years old (M= 15.90, SD = 2.13). When asked about drug use frequency, 1 (7.7%) reported weekly and 3 (23.1%) reported monthly drug use. Two (15.4%) participants identified as having an addiction to drugs.

What is your drug of choice?

Drug type	n	%
Marijuana	4	30.8%
Heroin	1	7.7%
Ecstasy	1	7.7%
Pills	1	7.7%

Self Harm

Self-harm behaviors were reported by 6 (85.7%) of the participants from One•N•Ten. Once they affirmed self-harm behavior, the participants were instructed to circle all of the self-harm behaviors they had participated in.

Types of Self-harm reported

Self-Harm Behavior	n	%
Not eating for long periods of time	5	83.3%
Cutting	3	50.0%
Drinking alcohol excessively	3	50.0%
Vomiting	3	50.0%

Drug use	2	25.0%
Risk taking	1	16.7%
Body modification	1	16.7%
Scarification	1	16.7%

Mental Health Problems

A history of suicide attempts was reported by over half (8, 61.5%) of participants from One•N•Ten. A current mental health problem was identified by 5 (38.5%) participants. Of the 5 participants who reported a mental health challenge, 3 (60.0%) reported depression, 1 (20.0%) reported Bipolar Disorder, 1 (20.0%) reported ADD/ADHD, and 1 (20.0%) reported anxiety. All of the participants that identified as having a mental health problem also reported that they had or were receiving treatment for the problem.

Medical Problem

Medical problems were identified by over half (7, 53.8%) of the participants from One•N•Ten. The medical problems identified included poor vision (4, 57.1%), dental issues (3, 42.9%), chronic pain (1, 14.3%), asthma (1, 14.3%), and skin issues (1, 14.3%). Five (71.4%) of the participants that reported having a medical problem reported that they were currently receiving treatment for these problems.

Lifetime Experiences

A history of homelessness was reported by 11 (84.6%) participants from One•N•Ten, and over one-third (5, 38.5%) of participants reported living in a foster home or group home. Regarding criminal background, 1 (7.7%) participant reported involvement in the Juvenile Justice System, and 4 (30.8%) reported a negative experience with law enforcement. Regarding school, participants reported academic difficulty (5, 38.5%), special education classes (4, 30.8%), expulsion from school (4, 30.8%), and being bullied by school peers (7, 53.8%). Over half (7, 53.8%) of participants reported a history of running away from home. Other lifetime experiences included: dating violence (6, 46.2%), harassment by peers (6, 46.2%), residential treatment program (1, 7.7%), and work in the adult entertainment industry (1, 7.7%).

Abuse Histories

Physical abuse by a parent or guardian was reported by almost half (6, 46.2%) of participants from One•N•Ten. Emotional abuse by a parent or guardian was reported by over three-fourths (10, 76.9%) of participants. Being sexually abused as a child, as characterized by molestation or rape at age 12 or under, was reported by 4 (30.8%) participants and rape from ages 13-17, was reported by 3 (23.1%) participants. Overall sexual abuse was reported by 5 (28.5%) of the 13 participants from One•N•Ten.

Strengths

Participants from One•N•Ten reported a history of saying “no” to drugs or alcohol (9, 69.2%) when it was offered to them, or when they felt sex was being forced upon them (8, 61.5%). Almost half of participants reported that they experienced steady employment (6, 46.2%) at one point in their life. One (7.7%) participant reported being part of a club or youth organization at one point in their life, and 8 (61.5%) reported that they were enrolled in school or a technical program. Volunteering in the community was reported by 11 (84.6%) of participants. Having a supportive, loving family or group of friends was reported by 10 (76.9%) of participants. Safe sex practices were reported by over half (9, 69.2%) of participants. A trusting and positive relationship with law enforcement was reported by 8 (61.5%) participants. Over three-fourths (10, 76.9%) reported feeling safe or secure standing up for oneself as well as having an awareness of community resources available to them.

Sex Trafficking/Sexual Exploitation Victimization

A total of 4 (30.8%) participants from One•N•Ten reported that they felt they had ever been compelled, forced, or coerced to perform a sex act, including sexual intercourse, oral or anal contact. Of the 6 participants in the sample who identified as male from One•N•Ten, 1 (16.7%) reported a sex trafficking experience. No participants who identified as female (1, 7.7%) reported a sex trafficking experience. 3 (23.1%) participants who identified as LGBTQ reported a history of sexual exploitation. One (33.3%) of the three participants who identified as genderqueer reported a sex trafficking experience, the one participant (100.0%) who identified as two-spirit reported a sex trafficking experience, and one (50.0%) of the two

participants who identified as transgender reported a sex trafficking experience. Of those who identified as being a sex trafficking victim, 2 (50.0%) reported to have been sexually exploited for money and 3 (75.0%) for shelter. None of the participants reported being exploited for drugs, protection or clothing. The reasons identified by the participants for the sexual exploitation experience were found to have some overlap. Some of the reasons did not overlap with reports of exchange for 'shelter only' by two participants, 'money only' by one participant, and 'money/shelter combined' was reported by one participant.

Sex Trafficked = 4
Money only = 1
Shelter only = 1
Money + Shelter = 1



The age of first experience of sex trafficking/sexual exploitation ranged from age 14 to age 21 (M =18.20, SD= 2.78) for participants from One•N•Ten. Two (50.0%) of the sexually exploited participants reported having a trafficker in the past. At the time of survey administration, no participants reported currently having a trafficker/exploited who encouraged, pressured, or forced them to exchange sex acts for money, drugs, a place to stay, clothing or protection. Two (50.0%) reported having had a sex trafficker. Two (50.0%) of the sex trafficked participants reported that they have been afraid to leave or quit this situation due to “fears of violence or other threats to harm you or your family”.

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Table All Variables and Significance Score

	Not-Sex Trafficked Group	Sex Trafficked Group	X ²
History of self harm**	44 (26%)	27 (48.2%)	.002
Cutting**	28 (15.6%)	20 (31.7%)	.005
Excessive use of alcohol**	20 (11.1%)	19 (30.2%)	.001
Drug use**	28 (15.6%)	24 (38.1%)	.001
Sex with strangers**	14 (7.8%)	27 (42.9%)	.001
Risk taking**	29 (16.1%)	27 (42.9%)	.001
Not eating for long periods of time**	29 (16.1%)	24 (38.1%)	.001
Body modification*	10 (5.6%)	10 (15.9%)	.01
Scarification*	39 (22.3%)	35 (56.5%)	.012
Suicide Attempt**	39 (22.3%)	35 (56.5%)	.001
Mental health problem*	42 (24%)	24 (38.1%)	.032
Medical problem*	77 (42.8%)	36 (57.1%)	.049
Drug addiction**	22 (15.2%)	17 (32.1%)	.008
Alcohol addiction**	16 (9.5%)	16 (27.6%)	.001
History of dating violence**	57 (31.8%)	40 (64.5%)	.001
Negative contact with law enforcement*	66 (36.9%)	34 (54.8%)	.013
Juvenile justice involvement*	51 (28.5%)	26 (41.9%)	.05
Academic difficulties**	54 (30.3%)	34 (54.8%)	.001
History of running away**	81 (45.3%)	40 (64.5%)	.009
Being bullied**	59 (33%)	34 (54.8%)	.002
Gang affiliation*	42 (23.5%)	23 (37.1%)	.037
Worked in adult entertainment industry**	10 (5.6%)	13 (21.3%)	.001
Childhood physical abuse*	51 (28.7%)	27 (43.5%)	.031
Harassed by peers**	48 (26.8%)	32 (51.6%)	.001
Raped/molested age 12 or under**	37 (20.7%)	27 (43.5%)	.001
Raped between ages 13-17**	27 (15.1%)	22 (35.5%)	.001
Combined sexual abuse**	49 (27.4%)	32 (51.6%)	.001
Homelessness	157 (87.7%)	57 (91.9%)	.363

History of Residential Treatment	26 (14.5%)	13 (21%)	.235
Foster care/group home	57 (31.8%)	24 (38.7%)	.324
Expelled from school	71 (39.7%)	24 (38.7%)	.894
Special education	47 (26.3%)	23 (37.1%)	.105
Childhood emotional abuse	78 (43.6%)	34 (54.8%)	.242
LGBTQ	23 (19.7%)	33 (38.4%)	.003

*Significant at the $p < .05$ level.

** Significant at the $p < .01$ level