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On the Front Lines: The Role of Teachers in the Prevention of Child Trafficking Through Education and Awareness of Online Recruitment Tactics

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“Trafficking”

What is trafficking?

- What is “trafficking”?

- US Federal law defines "severe forms of trafficking in persons" as:

- (A) **sex trafficking** in which a commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such act has not attained 18 years of age; or

- (B) the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for **labor or services**, through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery." [U.S.C. §7102(8)]

- “Any person younger than age 18 involved in any form of commercial sexual exploitation (prostitution, pornography, sex tourism, stripping, etc.) meets the legal criteria for minor sex trafficking” (*Trafficking Victim’s Protection Act*, 2008).

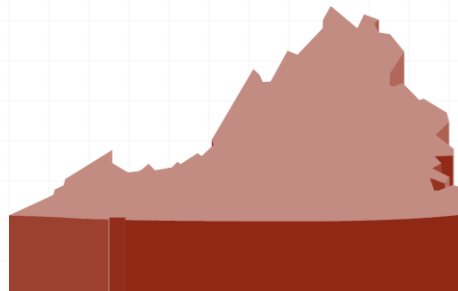
Is it a problem in the US?

- An estimated 100,000 children are victimized through prostitution in the US annually (US Department of State, 2009)



Is it a problem in Virginia?

- Cases reported in **all** 50 states
- Cases reported in Bedford, Northern VA, and other areas (rural and urban)
- Difficult to quantify because until February 2014 VA was one of only 2 states that lacked a comprehensive trafficking statute.



Who is vulnerable?

- Females (98% worldwide) and males (increasing trend)
- Children in cities, suburbs, and rural areas
- Average age of entry is between 11/12 and 14 years old, though there have been cases of children as young as 9 years old
- Children with the following characteristics:
 - Low self-esteem/need to belong
 - Minimal social supports
 - Economically vulnerable
 - Special education needs
 - Frequent truancy
 - Loss of a parent/guardian/caregiver
 - History of family substance abuse, abuse (physical, psychological, or sexual), child welfare involvement, running away

See: <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oese/oshs/factsheet.html>

Who is vulnerable?

- Runaways are *highly* vulnerable:
 - Approx. 1/3 of teen runaways/throwaways become involved in prostitution **within 48 hours** of running away.
 - Targeted by traffickers given their need for food and shelter.

See: <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oese/oshs/factsheet.html>

Trafficking Victim's Protection Act (TVPA)

o Three prong approach:

o **Prevention***

o Prosecution

o Protection



** Teachers are uniquely situated to assist with prevention*

National Strategy For Child Exploitation Prevention and Interdiction

Report to Congress
August 2010

- o Focuses on 4 types of exploitation:
 - o child pornography
 - o **online enticement of children for sexual purposes**
 - o commercial sexual exploitation of children, and
 - o child sex tourism

What is the role of schools and educators?

- **Prevention**
- Identification
- Intervention



What are the keys to prevention?

- Offer a developmentally appropriate prevention curriculum addressing:
 - Targeting and recruitment techniques
 - Online
 - After school programs
 - Shopping malls
 - Bus depots and terminals
 - Foster care, group homes, child welfare system
 - Through friends or acquaintances who recruit on school campuses
 - Online dangers and safe internet usage
 - Social media
 - Chat rooms
 - Self-esteem building activities
 - Involve parents and guardians
 - Engage with local law enforcement

See: <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oese/oshs/factsheet.html>

What are online enticement techniques?

- Requests to leave a public chat room
 - *"Let's go private."* (phone, text, IM)
- See if parents are around
 - *"Where's your computer in the house?"*
- Questions about likes/interests for gifts
 - *"Who's your favorite band, clothes, movies,"*
- Flattery
 - *"I know someone who can get you a modeling job."*
- Sympathy
 - *"You seem sad, what's bothering you?"*
- Threats
 - *"If you don't do [X], I'll do [Y]."*

See: http://www.criminaljustice.ny.gov/missing/i_safety/enticement.htm

What are safe internet practices?

- Don't do anything online you wouldn't do in real life.
- Can't judge a book by its cover and can't judge a person by their online portrayal.
- Don't give out personal information
 - Name, age, address, phone number, SS#, photographs, information about family and friends
- Never agree to meet an "online friend"
 - Unless you really know the person. An online friend is a stranger who has walked into your life through Wi-Fi.

See: http://www.criminaljustice.ny.gov/missing/i_safety/basicrules.htm



Predators spend entire days trolling Facebook, looking for girls who post about fighting with their parents or feeling left out of school. Photographic reenactments by Daniel Bedell.

Comments (16) | Published June 10, 2013



If only Katie hadn't responded to the Facebook message. That's how her ordeal began in the summer of 2011—with a vague enticement from an unfamiliar name, Rain Smith.

"You're pretty. You could make some money." Those empty words had lured her into a stranger's car.

It hadn't been clear how she'd make money, and now Katie knew there was no "Rain Smith." There was only the man in front of her—Justin Strom, a member of the Underground Gangster Crips gang in Fairfax County and the leader of a sex-trafficking operation.

Ottawa teen girl who led underage prostitution ring convicted of 30 charges

“Last June, police in Ottawa charged the **three teens with allegedly using social media to befriend and lure nine girls between 13 and 17 years of age** to a home at a social housing complex in southeast Ottawa. That is where one of the accused lived, neighbours said.”

<http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/news/prostitution-ring-ottawa/>

“The victims were **lured through Facebook and other social media** to come to a south-end Ottawa housing complex to hang out. The girls, some drugged, were then taken elsewhere to meet clients.”

“The girls were beaten, confined and forced to hand over their earnings, court was told. Some were stripped and **photographed** nude, with photos **texted** to clients. . . *CBC News* said.” <https://ca.news.yahoo.com/blogs/dailybrew/ottawa-teen-girl-led-underage-prostitution-ring-convicted-193849590.html>

What are helpful resources for schools and teachers?

o Virginia

- o Just Ask VA: End Teen Sex Trafficking. See <http://justaskva.org/>

o National

- o National Human Trafficking Hotline/Resource Center (1-888-373-7888)
- o [Human Trafficking 101 for School Administrators and Staff](#) ([Blue Campaign](#), U.S. Department of Homeland Security)
- o [Human Trafficking of Children in the United States: A Fact Sheet for Schools](#) (U.S. Department of Education)

Summary

“Commercial sexual exploitation can happen to any [child] regardless of age, race, socioeconomic status, or geographical location”

(Rand, 2009, p.141)

References

- o Blue Campaign. U.S. Department of Homeland Security. See <http://www.dhs.gov/end-human-trafficking>
- o NCHE Webinar Materials: The Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC): What is It?, Who's at Risk?, What Can Schools Do? See <http://center.serve.org/nche/web/trafficking.php>
- o Rand, A.(2009). It can't happen in my backyard: The commercial sexual exploitation of girls in the United States. *Child & Youth Services*, 31,138-156.
- o U.S. Department of Education. Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE)/Office of Safe and Healthy Students. *Human Trafficking of Children in the United States*. See <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oese/oshs/factsheet.html>

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