Sexual assault, sex trafficking, and prostitution

Trauma, trafficking and connection to IPV/IPSA

Miriam Goodman, LMSW
The Center’s Work

- RESEARCH
- DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS
- EXPERT ASSISTANCE
Trauma: What is it and why does it matter?

- Results from an event, series of events, or set of circumstance that is experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or threatening and that lasting adverse effects on the individual’s functioning and the individual’s psychological, social, emotional or spiritual well-being
- Micro (interpersonal trauma) and Macro (systemic trauma and oppression) experiences
Interpersonal Trauma

Immediate Reactions

Fight

Flight

*Freeze
Intrusive thoughts/feelings
- The client who reports that she is unable to sleep/has racing thoughts
- The client who reports physical pain, but no doctor can offer a medical explanation

Avoidance
- The client who never comes in to do their mandate
- The client who shows no affect

Hyperarousal
- The client who cannot sit still
- The client who continuously interrupts you

Reenactment
- The client who needs to talk and take control over the session

Dissociation
- The client who starts talking with a different voice or attitude
- The client who completely checks out during an interview/session
- The client who shows no affect while talking about traumatic events
Examples of traumas:
• Childhood Sexual Abuse
• Childhood Physical abuse
• Verbal/Emotional Abuse
• Domestic/Sexual Violence
• Poverty
• Rape
• Neglect
Context of Trauma Histories

Trauma → Vulnerability → Trauma
Prostitution, Trafficking and IPV
What’s in a word?

Prostitute
What’s in a word?

Prostitute

 Trafficking Victim
What’s in a word?

- Prostitute
- Trafficking Victim
- Victim of IPV/IPSA
1) Who’s responsible?
2) What’s the response?
What is trafficking?

The federal definition of human trafficking defined by the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) as:

• The recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for sex trafficking in which a commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion;

• A commercial sex act is induced through force, fraud, or coercion

• A person induced to perform a commercial sex act has not attained 18 years of age
Root Causes/Pathways

**Push Factors**
- Poverty
- Lack of economic opportunity
- Migration
- Physical and/or Sexual abuse
- Trauma
- Objectification of women

**Pull Factors**
- Opportunity and adventure
- Promises of money
- False pretenses of love
- Hope for a better life
Three Key Elements

**Force**
- Physical Assault
- Sexual Assault
- Emotional Abuse
- Damage to property
- Branding

**Fraud**
- Pretending to be a boyfriend
- Promise of making money for a future business that never happens
- Promise of money or earnings that never materialize
- Required to do things that were not originally planned

**Coercion**
- Exposing a secret
- Threats of violence to victim, family or friends
- Isolation
- Keeping control of documents
- Threatening to take custody
- Threatening to call authorities immigration and/or police
IPV or Trafficking?

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“Traumatic Bonding” and “Love”
- “turned out” at a young age
- Pimp provides
  - Shelter, food, clothes, basic needs
  - Sense of safety from unsafe family/community/living situation
  - Promise of future
  - Love
  - Companionship
- Psychological Abuse

Isolation
- Kept in insular community
- Stable of folks
- Recreation of family
- Using other woman

Money/ Sense of worth
- Power
- Self worth/worth of attention direct result of financial worth
RULES

• Do not talk about your pimp
• Do not talk to or look at other pimps
• Do not talk to other women who are not your wife-in-laws
• Snitches get stitches
• Pimps Up, Hoes down
• Love your daddy
The Life or The Game: The life of prostitution
Daddy: The pimp
P.I: In reference to another pimp
Stable: A group of women/girls under pimp control
Bottom Bitch/Bottom Girl: The head girl
Breaking: To give all your money to your pimp
Choosing: To choose another pimp
Folks/Family: Your pimp or the person for whom you work
Gorilla Pimp: A pimp who uses force to get a woman
Suave Pimp: A pimp who uses sweetness and kindness to seduce women
Track/Stroll: A street location for prostitution
Turnout: Someone who recruits you into “the life”

Wife-in-Law: A group of women who work for the same pimp
Dates/Johns/Trick: Buyers/ Clients
In House: Someone who works from inside a house
Out of Pocket: To look at or talk to another pimp
Stay in Pocket: To play by the rules of “the game”
Renegade: To work for oneself or to not have a pimp
Pimps Up, Hos Down... A reference to power and status or a rule of standing in the street and not being allowed on the sidewalk
Pimp Circle... A group of pimps surrounding a girl for purposes of intimidation
Square: Those who were never in “the life”
Squaring Up: To get out of the game
The Overlap

- Intimate partner violence: Pimp = Intimate partner
- Power and Control > Coercive Control
  - Sexual, physical, emotional abuse
  - Control over actions
  - Control over money
  - Isolation
- Stigma:
  - Being a victim
  - Staying with perpetrator
- Contact with criminal justice system
- Orders of protection
- Victims of IPV/DV/SA separate from trafficking experiences
POWER & CONTROL WHEEL FOR WOMEN INVOLVED IN STREET PROSTITUTION

**Economic Abuse**
Taking her money/benefits; not letting her have control over the money she earns and withholding earnings; making her pay for his own habits (drugs/alcohol/gambling); not paying the ‘going rate’; fixing ‘thresholds’ on what she has to earn and changing these.

**Sexual Abuse**
Forcing her to carry out sexual acts ‘as a favour,’ to pay debts or for money/drugs; forcing her to watch or participate in pornography; forcing her to have unsafe sex.

**Encouraging Drug & Alcohol Dependence**
Controlling the quantity of drugs/alcohol they have; preventing agency assistance; sabotaging her efforts to access support; injecting her/getting her high to enable her to sell sex.

**Using Coercion, Intimidation and Threats**
Threatening violence, saying to her, ‘If you love me you will do it’; threatening to leave her; threatening to tell the Police, Social Services and family members about her selling sex; blackmailing her; putting conditions on offers of ‘help.’

**Using Isolation**
Confining and isolating her; stalking her and monitoring her movements; controlling/preventing communications with friends and family; being the only source of support for her; preventing controlling access to services.

**Stigmatising, Undermining, Blaming**
Threatening exposure to family and children; normalising experiences of selling sex and sexual violence; disregarding the impact of selling sex on her; blaming violence on her; stigmatising her because of selling sex – name calling, blaming her for all her problems.

**Physical Abuse**
Hitting, slapping, punching, kicking, burning and disfiguring her; using weapons against her; forcing or withholding drug/alcohol use.

**Emotional Abuse**
Criticising and putting her down to undermine her confidence; affirming existing stigmas about her; threatening suicide if she leaves and/or doesn’t sell sex; playing mind games; humiliating her, including by openly having sexual relationships with others; withholding affection to control her.

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The Differences

- Stigma: “prostitute”, “criminal”, “choice”
- Victim/Defendant
- Traditional DV/SA providers do not ask questions
- Don’t exactly fit in to traditional programming and services – judgment from other survivors/staff
- Response from law enforcement/judicial system
- Response from staff: judges, attorneys, probation, service providers
- SHAME
Case Example: Alice

- With her pimp for over 20 years
- Multiple hospitalizations for wounds
- Contact with DV advocates
- Arrested for prostitution
- Engaged with court based DV advocate
  - Trained in working with trafficking victims
Q and A
Contact information:

Miriam Goodman, LMSW
Coordinator of Trafficking Programs, Center for Court Innovation
mgoodman@courts.state.ny.us
347.735.3957