

**Providing a Path: Exploratory Promising Practices for Working with Sexually  
Exploited/Trafficked Children and Youth**

By

JENNIFER RICHARDSON

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University of Manitoba

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## **Abstract**

The sexual exploitation and sex trafficking of children and youth in Canada is a growing concern. In the last 30 years, research has clearly identified several shared characteristics of these children, such as child welfare involvement, poverty, familial abuse and violence, drug and alcohol involvement, and homelessness. Yet, the lack of evidence regarding best practices to reduce harm to this group of children is staggering and practically non-existent.

This exploratory study is grounded in nine in-depth qualitative interviews with the following three groups: (1) young adults who were exploited as children but who are now stable, (2) parents/guardians of exploited children, and (3) specialized service providers. The goal of these interviews is to provide micro best-practice actions, theories and/or strategies to reduce the risk(s) for exploited/trafficked children. A small quantitative survey was also provided to participants on strategies, legislation and/or models from other jurisdictions to seek their feedback on if such practices should be explored in Manitoba. The data from the interviews was then coded and analyzed to look for emerging themes.

The findings of this study demonstrate that there are many strategies that can be effective in reducing the risk of children/youth being exploited, but that there is a strong need to have a secure setting to address co-occurring issues of exploitation, addiction, mental health, and other developmental disabilities that are not all being addressed in existing settings.

## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to first thank my children and mother for their support during this process. I would also like to thank my husband Michael for his unconditional love, support and encouragement to chase all of my dreams, no matter what the cost or sacrifice has been to him.

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Finally, a sincere thank you to all of the participants interviewed for this study for sharing their experiences with me so that we can collectively learn from their brilliance.

**Dedication**

This thesis is dedicated to all of the children and youth who are still being sexually exploited and/or trafficked. My sincere hope is that this thesis will better equip helpers to support and provide guidance so that the abuse being perpetrated against you ends.

## Preface

As a person with lived experience of being sex trafficked as a child, the lack of progress made to prevent this extremely violent sexual abuse of children is unfortunately a reality that I understand both from a personal and professional lens and one that I am invested in contributing to the collective actions being taken to change that reality.

In undertaking this thesis, I must acknowledge that as someone who has been trafficked, someone who has worked as a clinical social worker and as a person who has worked as a civil servant, my lens and understanding of the issue has several vantage points. First, as a person who has experienced sexual exploitation/sex trafficking, I have an understanding of the sex trade that I first wrote about in *“Understanding and Working with Sexually Exploited Children and Youth”*. Learning about the 8 (Language, Cognitive Systems, Roles, Rules/Norms, Political Systems, Economic Systems, Arts and Technology, and Spirituality) different cultural components from the Manitoba Core Competency *“Culture and Diversity”* training allowed me to verbalize and categorize my, and so many other children’s abuse; into a framework that enabled people who had not been exploited/trafficked to understand that there is an entire sub culture of our society where children are “re-socialized and sexually abused in plain sight and invisibly.

I would also be remiss if I did not acknowledge my positionality having spent many years working with the Government of Manitoba on the Provincial Strategy, both as a non-governmental person, as well as a civil servant. I also collaborated with many other wonderful programs in Manitoba, too many to mention, but as I have referenced

the Prostitution Offender Program, I would be inattentive if I did not acknowledge that I presented regularly for that program for many years.

As mentioned, I also acknowledge my piece in co-authoring the Province of Manitoba's training module entitled *Understanding and Working with Sexually Exploited Children and Youth* (Berry, Runner, Hallick, Rocke, & Scheirich, 2003). This training was designed to identify and address cultural differences of people who have been trafficked to assist the field in identification of children/youth who have been sexually exploited/sex trafficked, and identify clinical strategies to work with this population.

This work is intended to contribute to changing this reality for many other children and/or youth by identifying concrete strategies/approaches to effectively address this human rights issue of child sexual exploitation/ sex trafficking.

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## Chapter 1

### Introduction

Over the past 30 years, specialists (Gorkoff & Runner, 2003; Kingsley & Marks, 2002; Lloyd, 2005; Pearce, 2011) in the area of sexual exploitation and sex trafficking of children and youth<sup>1</sup> have raised grave concerns regarding the impacts of this form of criminal sexual abuse on children/youth.

Under both federal and provincial legislation in Manitoba, the sexual exploitation of children and youth is not only an indictable offense<sup>2</sup>, but also a summary offense<sup>3</sup>. Academic literature on the sexual exploitation and sex trafficking of children has also identified long term adverse effects on the health and safety of these children. This sexual exploitation and its impacts have become of growing concern to government, child welfare agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). As a result of this growing concern and the identifiable risks to these children, government, child welfare agencies and NGOs have become increasingly diligent in identifying best practice methods and strategies to protect these children through legislation and programming that can prevent and/or reduce future harm.

From the beginning of the Manitoba Strategy on Sexual Exploitation and within the design of the Strategy, it was always acknowledged how important it was to work with front-line service providers who were working with this population of children, and to

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<sup>1</sup> For the purpose of this research, children and youth will refer to people under the age of majority.

<sup>2</sup> An indictable offence is more serious than a summary conviction offence. Conviction of an indictable offence carries greater penalties. See <http://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/cj-jp/victims-victimes/court-tribunaux/offences-infractions.html> (consulted August 15, 2017).

<sup>3</sup> Summary offences are considered less serious than indictable offences because they are punishable by shorter prison sentences and smaller fines. See <http://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/cj-jp/victims-victimes/court-tribunaux/offences-infractions.html> (consulted August 15, 2017).

strengthen people's understanding of what child sexual exploitation/sex trafficking was so that people could identify when it was occurring (Runner, 2016). The Province of Manitoba's definition of child sexual exploitation states that:

Child sexual exploitation is the act of coercing, luring or engaging a child, under the age of 18, into a sexual act, and involvement in the sex trade or pornography, with or without the child's consent, in exchange for money, drugs, shelter, food, protection or other necessities. (Province of Manitoba, 2002)

Unlike other forms of child abuse (i.e., physical and sexual abuse), very little research exists on the best practice treatment modalities that are most effective in reducing and/or treating the harm that has been inflicted on exploited/trafficked children. For example, Berckmans, Velasco, Tapia and Loots (2012) found that several studies were able to identify the reasons why children end up on the streets, but they also found that there was a lack of empirical research on effective interventions or treatment modalities to effectively deal with this group of children.

In 2002, the Province of Manitoba launched Phase I of its official strategy to combat and prevent sexual exploitation/sex trafficking of children (Province of Manitoba, 2002). Manitoba was the first province to launch a formal strategy, which currently contributes approximately 10.4 million dollars in funds annually and, until 2016, had the most robust strategy in Canada.<sup>4</sup> During the first phase of the Manitoba Strategy from 2002 to 2008, the focus of the strategy was on street exploitation and the strategy did not address exploitation through an indoor or invisible lens<sup>5</sup>, which left an enormous number of

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<sup>4</sup> Ontario's Strategy to End Human Trafficking is now the largest Strategy in Canada contributing 72 million dollars to initiatives over four years.

<sup>5</sup> The term "indoor" or "invisible exploitation" is exploitation that occurs indoors or invisibly through massage parlours, strip clubs, escort agencies or online through the internet and social media sites such as Facebook.

exploited children at-risk and/or not being identified. In 2008, Phase II was launched, and the strategy was expanded to include both indoor/invisible and street/visible types of exploitation. The strategy was expanded by including more prevention programming and a larger continuum of services for children and young adults. Manitoba also increased public awareness initiatives, and launched new legislation to ensure offenders were held more accountable for perpetrating this crime against children (Province of Manitoba, 2008).<sup>6</sup> Phase II of the strategy was entitled *Tracia's Trust*, named after a young woman, Tracia Owen, who had been sexually exploited, and then after many years of suffering this type of abuse, tragically committed suicide in the west end of Winnipeg when she was 14 years old (Province of Manitoba, 2008).

During phases I (from 2002 to 2008), II (from 2008 to 2011) and III (from 2011 to the present), specialized services, legislation, training, and awareness of this type of child sexual abuse were all funded under this unique strategy. In the last 15 years, numerous specialized programs have been developed and implemented under the strategy to address the issues of sexually exploited/trafficked children and youth. Additionally, the Province of Manitoba has endeavoured to focus on joint collaboration with Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) in the field of social services to provide youth with a comprehensive care strategy that can address their unique, and often complex, needs<sup>7</sup>.

However, there appears to be a gap in research with respect to the best therapeutic modalities for this population of children. At an estimated 10.4 million dollars in annual

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<sup>6</sup> See Manitoba's *Child Sexual Exploitation and Human Trafficking Act* at <https://www.gov.mb.ca/justice/csehtact.html> (consulted August 16, 2017).

<sup>7</sup> Often, many co-occurring factors are at play. For instance, the same youth may be exploited/trafficked, struggling with an addiction to methamphetamine, have a cognitive vulnerability and serious mental health concerns, including suicide ideation. As such, each case is unique and requires complex supports.

funding, Manitoba has one of the largest strategies in Canada supporting sexually exploited/trafficked children<sup>8</sup>. Examining the best practice methods and strategies employed to reduce harm and successfully provide therapeutic treatment to these children is both timely and urgently needed<sup>9</sup>. It should be noted that there are many specialized programs providing services to exploited/trafficked children in Manitoba, but that it was beyond the scope of this project to interview staff, parents and service users of all of those programs.

One of the longest standing, well known and a highly praised programs is the *Transition, Education and Resources for Females* (TERF) program run by New Directions for Children, Youth, Adults & Families. The TERF Program works from a holistic perspective to provide education and healing for children, youth and adults who have been sex trafficked and/or sexually exploited. TERF also works from a perspective of empowerment and employs numerous people with lived experience to work with the participants within the program. For this reason, this study focuses on young adults, parents/guardians and service providers who participated/worked or received services for their children in the TERF Program. To this researcher's knowledge, this study is a piece of foundational work<sup>10</sup>, and seeks to serve as one piece of a larger puzzle in laying the groundwork for more research on promising therapeutic modalities and practices to

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<sup>8</sup> British Columbia contributes approximately 2 million dollars annually to programs specific to human trafficking and approximately 70 million dollars to violence against women and children programming, but the latter are not all specific to human trafficking.

<sup>9</sup> Unfortunately, too many exploited/trafficked children and youth continue to fall through the cracks. One such example is Tina Fontaine, an exploited/sex trafficked child who was murdered in Winnipeg. See <http://www.ctvnews.ca/canada/tina-fontaine-murdered-aboriginal-teen-struggled-with-father-s-violent-death-1.1967508> (consulted August 17, 2017).

<sup>10</sup> To this researcher's knowledge, this is the first study to speak with parents/guardians of exploited/trafficked children and stabilized adult children who were sex trafficked in Canada.

reduce risk for exploited/trafficked children. This study interviewed young adults, parents/guardians and service providers who participated/worked or received services for their children in the TERF program.

When addressing the issue of best clinical practice when working with sexually exploited/trafficked children, most of the specialized service providers simply state that “developing a relationship” is the central strategy to be employed (Estes & Weiner, 2001; Gorkoff & Runner, 2003; Kingsley & Mark, 2002; Thomson, Hirshberg, Corbett, Valila, & Howley, 2011). However, this statement is quite vague, and lacking in complexity/analytical rigor, as the foundation of all social work practice is the effective “development of a relationship”.

Similarly, in research (Berckmans, Velasco, Tapia, & Loots, 2012; Pearce, 2006, 2011) on the issue, there appears to be a lack of acceptable and empirical treatment modalities that reduce harm and mitigate risk to sexually exploited/trafficked children and youth. In light of this limitation, it makes sense to better understand or define “relationship” in the context of working with sexually exploited children, which will, in turn, improve understandings of best practices in the development of treatment models.

This exploratory study that is seeking to identify best practices in reducing risk to exploited/sex trafficked children will only focus on participants that received services from the TERF program. In doing so, it will examine the most effective and best practice treatment models, perspectives, and theories to treat and reduce risk to sexually exploited/trafficked children/youth. It should be noted that there are many other highly effective programs that are operating under the Manitoba Strategy that are providing care and reducing risk to this population of children as well, but that seeking participants from all of the programs was beyond the scope of this project.

This study was completed by analyzing and triangulating first-hand information from: 1) parents/guardians who attempted to reduce the risk to their exploited children, 2) service providers who supported exploited children, and 3) adult women who have lived experience of being exploited/sex trafficked as a child. On the whole, this study seeks to examine any gap and contribute to this field of research as comprehensively as possible by combining analysis of academic literature and first-hand findings from front-line service providers, parents/guardians, and children who are now age of majority adults, but who received services as children.

The central research question of this work is as follows: What do service users, service providers and guardians feel are the most effective/best treatment practices (modalities, theoretical frameworks, strategies and/or approaches) when working with sexually exploited/trafficked children to reduce harm and mitigate risk?

To answer this question, this thesis employs a mixed methodology approach. First and foremost, it examines the voices of service providers, prior sexually exploited children, and guardians of exploited children. The qualitative interviews are the critical component of the research as they serve to provide the most in-depth information. Secondly, the research analyzes participants' responses to a survey about a variety of treatment options, ideas etc., that have been used in other jurisdictions to solicit their thoughts on the efficacy of these treatment options.

Throughout all of the literature review, this researcher could not find a study that interviewed parents of exploited/sex trafficked children. As such, this appears to be the first study that has sought to identify micro level strategies that reduce risk to exploited/sex trafficked children and youth from the perspective of parents, service providers and

stabilized adults who were exploited/sex trafficked as children. This study may form the groundwork for much needed future research in this area.

Throughout this study, three key themes emerged with all three participant groups. Those themes were: the need for a safe, supportive, non-blaming, non-shaming environment; prevention and early identification; and a specialized secure setting. Within the different participant groups, other themes emerged that are also key findings, as they are concrete actions to reduce risk to these children, and address some of the deductive themes (e.g., relationship building) that have trended in the current literature.

In the young adult participant group, two additional themes emerged. They are: caregivers spending genuine time with the children/youth, and the provision of age appropriate activities with the children/youth. In the service provider participant group, three themes emerged. These were; 1) listening skills, 2) healthy boundaries, and 3) respect. In the parent/guardian group, two themes were noted. They were; 1) communication with parents, and 2) dealing with offenders more effectively.

While prevention and a safe, supportive non-judgemental environment have been abstractly discussed within existing literature, this study was able to deduce specific strategies/actions so that parents and service providers are able to have a better sense of how to protect children from this abuse in the future.

Furthermore, a new theme – the need for a specialized secure setting – emerged from this study. From this researcher's knowledge, this theme has not yet emerged in the current body of academic knowledge on the topic of sexual exploitation/sex trafficking.

## Chapter 2

### Literature Review

Over the last 30 years there have been numerous studies conducted on the sexual exploitation and human trafficking of children and youth. A review of the literature reveals that similar themes repeatedly emerge along with abstract recommendations and/or best practice suggestions for addressing the sexual exploitation/sex trafficking of children. The themes that continually reappear throughout the literature are as follows:

1. The sexual exploitation of children is a form of child abuse;
2. The offenders who are abusing these children are often not held accountable for their actions, and the children are often blamed for being exploited; and
3. There is a lack of concrete methods, practice strategies or theoretical frameworks on how to best protect sexually exploited children from this form of child abuse.

### *Sexual Exploitation of Children is a Form of Child Abuse*

The first theme that is continually presented and argued throughout much of the literature is the perspective that child sexual exploitation/trafficking is a form of child sexual abuse (Azhar & Al-Bahar, 2011; Badaway, 2010; Badgley, 1984; Barret, 1998; Fraser, 1985; Gorkoff, & Runner, 2003; Kingsley & Mark, 2002; Lloyd, 2005 ). Legally and socially, literature has found that children who have been sexually exploited have been seen as “delinquents” and “nuisances” to society, and to the other systems that interface with exploited/trafficked children. As such, for many years these children were not protected from this type of abuse, but rather criminalized and ignored by the very people



that were mandated to protect them (Badgley, 1984; Berry et al., 2003; Bittle, 2002b; Fraser, 1985). An overwhelming number of authors found that this form of child sexual abuse has been largely ignored by the children's care providers, mandated services, and society (Badgley, 1984; Fong & Cardoso, 2010; Pearce, 2011; Lloyd, 2005; Melrose, 2004; Williams, 2010).

Furthermore, sexually exploited children will often mask or dull the shame they experience from "mainstream society" with the use of drugs and alcohol (Brawn & Roe-Sepowitz, 2008; Fong & Cardoso, 2010; Gorkoff & Runner, 2003; Kingsley & Mark, 2002; Llyod, 2005; Saewyc & Edinburgh, 2010). Studies have also found that children will often leave safe places in order to obtain drugs and/or alcohol as a mechanism of coping with the abuse they have suffered through the sex trade (Brawn & Roe-Sepowitz, 2008; Dalley, 2010; Melrose, 2004; Saewyc & Edinburgh, 2010; Thomson et al., 2011). Due to the nature of these coping mechanisms, these children are treated as non-compliant, and considered willfully missing. As a result, they have not been deemed in need of protection. Unfortunately, many service providers and law enforcement often do not understand the behaviours of these children, and, as such, fail to identify the abuse they are often experiencing multiple times a day. Often, the children have been so abused so frequently that they have normalized the abuse, and, as such, refuse to give statements to police and child welfare workers. Unfortunately, the coping mechanisms (drugs, alcohol, and flight responses) that these children have developed to survive are viewed as delinquent behaviors, and then dealt with as such. As this researcher argues, it is, in fact, these very coping mechanisms, that have long been assisting these children in coping that are also placing them at an extremely high risk of being repeatedly victimized.

### Victim Blaming

Another theme in the literature is that the blame for this criminal act is more often than not, placed on the victims rather than on the perpetrators who are sexually offending against these children (Badgley, 1984; Barret, 1998; Bittle, 2002b; Brown, 2006; Chase & Stratham, 2005; Cooper, Estes, Giardino, Kellog, & Vieth, 2005; Estes & Weiner, 2001; Fraser, 1985; Gorkoff, & Runner, 2003; Kingsley & Mark, 2002; Lebloch & King, 2006; Lloyd, 2005; Pearce, 2006 & 2011; Schissel & Fedec, 1999; Urban Native Youth Association, 2002; ).

The re-socialization process back to mainstream society from the sex trade culture is a very difficult transition for the child to make, filled with complexities that are often not understood by social service providers, parents/guardians, police and/or the children's communities. Sexually exploited children often experience hostility (shaming/blaming behaviors) by "mainstream" society, which in turn can often lead to further entrenchment in the sex trade where they feel acceptance and belonging (Berry et al., 2003).

Inadvertently, when service providers, police, child welfare workers, and parents/guardians blame the child for the exploitation occurring, it reinforces the message with which the pimps/traffickers/exploiters are manipulating the children that they will never be accepted in mainstream society. That they are not worth enough to belong anywhere else other than in the sex trade. It simply becomes "easier" for the child to live in a culture (the sex trade) where they are not being subjected to shame or blame of "outsiders" (Berry et al., 2003).

Other research (Coy, 2009; Seshia, 2005) has identified the "culture of care" within the child welfare system, and how these children are misunderstood and often moved

multiple times from placement to placement (blamed for their abuse and subsequent behaviors), as a major risk factor to poor outcomes for these children.

In 2006, Lebloch and King found that the impacts of being sexually exploited are different than those in other abuse situations. They are also more complex in terms of the recovery process. Indeed, these children deal with stigma that other children who have been sexually abused by family members or by third party offenders do not deal with. They also often have workers who do not have the correct training (i.e., don't understand sexual exploitation/trafficking), which makes these children more socially isolated and emotionally damaged from not being able to access appropriate supports due to a lack of awareness/training on the part of the agencies that are working with them.

In another study, experiential<sup>11</sup> women spoke about the effect of being a marginalized group, and how the "blame" and "shame" placed on them by institutions, workers and law enforcement officers ultimately affected their self-esteem (Seshia, 2005). Anecdotally, before they can even begin to develop the smallest amount of trust with these children, workers who have contact with these children on a daily basis report that they must first spend months attempting to ensure these children understand and believe that they do not blame them for the abuse being perpetrated on them.

In their study, Gorkoff and Runner (2003) made several important findings. They found that children who become sexually exploited on the streets have higher incidences of familial sexual abuse than the general population (p. 30). In addition, a significant number of these children were running away from dysfunctional family settings or child welfare placements that often blamed them for the abuse they were experiencing (p. 30).

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<sup>11</sup> "Experiential" is a term often used to describe people who have experienced sexual exploitation and/or trafficking.

In 2011, Pearce found that several of the children who were reported to be sexually exploited were often criticized by the workers who were employed to protect them. The workers indicated that the children would “go back and engage” in the sex trade, making them complicit participants in being sexually exploited/trafficked. As such, she found that the majority of the workers did not make attempts to protect these children because they felt they had other children who actually needed their protection.

Throughout this researcher’s career in working with these children, both prior to becoming a mandated child welfare worker and while officially working as a child welfare worker, there have been consistent examples of child welfare workers and police ignoring their responsibility to protect these children. Very often, the response would be that the child is “always missing so I can’t do anything”, “they are exploiting themselves”, and “they won’t tell me what happened to them so there is nothing that I can do”.

All of these statements are examples of child welfare workers and police negating their mandated responsibility to protect the child, and blaming the children for the sexual abuse that is being perpetrated against them. This type of “categorizing” of these children as “less than” other types of victims is quite common when it comes to exploited and sex trafficked children. Within the six-day training course that this researcher co-authored, the “othering” of these children as “less than” other children is examined to give participants an understanding of their use of language, use of resources, and incorrectly categorizing these children as responsible for the sexual abuse that is hurting them.

Consider another example that highlights the prevalence of this victim blaming in the media. Recently, a Winnipeg Sun reporter stated that all the appropriate resources in the world would not stop “these” children from running away and using drugs and/or alcohol. Tom Brodbeck reported that a child who was recently murdered, who was

exploited, “was bound and determined to return to the streets even though care was available and offered to her,” and that “these children are exposing themselves to the dangerous world of gangs, drugs, violence and prostitution” (Winnipeg Sun, Oct. 8., 2014).

As children cannot legally consent to prostitution, it is irrational for Mr. Brodbeck to describe the sexual abuse that is occurring to these children and most often carried about by adult males as prostitution. We must name this and use clear language to describe what this really is: child abuse. In 2016, another article rightly indicated that “the mislabelling of victims also fails to deter traffickers and their customers from purchasing sex with children and wastes police resources” (Speckman, 2016, p. 406). Indeed, media plays a large role in contributing to society’s lack of awareness of what is really occurring for these children by blaming them for the abuse that is constantly occurring to them and illegally being carried out, often without any legal consequences, by adults.

Society’s ambivalence towards prostitution, poverty, oppression, racism and gender discrimination are all factors related to the vulnerability of youth who are at risk of becoming sexually exploited/trafficked or who have already been sexually exploited/trafficked. All of these social factors can be linked to the history that females have endured under a patriarchal system, which is structured to maintain the oppression of females in order for men to maintain control and, some may say, to continue to place blame on the victims (most often women) rather than the predators/offenders (most often men).

One manner in which “blame” is misplaced is in our language. Language in our society plays a large role in how we view social issues and their causes. Over the last several years, in Manitoba, non-governmental and governmental agencies have

advocated for change in how we label children involved in the sex trade. This shifting of views and language, both advocating and opposing, is largely derived from a feminist perspective. When exploring this issue from a feminist perspective, one perspective/ideology of feminism used is “gender feminism”. In 1997, McElroy described “gender feminism” as a perspective that:

Looks at history and sees an uninterrupted oppression of women by men that spans cultural barriers. To them, the only feasible explanation is that men and women are separate and antagonistic classes whose interests necessarily conflict. Male interests are expressed through and maintained by a capitalistic structure known as "patriarchy." (p.1)

Gender feminism looks at sex as a social construct, and since patriarchy is dominant in our society, “men construct women’s sexuality through the words and images of society which the French philosopher Foucault called the “texts” of society” (McElroy, 1997, p. 1). Through these “texts” of society, men and women market a female’s sexuality and commercialize it in many forms, such as, prostitution and pornography. To end the commercialization of females, the “texts” rooted in patriarchy need to be changed and rewritten.

In changing our language or “texts” of society, we can begin to remove the blame and shame from youth being exploited and abused. We can also begin to examine and constructively tackle our ambivalence towards this social issue. Much of the societal resistance to assisting those being exploited through the sex trade is the commonly held belief that people freely choose to engage in prostitution. Therefore, since it is assumed to be an individual’s choice to engage in prostitution, any negative experiences they have are regarded as a consequence of a personal choice and the responsibility of the individuals themselves. Countryman-Roswurm and Bolin (2014) indicate that there has been forward movement on the anti-human trafficking front, but that the words “prostitute”

and “prostitution” are still being used. This is problematic, for these terms have different meanings than sexual abuse or abuse. As cited in Countryman-Roswurm and Bolin (2014), Flowers (1998) stated “that when we use the word prostitute, a number of synonyms come to mind, many of them stereotypical and sexist: whore, fallen woman, street walker, call girl, white slave, drug addict, runaway, and even victim” (p.5).

This “blame the victim” attitude is rooted in the patriarchal system, but since Manitoba has begun the re-writing of our “texts” from a gender feminist perspective, we have now recognized that the men who are abusing these children should be the people holding the “blame”, not the children involved in the sex trade.

In 2002, the Province of Manitoba launched the Manitoba Strategy “Responding to Children and Youth at Risk of, or Survivors of, Sexual Exploitation”. The Manitoba Strategy encouraged law enforcement to change their language, resulting in the Winnipeg Police Services’ Vice Unit being renamed to the Counter Sexual Exploitation Unit. These changes in practice, both in terms of the new definition of “youth prostitution” and new unit name for Winnipeg Police, are clear examples of the long awaited beginning steps to the deconstruction of our patriarchal system.

### *Research and Practice Models*

A final theme in the literature is a substantive lack of suggested practice models that might link research to practice. It is unfortunate that very few studies reviewed gave concrete strategies regarding best practice methodologies/techniques when working with this population of children. Very broad statements such as “developing relationships”, “children’s rights” and “child centered” were often used to describe best practices, which

could mean very different practice strategies to different people who are intervening with sexually exploited children and youth.

One example of the poor fit between research and practice is in the area of the long-term risks associated with youth who are sexually exploited/trafficked. Prior research conducted by this researcher showed that children who are not diverted from the sex trade become re-socialized into a sub-culture of mainstream society that has been identified as the “sex trade” (Berry et al., 2003). Berry et al. (2003) further found that:

Once humans are conditioned by any culture that meets their needs in particular ways, they tend to become so set in these ways that change is perceived as a threat to their personal and interpersonal stability and continuity. This is particularly true for young children that are being abused through sexual exploitation. (p. 75)

In 2016, Runner indicated that based on over 25 years of clinical experience working with these children, she identified that the longer the child is immersed in the sex trade culture, the harder it is to remove him/herself from it, and for him/her to become a member of another culture (other than the sex trade, drug or gang culture).

To effectively work with this population, several reports (Countryman-Roswurm & Bolin, 2014; Hardy, Compton & McPhatter, 2013; Runner & Gorkoff, 2003) have explored possible macro level best intervention/practice strategies to remove these children who are entrenched<sup>12</sup> in the sex trade, and mitigate risk to these children.

Yet a review of the research on child sexual exploitation has shown that there are very little concrete or micro best practice treatment strategies to treat and/or reduce risk to these children (Berckmans et al., 2012; Pearce, 2006 & 2011). One of the issues associated with current research on this issue is that it is often too abstract and

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<sup>12</sup> “Entrenched” is a term coined by J. Runner in 2003 to describe a stage of exploitation and level of risk. “Entrenched” is the highest risk stage of exploitation.



theoretical, lacking in practical hands-on applications for clinicians and service providers to translate into treatment. However, this barrier of translating research into best practice is not isolated to the issue of child sexual exploitation and the sex trafficking of children. Indeed, this application issue has been identified across a number of human science fields.

In 2007, the National Institute of Health in the United States stated that “there has been consistent difficulty in rapidly translating basic science discoveries into effective interventions” (p. 2). Other barriers identified are that research is reported in language that is difficult for service providers to translate into practice. Other times, the community service providers do not have the ability to translate the outcomes of research findings into everyday practice due to the research findings being more abstract than concrete descriptions. For instance, in 2007, the National Institute of Health explained that:

Translational research includes two areas of translation. One is the process of applying discoveries generated during research in the laboratory, and in preclinical studies, to the development of trials and studies in humans. The second area of translation concerns research aimed at enhancing the adoption of best practices in the community. Cost-effectiveness of prevention and treatment strategies is also an important part of translational science. (p. 2)

It is critical that we better translate research on sexual exploitation and human trafficking into practice so that best intervention practices may be applied in practical, on-the-ground ways.

On this theme, the 2001 Second World Congress Against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children found that successful interventions with this population needed to promote children’s rights. This report, entitled, “Prevention, Protection, and Recovery of Children from Sexual Exploitation. Yokohama: A Contribution of the NGO Group for the Convention on the Rights of the Child,” was written after 122 governments, who

attended the First World Congress against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in 1996, adopted the Stockholm Declaration, committing to creating national plans of action by the year 2000. The 2001 Second World Congress Against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children acted/served as a collection of countries and their representatives to develop interventions, and return to the collective group of countries to discuss which interventions or practices had been successful, and which had not.

The recommendation of the Second World Congress Against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children to “promote children’s rights” is a broad statement that potentially can cover many issues in regard to best practice interventions with exploited children. However, when the representatives requested that sexually exploited children define what “children’s rights” meant to them, they came up with specific examples of how service providers could intervene appropriately with their peers who had been sexually exploited (2001, p. 8). They included services that provided a range of interventions based on the needs of a sexually exploited child. The children elaborated on their needs by indicating that service providers needed to consistently demonstrate respect, non judgemental attitudes, and acceptance of sexually exploited children (2001, p. 10). However, here again, due to vague language, these terms could mean different strategies to different service providers.

A critical, key component of all interventions or best practices with exploited children, as reported by the children providing feedback to the Second World Congress Against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children, was the overriding belief that:

Children who are involved in prostitution, as well as, those who are sexually abused in non- commercial contexts, should be recognized as victims of abuse. It is frequently reported that these children are considered to be responsible for their own experiences, and thus are excluded from any child protection services. (p 10)

In essence, these children often reported not being protected by the very people that were trusted by society, and mandated to protect them. In 2011, Pearce confirmed this experience shared by survivors. In her examination of service providers who were tasked to protect sexually exploited/trafficked children, she found that service providers presented as either “unaware of the indicators of exploitation or challenged to believe the child which augmented a culture of disbelief” (p.1429). In 2008, Bokhari found that child welfare practitioners were the best suited to protect children, due to their mandated responsibilities, but Bokhari also found that many practitioners were not trained to deal with the children’s needs, and resources were not available specific to their needs.

Further exacerbating the issue, in many cases child protection’s culture of disbelief or lack of awareness has allowed for these children to continue to become victimized over and over again due to a failure to protect these children.

In their 2003 study, Gorkoff and Runner found that services like TERF that provided an open and supportive, non-judgemental environment with access to experiential staff (women who have exited the sex trade) were most likely to be frequented by these children (p. 139). Lastly, a crucial component identified and examined by Gorkoff and Runner (2003) when exploring successful interventions with children involved in the sex trade was the ability of workers to take the perspective that children have rights, and, as such, they need to be respected. Here again, service recommendations are not concrete. Indeed, Gorkoff and Runner’s findings of open and supportive services can look very different to different professionals.

Although it was clear that the agencies and staff working with these young people did not condone child exploitation, they did advocate for children to have appropriate access to all the services they so desperately needed while being sexually exploited

through the sex trade, and when attempting to exit the sex trade (Gorkoff & Runner, 2003, p. 139). While helpful and a good starting point, Gorkoff and Runner's study lacked a description of exactly what services are needed, or would have been helpful to the service providers.

A second study conducted by Kingsley and Mark for *Save the Children Canada* in 2002 is also noteworthy. Save the Children Canada employed two experiential Indigenous women to embark on a cross-country research project examining 22 communities and 150 children who were sexually exploited/trafficked. Their objective was to explore what these children's needs were in regards to prevention, intervention and future research (Kingsley & Mark, 2002). The Save the Children report authored by Kingsley and Mark found that children felt that their involvement was critical in successful interventions. The children reported that experiential<sup>13</sup> children were in the best position to describe the types of specialized programming that they would need to address their multi-faceted needs (p. 63). This highlights the need to consult experiential voices. In spite of these important findings, the report fell short. It neglected to investigate or describe the best practice manners in which to achieve these recommendations, and failed to investigate how service providers could best protect these children while mitigating risk.

Consider a third study. In 2003, Laye examined a series of Canadian reports, which included authors such as Lowman (1989), Rabinovitch (1997), Carter and Walton (2000), and many more. These reports stressed that effective prevention should address

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social policy issues (including legislation to protect children) that cause children to become vulnerable to exploitation in the first place.

The Social Services and Community Safety Division of the Justice Institute of British Columbia acknowledged this may be a difficult goal; however, effective prevention must not be underestimated as an important component on the continuum of service. They found that “once the goal of prevention is achieved, far, far less children will become sexually exploited/trafficked and the intervention component of the continuum would spend far less resources to abolish this form of child abuse” (2002, p. 32).

This report entitled “Commercial Sexual Exploitation: Innovative Ideas for Working with Children and Youth” published by the Justice Institute of British Columbia also looked at the prevention of child prostitution. The goal was to foster unique manners in which to work with sexually exploited/trafficked children. By using a child advisory group consisting of children that had experienced sexual exploitation, the report identified that policy makers and service providers could develop strategies to meet these children’s distinct needs.

But here again, the report stressed that what the children felt and identified as the most effective manners in which to mitigate risk, and best practice treatment modalities for their complex needs were not addressed. Furthermore, conducting focus groups or research with children or minors, particularly children in care, raises ethical concerns as it is generally thought that these children have less parental investment in their wellbeing, and, as such, are often assessed as too high risk for ethics committees. As this study demonstrates below, studying samples of young adults who were exploited as children may be an effective manner in which to gather more data and understanding on this population.

Like the Justice Institute of British Columbia (2002), the Urban Native Youth Association (2002), found that prevention strategies were a key component in reducing and eliminating the sexual exploitation of children. The Justice Institute of British Columbia (2002) suggested that, if successful, prevention strategies should reduce the supply of children entering the sex trade. However, the report made the following important distinction: that prevention did not consist of just educating people, and that education was only part of the prevention needed to reduce the sexual abuse of children in the sex trade. All things considered, the report, like many others, raises important points, but fails to give any actual concrete examples of best practice prevention strategies to reduce child sexual exploitation/trafficking.

The report did, however, conclude with an important factor for the future development of best practice strategies for working with sexually exploited/trafficked children. The Justice Institute explicitly indicated that there are larger systems at play (racism, classism, socioeconomic status, gender, sexism, etc.) when it comes to sexual exploitation, and that people are not exploited and victimized purely due to their lack of knowledge regarding the issue (2002, p. 32).

This researcher contends in this study that in order to develop best/promising practice prevention strategies for working with sexually exploited/trafficked children, prevention strategies must take into account and seek to change the macro systems that currently create a societal environment in which children are at risk of becoming exploited/trafficked in the first place.

From all of these reports (Urban Native Youth Association, 2002; Justice Institute of British Columbia, 2002; Gorkoff & Runner, 2003; Kingsley & Mark, 2002) a common theme emerges that the sexual exploitation of children is an act of child sexual abuse,

and, as such, children involved in the sex trade should be seen as victims rather than criminals engaging in delinquent behaviors.

Grounded in these academic findings, and the expertise of front-line service providers, parents and children, this project goes a step further to provide clear, concrete, specific and empirical treatment practices that are both (1) effective when working with sexually exploited/trafficked children, and (2) successful in reducing harm and mitigating risk.

From 1997 to 1999, changes made to the Criminal Code of Canada, such as Bill C-27 and Bill C-51, that were intended to decriminalize children who were being exploited in the sex trade were a good first step in improving the approach and best practice strategies to protecting vulnerable children (Robertson, 2003). Although these changes to federal legislation were good first steps, and did trickle down to how police interact with children who are trafficked and exploited (i.e., not criminalizing them under prostitution related offenses), these changes did not provide micro level strategies to reduce risk to these children.

These legal reforms were important to creating positive long-term change for these children, but more advances are still needed. Multiple studies (Badaway, 2010; Barnitz, 2001; Barret, 1998; Bittle, 2002a; Gorkoff, & Runner, 2003; Kingsley & Mark, 2002; Lloyd, 2005; Melrose, 2004; Urban Native Youth Association, 2002), have recommended that the enforcement aspect of current legislation be revisited in order to effectively prosecute adults who are sexually exploiting children or trafficking children into the sex trade.

Based on the literature, it is clear that there are many common, yet abstract themes identified to address the sexual exploitation/trafficking of children. Indeed, most of the studies reviewed above discuss involving children in the process of program and policy

development, but lack concrete best/promising practice strategies to employ in order to achieve this involvement. Due to the broad/unspecific themes stated, no single “right way” in which to intervene with children who have been sexually exploited is evident. Indeed, most studies examined found that exiting was a very individualized process for people, and dependent on many variables. These variables included the community in which they lived, how they entered the trade (street or invisible), etc. (Gorkoff & Runner, 2003; Justice Institute of British Columbia, 2002; Kingsley & Mark, 2002; Second World Congress Against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children, 2001).

That said, the need for mutual respect and a non-judgemental service approach were clear in all of the studies. However, children who required intervention to exit the sex trade clearly repeated throughout each study that these abstract recommendations were inadequate. Although all of the studies discussed these children being sexually abused, none analysed how to mitigate risk to these children through best practice treatment modalities. Clear-cut, evidence-based best practice treatment modalities to reduce harm and risk to these children are long overdue.

Other social issues, such as depression and addiction issues that impact children in our society all have evidence-based research that has provided clear best practice treatment modalities and/or strategies. These treatment modalities and/or therapeutic approaches are aimed at reducing and mitigating risk and harm to these children from these mental health conditions or social ills.

For instance, substantial research on depression in children that can lead to self-harming or suicidal behavior demonstrates that Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) is greatly effective in reducing and mitigating risk to these children (Delaney, 2009; Ozabaci, 2011; Wilson, 2010). Similarly, research on addiction issues with children has highlighted



best practice interventions: multidimensional family therapy along with motivational interviewing are extremely effective in reducing harm and mitigating risk to these children (Danzon, 2013; Dickerson, Crase, & Sedhla, 2005; Henderson, Dakof, Greenbaum, & Liddle, 2010).

As we have seen, although exploitation and trafficking of children (forms of criminal sexual abuse) have existed for decades, existing research is characterized by many questions and gaps regarding the best/promising treatment modalities and approaches through which it is possible to reduce harm and risk to this group of children.

Inspired by the foundational work above and other examples of research that have given practitioners concrete modalities/strategies to effectively reduce risk and treat children with addictions and/or depression, this project seeks to take a first step in doing the same for exploited children and their families. The goal of this study is to provide people working with exploited/trafficked children concrete treatment modalities/strategies to reduce harm and risk to these children, while also focusing on strategies/modalities that will enable the children to live free from sexual exploitation/sex trafficking. In doing so, this project combines academic research, practical clinical experience, and the expertise of exploited/trafficked children who are now adults as well as guardians to identify what the best/promising practice treatment modalities/strategies are in order to reduce risk and assist children that have been sexually exploited/trafficked.

In 2008, Brittle indicated that the best method of dealing with children who are being trafficked and exploited was via the child protection system. She found that although secure settings for children who have been exploited/trafficked are not without problems, they give the best option for reducing the torture and brutalization that these children are being subjected to in the sex trade (p. 1368).

Brittle's study discusses services needing to be specifically developed for sexually exploited/trafficked youth, but does not speak to what modalities or treatment methods are best practice within the different services required by sexually exploited/trafficked youth.

In 2013, Mirr discussed in her research that children should be treated as victims first and foremost, but that having an all embracing response to all exploited/trafficked children was ineffective due to the risk that these children can present to themselves and sometimes others. Mirr therefore stated that:

Blanket immunity and decriminalization abolish prosecutorial and judicial discretion, thus discounting the experiences of individual victims and operating under the assumption that the provision of social services will rehabilitate all or the majority of these minors. This approach is over-inclusive, in that immunizing all minors ignores the exceptional cases where individuals warrant rehabilitation in a strict setting. Supervised detention is critical in instances where the minor has a legitimate criminal record or when she poses as a danger to herself or society. Without a systematic program in place, particularly vulnerable minors are left without the proper treatment and tools to recover rebuild their lives. (2013, p. 168)

As we will see below, specialized services (including secure settings) and a model that recognizes grey zones and complexity in each case (that is, not one size fits all) are both essential ingredients to best/promising practice modalities for working with exploited/trafficked youth.

## Chapter 3

### Methodology

The central research question of my thesis is as follows: What do service users, service providers and guardians feel is the most effective treatment practice (modality, theoretical framework, strategy and/or approach) when working with sexually exploited/trafficked children to reduce harm and mitigate risk?

This question is answered below using a two-step process. Firstly, I analyzed the insights and thoughts of service users or people who were exploited as children, guardians, and service providers regarding what models of practice, strategies, approaches, etc. were successful in reducing risk to them, their children and their clients. The second step involved asking the research participants to think about services offered in other jurisdictions (a description of these was provided to them), and if they believe those services should be offered in Manitoba to reduce risk to children who are sexually exploited. This was undertaken by a mixed method approach.

Mix-method approaches are supported by other research. In 2014, Creswell stated that:

As a method, (mixed methodology) focuses on collecting, analyzing, and mixing both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study or series of studies. Its central premise is that the use of quantitative and qualitative approaches in combination provides a better understanding of research problems than either approach alone. (p. 5)

As mentioned above, this project involved a two-step approach. It firstly included nine one-on-one qualitative interviews. Secondly, there were nine quantitative surveys completed with the same individuals. Participants included three young adults (18 to 29 years of age) that experienced exploitation as children, three parents/guardians of exploited children, and three service providers who provided specialized service to

children.<sup>14</sup> The survey outlined other practices/treatment modalities/approaches that have been utilized in other jurisdictions. The survey was relevant because the interviews focused on treatment practices that the children, workers and parents had experienced, and not alternative approaches/treatment modalities. However, it was anticipated that they could bring a unique perspective on the feasibility of best practice of these other alternative modalities.

Using both qualitative (semi-structured interviews) and quantitative methods (a survey) to gather and analyse data led to a better evidentiary basis and understanding of the problem than either method would have alone, offsetting the potential weaknesses of both approaches (Creswell, 2014).

It was hypothesised that the use of the mixed methodology would generate step-by-step recommendations for the beginnings of a framework that participants may not have considered in the past.

### Participants

To solicit participants for the study an advertisement was developed and placed in the Training, Education and Resources for Females (TERF) Program, operated through New Directions for Children, Youth, Adults & Families (See Appendix E). The recruitment poster indicated that the participants needed to have been exploited as children, have received services through TERF, and be between the ages of 18 and 29<sup>15</sup>.

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<sup>14</sup> The entire project encompassed 9 individuals, which was a smaller sample then originally proposed. This was due to the criteria set out within the methodology.

<sup>15</sup> The age range of 18-29 was chosen as this age range is commonly used within the federal government calls for proposals to provide service to young people, However, it is recognized that the term "youth" does not have an exact age attached to it, and using only age as a criterion is less acceptable then a variety of criterion.

A short screening tool was developed to ensure that the women contacting the researcher fit the parameters of the study (See Appendix H). The screening tool focused on their age, ethnicity, if they were exploited as a child, if they were a service provider or had a child that was exploited, if they received services at TERF, if they were exploited through “indoor” (massage parlours, escorts, strip clubs, etc.) or “outdoor” (street) exploitation.

The participants were interviewed individually at different locations throughout the city of Winnipeg. It was originally planned for the participants to attend the TERF Program, but that proved difficult for many of them to get to the program due to time constraints in their schedules, or issues with child care. However, they all indicated that they would meet the researcher at a restaurant close to home or work and/or the researcher was more than welcome to come to their house to interview them.

It was apparent very early on in the screening that the researcher needed to be flexible to reach this population. This was due to a number of factors. Firstly, many of the young adult participants discussed not wanting people to know they were associated with TERF any longer, as that identified them to others as being exploited. They indicated that they would stop in from time to time (e.g, where they saw the research recruitment poster) to see their workers, but that they did not want people to see them there for a longer period of time (interviews). Secondly, for some of the women, they were just not able to get out of their daily responsibilities long enough to get to TERF, do the interview and then back to where they needed to be.

All in all, 13 women contacted the researcher through word of mouth (using a snowball sampling) from participants that participated in the research, and from others that saw the recruitment ad. The researcher accepted participants from July 2016 until

October 2016, and during that time, 13 women contacted the researcher. Only three of the 13 women that reached out to participate in the study met the criteria as having exited the trade for at least five years, and for having been exploited as a child. Those three women interviewed were selected based on the parameters of the research. Those three women's experiences as children in the sex trade represented at least three sub-groups<sup>16</sup> within the sex trade. One woman was exploited on the streets (visible), one was exploited through escorting (invisible) and one was exploited through drugs and alcohol (invisible) and the street.

These women ranged in age from 25 to 29 years of age. One woman described herself as Caucasian, and two described themselves as First Nations. All of the women described themselves as having exited the sex trade for over five years. The women who participated in the interviews were given a \$20.00 honorarium.

Parents and workers, the second group of participants, were contacted via pre-developed letters (See Appendix G). One parent and two social workers participated in the study. One mother described herself as Caucasian, one worker described herself as First Nations, and one worker described herself as Other. The parents and workers who participated were all offered the incentive for participating in the research. However, none of them wanted to accept the \$20.00. They all indicated in differing ways that they just wanted to contribute to the body of knowledge that would be developed through the research. They stated several times that they hoped this research would be a starting point, and lead to additional collective research to address the micro needs of exploited/trafficked children to keep them safer and help them heal.

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<sup>16</sup> "Subgroups of the sex trade" is a term that is often used to describe the different manners in which people are exploited within the entire sex trade. Sub groups may represent invisible (trick pads, trap houses, etc.) or visible (street) manners in which people are exploited.

TERF Program staff, the third group of participants, were contacted by the TERF Program Manager to inquire if they were interested in participating in the study. There were three staff that demonstrated an interest, and all three were interviewed. Two of the women described themselves as First Nations, and one described herself as Caucasian. The TERF Program staff were interviewed at TERF, and were not paid by the researcher; the TERF Program allowed them to participate as part of their paid work hours for participating in the research.

It should be recognized that boys and LGBT2Q people are also exploited/sex trafficked. There were no males or transgender people that contacted the researcher to participate in the study. The participants who did participate identified as female and were not asked to disclose their sexuality, so it is unknown if any of the participants identify as LGBT2Q.

It should also be recognized that there have been several studies (Gorkoff and Runner, 2003; Ontario Native Women's Association, 2016) that have demonstrated an over representation of Indigenous women who are sex trafficked and sexually exploited. However, exploring in-depth targeted interventions to reduce Indigenous children's risk was out of scope of the study, hence not explored. However, there were Indigenous service providers who discussed culturally appropriate interventions based on their Indigenous teachings, and also some of the young adults also spoke about culture being an important piece to successfully healing. Future studies should explore this aspect further, as the link to culture for Indigenous peoples is a critical component to reducing risk for Indigenous children.

## Measures

Prior to any of the interviews being conducted, participants were informed of the purpose of the exploratory study, and asked for their consent (See Appendix D) to use data collected in the qualitative interviews. The main instrument used to collect data from the participants was the qualitative semi-structured interview. Participants who had been exploited as children were asked a set list of questions, including: “What was a good intervention/strategy in reducing your risk of exploitation?”, “What were the good relationship building methods/techniques?”, and “If your child became exploited in the future, what would you want workers to do to reduce your child’s risk to of becoming more exploited?” To view the full list of the questions, see Appendix A.

Participants were asked clarifying questions such as “I think I hear you saying a good intervention to reduce risk was that people allowed you to be angry in a safe place?” There was also probing questions used to draw out some of the thoughts that the participants were speaking about, or to assist with making their thoughts more concise, such as “You indicated that giving you money reduced your risk, but can you explain that more to me and why?”

The questions on the quantitative survey included Likert<sup>17</sup> scales and were based on different jurisdictions’ current treatment options (e.g., secure settings), and the qualitative interviews were based on their experiences with the treatment they were provided.

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<sup>17</sup> Rensis Likert developed an approach to scaling responses in survey research. Likert scales can capture the intensity of people’s feelings towards a specific topic. See <http://magazine.amstat.org/blog/2010/09/01/reensislikertsep10/> (consulted September 1, 2017)



The principles of a grounded theory approach was used to examine the results of the interviews conducted with the participants. Grounded theory was first developed in 1967 by Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Glaser stated that grounded theory is “a general methodology of analysis linked with data collection that uses a systematically applied set of methods to generate an inductive theory about a substantive area” (1992, p. 16). Grounded theory uses “Inductive analysis which means that the patterns, themes, and categories of analysis come from the data; they emerge out of the data rather than being imposed on them prior to data collection and analysis” (Patton, 1990, p. 306). As such, beginning with the very first sentence of the first interview, coding of concepts began, and were grouped into categories.

The categories were named then placed on a wall where they could be moved or connected to other categories. Colored sticky notes were also used to visually depict concepts and eventually themes that emerged. Although the sample size was small, and it could not be said due to the size of the sample that saturation (beyond a doubt) was met with the themes and responses, common themes quickly emerged in the interview transcriptions. These themes could be further explored in a larger study using the results of this study to further develop a best/promising practice methodology to working with exploited/trafficked children and youth.

### Strategy of Inquiry

As explained above, a total of nine qualitative interviews and nine quantitative surveys were administered. Three of the participants were individuals who had been exploited as children (now young adults 25 to 29 years of age); three of the participants were parents/guardians of children who had been sexually exploited; and three of the

participants were service providers who work for agencies that provide specialized services to children who are being sexually exploited. The workers and parents/guardians were not related to any of the young adults that participated in the study. The nine qualitative interviews and nine quantitative surveys were used to get participant insights on what strategies/modalities were most effective, or could be most effective in reducing risk and providing treatment for issues caused by being sexually exploited.

For the purpose of this study, the survey identified participant thoughts on programming in other jurisdictions, and if they felt those treatment modalities may have, or could reduce risk to themselves or other children. They were also asked if these treatment modalities would be considered best practice treatment modalities to exploited children.

Data collection was undertaken through a semi-structured interview (Appendix A & B) and a short survey (Appendix C). Analysis systematically moved from broad units to narrow units, and then the researcher summarized what the participants experienced as best practice treatment modalities that mitigated risk to either themselves, their children or the clients they worked with. The data analysis occurred through the principles of a grounded theory lens, coding and then grouping the data into concepts and eventually categories and then themes. After each interview, notes were kept regarding interpretations, observations and thoughts on the interviews, the coding of the data and on concepts emerging. Thought processes of the researcher were also recorded to enable the researcher to return to the data continually to check the fit and reliability.

As noted, due to the study size being small and the research having an exploratory lens, it cannot be said that saturation (beyond a doubt) occurred, but many themes did

emerge. The study results provide an initial glance at foundational promising practice treatment modality/approaches. It is anticipated that a larger study with more participants would be able to reach saturation, and begin to describe a more substantive theory to work with these children to effectively reduce their risk.

### Procedures

The nine participants within the study were asked to participate in an interview that would last approximately an hour. Some of the qualitative interviews lasted 90 minutes, but others only took 45 minutes. The average length of time it took to conduct all interviews was 60 minutes. At 60 minutes, all participants were asked if they felt well enough to continue the interview. The participants that went over 60 minutes all indicated they were fine to continue the interview in order to answer all of the questions. A description of the study was reviewed with them by the researcher. Any questions that they had were answered prior, during or after the interview. The researcher then moved forward in administering a semi-structured interview (Appendix A & B), and a structured survey (Appendix C).

It was originally proposed to use two different qualitative purposeful sampling strategies throughout this research. The first was discussed in 1990, when Patton found that “Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research, thus the term *purposeful* sampling.” (p.169).

Due to the criteria of the research being that young adults needed to have exited, and what they determined successful for at least five years, many participants were ineligible to participate in the study. The rationale for having participants removed for a

minimum of five years was based on the researchers anecdotal clinical experience, observations of other trafficked people's experience and length of time required to exit and heal from the sex trade. It was also based from the TERF Program's experience in working with this population. It has been my observations and TERF's experience that for children, on average, 3 years is required to exit, stabilize and heal from this abuse (TERF Stats, 2014). However, the participants were selected based on their different experiences of exploitation/trafficking, which still allowed for information- rich data to be gathered from the interviews. With a larger study, it would be recommended that purposeful sampling be used to ensure that perspectives from all the different sub-groups within the sex trade are captured. It would also be important to capture different ethnic group's opinions on best/promising practices to reduce risk, as cultural differences often impact treatment modalities and outcomes. Although three different ethnic groups were represented across the nine participants, it would be beneficial in future studies if more ethnicities could be engaged and represented.

Originally, the researcher intended to use a Maximum Variation Sampling technique. The purpose of using a Maximum Variation sampling strategy with young women and their guardians/parents is to explore all perspectives of best/promising practice interventions from the young woman's perspective as well as their caregiver's perspectives. This type of sampling allows the researcher to identify participants that can communicate rich sources of information. This type of sampling enables the capturing and describing of central themes that emerge even across participants with multiple differences (Patton, 1990).

Furthermore, with Maximum Variation Sampling, both extreme and typical cases plus any other positions and perspectives can be identified (Patton, 1990). However, due

to the small size of the group, the researcher was not able to employ this type of sampling. With the service providers, an Expert Sampling strategy was used. This particular sampling method is useful when attempting to gain empirical evidence from an area that is still quite abstract. Expert Sampling is used when attempting to gain special knowledge from “experts” that have acquired knowledge through years of practical experience (Krysik & Finn, 2013). This sampling strategy allowed the researcher to explore their perspectives of concrete theoretical models and/or best/promising practice techniques when working with exploited/trafficked children. All of the people who provided service to sexually exploited/trafficked children that participated in this study had worked with this population for over 10 years.

### *Informed Consent*

A written consent form was given to each participant, and verbally read by the researcher to the participant (Appendix D). All the information within the consent form (risks, benefits, confidentiality, compensation, etc.) was explained to the participants, and they were asked if they had any questions prior to the interview commencing. They were informed that they could ask questions after the interview if they required any other information. Participants were provided with the phone number of the student researcher, and for the researcher’s supervisor. Lastly, participants were informed that if they changed their mind they were free to withdraw at any time.

Feedback for the interview and any questions that were raised after the interview were responded to by the interviewing researcher after the interview was completed. The questions asked of the researcher were also documented for the purpose of analysis and audit trails. A number to contact the researcher and supervising faculty member was

provided to all participants so that after the interview they would be able to access the researcher and the supervising faculty member.

### *Risks to Participants*

This study involved interviews with service providers, service users and parents of service users. There are no known risks to the service providers as they are professionals working with this population of children. However, due to the study also interviewing young adults who had been exploited as children, there was the potential for some participants to suffer from emotional or psychological distress from recalling their experiences. When conducting the interviews none of the young adult participants appeared to be in any distress. Many of them stated that although that time in their life was not good, that they did have very fond memories of some of the people that tried to protect them.

The parents and guardians who were interviewed also had the potential to suffer from emotional or psychological distress. However, neither the parent, nor the guardians who participated appeared distressed. To be sure that none of the participants were feeling distressed about the content they spoke with the researcher about, the researcher asked all the participants if they were doing well after the interview was conducted. The researcher also spent approximately 20 minutes with each participant after the interview was completed chatting and observing how they appeared to the researcher. No distress was noted or observed. The researcher asked all of the participants if they had any additional questions after the research was conducted, and, as mentioned, collected the questions to inform the analysis, and for audit trail purposes.

### Data Analysis

The individual interviews were recorded with an audio recorder. The interviews were then transcribed verbatim. The data was analyzed according to the principles of grounded theory using the process of constant comparative analysis. The data was coded and grouped into larger themes (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Text was reviewed line by line to identify key concepts, phrases, and terms. These key phrases, terms or strategies were then coded and grouped into concepts. Color coded sticky notes were used to identify different participant groups along with different and similar emerging themes. This method of collection and analysis allowed the data collected from prior interviews to guide the collection process in subsequent interviews with respect to probing and clarifying questions. The researcher used the structured interviews to guide all of the participants and to ensure congruence to the research question. But in keeping with grounded theory principles, there were probing questions that were used in subsequent interviews that arose from the data collected and analysis of prior interviews. In constantly comparing all of the interviews, the insights of prior interviews assisted in grouping concepts, tying concepts together, identifying how themes related or did not relate to each other. According to Riley (1996), research projects, depending on the type of research, will most often achieve saturation between eight and 24 interviews. However, as mentioned, the sample size of nine for this exploratory, foundational research is too small to indicate that complete saturation was reached.

That being said, it is recommended that a similar research project be conducted with a larger sample to examine and compare the findings. Interview guides for this study were created to examine and enable the understanding of the participants' lived

experiences as exploited children, as specialized service providers, and as parents/guardians of exploited children. During the analysis, there was an overall sense of the participants' experiences, and there were common themes among all the participants.

A triangulation method<sup>18</sup> was used to ensure the transcriptions were correct, and to ensure the participants' voices were recorded accurately and appropriately. A comparison of the similarities and differences within the participants' stories did begin to emerge and were categorized appropriately. By examining and assessing their lived experiences when receiving services provided under Tracia's Trust, the answers of the respondents were used to determine emergent and underlying themes. Their experiences of best practice modalities/therapeutic approaches demonstrated a pattern, and created the beginnings of a theory of which modality is considered to reduce risk. As this study argues, the experiences of the participants can be used to begin exploring a theory of best/promising practice when working with exploited/trafficked children and youth.

Comparisons were also made between the service provider experts' understanding of actual best practice strategies/models etc. and the understanding of best/promising practice strategies/models etc. of young adult participants and parents of children who received services. Many of the participants' insights were similar, but there was one emerging theme that all of the participants identified. This theme was the need for the use of a secure setting with extremely entrenched children. With a larger sample, this theme could be explored further, and treatment modalities could be further advanced

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<sup>18</sup> Transcribed transcripts were provided back to the participants to ensure their responses were accurately reflected.



to ensure all service providers have congruent insights into promising practices and how to ensure they are implemented.

All participants voluntarily agreed to be interviewed, and were asked to sign a consent form (Appendix D) agreeing to the recording and transcribing of the interview. The consent form (Appendix D) was explained and included an explanation of the risks and benefits of participation. The consent form (Appendix D) also included the measures which were taken to ensure emotional and mental safety of participants during the interview, and with respect to their privacy once the research was completed and the thesis was written.

A list of appropriate helping resources was given to each participant to access if they felt supports were needed after the interview. As mentioned earlier, none of the participants appeared to be in any distress.

At all times during the research, the safety and confidentiality of the participants was a high priority. The interviews were kept in a secure, locked filing cabinet along with all of the signed informed consents. Initially, it was proposed that within the final thesis pseudonyms were going to be used so that no participant could be identified. However, during discussions with participants about how information would be reported in the final thesis, it was identified that even with pseudonyms, participants may still be able to be identified due to the size of the TERF program, number of participants that attend the program, etc. Due to this insight being provided to the researcher, the term “participant” is used throughout the report so that situations or quotes cannot be used to identify any specific participant within the study.

### Validity and Reliability

Scientific rigor is what is often described as validity and reliability, and vice versa. Reliability and validity are terms more often used in quantitative research, and scientific rigor used in qualitative research. Essentially, both (scientific rigor and reliability and validity) are methods applied to the research process so that researchers and others can assess the credibility of the research.

Due to some of the differences in methods depending on the type of research being conducted, many qualitative researchers have changed the terms used to describe valid results. Lincoln and Guba are two qualitative researchers that did exactly this when they began using their criteria to ensure a valid process from start to finish had been applied to their research. Their reliability and validity “measures were refined to credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985 as cited in Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson, & Spiers, 2002).

They recommended specific strategies be used to attain trustworthiness such as negative cases, peer debriefing, prolonged engagement and persistent observation, audit trails and member checks. As this was exploratory research, negative cases were not used. However, the peer debriefing took place after each time analysis occurred. Audit trails were also kept, such as raw data, written notes, the structure of categories and concepts, personal notes, questions the participants asked, and predictions. These strategies were used throughout the research in order to ensure the research was rigorous.

Also important were characteristics of the investigator “who must be responsive and adaptable to changing circumstances, holistic, having processional immediacy,

sensitivity, and ability for clarification and summarization” (Guba & Lincoln, 1981, as cited in Morse et al., 2002). It was apparent during the screening of research participants that the researcher would need to be flexible in regards to their needs. Once the flexibility was communicated to the participants, it appeared they were all willing to participate. It was also quite obvious that the researcher needed to communicate in both her physical and verbal communication that she was sensitive to the stories and information being shared.

This research project felt almost circular as the researcher worked with the data. Although on paper the design appears to have a structured approach, while conducting the interviews and analyzing the data, the researcher needed to go back and forth and/or around all of the information. To ensure congruence of the thesis question, literature, recruitment, data collection strategies and analysis, the researcher was continually circling back to other interviews, the structured questions, her notes, etc. Following (Morse et al., 2002) suggested methods of verification for qualitative research, the data was systematically checked, and to ensure that focus was maintained, the researcher checked all of the data in a quiet space with no time constraints to distract her from this task.

The manner in which the data was grouped, and the conceptual work of the analysis and interpretation, were monitored and confirmed by the researcher throughout the process by keeping notes. Notes were kept on the researcher’s cognitive processes and decisions so that she could circle back to them, and check the data and the suitability of her decisions. These verification strategies helped to identify when to continue with the analysis, move on to the next theme, or modify the research process.

## Chapter 4

### Results: Adults Exploited as Children

This project asked young women who were exploited/trafficked as children/youth, parents/guardians, and specialized service providers to identify concrete ways in which people developed relationships with them that assisted them in being safe, and able to remove themselves from the victimization that was occurring to them. As suggested in chapter one, research in this area has identified the issue of relationship building being important to assisting exploited/trafficked children in being safe. However, previous research has lacked concrete strategies and approaches in how to develop a relationship with exploited and/or trafficked children/youth in order to ensure their safety, and reduce the harm they are experiencing through this sexual abuse. The adults exploited as young women were asked to identify if there were concrete strategies that they wished had been in place when they were being exploited/trafficked, and also asked to think about what they would want for their children, if they became exploited.

The question about their children, or if they were to have a child was posed to them because it allowed the issue to be removed from them, and asked them to think about the needs of exploited children/youth from a caregiver perspective. Two of the young women did have children, and one woman did not yet have any children. Although their lives were in different places during the interviews, their answers to this question were very similar to what they stated they needed as children, as well as what they would want for their children. Analysis of their responses indicated that some of the young women did receive what they viewed as harm reduction, and some did not. Their responses to this question were significant, for they demonstrated that although they were not able to keep

themselves safe, they recognized how harmful exploitation was for them, and that they had not normalized this abuse.

It should also be noted that the results of the research are structured in a manner in which the participants cannot be identified. As mentioned previously in the methods section, it was determined by several participants that due to the relatively small community, and the fact that the research only focussed on people who received services from the TERF Program that using fictitious names may still allow for the participants to be identified. As such, all participants within the research have been labeled as participants and not given pseudo names. It is recognized that this can cause some confusion for the reader, but in order to ensure participant confidentiality and anonymity, it was agreed with the participants to structure the research in this manner.

### Safety

On the theme of safety, one participant indicated that “TERF was a really safe space, if you were really anxious, you could spin out at TERF and it didn’t matter”. She discussed how she was often very upset about issues occurring in her life, and that she was not able to express those feelings in a way that she could expel the negative energy she was feeling. All three young women discussed feelings of frustration, anger and sadness that they vividly remembered feeling.

Another young woman indicated that she would go into one of the staff’s office at TERF and “close my eyes and just scream and scream, and let all my frustrations out. Like I wouldn’t ever get in trouble for doing that”. When she was describing her ability to release her frustrations, she was quite animated, and it was observed that even after she demonstrated her screaming into a pillow, she appeared to feel some relief, almost as if

she was reliving the sensation of physically releasing her anger and frustrations, and how she just needed a place for that to occur, in which she felt was a safe manner.

Another woman spoke about TERF just “being a place where you could go from zero to a hundred there”. All of the young women described TERF being a safe place for them because they were allowed to release their frustrations, anger and other negative feelings without being concerned that they would be asked to leave the program.

This is an important, concrete strategy for service providers and programs to ensure is implemented. For exploited/trafficked youth, a safe place to discuss what is happening for them, and to be allowed to express their anger around the abuse that has occurred to them, allowed them to feel safe, which in turn, allowed them to develop trusting relationships with adults who were attempting to protect them. In 2011, Pearce noted that workers who found it difficult to listen to the stories of abuse these children would describe would get rather surface disclosures, whereas workers who validated and acknowledged the abuse occurring for them obtained more detailed disclosures. The workers who were able to allow the children to discuss the abuse, were in turn able to develop more meaningful relationships with the children, which allowed them to protect the children in a more effective manner (p. 1430).

Another description of safety for one of the young women meant that not everyone knew which program she was attending. For this young woman, safety meant she could attend a program without being labeled as an exploited youth given standalone buildings were difficult to protect exploited children’s confidentiality/anonymity. She stated that “when it’s just a standalone building, it’s really obvious why you’re going there, that other “kids get to know what the program is for”. She described how this made her feel unsafe because other kids would “throw shade”, meaning insult her and other exploited/trafficked

children. She further explained “No one’s gunna go, but if you’re like in an office building where there’s like a ton of other offices, and you got other programs, like RAP (Resources for Adolescent Parents), then we went there”.

For some youth, just the program being known for providing services to exploited children/youth, caused them to feel unsafe because people judged them, or it felt as if people were judging them for being exploited. From descriptions of other places in the young women’s lives, it became apparent that there was not an abundance of places where they felt safe, or an abundance of people who were able to keep them safe when they were children. Many reports have discussed how children/youth who are trafficked feel judged, shamed and isolated (Coy, 2009; Lloyd, 2011; Melrose, 2004; Pearce, 2011). Yet none of these articles speak to actions, policy or programming that can reduce these feelings for this group of children/youth. The concrete strategy of programmers and policy makers ensuring that programming for this group of children is not in identifiable buildings is a clear strategy to reduce their risk, as it creates a safer environment for them to attend. Another young woman described feeling safe because if she had a warrant she could still go to the TERF program, talk to people, eat and have a place to attend in which she could become more grounded again. She stated that “you could still go to school and not get in shit from anyone, they were just happy to see you. It allowed me to get my shit together again.” Interestingly, all of the participants (young women, parents/guardians, and service providers) identified that children/youth needed a space that was free from judgement. The young women especially spoke about TERF being a safe space, and that, in their opinion, it was a judgement-free environment where the staff “understood and didn’t judge” them. A reason explained for feeling that TERF was a non-judgemental space was that many of the staff had lived experience of being sexually exploited and trafficked. One

young woman commented that youth at TERF all knew that some of the TERF staff “didn’t have the best life in the world”.

### Experiential staff

On the theme of staff with lived experience, one of the young women stated that there were Indigenous staff at TERF, and that she kind of gravitated towards those staff and the staff with lived experience. Supporting this finding, in 2009, Ferguson and Heidmann found that peer educators/staff people had credibility with children due to having an almost inside knowledge on similar issues that the children may or could be facing. This same participant noted though that she knew there were staff that had healthy childhoods, but that they too “were never shocked by stuff and they were able to joke around with you, and make you feel safe”.

Another one of the participants spoke about her risk being reduced because there was one staff who she was particularly connected to, and that she was able to connect with her because she was “more like a friend, but always called me on my shit”. She stressed how she also felt safe because the TERF staff would come looking for her if she was missing. She stated “even though I ran away, I was always waiting for someone to find me. You don’t know what the fuck you’re running from when I am sitting there waiting for someone to find you, but then if no one shows up, it’s just gonna be a disaster.” This participant described how she felt that most of the service providers in her life just wanted her to be missing, and how this attitude made her feel unsafe and not cared for.

Another young woman described having “experiential women as staff made it feel very non-threatening, and that they knew how to ask you stuff without asking”. She further went on to explain that she felt they almost had a “sixth sense”. Here again, the researcher



noticed this young woman's physical presentation almost soften when she was remembering what reduced her risk at TERF. She thought for quite some time after indicating that the staff with lived experience had a "sixth sense," and indicated that "they just really provided a good safe supportive non-judgmental environment, like I truly believe that."

The findings above confirm and corroborate over two decades of literature on the topic of child sexual exploitation/sex trafficking, which has stressed the fact that people with lived experience are instrumental voices and actors in coming alongside of children/youth in these situations to reduce risk, and assist them in being removed from the abuse (Berckmans et al., 2012; Gorkoff & Runner, 2003; Kingsley & Mark, 2002; Lloyd, 2005).

#### *Genuine time spent with the youth*

All three of the young women who participated in the research talked about the importance of people spending time with them, either on the phone when they called, or in person when they showed up to program, or just seeking them out in the community.

One of the young women stated "they always answered their phones, and we called at all hours." This responsiveness and time was important to her because, it was during these times when she was reaching out that she very much needed adult assistance, reassurance, or just someone to share her thoughts with. This supports research by Seshia (2005) which described how community supports to the participants in her study often talked about the workers going above and beyond for the young people they were working with.

Returning to the young woman in question, she described not being able to talk with her mother, as she was not sure if her mother knew she was exploited or not. She

indicated “she probably did, but I never told her”, and that “I would never talk to my mother, like they don’t know anything”, and “I could talk more to people at TERF”.

This participant’s statement of needing a community resource that she knew she could trust has been discussed before by children, youth and adults who have been trafficked. In 2005, Seshia found that “nearly all of the experiential participants discussed the strong role individuals from community organizations played in their transition journey” (p.27).

Another young woman described how she felt that when she called one of the staff she had a connection with, she was often times upset and mad, but that the staff would listen to her and give her some choices, with consequences that she may face (both positive and negative) of her ultimate decisions. She stated “she would talk to me, and say here is the thing to do, boss me around, and I would say fuck you I’m just gonna do this, but she would say ok, if you do that, it is likely that this will happen.”

She explained how spending the time with her to review negatives and positives of her choices often helped her to make better decisions.

In 2011, Thomson et al. highlighted a number of effective interventions with sexually exploited/trafficked youth, but, interestingly, having a mentor for the child, someone to spend time with, and developing positive opportunities for the child and their family was thought to be a key component to effectively working with this population. All of these interventions were themes stressed by participants in this study, and suggested repeatedly.

This same participant described above also emphasized her trust in this TERF staff person, and voiced that although she did not always make the right choice, that it meant a lot to her for this staff person to always spend time with her. Corroborating this

finding, in 2009, Nakur found that children being able to access adults and seek support and/or advice was a crucial factor to those children being successful.

Additionally, this participant talked about how she enjoyed eating with the staff, and them taking her to go get food and go shopping. She discussed how eating together often gave them time to develop their relationship. In describing her relationship with staff, she stated that she also respected the staff who were firmer with her. But, that there needed to be a balance, that firmness did not mean “up in your face”, but expectations were clear while being gentle with her. This was an interesting statement that, as later discussed, mirrored some of the specialized service providers’ thoughts on reducing risk to exploited/trafficked children/youth through clear expectations and firm boundaries.

One young woman discussed how staff driving with her always assisted in their time spent together. She indicated it gave them time to just chat, without feeling like she was “under examination”. She stated that she would often ask to just go for drives, and that the staff would always try to make time for her, even if it was just for 20 minutes. She further stated that the short trips with staff were much appreciated, indicating that “driving around with me was a way of building our relationship, but I liked the short spurts of connection with them, I didn’t want to hang out with them all the time”.

This same young woman described how when she was spending time with the staff, she felt that they actually listened. The transcription of her words does not reflect the emphasis that she placed on “actually listened”, but it is important to describe as it was clear from her tone, and body language that she felt that this was an important aspect. She indicated that “staff were laid back, they were genuine good listeners, they reframed stuff for me, they were understanding what we were saying, and they even paid attention to physical space with me”.

As the young adults identified in this study, research in the area of child sexual exploitation/sex trafficking has also long revealed that this population is a difficult to reach population, and that strategies such as ensuring availability and genuine time spent listening to them are key factors in reducing their risk (Azhar & Al-Balhar, 2011; Pearce, 2011).

It is important to note that strategies, such as ensuring availability and genuine time spent with children/youth, are key to reducing their risk. In 2004, Melrose stated that “they are likely to be suspicious of helping agencies and authority figures because they often perceive that they have been, at best, let down by adults and, at worst, abused by them in the past” (p.24). This is an important factor for service providers to keep at the forefront of their minds while providing care for exploited children/youth. It is important to understand that these children/youth will require a longer term intervention (commitment and genuine time spent with them) to develop relationships with service providers that will allow reduced risk outcomes.

#### Age appropriate activities

Two of the three young women who participated in this research disclosed enjoying activities with the staff, and how that piece of their programming (strategies/approaches to reduce their risk) was appreciated, but, more importantly, reduced their risk of being sexually exploited and trafficked.

One of the young women discussed how she had not done age appropriate activities in such a long time that she almost had to relearn how to be a kid again. But, that in learning how to have fun in different activities, other than extremely high-risk activities (using hard drugs and/or drinking), enabled her to begin learning how to live life again. She stated “even just going to a scary movie not high, not drinking kept me safe

for a few hours”. She even went further to describe how she wished there had been a camp to allow for that type of learning 24 hours a day and seven days a week over the summer. The participant indicated “if we had a camp that was operated by TERF so that we could spend the summer away that would really help”. She also further described how attending the program, and how it was labeled as “school” was helpful in creating structure and predictability, which was something she lacked due to not having her parents around consistently. She described feeling that although TERF was able to provide her with these first steps needed to keep herself safe and reduce her risk that she wished the program was more “staged” based on where kids were at within the cycle of abuse or stages of exploitation.<sup>19</sup> This was important to her because although she stated that she was not being exploited/trafficked by the time she graduated the program, she had not completed any school credits, so she did not have her grade 12 which hindered her ability to move forward as an adult at age 18. Corroborating this finding, many authors have asserted the importance of formal education for sexually exploited and trafficked youth (Gorkoff & Runner, 2003; Goulet, 2001; Lloyd, 2011).

Another young woman talked about just doing simple activities like going to the movies, and how those were activities that she did not participate in while being exploited. She said “we didn’t do anything other than figure out how to get high and when we were just doing normal shit, we didn’t have to worry, we could just be kids.” In 2010, Twill, Green and Traylor cited activities that would be considered age appropriate for 15, 16 and 17 year old children such as book groups, yoga, leadership opportunities, and African drumming (p. 192). This participant further emphasized how grocery shopping and

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<sup>19</sup> Stages of exploitation were first described by Jennifer Richardson nee Berry and Jane Runner in the *Understanding and Working with Sexually Exploited Children and Youth* training course as a scaling categorization of risk levels of exploitation.

clothing shopping were also helpful to her as it gave her budgeting skills that she had not acquired due to being exploited/trafficked.

Trafficked and exploited children needing to learn age appropriate life skills is an area that is often discussed in research, and learning such life skills has been used as a strategy to reduce risk by the TERF Program for many years (Hardy, Compton, & McPhatter, 2013; Kubasek & Herrera, 2015; Lloyd, 2005). However, the use of age appropriate recreational activities was not something that this researcher was able to find within the literature with exception of Berry et al (2003). Berry et al (2003) found that the use of high adrenaline activities with exploited/trafficked youth to be an effective strategy to reducing risk. They noted that it almost appeared that the children became addicted to the high states of adrenaline their bodies were producing due to the high states of stress, and the amount of high risk activities they were often forced to engage in.

Many of the articles reviewed on child sexual exploitation/trafficking did discuss age appropriate activities focussed on life skills (budgeting, shopping, getting identification, etc.). This type of activity was discussed as life skills that the children would need to acquire to be successful outside of the sex trade as young adults. However, much of these skills were not what most 15 or 16 year olds would call age appropriate life skills, or what parents of 15 and 16 year olds would be teaching their children. It appears that within the literature (Berckmans, 2012; Lloyd, 2005; Mirr, 2013; Williams, 2010) on this population, that once a child has been sexually exploited, they are treated as an adult. In reviewing the last 20 years of research in this area, this has been the observation. This is a disconcerting observation and analysis of the literature, as most parents of children/youth who have not been sexually exploited/trafficked would not be teaching their 13 year-old child how to find an apartment, do their own grocery shopping or budgeting.

This approach of teaching the child to be an adult may be an acceptable, appropriate practice to reduce risk to older children/youth if they are close to age of majority, but might be not sensible or grounded in good judgement for a 13 year old.

This tendency is further perplexing given what we now know about people suffering from compounded trauma, and how repeated abuse often stunts their emotional and cognitive development (Blaustein, 2007; Crosby, 2015; Teague, 2013), makes such an approach counterintuitive. This is again an area that needs further research with this population. It appears that this approach to working with sexually exploited/trafficked children and youth can become “blurry” for service providers and researchers when they are viewing these children as small adults. Their approaches to working with them can come from a place of how they would provide service or research people who are engaged in “voluntary” sex work, which can legally only be adults.

However, as children and youth cannot legally consent to sex work, the approach used with adults (voluntary service) is likely not always the correct response to children, where protection should be the first logical approach. This is especially true when their emotional and mental development have often been stunted due to the trauma that they have suffered both prior to the sexual exploitation, and while the exploitation was occurring.

#### *Need for a specialized secure setting*

The issue of a secure setting for children and youth who have been trafficked has been debated since the early 1980s, first by Bagley (1984) and Fraser (1985) and then by numerous other researchers (Badawy, 2010; Bittle, 2002a; Countryman-Roswurm & Bolin, 2014; Gorkoff & Runner, 2003; Seshia, 2005). However, in all of these reports, secure settings for children who have been trafficked or exploited have been jails or

custody settings within the Justice system, not a specialized secure setting outside of the Justice system designed for protecting and stabilizing exploited/trafficked children and youth.

Understandably, there is controversy regarding secure settings for children due to a number of social issues. In the existing literature, mental health and addictions tend to be most commonly discussed with respect to secure settings (Barendregt, Laan, Bongers, & Nieuwenhuizen, 2015; Harder, Knorth, & Kalverboer, 2013). It would be an understatement to say that all care providers and guardians would like to be able to provide the care needed to their children, in their own communities and homes. This is without any argument from this researcher, the best case scenario, if possible. Yet, often times this is not possible or a viable option due to location, behavioral issues that are beyond the parent's/caregiver's abilities, and in the case of trafficked and exploited children, the additional factor of an offender's ability to access the child.

One woman who was sexually exploited/trafficked as a child discussed the issue of secure settings for children when she was asked about designing her own program to assist sexually exploited children/trafficked youth. She stated "Frigging lock her up!" and went on to say that restricting access from the offender (pimp/gang member or John) "is the only way to stop it, right? Like you can't put them in programs, but those guys will wait outside those programs. They know exactly where the kids are at all times. If they know that they are locked up from like sixty days or something, it can limit the hold they have on them (girls)." She went on to say that "a rural setting would also be good, but that they would have to figure out a way to keep the location unknown, as the offenders would go there as well". She indicated that "those guys need to continually have contact with the girls to keep the hold on them, tell them how much they love them, give them drugs, so if



they are restricted for sixty days, they can start to think about shit, and that is when they will start to second guess what is being said to them.”

One young woman indicated that she could never figure out why people always let her leave when they knew she was at so much risk to be harmed. She stated, “Like when I am upset, they would just let me go and I’d be at risk. That always happened. I would just leave and go self-destruct immediately.” This young woman discussed locked settings for children when she was asked to discuss what resources she would want her children to be able to access or access as a parent. She immediately indicated that she would “want them to be locked up”. She also discussed locked settings assisting her when she was being exploited, although it was primarily for children with addictions. She indicated that “it was more like detox, but it would get my mind straightened out and help me to make better choices.”

When she was asked to design a program that would reduce children’s risk once they have become trafficked and exploited, she stated that she would “lock em up” and also “would have a big building where they would live, they could work and go to school there, and they should get paid at the end of every day, and they could also get specialized therapy there”. She further began to explain that she felt most of the girls she knew, including herself, were crying out for help from all of the adults in their lives. She indicated that all the adults in her life knew what was happening to her, being sexually abused by numerous different men day in and day out, using drugs and being beaten up, yet they didn’t stop her. She stated it felt like “abandonment and neglect”.

The third young woman also talked about secure settings when asked for one effective strategy to reduce their risk. She immediately stated “one of them is locking them

up. A secure setting if they are extremely out of control and cannot keep themselves safe”.

One of the probing questions asked was “what would that look like?” She stated:

It should be homey, not institutionalized but secure. There should be a range of staff that are skilled and experienced to reflect the population, whether that is experiential people or Indigenous people, whatever, like a combination. Tons of clinical support there, so a range of clinicians, mental health supports, addictions, psychologists, and the whole range to support those individuals.

Another probing question asked of the same woman was “would there be any other supports?”, and she responded “Elders and cultural supports”.

In sharing some ineffective ways in which to reduce risk, she indicated that “punitive approaches were not super effective”. A clarifying question was “secure settings are often seen as a punitive measure, is there a difference to your description prior?” In response, she clearly indicated that she felt punitive meant when people were put in jail and “putting kids in jail a million times for breaches, that doesn’t work and that is punitive.”<sup>20</sup> It (secure setting) has to be specific to the population.

When asked if her child became exploited, what services or resources she would want to access, she immediately stated “I would want someone to go find them and then lock them up.” She then indicated that she would also want someone to hold the offenders of her child accountable. She further stated that “if I was part of the problem, then I would want them to live somewhere that was safe, a good home or something”.

When searching the literature on secure treatment options for sexually exploited/trafficked children that were not secure detention settings, there appeared to be little, if any, research conducted on the viability of secure settings with this population. Searches of academic journals were done using key phrases such as “secure treatment

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<sup>20</sup> Note: while outside the scope of this study, literature points to the need for justice reform in terms of preventing criminalization of exploited youth.

for sexually exploited children and youth”, “locked settings for sexually exploited youth”, “locked placements for sex trafficked youth” “secure placements for trafficked children and youth,” and “locked treatment options for sexually exploited youth”. None of these searches produced any literature that looked at a specialized secure treatment setting that was not a Justice related facility or placement.

The queries that did populate were on research that was on children and youth being arrested and detained for prostitution. The participants of this study described in their future thinking and insights into their past, a secure setting that was specialized in exploitation issues. The participants indicated that they believed this type of setting would have reduced their risk. However, in one study conducted by Hargreaves-Cormany (2016), one of the participants within their research did discuss the use of a secure juvenile setting as an effective intervention, indicating “how in retrospect she sees her experience as being one in which she was “brainwashed” at the time, and in order to enable her to leave sex trafficking it was critical to be in a secure facility for her own safety (p. 37). The lack of research on the effectiveness of secure settings highlights a gap area within research and practice. With further research in this area, it is possible that specialized, secure facilities outside of the justice system may be potentially promising resources/practices to reduce risk for these children. As emphasized in my thesis and by all of the participants, this is a key finding, and an area in need of future research.

#### *Prevention, early identification*

The last theme that presented within the interviews with the young women who had been exploited/trafficked as children was the concern that people did not identify what was happening for them early enough.

When asked about what an effective intervention would be to reduce the risks for exploited/trafficked children, one young woman answered “if people figured it out earlier in the process”. She went on to further state “if people could intervene earlier, they could stop the path that she is going down, programs like TERF were very good at that, identifying kids who were exploited”. She elaborated that “people need to figure out what is going on for those kids that they get into the trade, what is going on at home?”

In 2013, Hardy et al. identified the lack of not identifying children and youth being trafficked as a major issue to intervention and to negative outcomes for these children (p.12).

One participant explained that she had a friend whose little sister was starting to be groomed by one of her offenders, and “when my buddy told me about it, we talked and said we had to make a difference for this kid, cause the adults weren’t, and we didn’t know who else to go talk to but the people at TERF, so we told them what happened.”

This young woman also discussed how prevention with respect to mental health/addictions for exploited/trafficked children needed to be identified earlier so that people could assist the children/youth in dealing with their mental health/addiction issues. Numerous studies (Bokhari, 2008; Hardy et al, 2013) have discussed the issue of trafficked children having complex mental health issues, which can lead to addiction issues or vice versa, addiction issues that lead to exploitation and mental health issues. However there is little research around what treatment modalities are promising practices, or on how mental health practitioners/addiction specialists can intervene early (Berckmans, 2012; Biehal & Wade, 1999; Brawn & Roe-Sepowitz, 2008; Hardy et al., 2013).

Another young woman talked about prevention being an important piece that people often talk about, but she felt that not enough resources went into preventing kids from becoming exploited. She indicated that “support workers and helpers need to be in families’ homes sooner, and that they need to help mothers and even grandmothers when they are taking care of kids”. On this theme, in 2005, Seshia indicated that “peer support or support provided by others who have exited or who are attempting to exit can reduce feelings of isolation, shame, and blame. (p. 1)” This topic of peer support has been flagged throughout this thesis and throughout research on the issue for many years as a best practice (Bokhari, 2008; Gorkoff & Runner, 2003; Goulet, 2001). It has been this researcher’s experience in working with the population that this can be an effective tool, as children and youth do not feel they have to explain so many of the sex trade cultural nuances to peer support workers, and there is less fear around how peer support workers perceive the child due to the child also knowing that the worker has been in the same situation of abuse.

The participant above further described that assisting these families with getting their kids into sports and high energy activities would help make them feel that they have a sense of belonging, which they are often missing, and why offenders were so easily able to traffic them in the first place. She stated “well if there [were] more mentors available to families, they could help get kids to activities and sporting activities, get them active in a good way, or they will get active in a bad way”. The young woman went on to say that “the more physical the better, and it can help to give them some structure and a sense of belonging, because sometimes they are missing that and it makes them easy prey”.

When discussing the issue of prevention, she indicated that she thought kids didn't disclose to people sometimes because of the manner in which people were asking them questions. She stated "how they frame questions, like you don't just ask a kid if they are being exploited, you know, you need to look more at asking them how have they been surviving, and not making it shame-based, just saying it's exploitation, doesn't make it not shameful to the kid." She felt that asking children/youth directly if they had been exploited would cause the child to deny what was occurring, which would lead to no intervention happening for the child/youth.

Another participant also affirmed a more appropriate/helpful/useful manner in which service providers or workers can ask children/youth about exploitation, stating "they need to look at what is happening for the kid, not asking the kid, we would all tell them "no" cause we are ashamed of what was happening to us." In this vein, in 2005, the TERF program designed a risk assessment tool that sought to observe indicators that were not solely based on requesting information from the child. The rationale behind this was the program's 30 plus years of experience working with this population, observing that, most often, the child/youth did not disclose the abuse they were being subjected to, but that there were observable indicators that could assess risk. The TERF Program's risk assessment tool identifies clear and observable indicators which (1) do not require the child to disclose the exploitation; (2) are observable and measurable; (3) mirror literature on the vulnerabilities of exploited and sex trafficked children; and (4) reflect 20 years' worth of exploited children/youth risk factors within TERF Program case files.

The TERF risk assessment tool identifies common indicators of sexual exploitation/trafficking that can be observed and then measured to assess risk. It is

currently being utilized and will likely be published in 2018. Some of the indicators included in the tool are listed below:

#### **Indicators in TERF Risk Assessment Tool**

1. Is the child/youth experiencing physical abuse?
2. Is there a history of sexual abuse? (In traditional sense)
3. Has child/youth ever run away from home? If so, how many times?
4. Is the child using alcohol, drugs, if so what kinds?
5. Is child/youth experiencing indicators or symptoms from a suspected or diagnosed mental health concern/s? (Depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress, etc.)
6. Has child/youth been receiving phone calls from unknown, older sounding men/women? Has child/youth been trying to hide calls or keep making excuses about calls?
7. Has child/youth been given a cellular phone by a friend?
8. Has caregiver been getting hang-up calls while child/youth does not experience hang-up calls? (People asking for child by a different name?)
9. Has child/youth been acquiring unexplained expensive items or cash? (New clothing? Does not ask caregiver for money, has access to drugs/alcohol, says uncle/family member gave them gifts, but family has no funds to support?)
10. Does child/youth have a social networking page that they are very secretive about? (Does child have a Facebook account that they care providers don't know about? Plenty of Fish account, etc.? Numerous accounts with anonymous names)
11. Does child/youth appear to have friends/boyfriends who are much older than they are?
12. Does child/youth have friends that are involved in the sex trade?
13. Does child/youth have a healthy sense of cultural identity? (Has sense of admiration or pride as being part of a cultural group. E.g, Aboriginal, Canadian, Chinese, etc. Participates in cultural events or activities, speaks positively about culture, etc.)
14. Is child/youth negatively affected by racial and/or gender discrimination/oppression? (Feels discriminated against or oppressed due to skin color or gender and/or gender expression.)

This risk assessment tool described above has the potential to better equip those who work with exploited/trafficked children and youth in Manitoba by allowing for early identification, and clearer assessment of exploitation/trafficking. Similar to the risk assessment tool, questions on mental health and addiction related issues, the young woman above also brought up the mental health/addiction issues. She stressed the need for more prevention, as she felt that lots of children may be struggling with a mental health issue and not being identified could lead to them becoming exploited, which compounded

all issues. She elaborated that “sometimes it could be mental health issues that create the kid being exploited, but because the mental health issue wasn’t dealt with, it just gets worse, and by the time people figure it out, they don’t know what to deal with or what came first, or which is worse.” She further indicated that people didn’t talk to kids about the real consequences of using. She stated “people need to educate kids early on to what really happens when they start using, and not police, because lots of those kids don’t trust police. They should have people who were addicted, that look like their family or friends talk to them about it”.

Additionally, there was one topic that presented throughout the interviews that, although out of scope of the research as it is more related/focused on program recommendations, may assist in future program design and/or development of programs for exploited/trafficked children. This last theme that presented throughout different parts of the young adults interviews was that they felt the expectations of the program needed to be raised at some point in their healing (in the TERF Program). One young woman indicated that you could just hang out all day long if you wanted, and how she didn’t feel that was helpful to her, when she looked back, later in life. She did recognize that she was not an easy child to motivate indicating “the classroom needs more, there are no rules and you can just sleep on the couch all day. But I was an asshole to staff, so....”

She also felt that by having all the girls who were at different stages of healing in the same space, that it was difficult to have raised expectations. She recommended having a staged program, where kids who were just entering the program, were able to have some time with kids who were further along, but that it wasn’t all the time. She felt that with different expectations, the kids further along in the program should have more



incentives, and that the other kids would want to work towards the higher stages so they could also receive more incentives.

She stated that as a kid, she didn't care if she sat somewhere all day, if the outcome was the same, they all got incentives, she was good. But, she realized later in life that, it did hinder her because she didn't have the experience of working to achieve pay increases, better jobs, etc. Another young woman indicated that she just sat in class all day, and she didn't do much work. She wished that she had been pushed harder to finish school, or return to school because she never did finish school, and although she has been able to make a future for herself, she felt that she might have done more if the expectations were raised over time.

In summary, the young adults within this study indicated that the promising practices to reduce a child's risk to exploitation/trafficking were to create a safe space that did not identify them as exploited/trafficked children/youth, and to spend genuine time with them undertaking age appropriate activities. Furthermore, the young adults who were exploited/trafficked as children identified that a specialized secure setting would decrease risk and further exploitation of children/youth.

## Chapter 5

### Results: Service Providers in the TERF Program

The service providers interviewed for this study were asked to identify concrete ways in which they developed relationships with exploited and trafficked children/youth that assisted these children/youth in being safe. They were asked what concrete strategies they used to assist the children in being removed from the victimization that was occurring to them. They were also asked to identify the strategies that they would want in place for their children, if they ever became exploited.

The question about their children, or if they were to have a child, was posed to them because it allowed the issue to be removed from them professionally. It required the service providers, who do have a relationship with the children/youth, to remove the professional objective lens, and asked them to think about the needs of exploited children/youth from a caregiver perspective. Significantly, this reframing of the question has yielded a different result in both the young adult participants and the service providers. The hypothesis of why this question yielded different results, or possible reasons, was because when thinking about the question as it was posed, it required a personal reflection, rather than professional detached reflection.

As mentioned above, research in the past has not focussed on speaking with guardians or parents of exploited/trafficked children, but only with service providers, who, in theory, are able to remain objective and maintain a more theoretical standpoint with respect to their professional ethics. The question posed to them requiring them to think about their own children, removed their objectiveness and allowed them to see the situation from a parental lens, which is much more subjective. Again, this is an area within the current body of literature that needs to be further explored. All of the service providers

had children, so their responses to the questions regarding resources for their own children were interesting when compared to the strategies that they used with the children in the TERF Program.

*Listening skills, healthy boundaries, respect*

One of the participants discussed how having very good listening skills, both verbal and non-verbal (being able to observe the children's physical presentation), was important to listening with children who are exploited/trafficked. She indicated that you also needed to be comfortable with silence, stating "you have to take time with them, and be comfortable with long periods of silence, because there is lots of silence, you can't take that personal". She stated that she had to be able to multitask the administrative duties of her employment, plus manage the children's needs, as often she had to stop doing paperwork or meeting with people to be with the children/youth. She explained that "in the beginning of building the relationship, you have to be available lots to them. I often have to leave what I am doing to tend to what they need." She further explained that "you have to demonstrate that you are happy to see them, because you might not see them for a bit". She further elaborated that these were kids who you might not see for days or weeks at a time, so when they were accessible to her she would ensure they were able to access her. She also stated that she allowed the kids to express what they were feeling, "maybe they have a meltdown in the middle of the floor, and you help them up and process what is going on for them".

This research has demonstrated that being responsive and able to adjust based on the children's needs is a key theme. Both the young adults and service providers flagged acute listening skills, attention and responsiveness as a central concrete strategy. Having the ability to balance different responsibilities within the person's employment

would be a central strategy for service providers as well, because traffickers are always available to the children and youth they are pimping. In order to reduce children's risk of continued exploitation, being able to counter those same needs that the traffickers are meeting (which keeps them entwined in the abuse) is a logical deduction to make that would reduce a child's risk and the trafficker's hold over that child.

When asked to give concrete examples of strategies she has used to reduce risk for exploited/trafficked youth, she stated that she uses decisional balancing, which is a tool that examines the "pros and cons" of decisions, both good and bad, and is discussed in the trans-theoretical model, also known as the "Stages of Change" (Prochaska, Norcross, and DiClemente, 1994). She said assisting them to see that there are good consequences to choices and sometimes bad consequences to choices, enables her to allow them to make choices while being informed. She discussed that talking about the bad or the good of some topics (e.g., safe sex and safe drug use) that are very relative for sexually exploited/trafficked youth, but more difficult for non-specialized workers to talk about, also assisted in decreasing their risk.

Another participant spoke about the need to be comfortable around "edginess" because exploited youth are often very edgy at first until they trust her and the TERF staff. She felt that the children/youth would often test people's comfort level with difficult topics or difficult situations. She indicated that it was not uncommon for the children/youth to swear at staff or call them names, and that not reacting to that type of behavior was important. She felt that at the beginning of the relationship, they often tested workers, and it was best when workers ignored that type of behaviour and just said "ok, looks like you are having a bad day, I am going to be in my office or over there and if you want to talk, we can do that, if not, then I will see you tomorrow and I am hoping that it is going to be

a better day for you". She said they needed lots of forgiveness in the beginning because they have lived in such an unstable, violent world often for far too long.

Researchers have also indicated that exploited/trafficked children have complex needs that require patience and long-term specialized workers to assist them with the complex trauma they have experienced (Berckmans et al., 2011; Countryman-Roswurm & Bolin, 2014; Coy, 2009; Pearce, 2011).

Many authors have cited the use of peer workers with this population as it appears to be understood that peer workers have a better sense of the complex trauma that these children/youth are dealing with, and, as such, are better equipped to deal with behaviors that are a result of the trauma and abuse (Countryman-Roswurm & Bolien, 2014; Gorkoff & Runner, 2003; Seshia, 2005; Thompson et al., 2011). In 2003, Berry et al. discussed how service providers managing to get past the surface behaviors of exploited/trafficked children/youth is a critical component of working with and reducing risk for this population. This is an area where many non-specialized workers often struggle, which can leave these children at-risk because they are refused service due to the behaviour. In 2016, Runner discussed how having the "inside" or personal experience of being trafficked/exploited allows that peer worker to assist the child/youth in understanding the culture of the sex trade. When workers are not able to look past these surface behaviors, it leaves these children at a high risk to be continually exploited or trafficked due to their perceived belief that they cannot fit within a world or culture outside of the sex trade. Unfortunately, it also reinforces what the traffickers have been telling these children, "that

people don't care about them, will not accept them, and that they are not good enough for "mainstream"<sup>21</sup> culture.

One participant discussed having to make hard decisions for children/youth when they were in high-risk situations that could cause potentially fatal consequences for them. She stated:

Pulling them out (of the sex trade), when they don't want to be pulled out, and just doing what needs to be done to keep them safe, because yes they may end up in jail or a locked setting, which you hope to maintain safety for the kid at home, but I have found that even though they are pissed off at you in the moment, they come back later and say "you gave a shit about me."

Workers stressed having good boundaries with exploited children/youth, but also being real, and, when appropriate, sharing experiences with the children/youth that enable them to understand that people have exited from the sex trade successfully and been able to be "just ok or even better". One service provider indicated that when she disclosed to children/youth, she kept it extremely short and refocused back to the child by asking questions that gave the child hope for the future. She stated "I keep my crap out of it, if I do disclose, it is short, and refocus them back to what we need to look at, the future".

Another service provider indicated that boundaries were important because she had seen staff with inappropriate boundaries (most often new staff) have their own difficulties setting appropriate boundaries. She stated "if the staff have poor boundaries, it can trigger their own issues, sometimes it is just inexperience, but sometimes staff with poor boundaries just don't have their shit together, and it ends up impacting the children/youth."

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<sup>21</sup> Mainstream is a term that was used within the context of society and cultures outside of the sex trade culture within *Understanding and Working with Sexually Exploited Children and Youth* to describe how the sex trade culture describes all people who are not operating inside of the sex trade.

One service provider participant felt that “not having good boundaries, not letting the participant rule everything, they are kids and kids want, we all want to know the boundaries I think, because we are here to show them the boundaries, it just creates unhealthy relationships”.

Another service provider suggested that an effective strategy to reduce the children/youth’s risk is by honouring that child. She felt that it was important to demonstrate respect in all manners of interaction with the child/youth. She indicated that “listening and really respecting, honouring that student, that participant, totally showing love in a really healthy way, but also being humble with them too.”

As emphasized, listening skills, healthy boundaries and respect are all themes identified as best practice. These specific techniques and actions that the workers ensured they communicated to youth, constitute a key finding of the beginning foundations of best practices to reduce risk to these children. The actions of service providers on how they provide service to these children, and ensure they have the required listening skills, healthy boundaries and demonstrate respect provide some clear pragmatic examples of ways in which to reduce risk to this population of children and youth. However, future research is needed on how and where these practical examples could be further implemented and the child’s risk actually measured throughout their time receiving services with these practical examples being implemented. It would also be interesting to measure these practical strategies/techniques with an experimental and a control group (while measuring their risk) to evaluate how they may reduce risk for these vulnerable children and youth.

*Non-judgmental, non-shaming or blaming*

The service providers discussed non-judgmental behavior in all that they did with all of the children/youth that came to TERF. It was evident in many of their responses that they were hyper sensitive to the children feeling so judged by everyone in their lives, that they needed to continually demonstrate that they were not going to judge them for past, present or future exploitation that had or may occur to them.

One service provider stated “sometimes what they are telling you is heartbreaking and awful, but ensuring your body language and tone, etc. is not judging is important, we can’t judge or shame them, as that only drives them away”. In 2013, De Chesnay (2013) found that a “sensitive and caring person in a safe environment may be able to reach through to the victim and determine their health and safety needs.” (p. 175)

Another service provider discussed how their interactions with children needed to not be “shame based”, as the children already internalized an extreme amount of shame from the abuse that was perpetrated against them. Interestingly, one of the young adult participants who was exploited/trafficked as a child, also discussed how service providers needed to be very aware of what and how they asked exploited/trafficked children and youth questions relating to their abuse. She stated “it’s really trying to look at them and figure out how they have been surviving, not making it shame based, but ya know, just framing it in a way that allows them to tell you how they have been getting by”. She went on to further explain how a lot of professionals that interacted with the children, often blamed the children through their lack of understanding of sexual exploitation by saying “how they exploit themselves, or they write that in their social histories, the child has been exploiting themselves, rather than, the child is being exploited by someone”.



One of the service providers described one ineffective strategy to reduce children's risk was "judgement as a big one". She went on to explain that kids can see through people, and if they use blaming and shaming language, they will probably not trust them".

As we have seen, service providers corroborate numerous research studies (Estes & Weiner, 2001; Lebloch & King, 2006; Pearce, 2006 & 2011) that stress the importance of having a non-judgemental, non-shaming or blaming stance with children who have been exploited as an effective strategy in reducing their risk to further exploitation.

### Supportive/safe environment

The service providers in this study also seemed to mirror comments made by the young adults who were children that were once exploited and sex trafficked. The service providers talked at length about the need to ensure that the environment was safe and supportive. They discussed how, very often, the children displayed misplaced anger and frustration, but that it was important for the children to be able to show adults these feelings and still be accepted by them.

One service provider explained that "the kitchen is a safe place, it's a cozy place where cooking is happening, and it feels comfortable to them, they know that it is a safe place". She described how often the children would disclose abuse that had occurred or was occurring to them when they were sharing meals or making meals, and that she felt they disclosed in that setting because it felt like a family setting, one they could trust in which they could talk about their frustrations and anger. She stated "they know that it is a safe place, probably makes them feel like they are with their aunties, we are all aunties, mothers, and sisters to these children, and children want to be loved and accepted, even when they are mad, sad, hurt, or feel like why did this happen to them?"

One service provider indicated simply “we provide a really good safe supportive non-judgemental environment, I truly believe that”. She continued to discuss that she believed that because “the kids showed up every day, they felt respected, we are kind to them, they come because they are allowed to be whoever they are, they are allowed to get angry if they need to and we have set it up so that we can help them to succeed, but first we have to always create that environment”.

Research in the area also reveals that having a space where exploited and trafficked people can feel safe is critical to reducing victimization for this population (De Chasney, 2013; Gorkoff & Runner, 2003). It was also clear from the data analysis that many of the young adult and parents/guardians felt that a safe space was foundational for their healing and one of the factors that contributed to their success in exiting the sex trade. The parents/guardians also brought forward this theme with respect to both their children needing a safe space, but also for themselves needing to be able to safely communicate with the service providers and to not feel judged.

Another service provider talked about how the environment created at TERF was one in which the children knew that “if they freaked out, the staff would still be there. That forgiving and understanding place where kids can be kids”.

That same service provider quantified how she assessed that TERF provided a safe supportive environment by the amount of children who were now adults that continued to return to the program. She stated “Stability, we provide that to them, someplace they can always return to, kids that come back, they still call us to come to the house for Christmas dinner, or just stop by, some of them stop by three to four times a week, and some just call, but the majority of the kids stay connected, that is what eventually reduces their risk”.

One service provider discussed how providing an environment that was geared around the “Circle of Courage” model developed by Dr. Martin Brokenleg (Brendtro, Brokenleg, & Van Bockern, 2002) allowed the children to develop a sense of support and safety. She went on to describe how enabling the children to “develop a sense of belonging by developing a strong relationship with the children and their community, is key to them feeling safe and develop trust in us”.

She further explained how reducing the child’s risk involved assisting the child with knowing that the program was a part of their community and that their community was a part of them. She stated:

Helping them to understand that they belong to this, this is their program. We make sure that the kids feel comfortable here, that they feel comfortable in their own skin, comfortable in the environment, comfortable with their culture and comfortable with us. We smudge, have circles, talk and demonstrate respect for them, for the other staff, and we honor them, show them love in a healthy way.

Dr. Brokenleg (2012) states it best when discussing how to “transform cultural trauma into resilience” (p. 9). This is crucially important for Indigenous children, but also for non-Indigenous children who have been trafficked and exploited, as most children who have been abused in this way become socialized to the oppressive sex trade culture in order to survive (Berry et al., 2003). Although not all of the service providers named Dr. Brokenleg’s model, it was clear within the data analysis that they were also utilizing effective strategies to reducing children’s risk alike to Dr. Brokenleg’s Circle of Courage model. Dr Brokenleg eloquently described reducing children’s risk when he stated:

When someone cares for us amidst the blizzards of life, we know we are significant. This is not something that can be taught in words but can be communicated to others in how we treat them. Every teacher worth being a teacher knows that her students will forget what she says to them but they will never forget how she made them feel. That is the difference between learning something in the head and learning something in the heart. Belonging, Mastery, Independence, and Generosity are the vital signs of positive

youth development. These are a birthright of Native people, but also a precious gift for children of any culture which sees its children as sacred beings. These are the things that we need to learn in our heart. We have put these things around a medicine wheel and we call it the Circle of Courage because the result is someone who is courageous in surmounting the challenges of life (2012, p. 13).

It follows from the findings in this study borne out by the academic literature that promising practice includes incorporating this model in work with exploited/trafficked children and youth. This is especially true for Indigenous youth due to the colonization that Indigenous people have been and are still being subjected to. Having a safe space that Indigenous children and youth can feel they can belong to, and, more importantly, can belong to with their own cultural values/beliefs/practices, is critical to reducing their risk. However, although Dr. Brokenleg speaks specifically about Indigenous youth from the worldview of an Indigenous man, this model is applied to all youth within the program.

A sense of inclusion, safety, respect and appropriate boundaries were all themes that were identified by the specialized service providers, but the majority of these themes were also detailed by the young adults, which speaks volumes to the service providers and young adults being on the same page regarding what reduces risk to these children and youth.

There were several concrete examples provided by the service providers on how they created safety, belonging, acceptance, and respect for sexual exploited/trafficked children and youth which encompassed the overall support provided to these children, and, in turn, reduced their risk to further exploitation. These findings also clearly matched several themes that the young adults itemised during their interviews which only further supports these concrete examples as promising practice in reducing risk to exploited children and youth.

### Harm reduction

Many studies have talked about the use of harm reduction with this population as an effective intervention to reduce risk (Gorkoff & Runner, 2003; Pearce, 2011; Seshia, 2005). The service providers all discussed the use of harm reduction and how with entrenched children, this is an effective strategy to use to reduce their risk. They talked about how many of the children are struggling with mental health and addiction issues that are often met with “abstinence”-based theoretical models. Very often addiction and mental health models of care are not designed for exploited and trafficked children and youth who have different needs than general population children and youth. These children are often difficult to reach and hard to engage, which is only further exacerbated by the fact that very often they do not have consistent parental figures to assist them in following treatment plans and objectives (Berckmans et al., 2012; Melrose, 2004).

One service provider stated it was important to have “good safety plans integrated with harm reduction strategies and advocating with guardians and workers to understand the child’s primary issues”. She went on to explain that often the children’s primary issue with drugs are hard drugs such as methamphetamine, cocaine, and opioids, and that they use marijuana to self-medicate the withdrawal and as a coping mechanism as they often do not possess necessary coping skills when they first exit the trade.

This statement mirrors the findings of Berry’s (2003) research study entitled *Easing the Path*. That study found that 43 exploited/trafficked women and transwomen with addiction issues reported difficulty coping with the emotional trauma from years of exploitation. They reported that they knew their drug of choice (for most it was cocaine)

was the primary issue, and that they did want to stop using cocaine, but that they needed to use marijuana to cope with their life experiences.

The service provider went on to detail that “we have lots of super entrenched kids, using pills and meth and they often get pregnant. They smoke pot because it’s less harmful than the other drugs, and they know those drugs are really messing them up.”

She further explained that “we have to explain the harms to kids, but in a non-scare tactic way, just give them the facts about different drugs and what they do to them and to babies when they are pregnant. We also have to make sure that they can understand, that how we are explaining it is age appropriate, or if they are disabled, that we explain based on their cognitive functioning”.

This was an important finding, as, here again, if using a harm reduction strategy with children and youth is going to be effective, it needs to be geared towards their emotional and mental maturation in order for them to understand and integrate the information being given to them. As described above, with what we know now regarding compounded complex trauma and how that effects the brain/emotional development of children, this strategy, although discussed as a promising/best practice throughout literature for over the last 20 years (including by this researcher in Berry et al., 2003 and Berry, 2003), appears to be a strategy that needs further examining.

The further examination of this strategy to reduce risk, as it was discussed by numerous service providers and young adults, really should be geared towards identifying its effectiveness with different sub-populations of exploited children and youth. As research has demonstrated (Pearce, 2011), children/youth with mental health issues and cognitive delays are also at risk of being sex trafficked. As such, the blanketing of this harm reduction strategy (specifically for youth with cognitive delays who don’t understand

cause and effect) as best practice for all children, may not be as effective as once was discussed within the literature. This is mainly due to the different needs of these children who were not well researched within this population, if at all, over the last 20 years.

One specialized service provider stated “we have to provide lots of real information to them.” She discussed that she likes to use the Stages of Change Model (Prochaska & DiClemente, 2005). She went on to explain that “we have to use short periods of time to provide information, ask questions like what do they see in their future, get them forward thinking, but we also have to know which stage they are at, so we can assess which strategy will have the best outcomes”.

Another service provider emphasized the need to provide “lots and lots and lots of information”. She stated that “much of the children’s information has come from poor sources and that they have a lot of misinformation”. She further stated that it was important to use harm reduction, but to measure the outcomes and ask the questions. As noted above, TERF staff use an assessment tool developed by the TERF program to help guide their questions in this area. Questions include: has the child’s use decreased?, has their exploitation decreased?, and are they in less harm then when we started? One staff member reported that “we have to continually address those factors and keep reassessing where they are at”. This theme is important, as it points to measuring the child’s risk with respect to numerous behaviors that could potentially cause grave harm. Such an approach might also identify improvement areas for programs and services that are working with this population.

The use of harm reduction as a strategy has been often identified as a best practice, but within the literature, here again, there is little that discusses how to concretely use this strategy while reducing or measuring the actual risk to these children. Concrete

examples of questions to ask in order to measure the reduction of risk (which is essential to harm reduction as a theoretical model) are important not only to this population of children and youth, but to all populations of children and youth. If service providers are not measuring the reduction of risk, the question then needs to be asked, how do you know if you are reducing risk to the children by the interventions used? These questions and more consistent measures can assist in answering that question for the service providers, children and youth and their guardians and parents.

Another service provider suggested the use of an addiction centre that was secure as a measure of harm reduction. She stated:

If all else isn't working, and the youth is too unsafe in the community, sometimes you have to use YASU (Youth Addictions Stabilization Unit), and that can reduce harm as well. People seem to think that the only harm reduction is just talking to the kids, anything we do to keep them safer than what they are is what I call harm reduction.

Another staff talked about reducing harm for the youth she worked with by "normalizing" what was happening. She stated:

I would say I know they are being exploited, and to them it is probably normal now, but that we needed to create a new normal, and that until we could recreate that new normal, there were ways in which she could keep herself safer. I don't think kids expect you to call out what is happening, so it gets their attention.

A final theme related to harm reduction that arose from the interviews was the need to spend a lot of time connecting children and youth to their culture as an effective harm reduction strategy. One service provider stated "kids need their culture, they need to keep that connection or learn that connection, culture can improve their self-esteem, reduce self-blame and shame and give them effective coping mechanisms, and all of these things reduce harm for kids." She further explained that "connecting children to their culture can give them structure and that all children need structure to be successful".



There have been numerous studies on the impact of colonization on Indigenous peoples over the last several years (Connolly, 2016; Gunn, 2014; Kirmayer, McDonald, & Brass, 2000). Incorporating a child's cultural worldview into their environment, space, and daily teachings has shown positive outcomes for children, and this is especially important for minority children (Rigby, 2011).

The finding of incorporating culture into exploited and trafficked children's lives as an important factor to reduce harm is another key concrete strategy to reducing risk for sexually exploited and sex trafficked children. This is especially true due to the overrepresentation of Indigenous children in certain subpopulations of the sex trade (Ontario Native Women's Association, 2016; Pearce, 2012; Province of Manitoba, 2008). This strategy, as a concrete measure to reduce risk is equally important since, most often, when harm reduction is being discussed, it is in respect to the child's drug or alcohol use, and not from an overall cultural perspective.

### *Specialized secure setting*

Alike to what the young adults who were exploited as children stated, all of the service providers asserted the need to have a non-justice focused secure setting. They envisioned a setting that could secure children/youth whose safety was at too great of a risk in the community due to the primary issue of exploitation that was occurring to them, but also due to their secondary issues of mental health and addictions. One provider stated:

We need a staged model treatment centre for kids that has a secure component to it. I would like to see it in the country, on the land, and have progression for kids so that at first it is secure, but that after they have detoxed or had their mental health issues addressed that they could then come back and be mentors to the other children and youth.

This service provider identifies a much needed middle ground around the issue of secure vs. non-secure settings for exploited children and youth. She points to the fact that what is happening for these children is beyond a theoretical viewpoint and largely much of the reality of their lives is happening in a “grey” area that is not often protected by current resources or services. It is clear that a different resource, one that would provide for exploited/trafficked children and youth within the “grey” to assist them from being a victim to become a survivor is needed. This is central to this thesis, and the question what is best practice? The theme of not being able to protect children and youth from being sexually exploited/trafficked has reoccurred over and over again.

Another service provider indicated that she felt not all children and youth required secure settings, but that some were just being harmed so much and entrapped in drug addiction that they couldn’t make good choices for themselves.<sup>22</sup> She stated “secure setting for sure for kids who are just continually harmed and using daily. Other kids, they can work through the exploitation and drugs, with the right supports, in the community with support, education and appropriate mental health resources”.

Here again, during analysis of the data, the use of secure settings continued to present as a theme. It was apparent that the service providers and the young adults, were acutely aware of the reality of these children being sexually and physically harmed on a daily basis.

One service provider discussed the need for secure treatment that had all the resources an entrenched child needs right there in the secure setting. She suggested:

Secure treatment, longer than 10 days. 10 days is not long enough for some of the girls that are using meth and opioids, it isn’t even out of their system yet. But it

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<sup>22</sup> Note: currently in Manitoba there are no specialized long-term secure resources to deal with sexually exploited/trafficked children’s addiction and co-occurring mental health issues.

needs to have all the resources they need as well, addiction treatment workers, nurses, therapists and mental health workers. It would need to be joined to the community resources so that it could smoothly transition the child after the child has had time to stabilize, develop secure relationships and to just be healthy again.

As the young adults were asked to personalize the exploitation to a child or grandchild, every service provider responded that they would want to be able to secure their child or grandchild to receive the services they need. Once again, as analysed in the data from the adults who were exploited as children/youth, this theme was significant.

When asked about her own child becoming exploited in the future and what resources she would want to access for her child, one service provider responded “a secure setting especially if they are out of control and just not able to regain control in our home or a community setting.” She went on to explain that she didn’t feel that the secure setting should be punitive, but restorative so that the child could be removed from the abuse. She stated “I don’t think people understand that children are being sexually abused by adult men, numerous times every day. People seem to think that the kids should be able to choose to be abused or not, but when they are always intoxicated, how do they make any good choices for themselves?”

Another service provider stated that she felt:

Getting kids to transition was important but that sometimes, they need a secure environment to begin that transition.” She stated that she would prefer her child or grandchild to be in a “specialized home with specially trained staff who could address her needs, but if she was not able to accept the treatment I would want her in a locked setting where I could show her everyday how much I love her, and get her the treatment she needs.

On this same theme, one of the service providers indicated that:

I would like to think that we could provide what kids need in their homes, with services working with their parents and grandparents and communities, but unfortunately, that isn’t always the case or the reality, so, if it was my child and that wasn’t the reality, I would want her in a secure setting that could provide all the supports needed to her.

As emphasized above, the establishment of a secure setting has been a controversial topic within the field of exploitation and sex trafficking of children. It warrants additional evidence-based research. The sensitivity and potential concerns are especially significant for Indigenous communities who are still struggling with the legacies of past abuses that occurred in residential schools, institutions and the child welfare system for Indigenous families and children. This is not a simple issue. The issue of secure settings for children is a politically charged issue with many people questioning why it is not the offenders that are locked up for abusing the children, which would require the child to give a statement to police.

To be sure, justice for offenders is needed and an appropriate response, but unfortunately, that is the responsibility of the criminal justice system, and it's often not possible for the exploited child to be in a space to follow through with the criminal court process for a number of reasons.

That said, this new theme has emerged and exploring the creation of a secure facility outside of the justice system is a recommended strategy by the young adults and service providers interviewed for this study. It is beyond the scope of this research to categorically conclude if a secure setting is an effective strategy to deal with the risk of sex trafficking/exploitation for children. As mentioned, existing research available provides negative feedback on secure settings, but is limited to jails and custody settings within the justice system (Badgley, 1984; Bittle, 2002a; Fraser, 1985). As such, this is an area for further research.

All of the participants in both the service provider and young adult groups were clear that they did not think a secure setting by way of criminal charges was an effective strategy to deal with reducing risk. But, it was apparent that when they discussed secure

settings for their own children, removing the professional or themselves from the equation, that their philosophical views changed greatly. Indeed, they all indicated that they would want to be able to access a secure setting that was specialized and geared towards healing. However, they were also clear that if the only place that was available to them was a jail setting, that they would rather have their child in custody, than being abused by upwards of five to 10 men a day.

As mentioned, this is a new finding that differs from what existing research states on the issue of secure settings for children and youth who have been exploited and trafficked. All of the participants agreed secure settings were a potential promising practice strategy to reduce risk to their children and/or to them when they were children.

Analysing the lived experiences and perspectives of parents/guardians along with stable people with lived experience of being trafficked as children has presented an interesting theme regarding the secure setting as a promising practice with this population. It should also be noted that this researcher was not able to find any existing research where parents/guardians were consulted in what best practice for their children was or could be. There also did not appear to be much research on speaking with stabilized adults who were removed from the sex trade, asking them, as this study did, to have hindsight about what worked and what could have worked best to reduce their risk. The research that does exist is most often done with service providers and academics, as the primary groups consulted along with young people who are still in the midst of this abuse.

Many of the existing studies that discuss the use of secure settings with children who are exploited and trafficked are limited. They only do so with youth who are still being exploited and most likely heavily addicted to drugs and alcohol as a means to cope with

the daily abuse that is occurring to them (Bittle, 2002a; Fraser, 1985; Gorkoff & Runner, 2003; Seshia, 2005).

It was also noted that much of the research, (Bittle, 2002a; Fraser, 1985; Kingsley & Mark, 2002; Seshia, 2005) did not discuss the alternative for these children, which is often overdose, permanent disabilities, severe mental health issues that persist for many years, and fatalities.

The other issue that did not appear to be discussed is the impact on the children when adults who know what is occurring for these children, sometimes as young as 12 years old, do not intervene swiftly, and in a manner that can remove them from the abuse that is occurring repeatedly to them on a daily basis.

Parents and stabilized adults who experienced trafficking as children are two sample groups that should be consulted further within future research. All of these findings are promising and lay the groundwork for future studies.

## Chapter 6

### Results: Guardians/parents

#### Communication with parents/guardians

The final group interviewed for this study were the parents/guardians of exploited youth. This group was asked to identify concrete ways in which workers/professionals developed relationships with their children who were exploited/trafficked, and how they assisted their children/youth to be safe. They were asked what concrete strategies service providers had used to assist their children in being removed from the victimization that was occurring to them. They were also asked to identify if there were concrete strategies that they would want to be able to access for their children.

Better communication between the social service providers and parents was a theme discussed by the caregivers. One caregiver discussed not really understanding how entrenched her child was, and that she wished people who were aware of the exploitation communicated that better to her. She indicated that “there isn’t enough communication; it would have been good if people discussed all that was going on for her sooner with me”. She noted that although there are confidentiality issues, she really felt that people not discussing all of the issues hindered her ability to act in a protective manner. Another guardian also voiced that she felt “communication and information sharing, is one of the most effective interventions, then everyone including their caregiver can know what is happening.” She went on to further state that “people would always tell me long after the fact that she was being exploited or an incident involving exploitation which was not helpful because I am responsible for her.”

In 2006, Lebloch and King discussed the issue of implementing Multi Agency Planning (MAP) meetings during which all parties involved with the child discussed all of

the safety issues for the child and together come up with a plan to ensure the safety of the child (p. 370).

The need for increased communication between TERF staff and parents/guardians is an interesting finding because the parent/guardian group discussed how there needed to be a more team-based approach, and that the communication was effective in reducing the child's risk. Interestingly, this theme was also noted in the young adult group who also discussed the issue of early prevention, and people not identifying that they were exploited.

While analyzing the data and reflecting on the data, the following question continually came to the researcher's mind: Did people know and not indicate they knew because they would now be required to respond, or did people not know how to identify exploitation/trafficking? Speckman (2016) and Pearce (2011) both found favour of the former – that there is a culture of care within the child welfare system that has ignored these children and the abuses occurring to them.

Unfortunately, mandated people not responding to these children is not a difficult thing to do in practice, as sad as that seems, but it is a reality for these children. These are the children who are often missing, with no one looking for them, no one pushing the authorities to ensure they are safe, and that leaves them completely vulnerable to the offenders who also know how our systems work. The young adults discussed how easy it is for offenders to access children. With this in mind, it is clear that a promising practice strategy to reduce risk to these children is communication with all parties involved, including their guardians, unless it is their parent or guardian that is exploiting them.

In 2010, Fong and Cardoso indicated that child welfare needed to work with non-governmental organizations and communities to develop, through communicating with



each other effectively, best practices to work with this population (p. 315). One parent indicated that there:

Needed to be more opportunities for people to share what was happening sooner rather than later, because my child was beginning to be exploited in school and they knew something was happening but didn't discuss it with me and tried to deal with it in school. By the time I was notified, it was too late.

Corroborating this finding, in 2014, Countryman-Roswurm and Bolin identified lack of early identification and poor communication between services providers, along with lack of clarity on what child exploitation was or how it is defined by different services as creating increased risk to children (p. 523).

This parent further went on to discuss that she may have not believed it was occurring to her child, but she felt that people should have tried harder to help her understand what was happening to her child. She stated "as a parent I didn't want to put those things in my head, I just wanted to say this isn't happening".

The strategy of effective communication amongst all parties responsible for ensuring a child's safety is a simple but effective tool in reducing risk to these children. Here again, as a service provider, this researcher found that people were much more concerned with the issues of confidentiality than the abuse occurring to the child. Under the Child and Family Services Act in Manitoba (Province of Manitoba , 2017), all people are required to report abuse occurring to a child, under all circumstances. It appears from the lack of existing data within the literature that the scale and scope of actual instances of child sex trafficking/sexual exploitation are not well known, nor well reported. Many authors have discussed the issue of workers or guardians blaming the child for the sexual abuse occurring to them by adults, rather than recognizing it as abuse and reporting it to

child welfare authorities and police (Estes & Weiner, 2001; Lebloch & King, 2006; Pearce, 2006& 2011).

Too often, this researcher would read incident reports required of licensed group homes that would indicate “the child is sexually exploiting themselves.” This is an incorrect statement as the facts are that children cannot sexually abuse themselves, nor can they consent to sexual abuse. This apparent phenomenon of guardians, care providers and child welfare workers is again an area for future research in order to better understand why there is a lack of reporting when it comes to this type of child abuse, and a lack of communication amongst service providers who are mandated to protect these children.

#### *Non-blaming and non-shaming of parents/guardians*

One parent/guardian discussed how the TERF Program was the first program where she felt she was not being blamed for her child becoming exploited. She indicated that at “other programs when I went to visit her, the staff were rude and kind of blamed me, it didn’t feel very welcoming, but I never felt that way at TERF.”

Another parent/guardian indicated that she did not always feel that people in other services (outside of TERF) were helpful to her when her child was being exploited. She stated “I didn’t feel comfortable which she (the child) would notice and that isn’t good, they should get to know the parents as well as the child because they need to go home eventually”.

In 2011, Azhar and Al-Bahar found that service providers needed to ensure the family was included in the healing process for the child, and that cultural issues also needed to be carefully attended to as the child should, if it is safe to do so, be re-integrated

with the family. That same parent/guardian further explained that although no one out right blamed her for her child becoming exploited, that “it was just the way they said things to me, or didn’t say things to me, almost like they were better able to care for her then I was.”

This is another important finding regarding promising practice. Service providers need to ensure they are working with parents to enable them to care for their children when they return, or to support them when the systems are no longer able to do so due to age, geography, or any other factors. Two studies (Lebloch & King, 2006; Saewyc, et al, 2010) have found that exploited children will have behaviours and complex issues from being exploited/trafficked that parents/caregivers often find difficult to deal with, but that enabling parents to deal with these behaviors will best serve the child, and assist the family in reducing the child’s risk for re-entry back into the sex trade. Additionally, in 2010, Fong and Cardoso found that a possible effective treatment strategy to reducing risk for exploited/trafficked children/youth may be a treatment methodology called Multisystemic Therapy (p. 315). This therapeutic model focusses on improving protective factors and building stronger relationships with families, and the young girl’s communities (Fong & Cardoso, 2010, p. 315).

Working with parents of children who have been exploited appears to be another gap in the research on exploitation/trafficking of children, and what reduces their risk and/or promising practices in working with this group. Parents are key informants on their children’s lives, both prior and during the exploitation/trafficking, and can give insights regarding needs, practices, strategies, etc. that service providers or children may be blind to or just lack sufficient information to provide the best recommendations.

### Dealing with the offenders

All of the guardians/ parents discussed the aspect of needing a better manner in which to deal with offenders. Most of them acknowledged that due to their children's mental health status and instability that they were not able to give criminal statements on the men who had been offending against them. They described feeling failed by the criminal justice system and their children not being protected adequately.

Research in this area has focused mostly on the criminal justice system criminalizing children for being exploited. It has focussed less on changes to legislation that require less of the criminal case to be weighted on the child's statement, which is currently the practice. However, within the research on decriminalisation of children and youth under the Criminal Code of Canada for prostitution related offenses, there were studies that identified offenders needing stricter consequences if they are convicted of procuring a child into prostitution (Bagley, 1984; Bittle 2002b; Fraser, 1985).

One parent stated "people need to start dealing with the people who are creating the problem, the men who are abusing these kids". She went on to state that they should publish their names when someone suspects them of buying sex from a child. She indicated "they should put their names in the paper or on TV and other people should know what they are doing because they look normal, you wouldn't think that these are the people harming your child." Many articles have discussed how the criminal justice system is not a highly effective manner in which to deal with the issue of child sexual exploitation and trafficking (Countryman-Roswurm & Bolin, 2014; Gorkoff & Runner, 2002; Seshia, 2005).

These statements support that an effective way in which to reduce risk to the children\youth is by allowing the child/youth being abused anonymity while not allowing the men who are soliciting sex to be hidden any longer. The issue of blame being placed where it should be – that is, on the men who are attempting to purchase sex – has been discussed in the literature in great detail as referenced numerous times throughout this piece of work.

Another guardian indicated that although the police tried to get her child to feel comfortable enough to talk to them about the abuse she was experiencing, that her child just felt too ashamed to discuss it with them. She stated “There needs to be more awareness about the offenders, the police tried to get her to talk, they spent time with her, but in the end they couldn’t do anything because she just felt too ashamed to talk to them and so the offenders got away with it.”

Removing the onus from the child to disclose the abuse occurring to them within this population appears to be a promising practice, as much of the literature (Lloyd, 2005; National Institute of Health (U.S.), 2014; Reid, 2011) has demonstrated that these children/youth are often not able to do so for a plethora of reasons (e.g., mental health, addictions, fear of violence, trauma bonds to offender and lack of secure relationships). This is a promising practice, and one that has only occurred in Manitoba. Manitoba is the only jurisdiction in Canada that has ever used the Child and Family Services Act (CFSA) to hold offenders accountable for their harbouring of children in care with intent to exploit them (Sapoznik Evans, 2017). This promising practice allows the guardians of children in care to be the main source of evidence, without requiring the child to provide a statement of the abuse occurring. If convicted under the CFSA, offenders can face a two year custody sentence, a fifty thousand dollar fine, or both (Sapoznik Evans, 2017).

Another guardian indicated that she had used the Child Sexual Exploitation and Human Trafficking Act (CSEHTA) to restrict access of the offender to her child, but she stated that she may not have known that tool was available to her without the help of the police. She stated “government need to do more education, the Child Sexual Exploitation and Human Trafficking Act needs to be more publicized so that people know it exists, I wouldn’t have known if the police didn’t tell me.” She indicated that placing this non-contact order on the offender allowed him to be arrested, but not for human trafficking, and only a breach of a court order. She indicated that:

They were someone who helped me out and helped me deal with the situation, because no one was able to stop these guys from offending against my child until we got the order, and he was arrested but not for human trafficking, which he should have been, but only for a breach of a court order.

*Prevention education for both girls and boys, early intervention*

A second theme that emerged in the research was the need for early prevention through the education system. All of the guardians and parents discussed the need to have awareness of child sexual exploitation and human trafficking in schools so that children can identify early indicators of grooming and so that parents are aware of the signs that their child may be at risk of becoming exploited.

One guardian indicated “the schools need to be teaching kids that this is occurring, because I think kids think that this is something happening far away and doesn’t happen here”. She went on to further specify that her child started showing signs of being at risk in school, but that when she approached the school for help they just called child welfare on her, and how the child welfare system did not assist her.

She stated “Schools need to be talking to these kids and parents. When my child was struggling, they told me she is just growing up and don’t worry about her, but then

things got worse and when I asked them for help they called child welfare on me!” She further stated:

When the school called child welfare on me, the system didn't help me, they made me the bad guy and said they would bring her into care, but she only got worse in care because they just let her walk right out of the group home, and there was no accountability, and then they just started moving her all over the place. She got in with worse kids and it all went downhill.

Several authors have discussed the need for early prevention and awareness of indicators of exploitation within schools, community centres and other settings children frequent so that people can intervene quickly and appropriately (Coy 2009; Fong & Cardoso, 2010; Pearce, 2011).

Another care provider indicated that schools needed to become more involved in teaching children what exploitation looks like. She stated:

Schools should have more responsibility to have awareness on this issue, and teach children about the dangers of exploitation, because by the time it gets to the child welfare system, it is very hard to intervene with them as they are almost always already entrenched.

Additionally, one guardian indicated that she felt that the child welfare system needed better education around the issue so that they could educate families and children sooner, before the exploitation occurs, rather than after it has happened. She stated “we need better tools to know what to tell parents, how to teach kids the risks and how to get them to disclose right away if someone is trying to exploit them”.

The topic of early education on social issues is often discussed with children and families through the school system in a number of areas (e.g., healthy relationships, alcohol and drug use, and internet safety), but prevention of child sexual exploitation through human trafficking is not widespread within the Manitoba education and child welfare systems.

With all of the parents/guardians and young adults discussing early prevention as a promising practice to reduce risk to children, this is a significant finding, that to this researcher's knowledge is not being incorporated in any school division or provincial curriculum at present. Rigby (2011) also concluded that early prevention and education along with identification of children being trafficked and exploited was largely absent within this abuse of children (p. 333).

There are groups that present information to schools when requested, most often by teachers within the schools, but there is currently no formal responsibility of schools or school divisions to provide this type of curriculum within Manitoba.

As much of the research in this area discusses early prevention as a key priority in reducing child sexual exploitation, the question then becomes, with 30 years of research, why has this not yet occurred? The analysis of the data shows a promising practice of predicting better outcomes with respect to reducing risk to children if they are given the appropriate information to make informed choices, understand the consequences and protect themselves from being lured into the sex trade.

### *Specialized secure setting*

Alike to all of the other participants, parents and guardians also discussed the use of secure settings as an effective manner in which to reduce children's risk of further exploitation.

One parent stated about her daughter that:

She wasn't a criminal but she ended up in jail because she got a stupid intoxicated in public charge and then kept breaching. But, as much as I hated her being in jail, I can't say it didn't help her because she actually liked being in the youth centre. She needed to be locked up, but I wish it was in a place that had specialized resources for her to deal with her addiction and mental health issues.



This parent went on to further indicate that her daughter “liked being in a secure environment, it removed her ability to make stupid choices like using drugs or being with the guy who was pimping her.” She further explained that “it was really the only time you could talk to her, otherwise she was always missing and drunk or high. You can’t help them when they are always high and she was always high because she was hurting so much.”

Again, as mentioned previously, the existing research on use of secure settings with exploited children and youth discusses jail settings, not specialized secure resources that the participants in this study raised as a promising practice.

Another guardian found that the use of a secure setting was effective for her child because it allowed for resources to reach out to her child. She stated that:

When she was in a secure setting for her addiction issues, it allowed for TERF staff and other resources to connect with her. When she was in the community she was just being exploited every day and was only connected to the men who were abusing her.

She further stated when discussing effective methods to reduce risk with her own child, or what resources she would want to access for her own child, that “I would want to have a secure setting that wasn’t jail, but one that could deal with her issues of abuse”. She also indicated that it was difficult to think of her own child being exploited because she knew that there was no secure resources and that the resources available currently were not always effective with removing or reducing the risk to children.

Another guardian discussed the use of a secure setting because her child was so addicted to drugs that she could not access counselling or resources because she was never at home, and when she was it was only to sleep. She stated:

I wish there was a resource that could help her for longer than seven days, because that just isn’t long enough, she isn’t even sober off the drugs in seven days, and then

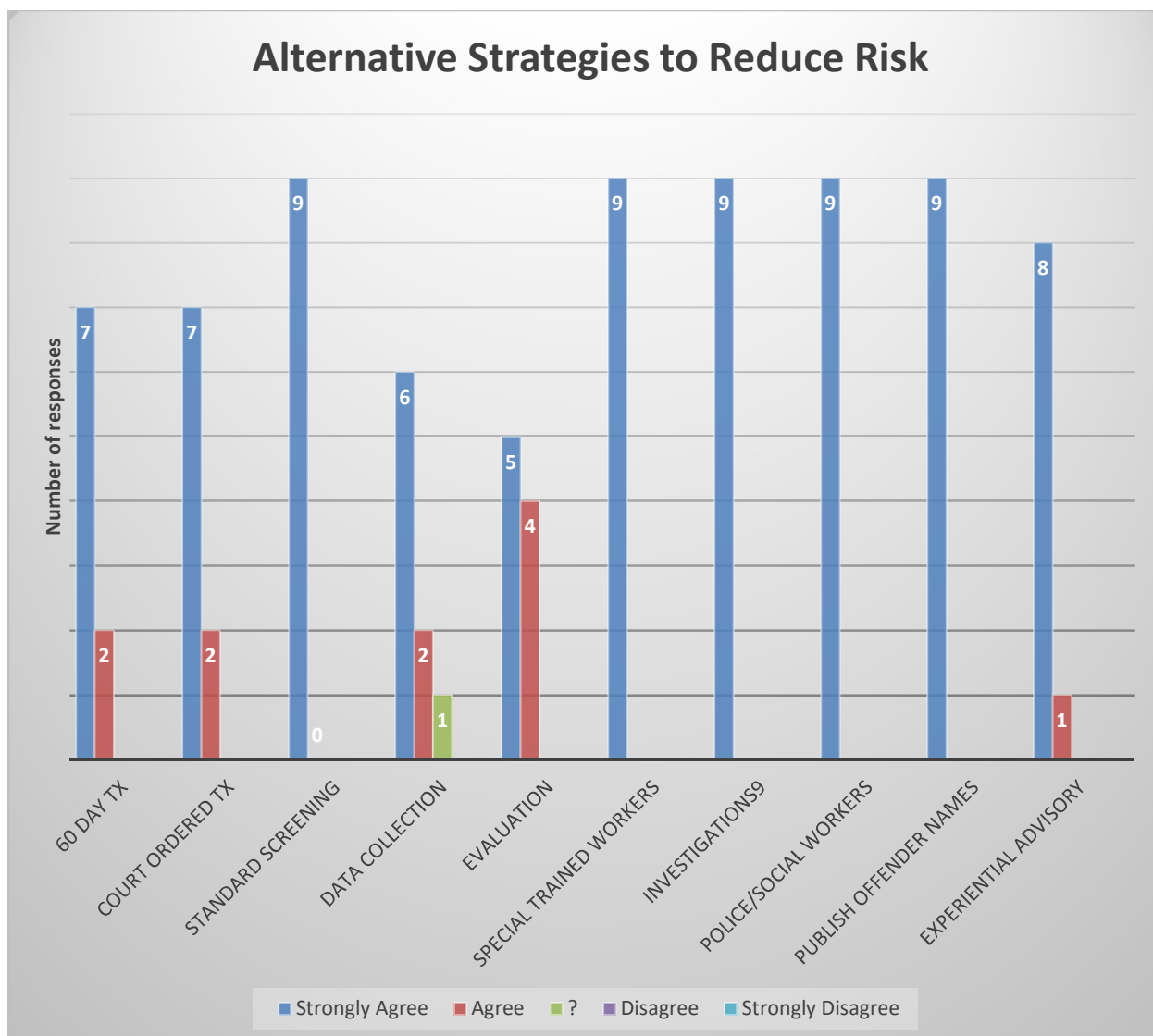
she is gone again, only coming home when she wants to sleep or she is so exhausted from using drugs all day and night.

Because the use of a secure setting was discussed by all participants in the study, and because research to date has not looked at the use of a secure specialized setting designed for exploited and trafficked children, it is an area that should be further explored.

#### Alternative Strategies list

In addition to interviews, this study also asked participants to complete a short questionnaire that described other jurisdictions' strategies and legislation as well as programming to reduce risk to sexually exploited/trafficked children and youth. Many of the participants asked questions regarding the other jurisdictions' approaches to working with this group of children, and the researcher explained each concept to the participants.

The responses to the questionnaire on alternative strategies to reduce trafficked and exploited children's risk in other jurisdictions were put into the graph below. All of the participants completed the questionnaire (see Appendix C for questionnaire).



The graph above illustrates that all of the participants felt that other jurisdictions' methods of reducing risk to exploited and trafficked children were needed in Manitoba. There was only one question (depicted in green in the graph) that a participant did not feel they could either agree or disagree with, which was regarding standardized data collection.

All of the participants felt that specially trained social workers and police who could respond to the children's needs on a 24/7 basis were needed for sexually exploited and trafficked children to reduce their risk effectively.

They all also felt that investigations needed to be done differently, not relying on the victim as much as the current practice does in Manitoba. This question on the questionnaire invoked quite a bit of emotion from all of the participants. They all had negative responses to the issue of how current investigations place so much weight and evidence on the child's statement.

The verbal, qualitative responses to the questionnaire were not being recorded though, so they are not included within the study. Only the quantitative questionnaire responses are included, which do indicate that every participant felt current investigation practices are not sufficient, and need to be reviewed or changed in Manitoba.

Interesting though, Manitoba as mentioned previously, is the only jurisdiction in Canada to utilize child welfare legislation to hold offenders accountable. Using the Child and Family Services Act (CFSA) does not require the child to give a statement, nor does the use of that legislation require the child's testimony. In analyzing the data, the continued use of the CFSA legislation would be a promising practice to hold offenders accountable for their conduct with children.

Another section of the questionnaire that appeared to cause a strong emotional response was the question on publishing offender's names in public records and media. Here again, the responses were not recorded, so they are not being included within the qualitative section of the study. It should be noted, however, that all nine participants indicated that they felt people who were exploiting/trafficking children should have their names published within media, and in other public records. Currently, in Manitoba, the

Winnipeg Police do not publish names of people who are attempting to purchase sex, and are arrested for communicating for the purposes of prostitution. The current practice is two-fold: 1) if a person caught attempting to buy sex from an adult (via a sting by police during which an adult officer goes undercover) does not have any violent offenses in their past, they can be diverted and attend a one day course on the harms created by engaging in prostitution. 2) If a person has a record that includes any offenses that would be considered violent, then they currently cannot be diverted and must go through the court process (Sapoznik-Evans, 2017).

The Prostitution Offender Program is a successful “community-based diversion tool for adults who have been arrested for *Obtaining sexual services for Consideration or Communicating in any place for that purpose* (Criminal Code, 1985, s286.1), or those who have other prostitution-related charges”.<sup>23</sup> The program is offered by Salvation Army Correctional and Justice Services Winnipeg in partnership with Manitoba Prosecution Service, Winnipeg Police, and community-based social service agencies. The program has been in existence since 1997, has had 308 participants from 2011-2016 alone, and was modeled after similar programs in North America. Similar to other programs it aims to reduce the demand for sexual exploitation. Overall objectives of the program include education/awareness raising and reducing recidivism. How effective this program is at reducing men in re-engaging in the sex trade is not well known as it is difficult to know if they are re-engaging in a different sub-group of the trade after being arrested. Compared to the “supply” side of the sex trade, the “demand” side has had very little research completed to determine effective strategies to reduce the demand or the purchasing of

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<sup>23</sup> A case study of the Prostitution Offender Program will be published this fall by Emily Richard, Hennes Doltze and Dianna Bussey of the Salvation Army. They generously provided the researcher with an early draft version quoted here.

sex from children/youth. To this researcher's knowledge, there has not been any studies that have looked at men who are purchasing sex from children. To date, research that has studied the demand side has focused on men who are purchasing sex from adults, or who believe the individuals to be adults.

Lastly, it is important to note that all of the participants, based on the analysis of the questionnaire, felt that standard screening was an effective tool to reduce children's risk. Here again, there was discussion with respect to the linkages of early identification and prevention if people were screening children earlier for indicators of exploitation/trafficking. As stated above, researchers (Berckmans, 2012; Countryman-Roswurm, 2014; Hardy et al., 2013) have also identified the need for effective screening, and early intervention with exploited/trafficked children and youth.

## Chapter 7

### Discussion/Recommendations

A strength of this study was the ability of the young adults interviewed to have distance into what worked for them in reducing their risk when they were children. The young adults that participated in this study were not biased by factors that were presently occurring for them as they were while they were being exploited. As they were no longer being exploited and were stable, their ability to describe promising practice was from a position of hindsight.

This has not often been the case in research with this population, as most often researchers are talking to children/youth who are still being abused or manipulated by drugs and/or traffickers, and, as such, may not present actual information regarding what would remove them from the drugs, traffickers, and/or culture of the sex trade. More likely than not, they will actually present information that would not remove them from these risk factors for fear of drug withdrawal, violence, sense of loss and belonging and, unfortunately, a loss of the only place they feel useful, loved and respected.

The parents/guardians interviewed for this study were able to provide their views on what reduced risk to their children/youth along with what they felt was needed to keep their children safe. This is a strength of this study as well because much too often social workers, policy makers and researchers remove the emotion from social issues by only speaking with experts, service providers, academics, etc. who do not have a strong emotional attachment to the victims. The literature within Canada and the United States that currently exists has not presented this important family member viewpoint on the issue of child sexual exploitation/trafficking. As cited above, these children are often

considered throwaways, runaways, bad or delinquent children/youth. Their parents and guardians can prompt us and ground us back to the human perspective that these children/youth are more than research participants, clients, or lectures, but someone's child who deserves to be protected just as much as every other child.

All in all, there were five key findings within this study. The first was that children/youth and their parents/guardians need a space that is non-judgemental and free of blame to be able to access services, which, in turn, in their opinion reduces risk. This is not a new concept by far within the existing research (Azhar & Al-Bahar, 2011; Seshia, 2005), but what was a new finding was how the service providers provided information in a concrete manner to these children and their families in order to reduce their risk. Some of the strategies that the service providers used to reduce the children/youth's risk that emerged from the data were the following: their listening skill strategies, extremely clear and healthy boundaries, their demonstration of respect towards the children/youth and their families, use of culturally age appropriate activities and ceremonies, use of experiential workers, and the manner in which they employed a harm reduction theoretical model while incorporating a stages of change model to address the child's readiness for change. The use of a harm reduction model has been cited (Brawn & Roe-Sepowitz, 2008; Goulet, 2001; Kingsley & Mark, 2002) as a promising practice model for this population, but it was not clear within existing research how service providers were implementing this model to ensure they were reducing risk. The data within this study demonstrated clear and concrete measures that can be used to ensure risk is being reduced while implementing this strategy.

The second key finding was the need for more effective prevention techniques, and better screening for indicators of sexual exploitation/trafficking. Both the



parent/guardian participants and the young adult participant groups indicated that the system was not effective in early identification of sexually exploited/trafficked children, and, in some cases, unable to identify them at all. Here again, within existing literature (Barnitz, 2001; Countryman-Roswurm & Bolin, 2014; Melrose, 2004; Pearce, 2006; Speckman, 2016), prevention and better indicators are identified but lack specific, concrete information on how to identify these children, on how to support their parents in the early stages of exploitation, or, better yet, prior to them being exploited.

The use of tools, such as the TERF Risk Assessment Tool (2005) developed in Manitoba, or the Barnardo's sexual exploitation risk assessment framework (Clutton, S. & Coles, J. 2007) developed in the United Kingdom could act as a mechanism to determine if children/youth are being exploited/trafficked. These types of tools could be considered a promising practice that all people working with children should have access to, as it is not dependent on the children or parents/guardians to disclose the abuse occurring. These tools allows for earlier identification if used as a standardized screening tool. The use of a standardized screening tool was called for by all participants within the questionnaire, which further supports the use of existing tools to screen children earlier for warning signs/indicators of exploitation/trafficking.

Due to the TERF Risk Assessment Tool being published in Manitoba, it is recommended that the TERF Risk Assessment Tool be published for widespread use within all of the specialized services in Manitoba and other provinces in Canada. It is also recommended that a larger study be conducted with a control group to assess risk while employing all of the identified effective strategies to reduce risk. Not having the ability to compare children who were receiving these noted strategies against children who were

not receiving the strategies/approaches identified in this study was a limitation to the study.

The third key finding of this study was the need to deal with offenders in a different manner, as the way in which the system is currently dealing with people who are purchasing and selling children/youth is not effective. Here again, research (Badawy, 2010; Badgley, 1984; Fraser, 1985; Gorkoff & Runner, 2003; Lloyd, 2005) has cited the need to focus more on the offender and less on the victim, but clear methods are not often cited or researched on their effectiveness in reducing risk to children. The parent/guardian and service provider participants within this study felt that publishing the names of offenders in popular media formats would be an effective tool to reduce the risk of exploitation for children/youth. They felt that by decreasing the demand, less children/youth would be bought and sold for sex. It is recommended that a study on the demand (people purchasing and trafficking children/youth) be conducted within Manitoba to establish if these people who are engaged in this behavior would cease engaging in the sex trade if they were publically identified.

The fourth key finding within this study was the use of effective, clear communication and collaboration with all people involved in reducing risk to the exploited child. Existing research (Barnitz, 2001; Berckmans et al., 2012; Henderson et al., 2010; Lebloch & King, 2006; Social Services and Community Safety Division, 2002) has discussed the use of multi-disciplinary teams and collaborative work with this group of children to reduce their risk. However, the majority of research in this area only discusses effective communication and collaboration with service providers.

From the data within this study, involving the child's parents and family within the team of people attempting to reduce risk is a concrete, effective strategy to reduce their

risk. It is recommended that any future research in the area of child sexual exploitation include, if possible, the child's parents/family members so that both professional perspectives (i.e., of social workers, law enforcement and other practitioners) and parental/familial perspectives are captured, as the parental/familial perspective is largely missing from the literature base.

The last key finding of this study, one that has not emerged in other literature on the issue of child sexual exploitation/trafficking, is the call for the use of a secure setting to reduce an exploited child's risk of harm or fatal incidents. Literature (Badawy, 2010; Bittle, 2002a; Carter & Walton, 2000) has discussed the use of jail settings as an ineffective strategy to deal with the issue of child sex trafficking, which the participants within this study also agreed with. But, what was clearly an effective strategy based on the service providers, parents/guardians and young adults was the ability to secure the child in a non-criminal related setting where they are away from the traffickers/exploiters and substances, and can be provided with the treatment specific to their exploitation, mental health needs and addictions. As this is an emerging finding, the effectiveness of secure settings in reducing children/youth risk is to be further exploited.

Although both the quantitative and qualitative sample size was quite small and cannot be generalized to the entire population of exploited/trafficked children, the findings of the study provide some concrete pieces of the overall puzzle and hopefully one day contribute to an overarching theoretical best practice that allows for these children to be safe from this type of victimization. Future research should be further explored with a larger sample size, and possibly a control group to assess which methods/strategies described within this study should or could be used in the future as a best practice method.

## Chapter 8

### Conclusion

In conclusion, the exploratory qualitative and quantitative data analysis within this study provides a first glimpse into what concrete strategies may be used to prevent the risk of sexual exploitation or further sexual exploitation/sex trafficking of children and/or youth. Complementing much of the overarching theoretical strategies discussed in the literature review above, the second half of this study is useful in that it sheds insights into the pragmatic actions that service providers can use on a day-to-day basis to reduce risk, and prevent re-victimization.

To the researcher's surprise, the results of this study indicated that all of the participants call for and indicated a need for a secure setting to address the complex issues that some sexually exploited/ trafficked children face on a daily basis. The participants of this study did not feel that open setting resources were always able to reduce risk to all children. While they state that all children will likely not need this resource, many will, and, as such, a secure setting should be available as an effective strategy to reduce their risk. The analysis of the data was clear that the participants felt that without a secure setting there were some children who would be at an extreme risk in the community with no way to effectively reduce their risk.

As the lack of a secure setting was undoubtedly one of the factors that caused the young adults interviewed to be further abused as children and the service providers and guardians/parents to not effectively intervene, this emerging theme should be further researched and explored outside of the context of jail or criminal custody settings.

Currently, in Manitoba there is a specialized secure crisis setting run by Project Neecheewam that can secure exploited/trafficked children for up to a maximum of 10 days. This study suggests Manitoba and Project Neecheewam are on the right track by funding and implementing this program. There is also a secure addictions unit that can secure exploited/trafficked children if they fit the criteria, and are able to obtain a warrant under the Youth Addictions Stabilization Act (Province of Manitoba, 2017). However, the latter is not a specialized unit to address exploitation/trafficking and addictions together.

On the whole, the lack of education and awareness of human trafficking and sexual exploitation are factors which increase risk to children. As the young adults interviewed for this study emphasized, people do not understand or recognize what is occurring for them early enough, and how this lack of understanding/recognition allows offenders to continue abusing them. As argued, in order to reduce risk to children, people need to be more aware and identify exploitation in a quicker manner to intervene effectively and remove the child from the abuse that is occurring.

This study supports the findings by numerous authors (Azhar & Al-Bahar, 2011; Berckmans et al, 2012; Countryman-Roswurm & Bolin, 2014) who have described the need for early identification as a manner in which to reduce risk to exploited children, as the earlier the abuse is identified the earlier people can intervene.

As we have seen, both the young adults and parents/guardians interviewed confirmed that early identification is an effective intervention strategy to reduce risk to children, from being first abused to being further abused through sex trafficking. Training programs such as “Understanding and Working with Sexually Exploited Children and Youth” in Manitoba have been working on training police and front-line social workers on indicators of sexual exploitation and sex trafficking. However, this training is not

mandatory. In light of this study's findings, opportunities through such training should be further explored and evaluated. Such an evaluation ought to consider the feasibility of having mandatory classes on this type of training within social work programs, universities and policing colleges, which, in turn, may assist in reducing the risk of sexual exploitation and sex trafficking of children.

The children and parents/guardians who participated in this study identified non-judgemental, safe spaces as another effective intervention strategy to reduce children's risk of exploitation. The ability for children/youth and their parents/guardians to feel safe to discuss current and/or past abuses occurring to them, was an important finding that is corroborated in other studies (Barendregt et al., 2015; Gorkoff & Runner, 2003; Goulet, 2001; Rigby, 2011) for the last 15 years, and discussed repeatedly throughout this thesis.

Many of the strategies to reduce risk for exploited/trafficked children and youth that were identified within the data of this study will require further research with a control group to determine the effectiveness of each strategy in reducing risk to children, and the amount of actual risk reduced. That said, this study is a first step in determining the most effective strategies and approaches to reducing risk to these children/youth. Doing so is critical to ensuring this vulnerable population of children/youth are protected. After all, human trafficking and sexual exploitation are now part and parcel of the process of globalization. Preventing and ending this human rights abuse and social injustice that disproportionately impacts children/youth in our local and global communities will demand more evidence-based practical research.

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## Appendices



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Faculty of Social Work

521 Tier Building

Winnipeg, Manitoba

Canada R3T 2N2

Telephone (204) 474-7050

### **Appendix A – Young Adult Questions:**

1. Research has said that “building a relationship with exploited children/youth” is an excellent intervention. Can you describe how (in a concrete manner with examples Eg. Answered your call any time of day, always made time for you when you arrived at office, spent over an hour with you, etc) workers developed a relationship with you?
2. What were the good relationship building methods/techniques?
3. What were the bad relationship building methods/techniques?
4. What was a good intervention/strategy in reducing your risk of exploitation?
5. What was a bad intervention/strategy in reducing your risk of exploitation?
6. If your child became exploited in the future, what would you want workers to do to reduce your child’s risk to of becoming more exploited?
7. Did you disclose the abuse (exploitation) occurring to you and if yes why? If no why? What would have made it easier for you to disclose the abuse occurring?
8. Would you have considered yourself to be abusing substances while being exploited? If so, what was a good intervention/strategy to deal with the substance use and exploitation? What was a bad intervention/strategy to deal with the substance use and exploitation?
9. Would you have considered yourself to have mental health (depression, anxiety, hearing voices, seeing things you thought might not be there, etc) issues while being exploited? If so, what was a good intervention/strategy to deal with the mental health issues and exploitation? What was a bad intervention/strategy to deal with the mental health issues and exploitation?
10. Did you feel that you could be truthful about your experiences of being exploited with the TERF program? If yes why? If no, why?
11. What difficulties did you have while in the TERF program?
12. What accomplishments did you have while in the TERF program?
13. If you could design the best intervention/strategy to address exploitation and reduce risk to children what would it look like?



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### **Appendix B – Guardian/Workers Questions:**

1. Research has indicated that “building a relationship with exploited children and youth” is an effective intervention. Can you describe how (in a concrete manner with examples) workers developed a relationship with the child you worked with or your child?
2. What were effective concrete relationship building techniques that you witnessed or the child told you about?
3. What were ineffective concrete relationship building techniques that you witnessed or the child told you about?
4. What was an effective intervention in reducing risk of exploitation to your child?
5. What was an ineffective intervention in reducing risk of exploitation to your child?
6. If in the future, your grandchild (or another child on your caseload) became exploited, what interventions would you want employed to reduce their risk to become exploited?
7. Did your child disclose the abuse (exploitation) occurring to them and if yes why, if no why? What do you think would have made it easier for them to disclose the abuse occurring?
8. Would you have considered your child to be abusing substances while being exploited? If so, what was an effective intervention to deal with the substance use and exploitation?
9. Would you have considered your child to have mental health (depression, PTSD, anxiety, etc) issues while being exploited? If so, what was an effective intervention to deal with the mental health issues and exploitation?
10. Did you feel that you could be truthful about your child’s experiences of being exploited with the programs/services that you were involved with while they exploited? If yes why? If no, why?
11. What difficulties did you have while your child was in specialized programs?
12. What accomplishments did your child have while in specialized programs?
13. If you could design the best intervention to address exploitation and reduce risk to children what would it look like?



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Canada R3T 2N2

Telephone (204) 474-7050

### Appendix C—Quantitative Survey

The questions below represent other methods/strategies/approaches used in other areas of North America. Pls circle what your thoughts/opinions are on these and if Manitoba (MB) should have these methods/strategies/approaches.

1. Should MB have specific legislation that allows for police, social workers and courts to place children in a 60 day secure treatment facility?  
**Strongly Agree                      Agree                      ?                      Disagree                      Strongly disagree**
2. Should MB have an outpatient treatment program that courts can court order children to attend?  
**Strongly Agree                      Agree                      ?                      Disagree                      Strongly disagree**
3. Should MB have a standardize screening tool to assess children for exploitation?  
**Strongly Agree                      Agree                      ?                      Disagree                      Strongly disagree**
4. Should MB have a province wide data collection tool to accurately collect data on the incidence and prevalence of child sexual exploitation?  
**Strongly Agree                      Agree                      ?                      Disagree                      Strongly disagree**
5. Should MB have evaluation methods to evaluate all specialized programs receiving provincial funding under TT to ensure that the services are meeting the needs of the sexually exploited children?  
**Strongly Agree                      Agree                      ?                      Disagree                      Strongly disagree**
6. Should MB have specially trained social workers and officers to respond 24/7 to cases of child exploitation and provide special consultation for planning and safety?  
**Strongly Agree                      Agree                      ?                      Disagree                      Strongly disagree**
7. Should MB be able to use other sources of evidence to build cases against offenders, and attempt to build cases around victims and not solely on victim's evidence?  
**Strongly Agree                      Agree                      ?                      Disagree                      Strongly disagree**
8. Should MB have a team of police officers and social workers that only respond to instances of child sexual exploitation as first responders and investigators?  
**Strongly Agree                      Agree                      ?                      Disagree                      Strongly disagree**



Should MB publish the names of people who have been involved in exploitation related offenses in the media on billboards and buses etc as a deterrent from becoming involved in sexual exploitation?

**Strongly Agree                      Agree                      ?                      Disagree                      Strongly disagree**

9. Should MB have advisory groups, made up solely of survivors of child exploitation, to advise government and funding bodies on programming and policy?

**Strongly Agree                      Agree                      ?                      Disagree                      Strongly disagree**



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521 Tier Building  
Winnipeg, Manitoba  
Canada R3T 2N2  
Telephone (204) 474-7050

## **Appendix D – Young Adult Informed Consent**

**Title: Best Practice to Working with Trafficked/Sexually Exploited Children and Youth to Reduce Risk and Mitigate/Treat the Abuse.**

**Investigator:** Jennifer Richardson, BSW, MSW (Candidate)

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Jennifer Richardson. Jennifer is a Graduate student from the faculty of Social Work with the University of Manitoba. Jennifer is conducting this study for her Master's in Social Work (MSW). Jennifer also manages a Program operated under Manitoba's Tracia's Trust called StreetReach.

This consent form, a copy of which will be left with you for your records and reference, is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. After all your questions have been answered, you should then decide whether or not to participate. You are being asked to participate in this study because you received a service from the Transition, Education, and Resources for Females (TERF) Program that is funded under Manitoba's Tracia's Trust (TT).

### **Purpose of the Research:**

Over the last 30 years the sexual exploitation and sex trafficking of children/youth in Canada have raised grave concerns regarding the impact of this criminal abuse on children/youth. However, unlike other forms of child abuse (i.e. physical and sexual abuse); very little research exists on the best practice treatment, strategies/approaches that are most effective in reducing risk and treating the harm that has been inflicted on these children. This project will seek to identify concrete treatment strategies/or approaches that are the most effective in reducing risk to these children/youth and enabling them to live healthy lives.

### **Description of the Research:**

This study is voluntary. The research will be conducted by asking you open-ended questions about your experiences of working with service providers and/or parents/guardians about how they reduced risk to you when you were a child/youth. There are also questions on how you were successfully assisted in exiting the sex trade. You will also be asked to take a short survey that identifies strategies in other areas and asked if you believe these would help children/youth in Manitoba.

The interview will last approximately 60 minutes. The survey will take approximately 10 minutes to complete. The data will be audio taped in order to allow for transcription of the information you provide. All of the information collected (audio tapes, transcription, etc) from you will be erased after two years of the final report being written to maintain your confidentiality. At any time during the interview, if you want to discontinue you can indicate this to the researcher and the interview will be stopped. You may choose not to answer or engage in a specific dialogue; if you chose not to, this will not impact you in any negative manner. If you received services from StreetReach, and you wish to be interviewed by someone other than Jennifer, an alternate interviewer will be provided. The alternate interviewer will also be a Graduate student at the University of Manitoba.

If you wish to withdraw from the study, your information will not be included in the analysis or within the final report and destroyed immediately.

#### **Access to Research Information:**

The primary researcher, Faculty Advisor, alternate interviewer and Thesis Committee Members will have access to the data. The data will be kept at all times in a locked filing cabinet that only the researcher will be able to access. You will be hand delivered a copy of your responses to check for accuracy. The researcher will call you to ensure the transcribed data is reflective of your opinions. As a participant, after reviewing your responses you may delete anything from your responses prior to analysis. A final copy of the research will be emailed to you if requested. The final report will be disseminated through publication.

#### **Potential Harm, Injuries, Discomforts, or Inconvenience:**

There is the potential for you to suffer from emotional or psychological distress from recalling your experiences. If this occurs, a list of resources will be provided to you. A counsellor who is trained in working with exploited persons and their families will also be available during or after the interview. The researcher will also make available time after the interview to debrief and answer any questions that you may have as a result of the interview that you did not ask prior to the interview starting.

There is a potential for historical and/or current child abuse to be disclosed during the interview. As all child abuse (historical and present) must be reported to the authorities, if this occurs during the interview, the researcher will inform you that what was just disclosed will have to be reported to the appropriate child welfare authority. If you disclose any illegal activity that is harmful to yourself or others, the researcher will take appropriate measures (contact mental health, police, etc).

#### **Potential Benefits:**

There is potential benefit to the specialized programs and social workers who are working with exploited children to learn a lot from you and the results of this study. If social workers and the specialized programs who are working with children/youth who have been exploited/trafficked have a better understanding of what modalities/treatment (what worked with you) options that have been most successful then they can better help other children/youth. You have the ability to give back to other children/youth, social workers and service providers. You will be giving back to the community in order to better protect exploited/trafficked children/youth.

#### **Confidentiality:**

Confidentiality will be respected at all times with no names being published within the final report or any subsequent reports unless required by law to do so. This obligation under the law is applicable to cases of suspected child abuse and in cases where the research documents are subpoenaed by a court.

**Reimbursement:**

You will be offered \$20.00 dollars to participate in this study. If you withdraw from the study, the \$20.00 dollars will still be provided.

**Contact Information:**

If you have any questions with respect to this study, please call Jennifer Richardson at 204-799-6540. If you have any questions with respect to your rights or how you were treated during this study by the researcher please contact the Research Supervisor, Dr. Jones at 204-806-6001.

**Consent:**

Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project and agree to participate as a subject. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and /or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation. The University of Manitoba may look at your research records to see that the research is being done in a safe and proper way.

This research has been approved by the Psychology/Sociology Research Ethics Board. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Coordinator (HEC) at 474-7122. A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

Name of Participant: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Researcher and/or Delegate's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_





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521 Tier Building

Winnipeg, Manitoba

Canada R3T 2N2

Telephone (204) 474-7050

**Appendix F—Letter to Young Adult Participants**

Dear [Mr. / Ms. LAST NAME],

I am writing to tell you about a study being conducted at TERF through the University of Manitoba by Jennifer Richardson for the completion of her Masters in Social Work. As you are aware, I was involved in working with you on your goals to exit the sex trade and believe that this study may be of interest to you. The study intends to identify best practices in working with sexually exploited children and youth to reduce risk and harm to children/youth.

My colleague, Jennifer Richardson, is exploring what the best practices are in working with sexually exploited/trafficked children and youth to reduce risk, according to the youth, parents/guardians and service providers.

I believe you have valuable knowledge in this area and would be a great asset in this research. I am not a member of her research team; however, I am contacting some of my past participants to let them know about the research in case they might be interested in learning more.

It is important to know that this letter is NOT to tell you to join this study. It is your decision. Your participation is voluntary. Whether or not you participate in this study will have no effect on your relationship with me or the TERF Program.

If you are interested in learning more about this study, please review the enclosed information from Jennifer Richardson, and contact her at 204-799-6540 to verify if you fit the criteria of the study.

You do not have to respond if you are not interested in this study. If you do not respond, no one will contact you.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

---

[NAME]

---

Jennifer Richardson

**Include enclosure(s) as applicable:**

Recruitment materials, e.g. brochure & consent form



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Canada R3T 2N2  
Telephone (204) 474-7050

### **Appendix G—Letter to Parent/Guardian Participants**

Dear [Mr. / Ms. LAST NAME],

I am writing to tell you about a study being conducted at TERF through the University of Manitoba by Jennifer Richardson for the completion of her Masters in Social Work. As a care provider, I was involved in working with your child/youth on their goals to exit the sex trade and believe that this study may be of interest to you. The study intends to identify best practices to reduce risk in working with sexually exploited children and youth.

My colleague, Jennifer Richardson, is exploring what the best practices are in working with sexually exploited/trafficked children and youth to reduce risk are, according to the youth, parents/guardians and service providers.

I believe you have valuable knowledge in this area and would be a great asset in this research. I am not a member of her research team; however, I am contacting some of my past participants guardians to let them know about the research in case they might be interested in learning more.

It is important to know that this letter is NOT to tell you to join this study. It is your decision. Your participation is voluntary. Whether or not you participate in this study will have no effect on your relationship with me or the TERF Program.

If you are interested in learning more about this study, please review the enclosed information from Jennifer Richardson, and contact her at 204-799-6540 to verify if you fit the criteria of the study.

You do not have to respond if you are not interested in this study. If you do not respond, no one will contact you.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

---

[NAME]

---

Jennifer Richardson

**Include enclosure(s) as applicable:**

Recruitment materials, e.g. brochure & consent form



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Canada R3T 2N2  
Telephone (204) 474-7050

### **Appendix H – Screening Criteria**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Age 18-29    Yes \_\_\_\_\_    No \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Ethnicity: \_\_\_\_\_

**TERF a TT funded program was provided to you as a:**

Exploited as a child/youth: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/guardian of a child that is now age of majority \_\_\_\_\_

Were you or are you a Staff member of the TERF Program over the last ten years: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Exploitation of self or child demographics (indoor/outdoor): \_\_\_\_\_

Did person complete interview and survey? \_\_\_\_\_

How would the person like to receive the summary of results? \_\_\_\_\_ Email

\_\_\_\_\_ Phone number

If they did, attach this to their interview and survey.

Pls have participant sign to reflect information is correct and that they consent to this information also being collected for final report. Their names or any identifying information will not be included in the final report as per the consent form which has already been explained and they have consented to participate in research.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date





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### **Appendix I – Script of Research for Participants**

Good Morning/Afternoon,

Thank you for enquiring about the research. I would like to tell you a little bit about this research. Over the last 15 years, there is more awareness about child sexual exploitation and child sex trafficking and special programs have been designed to support children who have been abused in this manner.

Although, there has been more awareness, the research that exists about this type of child abuse has been very broad and has not talked about what reduced risk to the children and helped them exit the sex trade. There is no description of what “best practice” is when working with exploited children and youth. I would like to explore this question, “what is best practice to reduce risk to exploited children” with you as the expert in

- A. Having experienced exploitation/trafficking personally as a child.
- B. Being a parent or guardian of a child who was exploited/trafficked
- C. Being a specialized program employee working with exploited/trafficked children

I will be asking you about what treatment, approaches and/or strategies did the workers and/or guardians and/or program employees provide to you or your child that assisted you or her/him in reducing risk and exiting the sex trade. These questions will be open and we will just have a conversation about your experiences.

There is also a short survey, shouldn't take more than 10 minutes to complete that has some programs in other areas and asks you what you think, should we have this type of programming as well to reduce risk and assist children to exit the sex trade. You will be compensated for your time and there will be a counsellor available for you if you need to speak with someone after or during the research questions.

If this research is something that you would like to participate in, there are some screening questions that I would need to ask you to identify if you would fit the criteria of the project. Can I ask you those questions now or would you like to think about your participation and call me back?



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### **Appendix J – Program Consent**

**Title: Best Practice/s to Working with Trafficked/Sexually Exploited Children and Youth to Reduce Risk and Mitigate/Treat the Abuse.**

**Investigator:** Jennifer Richardson, BSW, MSW (Candidate)

Your program (Transition, Education, and Resource for Females) is funded under Tracia's Trust with the Province of Manitoba and as such, Jennifer Richardson, a Graduate student from the faculty of Social Work with the University of Manitoba is requesting access to prior participants of your program. Jennifer is conducting this study for her Master's of Social Work (MSW).

This consent form, a copy of which will be left with you for your records and reference, is the informed consent allowing Jennifer to conduct the research with your staff and prior participants. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

Your Program/Staff participation in this study is entirely voluntary. After all your questions have been answered, you should then decide whether or not you would like your Program/Staff to participate. You are being asked to participate in this study because you are a program that is funded under Manitoba's Tracia's Trust (TT) or have been employed in a program that is funded under TT and have clinical experience working with children who have been trafficked/sexually exploited.

#### **Purpose of the Research:**

Over the last 30 years the sexual exploitation and sex trafficking of children/youth in Canada have raised grave concerns regarding the impact of this criminal abuse on children/youth. However, unlike other forms of child abuse (i.e. physical and sexual abuse); very little research exists on the best practice treatment, strategies/approaches that are most effective in reducing risk and treating the harm that has been inflicted on these children. This project will seek to identify concrete treatment strategies/or approaches that are the most effective in reducing risk to these children/youth and enabling them to live healthy lives.

#### **Description of the Research:**

This study is voluntary. The research will be conducted by asking the participants open-ended questions about their experiences of working with service providers and parents/guardians around how risk was reduced. There are also questions on how they were successfully assisted in exiting the sex trade.

Participants will also take a short survey that identifies strategies in other areas and asks if they believe these would help children in Manitoba.

The interview will last approximately 60 minutes in total duration. The survey will take approximately 10 minutes to complete. The data will be audio taped in order to allow for transcription of the data. The audiotapes will be erased 1 year after completion of the final report. At any time during the interview, if the participant wants to discontinue they can indicate this to the researcher and the interview will be stopped. The participant may choose not to answer or engage in a specific dialogue; if they chose not to, this will not impact them in any negative manner.

One year after the report is written, the data will be destroyed to maintain participant's confidentiality. If a participant wishes to withdraw from the study, their information will not be included in the analysis or within the final report and destroyed immediately.

#### **Access to Research Information:**

The primary researcher, Faculty Advisor, alternate interviewer and Thesis Committee Members will have access to the data. The data will be kept at all times in a locked filing cabinet that only the researcher will be able to access or on a password protected zip drive that only the researcher will be able to access. A final copy of the research will be emailed to the participant if requested. The final report will be disseminated through publication.

#### **Potential Harm, Injuries, Discomforts, or Inconvenience:**

There is the potential for some people to suffer from emotional or psychological distress from recalling their experiences. If this occurs, a list of resources will be provided to the participant. A counsellor who is trained in working with exploited persons and their families will also be available during or after the interview. The researcher will also make available time after the interview to debrief and answer any questions that the participants may have as a result of the interview that they did not ask prior to the interview starting.

#### **Potential Benefits:**

There is potential benefit to the specialized programs and social workers who are working with people who have been involved in the sex trade from the results of this study. If social workers and the specialized programs who are working with children/youth who have been exploited/trafficked have a better understanding of what modalities/treatment options have been most successful they can then employ those approaches in their programs to better meet the needs of these children/youth.

#### **Confidentiality:**

Confidentiality will be respected at all times with no names being published within the final report or any subsequent reports unless required by law to do so. This obligation under the law is applicable to cases of suspected child abuse and in cases where the research documents are subpoenaed by a court.

#### **Reimbursement:**

The participants not employed with the TERF program will be offered \$20.00 dollars to participate in this study.

**Contact Information:**

If you have any questions with respect to this study, please call Jennifer Richardson at 204-799-6540. If you have any questions with respect to the rights of prior participants or with respect to how prior participants were treated during this study by the researcher please contact the Research Supervisor, Dr. Jones at 204-806-6001.

**Consent:**

Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project and agree to allow your Program to participate as a recruitment program. It also indicates that you are allowing staff from the TERF Program to participate and that the staff are allowed to participate during their normal work hours. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw the program/staff from the study at any time, and /or have staff refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation. The University of Manitoba may look at the research records to see that the research is being done in a safe and proper way.

This research has been approved by the Psychology/Sociology Research Ethics Board. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Coordinator (HEC) at 474-7122. A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

Name of Program Manager/Director:

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature

Date

Researcher and/or Delegate's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



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521 Tier Building  
Winnipeg, Manitoba  
Canada R3T 2N2  
Telephone (204) 474-7050

### **Appendix K – Service Providers Informed Consent**

**Title: Best Practice to Working with Trafficked/Sexually Exploited Children and Youth to Reduce Risk and Mitigate/Treat the Abuse.**

**Investigator:** Jennifer Richardson, BSW, MSW (Candidate)

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Jennifer Richardson. Jennifer is a Graduate student from the faculty of Social Work with the University of Manitoba. Jennifer is conducting this study for her Master's in Social Work (MSW). Jennifer also manages a Program operated under Manitoba's Tracia's Trust called StreetReach.

This consent form, a copy of which will be left with you for your records and reference, is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. After all your questions have been answered, you should then decide whether or not to participate. You are being asked to participate in this study because you are employed in the Transition, Education, Resources for Females (TERF) Program that is funded under TT and have clinical experience working with children/youth who have been trafficked/sexually exploited.

#### **Purpose of the Research:**

Over the last 30 years the sexual exploitation and sex trafficking of children/youth in Canada have raised grave concerns regarding the impact of this criminal abuse on children/youth. However, unlike other forms of child abuse (i.e. physical and sexual abuse); very little research exists on the best practice treatment, strategies/approaches that are most effective in reducing risk and treating the harm that has been inflicted on these children. This project will seek to identify concrete treatment strategies/or approaches that are the most effective in reducing risk to these children/youth and enabling them to live healthy lives.

#### **Description of the Research:**

This study is voluntary. The research will be conducted by asking you open-ended questions about your experiences of working with children/youth and parents/guardians around how they/you reduced risk

to sexually exploited/trafficked children/youth. There are also questions on how you successfully assisted children/youth in exiting the sex trade. You will also be asked to take a short survey that identifies strategies in other areas and asks if you believe these would help children/youth in Manitoba.

The interview will last approximately 60 minutes. The survey will take approximately 10 minutes to complete. The data will be audio taped in order to allow for transcription of the information you provide. All of the information collected (audio tapes, transcription, etc) from the participants will be erased after one year of the final report being written to maintain your confidentiality. At any time during the interview, if you want to discontinue you can indicate this to the researcher and the interview will be stopped. You may choose not to answer or engage in a specific dialogue; if you chose not to, this will not impact you in any negative manner.

If you wish to withdraw from the study, your information will not be included in the analysis or within the final report and destroyed immediately.

#### **Access to Research Information:**

The primary researcher, Faculty Advisor, alternate interviewer and Thesis Committee Members will have access to the data. The data will be kept at all times in a locked filing cabinet that only the researcher will be able to access. You will be hand delivered a copy of your responses to check for accuracy. The researcher will call you to ensure the transcribed data is reflective of your opinions. As a participant, after reviewing your responses you may delete anything from your responses prior to analysis. A final copy of the research will be emailed to you if requested. The final report will be disseminated through publication.

#### **Potential Harm, Injuries, Discomforts, or Inconvenience:**

There is the potential for some people to suffer from emotional or psychological distress from recalling their experiences of working with children/youth and their families. If this occurs, a list of resources will be provided to you. The researcher will also make available time after the interview to debrief and answer any questions that you may have as a result of the interview that you did not ask prior to the interview starting.

There is a potential for historical and/or current child abuse to be disclosed during the interview. As all child abuse (historical and present) must be reported to the authorities, if this occurs during the interview, the researcher will inform you that what was just disclosed will have to be reported to the appropriate child welfare authority.

#### **Potential Benefits:**

There is potential benefit to the specialized programs and social workers who are working with people who have been involved in the sex trade from the results of this study. If social workers and the specialized programs who are working with children/youth who have been exploited/trafficked have a better understanding of what modalities/treatment options have been most successful they can then employ those approaches in their programs to better meet the needs of these children/youth.

#### **Confidentiality:**

Confidentiality will be respected at all times with no names being published within the final report or any subsequent reports unless required by law to do so.

There is a potential for historical and/or current child abuse to be disclosed during the interview. As all child abuse (historical and present) must be reported to the authorities, if this occurs during the interview, the researcher will inform you that what was just disclosed will have to be reported to the appropriate child welfare authority. If you disclose any illegal activity that is harmful to yourself or others, the researcher will take appropriate measures (contact mental health, police, etc).

**Reimbursement:**

There is no reimbursement for TERF Program service providers because this interview is being completed during their work hours as agreed upon via the Program Manager.

**Contact Information:**

If you have any questions with respect to this study, please call Jennifer Richardson at 204-799-6540. If you have any questions with respect to your rights or how you were treated during this study by the researcher please contact the Research Supervisor, Dr. Jones at 204-806-6001.

**Consent:**

Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project and agree to participate as a subject. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and /or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation. The University of Manitoba may look at your research records to see that the research is being done in a safe and proper way.

This research has been approved by the Psychology/Sociology Research Ethics Board. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Coordinator (HEC) at 474-7122. A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

Name of Participant: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

Researcher and/or Delegate's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



UNIVERSITY  
OF MANITOBA

Faculty of Social Work

521 Tier Building

Winnipeg, Manitoba

Canada R3T 2N2

Telephone (204) 474-7050

## **Appendix L – Guardian Informed Consent**

**Title: Best Practice to Working with Trafficked/Sexually Exploited Children and Youth to Reduce Risk and Mitigate/Treat the Abuse.**

**Investigator:** Jennifer Richardson, BSW, MSW (Candidate)

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Jennifer Richardson. Jennifer is a Graduate student from the faculty of Social Work with the University of Manitoba. Jennifer is conducting this study for her Master's in Social Work (MSW). Jennifer also manages a Program operated under Manitoba's Tracia's Trust called StreetReach.

This consent form, a copy of which will be left with you for your records and reference, is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. After all your questions have been answered, you should then decide whether or not to participate. You are being asked to participate in this study because you were/are the guardian of a child/youth who received a service from the Transition, Education, and Resources for Females (TERF) Program that is funded under Manitoba's Tracia's Trust (TT).

### **Purpose of the Research:**

Over the last 30 years the sexual exploitation and sex trafficking of children/youth in Canada have raised grave concerns regarding the impact of this criminal abuse on children/youth. However, unlike other forms of child abuse (i.e. physical and sexual abuse); very little research exists on the best practice treatment, strategies/approaches that are most effective in reducing risk and treating the harm that has been inflicted on these children. This project will seek to identify concrete treatment strategies/or approaches that are the most effective in reducing risk to these children/youth and enabling them to live healthy lives.

### **Description of the Research:**



This study is voluntary. The research will be conducted by asking you open-ended questions about your experiences of being a guardian/parent of a sexually exploited/trafficked child/youth and how you reduced risk to your child/youth. There are also questions on how you successfully, or attempted to successfully, assisted a child/youth in exiting the sex trade. You will also be asked to take a short survey that identifies strategies in other areas and asks if you believe these would help children/youth in Manitoba.

The interview will last approximately 60 minutes. The survey will take approximately 10 minutes to complete. The data will be audio taped in order to allow for transcription of the information you provide. All of the information collected (audio tapes, transcription, etc) from you will be erased after one year of the final report being written to maintain your confidentiality. At any time during the interview, if you want to discontinue you can indicate this to the researcher and the interview will be stopped. You may choose not to answer or engage in a specific dialogue; if you chose not to, this will not impact you in any negative manner.

If you wish to withdraw from the study, your information will not be included in the analysis or within the final report and destroyed immediately.

#### **Access to Research Information:**

The primary researcher, Faculty Advisor, alternate interviewer and Thesis Committee Members will have access to the data. The data will be kept at all times in a locked filing cabinet that only the researcher will be able to access. You will be hand delivered a copy of your responses to check for accuracy. The researcher will call you to ensure the transcribed data is reflective of your opinions. As a participant, after reviewing your responses you may delete anything from your responses prior to analysis. A final copy of the research will be emailed to you if requested. The final report will be disseminated through publication.

#### **Potential Harm, Injuries, Discomforts, or Inconvenience:**

There is the potential for some people to suffer from emotional or psychological distress from recalling their experiences. If this occurs, a list of resources will be provided to you. A counsellor who is trained in working with exploited persons and their families will also be available during or after the interview. The researcher will also make available time after the interview to debrief and answer any questions that you may have as a result of the interview that you did not ask prior to the interview starting.

There is a potential for historical and/or current child abuse to be disclosed during the interview. As all child abuse (historical and present) must be reported to the authorities, if this occurs during the interview, the researcher will inform you that what was just disclosed will have to be reported to the appropriate child welfare authority.

#### **Potential Benefits:**

There is potential benefit to the specialized programs and social workers who are working with people who have been involved in the sex trade from the results of this study. If social workers and the specialized programs who are working with children/youth who have been exploited/trafficked have a better understanding of what modalities/treatment options have been most successful they can then employ those approaches in their programs to better meet the needs of these children/youth. There is

also the benefit of reciprocity, as a parent/guardian of a prior exploited child/youth, you are giving back to the community in order to better protect exploited children/youth.

**Confidentiality:**

Confidentiality will be respected at all times with no names being published within the final report or any subsequent reports unless required by law to do so.

There is a potential for historical and/or current child abuse to be disclosed during the interview. As all child abuse (historical and present) must be reported to the authorities, if this occurs during the interview, the researcher will inform you that what was just disclosed will have to be reported to the appropriate child welfare authority. If you disclose any illegal activity that is harmful to yourself or others, the researcher will take appropriate measures (contact mental health, police, etc).

**Reimbursement:**

You will be offered \$20.00 dollars to participate in this study. If you withdraw from the study, the \$20.00 dollars will still be provided.

**Contact Information:**

If you have any questions with respect to this study, please call Jennifer Richardson at 204-799-6540. If you have any questions with respect to your rights or how you were treated during this study by the researcher please contact the Research Supervisor, Dr. Jones at 204-806-6001.

**Consent:**

Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project and agree to participate as a subject. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and /or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation. The University of Manitoba may look at your research records to see that the research is being done in a safe and proper way.

This research has been approved by the Psychology/Sociology Research Ethics Board. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Coordinator (HEC) at 474-7122. A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

Name of Participant: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

Researcher and/or Delegate's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



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**Appendix M – List of Free or Low Cost Resources**

**Aurora Counselling Centre: 204.786.9251 (sliding scale)**

**Aulneau Renewal Centre: 204.987.7090**

**Centre Renaissance Centre 204.256.6750 (bilingual, sliding scale)**

**Family Dynamics: 204.947.2128 (Formerly called Family Centre)**

**Fort Garry Women's Resource Centre: 204.477.1123**

**Jewish Child and Family Counselling Services: 204.477.7430 (open to all faiths and cultural groups)**

**Klinic Community Health Centre: 204.784.4059**

**Ma Mawi wi Chi Itata Centre (Aboriginal): 204.925.0300**

**Mount Carmel Clinic: 204.589.9475**

**North End Women's Centre: 204.589.7374**

**Pluri-elles: 204.233.1735 (French)**