



Reaching the Root:
Serving urban and rural
youth with an
understanding of
generational trauma



Land Acknowledgement

The land on which we are currently gathered is the ancestral homeland of the Chitimacha tribe. These lands were colonized by the Cajun French and the American colonies without the Chitimacha people's consent. We hold this knowledge with sorrow and seek to honor the Chitimacha people and the land of which they have been stewards during our time here.

We thank them from our hearts for their hospitality.



Heather Hagelberger



Heather Hagelberger is Boricuan, with her family originating from the ancestral island of Boriken, whose colonized name is Puerto Rico. She is a wife, mother to two adult children and her cat, Lulu. She was raised in Florida where she spent many years on the beach or at Disney World. She currently holds the role of Trafficking Prevention and Intervention Program Manager at Covenant House Alaska (CHA). Heather has been working with adult and minor victims of trauma for over 20 years within the medical field, social services and ministry settings, with 10 of those years spent advocating for and working directly with victims of human trafficking.



Jessica Raymond

Jessica Raymond is a lifelong Alaskan who has worked in urban and rural communities across the state to promote connection and wellness for Alaska's peoples in various capacities including chemical dependence support, suicide prevention and intervention, family advocacy, crisis intervention, and trafficking prevention/intervention. She currently works as the Talent Development & Training Specialist for Covenant House Alaska. She and her husband have three children at home and one grown. They love to have adventures together, in state, out of state, and around the world.



Our Agreements

- We agree to put aside common stereotypes or myths when discussing today's topic
- We agree to respect and learn from experiences different from our own
- We agree to reflect on how we can apply the information we learn in this training to everyday life
- We agree to listen
- We agree to create a safe place for every identity
- We agree to contribute and participate
- We agree to be present
- We agree to seek out support if the topic becomes overwhelming



**Covenant
House
Alaska**



Overview

1. Review of Definitions
2. Connecting Trauma to Human Trafficking
3. Differences of HT in urban and rural areas



Video



A Healing Journey for Alaska Natives: Federal Responses to Sex Trafficking in Alaska

Federal Definitions

U.S. Federal Law, in the Trafficking Victims Protection Act, provides this definition of “severe forms of trafficking in persons”:

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

b) the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision or obtaining of person for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage or slavery

Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC) Includes:

- ✓ child sex trafficking/the prostitution of children
- ✓ child sex tourism involving commercial sexual activity
- ✓ commercial production of child pornography
- ✓ online transmission of live video of a child engaged in sexual activity in exchange for anything of value.

Survival Sex

Survival sex involves individuals over the age of 18 who have traded sex acts (including prostitution, stripping, pornography, etc.) to meet the basic needs of survival (i.e., food, shelter, etc.) without the overt force, fraud or coercion of a trafficker, but who felt that their circumstances left little or no other option.



Connecting Trauma to Exploitation

"We ask questions such as, "Why doesn't she just leave?" and "Why would someone want to turn all their money over to a pimp?" instead of asking, "What is the impact of poverty on these children?" "How do race and class factor into the equation?" "Beyond their family backgrounds, what is the story of their neighborhoods, their communities, their cities?"- Rachel Lloyd

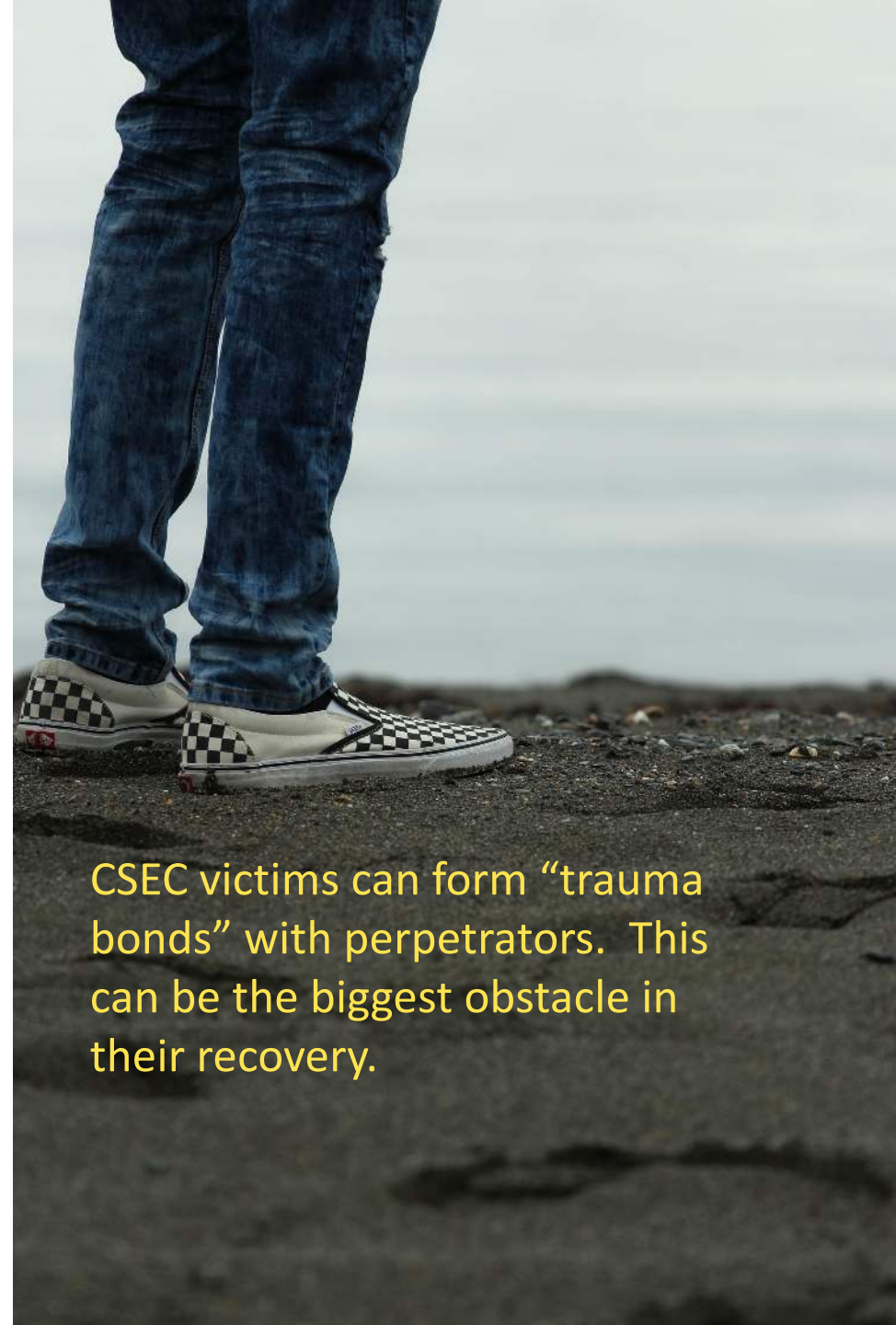


Stereotypes

- ✓ Youth choose to enter the sex trade
- ✓ Exploited youth are "bad kids"
- ✓ Exploited youth just like to have sex
- ✓ Lgbtq+ youth are sexually deviant and not victims
- ✓ Boys and lgbtq+ youth are complicit in their trafficking situation and enjoy it
- ✓ Youth take advantage of unsuspecting men
- ✓ All exploited youth are drug addicts
- ✓ Sexual exploitation is work
- ✓ Exploited youth make a lot of money in the commercial sex industry
- ✓ Being in "the life/the game" can be exciting and glamorous
- ✓ Sexually exploited youth have power and control within the commercial sex industry
- ✓ All pimps/traffickers are male
- ✓ Only girls are sexually exploited
- ✓ Boys cannot be trafficked
- ✓ Sexually exploited youth don't leave because they like the commercial sex industry
- ✓ CSEC is not a big problem in the United States
- ✓ It doesn't happen in my town

Stockholm Syndrome & Trauma Bonds

- ✓ Violence and threats of violence
- ✓ Alternating violence and kindness increases bonding
- ✓ Believe if they even think a disloyal thought, exploiter will know and retaliate
- ✓ Isolation increases bonding
- ✓ Shame and stigma associated with prostitution



CSEC victims can form “trauma bonds” with perpetrators. This can be the biggest obstacle in their recovery.

Human Trafficking In **ALASKA**

Covenant House Alaska served nearly **450 youth** in the shelter last year and the Anchorage School Districts report over **2,000 homeless youth** within the school district.

The Covenant House International and Loyola University Labor Exploitation Study results show in Anchorage **25% of youth surveyed in shelter at CHA reported being trafficking victims while 50% of non-residential drop in youth reported being victims.**



ALASKAN CONTEXT

“ALASKA HAS the highest rate of sexual assault in the nation, nearly four times the national average. About one third of women in Alaska have experienced sexual violence in their lifetime. Yet it is a secret so steeped into everyday life that to discuss it is to disrupt the norm.”- UNHEARD, 2020

- Population with high amounts of historical trauma
- Transient male dominated industries
- Transient male dominated industries placed in rural areas next to communities with high amounts of historical trauma
- High rates of physical abuse, sexual abuse, substance abuse and suicide.
- Celebrated history of prostitution

Recruitment in **Alaska**

Based on studies conducted in Alaska, within **48** hours of becoming homeless, one in three children will be approached by a trafficker.

In Alaska, the common age of recruitment is **14-16** years and the average lifespan once recruited is seven years.

65 youth were surveyed locally, and 641 youth were surveyed nationally

1 in 5 identified as trafficking victims nationally

1 in 4 identified as trafficking (labor/sex) victims locally

1 in 4 females identified as sex trafficking locally

Places of Recruitment



Where do vulnerable youth hang out in your community?

- Schools
- Malls
- Airports
- Bus stops
- Transit Centers
- Shelters
- Jail
- Home(Generational)
- Strip Clubs
- Streets
- Friends/Family
- Villages
- Social Media
 - ✓ Facebook
 - ✓ Instagram
 - ✓ TikTok
 - ✓ OnlyFans
 - ✓ Snapchat
 - ✓ Kik



Rural to Urban Recruitment



50% of Youth Who Are Served at Covenant House Alaska Are Alaska Native

Rural Recruitment

“Youth from different cultures are seen as versatile or exotic and vulnerable to traffickers”



- Usually through Family/Friends
- Promises or lures of a better life
- Distance from family and other support structures
- Trafficker likely family member or boyfriend
- Something of value other than money exchanged (E.g. drugs or alcohol)
- Forced criminality is common

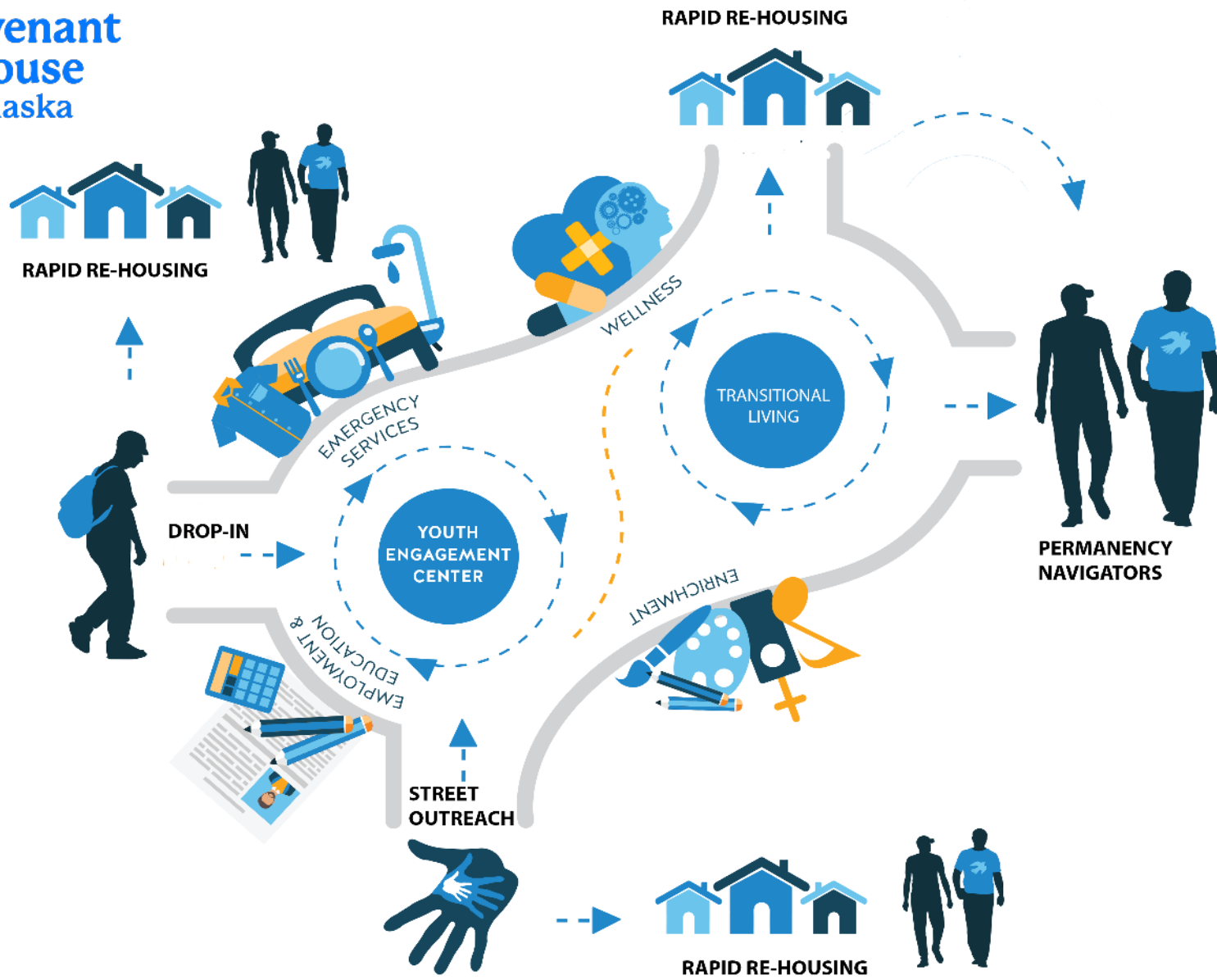
Casandra's Story



Covenant
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Continuum of Care



CORE SERVICES

(RHY PROGRAMS)

- Street Outreach/Community Center
- Basic Center
 - Youth Engagement Center
 - MACK House
- Transitional Living Programs
 - Passage House MGH
 - Rights of Passage TLP
 - Covey Lofts

COMPREHENSIVE CONTINUUM

- Education & Employment
 - Covey Academy
 - Jobs for America's Grads
- Wellness Services (SCF)
- Enrichment & Youth Voice
- On-site partners

YOUTH HOMELESSNESS DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM

- Rapid Re-Housing
- Permanency Navigators
 - Mobile, client-centered
 - Relentless Engagement

Protecting Against Exploitation by Meeting Needs

Tangible Needs

- Crisis Housing
- Longterm Housing
- Food
- Clothing
- Education
- Job or Income
- Viable alternatives for employment
- Transportation
- Legal representation and/or advocacy
- Opportunities to develop new skills or strengths
- Medical and/or dental care
- Health Education
- Mental Healthcare
- Counseling and/or case management
- Safety plans
- Childcare and/or parenting skills

Intangible Needs

- Safety
- Protection
- Nonjudgmental environment
- Respect
- Acceptance
- Engagement in positive community
- Healthy adult relationships
- Mentors and/or positive role models
- Supportive peers
- Understanding of the recovery process
- Affirmation of skills and strengths
- Recognition of abuse and trauma
- Options
- A sense of empowerment in one's own healing and restoration process
- Political education to understand the issue of CSEC
- Youth leadership opportunities
- Love & Holistic care

Questions?



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