



Minnesota
Indian Women's
Sexual Assault
Coalition

UNDERSTANDING SEX TRAFFICKING: 101

2023 Strengthening Sovereign Responses to Sex
Trafficking in Indian Country and Alaska Conference



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TODAY'S GOALS & OBJECTIVES

- Define sex trafficking as violence
- Highlight DV/SV advocacy overlaps in providing trauma informed services to sex trafficking survivors
- Identify possible warning signs and outreach strategies for those being used in trafficking
- Identify strategies and advocacy resources

**WHO ARE YOU
CURRENTLY
WORKING WITH
IN YOUR
PROGRAMS?**

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Sex Work

Exchanging sex for food, money, housing, transportation, safety, visitation, drugs, and/or favors

Sexual Exploitation

Sexual EXPLOITATION is what happens to anyone sold/traded/objectified for sex in exchange for something of value, including; money, food, clothing, shelter, safety, drugs, etc.

TERMINOLOGY

Sex Trafficking

Sex TRAFFICKING occurs when a person is forced or coerced into the commercial sex trade against their will, with a third party benefitting.

Survival Sex:

Sex act for something of value
(money, food, shelter, drugs)

Commercial Sexual Exploitation

(Prostitution)

Sexual Exploitation

**Stripping,
Pornography,
Transactional Sex
Work**

Sex Trafficking

Sex Trafficking

Recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for the purposes of a commercial sex act, in which the 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

(22 USC § 7102; 8 CFR § 214.11(a))

DEFINITIONS

Force

Physical assault; confinement; drugging; incapacitation

Fraud

False promises; forged documents; false advertising

Coercion

Physical; threats; intimidation; blackmail

DYNAMICS

Appeasement

- Made under duress
- Given two options:
“Do what I say, or face the consequences”
- Focus is on the benefit of the person enforcing the choice
- Consequences are harshly enforced

Consent

- Given multiple viable options to choose from
- Focus is on the benefit and agency of the person making the choice
- Safe environment to think about choices or options
- Consequences are a natural part of life and usually don't involve death or violence

SEX TRAFFICKING ECOSYSTEM



SEX BUYER

People who obtain sex or sexual activity with money or a trade for something of value (e.g. food, place to stay, goods, drugs).



TRAFFICKER

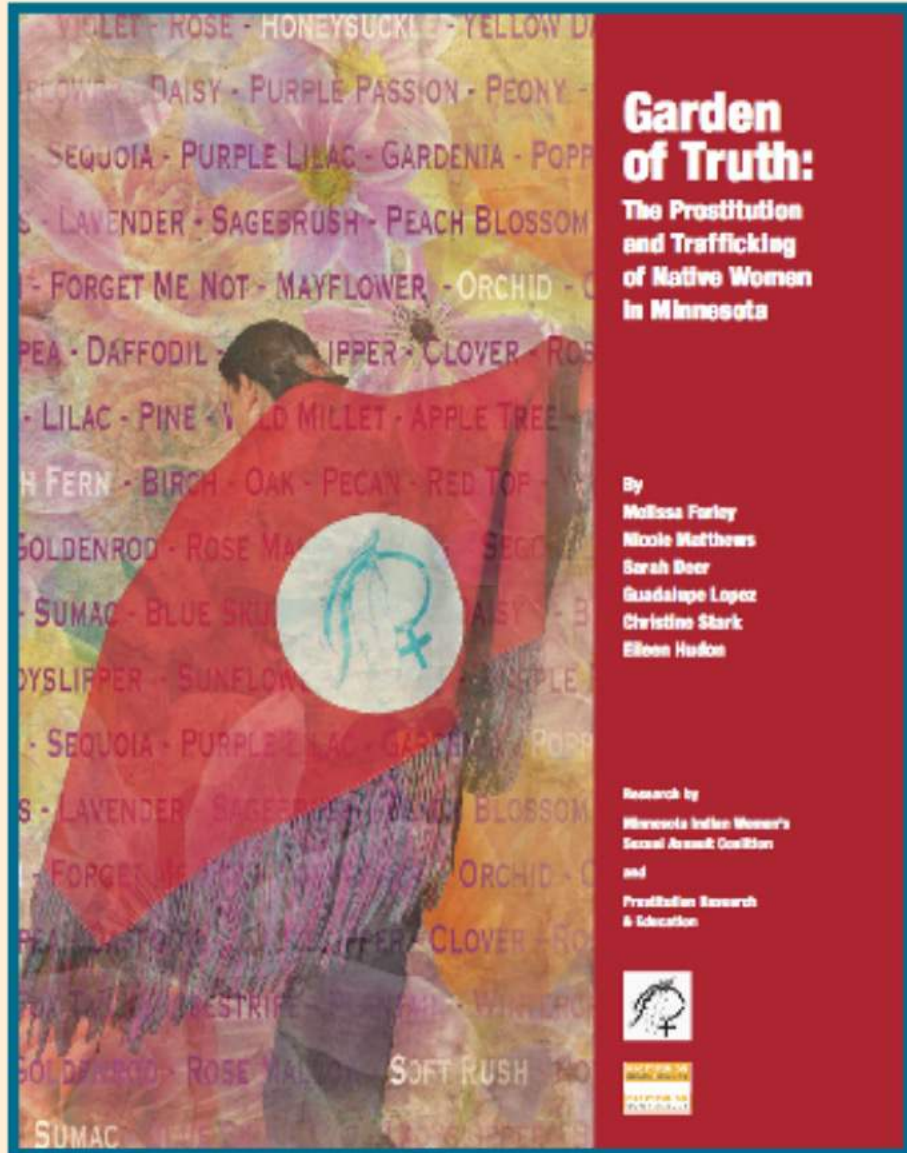
People who profit from connecting sex buyers to provider/victims (including pimps and third-party facilitators).



PROVIDER/VICTIM

People who provide sex or sexual activity include victims of sex trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation, as well as people who are not involved with a trafficker.



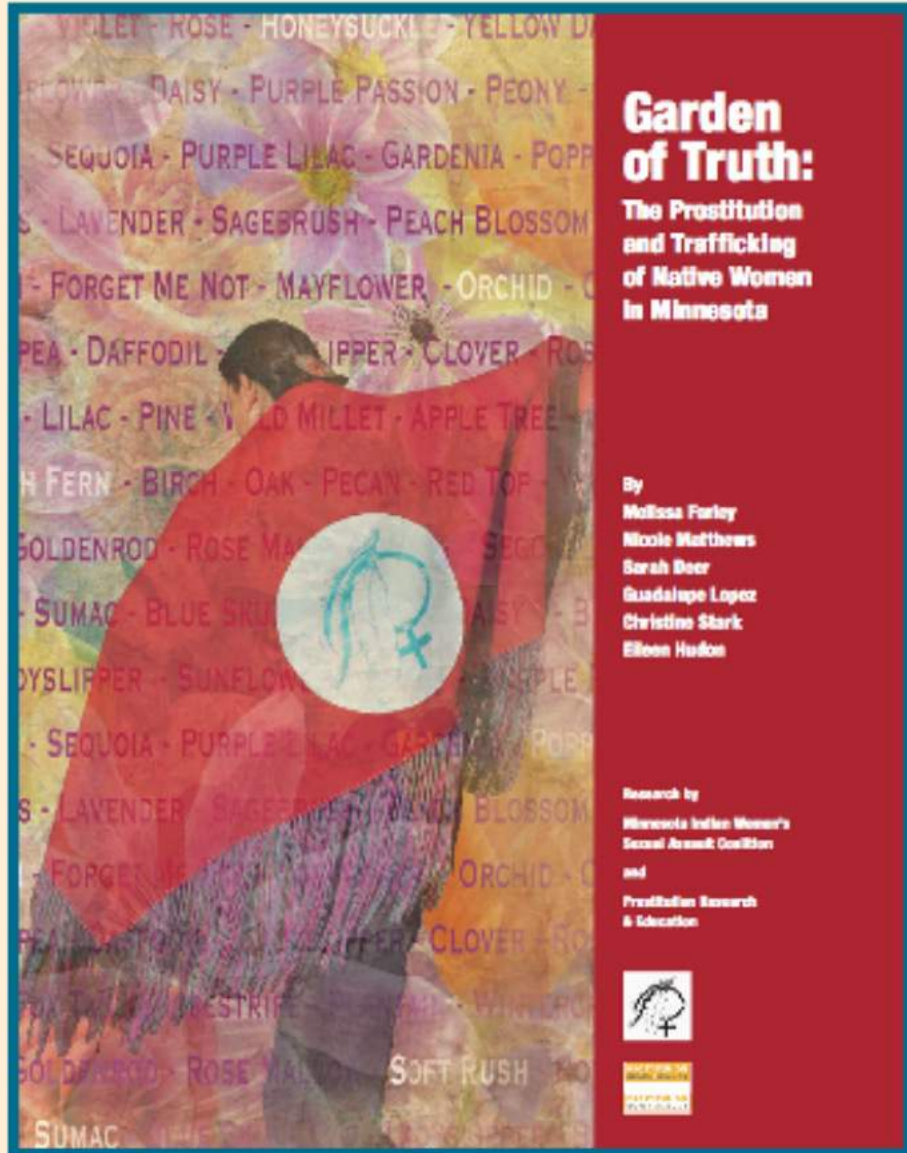


MIWSAC 2011

GARDEN OF TRUTH

(Interviews were 105 women prostituted and/or trafficked)

- 79% had been abused as children (average 4 perpetrators).
- 2/3 of the women had family who attended boarding schools.
- 92% had been raped.
- 84% had been physically assaulted.
- 72% experienced traumatic brain injuries(TBI) in prostitution.



MIWSAC 2011

GARDEN OF TRUTH

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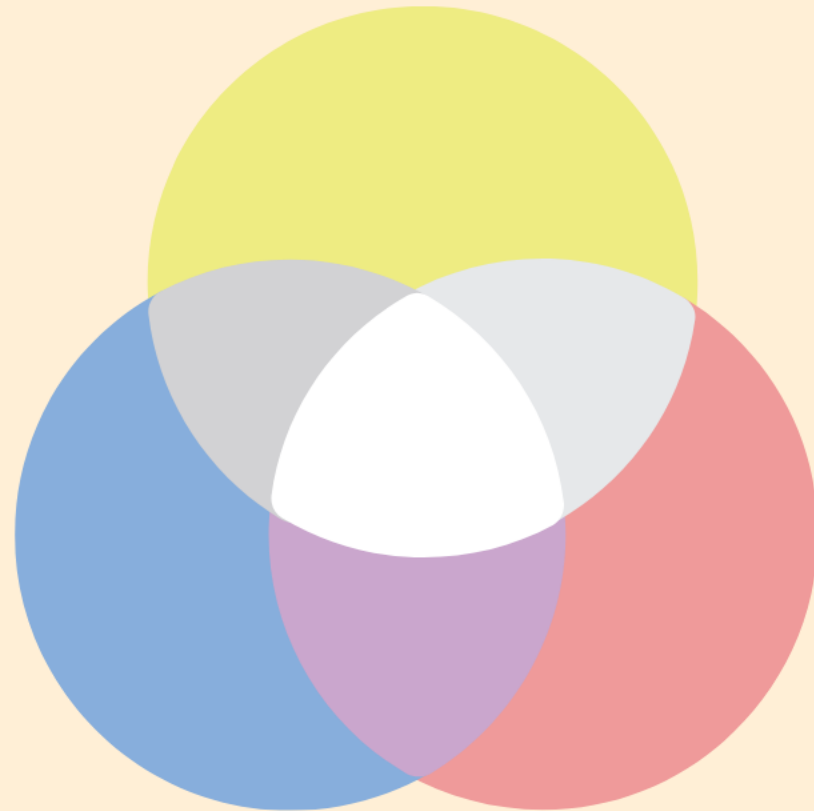
- 98% were either currently or previously homeless.
- 52% had PTSD; 71% had symptoms of dissociation.
- 80% had used outpatient substance abuse services; 77% had used homeless shelters; 65% had used domestic violence services; and 33% had used sexual assault services.
- 92% wanted to escape prostitution.

TRAFFICKING AND VIOLENCE

Trafficking intersects with other forms of interpersonal violence

- Child Sexual Abuse
- Sexual Assault (at any age)
- Domestic Violence
- Stalking

What else?



GROOMING TACTICS

- Sweet talk/full attention
- Feels so special
- Gifts- phones, clothes
- Token acts of kindness
- “Safe” place to stay
- “True Love”
- Access to alcohol, drugs
(often leading to addiction)
- “Help me pay bills”
- “Just this once”
- “You owe me now”
- Isolation
- Intimidation
- Call them crazy, stupid, ugly
- "No one else wants you", or
"knows where you are"
- Emotional/verbal abuse
- Threats to self, family, pets
- Physical violence
- Sexual violence
- Shows pornography/forces
to do things in pornography

TRAUMA-COERCED ATTACHMENT

Powerful psychological manipulation by traffickers -
Victims who believe they are in love with their trafficker are
easier to manipulate and control. “Mental handcuffs and chains”

INTERMITTENT “LOVE”,
INTIMACY AND ATTENTION

INTERMITTENT AND
PREDICTABLE ABUSE
AND MANIPULATION

POSSIBLE IMPACTS & EFFECTS

- Dissociation
- Fear, distrust
- Inability to be close to others
- The Scarlet Letter
- Suicidal
- Loss of self-worth
- Feels deserving of being abused/used
- Difficulties fitting in society
- Isolated, Few friends
- Depression, anxiety
- Phobias
- PTSD
- Feel as if being watched
- Difficulty concentrating
- “Damaged goods”
- Eating difficulties
- Avoidance of spiritual/cultural traditions & communities
- Triggers

TRIGGERED RESPONSES

Flight

Fight

Freeze

Fawn



INTERVENTION

- Invest in creating highly visible local Peer Support
- Be creative with events or activities that could be entry points for intervention and/or education
- Connect with detention centers/jails, courts, probation officers, CPS workers, schools, clinics, food pantries, homeless shelters, DV & SA organizations
- Build strong collaborations with other social service programs and agencies, always adhering to confidentiality
- Include culturally informed, welcoming language and information in materials

ADVOCACY BASIC NEEDS

- Culturally competent care
- Patience/Trust building
- School/GED
- Housing
- Healing
- Mentorship programs
- Chemical dependency treatment
- Work skills
- Life skills
- Safety from traffickers
- Relocation
- Civil and criminal legal assistance
- Help with children
- Health needs
- Mental Health needs
- Access to continued trauma-informed care

CHANGEMAKING

- Educate yourself first so Survivors don't have to
- Acknowledge invisibility and center those who may be targeted in meaningful ways
- Shift the focus to buyers and perpetrators
- Work to restore cultural identity, values & customs
- Host community discussions
- Enhance and revise agency policies, Laws & Tribal codes
- **DON'T GIVE UP!**



RESOURCES



- LIST

THANK YOU!

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