

UNDERSTANDING SEX TRAFFICKING: 101

**2024 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**

NICE TO MEET YOU!



Deb Bush



Becki Jordan

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

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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
(22 USC § 7102; 8 CFR § 214.11(a))
has not attained 18 years of age

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

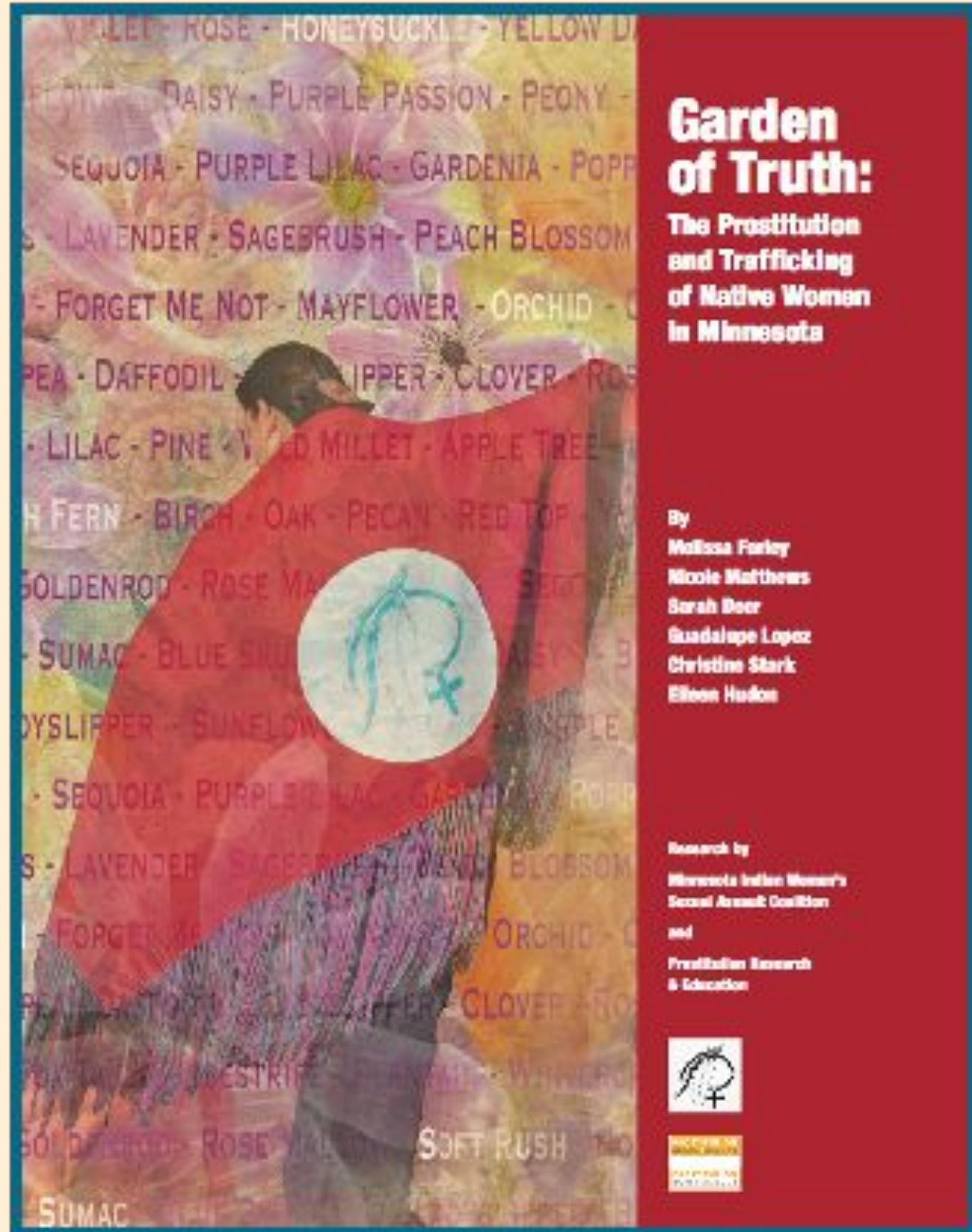
People who profit from connecting sex buyers to provider/victims (including pimps and third-party facilitators).



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.



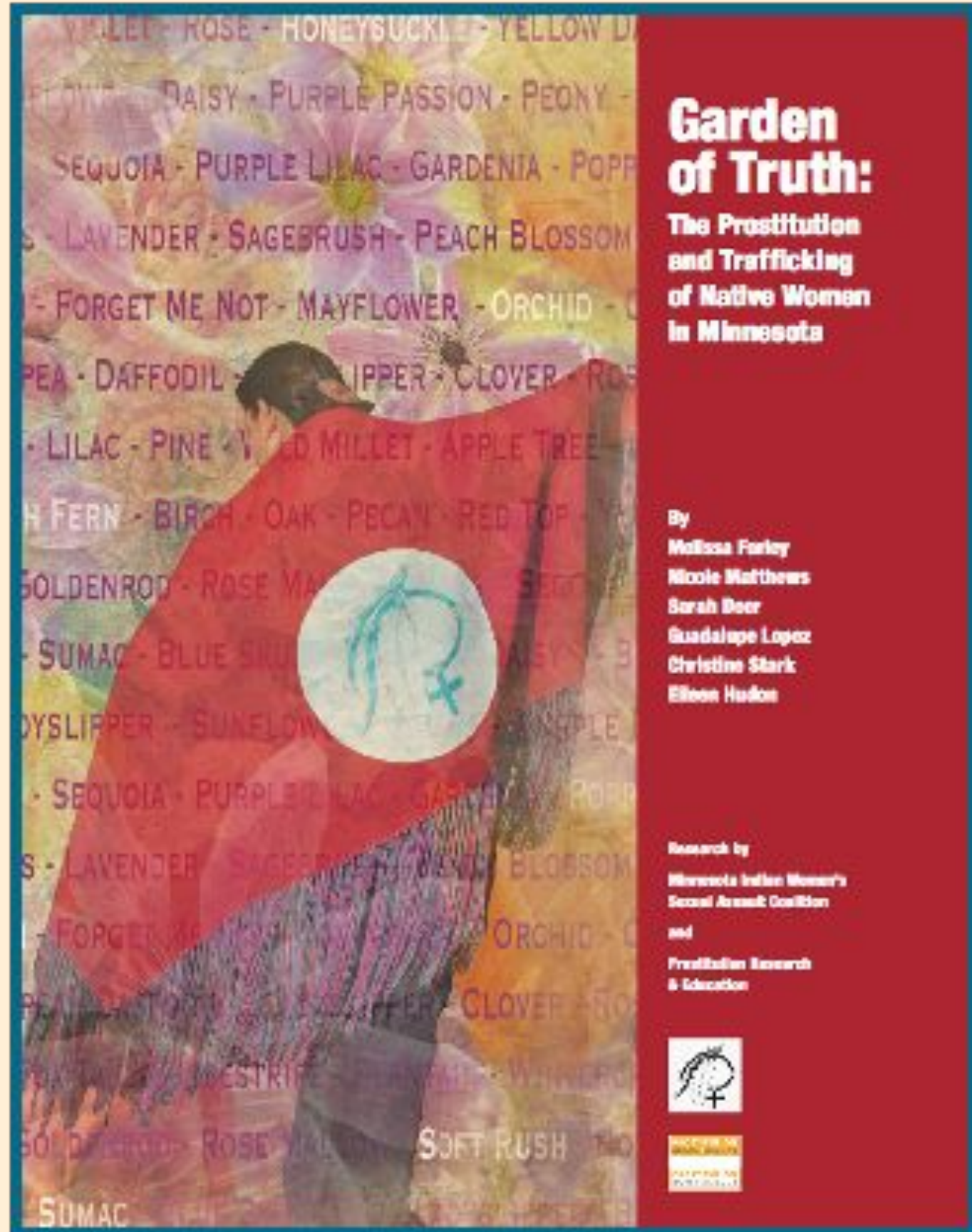


MIWSAC 2011

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

(Interviews were 105 women prostituted and/or trafficked)

- 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”**
- **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**

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**

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

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**

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



RESOURCES



- TLPI - www.home.tlpi.org/sex-trafficking
- Sex Trafficking Prevention: Tribal Child Welfare Information Exchange - www.tribalinformationexchange.org/index.php/sex-trafficking-prevention/
- Sex Trafficking in Indian Country: Advocacy Curriculum - <https://www.tribaltrafficking.org/sex-trafficking-advocacy-curriculum>
- Tribal Sex Trafficking Resources - www.TribalTrafficking.org
- Tools From Tribes - www.tribalinformationexchange.org/index.php/tools

THANK YOU!

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MIWSAC

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