



# Minnesota HUMAN TRAFFICKING TASK FORCE

## Human Trafficking & Sexual and Domestic Violence

ISSUE • RESPONSE • SOLUTION

### UNDERSTANDING HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Human trafficking is a public health, public safety and human rights violation that occurs around the world and in communities throughout Minnesota. Human trafficking includes both labor and sex trafficking, and international and domestic victims. The Minnesota Human Trafficking Task Force (MNHTTF) is working to address and prevent human trafficking through a coordinated, multidisciplinary, statewide response.

### THE ISSUE: HOW SEX TRAFFICKING INTERSECTS WITH DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Victims of human trafficking are especially vulnerable to domestic violence, and vice versa. Traffickers and abusers use similar power tactics to control their victims, including sexual assaults, threats and coercion, isolation, physical assaults, shaming and blaming and economic abuse. If domestic violence intersects with poverty, human trafficking is more likely to occur because victims are vulnerable to labor exploitation or commercial sexual exploitation to meet basic survival needs and/or income for families. Individuals can also be victims of domestic violence and trafficking simultaneously if the trafficker is an intimate partner or household member.

Recent studies demonstrate a correlation between domestic violence and sexual violence, including sex trafficking:

- Thirty percent of partnered women throughout the world are exposed to physical or sexual intimate partner violence at some point in their lives.<sup>i</sup>
- According to the National Violence Against Women Survey, approximately 52% of women surveyed and 66% of men were physically assaulted as a child or as an adult.
- Women who were raped or physically assaulted before the age of 18 were twice as likely to be raped or assaulted after the age of 18.<sup>ii</sup>

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- In a study of 25 traffickers, 82% had been exposed to domestic violence growing up.<sup>iii</sup>
- According to the Wilder Foundation's 2013 Homelessness in Minnesota study, most homeless youth have childhood histories of trauma and long-term health issues. About half were physically abused and approximately 1 in 4 were sexually abused.<sup>iv</sup>
- Native American women are particularly at risk for sex trafficking. According to a study conducted by the Minnesota Indian Women's Sexual Assault Coalition, about half of the 105 women surveyed met a conservative legal definition of sex trafficking, with 48% used by more than 200 sex buyers during their lifetimes and 16% used by at least 900 sex buyers. 79% of the women they interviewed had been sexually abused as children by an average of 4 perpetrators. 92% had been raped. 84% had been physically assaulted in prostitution. 77% had used homeless shelters, 65% had used domestic violence services, and 33% had used sexual assault services.<sup>v</sup>

## THE RESPONSE: COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS AND INITIATIVES


In recognizing the intersections and similarities between domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking, collaboration between these service providers is proving successful in Minnesota.

Anti-trafficking agencies such as Breaking Free, Catholic Charities, International Institute of Minnesota, Minnesota Indian Women's Resource Center, and PRIDE work together with domestic violence shelters and local sexual assault advocacy programs to enable cross-referrals and best meet the needs of trafficking victims. In addition, these organizations serve on many coalitions together, resulting in unified efforts to support policy and legislative initiatives that serve victims of all three service areas.

The following are domestic violence or sexual assault advocacy organizations that work closely with anti-trafficking organizations:

Cornerstone's Day One Program - manages a statewide domestic violence hotline and networks with shelters and domestic violence and sexual assault organizations to collect and disseminate program specifics on a shared database. Anti-trafficking direct service providers have added their services to Day One and provided an initial training to domestic violence and sexual assault advocates on human trafficking with the ultimate goal of trafficking survivors utilizing the statewide hotline to call for help. 1-866-223-1111  
<http://www.cornerstonemn.org/dayone.html>

Gender Violence Institute The Gender Violence Institute believes that violence against women functions to maintain the inequalities that exist between men and women. Through community



organizing, policy development, education and training, the Gender Violence Institute works to promote the personal and cultural change necessary to end violence in women's lives works with victims of abuse and perpetrators of abuse, as well as providing advocacy and training to reduce domestic and sexual violence. <http://www.genderviolenceinstitute.org/>

Mending the Sacred Hoop Mending the Sacred Hoop is a Native owned and operated non-profit organization that exists to address violence against Native women. Mending the Sacred Hoop addresses issues surrounding violence against American Indian/Alaska Native women in their home community of Duluth, MN, throughout the State of Minnesota, and works with Tribes and Native communities nationally. They provide training to strengthen Tribal and Native community responses, including advocacy and systems responses, community understanding and awareness, engaging men to end violence against women, and coordinating community responses that provide for women's safety and uphold offender accountability. <http://mshoop.org>

Minnesota Coalition Against Sexual Assault (MNCASA) The Minnesota Coalition Against Sexual Assault is a voice for victims/survivors, sexual assault programs, and allies committed to ending sexual violence. Prostitution is included in MNCASA's definition of sexual violence. MNCASA can provide information about sexual assault advocacy services available throughout the state. [www.mncasa.org](http://www.mncasa.org)

Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women (MCBW) The mission of MCBW is to provide a voice for battered women and member programs; challenge systems and institutions so they respond more effectively to the needs of battered women and their children; promote social change; and support, educate, and connect member programs. MCBW can provide information about domestic violence shelters and advocacy services available throughout the state. [www.mcbw.org](http://www.mcbw.org)

Minnesota Indian Women's Sexual Assault Coalition (MIWSAC) MIWSAC's mission statement is as follows: Through unity we will strengthen our voices and build resources to create awareness and eliminate sexual violence against Indian women and children. [www.miwsac.org](http://www.miwsac.org)

MN Men's Action Network The MN Men's Action Network was initiated by the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) to build a public/private prevention effort that promotes male leadership. To this end, a collaborative effort between the MDH, Men As Peacemakers in Duluth and the Gender Violence Institute in Clearwater has been created to develop a network of men and male leaders involved in primary prevention practices. <http://menaspeacemakers.org/mnman/>

## THE SOLUTION: CROSS-DISCIPLINARY TRAINING & COLLABORATION

Many communities throughout Minnesota lack resources specifically dedicated to serving victims of trafficking. However, these communities often have access to local domestic violence and sexual assault advocacy organizations. Through cross-disciplinary training and collaboration, the needs of locally identified victims may be able to be met by existing organizations or through cross-disciplinary collaborations.

Other recommendations include:

- Anti-trafficking organizations can reach out to domestic violence and sexual assault organizations in their region to discuss collaboration
- Domestic violence and sexual assault organizations can contact anti-trafficking organizations in their region or state to learn what services are available and how to make referrals.
- Organizations can offer trainings or events to raise awareness regarding trafficking.
- Advocates should be mindful of exclusively categorizing victims/survivors as domestic violence, sexual assault, or human trafficking victims/survivors because these labels could limit access to social services.
- Domestic violence and sexual assault service providers should have protocols in place to screen for victims/survivors of trafficking. Persons in high-risk categories should be screened to increase timely identification and access to appropriate referrals/interventions.
- Trafficking victims/survivors should be provided with information about sexual assault exams.
- Advocates should be mindful of victim/survivor confidentiality and provide access to confidential services whenever possible

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<sup>i</sup> World Health Organization, [http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/85239/1/9789241564625\\_eng.pdf](http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/85239/1/9789241564625_eng.pdf)

<sup>ii</sup> National Violence Against Women Survey <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/183781.pdf> (2000)

<sup>iii</sup> Raphael & Myers-Powell (2010) [http://newsroom.depaul.edu/PDF/FAMILY\\_LAW\\_CENTER\\_REPORT-final.pdf](http://newsroom.depaul.edu/PDF/FAMILY_LAW_CENTER_REPORT-final.pdf)

<sup>iv</sup> Wilder Research (2013) <https://www.wilder.org/Wilder-Research/Publications/Studies/Homelessness%20in%20Minnesota%202012%20Study/Homelessness%20in%20Minnesota%20-%20Findings%20from%20the%202012%20Statewide%20Homeless%20Study.pdf>

<sup>v</sup> Minnesota Indian Women's Sexual Assault Coalition & Prostitution Education and Research [http://www.prostitutionresearch.com/pdfs/Garden\\_of\\_Truth\\_Final\\_Project\\_WEB.pdf](http://www.prostitutionresearch.com/pdfs/Garden_of_Truth_Final_Project_WEB.pdf)