

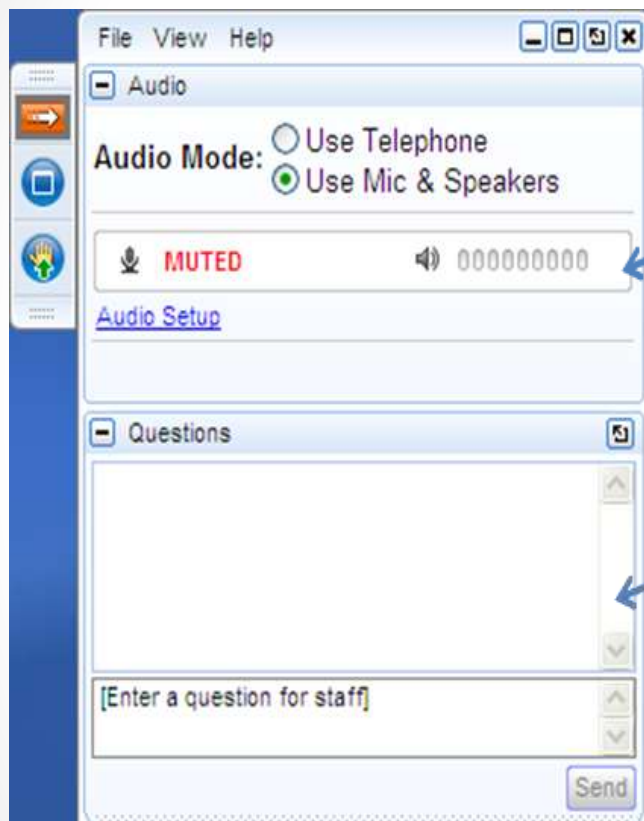
Case Study: Human Trafficking and the Law Enforcement and Social Service Response

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Objectives



- Explore three unique case studies on child exploitation
- Examine the victimology within these three cases
- Identify ways that law enforcement and social service providers can collaborate to improve their relationships and better support victims

Brittany



- ❧ 25-year-old female who has been in a relationship with Eric for 8 years. Brittany and Eric have three kids together.
- ❧ Eric is verbally, physically, and sexually abusive of Brittany.
- ❧ Eric forces Brittany to have sex with his friends and random men that respond to the Backpage.com ad that he placed for her. Brittany has tried to leave Eric before but he threatens to keep and hurt the children if she leave. He convinces her that if she leaves she would have nothing. He controlled all of Brittany's money, did not allow her to keep her own bank account, and forbade her from getting her driver's license. Brittany could not see any alternatives for leaving.

Brittany(cont.)



- ❧ One evening, Eric, Brittany and an 18 year-old, Amy, who Eric was also forcing into prostitution, were pulled over by a patrol officer for a traffic violation. Eric handed the officer identification for him and Brittany and said that Amy lost her license.
- ❧ Brittany and Amy looked over at Eric while answering the initial questions. Amy had several bruises that were visible to the officer. Both girls appeared shaken.

What Goes Through A Victim's Mind When They Run Into Law Enforcement



- ❧ “Cops are evil and want to put me in jail”
- ❧ “If they are involved with the child welfare system they may be afraid of going back home to the place they previously resided”
- ❧ “I am not a victim. I am a hustler and a provider for my family(pimps and wife-in-laws).”
- ❧ “What is the story daddy told me to say if I ever get arrested? I don't want to get daddy in trouble”
- ❧ The victim may not tell a complete story, or will use rehearsed responses
- ❧ Identify with the trafficker

What should the officer do



- ☞ Separate all parties and question each of them individually
- ☞ Ask Amy how she knows Eric and Brittany
- ☞ Check and see if all of their stories match
- ☞ Use your gut. If you suspect something is wrong act on that instinct. Your gut is right.
- ☞ If you suspect that they are victims of trafficking call it in and attempt to have a service provider at the station when you arrive to provide services as well as make sure the victim is comfortable during the interview and to provide emergency support

Ashley



- ❧ a 15-year-old female originally from Atlanta. She was raised by her grandmother until she was 8 years old and then placed in the foster care system. Ashley needed to get out of her foster home because of unwanted sexual attention from a male that was staying at her foster home
- ❧ During that time, she met "Breeze," a 23-year-old man who told her that he grew up in foster care and that he was going to be visiting some friends who lived in Atlanta and offered her a ride. She accepted and packed a bag and left her group home to meet him. Her hope was to get to Atlanta where she had a cousin that said she could stay as long as she took care of the kids.

Ashley(cont.)



- ❧ The journey was fine until they got to the hotel. He sexually assaulted her and told her she would never see anyone else in her family if she did not engage in sex with other men of his choosing. She felt she had no other choice and continued to earn money for Breeze to pay him back for the money he paid for her to get back to Atlanta.
- ❧ Ashley was arrested for solicitation in Atlanta and after serving time in a juvenile detention center was returned to her foster family Ashley ran away again and called Breeze to help her get back to Atlanta. He agreed to help again. She was arrested again.

Ashley(cont.)



- ❧ While participating in an outreach group at a detention center, Ashley reached out to a Survivor Advocate and told her parts of her story. The advocate partnered up with Ashley's social worker to provide emotional support and additional social services.
- ❧ The Survivor Advocate helped Ashley talk to her case manager at the detention center about what happened and helped Ashley's probation officer understand other options for support instead of a detention center and returning to her foster family.
- ❧ Ashley now has an order of protection against Breeze and was able to leave the detention center and go to an out-of-state residential program for young girls who were victims of sex trafficking. Ashley is doing well in her program and is almost finished with her GED.

Key Questions for Victims of Trafficking:



- 🌀 How did you get here?
- 🌀 Where do you live, eat and sleep?
- 🌀 Were you threatened if you tried to leave?
- 🌀 Has your family been threatened?
- 🌀 Were you ever physically abused?
- 🌀 Were you ever forced to stay in one place?
- 🌀 Who are you afraid of?
- 🌀 Is there anything you would like to tell me?

First interaction with the Victim

Make the victim feel comfortable with you

- ☞ Meet their basic needs before trying to interview them
- ☞ Remember it is difficult for victims to come forward because they see themselves as just doing what is needed to get by
- ☞ Always use a victim-centered approach

What worked with Ashley



- ❧ Social worker and advocate partnered to reach the best possible solution.
- ❧ Social worker used the interstate compact act in order to get Ashley to a safe place where she could heal.
- ❧ Probation officer as well as judge were informed of how to handle a trafficking case. She was treated as a victim not as a criminal.
- ❧ Social worker found a program specifically for girls who were victims of trafficking.

Sarah




- ❧ 17-year-old female from rural Midwest. Ran away from home a few times because her mom and stepfather drank a lot and did not pay attention to her. A few months ago Sarah was walking to the store alone and a 26-year-old male drove up beside her and told her how pretty she was and asked why she looked so sad.
- ❧ Sarah told him that she was angry with her mom and just needed to take a walk. He asked if he could take her to get her nails done down the street to cheer her up, and she agreed. He paid right away while giving compliments and telling her he wanted to meet again the next day.

Sarah(cont.)

- ❧ For the next two months he picked Sarah up and took her to eat, to get her nails done and continued to act like a loving boyfriend. They both began calling each other boyfriend and girlfriend. They spent a lot of time together and he asked Sarah to move in with him, but after a month of living together he told her he couldn't make the rent payment and needed help.
- ❧ He asked her to go on dates with older men and engage in commercial sex. Sarah felt uncomfortable but agreed because she would do anything not to return home, and wanted to make him happy. Her boyfriend praised her and told her he didn't mind that Sarah helped them get money for rent this way.

Sarah(cont.)



- ✧ This continued until one night when Sarah was out on the street and was raped by a stranger who initially solicited her for sex. She immediately called the police and was taken to the hospital for an exam. After meeting with the officers she told them that she was out working and was raped.
- ✧ The officers didn't pressure Sarah on the whereabouts of her pimp. Instead, they met several times and she opened up to them.

What should be done and what works

- ❧ If possible have a female officer in on the interview. Female victims may have a fear of men due to trauma.
- ❧ Reach out to a service provider that can provide emergency housing and emotional support for Sarah as she considered some of her options.
- ❧ She decided to leave her boyfriend and move into a shelter. During her month at the shelter, she was long-term housing for her and helped her secure a part-time job. Within four months, Sarah saved enough money to move into her own apartment. She continues to work part-time and attend classes in the evenings.

General Needs of Victims

Immediate assistance

❧ *Housing, food, medical, safety and security, language interpretation and legal services*

❧ **Mental health assistance**

❧ *Counseling*

❧ **Income assistance**

❧ *Cash, living assistance*

Building A Stable Relationship With Victim Is Crucial In The Initial Stages Of Any Investigation Is Crucial

- ☞ This can be done in several ways
 - ☞ Make sure the victim is fed. But make sure they choose what and where they eat. It may be a simple decision for the everyday person but for a trafficking victim their trafficker may control every aspect of their life.
 - ☞ Make sure if they are dressed inappropriately to offer them a change of clothes. In my D.C. office we had racks of clothes for victims to wear.
 - ☞ I suggest asking female coworkers to have a clothing drive so that the victims can change out of street clothes

Building A Stable Relationship With Victim Is Crucial In The Initial Stages Of Any Investigation Is Crucial (cont.).

- ❧ Treat victim with respect and talk to them as if they were a victim of any other crime
- ❧ Always bring in a victim specialist in the room so you can make sure that the victim feels secure. The victim specialist also will connect victim to resources needed like housing, food, a job as well as prepare them for the interview

Do not get angry if the victim refuses to give you all the information that you need right up front. It takes time to build trust

- ❧ Conduct interviews in a neutral location only after their needs have been assessed and any urgent needs have been met
- ❧ Be patient and give the victim time to stabilize and begin their recovery process

Tips



- ❧ Exercise patience
- ❧ Know that you will most likely not get all the information you want right away
- ❧ The survivor may give you small bits of information to see if they can trust you.
- ❧ Let them know that you are mandatory reporters. If you don't and you have to report something they say you may lose their trust. But if they know from the beginning it will get you one step closer to building up trust.

3AM Rule

- Always have your phone on
- Make sure that you have a staff member on call at all times even during the holiday
- Example: On New Years Eve, when I had just finished celebrating I got a call of two teenage girls.
- Always make sure that you have an emergency bag packed with a change of clothes in case you are at the precinct until morning and have to go to court with the victim

3AM Rule(cont.)

- ☞ Make sure that you have snacks and food for yourself and potential victims
- ☞ Have an emergency contact at the local shelters that you can call at anytime of the night
- ☞ If the officer is bringing the client to your office make sure that your staff has donors give clothes so the victim can change into
- ☞ If your organization doesn't have reward points please set a program up that you use when you go out of town or have your donors donate points in case there are no beds at shelters. I cant tell you how many times I had to sit with my clients waiting to figure out what we were going to do because there were no beds anywhere

Things to Remember



- ❧ Do not use the term “prostitute” to describe a victim of human trafficking
- ❧ If the person is under 18 and is engaging in commercial sex acts, pornography or stripping they are automatically a victim of trafficking.
- ❧ If the victim is over 18, you have to prove either force, fraud or coercion
- ❧ Nobody wakes up one morning and says that they want to be a victim of trafficking. It is not a lifestyle like movies like “Pretty Woman” makes it appear.
- ❧ Refer to other programs if you are not able to provide the service. Partnerships are key.

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