Understanding the Vulnerability of Runaway, Forced Out and Homeless Youth

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OJJDP’s MECP

- MECP offers assistance to local, state and tribal law enforcement, nonprofit organizations, and other juvenile justice practitioners to:
  - strengthen their responses
  - increase the use of evidence-based practices
  - identify and address operational and programmatic needs
- Coordinated by Fox Valley Technical College
- For more information or to submit a training and technical assistance request:
  - www.mecptraining.org
  - mecptraining@fvtc.edu
  - 1-888-347-5610
Webinar Housekeeping

Audio Support:
- Use Telephone or Mic & Speakers
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To ask a Question:
- Type a question in the box; click Send
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WE ARE PROUD TO OPERATE

SAFE PLACE

HR3

Runaway and Homeless Youth Training & Technical Assistance Center

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Partner with organizations in the 50 States and US territories in one or more of the following ways:

• Federally funded Training and Technical Assistance for grantees funded by the Family and Youth Services Bureau to serve runaway, homeless and street youth.

• Licensed agencies operating as a Safe Place community for youth (public/private sector partnership) – one sign as an access point for help across the country.

• National Safe Place Network Membership – Memberships for Organizational Development, Training and Professional Development Opportunities.

• Fee for Service Training and Consultation

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Federally funded RHY Programs in Action –

According to RHYMIS data for the time-period of 30 September 2013 and 7 September 2014:

14,643 RHY entered BCPs (short term shelter for youth under the age of 18)

1,396 RHY entered TLP/MGH (18 – 24 month transition services for youth ages 16 – 22)

210,683* contacts with RHY were made by Street Outreach Programs with 10,522 of those contacts leading to a RHY entering shelter (*this is a duplicated count – i.e. a youth may have been contacted multiple times prior to accepting shelter)

https://extranet.acf.hhs.gov/rhymis/custom_reports.jsp

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How has our world changed?
Our Youth ....

• Histories of abuse, neglect, trauma, exposure to violence
• Substance abuse (as youth or familial)
• Domestic and/or Relationship Violence
• Victims/Survivors of Trafficking (Most common DMST and CSEC)
• Mental Health Concerns
• Education/Social Delays
• LGBTQ Disconnected from Families and Communities
• Status and Delinquent Offenders
• Youth in and out of child welfare system
• Easily hidden, misunderstood or overlooked

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Our Society...

- Varied tolerance levels for differences
- “Social Issue” of the moment drives resources and attention
- Perceptions of runaway and homeless youth
- Consumption levels of negative media
- Demand exceeds supply for most services and tangible resources
- Territorialism and communication gaps are real
What makes each youth unique?

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CYCLE of NEED

- Need
- Tension
- Expression/Action
- Release/Relaxation
- Response/Intervention

Hopper, 2002
CYCLE of NEED

Need → Tension

Tension → Expression/Action

Expression/Action → Release/Relaxation

Release/Relaxation → Response/Intervention

Response/Intervention → Need

Hopper, 2002
How does need contribute to vulnerability?

- Seeking release from negative feelings (a little is better than none)
- Varies from “willingness to believe anything” to “unwilling to believe anything” – either extreme sets the stage for increased victimization
- Changing understanding or awareness of needs can lead to challenging behavior for providers which may result in youth being excluded from services
- Need may be misinterpreted which may lead to ineffective or mismatched services – youth disengage – opens door to manipulation from predatory figures
“People get ready, there’s a train a coming’... you don’t need no ticket, you just get on board”

- Individual Needs versus Systemic Responses
- Interdisciplinary cooperation, understanding and support (law enforcement, education, social services)
- No time or tolerance for blame – seeking solutions to the issue and acknowledging system limitations is critical

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What can organizations/agencies/systems do?

- Be Trauma Informed
- Examine policies and procedures for stereotype based assumptions
- Engage youth advisory personnel
- Host or participate in a “systems sit-in” – Sit together and share challenges, liabilities, PoV, needs, expectations
- Build on common ground

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Available Training and Technical Assistance

• All FYSB funded (Federal) RHY Programs receive FREE training and technical assistance –  
  [www.rhyttac.net](http://www.rhyttac.net)

• E-Mail and phone technical assistance available daily.

• Other partners, members or those seeking resources can visit [www.nspnetwork.org](http://www.nspnetwork.org)
Types of Training and Technical Assistance

• Web-Based Learning
• Site-Based Technical Assistance
• Events
• Emphasis on Trauma Informed Care, Culturally Competent, Evidence-Based Interventions focused on assisting youth in the areas of:
  • Wellness
  • Safety
  • Employment and Education
  • Permanent Connections to Caring Adults

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Questions or Clarifications

Thanks for your attention and for your dedicated efforts to youth and families in your community!
Investigative Response For High-Risk Victims/Homeless Youth

Investigative Strategies for Missing and Abducted Children
Overview

• Defining the High Risk Victim
• Understanding the problem
• Solutions (ownership of the problem)
• Road map for change
Homeless Youth “Perfect Victims”

- Perceptions
  - Victim
  - System
  - Society
- Off the “Grid”
  - No runaway reports
  - Appear and pass themselves off as adults
Homeless Youth “Perfect Victims”

- Shelters
  - Other adult clients
    - Protections
      - Help before hurt
- Streets
  - Preferential offenders
  - Traffickers
  - Drug Dealing
Homeless Youth
High Risk Victim
Defining the High Risk Victim

- High Risk Victims:
  - Chronic Runaways
    - Age
  - Repeat victims
  - Victims of child sex trafficking
Profile of the High Risk Victim

- Prior physical/sexual abuse
- Chronic runaway
- Drugs
- Fear distrust in system
- Health problems
- Highest potential for victimization
  - Exploitation/Trafficking/Abduction
- Highest level of lethality
Pathway to Victimization

- Family conflict
  - First runaway episode
- School problems – Truancy
- Becomes chronic runaway
  - Deviant peers/Substance abuse
- Street life
  - Exploitation
  - Meets “pimp” trafficker
  - Recruits others
- Life of crime, addiction
System Response

• Whose job is it to deal with Homeless Youth?
Your Agency’s Response

• How would you rate your agency’s response to HRV/Homeless Youth
  • Reactive
  • Proactive
• What is the “Investigative Mindset” regarding HRV in your agency
Challenges Dealing with Identified Homeless Youth

• Unique victim issues
• Lack of specific investigative responsibility
• Traditional investigative models and techniques
• Lack of streamline method of identifying and reporting
Solutions (Ownership of the Challenge)

- Assign specific investigative responsibility
- Arrange training on dynamics
- Implement departmental/system investigative and intervention protocol
  - Identify high-risk victims/runaways
- Establish departmental/juvenile justice system investigative and intervention team
Increased Reporting

• Training on dynamics for stakeholders:
  • Vice
  • Patrol
  • Juvenile department
  • CPS
  • Shelters
Identifying/Locating the HRV/Homeless Youth

- High Risk Victim Model
  - Victim centered approach
    - Intervention
    - Prevention
    - Suppression
Identifying/Locating the HRV/Homeless Youth

- Work with the Stakeholders
  - Patrol officers
  - Shelter workers
  - Hospitals
  - Businesses
- Provide a system of reporting
When a juvenile is found involved in or connected with prostitution or a juvenile is found violating curfew in a high prostitution area, contact a Juvenile Prostitution Unit detective at 214-671-. After hours call 214-687-. If there is no answer have dispatch page the on-call Child Exploitation/Juvenile Prostitution detective.

- Child Exploitation 214-671-
- Juvenile Prostitution Unit cell phone 214-687-
- Page Child Exploitation/Juvenile Prostitution detective through dispatch at 214-670-5250
Questions