

Tribal and Trafficking Webinar Series: Gangs in Tribal Communities

Chris Cuestas
January 29th, 2015





MECP supports state and local law enforcement officers, child protection personnel, prosecutors, medical providers, child advocacy center professionals, and other criminal justice practitioners in developing and strengthening their responses to child victimization.

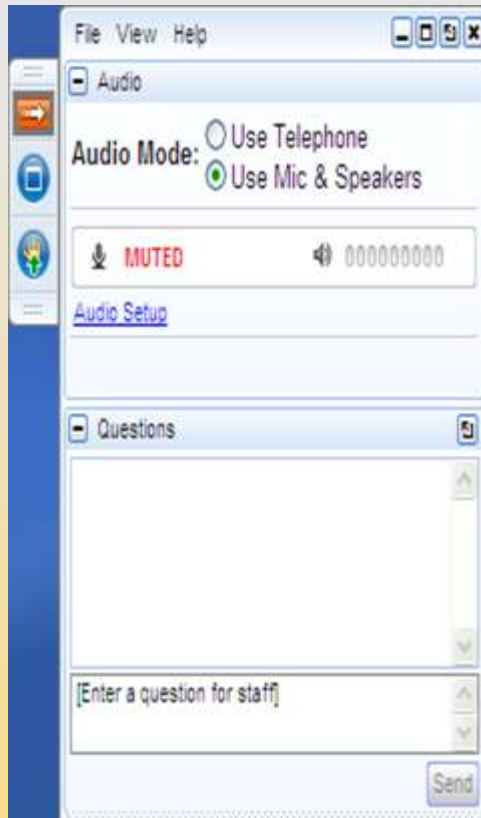
mecptaining@fvtc.edu
www.mecptraining.org
www.ncjtc.org/MECP
1-888-347-5610



The mission of the AMBER Alert Training and Technical Assistance Program is to safely recover missing, endangered, or abducted children through the coordinated efforts of law enforcement, media, transportation, and other partners by using training and technology to enhance response capacities and capabilities and increase public participation.

askamber@fvtc.edu
www.amber-net.org
www.ncjtc.org/AmberAlert
1-877-71-AMBER

Webinar Housekeeping



Audio Support:

- Use Telephone or Mic & Speakers
- Check 'Audio Setup' for problems
- All callers will be on mute throughout the webinar

To ask a Question:

- Type a question in the box; click Send
- Questions will be addressed during the Q & A portion of the webinar

Gangs in Tribal Communities



National Violence Prevention Resource Center

Sex and Human Trafficking in Tribal Communities

Gangs in Tribal Communities



National Violence Prevention Resource Center

Sex and Human Trafficking Overview:

- ☐ Definitions
- ☐ Local and National Trends
- ☐ Gang Organizations and Sex Trafficking
- ☐ Impact of Gangs in Tribal Lands
- ☐ Use of Technology in Sex Trafficking
- ☐ Recognizing Risk Factors
- ☐ Tribal Community Responses

Copyright © 2015 NVPRC

Gangs in Tribal Communities



National Violence Prevention Resource Center

The definition of a criminal street gang:

An ongoing formal or informal association of three or more persons whose members or associates individually or collectively engage in the commission, attempted commission, facilitation or solicitation of any criminal act, or any act that would be a criminal act if the youth were an adult, and who has at least one individual who is an identified gang member.”

Gangs in Tribal Communities



National Violence Prevention Resource Center

The definition of a human trafficking organization:

A formal or informal association of individuals whose main focus involves exploitation for profit which comes in many forms including: forcing victims into prostitution, subjecting victims to slavery or involuntary servitude, and compelling victims to commit sex acts for the purpose of creating pornography.

Gangs in Tribal Communities



National Violence Prevention Resource Center

The emergence of criminal street gangs on Native American reservations can be attributed to the following factors:

- socioeconomic issues of poverty, substance abuse & family dynamics
- loss of traditional culture combined with persisting kinship ties (family fragmentation)
- alienated youth who strongly relate to youth culture to fill a cultural void
- higher rates of geographic mobility of tribal members between metro areas and the reservation
- a shift in reservation housing configurations that run counter to traditional settlement patterns

Source: Center for Delinquency and Crime Policy Studies

Copyright © 2015 NVPRC

Gangs in Tribal Communities



National Violence Prevention Resource Center

Local and National Trends:

- There are currently 600,000 to 800,000 people trafficked per year across international borders
 - In the United States alone 14 to 17 thousand people per year are interdicted from trafficking organizations
 - Currently 80% of all trafficking involves sexual exploitation and 20% labor related
 - 70% are female and 35% are children
 - Average age of a female forced into the sex trade is 12-14 years of age
- Source: Do Something.ORG

Copyright © 2015 NVPRC

Gangs in Tribal Communities



National Violence Prevention Resource Center

Local and National Trends:

- Most sex traffickers target runaway females from impoverished communities
- Human trafficking is the 3rd largest international crime industry averaging 32 billion dollars annually
- Street gang organizations and cartels are linked to over 50% of this industry

Source: Do Something.ORG

Gangs in Tribal Communities



National Violence Prevention Resource Center

Gang Organizations and Sex Trafficking:

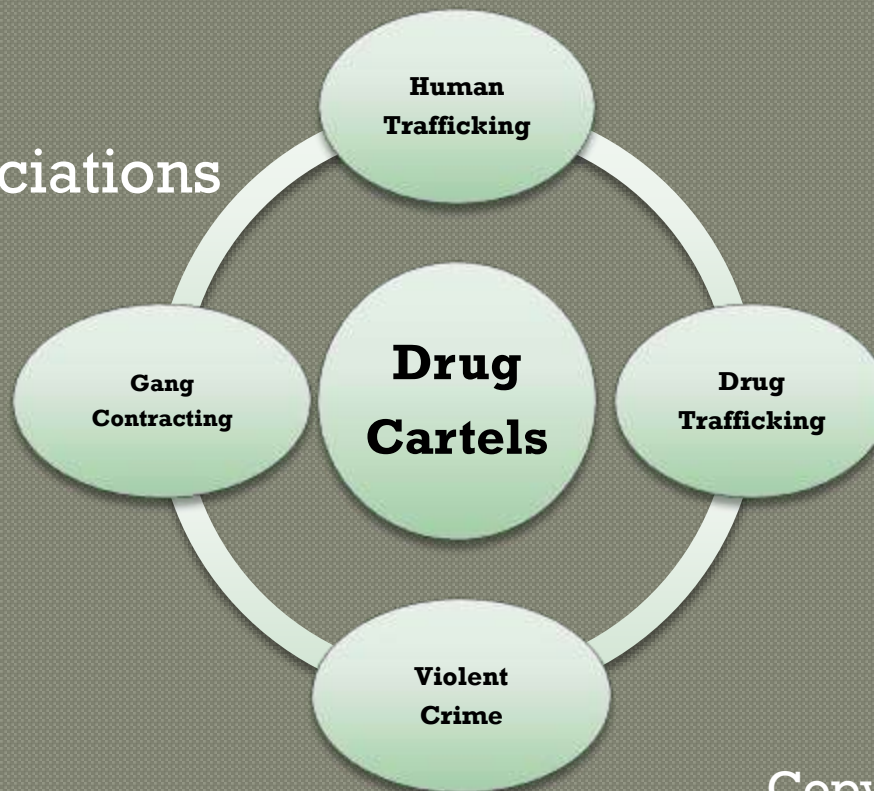
- Criminal organizations have recognized the financial potential for joint associations and sub-contracting
- Not unusual as enterprises (MS-13 has provided sub-contracted services for years)
- Multi level organizations can slow criminal investigations and task agency resources
- Cross jurisdictional investigations are cumbersome and often not pursued

Gangs in Tribal Communities



National Violence Prevention Resource Center

Criminal Associations



Copyright © 2015 NVPRC

Gangs in Tribal Communities



National Violence Prevention Resource Center

Gang Organizations and Sex Trafficking:

- There is no question that tribal gangs have established criminal associations with metropolitan gangs and prison organizations (native mob/warrior society/indian posse)
- Criminal street gangs in tribal lands have matured into profit based entities (greater influence in local drug trade)
- Associations are difficult to prove (transition of gathered intelligence to courtroom evidence)

Gangs in Tribal Communities



National Violence Prevention Resource Center

Impact of Gangs in Tribal Lands **Gangs are criminal entities**

As criminal entities, gangs and their corruptive influences evolve and adapt

To reduce the influence, tribal communities/law enforcement must also evolve and adapt

Gangs in Tribal Communities



National Violence Prevention Resource Center

How criminal street gangs develop

Emergence

Establishment

Evolution

Entrenchment

Gangs in Tribal Communities



National Violence Prevention Resource Center

How criminal street gangs develop:

Phase 1. **Emergence**

Activity: Turf establishment, boundary demarcation through graffiti

Crimes: Vandalism, criminal damage, minor threats and intimidation

Responses: Intelligence gathering, abatement, agency training, prevention efforts through the schools

Phase 2. **Establishment**

Activity: Recruitment, social networking

Crimes: Assaults, escalating threats and intimidation, alcohol violations

Responses: Focused deployment, collaborative task forces, diversion

Copyright © 2015 NVPRC

Gangs in Tribal Communities



National Violence Prevention Resource Center

How criminal street gangs develop:

Phase 3. **Evolution**

Activity: Weapons procurement, financing

Crimes: Narcotics distribution, burglaries, aggravated assaults

Responses: Tactical investigations, task force collaborations between law enforcement agencies and courts, community involvement

Phase 4. **Entrenchment**

Activity: Ongoing retaliations, dominance efforts, criminal diversity,

Crimes: Murders, witness intimidation, infiltration (government, law enforcement, courts, businesses)

Responses: Syndicate and conspiracy investigations, financial analysis

Copyright © 2015 NVPRC

Gangs in Tribal Communities



National Violence Prevention Resource Center

Extended Impact of the Gang Problem Within the Tribal Community

- Youth emulate the gang/thug culture vs. tribal culture
- Community struggles with denial
- Window of intervention closes
- Violence within the community becomes common
- Gang problem becomes cyclical
- Parents support gang involvement (gain benefit)
- Community becomes reactive vs. proactive in their approach

Copyright © 2015 NVPRC



National Violence Prevention Resource Center

Gangs in Tribal Communities



Technology and Sex Trafficking

Street gangs have accepted and introduced the advances of technology into their criminal subculture and have advanced criminality through their use of social media



National Violence Prevention Resource Center

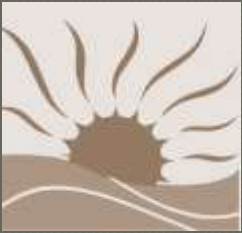
Technology and Sex Trafficking

Use of technology:

- Recruiting/promotion
- Accessing young girls (web searches)
- Sending messages and uploading photos
- Initiating contacts and introductions
- Threaten and intimidate (victims & families)
- Monitor activity
- Track families and law enforcement activity
- Direct introduction into “dark net”

Gangs in Tribal Communities





National Violence Prevention Resource Center

Technology and Sex Trafficking Use of Technology

- Upload sex acts into real time “sex sites”
- Monitor facebook for activity and requests
- Sell snap chat photos for profit
- Communicate, direct access and track prostitution activity through communication features in PS3 and X Box gaming systems

Gangs in Tribal Communities



Gangs in Tribal Communities



National Violence Prevention Resource Center

Recognizing Community Risk Factors for Sex Trafficking

In order to determine the level of gang activity within a tribal community, a tribe should conduct an local **assessment**.

An assessment should establish:

- Youth risk factors for gang involvement
- Current indicators of gang activity
- Agency appropriate strategies
- Justice delivery systems strengths/weaknesses
- Short term objectives and long term goals
- Local baseline data

Gangs in Tribal Communities



National Violence Prevention Resource Center

Recognizing Community Risk Factors for Sex Trafficking

Common Methods of Indoctrination:

“Romeo Method”: Females are courted into the trade through a love relationship or connection.

“Gang Sponsor Method”: Gang members are tasked with the role of targeting 3 to 5 girls each. Girls are separated from their families and moved to a different community where they are programmed through coercion and threats to participate in the local sex trade. (profit 1 to 3 thousand per girl to the sponsor)

Copyright © 2015 NVPRC

Gangs in Tribal Communities



National Violence Prevention Resource Center

Recognizing Community Risk Factors for Sex Trafficking

Local Awareness should include:

- Gang initiations which include “sexing in” ritual for recruitment
- House parties where intoxicants are provided for young females (indoctrination technique)
- Unreported or under reported sex offenses
- Shroud of silence surrounding community sexual behavior
- Females often leaving local community for “parties” and associations with surrounding community adults
- Community youth drug problem (furnished by adults)

Gangs in Tribal Communities



National Violence Prevention Resource Center

Recognizing Community Risk Factors for Sex Trafficking

Local Awareness should include:

- Heavy youth traffic between surrounding communities
- Developing romantic ties with unknown adults not common to the community
- Heavy Facebook and cell phone traffic
- Access to financial resources (out of the ordinary)
- Lack of familial control or not able to access juveniles locations or behaviors

Gangs in Tribal Communities



National Violence Prevention Resource Center

Responding to Criminal Street Gangs in Rural Tribal Communities

Gangs in Tribal Communities



National Violence Prevention Resource Center

Strategies that best respond to gang activity in tribal communities must be:

- Collaborative with a strategic focus
- Innovative
- Site-based (local answers to local issues)
- Culturally relevant
- Community inclusive
- Contain both short-term and long-term goals and objectives
- Continuously funded
- Multi-dimensional directives

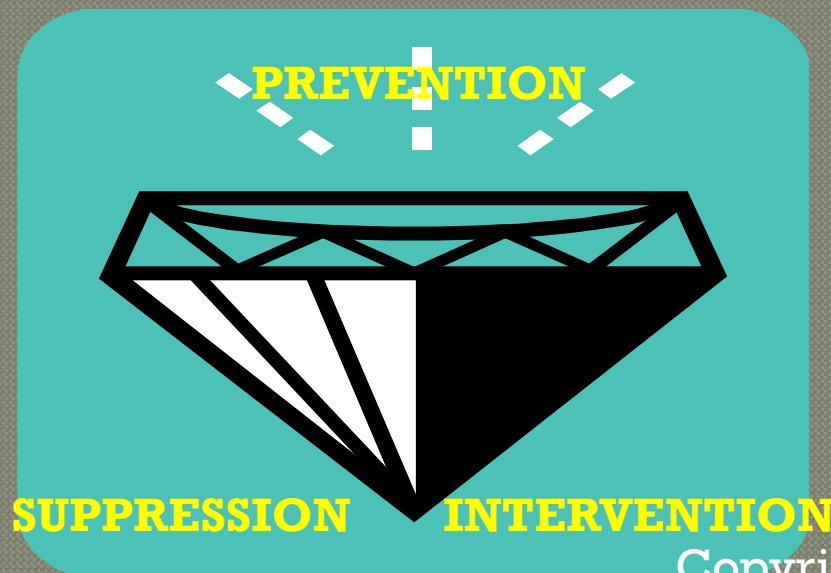
Gangs in Tribal Communities



National Violence Prevention Resource Center

What can be done about it?

NVPRC has introduced a multi-faceted strategic plan which includes:



Copyright © 2015 NVPRC



Gangs in Tribal Communities

National Violence Prevention Resource Center

G.R.I.P.S.

NVPRC's innovative, award-winning task force strategy

Gang Reduction through Intervention, Prevention & Suppression

Gangs in Tribal Communities



National Violence Prevention Resource Center

G.R.I.P.S.

NVPRC's innovative, award-winning task force strategy

Intervention

Parent notifications

Home visits and staffing

Student workshops

Mentorships

Court mandated diversion and restitution

Community service – graffiti abatement

Gangs in Tribal Communities



National Violence Prevention Resource Center

G.R.I.P.S.

NVPRC's innovative, award-winning task force strategy

Prevention

Agency training

Parent awareness sessions

Policy development

School dress codes

Gangs in Tribal Communities



National Violence Prevention Resource Center

G.R.I.P.S.

NVPRC's innovative, award-winning task force strategy

Suppression

Law enforcement training

Collaborative partnerships

Intelligence gathering

Gangs in Tribal Communities



National Violence Prevention Resource Center

Sex Trafficking in Tribal Communities can be influenced through a strong community collaborative and directed specific strategies within the community.

Tribal Leadership must re-examine resources and services provided for youth that can incorporate open lines of reporting and victim services that include support teams for families and victims.

Questions?
