

Commercial Sexual Exploitation: Innovative Ideas for Working with Children and Youth



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Commercial Sexual Exploitation: Innovative Ideas for Working with Children and Youth



SOCIAL SERVICES AND COMMUNITY SAFETY DIVISION
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Cover Art

The art on the cover was created by D-GIRL. D-GIRL says of her art: "I have been drawing for a long time just because it is interesting to see what a plain piece of paper can be. It can be a lot of things. It can be whatever you want it to be." D-GIRL's art focuses on creating images of youth speaking out and being independent.

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In Brief

This document presents a provincial framework for working with commercially sexually exploited children and youth, and innovative ideas for programs to deal with this social problem. The framework has been designed to assist in the formulation of policy, strategies, and services to assist these young people, and to prevent future generations of young people from being commercially sexually exploited. It is hoped that this document will be used in the development of appropriate responses to the commercial sexual exploitation of children and youth, including program design and implementation, as well as training and education for those working with these young people.

This framework was developed in consultation with an advisory group composed of experiential¹ young people, and an advisory committee composed of members from various ministries of the British Columbia government. Focus groups with experiential youth were held around the province, and key informant interviews were undertaken in the development of this framework.

This document consists of eight parts:

- *About This Document* presents a brief introduction and additional detail about the intended purposes of the document and the processes through which it was developed.
- *The Legal Meaning of “Commercial Sexual Exploitation”* briefly reviews relevant Canadian law on commercial sexual exploitation of children and youth.
- *What Rights Do Children and Youth Have?* highlights the problematic aspects of commercial sexual exploitation through a review of the most relevant sections of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- *Understanding Commercial Sexual Exploitation* presents a review and consolidation of the literature, including the nature of commercial sexual exploitation, a view of life on the streets, and an outline of the impossibility of obtaining an accurate estimate of the magnitude of the problem in terms of the number of children and youth affected. The section ends with a “Special Note on Aboriginal Children and Youth,” who are disproportionately affected by this issue.

¹ In keeping with much of the literature on commercial sexual exploitation of children and youth, the term “experiential youth” is used in this document to define any youth who are, or who have been, involved in commercial sexual exploitation (see, for example, Save the Children, 2000).

- *A Conceptual Framework: “Determinants of Risk”* summarizes the literature on commercial sexual exploitation within a population health approach to health promotion.
- *Meeting the Needs of Youth Through a Continuum of Services* outlines the range of services necessary for the development of a continuum of services, including prevention, early intervention/crisis intervention, assistance to exit, and strategies for healing and reintegration. Harm reduction philosophy should underpin all efforts to assist children and youth who are being commercially sexually exploited.
- *Guiding Principles for Program Design and Delivery* presents five principles that should underpin all program development to ensure that the rights of children and youth are respected in program development.
- *Innovative Ideas* presents a selection of programs from around British Columbia that are recognized as meeting the various guiding principles and that are considered by those working in the field to be exemplary and promising practices.

The commercial sexual exploitation of children and youth is the responsibility of all members of society. This framework is intended to make a contribution to the development and delivery of effective programs and services to meet the needs of experiential children and youth.

About This Document

The commercial sexual exploitation of children and youth is a serious problem in British Columbia. It affects the physical, emotional, and social health of children and youth, and has serious implications for families, communities, and society at large. A meaningful, comprehensive, and accountable response to this issue is required.

This document, prepared with input from key stakeholders, presents a provincial framework for working with commercially sexually exploited children and youth, and innovative ideas for working with commercially sexually exploited children, youth, and their families. A conceptual model, based on principles for working with experiential children and youth, is presented, along with examples of innovative programming ideas.

This document is intended to create a provincial vision that will:

- Support a provincial continuum of services for commercially sexually exploited youth that is consistent and guarantees accessibility for all experiential children and youth to appropriate services
- Guide the allocation of resources for this issue
- Validate important work that until now has not been documented
- Assist in the development of a provincial evaluation framework

At the provincial level, a number of initiatives to address the problem of the commercial sexual exploitation of children and youth have been undertaken, some in conjunction with municipal governments. Provincial government initiatives include:

- The creation of the Provincial Prostitution Unit in the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General
- The establishment of an Assistant Deputy Ministers' (ADMs') Committee on Prostitution and the Sexual Exploitation of Youth
- The support of the Community Action Teams in a number of communities across the province in dealing with community concerns regarding the commercial sexual exploitation of children and youth

An inter-ministerial working group of the ADMs' Committee on Prostitution and the Sexual Exploitation of Youth identified the need for multi-level strategies to address the problem. It is anticipated that effective strategies would prevent the exploitation of more children and youth, address the crisis needs of children and youth already being sexually exploited, reduce the health and other risks of this involvement, and provide community supports to assist children and youth in exiting.

This project was developed through partnerships between the Ministry of Children and Family Development, the Ministry of Attorney General, and the Justice Institute of British Columbia, with funding provided by the Ministry of Children and Family Development.

Two advisory committees provided guidance in the development of this document. The first was the Experiential Children and Youth Advisory Committee, designed to ensure that the voices of commercially sexually exploited children and youth are at the centre of the project. Members of this committee contributed significantly to our understanding of the issues. A second advisory committee was composed of members from various government ministries, stakeholders, and outreach intervention specialists. (Members of this advisory committee and other contributors to this document are listed in Appendix A.) Both advisory committees have been significant participants in informing the development of this document and the related consultation process.

To increase the likelihood of success in preventing commercial sexual exploitation and in assisting the children and youth currently involved, the consultation process sought input from key stakeholders. The participation of children and youth impacted by these issues was encouraged through a series of focus groups held around the province. Decision-makers, community agencies, and practitioners in many sectors were provided a voice through key informant interviews and focus groups. In addition, information was gathered on programs throughout British Columbia that are currently providing services in this area.

This framework document provides a foundation for developing effective practices for working with commercially sexually exploited children and youth in British Columbia. It will be of interest to policymakers at all levels of government who are concerned with determining future directions for addressing the problem of children and youth and sexual exploitation. Those involved with program development and delivery at the community level should also find this document useful in designing programs and delivering services that support children and youth in making healthy choices.

The Legal Meaning of “Commercial Sexual Exploitation”

This document focuses on *commercial* sexual exploitation, rather than incest, rape, or other forms of sexual abuse and assault. The term “commercial sexual exploitation” is defined (Assistant Deputy Ministers’ Committee, 2000) as

the sexual abuse of children and youth under the age of 18 through the exchange of sex for drugs, food, shelter, other basics of life, and/or money.²

Commercial sexual exploitation can include encouragement of participation in the creation of pornography.

Section 212(4) of the Criminal Code of Canada is aimed specifically at those who sexually exploit children and youth:

Every person who, in any place, obtains for consideration, or communicates with anyone for the purpose of obtaining for consideration, the sexual services of a person who is under the age of eighteen years is guilty of an indictable offence and liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding five years.

“Consideration” means money, drugs, shelter, clothing, a ride home, or anything else of value.

In Canada, an adult can legally have consensual sex with someone who is 14 or older, as long as the adult is not in a position of trust or authority toward the youth (Sections 150 and 151, Criminal Code). It is illegal to obtain or attempt to obtain the sexual services of a person under the age of 18 “for consideration.”

Media coverage validates a negative image ... referring to youth as “hookers” instead of sexually exploited youth.

– Youth outreach worker

Legal tools to address the sexual exploitation of children and youth are found primarily in the federal Criminal Code of Canada and in the provincial Child, Family and Community Service Act (CFCSA).

The CFCSA is the legislative authority for the Ministry of Children and Family Development to provide child protection services in the province, and provides mechanisms to protect children and youth under age 19 when they have been or are likely to be encouraged, helped, coerced, lured, or tricked into prostitution. Sections 28 and 98 of the CFCSA allow child protection workers to work with police and others who are involved with children at risk of sexual exploitation. Under these sections, child

² The more traditional term “child prostitute” is not used in this document. The preferred term “exploitation” moves the responsibility for exploitation away from children and youth to those who purchase or profit in any way from children and youth in the sex trade.

protection workers can apply to the court for protective intervention orders (s. 28) or restraining orders (s. 98) to be granted against pimps, “johns,” and others who may sexually exploit a child or otherwise cause a child to need protection. Child protection workers may ask the court to include a condition in these orders authorizing police to arrest, without warrant, the person named in the order if they have contravened or are contravening the order. A breach of a protective intervention or restraining order may result in a fine of up to \$25,000, or 24 months in jail, or both.

The way that legislation is enforced is also important. Enforcement policies can be aimed at providing protection to youth while targeting enforcement action against those who sexually exploit youth. Enforcement policies that recognize that sexually exploited youth are in need of social supports instead of being criminalized should be promoted. Sexually exploited children and youth who choose to testify in court will need adequate supports. Along with victim services and witness protection, the use of screens, videotaped evidence, and bans on publication of names may assist children and youth through the difficult process of testifying in court.

Legal and enforcement strategies that address the sexual exploitation of children and youth work best when there is a collaborative approach among those involved. The Provincial Prostitution Unit is an example of an integrated model in which police, Crown counsel, and social service providers work together to develop a plan that considers what is in the best interest of the youth.

What Rights Do Children and Youth Have?

The rights of children are most fully expressed in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which was adopted by the UN General Assembly as an international treaty in 1989. Canada is a signatory to this treaty, which has been signed and ratified by virtually every country in the world. Policies, strategies, and programs to deal with commercial exploitation of children and youth should be exemplars of these fundamental freedoms and inherent rights.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child recognizes civil, political, social, cultural, and economic rights of children. The basic premise of the Convention is that all children are born with fundamental freedoms and the inherent rights of all human beings. By virtue of being young and vulnerable, children also have some special rights. The Convention recognizes and strongly supports the central role of families in safeguarding children's rights, and reinforces the state's obligation to help families to meet the basic needs of their children.

Rights accorded through the Convention include the right to survival, health, and education; to a caring family environment, play, and culture; and to protection from exploitation and abuse of all kinds; as well as the right of a child to have his or her voice heard and opinions taken into account on significant issues. (The complete text of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child is published in Canada by Canadian Heritage [1991].)

Articles 34 and 35 of the Convention deal directly with the issue of commercial sexual exploitation of children and youth:

Article 34

States Parties shall undertake to protect the child from all forms of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse. For these purposes, States Parties shall in particular take all appropriate national, bilateral and multilateral measures to prevent:

- a) The inducement or coercion of a child to engage in any unlawful sexual activity;
- b) The exploitative use of children in prostitution or other unlawful sexual practices;
- c) The exploitative use of children in pornographic performances and materials.

Article 35

States Parties shall take all appropriate national, bilateral and multilateral measures to prevent the abduction of, the sale of or traffic in children for any purpose in any form.

Other articles of the Convention also provide an important basis for developing policies, programs, and strategies to deal with the issue of sexual exploitation of children:

- Article 2, for example, states that all children shall be protected from discrimination of any kind. Children have the right to be free from discrimination.
- Article 3 states that the best interests of the child shall be considered in all actions concerning children, including care and protection. Children have the right to have policies, strategies, and programs designed to foster their best interests.
- Article 6 states that every child has the inherent right to life, and that the survival and development of the child must be ensured.
- Article 12 provides for the right for children to express their views freely in all matters affecting them, and that those views “be given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.” Children have the right to be heard, and to participate in decisions affecting their own lives. Commercially sexually exploited children and youth should be involved in, and in charge of, their care planning. They have the right to receive information necessary to make informed choices.
- Article 16 recognizes that children have the right to protection of freedom from interference with their privacy, family, home, or correspondence.
- Article 30 recognizes the rights of children of ethnic, religious, or linguistic minorities or of indigenous origin to enjoy their own culture, to practise their own religion, and to use their own language.

Understanding Commercial Sexual Exploitation

The Situation in British Columbia

Because of the illicit nature of commercial sexual exploitation, there is no way to accurately measure the number of children and youth being commercially sexually exploited. Estimates of the number of commercially sexually exploited children and youth in BC vary greatly, depending on the sources and the ways in which information was collected. Commercially sexually exploited children and youth are often an invisible and hidden population.

Research on commercially sexually exploited youth indicates that entry usually occurs at an age when it would be expected that youth are living at home and attending school. In a recent jurisdictional scan of five communities in BC (Assistant Deputy Ministers' Committee, 2000), researchers found that the majority of children and youth who were being commercially sexually exploited were young women and girls between the ages of 15 and 18. However, there are reports in the Canadian literature of children as young as six being sexually exploited (Bagley, 1984; Fraser and Lowman, 1995). Schools, therefore, have an important role to play in the prevention and resolution of commercial sexual exploitation.

Estimates of the proportion of females and males who are involved in the sex trade vary widely between studies. Some studies have estimated that 75% to 80% of sexually exploited youth are female while 20% to 25% are male, but estimates of the extent of involvement by boys may be too low because boys may find it more difficult to disclose. Several recent studies indicate that the proportion of males may be higher than previously assumed (Federal/Provincial/Territorial Working Group on Prostitution, 1999). A study in Victoria used advertising to recruit youth in the sex trade for interviews, and found that nearly equal numbers of males and females responded (Capital Regional District, 1997). In Vancouver, 15% of males and 10% of females on the street reported prostitution as a source of income (Tonkin, 1994).

Despite the possibility that similar proportions of males and females are commercially sexually exploited, fewer males are seen in services and programs that are currently available. Females tend to be sexually exploited at an earlier age than males, while sexual orientation appears to be a greater determinant of sexual exploitation for males than females (Assistant Deputy Ministers' Committee, 2000; Scott, 1998). Young gay men, especially those who are still attempting to come to terms with their gay identity, are particularly at risk for sexual exploitation.

I'm starting to get angry that people don't get it, they don't know about sexually exploited youth and acknowledge it.

– Experiential youth

Commercial Sexual Exploitation: Sometimes Visible, Sometimes Hidden

Despite higher visibility, the streets are *not* the most common point of entry into the sex trade. Many children and youth in BC enter the sex trade through escort services, massage parlours, or brothels, or within their own homes when family members provide them for sexual services (Assistant Deputy Ministers' Committee, 2000).

I've survived my whole life with sugar daddies – it happens a lot – a lot of kids have daddies and get rejected for help because they are dressed well ... there is lots of psychological and emotional damage even though it may be safer physically to have a sugar daddy.

– Experiential youth

Many children and youth enter the sex trade as a means of survival after having left home. Some children and youth are commercially sexually exploited to support a “boyfriend.” Other children and youth are directly recruited by pimps, who prey on children and youth in a wide range of settings. Pimps are skilled at building trust while simultaneously isolating the child or youth and making them emotionally dependent. Young females who are being commercially exploited are more likely to have a pimp than young males, who are more likely to act independently, but some young males do have their entry into the sex trade facilitated by pimps (Van Brunshot, 1995).

The sex trade is far more extensive than many people realize. The children and youth seen on the streets represent only a very small proportion of the children being sexually abused for adult sexual gratification (Capital Regional District, 1997; Out from the Shadows, 1998). It has been estimated that less than 20% of commercial sexual exploitation of children and youth takes place on the street (Save the Children, 2000). On the other hand, between one in five and one in 10 of the children and youth who are street-involved are commercially sexually exploited (Burnaby School District, 1998). In many communities, especially smaller communities, the sex trade is virtually invisible and known only to well-informed professionals, the youth, and those who exploit them (Assistant Deputy Ministers' Committee, 2000).

The commercial sexual exploitation of children and youth happens in a wide range of venues: night clubs, massage parlours, karaoke bars, apartments, “trick pads,” fishing docks and commercial fishing fleets, freighters, back alleys, parks, truck stops, and on the road hitchhiking. There is also increasing concern about use of the Internet as a means of making contact with children and youth for sexual exploitation (Mehta, 1998).

Sexually exploited children and youth are sometimes moved from one city to another within established circuits that cross provincial and even national borders. Commercial sexual exploitation occurs along a continuum (Lowman, 1989), from those who temporarily or occasionally trade sex for survival to those who work in escort agencies or manage their own operations for financial gain.

Life on the Streets

Although sexual exploitation of children and youth is not exclusively an urban problem – sexual exploitation can occur anywhere – a walk through the streets of any major or medium-sized city in Canada can provide a glimpse into the lives of young people who live on the streets. The reality of life in the streets does not fit the glamorous image held by some young people.

The majority of young people on the streets – perhaps 90% (McCreary Centre Society, 1999a) – have run away to escape from psychologically, physically, or sexually abusive situations in their homes. Over 10,000 runaways are reported annually in British Columbia. Many others have been “kicked out” by their parents – these are “throwaways” rather than “runaways.” The majority of street youth have, at some point, been in government care (McCreary Centre Society, 1999a). While not all street youth are literally homeless, instability of permanent housing is a common feature (McCreary Centre Society, 2001).

Many of these young people have been expelled from school, further severing their ties to a potentially more stable world. Those who are still attending school tend to be one or more years behind the grade placement expected for their age (McCreary Centre Society, 1999a).

Usually the most significant problem facing young people on the street is that they need money to survive. Because these street youth tend to have less education than other young people, they find it more difficult to find and maintain a job, even if they are old enough to obtain work legally. Most of the support they receive – psychologically and otherwise – comes from other street youth.

Unsupported by family or by the community, street youth are especially vulnerable to exploitation, and work in the sex trade can hardly be viewed as a “choice” in the absence of other options. Twenty-five percent of young people on the streets report that they have sold sex to survive.

Cut off from all supports, other than peers in the same situation, street youth are at risk for violence. They also have high levels of suicide and attempted suicide (McCreary Centre Society, 1999a). To dull their isolation, their sense of pain and fear, many turn to alcohol and drugs, leading to addiction at an early age. Some may not realize that they are being recruited into the sex trade – someone has come along who, at least, pays some attention to their survival needs – or they may even, at first, welcome the protection of a pimp.

I drove down alleys to find her ... this skinny little girl in baggy clothes, no makeup, willing to do anything for crack – I would go looking for her and wonder “what are all these little kids doing here – it was not what I expected ... one time I looked for her all day long – and when I found her I did not recognize her – she was trying to light her crack pipe in the wind and she looked right through me ... my girl out there.

– Parent

Starvation – that’s how I started working the streets.

– IDU sex trade worker

Escape from exploitation is much more difficult than entry. Pimps are skilled at isolating their victim from others, and may beat or rape the person to force them to remain in the sex trade. Violence may also be used by a pimp when a “john” is not satisfied with his “date.”

Sexually exploited youth are also at high risk for violence from “johns.” Date violence – that is, violence at the hands of a “john” – can result from a dispute over price or services, or it can be premeditated, for purposes of robbery, or as a way of acting out misogynist beliefs, or as a result of generalized anger. Research shows that the vast majority of sexually exploited youth have experienced violence at the hands of their pimps, partners, or dates, or occasionally from the police (Save the Children, 2000).

In order to keep young people engaged in the sex trade, it may actually be in the pimp’s interest to encourage addiction. Pimps often supply their workers with drugs, purchased from the earnings.

In the presence of heavy levels of drug use – sometimes through injection – and in an environment where many clients will pay extra for sex without a condom, sexually exploited youth are especially at risk for acquiring HIV infection.

As young people live on the streets, their sense of powerlessness becomes magnified, and they may find it extremely difficult to effect any sort of change in their lives.

A Special Note on Aboriginal Children and Youth

Aboriginal children and youth are clearly over-represented in the visible sex trade in Canada (Assistant Deputy Ministers’ Committee, 2000; Save the Children, 2000; Toronto Board of Health, 1998). Estimates of the proportion of commercially sexually exploited children and youth who are Aboriginal range from 14% to 65% in various communities throughout British Columbia (Assistant Deputy Ministers’ Committee, 2000). In some Canadian communities, the proportion of street-involved sexually exploited children and youth who are Aboriginal reaches as high as 90% (Save the Children, 2000).

Aboriginal peoples are still suffering from residential schools.

– Experiential youth

While Canadian research and literature has not focused extensively on the commercial sexual exploitation of marginalized children and youth, it is clear that Aboriginal children and youth are among the most at risk. Poverty, racism, violence, and pressures towards assimilation all contribute to the increased vulnerability of Aboriginal children and youth, as have ongoing colonialism and colonization.

Discriminatory policies and practices (such as residential schools) have created an environment in which physical, sexual, and psychological abuse and neglect were common. These policies have created intergenerational social issues that play a role in the commercial sexual exploitation of Aboriginal children and youth. The impact of historical oppression and loss of culture experienced by Aboriginal peoples cannot be overstated. Aboriginal children and youth continue to experience a higher incidence of childhood sexual abuse, physical abuse, substance use, violence, and street involvement. The numbers of Aboriginal children and youth are disproportionately high not only among commercially sexually exploited children and youth but also in the social services, child protection, welfare, and criminal justice systems (Lowman, 1989).

Action is needed to support the Aboriginal community in developing culturally appropriate policies and solutions. Aboriginal people need to be central in government policymaking processes to ensure the development of culturally appropriate policies, strategies, and services. Frameworks such as the National Aboriginal Youth Strategy (Working Group of the National Aboriginal Youth Strategy, 1999) provide goals and measurable objectives for developing programs and services for Aboriginal children and youth. The Strategic Plan for Aboriginal Services (Ministry for Children and Families, 1999) has been developed to foster understanding of the needs and aspirations of Aboriginal communities, to enhance the authority and capacity of Aboriginal communities to deliver services, and to strengthen the capacity of government to respond appropriately to the ongoing need for Aboriginal services. These frameworks should be considered in the development of solutions specifically targeted towards Aboriginal children and youth who are commercially sexually exploited.

The rationale for supporting Aboriginal communities in designing and delivering their own programs could not be clearer. Research in British Columbia has examined the role of cultural continuity as a protective factor against suicide for young Aboriginal people (Chandler and Lalonde, 1998). As noted in the report (p. 191),

[Aboriginal] communities that have taken active steps to preserve and rehabilitate their own cultures are shown to be those in which youth suicide rates are dramatically lower.

This finding should inform all our efforts to determine how Aboriginal children and youth can be better served by a system that does not generally provide culturally appropriate supports and interventions.

We need ... help to work through issues and deal with intergenerational trauma by creating intergenerational solutions.

– Youth outreach worker

It's good for Native youth to have resources for our specific needs – we need to build a community within ourselves and spread out from there.

– Experiential youth

A Conceptual Framework: “Determinants of Risk”

Since the international adoption of the Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion (1986), the word “health” has come to mean much more than the absence of disease, and includes “complete physical, mental and social well-being.” The vulnerabilities of children and youth who experience commercial sexual exploitation – and potential solutions to these problems – can be conceptualized within this framework. The Ottawa Charter is presented in its entirety in Appendix B.

In addition to broadening the definition of “health” to include physical, mental, and social well-being, the Ottawa Charter has other implications for our thinking about commercial sexual exploitation of children and youth. A great deal of the research that attempts to explain prostitution (including the commercial sexual exploitation of children and youth) individualizes prostitution and pathologizes the issue while failing to address the underlying social issues and structures.

The “determinants of health” approach serves to broaden our thinking to include systemic and societal factors that place children and youth at risk. Well-being requires shelter, education, food, adequate income, social justice, and equity, among other conditions. Given these basic requirements for well-being, improvements in health and well-being are not only the responsibility of those working in what has traditionally been thought of as “health care.” Political, economic, social, cultural, environmental, behavioural, and biological factors can all favour health and well-being or be harmful to it. Improvements in health and well-being require concomitant improvements in these contributing factors. Responsibility for improvement in health and well-being rests not only with individuals but also with families, communities, and society at large. Government action and community development alike are required to improve situations that hamper the well-being of individuals and groups.

While our understanding of the complex web of factors contributing to health and well-being is still evolving, a number of factors are known to contribute to well-being. These factors, known as the “determinants of health,” include:

- Gender
- Income and social status
- Social support networks
- Education
- Employment/working conditions

- Social environments
- Personal health practices and coping skills
- Healthy child development
- Biology and genetic endowment
- Health services
- Culture
- Geography
- Physical environments

The converse of these “determinants of health” are “determinants of risk.” Research has shown that these determinants are strongly associated with the commercial sexual exploitation of children and youth. Various combinations of these determinants explain most – but not all – cases of exploitation of children and youth. Overall, the determinants point to systemic causes, and they suggest that remediation of these causes requires broad social action. If these determinants could be addressed effectively, many cases of commercial sexual exploitation of children and youth could be prevented.

The Ottawa Charter framework is used as an organizer in this document, since it provides a detailed conceptualization of the various factors that place children and youth at risk. Other related frameworks work towards a similar goal. For example, the British Columbia Youth Policy Framework (Ministry for Children and Families, 2000) recognizes these key influences on the health and well-being of youth:

- Social and economic conditions in which youth live, play, and work (basic needs for housing, food, and clothing; safety and security; and opportunities for work and play)
- Family and social connections (family and cultural connections, peer relationships, adult relationships, mentors, school, and community)
- Youth with a sense of control over their lives (value and respect; information, knowledge, and decision-making skills; meaningful participation; opportunities for self-definition; and creating positive futures)

Some of the wounds you can see. Most you can't.

— *Experiential youth*

The Determinants of Health

Research on risk factors associated with sexual exploitation indicates that many of the health determinants are relevant to our understanding of this issue. These factors interact, and it is occasionally difficult to disentangle the specific effects of each. Nevertheless, these factors provide a convenient and comprehensive way to organize our thinking about the problem of commercial sexual exploitation, and to begin to conceptualize comprehensive solutions to this problem.

1. Gender

Virtually all research indicates that girls are targeted more for sexual exploitation than are boys. Seventy-five to 80% of commercially sexually exploited children and youth are female (Assistant Deputy Ministers' Committee, 2000; McCreary Centre Society, 1999a). An analysis of factors leading to commercial sexual exploitation of young females must therefore include an analysis of systemic factors related to gender inequality. While the vast majority of clients or “johns” are males, research has tended to ignore the social context that creates a demand for the sex trade (Carter and Walton, 2000).

Gender is a social concept that reflects our attitudes, behaviours, and beliefs about maleness and femaleness. Gender refers to the “array of roles, personality traits, attitudes, behaviours, values, relative power and influence that society ascribes to men and women on a differential basis” (Health Canada, 1999, p. 10). Gender is strongly influenced by the social, political, ethnocultural, and economic environment in which we live.

Many health and social conditions can be attributed to gender-based social status or roles. For example, young women, on average, have lower incomes than young men, and are more likely to be single parents and to have lower levels of both self-esteem and feelings of personal competence. On the other hand, boys have higher mortality rates than girls, primarily from injury and suicide, and higher rates of learning and conduct disorders (Health Canada, 1999).

The way boys and girls develop is the result of inherent biological characteristics (genes) and upbringing (social environment). However, gender is linked more to the roles, power, and influence society gives to men and women than it is to their biological differences. Gender differences are related to opportunities and choices for education, occupational status, income level, and the nature of social support.

Females and males are socialized differently, and many of these differences result in the more frequent targeting of female children and youth for sexual exploitation. Widely accepted models of intrafamilial relationships (which are reflected, for example, in notions of acceptable play behaviour) place a heavy emphasis on socializing females to care for others; males, on the other hand, are socialized to be independent and aggressive.

Mass media play an important role in creating and reinforcing our attitudes and values about girls and women, as well as in the development of girls’ own attitudes about themselves. Media reflect cultural norms and values that view women and girls primarily as sexual objects, placing a heavy emphasis on sexual attractiveness and ideal body types. Ideals of youth and beauty place young females at risk. Children are increasingly sexualized in advertising.

At the same time, women are disproportionately portrayed in the media as victims. Media portrayals of violence against women are often sexualized in nature, and retribution for the aggressor is often absent. Not surprisingly, then, higher levels of violence are perpetrated against females of all ages, usually by males, and often as a way of attempting to control the behaviour or attitudes of females. Girls are sexually abused at much higher rates than boys (Fitzgerald, 1997), also a form of violence to the person.

We repress pain as women – it all boils down to being sexually abused – we have had to live with so much pain.

– IDU sex trade worker

Together, the nature and forms of socialization can lead girls to have lower self-esteem than males, and to internalize the response to the treatment they receive. Girls are more likely to report that they suffer from loneliness, depression, and feelings of guilt, and to be dissatisfied with their physical appearance. This constellation of effects resulting from socialization can lead girls to engage in self-destructive behaviours, while boys tend to externalize their reactions through aggression and acting out.

Underlying social attitudes and values related to male and female sexuality tend to condition males to be sexual predators and females to be sexual victims. The patriarchal organization of society has set the stage for sexualized assaults and harassment, including the sexual abuse of children. Changes to the socialization of children with respect to gender roles, power relationships, and attitudes toward sexuality are crucial agendas in order to address the underlying causes of child sexual abuse, including the commercial sexual exploitation of children. Similarly, changes in social policy are required. As noted by Carter and Walton (2000, p. 28),

Canadian social policy initiatives reinforce the expectation that girls should care for others, while keeping adolescent girls dependent on families through social welfare initiatives that are highly regulatory of young women’s lives, social connections and financial resources.

All of the factors described above limit girls’ opportunities for full self-realization, and they lead to violence against females and diminishment of their self-esteem.

I think males have been lost in the fight against sexual exploitation of youth – services are geared towards females – all the funding and proposals – based on a belief that men are strong and don’t need help.

– Experiential youth

While it appears that fewer boys and young men are commercially sexually exploited, their level of involvement is still substantial. The low documented numbers could be due to the fact that young men and boys do not disclose easily (Mathews, 1996; Price, 1989). Males are often discouraged from expressing their emotions, which increases the amount of acting-out behaviours while preventing males from talking about important issues. This is undoubtedly part of the reason why it is more difficult to obtain accurate estimates of the numbers of boys and male youth who are commercially sexually exploited.

2. Income and Social Status

Starvation – that’s how I started working the streets.

– IDU sex trade worker

While children and youth who are sexually exploited are from every socioeconomic class, there is strong evidence that children and youth whose origins are in households that live in poverty are over-represented among sexually exploited youth. Since Aboriginal, immigrant, and refugee children and youth more often live in socioeconomically disadvantaged households and communities, they are especially at risk. Children and youth who are living on the street usually need to earn their own money to survive. About 25% of youth living on the street have sold sex for money (McCreary Centre Society, 2001).

In 1996, 21% of children under the age of 18 were classified as low income, higher than any other age group (Federal/Provincial/Territorial Advisory Committee on Population Health, 1999, 2000).

Although there is a consensus in the literature that poverty is a key factor contributing to sexual exploitation, poverty itself is not the *cause*. Rather, sexual exploitation results from the intersection of poverty with other factors, such as the devaluation of women and girls, society’s emphasis on youthful ideals of beauty, marginalization due to race or ethnicity, experiences of abuse and violence, and the lack of other alternatives.

3. Social Support Networks

Social support networks include support from family, friends, and communities. Social support assists people to deal effectively with difficult situations.

Evidence is clear that children and youth who are sexually exploited tend to be isolated and disconnected from their families and from other social support structures. Many commercially sexually exploited children and youth have experienced living in foster homes (Carter and Walton, 2000).

Young people who have moved from rural areas and smaller towns to larger urban areas may be more easily targeted for exploitation because they wrongly assume that all adults can be trusted. This vulnerability may be compounded when the young person is moving from a community of the non-dominant culture, such as Aboriginal communities.

Once on the street, children and youth may find other youth more supportive than their own families, where they may have been abused. These new, “replacement” social networks may support behaviours that lead to sexual exploitation or foster its continuation.

Just as the lack of supportive relationships can place young people at risk of sexual exploitation, ongoing supportive relationships with adults have been shown to be key to assisting young people to exit and heal. Research has shown that *supportive relationships with adults* are critical to the success of any initiatives to prevent children and youth from being commercially sexually exploited. This principle also applies to services designed to assist experiential children and youth during crisis intervention, harm reduction, and supports for exiting and healing. For those children and youth already being exploited, the importance of trusting and supportive relationships with adults in assisting them to obtain services and to exit successfully cannot be overstated.

Many boys who experience homosexual attractions are at greater risk of commercial sexual exploitation because of their sexual orientation and the homophobia they experience in trying to deal with this issue (Gay and Lesbian Health Services of Saskatoon, 2001, pp. 24-25):

Obstacles [to coming out] are severe and often formidable in most schools, and function at the systemic, social, interpersonal and individual levels ... Gay men and gay youth often experience significant diminishment and exclusion within conventional social support networks, due to homophobia and heterosexism.

4. Education

For young people, school serves as a significant connection to friends and to community. “Connectedness” to others is a source of resilience and serves to protect children and youth from a wide range of psychological and health risks. Connectedness to school and connectedness to family are usually (but not always) found in tandem, so that children and youth not connected to others through their experience of schooling tend not to be well connected to their families either. Young people who are not connected are more likely to have been bullied, to experience higher levels of emotional distress, and to exhibit higher levels of risk-taking behaviours of all types (McCreary Centre Society, no date).

Children and youth whose identities differ in any way from the cultural majority may not feel “included” in the life of their school. This includes

If you don't feel connected to the community, then it's easier to be on the street.

– Experiential youth

children and youth who have English as a second language, members of ethnically different communities, Aboriginal children and youth, youth who are gay or lesbian, and those with disabilities. Children and youth who are members of these groups tend to have lower levels of academic achievement, which predispose them to feel alienated from others and from school.

We need to teach the true history – we teach white history in school.

– Experiential youth

School curricula, including the forms of pedagogy, need to recognize and value differences between people in order to foster positive attitudes between people and enhance the self-esteem of those who may feel “different.” For example, young gay males may feel that their experience of reality is not well reflected in the school’s norms, curricula, or social groupings (Gay and Lesbian Health Services of Saskatoon, 2001, p. 29):

Schooling is generally experienced as suppressing their active participation and sense of control over life conditions, through its heterosexist assumptions and practices, including through the homophobic interpersonal relations it often tolerates and hence fosters.

The majority of children and youth living on the street – who are targeted for sexual exploitation as a means of survival – have been suspended or expelled from school at some point in their lives (McCreary Centre Society, 2001). Overall, sexually exploited children and youth tend to leave school at an early age and to have less education than other young people of similar age (Capital Regional District, 1997). Two-thirds of young people on the street are still attending school, but they are alienated from school and have high levels of non-attendance and are more likely to experience “failure.”

Clearly, schools have an important role to play in prevention and early intervention.

5. Employment and Working Conditions

Because of their young age, their history of marginalization at school, and their lack of employment experience, children and youth who are commercially sexually exploited tend to lack access to gainful employment, particularly employment that is financially rewarding. In Canada unemployment rates tend to be highest among youth ages 15 to 24 (Federal/Provincial/Territorial Advisory Committee on Population Health, 1999, 2000). Employment opportunities are lacking for youth, especially in those sectors of the workforce that are well paid (Jiwani and Brown, 1999). Boys are more likely than girls to leave school at an early age, and may therefore encounter difficulties in obtaining and maintaining employment. Girls and young women are somewhat less likely to leave school at an early age, but those without a high school diploma are nearly twice as likely to be unemployed as boys and young men without diplomas.

Because of high unemployment rates among Aboriginal youth, movement between reserves, rural areas, and cities is high. Many young Aboriginal people migrate to cities, where they may lack appropriate social and economic supports. Friends and relatives from the same communities who have moved to cities may be unable to provide adequate support because they too are experiencing similar problems.

6. Social Environments

Through its values and norms, a society can minimize the risks of harm to individuals. Positive social environments are characterized by social stability, the recognition of diversity, safety, good working relationships, and cohesive communities. Conversely, ethnocentrism, racism, and homophobia create risky environments for those affected by them. For example, because of homophobia, gay male youth are more likely to experience verbal and physical abuse at home and at school, and this creates vulnerabilities, resulting in a number of problems, including running away and entry into the sex trade (Bagley, 1997).

Society needs to understand that sex is not the main focus. It's not the problem. It's about society.

– Experiential youth

Racism and systemic discrimination have been key factors in the marginalization of Aboriginal people in Canada and in British Columbia, and these determinants are reflected in the high proportion of sexually exploited children and youth who are from Aboriginal backgrounds.

7. Personal Health Practices and Coping Skills

In adolescence, young people begin making important choices that will affect their future. Knowledge and intentions, along with coping skills, are essential in enabling people to be self-reliant, to solve problems, and to make healthy choices. The nature of childhood and adolescence in our society means that many of these personal health choices are related to issues having to do with sexuality.

Children and youth at the greatest risk of becoming sexually exploited are commonly described as being socially isolated and disconnected. Isolation and disconnection are an effect of the other determinants, such as abuse and neglect, poverty, racism, discrimination, and homophobia. Isolation and disconnection increase the probability of children and youth making poor health choices, thereby increasing their vulnerability.

Vulnerability to risk may be particularly acute during times of transition, when stresses tend to accumulate. Adolescence itself can be considered as a transition. Transitions occur throughout life: school entry, adolescence and leaving home, significant life events such as childbearing. Transitions also include unexpected or externally controlled events such as a natural disaster, unemployment, family disruption, or poverty.

How painful is it to be truthful about where you have come from?

– Experiential youth

8. Healthy Child Development

Abuse, in all its forms, is by definition problematic and contributes to the sexual exploitation of children and youth. Over 40% of crimes committed against children are cases of sexual abuse or assault. Research evidence is clear that children and youth who are prone to sexual exploitation often have been abused sexually, physically, and emotionally (Widom and Ames, 1994), or have witnessed abuse in their homes.

A great deal of sexual abuse is linked to gender. In 1995 the rate of sexual assault of adolescent girls was seven times that of boys. Over half of young girls have received unwanted sexual attention, and about 20% have experienced sexual abuse (Jiwani and Brown, 1999).

There appears to be consensus that sexual abuse is a primary reason for running away from home (Jesson, 1993). A study in British Columbia indicated that 90% of sexually exploited children and youth have been physically or sexually abused, and 80% have spent time “in care” (McCreary Centre Society, 1999a). Disconnection from family is a significant contributor to the vulnerability of children and youth.

9. Biology and Genetic Endowment

Neurological disorders such as fetal alcohol syndrome and fetal alcohol effects (FAS/FAE) may contribute to the difficulties experienced by some individual children and youth who are commercially sexually exploited.

10. Culture

The ethnicity of children and youth experiencing sexual exploitation varies depending on the venue in which the sexual exploitation is taking place (Assistant Deputy Ministers’ Committee, 2000). Experiences of racism, sexism, classism, dislocation, violence, pressures to assimilate into the dominant culture, and the exoticization of difference are all factors that increase the vulnerability of many children and youth (Jiwani and Brown, 1999).

Aboriginal youth and other youth from varying cultural or racial backgrounds are at greater risk than others due to the demoralizing and exclusionary effects of the racism that they experience. In the case of Aboriginal children and youth, ongoing colonialism and colonization are important factors as well. The collective nature of smaller communities, and of various Aboriginal cultures, may leave Aboriginal youth especially at risk when they migrate to larger centres.

With the problem of FAS, my experience in high school was that no one took the time to teach us ... just made us feel stupid.

– Experiential youth

If you take somebody's spirit and you crush it, what do you expect?

– Parent

11. Geography

Research is beginning to investigate the ways in which geography may act as a determinant of health, particularly for residents of rural and remote areas (see, for example, Rural Development Institute, 2000; Welch, 2000). Young people who live in rural and remote communities, particularly those located near resource-based industries, may be at risk for commercial sexual exploitation because it presents the possibility of financial or other rewards that are otherwise unavailable to them.

We are getting youth from neighbouring communities because there is nothing in the outlying communities – youth from all over come to where the resources are.

– Outreach worker

How Determinants Interact

As can be seen in this discussion of determinants of health and well-being, a child or youth’s vulnerability to sexual exploitation begins long before the child’s actual involvement. Poverty, experiences of abuse (physical, sexual, and emotional), and disconnection from parental and community support all contribute to the progression to sexual exploitation.

The determinants of health are powerful influences on healthy adolescent development. These factors are inter-related in a dynamic fashion, and their impact on adolescent development are synergistic rather than simply additive in nature, just as they are for the health of all individuals. The systems implication of this synergistic interaction is that collaborative efforts are required across sectors of public policy.

Jiwani (in progress) has undertaken a theoretical analysis of the interaction between various types of determinants on the vulnerability of women, and notes that the effects of the determinants are both external and internalized. She writes:

Within the category of woman [for example], the standard of preference is based on being of the white/dominant race, heterosexual, able-bodied, and of middle-class background. Within communities of colour, similar standards prevail, cohering around the greater acceptance of certain kinds of behaviour from heterosexual and able-bodied males from particular class backgrounds. Yet, these standards are not autonomous. They intersect and are internalized through socialization. They are underpinned by social norms and historically entrenched. They are communicated through language, stereotypes and exclusions both normative and institutional.

Native girls are treated badly. I experienced racism as a child, as I was going through the trauma of abuse, not in my home, I was experiencing racism in my school. We need to teach children how to deal with it, how to be strong, be proud.

– IDU sex trade worker

The social determinants of health can be viewed through the lens of power and dominance: race/ethnicity, class, gender, sexual orientation, and ability/disability are prime examples. Where these determinants intersect, the effects of oppression are compounded. Jiwani (in progress) gives the following example, which places race and cultural dominance at the core:

The intersection of race, class and gender as it occurs in the situation of Aboriginal women exemplifies the intersecting and interlocking impact of

We need to start from an analysis of oppression and power – need to speak to the realities of young people who are marginalized around poverty, race, etc.

– Service provider

multiple forms of oppression. Aboriginal women already confront the legacies of colonization in terms of the profound impact on their communities. They are confronted with poverty and with their own devaluation as women in communities which have become increasingly patriarchal as a result of colonization. Men now hold more power than women in Aboriginal communities. Young Aboriginal women’s powerlessness is accentuated by their age and dependence on family and caregivers. Their devaluation as women and as Aboriginal impedes their access to services, the provision of adequate services and the recognition of their human rights.

While this analysis focuses on Aboriginal women, similar analyses can be developed that place the central focus on disabilities, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, or indeed any of the social determinants of health.

Gaps in Knowledge About Commercial Sexual Exploitation

There are significant gaps in our knowledge about these issues. These gaps in our knowledge include:

- Information on how ethnicity and other marginalizing factors like class, gender, and sexual orientation relate to entry into the sex trade and the experience of being commercially sexually exploited. While there is widespread recognition that the roots of this issue lie in a broad range of social problems, including poverty, racism, sexism, sexual and physical abuse, and the emotional neglect of children, there is little research that empirically investigates these relationships.
- Information about the relationship between homelessness and commercial sexual exploitation
- Information about recruitment, pimp behaviour, and how children and youth are controlled and manipulated in commercial sexual exploitation
- Information about clients (“johns”) of commercially sexually exploited children and youth
- Evaluation of programs, services, and policies targeted towards commercial sexual exploitation

There is general agreement across the field that the causes and dynamics of commercial sexual exploitation are multi-faceted and complex, but there is no question that more research is needed in this area.

Meeting the Needs of Youth Through a Continuum of Services

Effective resolution of the problem of commercial sexual exploitation of youth requires a range of interventions, from primary prevention to providing assistance in exiting, healing, and support for those already involved. This range of interventions is usually termed the *continuum of services*. The continuum of services provides a template for organizing our thinking about the potential range of services to deal with these issues.

It is important to note, however, that the progress of any individual child or youth through these services may not be linear or unidirectional. Some children and youth may “cycle through” several services at various stages of the continuum before being able to exit successfully and to reintegrate. Children and youth who are being commercially sexually exploited will require a range of services specifically tailored to their unique circumstances, and their progress towards exiting may require several attempts. A continuum of services would offer commercially sexually exploited children and youth a range of services that meet their immediate crisis needs while laying a foundation of practical and emotional support for when they are ready to exit (Capital Regional District, 1997; Rabinovitch, 1997; Out from the Shadows, 1998).

A comprehensive continuum of services for commercially sexually exploited children and youth would consist of service provision in these key areas:

- Global prevention strategies
- Targeted prevention
- Harm reduction
- Crisis intervention
- Programs to assist leaving
- Programs to assist healing and reintegration

Global Prevention

Preventive programs and services are required to reduce the flow of children and youth into commercial sexual exploitation. A distinction must be made between prevention and education. Education is only one aspect of effective prevention. If we are to make a genuine attempt to improve the health and well-being of people in our society, then we must think beyond providing people with information about the problem. People are not exploited and victimized because of a lack of knowledge on their own part.

We need creative thinkers, who will not put kids in a box, they don't fit in a box and are precluded from service – need to look at each youth as an individual – ask how can we meet their needs.

– Service provider

Larger systemic issues – for example, issues related to race, gender, social class, sexual orientation, and experiences of abuse – are responsible.

Global prevention means designing programs to address these large systemic issues by reducing the social conditions that create vulnerabilities. As a result, much of what can be considered to be global prevention relates to broad social policies (including legislation) and public attitudes about such issues as gender, race, and social equity. These may be the most difficult changes to effect, but this does not diminish the importance of social policy as the key component to effective prevention. If effective global prevention were implemented, far fewer children and youth would be the victims of sexual exploitation, and the following stages of the continuum would require much less attention and effort.

Global prevention strategies, then, are those that address the underlying structural factors that create the conditions for commercial sexual exploitation to exist, and that prevent the problem from ever occurring.

Global prevention strategies could include:

- *Governmental economic and social policies to prevent the abuse of children and youth*

Focusing prevention strategies on *stopping the abuse* of children would reduce the numbers of youth who end up being sexually exploited. Many sexually exploited youth turn to the streets after experiencing sexual abuse, starvation, poverty, and other forms of abuse.

- *Education*

The *education* system has a role to play in preventing the sexual exploitation of children and youth. Children and youth need to be educated about their rights under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. These rights are civil and political as well as economic, social, and cultural.

Providing education that strengthens children and youth will also serve as a preventive factor. Children and youth with strong communication skills, healthy attitudes towards sexuality, and healthy levels of self-esteem can more easily avoid exploitation. Healthy attitudes towards sexuality within the entire population would contribute towards resolving the problem of commercial sexual exploitation.

Educational programs about the realities of sexual exploitation should be offered to teachers and other school staff. Many youth who end up being sexually exploited are groomed within their own classrooms, by other youth or by people who hang around the schools.

We need to educate our children about healthy sexuality, about healthy relationships. What does a good supportive relationship look like? A healthy sexual relationship? We are so problem-focused – we need to talk with kids about healthy sexuality.

– Service provider

It is estimated that one-third of youth living on the streets are still attending school, so schools have a role to play in assisting those children and youth in exiting the sex trade. Teachers also need to be educated about the support systems that are available for youth who are sexually exploited as well as their families.

Experiential youth have suggested that children and youth need to be educated from a young age about the realities of life on the streets. Workshops could be organized with a health nurse and with children and youth who have exited from the sex trade. For young children, put posters on the wall with pictures of drug use and violence, and what they look like.

- *Housing*

An increase in the availability of all types of *housing* for youth who are experiencing abuse or violence in their homes would provide youth with a safe alternative to life on the streets.

- *Employment*

Strategies to enhance *employment* opportunities for youth would reduce the necessity of sex work for survival. Many youth who are sexually exploited are financially dependent on working the streets in order to make enough money to survive. For those who grew up in poverty, the money made through the sex trade is enticing and hard to resist. For many youth, if they had alternative ways of making a good living, they would not end up being sexually exploited. Creating exciting and useful employment opportunities for youth is a necessary change in preventing child sexual exploitation.

- *Legal sanctions*

Laws and policies that ensure prosecution of perpetrators of sexual exploitation are required to eliminate the problem. Legislative changes to make the criminal justice system safer and more comfortable for child and youth witnesses are also important. Heavier legal sanctions against those who violate laws related to acts of pedophilia and other offences related to sexual activities, as well as against racist activities, could deter those who sexually exploit children and youth. As one experiential youth commented, “White upper-class men are 80% of the johns. If they were of any other race, it would be made an issue of.”

- *Supporting public awareness*

Parents and other caregivers would benefit from an enhanced understanding of the importance of stable and supportive home environments for the well-being of the children and youth in their care.

White kids are believed over the coloured kids – that shit still goes on.

– Experiential youth

We need education about the reality of being on the streets. Start early, and educate youth about the real issues and take away the glamour.

– Experiential youth

When my daughter was in the hospital – they treat you different if it's addiction or self-inflicted they think she's dirty ... if I wasn't there they would have booted her out ... she had no dignity there ... I want them to know she doesn't come from that.

– Parent

The community thinks they don't have a part – many of the men out there are married.

– IDU sex trade worker

We can't deal with the problem without dealing with the language.

– Experiential youth

We may be young but we know how to learn – on the streets we have learned how to cope.

– Experiential youth

Many people make negative moral judgments about sex workers, including children and youth, because of the nature of sex work. All communities are affected by the sexual exploitation of children and youth, whether it be through street-level sex work, indoor sex work, or housing johns who buy sex from youth. In order for changes to occur in the lives of sexually exploited youth, people from all walks of life need to change their attitudes and actions toward these marginalized youth. Public education about the intersection of various types of oppression and traumas, and the role of the determinants of health in creating or reducing vulnerabilities, needs to take place.

Changes in the media's representation of sexually exploited youth need to take place in order for youth to not be further victimized on television and in the newspapers. Sensationalizing the lives of street youth and other marginalized youth only serves to further alienate the public and creates more problems for street youth.

Refusal to refer to commercial sexual exploitation of children and youth as "prostitution" would serve to heighten public awareness of the issues related to exploitation, by shifting the focus from young people to those who exploit them.

- *Providing healthy alternatives for at-risk children and youth*

Children and youth require meaningful activities. Arts-based programs (such as writing groups and street theatre) could provide youth with a vehicle for expressing themselves creatively while addressing the issues they face on a daily basis, such as racism, sexism, poverty, heterosexism, and other forms of oppression.

Targeted Prevention

Knowledge about particular types of vulnerabilities and how they interact can assist in the design of effective programs targeted towards those most at risk. Recognition of the specific needs of subgroups of youth (particularly cultural subgroups) strengthens the design of programs at all stages of the continuum of services, but it is the *sine qua non* – the defining characteristic – of targeted prevention.

Targeted prevention strategies could include:

- *Supports for families*

Creating more First Nations treatment centres will help Aboriginal parents begin the healing process in their families, and in the process prevent future generations of youth from becoming involved in street activities and sexual exploitation. Stopping the cycles of abuse and addiction is an important part of healing Aboriginal families and communities. Within Aboriginal communities, connecting youth with their elders and role models is an essential part of healing and preventing further abuses from occurring.

Within Aboriginal communities, programs aimed at youth who have FAS/FAE are needed to provide these youth with life skills and with support in other specific issues they and their families may face.

- *Programs targeted to high-risk youth*

Transgendered youth are particularly at risk for sexual exploitation. Many transgendered youth become alienated from their families and communities because of the attitudes that people hold about queer youth and the violence that is aimed at them. Targeted support for transgendered youth is needed to support them in dealing with the gender and sexuality issues they face. Programs are also needed to provide a positive space for them to express themselves and create a sense of safety within a society that is oppressive of differently gendered people.

- *Professional training and sensitization programs*

Many Aboriginal youth have a difficult time succeeding in the mainstream educational system. Teachers need continued education in the history of the First Nations communities and the unique issues that Aboriginal youth are facing as they attempt to make it to graduation. Focusing prevention efforts at educating teachers on Aboriginal issues will help give youth a healthier environment of understanding and respect.

Educating health care providers about the experiences of First Nations, queer, newly immigrated, and other marginalized groups of youth will sensitize them to the particular vulnerabilities of these groups.

Physicians and nurses with an increased understanding of the issues faced by these youth will be better equipped to create a welcoming and respectful environment and encourage youth towards healthier choices. Educating nurses and physicians will enable them to screen these youth more effectively and recognize those at particular risk for exploitation.

- *Improving child apprehension and care*

Child apprehension within Aboriginal communities is often an important factor in alienating youth from their culture and family, leaving them without a feeling of connectedness or stability. Focusing on development of a more satisfactory child care system for Aboriginal

We need to look at building on the strengths of families. Let's talk about what Mom and Dad do that is positive, with no fingerpointing. This way we can encourage families and parents to be healthy and not blame them for their addictions. In this way, we move away from the immediate removal of children for alcohol issues, dealing with intergenerational trauma by creating intergenerational solutions.

– Service provider

We need to start learning when we are young, to grow with your cultural awareness. I started to learn after I dropped out of school. I didn't feel accepted in school – there were not too many Natives ... the best class I had was drawing Native art – but they didn't say what it all meant ... we need to learn about all cultures.

– Experiential youth

I felt discomfort as a Native kid in a white foster home – you need to know your own culture – I felt “why am I this colour? I hated being brown – I hated my colour – I wanted to be white – you forget about your background ... your self-esteem goes down – you don't know how to stand up for your self – you need to know who you are.

– Experiential youth

My girlfriend is going through the process of getting her baby taken away – I said to her right when you have a baby welfare will be right there waiting for you to fuck up – sure they think they are doing good – but they hurt the mother and the child – they manipulated her, made her feel stupid ... they walk right over her, don't listen to her ... they think "oh, Natives, they are never going to change ... if we give them money where will it be spent ... booze" ... they think all of us Native youth only care about partying – they don't give us the time of day ... I think they should open a house for Native mothers.

– Experiential youth

Outreach helped me stay off the street because you talk to women on the street and it reminds you where you don't want to be.

– Experiential youth

youth, including building a network of Aboriginal foster parents or culturally aware foster parents, would assist Aboriginal youth to remain connected to their history and communities. Additionally, preventing child apprehension through such initiatives as housing for young mothers will aid in keeping families and communities connected, making Aboriginal youth less at risk of exploitation.

- *Employment opportunities and mentoring programs for children and youth in care*
- *Accessible and caring counselling and support for children and youth*
- *Family counselling for all family members when a child or youth is identified in trouble*
- *Safe and welcoming places for children and youth who are experiencing difficulties in their families*
- *Residential drug and alcohol treatment for children and youth*
- *Youth street outreach programs affiliated with or including medical services for youth experiencing life on the streets*

Harm Reduction

Harm reduction measures are designed to reduce the risks children and youth may experience while they are being sexually exploited. Harm reduction approaches are particularly useful where substance use accompanies commercial sexual exploitation, because most harm reduction measures are directed towards minimizing the personal and social harms associated with substance use.

Harm reduction initiatives are extremely important in assisting children and youth to stay alive and healthy during the period of their sexual exploitation. They can also serve an important function in terms of assisting in the development of supportive and trusting relationships with youth. Harm reduction initiatives have the potential to maximize the likelihood of a safe exit from sexual exploitation while minimizing risks to the individual, their family, and their community.

Harm reduction measures reduce the possibility that a child or youth will become more entrenched in the street community.

Harm reduction strategies include:

- *“Bad date” databases*
 “Bad date” databases are needed for both male and female sex workers. Providing youth with a safe and easy way to report a bad date will ensure that they come forward with reports of abuse, which will in turn work to prevent further harm.

- *Supportive police protection*

Sex workers need to stop being moved in to less safe areas, where it is convenient for business people but not for youth working the streets. Pushing the sex trade in to industrial areas puts sexually exploited youth out of the eye of the public and in to very unsafe situations.

- *HIV prevention*
- *Needle exchange*
- *STD (sexually transmitted disease) testing and counselling*
- *Health information*
- *Information about resources*
- *Street outreach*
- *Peer support services*
- *Food vans and food banks*
- *Emergency safe shelters*
- *Drop-ins*
- *Soup kitchens*

Police need to stop putting Youth and Prostitution together. They need to be educated about sexual exploitation so that they are not going to charge you under the prostitution laws, but under sexual exploitation ... They need to identify which members of our RCMP could come and be on our level in plain clothes, come to focus groups, go on outreach and see what it is really about.

– Experiential youth

Early Intervention/Crisis Intervention

Early intervention programs are designed to prevent the entrenchment of young people in commercial sexual exploitation. Such programs should focus in part on homelessness among children and youth, and on building relationships between schools and community agencies. Our ability to provide early intervention depends on high levels of awareness about the issue on the part of professionals who are well situated to recognize sexual exploitation, and those who work with young people, especially health care providers, educators, and the police.

Opportunities for early intervention often arise in connection with the crises and emergencies that result from being actively sexually exploited. Crises can include a wide range of events, such as being the victim of violence, the death of another youth or of a family member, arrest, or recognition of problems with alcohol or drugs, among others. These crises often act as a catalyst for the decision to exit. Crisis intervention services can therefore provide support once someone has decided to begin the process of exiting (Assistant Deputy Ministers' Committee, 2000).

Crisis is the best time for intervention ... we've got to keep the momentum alive – the truth is it's the opportunity for change, if we don't grab it when the opportunity is there we can lose them.

– Service provider

Early intervention and crisis intervention strategies include:

Hospitals need to be educated, especially about transgendered people. They get treated so bad.

– Experiential youth

We need to set up the system to improve the relationship between the hospital and social service agencies ... doctors and nurses are afraid of these youth.

– Outreach worker

We need something that forces hospitals to deal with these kids ... I watched a 16-year-old girl discharged and she fell on the mat right where the door opens and closes – they picked her up and dropped her outside.

– Parent

Every home is hell – the street is worse – we need a place between.

– IDU sex trade worker

- *Professional training and sensitization for health care workers*

Many youth who are involved in the sex trade, especially youth who are injection drug users, have had very negative experiences within the health care system. Training is needed for health care providers so that all youth are treated with the same level of respect and concern for their well-being. Health care providers are in a unique position to recognize vulnerable youth and put them in touch with intervention services when youth come to a hospital or clinic. More coordination is needed between health care providers and front-line service providers so that opportunities to intervene are not missed and youth are not discharged back onto the streets without assistance after overdosing or otherwise receiving medical care.

- *Safety vans to patrol strolls*

Services that are aimed at sexually exploited youth need to be easily accessible to the youth. Police are often seen as intimidating and harassing by young people who are being sexually exploited. Police may be encouraged by public concern to treat activities on the street as a nuisance rather than as an issue of exploitation. Police must be aware of the potential for negative outcomes if sexual exploitation and related activities are driven further from public view into neighbourhoods where the activities may be less visible and bothersome.

Children and youth who are being sexually exploited should be offered social supports instead of being criminalized. Police officers who work specifically with sexually exploited youth need to be visible and accessible to the youth who might need their protection.

- *Safe, supportive shelters*

Youth who are currently being sexually exploited need safe and accessible shelters to provide them with options when crisis strikes. Many youth who currently access emergency shelters feel that they need a few days to get their bearings after coming off the streets, before they are put into a schedule of meeting goals and maintaining their well-being. While finding a job, stable housing, and other basic goals are important in the long run, emergency shelters for sexually exploited youth should be understanding of the immediate needs of the youth and allow time for their renewal.

Queer youth shelters are needed to provide gay, lesbian, transgendered, and bisexual youth with a safe space to go in times of crisis. The staff at these facilities should be trained in addressing the needs of these youth and should be sensitive to their issues. Where possible, having queer staff or staff who have had previous experience in the sex trades is helpful for creating safe, nonjudgmental environments.

Some other needs of sexually exploited youth who access shelters are:

- Flexibility – in terms of length of stay, goals, drug and alcohol use
- Accessibility – easy transportation to the shelter and a toll-free number to call in times of crisis
- Gender-specific programming to provide a greater sense of safety
- In-house birth control and needle exchange programs
- Confidentiality – from parents, police, government

- *Alcohol and drug (A&D) treatment*

A continuum of A&D services is needed for youth. Access to services and coordination of services should be ensured.

- *Mental health services*

Mental health services for youth need to be accessible, flexible, and affiliated with youth medical clinics, outreach programs, shelters, and detoxification and detention centres.

- *Individual, family, and group counselling and support*

- *Mentoring*

- *Peer counselling*

- *Cooperative programs between schools and community agencies*

- *Suicide prevention and intervention services*

- *Supportive police protection*

They help you stay in touch with your family. If you don't want it they still call your family. But you don't want them to tell your family about what you are doing. That can be unsafe in some families if there is abuse. Sometimes they don't even tell you – they just do it. They don't involve you in those decisions they are making.

– Experiential youth

Parents live with this incredible paralyzing fear all the time ... the parents feel isolated, and the whole family unit breaks down.

– Parent

Programs to Support Leaving

Children and youth describe leaving the sex trade as a complex and difficult process, requiring both a clear personal decision and community support. About two-thirds of youth who have successfully exited report that they tried to leave the street more than once. Children and youth who are in the process of leaving must grapple with the issues of economic survival, acquisition of life skills, substance use, loneliness, and low self-esteem that may have kept them trapped in an exploitative situation. They require assistance to develop a new sense of self and a new identity.

The window of opportunity to assist someone who has made the decision to leave is small. As they turn to face the daunting economic and life skill challenges, many feel overwhelmed and return to the sex trade as a means of “temporary” survival, however high and painful the risks (Save the Children, 2000). Programs that support leaving are designed to ensure that the young person’s decision to exit is supported and becomes stabilized.

Examples of strategies to assist children and youth in leaving include:

- *24/7 drop in-centre providing emotional support and other services*
- *Legal supports (to make a statement, to testify, and to witness)*
- *Safe, long-term housing*
- *Reconnect program*
- *Education and training programs, including alternate schools*
- *Labour market attachment programs*
- *Financial support*
- *“Youth agreements” under the Child, Family and Community Service Act*
- *Economic incentives*

Healing and Reintegration

Healing services are designed to create a supportive environment that can provide an opportunity for long term healing, retraining, and long-term planning (Assistant Deputy Ministers’ Committee, 2000).

Healing is a personal journey. Other people can act as ongoing resources and support, but each person’s path to healing will be different. Children and youth who have successfully exited have said that longer-term supports must be in place in order for healing to occur.

Examples of healing services include:

- *Ongoing economic assistance*
- *Ongoing psychological and emotional assistance*
- *Life skills training, educational opportunities*
- *Opportunities to talk about previous experiences and share stories with the community*

Letting it go and talking about it. That’s why I like doing public education because I get to talk about it.

– Experiential youth

My ability to rephrase the terminology – I am a woman who has had experience in the sex trade. Reframing it takes me out of that shame-based place. Understanding that I am not the behaviour, separating the issue from the person. I learned I have a right to choose.

– Experiential youth

A Continuum of Services in British Columbia

The following programs and services are aimed at addressing the sexual exploitation of children and youth along the continuum of services, from prevention to exiting and healing. Many of the organizations listed offer services that cover a range of points along the continuum, as their programs cover a broad scope of measures addressing youth sexual exploitation. These programs are not an exhaustive list but are examples of the types of programs in British Columbia. In one way or another, all of them affect the lives of sexually exploited youth, their families, and communities.

Adolescent Outreach Services

Adolescent Outreach Services provides counselling to street-involved youth up to age 25, including individual, couples, and family counselling. They also provide outreach to other service providers and offer education to the community and other youth service providers.

Adolescent Outreach Services
Vancouver Community Mental Health Service
550 Cambie Street
Vancouver, BC V6B 2N7
Phone: 604-660-3175
Fax: 604-660-3856
E-mail: schetner@urhb.bc.ca
Contact persons: Shana Chetner and Ray Edney

Alliance for the Rights of Children

The Alliance for the Rights of Children is a multi-sector partnership of organizations and individuals committed to ending child commercial sexual exploitation. The society is an umbrella organization to unite child and youth service organizations, government, law enforcement, academics, legal experts, human rights experts, youth, parents, and others.

Alliance for the Rights of Children
575 Drake Street
Vancouver, BC V6B 4K8
Phone: 604-685-5437, ext. 15
Fax: 604-685-7457
E-mail: childrights@canada.com
Contact person: Renata Aebi

Broadway Youth Resource Centre

BYRC is an integrated centre for moderate-risk youth, ages 10 to 24, and their families, in the Midtown area of Vancouver. BYRC offers counselling, support services, life skills education, and a walk-in health clinic, and provides information and referrals to youth programs. The centre's services are provided by a variety of community organizations and social service agencies. Counselling and support services are available in the areas of youth and family, anger management, sexual orientation, and gender identity issues. BYRC maintains a youth advisory group to ensure that the centre understands the changing needs of youth. Aboriginal Youth Nights and Vietnamese Youth Nights are also offered through BYRC.

Broadway Youth Resource Centre
691 East Broadway
Vancouver, BC V5T 1X7
Phone: 604-709-5720
Fax: 604-709-5721

Burnaby Youth Clinic

The Burnaby Youth Clinic (BYC) provides targeted services to youth between the ages of 13 and 21, although they will provide service regardless of age and refer as necessary. BYC provides free medical services, including contraceptives, pregnancy testing/referral, STD testing, medical assessment, and emotional support and referral. Two counsellors are available on-site to provide psychological support, care, and reporting (as necessary) of sexual abuse/assault. Referrals for high-risk youth involved in the sex trade, drugs, gangs, self-mutilation, suicide, depression, or other mental health issues are also seen by these youth-oriented clinical psychologists. The goal of the youth clinic is to provide care and support in a nonjudgmental environment where youth are treated with respect and feel safe.

Burnaby Youth Clinic
15-250 Willingdon Avenue
Burnaby, BC
Phone: 604-293-1764
Fax: 604-293-1781
E-mail: claire_lawrence@sfhr.hnet.bc.ca
Contact person: Claire Lawrence, Nurse Co-ordinator

Car 278 and Yankee 177

The Vancouver Police Department has developed an integrated approach for focusing on street-involved youth under age 19 by deploying two special units. One of these is known as Car 278 and is often referred to as the “Kiddie Car” because of its specialized function in dealing with children. This unit is staffed by one police officer and a youth corrections officer who operate between the hours of 4 p.m. and 3 a.m. Car 278 is fielded every night of the week. The second unit with a specific “youth at risk” focus is Yankee 177. This unit is staffed by one Vancouver police officer and one social worker from the Adolescent Services Unit, and is fielded four days a week, primarily in Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside. The purpose of both units is to patrol areas frequented by youth, to conduct street checks, and, where appropriate, to take charge of youth who are found to be in circumstances that place their health or safety in immediate danger.

For more information, contact your local police department.

Children of the Street Society

Children of the Street Society is a parent group that provides services and education to families of sexually exploited youth or youth at risk of becoming sexually exploited.

Children of the Street Society
952A Brunette Avenue
Coquitlam, BC V3K 1C9
Phone: 604-606-3130
Fax: 604-525-0024
E-mail: Sowden@ican.net
Contact person: Diane Sowden

Community Action Teams (CAT)

Community Action Teams are community groups that work to develop local strategies to help prevent commercial sexual exploitation and address prostitution-related issues. These teams are made up of youth, parents, police, street outreach workers, health professionals, social workers, school officials, nonprofit agencies, and representatives from provincial and municipal governments.

Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General
Community Programs Division
201–4180 Lougheed Highway
Burnaby, BC V5C 6A7
Phone: 604-660-2605
Fax: 604-775-2674
Elsewhere in BC: 1-800-663-7867

Covenant House Vancouver

Covenant House is a short-term crisis and transitional residential shelter for males and females ages 19 to 22. The Community Support Service program provides nonresidential services (meals, transportation assistance, referrals, crisis counselling, advocacy) to runaway, homeless, and street-involved youth ages 13 to 24.

Covenant House Vancouver
575 Drake Street
Vancouver, BC V6B 4K8
Phone: 604-685-7474
Administration phone: 604-685-5437
Fax: 604-685-5324
E-mail: info@covenanthousebc.org
Web: www.covenanthousebc.org

Downtown Eastside Youth Activities Services (DEYAS)

DEYAS provides street-level services to youth and children on the streets in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside and Mount Pleasant areas. DEYAS provides health outreach services, including a needle exchange, has full-time alcohol and drug counsellors, and makes referrals to HIV/AIDS programs for people who are at risk. DEYAS houses Vancouver Reconnect, whose goal is to prevent children and youth who have run away from their homes from becoming street-involved, or to assist them in meeting their basic needs if they choose to remain on their own. DEYAS also prints and distributes a Bad Date Sheet, which provides profiles of people who have been reported as violent or abusive towards sexually exploited youth and adult sex trade workers in Vancouver. All services are provided in coordination with the Ministry of Children and Family Development as well as other service agencies.

DEYAS
223 Main Street
Vancouver, BC V6A 2S7
Phone: 604-685-6561
Alcohol and Drug Counsellors: 604-685-7300
Fax: 604-685-7117

Dusk to Dawn

Dusk to Dawn opened in 1996, created by the United Youth Movement in cooperation with the City of Vancouver, the Vancouver Police Department, community members, and other service providers, such as the Urban Native Youth Association. Dusk to Dawn offers a safe place for street-involved youth ages 21 and under. They provide information, referrals, peer counselling, hot meals, showers, laundry facilities, and recreational activities. As a youth-driven initiative, all front-line staff at the centre are under the age of 26. The programs are built upon the belief that all youth have value and are entitled to respect and safety, and should be considered a resource rather than a problem.

Hours of operation: Sunday to Thursday, 8:00 p.m. to 6:30 a.m.

Dusk to Dawn
St. Paul's Hospital
1056 Comox Street
Vancouver, BC V6E 4L7
Phone: 604-688-0399
Fax: 604-683-0383
E-mail: d2d@vcn.bc.ca
Web: www.members.home.net/dusktilldawn

FACES (Fight Against Child Exploitation)

FACES is an early-intervention program developed by the Vancouver Police Department. Concerned parents, service agencies, and all police departments can register a child or youth with FACES if the child or youth is a runaway or goes missing and there is an indication that the child is being sexually exploited. Contact your local police department or:

Vancouver Police Department
Vice Unit – FACES Coordinator
Phone: 604-717-2677
E-mail: dave_willis@city.vancouver.bc.ca
Contact person: Detective Dave Willis

Family Services Youth Detox Services and Options Programs

Youth Detox Services provides residential alcohol and drug detox and follow-up services for street-involved youth under the age of 24. Services include counselling, information and referral, and life skills; recreational activities; 24-hour caregiver coverage in a safe and secure residential facility; and a crisis and information line. Office hours are Monday to Friday 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Saturday and Sunday 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Youth Detox Services
Family Services of Greater Vancouver
Location is confidential
Phone: 604-872-4349
Fax: 604-872-4316
E-mail: info@fsgv.bc.ca
Web: www.fsgv.bc.ca/main_youth.html

Options is a day stabilization program providing pre- and post-detox services to street youth who are abusing and misusing alcohol and/or drugs. Its goal is to act as a street-front link to youth interested in entering detox, and as a support to those youth who have completed detox. The program was developed in consultation with youth and is available on a voluntary drop-in basis. Services include individual and group counselling, drug and alcohol education, life skills instruction, referral to detox and community services, networking with other Downtown South services, and a Two-Spirited program that provides outreach to urban Native youth in the sex trade.

Options
1058 Seymour Street
Vancouver, BC V6B 3M6
Phone: 604-662-8858
Cell: 604-618-9723
Fax: 604-669-6671
E-mail: info@fsgv.bc.ca

Gab Youth Services

Run through The Centre, Gab provides support to 13- to-25-year-old gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender youth, as well as youth who are questioning their sexual orientation or gender identity. Gab operates drop-in programs, organizes special events, provides one-to-one support and advocacy, and facilitates anti-discrimination and sensitivity training workshops. Gab seeks to foster healthy relationships between GLBTQ youth and adults and provide culturally appropriate sexuality education to reduce the vulnerability of GLBTQ youth to sexual exploitation.

Gab Youth Services
1170 Bute Street
Vancouver, BC V6E 1Z6
Phone: 604-684-4901
Fax: 604-684-5309
E-mail: gabyouth@yahoo.com
Program coordinator: Jenn Horgos

The Gathering Place

The Gathering Place is a community centre funded jointly by the Vancouver School Board, the Province of British Columbia, and the City of Vancouver. The Gathering Place operates six days a week (closed Sunday) from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. This centre is designed to be accessible to people living in the downtown core, and anyone can buy an annual membership for \$1. Services include a health centre, learning centre, computer training, reading room, art programs, and recreation programs. A youth worker is available to discuss youth problems and to make referrals to appropriate agencies. There are youth out-trips and from time to time other youth activities such as the mural project and a stilt performance group. The *Slice Magazine* has operated out of the Gathering Place and a youth food bank takes place in the theatre on Friday afternoons. The Youth Committee of the Board meets monthly to discuss issues of particular interest. Many special activities are planned each year for National Youth Week.

The Gathering Place
609 Helmcken Street
Vancouver, BC V6B 5R1
Phone: 604-665-2391
Web: www.city.vancouver.bc.ca/commsvcs/socialplanning/internal/gathering.htm

Greater Vancouver Aboriginal Head Start Circle

This program provides half-day preschool experiences that prepare Aboriginal children for their school years by meeting their spiritual, emotional, physical, and intellectual needs. All service sites in the Greater Vancouver Aboriginal Head Start Circle provide programming in all six AHS component areas: culture and language, education, health promotion, nutrition, parental involvement, and social support. The Aboriginal Head Start Circle runs in conjunction with the Vancouver Native Health Society, and works towards prevention with Aboriginal children and their families.

Vancouver Native Health Society
449 East Hastings Street
Vancouver, BC V6A 1P5
Phone: 604-254-9949, loc. 227
Fax: 604-254-9948
E-mail: vnhs@direct.ca
Web: www.vnhs.net

Healing Our Spirit BC Aboriginal HIV/AIDS Society

The mandate of Healing Our Spirit is to prevent and reduce the spread of HIV and AIDS and provide care, treatment, and support services to Aboriginal people infected and affected by HIV/AIDS. Healing Our Spirit works to increase awareness of HIV and AIDS in urban and rural Aboriginal communities, provide educational workshops throughout BC, provide support to individuals living with HIV and AIDS as well as their families and caregivers, increase community accessibility to HIV and AIDS resources, and increase acceptance of people living with HIV and AIDS in their communities.

Healing Our Spirit BC Aboriginal HIV/AIDS Society
Suite 100, 2425 Quebec Street
Vancouver, BC V5T 4L6
Phone: 604-879-8884
Fax: 604-879-9926
Toll-free (across Canada): 1-800-336-9726
E-mail: info@healingourspirit.org
Web: www.healingourspirit.org

Healing Ourselves – Boys and Girls Club Parent Support

This group was formed in March 2000 to assist and support parents of youth who are dealing with issues of sexual exploitation. This program is in the developmental stage, and the group model is continuing to change in response to the needs of the parents. The benefits for the parents are peer support, education, and counselling. One of the focuses of Healing Ourselves is to build better relationships with youth through understanding and education. Education about the cycle of involvement in sexual exploitation, including issues of recruitment, is designed to help parents move beyond blaming youth to building stronger relationships. The group members are currently discussing an upcoming project that would see them providing education to service providers, school programs, other parents' groups, and community agencies.

Boys and Girls Club
Pager: 250-480-3050
Fax: 250-360-5951

Youth Empowerment Society
Phone: 250-383-3514
E-mail: doboyle@bgevic.org
Co-facilitators: Debi O'Boyle and Suzanne Simpson

It's A Girl Thang

It's A Girl Thang, which operates out of the Edmonds Youth Resource Centre, is an innovative programming model that provides marginalized and at-risk adolescent females with a place in which to explore a wide range of issues that impact their daily lives. Girls are given an opportunity to explore their issues and experiences of abuse, sexual exploitation, body image, and other issues they are struggling with, in a safe, nonjudgmental environment. Through accessing the group, girls are connected with information and counselling, which addresses their need for services, as they often experience barriers to accessing community programs. The girls' group was designed by girls for girls.

Edmonds Youth Resource Centre
Phone: 604-761-4361
E-mail: nclark@jibc.bc.ca
Contact person: Natalie Clark

Justice for Girls Outreach Society

Justice for Girls promotes support, justice, and equality for adolescent girls who have experienced violence and live in poverty. Justice for Girls programs include Criminal Justice Monitoring Program (from policing to corrections), Advocacy Program, and Young Women's Internship Program. Justice for Girls advocates for laws and policies that ensure young women's rights to safety, dignity, and equality. At the same time, they challenge laws and policies that violate girls' rights or liberties.

Justice for Girls Outreach Society
Suite 606, 825 Granville Street
Vancouver, BC V6Z 1K9
Phone: 604-689-7887
Fax: 604-689-5600
E-mail: justiceforgirls@hotmail.com
Contact person: Annabel Webb

Missing CD-ROM Game

This multimedia interactive game was developed for the BC Ministry of Education to prevent youth from being lured over the Internet. For a preview of the Missing CD-ROM Game, go to www.livewwwires.com

Nexus

Nexus is a program of the Boys' and Girls' Clubs of Greater Vancouver directed towards street-entrenched youth. This program provides services to enable street youth to effectively deal with substance abuse issues, including crisis counselling, aid in intervention planning, facilitating access to alcohol and drug services, offering information and assistance, and educating other service providers. Program hours are daytime Monday to Friday, and evenings Monday to Thursday until 11 p.m.

Nexus

Office:
550 Cambie Street
Vancouver, BC V6B 2N7
Phone: 604-660-5216

Youth services:
432 East Hastings Street
Vancouver, BC V6A 1P7
Phone: 604-251-5507

Odyssey II

Odyssey II offers a combined drop-in/structured substance misuse program for youth ages 12 to 24 and their families. Services include individual and family counselling, support groups, educational workshops, skill development, recreation, and peer support and counselling. Clients are empowered to meet their own goals and be responsible to themselves. Prevention activities include panel talks, peer counsellor training, and social/recreational programs for high-risk youth. Programs are also available in French.

Odyssey II
2875 St. George Street
Vancouver, BC V5T 3R8
Phone: 604-879-8853
Fax: 604-879-6133
E-mail: odyii@bgc-gv.bc.ca

PACE (Prostitution Alternatives Counselling and Education)

The PACE Society was founded in 1994 by a group of former prostitutes who recognized the lack of specific services available to individuals engaged in prostitution. PACE offers one-to-one support in the form of individual counselling, referrals, and advocacy. Youth are offered individual support with setting and attaining goals, and one-to-one assistance with education, employment, and skills training programs. In partnership with Urban Native Youth Association, Habitat for Humanity, and Save the Children Canada, a housing project for sexually exploited youth has been established. Four units of housing are now occupied by youth 24 and under who wish to leave the survival sex trade.

PACE
P.O. Box 73537
1014 Robson Street
Vancouver, BC V6E 1A7
Phone: 604-872-7651
Cell: 604-786-5437
Toll-free: 1-866-872-8751
Fax: 604-872-7508
E-mail: pacekids@vcn.bc.ca

PEERS (Prostitutes Empowerment Education and Resource Society)

PEERS is dedicated to providing effective programs and services to prostitutes, ex-prostitutes, and sexually exploited youth. The organization is based in Victoria, BC, and operates out of a downtown office. PEERS was established by a group of former sex workers, sex workers, and community supporters. Their ongoing programs include outreach, peer counselling, advocacy, a place to do community hours, volunteer opportunities, access to computers and the Internet, public education, and training.

PEERS
211-620 View Street
Victoria, BC V8W 1J6
Phone: 250-388-5325
Fax: 250-388-5324
E-mail: info@peers.bc.ca
Web: www.peers.bc.ca
Contact person: Barbara Smith, admin@peers.bc.ca

Prince George Native Friendship Centre

Initiated in 1999, the Sexually Exploited Youth Outreach program was designed to assist female youth ages 12 to 18 in exiting the sex trade. Based on the development of a one-to-one relationship with the outreach worker, the program provides intensive therapeutic support, emergency housing funds, and access to safe housing. Along with Melville House, a safe house for girls moving to exit from sexual exploitation, this is the only program in Prince George that specifically addresses the needs of sexually exploited youth. A focus of the program is on preparing and assisting youth to exit and to begin the journey towards healing with the support of professionals. The program also offers a female-only educational group to explore such issues as cultural oppression and understanding government systems and how they work.

Prince George Native Friendship Centre
1600 Third Avenue
Prince George, BC V2L 3G6
Phone: 250-564-3568; 250-613-5744
Fax: 250-563-0924
E-mail: agallant@pgnfc.com
Outreach worker: Angela Gallant

Melville House
Phone: 250-563-4746
Fax: 250-563-3508
E-mail: melvillehouse@pgnfc.com
Contact person: Rene Allen

Rediscovery Camps

Guiding Vision

Drawing on the strengths of indigenous cultures and the wisdom of the elders, with a philosophy of respect and love for each other and the Earth, Rediscovery aims to empower youth of all ages to discover the world within themselves, the world between cultures, and the natural world.

Rediscovery was born in 1981 on the shores of the islands of Haida Gwaii. Challenged by substance abuse, high youth involvement in the justice system, and many painful forms of family disruption, the local Native and non-Native communities set up a dynamic youth project. Wilderness activities, blended with Native culture, serve to develop and strengthen feelings of confidence and self-worth for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal participants alike. Since they are integrated in a respectful community environment, participants are free to learn from each other, the environment, Elders, guides, and themselves.

Rediscovery International Foundation
150 Montreal Street
Victoria, BC V8V 1Y8
E-mail: rediscovery@vkool.com
Web: www.rediscovery.org

SafeHaven

SafeHaven is a community crime prevention program that aims to reduce the number of people who are victimized by crime in inner-city neighbourhoods. SafeHaven is a Block Parent–style program for businesses, where business owners, managers, and their employees are educated on how to assist people who are experiencing a temporary crisis. The aim of the program is to reduce crime by creating an increased sense of community. SafeHaven also conducts educational workshops in schools to teach children and youth about its programs.

SafeHaven
Phone: 604-254-4170
Fax: 604-713-5509
E-mail: rmijker@hotmail.com

SafeTeen: Powerful Alternatives to Violence

SafeTeen is a violence prevention program that has been implemented in elementary and secondary schools (grades 6 to 12) in BC since 1983. The SafeTeen program is primarily experiential and utilizes a youth-specific assertiveness model and a delivery style that has been well-received by students. SafeTeen addresses issues of power – not teaching youth to take someone else’s power but teaching them how to hold their own.

SafeTeen: Powerful Alternatives to Violence
306 East 24th Avenue
Vancouver, BC V5V 1Z9
Phone: 604-255-5147
Fax: 604-255-5196
E-mail: safeteen@telus.net
Contact person: Anita Roberts

Save the Children Canada

Save the Children Canada is involved in ongoing initiatives to address youth sexual exploitation. In August 1999, a national network of children and youth called Sexually Exploited Youth Speak Out (SEYSO) was formed. Since that time, a Web site at www.seyso.net has been developed to provide youth with a variety of information on issues surrounding sexual exploitation, information about upcoming events, program information, and a member message board. Save the Children also offers Exit Routes, a work experience program in which youth who wish to exit commercial sexual exploitation are provided with work experience and opportunities for future employment. Street Fest 2001, which was held in celebration of the annual Stop the Sexual Exploitation of Children and Youth Week, was organized by Save the Children to highlight the talents and diversity of street-involved and/or sexually exploited youth.

Save the Children Canada
2177 West 42nd Avenue
Vancouver, BC V6M 2B7
Phone: 604-437-5881
Fax: 604-437-5885

Street Spirits Theatre

Street Spirits Theatre has been providing services to youth and communities around BC since 1999. Working in alliance with Youth Around Prince (YAP), this program provides theatre training, social awareness, counselling, employment skill development, and recreation to at-risk youth. Street Spirits actors use life experiences to create plays that reflect shared experience.

Street Spirits Theatre
1160 Seventh Avenue
Prince George, BC V2L 5G6
Phone: 250-565-6332
Fax: 250-565-4209
E-mail: andrew@streetspirits.com
Contact person: Andrew Burton

Street Stories

Delivered for the first time in 2000, Street Stories is a media education program that gives youth who have been sexually exploited a chance to learn the skills to tell their stories through video and to create educational materials that could help prevent others from being sexually exploited. Street Stories is operated by the Access to Media Education Society (AMES) on Galiano Island. Since 1997, over 250 street-involved, First Nations, multicultural, queer, HIV-positive, sexually exploited, and developmentally disabled youth have created over 50 videos through AMES programs. Underlying the Street Stories program is an acknowledgment and critique of the social conditions that create child poverty and that make youth vulnerable to sexual exploitation. Street Stories encourages economic self-reliance by providing employment skills, training, and job opportunities to youth looking for an economic alternative to sexual exploitation.

Access to Media Education Society
P.O. Box 124
141 Sturdies Bay Road
Galiano Island, BC V0N 1P0
Phone: 250-539-5904
Fax: 250-539-5941
E-mail: ames@gulfislands.com
Contact person: Deblekha Guin

TCO²

TCO² stands for “Taking Care of Ourselves and Taking Care of Others,” a group of youth who use skits and interactive role-plays to show children and youth prevention strategies to stop themselves and others from becoming sexually exploited or involved in a street lifestyle. TCO² discourages youth from considering life on the street and exposes the real dangers of street life and the sex trade. Resource materials are included in *Being Aware, Taking Care*, a resource kit for educators, parents, police, and communities.

TCO² – Taking Care of Ourselves and Taking Care of Others
Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General
Community Programs Division
201–4180 Lougheed Highway
Burnaby, BC V5C 6A7
Phone: 604-660-2605
Fax: 604-775-2674
E-mail: community.programs@ag.gov.bc.ca

Three Bridges Community Health Centre

Three Bridges is a multidisciplinary, “one-stop shopping” drop-in clinic that provides a variety of health care services, including medical care, community counselling, alcohol and drug counselling, needle exchange, and methadone maintenance. Also operating out of Three Bridges is Boys R Us, a drop-in program for male sex workers that provides a safe place, meals, health-related services, and links to HIV and AIDS counselling and testing. The drop-in is operated in cooperation with a number of the city’s other community-based organizations, including AIDS Vancouver.

Three Bridges Community Health Centre
1292 Hornby Street
Vancouver, BC V6Z 1W2
Phone: 604-736-9844
Fax: 604-734-5918

UNYA (Urban Native Youth Association)

UNYA has been providing services to Aboriginal youth in Greater Vancouver since 1989. UNYA has mandated youth participation on their Board of Directors, with four of the nine positions on the board being allocated to youth. Programs include a youth drop-in centre for youth ages 15 to 24, school support worker, outreach workers, alternative school, pre-employment training program, and Aboriginal youth safehouse for 16-to-18-year-olds. UNYA is currently compiling a resource manual around the issue of youth sexual exploitation, with a focus on the particular situation of Aboriginal youth and their communities.

Urban Native Youth Association
1640 East Hastings Street
Vancouver, BC V5L 1S6
Phone: 604-254-7732
Fax: 604-254-7811
E-mail: unyainfo@unya.bc.ca

Watari Research Association

Watari Research Association is a community-based nonprofit society, incorporated in June 1986. Their mission is to facilitate positive change in at-risk children, youth, families, and communities through the design and delivery of innovative services. Services include alcohol and drug counselling, community development, life skills training, one-to-one support services, peer counselling training, public education, professional training, research, and curriculum development.

Watari Research Association
301-877 East Hastings Street
Vancouver, BC V6A 3Y1
Phone: 604-254-6995
Fax: 604-254-6985
E-mail: info@watari.org
Web: www.watari.org
Contact person: Michelle Fortin, Executive Managing Director

Youth Agreements

Youth Agreements is a provincial program for youth ages 16 to 19 years, with the ability to provide residential, educational, or other support services, and/or financial assistance to provide a foundation for high-risk youth, including sexually exploited youth, to implement change in their lives for successful transition to adulthood. This is one of the only programs for 16-to-19-year-olds who are seeking financial independence in order to exit involvement in sexual exploitation.

For more information on this program, you can phone or visit the nearest Ministry of Children and Family Development office, listed in the blue pages of your local phonebook.

Visit the Youth Agreements Web site at www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/youth/youth_agreements.htm.

Youth Around Prince Resource Centre

In 1997 Youth Around Prince Resource Centre (YAP) was developed in response to community and government demand for changes within the child welfare system. Youth speak of the YAP as “one-stop shopping,” meaning they are able to access services quickly and respectfully, especially when they need multiple services. Some of the programs offered are an Alternative School Program, Welcoming Project for Youth in Care, Alcohol and Drug program, Intersect Mental Health Counsellor, Youth Support Social Worker, and Public Health Services.

Youth Around Prince Resource Centre
1160 Seventh Avenue
Prince George, BC V2L 5G6
Phone: 250-565-6271
Fax: 250-565-4209
E-mail: Susie@mail.intersect.bc.ca
Contact Person: Susie Wheeler

YouthCO

Youth Community Outreach AIDS Society (YouthCO) is a peer-driven organization. YouthCO strives to enable youth from all communities to address youth issues concerning HIV/AIDS, by acting as a resource and facilitator for educational initiatives and support services. YouthCO is Canada's only AIDS service organization working exclusively to meet the needs of both HIV-positive and HIV-negative youth. It follows the Health Promotion and Harm Reduction models of service delivery. A nonprofit agency run by and for youth, YouthCO provides outreach, prevention education, and support to our peers infected and/or affected by HIV/AIDS. They also provide young people with volunteer opportunities through which they have the ability to learn and apply new skills as well as strengthen their existing abilities.

YouthCO
 203–319 West Pender Street
 Vancouver, BC V6B 1T4
 Phone: 604-688-1441
 Fax: 604-688-4932
 E-mail: information@youthco.org
 Web: www.youthco.org

Youthquest!

Youthquest! provides drop-in space for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, and questioning youth and their friends, up to age 21. The drop-in space is a place to hang out and meet friends, listen to music, watch movies, have discussion groups, and bring in interesting speakers on issues relevant to queer youth. Youthquest! also offers resources and referrals for youth who want further support, as counselling is not provided at the drop-in. All resources and referrals are screened to make sure they are supportive and positive for queer youth. GRRRLquest!, a young women's social at the Port Coquitlam Women's Centre, is also offered through this program.

Youthquest! Lesbian and Gay Youth Society of BC
 12424 Harris Road
 Pitt Meadows, BC V3Y 2J4
 Phone: 604-460-9115
 Fax: 604-460-9116
 Toll-free: 1-877-944-6293
 E-mail: yqinfo@youthquest.bc.ca
 Web: www.youthquest.bc.ca

Building Principles
for Program
Design
and Delivery



Guiding Principles for Program Design and Delivery

Effective design and delivery of programs for working with experiential youth will benefit from the recognition of a set of guiding principles. The rights recognized in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child provide a comprehensive and essential foundation for the development and implementation of policy, programs, and strategies to deal with the issue of commercial sexual exploitation of children. Five additional principals serve to extend and enhance this basic foundation, and will ensure the effectiveness and appropriateness of initiatives:

- Youth participation
- Equity of access
- Collective responsibility
- Cultural specificity
- Relational perspective

These five principles have been identified by both youth and practitioners as essential to delivering effective programming to sexually exploited youth.

Innovative Ideas

Based on information gathered from a variety of sources (including experiential children and youth and their families, current research, and the experiences of practitioners), the following sections identify *innovative ideas* for strategies following each of the five principles for working with commercially sexually exploited children, youth at risk, and their families in BC.

These programs are described as innovative ideas rather than as “best practices.” In describing the concept of “best practices,” a Prevention Source BC document (2001) notes that:

By nature the word “best” is highly subjective. As we seek best practices we are simply answering the question, “What practices can we determine based on research and collective experience that are most likely to have the most desirable results while meeting a high ethical standard? If we can determine the common elements of the most successful programs and policies, and build our own efforts on them, we can have some assurance that what we are doing is state of the art.

The current body of literature and research on commercially sexually exploited children and youth includes academic research as well as legal initiatives, government policies, and services. Very little information has been published in the literature about what services have been developed to serve the needs of commercially sexually exploited children and youth, and whether these services are in fact effective. Little evaluation has been done in most areas of practice in the field of commercial sexual exploitation, and there are few evaluations of local programs in Canada. This situation is exacerbated by limited resources for evaluation. (For a good example of an evaluation framework useful for evaluating community-based programs, see the National Centre for Crime Prevention’s Reporting Template, Appendix C.)

In this document, the term “innovative ideas” is used, acknowledging that research and evaluation on effectiveness is generally lacking.

We need creative thinkers, who will not put kids in a box, they don't fit in a box and are precluded from service – need to look at each youth as an individual – ask how can we meet their needs.

– Service provider

The programs featured under each principle were chosen to exemplify strategies that are being undertaken through innovative programming to meet one or more of the principles of practice. Many of the programs were chosen because they were identified by the youth themselves as being particularly effective and helpful. Others were identified by key informants, by service providers, or through the advisory committee guiding the development of this manual. All of the programs were found to be addressing at least four of the five principles in their service development and delivery.

In each of the following sections, a description of the principle is given, followed by examples of programs that are working to meet this principle, either in working specifically with sexually exploited youth or with youth in general. Resources for further information on the principles of practice are listed at the end of each section so that service providers and community members can educate themselves about integrating each of the principles into their own practice. It should be noted that the sections are not mutually exclusive, as each of the featured programs has been chosen because it addresses most of the principles effectively, and each program has outlined how it is working to address each of the five principles. Many of the programs could be listed under several principles, but were listed in the areas in which they were felt to be most innovative or unique.

Principle: Youth Participation

Meaningful youth participation involves recognizing and nurturing the strengths, interests and abilities of young people through the provision of real opportunities for youth to become involved in decisions that affect them at individual and systemic levels.

(McCreary Centre Society, 1999, p. 3)

Youth cannot be seen as only experientially involved in the trade. It is not the only aspect of their identity – we need to see them for the multiple aspects of their identity.

– Service provider

Lots of kids have things built up inside of them and they can't get it out unless they have a chance to – I had a bottle of feelings inside, and theatre gave me the chance to release the anger.

– Experiential youth

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child recognizes the right of children to participate in decisions affecting their own lives. Extending the notion of “decisions” to include development of policies and programs will ensure the relevance, appeal, and effectiveness of these initiatives. Not only do children and youth have the right to express their opinions, but those opinions can be utilized in a constructive manner in the design, development, implementation, delivery, and evaluation of programs and services. Children and youth – especially experiential youth – have valuable knowledge, experience, and skills to share in working on these issues.

Research increasingly points to a connection between youth well-being and a sense of control of their own lives. Three elements appear to help youth build their capacity and empower them to become healthy, responsible adults (Ministry for Children and Families, 2000):

- *Valuing and respect:* participation in the decisions that affect them
- *Knowledge and decision-making skills:* knowledge must be supplemented with a sense of trust that youth know who they are and what they need
- *Creating positive futures:* youth need to believe that they can consciously create better future for themselves

Successful innovations in preventing sexual exploitation of children and youth and in assisting them will involve those children and youth in the design and implementation of programs. Meaningful opportunities must be provided for young people to participate in the development of public policy that affects them.

Experiential children and youth have important expertise in these issues. Where young people have been provided with the opportunity to express their opinions about them and to assist in the design and development of programs, important things have been learned. Experiential youth have valuable insights to offer about their needs and potential solutions at all stages of the continuum.

Emphasis should be on encouraging a sense of belonging, mastery, generosity, and independence for sexually exploited youth. Additionally, programs should be grounded in the unique needs of sexually exploited youth, which should be viewed in a holistic manner, including their specific physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being. Safety, trust, availability, and the ability to respond quickly to the needs of youth are also essential for developing a stable relationship with them.

Due to the sensitive nature of issues surrounding commercial sexual exploitation, youth facilitators and youth in leadership positions must be trained and supported in dealing with potential disclosures from other youth whom they are working with.

Some strategies that programs have used to address youth participation include:

- Youth-driven programming
- Youth advisory board
- Leadership opportunities
- Significant employment opportunities for experiential youth
- Core staff positions occupied by youth
- Hiring boards with youth in decision-making positions
- Activities determined by the youth participants
- Allocation of funds determined by the youth participants
- Youth involvement in evaluating the success of programs
- Youth mentorship opportunities
- Production of media projects that reflect the social reality of sexual exploitation
- Youth theatre presentations and other arts-based educational tools

Services are ALWAYS most effective and empowering when they are delivered and designed by experiential persons. Organizations that allow clients to be staff but then form a hierarchy above them and do not allow them to truly be equal to all staff are merely offering tokenism and their programs and organization will suffer ultimately. Although an organization consisting of experiential persons does make for a lack of organization at times and creates a greater need for conflict resolution, this is to be expected and in fact celebrated, and this too offers empowerment and success within an organization.

– Service provider

When you are in a place where you can be seen, heard, and respected, it makes a big difference.

– Service provider

What is most effective in this job is when youth become aware of their context. This makes them angry and they turn it into something positive. Social justice work, programs like Street Spirits, through this the youth becomes empowered.

– Service provider

DUSK TO DAWN

Strategy

Youth-driven programming; youth advisory board

Mission statement

We are a culturally diverse program that is sensitive to the individual needs of street youth. We offer information, referral to services, and support for street youth. The Dusk to Dawn program strives to be a flexible, supportive, nonjudgmental and safe place run by and for youth. We are dedicated to being a consistent service that assists street-involved youth in making healthier choices for their lives.

Who we are

Dusk to Dawn opened in 1996, created by the United Youth Movement in cooperation with the City of Vancouver, the Vancouver Police Department, community members, and other service providers, such as the Urban Native Youth Association. As a youth-driven initiative, all front-line staff at the centre are under the age of 26. The programs are built upon the belief that all youth have value and are entitled to respect and safety, and should be considered a resource rather than a problem. Youth participation is a central part of the service provision at Dusk to Dawn, which is exemplified by their youth advisory board and opportunities for youth to become employed at the centre, to become peer counsellors, and to determine the kind of space that is available to them. In order to reduce barriers to service provision, youth are welcomed into the centre while under the influence of drugs or alcohol, and a pet room is provided so that animals can be brought in. Dusk to Dawn offers a safe place for street-involved youth ages 21 and under. They provide information, referrals, peer counselling, hot meals, showers, laundry facilities, and recreational activities.

Youth participation

Youth participation at Dusk to Dawn occurs on many levels, as youth decision making and empowerment are encouraged through their programs. Youth volunteer to maintain the space on a nightly basis. Each night, an honorarium is offered to a “tonesetter,” who is seen as a role model for other youth and who maintains the pet room and the youth lockers, for which the tonesetter has keys. The Youth Advisory Board meets regularly to make decisions about policies, rules, activities, and other program decisions. Youth are also paid to sit on the hiring panel when potential staff are being interviewed. Most of the staff have previous involvement with the streets and/or have had addiction issues, so they have experiential knowledge and credibility with the youth.

Collective responsibility

At Dusk to Dawn, collective responsibility takes the form of youth taking ownership over their space and their programs. The rules are developed by the youth themselves, and they are therefore not seen as oppressive, as they are based on principles of safety and respect. When someone steps over the established boundaries, it is often other youth who “call” their peers on how they are out of line.

Equity of access to services

The programs at Dusk to Dawn are designed to be accessible to street-involved youth, as reflected in the hours of operation and the rules that the youth have developed. All programs are free of charge, including snowboarding and other trips, and the centre is centrally located downtown to allow street youth easier access.

Culturally specific programming

Cultural programming is provided through a half-time First Nations liaison worker, whose job is to connect with Aboriginal programs and create connections with them for the youth. Additional cultural activities such as sweats and wood carving are provided for Aboriginal youth. Subculturally relevant activities such as playing punk music and holding chainmail-making workshops are held to address the subcultural roots of the youth who access Dusk to Dawn.

Focus on building relationships

The philosophy behind the programs at Dusk to Dawn is to create a relationship with youth so that if they are ready to make changes in their lives, they will have a safe and trusting person with whom to begin. Staff are hired with diversity in mind so that youth can find a staff member with whom they have something in common, and can therefore connect with more easily.

Dusk to Dawn
St. Paul's Hospital
1056 Comox Street
Vancouver, BC V6E 4L7
Phone: 604-688-0399
Fax: 604-683-0383
E-mail: d2d@vcn.bc.ca

Web: www.members.home.net/dusktilldawn

Hours of operation: Sunday to Thursday, 8:00 p.m. to 6:30 a.m.

JUSTICE FOR GIRLS OUTREACH SOCIETY

Strategies

Youth leadership; social justice approach

Who we are

Justice for Girls promotes support, justice, and equality for adolescent girls who have experienced violence and live in poverty. It is a social justice organization and thus promotes systemic change, with the feminist belief that young women in poverty are the experts of their own experience. Therefore, Justice for Girls works to provide the support and resources that girls need to act on their own behalf in creating change in their lives. Justice for Girls recognizes that lack of institutional power and credibility is a real impediment for young women in achieving their goals, regardless of their skills, intelligence, or ability to articulate their needs. The programs at Justice for Girls uses the knowledge of institutions such as the criminal justice and child welfare systems to assist young women in their day-to-day struggles with violence and poverty. A key goal is to promote community among young women. This is seen as key to empowering young women and creating safety.

Justice for Girls programs include Criminal Justice Monitoring Program (from policing to corrections), Advocacy Program, and Young Women's Internship Program. These programs operate with the awareness that there is a gap between the ideals set out in laws and policies, such as the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child as well as national laws, and the reality of young women's lived experiences of oppression and discrimination. Justice for Girls advocates for laws and policies that ensure young women's rights to safety, dignity, and equality. At the same time, they challenge laws and policies that violate girls' rights or liberties.

Youth participation

The majority of the staff are young women who have lived in poverty. In addition, six-month paid internships are offered to young women ages 15 to 24 who are low-income or formerly street-involved. For specific projects, girls are paid for their involvement in consultations. Justice for Girls believes in young women's leadership as opposed to their involvement or participation. They see that women should be at the forefront of designing all initiatives and education strategies relating to sexual exploitation, and therefore put young women in core staff positions. Support and training is provided to address the discrimination and challenges that young women in leadership positions often face.

Collective responsibility

Justice for Girls acknowledges that sexual exploitation is deeply rooted in many other forms of systemic inequality. With this in mind, they maintain community connections with other organizations that address sexual exploitation and other social justice issues that impact the young women they work with. They see it as their responsibility to continue to educate others and themselves in the development of new strategies to combat the commercial sexual exploitation of children and youth.

Equity of access to services

Justice for Girls was created out of the reality that young women living in poverty are often unable to have their needs met by either youth-serving organizations that cannot account for gender issues or women's organizations that cannot address issues relating to age. All the employees of the programs are required to have an understanding of many forms of interlocking oppressions and how they play themselves out in the lives of adolescent girls. Justice for Girls also educates other organizations and services about the specific impacts of oppression on young women so that they can make their services more accessible.

Culturally specific programming

All programs at Justice for Girls are founded upon anti-racist principles. Staff training involves extensive understanding of theories of oppression and specifically anti-racist feminist approaches to violence and poverty.

Focus on building relationships

Young women are encouraged to define for themselves who is supportive in their lives, as they naturally connect with those people who respectfully address and respond to their lived realities. Connections with advocates and anti-violence workers are made available, as are connections with lawyers for those girls who are in conflict with the law. Young women are also encouraged to build community among themselves, as this is seen as an effective strategy for social change and increased safety.

Evaluation

The Young Women's Internship Program is evaluated through an evaluation form, which is filled out by the interns. Most other work is evaluated by the outcome of the advocacy as well as the impact on each individual young woman who utilizes this service. In general, evaluation is done collectively and on an ongoing basis.

Justice for Girls Outreach Society
Suite 606, 825 Granville Street
Vancouver, BC V6Z 1K9
Phone: 604-689-7887
Fax: 604-689-5600
E-mail: justiceforgirls@hotmail.com
Contact person: Annabel Webb

REDWIRE MAGAZINE

Strategy

Aboriginal youth-driven media

Who we are

Redwire is a voice. Redwire is the stories, the fears, the politics, the wisdom and the words of our youth ... We use the written word and the art of statement to give Native youth their power back, to reclaim their voices and representations from mainstream media, criminalization and victimization.

Redwire Magazine is run by and for Native youth. Redwire has been in print since April 1997 and continues to be the only Native youth-driven magazine in Canada. One of the core beliefs upon which this publication is founded is that the key to healing among Aboriginal communities is self-empowerment. As part of a grassroots movement, Redwire grew out of the Native Youth Movement, a group of young people who were standing up to the government, to Native leaders, and to the world to say what they needed and to fight for their rights, the rights of the land and of Native peoples.

Youth participation

Redwire is by, for, and about Native youth. Native youth decide everything about the magazine, with administrative assistance from the Environmental Youth Alliance. They practise a non-hierarchical system where contributors and staff are equal in importance to the continuation of the magazine. Youth are involved in every step in the creation of Redwire.

Collective responsibility

“Native youth are more likely to be abused because we live in poverty, we live in racism, and we live with alcohol and substance misuse. We live with these things because our language and our resources, our connection with the land, have all been traumatized through colonization. We work with groups of self-empowered youth like the Native Youth Movement. We also work with social service organizations, Aboriginal organizations, and youth networks to talk about issues and build solutions. We do this work through expressing ourselves, finding our voice, and fighting for our rights whether that be in the streets, at an occupation, or through our words and our art.”

Equity of access to services

All Aboriginal youth are encouraged to participate through the creation of a sense of cultural connectedness and shared identity through nurturing and encouraging self-expression, and involvement in the collective process.

Culturally specific programming

“*Redwire* is a culturally specific project. We recognize the marginalization that keeps Native youth on the fringes and we try to bring ourselves back to the centre, the centre of the circle of life, of the four directions, and of our rightful place on Turtle Island. We also try to build acceptance and challenge the marginalization that happens within our own communities, the oppression of silence, homophobia, sexually exploited youth, drug users, alcoholics, artists, half-breeds, different Nations and traditions. These all contribute to the diversity of Native youth and we celebrate that diversity by opening up *Redwire* to all Native youth.”

Focus on building relationships

Relationships are formed with youth both through their contributions to the creative process of the magazine and through reading the material in the final product.

Evaluation processes

Informal evaluation is made through comments by readers through the Web site, e-mail, or letters to the editor. Success is mostly measured through the amount of involvement that youth have with the magazine. Without the youth, the magazine would not succeed, or exist.

Redwire Magazine
Box 34097, Station D
Vancouver, BC V6J 4M1
Phone: 604-602-7226; 604-639-9039
Fax: 604-689-4242
E-mail: info@redwiremag.com
Editor: Tania Willard

STREET SPIRITS THEATRE

Strategy

Youth-driven theatre

Who we are

Street Spirits Theatre has been providing services to youth and communities around BC since 1999. Working in alliance with Youth Around Prince (YAP), this program provides theatre training, social awareness, counselling, employment skill development, and recreation to at-risk youth. Street Spirits actors use their life experiences to create plays that reflect their shared experience. Street Spirits is not exclusively focused on providing services to sexually exploited youth, as they have found that having this particular focus sometimes unnecessarily stigmatizes and labels the youth who access their program. Street Spirits programs do a lot of work around prostitution and sexual exploitation issues in their programs, including issues of date rape, sexual assault, child sexual abuse, and family violence. Although not a specific therapy-based program, the results of the theatre techniques used in relation to issues of personal and social justice have therapeutic outcomes for the youth involved. In offering public performances, Street Spirits attempts to reach as wide an audience as possible in raising awareness of the social issues related to the problems youth face.

Youth participation

Street Spirits is supervised by Andrew Burton, but the operation of the company, booking of shows, design and creation of the shows, advertising, and day-to-day business of the company is carried out by youth.

Collective responsibility

Street Spirits works in cooperation with other community organizations, including Addiction Services, CASEY (Community Against Sexual Exploitation of Youth), Northern Interior Health Unit, and VAWIR (Violence Against Women In Relationships committee). Through public performance, this program promotes involvement by all members of the community in addressing issues of social justice in relation to the lives of youth.

Equity of access to services

Inclusivity is a central part of this program, which is reflected in the very culturally diverse group of participants, including youth with physical and cognitive disabilities. Having sexually exploited youth participate in the

program enables the group to explore the issue of sexual exploitation and to engage other youth in exploring related problems.

Culturally specific programming

Street Spirits uses performance to address issues of discrimination in terms of racism, sexism, homophobia, ageism, and religious intolerance. Their past shows have dealt with such issues as the cultural adjustments made by immigrant families and the issues related to residential schools for First Nations communities.

Focus on building relationships

Street Spirits theatre performances build bridges between youth and adults, as well as between youth and their families and communities. Operating out of YAP, this program brings youth into contact with a complete range of mental, physical, and emotional health services, establishing long-term relationships between youth and service providers.

Evaluation processes

Program evaluation is done through participant feedback interviews both directly after and six months after completing the program; agency feedback from referring agencies; program documentation through youths' records; and audience feedback.

Theatre resources

Books by Paulo Freire and Augusto Boal are useful in developing an understanding of popular education and theatre of the oppressed. Headlines Theatre in Vancouver is headed by David Diamond, who helped start Street Spirits. David can be reached at 604-871-0508.

Street Spirits Theatre
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Prince George, BC V2L 5G6
Phone: 250-565-6332
Fax: 250-565-4209
E-mail: andrew@streetspirits.com
Contact person: Andrew Burton

STREET STORIES

Strategy

Educational media tools created by sexually exploited youth

Who we are

Delivered for the first time in 2000, Street Stories is a media education program that gives youth who have been sexually exploited a chance to learn the skills to tell their stories through video and to create educational materials that could help prevent others from being sexually exploited. Street Stories is operated by the Access to Media Education Society (AMES) on Galiano Island. A main focus of AMES is to provide media access to groups that have traditionally been marginalized in the mainstream media and that otherwise could not afford access to media training and technology. AMES programs empower people to take control over their own stories and ideas, to contribute to increasing public understanding of a number of social justice issues, and to refine skills in the technical aspects of media production. Each student has walked away with increased self-esteem, higher levels of technical training, newly formed peer and industry contacts, and positive visions for their futures.

Since 1997, over 250 street-involved, First Nations, multicultural, queer, HIV-positive, sexually exploited, and developmentally disabled youth have created over 50 videos through AMES programs. Underlying the Street Stories program is an acknowledgment and critique of the social conditions that create child poverty and that make youth vulnerable to sexual exploitation. Street Stories encourages economic self-reliance by providing employment skills, training, and job opportunities to youth looking for an economic alternative to sexual exploitation.

“Street Stories has brought together a diverse group of beautiful people and empowered them through the gift of self-statement ... hearing the voices of sex workers is an important aspect of social change.”

Youth participation

In providing sexually exploited youth with the tools to tell their own stories and share their points of view, this program breathes new life into the value of peer-based education. The participants work collaboratively with other youth and have complete decision-making power over every aspect of their projects and the conditions of their distribution.

“It was mind-opening, challenging, exhausting, and emotionally draining, yet a wonderful source of healing for me.”

Collective responsibility

This program gives participants the communication and media production tools to participate in the media and to continue contributing to the public understanding of the sexual exploitation of youth and related issues, such as violence, sexual abuse, substance abuse, and poverty. Street Stories furthers social justice by removing barriers to education, skills, and training for sexually exploited youth.

Equity of access to services

“Life-saving. Absolution and renewal through pre-artistic statement ... BETTER THAN ANY DRUG! ... I hope other impoverished youth will be able to experience this artistic exhilaration — this natural high.”

As a fully subsidized media education program, Street Stories extends access to media training and technology to individuals who otherwise could not afford it and who are rarely given an opportunity to represent themselves. This program has a policy to hire culturally appropriate staff, and hires video mentors who have all experienced sexual exploitation as youth or who have worked in the sex trade as adults. AMES also offers an Urban Outreach Program to offer participants ongoing access to technical refresher courses and a full media production kit in Vancouver to make resources more accessible to urban youth.

Culturally specific programming

All of the programs run by AMES are specifically designed to meet the needs of traditionally marginalized groups of youth. Inclusivity is a primary aspect of the AMES mandate, which is reflected in their graduate base as well as their staffing policies.

Focus on building relationships

“When I show [my video] to my small community, it may help people to learn where we’ve been.”

Due to the intensity and transformative impact of the program, all participants are heavily bonded by the end. Many participants and staff have gone on to collaborate on other projects and continue to network and socialize with each other.

Evaluation processes

Evaluations are sought in the form of written feedback from students at the end of the program; participants rank and comment on every aspect of the training. Further input is sought from participants through phone calls and invitations to meetings during which they are encouraged to talk about what worked for them and how the program could be run differently.

Upcoming Program: Speaking Out – A Youth Research Project

“Speaking Out” is a research-based project on sexual exploitation in which the issues of poverty, violence, sexual and physical abuse, and drug and alcohol use will be explored. Four youth research teams, supported by community organizations, will identify and collect video testimonies to be compiled in a documentary film. The film will be available for use in education and outreach programs by grassroots organizations to reach specific, targeted audiences such as at-risk youth, teachers, police officers, and social workers.

Videos available

Videos created through Street Stories at Access to Media Education Society, entitled *A Doll's Life* and *Someone to Listen*, are available through AMES.

Access to Media Education Society
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Fax: 250-539-5941
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Contact person: Deblekha Guin

Resources for Youth Participation

The McCreary Centre Society

The McCreary Centre Society has published *The BC Youth Health Action Handbook* (1996), which was designed to help youth and communities develop projects designed by and for youth to improve youth health. It addresses youth participation, youth rights, and youth policy, among other issues related to youth involvement. Since 1995, the McCreary Centre Society has had a Youth Advisory Council, made up of about 15 youth. The council provides a youth-friendly forum for young people to develop skills related to effective participation as well as opportunities to make real contributions.

The McCreary Centre Society
401 North Esmond Avenue
Burnaby, BC V5C 1S4
Phone: 604-291-1996
Fax: 604-291-7308
E-mail: mccreary@lightspeed.bc.ca
Web: www.mcs.bc.ca

Canadian Mental Health Association

The Canadian Mental Health Association has published a practical guide on youth participation, *Working with Young People: A Guide to Youth Participation in Decision-Making* (1995). It is designed to help community organizations effectively involve young people in decision making about policies and programs that affect their lives.

Canadian Mental Health Association, BC Division
1200–111 Melville Street
Vancouver, BC V6E 3V6
Phone: 604-688-3234
Fax: 604-688-3236
E-mail: office@cmha-bc.org
Web: www.cmha-bc.org

Centre of Excellence for Youth Engagement

Recently established in Toronto, the Centre of Excellence for Youth Engagement is one of five Centres of Excellence supported by Health Canada. Its focus is on effective strategies for engaging youth in making decisions for healthy living. The primary goal of the Centre is to support lasting youth empowerment so that young people become confident in themselves and are able to make responsible choices for healthy living.

A unique feature of the Centre is its commitment to engage youth directly in planning, designing, and implementing the Centre's activities, in partnership with health and academic professionals. The Centre will develop tools to evaluate, measure, and demonstrate effective youth engagement, and create an accessible clearinghouse for information on youth engagement issues.

Centre of Excellence for Youth Engagement
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Principle: Equity of Access to Services

When I was 16 and actively on the street, I was not given help in Vancouver as a gay youth ... I was passed from association to association ... there was nowhere to go.

– Experiential youth

If kids have a drug problem don't just push them out ... provide counselling or else they will have to steal or sell their body.

– Experiential youth

We need to educate doctors, nurses, social workers. This is my daughter – these young girls are not seen as people or as humans – they would never treat me like that – it is sensitivity and judgment – they think she's got no value – she's just a junkie ho ... we need to give the message that these children are children and they are valuable ... they've been marginalized and so have their families – they are given the message that they are damaged goods.

– Parent

All children and youth have the right to access appropriate services. Appropriate services should have maximum accessibility and be relevant to all young people. Services must address the diversity of children and youth, particularly with respect to:

- Abilities and disabilities
- Age and stage of development
- Gender
- Language, culture, and ethnicity
- Sexual orientation
- Spirituality and religion
- Socioeconomic status

Barriers that hinder or prevent commercially sexually exploited children or youth from accessing help must be reduced or eliminated. Many sexually exploited youth find it difficult to access services because of their hours of operation, location, rules about using drugs and alcohol, lack of outreach, and lack of awareness about the lived realities of youth who have been sexually exploited. Further, a continuum of services for sexually exploited children and youth and their families is required to ensure accessibility.

Some strategies that programs have undertaken to address equity of access are:

- Strong understanding of the many forms of interlocking oppression
- Support and training for youth to access core staff positions
- Education and support through telephone or Internet services
- Services available to people who do not speak English
- Services available to youth who are using drugs or alcohol (harm reduction model)
- Outreach programs that serve youth in their own environment
- Anti-harassment, anti-discrimination policies
- Health care services that are sensitive to issues faced by sexually exploited youth
- One-stop comprehensive services
- Housing for youth seeking to exit sexual exploitation

PRINCIPLE: EQUITY OF ACCESS TO SERVICES

- School-based programming
- Hours of operation that reflect the needs of sexually exploited youth
- Flexible services that change with the needs of youth
- Rules and guidelines that are developed by the youth themselves
- Free services
- Drop-in services with consistent support
- Recognition of the particular needs of marginalized youth

My daughter is 24 – she has been out there for 10 years – but she is still 14 – she doesn't know how to access help ... for kids on the street their development stops from the time they hit the streets.

– Parent

There are a lot of middle class values around the structure of programs.

– Service provider

ADOLESCENT OUTREACH SERVICES

Strategy

Counselling for street-involved youth

Who we are

Adolescent Outreach Services provides counselling to street-involved youth up to age 25 years, including individual, couples, and family counselling. They also provide outreach to other service providers and offer education to the community and other youth service providers. The counselling offered through Adolescent Outreach Services is not directed by the workers but by the youth themselves, as they work through the therapeutic process at their own pace.

Youth participation

Youth accessing counselling through Adolescent Outreach Services are actively involved in developing the therapeutic format that best suits their needs. Their success in the program is dependent upon their willingness and ability to participate.

Collective responsibility

Adolescent Outreach Services has provided numerous workshops regarding commercial sexual exploitation in an attempt to educate youth and adults in the community.

Equity of access to services

Adolescent Outreach Services has flexible hours that reflect the needs of youth who are involved in street activities. The program was specifically developed to serve street youth, and when the accessibility needs of the youth change, the program changes with them.

Focus on building relationships

The counselling process focuses on building a relationship between the youth and the counsellor. Once this happens, the needs of the youth are more easily fulfilled and the therapeutic process flows more easily.

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Contact persons: Shana Chetner and Ray Edney

BURNABY YOUTH CLINIC

Strategy

Health services in a youth centre

Who we are

The Burnaby Youth Clinic (BYC) services youth between the ages of 13 and 21 years. However, they will see anyone of any age and refer as necessary. BYC provides free medical services, including free contraceptives, pregnancy testing/referral, STD testing, medical assessment, and emotional support and referral. Two counsellors are available on site to provide the psychological support, care, and reporting (as necessary) of sexual abuse/assault. Referrals for high risk youth involved in the sex trade, drugs, gangs, self-mutilation, suicide, depression, or other mental health issues are also seen by these youth-oriented clinical psychologists.

The goal of the youth clinic is to provide care and support in a nonjudgmental environment where youth feel safe and are treated with respect. BYC provides a place where youth can dump their “garbage” and work with supportive staff to sift through and deal with their concerns and priorities for better health. Youth at risk or in danger are quickly assessed and connected with the appropriate resources to provide them with a safe living environment. Confidentiality is important except where a youth is in danger. BYC aims to empower youth to make their own decisions based on all the facts. Sexually exploited youth come to the clinic to have their needs addressed, and are not forced to do anything that they do not want to do. The staff at BYC believe that all youth need to know that they have some control in their lives, and empowering them is vital to their self-esteem and self-worth.

Youth participation

When initially visiting the Burnaby Youth Clinic, all youth are screened for medical, psychological, and emotional risk behaviours, and are given the choice to participate in the information gathering or not. The needs and priorities of the youth themselves are addressed first. A trusting, nonjudgmental environment is provided in which any issue can be discussed without prejudice. Youth who are sexually exploited are particularly wary of anything authority-based, and BYC staff therefore try very hard to make the program youth-driven. Additionally, youth who are reluctant to talk can communicate with the staff through the talking wall, an area of the clinic where youth can share their thoughts by writing on the wall in order to provide feedback to the staff and use their voice in another way. The BYC counsellors employ a variety of methods, such as art therapy, to help establish a trusting relationship with youth.

Collective responsibility

The BYC works with youth workers, social workers, and foster care and other agencies as resources and support for youth at risk of being sexually exploited and those already involved in the sex trade. The BYC also provides educational services to incarcerated youth. These educational sessions focus on positive sexual knowledge and information. Youth normally receive an abundance of information on the negative aspects of being sexual, such as STDs, getting pregnant, and assault, but receive little information on what it is to experience touch that is not violent and not “work”-related. These sessions focus on what sexuality is, how to please a partner, how to please oneself, and different kinds of touch. Many of these information sessions are offered to young men who desperately want to know more about man-to-woman and man-to-man relationships.

Equity of access to services

The youth clinic has limited hours of operation, open only nine hours per week. In that time, Burnaby Youth Clinic staff see over 30 youth in three hours. Not all of these youth are involved in the sex trade, but those who are feel comfortable and return to the clinic even with the variety and mix of youth that we see.

Culturally specific programming

All youth of any culture, nationality, or belief system are welcome to the clinic. The atmosphere of acceptance and diversity is seen as an enrichment to the clinic. Posters in different languages hang on the walls, and intolerance among the youth in the clinic is addressed directly.

Focus on building relationships

“Relationship building is the crux of running a youth clinic. Word of mouth is the best form of advertising and endorsement.” At the BYC, the nurses, physician, counsellors, and support staff are very sensitive and aware of the importance of establishing a relationship with the youth. All youth are given the time they need to talk and be cared for. This is important, as youth need time to express themselves and establish safety.

Evaluation

The Burnaby Youth Clinic conducted a youth survey asking for feedback about the program. The talking wall is used as a tool for getting feedback, as well as word of mouth through other youth agencies.

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PACE

Strategies

Peer-based, one-to-one services; second-stage housing

Who we are

The PACE Society was founded in 1994 by a group of former prostitutes who recognized the lack of specific services available to individuals engaged in prostitution.

PACE is dedicated to creating a caring and judgment-free environment where individuals can make a free choice regarding their lifestyle. Programs, services, and support respect the individuals' needs and decisions. PACE is dedicated to reducing harm and abolishing conditions that lead to prostitution and to commercial sexual exploitation of children and youth. PACE's philosophy is based on a peer-driven model that creates a safe, nonjudgmental environment in which participants can work towards economic freedom and reunification with a community that is accepting and supportive of their difficulties and their diversity. Once marginalized by the survival sex trade and the devastating consequences that occur, participants are now able to move forward with their lives in a positive, proactive way.

In addition to the ongoing outreach, education, advocacy, and support services for sexually exploited youth, PACE has undertaken a number of other projects. With support from the British Columbia Ministry of Attorney General, PACE held the Vancouver Sexually Exploited Youth Forum, a focus group of over 35 sexually exploited youth that collected their input on solutions to problems they identified. In partnership with Urban Native Youth Association, Habitat for Humanity, and Save the Children Canada, a housing project for sexually exploited youth has been established. Four units of housing are now occupied by youth (24 and under) wishing to leave the survival sex trade.

Youth participation

PACE is active in ensuring that youth have a voice in determining the programs and services offered to them. In the housing project and the outreach program, youth were active in every aspect of program design and implementation. Through the youth forum, PACE has gathered input from sexually exploited youth about what they seek in services and support.

Collective responsibility

PACE has established a broad-based community partnership and is establishing a best practices program to prevent the recruitment of high-risk young women who are currently incarcerated. Additionally, PACE offers information seminars and presentations to service groups, organizations, community groups, students, and professionals.

Equity of access to services

PACE operates a comprehensive outreach program designed by a group of youth involved in the survival sex trade. The goal of the outreach program is to make nonjudgmental and significant contact with youth in the survival sex trade in order to assist them to leave the streets.

Focus on building relationships

PACE operates on a peer-driven model of service delivery, with many of their volunteers and employees having been clients at one time. PACE offers one-to-one support in the form of individual counselling, referrals, and advocacy. Youth are offered individual support with setting and attaining goals, and one-on-one assistance with education, employment, and skills training programs.

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PEERS: PROSTITUTES EMPOWERMENT, EDUCATION AND RESOURCE SOCIETY

Strategies

Peer-based model of services; youth conference; youth employment

Who we are

PEERS is dedicated to providing effective programs and services to prostitutes, ex-prostitutes, and sexually exploited youth. The organization is based in Victoria, BC, and operates out of a downtown office. PEERS was established by a group of former sex workers, sex workers, and community supporters. Their ongoing programs include outreach, peer counselling, advocacy, a place to do community hours, volunteer opportunities, access to computers and the Internet, public education, and training. PEERS receives core annual operating funding from the Ministry of Children and Family Development. The majority of staff currently employed by PEERS have had personal experience in the sex trade themselves.

Mission statement

PEERS is a nonprofit society established by ex-prostitutes and community supporters. We are dedicated to the empowerment, education, and support of prostitutes. We respect those involved in prostitution and we work to improve their safety and working conditions. We assist individuals who desire to leave the sex industry and strive to increase public understanding.

Youth statement

*There is no such thing as a child or juvenile prostitute; these children and youth are sexually exploited, and any language or reference to them must reflect this belief. Sexual exploitation of youth and children in Canada is rampant; the average age of entry into the sex trade is 14 years old. As a youth, please don't think that it can never happen to you or someone you know. It can happen to anyone, anywhere. The sex trade is not as exciting as the entertainment industry makes it out to be. Most of the time, it's not a choice, especially amongst youth. The majority of youth are **forced** (through a need to survive), **intimidated** (through blackmail and manipulation), and **seduced** (by the false promises of love, acceptance, wealth, glamour, and drugs). These are **tactics** meant only to exploit, abuse and harm youth*

and children through the Sex Trade. PEERS has identified these as FIST methods.

Out from the Shadows Conference

PEERS co-sponsored an event in Victoria on March 12, 1998, where 55 delegates with experience as sexually exploited children and youth from across the Americas, presented a Declaration and Agenda for Action to representatives from participating governments, international nongovernmental organizations and non-experiential delegates at “Out from the Shadows – First International Summit of Sexually Exploited Youth,” a five-day event that provided a venue for youth to speak out. The recommendations presented have formed the basis of many of PEERS’s new programs. Reflecting the principles outlined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, some of the recommendations were:

- Education is vital in our struggle against the sexual exploitation of children and youth.
- The voices and experiences of sexually exploited children and youth must be heard and be central to the development and implementation of action.
- We all have a right to resources that are directed towards sexually exploited children and youth and our very diverse needs.
- As children and youth, we are all vulnerable to sexual exploitation whether male, female, or transgendered.
- Our laws must protect us as sexually exploited children and youth and no longer punish us as criminals.

In response to these recommendations PEERS offers scholarships, exiting programs, public education, volunteer training opportunities, work placement, and employment support counselling and advocacy as well as representation at police departments and CRAT teams, where we advocate for the safe working conditions of sex trade workers. All of our initiatives are client-driven and seek to empower those in the sex trade or sexually exploited youth.

Youth participation

Project STEAM (Sex Trade Education and Awareness Manuals) is a project developed by youth and continues to thrive by hiring sexually exploited youth to develop resource materials for all sexually exploited youth and sex trade workers. It offers sexually exploited youth an opportunity to access employable skills. All youth are paid the same wage as every other PEERS staff member and these wages enable a youth to seek alternatives to the sex trade. Four manuals developed and produced by two sexually exploited youth are available. The manuals are aimed at educating different groups about issues of youth sexual exploitation. Manuals are available for parents and teachers, youth, doctors and nurses, and professionals. Workshops have since been created in response to each manual. All PEERS youth initiatives require the consultation and inclusion of experiential youth.

Collective responsibility

PEERS continues to operate as a collective, including all staff in decision making and hiring. Every staff member has the opportunity to voice their concerns and be apart of a subcommittee that will present recommendations for staff consensus. With no executive director, all staff have as much authority and assume the same responsibility as each other.

Equity of access to services

PEERS has always believed that services need to be tailored and accessible to those they are designed to serve. Their outreach workers are former sex trade workers and have been sexually exploited youth themselves, which means they are aware of the barriers and lack of resources faced by men and women with experience in the sex trade. The job of the outreach workers is to seek out those in need of the services PEERS offers and assist them in assessing their needs. PEERS services are nonjudgmental and nondiscriminatory, and include men, women, transgendered, and all ages as long as they have experience in the sex trade or as sexually exploited youth.

The PEERS public education department offers workshops specifically focusing on youth, teachers, professionals, social workers, and police. They present in the public school system and inform students of their choices and teachers of their responsibility to have resources available to youth who have been or are experiencing sexual exploitation.

Culturally specific programming

All PEERS programs recognize and address the isolation of youth belonging to marginalized groups, as many PEERS staff members have been marginalized youth and adults themselves. PEERS has developed an Aboriginal component to its programs that includes traditional ways of healing and learning and is organized and designed by an Aboriginal outreach and support worker. PEERS continues to work with all marginalized groups and believes that through appropriate community involvement and relationship building, they will better serve their clients by educating them on ways to reconnect with their culture. In order to achieve this goal, PEERS works collaboratively with many programs and support groups addressing the needs of people living in poverty, Aboriginal people, and survivors of abuse, as well as other service providers.

Focus on building relationships

PEERS programs are designed to reintegrate experiential youth back into mainstream society by locating outside resources and supports and choosing together what realistic goals the youth wish to pursue. Sexual exploitation is very isolating and in order to be successful in exiting, youth must find supports that are realistic and that reflect their own personal experiences. Peer support at PEERS consists of experiential youth and adults, and every staff member has the opportunity to become a mentor; the youth themselves are allowed to choose whom they best connect with. With the volunteer component at PEERS, youth can stay connected with PEERS as long as they wish, and often are mentored into paid positions through the support of the staff and department they choose to volunteer with.

Evaluation processes

PEERS projects identify a “best practices model” by utilizing evaluative research methods, including baseline questionnaires, quantitative and qualitative data collection instruments, and focus groups methodology. Client groups as well as staff are included in both the questionnaires and focus groups. PEERS programs and services are always open to change in order to reflect the needs of the youth and adults they serve. An evaluation framework is currently being developed consisting of ongoing performance indicators to monitor specific project and to analyze outcomes at the end of each project.

Resources

Impossible, Eh? is a report released in conjunction with Save the Children Canada. This report offers a model to PEERS and a look at the background and development of PEERS as a society.

Dispelling the Myths provides a comparison of indoor venues and outdoor venues, with some 100 experiential persons reporting on their experiences.

Gender Analysis looks at the experience of men and women in the sex trade and provides some valuable insight into the ways in which the experiences of these two genders compare with one another.

PEERS

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YOUTH AROUND PRINCE RESOURCE CENTRE

Strategy

One-stop comprehensive youth services

Who we are

Youth Around Prince Resource Centre (YAP) was developed in response to community and government demand for changes within the child welfare system. Since 1997, this organization has been one of the resource centres in Prince George serving youth at risk. Youth speak of YAP as “one-stop shopping,” meaning the ability to access services quickly and respectfully, especially when they need multiple services. Services at YAP are co-located, multidisciplinary, integrated, and youth-centred. Services to youth are in an environment that is responsive to the evolving needs of youth.

As a community, YAP is committed to developing an environment that embraces the principles of respect, equality, diversity, and fun, which encourages acceptance and belonging and assists youth in reaching their goals. YAP works in partnership with the Prince George Native Friendship Centre’s Sexually Exploited Youth Outreach program, and the outreach worker spends the majority of her time at YAP, specifically addressing the needs of sexually exploited youth. Many youth speak of this centre as giving them a sense of family, as well as being nonjudgmental and accepting. Some of the programs offered are an Alternative School Program, Welcoming Project for Youth in Care, Alcohol and Drug program, Intersect Mental Health Counsellor, Youth Support Social Worker, and Public Health Services.

Youth participation

Youth are offered employment opportunities at the centre, are able to develop and implement their own program ideas, are invited and encouraged to sit on committees as advisors or to provide presentations, and are trained in providing peer support and advocacy.

Collective responsibility

YAP works in partnership with other community agencies in providing services to sexually exploited youth, particularly with the sexually exploited youth outreach worker. YAP also partners with Human Resources Development Canada, the BC Ministry of Children and Family Development, the local school district, addiction services, mental health, public health, and independent contractors. YAP programs also offer

training to agencies about the issues surrounding youth sexual exploitation.

Equity of access to services

Outreach and support groups are offered to ensure equity of access for at-risk youth. YAP also encourages youth involvement from whatever position they are in, by having a harm reduction model of service delivery to ensure that addictions or involvement in sexual exploitation will not inhibit youth from accessing services.

Culturally specific programming

All programs, both philosophically and in practice, actively incorporate principles of cultural specificity. YAP also offers special cultural days and events, as well as specific partnerships with Aboriginal service providers, such as through the Native Friendship Centre Reconnect Program's drop-in and dances.

Focus on building relationships

One-to-one relationships are built through a variety of programs at YAP, as well as through the employment of youth at the centre. Youth training is offered on peer counselling, advocacy, and support, as well as youth-driven peer training and presentations.

Evaluation processes

Evaluation is done through written and oral testimonies of youth, quantitative statistics of youth accessing services, and community feedback.

Upcoming project

Staff at Youth Around Prince are currently developing a pilot project addressing youth sexual exploitation in schools and in youth containment facilities.

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Principle: Collective Responsibility

Action to resolve the problem of commercial sexual exploitation of children and youth is the responsibility of all members of society. Government, business, communities, and individuals must be involved in addressing this problem. Each of us has a personal and corporate responsibility for working together to stop the commercial sexual exploitation of children and youth.

The British Columbia Youth Policy Framework notes the importance of community asset building, which is defined (Ministry for Children and Families, 2000, p. 7) as:

An approach that builds the commitment and capacity of residents, families, neighbourhoods, schools, youth-serving organizations and businesses to take positive meaningful action to support the successful growth and health development of youth. These assets provide a mechanism for mobilizing communities, organizations and individuals to take action that can make a difference.

The goals of asset building are to develop supportive communities that respect the rights of youth; to meet youths' needs for safe and healthy communities that allow them to thrive; and to involve youth actively in the creation of their community's future.

Some strategies that programs have undertaken to address collective responsibility are:

- Social justice approach
- Workshops in the community to raise awareness about youth sexual exploitation
- Opportunities for youth involvement in community education
- Seeking youth feedback for projects on sexual exploitation
- Forming connections with other community organizations
- Doing work in alliance with other supportive programs
- Support for families and parents of sexually exploited youth
- Research about the reality of commercial sexual exploitation
- Advocacy within government and other institutions that affect youth for the enforcement of children's rights and human rights
- Removal of barriers to full participation in society faced by sexually exploited youth
- Tougher sentencing for pedophiles, sex offenders, and others who abuse children and youth

If we are going to make changes for the better, our younger generation needs to be treated better.

– Experiential youth

They are children – this is not a lifestyle choice.

– Parent

ALLIANCE FOR THE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN

Strategy

Research; advocacy; youth-driven educational projects

Who we are

The Alliance for the Rights of Children is a multi-sector partnership of organizations and individuals committed to ending child commercial sexual exploitation. The society is essentially an umbrella organization to unite child-serving organizations, government, law enforcement, academics, legal experts, human rights experts, youth, parents, and others. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child provides the guiding principles for the organization.

Youth participation

The Alliance seeks to involve youth as members of the society, as employees of contracts, and through paid consultations. It specifically seeks projects to employ youth in leadership roles. In a recent educational project, an experiential youth was hired to develop a series of posters and other educational materials on the issues of sexual exploitation that would engage youth at an intelligent level and enhance their critical-thinking skills. The youth project leader formed an advisory committee of experiential youth to drive the program, and was also supported by adults who had expertise in other areas, such as poster design and performance arts. The youth who was employed for this project also designed an arts performance piece that was performed at a conference, emphasizing the power of artistic expression and validating the youth's skill as an artist.

Collective responsibility

The Alliance for the Rights of Children is a multi-sector coalition, bringing individuals and experts together around human rights issues as they pertain to the lives of children and youth. The Alliance recently co-hosted a conference, along with the Justice Institute of BC and the Ministry of Attorney General, that brought together Community Action Teams from around BC. The educational and arts-based project was showcased at the conference by the youth project leader.

Culturally specific programming

The members of this organization understand that when children and youth are targeted for violence, this is often due to larger societal racism, sexism, ableism, and homophobia. These issues intersect with additional vulnerabilities such as age, homelessness, mental and physical health, and prior sexual abuse, putting youth more at risk for sexual exploitation. The Alliance for the Rights of Children seeks to address these concerns within their educational material as well as within their research interests and policy work.

Focus on building relationships

The Alliance for the Rights of Children works to build relationships with local, national, and international organizations that are working on the issue of human rights as they relate to the rights of children and youth. Through bringing members together, relationships are also built between local people and their communities as they strategize to advocate for national compliance with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and other human rights standards.

Evaluation processes

Evaluation processes vary depending on the project that the Alliance has undertaken.

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KELOWNA CASEY

Strategy

Community awareness week

Who we are

Kelowna CASEY (Community Against the Sexual Exploitation of Youth) is a registered nonprofit society (as of September 27, 2000). It was initially established in Kelowna, BC, in June 1996, as a proactive response to the Attorney General's announcement of a Provincial Action Plan on Prostitution. CASEY was one of the first community action teams formed as a result of that announcement. CASEY's mandate is to prevent and ultimately eliminate the sexual exploitation of children and youth in Kelowna and other communities by raising public awareness, by education, and by working cooperatively with enforcement and direct service agencies. CASEY is a grassroots community action team that draws its membership from the community at large, service providers, community agencies, RCMP, and government. Ongoing activities are letter-writing campaigns, media exposure, distributing fuchsia ribbons and pins (representing sexually exploited youth), and holding the annual Stop the Sexual Exploitation of Children and Youth Awareness Week in March.

It may be coincidental that the reduction in numbers of youth being sexually exploited in Kelowna fell dramatically after each Awareness Week, but CASEY believes that their messages have been heard. The city of Kelowna proclaimed the first Stop the Sexual Exploitation of Children and Youth Awareness Week in March 1998. That first Awareness Week included hanging a banner over a "stroll," a public forum, a media campaign, and other activities. The second Awareness Week, in March 1999, was proclaimed locally, provincially, and in some other communities around the province. Television and radio commercials were also developed as part of the second awareness campaign. A third Awareness Week was held in March 2000, when the issue of sexual exploitation of youth was featured on the radio program *Show Kids You Care*, talk shows, and news programs. CASEY also held mall displays and youth art and writing contests. These awareness campaigns have focused on humanizing the victims of sexual exploitation and raising awareness that the sexual exploitation of a person under the age of 18 is a crime and under the age 19 is child abuse.

Youth participation

CASEY programs are committed to involving youth in all of their operations. CASEY has employed experiential youth in all of its programs.

Collective responsibility

CASEY started by developing an inventory of capacities in its community, increasing cooperation, communication, and collaboration between existing

agencies and services, and then building on those capacities and strengthened partnerships to address identified gaps. Participants agreed early on that their community development efforts would have to encompass the whole community, but they also had a specific agenda to increase their influence. CASEY was invited to present a workshop on raising public awareness at an international conference on sexually exploited youth, From Answers to Action, in May 2000 in Edmonton, Alberta.

Focus on building relationships

By working cooperatively with the various mandates, professionals, service providers, and media in the community, CASEY simultaneously addresses prevention, enforcement, service gaps, public awareness, and the needs of youth and their families. It has increased effective relationships among agencies in the community by maintaining a commitment to noncompetition and cooperation.

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SAFETEEN: POWERFUL ALTERNATIVES TO VIOLENCE

Strategy

Violence prevention programs

Who we are

SafeTeen is a violence prevention program that has been implemented in elementary and secondary schools (grades 6 to 12) in BC since 1983. The SafeTeen program is primarily experiential and utilizes a youth-specific assertiveness model and a delivery style that has been extremely well received by students.

The program is delivered in separate-gender groups with a same-gender facilitator, with a follow-up coed program available when funding allows. The Girls Program focus is on assault prevention, sexual harassment, and healthy relationships, and has a physical self-defence component. The Boys Program focus is de-escalation of violent confrontation among males, sexual consent, and healthy relationships. Both programs deal with racism and homophobia, same-gender violence, and verbal violence. The skills taught in the programs give youth a way of standing up for themselves and what they believe in that is nonviolent and yet still feels powerful. SafeTeen provides youth with the awareness to access authentic inner strength and with concrete skills to deal with sexual exploitation and abuse of all kinds. It also supports and teaches youth to be free of self-blame and to defend against external blame for past, current, or future abuse.

SafeTeen addresses issues of power – not teaching youth to take someone else’s power but teaching them how to hold their own.

The SafeTeen motto is *Hold your Power / Speak your Truth*.

Youth participation

The program is skill-based and gives youth hands-on experience and participation in communicating from a place of inner strength. Using role-plays, real-life scenarios that youth can identify with are used to practise the skills demonstrated in the program. The program supports the empowerment of older youth to mentor and teach younger ones these life skills, and also provides training for adults to support and teach youth the empowerment and violence prevention skills.

Collective responsibility

SafeTeen offers training for adult males and females – parents, youth workers, academics, and educators – who wish to pass on the skills to the youth they work and live with.

Equity of access to services

SafeTeen is currently in partnership with the BC Teachers' Federation to train teachers province-wide. The goal is to build capacity within communities, thereby making the skills accessible to all youth regardless of socioeconomic circumstances or availability of school funding. The school-based focus of the program ensures that all youth who are attending school will receive the skills along with their peers. At-risk youth are not singled out, as SafeTeen believes that all youth are at risk.

Culturally specific programming

A SafeTeen First Nations program is being co-developed with First Nations facilitators and a First Nations Program Director. The goal is to provide the SafeTeen violence prevention and empowerment skills with a First Nations cultural/spiritual focus via strong same-race/same-gender role models for First Nations youth province-wide. As well, specific workshops facilitated by gay facilitators can be provided for gay youth.

Focus on building relationships

SafeTeen offers a mentorship program in which a team of secondary school youth along with a few support adults in their school can be trained to bring the violence prevention skills to pre-teens in elementary schools in surrounding areas. Training is also offered for mother/daughters and father/sons in order to increase awareness and communication around sensitive and volatile issues and to improve their relationships with this understanding.

Evaluation process

For the past 18 years, SafeTeen evaluation forms have been handed out at the end of every program in BC schools. The programs have also been the subject of independent study by the University of Victoria and the Victoria Sexual Assault Centre. Some independent school districts have created their own evaluation procedures in order to establish a rationale for future funding.

SafeTeen: Powerful Alternatives to Violence
306 East 24th Avenue
Vancouver, BC V5V 1Z9
Phone: 604-255-5147
Fax: 604-255-5196
E-mail: safeteen@telus.net
Contact person: Anita Roberts

STREET FEST 2001 – OUR QUEST FOR STATEMENT

Strategy

Street festival highlighting youth talents and diversity

Who we are

Street Fest 2001 – Our Quest for Statement, was held in a parking facility at 520 West Georgia Street in downtown Vancouver on March 9, 2001. This one-day event celebrated the annual Stop the Sexual Exploitation of Children and Youth Week (March 4-11) by highlighting the talents and diversity of street-involved and/or sexually exploited youth. The purposes of Street Fest 2001 were: (1) to create a safe environment that would address the prevention of sexual exploitation, promote harm reduction, raise public/community awareness, increase youth awareness, and increase youth and community participation; (2) to foster a “culture of peace” where all members of the community would come together to better understand the many issues surrounding street-involved and sexually exploited youth; (3) to create a space where various community services that cater specifically to the needs of the youth could display their services in order for everyone to learn about the different programs and services available; and (4) to provide a showcase highlighting the incredible and diverse talents of the youth.

Youth participation

The organization, implementation, and success of the festival was the result of a youth-driven process. The steering committee consisted of youth, who were involved in every aspect of the development and delivery of Street Fest 2001. The final report was also guided through youth involvement.

Collective responsibility

The festival increased public awareness and community involvement through the creation of an environment where all members of the community came together to better understand the many issues surrounding sexual exploitation. Street Fest 2001 also worked with service providers, organizations, and diverse community representatives to ensure a broad spectrum of interests and participation.

Equity of access to services

The event was centrally located in Vancouver to ensure that as many members of the community could attend as possible. Youth were encouraged and supported in their participation in the event through their involvement in the planning and implementation of the festival.

Focus on building relationships

Street Fest provided the community with a unique opportunity to become acquainted with the people they share their neighbourhood with. Street youth, sexually exploited youth, service providers, and volunteers from the local universities spent time together organizing the event and celebrating the day of the event.

Evaluation

A final youth committee meeting was held after Street Fest to discuss the successes of the project and what should be changed and improved for the next year's event. Service providers who participated in the festival were also asked for their feedback.

In August 1999, Save the Children Canada formed a national network of children and youth called Sexually Exploited Youth Speak Out (SEYSO) in Montreal. SEYSO believes that experiential youth are experts who can find relevant solutions to stop commercial sexual exploitation and prevent children and youth from becoming exploited. SEYSO provides young people with peer support while building skills and enhancing abilities in a healthy and fun way. SEYSO has developed a Web site at www.seyso.net that provides youth with a variety of information on issues surrounding sexual exploitation, information about upcoming events, program information, and a member message board. Youth have ongoing input into the creation and maintenance of the Web site.

**Save the Children Canada
2177 West 42nd Avenue
Vancouver, BC V6M 2B7
Phone: 604-437-5881
Fax: 604-437-5885**

TCO²

Strategy

Youth theatre presentations in BC schools

Who we are

TCO² stands for “Taking Care of Ourselves and Taking Care of Others,” a group of youth who use skits and interactive role-plays to show children and youth prevention strategies to stop themselves and others from becoming sexually exploited or involved in a street lifestyle. TCO² discourages youth from considering life on the street and exposes the real dangers of street life and the sex trade. Presentations include:

- A realistic look at the dangers of street life, and the myths and false stereotypes of independence and glamour
- Practical ways by which youth can prevent exploitation and take care of themselves and each other
- Methods used by pimps to lure children and youth to the street and into the sex trade
- What the Youth Against Violence Line is for and how to use it

Resource materials are included in *Being Aware, Taking Care*, a resource kit for educators, parents, police, and communities. The kit includes:

- A facilitator’s guide and a 16-minute videotaped TCO² performance
- A guide for parents, counsellors, youth workers, teachers, and police that points to early warning signs and provides advice on what to do and where to get help
- A community guide and video to help communities develop an action plan to prevent and address youth sexual exploitation

Youth participation

These workshops are facilitated by youth for youth. The workshops are structured to meet the needs of children ages 11 to 13 and youth ages 14 to 17. Workshops are interactive, allowing participants to discuss issues that are specific to their school and community.

Collective responsibility

Workshops are delivered to all levels of community, including children and youth, police, parents, educators, and other members of the community.

Equity of access to services

Service is provided to communities free of charge within the Lower Mainland. Efforts are made to minimize travel costs for communities outside the Lower Mainland. One option presented to youth during the workshop is the Youth Against Violence Line. This anonymous, confidential toll-free line is designed as a resource for youth to report information regarding threats of violence, if they are scared, or if they don't know what to do. This is a safe and effective way for youth to report things before they happen, to prevent someone from getting hurt, and to let the police know when someone has a weapon or when there is going to be a fight.

Focus on building relationships

Throughout the workshops, participants are encouraged to talk with trusted adults and members of the community to seek support for themselves and others. A “for youth by youth” service delivery model demonstrates positive role modelling and sets the groundwork for youth to work together to take action.

Evaluation

Participants are provided with an evaluation questionnaire assessing the delivery and content of the workshop. Each completed evaluation is individually reviewed and recommendations are made as needed.

TCO² – Taking Care of Ourselves and Taking Care of Others
Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General
Community Programs Division
201–4180 Lougheed Highway
Burnaby, BC V5C 6A7
Phone: 604-660-2605
Fax: 604-775-2674
E-mail: community.programs@ag.gov.bc.ca

Resources for Collective Responsibility

Being Aware, Taking Care

Being Aware, Taking Care is a resource binder consisting of two videos with facilitator's guides and an information booklet for parents, teachers, counsellors, youth workers, and police. This resource aims to educate parents, teachers, youth, and all those who work with youth about child and youth sexual exploitation and prostitution. *Being Aware, Taking Care* was developed in 1999 by the Ministry of Attorney General in consultation with other ministries, parents, youth, and front-line service providers. It has been distributed to every school in the province, school district offices, public health units, Aboriginal friendship centres, Community Action Teams, crime prevention offices, and other related agencies.

Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General
Community Programs Division
201-4180 Lougheed Highway
Burnaby, BC V5C 6A7
Phone: 604-660-2605
Fax: 604-775-2674
E-mail: community.programs@ag.gov.bc.ca

Community Action Teams (CAT)

Community Action Teams are community groups that work with the Provincial Prostitution Unit to develop local strategies to help prevent commercial sexual exploitation and address prostitution-related issues. These teams are made up of youth, parents, police, street outreach workers, health professionals, social workers, school officials, nonprofit agencies, and representatives from provincial and municipal governments.

The following are some examples of what Community Action Teams have been doing to address the sexual exploitation of children and youth:

- *Victoria CRAT (Capital Regional Action Team on the Sexual Exploitation of Youth)*

CRAT has four subcommittees (Schools/Education, Justice, Integrated Services/Housing, and Public Awareness/Education). It has engaged in several highly successful initiatives, including youth outreach teams, a public awareness campaign, establishment of safe houses for sexually exploited youth, and an Integrated Prevention and Early Intervention Program that combines outreach with short-term beds, medium-term beds, and a day program for youth.

- *Burnaby/New Westminster Task Force*

The Burnaby-New Westminster Task Force on the Sexual Exploitation of Youth has been active since the fall of 1998. At that time, two

separate task forces from Burnaby and New Westminster joined to collaborate on the issue of sexual exploitation of youth in these two communities. The task force has representation from about 25 agencies, government ministries, and organizations in Burnaby and New Westminster. It has been involved in many successful projects, including the establishment of integrated case management teams (ICMTs), the development and implementation of a pilot community education and public awareness campaign entitled “It Can Happen to Anyone!”, assisting in facilitating the establishment of a safe house in Burnaby, developing service provider training sessions, sponsoring a youth conference entitled “Youth Matters,” and assisting the City of Burnaby to develop a by-law to regulate escort agencies and massage parlours.

- *Merritt CAT*

The Merritt CAT has undertaken a number of initiatives, including the organization of a 10-kilometre run to raise awareness of the sexual exploitation of youth and to raise funds for youth services. Approximately 100 volunteers, youth, and parents were involved in the event. Shaw Cable made a video about the run, which helped to raise community and media awareness of sexual exploitation.

- *Nanaimo CAT*

The Nanaimo CAT has focused on building on existing community capacity and prevention initiatives, creating new linkages, and sustaining public and community response to the needs of sexually exploited youth in Nanaimo. The activities of the Nanaimo CAT include an Awareness Week in which 10,000 ribbons and 250 posters were distributed to schools and businesses in the area, and consultations and presentations to parent organizations, RCMP, and City Hall.

- *Ridge Meadows Task Force*

One example of the activities that Ridge Meadows Task Force has initiated is a community forum to educate the community on youth sexual exploitation and drug use. Three hundred people attended the forum and several articles were printed in the local newspaper.

To become involved or to find out more information about your local CAT, please phone the following numbers:

Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General
 Community Programs Division
 201-4180 Lougheed Highway
 Burnaby, BC V5C 6A7
 Phone: 604-660-2605
 Fax: 604-775-2674
 Elsewhere in BC: 1-800-663-7867

Reconnect

Reconnect is a provincial program for youth under 19 who are living on the street. There are 38 Reconnect programs in 32 rural and urban communities in BC. This service assists young people living on the street in creating a safer, healthier lifestyle by leaving the street. It can also help prevent other young people from getting involved in street life. Some of the services provided by Reconnect are:

- Reconnecting with family, culture, or community
- Housing
- Health care
- Mental health services
- Drug or alcohol detox and counselling
- School
- Life skills counselling
- Job preparation and pre-employment counselling

For more information and for a list of community contacts, please see the Reconnect Web page at www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/youth/reconnect.htm.

Society for Children and Youth of British Columbia

The Society for Children and Youth of British Columbia (SCY) is a provincial advocacy organization dedicated to improving the well-being of children and youth. SCY provides a forum for multidisciplinary exchange and action for organizations and individuals working with and for young people. SCY has produced a number of materials that utilize the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. For more information on the Society or copies of resources please contact:

Society for Children and Youth of BC
3644 Slocan Street
Vancouver, BC V3M 3E8
E-mail: scy@portal.ca
Web: www.scyofbc.org

Integrated Case Management

To view Ministry of Children and Family Development information on integrated case management, including a user's guide, please visit the Web site www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/pubs/integ_manage.htm.

Principle: Culturally Specific Programming

Contemporary Canadian society is characterized by the diversity of its peoples. The concept of diversity encompasses both obvious differences, such as those related to gender, ethnicity, race, and physical ability, and less obvious differences, such as socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, and family organization. Historically, many of these differences have been evident in the hierarchical organization of society, with many groups being marginalized and disenfranchised as a result of their differences. Effective programming will recognize the impacts of marginalization and disenfranchisement, and will support and build in a positive manner on the diversity found among young people and their families. Recognition of diversity in programming will encourage the growth of self-esteem and empowerment, both of which are critical to assisting young people in overcoming exploitation.

Cultural differences are a specific and important type of diversity. Among other differences, various cultures have differing roles for parents and children, as well as different ways of defining the relationships between adults and children, the roles of individuals and communities in resolving social problems, models of conflict resolution, and other dimensions that will have an impact on appropriate ways of addressing sexual exploitation of children and youth.

Children and youth of Aboriginal, immigrant, and refugee backgrounds will benefit most from strategic initiatives that are sensitive to culturally specific issues related to their exploitation. These issues must be explored as part of effective program design and delivery.

Leslie and Storey (2000) point out that the apparent commonalities among Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal youth may serve to mask the need for culturally appropriate programming. Further, it is important to note that there is no single Aboriginal or indigenous culture in Canada. Consultative processes are required within each Aboriginal community to design and deliver effective programming. Leslie and Storey (2000, p. 17) note:

For the vast majority of social, health and correctional services, Aboriginal youth will be better served through culturally-appropriate services provided by communities of origin or urban Aboriginal communities of convenience.

Collectivity is the fundamental organizing principle of Aboriginal culture and communities, and effective community-based programs to assist young Aboriginal people will be based on collective consensus building and decision making.

There is a lot of racism still to this day ... there is no way for me as a white person to say "oh yes I know what you mean" but I can try to understand ... my step-mom says I am still feeling the pain of what my ancestors did to the Native peoples.

– Experiential youth

We need Native staff that understand our history. That is empowering. We must have our elders involved, they are our teachers – we respect them.

– Experiential youth

PRINCIPLE: CULTURALLY SPECIFIC PROGRAMMING

We need to bring Native youth all together and make a stronger culture for our youth – the stronger we get, the healthier the next generation.

– Experiential youth

Some of us don't know how to speak our language – I am trying to learn from my kookum. The circle was broken around residential school – this was the breaking point of our culture.

– Experiential youth

For young women here, male violence is so pervasive – I would strongly advocate for gender-specific programming with an ability to deal with overlapping oppressions within them.

– Service provider

The ten days a client spent there was a turning point. You go in the bush, and learn about the culture and wilderness. When the youth came back, she had learned that when she had a smoke, she should offer some to the earth.

– Service provider

Some strategies that programs have undertaken to address culturally specific programming are:

- Girls' groups
- Gender-specific programs and spaces
- Cultural and social activities for Aboriginal youth
- Aboriginal youth worker
- Activities that reflect youth subculture
- Cross-cultural educational opportunities
- Recognition of existing racism, homophobia, and other systemic power imbalances
- Programs that address the specific needs of gay, lesbian, and other queer youth
- Programs that address the specific needs of transgender youth
- Programs for immigrant and refugee youth
- Building awareness around the media and other biases that create barriers for marginalized youth in accessing mainstream youth services
- Long-term youth treatment facilities that are based on building cultural identity and family healing. Ideally located in a wilderness area where youth can learn about their natural surroundings and learn to relate to the world around them in a healthy way.

GAB YOUTH SERVICES

Strategy

Drop-in services for gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender/questioning youth

Who we are

Run through The Centre, Gab provides support to gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender youth, as well as to youth who are questioning their sexual orientation or gender identity. Gab operates drop-in programs, organizes special events, provides one-to-one support and advocacy, and facilitates anti-discrimination and sensitivity training workshops. Gab participants range in age from 13 to 25 years, and come from communities all over the Lower Mainland. Gab seeks to foster healthy relationships between GLBTQ youth and adults and provide culturally appropriate sexuality education to reduce the vulnerability of GLBTQ youth to sexual exploitation.

Youth participation

Youth have the opportunity to be involved in planning and facilitating drop-in activities and events, and have a voice in how program funds are spent. Youth are also supported in doing advocacy work through Gab and in facilitating anti-discrimination workshops in schools and youth agencies.

Collective responsibility

Education is provided to community organizations around issues of sexuality and social justice, thereby helping to empower GLBTQ youth in having healthy, nonjudgmental support systems.

Equity of access to services

The Centre has anti-harassment and anti-discrimination policies that are implemented by staff and volunteers. Gab does specific outreach to youth in under-represented and hard-to-reach communities, in recognition of their marginalized position.

Culturally specific programming

Gab offers training to mainstream youth service providers to ensure that youth can access “queer-friendly” support in a wide range of services. Gab is itself culturally specific, as it meets the particular needs of youth who may be marginalized due to their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Focus on building relationships

Relationships between youth and practitioners are fostered primarily through the social drop-in programs. The goal of the drop-in is to create a comfortable, relaxed environment where youth can get to know the youth workers before seeking assistance on a specific issue.

Evaluation processes

Gab conducts a yearly participant feedback survey through the drop-in. The program also collects evaluations after each workshop to determine whether youth feel that they are learning anything new and useful. Generally, Gab participants are not shy about using informal means to let the program coordinators know when they are unhappy with the programs.

At this time, Gab does not offer a specific program for sexually exploited youth due to lack of resources. However, some of the youth who access services at Gab have been sexually exploited or are currently in that situation. In preventing future involvement in sexual exploitation, it is important to have support systems in place for youth who are grappling with issues of sexuality and gender identity, as they are particularly vulnerable to exploitation.

Gab Youth Services
1170 Bute Street
Vancouver, BC V6E 1Z6
Phone: 604-684-4901
Fax: 604-684-5309
E-mail: gabyouth@yahoo.com
Program Coordinator: Jenn Horgos

PRINCE GEORGE NATIVE FRIENDSHIP CENTRE

Strategies

Sexually Exploited Youth Outreach Worker; girls' group; safe house

Who we are

Initiated in 1999, the Sexually Exploited Youth Outreach program was designed to assist female youth ages 12 to 18 in exiting the sex trade. Based on the development of a one-to-one relationship with the outreach worker, the program provides intensive therapeutic support, emergency housing funds, and access to safe housing. The program also provides sexually exploited youth with a feminist analysis and support in developing strategies of empowerment and freedom from oppressive internalized ideologies. At present this program assists between 25 and 30 youth per year. Along with Melville House, a safe house for girls moving to exit from sexual exploitation, this is the only program in Prince George specifically addressing the needs of sexually exploited youth. A focus of the program is on preparing and assisting youth in exiting and in beginning the journey towards healing with the support of professionals. The program also offers a female-only educational group to explore such issues as cultural oppression, and understanding government systems and how they work.

Youth participation

Youth have agency and choice in deciding the programs they would like to develop. The one-to-one work is specific to the needs of each youth. In the girls' group, the youth themselves decide what they want to focus on and learn more about.

Collective responsibility

The outreach program is run jointly by the Prince George Native Friendship Centre and Youth Around Prince, in community partnership to draw on the resources of both organizations.

Equity of access to services

Referrals to the program come from a variety of sources, with entry into the program being voluntary. The outreach worker puts an emphasis on flexibility in her work, and goes where youth are to increase accessibility, recognizing the needs of youth to have support in a comfortable and familiar environment.

Culturally specific programming

In recognition of the high numbers of First Nations youth who are sexually exploited, this program is run through the Native Friendship Centre. Cultural sensitivity, empathy, and acceptance are central to the program

Focus on building relationships

Based on a relational model of service delivery and a belief in providing youth with healthy role models, the outreach worker spends the majority of her time one-to-one with youth, building stable, ongoing relationships of support.

Evaluation processes

Youth feedback is solicited for the annual report, which is submitted to the Prince George Native Friendship Centre.

“They helped me understand that I was better than the work that I have chosen.”

**Prince George Native Friendship Centre
1600 Third Avenue
Prince George, BC V2L 3G6
Phone: 250-564-3568; 250-613-5744
Fax: 250-563-0924
E-mail: agallant@pgnfc.com
Outreach worker: Angela Gallant**

**Melville House
Phone: 250-563-4746
Fax: 250-563-3508
E-mail: melvillehouse@pgnfc.com
Contact person: Rene Allen**

Resources for Culturally Specific Programming

FREDA Centre Publications

The FREDA Centre is a joint collaboration of academics at Simon Fraser University, the University of British Columbia, and community and women's organizations working at the grassroots level. The FREDA Centre is committed to participatory action research as defined by the community, and works in the interests of the community. The FREDA Centre's research focuses specifically on violence against women and children, and encourages collaborative partnerships between communities and academics who are working to end this violence.

Publications include:

Erased Realities: The Violence of Racism in the Lives of Immigrant and Refugee Girls of Colour

A juxtaposition of Canada's obligations as defined by international human rights instruments, with the lived realities and impacts of policies in Canada on the lives of racialized immigrant and refugee girls.

Jiwani, Yasmin (1998)

Violence Against Marginalized Girls: A Review of the Current Literature

An outline of commonalities that structure and impact the lives of marginalized girls.

Jiwani, Yasmin, with the assistance of Susan M. Brown (1999)

Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation of Girls and Young Women: A Review of Select Literature and Initiatives, 2nd revised edition

This literature review suggests that there are many factors that facilitate the trafficking and sexual exploitation of young women, both internationally and within Canada itself.

The FREDA Centre for Research on Violence Against
Women and Children
SFU Harbour Centre
515 West Hastings Street
Vancouver, BC V6B 5K3
Phone: 604-291-5197
Fax: 604-291-5189
E-mail: freda@sfu.ca
Web: www.harbour.sfu.ca/freda

Aboriginal Youth Network (AYN)

The Aboriginal Youth Network is an online resource created by youth for youth. AYN is accountable to youth through its youth advisory committee, which is consulted on an ongoing basis to determine the focus and content of the Web site.

Visit AYN on the Internet at www.ayn.ca.

Vancouver Aboriginal Council – Youth Portfolio

The Vancouver Aboriginal Council (VAC) is a voluntary association of service provider organizations and agencies serving the Aboriginal community in Vancouver. The main objective of the Vancouver Aboriginal Council is to develop and maintain collaborative, cooperative peer relationships between its member organizations and agencies. VAC has a youth portfolio, which meets monthly to discuss youth issues and concerns and new initiatives, and to share information on programs. For more information about the youth portfolio, please phone 604-783-6629.

Find the Vancouver Aboriginal Council on the Internet at www.angelfire.com/bc2/vac.

ASIA (Asian Society for the Intervention of AIDS)

The Asian Society for the Intervention of AIDS (ASIA) is a nonprofit HIV/AIDS organization serving East and Southeast Asian communities. ASIA is committed to providing culturally appropriate and language-specific support, outreach, advocacy, and education on HIV/AIDS and related issues. ASIA strives to improve the capacity of its communities to understand issues around HIV/AIDS and to provide support for members in its communities affected by the virus. ASIA offers youth outreach, training opportunities, and opportunities for youth to gain experience working in their community.

For more information on ASIA's youth programs, e-mail youth@asia.bc.ca.

Asian Society for the Intervention of AIDS
210–119 West Pender Street
Vancouver, BC V6B 1S5
Phone: 604-669-5567
Fax: 604-669-7756
E-mail: asia@asia.bc.ca
Web: www.asia.bc.ca

Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Service Agencies Youth Project

The Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Service Agencies (AMSSA) is a not-for-profit coalition of over 80 agencies providing multicultural programs and immigrant services throughout BC. The AMSSA Youth Project acts as a information-sharing resource base for youth, youth groups, community agencies, and schools in order to support youth multiculturalism/anti-racism programs. The project sends out a bi-weekly e-mail and fax of events, news, and job opportunities in nonprofit organizations working with youth on multiculturalism/anti-racism issues. It also provides peer-based workshops on anti-racism and diversity. The AMSSA Youth Project works with the AMSSA Provincial Youth Alliance.

The AMSSA Provincial Youth Alliance is a coalition of multicultural and anti-racist youth leadership groups and individuals across the province of British Columbia. It tries to develop meaningful youth involvement in multicultural, anti-racism, and human rights work through advocacy (taking a group position on issues of the day), joint projects, and public education (forums, workshops).

The AMSSA Provincial Youth Alliance acts as a resource for youth, AMSSA member agencies, and community groups in developing and supporting multicultural and anti-racist youth programs. The Youth Alliance advocates from a youth perspective.

AMSSA Youth Project
 c/o Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Services Agencies of
 British Columbia
 205-2929 Commercial Drive
 Vancouver BC V5N 1C8
 Phone: 604-718-2777
 Fax: 604-298-0747
 E-mail: amssa@amssa.org
 Web: www.amssa.org/programs/youth

Vancouver Multicultural Society Web Site

In recognition of Multiculturalism Week in the Province of British Columbia, the board and staff of Vancouver Multicultural Society are pleased to announce the launch of a new Web site on February 22, 2002. This exciting new site features links to various resources related to multiculturalism, anti-racism, human rights, and employment equity. A search engine will soon be added that will allow individuals to search the existing Vancouver Multicultural Society library of books, newsletters, magazines, and audiovisual materials. The new Web site also encourages members to dialogue on issues that relate to the VMS mandate. Each month a featured question will be posted on the site and VMS members will have an opportunity to contribute their perspectives through online

submissions. A direct link has been established to the Multicultural Calendar of Events prepared by the BC Ministry of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services. Members will also be able to promote their upcoming events through an innovative online postings feature. A special events page will highlight specific events of interest to the community.

Visit the Web site at www.urbancultures.ca.

Reclaiming Youth at Risk: Our Hope for the Future

By Larry Brendo, PhD, Martin Brokenleg, PhD, and Steve Van Brokern, EdD, National Education Service: Bloomington, IN (1990).

Principle: Relational Perspective

A sense of belonging to a supportive family and circle of friends is a major foundation for the health and well-being of youth. Caring relationships build on youths' strengths and help them to cope with challenges (Ministry for Children and Families, 2000).

Youth who have poor relationships with their family members, peers, or other members of their community are at greater risk for involvement in sexual exploitation due to the isolation that they may experience. From a relational perspective, preventing youth from being at risk for sexual exploitation involves taking action to address the causes of distress and disconnection among children and youth, rather than focusing on an individual's behaviours as the problem. Central to building the strength and empowerment of youth is the creation of relationships that foster growth within a variety of contexts, from the family unit to the larger society. It requires listening to children and youth to learn how to become allies in all aspects of the continuum of support. One of the important functions of any type of prevention or intervention, then, is to provide the opportunity for the establishment of a healthy, nurturing, or mentoring relationship with the youth.

Those who are involved in the day-to-day lives of young people (teachers, family, caregivers, service providers, neighbours) must be supported in their efforts to identify young people who are at risk and to establish and maintain supportive and trusting relationships with them. Young people may not realize the risks themselves, and may fear punishment for disclosure of their activities. A safe environment, demonstrated through supportive relationships, will allow young people to discuss their problems while they are experiencing difficulties in school, while their attendance is falling, while they are not living at home, and while they are spending time on the streets. Educators must make continuing efforts to intervene where these problems become apparent.

Some strategies that programs have undertaken to address the need for a relational perspective are:

- Counselling for street-involved youth
- Outreach worker for sexually exploited youth
- One-to-one youth worker
- Girls' groups
- Space for youth to create community among themselves
- Peer-based services involving experiential workers

We need to get people who want to work with these kids, and train, support, and retain them.

– Outreach worker

I can do what I put my mind to but I don't give myself credit for what I have done. So having long-term relationships are very important because those are the people who know how far I have come.

– Experiential youth

PRINCIPLE: RELATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

Our team is very diverse, we are not a whitebread organization ... metal, punk rock, raver scene, skate boarders, First Nations, Spanish speaking, Québécois – don't be hurt if you don't connect with certain youth

– Service provider

- Diverse staff to whom the youth can relate
- Opportunity to develop long-term relationships
- Opportunity to connect with health services and other support systems
- Nurturing healthy family connections
- Opportunities to connect with other youth who have been commercially sexually exploited
- Activities that focus on building relationships to the land and environment
- Focus on successes instead of failures, in creation of positive environment for youth

IT'S A GIRL THANG

Strategy

Girls' group for marginalized girls

Who we are

It's A Girl Thang, which operates out of the Edmonds Youth Resource Centre, is an innovative programming model that provides marginalized and at-risk adolescent females with a place to explore a wide range of issues that impact their daily lives. Girls are given an opportunity to explore their issues and experiences of abuse, sexual exploitation, body image, and other issues they are struggling with, in a safe, nonjudgmental environment. Through accessing the group, girls are connected with information and counselling, which addresses their need for services, as they often experience barriers to accessing community programs. This group allows the girls whose voices are most silenced by society to have a forum for self-statement in a time of adolescent confusion and pressures to conform.

It's A Girl Thang was first funded as a pilot project through the Vancouver Children's Fund, and has been operating without any core funding for the past three years. The community makes donations of food and clothing, and the Edmonds Youth Resource Centre donates the space and art supplies.

Youth participation

The girls' group was designed by girls for girls. Girls plan the year's events and the adult allies support the group by facilitating the check-in, bringing in resources and speakers, and meeting the needs that the girls have identified as priorities. Ownership of the group by the girls also includes making decisions about staffing. In addition, the participants have been in various focus groups on topics such as sexual exploitation, eating disorders, and training for professionals working with youth, and were paid for their contributions.

Collective responsibility

The girls in It's A Girl Thang are very active members of the community of Burnaby, and have volunteered their time to educate the community around the issue of sexual exploitation as well as give their feedback on training manuals for practitioners. They were involved in a pilot project for the Burnaby Community Action Team, and helped plan a youth forum about the issue of sexual exploitation.

Equity of access to services

The girls' group was designed to allow equity of access to counselling and support for girls who were marginalized in the community. The girls choose the time and day of the group, and it is offered through the community youth centre on a drop-in basis. Many of the young women have been attending the group for over five years, and have attended regularly even when their life circumstances have changed. It has provided a safe place for them to access consistent support regardless of where they are living or what their life circumstances are.

Culturally specific programming

It's A Girl Thang has partnered in the past with an Aboriginal girls "rites of passage" group to support the Aboriginal girls who attend the group in accessing culturally specific programming. In addition, the group provides opportunities for girls to share and learn cross-culturally as well as discuss issues of race, gender, sexuality, and class as they impact on their lives.

Focus on building relationships

The girls' group is built on a relational model, as the girls have the opportunity to develop longstanding relationships with the facilitators as well as with guest speakers. The group has been successful in facilitating counselling support for a number of sexually abused/sexually exploited young women who would not otherwise have sought support. The facilitators are also able to connect the girls with the youth clinic to develop a relationship with a health provider.

Evaluation

The success of the program is evaluated through the number of girls who have exited high-risk lifestyles and made connections to community supports, and the high number of girls who have accessed the group without any advertising. In addition, the girls evaluate the group by filling out feedback forms. The original pilot project was evaluated and a report was submitted to the Children's Foundation.

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WATARI RESEARCH ASSOCIATION

Strategy

One-to-one youth worker program

Who we are

Watari Research Association is a community-based nonprofit society, incorporated in June 1986. Its mission is to facilitate positive change in at-risk children, youth, families, and communities through the design and delivery of innovative services. The philosophy of service for Watari is based on a belief in the individual's innate strengths, capabilities, and desire for wellness. With an improved understanding of self and education about lifestyle options, a person can make life-affirming choices, regardless of their past or present circumstances. Services include alcohol and drug counselling, community development, life skills training, one-to-one support services, peer counselling training, public education, professional training, research, and curriculum development.

Watari's one-to-one support program is offered to high-risk youth and community members involved in at-risk behaviours or who are HIV-positive, as well as adult mental health service consumers referred through the Ministry of Attorney General. Youth who access this program are matched with their one-to-one worker on the basis of similarities in their background, interests, and personalities. Youth and their support people are asked questions about their interests and desired qualities in someone with whom they would like to develop a one-to-one relationship. Workers are then handpicked by the program coordinator from a bank of workers who are available as needed. Due to the flexible and part-time nature of the job, one-to-one workers have lower rates of burnout and higher rates of success, and are therefore more cost-effective.

Youth participation

Youth are actively involved in determining the kind of youth worker they would like to have, and what their needs are in developing a relationship with a trusted and trusting adult. The program is responsive to the needs of the young person, not to the needs of the system.

Collective responsibility

Both the young person and the youth worker sign codes of ethics, so that both are responsible for the relationship that is being formed. The program works within Watari, which serves the greater community and does educational work around the many issues surrounding commercial sexual exploitation.

Equity of access to services

The one-to-one program is very flexible and responsive to the needs of the youth. The relationships that develop between the youth and the worker are seen as organic, forming at their own speed and with their own unique form. Access to services is ensured by addressing the needs of individual youth as they arise.

Culturally specific programming

One-to-one workers are chosen according to the needs of the youth, some of which are culturally specific. Youth care workers represent diverse cultural backgrounds in order to meet the needs of the youth in the community. Watari also offers drug and alcohol counsellors who offer service in languages other than English, and who are able to address specific cultural needs of clients.

Focus on building relationships

For youth involved in commercial sexual exploitation, the opportunity to develop a positive and healthy relationship with an adult is often rare. It may take time, but consistent connections do have positive results. As a preventative measure with at-risk youth, a relationship with a youth worker creates an alternative to developing unhealthy or exploitative relationships with other adults. Due to the individualized nature of the program, the relationships that are formed are at the very centre of one-to-one work.

Evaluation

The success of one-to-one services is due to the quality and dedication of the child care workers who provide direct service. Success is measured by the number of connections made, increased quality of life in the lives of clients, and the number of youth who consistently show up, thereby indicating their commitment to the relationship they have formed.

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Resources for Relational Perspective

The Stone Centre Publications

The Jean Baker Miller Training Institute (JBMTI) is based on the Relational-Cultural Model developed at the Stone Center, which suggests that growth-fostering relationships are a central human necessity and disconnections are the source of psychological problems. The JBMTI is a part of the Wellesley Centers for Women, which includes the Stone Center and the Center for Research on Women. Over the years, the Stone Center has developed innovative theoretical work on women's psychological development and model programs for the prevention of psychological problems.

The mission of the Stone Center is carried out through education, research, and community outreach. Particular attention is paid to the experiences of women, children, and families across culturally diverse populations. The Stone Centre publications include:

Judith V. Jordan and Cate Dooley

Relational Practice in Action: A Group Manual

This manual is designed for use by group leaders who are facilitating Relational Practice Groups, which are based on a model of growth and effectiveness that suggests people grow and are most productive in relationships that are characterized by mutuality and empathy. Using this model, Relational Practice Groups explore the dynamics and development of growth-fostering relationships, which enhance creativity, clarity, relational awareness, a sense of vitality, and relational intelligence.

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Conclusion

Challenges for Programs

Programs aimed at addressing youth sexual exploitation face many challenges in their work, including the culture of silence around sexual exploitation, as it requires considerable strength for an individual who has been exploited to access services. Many sexually exploited youth have reservations and fears about opening up and sharing their stories with support workers, because of the shame associated with being involved in sexual exploitation. Some programs have found it useful to centre activities around other issues and aspects of youths' lives, such as theatre, storytelling, or discussion of other issues, rather than naming the programs as being specific to youth who have been sexually exploited. One service provider writes:

We have found that despite the fact that many of the students want to speak up and out about their experiences as sexually exploited youth, despite the fact that they want to create prevention education resources, it is not constructive to have the first creatively empowering project that they are involved with be so prescribed. Once they have completed a project that is purely about “play,” then it would be easier for them to tackle serious videos about serious and sensitive topics.

Other challenges faced by service providers are the lack of programming around related issues and needs that sexually exploited youth may have. Many service providers report that it is difficult to find supportive services that specifically address the emotional, mental, and spiritual needs of sexually exploited youth and that are sensitive to their specific social situation. After-hours and weekend delivery of services is also lacking, which is a central barrier to accessing services for many youths whose schedules do not coincide with that of existing services. Finding safe, accessible housing for sexually exploited youth is difficult, as beds are scarce. Addictions services for youth are needed to ensure that youth have the maximum possibility for success in exiting cycles of addiction and exploitation. Legal support is needed to address the specific needs of sexually exploited youth. Another major barrier is the reality that there are not enough support programs specifically meeting the extreme needs of youth who have been sexually exploited and who have basic needs that require immediate attention and assistance.

Funding is another challenge faced by service providers, as ongoing, stable funding is needed to maintain a consistent staff, and most programs have difficulty in securing this type of long-term funding. Many additional programs are needed to expand the continuum of services that work against the sexual exploitation of children and youth. For example, funding

is needed by existing programs to hire outreach workers for sexually exploited youth and to let youth know about available programs. Inadequate resources for social justice organizations and front-line services also create barriers to service provision. Project-specific funding inhibits the ability to create change, as it is temporary and a constant concern of service providers.

The attitudes that members of Canadian society have about sexual exploitation need to change in order for the shame and silence around this issue to be lifted. Many service providers report that media understanding of the situation and lives of sexually exploited youth needs to be greatly enhanced, which will in turn affect the attitudes of many members of society. This enhanced understanding is also needed by those people who are in positions to make decisions about the lives of sexually exploited youth. One service provider voiced the opinion that the people who have decision-making powers over sexually exploited youth are not required to fully understand the lived realities of those whose lives they are impacting with their decisions.

Girls' lived realities include many systemic inequalities, including, in most cases, a context of colonial destruction of their communities, sexist violence, and extreme poverty. Without having an understanding of these interlocking systems of oppression that contribute to youths' risks of being sexually exploited, people in positions of power and authority will not be able to address the full range of barriers and acts of violence that youth face on a daily basis. For example, one service provider felt that the magnitude of sexual exploitation can lead to an anxiety-driven desire to create Band-aid solutions to address the immediate needs of young women. This often leads to strategies that lock young women up "for their own safety" instead of eradicating the inequalities that make them vulnerable to abuse and exploitation by men.

Advice and Insight from Service Providers

Service providers working in the area of youth sexual exploitation have many insights to share with others who want to enhance their own programs for youth or who want to start a new program to address this issue.

One service provider has advised people to "just do it if the need is there." Many practitioners have developed programs based on observation of the needs of youth in their communities. Many practitioners are eager to share insights with people who are starting similar programs. You are encouraged to contact the programs featured in this document for more information on starting a program of your own.

Central to the success of any youth programming is the involvement of youth in every aspect of program development, and ongoing consultation with youth to elicit their feedback on existing programs. A strong emphasis on the development of the culture, environment, and philosophy of a program is critical to its success. Emphasis should be on encouraging a sense of belonging, mastery, generosity, and independence for sexually exploited youth. Additionally, programs should be grounded in the unique needs of sexually exploited youth, which should be viewed in a holistic manner, including their specific physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being. Safety, trust, availability, and the ability to respond quickly to the needs of youth are also essential for developing a stable relationship with them.

Most practitioners have found that community partnerships are a key aspect of their success. Education is a key aspect of healing in communities and families. Integrated services with wrap-around supports are essential for community-based youth programs, and appropriate training is needed for all workers addressing the needs of sexually exploited youth. This includes the development of a good working relationship with the local police. Staffing issues are also a key to success, as many youth respond much more positively to support people who are able to speak from their own experiences in situations similar to those of the youth they work with. Ethnic, gender, and sexual orientation diversity is vital in the staffing of youth programs. For gender-sensitive issues, youth often feel safer talking with someone of the same gender. One service provider writes:

Services are ALWAYS most effective and empowering when they are delivered and designed by experiential persons. Organizations that allow clients to be staff but then form a hierarchy above them and do not allow them to truly be equal to all staff are merely offering tokenism and their programs and organization will suffer ultimately. Although an organization consisting of experiential persons does make for a lack of organization at times and creates a greater need for conflict resolution, this is to be expected and in fact celebrated, and this too offers empowerment and success within an organization.

Additionally, due to the sensitive nature of issues surrounding commercial sexual exploitation, youth facilitators and youth in leadership positions must be trained and supported in dealing with potential disclosures from other youth whom they are working with.

Flexibility and easy accessibility are key aspects of youth programs. Accessibility may mean that youth do not have to take the risk of divulging too much personal information. Programs should be easily accessible so that youth who have been sexually exploited are not made to feel vulnerable by exposing too much of their experiences in order to access programs. Similarly, gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered, and queer and questioning youth are often fearful of being “outed” by accessing a program, so

practitioners should try to be aware of the stigma that may be attached with accessing certain programs. Many practitioners advise that it is most powerful to approach sexual exploitation from a social justice framework. Other advice from practitioners is that youth respond to hands-on, skills-based programs that demonstrate an acute awareness of youth culture and that are delivered by youthful facilitators. Additionally, youth do not respond well to programs that use scare tactics or censorship or that are critical or judgmental of youth culture.

Promote equality, not law and order strategies.

– Service provider

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Appendix B: Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion

First International Conference on Health Promotion Ottawa, Canada, 17-21 November 1986

Health Promotion

Health promotion is the process of enabling people to increase control over, and to improve, their health. To reach a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being, an individual or group must be able to identify and to realize aspirations, to satisfy needs, and to change or cope with the environment. Health is, therefore, seen as a resource for everyday life, not the objective of living. Health is a positive concept emphasizing social and personal resources, as well as physical capacities. Therefore, health promotion is not just the responsibility of the health sector, but goes beyond healthy lifestyles to well-being.

Prerequisites for Health

The fundamental conditions and resources for health are peace, shelter, education, food, income, a stable ecosystem, sustainable resources, social justice, and equity. Improvement in health requires a secure foundation in these basic prerequisites.

Advocate

Good health is a major resource for social, economic, and personal development and an important dimension of quality of life. Political, economic, social, cultural, environmental, behavioural, and biological factors can all favour health or be harmful to it. Health promotion action aims at making these conditions favourable through advocacy for health.

Enable

Health promotion focuses on achieving equity in health. Health promotion action aims at reducing differences in current health status and ensuring equal opportunities and resources to enable all people to achieve their fullest health potential. This includes a secure foundation in a supportive environment, access to information, life skills, and opportunities for making healthy choices. People cannot achieve their fullest health potential unless they are able to take control of those things which determine their health. This must apply equally to women and men.

Mediate

The prerequisites and prospects for health cannot be ensured by the health sector alone. More importantly, health promotion demands coordinated action by all concerned: by governments, by health and other social and economic sectors, by nongovernmental and voluntary organizations, by local authorities, by industry, and by the media. People in all walks of life are involved as individuals, families, and communities. Professional and social groups and health personnel have a major responsibility to mediate between differing interests in society for the pursuit of health.

Health promotion strategies and programs should be adapted to the local needs and possibilities of individual countries and regions to take into account differing social, cultural, and economic systems.

Health Promotion Action Means ...

Build healthy public policy

Health promotion goes beyond health care. It puts health on the agenda of policymakers in all sectors and at all levels, directing them to be aware of the health consequences of their decisions and to accept their responsibilities for health.

Health promotion policy combines diverse but complementary approaches, including legislation, fiscal measures, taxation, and organizational change. It is coordinated action that leads to health, income, and social policies that foster greater equity. Joint action contributes to ensuring safer and healthier goods and services, healthier public services, and cleaner, more enjoyable environments.

Health promotion policy requires the identification of obstacles to the adoption of healthy public policies in non-health sectors, and ways of removing them. The aim must be to make the healthier choice the easier choice for policymakers as well.

Create supportive environments

Our societies are complex and interrelated. Health cannot be separated from other goals. The inextricable links between people and their environment constitute the basis for a socioecological approach to health. The overall guiding principle for the world, nations, regions, and communities alike is the need to encourage reciprocal maintenance – to take care of each other, our communities, and our natural environment. The conservation of natural resources throughout the world should be emphasized as a global responsibility.

Changing patterns of life, work, and leisure have a significant impact on health. Work and leisure should be a source of health for people. The way society organizes work should help create a healthy society. Health promotion generates living and working conditions that are safe, stimulating, satisfying, and enjoyable.

Systematic assessment of the health impact of a rapidly changing environment – particularly in areas of technology, work, energy production, and urbanization – is essential and must be followed by action to ensure positive benefit to the health of the public. The protection of the natural and built environments and the conservation of natural resources must be addressed in any health promotion strategy.

Strengthen community action

Health promotion works through concrete and effective community action in setting priorities, making decisions, planning strategies, and implementing them to achieve better health. At the heart of this process is the empowerment of communities, their ownership and control of their own endeavours and destinies.

Community development draws on existing human and material resources in the community to enhance self-help and social support, and to develop flexible systems for strengthening public participation and direction of health matters. This requires full and continuous access to information, learning opportunities for health, as well as funding support.

Develop personal skills

Health promotion supports personal and social development through providing information and education for health and enhancing life skills. By so doing, it increases the options available to people to exercise more control over their own health and over their environments, and to make choices conducive to health.

Enabling people to learn throughout life, to prepare themselves for all of its stages, and to cope with chronic illness and injuries is essential. This has to be facilitated in school, home, work, and community settings. Action is required through educational, professional, commercial, and voluntary bodies, and within the institutions themselves.

Reorient health services

The responsibility for health promotion in health services is shared among individuals, community groups, health professionals, health service institutions, and governments. They must work together towards a health care system which contributes to the pursuit of health.

The role of the health sector must move increasingly in a health promotion direction, beyond its responsibility for providing clinical and curative services. Health services need to embrace an expanded mandate which is sensitive and respects cultural needs. This mandate should support the needs of individuals and communities for a healthier life, and open channels between the health sector and broader social, political, economic, and physical environmental components.

Reorienting health services also requires stronger attention to health research as well as changes in professional education and training. This must lead to a change of attitude and organization of health services, which refocuses on the total needs of the individual as a whole person.

Moving into the Future

Health is created and lived by people within the settings of their everyday life; where they learn, work, play, and love. Health is created by caring for oneself and others, by being able to take decisions and have control over one's life circumstances, and by ensuring that the society one lives in creates conditions that allow the attainment of health by all its members.

Caring, holism, and ecology are essential issues in developing strategies for health promotion. Therefore, those involved should take as a guiding principle that, in each phase of planning, implementation, and evaluation of health promotion activities, women and men should become equal partners.

Commitment to Health Promotion

The participants in this Conference pledge:

- to move into the arena of healthy public policy, and to advocate a clear political commitment to health and equity in all sectors;
- to counteract the pressures towards harmful products, resource depletion, unhealthy living conditions and environments, and bad nutrition; and to focus attention on public health issues such as pollution, occupational hazards, housing, and settlements;
- to respond to the health gap within and between societies, and to tackle the inequities in health produced by the rules and practices of these societies;
- to acknowledge people as the main health resource, to support and enable them to keep themselves, their families, and friends healthy through financial and other means, and to accept the community as the essential voice in matters of its health, living conditions, and well-being;

- to reorient health services and their resources towards the promotion of health; and to share power with other sectors, other disciplines, and most importantly with people themselves;
- to recognize health and its maintenance as a major social investment and challenge; and to address the overall ecological issue of our ways of living.

The Conference urges all concerned to join them in their commitment to a strong public health alliance.

Call for International Action

The Conference calls on the World Health Organization and other international organizations to advocate the promotion of health in all appropriate forums and to support countries in setting up strategies and programmes for health promotion.

The Conference is firmly convinced that if people in all walks of life, nongovernmental and voluntary organizations, governments, the World Health Organization, and all other bodies concerned join forces in introducing strategies for health promotion, in line with the moral and social values that form the basis of this CHARTER, health for all by the year 2000 will become a reality.

Appendix C: Reporting Template of the National Crime Prevention Centre

Evaluation applies generally accepted social science methods to review, assess, and refine a program. A program can be defined as a particular set of activities by a group, organization, or agency designed to achieve certain objectives.

There are many different forms and purposes of evaluation. In general, program evaluations undertaken by community-based agencies will be designed for one or more of the following purposes:

- To determine the extent to which objectives of the program have been met
- To measure the impacts of the program, and/or
- To determine whether the program is cost-effective

In this context, program evaluation is usually thought of as a form of systematic analysis undertaken to assist managers and those delivering a program to make decisions about that program. Constructive program evaluations usually suggest areas of possible improvement to a program.

The National Crime Prevention Centre (NCPC), Justice Canada, has developed useful resources for evaluation of programs designed to work with sexually exploited children and youth. Information about the NCPC's approaches to program evaluation are available on NCPC's Web site, <http://www.crime-prevention.org>. The Reporting Template for Sexual Exploitation of Youth Prevention Projects is reproduced here.

A Reporting Template for Sexual Exploitation of Youth Prevention Projects Funded Under the Community Mobilization Program

1. What are your project's main objectives?
2. What is your general approach?

Program preparation:

- Materials preparation
- Materials/message testing
- Presenter recruitment/training
- Campaign/modality effectiveness/efficiency assessment
- Other

Prevention through:

- Public awareness/promotion
- Public education
- Community mobilization
- Other

Outcome Evaluation:

- Concrete outcomes clearly spelled out as indicators of success at the time of project design
- Clearly assigned roles and responsibilities for gathering, storing, processing, and analyzing the data needed for the evaluation

3. Does your project also have secondary goals?

- Service to sexually exploited youth
- Exit assistance
- Other

4. What are your target populations [audiences] for prevention?

- Youth
 - Youth at risk/sexually exploited youth, “experiential” youth
- Parents /caregivers
- Professionals and workers by sector:
 - Teachers, counsellors
 - Criminal justice/health/child protection system workers
 - Community-based organizations/workers
 - Clergy
 - Other
- Lawmakers, decision makers
- General public/all community members
- Other

5. Diversity issues. Are you targeting the special needs of:

- Males
- Females
- Gay, lesbian, transgendered youth
- Aboriginal community/youth
- Youth/persons with specific disabilities
- Specific ethnocultural communities/youth

6. For each of the main target populations you defined:
 - a. What were the main messages/changes in beliefs/action agenda that you wanted to promote?
 - b. What media, material, and locations did you decide to use?
 - c. Why did you use particular material and locations?

Channel/Media/Materials

Face to face:

- Formal presentations: speeches, lectures, panel discussions, conferences, courses, “brown bag” seminars
- Public forums – town hall meetings
- Informal guided discussions – breakfast table
- Other

Media:

- Videos, movies, slide shows, graphics
- Print materials – brochures, articles, ads, comics, guidebook, report, manifesto/position paper, community report card
- Public ads – posters, billboards
- Public art – murals, graffiti
- Theatre presentations – plays, mime, dance
- TV/radio programming – documentaries, dramas, call-in
- Web pages , listservs
- Other

Target audience locations:

- In their homes via mass media
- Outdoors via bus boards/billboards
- Drop-in centres/youth centres
- Detention centres
- Schools
- Native friendship centres
- Film/video festivals
- Theatres
- Other

7. If you developed materials yourself, how were they tailored to specific audiences? For what uses? How did you test the effectiveness of your materials?

8. **Audience Analysis.** Did you do an analysis [formative evaluation] of your target audience’s characteristics, current awareness of sexual exploitation of youth, beliefs, readiness to change; media, format or locational preferences, etc.?

If you did, could you speak briefly to the process you used and your most useful findings?

9. **Theory-based Approach.** Did you use an explicit theory of change to help define your messages/community mobilization plan?

10. **Plausibility Assessment**

- a. Did you collect any information on how your messages/prevention initiatives were accepted by your target audiences?

If so, please outline your methods [e.g., feedback questionnaires, interviews, observations].

- b. Did you appear to change your audience’s perception of the seriousness of the issue of sexual exploitation of youth?

If so, how do you know you changed your audience’s perceptions?

- c. Did you appear to change your audience’s perception of the relevance to them of the issue of sexual exploitation of youth?

If so, how do you know you changed your audience’s perception of the relevance to them of the issue of sexual exploitation of youth?

- d. Did your audience see your prevention messages as potentially effective?

If so, what evidence do you have that your audience saw your prevention messages as potentially effective?

- e. Did they see themselves as able to take on these strategies?

If so, how do you know that your audience saw themselves as able to take on these strategies?

If not, what barriers did your project identify?

- g. Did you change your project to try to deal with these barriers?

- h. Did you change your messages?

- i. Did you change the medium you were using for transmitting the messages?

- j. Did you modify your goals and objectives?

10a. In the instance of community awareness/education activities, were there project outcomes that you could measure?

- Evidence of increased awareness or knowledge?
- Evidence that techniques and strategies you presented were being applied?
- Change in attitudes? Public opinion?
- Change in readiness to change?

10b. For community mobilization projects:

- Did the community/target populations develop/adopt a prevention agenda on sexual exploitation of youth?
- Did the project lead directly to the allocation of new resources to deal with the issue of sexual exploitation of youth?
- Did the project result in desired regulatory or legislative change?

Appendix D: Material from Focus Groups

1. Prevention Services

1a. Global Prevention

- Community awareness – Many people have moral judgments about sex work, and therefore look down upon sex workers as part of a lower class or as less human. All communities are affected by the sexual exploitation of children and youth, whether it be through street-level sex work, indoor sex work, or housing Johns who buy sex from youth. In order for changes to occur in the lives of sexually exploited youth, people from all walks of life need to change their attitudes and actions towards these marginalized youth.
- Tougher sentences for pedophiles/sex offenders/racists
- Media awareness – Changes in the media’s representation of sexually exploited youth need to happen in order for youth to not be further victimized on television and in the newspapers. Sensationalizing the lives of street youth and other marginalized youth only serves to further alienate the public and creates more problems for street youth. Sensitivity training around youth issues needs to happen for people who work in media.
- Education about the intersection of various types of oppressions and traumas, and the effects they have on children and youth
- Enforcement of children’s rights and human rights – Many sexually exploited youth turn to the streets after experiencing sexual abuse, starvation, poverty, and other forms of abuse. Focusing prevention strategies on stopping the abuse of children will lower the numbers of youth who end up being sexually exploited.
- Housing for youth
- Employment opportunities – Many youth who are sexually exploited are financially dependent on working the streets in order to make money to survive. Coming out of poverty, the money made through the sex trade is enticing and hard to resist. For many youth, if they had alternative ways of making a good living, they would not end up being sexually exploited. Creating exciting and useful employment opportunities for youth is a necessary change in preventing child sexual exploitation.

Let’s start profiling the men who buy these Aboriginal youth. White upper-class men are 80% of the Johns. If they were of any other race, it would be made an issue of.

We need education about the reality of being on the streets. Start early, and educate youth about the real issues and take away the glamour.

- Education in the school system – Educational programs about the realities of sexual exploitation should be offered to teachers and other school staff. Many youth who end up being sexually exploited are groomed within their own classrooms, by other youth or by people who hang around the schools. Teachers also need to be educated about the support systems that are available for youth who are sexually exploited, as well as their families.

Some other ideas that youth had about education within the school system are:

- In elementary schools, have workshops with a health nurse and with kids who have exited from sex trade.
- For 6-9-year-olds, put posters on the wall with pictures of drug use and violence and what they look like.
- Arts-based programs are one way in which youth can find a venue for expressing themselves creatively while addressing the issues they face on a daily basis, such as racism, sexism, poverty, and other forms of oppression. Examples of successful programs are:
 - Street Spirits Theatre in Prince George
 - Writing Against Racism in Vancouver, through Broadway Youth Resource Centre

1b. Targeted Prevention

- Girls' groups
- Gender-specific life skills and training opportunities for at-risk youth
- Culturally specific programming
 - Immigrant and refugee youth programs
 - Healing residential school traumas
 - School system – Many Aboriginal youth have a difficult time succeeding in the mainstream educational system. Teachers need to be educated in the history of First Nations communities and the unique issues that Native youth are facing as they attempt to make it to graduation. Focusing prevention efforts at educating teachers on Aboriginal issues will help to give youth a better environment of understanding and respect.
 - Within Aboriginal communities, programs aimed at youth who have FAS/FAE are needed to provide these youth with life skills, support, and help with other specific issues they and their families may face.
 - Child apprehension within Aboriginal communities is a huge factor in alienating youth from their culture and family, which often leaves them without a feeling of connectedness or stability.

I don't think a lot of the girls have opportunity for training – they are stuck in group homes without any training.

Focusing on finding a better child care system for Aboriginal youth, including building a network of Aboriginal foster parents or culturally aware foster parents will aid in keeping Native youth connected to their history and communities. Additionally, preventing child apprehension through such initiatives as housing for young mothers will aid in keeping families and communities connected, making Aboriginal youth less at risk of exploitation.

- Creating more First Nations treatment centres will help Aboriginal parents begin the healing process in their families, and in the process prevent future generations of youth from becoming involved in street activities and sexual exploitation. Stopping the cycles of abuse and addiction is an important part of healing Native communities and families.
- Within Aboriginal communities, connecting youth with their elders and role models is an essential part of healing and preventing further abuses from occurring.
- Support for transgendered youth – Transgendered youth are particularly at risk for sexual exploitation. Many transgendered youth become alienated from their families and communities because of the attitudes that people hold about queer youth and the violence that is aimed at them. Targeted support for transgender youth is needed to support them in dealing with the gender and sexuality issues they face. Programs are also needed to provide a positive space for them to express themselves and create a sense of safety within a society that is very oppressive of differently gendered people.

2. Early Intervention

- Development of a trusting and supportive relationship during involvement
- Safe supportive shelters
- Safety vans to patrol strolls
- Street outreach
- Drug and alcohol treatment
- Individual, family, and group counselling and support
- Mentoring
- Peer counselling
- Education and training programs
- Cooperative programs between schools and community agencies

It's hard to trust helpers. You learn not to trust nobody. That's how you think and its hard to change that. A lot of people aren't listening when we do speak. Your colour, race, gender – we are all fighting for the same shit.

I would like to decide the agenda for programs and speakers. I would choose programs like ways to get out of the safe house and out of the street. Not just lame “don’t do drugs” talks, but realistic shit. I would get a collection of decent videos to choose from. Not the ones with phoney actors with the little rhymes at the start. They think this is teaching us stuff. I would get more realistic and new stuff.

- Focus on successes instead of failures, as part of positive, supportive environments for youth.
- Youth participation – Many youth feel more connected to programs that they are integrally involved in creating and running. Youth services aimed at sexually exploited youth need to be built upon ideas and needs put forward by the youth themselves, as they will be more likely to access those services.
- Unique programming for unique communities: In Prince George, there is a sense of family and accountability. The social service workers are willing to stretch the boundaries of their programs in order to meet the needs of the families that they work with.
- Programs also need to be developed independently from government services in order to ensure that the needs of the youth are determining the types of programs that are offered instead of the ministry’s standards, which change with shifts in government.
- Health care – Many youth who are involved in the sex trades, especially youth who are intravenous drug users, have had very negative experiences within the health care system. Training is needed for health care providers so that all youth are treated with the same levels of respect and concern for their well-being. Additionally, health care providers are in a unique position to put youth in touch with intervention services when youth are brought into the hospital or clinic. More alliances are needed between health care providers and front-line service providers so that youth do not get discharged back onto the streets after overdosing or otherwise spending time in the hospital.

3. Immediate Supports

3a. Crisis Intervention

There are not enough safe houses – they are full most of the time so there is a wait list. They’re not supposed to turn away kids in the middle of the night. They should put you on the couch or give you money for a hotel if they are full.

- Safe supportive shelters designed specifically for sexually exploited children and youth – Youth who are currently being sexually exploited need safe and accessible shelters to provide them with options when crisis strikes. Many youth who currently access emergency shelter feel that they need a few days to get their bearings after coming off the streets, before they are put into a schedule of meeting goals and maintaining their well-being. While finding a job, stable housing, and other basic goals are important in the long run, emergency shelters for sexually exploited youth should be understanding of the immediate needs of the youth and allow time for their renewal. Some other needs of sexually exploited youth who access shelters are:
 - Flexibility – in terms of length of stay, goals, drug and alcohol use
 - Accessibility – easy transportation to the shelter, and a toll-free number to call in times of crisis

- Gender-specific programming to provide a greater sense of safety
- In-house birth control and needle exchange programs
- Confidentiality – from parents, police, government
- Age-specific programs for 12-18-year-olds and 18-25-year-olds, in order to safeguard younger people from being targeted by older ones
- Staff who are educated in dealing with a range of issues or who can help youth access resources to address issues such as IDU, mental health, pregnancy, sexuality and gender, racism, and language barriers
- Programs that are free from middle-class values and goals that youth can not identify with
- Options
- Financial assistance – independent living
- Street outreach and safety vans to patrol strolls – Services that are aimed at sexually exploited youth need to be easily accessible to the youth. Street outreach is the best way for youth to get information about services and to meet the people whom they can count on in times of crisis. Police officers who work specifically with sexually exploited youth need to be visible and accessible to the youth who might need their protection.
- Detox and treatment beds for youth – A continuum of services is needed for youth who are able to go into treatment or detox facilities. Many youth currently find that resources are broken up through the process of getting clean from addictions. Service providers need to be updated so that they have a higher number of beds for youth, especially in areas such as Vancouver, where there is a large concentration of youth who are addicted to drugs or alcohol and who are involved in street-level sex work.
- Youth-friendly, youth-focused services that are nonjudgmental and easily accessible
- Nonjudgmental psychological and medical care
- Mental health services
- HIV prevention

If you are going to help youth, then you should help everyone who is in need. Services should be nonjudgmental, at your point of entry or wherever you are at.

If you are a junkie they won't help you. They will take your name, that's about it. You are blacklisted. It's a right of mine to get help. I was in a doctor's office with an advocate and they wouldn't even talk to me. They just talked to the advocate in front of me like I wasn't there.

A guy got away with rape. And I got into trouble just because I am a street kid. There should be the same help for the poor as for the rich.

- Survival services such as food banks and emergency housing
- Suicide prevention services
- Supportive police protection and equal protection under the judicial system
- Culturally specific programming
 - Aboriginal safehouses
 - Queer youth shelters are needed to provide gay, lesbian, transgendered, and bisexual youth with a safe space to go in times of crisis. The staff at these facilities should be trained in addressing the needs of these youth and should be sensitive to their issues. Where possible, having queer staff or staff who have had previous experience in the sex trades is helpful for creating safe, nonjudgmental environments.

3b. Harm Reduction

Outreach helped me stay off the street because you talk to women on the street and it reminds you where you don't want to be.

Some of the older girls yell at the younger ones and warn them to get out of there. Sometimes it helps.

- Youth-focused programs that are designed by youth themselves. When youth feel respected and listened to, and when they have been a part of creating the structure of a program, they are more likely to want to participate in that program or be in that space. This is true for programs all along the continuum of services.
- Needle exchange
- STD testing and counselling
- Health information
- Information about resources
- Street outreach
- “Bad date” databases are needed for both male and female sex workers. Providing youth with a safe and easy way to report a bad date will ensure that they come forward with reports of abuse, which will in turn work to prevent further harm.
- Peer support services
- Food vans and food banks
- Emergency safe shelters
- Soup kitchens
- Educated and aware police providing protection
- Sex workers need to stop being moved into less safe areas, where it is convenient for business people but not for youth working the streets. Pushing the sex trade into industrial areas puts sexually exploited youth out of the eye of the public and into very unsafe situations.

4. Exiting Supports

4a. Leaving

- 24/7 drop-in centre providing emotional support and other services
- Safe housing
- Police protection
- Economic incentives
- Supportive organizations specifically for sex workers, such as PEERS, PACE:
 - Counselling
 - Advocacy
 - Resources
 - Education
 - Outreach
 - Life skills
- PEERS Second Stage Housing
- Culturally specific programming
 - Education within Aboriginal communities about sexuality, sexual abuses, and sexual exploitation needs to happen in order for youth to have safe environments into which they can exit from being sexually exploited. Generations of Aboriginal people have been taught to be ashamed about sex and sexuality, and therefore people who disclose histories of sexual abuse or involvement in the sex trades are often shunned and rejected. Discussions about these issues need to happen in all Aboriginal communities in order for healing to occur and to provide youth with a greater sense of safety in finding the courage to seek help from their own people.

They advertised a two-hour research interview with an honorarium. I would have done anything for the money. By being supported by the women through the interview, and then connected with the PEERS organization, I found hope and knew there were choices. It was the money that got me in.

It was only after going through the PEERS program that I realized how smart I am and what a good spirit I have. I saw that my skills from the street can be used for other things.

4b. Healing

- Community education and understanding
- Ongoing economic assistance
- Ongoing psychological and emotional assistance
- Opportunities to talk about previous experiences and share stories with the community

APPENDIX D: MATERIAL FROM FOCUS GROUPS

Humour is very healing, especially survival or black humour. A group of us were laughing about experiences that only another sex trade worker would know.

Children who are being sexually exploited – some are mothers and some are going to be mothers. If we take these women right now and educate them – do you think my child will become a prostitute? Never. We must assist women to be better parents.

- Humour
- Practical life skills training
- Affordable and realistic education and training opportunities
- Holistic healing with a family focus
- Education for young mothers
- Culturally specific programming
 - Long-term youth treatment facilities that are based on building cultural identity and family healing. Ideally located in a wilderness area where youth can learn about their natural surroundings and learn to relate to the world around them in a healthy way.
 - Rediscovery camps (e.g., in Gitsaan)