

Domestic Minor *Familial* Sex Trafficking

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Founder and Executive Director

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Presenter's Background

- Founder and Executive Director of The Samaritan Women, a long-term restorative care program for minor and adult females (2007-2021)
- FBI Citizens Academy
- Founder and Executive Director of Institute for Survivor Care, a national think tank, research and training effort to improve access to care and quality of care for survivors of exploitation
- Masters in Education
- Masters in Divinity
- Doctorate in Psychology (Trauma)

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Agenda

- Part I: Organized Abuse and Familial Subtypes
 Familial Prevalence, Risk Factors and Indicators

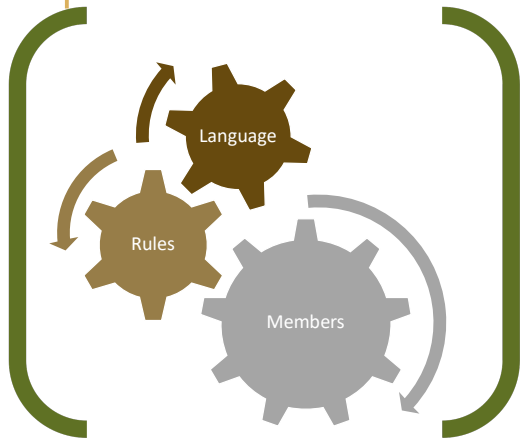
- Part II: Investigation and Prosecution Challenges
 Psychological Impacts and Victim Supports

Familial Trafficking is a Type of Organized Abuse

- Includes mental, physical and/or sexual abuse that occurs within an explicit, often secretive, system of participants.
- This can be as small as a family unit or as large as a multi-national network.
- Key distinctions from other forms of sexual abuse are, that organized abuse involves:

multiple offenders, multiple victims,
and a
coordinated, planned orchestration of the acts of abuse

The Characteristics of Organized Abuse



MEMBERS

- Members share an affinity of some kind
- Clear emphasis on the privilege or authority of the perpetrator(s) over victims

LANGUAGE

- Often has its own “insider” language, symbols or rituals

RULES

- Victims may be less aware of the economic exchange or there may be no economic exchange
- Rules governing how the abuse takes place

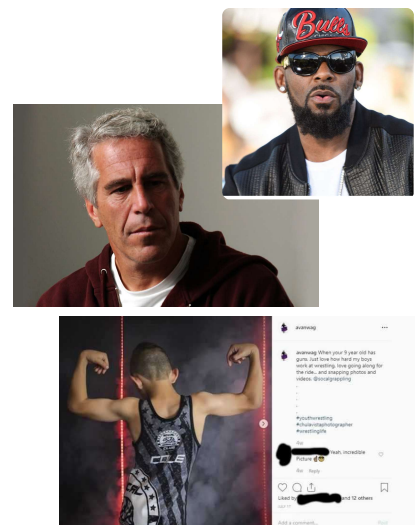
PROTECTION

- Perpetrators are protected over the victims
- Fear is the tool for retention and compliance
- Victims are often self-silencing, harboring a (lasting) fear of surveillance and control
- When threatened, the System “closes in” to protect itself

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1. Network Abuse

- These are usually extra-familial offenders acting on a shared sexual interest in children
- Sometimes referred to as pedophile rings/child sex rings
- Networks usually target and prefer a specific age range and gender of victim
- There can be a “hobbyist” dynamic to the members, sharing victims and boasting in community
- Perpetrators are more often male, but can be couples
- Members may have full or limited knowledge of other members
- Secrecy is maintained by tacit agreement of members or through threat of disclosure/blackmail



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2. Institutional Abuse

- The sexual abuse of children by people who work with them in an institutional setting
- One or more staff members engage in or arrange the sexual abuse of children in their care
- The setting itself provides for the introduction of new, potential victims into the sphere of abusers
- Grooming habits can be baked into the organizational culture and practices, “it’s what we do here”
- Member of the institution are complicit in the perpetuation of the abuse
- Protection is of the institution, not necessarily of individual



3. Ideological/Ritual

An ideology is a framework of values and practices that a group may hold.

- Abuse that is structured in a ceremonial or ritualistic fashion; Often incorporates magical, religious, pseudo-religious, or mythological iconography
- Ideology may be used to *justify* the abuse, and the abuse is used to *teach* the group’s ideology.
- May include the torture of children and adults and the manufacture of child abuse material
- [unlike other forms of organized abuse], Ideological/Ritual abuse has the objective of indoctrinating victims into becoming future adult perpetrators



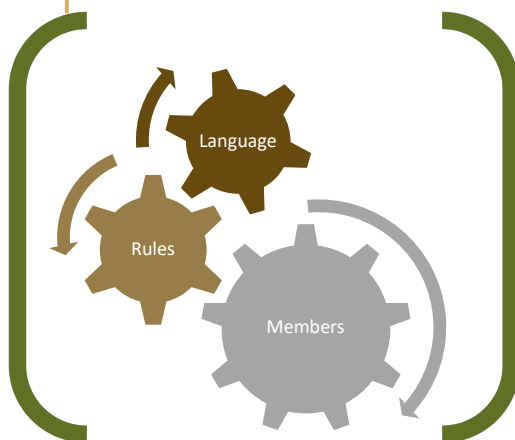
4. Familial Abuse

- Tends to involve a smaller number of victims who are extensively victimized over a prolonged duration
- Earlier initiation of abuse, quick progression to serious abuse
- Victims are rarely recruited from outside of the family system
- Offenders may be confined to the immediate or extended family structure, or may involve extra-familial offenders
- Extent of environmental grooming may be to present a “united front” or “veil of normalcy” to the local community
- Abuse can be scheduled, coordinated acts of abuse (example: Shabbat, Fridays & Saturdays) or impulsive



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What are the Characteristics of Your System?



MEMBERS

- Who's invited in, but not consanguine or custodial?
- Who's family, but on the fringes?
- What's the authority hierarchy?

LANGUAGE

- What can be said or gestured in your family and everyone knows what that means?
- What symbols mean something in your family?

RULES

- What are the unspoken taboos?
- When, as a child, did you learn to stop, be silent, or correct your behavior without being explicitly told?
- What traditions are practiced?

PROTECTION

- What don't you talk about with outsiders?
- How are members kept safe?

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The 3 Chairs Rule



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TWO STUDIES

Domestic Minor Familial Sex Trafficking through the Lens of Justic Professionals Study (2021)

- A mixed method descriptive study to identify the prevalence, characteristics and challenges of familial cases
- 3,505 child trafficking cases between 2018 - 2021
- N = 917 confirmed familial cases

Exiting Exploitation: Motivations, Helps and Hindrances (2025)

- A national Survivor survey to identify the factors leading to permanent exit or recidivism
- N = 189 survivors contributed
- Ages 14 to 64
- 93% reported familial involvement

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Defining *Familial* Sex Trafficking

Familial Sex Trafficking is a type of trafficking whereby a family member **facilitates sexual access** to another family member in exchange for something of commercial value.

Family Member:

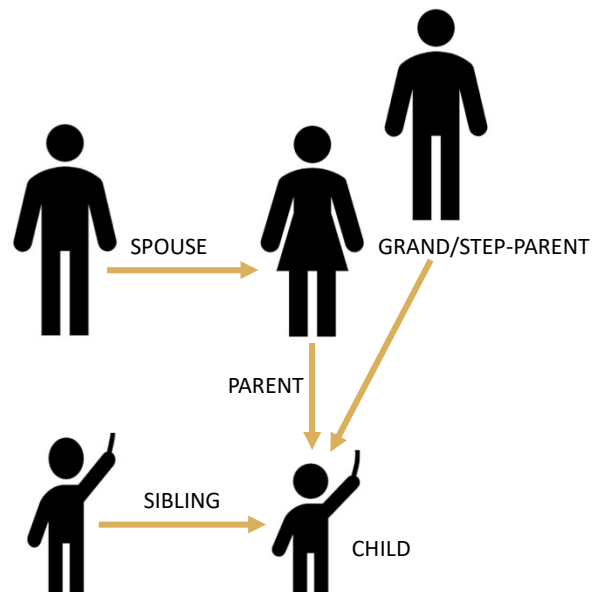
1. Consanguine (blood) – biological mother/father, siblings, grandparents
2. Custodial (marriage) – spouse, step-father/mother, adopted, in-laws

Cornell Law School definition (§ 780.308 Definition of immediate family) may include foster children/parents when living in the same household.

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SubTypes



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Contrasting to Incest

INCEST

- Perpetrator is the Offender
- Onset of abuse is most often elementary school age or younger
- The abuse is confined to the familial relationship
- Most often 1 offender, 1 victim, but can be 1 offender, multiple victims; or multiple offenders, multiple victims
- Motive is personal gratification/power

FAMILIAL EXPLOITATION

- Perpetrator gives access to the Child; Offender inflicts the abuse
- No extant data on age of onset, but suggestion that familial OA starts with incestuous abuse
- Offenders can be both inside and outside of the family
- Multiple offenders, multiple victims
- Motive is economic

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Prevalence

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Who's most likely to identify these children?

SCHOOL

- 84% of familial trafficking cases involved excessive school truancy
- Familial memoirs challenge this indicator

MEDICAL

- Familial trafficked children are less likely to present in medical setting for help. Parents have the authority to keep them home.

SOCIAL SERVICES

- 93.5% of cases have child welfare involvement

OTHERS

- In 698 cases in KY, reports were more likely to come from anonymous community members than from professionals.



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Mandated Reporters

Training

- Of the 14 states that changed their mandated reporting laws to include human trafficking, "***none expressly mandated training*** on how to identify and respond to human trafficking."
- Out of 577 mandated reporters, 60% indicated that they had received **no training of any kind** on identifying and reporting child sexual exploitation.
- Lack of/inconsistent training for those on the frontlines and across the justice process impacts our nation's ability to have reliable prevalence figures.

Dedel, K. (2010). *The Problem of child abuse and neglect in the home*. Guide No. 55. ASU Center for Problem-Oriented Policing. <https://popcenter.asu.edu/content/child-abuse-and-neglect-home-0>.
Mitchell, K.J., Finkelhor, D., and Wolak, J. (2010). Conceptualizing juvenile prostitution as child maltreatment: Findings from the National Juvenile Prostitution Study. *Child Maltreatment*, 15(1), 18-36.

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“Mom and I hustle:” 7-year-old’s confession led to dad’s prostitution arrest, New Mexico cops say

The 7-year-old girl was routinely absent from school or was often exhausted. “Mom made me hustle last night,” the girl told her teacher. The teacher told the principal, who reported it to a police detective.

The girl reported her parents would take her to “secret parties,” which were strip clubs. Her father had been forcing her to perform sex acts on his “friends” in exchange for drugs. “I keep saying I don’t want to, but he forces me to,” the girl said.



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- Stewart was arrested on felony charges of human trafficking, criminal sexual contact of a minor, promoting prostitution and contributing to the delinquency of a minor. The judge declared a mistrial due to prohibited testimony; the case remains on appeal.
- Sanchez kept trying to get her charges dropped. The Judge refused to release either from custody.
- Both parents were later indicted on human trafficking charges for forcing two other children to panhandle and using proceeds to buy drugs.
- They also faced charges for giving unlimited unsupervised access of their 8-year-old son to two adult males in a motel room on several occasions.



James Stewart, Teri Sanchez

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Law Enforcement

- Average number of hours of HT training (for this sample) over 2018-2021 was **38 hours**
- Only 18 individuals (**26%**) reported having at least **one training on familial trafficking** in their career.
- Almost 80% of survey respondents indicated they had apprehended a juvenile thought to be willfully engaged in commercial sex, only to find out later through investigation that there was a familial actor.

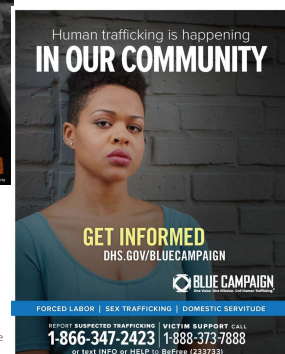
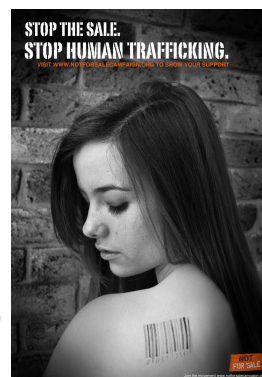


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Challenges in Victim Identification

- Lack of awareness by society
- Victims' reluctance to report, but also our failure to ask the right questions
- Victims of familial trafficking might not identify with the indicators featured in most public awareness and outreach campaigns (TIP Office)
- [familial] "trafficking is not typically advertised online via traditional means (i.e., prostitution hub websites, dating websites), which is the way we typically identify trafficking victims" and "[there is a difference in] methods of advertising, **not on the internet**, but by word of mouth."



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Prevalence in the Literature

- Shared Hope International (2009) “as many as **30%** of all domestically trafficked minors...are exploited by family members.”
- One 2010 study identified “CSA with payment” at **12%** while another suggested **62%**.
- A study conducted in 2016 found child exploitation by a family member at **16%**
- Two studies in 2019 showed **44%** and **40%**
- Polaris (2019) cited familial as the **2nd most common** form of induction into commercial sex
- **60%** of exploited children have intersected with the child welfare system (foster care). If the abuse occurred within the foster care home, that could fit the definition of familial trafficking.

Henderson, M. (2022). Human Trafficking by Families. Public Health Bulletin. UNC School of Government

Mitchell, K. J., Finkelhor, D., and Wolak, J. (2010). Conceptualizing juvenile prostitution as child maltreatment: Findings from the National Juvenile Prostitution Study. Child Maltreatment, 15(1), 18-36.

Raphael, J., and DePaul University College of Law. (2019). Parents as pimps: Survivor accounts of trafficking of children in the united states. Dignity: A Journal on Sexual Exploitation and Violence, 4(4) doi:10.23860/dignity.2019.04.04.07

Middleton, J., Edwards, E., and Ayala, R. (2019). Project PIVOT: Prevent and intervention for victims of trafficking: A preliminary report of child trafficking in Kentucky.

Polaris. (2019). 2019 Data report: U.S. national human trafficking hotline. <https://polarisproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Polaris-2019-US-National-Human-Trafficking-Hotline-Data-Report.pdf>.

Allert, J. L. (2021). Justice Professionals' Lens on Familial Trafficking Cases. Criminal Justice Review, 07340168211024719.

State Reports

- In **South Carolina** (2021), familial trafficking ranked third (**19%**) in top methods of recruitment.
- A 2022 report from **Hawaii** finds that in **25%** of child trafficking cases, the first trafficker was a family member.
- The 2021 report in **Colorado** reflected “intrafamilial” as a perpetrator category in **42%** of reported cases.
- A report from **Minnesota** based on 2018 data found **45%** of victims were recruited by a familial trafficker and **24%** were trafficked by a familial party.
- A 2019 **Kentucky** study identified that **over half** the cases of sex trafficking over a five-year period were familial. A 2020 report from the Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services found “caretaker perpetrator” in **47%** of child trafficking cases.
- According to a study of four counties in **Mississippi**, familial trafficking was identified as the **most common** form of exploitation—more than gang related, pimp related, or survival sex.

South Carolina Attorney General's Office. (2021). Annual report - South Carolina Human Trafficking Task Force.

State of Hawaii Department of the Attorney General. (2022). Initial report on the state's efforts to address the commercial sexual exploitation of children. Requested by House Resolution No. 83, H.D. 1 Regular Session of 2021 Submitted to The Thirty-

First State Legislature Regular Session of 2022

Colorado Human Trafficking Council (2021). Annual Report to the Judiciary Committees of the House of Representatives and the Senate, pursuant to C.R.S. § 18-9-505

Minnesota Office of Justice Programs Minnesota Statistical Analysis Center. (2019). Human trafficking in Minnesota. A Report to the Minnesota Legislature

Middleton, J., Edwards, E., and Ayala, R. (2019). Project PIVOT: Prevention and intervention for victims of trafficking: A preliminary report of child trafficking in Kentucky.

Department for Community Based Services - Cabinet for Health and Family Services (2020, November 1). Human Trafficking Report to Legislative Research Commission.

Beautiful Ones Ministries, Inc. (2015). Rapid assessment on domestic minor sex trafficking: Mississippi, Hinds, Madison, Rankin, and Warren counties. P. 1

Prevalence

- This 2021 study yielded **26% of cases** were confirmed as familial by the justice professionals who worked those cases.
- Comparing extant research, state-level reports and this study, a reasonable prevalence would be that familial accounts for between **26% – 47%** of minor sex trafficking cases in the U.S.
- Our 2025 study on *Exiting Exploitation* found familial prevalence to be **48%** (N=189)

Characteristics

Victim Age

- Research literature suggests children trafficked by a family member were significantly younger than those trafficked by a non-family member with the average age of victim at **11 years**.
- The PIVOT study out of Kentucky (2019) found familial victims to average between ages **12-14**.
- A 2024 analysis of 64 familial cases in one jurisdiction in Texas yielded nearly one-quarter of the juvenile victims were age **9 or younger**.
- The *Exiting Exploitation* study (2025) found the average age of initial familial trafficking at age **9.4** and age of exit at 18.6 years.

Magalhães, T., Taveira, F., Jardim, P., Santos, L., Matos, E., and Santos, A. (2009). Sexual abuse of children. A comparative study of intra and extra-familial cases. *Journal of Forensic and Legal Medicine*, 16(8), 455-459.
Middleton, J., Edwards, E., and Ayala, R. (2019). *Project PIVOT: Prevent and intervention for victims of trafficking: A preliminary report of child trafficking in Kentucky*.
Reid, J. A., Huard, J., and Haskell, R. A. (2015). Family-facilitated juvenile sex trafficking. *Journal of Crime and Justice*, 38(3), 361-376.
Sprang, G., and Cole, J. (2018). Familial sex trafficking of minors: Trafficking conditions, clinical presentation, and system involvement. *Journal of Family Violence*, 33(3), 185-195.
doi:10.1007/s10896-018-9950-y.

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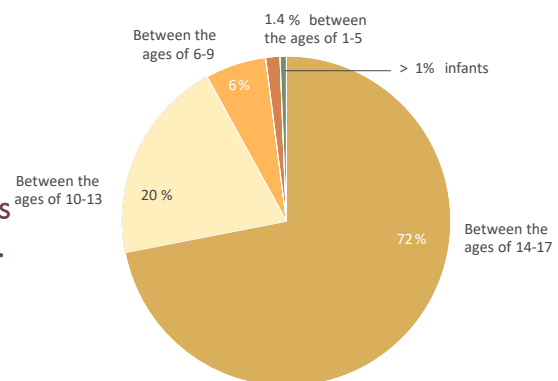
Victim Age and Sex

This Study found: **72%** of victims were between the ages of **14-17**.

Note: the documented age was when the victim *was encountered* by a justice professional. It does not speak to the child's age at the onset of abuse.

Females are the victims in **58% - 93%** of cases.

This Study found: **83%** of victims were female



Magalhães, T., Taveira, F., Jardim, P., Santos, L., Matos, E., and Santos, A. (2009). Sexual abuse of children. A comparative study of intra and extra-familial cases. *Journal of Forensic and Legal Medicine*, 16(8), 455-459.
Middleton, J., Edwards, E., and Ayala, R. (2019). *Project PIVOT: Prevent and intervention for victims of trafficking: A preliminary report of child trafficking in Kentucky*.
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Allert, J. L. (2021). Justice Professionals' Lens on Familial Trafficking Cases. *Criminal Justice Review*, 07340168211024719.
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Perpetrator Profile

Biological mothers were the perpetrator in **63-64.5%** of cases in historical studies. The second most common perpetrator profile was Mother+Paramour.

Perpetrator Relationship to Familial Trafficking Victim (n = 917)

Percentage	Relationship
60.29%	Biological Mother
39.71%	Stepfather/Mother's Boyfriend
33.82%	Biological Father
25.00%	Uncle
22.06%	Both parents together
11.76%	Female Sibling
11.76%	Grandparent
10.29%	Stepmother/Father's Girlfriend
10.29%	Male Sibling
10.29%	Cousin

Reid, J. A., Huard, J., and Haskell, R. A. (2015). Family-facilitated juvenile sex trafficking. *Journal of Crime and Justice*, 38(3), 361-376.
 Roe-Sepowitz, D. E., Gallagher, J., Ringer, M., & Hickie, K. (2015). The sexual exploitation of girls in the United States: The role of female pimps. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 30(16), 2814-2830.
 Sprang, G., and Cole, J. (2018). Familial sex trafficking of minors: Trafficking conditions, clinical presentation, and system involvement. *Journal of Family Violence*, 33(3), 185-195. doi:10.1007/s10896-018-9950-y.
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 Herman, J. L. (2000). *Father-daughter incest*. Harvard University Press.

Familial Trafficking – *Exiting Exploitation* (2025)

Are/were any of your family members involved in sexual exploitation/prostitution as **victims**? (N=186)

Mother/Stepmother	Father/Stepfather	Sister(s)	Brother(s)	Aunt(s)	Uncle(s)	Spouse	Your Children
36 (19.4%)	8 (4.3%)	30 (16.1%)	10 (5.4%)	15 (8.1%)	9 (4.8%)	3 (1.6%)	5 (2.7%)

Are/were any of your family members involved in sexual exploitation/prostitution as **exploiters/traffickers**? (N=186)

Mother/Stepmother	Father/Stepfather	Sister(s)	Brother(s)	Aunt(s)	Uncle(s)	Spouse
43 (23.0%)	28 (15.0%)	21 (11.2%)	4 (2.1%)	9 (4.8%)	21 (11.2%)	12 (6.4%)

Mother + Boyfriend Profile

- Children are 8-9x times more likely to be abused when they live in a step-family structure.
- Children who live in a home with their unmarried mother and boyfriend are 20x more likely to be sexually abused.
- Technology-facilitated sex trafficking of minors involved younger children and were more likely to involve family members.
- When the Exploiter profile was Mom+Paramour, there was a **70% increase** in the child also being used for the creation of CSAM
- **28%** of cases in this study included evidence of the child being used to create CSAM



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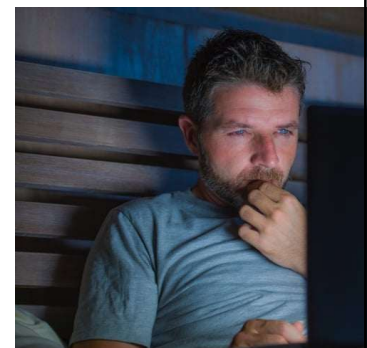
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Organized Abuse and CSAM

"Pedophiles [often] record their abuse of children into a collection

1. for purposes of masturbation to meet the immediate sexual needs of the perpetrators
2. to share and exchange with other pedophiles
3. to blackmail abused children to prevent them from disclosing." (Tate, 1992)

In this Study, the minor was forced to perform sex acts live on camera (33%). The minor was used to facilitate the manufacture of pornography (29%)



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Co-Occurring Risk Factors

Presence of Risk Factors in Half to All Familial Trafficking Cases (n = 917)

Percentage	Risk Factor
88.7%	Acute poverty
86.8%	Substance use/Addiction in the family
86.7%	Suggestion or evidence of neglect of basic needs
83.9%	Suggestion or evidence of verbal, emotional, spiritual abuse
81.0%	Other criminal activity in the home
78.9%	Suggestion or evidence of domestic violence
78.7%	Housing instability
77.0%	Single parent household
75.8%	Absent or nonexistent father
73.2%	Suggestion or evidence of other forms of childhood sexual abuse
62.2%	Pattern of running away from home
55.2%	Generational prostitution
50.0%	Incarcerated family members
45.5%	Pornography present in the home
24.1%	Gang affiliation
10.3%	Illegal immigration

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Venue

While children may be exploited in a range of venues, there is yet no distinct pattern or characteristic for where familial trafficking takes place.

Venue Comparison for 2020 and 2021 Findings

2020 Study	2021 Study	Venue
Not asked	64.9%	Exploited online
28.6%	63.8%	Transported to the buyer's location
42.0%	61.4%	Transported to a hotel/motel
22.0%	53.6%	Transported to another location
8.3%	49.1%	In a vehicle
11.4%	49.1%	In the child's home with parent(s) present
3.0%	32.0%	In the child's home with parent(s) absent

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Motive

The most common motive for familial sex trafficking—as identified in the historical research—was financial and/or material gain.



Cops arrest **Yolando Ostoloza** in NYC, charged with promoting prostitution and endangering the welfare of a child. She admitted to pimping out her 15-year-old daughter to Super Bowl fans for money to pay rent.



Reid, J. A., Huard, J., and Haskell, R. A. (2015). Family-facilitated juvenile sex trafficking. *Journal of Crime and Justice*, 38(3), 361-376.
 Reed, S. M., Kennedy, M. A., Decker, M. R., and Cimino, A. N. (2019). Friends, family, and boyfriends: An analysis of relationship pathways into commercial sexual exploitation. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 90, 1-12.
 Allert, J. L. (2021). Justice Professionals' Lens on Familial Trafficking Cases. *Criminal Justice Review*, 07340168211024719.
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 Greenbaum, J., Kellogg, N., Isaac, R., Cooper, S., Mary DeChesnay, D. S. N., Woodard, M., ... & Giardino, A. (2013). APSAC Practice Guidelines The Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children: The Medical Provider's Role in Identification, Assessment and Treatment. *American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children (APSAC)*.
 Estes, R. J., and Weiner, N. A. (2001). *The commercial sexual exploitation of children in the US, Canada, and Mexico*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, School of Social Work, Center for the Study of Youth Policy.
 Litam, S. D. A. (2017). Human sex trafficking in America: What counselors need to know. *Professional Counselor*, 7(1), 45-61.
 Middleton, J., Edwards, E., and Ayala, R. (2019). *Project PIVOT: Prevent and intervention for victims of trafficking: A preliminary report of child trafficking in Kentucky*

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Mom sold child to couple in exchange for car, police say

Published October 9, 2019 2:36pm CDT | U.S. | FOX 26 Houston



69.8%

Sex acts with the minor were exchanged for cash

60.3%

Sex acts with the minor were exchanged for material goods or services

In 2019 THOMASVILLE, N.C. — Alice Todd, sold her 2-year old child to Chavis and Vicencio Romero, in exchange for a car

Motive: Economic / Material Goods

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Motive: Drugs

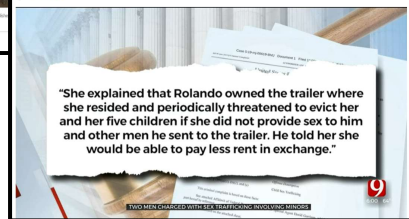
- This study found 75.4% cases where the minor was exchanged for drugs
- One respondent indicated that drug use of familial perpetrator was more severe (hallucinogenic)
- A study of 31 young children living in a rural state (KY) referred for behavioral health assessment found that family members were trafficking these children in exchange for illicit drugs **in more than 81 percent of the cases.**
- These cases [familial] were **less likely to involve drugs** [imposed on the children] than cases involving nonrelative perpetrators.
- Of those, 9 of 31 children (29%) were given drugs to ensure their compliance.

Wisconsin woman accused of trading sex with children for drugs and cash



OKC Mother Accused Of Trading Sex With Daughters For Rent And Drugs; 2 Men Arrested

Thursday, December 5th 2019, 4:20 pm
By Aaron Strickland



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Generational Prostitution

- The 'family business', a culture where family and extended family may have been raised in a similar way and may play a role in the trafficking.
- It is difficult for someone who grew up in a familial trafficking environment to recognize his/her victimization and to break the cycle with the family.



Mom, daughter arrested for prostitution, unlicensed massage therapy
WFLA-TV News 10 Aug 18, 2017

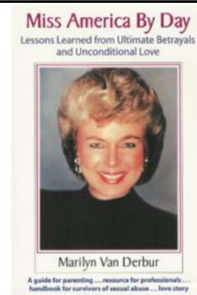


The story of a mother and daughter working a brothel in Iowa

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Motive: Familial Network

- Often led by an authoritative father
- Father often engages in incestuous abuse and then grants access to his child(ren) to others to advance Power, Status, or Protection.
- The families involved in the organized abuse all adopted and promoted an “abuse culture” that fostered secrecy and interdependence.” (Cleaver & Freedman, 1996)
- “It is far easier to pick up on the signs of abuse in working class or underclass children than in intact and outwardly functional middle-class families.” (Sinason, 2002)



“Apart from the abuse my life felt pretty normal. We were well looked after, well fed, well dressed, and we got on OK. Mum and Billy [step father] were not drinkers and they rarely went out, so there was no shortage of money. No teacher would have singled me out as a child from a problem family, no social workers ever came knocking at our door, and we never had cause for a policeman to arrive on our doorstep.” – Dana Fowley, 2010

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Motive: Sadistic Abuse

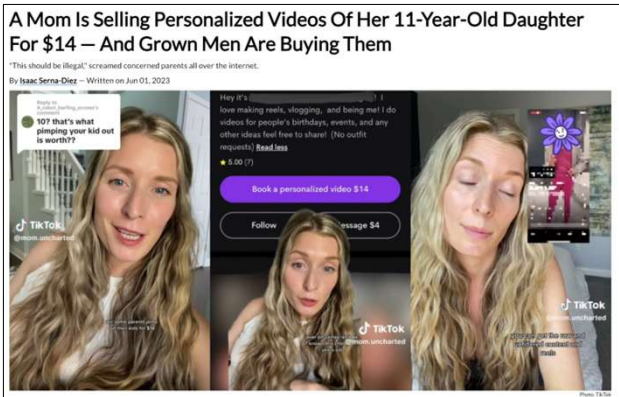
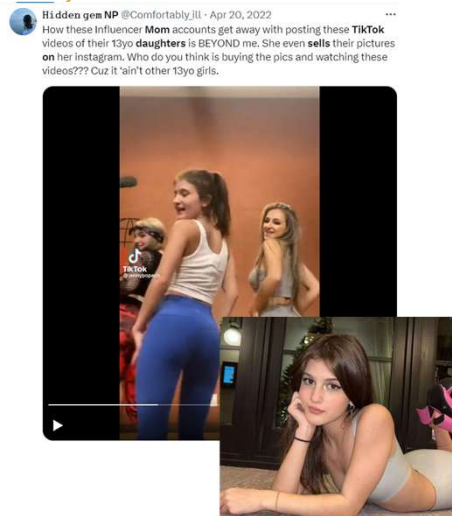
- “formalized, predetermined set of symbolic actions, generally performed in a particular environment
- patterned; words/actions follow a prescribed order
- Can present as:
 - Sadistic seduction rituals
 - Psychological torture
 - Indoctrination
- Ritualized abuse often has a pattern (ceremonial) quality and may include language, setting, dress, and symbols unique to that group
- Mind control / brainwashing can be a central practice
- Activities are kept secret from society at large, as they violate norms and laws.



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Motive: Narcissism?



@Jennypopach is one of the more well-known social media accounts. It's estimated her daughter's images generate \$100k/month

<https://instamixglobal.com/jenny-popach/>

BREAK

INTERVIEWING AND INVESTIGATIVE CHALLENGES

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Screening Tools

- Relying on tools to facilitate identification is currently an insufficient strategy.
- Only 22% of respondents indicated that they use a specific screening tool to distinguish sex trafficking cases.
- The most cited tool in use was **CSE-IT** (Commercial Sexual Exploitation Identification Tool). Several individuals reported that their agency modified a publicly available tool.
- Contemporary screening tools do not necessarily ascertain the relationship of the perpetrator to the minor victim, which ignores one of the critical factors of FTS.
- A review of 30+ HT screening tools yielded that none asked questions specific to the relationship of the victim to perpetrator (2021)

Reid, J. A., Baglivio, M. T., Piquero, A. R., Greenwald, M. A., & Epps, N. (2017). Human trafficking of minors and childhood adversity in Florida. *American Journal of Public Health*, 107(2), 306-311.
Hartinger-Saunders, R. M., Trouteaud, A. R., & Matos Johnson, J. (2017). Mandated reporters' perceptions of and encounters with domestic minor sex trafficking of adolescent females in the United States. *American journal of orthopsychiatry*, 87(3), 195.

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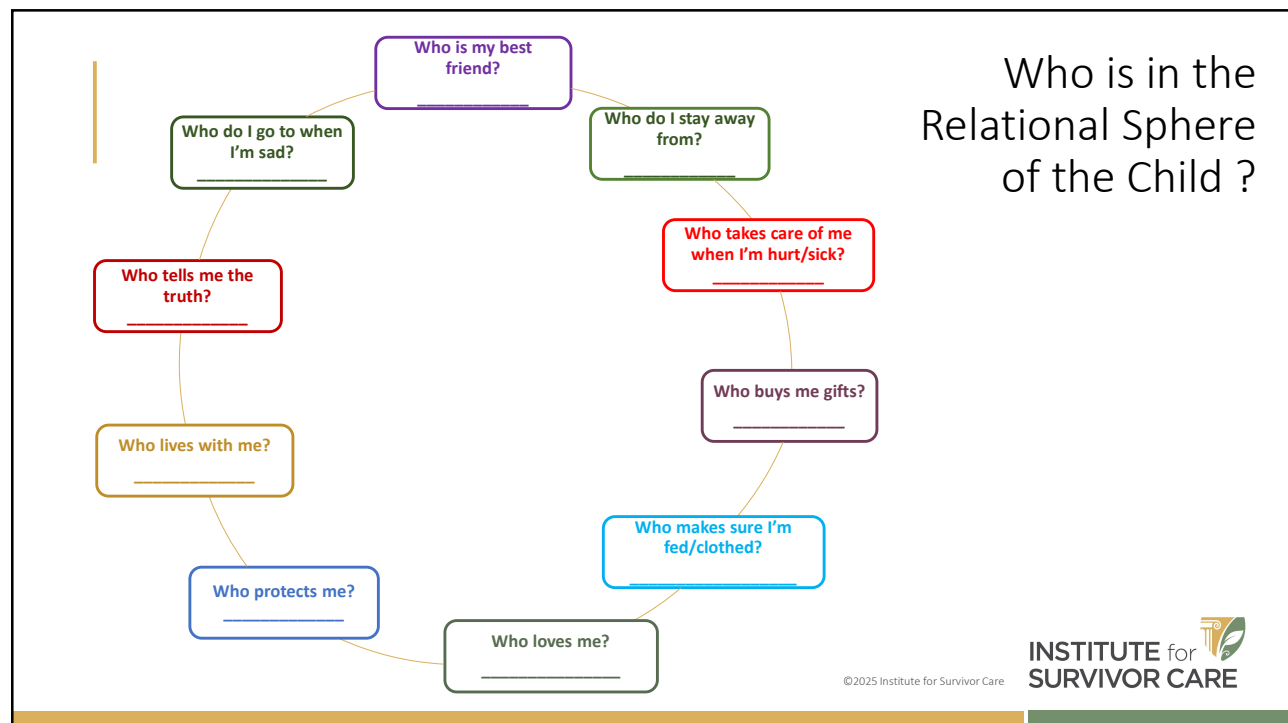
44

Familial Grooming is not an event, but an environment

- Boundaries are routinely violated or non-existent: what is the Child's privacy when getting dressed, bathing, or going to bed?
- Less parental affection
- Presence of sex talk, jokes about sex, pornography.
- Manipulation, bribes, threats, blackmail, or punishments to ensure the child keeps the abuse a secret.
- Threats of harm to other members of the family, pets or friends of the child
- Child is discredited, suggesting no one will believe them, and use any means necessary to keep the abuse quiet.
- "Forced Forgetting" is a psychological technique, aka "You must have been dreaming that"
- Make the child believe s/he has consented; shift blame to the child, leaving the child scared, or too ashamed to speak out.

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FORCE

“The question of whether force is involved is largely irrelevant, since force is rarely necessary to obtain compliance. The parent’s authority over the child is usually sufficient to compel obedience.”

— J. Herman (2012)

- Per the 2019 Kentucky study, child victims were more likely to have a *higher number of offenders* than those trafficked by nonfamily members.
- Severe forms of abuse including physical force, use of weapons, attempted or completed intercourse, object penetration, torture to animals
- Familial perpetrators are *less likely* to present the child for medical care so as to avoid detection
- Familial victim memoirs report rarely visiting medical providers.

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FRAUD

- Fraud may be more aligned with lies told to the Child that evoke fear and ensure compliance
- Children (appear to) cooperate or “consent” to their sexual victimization
- Compliant child victims may [learn to] claim they were asleep, drunk, drugged, or abducted in part to meet the lack of consent criteria and in part to avoid embarrassment

Lanning, K. (2005). Compliant Child Victims: Confronting an Uncomfortable Reality. *Viewing Child Pornography on the Internet*.

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COERCION

"The risk of losing this primary relationship is more devastating than the abuse [the Child] must suffer to keep it."

J.Herman (2000)

- Intrafamilial offenders tends to control their victims through their private access and family authority (the grooming process is not needed or just different)
- Caregiver threats, intimidation and parental authority were used to recruit and maintain the victim in prostitution (86.3%), pornography (50%), and strip club work (18%) (Sprang, 2018)
- Parents will use threats of abandonment and separation, telling their children that if they were to disclose what happens within the family, they will be separated, leaving them without a family altogether
- The greatest threat felt by familial trafficking victims is the **threat of loss**, often of that primary caregiver relationship
- The secondary threat is often, "...and I'll never get out."

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Exercise:

What are the terms/slang that you have learned associated with sex trafficking?

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Not the Same Language

Automatic

Choosing up

Date

Family/Folks

Gorilla (or Guerrilla) Pimp

Johns/Plays/Trick

Lot Lizard

Out of Pocket

Quota

Seasoning

The Circuit

The works

Turn Out

Bare back

Daddy

Exit Fee

Golden Shower

Ho

Kiddie Stroll

MoneyShot

Player

Renegade

Stable/Family

The Life/The Game

Track/Stroll/Blade/Strip

Wifies/Wife-in-Law

(virtually) none of this language is present in familial trafficking.

The child is generally not connected to the outside/commercial expression of sex trafficking (but as an adult, may migrate into other channels of exploitation)

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Challenges to Investigation

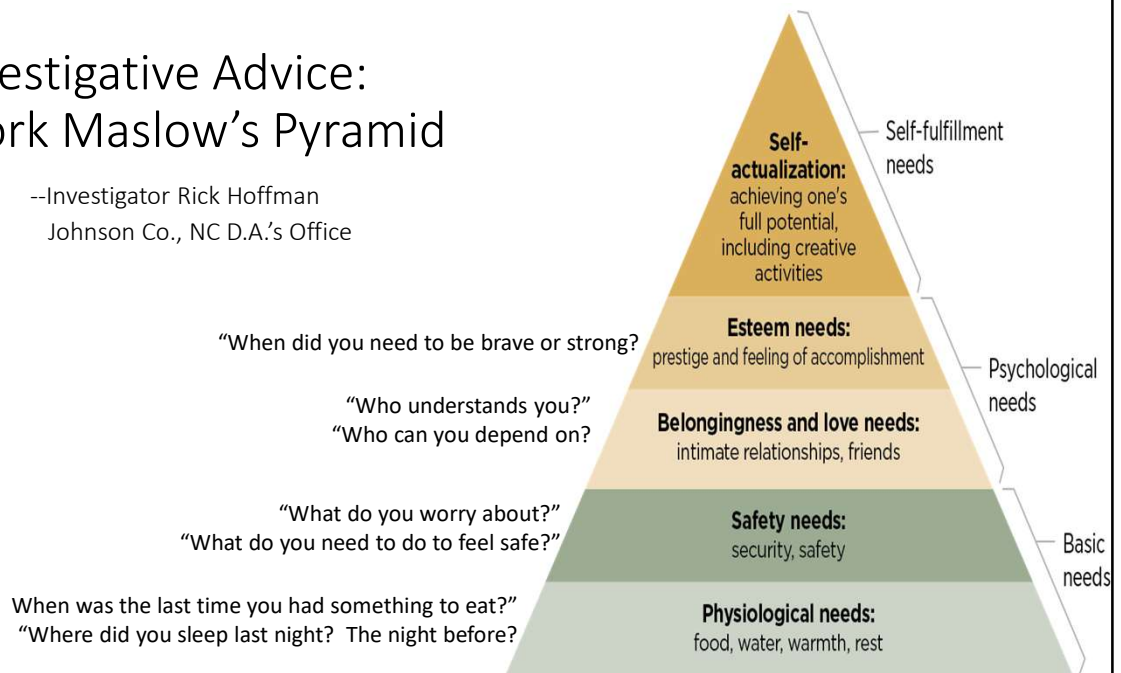
- In 39.5% of cases, justice professionals said there was not enough evidence to prosecute; the case was based solely on testimony and the child was not believed.
 - Transactions marketed to “insider” group (complicit in ensuring secrecy)
 - Transactions marketed via word of mouth
- **Lack of Evidence**
 - Child may have been intoxicated
 - Child may have strong skills of dissociation
 - Child may be trained for complicity
 - Child may have no knowledge of the economic transfer
 - Child is unable to provide evidence

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Investigative Advice: Work Maslow’s Pyramid

--Investigator Rick Hoffman
Johnson Co., NC D.A.’s Office



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Focus Questions on Safety and Relationships

- Who else lives in the house with you?
- Do you stay in the same house?
- Do you have your own room? Do you feel safe in your room?
- Is there any room in your house where you don't feel safe?
- Have you ever missed school? How often? Why?
- Have you ever been hurt and you didn't see a doctor?
- Has anyone ever taken your picture when you didn't want?

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Who's the Criminal?

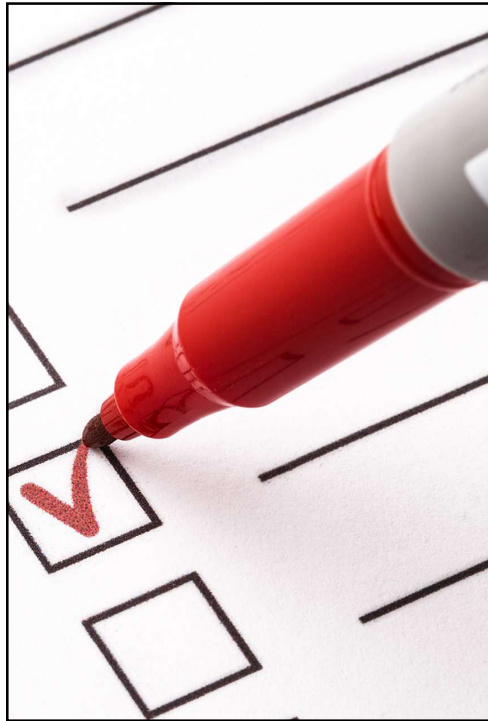


Jeremy Williams (AL), is accused of capital murder in the asphyxiation death of 5-year-old Kitarie Holland. Mother, Kristy Siple (GA) is charged with human trafficking and felony murder. The warrant states: "She did agree with another person to pay her for having sexual intercourse and sodomy with her minor daughter."

<https://www.foxnews.com/us/georgia-mom-murder-5-year-old-daughter-sex-slave>

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Challenge: Reporting

- Government reports on court cases involving trafficking fail to mention the relationship of the perpetrator to the victim (Banks & Kuckelhahn, 2011; Motivans & Synder, 2018)
- FBI Crime in the United States Report (2016) does not provide information about whether arrested trafficker are family members (Raphael, 2019)
- None of the cases in the Sprang & Cole (2018) study had notation in the child welfare files coding for minor sex trafficking/exploitation.

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Texas Approach to Coding Cases

- CF - Confirmed
- RTB – Reason to Believe
- UTO- Unable to Determine
- RO – Ruled Out

What protocol might your agency use to categorize cases that warrant further examination?

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PROSECUTORIAL CHALLENGES

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The Role of Bias

In a study on mandated reporters (school and healthcare professionals),

- **96.6 %** of reporters indicated that they would definitely report if they knew an adolescent was being sexually exploited by a family member
- They would ***probably not report*** if they had knowledge of an adolescent being used in pornographic imagery (12.4%), being pressured to exchange sex for money or goods (17.9%) or working at a strip club (18.5%).
- **57.2 %** of mandated reporters in the sample believed that ***some adolescent girls choose to prostitute***.

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CASE STUDY:

Griffin is said to have persuaded parents to let him train their daughters to be sexually submissive toward men. In June 2020, Griffin is alleged to have sent a mom of two girls, aged 9 and 13, \$3,000 for plane tickets so that she could travel with her daughters from Nevada to Boston, according to the indictment. Griffin met them at the airport and drove them to Ludlow, Vermont. Prosecutors say the girl was forced to engage in illegal sexual contact.

In April 2020, Griffin coordinated a 'virtual training session' where he instructed a woman and her 14-year-old daughter to remove their clothes during a video chat.

Two months later, in June 2020, prosecutors claim Griffin offered to pay for a woman and her 16-year-old daughter to come to his ski house in Vermont for sexual 'training' involving the teen.

Griffin is then said to have mentioned how he 'sexually trained girls as young as 7 years old,' according to the indictment.



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Bias in UK Grooming Gangs



- Police reluctantly responded to missing child reports. Identified children accused of “wasting police’s time”
- Children framed as deviant or promiscuous
- Going after the perpetrators has been vehemently challenged out of fear of being accused of racism
- Some reports used descriptor of “Asian” instead of Pakistani to more generalize the abuser population
- Formal investigations accused of collusion and intended coverup due to political sensitivity

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What might be your biases?



Sympathy for victims is inversely proportional to their age and sexual development (K. Lanning)

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The Compliant Victim

--Kenneth Lanning

- “Distorted accounts from victims are frequently caused or influenced by various interveners (e.g., therapist, physicians, parents, law enforcement) who are unwilling to nonjudgmentally accept the reality of the nature of the actual molestation of children. Instead, they influence, **pressure, or lead the children to describe the victimization in a way that fits their agenda** or needs and in the process, destroy the consistency and prosecutive potential of a valid case.”
- “Interveners must **be careful about asking questions that communicate a judgement about the nature of the victimization**...If why questions are asked (why didn't you tell? Why didn't you resist? Why are you smiling in this photo?) every effort should be made to communicate to the victim that any truthful answer is acceptable, including 'because I enjoyed it.' “

Lanning, K. (2005). Compliant Child Victims: Confronting an Uncomfortable Reality. *Viewing Child Pornography on the Internet*.

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Collusion / Lack of Cooperation

- Over half of respondents reported collusion, coercion, and corruption by family members.
- *“Families rally behind the offender and that hinders investigation,”* or *“Families join up against the victim,”* were echoed comments.

“We don’t have access to the child without them being psychologically adulterated by the adult in the home.”

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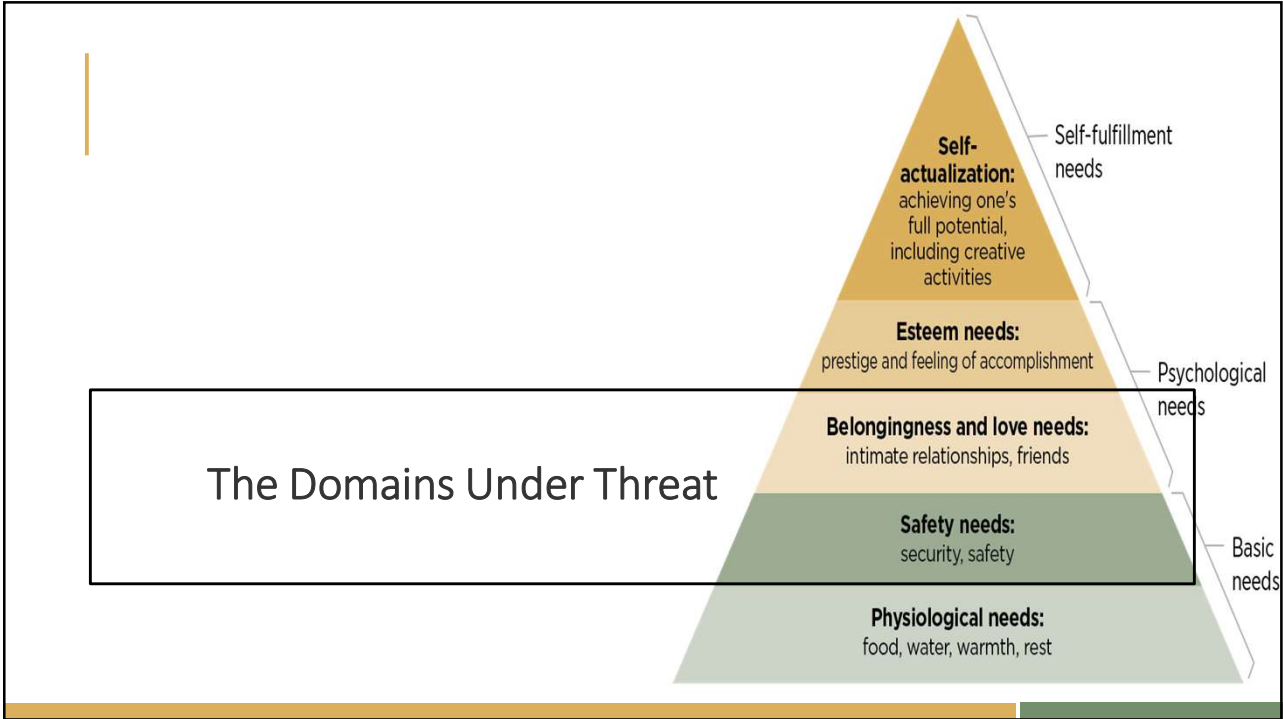
Challenges: Victim Stability

- DMST cases take, on average 18-24 months to go to trial, with some recent cases taking 3+ years.
- *“It can be even longer when you have multiple defendants”*
- Investigators, attorneys, and advocates need to build a basis of trust with a relationally-compromised child.
- Often times on-going perpetration is taking place while the judicial process is happening in the background.
- *“Victims need to have consistent, long-term support during the court process.”*

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RELATIONAL and PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACTS



Needs Priorities

FROM YOUR PERSPECTIVE

1. Safety
2. Physiological
3. Esteem
4. Relational

FROM THE CHILD'S PERSPECTIVE

1. Relational
 2. Safety
 3. Esteem
 4. Physiological
- May invert based on age

It's critical to keep in mind that for a Child, these needs are mediated *THROUGH* a relationship.

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How Socially Isolated has the Child become?

- Familial trafficking situations may have prevented survivors from developing key healthy social skills, including how to make and maintain friends, relate to other children and adults, ask for assistance, and recognize their own self-worth.
- Watch/ask about the Child's age-appropriate peer relationships.
 - Does the Child have a best friend? Do they go to each others' houses?
 - Do their families know each other?
- Adolescents/teens in incestuous abuse or familial trafficking situations may avoid romantic pursuits with peers (that may be one of the Rules)

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The Paradox

- Survivors of familial trafficking may do well academically because school is where they feel safe or because they have been conditioned to follow rules and please adults in their lives
- Children may be indoctrinated early not to draw attention to themselves, not to stand out. “Being invisible” means not drawing attention to the family or what happens at home.
- *“I wish there were more resources available in schools—people who can come in and “plant a seed” let the children know there is a way out: even if it’s family. I wished everyday that when I went to school that I didn’t have to go back home. With familial trafficking, it’s starts at birth. There were so many obvious signs, for years, but no one was looking.”*

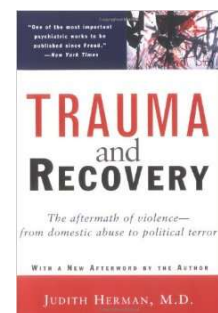


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The Cost of Disclosure

- Having a family member as the main perpetrator and trafficker may result in victims feeling unable to speak about their experiences due to the shame it may bring upon their families, communities, and themselves.
- Survivors may have a chronic (omnipresent) fear of reprisal.
- Familial trafficking situations often extricates the child from all other social supports and healing for the survivor may mean “total loss of family” – a price not readily paid.
- We need to think of “captivity” in psychological and relational terms



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Case Study: Chrystal

- Product of two substance-abusing parents who divorced
- Daughter is court-ordered to spend weekends with Dad
- Dad molests his daughters and invites his “friends” over to offend as well
- Mom is not “well,” so Daughter does not see a pathway to escaping her plight
- Abuse continues through high school
- Daughter sees this as “state-enforced abuse” because the state required her to be subjected to her father’s abuse and exploitation

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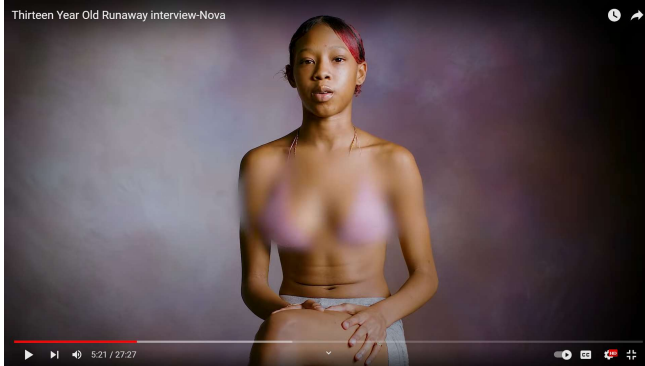
Crisis of Loyalty

1. to create a reality that says
 - *they’re just sad, tired, lonely...*
 - *they are doing the best they can*
 - *maybe there’s something wrong me*
 - *it’s something I did...*
2. to accept that the people who are supposed to love you unconditionally, protect and provide for you... failed; they never really loved you, they hurt you intentionally, and profited from your abuse.



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Cognitive Dissonance



<https://youtu.be/PVDJtYbmtfk?t=321>

- 13 year old being exploited on the streets in California
- Her mother is a known prostituted woman
- Note the cognitive dissonance in this child between her “prostituting” and her mother

All of the abused child’s psychological adaptations serve the fundamental purpose of preserving her primary attachment to her parents in the face of daily evidence of their malice, helplessness or indifference

--J. Herman, 2021

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Family Ties are not easily broken

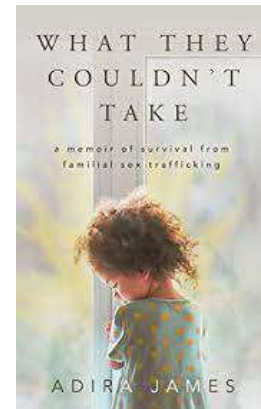
Victims are less likely to have a “break through” in this entrenched relational dynamic



Christy Huxoll, 33, (TN) was arrested alongside BOTH her parents Larry Huxoll, 53, and Lisa Alff, 48, after an undercover cop responded to her ad on Backpage.com and met her at a nearby hotel. Her parents had arranged and provided condoms for the exchange.

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VICTIM SUPPORTS



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Challenge: Reunification

- There is a bias towards family reunification. “Services should not necessarily be on family reunification, given that many of these youth are leaving their family homes because of abuse.”
- Kinship care may not be any better, depending on how extensive the “system” is for that child.
- The burden of proof for an “unfit” home situation is difficult to obtain

“We need to accept when reunification just isn’t an option. If that kid has run from that home over a dozen times, something’s just not right and we need to pursue other options.”

2022 National Runaway Switchboard

17,009 contacts

58% reached out via chat
42% called from home

77% due to family dynamics
44% reported being in crisis
27% contemplating running

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Specialized Placement

A 2018 report from the National Foster Parent Association suggests that while all foster parents receive basic training (20-30 hours pre-licensure), only an estimated 20% have completed advanced training for specialized needs placement.

"In my situation, I was trafficked through my biological parents and then entered into foster care. Even after I was adopted, nobody explained the significance of what I had been through. As a result, I endured years of mental turmoil and my adoptive family became very burnt out with my issues."

– Survey respondent, 2025

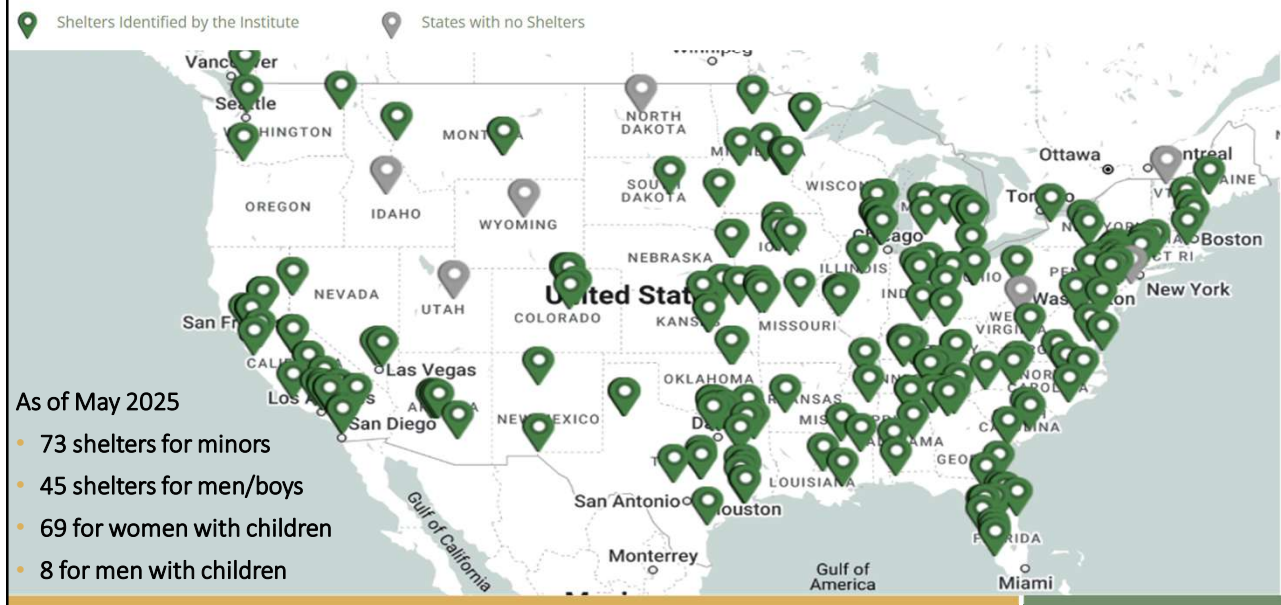
We need more research on whether family or group home placement produces better outcomes for children, and based on what identified needs.

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National Shelter Landscape Map

Our vision is that *any survivor, anywhere in the nation, has access to qualified, compassionate care.*



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Shelter Program Challenges

- 95% of shelter programs in the U.S. will take referrals from anywhere, but too often with minors, referrals are tied to funding source
- **41%** of victims in this study were removed from the home and placed in child protective services, institutional care, or foster care all or most of the time, but respondents lament that these options are not secure.
- **25%** of these cases were referred specifically to a minor trafficking shelter.
- Social pressure against lockdown facilities impedes service to those juveniles who need them most.

"Ninety percent of the time a child is recovered and placed with CPS and typically is gone the next day."

"I just wish we could buy them some time, so they could see that relationships could be different"

Institute for Shelter Care (2021). National shelter landscape map. The Samaritan Women. Retrieved from: www.thesamaritanwomen.org/shelter-map. (Swaner et al., 2016, p.105).

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Summary

- Domestic Minor Familial Sex Trafficking is suggested to be **26-47%** of child trafficking cases in the U.S.
- The **biological mother** is the most common perpetrator.
- When it's Mother+ Paramour, there is a greater risk that the child is also being used for CSAM.
- The acquisition of drugs was the **#1 motive** with money being a close second.
- **Familial collusion and lack of evidence** are the greatest challenges to investigation and prosecution
- Familial exploited children deal with a complex set of relational dynamics that significantly impacts their care, as well as case identification, investigation, prosecution and victim services.

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Potential Action Items

- Ensure training for mandated reporters on the unique characteristics of familial trafficking
- Examine screening tools and protocols to include victim-perpetrator relationship
- Explore more fully the intersection of poverty and drug use on the prevalence of familial trafficking
- Train service providers on the unique considerations for a familial trafficked individuals
- More accurately record cases that involve a familial dynamic

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CONTACT INFORMATION

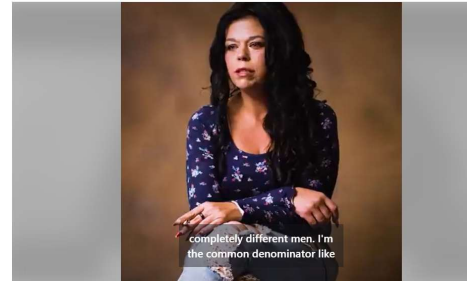
- TO DOWNLOAD THE FAMILIAL STUDY:
<https://instituteforsurvivorcare.org/familial/>
- TO DOWNLOAD THE EXITING EXPLOITATION STUDY:
<https://instituteforsurvivorcare.org/exiting/>
- Dr. Jeanne L. Allert
Institute for Survivor Care
jallert@instituteforsurvivorcare.org

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Contributing Resources

- Herman, J., *Father-Daughter Incest*
- C. Courtois., *Healing the Incest Wound*
- Salter, A., *Sexual Predators*
- Salter, M., *Organized Sexual Abuse*
- Van Derbur, M., *Miss American by Day*
- “*Prisoners of Incest*” - documentary
- “*the Healing Years*” – documentary
- Soft White Underbelly videos on YouTube



Incest Survivor Interview - Star

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