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Exploring the Realities of Child Sex Trafficking in Georgia

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Exploring the Realities of Child Sex Trafficking in Georgia

Amber McKeen, Child Abuse Prevention Trainer

Stephanie V. Blank Center for Safe and Healthy Children

A service of Children's at Scottish Rite



Children'sSM
Healthcare of Atlanta
Dedicated to All Better

Overview

- Definition/Language
- Statistics
- Risk Factors
- Pathways to Entry
- Males as Victims
- Voices of Victims
- Action Steps



Objectives

- Define the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC), or sex trafficking
- List three risk factors for CSEC
- Describe the reporting process when encountering CSEC victims
- Recall two resources for victims of CSEC



Language and Definitions

Child as victim, not criminal



Definition

- Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC)
 - Sexual activity involving a child in exchange for something of value
 - Child treated as a commercial, sexual object
 - A form of violence against children
 - Considered child abuse – must be reported
 - Federal Law (TVPA)
 - Child (< 18) used for the purpose of sexual servitude, regardless of the absence(s) of coercion, violence, etc.



Change in Language

- “Teen/Child Prostitute”
 - Implies choice
 - Bad kid
 - Resistant
 - Not worth the effort
 - Professional, working, doing job
 - Juvenile offender, criminal
 - Deserving of consequences: sexual violence, social isolation, incarceration

A label with
long-lasting
stigma



CSEC/Sexually Exploited Child

A young person who has been sexually used, coerced, manipulated, and violently controlled for another person's profit

- Victim
- Inequality, power imbalance
- Vulnerability
- Multiple systems of oppression
- System of violence against women and children
- Call for social responsibility and accountability

Defines what has happened to a child, rather than labeling the child's identity



Myths & Stereotypes

Youth make a lot of money in the commercial sex industry.

Children in the commercial sex industry like to have lots of sex.

Only girls are sexually exploited.

All pimps are male.

It is a victimless crime.

Children and youth choose to enter the sex trade.

Sex trafficking is perpetrated by a small number of "sexual predators"

Children/youth lure and take advantage of unsuspecting men.

Sexually exploited youth don't leave because they like the sex industry.

Children in the commercial sex industry are "bad kids."

Being in the life can be exciting and glamorous.



A New Vocabulary

- Pimps → Traffickers, exploiters
- Tricks/johns → Buyers, exploiters
- Child/teen prostitutes → Victims, prostituted teen, exploited child



Exploiters

- Trafficker (“pimp”) = Sex Offender = **Exploiter/Child Abuser**
 - Male or female
 - Sometimes female under the control of a male
 - Bottom girl/Bottom “Bitch”
 - Adult or teen
- Buyer = Sex Offender = **Exploiter/Child Abuser**
 - Person who buys sex from minor



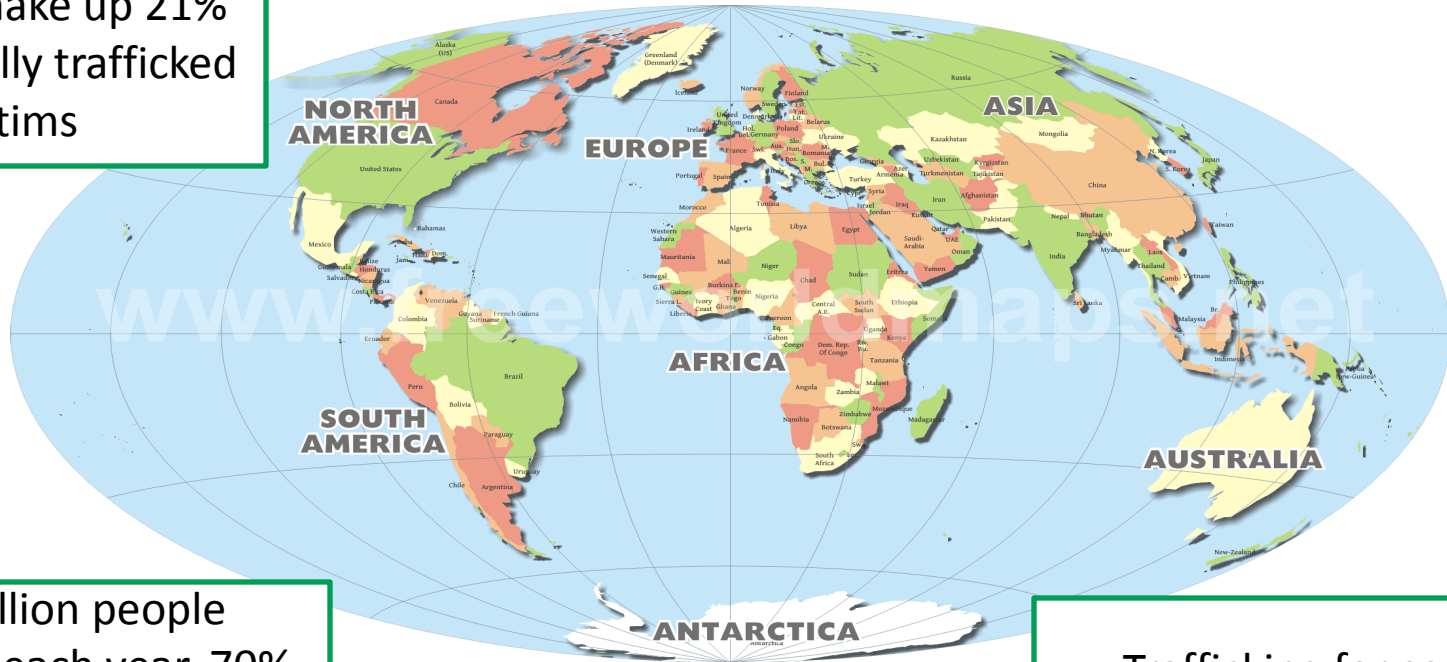
Other Common Terms

- Human Trafficking
- Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children
 - Sexually Exploited Teen/Child
- Sex Trafficking
 - Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking
 - Trafficked Youth
- Sex Slavery
 - Sex Slaves
- Prostituted Teen/Child
- Exploited Teen/Child



Scope of Problem - International

Children make up 21% of all sexually trafficked victims



2-4 million people trafficked each year, 70% of female victims are sexually trafficked

Trafficking for sexual exploitation is more common in Europe, Central Asia, and the Americas.

UNODC Global Report on Trafficking in Persons, 2012; Polaris Project Fact Sheet, 2010



International Trafficking Victims in US

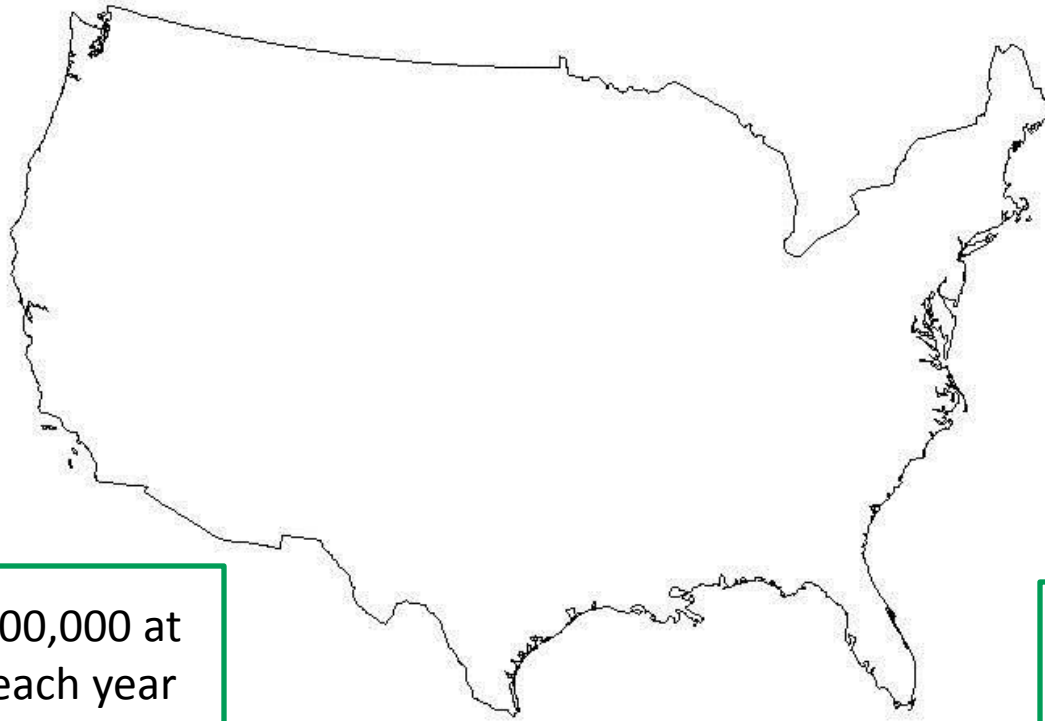
- Storefront/Residential Brothels
 - Informal, cash businesses operating in residential areas
 - “massage parlors”
- Agriculture/Farm Work
- Trafficker-controlled prostitution
 - Truck stops, escort services, strip clubs
- Restaurants
- Child brides
- Domestic work within homes



UNODC Global Report on Trafficking in Persons, 2012, Polaris Project Fact Sheet, 2010; Cooper et al, 2005



Scope of the Problem - National



14,500-17,500 foreign nationals trafficked into US each year

200,000 – 300,000 at risk in U.S. each year

38,600 runaways at risk each year

Polaris Project , 2010; Hammer et al, 2002; Estes & Weiner, 2001



Domestic Trafficking

- Runaways (often fleeing violence and abuse)
- “Throwaways”
- “System” Youth
- Child pornography
- False promises of jobs in entertainment industry
- Parents selling children
- Trafficker controlled prostitution
 - Truck stops, escort services, strip clubs

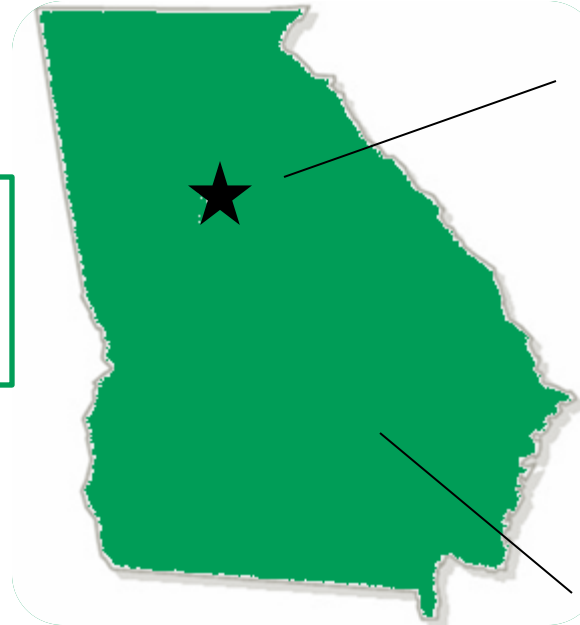


Polaris Project , 2010; Estes & Weiner, 2001



Scope of Problem - Georgia

7,200 men purchase sex with adolescent girls each month



Atlanta 1 of 14 cities with the highest rates of prostitution of children in U.S.

200 – 500 girls are exploited in Georgia each month



Risk Factors



Children at Risk for Recruitment

Under 18

Desire for
attention

Walk alone

Use Internet

Like brand-name
fashion and
luxury items

Feel insecure or
misunderstood

Fight with
parents

Want
independence

Test boundaries
and take risks



Video: Making of a Girl



www.gems-girls.org



Risk Factors: Individual

- Abuse and neglect
 - 80-90% of trafficked youth have been sexually abused before they are trafficked
- Mental health issues
- Unaddressed trauma
- Developmental/learning
- Drugs, substance abuse
- Runaway
 - 1.6 million children/yr
 - 1 in 3 approached in first 48 hrs
 - Throwaways → homelessness
 - Survival sex (esp. LGBTQ)



Cooper, 2010; GEMS, 2010; Hammer et al, 2002



Risk Factors: Environmental

- Transient male population
- Poverty, homelessness
- Violence
 - Family, neighborhood, school, etc.
- Street-involved culture/economy
- Presence of pre-existing prostitution markets
- Foster care

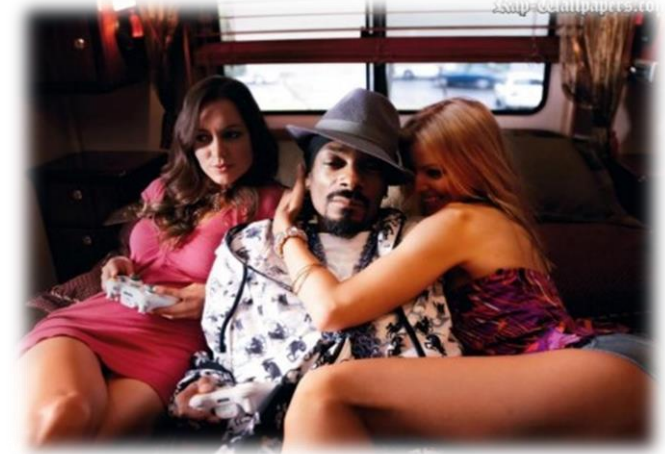


Cooper, 2010; GEMS, 2010; Estes & Weiner, 2001



Risk Factors: Social

- Sexism and misogyny
- Homophobia
- Sexualization of girls and young women
- Glorification of pimp/prostitution culture
 - Songs- *P.I.M.P.*, *Big Pimpin'*, *Pimp Mode*
 - Movies - *Hustle and Flow*
 - Video games- *Grand Theft Auto*
 - Clothing
- Access to technology
- Gang membership



Pathways to Entry

- Seduction and coercion
- False advertising for modeling, acting, or dancing
- Peer recruitment
- Internet: Chat rooms or sharing sites
- Parents selling children
- Violence and force, kidnapping



Cooper et al, 2005; Estes & Weiner, 2001



Victims

- Average age of entry is 12 - 14
- 80-90% were sexually abused before being sold for sex



GEMS, 2010; US Dept. of Justice, 2010



Males

- Males more likely to view themselves as “hustlers”
- Disproportionate number of males involved in CSEC identify as gay, bisexual, or transgender/transsexual
- Lured into exploitation – often operate without a trafficker (survival sex)
- More likely to be arrested for prostitution-related crimes; less likely to be referred to organizations for assistance



ECPAT-USA, 2013; Moxley-Goldsmith, 2005; Estes & Weiner, 2001



Why Don't They Just Leave?

- Coercion and control
- Stockholm syndrome / trauma bonds
- Similar to dynamics of intimate partner violence

Cycle of Violence



Why Don't They Seek Help?

- Threats
- Frequently accompanied
- Fear
- Shame
- Dependency
- Loyalty
- Perceived Normalcy
- Social Barriers
- No personal ID/documentation
- Distrust of law enforcement
- Lack of knowledge of social systems

Polaris Project, 2010; Cooper et al, 2005; Estes & Weiner, 2001



What You Can Do

Victim Identification & Advocacy

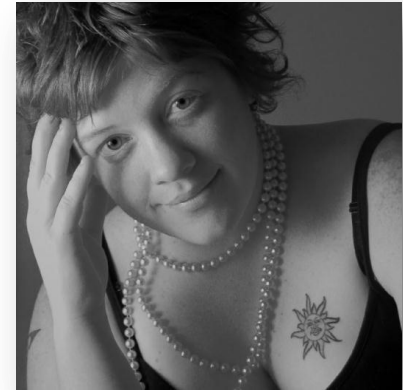
Recognize the Signs

- Frequent “runner”
- Frequently absent
- Older boyfriend or friends
- Falling grades
- Owns expensive items
 - Cell phone
 - Jewelry
 - Electronics
- Hyper-vigilant or constantly on alert



Recognize the Signs

- Gang signs/affiliation
- Physical signs
 - Unexplained bruises, scars
 - Cigarette burns
 - Tattoos of someone's name, nickname or symbols
 - » Back of neck
 - » Underarm
 - » Ankle
- May be secretive about meaning





Rectangles represent money packets.
Tattooed 3 weeks after meeting
pimp (trafficker).



In this image, the trafficker's street
name was "King Tae".



“One and Only Lay Low”

“Lay Lows Property”



Recognize the Signs

- Child won't make eye contact- particularly with males
- Child hostile or fearful of those in perceived positions of authority
- History of 1+ of following:
 - Physical or sexual abuse
 - DFCS involvement with family
 - Running away (especially >3 times in past year)
 - Truancy and school problems
 - Pregnancies
 - Abortions
 - Miscarriages



School Personnel

- **Awareness & Advocacy**

- Take note of adults or older teens (male and female) around the school that are not related to students
 - *Ex) High school student trafficking middle school girls*
- Reach out to “at risk” students
- Advocate for education & prevention programs for students, parents & staff
 - Start EARLY!
 - Comprehensive, fact-based sex education
 - Healthy Relationships
 - Media Literacy
 - Athletic Programs



Voices of Victims

“Most of us never expected to be involved in the life, but because of our age, the abuse we’d already experienced and the pervasive messages about our sexuality and worth that we receive every day in the media, we were vulnerable to a smooth-talking recruiter who promised us the world. Or at least a new pair of sneakers and jeans which at the time felt like the world.”

Rachel Lloyd, CSEC Survivor
GEMS

“It’s not a choice, no one just wakes up and wants to do this. You can’t just walk away...”
CSEC Survivor

“That’s the lowest you can feel in life because at that point you’re no longer human. You have a value on you that is so low. I have gone to the store and bought toys for my child that valued more than what my trafficker sold me for.”

Keisha Head, CSEC Survivor
from Stewards of Children 2.0



Remember: Not your “average victim”

- Generally do not self-identify as “victim”
- “You know what I do, right?”
- Trafficker (pimp) is: lover – friend – boyfriend – protector
- Show them that you are here to help, not to judge and don’t expect to convince them of anything....



Cooper S., 2010



Action Steps

1. Report

- Know your state's reporting requirements (ex. In GA, CSEC ***must*** be reported to DFCS or law enforcement)
- Contact the appropriate agency
 - **In GA: DFCS – 1-855-GA-CHILD**
 - **You may also report to Law Enforcement**
- Know your organization's child abuse reporting protocol and follow it
 - If no protocol, *advocate to create one*



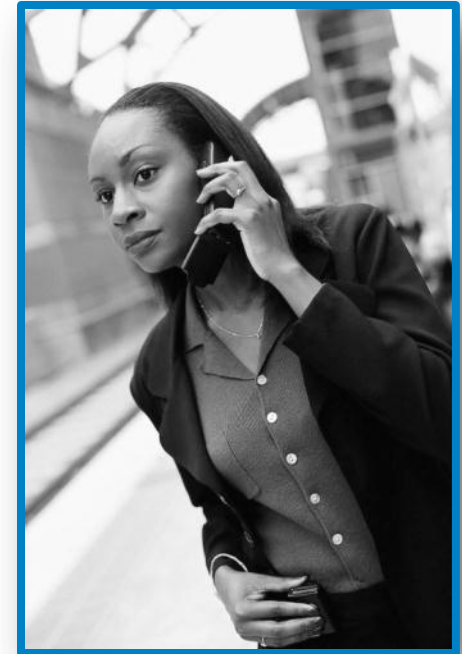
Action Steps

2. Make a referral

- In GA, Georgia Cares – (404) 602-0068
- Nationally, if you aren't aware of resources, contact Polaris Project – 1-888-373-7888

3. Link child to medical exam & forensic interview

- In the metro Atlanta area:
 - Acute case/Non-acute cases:
 - Children's Healthcare of Atlanta at Egleston, Hughes Spalding or Scottish Rite ED
 - Scottish Rite (404) 785-3820 OR Hughes Spalding (404) 785-9930
- Other parts of Georgia:
 - Find the closest child advocacy center: www.cacga.org
- Nationally:
 - National Children's Advocacy Center: www.nationalcac.org



Big Ideas

- Children who experience commercial sexual exploitation are, by legal definition, *victims*.
- Our *language* should reflect our understanding of these children as victims.



Big Ideas

- Any child can be at *risk* for sex trafficking...
...but there are multiple individual, environmental, and societal factors that contribute to the continuation of CSEC.
- There are steps that *professionals* can take to intervene and prevent the commercial sexual exploitation of children.
 1. Report
 2. Refer to system of care
 3. Refer for medical and child advocacy center services





Prevention

Prevention Programs

- Stewards of Children (*Nat'l*)
 - Child Sexual Abuse primary prevention
- A Future. Not a Past. And The Voices Project (*Atlanta*)
 - Divisions of Youth Spark organization
 - Prevention for at-risk youth and demand prevention
- My Life My Choice (*Boston*)
 - Intervention/prevention for victims and at-risk youth
- CAASE (*Chicago*)
 - Primary prevention of demand



Resources



Referral Organizations in Georgia

Organization	Contact info
Division of Family and Children's Services (reporting of CSEC)	www.dfcs.dhr.georgia.gov 1-855-GA CHILD (1-855-422-4453)
Georgia Cares (system of care for victims)	www.gacares.org (404) 602-0068
Children's Healthcare of Atlanta (medical exams, forensic interviews, behavioral health)	www.choa.org/childprotection <ul style="list-style-type: none">•ED for acute cases•Scottish Rite (non-acute): (404) 785-3820•Hughes Spalding (non-acute): (404) 785-9930
Child Advocacy Centers of Georgia (find other CAC's in GA)	www.cacga.org (770) 319-6888



National Referral Organizations

Organization	Contact info
Polaris Project (policy, training, advocacy, National Resource Center)	www.polarisproject.org 1-888-373-7888 (National Hotline – report tips, receive technical assistance, operates 24/7) 202-745-1001 (office number)
Shared Hope International (training, research, advocacy, policy)	www.sharedhope.org 1-866-HER-LIFE
National Children’s Advocacy Center (training, advocacy, find other CAC’s)	www.nationalcac.org www.nationalcac.org/locator (find local CAC) 256-533-KIDS (5437)
National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (search for missing children, cybertipline, training, collaboration)	www.missingkids.com 1-800-THE-LOST (National Hotline, 24/7) http://www.missingkids.com/CyberTipline (report possible exploited child) 703-224-2150 (office number)



Other Resources

Organization	Contact info
Street Grace (GA Based)	www.streetgrace.org
Youth Spark (GA Based)	www.youth-spark.org
Governor's Office for Children and Families (GA Based)	www.children.ga.gov
Girls Educational and Mentoring Services (GEMS) (National)	www.gems-girls.org
Office of Refugee Resettlement, Anti-Trafficking in Persons (US Dept. of Health and Human Services) (National)	www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/orr/programs/anti-trafficking
Child Welfare Information Gateway (National)	www.childwelfare.gov/responding/human_trafficking.cfm
National Child Traumatic Stress Network (Mental Health Resources) (National)	www.nctsn.org/resources/public-awareness/human-trafficking



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Thank You!

Please help by sharing your knowledge of child sex trafficking with others.

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- Human Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation: A Global Perspective, and...Boys are Victims Too
 - Special Topics on Child Sex Trafficking: Victims, Pornography and Legal Response
 - The Demand Side: Traffickers, Gangs, and Buyers
- Child Sex Trafficking and Commercial Sexual Exploitation: The Medical Evaluation of Victims
- Using a Victim-/Survivor-Centered Approach When Working with Trafficked Youth

