

Sex Trafficking

Prevention Strategies

Sex trafficking is a type of commercial sexual exploitation where a third person, often referred to as a trafficker, arranges or profits from the exploitation.

Sex trafficking is a multifaceted issue that intersects with multiple other forms of victimization including child abuse/assault, intimate partner violence, sexual violence. Traffickers typically exploit the needs of potential victims including housing, economic, and emotional needs.

Prevention strategies must address the range of perpetration and victim vulnerabilities, and be coordinated across local agencies and institutions. Prevention efforts aim to stop the causes of sex trafficking and prevent both perpetration and victimization. Some prevention efforts specifically aim to identify traffickers or potential buyers and prevent further victimization.

The following strategies represent larger categories of sex trafficking prevention:

Strategy: Education and Outreach to Youth in High Risk Situations

Goal: Prevent youth in high risk situations from entering sex trafficking.

Key Factors:

- Increase awareness of sex trafficking and dangers of commercial sexual exploitation
- Identify youth who may be vulnerable, indicators include low socioeconomic status, history of abuse and/or neglect, exposure to violence, sexual risk taking, history of alcohol or substance abuse, or mental health diagnosis
- Encourage self-esteem development and skills to navigate exploitive situations
- Promote healthy relationships and sexuality
- Encourage leadership and development of career skills

Examples:

- [Not a #Number](#) is an interactive curriculum for prevention of sex trafficking amongst

minors. The program is designed to prepare youth to better identify potential traffickers, recognize potentially risky situations, and understand vulnerabilities.

- [My Life My Choice \(MLMC\)](#) are ten-session prevention groups for girls aged 12 to 18. The curriculum is centered on the goals of changing attitudes and perceptions about the commercial sex industry, improving knowledge about sexual health and substance abuse, and increasing skills that help reduce the risk of exploitation.

Strategy: General Programming on Healthy Relationships, Sexuality, and Sex Trafficking Awareness

Goal: Promotion of healthy relationships, sexuality, and the harms of commercial sex exploitation will create a culture that reduces the demand for commercial sex exploitation.

Key Factors:

- Programming focused on shifting overall larger cultural norms around healthy relationships and sexuality
- Building general community awareness of commercial sexual exploitation and sex trafficking Education on the harm caused by treating others as sexual objects to be used, bought, or sold

Examples:

- Sexual violence advocacy organizations across Minnesota often lead community presentations and create resources to increase public awareness about the prevalence of sex trafficking in the area and share information on dynamics, identification, and services available
- MNCASA has collected [a list of healthy relationship and sexual prevention curriculums that can be used in community and school settings](#).

Strategy: Identification of Victims

Goal: Identify victims and connect them to resources to prevent further exploitation.

Key Factors:

- Training on identification for staff in organizations that often encounter victims and children (i.e. schools, hospitals, mental health facilities, and homeless and youth shelters)
- Resources to build capacity of community based organizations to identify victims and refer to appropriate resources

Examples:

- [StreetWorks](#) in Minnesota provides training to homeless youth providers and outreach workers on connecting and working with sexually exploited youth.
- [Minnesota Hotel Training Law](#) was passed in 2018 and states that employees of hotels and motels in Minnesota must be trained to recognize sex trafficking.
- [SOAR Online](#) is a curriculum designed to educate health care providers, social workers, public health professionals, and behavioral health professionals on how to identify, treat, and respond appropriately to individuals who are at risk or who have been trafficked.

Strategy: Early Intervention Programming

Goal: Provide resources to victims to prevent further exploitation.

Key Factors:

- Provision of resources to victims including shelter, social services, educational, and career opportunities
- Increased education on needs of victims and resources available

Examples:

- [Safe Harbor Regional Navigators](#) in Minnesota are responsible for connecting sexually exploited youth with services and serving as regional experts on sex trafficking in communities.
- [The Family Partnership PRIDE \(Promoting Recovery, Independence, Dignity, and Equality\)](#) in Minnesota provides various services across the life span of victims to help them reclaim their lives. Programming includes economic empowerment, education and system advocacy, legal assistance, counseling, safety planning, and family advocacy.
- [Breaking Free](#) in Minnesota is a non-profit that directly serves those impacted by trafficking through advocacy, housing, and education. Breaking Free also provides street outreach to build relationships and awareness of services.
- [The Link](#) in Minnesota provides a variety of services to youth who are victims of sex trafficking including emergency shelter, mental health and family reunification, and an Aftercare and Outreach program that helps youth transition out of emergency shelter.

Strategy: Reduce and End Demand for Commercial Sex

Goal: Less demand will reduce overall victimization.

Key Factors:

- Public education programs to discourage purchasing and decrease social normalization of commercial sexual exploitation
- Criminal penalties to discourage purchasing of sex (i.e. shaming, fines, stings, etc.)

Examples:

- [Don't Buy It Project](#) from Men as Peacemakers, Duluth, MN, includes a public awareness campaign and educational resources that move individuals, groups, and communities to a deeper understanding of the harm caused by sexual exploitation and empowers them to end the demand for commercial sex.
- [Men Breaking Free](#) is a restorative justice program through Breaking Free in Minnesota that works with men who have been arrested for attempting to purchase sex. Workshops include discussions with victims of trafficking, men from previous workshops, and staff on toxic masculinity, the realities of sex trafficking, and how the men can make changes in their lives to prevent further participation in the commercial sex trade.

Strategy: End Business Profits from Trafficking-Related Transactions

Goal: Eliminate business structures that perpetuate victimization.

Key Factors:

- Increased regulation of businesses profiting from sexual abuse and exploitation

Examples:

- [The Business Alliance Against Trafficking](#) supports local employers in protecting their businesses from the risks associated with human trafficking through best practices such as adopting policies that prohibit sex buying, raising awareness and training employees on the issue, donating resources to local anti-trafficking organizations, and creating safe employment opportunities for survivors.
- [The Code](#): (short for “The Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism”) is a multi-stakeholder initiative that provides awareness, tools and support to the tourism industry to prevent the sexual exploitation of children.

Strategy: Policies and Systems Change

Goal: Communities with policies and infrastructure to combat sex trafficking will reduce the demand and decrease the number of individuals entering sex trafficking.

Key Factors:

- Resources to combat trafficking
- Strengthen connections between systems and community members
- Policies focused on creating and advancing resources available trafficking victims

Examples:

- [The No Wrong Door Response Model](#) in Minnesota has created a statewide infrastructure for service delivery, specialized housing and shelter, and training for systems professionals to respond to sexually exploited youth.
- Through Minnesota's [Safe Harbor law](#) funding and programming has increased across the state to provide more services and housing for victims as well as increase awareness of sex trafficking.
- [Minnesota's Statewide Human Trafficking Task Force](#) was established by legislation in 2006 and advises the commissioner of public safety on how to address the issue of human trafficking in Minnesota.

Additional Resources

- Safe Harbor MN: <https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/safeharbor/index.html>
- Safe Harbor Services Map: <https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/safeharbor/documents/safeharbormap.pdf>
- Regional Navigators: <https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/safeharbor/response/navigators.html>
- Safe Harbor housing: <https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/safeharbor/response/housing.html>