

HUMAN TRAFFICKING INTERSECTIONS WITH DRUG ENDANGERED CHILDREN

ISSUE BRIEF

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WHAT ARE THE INTERSECTIONS?

Recruitment through Drug Use: traffickers may target individuals with drug addictions to recruit into trafficking situation or may supply drugs as a way to entice inexperienced drug users.

Control through Drug Addiction: traffickers may use drug addiction, whether a prior addiction or a facilitated addiction, to keep victim in the trafficking situation. Drugs may be used as a reward, punishment or way to decrease the victim's will to resist trafficking and abuse.

Drug Abuse as Coping Mechanism: victims of human trafficking, especially sex trafficking, may use drugs as a coping mechanism to respond to the trauma of their trafficking situation.

Drug Purchase/Sale: traffickers may ask for drugs in exchange for their victims, sell drugs themselves or make victims sell/traffic drugs for them.

MYTHS ABOUT THE INTERSECTIONS

Myth = All sex trafficking victims are drug addicted.

Reality = Drug addiction is not always present in sex trafficking and methods such as psychological control may be used instead.

Myth = Drug abuse only occurs in sex trafficking.

Reality = Drug abuse for recruitment and control has also been found in cases of labor trafficking.

FAMILIAL TRAFFICKING & DRUG ABUSE

In many cases of familial sex trafficking, the trafficker who is often a parent or adult, may sell their child or other family member for drugs. The abuser utilizes existing power dynamics and vulnerabilities to exploit the child. Physical and/or sexual abuse, along with exposure to drugs, was likely already present prior to trafficking.

INTIMATE PARTNER & DRUG ABUSE

Spouses and intimate partners may compel their partner to engage in commercial sex, forced labor or involuntary servitude, telling their partner that this will help their family or support an addiction.

PIMP-CONTROL & DRUG ABUSE

Pimps may use drugs as a way to lure victims into working in the commercial sex industry or may target and recruit individuals who are already drug addicted. Pimps can utilize drugs to maintain control, inflict punishment or give rewards.

LABOR TRAFFICKING & DRUG ABUSE

Labor traffickers may also utilize drug addiction to recruit vulnerable individuals or encourage drug abuse to keep individuals in a trafficking situation. Cases of this have been found in agricultural trafficking, peddling, begging, and door-to-door sales crew networks. Young people may also be coerced or forced to traffic and sell drugs themselves.

"My dad started to not be able to afford the stuff he was addicted to, so he started using me to pay for his drugs."¹

INDICATORS & ASSESSMENT

- **Signs** of control, monitoring, isolation, canned stories, financial or drug dependence, anxiety about work
- Have you ever been asked to do something you were uncomfortable with?
- Are you being monitored or watched by someone?
- What do you think would happen if you didn't do what this person asked you to do?
- Are you able to keep any of the money you earn or have access to finances?

RESOURCES

National Human Trafficking Resource Center (NHTRC) Hotline:

1-888-373-7888

Childhelp National Child Abuse Hotline:

1-800-422-4523

Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network Hotline:

1-800-656-4673

¹ <http://www.news9.com/story/15071353/edmond-teen-says-dad-pimped-her-for-drugs>