

Preventing Child Sex Trafficking in BC

Buying and selling children for sex is one of the fastest growing crimes in Canada, and it is happening in communities across BC.

Globalization, unregulated technology, lack of law enforcement and inadequate prevention education is allowing this crime to grow globally.

Human sex trafficking (HT) involves the recruitment, transportation or harbouring of people for the purpose of exploitation through the use of force, coercion, fraud, deception or threats against the victim or person known to them. It is known as modern day slavery. According to the US State department's annual global report on trafficking in persons (TIP), Canada is a source, transit and destination for sex trafficking. (<https://www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/>)

Child sex trafficking is a lucrative crime. It has low costs and huge profits; a trafficker can make \$280,000 per victim, per year. The average age of entry into prostitution in Canada is 12-14 years of age, although traffickers are known to target younger children. Traffickers seek young victims both to service the demand for sex with those who look young, and because these victims are easier to manipulate and control.

The biggest problem in Canada is that people do not know there is a problem; therefore, child sex trafficking is expanding in the dark. Every child can be a target and a potential victim, but learning about this issue is the first step.

Five things that parents can do to help prevent their children from being lured into sex trafficking:

1. Set a high standard of love within your home

The way you define and express love shapes your children's self-image, confidence and opinions of future relationships. Treat them the way you want their future partners to treat them. Help them to distinguish between real love and empty promises or cheap gifts.

2. Talk to your children about sexual abuse

According to the US Department of Justice, someone in the US is sexually assaulted every two minutes, of which 29% are between the ages of 12-17. Let your children know that if anyone has or ever does hurt them, they can talk to you. This is the most important thing you can say. Don't assume they have not been hurt by sexual violence before. Leave the door open for your child to talk about past circumstances that they haven't shared with you.

3. Talk to your children about sex trafficking

Discuss ways children and teens are targeted for sex trafficking. Let them know that traffickers specifically try to woo young girls and boys with promises of a better life – whether it's promises of love and attention, or promises of nice things and trips. Traffickers can be male or female, even classmates. Traffickers may even use kids to recruit other kids.

4. Talk to your children about the dangers of social media

It is important to provide practical safety tips, such as: don't share personal information on the internet; don't accept Facebook requests from unknown people; NEVER share naked photos of yourself with anyone; and tell a parent or a trusted adult if you feel threatened or uncomfortable online. Children also need help defining friendships. Teach them that a friend is not someone you met yesterday and that a "friend" on Facebook is not the same thing as a friendship.

5. Pay attention to your children

Monitor your children's social media accounts. Look for ways to meet their friends, their friends' parents and those they hang out with. Be alert to boyfriends who are much older, or friendships that tend to isolate your child from other friends or family. Notice if your child has new clothing items, makeup products, cell phone or other items and ask how they acquired them.

Resources and Links:

- Covenant House (crises program for ages 16-24): info@covenanthousebc.org, 604-685-7474
- Internet Safety Tips: www.Cybertip.ca
- Fraser Health Forensic Nurse Service
- Kids Help Phone: 1-800-668-6868
- Office to Combat Trafficking in Persons (OCTIP): 1-888-712-7974 (24/7 interpretation available), 604-660-5199, octip@gov.bc.ca
- Plea Community Services Society (assisting youth 24/7): onyx@plea.bc.ca, 604-708-2647
- Vancouver Rape Relief and Women's Shelter (24/7): 604-872-8212, info@rapereliefshelter.bc.ca
- RCMP: Victims of Human Trafficking National Headquarters (24 hours): 1-866-677-7267
- Trafficking Resource Centre (USA): www.traffickingresourcecenter.org
- VictimLinkBC (24/7): 1-800-563-0808 Ministry of Public Safety, BC
- Youth Against Violence (24/7): info@youthagainstviolenceline.com, 1-800-680-4264

Authorities Contacts:

- RCMP: www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca; 1-855-850-4640 OR 1-800-771-5401
- Ministry of Child Protection Services: 1-800-663-9122 or 604-660-4927 (24 hours) or 310-1234 if a child is in danger to reach Ministry of Child and Family Development
- Crime Stoppers : 1-800-222-TIPS (8477)

National Human Trafficking Crisis Hotline Number: 1-866-528-7109

About the Author:

Cathy Peters raises awareness of Child Sex Trafficking to all three levels of government in British Columbia, police agencies and the public. She is a former inner city high school teacher and has volunteered for two Members of Parliament (John Weston/BC, Joy Smith/Manitoba). She has made hundreds of presentations, including to City Councils, School Boards, Police Boards, high schools, universities and law enforcement agencies.

For information about her prevention education presentations, please contact Cathy Peters at ca.peters@telus.net

Additional Resources:

Children of the Street Society (Coquitlam) provides prevention education in BC schools; 25,000 students last school year Grades 3-12. They have an excellent website with tools/resources listed for every community in BC:

<https://www.childrenofthestreet.com/>

Joy Smith Foundation (Manitoba) provides prevention education, resources and an overview of human sex trafficking Canada: <http://www.joysmithfoundation.com/>

Shared Hope International (Washington State) sponsors The JuST (Juvenile Sex Trafficking) Conference in the USA; an event that spotlights the most pressing issues in the anti-trafficking field. Visit: www.justconference.org for more information.

A MODERN EQUAL SOCIETY DOES NOT BUY AND SELL WOMEN AND CHILDREN.

SEX TRAFFICKING is a **BOOMING** industry

DEFINED:

SEX TRAFFICKING occurs when someone uses force, fraud or coercion to cause a commercial sex act with an adult or causes a minor to commit a commercial sex act. A

COMMERCIAL SEX ACT includes prostitution, pornography and sexual performance done in exchange for any item of value, such as money, drugs, shelter, food or clothes.

It thrives because there is serious demand.

Buyer: fuels the market with their money

Trafficker/pimp: exploits victims to earn revenue from buyers

Victim: includes both girls and boys who are bought and sold for profit

Traffickers find victims through: Social network, Home/neighborhood, clubs or bars, internet, school, and lure them through promises: Protection, Love, Adventure, Home, Opportunity.

TRAFFICKERS USE: FEAR, VIOLENCE, INTIMIDATION, THREATS
to ensure compliance and meet demand.

The **common age** a child enters sex trafficking is **13 years old**; too young and naïve to realize what's happening. (10-12 years of age in larger urban centers).

Society may call it **PROSTITUTION**, but Federal Law calls it **SEX TRAFFICKING**.

Because of social stigma or misinformation, victims go:

UNIDENTIFIED (silenced by fear and the control of the trafficker),

MISIDENTIFIED (pigeonholed into treatment for only surface issues).

So

Sex trafficked children are instead treated for: drug abuse, alcohol abuse, domestic violence, delinquency, teenage pregnancy, STDS, abortion...all masking the true need...FREEDOM.

Shared Hope International

5 Strategies for Police:

1. **AWARENESS:** All Police need to be aware of the issue and **know the law**. Take HT training courses (Police Knowledge Network, OCTIP; Office to Combat Training In Persons). Read “Invisible Chains” by UBC law professor, Benjamin Perrin.
Google: beamazingcampaign.org Incorporate the **United Nations 4 Pillars** in a local strategy to combat trafficking: **Prevention, Protection, Prosecution, Partnerships**.
2. **ADDRESS DEMAND:** Until there is a **deterrent for demand**, this crime will increase. Johns, the buyers of sex, facilitators, profiteers need to be targeted and charged; this is the Federal law (**Protection of Communities and Exploited Persons Act**).
3. **SCHOOL LIAISONS:** Develop positive and strong liaisons with elementary and high school students. Young people are vulnerable and are being targeted. “Education is our greatest weapon”. **Cyberspace safety training** is needed for youth/parents. **Canadian Centre to Protect Children** (Manitoba) who run Cybertip.ca.
4. **INVENTORY SCAN:** Assess your community. Look for sex ads (Backpage, Craigslist, the newspaper, Georgia Strait); these will lead you to the buyers and sellers. List the businesses that are endemic to HT: escort services, modelling agencies, casinos, adult entertainment centers, tattoo parlours, holistic health centers, nail spas, day spas, unregistered massage parlours, strip clubs, cheap hotels and bars. Be aware of their services/clientele. List all your community resources to support victims.
5. **BEST PRACTICES:** Valiant Richey is the OSCE- the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe- Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating trafficking in Human Beings for 57 States and 1 billion people. **In Canada:** Halifax police addresses the North Preston and Preston “Finest” gang, RCMP operated “Northern Spotlight Operations”, London Ontario has veteran frontline worker and police educator Megan Walker (1-519-432-2204) from the London Women’s Abuse Center, Montreal vice unit, Peel Region Police in Hamilton, Winnipeg police and former MP Mrs. Joy Smith (who introduced our Human trafficking laws in Canada) with the Joy Smith Foundation and the Tracia Trust in Manitoba, York police in Toronto with survivor Casandra Diamond of Bridge North, Ontario has a strategic plan with a Human Trafficking Coordinator, **Washington State** with former Congresswoman Linda Smith and NGO “Shared Hope”; Seattle using Nordic Model. Dallas Police Department, Houston City Council have extensive training in sexual exploitation/human trafficking. **Sweden** has successfully implemented and funded the Nordic Model of Law for the past 22 years: contact Detective Inspector Simon Haggstrom head of the Stockholm Police Prostitution Unit (his work is to charge johns).

ADVICE FROM AN EXITED SURVIVOR TO POLICE:

For when you address the police, my message simply is they need to always keep compassion. Most police officers are men, and when they approach a girl who is being trafficked, to stay in an empathy frame of mind, I think officers will struggle with.

These woman have been trained to NOT trust the police and also that they are the ones who will get into trouble. So the fear of being charged and going to jail is terrifying for the girls and the thought of jail, they know will upset their "pimp".

So if the police can simply remember that all these woman and girls ARE someone's daughter and **they DO not want to be there** (even when they claim they do, which is a protection for themselves with the pimps, also they have been manipulated to believe they want to sell themselves) that to start building a trust with that girl and reassuring to them that they are the victim and they will be protected.

Knowing that, maybe when that girl does go back, because that will happen a lot of the time, if that girl walked away knowing she could go to the police if needed and won't get in trouble, I believe will make all the difference. It's all about planting a seed, if they know they can get out and have help, then I think more would come forward.

I did not trust my detective in my case right away, but the respect and empathy she displayed from the time she met me, made a HUGE difference. These woman are not respected (which is done by men) so that trust is gone. Most of these girls are street smart and can tell if someone is being authentic with them, so if an officer can display to them, it could make that difference if the girl opens up to speak on what is happening to her.

I found that with the detective who helped me, she never treated me like I was just a "HO" who was good for nothing. It allowed me to open up to her.

For the demand, it comes down to charging the men and I know police do try in all situations to press charges where they can, BUT it comes down to a girl speaking up and providing that evidence so that a pimp can be charged.

Forensic Nursing Service @ Fraser Health

Fraser Health Authority has designed a **Human Trafficking Screening Protocol**, with the following sample questions:

What type of work do you do?

Can you leave your job or situation if you want?

Can you come and go as you please?

Have you been threatened if you try to leave?

Have you been physically harmed in any way?

What are your working or living conditions like?

Where do you sleep and eat?

Do you sleep in a bed, cot or on the floor?

Have you been deprived of food, water, sleep or medical care?

Do you have permission to eat, sleep or go to the bathroom?

Are there locks on your doors and windows so you cannot get out?

Has anyone threatened your family?

Has your identification for documentation been taken from you?

Is anyone forcing you to do anything that you do not want to do?

Evaluation of safety: Are you feeling safe right now? Is it safe for me to talk to you? Do you have any concerns for your safety? Is there anything I can do for you?

8 strategies for Cities and Municipalities to consider:

1. Learn about the issue at www.beamazingcampaign.org. Follow Human trafficking expert in Canada former Manitoba MP Joy Smith at www.joysmithfoundation.com. and her **National Human Trafficking Education Centre**. Have staff take the BC OCTIP (Office to Combat Trafficking in Persons) **free online course**. Encourage police to take HT course on the **Police Knowledge Network**.
2. Incorporate the United Nations 4 Pillars in a local strategy to stop Human trafficking/sexual exploitation: **Prevention, Protection, Prosecution, Partnerships**.
3. **Prevention**: raise awareness in community. **Children of the Street** (Plea) does school and community programs. Encourage “Men End Exploitation” movements: Moosehide Campaign, Westcoast Boys Club Network. Support porn addiction services for youth; “Fightthenewdrug” program recognizing the public health effects to youth of viewing violent sexual material. Use communications to raise awareness: Candian Centre to End Human Trafficking has FREE posters, wallet cards. Calgary has “Not in My City” campaign, Ontario has “Saving the girl next door program”, the RCMP has the “I’m Not for Sale” campaign.
4. **Protection**: help victims, have exit strategies in place, consider 24-7 “wrap-around programs” Salvation Army “Deborah’s Gate”, Covenant House, Servants Anonymous, Union Gospel Mission.
5. **Prosecution**: increase policing budget, training and priorities. Have “buyer” deterrents in place, enforce the law; **“Protection of Communities and Exploited Persons Act”** which addresses **“demand”**- the profiteers, facilitators, buyers of commercially paid sex.
6. **Partnerships**: Train community stakeholders: Health care workers, fire department, municipal business licensing managers, educators, businesses to recognize human trafficking/sexual exploitation. **Fraser Health Authority** has a human trafficking protocol, Surrey Fire department is trained to recognize HT indicators. Train judges/Crown Counsel/criminal justice system.
7. **Partnerships**: Collaboration: with other cities and municipalities at local government associations, Police agencies and RCMP, 3 levels of government (civic, provincial, federal); UBCM, FCM with Resolutions.
8. Do not accept or support the full decriminalization of prostitution because the vulnerable (Indigenous women and girls, new migrants) in our communities are the targets being lured, groomed and exploited for the sex industry. **Goal**: safe, healthy, vibrant communities that are fit for families, youth, children and all vulnerable populations.

National Human Trafficking Hotline Number: 1-833-900-1010