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## Human Trafficking & Exploitation in Tribal Communities

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### Learning Objectives for session:

- ☐ Define and describe human trafficking in Tribal Communities.
- ☐ Identify risk factors for and signs of sex trafficking in Tribal Communities.
- ☐ Describe the link between gangs and sex traffickers.
- ☐ Describe relationship between technology, social media and trafficking (sites and symptoms).
- ☐ Advocate for victims of sex trafficking in Tribal Communities.



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### Small Group Discussion:

In your community, what has been your experience with human trafficking?

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## Introduction to Human Trafficking

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### The definition of human trafficking:

- A crime that involves compelling or coercing a person to provide labor or services, or to engage in commercial sex acts. The coercion can be subtle or overt, physical or psychological. (<https://www.justice.gov/humantrafficking/what-is-human-trafficking>)
- In this workshop, we will focus primarily on sex trafficking, a significant problem involving American Indian woman and girls.

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### Local and National Trends:

- There are currently 600,000 to 800,000 people trafficked per year across international borders
- In the United States alone 14 to 17 thousand people per year are interdicted from trafficking organizations
- Currently 80% of all trafficking involves sexual exploitation and 20% labor related
- 70% are female and 35% are children
- Average age of a female forced into the sex trade is 12-14 years of age

Source: Do Something.ORG

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**Local and National Trends:**

- Most sex traffickers target runaways females from impoverished communities
- Human trafficking is the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest international crime industry averaging 32 billion dollars annually
- Street gang organizations and cartels are linked to over 50% of this industry

Source: Do Something.ORG

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- Native women at increased risk of violent crime: domestic abuse and generational violence, which also raises risk of trafficking in indigenous communities.
- Traffickers may be members of organized crime, legal businesses, and individuals.
- Boom towns are risk areas: Bakken Oil fields (ND and MT) Dakota and Montana, Duluth, MN (shipping industry), Anchorage PD warned Alaska Native Villages as well.

• Source: Recognizing and Responding to Human Trafficking among American Indian, Alaska Native and Pacific Islander Communities, [https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/ai/ana\\_human\\_trafficking\\_fm\\_2015\\_01\\_29.pdf](https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/ai/ana_human_trafficking_fm_2015_01_29.pdf)

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## Recognizing the Signs of Trafficking

**The individual:**

- Is not free to come and go.
- Is under 18 and is providing commercial sex acts.
- Is in the commercial sex industry at any age.
- Is unpaid, paid very little, or only through tips.
- Works long or excessive hours.
- Owes a large debt and is unable to pay it off.
- Was recruited under false promises.

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## Recognizing the Signs of Trafficking

**The individual:**

- Is fearful, anxious, depressed, submissive, or nervous, particularly after bringing up law enforcement.
- Avoids eye contact.

• Source: Recognizing and Responding to Human Trafficking among American Indian, Alaska Native and Pacific Islander Communities, [https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/ai/ana\\_human\\_trafficking\\_fm\\_2015\\_01\\_29.pdf](https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/ai/ana_human_trafficking_fm_2015_01_29.pdf)

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## Recognizing the Signs of Trafficking

**The individual:**

- Lacks health care.
- Appears malnourished or shows signs of abuse.
- Has few or no personal possessions.
- Is not in control of his/her own money or ID.
- Lack of knowledge about whereabouts or time.
- Inconsistencies in his/her story.

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## Responding to Human Trafficking

- Victims often feel shame and stigma.
- Similar to dynamics of domestic violence, not all victims may readily self-identify or be ready to leave immediately.
- Advocates should consider culturally-relevant approaches and environments that provide "cultural safety" for disclosure.
- Women's circles, sweat lodges, and other culturally appropriate practices may be part of the healing process for indigenous people.

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## Small Group Discussion:

What is your protocol in the following case? And what “cultural safety” might you consider as you address the case?:

A tribal youth has been sold into sex trafficking ...and the pick-up point is an off-reservation treatment facility.

*Together, come up with 3-5 steps to take or follow.*

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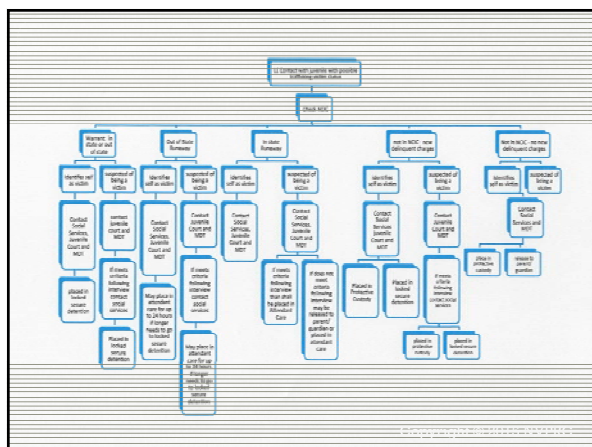


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## Result

The process is complex and complicated!  
Here is a template to build from!

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## The Link between Human Trafficking and Gangs

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### The definition of a criminal street gang:

An ongoing formal or informal association of three or more persons whose members or associates individually or collectively engage in the commission, attempted commission, facilitation or solicitation of any criminal act, or any act that would be a criminal act if the youth were an adult, an who has at least one individual who is an identified gang member.

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### The definition of a human trafficking organization:

A formal or informal association of individuals whose main focus involves exploitation for profit which comes in many forms including: forcing victims into prostitution, subjecting victims to slavery or involuntary servitude, and compelling victims to commit sex acts for the purpose of creating pornography.

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### The emergence of criminal street gangs on Native American reservations can be attributed to the following factors:

- socio-economic issues of poverty, substance abuse & family dynamics
- loss of traditional culture combined with persisting kinship ties (family fragmentation)
- alienated youth who strongly relate to youth culture to fill a cultural void
- higher rates of geographic mobility of tribal members between metro areas and the reservation
- a shift in reservation housing configurations that run counter to traditional settlement patterns

Source: Center for Delinquency and Crime Policy Studies

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### Gang Organizations and Sex Trafficking:

- Criminal organizations have recognized the financial potential for joint associations and sub-contracting.
- Not unusual as enterprises (MS-13 has provided sub-contracted services for years).
- Multi level organizations can slow criminal investigations and task agency resources.
- Cross jurisdictional investigations are cumbersome and often not pursued.

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### Gang Organizations and Sex Trafficking:

- There is no question that tribal gangs have established criminal associations with metropolitan gangs and prison organizations (native mob/warrior society/indian posse).
- Criminal street gangs in tribal lands have matured into profit-based entities (greater influence in local drug trade).
- Associations are difficult to prove (transition of gathered intelligence to courtroom evidence).

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### Gang Organizations and Sex Trafficking:

- The attraction here is that there is no out laying cost associated with trafficking introduction when internal recruiting is their strategy.
- End result is pure profit which can reach hundreds of thousands of dollars in profit annually.
- They understand the jurisdictional challenges associated with getting caught and prosecuted (financially worth the risk).

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### Recognizing Community Risk Factors for Sex Trafficking

#### Common Methods of Indoctrination:

**Romeo Method:** Females are courted into the trade through a love relationship or connection.

**Gang Sponsor Method:** Gang members are tasked with the role of targeting 3 to 5 girls each. Girls are separated from their families and moved to a different community where they are programmed through coercion and threats to participate in the local sex trade. (profit 1 to 3 thousand per girl to the sponsor)

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### Recognizing Community Risk Factors for Sex Trafficking

#### Common Methods of Indoctrination:

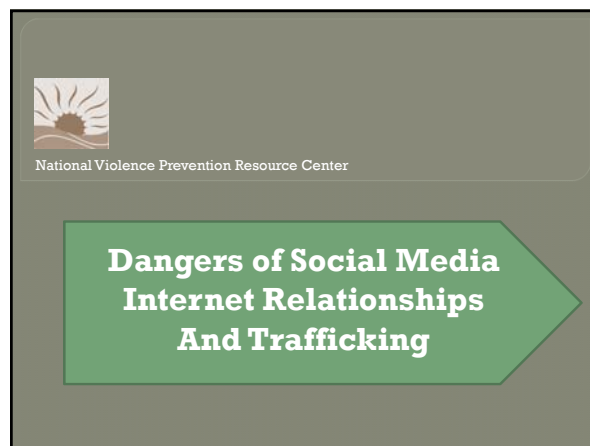
**School Recruitment Method:** Still the most popular and easiest method; promise of profit and friendship; begin to target at 11 years of age

**Social Media Phishing:** Fraudulently sending email appearing to be reputable companies searching for talent

**Phone App usage:** Using phone applications for entrapment and exposure

**Gaming Systems:** Engaging in games & redirection

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The slide has a dark green background. In the top left is the National Violence Prevention Resource Center logo. In the top right is an image of a computer monitor displaying a large eye. The title "TECHNOLOGY" is centered. Below it is a bulleted list.

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### TECHNOLOGY

- The average family of (4) four owns over 24 media devices.
- There are trafficking dangers introduced through media:
  - "Darknet" and "Back Page"
  - Sexually explicit chat rooms
  - Popular sites for photo sharing and "sexting"
  - Gaming sites with explicit material

The slide has a dark green background. In the top left is the National Violence Prevention Resource Center logo. In the top right is an image of a computer monitor displaying a large eye. The title "Gangs in Tribal Communities" is in the top right. Below it is the title "TECHNOLOGY Case Study". Below that is a paragraph and a bulleted list.

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### Gangs in Tribal Communities

### TECHNOLOGY Case Study

Recently a parent advised of the following symptoms:

- 13 year old daughter, verbally abusive
- Arguments over privacy
- Greater use of curse words
- Sexual derogatory verbiage home and school
- Multiple referrals for bullying verbal abuse in school
- Not willing to discuss a "new friend"
- Excessive on line gaming

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### TECHNOLOGY "Case Study"

What happened?

- Predator drove from Florida to meet 13 year old
- Plans were made in advance to leave together
- Other friends her age were to be picked up
- Predator had pre-purchase items daughter wanted
- Predator had on going relations with teens for at least 1 to 2 years
- "Not Prosecuted" animated sex acts are not considered pornographic but "cartoon depictions"

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### TECHNOLOGY "Case Study"

## How can advocates and others help avoid this result?



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## TECHNOLOGY “Case Study”

Potential Ways to Address the Case, which we can advocate for:

- Loading protective software
- In home education on technology and access
- Greater supervision; Limit private isolation time
- Dialog creatively with youth (“One of the girls I work with is having problem with social media”, “Friend I know told me this story about her daughter”)
- Dumb down their “smart phone”



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## Technology is Involved in Drug & Sex Trafficking

- 71% of teens have an on-line profile.
- 47% of sexual predators regularly surf the internet (fishing).
- Street gangs have accepted and introduced the advances of technology into their criminal subculture and have advanced criminality through their use of social media.

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## Technology and Sex Trafficking

There is absolutely no security or expectation of privacy on the internet. Even if you delete a photo or text it is retrievable.

Every Facebook site or page is accessible.



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## Technology and Sex Trafficking

- 28% of middle school students have sent a “sext” message.
- 67% of teens have the knowledge to clear browser history to avoid detection from parents.
- 72% of sex offenders admitted surfing the internet.
- less than 15% of parents discuss sexuality with their children.



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## Technology and Sex Trafficking

### What can advocates encourage parents to do?

- Download accountability and blocking software for computers, phones & gaming systems.
- Utilize available parental controls on all devices.
- Password protect your devices and internet.
- Keep computers and phones out of bedrooms at night.



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## Technology and Sex Trafficking

- No unsupervised access to children under (you decide).
- Write down all passwords, codes or accounts (allows monitoring).
- Set clear boundaries and dialogue about tech usage.
- Manage screen time.





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### Recognizing Community Risk Factors for Sex Trafficking

#### Local Awareness should include:

- Gang initiations which include "sexing in" ritual for recruitment.
- House parties where intoxicants are provided for young females (indoctrination technique).
- Unreported or under reported sex offenses.
- Shroud of silence surrounding community sexual behavior.
- Females often leaving local community for "parties" and associations with surrounding community adults.
- Community youth drug problem (furnished by adults).

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### Recognizing Community Risk Factors for Sex Trafficking

#### Local Awareness should include:

- Heavy youth traffic between surrounding communities.
- Developing romantic ties with unknown adults not common to the community.
- Heavy Facebook and cell phone traffic.
- Access to financial resources (out of the ordinary).
- Lack of familial control or not able to access juveniles locations or behaviors.

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## Responding to Criminal Street Gangs in Rural Tribal Communities

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### There is a strong link between gang activity and trafficking. Strategies that best respond to gang activity in tribal communities must be:

- Collaborative with a strategic focus
- Innovative
- Site-based (local answers to local issues)
- Culturally relevant
- Community inclusive
- Contain both short-term and long-term goals and objectives
- Continuously funded
- Multi-dimensional directives

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### What can be done about it?

NVPRC has introduced a multi-faceted strategic plan which includes:



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## G.R.I.P.S.

NVPRC's innovative, award-winning task force strategy

Gang Reduction through Intervention, Prevention & Suppression

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Sex Trafficking in Tribal Communities can be influenced through a strong community collaborative and directed specific strategies within the community. Tribal Leadership must re-examine resources and services provided for youth that can incorporate open lines of reporting and victim services that include support teams for families and victims.

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**Reflection:**

What is one thing you will do differently now as a result of what you learned today?

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**If you would like additional information or to schedule an assessment of your community, please contact us**

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