

Getting Out: A Framework for Exiting/Escaping Sex Trafficking

Authors : Amanda Noble

Abstract : The process of exiting/escaping situations of sex trafficking can be arduous and fraught with numerous barriers. In this paper the results of a national Canadian study on escaping situations of sex trafficking is discussed. Surveys and focus groups were conducted with 201 stakeholders in 8 cities, including 50 survivors of sex trafficking, service providers, health care providers and police. The results show that survivors are both vulnerable to being exploited and experience barriers to exiting as a result of structural factors such as colonialism, poverty, and discrimination based on race and gender. Survivors also face numerous barriers within various systems such as child welfare and the legal system. In addition, survivors contend with multiple psychological and psychosocial factors when exiting including the trauma bond, complex trauma and mental health concerns, substance use, isolation, and adjusting to 'mainstream' life. In light of these factors, the service needs of survivors escaping sex trafficking are discussed, and promising practices, such as trauma-informed practice and working from a stages of change model are outlined. This paper is useful for service providers that work with survivors, policy makers, or anyone who has ever wondered why survivors that are not being physically detained don't 'just leave' or escape their exploitative situations.

Keywords : Barriers, Exiting, Promising Practices, Sex Trafficking

Conference Title : ICHTSJ 2020 : International Conference on Human Trafficking and Social Justice

Conference Location : Los Angeles, United States

Conference Dates : October 29-30, 2020