

# WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

## SEX TRAFFICKING AND SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

### A TRAINING TOOL FOR ADULT PROBATION OFFICERS

ASU School of Social Work

**Office of Sex Trafficking  
Intervention Research**

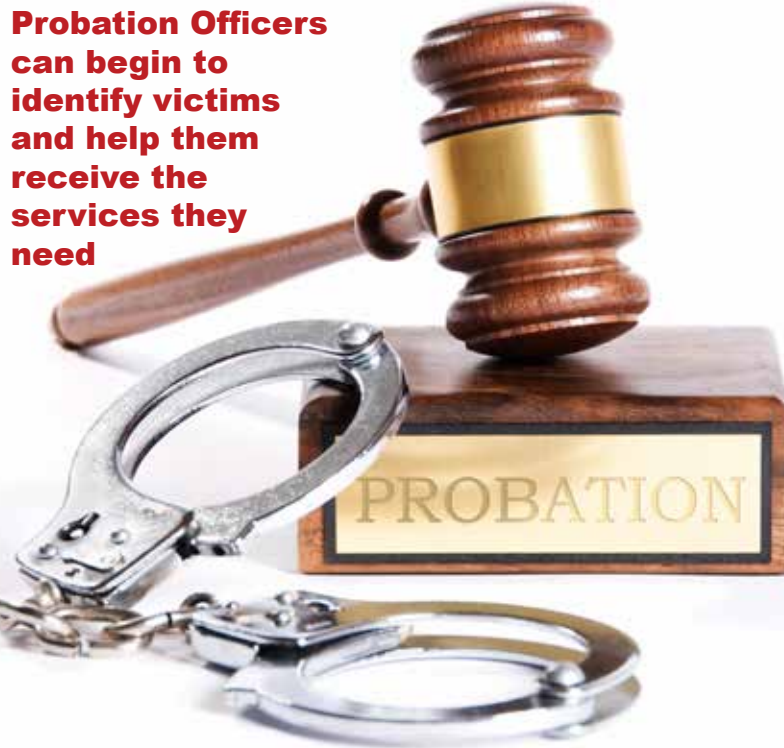
**ASU School of  
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ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

Probation Officers supervise adult criminal offenders in their community settings, and can play a critical role in identifying victims of human trafficking, as well as those victimizers (traffickers/pimps) seeking to exploit others for profit. The majority of Adult Probation Officers have a limited understanding of the issue of sex trafficking and how it may show up with their probationers.

This training brochure will explore both victimization and the criminal act of sexually exploiting another person for profit. **With proper training, Probation Officers can begin to identify victims and help them receive the services they need to exit the life of prostitution. The more the probation community knows about the warning signs of trafficking behavior, the better equipped they will be to preserve community safety and help rehabilitate probationers.**

Both victims of sex trafficking and victimizers (traffickers/pimps) may have entered the criminal justice system through crimes that appear unrelated to sex trafficking. As with many other offenses, plea agreements can also create a misleading picture of the true nature of an offender's criminal behavior. Probationers who may be involved in sex trafficking, either as a victim or victimizer, could be in the criminal justice system on related charges such as loitering, trespassing, prostitution, pandering, drug trafficking, domestic violence, assault, kidnapping, robbery, fraud or shoplifting. Probation Officers should be trained to know the signs of sex trafficking so that they are not overlooked when the probationer has been charged with other offenses.

**If a probationer commits a sex related crime and is not convicted of that crime, then he or she may slip through the legal system and continue their behavior or victimization without being detected. Probation Officers play a critical role in helping steer a vulnerable group away from re-entry into prostitution, pimping or other sex trafficking related crimes.**



Common myths and stereotypes about sex trafficking can affect a Probation Officer's judgment of who may be involved in sex trafficking situations and response. Cultural attitudes can also interfere with the ability to identify both traffickers and victims, as both groups may not appear commonplace. In addition, stereotypes about the race or gender of a pimp or trafficker can also impact judgment of who may be involved in sex trafficking situations. **The reality is anyone can be a trafficker regardless of race, ethnicity, gender or socioeconomic status.**

**Common Myths About Sex Trafficking** include "that only happens abroad" "prostitution is a victimless crime" or "it was between two consenting adults."

#### **What is Sex Trafficking?**

By federal definition, the crime of sex trafficking is defined as the recruitment, harboring, transportation or obtaining of a person for a commercial sex act where such an act is induced by force, fraud or coercion or in which the person has not attained 18 years of age.<sup>1</sup>

The commercial aspect of sex trafficking is what differentiates the crime from sexual assault, molestation or rape.<sup>2</sup>

Sex Trafficking is a real and growing problem all over the world, including here in the United States.

It defies stereotypes and experts continue to build new knowledge about the issue. Although there is limited data to quantify the exact number of human trafficking instances, we know that sex trafficking is happening all across America.

**IN 2014, MULTIPLE CASES OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING WERE REPORTED IN ALL 50 STATES AND WASHINGTON, DC.**<sup>3</sup>

**Sex trafficking is a highly profitable criminal enterprise, generating billions of dollars annually, second only to illegal arms trafficking and the drug trade.**<sup>4</sup>

In human trafficking, like drug trafficking, the market is driven by the laws of supply and demand. Prostituted adults and youth serve as the supply, while buyers of commercial sex serve as the demand. Traffickers or pimps fill the distribution void through facilitating the transactions.

As long as there remains a demand for the commercial sex industry, there will be a supply of victims and individuals willing to profit from selling sex.

# the VICTIM

Trafficking victims can be male, female or trans-gender, and are often recruited into prostitution, groomed by their trafficker and forced to comply through beatings, rape, starvation and threats of violence to loved ones.

Most trafficking victims suffer extreme physical and psychological trauma. These traumatic experiences can be dehumanizing, shocking or terrifying and often include a loss of safety and betrayal by a trusted person or institution.<sup>5</sup>

If you think your probationer could be a victim of sex trafficking, the first step is to get them alone in a confidential location for an interview. During investigative efforts, trafficking victims are likely to lie or use rehearsed stories initially and can be reluctant to speak to persons in uniform or individuals associated with law enforcement due to the shame associated with prostitution or the fear of punishment from their trafficker.

Victims whom have been involved with a multitude of criminal justice and social-help systems have many times felt further marginalized by the system itself, which can explain why they may have an inherent distrust of their Probation Officers.

When trying to identify if the probationer is a victim of trafficking, it is important to convey that you are not investigating a probation violation. Victims of trafficking may not readily disclose due to their fear of the trafficker and potential involvement with a criminal investigation.

Be mindful that some trafficking victims may have made previous attempts to escape only to be found, beaten, and ultimately forced to return to their trafficker. In addition, the victim may have sought police protection in the past, perhaps during a domestic violence incident only to have been arrested along with the trafficker from whom she tried to escape.

**Trafficking victims need the same kind of advocacy from Probation Officers as victims of domestic violence.** It is helpful to apply knowledge about domestic violence to better understand trafficking victims and their reluctance to leave a harmful situation. Many sex trafficking crimes often mirror intimate partner violence and include physical abuse, psychological abuse, coercive control, and rape. Trafficking victims may not disclose due to trauma bonding or perceived feelings of love and devotion toward the abuser.

**IN ADDITION TO CLINICAL SERVICES, VICTIMS EXITING PROSTITUTION WILL NEED ASSISTANCE IN RE-ESTABLISHING BASIC NEEDS PRIMARILY FOCUSING ON HOUSING, EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES.**

**Victims of trafficking are often forced into “the life” of prostitution during their adolescent stage of development, with the trauma and victimization carrying well into adulthood.**

Victims of trafficking often need multiple support systems to become rehabilitated. Based on a victim’s situation, necessary services may include mental health counseling, social services support, medical care, drug and alcohol counseling, housing assistance, as well as services that address sexual assault, intimate partner violence, and post-traumatic stress disorder. Treatment should be trauma-informed and trauma focused.

Research has found that mentoring from other survivors, and identifying new social supports can be beneficial to helping victims recover and rebuild their lives. Through social support, victims can be inspired to end negative relationships and avoid places that have been part of their victimization. They may be unaware of any alternatives to supporting themselves or their children; in fact they may see prostitution as the only value and worth they have.

**LET THE PROBATIONER/VICTIM KNOW THAT THEIR SAFETY IS YOUR FIRST PRIORITY.**



Tips to enhancing engagement between the Probation Officer and trafficking victim:

1. When working with a victim of trafficking, focus on his/her strengths and establish a working relationship that emphasizes positive change. The more risk factors a person has, the greater the likelihood they will engage in a given unhealthy behavior. And conversely, the more protective factors, strengths or assets they have, the less likely they are to engage in that behavior.
2. Bring small successes to awareness, and support clients to repeat their successful choices. Using solution based interviewing techniques, you can help your client construct a concrete vision of a preferred future and collaborate on a plan that includes solutions necessary to realize that vision.
3. Take the time to learn the victim’s perspective, give them a voice and show genuine concern and empathy, without judgment.
4. Let the victim tell their story. Where have they been up to this point? What led them to this place in their life? Where would they like to be in the future? Let the victim have a voice in coming up with solutions and change.
5. Deploy the same effective techniques learned by officers in other settings such as motivational interviewing, lessons from identifying the stages of change, and other effective communication techniques designed to elicit dialogue.

# upon **CASE** assignment:

## Things to consider:

- At what age did the sex trafficked Probationer/Victim become involved with the criminal justice system?
- What is the totality of the Probationer/Victim's criminal history? Are there any patterns, trends or relatable convictions?
- Have there been multiple arrests for prostitution or related crimes?
- Has there ever been disclosure of a third party facilitator i.e.: pimp, trafficker?
- Is there a history of the sex trafficked Probationer/Victim being the victim of domestic violence or a petitioner in an order of protection?
- Is there a history of involvement with child welfare system as a child and/or parent?
- Is there a family history of prostitution involvement?

## Moving out of "the life"

The prospective feelings of autonomy and achievement can serve as methods of sustaining the victim's motivation to not return to the trafficker. The Probation Officer can assist victims in redefining themselves to obtain gainful employment:

- What are the employable skills of the victim/survivor?
- What are the employment opportunities in the victim's community?
- Will the victim feel/presumably be safe in their community?
- What is the highest educational level completed?
- Can the victim/survivor attend school if needed?
- Does the victim have transportation and/or is public transportation available?
- Does the victim have adequate child care coverage?
- Is the victim literate and are they able to fill out applications properly?
- Is the victim able to interview? If so, does the victim have proper attire for the interview process?

## RED FLAGS

- Unusual tattoos or branding marks
- Use of street lingo (see page 5 for examples)
- Dominating or controlling "boyfriend" who is always present during scheduled visits
- Signs of physical restraint or abuse
- Lack of identification or loss of identification documents
- History of substance abuse
- History of domestic violence reports
- Living in a hotel
- Erratic work hours <sup>6</sup>



**Tip:** if you require an identified victim of trafficking to participate in a criminal investigation, consider having a service provider who specializes in trafficking or domestic violence to participate as an advocate and as the expert who can appropriately plan for the victim's safety while the investigation is underway.



## CASE STUDY

Carmen was seven years old when she was removed from her home after it was learned that she was being sexually abused by her stepfather. Her mother was addicted to drugs and didn't believe Carmen was telling the truth about the abuse. Carmen spent the next six years moving from relative placement to various foster homes. With each placement her sense of love and belonging diminished and she began to distrust all the adults around her. No one seemed to care, or at least care enough to stick by her and it didn't matter if she was "good" or "bad."

By the age of fifteen, Carmen had been arrested twice and was part of both the child welfare and juvenile justice systems. While to most it seemed she was making poor choices, Carmen felt that she had found a sense of purpose. At least now, people were paying attention to her. Running away and truancy were a daily part of her routine and it was during one of her "escapes" from foster care that she met an older woman who offered her a place to stay. Carmen was given a place to sleep, plenty of food, marijuana, alcohol and freedom.

One night, a man came into her room and raped her. As soon as he was finished, another man came in, and then another. This is how "the life" began for Carmen. She spent the next few years in and out of placement, foster homes and detention centers never disclosing what had happened to her and that since that day she had been sexually exploited regularly. Carmen would runaway on the weekends or whenever she could to make money for her pimp and her recruiter. It was bad but she thought "at least they love me," and since she had developed an addiction to drugs, the supply was never ending as long as she brought them the money.

Once Carmen aged out of the child welfare system and completed her probation, she had no where to go except back to be with them. Now at 25, she has been arrested several times on charges of prostitution, she continues to battle a heroin addiction, and her three children have been removed from her and are in foster care. Her pimp and recruiter have moved on and the new pimps that have found her have grown increasingly violent. The social worker assigned to her case and her Probation Officer believe that she has a pattern of choosing violent partners and have referred her to domestic violence services, as well as substance abuse treatment on several occasions but none of this has worked because her trauma goes much deeper.

For Carmen, a probation violation and being sent to jail is seen as a welcomed rest from her regular life. She sees time in jail as a break from being beaten, raped, or a way to escape the feeling of being dirty. In jail, she can try to get clean and maybe even get a good night's sleep. At 25, Carmen has given up. In order for Carmen to succeed, her caseworkers and Probation Officers will need to understand she is a woman who started her journey as a victim a long time ago.

In November, 2014, Maricopa County Adult Probation Officers reported

**165 adult victims of sex trafficking and 79 traffickers (perpetrators) under their supervision.**<sup>14</sup>



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# mindset of a sex trafficking VICTIM

## Sex trafficking victims often do not see themselves as victims

Victims may feel shame, self – blame and feelings of unworthiness of a better life.

Victims may be coached to lie to professionals and often give scripted stories.

Victims are often fearful and distrust law enforcement and government services out of fear of arrest.

Victims may have formed a type of trauma bond with their exploiter and may have deep loyalties and positive feelings for their abuser.

Victims often fear their own safety and the safety of their loved ones due to threats of violence.

Drugs often play a role in sex trafficking situations- sometimes as a way to cope or victims sometimes enter “the life” to support a drug habit.<sup>5</sup>

## A SURVIVOR STORY

Tracey, age 22, described the experience of sitting in front of her Probation Officers as humiliating. She felt the shame of all the perceived failures in her life. He knew she was a prostitute and once again, the system made her feel like a “whore.” She wished she could explain to the counselors, the judges, the Probation Officers assigned to her case that this is not what she wanted in her life; she had dreamed of being a teacher someday until her life was turned upside down.

At the age of 14, she had thought she had found someone who would love her. He became her nightmare when he injected her with heroin and soon thereafter began to sell her body for drugs. Since then, life has been hell and this moment, in this office, it feels like it is just another chance to reinforce she is nothing.

This time was different. Her Probation Officer asked her if anyone had forced her into “the life.” He took the time to ask her how it all began and told her he could see that she was capable of so much more. She broke down in tears and for the first time in her life felt safe enough to disclose that when she was 14 she became a victim of trafficking. For the first time, Tracey saw hope for her future.

## Common Sex Trafficking Terminology

(The following list of key terms used in sex trafficking is published in Renting Lacy: A Story of America’s Prostituted Children by Linda Smith)

**Bottom** — A female appointed by the trafficker/pimp to supervise the others and report rule violations. Operating as his “right hand,” the Bottom may help instruct victims, collect money, book hotel rooms, post ads, or inflict punishments on other girls. The bottom has often been trafficked as a minor and is in a complex relationship with the trafficker.

**Branding** — A tattoo, carving or burn on a victim that indicates ownership by a trafficker/pimp/gang.

**Caught A Case** — A term that refers to when a pimp or victim has been arrested and charged with a crime.

**Daddy** — The term a pimp will often require his victim to call him.

**Date** — The exchange when prostitution takes place, or the activity of prostitution. A victim is said to be “with a date” or “dating.”

**Exit Fee** — The money a pimp will demand from a victim who is thinking about trying to leave. It will be an exorbitant sum, to discourage her from leaving. Most pimps never let their victims leave freely.

**Family/Folks** — The term used to describe the other individuals under the control of the same pimp. He plays the role of father (or “Daddy”) while the group fulfills the need for a “family.”

**“John” (Buyer or “Trick”)** — An individual who pays for or trades something of value for sexual acts.

**Out of Pocket** - when a victim is not doing what their trafficker has instructed. This often ends in punishment from the trafficker.

**Quota** — A set amount of money that a trafficking victim must make each night before she can come “home.” Quotas are often set between \$300 and \$2000.

**Seasoning** — A combination of psychological manipulation, intimidation, gang rape, sodomy, beatings, deprivation of food or sleep, isolation from friends or family and other sources of support, and threatening or holding hostage of a victim’s children. Seasoning is designed to break down a victim’s resistance and ensure compliance.

**Squaring Up** — Attempting to escape or exit prostitution.

**Stable** — A group of victims who are under the control of a single pimp.

**The Game/The Life** — The subculture of prostitution, complete with rules, a hierarchy of authority, and language. Referring to the act of pimping as ‘the game’ gives the illusion that it can be a fun and easy way to make money, when the reality is much harsher. Women and girls will say they’ve been “in the life” if they’ve been involved in prostitution for a while.

**Track (Stroll or Blade)** — An area of town known for prostitution activity. This can be the area around a group of strip clubs and pornography stores, or a particular stretch of street.

**Trick** — Committing an act of prostitution (verb), or the person buying it (noun). A victim is said to be “turning a trick” or “with a trick.”<sup>7</sup>

# trafficker or the PIMP

In November, 2014, Maricopa County Probation Officers reported 79 traffickers (perpetrators) under their supervision.

## The criminal act of sex trafficking is hard to detect to an untrained eye.

The Pimp/Trafficker is a criminal who commits the crime of human trafficking. The trafficker forces another person into prostitution, and then keeps some or all of their earnings. According to federally defined terminology, traffickers employ force, fraud and coercion to recruit and retain their victims.

Traffickers can work alone or as part of extensive criminal networks. They include a wide range of criminals, including individual pimps, family operations, small businesses, loose-knit decentralized criminal networks, gang based, and international organized criminal operations. Often the traffickers and their victims share the same national, ethnic, or cultural background, allowing the trafficker to better understand and exploit the vulnerabilities of their victims. Traffickers can be foreign nationals and U.S. citizens, males and females, family members, intimate partners, acquaintances, and strangers.<sup>10</sup>

When evaluating if a probationer is a pimp/trafficker there are several things to consider:

- At what age did the probationer become involved with the criminal justice system?
- What is the history of the probationer's criminal charges? Are they related or is there an identifiable trend?
- Have there been multiple arrests for prostitution related criminal activity?
- Is there a history of the probationer having intimate partner violence related arrests and if so, what are the battering behaviors exhibited?
- Is there a history of involvement with the child welfare system as either a child or parent?
- Does the probationer live in a hotel with multiple women?
- Does the probationer seem to have money but no job, or appear to be selling drugs?
- Does there seem to be people in the home that do not belong there?
- Look for warning signs of trafficking such as what is listed below.



Major crimes that many individual pimps have committed through the course of their criminal behavior include sex trafficking, involuntary servitude, physical/sexual assault, kidnapping, sexual abuse of a minor, money laundering, tax evasion, false and fraudulent identities, fraudulent checks, racketeering, child pornography, pandering, and falsifying business records.<sup>3</sup>

## Examples of FORCE, FRAUD and COERCION used by pimps:<sup>9</sup>

### FORCE

- Slapping and beating with objects
- Burning
- Sexual assault
- Rape and gang rape
- Confinement and physical restraint
- Seasoning/initiation
- Torture practices

### FRAUD

- False promises
- Deceitful enticing and affectionate behavior
- Lying about working conditions
- Lying about the promise of a better life
- Withholding wages
- Blackmail, extortion

### COERCION

- Threats of serious harm or restraint
- Intimidation and humiliation
- Creating a climate of fear
- Enforcement of trivial demands
- Occasional Indulgences
- Intense manipulation
- Emotional abuse
- Isolation
- Dependency for basic needs
- Creating fear of independence
- Control of children
- Establishing quotas
- Threatening abuse of legal process or convincing victim that they are a criminal
- Removal from family and support structures to where victim knows no one

## WARNINGS SIGNS:

- Probationer/Victim has large amounts of cash or items with no verifiable explanation as to how they were purchased.
- Probationer/Victim maintains a social networking page(s) such as Facebook, Twitter, and/or Instagram that refers to pimping or boasts about money. Social media posts may also refer to hotels or strip clubs.
- During field or home contact visits, you notice the presence of women and/or youth that appear unwilling or unable to speak to you and seem like they don't belong there.
- Unusual tattoo, name, brand or symbol associated with the Probationer/Victim that may appear in social media or on their person.
- Offender has a record of assault or domestic violence.

# the role of **GANGS** in sex trafficking



Across the country, law enforcement is increasingly finding that gangs are moving to sex trafficking as a source of income. Prostitution has steady financial rewards and perceived low risk of apprehension. The FBI reports that some gangs appear to be diversifying their income by trading drug trafficking in favor of juvenile prostitution. In drug dealing, they need cash to buy their supply. Girls are free with no upfront investment. Forcing young girls to sell their bodies is both lucrative and difficult to prosecute, as victims are often rightly afraid to testify against their trafficker.

Gangs operate sex trafficking rings as a relatively low-risk, high-profit criminal enterprise. Gangs also use promises of protection, status, easy money, loyalty and material possessions to lure girls into the gang.<sup>10</sup> Girls are not members of the gang but are considered “property” of the gang. Girls are asked to “give back” and “support the family.” Some gang members will offer up their own sisters to move up in the gang.

Gang control techniques include violence, sexual assault, and branding to ensure compliance. According to the National Gang Intelligence Center, gangs recruit members within their neighborhood through grooming techniques or outside their neighborhood through “snatch and grab” or kidnapping. Gang members facilitate prostitution by providing security and transporting victims to their “dates.” They may also schedule appointments, obtain clients and collect money.<sup>11</sup>

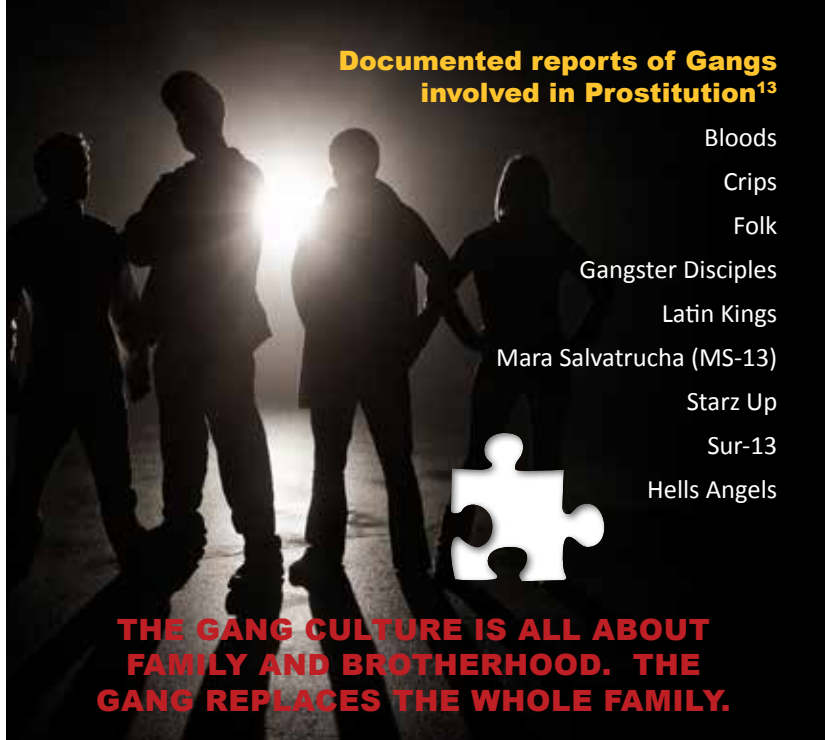


## CASE STUDY

Michael, age 23, described his upbringing as chaotic and unsafe. His community was wrought with gang violence and drug abuse. At home, he was often exposed to domestic violence and substance abuse. For Michael, violence was a way of life and there was no room for the weak. Thrown out of the home, Michael was on the streets by age 13. He needed to survive. Being gang involved wasn't an option, but rather the only way to stay alive. From an early age, Michael knew his father was a “pimp” and learned that pimping “ho’s” was fast money and in his community, virtually an undetectable crime; no one was really paying attention. It was a natural transition to become immersed in selling girls from his gang; his family. For Michael, there was no other life he could see for himself and this was as good as it was going to get.

## Documented reports of Gangs involved in Prostitution<sup>13</sup>

- Bloods
- Crips
- Folk
- Gangster Disciples
- Latin Kings
- Mara Salvatrucha (MS-13)
- Starz Up
- Sur-13
- Hells Angels



**THE GANG CULTURE IS ALL ABOUT FAMILY AND BROTHERHOOD. THE GANG REPLACES THE WHOLE FAMILY.**

## IMPORTANT QUESTIONS IF YOU SUSPECT A SEX TRAFFICKING LINK:

How is the probationer/victim involved in the gang? What is their sex trafficking role in the gang?

Is this a national or hybrid gang?

What are the rules of the gang and how do they operate?

What are the immediate and long-term dangers to the probationer/victim by asking him/her to leave the gang?

Is there family involvement in the gang?

Gangs are a local problem, but are often very organized with national and international affiliates. If gang affiliation is involved in trafficking, the assigned Probation Officer will need to have a working knowledge of gangs in the community and the various ways in which these gangs operate. Probation Officers have found that collaborating with other law enforcement with specialized knowledge of gangs and trafficking has been a powerful combination to address trafficking.

Probation Officers should also understand that gang involvement is a way of life that many members and associates cannot safely walk away from, regardless of probation supervision or the threat of incarceration. If a victim is asked to testify against a gang member, the victim's safety must be a priority.

**In addressing the probationer's trafficking behaviors, appropriately matching services with their needs is a critical phase of intervention.**

**BOTH TRAFFICKERS AND VICTIMS CAN BE GANG INVOLVED.**

# WHAT TO DO IF YOU SUSPECT HUMAN TRAFFICKING:

**If you think your probationer is in immediate danger, call 911**

Call the National Human Trafficking Resource Center to report an incident or get help in referring services.

**1-888-3737-888**

If you think your probationer could be a sex trafficker, notify your supervisor, collaborate with available specialized law enforcement resources, and follow departmental policy regarding this type of violation behavior. Trafficking is serious misconduct and should be perceived as high risk behavior that poses significant risk to community safety.

#### END NOTES:

1. The Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000
2. Shared Hope 2014
3. Polaris Project 2014 Combating Human Trafficking and Modern-day Slavery - <http://www.polarisproject.com>
4. Federation of American Scientist (2000) International Crime Threat Assessment Chapter 2
5. National Institute of Trauma Informed Care (2013)
6. US Department of Health and Human Services Rescue & Restore Campaign - <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/orr/resource/about-rescue-restore>
7. STIR Training Material 2013
8. Shared Hope 2014 - <http://sharedhope.org/learn/traffickingterms/>
9. National Human Trafficking Resource Center, 2014
10. [www.polarisproject.org/human-trafficking/overview](http://www.polarisproject.org/human-trafficking/overview)
11. Shared Hope 2014
12. National Gang Intelligence Center Intelligence Report January 2012
13. Gang Criminal Activity Expanding into Juvenile Prostitution Report. National Gang Intelligence Center and FBI Crimes Against Children Unit 2012
14. Arizona Probation Court Report: Assessing the Incidence of Victims and Offenders of Domestic Sex Trafficking in Maricopa County Adult Probation (2014)

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