



2017 Youth Experiences Survey: Studying Homeless Young Adults and their Experiences with Human Trafficking

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AMBER Alert Training and Technical Assistance Program

National Criminal Justice Training Center
of Fox Valley Technical College



Webinar Information

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AMBER Alert Training and Technical Assistance Program

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To safely recover missing, endangered, or abducted children through the coordinated efforts of law enforcement, media, transportation, and other partners by using training and technology to enhance response capacities and capabilities and increase public participation.

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Poll Questions

- Poll questions may be asked during the webinar.
 - They are asked so we can better understand the audience and provide the most useful information to you.
- As they will only be open a short period of time, please respond promptly.



POLL OPTION: Which of the following best describes your role?

- Investigator (Law Enforcement, CPS)
- Prosecutor, Attorney
- Forensic Interviewer, Social Worker, Child Advocacy Center
- Medical, Mental Health
- Other (type your role in the question box)





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- Associate Professor
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- Subject matter expert:
 - White House
 - US Department of Health and Human Services
 - SAMHSA
 - Office of Victims of Crime (OVC)
- City of Phoenix Human Trafficking Task Force
- Arizona Governor's Human Trafficking Council

POLL QUESTION: Please indicate your level of expertise as it relates to human trafficking of young adults?

- Very Knowledgeable
- Somewhat Knowledgeable
- Has some Knowledge
- Novice



A person is sitting on the floor in a dark, industrial-looking space, huddled against a wall. They are wearing a striped beanie and dark clothing, and their face is obscured by their hands. The background consists of a large, textured concrete wall and a brick wall on the right side. The floor is dark and reflective.

2017 Youth Experiences Survey: Studying Homeless Young Adults and their Experiences with Human Trafficking

Purpose of this Study:

- Inform the Arizona community about the sex and labor trafficking experiences among homeless young adults
- Create new partnerships and resources using this knowledge about human trafficking within homeless young adults
- Develop knowledge about the service and clinical needs of homeless young adults in Arizona



Definition Human Trafficking:

- The ***Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000*** defined human trafficking as “the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for sexual or labor services, through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery” (U.S. Dept. of State, 2000, p. 7)

Definition: Homeless Young Adult

- Homeless young adults can be defined to include:
persons from age 18 to 25 years old
 - 10% of homeless persons (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2014)
- “who have dropped out of school, are without regular employment, live in precarious conditions and often have little social support from their families or communities” (Haley et al. 2004; p. 526)

Robert Scifo

By Robert Scifo [CC BY-SA 4.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0>)], from Wikimedia Commons

Risk factors for youth homelessness include:

- Transitioning from foster care to adulthood (Dworsky, Napolitano & Courtney, 2013)
- Substance abuse (Dashora, Erdem, Slesnick, 2010)
- Family conflict (Robertson & Toro, 1999)
- Serious mental health problems (Bender et al, 2010)
- History of childhood maltreatment (Murphy et al, 2015)
- Survivors of trauma (Coates & McKenzie-Mohr, 2010) Davies & Allen, 2017).
- Identifying as LGBTQ (Durso & Gates, 2012)

Considerations for Research

- Homeless young adults were available to be surveyed
- Participants were given an incentive to complete the 6-page survey
- Survey was only given to persons fluent in reading English
- Participants could be persons who had been homeless for longer periods because they were on the streets (and accessible) or receiving services



Sex trafficking and survival sex

- Homeless young persons involvement in survival sex has been found to change over time
- Can move from sexual exploitation to independence back to sexual exploitation and is difficult to differentiate
- To meet the criteria of sex trafficking, use questions that look at:
 - Age (sexually exploited before age 18)
 - Ask specifically about force, fraud or coercion and/or ask about a third party trafficker



Previous Research on Sex Trafficking and Homeless Youth and Young Adults

- Bigelson & Vuotto (2013)
 - 174 homeless youth receiving services from Covenant House in NYC
 - Used the Human Trafficking Interview and Assessment Measure (HTIAM-14)
 - 20.1% experienced sex trafficking

Previous Research on Sex Trafficking and Homeless Youth and Young Adults

- Murphy (2017)
- 641 youth interviewed at 10 Covenant House locations around the U.S.
- 14% (92) were sex trafficked
- 8% (52) were labor trafficked
- 3% (22) were both sex and labor trafficked

A person is sitting on a concrete curb, looking down at a smartphone held in their hands. They are wearing black leggings with a large tear at the knee and black sneakers with white soles. The background is a blurred street scene with a metal pole and a brick-paved sidewalk.

Previous Research on Sex Trafficking and Homeless Youth and Young Adults

- Youth Experiences Survey in Kentuckiana (Middleton et al, 2018)
 - 131 homeless youth ages 12-25 surveyed
 - 41.2% reported they were victims of sex trafficking
 - Sex trafficked youth were more likely to report previous self harm behaviors, suicide attempts, and substance abuse



History of the Youth Experiences Survey

- Administered by ASU Office of Sex Trafficking Intervention Research since 2014
- Study is exempt from the ASU Institutional Review Board
- Surveys homeless young adults in the two major cities in Arizona (Tucson and Phoenix)
- Funded by the McCain Institute for Global Leadership, Tumbleweed, UMOM, and the City of Tucson
- Partnerships include:
 - Tumbleweed/UMOM
 - Our Family Services
 - OneNTen
 - Native American Connections

Research Questions

- What are the experiences of homeless young adults in Phoenix and Tucson, Arizona?
- What is the prevalence of sex and labor trafficking victimization among homeless young adults in Arizona?
- What are the differences in life experiences and treatment needs of homeless young adults who have experienced sex or labor trafficking compared to those who have not?



Methodology

- Convenience sample of all homeless young adults ages 18 to 25 being served by four homeless youth serving organizations in Arizona
- Participants were recruited by staff from the four agencies by trained staff:
 - On the streets
 - Young adult drop in centers
 - Transitional housing
 - Permanent supportive housing

Methodology

- 14-day cross-sectional convenience data collection Summer 2017
- Anonymous surveys
- 6-pages, 65 items (English only)
- \$5 gift cards and local resource list
- Administered by a known service provider/support staff

Survey Topics

- 
- Housing
 - Mental health
 - Suicide attempt history
 - Self harm behaviors
 - Medical services
 - Drug and alcohol use and addition
 - Contact with family

Life events

- 
- Dating violence
 - Childhood abuse
 - Out of home care
 - Experiences with law enforcement
 - Employment
 - Friendships/close relationships
 - Feelings secure to stand up for self

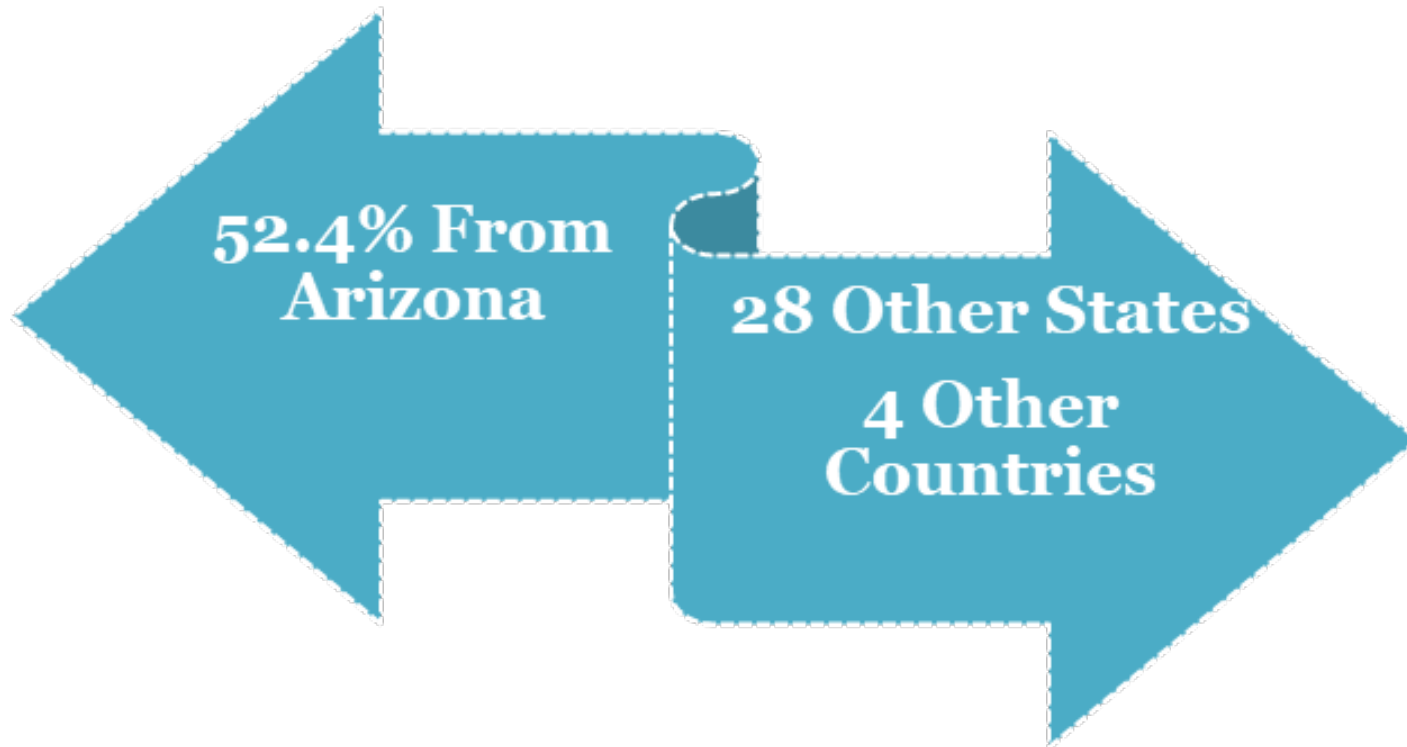
Sex Trafficking questions

- Have you ever been compelled, forced, or coerced to perform a sex act, including sexual intercourse, oral or anal contact, for the following: money, food, clothes, drugs, protection, place to stay, other?
- If you checked any of the above, how old were you the first time this happened?
- Do you currently have a person who encourages/pressures/forces you to exchange sexual acts for money, drugs, food, a place to stay, clothing or protection?
- In the past has anyone encouraged/pressured/forced you to exchange sexual acts for money, drugs, food, a place to stay, clothing or protection?

Labor Trafficking Questions

- Have you ever been compelled, forced or coerced to perform a NON-sexual act or form of labor, for any of the following for money, food, clothes, drugs, protection, place to stay, other?
- If you checked any of the above, how old were you the first time this happened?
- Do you currently have a person who encourages/pressures/forces you to exchange a form of labor for money, drugs, food, place to stay, clothing or protection?
- In the past, has anyone encouraged/pressured/forced you to exchange a form of labor for money, drugs, food, place to stay, clothing or protection?

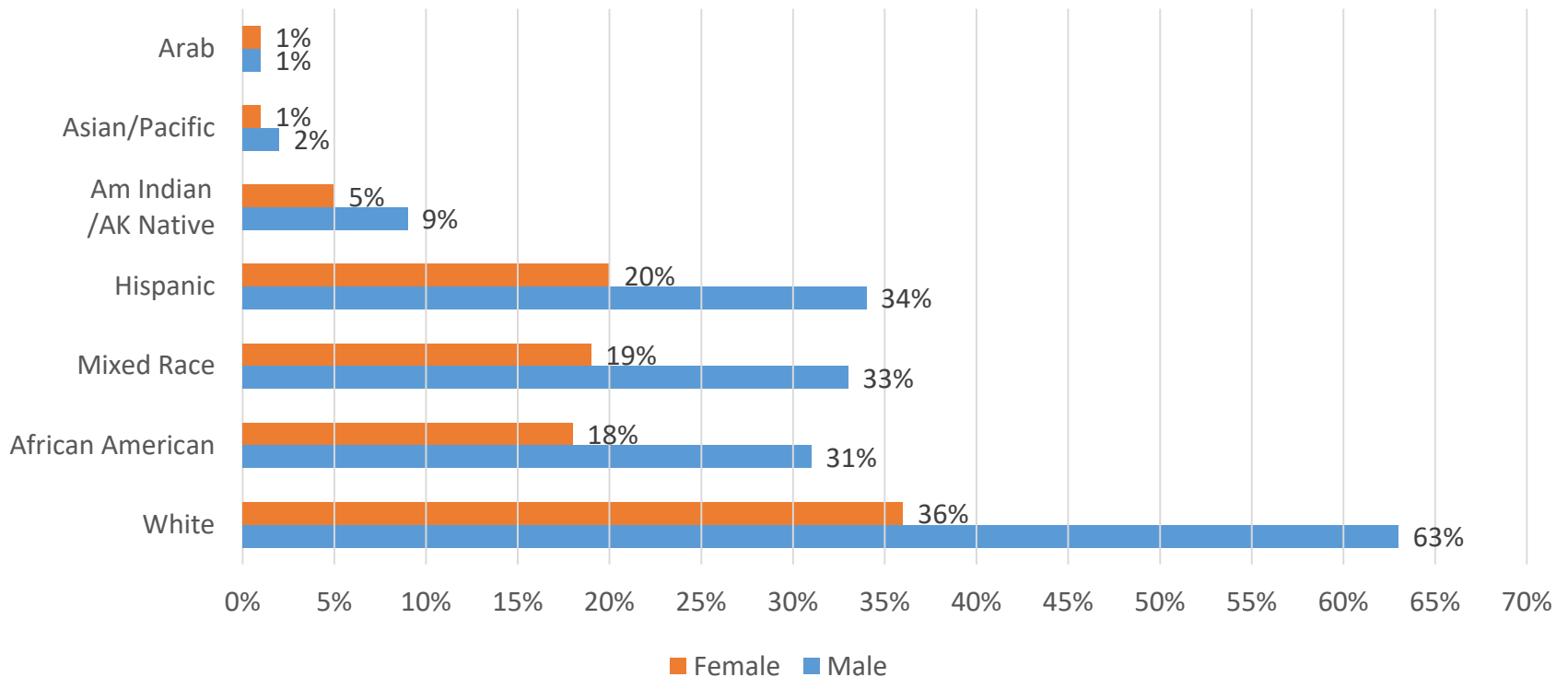
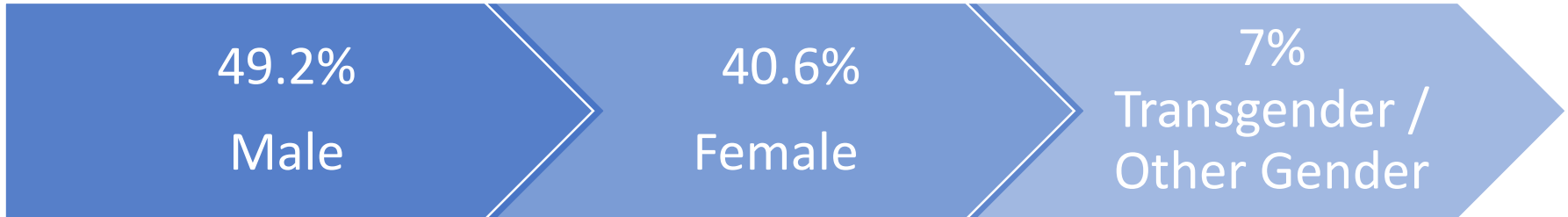
2017 Participants – 187 Homeless Young Adult Responders



Demographics:

Average Age:
21.1 Years Old

GENDER & ETHNICITY



HOUSING

15.5%

Couch Surfing

20.9%

Shelter

28.9%
Transitional
Housing

22.5%

Street

1.6%

Hotel

5.9%

Own Place





MENTAL HEALTH & MEDICAL ISSUES



Mental Health

67.9% Current mental health problems



Common mental health issues

47.6% - Anxiety

44.9% - Depression



Suicide

54.5 % had a suicide attempt

Medical Health

53.5% Current medical problems



Common medical health issues

24.6% - Asthma

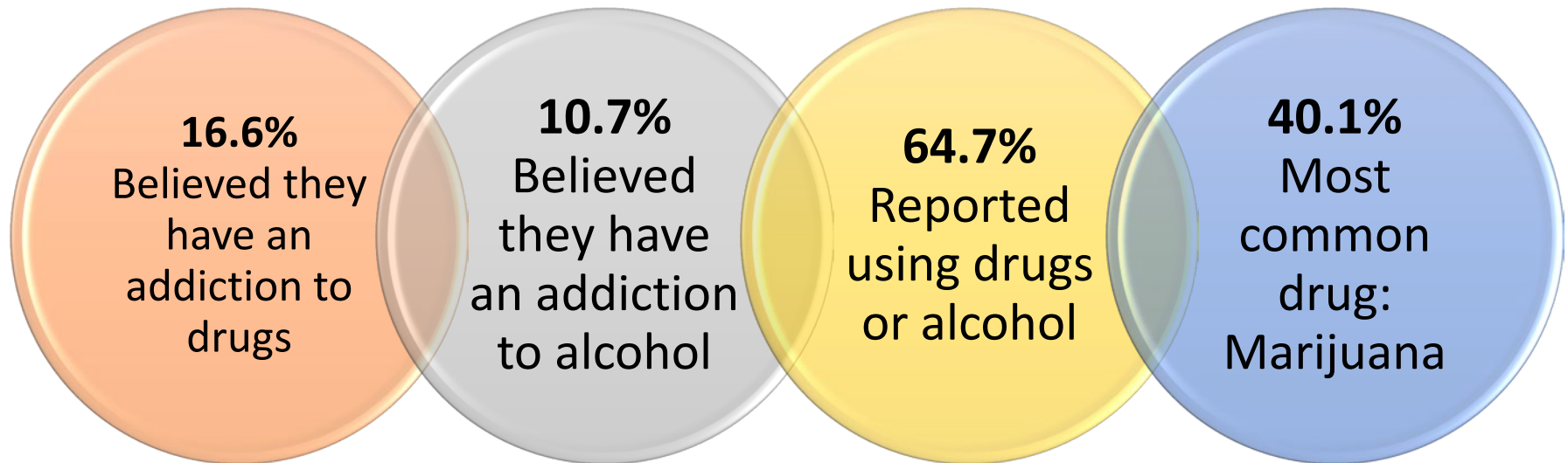
20.3% - Vision



Treatment

24.6 % had received treatment services

ALCOHOL & DRUGS



NEGATIVE LIFE EXPERIENCES

40.1%

Dating violence

34.8%

Negative experience
with law
enforcement

43.3%

Bullied by school
peers

31% Been sex
trafficked

15.5% no contact
with family
14.4% their home
was not a safe
environment



36.4% were kicked
out of their home

45.6% would like to
be more connected
to family

30.5%

Sexual abuse

43.9%

Ran away

41.2% Emotional
abuse by parent
or guardian

36.9%

group or foster
home

POSITIVE LIFE EXPERIENCES

58.3%
reported
practicing
safe sex

40.1%
said NO
when they
felt they
were being
forced to
have sex

58.3%
said no when
offered
drugs/alcohol

46%
felt secure or
safe to stand up
for themselves

40.6%
had steady
employment

48.7%
had been in a
club or youth
organization

50.8%
reported having a
loving family or
group of friends

42.8%
enrolled in school or
technical program



EXPERIENCE OF SEX TRAFFICKING

Of the 187 homeless young adult respondents
31% Identified as being sex trafficked

38.2%
Of females reported sex
trafficking

33%
Of transgender/other
gender reported sex
trafficking

25%
Of males reported sex
trafficking

Average age of first
sex trafficking
experience:
16.6 years old

82.8%
Reported having a
sex trafficker

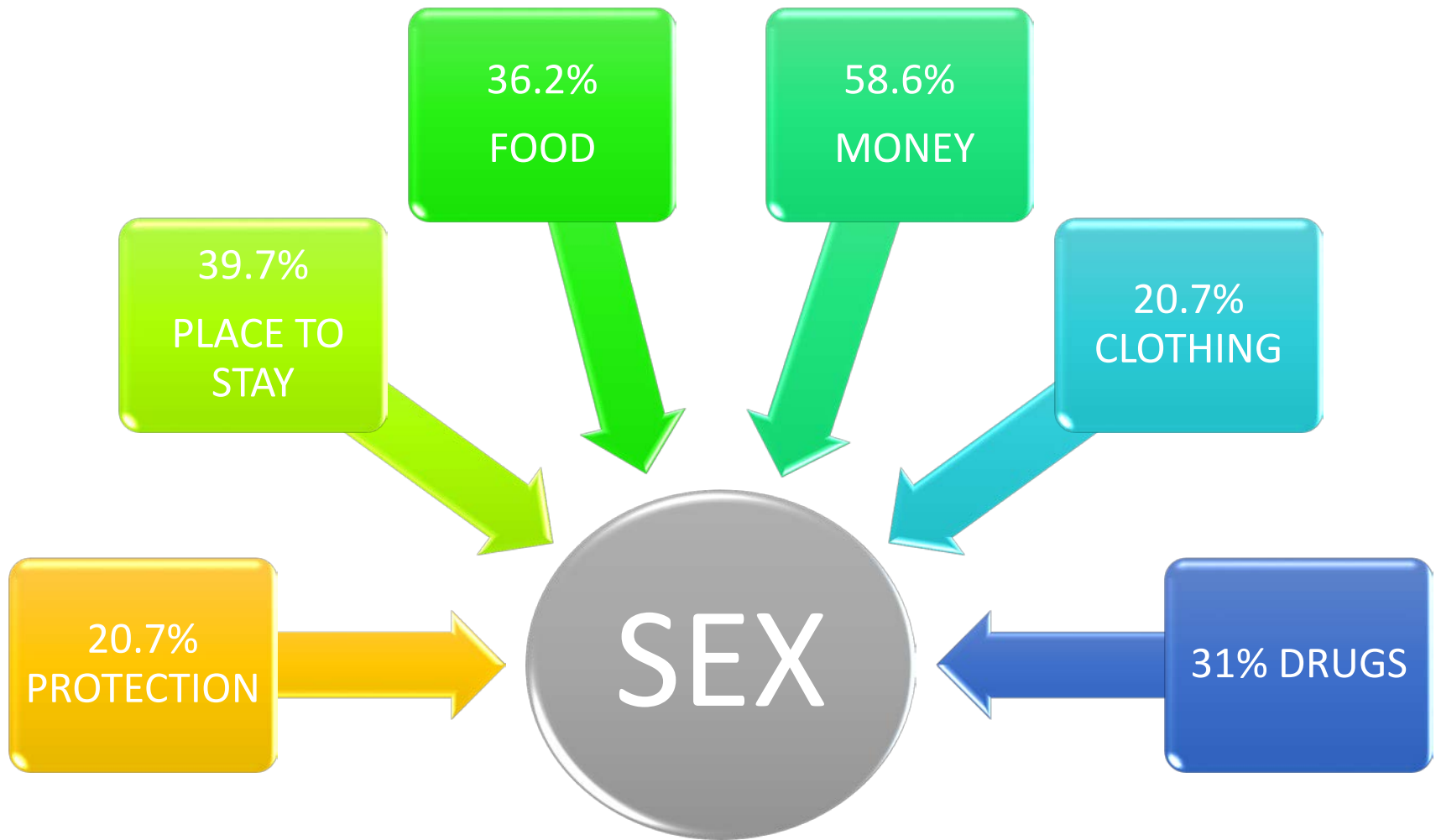
43.1%
Were sex trafficked
before age 18

6.9%
Reported being
currently sex
trafficked

Reported Human Trafficking

- 58 (31%) reported sex trafficking
- 60 (32.1%) reported labor trafficking
- 38 (20.3%) reported both sex and labor trafficking
- 80 (42.8%) reported at least one form of human trafficking





EXCHANGE OF SEX

Comparing Sex Trafficked Youth to Non-Sex Trafficked Youth: SIGNIFICANTLY MORE LIKELY TO...

- Gender and Sexuality – Identify as LGBTQ
- Drugs and Alcohol – Drug Addition, Use Methamphetamine, and Drink Alcohol Excessively
- Self-Harm and High Risk – Cutting, Scarification, Body Modification, Vomiting/Not Eating, and Have Sex with Strangers
- Mental Health – Suicide Attempt, Current Mental Health Issue, and More than one Diagnosis
- Medical Health – No Significant Differences

Comparing Sex Trafficked Youth to Non-Sex Trafficked Youth: SIGNIFICANTLY MORE LIKELY TO...

- Family Connection – Kicked out due to substance abuse and Kicked out due to family not approving of sexual orientation
- Abuse – Physical and emotional abuse by parent or caregiver
- Negative Experiences – Running away from home, Juvenile Justice System, Foster care/Group home, Residential treatment center
- Negative Experiences – Harassment by peers, Bullying by peers, and Academic difficulty

EXPERIENCE OF LABOR TRAFFICKING

Of the 187 Homeless Young Respondents, 32.1% identified a labor trafficking experience:

- 35.5% of females and 27.2% of males reported labor trafficking
- 44.4% of transgender/other gender reported labor trafficking
- Average age of first labor trafficking experience is 16.5 years old
- 66.7% Reported having a labor trafficker
- 35% Labor trafficked before age 18
- 18.3% Reported being currently labor trafficked

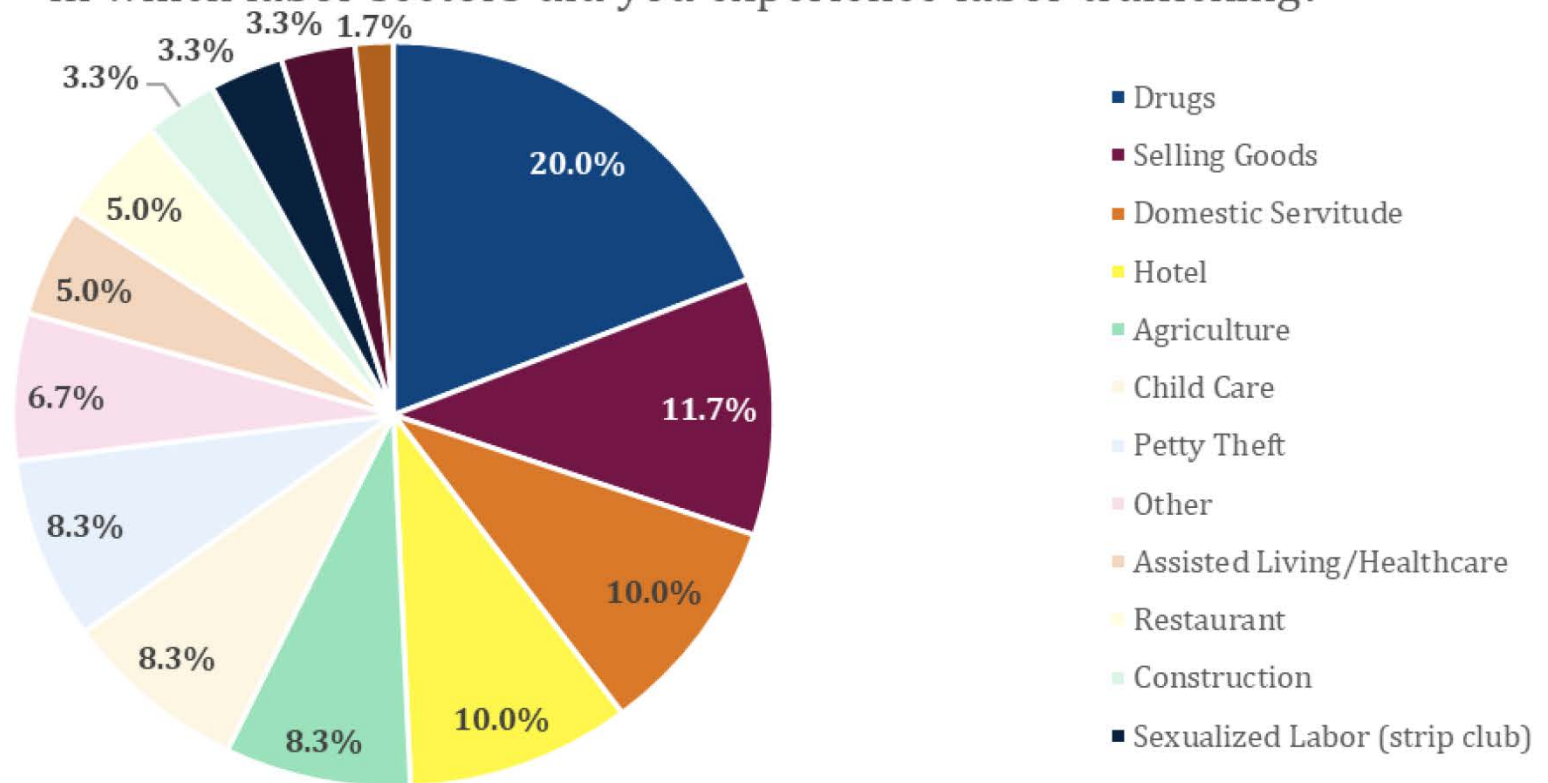


LABOR TRAFFICKING

Labor Trafficking

- 28.3% for protection
- 55% for a place to stay
- 58.3% for food
- 66.7% for money
- 43.3% for clothing
- 30% for drugs

In which labor sectors did you experience labor trafficking?



Comparing Labor Trafficked Youth to Non-Labor Trafficked Youth: SIGNIFICANTLY MORE LIKELY TO...

- Gender and Sexuality – No significant differences
- Drugs and Alcohol – Drug addiction, Used methamphetamines, and Drinking alcohol excessively
- Self-Harm and High Risk – Cutting, Scarification, Body Modification, Vomiting/Not eating, Have sex with strangers
- Mental Health – Suicide Attempt, Current mental health issue, and More than one diagnosis
- Medical Health – Current medical problem and Poor vision

Comparing Labor Trafficked Youth to Non-Labor Trafficked Youth: **SIGNIFICANTLY MORE LIKELY TO...**

- Family Connection – Kicked out due to substance abuse and Kicked out due to family not approving of sexual orientation
- Abuse – Witnessing domestic violence in the home, emotional and physical abuse by parent/guardian, Sexual abuse as a child and adolescent, Being abused and being an abuser in a domestic violence relationship, and Dating violence
- Negative Experiences – Foster care, Group home, Residential treatment center, and Special education classes
- Negative Experiences – Harassment by peers, Bullying by peers, Gang affiliation, and Adult entertainment industry

Implications

- Homeless young adults face numerous challenges including mental health, substance abuse, and traumatic life experiences
- Limited family connections
- Limited acceptance of their sexual orientation
- Reports of a lack of safety in their homes
- Extraordinary vulnerability:
 - 42% reported at least one type of human trafficking
 - Sex trafficking victims: one in three participants
 - Labor trafficking victims: one in three participants





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Thank you for your participation!

For assistance, please contact us:



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