



**Family Services of Peel – Peel Institute on Violence Prevention**

# **HUMAN TRAFFICKING - A LITERATURE REVIEW**

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## Acronyms

CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women
FSP	Family Services of Peel
HT	Human Trafficking
HT AC	Human Trafficking Advisory Committee
ILO	International Labour Organization
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
PIVP	Peel Institute on Violence Prevention
PTSD	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
RCMP	Royal Canada Mounted Police
TIP	Trafficking In Persons
UNO	United Nations Organization
UNODC	United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime
VAW	Violence Against Women
WHO	World Health Organization

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# HUMAN TRAFFICKING – A LITERATURE REVIEW

*"We are all better off when we open the doors of opportunity for women and girls in all aspects of life- in law enforcement, in health services, in the judiciary and prosecutorial authorities, in border control and port control and at peace talks."*

Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka  
Executive Director of UN Women  
March 2018  
(United Nations 2018)

## 1. Introduction

The purpose of this review is to convey information and ideas on Human Trafficking that have been published by accredited scholars and researchers in Canada and worldwide, over the past 10 years. The review relates to the needs of survivors of Human Trafficking. It describes strengths, gaps and weaknesses of the existing and recommended services and programs designed to help survivors.

While there are various forms of human trafficking that require attention, this paper deals with trafficking for the purposes of sex work. The common denominator in human sex trafficking is the movement of victims across borders from poor nations to affluent nations; however, domestic human trafficking also exists (Bernat & Winkeller, 2010). Shining a light on this, Peel Police (in 2012) stated that over half of the human trafficking cases in Canada have occurred in Peel Region, including both Mississauga and Brampton.

## 2. Methods

The following criteria were applied to the literature review research:

### 2.1 Inclusion

- Peer-reviewed articles and grey literature that explore human trafficking, the needs of victims of human trafficking, the services in place to help these victims and the aspects missing from these services.
- Studies from global, North American, Canadian, and local perspectives
- Peer-to-peer support methods
- Studies published from 2007 to 2018

## 2.2 Exclusion

- Violence from labour trafficking
- Articles not published in English
- Literature on legislation and punishment of traffickers

Databases	Search Terms Used
Google Scholar	Human Trafficking; physical health; mental health; women's rights; human rights; needs; services OR programs; violence against women; peer-to-peer support; moral support; Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD); determinants of health
CINAHL	Human Trafficking; women OR men; PTSD; anxiety OR depression; needs; services; violence against women
ProQuest	Human Trafficking; needs; services; Mental health; PTSD; anxiety OR depression
Scholars Portal	Human Trafficking; men OR women; needs; services; peer-to-peer support; moral support; PTSD
EBSCO	Human Trafficking; needs; services; peer-to-peer support; violence; human rights; women's rights; PTSD
PubMed	Human Trafficking; needs; services; peer-to-peer support; violence; human rights; women's rights; health, PTSD

## 2.3 Limitations

There are several limitations to this literature review. For example, numerous studies do not have large enough sample groups, and cannot, therefore, be accurately applied to larger populations. Additionally, the articles included in this literature review were composed solely in English, restricting studies from parts of the world, where articles were published in other languages. As human trafficking is a worldwide issue, this represents a significant limitation to the quantity of sources otherwise available.

## 3. Background

### 3.1 What is Human Trafficking?

There are several definitions of Human Trafficking:

1. United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Article 3, paragraph (a) of the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons defines Trafficking in Persons as the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat

or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation or the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2018)

2. [T]he recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation (World Health Organization, 2012).
3. “Trafficking in persons involves the recruitment, transportation, harbouring and/or control of the movement of persons for the purpose of exploitation, typically for sexual exploitation or forced labour. Victims are required to provide (or offer to provide) their services or labour as a result of conduct that, in all the circumstances, could reasonably be expected to cause the victim to fear for their own safety — or for the safety of someone known to them — if they refuse to provide that service or labour. Victims suffer physical, sexual and/or emotional abuse and often live and work in horrific conditions.” A Handbook for Criminal Justice Practitioners on Trafficking in Persons, Federal/Provincial/Territorial Working Group on Trafficking in Persons, (Department of Justice. Canada 2015).
4. “Human trafficking involves the recruitment, transportation, harbouring and/or exercising control, direction or influence over the movements of a person in order to exploit that person, typically through sexual exploitation or forced labour. It is often described as a modern form of slavery”, (Canada’s National Action Plan to Combat Trafficking. April 1 2015 –March 3, 2016).

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) demonstrated the difference between international human trafficking and domestic human trafficking.

*“A distinction between international and domestic human trafficking is made by the RCMP for law enforcement purposes, in order to determine the application of the appropriate piece of legislation as well as determine the jurisdictions based on law enforcement mandates.”*

The RCMP defines these two concepts as follows:

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*- **International Human Trafficking:** “involves someone, who, in the process of being trafficked, crosses an international border, regardless of the victim’s immigration status. The legality or illegality of border crossing in this case is irrelevant.”*

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*- **Domestic Human Trafficking:** “is the phenomenon in which all stages of trafficking occur within Canada, regardless of the victim’s legal status. Vulnerable, economically challenged and socially dislocated sectors of the Canadian population represent a potential pool of domestic trafficking victims”. RCMP National Strategy to Combat Human Trafficking, Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP National Strategies to Combat Trafficking. 2012)*

For this literature review, we have chosen the following definition:

“Human trafficking is the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons by improper means (such as force, abduction, fraud, coercion, deception, repeated provision of a controlled substance) for an illegal purpose, including sexual exploitation or forced labour.”, Ontario Taking Steps to End Human Trafficking, (Ontario Ministry of the Status of Women. 2016)

### 3.2 Magnitude of the problem

Human trafficking is a social issue of growing concern across the globe. The estimated number of individuals affected by human trafficking worldwide is 20.9 million people (Hemmings et al., 2016). It is the fastest growing area of organized crime and the third largest income revenue stream for systematized crime, after narcotics and arms sales. The global sex trade is worth around \$32 billion annually. What makes this business unique is that women and girls sold into sex trafficking earn profits for their pimps and traffickers over a great number of years, unlike the profits earned from drugs and narcotics that are sold and used only once. (Deshpande & Nawal, 2013).

The data from the International Labour Organization (ILO) map trafficking victims and profits by region. This data indicated that there are approximately 20.9 million victims worldwide. There is not specific data on Canada. The information provided by ILO indicates that in the U.S. alone, the profit is \$49.9 billion annually. However, except for a brief explanation by the ILO, it is unclear how these figures

were derived. It is clear, though, that in the case of human trafficking, no one really knows the true value of the trade. (Andreas & Greenhill, 2010).

There are many questions raised in the literature about the inadequacy of human trafficking statistics. The responses are often linked to the fact that human trafficking is a “hidden” phenomenon because it is illegal. (Andreas, & Greenhill, 2010). While trafficking in persons has become a worldwide concern, current data collection activities reveal many shortcomings: data are limited in scope, incomparable and insufficient to ascertain the true extent of the problem in Canada. (National Crime Prevention Centre of Public Safety Canada, 2009).

Human Trafficking has been defined as a process, not an event. If we are to have any long-term impact on the problem, we must use research to identify the most cost-effective areas of intervention. Compared with the complex nature of prevention, prosecution may seem a relatively simple area to track. However, although prosecution can be essential for a sense of justice (“bad people should be punished for doing bad things”), there is no nation in which prosecution can be shown to have reduced the aggregate amount of trafficking, including United States and Canada. (Mohajerin, 2011).

Traffickers and/or pimps commonly recruit potential victims who are either economically or socially vulnerable. (Hodge, 2008). This includes women and girls who are susceptible to poverty, societal isolation, drug addiction, and violence in the family, history of child abuse, family dysfunctions, school failure, and history of criminal behavior. It may also include orphans, women with mental and physical disabilities, aboriginal women, and those who are illiterate. (Dovydaitis, 2010).

Sex trafficking involves some form of forced or coerced sexual exploitation that is not limited to prostitution. It has become a significant and growing problem in both Canada and the larger global community. The cost to society includes the degradation of human and women’s rights, poor public health, disrupted communities, and diminished social development. Victims of sex trafficking acquire adverse physical and psychological health conditions and social disadvantages. Thus, sex trafficking is a critical social and health issue that requires social, medical and legal attention. (Deshpande & Nour, 2013). Virtually every country in the world is affected by these crimes. The challenge for all countries, rich and poor, is to target the criminals who exploit desperate people and to protect and assist victims of trafficking and smuggled migrants, many of whom endure unimaginable hardships in their bid for a better life.



As the only United Nations entity focusing on the criminal justice element of these crimes, the work done by UNODC to combat human trafficking and the smuggling of migrants is underpinned by the United Nations Convention on Transnational Organized Crime and its protocols on trafficking in persons and migrant smuggling. (UNODC, 2018).

### 3.3 Global approaches

Female Human Trafficking is being addressed in the new (*Strategy for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women for the United Nation on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) 61st session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs 2008*). The gender equality strategy, the first one for UNODC, sets out a framework, which takes into account the needs of women and girls, when tackling drugs and crime. It sets institutional standards and outlines a comprehensive set of commitments on gender equality over the next four years, which will help improve the lives of women and girls through the work of UNODC and UNOV.

### 3.4 Current Legislation

According to the Canadian Department of Justice, Human Trafficking is a very serious criminal offence with very serious penalties. There are specific criminal laws against trafficking in persons (TIP) in the Criminal Code. Two offences in the *Criminal Code* specifically address human trafficking:

- a. Trafficking in Persons (section 279.01): which carries a maximum penalty of life imprisonment and a mandatory minimum penalty of 5 years where the offence involved kidnapping, aggravated assault, aggravated sexual assault or death, and a maximum penalty of 14 years and a mandatory minimum penalty of 4 years in all other cases;
- b. Trafficking of a person under the age of eighteen years (section 279.011) which carries a maximum penalty of life imprisonment and a mandatory minimum penalty of 6 years where the offence involved kidnapping, aggravated assault, aggravated sexual assault or death, and a maximum penalty of 14 years and a mandatory minimum penalty of 5 years in all other cases (Justice).

### 3.5 Women's Rights and Human Rights

This review applied a theory of change, which asserts that women's rights are human rights and that progressive changes happen when diverse and independent women's movements have vision, strength, resilience and collective power (Women Kind, 2018). Several Global Agreements, such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW, 1979), represent substantial victories for the promotion and protection of women's rights. But this has not created a shift in gender relations; instead, the power dynamics that drive inequality between women and men remain in force at all levels. (UN Women, 2015). One of the most pervasive forms of abuse against women is Human Trafficking. Reviews of progress made under the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Beijing Platform for Action highlighted the lack of political will and the lack of investment, which stifled the creation, revision and implementation of national level laws, in accordance with international instruments and agreements on women's rights. While progress was achieved for some women, profound inequalities remain for women of marginalised groups, who face multiple and intersecting discrimination because of their gender and other aspects of their identity (Paz Arauco, 2014).

### 3.6 Human Sex Trafficking Victims

Human Trafficking is acknowledged to be a global human rights violation. Trafficking represents "a denial of the person's rights to liberty, integrity, security and freedom of movement" (Veljanoski & Stewart, 2007). Besides being a human rights violation, it is an issue of violence against women and a violation of women's rights. As stated in a report by the Peel Institute on Violence Prevention, "Women's rights are human rights" (2017).

According to the National Human Trafficking Hotline (n.d.), there are 20.9 million victims of human trafficking globally. The victims of human trafficking include men and women; however, women represent the majority. "Although men may also be impacted by such forms of violence, women continue to be the primary victims of these abuses, thus making gender a key health determinant of violence" (Riutort, Rupnarain & Masoud, n.d). Victims of human trafficking have diverse educational and economic backgrounds, but individuals in vulnerable states, such as low economic status, will have increased vulnerability of becoming victims of human trafficking.

Understanding the roots of vulnerability is invaluable, whether safeguarding young people from exploitation or helping them escape it. Ethnicity and socioeconomic status have some bearing, but the more helpful risk indicators are as follows:

- Female adolescent
- Absent or inattentive father
- Neglect or parental dysfunction
- Parental substance abuse/addictions
- Abuse: emotional, physical or sexual
- Depression or other mental health issues
- Social difficulties/lack of stable peer relations
- Developmental challenges
- Use of drugs/alcohol by the young person
- Estrangement from family, including homelessness and foster care (Cassells, 2017)

While there is no single profile of a victim of human trafficking, there are many common risk factors, including gender, age, race, and economic and social status. Overall, there is no one determinant to define who will become a victim of human trafficking, but as stated by Riutort, Rupnarain & Masoud (n.d.), “To understand fully the status of an individual, multiple determinants impacting the individual must be recognized” (pg. 6). We have identified four key populations that are particularly at-risk of being trafficked: (1) Indigenous girls/women, (2) young girls, (3) female, East Asian migrant workers, and (4) girls/women with disabilities.

### 3.7 Indigenous Girls/Women

“Several studies on human trafficking in Canada have concluded that the majority of people trafficked for sex within Canada are Aboriginal” (Barrett, 2013, pg.14-15). This trend has been noted in the provinces of British Columbia, Alberta and Manitoba. Majority of the population of sexually exploited women and girls in these areas are Aboriginal, which is significant when comparing the percentage of people of Aboriginal descent to the rest of the population. For example, in Winnipeg, 70-80% of

exploited children are Aboriginal, whereas only 10% of the population in Winnipeg is Aboriginal. In Vancouver, 40-60% of the prostituted women and girls are Aboriginal, whereas only 10% of the population is Aboriginal. And in Edmonton, 60% of its victims are Aboriginal, although they represent only 5% of its total population (Barrett, 2013). This causes concern because, “the RCMP reports that the majority of identified domestic sex trafficking victims in Canada are Caucasian, Canadian females between 14 and 22 years old who are recruited to work in the sex industry” (Barrett, 2013). This demonstrates that they are not accurately depicting the victims of sex trafficking, which makes it difficult to prevent the frequency of occurrences of these crimes.

In Canada, there exists local and national trafficking which include women and girls from Aboriginal communities, which are particularly vulnerable (Trafficking in Persons Report, 2016). In many provinces, such as British Columbia, Alberta and Manitoba, over 50% of the trafficking victims are from an Aboriginal women and girls (Barrett, 2013). Indigenous communities are often targets of discrimination, suffering from the difficult legacy of colonization. Due to this discrimination, Indigenous women are more likely than other, non-Indigenous Canadians, to experience discrimination, poverty, poor living conditions, and violent crimes. As well, they are less able to leave violent circumstances (The National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, 2017). In addition, police and justice systems contributes to violence against Indigenous women and girls, because they fail to adequately protect them from this violence and hold perpetrators accountable (The National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, 2017). Therefore, simply being Indigenous and female can put someone at risk for violence. This helps to explain why many of the victims of human sex trafficking in Canada are of Aboriginal descent.

### 3.8 Young Girls

Reports from service providers and the Canadian courts show that the average age of victims is younger than in previous years, averaging around 13-14 years old (Barrett, 2013). “It is thought that traffickers seek younger victims, both to service a demand for sex with those who look young, and because younger victims are easier to manipulate and control (Barrett, 2013). Stats Canada has reported that in 2014, there were 206 reports of human trafficking in Canada, with 93% of the victims being female, 47% between the ages of 18 and 24, and 25% under the age of 18 (Stats Canada, 2014). In communities across Canada, untold numbers of young women are involved in escort services, street walking, exotic massage, stripping and pornography. (Cassels, 2017). These common activities strip away

“human dignity” and have a “disproportionate impact on women and children”. (Government of Canada- Protection of Communities and Exploited Persons Act. 2014). Despite the resulting extreme emotional and physical toll, many young women will remain in the industry for some time. It can be extremely devastating for family and friends to watch this happen, and it can also be confusing to understand why the girls don’t just come home. None remain unscathed. The damage inflicted can be severe.

While society’s acceptance of nonconforming behaviours has grown, many young people have adopted a casual view of commercial sex. As a result, more young people from functional homes are participating in sex industry activities than ever before. It is fast money for seductive lure. Once a girl is entrenched in the sex industry, low paying jobs seem untenable. The ideas of designer clothing, expensive gifts and fast cars are enticing to these young girls. Intrigued, these young women fall victim to the fast paced and unpredictable trade. (Cassels, 2017). Young girls who are also yearning for validation, especially from fathers, may feel an emotional need which is met by the sex trade and the false bond they form with their pimp. Counterfeit love is prevalent in this trade. The most common approach utilized by Canadian traffickers is the illusion of love. False promises of gifts and special treatment misleadingly point to a happy future that does not involve working minimum wage jobs... Younger girls and those with developmental challenges are especially vulnerable to such tactics by the pimp. Some of the emotional tactics include: brainwashing, isolation, blame, shame, threats, controlled movements, normalization, and fear of rejection and lack of options. In addition, runaway and homeless youth as well as lesbian, gay, transgender and bisexual individuals are placed at an increased risk of human trafficking (National Center of Safe Supportive Learning Environments, 2017). Violence and torture are frequently used in the sex industry. Acts of violence or torture may be used to physically overpower the victims or achieve submission by pain and fear. Trauma, debt, drugs and alcohol are also some of the reasons why women to stay in the industry (Cassels, 2017).

### 3.9 Female, East Asian Migrant Workers

One of the greatest challenges in the fight against human trafficking is lifting the veil of silence that allows this oppressive behavior to flourish. Lack of understanding regarding the scope and severity of the problem has contributed to its dramatic rise. Traffickers have benefitted from the lack of public awareness by entrapping more victims and avoiding the consequences of law enforcement officials and the judicial system.

Today, human trafficking- its scope, its incidence, and its impact are unprecedented (Morency, 2004) through deception, women are promised better lives in Canada. Women are initially offered legitimate jobs in hotels, restaurants, and even as nannies (John Hopkins project online). False positions have been advertised in newspapers, through legitimate employment agencies, in magazines, and on the internet. These illusionary promises turn into horrendous nightmares, when victims are brought into brothels and massage parlours, and forced into prostitution.

There is a growing number of massage parlours in the Region of Peel. At the very least, one massage parlour can be seen to exist in any one of the multitude of industrial complexes. Asian women are represented in large numbers in this sector. A typical case of international trafficking was reported by the Canadian Press in November 2017. It was alleged that a woman arrived in Toronto in May 2016 for a job as receptionist, but, instead, was offered a job as masseuse in a massage parlour, because the receptionist position was no longer available. Investigators allege that she was then coerced into selling sexual services, while providing massages. Her passport was taken from her, and the accused convinced her to turn over all the money she earned to him for safekeeping. The investigators allege that she was violently choked and assaulted when she confronted the accused. The woman's passport was discovered on Oct. 19, when police executed search warrants at several locations in Toronto (CTV News, 2017).

There is a notable increase in the exploitation of Asian women across Canada. "The RCMP's 2010 threat assessment cited Montreal, Calgary, Edmonton, Ottawa, Toronto and Vancouver as cities of concern, with some women being transported between these cities and possibly to the US to engage in prostitution" (Barrett, 2013, pg. 16). It has been noted that these women were foreign nationals, as well as being Canadian citizens, and that most of these women ranged in age from 20-46 years old, unlike the Aboriginal cases (Barrett, 2013). There is also a reluctance of cooperation from Asian trafficking victims, with complex reasoning involving cultural values.

Women and children are also trafficked from Central America and South America as well as from Eastern Europe. Some of these individuals remain in Canada, while others are smuggled into the United States. An article published by NOW magazine in 2015 reported that six sex workers, who were members of Butterfly (Asian and Migrant Sex Workers Network, 2018), were arrested, detained and deported that year. In the year 2016, three Asian women were found dead in Hamilton and Mississauga areas. Like many sex workers, the women from Butterfly believe that violence against them is a direct result of anti-

prostitution laws and anti-trafficking campaigns which target Asian sex workers. “This creates a climate of fear for sex workers (and) they choose to work in locations that are less visible and with fewer safety protections” quoted from the NOW magazine article by Elene Lam from Fleur de Lit organization. (Lam, 2016).

Sex workers want to avoid contact with law enforcement. The Federal, provincial, regional and local governments have allocated millions of dollars to combat human trafficking, while at the same time, refusing to finance safety measures to protect women working in the sex industry. Much of the government funding “has been allocated to police and law enforcement to use to conduct periodic investigations and raids on sex work establishments in the name of anti- human trafficking” (Lam, 2016). These conditions encourage women to work and live in isolation and to avoid mainstream service protections. They encourage the targeting of migrant sex workers and create a climate of impunity for predators who are aware of the vulnerabilities the workers face because of their risks of deportation (Lam, 2016).

### 3.10 Girls/Women with Disabilities

Few researchers have examined sex trafficking of women with disabilities. A recent study done in the U.S. reveals a disproportionate risk for exploitation for girls with intellectual disabilities. This includes endangering circumstances which create vulnerability and the perpetrator-victim dynamics that complicate prevention and intervention. Some specific vulnerabilities include lack of awareness of exploitation on the part of the victim, the inability of victims to self-identify the exploitation, and the relative ease with which traffickers manipulate these girls and women.

Physical consequences of trafficking may include pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, bruises, lacerations and other physical injuries. Psychological consequences may include depression, anxiety, panic attacks, low self-esteem, shame and guilt, irrational fear, and loss of trust. Behavioural consequences are withdrawal, aggressiveness, self-injuries and sexually inappropriate behaviour. Intellectual Disabilities impair functioning in three domains, according to the American Psychiatric Association. (American Psychiatric Association, 2013).

Perpetrators are frequently family members, acquaintances, or persons considered as “dates”, with only 8% of perpetrators identified as strangers. Due to the higher vulnerability of individuals with

disabilities, manipulated by those they consider as friends or caregivers, several researchers coined the term “mate crime” to describe the faux – friendship strategy used by offenders to exploit those with intellectual vulnerabilities. (Reid & Joan, 2018). Typical scenarios include persons with disabilities being taken advantage of by friends, who, often turn out to be recent acquaintances. Persons with disabilities have their flats turned into crack dens; their residences are used to store stolen goods; and “women with learning disabilities are being pimped (sent to work as a prostitute) by their ‘boyfriends’”. (Grundy, 2011; Landman. 2014).

One of the strategies used by the “friend” is to move into the home of a woman with disabilities, under the pretense of being there to help. In reality, they are taking advantage of the relationship to get access to food, clothing, and drugs, or they manipulate individuals to involve and exploit them in criminal activities including sex crimes and prostitution. (Butera, 2013).

There is a common belief that women with disabilities are not sexually active. This belief increases their susceptibility to sex trafficking. For example, women with disabilities may be assumed to be virgins and therefore, targeted for sex trafficking for those seeking to buy or sell sex with a virgin (Groce, 2004; Phasha & Myaka, 2014; Reid, Huard, & Haskell, 2015).

Information is critically needed regarding the disproportionate risk for exploitation of girls and women with disabilities, the circumstances that facilitate human trafficking among this population, and the perpetrator-victim dynamics that make it difficult to develop prevention programs and deterrence services. These complex dynamics include victim lack of awareness of exploitation and its endangerments, the inability of victims to self-identify, and the ease with which the traffickers manipulate these individuals.

### 3.11 Sex trafficking and Prostitution: The Central Issue of Consent

If a woman’s consent to emigrate freely to another country often makes the legal identification of trafficking unclear, it becomes even more complex when this migratory strategy includes an independent decision to work as a prostitute in the host country. When a girl of high school age agrees to go into prostitution to increase her buying power of expensive goods, she can end up being trafficked from one place to another or from a country to the next. The relationship between prostitution and trafficking and the distinction, where it exists, between enforced and voluntary prostitution, are controversial matters. (Boaventura, Gomes & Duarte, 2010). Prostitution is engaging in sexual activity with someone by choice



for payment. Unlike sex-trafficked victims, society does not usually look favorably upon those in the business of prostitution. (Carter, 2017). Women being trafficked in the ever-growing global sex industry are recognized as "true" victims. Clearly, human trafficking is the illegal movement of people, typically for the purposes of forced labor or commercial sexual exploitation. (Carter, 2017). Rightfully so, we have waged a war on human trafficking, which is commonly seen as modern-day slavery. However, there appears to be a thin-line between the two situations: prostitution and being trafficked for sex.

### 3.12 Current Statistics on Human Trafficking

In 2014, the National Task Force on Trafficking Women and Girls in Canada collected information on sex trafficking across the country from key stakeholders that depicts a more accurate portrait of human trafficking in Canada. Information from British Columbia, Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, and Halifax has determined several trends that can be identified (Elislambouly, 2018).

### 3.13 A Move from the Street to Indoors

“The solicitation of sex for purchase has moved from the streets to behind closed doors, facilitated by internet advertising sales” (Barrett, 2013). This move is particularly concerning because it makes it more difficult for law enforcement or others to spot these victims, and facilitates the sale of younger victims (Barrett, 2013).

### 3.14 Histories of Poverty and Sexual Abuse

Trafficked women are most often economically poor, with histories of physical and sexual abuse. Many come from homes that lack positive masculine influence, which at this point, has not been generally discussed in sex trafficking literature (Barrett, 2013).

## 4 Needs/Recommendations

Minimal evidence-based research exists on the needs of victims of human trafficking, and the services that are available to them. It is significant that the health needs of this population are similar to the needs of other marginalized groups, such as migrant labourers, victims of sexual abuse or domestic violence, and victims of torture (Williamson, Dutch & Clawson, 2008). Because there is little research reported, similar populations can be examined to provide a foundation for the treatment of this population (Williamson et al., 2008).

The effects of human trafficking can result in numerous physical, emotional and mental health needs for survivors; these effects are substantial and long-term (Powell, Asbill, Louis & Stoklosa, 2017). Based on the literature, there are various needs of victims of human trafficking, and not all survivors require the same interventions. In the research, there are common needs seen among most victims of human trafficking. These include “emotional and moral support, legal assistance, safe housing, high school diploma or General Education Diploma assistance, identification documentation, job training, resume and job search assistance, medical and dental appointments, cell phone assistance, child care, transportation, safety planning, and clothing and food assistance” (Wirsing, 2012). However, this does not include everything, and new needs may arise with each client.

#### 4.1 Emotional Support

Emotional and mental health needs may be the most critical of them all, as it is the most debilitating on their everyday lives. All of the literature emphasizes that many survivors experience Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), depression, anxiety, self-hatred, dissociation, despair, and difficulty with interpersonal and intimate relationships (Williamson et al., 2008). In addition to this, survivors have been known to suffer from other mood disorders, including panic attacks, obsessive compulsive disorders, fearfulness, and hopelessness about the future (Williamson et al., 2008). In one study of over 100 trafficked women, 41.5% reported attempted suicide (Powell et al., 2017). Victims of human trafficking have often been involved in very traumatic experiences, such as extreme violence, death threats, serious injury, rape, and psychological abuse (Global Alliance Against Trafficking in Women, n.d.). Having been exposed to this type of trauma may lead to a multitude of emotional and psychological symptoms. It is, however, important to remember that not all victims experience trauma in the same way.

Many victims of human trafficking require immediate and ongoing emotional support and psychological assistance. This goes beyond focusing on the victim post-trafficking, and extends to the victim’s earlier life experiences. Many individuals who are trafficked have experienced high levels of sexual and physical violence prior to being trafficked (Hemmings et al., 2016). In a study performed by Hopper (2017), “the large majority of youth in this sample (91%) reported a history of victimization prior to the trafficking experience, including directly experiencing physical, sexual, or verbal/psychological abuse, as well as witnessing violence”. Having experienced victimization in the home, they were already vulnerable and at risk of being trafficked. This further demonstrates the need to provide adequate

emotional support to these individuals, after their escape from trafficking, as they will now have increased trauma.

Consideration needs to be given to how trauma is defined and treated in different cultures. For example, Western psychologists derive certain criteria (such as independence, self-containment, and autonomy) for psychologically healthy individuals based on a rigid normative stance, derived mostly from studies of white males. This rigid normative stance values certain cultural and gender identity formations more than others. Thus, many minorities, especially minority women, risk being defined as pathological. (Machery, 2010)

## 4.2 Physical Healthcare

Physical health needs are also of great concern to post-trafficking victims, because their activities of daily living have been affected. Children who are involved in sex trafficking may be more prone to physical illness because of their immature physical systems (Bernat & Winkeller, 2010). There are a number of physical issues associated with trafficking victims, which include headaches, stomachaches, difficulty breathing, and hair falling out, frequent colds, low blood pressure, sexually transmitted diseases, frequent urinary tract infections, and issues with bowel incontinence (Hopper, 2017). These are just some of the physical symptoms that these individuals can encounter. (Hopper, 2017) states that some of the girls reported head injuries resulting in confusion, mental slowing and other cognitive difficulties. It can be said that these symptoms may represent the body's way of experiencing psychological stress through physical symptoms, which can be associated with complex trauma (Hopper, 2017). With that said, there is an urgent need for these victims to seek medical attention to help deal with their physical issues, in addition to their emotional health.

## 4.3 Peer-to-Peer Support

There is a necessity for the victims of human trafficking to have contact with others who also have been victims of human trafficking. Often, victims are unwilling to acknowledge the trauma and exploitation they have experienced. As a result, many survivors are reluctant to seek treatment. However, when working with others who have had similar experiences, many individuals feel more at ease. A study of a group intervention for sexually exploited girls by Hickle & Roe-Sepowitz (2013) showed that discussing their experiences in a group setting with others who had been through the same type of trauma, led to a positive impact of feeling supported and validated by others. This mutual aid allowed

them to feel comfortable in opening up about their experiences and understanding that they were not alone. As well as having a group of peers to talk to, there are recommendations for a “co-facilitator, who is also a survivor of sex trafficking, as this individual will be able to build rapport, provide a sense of authenticity, and be a role model to group members” (Hickle & Roe-Sepowitz, 2013). With the use of a co-facilitator and a trained professional, this group intervention can be very effective. However, it is important to keep in mind that group intervention does not work for everyone, and individual therapy may need to be considered.

Peer-to-peer support has a positive influence on the recovery of human trafficking victims. As little research has been done on the effects of trafficking on victims, there are not many peer support groups available. One organization held weekly group counselling sessions specifically for women from Southeast Asia, and this meeting allowed women to connect with one other, eventually referring to each other as family (Global Alliance against Trafficking in Women, n.d.). In U.S. Hickle and Roe-Sepowitz (2013), describe a pilot group intervention created for domestic minor sex trafficking victims. This group intervention revealed that being in a group setting with peers who had the same experiences made the participants feel open and comfortable, and they were able to come to terms with their experiences and reduce stigma, allowing them to accept and seek treatment (Hickle & Sepowitz, 2013).

There are also peer-to-peer services available through *Girls Educational Mentoring Services (GEMS)*, a strength-based leadership program which enables women empowerment (Lloyd, n.d). Peer support groups have been proven to provide many therapeutic benefits, as they help to re-build self-confidence and address feelings of isolation (Global Alliance Against Trafficking in Women n.d).

#### 4.4 Family Support

Involving the family in helping victims post-trafficking is an important need, as family members can be a great support system for them. However, many family members may not have a full understanding of human trafficking, and this can cause the family to place a stigma on the victim, causing them to feel embarrassed or ashamed. Therefore, it is important to include the family so that they can identify this situation as abuse and as a crime, rather than blaming their family member (Global Alliance Against Trafficking in Women, n.d.).

## 4.5 Therapeutic Supports

Considering the number of human trafficking survivors suffering from PTSD and other mood and anxiety disorders, there are several therapeutic supports that have been found to be successful in managing the psychological consequences of human trafficking; the most prominent of these therapies being behavioural, cognitive and psychodynamic. Each of these therapies has a positive influence on the patient's behaviours and feelings by altering how the patients understand their experiences (Williamson et al., 2008). Additional therapies include eye movement desensitization and reprocessing, stress inoculation training and exposure therapy (Williamson et al., 2008). Cognitive-behavioural therapy, exposure therapy and stress inoculation training, in particular, have been successful in preventing the development of PTSD when used with female victims of sexual violence.

Additional types of therapy that have proven to be successful are yoga, art therapy, aromatherapy, animal assisted therapy, mindfulness, and breathing techniques. These therapies had a general outcome of an increase in characteristics such as hope, and increased self-awareness, and a decrease in trauma-related symptoms including anxiety and dissociation (Polaris, 2015).

## 4.6 Employment and Reintegration Services

Many of these individuals may lack the skills necessary to obtain jobs and achieve economic stability after escaping trafficking. In many cases, clients do not receive the full array of the integration services they need, such as assistance in finding and maintaining employment, finding affordable and long-term housing, and help with citizenship status (Powell et al., 2017). Resolving these basic necessities will increase the likelihood of consistent use of services, but without them, some of these individuals will end up back in the trafficking system. Providing ways for victims to have access to services is critical in ensuring that clients continue their care and pursue a healthy path to recovery.

A study by the *Standing Against Global Exploitation Everywhere* (SAGE) project states that many of these people need legal services as well as assistance with benefits (Gibbs, Walters, Lutnick, Miller & Kluckman, 2015). According to researchers, one of the gaps in service provision to victims of human trafficking are inconsistent screening practices (Hemmings et al., 2016). In order to effectively treat these individuals, it is important to be able to identify them, especially in health care settings. Most victims of human trafficking experience complex trauma, and this factor should be considered when developing a screening tool. The services that are currently available are as follows:

## 4.7 Housing Services

Victims of sex trafficking are often offered apartments or rooms to live in while they work for their pimps, which makes escaping the trade rather difficult, due to fear of homelessness and feelings of dependency on their pimps. This is where housing services provide care and protection to these women during vulnerable times. Surveys provided to fourteen different agencies that work with sex trafficking victims in California showed that housing was the biggest need, “with 43% of the respondents indicating this as a specific need for the victims.” Safe housing services give women an opportunity to start fresh, repair their damaged emotional, mental, and physical health through counselling, as well as having a support system to help them find stable employment. This inevitably decreases the chances of their returning to the sex trade.

Unfortunately, as of now, housing services for human trafficking victims remain scarce in Canada, and the services available are inadequate, which further strengthens the sex trade. Some of the major issues with current housing services are the ‘male-centered’ housing models which enforce strict curfews, the lack of emotional support towards women’s healing, and failure to provide resources for women to find employment (Chettiar, Deering, Lazarus, Nabess & Shannon, 2011). These flaws can contribute to women back peddling into exploitation.

## 4.8 Medical Service Screening Tools

One of the main issues for medical services, including emergency department and other hospital services, is the lack of personal skills to identify survivors of human trafficking at the point of care, and provide them with adequate services, including appropriate referral and follow up. In the U.S., several screening tools for healthcare professionals have been proposed. A recent study in the U.S. examined the effectiveness of screening tools in emergency departments to identify victims of sex trafficking. The study also compared the sensitivity to the issue of emergency physicians and determined the most effective questions for identifying adult victims of sex trafficking. The conclusion of this study is that identifying victims of sex trafficking through a single questionnaire may be sufficient to recognize all adult victims of sex trafficking (Mumma, Scofield, Mendoza, Toofan, Youngunpipatkul & Hernandez, 2017).

## 4.9 Rehabilitation and Substance Abuse Services

Those patients suffering from substance abuse will need therapeutic supports as well. It is important to not only address the substance abuse itself, but also the underlying trauma that caused the substance abuse, or the treatment is not likely to be effective (Williamson et al., 2008). Other services available, as stated by the Department of Justice Canada (n.d), include community service agencies, detox programs and treatment centres, hospital services, and housing. Combining trauma and substance abuse treatment are recommended as they are mutually exclusive. (Covington S. 2008).

### 4.10 Services for Men

There is a lack of services available for men, and this is often because of the assumption that men do not seek psychological help, because of the stigma of showing emotions. This represents a large area of unmet needs, because “Men who have been trafficked have similar mental health problems and needs as trafficked women” (Global Alliance Against Trafficking in Women, n.d.). As the needs are similar for both men and women, it is important that there are services available equally to all.

### 4.11 Proximity of Services

While there are some services available, there are not many, and they are often spread over large areas. This forces clients to have to travel long distances, and without their own means of transportation, this might mean long rides on public transportation (Powell et al., 2017). Some victims stated that they were forced to move back to the same area where the trafficking took place, and this meant that they ran into their traffickers. When this happens, clients no longer attend their appointments and no longer receive treatment. Therefore, the location, number, and proximity of available services is crucial for maintenance of treatment.

### 4.12 Why Services are Not Used

Victims’ needs are not met partially due to lack of availability of services, but also due to a reluctance to use them. Many young people choose not to use these services for fear of being reported, based on prior maltreatment or their current trafficking engagement, especially for women with children due to apprehension issues (Gibbs et al., 2015). A variety of projects were evaluated such as SAGE, STOP-IT and Street work, and the median length of time during which participants engaged in these services ranged from 65 days, 117 days, and 15 days respectively. It was noted that the reason for clients to discontinue services was the absence of other means to meet survival needs (Gibbs et al., 2015). This

demonstrates that these victims do not feel safe to come forward and seek help, for fear of being reported. They need assistance to see themselves as victims of crime rather than targets of blame.

#### 4.13 What Services are Lacking?

While there are effective services available, there are still aspects of these services that need to be improved upon. Powell et al. (2017) stated that if there was no Case Manager or main point of contact, the client did not receive the full range of services that were available, due to miscommunication or poor coordination (pg. 4). In addition, there is a shortage of mental health professionals who are trained to address the unique needs of human trafficking survivors. When not properly trained, the treatment can be ineffective or even cause more harm (Williamson et al., 2008).

There is also a lack of evidence-based trauma treatment that works with this population. Researchers need to move beyond anecdotal stories to produce more studies with rigorous designs and methodologies (Powell, Dickins & Stoklosa, 2017). Further trauma-informed healthcare is needed to care for victims of human trafficking. This care must be culturally sensitive in order to meet particular needs (Hemmings et.al. 2016).

It is important to mention that aboriginal women, women from other countries, women with disabilities and vulnerable women, in general, may have unique needs that may require culturally appropriate services for them. There is a need in the VAW field in general and particularly in human trafficking to move beyond obtaining anecdotal feedback to conducting effective evaluations to advance learning (CREVAWC, 2011). Services should be evaluated so that they are evidence based.

For example, the review of the eleven trainings for service providers working in the field of human trafficking in the United States found that very few projects contained evaluative components, and even fewer conducted impact evaluation (Powell, Dickins & Stoklosa, 2017).

Other considerations include a lack of gender sensitive language and culture specific services for clients. This can change how survivors respond to this care and could see this as a barrier (Powell et al., 2017). There needs to be cultural consideration regarding referrals to counselling, as victims come from many different cultures, and we cannot assume that women or men from all cultures would respond to counselling. Many victims from developing countries may not necessarily go to counselling (Yakusho, 2009):



Western approaches, such as counselling, may not be appropriate for this client group [43]. In qualitative work by Aron et al. [39], victims described wanting other services, outside of one-to-one therapy, to address their emotional needs such as acupuncture. Victims described their experiences of one-to-one therapy as often shameful and blaming, and they found that western-style talk therapy did not always resonate with their cultural backgrounds (Hemmings et al., 2016, pg. 5)

As stated by (Hickle & Roe-Sepowitz, 2014), there is a need for the development of residential treatment centers, group homes, foster care agencies and homeless and runaway youth shelters that can help victims in their transitional period to recovery (p. 5).

#### 4.14 Training and Evaluation

The Canadian Government policy and practices surrounding human trafficking, since the adoption of the United Nations (UN) Protocol on Trafficking in 2000, have focused on the three key areas of the Protocol: prevention of human trafficking, protection of trafficking victims, and the prosecution of traffickers. (Martinez, Hanley, & Gomez, 2005). The Canadian government has already invested substantial resources in these areas, and progress has been made in Canadian responses. However, there are still challenges that need to be overcome. A missing approach in the overall strategy is the introduction of training that focuses on the trauma experience of survivors. This would shift the current focus away from that of crime and security, and would place more importance on the protection and promotion of the human rights of trafficking victims.

The emotional, social and health consequences of human trafficking bring survivors into contact not only with the police and judicial system, but also with health and social services systems and providers, thus providing the potential for identification and intervention. A robust social and healthcare system response, however, requires a workforce that is aware of the health and social impact of this issue; educated about how to identify and treat affected individuals in a compassionate, culturally aware, and trauma-informed manner; and trained about how to collaborate efficiently with law enforcement, case management, and advocacy partners.

There are on-line trainings and other trainings described in the literature regarding human trafficking, designed for a social health care audience. Most of them differ substantially in format, length, scope, and intended audience. Topic areas covered by these resources include trafficking definitions and scope, health consequences, victim identification, appropriate treatment, referral to services, legal issues, and security. None of the educational resources have been rigorously evaluated. There is a clear need to develop, implement, and evaluate high-quality education and training programs that focus on human trafficking for healthcare providers (Ahn et al., 2012).

Sexual Assault/Rape Crisis Centre of Peel received a grant from the Ministry of the Attorney General to develop an interactive CD/DVD manual that was distributed in Peel to train people on identifying victims of human trafficking. The manual was named “Breaking the Chains of Human Trafficking — Linking Community Support in Peel”. The manual was distributed to settlement agencies, police, hospitals, victims’ service groups and other organizations. (Brampton Guardian. 2012), (Mississauga News, 2012). One other training have been developed and implemented in the Region of Peel in recent years.

Peel Human Trafficking Service Providers Committee launched a new Human Trafficking Protocol for Peel region. This committee, which is chaired by Peel Regional Police, is comprised of more than 22 community, police and medical service providers. Peel Police has been training services providers in the application of the protocol with the aim of raising awareness and increasing knowledge of specialized support services available to victims in Peel. (Peel Regional Police, 2016). Peel Police also offered a Human Trafficking Training of Trainers to communities and services providers.

## Conclusion

This review applied a theory of change, which asserts that women’s rights are human rights and that progressive changes happen when diverse and independent women’s movements have vision, strength, resilience and collective power. There is a growing need to analyse the effect of the feminization of poverty and the impact it has on human trafficking and prostitution.

Services, programs, training, policies and other resources are still in the process of building survivor’s resilience into the development and implementation of resources. There is still insufficient

information and a lack of understanding that survivors will never be the same after the trauma and distressing experience. What triggers their reactions? How do they relate to males after the trafficking end? Every transformational journey is unique, but heroic survivors have two things in common. First, they integrate the traumatic experience into their public identities and make the experience a defining part of their life stories. Second, they talk or write about it in a way that has an inspiring effect on others.

We still need to learn the way in which survivors can leave the sex industry, and how we can effectively support women who want to move on. The Government of Canada has developed and implemented its tools for the prosecution of traffickers, thereby responding to most of the prosecution recommendations of the UN Protocol 2000. Different government agencies are also coordinating their efforts to implement prevention projects, both in policy development and collaborations. However, the more structural elements of prevention have yet to be adequately sourced, including awareness-raising campaigns, education campaigns, and training.

While trafficking in persons has become a worldwide concern, current data collection activities reveal many shortcomings: Data are limited in scope, incomparable and insufficient to ascertain the true extent of the problem in Canada.

Overall, there are significant unmet needs of this population, and a lack of evidence-based research to focus on the main issues associated with this type of trauma. We still lack a meaningful collection of data. Data is necessary to develop evidence-based prevention, services and programs.

There are different views on what constitutes trafficking, and those working in the field usually walk the fine-line of language and definitions that apply to human trafficking and prostitution. There are divisive tensions between the view of a sex worker as a victim of human trafficking and those who view sex trade as legitimate work that needs protection. Early identification of human trafficking survivors is needed. The development of trauma screening tools should be of great assistance to professionals who are working in human trafficking.

There are a variety of services available, but not nearly enough to facilitate recovery for a larger number of human trafficking survivors. It is important that services are multidimensional, such as treating addiction and trauma, when needed. For example, there should be no wait times for essential services, as women will be more tempted to go back into the industry. Additionally, all services need to be mobile and available at the place that is geographically close to survivors. Travelling long distance to

receive services is not an option for women who are trafficked. This leaves room for further research, **especially with survivors themselves**. Overall, the services found to be most effective regarding treatment of this population are peer-to-peer support, physical health support, and reintegration services. Strategies for housing services need to be developed, considering the particular needs of this population. Services and programs should be mobile to reach a population which is transient. Conducting further research will determine ways to better implement strategies to serve victims and survivors of human trafficking. An area which needs further development is education and awareness training for professionals and the general public. Online training and other modalities of training that have been developed do not all have proper evaluation processes attached to them. There is a great need to develop evaluations, which measure impact.

As the executive director of United Nations Women said we are all better off when we open our hearts and resources to one of the most vulnerable sectors of our population, the girls and women who end up in human trafficking.

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