



UNDER **The Radar**
The Sexual Exploitation of Young Men

British Columbia Edition

Under the Radar: The Sexual Exploitation of Young Men- British Columbia
Edition

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Table of Contents

PREFACE	5
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	8
DEDICATION	9
THE RESEARCHER	11
FOREWORD	13
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	16
SECTION 1: IMPETUS & METHODOLOGY OF THE RESEARCH	22
1.1 IMPETUS FOR THE RESEARCH	22
1.2 PROCESS	23
1.3 METHODOLOGY	24
1.4 TRAINING	25
1.5 INTERVIEWS	26
SECTION 2: DEMOGRAPHICS & HISTORICAL BACKGROUND	27
2.1 ABORIGINAL HERITAGE	27
2.2 CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES	28
2.3 EDUCATION	29
2.4 RUN AWAY	29
2.5 THROWN OUT	32
2.6 SEXUAL & PHYSICAL VIOLATION	32
2.7 WITNESSING AGGRESSION WHILE GROWING UP	35
2.8 POLICE INVOLVEMENT	36
2.9 SELF-HARM	36
SECTION 3: WORK LIFE/HUSTLING	37
3.1 ENTERING	37
3.2 INTRODUCTION TO HUSTLING/WORKING	38
3.3 AGE BEGINNING HUSTLING/WORKING	40
3.4 TIME HUSTLING/WORKING	42
3.5 WORK LOCATIONS	43
3.6 SHELTER STAYS	44
3.7 FEELINGS WHILE WORKING AND AFTER	45
3.8 FAMILY RELATIONS	48
3.9 FEMALE CUSTOMERS	49
3.10 WHY MEN BUY SEX	50
3.11 TELL SOMEONE ENTERING	51
SECTION 4: STAYING	53
4.1 STAYING IN	53
4.2 GAY BASHING	53
4.3 WORST DATE	54
4.4 FEAR THE MOST	55
4.5 THOUGHTS WHEN HUSTLING/WORKING	57
4.6 THOUGHTS WHEN NOT HUSTLING/WORKING	58
4.7 REFUSING A DATE	58
4.8 WORKING SAFELY	59
4.9 GETTING PAID	60
4.10 SUGAR DADDY	61
4.11 TYPES OF HUSTLING/WORK ACTIVITIES	63
4.12 HUSTLING/WORKING & DRUGS	63

4.13	OTHER JOBS	64
4.14	CHARGED	65
4.15	VARIOUS CITIES	65
4.16	SEXUAL ORIENTATION WHEN HUSTLING/WORKING	66
4.17	SEXUAL ORIENTATION WHEN NOT HUSTLING/WORKING	70
4.18	WHY PEOPLE STAY HUSTLING/WORKING	70
4.19	SERVICES YOU WISH EXISTED	72
SECTION 5: ATTEMPTS AT EXITING		74
5.1	LEAVING	74
5.2	BEST THING NOT HUSTLING/WORKING	75
5.3	RETURNING	76
5.4	STRESS.....	77
5.5	PROBLEMS SLEEPING.....	77
5.6	FLASHBACKS	78
5.7	ANGER.....	78
5.8	OTHER WORK	78
5.9	MESSAGES FOR SERVICE PROVIDERS.....	79
5.10	STORY OF 10 WHO EXITED.....	81
SECTION 6: HEALTH ISSUES.....		84
6.1	HEALTH CARE WORKERS AWARE OF HUSTLING/WORKING	85
6.2	TESTING FOR HIV / STD'S	86
6.3	FREQUENCY HIV / STD TESTING	86
6.4	CONDOM USE HUSTLING/WORKING	87
6.5	CONDOM USE IN PERSONAL LIFE	89
SECTION 7: DISCOVERIES		92
SECTION 8: CONCLUDING DISCUSSION & RECOMMENDATIONS		100
APPENDIX 1: STROLLING AWAY & UNDER THE RADAR.....		118
APPENDIX 2: THOSE WHO ENTERED OVER AGE OF 18.....		119
APPENDIX 3: MALE SEX TRADE WORKER EXIT PROGRAM.....		120
GLOSSARY.....		121
BIBLIOGRAPHY		126

Preface

Over the past 15 years, much of my research has been focused on young people involved in the sexual exploitation trade. This academic research extends primarily through three interconnected pieces of work.

The first piece of interviewing took place in 1991-1992, and was released as my PhD dissertation in 1994 entitled *The Youngest Profession the Oldest Oppression*. During that time, I interviewed 50 young people in Calgary. This involved 41 females and nine males, 25% of which were Aboriginal. This research found 82% of this population had experienced sexual abuse prior to their entrance into the sexual exploitation trade. It also demonstrated professionals had both ignored and failed to recognize the abuse this population had experienced prior to their entrance into the trade. In fact, many had failed to act while young people were being sexually exploited in front of them. Given this failure to intervene, it was in fact a form of state-supported sexual abuse. In the end, this research resulted in raising both social and political attention in The City of Calgary and The Province of Alberta.

Over time, I observed the growing acceptance of youth involved in prostitution as a form of sexual abuse. I watched The City of Calgary and The Province of Alberta embrace this paradigm shift, subsequently resulting in policy, legislative and program changes. This paradigm shift slowly spread across the country as the term 'youth prostitution' was replaced by the term 'sexual exploitation.' Today these two terms are used interchangeably.

The second piece of research was initiated by two former youths I had interviewed in 1991-1992, who challenged me to revisit the same questions I had originally asked them 10 years earlier in order to see what had and hadn't worked.

I took the challenge, and in 2002 a retrospective longitudinal study titled *Strolling Away* was released.

At that point, I had accounted for and interviewed 38 of the original 50 people I had interviewed 10 years previously. Some of the women had worked in the United States: primarily Las Vegas, California or Hawaii. Two women from this group ended up working in Japan for up to six months and found it difficult to escape back home. The men seemed to work primarily throughout Canada.

In this study, I learned both young women and men could survive this experience; however, the painful scarring remains. We also learned that for young women, the value of producing a child, or the desire to produce children, brings with it both family and state support. Eighty-two percent of women from this study had in fact produced children. On the contrary, the physical birthing of a child was not an option available to young men. From our small sample of young men, we learned they enter the trade younger and stay twice as long. Childbirth was not a viable opportunity to exit for young men as it is for young women. We also learned through interviewing the same men 10 years later that we tend to view sexual exploitation of children through a female lens only. Young men inquired as to why we still asked them questions from a 'chick perspective'.

This second piece of research made it apparent that we as professionals and as a society knew very little about young men entering the sexual exploitation trade. Why and how do they enter? How do they work? How long do they stay? What is the lifestyle? How do they exit?

This lack of knowledge was the impetus to begin the following connected piece of work entitled *Under the Radar: The Sexual Exploitation of Young Men*. It was apparent that looking at only one geographic site would be unfair. The long-term plan is to examine independently the provinces of Alberta, British Columbia,

Saskatchewan and Manitoba. The Alberta report was released in June 2005. This current report examines British Columbia. Plans are to release the reports from Saskatchewan and Manitoba in early spring of 2007. We also plan to release a Western Canadian report summarizing and comparing similarities and differences of each of these Western Provinces in the fall of 2007.

This research aims to answer some important questions. Hopefully in doing so, we will be better able to assist younger men by providing specialized support services in order to help them live safe, healthy, meaningful lives.

Acknowledgements

This research was made possible with the support and energy of Covenant House Vancouver who provided guidance through many stages of this project, as well as many individuals, anonymous donors, the National Crime Prevention Centre, The Province of British Columbia Ministries of: Children and Family Development, Community Services, Education and Public Safety and the Solicitor General.

In addition, the following organizations provided invaluable support, direction, and information:

- AIDS, Vancouver Island
- PEERS, Vancouver
- PEERS, Victoria
- Saanich Police, Vancouver Island
- Gathering Place, Vancouver
- Boys R' Us, Vancouver
- John Howard Society, Lower Mainland
- Vancouver Vice Police, Vancouver

Dedication

This project is dedicated to those young men who encouraged me to listen to their very compelling personal stories. They challenged my previous research as being too “chick focused”, believing there was an imbalance to looking at the issue of sexual exploitation of children solely through a female lens. This was a fact I had to face up to and address. It was this challenge that drove my determination to have an independent story told of the sexual exploitation of young men.

Thank you Fadi, Pytor and Zac who gave freely of their time to make sure this material moved toward a male perspective. You have created a lens for the voices of sexually exploited males to be heard.

To the Alberta Youth In Care and Custody Network who ensured the language of the questionnaires were youth friendly.

To Sandy Cooke, Laurie Hearty, and Dan Biggs who supported me throughout the project. To Yvonne Andrews and Teri Basi who worked endless hours on coordinating the project in Vancouver and Vancouver Island. To Yvonne and Anna Marie who provided the essential task of transcribing and formatting of material for analysis.

To all of the Research Assistants who embraced the value and need for such a study: Amanda, Melanie, Lauren, Mykie, David, and Rick. They provided the energy, time and commitment to interviewing this population in both Vancouver and Victoria.

To the 40 young men in British Columbia (2004-2005) who took the time to share their stories with the five Research Assistants, thank you for your time and honesty.

Finally, to the spirit of Ms. Adventure who continues to inspire and motivate my personal commitment towards helping sexually exploited youth.

The Researcher

With over 20 years experience in the non-profit, public and private sectors, Dr. Sue McIntyre has developed a unique set of skills and expertise.

As a scholar and educator, Dr. Sue McIntyre is well recognized for her expertise in the areas of child sexual abuse and prostitution. She has made over 100 workshop presentations and keynote addresses to provincial, national and international conferences.

As an international research and policy advisor, Dr. McIntyre appreciates the relationship between research, the law and social policy in the development of social programs.

As a social service practitioner, she has combined her human service background with entrepreneurial business flair. She clearly understands the social sector's challenge to meet mission goals, and helps them integrate mainstream business practices and accountability into their daily operations.

As a leader in effecting organizational change and development, she has established a strong track record in identifying and meeting the needs of an organization.

As a fundraiser, her ability to provide an analytical, business approach towards matching a company's community interests to high priority social issues have earned her the respect of Calgary's foundations and corporate sector.

Her broad fundraising experience includes approving foundation grants, applying for foundation grants and securing sponsorship from numerous leading national and international corporations.

As an entrepreneur, she was responsible for the start-up of 25 operations in both the private and public sectors, guiding them from concept through to the stages of implementation and evaluation. Her pioneering work in designing a management service to partner the expertise of Calgary's corporate community with non-profit organizations was just one example of her work in this regard.

As a community volunteer, Dr. McIntyre has proven her personal commitment time and again. As a strong community advocate, she has co-chaired numerous volunteer committees and task forces involving justice, social services, health services and education.

As a professional who has devoted much of her life to helping sexually exploited youth, Dr. McIntyre's commitment to helping us better understand the sexual exploitation of young men is commendable. This important body of research is long overdue.

Foreword

When looking at the issue of sexual exploitation of young men, it is important to hear the voice of an experiential youth firsthand. As a result, the following foreword was prepared by a male youth with experience in the sexual exploitation trade.

What about the boys? This is a question I have asked myself many times over the years. I spent 15 years in the trade. I was 14 when I met a man of fifty-six in a washroom. He offered me \$60 for a sexual favour. I took it. It was at a vulnerable time in my life. My home life was unstable to say the least. It was all about survival at this time in my life and I would have gone to any length for that freedom or perceived freedom. I was young and very impressionable.

I have been out of the trade for a year and half now. There are days that the street still calls my name. It took me many years to come to that place where I was totally spent. I could no longer act. I was starting to harden and entertain homicidal thoughts towards my customers. Sometimes, getting out of the trade seemed impossible. Fear and insecurity drove me back into the trade several times.

When I left the trade, I left behind security. I had built this life around using my body. That's all I ever knew. If I needed something, I used my body. I didn't know I was messed up until I tried get out. I felt trapped in silence. I was full of shame and there was so much I just didn't understand. I have had service providers say to me "What's the big deal? You're gay anyways". The big deal is none of us likes compromising ourselves for someone else's sexual gratification.

There are so many misconceptions about us. The first one I would like to clear up is that we are not all gay. In fact, in my 15 years I have met more straight hustlers than gay. I have listened to their pain and the struggles of the straight boys.

They live in even more isolation than the gay population. A lot of them come out of the trade very angry and confused. Service providers must work through any homophobia they have. This is everybody's issue. Boys are being exploited. We must respect their sexual identity and not force our own beliefs upon them.

After 11 years in the trade, I became a drug addict. The drugs drove my next four years before I got out. Mentally and emotionally this life wears you down. In order to continue I needed, and many others needed to numb, or we would have hung ourselves like many others did. We're not all drug addicted, but it is safe to say the longer one is in the trade, the more likely this will become one's reality. Given the right services, many would have been spared this fate. We have to get to this population when they are young. Before they cross over into addiction. Many lives have been taken over and snuffed out by drugs.

I know many of you have worked with us and many more have tried. I thank you and now ask you to break your silence and come forward. We need your voices. I have met hundreds of hustlers over the years. It is a real shame this population has been virtually ignored. What is the problem? Are we too uncomfortable talking about our boys and old men? Our boys are getting in the trade so young. There are these men out there grooming our boys into a lifestyle. I hate to say lifestyle, but that's what it becomes.

It's time for all of us to come together so we can understand this population. We need to break the silence, come out of isolation and be heard. We need to hold these men accountable for exploiting our boys. I understand the complexities of hitting the demand side of things; however, an attempt needs to be made. We are holding the men on the female side of things accountable. Once again, I ask myself, "what about the boys?" We can no longer sit back and allow this to continue. These men are stealing our sons' innocence. They are preying upon our boys at a very vulnerable time in their lives. Many of these boys are simply driven by survival.

Government must come forward and make the funds available so services can be designed for these men who are in the trade. Governments must understand that although this is a small population, it is a population that has flown under the radar for far too long. Now many lives have been lost as a direct result of not having the proper services in place. It's sad to say, but if it's not in the public interest, it's not always in the government's interest.

Please believe me when I say we can no longer afford not to educate ourselves. It is a real shame that it's now 2005 and this research is just now coming out. I am so grateful to Sue for undertaking this issue. It is not an easy one to take on. I believe anyone who takes a stance on this issue has a lot of courage. I know first-hand the resistance to this topic. I have felt homophobic attitudes. I have heard the close-minded opinions. I have done my research. It is sad to say there is very little substance out there. *Under the Radar* is an awesome research project. I would like to thank Sue for validating us. I feel like change is in the air and I feel a lot less isolated than I did before I got a chance to read the data. We can start saving lives today. Please react to this research. Please talk about it. I want to leave you with one question-- What about the boys?

Executive Summary

In December of 2002, *Strolling Away* was released. *Strolling Away* represented a longitudinal retrospective study that examined young people from the sexual exploitation trade in 1991-1992 and then again in 2001-2002. The opportunity to interview individuals 10 years later was valuable.

One of its major findings was that we know very little about young men involved in the sexual exploitation trade. The young men I interviewed commented on how my questions were “chick questions”. It was clear that we have traditionally looked at this issue through a female lens. It became evident through this study that more research was required in order to understand young men in the sexual exploitation trade.

Interviews for *Under the Radar: The Sexual Exploitation of Young Men - British Columbia Edition* began in April 2004 and wrapped up in March 2005. Forty young men were interviewed in total. Twenty-four interviews occurred in Vancouver and 16 in Victoria.

Characteristics of Respondents

- 43% of this population are of Aboriginal heritage
- Half had involvement with child welfare services
- Close to 50% had completed high school
- 88% had a history of running away
- 78% had a history prior to the street of being sexually violated
- Over three-quarters had been physically violated and witnessed aggression while growing up
- 63% entered the trade under the age of 18 years of age
- 15% entered the trade over the age of 20 years of age
- Males enter the trade younger and stay longer than young women

- 70% experienced staying in shelters
- Almost everyone felt no one should do this type of work
- The fear of gay-bashing exists
- Drug use is extensive
- Exiting the trade is a long process, usually attempted more than once
- Almost everyone has, and does, access HIV / STD testing

Summary of Discoveries

- Young men have comparable histories of sexual and physical abuse to young women
- Young men in this study were gay, heterosexual and bisexual
- Young men create a construct to be able to achieve a level of performance
- The issue of young men in the sexual exploitation trade creates a sense of discomfort
- Young men begin younger and work longer
- A significant portion enter the trade over the age of 18
- Young men fly under the radar of service providers
- Young men have unique service needs different from young women
- Public education on condom use and HIV testing has worked
- The connection between the street and drug use is longer and greater in the variety of drugs for young men
- These young men have strained and distant relationships with their family
- Running away often triggers an entrance into the sexual exploitation trade

Summary Recommendations

1. Efforts should be directed towards supporting the future expansion of this study to other provinces. Upon completion of the four western provinces, those being British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba,

a report should be developed outlining the differences and similarities in Western Canada. Ontario, Quebec and Nova Scotia should be considered as future sites in order to allow for national, eastern, central and western perspectives. This population tends to be rather transient so the opportunity to gain a national perspective as well as regional differences will be of assistance.

2. A need exists for Outreach Programs to gain an exemption, relaxation to Safe Care legislation authorizing involuntary intervention if it becomes a reality. Often outreach programs offer the only lifeline of support for youth involved in the sexual exploitation trade.
3. That we publicly acknowledge both young men and women are being exploited in the sexual exploitation trade, and that we provide services to help them exit.
4. That staff working with young men in the sexual exploitation trade be provided with gender non-conformity training.
5. That service providers create the opportunity for young men in and out of the sexual exploitation trade to tell service providers about the services they require. We should not assume that one service will fit all.
6. That a series of detox and rehabilitation beds be established for young men exiting the trade. Years of extensive drug consumption requires an intervention that will provide them with temporary accommodation while detoxification and rehabilitation takes place.
7. That safe affordable accommodation is provided for this population once they have completed drug detoxification and rehabilitation. This population requires safe, supportive living arrangements.

Coupled with this, they need help seeking alternative employment. Close to half of this population had completed high school and some college and university; however, they have limited employment skills and experience. Standard employment assistance programs will be required to assist them in supporting a successful exit from the sexual exploitation trade.

8. That we approach the issue of demand, that being customers, with an equal balance for both young men and women who are being sexually exploited. Like women, these men are young people who are in need of our assistance.
9. That prevention information is directed towards both young men and women. We need to provide information that both young men and women in the sexual exploitation trade experienced sexual abuse in their part. We should support, not ridicule them.
10. That the community-at-large recognize the damaging effects of sugar daddy relationships on this young and vulnerable population. In addition, an awareness of the economic disadvantages facing young males involved in the trade must be taken into account and considered as a symptom of the differential power relationship existent in sugar daddy relationships.
11. Develop mentoring connections for the population who are exiting. A need exists for those exiting to have support from those who have exited. An experiential voice can assist an individual who is in the process of exiting the sexual exploitation trade. There are many questions, and those who have been through such a journey can better answer challenges facing those who are exiting.

This type of service could be set up in a formal structure through an agency that works with this population or informally within the volunteer community network. This network could be set up in formal face to face meetings, telephone or online support.

- 12.** A review of prevention, intervention and re-integration materials be completed and adjusted to speak to the sexual exploitation of youth regardless of gender. Materials must recognize the differences facing young women and men in the sexual exploitation trade. Education for both genders needs to be covered in these materials, emphasizing that the trade is a risk for both genders.
- 13.** That an evaluation occurs of harm reduction approaches such as distributing bad date sheets, mobile support services to sexually exploited youth. The opportunity exists to move into a more direct approach to intervention. The ultimate goal must always remain moving someone out of the trade.
- 14.** That the National Youth In Care Network embrace the topic of sexual awareness. There is a need to ensure that youth from care have the same knowledge base as the general youth population. This information could be delivered through DVD, booklets or lectures.
- 15.** That we develop and pay closer attention to youth who are running away. We need to recognize this as the early warning system for possible entrance into the sexual exploitation trade for both genders. For youth, service providers and professionals, the opportunity to successfully support and stabilize a situation is more likely to occur prior to years of abuse and drug use on the street.

Introduction

Throughout 1991-1992, I researched the sexual exploitation trade in downtown Calgary. My goal was to observe and interact with this population in order to investigate the relationship of sexual abuse with a person's involvement in the trade. Fifty young people were interviewed as part of this study which was titled *The Youngest Profession, The Oldest Oppression*.

In 2000, with the realization that retrospective, longitudinal information on prostitution did not exist anywhere in Canada or the world, I made the decision to track as many participants from this original population to determine if they were still involved in the trade or not. In December 2002, this body of research was released, titled *Strolling Away*. This document included interviews that accounted for 38 of the original 50 people interviewed in 1991-1992.

During *Strolling Away* it became clear to me that males face very different challenges than females. It is my belief that for many years this social issue was examined through a female lens. Through *Strolling Away* it was discovered that there are differences. For example, males enter the sexual exploitation trade younger and stay longer.

My personal and professional interest in wanting to know more about this population and how we can better assist them initiated *Under the Radar: The Sexual Exploitation of Young Men - British Columbia Edition*. Hopefully the following body of research will bring this issue out from under the radar to something we as a community can address proactively and effectively in the future.

Section 1: Impetus & Methodology of the Research

1.1 Impetus for the research

Is there a difference between young men and women who enter into the sexual exploitation trade?

Since the early 1980's, I have been interviewing and working with young men and women involved in the sexual exploitation trade. Over that time, I have slowly been forced to recognize there are differences between men and women involved in this trade. In fact, for many years, this issue has been examined through a female lens only.

Often when I speak publicly about my research, *The Youngest Profession*, *The Oldest Oppression* (McIntyre 1994) and *Strolling Away* (McIntyre 2002), people would say “those poor young women”. While this is true, for the past 13 years I have always had to remind people that this sample includes men as well.

Following the completion and release of *Strolling Away* (2002), it was obvious that a study pertaining to males was needed. *Strolling Away* recommended the male study. The Alberta Government along with a series of anonymous donors recognized the need to understand this social issue from a male perspective and saw the need to further balance the scales by recognizing both young women and men are sexually exploited. This study was released early in 2005, entitled *Under the Radar: The Sexual Exploitation of Young Men*.

The momentum to address this issue has now gone into British Columbia, spearheaded by the Federal Government's National Crime Prevention Centre,

The Government of British Columbia and anonymous donors. I am happy to say similar research will soon be completed in Saskatchewan and Manitoba as well.

The goal of the work in British Columbia, and the additional provincial studies to come, is to impact youth involved in sex work at the levels of prevention, intervention and (re)integration. To do this effectively, there is a need to have a clear understanding of the unique differences of often-ignored males involved in the sexual exploitation trade.

While antecedents contributing towards entering and leaving the sexual exploitation trade are similar for both genders, certain unique differences occur in the following areas:

- Entering the trade
- Styles of work
- Location of work
- Risk factors
- Patterns of work
- Duration
- Exiting the trade
- Program requirements
- Law enforcement
- Social service intervention
- Health services

1.2 Process

Grounded Theory and feminist research principles were used in the design of the *Under the Radar: The Sexual Exploitation of Young Men* research. The specific interview instrument was designed and reviewed in conjunction with three young men formerly involved in the sexual exploitation trade.

1.3 Methodology

Grounded Theory and feminist research principles were also used in designing the research methodology.

I used the combined inductive approach of Grounded Theory and a Feminist methodology to be complementary. Grounded Theory allowed the opportunity for immersion into the sex worker's life, and the Feminist methodology insisted upon face to face interviews, recognizing this would have a direct impact upon the researcher. (McIntyre 1994:6)

The first step for me was to finalize the questionnaire. I worked with three young men formerly from the sexual exploitation trade. In order to develop each question, many of the questions used in "*The Youngest Profession: The Oldest Oppression*" were crafted to fit the male study; however, terminology had to be changed, as did many of the questions, to suit this population. In addition, health authorities indicated a strong interest to include health-related questions.

It became clear to me that I could not do all the interviewing. As a colleague said to me, "Why not provide the discoveries to others as to how to interview this population?" Originally, allowing others to do what I had done up until then made me very nervous. I questioned whether they would be able to interview with the same level of compassion and commitment I had. Would they understand the questionnaire and the method of utilizing the information? I decided that realistically, I had no other option.

Finally, in order to protect the anonymity of the interviewees, pseudonyms were utilized in all cases.

1.4 Training

A Request for Proposals for Research Assistants was circulated in both Vancouver and Victoria. The goal was to attract individuals and agencies that already had a level of comfort and connection with this population.

Six individuals were successful, and represented the following five agencies:

- AIDS, Vancouver Island
- Covenant House, Vancouver
- John Howard Society, Lower Mainland
- PEERS, Vancouver
- PEERS, Victoria

A full day was dedicated to training these Research Assistants and Coordinators. Also involved in the training was Dan Biggs who was extensively involved in the Alberta study. He assisted the interviewers from British Columbia in gaining a level of comfort and understanding of the questionnaire. He also provided assistance and guidance to Yvonne Andres (Vancouver) and Kim Basi (Victoria) the two Project Coordinators. Some of the Research Assistants were experiential, in other words, they had previously been part of the sexual exploitation trade.

Originally there was some hesitancy in including experiential individuals in the interviewing process. Those that helped design the questionnaire and who were themselves experiential were doubtful that an individual formerly from the sexual exploitation trade could do this interviewing without experiencing discomfort, potentially triggering flashbacks.

By the end of the day, all Research Assistants had a level of comfort with the material.

Time was then spent reviewing confidentiality and legal requirements, consent forms, tape recording, snowball sampling, and storage of interview materials.

1.5 Interviews

I personally met with those who were experiential youth to discuss their personal and professional comfort level with interviewing. Once I had a level of confidence with their ability to interview, they began. In addition, I personally debriefed those who were experiential to establish their personal comfort after the first interview. All of those who were experiential and interviewing were at a minimum six months removed from the trade.

The use of Research Assistants with an experiential background was certainly a bonus. They brought with them a vast knowledge base and understanding of this population. Those who were not experiential brought with them a level of comfort and understanding of this population. This combined group of Research Assistants and Coordinators brought professional expertise and comfort to those being interviewed. The breadth and quality of the research interviews was stellar and in-depth. I am grateful to have had such a diverse committed group.

The original goal was to interview 20 young men in Vancouver and 20 young men in Victoria. That would mean a total of 40 interviews in British Columbia, 10 of which had exited the trade.

Interviews began in British Columbia in March 2004 and ended in April 2005. In total, we achieved 40 interviews, 24 in Vancouver and 16 in Victoria.

Section 2: Demographics & Historical Background

2.1 Aboriginal Heritage

Of those males interviewed, 43% identified themselves as Aboriginal. This predominance of Aboriginal culture in the male study is significant. In *“The Youngest Profession: The Oldest Oppression”* only 24% identified as Aboriginal. We can see from this that the male population has a greater number of Aboriginals.

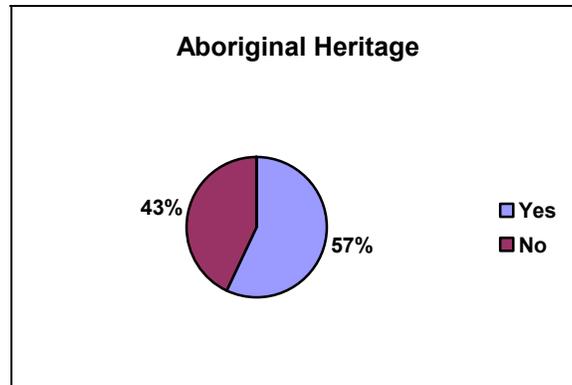
Of the 17 young men who identified as Aboriginal, 65% had spent some time on a reserve. Thirty-five percent had never spent anytime on a reserve. A total of 75% of those that were Aboriginal were interviewed in Vancouver.

A further line of inquiry examined whether those 17 Aboriginal individuals had lived on a reserve or felt connected to their Aboriginal heritage. Eight of the 17 individuals reported not feeling connected to their Aboriginal culture.

“No I don’t know too much about my native heritage.” (Paul)

The other nine individuals felt some connection to their Aboriginal heritage whether they were primarily urban or reserve.

“Somewhat. I got into the Indian dancing and old native stories, and pot latches.” (Forrest)



2.2 Child Protective Services

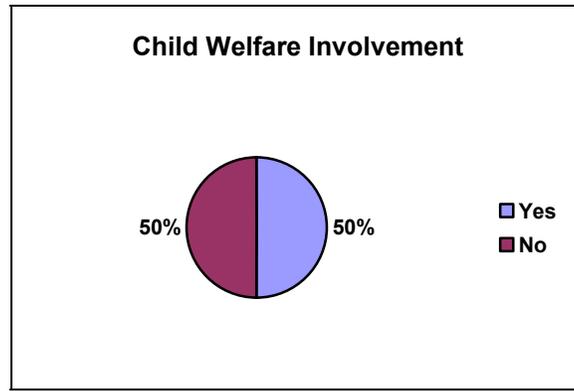
Half of this population interviewed had a family history with Child Welfare. This means that half of those interviewed had experienced some type of professional association like the provincial system of care as children. As a result, many were not provided with proper information on sexual development.

There is a sense that young men are not encouraged to talk about their physiological changes.

“Boys are not encouraged to talk about the changes that are happening to their bodies. They receive less guidance about their reproductive role, despite being provided with information and support around the experiences of puberty. For girls, the onset of puberty often means the placement of restrictions on their freedom. Boys, on the other hand, are generally provided no support or information, are given more freedom, and spend more time outside of the home in unsupervised activities than do girls.” (McCreary Youth Foundation, A Moment for Boyz, 2004:5)

There is an assumption that young men have received the knowledge about sexual biology and socialization that they require; however, this is not always the case. This is even less likely if they had grown up in government care according to Shauna Parks, Board Member, National Youth In Care and Custody Network.

“Males are often overlooked when it comes to information about sexual development, especially if they’re in care. A lot of times, people who work with these youth assume they have the knowledge or someone else has ‘had that conversation’ with them.” (Parks, 2004)



2.3 Education

This population was generally well-educated. Forty-five percent had completed high school, and five individuals had entered post-secondary education. Only eight individuals had been in grade school and gone no further.

“Grade twelve and a little bit of college.” (Bob)

“University, Bachelor of Commerce.” (Rob)

“I think it was maybe grade eight, maybe grade 9.” (Jordan)

2.4 Run Away

Eighty-eight percent of the population had a history of running away. Only 12% of those interviewed had never run away.

“Yes I did run away. I was six years old and I left home when I was 14.” (Randy)

“Yes. I ran away in grade seven. At the time I was being made fun of. I was already shaving and most people thought I was older. I had also finished growing by that time. Everyone assumed I was 17. I started going to bars at 13. I was on a swimming team at 13 and wearing a Speedo, it was very obvious that I was not 19 like the others. I got teased by the girls and the guys. They used to call me the hairy man. I took that as an insult. And there were a lot of problems with the family. I was constantly blamed for everything. I was always slower than the other kids. The morning I ran away, we were going to a swim meet and I was 10 minutes late getting outside and so they (the other students/teachers) left me. That was it for me. I ended up taking the bus back and I was late for school that day, and I was hanging out having a cigarette, and I just decided I was out of there. I would be happier anywhere but there. I went home and grabbed a sleeping bag and wrote a note and said “you guys don’t appreciate me, and I’m out of here”, and I hitchhiked out to Vancouver. I was gone for a month. I went back to Edmonton, I don’t really know why. I was tired of sleeping on the streets, I was tired of trying to find food, street people didn’t really bother me at all but I just wanted to get out of the rain. I thoroughly enjoyed myself but I went back home, not that I wanted to, but I did.” (Ted)

“After my mom remarried I used to run away a lot to get away from my dad. I got the punchings, the slappings; he’d always call me a bastard and shit like that.” (Forrest)

Running away was common. Of great importance when asked about running away was a subsequent question that referred to the offer of food and/or shelter while on the run.

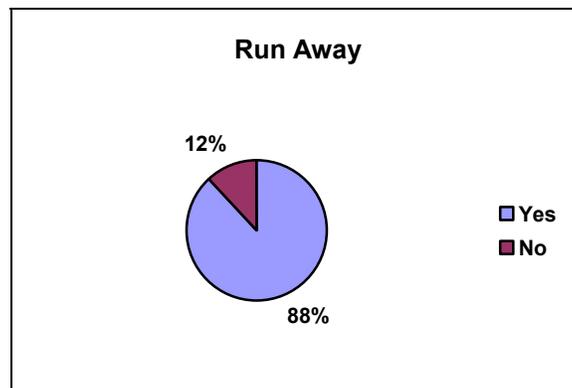
A total of 77% were offered food and shelter while on the run. What becomes important about this finding is that three-quarters of those who were offered food and shelter had conditions attached by the giver. In most situations, these conditions were sexual in nature. Many of those interviewed described their first introduction to hustling/working in the sexual exploitation trade was while they were on the run trying to survive.

“They always wanted to have sex with me. Even now, if I wanted to stay at his place I’d have to sleep in his bed. So I won’t stay there.” (Mick)

“Yeah if you do this, I’ll give you these....sexual things.” (Jackson)

“Many times. Usually it was something to do with sex. “I’ll give you a place to stay if....if you’re hungry.....Usually only because I was vulnerable. Out of need, a place to live. When I was living on the streets of Toronto, I would go down to the beach for a place to sleep and people would pick me up. Three of four times a week.” (Emile)

“Yes always. Sex! It was common.” (Parker)



Of importance were the reasons provided for running away. Thirty percent cited reasons of fear and/or avoidance of family violence and abuse.

“I would get a lot of beatings from my Dad.” (Ted)

“Abuse from my brother.” (Sandy)

“Abuse from my step parent.” (Scott)

Over one-quarter identified discomfort fitting in. This is common with young men struggling with their sexual identity. They often feel uncomfortable with their gender non-conformity. If they are comfortable with their sexual identity, often family and friends are not comfortable with it either.

“I was 15 and I just came out of the closet. I was staying in a group home and I came out to my family and my stepfather was starting to get abusive so I decided to leave.” (Conrad)

“I was 14. I was not getting along with my family. I was gayI felt different.” (Sid)

2.5 Thrown Out

Forty percent of those interviewed had a history of being thrown out of their homes. This often resulted in them having to seek temporary accommodation or to sleep in public places.

“Orientation issues. I just couldn’t deal with the fact I was gay. Other times it was because I was unruly and rebellious.” (Emile)

Many described running away either before or after being thrown out of their place of residence by an adult. This adult was often a parental figure.

“I was on the phone long distance with my friend and my mom was yelling at me to get off and do the dishes. I was like, just wait you know; my friend is paying for the call. My mom was going to slap me and I got tired of it and I grabbed her hand and said don’t. My Dad ripped the phone out of the wall and we started fighting, like really fighting. He wrapped me up in a blanket and I had my boxers on. He told me to never come back.” (Forrest)

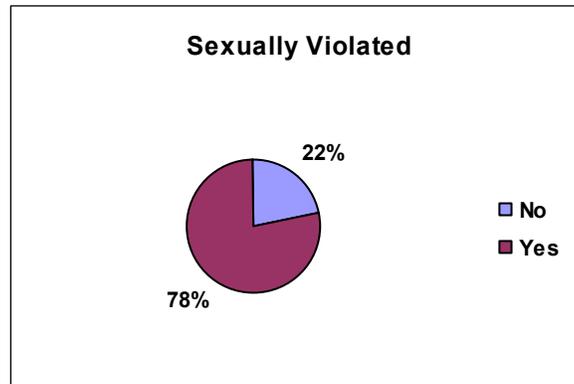
Running away or being thrown out often ended in the same result, that being the need to seek a means of survival on the streets.

2.6 Sexual & Physical Violation

While interviewing this population, a total of 78% identified themselves as being sexually violated. In other words, many had a history of sexual abuse.

“I became an adult when I was three years old. It was a babysitter, a female. She was babysitting another kid. I was three and she was two. The babysitters made us do sex acts together. People ask me when I lost my virginity and I say when I was three. It also happened with my mom’s younger brother.” (Forrest)

*“Yes, when I was seven years old. And 12 years old.....I was molested.”
(Ted)*



Researchers in both Vancouver and Victoria contacted me about this question. My *Strolling Away* research had historically identified a higher rate of sexual abuse for this population. In this study, there were a series of interviewees who reported “no sexual violation”. However, when they were asked how old they were when someone first touched them sexually, 45% identified this occasion being prior to the age of 14. Some participants said they were first touched sexually when they were under the age of five years.

“Not really. Like a couple of times people have done stuff while I was sleeping but I’ve never been like totally raped or anything. I don’t remember a lot of things. To be honest I was abused. I don’t know the extent of it from when I was really young. My mom beat us up a lot. She ran with us from my dad when I was young.” (Matt)

These results caused some confusion. An individual would report no history of sexual violation; however, they would then report sexual activity and exchange at a very young age. This confusion caused us to do further reflection. We concluded that respondents fell into the following three categories:

- 1) Individuals with a history of sexual violation
- 2) Individuals with no history of sexual violation
- 3) Individuals with a history of legal sexual violation but no personal acknowledgement of it

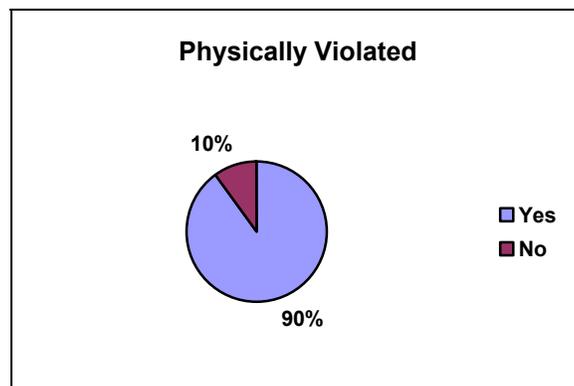
Thirty-one individuals were clearly identified as having a history of sexual violation. Nine individuals clearly identified as having no history of sexual violation; however, they also reported sexual touching in their early teen years and the exchange of sexual activity for money and/or shelter occurring in their mid-teen years. This issue was not interpreted either by them or the general community as sexual violation due to the fact they were of legal age for sexual activity.

The concern arises with five individuals who reported a very early onset of sexual touching and/or exchange of money or shelter. These individuals did not interpret this activity as being a sexual violation or abuse; however, both Criminal Law and Child Welfare would label this activity as sexual abuse. For those individuals that did not interpret this activity as a violation or sexual abuse, it is important we respect their personal interpretation of this.

A total of 90% reported a history of physical violation, or physical abuse.

“Again it was a different foster father and he grabbed me by the throat and threatened to kick me out because I was a faggot. I was 13 or 14 then.” (Emile)

“I just got beat up. Outside of my family. Inside the family a little bit but mostly at school.” (Parker)



In summary, this is a population with a substantial history of both sexual and physical violation.

2.7 Witnessing Aggression While Growing Up

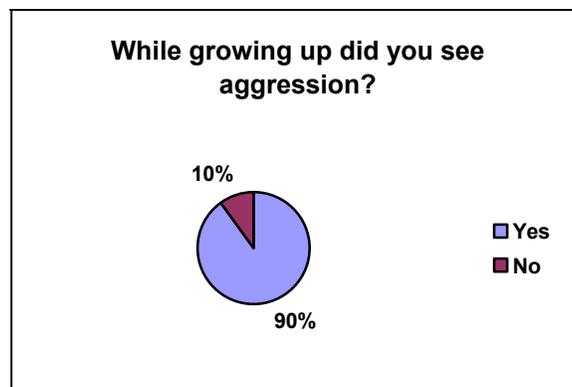
While growing up, over three-quarters had personally witnessed aggression.

“I remember my mother getting into a fight with my father and that and I remember my father beating my mother up and the disputes were never really resolved.” (Kim)

Often, observing aggression can be just as challenging as being a direct victim of it. The vast majority, or 90%, had witnessed or had been a victim of family violence.

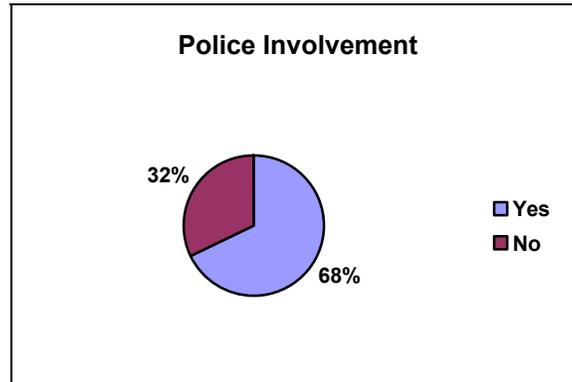
“It was all fighting. Getting whipped. My mom never really hit me with her hand. She’d use a shoe or a stick. My dad would hit me around. I just got tired of it and started fighting back.” (Forrest)

“Usually physical. If they weren’t physical they were arguing, yelling, screaming matches.” (Brett)



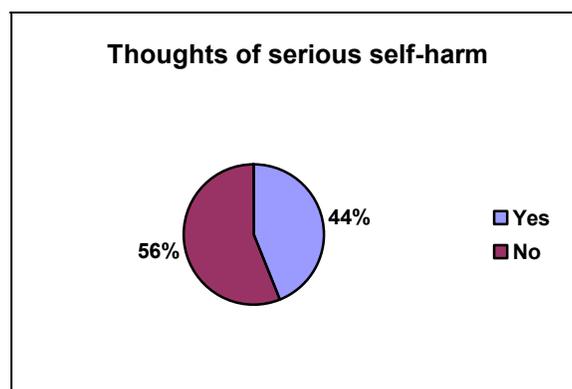
2.8 Police Involvement

Over 68% interviewed had a history with the police. This included some criminal activities, mainly involving alcohol and drugs which had brought them into contact with the police.



2.9 Self-Harm

Forty-four percent of this population identified periods where they contemplated self-harm. These periods occurred prior to their involvement in the sexual exploitation trade, not while they were entrenched within it.



Section 3: Work Life/Hustling

3.1 Entering

It is clear that one factor alone does not result in an individual entering the sexual exploitation trade. Often a series of circumstances result in a person ending up in this situation. No one had the goal to enter the street trade. Over 75% saw this activity as a short-term method to make money, so they could survive.

When entering the trade, a variety of factors come into play. We have seen from the previous demographics section that the following was established:

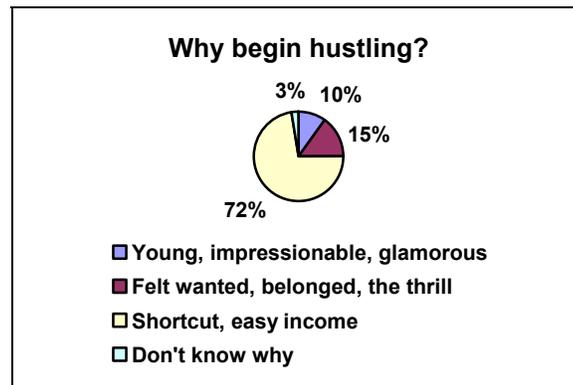
- 78% reported a background of sexual violation
- 90% had a history of physical violation
- 88% had a history of running away
- 43% were from an Aboriginal culture
- Over half with Aboriginal history had not spent time on a reserve
- 50% had a family history of involvement with Child Welfare
- Over 45% had completed high school
- 68% had a history with the Criminal Justice System

Most people see their entrance into this activity as temporary. It is seen as a method of survival. Some described their entrance as a way of belonging. As many are often on the run, many find connection and camaraderie with the activity.

“The circumstances at home. Drugs and alcohol. Maybe they’re gay. Some do it to for survival.” (Sid)

“Desperation. It seems like an easy way out.” (Carl)

“I started, and the reason was coming to Vancouver. I didn’t know anyone, I didn’t have anything and everybody needs money and I just remember the first time this guy wanted to pay me for sex and I remember feeling very powerful and I thought, wow! I had nowhere else to go and no one else to help me so I had to hustle. That was the only way I was going to look after myself.” (Kim)



Understanding how an individual begins the process of working on the street is important if we ever hope to intervene in this activity. Often they are introduced to this activity while on the run. Seventy-seven percent of those who had run away were offered food and/or shelter; however, there were conditions attached to this offer. Most often these conditions were sexual in nature, representing an introduction and entrance into the sexual exploitation trade.

“Yes, even when I was hitchhiking. Sexual conditions, basically.” (Randy)

3.2 Introduction To Hustling/Working

When we asked how someone entered the trade and learned about its workings, we were provided with three consistent answers. Thirty-five percent learned about the trade from a friend, and simply followed the process.

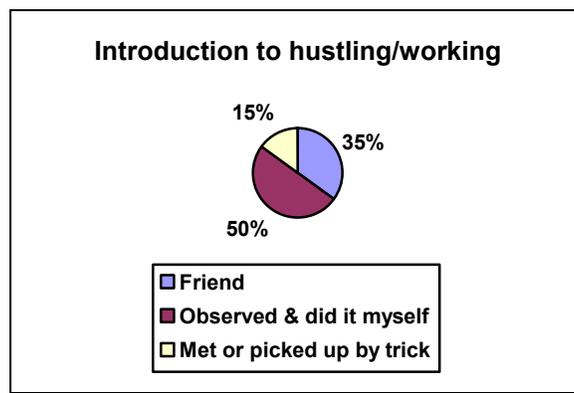
Fifty percent learned what was required by observing other people. Fifteen percent ran into a customer, or “trick” who offered them this opportunity.

It became a means for survival. The offer was made, and they were able to figure it out.

“A friend of mine was in the trade.” (Jordan)

“I think I was just at this park. I don’t know. I was at the park and this guy asked if I wanted to go home and he gave me money.” (Zac)

“No one introduced me. I just seen it and thought if they can do it, I can and I just started doing it.” (Kim)



There is a strong correlation between running away and a potential introduction to the sexual exploitation trade. Only five of the 40 had never run away.

Often when young people are on the run they are offered food and/or shelter. A total of 77% who had run away were offered food and/or shelter while they were on the run. What is important is that 74% of those offered food and/or shelter were offered these necessities with conditions attached to them, often sexual in nature.

“Yes, sex and stuff.” (Zac)

“Yes always. Sex. It’s common.” (Parker)

“Not up front. It became obvious as time went on.” (Sandy)

3.3 Age Beginning Hustling/Working

There was a broad range of ages when people began to hustle/work. The youngest person was 11 and the oldest was 35 years of age.

Sixty-two percent of this group commenced work prior to the age of 18 years. Close to half began work under the age of 16 years. In any former work that I have completed in the past, there has never been so many entering the sexual exploitation trade as adults. It has previously been seen as an activity entered into by youth and children. Sixty-two percent began this activity as youth. If we remove the outliers, that is those that began over the age of 18, the average age of entering the trade drops to 15 years of age.

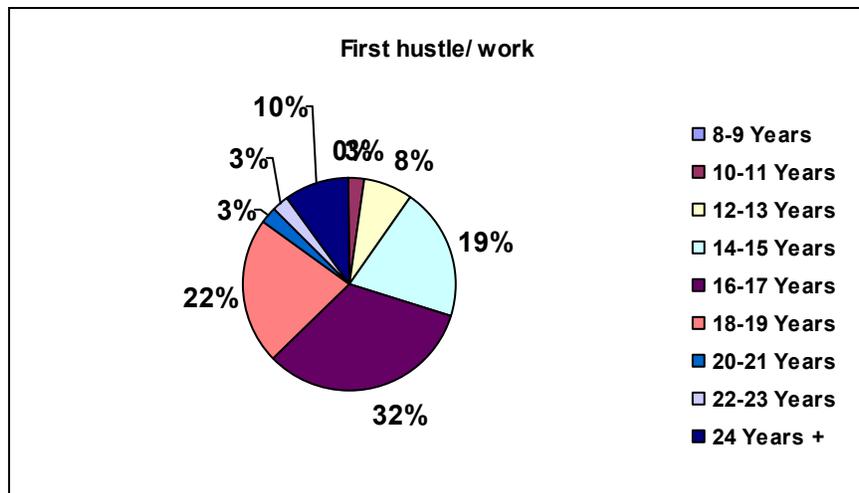
Nevertheless, as disturbing as that is, a substantial number entered into the sexual exploitation trade as adults.

Thirty-eight percent entered this life when they were adults (over 18 years of age). It became a way to achieve minimal survival, or something they did to survive. It can best be characterized as “voluntary desperation”. What is important is that of the 15 young men who entered over the age of 18 years of age, most had a background of sexual abuse. A total of 80% of those who entered the trade as adults had a childhood background of sexual violation, or abuse. The relationship of sexual abuse prior to entrance into the sexual exploitation trade was established as far back as *The Youngest Profession: The Oldest Oppression* (1994). This finding confirms that sexual violation, or sexual abuse as a child, can affect an adult and often trigger or prompt their entrance into the sexual exploitation trade. The male sexual exploitation trade is not one that just attracts children and youth. Adult young men can be at risk of entering into the sexual exploitation trade too. Of the 15 young adult men that were over the age of 18, their average age was 22 when they entered into the trade. The oldest of this group entered at the age of 35.

What is important about this finding in the British Columbia context is that the majority were simply attempting to live in Vancouver, which is a very expensive city. In total, five of these young men were from British Columbia and two of the young adult men were from the Greater Vancouver Area. The other three were from Northern British Columbia towns. The other 10 young adult men who began in the trade over the age of 18 were from the other provinces of Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario and Nova Scotia. One individual came from India.

Overall, this group was highly educated. Two individuals had entered university and one had entered college. A total of eight had completed high school but went no further. Two had started high school but never graduated, and two had only completed grade school. What is important about this is that a total of 11 of the 15 had completed high school successfully. From an educational perspective, this was a very successful group. (See Appendix 2).

Of particular significance is that this group appeared to be challenged by the transition from school to work.



“Vancouver and the surrounding region are amongst the highest rent and cost of living districts in Canada, if not the highest. Even though BC’s graduation rates continue to climb and students’ scores are also gradually improving, employers’ demands for higher levels of job ready skills are at least keeping pace. This means those high school students directly entering the workforce from high school without these skills find it hard to get those well-paying jobs that match the prevailing cost of living. A large focus of the Industry Training Authority in conjunction with the Ministry of Education, school districts and motivated employers, has been the introduction of apprenticeship training at the high school level. Early results show this type of employment-focused skill acquisition better engages students, particularly those students on the edge of dropping out or otherwise disengaged. Employers also like this type of education as it better prepares students for direct entry to apprenticeship trades which are typically in high demand and pay well.” Brian Clewes, CEO, Industry Training Authority of BC.

3.4 Time Hustling/Working

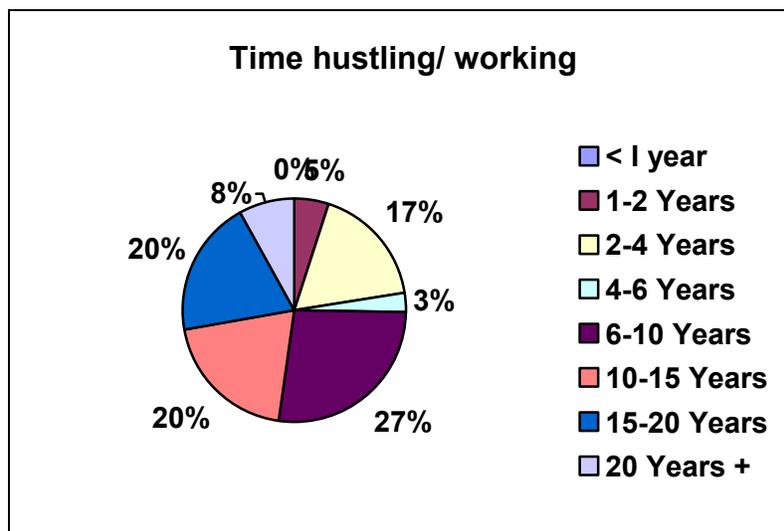
It is important to understand the length of time study participants had been hustling/working. The majority reported working for a long time. Two individuals had worked for only one to two years. No one interviewed in British Columbia had worked less than one year. What is important is that these young men remain out of sight for at least one year. They are not quickly identified and provided support services; therefore, work in a very clandestine, hidden manner. They are not quick to self identify as someone who just entered the trade. Unfortunately, social services does not connect with them until they have been on the scene for well over a year.

As you can see, most began to hustle/work at an early age. Sixty-two percent began street involvement prior to the age of 18. The other 38% did not enter until they had turned 18 years of age.

As was discovered in *Strolling Away* (McIntyre, 2002) males enter the trade earlier and stay longer. This is consistent in *Under the Radar: The Sexual Exploitation of Young Men - British Columbia Edition*.

Many stay in the trade six to ten years. There was a combined total of over 372 years in the sexual exploitation trade, and this figure is growing as only 10 of the 40 young men interviewed left the trade (Appendix #1). The average number of years working in the sexual exploitation trade for young men in British Columbia is 9.3 years. During their time working, they often remain unidentified, and do not access services.

Another important feature is the group of 15 young men who began working over the age of 18. This is not something they began, nor ended, as a quick fix. On average, those that entered after age 18 remained in the trade for eight years. This “quick fix” slowly turned into a long-term form of survival.



3.5 Work Locations

A variety of work locations were identified. Most worked in cars, hotels, and apartments. Some worked at truck stops and parks. Very few had worked in bathhouses.

“...park, beaches, restaurants, alleys, forest, Stanley Park.” (Mick)

In Vancouver and Victoria, cars, hotels, houses, parks, and washrooms were identified as the main locations of work.

One individual worked in casinos as opposed to the street or hotels. He would always work with a partner and they would cater to the trick's requests. It appeared that this individual always worked as a male; however, sometimes he worked with a male or female partner. The goal was to maximize the monetary benefit for the activity.

3.6 Shelter Stays

A total of 72% reported staying in shelters. The other 28% had never stayed in a shelter. For many, shelters were the only option available to them. Their ability to gain government support given their age and personal circumstances was minimal. Often, entrance into and continuation of the sexual exploitation trade results in a distinct lack of options.

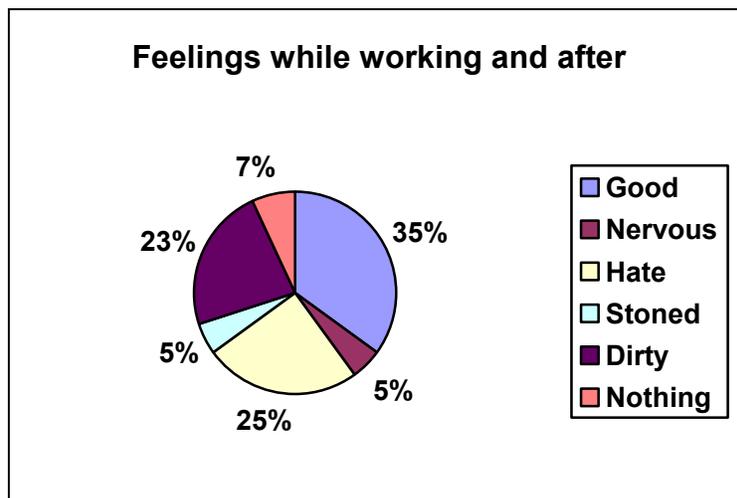
Homelessness is a true reality for many of these young men. The trade is a means to avoid homelessness and related shelter experiences. Only six individuals who entered the trade over the age of 18 had never been a part of the shelter or child protection system. Initially, the trade was seen as a viable option for the short term. However, as we have seen, short term is not the reality for most that enter the trade. Their only other option becomes a crowded, uncomfortable shelter stay.

As stated in *Strolling Away*, 82% of young women have given birth to a child. This event brings back family support and can result in government support. This is often not an option for young men. Of the 40 interviewees, 17 had impregnated a young woman. Of these 17, three have been actively parenting their children. The other 14 pregnancies either resulted in an abortion, miscarriage or estrangement.

The biological act of conceiving a child does not bring a young man government or family support. In other words, the birth of a child brings with it support for women; however, it only creates additional responsibility for the young men. The need to provide child support also influenced an entrance into the sexual exploitation trade.

3.7 Feelings While Working And After

It is important to gain some insight into how someone is feeling when they are hustling/working. How is an individual able to prepare for and sustain themselves throughout this activity?



It is clear that the majority of these young men are not happy. It is a form of survival. They feel exposed to the public, and therefore psychologically and physically numb themselves due to the shame they feel. Substances such as alcohol and drugs help them achieve this sensation of numbness.

The fact that just over three-quarters of this population had a history of sexual violation prior to their involvement in the sexual exploitation trade plays a role in some of the disassociation and flashback episodes these young men subsequently experience.

Unresolved abuse issues were a clear theme in the quotes of young men discussing their thoughts and feelings while working and after work.

"I just kind of shut my mind off really. I'd be working with men so I'd pretend they were women. I'd just shut myself off mentally." (Bob)

"Used." (Damien)

"Empty." (Mick)

"I really don't feel anything. I just shut all my emotions off, I don't feel anything. I'm just there to do a job and to get the hell out of there." (Kim)

"I feel like I am letting myself do this. I close my eyes and let myself think I'm that little boy again. Sometimes the dates ask me what's wrong and I don't want to tell them." (Forrest)

"There were some instances like this one where everything was fine, he was a nice man, and he just grabbed me and I don't know if it reminded me of my childhood or what but I just told him to get off and I shut down. I had some very strict do's and don'ts and that was it; you wouldn't believe how fast I would get out of there. I have never been relaxed with a lover around the intimacy." (Darryl)

"Depends on the client and the situation. Earlier felt appreciated but later I was just keeping up the illusion. It wasn't me." (Toby)

"Nervous." (Jamie)

"Great! Sorry I was being sarcastic. I don't feel good about what I do...terrible." (James)

"Get it over with." (Bobbie)

For some, there is a clear sense of relief when they finish their time in the sexual exploitation trade. Close to one-third of the population interviewed had a sense of guilt and numbness from their experience. This is not an activity that people do proudly, or with a strong sense of safety.

Five percent work only enough to buy their drug of choice. Their goal is to work to feed their habit. The additional 95% try to finish work quickly, safely and without reaction by numbing the experience.

Their need for cleansing is important. The desire to physically wash off the shame is something that was identified.

“Degraded.” (Sid)

“Kind of dirty like somebody got away with something.” (Stephen)

“Not too good, I guess. Means I need drugs.” (Zac)

“I feel fine. It’s not because I like doing it. That’s why I say fine because it’s over and that’s it.” (Jackson)

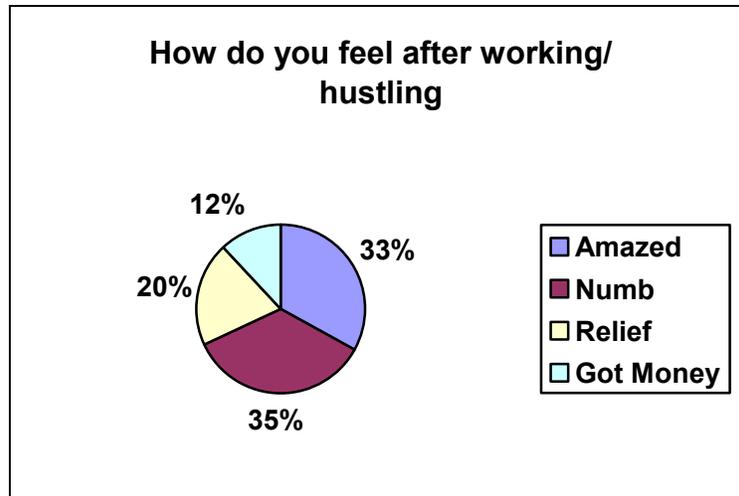
“Relieved that it’s over and I don’t have to go there anymore. Eager to get off the street so I don’t have to think about it anymore.” (Emile)

“I feel dirty. Like I just want to go home and shower. I feel raw. I can get clean but I’ve still got it on me. I never feel clean. It’s like a mud bath. I can’t get it off. I never get rid of that feeling.” (Forrest)

“I’m relieved that I am not dead.” (Thomas)

“Depending on the kind of date I had, sometimes I would want to go out and other times I would want to just jump right into a hot shower and scrub it all off.” (Anthony)

“Go home and have a beer.” (Bobbie)



3.8 Family Relations

Half the population interviewed said at least one family member was aware of their activity in the sexual exploitation trade. Although they are able to keep their work secret in the beginning, eventually family members figure out what is occurring. Close to half of those interviewed believed that their family was unaware of their involvement in the trade.

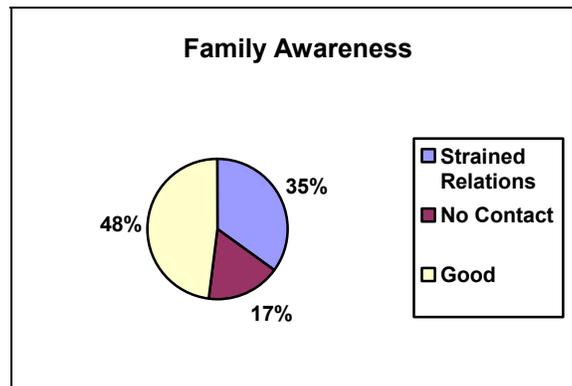
A total of 48% described having a good relationship with their family. Once the family knows about their son or sibling being in the trade, it can bring about a great deal of familial strain. The remaining 52% had strained relations, resulting in some having no contact whatsoever with their family.

“It’s very good actually.” (Carl)

“Fifty percent, right, no.” (Jackson)

“There is no relationship. I haven’t spoken with or seen my family since 1998, since my father passed away. That was the last time I was home.” (Kim)

“Nobody knows about what I do. It’s a small community and the city is different. Nobody knows. They don’t live in the city. They’re all split up and I’m the only one here.” (Pat)



3.9 Female Customers

Just over half had been approached by a woman, and this often involved the request for a threesome with another male. Close to half were never approached by a woman. In many situations when approached by a woman it was to be with a heterosexual couple. There was also the request for someone to observe their significant other having sex with the male sex worker. Some young men who were gay, were not prepared to involve a woman. Some were also approached by a gay couple for a threesome.

“I’ve had husbands approach me to watch me with their wives.” (Matt)

“Yeah, I do couples too. As a matter of fact I did a couple last night.” (Forrest)

“Yes, just not my cup of tea. Male to male couple, yeah. I think I responded to their ad and then we took it from there and I saw them regularly.” (Brett)

“Threesomes mainly. The woman would want two men. Normally it was the guy’s idea, and he would end up doing more with me and he would pay more attention to me and I’d wind up paying attention to the woman. But usually it’s the men with the money, so he needs to be satisfied if you want to get paid.” (Darryl)

There was one young man who said he worked escort only with women, and did that for a year and a half in New York and Miami. He was a single parent, attending school and working as a model in New York when he entered the sexual exploitation trade. This young man is heterosexual, yet still experienced many of the similar levels of discomfort both young women and young men in the trade spoke about. There was a need to create a construct in order to ensure he was able to deliver what was expected.

"I do not want to look at a lady who is you know, 60 years old, or late 50's at my age then, I was very young. I didn't want to think about it. I'd put a movie star in my mind." (Anthony)

"We're still being abused no matter what." (Anthony)

3.10 Why Men Buy Sex

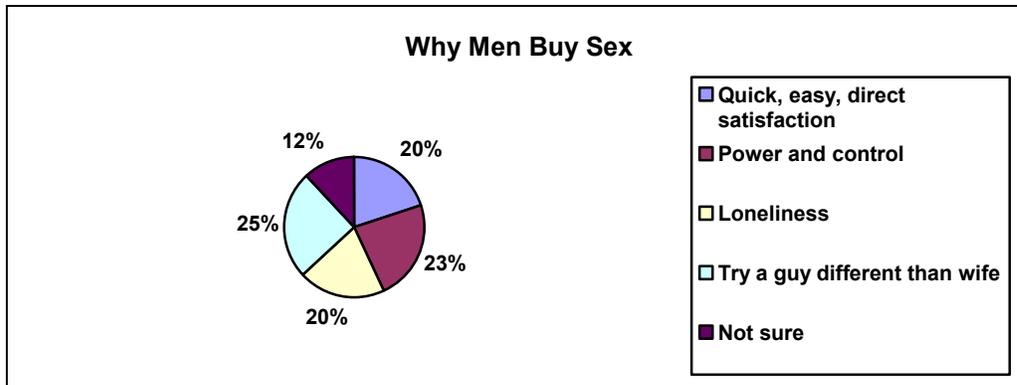
Those interviewed were very clear about why men purchase sex. They saw this as a quick, easy process for them to go through. A transaction. It was something that was easy and different.

"Power, lack of alternatives, lack of respect for humans." (Stephen)

"Because they want the fantasy of buying sex. Personally I think it's about controlling someone." (Jackson)

"I'd say because they like other men and they live a different life when they're with their partner or wife isn't around. They get a thrill out of it." (Kevin)

"They don't really have time for a relationship." (Jordan)



Laud Humphreys (1970) completed a study on male sexual encounters in public bathrooms. What is important from his study, and the information offered from those interviewed, is that many of these men are not considered to be gay or bisexual but heterosexual in orientation. His thoughts reflect that many of the male customers of these young men are not seeking a gay relationship just something quick and different.

I find no indication that these men seek homosexual contact as such; rather, they want a form of organ-producing action that is less lonely than masturbation and less involving than a love relationship. (Humphreys, 1970:115)

The young men were asked what is the most sought after request from customers. They were very clear. Oral sex or ‘blow jobs’ were most prevalent, rated at over 90%. What is important to understand for young men who are working/hustling is that the customer can request a blow job from a young man, or vice versa. The customer then would perform oral sex on the young man. The roles can be described as the provider or the deliverer and are interchangeable. This is something unique to males in the sexual exploitation trade. This can include both oral and anal sexual acts.

3.11 Tell Someone Entering

All but one individual was crystal clear that this activity was something individuals should not do. They were clear about the negative impact of this activity, and strongly suggested people explore other options.

"It will have a more profound effect on your life than you'll ever understand." (Stephen)

"Don't." (Zac)

"It's something that is not easy, it's hard. It's very addictive. Why the hell on earth would you want to? I'd ask questions like it's about money, are you trying to hurt someone or are you running away from something?" (Kevin)

"Only do this if you have to. I usually talk to them about their backgrounds. I tell them they can have a better life. Lots of them come from bad homes. They ran to this place." (Forrest)

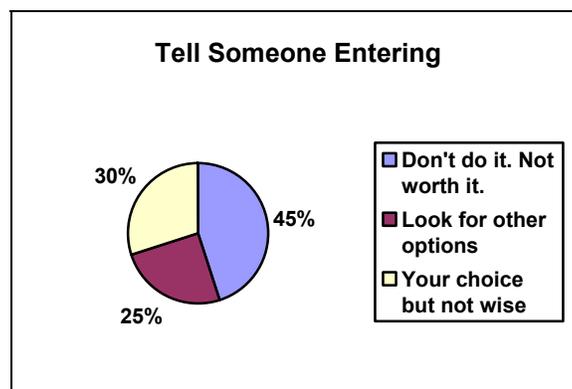
"I would say do it for yourself but don't do it to support your drug habit. Do it as a means of getting something better, like school. It's gotta be for making a positive change in your life." (Simon)

"Nothing prepares you." (Alex)

"Rethink." (James)

"Think hard not easy to get out." (Sandy)

"Don't do it." (Jack)



This finding is significant because those involved in the trade are adamant that others should be warned of the danger of entering.

Section 4: Staying

4.1 Staying In

As we have seen from the previous section, this group of young men stayed in the sexual exploitation trade for an extensive period of time. Twenty-five percent of males stayed in the trade from one to six years. A total of 52% lasted up to 10 years. The average length of time was 9.3 years in the trade, and the range extended from six to ten years. The least amount of time in the trade was one year and the longest period exceeded over 20 years for three individuals.

4.2 Gay Bashing

Both males and females in the trade fear violence while working/hustling. Both young men and women experience violence and humiliation from customers and from the general community. However, the primary source differs.

For women, the main source of violence emanates from customers seeking their services. For males, the main source of violence is the result of homophobia. Males are at risk of gay bashing from onlookers who suffer from homophobia. Onlookers choose to physically damage and humiliate young men attempting to survive on the street. There is a perception that all these young men must be gay.

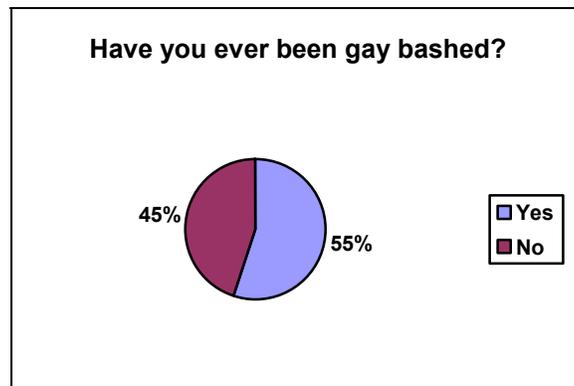
The fear of gay bashing is prevalent at all times for young men involved in the sexual exploitation trade. Close to half have experienced being gay bashed, but certainly all fear the potential. It is an activity that people react to whether the young man is actually gay or not. The classic homophobic belief system places these young men at risk from heterosexual males who react to their behavior.

“I’ve seen it happen on stroll to somebody else.” (Mick)

*“Yeah in Edmonton, this one guy whipped a chain around my head.”
(Amos)*

“I’ve been struck, abused. Violently injured, no.” (Jamie)

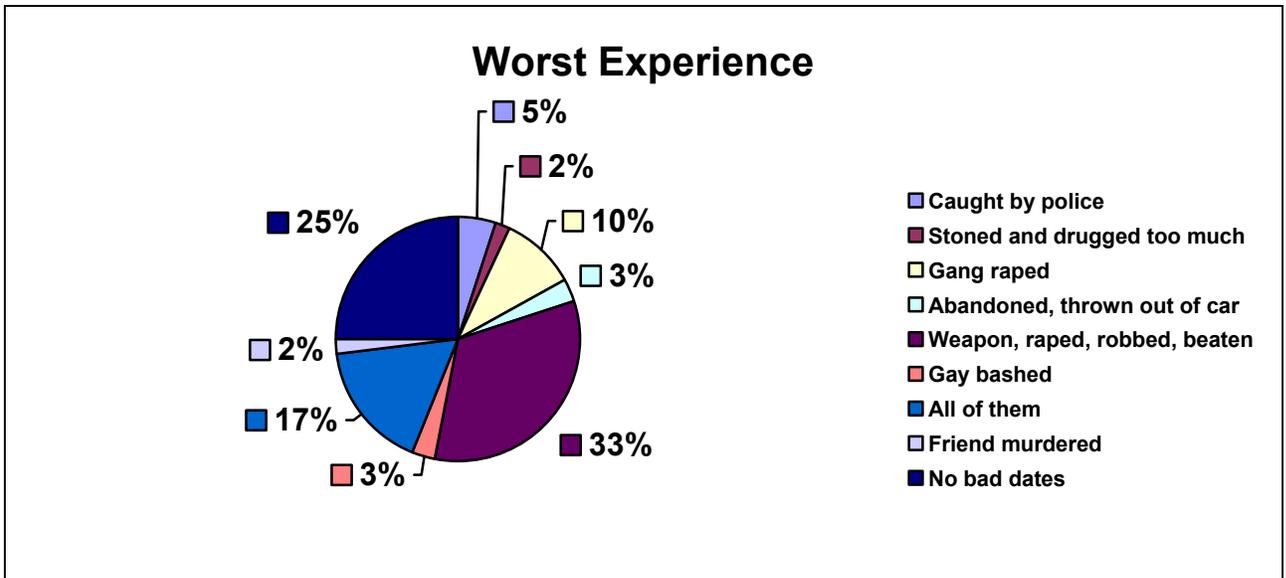
*“Just like while you’re standing there they throw pennies at you and eggs,
or like other things.” (Jordan)*



A total of 88% of those interviewed saw the sexual exploitation trade, hustling/working, as dangerous. They saw, experienced, and lived the reality of this fear and the dangers of the trade.

4.3 Worst Date

This population was quick to identify the following worst experiences hustling/working. There was a general level of fear they had experienced from bad dates. Twenty-five percent had not experienced a bad date although they all still lived in fear of such a situation occurring.



“Probably would be the one that wanted me to try and find some children to indulge with like a 12-year old girl or 12-year old boy.” (Kim)

“It was five or six guys at one time.” (Sandy)

“The worst go beat up, the guy had managed to get a handcuff on me and locked me to a post so it made it a lot harder to hit back with my left hand. We started doing our thing and either he had them under the pillow or something and suddenly they were on and I told him to take them off now. He thought he could beat me into submission. I managed to kick him in the gut, and kicked him around a bit. He finally threw me the keys and I unlocked myself but I was pretty beat up.” (Darryl)

4.4 Fear The Most

During the interviews, we asked individuals what they feared most while they were hustling/working. Their fears extended from public exposure to drive-by shootings. The greatest fear was a bad date-- that is someone that would harm them and potentially kill them. As a result, the level of fear these young men have is both real and constant.

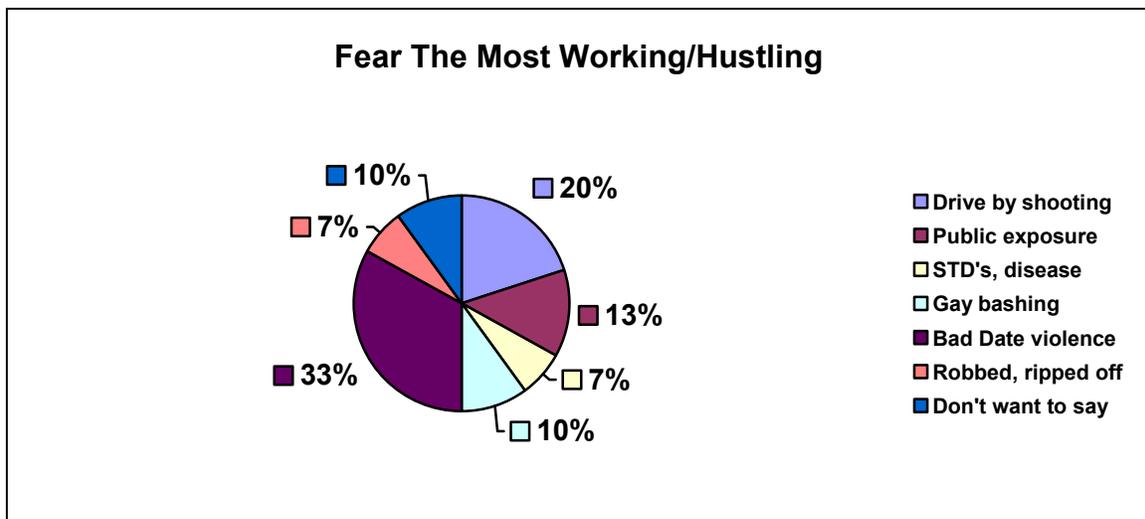
A total of 88% of those interviewed saw hustling/working in the sexual exploitation trade as dangerous. They saw, experienced, and lived the reality of this fear and the dangers of the trade.

“Never know what is going to happen.” (Sid)

“Because we’re so, we’re so sleeping with pedophiles, rapists, were so easy for people to try to take us off the face of this earth because they think we mean nothing to anyone, we’re garbage.” (Kim)

“Because there are people who are crazy and psycho and kill people. I mean look at what happened to all those girls who were murdered on that farm near Vancouver.” (Parker)

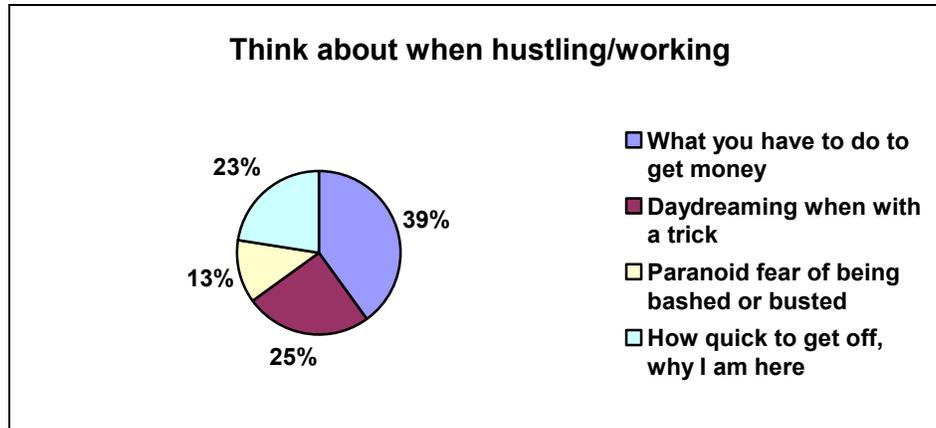
“Getting bashed. Having bad dates.” (Pat)



There was a strong sense that violence could come both from gay bashing and customers. Fear is prevalent for both women and young men in the trade. Women have a level of fear from customers, but not from those onlookers who harass them.

4.5 Thoughts When Hustling/Working

Given the length of time most of these young men have been involved in the trade, there is value in understanding what they think about when they are and are not hustling/working.



The majority think about what they have to do to get this money. This speaks to the continual grind of this type of trade. Absolutely no one spoke highly of what they were doing. It is simply a form of survival for many and they are not proud of it. They also acknowledge it is difficult to exit.

“When am I going to get out? Am I going to be killed?” (Sid)

“When is it going to be over?” (Toby)

“I think how it would be nice to see my family, my brothers and sisters and how fast it would be to have myself go missing, or be murdered just due to the facts I have seen and read.” (Kim)

“Wishing I was done already and I had my money.” (Nicky)

“I always worry about my kid because I was a single parent. It’s different than a woman. Sometimes it can actually be harder than being a single mother. I was worried about what I was doing for work.” (Anthony)

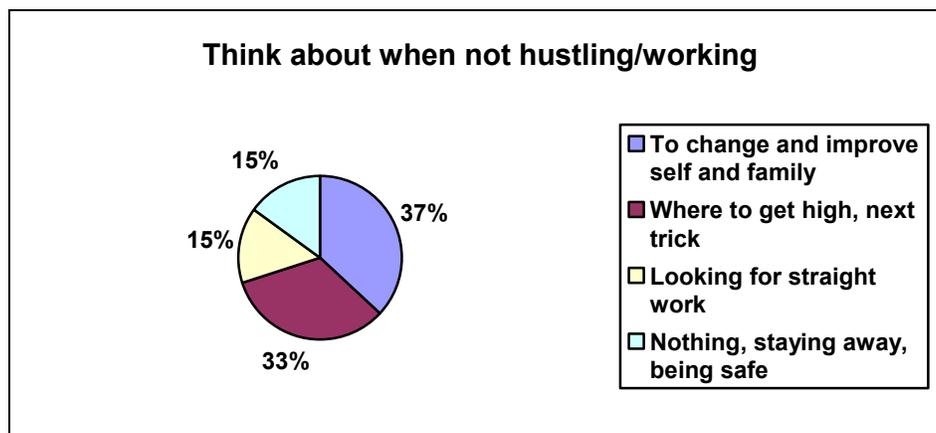
4.6 Thoughts When Not Hustling/Working

It is also important to understand what people think about when they are not hustling/working. Most think about staying away, being safe and making changes. A significant percentage (33%) think about their next fix or supply of drugs. Many are thinking about getting away and making changes and improvements. Again, this is not an activity they seem to be proud of. They are either looking for routes to exit the trade or they are using drugs to numb themselves.

“I often wondered why I started working in the first place. I wonder how my life would be if I followed my dreams.” (Emile)

“My future. Everything. Self help.” (Jamie)

“Everyday things. Taking my kids out. Having fun with my son.” (Anthony)

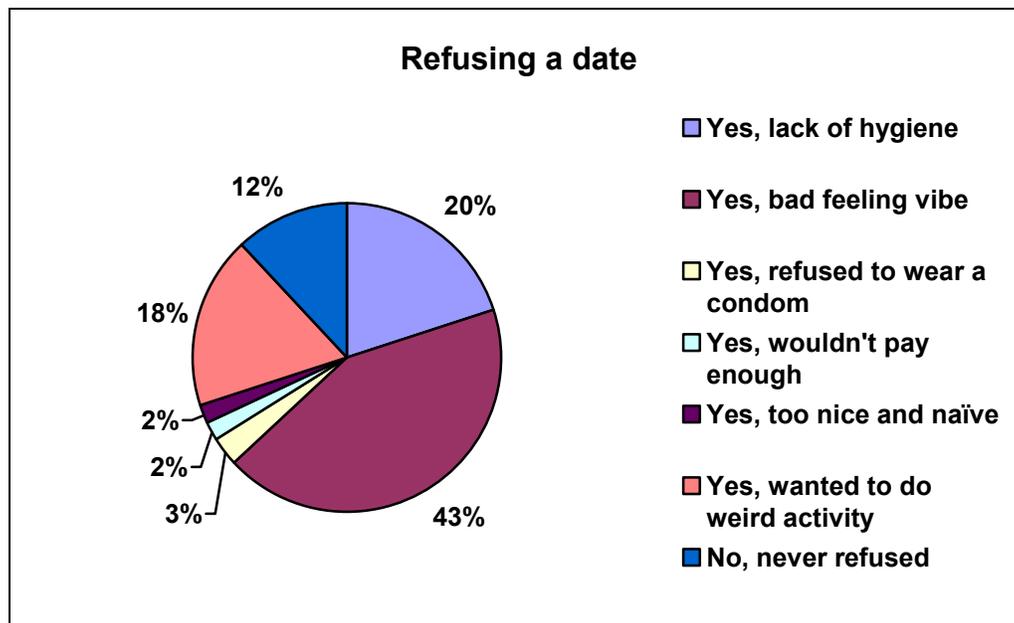


4.7 Refusing A Date

It was important to understand that the majority of young men had refused a date at some point. Eighty-eight percent of those interviewed had refused a customer at some point. Over 40% refused a customer because of a bad feeling they got, an uncomfortable ‘vibe’. The use of gut feelings and intuition are important protection mechanisms for those in the sexual exploitation trade.

It is an important skill that other peers in the trade can teach them. Outreach and support services can play a critical role in encouraging and reinforcing the use of this gut instinct.

When asked why people refused certain customers the following responses were provided:



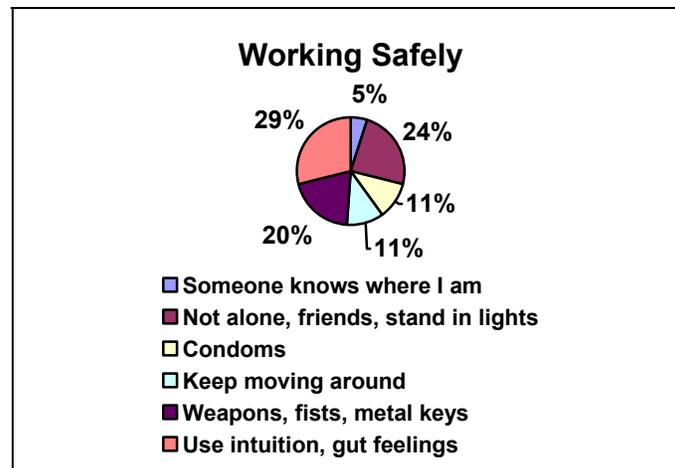
“Because of the vibe....he may be too aggressive, too in control.” (Rob)

“I never refuse a client, but sometimes their actual fantasies were too much and I wouldn't do that act. They would offer to pay more, but I still wouldn't. I would be afraid that if I did accept the money I'd be scarring myself for life.” (Pat)

4.8 Working Safely

It is important to gain insight into how someone works safely. There are specific techniques young men rely on to keep them safe. These techniques are far from foolproof; however, they allow them a sense of control and safety. It is the best they can do given the circumstances and nature of the sexual exploitation trade.

People provided the following examples of how they work safely for themselves:



The only method of support for this population comes in the form of outreach programs. Both Victoria and Vancouver provide these services through various programs. These services provide condoms and support. As helpful as the services are, respondents felt this was the only service they could access, and other than drop-in support at Vancouver Boys R' Us, even this was somewhat female-focused.

The services were also restricted to providing short-term hours of support due to insufficient funding. The BC Society for Male Survivors of Sexual Abuse has just recently begun offering life skills and clinical support to sexually exploited males (Appendix #3).

4.9 Getting Paid

Over 60% seek payment before the activity to make sure they are paid and not taken advantage of financially. This is similar to women in the sexual exploitation trade. It could be argued that the financial transfer of money motivates young people to close the deal as quickly as possible.

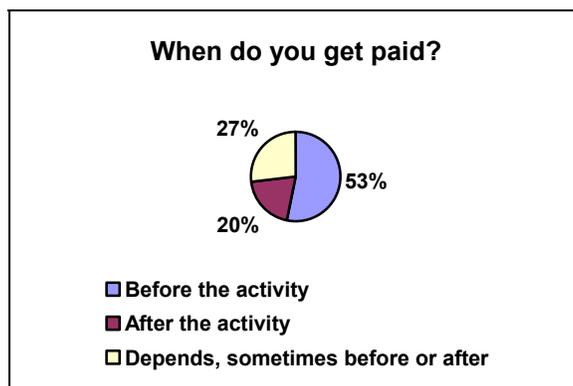
“Ah first timers um up front. Regulars could pay after.” (Jack)

Fifty-three percent will take payment after the act. From discussions with young men in the sexual exploitation trade, this often happens with regular customers in familiar territory.

One young man felt that taking money first made him look weak and vulnerable. He wanted customers to think he could handle himself if a customer tried to rip him off. Others said payment after the sexual exchange brought a level of insurance that this person was not a police officer. This brought a different form of protection for young men in the trade.

“At the beginning. You never do the trick without getting paid because that’s how you get ripped off.” (Mick)

“Used to be after but that was only when I was in their house but if it was anywhere else, it would be before.” (Simon)



4.10 Sugar Daddy

Young men in the trade often seek out a ‘sugar daddy’. This protects them, and has the potential to limit the time and risk they experience on the street. There is a vast difference between a regular customer and a sugar daddy.

A sugar daddy will seek a public relationship with the chosen young man. It often involves exclusivity and means a live-in role.

A total of 68% had experience with sugar daddies. Ten percent of those had experienced both having a regular customer and a sugar daddy. This experience resulted in rewards such as food, shelter, clothing, movies, trips, cash, and for some, whatever request they sought. However, usually one's position of being taken care of by a sugar daddy is a short-term one. Often these young men are replaced with other young men.

Significantly, in this case, the young man's sexual orientation is gay, as is the sugar daddy's. A sugar daddy will profile the young man he chooses. This often happens in public places or at events.

“But a lot of times I would end up moving in with them, but I got tired of being paid or feeling like I was owned by them. And I would just feel like enough was enough and I would move out.” (Jamie)

A “gay for pay” young man would not seek out such a public display; they are clearly heterosexual but work as a gay young person to earn money. Their sexual orientation is gay only when they are involved in the sexual exploitation trade. They would be more inclined to seek a regular customer in private and have an impersonal relationship with them.

“Not sugar daddies but regular clients, ready to dote on me at anytime.” (Emile)

A “gay for pay” young man could be inclined to have a regular customer as depicted by the actor River Phoenix in *My Private Idaho* (1991).

This type of relationship offers limited protection from the unknown elements. A total of 97% had a history of having either a sugar daddy or a regular customer.

Some young men seek impersonal relations from their customers, but very few young men did not want any type of personal relationship with their customer. A sugar daddy or a regular customer brings with it a sense of safety and security.

“I had a sugar daddy once that was pretty cool. It didn’t last that long, mostly because he wasn’t my type but the money was absolutely fantastic. I would have four or five regulars throughout the week. Those were the easy tricks and enjoyed the most because then you knew what was happening. They would often feel a real connection to me, and that made the sex better than say in the back seat of a car. Those are the ones you want really.” (Darryl)

4.11 Types Of Hustling/Work Activities

We asked about different venues for work. Over half of the young men had been approached to model for pornography. Nearly half had worked private parties. A very small proportion, under one-third, had experience in massage parlors, and on-line or escort services.

4.12 Hustling/Working & Drugs

The relationship between drug use and the sexual exploitation trade was explored. Often when speaking with those involved in the sexual exploitation trade, substance abuse (drugs and alcohol) entered their lives once they worked in the trade. Some people had histories of partying involving drugs and alcohol; however, it was not their primary focus.

Many times, once people enter the sexual exploitation trade, drugs become a way of life. They are initially a reward of life on the street because they assist in blocking out or numbing the continual sexual exploitation and humiliation they experience. As time goes on, the relationship between the trade and substance abuse becomes stronger. These two usually mutually exclusive experiences become associated.

The initial introduction to work can be driven by money to survive; however, this often becomes replaced or adjoined with a need to feed the drug addiction. What is important to understand is that close to half those interviewed avoid the use of drugs while they are on the street working. Nearly everyone interviewed spoke of some drug use in their private time. It is clear that drug use in their private life often fuels their need to work.

“It depends on the client. If they are using drugs or alcohol, and they are offering I do take it but sometimes I refuse depending on their mood or how I feel. I would refuse because I would want to look after myself, and not get drunk, because I don’t want anything to happen to myself. I gotta look out for my boundaries.” (Pat)

“Crystal meth keeps me awake.” (Conrad)

For some, substance use enables them to work in the trade. Potentially, for a limited number, substance addiction drives them and keeps them in the trade, as they work to feed their habit.

It is important to acknowledge the strong relationship between drug use and the sexual exploitation trade. The possibility exists that the longer someone stays in the trade, the greater and more intense the drug use becomes. The need to disassociate oneself and from the actual day-to-day degradation of the trade intensifies over time. This will occur regardless of sexual orientation.

“It varies. Sometimes I go down there sick as hell, other days I’ll be high. Sometimes being high can get the job done faster.” (Alex)

4.13 Other Jobs

This population has limited work experience outside of hustling. The opportunity to turn to mainstream, well-paid work is not there. Most tried working either in retail services, restaurant services or landscaping. These were part-time positions paying minimum wage.

Even though this group is educated, their lack of work experience results in a hand-to-mouth existence. There appears to be a gap regarding their education level and employment skills.

The sexual exploitation trade offered consistent, non-taxable work, with no specific skills, education or training required. In other words, it was something that brought short-term financial gain. Unfortunately, with that comes long-term pain. When consistent cash flow is achieved, it is often easier to remain in the trade.

4.14 Charged

Only 7% of this population has been charged with 'Communicating for the Purpose of Prostitution'. To repeat, the average tenure for those in the sexual exploitation trade is nine years. It is significant then, that so few have been subject to Criminal Justice intervention even though they have spent close to a decade on the stroll. If the Criminal Justice system does not respond to these young men, it is logical to say they are not approaching the customers of these young men either. It remains a hidden issue. Customers of these young men are not identified nor targeted for criminal prosecution. Most stings resulting in charges of 'Communicating for the Purpose' involve women from the trade and their male customers. Once again, these young men are being sexually exploited under the radar which results in no social support or intervention, and their customers escape any legal responsibility, leaving them vulnerable without any detection or support.

4.15 Various Cities

This is a transient population. One quarter remained working in just one city - Vancouver. The other three-quarters of the population moved around.

Over 25 cities were identified, with the majority being in Canada; however, cities in the United States and Europe were also mentioned.

4.16 Sexual Orientation When Hustling/Working

What became clear to this author over time was that there is a difference between how an individual describes their sexual identity while working/hustling as opposed to their private time. Calgary Birth Control Association (CBCA) defines sexual identities in the following ways:

Gay: Men who are emotionally, physically, and sexually attracted to men.

Bisexual: People who are emotionally, physically and sexually attracted to people of either gender.

Heterosexual: People who are attracted to the opposite sex.

Transgender: Refers to individuals whose sense of being a man or a woman does not correspond to their biological sex.

Two Spirited: Refers to First Nations peoples whose sexual and romantic feelings are primarily for the same gender who, historically, were revered as embodying both female and male spirits. (*Calgary Birth Control Association, Celebrating Diversity, 2004*)

Many of these individuals labeled themselves as being 'two spirited'. The following is a specific description that was crafted at a conference in the late 1990's:

"The term two spirited has a number of meanings within several different contexts. "Two Spirited" means Aboriginal people who identify themselves as gay or lesbian. The terms gay or lesbian are of European origin.

Therefore, “two spirited” is preferred because it is more culturally relevant to Aboriginal lesbians and gays.” (Two Spirited People of the 1st Nations, We Are Part of a Tradition, 1998)

The following quotes by a young two spirited person interviewed in this study speaks to some of his confusion, yet also to the strength and comfort he finds in his personal life. As this young man said earlier, he feels safer working “straight” and now sees himself as two spirited.

“I feel two spirited. It depends on where I’m at. I don’t know. I don’t know what I’m into. I don’t know if I’m gay or bisexual. It’s a hard question. I feel straight, I guess. I don’t know how to answer that. It’s a difficult question. Others see me as straight. I do like men, so I’ll say two-spirited.” (Pat)

There is value in clarifying sexual identities prior to the actual discussion of selecting sexual identities when working/hustling and private, non-work time. The following hustling/working sexual orientations were identified:

- Gay
- Gay for pay
- Straight for pay
- Tranny
- Bisexual
- Confused

Gay refers to a young man who has embraced and accepted a gay (homosexual/same sex) sexual identity while he is hustling/working.

Gay for Pay refers to a young man who is heterosexual in his off-street sexual identity; however, to survive he will be ‘gay for pay’, becoming involved in sexual activities with male customers. This also means that only during the time they are hustling/working will they demonstrate and/or perform gay sexual activities. Often customers find the potential opportunity to alter a young man's heterosexual orientation very attractive.

Straight for Pay refers to a young man who is gay in his off-street sexual identity; however, to survive he will become 'straight for pay'. They appear as very "macho" young men while they are on the street, and approach customers as straight. Some male customers find it attractive to engage a young straight macho man in sexual activity. Some customers find it very satisfying to think a young straight man would be prepared to alter their orientation to be with them.

Tranny refers to a young man who has entered the world of being a woman or a 'transvestite'. This means they will dress and conduct themselves as a woman. They wear women's clothing and makeup, and style their hair as a woman. Some of those interviewed appear as women at all times. Others interviewed described themselves as being a Tranny in their personal life but not while working on the street.

A total of four individuals identified as transgender while they worked. All four individuals were Aboriginal; however, six individuals identified as transgender in their personal life. Five of the six that saw themselves as transgender in their personal lives were Aboriginal.

"A very proud, young transgender First Nations women." (Kim)

The following quote clearly explains why a person will work straight but has a private identity of transgender. Often it reflects a need for safety, that being it is safer to appear as a male whether straight or gay for pay.

*"When I'm out there, I'm scared. I figure when I'm out there I act straight."
(Pat)*

Bisexual

This describes a young man who is attracted to both genders. He identifies with both sexual identities. For some young men, seeing themselves as bisexual eased the transition to work with male customers. Some only saw bisexual behavior with men occurring when they worked in the sexual exploitation trade.

“Straight. I would say I was bi.” (Bob)

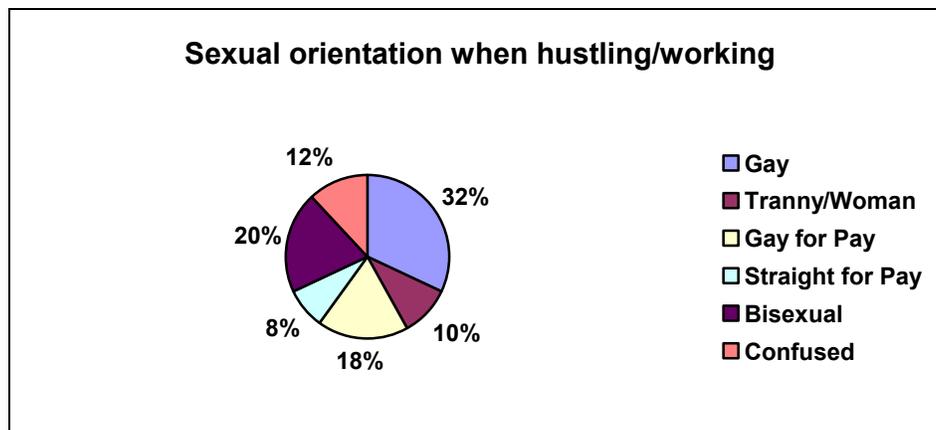
Others lived a full bisexual life while in and out of the trade. Others identified as bisexual even though they were gay as some customers like the opportunity to see that a young man was attracted to women but chose to be with a male customer.

*“I believed I was gay and I use to tell them I was bi. I did that for them.”
(Toby)*

Confused

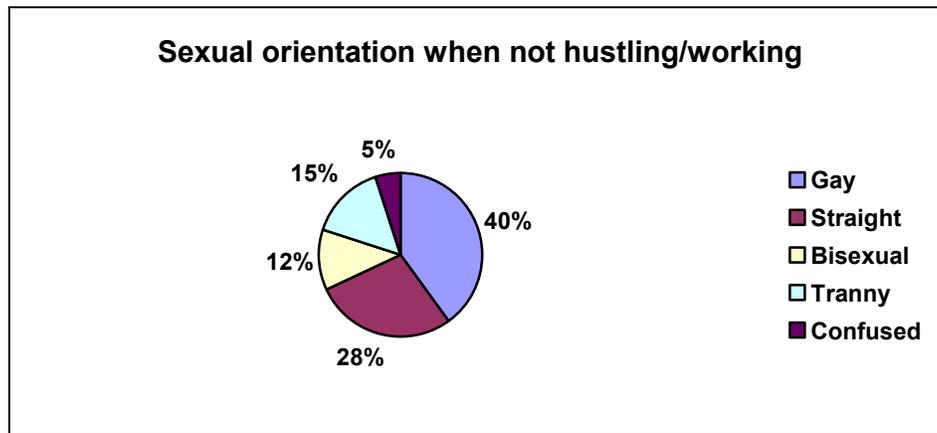
Five individuals saw themselves as confused or unable to answer about their sexual identity when they were working. They were unclear about where and how their sexual identity could fit while they were working.

“Really confused. Society pressures everyone to be straight.” (Darryl)



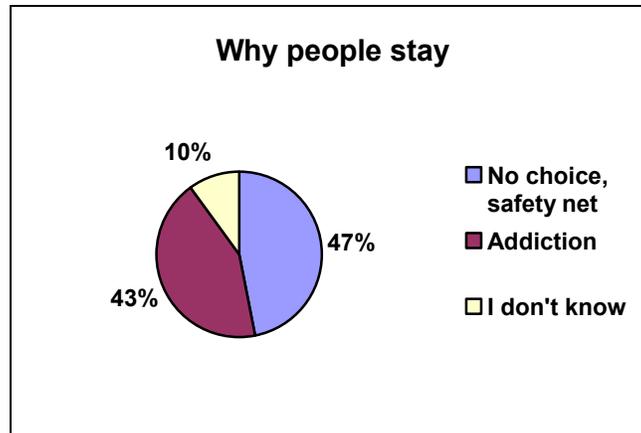
4.17 Sexual Orientation When Not Hustling/Working

An individual can describe his sexual identity while on the street as being different than that displayed in his private life. For example, four individuals saw themselves as being a Tranny while they were working; while six saw themselves as being Tranny in their private time, meaning two protected their Tranny presentation for their private life.



4.18 Why People Stay Hustling/Working

To understand why people stay hustling/working in the sexual exploitation trade it is also important to understand why they return. If we are going to be effective in assisting individuals leave the trade for good, then we need to understand exactly what keeps someone in the sexual exploitation trade in the first place.



Forty-seven percent did not believe they had other options or choices. The trade represented a safety net to them and they relied on it for their immediate survival.

“To get money. It’s hard to leave.” (Carl)

“Limit options, belief and lack of options.” (Stephen)

“They feel trapped. The money.” (Toby)

“I think it, it’s sort of the same for everybody and some have been abused as a child. Sex sells. It makes a lot of money.” (Forrest)

“Shelter, food. Um, easy access to cash.” (Jordan)

“Really hard to explain. It’s hard to get out of it.” (Jack)

A large majority, 43% saw their addiction as playing a key role in why they stayed in the trade.

“Because the money is good. You can work your own hours. You can do it while you’re loaded or stoned, mostly because you can’t hold down a day job. Lack of education, or drug addiction. Why should you when you can get way more money hustling?” (Darryl)

A similar line of questioning was part of *The Youngest Profession: The Oldest Oppression* (McIntyre, 1994), where we found drug addiction for this population on the increase.

It is highly possible that access to inexpensive addictive crack cocaine and crystal meth has hastened the level of addiction and the numbers of those who are addicted. Crack cocaine was not a prevalent drug in use in the early 1990's. Expensive cocaine was certainly a drug of choice; however, the expense of cocaine has limited its use.

“Again, it’s the need to support the drug habit. We have regulars who want to pay and don’t want to stop.” (Conrad)

The inexpensive nature and highly addictive character of smoking crack cocaine and crystal meth has amplified the level of addiction; hence, the reliance on and entrenchment in the sexual exploitation trade.

“Usually in my experience with men, it’s drug addiction.” (Bob)

“Probably much for the same reason, but they develop a drug addiction and they need to finance it somehow.” (Simon)

“So they can get their drugs and stuff like that.” (Jack)

4.19 Services You Wish Existed

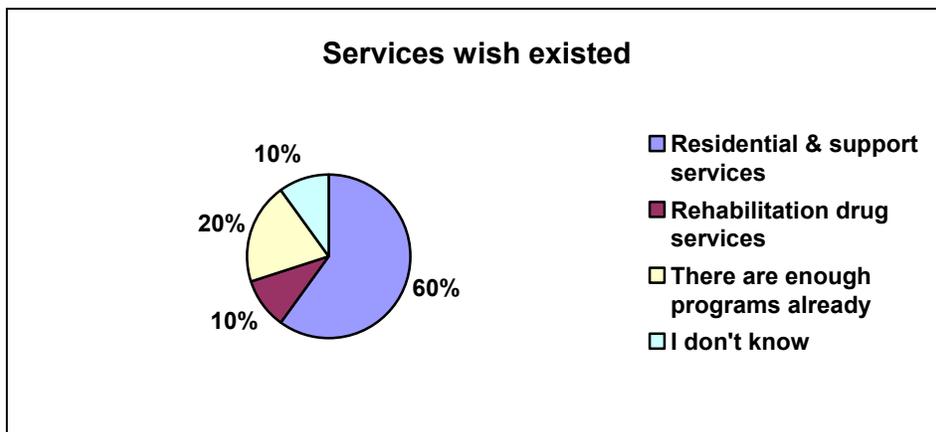
Throughout the interviews, we were curious about the type of services these young men felt should exist. However, there was a clear sense they felt that existing services were more female-oriented.

Boy R' Us Vancouver is one of the few organizations that services young men in the sexual exploitation trade. PEERS Victoria and PEERS Vancouver recently began to provide supports to both sexually exploited young men and women.

The delivery of services to young men has been hampered because we know very little about the different working styles or needs of these young men.

It is hoped that this study will provide the needed additional information for all these young men regardless of their sexual identity while working or in their personal lives.

In revisiting the male population from *Strolling Away*, they clearly stated they were different and we needed to hear their differences. Over 60% felt strongly there needed to be residential programs and support services for males that addressed the unique issues facing sexually exploited males. Residential services should include services for drug rehabilitation.



Section 5: Attempts At Exiting

It is crystal clear that people wish to exit the sexual exploitation trade. They do not perceive the trade as a long-term lifestyle for themselves; however, knowing how to leave is a process we need to understand and we must design supports accordingly.

5.1 Leaving

Everyone we interviewed wanted to leave the sexual exploitation trade. No one person spoke of positive benefits or the desire to remain. One-quarter felt they looked and felt worn down physically and mentally. Close to one-third felt emotionally empty. Many felt lost and that they had gone over the top. The last quarter felt it was time for a normal life and they needed to find some support. Significantly, all had a reason to want to exit. All of these individuals had taken a time out, but most had slipped back into the sexual exploitation trade.

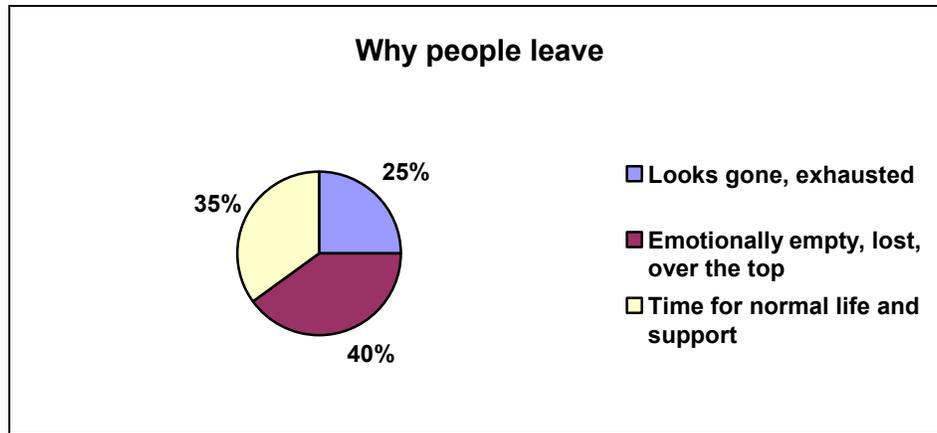
“Scars and too much damage has been done.” (Matthew)

“I found myself very dehumanizing and very degrading because it felt like I was doing something against my will even though it was my choice. It went against my morals.” (Emile)

“The violence definitely stepped up over the years. It definitely became a cold place, it isn’t fun anymore. For me, drugs were the paramount reason. When I first started I actually enjoyed the sex but I lost that. You become desensitized. It’s like going to take a pee. It’s not quite inhuman, but emotionally unconnected. I start feeling bad about myself. I didn’t feel good anymore and the chances of getting beat were getting higher.” (Darryl)

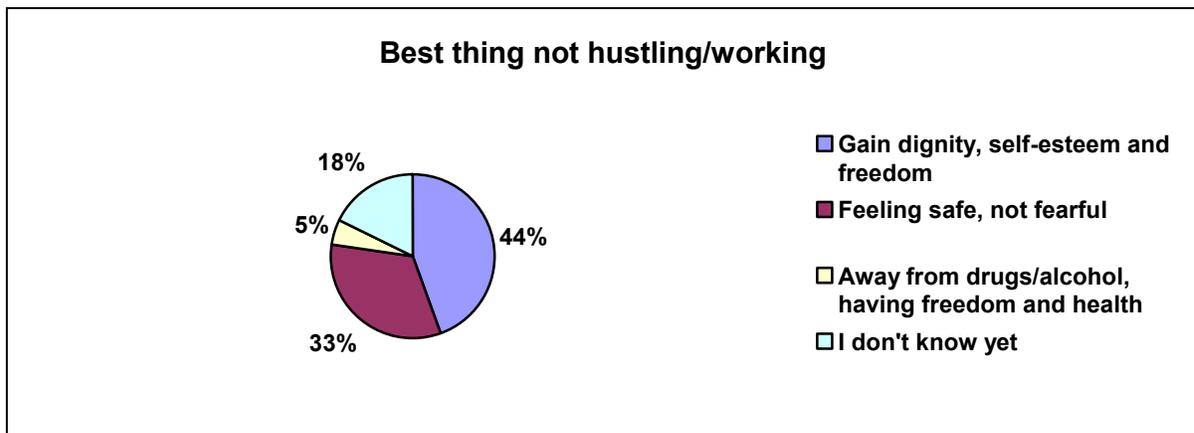
“I find it disgusting. Sleeping with old men is not fun. It’s gross.” (James)

“Tired of being a toy. Tired of the same old, same old.” (Larry)



5.2 Best Thing Not Hustling/Working

Only seven people that had exited were unable to identify the best thing about not working. Others who had short-term or multiple experiences with exiting were able to quickly identify the benefits.



The sense of dignity was something that was quickly identified. A sense of self-esteem returned to individuals who had exited. The sense of fear disappeared and was replaced with a sense of safety.

5.3 Returning

Unfortunately, many of those who had exited experienced a sense of relief for only a brief period of time. Almost half felt they returned to hustling/working because they were stranded, unemployed and/or feared becoming homeless.

It is important to remember that the majority of these young men had lived either as run aways, or had been homeless and had experience in the shelter system. Some saw that their only option was to return to shelters or to the sexual exploitation trade.

“Fear of fitting into this world...might not have the skills to learn and the guilt and the shame felt all the time.” (Sid)

“Money.” (Bobbie)

Some realized friends and roommates were significant factors in returning. Although they had decided to stop working/hustling, they still continued to be part of the lifestyle through roommates, etc. Unfortunately, this peripheral lifestyle becomes a slippery slope and most end up re-entering the trade.

“All my friends were hustlers. I felt like I was moving away from them.” (Simon)

The level of addictions also played a significant role in re-entering the sexual exploitation trade.

“I needed drugs.” (Ray)

“The money. The action. Even the violence I missed. The night hours. The drugs, the alcohol. All that.” (James)

5.4 Stress

Close to 70 percent had difficulty with stress once they ceased work. This stress most often occurred due to worry about survival. How exactly were they going to survive? Many were concerned with their ability, or lack of ability, to be a provider.

All of the individuals had limited experience with other forms of work. Minimum wage jobs require strength and endurance. Recent experience in the trade did not prepare any of them physically or mentally to return to this type of 'legitimate' work. There was a sense of abandonment.

“When I was put in situations with people who I used to work with, I felt uncomfortable and having to explain why and was a sell out and they would say “oh you’re better than us now” so there was a bit of anxiety over that. I never really had to explain myself but it was always there.” (Emile)

“Yes because I didn’t know the right words to express what I was needing be it a hug or just sheer frustration from full time work and I didn’t know how to ask someone else to help or do something because I didn’t know how to do it.” (Nicky)

5.5 Problems Sleeping

During periods of time when young men exited the trade, over three-quarters experienced difficulty sleeping. Street life entails long, late hours. It was not just the adjustment to change. Often it had to do with other physical changes from drug withdrawal or sleep disturbances from dreams and nightmares.

“Yes. Due to nightmares.” (Sandy)

“Oh yeah. They put me on heavy medication to put me to sleep. These pills would help to put me to sleep but you know, the nightmares. I’d sleep walk and I’d scream.” (Forrest)

5.6 Flashbacks

Sixty-five percent experienced flashbacks once they left the street. Flashbacks are a very real disturbance for many individuals. Often they recall some of the difficult times that occurred while in the sexual exploitation trade or experience unresolved issues they suppressed while in the trade.

“Yes. It only happened a couple of times but it was pretty traumatic for me. It was an uncomfortable thing. Anxiety all over again.” (Emile)

“I did have problems with flashbacks, yes. For me I have flashbacks about my younger childhood, and sometimes about the trade. I did have them, yes.” (Pat)

5.7 Anger

Over 60% who had exited experienced problems with anger once they left the trade. Some describe how they get angry now because they were once so guarded and/or stoned. Previously their anger was buried.

“Anger has always been a main issue for me because I was raised with it and if you don’t get your way you always just express it with violence.” (Kim)

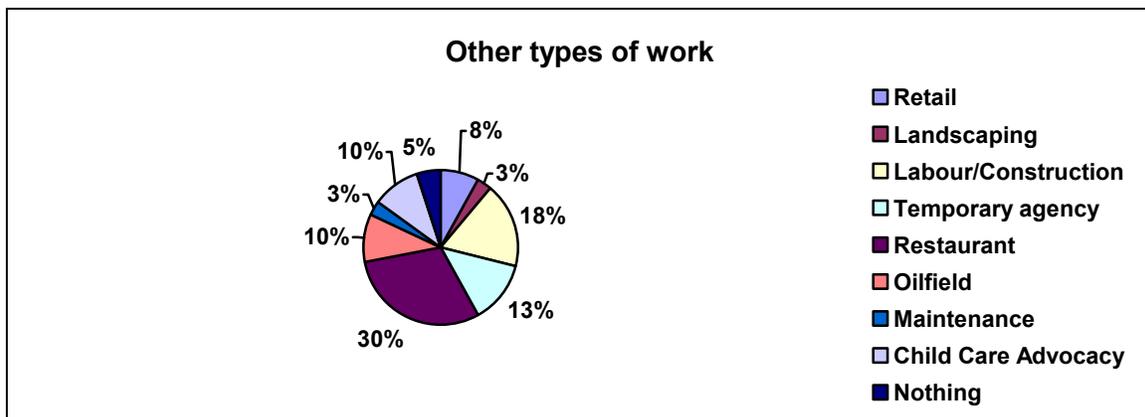
“Probably, but mostly related to other things like trying to quit drugs.” (Matt)

“Yes. If I had a gun I would like to shoot a lot of them. But I’m not like that.” (Randy)

5.8 Other Work

This population had dabbled in other types of work. Most times it was short-term, minimum wage employment. As mentioned in the section on education this is a group of young men where 45% had completed high school.

The issue seems to be in the transition from school to work. The skills required to secure stable, suitable employment seem to be absent. The ability to find short-term, minimum wage income employment is easy; even though it is insufficient when living in one of the most expensive cities in Canada. This group appears to have a gap between their education and a transition into consistent employment.



5.9 Messages For Service Providers

It is important to hear what these young men wanted to tell service providers. An overwhelming number wanted to let them know that it is not easy to leave the trade. As was found in *Strolling Away* (McIntyre, 2002), nearly everyone left at least once. The process of leaving is a challenge; they often do not have the resources to exit. Add to that their level of addiction, lack of employment and limited resources, and a successful exit often includes homelessness and/or shelter stays.

Most males do not have children or child care responsibilities. While the birth and caring of a child often brings with it government aid and a renewed family connection for females, this is not an option for young men.

The young men in this study felt there was a need for service providers to understand them.

Yes, young gay men and some transsexuals felt that they had support services available to them three nights a week at Boys R' Us; however, young heterosexual and bisexual men felt there were limited services. There was a sense of feeling uncomfortable at Boys R' Us Vancouver. They did not feel understood by service providers, nor did they believe program options were available to them.

“Be very sensitive and very compassionate and supportive to our needs and our battles.” (Kim)

“That there needs to be more of a presence of care out there.” (Emile)

“Realize that we're people. We've done what we've done for the large part because we've fallen through the cracks. A pattern happens and a lot of people get stuck in the pattern.” (Darryl)

“We're still being abused no matter what. It's unacceptable for us to be treated differently than others. I'm still a human being. And no matter what anybody's reasons are, they are still human beings and they should be treated like everyone else. They should be more open-minded before they can judge.” (Anthony)

The issue of drug rehabilitation programs was critical. Young men engage in sexual exploitation at a very young age and remain in the trade longer than women. Consequently, they have longer and more severe experiences of drug addiction.

“Well there could always be more services making it easier to get off drugs and stuff.” (Matt)

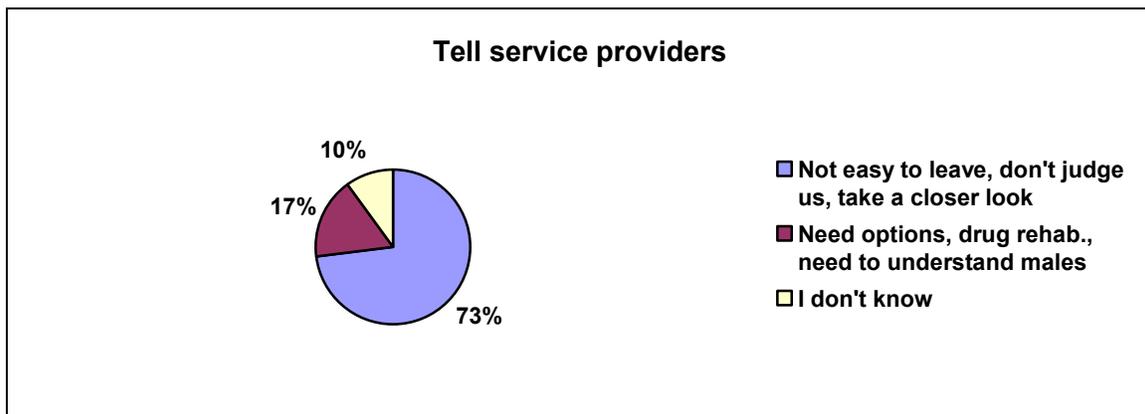
When asking the young men about services and service providers the interviewers often received comments saying they were grateful for this study. Some of those interviewed sent notes directly to us thanking us for doing this study.

Finally, they felt their voice about needing services to meet their needs was being heard. Condoms and coffee programs assist but there is a desire for more in-depth services.

“Something for men.” (Sid)

“I think there should be an on-going counseling service for them. It seems like most have experienced something from their early years. There should be some kind of counselor or mentoring thing where they can off load. The earlier that process begins the sooner they can slowly start to change who they are.” (Darryl)

“Counsellors for men.” (Carl)



5.10 Story Of 10 Who Exited

A total of 10 individuals interviewed had exited from the sexual exploitation trade. These 10 individuals had exited anywhere from 12 months up to 20 years. As a result, they bring with them a wealth of information on the challenges and process of leaving the sexual exploitation trade.

The majority of individuals left the trade more than once. Over three-quarters exited between two and five times before they had a successful exit. We need to understand that individuals do not exit just once in most cases. Many times it becomes a cumulative learning process.

The key findings from these 10 interviews are as follows:

- The majority of individuals left the trade more than once
- The issue of fear and abuse made five of the 10 want to exit
- The desire to have a “normal” life created the desire for seven of the 10 to exit
- The need for income pressured eight of the 10 to consider returning to the sexual exploitation trade
- Six of the 10 missed the excitement and the thrill of the street
- When people did go back, they were quick to say things such as better housing, drug and personal counseling , moving and being drug free could have prevented them from returning
- Over half clearly stated they left because ‘enough was enough’
- Two were fortunate enough to say they left because they found employment
- The desire for a normal life, relationship with friends and program support assisted in supporting someone to leave
- Eight of the 10 interviewed felt that supportive positive relationships and treatment were what assisted them in not returning to the street
- People talked about missing life on the edge and the money once they had left
- People identified financial stress, missing action, relationship problems and drug addiction as factors that almost made them return to the sexual exploitation trade
- One lesson people identified after leaving the street was that they could be a valuable person
- After people left, they said they wanted to stop everyone from doing this and that we need to understand it is a method of survival, it makes people uncomfortable and it is child abuse
- When you leave, you should expect to be broke and stressed
- There are consequences for the life they were part of

- When questioned as to what surprised them after they left, they were quick to say they can leave, they have self respect

“It’s heart wrenching to watch people go down there daily.” (Conrad)

Section 6: Health Issues

The Calgary Health Region was a strong supporter of the study in Alberta and assisted in the development of the health questions which were used in British Columbia. There was a real desire to understand the health-related issues with this population.

In order to obtain this information, we asked questions about the need to access health services as a result of an individual's hustling/working. Close to half had accessed health services as a result of the sexual exploitation trade. Two-thirds of those who had accessed the services stated they received good services and their needs were addressed.

"We went to a bondage and domination party in Surrey. They drugged us up and did something to us. I woke up and I was shaking and I was bleeding. Again I was on drugs. We went to some hospital in Burnaby and they were too busy for us. We got to the VGH, and I told them I'd pay them whatever. The cabby took all back roads to get us there quickly because I didn't know if she was going to die or what. They treated us there, and the two of us couldn't sit down for a week. They said it was funny we even made it there. I didn't actually feel the pain until the next day." (Forrest)

Unfortunately, not all had positive experiences with the medical community.

One young man experienced a humiliating episode after a bad date.

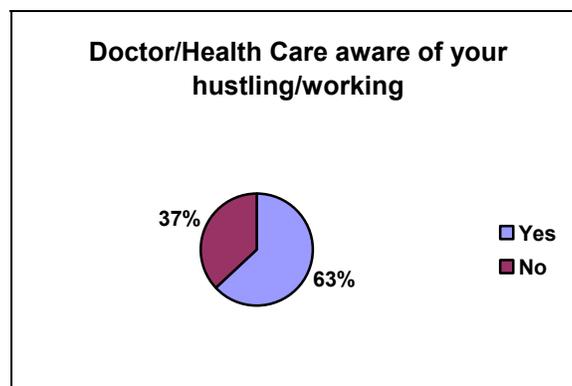
"It was unbelievably unprofessional. It was a moral issue for him when I explained what happened. Well, I was bleeding and uh, you know he asked me why. I was there for half an hour. This young doctor comes in and asks me what happened and obviously wasn't prepared for that. He told me I shouldn't be doing that. He didn't inform me of any of the medical or health stuff I should know. He was just so disgusted and he clearly didn't want to be there. I felt strange and dirty." (Toby)

6.1 Health Care Workers Aware of Hustling/Working

We then inquired about their own doctor or health care worker being aware of their involvement in the sexual exploitation trade. Over 60% of the population interviewed had informed health professionals of their hustling/working. What is important is that 45% of this population identified having a health concern.

These ranged from HIV, Hepatitis C, STD's, and mental health issues which were either connected with, influenced by or resulting from their involvement in the sexual exploitation trade.

It was of value to see that such a large percentage (63%) had kept health care professionals aware of their involvement in the street. This allowed for a greater level of awareness and proper health education and prevention.



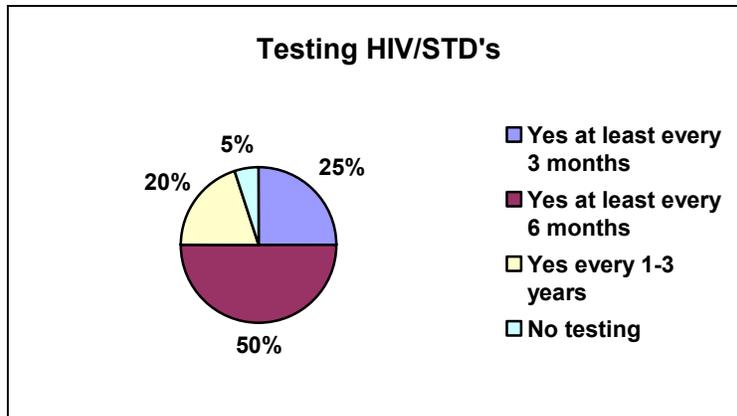
6.2 Testing For HIV / STD's

Many spoke highly of the medical services they had received to date. They felt it was important to have a good relationship with health care professionals. There was a strong commitment to being responsible with respect to HIV and other STD testing. Only one person had not been tested.

What is important is that the public education on HIV testing has made a significant impact. People understand the value and importance of regular testing.

6.3 Frequency HIV / STD Testing

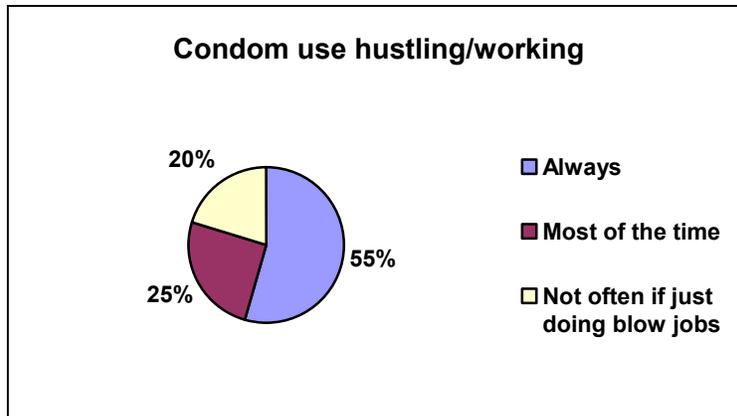
When we asked about the frequency of HIV / STD testing, what was important about our findings was how regular testing is of value. Three-quarters interviewed went for testing at least every six months. Over half went for testing at community clinics such as Three Bridges in Vancouver, PEERS and other street nurse services in Victoria.



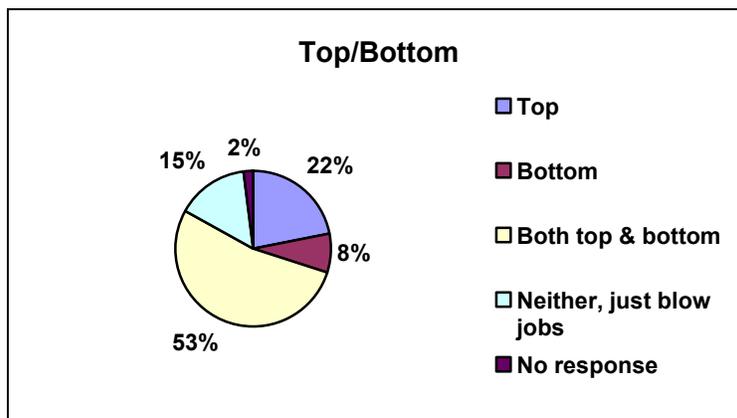
When asked what makes it easier to get testing done, over half spoke about having a neutral, confidential and anonymous service. One-quarter said nothing makes it easier and that they are always very nervous when they go for testing. There was a clear sense from half this population that they saw themselves as low risk for HIV. Five individuals interviewed were already confirmed as being HIV positive and/or having Hepatitis C.

6.4 Condom Use Hustling/Working

Next we asked about the importance of condom use while hustling/working. Public education on prevention of HIV and STD's has had some effect. The use of condoms while working/hustling was at 54%. Twenty-five percent use condoms most of the time, but 20% do not use condoms often when doing blow jobs.



One of the questions designed by experiential youth also used the terms ‘top boy/ bottom boy’. The term in the gay community is top or bottom. This term refers to the physical positioning of anal penetration. A person who fulfils the role as top will deliver anal penetration. The person who is bottom will be the receiver who is being anally penetrated.



It is revealing that the use and value of condoms is established and followed in a consistent manner according to those interviewed. There is clarity that condom use is imperative when engaging in anal sexual intercourse, as there is an understanding that the risk is high.

There is a lack of clarity in reference to transmission guidelines via oral sex. A need exists to have a clearly established medical position on the risk of disease transmission (STD/HIV) for youth and youth serving agencies. Suffice to say, the issue of condom use for oral sex is rather cloudy and Health Canada standards should be outlined and followed.

Although we found a majority always use condoms, there appears to be a need for clarification on the use of condoms when the activity is oral in nature. It appears there is a lack of clarity as to the potential effects of unprotected oral sex.

“For anal sex I always do but for everything else it is negotiable.” (Dermot)

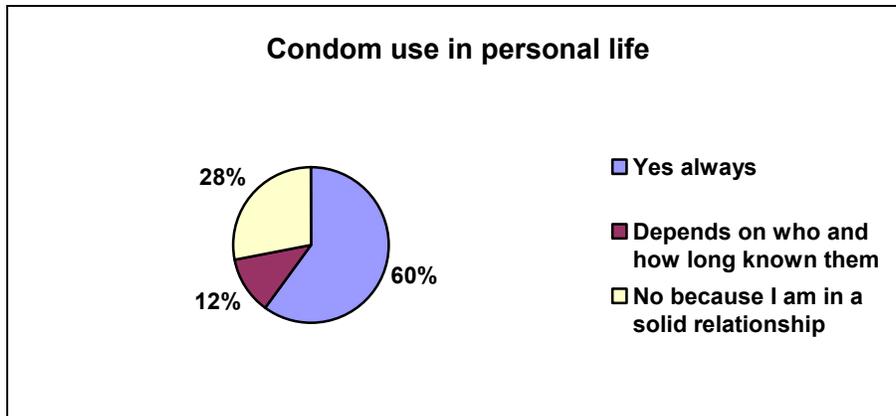
“One hundred percent of the time.” (Nicky)

“I find a lot of gay people don’t like wearing condoms. They don’t care it seems. They don’t think that by sucking me off they can catch anything.” (Randy)

“Some clients don’t like to use condoms, and so they’ll pay more money. We as hustlers have to protect ourselves though.” (Pat)

6.5 Condom Use In Personal Life

There is a strong awareness of the importance of condom use in their personal lives as well. We found that 65% will always use condoms in their personal lives. One-quarter will use condoms depending on who the person is.



A substantial portion, that being 28%, say they do not use condoms as they are in a solid personal relationship.

What is refreshing about this information is that there is an awareness of the need for condom use even in a personal situation. Five of the individuals interviewed are HIV positive and/or Hepatitis C but they clearly understand the need to protect others.

It was important to understand the medical services this population accesses. Medical services provided by street vans play an important role in the lives of these young men. Programs in both Vancouver and Victoria provide important public health information and direct medical services. Programs such as PEERS, Three Bridges, Boys R'Us, Covenant House, The Gathering Place and AIDS Vancouver Island provide a lifeline to this population. These programs reinforce the awareness of condom use and the importance of regular testing.

Overall, what is of importance is that the critical need for awareness and action regarding health protection from HIV and other STD's is on the radar screen within this population. They are aware of the risks, but more importantly these young men are taking action to protect themselves. Health and AIDS professionals should be praised for achieving this current awareness and practice, and it is important to keep this information relevant and updated. There is a fear some will see AIDS as being curable and therefore become lax in using condoms. There is a need to keep updated and accurate health information for this population.

Section 7: Discoveries

#1: Comparable Histories Of Abuse

Both young men and women have comparable backgrounds of sexual and physical abuse prior to their entrance into the sexual exploitation trade. What is key to understand is that these are children with backgrounds of abuse who have entered into the sexual exploitation trade. For young men, this background of sexual abuse was prominent. Seventy-eight percent reported sexual abuse and 90% reported physical abuse.

#2: Creating A Construct

It was clear that many young men created an image or construct that allowed them to work while in the trade. A number of different methods to create constructs existed.

Young men strive to create a construct to achieve a level of performance while on the street because they are placed in the position of needing to achieve sexual satisfaction (eg. an erection and/or orgasm) for their customers.

According to many of the young men I spoke with, many talked about the pressure, need or outcome to demonstrate physical arousal whether they were the receiver or the deliverer.

Even if they are taking the lead in giving a customer a blow job, there is an expectation that some form of excitement, that is an erection, can be sighted. This becomes very challenging for a young man particularly if he identifies himself as heterosexual. Young men are expected to demonstrate 'buy-in'; whereas, women have the advantage of 'faking it'. Men must show some physical evidence of being sexually authentic so they select a construct in which they can achieve what is expected of them from customers.

As a result, a variety of different constructs exist, ranging from:

- Gay for pay
- Straight for pay
- Tranny for pay
- Bisexual
- Gay

#3: Male Prostitution Fear Factor

During the years I have been involved with the topic of sexually exploited youth, I have often spoke of the original 50 youth I interviewed in the early nineties.

There seemed to be a pattern emerging that focused on the 'poor young women'; however, often I would have to clarify that nine of the original 50 were young men.

The issue of young men in the trade made many uncomfortable. To ease this feeling, people would presume that those nine males worked with female customers. However, when I advised them that the majority of young men were involved with adult males, there was a great level of discomfort and angst.

It has been a challenge to gain an understanding as to why and how we are able to so readily accept young women in the sexual exploitation trade and not young men. There is a sense that as long as the activity is heterosexual, it is therefore 'normal'.

The issue of adult men purchasing sexual services from other young men raises discomfort with both the general public and service professionals. This level of discomfort is raised even higher when it is pointed out that not all customers are themselves gay men. Many are closeted married men. When we speak about young men in the trade we are asking people to stretch outside of their heterosexual comfort zone.

#4: Begin Young & Work Longer

Over 60%, or 25 individuals interviewed, began work under the age of 18 years. Twelve of those, or 30% of the young men interviewed had begun work under the age of 16.

This means that criminal charges could have been laid in 73% of those cases under Section 212(4) of the Criminal Code of Canada, which prohibits anyone from 'attempting, or purchasing the services for the purposes of prostitution of someone under the age of 18'. To my knowledge, no single case involving males was brought into the criminal justice system.

A group of 15 young men entered the trade over the age of 18 years. They were hard pressed to find alternative options, selecting this lifestyle as a short-term solution.

Young men averaged nine years working on the street. Nineteen of these young men had been involved in the street trade for over 10 years. Eleven of these young men had been involved for over 15 years.

Overall, young men enter the trade younger and work longer as part of this lifestyle of voluntary desperation. Young women are often handed a lifeline of support. A significant majority of women from *Strolling Away* (McIntyre, 2002) had birthed children. Young men do not have the option to physically birth a child and as we have seen, if they father a child they are often separated from any benefits.

Nearly every young man in this study had at one point or another spent time in a shelter.

The voluntary desperation of the street can often only be replaced by life in homeless shelters. Life in the trade is often their only option to being homeless.

#5: Flying Under The Radar

What became clear to me is that many of the young men in this study had and continue to fly 'under the radar' of most service providers.

The lack of awareness of males is two-fold. Some fly under to avoid contact and interaction with professionals because of their backgrounds in care and drug use. Many avoid contact with family and friends. Others are harder to identify, given the difference in demeanor and working styles of young men and women. Males do not wear short skirts or stiletto heels, nor do they circle around corners when working. They are more mobile.

#6: They Have Unique Service Needs

This research provided an opportunity to listen, hear and view the service needs of young men. Clearly, they were frustrated with the services they presently receive. They feel these services are an add-on to services provided for young women in the sexual exploitation trade, are minor in scope and reflect a female lens. Unfortunately, there is only one specialized service in Vancouver for young men and its program is limited by the hours it is available.

This one service does not meet the needs of all young men. It is obvious that they have unique needs, and they have requested that we listen to them.

#7: Public Education On Condom Use & HIV Testing Has Worked

It is refreshing to hear about the awareness and safety knowledge this population has gained through public education. They understand the need for condom use and have become committed to using them while working. The message has been clearly understood. The only time they consistently identified the lack of condom use was when they were in a long-term, committed relationship with the same person.

A strong awareness exists about the need and value of consistent HIV testing. The majority realize that consistent testing is both a preventive and self-protection tool.

Again, public education on condom use and consistent AIDS/HIV testing has worked with this population. Public education around the prevention of HIV/AIDS has also resulted in a significant level of awareness amongst this population.

There does however, appear to be a lack of clarity around the issue of choosing to use or not to use a condom when oral sex is involved.

A need exists to gain a clear medical opinion on this issue in order to provide an appropriate platform for any public education awareness campaign. A great deal of inconsistency exists on this issue between service providers, clients, and other professionals in the community.

#8: Connection Between Street & Drugs Is Longer And More Intense

Young men are spending a greater length of time on the street than young women. For many young women, they spend less time on the street and often take breaks to birth children. Hopefully, in most situations these breaks also disrupt drug use. The birth of a child can often work as a catalyst to disrupt, alter and cease drug use and street involvement. Again, young men do not have this opportunity. In many cases, this results in greater and more extensive drug use. It is possible that given the second stigma role of 'gay for pay' these young men feel both a greater level of shame and therefore drug use increases.

#9: Family Ties

The greater the length of time a person spends in the sexual exploitation trade, the greater likelihood it stresses and alters family relations. Over half of those interviewed had either a strained or non-existent relationship with their family. This strain and stress often results from a family's awareness of their son being in the sexual exploitation trade. Only four individuals were from the Vancouver

lower mainland area. Only 50% of those interviewed said that someone in their family was aware of their working. Many individuals kept their work a secret and they either had no contact with their family or just kept the secret. Twelve of the young men interviewed were from British Columbia. Five were born and raised outside of Canada. Distance creates a greater opportunity to keep their work a secret.

#10: Run Away Programs

Eighty-eight percent of this population had run away. What is important from this finding is that 75% of those who had run away were offered food or shelter with sexual conditions attached to the offer.

Running away plays a vital role in the potential entrance into the sexual exploitation trade. Often it is the trigger that initiates entrance into the trade.

Section 8: Concluding Discussion & Recommendations

Young Men In The Sexual Exploitation Trade

In 2002, it was recommended in *Strolling Away* that a national study on males in the sexual exploitation trade would be of value; however, it was felt that the attempt of gaining an inclusive national study would be both onerous and time consuming. As a result, a decision was made to proceed one province at a time.

The Province of Alberta took the lead. They supported the need and provided the necessary funds required for such a study. They were joined by a series of anonymous donors.

Shortly thereafter, *Under the Radar: The Sexual Exploitation of Young Men* caught the attention of the Province of British Columbia. As a result, we were able to move the study into British Columbia, working closely with Covenant House in Vancouver, The Federal Government National Crime Prevention Centre (NCPC), The Government of British Columbia and some anonymous donors.

Funding has already been secured to move this project into the provinces of Saskatchewan and Manitoba. The Federal Government National Crime

Prevention Centre, the Provinces of Saskatchewan and Manitoba and anonymous donors have agreed to fund the continuation of this study. These studies will be completed in late 2006. Once completed, we will have a comprehensive picture of the issue of male sexual exploitation throughout Western Canada.

Under the Radar: The Sexual Exploitation of Young Men - British Columbia Edition provided the opportunity to design, enact, implement, review and complete a study on young men in the sexual exploitation trade. It also provided an opportunity to understand this issue from a male perspective, from the design of the questions, to the printing of this document. As males enter the sexual exploitation trade younger and remain longer, it is important that we gain as much information about young men involved in the sexual exploitation trade as possible.

Recommendation #1:

Efforts should be directed towards supporting the future expansion of this study to other provinces. Upon completion of the four western provinces those being British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba, a report should be developed outlining the differences and similarities across Western Canada. Ontario, Quebec and Nova Scotia should be considered as future sites in order to allow for national, eastern, central, and western perspectives.

This population tends to be rather transient, so the opportunity to gain a national perspective as well as regional differences will be of assistance.

Outreach Program Support

Outreach programs offer a critical service element for youth involved in the sexual exploitation trade. These programs offer a lifeline for young people who are involved in the trenches, a lifestyle which often further isolates them from any support or community connections. Of the 40 interviewed, only 12 were born and raised in British Columbia. Only four of these individuals were born and raised in the Vancouver Lower mainland area. The result is that only 10% of this population had family close at hand. These distant family and community ties drift and become strained during this challenging time. As mentioned before, young men enter the sexual exploitation trade earlier and stay much longer, which results in these ties drifting further and further away.

Outreach Programs therefore become a more critical service for this population. As these young men have a lengthier time on the street, they also have more challenges with extensive drug addictions.

Recommendation #2:

A need exists for Outreach Programs to gain an exemption, relaxation to Safe Care legislation authorizing involuntary intervention if it becomes a reality. Often outreach programs offer the only lifeline of support for youth involved in the sexual exploitation trade.

Abuse Services

A minimum of 78% of both young men and women had a history of sexual abuse before entering the sexual exploitation trade. Seventy-eight percent with previous abuse histories means that unresolved abuse could act as an antecedent to entrance into the trade. As found in *Strolling Away* (McIntyre, 2002), often when attempting to or actually exiting the trade, unresolved original abuse resurfaces. The issue of a history of being violated in a physical manner prior to entrance into the sexual exploitation trade was 90%. It is fair to say that the majority of these young men in the sexual exploitation trade had background histories of both physical sexual abuses before slipping into the lifestyle.

Recommendation #3:

That we publicly acknowledge both young men and women are being exploited in the sexual exploitation trade, and that we provide services to help them exit.

In over three-quarters of cases, both young men and women have a history of sexual and/or physical abuse. They are children who have been abused and are now being sexually exploited.

There is a need to ensure that children who are sexually and physically violated have the option to access treatment.

It is critical that we have services available for those exiting the sexual exploitation trade. Remember, for these young men, they have been in the sexual exploitation trade longer and the issue of homophobia circles around them. We must offer long-term clinical services to the populations who have escaped under the radar for far too long. As was discovered in “Strolling Away” once an individual exits the sexual exploitation trade, former memories of abuse before and during the trade often flood individuals. There is a need to provide ongoing clinical support to this population during their reintegration back into mainstream life. This will increase the likelihood of a successful departure from the trade.

Gender Non-Conformity Training

A need exists for program staff that provide support services to this population to gain a greater level of knowledge and comfort with this population, especially regarding how they construct their own often fluid gender roles. Workers are

often confused, uncomfortable or unaware of the profiles of young men in the sexual exploitation trade. We live in a culture that presumes heterosexuality as the norm.

These young men have stepped outside societal norms in order to survive. No one wants to see a young woman in the sexual exploitation trade, yet there is a greater understanding of this as it is heterosexual in nature.

As we have seen, young men create a 'construct' to be able to survive in the sexual exploitation trade. Staff involved in programs and services need to understand and accept the constructs these populations have used to survive.

Training and information is required in the following constructs:

- Gay for pay
- Straight for pay
- Tranny for pay
- Bisexual
- Gay

Recommendation #4:

That staff working with young men in the sexual exploitation trade be provided with gender non-conformity training. As discussed, there is often a level of discomfort, overtones of homophobia and a general lack of awareness and comfort amongst program staff.

Awareness of Services Needed For Males

We need to look for and provide services specifically designed for young men. It is important that we understand they work differently than young women. Young women in the sexual exploitation trade work from a heterosexual framework. Even when young women are under the influence of a pimp it is heterosexual. Young men, regardless of their own personal sexual orientation, do not work in the sexual exploitation trade from the dominant heterosexual framework.

Service providers need to take the time to let a group of young men explain the types of services that would be of assistance to them. It is important that in designing such services we recognize the need to reflect both their work and personal sexual orientation. In other words, a young man who had to work as 'gay for pay', but is heterosexual in his private life will have different service needs than a young man who works and lives as a gay young man.

Services provided by Boys R'Us predominantly attract young men who are gay or transgender. A 'gay for pay' young man would not feel he fits into this service design. We need to take this into consideration in the support and treatment of this population. A young gay man interviewed had nothing but sympathy for 'gay for pay' young men.

It is important that we understand there are many young men who are being sexually exploited in the trade. We need to get these young men on our radar screen and talk to them about their service and support needs. We need to stretch outside our standard heterosexual comfort zone.

Recommendation #5

That service providers create the opportunity for young men in and out of the sexual exploitation trade to tell service providers about the services they require. We should not assume that one service will fit all. This type of information could be discovered through focus groups and individual interviews with young men from the sexual exploitation trade. A neutral facilitator would be a critical step. The use of experiential youth could also facilitate in attaining accurate needs.

Drug Addiction

Young men are remaining in the sexual exploitation trade much longer than young women. They are unable to physically birth children, so this exit route, which can often lead to family and state support, is unavailable to them.

Pregnancy often leads to a decrease, if not a total elimination of drug consumption. Males cannot physically carry a child so often the drug intake is not interrupted.

As we found, young men are averaging six to nine years in the sexual exploitation trade. We know that this is associated with extensive and multiple drug use. The attempt to mask pain is managed through long-term self-medication.

Recommendation # 6

That a series of detox and rehabilitation beds be established for young men exiting the trade. Years of extensive drug consumption requires an intervention that will provide them with temporary accommodation while detoxification and rehabilitation takes place.

Housing & Training

Nearly every individual interviewed had spent time living in shelters. This included shelters for adults and youth. Shelter living is challenging. Often extensive stays and involvement in the sexual exploitation trade becomes a solution to homelessness. This group has experienced shelter stays and found this type of living extremely difficult. Once an individual is identified as working in the sexual exploitation trade, this label sticks.

In addition to detoxification and rehabilitation, we need to provide the opportunity for low-income affordable housing, as well as employment training and support.

This group has very little traditional work experience however close to 50% has completed high school. The challenge they have faced is in the transition from school to work. The challenge becomes even greater at this point, considering many of them have been in the sexual exploitation trade for an average of nine years. Assistance with basic employment skills training, and the option of trade tickets and apprentice programs is essential.

Recommendation # 7

That safe affordable accommodation is provided for this population once they have completed drug detoxification and rehabilitation. This population requires safe, supportive living arrangements. Coupled with this, they need help seeking alternative employment. Close to half of this population had completed high school and some college and university; however, they have limited employment skills and experience. Standard employment assistance programs will be required to assist them in supporting a successful exit from the sexual exploitation trade.

Supply & Demand

As was discovered in *Strolling Away* (McIntyre, 2002), we place most of our attention on the supply end of the equation, meaning we put our energy into those young persons working in the sexual exploitation trade.

From this research it became apparent that our attention, minimal prevention materials and intervention are directed towards the supply of youth involved in the sexual exploitation trade. Outreach programs and secure treatment are designed to support or contain young people who have entered the trade. These forms of intervention are directed at keeping the individual who is involved in the street, safe.

It is clear that if we are going to conquer this issue, a demand approach must be part of the equation. We need to educate with the goal of affecting and deterring present and future customers. A need exists to alter the demand for such services. During these interviews, both male and female sex workers spoke about the continual flow of customers wanting to purchase their services. This presented a challenge for those trying to escape the trade (*Strolling Away: McIntyre, 2002:37*)

We have not kept sexually exploited young men on the radar screen. We have ignored them. By ignoring them, we have also not addressed the demand side, that being the customers. Again we have ignored both the supply and the demand side of sexually exploited young men.

The criminal justice system pays minimal, if any, attention to the customers of young men. If 'communicating for the purpose' charges occur, they are most often directed towards customers of women in the sexual exploitation trade.

In other words, police undercover sting operations are directed towards charging the male customers of young sexually exploited women. The reverse is also true. Young sexually exploited women are more likely to be detected by the police and charged with ‘communicating’.

Our view of the trade is classically heterosexual. We are prepared and comfortable to intervene both from a social and legal perspective with young sexually exploited women and their male customers. This is the traditional lens, or vision we have of the sex trade and the manner in which we intervene. It is a patriarchal, heterosexual view. We are uncomfortable and reluctant to intervene with young men who are being sexually exploited by adult men. The reality is, men are having sex with boys and paying for it.

Recommendation #8

That we approach the issue of demand, that being customers, with an equal balance for both young men and women who are being sexually exploited. Like women, these men are young people who are in need of our assistance.

Peer Education

A need exists to educate peers that the road out of the sexual exploitation trade is challenging.

Both genders who have exited the trade identified challenges in this process. They attempt to return to their communities after exiting the sexual exploitation trade; however, many feel different, separate and outside their original peer group. They are often ridiculed, teased and challenged by their peers.

For young men, the ridicule of stretching outside the traditional heterosexual framework for an extended drug-addicted time can haunt them.

Recommendation #9

That prevention information is directed towards both young men and women. We need to provide information that both young men and women in the sexual exploitation trade experienced sexual abuse in their part. We should support, not ridicule them.

Community Responsibility

Sixty percent of young men in the sexual exploitation trade had the experience of having a “sugar daddy”. Many of the young men interviewed were clear that these relationships were sexual in nature and included an older gay man seeking a relationship with a younger adolescent. This relationship often occurred in public.

The sugar daddy uses the public arena to display the relationship he has with the young man, who often serves as a status symbol for the sugar daddy. Numerous gifts and financial rewards are attached to this often temporary role. Many of the young men interviewed spoke about being fired or replaced by a new younger adolescent as they began to age.

While there are numerous relationships where age differences occur among both genders, the sugar daddy relationship is particularly damaging because the exploitation occurs in such a young and vulnerable population of young males. (Eric Berndt, November 2004).

An awareness must be created in all communities that exploitative relationships should not be tolerated. Given the nature of the male sexual exploitation trade, this awareness is particularly important in the gay community as this is an arena where sugar daddys 'parade' their adolescent partner.

Recommendation #10

That the community-at-large recognize the damaging effects of sugar daddy relationships on this young and vulnerable population. In addition, an awareness of the economic disadvantages facing young males involved in the trade must be taken into account and considered as a symptom of the differential power relationship existent in sugar daddy relationships.

Transitioning Support

The transition from the street into the community is one that is difficult for young persons exiting the sexual exploitation trade. As we have noted, young men remain in the sexual exploitation trade longer than young women. Often young women leave the trade because they have birthed, or desire to birth children. This is neither a motivator, nor an opportunity for young men to exit. During the exiting process from the sexual exploitation trade, there is an inherent danger in socializing with peers who are still in the trade. There is the risk of slipping back into the lifestyle, which involves drug consumption. Little “formal” community support exists for this population. Often I and my researchers transitioned into support people answering questions for those exiting the trade. Nothing formally exists for helping this population exit the trade.

Recommendation # 11

Develop mentoring connections for the population who are exiting. A need exists for those exiting to have support from those who have exited. An experiential voice can assist an individual who is in the process of exiting the sexual exploitation trade. There are many questions, and those who have been through such a journey can better answer challenges facing those who are exiting.

This type of service could be set up in a formal structure through an agency that works with this population or informally within the volunteer community network. This network could be set up in formal face to face meetings, telephone or online support.

Public Education

When we speak about the issue of youth prostitution or sexually exploited youth, we often see this as focused around young women. The prevention, intervention and support materials are primarily if not exclusively targeted to young women.

Recommendation # 12

A review of prevention, intervention and re-integration materials be completed and adjusted to speak to the sexual exploitation of youth regardless of gender. Materials must recognize the differences facing young women and men in the sexual exploitation trade. Education for both genders needs to be covered in these materials, emphasizing that the trade is a risk for both genders.

Harm Reduction

The methods used in harm reduction approaches to drug abuse have been adopted for youth in the sexual exploitation trade.

As was noted clearly in *Strolling Away* (McIntyre, 2002), it was suggested by experiential individuals that outreach services and professionals should directly offer respite and exiting support. There is value in offering condoms and bad date sheets; however; the offer to discuss exiting is of great value to those working in the sexual exploitation trade. The ultimate goal must always remain moving someone out of the trade.

Recommendation #13

That an evaluation occurs of harm reduction approaches such as distributing bad date sheets, mobile support services to sexually exploited youth. The opportunity exists to move into a more direct approach to intervention. The ultimate goal must always remain moving someone out of the trade.

Youth In Care

Over 50% of those interviewed for this study were under government care. As noted by Shauna Parks-Denton, a former Executive Director of the Alberta Youth in Care and Custody Network and a Board Member of the National Youth In Care Network, “often youth from care have gaps in their sexual knowledge and education.” This is even more pronounced with young men from care.

Recommendation #14

That the National Youth In Care Network embrace the topic of sexual awareness. There is a need to ensure that youth from care have the same knowledge base as the general youth population. This information could be delivered through DVD, booklets or lectures.

Running Away

We have seen that 88% of this population had a history of running away prior to their entrance into the street. What is important is the majority of those that had runaway from home had backgrounds of physical and sexual abuse. While on the run, 75% of those were offered food or shelter from a stranger with conditions attached, often sexual in nature. This often became a means for an individual's entrance into the trade.

Recommendation #15

That we develop and pay closer attention to youth who are running away. We need to recognize this as the early warning system for possible entrance into the sexual exploitation trade for both genders. For youth, service providers and professionals, the opportunity to successfully support and stabilize a situation is more likely to occur prior to years of abuse and drug use on the street.

Appendix 1: Strolling Away & Under the Radar

Background Prior Sexual Exploitation Trade (males only)

	Average Age First Trick	Total Years On The Street	Sexual Abuse	Physical Abuse	In Government Care	Aboriginal Descent
Total 38 Interviews	14 yr	260 yr Avg. 7yrs	84%	79%	61%	26%
Strolling Away						
Strolling Away	15 yr	200 yrs Avg. 6 yrs	82%	78%	61%	24%
33 Females (87%)						
Strolling Away	12 yr	60 yrs Avg. 12 yrs	100%	100%	60%	40%
5 Males (13%)		*				
Under the Radar AB	15 yr **	322 yrs Avg. 8.7 yrs	68%	86%	51%	54%
37 males (100%)						
Under the Radar BC	15 yr***	372 yrs Avg. 9.3 yrs	78%	90%	46%	43%
40 Males (100%)	17 yr***					

* Sample size includes only 5 males

** 48% commenced street work under the age of 16 (18 individuals)
73% commenced street work under the age of 18 (9 individuals)
27% commenced street work as young adult that being 18 years of age and older (10 individuals)

*** The age of 15 was found for those 25 individuals that began under the age of 18. When including the 15 outliers the average age was 17.

Appendix 2: Those Who Entered Over Age of 18

Int.#	Age Start	Length Work	Education	Work	Aboriginal	Care	Sex Abuse	Sexual Orientation	Sol. Gen.	Why Start?	Why Stay?	Place Birth
3	18	6-10	Grad High School	Hair, Make-up, Hotels	No	No	Yes	Gay	No	Easy \$	No choice	Vancouver BC
4	18	2-4	University	Events Fundraiser	No	No	Yes	Gay	Yes	Wanted thrill	No choice	Toronto Ont
6	19	4-6	College	Fast Food Labor	No	Yes	Yes	Straight	Yes	Easy\$	Addictions	Murray BC
8	19	1-2	Grad High School	Labor	No	No	No	Bisexual	No	Easy \$	Addictions	St John NB
10	27	15-20	Grad High School	Account	No	Yes	Yes	Gay	No	Easy \$	No choice	Thompson Man
15	19	10-15	Grade School	Teller Housekeeper	Yes	Yes	Yes	Straight	Yes	Easy \$	Addictions	Lethbridge AB
16	29	10-15	Grade School	Hotels Lawns	Yes	No	No	Tranny	Yes	Easy\$	No choice	Prince George BC
17	23	2-4	Grad High School	Hair	Yes	No	Yes	Tranny	Yes	Easy\$	Addictions	Terrace BC
20	19	15-20	Grad High School	Lifeguard hair	Yes	Yes	Yes	Gay	Yes	Young	No choice	Edmonton AB
21	35	6-10	University	Mix	No	No	Yes	Straight	Yes	Young	No choice	Calcutta India
24	18	2-4	Grad High School	Trades	Yes	No	Yes	Straight	Yes	Easy\$	No choice	Fort McMurray AB
26	19	6-10	Grad High School	Coffee, Hair	No	No	Yes	Straight	No	Young	Addictions	Toronto Ont
28	18	6-10	High School	Waiter landscape bars	No	No	No	Gay	No	Wanted thrill	Addictions	Sydney NS
30	25	6-10	High School	All kinds	No	No	Yes	Straight	Yes	Easy\$	No choice	Burnaby BC
37	20	2-4	Grad High School	Food Del	Yes	No	No	Gay	No	Easy\$	No choice	Halifax NS

Appendix 3: Male Sex Trade Worker Exit Program

B. C. SOCIETY FOR MALE SURVIVORS OF SEXUAL ABUSE

~ MALE SEX TRADE WORKER EXIT PROGRAM ~

The B. C. Society for Male Survivors of Sexual Abuse recently received a grant from the City of Vancouver to initiate an Exit Program for male sex trade workers. The city grant covers the cost of running a life skills program for this population. The entire project includes Victim Services support, a program that is already in place and funded by the provincial Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General. Clinical services in the form of individual and group therapy will also be made accessible to male sex trade workers, whenever funds can be found to cover that cost and therefore be provided free of charge to clients.

Part of the city grant involves networking with other agencies who provide services specifically to male sex trade workers, or who have these young men as part of their client case load. It is the intention of this program to coordinate services so that the specific needs of each individual will be met in a way that is most conducive to their recovery from historical trauma, to skills development and ultimately to a successful exit from the sex trade.

Glossary

BAD DATE

When a customer/trick harms and/or rips off a sex trade worker. This often involves physical abuse and sometimes weapons.

BISEXUAL

This refers to an individual that is physically, emotionally and sexually attracted to individuals of either gender.

BLOW JOB

Oral sex/fellatio that a sex trade worker gives to a customer/trick. Male sex trade workers will often allow a customer/trick to give them a blow job. "French" is another term used for blow job.

BOTTOM

This term refers to the physical positioning of anal penetration. The individual referred to as bottom will be the individual who is being anally penetrated.

BUDDY

Customer/trick who purchases a man for sexual purposes in exchange for money.

CONFUSED

This refers to an individual who is confused about their sexual identity. They do not see themselves as being straight, gay or bisexual.

CONDOMS

Safe sex, sheiks, rubbers, prophylactics and covers are other terms used for condoms.

DATE

Customer/trick who purchases the man for sexual purposes in exchange for money.

DOPE PUSHER

An individual who sells non-prescription or prescription drugs illegally.

FEMINIST RESEARCH

“Feminist Research investigates the aspects of women’s oppression while seeking at the same time to be part of the struggle against it.” (McIntyre, 1995:15)

GAME

Slang term used for the activity of prostitution.

GAY

This refers to a male who is emotionally, physically and sexually attracted to the male gender. They have accepted and embraced a gay sexual identity in their personal life.

GAY BASHING

Is an activity that usually involves straight males whose homophobia results in violence towards gay males or those who appear to be gay in the sexual exploitation trade.

GAY FOR PAY

This refers to a young man who is heterosexual in their private sexual orientation, however will interact as gay strictly for pay in the sexual exploitation trade.

GLORY HOLE

This refers to a secluded private booth where a man can insert his penis and he is stimulated by a hidden individual.

GROUNDING THEORY

“At the beginning of the research, interviews usually consist of open-ended conversations during which respondents are allowed to talk with no imposed limitations of time. Often researchers sit back while the respondents tell their stories”. (Feminist Research, Glaser & Strauss, 1967:76)

HAND JOB

Sex trade worker masturbates customer.

HIGH

The physiological and mental reaction to drugs.

HUSTLER

Term most often used for male sex worker.

JOHN

The customer who purchases a man for sexual purposes in exchange for money. They are also referred to as "customer", "trick", "buddy" or "date".

LINES OF INQUIRY

The method of open-ended questioning on a specific topic.

MAINSTREAM FOLKS

People who are not involved in prostitution.

PCHIP

The Protection of Children Involved in Prostitution (PCHIP) was enacted in 1999 in Alberta. This legislation recognizes that children involved in prostitution are victims of sexual abuse and require support. Police and/or the director of Child Welfare may apprehend and confine a young person in a Protective Safe House.

PROSTITUTION

An individual who engages in sexual activity for the exchange of money or products.

PUMP

The energy, activity and unpredictable nature of street life described by sex trade workers on the street.

REGULAR

A consistent, repetitive customer who will interact with the same sexually exploited young man.

RITUALS

A pattern of behaviour that occurs in specific situations.

SEXUAL EXPLOITATION TRADE

Profession where youth engage in sexual activities with adults for money or products.

SNOWBALL SAMPLING

Results when persons interviewed tell others about the research and/or identify others to be interviewed.

SHELTERS

Large temporary accommodation that houses numerous individuals in the community.

SQUARE

A person who is not knowledgeable about the street.

STRAIGHT PEOPLE

In this case, it does not necessarily mean heterosexual. This refers to people not involved in prostitution.

STRAIGHT FOR PAY

This refers to a young man who is homosexual in his private sexual identity. For survival, this young man will perform heterosexual sexual activities for pay.

STROLL

Area where someone works on the street. Known as the 'stroll' because the sex worker walks up and down it. This constant movement was necessary historically because of the old Vagrancy charges. There is a distinction of "high stroll", meaning more expensive sex workers, like "high track". "Low stroll" is the same as "low track" meaning less expensive sex workers.

SUGAR DADDY

Refers to an older gay man who seeks a relationship with a younger gay man. This often involves sexual activity. The young man is rewarded with presents and necessities. The younger male is also often the exclusive 'ownership' of the older gay man in public places. A gay for pay young man would not seek out a sugar daddy relationship.

TOP

This term refers to the physical positioning of anal penetration. The individual referred to as top will be the individual who is anally penetrating.

TRACK

The street where you work is known as the "track" or "stroll". No one knows for sure why it is called track. Some relevant connotations are: that it is the wrong side of the tracks; track marks up and down arms; often by railway tracks; people drive up and down like they are on tracks. "Tracks" are sometimes seen as high and low.

TRADE

Slang term used for the activity of prostitution.

TRANNNY FOR PAY

This refers to a young man who is either gay or heterosexual in their sexual orientation who presents as a transvestite while working in the trade.

TRANSSEXUAL

An individual who has a consistent overwhelming need to live their life as a member of the opposite gender.

TRICK

Customers who purchase the man for sexual purposes in exchange for money. The customer is also known as 'buddy', 'john' or 'date'.

TURNED HIM

Refers to action with a customer. It means that the money is exchanged and the sex act is complete. 'Turned a trick' is another term for 'turned him'.

TURNED OUT

Refers to when a sex trade worker first began working.

TURNED A TRICK

When a sex trade worker completes a transaction with a customer. Also known as 'turned him'.

TWO SPIRITED

Aboriginal people who identify themselves as gay or lesbian. The terms, gay or lesbian are of European origin, therefore, 'two spirited' is preferred because it is more culturally relevant to Aboriginal lesbians and gays.

WORKING

If a worker considers themselves to be transsexual they will say they are working. The term "working" is one that women also use in the trade.

YOUTH IN CARE

An advocacy organization for youth who are in the care of government. Adults who were youth in the care of government now manage this organization.

YOUTH PROSTITUTION

A youth who enters the sexual exploitation trade.

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