

Gang Trafficking Recruiting and Prevention



1) The difference between the pimp trafficking methods and a gang is significant.

- A pimp generally works alone to build his 'business' and uses his most loyal female to help him control the others. (the bottom b*tch)
- A gang has at least 7-8 close-knit members working in concert with rules, structure and loyalty to build a child exploitation enterprise. The local group is called a "set" or "crew."

2) Most traffickers build a 'family' concept of belonging to lure victims.

- A pimp may require his victims to call him "Daddy" and to call one another "sisters" or "wifey" or "wifey-in-law" to assimilate a family environment in the "stable."
- A gang carries the concept of an extended network; consequences are dealt out by "elders" for those who break the rules of the game. Often the coveted position as the elder is handed down from generation to generation. Police gang units report 7 years old as the youngest gang trafficker they've dealt with and report that often they are seeing four generations in action.

3) Girls see themselves as 'members' and won't identify as victims.

- They are proud to be accepted into a gang that they perceive as powerful.
- But their role is defined for them – they are to earn money for the gang through acts of prostitution.
- Many times they are "sexed" into a gang. The term "gang bangers" comes from the initiation of sexing a girl into membership. Some girls take pride in choosing instead to be "jumped" in – a rite of initiation where a potential gang member is beaten by all the other gang members. Usually that initiation is reserved for males joining the gang.

4) Loyalty extends beyond a biological family relationship to gain gang status.

- Females become "property" of the gang. In most US gangs today, police gang units report they are not accepting female members. If you see females hanging with gang members, it's very likely they are being prostituted by that gang.
- Loyalty to the gang comes first even to betrayal of biological family members.
- Boys use sisters as status. "I can contribute this to my set."
 - Example: Brother taught his 9 year old sister how to have sex. Then he got her high and she was gang raped. Afterward they took her to the DQ for a party. Now these are your 'friends' too. Her parents were at work; her brother was in charge; but his loyalty is to the gang and 'doing business.'

- At first she was protected as his little sister. Gang members build trust with her. She's kept 'safe' but is included in all the thrills.
- Then one guy asks her to "Be all mine" – the flattery wins over her loyalty even to her own brother. They meet on the sly and she starts "paying back" for being inside.
- She will look like a gang member. Be disrespectful. Will look like a runaway, exhibit truancy, act like a 'slut'. She looks like anything but a victim!
- It's difficult to convince parents and the community because they know their children are hanging with gangs, in trouble with police/schools/community. It looks like they are making the choices!
- All the while the gang benefits from the profits of her rape with parties, guns, alcohol and drugs.

5) The influence of gangs reaches beyond a local community.

- A crew or set moves their victims around to avoid being detected, and to follow the buyers.
- The West Coast Circuit is generally:
 - SEA, PORTLAND, SAN FRAN, LOS ANG, SAN DIEGO, LAS VEGAS, HAWAII
- Gang members can be anywhere – making the victims feel like they can't get away. They are made to believe that loyal eyes and ears everywhere.
- Gangs can be made up of families. This system is particularly full of the threat of violence and retaliation. "If I leave the gang, where will I go?" Uncles, dad, mom, cousins, multiple family members are in the gang. Every block has a known gang member.

6) Those who purchase sex acts vary by area.

- Under pimp control, buyers range in age from 18 – 89 according to law enforcement. More and more pimps use the internet to sell sex acts and traffic victims. (Backpage.com most common)
- Under gang control, the trend is to sell to trusted clientele in a confined area. OR they trade victims with other gangs in other areas. Not all gangs remain within ethnic lines, but generally they serve their own with a tight supply line that is maintained in a given area to avoid detection.
 - Many times slave labor (factories, farm workers, restaurant labor) also includes sex trafficking.

7) Where there are gangs or organized crime, there is sale of illegal arms, drugs and prostitution.

- 30,000 estimated gangs in the US as of 2011
- Gang members estimated at 782,000
 - 41% are in large cities
 - 32% in small cities
 - 23% are suburban
 - 5% are rural
- 54% of cities will say that gang activity is staying the same:

In 1999, gang members were considered to be 50/50 juveniles and adults.

As of 2011, it's estimated 65% are adults and 35% are children.

- TODAY female members are counted to be the highest since 1998. This could mean that adult gang members are spending more time trafficking victims than recruiting juvenile males into the gangs.
- The revenue from prostitution can be as high as \$450,000 per year PER GIRL
- Initiation rite of passage reported for one gang: Initiation was to do a gang hit/ randomly shoot a kid on a bike. The reward? Two girls in a hotel room.
- The average age is 12 – 21 being recruited by gangs.
- The age of the two girls in the hotel room? 4th graders, They were 9 year old runaways.
- Reports of an 11 year old being gang trafficked by attacking her with a knife. Now she's pimping other girls. It's safer to cooperate than to try to run.

8) The trend as of 2010 is for gangs to stay localized more. IF they do move:

- 47% move because of social reasons
- 17% move because of law enforcement pressure
- 35% move because of drug trafficking
 - Small town migration has been noted as originating from drug cartels in Mexico

9) Girls are traded and marked as property.

- Promised protection. Basic needs met. Someone who cares.
- Bar codes often inside the bottom lip; not easily detected
- Gangs are electronically tracking their profits
- Has become a sophisticated market

10) Who is vulnerable to gang recruiting ?

#1 REASON THEY JOIN? RELATIONSHIP

- They are drawn by 'belonging' – dress codes, gang colors, power and being part of something strong and impenetrable.
- Poverty is a huge factor in recruiting victims.
- English as a second language makes some more vulnerable. Undocumented aliens makes them a target. Who would they tell?
- They may have real needs for food, clothing, shelter, rehab or resources. The gang offers to protect and provide. Grooming includes promises and flattery.
 - "See that girl in the nice clothes? She's one of mine."
 - "Do you need something? We will hook you up."
 - "I care you're in pain."
- Power is exhibited (drive by shooting, initiation rites, intimidating others)

- The thrill of doing something dangerous is attractive, especially to someone who's never been "important"
- After they are "in" they are told you've got to prove yourself. Gang initiation.
 - Roll the Dice. The number on the dice is how many rapes for your induction. The gang leader gets to go first. Everyone else watches. Then the gang leader finishes it
 - Girls get "bragging rights" by rolling higher numbers.
 - If she's lucky, she'll be numbed out first (drugs/loaded)
- Then she begins to pay the price. "This isn't always 'free' – you gotta put some work in."
- At first they are under the illusion of being protected by the gang.
- 65% of victims have come through the foster care system. They are vulnerable, detached and easily convinced they don't belong anywhere else but with the gang.
 - Show aggression
 - Anti-social behaviors
 - Victims of trauma (sexual, physical, mental abuse)
- SKIP PARTIES – police are finding huge increase in youth being invited to skip parties during school hours.
 - They are held locally, near the schools, easily accessible or rides are offered.
 - Available drugs and alcohol.
 - As young as junior high are invited.
 - It's considered "cool" to attend. It's fast, fun and exciting. Not everyone is invited to join.
 - Can include drugging, rape, beatings even death as victims are intimidated into cooperating with gang recruiting tactics.
- Internet recruiting
 - In 2011 law enforcement began to see the trend towards gangs sex trafficking
 - In a study, they found that almost all the phone numbers listed on Backpage, Craigslist and Facebook were known gang numbers on record.
 - It appeared that these were just "trouble maker" girls in schools. Gangs were invisible in the process.

11) Law enforcement responses

- Online stings: Listed a girl as "young, classy and lonely". Nothing said about sex. Within 1hour and 45 minutes after the ad went up at 2:45 pm in the afternoon, police had 55 replies before the ad was taken down. Many responses were offering money and sending sexual photos of themselves.

12) How do gangs control members?

- Most gangs have seniority rules. The one who has been there the longest is the ‘elder in charge.’
- Some have ethnic rules governing them. For example:
 - A Hispanic gang exhibited the matrix leadership structure. Whoever was best at the crime being engaged in, was the leader at that moment.
- Members are all expected to put in “work” or bring something to the gang. If they have legitimate jobs, a portion of their income is required as dues. If they don’t have a job, they are expected to pay their dues in other ways.
- Girls “work” is performing sex acts for money – it’s not a choice.
- Shot callers can even control the gang activity from prison. That’s how strong the loyalty is.

13) What is the most common victim profile who is vulnerable to trafficking?

- Girls who are runaways. Minors with no supervision.
- Girls will lie to belong to the gang. They act tough to earn the “gang” love.
- They aren’t going to allow easy access to build relationship. Takes work.
- May exhibit self-inflicted wounds: cutting, self-made tattoos, eating disorders
- May be disappointed or hurt by the “system.” Tried to get services, no one called me back.
- Seeking identity, family, power, drawn to the “bad boy” persona
- Some come from ‘normal’ families, affluent but lonely, bored, don’t fit anywhere.
- Gang members search online for girls to recruit.
 - On FB but have few friends
 - Hidden face in profile pictures; comments appear to be low in self esteem
 - Start with “We really like you”, “You’re part of us”, take her into the secret community of handshakes and colors.
 - Soon she will do anything to please him and stay “in” with the gang.
- Girls who are promiscuous are sold the line, ‘You’re doing it anyway. You should get paid for it.’
 - Promiscuity and exploitation often look the same.
 - Trained professionals through CPS, DSHS and Gang intervention services know it takes time. Victim centered approach. Not a judgmental approach. They won’t answer your questions until you prove you’re loyal to them. Reprisal for “squealing” can be death.
- Offer her skip parties; rape becomes part of the grooming process.
- Fear of reprisal and the threat of violence keeps her subjugated.
- Soon, she belongs to all the gang members (sexually), not just the one that she liked.
- He will ask her to “hold me down” or “take care of my needs, put money on my books.”
- She begins to sacrifice to “protect” her new family even though he’s making her sleep with his friends.
- She’s afraid of losing him; of making him mad.
- Victims are trafficked in neighborhoods where the gangs have control. She’s controlled by fear and intimidation. There are ears and eyes everywhere.
 - Not like pimp control where he keeps her with him all the time, or has a 24 hours bottom watching her every move.

- She may appear to be moving ‘freely’ when in actuality she’s terrified to break any of the rules. May still live at home, go to school but becomes more and more isolated; different ‘friends’, different clothes, fitting into a different crowd. Appears to be just making poor choices; actually she’s being controlled.
- Example: Girl was being picked up after school by “friends” – was home by 8-9 pm every night. Parents had no idea she was being gang trafficked. She was no longer allowed to have friends, she couldn’t buy anything without permission, she couldn’t come and go.
- Constant reminder of control emotionally, physically through being told “You can’t get away.” Being jumped, burned, choked, stabbed, hair pulled out, shot, gang raped.
- A victim who exhibits independence may be brutally killed as an example to other gang ‘members’ to stay in line. There is horrific evil done to maintain control.
- Girls in a notable gang were shown a video of one girl who ratted out her gang and went state’s evidence. Her decapitated body was found in a drainage ditch months after she disappeared.

The good news?

A mentioned earlier, less juveniles are joining gangs.

Law enforcement is hoping gang members will age out.

With this type of awareness training in our schools where we show kids, not only the Chosen original film, but also the 10 minute Gang Edition, more and more kids will recognize the signs of recruiting by gang traffickers.

Here’s just one success story in progress:

Phil Shank, a Sunnyside police officer of 24 years reported that in their tiny town of 15,000, swells to 25,000 during the farm labor season and is 75% Hispanic

- 2010 – adopted Gang ELIMINATION strategies

It started with a drive by shooting in their sleepy little town.

Had 6 homicides and 44 drive by shootings that year.

- 2013 – had 5 shootings and 0 homicides.

We can make a difference in our communities simply by being aware and sharing that education with others. The GANG TRAP DVD package is now available online at sharedhope.org for just \$20. Get your copy – share it with your law enforcement, school counselors, CPS, DSHS staff.

YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE TODAY!

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