
Emerging research suggests that sex traffickers/pimps control the majority of trafficked girls in the United States. The youthfulness of these victims and their lack of psychosocial maturity severely diminish their ability to detect exploitative motives or withstand manipulation of traffickers. A review of 43 cases of sexually exploited girls involving non-relative traffickers and 10 semi-structured interviews with social service providers revealed numerous scripts and schemes used by sex traffickers to entrap and entangle victims including boyfriend/lover scripts, ruses involving debt bondage, friendship or faux-family scripts, threats of forced abortion or to take away children, and coerced co-offending. These findings inform potential prevention efforts and highlight the need for multi-systemic, victim-centered approaches to intervention.