IRIS

TRAFFICKING & INDIGENOUS WOMEN WITH INTELLECTUAL, COGNITIVE AND PSYCHOSOCIAL DISABILITIES: PROMISING PREVENTATIVE PRACTICES

A SAFE & INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES RESEARCH REPORT

from IRIS – Institute for Research and Development on Inclusion and Society

About The Native Women's Resource Centre Toronto

The Native Women's Resource Centre of Toronto provides a safe and welcoming environment for all Indigenous women and their children in the Greater Toronto Area. We honour the vision of our founders as we support urban Indigenous women and children from all walks of life. We build self-sufficiency and develop collective capacity to make positive change. We provide individual support, group programming, and cultural initiatives.

About IRIS

Informed by the systemic exclusion that people with intellectual disabilities and other marginalized groups face, IRIS's mission is to seed and support transformative social development. Guided by the principles of full inclusion and human rights, we carry out research to identify issues and policy options. We foster social innovation to re-imagine inclusion and design new ways to meet unmet needs. Through capacity building, we strengthen leadership and constituencies for transformative change. For more information, visit us as at https://irisinstitute.ca or email contact@irisinstitute.ca.

Indigenous people are more susceptible to being trafficked because we have been groomed to be trafficked as an entire nation across Turtle Island due to the relationship with colonialism.

Focus group participant

Message from the Executive Director
The Native Women's Resource Centre of Toronto

"Indigenous Women are mothers, daughters, aunties, and sisters. They are leaders, protectors, warriors, life-givers, beautiful, artistic, strong, proud, ground-breaking and they are recalling their spiritual power. Indigenous Women are SACRED."

Indigenous women are 12 times more likely to be killed than any other women in Canada. Indigenous women make up 50 percent of Human Trafficking victims yet only 4 % of Canada's population. Indigenous women experience spousal violence at a rate 3x higher than non-Indigenous women. Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) and the national inquiry report demonstrates that deliberate human and Indigenous rights violations and abuses are the root cause behind Canada's staggering rates of violence against Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people. MMIWG is genocide and started with first contact and the intent to eliminate the community, destroy the family and "kill the Indian in the child"

Systemic and structural racism, and Canada's disregard for Indigenous women's lives continue to contribute to and perpetuate the harm that Indigenous women face which too often, ends in death. On the front lines of our community, we continue to see the consequences of residential schools, first contact, systemic racism, over-incarceration, and the destruction of our sacred land.

We see the systems that continue to fail the women and will continue to cause harm … systems that are not inherently ours and were designed with the intent to eliminate the community. NWRCT's response to offer healing to the community starts with access for the women, led by women, and through this, the family and community. Every response to the community must be led by an Indigenous community with ceremony culture at its forefront.

Indigenous community deserve a seat at the table as the table is formed, and our counter parts must align their paths with ours to walk side by side. This project was meant to highlight the darkness that still plagues our city and society to highlight the significance of the work and the women proclaiming the response they know is needed.

We acknowledge and give thanks to IRIS, Doris Rajan, and her amazing team who has worked with NWRCT over many years. Their support, and efforts are rooted in reconciliation and the leadership they give to the community is an example of how meaningful engagement should occur. Denia Anderson-Dornan, Project Coordinator who diligently met the community where they were at, to capture important conversations, we value you.

To the community who shared their stories, wisdom, and spirit we aim to continue to honor you and raise your voices. We thank you and may this project serve you and future generations to come in a good way. Your fearlessness, your strength and beauty do not go ignored.

Pamela
Executive Director, Native
Women's Resource Centre Toronto

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I. Overview

1. Project Background

We know that Indigenous women, girls, and two-spirted people experience a heightened risk to trafficking. Further, it is becoming increasingly evident that Indigenous women and girls with intellectual, cognitive, and psychosocial disabilities experience an even higher risk to trafficking due to several reasons including, being more vulnerable to manipulation and disability-specific barriers to disclosure, i.e., communication difficulties and an increased dependency on their abuser for support.

Over the last five years the Native Women's Resource Centre Toronto (NWRCT) has participated in many projects with the Institute for Research and Development on Inclusion and Society (IRIS), where it has become evident that many women that NWRCT supports through their Human Trafficking program, live with invisible disabilities. Through these initiatives key learnings have occurred between the intersection of indigeneity, disability, and gender-based violence, i.e., Indigenous and other marginalized women with intellectual, cognitive, and psychosocial disabilities were most vulnerable to unit takeovers for drug trafficking and to being forced into sex involving multiple male abusers. [1] Further, through NWRCT direct service work, they have recognized that women living with these disabilities are at a greater risk of coercive sexual exploitation and drug trafficking; yet there is little disability-specific information on the kinds of supports needed.

The *Trafficking & Indigenous Women with Intellectual, Cognitive and Psychosocial Disabilities: Promising Preventative Practices* initiative seeks to learn more about the specificity of these experiences to develop and implement culturally and disability sensitive promising practices for potential community supporters and women and gender diverse people themselves.

The first step in developing promising practices that will advance knowledge and enhance empowerment supports for Indigenous women and gender diverse peoples with intellectual, cognitive, and psychosocial disabilities, is to learn more about:

The nature of trafficking experiences, risk factors, service barriers and supports needed for Indigenous women and gender diverse people with intellectual, cognitive, and psychosocial disabilities who may be vulnerable to trafficking.

This is the primary objective of the research component of this project. The information gleaned from the research process will be used to develop resources and community strategies that will advance knowledge on promising practices for this population.

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[1] Please see: Toronto - A Place to Call Our Own: Empowering Women to Take Action for Affordable Housing. (2019). Prepared by the Riverdale Immigrant Women's Centre, Centre for Equality Rights in Accommodation (CERA) and, the Institute for Research and Development on Inclusion and Society: [written by Doris Rajan] With Judy Shaw and Mercedes S. Zayas. Includes index. ISBN 978-1-897292-14-3

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2. Research Focus

The focus of this research is on the issue of trafficking and Indigenous women, girls, and gender diverse people who live with an intellectual, cognitive and/or psychosocial disability. Given this, it is first important to define and outline how we understand these terms in this project.

The term 'Indigenous' we used to refer to the original peoples of this land now known as 'Canada', including First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples. The Indigenous Foundation at the University of British Columbia offers an important discussion on this issue.[2] It is recognized that for many of the first peoples of this land, identify with "a particular family, clan, band, or nation and may prefer to use the traditional terms and names that locate them within those circumstances," [1]such as Mi'kmaq, Okanagan or Anishinaabe. Whenever possible, original nations' names will be used; however, the term Indigenous has been selected when referring to these populations collectively. The Indigenous Foundation explains:

> "Indigenous," has gained prominence as a term to describe Aboriginal peoples in an international context through the increasing visibility of international Indigenous rights movements. "Indigenous" may be considered by some to be the most inclusive term of all, since it identifies peoples in similar circumstances without respect to national boundaries or local conventions[...][2]

This project also focuses on disabilities related to mental and cognitive abilities, rather than physical, sensory or mobility disabilities. This is because people living with these types of disabilities, often invisible disabilities, experience distinct issues that are often not included in discussions of gender-based violence and people with disabilities generally, even though their experiences of violence are acute and often go undetected.

Intellectual disability is a broad term referring to people with below typical cognitive ability. This label covers a wide group of different people, including those who are verbal, non-verbal, have Down Syndrome, Autism, Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorder, etc.[3]

Mental Health or psychosocial disabilities refer to the range of experiences associated with medical diagnoses such as, depression, schizophrenia, or bipolar disorder. The biological premise and thus medicalization of psychosocial disabilities is viewed as problematic by many activists in the community. From our perspective, this is not to deny any physiological basis to psychosocial disabilities, but rather how this overemphasis and medicalization ignore the pertinent impact of colonialization, racism, ableism, transphobia, sexism, historically shaped trauma, abusive institutional and state control, and the proliferation of the pharmaceutical industry in the creation of these 'illnesses.'

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[2] For more detailed information, visit the website at: http://indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca/.

[3] In early 2018 National Public Radio in the United States, launched a series entitled "Abused and Betrayed" which highlights the ongoing and unrecognized nature of violence against women with intellectual disabilities. The series notes that women with intellectual disabilities "are some of the easiest and most frequent victims of sexual assault. Their risk is at least seven times the rate for people without disabilities" (Shapiro, 2018).

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In this paper we may use the term 'neurodiverse' to refer to intellectual, psychosocial, and cognitive disabilities. Cognitive disabilities relate to difficulties remembering, learning, concentrating, and/ or making decisions , examples of this disability include brain injury and dementia.

This project adheres to the Canadian government's definition of human trafficking:

> Human trafficking involves recruiting, transporting, or holding victims to exploit them or to help someone else exploit them, generally for sexual purposes or work. Traffickers get their victims to comply through different forms of coercion.

Gender-based violence is a key component of the experience of trafficking in all forms including, emotional, physical, sexual, financial abuse. In researching our topic therefore, we were aware of the importance of understanding the nature and impact of gender-based violence on Indigenous women, girls, and gender diverse peoples who live with an intellectual, cognitive and/or psychosocial disability. Mark Totten and the Native Women's Association of Canada make the important distinction between sex work and trafficking stating: "It is important to identify that trafficking is not prostitution or sex work – it is a form of slavery. It "involves the recruitment, transportation or harbouring of persons for the purpose of exploitation and may occur across or within borders."

3. Research Design

Methods

We employed the following secondary and primary research methods to examine the experiences of trafficking for Indigenous women and gender diverse people with intellectual, cognitive, and psychosocial disabilities in Canada:

Literature Review – The objective of the Literature Review process is to identify key books, articles, and other kinds of documents related to this issue. The goal of the Literature Review is to gather and analyze academic and other published knowledge on this topic and to thematize and critically evaluate the key arguments of the materials gathered.

Scan of Community Resources – In recognition that the subject of trafficking and Indigenous women with disabilities is not well researched and that most scholarly materials would not offer practical information, we also conducted a scan of community resources. This process set out to identify promising practices and examine relevant tools and resources to inform the resources we will be developing. The scan aims to go beyond academic and published sources, by identifying unpublished 'grey' materials that have be developed in the community.

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Community Discussion Groups – The above information was useful in setting the context for this issue, the next step was to hear from Indigenous women and gender diverse people with intellectual, cognitive and/or psychosocial disabilities, about their experiences related to the topic of gender-based violence and trafficking. The discussion group process aimed to give people with lived experience the opportunity to articulate their distinct experiences, needs and ideas on what is needed to improve their lives. We also held a discussion group with front-line grassroots service providers who work in the area of trafficking and these target groups.

II. Results

1. Literature Review

i. Introduction

Methodology

The scope of this review is limited to materials relevant to the Canadian and North American context. The focus is on articles, reports and books developed during the period of 2010 to 2021.

Specific keywords and precise combinations were used to guide the online search process. The following are the keyword combinations used with Indigenous + Trafficking + Disability:

- Women
- Girls
- Youth
- Trans
- Race
- Native
- Aboriginal
- First Nations
- Metis
- Inuit
- Urban
- Rural
- Northern
- Intellectual
- Mental health
- Psychosocial
- Psychiatric
- Learning
- Brain injury
- Cognitive
- Developmental
- Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorder
- Sexual violence
- Gender-based violence

The identification of pre-existing information relevant to this research was conducted using online library computer databases including:

- ProQuest – With an interdisciplinary focus on; ERIC (Education), International Bibliography of the Social Sciences, Sociological Abstracts, Worldwide Political Science Abstracts.
- JSTOR - a shared digital library that is home to over 2000 academic journals
- Google Scholar

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The State of the Literature

The issue of Indigenous women with disabilities and trafficking is not a topic well studied. As explained above we narrowed our search to various combinations of 'Indigenous' identities, the 'types' of disabilities of focus and included sexual and gender-based violence with trafficking. Within this context, we did not include 'sex work' or 'commercial sex' unless there was a correlation with gender-based violence.

There were just under forty documents identified that met our criteria. As anticipated, there was only one article that specifically examined the issue of Indigenous women with disabilities and trafficking. Most reports and articles related to: Trafficking and Indigenous women (37%) and Barriers to Services related to either Indigenous women or women with disabilities (37%). There was a significant number of studies that examined disability as an outcome of trafficking (14%), primarily focused on psychosocial disabilities. Finally, approximately 12% of the literature that fit our search criteria related to what makes women with disabilities vulnerable to trafficking.

This report also considers articles that did not correspond directly to our criteria, yet we felt was relevant to this research. These include, 1) studies that examined the relationship between location and trafficking and 2) trafficking and the 2SLGBTQ+ communities. We included some articles that may not have been specific to Indigenous peoples but examined the issue of race and trafficking.

The scarcity of scholarly articles on the issue of trafficking and Indigenous women with intellectual, cognitive, and psychosocial disabilities, highlights the importance of the focus groups that we conducted for this research.

ii. The Nature of the Issue

Women and gender diverse people who live with marginalized identities such as disability, being Indigenous and/or racialized, experience an increased vulnerability to trafficking because of the precarious conditions that poverty, ableism, sexism, genderism, and racism creates.

Indigenous girls and women

There is a strong relationship between the violence of colonialism and the resultant poverty, homelessness and poor health experienced by Indigenous women and their vulnerability to sexual exploitation.[6] The patriarchal violence and oppression experienced by Indigenous women from first the British then Canadian states, played an important role in the colonization of the first peoples by destabilizing the central role Indigenous women played in communities and within families.[7] Stark et al historicize the sex trafficking of Indigenous women[8] as rooted in; the conceptualization of the sexually 'immoral' Indigenous woman, the sexual violence experienced in residential schools, historically shaped trauma or Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and social and economic disparities, such as inadequate housing.[9] Further, they state the direct link between engagement in prostitution and trafficking with the state's lack of investment in

improving the socio-economic conditions experienced by Indigenous women: "When state and private agencies fail to offer women and children shelter, pimps provide housing in exchange for prostitution."[10]

Christine Stark and Eileen Hudon examine the relationship between trafficking and "chronic homelessness" of Indigenous women because of the reserve system resulting in parents being unable to "adequately house, feed and clothe their children".[11] For these and other reasons Indigenous women might find themselves leaving their reserve communities and entering urban centres, where they experience isolation and are looking for relationships and financial supports. Traffickers will offer to connect women to other Indigenous peoples and supports.[12] Many of these women cannot find shelter, end up homeless and become vulnerable to commercial sex and trafficking.

The ongoing colonial systems and policies have placed Indigenous girls and women in situations of increased vulnerability to not only the violence of trafficking, but it is well documented that Indigenous women experiencing some of the highest rates of all forms of violence in the country. The Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) reports that Indigenous women experience:

- Much higher rates of violence than non-Indigenous women
- Indigenous girls and women 15 years and older are 3.5 times more likely to experience violence than non-Indigenous women
- Rates of spousal assault against Indigenous women are more than three times higher than those against non-Indigenous women.[13]

When Indigenous girls and women find themselves in these new urban centres, they experience various ways that they are lured into trafficking. Sethi offers a concise description of recruitment methods of Indigenous girls and women in airports, city bars, (where they might go to "bridge the isolation"); schools; internet; hitchhiking, other girls and women serving as recruiters, traffickers pose as "boyfriends" and women are hired as dancers where they are moved to other locations for "dance shows". [14]

The literature also contends that the legacy of colonialization has resulted in a lack of awareness and understanding of sexual exploitation for Indigenous girls and women, and a hesitancy to access outside supports. As Sethi explains:

> …limited resources, lack of education and understanding of the exchange of sexual favors for goods and resources as sexual exploitation and the fear of outside involvement resulting from ineffective past interventions.[15]

In addition to the legacy of colonization, poverty, racism, isolation, and the need for belonging, Sethi also highlights both the role addictions and substance abuse plays in recruiting and maintaining involvement in trafficking, the role that gangs play in recruitment. [16] As the NWAC outlines, gangs can provide Indigenous girls and women with an "alternate 'family'" particularly if they have "experienced family dysfunction related to the residential school experience, (themselves or their parents), substance abuse, or poverty." [17]

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Women with intellectual, cognitive, and psychosocial disabilities

It is well documented that women with disabilities, particularly those living with intellectual disabilities, also experience very high rates of violence. People with disabilities are often excluded from attaining the things they need, i.e., employment, education, affordable and accessible housing, etc., resulting in poverty and violence. The structural oppression and resultant violence experienced by women with disabilities goes beyond the violence that occurs within a family. For example, we know that abuse occurs in residential care institutions where many people with disabilities live because they require extensive healthcare and support with daily living. Further, the dependency many women with disabilities have on formal and informal caregivers increases their vulnerability to violence. For this reason, advocates in the women with disability movement has been pushing the Violence Against Women sector to think beyond intimate partner violence because violence against women with disabilities is often perpetrated by a family caregiver, personal support worker, transit driver, healthcare provider and/or residential staff. [18]

Women with intellectual, cognitive, and mental health disabilities experience very high rates of sexual violence. For example, about one-quarter of women with a cognitive disability (24%) or a mental health-related disability (26%) were sexually abused by an adult before they were 15 years of age.[19] It follows that women with these types of invisible disabilities would be easy targets for trafficking. Further, Steven Mentrek and Patricia Stephens with the Lucas County Board of Developmental Disabilities make the point that support services dealing with the issue of sexual violence for people with intellectual disabilities, often do not recognize 'trafficking' as abuse, i.e. they do not identify recruitment, transporting and/or holding people for the purposes of sexual exploitation, as violence.[20] Mentrek and Stephens also state that for those that work towards addressing trafficking, people with intellectual disabilities, women particularly, are not seen as "common victims". [21]

While the literature on trafficking experiences of women with disabilities is in its early stages, most articles focus on disability resulting from involvement in trafficking. While these findings are important as they will inform our understanding of barriers to leaving trafficking situations, our primary focus is preventative in nature. We will however summarize the findings of these types of articles at the end of this section.

A few articles that were identified focused on youth living with mental health or intellectual disabilities. Many of these studies emphasize the non-medical model for understanding these experiences of disability, i.e., recognizing that the relationship between trafficking and people who are labelled with, for example psychiatric diagnoses is not unilinear. That is, a person often lives with mental health disabilities because of intergenerational trauma, poverty, lack of access to opportunities resulting from colonization, childhood abuse and/or violence in the home.

The International Disability Alliance outlines how poverty and "multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination" place women and girls living with disabilities at a higher risk of trafficking. These intersecting forms of discrimination include, economic disadvantages, isolation, forced sterilization and abortion, lack of access to community services, low quality housing, institutionalization, inadequate healthcare, and social service supports. [22]

Mental health issues are then exacerbated when people become involved with trafficking. Chapple and Crawford make this point in their comparative analysis of mental health diagnoses of "youth commercial sex exploitation victims" and "adjudicated delinquent" (i.e., a young person who has committed a criminal law violation determined in U.S. juvenile courts) – when they state that young people involved in commercial sex have significantly higher rates of mental health issues as a result of both "sex victimization" and histories of violence and abuse.[23]

Hollomotz supports this point by concluding that we need to expand simplistic understandings that link vulnerability to trafficking or sexual violence directly to a person's intellectual disability. Hollomotz asserts that we need to go beyond disability related 'risk' factors towards a deeper analysis using an "ecological model".[24] An ecological model offers a more holistic way of understanding the relationships between people who are involved in trafficking and their past and present environments. For example, Palines et al found that there are significantly higher rates of specific types of psychosocial and intellectual disabilities, i.e., ADHD, bipolar disorder, depression, anxiety, etc. in youth identified as "being sex trafficked" (see also Levine 2017[25]). However, they alert us to the need to understand the environment and the "complex trauma suffered by child survivors of sex trafficking" resulting in symptoms of "mental health disorders" which may lead to "improper diagnosis and treatment of mental health disorders at the expense of prompt access to trauma-focused therapies".[26]

It is evident in the literature that women and girls with intellectual disabilities are at a higher risk of being trafficked. As Reid explains in their study of "sex trafficking" and girls with intellectual disabilities in the juvenile sex trafficking population, girls with intellectual disabilities face a "disproportionate risk for exploitation".[27] Reid outlines issues that contribute to girls with intellectual disabilities' risk to trafficking, including:

- Lack of awareness of exploitation and the dangers that are imposed
- The relative ease with which traffickers can manipulate this population
- Not seen as sexual, thus they lack appropriate sex education which is necessary to develop safe practices
- Unsupervised internet use results in easy access to this population by traffickers
- Feelings of isolation and the need for friends may lead to being an 'easy target' for traffickers. Related to this, girls with intellectual disabilities may not understand the differences between a boyfriend, a trafficker, or someone buying sex.[28]

The isolation, loneliness, longing, and lack of relationships is often used as an "offender strategy" in trafficking referred to as "mate crime". In mate crimes, recent acquaintances pose as wanting to be friends, helpers, and/or boyfriends often resulting in gaining access to food, money and the takeover of their apartments which are used to sell and use drugs and store stolen goods. Women with intellectual disabilities are then "being pimped (sent to work as a prostitute) by their 'boyfriends'" in their own homes.[29]

Similar scenarios can play out for women with mental health disabilities who may also be additionally vulnerable due to a greater propensity to addiction, i.e., we know that many people who live with a mental health disorder also have a concurrent disorder, i.e., mental health and addictions.[30]

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The literature is beginning to investigate the association between Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorder (FASD) – intellectual disability, sexual exploitation, and Indigenous women. As Totten and the Native Women's Association of Canada explain, Indigenous people living with FASD experience high rates of physical and sexual abuse in childhood, which is related to having the highest rates of involvement with the sex trade and sex trafficking.[31]

Due to the legacy and ongoing colonial project, it is evident that Indigenous people experience high rates of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD), "particularly the First Nations population", which, as Totten and NWAC explain, has a direct link to the higher rates of "drug and alcohol use and addictions at a young age" and given that Indigenous women and girls make up "the large majority of all individuals in Canada who are involved in the sex trade and sexual trafficking"[32], we can surmise that many of these Indigenous women and girls live with FASD. This article also goes on to state that there is evidence to suggest that "gangs are responsible for the sexual exploitation and sexual slavery" of Indigenous women and girls,[33] again, many of whom live with FASD.

2SLGBTQ+ peoples

Due to a heightened risk to leaving home and community due to family conflict, violence, bullying etc., 2SLGBTQ+ youth constitute a large percentage of the youth homeless population.[34] Homelessness is also related to discrimination in employment and housing, resulting in, as the research suggests, 2SLGBTQ+ youth involvement in trafficking is understood in one study as the need to engage in "survival sex".[35]

The Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) outlines how pre-colonial understandings of gender roles and sexuality in Indigenous communities differed to colonial conceptualizations, resulting in Indigenous peoples who are "Two-Spirited and/or members of LGBTQ+" experiencing discrimination from both the mainstream society and "from within their own communities."[36] 2SLGBTQ+ Indigenous people experience compounding levels of marginalization, i.e., racism, transphobia, genderism, sexism and age vulnerability. The NWAC reports that in "Ontario, First Nations, Inuit, and Métis trans people report high levels of poverty, homelessness, and forced migration." [37]

Disability an Outcome of Trafficking

As outlined earlier, most of the literature related to the topic of disability and trafficking examines disability as a consequence of the violence of trafficking. As Joan Reid explains, the physical consequences of trafficking in the general population include "sexually transmitted diseases, bruises, lacerations, and other physical injuries" and common psychological consequences including "depression, anxiety, panic attacks, low self-esteem, shame and guilt, irrational fear, and loss of trust."[38]

Most relevant to our research, some studies examine disability resulting from Indigenous women's involvement in prostitution and/or trafficking. For example, Indigenous women and girls who were sexually exploited and trafficked participated in an American study which found that: 84% had been physically assaulted; 72% experienced traumatic brain injuries (a cognitive disability); and in the area of mental health, 52% had PTSD and 71% had symptoms of dissociation.[39]

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Understand the relationship between Indigenous women, trafficking, and location

The Native Women's Association of Canada reports that sexual trafficking of Indigenous girls and women is most common in the Prairie provinces, primarily in major cities such as, Vancouver, Winnipeg, Regina, Edmonton, and Calgary, and in some small towns in B.C. and the Prairies.[40] This NWAC study also points out the "city triangles" across provinces, such as Saskatoon-Edmonton-Calgary-Saskatoon; and Calgary-Edmonton-Vancouver-Calgary, where the oil rigs and mining businesses play a role in trafficking activity.[41]

A study of Indigenous women in circumpolar regions of the United States and Canada also identifies the relationship between isolated resource-based businesses and an increased vulnerability to trafficking for Indigenous women:

> With the current interest in resource extraction, and other opportunities in the warming Arctic, people from outside regions are traveling north in growing numbers. This rise in outside interactions increases the risk that the Indigenous women may be trafficked.[42]

Bigger cities also offer somewhere to go when women are "discarded" from trafficking activity, in "'hot spots' such as Downtown Eastside of Vancouver", where the risk of violence and murder is high.[43]

Summary – The Nature of the Issue

The research demonstrates that Indigenous girls and women, women with intellectual, cognitive, and mental health disabilities and/or 2SLGBTQ+ peoples are embedded in historically based systems and practices that have resulted in structural discrimination that excludes them from attaining the things they need to live a safe and healthy life.

The result of this historically entrenched exclusion is poverty which as Rose Henry, Aboriginal Community Consultant, Coast Salish Territory explains, lies at the root of Indigenous women's susceptibility to trafficking:

> *What makes Aboriginal people most vulnerable for human trafficking is the fact that so many of us are living well below the poverty line. […] All these things contribute to making us more vulnerable to the human trafficking because with human trafficking, there's a lot of money that exchanges between the rich and the richest sort of deal, and so that's the bottom line. It's about the dollar, how much is this person worth because this person is willing to do anything to survive including selling their soul. If that's what they have to do to ensure the survival of their children, or their mothers, or their daughters, or whatever the situation is, they'll do it. And that means their souls are being sold for the bottom dollar.* [44]

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[44] In the U.K. the term "learning disabilities" refers to people with intellectual disabilities. In Canada, a learning disability refers "to a number of disorders which may affect the acquisition, organization, retention, understanding or use of verbal or nonverbal

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The consequence of this poverty is critical to understand because it has resulted in distinct risks and vulnerabilities to trafficking for both women with intellectual disabilities and Indigenous women. As Joan Reid explains, "the level of vulnerability of a victim is an important factor in offender selection." [45] In other words, in the context of this research, we need to examine the multiple factors that place Indigenous girls, women and two-spirited peoples with intellectual, cognitive, and psychosocial disabilities at risk to trafficking.

The review of the literature on the nature of trafficking, sexual exploitation and Indigenous girls, women and gender diverse people, highlights the impact of early and present-day colonial capitalist practices and policies, poverty, segregation, racism, isolation, and the need for belonging, as the key factors placing this population at a high risk to trafficking.

iii. Barriers to Services and Supports Needed

Most studies reviewed outlined the risks factors and conditions that places Indigenous and women with intellectual disabilities at risk to trafficking, yet very few offered practical ideas of what needs to be done. Therefore, through analyzing the impact and the conditions that make Indigenous women with intellectual disabilities vulnerable to trafficking, we can offer some ideas on the kind of services and supports that are needed.

Hollomotz's ecological model for understanding the risk of sexual violence for people with intellectual disabilities, contends that this population is vulnerable because of multiple interconnected reasons, including socio-cultural and economic environmental conditions and personal attributes.[46] Therefore, services and supports aimed at prevention, intervention, and response to trafficking have to be built on understandings of these complex, interlocking conditions that make women with intellectual disabilities vulnerable to exploitation and trafficking.

The impact of colonization and the resultant structural exclusion and historical trauma, also place Indigenous girls, women into complex systems of vulnerability. It is clear that first and foremost, services need to be provided in holistic, simultaneous, and interconnected ways. For example, trauma counselling services should be offered along with life skills, employment, education, and housing supports. Sethi affirms the need for a holistic approach in policy development related to the issue of trafficking and Indigenous girls and women stating, that there is a tendency "in policy decisions to analyze one issue at a time as against a holistic approach limit, if not excludes, the examination of linkages with the sexual exploitation of Aboriginal girls in Canada." [47]

With the understanding that a variety of supports need to be offered in holistic person-centred plans, the following outlines the types of services needed, key locations for effective service delivery and the things to keep in mind for program development.

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iv. Types of Services & Supports Needed

The literature supported the need for person-centred and led approaches, that were designed and delivered by Indigenous peoples for Indigenous peoples. Services need to be holistic and culturally grounded and start with addressing basic needs. Services also should adhere to a harm reduction approach, and not to expect a complete end to trauma response behaviours and actions all at once. Instead, the focus should be on reducing negative consequences.[48]

The location of services is important to reach vulnerable women, because research indicates that trafficking networks are found in major cities, "city triangles" across provinces, i.e., Saskatoon-Edmonton-Calgary-Saskatoon, and some industries such as oil rigs and mining in Alberta.[49]

As mentioned earlier, public spaces such as airports, bars, schools, and the internet are also sites of recruitment. Further, in less concentrated areas it is harder to find the services needed. Even when there is awareness of services, there is often limited transportation to enable access. This suggests that services need to be mobile, offsite, and located in high-risk and less populated areas. Another consideration is the influence that stigma has on accessing services for trafficking survivors. In Hunts Guide, they offer the idea of having services located in larger buildings so that it is not obvious what kind of services a person is accessing. This is particularly important in rural communities where there is less anonymity.[50]

Types of services fell in to the following six areas:

1. **Culturally Grounded Mental Health and Addictions Support**
   This type of intervention is for trained and skilled Indigenous mental health workers, ideally those with lived experience. Workers would understand how to intervene with PTSD and would be able to deliver culturally appropriate, grounded trauma therapy.

2. **Access to Traditional and Cultural Teachings and Ceremonies**
   This should be specific to diverse Indigenous nations' practices. Programs should involve experiential survivors in running and developing groups.[51]

3. **Education for Stakeholders**
   Many articles emphasized the need to provide education to women and girls on the following topics:

   • Sex education
   • Internet risks
   • Drugs
   • The process of 'grooming', which refers to relationship building with a vulnerable person to exploit, control and abuse them.

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information." Please see the Learning Disabilities Association of Canada's website at: https://www.ldac-acta.ca/official-definition-of-learning-disabilities/

- Self esteem and empowerment
- Healthy relationships
- Exit strategies, i.e., how to get out of dangerous situations and relationships.

Hunt in their report, "Restoring the Honoring Circle: Taking a Stand Against Youth Sexual Exploitation,"[52] identified the difficulties Indigenous youth face in recognizing sexually exploitative relationships, (including being trafficked) because of the difficulties they have experienced in their upbringing. Several researchers,[53] advocate the need to build awareness on what constitutes healthy living and relationships.

The need to educate mainstream services was also outlined, emphasizing collaboration with Indigenous agencies to develop and deliver educational resources. Specifically, education is needed in police services and child welfare.

Topics for mainstream services include:

- Understanding the historical context and present-day manifestations of colonialism
- Trafficking specific information particularly as it pertains to Indigenous women and girls
- The specific needs of Indigenous girls and women with intellectual disabilities.

4. Promising practices for Indigenous Workers

The literature highlighted that Indigenous agencies, leaders, and communities, need to be more active in addressing issues of sexual exploitation for Indigenous peoples. Further, people in protective roles, such as parents, guardians, friends, school staff, etc., should receive education and resources on recognizing signs, so that they might be better able to identify and provide support for the young people in their lives.

5. Access to Affordable and Safe Housing

The literature highlighted the need for safe housing and safe places for Indigenous women and girls., given that homelessness and a lack of safe places greatly increase the vulnerability to trafficking and sexual exploitation.[54]

6. Miscellaneous Supports

Other types of services and supports that were identified in the literature, yet less frequently cited include, self defense course, peer support groups and more supports for 2SLGBTQ+ Indigenous youth.

The key point for effective services and supports is that solutions need to be multi-faceted, involve women, girls, and gender diverse peoples with lived experience in developing interventions, as well as be open, welcoming, and cognizant of the contexts, lifestyles, and constraints on those sexually trafficked, i.e., having flexible hours rather than just a nine-to-five option.[55]

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Summary of the Review of the Literature

The research demonstrates that Indigenous girls and women, women with intellectual, cognitive, and mental health disabilities and/or 2SLGBTQ+ peoples are embedded in systems and practices that have resulted in a lack of socio-economic access. More specifically, the impact of early and present-day colonial practices and policies, poverty, racism, isolation, ableism, and the need for belonging were among key factors to trafficking.

The consequence of this societal exclusion is poverty and violence which is critical to understand because it has resulted in distinct risks and vulnerabilities to trafficking for each of these systemically marginalized populations of girls, women, and gender diverse people – separately and intersectionally. Further, as Joan Reid explains, "the level of vulnerability of a victim is an important factor in offender selection." [56]

Given that the research shows that there are multiple factors that lead to Indigenous girls and women with intellectual, cognitive, and mental health disabilities vulnerability to trafficking, we need to acquire fulsome understandings of these factors to develop community tools and strategies to deconstruct and address them.

2. Scan of Comminity Resources

Thirty organizations in the Greater Toronto Area were contacted by email or phone to share information on any relevant resources that they use in working with people who have or currently are, experiencing trafficking. Materials sought included: flyers, information session notes, workshop materials, research papers, and community-based reports.

The response rate to this direct outreach was limited, therefore most resources were collected through online searches on Indigenous and disability organization websites. None of the resources identified addressed all of the intersections of focus for this project, i.e., Indigenous, disability and trafficking.

The community resources identified have been categorized in the following three areas:
1) Indigenous Specific Preventative Supports
2) Child and Youth Specific Supports
3) Supports that Respond to People who have been Trafficked. This section could be further broken down to:

- Indigenous Specific
- Disability Specific
- Children and Youth
- 2SLGBTQI+
- General

1) Indigenous Specific Preventative Supports

Most of these resources were developed by Indigenous organizations. Resources were grounded in an understanding of the impact of colonization that has led to a vulnerability to trafficking for Indigenous girls and women. Resources in this category outlined the distinct nature of trafficking experiences

for Indigenous people and stressed the need for survivor-led strategies, that are culturally based, trauma-informed and involve Elders and Knowledge Keepers. Some resources focused on the 2SLGBTQ+ community and trafficking. Resources usually contained background contextual information on colonization and its impact on families and communities, followed by tips on identifying signs and indicators of trafficking.

Information resources outlined the pathway to exploitation and recruitment. A useful prevention framework presented the principles or the key areas to focus on when doing preventative work, such as, age, location, who is doing the intervening, geography (i.e., rural, or urban), cultural education and family-based intervention.[5]

2) Child and Youth Specific Supports

Most resources in this category were not Indigenous or disability-specific but applied to the general population of children and youth. There are LGBTQ+ youth resources. Some of the resources were directed to specific audiences, such as, parents, schools, educators and youth shelters and group homes. Practical information is offered in a fact sheet that outlined tips on engaging youth who have/are currently in situations of trafficking, using trauma-informed language, awareness of recruitment in service programs and safety planning.[6]

3. Focus Groups

i. Profile of Focus Group Participants

The following four focus groups were held, with 3 one-to-one key informant interviews.

1. Individuals with lived experience – 2 groups
2. Mainstream service workers
3. Indigenous and disability service workers

In total, 26 people participated in these discussions, 9 Indigenous neurodiverse women- or gender diverse people with lived experience of violence and trafficking, and 17 service workers who work in the area of trafficking.

Individuals with Lived Experience

Individuals with lived experience were recruited with the support of the Trauma Support Case Manager at the Native Women's Resource Centre Toronto. It was important that participants were approached by someone they know and have already formed a trusting relationship with. The goal was to keep the focus group small

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[5] Please see: Sexual Exploitation Prevention Education for Indigenous Girls Developed by: Dustin Louie, 2018, in Appendix 1: Scan of Community Resources.
[6] Please see: Youth Sex Trafficking Fact Sheet, International Organization for Adolescence; Courtney's House, 2018, in Appendix 1: Scan of Community Resources.

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in order to give everyone the opportunity to engage in the discussion. There were more women interested than anticipated, thus we added a second group. All participants were compensated for their time.

Service Workers

The service workers were recruited through call and email invitations sent to individuals working in community service agencies that address sexual exploitation and trafficking. Out of thirty-two organizations contacted, representatives from eight organizations were able to attend either the focus group or one on one calls.

Participating Organizations:

Sistering
LOFT
Aura Freedom
The Canadian Centre to End Human Trafficking

Community Living Toronto
Montage Support Services
Native Child and Family Services
Ontario Native Women's Association

ii. Experiences & Vulnerabilities

The foundation of what Indigenous women experience is rooted in the violence and impact of colonialism, which destroyed traditional family, community, and governance systems of the first peoples and nations of Turtle Island. Violence and oppression of Indigenous women played an important role in colonization. Colonial rule was enabled through the destabilization and break down of the central role Indigenous women played in communities and within families. Forced segregation onto reserves of land, the Pass System, residential schools, the 60s Scoop, the continued apprehension of Indigenous children and pronounced overrepresentation of Indigenous peoples in jails – demonstrate that the colonial project continues in full force today.

As one participant stated:

> *Indigenous people are more susceptible to being trafficked because we have been groomed to be trafficked as an entire nation across Turtle Island due to the relationship with colonialism.*

Indigenous women with intellectual disabilities were also likely to have been subjected to polices of mass institutionalization for people with intellectual disabilities, where physical and sexual violence was widespread. Indigenous people also have higher rates of disability than non-Indigenous peoples, due to the impact and response to historically shaped trauma, poor health, and poverty.

Colonialism has also disconnected Indigenous peoples from their many cultures which has resulted in a loss of identity and community, thus increasing a need to belong. The segregation and the need to belong also contributes to an increased vulnerability to sexual exploitation and trafficking for neurodiverse Indigenous women and gender diverse peoples.

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One support worker elaborates on this:

> *As they (Indigenous women) are coming out of the system, they're now looking for stability… so someone sees that, and they then build that trusting relationship with them which leads to trafficking. Once that happens it's hard for them to know, 'Am I being used, or am I having a family?'*

Indigenous women who live with an intellectual and/or mental health disability who participated in the focus groups shared many key aspects of their lives.

Poverty - Women talked about how poverty and trying to survive was something they faced on an ongoing basis, placing them in precarious living situations and vulnerable to any opportunities to make money.

Violence in their communities - Violence was something many women were accustomed to from a very early age and thus it became normalized in their homes and communities. They also shared the impact of watching their family members and older adults work through their own trauma and how violence often resulted from this.

Loneliness - Women spoke about the pervasive loneliness that they experienced and their desire to belong. As this woman said:

> *The reason I became involved in these relationships was because of systemic loneliness.*

Abusive relationships - Women also stated that they were often in toxic and abusive relationships and had problems identifying what a healthy relationship would look like.

The poverty, normalization of violence and loneliness resulted in women developing harmful survival and coping strategies. In addition, the impact of colonization in its present-day iterations embeds a feeling of powerlessness and a lack of control in women's lives, making them easy to coerce.

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iii. Barriers to Getting Help

Barriers for the Individual

There were several reasons why women couldn't seek help when in situations of exploitation and trafficking. The following outlines the key issues identified.

Isolation - The loneliness and isolation that we heard about greatly impacted women's self esteem. The desperation and longing for 'community' and acceptance made even these negative and abusive situations difficult to leave. In addition, once in situations of trafficking you become even further isolated, under strict surveillance that not only were women unaware of services, but they also found services difficult to access.

Social media and online engagement - These platforms offer an easy avenue to recruit women and girls who are looking for relationships and friends.

Not believed - We heard that due to their disability, people were often skeptical that they would be targeted by traffickers.

Unable to recognize risks - Some participants stated that they were perceived as unintelligent, leading to them into risky situations. In addition, they felt that they did not notice signs of grooming.

Stigma - Women deny what they are experiencing to avoid the shame and stigma attached to trafficking.

Barriers in services

Barriers for women

We heard of many barriers in the education and service sector that contribute to girls and women not getting the support they need to prevent and leave situations of trafficking.

Lack of information when moving to Toronto - There is a lack of information on what Indigenous women can expect when arriving in Toronto, who are often coming from small communities. Women are unaware of services that might be there to help them transition into urban life.

Lack of targeted tools to help recognize risks - Support workers stated that there was a lack of resources and tools that would assist Indigenous women with intellectual and mental health disabilities recognize the harmful situations that they are in. For example, women may not know that there is even a problem and if they do understand this, they may be unsure of what they can do about it, and where they can go to get help.

Women may also trust their traffickers and thus are unable to see that there is anything wrong with their situation. We heard how women often could not distinguish between a boyfriend, a trafficker or someone buying sex. For many of the women we spoke to, they believed they were in an intimate relationship with

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their trafficker before he became abusive. A need for belonging is so strong placing women in dangerous positions, as this woman stated:

Sometimes I would be trading safety for belonging… that turned into a relationship… and they realized they could exploit me.

Women were often susceptible to traffickers to meet their basic survival needs, which resulted in the relative ease traffickers have in manipulating them. We heard that traffickers determine their wants and needs which results in the individual relying on them.

Lack of education - We heard from both the women with lived experience and service providers that there is a lack of education geared to youth on the topic of trafficking. Also, that the quality of sexual health education was low, and that families and educators were resistant to talking about sexual health to women with disabilities. This is because women with intellectual disabilities are viewed as 'young' and unlikely to engage in sexual behaviour.

When I voiced my concerns, I got basically laughed at.

Relationships are what foreclose a lot of Indigenous communities and individuals' ability to seek justice or to exit to get help and access resources.

Inappropriate services and a sense that these programs will not help them - There were many reasons given related to a lack of confidence in services, based on their past experiences. Support services are not aware of the situation of Indigenous women coming into the city and thus are not there to support them at the onset. This often results in Indigenous women, especially younger women, getting into unsafe circumstances and friend groups.

Participants indicated that services providers often gave them false hope and that they have been let down repeatedly. Service workers also lacked understandings of the context in which they have come from and the framework of historical trauma, i.e., residential school experiences and the impact on generations of families. This often translated in providers not using trauma informed, sensitive language, leading to a neglect of their needs. Workers also seemed wary to broach the topic of trafficking. Related to staffing, participants noted a lack of diversity and a constant change over in staffing who employed different approaches. Indigenous women often felt pressure to accept services that do not feel right because of the lack of options available.

Mistrust of mainstream service providers - Many participants spoke about their mistrust with mainstream social service workers. The mistrust was often influenced by previous negative experiences they had with service workers, as these quotes demonstrate:

Specific comments about services included:

- Programs not reflecting what survivors need or want
- Lack of person-centred care
- Spaces not designed for healing, i.e., many women would rather sleep on the streets than be in a setting where they are forced to be with others going through similar traumas.
- When experiencing traumatic response, they are placed on the "hard to work with" list, further restricting access to services.
- Lack of holistic, culturally grounded supports that recognize the interconnectedness of social problems, i.e., need to address poverty and housing, if they are to address trafficking and sexual violence
- Services are not close in proximity and transportation is not possible or suitable

These negative experiences often reinforce the messages they receive from their traffickers and "street sisters" about the harm they will experience if they try to access services. This has a strong influence on their decision to seek help.

Stereotypes and Labeling - There was a lot of discussion about the racism, ableism intersecting with genderism/sexism that people experience when attempting to access services and supports. Related to this, is the power imbalance between service provider and service user. The intersection of disability and race increases this power imbalance. Participants shared that they often get labelled by agencies, sometimes even before having any direct interactions with them.

Here are some other issues raised:

- Women with disabilities were not seen as sexual thus were not believed.
- Stereotypes often leading to misdiagnosis for women with disabilities
- There was a tendency to group all Indigenous peoples together.
- Women felt discriminated against based on racial stereotypes, i.e., "lost, weak and/or stupid."

Women felt as if they were not seen as 'worthy' victims and that they had chosen the violence that they are experiencing:

We're looked at like sore thumbs, specifically if we're going into a place like rehab… we get the look… you're Indigenous, of course…

We are always seen as if 'we' are the problem.

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Barriers for service providers

Inappropriate services and restrictive, harmful policies and procedures

Mainstream service providers also indicated that they felt ill-equipped to provide adequate support. There was a lack of awareness from service providers on what trafficking looks like and what groups are vulnerable and why. In addition, mainstream service providers shared that it is difficult to provide support working within systems that are not created for Indigenous peoples. This observation was echoed by Indigenous workers as well, as this quote demonstrates:

> *Systems weren't created for Indigenous peoples to thrive and survive; they were meant to kill us.*

Problems with mainstream services

The following issues were identified as problematic for neurodiverse Indigenous women and gender diverse people when attempting to access mainstream services:

- Many agencies have a narrow focus on what they can and cannot provide and who they can provide services to. This excluded many individuals from accessing services.
- Often, research participants said that they felt that they must fit rigid criteria, leaving people feeling unseen. The need to follow strict guidelines left little room for flexibility in service provision.
- The intake process involved having to re-tell their story repeatedly, resulting in retraumatizing individuals.
- Administrative requirements take away from the time service providers can spend with their clients.
- There are long waitlists and a lack of follow up once women contacted a service.

We also heard about the unwritten expectation of people advocating for themselves. This is difficult for Indigenous women who are displaced in their new city and/or for people living with intellectual and/or mental health disabilities.

iv. What Helped

Participants were clear about the things that they needed in terms of services and supports to help them heal from the trauma experienced and to begin to build better lives, as these quotes demonstrate:

> *Why would you ask someone to be vulnerable with you if you can't be vulnerable with them?*

> *They looked at me like I was a person and it just built up my confidence a lot.*

> *I let the youth direct conversations, I don't pry, I use a lot of humor.*

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Sensitive Direct Service Provision

Firstly, participants told us how important it was for them to have workers that were sensitive to their needs and would provide them with unconditional support. Often the workers who they said were most sensitive were Indigenous themselves. With Indigenous service providers, they felt that they were not looked down upon and that they were not seen as "the problem". Key to this success was that they developed relationships with their workers that were ongoing.

The following outlines the kinds of things women identified as best practices:

- Person-centred/led care; where women feel they have control over the process. This might mean not being too goal focused, at the expense of woman's needs in the moment.
- Not pressuring women to move at a certain pace or share anything they are not ready to share.
- Believing women and being non-judgemental
- Creating safety in the meeting environment, e.g., Finding creative ways to work with the survivor without them having to re-tell their story repeatedly.
- Empowering women by using a strength-based approach and honouring them as survivors.
- Mirroring survivors' language
- Meeting women in locations of their own choosing
- Service providers sharing some of their own vulnerabilities to strengthen the alliance
- Honesty and transparency from the worker
- Helping survivor to identify people in their circle they can lean on if they need support
- Workers advocating for survivor without being asked
- Helping women find purpose
- Supporting women's role as the 'new warrior women' who can now help others that need support on their healing journeys

Many agreed that this kind of care was most often found in Indigenous organizations compared to mainstream organizations. For many, being supported in these ways greatly contributed to their motivation to work on their healing journeys.

Access to Cultural Practices and Medicine

We heard that having opportunities to (re) connect to Indigenous cultural practices and teachings, i.e., ceremonies and smudging was particularly healing for many participants. For some women this meant having the space and time to regain knowledge that was lost and an opportunity to connect with other Indigenous peoples.

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Addressing Basic Needs

Ensuring that survivors had access to their basic needs was something valued in service provision. Service providers also agreed that this was important and noticed that addressing basic needs had a positive impact on the success of other interventions.

The basic needs identified were:

- Food
- Clothing
- Showers
- Laundry services
- Shelter from the outside
- Transit money
- Childcare services

Women also appreciated receiving skills training and exposure to employment opportunities.

Flexible & Creative Services

Participants shared that when services are flexible, they felt much more supported and cared for, compared to their experience with rigid and restrictive services.

Flexibility could be in the form of:

- Providing ongoing services without a set number of sessions.
- Not forcing therapy on a woman if they are not ready for this yet, rather finding alternative ways to help
- Listening to women's needs and adapting services where needed

Creativity in service provision including things like providing education through storytelling or organizing off-site land-based sessions.

Collaborating with Other Community Services

Collaboration between mainstream and other Indigenous services was identified as important because it was felt that agencies' combined strengths would increase the support for an individual.

It was also felt that cross sectoral approaches would increase support for women, i.e., training nurses on the kinds of questions to ask survivors. Further, being involved in local response teams, i.e., the Coalition to End Human Trafficking was also critical in supporting survivors.

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v. What is Needed

Building on the kinds of things that survivors identified as helpful, the following types of services and programs were identified as needed to effectively prevent and respond to the needs of Indigenous women, girls, and gender diverse peoples vulnerable to, or in situations of sexual exploitation and trafficking.

Adaptive, Evolving and Ongoing Services

Every situation is different and just when you think you got something that's working… things change out there.

Indigenous Service Provider

Although the participants identified that there are programs that provided flexibility in their approaches, it was felt that most programs continue to be rigid in their policies and procedures. The need for more adaptive and flexible programs is particularly important for this population given the unique and complex needs that have been explored.

The following outlines what this flexibility could look like:

- Continuously evolving services based on each person's expressed and unique needs of service users
- The provision of holistic services where women can address their multiple needs in one space
- Less restrictive parameters tied to funding.
- Providing gradual transitional programming which would allow women to ease into the next phases of their healing
- Ability to have rapid access to services when needed, without having to wait. For example, when someone is exiting a program or a shelter, they will require that services are available immediately
- Relationships need to continue after the completion of a service because survivors need ongoing supports. As this woman expressed it: "*Continuity of these services, I believe, could have cut down on a lot of these abusive relationships that I was in.*"

Greater Diversity in Services

We heard that anti-trafficking services need to be developed with an understanding of intersecting identities in the context of these issues. That is, services need to be responsive to each layer of marginalization, i.e., race, disability, gender, and culture.

Responses also need to acknowledge diverse Indigenous identities. The following quote illuminates this point:

I was adopted out. I have no real connection to Inuit culture and that is not really taught in these native organizations in the city… I feel I can't even learn by myself.

As the above quote indicates there is a need to focus on underrepresented Indigenous communities in Toronto, i.e., Inuit peoples. This would mean having distinct services that recognize the diversity in Indigenous cultures and the differential impact of colonization on that group. More diversity in staff for Indigenous agencies would also be useful because the survivors will be comforted to know that the people who are providing support understand them better.

There was also a sense that there needs to be increased support for gender minority people.

Staff Training

It was stated that mainstream agencies need more 'Cultural Competency' training, which ideally would lead to better accountability and understanding from settler service workers.

Participants indicated that staff in both mainstream and Indigenous agencies should receive education and training in the following areas:

- Strength-based approaches for working with Indigenous women with disabilities
- Attain a greater understanding of the diversities of disabilities that exist
- Understanding the diversities that exist in Indigenous cultures and nations
- Trauma informed training which includes, learning trauma informed language and understanding potential underlying reason for presenting behaviour
- Specific coaching on working with people who are vulnerable or currently experiencing trafficking, i.e., recognizing the signs of trafficking
- Understanding of the impact of colonization and ongoing discussions on overarching systemic issues such as inequality, power, and control

Survivor Led Programs

People's lives are not textbooks… when someone lives through something… they have more to bring to the table than someone who's just reading books.

Indigenous people are the ultimate healers when it comes to healing practices and healing strategies.

Survivor voices are powerful and helpful to the development and the delivery of programs if the person has completed their healing, and this work will not cause them greater harm. Participants felt that survivor led programs would help to:

- Reduce stigma
- Create an environment where people feel understood
- Develop ongoing relationships
- Develop roles in agencies for survivors who don't have formal degrees and are recognized for the knowledge and expertise that they hold
- Re-enforce survivors' courage

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Children, Youth and Family Geared Education

There is a need for proactive services and programs that educate children, youth, and their families. Preventative education can also help guide peers on how to respond to a friend who may be engaging in dangerous behaviours. This is important as youth often begin to rely on their friendships as a support system in the adolescence years.

The school setting offers an ideal environment for survivors to come and speak to youth.

Education for children, youth and families can support young people and their families, to learn about:

- Their sexuality and healthy relationships
- Signs and risks
- How to protect themselves
- What resources are available

More Cross-sectoral and Organizational Collaboration

Participants indicated that there was a need for those organizations involved in addressing trafficking work to work and learn together and share resources and strategies. More specifically, there is a need for increased collaboration between mainstream, Indigenous and disability organizations.

It was felt that organizations should dedicate time to build relationships with key sectors involved with this issue.

Collaboration would result in:

- Increased knowledge of other services in the area for survivors. As this woman stated:
  "*There are so many variables that make it difficult for us to navigate what services will be beneficial for us.*"
- More holistic care with organizations working together through referrals based on needs
- A reduction of waitlists

It was also stated that there is a need for more clinical outpatient support for children and youth who are in group homes.

Consistent Funding

We heard that some programs that participants identified as being helpful for them, were discontinued due to funding cuts. Therefore, funding needs to be consistent to sustain programs that are in high demand. When there are constant changes in program availability, it is difficult to build a positive reputation for a program.

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Participants felt that funding and additional supports need to prioritize Indigenous organizations, for services such as working with traditional healers. These types of programs are in high demand, leaving workers over-extended and incapable of meeting the demand. This is a critical need due to an increase in women being exploited during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Further, funding should be:

- Unconditional and less restrictive
- Ongoing and longer term
- Be increased to fund preventative initiatives

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III. Summary

The research component of the *Trafficking & Indigenous Women with Intellectual, Cognitive and Psychosocial Disabilities: Promising Preventative Practices* initiative set out to learn more about the specificity of the experiences of neurodiverse Indigenous women, girls and gender diverse people and the issue of trafficking. The results of this research will inform the development of culturally and disability sensitive promising practices and tools for potential community supporters and women and gender diverse people themselves.

The research results demonstrate that Indigenous girls, women, and gender diverse people are embedded in early and present-day colonial capitalist practices and policies, resulting in entrenched poverty, segregation, racism, isolation, and the need for belonging – the key factors placing this population at a high risk to trafficking. Women and girls with intellectual disabilities experience distinct risks to trafficking, including, lack of awareness of exploitation, susceptibility to manipulation, viewed as non-sexual, thus lacking appropriate sex education and unsupervised internet use. Feelings of isolation and the need for friends may also lead to being an 'easy target' for traffickers.

Further, the review of the literature reveals that there is minimal work that offers practical ideas of what needs to be done to address these risks. Of the materials identified, effective supports would be person-centred, culturally grounded and adhere to a harm reduction approach. The location of services was noted as critical in reaching vulnerable women, i.e., airports, bars, schools as well as oil rigs and mining sites. Education directed to women, girls and mainstream service providers was also noted as important on issues such as, self esteem and empowerment, exit strategies and understanding the historical context and present-day manifestations of the impact of colonialism and ableism. Understanding the distinct risks and vulnerabilities to trafficking for both Indigenous and neurodiverse women, helps assess the level of vulnerability for this population.

The scan of community resources identified two broad types of tools - Indigenous specific preventative supports and child and youth resources. The child and youth resources were further broken down to Indigenous, disability and 2SLGBTQI+.

The Indigenous prevention supports were grounded in understandings of the impact of colonization and the need for survivor-led, culturally based strategies that involved elders and knowledge keepers. Useful resources offered tips on identifying signs and indicators of trafficking, safety planning and the need to focus on age, location/geography, culturally based and family-based interventions. Resources were usually audience specific including, parents, schools, educators, and youth shelters. This research did not identify any tools specific to Indigenous women with disabilities.

Neurodiverse Indigenous women who participated in the focus groups talked about the poverty they have or still are, living in and how that puts them in precarious environments. They also talked about the violence in their communities that they have witnessed and/or experienced throughout their lives, the loneliness they live with, their need to belong, and the pervasive violent relationships that they find themselves in.

There were several reasons given for why women do not seek help when they are are in exploitative situations, including, isolation and lack of community support, social media making online engagement easier, not being believed due to their disability, not recognizing signs of grooming, and shame and stigma.

Focus group participants also identified many barriers in the service sector and in terms of educational needs, which include:

- A lack of information on what Indigenous women can expect when arriving in Toronto to transition to urban life:
- Lack of tools specifically for Indigenous women with disabilities to help recognize risk to trafficking
- Lack of education geared to youth on the topic of trafficking and sexual health education, especially for girls and women with disabilities
- Mistrust of mainstream service providers, Inappropriate services
- A sense that programs available, would not help them
- Discrimination and stereotyping in service delivery.

Service providers identified barriers that they experience in attempting to support neurodiverse Indigenous women, such as:

- Feeling ill-equipped to provide adequate support
- Restrictive policies and administrative protocols resulting in people having to fit into rigid criteria to receive support
- Lack of awareness on what trafficking looks like and what groups are vulnerable and why
- Long waitlists
- A lack of follow up once a service is completed.

Focus group participants outlined the types of services and supports that they needed, these included, sensitive direct service provision such as person-centred/led care, non-judgemental support, empowering women with a strength-based approach and helping survivors to identify people in their circle that they can lean on if they need support.

Women and gender diverse people wanted to go to Indigenous organizations and be supported by Indigenous workers. They also wanted access to cultural practices and medicine, services that address their basic needs such as food, clothing, transit money and flexible and creative services, i.e., providing education through storytelling or organizing off-site land-based sessions.

Focus groups participants also wanted to see more collaboration between mainstream and other Indigenous services, feeling that if agencies combined their strengths, this would result in better support for the individual.

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The women, gender diverse people and service providers who participated in this research, identified the following types of services and programs as needed to effectively prevent and respond to the needs of neurodiverse Indigenous women, girls and gender diverse people who are vulnerable to trafficking:

- Adaptive, evolving, and ongoing services
- Greater diversity in services, that understand and respond to intersecting identities
- Cultural competency and disability training for mainstream agencies
- Survivor-led programs
- Children, youth, and family preventative education
- Cross-sector collaboration
- Consistent funding that prioritizes Indigenous organizations.

IV. Conclusions

The results of the research identified the types of supports and underlining understandings needed in the prevention and more effective response to trafficking for this population.

Principles & Understandings for Effective Interventions

It is critical that any interventions or community strategy that aims to address Indigenous women, girls and gender diverse people with intellectual, cognitive, and psychosocial disabilities' heightened risk to trafficking and sexual exploitation, must fully understand the impact of early and present-day colonial capitalist practices and policies resulting in poverty, segregation, racism, isolation, and the need for belonging, as well as disability-specific barriers to disclosure, i.e., communication difficulties and an increased dependency on their abuser for support.

This understanding serves as the foundation for needing holistic approaches, because the contemporary impact of colonization, i.e., poverty, cultural and community dissolution, structural racism, etc., means issues for this population cannot be addressed in silos. For example, a woman is not safe if she has no choice but to live in unsafe housing environments or services cannot just focus on employment supports when a woman is dealing with mental health issues arising from sexual violence.

There is a need for community supports and services to understand, in very practical ways, the multiple ways colonization, systemic racism, sexism, genderism and ableism impacts every avenue of neurodiverse Indigenous women, girls and gender diverse people's lives.

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Policy and Program Changes

The core finding in this research related to policy and program changes needed, is the need for consistent funding for Indigenous designed and led women's programming. These were the types of programs that research participants identified as being the most helpful to them. Continuity is critical to realizing positive outcomes, thus funding needs to be ongoing to sustain the programs that are in the highest demand.

The research also identified the need for better, more systemized cross sectoral collaboration to enhance referral systems, reduce waitlists, and increase knowledge of available services for survivors.

Key Service Considerations & Components

Services need to:

- Be designed and delivered by Indigenous women and gender diverse peoples.
- Be traditionally based, grounded in cultural teachings and ceremonies.
- Be culturally and disability sensitive, this means understanding the diversity in types of disabilities and nations; yet seeing the person first.
- Understand that the stigma associated with trafficking is compounded with multiple intersecting marginalized identities, i.e., race, gender, and disability.
- Be person-centred, survivor led, strength-based and empowering.
- Meet people where they are at, in a non-judgemental manner. This means not pressuring them to move at a set pace and/or abide by rigid rules.
- Employ service providers, with lived experience and who are honest, vulnerable, and do not act in a hierarchal way.
- Be in located in sites where recruitment occurs, i.e., major cities, "city triangles" where oil rigs and mining businesses are located, airports, bars, schools, and the internet.
- Be mobile and located in high-risk and less populated areas, where there is limited access to transportation.
- Include preventative education for individuals on subjects such as, sex education, healthy relationships, internet risks, the process of grooming, exit strategies and self esteem and empowerment.
- Include education for peers and families on how to respond to a family member or friend at risk.
- Include education for mainstream services on understanding the historical and present-day impact of colonization, trafficking specific to Indigenous women, girls and gender diverse people who live with a disability.

The primary goal of these service components is to help neurodiverse Indigenous women and gender diverse people find meaning and purpose in their lives.

Appendix: Scan of Community Resources

Researched and written by Denia Anderson Doran

The community resources identified have been categorized in three areas:

1. Indigenous Specific Preventative Supports
2. Child and Youth Specific Supports
3. Supports that Respond to People who have been Trafficked – which could be further broken down to:
   • Indigenous Specific
   • Disability Specific
   • 2SLGBTQI+
   • General

Indigenous Specific Preventative Supports

(a) Speak Out: Stop Sex Trafficking

Developed by: Ganohkwasra Family Assault Support Services, Independent First Nations, Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres, Ontario Native Women's Association, Ontario's Human Trafficking Lived Experience Roundtable and Design De Plume Inc. Funded by the Ontario Government

Description: This is an Indigenous-focused anti-human trafficking education campaign. It provides information on sexual exploitation, human trafficking, why Indigenous peoples are particularly susceptible of becoming targets and where to go for help.

Link: http://endindigenoustrafficking.com/publications-and-resources

(b) Speak Out: Stop Sex Trafficking - Discussion Guide

Developed by: Ganohkwasra Family Assault Support Services, Independent First Nations, Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres, Ontario Native Women's Association, Ontario's Human Trafficking Lived Experience Roundtable and Design De Plume Inc. Funded by the Ontario Government

Description: Part of the above Indigenous-focused anti-human trafficking education campaign, offering a discussion guide for facilitators, caregivers, workers, youth leaders to help address, prevent and end sex trafficking.

Link: https://endindigenoustrafficking.com/wp-content/uploads/HT_Indigenous_Discussion_Guide-ENG.pdf

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c) Restoring the Honouring Circle: Taking a Stand Against Youth Sexual Exploitation

Developed by: Sarah Hunt; Justice Institute of British Columbia, 2011

Description: An information and prevention manual on sexual exploitation, designed to be used by people supporting youth in rural and isolated communities in British Columbia.

Link: https://www.jibc.ca/sites/default/files/research/pdf/Restoring-Honouring-Circle-Manual.pdf

(d) First Nations Sexual Health Toolkit: Part 1 and 2

Developed by: The National Aboriginal Health Organization, 2011

Description: This is a toolkit designed specifically for Indigenous communities and focuses on topics of STI's, HIV/AIDS, healthy relationships, sexual abuse, and drug/alcohol facilitated sexual assault, sexuality, body image and traditional views on sexual health.

Link: https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5f3550c11c1f590e92ad30eb/t/5f45a5926c18632c599db16c/1598399912018/First+Nations+Sexual+Health+Toolkit.pdf

(e) Lifecycle for a Human Trafficking Survivor

Developed by: Ontario Native Women's Association

Description: Visual representation depicting how Indigenous women are groomed for exploitation. It illustrates the barriers Indigenous women face, and where systemic change is needed.

Link: https://www.onwa.ca/learning-resources-ht

(f) Sexual Exploitation Prevention Education for Indigenous Girls

Developed by: Dustin Louie, 2018

Description: Summary of a study conducted between 2014-2016 (Louie, 2016) and suggestion of a prevention framework to be used in schools to educate Indigenous girls who are at increased risk of sexual exploitation.

Link: https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1183728.pdf

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Child and youth specific supports

(a) Sexual Exploitation and Trafficking of Children and Youth in Canada: A Prevention and Early Intervention Toolkit for Parents

Developed by: Stephanie Moss; Children of the Street Society

Description: Toolkit is for caregivers and parents that want more information on sexual exploitation and trafficking. It outlines warning signs, recruitment tactics and trends in youth behaviour.

Link: http://media.wix.com/ugd/cb3288_c604d397196d44e58b91e52ba182f08f.pdf

(b)White Ribbon Project on Eradicating Child/Youth Sexual Exploitation and Sex Trafficking

Developed by: White Ribbon; Funded by the government of Ontario

Description: This is a digital learning resource offered to secondary school educators. It includes lesson plans on sexual exploitation and sex trafficking.

Link: https://www.wrprevent.ca/-recommendations-for-educators

(c) Human Trafficking Prevention: Strategies for Runaway and Homeless Youth Settings

Developed by: Family and Youth Services Bureau, 2020

Description: This report looks at strategies to include human trafficking prevention education into Runaway and Homeless youth programs.

Link: https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/fysb/acf_issuebrief_htprevention_10202020_final_508.pdf

(d) Youth Sex Trafficking Fact Sheet

Developed by: International Organization for Adolescence; Courtney's House, 2018

Description: Fact sheet on youth sex trafficking primarily targeted towards service providers

Link: http://iofa.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/IOFA-Pack-of-Fact-Sheets.pdf

(e) The Truth About Child and Youth Sexual Exploitation

Developed by: Children of the Street Society

Description: Infographic on child and youth sexual exploitation that provides statistics and quick information about the problem.

Link: https://a21df1e8-146f-4268-85fd-40f5b23760f2.filesusr.com/ugd/cb3288_051dd70245ba452083b831a6b3401e33.pdf

(f) Sex Trafficking and LGBTQ Youth

Developed by: Polaris Project

Description: Poster that provides statistics and quick information on youth sex trafficking in the LGBTQ2S+ community.

Link; https://polarisproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/LGBTQ-Sex-Trafficking.pdf

Supports that respond to people who have been trafficked

Indigenous Specific Supports

(a) We Are Not Invisible: Indigenous Anti-Human Trafficking Education Toolkit

Developed by: Wabano, 2019

Description: This toolkit outlines preventative steps to be taken to reduce human trafficking. They also outline best ways of engaging with Indigenous communities.

Link: https://wabano.com/product/we-are-not-invisible-indigenous-anti-human-trafficking-education-toolkit/

(b) Safe Passage: Anti-Trafficking Toolkit

Developed by: Native Women's Association of Canada in partnership with Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre

Description: This training model serves as an educational tool to learn about why Indigenous people are more susceptible to trafficking. It is divided into the six sections: (1) Indigenous people pre-contact, (2) contact and colonization, (3) present day experiences, (4) Indigenous women and exploitation, (5) next steps, (6) planting seeds of hope.

Link: https://safe-passage.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/violence_prevention-community_member_booklet.pdf

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(c) Our Spirits are Not for Sale: A Handbook for Helping Sexually Exploited Aboriginal Women and Girls

Developed by: Native Women's Association of Canada, 2015

Description: This handbook is divided into two sections. This first (larger) section provides education on trafficking for individuals that may think they are being trafficked. The second section is for frontline workers to educate them on best practices when working with this population.

Link: https://www.nwac.ca/assets-knowledge-centre/Our-Spirits-are-NOT-for-sale-English-web-version.pdf

(d) You Are Not Alone: A Toolkit for Aboriginal Women Escaping Domestic Violence

Developed by: Native Women's Association of Canada

Description: This tool kit is designed for women escaping domestic violence. It explains signs of an abusive relationship, reasons one might stay etc. There are also several exercises included in the booklet such as templates for safety planning, self-care activities and tips, a positive statement guide using the medicine wheel etc.

Link: https://www.nwac.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/NWAC-You-Are-Not-Alone-Handbook-with-weblinks.pdf

(e) SOAR for Indigenous Communities

Developed by: SOAR

Description: U.S. based online training designed for those serving Indigenous populations to better understand issues of human trafficking and the impact it has on Indigenous communities.

Link: https://www.train.org/main/course/1088753/?activeTab=about

(f) Journey to Safe Spaces: Indigenous Anti-Human Trafficking Engagement Report

Developed by: Ontario Native Women's Association, 2017-2018

Description: This report outlines some of the barriers and needs of survivors as well as recommendations for ongoing work. The report also includes an Indigenous anti-human trafficking service delivery framework followed by recommendations.

Link: https://www.onwa.ca/_files/ugd/33ed0c_1a2b7218396c4c71b2d4537052ca47cd.pdf

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(g) Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls

Developed by: National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, 2019

Description: This is a two-part report on the national inquiry into missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. Volume 1a, Section 1, provides a framework that identifies the violence experienced by Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people. Section 2 focuses heavily on the testimony gathered from families and survivors to better understand their encounters with individual, institutions, and systemic forms of oppression. Volume 1b, focuses on different models of healing, commemoration, and Indigenous-led best practices. It also includes the Calls for Justice.

Link: https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Executive_Summary.pdf

https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Final_Report_Vol_1a-1.pdf

https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Final_Report_Vol_1b.pdf

(h) Sex Trafficking of Indigenous Women in Ontario

Developed by: Ontario Native Women's Association, 2016

Description: This report gives an overview of the issue of trafficking in Ontario. It ends with a list of recommendations based on the research.

Link: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1vi8YNsrjFcss57JziwVJ7VwIiwE91EH0/view?usp=sharing

(i) Community Strategic Action Plan February 2007, United Against Sexual Violence: Empowering Aboriginal Women, Sister Organizations, and the Community Towards Collaborative Action: A Plain Language Version

Developed by: Cynthia Bird, sponsored by the Native Women's Association, with funding from the National Crime Prevention Program and Status of Women Canada, 2007.

Description: A strategic action plan to combat sexual violence against Aboriginal communities. It is based on a research project on sexual victimization of Aboriginal women, Aboriginal transgender women and Aboriginal two-spirit women based in Winnipeg.

Link: http://iwhc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/united-together.pdf

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(j) Reconciliation with Indigenous Women: Changing the Story of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls

Developed by: Ontario Native Women's Association, 2020

Description: This report is a summary of over 5,700 women, over 50 years, who have spoken to ONWA specifically on the issue of violence against Indigenous women. Recommendations based on these discussions are listed at the end of the report.

Link: https://www.onwa.ca/_files/ugd/4eaa9c_be059fe0cd844671839aef58558d893d.pdf

Disabilities Specific Supports

(a) Illinois Imagines Toolkit, Our Rights, Right Now (sexual assault and women with disabilities)

Developed by: Illinois Imagines Project, 2010

Description: This toolkit is part of a strategic plan to support women with disabilities that have been sexually assaulted. It aims is to foster collaborations among disability service agencies and rape crisis centres, and to better train workers from both sectors on how to work with women with disabilities who experience sexual violence.

Link: http://iofa.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Illinois-Imagines-Toolkit.pdf

(b) The Trafficking of Youth with Disabilities: What Youth Service Providers Need to Know

Developed by: International Organization for Adolescence

Description: This is a short report on some basic information on working with youth with disabilities that have been trafficked.

Link: http://iofa.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Vera-Institute-Service-Providers.pdf

(c) Measuring Capacity to Serve Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Survivors with Disabilities

Developed by: Nancy Smith, Sandra Harrell, Jaclyn Smith, Ashley Demyan; VERA Institute of Justice, 2015

Description: This is a tool for disability organizations to track and improve their capacity to serve people with disabilities who have experienced domestic and sexual violence.

Link: https://www.vera.org/downloads/publications/Disability-Organization-Implementation-Guide.pdf

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(d) Applying Trauma-Informed Care and Disability Justice to Working with Survivors of Sex Trafficking

Developed by: Susan Kahan and Justine Shorter; Vera Center on Victimization and Safety, International Organization for Adolescence and National Human Trafficking Disability Working Group 2021

Description: This webinar describes the importance of using a trauma-informed approach to supporting survivors of sex trafficking with disabilities and provide attendees with skills to effectively support these survivors.

Link: https://www.endabusepwd.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/TraumaInformedCareandDJFinal.pdf

Webinar version at: https://www.endabusepwd.org/resource/applying-trauma-informed-care-and-disability-justice-to-serving-survivors-of-sex-trafficking-with-disabilities/

(e) Serving Survivors of Sexual Assault with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

Developed by: Leslie Myers and Leigh Ann Barry; Center on Victimization and Safety, Vera Institute of Justice, 2021

Description: This resource offers information on the unique risks and barriers people with I/DD face, related to sexual assault, includes best practices when working with I/DD and offers tips for increasing a survivors' comfort with the provider.

Link: https://www.endabusepwd.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Slides-Serving-Survivors-of-Sexual-Assault-with-Intellectual-and-Developmental-Disabilities.pdf

Webinar version at: https://www.endabusepwd.org/resource/serving-survivors-of-sexual-assault-with-intellectual-and-developmental-disabilities/

(f) Service Recommendations for Human Trafficking Survivors with Substance Use Disorders

Developed by: Human Trafficking Leadership Academy, 2018

Description: This document provides recommendations from a team of non-governmental service providers and survivor leaders on how to enhance service to survivors of human trafficking or those at risk of human trafficking. The recommendations are based on trauma-informed practices and survivor-informed principles.

Link: https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/otip/htla_service_recommendations_for_human_trafficking_survivors_with.pdf

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(g) Parliamentary Brief: Canadian Women and Girls with Disabilities and Human Trafficking

Developed by: Sonia Alimi and Mikayla Celine Aguie; DisAbled Women's Network of Canada, 2018

Description: This brief was prepared for the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights for their study on Human Trafficking in Canada.

Link: https://dawncanada.net/media/uploads/news_data/news-287/dawn_brief_on_human_trafficking_and_women_with_disabilities_june_15_2018.pdf

(h) Victimization and People with Disabilities: It's Real TALKS Train-The-Trainer Discussion Guide (toolkit)

Developed by: THINK+change, A Social Enterprise of the Arc of Aurora, 2021

Description: A training guide for organizations to learn about victims with developmental and other disabilities who have experienced sexual assault and trafficking. Included are some suggestions of ways to help support survivors and to reduce victimization of people with disabilities.

Link: https://www.flipsnack.com/thinkchange/victimization-and-people-with-disabilities-it-s-real-talks-trai/full-view.html

Child and Youth Specific Supports

Human Trafficking in Youth-Serving Programs: A Blueprint for Organizations Working with Street Youth, Homeless Youth, and Youth at Risk (U.S. Based) (Guide)

Developed by: Family and Youth Service Bureau

Description: A guide for helping service providers navigate working with youth who have been trafficked.

Link: https://www.rhyttac.net/assets/docs/Resources/HumanTraffickingBlueprint-508.pdf

LGBTQ2SI+ Specific Supports

Breaking Barriers: Improving Services for LGBTQ Human Trafficking Victims

Developed by: Polaris, 2015

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Description: This report includes suggested practices to be taken up by anti-trafficking providers to better recognize and serve the needs of the LGBTQ2SI+ youth population.

Link: https://polarisproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/breaking-barriers-lgbtq-services.pdf

General Resources

(a) Getting Out: A National Framework for Escaping Human Trafficking for Sexual Exploitation in Canada

Developed by: Amanda Noble, Isaac Coplan, Jaime Neal, Amanda Suleiman; Covenant House Toronto AND Susan McIntyre; The Hindsight Group, 2020

Description: This framework outlines barriers, needs and considerations for service providers working with survivors of sex trafficking.

Link: https://covenanthousetoronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Covenant House Research Report_ FINAL.pdf

(b) Collaborative and Best Practices to End Sexual Exploitation and Sex Trafficking in Manitoba

Developed by: Tracia's Trust: Manitoba's Strategy to Prevent Sexual Exploitation and Sex Trafficking, 2019

Description: This report contributes to evidence-based practices in preventing sexual exploitation and sex trafficking in Canada.

Link: https://www.gov.mb.ca/fs/traciastrust/pubs/tracias_trust_report_2019.pdf

(c) Ontario's Anti-Human Trafficking Strategy 2020-2025

Developed by: The Government of Ontario, 2020

Description: This document provides an overview of Ontario's anti-human trafficking strategy. It states it will: "raise awareness of the issue through training and public awareness campaigns, empowering frontline service providers to prevent human trafficking before it occurs and take action early, supporting survivors through specialized services, and give law enforcement the tools and resources they need to hold offenders accountable."

Link: https://www.ontario.ca/page/ontarios-anti-human-trafficking-strategy-2020-2025

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