

DEVELOPING TRAUMA-SPECIFIC SOCIAL WORK FOR COMMERCIALLY
SEXUALLY EXPLOITED CHILDREN: A MODEL OF PRACTICE

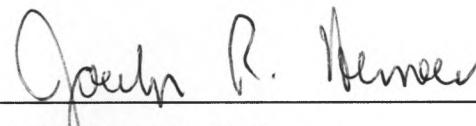
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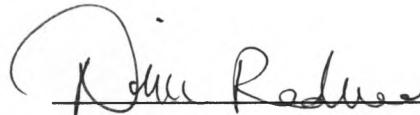
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CERTIFICATION OF APPROVAL

I certify that I have read Developing Trauma-Specific Social Work for Commercially Sexually Exploited Children: A Model of Practice by Sharon Denise Santos, and that in my opinion this work meets the criteria for approving a thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree Master of Social Work at San Francisco State University.



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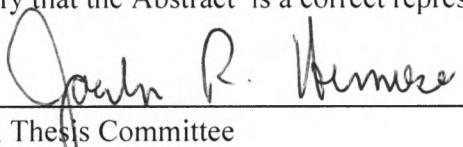
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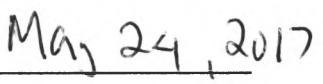
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2017

Commercially Sexually Exploited Children (CSEC) have exceeding difficulties in county child welfare. Due to the all-consuming and devastating form of abuse endured by this population, they often differ greatly from minors which have suffered familial abuse and neglect. These differences are apparent in everything from identification, response to intake, overall behaviors and placement outcomes. (Crowell, K., 2010). The aim of this study is to develop a model of practice for working with CSEC under the jurisdiction of Child welfare that will address the unique needs of this population. This study took into account relevant literature, trainings, documentaries and the testimonies of key informants. The resulting practice model identifies five main areas of need: 1) Education/Training, 2) Engagement, 3) Safety/Stability, 4) Support and 5) Empowerment/Autonomy. This study organizes these areas by levels and details a framework through which social workers may provide each need.

I certify that the Abstract is a correct representation of the content of this thesis.



Chair, Thesis Committee



Date

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CHAPTER I: STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Introduction

“...It is a debasement of our common humanity. It ought to concern every community, because it tears at our social fabric. It ought to concern every business, because it distorts markets. It ought to concern every nation, because it endangers public health, and fuels violence and organized crime. I am talking about the injustice, the outrage, of human trafficking”

- President Barack Obama

Commercial sexual exploitation is one of the most egregious, debilitating and dehumanizing forms of abuse persisting in society today. This thirty-two billion dollar industry affects every culture, ethnicity, gender and every region of the globe. In 2015 the United States were identified as one of the top three countries of origin for federally identified trafficked victims and described as a “source, transit, and destination country for men, women, transgender individuals, and children— both U.S. citizens and foreign nationals—subjected to sex trafficking...” (U.S. Department of State, 2016, p.387). The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) identifies thirteen areas of the country in which the highest rate of sex trafficking takes place; California is home to three of them: Los Angeles, San Diego, and the San Francisco Bay Area (US Dept. of Justice, 2009). H.E.A.T. Watch, a San Francisco Bay Area-based anti-human trafficking organization, affirms this reality in finding that 80% of reported human trafficking cases in California

occurred in these three areas. Amongst the various counties and cities that comprise the San Francisco Bay Area, the “heat”¹ has an undeniable concentration in Alameda County. Oakland, California is described as a “thriving underage sex market” and, “the epicenter of a trafficking triangle between San Francisco & Contra Costa counties.” It is reported that 46% of all prosecuted human trafficking cases in California since 2011 have come from the Alameda District Attorney’s office (H.E.A.T Watch, n.d.).

The first group of individuals named by the 2016 Trafficking in Persons Report as particularly vulnerable to trafficking in the U.S. were children in the child welfare system. How does engagement in this system make children more susceptible? The child welfare system operates specifically to increase safety for minors. How then is involvement with county child welfare somehow doing the opposite in regards to exploitation?

Commercially Sexually Exploited Children (CSEC) historically were mainly addressed by the juvenile justice system. In 2014 Senate Bill 855 made it possible for minors under the jurisdiction of juvenile justice to transfer to that of county child welfare given that the youth is, “a victim of sexual trafficking, or receives food or shelter in exchange for, or is paid to perform, specified sexual acts” (S. 855, 2014, p.24) thereby effectively adding exploitation to the list of child welfare offenses along with child abuse and neglect, by way of attributing it to the parent or guardian’s inability to protect the

¹ See Glossary of Terms

minor from this fate. Certainly, county child welfare has had CSEC under its jurisdiction (whether cognizant of it or not) for many years. However, the passing of this legislation indicates that the commercially sexually exploited population as defined by law is not new to child welfare's awareness. Even so, the literature shows that the plight of CSEC within county child welfare systems has remained bleak. Child welfare focuses mainly on familial abuse and neglect. CSEC are often isolated from family and exploited by those that have no parental or guardianship rights to the minor. This significant difference causes a divergence in behavioral outcomes and overall needs. Since child welfare education and training focuses on forms familial maltreatment, workers and caregivers often lack training to support the deviating needs and outcomes of commercial sexual exploitation. This lead to extreme difficulties in placement stability and overall engagement.²

In light of this, what protective measures have been put in place for this population? What models of practice are currently being applied and how can those models be adjusted to fit the needs and experiences of CSEC? Most importantly, what present needs of this population are not being addressed?

This study will focus on developing a trauma-specific model of practice for working with commercially sexually exploited children within the county child welfare system. The ultimate objective of this project is to determine which practices and services

²See Figure 1.1.

have been effective in providing adequate, trauma-sensitive care to commercially sexually exploited children and youth, and to create a comprehensive model that will utilize these findings to address the biological, psychological and social aspects of victimization, traumatization, treatment, and rehabilitation, while simultaneously taking into account the intersections of the structure and policies of county child welfare.

There have been specific models of practice developed by community based organizations to improve the plight of CSEC. Unfortunately, these models have yet to be adapted and applied directly to county child welfare practice. This model will deal specifically with the nuances, structure and limitations of working with this population within the child welfare system.

This work as a whole will be an attempt to develop a solution to the problem stated in this chapter. In chapter one the researcher has provided context for the thesis as well as its relevance to social work. A review of relevant literature, previous work and proposed solutions will be presented in chapter two. Chapter three will follow with the researcher's personal positioning and the various theories and frameworks applicable to this phenomenon. Chapter four provides both the operational and conceptual definitions of the variables. Chapter five contains the model itself as well as its developmental narrative and explanation. Chapter six will detail and explain the model's components and provide examples of the components at work in practice. Chapter seven completes the thesis with a conclusion that readdresses the research questions and objectives, as well as provides a summary of its implications for social work practice. This model

cannot be effectively utilized without proper training and implementation. The outline for the training curriculum will also be found in the final chapter. This chapter is followed by depictions of the Problem Dynamic described on page 3, as well as tables detailing aspects of victimization and common behaviors and survival mechanisms exhibited by CSEC.

Figure 1.1: Problem Dynamic

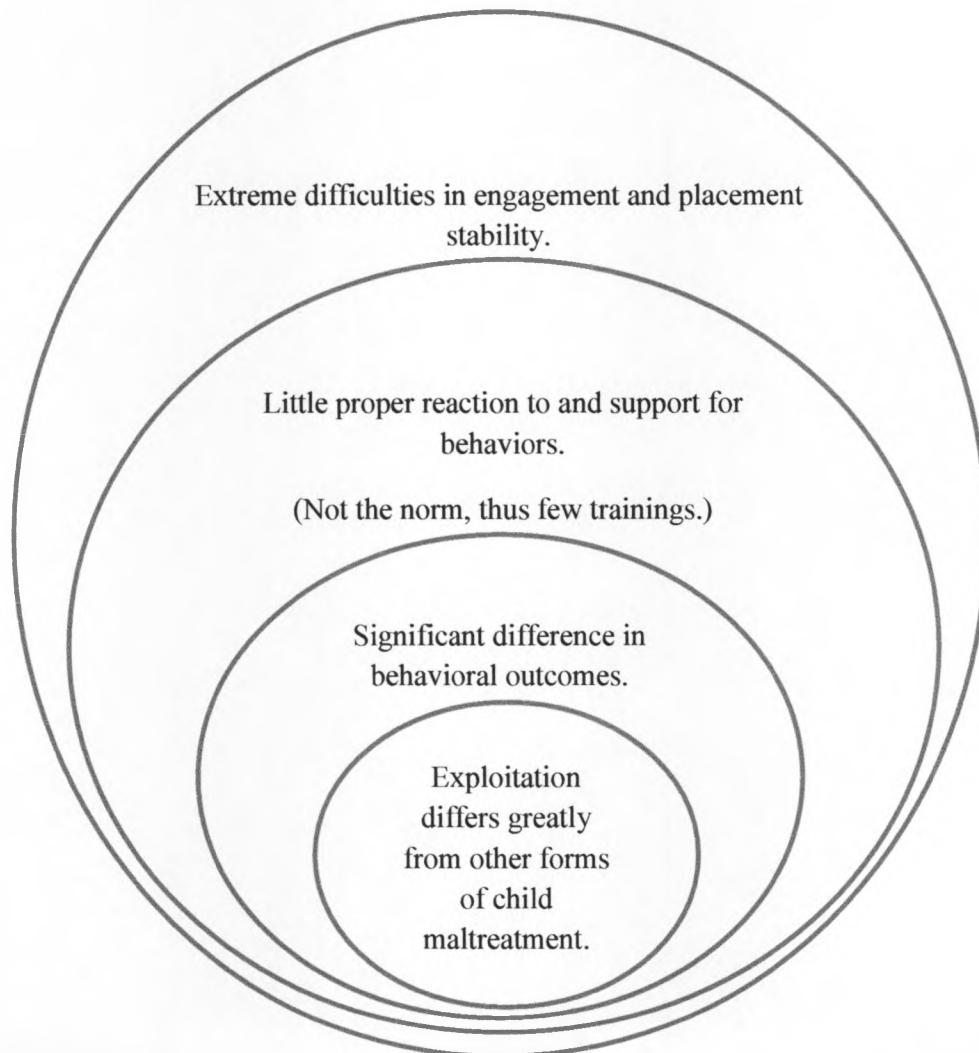


Table 1: Victimization³

<u>Tool</u>	<u>Exploiter's Role</u>	<u>Notes</u>
Targeting:	Looks for: 1) Pre-conditioned youth. 2) Youth in foster care. 3) Homeless youth. (Highest Risk Populations)	1) History of sexual abuse is most desirable. Those with histories of physical abuse, emotional abuse and neglect are also at high risk. 2) Minors involved with Child Welfare often have the above histories and are likely to be pre-conditioned. 3) Little chance of rescue and a general lack of protection and/or strong community.
Conditioning:	-Builds a “relationship” with the victim. -Often presents as “caring” or “supportive” initially.	This is the beginning of the power and control wheel. ⁴
Entrapment:	1) Stockholm Syndrome. 2) Indoctrination: Instilling (amongst other things) - The belief that they deserve this treatment, -The belief that this is their only support system -Extreme shame and guilt -Fear.	1) Victims are often “in love” with their exploiters and truly believe that love is mutual.

³ This list is not exhaustive of all possible victimization methods.⁴ See Figure 3

Table 2: Behavioral Component⁵

Maladaptive Protective Mechanisms

<u>Normalization</u>	<u>Survival/Coping</u>	<u>Adjustment</u>
Denial of Exploitation	Substance Abuse	Running Away
Resistance to Rescue	Over-sexualized behavior	Hostility
Bringing others into “the life.”	Aggression	Undiagnosed Mental Health Issues (i.e. PTSD, Adjustment Disorder)

All behaviors serve a purpose.

***Change requires time, support, and persistence.**

⁵ This list is not exhaustive of possible behaviors and maladaptive protective mechanisms utilized by this population.

Table 3: Survival Mechanisms⁶

Type	Description
Hardening/ Numbness:	This may manifest as hostility, anger, aggression, or even over-compliance. This may also take the form of refusing to engage, or engaging well and stopping suddenly.
Normalization:	Mentally and emotionally adjusting to exploitation. Exploitation becomes familiar, “normal,” and thus safer than the unknown.
Denial:	Truly believing they “chose” this life. - Many cannot see how they were strategically victimized. Survival sex: Indicates a last resort. A last resort is not a predetermined choice.

⁶ This list is not exhaustive of possible survival mechanisms utilized by this population.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

It has been gathered through the testimony of key informants that minors with a background of commercial sexual exploitation tend have an overly difficult time engaging with workers and caregivers, which leads to them having an exorbitant number of foster care placements. Many county workers and caregivers are not specifically trained to support CSEC and are ill-informed on the specialized type of trauma they have undergone. Upon reviewing the literature, it was found that, though there is a great deal of research on the experience and victimization of CSEC, as well as the legislative, medical, societal, and other systematic implications, there is very little work concerning the plight of these children while in the Child welfare system.

Victimology

There are many factors that work in favor of victimization and against the rescue and rehabilitation of CSEC.⁷ The largest challenge in aiding this population is its lack of visibility. These minors and the world in which they are oppressed are undeniably hidden (Marcus & Curtis, 2014). In addition to this, minors who are exploited are woefully

⁷ See Table 1.

lacking in protective or rehabilitative options. Numerous CSEC have fled abusive or neglectful home lives or have been removed from their natural support systems, thus creating a profusion of vulnerability (Barnitz, 2001).

The existing published literature that explores the context and dynamics of commercial sexual exploitation is predominantly exploratory in nature and largely based on anecdotal information from service providers. In addition to the limited peer reviewed research literature that is available, there are formal reports and narratives that capture the issue of commercial sexual exploitation both domestically and internationally (Rand, 2010).

It is apparent that race plays a role in victimization, especially in California. African American females are overwhelmingly represented amongst CSEC, followed by girls of Hispanic ethnicity (Grant, 2017). A study completed by Tamara E. Hurst (2015) identified, "a potential vulnerability for some youth who may be at risk of experiencing sexual exploitation. In particular, youth who are part of a marginalized race and who have experienced racism or colorism may have internalized these acts of oppression" (para. 49). She determined that once these feelings are internalized, they may lower a child's sense of self-worth, "thereby making them more susceptible to those who seek to exploit them" (para. 49). Ms. Hurst (2015) urges professionals to "consider the effects of racism, colorism, and internalized racism when planning prevention programs, offering resources, or identifying potential victims" (para. 49).

Traffickers/Exploiters

The recruiting process has been found to be relatively calculated. In 2000 the US State Department found that, “[t]raffickers primarily target women and girls, who are disproportionately affected by poverty, the lack of access to education, chronic unemployment, discrimination, and the lack of economic opportunities in countries of origin. Traffickers lure women and girls into their networks through false promises of decent working conditions at relatively good pay as nannies, maids, dancers, factory workers, restaurant workers, sales clerks, or models. Traffickers also buy children from poor families and sell them into prostitution or into various types of forced or bonded labor” (Sec. 102, para. 4).

The New York Times conducted interviews with more than twenty incarcerated exploiters in New York City and wrote letters to more than one hundred of them. In these interviews, pimps explained their reasoning methods of targeting and recruiting minors. High on the list of what made a minor an easy target were characteristics often found in minors within the foster care system. According to the interviewees, low self-esteem and a general lack of options make for easy targets. Children and youth with a history of abuse and/or severe neglect tend to have lower self-esteem, this is worsened by involvement in the child welfare system and removal from their families (Thompson, Wojciak, & Cooley, 2016). Furthermore, entry into foster care is usually indicative of a lack of options for placement within the family’s natural system of support. Sexual

experience in general was also viewed as an advantage, however, minors that had been sexually abused previously are considered to be pre-conditioned for the purposes of an exploiter (Liebolt, 2015).

Traffickers have noted the advantages of recruiting young girls as opposed to adults may outweigh the legal risk. Customers tend to pay higher prices for minors. Exploiters also assert that younger girls are easier to manipulate, groom and intimidate. CSEC are often in relationships with their traffickers or exploiters that resemble domestic violence relationships. The cycle of power and control⁸ is often present, which means that there may be “honeymoon” periods in the relationship which helps to solidify the attachment of the victim to his or her exploiter (Liebolt, 2015).

Stigma

The stigma associated with prostitution is prevalent in American society. Victims of sexual trafficking are not automatically released by their oppressors on their eighteenth birthday, yet trafficked adults are most often automatically assumed to be willingly breaking the law and are prosecuted as such. This “blame the victim” mentality towards adults in this situation spills over onto children suffering a similar fate (Liebolt, 2015).

Unfortunately, it is normative to assign blame to the minors instead of the exploiters or circumstances. Furthermore, it has been found that the perception of the blameworthiness of victims is affected by a number of factors. This creates a barrier to

⁸ See Figure 3.1.

providing support, protection and rehabilitative services. Tasha Menaker, MA, and Courtney Franklin, PhD (2013) conducted a study examining public perceptions of the blameworthiness of commercially sexually exploited girls and found that blameworthiness is determined by factors such as race, gender, age, and socio-economic status. Factors such as behavior, aggression, and having an exploiter (as opposed to engaging in survival sex) also impact whether a survivor is seen as a victim or delinquent. Providers and law enforcement officials are not immune to these views. Negative views of survivors impact all aspects of service delivery from the type of services a minor is offered, appropriateness of the services, timeliness of delivery, and whether the minor is offered services at all (Menaker & Franklin, 2013).

Law Enforcement

Many factors influence the recognition and treatment of CSEC. CSEC most often encounter the criminal justice system before they reach child welfare- that is, if they reach the child welfare system at all. Police are in many ways ill equipped to assist these youth. They generally lack proper training in this form of trauma and thus often prosecute victims as offenders. This practice is not always ill-intended. A study completed by Stephanie Halter (2010) found that, since officers cannot order youth to services, they would at times, “use criminal charges as a paternalistic protective response to detain some of the youth treated as offenders, even though they considered these youth victims” (p. 1). This study showed that CSEC are viewed by police as victims or criminals based

on a number of factors. Factors that favored the perception of “victim” included, “youth with greater levels of cooperation, greater presence of identified exploiters, no prior record, and {local youth} that came to their attention through a report.” (Halter, 2010. p. 1). Youth who were more resistant, hostile, or picked up for soliciting were more likely to be treated as offenders. April Rand (2010) articulated it best when she concluded that, “All victims of commercial sexual exploitation deserve protection. First and foremost this protection begins with the identification of these young girls as victims instead of criminals. Only then will progress be made toward ending the commercial sexual exploitation of children in the United States” (p. 156).

Legislation

The current CSEC legislation in this country ranges from full criminalization to complete immunity. In between the two exists the domain of safe harbor laws. These laws create certain protections for victims of human trafficking, often based upon whether or not coercion or manipulation is evident. “They may reserve space for prosecution of individuals when the act was deemed voluntary according to an enumerated set of standards or a judicial finding. This approach attempts to strike a balance between the view that some juveniles may still choose to participate in prostitution and the view that human trafficking and coercion may negate some or all criminal responsibility. Approaches under this umbrella vary widely in their scope and application” (Bergman, 2012, p.1369).

Until the implementation of Illinois Safe Children's Act, minors were prosecuted as prostitutes instead of protected as victims of exploitation. The Illinois Safe Children's Act was a landmark legislation that finally allowed these children to be seen as the latter and CSEC cases became the jurisdiction of the child welfare system. Fortunately, this practice has begun to be copied throughout the country (Bounds, Julion & Delaney, 2015).

In 2000, the Trafficking and Violence Protection Act was enacted - the first comprehensive law to combat human trafficking on a federal level (Adams, Owens, & Small, 2010). Though this legislation "focused efforts on prevention, protection, and prosecution" (p.3) the vast majority child victims were still prosecuted as criminals along with their oppressors until 2010. The commercial exploitation of children was not considered a child welfare issue until the passing of Senate Bill 855 of 2014 (S. 855, 2014). Prior to SB 855 the issue of exploitation was handled largely by the juvenile justice system. There have been calls to divert these victims away from juvenile justice and toward more appropriate supports such as community youth advocates and sexual assault resources (Salisbury, Dabney, & Russell, 2015). California has at long last granted immunity to child victims of exploitation by decriminalizing prostitution for those under the age of eighteen (S. 1322, 2016). This bill reasoned that the dividing factor between prostitution and exploitation is consent. If an individual under the age of eighteen is by law not able to consent to sexual relations, he or she cannot shoulder the legal burden.

Child welfare

There exists a woefully insufficient amount of research and scholarly writing concerning the interaction between CSEC and the child welfare system. This work serves to address this gap in literature. Similar to this model of practice and proposed training design, many child welfare agencies have begun implementing CSEC training for their staff. An evaluation of the effectiveness of these programs for child protective workers determined that there is still much to be done (McMahon-Howard & Reimers, 2013). As helpful and necessary as these trainings are, they have yet to successfully address and act upon the challenges that face the child welfare system in addressing, protecting, and supporting this population.

Due to their trauma-specific behaviors, CSEC have difficulty sustaining placement with foster families. Exploited minors are more likely to have trauma-related mental illnesses, the most common of which is Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. They are also more likely to have inappropriate social skills and poor academic performance. These factors have caused a general streamlining of CSEC into congregate care while they abide in the child welfare system. Studies have shown that sexually exploited children and youth fare especially poorly in this form of care (Twill, Green & Taylor, 2010).

Approaches to Addressing the Needs of CSEC

As the issue of the sexual exploitation of youth increases in public awareness, so do efforts to combat it and support its survivors. Yvonne Rafferty (2013) of Pace University composed a review of promising policies and programs aimed at the prevention of child trafficking. Her review covers three human rights-based approaches to prevention including: Combatting Demand, Reducing Supply, and Strengthening Communities.

Combating Demand. Without demand, there would be no need for supply. Rafferty proposes that all sources of demand should be further criminalized through strengthening legislation and the enforcement thereof. She divides Demand into three levels: 1) Employer Demand, 2) Consumer Demand, and 3) Third Party Demand. The term “employer” is applied to traffickers, exploiters, brothel owners, and anyone who directly controls victims and their profits. “Consumer” refers to those who pay for the services. In-person consumers are often referred to as “Johns” or “Dates,” however this also includes those participate via internet, such as viewing child pornography. The Third Party piece of Demand encompasses factors that ease, allow, or promote victimization. Examples of these include corruption amongst members of law enforcement, the judicial system (criminalizing victims), and immigration (lack of protections). Rafferty also details what each level entails for labor trafficking (Rafferty, 2013).

Reducing Supply. The term “supply” refers to the children and youth who are exploited. This approach focuses on making victimization more difficult through education, as well as helping minors build life skills and resiliency. Additionally, ensuring the safe travel of young people when they are relocating is key. Many youths are trafficked while in transition after leaving home (Rafferty, 2013).

Strengthening Communities. Rafferty stresses the importance of a protective and supportive environment. Approaches to achieving this included enhancing economic opportunities, promoting gender equality and child participation, better training for law enforcement, and the implementation of national child protection systems (Rafferty, 2013).

Human Rights Approach. This victim-centered framework, “recognizes the child's right to be both protected and assisted as well as for the child's perpetrator to be held accountable. Thus, it calls for the identification of both those at risk for trafficking as well as those who have been trafficked, an analysis of their entitlements, and work toward strengthening their capacities to secure their rights under international human rights law. It also requires ensuring that the child's best interests are given primary consideration in all actions and interventions...” (para. 37). Ms. Rafferty (2013) writes that the Human Rights framework should include the following:

“... a comprehensive human-rights-based approach to child trafficking should consist of (a) adequate law enforcement as well as a law enforcement system that

is free from corruption and provides the basis for the identification and punishment of those who exploit children; (b) an understanding of who is accountable to protect children in high-risk settings, including the strategies that are required to effectively protect them; (c) a monitoring system that is capable of identifying children who are at risk of trafficking as well as the tracking of those who have been victimized, so that they can be provided with timely and effective rehabilitation and enable them to recover their dignity and human rights; and (d) international cooperation and coordination and communication between stakeholders at national and subnational levels as well as among all professionals who are working with and for children” (para. 36).

Conclusion. This chapter provided a review of relevant scholarly literature pertaining to the cause of this model of practice. The following chapter will detail the theoretical frameworks applicable to this study as well as the writer’s subjectivity and positioning.

CHAPTER III

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND SUBJECTIVITY

The literature confirms the validity and severity of the stated problem. This issue finds its roots in social construction as well as in the cultural and international dynamics of patriarchal society. These phenomena intertwine to support and sustain the reality of commercial sexual exploitation.

Theoretical Framework

Social Construction Theory

Greene and Schriver assert that one of the basic assumptions of the Social Construction Theory is that “culture is a system of meaning created through the use of language and communal action” (Greene & Schriver, 2016, p. 105). It is collectively the language used to speak about and to this population, as well as the conscious and unconscious communal actions taken against them that create the need for a trauma-specific model of practice. CSEC have historically (and currently) been referred to and treated as criminals. The social construct of the criminality of this population shows through on micro, mezzo, and macro levels. It has been argued that the use of various criminal justice theories such as *Turning Points Theory* and *Procedural Justice Theory* can be useful in creating more effective policies for CSEC (Liebolt, 2015). Unfortunately

the criminal view of this population is too often found in the helping profession of county social services.

Our culture and society have created and attached a negative view to commercially sexually exploited children and their plight. That view has permeated law enforcement, juvenile justice, and county child welfare, and has become evident in the punitive and/or calloused actions taken by each entity.

Feminist Paradigm

This model is also informed by the feminist research theory (Koertge, 2012). The vast majority of CSEC are female, while traffickers and customers are largely male. The patriarchal hierarchy of genders and the abuses thereof are evident in the historical and current practice of commercial sexual exploitation. Previous laws, policies and practices suggest that it is overwhelmingly believed that sexual exploitation is the result of a moral deficit on the part of the individual that is being trafficked. The general belief is that prostitutes, often regardless of age, work of their own free will. This belief is perceptible in the common practice of prosecuting the victim and rarely the exploiter. The feminist perspective challenges the common view that trafficking victims possess in themselves an immoral nature and theorizes that exploitation is one manifestation of patriarchy.

Logic Model

Until recently this social problem was addressed by punishing the trafficked minors through the juvenile justice system. Senate Bill 855 of 2014 allowed the transfer

of these minors from the jurisdiction of juvenile justice to that of the child welfare system. The transfer between systems resulted in an increased population of minors with especially maladaptive survival and coping mechanisms which are specific to the complex nature of commercial sexual exploitation (Crowell, 2010). This has caused numerous challenges for county child welfare around providing effective care (Bounds et al, 2015). Traits such as unrelenting fear, hypervigilance, denial, aggression, and transience when combined with other trauma-related coping mechanisms have caused extreme difficulty in achieving permanence in foster care placements.⁹

I assert that the difficulty derives from a lack of required training for working with this population. I propose change through developing a method by which to successfully work with and support victims of exploitation. This method will address implicit bias, educate on the dissimilarity between CSEC and other CPS-served populations, and provide support and intervention methods around what commonly factors into placement instability. This should result in a decrease in victim-blaming mentalities and an increase in knowledge around CSEC and positive intervention strategies, ultimately resulting in better engagement and increased longevity in placement.¹⁰

⁹ See Tables 2 and 3.

¹⁰ See Figure 1.1

Researcher's Positioning and Subjectivity

My interest in this topic began when I was working with Foster Youth Services in the San Francisco Unified School District. In the course of the school year I learned that one of my clients had been identified as a CSEC. Her number of placements far exceeded that of any other client on my caseload. During the nine months we spent together she changed placement three additional times. I was informed by one of her workers that this is unfortunately very common. After several conversations with various workers and supervisors, I was informed in a myriad of ways that commercially sexually exploited children tend to not do well in placements because generally providers and caregivers do not know how to handle their behaviors. This was reinforced during my internship in Alameda County when I was told by a worker that, "those kids typically don't get placed with families. They usually go straight into group homes" (L. Smith, personal communication, October 4, 2016). I was taken aback by this reality and immediately began brainstorming ways to address the need. Logically, caregivers and workers have difficulty with this population because they have not been sufficiently educated on the nuances of working with CSEC, nor adequately trained in how to address their needs and differences in practice.

In conclusion, this model has been informed by the theoretical frameworks of Social Construction Theory and the Feminist Paradigm. It has additionally been shaped by the personal and professional subjectivity of the theorist. The variables defined in the

following chapter will help provide clarity and distinction of factors involved in the model of practice.

CHAPTER IV

VARIABLE DEFINITIONS

Due to the socially constructed nature of exploitation, many of the key terms and concepts used within this work have fallen into common use and thus are often assigned a range of connotations. This chapter seeks to define and specify how each term and concept will be used within the context of this study.

Conceptual Definitions

Commercially Sexually Exploited Children

The Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) defines commercial sexual exploitation as, “sex trafficking in which a commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such an act has not attained 18 years of age” (U.S. Department of State, 2000, sec. 103). For the purpose of this model, the writer would like to include minors who engage in sexual acts to address an addiction and/or as a means of survival.

*Exploiter**

One who profits from sexual acts performed by a minor to a third party.

*Trafficker **

Refers to an individual who transports a victim for the purpose of exploiting her or him sexually.

* These two terms are frequently interchanged as offenders often act as both.

Trauma

The trauma referred to in this work is that which results specifically from the experience of sexual exploitation and trafficking. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration (SAMHSA) (2017) defines individual trauma as that which, “results from an event, series of events, or set of circumstances experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or life-threatening with lasting adverse effects on the individual’s functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being” (para. 1). The adverse functioning common among CSEC plays a large role in their placement instability within the foster care system.

The IECMHC (Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation) (2017) defines trauma as “severe mental or emotional stress or physical or psychological injury. Child traumatic stress occurs when children and adolescents are exposed to traumatic events or situations, and when this exposure overwhelms their ability to cope with what they have experienced” (p. 14). The “psychological injury” resulting from commercial sexual exploitation frequently manifests as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). The writer would like to add that in addition to an “inability to cope,” trauma also produces mal-adaptive coping mechanisms. In CSEC, these may include aggression, over-sexualization, and chronic mistrust.

Child welfare

Refers to all departments of county-based child protective services.

Training

Refers to the education of child welfare staff, foster caregivers and biological or legal parents/guardians of exploited minors on the experience, needs and common psychological and behavioral outcomes of CSEC, and how to support healing from their specialized form of trauma.

Operational Definitions*Safety*

The components of safety for CSEC include stable and reliable housing, finances, physical provisions and security from exploiter retaliation.

Autonomy

This term denotes to the ability to make choices, even when they may possibly be detrimental ones. Ideally, education about alternative options, the impact of their choices and the comparative impact of alternatives will empower the youth to make increasingly better choices over time.

Support

There are several factors that create support for members of this population. The needs of any individual youth in terms of support will vary. In her exploration of this topic through key informant interviews and various written, audio and video sources the writer found that the overarching features of support for CSEC include consistency, stability, forgiveness, understanding, encouragement, and perseverance. Each of these will be explained in depth within the Methodology chapter

Conclusion. This chapter provided the conceptual and operational definitions for this model of practice. The following chapter will detail the various methods by which information was gathered to build the model.

CHAPTER V

METHODOLOGY

The information by which this model was developed was gathered from a variety of written, audio and visual sources. These took the form of key informant interviews, trainings, scholarly articles, published interviews, documentaries, and first-hand accounts. Additionally, the writer reviewed the services, models, and approaches of programs and organizations which served a similar or related purpose to the proposed model.

KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

To explore direct impact the writer conducted one-on-one interviews with key informants. The backgrounds of the selected informants served to address the juxtaposition of commercial sexual exploitation and the child welfare system. One of the informants is a former commercially sexually exploited youth, and one is a former foster youth. Both currently serve commercially sexually exploited youth in direct practice. Full names have been omitted for confidentiality purposes.

Informant #1.

Direct Practice: MISSSEY INC. Lead Trainer. Former Residential Advisor with Bay Area Youth Centers (RACA program). Former Alameda County Title IV-E

Intern. Worked with CSEC in direct services since 2012 through MISSSEY Inc. and Bay Area Youth Centers.

Background: Former Foster Youth

Additional CSEC Service: Served on the Youth Advisory Board of the Sexually Exploited Minor Conference- a counter collaborative with the Interagency Children's Policy Council. The Youth Advisory Board was put together to aid in the planning of the conference. Informant has participated in advocacy and research for this population since 2006.

Informant # 2

Direct Practice: CSEC/ Human Trafficking Advocate, District Attorney's Office (Juvenile), YWSP (Young Women's Saturday Program), Safety Net.

Background: Former CSEC

Key Informants answered the following questions:

Interview Questions for Key Informants

1. Why do you think children and youth in the child welfare system are especially susceptible to exploitation?
2. In your work with this population, what practices have you noticed as most successful in supporting them?
3. What methods of engagement worked the best?

4. What services were they most likely to engage in?
5. What services were the most effective/supportive/rehabilitative?
6. Are you aware of any protective measures have been put in place for this population by the child welfare system?
7. Does your agency apply and specific models of practice for victims of human trafficking?
8. In your opinion, what are the largest needs of CSEC?
9. What needs do you feel especially are not being addressed?
 - a. In general?
 - b. By the Child welfare System?
10. What do you personally feel would be the best way to address these needs? Why?

TRAININGS

The writer attended various trainings offered by Fred Finch Youth Center and Alameda County's Department of Children and Family Services to gather practice methods and approaches. These trainings included a CSEC-focused series which took place from January 2017 to February 2017, as well as those on bias and trauma-informed systems.

The trainings are as follows:

1/24/17: CSEC Foundations- *Fred Finch Youth Center*

2/14/17: CSEC Treatment - *Fred Finch Youth Center*

4/13/17: Trauma Informed Systems- *Alameda County*

5/11/17: Exploring the Intersection between Implicit/Explicit Bias and Its Societal Implication on Race- *Fred Finch Youth Center*

CSEC Foundations

On January 24, 2017 the writer attended the *CSEC Foundations* training given by Fred Finch Youth Center in Oakland, California. This training focused on educating workers on the current condition of the commercial sex trade within Alameda County and the plight of its commercially sexually exploited children. Key focuses included what has made Oakland a hub for this activity, such as police corruption and normalization, how minors are entrapped and victimized, and frontline interventions- including schools and street engagement. Barriers to treatment and societal views and bias were the most relevant to this model and subsequent training, as was the discussion on the decriminalization of CSEC and its possible benefits and consequences.

CSEC Treatment

On February 14, 2017 the writer attended the *CSEC Treatment* training given by Fred Finch Youth Center in Oakland, California. This training focused on how to effectively serve CSEC. It detailed risk factors for exploitation and common unsafe behaviors displayed by exploited minors. The training also taught a public health approach to supporting CSEC as well as tools to help assess and address trauma.

Trauma Informed Systems

On March 13, 2017 the writer attended the *Trauma Informed Systems* training given by Alameda County's Department of Children and Family Services in Hayward, California. The training outlined the requirements of a trauma-informed system and provided a wealth of self-care resources for frontline workers and caregivers. The principles of a trauma-informed system included the following: 1) Trauma Understanding, 2) Safety and Stability, 3) Cultural Humility and Responsiveness, 4) Compassion and Dependability, 5) Collaboration and Empowerment, 6) Resilience and Recovery.

Exploring the Intersection between Implicit/Explicit Bias

On May 11, 2017 the writer attended the *Exploring the Intersection between Implicit/Explicit Bias and Its Societal Implication on Race* training given by Fred Finch Youth Center in Oakland, California. This training emphasized recognition of personal and societal bias through highlighting common language, images, associations and micro-aggressions. This method can be applied to aiding workers recognize both general and personal views of CSEC, how these views may affect service delivery. This may also initiate the process of adjusting their personal views.

DOCUMENTARIES

- 1) "International Boulevard"
 - a. Focus: Sexual Exploitation within Oakland.
 - b. Interviewed: CSEC survivors and workers.
 - c. By: Dharma Yi Productions.
- 2) "CSEC Survivors Speak Out" *The Commercial Exploitation of Children. Advocating for Survivors, by Survivors.*
 - a. Focus: Domestic-born victims exploited within the US.
 - b. Interviewed: CSEC Survivors.
 - c. By: UC Davis Extension, Center for Human Services.

SIMILAR OR RELATED PROGRAMS

The following programs were reviewed for their applicable services, models, and approaches. All programs are based within the borders of Alameda County unless otherwise noted.

1) DELTA Foster Care (Florida)

Services Offered:

- Therapeutic foster homes and safe housing tailored to the unique issues related to CSEC.
- Specialized trauma-informed and clinical training focused in the area of sexual exploitation.
- Services and continuous support provided to each foster family by a team of therapists, behavioral analysts, psychiatrists, and case managers.¹¹

Approach to Service: Supporting the minor within a family setting; supporting the foster family as a unit.

Model of Practice: Non-Specified

¹¹ Retrieved from: http://www.devereux.org/site/PageServer?pagename=fl_foster_programs_services

2) West Coast Children's Clinic: C-Change Transforming the Lives of Sexually Exploited Minors

Services Offered:

- Intensive mental health treatment.
- Connections to safe housing, healthcare, and educational resources.
- Research data, policy recommendations/legislative reform advocacy.¹²

Approach to Service: One-on-one case management, one-on-one mental health services, and group services.

Model of Practice: None specified.

3) M.I.S.S.S.E.Y (Motivating, Inspiring, Supporting and Serving Sexually Exploited Youth)

Services Offered:

- Case Management
- Mentoring
- Foster Youth Program
- Referrals and Services
- Training (Service Providers).¹³

Approach to Service: One-on-one case management and mentoring. Group services.

Model of Practice: None Specified

4) H.E.A.T. (Human Exploitation and Trafficking) Watch

Services Offered:

- Community Programs.
- Specially trained law enforcement officers.
- Policy and legislative advocacy.
- Case management support and stabilization for service providers.

¹² Retrieved from: <http://www.westcoastcc.org/what-we-do/clinical-programs/c-change/>

¹³ Retrieved from: <http://misssey.org/>

Approach to Service: Mezzo and macro focus: Addresses trafficking issues in the community, law enforcement, policy, and through multidisciplinary service provider meetings.

Model of Practice: H.E.A.T. Watch employs a 5 Point Strategy.

1. **COMMUNITY:** We empower the community by dispelling myths & misconceptions about this form of child abuse. We also teach them how to identify & report human trafficking. Our community programs include H.E.A.T. Watch Radio & Neighborhood H.E.A.T. Watch.
2. **LAW ENFORCEMENT:** Our Office has trained law enforcement officers from Alameda County agency, along with various other agencies throughout the nation.
3. **PROSECUTION:** Our vertical H.E.A.T. Unit consists of two District Attorneys, a victim-witness advocate & an inspector.
4. **LAW & POLICY:** The Alameda County District Attorney's Office has drafted, sponsored, advised & supported key pieces of human trafficking related legislation in CA.
5. **SERVICE PROVIDERS:** We convene a multidisciplinary case review called SafetyNet that provides case management & stabilization for victims. We also oversee the Young Women's Saturday Program, a 16-week education & empowerment course for at risk & involved commercially sexually exploited youth.¹⁴

Conclusion: This chapter detailed the methods used by the writer to obtain the information necessary to design a thorough and client-centered model of practice. The next chapter will provide an analysis and discussion of the information gathered. Chapter 6 will also present the resulting model.

¹⁴ Retrieved from: http://www.heatwatch.org/heat_watch/

CHAPTER VI

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The information gathered from the various sources in this study stipulates that the overall needs of CSEC within the child welfare system will be best addressed through the thorough training of workers at all points of contact, as well as foster caregivers and families of origin. Both key informants identified training as the principal instrument in addressing the gaps in service and increasing worker and caregiver ability to support the specialized needs of commercially sexually exploited children.

Review of Research Questions

1. How does engagement in the child welfare system make children more susceptible?

The research identified several aspects of child welfare system involvement that promote victimization of this form. What was most highlighted was the general lack of stability and consistency. This included the practice of changing workers at each stage of the system (Emergency Response, Dependency Investigations/Court, Placement, Family Maintenance/Reunification, AB 12¹⁵, etc.) and the lack of permanence in placement. For example, Ms. Gix stated:

¹⁵ See Glossary of Terms

“The lack of support and stability; they need consistency. Let’s talk about the fact that they have multiple Child welfare workers. There is no consistent child welfare worker for a CSEC child. It may remind them of a father or mother that’s on drugs or someone in their family that was unreliable. To them the system is unreliable. Both the judicial and foster care systems are unreliable. There are girls who call their probation officers and social workers that never get an answer because they are so busy, because of their huge caseloads and they can’t keep up.” (L. Gix, personal communication, March 10, 2017)

2. In light of this, what protective measures have been put in place for this population?

In keeping with Senate Bill 855, Alameda County has formed a CSEC workgroup to develop ways to better serve and support commercially sexually exploited children.¹⁶ Additionally, Alameda County has partnered with community-based organizations that serve this purpose and have begun integrating them into county services. For instance, Alameda County has a MISSSEY advocate stationed at the Assessment Center- which is where minors within the Alameda County child welfare system await placement. CSEC frequent the center due to their extreme placement instability.

¹⁶ Ending CSEC- A Call for Multi-System Collaboration in California

3. What models of practice are currently being applied to CSEC within County Child welfare?

Generally, the models of practice currently used with CSEC are those used for all children in the child welfare system. Alameda County currently utilizes Safety Organized Practice, Structured Decision Making, and trains its workers in Trauma-Informed Care. However, no CSEC-specific model has been identified. The results of the research indicate that something more specific to the needs and trauma of CSEC desperately needs to be implemented.

4. What needs are present in this population that are not being addressed?

The needs identified in the course of this study fall within five general categories. 1) Education/Training 2) Engagement 3) Safety/Security 4) Support 5) Autonomy/Empowerment.

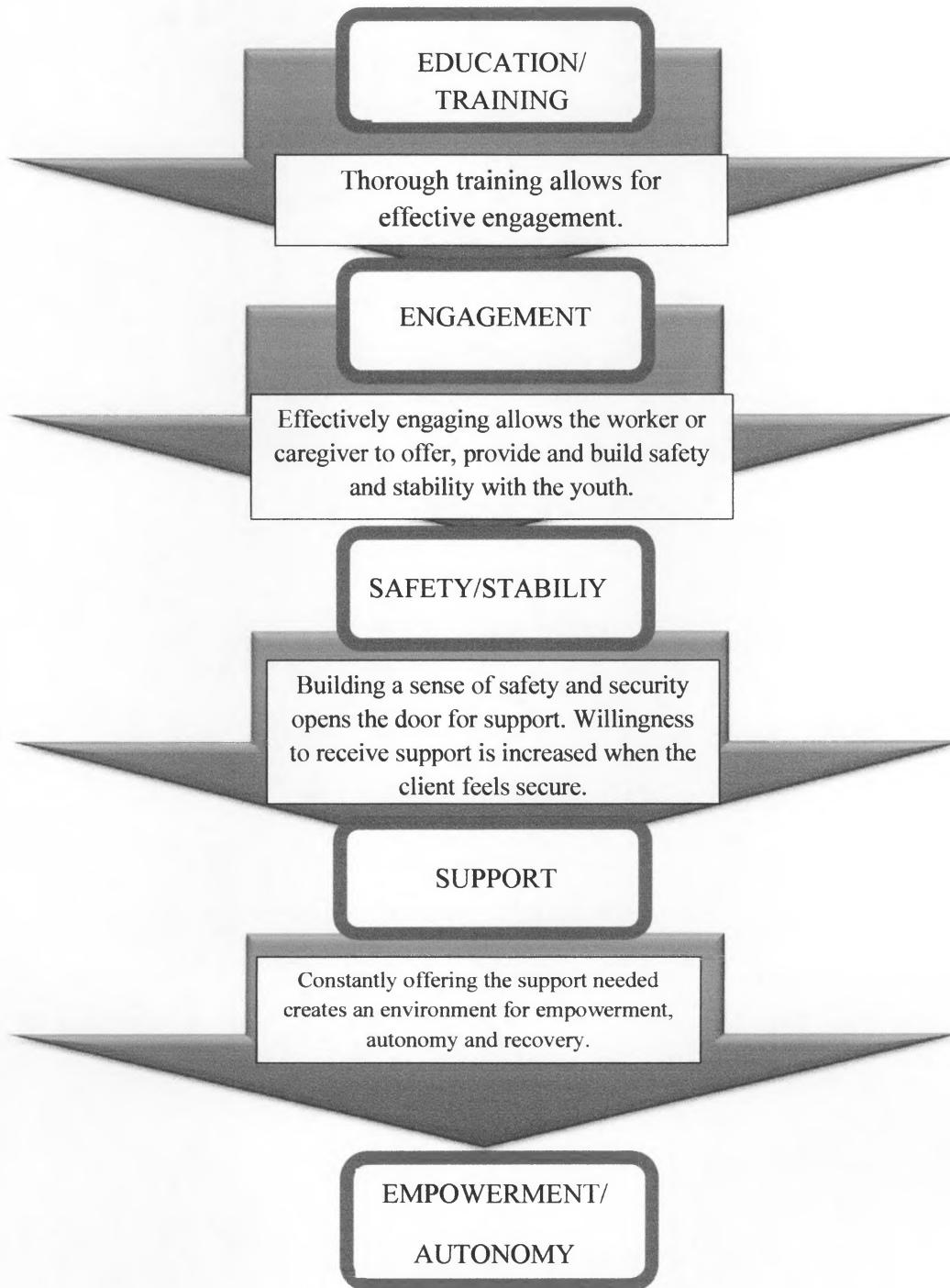
5. What combination of practices are most effective in providing adequate, trauma-sensitive care and services to CSEC?

The varied information sources produced a plethora of effective exploitation- specific practices and services. The model on the adjoining page aims to connect those practices and fit them within the context of the Child welfare system.

MODEL OF PRACTICE

The results of this study's analysis concluded that commercially sexually exploited children within the child welfare system differ greatly from minors suffering from familial abuse and neglect. This has created a demand for a different approach to engagement, care and support. The outcomes of the interviews and trainings indicate that there are five main areas of need: 1) Education/Training, 2) Engagement, 3) Safety/Security, 4) Support and 5) Autonomy/ Empowerment. The full model will be found on the following page and its components and connections are expounded upon subsequently.

Figure 2.1. CSEC MODEL OF PRACTICE



Components of Model

Education/Training

Education and training is the foundation on which the rest of the model is built. Training will cover the CSEC-specific principles of Engagement, Safety and Stability, Support, Empowerment, Autonomy and Recovery. Training should be mandated for workers at all points of contact and foster caregivers, but it also should be offered to the families of origin. The direct practice workers interviewed emphasized the need to prepare families for reunification with an exploited child and offer support after. Failing to do this results with that youth cycling though the child welfare system or the juvenile justice system over and over again.

Training should start with bias testing. The *CSEC Foundations* training highlighted common views of this population which are overwhelmingly negative; workers and caregivers are not immune to these views. The testing will address perceived blameworthiness based on things such as age, how they entered “the life,” race, gender, attitude/aggression, and willingness of the minor to engage.

The training will focus on trauma of commercial sexual exploitation its bio-psychosocial outcomes- which are the unexpected or difficult ways the trauma manifests. The largest issue in county for CSEC is placement instability. This has been attributed to behaviors such as running away, hyper aggression, over-sexualization, and difficulty adhering to rules and curfews. Placement instability is also largely attributed to lack of

support for caregivers. The need to provide training for workers, foster caregivers and the families of origin was the strongest theme in the key informant interviews.

Key Informants on Education/Training

Workers and Foster Caregivers

“Training is where it is at. Everyone needs to learn the lingo, just everything. They need to read books. It’s just a lot, a lot of care, a lot of time. It’s just very unique” (L. Gix, Personal Communication, March 10, 2017).

“Community Awareness. Not just service providers. For service providers- CSEC training should be mandatory” (But, community education should be offered). (S. Daniels, Personal Communication, March 14, 2017).

“The education of the family on the issue. The safety plan, the case plan. It’s where many agencies falter. It’s hard because they are obviously in foster care for a reason. Basic education around CSEC should include 1) Language 2) Trauma-Informed lenses around CSEC-specific issues. 3) Increased understanding of resources that have been successful in serving this population. 4) Family integration into case planning and safety planning” (S. Daniels, Personal Communication, March 14, 2017).

Families of Origin

“With the families, a lot of the families, it’s not that they don’t want the child back. It’s that they don’t know how to be a parent to this new child” (Not understanding the change and the support their child needs now) (L. Gix, Personal Communication, March 10, 2017).

“They (need to) start taking family members (of the CSEC) and training them. We're trying to reunite these children with their families and we're not educating them on what's happened. They don't know what exploitation is, what it entails, how it has changed their daughter. They just know that their daughter is different, and they don't know what to do” (S. Daniels, Personal Communication, March 14, 2017).

“The second worst thing about exploitation is the impact that it has on that child's family. How do you explain to somebody's mama, what happened to her daughter?” (S. Daniels, Personal Communication, March 14, 2017)

“Even with the parents sometimes; counseling the dad and the mom that Susie is not Susie anymore she is Sue. She is totally different. She is not little baby you knew anymore. Her life has changed. She’s had to sleep with old, dirty men. Her life is not the same anymore. From this point on she's a different person and you have to accept the new her. You have to watch what you say and it sucks as a parent, of course it does, but if you

want to be in this child's life you have to follow some guidelines" (L. Gix, Personal Communication, March 10, 2017).

Family and Foster Caregiver Support

"There is a lack of support for parents of CSEC children. There are no groups for parents. Very few have counseling. There is support for the family when the girl is not AWOL, but what about when the girl is missing? When a girl is AWOL, you're stressing, and you can't sleep and you're wondering, 'Where is your baby?' There's no help for that mother or that father. There's no help for them until the child comes home. I have a parent that complains to me all of the time about how no one checks on them when the child is gone. I feel so bad for him because he does not have the support he needs, or the education" (L. Gix, Personal Communication, March 10, 2017).

Engagement

None of the goals of the model can be accomplished if the minor is not engaged. A recurring theme was the notion of "meeting them where they are." This was described both figuratively and literally. Engagement included consistency, timeliness, and warm handoffs (referred to as "soft handoffs" between workers and/or caregivers), as well as patient listening. Additionally, it included having workers stationed in places where CSEC frequent such as at the Assessment Center and the Juvenile Justice Center.

Key Informants on Engagement

“Being ready at all points of contact: Assessment Center, the receiving place for your entry into foster care. MISSSEY had two particular positions; they had a case manager and a juvenile justice advocate that were both at the Juvenile Justice Center- who did outreach there. They also had advocates/specialists at the Alameda County Assessment Center who there to engage with CSEC. The advocate did outreach to the girls there, had enrichment sessions there- safety, trans-theoretical model, filling in gaps of support, etc.- and it lowered rate of running away from the AC. Figure out a way to be where they already are and where they want to be” (S. Daniels, Personal Communication, March 14, 2017).

“The fact that they (Alameda County) have an organization like MISSSEY stationed at the Assessment Center is huge. Would I say that is enough of a protective factor? Absolutely not. But it's a first step, and it's a very good step” (S. Daniels, Personal Communication, March 14, 2017).

“The girls discuss it (their sexual experiences and clientele). Prepare yourself, because sometimes they discuss it in front of you. They'll talk about him sexually, mentally, financially, whatever. Sometimes I just let them; just let them vent about their life. I don't coach them. I just sit with them and allow real talk. Because it's their experience” (L. Gix, Personal Communication, March 10, 2017).

“A soft handoff is the best way to connect a child with a service provider. That’s what I don’t like about child welfare. How a child is transferred. Once they like someone it’s best that they stay with that person or it won’t be good for the subsequent workers” (L. Gix, Personal Communication, March 10, 2017).

“Timeliness. The kids fall off if you take too long, or they lose hope” (L. Gix, Personal Communication, March 10, 2017).

“Consistency. A lot of people take it personally when the child is not answering their phone call. There are many reasons for that” (L. Gix, Personal Communication, March 10, 2017).

Safety/Stability

Most of the elements of the safety/stability component address the multidimensional poverty of CSEC youth. Financial stability and safety require a poverty-aware social work practice and a commitment to economic justice. Utilizing this anti-poverty perspective will be instrumental in supporting exploited children and youth.

The safety and stability component is more concrete in nature. It includes, but is not limited to: Stable Housing, Financial Provision, Physical Provision (food, clothing, medical care, etc.), Physical Safety, and Stability of Workers and Placement. It has been gathered that stability is a large factor in building relationships.

Housing: Safe and dependable placement is a must, it is also the key concern. The difficult behaviors described earlier are said to be the largest culprit of placement instability. All behaviors serve a purpose, so those behaviors must be met with compassion, patience, and a trauma-informed lens. Demanding the immediate eradication of these behaviors from any youth is not only trauma-insensitive, it is unrealistic. An arguably equal cause of placement instability is the lack of support for caregivers. The workers and caregivers that are supporting these youth also need support themselves.

Finances: Much of their experience has revolved around money and profit. Financial stability may take many forms, including, aid with obtaining employment, giving an allowance or setting up a bank account.

Physical Provisions: Provisions such as food, clothing and medical care are a must. Ensuring that the youth's needs are met consistently decreases the lure for them to provide for themselves using previous means.

Transportation: Bus passes, clipper cards, and dependable rides create security around having the means to travel to school and work. CSEC are a highly independent population. The overall focus of the Safety/Stability component is making staying in placement a better option.

Stability of Workers: Warm-handoffs were introduced in the *Engagement* section, however, a large part of feeling safe and stable is having someone you can depend upon. This can be fulfilled by ensuring CSEC have a stable long-term worker once they reach the back end of the system (after the court unit); a worker that stays with them whether they are in FM, FR, PYC etc.¹⁷ Another option is developing a volunteer CSEC/Survivor Advocate Program, similar to Alameda County's Parent Advocate Program, in which trained adult volunteers- ideally former CSEC that have been through the child welfare system- can support the youth from beginning to end.

Key Informants on Safety/Stability

“It starts with safe placement. If you cannot figure out adequate and safe placement, then no, I don't believe you can adequately address the issue of exploitation” (S. Daniels, Personal Communication, March 14, 2017).

“...the girls fear group homes all together. But if you had a bunch of foster homes that were willing to take the girls- things might run a little smoother” (L. Gix, Personal Communication, March 10, 2017).

“...if you don't have the safety provision, a real protective provision which needs to be centered around housing. We can serve, we can support, we can do so many things- and

¹⁷ See Glossary of Terms

it'll be helpful, but the one thing CPS is really lagging at- is creating safe housing (for CSEC). Which is crazy because they are the only organization with the power to do that. MISSSEY cannot place, West Coast cannot place" (S. Daniels, Personal Communication, March 14, 2017).

"Financial needs. Placements do not always provide well for minors; girls need money, which also make recruitment easier because her needs are so blatant. Ultimately it is an easier option than to struggle or feel powerless" (S. Daniels, Personal Communication, March 14, 2017).

"The lack of support and stability; they need consistency. Let's talk about the fact that they have multiple child welfare workers. There is no consistent child welfare worker for a CSEC child. It may remind them of a father or mother that's on drugs or someone in their family that was unreliable. To them the system is unreliable. Both the judicial and foster care systems are unreliable. There are girls who call their probation officers and social workers that never get an answer because they are so busy, because of their huge caseloads and they can't keep up" (L. Gix, Personal Communication, March 10, 2017).

"There's no specific CSEC task force/group/unit. I mention all the time that Probation needs to have their own CSEC officers that we have vetted and trained" (L. Gix, Personal Communication, March 10, 2017).

“There needs to be about 10 (workers) maybe that are just for CSEC. It’s the same for child welfare workers, from intake and all throughout, and they need to be in one group so they can meet weekly and have communications. Like we have in our Safety Net meetings. Maybe that Intake person can be the point person, the one worker that stays with the youth from point A to Z” (L. Gix, Personal Communication, March 10, 2017).

Support

There are several factors that create support for members of this population. The needs of any individual youth in terms of support will vary. In her exploration of this topic through key informant interviews and various written, audio and video sources the writer found that the overarching features of support for CSEC include consistency, perseverance, understanding, encouragement and community.

Commitment/Perseverance: This takes the consistency and dependability piece long term. It denotes being there for them despite everything.

Understanding and Forgiveness: Knowing where the behavior is coming from and though it may be directed at you, you are likely not the cause.

Space: Provide space for them to make mistakes and adjust at their own pace. An excellent example of this is the Delta Foster Care Program through Devereux Advanced

Behavioral Health in Florida. This CSEC-specific program allows the minor to return after running away. Once the youth has returned the foster parents wait for 24 hours before they approach the youth about their absence. Additionally behavioral support specialist comes to speak with the youth after the 24 hour period.

Community: This was one of the largest components of recovery or “getting out of the life.” In interviews, CSEC identified having community, family, or kin as a major benefit of the life. Building community can happen in a myriad of ways including, involvement in group services, participation in extracurricular activities and involvement in the youth’s chosen place of worship.

Key Informants on Support

“To answer your question, how to help them get out the life is support” (L. Gix, Personal Communication, March 10, 2017).

“CSEC are baring their soul to all these people with different personalities and attitudes and a lot of workers did not sign up to be with CSEC kids. They believe they’re disrespectful and difficult. They need someone that’s in it for the heart of it” (L. Gix, Personal Communication, March 10, 2017).

Autonomy/Empowerment

Autonomy: CSEC have an interesting balance when it comes to autonomy. They may be incredibly independent and resistant to authority due to having to fend for themselves without a home life. At the same time many CSEC are accustomed to not having control over their finances, time and bodies and may have difficulties saying “no” and setting boundaries. They may also overcompensate by doing the opposite and display difficulty being told “no” and abiding by boundaries. This piece is about striking a balance between setting appropriate boundaries and encouraging healthy control.

Empowerment: Often a great deal of conditioning goes into the victimization process. Survivors have learned about relationships, love, commitment, and loyalty through the lens of exploitation. This component focuses on re-education; undoing the indoctrination of commercial exploitation and teaching what healthy relationships and boundaries look like. Much of this will need to be done by modeling.

Key Informants of Empowerment/Autonomy

“It’s the balance of giving them back their power and also showing that they are still children” (L. Gix, Personal Communication, March 10, 2017).

"I give them a chance to learn that they are not grown. I teach them that they're not grown, but I also give them the freedom of choice because they're victims. Choice has been taken away from them; but I don't give them too much choice. I advise them because they're still a child but they have to answer to someone; an authority figure, a mom, somebody" (L. Gix, Personal Communication, March 10, 2017).

"I believe that's one of the things that are really lacking. A lot of service providers are too busy trying to give them their choice back 'because they're victims.' They're so focused on giving them their power back that they forget that they're still children. So while you're giving them all this power, now they think that they can tell their parents what to do. That's the balance that I try to bring" (L. Gix, Personal Communication, March 10, 2017).

CSEC Re-Education

"It's all they know. No one has taught them different. That's what I try to do at the Saturday program. I bring in CEOs and CFOs and VPs that are African American or Hispanic, primarily African American though because African Americans make up the majority of our group, that have made it, regardless of what their history was, but they made it. So they can see someone of their skin complexion with a 401K and a Benz in the parking lot" (L. Gix, Personal Communication, March 10, 2017).

"So I began to just talk to young girls and ask them, 'what are some the reasons why you stay?' Just try and understand...I was working with this girl all the time and the interventions I was using just weren't working. I just felt like they weren't being fruitful with her, and I was thinking, "How can I get her to engage?" So we did this activity where she talked about all she got from being in the life and talked about when it cost to be in the life. So she applied monetary value to these things. She put down: 'I get my hair done, I get my nails done, I get clothes, and I've got Kin (family) now.'

I let her exaggerate the numbers however she chose to. She applied like \$1,000 to the nails and we all know that it doesn't take \$1,000 dollars to get your nails done. I knew she was thinking in terms of yearly. What I thought was interesting was that the one thing she didn't put the financial benefits side was that she actually got money.

So then I asked her about the costs. She was like 'What costs?' I said, 'There are very obvious costs what you're doing. Tell me about the times when there was something that happened to you, when had to do something you did not want to do, when you felt like something harmed you or hurt you. Something you felt like was a cost of be out there.' So she put down there the first time that she was raped; she put down the first time she was beaten. She put down how long it had been since she talked to her sister, just a lot of stuff. Then I had her assign dollar amounts to those things. Now for the other ones-nails she put down \$1,000, for getting her hair done to put \$5,000. Just outlandish prices. But, for getting raped she put down \$100,000. Being beaten she put down \$50,000. Way

bigger prices" (*Helping them to view things differently*) (S. Daniels, Personal Communication, March 14, 2017).

Conclusion: This chapter has provided the visual depiction of the full model of practice and detailed its components, connections and flow. The final chapter will review this study's social work implications and limitations.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

The overall objective of this study was to develop a model of practice specifically for supporting commercially sexually exploited children within the complex and structured system of county child welfare. In doing so, the writer drafted research and interview questions that directly addressed the needs CSEC presented during or that were associated with system involvement. This resulted in an abundance of needs that were later categorized into five areas: Education/Training, Engagement, Safety/Stability, Support, and Autonomy/Empowerment.

Implications for Social Work

The ideal impact of this study would be the adoption of this model by county child welfare agencies and for it to be utilized to increase placement stability and support for commercially sexually exploited children. This model should inspire the development of training that is both specified to this cause and mandated for caregivers and workers at all points of contact. The results of this model should undergo review using quantitative and qualitative measures. Quantitative methods should include assessing subsequent placement stability. Qualitative methods should include conducting surveys, preferably open answer, with CSEC in placement. This model could also serve as part of Bachelor's or Master's level social work curriculum.

If implemented, child welfare workers should undergo this training and bias testing every two years at minimum, especially if there are significant changes in law, policy, or other circumstances which impact service to this population. Supporting CSEC is a highly taxing endeavor. Burnout is a large culprit of ineffective work, and will continue to be if workers and caregivers are not adequately supported. Counties need to provide special supports to workers and caregivers who are serving this population children and youth. Support groups, increased consultations, and increased mental/emotional health services would all be helpful in achieving worker and caregiver longevity. Ideally these providers should have their own unit in which they can train together and support one another. An outline for the training curriculum can be found on the adjoining page.

TRAUMA-SPECIFIC SOCIAL WORK (TSSW) FOR CSEC

Training Curriculum Framework

Unit 1: Re-Education

Bias Testing

The first unit should begin with anonymous bias testing. This should test for views of blameworthiness for CSEC. Factors such as age, gender, race, sexual orientation, attitude, method of entry into the life, etc. should be included. It should focus on common views of trafficking and prostitution. Trainees should not be made aware of the nature of the test until after the questionnaire is completed and “graded.” Testing should be timed and quickly paced to encourage answers that reflect immediate reactions and thoughts.

Once the trainees have their results, the training should start with common views of CSEC in society and amongst service providers. The rest of this unit will be on CSEC-specific trauma and the biopsychosocial outcomes. This should focus on highlighting the purposes behind behaviors exhibited while under the jurisdiction of Child Welfare.

CSEC Trauma and Common Outcomes

- Behaviors
- Specialized Trauma
- Brainwashing & Conditioning
- Cycle of Violence/Exploitation
- Difficulty Building Healthy Relationships.

Unit 2: Engagement

- “Deal Breakers?”
 - Anticipate the behaviors that cause workers and caregivers to disengage.
(i.e. running away, oversexualization, aggression, substance use, etc.).
 - Forgiveness
- Open Communication
 - Inform the minor of changes ahead of time.
 - Warm hand-offs between workers and caregivers.
 - Active Listening.
- Language Education
 - What to use and avoid.
 - Common terms used within the world of exploitation.
 - Identity (Avoid defining their identity, instead model positive language).

Unit 3: Building Stability and Safety

- Consistency
 - Contact/Dependability (Answering when they call/text. Picking them up from the AC or JJC).
 - Housing (Allowing them to come home after they’ve made mistakes).
 - Food (This can look like regular meal times or trips to the store).
 - Transportation.
 - Finances.
 - Timeliness.
- Avoiding Re-victimization

Unit 4: Support and Recovery

- Flexibility (Change takes time. Adjusting to their needs).
- Commitment.
- Praising any progress.
- Building Community.

Unit 5: Supporting You

Preventing Burnout

- Worker Support Groups
- CSEC Foster Parent Support Groups.
 - Two Kinds: General and AWOL
 - Can be more if your program sees the need.
 - Meeting Structure
 - Example: 1) Develop a group (allow time for families to connect and sign up for support groups based on proximity and/or current connection. 2) Choose a non-public meeting place. (i.e. a private room at a library, church, or other places where you can reserve closed rooms for free). Or, someone's house if there is a set time when the child or youth is not present (i.e. during an extracurricular activity)
 - Go over Guidelines and limitations.
 - Focus on issues of confidentiality. (i.e. not disclosing past information, connections, etc.)

*End of Training Outline

Plans for Reporting

This study finds its foundations in the needs presented within Alameda County. The writer has presented her efforts, the resulting model, and the proposed training outline to the division directors of Alameda County's Department of Children and Family Services. Additionally, the full manuscript will be published by San Francisco State University and made available in its library archives.

Limitations

This effort focuses solely on supporting commercially sexually exploited children and youth after they have entered into the child welfare system. The writer realizes that there are many other pressing issues concerning this population such as identification of victims, identifying and prosecuting traffickers, and overall prevention. Though this model does not cover provisions for prevention, writer would like to state how imperative preventative efforts are, and note that a significant amount of information on this topic was gathered in the course of the study. It is still to be determined whether those efforts should be made by county child welfare, or if counties should partner with organizations already implementing effective prevention methods.

This work is tailored for direct service workers and caregivers, and thus does not address management-level topics such as fiscal impact and the program structure adjustments necessary for implementation. Possible expansions of this work may include funding, preventative efforts, and a comprehensive training curriculum.

This study has been shaped by the limited time frame within which the project must be completed and the writer's current scope of practice as an Alameda County Emergency Response Intern. Due to this, this work was completed with a focus on Alameda County and may not directly address specific needs found in other locations.

The writer would like to thank you for your review of this study.

Figure 3.1. Power and Control Wheel of Human Trafficking¹⁸



This wheel was adapted from the Domestic Abuse Intervention Project's Duluth Model Power and Control Wheel, available at www.theduluthmodel.org

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¹⁸ Retrieved from

http://www.ncdsv.org/images/DSVintersectionsWithTraffickingANDTraffickingWheel_2012.pdf

Figure 4.1. Heat Watch Model of Practice: Part I¹⁹



¹⁹ Retrieved from: http://www.heatwatch.org/heat_watch/

Figure 4.2. Heat Watch Model of Practice: Part 2²⁰

Five Point Strategy

1 Community

We empower the community by dispelling myths & misconceptions about this form of child abuse. We also teach them how to identify & report human trafficking. Our community programs include H.E.A.T. Watch Radio & Neighborhood H.E.A.T. Watch.

5 Service Providers

We convene a multidisciplinary case review called SafetyNet that provides case management & stabilization for victims. We also oversee the Young Women's Saturday Program, a 16-week education & empowerment course for at risk & involved commercially sexually exploited youth.



2 Law Enforcement

Our Office has trained law enforcement officers from Alameda County agency, along with various other agencies throughout the nation.

3 Prosecution

Our vertical H.E.A.T. Unit consists of two District Attorneys, a victim-witness advocate & an inspector.

4 Law & Policy

The Alameda County District Attorney's Office has drafted, sponsored, advised & supported key pieces of human trafficking related legislation in CA.

²⁰ http://www.heatwatch.org/heat_watch/

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APPENDIX A

Glossary of Terms

- ❖ *AWOL*: “Absent Without Leave.” This term is used when a minor runs away.
- ❖ *AB12*: Assembly Bill 12 (2010). The abbreviation refers to the county unit that serves young adults participating in the extended foster care program. This program that allows youth in foster care to remain under the jurisdiction of the county after age 18 and up to age 21.
- ❖ *Blade/ Stroll/ Track*: The location for soliciting.
- ❖ *CSEC*: Commercially Sexually Exploited Children
- ❖ “*Daddy*”: Exploiter and/or Trafficker
- ❖ *FM*: Family Maintenance. Child welfare Unit that serves families in which the minors are dependents of the county and are residing at home.
- ❖ *FR*: Family Reunification. Child welfare Unit that serves families in which the minors are dependents of the county and are residing in an out-of-home placement.
- ❖ *Heat*: Refers to where human trafficking activity takes place.
- ❖ H.E.A.T. Watch: (Human Exploitation and Trafficking): An Alameda County-based anti-human trafficking organization.
- ❖ *Johns*: Men who purchase CSEC.
- ❖ M.I.S.S.S.E.Y.: Motivating, Inspiring, Supporting & Serving Sexually Exploited Youth. An Oakland- based non-profit organization.

- ❖ PYC: Positive Youth Connections. The Child welfare Unit that serves
- ❖ “*The Life*”: The commercial sexual exploitation industry.

APPENDIX B

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Polaris Project Information

Sharon,

You are welcome to include any materials available on the National Human Trafficking Hotline as long as they are not edited and are cited to NHTH. Thank you so much for your interest, please feel free to pass any materials you would like to share to us as well. We always try to pay attention to good ideas from all sources.

Best of luck in your endeavors,

Alexa

APPENDIX C

H.E.A.T. Watch Copyright Permission

Levinson, Robyn, HEAT <Robyn.Levinson@acgov.org>

Hi Sharon,

Thank you for your email. You are welcome to use us for your appendices and appreciate that you will be crediting HEAT Watch.

Best,

Robyn Levinson

H.E.A.T. Watch Program Coordinator

Alameda County District Attorney's Office

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