

Promising Practices in Combating the Sexual Exploitation of Girls in Gangs

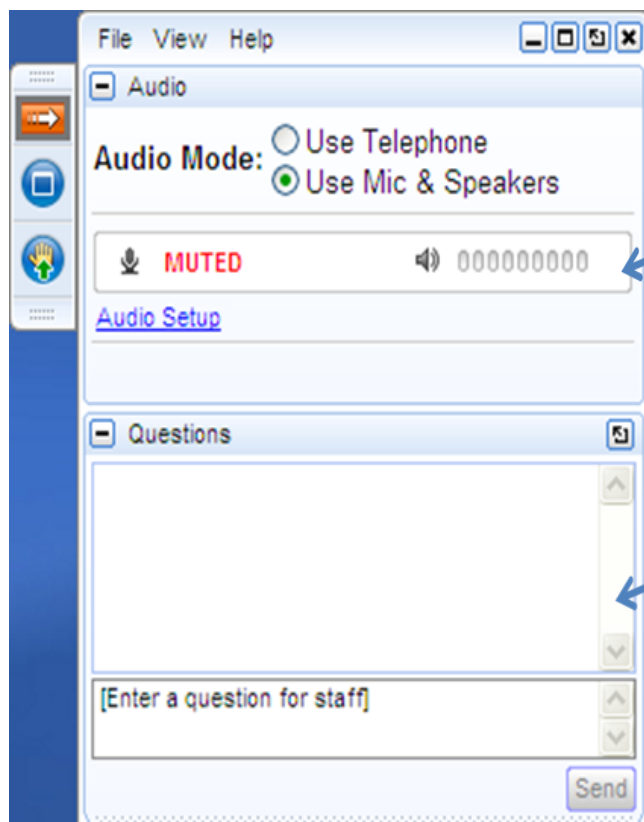
Jenee Littrell

Keith G. Burt

OJJDP's MECP

- MECP offers assistance to local, state and tribal law enforcement, nonprofit organizations, and other juvenile justice practitioners to:
 - strengthen their responses
 - increase the use of evidence-based practices
 - identify and address operational and programmatic needs
- Coordinated by Fox Valley Technical College
- For more information or to submit a training and technical assistance request:
 - www.mecptraining.org
 - mecptraining@fvtc.edu
 - 1-888-347-5610

Webinar Housekeeping



Audio Support:

- Use Telephone or Mic & Speakers
- Check 'Audio Setup' for problems
- All callers will be on mute throughout the webinar

To ask a Question:

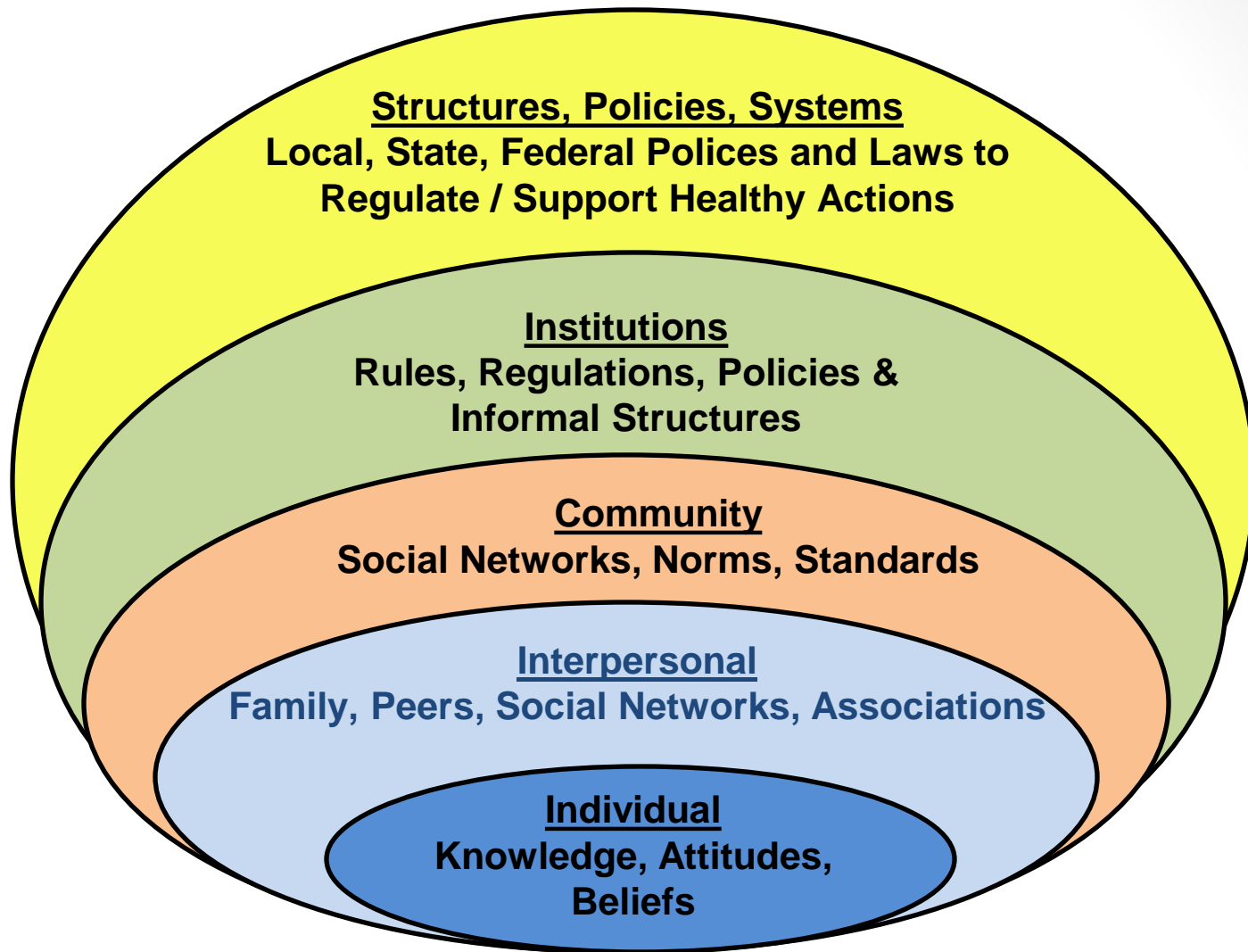
- Type a question in the box; click Send
- Staff will respond in the 'Questions' box

Keys to Promising Practices

- Awareness
- Acknowledgment of the problem
- Recognizing and accurately identifying the issues
- Recognition of the benefits of collaboratively developing responsive strategies.

Keys to Promising Practices

- Understanding current system processes & practices
- Understanding roles & responsibilities in an inter-agency approach
- Policy makers cooperate in inter-agency collaborative processes to develop prevention, intervention & recovery strategies in private and public sectors of the community.



Levels of Influence in the Social Ecological Model

Keys to Successful Structure

- Leadership
 - Executive management
 - In the trenches
- Innovation
 - Executive management
 - In the trenches
- A concise but comprehensive mission statement
- A separate list of clear objectives with specific dead lines

Critical Partners

- Prevention
- Intervention
- Law Enforcement
- Prosecution
- Probation
- Social Services
- Family Involvement
- Local Government
- Community Organizations
- Housing
 - Federal, State & Local
- Schools (K - 12)
- Colleges & Universities
- Corrections / Detention
- Courts
 - Juvenile, Family, Criminal
- News Media

One Size / Format Does Not Fit All

- Regions, cities and towns vary
 - Size
 - Culture (social, ethnic, faith, etc.)
 - Political Climate
 - Governmental structure

Assessing the Problem

- Establish local baseline data
 - Who has information?
 - What types of records are kept
 - Criminal / Delinquency
 - Social Services / Child Protective Services
 - Mental Health
 - Schools
 - NGO's

Who are the Victims?

- How & where do you start?
- What do you want to know?
 - Who are the victims
 - Where are the victims
 - Where do they live
 - Where do they go to school
 - Where are they being sexually exploited
 - Number of victims

Who are the Perpetrators?

- Are the victims in gangs or gang affiliates?
- Is there influence from outside your area?
- What are the barriers to accessing necessary information?

Information Sharing

- What type and how much information related to sexual exploitation of girls is currently shared among law enforcement, schools, courts, prosecution, social services, etc.?
- What procedural / institutional impediments exist to sharing information?
- What legal impediments to sharing the information exist?

Data Collection

Juvenile Records - Types

- School
- Legal
- Social Services
- Law Enforcement

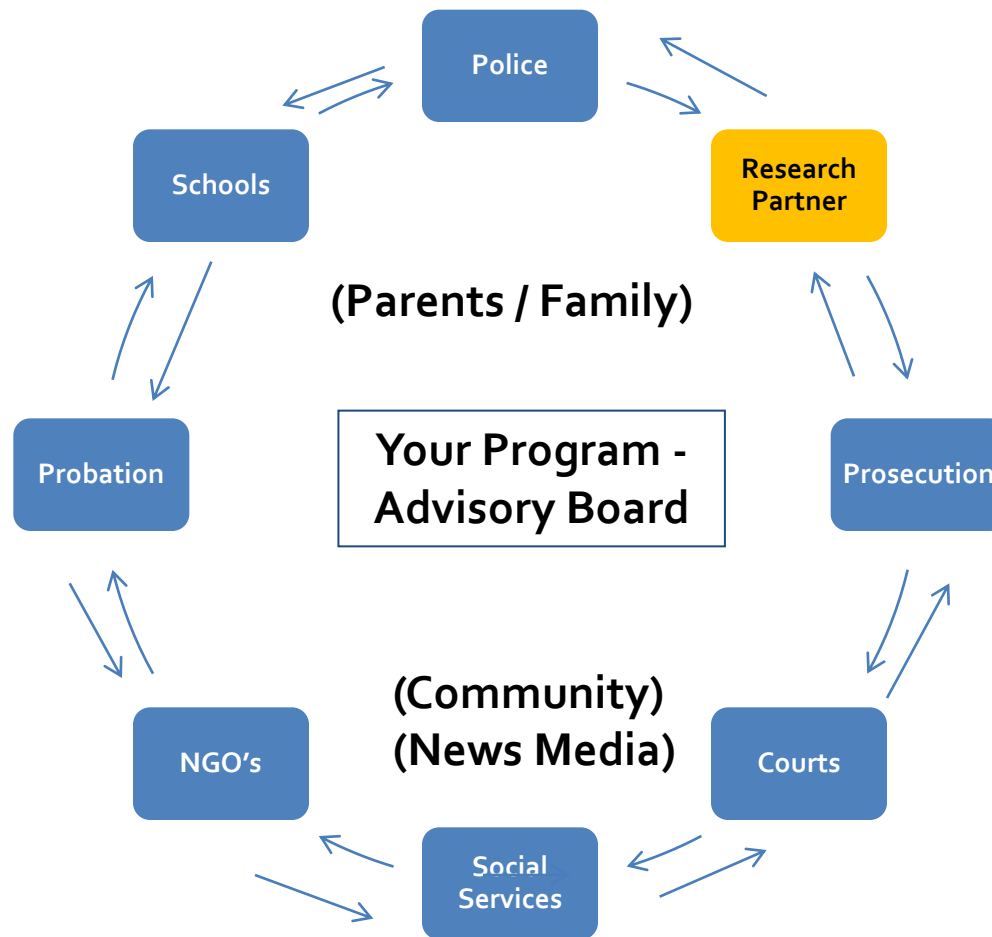
No national standard – but fairly consistent

Data Collection

Juvenile Records - Access

- Almost universally confidential – but available within closed arenas for official use
- Commonly available to specified people / group(s) for specified purposes pursuant to court order based on legitimate need
- Universally separate from adult records
 - But adult records may contain critical info vis-à-vis a juvenile, e.g., offspring and/or victim

Inter-Agency Cooperation



How To Identify Victims

- Screening tools for:
 - SRO's
 - Patrol officers
 - School Officials
 - Emergency room & other healthcare workers
 - Mental health providers
 - Social service workers

Screening Tool Basics

- Extreme fear / psychological trauma
 - Initial interaction geared to conveying trust & safety
 - Safety is top concern
 - Victim focused and trauma informed
- Sex trafficking indicators
 - Involved with a person who behaves in a manner consistent with:
 - Pimp / Bottom girl / Gang member

Critical Questions to Ask

- How well does the current system work in identifying & handling victims of sex trafficking?
- Can we identify juvenile justice system cases?
- Is there documentation to track case histories?
- Can the effectiveness of dispositions be assessed?
- Are alternative dispositions available?
 - E.g., Juvenile Drug Court, Girls Court, etc.

Develop Community Support & Interagency Cooperation

- Identify institutions, agencies, groups, etc. that will be affected by implementation of protocols/procedures to ameliorate sexual exploitation of girls in your community.
- Are any agreements (formal or informal) currently in effect?
- What is the actual level of cooperation?

Develop Community Support & Interagency Cooperation-2

- Identify specific roles for the institutions, agencies, groups, etc. that will be part of the effort to end the sexual exploitation of girls in your community.
- Identify the programmatic responses necessary to effect new policies re sexual exploitation victims
- Is there an existing group / organization or program that can facilitate your goals?
- Should a new organization or program be formed?

Develop Community Support & Interagency Cooperation - 3

- Do special units exist that deal with sexual exploitation?
 - Law enforcement, prosecution, probation, etc.
 - What are the current role of those units
 - Do they need training / technical assistance?
- What are community perceptions of the issues?
 - It doesn't happen here
 - Everyone is at risk

Develop Community Support & Interagency Cooperation - 4

- Identify commonly held perceptions
 - Confirm, debunk, clarify
- Educate the community on the basics
 - Sexual exploitation of girls in our community exists
 - Law enforcement is not solely responsible for nor capable of resolving issues of sexual exploitation of girls by gangs

Action Leading to Best Practices

- Start Small
- Acquire community support
- Acquire a research partner
 - Enlist the support of news & entertainment media
- Develop local information sources

Promising Practices

May include:

- Identify children already within the juvenile justice system who have been or are currently sexually exploited
- In-school programs alerting middle / high school youth of potential consequences of gang association & early sexual activity
- Coordinated L.E. suppression and targeted prosecution of gang related sexual exploitation

Procedural Considerations

- Police – Traditional Response includes strong suppression:
 - Identify gangs involved in sex trafficking & gang member pimps
 - Prioritize gang related sex trafficking
 - Arrest all parties
- Police – Promising Practice Response includes:
 - Prevention, Intervention, and Protection

Procedural Considerations

- Prosecutor – Traditional response includes standard prosecution
 - Immediate response to follow-up case detective
 - Standard prosecution of pimp
- Prosecutor – Promising Practice Response includes:
 - Immediate field response to arresting officer
 - Vertical prosecution of pimp & other gang members

References/Resources

- Clawson, H.J. Salomon, A., & Grace, L.G. (2008). Treating the hidden wounds: trauma treatment and mental health recovery for victims of human trafficking. Washington, DC: Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluations, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Q & A