

The Intersection of Adolescent Development and Sex Trafficking: Vulnerabilities and Risk Factors

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MISSION

To restore and empower trafficked and sexually exploited women, teens, and their children, and drive awareness of the issue and its prevalence.



Empower

Provide trauma-informed services that enable members to experience healing, self-reliance, and long-term stability.

Educate

Expand education and awareness of the sex trafficking industry and be a leading voice in the metroplex.

Eradicate

Advocate for legislative reform and partner with cause-related organizations to address the systemic causes of trafficking.

Expand

Recruit, retain, and reward quality staff, grow membership, and donor funding.

FOUR-PHASED WOMEN'S PROGRAM



PHASE 1

Earth

Women in the Earth Phase are taking active and intentional steps to create a new life for themselves.



PHASE 2

Wood

Women in the Wood Phase are building on the foundation of Phase 1 towards long-term stability.



PHASE 3

Fire

Women in the Fire Phase are building on a solid foundation by looking ahead to their future.



PHASE 4

Metal

Women in the Metal Phase are preparing to launch into a new life they have created for themselves.



NEW FRIENDS NEW LIFE YOUTH RESOURCE CENTER



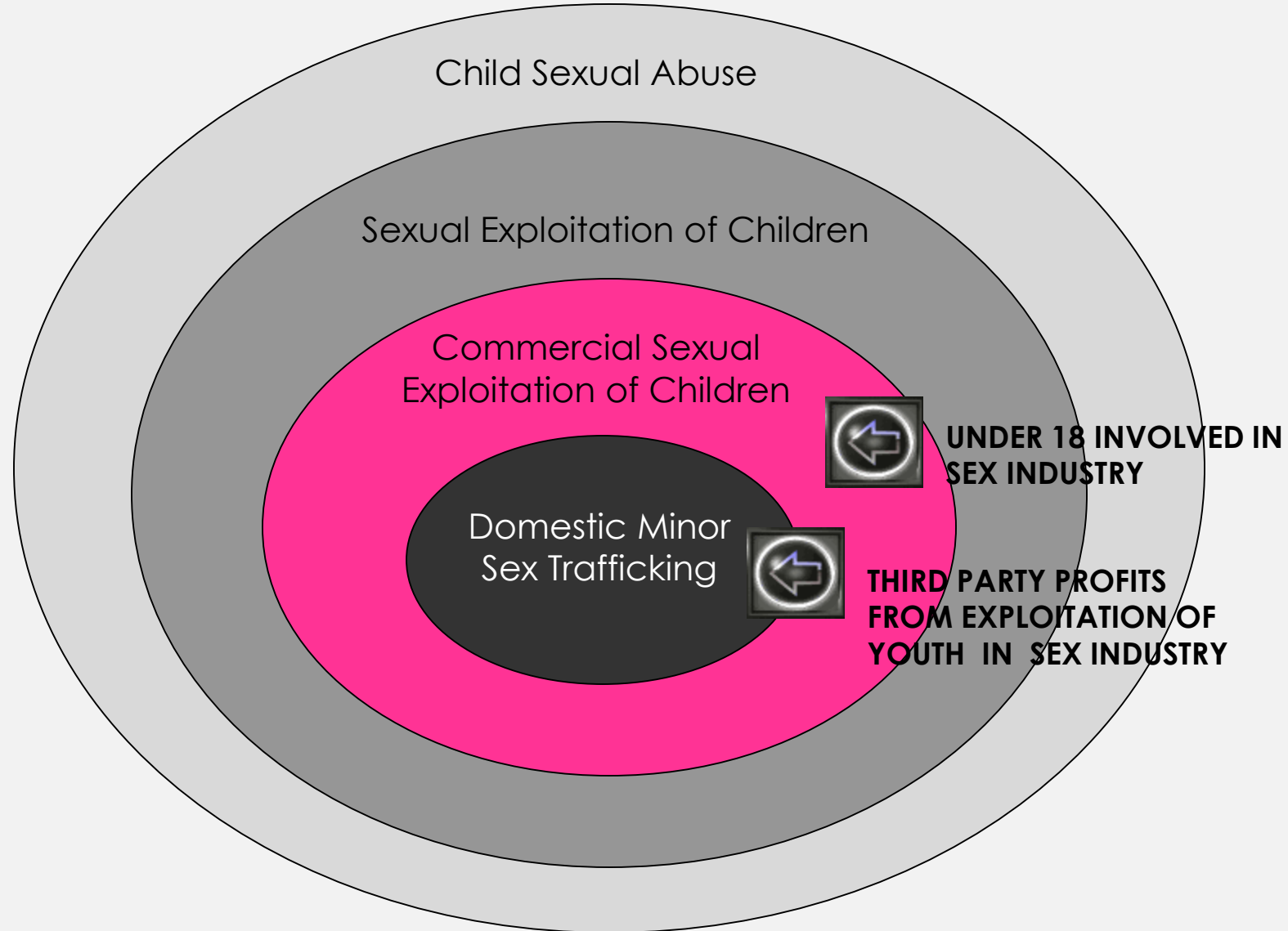
Opened in January 2018 through grant partnership with the Governor's office, the YRC serves high-risk, exploited, and trafficked girls ages 12-22, by providing holistic, trauma informed care.



Sex Trafficking and Commercial Sexual Exploitation

- **What is Sex Trafficking?**
 - When someone uses force, fraud or coercion to cause a commercial sex act with an adult or causes a minor to commit a commercial sex act
- **What is a Commercial Sex Act?**
 - Examples include prostitution, pornography, and sexual performance done in exchange for anything of value, such as money, food, shelter, clothes.
- **What is Child Sexual Exploitation and Trafficking?**
 - When a person under the age of 18 is sexually abused or violated in exchange for anything of value, such as money, power or status
 - Child Sex Trafficking occurs when a 3rd party (trafficker/"pimp") profits from the act
 - When a minor is the victim, force, fraud, or coercion need not be present

Intersections of Abuse



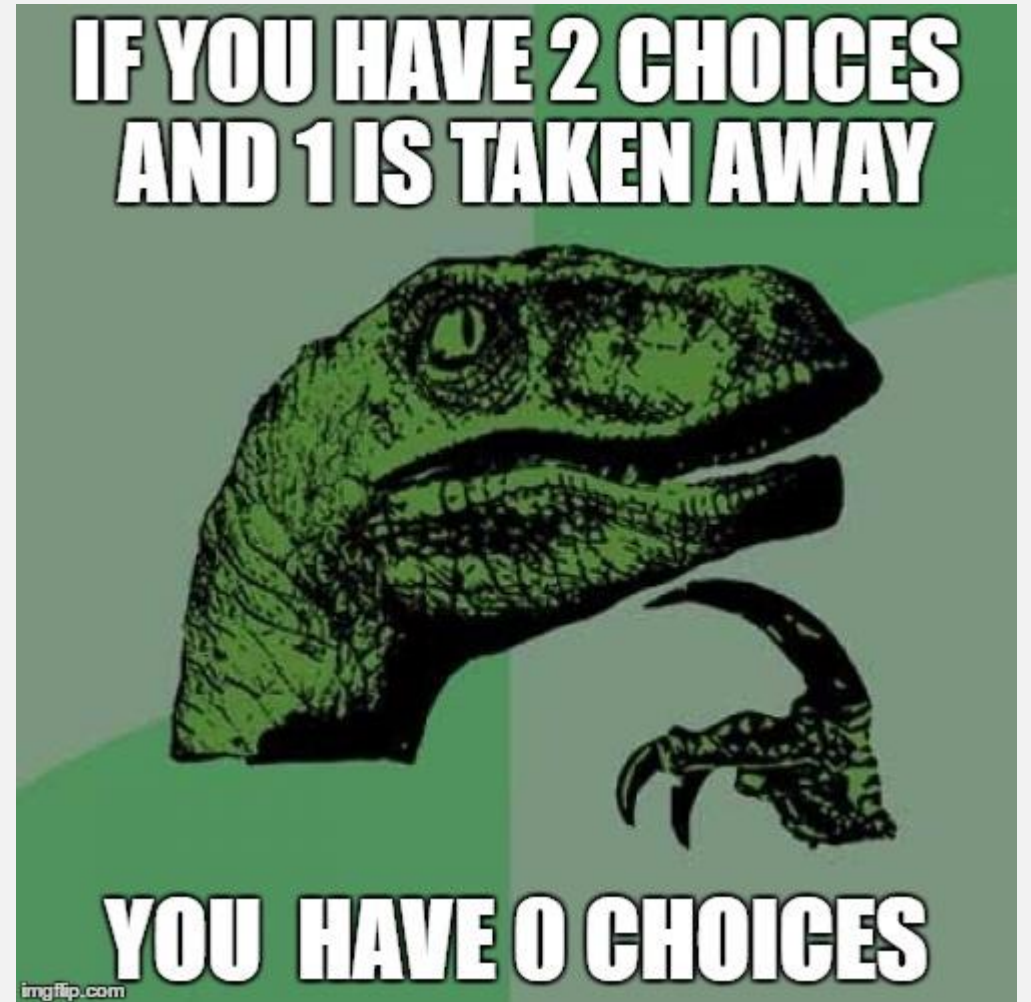
Choice Defined

choice noun

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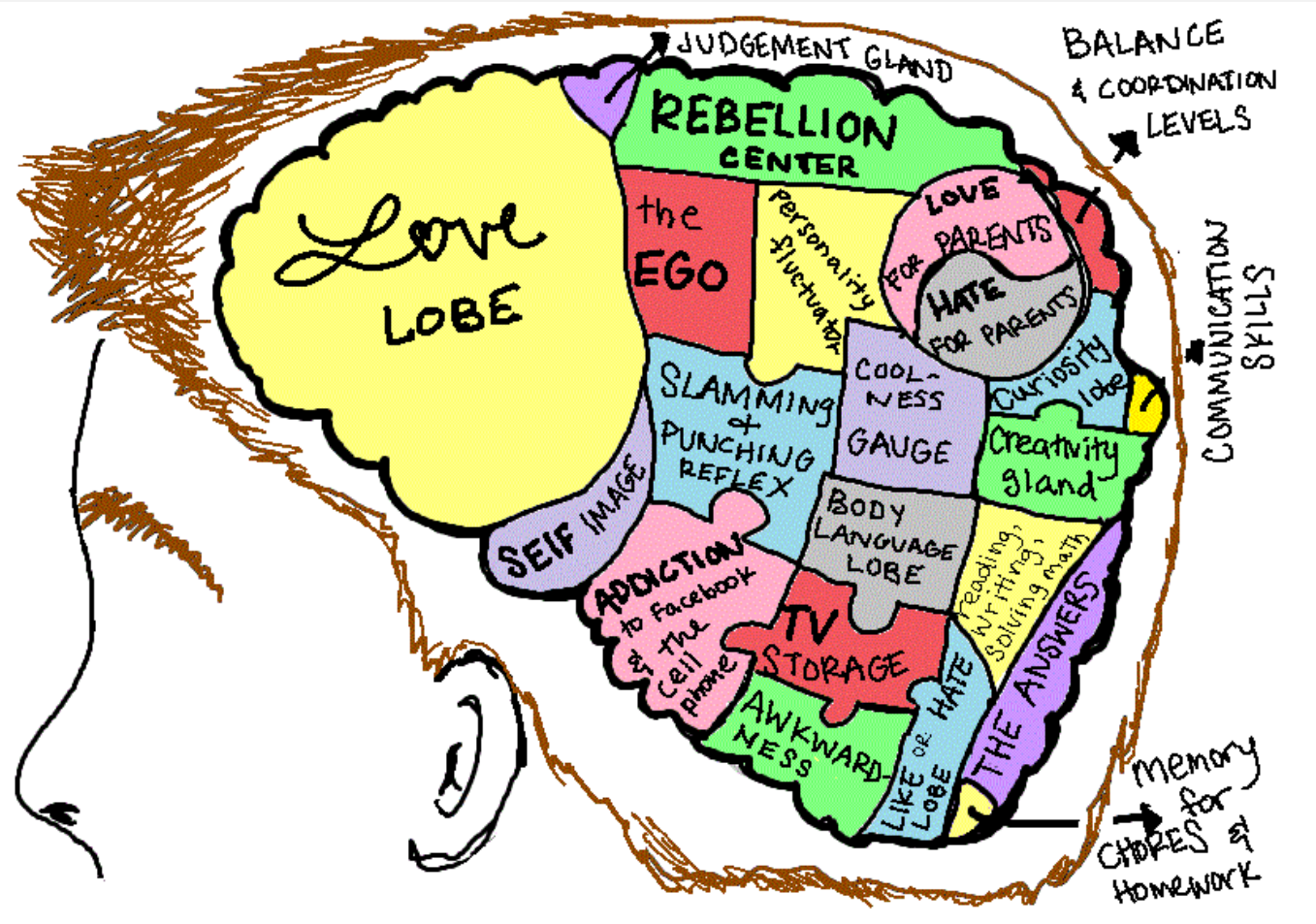
Definition of *choice* (Entry 1 of 2)

- 1 : the act of choosing : SELECTION
// finding it hard to make a *choice*
- 2 : power of choosing : OPTION
// you have no *choice*



Adolescent Brains: What IS going on in there?

THE AVERAGE TEENAGE BRAIN



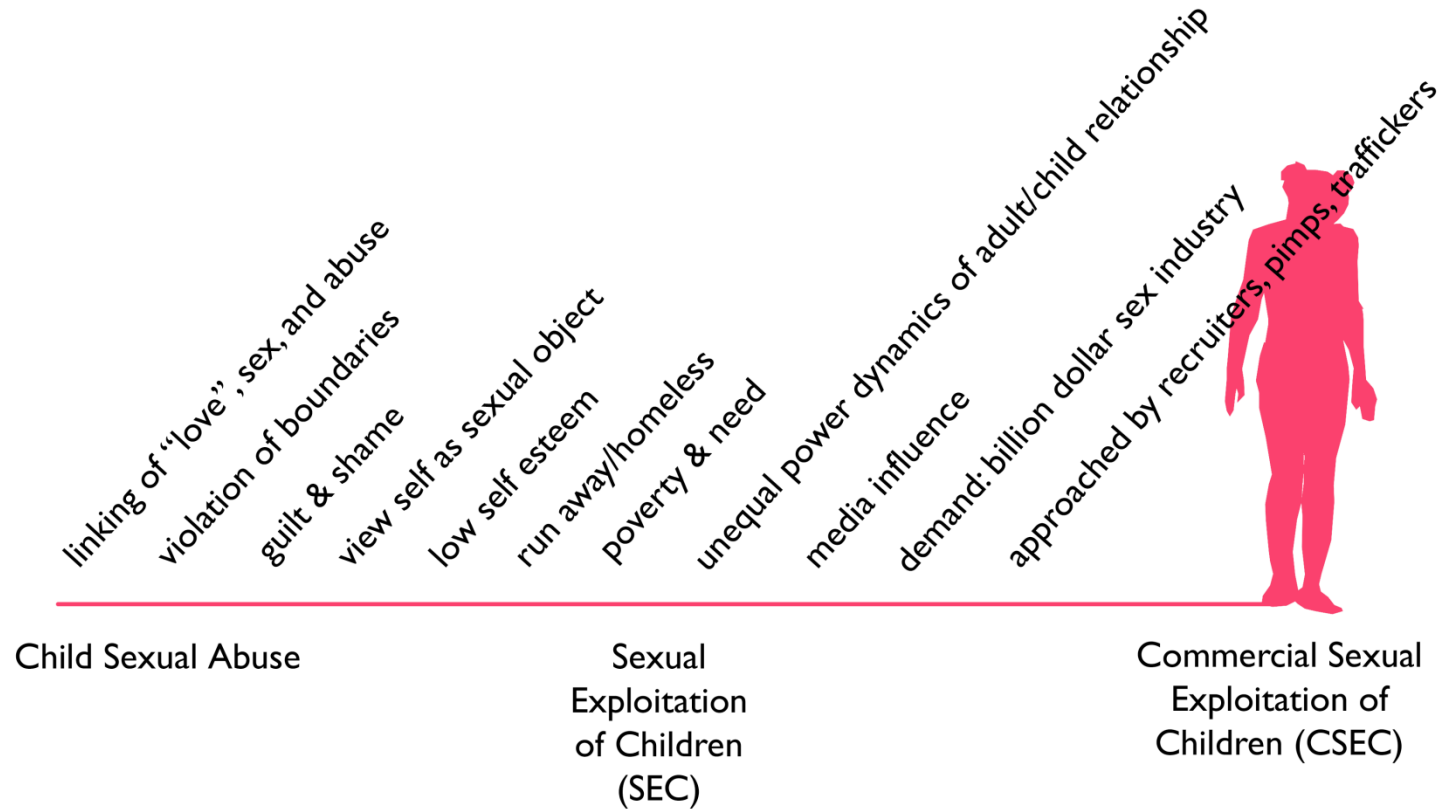
Adolescent Brains: Let's Break it Down

- Young people are making decisions from their **AMYGDALA**, the emotional part of the brain.
- **Pre-Frontal Cortex (PFC)**, which is the decision making center of the brain, is not fully developed until age 25
- High stress environments trigger a cortisol response—that means the amygdala is constantly activated
- Young people are not thinking as much as they are feeling

Food for thought:

If a person experiences trauma at a young age, how does this impact their behavior when they are a 27 year old adult, accounting for brain development?

Continuum of Sexual Abuse, SEC, & CSEC



GEMS: A Making of a Girl



(Click image to launch video (YouTube))

In their own words

"If you meet a female, she don't got no family, she don't got nowhere to stay, but you got a little bit of money, you doing for her, you putting a roof over her head, feeding her ... she going to end up trusting you, depending on you...You've got some females, they run their own, they manage theyselves.

But most, they want a daddy to feel secure, to feel like they got somebody watching out for them."
–K.A., Pimp from San Antonio

A lot of people always think that somebody's making them do it or forcing them to do it. That's not the case. Most cases, these girls are already doing it. They're doing it on their own. It's just, they hate to be by themselves, or they can't take care of their money.

It's just like any regular household. A man takes care of the household, so they feel like that's what they need the man there for. You feel like family. When you're looking out for somebody like that, it don't feel like a business. It feels like family. I got your back, you got mine.

–Anthony Harris, Pimp from Huntsville

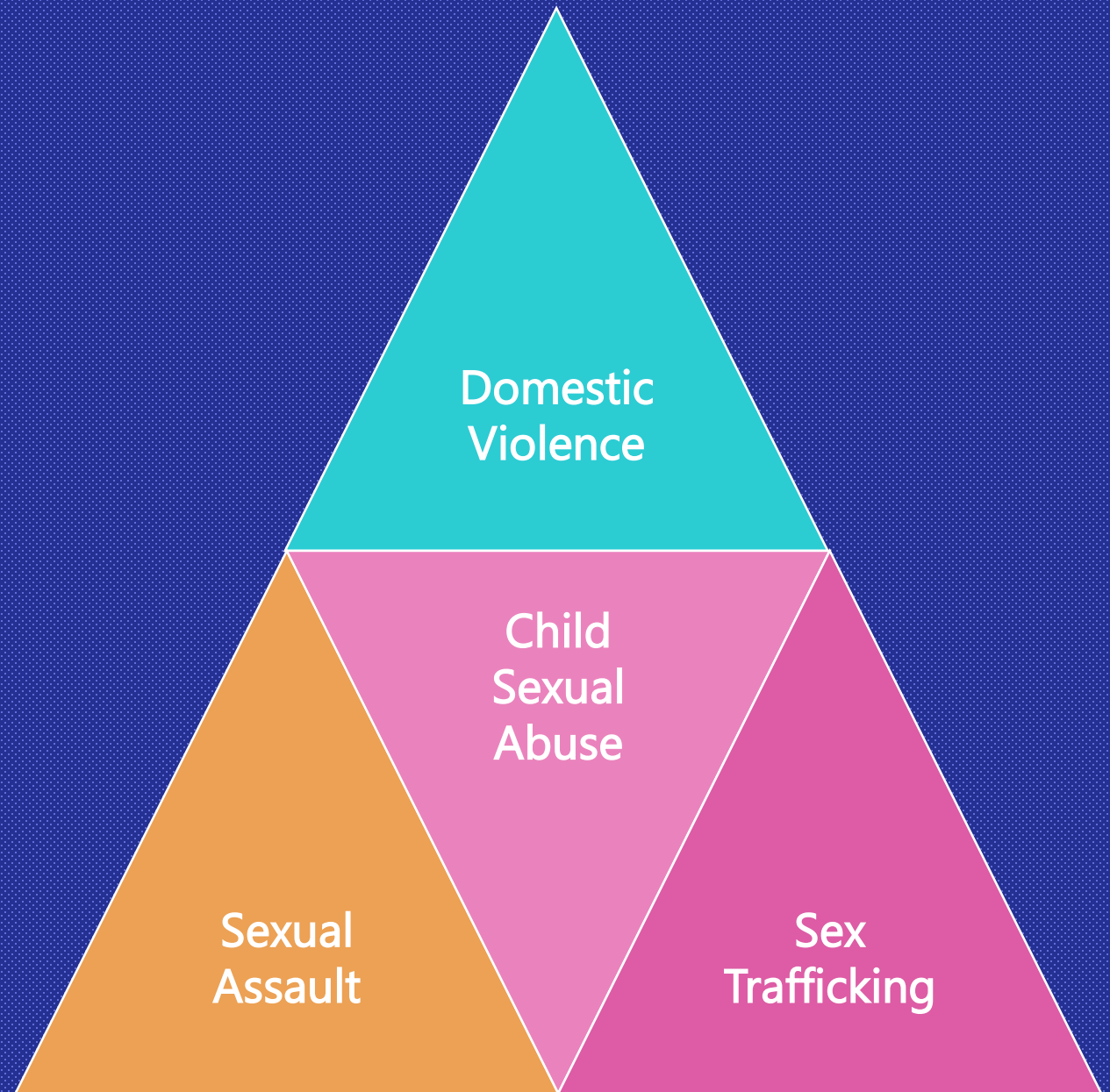
"If it's a new girl trying to get on my team, I have sex with them first because I know I can get in they head. Once I make love to them, or what they think is love, know what I'm saying, I really don't have no feelings behind it. I just be thinking about money... I didn't beat my girls. I might fight them sometimes, like slap them or something, but I didn't beat them where I just beat them for no reason or something. It wasn't like that. We'd just fight. It wasn't all harsh. I didn't do them bad or nothing like that. I spoiled them like they spoiled me.

–Jasmine Johnson, Pimp from Dallas

Primary Risk Factors for CSE/ST



The Intersections of Abuse





ACES: Adverse Childhood Experiences

1. Physical abuse
2. Sexual abuse
3. Emotional abuse
4. Physical neglect
5. Emotional neglect
6. Mother treated violently (witness/victim of domestic violence)
7. Household substance abuse (addiction)
8. Household mental illness
9. Parental separation or divorce
10. Incarcerated household member

The ACE (Adverse Childhood Experience) Study

Conducted by the US Center for Disease Control & Kaiser Permanente

17,000 PARTICIPANTS SURVEYED

Female Participants:

13% emotional abuse
27% physical abuse
24.7% sexual abuse

Male Participants:

7.6% emotional abuse
29.9% physical abuse
16% sexual abuse



The ACE Study Findings

suggest that certain experiences are major risk factors for the leading causes of illness and death as well as poor quality of life in the United States.

It is critical to understand how some of the worst health and social problems in our nation can arise as a consequence of adverse childhood experiences.

Realizing these connections is likely to improve efforts towards prevention and recovery.



Multiple Factors, 1 Person

Social Toxicity

HOMOPHOBIA

VIOLENCE

SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

Social factors that poison youth's well being and healthy development

DISRUPTED FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

HEALTH THREATS

SEXISM

RACISM

POVERTY

LACK OF BENEVOLENT ADULT AUTHORITY

Key Takeaways

- Remember that a young person's chronological age is not an indicator for rational decision making
- Consider the impact of trauma on the brain + its impact on a young person
- Co-occurring risk factors are often present that make a youth vulnerable to sex traffickers and the commercial sex industry
- “Choice” is tied up in age and perceived cognitive development—think of informed consent

Questions?

Thank you!

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