

Needs Assessment of  
**Domestic Child Sex Trafficking**  
in Santa Barbara County

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The Santa Barbara County District Attorney's Office is grateful for the financial support of the Santa Barbara Foundation and the tireless work and dedication of Kary O'Brien and Kyli Larson, who brought to fruition this Needs Assessment on Domestic Child Sex Trafficking.

In August 2013, Santa Barbara County District Attorney Joyce Dudley initiated the Human Trafficking Task Force, assembling local and federal agencies and faith-based representatives across the tri-counties to assess the issue locally. The Task Force has provided a venue for developing effective strategies to identify and investigate human trafficking cases given existing resources, and provided collaborative services to survivors.

The Needs Assessment is a road map for the Santa Barbara County District Attorney's Office and Human Trafficking Task Force, offering specific information on the scope of domestic child sex trafficking locally, needs of survivors, and gaps in services.

The Task Force is grateful for this report and is committed to using the Needs Assessment findings to guide future efforts to increase efficiency and effectiveness in addressing domestic child sex trafficking in Santa Barbara County.



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We would like to recognize all those who took time to participate in this assessment. Your efforts addressing complex social issues are far too often overlooked. Thank you to the agencies, organizations, and individuals who allowed us to gain wisdom from your expertise in an effort to illuminate this issue and provide impetus for an informed response. Despite the vast array of challenges faced in responding to children who are survivors of domestic child sex trafficking, there are efforts being made locally. We recognize these efforts are due to compassionate individuals who work tirelessly towards change.

We recognize with appreciation the District Attorney's Office, particularly Joyce Dudley, Mag Nicola, and Megan Riker-Rheinschild, who have initiated addressing the issue of domestic child sex trafficking locally. Thank you to the Santa Barbara Foundation for funding this project, especially to Al Rodriguez, Vice President, Community Investments, for offering your support of this assessment and insight into its purpose.

We would also like to offer our wholehearted and humble thanks to the individuals in our county who go above and beyond their requirements to address, counteract, and re-construct the crime of domestic child sex trafficking. You are true champions in our community and without you, we would have far less to be encouraged about.

We recognize the many men and women working against this pervasive issue across the state, nation, and globe. Thank you for your many acts of integrity that others, including us, may never see.

Finally, we dedicate this report to the countless survivors of domestic child sex trafficking, in our community and around the world. We hold many, many hopes for you and have been unfathomably changed by your stories.

With grateful hearts,

Kathryn O'Brien and Kyli Larson

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## Executive Summary

Domestic Child Sex Trafficking (DCST) is a violent form of modern-day slavery. Although current estimates of the prevalence of DCST in the United States are not available, figures from 2011 suggest that 100,000 – 300,000 domestic children are at-risk of being sexually trafficked in the United States.<sup>1</sup> It is important to recognize these figures underrepresent the number of children at-risk for DCST. Some experts purport that a more accurate figure would be close to one million.<sup>2</sup> As a matter of utmost concern, research suggests that after children are first trafficked, they are expected to live only seven more years on average, with homicide and AIDS being the lead causes of death.<sup>3</sup> For example, if a child is first trafficked at age ten, she/he is only expected to live until age 17 on average.

This Needs Assessment of Domestic Child Sex Trafficking in Santa Barbara County seeks to understand:

- (1) Prevalence of Child Survivors<sup>a</sup> of Domestic Sex Trafficking in Santa Barbara County,
- (2) Protocols<sup>b</sup> for Domestic Child Sex Trafficking in Santa Barbara County,
- (3) Needs of Child Survivors of Domestic Sex Trafficking in Santa Barbara County, and
- (4) Available Services (and Gaps in Services) for Child Survivors of Domestic Sex Trafficking in Santa Barbara County.

Twenty-two representatives, of 13 agencies and organizations, from five key sectors in Santa Barbara County, participated in this Needs Assessment. Key sectors included:

- (1) Social Service Providers (38% of participants),
- (2) Law Enforcement (23% of participants),
- (3) District Attorney's Office (18% of participants),
- (4) Juvenile Probation (18% of participants), and
- (5) Child Welfare Services (5% of participants).

Participants were administered the *Needs Assessment of Domestic Child Sex Trafficking in Santa Barbara County* survey during semi-structured interviews, lasting a minimum of 90 minutes and a maximum of four hours. In addition to interview data, efforts to gather more quantitative data were attempted through the *Statistics on Domestic Child Sex Trafficking in Santa Barbara County* survey. Lastly, challenges with obtaining accurate information on the prevalence of DCST led us to conduct Internet research on advertisements for “escort” services in Santa Barbara County. Data was carefully analyzed and key findings of this Needs Assessment of DCST in Santa Barbara County are highlighted below.

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<sup>a</sup> In this Needs Assessment report, any child that endured domestic sex trafficking is referred to as a survivor.

<sup>b</sup> Protocols are the “accepted or established code of procedures or behavior within any group, organization, or situation” (as defined by Oxford Dictionary).

## Key Findings

### Prevalence of Child Survivors of Domestic Sex Trafficking in Santa Barbara County

1. **Significant limitations in current systems affect the ability to provide an accurate understanding of the prevalence of child survivors of domestic sex trafficking in Santa Barbara County.** In particular, providing accurate and complete prevalence data is not possible due to the following: (a) the absence of a county-wide tracking system of DCST, (b) lack of any screening tools or assessment instruments of DCST employed by agencies and organizations in contact with potential DCST survivors, (c) lack of disclosure and self-identification by child survivors of domestic sex trafficking, and (d) current reactive approach to DCST in Santa Barbara County.
2. **Children in Santa Barbara County are survivors of domestic sex trafficking.** Despite limitations with prevalence data, interview participants identified **45 confirmed, unduplicated child survivors of domestic sex trafficking in Santa Barbara County between 2012 and 2014, 80 suspected (unconfirmed) child survivors of domestic sex trafficking, and 461 children extremely vulnerable for domestic sex trafficking.**
3. **Almost all of the confirmed child survivors of domestic sex trafficking (96%) identified in Santa Barbara County are residents of Santa Barbara County.** 43 out of 45 confirmed child survivors of domestic sex trafficking were residents of Santa Barbara County.
4. **Confirmed child survivors of domestic sex trafficking in Santa Barbara County were first identified by Mental Health staff at Juvenile Hall (44%), Law Enforcement (42%) and Social Service Providers (13%).** Child survivors of domestic sex trafficking may come into contact with many different agencies and organizations in Santa Barbara County. At present, most child survivors were identified through their placement and receipt of services at Juvenile Hall.
5. **There is a demand for “escort” services in Santa Barbara County that contributes to domestic child sex trafficking.** In a two-week period, a total of 675 advertisements for “escort” services were placed in Santa Barbara and Santa Maria on Backpage.com. Almost half of the advertisements (41%) were placed for “escorts” aged 18 – 21 years. According to interview participants and child sex trafficking survivors, girls under the age of 18 are advertised as “escorts” on Backpage. A total of 111 unduplicated advertisements for “escorts” with listed ages between 18 – 21 years were identified during the two-week study period. Given the known connection



between advertisement on Backpage and DCST, information from the two-week Backpage study suggests an **average of eight children per day may be sexually trafficked in Santa Barbara County via Backpage alone.**

### **Protocols for DCST in Santa Barbara County**

1. **There are no protocols for domestic child sex trafficking in Santa Barbara County.** At the time of this assessment, there is no county-wide protocol or agency-specific protocols for DCST. In particular, none of the 22 participants interviewed reported any “formal” agency protocols for child survivors of domestic sex trafficking. The lack of identification of protocols by interview participants is not because these participants may be unaware of protocols, as each individual interviewed was specifically chosen by their agency because of their knowledge of DCST in Santa Barbara County. A critical need is for each agency to develop protocols to address DCST.

### **Needs of Child Survivors of Domestic Sex Trafficking in Santa Barbara County**

1. **The five most frequently cited needs of child survivors of domestic sex trafficking in Santa Barbara County are:**
  - (1) **Trauma-informed Care and Therapy (73%)**
  - (2) **Housing (68%)**
  - (3) **Collaboration Between Agencies (64%)**
  - (4) **Designated Staff to Ensure Consistency of Care (55%)**
  - (5) **Drug and Alcohol Treatment Services (50%)**

### **Available Services (Gaps in Services) for Child Survivors of Domestic Sex Trafficking in Santa Barbara County**

1. **Housing options – emergency, transitional, and permanent – for child survivors of domestic sex trafficking are severely limited in Santa Barbara County.** Although housing is a critical need for child survivors of domestic sex trafficking, there are no specific emergency, transitional, or permanent housing options available in Santa Barbara County for child survivors of domestic sex trafficking.
2. **There is only one agency in Santa Barbara County that has designated staff focused on providing consistent care and services to child survivors of domestic sex trafficking.** The Santa Barbara County’s District Attorney’s Office Victim Witness Assistance Program is the only agency in Santa Barbara County that provides one designated Victim Advocate specifically for child survivors of domestic sex trafficking.

3. ***Drug and Alcohol Treatment Services should be included in the treatment plans for child survivors of domestic sex trafficking in Santa Barbara County.*** For child survivors of domestic sex trafficking where information about drug and alcohol use was available, each child survivor was reported to have significant issues with drugs and/or alcohol. Mental Health staff working with child survivors in Juvenile Hall highlighted the need for drug and alcohol treatment services. At present, no drug and alcohol treatment services are offered to children in Juvenile Hall.

## Recommendations

1. ***A Survivor-Centered, Trauma-Informed approach to DCST is essential for Santa Barbara County's efforts to address the issue of DCST.*** Child survivors of domestic sex trafficking have experienced significant trauma (often repeated trauma for extensive periods of time throughout their childhood). For Santa Barbara County to be effective in supporting survivors of DCST, it is imperative that we adopt a systematic focus on the needs and concerns of child survivors to ensure the compassionate and sensitive delivery of services in a nonjudgmental manner.
2. ***Resources to adequately fund Santa Barbara County's Human Trafficking Task Force are critical to increase Santa Barbara County's effectiveness to address the issue of DCST.*** In particular, appropriate staffing resources need to be allocated for the leadership of the Human Trafficking Task Force. One promising approach for local efforts is to employ co-leaders, one representing Victim Services and one representing Law Enforcement.
3. ***Santa Barbara County's Human Trafficking Task Force would benefit from reorganization to include a "core" group of members and designated resources to fund "core" members.*** "Core" group of Task Force members should include: Law Enforcement Supervisor, Law Enforcement member from each jurisdiction, Victim Advocates for both North and South County with flexible work hours, specified counselor from both North County and South County Rape Crisis Centers, one specified Social Worker from Child Welfare Services, one specified Juvenile Probation Officer, one specified Medical Health Care Provider, one specified Prosecutor, one Juvenile Court Judge, and one District Attorney Criminal Investigator.
4. ***Santa Barbara County's Human Trafficking Task Force should engage in proactive efforts with the 45 confirmed child survivors and 80 suspected survivors of domestic sex trafficking identified by participants in this Report.*** Specific proactive identification and recovery operations should initially focus on the 45 confirmed child survivors and the 80 suspected (unconfirmed) child survivors of domestic sex trafficking in Santa Barbara County identified in this report. Efforts to reestablish relationships (or establish, if needed) with each of these 125 known and suspected child survivors of domestic sex trafficking is critical to understand whether any of these children are still being sexually exploited. Further, such investigations will

significantly enhance our current understanding of the issue of DCST in Santa Barbara County and further delineate best practices for addressing this issue in our community.

5. ***A Human Trafficking Data Management System needs to be established in Santa Barbara County.*** For our county to be effective in our efforts to address DCST, it is essential that we establish a Human Trafficking database for tracking child survivors of domestic sex trafficking. This will require that all agencies and organizations involved with survivors of DCST include this specific category in their current database systems.
6. ***Human Trafficking Screening and Assessment Instruments are needed for all agencies and organizations that may interact with child survivors of domestic sex trafficking and/or those vulnerable for DCST.***
7. ***Santa Barbara County's effectiveness in addressing DCST is dependent on countywide, multi-agency collaboration.*** Each agency and organization must commit to a Survivor-Centered, Trauma-Informed approach for working with survivors and with one another. Agreements and MOU's between agencies and organizations must be established to facilitate communication and information sharing about known and suspected survivors and children highly vulnerable for DCST.
8. ***Identified funding priorities for survivors of DCST are: (a) Trauma-informed Care and Therapy, (b) Housing Placements, (c) Designated Staff, and (d) Drug/Alcohol Treatment Services.***

*“Child sex trafficking is a silent but pervasive problem in all communities across our nation. The survivors of human trafficking suffer long-lasting psychological and physical violence at the hands of their traffickers.”*

*~Joyce Dudley, Santa Barbara County District Attorney*

## Introduction

In Santa Barbara County, there is a growing awareness of the issue of domestic child sex trafficking (DCST). Many Santa Barbara County District Attorney’s Office personnel, Santa Barbara County Law Enforcement officers, Santa Barbara County Juvenile Probation staff, Santa Barbara County Child Welfare Services staff, and Social Service Providers are increasingly aware of the prevalence of child survivors of domestic sex trafficking among current and past children served. According to an FBI Victim Specialist for Los Angeles and Los Angeles Law Enforcement personnel, the Central Coast is a hub for sex trafficking. In response to this alarming information, in 2013, the Santa Barbara County District Attorney’s Office formed a Human Trafficking Task Force. The Task Force consists of more than 70 members who represent law enforcement agencies, the District Attorney’s Office, Child Welfare Services, Juvenile Probation, Alcohol, Drug and Mental Health Services, nonprofit organizations and faith-based communities.

Specific aims of Santa Barbara County Human Trafficking Task Force are to assess the scope of the problem locally, offer access to training opportunities, develop protocols and improve law enforcement and survivor service response. Towards these goals and made possible by a grant through the Santa Barbara Foundation, this Needs Assessment of DCST in Santa Barbara County was conducted to generate needed information to help develop more efficient and effective support and treatment services for child survivors of domestic sex trafficking. In particular, the Needs Assessment of DCST in Santa Barbara County was designed to answer the following questions:

- What is the **prevalence** of child survivors of domestic sex trafficking in Santa Barbara County?
- What are the **protocols** for DCST in Santa Barbara County?
- What are the specific **needs** of child survivors of domestic sex trafficking in Santa Barbara County?
- What are the **available services (and gaps in services)** for child survivors of domestic sex trafficking in Santa Barbara County?

The following is a report of the findings from the Needs Assessment of DCST in Santa Barbara County. This report is organized into five main sections:

- (1) Introduction
- (2) Background and Understanding
- (3) Methodology
- (4) Results
- (5) Recommendations

## Background and Understanding

### Human Trafficking

**Human Trafficking:** *“The recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for the purpose of a commercial sex act, in which the commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such act has not attained 18 years of age; and the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery.”<sup>4</sup>*

Human trafficking is a form of modern-day slavery. Current estimates indicate 30 million people throughout the world are survivors of human trafficking.<sup>5</sup> Survivors of human trafficking are adults and children, women and men. Trafficking includes both labor and sexual exploitation, although they are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Research indicates human trafficking is the second largest growing criminal industry in the world, surpassed only by the international drug trade.<sup>6</sup> Human trafficking is purported to be an annual \$150 billion industry worldwide.<sup>7</sup>

### Human Trafficking in the United States and California

Human trafficking is often thought to be a non-issue in the United States. However, it is imperative to recognize that both labor and sex trafficking are pervasive within the U.S., including the state of California. According to the 2012 California Attorney General’s State of Human Trafficking in California Report, between January 2008 and June 2010, 42 federally funded United States Human Trafficking Task Forces investigated 2,515 suspected incidents of human trafficking.<sup>8</sup> Eight out of ten incidents were classified as sex trafficking cases, with 83% of survivors identified as U.S. citizens. Moreover, more than 1,000 of the investigations included allegations of child sex trafficking.

California has been identified as one of the nation’s top four destination states for human trafficking.<sup>9</sup> Between 2010-2012 in California, 1,277 survivors of human trafficking were identified. 2,552 investigations were initiated, and 1,798 individuals arrested.<sup>10</sup> Of the survivors involved in these cases, 56% were survivors of sex trafficking. Los Angeles, San Francisco, and San Diego have been identified as three of the top cities for child sex trafficking in the United States.<sup>11</sup> (For more information regarding sex trafficking in California, please see Appendix A.)

### Sex Trafficking in Santa Barbara County

Although a common misconception is that sex trafficking only occurs in major cities, it is important to understand the crime of trafficking is rampant everywhere, even in Santa Barbara County. According to Santa Barbara County’s District Attorney’s Office, “Our central coast has been identified as a natural transit corridor for trafficking activity between major metropolitan areas to the south and north. Santa Barbara County, a tourist attraction with conference

venues, a transitory population, and migrant labor makes it vulnerable to trafficking activity as well.”<sup>12</sup> According to Megan Rheinschild, Victim Witness Assistance Program Director, “Recent investigations and victim testimony have revealed that Santa Barbara County is a destination which offers relative anonymity and ready access to a pool of purchasers who come from a wide range of socioeconomic backgrounds.” Moreover, according to Orange County expert Craig Friesen, “If you have a hotel or motel in your community, then you have a [sex] trafficking problem.”

As a preliminary method of understanding the prevalence of sex trafficking in Santa Barbara County, a media search was conducted to identify potential sex trafficking cases in Santa Barbara County. In particular, between 2006-2014, four specific cases of domestic child sex trafficking were identified. (For more information about the media search conducted please see Appendix B. For more information about traffickers and sex-purchasers please refer to Appendix C. For more information about the means and methods used by traffickers, please see Appendix D.)

## Domestic Child Sex Trafficking (DCST)

*“There is no such thing as a child prostitute. A child prostitute does not exist.”*

*~ Lieutenant Andre Dawson, Los Angeles Police Department*

**Sex Trafficking:** *“the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for the purpose of a commercial sex act.” “Severe form of trafficking in persons” includes “sex trafficking in which a commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such act has not attained 18 years of age.”<sup>13</sup>*

Domestic child sex trafficking (commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC), domestic minor sex trafficking (DMST), juvenile sex trafficking (JuST), etc.) is a violent form of child abuse and is pervasive throughout the United States. Estimates from 2011 suggest that 100,000-300,000 American children are at-risk of being sexually trafficked in the United States.<sup>14</sup> Some experts purport that a more accurate figure of DCST is close to one million.<sup>15</sup> Although more recent, accurate information on the prevalence of DCST is needed, it is clear that a significant number of American children are sexually trafficked in the United States. Moreover, research suggests that after children are first trafficked, they are expected to live only seven more years on average, with homicide and AIDS being the lead causes of death.<sup>16</sup> For example, if a child is first trafficked at age ten, she/he is now only expected to live until age 17 on average.

According to the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) passed by Congress in 2000 and reauthorized in 2003, 2005, 2008, and 2013, **any child under the age of 18 who engages in commercial sex is a victim a sex trafficking.** A commercial sex act is defined by the TVPA as “the giving or receiving of anything of value (money, drugs, shelter, food, clothes, etc.) to any person in exchange for a sex act.”<sup>17</sup> Further specified in the TVPA, if a child is sexually trafficked, prosecution does not have to prove that the trafficker induced that child with force, fraud, or coercion. It is critical to recognize this; **there is no need to prove force, fraud, or coercion if a child is under the age of 18.**

It is also important to clarify that **sex trafficking — adult and child — does not need to involve movement or transportation**. For example, a child may be sexually trafficked by a family member, by a gang member within city limits, or out of a hotel/motel within walking distance of a child's home. It is important to address this common misconception, particularly in the process of identifying and recovering child survivors of domestic sex trafficking.

## Child Survivors of Domestic Sex Trafficking

Although research on child survivors of domestic sex trafficking is limited, available information does provide some understanding of specific factors shown to increase a child's vulnerability to domestic sex trafficking. Two broad factors associated with DCST are age and gender. According to Shared Hope International, the primary factor of vulnerability for DCST is the child's age.<sup>18</sup> On average, children are first sexually trafficked between the ages of 12 and 14. However, child survivors of domestic sex trafficking are becoming increasingly younger, with survivors as young as eight years old being identified. Significant gender differences in the prevalence of DCST have been shown, with girls representing the majority of identified DCST survivors in the United States.<sup>c</sup>

In addition to age and gender, five factors shown to be common among child survivors of domestic sex trafficking are: (1) history of abuse and/or neglect, (2) involvement with the foster care system, (3) history of running away, (4) homelessness, and (5) involvement in the juvenile justice system.

**1. History of Abuse and/or Neglect:** For most child survivors of domestic sex trafficking, there is generally a history of abuse and/or neglect.<sup>19</sup> Although estimates vary, approximately 60 – 100% of survivors of DCST have been abused (physically, sexually, emotionally) and neglected.<sup>20</sup> According to the Orange County Human Trafficking Task Force, 100% of the children identified in their sex trafficking investigations had a prior history of sexual abuse. In Alameda County, 68% had current or prior history with Child Welfare Services for investigations of alleged abuse and neglect.

**2. Involvement with Foster Care:** Foster care is a system to care for children who are (a) removed from their parents/guardians, or (b) surrendered to state by their parents. Children may be placed with non-relative foster families, relatives, or group homes and institutions in exchange for a stipend. Foster care children are targeted by traffickers because of their need for love, affirmation, and protection. In 2012, studies estimate that between 50 and 80 percent of commercially sexually exploited children (CSEC) in California are or were formally involved in the Child Welfare system; in Los Angeles County's STARS Court, 58 of 72 girls sexually trafficked in 2012 (81%) were foster care kids.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>c</sup> Research indicates that boys who are survivors of DCST often go unidentified, and may be sexually trafficked more frequently than current estimates suggest.

**3. History of Running Away:** Children who run away are especially vulnerable to sex traffickers. Some reports estimate that one in three children who run away will be approached or recruited by a trafficker within 48 hours.<sup>22</sup> According to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, one in six runaways in 2014 were likely sexually trafficked. This represents an increase from one in seven in 2013. Of these potential sex trafficking survivors, 68% were in the care of Social Services or foster care when they ran away.<sup>23</sup>

**4. Homelessness:** Children who are homeless and away from a safe living situation for any period of time are vulnerable for domestic sex trafficking. In one study, 30% of shelter youth and 70% of street youth were reported as survivors of commercial sexual exploitation. Because they may be desperate to have their daily needs met, youth who are homeless may engage or be coerced into the commercial sex industry for “survival sex”.

**5. Involvement in the Juvenile Justice System:** Many child survivors of domestic sex trafficking have been involved with the juvenile justice system. In Alameda County, 40% of child survivors of domestic sex trafficking were currently or previously involved with the juvenile justice system. In a 2007 study in Las Vegas, 75% of child survivors of domestic sex trafficking had been arrested.<sup>24</sup>

Although studies of survivors of DCST are sparse, available information does highlight that **child survivors of domestic sex trafficking are among the most vulnerable children in our community.**



## Methods

This section describes the methods used to conduct this Needs Assessment of DCST in Santa Barbara County.

### Participants

**Selection Criteria:** The Victim Witness Assistance Program Director, who chairs the Santa Barbara County Human Trafficking Task Force, identified specific individuals from each sector for participation in this Needs Assessment. Of primary importance for selection of participation in Needs Assessment interviews was: (1) at least one representative from each of the key sectors identified, (2) knowledge and experience with child survivors of domestic sex trafficking, and (3) appropriate representation from both North and South County (i.e., Carpinteria, Lompoc, Orcutt, Santa Barbara, and Santa Maria).

**Participation Rate:** Twenty-one of the 23 individuals initially contacted participated in the Needs Assessment interviews, a participation rate of 95%. The initial individual identified for participation from the Santa Maria Police Department was unable to participate. A second representative from the Santa Maria Police Department was then identified to participate in the Needs Assessment interview, resulting in a total of twenty-two interview participants. Given the limited timeframe for completing this interview and the representative's limited availability for participation, a phone interview was conducted.<sup>d</sup>

**Description of Participants:** Twenty-two representatives, from 13 agencies and organizations, from five key sectors in Santa Barbara County were interviewed.

1. *Social Service Providers (36%, 8 participants)*
  - Child Abuse Listening and Mediation (CALM) (n = 2)
  - Fighting Back Santa Maria Valley (n = 1)
  - North County Rape Crisis and Child Protection Center (n = 1)
  - Santa Barbara County Alcohol, Drug and Mental Health Services/  
Juvenile Justice Mental Health Services (n = 1)
  - Santa Barbara Rape Crisis (n = 1)
  - YMCA, Noah's Anchorage (n = 2)
2. *Law Enforcement (23%, 5 participants)*
  - Lompoc Police Department (n = 1)
  - Santa Barbara Police Department (n = 1)
  - Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Department (n = 2)
  - Santa Maria Police Department (n = 1)
3. *District Attorney's Office and Victim Witness (18%, 4 participants)*
  - Prosecutor (n = 1)
  - Criminal Investigator (n = 1)
  - Victim Witness Assistance Program (n = 2)

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<sup>d</sup> Due to time constraints of data collection period, after initial phone call, no follow-up attempts were made by researchers to interview a representative from the Public Defender's office.

4. *Juvenile Probation (18%, 4 participants)*
  - Field Supervision (n = 1)
  - Juvenile Hall (n = 2)
  - Pediatrician, Juvenile Hall (n = 1)
5. *Child Welfare Services (5%, 1 participant)*
  - Child Welfare Supervisor

Three additional sectors of Santa Barbara County also identified for participation in Need Assessment interviews were: (1) Juvenile Court Judges, (2) Public Defender, and (3) School Personnel. However, due to time constraints of the data collection period and need to prioritize interview participants based on knowledge and experience with child survivors of domestic sex trafficking, it was not possible to interview representatives from these specific sectors.

## Measures

### **Needs Assessment of DCST in Santa Barbara County**

The Data and Evaluation Committee of the Santa Barbara County Human Trafficking Task Force developed a Needs Assessment survey, *Needs Assessment of Domestic Child Sex Trafficking in Santa Barbara County*, for specific use in this study. Committee members conducted a literature search to identify existing examples of Needs Assessments of Sex Trafficking. Two specific Assessments of particular assistance were *Shared Hope International's Rapid Assessment Methodology and Field Interview Tool: Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking*<sup>25</sup> in the United States and the *Needs Assessment for Service Providers and Trafficking Survivors* prepared by Caliber Associates, Inc. for the U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice.<sup>26</sup>

The *Needs Assessment of Domestic Child Sex Trafficking in Santa Barbara* included specific items to gather detailed information about participants' experiences with child survivors of domestic sex trafficking in Santa Barbara County. Participants were asked to share specific demographic and background characteristics, when available. Specific demographic and background information included: (1) age, (2) gender, (3) race/ethnicity, (4) familial household, (5) foster care placement, (6) primary residence, (7) history of abuse and neglect, (8) mental health issues, (9) alcohol and drug use, (10) involvement with juvenile justice system, (11) truancy, (12) history of running away, (13) family history of criminal involvement, (14) family history of mental health issues, and (15) family history of alcohol and drug use.

Prior to use in this study, the *Needs Assessment of Domestic Child Sex Trafficking in Santa Barbara County* survey underwent several revisions to ensure its utility in addressing primary questions of this Needs Assessment. Due to the distinct nature of each of the five sectors of agencies and organizations identified for participation in this Needs Assessment, the set list of items on the *Needs Assessment of Domestic Child Sex Trafficking in Santa Barbara County* tool were slightly modified, where appropriate. The *Needs Assessment of Domestic Child Sex Trafficking in Santa Barbara County* tool was pilot-tested to further examine its effectiveness and the tool was further revised using this information.

The *Needs Assessment of Domestic Child Sex Trafficking in Santa Barbara County* was administered in a semi-structured interview format. Semi-structured interviews afford the opportunity to gather set information from participants as well as offer freedom to both the

participant and the interviewer to share and gather additional information not specifically included in the set interview questions. This format was selected given the exploratory nature of this Needs Assessment.

Semi-structured interviews were designed to be completed within a 90-minute timeframe, either during face-to-face interviews or via Skype interviews. However, after the completion of several interviews, the importance of conducting face-to-face interviews was clearly evident and all interviews were completed in this manner, with the exception of one interview with the representative from the Santa Maria Police Department.<sup>e</sup> Although the duration of most interviews was within the 90-minute timeframe, several interviews did exceed this amount and we were thankful for the additional time offered to us by those specific participants.

### **Statistical Data of Prevalence of DCST**

The Data and Evaluation Committee of the Santa Barbara County Human Trafficking Task Force developed a survey, *Statistics on Domestic Child Sex Trafficking in Santa Barbara County*, to gather specific statistical data about prevalence of DCST and additional statistical data related to DCST (i.e., number of children under 18 years that have run away in past 5 years, by gender and by age). The survey was based on Shared Hope International's survey and adapted for use in this Needs Assessment. Given the distinct nature of each of the five sectors of agencies and organizations identified for participation in this Needs Assessment, the set list of items on the *Needs Assessment of Domestic Child Sex Trafficking in Santa Barbara County* tool were slightly modified, where appropriate.

### **Internet Research: "Backpage Study"**

The lack of accurate information on prevalence of DCST led us to conduct internet research on advertisements for escort services in Santa Barbara County. One specific internet site known to advertise child survivors of sex trafficking is Backpage. Advertisements for specific geographic areas are posted under the category "escort services." Given the use of Backpage to advertise child survivors of sex trafficking, a "Backpage Study" was conducted to provide a greater understanding of the frequency of advertisements of "escort services" in Santa Barbara County on this one internet site.

A *Backpage Assessment* measure was created for use in this Needs Assessment. The *Backpage Assessment* included specific items about total number of advertisements placed for "escort services" in Santa Barbara and Santa Maria and total number of advertisements placed for "escort services" in Santa Barbara and Santa Maria where age of "escort" advertised was between 18 – 21 years. Specific items included: number of past advertisements for phone number used in current advertisement (e.g., how many prior advertisements for "escort" services were placed using this same phone number) and geographic location of prior advertisements placed for phone number used in current advertisements (e.g., where were prior advertisements for "escort" services placed).

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<sup>e</sup> Given the limited timeframe for completing this interview and the representative's limited availability for participation, a phone interview was conducted.

## Procedures

The Victim Witness Assistance Program Director emailed selected participants to inform them about the Needs Assessment and that a researcher would be contacting them to request their participation and schedule an interview. After the Victim Witness Assistance Program Director indicated she emailed the identified participants, researchers sent a follow-up email to selected interview participants to further describe Needs Assessment, request their participation, and schedule the interview. Given the short timeframe to complete Needs Assessment interviews (November to December, 2014), some interview participants were also contacted via telephone to facilitate requests for participation and schedule interviews.

Location of interviews was selected by interview participants based on need for privacy and quiet surroundings to facilitate quality of recordings of interviews. Prior to start of interview, researcher reviewed the purpose of the Needs Assessment and requested permission for the interview to be digitally recorded to maximize the integrity of the data gathered for subsequent data analysis. All but one participant agreed to have interviews recorded. In this one case, detailed notes were taken during the interview to ensure the integrity of the data.

Prior to the start of the interview, participants were given a copy of the *Statistics on Domestic Child Sex Trafficking in Santa Barbara County* survey. The researcher explained the purpose of this survey for gathering available statistical data on domestic child sex trafficking. Most interview participants shared it would not be possible to provide this information as statistics on domestic child sex trafficking were not available. However, where available, participants referred researchers to a data analyst in their agency or organization to provide some of the requested statistical data or other relevant data.

For a two week period, between March 1, 2015 and March 14, 2015, the backpage site was examined for (1) total number of advertisements for Santa Barbara and Santa Maria and (2) total number of advertisements where listed age was between 18 – 21 years. For all advertisements where listed age was between 18 – 21 years, additional information about the “escort” being advertised was gathered to gain a greater understanding of potential child survivors of sex trafficking. In particular, an internet search of the phone number and images used in the advertisement were conducted to gain information about the past advertisement history associated with that specific phone number and/or image. Several web sites, such as Exotic Post Review.xxx, escort phone search.com, and My BodyRubList.com, provide information about the past advertisement history for phone numbers used in advertisements for “escort services.” All suspicious advertisements indicative of child sex trafficking were reported to local law enforcement.

## Data Analysis

Interviews provided 1,875 minutes/31.25 hours of digital recordings. Digital recordings were examined and organized into sections related to the primary Needs Assessment questions. In particular, the sections were: (1) prevalence, (2) protocol, (3) needs of child survivors of domestic sex trafficking, (4) available services and gaps in services for child survivors of sex trafficking and (5) recommendations for addressing domestic child sex in Santa Barbara County.

## Results

Findings presented in this section are based on: (1) *Needs Assessment of Domestic Child Sex Trafficking in Santa Barbara County* interview data, (2) *Statistics of Domestic Child Sex Trafficking in Santa Barbara County* statistical data, and (3) “Backpage study” data.

### **Prevalence of Child Survivors of Domestic Sex Trafficking in Santa Barbara County**

Trying to understand the prevalence of child sex trafficking in Santa Barbara County is incredibly challenging for a myriad of reasons. Think of working on a 5,000-piece puzzle without any corner or flat-edge pieces and an *a priori* recognition that many pieces are missing. Best efforts were made to “piece” together available information to provide as great an understanding as possible of prevalence of DCST in Santa Barbara County. However, it is important to discuss many of the limitations that impact the completeness and accuracy of the prevalence data presented in this section.

#### **Limitations of Accuracy and Completeness of Prevalence Data**

**1. There is no county-wide tracking system of child survivors of domestic sex trafficking in Santa Barbara County and not one agency or organization is responsible for identifying and monitoring child survivors of domestic sex trafficking in Santa Barbara County.** Without such tracking systems and responsibility, available information on prevalence of child survivors of sex trafficking is extremely limited. This significantly impacts the accuracy of information and its usefulness in understanding the prevalence of this heinous issue in our community. Despite the absence of formal tracking systems of child survivors of domestic sex trafficking, thanks to the dedication and motivation of one Mental Health Supervisor assigned to Juvenile Hall, there is an informal list of known or suspected survivors of domestic child sex trafficking among children placed in Juvenile Hall. This informal list was started in 2013. It is this informal list and specific survivor information shared by participants during interviews that forms the basis of our understanding of the prevalence of DCST in Santa Barbara County.

**2. There are no screening tools or assessment instruments of Domestic Child Sex Trafficking being used in Santa Barbara County.** At the time this Needs Assessment was conducted, none of the agencies and organizations interviewed had a screening tool or assessment instrument to identify child survivors of domestic sex trafficking. Without the use of screening tools and assessments of DCST, interview participants indicated that numerous survivors of DCST are unidentified or misidentified in Santa Barbara County. For example, a social worker may be called to investigate a report of molestation of a 13 year-old female by an adult male neighbor. Based on an investigation, a male neighbor is charged with molestation. Several months later, a different social worker is called to investigate a second

report of molestation of the same 13 year-old female by a different adult male neighbor. Similar to the outcome in the first situation, the investigation results in a male neighbor charged with molestation. Additional information reveals that mother of the child has two prior arrests for involvement in the commercial sex industry. Could this child be a child survivor of domestic sex trafficking? Without use of screening tools and assessments of DCST, the child in this hypothetical situation remained in the home and no investigation of possible child sex trafficking occurred. Another example may involve a 15-year old girl found during a drug raid at a known “meth den.” The 15 year-old girl is a known chronic runaway and has a history with Child Welfare Services and Juvenile Probation. Could this child be a survivor of domestic sex trafficking? Screening tools and assessment instruments are critical for the identification and recovery of child survivors of domestic sex trafficking.

**3. Lack of disclosure and self-identification by child survivors of domestic sex trafficking** are two additional challenges to identification and accuracy of prevalence information. Interview participants representing Law Enforcement, Juvenile Probation, Child Welfare Services, and Social Service Providers identified the issue of disclosure and self-identification as major challenges in accurately identifying child survivors of domestic sex trafficking and offering appropriate treatment services and placements.

Survivors of DCST are extremely vulnerable and subsequently, traffickers often become the most constant and stable presence in their lives. Stockholm Syndrome and “Traumatic Bonding” are common among many survivors of DCST. Child survivors of domestic sex trafficking often form incredibly intense bonds to their traffickers and have negative feelings about police or other authorities. Although negative feelings about police may be based on past history and experiences, traffickers often capitalize on this and further survivors’ dislike and distrust of law enforcement and other authorities, which in turn isolates survivors and their perceptions of alternative life choices. According to one Mental Health Clinician,

*“I’ve never seen teenage females keep something so private in my life. It tells me that this (their relationship with trafficker) is something they really feel they need as an outlet and a place to go to... They are looking for love, they’re looking for belonging, family. Girls regard their traffickers as a place of escape. If they disclose, they risk violence, loss of that situation, and provision of substances that they are most often addicted to. The complex intersection of childhood trauma, inconsistent family life, substance abuse and addiction, and relationships with traffickers make disclosure unlikely.”*

Self-identification by survivors of DCST is another challenge that impacts our understanding of prevalence of DCST in Santa Barbara County. According to interview responses, especially among those providing therapeutic services to survivors, some survivors of DCST do not recognize they are being victimized, or perceive themselves as survivors. Survivors may view “prostitution” as something that occurs on the streets, where money is exchanged for sexual services; that “child sex trafficking” is specific to young children in foreign countries; and/or the belief that “trafficking” must involve transportation. Due to these misconceptions, interview participants explained that some survivors being trafficked by “boyfriends” may not recognize the exploitation in their relationships (e.g., because they do

not see money exchanged for sexual favors, nor is there transportation to different cities or states to perform sexual favors). For some survivors, prior history of sexual abuse and lack of needed help may have resulted in distorted views of themselves and of sex that is perceived as normal in relationships and daily experiences. Further, some child survivors think they have “agreed” to engage in sexual behaviors and do not understand that any child under 18 years cannot consent to such behaviors.

**4. Current approach to DCST in Santa Barbara County is reactive rather than proactive.** With the exception of one survivor identified by the FBI working with local law enforcement, no confirmed child survivors of domestic sex trafficking in Santa Barbara County were identified through proactive investigations conducted by law enforcement agencies. Rather, most child survivors were identified after placement in Juvenile Hall by Mental Health staff or by Social Service Providers who provided therapeutic services to children. Interview respondents indicated that if the “green light” was given for them to focus on identifying child survivors of domestic sex trafficking, there would be a significant increase in numbers. For example, one Law Enforcement respondent indicated that proactive investigations would lead to the recovery of at least 20 child survivors in Santa Barbara County on any given day.

Although each challenge individually limits our understanding of the prevalence of DCST in Santa Barbara County, when combined the significance of the impact is even more substantial. As such, **the main finding from this Needs Assessment about prevalence of DCST in Santa Barbara County is not prevalence, rather that the current state of the systems limit anyone’s ability to answer questions of prevalence.**

Thus, it is incredibly important that the prevalence data in this report be viewed with extreme caution, with the understanding that the numbers provided underestimate the number of child survivors of domestic sex trafficking in Santa Barbara County. Each of the participants interviewed emphatically indicated this point when discussing prevalence.

## **Prevalence Findings: Interview Data**

### ***Confirmed Child Survivors of Domestic Sex Trafficking in Santa Barbara County***

Each interview participant provided information about personal experiences with confirmed child survivors of domestic sex trafficking. As seen in Table 1, **45 confirmed, unduplicated child survivors of domestic sex trafficking in Santa Barbara County between 2012 and 2014.** Interview responses revealed child survivors of domestic sex trafficking in our county were *first* identified by Mental Health staff at Juvenile Hall (44%, 20 survivors), Law Enforcement (42%, 19 survivors) and Social Service Providers (13%, six survivors).

Table I. Number of Confirmed Survivors of DCST Identified

<b>Agency</b>	<b>First Identified</b>
Lompoc Police Department	15
Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Office	2
Santa Barbara Police Department	1
Santa Maria Police Department	1
Santa Barbara County, Alcohol, Drug and Mental Health Services - Juvenile Justice Mental Health Staff	20
Santa Barbara County Probation, Juvenile Hall	0
Santa Barbara County District Attorney's Office	0
Santa Barbara County Child Welfare Services	0
Social Service Providers	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>45</b>

It should be noted that interview participants identified at least five adult female survivors of sex trafficking and five suspected cases of child survivors of sex trafficking from outside of the United States. Although each survivor warrants attention by our community, this Needs Assessment focused on domestic child sex trafficking, and these survivors are not included in prevalence findings.

*Demographic and Background Characteristics of Child Survivors of Domestic Sex Trafficking in Santa Barbara County*

In the absence of a county-wide or agency-specific tracking system for child survivors of domestic sex trafficking in Santa Barbara County, the available information on demographic and background characteristics of child survivors of domestic sex trafficking is extremely limited.<sup>f</sup> Although the gender of each child survivor of domestic sex trafficking was available, additional demographic and background information was only available for 15 of the confirmed child survivors of domestic sex trafficking identified by participants in this Needs Assessment. Moreover, even for the 15 child

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<sup>f</sup> It is important to note that significant efforts were expended to gather this specific information (e.g., numerous phone calls and emails to interview participants and relevant individuals). However, because no systematic database for child survivors of sex trafficking is available in Santa Barbara County or within individual agencies, respondents had to examine case files that did not always provide specified information. For some respondents, it was not possible to gather requested information with available time resources.



survivors where additional information was provided, several characteristics were unknown. Despite these limitations, we can offer some preliminary descriptive information towards an understanding of who these children are.

Age at Contact with Interview Participant. For the 15 child survivors of domestic sex trafficking where additional information was available, one was 11 years old, two were 12 years old, one was 13 years old, three were 14 years old, two were 15 years old, three were 16 years old, two were 17 years old and one was 18 years old (child recently turned 18).

Gender. Information on gender was available for all confirmed child survivors of domestic sex trafficking identified by interview participants. Consistent with available national information, 44 of the confirmed child survivors of domestic sex trafficking in Santa Barbara County are female and one is male.

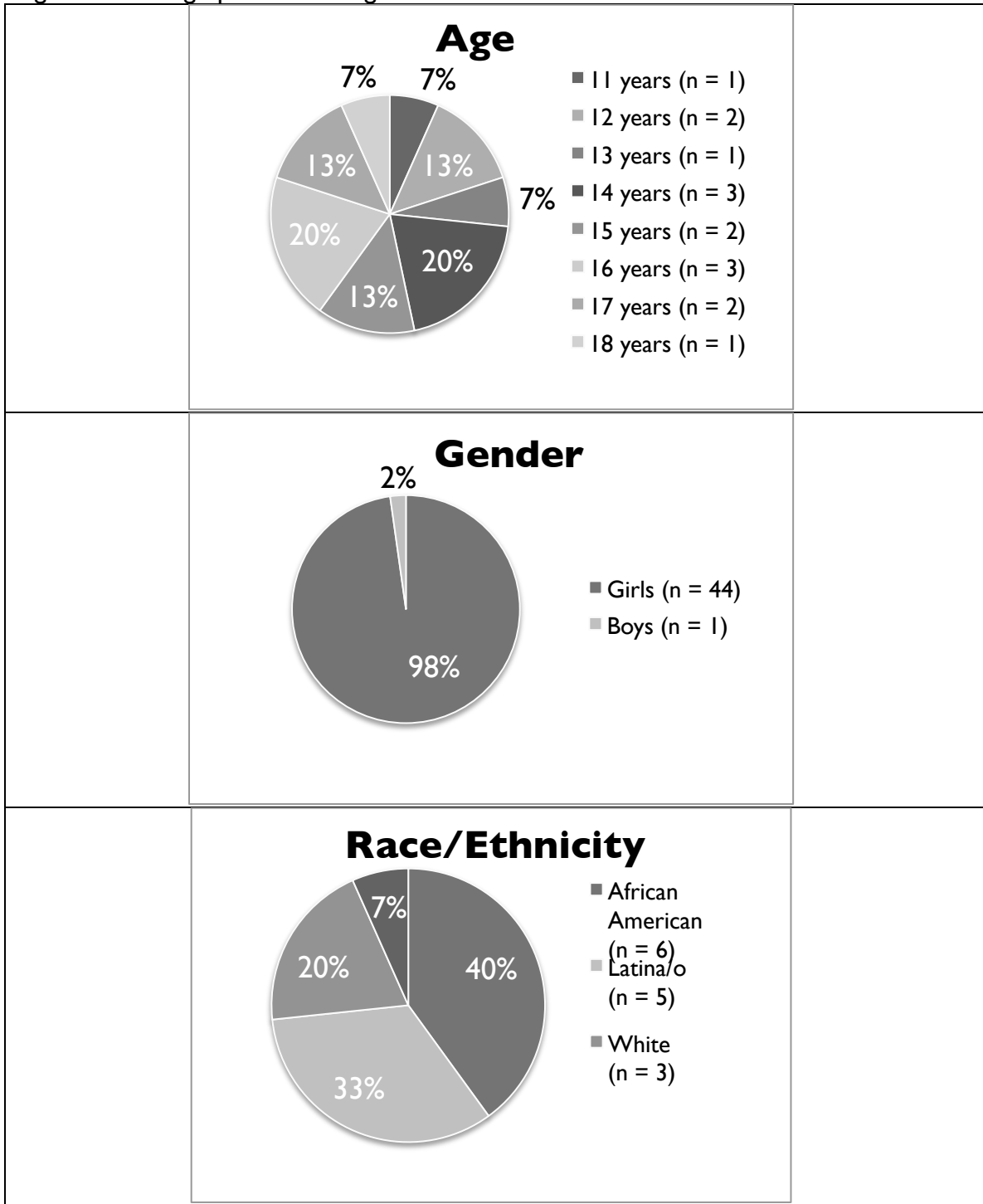
Race/Ethnicity. For the 15 child survivors of domestic sex trafficking where additional information was available, six were African American, five were Latina/o, three were White, and one was Mixed Race/Ethnicity (African American and Asian).

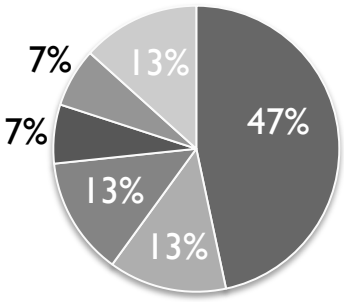
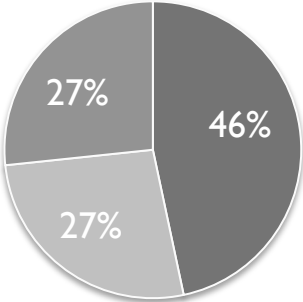
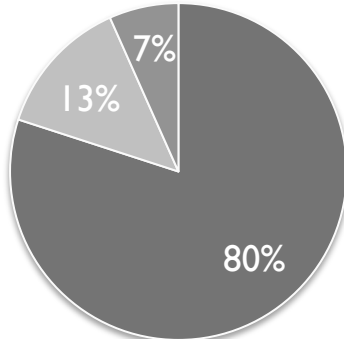
Familial Household. For the 15 child survivors of domestic sex trafficking where additional information was available, seven lived in a Single-Mother household, two lived in a Divorced household with joint custody, two lived with a Single-Family Relative household, one lived in an Adoptive Two-Parent household, and one lived in a Foster Two-Parent household. Familial household information was unavailable for two child survivors.

Foster Care Placement. For the 15 child survivors of domestic sex trafficking where additional information was available, seven child survivors had been placed in Foster care, four had not been placed in foster care, and this information was not available for four child survivors.

Primary Residence. For the 15 child survivors of domestic sex trafficking where additional information was available, 12 were residents of Santa Barbara County (five from Santa Maria, four from Lompoc, two from Santa Barbara, and one from Carpinteria), two were from Outside the County and one was from Out of State.

Figure I. Demographic and Background Characteristics of Known Child Survivors



	<h3 style="text-align: center;">Familial Household</h3>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Single Mother (n = 7)</li> <li>■ Divorced/Joint Custody (n = 2)</li> <li>■ Single Relative (n = 2)</li> <li>■ Adoptive, Two Parent (n = 1)</li> <li>■ Foster, Two Parent (n = 1)</li> <li>■ Unkown (n = 2)</li> </ul>	
	<h3 style="text-align: center;">Foster Care Placement</h3>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Yes (n = 7)</li> <li>■ No (n = 4)</li> <li>■ Unknown (n = 4)</li> </ul>	
	<h3 style="text-align: center;">Primary Residence</h3>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ SB County (n = 12)</li> <li>■ Outside County (n = 2)</li> <li>■ Outside State (n = 1)</li> </ul>	

History of Abuse and/or Neglect. For the 15 child survivors of domestic sex trafficking where additional information was available, 14 had known history of abuse and/or neglect and this information was not available for one child survivor.

Mental Health Issues. For the 15 child survivors of domestic sex trafficking where additional information was available, six child survivors had diagnosed mental health issues and one child victim had no known mental health issues. This information was not available for eight child survivors.

Alcohol and Drug Use. For the 15 child survivors of domestic sex trafficking where additional information was available, 11 had identified issues with alcohol and drugs. This information was not available for four child survivors. It should be noted that although this information was not available for the 20 survivors identified because of their placement in Juvenile Hall, according to the information provided during the interview, each of these children did have significant issues with drugs and/or alcohol.

Involvement with Juvenile Justice System. For the 15 child survivors of domestic sex trafficking where additional information was available, seven had involvement with the juvenile justice system and two had no known involvement with the juvenile justice system. This information was not available for six child survivors. In addition to the 15 child survivors for whom this information was available, an additional 18 child survivors were first identified because of their placement in juvenile hall.

Truancy. For the 15 child survivors of domestic sex trafficking where additional information was available, 11 had issues with Truancy. This information was not available for four child survivors.

History of Running Away. For the 15 child survivors of domestic sex trafficking where additional information was available, 12 were known runaways. This information was not available for three child survivors.

Family History of Criminal Involvement. For the 15 child survivors of domestic sex trafficking where additional information was available, four had parents with a history of criminal involvement and two had parents with no known criminal history. This information was not available for nine child survivors.

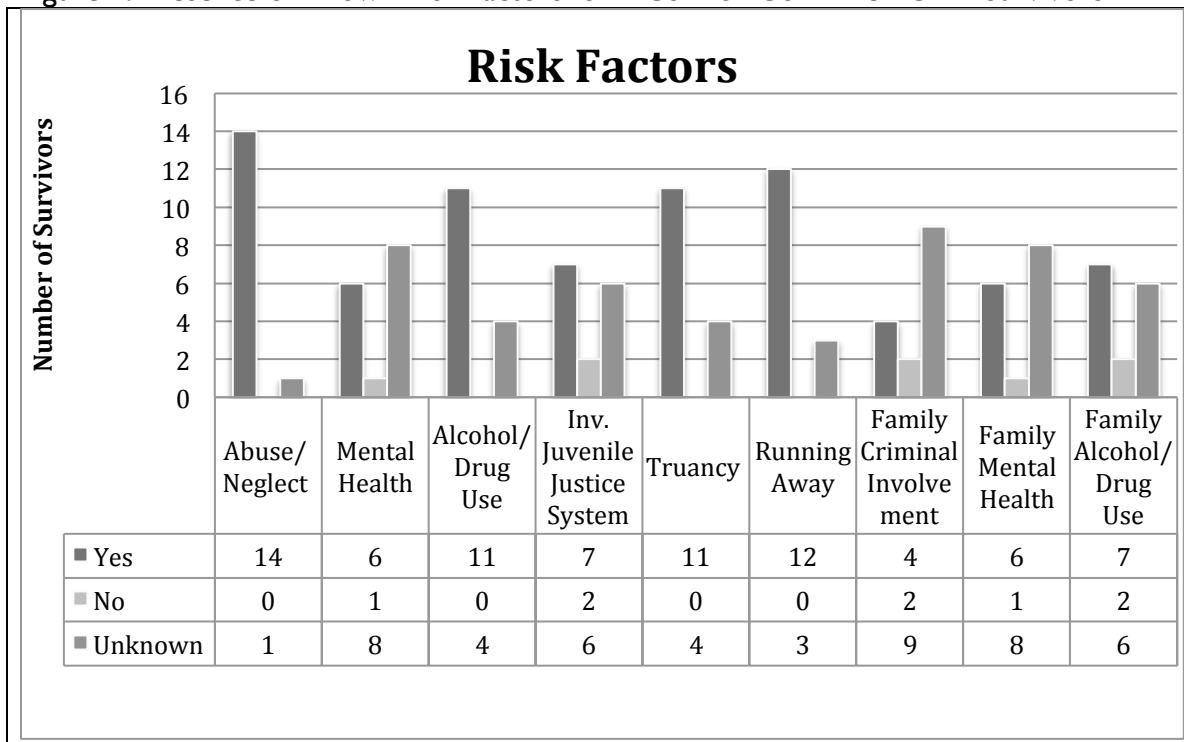
Family History of Mental Health Issues. For the 15 child survivors of sex trafficking where additional information was available, six had parents with known mental health issues and one had parents with no known mental health issues. This information was not available for eight child survivors.

Family History of Alcohol and Drug Abuse. For the 15 child survivors of sex trafficking where additional information was available, seven had parents with known alcohol and

drug abuse and two had parents with no known issues with alcohol and drugs. This information was not available for six child survivors.

Another important background characteristic identified by interview participants is “Family History of Sex Trafficking.” At least two child survivors of domestic sex trafficking in Santa Barbara County had mothers who were involved in the commercial sex industry. One survivor’s mother was being trafficked by her father.

Figure 2. Presence of Known Risk Factors for DCST for Confirmed Child Survivors



### Trafficker Information and Methods of Recruitment

Information about the traffickers of the confirmed child survivors of domestic sex trafficking and their methods for recruitment was provided by interview participants for 15 of the child survivors identified. Most of the traffickers identified were adult males (between 18 and 30 years of age), with the exception of one female (19 years old). Nine of the traffickers had known sexual relations with the child survivors. This information was not known for six of the survivors. Six of the traffickers were residents of Santa Barbara County and six traffickers resided outside of Santa Barbara County (Bay Area, Fresno, Los Angeles), and the rest were unknown.

Several different recruitment methods by traffickers were identified. Four child survivors were recruited by their “boyfriends,” three were recruited through the use of social media (Facebook), three through the use of drugs, and the one child survivor of a female trafficker was recruited through their friendship, and the rest were unknown.

## **Suspected (unconfirmed) Child Survivors of Domestic Sex Trafficking in Santa Barbara County**

Interview participants were asked to share specific information about their knowledge of and/or experiences with children *suspected* of being survivors of sex trafficking in Santa Barbara County. Based on this, **80 children were identified as “suspected” survivors of domestic sex trafficking**. According to one participant, in reflecting on her 20-year history within her organization, she suspected serving probably “hundreds” of child survivors of domestic sex trafficking. Similar to confirmed child survivors of domestic sex trafficking, the majority of suspected child survivors were identified by law enforcement (37 survivors), Mental Health staff at Juvenile Hall (21 survivors), Social Service Providers (18 survivors) and Child Welfare Services (four survivors).

## **Children Vulnerable and At-risk for Domestic Sex Trafficking in Santa Barbara County**

Although many factors have been associated with vulnerability for DCST, five specific factors demonstrated to place children at highest risk for child sex trafficking are: (1) history of abuse and/or neglect, (2) involvement with foster care system, (3) history of running away, (4) homelessness and (5) involvement with juvenile justice system.

### 1. History of Abuse and Neglect.

In Santa Barbara County, **more than 5,000 reports of abuse and neglect** were made in 2013.<sup>27</sup> Almost 60% of reports were for neglect (n = 3,057), 19% for physical abuse (n = 996), 10% emotional abuse (n = 544), and 7% for sexual abuse (n = 349). It was notable that of the 5,140 total reports to Child Welfare Services, two reports were for exploitation.

### 2. Foster Care Placement.

There were **549 children under 21 years of age in Foster Care Placements** in Santa Barbara County in 2013. Most foster care placements, about 36%, were with kin-relatives (n = 198) and about 10% (**n = 56**) were placed in foster homes.<sup>28</sup> **Forty-eight children (24 girls, 24 boys) were placed in group homes.**<sup>29</sup> Further, 32 of the children were placed in group homes OUT of Santa Barbara County and 16 placed in County. Of the 16 children placed in County, 12 are girls.

### 3. History of Running Away.

In Santa Barbara County, according to law enforcement data, there were **815 reports of runaways in 2013 and 1,005 reports in 2012**. It is important to note that reports of runaways do not necessarily reflect numbers of individuals that run away.

For example, one child may run away multiple times per year and thus have multiple reports. In trying to better understand individual number of children that run away in Santa Barbara County (regardless of number of times in a year they run away), data was requested from each law enforcement agency in Santa Barbara County. **Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Office reported a total of 72 children (46 girls, 26 boys) were reported as runaways in 2014, 68 children (38 girls, 30 boys) in 2013 and 88 children (55 girls, 33 boys) in 2012.** Similar data was not available from the three other law enforcement agencies (Lompoc, Santa Barbara, Santa Maria)<sup>§</sup>, however based on personal communication with law enforcement officers from each of these jurisdictions, the number of runaways reported by Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Office are likely similar for these jurisdictions. Based on this information, it can be estimated that **288 children (184 girls, 104 boys) were reported as runaways in Santa Barbara County in 2014.** Of particular concern, communications with Child Welfare staff revealed as of November 2014, **five children (four girls, one boy) are Absent Without Official Leave (AWOL).**

More specific information on children reported as runaways (e.g., history of abuse and neglect, involvement with foster care, involvement with probation) and the location from where they ran away (e.g., number of children who run away from foster homes, group homes in county, group homes out of county) was not easily available from law enforcement or Child Welfare databases.

#### 4. Homelessness.

**In Santa Barbara County, 9,169 public school students were reported as homeless in 2014.**<sup>h</sup> More specifically, 5,396 children reported as homeless were in grades Pre-K – Grade 5 (59%), **1,860 children reported as homeless were in Grades 6 – 8 (20%) and 1,913 children reported as homeless were in Grades 9 – 12 (21%).**<sup>30</sup> As one respondent who works with this specific population in Santa Barbara County shared, “‘Survival sex’ is a very common occurrence for runaway, street, and homeless youth.” He also indicated challenges with self-identification, as “few youth would identify survival sex as ‘Commercial Sexual Exploitation.’”

#### 5. Involvement in Juvenile Justice System.

In Santa Barbara County, **913 children (211 girls, 702 boys) were involved in the juvenile justice system in 2014.** During 2014, **103 children (46 girls (22%), 57 boys (8%)) were in out-of-home placements** (group/foster/or relative home). Specific to Group Home and Foster Home Placements, **100% (27 out**

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<sup>§</sup> Communications with Crime Analyst from Santa Maria Police Department indicated that future data management efforts would afford more specific information about children that run away.

<sup>h</sup> Students are designated as homeless if their primary nighttime residence at any point in the school year is: a shelter, hotel, or motel; shared housing with others due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reason. These data may include duplicate counts of students who are homeless.

**of 27) of girls were placed in Group Homes/Foster Homes OUT of Santa Barbara County and 92.5% (37 out of 40) of males were in Group Homes/Foster Homes OUT of Santa Barbara County.**

In sum, there are many children in Santa Barbara County vulnerable for DCST. Based on available data, there are an estimated **461 children vulnerable and at highest risk for DCST in Santa Barbara County** (see Table 2). Proactive investigations of DCST in conjunction with prevention and intervention efforts with this specific group of vulnerable children in Santa Barbara County are critical.

Table 2. Number of Children Vulnerable for Domestic Sex Trafficking in Santa Barbara County

Children in Group Home Placements, Child Welfare Systems	48
Children in Foster Home Placements, Child Welfare Systems	56
Children in Group Home/Foster Home Placements Outside County, involved with Juvenile Probation	64
Children reported as Runaways	288
Children reported as AWOL	5
<b>Total Number of Children Vulnerable for Sex Trafficking</b>	<b>461</b>

### **Summary of Prevalence Information of Child Survivors of Domestic Sex Trafficking in Santa Barbara County**

In sum, and with extreme caution given the significant limitations with available prevalence information, in Santa Barbara County, there are **45 confirmed child survivors of domestic sex trafficking, 80 suspected (unconfirmed) child survivors of domestic sex trafficking and an estimated 461 children extremely vulnerable and at high risk for DCST.**

### **Backpage Study**

Total Number of Advertisements for “Escort” Services on Backpage.

Between March 1, 2015 and March 14, 2015, **a total of 675 advertisements for “escort” services were placed in Santa Barbara (n=383 ads) and Santa Maria (n = 292 ads).** This suggests an **average of 48 advertisements for “escort” services per day in Santa Barbara County.** This number represents the number of advertisements placed during this two-week study period and not necessarily the number of individual “escorts.” Review of advertisements revealed a few advertisements that appeared more than one time per day (typically one duplicate advertisement per day) and some advertisements may have been listed in both Santa Barbara and Santa Maria (typically one advertisement placed in both cities each day).



It is interesting to consider this “escort” advertisement information and the number of arrests for “prostitution” in Santa Barbara County. In particular, during 2010 – 2013, there were a total of 25 females arrested for “prostitution” in Santa Barbara County (as reported by the Department of Justice). In particular, during this period, two females were arrested for “prostitution” in Lompoc, 8 females were arrested in Santa Barbara, 4 females were arrested in Santa Maria and 11 females were arrested by Santa Barbara County Sheriff’s Office.

Specific data related to number of arrests for solicitation of “prostitution” was not available from law enforcement agencies with the exception of Lompoc Police Department who reported a total of 6 arrests between 2010 and 2014. A media search of “prostitution” in Santa Barbara County between 2010 and 2014, revealed that in 2012, 25 men were arrested for solicitation of “prostitution” as a result of “buyer” sting operations conducted by Santa Maria Police Department (n = 21 arrests) and Santa Barbara County Sheriff’s Department (n = 4 arrests). In sum, between 2010 and 2014, a total of 31 men were arrested for solicitation of “prostitution” compared with 675 advertisements for “escort” services placed in Santa Barbara County in only a two-week period.

Number of Advertisements Posted on Backpage offering “Escorts” Ages 18 – 21 years.

Between March 1, 2015 and March 14, 2015, **a total of 277 advertisements (Santa Barbara = 137 ads and Santa Maria = 140 ads) were placed on Backpage advertising “escorts” ages 18 – 21 years.** This represents 41% of the total advertisements on Backpage during this two-week period. As with information presented on Total Number of Advertisements Posted on Backpage, this number does not represent individual number of “escorts”, rather number of advertisements.

Given the focus of this Needs Assessment on DCST in Santa Barbara County, a more detailed examination of all advertisements placed for “escorts” between the ages of 18 – 21 years was conducted. Several of the identified child survivors of domestic sex trafficking in Santa Barbara County were advertised on Backpage. Thus, it is evident that many children under 18 years are being advertised on Backpage and age given in ads is not actual age.

This examination revealed **a total of 111 unduplicated advertisements for “escorts” ages 18 – 21 years.** Each of these 111 advertisements was further examined to understand the prior “escort” advertisement history for the phone number posted in the advertisement, and when phone number did not yield any prior advertisement history, an image search was conducted to access this information. Internet phone number search, and when needed internet image search, provided information on prior advertisement history for 100 of the unduplicated advertisements for “escorts” ages 18 – 21 years. No prior advertisement history was available for 11 advertisements.

Number of Days Advertisements Posted on Backpage in Santa Barbara County.

More than half of the advertisements posted during this two-week period were posted multiple days. This finding is consistent with information shared by participants during the Needs Assessment interviews and with available information about sex trafficking nationally. In particular, 26% of advertisements appeared on two separate days during the two-week study period, 12% appeared on three separate days, 11% appeared on four separate days, 1% appeared on 5 separate days, 1% appeared on 6 separate days and 3% appeared on seven

separate days. This pattern of advertisement postings indicates the transitory nature of those engaged in “escort” services in Santa Barbara County. That is, individuals arrive in Santa Barbara County, have advertisements posted for escort services for two – four days, and then leave.

#### Location of Past “Escort” Advertisements within and Outside California.

An examination of prior advertisement histories for prior locations where advertisements were placed also confirmed participant responses about the inclusion of Santa Barbara County in several “sex trafficking” routes. A majority (85%) of advertisements for “escorts” ages 18 – 21 years had a history of prior advertisements placed in other cities within California. Northern California cities most frequently reported in prior advertisement histories included San Francisco, East Bay, San Jose, Santa Cruz, Monterey and Sacramento. Southern California cities most frequently seen in prior advertisements histories were Los Angeles, Orange County, San Bernardino, San Diego. Central California cities most frequently reported in prior advertisement histories included Fresno, Bakersfield, Merced and Modesto. Over half (53%) of advertisements posted in Santa Barbara County had previously been posted within the Tri-county area (San Luis Obispo and Ventura).

Over a quarter (30%) of advertisements had prior advertisement histories in two cities within California, 15% of advertisements were posted in three cities within California, 10% of advertisements were posted in four cities within California, 11% of advertisements were posted in five cities within California, 5% of advertisements were posted in six cities in California, 2% of advertisements were posted in seven cities in California and one advertisement had been posted in 12 cities within California.

In addition, 39% of advertisements posted in Santa Barbara County had been previously posted in other states. Most frequently identified states were Arizona and Nevada.

#### Summary of Backpage Study.

Findings from the “Backpage Study” provide ample evidence of the demand for “escort” services in Santa Barbara County, with a daily average of 48 advertisements for “escort” services on one internet site<sup>i</sup>. Further, findings revealed 111 unduplicated advertisements for “escorts” ages 18 – 21 years were posted in the two-week study period. Although not all advertisements for “escorts” ages 18 – 21 years are for children under 18 years of age, available information from Law Enforcement and survivors of child sex trafficking does indicate that all of the females advertised are currently or at one time were sexually trafficked. Therefore, it is fair to estimate that there were 111 survivors of sex trafficking during this two-week period, or potentially **an average of 8 child survivors of domestic sex trafficking per day in Santa Barbara County via Backpage alone.**

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<sup>i</sup> Backpage is one of many Internet sites used to advertise “escort” services in Santa Barbara County. Other Internet sites include: My Provider SantaBarbara, Cityvibe, and Craigslist.

## **Protocols for DCST in Santa Barbara County**

As defined by the Oxford Dictionary, protocols are “the accepted or established code of procedures or behavior within any group, organization or situation.” Given the complexity of domestic child sex trafficking, efforts aimed at addressing this issue necessitate an interagency, collaborative approach. Since agencies involved in a countywide collaborative to address child sex trafficking may have very distinct philosophies, methods of operation, confidentiality issues, protocols are essential. Specific protocols facilitate an agreed upon understanding of behavior and expectations for all participating agencies within the collaborative. Agency-specific protocols for domestic child sex trafficking are also necessary to ensure all staff within an organization have clear instructions for working with known and suspected survivors of DCST. Interview participants were asked specific questions about current protocols within their agency specific to DCST.

### **Protocol Findings: Interview Data**

Participant responses to questions about agency protocols for child survivors of domestic sex trafficking revealed that, at least at the time of this Needs Assessment, **there is no county-wide agency protocol or any agency-specific protocols for DCST.** That is, **none of the 22 participants interviewed reported any “formal” agency protocols for DCST.** Please know the lack of identification of protocols by interview participants is not because these participants may be unaware of protocols. Each individual interviewed was specifically chosen by their agency because of their involvement with the issue of domestic child sex trafficking. A critical need among each agency in our county is to develop protocols for child survivors of domestic sex trafficking.

Although no “formal” protocols for DCST were identified by interview participants, there was some evidence that the development of “formal” protocols was in process at both the interagency, collaborative level and individual agency level. For example, several interview participants indicated the use of the Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) approach for working with child survivors of domestic sex trafficking. SART is a county-wide, interagency program offering services to individuals who have been sexually assaulted or sexually abused. In particular, SART coordinates with Law Enforcement, Rape Crisis Centers, Victim Witness Assistance, Child Welfare Services, Child Abuse and Listening Mediation (CALM) and a medical team of trained professionals, nurses, and physicians. SART’s approach to sexual assault and abuse, represents a Survivor-Centered, Trauma-informed approach that offers individuals the most positive therapeutic environment possible. Services include forensic medical exams, forensic interviews, emotional support, advocacy, counseling referrals, prophylaxis for sexually transmitted infections and pregnancy, and other support services for the individual and her/his family. Several participants discussed the possibility of adapting the SART approach for use with child survivors of domestic sex trafficking.

Another possible resource in developing protocols, specific to Law Enforcement, is the Santa Barbara Regional Narcotic Enforcement Team (SBRNET). SBRNET is a multi-jurisdictional law enforcement team that focuses on narcotic suppression. As shared by a member of SBRNET, the efficiency and effectiveness of this team is increased by the involvement of law enforcement officers from several jurisdictions throughout Santa Barbara

County and an agreement that when engaged in an operation or investigation, there are no jurisdictional issues among law enforcement agencies. SBRNET represents a united and dedicated team of Law Enforcement officers specifically aimed to address the availability and use of drugs in Santa Barbara County. An examination of SBRNET protocols and agreements amongst law enforcement agencies may be helpful for similar multi-agency and coordinated efforts to address domestic child sex trafficking in Santa Barbara County.

## Needs of Child Survivors of Domestic Sex Trafficking in Santa Barbara County

Needs Assessment participants identified critical needs of child survivors of domestic sex trafficking. The five most frequently cited needs were:

- (1) Trauma-informed Care and Therapy (73%)
- (2) Housing (68%)
- (3) Collaboration Between Agencies (64%)
- (4) Designated Staff to Ensure Consistency of Care (55%)
- (5) Drug and Alcohol Treatment Services (50%)

Due to the exploratory nature of this Needs Assessment, interview participants were asked to share their perceptions of the most critical needs of child survivors of domestic sex trafficking based on their own experiences, as opposed to responding to a survey item that offered a list of possible needs that they could rank order by level of importance. Also, given the importance of understanding the needs of child survivors of DCST, it was decided to examine each participant's interview in its entirety, rather than only the "Needs" portion, to ensure as complete and accurate an understanding of needs of child survivors as possible. For example, if a participant reflected on the importance of drug and alcohol treatment services when discussing personal experiences with survivors of DCST, that participant was noted to have identified the need for drug and alcohol treatment services. The needs identified are by no means exhaustive, rather the most frequently cited needs of interview participants in this Needs Assessment.

### I. Trauma-informed Care and Therapy

**Trauma-Informed Care:** *"a strengths-based service delivery approach that is grounded in an understanding of and responsiveness to the impact of trauma, that emphasizes physical, psychological, and emotional safety for both providers and survivors, and that creates opportunities for survivors to rebuild a sense of control and empowerment."*<sup>31</sup>

Child survivors of domestic sex trafficking have endured immense traumas; therefore a critical need is for a Trauma-informed approach across all agencies with whom they come into contact, from the initial point of recovery and throughout their stabilization. Of Needs Assessment participants, 73% (16 out of 22) highlighted the need for survivors of DCST to receive trauma-informed therapeutic care and services. In particular, the need for trauma-informed services for child survivors of domestic sex trafficking was identified by 100% of respondents from Probation (4 out of 4), 88% of Social Service Providers (7 out of 8), and 75% of respondents from the District Attorney's Office (3 out of 4), 20% of Law Enforcement (1 out of 5) and the one Child Welfare Services representative.

Survivors of DCST are often afflicted by complex mental health needs, including "feelings of severe guilt, posttraumatic stress disorder, depression, anxiety, substance abuse

(alcohol or narcotics), and eating disorders”.<sup>32</sup> Many have also experienced multiple types of trauma over a significant period of time. This is identified as “complex trauma,” and defined as “a type of trauma that occurs repeatedly and cumulatively, usually over a period of time and within specific relationships and contexts.”<sup>33</sup> Survivors who experience this complex trauma require consistent, trauma-informed therapy and a range of trauma-specific interventions to address their history and future.<sup>34</sup>

The provision of trauma-informed therapy and other trauma-informed services is important immediately after children are recovered from their trafficking situation *and* well into their stabilization. Due to the years of trauma experienced, potentially occurring long before they were trafficked, many of these children will require consistent attention to their mental health needs, throughout their cycles of change. (Please see Appendix E for additional information regarding Survivor Stages of Change.) One expert advised that survivors of DCST receive therapeutic services at least twice per week — if necessary, up to four or five times per week.<sup>35</sup> These long-term, intensive services that eventually taper off will be critical in the recovery process of survivors of DCST.

## **2. Housing (Emergency, Transitional, Permanent)**

Adequate short- and long-term care relies particularly on the availability of appropriate emergency, transitional, and permanent housing equipped specifically for child survivors of domestic sex trafficking. Almost three-quarter of interview participants, 68% (15 out of 22), identified a need for housing facilities specifically for survivors of DCST. In particular, the need for placement options was specified by 75% of respondents from the District Attorney’s Office (3 out of 4), 75% of Probation respondents (3 out of 4), 63% of Social Service Providers (5 out of 8), 60% of Law Enforcement (3 out of 5), and the one Child Welfare Services representative.

Among the specific facilities mentioned, a Drop-in Center in North County was mentioned as a strategy of prevention as well as a location for emergency services. The need for a Child Advocacy Center was also mentioned as a location for conducting interviews and providing services. Both the Drop-in Center and Child Advocacy Center were recommended to include wrap-around services (including trauma-informed therapy and drug and alcohol treatment). Participants also identified foster homes intended specifically for survivors of DCST as a viable housing option. These foster homes, commonly called “CSEC-specific” (Commercially Sexually Exploited Children) foster homes, were recommended as a housing option by five out of eight social service providers (63%) and the one CWS participant.

Emergency housing options are of dire importance for recovered child survivors of domestic sex trafficking. Safety and stabilization are of utmost concern for survivors of DCST, particularly in order to remove children from their traffickers and begin providing them with services and stability. Survivors might also need a transitional housing option, for a few weeks or months, before they are ready to transition to a permanent placement. Permanent placements could include family reunification, specific foster placements designed for child survivors of domestic sex trafficking (CSEC-specific foster homes), or specific programs created for survivors of DCST. To best serve child survivors of domestic sex trafficking, these types of facilities and housing placements would require more flexible rules, an emphasis on

unconditional acceptance, and offer the ability to come and go as needed. As one participant articulated,

*"I try to explain this to people — these girls need 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, chances. They need a secure, unconditional relationship based on unconditional positive regard, where someone is saying yes, you will leave, but when you do, you always know that you have a place to come back to."*

It is important to understand that providing appropriate housing options for child survivors of domestic sex trafficking will often be incredibly challenging. First and foremost, one option will not work for every survivor. There are many complex needs and nuances for each case that must be addressed when providing services (including housing) for child survivors who of domestic sex trafficking. Challenges in addressing needs of survivors identified by our participants included propensity for running away; outstanding warrants; lack of information provided by Service Providers and Probation Officers; defiance and non-compliance; recruitment of other young women; complex mental health needs; and extreme loyalties to traffickers.

For example, a recent child survivor of domestic sex trafficking in Santa Barbara County experienced severe anxiety and triggering experiences when in group housing situations, and found it difficult to be around children and families. This particular survivor also had substance abuse issues. From this case alone, the need for multiple types of housing placements is obvious, ranging from CSEC-specific foster homes with and without other children, to crisis shelters, to a trauma-informed, live-in unit at Juvenile Hall. Housing options are needed for children with and without warrants, with substance abuse issues or mental health needs, children who need a secure location for their safety, children whose traffickers have not been arrested, etc. It is essential that we preemptively develop adequate housing placements for survivors in various types of situations, despite the complex challenges that will likely arise.

### **3. Collaboration Between Agencies**

The need for collaboration between agencies was cited by 63% of interview participants (14 out of 22), including 75% of representatives from the District Attorney's office (3 out of 4), 75% of Probation (3 out of 4), 60% of Law Enforcement (3 out of 5), 50% of Social Service Providers (4 out of 8), and the one Child Welfare Services representative. Collaboration was identified as a need for child survivors of domestic sex trafficking because of the critical importance of continuity and seamlessness of services.

The current system has not functioned in a way that is optimal for survivors of DCST. In contrast, Santa Barbara County's network of services has suffered due to lack of collaboration across agencies involved. For example, children who are booked in Juvenile Hall and discovered to be survivors of domestic sex trafficking receive services from Alcohol, Drug, and Mental Health Services' mental health staff and often from Rape Crisis counselors. However, these survivors have often been released or assigned to a different placement without receiving a concluding therapeutic session or any means to remain in contact with their counselor. Thus, this important relationship (where trauma is often first disclosed) is terminated abruptly. Mental

health staff in Juvenile Hall does not have the directive or bandwidth to continue the therapeutic relationship outside of the hall. Rape Crisis counselors could potentially continue the relationship, but often they have not been apprised of where the survivor is placed.

In other situations, assessment participants identified the need for agencies to contract out to other agencies for the provision of services. For example, it may be beneficial for an agency to contract with Rape Crisis or CALM counselors to provide trauma-informed therapy, or with Family Care Network to develop foster placements that are specific to survivors of DCST. One participant identified the need to have “pre-approved” individuals from various agencies who are able to access Juvenile Hall in order to build relationships with child survivors of domestic sex trafficking. In other scenarios, for survivors of DCST to be adequately resourced and consistently followed-up with, information sharing will be necessary and will rely on the key principle of collaboration.

Confidentiality agreements are of the utmost importance and must be established between all involved agencies and organizations. For example, it may be advantageous for Juvenile Probation to establish confidentiality agreements with specific Social Service Providers offering therapeutic services to children in Juvenile Hall. The confidentiality agreement might specifically state that contact information may be shared with a Social Service Provider. This type of agreement is present between North County Rape Crisis Counseling Center and the Santa Barbara County District Attorney’s Office’s Victim Witness Program and significantly aids in facilitating intervention and treatment efforts for child survivors of domestic sex trafficking.

#### **4. Designated Staff to Ensure Consistency of Care**

More than half of interview participants (55%, 12 out of 22) identified the need to have designated staff from all respective agencies that interact with and provide services to survivors of DCST. In particular, 80% of representatives from Law Enforcement (4 out of 5), 75% of representatives from Probation (3 out of 4), 75% of representatives from the District Attorney’s office (3 out of 4), and 25% of Social Service Providers (2 out of 8) indicated the need for availability and consistency in professionals providing care and services to child survivors of domestic sex trafficking.

As was highlighted by one law enforcement officer, often the only person that is consistent in the lives of survivors of DCST is their trafficker. This is an extreme challenge to overcome; trust may be incredibly difficult to establish with child survivors of domestic sex trafficking, which highlights the critical need for consistency in their continuum of care. The need for designated staff was specified to include the following agencies: Child Welfare Services, Juvenile Probation, Law Enforcement, and Rape Crisis Centers. Designated Victim Witness Advocates, a District Attorney Prosecutor and a District Attorney Criminal Investigator were also mentioned. These designated staff members must be available specifically for the labor-intensive and time-consuming nature of DCST cases. One law enforcement participant articulated it simply: “I need someone I can call from each agency.”

Designated Victim Advocates. Given the significance of consistency in care for child survivors of domestic sex trafficking, many participants specifically identified the need for designated Victim Advocates. As one interview participant shared, many children



who have been sexually trafficked do not identify as sexual assault victims, and hence are more prone to respond initially to a more general Victim Advocate (as opposed to a Rape Crisis advocate). Participants indicated that advocates must be available to respond at the initial point of recovery to coordinate the child with services and begin the process of building relationship. Multiple participants specified that Victim Advocates must be have flexible work schedules, or to be available “as needed.”

Designated Probation Officer. Participants also specifically referenced re-instating a Probation Officer specifically assigned to females on probation. Probation Officers assigned to females on probation would be specifically trained to handle cases of child survivors of domestic sex trafficking and designated to make sure that a seamless coordination of services occurs before and after release from Juvenile Hall and within Field Supervision.

Designated Law Enforcement Officers. Interview participants articulated the need for Law Enforcement officers to establish trust with children at-risk for DCST (particularly children who are chronic runaways), as well as children who are confirmed survivors of domestic sex trafficking. In one case referenced, a child with a history of running away denied offers of help from a law enforcement officer, but that officer consistently offered help nonetheless. When the young girl was sexually trafficked, she reached out to the officer for help. This instance displays the need for perseverance in building relationships, as opposed to dismissing children because they “do not want help.” A law enforcement participant also specified the need for law enforcement officers who are designated to address DCST be assigned long-term (as opposed to a three year rotation, for example).

Designated Coordinator of Services. Child survivors of domestic sex trafficking require intensive and long-term services that eventually taper off, and have a myriad of needs to be addressed. As a result of these complex needs, survivors of DCST require a designated individual who is the child survivor’s “coordinator of services,” someone who is ultimately responsible for ensuring that consistent care is being provided across various agencies. This “coordinator” will be able to anticipate and respond to the various challenges that each cycle of change presents for the survivor (please see Appendix E for more information on the Survivor’s Stages of Change). Some might identify this person as a “case manager” or “coordinator.” Others might refer to this person as a “Victim Advocate.” Regardless, one specific individual is necessary to take responsibility for each survivor of DCST and facilitate a consistent, long-term continuum of care for that child.

## **5. Drug and Alcohol Treatment Services**

Child survivors of domestic sex trafficking have a need for drug and alcohol treatment services, a need that was identified by 50% of participants (11 out of 22). In particular, the need for drug and alcohol treatment services was indicated by 75% of respondents from the District

Attorney's Office (3 out of 4), 63% of Social Service Providers (5 out of 8), 50% of participants from Probation (2 out of 4), and 20% of Law Enforcement participants (1 out of 5). Information about issues with drugs and alcohol was only available for 11 of the child survivors of domestic sex trafficking identified in this study. However, it is important to note that each of the 11 child survivors whom this information was available for *did* have significant issues with drugs and alcohol.

## Summary of Needs

In sum, five critical needs of child survivors of domestic sex trafficking in Santa Barbara are: (1) trauma-informed care and therapy, (2) housing (including emergency, transitional, permanent), (3) collaboration between agencies, (4) designated staff to ensure consistency of care, and (5) drug and alcohol treatment services. The identified needs must be viewed with caution due to the constraints of the interviews: each participant identified crucial needs based on their own perspectives and personal experiences, and are by no means exhaustive. (Please see Appendix F for information on additional needs of child survivors of domestic sex trafficking.) The needs specified for survivors of DCST in Santa Barbara County are consistent with needs of survivors of DCST nation-wide; therefore, Santa Barbara County will be able to learn from and model the successful models of other areas.

Again, the needs of children who survive domestic sex trafficking are incredibly complex. Participants in this Needs Assessment reiterated the complexity of each survivor's stages of change and indicated that, almost without exception, survivors will return to their traffickers and/or a trafficking situation even after they have been recovered, and often even if they have been provided with services. According to one mental health professional:

*"It takes about seven times before they leave their pimp .... that's about the same as drug addiction — seven relapses before they get sober. Because this **is** an addiction, but this is the most dangerous addiction in the world, because they are really addicted to drugs, they are really addicted to the lifestyle, the hustle, the excitement of running away; they are addicted to running away from their problems, running away from relationships, and they are addicted to the relationships with these men..."*

Of the limited information we were provided with concerning confirmed survivors, three of them were known to have cycled back to trafficking situations after they were recovered. Therefore, each agency involved must patiently walk through the stages of change with each individual survivor and be equipped with the resources necessary to do so.

<b>Available Services (Gaps in Services) for Child Survivors of Domestic Sex Trafficking in Santa Barbara County</b>
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<b>Needs of Survivors of DCST in SB County</b>	<b>Available Services specifically for Survivors of DCST in SB County</b>	<b>Possible Services for Survivors of DCST in SB County</b>
Trauma-informed Therapy	- North County Rape Crisis and Child Protection Center - Santa Barbara Rape Crisis Center - CALM - Alcohol, Drug and Mental Health Services	
Housing		
a. Emergency		Noah's Anchorage
b. Transitional		Changing Faces
c. Permanent		Family Care Network
Drug and Alcohol Treatment Services		- CADA - Santa Maria Valley Youth and Family Services - Coast Valley Substance Abuse Treatment Centers

### Trauma-informed Care and Therapy

There are three specific agencies and organizations in Santa Barbara County identified to provide trauma-informed therapy to child survivors of domestic sex trafficking: Rape Crisis Centers (North and South County), Child Abuse Listening and Meditation (CALM), and Alcohol, Drug, and Mental Health Services (ADMHS) mental health staff in Juvenile Hall. However, as was cited in the previous section, intensive therapeutic care for survivors of DCST may involve two or more, perhaps even four or five, therapeutic sessions per week. To adequately serve child survivors of domestic sex trafficking, it is likely that additional funding, staff, and/or training would be necessary. Future efforts will benefit from examining each agency and organization's capacity to provide appropriate services for child survivors of domestic sex trafficking.

North County Rape Crisis and Child Protection Center serves survivors in Lompoc and Santa Maria, and Santa Barbara Rape Crisis Center serves survivors in Santa Barbara. The Rape Crisis Centers offer a range of supportive services to survivors of sexual assault and child abuse. Rape Crisis counselors provide referrals, relevant information, advocacy, accompaniment of survivors through their medical and legal processes, as well as in-person counseling, and follow-up. Long-term counseling services are also available for survivors of DCST. Rape Crisis advocates are available 24/7 and have made themselves available to resource child survivors of domestic sex trafficking. Although the Rape Crisis Centers have been able to meet the needs of

identified survivors of DCST in the past, increased identification and recovery of survivors of DCST may require additional resources be allocated for their services.

CALM provides a variety of services to children who have experienced sexual abuse, physical abuse, and/or neglect, and accepts Victim Compensation benefits for survivors of DCST that are identified through task force efforts. CALM provides drop-in and referral-based trauma-focused cognitive behavior therapy services in their Santa Barbara, Santa Maria, and Lompoc centers. CALM also employs Child Forensic Interviewers who may be able to respond to suspected cases of DCST once additional training is obtained. Consistently, to better serve survivors of DCST, staff at CALM may need to receive additional training on DCST. Similar to the Rape Crisis Centers, additional funding and/or staff at CALM may be necessary to adequately meet the needs of confirmed survivors of DCST, especially as identification and recovery efforts develop.

Recent efforts to address the population of girls in Juvenile Hall who are confirmed or highly suspected to be survivors of domestic sex trafficking include a specific Girl's Group and a potential Girl's Unit. Girl's Group is a pilot project through Juvenile Hall's mental health program that functions as a therapeutic, resiliency-building approach for girls who are either confirmed survivors or highly suspected to be survivors of domestic sex trafficking. The group offers a Trauma-Informed, Survivor-Centered approach, seeking to empower the girls who have experienced domestic sex trafficking instead of further criminalize them.

Girl's Group is being held in a previously unused wing of Juvenile Hall that has been renovated to create a more comfortable environment. The girls sign a contract, and if they sign the contract they are expected to commit to specific high standards. At the time of this assessment, the group had been run as a pilot three times a week, two hours per day, with Probation and Mental Health staff present. Ideally, the current location of Girl's Group would become its own trauma-informed, therapeutic, live-in Girl's Unit. To make this unit possible, Probation Officers will need to be trained and designated for the Girl's Group and Unit, and more ADMHS mental health staff will be needed to serve the population at Juvenile Hall. At the time of our interviews, only two mental health professionals were responsible for the comprehensive mental health needs of children in Juvenile Hall.

## **Housing (Emergency, Transitional, Permanent)**

**At present, Santa Barbara County has no housing options available for survivors of DCST, either in the form of emergency, transitional, or permanent housing.** Placement options utilized for child survivors of domestic sex trafficking have included Children of the Night in Los Angeles, New Day based out of Redding, Runaway Girl, Noah's Anchorage in Santa Barbara, and Mingus Mountain in Arizona. Juvenile Hall has served as a secure location in which children are detained, provided with mental health services, and, more recently, connected with Girl's Group. However, if the goal is not to criminalize survivors, but instead engage with a survivor-centered approach, there are obvious problems with this option.

Noah's Anchorage served as a housing placement for one young female who was sexually trafficked, and may be a housing option for survivors of DCST in the future. Noah's

Anchorage provides a Youth Crisis Shelter for children 10-17 years old in Santa Barbara. It is a licensed eight-bed, low-level group home and their services are available 24/7. Noah's Anchorage provides the following services to residents: temporary shelter and basic needs, crisis intervention and resolution, counseling for youth and families, community referrals, and individualized support. This facility could function as an emergency and/or transitional placement for child survivors of domestic sex trafficking in the future, but is not functioning in this capacity at this time. There have been challenges with survivors of DCST being placed at Noah's Anchorage in the past and those challenges, including lack of resources to provide the amount of supervision and trauma-informed services needed, will need to be addressed if Noah's Anchorage is to be used as a placement option in the future.

Changing Faces has three group homes located in Lompoc and Orcutt. Two homes serve a maximum total of 14 girls and one home (Agape) with a capacity to serve six boys. Changing Faces has been used as a placement for survivors of DCST. However, it is crucial to note that when survivors are placed, they absolutely must be linked with consistent services, most notably therapeutic services. Confidentiality agreements are needed between partners providing services to survivors of DCST placed at Changing Faces if consistency of care is to be prioritized (for example, advocates and/or counselors must know where their clients are placed). It is also crucial to note that since Changing Faces serves as a group home placement for a variety of children involved in the Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice system (and the only group home placement option for females), the placement may not be resourced adequately to serve survivors of DCST at this time.

Transitional and permanent placement options might include intensive therapeutic foster care placements. These "CSEC-specific" foster placements were referenced by 27% of interview participants (6 out of 22), specifically 5 out of 8 social service providers (63%) and the single CWS participant. Housing placements modeled after GEMS, an organization in New York, were also suggested, as well as a Drop-in Center in North County with emergency beds included. As we identified earlier, since no single option will work for every survivor, we need to include many options within our available services to function as potential housing placements for child survivors of domestic sex trafficking.

## **Designated Staff to Ensure Consistency of Care**

The extensive needs of child survivors of domestic sex trafficking require availability and consistency. Designated staff from agencies involved are needed, particularly from Child Welfare Services, Probation, Law Enforcement, Rape Crisis Centers, Victim Witness, as well as a designated District Attorney Prosecutor and Criminal investigator. The critical need of consistency of care necessitates a single "coordinator" or advocate available long-term facilitating consistent services for DCST survivors and managing the many needs each survivor is likely to have. This "coordinator," who would take responsibility for managing DCST cases, would coordinate the long-term intensive services that eventually taper off from the point of initial recovery until they are no longer needed. Due to the time-consuming nature of needs of survivors of DCST, it is likely that more than one coordinator will be necessary.

A major need of child survivors of domestic sex trafficking is to obtain consistency of care from mental health professionals, advocates, and case managers who will anticipate the

needs of survivors of DCST and assist each survivor transition through housing placements and life circumstances. Although there is no established protocol for survivors of DCST, in recent cases where Law Enforcement has discovered children being sexually trafficked, they first call Victim Witness for assistance. Victim Witness has thus functioned as the primary available service and contact for advocacy and referral services, as well as crisis management and ongoing case management. At the time of this assessment, Victim Witness lacked the necessary resources to provide intensive long-term case management.<sup>i</sup>

It also should be noted that designated staff will likely need to meet on a frequent basis, to discuss the needs of each survivor of DCST. Some participants suggested once a week, others suggested twice a month. An individual, organization, or agency must be designated to coordinate these meetings, and partnering agencies must assess what additional resources will need to be allocated towards this prospective project.

## **Drug and Alcohol Treatment Services**

Although this was a specified need identified through our Needs Assessment, no drug and alcohol treatment services were mentioned that have staff specifically trained in the provision of services for children who have been sexually trafficked.<sup>k</sup> Further research is needed to assess whether current options (CADA, Santa Maria Valley Youth and Family Services, Coast Valley Substance Abuse Treatment Centers) would have adequate resources, training, and services to respond to the needs of survivors of DCST. Nonetheless, including drug and alcohol treatment services in the treatment plan of child survivors of domestic sex trafficking will be critical moving forward.

In addition, it is important to address that there are currently no drug and alcohol treatment services available in Juvenile Hall. Since survivors of DCST were detained in Juvenile Hall at the time of this assessment and will continue to be through involvement in the Juvenile Justice System and the development of Girl's Group, it will be critical to develop these services in Juvenile Hall.

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<sup>i</sup> In April 2015, a Victim Witness Advocate specifically assigned to Human Trafficking cases in Santa Barbara County was hired. The Victim Witness Advocate will provide intensive case management for survivors of DCST; however, because of recent hiring, long-term intensive case management has yet to be demonstrated.

<sup>k</sup> In the course of assessment interviews, Social Service Providers mentioned various drug and alcohol treatment providers. Programs mentioned included CADA, Narcotic's Anonymous, Alcoholics Anonymous, and outpatient clinics in Lompoc. However, additional research would be needed to investigate whether or not these agencies are capable of providing services necessary for child survivors of domestic sex trafficking, including investigation into waitlists, capacity, group vs. individual services, etc. Training would also be mandatory for each agency's staff to ensure trauma-informed and appropriate care was offered to each child survivor.

## **Summary of Available Services**

In sum, available services for child survivors of domestic sex trafficking are extremely limited. Available trauma-informed therapy, housing, designated staff, and drug and alcohol treatment services may be available through certain agencies, but would benefit from further development. As previously stated, the 45 identified survivors of DCST identified in our community is a low estimate. If those 45 survivors are to be provided with intensive services, and an additional 45 survivors are recovered in the next two years (again, a low estimate), one can easily see how available services will need to be significantly developed. (For a brief compilation of other resources available, please see Appendix I.)

*“If we do not invest in our children, the pimps will.”*

*~ Lieutenant Andre Dawson, Los Angeles Police Department*

## Recommendations

Based on the key findings and information obtained for this Needs Assessment, in combination with available research on effective strategies for addressing domestic child sex trafficking, this section offers specific recommendations for our county to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of our efforts to address the issue.

### I. Survivor-Centered, Trauma-Informed Approach to Domestic Child Sex Trafficking

**Survivor-Centered Approach:** *“the systematic focus on the needs and concerns of a victim to ensure the compassionate and sensitive delivery of services in a nonjudgmental manner.”*

**It is imperative that each and every effort aimed to address domestic child sex trafficking in Santa Barbara County employ a Survivor-Centered, Trauma-Informed Approach.** A survivor-centered approach seeks to minimize re-traumatization by providing the support of Victim Advocates and Service Providers, empowering survivors as engaged participants, and providing survivors an opportunity to play a role in seeing their traffickers brought to justice. This approach needs to be adopted by each agency and organization within our County and at each level within each agency and organization. In particular, a Survivor-Centered, Trauma-Informed Approach is essential for Law Enforcement, Child Welfare Services, Juvenile Probation, Juvenile Court Judges, Prosecutors, Public Defenders, Social Service Providers, Medical Health Providers, and School Personnel.

To ensure a Survivor-Centered, Trauma-Informed approach, additional training among individuals who may come into contact with child survivors of domestic sex trafficking is needed, as well as a paradigm shift for many of the agencies, organizations, and staff coming into contact with survivors of DCST. **As was identified by a child survivor from Santa Barbara County, “They treat us like criminals instead of survivors.”** For many, this important shift must occur in order to truly embody a Survivor-Centered, Trauma-Informed approach.

Office for Victims of Crime Training and Technical Assistance Center (OVC TTAC) offers a module on Trauma-Informed Care through [Victim Assistance Training \(VAT\) Online](#).<sup>36</sup> Project REACH also created a useful guide on [Utilizing Trauma-Informed Approaches to Human Trafficking Related Work](#) to facilitate an understanding of complex trauma reactions and to integrate awareness into direct service of survivors of human trafficking.<sup>37</sup>



## 2. Allocation of Needed Resources to Human Trafficking Task Force (HTTF)

The current Santa Barbara County Human Trafficking Task Force, established in 2013, has played a significant role in generating awareness of Human Trafficking in Santa Barbara County. In particular, the Task Force has encompassed more than 70 members throughout Santa Barbara County, representing Law Enforcement, Juvenile Probation, Child Welfare Services, Nonprofit organizations and Faith-based communities. Primary activities have been aimed at awareness and education, and included many specific Human Trafficking training opportunities.

In addition to training opportunities, the stated aims of the Task Force include an assessment of the scope of the problem locally, development of protocols, and improvements in Law Enforcement and Victim Service response. Towards these specific goals, with the ultimate aim of the health and well-being of survivors of human trafficking and the amelioration of human trafficking in Santa Barbara County, several specific recommendations are offered that are essential for forward movement.

### a. Leadership, Management and Oversight of HTTF

This Needs Assessment Report provides clear evidence that DCST is a serious issue in Santa Barbara County. Although this report focuses solely on DCST, evidence of adult sex trafficking, other forms of commercial sexual exploitation (i.e., pornography) and labor trafficking was also reported by interview participants. For the Human Trafficking Task Force to be effective in achieving specific identified goals, specified leadership, management, and oversight is critical. In particular, **appropriate staffing resources need to be allocated for a Leader of the Human Trafficking Task Force** to specifically devote the time required to provide the extensive leadership, management, and oversight of the Task Force.

Based on leadership organization of current Human Trafficking Task Forces throughout the nation, one promising approach for local efforts is to employ co-leaders, one representing Victim Services and one representing Law Enforcement. In Santa Barbara County, Victim Services has been responsible for the organization of the Task Force and responsible for securing training opportunities. For Victim Services to strengthen their leadership capacity, an allocation of dedicated resources is needed (e.g., it is not possible for one person to achieve identified goals of Task Force while performing all other job duties and responsibilities). Similarly, the **need for a specified Law Enforcement Supervisor** to direct proactive identification and recovery operations was identified by each of the interview participants representing Law Enforcement agencies.

### **3. Reorganization of Human Trafficking Task Force**

#### **a. “Core” Human Trafficking Task Force Members**

Many current Human Trafficking Task Forces have a specified “core” group of members specifically responsible for proactive Human Trafficking identification and recovery operations. Our current Human Trafficking Task Force needs to be reorganized to include a similar “core” group of members. Many interview participants emphasized this need. In particular, “core” members of the Human Trafficking Task Force would include:

1. One identified Law Enforcement Supervisor
2. One Law Enforcement member from each jurisdiction within Santa Barbara County
3. Two - four dedicated Victim Advocates for both North and South County with flexible work hours (e.g., because a survivor of DCST may often be identified outside “normal” working hours and it is critical to have a Victim Advocate available for the survivor as soon as identified)
4. One specified counselor from both North County and South County Rape Crisis Centers
5. At least one specified Social Worker from Child Welfare Services
6. At least one specified Probation Officer
7. At least one Medical Health Care Provider
8. At least one Prosecutor
9. One Juvenile Court Judge
10. At least one District Attorney, Criminal Investigator

Two specific “teams” in Santa Barbara County that may serve as a model for the development and management of the “core” Human Trafficking Task Force are the Santa Barbara Regional Narcotic Enforcement Team (SBRNET) and the Sexual Assault Response Team (SART). Both SBRNET and SART have functioned in Santa Barbara County as effective models, and elements could be used as an example. Most notably, SART’s response protocol and consistent meetings regarding clients, and SBRNET’s freedom of jurisdiction.

#### **b. Resources for Core HTTF Members**

Critical to the effectiveness of the “Core” Human Trafficking Task Force is the allocation of appropriate financial resources to support each of the required “core” members. Santa Barbara County is extremely fortunate to have incredibly dedicated and knowledgeable individuals ready to focus on Human Trafficking and address this issue in our County; however, it is imperative that members be given the resources, including finances, directive, and specific goals, to serve effectively.

At present, Santa Barbara County’s response to DCST, and Human Trafficking more generally, has been reactive rather than proactive. Interview participants indicated that the allocation of necessary financial resources for a “core” group of Task Force members is needed to conduct more targeted and effective proactive identification and

recovery operations.

It will be important for all agencies and organizations to take advantage of available federal and state grant opportunities that provide needed funding to address issue of Human Trafficking.

### **c. Proactive Efforts of HTTF for Formerly Identified and Future Survivors**

Specific proactive identification and recovery operations should initially focus on the 45 confirmed survivors and the 80 suspected (unconfirmed) child survivors of domestic sex trafficking in Santa Barbara County. Efforts to reestablish relationships (or establish, if needed) with each of these 125 known and suspected child survivors of domestic sex trafficking is critical for multiple reasons.

First, it is important to understand whether any of these children are still being sexually exploited. If so, specific recovery and treatment plans should be developed to facilitate the child's ability to get out of "the life" and successfully engage in the identified treatment plan. As shared, studies of survivors of DCST have highlighted that each survivor will have unique needs. For treatment efforts to be effective, the unique needs of each survivor must be taken into careful consideration. Effective treatment programs have identified the importance of having the survivor be involved in the development of their recovery and treatment plan.<sup>38</sup>

Targeted recovery efforts aimed at currently known and suspected child survivors of domestic sex trafficking in Santa Barbara County will offer important information about effective strategies for identification and recovery operations and specific areas for improvement. DCST is incredibly complex and for our County's efforts to be as effective as possible, a careful, detailed examination of known and suspected child survivors of domestic sex trafficking will significantly enhance our available understanding of this issue in our county.

### **d. Include Survivors on HTTF**

Survivors should be included on the "Core" Human Trafficking Task Force. Survivors have offered significant insight and assistance in other Task Forces around the state and nation. Survivors are the most knowledgeable resource about this issue and can provide significant information about all aspects of DCST from survivor's needs, traffickers, recruitment methods, specific trafficking practices, and trafficking locations.<sup>39</sup>

### **e. Strengthen Human Trafficking Task Force Committee Members**

The number of members currently serving on the Human Trafficking Task Force provides ample evidence of the significant interest in this specific issue. For those members not serving on the "core" Task Force, it is recommended that current committees be examined in consideration of the recommendations offered in this Needs Assessment Report.

Committees must develop specific goals and measurable objectives to achieve stated goals that include specified timelines. Santa Barbara County has extremely

motivated individuals with diverse backgrounds committed to this issue and it is important to more effectively utilize these members to achieve identified goals.

#### **4. Human Trafficking Data Management System**

For our county to be effective in our efforts to address DCST, it is essential that we establish a Human Trafficking database for tracking child survivors of domestic sex trafficking. This will require that all agencies and organizations involved with survivors of domestic child sex trafficking include this specific category in their current database systems. At present, there is no agency that is tracking survivors of DCST.

It is also imperative that agency databases be examined to provide important information about children vulnerable and at high-risk for domestic sex trafficking. In trying to gather statistics about children that run away, it was clear that current databases (i.e., Law Enforcement, Child Welfare Services, and Juvenile Probation) are not set up to easily provide important information about this vulnerable group of children. In particular, efforts aimed to support children vulnerable to domestic sex trafficking would benefit from databases that provide a list of children that have run away, the frequency of running away, location from where they ran away, and history of abuse and neglect. Further, staff within agencies coming into contact with at-risk, suspected, or confirmed children being sexually trafficking must also be trained to prioritize entering this data.

#### **5. Human Trafficking Screening and Assessment Instruments**

Each agency and organization working with children in Santa Barbara County need to utilize appropriate screening tools and assessment instruments to ensure proper identification of child survivors of domestic sex trafficking. At the time of this Needs Assessment, no specific screening tools and/or assessment instruments of DCST were being used by any agencies or organizations in Santa Barbara County. Screening tools and Assessment instruments are especially critical for Law Enforcement, Child Welfare Services, Probation, Social Service Providers, SART team, School Personnel and Health Care Providers.

Based on recent communications, there are two possible screening and assessment tools being examined for use in our County. The *Child Welfare Human Trafficking Initial Assessment*, also known as “Rapid Responder”, is designed to be used by first responders to assess an identified or suspected survivor.<sup>40</sup> Mental Health Staff at Juvenile Hall and the Pediatrician at Juvenile Hall have been trained on the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) tool, which does have a specific module that assesses sex trafficking. It is important that the “Rapid Responder,” the CANS, or another appropriate screener be used by Law Enforcement, Probation, Child Welfare Services, and Social Service Providers as a means to both identify child survivors of domestic sex trafficking and design appropriate treatment plans. The CANS may also be used as an evaluation tool, which is also critical in increasing our effectiveness and overall understanding of child survivors of domestic sex trafficking.

## **6. Improved Communication and Collaboration**

Given the complexity of DCST, our County's effectiveness is dependent on a countywide, multi-agency collaborative approach to addressing this issue. It is critical that each agency and organization commits to a Survivor-Centered, Trauma-Informed approach, and use this approach in their communication and collaboration with one another.

It is important that agencies and organizations make it as easy and efficient as possible for communication and information sharing about survivors to occur. Issues of confidentiality need to be discussed and specific methods for sharing information need to be identified. Law Enforcement, Juvenile Probation, Social Service Providers, and Child Welfare Services must be able to easily work together to facilitate intervention and treatment efforts for child survivors of domestic sex trafficking. For example, Juvenile Probation needs to establish necessary confidentiality agreements and/or MOU's with Social Service Providers providing services to children in Juvenile Hall to maintain a continuum of consistent care for child survivors of domestic sex trafficking, especially with changes in placement (e.g., release from Juvenile Hall and placed in group homes within and outside of Santa Barbara County).

It is also important that communication and collaboration efforts include other Human Trafficking Task Forces, where present, and if not, other Law Enforcement, Child Welfare Systems, and Juvenile Probation Departments (i.e., San Luis Obispo Child Welfare Services). Available information on sex trafficking demonstrates that many local child survivors of domestic sex trafficking are trafficked in other cities within California, as well as other states. Similarly, many survivors from other cities within California, and from other states are sexually trafficked in Santa Barbara County. To be effective in recovery operations, we need to work together across county and state lines to access as much information as possible about survivors as quickly as possible. Agreements or MOU's that are needed must be established prior to investigations and the opening of cases in order to expedite the process of resourcing survivors of DCST.

## **7. Develop Protocols**

There is considerable experience and knowledge among Human Trafficking Task Force members to develop needed protocols for Human Trafficking within our county. Further assistance in the development of needed protocols is available from other counties and leading agencies and organizations at the forefront of addressing Human Trafficking.

It is recognized that protocols need to reflect that "one size does not fit all" and that there are many possible pathways through which survivors of DCST may be identified and each survivor may have unique characteristics and circumstances that require an individualized plan. For example, special considerations needed for mental health needs, alcohol and drug addiction, medical needs, and Child Welfare history.

## 8. Funding Priorities

There are very specific needed resources for child survivors of domestic sex trafficking that are currently unavailable or extremely limited in Santa Barbara County. As our County becomes more focused and effective in identifying and recovering survivors of DCST, it is imperative that we have the necessary support systems in place for child survivors.

### a. Trauma-informed Care and Therapy

Interviews identified that CALM, Rape Crisis Centers, and ADMHS Mental Health Staff at Juvenile Hall have provided, and are available to continue providing, therapeutic services to child survivors of domestic sex trafficking. It will be important to evaluate what additional resources each of these agencies and organizations need in order to respond to the complex needs of survivors of DCST, as well as capacity for providing services to child survivors of domestic sex trafficking in the future.

### b. Housing Placements

Housing and quality placement options are also critical for child survivors of domestic sex trafficking. Although we do have one emergency shelter in South County that serves children up to 18 years, Noah's Anchorage may not be the most appropriate placement when considering the many complex needs of survivors of DCST. Funding would be required if Noah's Anchorage was to serve as an emergency shelter for survivors of DCST in order to increase number of beds and staff members. There is also a need for an emergency shelter in North County.

It is also important to note that a group, emergency shelter facility may not be the most appropriate long-term placement option for some survivors and it is critical that we identify alternative housing options. Commercially Sexually Exploited Children (CSEC) Foster Homes have been discussed as possible promising housing options for some survivors of DCST. Intensive therapeutic, in-home treatment efforts have also been identified as effective treatment options for child survivors of domestic sex trafficking, in which a therapist provides extensive and intensive services with the child survivor and his/her parent/guardian to facilitate improved individual as well as family relationships.

### c. Designated Staff

Appropriate funding of designated staff is a primary need. Designated staff from Child Welfare Services, Probation, Law Enforcement, Rape Crisis Centers, Victim Witness, as well as a designated District Attorney Prosecutor and Criminal investigator. It will be critical for these agencies to recognize this need and create new and/or modify existing protocol in order for these positions to be effective. Coordination of services must be a priority for all designated staff, or be included in a separate funded position.

### d. Drug/Alcohol Treatment Services

Given the frequency of drug/alcohol issues among child survivors of domestic sex trafficking, it is important that specialized drug/alcohol treatment services for survivors

of DCST be included in treatment plans, especially for youth placed in Juvenile Hall, where it was reported that no current drug/alcohol treatment services are offered.

**e. Additional Services**

Funding and/or developing additional services important for child survivors of domestic sex trafficking might include:

- i. Girl's Group and Girl's Unit at Juvenile Hall**
- ii. Girl's Court**
- iii. Education and life-skill development**
- iv. Employment opportunities: training and placements**
- v. Mentoring networks**

## **9. Training, Public Awareness, and Prevention Efforts**

Given the complexity of DCST in Santa Barbara County, training needs to be a continued emphasis. Although trainings of Human Trafficking have been offered, it is clear that additional trainings for all staff who may come into contact with child survivors of domestic sex trafficking is critical. Almost three quarters of interview participants (71%) highlighted the need for training. In particular, 75% of law enforcement, 88% of social service providers, and 75% of probation staff mentioned this need. Types of trainings recommended by participants included: specific training for first responders on identification and recovery, as well as a series of trainings on DCST tailored for different audiences, such as general public, administrators within agencies, probation, foster parents, Child Welfare Services, Planned Parenthood, judges, and patrol officers.

For Santa Barbara County to be as effective as possible in our efforts to address domestic child sex trafficking, it is imperative that we increase our community's awareness and understanding of this issue. It is recommended that our community engage in public awareness campaigns, particularly highlighting the presence of DCST in the Santa Barbara County. Distributing information about indicators of trafficking and a phone number by which to report suspected trafficking situations is a needed initiative.

Critical to our efforts is the need for prevention activities for all children, girls and boys, especially those with risk factors associated with DCST. A general prevention strategy is to include prevention education within school systems. Including curriculum that educates children about the risks, realities, and recruitment strategies of child sex trafficking could reduce the number of children who are exploited. As local survivor Carissa Phelps reiterates, "Prevention is key." This education within school systems might include posters with a local hotline or the National Human Trafficking Hotline.

## **Summary**

In sum, Santa Barbara County has ample evidence that the heinous crime of domestic child sex trafficking is a disturbing and present reality each day in our community. Similarly, we have ample evidence that our current comprehensive approach to identifying and resourcing child survivors of domestic sex trafficking is alarmingly deficient.

This Needs Assessment offers our community a needed guide for future directions aimed at better addressing the issue of DCST in our community, resulting in immediate and sizeable shifts in agency protocol, funding, staffing, and administrative directive. With the current Task Force, this Needs Assessment, and many champions ready and willing to act, Santa Barbara County is poised to make considerable improvements and gain momentum in our approach to DCST.

With the 45 confirmed survivors, 80 suspected survivors, and 461 children extremely vulnerable to domestic child sex trafficking in mind, as well as the recognition that many other survivors remain unidentified, the urgency is evident.



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