

Violence and the trauma bond in sex trafficking of Native women and youth

National Indigenous Women's Resource Center
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Battering vs. pimping

- Both types of violence are perpetrated within the context of a real or pretended intimate partner relationship
- Purpose for both is power & control
- Batterers' violence is to control the victim
- Pimps' violence is to ensure economic gain BY controlling the victim

Intimate partner pimping

- Create an emotional bond
- Psychological manipulation to increase self-doubt, uncertainty, dependency
- Arbitrarily alternate strategic, calculated, and brutal violence with kindness, gifts, and special treatment
- Keep the victim focused entirely on pleasing the trafficker, who defines who she is and what she is good for

Breaking and controlling process

- Arbitrarily alternating violence with loving affection to keep her off balance
- Using mind games to foster self-doubt
- Instilling the belief that she is responsible for her own misery

Sexual violence: Strategic tool

- Used to “turn out” victims for prostitution
- Used to “break” victims, to eliminate resistance
- Used to “audition” victims for high-level market segments
- Used to degrade and humiliate victims, for “inventory control” purposes

Torture and sex trafficking

- Research shows torture to be a core strategy in sex trafficking
- It is for a purpose, but the purpose is economic rather than political

“Torture transcends political ends, and is a tool by which some seek to supply the raw material—female human beings—for consumption in the commercial sex industry” (Thompson, 2011).

International Red Cross (ICRC)

- Torture has a specific purpose + involves intentional infliction of severe suffering or pain
- Cruel or inhuman treatment has no specific purpose, but involves infliction of a significant level of suffering or pain
- Outrages upon personal dignity have no specific purpose, but involve a significant level of humiliation or degradation

Biderman’s chart of coercion

Military method	How pimps use it
Isolation (to make victim dependent on interrogator)	Separate victim from friends/family, resources, emotional support and ability to meet basic needs Eliminate access to avenues of potential intervention or rescue Make dependent on pimp for all needs Play girls against each other: “Discipline” one another, punish all for one victim’s “wrongs”

Biderman’s chart of coercion

Military method	How pimps use it
Monopolize perception (to frustrate all actions not consistent with compliance)	Require the victim to immediately answer phone calls/texts regardless of situation. Make her justify her every action, constantly questioning her love and loyalty. Focus her attention on how she “caused” abuse or negative experiences

Biderman's chart of coercion

Military method	How pimps use it
Induce debility and exhaustion (weaken mental and physical ability to resist)	Control if, when, and what the victim eats. Make the victim's sleep time conditional and inconsistent. Impose quotas for how many tricks, how much money she must deliver each day. Permit no "down time," schedule back-to-back "dates" over a 48 hour period.

Biderman's chart of coercion

Military method	How pimps use it
Threats (to cultivate anxiety and despair)	Create an environment of constant fear: Death threats, mock execution Threaten to harm the victim's child or take the child away (hostage babies) Threaten to (or actually) harm her family or pets Threaten to turn her in to the police or Child Protection Destroy her belongings

Biderman's chart of coercion

Military method	How pimps use it
Occasional and unexpected indulgences (to provide positive motivation for compliance)	Sporadic concern for the victim's well-being, arbitrary acts of kindness Indicate preference over the other girls Tell her she's "the special one," "the only one who really loves me" Unexpected gifts/treats: expensive clothing, jewelry, "special" time alone with the pimp

Biderman's chart of coercion

Military method	How pimps use it
Demonstrate omnipotence (to show futility of resistance)	Extreme physical violence Pimp circles/multiple-pimp discipline Stalking her, suddenly appearing when she does not expect it Destroy her money when she is "short," and send her out to "make up the loss" or suffer the consequences

Biderman's chart of coercion

Military method	How pimps use it
Degradation (make the cost of resistance greater than the cost of compliance)	Constant verbal abuse and "put downs" Urinate on the victim, smear her with excrement Force her to sleep in a dog crate Require that she perform degrading or demeaning sexual acts in front of an audience

Biderman's chart of coercion

Military method	How pimps use it
Enforce trivial demands (to get the victim in the habit of compliance without questioning the logic)	Create (and arbitrarily change) rigid "house rules" that govern appearance, behavior, and responsibilities Play "mind games," forcing her to question her own perceptions (falsely insist she was told to do "x" and disobeyed by not doing it, or hide an item and then accuse her of losing it/throwing it away)

Federal case 2012-2013, MN

Washington family trafficking operation

- 2 brothers (Otis, 29 & Antonio, 26), 2 uncles (Robert, 55 & Calvin, 49)
- 5 victims ages 15 - early 20s (one Native)
- Brutal violence, death threats
- Otis, 40-year sentence; Antonio 36 years
- Robert pled guilty to 2nd degree ST, got 12.5 years probation/community service
- One victim said Robert was “most violent”

State-prosecuted case (MN) 2013

Arteco M. Rhodes, 38

- Trafficked young women ages 15 - 19
- Drove one victim to an isolated area, beat her with fists and a baseball bat, urinated on her, strangled her until she passed out
- Threatened to kill her if she told anyone her age or what he had done
- Convicted for sex trafficking & possession of child porn

Other recent cases

Location	Victim age	Use of force, fraud, coercion
Portland OR Antonio V. Porter Age 28 (2015)	15	Threatened to harm victim’s family, struck her in the head with a toddler bike, cut her with a knife, beat her
Albuquerque NM David J. Lynch Age 39 (2015)	20s	Verbal threats, held knife to victim’s throat, told her he would “track her down and kill her” if she tried to escape
Rochester MN Lee A. Paul Age 34 (2015)	12 16	Raped both girls, threatened to kill the 12-year-old and her family

Other recent cases

Location	Victim age	Use of force, fraud, coercion
Long Beach CA Roshawn N. Porter Age 39	20s (5)	Physical violence, psychological abuse, threats to harm family members
Memphis TN LaRon Matlock Age 33 (2014)	16 19	Sexual relationship w/older girl, her friend came to visit. Imprisoned both in his home, beat them, gave them Ecstasy & Xanax to keep them awake for days, wouldn't allow sleep
New York NY Jabar Gilliam Age 32 (2015)	16	Physical/sexual assault, threatened to kill victim & her family.

Other recent cases

Location	Victim age	Use of force, fraud, coercion
Chicago IL Datqunn Sawyer Age 32	11-17 (6)	Pounded girls' feet with a hammer. Split one girl's head open with her high-heeled shoe. Poked a pregnant girl's belly with a pimp stick, then split her head open with a glass ashtray. Re-named them, branded them with tattoos.
New York NY Jeremy Naughton Age 32	19-28 (4)	Physical assaults, humiliation, confinement, death threats, choking. Broke the neck of one woman's dog when she refused to prostitute.

What we know about trauma

Psychological trauma results from direct personal experience with:

- Actual or threatened death/serious injury
- Other threat to one's physical integrity
- Witnessing an event that involves death, injury, or a threat to the physical integrity of another person
- Learning about unexpected/violent death, serious harm, or threat of death/injury experienced by a loved one

Trauma bonding

- First recognized as Stockholm Syndrome, where hostages bond to their captors.
- Graham and her colleagues differentiated between the trauma bonding seen in battered women and the trauma bonding seen in Stockholm Syndrome
- These researchers specified 4 conditions that laid the foundation for a trauma bond with an intimate partner

The 4 conditions

- A person threatens to kill the victim, is perceived as having the ability to do so;
- The victim cannot escape, so her/his life depends on the threatening person;
- The victim is isolated from others so the only viewpoint available is that of the threatening person; and
- The victim perceives kindness/love in the perpetrator, giving her hope that she/he will be allowed to live

Biochemical aspects of trauma bonds

- In times of stress/danger, people have a greater need to attach to others (Saporta & van der Kolk, 1992)
- When traumatic events are repeated and overwhelming, the victim's brain is conditioned to be in a constant state of fight, flight, or freeze
- The brain develops new neural pathways and brain chemistry changes

Neurohormones

In stressful situations, the brain generates:

- Oxytocin (the birth/bonding hormone), which prevents consolidation of memory
- Estrogen amplifies the effect of oxytocin, so women more vulnerable
- Norepinephrine is primary in long-term memory storage

Constant/repeated traumatic events

- Repeated overload of oxytocin can promote bonding to the perpetrator
- Repeated overload of norepinephrine can over-condition the brain to “remember” trauma
- When traumatic events are repeated and overwhelming, the victim’s brain is conditioned to be in a constant state of fight, flight, or freeze—and cannot decide

Trauma bond impacts

- Crushing shame, humiliation, mortification
- Feelings of responsibility for the pimp and her own victimization
- Feeling dehumanized, “less than”
- Anger/resentment for “interfering” helpers
- Paradoxical gratitude toward pimp
- Defilement, feeling dirty, disgusting
- Reduced capacity for intimacy
- Resignation, a state of despair

Trauma Informed Care for Sex Trafficked & Prostituted Native Women

National Indigenous Women's Resource Center

Webinar: August 24, 2015
Chris Stark: MFA, MSW Student

Trauma

- Trauma is an experience or situation that is emotionally and/ or physically painful and distressing, and includes a response that is characterized by intense feelings

Impact of Trauma

- Past 30 years significant change in comprehension of trauma's impact on individual, family, community, society
- Roots in social and political advocacy
- Studies show abuse's impact on
 - Brain
 - Physical health
 - Mental health
 - Relationships(Need to understand impact on communities)

First Core Aspect of Trauma Informed Care

Organizations and practices that understand and incorporate pervasive nature of trauma

- Impact of trauma is fully acknowledged
- Designed to reduce retraumatization, support healing and resiliency, address root causes of abuse and violence in individual, culturally attuned, welcoming

First Core Aspect of Trauma Informed Care

- All service providers, employees, board members, and volunteers in an organization:
 - understands impact of trauma
 - share values & goals
- Understand root causes of trafficking of Native women:
 - Ongoing impact of colonization
 - Sexism
 - Racism
 - Poverty
 - Homelessness

First Core Aspect of Trauma Informed Care

- Victim may have significant past abuse
- Incorporate past abuse into her current situation and response to that situation
- Victim may have participated in abuse of others either through force, lack of choice, or for other reasons
- Incorporate the complicated feelings from this: self-blame, shame, and confusion about whether she is also a perpetrator

First Core Aspect of Trauma Informed Care

- Victim may have unresolved legal and/or criminal statuses
- Prepare organizations & service providers such that they can “hold space” for all of the survivor’s experiences, feelings, and actions

Second Core Aspect of Trauma Informed Care

- Focus on harm AND strengths of survivor
- Avoid dehumanizing survivors by turning them into “pathetic victims” who need “saving”
 - “Puppy dog victim” versus “dirty/criminal”
 - Instead understand
 - “Symptoms” = Survival Strategies
 - adaptations to intolerable situations
 - Not all symptoms are “pretty” or socially acceptable

Second Core Aspect of Trauma Informed Care

- Strength & resiliency of survivors
- “disorder” and “mental illness” versus “gift” and “difference”
 - dissociation as a gift from the spirits to survive
 - dissociation as healing
 - especially important in substance abuse work

Third Core Aspect of Trauma Informed Care

Clarifying good responses in cultures and communities

- Strength of community
 - prevention
 - care and healing after assault
 - support/not blaming victims
 - accept and welcome victims (belonging)
 - protect/stand up for victims

Third Core Aspect of Trauma Informed Care

Coordinate multi-disciplinary response of First Responders

- Medical—emergency rooms, nurses, SANE nurses, doctors, etc.
- Criminal Justice System—law enforcement agencies, prosecutors, health care professionals, emergency responders, 911 operators, advocates, child protective services, etc.
- Community—local businesses and employers, religious leaders, educators, etc.

Fourth Core Aspect of Trauma Informed Care

Awareness of impact on “helpers” and support for “helpers”

- importance of organization’s support and “helper’s” self-care
- “research” teams
- community organizers
- create talking circles

VAWA Identified Causes of Trauma

- Medical interventions
- War
- Childhood abuse & neglect
- Physical, emotional, and/or sexual abuse
- Grief and loss
- Accidents & natural disasters
- Witnessing acts of violence
- Cultural, intergenerational and historical trauma

VAWA Identified Causes of Trauma Applied to Native sex trafficked and prostituted

- Medical interventions:
 - forced sterilizations of Native women
 - racism—assumed “drunk”, less than
- Childhood abuse or neglect
 - “Garden”—79% had average of four perpetrators in childhood
 - sex trafficking & prostitution *IS* childhood abuse
 - abuse in foster care & by adoptive parents (high placement of Native children in system)
 - if also Native LGBT & Two Spirit—higher rates of abuse in home and system

VAWA Identified Causes of Trauma

Applied to Native sex trafficked and prostituted

Physical, emotional, and/or sexual abuse

- Highest rate of violence of any group is against Native women
- Experience all 3 in domestic violence, sexual assault, police abuse, childhood & adult
- Targeted by non-Native men due to jurisdictional issues

VAWA Identified Causes of Trauma

Applied to Native sex trafficked and prostituted

Grief and Loss

- Historical—92% loss of Native population
- Loss of land and culture
- Murder and disappearance
- Prostituted/trafficked
- Duluth ships
- Canadian 1800+ missing and murdered—Highway of Tears
- Vancouver pig farm
- Taken from family and tribe
- Enrollment issues for self and/or children

VAWA Identified Causes of Trauma

Applied to Native sex trafficked and prostituted

Witnessing acts of violence

- Family violence as children
- Others hurt in prostitution & trafficking
 - As “examples” to maintain control of all victims
- Against animals
- Against own children
- Other family members

VAWA Identified Causes of Trauma

Applied to Native sex trafficked and prostituted

Cultural, intergenerational and historical trauma

- All three experienced by Native women
- Attempted genocide—centuries of sexual & physical violence including sex trafficking
- Boarding schools—2/3 of “Garden”
- Relocation
- Theft of children by “system”
- Assimilation as survival and subsequent intergenerational loss of culture and tribal membership
- Forced sterilization
- Spiritual practices illegal until 1978
- “Microaggressions”
- Colonization—poverty, homelessness

VAWA Identified Causes of Trauma

Applied to Native sex trafficked and prostituted

Cultural, intergenerational and historical trauma

- Intergenerational family violence, especially from boarding schools
- Family/intergenerational prostitution & sex trafficking
 - Ships
 - “Garden” interviews
 - 62% of Native prostituted and trafficked women saw a connection between prostitution and colonization, and explained that the devaluation of women in prostitution was identical to the colonizing devaluation of Native people

Adverse Childhood Experience

- 8 areas studied
- Abuse: Recurrent physical, emotional, sexual
- Household Dysfunction: someone in prison, mother treated violently, alcoholic or drug abuser, one bio-parent lost, someone chronically mentally ill, depressed, or suicidal

ACE Results

- Study found number of categories determine health outcomes
- American Indian and Alaska Native children and youth have high or highest rate in all categories
- (including violence versus AI mothers—50% higher than Black males)

AI/Alaska Native ACE Results

- 86% one or more categories
- 33% four or more categories

Multiple Traumas

- When people have multiple traumatic experiences the impact of the trauma is cumulative resulting in chronic, serious mental and physical health consequences

Multiple Traumas for Native Prostituted & Trafficked Women

- If they have a pimp, similar to being battered and raped by a partner, ie domestic violence
- Native prostituted & trafficked women/youth are sold to many men
- 48% more than 200 "sex buyers"
- 16% more than 900 "sex buyers"
- 68% recently raped in Vancouver study
- 72% kidnapped in Vancouver study
- 75% severe physical injuries—broken bones, spinal injuries, etc in Vancouver study
- Perpetration by multiple men is prostitution & sex trafficking

Multiple Traumas for Native Prostituted & Trafficked Women

Men, “pimps” & “johns” (primarily white in the U.S.) are:

- racist
- sexually violent
- physically violent
- verbally violent
- financially exploitative

Cumulative Trauma: Multiple Results & Risks

The more they are abused the more difficult it is to leave and the more at risk they become

- High rate of homelessness
- 98% were previously or currently homeless
- 52% of Native women in prostitution & trafficking had PTSD at the time of the interview, similar rate as combat war veterans
- 71% dissociative
- 72% traumatic brain injuries

Manifestation of Trauma:

Many ways, can overwhelm ability to cope

- Short-term: shock and denial
 - fear
 - concern for the safety of themselves and others
- Long-term:
 - embarrassment
 - shame
 - self-blame
 - minimization of violence
 - normalization (Stark)

Dolores Subia Bigfoot, Ph.D.

- Historically, Native families used extended family network to raise children
- Survival depended on interdependency of family
- To regain balance, one must change thinking, feelings, and beliefs about a traumatic event

Trauma in Indian Country

- Historical trauma
- Individual trauma
- Oppression & cultural trauma

- Incarceration, accidental death, violence, child abuse, domestic/family violence, suicide, substance abuse

- At center: Cumulative trauma

AI/Alaska Native Wellbeing

- A balance exists among spiritual, emotional, mental, physical, and relational dimensions of a person
- Goal is to achieve and maintain balance

AI/Alaska Native Cultural Practice

- Teach AI understanding of well being
- That all aspects are interconnected aspects of ourselves
- Help individual draw upon traditional ways to move toward spiritual balance
- Help install enthusiasm for life, hope, willingness to meet new challenges
- Increase sense of self identity, self-worth, self-knowledge

BigFoot's Model of AI Wellbeing

- Spiritual at center, surrounded by:
- Physical, mental, emotional, relational

- Overarching values:
- Respect
- Harmony
- Balance
- Connectedness
- Wellness

Best Practices for Native Prostituted & Trafficked Women

Incorporate:

- core aspects of Trauma Informed work
 - domestic violence & sexual assault
- issues specific to prostituted & trafficked
- Native culturally specific ways

Next Steps

- Dialogue
- Collaborate
- Hire Native women
- Hire prostituted & trafficked women
- Make room for their leadership
