



**UNDER** **The Radar**  
The Sexual Exploitation of Young Men

Under the Radar: The Sexual Exploitation of Young Men

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## Preface

Over the past 15 years, much of my research has been focused on young people involved in the sexual exploitation trade. This academic research extends primarily through three interconnected pieces of work.

The first piece of interviewing took place in 1991-1992, and was released as my PhD dissertation in 1994 entitled *The Youngest Profession the Oldest Oppression*. During that time, I interviewed 50 young people in Calgary. This involved 41 females and nine males, 25% of which were Aboriginal. This research found 82% of this population had experienced sexual abuse prior to their entrance into the sexual exploitation trade. It also demonstrated professionals had both ignored and failed to recognize the abuse this population had experienced prior to their entrance into the trade. In fact, many had failed to act while young people were being sexually exploited in front of them. Given this failure to intervene, it was in fact a form of state supported sexual abuse. In the end, this research resulted in raising both social and political attention in The City of Calgary and The Province of Alberta.

Over time, I observed the growing acceptance of youth involved in prostitution as a form of sexual abuse. I watched The City of Calgary and The Province of Alberta embrace this paradigm shift, subsequently resulting in policy, legislative and program changes. This paradigm shift slowly spread across the country as the term 'youth prostitution' was replaced by the term 'sexual exploitation.' Today these two terms are used interchangeably.

The second piece of research was initiated by two former youths I had interviewed in 1991-1992, who challenged me to revisit the same questions I had originally asked them 10 years later in order to see what had and hadn't worked. I took the challenge, and in 2002 a retrospective longitudinal study titled *Strolling Away* was released.

At that point, I had accounted for and interviewed 38 of the original 50 people I had interviewed 10 years previously. Some of the women had worked in the United States: primarily Las Vegas, California or Hawaii. Two women from this group ended up working in Japan for up to six months and found it difficult to escape back home. The men seemed to work primarily throughout Canada.

In this study, I learned both young women and men could survive this experience; however, the painful scarring remains. We also learned that for young women, the value of producing a child, or the desire to produce children, brings with it both family and state support. Eighty two percent of women from this study had in fact produced children. On the contrary, the physical birthing of a child was not an option available to young men. From our small sample of young men, we learned they enter the trade younger and stay twice as long. Childbirth was not a viable route to exit for young men as it is for young women. We also learned through interviewing the same men 10 years later that we tend to view sexual exploitation of children through a female lens only. Young men inquired as to why we still asked them questions from a 'chick perspective'.

This second piece of research made it apparent that we as professionals and as a society knew very little about young men entering the sexual exploitation trade. Why and how do they enter? How do they work? How long do they stay? What is the lifestyle? How do they exit?

This lack of knowledge was the impetus to begin the following connected piece of work entitled *Under the Radar: The Sexual Exploitation of Young Men*.

This research aims to answer some of those important questions. Hopefully in doing so, we will be better able to assist younger men by providing specialized support services in order to help them live safe, healthy, meaningful lives.

# Acknowledgements

This research was made possible with the support and energy of AIDS Calgary who provided guidance through many stages of this project, as well many individuals, anonymous donors, The Province of Alberta Ministry of Children's Services, and the Calgary Health Region.

The following organizations provided invaluable support, direction, and information:

- AIDS Calgary Awareness Association
- Alberta Youth In Care & Custody Network
- Boys & Girls Club of Calgary
- Calgary Drop In Centre
- Calgary Rockyview Child and Family Services
- The City of Calgary Police Services
- Crossroads
- Edmonton Catholic Social Services
- Gay and Lesbian Community Services and Support Association (Calgary)
- Inner City Youth Housing Project
- Kindred House
- Métis Child and Family Services
- Mount Royal College
- The City of Edmonton Police Services
- The Province of Alberta Ministry of Children's Services
- The Province of Alberta Solicitor General
- Woods Homes

## Dedication

This project is dedicated to those young men who encouraged me to listen to their very compelling personal stories. They challenged my previous research as being too “chick focused”, believing there was an imbalance to looking at the issue of sexual exploitation of children solely through a female lens. This was a fact I had to face up to and address. It was this challenge that drove my determination to have an independent story told of the sexual exploitation of young men.

Thank you Fadi, Pytor and Zac who gave freely of their time to make sure this material moved toward a male perspective. You have created a lens for the voices of sexually exploited males to be heard.

To the Alberta Youth In Care and Custody Network who ensured the language of the questionnaires were youth friendly.

To Kevin Midbo, Garth Goertz, and Eric Berndt who assisted me in understanding and communicating appropriate terminology for the gay community.

To all of the Research Assistants who embraced the value and need for such a study.

To the 37 young men in Alberta (2003-2004) who took the time to share their stories with the five Research Assistants, thank you for your time and honesty.

To Krista, Lori, Corey, Kristy, Shawna and Irene for your assistance in coordinating interviews in Edmonton.

A special thanks to Dan Biggs who worked as an Interviewer and Project Coordinator, MSW Practicum Student and as an Interviewer.

Finally, to the spirit of Ms. Adventure who continues to inspire and motivate my personal commitment towards helping sexually exploited youth.

## The Researcher

With over 20 years experience in the non-profit, public and private sectors, Dr. Sue McIntyre has developed a unique set of skills and expertise.

As a scholar and educator, Dr. Sue McIntyre is well recognized for her expertise in the areas of child sexual abuse and prostitution. She has made over 100 workshop presentations and keynote addresses to provincial, national and international conferences.

As an international research and policy advisor, Dr. McIntyre appreciates the relationship between research, the law and social policy in the development of social programs.

As a social service practitioner, she has combined her human service background with an entrepreneurial business flair. She clearly understands the social sector's challenge to meet mission goals, and helps them integrate mainstream business practices and accountability into their daily operations.

As a leader in effecting organizational change and development, she has established a strong track record in identifying and meeting the needs of an organization.

As a fundraiser, her ability to provide an analytical, business approach towards matching a company's community interests to high priority social issues have earned her the respect of Calgary's foundations and corporate sector.

Her broad fundraising experience includes approving foundation grants, applying for foundation grants and securing sponsorship from numerous leading national and international corporations.

As an entrepreneur, she was responsible for the start-up of 25 operations in both the private and public sectors, guiding them from concept through to the stages of implementation and evaluation. Her pioneering work in designing a management service to partner the expertise of Calgary's corporate community with non-profit organizations was just one example of her work in this regard.

As a community volunteer, Dr. McIntyre has proven her personal commitment time and again. As a strong community advocate, she has co-chaired numerous volunteer committees and task forces involving justice, social services, health services and education.

As a professional who has devoted much of her life to helping sexually exploited youth, Dr. McIntyre's commitment to helping us better understand the sexual exploitation of young men is commendable. This important body of research is long overdue.

## Foreword

In December 2003, Dr. McIntyre assembled 10 individuals to assist and discuss the findings and content of the 37 interviews. The 10 people were a diverse group. There was a Senior Vice-President of an oil firm, a former civic politician, a health administrator, a private consultant, as well as non-profit and government representatives. In addition to this was a young woman named Allison and a young man named Harry. Both of these individuals were 'experiential', meaning they had worked and escaped the sexual exploitation trade.

The following is a letter Allison felt compelled to write to Harry and share with readers of this document:

*Dear Harry,*

*I have learned that it is not that we are so different in the scars that we both carry, the difference is in the way we received them. The experience that we both share is the act of sexual abuse, the process of that degradation, and the total rape of our souls. It is that shared experience that binds us both and binds us all.*

*When we spent time together talking about our individual journeys I was surprised to find out how differently we each handled things. I had assumed it was the same for the both of us..... it was not. Yes we both stood on a street, we both turned tricks, and we both collected money. How we got there, why we stayed and how we got off is where the differences were drastic.*

*I was shocked that you didn't have a pimp; it seemed to me that having a pimp was not only a requirement but some would say a law. Then you explained to me that instead of having a pimp, your predator often looked like an older man just wanting to give you a place to stay or a little help in exchange for constant sexual or physical abuse sometimes both. I guess that you had your own type of Pimp.*

*I expected that we both had to pretend we enjoyed what was happening which is in itself was completely unbearable, but I never even considered that you had to pretend to be straight or gay depending on what the situation required. Quite honestly, I cannot even begin to imagine where you had to try and run to in your imagination to be able to make yourself ready for a trick; I believe though that it must have been your own private hell. My hell consisted of KY Gel and the very strategic art of detachment.*

*We both fought off the bad dates, the people that would beat or kill us without the slightest moment of thought, but how did you manage to escape them and the people who travel in groups looking only to attack you for their pleasure? I am awed at your abilities and of mine to survive the things that only pass through most people's worst nightmares.*

*For all of the Harrys out there and to you, I would like you to know that I am truly sorry for all that you have been through and for all that you still live with. I know in my heart that this book will be the beginning of an understanding into what you have lived through and how to make a difference for the Harrys that still stand on the corners everywhere.*

*Allison*

# Executive Summary

In December of 2002, *Strolling Away* was released. *Strolling Away* represented a longitudinal retrospective study that examined young people from the sexual exploitation trade in 1991- 1992 and then again in 2001-2002. The opportunity to interview individuals 10 years later was valuable.

One of its major findings was that we know very little about young men involved in the sexual exploitation trade. The young men I interviewed commented on how my questions were “chick questions”. It was clear that we have traditionally looked at this issue through a female lens. It became evident through this study that more research was required in order to understand young men in the sexual exploitation trade.

Interviews for *Under the Radar: The Sexual Exploitation of Young Men*, began in March 2003 and wrapped up in October 2003. Thirty-seven young men were interviewed in total. Twenty- three interviews occurred in Calgary and 14 in Edmonton.

## **Characteristics of Respondents**

- 54% of this population are of Aboriginal heritage
- Over half had involvement with Child Welfare Services
- Over one third had completed high school
- 95% had a history of running away
- Close to 70% had a history prior to the street of being sexually violated
- Over three-quarters had been physically violated and witnessed aggression while growing up

- Close to three-quarters began under the age of 18
- Males enter the trade younger and stay longer than young women
- 86% experienced staying in shelters
- Almost everyone felt no one should do this type of work
- The fear of gay-bashing exists
- Drug use is extensive
- Exiting the trade is a long process, usually attempted more than once
- Almost everyone has, and does, access HIV / STD testing

### **Summary of Discoveries**

- Young men have comparable histories of sexual and physical abuse to young women
- Young men in this study were gay, heterosexual and bi-sexual
- Young men create a construct to be able to achieve a level of performance
- The issue of young men in the sexual exploitation trade creates a sense of discomfort
- Young men begin younger and work longer
- Young men fly under the radar of service providers
- Young men have unique service needs different from young women
- Public education on condom use and HIV testing has worked
- The connection between the street and drug use is longer for young men
- These young men have strained and distant relationships with their family
- Running away often triggers an entrance into the sexual exploitation trade

### **Summary Recommendations**

1. Efforts to expand this study into other parts of Canada should be supported.
2. Outreach programs need to return to a place of neutrality by providing an exemption for reporting youth.

3. That we publicly acknowledge both young women and men are at risk in the sexual exploitation trade.
4. That service providers be provided with gender non-conformity training.
5. That experiential young men be provided an opportunity to dialogue with service providers to help design services for this population.
6. That a series of rehabilitation beds be established to service young men who are detoxing from extensive drug use.
7. That safe, affordable accommodation is provided to this population after exiting the trade.
8. That we approach the issue of preventing customer demand.
9. That prevention programs and services both acknowledge and warn of the risk to both young men and women.
10. That the community recognizes sugar daddy relationships are damaging given the circumstances of this vulnerable population.
11. That mentoring connections be available from those who have successfully exited the trade or are trying to exit.
12. That prevention, intervention and re-integration materials be adjusted to reflect the risks of the sexual exploitation trade for both genders.
13. That an evaluation occurs of harm reduction approaches to sexually exploited youth.
14. That the National Youth In Care Network embrace the need for sexual awareness education.

# Introduction

Throughout 1991-1992, I researched the sexual exploitation trade in downtown Calgary. My goal was to observe and interact with this population in order to investigate the relationship of sexual abuse with a person's involvement in the trade. Fifty young people were interviewed as part of this study which was titled *The Youngest Profession, The Oldest Oppression*.

In 2000, with the realization that retrospective, longitudinal information on prostitution did not exist anywhere in Canada or the world, I made the decision to track as many participants from this original population to determine if they were still involved in the trade or not. In December 2002, this body of research was released, titled *Strolling Away*. This document included interviews that accounted for 38 of the original 50 people interviewed in 1991 – 1992.

During *Strolling Away* it became clear to me that males face very different challenges than females. It is my belief that for many years this social issue was examined through a female lens. Through *Strolling Away* it was discovered that there are differences. For example, males enter the sexual exploitation trade younger and stay longer.

My personal and professional interest in wanting to know more about this population and how we can better assist them initiated *Under the Radar: The Sexual Exploitation of Young Men*. Hopefully the following body of research will bring this issue out from under the radar to something we as a community can address proactively and effectively in the future.

# Section 1: Impetus & Methodology of the Research

## 1.1 Impetus for the research

Is there a difference between young men and women who enter into the sexual exploitation trade?

Since the early 1980's, I have been interviewing and working with young men and women involved in the sexual exploitation trade. Over that time, I have slowly been forced to recognize there are differences between men and women involved in this trade. In fact, for many years, this issue has been examined through a female lens.

Often when I speak publicly about my research, *The Youngest Profession: The Oldest Oppression* (McIntyre 1994) and *Strolling Away* (McIntyre 2002), people would say “those poor young women”. While this is true, for the past 12 years I have always had to remind people that this sample includes men as well.

Following the completion and release of *Strolling Away* (2002), it was obvious that a study pertaining to males was needed. *Strolling Away* has recommended the male study, and the Alberta Government along with a series of anonymous donors recognized the need to understand this social issue from a male perspective and saw the need to further balance the scales by recognizing both young women and men are sexually exploited.

The goal of this study is to impact youth involved in sex work at the levels of prevention, intervention and (re)integration.

To do this effectively, there is a need to have a clear understanding of the unique differences of often-ignored males involved in the sexual exploitation trade.

While antecedents contributing towards entering and leaving the sexual exploitation trade are similar for both genders, certain unique differences occur in the following areas:

- Entering the trade
- Styles of work
- Location of work
- Risk factors
- Patterns of work
- Duration
- Exiting the trade
- Program requirements
- Law enforcement
- Social service intervention
- Health services

## **1.2 Process**

Grounded Theory and feminist research principles were used in the design of the *Under the Radar: The Sexual Exploitation of Young Men* research. The specific interview instrument was designed and reviewed in conjunction with three young men formerly involved in the sexual exploitation trade.

## **1.3 Methodology**

Grounded Theory and Feminist research principles were also used in designing the research methodology.

*I used the combined inductive approach of Grounded Theory and a Feminist methodology to be complementary. Grounded Theory allowed the opportunity for immersion into the sex worker's life, and the Feminist methodology insisted upon face to face interviews, recognizing this would have a direct impact upon the researcher. (McIntyre, The Youngest Profession: The Oldest Oppression, 1994:6)*

The first step for me was to finalize the questionnaire. I worked with three young men formerly from the sexual exploitation trade. In order to develop each question, many of the questions used in “The Youngest Profession: The Oldest Oppression” were crafted to fit the male study; however, the terminology had to be changed, as did many of the questions to suit this population. In addition, the Calgary Health Region had a strong interest to include health-related questions.

It became clear to me that I could not do all the interviewing. As a colleague said to me, “Why not provide the discoveries to others as to how to interview this population?” Originally this made me very nervous allowing others to do what I had done up until then. I questioned whether they would be able to interview with the same level of compassion and commitment I had. Would they understand the questionnaire and the method of utilizing this information? I decided that realistically, I had no other option.

#### **1.4 Training**

A proposal for Research Assistants was circulated in both Calgary and Edmonton. The goal was to attract individuals and agencies that already had a level of comfort and connection with this population.

Five individuals were successful, and represented the following agencies:

- AIDS Calgary Awareness Association
- Boys & Girls Club of Calgary
- Gay Lesbian Community Services Association
- Wood’s Homes
- Kindred House

A full day was dedicated to training these Research Assistants. Also involved in the training was one of the young men who assisted in designing the research questionnaire. This individual spent nine years in the sexual exploitation trade. His experience and feedback was extremely valuable in guiding the Research Assistants through the interview instrument. Both he and I worked to ensure they understood both the purpose and design of each question.

By the end of the day all Research Assistants had a level of comfort with the material. Time was then spent reviewing confidentiality and legal requirements, consent forms, tape recording, snowball sampling, and storage of interview materials.

## **1.5 Interviews**

The original goal was to interview 20 young men in Calgary, and 20 young men in Edmonton. Of the 20 in each community, the goal was to interview 15 presently in the sexual exploitation trade and five who had exited.

Interviews began in Alberta on March 13, 2003 and ended on October 9, 2003. What occurred was something quite different than originally planned. In total, we achieved 37 interviews, 23 of which were from Calgary. The linear approach for dividing interviews in each city was not realistic because the cities of Edmonton and Calgary are quite different. The old traditional male stroll area of Edmonton had seemingly disappeared. Although there were young men working there, they were predominantly transgendered.

One hypothesis for this difference is that Edmonton has enforced Protection of Children Involved In Prostitution (PCHIP) legislation more stringently than Calgary has.

According to officials from the Protective Safe House run by Edmonton's Catholic Social Services, they have not had one male in their program since May 2001, and in total they have only ever had three young men admitted. Two young men I am familiar with, who are originally from Edmonton, say it is too risky to work there as a young man, and they would not consider the transvestite role; hence, the disappearance of the male stroll in Edmonton.

In contrast, there have been a total of eight males admitted into the Protective Safe House at Wood's Homes in Calgary. Here there is a recognizable and active male stroll area. Transvestites in Calgary most often work the female strolls.

A difference also exists with respect to the location of work in Calgary and Edmonton. Calgary's working district is within close proximity to the downtown core, just outside of the business district. It is a residential community with a large number of apartment buildings and small businesses. Young men walk through and around a four block radius that encloses a park.

The male stroll area in Edmonton is located in an inner-city residential community. Recently, young men have begun to reappear on the stroll. Previously it had all but disappeared. The actual main stroll is seen as one exclusively for transvestites.

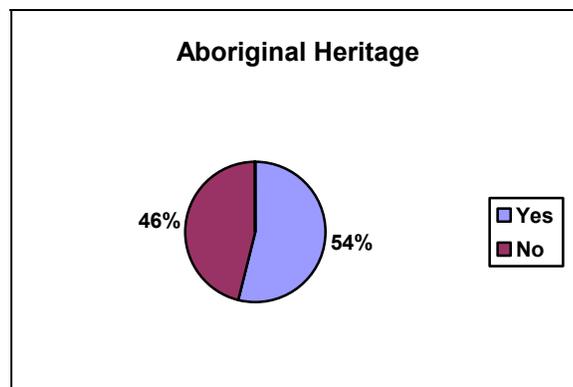
## Section 2: Demographics & Historical Background

### 2.1 Aboriginal Heritage

Of those males interviewed, 54% identified themselves as Aboriginal. This predominance of Aboriginal culture in the male study is significant. In “The Youngest Profession: The Oldest Oppression” only 24% identified as Aboriginal. We can see from this that the male population has a greater number of Aboriginals.

Of the 20 young men who identified as Aboriginal, less than half spent time on a reserve. In other words, over 50% of Aboriginal males had never spent any time on reserve.

A further line of inquiry examined whether those 20 Aboriginal individuals had lived on a reserve or felt connected to their Aboriginal heritage. Twelve individuals reported feeling connected to their Aboriginal culture. This finding spoke to their connection to heritage whether they were primarily urban or reserve.



## 2.2 Child Protective Services

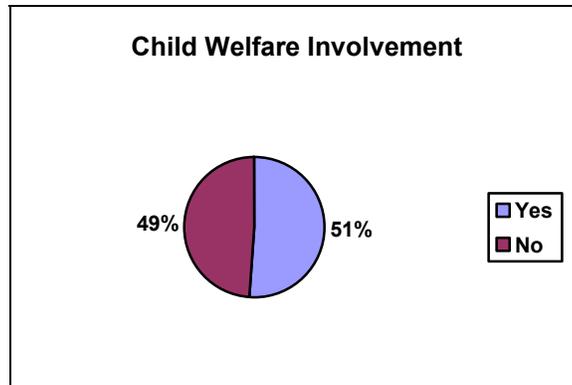
Fifty-one percent of those interviewed had a family history with Child Welfare. This means that half of those interviewed had experienced some type of professional association like the provincial system of care as children. Over half of this population had grown up in care. As a result, many were not provided with proper information on sexual development.

There is a sense that young men are not encouraged to talk about their physiological changes.

*Boys are not encouraged to talk about the changes that are happening to their bodies. They receive less guidance about their reproductive role, despite being provided with information and support around the experiences of puberty. For girls, the onset of puberty often means the placement of restrictions on their freedom. Boys, on the other hand, are generally provided no support or information, are given more freedom, and spend more time outside of the home in unsupervised activities than do girls. (McCreary Youth Foundation, A Moment for Boyz, 2004:5)*

There is an assumption that young men have received the knowledge about sexual biology and socialization they require. However, this is not always the case. This can even be less likely if they had grown up in government care according to Shauna Parks, Executive Director of the Alberta Youth In Care and Custody Network.

*Males are often overlooked when it comes to information about sexual development, especially if they're in care. A lot of times, people who work with these youth assume they have the knowledge or someone else has 'had that conversation' with them. (Parks, 2004)*



### 2.3 Education

This population was generally well-educated. Over 35% had completed high school, and six individuals had entered post-secondary education. Only five individuals had been in grade school and gone no further.

*Well, um my family was a fairly dysfunctional one. Alcoholism and um physical and sexual abuse went on in the family. As a result we moved a lot. So in a space of my 11 years of school I was probably in close to 40 schools. So I was always the outside person trying to break in. Just start making a friendship and then you get jerked out of town into somewhere else so there was always that trying to fit in. (Jordan #2)*

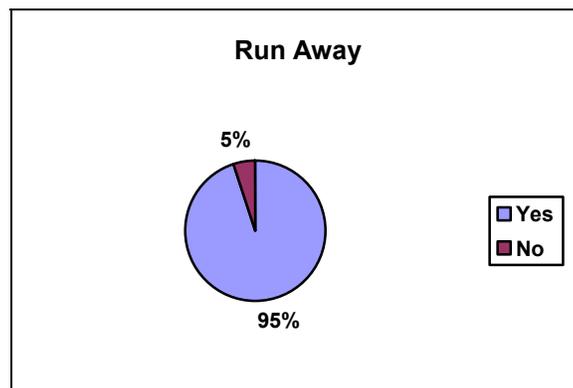
### 2.4 Run Away

Ninety-five percent of the population had a history of running away. Only two of those interviewed had never run away.

*I used to run away all the time or get kicked out. I have no contact with my family anymore. (Blair #3)*

Running away was common. Of great importance when asked about running away was a subsequent question that referred to the offer of food and or shelter while on the run.

A total of 86% were offered food and shelter while on the run. What becomes important about this finding is that two-thirds of those who were offered food and shelter had conditions attached by the giver. In most situations, these conditions were sexual in nature. Many of those interviewed described their first introduction to hustling/working in the sexual exploitation trade while they were on the run trying to survive.



Of importance were the reasons provided for running away. Forty percent cited reasons of fear and/or avoidance of family violence and abuse.

*Ah, I was 10 and my foster dad tried to sneak into my room in the middle of the night so ah I freaked out and got grounded. Apparently I hit him, that's what he said, he said I freaked out for no reason and then the social worker came and I got into all kinds of trouble. (Brent #5)*

Close to one-quarter identified discomfort in fitting in. This is common with young men struggling with their sexual identity. They often feel uncomfortable with their gender non-conformity. If they are comfortable with their sexual identity, often family and friends are not comfortable with their gender non-conformity.

*I was probably seven or eight years old. And, um, kind of hard to put into words. Just a lot of pressure, ah negative pressure from my father you know on my lack of being perfectly male and ah you know being a disappointment. (Jordan #2)*

## **2.5 Thrown Out**

Sixty percent of those interviewed had a history of being thrown out of their homes.

*Told them I was gay. (Leo #1)*

Many described running away either before or after being thrown out of their place of residence by an adult. This adult was often a parental figure.

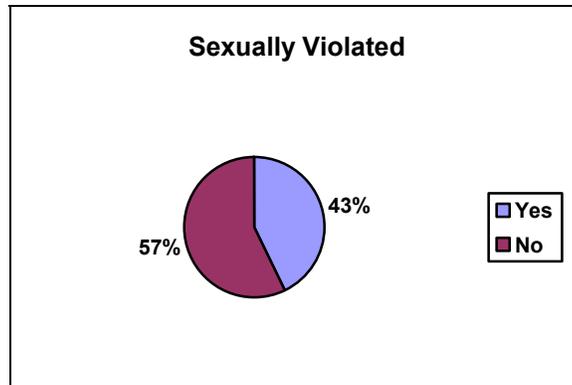
*I don't know. We just got into fights all the time. On occasion she'd throw me out of the house. All the time now she just despises me. I told her I was bisexual and she didn't take it very well either. I think she just used that as an excuse to kick me out for good. (Oliver # 26)*

Running away or being thrown out often ended in the same result, that being the need to seek a means of survival on the streets.

## **2.6 Sexual & Physical Violation**

While interviewing this population, a total of 57% identified themselves as being sexually violated. In other words, many had a history of sexual abuse.

*I was sexually abused by my two uncles. I was nine. (Cal #22)*



Researchers in both Edmonton and Calgary contacted me about this question. My *Strolling Away* research had historically identified a higher rate of sexual abuse. In this study, there were a series of interviewees who reported “no sexual violation”.

However, when they were asked how old they were when someone first touched them sexually, close to 70% identified this occasion being prior to the age of 13.

Some participants said they were first touched sexually when they were under the age of 10.

*I'd have to relax so he got me doing glue, and then I wanted to learn to drive, but because I was so short, I sat on his knee, I started doing more glue and more glue. Then he started coming to my junior high school and he would pull me out of school and take me to his mother's house and he would sodomize me. He wouldn't drive me back. He'd drive me to the bus stop and I had to take a bus. I remember just crying. (Sydney #31)*

Some of the respondents that reported no history of sexual violation reported being touched sexually at a very young age (5-10 years of age). Twenty-four percent under the age of 13, reported being involved in the exchange of sex with a man for money and/or shelter.

These results caused some confusion. An individual would report no history of sexual violation; however, they would then report sexual activity and exchange at a very young age. This confusion caused us to do further reflection. We concluded that respondents fell into the following three categories:

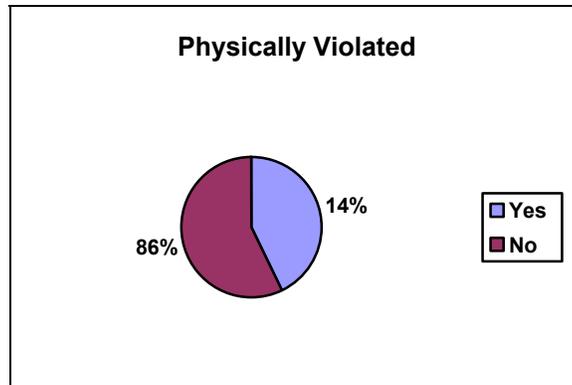
- 1) Individuals with a history of sexual violation
- 2) Individuals with no history of sexual violation
- 3) Individuals with a history of legal sexual violation but no personal acknowledgement of it

Twenty-five individuals were clearly identified as having a history of sexual violation. Eight individuals clearly identified as having no history of sexual violation; however, they also reported sexual touching in their early teen years and the exchange of sexual activity for money and/or shelter occurring in their mid-teen years. This issue was not interpreted either by them or the general community as sexual violation due to the fact they were of legal age for sexual activity.

The concern arises with four individuals who reported a very early onset of sexual touching and/or exchange of money or shelter. These individuals did not interpret this activity as being a sexual violation or abuse; however, both Criminal Law and Child Welfare would label this activity as sexual abuse. For those individuals that did not interpret this activity as a violation or sexual abuse, it is important we respect their personal interpretation of this.

A total of 86% reported a history of physical violation, or physical abuse.

*Sexually, physical way, whatever. (Dan #11)*



In summary, this is a population with a substantial history of both sexual and physical violation.

## 2.7 Witnessing Aggression While Growing Up

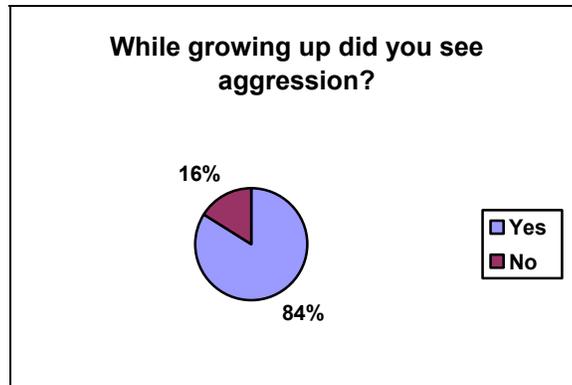
While growing up, this population witnessed aggression. Aggression was something over three-quarters had personal experience with.

*Well I don't know if this is violent if I get thrown across the room. Yep. Um or if I get slapped or I see my brother getting punched or something. People were just fighting around everywhere. Just being abusive. (Carl #22)*

Often, observing aggression can be just as challenging as being a direct victim of it.

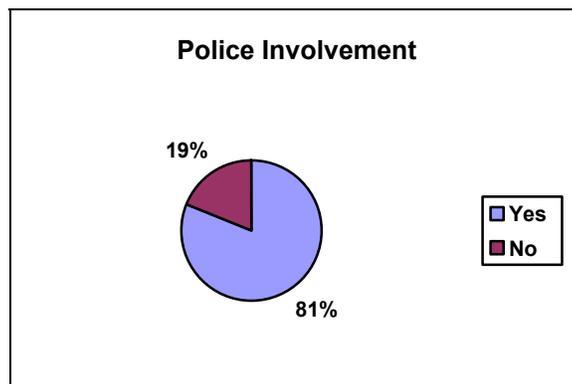
*My brother and dad trying to kill each other, trying to choke each other to death. (Blair #3)*

*When my mother was raped. I didn't see it, I heard it. (Sydney #31)*



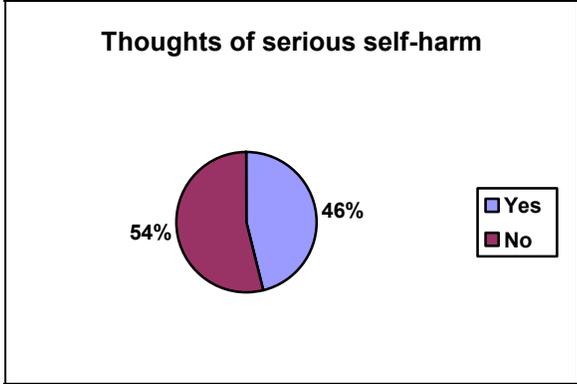
## 2.8 Police Involvement

Over 80% interviewed had a history with the police. Some criminal activity brought them into contact with the police. Most involved alcohol and drugs.



## 2.9 Self-Harm

Close to half this population identified periods of contemplation of self-harm. These periods occurred prior to their involvement in the sexual exploitation trade not while they were entrenched.



## Section 3: Work Life/Hustling

### 3.1 Entering

It is clear that one factor alone does not result in an individual entering the sexual exploitation trade. Often a series of circumstances result in a person ending up in this situation. No one had the goal to enter the street trade. Over 75% saw this activity as a short-term method to make money, so they could survive.

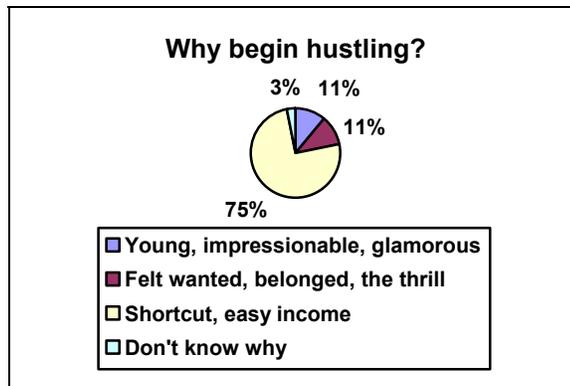
When entering the trade, a variety of factors come into play. We have seen from the previous demographics section that the following was established:

- 68% reported a background of sexual violation
- 86% had a history of physical violation
- 95% had a history of running away
- Over half were from an Aboriginal culture
- Almost half with Aboriginal history had not spent time on a reserve
- 50% had a family history of involvement with Child Welfare
- Over 35% had completed high school
- Over 80% had a history with the Criminal Justice System

Most people see their entrance into this activity as temporary. It is seen as a method of survival. Some described their entrance as a way of belonging or fitting in. As many are often on the run, many find connection and camaraderie with the activity. It is also a form of survival and perceived to be a short-term solution.

*Different reasons I believe. Um, some come from economic, ya know poor economic background I believe. But I don't think that's the majority. I think just um there's some that lack a sense of community like I did and lack of just looking for something. (Brett #21)*

*Fascination, desperation, I was never glamorized by it, but I was desperate for cash and I was very young. (Oliver #26)*



Understanding how an individual begins the process of working on the street is important if we ever hope to intervene in this activity. Often they are offered or introduced to this activity while on the run. Sixty percent of those that had run away were offered food and/or shelter; however, there were conditions attached to this offer. Most often these conditions were sexual in nature, representing an introduction and entrance into the sexual exploitation trade.

*It's hard for someone to go out there and find a job that'll pay you right away like working and it's fast money. And I look at it like that. Because ya know you want the money, that's the quickest way to get it. And unfortunately sometimes that's the most quick way too. (Jackie #37)*

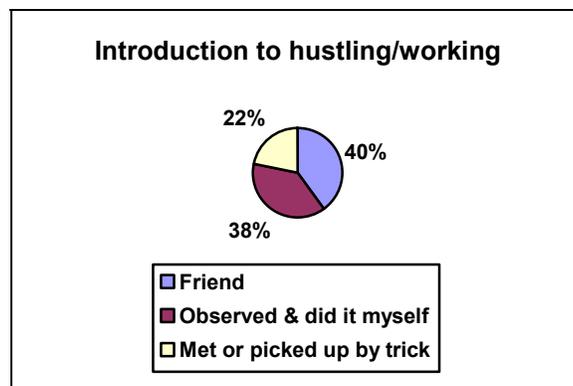
### **3.2 Introduction To Hustling/Working**

When we asked how someone entered the trade and learned about its workings, we were provided with three consistent answers.

Forty percent learned about the trade from a friend. They saw it and followed the process.

*The first time I ran away I met this guy in Devonian Gardens and I hung out with him for a couple of days and one day ran out of money and he said well, come with me I'm gonna go get some money. And he brought me down to the stroll and I had never been there before. I was scared out of my mind, um, he left me on the corner while he was doing a date for about 30 - 45 minutes and from then on, I decided that I could do it and get that amount of money, I think about 200 bucks. If he could get that much money, in that much time, then maybe I could too. So then two weeks later I ended up going back by myself. (Jake #9)*

Thirty-eight percent of this population learned what was required by observing other people. Twenty-two percent ran into a customer, or “trick” who offered them this opportunity. It became a means for survival. The offer was made, and they were able to figure it out. The male role as breadwinner supported these young men while they were entering the sexual exploitation trade.



There is a strong correlation between running away and a potential introduction to the sexual exploitation trade. Only two of the 37 had never run away.

Often when young people are on the run they are offered food and/or shelter. A total of 86% who had run away were offered food and/or shelter while they were on the run. What is important is that 60% of those offered food and/or shelter were offered these necessities with conditions attached to them, often sexual in nature.

*My first legitimate trick in my head was when I was on the run when I was 14. I was very aware of what I was doing for food and shelter. (Jordan #2)*

### **3.3 Age Beginning Hustling/Working**

There was a large range of ages when people began to hustle/work. The youngest person was eight and the oldest was 23.

*I was turning nine. (Carl #22)*

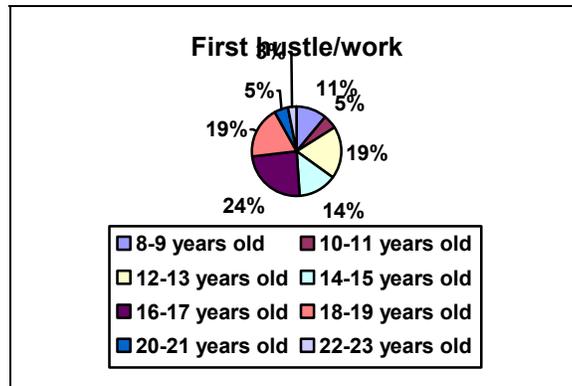
*I started off by 15, 16. Ya 16, cause I was on my own.” (Jack #36)*

*Eight years old. It wasn't really a hustle, it was a rape and money and I left out of guilt. (Elton # 11)*

*Mmmm I'd have to say 19, 20, and 18 sorry. Ya that was my first time ever working. (Jackie #37)*

Seventy-three percent of this group commenced work prior to the age of eighteen years. Close to half began work under the age of 16 years. This is not an activity the majority commenced in adulthood. It is an activity entered into by youth and children.

Twenty-seven percent entered into this life when they were adults, or over 18 years of age. It became a way to achieve minimal survival, or something they did to survive. It can best be characterized as “voluntary desperation”.



### 3.4 Time Hustling/Working

It is important to understand the length of time study participants had been hustling/working. The majority reported working for a long time. Only one person had worked under a year, at eight months. What is upsetting is that these young men escape under the radar of many outreach programs. Unfortunately, we do not connect with them until they have been on the scene for well over a year.

In other words Protection of Children Involved In Prostitution (PCHIP) legislation has resulted in these young men flying under the radar. They are not picked up or identified by outreach programs because there is a predictable schedule when outreach vans visit the stroll areas. PCHIP effectively places outreach programs in a ‘non-neutral’ position.

If a person is under the age of 18 and suspected of being involved in prostitution, they must be reported and taken to a locked Protective Safe House. Outreach programs are not exempt from this reporting. The result is that youth under the age of 18 fly under the radar by deliberately avoiding outreach workers and programs that cannot be neutral.

The following quote was provided by Dan Biggs, an Outreach Worker for AIDS Calgary. Dan provided outreach services both on foot and in the Exit van for three years:

*For me the damage of PCHIP became clear during conversations with two separate youth. These conversations occurred shortly after each of their eighteenth birthdays. It was the first time that I could remember truly talking to these youth, though I had seen them both for years, always very briefly, as they distrustfully said hello or ignored me altogether before darting away. However, once they turned 18 it felt as though these youth could finally reach out with no fear and talk, and in turn I felt as it was the first time I could do the same. Within half a year I had discussed the realities and challenges of being HIV positive with one youth and debriefed recent violent dates with both of them. During these initial conversations, these youth both talked about running away from outreach or hiding when the vans passed. It was during these conversations that I began to understand how desperate and lonely it must have been for them. I realized then that these youth had been in the sex trade for years, but were fearful to access help after they had experienced violence. I realized that these youth had been fearful to access harm-reduction agencies, in fear of PCHIP. It was during these conversations that I felt the damage and distance that PCHIP has imposed between outreach workers and desperate, under age youth in the sex trade. (Dan Biggs, 2004)*

As you can see, most began to hustle/work at an early age. Seventy-three percent began street involvement prior to the age of 18. If they were detected by outreach services, they would be subject to containment in a locked Protective Safe House. This is potentially why this population has avoided contact. This can be further complicated when the same organizations running Street Outreach Programs are also responsible for Protective Safe House programs.

In the five years PCHIP programming has been in existence, a total of 11 individual males have been contained in Protective Safe Houses throughout Alberta. Young men have found alternative methods and locations of work.

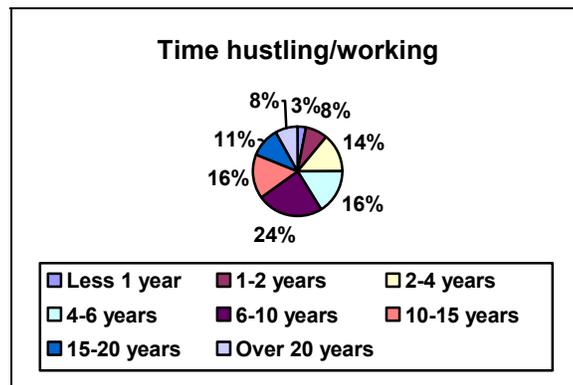
As was discovered in *Strolling Away* (McIntyre, 2002) males enter the trade earlier and stay longer. This is consistent in *Under the Radar: The Sexual Exploitation of Young Men*. Many stay in the trade six to ten years. In total, there was over 320 years in the sexual exploitation trade, and this figure is growing as only 10 of the 37 young men interviewed left the trade. (Appendix #1)

*A little while now, like probably eight months. (Jason #19)*

*I started when I was 16 and now I'm 24. (Scott #28)*

*"I must have been 13. I am 22 now. Nine years that's a long time. (Harry #23)*

*Four years off and on. But if you put accumulated time that I actually spent hustling it would probably be just two years. (Jake #9)*



### **3.5 Work Locations**

A variety of work locations were identified. Most worked in cars, hotels, and apartments. Some worked at truck stops and parks. Very few had worked in bathhouses.

*Truck stops, gay clubs, trick pad in Vancouver and mobile trick pad, like motor home. (Jordan #2)*

In Edmonton, a Peep Show was identified as a place of work. In the Peep Show a 'glory hole' exists. This facilitates a customer inserting his penis through the glory hole to be fellated by another young man leading to ejaculation. This is most often achieved by a hidden man masturbating the customer. This form of work seems to exist only in Edmonton. According to Detective Sue Brown, formerly with the Vice Squad, a city-licensed Peep Show existed in Calgary in the late 1980's in an industrial part of the city. This business had a short tenure, and was shut down within a month. No such facility has reappeared in Calgary since.

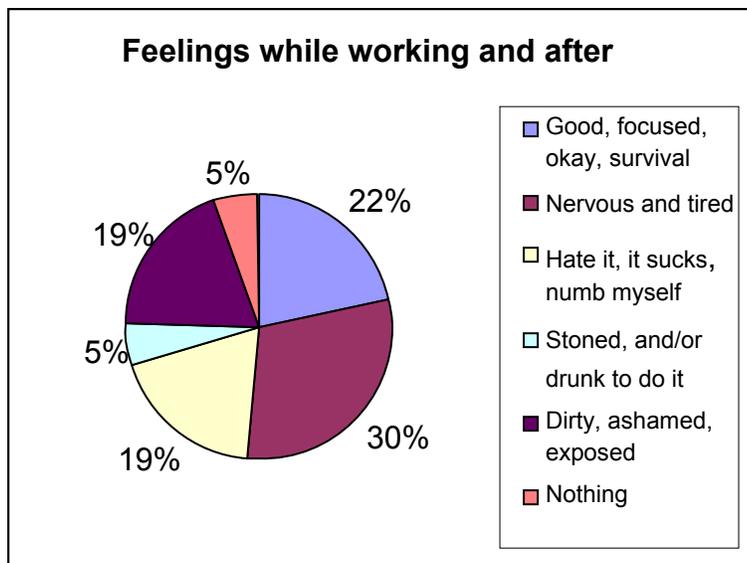
### **3.6 Shelter Stays**

A total of 86% experienced staying in a homeless shelter. For many, shelters were the only option available to them. Their ability to gain government support given their age and personal circumstances is minimal. Often, entrance into and continuation in the sexual exploitation trade result in a lack of options. Homelessness is a true reality for many of these young men. The trade is a means to avoid homelessness through shelter experiences.

As stated in *Strolling Away*, 82% of young women have birthed a child. This event brings back family support and can bring with it government support. This is often not an option for young men. Forty-three percent of young men had actually conceived a child. Often this results in an abortion, miscarriage or an estrangement. The biological conceiving of a child does not bring a young man government or family support.

### 3.7 Feelings While Working And After

It is important to gain some insight into how someone is feeling when they are hustling/working. How is an individual able to prepare themselves for this activity?



It is clear that the majority of these young men are not happy. It is a form of survival. They feel exposed to the public. They psychologically numb themselves due to shame. Substances such as alcohol and drugs also help them achieve a form of numbness.

*Nervous, sad, scared. (Brent #5)*

*Neutral. I put all my feelings and emotions aside. I just put myself in a state of mind. (Richard #13)*

*I feel kind of remorseful because ya know um I'm better than that and I have had all my friends tell me the same thing and you know it just makes you feel really guilty that I've had to put myself on that road to get some cash. But then again party money is okay but it's not what you want to get yourself involved in. It's low self-esteem. Ya it doesn't help you. (Fred #8)*

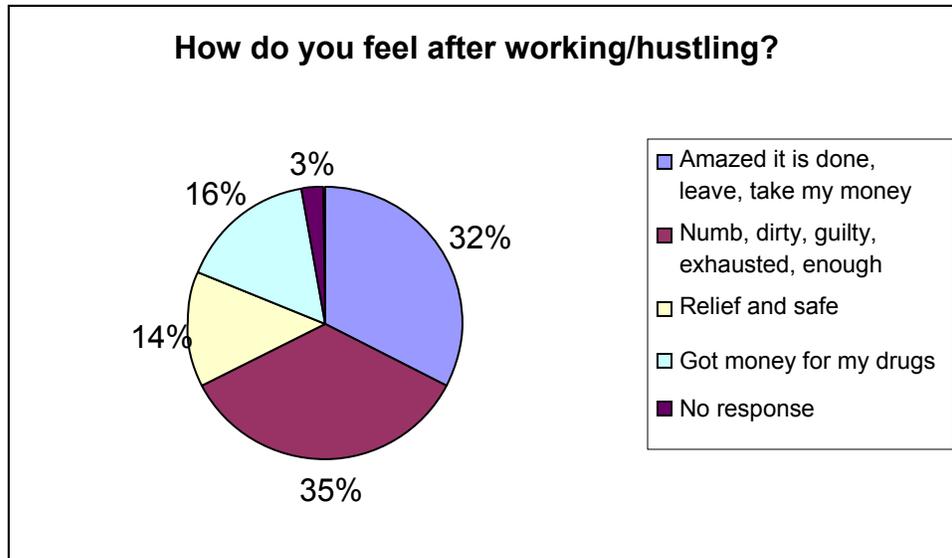
*Trying to get it over with as quick as possible. When will this be over? When will this be over? That's all. (Roland #27)*

There is a clear sense of relief once someone finishes their time in the sexual exploitation trade. Close to one-third of the population interviewed had a sense of guilt and numbness from their experience. This is not an activity that people do proudly, or with a strong sense of safety.

Sixteen percent work only for enough money for their drug of choice. Their goal is to work to feed their habit. The additional 80% seek to finish work quickly and safely.

*Dirty, I always have to go home and have a shower. Relieved that it's over. It always pushes me more to look for a job. (Jake #9)*

*Lonely. (Jackson #30)*



### 3.8 Family Relations

A total of 73% of those working/hustling in the sexual exploitation trade have at least one member of their family aware of their activity. Although they are able to keep their work secret in the beginning, eventually family members figure out what is occurring. It can be hidden for awhile but not for extended periods of time. Once the family knows, it can bring about a great deal of familial strain. Thirty-five percent felt they still had a good relationship with their family. The remaining 65% had strained relations, resulting in some having no contact whatsoever.

*Strained. They would keel over in shock if they knew about the hustling. (Jordan #2)*

*Um, still talk to my mom and dad every week. My brothers and sisters cover the bases let them know I'm still alive and doing okay. (Tim #4)*

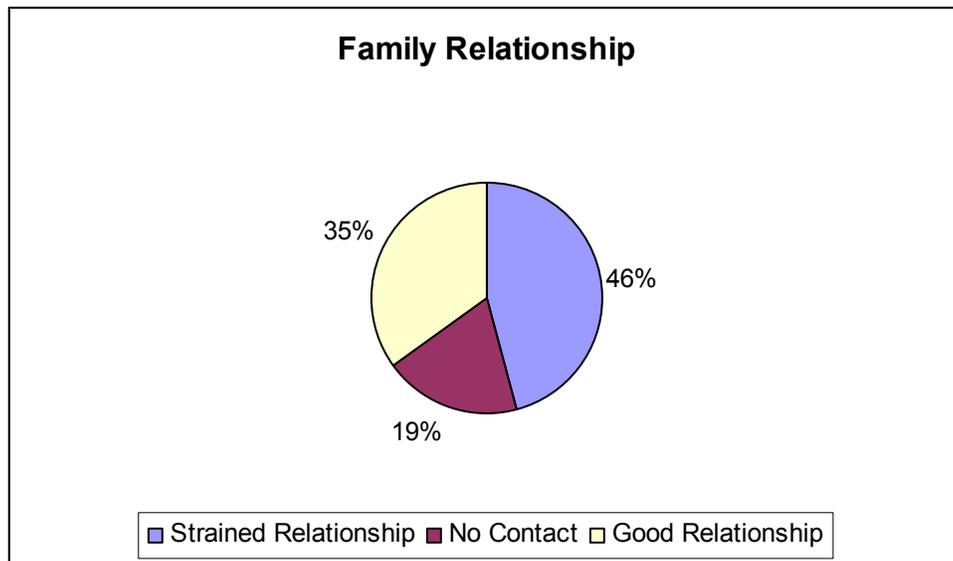
*Well I'm going home this summer for a week to actually talk to them. (Fred #8)*

*I don't know. I don't talk to them. (Austin #14)*

*We're close but not too close. I'm gay and they are from a very small town and they're very closed minded. So I don't get too close cause I don't want to hurt my Grandma. I don't want to talk anymore about that. So I don't get too close to them. (Jackson #30)*

*Sporadic. (Elton #34)*

*Nothing right now. I haven't seen or spoken to them in a year. (Teri #29)*



### **3.9 Female Customers**

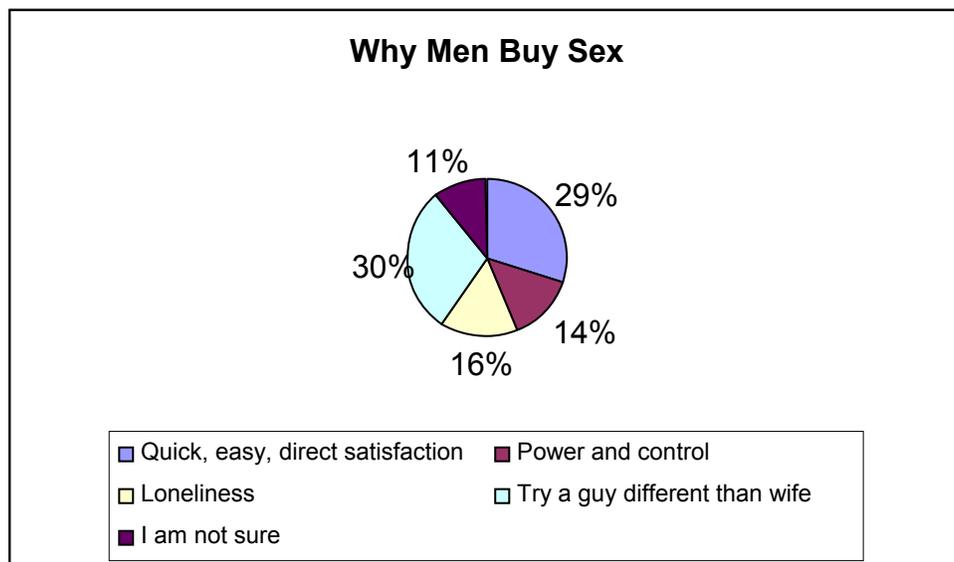
Eighteen percent of young men reported being approached by a woman. This was not something that happened frequently. An additional 43% spoke about being approached by a woman for the purposes of a threesome with another male. Close to 40% were never approached by a woman. In most situations, when approached by a woman it was to be with a heterosexual couple.

*I probably can't count the number of times I've been involved with couples and where the woman has approached me. I would say probably eight to ten times I was approached by the woman for that. (Jordan #2)*

### 3.10 Why Men Buy Sex

Those interviewed were very clear about why men purchase sex. They saw this as a quick, easy process for them to go through. A transaction. It was something that was just easy and different.

*I think first of all because they're married to women and they don't want to be, so that's one of the prime reasons. Um, so the guys who are buying sex from me, the majority of them were married with wives and kids at home. And the majority of them were very gay and just were never going to come out.....Because we've gotten to a point where we've commercialized sex completely to where it means absolutely nothing. Um like all it is about getting off and so for guys I think they buy it because that's all it is to them is getting off. It has nothing to do with the connection to the person who they're with. (Harry #23)*



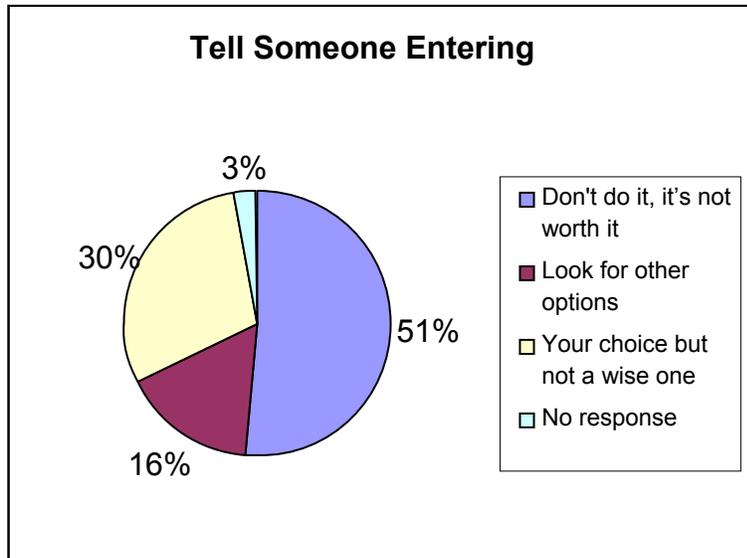
Laud Humphreys (1970) completed a study on male sexual encounters in public bathrooms. What is important from his study, and the information offered from those interviewed, is that many of these men are not considered to be gay or bisexual but heterosexual in orientation. His thoughts reflect that many of the male customers of these young men are not seeking a gay relationship just something quick and different.

*I find no indication that these men seek homosexual contact as such; rather, they want a form of organ-producing action that is less lonely than masturbation and less involving than a love relationship. (Humphreys, 1970:115)*

The young men were asked what is the most sought after request from customers. They were very clear. Oral sex or 'blow jobs' were most prevalent, rated at over 80%. What is important to understand for young men who are working/hustling is that the customer can request a blow job from a young man, or vice versa. The customer then would perform oral sex on the young man. The roles can be described as the provider or the deliverer and are versatile. This is something unique to males in the sexual exploitation trade. This can include both oral and anal sexual acts.

### **3.11 Tell Someone Entering**

All individuals except one were crystal clear that they thought this was something individuals should not do. They were clear about the negative impact of this activity, and suggested strongly exploring other options.



*It may be fast, it may be easy and you make more money than you ever thought you would in a period of two nights, but it will never replace your self dignity, respect and the ability for you to hold your head up high and walk down the street... your security. If you really want to, then go for it, but I would advise against it. (Jake #9)*

*Don't do it. You'll get caught up and it's too easy. If I would have never, if I would've if the situation was different I was walking and I had no place to stay, and I never had any food never had nothing and I was kicked out of the house it's like I didn't have a house to live in and some guy offered me money to ah, sit and watch him jerk himself off for I think 50 or 60 bucks, and at that time it was a lot of money, and it happened and once you do it once it's easy to go down that same road. Don't do it, cuz you're hooked. I heard 'once a hoe always a hoe' and so far you know you start to believe them after awhile, cuz I quit and now I'm back you know whatever a couple of months at a time with all the stress like I said it was 18 months but I kept coming back. I don't know what it is if it's the dope or if it's the thrill or if it's the combination of everything but something pretty powerful.*

*Pretty powerful and if I never would have been introduced to it I know I never would have I wouldn't be here talking to you. I wouldn't be involved in this whole lifestyle. (Roland #4)*

*I would warn them about how dangerous it is and how it can destroy your life overnight because working is just as much an addiction as drugs or alcohol. (Jackson #30)*

This finding is significant because those involved in the trade are adamant that others should be warned of the danger of entering.

## **Section 4: Staying**

### **4.1 Staying In**

As we have seen from the previous section, this group of young men stayed in the sexual exploitation trade for an extensive period of time. Forty percent of males stayed in the trade from less than one to six years. A total of 65% lasted up to ten years. The average length of time extended from six to ten years. The least amount of time in the trade was eight months and the longest period exceeded twenty years for three individuals.

### **4.2 Gay Bashing**

Both males and females in the trade fear violence while working/hustling. Both young men and women experience violence and humiliation from customers and from the general community. However, the primary source differs.

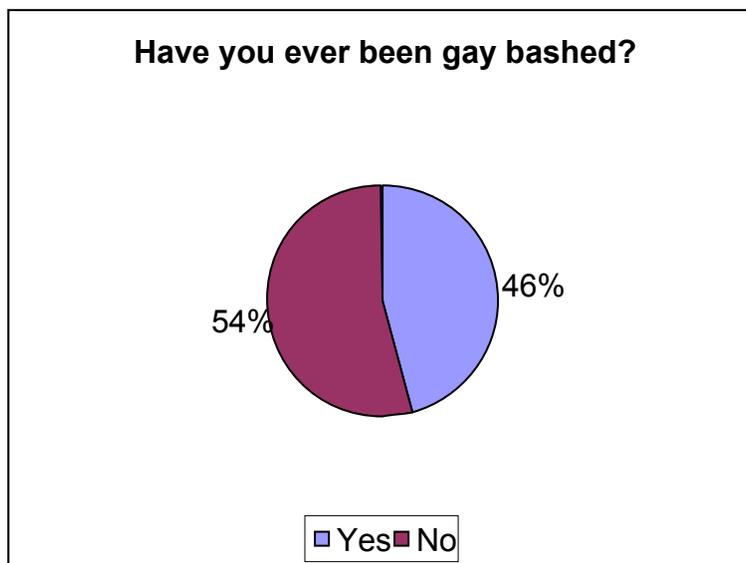
For women, the main source of violence emanates from customers seeking their services. For males, the main source of violence is the result of homophobia. Males are at risk of gay bashing from onlookers who suffer from homophobia. Onlookers choose to physically damage and humiliate young men attempting to survive on the street. There is a perception that all these young men must be gay.

The fear of gay bashing is prevalent at all times for young men involved in the sexual exploitation trade. Close to half have experienced being gay bashed, but certainly all fear the potential of being bashed.

It is an activity that people react to whether the young man is actually gay or not. It is a classic homophobic belief system that places these young men at risk from heterosexual males who react to their behavior.

*That's fairly common. If you're putting yourself out there in places it's pretty obvious what you're doing. (Jordan #2)*

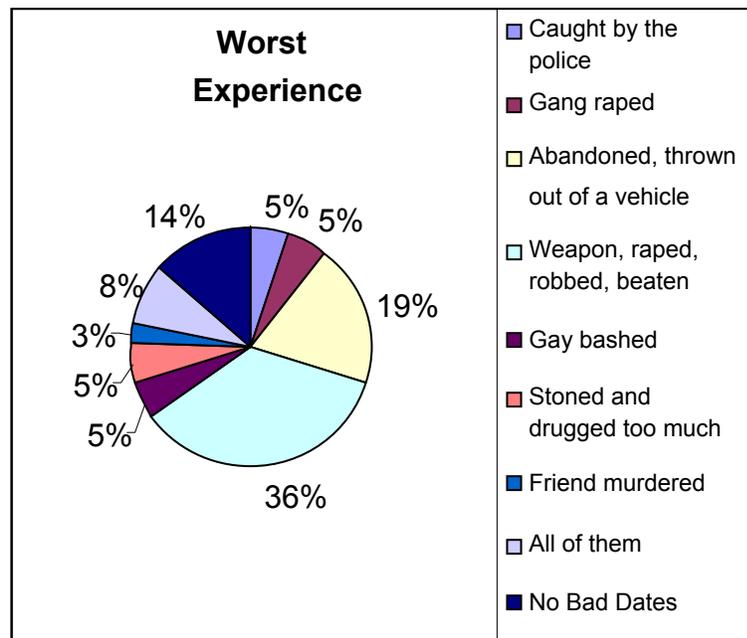
*It was three in the morning and my friend just took off and I was going to catch up to him and then the gay bashers struck me from behind. I tried to defend myself but there were three of them and they were all intoxicated. But I still couldn't defend myself because well there was two on one side of me and the other was like digging through my pockets. (Fred #8)*



A total of 95% of those interviewed saw the sexual exploitation trade, hustling/working, as dangerous. They saw, experienced, and lived the reality of this fear and the dangers of the trade.

### 4.3 Worst Date

This population was quick to identify the following worst experiences hustling/working. Thirty-six percent reported the presence of a weapon, being raped, robbed or beaten, while 19% reported being abandoned or thrown out of a vehicle.



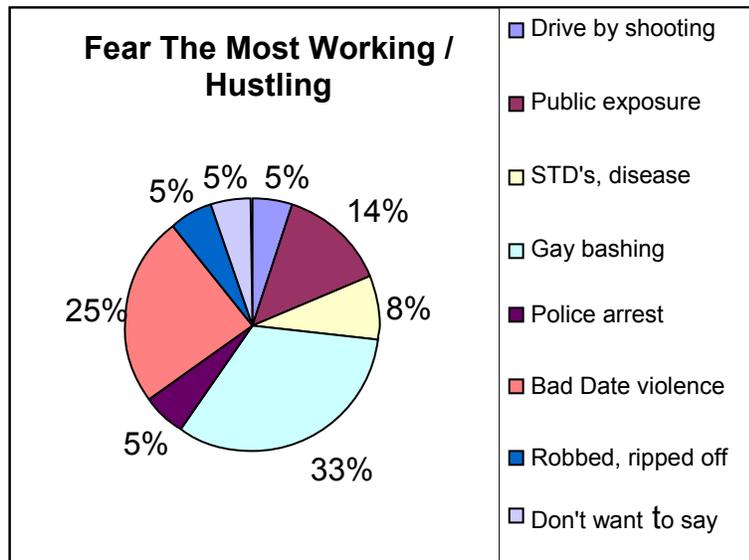
*I was gang raped the one time. I was made sterile; they stomped on my man genital area. Kids are not in my future anymore. (Jordan #2)*

*Oh I was thrown out of the car and beaten up. (Brett #21)*

### 4.4 Fear The Most

During the interviews, we asked individuals what they feared most while they were hustling/working. Their fears extended from public exposure to drive-by shootings.

The greatest fear was being gay bashed. Suffice to say that the level of fear for these young men is prominent on a continual basis.



*Exposure I think. (Jordan #2)*

*Um I guess the fear of being alone or having nobody around and then something bad happens like getting gay bashed. Because there is no one around at the time we work, so it's scary. (Fred #8)*

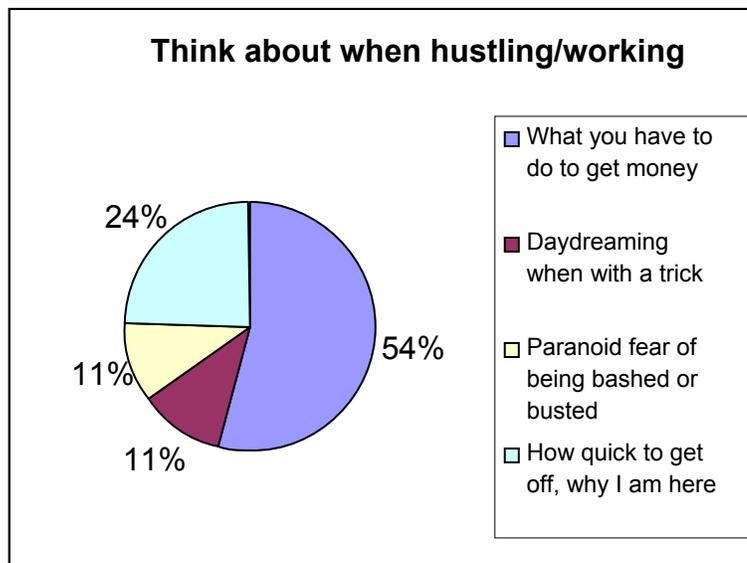
There was a strong sense that violence could come both from gay bashing and customers. Women have a greater level of fear from customers, not from those who harass them.

*I had one of my dates attack me one time and tell me he was gonna kill me. (Michael #8)*

*Being left for dead. Yes, I was thrown into a swamp with a down feathered jacket on and bricks in the pocket and tied up and thrown into the swamp. Like two customers left me for dead. (Jamie #15)*

#### 4.5 Thoughts When Hustling/Working

Given the length of time most of these young men have been involved in the trade, there is value in understanding what they think about when they are and are not hustling/working.



The majority think about what they have to do to get this money. This speaks to the continual grind of this type of trade. No one spoke highly of what they were doing or have to do. This is a type of work that no one is proud of or wants to do.

*Are those guys around the corner? Avoiding being rolled or bashed I guess. (Nelson #18))*

*What are you gonna have to do, what sick twisted weirdo was gonna call you that day, um where the hell how much money you were gonna need so that you and whoever could get the drugs and get to where. It's amazing, the time and energy that you spend just getting the money and getting the drugs and then getting high and then that's it and then you're right back out there again. (Leo #1)*

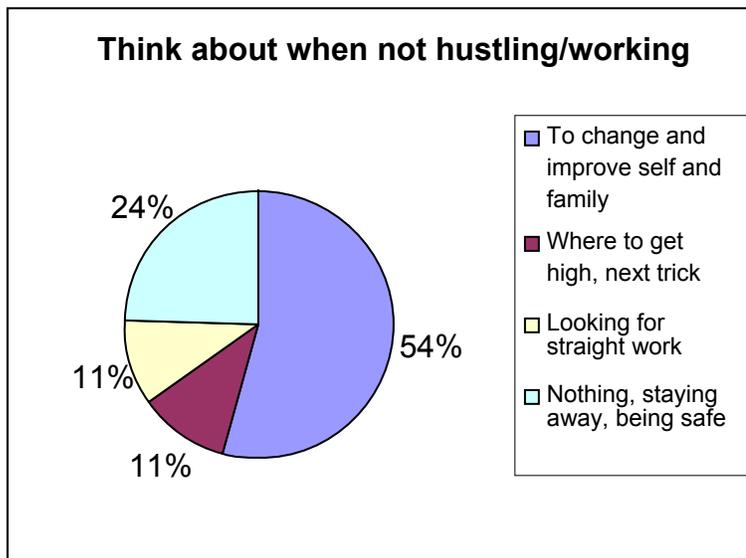
## 4.6 Thoughts When Not Hustling/Working

It is important to understand what people think about when they are not hustling/working as well. What is clear is that most think about staying away, being safe and making changes. A very small portion, 11% are thinking about their next fix of drugs. Most are thinking about getting away and making changes and improvements. Again, this is not an activity they seem to be proud of. They are looking for routes to separate themselves from this activity, or are using drugs to numb themselves.

*My wife. (Richard #13)*

*Getting my life back on track, getting back to where I was um seven years ago, um how I can put like all this behind me ya know. Will a day ever come where it won't be something that I think about on a daily basis? Or ya know, I just get that gross disgusting feeling. (Jason #19)*

*Think about my kids and my healing. (Sydney #31)*



## 4.7 Refusing A Date

It was important to understand that the majority of young men had refused a date at some point. Ninety-five percent of those interviewed had refused a customer at some point. Over 40% refused a customer because of a bad feeling they got, an uncomfortable 'vibe'. The use of gut feelings and intuition are important protection mechanisms for those in the sexual exploitation trade. It is an important skill that other peers in the trade can teach them. Outreach and support services can play a critical role in encouraging and reinforcing the use of this gut instinct.

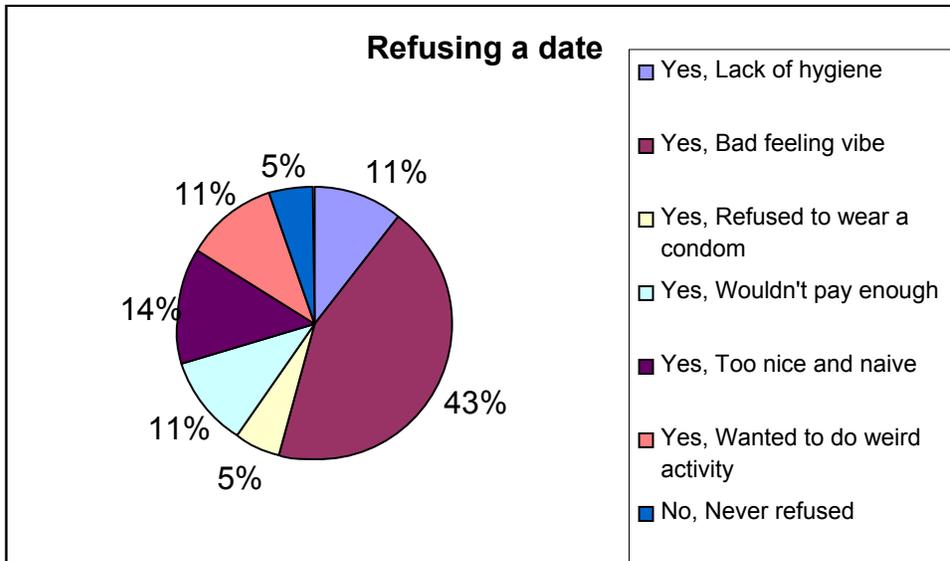
When asked why people refused certain customers the following responses were provided:

*Not enough money or I just got the wrong vibes that I don't trust them. I follow my instincts very, very closely and if I just get the feeling that person is not kosher I won't go. Probably one of the reasons I've never been busted. (Abby #33)*

*Yes, I did because I saw the ring on his finger. (Elton #34)*

*Yes, yes guys who don't want to wear condoms or guys who are into disgusting things like scat, and water play and blood works. (Bill #24)*

*Because of condoms, they didn't use safe sex, because my life is worth more. (Jake #9)*



#### 4.8 Working Safely

It is important to gain insight into how someone works safely. There are specific techniques young men rely on to keep them safe. These techniques are far from foolproof; however, they allow them a sense of control and safety. It is the best they can do given the circumstances and nature of the sexual exploitation trade.

People provided the following examples of how they work safely for themselves:

*I work with a friend, walk the street with a friend or near by. (Blair #3)*

*Work 20 feet from a friend under a street light. (Tim #4)*

*Staying smart. Being aware of your surroundings and keeping people that I know down there close, friends-wise, because they'll always be there to protect you if you're decent to them. (Jake #9)*



The only method of support for this population comes in the form of outreach program vehicles. Both Edmonton and Calgary provide these services through programs such as Exit, Safe Works, Crossroads and Street Works. These services provide condoms, coffee and support. As helpful as the services are, respondents felt this was the only service they could receive, and even this was somewhat female-focused.

#### 4.9 Getting Paid

Over 60% seek payment before the activity to make sure they are paid and not taken advantage of financially. This is similar to women in the sexual exploitation trade. It could be argued that the financial transfer of money motivates young people to close the deal as quickly as possible.

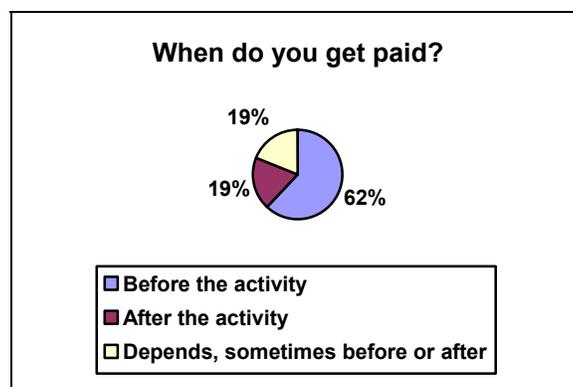
*Ah first timers um up front. Regulars could pay after. (Jackson #7)*

Close to 40% will take payment after the act. From discussions with young men in the sexual exploitation trade, this often happens with regular customers in familiar territory.

One young man felt that taking money first made him look weak and vulnerable. He wanted customers to think he could handle himself if a customer tried to rip him off.

Others said payment after the sexual exchange brought a level of insurance that this person was not a police officer. This brought a different form of protection for young men in the trade.

*After the act. Never before. If you get paid before, if the guy hands you the money before he's a cop. He's an undercover cop looking to bust us. Money before it's a cop. (Elton #11)*



#### 4.10 Sugar Daddy

Young men in the trade often seek out a 'sugar daddy'. This protects them, and has the potential to limit the time and risk they experience on the street. There is a vast difference between a regular customer and a sugar daddy.

A sugar daddy will seek a public relationship with the chosen young man. It often involves exclusivity and means a live-in role.

A total of 54% had experience with sugar daddies. This experience resulted in rewards such as food, shelter, clothing, movies, trips, cash, and for some, whatever request they sought. However, usually one's position of being taken care of by a sugar daddy is a short-term one. Often these young men are replaced with other young men.

Significantly, in this case, the young man's sexual orientation is gay as is the sugar daddy's. A sugar daddy will profile the young man he has a personal relationship with. This often happen in public places or at events.

*It was all about image. He wanted to parade me around on his arm and to make him look better so he provided clothes so I looked good, got my hair done, a lot of things he provided for me were only to make him look better. (Jake #9)*

A "gay for pay" young man would not seek out such a public display; they are clearly heterosexual but work as a gay young person to earn money. Their sexual orientation is gay only when they are involved in the sexual exploitation trade. They would be more inclined to seek a regular customer in private and have an impersonal relationship with them.

A "gay for pay" young man could be inclined to have a regular customer as depicted by the actor River Phoenix in *My Private Idaho* (1991).

*I call a 'regular' someone that just picks you up on a regular basis. So like they come see you once a week or whatever. And if I guess you needed to you could call them and they could help you out. A sugar daddy I'd say is someone who gets you off the street, physically moves in and stays there with you. They provide you with money and stuff. Yea I have had them both. (Scott #5)*

This type of relationship offers limited protection from the unknown elements. However, close to 20% had never had either a sugar daddy or a regular.

Some young men seek impersonal relations from their customers. They do not want any type of personal relationship with their customer.

#### **4.11 Types Of Hustling/Work Activities**

We asked about different venues for work. Close to three-quarters of the young men had been approached to model for pornography. Nearly half had worked private parties. A very small proportion, under one-third, had experience in massage parlors and on-line escort services.

#### **4.12 Hustling/Working & Drugs**

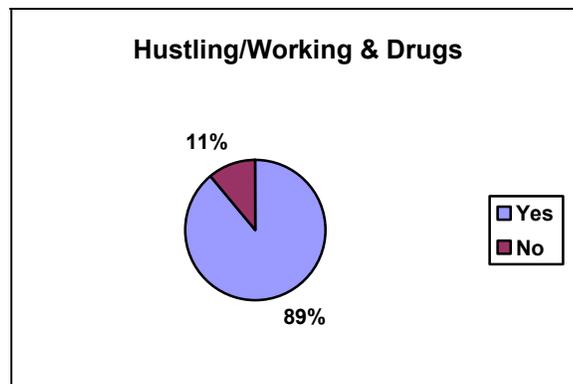
The relationship between drug use and the sexual exploitation trade was explored. Often when speaking with those involved in the sexual exploitation trade, substance abuse (drugs and alcohol) entered their lives once they worked in the trade. Some people had histories of partying involving drugs and alcohol; however, it was not their primary focus.

Many times, once people enter the sexual exploitation trade drugs become a way of life. They are initially a reward of life on the street because they assist in blocking out or numbing the continual sexual exploitation and humiliation they experience. As time goes on, the relationship between the trade and substance abuse becomes stronger. These two usually mutually exclusive experiences become associated. The initial introduction to work can be driven by funds for survival; however, this often becomes replaced or adjoined with a need to feed the drug addiction.

*I think it starts out maybe financial because you don't have a place. It was for me anyway speaking for myself. And then I think it turns into could be to support a drug habit. (Roland #27)*

For some, substance use enables them to work in the trade. Potentially, for a limited number, substance addiction drives them and keeps them in the trade, working to feed their habit.

It is important to acknowledge the strong relationship between drug use and the sexual exploitation trade. The possibility exists that the longer someone stays in the trade the greater and more intense the drug use becomes. The need to numb oneself and disassociate from the actual day-to-day degradation of the trade intensifies over time. This will occur regardless of sexual orientation.



#### **4.13 Other Jobs**

This population has limited work experience outside of hustling. The opportunity to turn to mainstream well-paid work is not there. Most tried working either in retail services, restaurant services or landscaping. These were part-time positions paying minimum wage. Their lack of education and/or experience results in this hand-to-mouth existence.

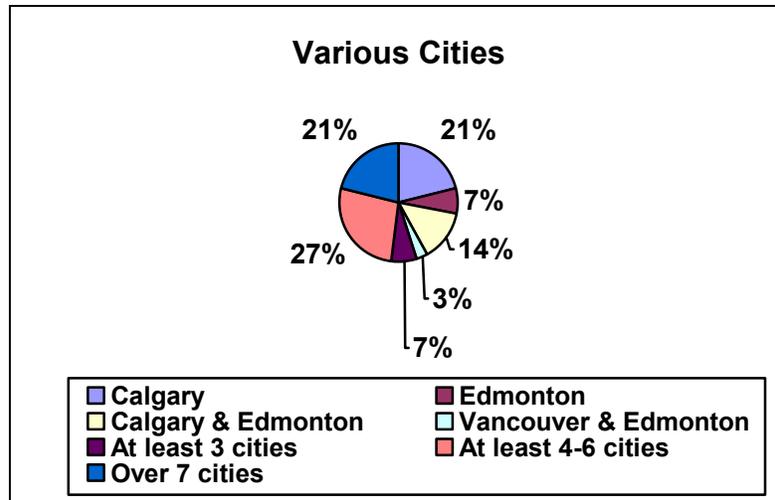
The sexual exploitation trade offered consistent, non-taxable work, with no specific education or training required. In other words, it was something that brought short-term financial gain. Unfortunately, with it comes long-term pain. When consistent cash flow is achieved, it is often easier to remain in the trade.

#### **4.14 Charged**

Just under half this population has been charged with 'Communicating for the Purpose of Prostitution'. To repeat, the average tenure for those in the sexual exploitation trade is six to ten years. It is significant then, that less than half have been subject to Criminal Justice intervention even though they have spent close to a decade on the stroll. It is highly likely that some of this population is misinterpreting their containment under PCHIP as a charge of Communicating for the Purpose.

#### **4.15 Various Cities**

This is a transient population. One quarter remained working in just one city. The other three-quarters of the population moved around. Over 25 cities were identified. The majority of these cities were in Canada; however, cities in the United States and Europe were also mentioned.



#### 4.16 Sexual Orientation When Hustling/Working

What became clear to this author over time was that there is a difference between how an individual describes their sexual identity while working/hustling as opposed to their private time. Calgary Birth Control Association (CBCA) defines sexual identities in the following ways:

**Gay:** Men who are emotionally, physically, and sexually attracted to men.

**Bisexual:** People who are emotionally, physically and sexually attracted to people of either gender.

**Heterosexual:** People who are attracted to the opposite sex.

**Transgender:** Refers to individuals whose sense of being a man or a woman does not correspond to their biological sex.

**Two Spirited:** Refers to First Nations peoples whose sexual and romantic feelings are primarily for the same gender who, historically, were revered as embodying both female and male spirits. (*Calgary Birth Control Association, Celebrating Diversity, 2004*)

There is value in clarifying sexual identities prior to the actual discussion of selecting sexual identities when working/hustling and private, non-work time. The following hustling/working sexual orientations were identified:

- Gay
- Gay for pay
- Straight for pay
- Tranny
- Bisexual
- Confused

**Gay** refers to a young man who has embraced and accepted a gay (homosexual/same sex) sexual identity while he is hustling/working.

**Gay for Pay** refers to a young man who is heterosexual in his off-street sexual identity; however, to survive he will be 'gay for pay', becoming involved in sexual activities with male customers. This also means that only during the time they are hustling/working will they demonstrate and/or perform gay sexual activities. Often customers find the potential opportunity to alter a young man's heterosexual orientation very attractive.

**Straight for Pay** refers to a young man who is gay in his off-street sexual identity; however, to survive he will become 'straight for pay'. They appear as very "macho" young men while they are on the street, and approach customers as straight. Some male customers find it attractive to engage a young straight macho man in sexual activity. Some customers find it very satisfying to think a young straight man would be prepared to alter their orientation to be with them.

**Tranny** refers to a young man who has entered the world of being a woman or a 'transvestite'. This means they will dress and conduct themselves as a woman.

They wear women's clothing and makeup, and style their hair as a woman. Some of those interviewed appear as women at all times. Others interviewed described themselves as "Tranny for Pay." This included both gay and heterosexual males. They only dress as transvestites while they are working the stroll area. This was exclusive to the city of Edmonton.

As mentioned previously, the traditional male stroll in Edmonton has virtually disappeared. Recently there appears to be one or two young men working. According to former Vice Detective JoAnn McCartney the male stroll area in Edmonton began to decrease in 1999 and eventually almost disappeared for two reasons:

*I would say that the boy stroll almost disappeared when the bath house opened because people could go there and have liaisons for free so why purchase on stroll. I have not heard of a youth working the bath house, but I can't say it's never happened. ....The PCHIP legislation (1999) changed the entry of youth into prostitution generally, since it was used vigorously here (Edmonton).....the male youth who were apprehended under PCHIP I think were working as trannies. (McCartney J, 2004)*

There have been no sexually exploited youth found working in bath houses. In the start-up phases of PCHIP, the Protective Safe House run by Catholic Social Services in Edmonton provided services to three young men. The male stroll area began to disappear. This is reflected in that there has not been a male placed in the Protective Safe House in Edmonton for over three years. It is only recently that males working as males have reappeared on the streets of Edmonton. During the interviewing phase of *Under the Radar: The Sexual Exploitation of Young Men* (March 2003-October 2003) there were no active visible males working as males on the streets of Edmonton; therefore, none were interviewed. There were, however, young males working as transvestites who were interviewed.

A total of nine individuals identified as transgender. Five from Edmonton and four from Calgary. Four of the individuals from Edmonton identified as Aboriginal and three from Calgary. Many of these individuals labeled themselves as being 'two spirited'. The following is a specific description that was crafted at a conference in the late 1990's:

*The term two spirited has a number of meanings within several different contexts. "Two Spirited" means Aboriginal people who identify themselves as gay or lesbian. The terms, gay or lesbian are of European origin. Therefore, "two spirited" is preferred because it is more culturally relevant to Aboriginal lesbians and gays. (Two Spirited People of the 1<sup>st</sup> Nations, We Are Part of a Tradition, 1998)*

The following quotes by a young two spirited person interviewed in this study speaks to the strength of her spirits. As time went on, learning about being two spirited brought a different awareness.

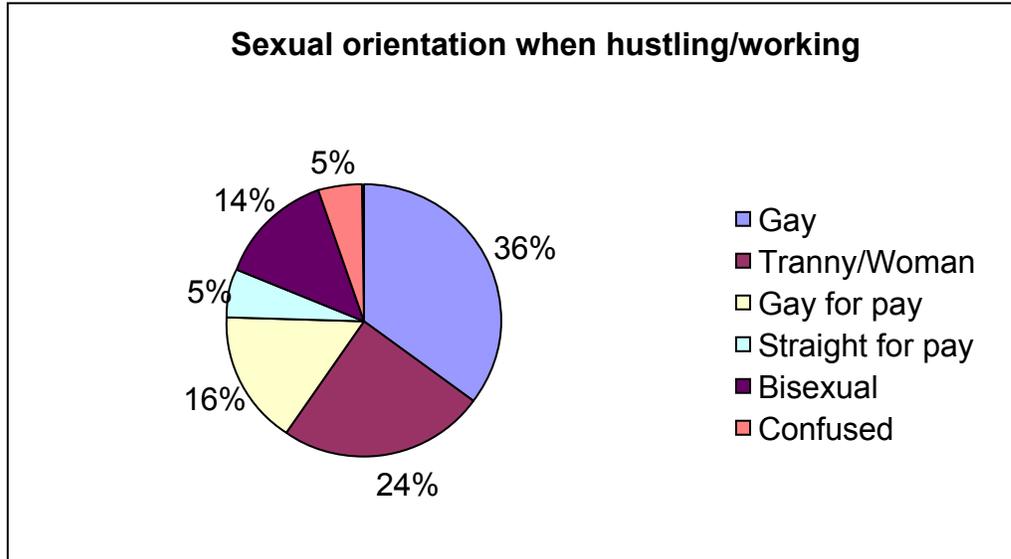
*My Aboriginal beliefs are what actually opened me up to being Julie. Um, the Aboriginal honor the Two Spirited people with great respect and being Aboriginal helped me up to being Two Spirited and accepting myself for who I was. Both man and woman. It's given me my strength and the capability to find happiness within myself to a point of full acceptance and I thank the great spirit for that. Something I try and teach a lot for the Aboriginal people that Two Spirited is being accepted by all Aboriginal people more of society than just being gay.(Jamie #15)*

## **Bisexual**

This describes a young man who is attracted to both genders. He identifies with both sexual identities. For some young men, seeing themselves as bisexual eased the transition to work with male customers. Some only saw bisexual behavior with men occurring when they worked in the sexual exploitation trade. Others lived a full bisexual life while in and out of the trade.

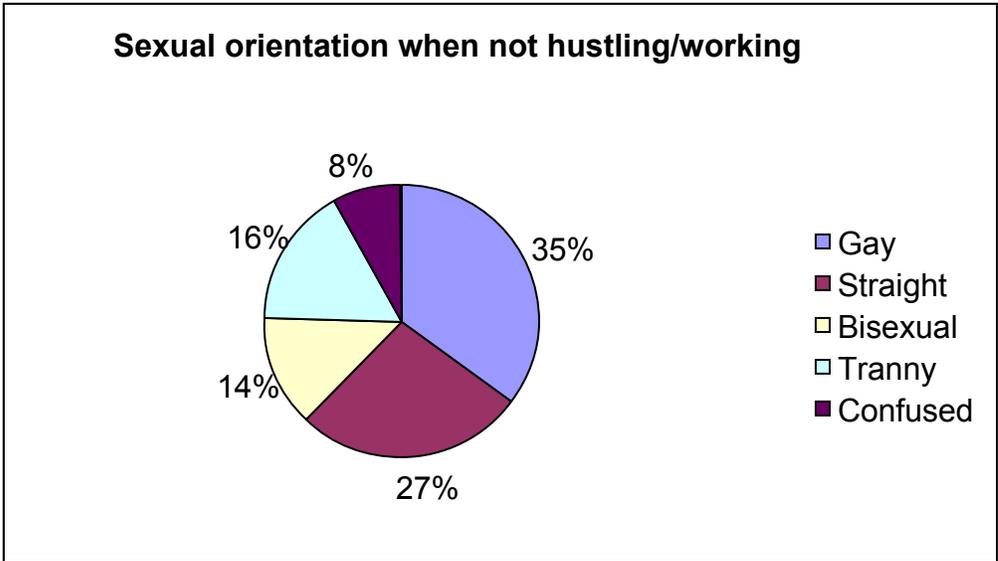
## Confused

Two individuals saw themselves as confused about their sexual identity when they were working. They were unclear about where and how their sexual identity could fit while they were working.



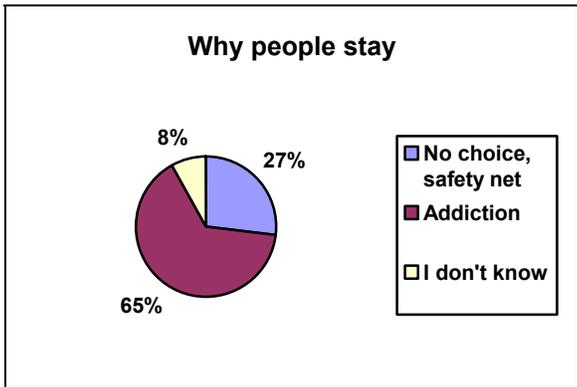
### 4.17 Sexual Orientation When Not Hustling/Working

An individual can describe his sexual identity while on the street as being different than that displayed in their private life. For example, nine individuals saw themselves as being a Tranny while they were working; while only six saw themselves as being Tranny in their private time, meaning three conformed to the Tranny for Pay scenario.



**4.18 Why People Stay Hustling/Working**

To understand why people stay hustling/working in the sexual exploitation trade is to also understand why they return. If we are going to be effective in assisting individuals to leave the trade for good, then we need to understand exactly what keeps someone in the sexual exploitation trade in the first place.



Many in the sexual exploitation trade do not believe they have other options. The trade represents a safety net to them and they rely on it for their immediate survival.

*Um well because after awhile like people just adapt to their environment so they become numb to it and if they had addictions to drugs and need to keep working in order to survive or like be able to feed their habits you know after awhile it becomes a career so they can't see themselves doing anything else. Um the money can be good. So it's just sort of a vicious circle. (Tony #19)*

*For me I think about it all the time, I always go out there and it never seems to go away. (Micky #25)*

*Okay well working is also an addiction. You get addicted to the lifestyle, the people. You meet friends and then of course you're always going to find your drugs. (Jackson #30)*

A large majority (65%) see their addictions playing a role in why they stay in the trade.

A similar line of questioning was part of *The Youngest Profession: The Oldest Oppression* (McIntyre, 1993). There is an increase in the recognition of the level of addiction. Drug addiction for this population has increased. It is highly possible that the inexpensive addictive crack cocaine has hastened the level of addiction and the numbers of those who are addicted. Crack cocaine was not a prevalent drug in use in the early 1990's. Expensive cocaine was certainly a drug of choice; however, the expense of cocaine has limited its use.

The inexpensive nature and highly addictive character of smoking crack cocaine has amplified the level of addiction; hence, the reliance on and entrenchment in the sexual exploitation trade.

#### 4.19 Services You Wish Existed

Throughout the interviews, we were curious about the type of services these young men felt should exist.

Currently, programs like Exit exist and service this male population. However, there was a clear sense they felt these services were more female-oriented.

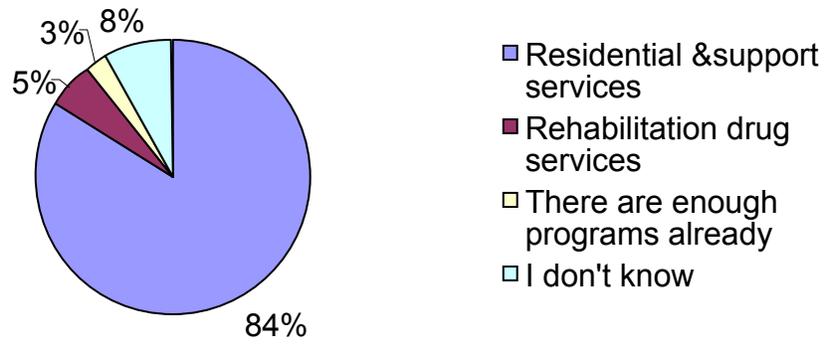
Having been personally involved in the development of the Exit Program, we attempted at all points to include young men from the sexual exploitation trade. However; we were hampered because we knew very little about the different working styles or needs of these young men.

*Better group homes for sexually exploited men. There's ones for females, but not for males. (Blair #3)*

*There's no service really for men trying to get off the streets. (Jordan #2)*

In revisiting the male population from *Strolling Away*, they clearly stated they were different and we needed to hear their differences. Over 80% felt strongly that there needed to be residential programs and support services for males that addressed the unique issues facing sexually exploited males.

### Services wish existed

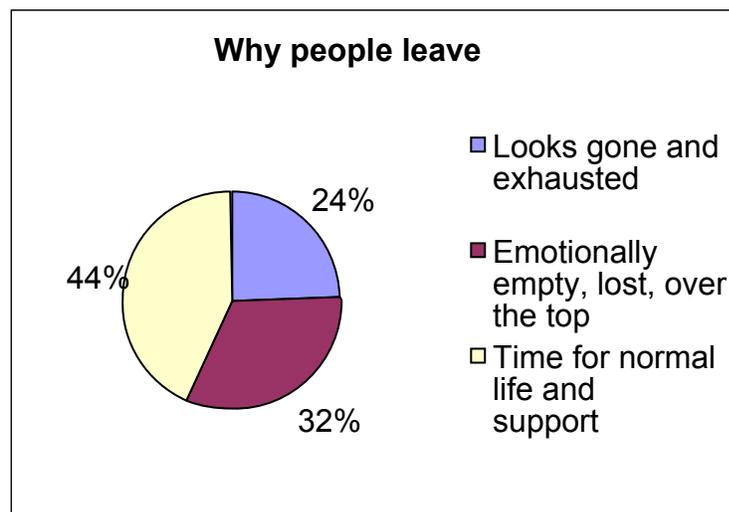


## Section 5: Attempts At Exiting

It is crystal clear that people wish to exit the sexual exploitation trade. They do not perceive the trade as a long-term choice for themselves; however, knowing how to leave is a process we need to understand.

### 5.1 Leaving

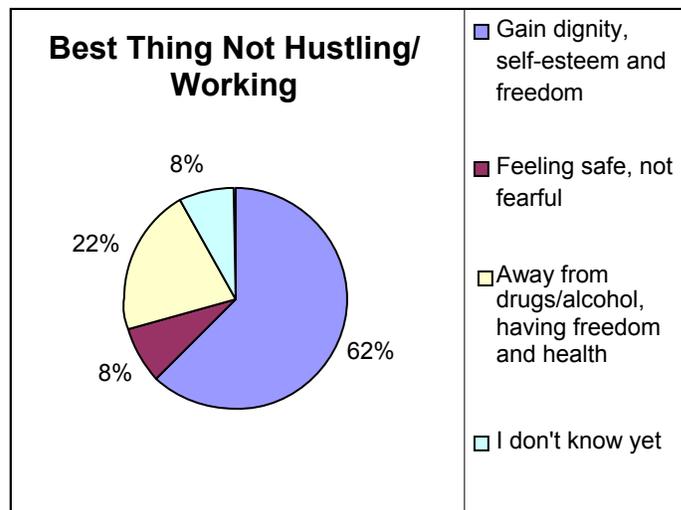
Everyone we interviewed wanted to leave the sexual exploitation trade. No one person spoke of positive benefits or a desire to remain. One-quarter felt they were exhausted both physically and mentally. They looked and felt worn down. Close to half felt emotionally empty. Many felt lost and that they had gone over the top. The last quarter felt it was time for a normal life and they needed to find some support. Significantly, all had a reason to want to exit. All of these individuals had taken a time out, but most had slipped back into the sexual exploitation trade.



*I left the trade because I was sick of myself ya know sick of the person I had become and how mean I was and I was sick of every aspect of my life.  
(Brett #23)*

## 5.2 Best Thing Not Hustling/Working

Only three people that had exited were unable to identify the best thing about not working. Others who had short-term or multiple experiences with exiting were able to quickly identify the benefits.



*Having a place for a long time. Like when you have to buy things like a cup or a plate set or a blender or a video game for the TV or a couch, whatever it is because that means you're really far away from that world. (Harry #23)*

The sense of dignity was something that was quickly identified. A sense of self-esteem returned to individuals who had exited. The sense of fear disappeared which was replaced with a sense of safety.

## 5.3 Returning

Unfortunately many of those who had exited experienced this sense of relief for only a brief period of time. Almost half felt that they returned to hustling/working because they were stranded, unemployed and feared becoming homeless.

It is important to remember that the majority of these young men had lived as run aways, had been homeless and had experience in the shelter system. Some saw that their only option was to return to shelters or to the sexual exploitation trade.

*Desperation and nowhere to go, nowhere to turn for resources. (Elton #11)*

Some realized friends and roommates were significant factors in returning. Although they had decided to stop working/hustling they still continued to be part of the lifestyle through roommates, etc. Unfortunately, this peripheral lifestyle becomes a slippery slope where most end up re-entering the trade.

The level of addictions also played a significant role in re-entering the sexual exploitation trade.

*I just missed the whole atmosphere being out there. There was a feeling to being there and there was a feeling between us, there was a connection between people. (Elton #11)*

#### **5.4 Stress**

Close to 70% had difficulty with stress once they ceased work. This stress most often occurred due to worry about survival. How exactly were they going to survive? Many were concerned with their ability, or lack of ability, to be a provider.

All of the individuals had limited experience with other forms of work. Minimum wage jobs require strength and endurance. Recent experience in the trade did not prepare any of them physically or mentally to return to this type of 'legitimate' work.

*Yea my stress level was really difficult because I was dealing with all the normal human beings of society and you know it's just a matter of time before you actually forget the past and move on with your life. (Fred #8)*

## **5.5 Problems Sleeping**

During periods of time when a young man exited, over three-quarters experienced difficulty sleeping. Street life entails long, late hours. It wasn't just the adjustment to change. Often it had to do with other physical changes from drug withdrawal or sleep disturbances from dreams and nightmares.

*Yea I wake up and freak out thinking there were people around me or someone was trying to touch me in the middle of the night and yah kind of makes it hard how do you explain that to your girlfriend, yah know two months I have had. I'm not gay. I'm not bisexual . I have a girlfriend. (Brent #5)*

## **5.6 Flashbacks**

Close to 60% experienced flashbacks once they left the street. Flashbacks are a very real disturbance for many individuals. Often they recall some of the difficult times that occurred while in the sexual exploitation trade or experience unresolved issues they suppressed while in the trade.

*Like you know someone's cologne that I went home with willingly. They have cologne that I remember from someone and that would be very stressful. (Harry #23)*

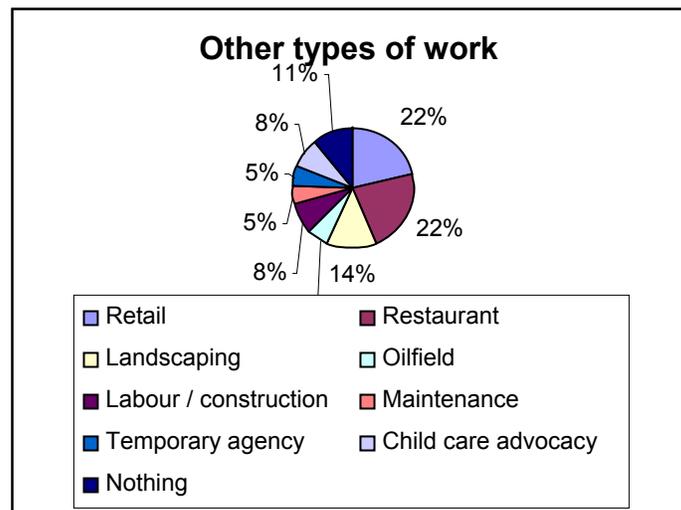
## 5.7 Anger

Over half who had exited experienced problems with anger once they left the trade. Some describe how they now get angry because they were once so guarded and/or stoned. Previously their anger was buried.

*I guess so. It was realizing that you know, because when you stop you have to realize yes, this is what I did. I guess a little bit of anger but more ashamed. (Micky #25)*

## 5.8 Other Work

This population had dabbled in other types of work. Most often it was short-term, minimum wage employment. There was a group of young men who had successfully exited and were working with youth similar to themselves, advocating successfully for this population.



## 5.9 Messages For Service Providers

It is important to hear what these young men wanted to tell service providers. An overwhelming number wanted to let them know that it is not easy to leave the trade. As was found in *Strolling Away*, nearly everyone left at least once. The process of leaving is a challenge. They often do not have the resources to exit. Add to that their level of addiction, lack of employment and limited resources, and a successful exit often includes homelessness and shelter stays. Most males do not have children or child care responsibilities. While the birth and caring of a child often brings with it government and a renewed family connection for females, this is not an option for young men.

The young men in this study felt there was a need for service providers to understand them. They did not feel understood by service providers, nor did they believe program options were available to them.

*I think a lot of them have a kind of patronizing attitude and I think it would be better for men to have a man that used to hustle. (Blair #3)*

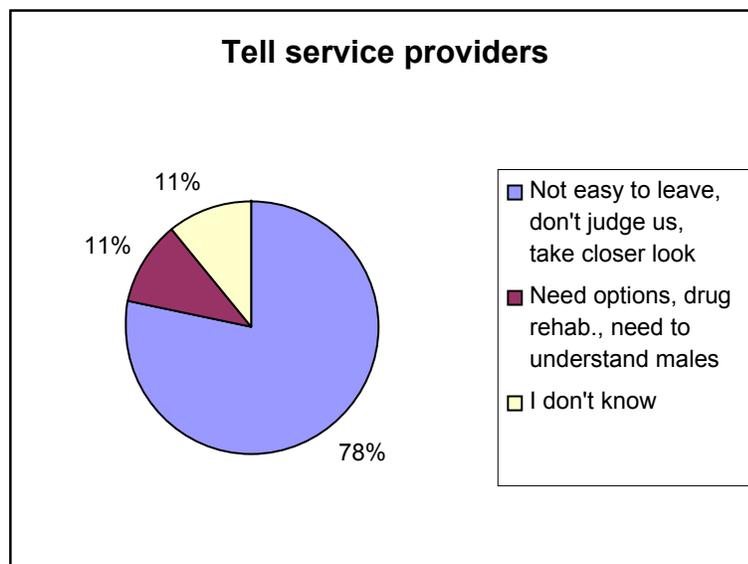
The issue of drug rehabilitation programs was critical. Young men engage in sexual exploitation at a very young age and remain in the trade longer than women. Consequently, they have longer and more severe experiences of drug addiction.

*Even though they are trying to deal with us working, there's always something underneath it. That's why we're working, so maybe it would be better if they tried helping with the underlying stuff instead of the working stuff. (Scott #5)*

When asking the young men about services and service providers the interviewers often received comments saying they were grateful for this study. Some of those interviewed sent notes directly to us thanking us for doing this study.

Finally, they felt their voice about needing services to meet their needs was being heard. Condoms and coffee programs assist but there is a desire for more in-depth services.

*No I would tell them that the studies they're doing right now are good to find out all about us, about the problem, where it originated, how they can help, not as you know their given terms but as people who care, so you would tell them maybe be less focused on what their professional role is and more on what the people need. (Elton #34)*



## 5.10 Story Of 10 Who Exited

A total of 10 individuals interviewed had exited from the sexual exploitation trade. These 10 individuals had exited anywhere from three months up to five years. As a result, they bring with them a wealth of information on the challenges and process of leaving the sexual exploitation trade.

The majority of individuals left the trade more than once. Over half exited between two and five times before they would have a successful exit. We need to understand that individuals do not exit just once in most cases. Many times it becomes a cumulative learning process.

The key findings from these 10 interviews are as follows:

- The majority of individuals left the trade more than once
- The issue of fear and abuse made three of the ten want to exit
- The desire to have a “normal” life created the desire for six of the ten to exit
- The need for income pressured six of the ten to consider returning to the sexual exploitation trade
- Some missed the excitement and the thrill of the street
- When people did go back, they were quick to say things such as better housing, moving and being drug free could have prevented them from returning
- Half clearly stated they left because ‘enough was enough’
- Two were fortunate enough to say they left because they found employment
- The desire for a normal life, relationship with friends and program support assisted in supporting someone to leave
- Over half felt that supportive positive relationships were what assisted them in not returning to the street
- People talked about missing life on the edge and the money once they had left
- People identified financial stress, missing action, relationship problems and drug addiction as factors that almost made them return to the sexual exploitation trade
- Two valuable lessons people identified after leaving were that the street was a scam, and they could be valuable people
- After people left, they said they wanted to stop everyone from doing this and that we need to understand it is a method of survival, it makes people uncomfortable and it is child abuse
- When you leave, you should expect to be broke and stressed
- There are consequences for the life they were part of
- When questioned as to what surprised them after they left, they were quick to say they can leave, they can trust others and they have self respect

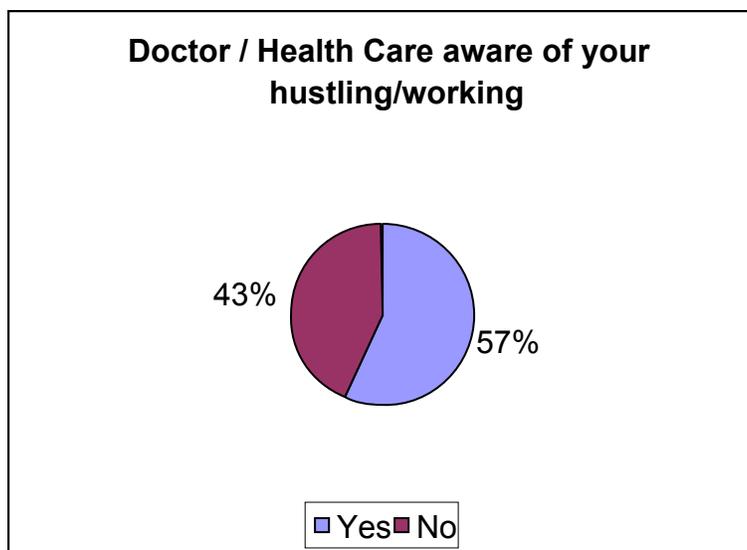
## Section 6: Health Issues

The Calgary Health Region was a strong supporter of this study. There was a desire to understand the health-related issues with this population.

We asked questions about a need to access health services as a result of an individuals hustling/working. Only 40% had accessed health services as a result of the sexual exploitation trade. Two-thirds of those who had accessed the services stated they received good services and their needs were addressed.

### 6.1 Health Care Workers Aware of Hustling/Working

We then inquired about their own doctor or health care workers being aware of their involvement in the sexual exploitation trade. Close to 60% of the population interviewed had informed their health professionals of their hustling/working.

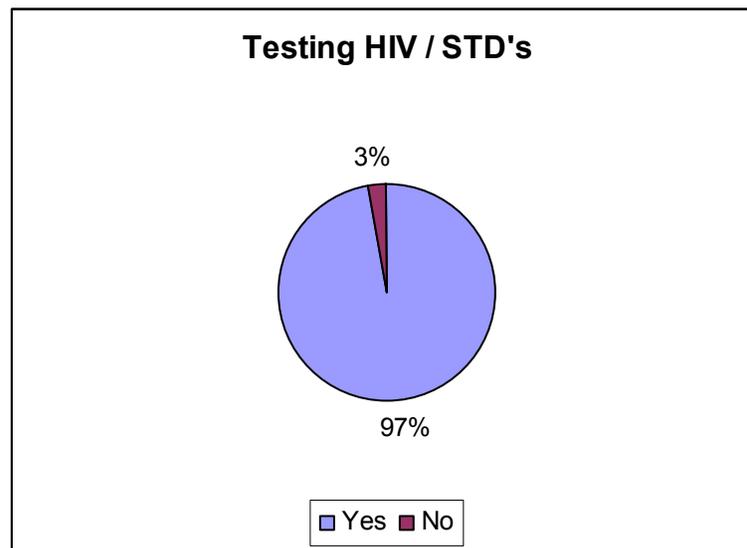


## 6.2 Testing For HIV / STD's

Many spoke highly of the medical services they had received to date. They felt it was important to have a good relationship with health care professionals.

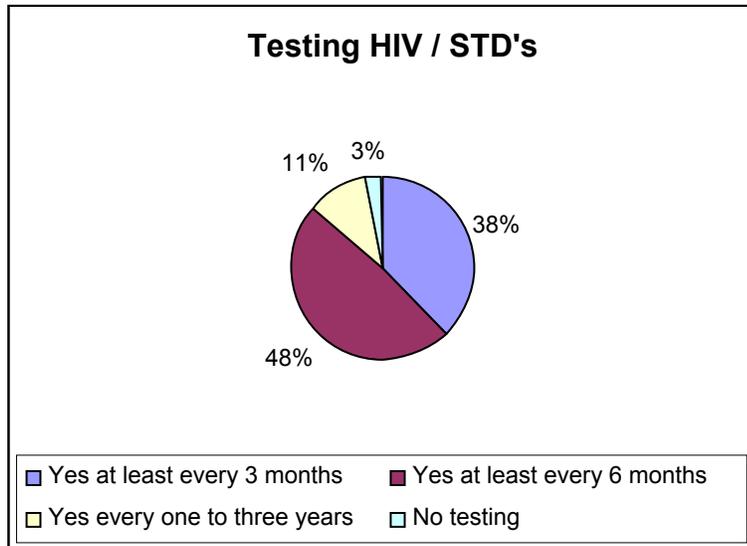
There was a strong commitment to being responsible in reference to HIV and other STD Testing. Only one person had not been tested.

What is important is that the public education on HIV testing has made a significant impact. People have understood the value and importance of regular testing.



## 6.3 Frequency HIV / STD Testing

When we asked about the frequency of HIV / STD testing, what was important about our finding was how regular testing is of value. Half we interviewed went for testing at least every six months. Over half went for testing at community clinics such as 8<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> in Calgary and Boyle McCauley Health Centre in Edmonton.

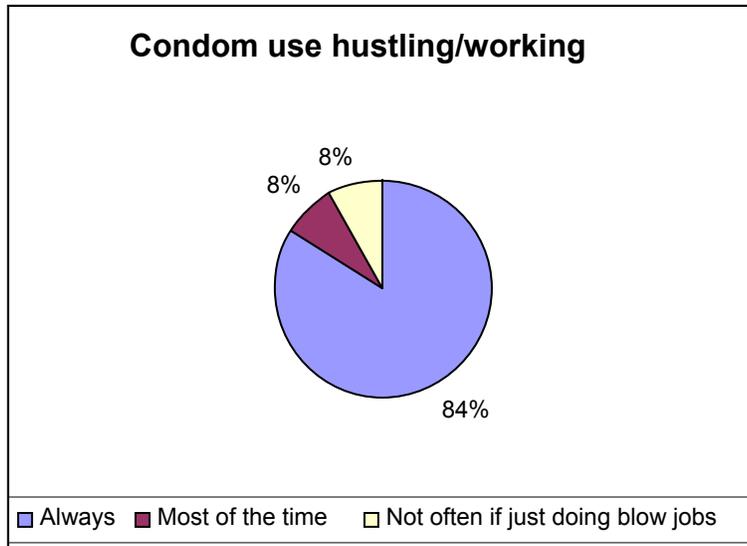


When asked what makes it easier to get testing done, over half spoke about having a neutral, confidential and anonymous service. One-quarter said nothing makes it easier and that they are always very nervous when they go for testing.

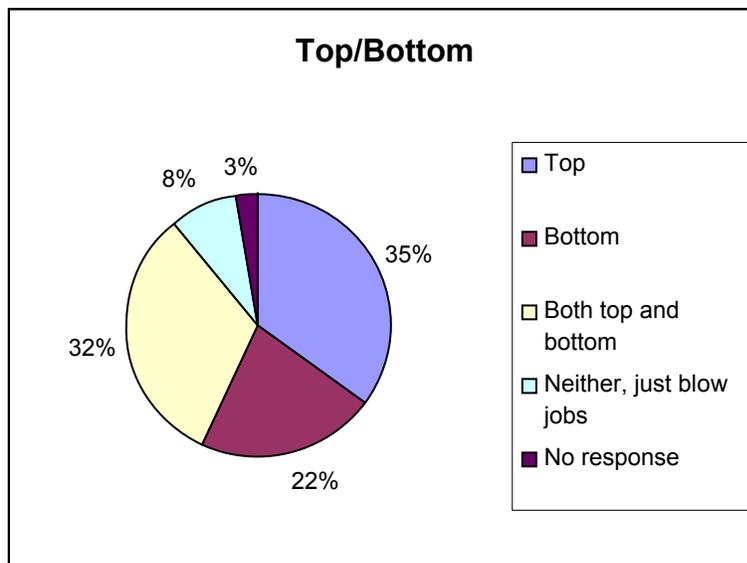
There was a clear sense from half this population that they saw themselves as low risk for HIV. Six of those interviewed were already confirmed as being HIV positive.

#### 6.4 Condom Use Hustling/Working

Next we asked about the importance of condom use while hustling/working. Again public education on prevention of HIV and STD's has worked. The use is very high while working/hustling.



One of the questions designed by experiential youth also used the terms ‘top boy/ bottom boy’. The term in the gay community is top or bottom. This term refers to the physical positioning of anal penetration. A person who fulfils the role as top will deliver anal penetration. The person who is bottom will be the receiver who is being anally penetrated.



It is revealing that the use and value of condoms is established and followed in a consistent manner according to those interviewed. There is clarity that condom use is imperative when engaging in anal sexual intercourse.

There is an understanding that the risk is high when anal intercourse is involved hence requiring condoms.

There is a lack of clarity in reference to transmission guidelines for oral sex. A need exists to have a clearly established medical position on the risk of disease transmission (STD/HIV) for youth and youth serving agencies. Suffice it to say, the issue of condom use for oral sex is rather cloudy and Health Canada standards should be outlined and followed.

Although we found a strong majority always use condoms; there appears to be a need for clarification on the use of condoms when the activity is oral in nature. It appears there is a lack of clarity as to the potential effects of unprotected oral sex.

## 6.5 Condom Use In Personal Life

There is a strong awareness of the importance of condom use in their personal lives as well. We can see that 65% will always use condoms in their personal life. One-quarter will use condoms depending on who the person is.



A small portion, that being 15%, say they do not use condoms as they are in a solid personal relationship.

What is refreshing about this information is that there is an awareness of the need for condom use in a personal situation. Six of the individuals interviewed are HIV positive and they clearly understand the need to protect others.

It was important to understand the medical services this population accesses. Medical services provided by street vans play an important role in the lives of these young men. Programs in both Edmonton and Calgary provide important public health information and direct medical services. Programs such as Safeworks, Exit, Street Works and Crossroads provide a medical lifeline to this population. These programs reinforce the awareness of condom use and the importance of regular testing.

Overall, what is of importance is that the critical need for awareness of and action for health protection from HIV and other STD's is on the radar screen within this population. The awareness is present, but more importantly these young men are taking action to protect themselves. Health and AIDS professionals should be praised for achieving this present awareness and practice.

## **Section 7: Discoveries**

### **#1 Comparable Histories Of Abuse**

Both young men and women have comparable backgrounds of sexual and physical abuse prior to their entrance into the sexual exploitation trade. What is key to understand is that these are children with backgrounds of abuse who have entered into the sexual exploitation trade. For young men, this background of sexual abuse was prominent. Close to 70% reported sexual abuse and 86% reported physical abuse.

### **#2 Creating A Construct**

It was clear that many young men created an image or construct that allowed them to work while in the trade. A number of different methods to create constructs existed.

Young men strive to create a construct to achieve a level of performance while on the street because they are placed in the position of needing to achieve sexual satisfaction for their customers. According to many of the young men I spoke with, many talked about the pressure, need or outcome to demonstrate physical arousal whether they were the receiver or the deliverer. Even if they are taking the lead in giving a customer a blow job, there is an expectation that some form of excitement, that is an erection, can be sighted. This becomes very challenging for a young man, particularly if he identifies himself as heterosexual. Young men are expected to demonstrate the buy-in; whereas women have the advantage of 'faking it'.

Men must show some physical evidence of being sexually authentic, so they select a construct in which they can achieve what is expected of them from customers.

As a result, a variety of different constructs exist, ranging from:

- Gay for pay
- Straight for pay
- Tranny for pay
- Bisexual
- Gay

### **#3 Male Prostitution Fear Factor**

During the years I have been involved with the topic of sexually exploitive youth, I have often spoke of the original 50 youth I interviewed in the early nineties. There seemed to be a pattern emerging that focused on the 'poor young women'. However, often I would have to clarify that nine of the original 50 were young men.

The issue of young men made many uncomfortable. To ease this feeling, people would presume that those nine males worked with female customers. However, when I advised them that the majority of young men were involved with adult males, I would experience a great level of discomfort and angst.

It has been a challenge to gain an understanding as to why and how we are able to so readily accept young women in the sexual exploitation trade. There is a level of consolation for individuals that the activity is heterosexual, that being 'normal'.

The issue of adult young men purchasing sexual services from other young men raises discomfort with both the general public and service professionals.

This level of discomfort is raised even higher when it is pointed out that not all customers are themselves gay men. Many are closeted married men.

#### **#4 Begin Young & Work Longer**

Almost 50% of those interviewed began work under the age of 16 years. Twenty-seven of the 37 young men I interviewed had begun work under the age of 18.

This means that criminal charges could have been laid in 73% of those cases interviewed under Section 212(4) of the Criminal Code of Canada, which prohibits anyone from 'attempting, or purchasing the services for the purposes of prostitution of someone under the age of 18'. To my knowledge, no single case involving males was brought into the criminal justice system.

A group of 10 young men entered the trade over the age of 18 years. They were hard pressed to find alternative options, selecting this as a short-term solution.

Young men average nine years working on the street. Thirteen young men had been involved in the street trade for over 10 years. Seven of these young men had been involved for over 15 years.

Overall, young men enter the trade younger and work longer in this form of voluntary desperation. Young women are often handed a lifeline of support. A significant majority of women from *Strolling Away* had birthed children.

Young men do not have the option to physically birth a child and as we have seen, if they father a child they are often separated from this process.

Nearly every young man in this study had at one point or another spent time in a shelter. The voluntary desperation of the street can often only be replaced with living in homeless shelters. Voluntary desperation of the trade is often their only option to being homeless.

## **#5 Flying Under The Radar**

What became clear to me is that many of the young men in this study had and continue to fly under the radar of most service providers. The lack of awareness of males is two fold. Some fly under to avoid contact and interaction with PCHIP legislation.

Others are hard to identify, given the difference in demeanor and working styles of young men and women. Males do not wear short skirts or stiletto heels, nor do they circle around corners when working. They are more mobile.

## **#6 They Have Unique Service Needs**

This research provided an opportunity to listen, hear and view the service needs of young men. Clearly, they spoke of a frustration in the services they presently receive. They feel services are an add-on to services provided for young women in the sexual exploitation trade, are minor in scope and reflect a female lens. Unfortunately, there are no specialized services designed for young men. It is obvious that they have unique needs, and they have requested that we listen to them.

## **#7 Public Education On Condom Use & HIV Testing Has Worked**

It is refreshing to hear about the awareness and safety knowledge this population has gained through public education. They understand the need for condom use and have become committed to using them while working. The message is clear. The only time they consistently identified the lack of condom use was when someone was in a long-term committed relationship with the same person.

A strong awareness exists about the need and value of consistent HIV testing. The majority realize that consistent testing is both a preventive and self-protection tool.

Again, public education on condom use and consistent AIDS/HIV testing has worked with this population. Public education around the prevention of HIV/AIDS has also resulted in a significant level of awareness amongst this population.

There does however appear to be a lack of clarity around the issue of choosing to use or not to use a condom when oral sex is involved. A need exists to gain a clear medical opinion on this issue in order to provide an appropriate platform for any public education awareness campaign. A great deal of inconsistency exists on this issue between service providers, clients, and other professionals in the community.

## **#8 Connection Between Street & Drugs Is Longer And More Intense**

Young men are spending a greater length of time on the street than young women. For many young women, they spend less time on the street and often take breaks to birth children.

Hopefully, in most situations this absence also disrupts drug use. The birth of a child can often work as catalyst to disrupt, alter and cease drug use and street involvement. Again, young men do not have this opportunity. In many cases, this results in greater and more extensive drug use. It is possible that given the second stigma role of 'gay for pay' these young men feel both a greater level of shame and drug use.

## **#9 Family Ties**

The greater the length of time a person spends in the sexual exploitation trade, the greater likelihood it stresses and alters family relations. Sixty-five percent of those interviewed had either a strained or non-existent relationship with their family. This strain and stress often results from a family's awareness of their son being in the sexual exploitation trade.

## **#10 Run Away Programs**

Ninety-five percent of this population had run away. What is important from this is that 60% of those who had run were offered food or shelter; however, often there were conditions, primarily sexual conditions, attached to the offer. Running away plays a vital role in the potential entrance into the sexual exploitation trade. Often it is the trigger that initiates entrance into the trade.

## **Section 8: Concluding Discussion & Recommendations**

### **Young Men In The Sexual Exploitation Trade**

In 2002, it was recommended in *Strolling Away* that a national study on males in the sexual exploitation trade would be of value; however, it was felt that the attempt of gaining an inclusive national study would be both onerous and time consuming. As a result, a decision was made to proceed one province at a time.

The Province of Alberta took the lead. They supported the need and provided the necessary funds required for such a study. They were joined by a series of anonymous donors.

Shortly thereafter, *Under the Radar: The Sexual Exploitation of Young Men* caught the attention of the Province of British Columbia. As a result, we were able to move the study into British Columbia, working closely with Covenant House in Vancouver. The Federal Government National Crime Prevention Centre (NCPC), The Government of British Columbia and some anonymous donors are now supporting this study. We hope to release findings of this project in the fall of 2005.

In addition to this, half the funding has already been secured from anonymous donors to move this project into the provinces of Saskatchewan and Manitoba. Discussions have begun with the Federal Government NCPC about supporting the continuation of this study into Saskatchewan and Manitoba. If this is achieved, it will provide us with a good picture of this issue throughout Western Canada.

*Under the Radar: The Sexual Exploitation of Young Men* provided the opportunity to design, enact, implement, review and complete a study on young men in the sexual exploitation trade.

It provided an opportunity to understand this issue from a male perspective, from the design of the questions, to the printing of this document. *Under the Radar: The Sexual Exploitation of Young Men* is now being replicated in British Columbia.

Males enter the sexual exploitation trade younger and remain longer. It is important that we gain as much information about young men involved in the sexual exploitation trade.

**Recommendation #1:**

*Efforts should be directed towards supporting the future expansion of this study to other provinces. Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec and Nova Scotia should be considered as future sites in order to allow for National, Eastern, Central, and Western perspectives. This population tends to be rather transient so the opportunity to gain a national perspective as well as regional differences will be of assistance.*

**Outreach Program Support**

Outreach programs offer a critical service element for youth involved in the sexual exploitation trade. These programs offer a lifeline for young people who are involved in the trenches, which often further isolates them from any support or community connections. Family and community ties drift and become strained during this challenging time. Young men enter the sexual exploitation trade earlier and stay much longer. The long and short of this is that these ties drift further and further away.

Outreach Programs become a more pivotal service for this population. They have a lengthier duration on the street, and all the challenging practices that come from this include an extensive drug addiction. The use of PCHIP legislation in Alberta has hampered the ability of outreach programs in both Calgary and Edmonton to be able to extend support to this population regardless of gender.

Under PCHIP, outreach workers have to report young people they believe are working. This then results in young people being contained in a Protective Safe House. The bottom line is that youth of both genders avoid Outreach Programs to avoid containment.

**Recommendation #2:**

*A need exists for Outreach Programs to gain an exemption, relaxation or exception to the PCHIP legislation. Often Outreach Programs offer the only lifeline of support for youth involved in the sexual exploitation trade. The PCHIP legislation inadvertently violates the core outreach principal of neutrality. As noted by Outreach Workers, youth would run and hide from staff to avoid detection and potential containment. This resulted in youth being isolated and separated from potential support services.*

**Abuse Services**

Both young men and women who enter the sexual exploitation trade have histories of sexual abuse prior to the trade. A minimum of 70% of both genders had a history of sexual violation before surfacing in the sexual exploitation trade.

Seventy percent with previous abuse allow us to say that unresolved abuse could work as an antecedent to entrance into the trade. As found in *Strolling Away* often when attempting to or actually exiting the trade, unresolved original abuse resurfaces.

### **Recommendation #3:**

*That we publicly acknowledge both young men and women are being exploited in the sexual exploitation trade. In over 70% of cases, both young men and women have a history of sexual and/or physical abuse. They are children who have and are being exploited.*

*There is a need to insure that children who are sexually violated have the option to access treatment. It is critical that we have services available for those exiting the sexual exploitation trade. Remember for these young men, they have been in the sexual exploitation trade longer and the issue of homophobia circles around them. We must offer long-term clinical services to the populations who have escaped under the radar for far too long. As was discovered in “Strolling Away” once an individual exits the sexual exploitation trade, former memories of abuse before and during the trade often flood individuals. There is a need to provide ongoing clinical support to this population during their reintegration back into mainstream life. This will increase the likelihood of a successful departure from the trade.*

### **Gender Non-Conformity Training**

A need exists for program staff that provides support services to this population to gain a greater level of knowledge and comfort with this population, especially regarding how they construct their own, often fluid, gender roles. Workers are often confused, uncomfortable or unaware of the workings of young men in the sexual exploitation trade.

As we have seen, young men create a “construct” to be able to survive in the sexual exploitation trade. Staff involved in programs and services need to understand and accept the constructs these populations have used to survive. Training and information is required in the following constructs:

- *Gay for pay*
- *Straight for pay*
- *Tranny for pay*
- *Bisexual*
- *Gay*

**Recommendation #4:**

*That staff working with young men in the sexual exploitation trade be provided with gender non-conformity training. As discussed, there is often a level of discomfort, overtones of homophobia and a general lack of awareness amongst program staff.*

**Awareness For Males**

We need to look for and provide services specifically designed for young men. It is important that we understand they work differently than young women. Service providers need to take the time to let a group of young men explain the types of services that would be of assistance to them.

It is important that we understand there are many young men who are being sexually exploited in the trade. We need to get these young men on our radar screen and hear them talk about their service and support needs.

**Recommendation #5**

*That service providers create the opportunity for young men in and out of the sexual exploitation trade to tell service providers about the services they require. This type of information could be discovered through focus groups and individual interviews with young men from the sexual exploitation trade. A neutral facilitator would be a critical step. The use of experiential youth could also facilitate in attaining accurate needs.*

## **Drug Addiction**

Young men are remaining in the sexual exploitation trade much longer than young women. They are unable to physically birth children, so this exit route, which can often lead to family and state support, is unavailable to them. Pregnancy often leads to a decrease, if not a total elimination of drug consumption. Males are not physically carrying a child so often the drug intake is not interrupted. As we found, young men are averaging six to nine years in the sexual exploitation trade. We know that this is associated with extensive and multiple drug use. The attempt to mask pain is managed through long-term self-medication.

### **Recommendation # 6**

*That a series of rehabilitation beds be established for young men exiting the trade. Years of extensive drug consumption requires an intervention that will provide them with temporary accommodation while detoxification and rehabilitation takes place.*

## **Housing & Training**

In addition to detoxification and rehabilitation, we need to provide the opportunity for low-income affordable housing, as well as employment training and support. This group has very little traditional work experience.

Nearly every individual interviewed had spent time living in shelters. This included shelters for adults and youth.

Shelter living is challenging. Often extensive stays and involvement in the sexual exploitation trade becomes a solution to homelessness. This group has experienced shelter stays and found this type of living extremely difficult. Once an individual is identified as working in the sexual exploitation trade, this label sticks.

## **Recommendation # 7**

*That safe affordable accommodation is provided for this population once they have completed drug detoxification and rehabilitation. This population requires safe, supportive living arrangements. Coupled with this, they need to be assisted in seeking employment. One-third of this population had completed high school and some college and university. However, they have limited employment skills and experience. Standard employment assistance programs will be required to assist them in supporting a successful exit from the sexual exploitation trade.*

## **Supply & Demand**

As was discovered in *Strolling Away*, we place most of our attention on the supply end of the equation, meaning we put our energies into those young persons working in the sexual exploitation trade.

*From this research it became apparent that our attention, minimal prevention materials and intervention are directed towards the supply of youth involved in the sexual exploitation trade. Outreach programs and secure treatment are designed to support or contain young people who have entered the trade. These forms of intervention are directed at keeping the individual involved in the street, safe. It is clear that if we are going to conquer this issue a demand approach must be part of the equation. We need to educate with the goal of affecting and deterring present and future customers. A need exists to alter the demand for such services. During these interviews, both male and female sex workers spoke about the continual flow of customers wanting to purchase their services. This presented a challenge for those trying to escape the trade. (Strolling Away: McIntyre, 2002:37)*

We have not kept sexually exploited young men on the radar screen. We have ignored them. By ignoring them, we have also not addressed the demand side, that being the customers.

The criminal justice system pays minimal attention to the customers of young men. If 'Communicating for the Purpose' charges occur, they are most often directed towards customers of women in the sexual exploitation trade. In other words, police undercover sting operations are directed towards charging the male customers of young sexually exploited women. The reverse is also true. Young sexually exploited women are more likely to be detected by the police and charged with Communicating.

Our view of the trade is classically heterosexual. We are prepared and comfortable to intervene both from a social and legal perspective with young sexually exploited women and their male customers. This is the traditional lens, the vision we have, of the sex trade and the manner in which we intervene. It is a patriarchal, heterosexual view. We are uncomfortable and reluctant to intervene with young men who are being sexually exploited by adult men. The reality is that men are having sex with boys.

### **Recommendation #8**

*That we approach the issue of demand, that being customers, with an equal balance for both young men and women who are being sexually exploited. Like women, these men are young people who are in need of our assistance.*

### **Peer Education**

A need exists to educate peers that the road out of the sexual exploitation trade is challenging. Both genders who have exited the trade identified challenges in this process. They attempt to return to their communities after exiting the sexual exploitation trade; however, many feel different, separated and outside their original peer group and are often ridiculed, teased and challenged by their peers.

## **Recommendation #9**

*That prevention information is directed towards both young men and women. We need to provide information that both young men and women in the sexual exploitation trade experienced sexual abuse. We should support, not ridicule them.*

## **Community Responsibility**

Over half the young men in the sexual exploitation trade had the experience of having a “sugar daddy”. Many of the young men interviewed were clear that these relationships were sexual in nature and included an older gay man seeking a relationship with a younger adolescent. This relationship often occurred in public places.

*The sugar daddy uses the public arena to display the relationship he has with the young man, who often serves as a status symbol for the sugar daddy. Numerous gifts and financial rewards were attached to this somewhat temporary role. Many of the young men interviewed spoke about being fired or replaced by a new younger adolescent as they began to age.*

*While there are numerous relationships where age differences occur among both genders, the sugar daddy relationship is particularly damaging because the exploitation occurs in such a young and vulnerable population of young males. (Eric Berndt, November 2004)*

An awareness must be created in all communities that exploitative relationships should not be tolerated. Given the nature of the male sexual exploitation trade, this awareness is particularly important in the gay community as this is an arena where sugar daddy’s ‘parade’ their adolescent partner.

## **Recommendation #10**

*That the community-at-large recognize the damaging effects of sugar daddy relationships on this young and vulnerable population.*

*In addition, an awareness of the economic disadvantages facing young males involved in the trade must be taken into account and considered as a symptom of the differential power relationship existent in sugar daddy relationships.*

### **Transitioning Support**

The transition from the street into the community is one that is difficult for young persons exiting the sexual exploitation trade. As we have noted, young men remain in the sexual exploitation trade longer than young women. Often young women leave the trade because they have birthed, or desire to birth children. This is neither a motivator, nor an opportunity for young men to exit. During the exiting from the sexual exploitation trade, there is an inherent danger in socializing with peers who are still in the sexual exploitation trade. There is the risk of slipping back into the lifestyle, which involves drug consumption. Little “formal” community support exists for this population.

### **Recommendation # 11**

*Develop mentoring connections for the population who are exiting. A need exists for those exiting to have the opportunity and support from those who have exited. An experiential voice can assist an individual who is in the process of exiting the sexual exploitation trade. There are many questions, and those who have been through such a journey can better answer challenges facing those who are exiting. This type of service could be set up in a formal structure through an agency that works with this population or informally within the volunteer community network.*

## **Public Education**

When we speak about the issue of youth prostitution or sexually exploited youth, we often see this as focused around young women. The prevention, intervention and support materials are primarily if not exclusively targeted to young women.

### **Recommendation # 12**

*A review of prevention, intervention and re-integration materials be completed and adjusted to speak to the sexual exploitation of youth regardless of gender. Materials must recognize the differences facing young women and men in the sexual exploitation trade. Education for both genders needs to be covered in these materials.*

## **Harm Reduction**

The methods used in harm reduction approaches to drug abuse have been adopted for youth in the sexual exploitation trade. As was noted clearly in *Strolling Away* it was suggested by experiential individuals that outreach services and professionals should directly offer respite and exiting support. There is value in offering condoms and bad date sheets; however; the offer to discuss exiting is of great value to those in the sexual exploitation trade. The ultimate goal must always remain moving someone out of the trade.

### **Recommendation #13**

*That an evaluation occurs of harm reduction approaches to sexually exploited youth. The opportunity exists to move into a more direct approach to intervention.*

## **Youth In Care**

Over 50% of those interviewed for this study and others had been under government care.

As noted by Shauna Parks-Denton, former Executive Director of the Alberta Youth in Care and Custody Network, often youth from care have gaps in their sexual knowledge and education. This is even more pronounced with young men from care.

**Recommendation #14**

*The National Youth In Care Network embraces the topic of sexual awareness. There is a need to ensure that youth from care have the same general knowledge base of the general youth population. This information could be delivered through a DVD, booklets or lectures.*

## Appendix 1: Strolling Away & Under the Radar

<b>Background Prior Sexual Exploitation Trade</b>						
	Average Age First Trick	Total Years On The Street	Sexual Abuse	Physical Abuse	In Government Care	Aboriginal Descent
Total 38 Interviews Strolling Away	14 yr	260 yr Avg. 7yrs	84%	79%	61%	26%
Strolling Away 33 Females (87%)	15 yr	200 yrs Avg. 6 yrs	82%	78%	61%	24%
Strolling Away 5 Males (13%)	12 yr	60 yrs Avg. 12 yrs *	100%	100%	60%	40%
Under the Radar 37 males (100%)	15 yr ***	322 yrs Avg. 9 yrs	68%	86%	51%	54%

\* Sample size very small only 5 males

\*\*\* 48 % commenced street work under the age of 16 (18 individuals)

\*\*\* 73 % commenced street work under the age of 18 (9 individuals)

\*\*\* 27 % commenced street work as young adult that being 18 years of age and older (10 individuals)

# Glossary

## **BAD DATE**

When a customer/trick harms and/or rips off a sex trade worker. This often involves physical abuse and sometimes weapons.

## **BISEXUAL**

This refers to an individual that is physically, emotionally and sexually attracted to individuals of either gender.

## **BLOW JOB**

Oral sex/fellatio that a sex trade worker gives to a customer/trick. Male sex trade workers will often allow a customer/trick to give them a blow job. "French" is another term used for blow job.

## **BOTTOM**

This term refers to the physical positioning of anal penetration. The individual referred to as bottom will be the individual who is being anally penetrated.

## **BUDDY**

Customer/trick who purchases the woman/man for sexual purposes in exchange for money.

## **CONFUSED**

This refers to an individual who is confused about their sexual identity. They do not see themselves as being straight, gay or bisexual.

## **CONDOMS**

Safe sex, sheiks, rubbers, prophylactics and covers are other terms used for condoms.

## **DATE**

Customer/trick who purchases the woman/man for sexual purposes in exchange for money.

## **DOPE PUSHER**

An individual who sells non-prescription or prescription drugs illegally.

**FEMINIST RESEARCH**

“Feminist Research investigates the aspects of women’s oppression while seeking at the same time to be part of the struggle against it.” (McIntyre, 1995:15)

**GAME**

Slang term used for the activity of prostitution.

**GAY**

This refers to a male who is emotionally, physically and sexually attracted to the male gender. They have accepted and embraced a gay sexual identity in their personal life.

**GAY BASHING**

Is an activity involving straight gay males whose homophobia results in violence towards gay males or those who appear to be gay in the sexual exploitation trade.

**GAY FOR PAY**

This refers to a young man who is heterosexual in their private sexual orientation, however will interact as gay strictly for pay in the sexual exploitation trade.

**GLORY HOLE**

This refers to a secluded private booth where a man can insert his penis and he is stimulated by a hidden individual.

**GROUNDING THEORY**

“At the beginning of the research, interviews usually consist of open-ended conversations during which respondents are allowed to talk with no imposed limitations of time. Often researchers sit back while the respondents tell their stories”. (Feminist Research, Glaser & Strauss, 1967:76)

**HAND JOB**

Sex trade worker masturbates customer.

**HIGH**

The physiological and mental reaction to drugs.

**HO/HOE/HOOKER**

Term for sex trade worker most often used for women such as ‘ladies of the night’.

**HUSTLER**

Term most often used for male sex worker.

**JOHN**

The customer who purchases a woman/man for sexual purposes in exchange for money. They are also referred to as "customer", "trick", "buddy" or "date".

**LAY**

A term for vaginal intercourse.

**LINES OF INQUIRY**

The method of open-ended questioning on a specific topic.

**MAN**

Usually refers to a pimp that a woman is working for/involved with.

**MAINSTREAM FOLKS**

People who are not involved in prostitution.

**MY PEOPLE**

The family that the female sex worker is associated with. It usually means the pimp and wife-in-laws, but often can mean a large family associated with sex work.

**PCHIP**

The Protection of Children Involved in Prostitution (PCHIP) was enacted in 1999 in Alberta. This legislation recognizes that children involved in prostitution are victims of sexual abuse and require support. Police and/or the director of Child Welfare may apprehend and confine a young person in a Protective Safe House.

**PROSTITUTION**

An individual who engages in sexual activity for the exchange of money or products.

**PUMP**

The energy, activity and unpredictable nature of street life described by sex trade workers on the street.

**REGULAR**

A consistent, repetitive customer who will interact with the same sexually exploited young man.

**RITUALS**

A pattern of behaviour that occurs in specific situations.

**SEXUAL EXPLOITATION TRADE**

Profession where youth engage in sexual activities with adults for money or products.

**SNOWBALL SAMPLING**

Results when persons interviewed tell others about the research and/or identify others to be interviewed.

**SHELTERS**

Large temporary accommodation that houses numerous individuals in the community.

**SQUARE**

A person who is not knowledgeable about the street.

**SQUARED UP**

When a woman leaves the business sometimes leaving man/pimp/family in the process.

**STRAIGHT PEOPLE**

In this case, it does not necessarily mean heterosexual. This refers to people not involved in prostitution.

**STRAIGHT FOR PAY**

This refers to a young man who is homosexual in his private sexual identity. For survival, this young man will perform heterosexual sexual activities for pay.

**STROLL**

Area where someone works on the street. Known as the 'stroll' because the sex worker walks up and down it. This constant movement was necessary historically because of the old Vagrancy charges. There is a distinction of "high stroll", meaning more expensive sex workers, like "high track". "Low stroll" is the same as "low track" meaning less expensive sex workers.

**SUGAR DADDY**

Refers to an older gay man who seeks a relationship with a younger gay man. This often involves sexual activity. The young man is rewarded with presents and necessities. The younger male is also often the exclusive 'ownership' of the older gay man in public places. A gay for pay young man would not seek out a sugar daddy relationship.

**TOP**

This term refers to the physical positioning of anal penetration. The individual referred to as top will be the individual who is anally penetrating.

**TRACK**

The street where you work is known as the "track" or "stroll". No one knows for sure why it is called track. Some relevant connotations are: that it is the wrong side of the tracks; track marks up and down arms; often by railway tracks; people drive up and down like they are on tracks. "Tracks" are sometimes seen as high and low. "High track" meaning higher quality girls and prices and "low track" meaning lower quality girls and prices.

**TRADE**

Slang term used for the activity of prostitution.

**TRANNY FOR PAY**

This refers to a young man who is either gay or heterosexual in their sexual orientation who presents as a transvestite while working in the trade.

**TRANSSEXUAL**

An individual who has a consistent overwhelming need to live their life as a member of the opposite gender.

**TRICK**

Customers who purchase the woman/man for sexual purposes in exchange for money. The customer is also known as 'buddy', 'john' or 'date'.

**TURNUED HIM**

Refers to action with a customer. It means that the money is exchanged and the sex act is complete. 'Turned a trick' is another term for 'turned him'.

**TURNUED OUT**

Refers to when a sex trade worker first began working.

**TURNUED A TRICK**

When a sex trade worker completes a transaction with a customer. Also known as 'turned him'.

**TWO SPIRITED**

Aboriginal people who identify themselves as gay or lesbian. The terms, gay or lesbian are of European origin. Therefore, 'two spirited' is preferred because it is more culturally relevant to Aboriginal lesbians and gays.

**WORKING**

If a worker considers themselves to be transsexual they will say they are working. The term “working” is one that women use in the trade.

**YOUTH IN CARE**

An advocacy organization for youth who are in the care of government. Adults who were youth in the care of government manage this organization.

**YOUTH PROSTITUTION**

A youth who enters the sexual exploitation trade.

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