



Aboriginal Domestic Trafficking in Persons

**For the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern
Development**

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Executive Summary

The data for this report was summarized from the following studies completed by Dr. Susan McIntyre:

- *The Youngest Profession Oldest Oppression* (1994)
- *Strolling Away* (2004)
- *Under the Radar the Sexual Exploitation of Young Men in Alberta* (2005)
- *Under the Radar the Sexual Exploitation of Young Men in British Columbia* (2006)
- *Under the Radar the Sexual Exploitation of Young Men in Saskatchewan* (2008)
- *Under the Radar the Sexual Exploitation of Young Men in Manitoba* (2008)
- *Under the Radar the Sexual Exploitation of Young Men in Western Canada* (2010)

The key findings in each subsection were derived from *Under the Radar the Sexual Exploitation of Young Men in Western Canada* (2010):

- A total of 157 young men were interviewed and 96 of them were Aboriginal. The highest Aboriginal representation was from Saskatchewan where 85% were Aboriginal.
- A background of sexual abuse prior to the street for this population was 70%. A background of physical abuse was reported in 82% of this Aboriginal population.
- A total of 54% of these Aboriginal young men reported self harming actions prior to the street.
- Sixty-one percent of this population entered into the Child Welfare system
- Running away was reported in 81% of young Aboriginal men
- Fifty percent reported being thrown out of their home
- The youngest person began work at age 8 and the oldest at 30 with an average age of entering into street sexual exploitation being 15 years of age.
- Just over half this population reported a connection to their Aboriginal culture
- Eighty-three of the 96 Aboriginal young men (86%) had a history with the police
- Seventy percent of this population were victims of violence within the home while 90% had witnessed family violence
- Nine years was the average time Aboriginal youth reported working
- Self introduction or introduction by a friend was the most common route into sexual exploitation
- A family history of sexual exploitation was reported in over 60% of those interviewed
- Thirty percent of this population reported being a biological parent
- Over 60% of this population had not completed high school

- Risk of gay bashing violence for this population is always a risk though only close to half had the experience
- Family strain and disconnection was prevalent in 58% of these young men
- Eighty-two percent of this population reported addiction as an issue
- A person has a sexual orientation in their work life and in their private life
- Having regular customers and/or sugar daddies was reported in 86% of those interviewed for the study
- Sixty-six percent of this population had moved and worked in sexual exploitation
- Over half of this population had worked in more than one province

A review of the overall findings was complete, and the Aboriginal data was then separated out and analyzed for the *Aboriginal Domestic Trafficking in Persons* report.

The remainder of this report is a discussion and series of seven recommendations which are as follows:

1. That an environmental scan be undertaken and completed at a national level looking at the services and supports available to sexually exploited young men. It should examine the extent of services available to Aboriginal sexually exploited young men given their overrepresentation in Western Canada. It will also be important that this document be province and city specific.
2. That studies such as *Under the Radar* be completed in other parts of Canada (e.g. Central and Eastern Canada) looking at the sexual exploitation of young men. National studies have been completed on females in sexual exploitation but not on males. This would provide an opportunity to have a complete picture of sexually exploited young men in Canada and the level of Aboriginal representation.
3. That specific research is undertaken that focuses on the issue of transgendered and/or Two-Spirited persons. That education and training be developed for educators, social service providers, health care workers, police, family and the general public in reference to transgendered and Two-Spirited persons.
4. That programs and services be designed, implemented and evaluated that are specifically focused on young sexually exploited young men; and that sexually exploited young men be the primary focus in this process. Specific attention should be directed toward the risk factors facing Aboriginal persons.
5. That a Federal Territorial Provincial Working Group be set up to look at sexually exploited young men. Establishing a gender-specific committee will ensure their needs is being considered from a program, policy and legal prospective.
6. That specific prevention and training programs be developed in looking at sexually exploited Aboriginal persons. Prevention programs and training materials should be designed, developed and delivered examining the role residential schools have played in impacting parents and their communities. These programs could be delivered to families, parents and the community both urban, rural and on reserve.

7. That training and education be designed and delivered to government, correctional and social service practitioners and students on the issue of sexual exploitation of young men including Transgendered and Two-Spirited individuals. Focus should be directed to the overrepresentation of Aboriginal persons and the relationship this has to residential school history.

Background

Dr. Susan McIntyre has become known for her compelling research into various issues surrounding sexual exploitation. Her research has helped change the way many practitioners and policy makers view the profession; has led to changes in service programs and delivery; and it has given a voice to those who have been struggling to exit the profession successfully and move on with their lives.

While her research included participants of Aboriginal descent, it did not specifically explore address whether their issues and experiences were different in some way from others.

A few months ago, Dr. McIntyre was commissioned by Cheryl Matthew, Senior Policy Analyst with the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development to identify and profile Aboriginal findings from the following reports:

- *The Youngest Profession Oldest Oppression* (1994)
- *Strolling Away* (2004)
- *Under the Radar: The Sexual Exploitation of Young Men in Alberta* (2005)
- *Under the Radar: The Sexual Exploitation of Young Men in British Columbia* (2006)
- *Under the Radar: The Sexual Exploitation of Young Men in Saskatchewan* (2008)
- *Under the Radar: The Sexual Exploitation of Young Men in Manitoba* (2008)
- *Under the Radar: The Sexual Exploitation of Young Men in Western Canada* (2010)

The Youngest Profession Oldest Oppression (1994) and Strolling Away (2004)

In 1994, Dr. McIntyre interviewed 41 young women and 9 young men. The study was titled the *The Youngest Profession Oldest Oppression*. In that study, a total of 12 individuals identified themselves as Aboriginal. Nine were women and three were men.

Ten years later, as part of the *Strolling Away* study, Dr. McIntyre successfully re-interviewed nine young women and two young men that had originally identified as Aboriginal. Out of these, one young man and one young woman from the 1994 study did not identify as Aboriginal.

However, when re-interviewed in 2004 they had discovered their Aboriginal heritage. Three of the original 12 were not discovered or available for interviews for the follow up study in 2004. One had committed suicide and the other was missing.

Of the 11 Aboriginal men and women that were re-interviewed for *Strolling Away*, 100% had a background of sexual and physical abuse prior to their involvement in sexual exploitation, and all had experienced violence while involved on the street. In addition, 81% had a background of involvement with child welfare. On average, this group had a higher percentage of history with sexual abuse, physical abuse, street harm and child welfare involvement than the other 27 non-Aboriginal persons that were interviewed.

Overall, Aboriginal youth entered at the age of 14 which is comparable to non-Aboriginal persons interviewed. Other comparable issues included: running away (81%); police involvement (91%); family violence (73%); being thrown out of the house (55%); and addiction issues (91%).

Furthermore, this Aboriginal group of 11 had comparable percentages with the other 27 non-Aboriginal populations in the areas of: education, pregnancy, siblings in sexual exploitation, and introduction into sexual exploitation with the most common route of entry being through a friend.

In 2004, none of the 11 Aboriginal persons were still working in the sexual exploitation trade.

Originally only 64% felt a connection to their Aboriginal heritage with only 36% having spent time on a reserve.

Under the Radar: The Sexual Exploitation of Young Men studies

After the release of *Strolling Away* in 2004, it became clear we knew virtually nothing about young men involved in sexual exploitation because we had been viewing this issue through a female lens. It was for this reason that *Under the Radar: The Sexual Exploitation of Young Men* research began in Alberta in 2005. It was later expanded to British Columbia in 2006, followed by Saskatchewan and Manitoba in 2008. In 2010, a consolidated report titled *Under the Radar: The Sexual Exploitation of Young Men in Western Canada* was released. This report represented interviews with 157 young men involved in the sexual exploitation trade in the provinces of British Columbia (40 interviews), Alberta (37 interviews), Saskatchewan (40 interviews) and Manitoba (40 interviews).

Research Findings

The following information, specific to Aboriginals was gleaned from a combination of those Under the Radar reports.

Cultural Background

In this research, out of 157 interviewed, there were a total of 96 sexually exploited Aboriginal men. This meant 61% of the total population interviewed in Western provinces was Aboriginal.

By province, the breakdown was as follows:

- In Alberta, 20 of the 37 sexually exploited young men interviewed, over half (54%) were Aboriginal.
- In British Columbia, 16 of the 40 young men interviewed, 40% were Aboriginal.
- In Saskatchewan, 34 of the 40 young men interviewed (85%) were Aboriginal.
- In Manitoba, 26 of the 40 young men interviewed (65%) were Aboriginal.

Given the fact that 61% of the total population interviewed in Western Canada was Aboriginal, it is fair to say young Aboriginal men are significantly overrepresented in the male sexual exploitation arena in Western Canada, and unfortunately they are also largely ignored by service providers.

	BC	AB	SK	MN	TOTAL
Aboriginal	16/40	20/37	34/40	26/40	96/157
	40%	54%	85%	65%	61%

J. Spencer is an Aboriginal man involved in psychotherapy and consulting. He provided the following explanation in reference to the silence of young Aboriginal men being sexual exploited:

“While the greatest majority of female sex workers engage in heterosexual work for males regardless of their orientation or self-identification, the sex work is usually of a homosexual nature. I suspect this more than anything prevents any real work and may explain the further marginalization of male sex workers in regards to services and awareness. I think there is also an subconscious element of awareness that most sex workers are Aboriginal, again furthering the stigmatization and marginalization.” Source: J. Spencer Row and Associates Making A Ripple

Sexual Abuse Prior to the Street

Inquiring into a background of sexual abuse prior to involvement in sexual exploitation consumerism was important. Sixty-seven of the 96 young Aboriginal men (70%) reported sexual abuse in their early years. This finding was consistent with the report *Scared Lives* (Kingsley and Marks 2000) and *It’s Not What You Think* (Saewyc, MacKay, Anderson & Drozda 2008).

	BC	AB	SK	MN	TOTAL
Sexual Abuse	9/16	13/20	25/34	20/26	67/96
	56%	65%	74%	77%	70%

The following quotes speak clearly too sexual abuse this population had suffered in their younger years:

“I would say the first incident happened when I was probably 10, then again at 12, 13, and 14. After that people started to pay which made it a little easier.” (Jade)

“I became an adult when I was three years old. It was a female babysitter. She was babysitting another kid. I was three and she was two. The babysitters made us do sex acts together. People ask me when I lost my virginity and I say when I was three. It also happened with my mom’s younger brother.” (Forrest)

“Yes, it the next door neighbor when I was a kid. He was an old man. It happened in the alley one time.” (Matthew)

“Yes, my mom’s boyfriend and an old guy I was drinking with.” (Darren)

In total, 70% of these Aboriginal young men had been sexually victimized as young children. The highest was found in Saskatchewan (77%) and the lowest in British Columbia (56%).

Physical Abuse Prior to the Street

A total of 79% of the 96 Aboriginal young men reported a background of physical abuse prior to their involvement in sexual exploitation. Saskatchewan had the lowest number of young Aboriginal men reporting physical abuse at 74% while Manitoba had the highest rate being reported at 96%.

“My biological dad would beat the shit out of me. My dad shot a gun through the house and almost killed my sister.” (Sal)

“When my father was drunk they screamed and we got spanked.” (Jamie)

“My dad was pretty drunk. I saw my dad holding a shotgun. My mom walked in and said ‘what the hell are you doing’ and took the bullets away.” (John)

In total, 82% of young men had experienced physical abuse in their homes prior to their involvement in sexual exploitation.

	BC	AB	SK	MN	TOTAL
Physical Abuse	12/16	17/20	25/34	25/26	79/96
	75%	85%	74%	96%	82%

Self Harm Prior to the Street

Over half of the Aboriginal young men interviewed (54%) of this population were involved in self harming behavior ranging from cutting, overdosing and attempting suicide prior to the street. This self harming speaks to the trauma they had experienced earlier on.

“Yes, I tried to commit suicide.” (Brett)

“Yes, I slashed, overdosed, ran in front of cars on purpose, tried to hang myself, jumped from the 3rd story.” (Darren)

Self harming behavior was a common reaction to circumstances with this young Aboriginal population.

	BC	AB	SK	MN	TOTAL
Self Harm Prior	13/16	10/20	15/34	14/26	52/96
Street	81%	50%	44%	54%	54%

Child Welfare

Sixty one percent of the 96 Aboriginal young men had family involvement with Child Welfare. In other words, 54 of the 96 of Aboriginal young men had a family history of Child Welfare involvement in their background.

	BC	AB	SK	MN	TOTAL
Child Welfare	12/16	11/20	21/34	15/26	55/96
	75%	55%	62%	58%	61%

A large proportion of this Aboriginal population had Child Welfare intervening in their family upbringing. Some identified Child Welfare involvement corresponding with their family experience resulting from a residential school experience. This population experienced disconnection from family, culture, heritage and community earlier in their lives. This disconnect often resulted in isolation, gaps and losses resulting in personal difficulties and challenges.

“To some degree our whole life has had some kind of involvement with Child Welfare.” (Baylee)

“My brother, both my sisters, my whole family.” (Ross)

Running Away Prior to the Street

Eighty one percent of the Aboriginal young men interviewed had run away prior to their involvement in sexual exploitation. Backgrounds of abusive surroundings certainly contributed to running away. Some ran as they felt different, and their sexual orientation fueled their need to find alternative settings where they felt a greater degree of understanding and acceptance.

	BC	AB	SK	MN	TOTAL
Running	15/16	16/20	26/34	21/26	78/96
	94%	80%	76%	81%	81%

This population was running both to and from situations. The lack of income and housing often identified this population for being at risk of an entrance into survival sexual exploitation. They were vulnerable and easily identified when they were on the run.

*“After my mom remarried I used to run away a lot to get away from my dad. I got the punching, the slapping; he’d always call me a bastard and shit like that.”
(Forrest)*

“Fifty plus, my mom was always trying to OD.”(Darren)

“I was thirteen and it was because of my sexuality.” (Brett)

*“I was angry. I knew there were other gay people out there so I went to the city, I felt that’s where I belonged I was finally part of something for once in my life.”
(Billy)*

Thrown Out Prior to the Street

Running away was not the only method that identified this population for risk of sexual exploitation. Half this population had been thrown out of their home and some said this had occurred because of their sexual orientation.

Again the risk factor of no income or housing increased the probability of this population entering into survival sex. Sexual exploitation work resulted in a quick immediate source of income.

	BC	AB	SK	MN	TOTAL
Thrown Out	6/16	11/16	16/34	21/26	48/96
	37%	69%	47%	81%	50%

“Because I wanted to dress like a girl.” (Cagney)

“I was on the phone long distance with my friend and my mom was yelling at me to get off and do the dishes. I was like, just wait you know; my friend is paying for the call. My mom was going to slap me and I got tired of it and I grabbed her hand and said don’t. My dad ripped the phone out of the wall and we started fighting, like really fighting. He wrapped me up in a blanket and I had my boxers on. He told me to never come back.” (Forrest)

“Because of my sexuality.” (Jasper)

Age They Began Working

Over 62% of this population had an average age of 15 when entering the sexual exploitation. Seventeen percent entered into sexual exploitation at 13 years of age. An additional 21% entered at 14 years of age. The youngest Aboriginal person interviewed entered when he was 8 and the oldest was 30. Overall, what is important is that 82% of this population began work when they were under the age of 18; they were youth being sexually exploited. These youth were attempting to survive in the world of sexual exploitation. The 18% over the age of 18 that entered this life were seeking a form of continued existence also but had resorted to what would be legally termed prostitution. This older population had many of the significant risk factors discussed throughout this paper.

	BC	AB	SK	MN	TOTAL
Average Age Began	13 yrs	14 yrs	15 yr	15 yrs	15 yrs
Began Work Under 18 yrs	13/16 81%	16/20 80%	29/34 85%	21/26 81%	79/96 82%
Began work over 18 yrs	3/16 19%	4/20 20%	5/34 15%	5/26 19%	17/96 18%

Cultural Connection

A total of 54 of the 96 felt connected to their Aboriginal heritage. The additional 42 young men felt no connection whatsoever to their Aboriginal culture.

	BC	AB	SK	MN	TOTAL
Cultural Connection	8/16 50%	12/20 60%	21/34 62%	13/26 50%	54/96 54%

At some point 65% of these sexually exploited Aboriginal men had spent time on reserve; however, this did not necessarily translate to a connection to their culture.

“I am aware of the residential school issue and how it has impacted my parents and their parents. I attribute a lot of my own dysfunctional behavior to their inability to be whole people themselves.” (Sam)

“I’m Métis. I think that’s Aboriginal.” (Jake)

“A lot of my family grew up on reserve. Mostly my mom’s side of the family. Most of my dad’s family left the reserve and worked. My sister turned to street life and gave up her child to child welfare.” (Baylee)

“No I don’t know too much about my native heritage.” (Paul)

“Somewhat. I got into the Indian dancing and old native stories, and pot latches.” (Forrest)

“In a way, no not really, sometimes.” (Liam)

“It got me out of what I was doing; the whole spirituality gave me self esteem, kept me from relapsing.” (Matthew)

“Not sure, the Aboriginal women that raised me were ashamed of being Aboriginal. We went to a big church with no Aboriginal people.” (Lawrence)

“I was raised in a Christian home. I spent most of my life in that mentality but I knew I was Aboriginal and did look for my traditional roots, I never got in touch with them until I was incarcerated.” (Lane)

“My Aboriginal beliefs are what actually opened me up to being Julie. Um, the Aboriginal honor the Two-Spirited people with great respect. Being Aboriginal helped me accept 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 Aboriginal people is that Two-Spirited is being accepted by all Aboriginal people more of society than just being gay.” (Jamie)

“It affected my life pretty much. When I was a kid I was ashamed to be native, the poverty and everything. I moved out here and found out that being native wasn’t something I had to be really embarrassed about. It was probably because I was in a different province. Natives are treated a lot different in BC than they are in Saskatchewan. It’s sad to say but true.” (Matt)

Police

This population was very familiar with police in all four provinces. Some spoke about how police protected and assisted them while they were involved in sexual exploitation, while others had a long history of enforcement as youth and adults.

Overall 86% of young Aboriginal men had involvement with police, the highest being the province of Alberta at 95%.

	BC	AB	SK	MN	TOTAL
Police	13/16	19/20	30/34	21/26	83/96
	81%	95%	88%	81%	86%

“I’ve never had a problem with the police. They’ve never harassed me. They actually came and checked on me, went out of their way.” (Jace)

“Significant portion. All of my youth and most of my adult life. I have had interaction with the police in one form or another.” (Dylan)

Family Violence

Sixty seven of the 96 young men (70%) experienced family violence in their home growing up. This violence ranged from sexual assault and/or physical assault, to threats with weapons.

	BC	AB	SK	MN	TOTAL
Family Violence	11/16	18/20	26/34	12/26	67/96
	69%	90%	76%	46%	70%

According to the Alberta Council of Women Shelters (ACWS), Alberta has one of the highest provincial levels of domestic violence. This was confirmed in the research, as 90% percent of sexually exploited young men from Alberta reported witnessing family violence. In other words, 18 of the 20 Alberta Aboriginal participants had been in and around domestic violence in their family of origin.

“Dad was drinking, abusive verbally and physically to my mom.” (Tory)

“I watched my mom get beat up lots.”(Jaden)

“My dad beat up his girlfriend and me.” (Rob).

“My biological dad would beat the shit out of me. My dad shot a shotgun through the house and almost killed my sister.” (Rafi)

“When my mother was raped. I didn’t see it, I heard it.” (Sydney)

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

Years Working

In summary, the 96 men in this study had worked a total of 862 years. That means that on average, a person stayed in sexual exploitation for 9 years. Some of those interviewed had been working for over twenty years while others had been working for less than one year.

	BC	AB	SK	MN	TOTAL
Years Working	8.8 yrs	8.6 yrs	9.5 yrs	8.7 yrs	9 yrs
Total	141 yrs	172 yrs	323 yrs	226 yrs	862 yrs

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

“Eight years old. It wasn’t really a hustle, it was a rape and money and I left out of guilt.” (Elton)

“Well the first time it was not my child. I thought it was. I tried to be there for the kid then I found out it was not mine. It was not a very pleasant experience. We were trying to change our lives and not sure how to do this.” (Baylee)

Introduction to Exploitation

It is important to gain a clear understanding of how Aboriginal young men are introduced into sexual exploitation. The following table spells this out by province and the source of the introduction which was predominantly by oneself or through a friend.

	BC	AB	SK	MN	TOTAL
Introduced self to work by observing	7/16 44%	8/20 40%	12/34 35%	4/26 15%	31/96 32%
Introduced by family to work	0/16 0%	1/20 5%	3/34 9%	3/26 12%	7/96 7%
Introduced by friend to work	6/16 38%	8/20 40%	14/34 41%	15/26 58%	43/96 45%
Introduced to by offer consumer	3/16 19%	3/20 11%	5/34 15%	4/26 15%	15/96 16%

The following quotes speak clearly too how a young male Aboriginal person is inducted into the sexual exploitation lifestyle. Friends, family, personal observation and consumer offers are the methods of entrance identified and spoken about in these quotes. Personal observation and friends is the most common route in.

“At first my girlfriend introduced me to meet people over the phone. Then I went down to the bar to meet people.” (Lane)

“Myself and a friend, I just heard about it and said what the hell, a friend helped.” (John)

“A guy approached me in the park. I was at the fruit loop.” (Darren)

“Stumbled upon a man that would provide as long as I gave him what he wanted and I went along with it.” (Billy)

“My gay cousin.” (Greg)

“My mom, dad, brother and sister.” (Darren)

“My one sister and one brother.” (Wil)

“My mother used to hook and my sisters worked for an escort agency.” (Adam)

“Yes, my dad was my mom’s pimp and my grandma was a madam.” (Darren)

“Everything that was going on in my family, Alcohol, residential school, just her history of being Aboriginal.” (Ross)

As can be seen from the quotes above, young men do not use the same methodology as young women when entering into sexual exploitation. Young men do not usually have a pimp pressuring them into sexual exploitation and garnishing their earnings. Young men often have friends or family they know or meet who introduce them into this survival lifestyle. Other entrance paths are achieved through observation which leads to venturing out on their own accord. An additional orientation occurs through the offer of consumers who will make such propositions to vulnerable young men they see seeking food, shelter and income.

Family History

	BC	AB	SK	MN	TOTAL
Family History Street	5/16 31%	8/20 40%	17/34 50%	15/26 58%	45/96 47%
Family History Sex Exploitation	4/5 80%	5/8 63%	13/17 76%	7/15 47%	29/45 64%

Another significant finding is that 47% of Aboriginal sexually exploited young men had a family history on the street. This was either in the trade or through involvement in drugs and/or gangs.

Of the 45 participants with a background of street life, 29 (64%) had a history of a family member in sexual exploitation.

Background awareness of survival sex existed with many. The concept of sex exploitation survival was not a foreign concept in their family heritage. Survival sex for income was something that was known to this population. Young men receive the cash immediately for their survival and they do not have to provide their earnings to a pimp. Young men are more collegial and sharing with their peers.

Pregnant

It was found in *Strolling Away* that the reality or intention to bring a child into the world to fulfill the role as a parent motivated a person's desire to distance themselves and detach from sexual exploitation.

For mothers, a child brings about state and family support to those in the exiting process from sexual exploitation. This same excitement and support is not provided to sexually exploited men if they were to become a parent.

Firstly, they are not physiologically positioned to carry and birth a child as women are. Secondly, they are distanced, ignored, shamed and ridiculed for being involved in sexual exploitation with male consumers.

There is a tendency to forgive, assist and provide compassion to young women entrenched in sexual exploitation. This concern is not afforded to young men.

Young men survival sex is with male customers and this tends to be uncomfortable and raises homophobic fears regardless of the sexual orientation of young sexually exploited men. Sympathy and support is not something that is forthcoming if a young man was to become a parent.

Distance and separation are a standard response to these young men if they were to become a parent. Parents and other family members do not want or encourage these young men to play an active or recognized parental role.

	BC	AB	SK	MN	TOTAL
Pregnant	8/16	7/20	8/34	6/26	29/96
	50%	35%	24%	23%	30%

“Well the first time it was not my child. I thought it was. I tried to be there for the kid, then I found out it was not mine. It was not a very pleasant experience. We were trying to change our lives and not sure how to do this. We were trying to change things but did not know how.” (Baylee)

Education

Sixty three percent of Aboriginal young men in sexual exploitation had not completed high school. Once a person enters into sexual exploitation, school is not a priority or a reality in a lifestyle of survival. This lack of educational completion raises new challenges around education to work life transition.

To their credit, a total of 37% had completed high school and some entered into college and university. Sadly, this educational achievement did not protect them from sexual exploitation. Backgrounds of abuse, running away, living and family circumstances placed this population at a greater risk of entrance into sexual exploitation regardless of education. A level of discomfort and trauma often precluded this population from educational success and completion.

	BC	AB	SK	MN	TOTAL
Educational Level	0/16	3/20	2/34	2/26	7/96
Post Secondary	0%	15%	6%	8%	7%
Educational Level	6/16	5/20	9/34	9/26	29/96
GED	38%	25%	26%	35%	30%
Educational Level	10/16	12/20	23/34	15/26	60/96
No GED	62%	60%	68%	58%	63%

Young Aboriginal men spoke of how they found educational programs different and uncomfortable for them. They felt they did not fit in given their Aboriginal heritage.

“My parents thought they should put me in Aboriginal school but they never knew where there was one. My dad wanted me to have a better chance. We could not compare ourselves with what we actually had because of skin color and we were the only ones with different skin color.” (Baylee)

“I didn’t do well because I wasn’t in a comfortable place.” (Haley)

“I think I wasn’t treated differently but I never felt I fit in.” (Scout)

“Yes, Catholic schools. I was the only native boy in the school.” (Darren)

Violence While Working

The issue of violence faces all involved in sexual exploitation regardless of gender, sexual orientation, culture, age or location.

For young women, their violence factor originates with customers.

For young men, there can be some violence from customers, yet the biggest risk is gay bashing. Gay bashing occurs where heterosexual men often in a group or individually will go to a street location and publicly ridicule those involved in sexual exploitation by name calling, throwing objects, direct physical encounters and assaults.

Forty-three percent had been gay bashed during their time in sexual exploitation. All 96 feared on a daily basis while working in sexual exploitation that they would be battered that evening.

This population works in areas that are dark, secluded and isolated so protection is not readily available. Many tend to work with other like persons and carry a weapon for protection while walking in the sexual exploitation area, believing they are less visible as movement provides them some protection. Regardless, the fear of potential violence is an ever present reality while working. In addition, the fear from customers and those that gay bash is always present.

“No I carry a switch blade with me just in case.” (Raven)

“A guy came by and he was threatening to kill us. Found out later he was a closet gay.” (Brett)

“Yes, I have been beaten up. It’s more about being gay or Two-Spirited. You’re both Aboriginal and Two-Spirited. There is a lot of abuse. It is not as acceptable for gay men as it is for women.” (Ross)

“Because you never know who the next person is and you will never know them. You are there for the money and they are there for the sex.” (Darren)

“It was three in the morning and my friend just took off. 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 there was two on one side of me and the other was like digging through my pockets.” (Fred)

	BC	AB	SK	MN	TOTAL
Violence while working	8/16	9/20	14/34	12/26	43/96
	50%	45%	41%	46%	45%

Family Relationship

Forty two percent still remained connected and felt support from their family even while they were in this difficult lifestyle. Fifty six of the 96 sexually exploited Aboriginal young men identified that their relationship with their family was strained or did not exist at the time. In other words 58% of sexually exploited Aboriginal young men had no consistent, supportive relationship with their family.

	BC	AB	SK	MN	TOTAL
Relationship Family	6/16	9/20	16/34	9/26	40/96
Good	38%	45%	47%	35%	42%
Relationship Family	10/16	11/20	18/34	17/26	56/96
Strained	62%	55%	53%	65%	58%

“Very open and honest about my boundaries. They respect that. It is more comfortable than it has ever been.” (Billy)

“I am the only sober one. I have no clue who they are.” (Ross)

“Disconnected because they moved away. We need the distance.” (Alan)

“Not very close. Just starting to reconnect.” (Stu)

“Don’t have one.” (Sam)

“That my family will find out and I will be shamed out of my family.” (Adam)

Addiction to Drugs

There exists a strong relationship between sexual exploitation and drug use. Often the use of drugs eases the activity of exploitation. In total, 82% identified drug use as being part of their life in sexual exploitation.

	BC	AB	SK	MN	TOTAL
Addiction Drugs Work	14/16 87%	14/20 70%	29/34 82%	22/26 85%	79/96 82%

“Yes, I realized at 19 I had not had sex with a man sober.” (Ross)

“Yes, because it easier to hook high.” (Stu)

Sexual Orientation While Working

Calgary Sexual Health Centre 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*)

In *Under The Radar*, the following definitions were also included:

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 being a Tranny in their personal life but not while working on the street.

Bisexual 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. Others identified as bisexual even though they were gay as some customers like the opportunity to see that a young man was attracted to women but chose to be with a male customer.

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:

Sexual Orientation	BC	AB	SK	MN	TOTAL
On Street					
Gay	4/16 25%	5/20 25%	15/34 44%	9/26 35%	33/96 34%
Bi-Sexual	2/16 13%	3/20 15%	7/34 21%	4/26 15%	16/96 17%
Trannie/Woman	4/16 25%	6/20 30%	5/34 15%	7/26 27%	22/96 23%
Gay for Pay	2/16 13%	4/20 20%	4/34 12%	3/26 12%	13/96 14%
Straight For Pay	2/16 3%	1/20 5%	1/34 3%	1/26 4%	5/96 5%
Confused	1/16 6%	1/20 5%	2/34 6%	1/26 4%	5/96 5%
Don't Know	1/16 6%	0/20 0%	0/34 0%	1/26 4%	2/96 2%

Some of the individuals labeled themselves transgender but 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 1st Nations, We Are Part of a Tradition, 1998*)

Sexual Orientation in Private Life

It became clear during *Under The Radar* that there was a difference in sexual orientation while working and in a person’s private life. This was not a question that had been asked previously of women but it was similar.

Many select a different sexual identity in their private lives. For instance, a young man who is gay for pay in his work life for survival sex but is clearly heterosexual in his private life. The distinction between work and private life allow these young men to separate and thrive as an individual. A work sexual construct and private sexual construct supports and eases the lives of these young men.

Sexual Orientation	BC	AB	SK	MN	TOTAL
Private Life					
Gay	5/16 31%	5/20 25%	17/34 50%	9/26	36/96 38%
Straight	5/16 31%	5/20 25%	7/34 21%	3/26	20/96 21%
Bi-sexual	1/16 6%	4/20 20%	4/34 12%	3/26	12/96 13%
Trannie	4/16 25%	4/20 20%	3/34 9%	9/26 35%	20/96 20%
Confused	1/16 6%	1/20 5%	2/34 0%	1/26 0%	5/96 5%
Don’t Know	1/16 6%	0/20 0%	0/34 0%	1/26 4%	2/96 2%

Regulars and Sugar Daddies

Eighty-four of the 96 had regular customers or a “sugar daddy”. The role for a young man who enters into a relationship with a sugar daddy is that of being available in a public manner for the individual who is a sugar daddy. A sugar daddy is a gay man seeking a visible, public companionship with a young man. Food, shelter, clothing, cash and substances such as alcohol are part of the relationship. A young man who would enter into such a relationship would be considered gay in his sexual orientation while working and most likely privately.

	BC	AB	SK	MN	TOTAL
Sugar Daddies or	15/16	15/20	31/34	23/26	84/96
Regulars	94%	75%	91%	88%	86%

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 yet a consistent person.

“A place to stay for the night. Fifty dollars and all the food I could eat.” (Marcus)

“Money, drugs, cigarettes, booze, food, entertainment, everything.” (Sean)

“Money, alcohol they buy me whatever I want.” (Ted)

“Money, trips, hotels, food, etc” (Sam)

“Transportation, money, food and cuddles if I wanted them.” (Wil)

“Free trips, various things you could not afford yourself.” (Terry)

Work Movement

This population was transient in the nature of their work. Sixty-three individuals had traveled and worked in different cities and provinces. Forty-two percent remained in one province. A total of 58% traveled this country and had worked in various provinces and cities.

Young men in the sexual exploitation tend to travel together or visit one another in Canada. Only 5% had worked out of the country primarily in the United States.

A traditional trafficking exchange seems non-existent for young men as it appears much more collegial in nature. Young men described being moved or transported to other communities by other workers or sugar daddies. What is important is that this population is vulnerable. Fifty-eight percent are already disconnected or in a strained relationship with family members. Movement to other cities, provinces or countries further alienates this population from their community and supports. Isolation and disconnection from community and family prevents the opportunity to attempt exits from sexual exploitation. Furthermore, the lack of child rearing and isolation speaks to a rationale of why young men stay in sexual exploitation much longer than their female counterparts.

TABLE WESTERN CANADA 96 ABORIGINAL YOUNG MEN					
	BC	AB	SK	MN	TOTAL
Worked 1 City in Province	6/16 = 37%	5/20 = 25%	12/34 = 35%	10/26 = 38%	33/96 = 34%
Worked 2 Cities in Province	2/16 = 12%	2/20 = 10%	2/34 = 6%	1/26 = 4%	7/96 = 7%
Worked in 2 Provinces	3/16 = 19%	8/20 = 40%	6/34 = 18%	6/26 = 23%	23/96 = 24%
Worked in 3 Provinces	4/16 = 25%	3/20 = 15%	14/34 = 41%	7/26 = 27%	28/96 = 29%
Worked Canada and USA	1/16 = 6%	2/20 = 10%	0/34 = 0%	2/26 = 8%	5/96 = 5%
Worked in two or more provinces					56/96 = 58%

Concluding Discussion and Recommendations

We have seen how there are potential risk factors which can lead young people into sexual exploitation. A background of sexual abuse, physical abuse and being thrown out or running away from home increases the probability of an entrance into sexual exploitation for survival. We need to pay close attention to these risk factors which can heighten the reality of an entrance into the survival world of sexual exploitation.

Given these research findings, we would recommend the following actions be taken:

1. That an environmental scan be undertaken and completed at a national level looking at the services and supports available to sexually exploited young men. It should examine the extent of services available to Aboriginal sexually exploited young men given their overrepresentation in Western Canada. It will also be important that this document be province and city specific.
2. That studies such as *Under the Radar* be completed in other parts of Canada (e.g. Central and Eastern Canada) looking at the sexual exploitation of young men. National studies have been completed on females in sexual exploitation but not on males. This would provide an opportunity to have a complete picture of sexually exploited young men in Canada and the level of Aboriginal representation.

3. That specific research is undertaken that focuses on the issue of transgendered and/or Two-Spirited persons. That education and training be developed for educators, social service providers, health care workers, police, family and the general public in reference to transgendered and Two-Spirited persons.
4. That programs and services be designed, implemented and evaluated that are specifically focused on young sexually exploited young men; and that sexually exploited young men be the primary focus in this process. Specific attention should be directed toward the risk factors facing Aboriginal persons.
5. That a Federal Territorial Provincial Working Group be set up to look at sexually exploited young men. Establishing a gender-specific committee will ensure their needs are being considered from a program, policy and legal prospective.
6. That specific prevention and training programs be developed in looking at sexually exploited Aboriginal persons. Prevention programs and training materials should be designed, developed and delivered examining the role residential schools have played in impacting parents and their communities. These programs could be delivered to families, parents and the community both urban, rural and on reserve.
7. That training and education be designed and delivered to government, correctional and social service practitioners and students on the issue of sexual exploitation of young men including Transgendered and Two-Spirited individuals. Focus should be directed to the overrepresentation of Aboriginal persons and the relationship this has to residential school history.

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