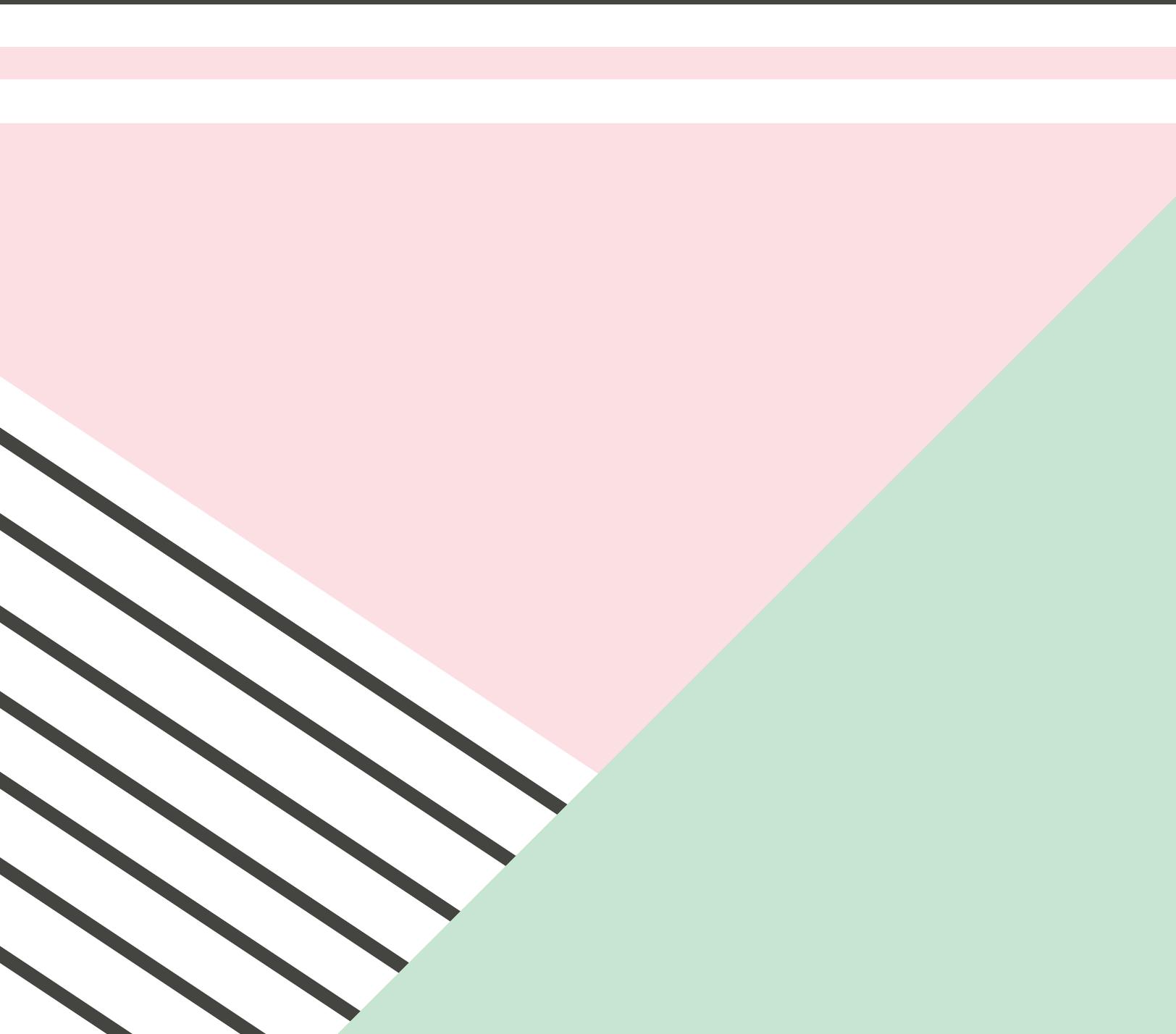


# YOUTH EXPERIENCES SURVEY

EXPLORING THE HUMAN  
TRAFFICKING EXPERIENCES OF  
HOMELESS YOUNG ADULTS IN  
ARIZONA, YEAR 6

Arizona State University  
Office of Sex Trafficking Intervention Research

20  
19



**2019 Youth Experiences Survey**  
Year Six

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### **2019 Youth Experiences Survey: Exploring the Human Trafficking Experiences of Homeless Young Adults in Arizona, Year Six.**

The Youth Experiences Survey (YES) is a study of the experiences of homeless young adults in Arizona that has been conducted for the past six years, from 2014 to 2019. The YES focuses on how the life experiences of Arizona's homeless young adults (ages 18-25) increases their risk of experiencing human trafficking. The study was conducted in partnership with four agencies from Phoenix and Tucson that provide direct services to homeless persons: Native American Connections, UMOM, one.n.ten of Phoenix, and Our Family Services of Tucson. The findings from the YES study have consistently provided insight into the challenges and needs of Arizona's homeless young adults to better target needed services as well as the first of its kind knowledge of the scope of the sex and labor exploitation of this population in Arizona.

Identifying sex and labor trafficking among homeless young adults is confounded by access issues, which makes this population challenging to study. Topics such as that they are transient, are challenging to find, and are involved in fewer social service and medical service agencies than other homeless youth due to their status as adults. This study targeted homeless young adults in multiple settings, including transitional housing, drop-in centers, and on the streets of Tucson and Phoenix.

A seven-page paper survey was distributed to homeless young adults over two weeks in July 2019 by staff from the above mentioned homeless young adult serving partner agencies. This report includes the findings from all of the participants, including details about their homelessness experiences, substance use, mental and medical health history, family challenges, as well as risk and protective factors. The sex trafficking and labor exploitation experiences of the participants are also discussed, and a comparison of the trafficked versus non-trafficked participants is provided. Finally, notable trends over the six-year YES data collection are highlighted and future research and targeted service provision recommendations are discussed.

#### **Brief Summary of Findings**

##### **Status of Homeless Young Adults in Arizona in the 2019 Youth Experiences Survey (N = 167)**

##### ***Participant Profile***

- One-hundred sixty-seven participants responded to the Youth Experiences Survey in 2019.
- The average age of the 167 homeless young adult participants was 20.9 years old.
- Males represented 48.5% of the participants, followed by females 40.1%, non-conforming 4.2%, transgender 3.6%, genderqueer 1.2%, two-spirit 1.2%, and other 0.6%.
- Participants identified as LGBTQ (45.5%) and heterosexual (43.1%).
- 70.1% of the participants were raised in the State of Arizona, and the others were from 16 other states.

### ***Housing and Homelessness***

- The average age of the participants' first homelessness experience was 15.8 years of age.
- The participants reported experiencing an average of four periods of homelessness during their lifetimes.
- Participants reported currently living in: a transitional housing program (n = 42, 25.1%), living in a shelter (n = 37, 22.2%), living on the streets (n = 31, 18.6%), couch surfing (n = 22, 13.2%), "other" living situation (n = 16, 9.6%), living in their own place, paid by self (n = 13, 7.8%), or living in a hotel (n = 3, 1.8%).

### ***Challenges and Risk Factors***

- Drug use was reported by over half of the sample (n = 99, 59.3%), with the most frequently used drugs reported including marijuana (n = 60, 35.9%) and methamphetamines (n = 16, 9.6%).
- Over half (n = 91, 54.5%) of the participants reported engaging in self-harm behaviors.
- A suicide attempt was reported by over two out of every five (n = 70, 41.9%) participants.
- Two out of every three (n = 107, 64.1%) participants reported a current mental health diagnosis, and over half (n = 90, 53.9%) reported having more than one mental health diagnosis.
- The most common mental health diagnoses reported by participants included depression (n = 78, 46.7%) and anxiety (n = 75, 44.9%).
- Over half (n = 90, 53.9%) of the participants reported experiencing a current medical problem. The most common medical problems reported included poor vision (n = 42, 25.1%), asthma (n = 33, 19.8%), and dental problems (n = 33, 19.8%).
- Fifty-six percent (n = 94) of the participants reported being kicked out of their homes by their families.
- Over half (n = 93, 55.7%) of participants reported running away from home.
- Almost half (n = 80, 47.9%) of participants reported experiencing emotional childhood abuse.
- Over one in every three (n = 57, 34.1%) participants reported experiencing physical abuse by a parent/guardian before the age of 18.
- About one in every three (n = 55, 32.9%) participants reported experiencing sexual abuse by a parent/guardian before the age of 18.

### ***Adverse Childhood Experiences***

- Participants had an average of 4.5 ACEs.
- 37.7% (n = 63) of participants had experienced between zero and three ACEs.
- Over half (n = 102, 61.1%) of participants had experienced four or more ACEs.

## **Status of Homeless Young Adult Victims of Human Trafficking in Arizona**

Of the 167 homeless young adult participants, 65 (38.9%) reported experiencing sex trafficking exploitation, and 72 (43.1%) reported experiencing labor exploitation. At least one form of human trafficking (either sex or labor) was reported by 89 (53.3%) participants, and 47 (28.1%) participants reported experiencing both sex and labor exploitation.

### ***Sex Trafficking Findings (n = 65)***

- Sixty-five (38.9%) of the total sample (N = 167) reported experiencing sex trafficking exploitation.
- Forty-nine percent (n= 32) of the female participants self-reported that they had experienced sex trafficking.
- 25.9% (n = 21) of the male participants self-reported that they had experienced sex trafficking.
- The average age of first sex trafficking experience was 14.2 years old, with 60% (n= 39) reporting that they were sex trafficked before the age of 18.
- Eighty-nine percent (n = 58) of the participants who reported being sex trafficked reported that they had at some point had a sex trafficker, with 3.1% (n = 2) of the participants reporting the current presence of a sex trafficker.
- The most common reasons identified by the 65 participants that reported sex trafficking victimization was for a place to stay (50%), for money (44.6%), and for food (33.8%).

### ***Comparing Sex Trafficked and Non-Sex Trafficked Young Adults***

When comparing the sex trafficked homeless young adult participants with the non-sex trafficked homeless young adult participants, the sex trafficked group was found to be significantly more likely to:

- Identify as LGBTQ
- Engage in self-harming behaviors
- Report mental health diagnoses and more than one mental health diagnosis, including Depression, PTSD, Schizophrenia, and Borderline Personality Disorder
- Report history of suicide attempts
- Report having a medical issue, specifically asthma
- Witness domestic violence in the household, with both father hitting mother and mother hitting father
- Experience abuse in a domestic violence relationship and be the abuser in a domestic violence relationship
- Experience each of the ten Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)
- Experience four or more Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)
- Experience emotional childhood abuse by parent/guardian
- Experience physical abuse by a parent/guardian

- Experience sexual abuse by a parent/guardian as a child (12 and under)
- Experience sexual abuse by a parent/guardian as an adolescent (13-17)
- Experienced bullying and harassment by school peers

***Labor Exploitation Findings (n = 72)***

- Seventy-two (43.1%) of the participants (N = 167) reported experiencing labor exploitation.
- Forty-two percent (n = 28) of the female participants reported experiencing labor exploitation.
- Forty-three percent (n = 35) male participants reported experiencing labor exploitation.
- The average age of first labor exploitation experience was 16.4 years old, with 40.3% (n = 29) reporting that they were exploited for labor before the age of 18.
- Eighty-one percent (n = 58) of the participants who reported being exploited for labor reported that they had at some point had a labor exploiter, with 8.3% (n = 6) of the participants reporting the current presence of a labor exploiter.
- The most common sectors that participants reported experiencing labor exploitation included: drug selling (n = 11, 15.3%), domestic servitude (n = 8, 11.1%), and petty theft (n = 8, 11.1%).

***Comparing Labor Exploited and Non-Labor Exploited Young Adults***

When comparing the labor exploited homeless young adult participants with the non-labor exploited homeless young adult participants, the labor exploited group was found to be significantly more likely to:

- Engage in self-harming behavior
- Report mental health diagnoses and more than one mental health diagnosis, including Depression, ADD/ADHD, PTSD, and Schizophrenia
- Report history of suicide attempts
- Report having a medical issue, specifically asthma, dental problems, and chronic pain
- Witness domestic violence in their household
- Experience abuse in a domestic violence relationship and be the abuser in a domestic violence relationship
- Experience sex trafficking victimization
- Experience nine out of the ten Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)
- Experience four or more Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)
- Experience bullying and harassment by peers
- Be expelled from school
- Be affiliated with a gang
- Experience sexual abuse by a parent/guardian as a child (12 and under)
- Experience sexual abuse by a parent/guardian as an adolescent (13-17)

- Experience physical abuse by a parent/guardian

### **Key Findings**

The 2019 Youth Experiences Survey (YES) Study marks six years of collecting data on homeless young adults in the state of Arizona. From year to year, the YES study continues to demonstrate the incredible challenges that homeless young adults, ages 18 to 25, face in the state of Arizona. This is a unique population, just aging out of childhood and no longer having access to the same protections and supports afforded to minors, but perhaps not aware of the array of resources available to them. Coupled with the challenging life histories, this population has many needs, including rehabilitation from substance abuse, mental health and medical support, housing, and therapeutic services.

Significant findings from the 2019 YES Study include the record number of participants that reported being raised in the state of Arizona, signifying that this is a critical issue to tackle in this state. Family disconnection was of particular significance this year, with one in four participants reporting feeling unsafe in their home environment, and over half of participants reporting being kicked out of their homes by family members or guardians. The violence that participants witnessed and experienced was great, including witnessing domestic violence in the home, and experiencing physical, emotional, and sexual abuse. These experiences seem to contribute to important negative outcomes for participants. Participants who witnessed domestic violence in their homes were significantly more likely to experience domestic violence in a romantic relationship of their own. Similarly, participants who experienced sexual abuse under the age of 18 years old were significantly more likely to report sex trafficking victimization.

Of the overall sample of 167 homeless young adult participants, 65 (38.9%) reported experiencing sex trafficking exploitation, and 72 (43.1%) reported experiencing labor exploitation. At least one form of human trafficking (either sex or labor) was reported by 89 (53.3%) participants, and 37 (28.1%) participants reported experiencing both sex trafficking and labor exploitation. These represent the highest numbers of reported human trafficking victimization in the history of the YES Study.

An interesting finding from the 2019 YES study that is different from years past is the number of participants that reported experiencing their first sex trafficking victimization at the age 12 years old or younger. Almost one in four ( $n = 16$ , 24.6%) of the 65 participants who reported experiencing sex trafficking also reported that they experienced their first sex trafficking victimization at or below the age of 12 years old. Although there were not enough in the sample to conduct statistical analyses to compare the experiences of these victims with those who experienced first sex trafficking victimization at age thirteen or older, the life experiences and outcomes of this group are startling, including:

- The average age of first drug use at 11.8 years old

- 93.8% (n = 15) reporting a history of suicide attempts
- 100% (n = 16) reporting at least one mental health diagnosis
- 93.8% (n = 15) reporting more than one mental health diagnosis
- 87.5% (n = 14) reporting four or more Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

The labor exploited participants reported experiencing exploitation in various labor sectors, but the most common included drug related jobs, domestic servitude, and petty theft. These forms of labor exploitation are challenging to detect and interdict, because these forms of “work” often include labor for an individual rather than a company and may entail working within the confines of the exploiter’s place of residence. For jobs such as drug-related jobs and petty theft, exploiters are involving victims in forced criminality, defined as “the enticing, forcing, or coercing a victim to commit other crimes. These crimes can include any crime but have most often been identified by victims as including shoplifting, theft, robbing sex buying customers, recruiting and trafficking other victims, transporting or dealing illegal drugs, pick-pocketing, and selling of stolen items” (Roe-Sepowitz, 2019). Forced criminality often keeps a victim from trying to leave or seek help because the victim has become complicit in a crime, and the exploiter is now able to use this as further means to control and exploit the victim.

### **Implications**

The findings of the 2019 YES Study continue to highlight the significant challenges that homeless young adults face in the state of Arizona face. Traumatic life histories that include violence, exploitation, and lack of critical supports may be contributing to the participant’s current housing instability. Resources, such as mental health and medical interventions, are a critical need for this population, as well as supportive housing opportunities. The significant number of homeless young adults that reported experiencing sex or labor exploitation demands the implementation of a screening tool in all points of contact for this population. To meet this demand, it is recommended that homeless serving programs implement specific services or referral protocols to best serve identified trafficking victims.

Findings of this study are obtained from a sample of the population that is already seeking services, and obtaining access to homeless young adults that are not connected to social service agencies is a challenge. Homeless young adults may interact with many businesses, organizations, or systems, whether they are seeking social services or not. This highlights the need for continued training of the community to spot warning signs of human trafficking, and the implementation of a screening tool to assess for trafficking that can be used across disciplines. Arizona should continue to identify the greatest gaps in services, such as housing for males and non-binary individuals, LGBTQ specific shelter services, treating trauma symptoms and experiences, and the ability to identify of labor trafficking situations.

## Full Report

### 2019 Youth Experiences Survey: Exploring the Sex Trafficking Experiences of Homeless Young Adults in Arizona, Year Six.

#### Introduction

Homelessness continues to be a critical social injustice at the forefront of national conversations. Special attention is given to families with children, unaccompanied minors, the elderly, and veterans. However, young adults, ages 18 to 25, are a vulnerable population that experiences homelessness. The 2018 Annual Homeless Assessment reported an increase in overall homelessness from the 2017 annual assessment by 0.4 percent and found over 32,000 unaccompanied youth between the ages of 18-24 experienced homelessness (Henry et al., 2018). Prevalence estimates paint an even grimmer picture of homelessness in this age group. Morton et al. (2018) conducted a population prevalence estimate for the 18-25 age group and found an estimated 3.48 million persons have experienced some form of homelessness, including couch-surfing. Although homelessness in young adults (ages 18-25) is an important area of inquiry and subject of discussion, there is still much to learn about the vulnerabilities of this population to homelessness and the solutions in ending chronic homelessness within this population.

Homeless young adults can be defined to include persons from age 18 to 25 years “who have dropped out of school, are without regular employment, live in precarious conditions and often have little social support from their families or communities” (Haley et al., 2004, p. 526). Risk factors identified in the literature for young adult homelessness include transitioning from foster care to adulthood, substance abuse, family conflict, and a history of childhood maltreatment (Dworsky, Napolitano, & Courtney, 2013). Previous research also highlights the disproportionate number of homeless youth who identify as LGBTQ and cites the heightened risk of homeless LGBTQ youth for human trafficking (Martinez & Kelle, 2013; National Coalition for the Homeless, 2017). Similarly, studies have found that high numbers of young people experiencing homelessness in the United States have been exploited for sex and labor, due to their vulnerability and lack of basic needs (United States Interagency Council on Homelessness, 2018).

Human trafficking is defined as “the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for sexual or labor services, through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery” (U.S. Dept. of State, 2000, p. 7). The connection between experiencing homelessness and exchanging sex for subsistence needs is not new. The term “survival sex” has been used to describe this exchange of sex for the receipt of basic needs (Greene, Ennett, & Ringwalt, 1999), and has been a topic of inquiry in research for over thirty years (Yates, MacKenzie, Pennbridge, & Cohen, 1988). As awareness about the issue of sex trafficking has increased, a shift in perspective about survival sex has begun, and the coercive elements of this exchange are emphasized in empirical

studies. Being homeless has been found to be a risk factor for commercial sexual exploitation (Hudson & Nandy, 2012). In a study of 185 homeless young people ages 18-23, Covenant House (2013) found that nearly 23% of their sample reported some experience of human trafficking. The researchers found that survival sex “frequently turned into coercive and violent trafficking experiences” (Covenant House, 2013, p. 6). According to a study conducted by Dank et al., (2015), youths’ engagement with survival sex may change over time; i.e., a youth may be recruited by a trafficker but later independently trade sex; or a youth may independently sell sex until she meets someone who begins exploiting her. Research estimates that traffickers may approach homeless young people within 48 hours of being on the street (Jordan, Patel, & Rapp, 2013).

Homeless persons in the United States have also been found to be at heightened risk for labor exploitation. Researchers studying child labor trafficking in the United States have cited the vulnerabilities that create homelessness make homeless youth easy prey for labor traffickers (Kaufka Walts, 2017). Labor traffickers are aware of a homeless youths’ need for food, shelter, and protection, and use these vulnerabilities to exploit the youth (Gibbs, Hardison Walters, Lutnick, Miller, & Kulckman, 2015). Door-to-door sales and begging rings have been found to be common ways that homeless youth are exploited (National Network for Youth, 2015). Another study found homeless youth forced into drug selling and other dangerous labor situations (Murphy, Taylor, & Bolden, 2015). The National Human Trafficking Resource Center received 602 calls for labor trafficking in 2018, with the top venues being domestic work, traveling sales crews, agriculture, restaurant/food service, and begging rings (<https://humantraffickinghotline.org/states>).

The purpose of this ongoing study is to explore the experiences reported by homeless young adults in Phoenix and Tucson, Arizona, and to explore the prevalence of sex trafficking and labor exploitation among the participants. This study will also compare the life experiences and treatment needs of sex trafficked and non-sex trafficked homeless young adults from around Arizona and labor exploited and non-labor exploited homeless young adults. The findings from this study will be compared to 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, and 2018 surveys to examine trends over time regarding sex trafficking and labor exploitation. Implications for practice and recommendations will be addressed.

### **Research Questions**

The purpose of this study is to understand the scope and complexity of sex trafficking and labor exploitation among homeless young adults in Phoenix and Tucson, Arizona. Homeless young adults were surveyed by staff at four agencies about their life experiences, including sex trafficking and labor exploitation.

The specific research questions are:

1. What are the experiences of homeless young adults in Phoenix and Tucson, Arizona related to place of origin, use of drugs and alcohol, mental and physical diagnoses, family connectedness, reasons for homelessness, experiences of trauma, and risk (childhood maltreatment, school problems, being bullied, history of foster care placement) and protective factors (said no to drugs when offered, able to stand up for themselves, practicing safe sex, being part of a club or organization, having supportive friends/family, knowing area resources)?
2. Are sex trafficked homeless young adults different from non-sex trafficked homeless young adults on demographics, family connectedness, sexual orientation, medical and mental health issues, high-risk behaviors, school and social issues, child abuse experiences, drug and alcohol use/abuse and risk and protective factors?
3. Are labor exploited homeless young adults different from non-labor exploited homeless young adults on demographics, family connectedness, sexual orientation, medical and mental health issues, high-risk behaviors, school and social issues, child abuse experiences, drug and alcohol use/abuse and risk and protective factors?

Within the sex trafficked homeless young adults:

1. What were the most common reasons the sex trafficking victims identified as how they were sex trafficked (money, food, clothes, drugs, protection, a place to stay)?
2. How prevalent was the use of technology in their sex trafficking experience?
3. What is a profile of a sex trafficked homeless young adult from Phoenix/Tucson, Arizona?
4. What are the adverse childhood experiences of participants who experienced sex trafficking?

Within the labor exploited homeless young adults:

1. What were the most common reasons the labor exploited victims identified as how they were exploited for labor (money, food, clothes, drugs, protection, a place to stay)?
2. How prevalent was the use of technology in their labor exploitation?
3. What is a profile of a labor exploited homeless young adult from Phoenix/Tucson, Arizona?
4. What are the adverse childhood experiences of participants who experienced labor exploitation?

## METHOD

### **Instrument**

The Youth Experiences Survey is a 79-item, seven-page paper-and-pencil survey with questions regarding demographics and personal history (place of origin, living situation, drug and alcohol use, a health history, self-harm, suicide attempts, mental health diagnoses/treatment, medical issues/treatment, and pregnancy). A family history section includes questions about how participants define their family, how they feel about their connectedness and support from their

families, reasons for being kicked out, and if participants witnessed domestic violence in the home. A life experiences section includes questions about how participants make money and if they have experienced sex trafficking and/or labor exploitation.

If participants reported a sex trafficking or labor exploitation experience, the survey directed them to questions about the presence of a trafficker and what technology was used in the trafficking situation.

Sex trafficking was identified if the participants answered yes to any of the following questions:

1. Have you ever been compelled, forced, or coerced to perform a sexual act, including sexual intercourse, oral or anal contact for: money, food, clothing, drugs, protection, or a place to stay?
2. Do you currently have a person who encourages/pressures/forces you to exchange sexual acts for money, drugs, food, a place to stay, clothing, or protection?
3. In the past, has anyone encouraged/pressured/forced you to exchange sexual acts for money, drugs, food, place to stay, clothing, or protection?

Labor exploitation was identified if the participants answered yes to any of the following questions:

1. Have you ever been tricked or forced into doing any kind of work that you did not want to do for money, drugs, food, place to stay, clothing, or protection?
2. Have you ever been promised work where the work or payment ended up being different than what you expected?
3. Has someone you worked for ever controlled the money you earned or kept the money you earned in exchange for money, drugs, food, place to stay, clothing, or protection?
4. Do you currently have a person you work for who controls the money you earn, or keeps money you earn in exchange for money, drugs, food, place to stay, clothing, or protection?

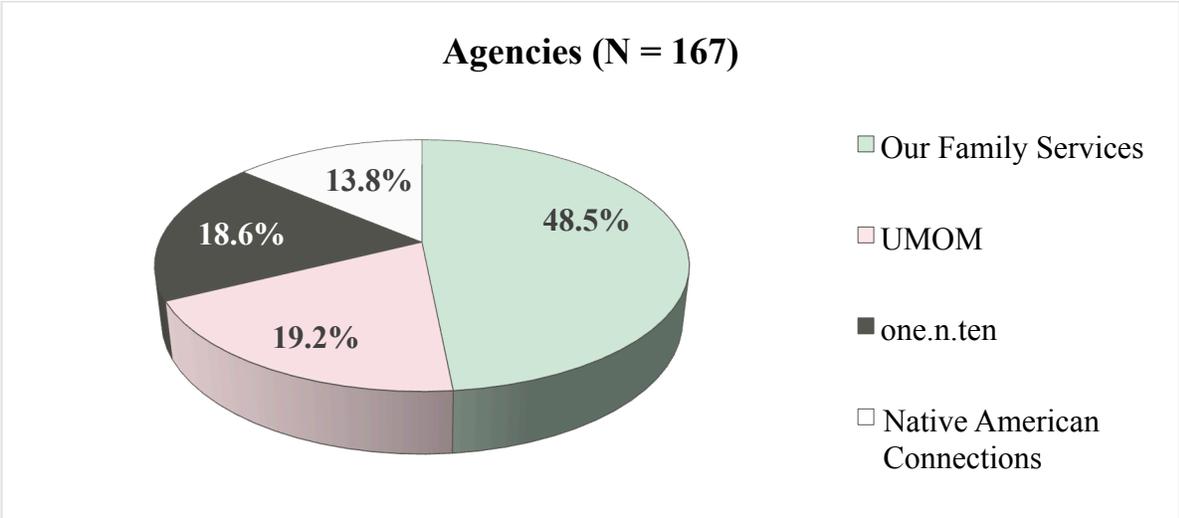
Life experience questions included a range of possible experiences, such as out-of-home placements, history of running away, interactions with the Juvenile Justice System, negative school/peer experiences, history of abuse, dating violence, work in the adult entertainment industry, and gang involvement. Participants were also asked about protective factors such as steady employment, being a part of a club or organization, enrollment in a school or technical program, volunteering in the community, having a supportive, loving family or group of friends, having a healthy, safe and permanent place to live, practicing safe sex, having a trusting/good relationship with law enforcement, feeling secure or safe standing up for/protecting self, and awareness of community resources.

The Youth Experiences Survey also includes questions from the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) study. The ACE study examined exposure to different abuse (psychological, physical, and sexual) and household dysfunction (substance abuse, mental illness, divorce/separation, domestic violence, and criminal behavior) categories and the relationship to disease and early death in adulthood (Felitti, Anda, Nordenberg, Williamson, Spitz, Edwards, & Marks, 1998). Findings from this seminal study included that over half (52%) of the sample of 9,508 participants experienced at least one category of adverse childhood experience, and 6.2% reported four or more exposures. Additional findings determined that persons experiencing four or more ACEs were twelve times more likely to attempt suicide, and as the number of childhood exposures increased, so did the prevalence and risk of alcoholism, illicit drug use, having 50 or more sexual partners, and history of sexually transmitted infections (Felitti, Anda, Nordenberg, Williamson, Spitz, Edwards, & Marks, 1998).

Subsequent studies determined that a high ACES score may predict early initiation of alcohol use (Rothman, Edwards, Heeren, & Hingson, 2008), increased adolescent prescription drug use (Forster, Gower, Borowsky, & McMorris, 2017), increased likelihood of early initiation into illicit drugs (Dube, Felitti, Dong, Chapman, Giles, & Anda, 2003), increased risk of attempted suicide (Dube, Anda, Felitti, Chapman, Williamson, & Giles, 2001; Merrick, Ports, Ford, Afifi, Gershoff, & Grogan-Kaylor, 2017), increased high-risk sexual behaviors (Hillis, Anda, Felitti, & Marchbanks, 2001), increased risk for long-term physical health problems (Monnat & Chandler, 2015), increased likelihood of poor dental health (Bright, Alford, Hinojosa, Knapp, & Fernandez-Baca, 2015), and a strong likelihood of future homelessness (Roos, Mota, Afifi, Katz, Distasio, & Sareen, 2013).

### **Participants**

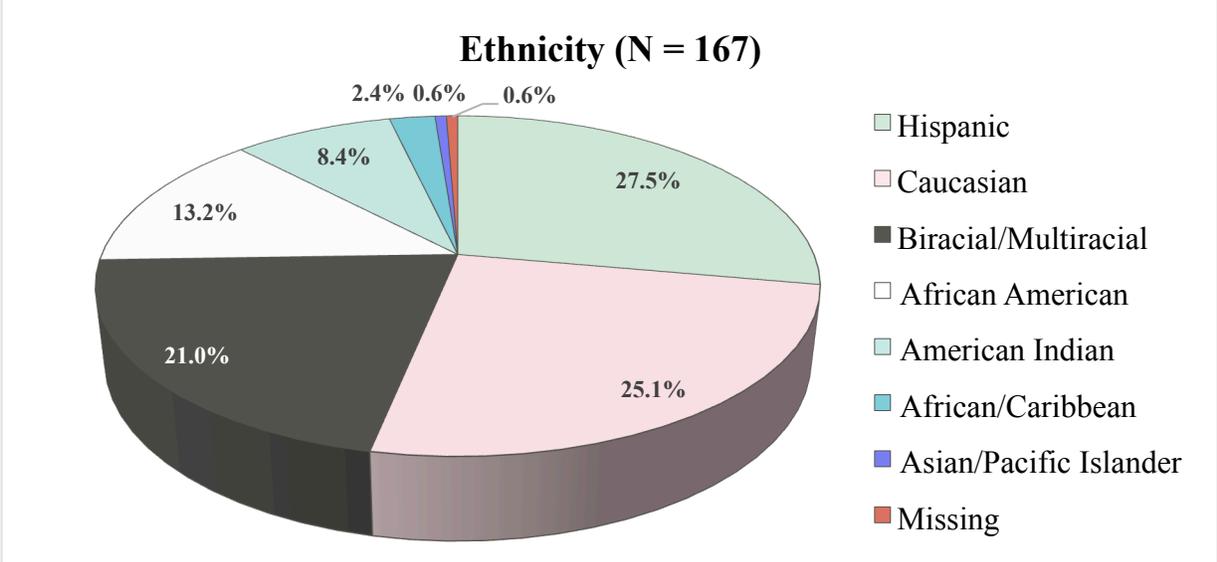
During two weeks in July 2019, 167 homeless young adults from the greater Phoenix, Arizona area, and Tucson, Arizona, completed the Youth Experiences Survey. Participants completed surveys from four agencies, including UMOM (Phoenix, Arizona), Our Family Services (Tucson, Arizona), One•n•ten (Phoenix, Arizona), and Native American Connections (Phoenix, Arizona). Our Family Services had 81 (48.5%) participants; UMOM had 32 (19.2%) participants; One•n•ten had 31 (18.6%) participants; and Native American Connections had 23 (13.8%) participants.



Participants completed the survey at resource centers (n = 44, 26.3%), housing facilities (n = 69, 41.3%), during street outreach (n = 26, 15.6%), and at the UMOM New Day Center (n = 5, 3%).

*Demographics*

Participants identified as male (n = 81, 48.5%), female (n = 67, 40.1%), nonconforming (n = 7, 4.2%), transgender (n = 6, 3.6%), genderqueer (n = 2, 1.2%), Two-spirit (n = 2, 1.2%), and other (n = 1, 0.6%). One participant (0.6%) did not disclose gender identity. The participants ranged in age from 18 to 25 years old (M = 20.9, SD = 2.34). Participants reported their ethnicities as Hispanic (n = 46, 27.5%), Caucasian (n = 42, 25.1%), Biracial/Multiracial (n = 35, 21%), African American (n = 22, 13.2%), American Indian (n = 14, 8.4%), African/Caribbean (n = 4, 2.4%), Asian/Pacific Islander (n = 1, 0.6%), Indian/South Asian (n = 1, 0.6%), and two (1.2%) participants did not report ethnicity.

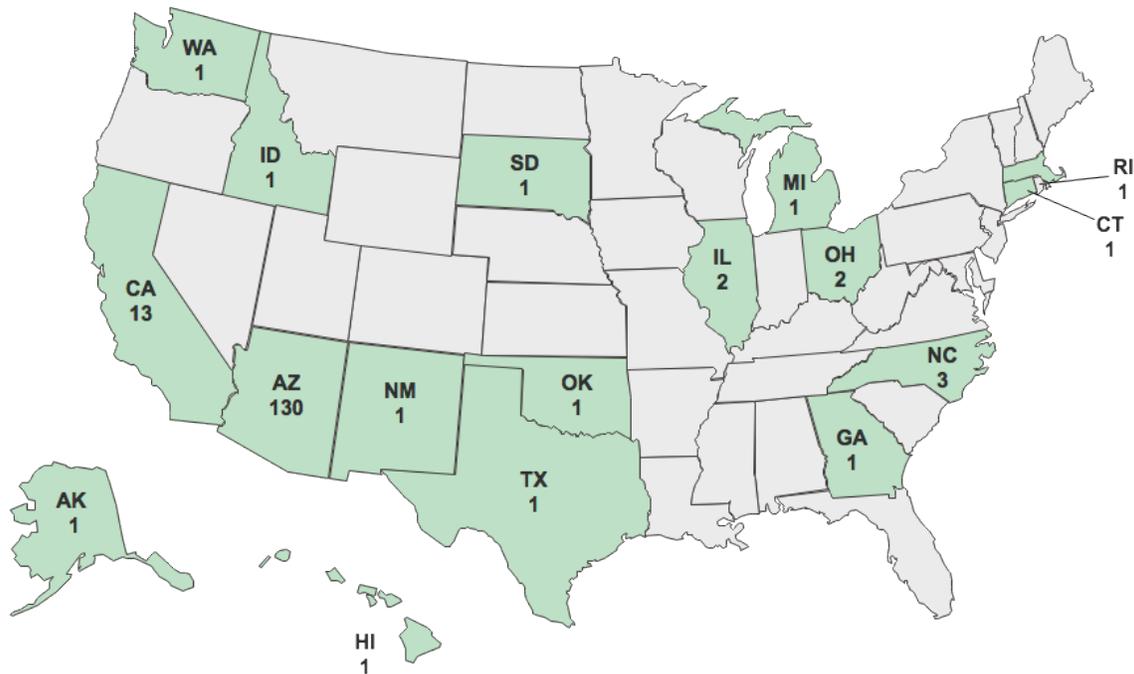


Participants identified their sexual orientation as LGBTQ (n = 76, 45.5%), heterosexual (n = 72, 43.1%) and 19 (11.4%) participants did not disclose sexual orientation. The participants who identified as LGBTQ reported the following sexual orientation:

<b>Sexual Orientation (N = 167)</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Bisexual	37	22.2%
Asexual	17	10.2%
Gay	9	5.4%
Pansexual	8	4.8%
Other	2	1.2%
Lesbian	1	0.6%

### FINDINGS

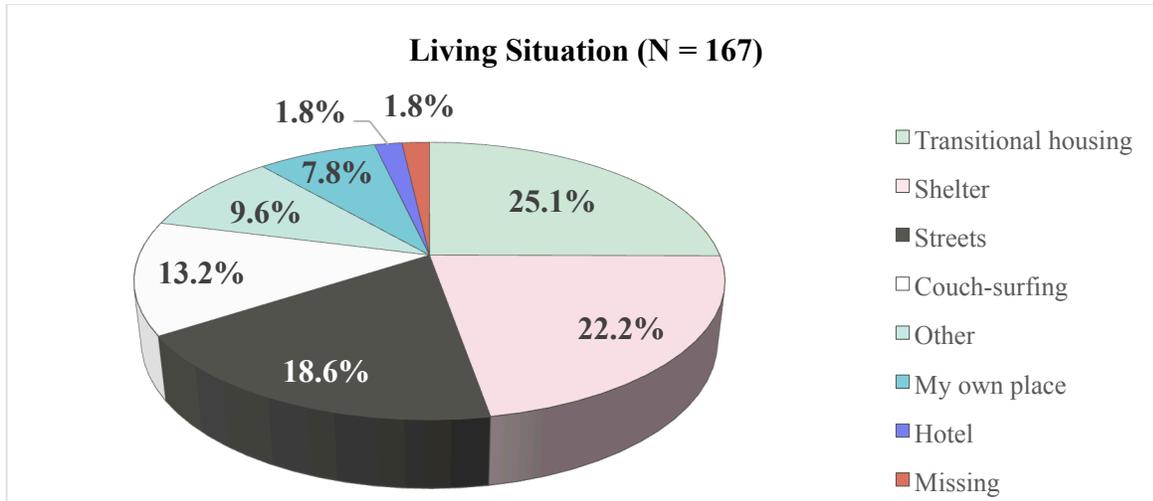
The 167 homeless young adult participants reported they were from Arizona and 16 other states in the United States. The majority (n = 117, 70.1%) of the participants reported that they were raised in the state of Arizona. Most participants (n = 150, 89.8%) reportedly lived in Arizona for more than a year, with 6.6% (n = 11) living in Arizona for less than a year.



### Housing

Participants reported that their first homeless experience was between the ages of three and twenty-five years of age ( $M = 15.8$ ,  $SD = 4.22$ ). The total number of times participants'

reported experiencing homelessness ranged from one time to fourteen times ( $M = 3.7$ ,  $SD = 2.54$ ). Participants reported their living situations as: living in a transitional housing program ( $n = 42$ , 25.1%), living in a shelter ( $n = 37$ , 22.2%), living on the streets ( $n = 31$ , 18.6%), couch surfing ( $n = 22$ , 13.2%), “other” living situation ( $n = 16$ , 9.6%), living in their own place, paid by self ( $n = 13$ , 7.8%), or living in a hotel ( $n = 3$ , 1.8%). Three (1.8%) participants did not report their living situation. Participants who selected “other” as their living situation wrote in locations such as living with family, permanent supportive housing, rapid rehousing, and staying in their vehicle.



### Drug Use

Drug use was reported by 59.3% ( $n = 99$ ) of the homeless young adult participants. The age of first drug use ranged from six to twenty years old ( $M = 14.1$ ,  $SD = 2.99$ ). Twenty-four (14.4%) participants believed they had an addiction to drugs, and 10.2% ( $n = 17$ ) reported an addiction to alcohol. Participants reported drug use frequency as daily ( $n = 17$ , 10.2%), weekly ( $n = 13$ , 7.8%), monthly ( $n = 7$ , 4.2%) and not currently using ( $n = 101$ , 60.5%). Similarly, participants reported alcohol use frequency as daily ( $n = 5$ , 3%), weekly ( $n = 13$ , 7.8%), monthly ( $n = 13$ , 7.8%), and not currently using ( $n = 113$ , 67.7%).

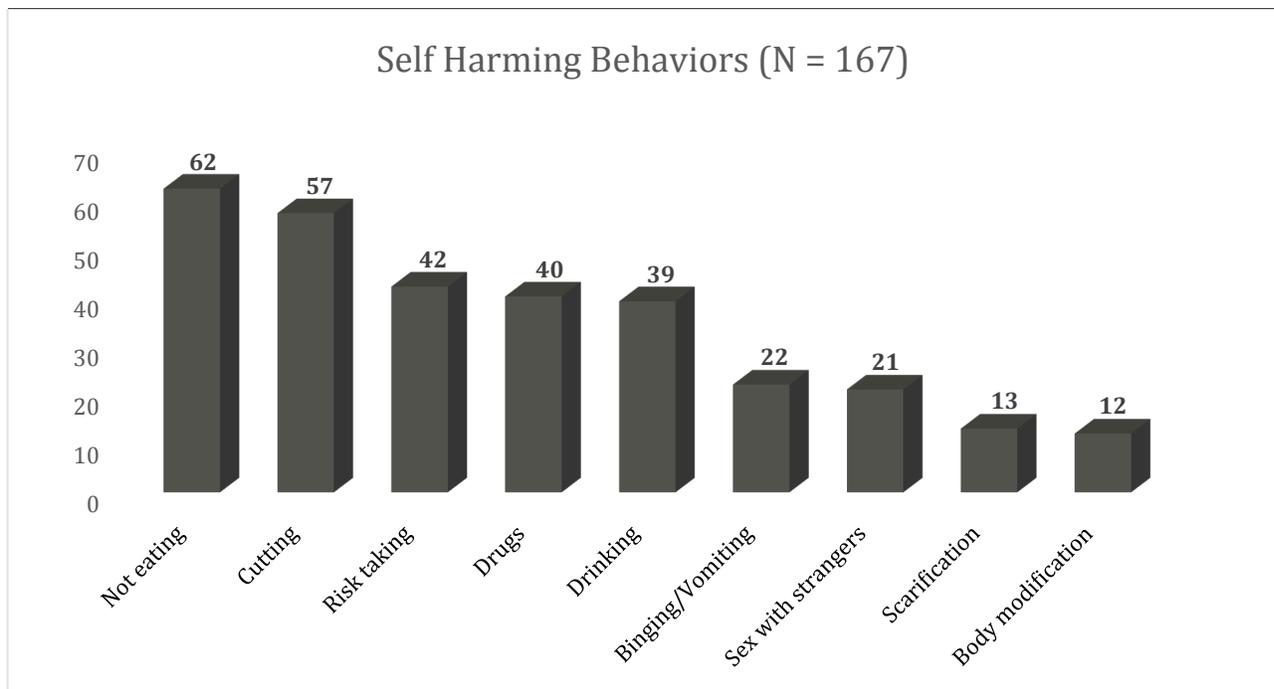
The types of drugs used by the participants varied, and some participants identified using multiple drug types. Participants were explicitly asked if they had ever used methamphetamines and heroin. Twenty-two (13.2%) participants reported heroin use, and 41 (24.6%) participants reported methamphetamine use.

Drug Type (N = 167)	n	%
Marijuana	60	35.9%
Methamphetamines	16	9.6%

Crack/Cocaine	12	7.2%
Opiates/OxyContin	4	2.4%
Heroin	3	1.8%
Pills	3	1.8%
Acid	1	0.6%
Gamma Hydroxybutyrate Rohypnol	1	0.6%
Percocet/Percodan	1	0.6%
All drugs	1	0.6%

### Self-Harm Behaviors

Over half (n = 91, 54.5%) of the homeless young adult participants reported that they participated in some form of self-harming behavior including: not eating for long periods (n = 62, 37.1%), cutting (n = 57, 34.1%), risk taking behaviors (n = 42, 25.1%), drug use (n = 40, 24%), drinking alcohol excessively (n = 39, 23.4%), bingeing/vomiting (n = 22, 13.2%), having sex with strangers (n = 21, 12.6%), scarification (n = 13, 7.8%), and body modification (defined as altering or modifying the human anatomy or physical appearance for self-expression, shock value or aesthetics (Featherstone, 1999) (n = 12, 7.2%). Other self-reported self-harm behaviors included: “blunt force,” and “punching and whipping myself.”



A suicide attempt was reported by 70 (41.9%) of the homeless young adult participants. Participants reported last suicide attempt within the past week (n = 4, 2.4%), month (n = 4, 2.4%), six months (n = 12, 7.2%), year (n = 7, 4.2%), and over one year (n = 44, 26.3%).

### **Mental Health Issues**

A current mental health diagnosis was reported by over half (n = 107, 64.1%) of the homeless young adult participants, with 90 (53.9%) participants reporting more than one mental health issues/diagnoses.

<b>Types of Mental Disorders Reported (N = 167)</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>
Depression	78	46.7%
Anxiety	75	44.9%
ADD/ADHD	53	31.7%
Bipolar disorder	44	26.3%
Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder	38	22.8%
Schizophrenia	18	10.8%
Borderline Personality Disorder	16	9.6%
Dissociative Identity Disorder	7	4.2%
Asperger's	6	3.6%
Oppositional Defiant Disorder	5	3%
Other	5	3%
Autism	4	2.4%
Antisocial Personality Disorder	3	1.8%

Participants who reported “Other” wrote in: “unofficially diagnosed PTSD,” “SMI,” and “Insomnia.” Having received treatment for the reported mental health disorders was reported by 86 (51.5%) participants.

### **Medical Issues**

The majority (n = 121, 72.5%) of the participants reported they had health insurance through the Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System. A current medical problem was reported by 90 (53.9%) of the participants. Medical problems included the following: poor vision, asthma, dental problems, chronic pain, skin problems, open wounds, broken bones, and sexually transmitted infections (STI).

<b>Medical Issues Reported (N = 167)</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>
Poor vision	42	25.1%
Asthma	33	19.8%

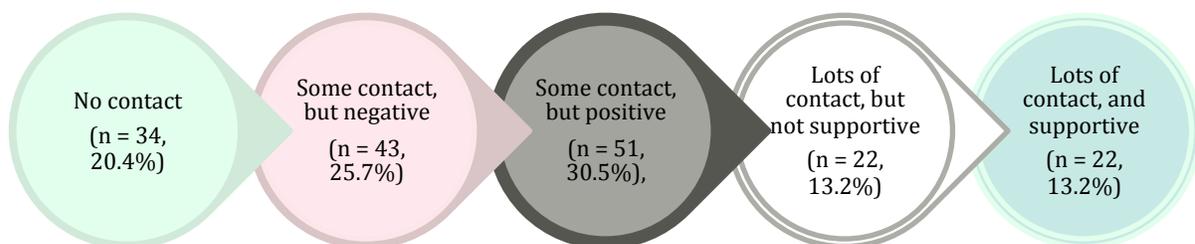
Dental	33	19.8%
Chronic Pain	27	16.2%
Skin problems	14	8.4%
Open wounds	8	4.8%
Broken bones	7	4.2%
Sexually transmitted infections	4	2.4%

Other self-reported medical conditions included “epilepsy,” “heart issues,” “nerve damage,” “seizures,” and “stomach burning and hip pain.” Forty-eight (28.7%) of the homeless young adult participants were receiving medical treatment for their identified current medical problem. Thirty (18%) participants reported having used the Crews’ n Healthmobile from Phoenix Children’s Hospital.

A current pregnancy was reported by eight (4.8%) participants. Almost one-quarter (n = 41, 24.6%) of the participants reported that they had children. The number of children ranged from one to six years old ( $M = 1.7, SD = 1.07$ ). Participants reported child custody or living arrangements as: Department of Child Safety (DCS) custody (n = 18, 10.8%), living in my care (n = 20, 12%), living in foster care (n = 9, 5.4%), living with family (n = 8, 4.8%), or other (n = 5, 3%).

### Family Connection

The homeless young adult participants reported that relationships with their families and their level of connectedness with their families varied. Family contact was described as: no contact (n = 34, 20.4%), some contact, but negative (n = 43, 25.7%), some contact, but positive (n = 51, 30.5%), lots of contact, but not supportive (n = 22, 13.2%), and lots of contact, and supportive (n = 22, 13.2%).



In response to a question about possible reasons for the participants’ level of contact with their families, 48 (28.7%) reported their family lives too far away, 42 (25.1%) reported that their home with their family was not a safe environment for them, and 94 (56.3%) reported that they were kicked out by their families. Participants wrote in other reasons attributed to feelings of

disconnection with family, which included: drugs, removal from the home, feeling like the “black sheep,” mental illness of a parent, abuse by a parent, and lack of support and empathy.

Participants reported being kicked out of their homes because the participant was using substances (n = 22, 13.2%), the family did not approve of their sexual orientation (n = 17, 10.2%), their family did not approve of their gender identity (n = 7, 4.2%), their family could not provide for their needs (poverty) (n = 28, 16.8%), and family conflict/fighting with parents (n = 66, 39.5%).

Witnessing domestic violence in the home was reported by 75 (44.9%) participants. Participants reported witnessing their father hit their mother (n = 73, 43.7%), and their mother hit their father (n = 40, 24%). Participants reported experiencing abuse in a domestic violence relationship (n = 77, 46.1%), and being the abuser in a domestic violence relationship (n = 40, 24%). Participants who reported witnessing domestic violence in their home were significantly more likely to report experiencing a domestic violence relationship of their own  $\chi^2 (1, N = 159) = 16.16, p < .001$ .

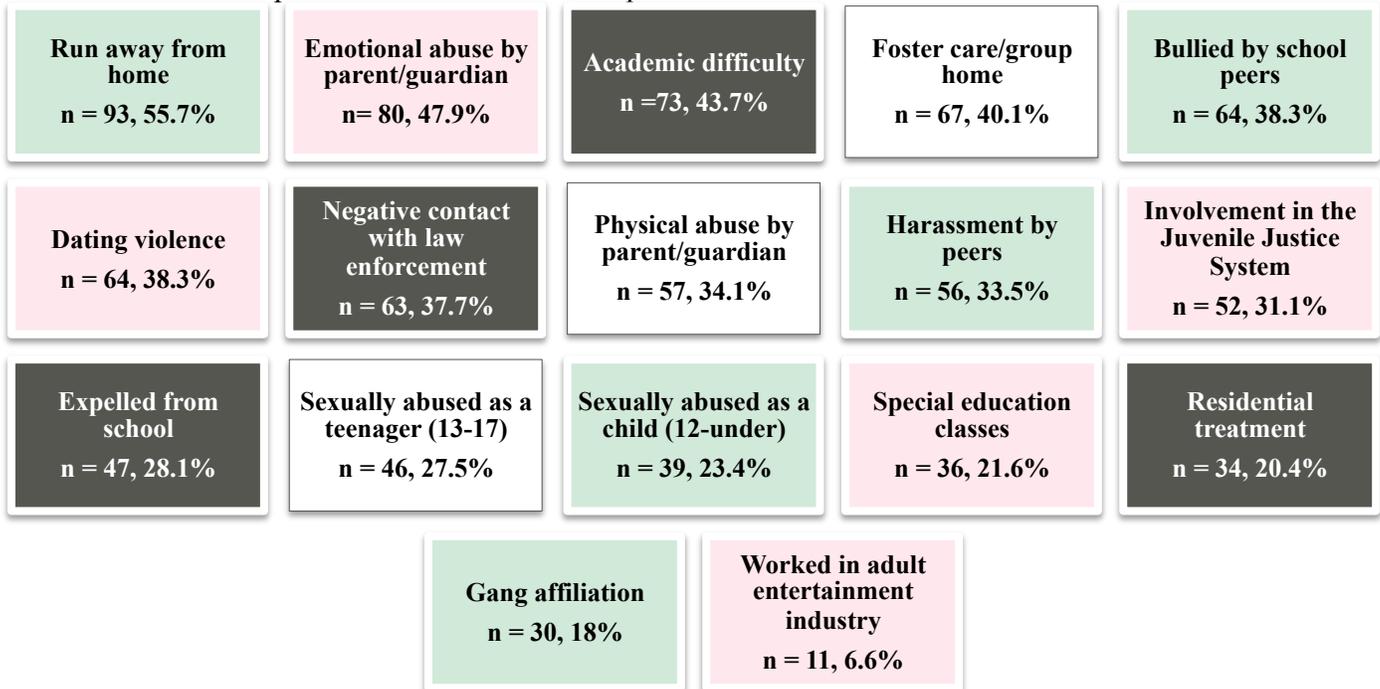
### **Economics of Homeless Young Adults**

The participants identified a variety of ways they earned money which included: having a steady job, working day labor, selling drugs, selling stolen things, selling their own belongings, working side jobs for cash, door to door sales, panhandling, pickpocketing, and sex trading. Participants who selected “other” wrote in tasks such as landscaping, cleaning parking lots for monthly pay, selling plasma, household chores, government assistance, shoplifting, stealing, and unsteady jobs.

<b>How the Participants make money to live</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>
Side jobs for cash	59	35.3%
Steady job	61	36.5%
Selling their own belongings	40	24%
Day labor	26	15.6%
Panhandling	20	12%
Selling stolen things	22	13.2%
Other	17	10.2%
Selling drugs	14	8.4%
Sex trading	11	6.6%
Pickpocketing	11	6.6%
Door to door sales	7	4.2%

## Life Experiences

Participants identified their life experiences as:



A total of 55 (32.9%) of the homeless young adult participants reported that they had been sexually abused before the age of 18.

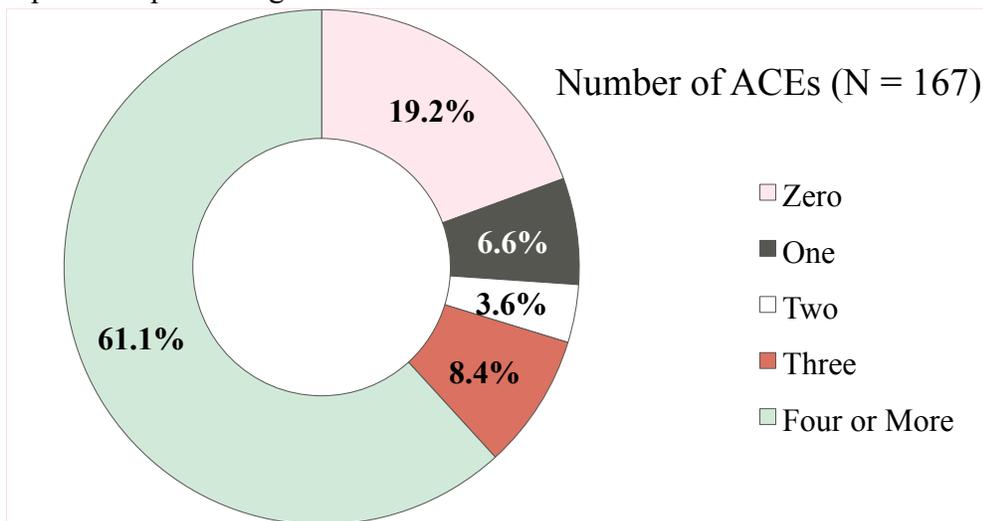
## Adverse Childhood Experiences

Ten questions were asked that represented different abuse (psychological, physical, and sexual) and household dysfunction (substance abuse, mental illness, divorce/separation, domestic violence, and criminal behavior) categories. The physical abuse category was represented in two questions as physical abuse and physical neglect. The psychological abuse category was represented in two questions as emotional abuse and emotional neglect. The questions on the adverse childhood experiences survey include:

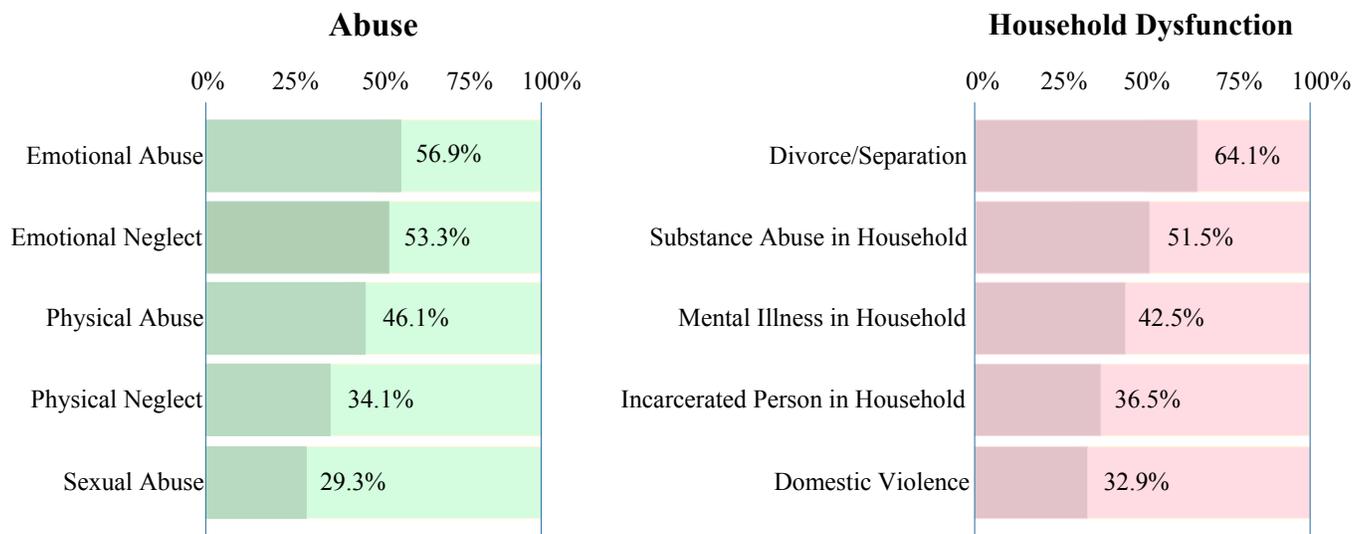
<b>Prior to your 18<sup>th</sup> birthday:</b>	
<b>Question</b>	<b>Adverse Childhood Experience</b>
Did a parent or other adult in the household often or very often swear at you, insult you, put you down, or humiliate you or act in a way that made you afraid that you might be physically hurt?	Emotional Abuse
Did a parent or other adult in the household often or very often push, grab, slap, or throw something at you or ever hit you so hard that you had marks or were injured?	Physical Abuse
Did an adult or person at least 5 years older than you ever touch or	Sexual Abuse

fondle you or have you touch their body in a sexual way or attempt or actually have oral, anal, or vaginal intercourse with you?	
Did you often or very often feel that no one in your family loved you or thought you were important or special or your family didn't look out for each other, feel close to each other, or support each other?	Emotional Neglect
Did you often or very often feel that you didn't have enough to eat, had to wear dirty clothes, and had no one to protect you or your parents were too drunk or high to take care of you or take you to the doctor if you needed it?	Physical Neglect
Were your parents ever separated or divorced?	Divorce/Separation
Was your mother or stepmother often or very often pushed, grabbed, slapped, or had something thrown at her or sometimes, often, or very often kicked, bitten, hit with a fist, or hit with something hard or ever repeatedly hit over at least a few minutes or threatened with a gun or knife?	Domestic Violence
Did you live with anyone who was a problem drinker or alcoholic, or who used street drugs?	Substance Abuse in the Household
Was a household member depressed or mentally ill, or did a household member attempt suicide?	Mental Illness in the Household
Did a household member go to prison?	Incarcerated Household Member

The number of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) reported ranged from zero to 10 ( $M = 4.5$ ,  $SD = 3.27$ ). Thirty-two (19.2%) participants reported experiencing no ACEs, 11 (6.6%) participants reported experiencing one ACE, six (3.6%) participants reported experiencing two ACEs, 14 (8.4%) participants reported experiencing three ACEs, and 102 (61.1%) participants reported experiencing four or more ACEs.

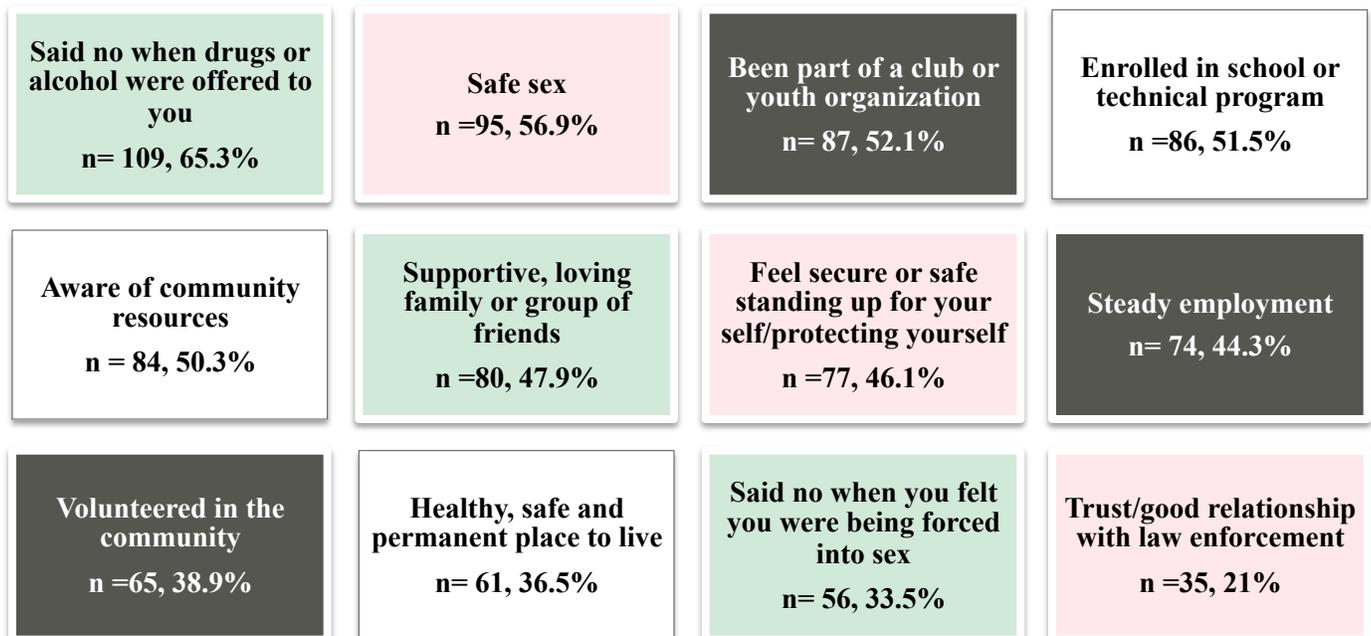


Within the abuse category, 95 (56.9%) participants reported experiencing emotional abuse, 89 (53.3%) reported emotional neglect, 77 (46.1%) reported physical abuse, 57 (34.1%) reported physical neglect, and 49 (29.3%) reported sexual abuse. Within the household dysfunction category, 107 (64.1%) participants reported a parent divorce or separation, 86 (51.5%) reported having substance abuse within the household, 71 (42.5%) reported having mental illness or someone who attempted suicide within the household, 61 (36.5%) reported someone in their household being incarcerated, and 55 (32.9%) reported witnessing domestic violence against their mother figure.



### Positive Life Experiences

Positive life experiences of the homeless young adult participants were reported as follows:



### **Sex Trafficking Experiences of Homeless Young Adults (n = 65)**

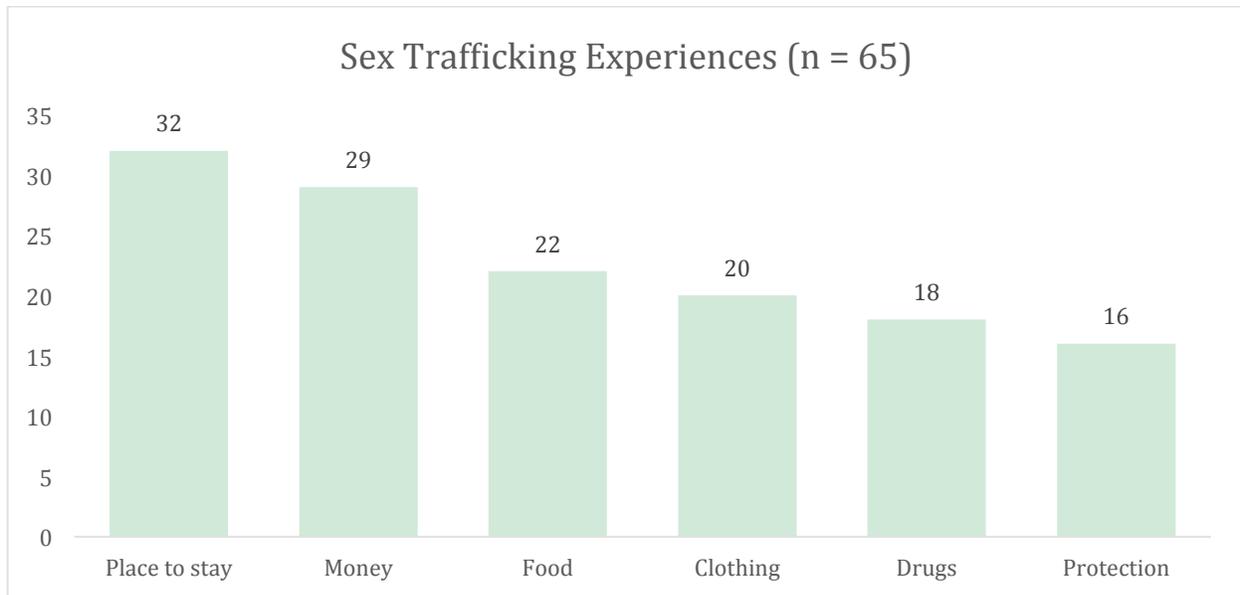
Sixty-five (38.9%) of the homeless young adult participants reported they had been sex trafficked by answering affirmatively to any of the following questions:

1. Have you ever been compelled, forced, or coerced to perform a sexual act, including sexual intercourse, oral or anal contact for: money, food, clothing, drugs, protection, or a place to stay?
2. Do you currently have a person who encourages/pressures/forces you to exchange sexual acts for money, drugs, food, a place to stay, clothing, or protection?
3. In the past, has anyone encouraged/pressured/forced you to exchange sexual acts for money, drugs, food, place to stay, clothing, or protection?

The participants who reported a sex trafficking experience ranged in age from 18 to 25 years old ( $M = 21.4$ ,  $SD = 2.43$ ). The age of first sex trafficking victimization ranged from three to 24 years ( $M = 14.2$ ,  $SD = 5.15$ ). Thirty-nine (60%) participants reported that they were sex trafficked before they were 18 years old. Almost one in four ( $n = 16$ , 24.6%) participants reported their age at first sex trafficking victimization as age 12 and under.

Thirty-two (49.2%) female homeless young adults reported experiencing sex trafficking, which is 47.8% of the total number of female homeless young adult participants. Twenty-one (32.3%) male homeless young adults reported experiencing sex trafficking, which is 25.9% of the total number of male homeless young adult participants. Four (6.2%) participants who reported a sex trafficking experience identified as non-conforming, four (6.2%) participants identified as transgender, two (3.1%) participants identified as two-spirit, and one (1.5%) participant identified as genderqueer. Regarding sexual orientation of the sex trafficked group ( $n = 65$ ), 23 (35.4%) participants identified as heterosexual and 38 (58.5%) participants identified as LGBTQ. Four (6.2%) participants did not report sexual orientation.

Sixty-four participants reported a commercial exchange of sex by means of force, fraud, or coercion in exchange for items of value, such as a place to stay ( $n = 32$ , 50%), money ( $n = 29$ , 44.6%), food ( $n = 22$ , 33.8%), clothing ( $n = 20$ , 30.8%), drugs ( $n = 18$ , 27.7%), and protection ( $n = 16$ , 24.6%).



Having a sex trafficker was reported by 58 (89.2%) of the participants that identified as being a victim of sex trafficking. The 89.2% who reported having a sex trafficker answered affirmatively to the one of the following questions:

1. Do you currently have a person who encourages/pressures/ forces you to exchange sexual acts for money, drugs, a place to stay, clothing, or protection?
2. In the past, has anyone encouraged/pressured/ forced you to exchange sexual acts for money, drugs, a place to stay, clothing, or protection?

Two (3.1%) of the 65 participants who reported a sex trafficking experience identified they were *currently* being sex trafficked by a person who encourages/pressures/forces them to exchange sexual acts for money, drugs, protection, a place to stay, clothing or protection. Twenty-four (36.9%) participants reported that they had felt afraid to leave or quit the sex trafficking situation due to fear of violence or other threats of harm to self and to family. The participants reported their relationship with the sex trafficker as a friend (n = 25, 38.5%), boyfriend (n = 20, 30.8%), parent/guardian (n = 8, 12.3%), girlfriend (n = 7, 10.8%), gang member (n = 6, 9.2%), sibling (n = 4, 6.2%), other family member (n = 3, 4.6%), or other (n = 11, 16.9%). Participants who reported “other” wrote in responses, such as: “baby’s dad,” “dealer,” “Mom’s BF,” “Person who pretended to be a high school student when I was 16,” “teacher/landlord/roommate,” “work – team member,” and “stranger who falsified identity.”

The use of technology for the purpose of the sex trafficking was identified by 27 (41.5%) of the 65 homeless young adult participants who reported having been sex trafficked. The participants responded affirmatively to the following survey question:

1. Were any of the following technological devices or means used to recruit you to trade sex, to keep you in the sex trading situation, or used as a tool in the sex trading situation?

<b>Types of technology used in the sex trafficking situations (n = 65)</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>
Smart phone	18	27.7%
Facebook	10	15.4%
Craigslist.com	9	13.8%
Instagram	8	12.3%
PayPal	8	12.3%
Pornographic pictures	7	10.8%
Backpage.com	7	10.8%
Dating websites	6	9.2%
Twitter	6	9.2%
Tinder	6	9.2%
Bitcoin	4	6.2%
Tumblr	3	4.6%

The dating site Plenty of Fish was written in as an additional tool that was used in the participant's sex trafficking situation.

Participants reported that technology was used in their sex trafficking situation in a number of ways, including: to recruit into a sex trafficking situation (n = 17, 26.2%), as a tool in the sex trafficking situation (n = 15, 23.1%), to keep the participant in the sex trafficking situation (n = 13, 20 %), and to help the participant get out of a sex trafficking situation (n = 8, 12.3%).

### **Comparing the Sex Trafficked Group with the Non-Sex Trafficked Group**

To compare the sex trafficked and the non-sex trafficked group, chi square and t-test analysis were used. There were no significant differences between the two groups regarding age at the time of the survey, the age of first homelessness, or the age of first drug use.

There were no significant differences in gender between groups. Participants who indicated their sexual orientation was in the category of gay, lesbian, pansexual, asexual, bisexual or other, were significantly more likely to have reported they were a sex trafficking victim when compared to those who reported heterosexual as their sexual orientation  $X^2 (1, N = 147) = 4.69, p < .03$ .

<b>Demographics</b>	Sex trafficked group (n =65)	Non sex trafficked group (n =102)
Sexual orientation		
Heterosexual	23 (35.4%)	48 (47.1%)
LGBTQ*	38 (58.5%)	38 (37.3%)

\*Significance at a  $p < .05$  level. \*\*Significance at a  $p < .01$  level.

### **Self-Harm and Risk Taking Behaviors**

Self-harming behaviors were significantly more likely to have been reported by the sex trafficked group when compared to the non-sex trafficked group  $X^2(1, N = 161) = 29.88, p < .001$ . The sex trafficked homeless young adults were significantly more likely than the non-sex trafficked group to report that they were cutting  $X^2(1, N = 159) = 18.76, p < .001$  and using drugs  $X^2(1, N = 159) = 5.76, p < .016$ .

Risk taking behaviors  $X^2(1, N = 159) = 15.35, p < .001$  were significantly more likely to have been reported by the sex trafficked participants than the non-sex trafficked participants. Not eating for long periods of time  $X^2(1, N = 159) = 10.73, p < .001$ , and bingeing/vomiting  $X^2(1, N = 159) = 9.14, p < .002$  behavior was significantly more likely to have been reported by the sex trafficked participants than the non-sex trafficked participants.

<b>Self-Harming and Risk Taking Behaviors</b>	Sex trafficked group (n =65)	Non-sex trafficked group (n =102)
Self-harming behaviors***	53 (81.5%)	38 (37.3%)
Cutting***	35 (53.8%)	22 (21.6%)
Not eating for long periods of time***	34 (52.3%)	28 (27.5%)
Risk taking behaviors***	27 (41.5%)	15 (14.7%)
Drug use*	22 (33.8%)	18 (17.6%)
Bingeing/Vomiting**	15 (23.1%)	7 (6.9%)

\*Significance at a  $p < .05$  level. \*\*Significance at a  $p < .01$  level. \*\*\*Significance at a  $p < .001$  level.

### **Mental Health Issues**

Suicide attempts were significantly more likely to have been reported by the sex trafficked homeless young adults when compared to the non-sex trafficked group  $X^2(1, N = 163) = 16.45, p < .001$ . The sex trafficked participants were more likely to have a current mental health issue/diagnosis than the non-sex trafficked group  $X^2(1, N = 164) = 9.66, p < .002$ . The sex trafficked group was also significantly more likely to report having more than one mental health diagnosis compared to the non-sex trafficked group  $X^2(1, N = 163) = 4.62, p < .032$ . The sex

trafficked group were more likely to report being diagnosed with Depression  $X^2(1, N = 163) = 9.06, p < .003$ , Schizophrenia  $X^2(1, N = 163) = 4.05, p < .044$ , Borderline Personality Disorder  $X^2(1, N = 163) = 6.47, p < .011$ , and Posttraumatic Stress Disorder  $X^2(1, N = 163) = 14.62, p < .001$ .

<b>Mental Health Issues</b>	Sex trafficked group (n = 65)	Non-sex trafficked group (n = 102)
Mental health issue/diagnosis**	51 (78.5%)	56 (54.9%)
More than one diagnosis reported*	42 (64.6%)	48 (47.1%)
Suicide attempts***	40 (61.5%)	30 (29.4%)
Depression**	40 (61.5%)	38 (37.3%)
Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder***	25 (38.5%)	13 (12.7%)
Schizophrenia*	11 (16.9%)	7 (6.9%)
Borderline Personality Disorder*	11 (16.9%)	5 (4.9%)

\*Significance at a  $p < .05$  level. \*\*Significance at a  $p < .01$  level. Significance at a  $p < .001$  level.

### Medical Problems and Services

The sex trafficked group was significantly more likely to report having a medical issue than the non-sex trafficked group  $X^2(1, N = 163) = 6.11, p < .013$ . Specifically, the sex trafficked group were significantly more likely to report having asthma  $X^2(1, N = 163) = 4.05, p < .044$ . The two groups did not differ regarding the number of children they have and were similar in the locations of their children.

<b>Medical Challenges</b>	Sex trafficked group (n =65)	Non-sex trafficked group (n =102)
Having a medical issue*	43 (66.2%)	47 (46.1%)
Asthma*	18 (27.7%)	15 (14.7%)

\*Significance at a  $p < .05$  level. \*\*Significance at a  $p < .01$  level.

### Family Connection and Support

The sex trafficked group and the non-sex trafficked group did not significantly differ with regard to family connection and challenges. The sex trafficked group was significantly more likely than the non-sex trafficked group to report witnessing domestic violence in the home  $X^2(1, N = 162) = 13.41, p < .001$ , with participants specifically witnessing their father hit their mother  $X^2(1, N = 160) = 10.01, p < .002$  and witnessing their mother hit their father  $X^2(1, N = 153) = 4.89, p < .027$ .

The sex trafficked group was significantly more likely than the non-sex trafficked group to report being abused in a domestic violence relationship  $\chi^2(1, N = 160) = 29.39, p < .001$ , and being the abuser in a domestic violence relationship  $\chi^2(1, N = 160) = 14.67, p < .001$ .

<b>Experience of Domestic Violence</b>	Sex trafficked group (n = 65)	Non-sex trafficked group (n = 102)
Abused in a domestic violence relationship***	46 (70.8%)	31 (30.4%)
Witnessing domestic violence in the home***	40 (61.5%)	35 (34.3%)
Witnessing father hit mother**	38 (58.5%)	35 (34.3%)
Abuser in a domestic violence relationship***	26 (38.5%)	14 (13.7%)
Witnessing mother hit father*	21 (32.3%)	19 (18.6%)

\*Significance at a  $p < .05$  level. \*\*Significance at a  $p < .01$  level. \*\*\*Significance at a  $p < .001$  level.

### **How Participants Earn Money**

The sex trafficked homeless young adult participants were significantly more likely than the non-sex trafficked group to report selling their own belongings  $\chi^2(1, N = 160) = 6.44, p < .011$  in order to make money to live.

### **Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)**

Of the 10 ACEs surveyed, the sex trafficked group was significantly more likely than the non-sex trafficked group to have experienced more than one adverse childhood experience  $\chi^2(1, N = 164) = 28.08, p < .001$ . The non-sex trafficked group was significantly more likely than the sex trafficked group to report experiencing between zero to three ACEs  $\chi^2(1, N = 164) = 16.22, p < .001$ . The sex trafficked group was significantly more likely than the non-sex trafficked group to report experiencing four or more ACEs  $\chi^2(1, N = 164) = 16.22, p < .001$ .

Regarding type of adverse childhood experiences, the sex trafficked group was significantly more likely than the non-sex trafficked group to report experiencing the 10 adverse childhood experiences, including: emotional abuse before the age of 18 years old  $\chi^2(1, N = 165) = 11.57, p < .001$ , physical abuse before the age of 18 years old  $\chi^2(1, N = 163) = 28.74, p < .001$ , sexual abuse before the age of 18 years old  $\chi^2(1, N = 161) = 40.72, p < .001$ , emotional neglect before the age of 18 years old  $\chi^2(1, N = 163) = 26.62, p < .001$ , physical neglect before the age of 18 years old  $\chi^2(1, N = 164) = 11.60, p < .001$ , parents' divorce/separation before the age of 18 years old  $\chi^2(1, N = 164) = 4.45, p < .035$ , witnessing domestic violence in the home before the age of 18 years old  $\chi^2(1, N = 164) = 19.16, p < .001$ , substance use in the home before the

age of 18 years old  $X^2(1, N = 163) = 14.36, p < .001$ , mental illness in the home before the age of 18 years old  $X^2(1, N = 164) = 12.08, p < .001$ , and having a household member go to prison before the age of 18 years old  $X^2(1, N = 164) = 20.31, p < .001$ .

<b>Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), Overview</b>	Sex trafficked group (n = 65)	Non-sex trafficked group (n = 102)
More than one ACE***	61 (93.8%)	60 (58.8%)
Presence of 4 or more ACEs***	51 (78.5%)	50 (49%)
Presence of 0-3 ACEs***	12 (18.5%)	51 (50%)
<b>Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), by Type</b>		
Emotional neglect***	50 (76.9%)	38 (37.3%)
Emotional abuse***	47 (72.3%)	47 (46.1%)
Parent divorce/separation*	47 (72.3%)	59 (57.8%)
Physical abuse***	46 (70.8%)	30 (29.4%)
Substance use in the home***	45 (69.2%)	41 (40.2%)
Mental illness in the home***	38 (58.5%)	33 (32.4%)
Sexual abuse***	37 (56.9%)	12 (11.8%)
Household member go to prison***	37 (56.9%)	24 (23.5%)
Witnessing domestic violence in the home***	34 (52.3%)	21 (20.6%)
Physical neglect***	32 (49.2%)	25 (24.5%)

\*Significance at a  $p < .05$  level. \*\*Significance at a  $p < .01$  level. \*\*\*Significance at a  $p < .001$  level.

### Negative Life Experiences

Regarding negative life experiences and peer relations, the sex trafficked group was significantly more likely than the non-sex trafficked group to report experiencing dating violence  $X^2(1, N = 164) = 32.85, p < .001$ , being bullied by school peers  $X^2(1, N = 164) = 7.67, p < .001$ , and harassment by peers  $X^2(1, N = 164) = 8.26, p < .004$ . With regard to childhood abuse, the sex trafficked group was significantly more likely than the non-sex trafficked group to report a history of physical abuse by a parent/guardian  $X^2(1, N = 164) = 5.74, p < .017$ , emotional abuse by a parent/guardian  $X^2(1, N = 164) = 10.88, p < .001$ , sexual abuse (molested or raped) as a child ages 12 years old and under  $X^2(1, N = 164) = 27.94, p < .001$ , and sexual abuse (molested or raped) between the ages of 13 to 17 years old  $X^2(1, N = 164) = 47.72, p < .001$ .

<b>Negative Life Experiences</b>	<b>Sex trafficked group (n =65)</b>	<b>Non-sex trafficked group (n =102)</b>
Dating violence***	42 (64.6%)	22 (21.6%)
Emotional abuse by parent/guardian***	41 (63.1%)	39 (38.2%)
Sexual abuse as adolescent (13-17)***	37 (56.9%)	9 (8.8%)
Bullied by school peers***	33 (50.8%)	31 (30.4%)
Harassment by peers**	30 (46.2%)	26 (25.5%)
Sexual abuse as child (12 and under)***	29 (44.6%)	10 (9.8%)
Physical abuse by parent/guardian*	29 (44.6%)	28 (27.5%)

\*Significance at a  $p < .05$  level. \*\*Significance at a  $p < .01$  level. Significance at a  $p < .001$  level.

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### **Labor Exploitation Experiences of Homeless Young Adults (n = 72)**

For questions regarding labor exploitation in the Youth Experiences Survey, the term “work” was first defined as,

*“Anything you have done where you or someone else received something of value, such as money, food, clothing, a place to stay, protection, drugs or gifts in exchange for your work or efforts. “Work” could mean working in a store or restaurant, but it could also mean shoplifting, running drugs, or anything where your efforts were exchanged for something of value. Aside from a typical employer, someone you worked for could include a family member, a friend, boyfriend or girlfriend, or anyone you lived with or were in a relationship with”* (Covenant House, 2013).

Seventy-two (43.1%) participants reported they had been labor exploited by answering affirmatively to one or more of the following questions:

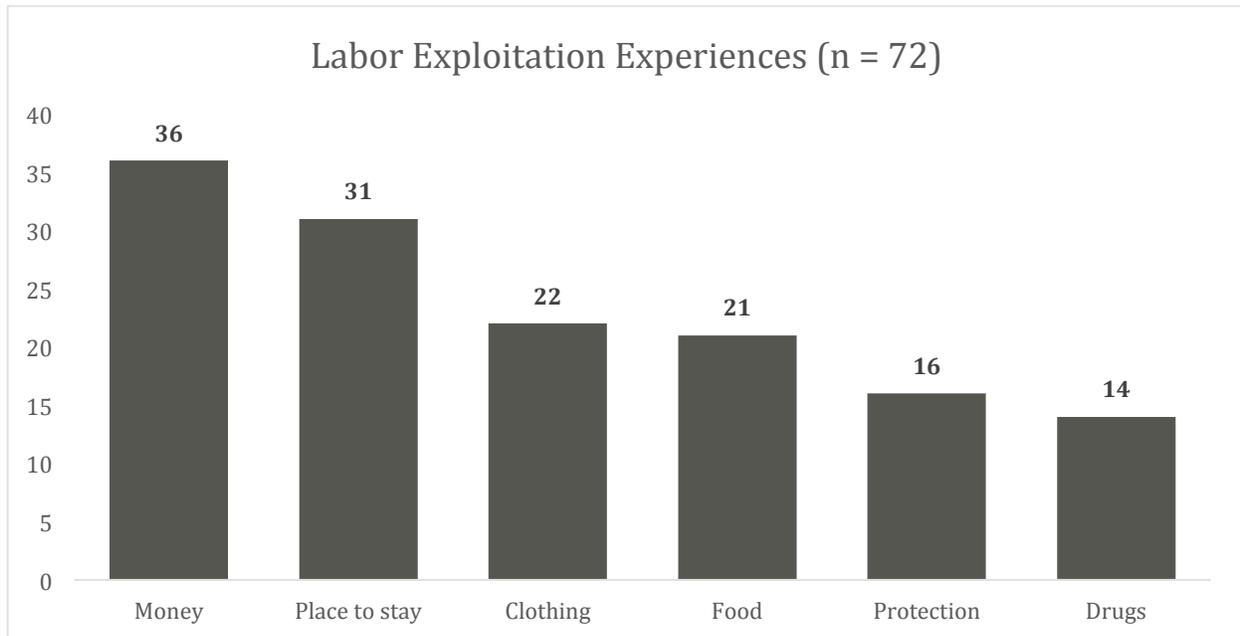
1. Have you ever been tricked or forced into doing any kind of work that you did not want to do?
2. Have you ever been promised work where the work or payment ended up being different than what you expected?
3. Has someone you worked for ever controlled the money you earned, or kept the money you earned in exchange for money, drugs, food, place to stay, clothing, or protection?

The participants who reported labor exploitation ranged in age from 18 to 25 years old ( $M = 21.4$ ,  $SD = 2.58$ ). The age of first labor exploitation was reported by 44 (61.1%) of the 72 participants who reported experiencing labor exploitation. The age of first labor exploitation

ranged from seven to 24 years old ( $M = 16.4$ ,  $SD = 3.77$ ). Twenty-nine (40.3%) participants reported that they were exploited for labor before the age of 18 years old.

Twenty-eight (38.9%) female homeless young adults reported that they were exploited for labor, which is 41.8% of the total number of female homeless young adult participants in this study. Thirty-five (48.6%) male homeless young adults reported that they were exploited for labor, which is 43.2% of the total number of male homeless young adult participants. Of the 18 individuals who identified as non-binary (transgender, genderqueer, non-conforming, or two-spirit), eight (44.4%) reported that they were exploited for labor. Regarding sexual orientation of the labor exploited group ( $n = 72$ ), 64 (88.9%) participants reported their sexual orientation. Thirty-six (50%) participants identified as LGBTQ and 28 (38.9%) participants identified as heterosexual.

Sixty-six (91.7%) participants responded affirmatively to the question, “have you ever been tricked or forced into doing any kind of work that you did not want to do?” These participants reported an exchange of work by means of force, fraud, or coercion in exchange for items of value, such as money ( $n = 36$ , 50%), a place to stay ( $n = 31$ , 43.1%), clothing ( $n = 22$ , 30.6%), food ( $n = 21$ , 29.2%), protection ( $n = 16$ , 22.2%), and drugs ( $n = 14$ , 19.4%).



Participants were given the opportunity to provide a narrative of their experience. Responses included:

**If you have ever been tricked or forced in to doing any kind of work that you did not**

<b>want to do, please explain:</b>
“False payments”
“Forced to take cars to chop shops, transport drugs”
“I had to steal from stores and give the supplies to this guy in order for me to stay away from my family”
“I was being forced into going to stores to shoplift and I was being forced to sell drugs to others”

Forty-five (62.5%) participants reported experiencing fraud, which was defined as being promised work where the work or payment ended up being different than expected. Those who responded affirmatively to experiencing fraud were given the opportunity to provide a narrative of their experience. Responses included:

<b>Have you ever been promised work where the work or payment ended up being different than what you expected? If so, please explain:</b>
“Did not get my full check”
“Didn’t get paid for cleaning a house, doing hair, trading products”
“False payments”
“I was tricked into doing some housekeeping and promised money after but I never got no money or nothing”
“I worked washing cars on the ad it said \$11/hour. I started working, on the third day we get paid based on how many lots we finish and depends on how quickly we do it”
“I’ve done hair and not gotten paid. Cleaned houses and not been paid in full”
“Masonry job didn’t pay full”

Having a labor exploiter was reported by 58 (80.6%) of the participants that identified as being a victim of labor exploitation. The 80.6% who reported having a labor exploiter answered affirmatively to the one of the following questions:

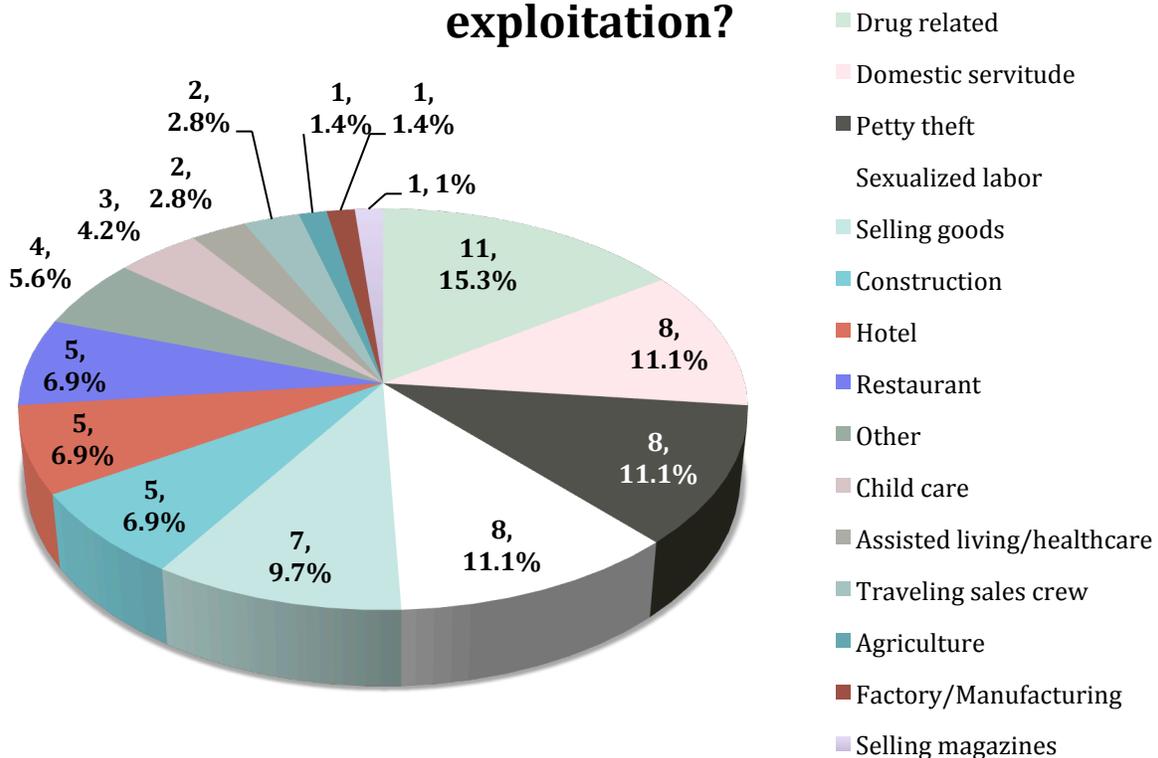
1. Has someone you worked for ever controlled the money you earned, or kept money you earned?
2. Do you currently have a person you work for who controls the money you earn, or keeps money you earn?

Six (8.3%) of the 72 participants who reported labor exploitation identified they were currently being exploited for labor by a person who controls the money s/he earns, or keeps money s/he earns. Twenty-five (34.7%) participants reported that they had felt afraid to leave or quit the labor exploitation situation due to fear of violence or other threats of harm to self and to family.

Participants identified the type of relationship with the labor exploiter as: a boyfriend (n = 12, 16.7%), a girlfriend (n = 4, 5.6%), a friend (n = 16, 22.2%), a gang (n = 6, 8.3%), a parent/guardian (n = 8, 11.1%), sibling (n = 1, 1.4%), other family member (n = 4, 5.6%), and other (n = 2, 2.8%). Those who selected “other” were given the opportunity to provide a narrative and responses included: “a random guy I stayed with,” “baby’s dad,” “ex,” and “landlord/roommate.”

Participants who identified as having experienced labor exploitation were asked to report in which labor sector the exploitation was experienced. Thirty-one (43.1%) participants responded to this question, and reported exploitation in a number of sectors, including: child care (n = 3, 4.2%), assisted living/healthcare (n = 2, 2.8%), traveling sales crew (n = 2, 2.8%), agriculture (n = 1, 1.4%), construction (n = 5, 6.9%), factory/manufacturing (n = 1, 1.4%), domestic servitude (n = 8, 11.1%), drug related (n = 11, 15.3%), selling magazines (n = 1, 1.4%), hotel (n = 5, 6.9%), petty theft (n = 8, 11.1%), restaurant (n = 5, 6.9%), selling goods (e.g., pencils) (n = 7, 9.7%), sexualized labor (e.g., strip club) (n = 8, 11.1%), and other (n = 4, 5.6%).

### In which labor sectors did you experience exploitation?



### Comparing the Labor Exploited Group with the Non-Labor Exploited Group

To compare the labor exploited and the non-labor exploited group, chi square and t-test analysis were used. There were no significant differences between the two groups regarding the

age at the time of the survey, the age of first homelessness or the age at first drug use. There were no significant differences between the two groups regarding gender identity or sexual orientation. There were no significant differences between the two groups regarding drug and alcohol addiction.

### Self-Harm and Risk Taking Behaviors

The labor exploited group was significantly more likely than the non-labor exploited group to report a history of self-harming behavior  $\chi^2(1, N = 158) = 13.60, p < .001$ . The labor exploited group was significantly more likely than the non-labor exploited group to report engaging in risk taking behavior  $\chi^2(1, N = 156) = 12.47, p < .001$ , not eating for long periods of time  $\chi^2(1, N = 156) = 6.24, p < .012$ , and bingeing/vomiting food  $\chi^2(1, N = 156) = 5.63, p < .018$ .

<b>Self-Harming and Risk Taking Behaviors</b>	Labor exploited group (n =72)	Non-labor exploited group (n =95)
Self-harming behaviors***	51 (70.8%)	37 (%)
Not eating for long periods*	34 (47.2%)	25 (%)
Risk taking behaviors***	27 (37.5%)	12 (%)
Bingeing/vomiting*	15 (20.8%)	7 (%)

\*Significance at a  $p < .05$  level. \*\*Significance at a  $p < .01$  level. Significance at a  $p < .001$  level.

### Mental Health Issues

Suicide attempts were significantly more likely to have been reported by the labor exploited group when compared to the non-labor exploited group  $\chi^2(1, N = 160) = 12.14, p < .001$ . The labor exploited group was more likely than the non-labor exploited group to report a current mental health issue/diagnosis  $\chi^2(1, N = 161) = 14.51, p < .001$ . The labor exploited group was also significantly more likely to report having more than one mental health diagnosis compared to the non-labor exploited group  $\chi^2(1, N = 160) = 5.58, p < .018$ .

The labor exploited group was significantly more likely than the non-labor exploited group to report being diagnosed with Depression  $\chi^2(1, N = 160) = 6.06, p < .014$ , Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)  $\chi^2(1, N = 160) = 12.54, p < .001$ , Schizophrenia  $\chi^2(1, N = 160) = 5.29, p < .021$ , and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder  $\chi^2(1, N = 160) = 10.49, p < .001$ .

<b>Mental Health Issues</b>	Labor exploited group (n =72)	Non-labor exploited group (n =95)
Mental health issue/diagnosis***	58(%)	46 (%)

More than one diagnosis reported*	46 (%)	41 (%)
Depression*	41 (%)	34 (%)
Suicide attempts***	41 (%)	27 (%)
ADD/ADHD***	33 (%)	18 (%)
Post Traumatic Stress Disorder***	25 (%)	12 (%)
Schizophrenia*	12 (%)	5 (%)

\*Significance at a  $p < .05$  level. \*\*Significance at a  $p < .01$  level. \*\*\*Significance at a  $p < .001$ .

### Medical Problems and Services

The labor exploited group was significantly more likely than the non-labor exploited group to report experiencing a medical issue  $X^2(1, N = 160) = 4.34, p < .037$ . The labor exploited group was significantly more likely than the non-labor exploited group to report asthma  $X^2(1, N = 160) = 5.32, p < .021$ , dental problems  $X^2(1, N = 160) = 4.44, p < .035$ , and chronic pain  $X^2(1, N = 160) = 6.54, p < .011$ .

Medical Problems	Labor exploited group (n =72)	Non-labor exploited group (n =95)
Current medical problem*	46 (63.9%)	43 (45.3%)
Asthma*	20 (27.8%)	12 (12.6%)
Dental problems*	20 (27.8%)	13 (13.7%)
Chronic pain**	18 (25%)	9 (9.5%)

\*Significance at a  $p < .05$  level. \*\*Significance at a  $p < .01$  level.

### Family Connection and Support

Although not significantly different from the non-labor exploited participants, 44.4% of the labor exploited homeless young adult participants reported that they had been kicked out by their family, compared to 30.5% of the non-labor exploited group.

The labor exploited group was significantly more likely than the non-labor exploited group to report witnessing domestic violence in the household  $X^2(1, N = 159) = 8.07, p < .004$ . The two groups were not significantly different with regard to witnessing a father's abuse of the mother, but the labor exploited group was significantly more likely to report witnessing a mother's abuse of the father  $X^2(1, N = 150) = 8.15, p < .004$ . The labor exploited group was significantly more likely than the non-labor exploited group to report being abused in a domestic violence relationship  $X^2(1, N = 157) = 17.46, p < .001$ , and being the abuser in a domestic violence relationship  $X^2(1, N = 157) = 7.51, p < .006$ .

<b>Experience of Domestic Violence</b>	Labor exploited group (n =72)	Non-labor exploited group (n =95)
Abused in a domestic violence relationship***	45 (62.5%)	29 (30.5%)
Witnessing domestic violence**	41 (56.9%)	32 (33.7%)
Abuser in a domestic violence relationship***	24 (33.3%)	14 (14.7%)
Witnessing mother abuse father**	24 (33.3%)	14 (14.7%)

\*Significance at a p < .05 level. \*\*Significance at a p < .01 level. Significance at a p < .001 level.

### **How Participants Earn Money**

There were no significant differences between the labor exploited group and the non-labor exploited group with regard to how money was earned.

### **Sex Trafficking Experiences**

The labor exploited group was significantly more likely than the non-labor exploited group to report experiencing a sex trafficking situation  $X^2(1, N = 163) = 38.61, p < .001$ .

<b>Experience of Sex Trafficking</b>	Labor exploited group (n =72)	Non-labor exploited group (n =95)
Sex trafficking victimization***	48 (66.7%)	17 (17.9%)

\*\*\*Significance at a p < .001 level.

### **Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)**

The labor exploited group was significantly more likely than the non-labor exploited group to report experiencing more than one adverse childhood experience (ACE)  $X^2(1, N = 161) = 19.37, p < .001$ . Of the 10 ACEs surveyed, the non-labor exploited group was significantly more likely than the labor exploited group to report experiencing between zero to three ACEs  $X^2(1, N = 161) = 12.72, p < .001$ . The labor exploited group was significantly more likely than the non-labor exploited group to report experiencing four or more ACEs  $X^2(1, N = 161) = 12.72, p < .001$ .

Regarding type of adverse childhood experiences, the labor exploited group was significantly more likely than the non-labor exploited group to report experiencing nine out of the 10 ACEs, including: emotional abuse  $X^2(1, N = 162) = 13.92, p < .001$ , physical abuse  $X^2(1, N = 160) = 19.14, p < .001$ , sexual abuse before the age of 18 years old  $X^2(1, N = 159) = 14.76, p < .001$ , emotional neglect before the age of 18 years old  $X^2(1, N = 160) = 12.27, p < .001$ ,

physical neglect before the age of 18 years old ( $\chi^2(1, N = 161) = 15.51, p < .001$ ), witnessing domestic violence in the home ( $\chi^2(1, N = 161) = 10.64, p < .001$ ), substance use in the home before the age of 18 years old ( $\chi^2(1, N = 160) = 20.74, p < .001$ ), mental illness in the home before the age of 18 years old ( $\chi^2(1, N = 161) = 19.15, p < .001$ ), and a family member incarcerated ( $\chi^2(1, N = 161) = 13.19, p < .001$ ). The groups did not differ significantly with regard to parent separation or divorce.

<b>Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), Overview</b>	Labor exploited group (n = 72)	Non-labor exploited group (n = 95)
Experiencing more than 1 ACE***	65 (90.3%)	55 (57.9%)
Presence of 4 or more ACEs***	55 (76.4%)	45 (47.4%)
Presence of 0-3 ACEs***	16 (22.2%)	45 (47.4%)
<b>Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), by Type</b>		
Emotional abuse***	53 (73.6%)	40 (42.1%)
Substance use in the home***	52 (72.2%)	33 (34.7%)
Emotional neglect***	50 (69.4%)	38 (40%)
Physical abuse***	47 (65.3%)	28 (29.5%)
Mental illness in the home***	45 (72.5%)	26 (27.4%)
Household member in prison***	38 (52.7%)	23 (24.2%)
Physical neglect***	37 (51.4%)	20 (21.1%)
Domestic violence in the home***	34 (47.2%)	21 (22.1%)
Sexual abuse***	33 (45.8%)	16 (16.8%)

\*Significance at a  $p < .05$  level. \*\*Significance at a  $p < .01$  level. \*\*\*Significance at a  $p < .001$  level.

### Negative Life Experiences

Regarding negative life experiences, the labor exploited group was significantly more likely than the non-labor exploited group to report experiencing dating violence ( $\chi^2(1, N = 161) = 11.94, p < .001$ ), being expelled from school ( $\chi^2(1, N = 161) = 6.99, p < .008$ ), being bullied by school peers ( $\chi^2(1, N = 161) = 4.65, p < .031$ ), gang affiliation ( $\chi^2(1, N = 161) = 4.09, p < .043$ ), harassment by peers ( $\chi^2(1, N = 161) = 15.05, p < .001$ ), physical abuse by a parent/guardian before age 18 years old ( $\chi^2(1, N = 161) = 8.34, p < .004$ ), sexual abuse as a young adult (age 13-17) ( $\chi^2(1, N = 161) = 11.17, p < .001$ ), and sexual abuse as a child (age 12 and under) ( $\chi^2(1, N = 161) = 5.88, p < .015$ ).

<b>Negative Life Experiences</b>	Labor exploited	Non-labor exploited
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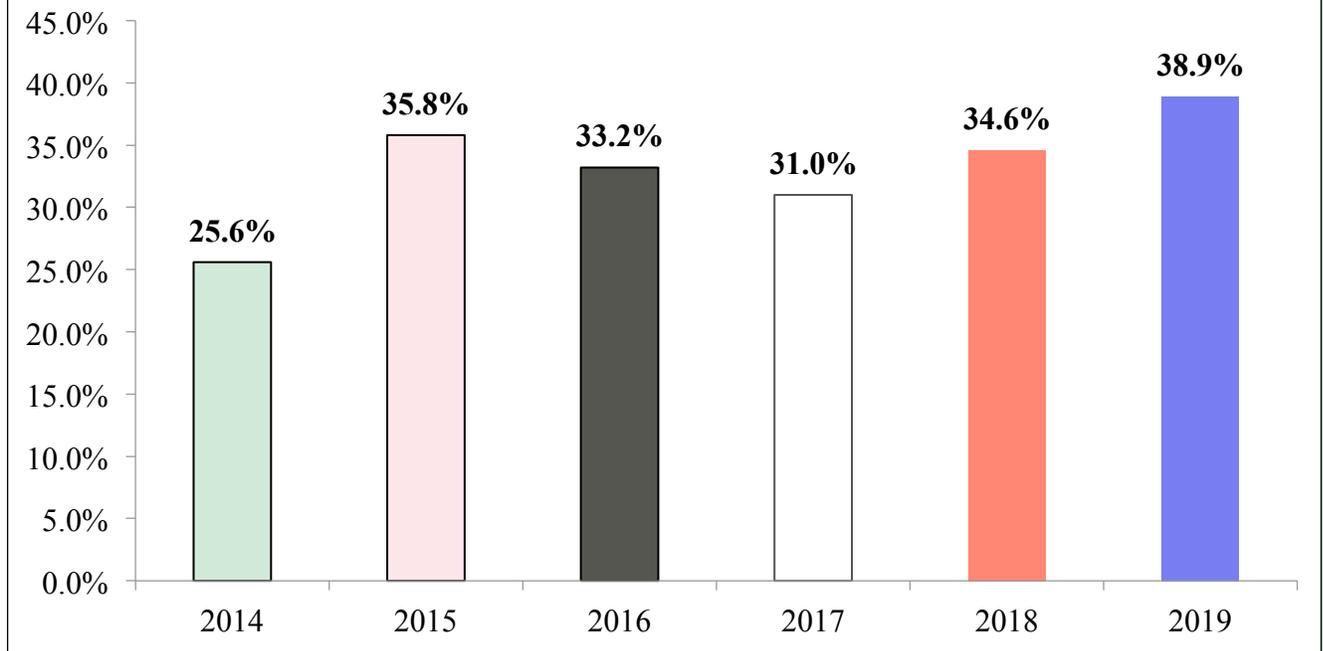
	group (n =72)	group (n = 95)
Dating violence***	38 (52.8%)	25 (26.3%)
Harassment by peers***	35 (48.6%)	19 (20%)
Bullied by school peers*	34 (47.2%)	29 (30.5%)
Physical abuse by parent/guardian**	33 (45.8%)	23 (24.2%)
Sexual abuse as a young adult (age 13-17)***	29 (40.3%)	16 (16.8%)
Expelled from school**	28 (38.9%)	19 (20%)
Sexual abuse as a child (age 12 and under)*	23 (31.9%)	15 (15.8%)
Gang affiliation*	18 (25%)	12 (12.6%)

\*Significance at a  $p < .05$  level. \*\*Significance at a  $p < .01$  level. Significance at a  $p < .001$  level.

### Comparing Findings from the YES 2014 through 2019

In 2014, 246 homeless young adults participated in the Youth Experiences Survey (YES). The 2015 YES was completed by 215 homeless young adults, the 2016 YES was completed by 199 homeless young adults, the 2017 YES was completed by 187 homeless young adults, the 2018 YES was completed by 179 homeless young adults, the 2019 YES was completed by 167 homeless young adults. Due to the transient nature of this population and the anonymity of the participants, duplication from year to year was not considered or included in the interpretation of these findings. Additions to the 2015 Youth Experiences Survey included questions about participant origins, such as hometown and how long the participant has resided in Arizona, what types of medical services the participant utilizes, and if the participant has children or is currently pregnant. New questions addressing family history and connectedness, spirituality, how the participant makes money, and how technology was used in a sex trafficking situation were also included in the 2015 Youth Experiences Survey. New questions added to the 2016 YES included requesting their hometown zip code, and reasons for being kicked out of their homes (if they were kicked out). The 2017 Youth Experiences Survey included questions about labor exploitation. The 2018 survey included the Adverse Childhood Experiences Questionnaire.

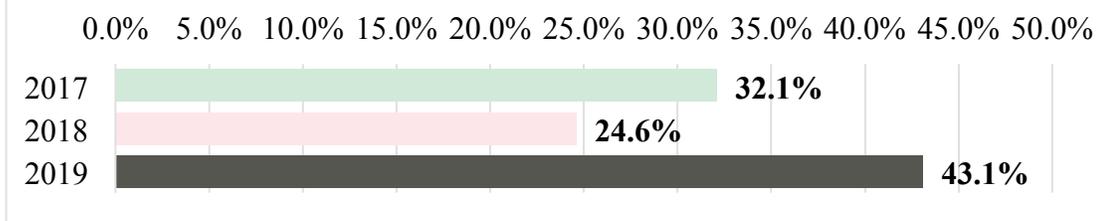
### Participants who reported a sex trafficking experience Year-to-Year Comparison



The 2019 YES study resulted in the largest percentage ( $n = 65$ , 38.9%) of participants that reported experiencing a sex trafficking situation. In 2014, one in four ( $n = 63$ , 25.6%) homeless young adult participants self-reported that they had experienced a sex trafficking situation. The 2015 participants demonstrate an increase in the number of reported sex trafficking experiences by homeless young adults, with over one in three (77, 35.8%) participants self-reporting a sex trafficking experience. The 2016 YES participants reported that one in every three ( $n = 66$ , 33.2%) participants had experienced sex trafficking. The 2017 YES study found that 58 (31%) participants had reported experiencing sex trafficking. The 2018 YES study found that 62 (34.6%) participants reported a sex trafficking experience. The number of participants who have reported experiencing sex trafficking over the six-year study period has varied between 25% to 39%.

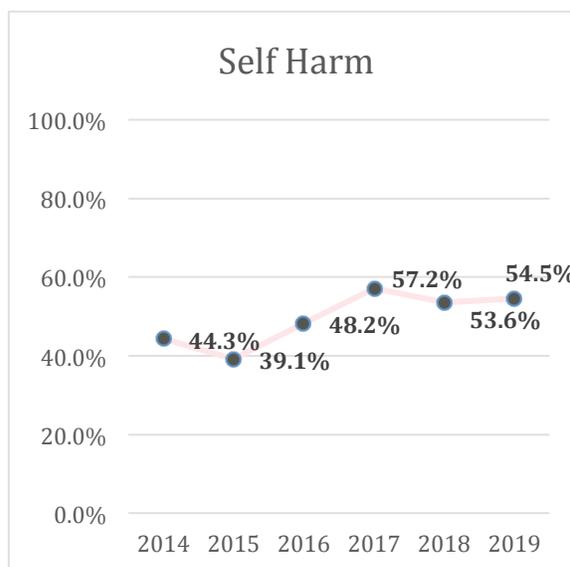
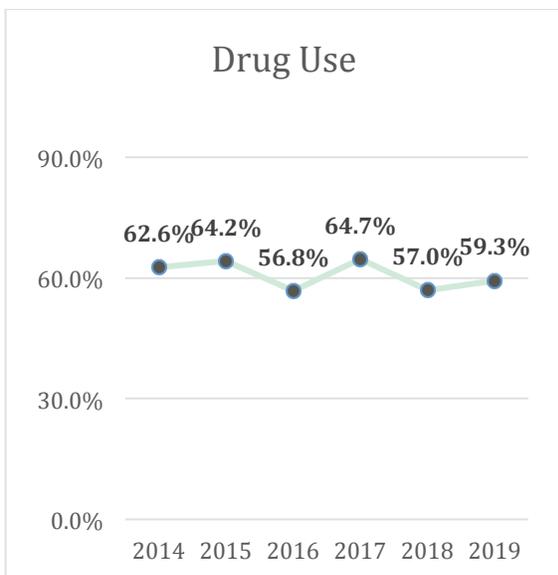
In 2017, questions were added to the Youth Experiences Survey to explore the number of participants who had experienced labor exploitation. In 2017, almost one in three ( $n = 60$ , 32.1%) homeless young adult participants self-reported experiencing labor exploitation. The number slightly decreased in 2018 to almost one in four ( $n = 44$ , 24.6%) participants self-reporting an experience of labor exploitation. The 2019 YES study resulted in the largest percentage ( $n = 72$ , 43.1%) of participants that reported experiencing a form of labor exploitation.

### Participants who reported a labor exploitation experience Year-to-Year Comparison

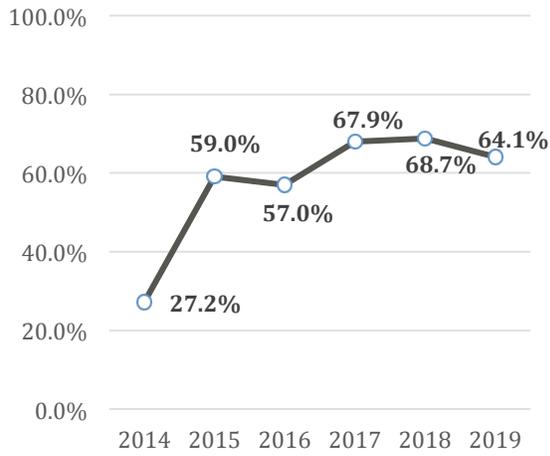


### Trends in Overall Sample Over Time, From 2014-2019

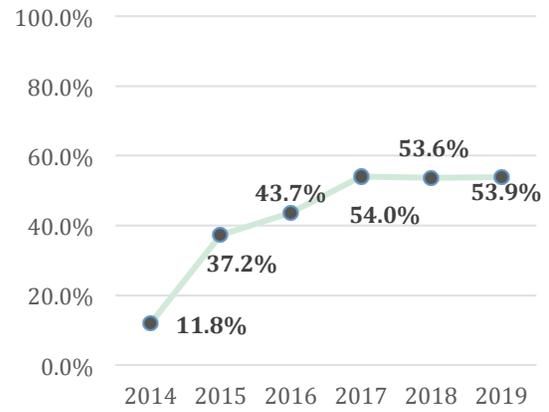
Over the six years of the YES study, many of the variables studied have remained relatively stable have slightly fluctuated from year to year. The graphs below depict the variables of most concern for the overall sample (sex trafficked and non-sex trafficked participants), as these variables continue to remain very high over the years and demand the attention of social services, policy makers, and the community at large.



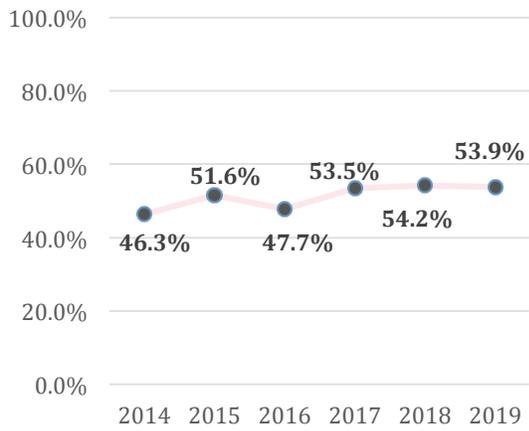
### Mental Health Diagnosis



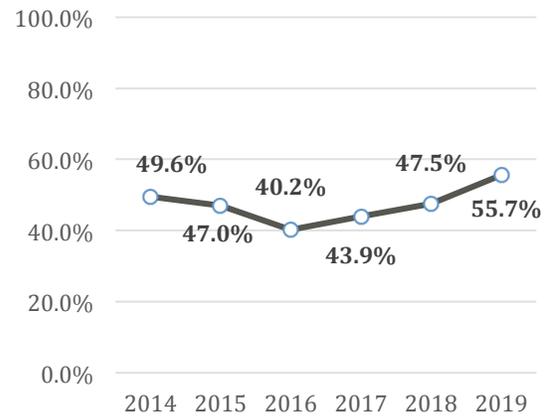
### More than One Mental Health Diagnosis

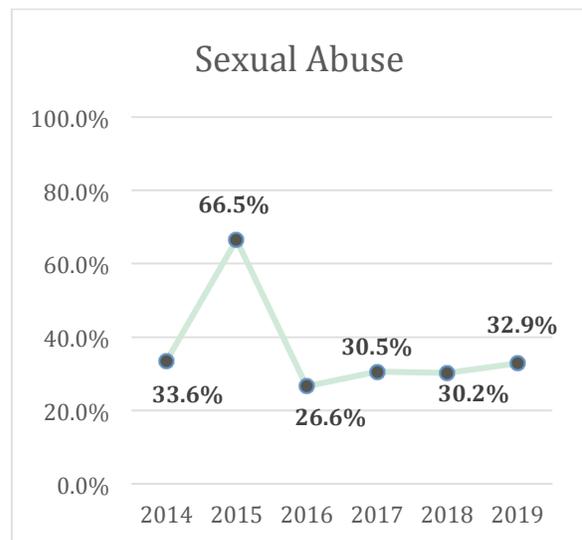
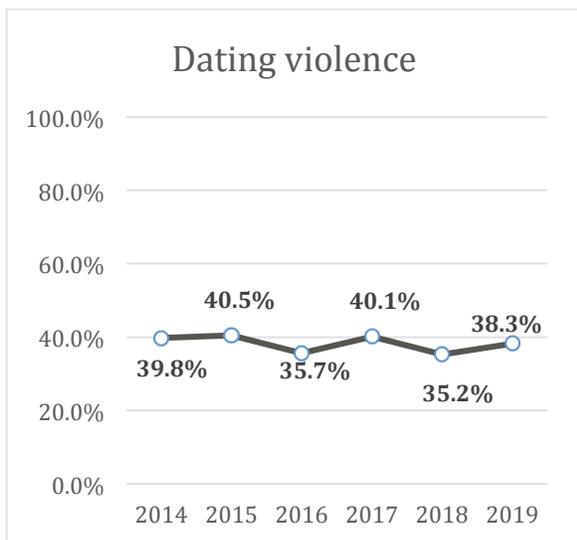
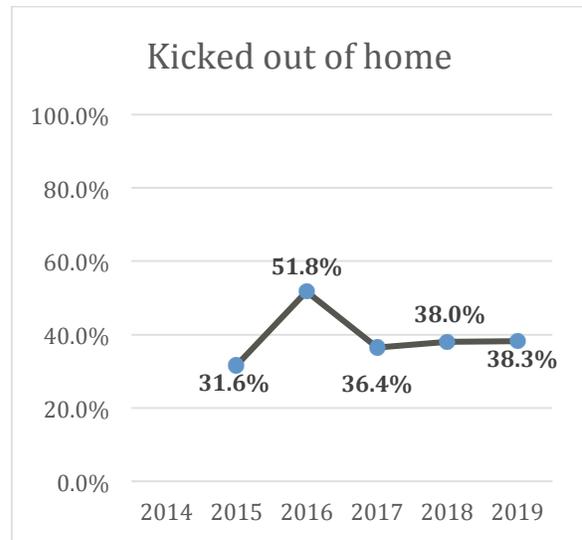
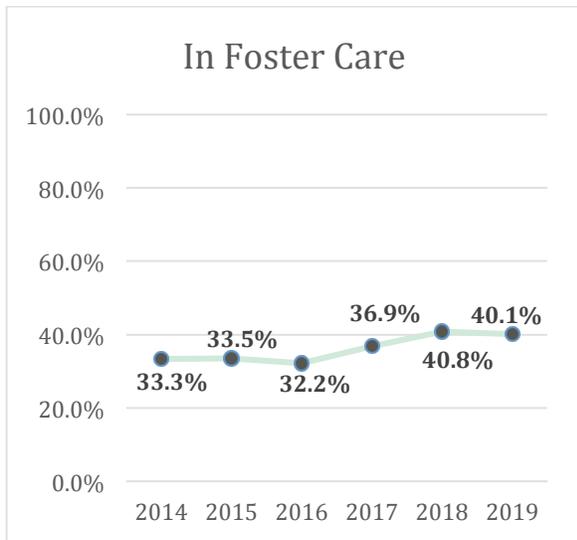


### Medical Problem



### Running Away From Home



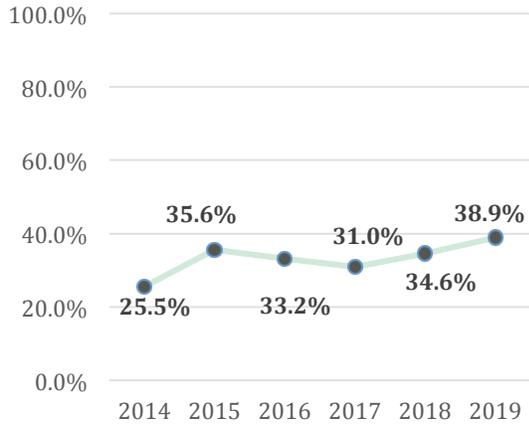


### Trends in Sex Trafficked Only Group Over Time, from 2014 to 2019

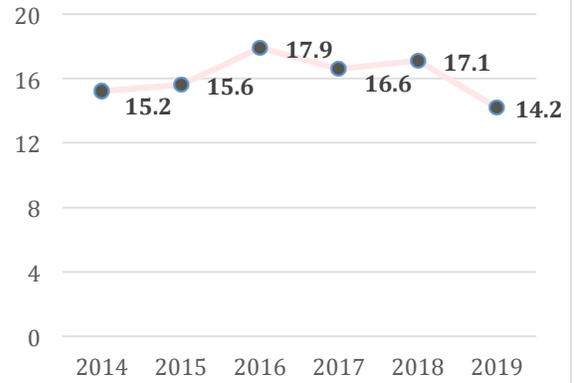
Specific to the sex trafficked group, several variables have remained relatively consistent over the six-year study period. Significant factors to the sex trafficking experience, specifically, which remain of utmost importance include the presence of a sex trafficker, the victim identifying as LGBTQ, and the use of technology in the sex trafficking situation.

Other significant challenges in the lives of homeless young adults who identify as sex trafficking victims include self-harming behaviors, significant mental health challenges, and running away from home/placements.

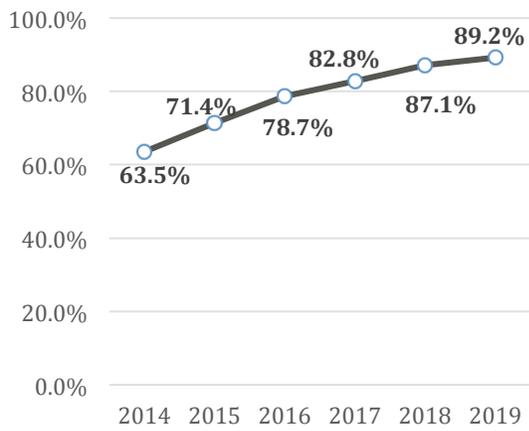
### Experienced Sex Trafficking



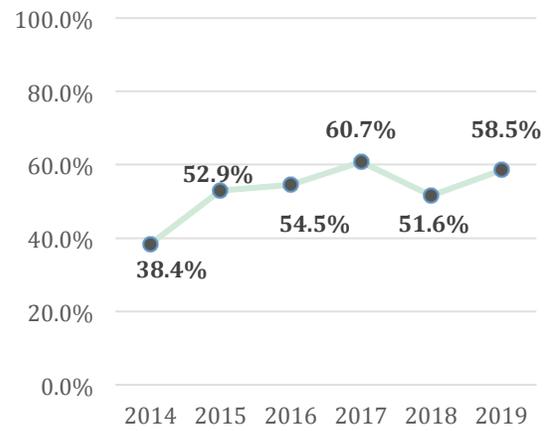
### Average Age of First Sex Trafficking Experience

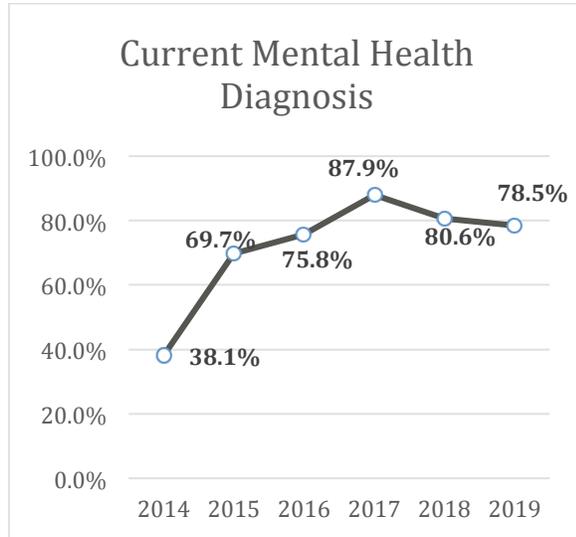
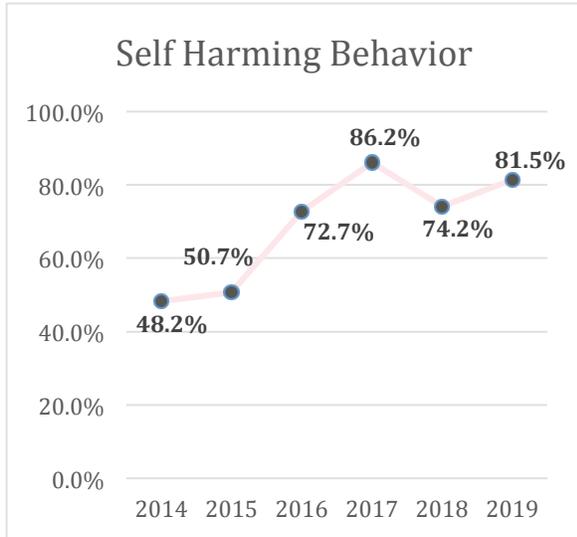


### Ever Had a Sex Trafficker



### Identify as LGBTQ






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## DISCUSSION

The 2019 Youth Experiences Survey (YES) Study marks six years of collecting data on homeless young adults in the state of Arizona. From year to year, the YES study continues to demonstrate the incredible challenges that homeless young adults, ages 18 to 25 years old, face in the state of Arizona. This is a unique population, just aging out of childhood and no longer having access to the same protections and supports afforded to minors, but perhaps not aware of the array of resources available to them. Coupled with the challenging life histories, this population has many needs, including rehabilitation from substance abuse, mental health and medical support, housing, and therapeutic services.

The findings from this study demonstrated that this is a statewide issue. A record number of participants (n = 117, 70.1%) reported that they were raised in the state of Arizona, and the majority of the sample (n = 150, 89.8%) had lived in Arizona for more than a year. These findings suggest that many participants in this sample first experienced homelessness here in the state of Arizona.

Family disconnection and violence was an important finding from the 2019 YES study data. One in four (n = 42, 25.1%) participants reported feeling unsafe in their home environment. Over half (n = 94, 56.3%) of participants reported being kicked out of the home by their family. Violence witnessed or experienced within the home environment was great, with participants' reportedly experiencing emotional abuse (n = 95, 56.9%), physical abuse (n = 77, 46.1%), and witnessing domestic violence (n = 75, 44.9%). One in every three (n = 55, 32.9%) homeless young adult participants reported that they had been sexually abused before the age of 18. Evidence of re-victimization or re-traumatization were discovered based on these patterns of violence as well. Participants who reported witnessing domestic violence in their home were significantly more likely to report experiencing a domestic violence relationship of their own ( $\chi^2(1, N = 159) = 16.16, p < .000$ ). Participants who experienced sexual abuse under the age of 18 years old were significantly more likely to report sex trafficking victimization  $\chi^2(1, N = 164) = 41.18, p < .001$ .

Drug use continues to be a significant challenge for this population, with over half of the sample (n = 99, 59.3%) reporting drug use, and the average age of first drug use being 14 years old. It is difficult to determine causation from this data. For example, whether the substance use is a causal factor for the participants' homelessness experience, or if the substance use began after experiencing homelessness as a way to cope or escape from life challenges. However, twenty-two (13.2%) participants reported losing stable and supportive housing (kicked out by their families) because they were using substances. It is clear that substance use in this population further complicates housing stability, while possibly contributing to other mental health and medical challenges as well.

The sixth year of data collection also found that participants are still experiencing profound mental health challenges. In fact, many of the mental health factors increased from 2018 to 2019. The ramifications of housing instability, coupled with other life challenges may be contributing to the large number of participants engaging self-harming behaviors (n = 91, 54.5%), and suicide attempts (n = 70, 41.9%). The most common mental health diagnoses reported remain depression (n = 78, 46.7%) and anxiety (n = 75, 44.9%). However, over half (n = 86, 51.5%) of the total sample reported that they had received treatment for their reported mental health diagnoses. The homeless young adults who participated in this study are already connected to services somehow, as evidenced by receiving the Youth Experiences Survey from

an agency staff. However, this suggests that over half of those who are engaging in services from an agency are successfully engaging in mental health and therapeutic services.

Medical challenges remain an issue among homeless young adults in the state of Arizona, with over half (n = 90, 53.9%) reporting a current medical issue. The most common medical challenges reported remain poor vision (n = 42, 25.1%) and asthma (n = 33, 19.8%), with the addition of dental problems (n = 33, 19.8%). However, the number of participants who reported receiving treatment for their medical challenge (n = 48, 28.7%) increased from the 2018 findings. Also, almost three out of every four participants (n = 121, 72.5%) reported having health insurance coverage through the Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS), suggesting that connection to service providers increases the likelihood that participants can have affordable access to healthcare, should they choose to engage. Thirty (18%) participants also reported utilizing the services of the Phoenix Children's Hospital Crews'n Healthmobile.

The findings from the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) questionnaire continue to be illuminating. As mentioned previously, the findings from the first ACE study, and supported by subsequent studies, demonstrate that individuals who experience four or more ACEs are more likely to experience disease or early death, and are twelve times more likely to attempt suicide, (Felitti, et al., 1998). Participants from the 2019 YES study had an average of four and a half ACEs, with almost two-thirds (n = 102, 61.1%) experiencing four or more ACEs. These findings are consistent with prior research on adverse childhood experiences, which suggest that negative experiences in childhood, such as abuse, neglect, domestic violence, drugs or mental illness in the home, or a household member incarcerated, may predict negative outcomes that include homelessness.

Of the overall sample of 167 homeless young adult participants, 65 (38.9%) reported experiencing sex trafficking exploitation, and 72 (43.1%) reported experiencing labor exploitation. At least one form of human trafficking (either sex or labor) was reported by 89 (53.3%) participants and 37 (28.1%) participants reported experiencing both sex trafficking and labor exploitation. These represent the highest numbers of reported human trafficking victimization in the history of the YES Study.

An interesting finding from the 2019 YES study that is different from years past is the number of participants that reported experiencing their first sex trafficking victimization at age twelve or younger. Almost one in four (n = 16, 24.6%) of the 65 participants who reported experiencing sex trafficking also reported that they experienced their first sex trafficking victimization at or below the age of 12. Although there were not enough in the sample to conduct statistical analyses to compare the experiences of these victims with those who experienced first

sex trafficking victimization at age 13 or older, the life experiences and outcomes of this group are startling, including:

- Average age of first drug use at 11.8 years old
- Ninety-four percent (n = 15) reporting a history of suicide attempts
- One-hundred percent (n = 16) reporting at least one mental health diagnosis
- Ninety-four percent (n = 15) reporting more than one mental health diagnosis
- Eighty-eight percent (n = 14) reporting four or more Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

Comparison was made between participants who reported experiencing sex trafficking and those who did not, to explore if there were any factors that were different about these two groups. The purpose of this is to try to understand the unique variables that may place a homeless young adult more at risk for experiencing sex trafficking victimization. The sex trafficked group was more likely to: identify as LGBTQ, report self-harming behaviors, report suicide attempts, report current and multiple mental health diagnoses, report medical challenges, experience dating violence, and experience sexual abuse before the age of 18 years old. The sex trafficked group was significantly more likely than the non-sex trafficked group to report experiencing all ten of the Adverse Childhood Experiences. Interestingly, the sex trafficked group was also nine times more likely to report experiencing labor exploitation than the non-sex trafficked group.

The labor exploited participants reported experiencing exploitation in various labor sectors, but the most common included drug related jobs, domestic servitude, and petty theft. These forms of labor exploitation are difficult to detect and interdict, because these forms of “work” often include labor for an individual rather than a company, and may entail working within the confines of the exploiters place of residence. For jobs such as drug-related jobs and petty theft, exploiters are involving victims in forced criminality, defined as “the enticing, forcing, or coercing a victim to commit other crimes. These crimes can include any crime, but have most often been identified by victims as including shoplifting, theft, robbing sex buying customers, recruiting and trafficking other victims, transporting or dealing illegal drugs, pick-pocketing, and selling of stolen items” (Roe-Sepowitz, 2019, .p? due to direct quote). Forced criminality often keeps a victim from trying to leave or seek help, because the victim has become complicit in a crime and the exploiter is now able to use this as further means to control and exploit the victim.

Comparison was also made between participants who reported experiencing labor exploitation and those who did not, for the same reason: to explore what factors may place a homeless young adult at greater risk for being exploited for labor. The labor exploited group was more likely to engage in self harm of various forms, to report a suicide attempt, current and multiple mental health diagnoses, medical challenges, witness domestic violence and experience

dating violence. The labor exploited group was also significantly more likely than the non-labor exploited group to report experiencing nine of the Adverse Childhood Experiences.

### **Limitations**

There are a number of limitations to consider when interpreting the findings from this study. The data was drawn from the two largest cities in Arizona, Phoenix and Tucson, utilizing four service providers but data was not collected from rural areas or smaller cities. In the rural and smaller cities, sex trafficking and labor exploitation prevalence along with the other issues presented in this study among homeless young adults may vary from the urban sample used in this study. Another limitation of this study consists of the sample being limited to those in contact with a homeless young adult service provider whether through street outreach, at a resource/drop-in center, or in transitional housing. The \$5 gift card given to survey completers may have influenced their decision to complete the survey, but no surveys were turned in that were incomplete or appeared to be marked in a pattern. Finally, training efforts continue to be a focal point of sex and labor trafficking intervention in the state of Arizona. During the six years that the YES study has been collected (2014-2019) significant efforts were made to train the staff at all of the participating agencies, and new sex trafficking victim targeted services were developed and implemented at the two largest agencies, UMOM and Our Family Services. This may have influenced who the surveys were given to within each agency.

### **Implications**

The findings of the 2019 YES Study continue to highlight the significant challenges that homeless young adults face in the state of Arizona. Traumatic life histories that include violence, exploitation, and lack of critical supports may be contributing to the participants' current housing instability. Resources such as mental health and medical interventions remain an important need for this population, as well as supportive housing opportunities. The significant number of homeless young adults that also reported experiencing sex or labor exploitation demands the implementation of a screening tool in all points of contact for this population. Homeless serving programs must implement specific services or referrals for identified trafficking victims.

These findings are derived from a sample that is already seeking services, and access to homeless young adults that are not connected to a social service agency is a challenge. Homeless young adults may interact with many businesses, organizations, or systems, whether they are seeking services or not. This highlights the need for continued training of the community to spot warning signs, and the implementation of a screening tool to assess for trafficking that can be used across disciplines. Arizona should continue to identify the greatest gaps in services, such as housing for young males, LGBTQ specific shelter services, treating trauma symptoms and experiences, and the identification of labor trafficking in the community.

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