A Trauma Informed Therapeutic Program For Victims Of Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking: A Grant Proposal

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Introduction

- The U.S. Department of State (2013) found that the largest subset of human trafficking is the sexual trafficking of young women and children.
- It is estimated that there are approximately 100,000 Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking victims in the United States.
- Research has found that the consequences that result from DMST are varied and often severe. A 2003 needs assessment for service providers and trafficking victims reported that 95% of human trafficking victims were in need of mental health services while 52% were in need of drug treatment, and 88% were in need of counseling (Clawson, Small, Go, & Myles, 2003).

- The proposed program’s primary intention is to address the growing need for specialized services for the DMST population.
- The proposed program’s overarching goal is to promote a better quality of life for the DMST population in the city of Long Beach, California through skill building, empowerment, relationship building, and exposure to psycho-education that will increase options and lead to improved client outcomes.
Social Work Relevance

- One of the ethical principles of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) is that of Social and Political Action, which states that social workers have a responsibility to prevent the exploitation of any group of individuals (2008).
- The NASW Code of Ethics also states that social workers should expand opportunities for exploited groups of people. DMST victims are often stigmatized for their engagement in sex work despite the fact that they are recruited through coercion and manipulation.
- Social workers are likely to encounter DMST victims through a variety of avenues including law enforcement, hospitals, foster care, and/or the child welfare system. If social workers are educated and informed regarding DMST victims, social workers will be better equipped to assist victims with appropriate services and develop specialized therapeutic interventions.
Cross Cultural Relevance

- There are certain socio-emotional risk factors that make individuals more vulnerable to DMST (Estes & Weiner, 2002; Kotrla, 2010)
  - LGBT individuals are at risk for recruitment as they are disproportionately represented in the homeless population, which is an at-risk population in itself (Quintana, Rosenthal, & Krehely, 2010)
- While there is no empirically supported data regarding prevalence rates of DMST between ethnic groups, the study samples explored in the literature review were primarily African American females and Latinas (Thomson et al., 2011).
- As some research indicates that DMST victims are more likely to be victims of child maltreatment, one can infer that a significant number of DMST victims would also have a history in the child welfare system (Reid, 2011).
- Despite the factors that place certain individuals at risk more than others, it is important to remember and understand that DMST is widespread and affects individuals from all socioeconomic backgrounds, ethnicities, and genders (Clawson, Dutch, Solomon, & Grace, 2009).
Methods

- Target Population: The DMST population from the Child Welfare System, specifically from the Department of Children of family services South County Location which serves Long Beach and its surrounding area

- Identification of Potential Funding Source:
  - The process of identifying a potential funding source was completed primarily by conducting an Internet search
  - The grant writer used Google and Yahoo search engines including using the links and resources provided by the library at California State University, Long Beach (CSULB) social work page
Methods (cont.)

- **Selected Funding Source**: Mark S. Taper Foundation

- **Needs Assessment Sources**: Databases such as the United States Census, California Department of Justice, and the County Quickfacts from the U.S. Census Bureau were accessed.

- **Projected Budget**: An estimated $80,000 will be required to successfully implement the program. The budget will fund the following categories:
  1. LCSW salary and benefits
  2. General Office Supplies
  3. Training and Conference expenses
  4. Cellphone for LCSW
Grant Proposal

Program Description
- The program’s hope is to decrease isolation, stress, anxiety, shame, and hopelessness in addition to decreasing distress brought on by trauma among victims of DMST.
- Participants will receive both individual and group therapeutic services led by a Licensed Clinical Social Worker trained in trauma informed practice and who can address behaviors associated with trauma including non-suicidal self-harm, eating disorders, and substance use.
- Treatment will consist of building healthy coping skills, processing trauma events, and learning how to manage life stressors.
- Group therapy will focus on building peer relationships in addition to receiving psychoeducation regarding topics such as substance use, healthy relationships, career information, and college preparation.

Population Served
- The proposed program will serve the population of Long Beach, California, specifically through a partnership with the Department of Children and Family Services South County Office.

Program Sustainability
- The program will be sustained through building a relationship with the Department of Children and Family Services. The program will be placed in the Regional Community Resource handbook and clients will consistently be referred to the agency.
- Once the program becomes more successful and has access to more funding, another LCSW will be hired and trained to work with the DMST population.
- A treatment handbook will be developed by the LCSW so that it can be replicated.
Grant Proposal (cont.)

Program Objectives

1. Provide assessment and individual therapy (12-16 sessions) to decrease harmful manifestations of trauma including non-suicidal self-harm, substance use, and eating disorders.

2. Provide clients with psychoeducational groups (12 sessions) to learn healthy coping skills to replace maladaptive behavior resulting from trauma.

3. Provide clients with group therapy (12 sessions) to help clients build healthy relationships and engage in mutual aid and support.

Program Evaluation

- To determine the effectiveness of the program, three types of evaluation will be used at different points of treatment:

  1. Weekly client progress notes
  2. Clients will be screened using all applicable scales every three weeks to give the LCSW a concrete measure of their progress
  3. Client program evaluation forms
Lessons Learned

- In researching the DMST population, this writer was able to assess the population’s needs and identify the most appropriate interventions to include in the development of the proposed program. However, the literature also reflected the trajectory and evolution of DMST from an individual issue to a social issue that eventually prompt public responses.
- The process of finding evidence based research to guide this grant writer’s program was a huge challenge as most of what was written about DMST was conceptual and lacked statistically significant data.
- Advocating for at-risk and often invisible populations is an essential part of the social work profession.
- Social workers are appropriate service providers for this population as they are able to address issues at a both the micro and macro level.
- Social workers are appropriately trained in the individual treatment of individuals and have the unique ability to affect change in communities through program implementation and policy advocacy.
- Future grant proposals could build on the gaps in knowledge identified through this grant writer’s research, specifically regarding the lack of empirically based evidence measuring program outcomes and successes.
References