

Findings

(N = 107)

NEGATIVE LIFE EXPERIENCES

Participants reported experiencing additional life challenges, including:



Impermanent/Unstable Living Conditions

- Participants reported
- Running away from home (n = 41, 38.3%)
 - Living in a foster care/group home setting (n = 20, 18.7%)
 - Spending time in residential treatment (n = 11, 10.3%).



Justice System Involvement

- Participants reported:
- Experiencing negative contact with law enforcement (n = 26, 24.3%)
 - Involvement in the Juvenile Justice System (n = 13, 12.1%).



Academic and Peer Difficulties

- Participants reported experiencing:
- Academic difficulty (n = 41, 38.3%)
 - Bullying by school peers (n = 32, 29.9%)
 - Harassment by peers (n = 20, 18.7%)
 - Being in Special Education classes (n = 16, 15%)
 - Being expelled from school (n = 19, 17.8%)
 - Gang affiliation (n = 13, 12.1%).

Findings

(N = 107)

POSITIVE LIFE EXPERIENCES

Participants also reported positive life experiences that can serve as protective factors against homelessness or long-term negative effects of trauma.

Said no when drugs or alcohol were offered
(n = 58, 54.2%)

Supportive, loving family/group of friends
(n = 38, 35.5%)

Steady employment
(n = 37, 34.6%)

Enrolled in school or technical program
(n = 36, 33.6%)

Practiced safe sex
(n = 34, 31.8%)

Feel secure standing up for/protecting self
(n = 34, 31.8%)

Been part of a youth club or organization
(n = 30, 28%)

Said no when pressured for sex
(n = 27, 25.2%)

Healthy, safe and permanent place to live
(n = 27, 25.2%)

Aware of community resources
(n = 26, 24.3%)

Volunteered in the community
(n = 20, 18.7%)

Trust/good relationship with law enforcement
(n = 14, 13.1%)

Findings

Human Trafficking Data

HUMAN TRAFFICKING DATA N = 107

Two out of every five



(n = 43, 40.2%) participants reported experiencing at least one form of exploitation.

Nineteen (17.8%) participants reported experiencing **both** sex trafficking and labor exploitation.

Findings

Human Trafficking Data

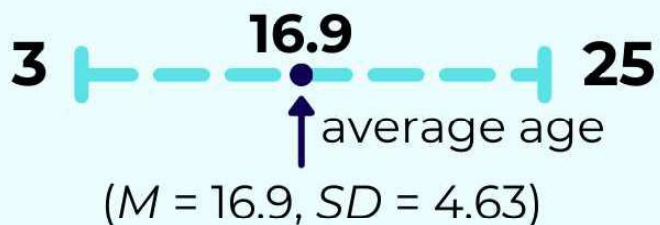
SEX TRAFFICKING DATA N = 21

Over one in every three



(n = 39, 36.4%) participant reported experiencing sex trafficking.

The age of 1st sex trafficking experience ranged from



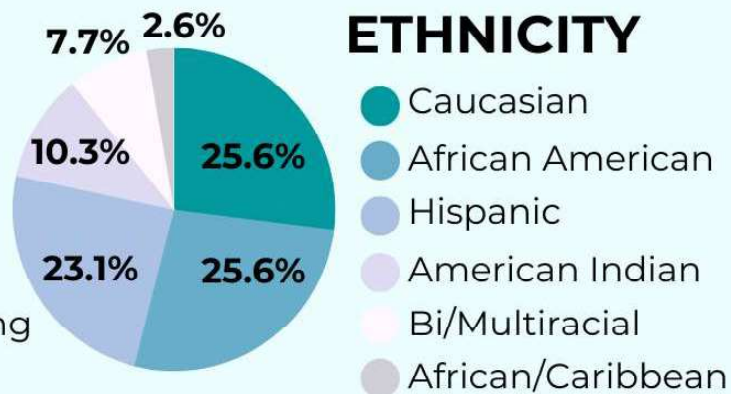
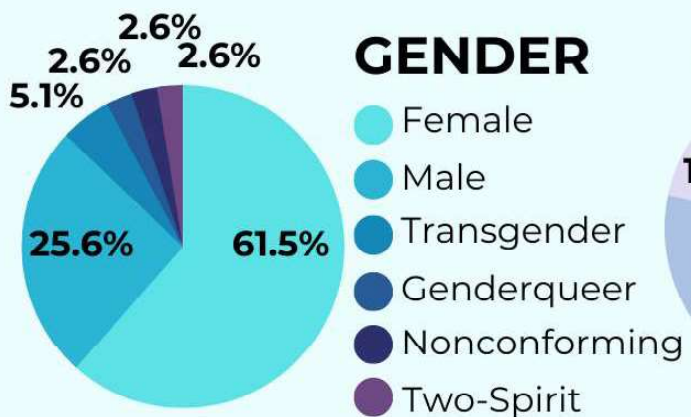
23.1%

(n = 9) of those that reported experiencing a sex trafficking situation were first sex trafficked under the age of 18.

UNDER
18

Findings

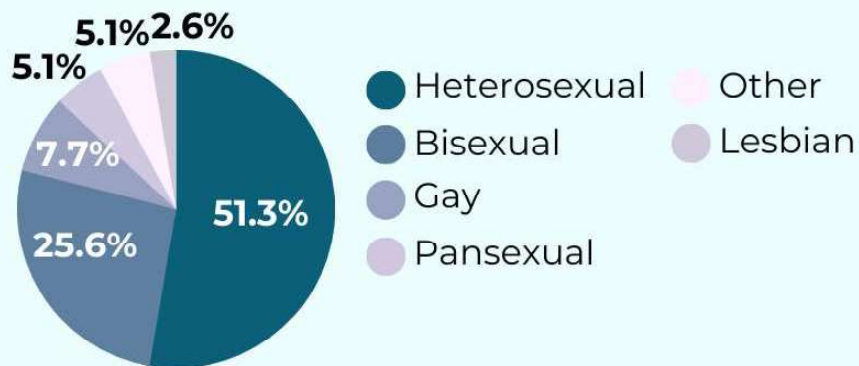
Human Trafficking Data



SEXUAL ORIENTATION

43.6%

identified as LGBTQIA+



Findings

Sex Trafficking (N = 39)

SEX TRAFFICKING EXPERIENCE



43.6%

Place to stay



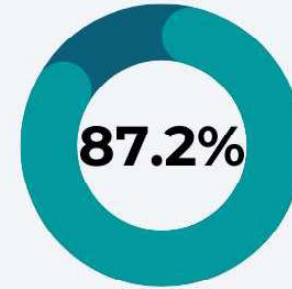
35.9%

Money



35.9%

Food



(n = 34) of participants identified as ever having a sex trafficker.



28.2%

Drugs



20.5%

Clothing



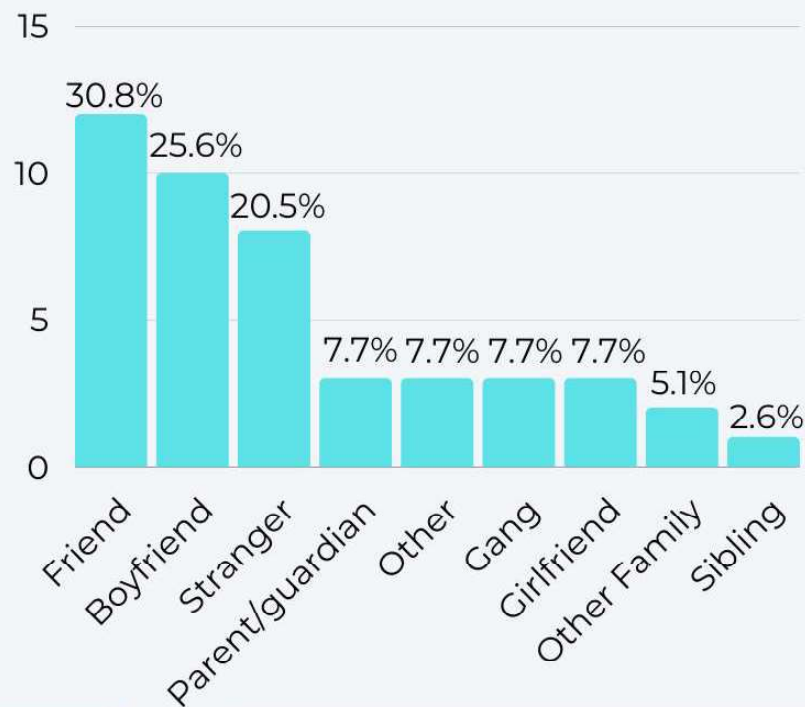
17.9%

Protection

Findings

Sex Trafficking (N = 39)

Participants identified their relationship to their sex trafficker as:



Participants wrote in "cousin" and "mother's boyfriend" next to other family member.



23.1%

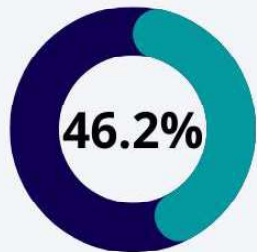
reported feeling afraid to leave the sex trafficking situation due to fear of violence or other threats of harm to self or family.

Findings

Sex Trafficking (N = 39)

TECHNOLOGY

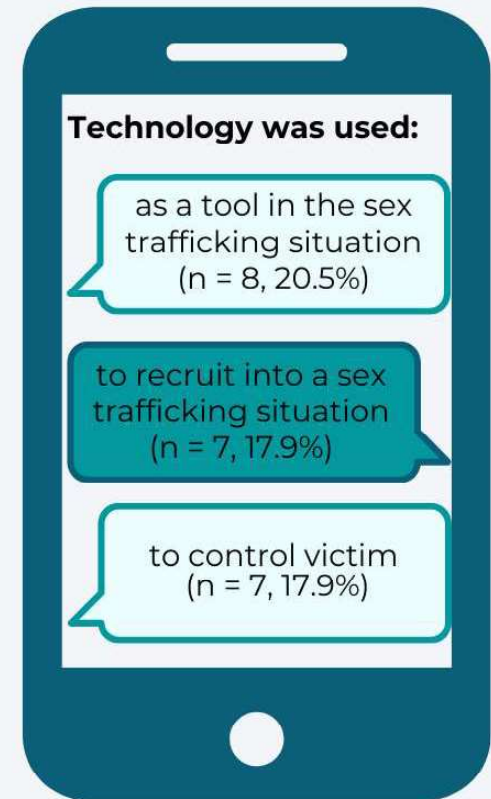
Technology is often used as a tool to exploit victims of sex trafficking. Participants were asked a series of questions to explore the role of technology in their exploitation experience.



(n = 18) reported that technology was used to facilitate their exploitation.

Technology, by type	n	%
Smart phone	12	30.8%
Grindr	5	12.8%
OnlyFans	4	10.3%
Pornographic photos	3	7.7%
Facebook	3	7.7%
Instagram	3	7.7%
Craigslist	3	7.7%
Tinder	2	5.1%
Twitter	2	5.1%

Participants also wrote in “Chaturbate”, “Cash App” and “Snapchat” as online venues that have been used in their sex trafficking victimization



Findings

Sex Trafficking (N = 39)

LGBTQIA+ EXPERIENCE

Researchers were interested in better understanding the intersectionality of sexual orientation and sexual exploitation, and whether participants perceived sexual orientation to be a factor that created a unique vulnerability to being sex trafficked. Participants were asked a series of questions to explore this aspect of LGBTQIA+ homeless young adults' experiences of sexual exploitation.

12.8% (n = 5) participants reported that they believed that identifying as LGBTQIA+ made them more vulnerable to being forced or coerced to exchange sex for something of value.

- *"Predators take advantage of you and see you as being more vulnerable."*
- *"People would tend to take advantage of the aspects."*

10.3% (n = 4) reported that during their sex trafficking victimization, they were forced to engage in sex with persons of a different gender from their sexual preference.



Findings

Sex Trafficking (N = 39)

SEX TRAFFICKED VS. NON-SEX TRAFFICKED PARTICIPANTS



Drug Use
 $\chi^2(1, N = 106) = 4.13, p < .042$



Self-harm
 $\chi^2(1, N = 107) = 12.76, p < .000$

Not eating for long periods of time
 $\chi^2(1, N = 97) = 4.52, p < .034$

Risk taking behavior
 $\chi^2(1, N = 97) = 8.06, p < .005$

Drinking alcohol excessively
 $\chi^2(1, N = 97) = 5.36, p < .021$

Sex with strangers
 $\chi^2(1, N = 97) = 7.82, p < .005$



More than one mental health diagnosis

$\chi^2(1, N = 97) = 4.12, p < .042$

Depression

$\chi^2(1, N = 97) = 6.02, p < .014$

Suicide attempt

$\chi^2(1, N = 103) = 5.62, p < .038$



Current medical issue
 $\chi^2(1, N = 103) = 5.62, p < .038$

Dental challenges
 $\chi^2(1, N = 101) = 6.94, p < .008$

Poor vision
 $\chi^2(1, N = 101) = 11.01, p < .001$

There was no statistical significance between the sex trafficked group and the non-sex trafficked group with regard to age, gender, ethnicity, or sexual orientation. However, participants who experienced sex trafficking were significantly more likely to report:

ACEs

Having 4 or more ACEs
 $\chi^2(1, N = 105) = 16.31, p < .000$

Substance abuse in the home
 $\chi^2(1, N = 104) = 22.23, p < .000$

Emotional abuse
 $\chi^2(1, N = 102) = 10.09, p < .001$

Emotional neglect
 $\chi^2(1, N = 102) = 4.73, p < .030$

Physical abuse
 $\chi^2(1, N = 103) = 21.37, p < .000$

Mental illness in the home
 $\chi^2(1, N = 104) = 13.67, p < .000$

Physical neglect
 $\chi^2(1, N = 102) = 13.31, p < .000$

Sexual abuse
 $\chi^2(1, N = 103) = 21.07, p < .000$

Domestic violence against mother
 $\chi^2(1, N = 103) = 20.62, p < .000$

Incarcerated family member
 $\chi^2(1, N = 105) = 9.87, p < .002$

Findings

Sex Trafficking (N = 39)



Sex trafficked participants were significantly more likely than non-sex trafficked participants to report experiencing labor exploitation ($\chi^2(1, N = 95) = 17.42, p < .000$).



Kicked out of home

$\chi^2(1, N = 107) = 12.76, p < .000$

Dating violence

$\chi^2(1, N = 97) = 4.52, p < .034$

Dropped out of school

$\chi^2(1, N = 97) = 8.06, p < .005$

Running away from home

$\chi^2(1, N = 97) = 5.36, p < .021$

Bullied by school peers

$\chi^2(1, N = 97) = 7.82, p < .005$

Negative contact with law enforcement

$\chi^2(1, N = 107) = 12.76, p < .000$

Harassment by peers

$\chi^2(1, N = 97) = 4.52, p < .034$

Expelled from school

$\chi^2(1, N = 97) = 8.06, p < .005$

Findings

Labor Exploitation (N = 31)

LABOR EXPLOITATION N = 31

Labor trafficking is a difficult injustice to identify and prosecute. Both labor exploitation and labor trafficking involve unfair wages or wages left unpaid and/or substandard living and working conditions. In order to demonstrate that labor trafficking has occurred, elements of force, fraud and coercion need to be proven.

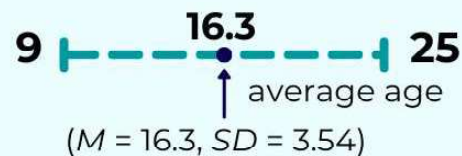
The exploratory questions in the YES study regarding the work experiences of homeless young adults are not sufficient to prove the presence of force, fraud or coercion.

Therefore, these findings are discussed through the lens of labor exploitation.

31 participants reported experiencing labor exploitation.

29%

The age of 1st labor exploitation experience ranged from



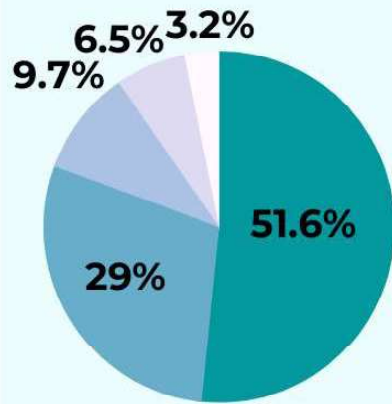
41.9%

(n = 13) of those that reported experiencing a labor exploitation situation were first exploited for labor under the age of 18.

UNDER
18

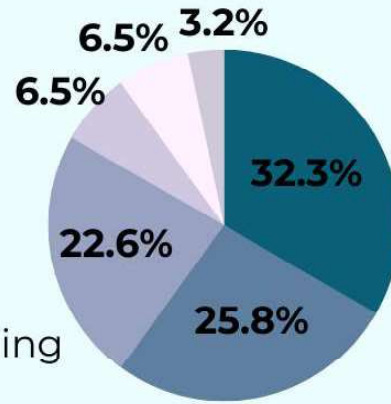
Findings

Labor Exploitation (N = 31)



GENDER

- Female
- Male
- Transgender
- Genderqueer
- Non-conforming



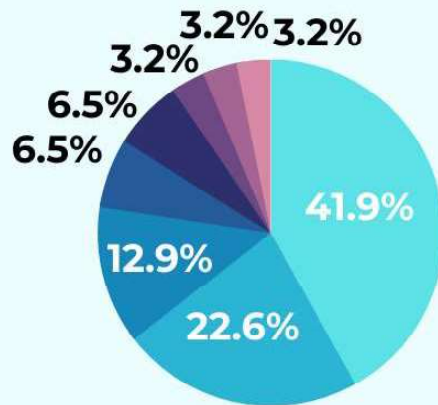
ETHNICITY

- Caucasian
- Hispanic
- African American
- African/Caribbean
- American Indian
- Bi/Multiracial

SEXUAL ORIENTATION

51.6%

identified as LGBTQIA+



- Heterosexual
- Bisexual
- Pansexual
- Lesbian
- Other
- Asexual
- Gay
- Missing

Findings

Labor Exploitation (N = 31)

LABOR EXPLOITATION EXPERIENCE

24 (77.6%) participants reported being tricked or forced into doing work they did not want to do. Participants were attempting to work in exchange for:



61.3%
Money



29%
Place to stay



25.8%
Food



25.8%
Drugs



19.4%
Protection



9.7%
Clothing

Exploitation Narratives

- "Forced to shoplift"
- "Forced to take care of children that were not mine."
- "Thought I could make quick money for food."
- "Underpaid for odd jobs"
- "Forced to steal from grocery stores. If I didn't I'd be abused physically."

Findings

Labor Exploitation (N = 31)

Fraud

11 (42.9%) participants reported being promised work where the work or payment ended up being different than what they expected.



Fraud Narratives

- “Being explicitly told by everyone in managing positions but the pay was different.”
- “Gave me nothing.”
- “Had picked something up but didn’t receive the amount I was supposed to.”
- “Never received payment.”

Control Tactics



15 (48.4%) participants reported having someone they worked for control the money they earned or keep money they earned.



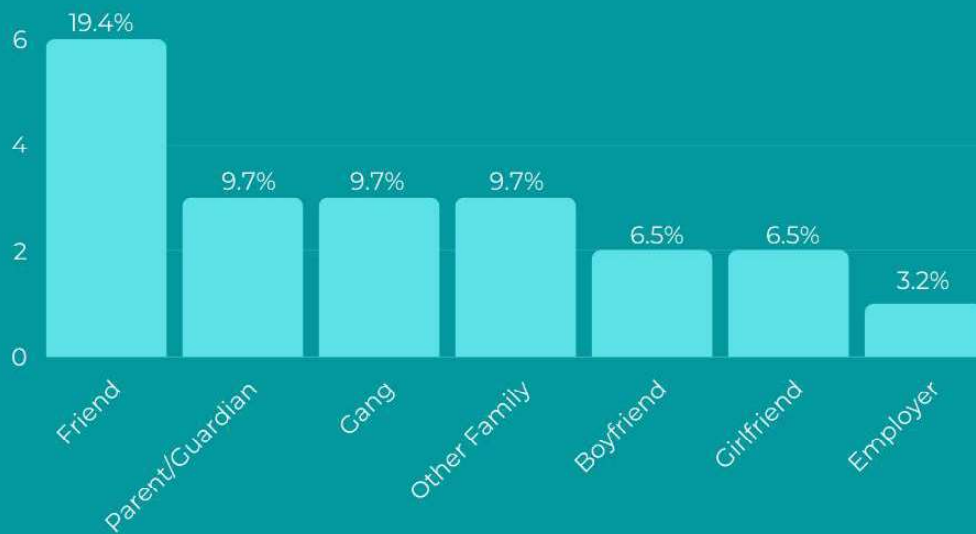
6 (19.4%) participants reported being afraid to leave or quit the labor exploitation situation due to fear of violence or other threats to harm them or their family.

Findings

Labor Exploitation (N = 31)

RELATIONSHIP TO LABOR EXPLOITER

Participants identified their relationship to their labor exploiter as:



SECTOR OF LABOR EXPLOITATION



Domestic Servitude
(n = 5, 16.1%)



Drug related
(n = 3, 9.7%)



Petty Theft
(n = 1, 3.2%)



Restaurant
(n = 1, 3.2%)



Selling Goods
(n = 1, 3.2%)



Sexualized Labor
(n = 1, 3.2%)



Construction
(n = 2, 6.5%)



Hotel
(n = 1, 3.2%)

Findings

Labor Exploitation (N = 31)

LABOR EXPLOITED VS. NON-LABOR EXPLOITED PARTICIPANTS

There was no statistical significance between the labor exploited and non-labor exploited group with regard to gender, age, or sexual orientation. However, participants who experienced labor exploitation were significantly more likely to report:



Self-harm

(χ^2 (1, N = 95) = 7.03, p < .008)

Attempted suicide

(χ^2 (1, N = 92) = 4.92, p < .026)

Cutting

(χ^2 (1, N = 85) = 4.39, p < .036)

Risk taking behavior

(χ^2 (1, N = 85) = 3.93, p < .047)

Sex with strangers

(χ^2 (1, N = 85) = 5.15, p < .023)

ACEs

Having 4 or more ACEs

(χ^2 (1, N = 93) = 5.94, p < .015)

Substance abuse in the home

(χ^2 (1, N = 92) = 4.29, p < .038)

Physical neglect

(χ^2 (1, N = 91) = 15.18, p < .000)

Mental illness in the home

(χ^2 (1, N = 92) = 5.01, p < .025)

Physical abuse

(χ^2 (1, N = 92) = 4.08, p < .043)

Sexual abuse

(χ^2 (1, N = 92) = 6.86, p < .009)

Domestic violence against mother

(χ^2 (1, N = 91) = 5.06, p < .024)



Negative contact with LE

(χ^2 (1, N = 91) = 5.51, p < .019)

Dating violence

(χ^2 (1, N = 91) = 5.02, p < .025)

Running away from home

(χ^2 (1, N = 91) = 4.97, p < .026)

Harassment by peers

(χ^2 (1, N = 91) = 4.28, p < .039)

Discussion

LGBTQIA+ Experience



- The homeless young adult population continues to be overrepresented by individuals who identify as LGBTQIA+, with almost half (46.7%) of the sample identifying as LGBTQIA+.

Homelessness as a Child



- The average age that 2022 YES study participants first experienced homelessness was age 16.5, or as a child.
- Over half of the 2022 YES participants (n = 55, 51.4%) first experienced homelessness under the age of 18.
- The majority of participants (n = 76, 71%) reported being kicked out of their home.
- The average age that 2022 YES study participants experienced first being kicked out of their homes was age 16.6, or as a child, with the first time being kicked out ranging from eleven years old to 25 years old.

Discussion



Educational Attainment

- Almost half of participants (n = 44, 41.1%) reported dropping out of school at one point in time.
- 44.9% (n = 48) of participants did not graduate from high school.



Mental Health

- Over half of participants (n = 58, 54.2%) reported engaging in self-harming behavior.
- A suicide attempt was reported by 48 (44.9%) of the homeless young adult participants.
- The two most common mental health diagnoses included anxiety (n = 50, 46.7%) and depression (n = 45, 42.1%).
- Concerning Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), the majority of participants (n = 71, 66.4%) reported experiencing four or more ACEs which has been found to lead to significant long-term mental health and medical challenges, including early death.

Discussion



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- Concerning Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), the majority of participants (n = 71, 66.4%) reported experiencing four or more ACEs which has been found to lead to significant long-term mental health and medical challenges, including early death.

Discussion

At least one form of human exploitation was present in 40.2% of participants (n = 43) in the 2022 YES study.

Sex Trafficking



- The average age of first sex trafficking experience was 16.9 years old, with the youngest age of first sex trafficking experience being three years old.
- Almost one in every four participants (n = 9, 23.1%) reported first being sex trafficked as a child, or under the age of 18.
- Sex trafficked participants were significantly more likely than non-sex trafficked participants to report addiction, depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, various self-harming behaviors, and significant trauma histories.

Discussion



Labor Exploitation

- The average age of first labor exploitation experience was 16.3 years old, with the youngest age of first labor exploitation experience being nine years old.
- Of those that reported experiencing labor exploitation, almost half (n = 13, 41.9%) reported being under the age of 18.
- Labor exploited participants were also significantly more likely than non-labor exploited participants to report various self-harming behaviors, attempted suicide, and significant trauma histories.

Conclusion

Ongoing needs for homeless young adults in the state of Arizona:

- Educational support
- Services targeting LGBTQIA+ young people who are high risk
- Mental health support, particularly to address maladaptive coping and the significant effects of trauma

With regard to sex trafficking and labor exploitation:

- Social serving agencies must be equipped to screen for the presence of these forms of exploitation and must strengthen their organizational programming to address this occurrence within this population.
- Efforts such as street outreach, mobile resource units, and drop-in centers can serve as touchpoints for prevention and intervention.
- Additional funding opportunities from local and state government should be made available to specifically target service provision for this population.

Conclusion

Homelessness as a Child

- Prevention and early intervention efforts for school-age children at risk for homelessness.
- The findings indicate that homeless young adults were experiencing not only homelessness prior to adulthood, but also a significant number of other negative life experiences and traumas that may have contributed to their homelessness.
- Continued research is needed to identify specific points of intervention in childhood in which children experiencing poverty, abuse, or even academic difficulty can be identified and targeted for homelessness and human exploitation prevention.



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<https://www.socialwork.asu.edu/stir>

<https://www.sextraffickinghelp.com>