

Getting Out:

A National Framework for Escaping Human Trafficking for Sexual Exploitation in Canada

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Agenda

- Background, methodology
- Process of Exiting / Escaping
- Framework Components
 - Barriers & Promising Practices
- Hope

Background

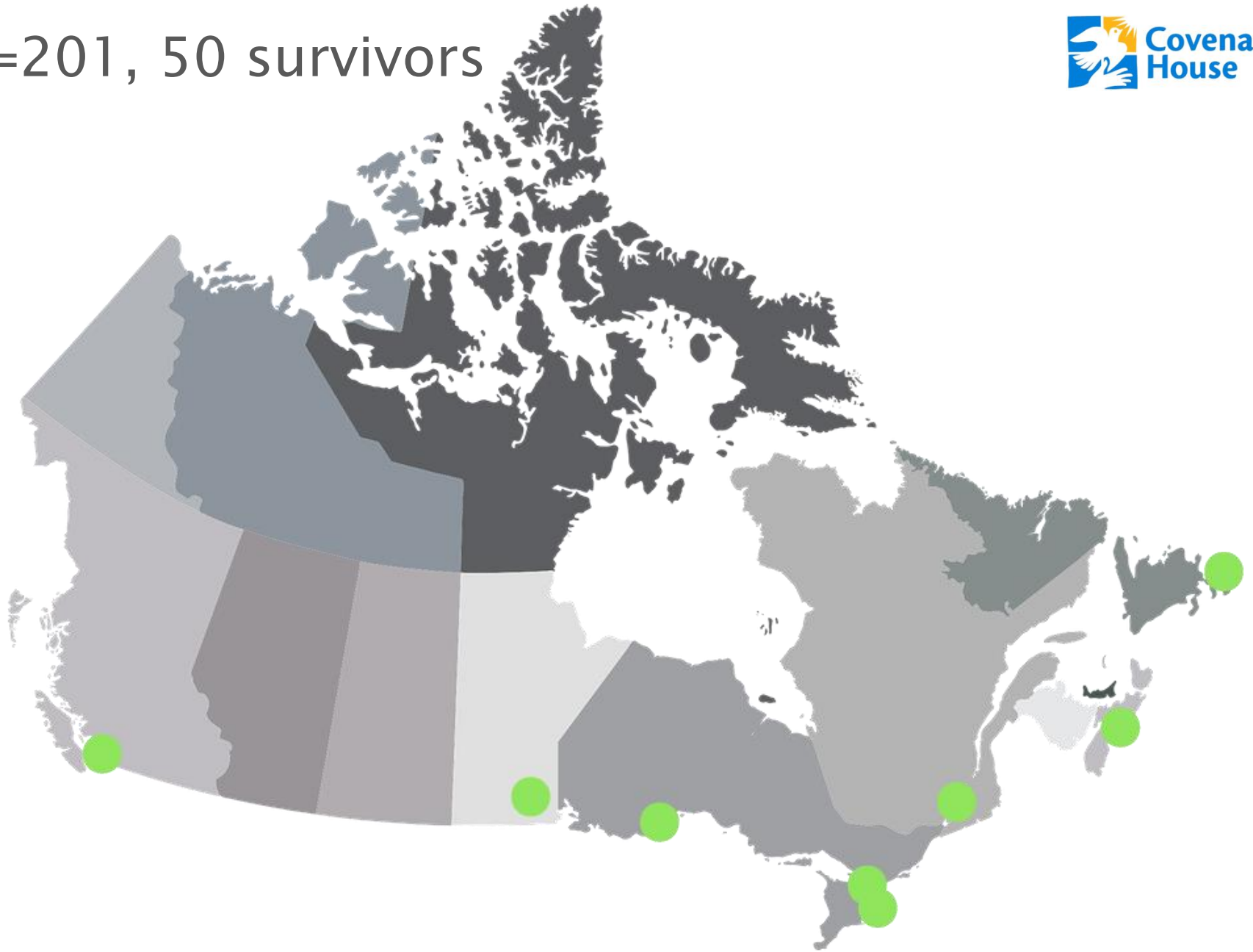
What this framework is

- Demonstrates a process
- Shows barriers and needs together
- Promising practices

What this framework isn't

- One-size-fits-all
- Attempt to show process as linear
- Every story/experience

n=201, 50 survivors



The Process: Grooming

HOW GROOMING AND RECRUITMENT HAPPENS



The trafficker may appear in a romantic capacity



They may offer friendship, drugs or a place to stay



Traffickers often lure people by offering a job or lucrative employment



They may offer a partnership in the sex industry, or lie about the job



Grooming

That was more important to me...that sense of belonging, that being loved, being wanted, that being needed was way more important to me than having a roof over my head, you know? That kept me there... I knew how to survive on the street. I just wanted to be loved...that psychological hold, like unbelievable. I didn't leave, and when I did leave, I felt guilty. They took care of me, they really did.

Things Change...

CHANGE IN THE SITUATION

At some point the trafficker becomes:



Unfair



Coercive



Controlling



Manipulative



Violent and/or
abusive

The Trigger Event

**MOST SURVIVORS EXIT BECAUSE OF A TRIGGER EVENT,
WHICH CAN INCLUDE:**



Having a child and wanting to ensure the child's safety



Physical or mental illness



Violence



A police bust



An opportunity arises to escape/exit



A friend gets hurt, goes missing or is murdered



The Trigger Event

It took that [for my child being kidnapped] and for me knowing and risking my life, knowing that I was risking my life to actually get out. It was either, I'm getting out alive, or getting out dead, but I have to get my baby back one way or another.

The Importance of First Responders

FIRST RESPONSE

Service providers, law enforcement and/or medical staff are likely to come into contact with survivors during a trigger event. This presents an opportunity to intervene, develop a relationship with the survivor and provide them with referrals or support. Showing compassion and responding without judgement at this critical time can make a difference in whether survivors feel they have the support to attempt an exit.

Here is what first responders can do during a trigger event:



Healthcare

Notice the signs of sex trafficking



Police

Refer to support services



Child protective services

Offer whole family support



Community organizations

Understand the basics of trauma-informed care and practice it throughout service provision

Re-Entry

- Some survivors exit the first attempt
- Most made several attempts
- Several spoke of vulnerability to going back

The Framework

Structural Barriers

STRUCTURAL BARRIERS

Structural barriers can be reinforced by people survivors come into contact with including those who work in systems, frontline service providers and even people in the community. These barriers include:



Lack of public awareness



Stigma



Geography and jurisdiction



Racialization



Gender



Colonization



Poverty



Colonization

I felt shame to be an Indigenous woman...when I was put in residential school, culture shock, everything was different. Now I have to speak this language, now I get soap in my mouth because I'm speaking Ojibway. It was very traumatizing for me. So that's where [the shame] came from...It didn't start from being raised in a bush, it started when they put me in residential school so I can assimilate - made to live like a white person. When that was done, it was like I was already damaged.

System Barriers

SYSTEMS BARRIERS

Survivors often interact with multiple systems, all of which create opportunities or barriers. These include:



Non-profit sector



Legal/justice



Immigration



Child protection



Health

System Barriers

The officer told me to “go and get help”, where, how? I don’t even know how to ask for coffee...I’m more afraid of the police than my trafficker because I don’t know how to react or what to say

Psychosocial Factors

PSYCHOSOCIAL/COMMUNITY BARRIERS

Exiting can mean having to find a new community, starting over alone or with little community support. These barriers include:



Isolation



Being recognized
as a survivor



Lack of trust in
others



No social support
network



Difficulty adapting
to 'mainstream life'



Adjusting

To try somehow or another to fit, to experience something the whole world sees as normal, because in our minds, we are not normal. We are different, we are distinctively different, and we know that...and we walk around feeling distinctively different inside, but wanting to be normal.

Psychological Factors

INDIVIDUAL/PSYCHOLOGICAL BARRIERS

Psychological factors are the mental and emotional considerations that affect a survivor's exiting or escaping process. These include:



Trauma bond with the trafficker



Hopelessness



Self-value/self esteem



Complicity and guilt



Substance use



Identifying as a victim



Fear



Past and current trauma



The Trauma Bond

He's my boyfriend, not my trafficker; he's not pimp, he's my boyfriend. Even after an arrest has been made and police are involved, he's still my boyfriend. He was just at the wrong place at the wrong time; it just happened to be people he knows...

Promising Practices

THE FOLLOWING ARE PROMISING PRACTICES IN THE DELIVERY OF SERVICES TO SURVIVORS



Trauma-informed care



Anti-oppressive
practices



Stages of change



Valuing lived
experience



Client-led services



Reconciliation



Harm reduction



Stages of Change

I can offer you all of the support, compassion, services in the world, but until you're ready to say "here's my tipping point", whatever that may be, it sounds quite simple...until they're ready to accept help or services, unless you're ready to take it, you won't take it no matter how much it's offered to you.

Service Needs – Basic Needs

BASIC NEEDS



Safety



Income



Transportation



Communication



Housing



Clothing



Food



Service Needs

OTHER SERVICE NEEDS



Support from peers and staff with lived experience



Legal support and advocacy



Mental health, trauma and substance use



Family reconnection



Harm reduction



Specialized case management



Healthy relationships



Employment



Culturally relevant and spiritual care



Healthcare



Conclusion – A Message of Hope

- There are many barriers to exiting
- The process is challenging, arduous and complex
- However, there are dedicated services across the country working on this
- Survivors demonstrate a tremendous amount of resilience