

Mitigating Barriers in Order to Create an Effective Healthcare

Model for Previously Sexually Exploited Women

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The Problem

- Women who have been previously sexually exploited often lack access to adequate healthcare leading to increased emergency room use and greater likelihood to suffer from exacerbation of treatable diseases.

Background

- "A practice by which a person achieves sexual gratification, financial gain or advancement through the abuse or exploitation of a person's sexuality by abrogating that person's human right to dignity, equality, autonomy, and physical and mental well-being; i.e. trafficking, prostitution, prostitution tourism, mail-order-bride trade, pornography, stripping, battering, incest, rape and sexual harassment".
- The sexually exploited population usually encompasses women who are victims of sex trafficking, homeless, previously incarcerated and many involved in the criminal justice system.
- There is a severe dearth of research concerning best practices for treating women who have been sexually exploited.
- In 2014 the Worcester Alliance Against Sexual Exploitation (WAASE) was created to address the needs of sexually exploited individuals and combat sexual exploitation in Worcester.

Causes

- Sexual exploitation is a lucrative and covert business leading to isolation and vulnerability of victims.
- Sexually exploited women often suffer from co-occurring disorders and trauma of abuse and exploitation can present barriers to accessing help.
- Many clinical settings in the Worcester area are too spread out for the women to feasibly access services and providers may not be informed on caring for the sexually exploited.

Summer Assistantship Work



Promoting positive community response to eliminate sexual exploitation

Clinic Model	Services	Staffing
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Operating out of one of the community health centers in WorcesterReferrals to the clinic could be done through LIFT, law enforcement, Pathways for Change and other agencies serving or encountering members of this populationClinic could operate one to two afternoons per week at first	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Primary care (vaccines included)Urgent careSubstance abuse careCase managementTestingService referralsHealth education	<ul style="list-style-type: none">At least two physicians: taking appointments for urgent and primary careCase manager/community health worker: working to integrate services for each patientPeer mentor: may accompany patients to appointments, call patients reminding them of upcoming appointment, support

Pathways for Change Description Card

Name of Program: Pathways for Change, Inc. (Pathways)
Organization offering program: Pathways for Change, Inc.

List of Programs Provided: 24/7/365 Hotline, 1 on 1 counseling, support groups, 24/7/365 accompaniment to emergency room/police station & court accompaniment.

Best Way to Contact Program:
Office: (508) 852-7600 m-f, 9a-5p
Office Video Phone: 508-502-7681 m-f, 9a-5p
Office TTY: 888-887-7130 m-f, 9a-5p
Hotline: 1-800-870-5905 24/7/365

Description: Pathways' Mission is to address the impact of sexual violence by providing quality and multicultural services to those whose lives have been impacted by sexual violence and to provide education geared toward ending violence.

Pathways' Vision is:

- That each survivor has access to culturally appropriate services.
- That communities are actively engaged in prevention.
- That systems be well coordinated and survivor-centered.
- That survivors lead all aspects of the community response to sexual violence.

As a freestanding rape crisis center, the efforts of the entire agency are focused on the issues related to sexual violence. Our sole commitment to these issues results in a deep and widespread impact throughout Central Massachusetts.

Languages supported: Spanish, English, ASL, with over 150 other languages available via telephonic or in person interpreters

Website Address: www.PathwaysforChange.help

Countermeasures

- Creation of a clinic catering specifically to the sexually exploited population including primary care, behavioral health and mental health services.
- Foster a partnership with the Worcester Alliance Against Sexual Exploitation.
- Work toward engaging previously exploited women in primary care.

Future Goals

- Primary: establish a clinic solely for the purpose of treating previously sexually exploited women of the Worcester area.
- Secondary: engage women of the sexually exploited population in continuous primary care and reduce ER use and dependence.

Summer Assistantship Work

- Conduct a literature review on healthcare needs of populations encased within the sexually exploited population.
- Establish a partnership with LIFT for the initiative.
- Research organizations in Central, MA which work with sexually exploited women.
- Create a potential healthcare model for an affordable clinic for the sexually exploited population.

Future Plans

- Conduct a focus group concerning healthcare needs with clients at LIFT.
- Write grants and establish funding.
- Establish partnership with WAASE.

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