



SEX TRAFFICKING IN HAWAI'I PART III

*SEX TRAFFICKING  
EXPERIENCES  
ACROSS HAWAI'I*

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*KAUAI*

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## Sex Trafficking on Kauai

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This is the third study in a series of research studies exploring sex trafficking in Hawai‘i. The first study conducted in 2018 explored the scope of the online sex buyer market. The online buyer market was found to be robust with many thousands of sex buyers looking for sex online every day in Hawai‘i. The second study was completed in 2019 and explored the stories of 22 female sex trafficking survivors who were sex trafficked in Hawai‘i. The victims were from Oahu and Hawai‘i Island and were 77.3 percent Native Hawaiian. The survivors’ stories included their recruitment experiences, their violent victimizations by their families, traffickers, and customers, and the involvement of systems including law enforcement, medical services, and schools that did not identify or respond to their victimization.

This study aims to build on the first two studies with a large scale survey (the Youth Experiences Survey (YES) Hawai‘i) of sex trafficking experiences among clients at a large social service agency in Hawai‘i. During three months in 2019, 363 individuals on five Hawaiian Islands completed an eight page paper and pencil survey about their childhood and adult experiences including their sex trafficking victimization.

### Kauai

Of the full sample from five Hawaiian Islands (N =363), 18 (5%) participants from Kauai completed the eight page YES Hawai‘i Survey. Of the 18 participants in Kauai, 6 (33.3%) reported that they were a victim of sex trafficking.



### Demographics:

- The sex trafficking victims on Kauai identified as 83.3% (n =5) female and 16.7% (n =1) male.
- Eighty-three percent (n =5) of the 6 sex trafficking victims on Kauai identified as some Native Hawaiian.
- One (16.7%) sex trafficking victim identified as Hawaiian and the other five (83.3%) sex trafficking victims identified as multiracial.
- One (16.7%) sex trafficking victim in Kauai identified as LGBTQ.

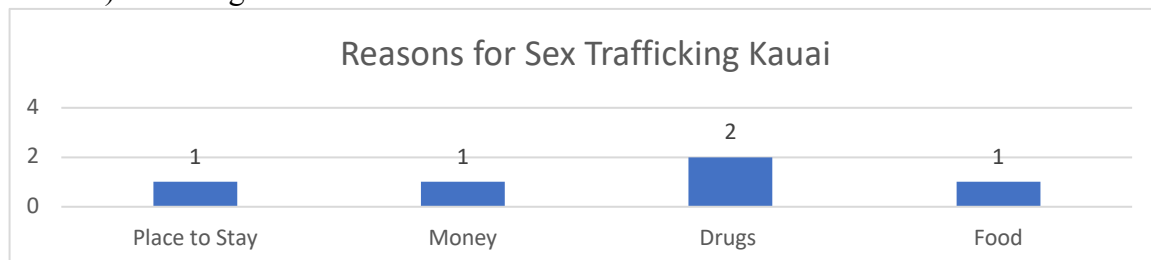
### Sex Trafficking Specific Information

- *Age of Victimization*  
The age of first sex trafficking in Kauai ranged from age 14 to 22 years old with an average of 19.3 years old.

One of the sex trafficking victims was a child (under age 18) when they were first sex trafficked. The child sex trafficking victim was a male and was 14 years old when first sex trafficked.

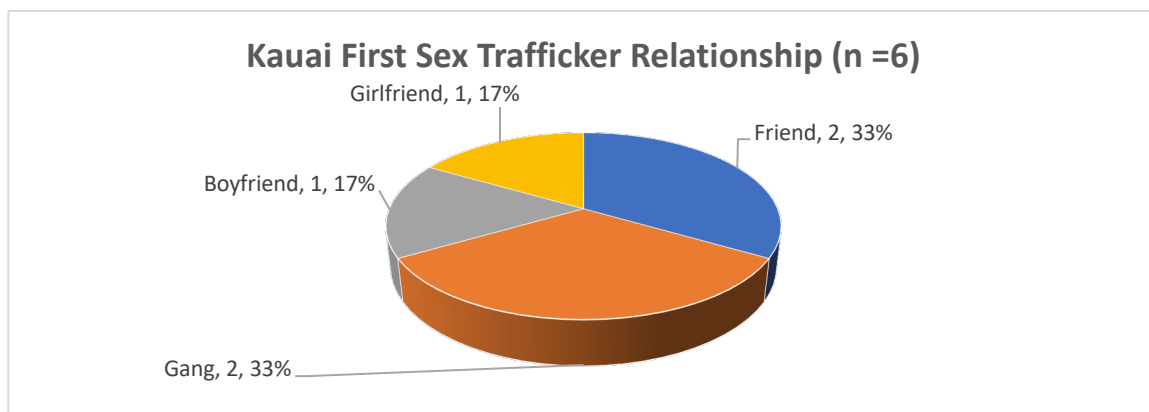
▪ **Reasons for Sex Trafficking**

The sex trafficking victims identified as being forced to exchange sex for a reason (or reasons) including:



▪ **Sex Traffickers**

In 100% of the sex trafficking cases in Kauai, a sex trafficker was reported. The sex trafficking victims identified their first sex trafficker as:



▪ **Sex Trafficking Experiences**

- One (16.7%) of the sex trafficking victims in Kauai reported that they were forced to use drugs by their sex trafficker.
- One (16.7%) of the sex trafficking victims in Kauai were afraid to leave the sex trafficking situation because of a fear of violence or other threats of harm to them or their family.
- One (16.7%) of the sex trafficking victims in Kauai reported that they had a family member who had also experienced sex trafficking.
- Fifty percent (n =3) reported that technology was used in their sex trafficking situation.

▪ **Current Situation**

- Two (n =33.3) of the sex trafficking victims their current housing situation was precarious (couch surfing, beach).
- Eighty-three percent (n =5) have children.

- One (16.7%) of the sex trafficking victims are currently involved with the Hawai'i Child Welfare System.
- One (16.7%) of the sex trafficking victims reported that their children did not live with them- their children are in foster care.
- Two (33.3%) reported their children live with their family.
- As adults, 83.3 percent (n =5) of the sex trafficking victims reported being victims of domestic violence.
- Two (33.3%) of the sex trafficking victims in Kauai reported that they had experienced negative contact with law enforcement.

### **Lifetime Experiences of the Sex Trafficking Victims**

- *Housing and Homelessness*
  - One hundred percent (n =6) of the sex trafficking victims on Kauai reported that they had also experienced homelessness.
    - ⇒ Their average age of first homelessness of the sex trafficking victims on Kauai was between ages 8 and 50 (average of 27.3 years old).
    - ⇒ They reported an average of 3.6 homelessness experiences.
- *Childhood Experiences*
  - One (16.7%) of the sex trafficking victims reported having a parent in prison.
  - The sex trafficking victims in Kauai reported an average of 4.2 adverse childhood experiences on the ACE survey.
  - Fifty percent (n =3) reported having observed domestic violence in their homes as children. Fifty percent (n =3) saw their father hit their mother, seventeen percent (n = 1) saw their mother hit their father.
  - Sixty-seven percent (n =4) of the sex trafficking victims reported experiencing childhood emotional abuse.
  - Thirty-three percent (n =2) of the sex trafficking victims reported experiencing physical abuse as a child.
  - Three (50%) of the sex trafficking victims reported that they had been placed in residential treatment as a youth.
  - Sexual Abuse
    - ⇒ Sexual abuse before the age of 12 was reported by seventeen percent (n =1) of the sex trafficking victims.
    - ⇒ Sexual abuse between the age of 12 to 17 years was reported by none of the sex trafficking victims.
  - Teen dating violence experiences was reported by 66.7% (n =4) of the sex trafficking victims.
  - Child Welfare Involvement
    - ⇒ None of the sex trafficking victims reported having been in foster care.
  - Juvenile Delinquency
    - ⇒ Seventeen percent (n =1) of the sex trafficking victims reported that they had been involved in the juvenile justice system (detention/probation).
    - ⇒ Gang affiliation was identified by 16.7 percent (n =1) of the sex trafficking victims.

- *School issues*

- The sex trafficking victims identified important issues and experiences when they were in school.

School Issue	N = 6 Sex Trafficking Victims	%
Bullied in school	4	66.7%
Special education classes	2	33.3%
Academic difficulties	2	33.3%
Expelled from school	0	0%

- *Family Issues*

- Family issues reported by the sex trafficking victims included being kicked out of the house and living in an unsafe environment.

Family Issue	N = 6 Sex Trafficking Victims	%
Kicked out of the home	1	16.7%
Home was unsafe environment	1	16.7%
Kicked out due to using drugs	1	16.7%
Family conflict/fighting with parents	0	0%
Family too poor to provide for their needs	0	0%

- Two (33.3%) of the six sex trafficking victims reported having run away as a child.

- *Drug Use*

- Eighty-three percent (n =5) of the sex trafficking victims reported have used drugs.
- First drug use was on average, 27.3 years old for the sex trafficking victims.
- Drug addiction was reported by four (66.7%) of the sex trafficking victims and two (33.3%) sex trafficking victim reported addiction to alcohol.
- Drug use types by the sex trafficking victims included:
  - Marijuana (n =5, 83.3%)
  - Methamphetamines (n =4, 66.7%)
  - Vaping (n =2, 33.3%)

Two (33.3%) of the sex trafficking victims reported attending drug treatment.

- *Mental Health Issues*

- Four (66.7%) of the sex trafficking victims reported having a mental health diagnosis, all four (66.7%) reported having more than one mental health diagnosis.
- Mental health diagnoses included:
  - Depression (n =4, 66.7%)
  - Anxiety (n =2, 66.7%)
  - Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (n =1, 16.7%)
  - Bipolar Disorder (n =1, 16.7%)
  - Borderline Personality Disorder (n =1, 16.7%)

<b>Mental Health Challenge</b>	<b>N = 6 Sex Trafficking Victims</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Self-harm</b>	3	50%
<b>Attempted suicide</b>	3	50%
<b>Excessive alcohol use</b>	1	16.7%
<b>Risk taking behaviors</b>	0	0%
<b>Burning self</b>	0	0%

- Four (66.7%) of the sex trafficking victims on Kauai reported receiving treatment for their mental health diagnoses.

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