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## The Journey to Oz: How Practice, Research, and Law Have Been Used to Combat Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking in Kansas

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# The Journey to Oz: How Practice, Research, and Law Have Been Used to Combat Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking in Kansas

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*Some people believe that slavery no longer exists.  
This is not true.*

*Slavery ensnares and violates women and children  
domestically and internationally every day.*

*It may look a bit different from historical slavery,  
but the exploitation and abuse remains the same.*

*It has previously been called prostitution.*

*Now we recognize it as human trafficking.*

(Countryman-Roswurm, During Testimony to the Kansas House)

## **Introduction**

Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking is a form of modern day slavery and is one of the most hidden means of child abuse in the United States. In response to encountering the reality of this abuse and exploitation of *our children*, multidisciplinary professionals in Kansas were impassioned to develop and implement collaborative practices, community-based research, and law and policy to assist in combating trafficking. This paper presents a summary of such efforts that, expanding over a decade, have culminated in a new Kansas Anti-Trafficking Law. A brief summary of the definitions and demographics of trafficking are provided followed by a discussion of the collaborative multidisciplinary practice and research efforts that occurred in the largest city in Kansas. With an understanding that it was these works that empowered a statewide paradigm shift and thus, ultimately led to policy development, a comparative summary of key Anti-Trafficking legislation is then reviewed. In conclusion, this paper offers recommendations for others who wish to combat trafficking in their own communities.

## **Definitions and Demographics**

Human trafficking is an overarching umbrella that refers to the exploitation and commodification of people for labor or sexual purposes which can occur both domestically and internationally.<sup>1-2</sup> While domestic and international labor and sex trafficking often intersect, this paper focuses exclusively on domestic sex trafficking. More specifically, this paper addresses the issue of the sex trafficking of minors.

Defined by the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) of 2000 as “the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for the purpose of a commercial sex act”,<sup>1</sup> sex trafficking with minors has been termed domestic minor sex trafficking (DMST). While still referred to by some as teen prostitution,<sup>3-6</sup> the term DMST supports the recognition that young people subjugated to DMST are not delinquents or criminals, but rather victims and survivors of a crime committed against them.<sup>3-6</sup> With this in mind, the working definition of DMST often utilized by Kansas multidisciplinary practitioners is, “A type of violence, including verbal, emotional, physical, and sexual abuse, against young people which may include coerced or forced sexual acts in exchange for, or the promise of, money, drugs, food, clothing, shelter, or other survival needs. It is a transaction in which the body of a young person is treated as a commodity.”<sup>7-9</sup> Building on this definition, and in an effort to promote strength-based client-centered services, young people who remain ensnared in a life of DMST or who have died due to such victimization are referred to as victims. Children and youth who have exited DMST are referred to as survivors.

The number of victims and/or survivors of sex trafficking are difficult to enumerate due to the crimes secretive and transient nature. In fact, estimates vary widely with research approximations proposing that between 4 and 27 million people are trafficked each year worldwide.<sup>10-12</sup> Of such trafficking cases, it is estimated that over 70 percent are for sexual purposes, more than 80 percent include perpetration against a female, and approximately half includes trafficking of a child.<sup>10-12</sup> Estimates of sex trafficking within the United States propose a broad range as well, suggesting that between 50,000 and 2 million young people are at-risk for, or subjugated to, DMST each year.<sup>1,11,13,14-15</sup>

Although the amorphous underworld of DMST is difficult to map, the extent and magnitude of the crime is not debatable. Similar to domestic violence and/or historical slavery practices, sex trafficking includes emotional/mental, physical, and sexual abuse.<sup>16-21</sup> Specifically, with the intent to control and profit from their victims, traffickers dehumanize, objectify, and commodify their victims through DMST. Victims are exposed to repeated, persistent, and unexpected cycles of emotional/mental manipulation, drug intoxication, physical mutilation, and sexual assaults<sup>16-21</sup> causing psychobiological trauma and long-term health consequences.<sup>16-21</sup> With an average age of initial sex trafficking subjugation between 11 and 14 years of age, this victimization of DMST ensnares our Country's most vulnerable—*our children*.<sup>2,22</sup>

### **Human Trafficking in Kansas**

Perhaps shattering the mental image held by many, Kansas is not the picturesque farmland portrayed in the memorable film, *The Wizard of Oz*.<sup>23</sup> Kansas is made up of a combination of mid-to-large sized cities full of bustling metropolitan life, as well as, small rural towns.<sup>24-25</sup> And although the traditional values of attending church on Sunday and enjoying a sunset in the Flint Hills in fall may still run deep to some, Kansas faces poverty, neglect, abuse, violence, and crime at levels similar to that of other large cities across the United States.<sup>24</sup> Additionally, the State as a whole obtains risk factors for sex trafficking including, but not limited to, a central geographic location which allows the heartland to serve as a form of pipeline for sex trafficking; pockets of neighborhoods saturated with escort services and strip clubs; a strong agriculture industry and meat/packing plants that attract migrants and undocumented citizens; a trucking thoroughway; the presence of a large military base; a number of casinos in Northern Kansas, Southern Kansas, and the North Oklahoma border; and decreased employment/economic development opportunities.<sup>7-9,24,26-28</sup> These characteristics act as risk factors for human sex trafficking in Kansas's communities large and small.

While still largely unnoticed or disregarded by most, by the mid 1990's individual and community risk factors had cultivated human trafficking to a level that caught the attention of researchers and media. Based on findings that 33 of 262 children identified as sex trafficking survivors in New York City were from Kansas, the Midwest State was reported to be "the favorite recruiting ground for the New York City sex trade."<sup>29</sup> News publications documented broad estimates proposing that hundreds of Kansas's youth were at-risk of or subjugated to DMST each year.<sup>30-32</sup> Other stories printed broad increases in the number of human sex trafficking cases investigated by law enforcement entities.<sup>33</sup> Additional media outlets told the stories of marginalized Kansas kids sold for sexual purposes by street-level pimps or commercial sex business owners, those the

young person considered to be their friend or intimate partner, and even the child's parents or caregivers.<sup>33-38</sup> These stories of children and youth subjugated to DMST were often brought to the attention of media due to the works of the multidisciplinary professionals leading the anti-trafficking movement in Kansas.

### **Practice and Multi-Disciplinary Collaboration**

In response to the aforementioned risk factors, as well as, an identified increase in the number of children being subjugated to DMST, a very small handful of social work, community psychology, and law enforcement professionals began to lead anti-human trafficking efforts in the largest city in Kansas.<sup>38-39</sup> From the start of such efforts, leaders acknowledged the importance of bridging the gap between multidisciplinary practices, community-based research, and law and policy. More specifically, with the intent to more effectively prevent and intervene in cases of human trafficking, there was a desire to empower a context in which practice, research, and law could cyclically inform, and be informed, by each other. Thus, at the end of 2005, after first assessing the knowledge and perspectives of human trafficking held by community professionals, the Anti-Sexual Exploitation Roundtable for Community Action (ASERCA) was formed as a multi-disciplinary team (MDT) comprised of social workers, psychologists, law enforcement officers, nurses, physicians, detectives, FBI agents, attorneys, therapists, outreach workers, case managers, teachers, etc.<sup>38-39</sup> Youth survivor leaders and community representatives were also invited to act as partners in the MDT efforts.

Although fairly inexperienced at leading community multidisciplinary collaboration, and while recognizing that true collaboration can cause a process to move more slowly, the primary leaders acknowledged the importance of assisting ASERCA membership in forming a structure that would promote intentional practices. One of the first steps was assisting in the formation of a vision, mission, and list of objectives that would assist in the memberships ability to be intentional in their efforts. Thus, motivated by the hope that young people in Kansas would no longer be at-risk for or subjugated to DMST, ASERCA members developed the vision that "all children and youth in Kansas will be free from sexual exploitation." ASERCA's mission is "to provide collaborative and multi-disciplinary prevention and intervention services in a safe, secure, nurturing and healing manner thus allowing young people who have been victimized or who are at risk for sexual human trafficking to gain dignity and respect for themselves." And with this in mind, a primary objective is to effectively prevent, and intervene in, situations of domestic minor sex trafficking through collaborative multi-disciplinary direct service provision and through the following action committees: Collaborative Direct Practice Service Delivery (protocols and procedures); Resource Development (fundraising and donation collections); Advocacy, Legislation, Law, and Policy; Education (keynotes, workshops, trainings, certifications, and academic courses); and Multi-Disciplinary Case Staffings. Although all of the ASERCA membership meet monthly in a formal setting, in an effort to ensure connection and accountability, action committees convene additionally based on the needs of DMST survivors, agencies, organizations, or the larger community.<sup>39</sup>

ASERCA, a survivor-centered multidisciplinary team working to end the commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) and domestic minor sex trafficking (DMST), has served as the forerunner in the anti-human trafficking movement in

Kansas. It is the early efforts of ASERCA, countless hours spent in the development of protocols and procedures for identifying and serving youth at-risk of and/or subjugated to DMST, local, state, and federal law and policy advocacy and development, the facilitation of training and education events, and multidisciplinary case staffings, that act as the foundation for much of the anti-human trafficking efforts that continue to take place to this very day in Kansas. More so, it is the work of ASERCA that serves as the bedrock for a statewide paradigm shift to recognize that children subjugated to DMST are not prostitutes—criminals and delinquents—but, rather *our children* who are victims and survivors of a crime perpetrated against them.

### Community-Based Research

While the multidisciplinary professionals of the community action group ASERCA recognized the magnitude of DMST, they acknowledged that in order to more effectively prevent and intervene in cases of trafficking, they needed to facilitate intentional community-based research that would more accurately illustrate the dimensions of human sex trafficking to the larger public. Even more so, in an effort to develop a method of producing accurate statistics, the ASERCA MDT recognized the need to develop an instrument that would assist practitioners in identifying young people who were at-risk of and/or subjugated to DMST in the first place.<sup>7,40-41</sup> Furthermore, to assist in progressive individualized and best-practice youth interventions – the ASERCA MDT found it critical to develop a tool that would assist practitioners in detecting the resilience factors of youth, thus empowering an opportunity to apply the survivors personal strengths and resources to intervention and aftercare practices. Therefore, the inception of the Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking Risk and Resiliency Assessment (DMST-RRA) was conceived (also Countryman-Roswurm and Bolin unpublished data, 2013).<sup>7,40-41</sup>

Utilizing the framework of the Instrument Development and Construct Validation (IDCV) process, a series of research phases and processes were developed in an effort to scientifically develop and validate the DMST-RRA in a manner that would assist multidisciplinary first responders in 1) identifying youth who are at-risk of or subjugated to sex trafficking, and 2) providing more individualized and effective strengths-based services (also Countryman-Roswurm and Bolin unpublished data, 2013).<sup>7,40-41</sup> The instrument development processes, which include the implementation of the DMST-RRA, has expanded over a decade. (also Countryman-Roswurm and Bolin unpublished data, 2013).<sup>7,40-41</sup> Throughout this time, quantitative and qualitative data were collected and while limited, has served as a primary record for assessing the extent and nature of DMST within the State. Most importantly, it has served as a motivating call to action to professionals, legislators and representatives, and citizens.

A summary of some of the primary findings which have assisted in practice recommendations and have been used in testimony for Kansas law and policy development include the following:

1. Of 258 youth interviewed in the States largest not-for-profit child services shelter, nearly half (47%) reported to being propositioned to strip, go on a date, or provide sexual favors in exchange for food, shelter, money, drugs, or other survival materials.
2. Once propositioned, only seven percent of young people were able to flee from a situation of DMST. Thus, 40% of such young people were forced,

- frauded, or coerced into DMST. Their risk of DMST subjugation increased the longer they remained on the streets.
3. Youth survivors of DMST reported similar childhood experiences that acted as risk factors. When young people were asked what they believed made them vulnerable to DMST subjugation, they reported that experiences of emotional abuse (ie, name calling, unengaged parents, etc); physical abuse (ie, being pushed, shoved, hit, and punched by parents or other caregivers); and sexual abuse (ie, sexual touching, incest, or rape by a parent or caregiver, sibling, or other caregiver) had made them more vulnerable to the perpetrators of DMST. Other experiences of familial drug and alcohol use/abuse, out-of-home placements, and exposure to street living were also reported by youth as acting as risk factors which made them more susceptible to DMST.
  4. The young people who participated in the study also reported similar categories of resilience factors that assisted them in surviving through, and exiting, DMST. When survivors were asked what helped them to survive despite their DMST victimization, factors such as a relationship with a supportive adult (ie, a firm connection with a parent, caregiver, or other family member, youth service worker, or teacher); faith and spirituality (ie, belief in a higher power, connection to a faith community, and/or use of prayer); and personal character traits such as the ability to be future oriented and envision the future were reported. Additionally, the ability for youth to identify signs of healthy versus unhealthy relationships, set boundaries in relationships, and obtain knowledge of how to seek/receive assistance from service providers served as resiliency factors in preventing and/or exiting a situation of DMST.

### **Law and Policy**

Building on the aforementioned multidisciplinary practice and community-based research, those leading in the Kansas anti-trafficking efforts recognized that in order for lasting change to occur, there needed to be a change in statewide legislation. Law and policy creates a systemic, institutionalized, and formalized mandate for addressing social issues. Thus, it was recognized that if accurately and cyclically informed by and effectively implemented into practice and research, a well-constructed Kansas law could be one of the most important tools for combating human trafficking from prevention to prosecution and survivor aftercare.

To begin such efforts, previous and current laws relative to the issue of trafficking were reviewed and discussed by the multidisciplinary professionals. For the purposes of this paper, anti-trafficking laws will be examined at an international and federal level and then conclude with a review of the new Kansas legislation. Furthermore, such laws will be presented in a manner that assesses how the four “Ps” of Prevention, Protection, Prosecution, and Partnerships are addressed.<sup>11</sup> Because of the importance for a survivor to be able to recover from their trauma, reintegrate back into their community post social service care, and holistically thrive, a fifth P, labeled Prosperity is also proposed.

## **United Nations Protocol**

In 2000, the United Nations took a huge step toward developing an expansive human trafficking policy with the introduction of the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children.<sup>42</sup> The Protocol defines trafficking, compels nations to prosecute offenders aggressively, and promotes providing victim protection.<sup>43</sup> To date, 117 states have signed the Protocol.<sup>44</sup> The Protocol is the first attempt to address human trafficking on an international level and is particularly concerned with the protection of vulnerable women and children.<sup>43,45</sup> While partnership between government and nongovernmental agencies are emphasized throughout the Protocol, and nations are encouraged to engage in research and educational campaigns to better inform the general public about the issue of trafficking, prosecution is the main focus.<sup>43,46</sup> The law enforcement pieces of the Protocol are particularly important. However, with such a heavy emphasis on prosecution, victim protection and prosperity are somewhat overlooked.<sup>43</sup>

The Protocol serves as an anchor in the fight against human trafficking, however there are notable weaknesses. For example, while the Protocol makes mandatory requirements of nations in terms of law enforcement and training, there is no mandatory requirement for victim's protection and assistance.<sup>43</sup> Thus, in reality, provisions detailed in the Protocol are only useful in combating trafficking so far as nations incorporate the provisions into their domestic laws and make an effort to allocate the resources to enforce the recommendations.<sup>43,46</sup> In sum, of the five P's, prosecution is the strongest component of this Protocol and prosperity is the weakest.

## **Trafficking Victims Protection Act**

Recognizing the need for a comprehensive federal policy on human trafficking, the United States Congress passed the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (TVPA). The act was subsequently reauthorized in 2003, 2005, 2008, and 2013 as an amendment to the Violence Against Women Act.<sup>1,43,47-48</sup> The TVPA addresses many of the provisions outlined in the UN Protocol and like it, is also particularly concerned with the protection of women and children. Similar to the UN Protocol, the TVPA also promotes collaboration across agencies, preventative educational campaigns, and the release of reports detailing progress made in addressing trafficking by the United States and foreign countries alike.<sup>49</sup> Unfortunately, initial drafts of the legislation were also more concerned with prosecution than victim protection. Victims were required to assist in prosecution in order to receive benefits and law enforcement officials were ill equipped to identify victims. Thus, the prosecution of traffickers was made nearly impossible.<sup>42,50</sup> Fortunately, with each reauthorization, major weaknesses in the legislation have been addressed.<sup>50</sup> For example, victims are no longer required to assist law enforcement with the prosecution of traffickers in order to receive benefits.<sup>42,50</sup>

With this in mind, gaps in federal policy still exist, specifically as to victim identification and assistance.<sup>42</sup> For example, provisions for the aftercare for domestic victims, particularly minors, are inadequate.<sup>51</sup> In sum, while the TVPA provides a clear mandate for protection and prosecution, the provisions and resources available to assist in the prevention, partnership, and prosperity components of trafficking are lacking—particularly in regards to those trafficked domestically.



### **State Level Trafficking Law**

Enacting and utilizing federal trafficking law is important in the fight against human trafficking. However, such laws are rarely used for prosecuting cases of DMST in Kansas.<sup>52</sup> Thus, due to the magnitude of the problem and limited availability of federal resources, state laws are necessary to more effectively prevent cases of DMST, increase the number of prosecuted cases, and improve victim/survivor services. This is partially due to the way in which state-level laws allow for the involvement of local multidisciplinary professionals. Such practitioner involvement is critical in accurately identifying and prosecuting cases of trafficking as they are the ones who will likely encounter, develop a professional relationship with, and establish trust with those subjugated to DMST.<sup>50</sup> Furthermore, state laws are more equipped to mandate the tools and protocols, as well as allocate the resources, which will ensure the implementation of anti-trafficking prevention, protection, prosecution, partnership, and prosperity efforts.<sup>52</sup>

### **Kansas Trafficking Law**

While Kansas has made efforts in the past to improve trafficking laws, significant gaps in legislation have remained until recently. For example, children subjected to sex trafficking had historically been placed in juvenile detention centers where they were often criminalized and unable to receive important mental health services. ASERCA members recognized service gaps such as these thus, in partnership with Kansas leaders such as Governor Sam Brownback, Attorney General Derek Schmidt, and members of the Attorney General Human Trafficking Advisory Board, labored tirelessly to develop a law that would 1) change language in a manner that recognized survivors of DMST as victims rather than criminals thus, guiding more trauma-informed client-centered practices; 2) prevent and empower best practices in cases of human trafficking through education and training; and 3) deter predators from trafficking Kansas children, as well as create a funding stream for services by increasing the prosecution and fine structure. Through multidisciplinary collaboration, House Bill (HB) 2034 was signed into law in April of 2013. HB 2034 mandates that young people subjugated to DMST be treated as victim/survivors, be housed in an environment with therapeutic care and holistic treatment services, and has far reaching implications for combating trafficking through prevention, protection, prosecution, partnership and prosperity efforts.<sup>53,54</sup> As Kansas Governor Sam Brownback noted, "This will not only strengthen our ability to severely punish traffickers, it will give us valuable new tools to protect vulnerable young victims so they can have hope of a new life and break a cycle of exploitation."<sup>55</sup>

### **Evaluating Kansas House Bill 2034**

Kansas HB 2034 includes important stipulations for protecting minors and prosecuting perpetrators of human trafficking. HB 2034 creates the crime of commercial sexual exploitation of a child (CSEC), which increases fines and jail time for offenders.<sup>53,54</sup> CSEC also addresses the promotion of sexual relations and the buying of sexual relations when the victim is less than 18 years old.<sup>53,54</sup> Under past law, sexual exploitation of a child under 14 was a felony punishable with life in prison. However, punishment for the same crime with a 14 to 17 year old was significantly less harsh. In fact, most convictions were prosecuted as very low misdemeanors and with regard to

sex trafficking; child victims over 14 were often treated as adults by the court system.<sup>56</sup> This gap is addressed in HB 2034 with the new law of CSEC. First time offenders will be charged with a felony, given increased prison time, and pay a \$2,500 to \$5,000 fine. Repeat offenders will be charged with a felony and a fine of no less than \$5,000.<sup>53-56</sup> Additionally, CSEC is added to the list of crimes which justifies a wiretap and civil forfeiture of assets.<sup>53-54</sup>

Under HB 2034, minors subjected to human trafficking are acknowledged as victims instead of offenders. Building on this change, the Kansas Code for the Care of Children is revised so that child victims of human trafficking can be quickly placed in protective environments.<sup>53,54</sup> Thus, victims of DMST will now be diverted from the juvenile justice system to the Department of Children and Families where they are able to receive a continuum of holistic care service. Victims will be assessed for safety and treatment needs and placed in staff secure facilities when appropriate. As described in HB 2034, staff secure facilities will provide case management, life skill training, medical care, mental health treatment, substance abuse treatment, and other appropriate services to victims.<sup>53,54</sup> Additionally, law enforcement officers are now permitted to take any child into custody who is reasonably suspected to be a victim of trafficking and place the child in a staff secure facility. Finally, the bill amends current Juvenile Justice Codes to allow for charges of selling sexual relations to be removed from the child's record.<sup>53,54</sup>

Further emphasizing that minors subjected to sex trafficking crimes are victims, HB 2034 changes the vocabulary used to describe trafficking crimes. HB 2034 replaces the phrase "prostitution" with "selling sexual relations" throughout the text of the bill.<sup>53-54</sup> DMST victims are forced to perform illegal acts as a byproduct of their situation. They are first and foremost victims and should be treated as such. By changing the vocabulary used to describe sex trafficking, the State provides the context in which, in partnership, prevention, protection, prosecution, and prosperity services can occur.<sup>56</sup>

The mental and physical trauma suffered by victims of domestic minor sex trafficking is extensive.<sup>57</sup> Therefore, effective policy must address how holistic treatment and victim prosperity services will be ensured. HB 2034 establishes the Human Trafficking Victims Assistance Fund that will be used to provide for multidisciplinary training, victim/survivor treatment, and aftercare. All fines collected from the prosecution of human trafficking offenses will be placed into this fund. Under past Kansas law, no such fund exists.<sup>53,54</sup>

One of the most important ways to protect children from becoming victims of human trafficking is through prevention efforts. Law enforcement plays a crucial role in these efforts. Accordingly, HB 2034 directs the Attorney General and appropriate State agencies to coordinate the training of law enforcement across Kansas on human trafficking. HB 2034 also requires that the Attorney General and Secretary of Labor create an education plan to raise awareness about human trafficking among Kansas employees.<sup>53,54</sup> This is the first time such a comprehensive statewide education campaign has been undertaken. Finally, partnership across disciplines is essential for combating human trafficking and providing for victim protection. HB 2034 encourages the continuation of the multidisciplinary collaboration already in place in Kansas by establishing the Attorney General's Human Trafficking Advisory Board as the official human trafficking advisory board of Kansas.<sup>53,54</sup>

In sum, the creation of this new Kansas law, HB 2034, better protects children at-risk of or subjugated to DMST in the following ways:

1. It sets the stage for appropriate holistic prevention, protection, prosecution, and prosperity services by changing the language thus, shifting statewide paradigms regarding the victims/survivors of DMST.
2. It increases penalties and fines for sellers and buyers of CSEC thus serving as a deterrent in the continued increase in the number of traffickers who intentionally seek to perpetrate against Kansas children.
3. It increases fines for sellers and buyers of children for sexually exploitative purposes thus allowing for the creation of a human trafficking assistance fund that assists multidisciplinary professionals in providing prevention, protection, prosecution, and prosperity services.<sup>53,54</sup>

Ultimately, the development of this legislation sends a clear message to traffickers that the young people in Kansas are *our children* and if you perpetrate crimes against *our children* by committing the crime of sexual exploitation against a child, you will be severely punished.

### Conclusion

Human trafficking is one of the greatest human rights challenges of the century. If we as multidisciplinary professionals intend to combat such demoralizing injustice, we must acknowledge the young people victimized by DMST as *our children*. They are not social outcasts or criminals. DMST does not just ensnare *those children*. Rather, it victimizes *our* neighbors and friends, *our* nieces and nephews, our grandchildren, and *our* sons and daughters. Building on this acknowledgement, if we ever wish to truly make a difference in the life of a child subjugated to trafficking, we must be willing to face the uncomfortable and heart-wrenching truths about trafficking and all that it entails. We must seek to understand the severe and unpleasant extent of DMST, and we must assess the very complex and convoluted nature of the culture in which human commoditization and exploitation occurs.

Having recognized the reality of the demoralizing commodification of children included in DMST, multidisciplinary professionals in Kansas sought to engage in intentional collaborative approaches that would bridge the gap between practice, research, and law and policy implementation. While the journey of such efforts have not always been easy, Kansas multidisciplinary professionals have collaboratively worked to provide public awareness and professional training, prevention services, early identification and intervention services, survivor protection and human rights advocacy, perpetrator prosecution, and recovery services, all the while working to reduce the demand that encourages DMST to occur in the first place. Culminating such efforts, the passage of Kansas HB 2034 formalizes and institutionalizes such efforts by holding communities accountable. Furthermore, to support the implementation of such law, is the multidisciplinary education, training, and research provided through The Center for Combating Human Trafficking (CCHT) at Wichita State University.<sup>58</sup> CCHT works to provide other communities with the skills and information needed to prevent trafficking, identify and intervene on behalf of DMST victim/survivor, and provide aftercare/prosperity services and is poised to provide the assistance necessary to make

the implementation of HB 2034 successful.<sup>59</sup> Collectively, these efforts will continue to establish healthier neighborhoods and develop healthier children.

With an understanding that there is no single solution to eradicating human trafficking, Kansas multidisciplinary professionals offer the following points based on their own experiences in combating DMST:

1. The issue of human trafficking, in all its forms, must be addressed as an issue of human dignity, peace, and social justice. Trafficking is rooted in a history of racial, sex, age and class inequality, thus combating trafficking means to address the reality of such oppression and exploitation.
2. In order to address any social justice issue, particularly that of human trafficking, there must first be a shift in language. Such linguistic changes guide the path for the way in which people view, and thus respond to, the issue of DMST.
3. It is important for those who have a direct experience with the social issue to lead the way. Whether working with young people, the aging population, women, people of color, or any other vulnerable population, it is critical to have appropriate representation in positions of leadership. Having survivor-leaders and direct practitioners with a connection to domestic sex trafficking helps to illustrate the reality of sexual subjugation, provides a visual representation of the capacity for survivors to recover from and thrive in spite of their victimization, and increases community passion, energy, and accountability.
4. The issue of human trafficking is too large to combat alone. Addressing social issues takes multidisciplinary collaborations at the local, state, regional, and federal level.
5. Efforts to combat human trafficking must be multidimensional and holistic in nature. From prevention and intervention to aftercare, efforts must include improved identification and assessment tools, social service practice techniques, and community supports. Such efforts can only occur in contexts that respond to, are guided by, and are accountable to, survivor-centered practice, research, and law.
6. Formalized law can define and institutionalize effective and efficient practices that respond to the safety and holistic health of our children and youth, particularly those at-risk for or subjugated to domestic minor sex trafficking.

Lastly, though the “journey to Oz” may seem bleak and daunting, we as multidisciplinary professionals must collaboratively stand up and say, *one child is one too many!* And we must take practice, research, and legal action that communicates to perpetrators everywhere that *our children* will not be exploited -- not in *our town*, not in *our city*, not in *our state*, not in *our country*, and not in *our world*.

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