Ending the Game:
An Intervention Curriculum for Survivors of Commercial Sexual Exploitation

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FEBRUARY 4, 2017
SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA
Ending the Game (ETG)

• Ending The Game (ETG) is designed to educate and empower commercial sex trafficking victims by providing a structure and framework to uncover harmful psychological coercion (a.k.a. “The Game”) that victims may have been subjected to during or before their trafficking experience.

- 10-session course, 1 – 2 hours per session
  - Facilitates experiential learning through activities, guided reflection, and meaningful homework assignments
  - Aims to spark intrinsic motivation to leave a trafficker and/or “the life”
  - Caters to a variety of learning styles including visual, tactile, and auditory
  - Suitable for participants who may not be strong readers
Promising Findings

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Carrie Smalley, MS, and Susan Brooks, MSW, University of California Davis,
Northern California Training Academy
Methodology

- Pre-curriculum and post-curriculum surveys filled out by participants and ETG facilitators/educators
- Service providers consisted mainly of “Ending the Game” facilitators.
- Surveys were completed by participants from 7 different programs located in 6 cities in 3 states
Survey Methodology

• Pre-test, beginning of the 10 week curriculum, participants complete Likert type scale using a survey developed by the creators of ETG, Post-test after 12 weeks
  • Survey asks questions about:
    • Self-worth
    • Attachment to their trafficker
    • Risk-taking behavior
    • Sexual attitudes and beliefs
    • Hopes for the future
  • At post-test open-ended questions collected for feedback about the curriculum

Example Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I can have a good life without my “trafficker” or out of “the life”.</th>
<th>YES! Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Yes Agree</th>
<th>No Disagree</th>
<th>NO! Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>I don’t have a trafficker/live “the life”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I wish I was with my “trafficker” and/or back in “the life” right now.</td>
<td>YES! Strongly Agree</td>
<td>Yes Agree</td>
<td>No Disagree</td>
<td>NO! Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>I don’t have a trafficker/live “the life”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

• Facilitator observations of the participants at pre-test and post-test (before participating and after participating in the 10 week curriculum)
Pre/Post Surveys Collected

35 Participant Matching Pre/Post Surveys

17 Facilitator Matching Pre/Post Surveys
SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS

Ethnicity/Race

- Black/AA, 47%
- Hispanic/Latino, 12%
- White, 3%
- Multiracial, 35%
- American Indian or Asian, 3%

AGE
Average age is 25.5 years old and ages range from 15 to 53.

EDUCATION
62% did not complete high school

GENDER
97% Female and 3% Transgender
Emerging Findings

• Significant findings when comparing participant pre- and post-test surveys \( (p<.05) \)
  • Belief that it is okay to do dangerous things like having unprotected sex, going with strangers, and or being on the streets decreases
  • Fewer participants believe that getting paid for sex is better than having sex for free
    • (61% say “yes” at pre, 37% say “yes” at post)

• Continuing to collect surveys to increase our sample size to statistically examine outcomes
A Closer Look at the Participants Completing ETG: Facilitator Feedback Surveys
Results from Examining ETG Facilitator Surveys

- Facilitators completed a 5 open-ended question survey at pre and post curriculum for each participant.

5 Themes

- Identification and understanding of their victimization
- Self-Esteem
- Loyalty to “the life” or to their trafficker
- Assertiveness and ability to act independently of influences
- Having future goals and plan
Illustrative Quotes

Loyalty to the Life or to the Trafficker

◦ “She grew up with brothers who trafficked women, behavior was normalized. Much more insight now, less loyal to "the life", increased loyalty to self and her goals.”

◦ “As this course went on student became more aware that she was a victim... initially she didn't see herself as a victim because she grew up in a home where "the life" was normal.”

Self-Esteem and Plans for the Future

◦ “Amazing turn around, connected with others sisters with great ambition to succeed in life. This was not a mandated obligation for her. She has a desire to be the best "me" there is.”

Assertiveness

◦ “Student has learned how to turn off negative influences. According to her session 5 on degrading thoughts was a major step to start believing in herself and that she can make it. :)

“
ETG Facilitator Perceptions

- 17 participants from pre to post

Ages
- 19-20: 2 survivors
- 21-25: 8 survivors
- 26-30: 1 survivor
- 31-39: 3 survivors
- 40--50: 1 survivor
- 51 and older: 2 survivors

Gender
- 16 Female and 1 Transgender
Facilitator perceptions of changes in 17 participants from pre to post

**Identification as Victim**
- At pre-test, 7 participants did not fully self-identify or understand being a victim of commercial sexual exploitation.
  - At post-test all of these participants identified and better understood their victimization.

**Loyalty to “The Life”**
- At pre-test, 50% of 14 participants were noted to be loyal to “The Life” or their trafficker.
  - At post-test, 0% were noted to be loyal to “The Life”, 13% were “less” loyal to their trafficker.

**Self-Esteem & Assertiveness**
- 73% of 15 participants were noted to have low or poor self-esteem at pre-test.
  - 100% (all 15 participants) had high or good/average self-esteem at post-test.
  - 100% had either good or growing assertiveness skills at post.

**Future Plans & Goals**
- Before ETG, 50% of 13 participants did not have future goals or positive outlook about the future.
  - After the curriculum, all of these participants either had goals for the future or had a more positive outlook about their future.
Before ETG

“Student carries a lot of shame, low self-esteem, very quiet.”

“Was loyal for years to gain her mother’s love, who was her trafficker.”

“The client is recently coming to terms with acknowledging that she is a victim of sexual exploitation. There are times she blames herself.”

After ETG

“Student’s self-esteem has improved over the weeks, she no longer came in with a hoodie on to cover her face.”

“...she has made great strides to become self-sufficient and has put distance between them.”

“Fully able to identify as victim of human trafficking, understands the ways in which she was coerced.”
Participants Comments and Thoughts After Completing ETG

• **98% said** that ETG made them look at their trafficker or “the life” differently

• **100% said** participating in ETG was worth their time

• **96% said** they enjoyed the activities

• **100% said** they learned information that will impact them in positive ways

“Being in here has made even a stronger believer for myself. Thanks for everything.”
Participant Comments After Completing ETG

I love the facilitators because they understood us. They showed a lot of compassion.
– 51 year old

I’ve grown so much. I’m so proud of myself. I just can’t wait to see what's next. I feel like I'm being healed in the inside. Things that learned and I would have forgot.
- 22 year old

It helped me change my mind set on prostitution. I really didn't take it as being assaulted, until I came to this program.
- 16 year old
I just wanna thank my supporters & everyone who believed in me. This was the best program for me so far. It really taught me a lot about the game & also ending the game. I realize this isn’t the life for me I want more for myself & my future. We all live & learn & I truly learned I’m better than this! It was like a Nightmare I was living wasn’t In a good frame of mind frame, was just living for that moment. And most importantly I thank the man above for guiding me out that life style.

Survivor - CL
6.16.16
Promising Findings

• Recognition of victimization
• Reduction in feelings of attachment to a trafficker or the trafficking lifestyle
• Increase in feelings of self-esteem and worth outside “the life”
• Increase in feeling positive about the future, having goals for the future