

LIGHTLY EDITED FILE

Rights4Girls: Cyntoia Brown, Bresha Meadows and the
Abuse to Prison Pipeline
National Resource Center on Domestic Violence

(NRCDV)

Remote CART

February 22, 2018

1:00 p.m. - 2:05 p.m.

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>> Hello, everyone.

Thank you so much for joining us today for our
Rights4Girls webinar.

We will be beginning in just a few minutes.

Don't fear if you can't hear the audio once I stop
talking, because we don't -- we're not fancy enough to
have that snazzy elevator music but we're very excited
to talk to you today and you'll be hearing our

beautiful

presenters' voices in just a few minutes.

>> Welcome, everyone.

We are ready to get started.

My name is Ivonne Ortiz and I'm the training and
education specialist at the NRCDV.

Thank you for joining us this afternoon.

Before we start I want to take a moment to tell you a few things about our webinar system.

You should be able to see the full PowerPoint screen which is now displaying our first slide that has the butterflies and the title of our webinar today, Rights4Girls, Cyntoia Brown, Bresha Meadows and the Abuse to Prison Pipeline.

Please feel free to send a message in the public chat.

I know some of you have been introducing yourselves.

That public chat is on the left-hand side of the

bottom,

and we encourage you to send a message, post your

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chat

visible

feel

questions, anything, but remember this is a public

so please, we want to remind everybody that it's

and everyone can read it, so be sure to not share any confidential or sensitive information.

If you have a question throughout the presentation,

free to post it, and we will have Breckan manning our

box.

Make sure our presenters respond to your questions.

We also have closed captioning and should be viewable
at
the bottom of your screen under the presentation
window.

Please let us know if you have difficulty seeing the
captions.

And we are almost getting ready to start.

>> Good afternoon, everybody.

Thank you for joining us today and welcome to this
webinar session titled Rights4Girls, Cyntoia Brown,
Bresha Meadows and the Abuse to Prison Pipeline.

My name is Ivonne Ortiz and I'm the education and
training specialist.

For teen dating and violence awareness and prevention
month we're highlighting the Rights4Girls, a human
rights organization focused on gender-based violence
against young women and girls in the U.S.

Through this webinar we will explore how the
intersections of race, gender, and violence cause our

most marginalized girls to be criminalized for their experiences of sexual violence and sexual exploitation.

Before I welcome our presenters today, Cherice Hopkins and Rebecca Burney, I want you to invite -- and let me see if I can pass our slide.

See if you can pass -- thank you.

We want to invite you to check out our teen dating violence awareness month events and activities.

For this month, as I mentioned, we're highlighting the power of young activists and organizing for social justice.

Our podcast stories of transformation for the entire month of February is featuring the stories of young activists, advocates age 12 to 20.

They're telling their stories of why they're activists.

Follow us at and join us on twitter at #iamanactivist.

Also I would encourage you check our blog where we highlight the work of break the cycle of knowing yourself slogan.

We also develop a technical assistance question of the month on youth activism.

And if you want to learn more about each of one of these

activities, events and resources, there's information.

Look us at VAWnet.org/training.

And now I want to welcome our presenters.

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We have Cherice Hopkins and she's a staff attorney at Rights4Girls, a human rights organization committed to ending gender-based violence in the U.S.

Where her work includes research, education and advocacy.

causes

Her focus is identifying and addressing the root

of problems which hinder gender and racial equity.

Her prior experience includes the provision of consultation services to non-profits and small businesses founded by women and people of color in the areas of analysis, research and strategy planning.

Cherice received her JD from Northwestern Pritzker School of Law and is a member of the Minnesota state bar.

Welcome, Cherice.

And now we welcome Rebecca Burney.

She's an equal justice works fellow at Rights4Girls where she focuses on the intersection of female sexual abuse and juvenile justice system involvement in Washington D.C.

She has extensive experience working with survivors of sexual abuse.

Rebecca served as a sexual assault counselor and first responder for the listening ear crisis intervention center in Lansing, Michigan, where she worked with

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nurses, prosecutors, and police officers to coordinate care and advocacy for sexual abuse survivors.

the

She has also worked directly with youth involved in

D.C. foster care system as a court appointed special advocate and has mentored delinquent youth during incarceration in local detention facilities.

In addition to crisis intervention and legal advocacy, Rebecca has supported youth through traditional

teaching

and mentorship.

NRCDDV

>> Thank you so much, Ivonne, and thank you to the

to

for inviting us to conduct the webinar and thank you

everyone who is on the call.

We appreciate you joining us.

choose

We know that you have lots of options for how you

to spend your time, so we're thankful that you want to

learn more about the sexual Abuse to Prison Pipeline.

passionate

And we believe it's very important and we're

about raising awareness of the pipeline.

As Ivonne said, I'm Cherice Hopkins and I'm joined by

and

Rebecca Burney today and we're both at Rights4Girls,

based

we're a national human rights organization that's

in DC working to combat sexual violence against women

and girls specifically in the United States.

And as part of our work we really advocate for the

inclusion of girls' voices and experience in order to

address gender-based violence particularly vulnerable girls and girls who are othered and marginalized like girls of color and as a result of that marginalization their experiences and voices are often overlooked and ignored as we can see happening with the example of

the

Sexual abuse to prison pipeline.

The best way I can describe our work is engaging in policy reform, research, technical assistance,

advocacy

campaigns that are really at the intersections of

racial

justice, violence against young women and girls and systems reform particularly improving system responses to survivors of violence.

And as a result of this work, we find ourselves operating in different spaces including juvenile

justice

spaces.

And a few years ago when we go into juvenile justice spaces trying to raise conversations about girls, we were met with resistance and the conversations really tended to focus on boys, and when we would try to push back and say what about girls, people wouldn't want to talk about girls because they weren't involved in the

justice system at the same rates as boys.

justice

And so we decided to expand our conversations that we were having with girls who were involved in the

system to find out directly from them what were they

8

them

experiencing and what we learned was that a lot of

experienced sexual abuse prior to entering the system and so we looked at the data that was available and we

learned that this was overwhelming the experience of girls and in fact sexual abuse is a primary predictor

of

girls' entry into the juvenile justice system.

And as a result of that, we wrote a report called a sexual Abuse to Prison Pipeline that we coauthored

with

the Georgetown law center in 2015.

So you'll hear us use the term sexual abuse to prison pipeline which describes the ways of the gendered pathways -- excuse me -- the gendered violence that

sexual

other

violence

not

them

to

leads girls into the juvenile justice system and also sometimes say Abuse to Prison Pipeline instead of abuse to prison pipeline when we're talking about forms of violence such as family violence and physical abuse.

And so what we really want to do today is as Ivonne shared talk about the sexual abuse to prison pipeline but specifically how our girls are experiencing and particularly when it's girls of color and our most marginalized girls and their response to that is to meet them with services but to actually criminalize for their responses.

So I'm going to turn it over to Rebecca who is going

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talk a little bit more and discuss what types of violence girls are experiencing.

>> Rebecca: Great.

having

And thank you so much, Cherice, and thank you for me.

So when we think about girls in the United States, one of the things that the me too movement has really highlighted is that girls across the country

regardless

of their class or race or gender identity are experiencing sexual violence at astronomical levels

and

this violence is something they're experiencing at home,

in the community, as well as in schools.

And as we know, these experiences range from street harassment and harassment by peers to sexual assault. In addition many girls are witnessing or experiencing domestic violence.

So when we talk about dating violence, it's really important to think about the types of relationships

that

young women and girls are seeing modelled before them. So we know from research that girls that grow up in abusive households and witness an abusive relationship are actually more likely to be in an abusive relationship in their own lives, and they're also more likely to experience teen dating violence.

So teen dating violence, as I mentioned, is another

form

of violence that girls experience, and we're really interested at Rights4Girls at looking at the link between gendered violence and dating violence and how dating violence is leading girls into the juvenile justice system.

domestic

And Cherice will speak a little bit later about child sex trafficking, but we wanted to highlight here that this is another form of gender based violence that's often leading girls into the juvenile justice system as well.

So teen dating violence and we're really excited to be able to speak about this month.

And we can't ignore the link between teen dating violence and trauma and justice system involvement for girls.

or

The percentage of girls who have experienced physical sexual dating violence is striking so nearly 21

percent

tweens

have experienced dating violence and one in five

knows a survivor.

And of course these are numbers of people reporting dating violence and as we know with sexual assault and sexual abuse these numbers are often underreported.

So it's very likely that these statistics are probably not as accurate as we want them to be.

So we want to focus on this link between domestic

11

violence and intimate partner violence later in life.

We do know that girls who are in abusive relationships as teens or between the ages of 11 and 17 are also

more

likely to experience violent relationships in

adulthood,

so as I mentioned previously, if you witness a

domestic

abuse in your household, if you witness your parents

in

an abusive relationship, you're more likely to have an abusive relationship in your teenage years but you're

in

also more likely to be a victim of domestic violence adulthood, so hopefully by addressing teen dating violence we can prevent future cases of domestic violence that often leave women victimized in our country.

Okay.

And this slide also just gives some statistics that we do know and like I said, these are just reported instances of domestic violence so we know that 22% of women who experience domestic violence as adults had their first experience with intimate partner violence between 11 and 17, so this research is highlighting

what

I mentioned previously about these links so we're

hoping

by disrupting the abuse to prison pipeline by focusing on gendered violence at early ages and during development we can hopefully prevent future violence towards women and girls.

experienced

So as I mentioned, gender-based violence is

marginalized

by girls of all races and classes, but as Cherice previously discussed, we know that the most young women and girls are often end up in the juvenile justice system for the same experiences of trauma. So why is this.

has

Unfortunately what we're seeing is that when a girl

receive

a stable family and economic stability, she can access to services and support necessary to heal from her trauma.

However girls without access to these resources are criminalized.

are

And when you think about services and supports that

safer

necessary to heal, they can include anything from therapeutic intervention to, you know, moving to a environment where you do not have to be around your abuser.

is

There's a whole host of research around ways to cope with trauma, and one of the things that we're finding that girls who don't have these resources and supports most often come up with their own coping mechanisms.

These coping mechanisms can include anything from substance abuse, some girls will attempt to run away from their abusers and often find themselves in the criminal justice system for running away or status

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offenses.

alcohol

Girls who try to self-medicate through drugs and often are arrested for possession and use of drugs and illegal substances.

may

Girls who are experiencing violence in schools, they choose not to attend school because they feel it's unsafe for them.

access

Unfortunately, they're also arrested for truancy. And so as we have these conversations around gendered violence, it's important to think about class and

stability

to resources and if a girl who has, you know, a stable family environment, if a girl who has economic if she would not be criminalized for her trauma why

are

we criminalizing the most marginalized girls.

So what do we know about girls in the juvenile justice system.

So the rate of girls entering the juvenile justice system is increasing at every point of contact, so the numbers of arrests have increased by 40%.

Detentions have increased by 40%.

Probation has increased as well.

violent.
But we do know that girls are not becoming more

the
So most of the arrests of girls are for non-violent offenses and when you think of these offenses, they're often offenses that we call status offenses because

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youth is a minor.

lead
course,
So something like running away is an act that could a girl into the juvenile justice system, but, of running away is not a crime for an adult.

And what we're also seeing is that the criminalization of these responses to trauma is also having a disproportionate impact on girls of color.

So even though it's widely known and recognized with the all girls incarcerated, Native American girls, they're impacted at even more disproportionate rates and black and Native American girls are actually 20% more likely than white girls to be formally petitioned.

So when we think about how we as a community and when you think about how we as a society respond to trauma and why are we criminalizing some girls over others, it's important to keep these statistics in mind and ask ourselves are we treating girls of color fairly.

So as I mentioned previously, girls are not becoming

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to

more violent, and so we really as an organization try to understand what is causing this increase.

And our report really highlights the fact that sexual abuse is one of the key predictors of whether or not girls will enter the juvenile justice system.

There's -- it's nearly impossible to ignore the relationship between trauma and justice system involvement for girls.

They're experiencing trauma at disproportionate rates, and as an organization this is something that we've definitely worked to try to address and understand and come up with policy recommendations to what we deem

the

Abuse to Prison Pipeline.

rates

So one of the reasons why we're seeing these high rates of trauma in girls in the juvenile justice system is because they're being criminalized for their responses to trauma.

So we know several things about girls in the system.

One of the things that we do know is that they're extremely high rates of depression and post traumatic stress disorder among girls in the juvenile justice system.

They're also disproportionately victims of sexual violence, and they have negative health outcomes. They have also experienced more adverse childhood

16

experiences.

Harris

And I'll mention a study done by Dr. Nadine Burke

about adverse impact on health for children.

So what are girls entering the system with.

So this was a study that was done in 2009 and

researchers conducted a health screening of girls entering detention centers in Philadelphia, San Diego and Santa Cruz and the numbers are really striking.

had

At entry 18% had a current suicidal ideation and 7%

attempted suicide in the last month.

So when we talk about depression among young girls who are involved in the juvenile justice system this is critical.

It means that they're entering the system already feeling suicidal.

perpetuate So once they're in the system, as many of you can imagine, unfortunately our justice system can the trauma they've already experienced.

It's not as if they're entering some type of youth sanctuary space, so it's not a place of healing.

It's often a place of punishment, and I think it's important to highlight they're entering with severe mental health crisis.

22% Another area we found particularly striking was that prior of girls had been sexually assaulted within 7 days

17

to entering the detention center.

So if you know anyone who has experienced a traumatic

7

event such as sexual assault, you know that the first days are crucial.

Most people are in a daze.

They're not acting at the most optimal level.

They're probably not making the best decisions, and so girls when they're entering detention are in the midst of that trauma.

or

They're in the midst of coping with the event they've just experienced, and rather than getting the support resources that they need to heal, they're put into detention centers.

not

So when we think about trauma, you know, it's really enough to just focus on what girls are entering the detention centers with.

really

There's a whole life trajectory of experiences that they've had that are often troubling, and so it's important for us to start at the beginning and think about what these girls have been exposed to and experienced over their lifetime.

was

So in the 1990s researchers began to wonder if there was a link between adverse experience during childhood and health outcomes for adults.

So from 1995 to 1997 over 17,000 patients at Kaiser

were

18

evaluated in what became known as the ACE study. And ACEs are adverse childhood experiences that are identified including emotional abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse, mental illness, parental separation or divorce, and they assigned a score based on the number of these ACES that somebody had experienced.

So for example if you had one parent that was incarcerated but you had none of the other adverse childhood experiences, then your score would be one.

And they found that the more ACES someone had the more likely they were to have disparate health outcomes and the more at risk they were for cancer, heart disease

and

other illnesses in adulthood.

Dr. Burke Harris is a pediatrician in San Francisco

and

she published a book.

She actually found that children with high ACE scores also are experiencing disparate health outcomes in

childhood.

as
these
and

So exposure to toxic stress and constant trauma such
living in a household where there's domestic violence,
these experiences are actually altering the DNA of
youth, and she's found that as a result young girls
boys are having high levels of asthma, they're having
behavioral issues, learning disabilities, diabetes.
They're at risk for a number of negative health

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outcomes, and so when we think about girls in the
juvenile justice system, it's really important to keep
this research in mind when we question why they're
behaving the way that they do.

So girls in the juvenile justice system have extremely
high ACE stores.

They're nearly two times as likely as boys to report
having five or more ACES and the rates of sexual abuse
are over four times higher for girls.

And so what does this mean?

This means based on all the research that we know that they're more at risk for negative health outcomes as adults, but they're also having, you know, behavioral issues, learning disabilities, things that are getting them expelled or getting them arrested, less cognitive development because of the things they face.

So that's important to keep in mind when we're considering intervention.

>> We have a question.

I'm sorry to interrupt you, and she's asking, I was wondering or pointing out that because of the trauma many times they can cope and behave violently or aggressively, and the families do not know what to do

so

they call the cops and then they are arrested.

>> Yes, thank you for that question.

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I was actually just about to cover that in the next slide.

so

So, you know, one of the things that we are seeing is that girls are getting arrested for family violence, unfortunately in some jurisdictions if the police are called, then the youth is automatically arrested, so thank you so much for this question because that is often what we're seeing.

process

So youth that don't have access to resources to the trauma they've experienced will act out in anger.

mechanisms

They will, you know, use a variety of coping

healthy

that maybe as adults we might say these are not

copying mechanisms but for the youth it's kind of all they have for survival.

So we have situations where they witness domestic violence in the household.

one

They feel they may have to fight to protect a loved

up

who is being violated and that can cause them to end

in the juvenile justice system.

And I think when you think about the research that

the

Dr. Harris has done, you know, a lot of the parts of

responses

brain that would process, you know, the proper

that one should have, the healthy responses that one

should have, those just aren't developed and many ways are stunted because of the trauma.

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So we're finding that youth who experience a lot of trauma often make decisions that are not in their best interest due to the trauma they've experienced and how it's restructured their brain and restructured their ability to think about long-term consequences.

and

So no, that's definitely an issue that we're seeing,

or

it's something that, you know, there's no easy answer

easy solution.

be

Parents, you know, often don't want their children to

incarcerated or taken by police, but they may feel

they're a threat to other members of the household.

So I think really for us is education and making sure

that police officers if they are called understand how

the

trauma works in adolescence and why they're behaving

way they do and that the youth are given the supports they need rather than simply being locked up.

wanted Our pathways into the system after abuse, I just

to highlight a few.

Status offenses as I previously mentioned.

is Many girls who are abused will run away if the abuse

taking place in their household.

They will often skip school if they're feeling like school is not a safe environment for them.

They will engage in alcohol or tobacco use in order to cope with the trauma.

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curfew They don't have access to other resources or healthy coping mechanisms and they will sometimes violate

as well especially when they don't feel that the household they're in is safe.

and And unfortunately for girls, all of these behaviors

all of these coping strategies are criminalized.

They're called status offenses, and they can get arrested and enter the juvenile justice system for things like running away.

And so our argument at Rights4Girls as an organization is really these youth need support.

They need treatment.

They need to have their trauma addressed.

They don't need to be punished for something that they are not responsible for.

We shouldn't punish victims of crimes.

We shouldn't punish victims of trauma.

Another pathway we're seeing as well is what we call dual system or crossover.

So we're seeing girls who are involved in the child welfare or dependency system, actually crossing over into the delinquency system and again the reason for this is really abuse and trauma.

So if your needs are not met and you're not given the resources to cope with trauma you may have experienced

causing you to be in the child welfare system, that trauma doesn't just go away, and as you get older if you act out on these traumatic events, if you begin to run away or engage in substance abuse, you can find yourself in the delinquency system as well as the child welfare system.

And then Cherice will talk more about this but domestic child sex trafficking is another pathway into the juvenile justice system for girls.

Federal law defines anyone under the age of 18 engaged in commercial sex as a victim of child sex trafficking.

And even in jurisdictions that don't arrest girls under the age of 18 for prostitution like they're often arrested for prostitution related offenses.

So unfortunately we're seeing individuals who are forced into the sex trade being punished.

And that's something that Rights4Girls has been working really hard on.

We have a campaign called the no such thing campaign and I'll let Cherice talk more about that.

So I'm going to end here and turn it back over to Cherice, and she'll speak a little bit more about specific examples of how we're seeing the pipeline in action.

>> Cherice: Thank you, Rebecca.

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some
Ohio
result

So I first wanted to talk about Bresha Meadows, and of you may be familiar with Bresha's story. Bresha Meadows is a teenage girl and she grew up in in an abusive household. Her father physically injured her mother. He threatened to kill Bresha and her entire family. She had to cope with a lot of violence, witnessing violence, the trauma from that violence and as a result she tried to get away. She actually ran away from home twice and she was someone who was known to law enforcement and known to the system.

She did disclose about the violence in her home but still was not met with services and was actually taken back to her home.

And so as a result of the abuse that she experienced, she shot her father but again was not perceived to be

a

survivor of violence or a survivor of trauma, and was instead charged with aggravated murder.

She spent a year in a detention center, and as a

result

of her lawyers and a lot of grassroots organizing and advocacy, really just put a lot of pressure on the systems and was able to make a plea deal where the charges were reduced to involuntary manslaughter, but again she still has that charge, that conviction of

25

involuntary manslaughter as well as she's moved to a residential treatment center.

So while it wasn't the detention center she was in, it wasn't community based services, she was still essentially locked up, and she remained there for six

months and now she's home.

So that is one of the -- I know there was a question about family violence and how that can push girls into the justice system, so I think the story of Bresha Meadows is a prime example of that.

her We also want to talk about Cyntoia Brown, and some of you may have heard of Cyntoia Brown recently because case and her story really got a lot of national attention late last year.

she And so those of you who are not familiar with Cyntoia, she also grew up in an abusive home environment and

her left home in order to escape, and as a result of that she wound up meeting an older man who she -- groomed

him as often in the case of trafficking cases, showed her affection, was nice to her, and got her to perceive

as her boyfriend.

But then the relationship -- not the relationship but her perceived relationship turned violent.

He raped her.

He physically abused her.

her. He forced her to take drugs and he also trafficked
with He forced her to have engagement in commercial sex
old strangers, and one of those strangers was a 43-year-
man who paid to rape Cyntoia.
This man was a collector of guns and Cyntoia was
obviously -- felt threatened in that situation so she
wound up shooting him in self-defense but the
not prosecution still chose to charge her, and so she's
only charged with murder but she was charged as an
adult.
This was in 2004.
She was convicted of first degree murder and she's
currently serving a life sentence and not eligible for
parole until she's 69 years ago.
The piece of legislation that up holds the rights for
survivors of trafficking is the Trafficking Victims
Protection Act.
That wasn't enacted until 2000, so that's four years
before Cyntoia's case and before she was charged as an

adult.

the But even then that act in place did not contemplate fact that there could be domestic victims of trafficking.

were It only contemplated a foreign victims, people who forced from their country, they are tricked from their

27

home countries to come to the U.S.

later So it wasn't until after Cyntoia was charged years that our federal laws even contemplated and addressed established rights for survivors of domestic trafficking, so I think that's important context to understand the fact that unfortunately, you know, Cyntoia is not alone.

There are other kids who have been trafficked who are not seen as victims, who the perpetrators of violence against them are not seen as perpetrators of violence but are seen as Johns.

Excuse me.

disturbing

So I think Cyntoia's story is very sad, very

of

but also very representative of what other survivors

not

trafficking have gone through and how they have been

but

viewed as survivors of crime and of gender violence

instead have been criminalized.

I want to talk a little bit more, we've been talking about trafficking.

I know Rebecca shared that's one of the pathways that girls are pushed into the juvenile justice or in Cyntoia's case adult criminal justice system, and we know it's something that people are more aware of and talking about more but it's also there tends to be confusion on what is sex trafficking and with kids

what

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have

is domestic child sex trafficking, so we wanted to

a little clarity around that.

is

Domestic child sex trafficking is when any person who under 18 exchanges sex for anything of value.

and

And I wanted to just clarify because often I think we hear people talking about in trafficking and we say traffickers, people of those referred to as pimps but there are various roles people play in trafficking, so for example, there are people who actually get paid to recruit girls and to groom girls and vulnerable kids trafficking them that way, so for example, people -- like Facebook is a big tool and social media so there are people who go on social media and direct message kids and try to lure them away from home or people who will go to group homes or -- and seek out children in the child welfare system.

role

Another way people engage in trafficking or have a role in a larger trafficking system is harboring so they're providing a location where these children are being kept.

need

Another big one is patronizing or the people who are sometimes called buyers, they engage in trafficking so the people who pay to have sex with a child, that is trafficking, and so that means there doesn't always need to be a third party.

trafficking

There doesn't have to be a pimp in order for
to occur.
It could be just a buyer and the child.

anything

Another thing that I want to point out is that
of value is not just money.
It could be trading sex for basic needs, so for food,
for shelter, for a coat, so sometimes you will hear
people talk about survival sex and whenever they are
talking about a youth who has exchanged in sex for
food

or sex for a place to stay, that is trafficking.
Trafficking has taken place.

you

Another thing that I want to point out is sometimes
may hear people talking about force, fraud or coercion
and when we're talking about kids that is not
necessary

for any force, fraud or coercion to have occurred.
Under federal law minors are legally incapable to

coercion

consenting to sex.

Again, there doesn't have to be force, fraud or

if something of value is exchanged for someone to have sex with someone under the age of 18, then that is trafficking.

The other thing that I want to talk about is just some of the terms.

We've already discussed survival sex, but you may also hear people refer to domestic minor sex trafficking,

30

legally

some things that other terms are like prostitution or juvenile prostitution which we find those terms to be very problematic because again they imply consent or choice and we're talking about children here who

they're incapable of consenting.

So who are the victims.

You know, who do the traffickers and buyers target.

In the U.S. it's primarily U.S. citizens.

U.S.

There was a study conducted of all the national sex trafficking cases and 83% of confirmed victims were citizens.

victims

Also a lot of children, a lot are minors under the age of 18 and that same study over half of confirmed were minors and also you'll see from some of the other bullet points here is that traffickers really go after those who are vulnerable.

So not just minors.

Minors who are learning and developmental disabilities are often targeted.

often

Runaways and homeless youth again because they are lacking stability, lacking supports.

they

They have basic needs like clothing and shelter, so tend to be very susceptible, and because so many homeless youth identify as LGBT or gender non-conforming, then they are at increased risk of

being

trafficking

trafficked and then also a lot of identified survivors come from the child welfare system, again, because of lacking -- those kids often are lacking certain civility.

They're looking for relationships.

Looking for family.

So traffickers are very attuned at pinpointing children's vulnerabilities and trying to frame themselves in a way as they can meet whatever those children's needs are.

that

Another thing I want to point out is in regards to who are the -- who tends to be targeted, a lot of trafficking survivors are female and a lot are black children, and so 2016 national arrest data shows us

more

76% of all juvenile prostitution arrests in the United States are girls and 57% is black children which is

actually

than any other racial group and this figure has gone up.

It was a few years ago 52% and now it's 57%.

are

And I just want to clarify that even though black children and black girls meaning also girls of color disproportionately arrested on prostitution charges,

we

know that this isn't solely an issue of disproportionate

contact between police and children of color and we know

that because when we look at jurisdictions like King

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County, Washington, where they stopped arresting minors

on prostitution charges but they're still proactively taking efforts to identify children who are sex trafficked, that still children of color, particularly black children are still disproportionately impacted. So we see 62% of sex trafficking victims are black but black people are only 7% of the population.

But black adults and black children and we see the same

thing in Portland, Oregon.

Not the same numbers but similar numbers in Portland, Oregon.

So even in places where black people are small percentage of the population, they still tend to be

large percentages of those who are trafficked for sex. So I think it's also important to not just look at our responses to the children but again what are our responses to the perpetrators, what are our responses to the people who are buying these children. And so advocacy unfortunately a lot more needs to be done in order to collect this data, but in the jurisdictions where they are collecting the data, we see that often the buyers are white men. Often they are affluent and have money. Many are married and have day jobs. King County has done quite a bit research on this topic

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and they found that in their area many buyers purchase sex between the hours of 2 to 4 p.m. which meant that not only do they have jobs but they were at work whenever they were making these arrangements to buy children.

children

And often I'm not sure if you guys have seen but more and more we see articles in the newspapers detailing scenes and arrests of people who are purchasing

for sex and oftentimes if you look at those articles you'll see the people being arrested are teachers, they're doctors, they're lawyers, they're judges, they're police officers.

And it's quite the juxtaposition when we look at not just who is being trafficked as opposed to who are the sex buyers, but also our responses because, again, we see going back to this slide, you know, so many girls are being arrested on prostitution charges.

arrested.

So many black children are being arrested on prostitution charges, but when we look at different jurisdictions, oftentimes buyers are not being

They aren't being fined.

There's no accountability.

when

They've actually heard from survivors who have said

the police came to their hotel room or whenever they were, they told the buyers to leave and then the

survivor was arrested.

And again more data needs to be collected but in Pennsylvania I think the numbers are something like

80%

of arrests are for -- regarding sex trafficking or in the sex trade are for those who are selling sex where those who buy it, it's about 20, 18% so we definitely see where the focus is.

And so I think it's important to recognize that

because

what does that mean for these girls and their trauma.

One, it's reinforcing messages that their traffickers are telling them, that buyers are telling them --

excuse

me -- that the other perpetrators of violence are telling them, right?

Whether it's a teen dating violence situation, it's their boyfriend, whether it's another form of child sexual abuse, we know that often child predators will tell the girls it's their fault.

Traffickers will tell them, you will go to jail.

So when the survivors are not met with trauma informed response it's causing them to have to figure out

they're

still having these feelings, they're still having this
trauma so it's causing them to have to figure out how
to
cope with that trauma on their own, and it's just
victimization.
fuelling the cycle of criminalization and

And so it's important to I think also talk about not

35

just the trauma that girls have encountered prior to
entering the justice system but what happens to them
once they're involved in the justice system, what
is
happens when they're in detention, and so part of it
so
as we talked about earlier that because historically
many males have been involved in the juvenile justice
system, the system is really not designed for them.
It doesn't necessarily take into account their
different
physical needs or their emotional needs and their
conditions
differences in how they respond to programs,

of confinement are problematic because they can exacerbate girls' trauma so think about in some places strip searches are still conducted which can be invasive even if you're in a healthy place let alone if you have experienced something traumatic. Things like shackles, shackles if you've been in places where you've been sexually violated and people have held you down or grabbed your wrist then shackling can be very jarring and girls have said it can be humiliating and it can be loud. And things we don't necessarily think about. So these systems are designed for order and control and so kids are being told when to eat, when to sleep, and so that loss of autonomy and once again having someone else exercising control over them and how they go about

their day can also be triggering to survivors.

Excuse me.

So and then we also know that arrests for survivors of violence just like for other people can have other consequences, so for example, it can impact access to housing, to jobs, and to education.

So why does the pipeline exist?

because So we just want to talk about this a little bit

although we're talking about systems and the need for systems reform, we know that these systems and what girls are experiencing are operating in a larger, broader context, and so some of the things that we need

to keep in mind are about mythologies of girls of color.

For example these myths that girls of color are hypersexual or fast.

Misunderstandings about families of color.

Often there's a misconception when families of color don't care about their kids when they really do.

And lack of data, so getting more information about girls of color particularly things that we know that they're experiencing and also we have on here there's no

screening required for sexual abuse or trafficking.

There's also no -- currently no data collected on the number of pregnant youth in custody but there's a bill

that passed both the house and senate, that the two
that

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house and senate are working to reconcile so we are
looking forward to that bill becoming law for a number
of reasons, but one of them is that it would address
those two components.

It does create in there a requirement that kids coming
into systems be screened for abuse and trafficking and
if they're found to be survivors to be directed away
from the justice system and be connected with services
and there's also a requirement in there to collect

data

on the number of pregnant youth in custody.

of

And the last one I just want to mention is just kind

glamorize

again our overall culture and how even things that we
don't think about like the language we use can

awareness

exploitation but it can also be used to raise

so things to think about is, you know, for technology

--

not technology but terminology right now you probably heard teens who say things when they look good that their faces bead or a lot of euphemisms for sex or violence.

So some of these things have permeated our culture that we don't think about can also reinforce these messages.

So we just wanted to talk about before we wrap up ways that we can dismantle the pipeline.

So one of them is definitely identification.

You know, reframing our approach to asking questions,

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asking girls what's going on and when we see behavior that our system will often deem as delinquent or a misbehavior really looking behind that behavior and asking questions.

Let's see.

Creating and implementing prevention and intervention programming in schools is definitely important and I

just wanted to point out that this is not just focused on girls but also including programs and interventions for boys and their treatment of girls.

For example, California now has a law regarding sex trafficking that sex trafficking prevention must be taught in schools, so that curriculum includes not

just

hopefully identifying children who are being

trafficked

but also trying to help educate kids about trafficking so hopefully they themselves will not be trafficked

but

also about educating young boys so hopefully they will not become buyers or traffickers.

Again, developing alternatives to detention, criminalization, and making sure that those messages

--

that those alternatives are really responses and

trauma

informed and tailored to meet the specific needs of girls.

Multidisciplinary response is key.

As we've been discussing, you know, the girls who are

at

risk of being pushed into the system or currently involved in the system are often touched by multiple different systems or have experienced multiple forms of trauma, so it's really important that we not be siloed in our responses to them and then also changing the conversation with our children and our community.

One of the things we've done here at Rights4Girls is we started a campaign called as no such thing as a child prostitute and the purpose is to eliminate the notion of the term "child prostitute" both in language as well as the law and so we partnered with a survivor on that, launched a campaign, an online campaign and got the Associated Press to agree to change their style guidelines on how they report on victims of child sex trafficking and partnered with communities like California and advocates who are working in different jurisdictions to be able to change the culture around responses to trafficking survivors as well as change the law so that they are being treated as survivors of a crime and not being criminalized.

it's
place
So we just wanted to wrap up and just say we think
great that there are so many conversations taking
place across the country now about racial justice,
incarceration and the need to reform our criminal
justice and juvenile justice systems but unfortunately

40

boys
systems
these conversations tend to really focus on men and
and so the reality of the Abuse to Prison Pipeline is
that girls of color are being impacted by these
too and on an increasing basis, and so we just need to
make sure that these efforts that are taking place
contemplate them and are also geared towards meeting
their needs as well.

we
So this is just a list of resources, some sites that
wanted to share or we thought might have some helpful
information.

I just wanted to point out that on our website I think

sexual
reports.
color,
questions.
of
you

there's a link shared to accession the report on Abuse to Prison Pipeline but we also have other We have other fact sheets that talk about the violence that girls of color experience providing different solutions to some of the things that they face as well as talking about how these systems like child welfare and juvenile justice overlap and impact girls of particularly survivors of violence. It looks like we have some time to take some I think that people have been typing them in so we're happy to answer them now but also in case we can't get to them all because of time or in case anyone thinks some questions later or if we can be a resource in any way here's my and Rebecca's contact information and

can feel free to reach out to us.

>> Thank you.

one
Actually we have five or six questions and the first
is coming from Victoria and she's asking, I was
wondering if sexual abuse can alter metabolism.
I was assaulted at a young age and started eating as
comfort.

she
Growing up she was the only one sexually abused and
believes her metabolism may have been affected.

>> Thank you so much for your question.

where
So this is actually a relatively new area of study
physicians and researchers are really trying to delve
into the impact of trauma on DNA as well as health
outcomes.

for
So I mean there's definitely a lot of research showing
that many individuals use food as a coping mechanism
trauma, so we are noticing that individuals who are
struggling with obesity, often there's a history of
abuse and trauma.

that
In terms of actually changing the genetic makeup, it's
highly likely based on the studies we've seen that the
experiences of childhood sexual abuse, it is likely
could have caused a change in metabolism.

It could have been made the person more likely to

develop chronic illnesses such as hypothyroidism but

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figure
Rights4Girls
would

that's something researchers are still trying to
out and unfortunately we're not doctors at
and we don't want to give any misinformation but I
say definitely check in with your physicians and as
research is growing after this initial study by
Dr. Harris, I would say there's probably some link.

>> Wonderful.

many
prior

Angela is asking if there is any information on how
of these girls disclose or report the sexual abuse
to being charged and/or arrested.

that

>> Yeah, I'm not aware of anything that's collected
data, no.

>> Okay.

local

>> Annika is asking how can we assist Cyntoia at a

level?

>> That's a great question.

Definitely continue to raise awareness about her experience and her current incarceration.

Unfortunately -- I know that last year there was a petition that was being sent to the governor as well

as

her attorneys, have filed for clemency and it was just recently shared that that request has been denied, so

taking

I'm not sure what steps her lawyers are currently

to

when someone is represented by counsel we really try

follow the lead of their attorney so we can make sure

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to

that we're not doing anything that would be contrary

the case or would interfere with the case and so since that announcement of clemency was very recent, I think it just happened last week I'm not quite sure what her attorneys are taking and what they're asking advocates

to take but we're definitely trying to find out more information on that so if you want to shoot us a follow-up e-mail, then we're happy to keep you looped in, but right now, yeah, I'm not sure.

I think it's recouping after the denial of clemency to decide next steps and approaches but in the meantime I think continuing to raise awareness about Cyntoia so people continue to remember her and want to assist her and gain understanding of child sex trafficking is important and helpful.

>> Another question.

How are immigrant children impacted?

>> So immigrant children are definitely impacted by trafficking because -- excuse me -- and part of that

is

because they -- you know, they also have vulnerabilities, right?

So I think one of the things that really makes it difficult for immigrant children who are being trafficked is traffickers will go after not only vulnerable children but children they think are

unlikely

to disclose or report.

So definitely some of the experiences that immigrant children are having with law enforcement they've heard from different partners there's definitely been a drop in reporting of sexual assault.

I think in California a group just did a study, and I think like the number dropped drastically.

So I think that's one way where children are impacted. I think it's probably -- from what we're finding from our partners in different jurisdictions is it can increase their being a target for assault at least for trafficking where perpetrators are specifically trying to find people that they think they're less likely to disclose, and it is actually leading to less

disclosure

survivors

because of fears on top of all the fears that

have of not being believed and the shame that can come and the trauma, there's also the additional concerns that come with being an immigrant that we're finding makes them also less likely to disclose in this recent climate.

>> Great.

Our next question comes from Loeda.

Can the CPS, DCS help this girl?

>> That can -- I'm not quite sure.

So I think CPS, child protection services.

45

DCS isn't a term that we're familiar with.

But in terms of how child protection services can help,

I think again I think there are several ways.

One is I'll say that there's -- has been legislation to

require that any child welfare state or local or any child welfare system, organization that receives title for funding have to report when children go missing

from

their custody, and so that has increased the response

as

well as there's also been legislation that has

changed,

led states to change their definition of abuse and neglect to allow them to respond to any trafficked

child

because before unless a child -- in most jurisdictions

able

unless a child was being trafficked by a parent or guardian, then most child welfare systems were not to respond.

and

So now because of this law we're seeing that jurisdictions are changing their definition of abuse neglect so that there isn't that restriction so that's increasing the response.

a

And definitely as we said earlier, asking those questions if we see -- if they're seeing behavior from child, you know, finding out what's going on, training to the family so like therapeutic foster care, so

trying

to make sure that children who have experienced trauma and violence are placed with families that understand,

46

been

you know, how that can impact them and that they've equipped to help that child as opposed to they don't know what to do so they're going to call the police.

Those are the main things we've been seeing.
We've also seen child welfare systems in different jurisdictions really partnering with these other systems.

Excuse me, so that they can better adjust the needs of these girls and hopefully they not be pushed into the system or if they are in the system trying to figure out them.

if there's other ways other than detention to help
And we found that that's been helpful because that really increases the sharing of information and understanding for girls' situations, and for example, not just thinking of them as a delinquent child but understanding, oh, this girl had this family situation and she has experienced this problematic situation and just really giving more context.

>> Our last question is coming from Scotty.
Are there any training programs aimed at police or social workers that help them recognize trauma, ACES, or sexual abuse?

>> I'm sorry.

I didn't hear all that.

Could you repeat that one please.

47

trauma,
>> Are there any training programs aimed at police or social workers that work to help them recognize

adverse childhood experiences or sexual abuse?

>> So the answer is yes.

I think it really depends on which -- what area you're in.

Like what city in terms of who is doing that training and what it looks like.

better
So I think that's another one that maybe we could

answer off line so whoever had that question wants to e-mail myself or Rebecca and let us know kind of what jurisdiction you're in or what locality and we can try to connect you with people who are doing trainings to either police or social workers or whatever particular segment that you're looking for and try to get you connected.

>> Wonderful.

We have run out of time again.

Rebecca,
If you have any other questions for Cherice or

to
the

you see their contact information, and you are going
be receiving a follow-up e-mail and it will contain
link to the webinar recording, to the PowerPoint slide
and also the link to a brief survey.

Be on the lookout for that.

I want to thank our presenters today, Cherice and

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Rebecca.

You have done a wonderful job.

Thank you so much for joining us.

And everybody else for participating in today's
session.

I also want to thank our closed captioner, Jayne has
done a wonderful job, and I want to recognize Justine
Robillard.

She's our staff for her technical support, Breckan.

She has done an amazing job managing the chat box and
thank you for joining us and I hope that you continue
to

support through these events and webinars.

Thank you, everybody, and have a great afternoon.

>> Thank you so much.

[This text is being provided in a lightly edited
format.]

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