

Action Research Project Addressing the Relationship between Running Away and Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

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Partnership Project between Barnardo's and Paradigm Research funded by Comic Relief

Format of the Presentation

- Brief introduction to the action research project addressing the relationship between running away and CSE.
- Outline of the what the action research provides.
- Exploration of the relationship between running away and CSE:
 - CSE following running away;
 - running away following CSE; and
 - other links between running away and CSE

What the Action Research Project Provides

- Addresses previous gaps in evidence-base
- Presents the perspectives and experiences of CYP who have experienced running away and CSE under the age of 16
- Presents the perspectives of professionals working directly with CYP who have experienced running away and CSE under the age of 16
- Explores the relationship between running away and CSE
- Identifies causality
- Provides indications of prevalence
- Diversity issues
- Identifies effective practice with CYP who run away and experience CSE
- Identifies factors that hinder effective practice with CYP who run away and experience CSE
- Identifies gaps in national and local policy and practice
- Offers evidence-based learning and recommendations that are incorporated into national policy and practice responses
- Produces a final report, executive summary, practitioner toolkit and policy brief
- Includes comprehensive dissemination at the local and national level to facilitate project findings being incorporated into local and national policy and practice

CSE as a Risk of Running Away

"If I hadn't have left home, then the things that happened to me wouldn't have happened because I would have been in a safe environment. ... If you leave home and spend time in dangerous places, it is more likely that you are going to get raped and more likely that you are going to get sexually exploited."

Leanne

CSE as a Survival Strategy of Running Away

"If you're on the streets and you're begging for money or something like that ... people will see that you are vulnerable and will see that you are desperate for money and they will offer you it [money]. Men aren't shy about offering you money or something like that. ... They'll say 'do you want to come into this toilet with me? I've got some money; I'll give you 20 quid'. And 20 quid's very tempting when it took you all day to make a couple of quid. 20 quid for ten minutes is very tempting for a young person."

Ben

Perpetrators Exploiting the Vulnerability of Young Runaways

"If kids are on the streets, if they run away or their parents kick them out, there are adults out there who will take advantage of them and 'cos you've got nowhere else to go, you'll do it [have sex with them]. ... It's better than sleeping out and getting raped by someone you don't know who could do anything to you. ... There's always someone who will take advantage of you. When you're a kid, it's hard to say no to an adult who says they want to help you and offers you a place to stay 'cos what other choice do you have?"

Lily

Running Away to Seek Attention and Care

"I ran away because I felt unwanted and I wanted attention."
Nicola

"Cos you feel like you're on your own [when you feel uncared for] so you just want somebody else there for you. ... Pretty much anyone would do at that time when you feel that low."
Shar

"Running from hate to what you think is love."
Jasmine

Running Away and Spending Time with Friends Involved in CSE

"They'd [Shar's friends] like meet them [older males] in the park or on the streets. They'd [the older men] would ask for my number and my friends would give it to them."

Shar

Running Away to be with an Older Boyfriend or Girlfriend

"She was 22. ... I hadn't had sex before, my first time was with her. ... I used to run away so that I could see her."

Leo

"I slept in the night shelter for just one night and then they found out me age and I wasn't allowed to stay there and so the next night me and me boyfriend slept out on the street ... for about two months."

Abi

Running Away because of the Desire to Have Sex

"I felt like just wanted in way that I had never felt wanted before: like more of a lust than love. ... And then when I was with a guy, I felt like I was being loved in a way that I hadn't been loved by my parents and stuff. ... I liked those feelings of being wanted and the sex and how it made me feel and I wanted those feelings."

Tom

Running Away to Escape CSE

"I ran away so me X [the young person's relative] couldn't find me and couldn't make me do all that stuff. ... There was no-one to help me with it all so all I could think to do was run away and be somewhere where he [the young person's relative] couldn't find me."

Nicole

Running Away Because of Responses to Disclosures of CSE

"The police woman acted like she had already made her judgement before she had already met me so I stood up and said 'I've had enough of this' and that was the first time I ran away. ... They [the young person's family] don't believe me; their attitude is 'we don't believe you'."

Lucy

"My dad barely looked at me. ... I couldn't bear being somewhere where I felt like I wasn't wanted and didn't fit."

Lauren

Running Away Because of the Pressure of a Police Operation

"It was all the questions that did it [led the young person to run away during the police investigation]. ... Some days I just couldn't take any more and I ran away to have a break from it."

Jasmine

"It was just all so stressful: being asked time and time again about the men [who had sexually exploited the young person], worrying what the court hearing was going to be like. ... I just had to get away from it all."

Tom

Drugs and Alcohol in the Relationship between Running Away and CSE

"I didn't go for the fun or to see those people [who sexually exploited the young person]; I went for the drink and drugs ... to take like all my feelings away. ... I felt like not good enough ... and I felt depressed."

Shar

"I got off my face as this was the only way I was gonna get through the evening. ... We knew what was going to happen so we would just think 'need to get wasted for this' and enjoy the drugs they gave us."

Ben

The Role of the Internet in the Relationship between Running Away and CSE

"I saw him and suddenly got attracted to him and added him on Facebook, started talking to him [messaging via Facebook] and we got together. ... I went round to his house and we watched a film and then obviously had sex."

Tina

"I wanted a boyfriend and met this man on Facebook who said he wanted to be my boyfriend. He arranged for a taxi to come and pick me and up and told me not to tell anyone where I was going."

Liam

Children and Young People's Perception of Risk

"I really needed to talk to someone about it [being gay]. ... I wanted to talk to other guys. ... Guys were just like helping me out and making sure I was okay. But then one guy was like 'have you ever had sex with a guy before?' ... and he was like 'do you want to try?' ... I always felt like I was safer checking men out first out on the internet 'cos on the internet I could see if I liked them first."

Tom

Parents Role in Running Away and CSE

"When I ran away when I was young [aged nine], I got sexually abused [through selling sex] because my real mum, she was doing prostitution so I thought 'oh, if me mam does, it must be okay' because it's normal to take after your mum isn't it? ... So I did that and ever since then I've just ran, ran, ran."

Maria

Trust and the Relationship Between Running Away and CSE

"You run away because you want to trust someone and find someone to trust and then you think you've found someone to trust so you trust them and then you realise that they made you trust them you so they could exploit you."

Ellie

Feeling Isolated and Experiencing Running Away and CSE

"[If] I could have talked to them [other gay young people] I wouldn't have gone on to the internet to talk to someone about how I felt. So if I hadn't done that, I would haven't got into the whole sex[ual exploitation] and running away thing."

Tom

"I've always felt like part of me was missing. ... As a small kid I didn't feel all there and I didn't feel like I belonged to anyone."

Lauren

Experiencing running away and CSE and Becoming a Sex Worker

If you've done it [had sex] for somewhere to stay, you might as well do it for money – it's the same thing really as you're only having sex so you can survive."

Fay

"It's also the uncertainty of 'where's my next meal coming from? Where am I sleeping? ... If you don't have cash there, all of these things are an issue and they are an obstacle that you need to overcome. Now the quickest way to get money, as I'm sure most people will know, is to sell sex."

Ben

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