

SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES FOR THE VICTIMS

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TRAFFICKING AS A SOCIAL CONSEQUENCE





ABUSE EXPERIENCED IN CHILDHOOD

At home		Outside of home	
Psychological abuse	49 %	Psychological abuse	65 %
Physical abuse	29 %	Physical abuse	34 %
Sexual abuse	5 %	Sexual abuse	15 %

Source: Survey of women involved in prostitution. Estonian Institute of Open Society, 2005

EXPERIENCE OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Have you experienced sexual intercourse against your will (rape)?	
Yes, once	26 %
Yes, repeatedly	16 %
No	35 %
Cannot say	23 %
65 % have experienced rape	

How old were you during your first experience of forced sex?	
Up to 12 years	8 %
13-14 years	34 %
15-16 years	24 %
17-18 years	18 %
19-21 years	11 %
Above 21	5 %

Source: Survey of women involved in prostitution. Estonian Institute of Open Society. 2005

VICTIMS ARE SAYING:

“My mother forced me to have sex with strangers [when I was 11 and 12 years old]. Strangers would force and beat me.”

“My mother’s half brother raped me when I was eleven.”

More than half of respondents (60%) reported some form of violence prior to being trafficked, with 32% having been sexually abused and 50% physically assaulted.

Source: Stolen smiles: a summary report on the physical and psychological health consequences of women and adolescents trafficked in Europe. The London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, 2006. 207 women from 14 countries interviewed

TRAFFICKING INVOLVES PROLONGED AND REPEATED TRAUMA

Experiences of violence during trafficking

Type of violence	Yes (%) (n=207)	Yes (n)
Physical violence	76 %	158
Sexual violence	90 %	186
Both types	71 %	148
Threats during trafficking		
Woman was threatened	89 %	185
Woman's family was threatened	36 %	75

Source: *Stolen smiles: a summary report on the physical and psychological health consequences of women and adolescents trafficked in Europe*. The London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, 2006. 207 women from 14 countries interviewed

PHYSICAL HEALTH SYMPTOMS

Easily tired – 82 %

Neurological symptoms – headaches (81%), memory difficulty (63%)

Gastrointestinal symptoms – stomach or abdominal pain (63%), regular vomiting, diarrhoea.

Cardiovascular symptoms – chest and/or heart pain (50%).

Musculoskeletal symptoms – back pain (69%), dental problems (58%)

Skin problems – 1/3 reported dry skin, itches, sexually transmitted infections, consequences of unhygienic conditions and stress.

NB! Women's symptoms subside significantly within the first month to six weeks, deleterious health complications that require medical attention often persist, even after several months of receiving care.

SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH SYMPTOMS

More than 60% of respondents reported **pelvic pain, vaginal discharge** and **gynaecological infection**, and one-quarter reported **vaginal pain** at the first interview.

Candidiasis (33%), **trichomoniasis** (12%) and **bacterial vaginosis** (11%).

A **positive HIV** diagnosis was self-reported by 2% of women.

Induced abortions – 17%

Women's concerns about fertility - most prominent among the risks to infertility is chlamydia infection.

MENTAL HEALTH SYMPTOMS (A)

Depression symptoms	Interview 1 (%)	Interview 3 (%)
No interest in things	73	41
Hopelessness about the future	76	59
Worthlessness feelings	78	52
Loneliness	88	72
Depression/ Very sad	95	75
Suicidal thoughts	38	6
Anxiety symptoms		
Fearful	85	43
Tense or keyed up	84	37
Terror/ panic spells	61	8
Restlessness	67	19
Scared suddenly without reason	75	24
Nervousness or shakiness inside	91	51

MENTAL HEALTH SYMPTOMS (B)

Hostility symptoms	Interview 1 (%)	Interview 3 (%)
Urges to beat, injure or hurt someone	36	8
Urges to break or smash things	29	8
Frequent arguments	57	8
Annoyed/ Irritated easily	83	19
Temper outbursts that cannot be controlled	67	10

VICTIMS ARE SAYING:


“[I am] scared for no reason. I think that someone is behind my door, window. Someone will find me, pick me up, beat me and kill me. I have run off and they are looking for me. My mood changes all the time. I cannot control my mind.”

“Sometimes I don’t see the point in doing anything. It seems useless. When someone has controlled you and made decisions for you for so long, you can’t do that yourself anymore.”

“I wish to forget, but this is impossible. This experience will remain an eternal burden.”

INDIVIDUAL SYMPTOMS ASSOCIATED WITH PTSD

- Recurrent thoughts / memories of terrifying events
- Recurrent nightmares
- Sudden emotional or physical reaction when reminded of the most hurtful or traumatic event
- Unable to feel emotions
- Jumpy, easily startled
- Difficulty concentrating
- Trouble sleeping
- Avoiding activities that remind of traumatic or hurtful event
- Inability to remember part of most traumatic or hurtful event
- Avoiding thoughts or feelings associated with the traumatic events.

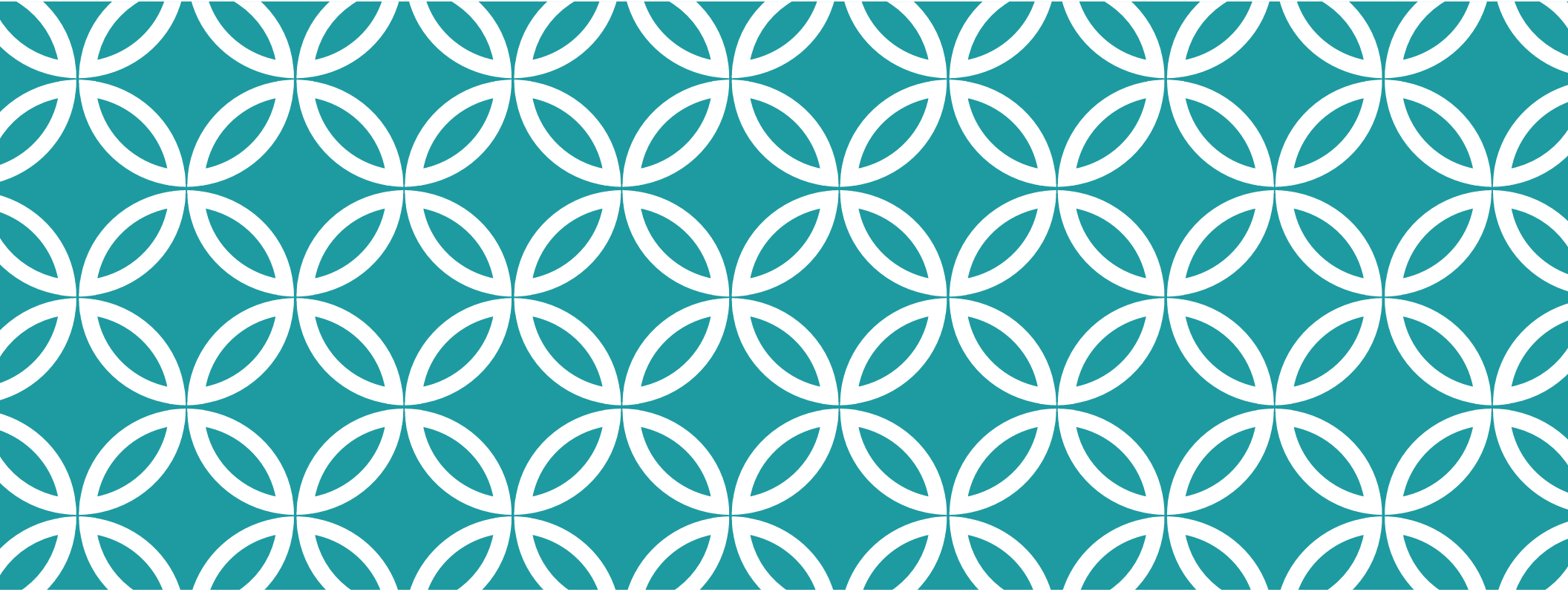


„By accepting human trafficking or just turning our heads, what we effectively do is put money in the pockets of the traffickers.

All they ask us to do is do nothing — to look away or pretend it isn't happening.”

STIGMATISATION, REJECTION

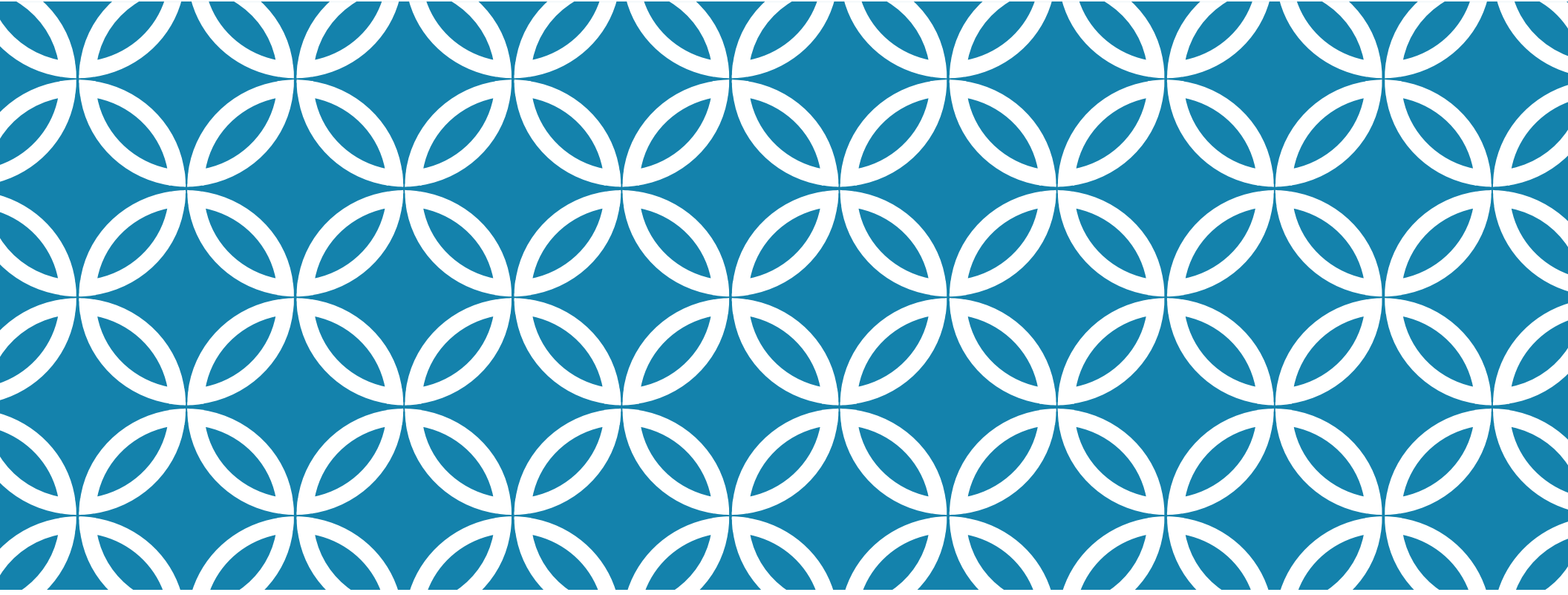
- ❖ Support groups for trafficked/prostituted women in Estonia:
 - biggest fear is that someone finds out about their past.
- ❖ Attitudes among social workers:
 - prejudices, stereotypical thinking, but also fear.
- ❖ Re-victimisation:
 - family, victim support personnel, police, prosecutor, judge.



FINALLY...



- Even though it is difficult to remove all the social consequences, especially the ones from the past, you can do your part today. Do it well. Get trained. Use manuals, no need to invent the wheel. Ask for sensitivity training if needed (Crime Victim's Directive!)
- Dealing with victim's reactions – be prepared, don't be surprised, and don't take anything personally ;-)
- Cooperation with specialised NGOs or other victim support organisations provides better opportunities to identify victims and to create trust between investigators etc and possible victims.



THANK YOU!

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