

My Life My Choice USA



Type of intervention



Group Work



Mentoring

Target group/s, level/s of prevention and sub-group/s:



Secondary prevention

Young People (12-17 Years), Young Adult (18-20 Years) | Female | Group Work, Mentoring
| English, Spanish



Tertiary prevention

Young People (12-17 Years), Young Adult (18-20 Years) | Female | Group Work, Mentoring
| English, Spanish

Target population

Girls aged 12 -18 years who have been sexually exploited or are at high risk of being exploited.

Delivery organisation (e.g. LFF UK, Prison Service of England and Wales)

My Life My Choice (MLMC), which is based in Boston, USA at the Justice Resources Institute.

www.fightingexploitation.org.

Mode and context of delivery

My Life My Choice (MLMC) provides a continuum of services to prevent CSEC in adolescent girls, spanning:

- CSEC prevention groups for vulnerable adolescent girls
- survivor mentoring to young victims of commercial sexual exploitation (CSEC)
- professional training

Services are provided in the birth or adoptive family home, in residential and foster care setting and in schools.

Level/Nature of staff expertise required (e.g. professional background)

Exploitation prevention groups are co-facilitated by a clinician/licenced mental health expert working with a survivor of the commercial sex industry.

Mentors need to be survivors of CSEC and do not require a professional qualification. They require special training in mentoring and CSEC.

Intensity/extent of engagement with target group(s)

Survivor mentoring: mentors meet their mentees weekly for an average of one to two hours. Relationships between mentors and mentees last over a period of years on a case by case basis.

Prevention groups: are held weekly for 10 weeks and each session lasts for approx. 90 minutes.

Description of intervention

My Life My Choice (MLMC) has the following goals:

- prevent commercial sexual exploitation of girls by empowering them with knowledge and skills to reduce the risk of exploitation
- increase identification of girls who are being commercially sexually exploited by training service providers to recognise signs and know how to respond
- decrease the number of girls being commercially sexually exploited by supporting victims as they exit exploitation and work to rebuild their lives
- improve community response to girls who have been commercially sexually exploited
- improve practice nationally in relation to CSEC

They work with girls aged 12 -18 years who have been, are currently being or are deemed to be at high risk of commercial sexual exploitation because of their past trauma and/or abuse histories combined with behaviours such as frequent running away. They use learning from practice to inform their training of others.

3 main programmes are provided:

Survivor mentoring: MLMC pairs survivor mentors with mentees to encourage their use of existing supports to exit the commercial sex industry. The mentor initially seeks to stabilise the girl's situation and provides continuing support, motivation and hope over time as she builds a new life.

Prevention groups: A 10 session curriculum is used to prevent commercial sexual exploitation among vulnerable adolescent girls. They are run on a weekly basis for groups of 8-12 girls, in schools, residential group homes and other community settings. Groups teach at risk girls how to recognise and avoid recruitment tactics of pimps and find a path out of exploitation. They tackle attitudes and perceptions as well as building self-esteem. Interactive methods and journaling are used.

Training for youth service providers: introductory and advanced training about the sex industry and its impact, risk factors/red flags and how to provide support are provided.

Evaluation

My Life My Choice (MLMC) has been reviewed by the California Evidence-based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare see www.cebc4cw.org/program/my-life-my-choice-mlmc.

There are no published peer-reviewed research studies or impact evaluations available currently. The model is recommended by the US Dept. of Justice and has been replicated in a number of States. The MLMC website describes examples of impact and influence www.fightingexploitation.org.

References

None currently available.

Contact details

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