



WESTCOAST CHILDREN'S CLINIC



Overview

Following information was gathered during the screening process from 200+ girls participating in MISSEY.

Demographics

- 98% of participants female
- 44% African American
- 24% Mixed race including African American
- 8% White
- 6% Asian
- 6% Latina
- 8% mixed race with Latin heritage
- 5 were born in other countries (4 Latin America and one from Thailand)
- 23% identified as a sexual minority (gay/lesbian/bisexual and questioning)
- 66% identified as heterosexual

Family/Institutionalization

- 67% reported being raised by biological or adopted families
- 53% of youth reported living in a group home at one time
- 59% were living in juvenile hall at the time of entry into the program
- 83% reported running away from home at least once

School and Employment

- 62% of youth reported attending school
- 51% reported being excellent students
- 30% of youth reported dropping out or no longer attending school
- 31% reported having a job

Legal Interaction

Youth are often criminalized for their exploitation

- 59% of youth were incarcerated in juvenile hall at the time of entry into the program
- 58% reported being arrested for solicitation
- 56% were on probation

Trauma History

- 43% of youth reported a history of physical or sexual assault
- 53% reported feeling unsafe

Health and Mental Health

Mental and overall health problems are 2–5 times higher than in the general population of adolescents. While youth report high rates of psychological distress, these are likely underestimates given the trauma that they have experienced.

- 25% of the group were clinically depressed*
- 3% of the youth are diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder*
- 4% of youth are diagnosed with Bipolar Disorder*
- 25% of youth had a history of suicide attempts that required hospitalization
- 52% had serious drug abuse problems
- 16% had been pregnant or had children

Conclusion

Commercially sexually exploited youth are extremely vulnerable and complex, and in need of specialized attention and services in order to recover and regain a sense of themselves.

For more information regarding the data presented here, or on information regarding commercially sexually exploited children and youth, please contact:

MISSEY, Inc. (Motivating, Inspiring, Supporting, and Serving Sexually Exploited Youth)
Nola Brantley, Executive Director
info@missey.org (510) 267-8840

WestCoast Children's Clinic
April D. Fernando, PhD, Director of Research and Training
afernando@westcoastcc.org (510) 269-9098

* This data represents a group of commercially sexually exploited youth that were served through WestCoast Children's Clinic's Screening, Stabilization and Transition program.