

# 2022

## YOUTH EXPERIENCES SURVEY



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Office of Sex Trafficking Intervention Research

# Acknowledgements

The 2022 YES Study was made possible by the following seven participating agencies:



The 2022 YES Study was funded by:



# Method

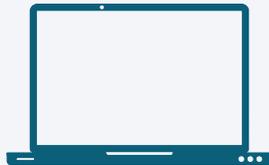
## Instrument

Participants completed the YES survey via paper-and-pencil surveys (n = 98, 91.6%) and online surveys utilizing SurveyMonkey (n = 9, 8.4%).



**91.6%**

Paper and Pencil Surveys



**8.4%**

Online Surveys

## Participants

**107**

homeless young adults from Phoenix, Tucson, and Flagstaff, Arizona, completed the Youth Experiences Survey. Participants completed surveys from seven agencies across the state. Participants of the YES study were receiving services from:

  
ourfamilyservices  
(n = 58, 54.2%)

  
NATIVE AMERICAN CONNECTIONS  
(n = 20, 18.7%)

  
HOMELESS YOUTH connection  
(n = 14, 13.1%)

  
SAAF  
Southern Arizona AIDS Foundation  
(n = 9, 8.4%)

  
one.n.ten  
Today's Youth. Tomorrow's Future.  
(n = 3, 2.8%)

  
Northland Family Help Center  
(n = 2, 1.9%)

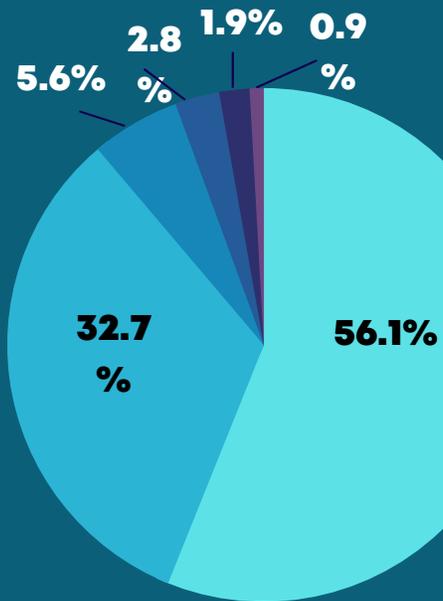
  
umom  
NEW DAY CENTERS  
(n = 1, 0.9%)

## Setting

Participants responded to the survey from housing programs (n = 43, 48.3%), street outreach (n = 22, 24.7%), resource or drop-in centers (n = 18, 20.2%), and this data was missing for six (6.7%) participants.

# Participants

(N = 107)



## GENDER

- Female
- Male
- Transgender
- Genderqueer
- Non-conforming
- Two-spirit

## AGE

The age of participants ranged from



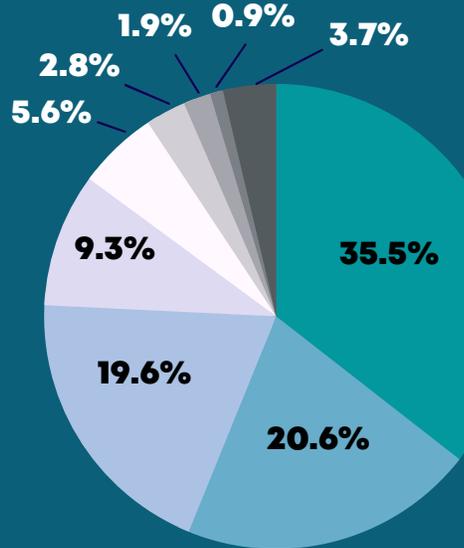
(M = 20.4, SD = 2.23)

The age of the homeless young adult participants ranged from 18 to 25 years old, with the average age being 20.4 years old (M = 20.4, SD = 2.23).

# Participants

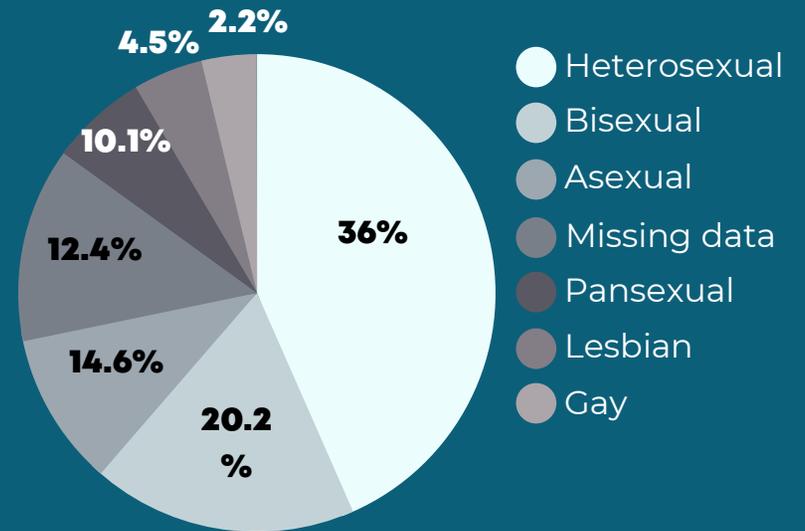
(N = 107)

## ETHNICITY



- Hispanic
- Caucasian
- African American
- American Indian
- Bi/Multiracial
- African/Caribbean
- Other
- Asian/Pac. Islander
- Missing

## SEXUAL ORIENTATION



- Heterosexual
- Bisexual
- Asexual
- Missing data
- Pansexual
- Lesbian
- Gay

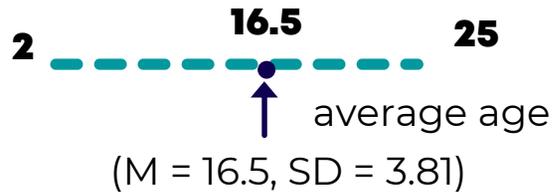
# Findings

(N = 107)

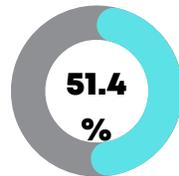
## HOMELESSNESS + HOUSING

Participants were asked questions regarding their experiences of homelessness, including age range of first homelessness experience, place of origin, and current housing situation.

Age of 1st homeless ranged from:

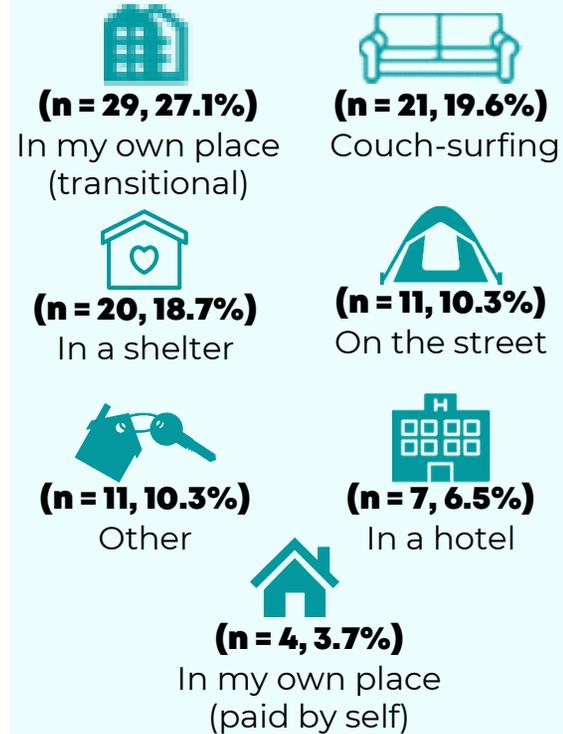


Fifty-five (51.4%) participants first experienced homelessness under the age of 18.



## Current Housing Arrangements

Participants reported currently living:



## Findings

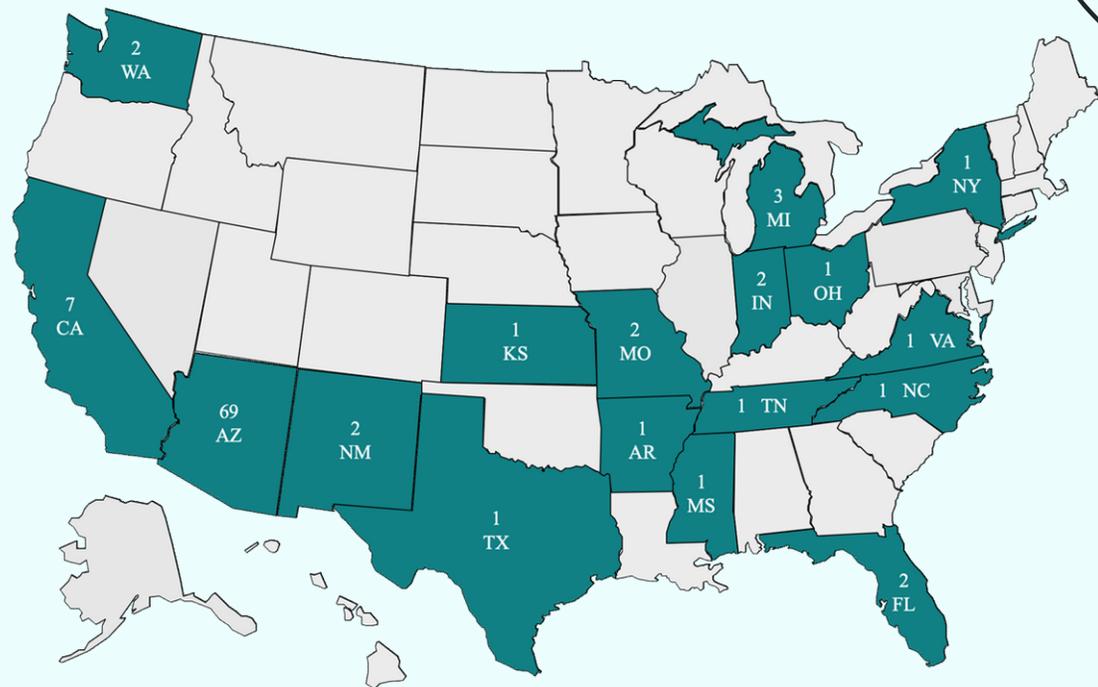
(N = 107)

### Place of Origin

Participants originated from around the United States, as well as from:

- Mexico (n = 1, 0.9%)
- Philippines (n = 1, 0.9%)

Over half (n = 61, 57%) of the participants reported that they were raised in the state of Arizona.

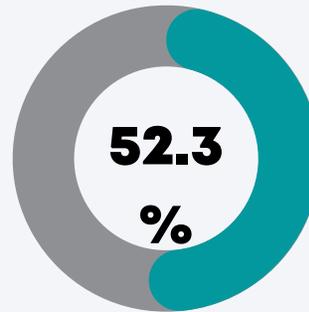


## Findings

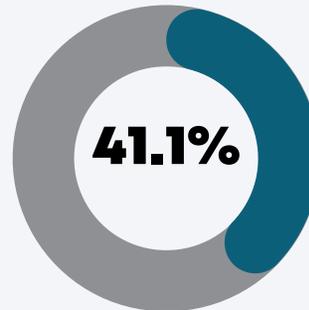
(N = 107)

### EDUCATION

The YES study asked a series of questions on educational attainment to gain a better understanding of the education challenges that homeless young adults face, and the underlying causes of potential low educational attainment.



Half (n = 56, 52.3%) of participants reported successfully graduating from High School.



Almost half of participants (n = 44, 41.1%) reported dropping out of school at one point in time during their educational journey.

# Findings

(N = 107)

## Dropping Out

Participants' reasons for dropping out of school included:



**(n = 20, 18.7%)**

I moved around a lot



**(n = 15, 14%)**

I was homeless



**(n = 14, 13.1%)**

Academic difficulty



**(n = 14, 13.1%)**

I had to work to support myself



**(n = 7, 6.5%)**

Bullying



**(n = 6, 5.6%)**

I was pregnant/  
had a baby



**(n = 2, 1.9%)**

I was expelled



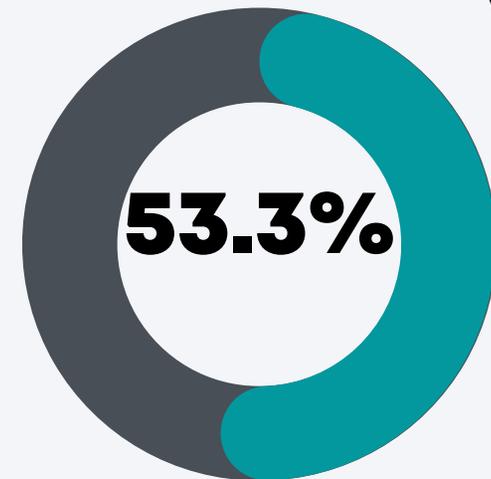
**(n = 1, 0.9%)**

I was using substances

## Findings (N = 107)

### SUBSTANCE USE

Questions about substance use are included in the YES study to explore use and addiction as possible challenges within this population. Questions on substance type, frequency of use and onset of use are included on the survey.

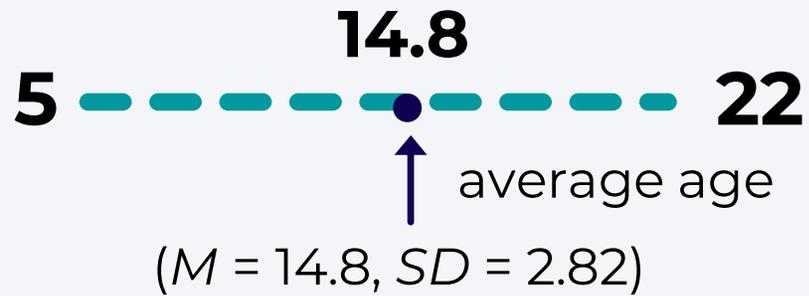


(n = 57) participants reported drug use.

## Findings

(N = 107)

Age of 1st drug use ranged from:



Of the 57 participants that reported drug use

**87.7%**

reported first drug use

**before the age of 18.**



# Findings

(N = 107)

## SUBSTANCES USED

Participants reported drug choice as:

| Substance used by type (N = 107) | n  | %     |
|----------------------------------|----|-------|
| Marijuana/Weed                   | 35 | 32.7% |
| Methamphetamines                 | 15 | 14%   |
| Heroin                           | 13 | 12.1% |
| Fentanyl                         | 10 | 9.3%  |
| Opiates/Oxy                      | 3  | 2.8%  |
| Cocaine/Crack                    | 2  | 1.9%  |
| Acid                             | 2  | 1.9%  |
| GHB                              | 1  | 0.9%  |
| MDA                              | 1  | 0.9%  |

## ADDICTION

Ten participants



9.3%

identified as having an **addiction to drugs.**

Of the 10 that identified as having an addiction,



(n = 3) began experiencing addiction **after** becoming homeless.

Nine participants



8.4%

identified as having an **addiction to alcohol.**

Of the 9 that identified as having an addiction,

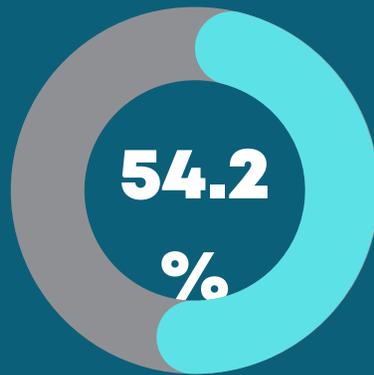


(n = 7) began experiencing addiction **after** becoming homeless.

## Findings

(N = 107)

Over half (n = 58)



of participants reported engaging in some form of self-harming behavior.

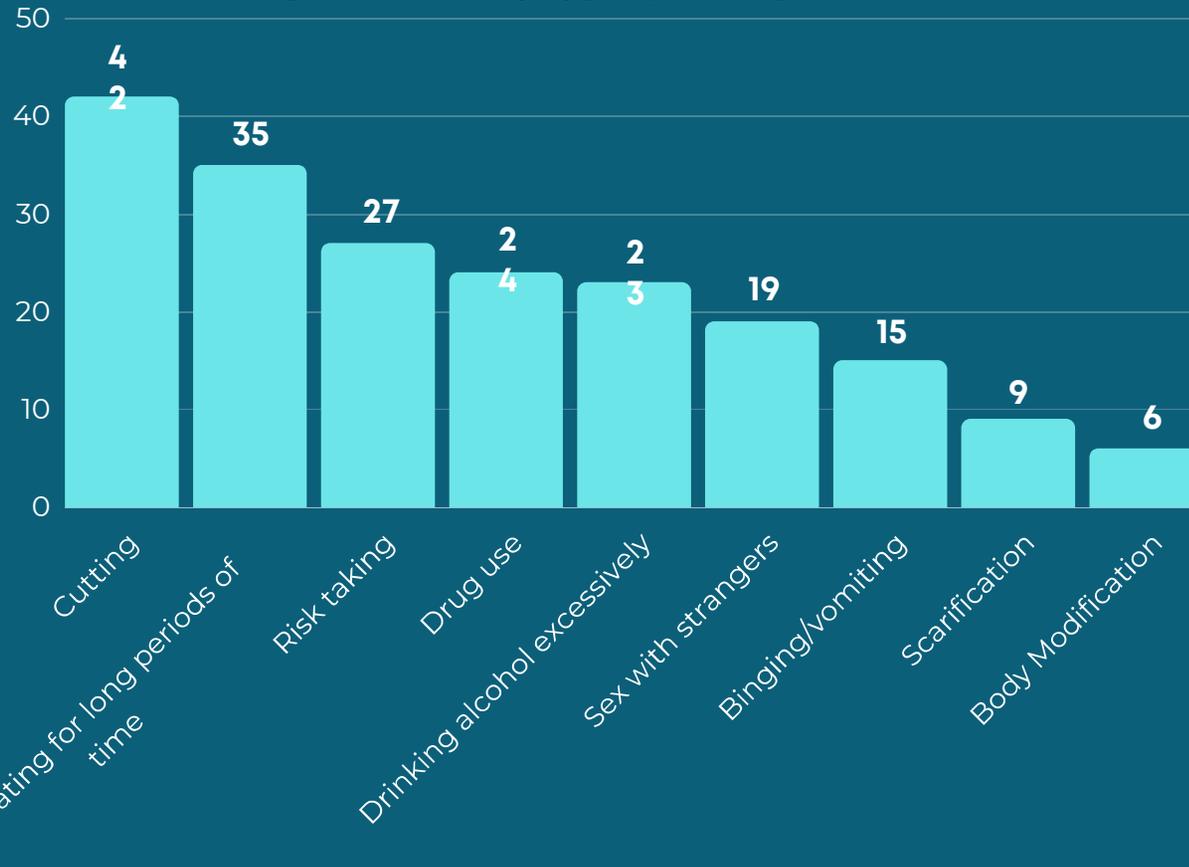
### SELF-HARM

- Homeless young adults have been found to face significant mental health challenges due to the instability of their living situations and acquisition of basic needs.
- Crisis situations that overwhelm the individual's ability to cope may result in self-harming or risk-taking behaviors, and suicidal ideations.
- To better understand the incidence of self-harm, the YES survey includes questions pertaining to self-harm engagement and suicidal ideations.

# Findings

(N = 107)

## Self-harming behavior, by type (N = 107)



# Findings

(N = 107)

## MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES

Fifty-five (61.8%) participants reported having a current mental health diagnosis, and over half (n = 47, 52.8%) reported more than one mental health diagnosis.



**44.9%**  
of participants  
reported  
attempting  
suicide.

| Mental Health Diagnosis, by type | n  | %     |
|----------------------------------|----|-------|
| Anxiety                          | 50 | 46.7% |
| Depression                       | 45 | 42.1% |
| PTSD                             | 26 | 24.3% |
| ADD/ADHD                         | 25 | 23.4% |
| Bipolar Disorder                 | 20 | 18.7% |
| Obsessive Compulsive Disorder    | 7  | 6.5%  |
| Antisocial Personality Disorder  | 6  | 5.6%  |
| Oppositional Defiant Disorder    | 6  | 5.6%  |
| Borderline Personality Disorder  | 5  | 4.7%  |
| Autism Spectrum Disorder         | 4  | 3.7%  |
| Schizophrenia                    | 3  | 2.8%  |
| Dissociative Identity Disorder   | 1  | 0.9%  |

## PHYSICAL HEALTH CHALLENGES

Fifty-six (52.3%) participants reported having a current medical issue, but only 23 (21.5%) participants reported receiving treatment.

## Findings

(N = 107)

The most common medical issues reported included:



**(n = 27, 25.2%)**  
Poor vision



**(n = 25, 23.4%)**  
Asthma



**(n = 17, 15.9%)**  
Dental problems



**(n = 10, 9.3%)**  
Chronic pain

## Findings

(N = 107)

### PREGNANCY + CHILDREN



Three (2.8%) participants were pregnant at the time of the 2021 YES Survey.

Almost one in four (n = 25, 23.4%) participants reported having children.



Child amount ranged between **1 to 4 children each** ( $M = 1.7, SD = 0.83$ ) with children reportedly living:

- In the participant's care (n = 13, 12.1%)
- With family (n = 9, 8.4%)
- In foster care (n = 2, 1.9%)
- Other (n = 1, 0.9%)

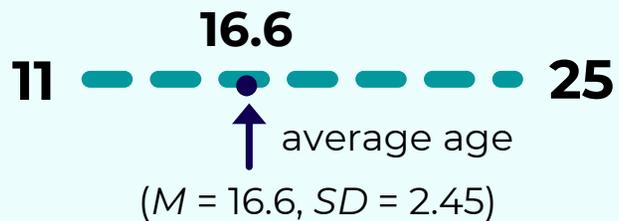
## Findings

(N = 107)

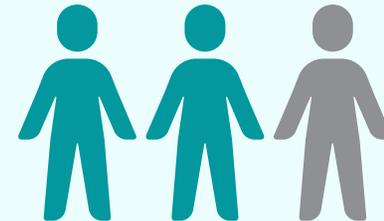
### KICKED OUT OF HOME

**71** (n = 76) of participants reported being kicked out of the home.

**%** The age of first time kicked out ranging between:



Of the 76 participants that reported being kicked out of the home

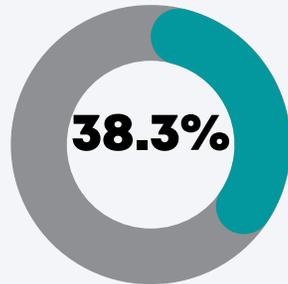


**Over 2 out of every 3**  
67.1% (n = 51) reported being kicked out **before the age of 18**

# Findings

(N = 107)

## VIOLENT RELATIONSHIPS



witnessed domestic violence in their household as a child.



### Witnessing Domestic Violence

Thirty-five (32.7%) participants witnessed their father hitting their mother, and 24 (22.4%) participants witnessed their mother hitting their father.

In adulthood, almost half of participants (n = 47, 43.9%) reported experiencing abuse in their relationship and 22.4% (n = 24) reported also being abusive toward their partner.

# Findings

(N = 107)

## MAKING MONEY

Participants were asked how they make money to live:

| Jobs, by type         | n  | %     |
|-----------------------|----|-------|
| Steady Job            | 53 | 49.5% |
| Side jobs for cash    | 24 | 22.4% |
| Selling my own things | 16 | 15%   |
| Other                 | 14 | 13.1% |
| Day labor             | 12 | 11.2% |
| Selling drugs         | 8  | 7.5%  |
| Panhandling           | 7  | 6.5%  |
| Selling stolen things | 4  | 3.7%  |
| Door-to-door sales    | 2  | 1.9%  |

Other ways to earn income reported by participants included asking family/friends/intimate partners, babysitting/caregiving for family, plasma donation, food delivery service, food stamps and unemployment, and part-time minimum wage work/gig work.

## Findings

(N = 107)

# ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES

Participants were asked questions from the Adverse Childhood Experiences Study, which examined exposure to different abuse and household dysfunction categories and the relationship to disease and early death in adulthood (Felitti, Anda, Nordenberg, Williamson, Spitz, Edwards, & Marks, 1998). Findings from that seminal ACEs study and subsequent studies demonstrated significant negative life outcomes, particularly for individuals who have experienced four or more ACEs.

**4**  
OR MORE  
ACEs



**12x**  
MORE  
LIKELY



- to attempt suicide
- to experience alcoholism
- to use illicit drugs
- to have 50 or more sexual partners
- to have a history of sexually transmitted infections

# Findings

(N = 107)

Participants reported experiencing between zero to ten ACEs, with the average number of ACEs being 5.1.



Eighty-seven participants reported experiencing



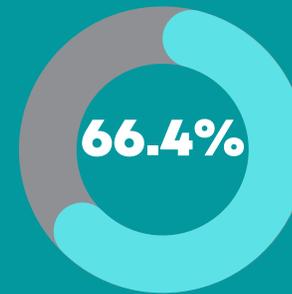
more than one ACE

Thirty-eight participants reported experiencing



between 0-3 ACEs

Seventy-one participants reported experiencing



4 or more ACEs

## Findings

(N = 107)

Participants reported experiencing:



**79.4%**

Parents Separated  
/Divorced



**62.6%**

Emotional  
Neglect



**61.7%**

Emotional  
Abuse



**58.9%**

Substance Abuse  
in the Household



**49.5%**

Mental Illness in  
the Household



**44.9%**

Physical  
Abuse



**43%**

Physical  
Neglect



**36.4%**

Incarcerated  
Household Member



**33.6%**

Sexual  
Abuse



**31.8%**

Witness Domestic  
Violence

# Findings

(N = 107)

## NEGATIVE LIFE EXPERIENCES

Participants reported experiencing additional life challenges, including:



### Impermanent/Unstable Living Conditions

- Participants reported
- Running away from home (n = 41, 38.3%)
  - Living in a foster care/group home setting (n = 20, 18.7%)
  - Spending time in residential treatment (n = 11, 10.3%).



### Justice System Involvement

- Participants reported:
- Experiencing negative contact with law enforcement (n = 26, 24.3%)
  - Involvement in the Juvenile Justice System (n = 13, 12.1%).



### Academic and Peer Difficulties

- Participants reported experiencing:
- Academic difficulty (n = 41, 38.3%)
  - Bullying by school peers (n = 32, 29.9%)
  - Harassment by peers (n = 20, 18.7%)
  - Being in Special Education classes (n = 16, 15%)
  - Being expelled from school (n = 19, 17.8%)
  - Gang affiliation (n = 13, 12.1%).

# Findings

(N = 107)

## POSITIVE LIFE EXPERIENCES

Participants also reported positive life experiences that can serve as protective factors against homelessness or long-term negative effects of trauma.

**Said no when drugs or alcohol were offered**  
(n = 58, 54.2%)

**Supportive, loving family/group of friends**  
(n = 38, 35.5%)

**Steady employment**  
(n = 37, 34.6%)

**Enrolled in school or technical program**  
(n = 36, 33.6%)

**Practiced safe sex**  
(n = 34, 31.8%)

**Feel secure standing up for/protecting self**  
(n = 34, 31.8%)

**Been part of a youth club or organization**  
(n = 30, 28%)

**Said no when pressured for sex**  
(n = 27, 25.2%)

**Healthy, safe and permanent place to live**  
(n = 27, 25.2%)

**Aware of community resources**  
(n = 26, 24.3%)

**Volunteered in the community**  
(n = 20, 18.7%)

**Trust/good relationship with law enforcement**  
(n = 14, 13.1%)

## Findings

### Human Trafficking Data

#### HUMAN TRAFFICKING DATA N = 107

Two out of every five



(n = 43, 40.2%) participants reported experiencing at least one form of exploitation.

Nineteen (17.8%) participants reported experiencing **both** sex trafficking and labor exploitation.

# Findings

## Human Trafficking Data

### SEX TRAFFICKING DATA N = 39

Over one in every three



(n = 39, 36.4%) participant reported experiencing sex trafficking.

The age of 1st sex trafficking experience ranged from



(M = 16.9, SD = 4.63)

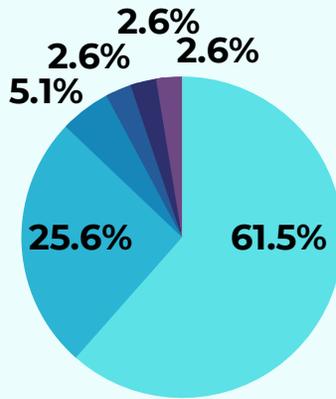
# 23.1%

(n = 9) of those that reported experiencing a sex trafficking situation were first sex trafficked under the age of 18.

UNDER  
**18**

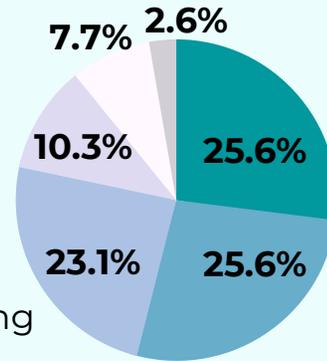
# Findings

## Human Trafficking Data



### GENDER

- Female
- Male
- Transgender
- Genderqueer
- Nonconforming
- Two-Spirit



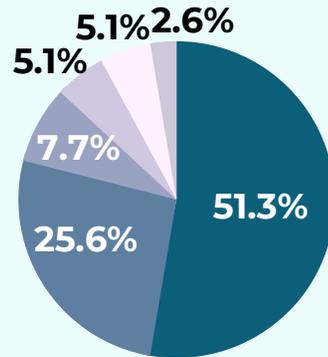
### ETHNICITY

- Caucasian
- African American
- Hispanic
- American Indian
- Bi/Multiracial
- African/Caribbean

### SEXUAL ORIENTATION

**43.6%**

identified as LGBTQIA+



- Heterosexual
- Bisexual
- Gay
- Pansexual
- Other
- Lesbian

# Findings

## Sex Trafficking (N = 39)

### SEX TRAFFICKING EXPERIENCE



**43.6%**

Place to stay



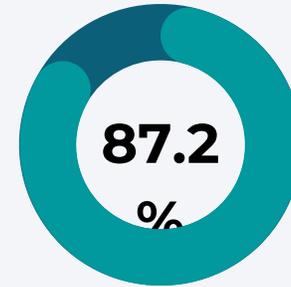
**35.9%**

Money



**35.9%**

Food



(n = 34) of participants identified as ever having a sex trafficker.



**28.2%**

Drugs



**20.5%**

Clothing



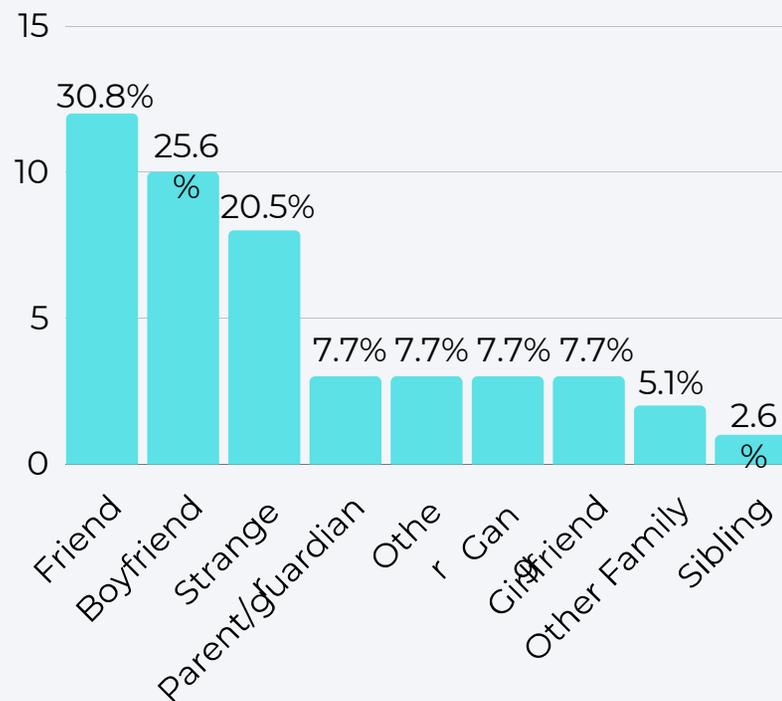
**17.9%**

Protection

## Findings

### Sex Trafficking (N = 39)

Participants identified their relationship to their sex trafficker as:



Participants wrote in "cousin" and "mother's boyfriend" next to other family member.



# 23.1%

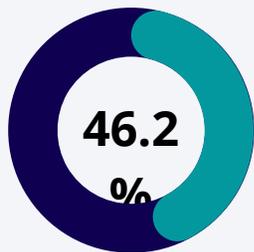
reported feeling afraid to leave the sex trafficking situation due to fear of violence or other threats of harm to self or family.

## Findings

### Sex Trafficking (N = 39)

## TECHNOLOGY

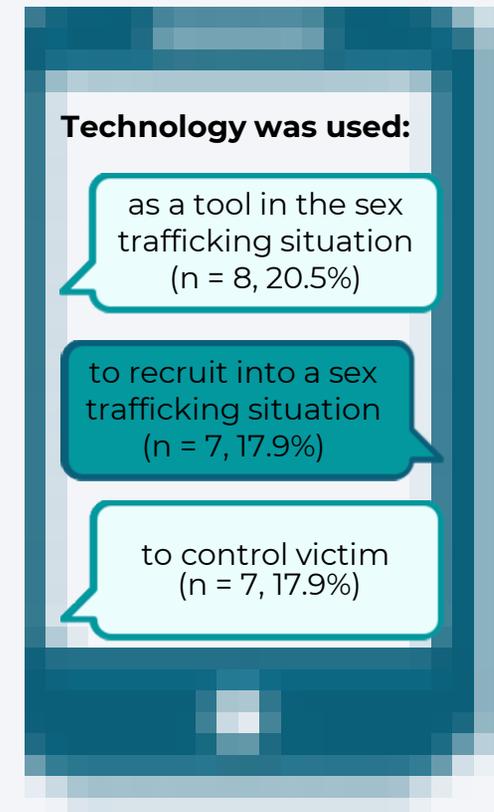
Technology is often used as a tool to exploit victims of sex trafficking. Participants were asked a series of questions to explore the role of technology in their exploitation experience.



(n = 18) reported that technology was used to facilitate their exploitation.

| Technology, by type | n  | %     |
|---------------------|----|-------|
| Smart phone         | 12 | 30.8% |
| Grindr              | 5  | 12.8% |
| OnlyFans            | 4  | 10.3% |
| Pornographic photos | 3  | 7.7%  |
| Facebook            | 3  | 7.7%  |
| Instagram           | 3  | 7.7%  |
| Craigslist          | 3  | 7.7%  |
| Tinder              | 2  | 5.1%  |
| Twitter             | 2  | 5.1%  |

Participants also wrote in “Chaturbate”, “Cash App” and “Snapchat” as online venues that have been used in their sex trafficking victimization



## Findings

### Sex Trafficking (N = 39)

#### LGBTQIA+ EXPERIENCE

Researchers were interested in better understanding the intersectionality of sexual orientation and sexual exploitation, and whether participants perceived sexual orientation to be a factor that created a unique vulnerability to being sex trafficked. Participants were asked a series of questions to explore this aspect of LGBTQIA+ homeless young adults' experiences of sexual exploitation.

**12.8%**

(n = 5) participants reported that they believed that identifying as LGBTQIA+ made them more vulnerable to being forced or coerced to exchange sex for something of value.

- *"Predators take advantage of you and see you as being more vulnerable."*
- *"People would tend to take advantage of the aspects."*

**10.3%**

(n = 4) reported that during their sex trafficking victimization, they were forced to engage in sex with persons of a different gender from their sexual preference.



# Findings

## Sex Trafficking (N = 39)

### SEX TRAFFICKED VS. NON-SEX TRAFFICKED PARTICIPANTS



**Drug Use**  
 $\chi^2(1, N = 106) = 4.13, p < .042$



**Self-harm**  
 $\chi^2(1, N = 107) = 12.76, p < .000$

**Not eating for long periods of time**  
 $\chi^2(1, N = 97) = 4.52, p < .034$

**Risk taking behavior**  
 $\chi^2(1, N = 97) = 8.06, p < .005$

**Drinking alcohol excessively**  
 $\chi^2(1, N = 97) = 5.36, p < .021$

**Sex with strangers**  
 $\chi^2(1, N = 97) = 7.82, p < .005$



**More than one mental health diagnosis**

$\chi^2(1, N = 97) = 4.12, p < .042$

**Depression**  
 $\chi^2(1, N = 97) = 6.02, p < .014$

**Suicide attempt**  
 $\chi^2(1, N = 103) = 5.62, p < .038$



**Current medical issue**  
 $\chi^2(1, N = 103) = 5.62, p < .038$

**Dental challenges**  
 $\chi^2(1, N = 101) = 6.94, p < .008$

**Poor vision**  
 $\chi^2(1, N = 101) = 11.01, p < .001$

There was no statistical significance between the sex trafficked group and the non-sex trafficked group with regard to age, gender, ethnicity, or sexual orientation. However, participants who experienced sex trafficking were significantly more likely to report:

### ACEs

**Having 4 or more ACEs**  
 $\chi^2(1, N = 105) = 16.31, p < .000$

**Substance abuse in the home**  
 $\chi^2(1, N = 104) = 22.23, p < .000$

**Emotional abuse**  
 $\chi^2(1, N = 102) = 10.09, p < .001$

**Emotional neglect**  
 $\chi^2(1, N = 102) = 4.73, p < .030$

**Physical abuse**  
 $\chi^2(1, N = 103) = 21.37, p < .000$

**Mental illness in the home**  
 $\chi^2(1, N = 104) = 13.67, p < .000$

**Physical neglect**  
 $\chi^2(1, N = 102) = 13.31, p < .000$

**Sexual abuse**  
 $\chi^2(1, N = 103) = 21.07, p < .000$

**Domestic violence against mother**  
 $\chi^2(1, N = 103) = 20.62, p < .000$

**Incarcerated family member**  
 $\chi^2(1, N = 105) = 9.87, p < .002$

# Findings

Sex Trafficking (N = 39)



Sex trafficked participants were significantly more likely than non-sex trafficked participants to report experiencing labor exploitation ( $\chi^2(1, N = 95) = 17.42, p < .000$ ).



**Kicked out of home**  
 $\chi^2(1, N = 107) = 12.76, p < .000$

**Dating violence**  
 $\chi^2(1, N = 97) = 4.52, p < .034$

**Dropped out of school**  
 $\chi^2(1, N = 97) = 8.06, p < .005$

**Running away from home**  
 $\chi^2(1, N = 97) = 5.36, p < .021$

**Bullied by school peers**  
 $\chi^2(1, N = 97) = 7.82, p < .005$

**Negative contact with law enforcement**  
 $\chi^2(1, N = 107) = 12.76, p < .000$

**Harassment by peers**  
 $\chi^2(1, N = 97) = 4.52, p < .034$

**Expelled from school**  
 $\chi^2(1, N = 97) = 8.06, p < .005$

## Findings

Labor Exploitation (N = 31)

### LABOR EXPLOITATION N = 31

Labor trafficking is a difficult injustice to identify and prosecute. Both labor exploitation and labor trafficking involve unfair wages or wages left unpaid and/or substandard living and working conditions. In order to demonstrate that labor trafficking has occurred, elements of force, fraud and coercion need to be proven.

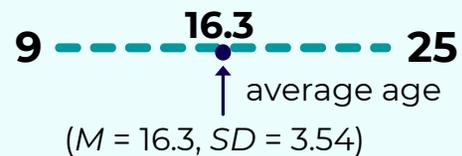
The exploratory questions in the YES study regarding the work experiences of homeless young adults are not sufficient to prove the presence of orce, fraud or coercion.

Therefore, these findings are discussed through the lens of labor exploitation.

31 participants reported experiencing labor exploitation.

**29%**

The age of 1st labor exploitation experience ranged from



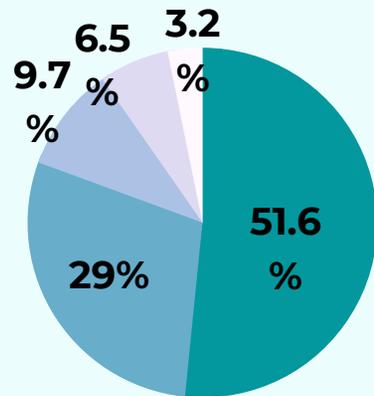
**41.9%**

(n = 13) of those that reported experiencing a labor exploitation situation were first exploited for labor under the age of 18.

UNDER  
**18**

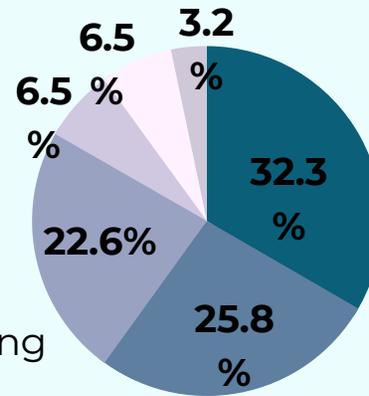
# Findings

Labor Exploitation (N = 31)



## GENDER

- Female
- Male
- Transgender
- Genderqueer
- Non-conforming



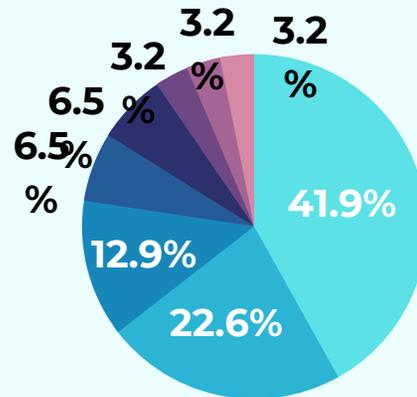
## ETHNICITY

- Caucasian
- Hispanic
- African American
- African/Caribbean
- American Indian
- Bi/Multiracial

## SEXUAL ORIENTATION

# 51.6%

identified as LGBTQIA+



- Heterosexual
- Bisexual
- Pansexual
- Lesbian
- Other
- Asexual
- Gay
- Missing

# Findings

Labor Exploitation (N = 31)

## LABOR EXPLOITATION EXPERIENCE

24 (77.6%) participants reported being tricked or forced into doing work they did not want to do. Participants were attempting to work in exchange for:



**61.3%**  
Money



**29%**  
Place to stay



**25.8%**  
Food



**25.8%**  
Drugs



**19.4%**  
Protection



**9.7%**  
Clothing

### Exploitation Narratives

- "Forced to shoplift"
- "Forced to take care of children that were not mine."
- "Thought I could make quick money for food."
- "Underpaid for odd jobs"
- "Forced to steal from grocery stores. If I didn't I'd be abused physically."

# Findings

Labor Exploitation (N = 31)

## Fraud

11 (42.9%) participants reported being promised work where the work or payment ended up being different than what they expected.



## Fraud Narratives

- “Being explicitly told by everyone in managing positions but the pay was different.”
- “Gave me nothing.”
- “Had picked something up but didn’t receive the amount I was supposed to.”
- “Never received payment.”

## Control Tactics



15 (48.4%) participants reported having someone they worked for control the money they earned or keep money they earned.



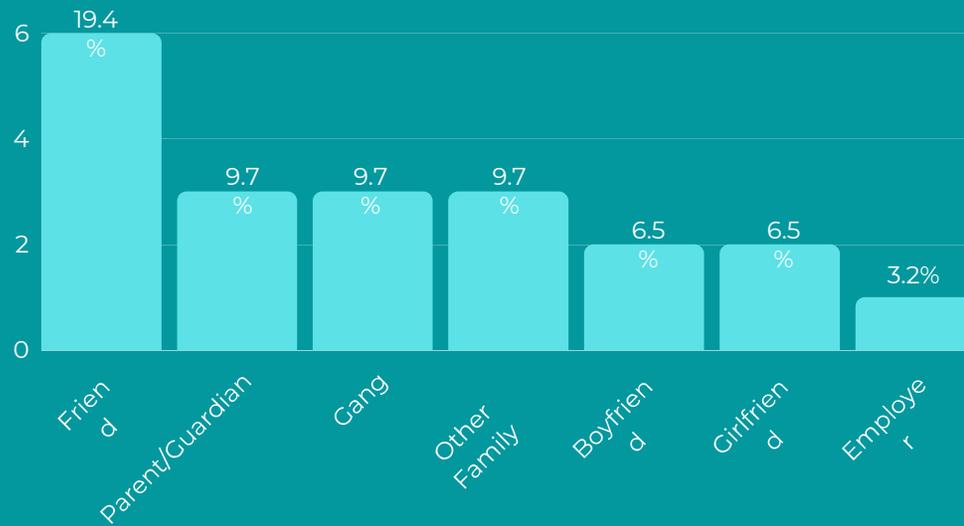
6 (19.4%) participants reported being afraid to leave or quit the labor exploitation situation due to fear of violence or other threats to harm them or their family.

# Findings

Labor Exploitation (N = 31)

## RELATIONSHIP TO LABOR EXPLOITER

Participants identified their relationship to their labor exploiter as:



## SECTOR OF LABOR EXPLOITATION



**Domestic Servitude**  
(n = 5, 16.1%)



**Drug related**  
(n = 3, 9.7%)



**Petty Theft**  
(n = 1, 3.2%)



**Restaurant**  
(n = 1, 3.2%)



**Selling Goods**  
(n = 1, 3.2%)



**Sexualized Labor**  
(n = 1, 3.2%)



**Construction**  
(n = 2, 6.5%)



**Hotel**  
(n = 1, 3.2%)

# Findings

## Labor Exploitation (N = 31)

### LABOR EXPLOITED VS. NON-LABOR EXPLOITED PARTICIPANTS

There was no statistical significance between the labor exploited and non-labor exploited group with regard to gender, age, or sexual orientation. However, participants who experienced labor exploitation were significantly more likely to report:



#### Self-harm

$\chi^2(1, N = 95) = 7.03, p < .008$

#### Attempted suicide

$\chi^2(1, N = 92) = 4.92, p < .026$

#### Cutting

$\chi^2(1, N = 85) = 4.39, p < .036$

#### Risk taking behavior

$\chi^2(1, N = 85) = 3.93, p < .047$

#### Sex with strangers

$\chi^2(1, N = 85) = 5.15, p < .023$

### ACEs

#### Having 4 or more ACEs

$\chi^2(1, N = 93) = 5.94, p < .015$

#### Substance abuse in the home

$\chi^2(1, N = 92) = 4.29, p < .038$

#### Physical neglect

$\chi^2(1, N = 91) = 15.18, p < .000$

#### Mental illness in the home

$\chi^2(1, N = 92) = 5.01, p < .025$

#### Physical abuse

$\chi^2(1, N = 92) = 4.08, p < .043$

#### Sexual abuse

$\chi^2(1, N = 92) = 6.86, p < .009$

#### Domestic violence against mother

$\chi^2(1, N = 91) = 5.06, p < .024$



#### Negative contact with LE

$\chi^2(1, N = 91) = 5.51, p < .019$

#### Dating violence

$\chi^2(1, N = 91) = 5.02, p < .025$

#### Running away from home

$\chi^2(1, N = 91) = 4.97, p < .026$

#### Harassment by peers

$\chi^2(1, N = 91) = 4.28, p < .039$

# Discussion



## LGBTQIA+ Experience

- The homeless young adult population continues to be overrepresented by individuals who identify as LGBTQIA+, with almost half (46.7%) of the sample identifying as LGBTQIA+.



## Homelessness as a Child

- The average age that 2022 YES study participants first experienced homelessness was age 16.5, or as a child.
- Over half of the 2022 YES participants (n = 55, 51.4%) first experienced homelessness under the age of 18.
- The majority of participants (n = 76, 71%) reported being kicked out of their home.
- The average age that 2022 YES study participants experienced first being kicked out of their homes was age 16.6, or as a child, with the first time being kicked out ranging from eleven years old to 25 years old.

# Discussion



## **Educational Attainment**

- Almost half of participants (n = 44, 41.1%) reported dropping out of school at one point in time.
- 44.9% (n = 48) of participants did not graduate from high school.



## **Mental Health**

- Over half of participants (n = 58, 54.2%) reported engaging in self-harming behavior.
- A suicide attempt was reported by 48 (44.9%) of the homeless young adult participants.
- The two most common mental health diagnoses included anxiety (n = 50, 46.7%) and depression (n = 45, 42.1%).
- Concerning Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), the majority of participants (n = 71, 66.4%) reported experiencing four or more ACEs which has been found to lead to significant long-term mental health and medical challenges, including early death.

# Discussion



## Educational Attainment

- Almost half of participants (n = 44, 41.1%) reported dropping out of school at one point in time.
- 44.9% (n = 48) of participants did not graduate from high school.



## Mental Health

- Over half of participants (n = 58, 54.2%) reported engaging in self-harming behavior.
- A suicide attempt was reported by 48 (44.9%) of the homeless young adult participants.
- The two most common mental health diagnoses included anxiety (n = 50, 46.7%) and depression (n = 45, 42.1%).
- Concerning Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), the majority of participants (n = 71, 66.4%) reported experiencing four or more ACEs which has been found to lead to significant long-term mental health and medical challenges, including early death.

## Discussion

**At least one form of human exploitation was present in 40.2% of participants (n = 43) in the 2022 YES study.**

### **Sex Trafficking**



- The average age of first sex trafficking experience was 16.9 years old, with the youngest age of first sex trafficking experience being three years old.
- Almost one in every four participants (n = 9, 23.1%) reported first being sex trafficked as a child, or under the age of 18.
- Sex trafficked participants were significantly more likely than non-sex trafficked participants to report addiction, depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, various self-harming behaviors, and significant trauma histories.

# Discussion



## **Labor Exploitation**

- The average age of first labor exploitation experience was 16.3 years old, with the youngest age of first labor exploitation experience being nine years old.
- Of those that reported experiencing labor exploitation, almost half (n = 13, 41.9%) reported being under the age of 18.
- Labor exploited participants were also significantly more likely than non-labor exploited participants to report various self-harming behaviors, attempted suicide, and significant trauma histories.

## Conclusion

### **Ongoing needs for homeless young adults in the state of Arizona:**

- Educational support
- Services targeting LGBTQIA+ young people who are high risk
- Mental health support, particularly to address maladaptive coping and the significant effects of trauma

### **With regard to sex trafficking and labor exploitation:**

- Social serving agencies must be equipped to screen for the presence of these forms of exploitation and must strengthen their organizational programming to address this occurrence within this population.
- Efforts such as street outreach, mobile resource units, and drop-in centers can serve as touchpoints for prevention and intervention.
- Additional funding opportunities from local and state government should be made available to specifically target service provision for this population.

## Conclusion

### Homelessness as a Child

- Prevention and early intervention efforts for school-age children at risk for homelessness.
- The findings indicate that homeless young adults were experiencing not only homelessness prior to adulthood, but also a significant number of other negative life experiences and traumas that may have contributed to their homelessness.
- Continued research is needed to identify specific points of intervention in childhood in which children experiencing poverty, abuse, or even academic difficulty can be identified and targeted for homelessness and human exploitation prevention.



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<https://www.socialwork.asu.edu/stir>

<https://www.sextraffickinghelp.com>