

4,460. with weakened
mental health is not
uncommon.

[Business](#), [Industries](#)



4, 460.

This is the number of individuals that have reportedly been trafficked in the United States in 2017, according to the National Human Trafficking Hotline (2017 trafficking statistics graph). This is a massive number for a single country, which as a result bears the question; to what extent do the judicial and legislative systems in the modern day United States enforce preventative measures against human sex trafficking? Since the 21st century, the judicial and legislative systems of the United States have been busy with attempts to lower the impact of human trafficking, especially by implementing laws such as the US Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (Rothman 1045) . Due to an increasingly globalized society, human trafficking is growing with alarming numbers each year, and not just in the United States but everywhere. Viewing this question through a social and psychological lens is imperative to the recovery of victims subjected to trafficking. Notably because, there are not enough preventative measures enforced by the U. S.'s lawmaking bodies, leading to severe psychological traumas in victims that are recovered from the sex industry.

A domino effect then becomes prominent as mental health declines and social abilities are impaired in the persons subjected to the sex trafficking.” My Inner World Has Changed, Everything Seems to be Dark Grey”: A discourse of Psychological TraumasSex trafficking exploits humans both physically AND mentally, although, mental traumas carried by the survivors tend to be overlooked as the U. S. focuses more on enforcing laws. Cathy Zimmerman, Ph. D.

, at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and Nicola Pocock, Ph. D., at United Nations University, argue that traumas faced by survivors, like rape and torture, have increasingly serious tolls on their mental health (Zimmerman, Pocock 265-67). They are constantly exposed to abuse and intimidation as control mechanisms by the pimps, so returning with weakened mental health is not uncommon. The inconceivable experiences faced, leave victims trapped in a constant cycle of fear. Many survivors find it hard to cooperate with law officials, for instance, because they come from areas where law enforcement is corrupt, so they fear revenge from the pimp (Zimmerman, Pocock 265-67).

Bringing about policy that focuses more on the psychological needs of victims would imply facilitated mental recovery, and thus, much easier integration into society as healthy individuals. Bozidar Banovic, professor at the University of Belgrade, and Zeljko Bjelajac, professor at the University Business Academy at Novi Sad, Serbia, make similar points in arguing that globalization is facilitating human trafficking. It's common sense that survivors won't wholly recover until society accepts them. To approach this, Banovic and Bjelajac propose non governmental action: non profit organizations and organized groups to provide basic needs like counseling and housing for the victims. Consequently, they would have an easier path to living their best lives, and becoming working members of society. Overall, government policy needs to become more victim based in terms of recovery as opposed to solely using the persons trafficked to bring in the pimps.

The Climb to Reintegration The path to becoming avid members of society again is difficult, but not impossible. Sarah Crocker, lawyer in conjunction with the Chicago Alliance Against Sexual Exploitation, accounts for the women victims of sex trafficking referred to as the “ bottoms,” or lead prostitutes; the women that get promoted by the pimps to do crime heavier tasks like recruiting more victims. As a result, they are prosecuted intensely with jail time (Crocker 755-56). Crocker asserts that society and law enforcement historically have failed to realize that bottoms are still forced to complete tasks given, and are often threatened if they refuse. A safety valve then, is necessary. It would reform the way the judicial system treats the cases of bottoms, rebuilding a sense of trust in the system and a more fair trial, thus aiding in the process of social acceptance. (Crocker 757).

Not to mention, there would be more victims coming forward to prosecute those who are actually at fault (the pimps). Similarly, Edward L. Stotts Jr., in the counseling department at Oakland Community College, and Luellen Ramey, Ph.

D. in counseling, propose that for reintegration to occur, there must be more aid to counselors themselves. Historically, there’s been little emphasis on human trafficking in the counseling world, so informing counselors is essential (Stotts, Ramey 36). This means making the symptoms of sex trafficking obvious, so they can identify which of their clients are suffering from the psychological traumas induced by the experience, and help them with treatments specific to their struggles. This would create a path for more survivors to “ fulfill their potential as human beings” (Stotts, Ramey 36),

instead of living in a world of grey. An emphasis on social reintegration is what will allow the recovery process to come full circle.

Prevention: The Flawed SystemThe United State's system to prevent sex trafficking is thoroughly flawed. Richard Danziger, International Organization for Migration worker, argues that victims aren't effectively identified internationally. Implementing a more effective system to document the whereabouts of victims around the world, would result in easier ways to protect them, and to prevent the pimps from causing more harm to others in the future (Danziger 10).

This system would only be viable, though, if social conditions and stigmas were altered in the U. S., so the victims would feel less like outcasts (Danziger 10). On another note, Swanee Hunt, author and lecturer at Harvard University, argues that within the law making bodies of the United States, there is not enough emphasis on the buyer section of the ordeal.

When thinking about sex trafficking, especially in the eyes of the law, the focus tends to be on the pimps, and crimes committed by the victims when it should be on why the system even stands- the demand. Without the buyers there is no demand and thus no profit. (Hunt 225). Increased intervention by the government, and law making efforts to focus more on persecuting the buyers contributing to the crime, instead of solely the pimps, is crucial. Emily Rothman, Ph. D., professor at the School of Public Health at the University of Boston, argues, like Danziger and Swanee, that prevention isn't strong, but it **NEEDS** to be to avoid dealing with the consequences later. Subsequently,

laws like the Victims Protection Act of 2000 would need to continue to evolve and be implemented by the lawmaking bodies, because trafficking jurisdiction and occurrences are continuously changing (Rothman 1045).

Danziger, Hunt, and Rothman alike, all hold that U. S. prevention is weak, so the methods of attaining justice need to shift in order to get closer eradicating sex trafficking. *An Insider's Perspective* The needs and perspectives of trafficked persons must be accounted for, and to be truthful, they rarely are. Diana Meyers, Ph. D.

, philosopher and professor at the University of Connecticut, affirms the overlooked point that survivors should be the ones running support groups, and having a say on whether or not they leave the sex industry. Clearly this is a more liberal, radical view on the topic than what is the “ norm,” but it allows for the survivors to be empowered and have control over their lives after not having any power (Meyers 427). The downfall, is that those who choose to remain in the sex industry feed the negative social stigmas that are already prevalent. *A Final Look* In summation, U. S. lawmaking bodies aren't to the fullest extent, preventing sex trafficking occurrences.

Traumas that result from the struggles, have severe tolls on the mental health of the victims that if untreated, prevent healthy social reintegration. The most logical solution then, is to work at deteriorating the trafficking system all together as opposed to failing at preventing it. The way to do so, would be to eliminate the demand, and focus efforts on persecuting the buyers as mentioned by Swanee Hunt.

Over time, the non-profitable system would crumble, but it's difficult to do this because the U. S. lawmaking bodies would have to refocus their efforts entirely, and be more internationally collaborative.