

WHAT WORKS? BEST PRACTICES TO PREVENT HUMAN TRAFFICKING.

Jeanne Sarson & Linda MacDonald 2013

We thank Lobi Redhawk for her invitation to participate in “What Works?” As well, we extend our respect to the sponsors for supporting this panel discussion. We have for 20 years provided grass root support to mainly women who Self-identify as having survived torture victimization including human trafficking perpetrated by private individuals or non-State actors. These contacts have varied from years of support to brief connections. In total, over 3000 persons from the industrialized countries of the U.S, the U.K. and other Western European countries, Australia, New Zealand, and Canada have contacted us. We have had prolonged years of supportive contact with 30 individuals. Women report surviving non-State torture with human trafficking victimization that began in their earliest of childhood, from infancy onwards. The perpetrators were principally parents, extended family members, guardians, like-minded others, pedophilic groups/rings, pornographic exploiters and human traffickers. Non-State torture involving sexualized human trafficking by a spouse and connected gang was also reported to be perpetrated in adulthood. **Our presentation specifically focuses on the specific population of women who report being born into such family systems or placed in guardianship care where non-State torture and human trafficking victimization occurred.**

Prevention and what we know. Prevention in context of what we know begins after victimization has been inflicted for years. It involves interventions that:

1. Support women in exiting or escaping from such family-based systems
2. Prevents their on-going chronic torture and human trafficking victimization
3. Helps them to remain exited and develop ways to Self-protect with a focus on building safety
4. Prevents inter-generational torture and human trafficking victimization from occurring

What Works? Interventions at the socio-cultural and legal structural levels. These include:

1. Creating social awareness that such intimate relational torture and human trafficking systems exist, for example, by speaking on this panel. This means acknowledging that for some women immense degrees of victimization can occur from infancy onwards shielded within the socio-cultural privileges afforded to family systems. In other words, the family system is not always a safe place.
2. Making the links between various human rights instruments and how these apply to this specific group of vulnerable victimized women (See figure 1). Applying the trafficked framework as defined in the UN *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress & Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children* also means acknowledging that some women, as children and or as adults, endure classic torture as described in Article 1 of the Convention against Torture (CAT). For some women such

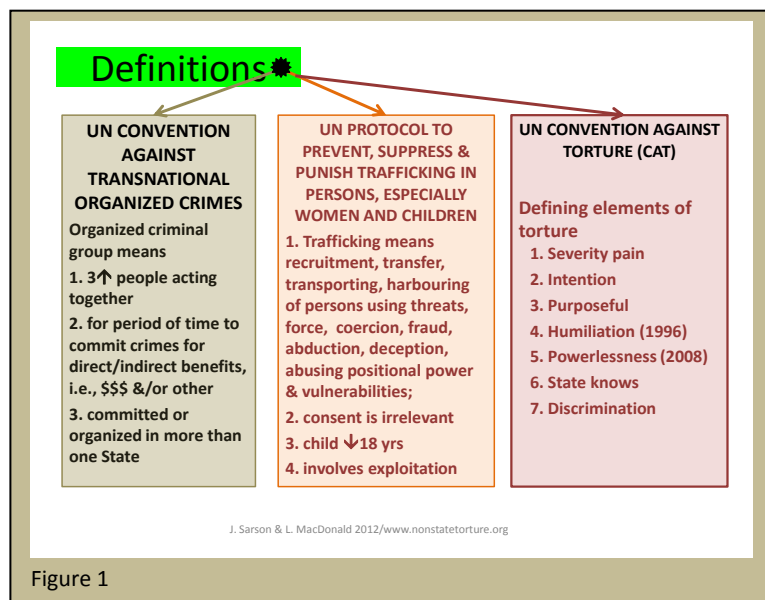


Figure 1

victimization can also be sufficiently organized as to violate the *Convention against Transnational Organized Crimes*.

- Promoting socio-legal understanding of classic and commercial categories of non-State torture that can occur during human trafficking (Figure 2).
- Educating about classic torture; for example, the “Herstories”, figure 3 below, provides insights shared by women who endured sexualized and reproductive non-State torture and human trafficking victimization which

were accompanied by many other forms of classic non-State torture listed in figure 2. The drawing in the second column is shared by a Canadian woman. She explained that torture impregnation occurred at age 12; she was forcibly aborted by the family/group who then forced her to ingest some of the aborted tissue. Told the abortive tissue was evil forced her to internalize a belief that evilness must exist inside her that would one day be expelled from her body as presented in her drawing. This fear of evilness within triggered anorexia thinking if she stopped eating it would not grow and Self-cutting was her effort to expel such evilness.

- Ensuring that national laws cover not only human trafficking but also the human rights crime

Non-State Torture & Evolving Gender-Based Categories

CLASSIC TORTURE WITHIN RELATIONAL SYSTEMS (families, guardianships, kidnappings), i.e.,

- ❖ physical
- ❖ psychological conditioning
 - ❖ verbal & emotional
- ❖ sexualized & reproductive
 - ❖ chemical/drugging
 - ❖ human-animal
 - ❖ spiritual
 - ❖ ritualistic
 - ❖ cannibalistic
- ❖ relational & acculturational
- ❖ combinations: many/all of the above inflicted over periods of time, even years, i.e., RAT

Socio-cultural, traditional or religious-based tortures, i.e.,

- ❖ FGM
- ❖ acid burning
- ❖ widow burning

Commercial-based classic torturing, i.e.,

- ❖ trafficked for torturing
- ❖ women/girls ‘prostituted’
 - ❖ torture-porn
 - ❖ snuff films/photos

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Figure 2

HERSTORIES:

Human trafficking & non-State torture victimization

Canada/industrialized countries

Sexualized torturing: vaginal, oral, anal & guns, sticks, bottles, etc.; repetitive, multi-perpetrator/gang rapes, period of years; unable to recall No. of rapes survived 10,000+

- **Bottle anal rape tactic**
- **Torture of women’s breasts** bitten, burnt, cut, electric shocked, twisted with pliers
- **Raped in front of others/private**
- **Rapes photos, used for ‘training’**
- **Raped, urinated, ejaculated, defecated on, smeared with, ingestion of**

• **Reproductive torture:** We did a web initiated questionnaire on reproductive torture, of the 233 respondents, 56% (131) stated being raped during forced abortions or torture induced deliveries; of 232 respondents 43% (99) stated they were forced to swallow aborted tissue.

- ◆ **impregnated at 12**
- ◆ **forcibly aborted**
- ◆ **they cut up the tissue**
- ◆ **made me eat some of it**

• **Horrendous abuses of intimate trust**

• **Criminal activities**



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Figure 3

of non-State torture increases the appropriateness of redress and services. According to the UN Committee against Torture criminalization of non-State torture achieves the following: (a) it names, defines and alerts everyone that such a criminal human rights violation occurs, (b) it helps to address the gravity of the crime, (c) it strengthens the deterrent effect, (d) it enables State responsibility to track all crimes of torture—State and non-State, (e) it enables and empowers the public to monitor and, when required, to challenge State action or inaction that violates the CAT, and (f) it helps prevent impunity and on-going victimization.

Additionally, “What Works?” To

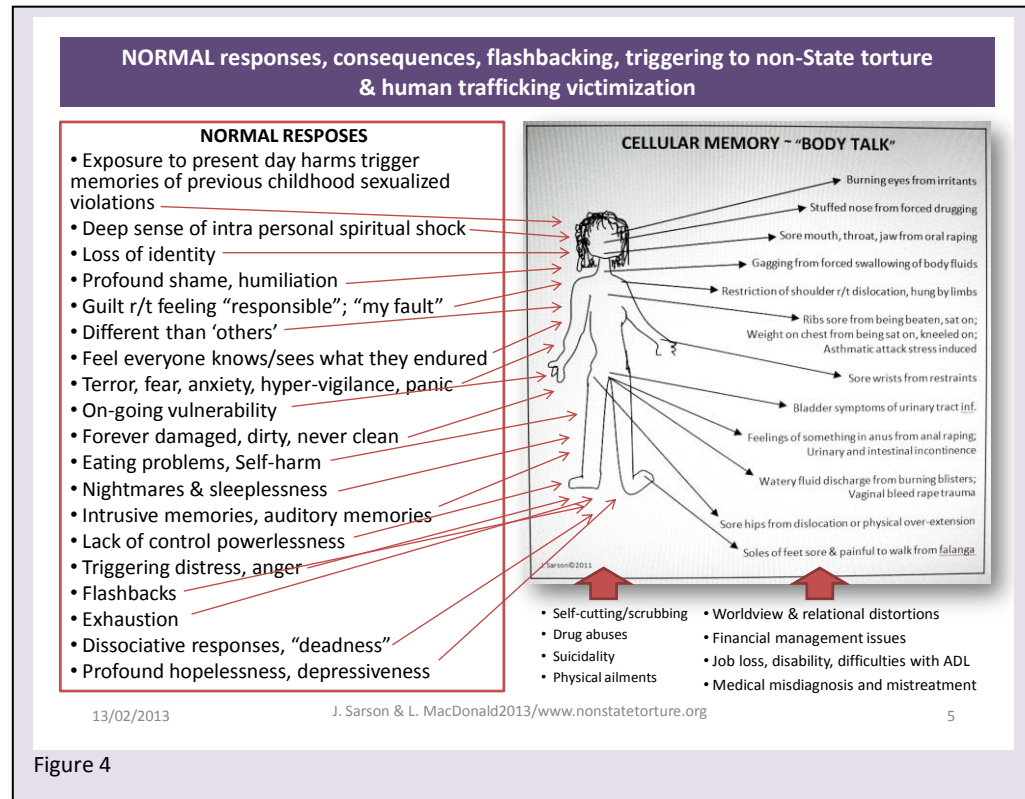
address the socio-cultural and legal structural issues we have professionally and successfully had articles published, presented papers at conferences, talked until we are “blue in the face”, and not taken rejections or “I don’t want to hear this” comments personally. Being members of the NGO, the Canadian Federation of University Women (CFUW), whose membership supported a policy to advocate for the criminalization of non-State torture in Canada, resulted in the submission of a shadow report to the UN Committee against Torture. We appeared before the Committee to gain support for this CFUW

advocacy. This was most successful, achieving the breakthrough that the Committee stated gender-based manifestations of non-State torture need to be included in national laws as these come under the mandate of the CAT. This advocacy intervention has been picked up by other women's groups, another sign of successfulness. There is now a Universal Periodic Report (UPR) submitted by CFUW and the National Council of Women of Canada to the Human Rights Council. Canada will present its UPR to the UN Human Rights Council in April-May of this year. We will attend Canada's reporting.

“What Works?” Interventions of Seeing, Hearing, Believing, and Understanding Women so Victimized.

Women repetitively say they tried to tell, even when they were children, only to be disbelieved, told they were lying, threatened by police that if they persisted in their statements they would be charged for making false reports, treated as if they were “crazy” or labelled mentally ill. Women also speak of suicidal attempts even as preschoolers; these were disguised as “accidental injuries”. Some tried to run away only to be returned home without being listened to. Interventions, therefore, are about seeing, hearing, believing, and understanding that first and foremost women are persons with equal human rights, worth, and dignity who have the fundamental right to freedom of speak. They must be heard and the human rights crimes they are trying to express must also be understood to exist. Therefore “What Works?” interventions include:

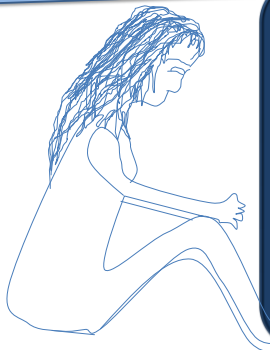
1. Understanding normal human responses to torture victimization that includes human trafficking violations. Some of these are listed under the “Normal Responses” column in the above figure 4.
2. Understanding and respecting “Cellular Memories—‘Body Talk’” listed in column two. Body talk is a most distressful process as it means women’s bodies during the process of healing and re-remembering can re-suffer the torture pains that were inflicted years previously. For example, when a woman remembers her vagina being burnt with a hot rod she can re-experience the burning sensations, a few vaginal blisters may appear, and she may also have a watery vaginal discharge. All are body talk cellular memories representative of her previous torture ordeals.
3. Respecting that it takes time to safely move through dissociative responses accompanied by waves of grief as she becomes aware “she was the victim”. Vicarious trauma can also occur when this happens. Anger boils when realizing that what she thought was normal family relations were instead criminal violations of her human rights which society failed to protect.



“Body Talk” r/t Forced Drugging

Causes Disconnection/Dissociation & Blocks Telling

Possible responses



- Drowsiness
- Slurred speech, mute
- Eyes lids droop
- Eyes close
- Eyes “go up into head” or “back of head”
- Falling asleep
- “Raggedy Anne” feeling
- Dizziness
- Feeling drunk, balance affected
- Temporary paralysis

17/02/2013

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4. Developing torture-informed caring interventions includes the knowledge that forced drugging is a common tactic of these perpetrators. Being drugged causes disconnections/dissociative responses that can block telling. It creates powerlessness, disorientation, increased vulnerabilities, and restrains and silences those being so victimized. Therefore, an example of a knowledgeable caring intervention requires understanding how a woman, when telling, can present as having consumed drugs when she had not. Figure 5 lists possible spontaneous re-

enactments of forced drugging responses.

What Works? Interventions to prevent inter-generational classic torture and human trafficking.

Women disclosed concerns that family/group perpetrators want access to intergenerational victims; therefore, some women who had exited such family/group systems spoke of deciding never to have a child or if they became pregnant deciding on an abortion in their efforts to prevent perpetrators gaining access to a child they bore or breaking all connections before adopting a child. Others spoke of having a child before they had made the conscious connection that the victimization they endured in childhood was not normal but a criminal human right violation; then later, when realizing this fact some women realized they had placed their child in contact with the perpetrator families/groups and believed their child had probably been harmed. Acknowledging this fact added to their painful emotional grief. As soon as they became aware of the crimes they survived they took action to remove their child from family/group perpetrators. Women also expressed their opinion that siblings who had not exited the family/group system may well be involved in on-going perpetration. Therefore, we suggest preventive interventions include:

1. Relational human rights education addressing a continuum from respectful to violent relationships (Figure 6), for adults and children.
2. This content be included in pre-natal, post-partum, and parenting classes because some women went to pre-natal classes. They thought if these relational issues were discussed they may have understood earlier that they had endured crimes.
3. Available and appropriate services that help a parent seek healing support and thus help to protect their child.
4. Laws to ensure that professional education occurs in health, law, and child protection services for example.

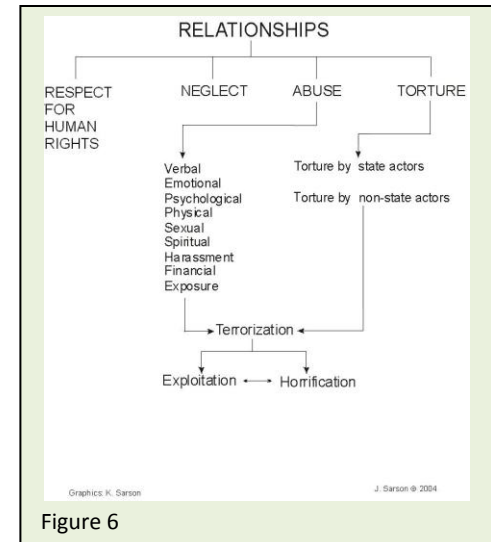


Figure 6

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- Figure 2: Sarson, J. & MacDonald, L. (2011). Non-state torture—specifically sexualized non-state torture—inflicted in the private/domestic sphere against girls/women: an emerging “harmful practice”. Expert paper presented to the UN joint CEDAW-CRC committee. http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cedaw/docs/cedaw_crc_contributions/JeanneSarson-LindaMacDonald.pdf
- Figure 3: Sarson, J. & MacDonald, L. (2013). *Access to justice for women and girls tortured by non-state actors*. <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cedaw/WrittenContributions2013.htm>. Drawing is shared with consent.
- Figure 4 & 5: Sarson, J. & MacDonald, L. (2011). Sexualized torture in the domestic/private sphere and ‘body talk’: A human rights and relational feminist paradigm (Cellular memory & forced drugging). <http://nonstatetorture.org/files/6513/5189/0549/SexualViolenceConferencepaperwebsite.pdf>
- Figure 4. Column 1 reflects our knowledge re normal non-state torture responses; it also represents those of women tortured by State actors, see Smith, E. & Boyles, J. (2009, December). *Justice denied: The experiences of 100 torture surviving women of seeking justice and rehabilitation*. Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture, UK.
- Figure 6. Sarson, J. & MacDonald, L. (2007). Ritual abuse-torture [RAT]: Torture that happens in families, guardianships, and in like-minded groups. (Pamphlet). <http://nonstatetorture.org/files/6113/3937/8709/Tortureinfamilies.pdf>