

TRACIA'S TRUST STRATEGY

About 400 children and youth are sexually exploited each year in Manitoba, but experts believe there are likely hundreds more victims and survivors, and the known number likely under-represents the prevalence of sexual exploitation by up to 90 per cent. Manitoba's provincial strategy to prevent human trafficking and sexual exploitation was launched in 2002 and is now known as Tracia's Trust, in honour of Tracia Owen who tragically died of suicide after being sexually exploited.

Every year, the province invests approximately \$10 million under Tracia's Trust in prevention, intervention, research and evaluation. Manitoba works in partnership with many non-government community organizations to prevent and intervene in the sexual exploitation and sex trafficking of children, youth and adults. Some of the funded initiatives include:

- Restoring the Sacred, a culturally based peer mentorship program for Indigenous young people aged 14 to 21 who are relocating to Winnipeg to continue their education;
- educational opportunities for people with lived experience in sexual exploitation to achieve a post-secondary certificate or diploma in child and youth care; and
- regional team partnership located throughout Manitoba to increase public awareness on the issue of sexual exploitation.

Manitoba is now the first province to prepare comprehensive research and data analysis related to the sexual exploitation of children and youth, which provides an opportunity to guide the ongoing investments and efforts in Tracia's Trust. The research team conducted quantitative analysis of 282 cases covering a five-year period between Jan. 1, 2011, and Jan. 1, 2016. They also collaborated with partner organizations to analyze 11 case studies and completed a qualitative analysis of nine focus groups with participants representing:

- survivors and experiential voices with lived experience in the sex trades,
- front-line service providers,
- community members and elders,
- law enforcement, and
- government officials.

Local Indigenous elders, leaders and experiential-led groups such as the Advisory Council of Knowledge Keepers and the Experiential Advisory Committee under the Sexually Exploited Youth Community Coalition continue to be instrumental in guiding activities under Tracia's Trust.

Manitoba Families will continue to collaborate with other government departments as well as community partners to renew the strategy and address the findings from this research.