

Sex Trafficking Awareness Among Adolescents by Emily Riumbau

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Sex Trafficking is a growing concern for the United States of America. This research investigation identifies the level of awareness from a group of individuals about 14 to 18 years old, allowing for the improvement of prevention methods for younger populations. The data for this study reported an overall trend in which students had an insufficient understanding for sex trafficking and its occurrences. Student responses contained higher mean scores as the grade levels increased. The data supports the argument that students are not as aware as they may need to be; however, 10th grade students responded either "slightly agree" or "strongly agree" more frequently than the 9th, 11th, and 12th grade students, leading them to have higher averages. This group of students in particular deviated from the trend established by the other grade level; on average, 10th grade students had higher mean scores than the other grade levels.

Survey results summarize a lack of awareness that may originate from ineffective, or nonexistent, awareness programs from the students' middle schools. Individuals should be informed prior to their entrance into high school. The data followed a distribution in which students were becoming progressively more aware through each school year. During the developmental period between the ages of 11 and 15, individuals often seek closer relationships with perceived friends. Sex traffickers often take the form of a close friend, allowing for an uninformed individual to put their trust in a potential trafficker.