In 2018, a three-year, longitudinal, multi-site evaluation of My Life My Choice concluded with positive results. Funded by a grant from the National Institute of Justice, the study was conducted by the Boston University School of Public Health and the Northeastern School of Criminology and Criminal Justice. The purpose of the study was to assess the My Life My Choice secondary (Exploitation Prevention Curriculum) and tertiary (Survivor Mentor Model) prevention programs.

Our approach, grounded in survivor experiences, serves as a model for communities across the country. Our aim is to change not only lives, but the structural inequities that give rise to trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC). Therefore, it is critical to ensure our programs’ efficacy through high quality, third party research. As the first and only study of its kind, we are pleased to report the evaluation’s top line findings.
EXPLOITATION PREVENTION CURRICULUM EVALUATION

• 354 youth from MA, FL, CT & NJ
• Youth surveyed at start of group, at the end of the group, and at six months post group

SURVIVOR MENTOR MODEL EVALUATION

• 41 youth from MA
• Youth surveyed prior to starting services, at six months, and again at one year

Demographics

AVERAGE AGE
15.6 Range 11-20 years

GENDER
95% Female
2% Male
3% GNC or Trans

RACE/ETHNICITY
28% Black/African American
25% Hispanic/Latina
25% White
22% Other

Demographics

AVERAGE AGE
15.6 Range 13-18 years

GENDER
96% Female
2% Male
2% GNC or Trans

RACE/ETHNICITY
10% Black/African American
29% Hispanic/Latina
20% Multi-racial
29% White
12% Other
EXPLOITATION PREVENTION CURRICULUM

A 10-session curriculum designed for youth at disproportionate risk of commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) and aims to shift their knowledge, attitudes and behavior to reduce the risk of exploitation or to prevent re-victimization.

The first comprehensive exploitation prevention curriculum rigorously evaluated with evidence of decreased risk of CSEC.

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KEY OUTCOMES:

- Knowledge about CSEC and risks for exploitation improved for 100% of participants.
- Experiences of CSEC decreased by 50%.
- Participants were 2x less likely to report dating abuse victimization.
- Participants’ trust in police increased.
- Reports of sexually explicit behaviors reduced by 50%.
- 100% of youth reported talking to a friend about CSEC.
SURVIVOR MENTOR MODEL

A specialized service model pairing commercially sexually exploited youth with a trained adult survivor of the commercial sex industry and designed to provide intensive, consistent, long-term support.

This is the first study to evaluate the efficacy of a survivor mentor program for CSEC using data directly collected from youth over a longitudinal period.


KEY OUTCOMES:

- **Illicit drug use decreased by 30%**
- **Crime perpetration decreased by 35%**
- **Youth arrested or detained by the police decreased by 54%**
- **Youth were 4x less likely to report participating in sexually explicit behavior**
- **Youth were 1.4x more likely to have adequate social support**
- **Youth were 20% more likely to have adequate social support**
- **Youth were 3x less likely to report having been commercially sexually exploited**
Our fervent conviction is that no child should be bought or sold. At My Life My Choice, it is our daily fight. Our holistic, battle-tested approach is grounded in survivor experiences of those who have lived the ugly realities of exploitation and come back fierce, wise, and strong. We understand that violence to one girl is a threat to us all. Her story is our story; her strength, her resolve, and ultimately her resilience fuels a better future for us all.

Since 2002, My Life My Choice has successfully trained over 18,000 service providers in Massachusetts and nationally. We ran prevention groups for more than 2,400 youth, mentored more than 700 girls in Greater Boston, and trained facilitators on our Prevention Curriculum in 33 states and Canada.