



Street-Level Prostitution and Drug Abuse in the City of Detroit

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Brief Profile of the City of Detroit (Located in Wayne County)

- Population: 900,000 residents
- Race/Ethnicity: 82% African-American, 10% White, 5% Hispanic, 2% Asian, <1% American Indian.
- Crack-cocaine is the most widely used illicit drug in the city. Crack cocaine dealers tend to be involved in prostitution, gang-related activity, and violent and non-violent crimes.
- About 90% of Detroit's street prostitutes are addicted to crack-cocaine.



Detroit's Approach to Street Prostitution

- Street Prostitution is viewed as a public health issue and not as a criminal justice problem.
- Not only is a community issue but also an individual or personal issue.
- It is also a women's health issue and a human rights issue--it is about how to treat women as human beings and not as rodents out on the streets.



Moral Concerns About Street Prostitution by the Detroit Community

- Is offensive to citizens' moral standards;
- Nuisance to passersby and to nearby residents and businesses;
- Offends uninvolved people in the area where they are solicited;
- Juveniles, who are less capable of making informed choices, may become prostitutes.



Public Safety Concerns About Street Prostitution by the Detroit Community

- Clients may harm prostitutes;
- Prostitutes and/or clients may be assaulted, robbed or defrauded;
- Pimps may financially and physically exploit prostitutes;
- Prostitutes create parking and traffic problems where they congregate;
- Prostitution may attract strangers and criminals to a neighborhood.

Economic Concerns About Street Prostitution by the Detroit Community

- Legitimate businesses may lose customers who avoid the area because of prostitution;
- Presence of prostitutes may negatively affect the area economy, reducing property values and limiting property use; and
- Spillover effect: Street prostitution and street drug markets are often linked. Prostitution may provide the seedbed for organized crime.



Precursor Problems That Produce Street Prostitution

- Drug Abuse
- Childhood Sexual Abuse or Victimization
- Running Away
- Poor Education and Job Skill
- Mental Illness
- Economics: Need for Money to Survive
- Family Legacy



Detroit's Street Prostitutes: Who Are They?

- Lower status than prostitutes who work indoors;
- Often in some state of personal decline:
 - running away from abusive situations
 - becoming drug dependent
 - deteriorating psychologically
 - getting less physically attractive



Street Prostitutes: Who Are They? (cont'd)

- Work 6-8 hours a day, 5-6 days a week and has at least 3-5 clients a night;
- Their lives are organized principally around prostitution itself, and maneuvering through the legal system;
- Their cycle is getting arrested, going to jail, paying fines, and returning to the streets.

Detroit's Street Prostitutes: Who Are They? (cont'd)

- Data provided by the Detroit Police Department reports the following number of arrestees for prostitution:

Year 2002	420
Year 2003	738 (43%+)
Year 2004	846 (13%+ as of 8/30/04)



Public Health Problems Created from Street-Level Prostitution

- Sexually transmitted diseases are a significant risk from this activity.
- Studies have shown that nearly all violence against prostitutes happen to street prostitutes: customer and pimp-related violence.
- Deterioration of emotional, mental and physical well-being.
- Drug addiction (cause and effect).



Bivariate Relationship: Prostitution and HIV/AIDS/STD's

- HIV and sexually transmitted diseases are given through intravenous drug use (IDU).
- Prostitutes are more likely to contract HIV/AIDS through intravenous drug use and being involved in an IDU user.
- Prostitutes are most at risk from transmission occurring from heterosexual relationships.
- Drug addicted prostitutes in need of more drugs are most likely to allow customers to negotiate condom use. Since sex trade is cheap, the "johns" usually dictate not using condom use.



Bivariate Relationship: Drug Abuse and Prostitution

- Substance abuse or dependence is strongly associated with prostitution: 70% of women involved in street prostitution are drug addicts.
- Women with moderate or severe cocaine abuse or dependence are more likely to engage in prostitution.
- *Functional Drug Use*: as a way of coping with the act of prostitution
- *Casual Drug Use*: prostitution as a means of supporting a drug habit.



Drug Addiction

- When crack-cocaine flourished in the 80s, the world of prostitution shifted in a profound way. Crack-cocaine became the drug of choice for street prostitutes.
- The influx of crack-cocaine has dealt a devastating blow to women involved in prostitution. The lowest cost for drugs on the streets always equals the lowest cost for sex.



Drug Addiction (cont'd)

- Today, the drug of choice is crack-cocaine and can be purchased for as low as \$5. In order to compete in today's prostitution market, women have to work more, for less, and often under riskier circumstances.



Drug Addiction (cont'd)

- Working more often can be interpreted to mean more client contact, which increases the risk of both customer-related violence and the transmission of sexually transmitted diseases.



Customer-Related and Pimp-Related Violence

- Despite apparent health risks to women in terms of contracting HIV, the greatest risk to the health of women in Detroit comes not from a deadly virus, but from violent actions of many of their customers and pimps. These violent actions tend to be brutal, frequent and pervasive.
- Rape, beatings, and robbery were among the more common occurrences.



Customer and Pimp-Related Violence (cont'd)

- In Detroit, over 90% of the street prostitutes have experienced one or more of the following:
 - Being thrown or jumping from a moving vehicle;
 - Threatened with a gun, shot at, beaten with a blunt object;
 - Being thrown or throwing themselves through glass to escape; and
 - Being branded and tortured.
- Some prostitutes have even been murdered on Detroit streets by serial killers, customers, etc.



Deterioration of Mental Health

- Street prostitutes' experiences with violence, drugs, and HIV risks contribute to decreased emotional, mental, and physical well-being.
- Over time, women in street prostitution experience profound depression and post-traumatic stress.



Fresh Start Prostitution Project: Detroit's Solution to a Long-Standing Problem

- Based on the philosophy that street-prostitution is a public health issue.
- Our goal is not harm reduction but coercion into treatment for “revolving door” prostitutes.
- Our focus is not to cure prostitution in the community per se, but to cure the individual prostitute.
- We turn them into victors, and not sustain them as victims.



Fresh Start Prostitution Project: Detroit's Solution to a Long-Standing Problem (cont'd)

- Is an alternative to jail time. Mere incarceration does not stop the continuing cycle of physical and mental health issues, intense drug abuse, malnutrition, homelessness, or the absence of medical care.
- Designed to address the quality of life issues that prostitution brings to Wayne County.



Partners of the Fresh Start Prostitution Project

- Wayne County Sheriff's Office
- Wayne County 36th District Court
- City of Detroit Law Department
- Detroit Recovery Project
- City of Detroit Bureau of Substance Abuse Prevention, Treatment and Recovery
- Detroit Department of Health and Wellness Promotion
- Detroit Police Dept.
- Focus HOPE



Sample of Services Provided by Partners

- Wayne County Sheriff's Office/Detroit Police Department

- √ Identifies prostitutes with the most egregious records;
- √ Screens for illegal substances;
- √ Provides legal case management.

- Bureau of Substance Abuse

- √ Performs primary care assessments to determine psychological, social, medical and economic needs;
- √ Provides extensive drug treatment/counseling and case monitoring.



Sample of Services Provided by Partners (cont'd)

- 36th District Drug Treatment Court

- √ Holds offenders accountable for their behavior while providing them with rehabilitative services necessary to maintain law-abiding and substance free lifestyle. Offenders are required to appear for all scheduled status hearings, submit to urinalysis, attend all treatment sessions, etc.

- Detroit Recovery Project

- √ Provides support services:
 - Life Skills Training
 - Job Readiness Skills
 - Job Referrals
 - Interpersonal and Socialization Skills
 - Parenting Skills
- √ Assist clients in finding permanent housing



Profile of Women in Project Fresh Start (as of September 2004)

- Their Status (21 Referrals):

- ✓ Currently serving time at Wayne County Jail (6)

- ✓ Inpatient Treatment (7)

- ✓ Completed Inpatient Tx and are in transitional (6)

- ✓ Warrant Status (2)

- Drug of Choice:

- ✓ Crack (57%)

- ✓ Heroin (24%)

- ✓ Alcohol (14%)

- ✓ Marijuana (5%)



Fresh Start Prostitution Project: Expected Outcomes

- Moderate to high post-treatment abstinence rates from alcohol and drugs.
- Improved economic status.
- Improved mental and social well-being (such as less depression, sustained personal relationships).
- Acquired effective life and parenting skills.