

*The following is a case study to be used as part of the SOAR Training for Health Care and Social Service Providers.
Read the information below, and your facilitator will guide you through discussion of this case.*

Case study: Liza

As an 11 year old, I was one of six foster kids who were sold to men for sex by my foster mother's boyfriend. My foster mother and boyfriend needed to get money to pay for their addiction to heroin. No one in the foster system knew what was going on. Whenever we ran away the police would return us to the same abusive foster home. We felt like we had no recourse since no one believed us when we said we were being hurt. By the time I was 12, I left the house for good and was on my own. I met a guy on the street who said he would take care of me and I believed him. In actuality, he was a pimp and sold me to men for money.

He had me moving around on a circuit – Chicago, Detroit, Indianapolis and back to Chicago again. At first he treated me nicely – just long enough to get me to do what he wanted. Then, he turned mean, and if I didn't make enough money he beat me mercilessly. I learned quickly how to keep my head down and make my daily quota. During this time I was beaten, burned, raped, and assaulted, sometimes by my trafficker and sometimes by the guys who were buying me. Some of those wounds were treated by the grandmother of one of the pimps, who had been a nurse for 30 years. She had a setup in her basement and the pimps brought us to her place whenever we were seriously injured. Sometimes I went to a local neighborhood health clinic, but no one ever asked what had happened to me, and if they did, I lied because I was afraid of my pimp. I knew he would beat me if I told anyone what was going on. To this day I have physical, mental, and emotional issues as a result of that time on the street.