Capstone Video Transcript:

Hi, my name is Aleesa Nutting. I am a graduate student at Arizona State University, fufilling the final requirements necessary to earn my Master of Arts in social justice and human rights. This presentation as well as the website it is housed within represent my social justice and human rights Compendium. In addition, I have included information about my individual research project. This individual research project did not require IRB approval as there were no human subjects directly interviewed, but was performed under the mentorship and guidance of Dr. Allan Colbern. This brief video seeks to overview the original research that began during my time at Arizona State University. This original qualitative research focuses on residential programs located within the United States, specifically those serving minors who are survivors of domestic sex trafficking.

Before deep diving into the methodology on how my research was performed, it is important to consider why perform this research at all. Since the passage of the TVPA, or the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000, public knowledge has drastically increased about the plights of human trafficking. Since this increase, many programs and services have been formed within the United States for both domestic and international survivors of human trafficking. While initially the increase of programming sounds fantastic for survivors, we must ask, what really are these programs offering? Through this project I consider- Where are we now in the United States in terms of programs available for minor survivors of domestic sex trafficking? Through my qualitative research, I provide one answer to this question through a brief snapshot in time capturing the websites of programs serving this population.

Beyond considering why conduct this research, I considered why me when considering the goodness of fit between the researcher and the field, I believe that I'm particularly qualified to speak. As a survivor, I offer the knowledge of lived experience. As a scholar, my position to the researchers both one have compassion for the survivors, as well as hope and critique on for the programs serving them. My education as well as the theories that I learned from the social justice and human rights program make me particularly knowledgeable in this field and qualified to speak on the matter.

Overall, my culminating qualitative research project can be broken down into three simple steps. First, the qualitative data analyzed for this project was the websites of residential programs, serving minor survivors of sex trafficking, located within the United States, and primarily focusing on serving the needs of domestic survivors. Full screen captures were taken of each page within the website, and then organized into one of five categories homepage about us, donations, human trafficking information or other and the date the image was captured was recorded. This process was repeated for each program, and then collected on a state-by-state basis. The discovery process of these programs relied on previous published works containing lists of residential programs, including Farrell at all, 2019 St. Francis mysteries, 2019, sold no more, no date, Polaris Project 2012 and the Samaritan woman database 2022 and any other organization mentioned within each Programs website. The screenshots were then coded using the qualitative program MAXQDA into thematic frameworks. That overarching themes included language that encouraged empowerment, and then language that maintains an unequal power dynamic. These themes were broken into smaller categories and the elements found within the programming of these websites was collected to within these sub nodes. Following this process, the data was explored for patterns. The number of instances of empowerment versus maintenance, or the subtypes within can be explored on a program level on a state level within states that have additional legal protection for trafficking survivors through the page type, or other groupings. Additionally, with my connection to the research, I discussed the impact of these findings to provide critiques as within the field, their areas that are problematic, and then also to speak highly and to encourage the efforts that endorse empowerment.

Overall, my research was highly influenced by the education I attained through the Master of Social Justice and Human Rights at Arizona State University. Some of the overarching themes found within my classes also translated into major considerations for this work. Those include power dynamics and influences, including studying this on a multi-level perspective to gain insight as to where the power structures may be maintained or broken down. This should be critically examined and reflected upon including any social, economic or political factors. Next, the critical examination and presentation. Throughout my project, I question whose voices are being represented, what dominant narratives are being projected? And do those reflect the vulnerable populations that are being served. Finally, what are the reverberating effects is a status quo being maintained or dissolved through the dominant narratives that are being projected on an individual, organizational, or community plus scale?

Overall, throughout my time at Arizona State University and within the Master of Arts, social justice and human rights program, I've grown immensely, not only as a scholar and researcher but also as an individual and have learned how my identity correlates to those who I serve, and the ways that this can be used as a tool for good. This project is far from over and is continuing to develop. If you're interested in more information, please visit my website AleesaNutting.com. I look forward to connecting with those of you in the future who may be passionate about my work as well. Thank you