Sex Trafficking Vocabulary

Family Terminology
A. “Daddy” - a term used to describe one's own pimp, evoking images of fatherhood. Women and girls under a pimp's control must never know his real name or identity and refer to him exclusively as “daddy.”
B. “Bottom” or “Bottom Bitch” - the woman who’s been with the pimp the longest and often takes on a mid-level controlling role to keep other victims in line.
C. “Bitch” - the most common way a pimp refers to his sex worker(s). Bitch is so pervasive that street-level sex workers use it as a referent to other street-level workers with whom they are very close
D. “Wife in Law”/“Wifey” - each individual in a group of women or girls that are with the same pimp. “Family” and “folks” also are synonyms.
E. “My Folks”/ “My Team” - The family metaphor is prevalent within street-level sex workers reinforcing feelings of identity beyond a sex worker and connecting to feelings of belonging and camaraderie (Weinkauf).

Terms of Disloyalty
A. “Out of Pocket” - a term used to describe when a woman or girl breaks “the rules” by making eye contact with another pimp.
B. “Square” - a term used that describes trying to go straight and get out of the life, or that describes law enforcement and those that don’t understand “the game.”
C. “Choose-up” - is to make the choice to have a different pimp. A sex worker’s decision to choose up is often met with physical violence from her former pimp, which her new pimp allows as part of the transaction (Weinkauf).
D. “Renegade” A street-level prostitute who does not have a pimp. The term reflects the arguably traitorous nature of the woman who chooses to work for herself and by definition is a disloyal person who betrays or deserts others (Weinkauf).

Other Terms in the Pimp Subculture
A. “Dates”, “Johns”, or “Tricks” - terms used to describe buyers of commercial sex.
B. The “Stroll” or “Track” - the common area or cross-streets where street prostitution is known to occur on a nightly basis.
C. “Pimps Up, Ho’s Down” - women and girls must always exist in “lower” ways than the pimp, including by standing only on the street during street prostitution. A woman or girl who ventures onto the sidewalk is severely reprimanded or forced into what is known as a “pimp circle.”
D. “Pimp circle” the process of multiple pimps swarming and surrounding one woman or girl and hissing insults at her, for the purposes of humiliation and intimidation.
E. "Stable"- refers to the group of women and girls under a pimp's control (i.e., a pimp's stable).

F. Eye Contact- A woman or girl may not ever make eye contact with another pimp. If this rule is broken, the woman or girl suffers serious physical violence.

G. Quotas- Pimps set nightly monetary quotas that the women or girls must reach through providing commercial sex or theft.

Grooming/Seasoning- The process of "breaking-down" a girl from healthy adolescent sexual boundaries to commercial sex with strangers is often referred to as "grooming" or "seasoning." It is a systematic process that has been documented and replicated by pimps nationwide. In essence, this process aims to achieve complete control over someone's identity or individuality using a combination of physical, mental, and emotional means. In the trafficking paradigm, this process involves force, fraud, and coercion.

*All definitions taken from Polaris Project unless otherwise noted.