



## **HUMAN TRAFFICKING TRAINING RESOURCE MANUAL**

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## Introduction

First of all I would like to say thank you to Alabama Department of Public Health for providing this training opportunity and allowing me to be a part of social change and public health related issues. I am honored and humbled.

The manual is for you to refer back to as you have more questions, situations arise and/or someone needs your assistance. I am sure we will not have the time to cover the entire manual during this training session, yet the materials and resources provided are to help you understand at an even deeper level the aspects of human trafficking and how victims are affected.

I know many of us have been taught how to handle situations and we do the best we can. As a professional, I have had to review what I thought I knew and take an even deeper look at how to best help this specific population. There have been MANY times when what had been taught was not the best way to help this specific person and I had to think outside of the box.

This is not an easy or pretty subject to cover, yet it is necessary. My hopes are this training allows you to change the lens you may be looking through and see trafficking victims in a different way. I challenge each of you to re-think what you have been taught and to understand is that he/she is a person who needs grace and love...and you may be given the opportunity to be the first one to show them these aspects of life.

Let's get started!  
Blessings to you all!

Tajuan McCarty  
BSW, MPA, MPH

## Red Flag Indicators

Anti-trafficking experts have identified specific “red flag” indicators for human trafficking. The presence of any of the red flags listed below should heighten a provider’s suspicion of some form of human trafficking or other serious coercion:

- Delayed presentation for medical care
- Discrepancy between the stated history and the clinical presentation or observed pattern of injury
- Scripted, memorized, or mechanically recited history
- Stated age older than visual appearance
- Subordinate, hyper-vigilant, or fearful demeanor
- Inability to produce identification documents
- Documents in the possession of an accompanying party
- Reluctance or inability to speak on one’s own behalf
- Accompanying individual who answers questions for the patient or otherwise controls the pace and content of the encounter
- Companion or accompanying individual who insists on providing translation
- Companion who refuses to leave
- Evidence of a lack of care for previously identified or obviously existing medical conditions
- Tattoos or other marks or insignias that may indicate a claim of “ownership” by another
- Evidence of any kind of physical violence including torture

Specific red flag indicators of sex trafficking, or of labor trafficking with concomitant sexual exploitation/abuse, include:

- Recurrent sexually transmitted infections
- Multiple or frequent pregnancies
- Frequent or forced abortion
- Frequent relocation to avoid detection

Labor trafficking should be suspected in patients of any age who present with injuries or ailments that could be due to lack of proper protective gear, excessively long work hours, heavy labor with restricted access to food/drink, or physical abuse, for example:

- Occupational-type injuries without evidence of legitimate employment (e.g., overuse injuries, chemical exposures, exposure to extreme or adverse climate conditions, head injuries)
- Physical ailments (e.g., dehydration, malnutrition, chronic fatigue), especially when accompanied by vague references to being related to a work situation

Given that foreign-born nationals are more likely than U.S. citizens to be trafficked for the purpose of forced or bonded labor, the above indicators are especially relevant to clients for whom English is not the primary language.

Commercial sexual exploitation should be suspected if children or adolescents (or, in certain circumstances, young adults) present with any of the following features:

- Presentation to the health care setting with non-guardian or unrelated adults
- Access to material possessions that one would reasonably doubt the patient could afford
- Over-familiarity with sexual terms and practices
- Seemingly excessive number of sexual “partners”
- History of school truancy or recurrent episodes of running away
- Reluctance to talk about a particular tattoo
- Fearful attachment to a cell phone (often used for monitoring or tracking)

Pediatric-age red flags may also signal incipient exploitation of a minor who has not yet been trafficked but who may be in the “grooming” phase (e.g., being lured and manipulated in preparation for commercial sexual exploitation).

## More Red Flags

Common work and living conditions:

- Is not free to leave or come and go as he/she wishes
- Is under 18 and providing commercial sex acts
- Is in the commercial sex industry and has a pimp/manager
- Is unpaid, paid very little, or paid only through tips
- Works excessively long and/or unusual hours
- Is not allowed breaks or suffers under unusual restrictions at work
- Owes a large debt and is unable to pay it off
- Was recruited through false promises concerning the nature and conditions of his/her work
- High security measures exist in the work and/or living locations (e.g. opaque windows, boarded up windows, bars on windows, barbed wire, security cameras, locks on outside of doors etc....)

Poor mental, physical health or abnormal behavior:

- Is fearful, anxious, depressed, submissive, tense or nervous/paranoid
- Exhibits unusually fearful or anxious behavior after bringing up law enforcement
- Avoids eye contact
- Lacks health care
- Appears malnourished
- Shows signs of physical and/or sexual abuse, physical restraint, confinement, or torture

Lack of Control:

- Has few or no personal possessions
- Is not in control of his/her money, no financial records, or bank account
- Is not in control of his/her identification or has none (ID, passport)

- Is not allowed to speak for themselves
- Claims of just visiting and inability to clarify an address
- Lack of knowledge of whereabouts or does not know what city they are in
- Loss of sense of time
- Has numerous inconsistencies in their story

These lists are NOT exhaustive and represent only a selection of possible indicators. The red flags may not be indicative of all cases, and are not cumulative. These are offered as a guideline for you as a helping professional.

## **Assessments**

Provided in separate documents.

## Understanding Stockholm Syndrome

On August 23rd, 1973 two machine-gun carrying criminals entered a bank in Stockholm, Sweden. Blasting their guns, one prison escapee named Jan-Erik Olsson announced to the terrified bank employees “The party has just begun!” The two bank robbers held four hostages, three women and one man, for the next 131 hours. The hostages were strapped with dynamite and held in a bank vault until finally rescued on August 28th.

After their rescue, the hostages exhibited a shocking attitude considering they were threatened, abused, and feared for their lives for over five days. In their media interviews, it was clear that they supported their captors and actually feared law enforcement personnel who came to their rescue. The hostages had begun to feel the captors were actually protecting them from the police. One woman later became engaged to one of the criminals and another developed a legal defense fund to aid in their criminal defense fees. Clearly, the hostages had “bonded” emotionally with their captors.

While the psychological condition in hostage situations became known as “Stockholm Syndrome” due to the publicity, the emotional “bonding” with captors was a familiar story in psychology. It had been recognized many years before and was found in studies of other hostage, prisoner, or abusive situations such as:

- Abused Children
- Battered/Abused Women
- Prisoners of War
- Cult Members
- Incest Victims
- Criminal Hostage Situations
- Concentration Camp Prisoners
- Controlling/Intimidating Relationships

In the final analysis, emotionally bonding with an abuser is actually a strategy for survival for victims of abuse and intimidation. The “Stockholm Syndrome” reaction in hostage and/or abuse situations is so well recognized at this time that police hostage negotiators no longer view it as unusual. In fact, it is often encouraged in crime situations as it improves the chances for survival of the hostages. On the down side, it also assures that the hostages experiencing “Stockholm Syndrome” will not be very cooperative during rescue or criminal prosecution. Local law enforcement personnel have long recognized this syndrome with battered women who fail to press charges, bail their battering husband/boyfriend out of jail, and even physically attack police officers when they arrive to rescue them from a violent assault.

Stockholm Syndrome (SS) can also be found in family, romantic, and interpersonal relationships. The abuser may be a husband or wife, boyfriend or girlfriend, father or mother, or any other role in which the abuser is in a position of control or authority.

It's important to understand the components of Stockholm Syndrome as they relate to abusive and controlling relationships. Once the syndrome is understood, it's easier to understand why victims support, love, and even defend their abusers and controllers.

Every syndrome has symptoms or behaviors, and Stockholm Syndrome is no exception. While a clear-cut list has not been established due to varying opinions by researchers and experts, several of these features will be present:

- Positive feelings by the victim toward the abuser/controller
- Negative feelings by the victim toward family, friends, or authorities trying to rescue/support them or win their release
- Support of the abuser's reasons and behaviors
- Positive feelings by the abuser toward the victim
- Supportive behaviors by the victim, at times helping the abuser
- Inability to engage in behaviors that may assist in their release or detachment

Stockholm Syndrome doesn't occur in every hostage or abusive situation. In another bank robbery involving hostages, after terrorizing patrons and employees for many hours, a police sharpshooter shot and wounded the terrorizing bank robber. After he hit the floor, two women picked him up and physically held him up to the window for another shot. As you can see, the length of time one is exposed to abuse/control and other factors are certainly involved.

It has been found that four situations or conditions are present that serve as a foundation for the development of Stockholm Syndrome. These four situations can be found in hostage, severe abuse, and abusive relationships:

- The presence of a perceived threat to one's physical or psychological survival and the belief that the abuser would carry out the threat.
- The presence of a perceived small kindness from the abuser to the victim
- Isolation from perspectives other than those of the abuser
- The perceived inability to escape the situation

## **Linking Sex Trafficking and Prostitution**

**We, the survivors of prostitution and trafficking gathered at this press conference today, declare that prostitution is violence against women. Women in prostitution do not wake up one day and “choose” to be prostitutes. It is chosen for us by poverty, past sexual abuse, the pimps who take advantage of our vulnerabilities, and the men who buy us for the sex of prostitution. (Manifesto, Joint CATW-EWL Press Conference, 2005)**

The global sex industry is a massive profit-making enterprise based on the marketing of women and girls. The sexual exploitation of women and girls in international prostitution and trafficking networks has become one of the major aspects of transnational organized crime. Unlike drugs and guns, women and children can be sold multiple times and in multiple ways for profit, and the criminals receive less punishment and shorter sentences.

In any system of legalized or regulated prostitution the State is benefiting financially from the sexual exploitation of women and girls. The collusion and lack of political will by states to create adequate laws and ensure police enforcement give legal permission to exploit and make the sexual violence against women invisible

Male demand for a supply of women and children is the root cause of prostitution and trafficking. Gender inequality, globalization, poverty, racism, migration and the collapse of women's economic stability are global factors, which create the conditions in which women are driven into the sex industry.

The majority of trafficked persons are women and girls, in particular from developing countries and countries with economies in transition. Multiple forms of discrimination and conditions of disadvantage contribute to the vulnerability of women and girls driven into prostitution.

Studies consistently indicate that women and children who are exploited in the local sex industry (i.e. not trafficked) have experienced similar economic deprivation, alongside a history of sexual abuse. Homelessness, institutionalization and drug addiction are some of the additional factors making them vulnerable to entry into prostitution.

The root cause of prostitution and trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation is the male demand for women and girls who can be bought and sexually exploited. Without the demand, the supply of women and girls would not be necessary and the market would collapse.

Prostitution and the sex industry promote the myth that male sexuality must be satisfied by a supply of women and children who can be bought. This demands the creation of a group of women who are legitimate targets for rape and sexual exploitation.

Male abusers can act with impunity because they know that women in prostitution will not be believed or taken seriously by the criminal justice system. Many abusers deliberately target women's vulnerabilities, such as a drug habit, in order to act as abusively as they wish.



The concepts of ‘consent’ and ‘choice’ are consistently abused by those promoting the legalization of prostitution. They are misleading and inaccurate terms when applied to the constrained and limited contexts in which women and girls are lured or forced into sexual exploitation.

Promoting prostitution as a legitimate career or sexual service denies and obscures the inherent sexual exploitation and violence to which women and girls are subjected.

One cannot have the right to violation. One only has the right to be free from violation.

**There are no “safe zones” for women in the sex industry.**

## **FAQ**

### **What does the term “sex trafficking” mean?**

Commercial sexual exploitation through force, fraud, and/or coercion. In short, sex trafficking is sexual slavery. Trafficked women and children feed a high worldwide demand for sex slaves, pornography, and prostitution. Traffickers consider people, especially children, to be commodities or renewable resources that can be exploited again and again, unlike guns or drugs that can only be sold once and at high risk of penalty. With the combination of low risk, high demand, and enormous profit potential, it is easy to see why sex trafficking is the fastest growing criminal industry.

For anyone under age 18, force, fraud, or coercion are not required elements of the crime, meaning any minor in the commercial sex industry is a sex trafficking victim, according to the law.

#### *Force*

- Beating and slapping
- Beating with objects
- Burning
- Sexual assault
- Rape
- Confinement and physical restraint

#### *Fraud*

- False promises
- Deceitful enticing and affectionate behavior
- Lying about working conditions
- Lying about the promise of a better life

#### *Coercion*

- Threats of serious harm or restraint
- Intimidation and humiliation
- Creating a climate of fear

- Intense manipulation
- Emotional abuse
- Creating dependency and fear of independence

### **How do traffickers get their victims?**

Each victim of sex trafficking has a different story as to how she was introduced, coerced, manipulated, or forced into the lifestyle. Some are lured in by the prospect of a well paying job, fame, or enticing false advertisements promising to move them abroad or across town for a better life. Others are mesmerized by the love and attention that a doting “boyfriend” lavishes upon them, rendering them unable to recognize the truth of the situation: that he is actually a pimp. Unfortunately, many children are sold by their parents directly to a john or pimp or kicked out of their home, becoming easy prey for a manipulating pimp. Traffickers understand the economic motivations and psychological exploitation that will entice a person to leave her family for monetary gain, offer complete trust and devotion to a stranger, and do whatever it takes to survive.

### **Do victims always come from a low-income background?**

Victims come from backgrounds of all types, including middle- and upper-class families. Poverty is one of many factors that make individuals vulnerable to exploitation and trafficking.

### **Who is at risk of becoming a victim of human trafficking?**

Traffickers typically prey on individuals who are vulnerable in some way, making them easier to recruit and control. Targets include those suffering from poverty, crisis, ignorance, despair, war, and hopelessness.

### **Is human trafficking another word for smuggling?**

Smuggling is a crime against a country’s borders, whereas human trafficking is a crime against a person. While smuggling requires illegal border crossing, human trafficking involves commercial sex acts, labor, or services induced through force, fraud, or coercion. Although the word ‘trafficking’ sounds like movement, the federal definition of trafficking does not require transportation.

### **Does physical violence have to be involved in human trafficking cases?**

Under federal law, an individual using physical or psychological violence to force someone into a labor or sex industry is considered a human trafficker. While some victims experience beatings, rape, and other forms of physical violence, many victims are controlled by traffickers/pimps through psychological means, such as threats of violence, manipulation, and lies. In many cases, traffickers use a combination of direct violence and mental abuse.

### **Why don’t victims of trafficking ask for help?**

Victims of trafficking often do not see themselves as victims. They do not seek help because of lack of trust, self-blame, or training by traffickers.

### **Does human trafficking only occur in illegal underground industries?**

While human trafficking occurs in illegal and underground markets, it can also occur in legal and legitimate settings. Common locations include private homes, large hotels, nail salons, restaurants, bars, and strip clubs.

## **Who Is She?**

- Who is the woman experiencing sexual exploitation?
- What does she look like?
- What are her hopes, fears, feelings, and dreams?
- What pressures does she face?

She looks a lot like you. She may come from an abusive environment. She may be well educated. She may be marginalized. There is not a consistent pattern or “type” of trafficking victim.

### **She has potential.**

God loves us for who He created us to be. And, at the same time, He loves us so much that He is willing to meet us exactly where we are and we must meet the victim exactly where she is.

### **She has a desire to nurture life.**

Most people instinctively know that life is worth protecting and nurturing. The degree to which this is true, however, involves how they view various stages of life. If she honestly does not know that her life is worth protecting, she may not sense the need for protection as greatly. You may be one of the few people who she sees that can give her hope.

### **She has hopes and dreams for her life.**

Everyone has an idea of what they would like to achieve and receive in life. Some may actually have definable goals for their lives, and some may only relate to hopes and dreams. Regardless of how reasonable or well thought out their goals are, they still exist. In addition, most people do not set out to make things as difficult as they can in their lives.

### **She has her own beliefs and value system.**

Before being trafficked she may have had her own belief and value system. But, that may no longer be the case due to how much she was been devalued as a person. Therefore, make sure that you are being careful not to impose cultural preferences on her. Even if you disagree with her beliefs, you still need to show her respect.

### **She is created in the image of God and is a unique and special individual.**

This may be a new concept to her, given the fact that only 41% of all Americans, and 34% of teens, classify themselves as “born again”. This means that many have only vague ideas or knowledge regarding God and the Scriptures.

## **What Is She Thinking?**

### **Common Thoughts**

Imagine you have been rescued and your life has completely changed from what your “normal” has been for years, what would be going through your mind?

Many of those thoughts are hers too. She is unsure of where she is, who she can trust, how she is going to survive, what is going to happen to her and if she will be safe. It is our job to love her into a place of comforting thoughts and healing. She must consistently know she is safe.

## What Is She Feeling?

### Commons Emotions

Imagine that you just been tricked or coerced into being sexually exploited. List what you are feeling:

Many of the same feelings you listed may be the ones that a victim is experiencing. Feelings are powerful persuaders. As you speak to her, listen for the feelings being expressed, verbally and non-verbally.

- **Fear:** She may be scared about many things. She may be scared to talk to anyone about her experience. She may be scared to face the future with this life-changing situation. She may be scared of the health impacts.
- **Confusion:** The degree of crisis she experiences will impact her ability to make well thought out decisions. This confusion is often the result of desperation to find relief from the painful circumstances of being sexually exploited.
- **Worthlessness:** She may have suffered from a poor self-image before being trafficked, and her experiences can intensify these feelings. Her deep longings to achieve significance and worth could have led to her feeling that she loved the man who was her pimp. He was her provider and took care of her. He may have been the only “love” she has ever known.
- **Anger:** It can be directed at herself, her pimp, and/or her parents or family. The expression of anger is often a result of actual or perceived loss. Many young women are angry at the losses they have experienced, although they will not acknowledge it.
- **Guilt:** She may be ambivalent about her sexual activity, vacillating between feeling guilty and justifying her behavior. The feeling of guilt can be an overwhelming experience to her. It can result in an acute sense of need for help and change, or a desperate need to rationalize or deny consequences of behavior. The need to justify actions and thoughts will often intensify if she senses she is being judged. The skilled helper will show nonjudgmental acceptance without condoning her behavior.

## Pressures

There are many pressures that a woman may face seeking help from being sexually exploited. Some of these pressures are very real and may present a threat to her well-being. Others are perceived pressures based upon what may be said or thought. Careful helping skills, an understanding of the crisis response, and compassionate care can go far to help alleviate some of the intensity of these pressures.

- Identify one of the most important decisions you had to make in your life.
- With whom did you consult?
- How did you deal with conflicting counsel?

## The Nature of Crisis

A crisis is not an external event. A crisis is what happens within a person—what takes place as a response to the event. Everyone has experienced a crisis at some point in his or her life. It may be something as ordinary as losing your car keys or as large as the death of a loved one.

What feelings do you associated with the word crisis? List some of those feelings:

Most people list negative emotions. The word crisis carries intensity with it. It gives the situation an urgency that suggests a need to make an immediate decision.

## Crisis Phases

It is imperative we understand the dynamics of a crisis and the phases a woman goes through during a crisis. During the pre-crisis phase, the woman is coping with life as she normally does. Each person has his or her own way of handling day-to-day experiences.

When a woman learns she is being trafficked and wants to be free, she enters into the crisis phase. The length of time spent in this phase will vary from person to person, but a general pattern of experience exists for most people who are going through a crisis. This experience usually includes symptoms of grief, adaptation, and resolution. Some of the negative emotions that may be experienced are:

- **Anger:** anger at her pimp, at God, at herself, her situation.
- **Denial:** “I wasn’t trafficked. I made the decision to runaway/leave home/be on the streets.”
- **Bargaining:** “Please, God! If I can get out of this situation, I’ll never...again.”
- **Depression:** symptoms of excessive sleeping, withdrawal, excessive crying, etc.
- **Acceptance:** coming to terms with being trafficked, going through the process of resolving the crisis.

Two common attitudes that you may encounter in a victim who is facing crisis are ambivalence and detachment.

- **Ambivalence:** When a victim is ambivalent, conflicting emotions or thoughts are often observed. She may find herself looking in many different directions for possible solutions. This may occur within a matter of minutes or over a couple of days. This is why it is so important to educate yourself and her about ambivalence.
- **Detachment:** The victim, who talks to you without emotion, possibly in a matter-of-fact way, may be experiencing detachment. Detachment is used as a defense mechanism. It is characterized by a lack of emotional and intellectual involvement. It keeps her from feeling emotions that may cause her to more thoroughly explore her options. Detachment works as a wall—a block to face the realities of the crisis. A woman may use detachment to deny the fact that she was trafficked. More commonly, you may see the emotionally detached woman who refuses to see any option other than running away, as she develops *tunnel vision* and blocks out any other possibilities in dealing with her crisis.

Ambivalence and detachment, as well as anxiety, an inability to cope, and helplessness, are often observed in the adaptation stage. This is the point where the victim is trying to come to terms with her situation and make a decision as to what her next step might be. It is a time of seeking additional information and making decisions. It is a time of transition. Transition begins by letting go of something. Psychologists tell us that all people perceive change as loss.

## What Does She Need?

Put yourself in her shoes. You have been trafficked in 50 states, with no money or identity. What are some of the things you would look for in your helper? List some of the qualities below.

### Qualities of a helper:

Desired qualities might include: trustworthiness, a good listener, non-manipulative, accepting, truthful, and someone without an agenda who keeps confidences and does not gossip.

One emotion common to people experiencing a crisis is fear—fear of losing something or someone. Whatever the fear, it is her fear and, thus, needs to be explored, no matter how irrational, ridiculous, or selfish it may seem to you.

There are steps to helping the individual in a crisis situation. They involve making contact, reducing anxiety, focusing on the issues, encouraging action, and continuing to help. The next section will show you how to become the kind of caregiver that can help a woman in crisis as she works through her emotions and her situation.

## Good Questions

Good questions provide you with important information about her and her situation. Using this technique provides an opportunity for her to learn how to solve problems on her own. The ability to ask good questions is necessary to be an effective volunteer.

## Types of Questions to Avoid

The first step in learning to ask good questions is to recognize the types of questions that are least helpful. Unfortunately, most of us naturally ask questions that do not often lead to a better understanding of a situation.

- **Closed-ended questions**

Closed-ended questions are questions that can be answered “yes” or “no.” They usually begin with *Have, Do, Are, Would*, or other auxiliary verbs. Most people like being asked these types of questions since they can be answered with a “yes” or “no.” However, this does not allow you to gain useful information about her or her situation.

Example: “Are you upset about being here?”

- **“Why” questions**

“Why” questions imply judgment and put her on the defensive. The same information may be obtained by rephrasing the question.

Example: “Why did you call him when you have escaped his abuse?”

*Rephrased:* “What is causing you to pursue this relationship?”

- **Rapid-fire questions**

Rapid-fire questions are actually several questions combined into one sentence. This type of questioning confuses her and is a poor communication technique. Never ask more than one question at a time.

Example: “Where will you live, how will you pay for it, and who is going to help you?”

- **Questions containing the answer**

Questions containing the answer are used to state opinions rather than to gain information. You should never use a question to manipulate her into a preferred response.

Example: “You wouldn’t really have run, would you?”

## Good Questions: Open-ended

Good questions are open-ended and resident-focused. Open-ended questions encourage victim to talk about herself. They are usually based on something she has said and are used to explore the situation in greater depth. They also provide a model for future problem-solving techniques.

Good questions usually begin with *How, What, Which, When, and Where*. Listed below are examples of open-ended questions:

“How do you feel about being here?”

“What makes you say that running is the best solution?”

“What were the circumstances that led up to you leaving him?”

“Which living situation do you think you would like the most?”

Exercises:

Read each statement below and think of an open-ended question that would be helpful in exploring the situation.

Victim: “My parents really disapproved of my friends. They want me to find a new crowd, but it’s hard to break into a new crowd after the school year begins.”

Question:

Victim: “Once in a while, I just let myself dream. I think about what I would like to do and who I’d like to be. It’s such a relief from the situation I’m in right now.”

Question:

Victim: “My parents are religious, and I know they’re going to be really upset when they find out I’ve been sexually exploited.”

Question:

Victim: “When I told my best friend that I was running away to model and have a fabulous life of travel and money and she said I was crazy and should talk to my parents.”

Question:

Victim: “My boyfriend (pimp) thinks that sex is important in our relationship. I’m not really sure how I feel about it. But I think that maybe I should go along with what he wants.”

Question:

In evaluating your questions, use the following criteria:

- 1) Does she have the opportunity to explore her thoughts and feelings?
- 2) Do the questions provide an opportunity for new insights?
- 3) Is new information received that leads to a greater understanding of her?



## Resources

The following resources are both local and national. Links are provided for further reading and understanding of trafficking.

### Law Enforcement

- FBI  
Birmingham Office – 205-326-6166  
Email: [Birmingham@icfbi.gov](mailto:Birmingham@icfbi.gov)
- Alabama Law Enforcement Agency  
334-517-2800
- Alabama Fusion Center  
334-517-2660

### National Agencies

- National Center for Missing & Exploited Children  
1-800-THE-LOST (843-56780)
- National Human Trafficking Resource Center  
1-888-373-7888

### Housing

- The WellHouse  
1-800-991-0948 (24/7 Crisis Line)

### Links:

The Polaris Project – [www.polarisproject.org](http://www.polarisproject.org)

Prostitution Research and Education – [www.prostitutionresearch.com](http://www.prostitutionresearch.com)

Shared Hope International – [www.sharedhope.org](http://www.sharedhope.org)

The WellHouse – [www.the-wellhouse.org](http://www.the-wellhouse.org)

Trafficking Resource Center – [www.traffickingresourcecenter.org](http://www.traffickingresourcecenter.org)

## The Demand

### THE PROBLEM OF DEMAND IN COMBATING SEX TRAFFICKING

Linda SMITH/Samantha HEALY VARDAMAN

#### What is Demand?

In the global market of sex trafficking there are sellers (traffickers), consumers (johns), and products (victims). Basic economics holds that demand for a product is fundamental for market survival. Without demand for services there would be no market for this particular product--sex trafficking victims. Demand is the push factor in the criminal business of sex trafficking. Demand is created by men and women (predominantly men) who seek to purchase sex or sexual entertainment from persons who have been subject to force, fraud or coercion or who are under the age of 18 years and are involved in commercial sex. Demand causes sex trafficking to occur in countries around the world.

#### The Function of Demand in Sex Trafficking

The sex trafficking of persons is driven by demand for the menu of commercial sex acts they are forced to perform and how they are “packaged.” Traffickers move victim-products to the markets, assisted and facilitated by other actors in a myriad of ways. As the demand increases, traffickers must increase the supply of victims. The buyer in this marketplace views the victim as a dehumanized product for immediate consumption and disposal. If buyers were not seeking commercial sexual services, then sex trafficking would cease to be a profitable venture. Much like a legitimate market, supply and demand for commercial sexual services are correlated. The supply of women and children in the sex industry serves as the fuel for this criminal slave trade and must increase to meet growing demand for sexual services throughout the world. Demand affects the market structure and the type of product made available. Evidence suggests that increasingly younger product is sought, signaling a response to buyers’ perceptions that younger victims are both healthier and more vulnerable. This desire for sex with younger girls has led to large numbers of juveniles exploited through prostitution around the globe – per se sex trafficking victims under the U.N. Protocol and the U.S. federal trafficking law.

#### Culture of Tolerance

“It is not enough that the law considers illegal behavior of the customer of sexual services...the functional equivalent of the law must also recognize such behavior as unacceptable. By ‘functional equivalent of the law,’ I mean the traditions, the customs, the acceptable behavior of the people. The legal systems that ‘tolerate’ or ‘accommodate’ or ‘normalize’ the behavior of the customer must reconsider its policies, change the law, and enforce the law accordingly.”

— Dr. Mohamed Mattar, Director of The Protection Project of Johns Hopkins University, School of Advanced International Studies

A culture of tolerance surrounds the marketplace of commercial sexual exploitation. The culture of tolerance is derived from a country’s history, ethnicity, religious practice, language, political and economic system, and other influences. Research in several countries revealed the following characteristics of buyers. In the Netherlands, a sex addiction counselor described

most buyers who visit the red light districts as “situational buyers” based on his work in this area. These buyers are usually married (9 out of 10), in their late 30’s to early 40’s, have children, hold a good job, and have an average to high I.Q. They have difficulty maintaining relationships and focus heavily on their work. Many times they do not intend to endanger their current relationship with a wife or girlfriend, but are unable to stop the relationship with prostitution. Particularly because prostitution is legal and readily available, in their minds they are able to separate the two worlds so that there is not a conflict of interest. In the U.S., the observed purchasers of commercial sex and perpetrators of sexual exploitation in the three cities researched for the DEMAND. report were observed to be of all three types of buyers; though ethnic brothels are reported to service only members of the particular ethnicity. With that exception, buyers, who tend to be primarily white, middle-aged males, appear to be opportunistic and use a variety of methods to access the commercial sex markets ranging from the Internet, to telephoning escort services, to inquiring of close confidantes. Preferential buyers will go to great lengths to obtain their preferred product, e.g., traveling abroad to countries where penalties for commercial sex, particularly with children, are lax or nonexistent and their anonymity can be preserved. Buyers of sexual services in urban Tokyo included Japanese male, white-collar workers; college students; and foreign businessmen who often rationalize their behavior as a form of economic assistance—a rationale heard by buyers consistently in every country researched. One buyer in Tokyo stated, “It’s like donating money to UNICEF: If the girls even get a fraction of what I pay, they’re doing a hell of a lot better than they would in their own country. If it was really so bad, the Japanese cops would close them down, right?”<sup>7</sup> Researchers in London interviewed 103 men who buy sex to determine what they know about the women they are using in prostitution. Twelve percent of the men reported they had used more than 130 women in prostitution. Most reported buying sex 15 times, although the numbers ranged from one to 2,000.

#### Who Are the Buyers?

Buyers of sexual services can be placed in three categories: situational, preferential and opportunistic. The definitions of buyers commonly employed by those working in the area of commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) include “situational” and “preferential” buyers. Situational buyers in the realm of

CSEC are defined as those who engage minors in commercial sex because they are available, vulnerable and the practice is tolerated. Preferential buyers, such as pedophiles, have a sexual preference and shop specifically in the markets providing the preferred victim or service.

In the larger commercial sex market involving adults and minors there is a third group of buyers, which can be described as “opportunistic buyers.” These are buyers who purchase sex indiscriminately because they do not care, are willfully blind to the age or willingness of the female, or are simply unconcerned as to the differentiation between adults and minors. Due to intensive marketing and the increased normalization of commercial sex in society, buyers from a young age are groomed to glamorize commercial sex, to dehumanize the women and children exploited, and even to express aggression toward the victims through violent video games and violent pornography.

Power and Control Wheel



Note: this wheel was adapted from the Domestic Abuse Intervention Project's Duluth Model Power and Control Wheel, available at [www.theduluthmodel.org](http://www.theduluthmodel.org)

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