
Engaging Christian Communities in Ending Sexual Exploitation:

A Toolkit and Resource Guide



This guide has been adapted with permission from Chapter 61 Ministries of Chicago, IL. We thank them for their generosity in allowing us to adapt their work.

Introduction

This toolkit includes the following resources:

Biblical passages and reflective questions that can help you explore the issues surrounding prostitution in a way that is spiritually relevant to your community

Practical action steps to eliminate the exploitation of women and children

A section describing specific groups that have taken positions against sexual exploitation

Lists of organizations, both faith-based and secular, that are working to end sexual harm against women and children

Note: *Engaging Christian Communities in Ending Sexual Exploitation* is a resource adapted from the Chicago Alliance Against Sexual Exploitation (CAASE)'s guide of the same name. The Maryland Rescue and Restore Coalition (R&R) and The Samaritan Women (TSW) have, with permission, adapted the guide to better serve Maryland residents and groups.

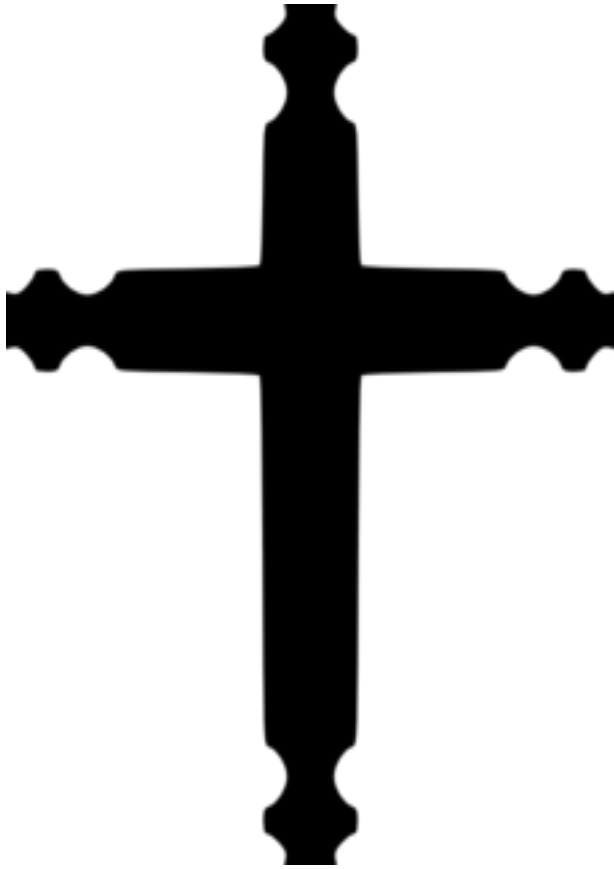
This toolkit is for Maryland groups within faith communities (i.e., women's groups, study groups, social groups, etc.) and any other individuals of faith who are passionate about ending sexual exploitation.

This toolkit provides background information on issues surrounding prostitution and other forms of sexual exploitation both generally and affecting Baltimore specifically, including pathways to entry, barriers to exiting, and the role that customers and pimps play in maintaining and profiting from the sex trade. This kit can be used to raise awareness *and* mobilize your community to join the fight to end sexual exploitation. As Christians, it is imperative that we take action on this issue. As followers of a faith permeated with social justice and helping those who are suffering, there is no choice *but* to be a voice for justice.

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How Christian Communities Can Help



Christian tradition is rooted in the concepts of love and compassion, and these overarching values form the foundation for Christians' leadership roles in social justice efforts throughout the world. With a long history of striving to make the world better for all, Christian communities can play a key role in the fight to end human trafficking and sexual exploitation. This kit is a tool that can be a catalyst for activism within congregations. The toolkit can be used by groups within faith communities that are interested in working towards social change (women's groups, social justice groups, young adult groups, etc.), as well as by any individual who is passionate about ending sexual harm.

Prostitution and human trafficking are human rights violations that occur in neighborhoods all over Baltimore, throughout Maryland, and indeed worldwide. As long as people remain unaware of the root cause and extent of sexual exploitation, the trauma experienced by victims will continue to grow. Christian communities can be a vehicle for both raising awareness and advocating on behalf of the victims of sexual exploitation.

This toolkit focuses specifically on the importance of ending *the demand* for paid sex. While this is just one piece of a complicated puzzle, it is the piece that is most commonly overlooked. Providing prostituted individuals with social services and other resources is vital for helping them exit prostitution, but as long as demand exists, vulnerable individuals will continue to be recruited and coerced into the sex trade. Purchasing sex is never justified, no matter a person's circumstances, and serves to support an industry that profits from sexual exploitation and harm. That is why we are reaching out to you to help us *end the demand*.

We hope that you will use this toolkit to educate your fellow congregation members about the harms of human trafficking and sexual exploitation and work with them to identify ways to take action toward change.

¹ Wilberforce Central, <http://www.wilberforcecentral.org>.

² The Abolition of Slavery Project, http://abolition.e2bn.org/people_31.html.

Introduction to Prostitution

Women and girls account for 80% of detected victims of forced labor/trafficking. Children are about 15-20%.

Why the Focus on *Demand* for Paid Sex?

Solving the issue of prostitution is complicated. Individuals involved in the sex trade need a variety of social services and other resources to exit the sex trade safely. Unfortunately, instead of viewing these individuals as victims in need of assistance, society tends to label them as criminals. This leads to a criminal justice response that disproportionately targets those selling sex and not the men who are purchasing

or the pimps and traffickers who are profiting. Although ample research informs us that the customers (or "johns"), pimps, and other traffickers are fueling the sex trade and abusing the women and girls in prostitution, the criminal justice and legal systems continue to target and punish the victims. **This one-sided focus fails to address the root cause of prostitution: the demand to purchase sex.** As long as this demand exists, more vulnerable women and children will be forced, coerced, and manipulated to meet the demand. The equation is simple: eliminate demand, eliminate commercial sexual exploitation.

Women in prostitution face barriers towards rehabilitation since an arrest record makes it more difficult to secure a job or home. The Johns, on the other hand, receive lesser punishments such as car impoundment, fines, and municipal violations, resulting in very little deterrence.

Prostitution will not end unless we end the demand for it. By shifting the community focus from targeting women in the sex trade to eliminating the demand for paid sex, we believe we will see a real reduction in prostitution and the harms associated with it in our communities and in our city.



Prostitution in Maryland

Many people believe that most people in prostitution are there of their own free will, or choose to do it to earn lots of money. But research conducted nationwide reveals that a substantial percentage of women in prostitution are homeless, and/or survivors of domestic violence and

sexual assault, and often start selling sex at a very young age. Many also experience mental health and substance abuse issues that go untreated.

Additionally, these individuals often experience extreme physical violence, sexual harm, and psychological trauma. This abuse results in a myriad of health problems, including sexually transmitted diseases, HIV/AIDS, migraines, memory problems, sleeplessness, severe depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, and eating disorders.

The Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children

Since last fall, the Crimes Against Children Squad in the FBI's Baltimore office has rescued 16 juveniles who were forced into prostitution by their pimps.³

Prostitution Facts	
Prostitution is an act of violence which is intrinsically traumatizing.	
Average Age Entering Prostitution	13.5
reported a history of sexual abuse in childhood	85%
reported a history of incest	70%
Percentage That Said Porn Taught Them What Was Expected Of Them	52%
said porn was used to illustrate client demands	80%
said pimps regularly exposed them to porn	30%
Rough Percentage Of Prostitutes Who Were Victims Of Rape	75%
prostituted women who had pimps	90%
prostituted women raped by pimps	85%
Prostituted Women Were Raped 16 Times Yearly By Pimps	
Of 475 Women, Men And Transgender People In Prostitution From 5 Countries (South Africa, Thailand, Turkey, USA, Zambia):	
raped in prostitution	62%
physically assaulted	73%
currently or formerly homeless	72%
Wanted To Escape Prostitution Immediately	92%
Girls And Women In Prostitution Have A Mortality Rate 40 Times Higher Than The National Average	
women in escort prostitution that have attempted suicide	75%
completed suicides of prostituted women of all completed suicides reported by hospitals	15%
Ingredients: Excerpted from the Prostitution Fact Sheet, compiled by Melissa Farley, at the Prostitution Research & Education site, prostitutionresearch.com.	
	

The overwhelming majority of individuals engaged in prostitution have a history of physical and/or sexual abuse, with estimates ranging from 65 to 90 percent.⁴ **Incest has long been considered a form of “boot camp” for prostitution because it teaches its victims to expect and accept abuse, even from the people who claim to love and care for them most.** It also teaches young people how to disassociate their bodies from their minds, and as many women in the sex trade

have expressed, being able to disassociate is necessary to survive the trauma of prostitution.

Commercial sexual exploiters in the U.S., commonly referred to as pimps, target particularly vulnerable youth, such as runaway and homeless adolescents (one out of every three teens on the street will be lured toward prostitution within 48 hours of leaving home⁵), and are constantly searching for younger victims, which often bring higher profits. Pimps understand the circumstances and tactics necessary to compel an individual into the sex trade, and seek out the most vulnerable women and girls to physically coerce or emotionally manipulate through false promises, verbal/physical abuse, and threats of harm to the victim and her family.

Nationally, **the average age females enter the sex trade is 12-14.**⁶ The effects are devastating for these children. Youth in prostitution are seriously affected developmentally, suffering from lack of sleep, malnutrition, loss of appetite and concentration, addiction to drugs, sexually transmitted diseases, and a feeling of intense

³ “Human Trafficking: A Modern-day Form of Slavery.” *The Baltimore Sun*. 6 June 2011. Web. 16 June 2011.

⁴ M. Farley et al., “Prostitution and Trafficking in Nine Countries: An Update on Violence and Posttraumatic Stress Disorder” in M. Farley, ed., *Prostitution, Trafficking, and Traumatic Stress* (New York: Haworth, 2003), 33-74.

⁵ National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, www.missingkids.com.

⁶ U.S. Department of Justice. (2007). *Domestic Sex Trafficking of Minors*. Washington, DC.

isolation. Additionally, they are often treated as criminals by law enforcement and judges, even though federal law states that any child under the age of 18 who has performed a commercial sex act is a victim of a severe form of human trafficking.⁷

What is Human Trafficking?

Victims of human trafficking are people forced, coerced, or deceived into labor or commercial sex. Labor trafficking is widespread in a variety of work situations that include small-scale businesses like restaurants and cleaning services and domestic workers held in homes, as well as large-scale operations such as farms, factories, sweatshops, and the supply chains of major multinational corporations. Sex trafficking occurs in all sectors of the sex industry, including street prostitution, online escort services, strip clubs, pornography, brothels, and the use of children for commercial sex. Some “mail order brides” become victims of both labor (domestic work) and sex trafficking. Under international law, any child involved in commercial sex is considered a trafficking victim, even if no force or coercion occurs.

“He promised me everything and better. Clothes, cars, house, himself. I was just looking for someone to love and love me.”
—prostitution survivor

In the U.S., a person is a victim of sex trafficking if s/he is being exploited to engage in commercial sex. A person is a victim of a severe form of sex trafficking if:

- S/he is being forced, coerced, or tricked to either work or engage in sex for money, and s/he believes s/he would experience serious harm if s/he tried to leave the situation.

OR

- S/he is under 18 and is having sex for money. (It isn't necessary to prove force or coercion for minors; the law recognizes that children cannot meaningfully consent to sex).



A 1999 study found that 90-percent of the prostitutes surveyed came from “church-going” homes or church-based orphanages
--SAGE (Standing Against Global Exploitation)

It's important to remember that:

- Anyone can be a victim of human trafficking, including U.S. Citizens, foreign nationals, men, women, adults, and children.
- Trafficking is not smuggling or forced movement. While transportation or movement may be involved in human trafficking, trafficking is simply forced/coerced labor; it doesn't require transportation or movement across borders.

⁷ William Wilberforce Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2008, Public Law 110-457, 110th Cong. (December 23, 2008), codified at US Code 18 section 1591.