

Not in Our Name!

Massage Therapists Against Sex Trafficking

Action Items & Powerful Tools for Ending Sexual Exploitation 2012

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Use your voice

Turn insults into opportunities

Unless you are very new to bodywork, chances are you've been on the receiving end of some disrespectful and inappropriate comments and inquiries about connections between massage therapy and prostitution. Depending on your mood, your response may have ranged from anger to frustration to sadness. Next time you are confronted with any of the above, consider the opportunity you have been given and bring the issue of sex trafficking into the light.

Strange calls at your place of business

Here are common examples of questions you may have gotten via your business phone line:

"How old are the therapists?"

"What do you wear?"

"What nationality are the girls?"

"Is total release included?"

Over time, and certainly by exploring the RESOURCE GUIDE, you have probably come to realize that these callers are looking for sex. There are many ways to deal with this situation; the best may be to respond in the following fashion:

*"It sounds like you're looking for sex. Massage therapy never involves sex. In fact, in all 50 states it is illegal to solicit sex in exchange for money; in many it is a felony, and in some cities men charged with solicitation get their pictures in the paper."**

Print your customized response on a laminated card near the phone so that your staff may have it handy at all times. Include the National Trafficking Hotline: 888.373.7888 on the card as well. If any callers make extremely blatant or explicit requests, forward the caller ID information and the details of their inquiry to the authorities.

* For state-specific information about the criminal penalties for soliciting sex, click here: <http://tinyurl.com/mt-penalties>. To ensure that this information is up to date, please visit www.polarisproject.org.

Social situations

When describing what you do for a living in a social situation such as a cocktail party, you may hear comments like this:

“Everybody loves a happy ending!”

People are likely to laugh along in the absence of any response, which perpetuates this harmful stereotype. By responding you have the opportunity to end this cycle. You could say:

“Massage therapy never involves sex. What you’re talking about is usually sex trafficking. Every day thousands of women and children forced into prostitution in the types of establishments you are referring to. I don’t think that’s something to joke about, do you?”

It’s true, these are unpleasant conversations to have, but when you are armed with information from this tool kit, you will be able to educate everyone in your midst and you will contribute to a larger cause.

Abolish the term “massage parlor”

One of the easiest and most powerful ways that you can fight sexual exploitation is to become aware of the language you use. Our words are intimately connected to the way we think about the world. To change our vocabulary is to take the first step toward changing our culture.

“Massage parlor” is a derogatory term, a euphemism for brothel, and perpetually links our industry with sex trafficking. Do not allow the use of this phrase to pass by without correcting the speaker. If you are not referring to a legitimate establishment, replace “massage parlor” with “illicit activity/ trafficking operation/ sex trafficking ring *posing as a massage establishment.*”

In general, instead of calling women in the sex trade “prostitutes,” “hookers,” “sex workers,” or “escorts,” use terms like “prostituted woman” or “people impacted by the sex trade,” as this more accurately reflects most circumstances. Urge family and friends to change their language as well, explaining why traditional terminology is harmful and misleading.

Collaborate with local law enforcement

All too often, law enforcement officials do not take issues related to human trafficking seriously enough. For far too long women forced into human trafficking were viewed and treated as criminals. It is crucial that law enforcement officials shift their focus to the pimps, traffickers and johns who fuel the industry. It is important to inform law enforcement about the harm the owners of trafficking operations with massage fronts create. Arresting johns and traffickers/brothel owners is essential to ending sexual exploitation. Make sure to emphasize to law enforcement the need to go after those prostituting others and purchasing at these establishments, not those being sold.

1. Search for potential trafficking operations in your area via rubmaps.com or by submitting an Internet search for “sensual massage” or “erotic massage” and your zip code or town’s name.

The results can help identify and distinguish legitimate massage therapy clinics from fronts for criminal activity.

2. Print out this list and send it to police officers along with this letter: <http://tinyurl.com/nion-lawenf>.

Encourage law enforcement to take advantage of the information on these websites. Raising their consciousness to the severity of this problem in their community may help instigate investigations and the rescue of trafficked women and children.

A note on language

CAASE explicitly refrains from utilizing words and phrases that reflect the idea that the purchase of sex is a normal business transaction void of an exploitive component. Therefore, terms like “buyer” or “customer” will be avoided when referring to an individual who pays for sex. Instead, CAASE and fellow experts on human trafficking have widely adopted the term “john” to refer to a man who purchases sex,.

Respond to the media

Though there are reporters who understand trafficking and help raise awareness about this issue effectively and justly (such as Nicholas Kristoff from the New York Times), historically, the media has overlooked the crucial problem of sex trafficking. When news outlets cover this issue, stories often reinforce victim blaming or normalize the sex trade. The media contributes to the formulation of public perception of trafficking and sexual exploitation, so the lack of coverage or skewed coverage frames how we relate and understand these issues. When media portrayals appear to ignore the injustices of the sex trade or glamorize it, you have an opportunity to raise awareness of the harms of sex trafficking.

1. Search for potential trafficking operations in your area via rubmaps.com or by submitting an Internet search for “sensual massage” or “erotic massage” and your zip code or town’s name.

2. Print out this list and send it to media outlets along with this letter: <http://tinyurl.com/nion-media>.

Informing the media of the pressing problem in your own community may encourage news outlets to publicize incidents of potential trafficking activity. This would not only inform community members of the locality of human trafficking, but also pressure law enforcement to take more immediate action. Encourage media to focus on the role of demand in the existence of sex trafficking.

CAASE Media Action Toolkit

If you would like more direction on how to approach the media about trafficking in general, you can refer to CAASE's Media Action Toolkit.

This toolkit serves to assist you with writing a response to address misconceptions about trafficking or sexual exploitation represented in the media. ‘Talking points’ are included with each misconception example as a resource to use when writing a response.

Here you may learn how to respond to negative media representations of sexual exploitation:

http://g.virbcdn.com/f/files/6d/FileItem-258095-CAASE_Media_Toolkit.pdf

Advocate for effective, respectful legislation

We can help create change by advocating for local and state laws that strive to shut down trafficking operations posing as massage establishments by holding the traffickers and customers accountable.

Lobbying for specific requirements for massage establishment licensing can make hiding illicit activity more difficult; legislation can make our industry an inhospitable front for traffickers

One example of a well-written ordinance is referenced in Chapter 4-92 of the Municipal Code of Chicago (Massage Establishments and Massage Services). It states:

1. Front windows are to be clear glass, not painted, darkened or blocked by any cloth or obstruction
2. Current and valid licensing needs to be placed in a location viewable by patrons

Please refer to the legislation page of www.not-in-our-name.org for more information.

Support social services in your area

Donate fiscal or material goods

Survivors of sex trafficking are often confronted with many needs. Before piecing their lives back together, survivors frequently need housing, as well as financial, emotional and psychological support. Social services for victims tend to be strained. *Find out what victims need.* Something as basic as modest second-hand clothing can help survivors establish a sense of independence from their traffickers. You may even want to fundraise for your local anti-trafficking organization.

Donate your time and services

Volunteering healing massage could be helpful, but must be approached carefully. Massage is very healing, but given the nature of the abuse these women and children have suffered, it may not be well received. If you practice any form of “hands off” energy healing modality, you could offer up your time to work with survivors. If you are a Reiki Master Teacher, offer to teach Level 1 Reiki to groups of survivors so they have access to self-treatment around the clock and can help each other. Proceed slowly and with great compassion, as trust might be slow to build. Where you succeed, your gift will help.

**What can you personally do
if you suspect someone is being
trafficked or prostituted under the
guise of massage therapy?**

*Call the National Trafficking Resource
Center (NHTRC) at 1-888-373-7888*

Effective practices for all conscientious citizens

Now that you are more aware of what to look for, you may recognize signs of trafficking in your community. Here are some tips to help you change public attitudes and take action.

Be Alert: If you suspect that someone is in your neighborhood or area of business for the purposes of purchasing sex (such as driving in circles around areas known for high levels of prostitution), you can make them feel self-conscious about their actions by taking their picture. Taking pictures of johns, their cars, and their license plates can aid police in their investigations and serve as a deterrent to those planning to purchase sex. Even just pretending to take pictures can be enough to scare off potential buyers. In addition, you can write down license plate numbers. Similar to taking pictures, writing down license plate numbers serves both to assist police and deter demand. Again, even just appearing to take down a license plate number can serve as a deterrent.

Remember!

When reporting a trafficker or john to law enforcement, focus on the perpetrator. If the 911 operator asks for a description of the individual in prostitution, please do not provide information. Keep in mind that the purpose of reporting is NOT to criminalize the women and children who are being prostituted, but instead to take action against the pimps and traffickers who maintain the demand for and profit from trafficking and prostitution!

Report: If you feel as though you have identified a pimp or john in your neighborhood or at your business, do not hesitate to call 911. If possible, provide the address and following descriptions of potential johns and pimps/traffickers:

- 1) Color and type of clothing
- 2) Physical description
- 3) Description of car
- 4) License plate number
- 5) Any other identifying information of the individual(s)

You can also use the form below to help guide your reporting process:

Date: _____ Time: _____ AM/PM
Beat: _____
Intersection/Address: _____
Location Type (e.g. abandoned building/vehicle/alley/etc): _____
Vehicle Information:
Year ____ Make _____ Model ____ Color _____ License Plate # _____
Have you seen this vehicle before? When/Where?

Description of Incident:

Conclusions

Thank you for taking the time to look through this packet; remember to reference the Resource Guide for more information on sex trafficking under the guise of massage therapy. Your contribution to this cause *will* make an impact. For further support in your advocacy, please reach out to info@caase.org.