

# Men as Partners in Ending Demand

A Toolkit and Resource Guide to End  
Sexual Exploitation



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**Chicago Alliance Against Sexual Exploitation (CAASE)** addresses the culture, institutions, and individuals that perpetrate, profit from, or support sexual exploitation. Our work includes prevention, policy reform, community engagement, and legal services.

**CAASE** envisions a community free from all forms of sexual exploitation, including sexual assault and the commercial sex trade.

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood . . . Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.

—United Nations, articles 1 and 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)

This toolkit, *Men As Partners in Ending Demand*, is a resource for men created by the Chicago Alliance Against Sexual Exploitation (CAASE). We know that many men care strongly about ending sexual exploitation and harm but struggle with how to create change in their everyday lives. This toolkit provides background information on issues surrounding commercial sexual exploitation, debunks popular myths about exploitation, and offers suggestions for advocacy. As men, you are integral in the fight against sexual harm and violence. This toolkit offers valuable knowledge and tangible strategies that you can use to become an activist in your own lives.

This toolkit includes the following resources:

- Information on Sexual Exploitation
- Why Men are Crucial in Ending Demand

Additionally, there are supplemental materials available on our website ([www.caase.org/toolkits](http://www.caase.org/toolkits)) where you can find information on Chicago organizations you may want to partner with, as well as movies and books to raise awareness.

### SPOTLIGHT: A CALL TO MEN

**A Call To Men** is a leading national men's organization that works to prevent domestic and sexual violence and to promote a healthy definition of what it means to be a man. It is committed to maintaining strong partnerships with women's organizations and helps organize communities to raise awareness and get men involved in this effort. Through seminars, workshops, and other educational vehicles, A Call To Men challenges men to reconsider many of the social norms that define masculinity and manhood.

Cofounders Tony Porter and Ted Bunch created A Call To Men based on their belief that preventing domestic and sexual violence is primarily the responsibility of men. Although work to end gender-based violence has been historically viewed predominantly as a “woman’s issue,” A Call To Men believes that it is essential for men to play a primary role in the solution. To do that, well-meaning men—men who, for the most part, don't see themselves as part of the problem—need to get involved.

<http://www.acalltomen.com/>

## WHY MEN MATTER: MEN AS PARTNERS

CAASE believes that the only way to truly eliminate prostitution is to eliminate the demand for paid sex. If nobody wants to purchase women and girls, then pimps and traffickers will have no reason to try to sell them for a profit. As men, you stand at the crux of the movement; as men, you can influence your own behavior and that of your peers, and you can become a powerful advocate in the fight against prostitution.

If we try to combat prostitution by blaming men, we will fail. Men *and* women have contributed to a society that supports the buying and selling of sex. Therefore, both men and women are integral in ending sexual harm. Separated, we may be too weak to create significant change, but together we can begin to shift the way the world views sexual exploitation. Sexual exploitation affects our entire community, so we need to unite in order to eliminate demand. Men are not the problem; they are a vital part of the solution.

## HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

Human trafficking, a form of modern day slavery, is pervasive nationally and internationally. There are more people enslaved today than at the peak of the trans-Atlantic slave trade.

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 would experience serious harm if s/he tried to leave 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).

Many prostituted individuals enter prostitution out of economic desperation because they have no other means of earning money.<sup>1</sup> These women view prostitution as a survival strategy. When prostitution is the only financially viable option for a woman to support herself and her family, is it really a *choice*?<sup>2</sup>

Indeed, it is difficult to separate "voluntary prostitution" from exploitative, forceful prostitution. Even if identification of "voluntary prostitution" was simple and accurate, *any* money that goes into the sex trade directly supports an industry that systematically and frequently exploits girls and women who do not want to be there.

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<sup>1</sup> M.C. Nussbaum, (1998). "Whether From Reason or Prejudice: Taking Money for Bodily Services," *Journal of Legal Studies* 27 (2) (1998): 693-724.

<sup>2</sup> Denise Brennan, *What's Love Got to Do With It?: Transnational Desires and Sex Tourism in the Dominican Republic* (Duke University Press, 2004), 45.

## ACTIONS YOU CAN TAKE

**Educate yourself:** There are many films and books about human trafficking and prostitution (See Supplemental Materials). Expand your personal knowledge about these issues by checking out any of the recommended resources. Develop action steps based on what you learned from these resources.

**Buy fair-trade coffee or have traffick-free chocolate parties:** Avoid other businesses that contribute to sexual exploitation, such as travel companies that foster sex tourism, websites like Backpage.com, or newspapers that feature adult sections. If you suspect that a local business is actively involved in sexual exploitation, you should call the local police or contact the National Human Trafficking Resource Center at 1-888-3737-888. Buy fair trade and traffick-free chocolate and coffee. Some examples of companies that refuse to support the trafficking industry can be found at [www.fairtradeuse.org](http://www.fairtradeuse.org).

**Volunteer:** Partner with organizations that are working on this issue. Many organizations/coalitions are looking for individuals to help support their goals through volunteer time, collaborative community efforts, and donations. Organizations to volunteer with can be found in the supplemental materials on our website at [www.caase.org/toolkits](http://www.caase.org/toolkits).

## THE COMMERCIAL SEX INDUSTRY

Domestic sexual exploitation can be found everywhere around us. From the busy commercial streets of an urban city to massage parlors in the suburbs, from websites like Backpage.com to the Super Bowl each year, sexual exploitation takes many forms.

**Street prostitution:** People who are found and purchased outdoors. Women in outdoor prostitution will have certain locations, or “tracks,” where they walk as they wait for men to pick them up.

**Indoor prostitution:** Occurs in locations such as massage parlors, strip clubs, brothels, and apartments. In the case of massage parlors and strip clubs, the business may appear to be legitimate while secretly offering men the chance to purchase the women employed there for various acts.

**E-Trade:** Websites like Backpage.com and Sugar Daddy websites are often used to post advertisements for people being sold. These websites often have restrictions in place to protect women and children from being exploited, but pimps easily find loopholes in the system.

You can find examples of each of these types of prostitution in the supplemental materials on our website.

## ACTIONS YOU CAN TAKE

**Community Engagement:** If you hold a leadership position in a group – a church, sports team, a non-profit organization – suggest that your group host a screening of a documentary about prostitution (see supplemental materials for recommendations). If you have influence in a community, you have a great chance to educate people about and rally them to fight against sexual exploitation.

**Language:** One of the easiest and most powerful ways that you can fight sexual exploitation is to become aware of the language you use regarding prostitution. The words we use are intimately connected to the way we think about the world. You should stop using words like *whore* or *ho* as these terms, used casually, normalize the sex trade and disguise its harmful facets. Instead of calling women in the sex trade *prostitutes*, *hookers*, *sex workers*, or *escorts*, use terms like *prostituted woman* or *victim of commercial sexual exploitation*.

## COMMERCIALLY SEXUALLY EXPLOITED CHILDREN

The average age of entry into prostitution is **12-14 years old**.<sup>3</sup> The overwhelming majority of individuals engaged in prostitution have a history of physical and/or sexual abuse.<sup>4</sup>

Being abused teaches victims to expect and accept abuse. It also teaches young people how to disassociate their bodies from their minds. *Being able to dissociate is necessary to survive the trauma of prostitution.*

Commercial sexual exploiters target particularly vulnerable youth, such as runaway and homeless adolescents.<sup>5</sup> They physically coerce or emotionally manipulate young people with false promises, verbal or physical abuse, and threats of harm to the victim and his or her family.

Youth in prostitution are affected developmentally. They suffer from posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), and drug addiction.<sup>6</sup> Young girls who are in prostitution often grow distrustful of men and strangers, and their self-esteem deteriorates.

If youth escape the commercial sex trade, they are at a developmental disadvantage because pimps rarely allow their victims to go to school.<sup>7</sup> They must start a new life with little education, savings, or support from family and friends.

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<sup>3</sup> U.S. Department of Justice. (2007). *Domestic Sex Trafficking of Minors*. Washington, DC.

<sup>4</sup> 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.

<sup>5</sup> The Polaris Project, "The Victims," <http://polarproject.org/human-trafficking/overview/the-victims>

<sup>6</sup> Kritaya, Archavanitkul, "Combating the Trafficking in Children and their Exploitation in Prostitution and Other Intolerable Forms of Child Labour in Mekong Basin Countries," *Institute for Population and Social Research (1998)*.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

## ACTIONS YOU CAN TAKE TO END HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

**Build a relationship with your local elected officials:** Help your representatives understand how important it is not to re-victimize women and girls in their community. Advocate for targeting those causing the harm—pimps, traffickers, and customers—instead of re-victimizing prostituted individuals with arrest and incarceration. Most political leaders allot one day per week to meet with their constituents. Chicago residents can find their alderman at

<http://www.chicityclerk.com/citycouncil/alderman/find.html>.

**Contact your legislators:** Your voice counts! Keep abreast of relevant legislation and support initiatives that provide resources to women and girls and hold perpetrators accountable. An easy way for you and your congregation to voice your opinions and make an impact on this issue is to write, call, or meet your local legislator. Each Illinois legislator has a Springfield office and a community office. And each US legislator has a DC office and a local office. You can find your local and national representatives at

<http://capwiz.com/cfw/state/main/?state=IL&view=myofficials#0>

## HARMS OF THE COMMERCIAL SEX TRADE

Research on women in prostitution in Chicago shows that approximately 90 percent are physically, sexually, and emotionally abused at the hands of pimps and johns.

While it is important to note that not all johns abuse the woman that they purchase, every man that chooses to spend money for sex chooses to contribute to an industry in which other men – pimps or johns – do abuse women.

Abuse can result in a myriad of health problems including:

- sexual transmitted diseases
- HIV/AIDS
- migraines
- memory problems
- sleeplessness
- severe depression
- Post-traumatic stress disorder
- eating disorders

Approximately 68 percent of women who are sexually exploited experience posttraumatic stress disorder as a result of the trauma they experience during prostitution.<sup>8</sup>

Therefore, individuals involved in the sex trade need a variety of social services and other resources to exit the sex trade safely.

In addition to physical and emotional abuse, prostituted women and girls endure a stigma that can last a lifetime. This stigma affects a woman's career opportunities, her future relationships, and her self-esteem. It is perhaps the longest-lasting harm caused by sexual exploitation.

## ACTIONS YOU CAN TAKE TO END HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

**Monitor the Media:** If you see something in the media that promotes or glorifies the exploitation of women, write letters to the editor and/or producer. All forms of media (newspapers, magazines, television programs, etc.) have avenues for this. If you see advertising or billboards that are offensive or degrading, contact the company or publisher and inform them of your opinion. To access CAASE's guide on how to respond to harmful depictions of the sex trade in the media, please visit <http://caase.org/toolkits>.

**Speak up:** If you hear your friends, family, or co-workers make sexist or degrading jokes, you should challenge them. Prostitution won't end until our culture stops accepting it and your silence contributes as much to the "rape culture" as your peers' misogynistic jokes. You don't have to chastise them or be rude: you can easily explain that the joke or comment is more harmful than humorous and that they should consider telling it to others.

**Bachelor Parties:** Bachelor parties can still be memorable without stripping or prostitution. You can celebrate your own wedding or your friend's by doing a range of other activities: you can go hunting, fishing, or paint-balling; you can play poker; or you could do a whiskey-tasting. Do something that the groom loves as a daylong activity or take a trip together to someplace new. For stripper-free ideas, check out: <http://www.theplunge.com/bachelorparty/bachelor-party-ideas-2>.

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<sup>8</sup> Farley, M. (2004). "Bad for the body, bad for the heart: Prostitution harms women even if legalized or decriminalized," *Violence Against Women*, 10(10) pp. 1087-1125.

## ENDING THE DEMAND FOR SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

Although ample research informs us that the customers, pimps, and traffickers are fueling the sex trade and abusing 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.

There are three components to the demand side of the sex trade:

**Johns** – The individuals purchasing sex. They constitute the demand for sexual acts from women, men, transgendered individuals, and children. Buying another person shows a lack of respect because it puts a price on a person's self-worth.

**Pimps, traffickers, sex industry executives** – This group profits by marketing individuals as a commodity, essentially dehumanizing them. Prostitution is just another profitable economic market to them. This framework minimizes the harms of sexual exploitation by lifting the blame from the individuals who profit from selling others and placing it on someone or something else.

**Government(s) or ruling systems** – The sex trade provides a lucrative tax base, and it can provide millions of dollars for corrupt officials. There are several governments and ruling systems, including our own in the United States, that tolerate or legalize the sex industry (prostitution is not legal in the United States). Exploiters use their power and wealth to manipulate laws and policies.

These three components work together to dehumanize the people caught in the sex trade, reinforcing the concept that people are commodities that can be bought and sold for the right price.

## ACTIONS YOU CAN TAKE TO END HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

**Strip clubs:** Strip clubs perpetuate the notion that women's bodies can be purchased for the right price; you should refrain from visiting these clubs and urge your peers to do the same. Club owners will close to clubs that garner little profit, and pimps will lose interest in lurking where there's scarce traffic.

**Law enforcement:** Urge your local police department to implement mechanisms that keep prostituted women and girls safe from their pimps and provide them with alternatives to arrest, detention, and incarceration.

**Schools:** Encourage schools to provide a curriculum that helps young men understand the messages they receive about masculinity from the culture around them; connect these messages to the normalization of gender-based violence. Contact CAASE for a curriculum that's designed for young men at [info@caase.org](mailto:info@caase.org)

**Sporting events:** Prostitution and trafficking increase at major sporting events like the Super Bowl and the Olympics. If you have the opportunity to attend one of these events, create flyers with facts about prostitution and suggestions of alternative postgame celebratory events.

**Pornography:** Many men and women will invariably view pornography at some point. Instead of trying to force them to abstain, encourage your peers and young adults in your life to maintain an open dialogue about pornography and help them approach it with an educated point of view.



Thank you for using our toolkit for engaging men. We hope that you found the resource helpful. CAASE wants to emphasize that if we try to combat prostitution by blaming men, we will fail. Society will fail. Indeed, men are not the problem – they are wrapped up in a society drenched in mixed messages about gender roles and sexuality. Men can be a vital part of the solution and men are in a strategic position to work towards eliminating sexual exploitation. CAASE is always available to answer any questions, suggestions, or concerns that you may have while reading and working with this toolkit. Please do not hesitate to contact us at [outreach@caase.org](mailto:outreach@caase.org).

We also encourage you to look at the supplemental information provided in addition to this toolkit. These materials include

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- Chicago-based organizations: Direct service/Outreach
- Chicago-based organizations: Advocacy
- Must-see films
- Must-read books

Lastly, we would greatly appreciate your feedback regarding your experience with the toolkit. You can fill out a brief survey online at <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/W5NZRXM>.