

# Toolbox Talks

**Purpose:** These are 5-minute talking points and subjects to be delivered in the field. They need to be direct, impactful and speak to the heart of the issue. The less sugar coating, the better. There are no accompanying slides or videos.

**Don't defend or justify your crimes: No** matter why you "think" it's okay to purchase commercial sex, it is still illegal. Here are some common excuses from Johns/buyers:

- Boys will be boys -- "victimless" crime, world's oldest profession (actually farming is ... but prostitution is the world's oldest oppression of women.)
- My wife/girlfriend/partner won't do XYZ.
- I don't have luck dating, so I'll just pay to get it.
- I don't have time to date on the job, so this is what I have to do.
- I'm just lonely.
- I should get what I want when I want it ... if I have the money, then I should decide.
- We need these type of women, so the "good" women don't get raped (this will get a reaction ... this is a very common excuse we hear from both women and men.)

It's your choice -- are you going to purchase or protect? Be a protector.

**Just because there is a middleman, doesn't mean it's okay:** Even if there are websites set up to facilitate "dates" or sex, that doesn't make this legitimate. Even when you "chat" with someone on an app or online before meeting, that doesn't mean that person is there willingly.

**If you have to hide it, is it okay?** If you wouldn't tell your family about purchasing sex, why are you doing it? If you wouldn't post this as your Facebook status or tweet it with your real name, why are you doing it? Not only is this illegal, but it is also hurting people and communities. And you know it is wrong if you're hiding it. It's your choice -- are you going to purchase or protect? Be a protector.

## **Survivor Vignette:**

*I was sold by my mom when I was 6 years old. You might not think it happens that young, but it does. By the time I was a teen, I looked and acted the part, because it was the role I was used to.*

This woman works for an anti-trafficking organization, and her story highlights how human trafficking can happen, even within a family and at a young age. This is why we need people like you to make the call when you see potential trafficking. This is why we need you to not allow your colleagues in the industry to participate in this kind of activity. It's your choice -- are you going to purchase or protect? Be a protector.

## **Survivor Vignette:**

*I was on the brink of making a new, healthy, and full life for myself when my trafficker targeted me and trafficked me at 18 in Las Vegas. I escaped my trafficking by being hospitalized, because my trafficker was very violent. I went to trial against my trafficker, and he was sentenced to life in prison, and I was able to get into anti-trafficking work to help others who have not been given a chance to feel freedom, yet.*

This woman works for an anti-trafficking organization, and her story highlights how human trafficking can happen to people from all walks of life. This is why we need people like you to make the call when you see potential trafficking. This is why we need you to not allow your colleagues in the industry to

participate in this kind of activity. It's your choice -- are you going to purchase or protect? Be a protector.

**The Game Has Changed:** Trafficking may look different here than it does on TV, but it's still trafficking. Trafficking victims may not appear like victims ... they may have a tough exterior, speak and act provocatively and act the part of what you think of as a person in prostitution. They won't tell you they are victims, and they will act like they just love sex and want you.

Trafficking victims might also be in hotel rooms and have provocative ads that welcome buyers to come join them in the room. Oftentimes, the trafficker has ordered their victims there, and they have to make a quota or face beatings and sleep and food deprivation.

Trafficking victims will come from every race, ethnicity, educational background, gender, size and shape. There is no standard victim; a victim can be anyone.

Trafficking victims are rarely kidnapped by strangers, although that can happen. They are often lured in through a boyfriend/girlfriend figure or a person offering them a legitimate job or place to stay, only to have those promises and relationships be exposed for the fraud they are.

Trafficking victims are subjected to incredible emotional, physical and psychological abuses. We know survivors who have suffered torture, beatings, gunshots, stabbings, brutal rapes, life-threatening infections, broken bones and starvation. Even with broken jaws, internal bleeding or black and blue bodies, they were still made to go make money for their traffickers.

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**Prostitution By The Numbers:** The numbers don't lie when we think of the dangers and realities of those who are prostituted.

- 73% are physically assaulted
- 53% reported rape
- 75% went homeless
- 68% have PTSD (more than double that of military veterans)

Don't let anyone you know or work with be a part of this crime. It's your choice -- are you going to purchase or protect? Be a protector.

**STIS:** Use a health-based approach to talk about the potential dangers of sexually transmitted infections as a part of purchasing sex. This excerpt from *The Johns* by Victor Malarek talks about this very thing: *'This program is also designed so that you get the latest information on STDs and HIV ... if you're picking up somebody you just met and you're not using a condom, I bet you they're not using a condom with everybody else. So if you think they're safe, I'm here to tell you they're not!'* *'Crack users [involved in prostitution] have a lot of sex with people without condoms and you don't know that ten minutes ago they were in a room with five guys and they were having sex with all of them without condom,' she explains.* (page 260)

**Living Under A Microscope:** They are looking for you to do wrong, don't prove them right.

**Girl Like Us:** *She likes swimming, SpongeBob, Mexican food, writing poetry, getting her nails painted (light pink is her favorite color), and Harry Potter books (plus she thinks Daniel Radcliffe is "fine"). This Christmas she wants an iPod but would settle for some sweat suits, preferably pink. Sometimes she's petulant -- pouting and sullen -- but mostly she's open and eager to be loved. When she smiles, huge dimples crease her chubby face and are still capable, as she moves into awkward adolescence, of melting hearts.*

Take a moment to think about this girl. Does she sound like anyone you've known? A daughter, a niece, a family friend? Can you picture this age and personality? Keep that thought and person in mind... *She's much like any other eleven-year-old girl in America, except for one critical difference. Over the last year of her life, she's been trafficked up and down the East Coast by a twenty-nine-year-old pimp and sold nightly on Craigslist to adult men who ignore her dimples and her baby fat and purchase her for sex.* This is just one of many stories shared in the book *Girls Like Us* written by Rachel Lloyd. As men and members of the community, you each have the ability to protect those around you from the most heinous of crimes.

**Consent is not given on a phone:** If you are talking to someone on a phone and arranging a meetup, there is no way to know that the person on the other end is actually who they say they are. It could be a trafficker setting up that arrangement, so there is no consent, and they may not be there willingly.

**Sex Tourism:** Some buyers travel abroad to avoid breaking local laws by purchasing commercial sex in other countries. Some johns use traveling for work in different areas as a similar excuse to purchase sex where they think they won't get caught or run into people they know. They use being away from home, being bored, or having extra money in their pockets as an excuse to do this. This does not make it right. No excuse makes this legal. And while buyers may travel to locations where they can purchase sex without as many consequences, traffickers send their victims into locations where there is a large community of men for the same reason.

**Groomed for exploitation:** To understand the issue of trafficking, you also need to understand how victims can be groomed. These are the 6 stages of grooming as described by John Clark, father of a trafficking victim:

1. **Befriend**--Traffickers seek out potential victims and become their friends. This can happen online or in person. This establishes trust.
2. **Intoxicate**--Make sure the potential victim has fun and feels independent from home. Introduces or hones into a level of friction at home.
3. **Alienate**--Drive a wedge between the potential victim and their family. This can include talking negatively about the family and planting the idea that they would be better off away from home.
4. **Isolate**--Separate the potential victim from their friends and support system and introduce them to a whole new group of "friends."
5. **Desensitize**--Work to disorient the potential victim from their existing moral compass or ideals. Convince them that the things their parents warned them against are actually good.
6. **Capitalize**--This is when the trafficker will start to make money off of the victim.

For more on these steps, read this: <https://childproofamerica.org/6-step-recruiting-process>

There are criminals out there that are actively grooming children, teens and young adults to be trafficked. This could happen to your children, so every step you take to prevent this crime at work and at home is important.

**Pipeliner vs. Prostituted Person:** If you think that this is a good way to earn money, let's compare work as a pipeliner to work as a prostituted person.

- What are you required to wear to work? Would you feel comfortable running into a grocery store for some groceries wearing that?
- How much money do you get on your paycheck? What benefits do you get? Health care? Retirement plan?
- What training do you need and how do you get it?

- If you get hurt on the job, how is that handled?
- Do you regularly feel threatened by those you work with?
- What does your resume look like?
- If a job interviewer asked you about your last job, would you be ashamed to tell them?
- Do the people paying your salary rape and beat you?
- Do you have to hide from cops at work?

**The Hard Questions:** There are a lot of factors that can make people vulnerable to trafficking, think about this...

- When your choice is between prostitution and homelessness, are you truly choosing to enter the sex industry?
- When you need food for your children and can't take a day job because it won't even cover daycare costs, are you really making a choice when having to prostitute?
- When your legal documentation status is threatened, are you there willingly?
- If your family is threatened, is this really a choice?
- If you are being blackmailed into doing sexual acts, are you truly choosing to enter the "sex industry"?

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**The Cultural Normalization of Commercial Sex:** All around you, popular culture is normalizing this. Sex is something for consumption these days. This includes the rise of OnlyFans, pop culture, music, sugaring, etc. It's your choice -- are you going to purchase or protect? Be a protector.

**Money:** Just because money exchanges hands, it may not be consensual. You don't know what is happening behind the scenes. It's your choice -- are you going to purchase or protect? Be a protector.

**Primed to Purchase:** Even as you watch pornography online, you are being primed to purchase commercial sex through the Three Es. First you are Exposed to extensive sexual content, then you are tempted to Engage in this content by subscribing to webcams and offered Experiences through escort service ads. This is all shown on the same screen as online porn, priming you to purchase commercial sex.

Traffickers use the legal, commercial sex industry to exploit their victims. Many trafficking survivors talk about being made to dance at strip clubs while their trafficker was in the club making "dates" for them with buyers for later that night. The trafficker took all the money that was made on the stage and was made during the sex acts. Survivors also talk about being filmed and photographed against their will and their images and abuse being used on porn sites.

Traffickers even exploit their victims at legal brothels in Nevada and around the world ... making a deal with the guards at the brothels, the house takes their percentage of the victim's earnings, and the trafficker takes the rest. Just because it is legal, does not make it consensual. It's your choice -- are you going to purchase or protect? Be a protector.

**Porn to Prostitution Pipeline:** This excerpt from *The Johns* by Victor Malarek highlights the progress from watching porn to purchasing sex and the extreme nature of buyers:

*For those who do take the next step -- pay their way to sex -- what they demand behind closed doors is often what's portrayed on the screen. One john, who goes by the name X-rated, writes, "I've watched a lot of porn and I jerk off to it. But in the end, there's no great orgasm. I just come. Every once in a while, when I have some spare cash, I go out and hire a hooker ... been doing that for over 20 years. When I pay*

*for it, there's no way I'm going to settle for the missionary position. What I get is hardcore. It's around the world sex. If the whore gives me attitude about it, I show her the door. I'm paying, so I call the shots, not the whore."*

**Porn:** This excerpt from *The Johns* by Victor Malarek shows some staggering statistics on pornography as it relates to prostitution.

*X-rated isn't alone. A 1990 study by the organization WHISPER (Women Hurt in Systems of Prostitution Engaged in Revolt) revealed that 52 percent of women interviewed said that porn played a significant role in teaching them what was expected of them as prostitutes, 30 percent reported that their pimps regularly exposed them to pornography to get them to accept the sex acts shown there, and 80 percent said that johns showed them porn in order to illustrate specific acts they wanted performed. Melissa Farley, a leading researcher on prostitution, found a similar link between what johns see and what they seek. In interviews with 854 women in prostitution in nine countries, 47 percent were upset by their john's attempts to make them do what they had seen in pornography.*

On Pornhub, underage and adult trafficking victims, as well as rape victims, had their assaults uploaded and viewed millions of times. Imagine if someone you loved was assaulted and then the worst moment of their lives was viewed over and over again? It's your choice -- are you going to purchase or protect? Be a protector.

A few things to note on this is to think: How has the ease of access of pornography changed since 1990? How have the content and "actors" in this changed in the past 30 years? With the growth of technology, this problem is only getting worse, and there is no way to know how the person on those little phone screens ended up there and if they are there of their own free will.

\*\* Reminder that using work phones or technology to access sexually-oriented material is against policy.

**The Digital Deviation:** Even if you are just watching online, this still contributes to trafficking. Even if you pay for an OnlyFans subscription, there is no way to know that the person on the other end of the camera is there willingly.