

# Ten Things Men & Boys can do to Stop Human Trafficking

## (1) Challenge the glamorization of pimps in our culture

Mainstream culture has popularized the image of a pimp to the point that some men and boys look up to pimps as if they represent legitimate male role models and view "pimping" as a normal expression of masculinity. In reality, pimps play a central role in human trafficking and cause tremendous harm by routinely raping, beating, and terrorizing women and girls to keep them locked up in prostitution. *Men can take a stand against pimps and pimping by renouncing the pimp culture and the music that glorifies it.*

## (2) Confront the belief that prostitution is a "victimless crime"

Many men view prostitution as a "victimless crime." But it is not. For example, women who are involved in prostitution are at a greater risk to be murdered than women in the general population (Potterat, 2004). Research also shows that women who are involved in prostitution suffer tremendous physical and mental trauma associated with prostitution. Viewing prostitution as a victimless crime or something that women "choose" allows men to ignore the fact that the average age of entry into prostitution in the United States is 13 years old and that the vast majority of women engaged in prostitution would like to get out but feel trapped. *Men should stop viewing prostitution as a victimless crime and acknowledge the tremendous harm and suffering that their participation in prostitution causes.*

## (3) Stop Patronizing Strip Clubs

When men think of human trafficking, they often think of brothels in countries outside of the United States. However, strip clubs in the United States and abroad may be a place where human trafficking victims go unnoticed or unidentified. Strip clubs are places of manufactured pleasure where strippers are routinely sexually harassed and assaulted by owners, patrons, and security personnel. Men rarely consider whether women working in strip clubs are coerced into that line of work, because to do so would conflict with the pleasure of participating in commercialized sex venues. Strip Clubs—like brothels—are the most popular venues where the purchase of sexual services from women occur the most. *Men can combat human trafficking by no longer patronizing strip clubs and by encouraging their friends and co-workers to do the same.*

## (4) Don't Consume Pornography

Pornography manipulates male sexuality, popularizes unhealthy attitudes towards sex and sexuality and eroticizes violence against women. Pornography leads men and boys to believe that certain sexual acts are normal, when in fact sexual acts that are non-consensual, offensive, and coupled with violent intent result in the pain, suffering, humiliation of women and children. In addition, a disproportionate amount of mainstream pornography sexualizes young women with such titles as "teens", "barely 18", "cheerleaders", etc. Targeting younger women socializes men to develop appetites for younger and younger women creating a "pedophile-like culture" among men. Victims of human trafficking have also been forced into pornography. *Men can stop the voyeurism of sex and sex acts that fuel human trafficking by refusing to consume pornography and encourage others to do the same.*

## (5) Tackle Male Chauvinism and Sexism Online

Contrary to the myth that men do not gossip, men spend a significant amount of time online discussing their sexual exploits. The internet provides many men with the ability to mask their identities while indulging in racist, sexist, and violent diatribes against women and girls. Choosing to be a critical voice online is an extremely important way to educate and inform men and boys about their choices. *Men can change this culture by starting threads in online forums that cause men to start talking about their attitudes towards women and how these attitudes and behavior is linked to human trafficking.*

## (6) End Sex Tourism

Men in the United States and other "first world" nations routinely travel overseas and have sex with women in developing countries. When men engage in these practices, they do not acknowledge the fact that many are trafficked women and children that come from developing countries—even in countries where prostitution is "legal." Traveling overseas grants men a great deal of anonymity. *As men, we have a responsibility to confront the men that go overseas and participate in sex tourism.*

## (7) Talk to men and boys about men's issues in male spaces

The only way to change men is by engaging them in spaces where men and boys talk and develop their ideas and attitudes towards sex and sexuality. Male spaces such as barbershops, locker rooms, fraternities, and union halls are the real classrooms where boys learn to become men and where men develop most of their ideas about how to interact with women. If men do not feel comfortable talking about these issues in male spaces, they can drop off informational brochures and make themselves available to talk with other men and boys when they have questions or concerns. *As men, we need to turn male spaces into circles of accountability where men learn about non-violence, social justice, and ending violence against women.*

## (8) Support anti human trafficking policies

President Obama declared National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month in January 2010. However, more substantive legislation is required to end human trafficking. Men can educate themselves about the issues by visiting anti-trafficking organizations and by asking their elected officials what they have done to support or sponsor anti-human trafficking legislation. *One of the most important acts men can do to stop human trafficking is to support anti-trafficking legislation at the local, state, or federal level.*

## (9) Support creation of John Schools

There would be no human trafficking if there was no demand for it! Strategies aimed at ending human-trafficking must focus on eliminating the demand. "John Schools" are education programs designed to educate customers apprehended by law enforcement who attempted to purchase sex. By teaching the legal and health effects of buying sex and the realities of prostitution, such schools impart knowledge that can reduce demand, making men conscious of how their actions can spur on human trafficking. *Learn whether or not your community has a local John School. If not, encourage your local prosecutor's office or city council to start one.*

## (10) Raise sons and mentor boys to challenge oppression

No boy is destined to be a "john", a pimp or a human trafficker. Raising young men in circles of accountability, to be respectful and protective of all women and children is one of the most important things that men can do to stop human trafficking. *Talk about human trafficking as a modern form of slavery to help convince men and boys to become allies in the fight to end this form of oppression.*