



Discussion Guide:
Protect Our Children

For Parent and Community Groups

Prepared by Hawaii Youth Services Network
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Acknowledgments

Hawaii Youth Services Network (HYSN) has developed this sexual exploitation education kit with the help of staff and volunteers from government, non-profit, and faith-based organizations concerned about commercial sexual exploitation of our youth.

To find out what people know and believe about commercial sexual exploitation (also known as CES), HYSN conducted eight focus groups with street youth, intermediate and high school students, parents, gays and lesbians, social work students, former sex industry workers, and service providers. Mahalo to those who hosted and participated in these discussions

Waikiki Health Center
Sisters Offering Support
Church of the Living God
Gay and Lesbian Community Center
Hale Kipa
Castle High School
Ilima Intermediate School
Moanalua High School
University of Hawaii Social Work students
Hawaii Youth Services Network members

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This guide and all of the materials in the kit have been developed by the HYSN. The HYSN, incorporated in 1980, is a coalition of more than 45 organizations serving youth statewide. Members include emergency shelters and foster homes, therapeutic group homes and transitional living services, street outreach, substance abuse prevention and treatment, education and vocational training, domestic violence prevention and counseling, recreational activities, family therapy and counseling, referrals, HIV and other health-related services, mental health counseling, and gay, lesbian and transgender youth services.

The video, *Protect Our Children*, has been produced in two versions. The longer one runs about twenty minutes in length, while the abbreviated version is nine minutes. The shorter version is faster moving and may be more appropriate to maintain interest among young audiences. Depending upon the length of the presentation, the facilitator may prefer one version over the other.

Produced and taped on Oahu, the video includes interviews with local youth, former sex industry workers, family members, law enforcement personnel, and service providers. Its purpose is mainly *prevention—stopping kids from entering into commercial sexual exploitation*.

The subject of commercial sexual exploitation of children and youth is a complex and sensitive one. There are many forms of commercial sexual exploitation--prostitution, exotic dancing, pornography, erotic/nude massage, phone sex, Internet exploitation, and trafficking for sexual purposes. It is impossible to address every type of commercial sexual exploitation, in depth, given the limited time and budget for this project.

Protect Our Children focuses primarily on one form of commercial sexual exploitation, prostitution, and features several female survivors of CSE and a former pimp (or promoter of prostitution). Please be aware that people involved in CSE include males and females, and persons of all ages, cultures, ethnic groups, and sexual orientations. We have included fact sheets on related topics (such as HIV/AIDS) and a list of additional resources that may be helpful to you in discussing commercial sexual exploitation with others.

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Purpose

This guide is to be used by a group facilitator along with the video *Protect Our Children*. The purpose of this guide is to help create thoughtful discussions about commercial sexual exploitation (CSE) with parents and other community members. The following definition of CSE will be used:

- *Commercial sexual exploitation is the exchange of sexual services for something of value and includes prostitution, exotic dancing, pornography, erotic/nude massage, phone sex, Internet exploitation, and trafficking for sexual purposes. **

Although there are many forms of CSE, the focus of this video and guide will be on female adolescent prostitution, managed by pimps. Also known as panderers, pimps solicit for prostitutes or brothels. With your guidance, we hope to:

- increase parent and community member awareness about child sexual exploitation
- teach parents and other concerned adults how to identify the warning signs of CSE
- give parents ideas on how to prevent children from getting involved in CSE
- give parents ideas on how to help their children get out of CSE
- help groups discuss how they can address CSE in their communities.

Formats Available

A copy of this manual has been included on diskette, in Microsoft Word 2000. You can also download printed materials from our website at www.hysn.org. This CSE Education Kit also includes Guides for youth and service provider audiences. Please give Hawaii Youth Services Network credit for any materials you duplicate or distribute.

To facilitate use of these materials by persons with disabilities, we have included large print copies of the Resource Guide and the Reference Guide of print and internet resources. The video is closed captioned for persons with hearing disabilities. You are hereby given permission to make copies of these materials on diskette for persons who are blind. Braille copies of print materials will be made available upon request.

Preparing for the Discussion

Time Allotted:

The video takes about 20 minutes to view. Depending upon the length that your group meets, you will want to pace the discussion, allowing at least 45 minutes. We estimate that a full discussion will take at least 45 minutes, but the amount of time will vary from group to group.

Materials Needed:

You will need a VCR, pens, handouts from your kit (enough copies for all group members), and either a black board or flip chart.

Materials Available as Handouts:

In your Kit, you will find various materials that you may want to use as handouts during the discussion:

- Reference Guide (bibliography)
- Resource Guide (lists organizations that can help)
- Warning Signs of CSE
- Who's At Risk of CSE
- Fast Cash (about recruitment)

Basic Facilitation Skills

This section highlights how to be an effective facilitator. It is important to read it before you lead the discussion.

Do's and Don'ts

Do:	Don't:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Manage time• Facilitate information exchange among participants• Help ensure equal participation• Help group members see commonalities• Help group members deal with differences• Deal with conflicts/situations that interfere with group functioning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Analyze personal problems• Interpret if you can paraphrase• Focus on your own personal issues• Give advice, beyond referrals or providing information• Push a group member to disclose anything he or she is uncomfortable with• Allow a group member to be abused or neglected– verbally or physically

Qualities of an Effective Facilitator

Be . . .

- non-judgmental
- a skilled communicator
- charismatic/charming
- sense of humor
- organized and punctual
- knowledgeable
- a good listener
- observant
- perceptive
- empathetic
- flexible
- fair and objective
- clear headed and focused
- open and honest
- trustworthy
- patient

Ground Rules

- (1) Confidentiality: Never talk about what goes on in the group in a way that might reveal the identity of a group member.
 - (A) To develop trust and openness, we need to respect what people say about their personal lives. Personal information stays in the room
 - (B) It is alright to share educational information and your own reactions with others.
 - (C) If you ever happen to see someone from the group in public, be discrete.
- (2) Participate and disclose at your own pace.
 - (A) People are encouraged to speak freely and openly.
 - (B) At the same time, respect your own and others' right to participate through listening. People are not obliged to talk.
 - (C) If an exercise or question makes you feel uncomfortable, simply tell the facilitator.
- (3) When speaking, try doing so from your own personal perspective.
 - (A) Try using, "I feel . . ." or "My experience has been . . ."
 - (B) This keeps you from generalizing your experiences to others

- (4) Speak one at a time
 - (A) Allow each person to complete their thoughts.
 - (B) Avoid side conversations.
- (5) No judgments.
 - (A) When we're talking about feelings, there isn't a right or wrong answer.
 - (B) Don't condemn anyone for the ideas, beliefs and especially feelings he or she may hold. We are not here to make everyone think or act in one particular way.
- (6) No physical violence or verbal abuse between group members.
 - (A) People may feel anger and other negative emotions. That is understandable. People are bound to disagree. However, it is important to respect each other's differences and our differing points of view.
 - (B) Look to the facilitators to mediate disagreements and to encourage constructive resolutions.

Conflict Resolution

Differences of opinion will come up between group members and that should be allowed. Arguments, however, can disrupt group interaction or threaten the feeling of safety. To resolve conflicts:

- (1) Reiterate the ground rules. Speak from the first person. Not here to judge. No right or wrong feelings. Respect differences of opinion.

- (2) If the conflict persists, insist that each person be allowed to speak uninterrupted.

Allow time for each person to be heard fairly. Explain that understanding is not the same as agreeing.

- (3) If the conflict persists, call "time out" – set the issue aside for now and move on. If you have time later, you can come back to it.

"I feel like this is getting out of hand right now. I think it would be better to set this issue aside for now and move on. If we have time we can come back to it later."

Suggestions for Preparing Your Audience

Ground Rules:

Prostitution and other forms of commercial sexual exploitation can be difficult to discuss. It is very important that you establish ground rules first. It is important that everyone in the group AGREES to the ground rules. These ground rules will help participants to feel safe. Make sure the ground rules are posted where everyone can see them. You may have to go back to the ground rules during your discussion to remind participants about using “I statements” or not being judgmental.

Being Non-Judgmental:

The purpose of this group is not to demonize the evils of prostitution. The purpose is to increase awareness about the topic and to teach parents to openly communicate with their children so they can keep them safe. Remember, we are talking about *commercialized* sex, not just sexuality. Your job is to start this process using the video and facts commercial sexual exploitation.

Audience Participation:

It is important to give audience members a chance to share their feelings about CSE. If your audience is large, you may want to break them into small groups of three or four parents/community members, with a discussion facilitator and recorder assigned to each group (so they can report back to the entire class at the end of the discussion period). If time permits, each group can report briefly to the larger group about the important issues they discussed.

If you are concerned that all parents be given a chance to express themselves, you may want to ask everyone to arrange their chairs in a circle. Then call on them in turn to respond to your questions. If you find that a few parents have not participated, you can say something to this effect, “I’d like to hear from some of the people who haven’t said much yet.”

Video Discussion Questions

General

- What *impacted you* most in the video? What did you *see* or *hear* that stood out for you?
- How did it make you *feel*?
- What is your *overall impression* of the documentary?
- Has it *changed your view of prostitution* or other forms of commercial sexual exploitation? If so, in what ways?

Relating to the law and societal views:

- Are young people who engage in CSE *criminals*, *victims*, or both?

- *What words are used to describe people who engage in CSE?*

Such as slut, hooker

- *Does calling someone a “victim” or “sexually exploited” versus a “hooker” or “prostitute” make any difference to you?*

In the video, Kelly Hill stated that every time someone made a judgment statement about her, it was like she was “hit with a baseball bat.”

- *What is the difference between “being a prostitute” and “engaging in prostitution?”*

Guide the discussion to note that what you do is not who you are. That is, each of us is unique as a person. Our actions do not define our being.

- *Should prostitution, pornography and other forms of CSE be a crime or not?*

Guide the discussion to note that “decriminalization” means repealing criminal sanctions whereas “legalization” means to organize and regulate CSE.

- *Some people believe that arresting a minor for CSE is necessary because it stops her or him from that behavior (at least temporarily) and it allows professionals to help with counseling or other services. Some people think that if young people know that they could be arrested or have committed illegal activity, they may not seek help. What do you think?*

- *If anyone should be arrested, who should that be?*

- People under age 18 who engage in prostitution? stripping? pornography?
- Pimps?
- People who hire prostitutes?
- People who recruit others into CSE?

- *A crime is punishable under the law. What, if any, are appropriate punishments for engaging in CSE?*

Such as jail, juvenile detention, residential treatment, counseling.

The Facts:

- *What kind of youth get involved in CSE?*

In the video Frank Chong says these kids are usually running away from abusive homes, where the street may actually be safer than staying at home. Ken Miller said that often gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender/questioning/intersex (referred to as GLBTQI) kids are thrown out of their homes. Other people say any young person from most any background may get involved in CSE. All answers are correct. However, children who are already in need of trusting adult relationships live in poverty, who have low self-esteem, or who are neglected or abused are more likely to turn to commercial sexual exploitation, substance abuse, and gang membership.

- *Why would a child from a “good” family get involved in CSE?*

This is probably the question that will hit the closest for parents, since most of them are “good” parents. During the adolescent years, communication between parents and children can become strained as children seek to assert themselves and as parents learn how to deal with this stage between childhood and adulthood.

- *Why would a teenager be interested in CSE?*

Some might answer: money, attention, glamour, rebellion, supporting a drug or alcohol habit, peer pressure/others doing it, or curiosity. If parents know what might motivate their children to go into sex work, they are better equipped to deal with these motivating factors.

The child’s reason may also be that an adult, even though it may be a pimp, “accepts” them, “loves” them, and will “take care/protect” them. Children need loving parents whom they can trust. In the absence of these adults, they may turn to others, even pimps.

- *What does your child do when she/he is not in school and you are not at home?*

When children have free time, it is important to know what they are doing. If parents are concerned about their children’s activities after school, they may want to explore constructive outlets such as sports, clubs, music, dance, working on hobbies in a group or class situation.

On a personal level:

- Do you think that any *children in your* community are involved in commercial sexual exploitation?
- Have you ever *talked about commercial sexual exploitation with your child/children?*

If they say “yes,” ask how the conversation went and what it accomplished.

- How much do you think your children know about sexual exploitation?
- The mother in the video urged that parents “keep communication open.” What do you think she meant by that? How can you do this with your own children?
- Do you believe *your child/children might engage in prostitution, nude or lap dancing, pornography, or telephone sex?*

Whether they answer yes or no, ask them to explain why. The answers can lead into a discussion of risk and protective factors. The Department of Health has identified a number of protective and risk factors for families and communities. Some examples include: (1) families with opportunities for positive involvement, (2) families visiting with relatives in person in the last year, and (3) adults who are members of a religious or spiritual community. Risk factors include: (1) kids reporting family conflict, and (2) sibling history of anti-social behavior.

- What are some things about your family or community that help protect your children from harmful behaviors?
- Do you think that you would *know if your child was being sexually exploited?* How would you know?

Here you might mention some of the signs mentioned in the video: new pagers, cell phones, new clothes, frequent absences, nick names, street talk, new friends, older friends. You may want to refer to the Warning Signs in your kit.

Approaches to Communicating with Youth:

- *How would you talk about commercial sexual exploitation with your child?*

This is an opportunity to discuss how to approach the subject. Those who have already talked with youth can explain what was said and how their children responded. Speakers in the video suggested: (1) being nonjudgmental, (2) accepting, (3) encouraging open communication, and (4) listening attentively.

Brainstorm ideas like: “When you’re watching television with your family and you see an example of prostitution or pornography, ask your child what they thought about it.” “What do you think it is like to be involved in prostitution?” “How do you think you would feel about falling in love if you had been involved in commercial sexual exploitation?” –the idea being to make the distinction between sex as a commodity and sex as an expression of intimacy. “Do you think it is safe to become involved in CSE? Ask them to explain why or why not. You might ask your child, “Once you get involved in prostitution, *do you think you could get out easily* if you wanted to?”

- *Do you think that your child would come to you if she/he or a friend were being sexually exploited?*

If the answer is yes, explore what helped build that kind of trusting relationship. If the answer is no, explore ways to encourage trust and communication.

Emphasize the importance of parents being unconditionally accepting of their children and being non-judgmental. Remind parents they must communicate that they love their children no matter what. As one speaker said in the video, “I was not loved by my Mom.” Other speakers also talked about the importance of parental love. Even the pimp in the video was aware that it was important to “play with their mind . . . show them love.”

- *If you found out that your child was being sexually exploited for money or other material things, what would you do?*

Talk about the good sides and the bad sides of what they might do. For example, if they say “I would ground her,” ask how this would help and how it might back fire.. If they say they would “kill that guy,” ask them to realistically think about their options. Some parents may place the blame on themselves, saying “it must have been something I did.” At the other extreme, some parents may refuse to believe that their children could become involved in CSE.

- If your *child told you that a friend was involved in a form of CSE*, what would you do?

Key points are being unconditional, nonjudgmental, and thinking about pros and cons of responses. You may want to refer to the agencies listed in the Resource Guide in your kit.

- *If your relationship with your child isn't that good*, what can you do to make it better?

Brainstorm ideas like spend more time together, ask trusted family members or friends for advice, call the parent line, go to family counseling. The speakers in the video made it clear that parental acceptance, love, and trust are very important preventive factors.

Relating to prevention:

- How could you *prevent your child from becoming involved* in CSE?

As folks mentioned in the video - tell them you love them everyday – spend more time with them – support them if they are LBGTQI, - unconditional love and acceptance. This is a recapitulation of what has already been answered in previous questions– open, non-critical communication, spending time with your children, being aware of how they spend their time. However, despite a parent’s best efforts, their children may still turn to such destructive behavior as prostitution. If this is the case, then seek help to get your child out.

- One parent in the video said, “most kids just get sucked in.” What do you think they meant? What can parents do to prevent their children from getting “sucked in”?
- Another speaker from the video stated, “It can happen to anyone . . . maybe on a day when they feel bad.” Do you think this is true? What can be done to prevent this?

Relating to help:

- Adina Stevens said in video that people involved in CSE “can only heal after they no longer see themselves as prostitutes.” What did she mean by this?
- How might you *help your child* if she/he has already become involved in commercial sexual exploitation?

Brain storm ideas from “Resource Guide.”

- Who could help you talk with your child about commercial sexual exploitation?

Other family member, friend, or pastor.

- One speaker in the video said that “we can solve this problem if we work together as a community.” How can this be done?

Concluding Remarks:

When there are at least five minutes left, briefly highlight some of the important points made by the group. Thank the participants for coming and sharing. Remind them of the ground rule about confidentiality. Let them know that help is available.

Background on Child Prostitution

In the United States we are proud of our rights to many forms of freedom. The world looks up to us as leaders of civil rights and promise for all, regardless of our backgrounds. Yet, beneath this veil of ideals lie anguished communities, struggling with the causes and results of economic hardship, domestic violence, abuse, prejudice, discrimination, and extreme exploitation of those who are most vulnerable.

Among the most serious of these problems is child prostitution. Much like slaves, young prostitutes survive under the domination of their masters--pimps and panderers. A typical pimp has six prostitutes under him, whom he refers to as his family, and who call him "Daddy." Each girl brings in on average \$500 per night for her pimp.¹ In turn, her pimp keeps them "safe," or gives them a token of the money they make. Like many victims of sexual assault, prostitutes feel trapped, humiliated, and dependent upon their abusers. Like victims of domestic violence and foreign refugees, many of these teenagers are fleeing with nothing but the clothes they are wearing and the change, if any, in their pockets. Other than their pimps, they may have no place to turn.

Adding to their heavy burden is a sense of isolation from their families and communities, brought on by the stigma attached to "hookers," "whores," "bitches," "sluts," and "hoes."² Despite her/his obvious victimization, society frowns upon her as a "woman of the night," who leads a life of "sin." Likewise, the law usually views her/him as a wrongdoer or sexual deviant, or carrier of disease who should be punished. At the same time, this person is a victim, a witness, and an offender. Often, pimps do not even allow their "girls" to contact families and friends. Many are moved around the country in "the Circuit" in an effort to prevent them from establishing relationships with friends or social service providers.³ Many see themselves as different from "squares" and cannot see themselves operating within conventional standards of school, work, and heterosexual marriage.

In reality, most prostitutes were victims of incest or sexual abuse as children. Many are high school dropouts and come from low-income homes.⁴ They are easily manipulated to believe that their pimps are all powerful and that they control the police, customers, and other key people. Their pimps encourage dependency and their distrust of "squares." While the vast majority are female, some are male.

A teenager's entry into sex work is often a response to serious problems--incest, sexual abuse, low self-esteem, sheer survival, dependence on drugs or alcohol, perceived lack of choices, family discord and abuse, living near a sex-industry district, a craving for expensive merchandise and the "good life," and a desire to impress others or to gain acceptance.

¹Italiano, Laura, "TeenGirls Give Pimps Easy Payday: 'Daddies Profit From Lax Laws, Hookers' Devotion," *New York Post*, 23 February 1998.

²"Developing Individual Growth and New Independence Through Yourself," Dignity House.

³Estes R. & Weiner N. *The Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children In the U.S., Canada and Mexico*. Washington: US Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice, 2001.

⁴"Danger For Prostitutes Increasing, Most Starting Younger," *Beacon Journal*, 21 September 1997.

None of these risk factors come as a surprise, except perhaps the emphasis on consumerism, which is now an increasing reason for teens to go into sex work.⁵ Kids want to be seen in trendy clothes, glamorous cosmetics, expensive shoes, and fancy cars--images that tantalize and bombard them on TV, the radio, in magazines, and over the Internet. Today children now spend less time in school than they do watching TV, where they see 20,000 commercials a year and hear 15,000 sexual references a year.⁶

Studies indicate that most kids on the streets fled violence at home. These runaways often resort to prostitution, petty theft, and drug dealing to survive. We also know that hundreds, possibly thousands of girls and women are victims of transnational sex tourism trafficking. Compared to the dire poverty they experience in their homelands, their opportunities are greater in the United States, even as a prostitute.

In Hawai`i, the needs of girls who are most at risk of destructive behavior--particularly running away from home and using illegal drugs--are not adequately met.⁷ On August 23, 2000, the Honolulu Star-Bulletin featured a story, *Girls for Sale*, that poignantly stated that "teenage girls are bought and sold nightly in Honolulu." The article goes on to say that Hawaii's geographic restriction law, which is intended to clean up the streets of Waikiki, may actually be pushing prostitution further underground, leaving many teenage prostitutes at the mercy of their pimps. According to Professor Meda Chesney-Lind, "Since we've cracked down on adult prostitution, one of the unintended consequences has been the stepped-up recruitment of local girls."

On the island of O`ahu, no hard numbers relating to adolescent prostitution are available. In part this is because, even when kids are apprehended by police on the streets, many have out-of-state, falsified identification cards, that cannot be easily verified. There are lots of anecdotal accounts--pimps recruiting kids in shopping malls, schools and dating services, offering "finders' fees" of \$400 to \$500 for referrals, and recruiting prostitutes by participating in teen chat lines over the Internet.

Due to an economy based almost entirely on tourism and the military, Hawai`i has a disproportionately high number of sex workers compared to other states. According to one article, as many as 5,000 women and children are prostituting in Honolulu each day, including an unknown number of illegal aliens.⁸ Other young prostitutes, many of whom are addicts, are found strolling down Honolulu's Chinatown, a haven for drug pushers.

It is impossible to state how many people are victims of commercial sexual exploitation, since hard data is unavailable. However, according to various agencies and individuals who work closely with this population, an estimated 10,000 minors work in Oahu's sex trade, many on the streets of Waikiki, the densely-occupied tourist district where Hawaii's sex industry thrives.⁹

⁵As cited in various studies and as mentioned by individual POCSE members.

⁶Newsweek. May 19, 1997.

⁷Chesney-Lind, Meda, J. Koo, D. Kato, K. Fujiwara Clark, *Girls at Risk: An Overview of Gender-Specific Programming Issues and Initiatives*, The Center for Youth Research, Social Science Research Institute, University of Hawai`i at Manoa, April 1998.

⁸Johnson, Michelle, *The Honolulu Weekly*, July 19-25, 2000, page 9.

⁹These statistics are mentioned in Christine Donnely's Honolulu Star-Bulletin article, *Girls for Sale*, August 23, 2000, A-1.

One important statistic is available: 92% of women prostitutes said they want to leave prostitution but couldn't because they lack shelter, jobs, health care, counseling and treatment for addictions.