

Sex Trafficking

A Demand Reduction Strategy for Minnesota



CONTENTS

I. Background	2
II. This Plan.....	3
III. Demographics: Mapping the Market	5
IV. Focus Groups.....	6
V. Results: Main Findings	9
VI. Recommendations	14
Abbreviations Used	16
Endnotes	16



This report and the research it covers were developed through funding support generously provided by the Women’s Foundation of Minnesota.

We would like to thank the following individuals for their contributions as part of the Expert Advisory Board overseeing design and methodology, data interpretation, and refinement of this report: Sarah Curtiss of Men As Peacemakers; Samuel Estes of Restorative Justice; Katie Fritz-Fogel of Rainbow Research; Beth Holger-Ambrose of The Link; Lauren Martin of UROC; Colleen Owens of the Urban Institute; Samuel Simmons of Simmons Consulting; and Pheng Thao of ManForward. Lee Roper-Batker and Terry Williams of the Women’s Foundation of Minnesota provided immensely valuable insight, direction, and support. Lou C. deBaca, a recognized authority in anti-trafficking efforts, provided input and guidance. And Laura Schauben of the Amherst H. Wilder Foundation provided overall feedback as well as specific advice on measure social marketing outcomes.

We would also like to thank the following individuals for agreeing to be interviewed and being generous with their wisdom and expertise, particularly members of the Minnesota Human Trafficking Task Force (MNHTT): Jeff Bauer of the Family Partnership; John Choi of the Ramsey County Attorney’s Office; Amy Farrell of Northeastern University; Sgt. Ray Gainey of the St. Paul Police Department; Amy Kenzie of MNHTT; Robin Phillips of Advocates for Human Rights; and, Sgt. Grant Snyder of the Minneapolis Police Department.

I. BACKGROUND

*Mapping the Market*¹ from the Urban Research and Outreach-Engagement Center (UROC) notes that as an industry sex trafficking operates on market principles. This means that, like other markets, it is structured by both supply and demand — and it “is the “demand side” of the market for sex that is the driving force of the market.”²

There are more than a dozen tactics in common use to decrease demand, including: stings, S.O.A.P. orders (Stay Out of Areas with Prostitution); fines, community service sentencing and “John Schools”, as well as publishing “Dear John” letters and similar public shaming tactics.

Almost all of these can be roughly grouped in two overarching approaches:

1. Apprehend (stings, surveillance, etc.) and punish (incarceration, shaming, fines.); and,
2. Public education and social marketing.

While the vast bulk of efforts to date have focused on *apprehend and punish* (and both remain important tools), few leading authorities see it as an effective long-term strategy for reducing or eliminating demand. As some experts put it, few jurisdictions will have the resources to be able to incarcerate their way to eradication.

This may be particularly important when it comes to underage sex trafficking, a market which is increasingly moving online and underground. The Department of Justice has found that 76% of transactions for commercial sex with underage girls are already conducted online — a statistic which is set to increase in coming years.

As sex buying of all kinds shifts away from physical locations like brothels, bars, and street corners to anonymous apps and websites like *Craigslist* and *Backpage*, apprehension and punishment are becoming more challenging.

Such diverse studies as the Department of Justice's [National Assessment of Prostitution and Sex Trafficking Demand Reduction Effort](#) and Hunt Alternatives' exhaustive [National Action Plan for Eliminating Sex Trafficking](#) both found very strong cross-sector support for prioritizing public education and social marketing.

As the [National Assessment](#) explains: “[P]ublic education...is among the few types of interventions that are designed to be truly preventive, rather than to react to known offenders... [T]here is a need to intervene ‘further upstream,’ before men become sex buyers”

Yet, as the [National Assessment](#) concludes: “[While] experts agree that public education and awareness are critical to combating prostitution and sex trafficking, there are relatively few programs designed specifically to address demand...”⁵

The disparity is striking: the field comprehends that the current dual focus on supply reduction, and apprehend/punish are insufficient, but this understanding has yet to translate into widespread creation of demand-side social marketing and education campaigns. It is on this underserved area that this report focused.

II. THIS PLAN

A. Masculinity and Sex Buying

Experts agree that one important factor driving male demand for sex trafficking victims is attitudes of predatory and entitled manhood— what some experts simply call “toxic masculinity”.

As the Minnesota Human Trafficking Task Force (MNHTT) reported, *“The demand for commercial sex is strongly related to male privilege and sexual entitlement.”*⁶

Similarly, the Chicago Alliance Against Sexual Exploitation (CAASE) found that entitled and predatory masculinity was a key driver of sex buying behavior, explaining that *“[b]uying sex [was often seen] as a male privilege and a normative part of male behavior...”*

This plan accepts this view: that the market is enabled and driven by accepted norms of entitled and predatory masculinity. Such norms tend to ignore the victim, her situation, and the buyer's own implication by purchasing sex and thus supporting the trade.

These norms are particularly important where underage girls are involved, and males still feel a sense of moral impunity. Effective long-term reduction of demand must focus challenging these norms with tested, evidence-based messaging.

A Gender Dictionary

“Gender” is used in multiple contexts. Here's a quick guide.

Gender Equality/Equity

Ensuring equal access to resources, power, opportunity for females, males, children and families, LGBTQ, etc.

Gender Expression

How we express feeling feminine and masculine through dress, hair style, adornment, posture, etc.

Gender Identity

An inner sense of being male or female; useful when discussing transgender individuals who feel a conflict between their sex and gender identification.

Gender Lens or Gender Analysis

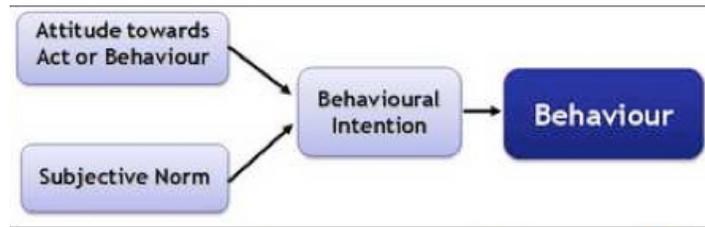
Being aware of the impact of gender equity and/or gender norms on a problem or issue.

Gender Norms

Socially-constructed ideals, scripts, expectations for how to be a woman or a man.

Gender Roles

Social and behavioral norms for how men and women are expected to act: being a doctor or nurse, being martial or maternal.



Schematics of the theory of reasoned action (TRA)

Whether an individual changes their behaviour will depend on whether they perceive the behaviour change to be:

- ✓ Beneficial;
- ✓ In accordance with their needs and values;
- ✓ Easy to understand or adopt; and
- ✓ Something that will be viewed positively by their peers – that is, whether others will support them in practicing the behaviour.⁴

Thus this research focused identifying what kinds of messaging might make young men think differently about masculine norms and sex-buying, with an emphasis on underage and/or abused girls.

This plan sought a message platform that was effective with young males across diverse races and ethnicities, and of varying socio-economic backgrounds.

B. Logic Model

Our Logic Model was based on the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), an elaboration of the Theory of Planned Behavior.

TRA has been widely used in public education prevention efforts because of its primary focus on changing intended, rather than current, behavior. TRA assumes a person's intention to perform a behavior is one of the strongest predictors of whether they will actually do it.⁷

This intention is strengthened when the person believes the outcome is a good thing, and that others will think so as well — thus TRA engages perceived social norms as a central pillar.

Put simply, behavior is a result of a person's feelings about its outcomes and how they think others will view them. Thus, a person's attitude plus social norms or perception equals behavioral intent.⁸

This made it important to find not only a message that individuals believed in, but that they perceived *others* as believing in as well — and through testing, we were able to accomplish this.

According to TRA, effective messaging should follow four simple principles:

1. Align with the target audience's values;
2. Be specific and easy to understand;
3. Be easy to adopt; and
4. Be something peers would support.

In addition, social marketing delivery channels (billboards, social media, PSAs) tend to be "a mile wide and an inch deep." That is, they are viewed by many people, but with a message exposure typically measured in seconds.

This means effective social marketing message platforms tend to avoid trying to *change subjects' minds* on deeply held beliefs, instead leveraging *existing value systems* to make small, specific, easy-to-adopt requests over requests that are both large and deep.

In effect, this means effective social marketing tends more towards a harm-reduction model than a zero tolerance approach to sex-buying (as many in the field prefer).

This may seem like a limited objective. But social marketing campaigns rarely enjoy the kind of extended message exposure (for instance in a film or small group exercise) that can be used to challenge deeply held attitudes or beliefs head-on.

Perhaps this is one reason why, as the National Institutes of Health’s Overview of Anti-Demand Public Educations notes, most demand-side social marketing programs to date have been designed to increase public awareness, rather than to actually reduce or change sex buying behavior.

This plan addresses the latter. Improved public awareness is certainly an important by-product, but its focus is on how to best change the attitudes and behavior of potential sex buyers.

III. DEMOGRAPHICS: MAPPING THE MARKET

[NOTE: We thank UROC’s Mapping the Market and CAASE’s Deconstructing Demand for the use of the accompanying informative graphics.]

As UROC’s Mapping the Market report makes clear, “[S]ex buyers tend to be men from all communities and socioeconomic backgrounds from across the entire Twin Cities Metropolitan area.”^{11, 12}

Despite the breadth of the market UROC also found specific features of buyers. For purposes of comparison, we also examined CAASE’s research on males sex buys in the Chicago/Cook County area. Cook County’s demographics enjoy some marked similarities to those of the Twin Cities.

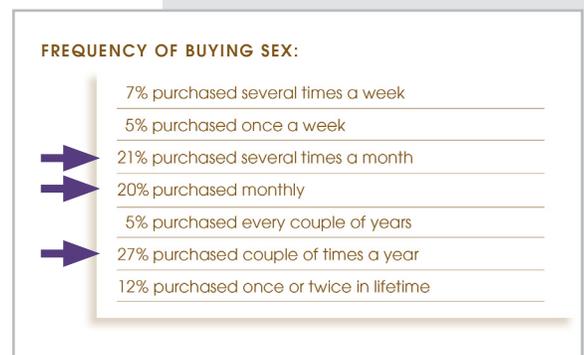
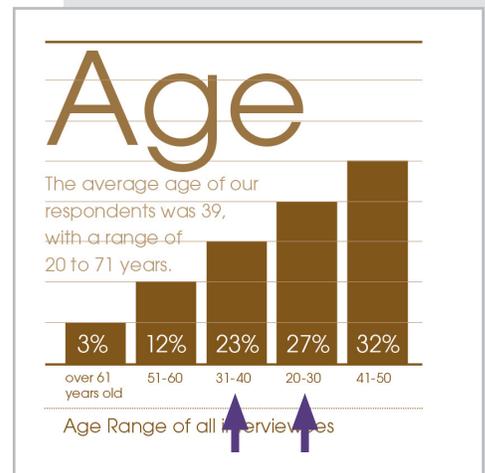
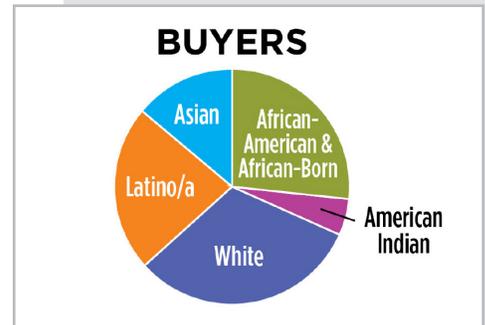
CAASE found similar broad diversity among sex buyers; yet like UROC, it also found consistent demographic features useful for guiding effective demand-side message development. These are detailed below.

A. Habituation

CAASE’s found that about two-thirds of sex purchasers did so multiple times and on a regular basis. About one quarter did so monthly and another one quarter did so several times a month. It should be no surprise that UROC found that 83% of purchasers themselves considered buying sex an addiction.¹³

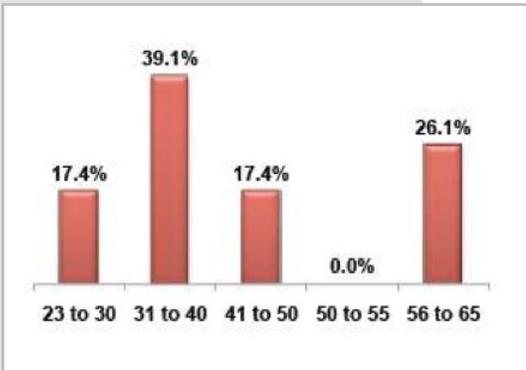
This indicates that if a social marketing campaign can deter a young man from *beginning* to buy sex, the likelihood is that doing so will deter *multiple* such purchases *every year* by potential buyers (at least until their 60s, when buying drops off).

In fact, targeting young men may be the *only* practical audience for effective social marketing. Changing addictive or highly habitual behavior is difficult even with time-intensive programming. And most people become less open to new ideas and to changing their behavior as they age and it becomes familiar routine.



Similar conclusions were reached by Global Centurion, which noted that, “Messaging needs to be developed to reach...young males before they have become users/customers.”¹⁴

Hunt Alternatives agreed: “[We must] focus efforts on ‘softer’ targets: those who are not strongly invested, and who mildly accept or have weaker support for commercial sex, akin to ‘swing voters.’”¹⁵



B. Age

Young males age 20–30 comprised about a quarter of the market. Combined with those of the next cohort, aged 31–40, they account for fully half more of sex buyers.

Thus, a social marketing program that successfully engaged young males, would not only reach potential buyers *before* they became habituated, but it would also address more than half of the market for demand.

C. Education & Income

About 20% of buyers had some college, with an additional 30% having a full college degree. Together, college-educated males comprise about half the market. This is most likely because only educated males with higher earning capacity have the disposable income to support an expensive buying habit.

(It is worth noting that Twin Cities sting operations have often focused on working class immigrant communities, who seldom have the disposable income to support habitual sex buying.)

D. CONCLUSION

Therefore, demographic information suggests a campaign, which is focused on:

- Young straight males age 20-30;
- With two- or four-years of college education; and,
- Who were not yet habituated (or even active) sex buyers.

In addition, an effective campaign should try to reach what in politics are termed the “near persuadables:” not those who already agree with a message about sex trafficking (and who therefore don’t need it), but also not those who are already habituated and therefore implacably opposed to a messages (with whom it would be ineffective).

IV. FOCUS GROUPS

Rainbow Research conducted two focus groups with young, mostly-white college fraternity males recruited through advertisements and local outreach. Samuel Simmons Consulting conducted two focus groups with young African American community college males recruited through their existing community work. Restorative Justice Community Action conducted four groups with young, mostly Hispanic males who were recruited from their “John school” program.

Family Income

- 17% earned less than \$20,000
- 21% earned between \$20,001-\$40,000
- 28% earned between \$40,001-\$60,000
- 17% earned between \$60,001-\$80,000
- 10% earned between \$80,001-\$140,000
- 7% earned more than \$140,001

Education Level

- 32% had earned a college degree
- 31% had attended some college
- 21% had completed some high school or obtained a high school diploma
- 16% had earned a graduate or professional degree

In addition, so that the voices and insights of young victims themselves would be represented, The Link conducted a focus group of LGBTQ and heterosexual-identifying youth, who had engaged in survival sex and/or been trafficked.

A. Shame and Fear Campaigns

This study explored a range of possible campaign themes with our Expert Advisory Board, first among them campaigns that shame potential buyers, or threaten them with punishment. Such campaigns have been used with trafficking before, and proven effective with issues like public smoking.

Fear campaigns have been most effective when connected to issues towards which the audience already has strong fear (for instance, heart disease).¹⁶

They may be less effective with issues that don't align with the audience's fears. (For instance, despite its visual punch, *"This is your brain on drugs!"* was never considered effective with the liberal drug-experimenting youth who were its target demographic.)

Combined fear and punishment campaigns can also get good results. *"Click it or Ticket"* is a good example. However, to be effective, it helps if fear and punishment campaigns have nearly universal police support to reinforce public perception of swift and certain punishment.

It is unclear if Minnesota law enforcement can devote the person-power to surveilling and apprehending sex buyers that would make a fear and threat campaign effective.

Fear and shame campaigns can also be a double-edge sword, causing the target audience to tune out, rather than change their views.

For instance, Brennan and Street found that audiences were "more likely to invoke self-protection and inaction" to messages of fear and shame-based than to perform the suggested behavior.¹⁷

Similarly, other researchers have also found that the most common reaction to threats and fear is avoidance and escape, rather than long-term behavior change.¹⁸

Our focus groups tended to bear both these observations out. Our young, college-educated males tended to feel relatively invulnerable and to discount threats of apprehension. Many were openly dismissive of the idea that police were likely to arrest most sex-buyers.

This is why some researchers have found that shame base campaigns are less effective than those using the audience's own moral framework to generate guilt.¹⁹

The recommended message platform we developed was eventually able to do both: use a morally-based appeal which was nonetheless anchored in the deeply held beliefs of our male subjects.

B. Anti-Prostitution Messaging

A second strategy explored with our Expert Advisory Board was messaging condemning all sex-buying— an approach that has been especially attractive to zero-tolerance and abolition advocates.



SOME TESTED MESSAGES

CAASE/End Demand IL



H.E.A.T. Watch



Men Can Stop Rape



"Real Men"



However, in discussions with the Advisors Board, it became apparent that there was often a degree of tolerance for some forms of sex-buying both within communities and also among individual males — and this was borne out in the responses of many focus group participants.

There were also racial, class, and ethnic aspects of abolition-based messages. One experienced facilitator stressed that the buying and selling sex was often viewed through a very different moral lens among low-income communities of color, than it might be among suburban, middle-class white ones.

For instance, in disinvested Minnesota Black or Hispanic communities, where good jobs can be scarce and regular incomes less common, the sex trade may not be viewed as the same moral transgression it is in more affluent communities, but rather as yet another means to survive. (Significantly for this report's recommended messaging, this view did not include underage girls.)

In fact, similar opinions were expressed by some of the LGBTQ youth from The Link, who engaged in survival sex to get food or a night's shelter.

In addition, some Hispanic participants in the Restorative Justice "john school" groups pointed out that in their countries of origin, prostitution is not legal, nor considered particularly immoral (again, tellingly, this did *not* include underage girls).

In addressing how shame-based messaging might be perceived by young Black men, Samuel Simmons of Samuel Simmons Consulting's Healing Brothers program explained, "We're used to being shamed. Black men *know* how to do shame. So a shaming campaign is simply not going to be heard in African-American communities."

Addressing threat-and-punishment messaging, Simmons continued, "Young men of color in low-income communities are not going to be scared off by threats of punishment. Police pat-downs and possible arrest are part of their regular daily experience. *They will just ignore such messages.*"

Summing up, he added, "Like most people, I'm not at all pro-prostitution. But to really be responsive to communities of color, a campaign should consider messages that will really work and have resonance with *all* types of men."

The one focus group that emerged as most receptive to shame and threat messages were those from john schools, who were very ashamed of their behavior, and highly fearful of further punishment.

Thus while basing a campaign around on condemnatory messages that "all prostitution is immoral" or threat messages that declare "if you do this, you will go to jail" might work for a narrow demographic of young males, it would likely be one that is whiter, more affluent, and possibly also indigenous.

In addition, young male participants across all demographics tested were openly dismissive of any suggestion that sex-trafficking victims who charged high prices were in fact victims, or that the market for sex could ever be completely eradicated.

C. Anti-Sex-Trafficking and Social Norming Messages

A third strategy explored with the Advisory Board was a campaign based on new anti-sex-trafficking laws, in which any transaction involving a third-party is legally *de facto* trafficking.

Since many buyers may be unaware of these laws (and the increased penalties), a public education seemed an obvious strategy.

However, several Advisors pointed out that buyers have little way of distinguishing victims who *are* being exploited by a third-party, from those who *aren't* — particularly with many transactions originating online, and especially among the young, inexperienced first-time, buyers who were our target demographic.

In addition, The Link's participants noted how even as underage victims, they were highly motivated to fulfill transactions, going to great lengths to disguise their age, hide signs of abuse and/or exploitation, and lying to Johns whenever necessary.

D. Model Messages

It became increasingly clear that identifying an effective message platform would require better understanding about how young Minnesotan males thought about masculinity, entitlement, sex, and prostitution as well as what (if any) moral framework they attached to such factors.

This became the primary objective of the focus group research.

Each group tested specific messages from well-known anti-sex-trafficking or anti-abuse social marketing campaigns:

- CAASE / End Demand Illinois;
- H.E.A.T. Watch of Alameda County);
- Men Can Stop Rape; and,
- Demi and Ashton Foundation.

All but the last could be considered Evidence-Based or at least Promising Practice.

However, when it became apparent that none of these were especially effective with our participants, we began developing alternative messages based on the feedback from the last group, and then presented to the next group.

In addition, at the end of each group, participants were asked a series of open-ended questions about what they thought would make anti-trafficking messages the most effective with them and their friends. Key findings from all focus groups are detailed in the next section.

V. RESULTS: MAIN FINDINGS

A. Participant attitudes about masculinity that justified sex-buying

i. Participants connected the use of force and abuse with toxic manhood.

- *They want to prove they're the man, and part of that is dominating the girl and asserting themselves over them.*
- *It gives them a sense of power.*
- *After you've paid for something, you think of it as your property.*
- *You own them for an hour.*
- *[It's] the dominance thing. That's why they purchase sex, to be the man.*

ii. Participants drew distinctions between buying sex and strip clubs.

- *I can't say I ever heard of anyone who's been [with a prostitute but] the majority of us have been to strip clubs.*
- *I don't know any one [who's been with a prostitute], but if you asked how many times have I've heard somebody talk about strip clubs they've been to in Vegas, we can make a list right now. It's two different things.*

iii. Participants distinguished between average buyers who might purchase sex out of need, and high-SES males who did so mainly for status.

- *There's a double standard between the 40-year-old guy who hasn't had sex in 10 years: if he goes out and has sex with a prostitute it's viewed as shameful. But if you're some billion dollar tycoon, and he's just having strippers or sex-trafficking victims, nobody really judges him for that because he's already achieved status.*
- *It's like the "Wolf of Wall Street" thing: if you've got a lot of money, it's just like why not?*
- *I think that also reflects the two different mentalities: the person who can't get laid or hasn't been laid in a very long time or the person who's very power hungry.*

iv. Participants tended to identify sex-buying as a commercial transaction between two informed and consenting adults.

Such attitudes would be an obstacle to creating an effective campaign that sought to convince young men that all buying sex is wrong. However, the concepts of "adult," "consent," and "informed" proved to be crucial hooks for effective messaging.

- *For example, Craigslist you can go on there and purchase sex. It's a joke.*
- *The fact that it's such an open category for people looking to buy sex on Craigslist. It's not necessarily buying them; it's a mutual agreement. It's voluntary transaction.*
- *If you think of prostitution as a career, it's just not a very glamorous career to have.*
- *I personally think people should be able to [sell their bodies]...they can do what they want with their bodies.*

v. Foreign-born participants were confused by or unaware of US laws on buying sex.

- *I am from Ecuador, where we have many sex-trafficking victims around. Many nightclubs where prostitution is legal, I saw uncles going to the prostitution, I saw my friends and my friends from high school too.*
- *Here in the US, just asking how much, you could be committing a crime. It's the equivalent of buying sex, of prostitution. In other countries, buying sex is nothing. But many Hispanics living here don't know it's a crime. So we make mistakes because we don't know the laws.*

B. Participant attitudes about masculinity that refuted sex-buying

Notably, participants' views of buying sex as a commercial transaction between two informed and consenting adults did not preclude them from having moral parameters around it, or from viewing aspects as morally wrong. Significantly, the most common of these related to girls who were underage.

i. Low age was the most reliable moral trigger across every racial and ethnic group—with no participant in any group expressing support for buying sex from underage girls (and many expressing strong revulsion).

There were a number of other arguments advanced to justify the purchase of sex:

- The high rates charged by some sex-trafficking victims showed that they were not really victims;
- Sex-buying was a private act between two consenting adults;
- Victims were informed adults who knew what they were doing; and,
- Victims were in control of their own actions.

Each of these arguments was nullified –and actually reversed – when they were question about underage girls

In addition to general moral disgust (a powerful hook for a social marketing program in itself), other common reasons participants offered for condemning such sex included:

- Underage girls could not consent to sex;
- Underage girls were not old enough to understand their situation or its ramifications;
- Underage girls were probably being victimized and abused by adults; and,
- Underage girls would likely end up scarred psychologically for life.

In other words, the moral repugnance participants felt about sex with underage girls “trumped” each of the arguments advanced to justify sex-buying.

ii. Sample of attitudinal statements by category.

- General Disgust
 - *Under-age is the worst.*
 - *When you're under 14 that's disgusting. 16 is equally disgusting.*
 - *If you have any kind of morality you wouldn't go for someone underage*
- Manipulation, Force, and Abuse
 - *If you're underage and being forced -- usually those two go together.*
 - *With younger girls there's always someone running it who's very likely abusing them, who's demanding things from them.*
 - *There's a good chance they've been forced, and they don't fully comprehend the dynamics.*
 - *A kid is being forced, whereas older gals maybe do it because they need the money.*



- Psychologically Scarring
 - o *I think it could be very detrimental to their mental health if they were 14, even 16, because their brain is not fully developed. It could be something that scars them.*
 - o *Not even 18. Dude, think about it. Depending on how this all starts, you're scarring yourself for life. What age are you ready to scar yourself?*
- Lack of Agency, Comprehension
 - o *From an ethical standpoint, a big part of it is being old enough to really understand what sex is and be informed and mature enough to make a conscious decision.*
 - o *[Very young girls] are definitely the worst, because it's easier to manipulate their minds, and they aren't able to comprehend that type of lifestyle.*

What participants saw as "underage" varied widely, from as low as 14 up to as high as 21.

- *I think 16 is that age you can consent in Minnesota. Consent is a great benchmark.*
- *Sex at 16 for you is a good guideline*
- *For me definitely 18 [and] I'm 20.*
- *[Is there an age that's too young to sell sex?] Hell yeah. 10 years old doesn't make sense at all to me. It happens. But to be honest, if she's 18, she's an adult, but still.*
- *If you're looking at any age range, I'd say 21, honestly, is a good number to go with.*

C. Daughter/Sister Tropes

Both during the discussion of masculinity and towards the end when we asked participants about effective messaging, one trope that surfaced spontaneously and regularly was, "She could be my sister" or "She could be someone's daughter."

Some participants saw the concept of an underage family member trapped in sex trafficking as compelling and disturbing, and made a personal connection to it.

They felt a key to effective messaging was personalizing the victim, rather than having her be anonymous or out of sight.

For instance, one participant observed:

- *This very general, very generalized word like "child prostitution" doesn't hit any emotions, but when you think about your family that's someone close to you [it's different].*

Significantly, none of the model campaigns tested used such messages about sisters or daughters.

D. Participant Advice

Participants also offered a number of specific participant suggestions on maximizing such a campaign's impact, including the following:

- *Everyone has sisters or some family member who was once a young girl and seeing that might make someone even angrier about the situation.*
- *I think, "This could be your daughter." [Multiple Speakers: Yeah.]*
- *And the innocence, looking at the innocence of the young girl, maybe making it a little bit more dramatic than it really is, but that would, I think, hit home with a lot of people.*
- *What if that was your mom or what if that was your sister? All of a sudden n****s want to do something about it.*
- *[The most effective ad] would be where you're opening a door and see a blurred face that could be your sister with a man on top of her, saying "What would you do?"*
- *[The most effective ad] would be the underage one, and then this would be for anybody that's over 18. By far those are the two best ones you got.*
- *Now I'm a dad and I have a daughter. I would put an example like, I have a daughter and I don't want to see anybody trying to buy my daughter when she's underage. If I'm single I would have that feeling, even if I had a sister I don't have that feeling. As a father I feel I have to protect my daughter.*

In perhaps the most telling example of age as an effective emotional trigger, when closing comments were solicited, one participant still could not stop thinking about it, declaring:

- *I keep thinking about my daughter being sex trafficked, and it's kind of got me messed up.*

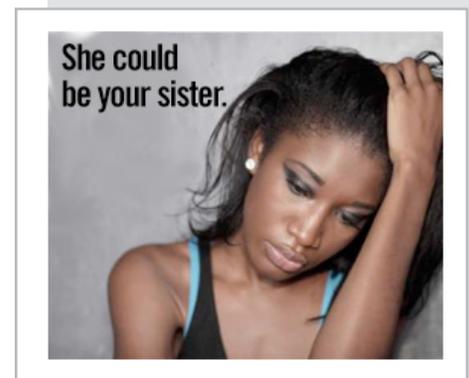
E. Mock-up Test Ads

Feedback from participants was used in each group to mock-up a set of possible messages, and then to test and refine them on each successive group. Because of the brief time between groups, only stock images found online were available, so limited graphic capabilities were used, with placeholder statistics.

One affecting example for many participants was the stock image of the young girl holding the sign with the "This could be your sister" message (although an image of someone this young would likely to problematic for any campaign.) Images of obvious abuse were also memorable.

Perhaps encouragingly, ads received some positive reviews from groups across different demographics.

- *This one comes out the most because it looks like she's bruised up and she's hurt. Something like that would probably catch the eye a little more.*
- *Something like this is effective with a little kid holding a sign. People are more likely to be interested because the little girl that could potentially be a victim and she's young.*



The Wilder Foundation, which kindly examined this report and its recommendations, offered the following guidance for outcome metrics and refinement for a hashtag or similar social marketing campaign.

1. Test the number of people who remember seeing the message or tweet;
2. Test their recall of the message and/or understanding of its intention; and,
3. Test their reaction to the message.

In a larger social messaging or social norm campaign, Wilder would also suggest measuring:

4. If people remember the exact message wording and/or picture; and,
5. If it affected their thinking or intended behavior.

However, a hashtag- or tweet-only campaign is less likely to produce measurable effects for these metrics.

Wilder also suggested piloting the campaign with a local college or university. This would provide opportunities to measure its impact on the target audience, and then conduct message refinement prior to taking the campaign to scale.

Finally, if a hashtag or message is to be amplified by partnering groups, Wilder suggested piloting it with one or more of them so that any necessary refinement can be conducted to help ensure greater acceptance across the full network.

- *I think, this one, being a little girl, she's going to catch a lot of eyes, mothers, probably, or some fathers because if I was a father, I would be looking at this and thinking, "I don't want my girl to be doing this."*
- *I think she would catch the eye of most people because she's a little girl and she's holding a sign about prostitution. A little girl shouldn't know anything about prostitution at that age.*
- *This one like this it can be my sister, but I have a daughter so while I know and it's bad I shouldn't be doing it because that can be my sister or my daughter. It would attach me to this picture.*

In Phase II of this project, we will test these messages and images in more depth, and refine them with a number of groups of males from the target demographics.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Audience

As mentioned, *III. Demographics: Mapping the Market*, effective campaigns will:

- Target males with at some college likely to have enough disposable income to sustain the habitual purchases of sex;
- Primarily target white and Black males who make up over 50% of the Twin Cities market (with other demographics to be added later); and,
- Target younger men who have not purchased sex before, or who have limited experience with it before it becomes habitual (in Hunt Alternatives' language, the "'softer targets who are who are not strongly invested akin to 'swing voters'" or "persuadables").

B. Images

- Participants reacted most strongly to the image of the young girl and the two images of bruised/abused young women.
- Participants were unambiguous that pictures are more effective than words alone.
- Participants reacted most strongly to racially representative images, so it would be preferable to pick several racial and/or ethnically diversity images that would resonate the most with each community.

C. Message Platform

- The sister/daughter message was clearly the most compelling of all messages tested across groups. This should be the foundation for a campaign, especially for a social media hashtag campaign where brevity is crucial to success:

*What if she was your sister?
She could be your daughter.*

We are currently conducting additional focus groups to test various version of this wording to identify which versions are most effective with young Minnesota males.

- Feelings of disgust, guilt, and protectiveness about underage girls trumped all other attitudes that might justify buying sex. Reasons included:
 - o Could not really consent to commercial sex;
 - o Did not have the maturity to understand their situation;
 - o Were probably being manipulated and abused; and,
 - o Would be psychologically scarred for life.

For a print campaign, messaging could touch on each reason cited for underage girls being unacceptable and was immoral. Some examples might include:

What if she was your sister?

Prostitution scars teenage girls for life.

She could be your sister.

A teenage girl can't consent to prostitution.

She could be your daughter.

Trafficking victims are manipulated and abused.

For a print/billboard campaign, each girl could deliver each of the target messages. A simple mock-up of what this could look like appears at the right.

By anchoring sex-buying in existing moral beliefs and by associating it with something personal and emotionally loaded, the campaign would: directly challenge predatory and entitled attitudes of masculinity that justify sex with underage and/or trafficked girls.

D. Requested Behavior

The campaign would ask of young men to avoid buying sex. If they find themselves involved in such a transaction, they should walk away. This follows the Theory of Reasoned Action principles for effective behavior appeals. It is:

- Aligned with our target audience's expressed and deeply felt values;
- Simple and easy to understand; and,
- Easy to follow.

Beneath the initial message, the campaign could feature a memorable tag-line with the requested behavior:

What if she was your sister?

A teenage girl can't consent to prostitution.

Just Walk Away!

The campaign could even create specific versions of the message platform to specifically address this and distinguish the two. For instance:

What if she was your sister?

Teens can't "consent" to prostitution.

Just Walk Away!

The campaign could even create specific versions of the message platform to specifically address this and distinguish the two. For instance:

What if she was your sister?

16 is not old enough to "consent" to prostitution.

Just Walk Away!

In follow-up focus groups refining possible hashtags, participants made the following points.

1. "Daughter" is stronger than "sister."

Men are more likely to feel a deep sense of personal investment and protectiveness towards daughters. Also, a sister could be an older sister; but among the target age-group, a daughter would necessarily be a very young person.

2. "What if she was your daughter" is stronger than "I could be your daughter" or "What if I was your daughter" or "She could be your daughter."

The second is a two-way conversation between the girl and the adult reader; while the first is between three people, including the adult who asks the question and is witnessing and judging. The last two phrases were considered less strong because the word "could" was perceived as weak and tentative.

E. Social Media Amplification

The campaign consider launching viral Twitter campaigns, combined with one of the selected images. This could be coordinated with parallel Facebook and Instagram efforts, and would encourage all partnering organizations and agencies to repost and amplify the message.

For instance, neither of the following hashtags are currently taken on Twitter:

#whatifshewasyourdaughter

#shecouldbeyourdaughter

Abbreviations Used in this Paper

CAASE — Chicago Alliance Against Sexual Exploitation

CSEC — Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children

MNHTT— The Minnesota Human Trafficking Task Force

SOAP — Stay Out of Areas with Prostitution

UROC — Urban Research and Outreach-Engagement Center

SES — Socio-Economic Status

TPB — Theory of Planned Behavior

TRA — Theory of Reasoned Action

¹ Mapping the Market for Sex with Trafficked Minor Girls in Minneapolis, Urban Research and Outreach-Engagement Center (UROC), University of Minnesota, September, 2014, p. 6

² Mapping the Market, p. 52

³ NPR, Trafficked Teen Girls Describe Life In 'The Game', <http://www.npr.org/2010/12/06/131757019/youth-radio-trafficked-teen-girls-describe-life-in-the-game>

⁴ National Assessment of Prostitution and Sex Trafficking Demand Reduction Efforts, Prepared for the National Institute of Justice by Abt Associates, July 7, 2012, p.9.

⁵ National Assessment of Prostitution and Sex Trafficking Demand Reduction Efforts, Prepared for the National Institute of Justice by Abt Associates, July 7, 2012, p1.

⁶ Minnesota Human Trafficking Task Force, <http://mnhttf.org/human-trafficking/demand/>

⁷ Resource Center for Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention (ReCAPP), Theories & Approaches – Theory of Reasoned Action, Nicole Lezin, <http://recapp.etr.org/recapp/index.cfm?fuseaction=pages.TheoriesDetail&PageID=517>,

⁸ Chapter 6, Theory of Reasoned Actions (TRA) and its Relation to ICT Adoption, ICT Adoption and Application in the Malaysian Public Sector, A.R. Ambali, IGI Global, October, 2014, p. 83

⁹ An Overview of Anti-Demand Public Education in the United States, Prepared for the National Institute of Justice, DOJ, Abt Associates, July, 2012, p. 1.

¹⁰ An Overview of Anti-Demand Public Education in the United States, Prepared for the National Institute of Justice, DOJ, Abt Associates, July, 2012, p. 1.

¹¹ Mapping the Market for Sex with Trafficked Minor Girls in Minneapolis Structures, Functions, and Patterns, University of Minnesota's Urban Research Outreach-Engagement Center (UROC) and Othayonih Research in partnership with the Women's Foundation of Minnesota, September, 2014, p.28

¹² Mapping the Market, p. 36.

¹³ Deconstructing the Demand, p. 2.

¹⁴ Addressing Demand Examining New Practices – The Five S's, L. Lederer, for Global Centurion, <http://www.globalcenturion.org/programs/demand-reduction-program/articles/>

¹⁵ Hunt Alternatives, National Action Plan, Chapter 8, p. 9

¹⁶ Fear Appeal Theory, K. C. Williams, Research in Business and Economic Journal

¹⁷ Fear, Guilt, and Shame Appeals in Social Marketing, L. Brennan and W. Binney, (2010), Journal of Business Research, 63(2), 140-146.

¹⁸ Lazarus Richard S. Progress on a Cognitive-Motivational-Relational Theory of Emotion. American Psychologist 1991; 48 (8 August): 819-834.

¹⁹ Bennett Roger. Shame, guilt and responses to non-profit and public sector ads. International Journal of Advertising 1998; 17 (4): 483-499.