



Awareness

Human Trafficking is a modern-day form of slavery with over forty-three million people enslaved worldwide. The scope of the problem is hard to define because human trafficking is largely a hidden crime, making accurate numbers of trafficking incidents difficult to determine. It is a crime under state, federal, and international law and is currently the second fastest-growing criminal activity.

A person is a human trafficking victim if she/he is induced by force, fraud or coercion or if she/he is a victim under 18 years of age. There are two major types of human trafficking:

1. *Sex trafficking*, in which the victim is forced to commit a commercial sex act
2. *Labor trafficking*, which is the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision or obtaining of a person for labor or services for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage or slavery

Sex trafficking is especially reprehensible because it usually targets vulnerable women and girls. Some victims are abducted; others are runaways or are lured out of poverty or sold by their destitute families. Many are desperate for acceptance and enticed by the false promise of romance, good jobs or a better life.

Many factors are contributing to the tragedy of human trafficking; a significant one is pornography, which is the focus of this module. Pornography creates a climate in which violence and exploitation of women and children is both tolerated and tacitly encouraged. Taking on pornography means challenging the culture's libertarian attitude about sex, which says anything goes between consenting adults and those who don't like pornography



can change the channel. Lies about pornography must be dispelled. For example, viewing it will satisfy your sexual desire, consumption of it is harmless and even helpful in building stable relationships or those involved in its production are there by choice.

Pornography is prevalent and destructive. Recent statistics regarding children viewing pornography are staggering. Enough is Enough, a nonprofit organization working to make the internet safer for children and families, provides the following statistics:

- Among children that said they had seen pornography, those in the youngest age-group (11 to 13) were the most likely to say that their viewing of this content was mostly or all unintentional (62 percent vs. 46 percent of 16- to 17-year-olds).
- 50 percent of 11- to 13-year-olds, 65 percent of 14- to 15-year-olds and 78 percent of 16- to 17-year-olds reported having seen pornography in some way (shown/sent by someone else, searched for/stumbled upon it).
- There was a disconnect between parents' perceptions of their children's pornography viewing practices and the reality: 75 percent of parents felt their child would not have seen pornography online, but of those children, 53 percent said they had seen pornography.
- Of the children who admitted to intentionally searching for pornography, nearly two-thirds of them said they had done so at one point or another specifically for one or more of the four reasons: (1) Ideas for new things to try sexually (2) Learning about sex generally (3) Learning how to get better at sex (4) Learning what people expect from me sexually. Overall, 41 percent of all children who were aware of pornography agreed that "watching porn makes people less respectful of the opposite sex."
- Visits to Pornhub (one of the most prolific providers of pornography) totaled 33.5 billion over the course of 2018, an increase of 5 billion visits over 2017. As of July 2020, Pornhub's daily visits exceeded 100 million. Every minute, 63,992 new

visitors arrive at Pornhub while 12 new videos and 2 hours of content are uploaded to Pornhub every minute. The average worldwide Pornhub user is aged 35.5 years old.¹

- The United States is a top consumer of both illegal child pornography and obscene pornography and more than half of the 4.5 million porn sites are located in the United States.¹ Many of these sites offer free access.

Analysis

What is the link between pornography and human trafficking? The Freedom Youth Project Foundation reports that thousands of trafficked children and young adults are forced to make pornographic films.² In addition, those addicted to pornography eventually lose satisfaction with just watching sexual encounters and seek encounters with trafficked persons. The Family Policy Alliance reports that an estimated 40 to 80 percent of consumers of child pornography abuse and molest a child. It is a cruel cycle with little thought given to the victims.³

Consuming pornography is an experience of bought sex and creates a hunger to continue to purchase and objectify and act out what is seen. Pornography is advertising for trafficking as traffickers and pimps use pornographic images of victims as specific advertising for their “products.” In addition, viewing pornography and gratifying oneself with it creates a drug-like addiction, which distorts the individual’s view on sexuality. It also trains the mind to expect sexual fulfillment on demand, and to continually seek more explicit or violent content to create the same high. When pornography is a source of sex education for our generation, the natural outcome is a culture of commercial sex and sex trafficking.⁴

The victims of pornography most often are women and girls, but men and boys are also victims. The majority of pornography viewers are male, but females also view it. Many women and children who are sexually exploited and trafficked are also being used for

the production of pornography. At times, acts of prostitution are filmed without the consent of the victim and distributed.

On other occasions, victims are trafficked for the sole purpose of pornographic production. In today’s era of webcams and chat rooms, the lines between interactive pornography and virtual prostitution websites have been blurred.⁵

Victims of the pornography industry are considered a commodity, easily discarded when no longer needed. They are used to create a product that is supplied to countless consumers across the world. The pornography industry is continually providing the world with commercial sex acts, which can be consumed endlessly and anonymously.

Recruitment for and retention of victims in the pornography industry occurs in many ways through social media or by contact in places where women and girls gather, such as malls, coffee shops, or specialty shops. Pornographers, like other predators and traffickers, learn how to exploit economic and psychological vulnerabilities to coerce women and girls to get into and stay in the sex industry. Sometimes the victims are held captive on pornography sets or driven by the pornographer or agent to and from the sets. Other times they threaten or use alcohol and drugs to induce compliance.

Understanding that pornography and sex trafficking are interconnected challenges us to seek justice for victims of commercial sexual exploitation. We must acknowledge that pornography is a root cause of human trafficking and fuels the demand for more victims of sexual exploitation.

What is being done?

The Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (TVPA), which created current federal legislation against sex trafficking, states that people are trafficked into and exploited in pornography. Under the TVPA, sex trafficking is defined as “the recruitment, harboring, transportation,

provision, or obtaining of a person for the purpose of a commercial sex act.”⁶ The realities of the pornography industry are perfectly described in the definition of sex trafficking in TVPA.

With an increasing awareness of the intersection of pornography with human trafficking, there are several organizations working to address the issue.

Clean Hotels www.cleanhotels.com

Hotels and motels in most cities and towns in the U.S. have taken the pledge to remove in-room porn as a TV offering. Interviews by concerned citizens with local hotel/motel managers about this have led them to remove the porn.

Sold No More | Abolish Sex Trafficking <https://soldnomore.org>

In order to address the growing problem of exploitation in Arizona, *Sold No More* was launched in 2010. Working with schools, local churches, like-minded organizations and individuals, their mission is to end child exploitation in Tucson and provide a hopeful solution through awareness training and prevention education.

What needs to be done?

Sex trafficking will not be eliminated until the demand is eliminated. The demand will not be eliminated until the roots of disordered sexual desire are eliminated. One of the biggest causes of disordered sexual desire is consuming pornography and pornography addiction.

A documentary on sex trafficking, *Rape for Profit*, sent the message home: “Prostitution is the main act, and pornography for these men is the dress rehearsal. They see it and then they go and act it out. ... When a society is demanding more pornography, it’s demanding more prostituted women.”

An all-male led film documentary called *Hearts of Man* seeks to address the root of the problem. One of the men who speaks in the film admits, “We’re the root



of this, and if we're the root of this, we have to figure out what has to change. It has to start with us."

Pornography enslaves men physically and psychologically, which then enslaves women and children literally via sex trafficking. Pornography is a major gateway to sex trafficking. Men create the demand; women and children are the supply. If we transform the demand side, the supply side will also cease. Victims captured by pornographers are not there for the pleasure, nor even for the money; but because they have been bought, kidnapped or tricked. There may be a transaction involving money and pleasure, but it is doubtful the trafficked victim receives much of either.

Reflection

What are our values and sources of our hope in the battle against trafficking of persons?

Scripture (New Jerusalem Bible)

- *Peter 2:3* In their greed, they will try to make a profit out of you with untrue tales...
- *Matthew 5:27-28* Lust ... adultery in the heart
- *Galatians 5:19* When self-indulgence is at work...sexual vice...sensuality...
- *1 Timothy 6:10* The love of money...root of all evils...given their souls...wounds...
- *Hebrews 13:4* Marriage must be kept undefiled...adulterers will come under God's judgement.

Catholic Social Teaching from the Catholic Catechism for Adults: Chapter 28 - the section entitled The Family and Society, quotes Pope John Paul II's Familiaris Consortio, in which he cites a list of rights of the family, among them is, "the right to protect minors by adequate institutions and legislation from harmful drugs, pornography, alcoholism..."

- "It would be a grave illusion to think that a society, where an abnormal amount of online sex is common among adults, would then be able to effectively protect its minors." -Pope Francis, Oct. 2017
- "The dramatic growth of pornography in the digital world is, in itself, most serious, the fruit of a general loss of the sense of human dignity. Frequently it is linked to human trafficking," -Pope Francis, Nov. 2019

Action

As individuals, people can become involved and effective:

- Pray and sacrifice daily for both the victims and the perpetrators of human trafficking. Subscribe online or through the mail to anti-human trafficking newsletters.
- Write letters to local newspapers, keeping the human trafficking issue alive and spreading the news about developments.
- Contact a popular columnist and ask her/him to write a news article on the topic.
- Bring pressure through letters to the editor concerning websites which publish on the internet, urging them to remove their 'adult' section advertising the availability of persons for commercial sex.
- Discuss with store managers the offensiveness of the pornography on their checkout counters. Some high school students have made it a practice to turn magazines like *Cosmopolitan* backwards at store checkout counters.
- Join your parish social action group and encourage the members to focus on human trafficking

The scope of human trafficking is vast. It is important for individuals to connect with groups or coalitions to have any significant impact on this crime. Such groups exist throughout the U.S. and in other countries. Websites listed below can help individuals connect in their local areas.

Further Information

Alliance to End Human Trafficking - <https://alliancetoendhumantrafficking.org>, envisions a world without human trafficking with a network of resources and services to prevent the crime and assist survivors in achieving a fulfilling life. It is a collaborative, faith-based national network that offers education, supports access to survivor services, and engages in advocacy to eradicate human trafficking. The *Stop Trafficking Newsletter* is located on the AEHT website.

National Council of Jewish Women – <https://www.ncjw.org/work/stop-sex-trafficking>. This resource includes “8 Ways to Help Fight Human Trafficking.”

United Methodist Women – <https://www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/human-trafficking>, includes “Human Trafficking: A Resource for Preventing, Protecting, Prosecuting”.

Truckers Against Trafficking – <https://truckersagainstrafficking.org>. “At the end of the day if no one purchased commercial sex, the crime of sex trafficking wouldn’t exist. Therefore, it is imperative that we address the issue of demand in order to create a culture where the buying and selling of human beings for another’s sexual gratification is not looked upon as normal behavior.” Website includes actions that individuals, corporations and men’s groups can take. Includes informational video. The site addresses the link between pornography and sex trafficking. Statistics are from Culture Reframed at www.culturereframed.org.

Fight the New Drug – <https://fightthenewdrug.org/stopthedemand> Pornography fuels sex trafficking, ignores consent, promotes sexual violence, encourages coercion, advertises objectification, sells exploitation, perpetuates racism and normalizes abuse.

Brain Heart World – <https://brainheartworld.org>. For years, pornography has often been thought of as an isolated issue—something that can be easily compartmentalized in the lives of consumers, unrelated to anything else that is going on. Thanks to decades of research from major institutions, the world is beginning to see how inaccurate that line of thinking is.

Blue Campaign – <https://www.dhs.gov/blue-campaign>, is a national public awareness campaign, designed to educate the public, law enforcement and other industry partners to recognize the indicators of human trafficking, and how to appropriately respond to possible cases. Blue Campaign works closely with DHS components to create general awareness training and materials for law enforcement and others to increase detection of human trafficking, and to identify victims.

Shared Hope International – www.sharedhope.org, focuses on trafficking of children.

Children of the Night – <https://www.childrenofthenight.org>, is a privately funded non-profit organization established in 1979 with the specific purpose to provide intervention in the lives of children who are sexually exploited and vulnerable to or involved in prostitution and pornography.

For state information go to <http://www.state.gov/i/tip>.

Source Notes:

1. Enough is Enough, www.enough.org
2. The Freedom Youth Project Foundation, www.freedomyouthproject.org
3. The Family Policy Alliance, <https://familypolicyalliance.com/>
4. The Porn Industry and Human Trafficking Reinforce Each Other, <https://www.nationalreview.com/2018/08/porn-human-trafficking-reinforce-each-other/#:~:text=Beyond%20the%20supply%2Dand%2Ddemand,they%20see%20performed%20in%20it>
5. Standing for Justice, <https://charity.gofundme.com/o/en/campaign/s4javn2020>
6. U.S. Dept. of State, Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) 2000, Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (2001) (enacted). Print, Sec 102 (2).

In order to protect the identity of trafficking victims, models have been used in identifiable photos.