



Chicago Alliance Against Sexual Exploitation

Available Presentations

Civil Laws and Legal Remedies Against Sexual Abuse and Exploitation:

It is a crime in Illinois to force sex on someone (sexual assault), or to exploit the prostitution of another (pimping or purchasing sex as a john). State's Attorneys, however, are reluctant to file sexual assault charges unless they have corroborative evidence like witnesses or severe bodily injury (so most rapes are never prosecuted). Likewise, criminal laws related to prostitution are mostly used against the people whose bodies are being sold, rather than against the people who are profiting from prostitution or creating the demand for the sex trade (it's easier to arrest prostituted individuals than pimps or johns). Fortunately, Illinois has a number of cutting-edge civil rights laws that can be used to vindicate the rights of those who are harmed by sexual assault and exploitation. This presentation explains the need for civil rights laws against rape and prostitution, explains the tools that exist in Illinois—such as the Gender Violence Act, the Civil No Contact Order Act, and the Predator Accountability Act—and explains how these laws can, and should, be used to help eradicate sexual violence—both inside the sex trade and everywhere else girls and women live.

Deconstructing the Demand for Prostitution: Preliminary Insights From Interviews With Chicago Men Who Purchase Sex:

With limited comprehensive research on the demand side of the sex trade in the United States, the Chicago Alliance Against Sexual Exploitation (CAASE) partnered with Prostitution Research and Education in 2007 to interview 113 men who buy sex in the Chicago-land area. The results of this research shed light into the thinking and behavioral patterns of these men, their prevalence of rape myth and prostitution myth, how they view the women and children they buy, how they view women not in prostitution, and how perceptions of entitlement and masculinity play a key role in the perpetuation of the sex trade. This presentation highlights the major findings from our research on men who purchase sex in Chicago, as well as the steps we can take to reduce the demand for sexually exploited individuals.

End Demand, IL

The End Demand, IL campaign is a multi-year effort to transform Illinois' prostitution and trafficking laws to reflect the philosophy that prostituted and sex trafficked individuals should not be further penalized, and should be offered social services in lieu of arrest, detention, and incarceration, whereas resources and tools should be

increased for law enforcement to prosecute traffickers, pimps, and profiteers, while deterring men from buying sex. Over the next three years, we are engaged in the following:

1. Organizing survivors of trafficking and prostitution to engage in strategic and extensive statewide community education efforts,
2. Conducting national and international research to determine what policies will work best in Illinois--codifying those policies and advocating for the passage of pertinent legislation,
3. Creating a funding stream for the statewide care for victims,
4. And developing and monitoring Cook County pilot projects (including with the CC Sheriff's Office) to replicate statewide.

The presentation details the campaign and its implications and explores ways in which your organization can get involved.

Harms of Legalizing Prostitution:

Irrespective of whether a person understands prostitution to be legitimate work or a system of violence and oppression, people on both side of the debate can agree that unregulated prostitution puts women at extreme risk both physically and emotionally. Some see the legalization of the sex industry as a way to decrease or eliminate the physical, social, and psychological harm of prostitution, while others endorse initiatives that help women escape life in the sex trade. Data from several countries that have legalized prostitution offer insight on the affects of prostitution on women and children both in and out of the sex industry. Based on this research, this presentation addresses the physical and emotional harms in prostitution *do not* decrease with legalization. Using the case example of Victoria, Australia, the presentation highlights how legalizing prostitution in Victoria has done nothing to protect the health and safety of those in the industry. The presentation concludes with identifying effective alternatives to legalization.

Harms of Pornography

Mainstream heterosexual pornography often reflects the dark, racist, and intensely misogynistic beliefs in our culture. The pornography industry generates up to \$10 billion a year¹, making it the most lucrative media genre in existence. Like any other type of business, production companies constantly need to create new content that differentiates them from each other. Unfortunately, these attempts at distinguishing oneself have produced content that is more body-punishing, racist, and hateful. When we connect masturbation material with eroticized racist portrayals, extreme acts of violence, verbal degradation, and the sexualization of children, the results are dangerous. Pornography teaches warped lessons about women's sexual desires and the role of power and privilege in sexual relationships. The presentation, "Who Wants To Be A Porn Star" was created by Stop Porn Culture and addresses the multiple harms of the industry. It is an educational and organizing tool for anti-porn activists that presents a feminist analysis of pornography and of the increasingly pornographic culture in which we live.

Innovative Solutions: Chicago's Response to Sexual Exploitation:

Chicago, and greater Cook County, has been a leader in strategically addressing issues of the sex trade. Through a variety of coalitions, the passage of progressive legislation on the issue, and the leadership of politicians and government agencies,

the city has become a model of a “best practice” in holistically working to end the harms of the sex trade industry. This presentation examines the various movements and leaders within the city and how this work collectively brings us closer towards ending sexual exploitation.

Is Prostitution Really A Victimless Crime?:

Misconceptions about prostitution are pervasive. Phrases such as, “victimless crime” or, “oldest profession” accompany most public discourse surrounding the sex trade. And though many believe the sex trade to be harmless, research conducted about prostitution nation-wide has consistently validated the hypothesis that the sex trade is a harmful institution. Research in Chicago on women in prostitution found that 100% of survey participants had experienced some type of violence while in the sex trade including being raped, kicked, threatened with a weapon, punched, and slapped. This presentation addresses six commonly held misconceptions about prostitution and refutes each with research, statistics, and narrative provided by survivors of the sex trade.

Living In A Rape Culture

This workshop explores the historical context for the rape culture and the creative strategies employed to nurture an environment that encourages, perpetuates, and tolerates sexual violence. Participants draw on their lived experiences to discuss how we all learn powerful messages from the rape culture, and the workshop examines community systems that support it, including our criminal justice system, educational curricula, media, laws, and social networks. Participants deconstruct the myths and learn a survivor-centered definition of sexual assault.

Overview of the Sex Trade Industry: A National and International Perspective:

Prostitution exists because there is a demand for purchased sex. But the sex trade has an endless supply of vulnerable individuals to meet this demand for a variety of reasons, including: systemic racism, economic inequality, sexual abuse, the normalization of violence against women, a lack of substance abuse services, and a culture that equates masculinity with sexual dominance. Demand coupled with multiple life circumstances that make people vulnerable to the sex trade involvement has created a domestic and international sex market in human beings. This presentation provides insights into the multiple reasons the sex trade exists, an idea of the prevalence of sexually exploited individuals, the physical and psychological impact of prostitution, and innovative solutions to end prostitution.

Prostitutes: Criminals or Victims of Sex Trafficking?

Generally speaking, persons in prostitution are not considered victims, even though for the majority, their life circumstances and conditions of recruitment and involvement in the sex trade meet the federal and state definition of sex trafficking. Why is it, then, that they are treated like criminals instead of victims? And why are they treated differently by the law than victims of international sex trafficking? This presentation explores these questions and lays out a policy framework to address prostitution as an issue of sex trafficking.

Sexually Exploited Youth:

Every day, approximately 16 thousand to 24 thousand women and girls are impacted by the sex trade. The majority of these individuals enter as youth, with 35% entering before the age of fifteen.

Chicago has been designated by the F.B.I. as one of 13 world locations of high intensity child prostitution. The criminal justice system often fails child victims, the social service community remains unaware of their specific needs, and the general community remains largely ignorant of the multitude of issues they face. This presentation provides information about identifying child victims of commercial sexual exploitation, explores the types of physical and psychological issues often faced by prostituted youth, analyzes the role that demand plays in the recruitment and retaining of exploited youth, and ends with intervention recommendations.

Understanding the Role of Demand in Sex Trade Dynamics:

The sex trade would not exist without demand for purchased sex. This demand generally comes from men, and targets vulnerable individuals, predominantly women and girls. Generating billions of dollars every year, the sex trade continues to expand at an alarming rate. It is impossible to create real change unless we understand the root cause of the issue: the demand for sexually exploited individuals. This presentation addresses the role that demand plays in the sex trade, explores why the demand for sex is ever-increasing, looks at the role that popular culture and the normalization of the sex trade play in increasing demand, highlights some of CAASE's findings from interviews with men who purchase sex, and recommends solutions.