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**FAAST**  
FAITH ALLIANCE AGAINST SLAVERY AND TRAFFICKING

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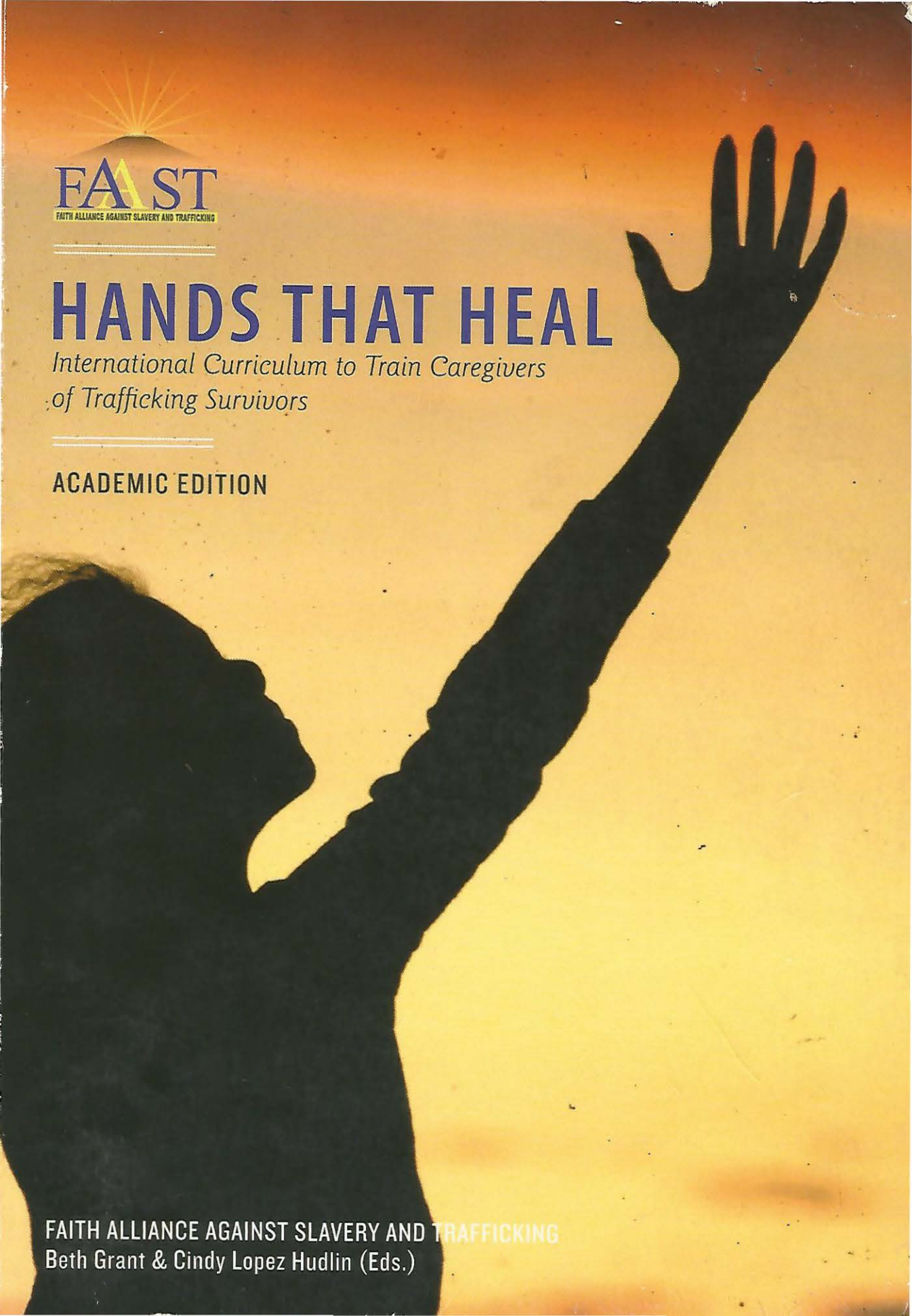
# HANDS THAT HEAL

*International Curriculum to Train Caregivers  
of Trafficking Survivors*

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ACADEMIC EDITION



FAITH ALLIANCE AGAINST SLAVERY AND TRAFFICKING  
Beth Grant & Cindy Lopez Hudlin (Eds.)

# Unit 4

## Gender and Trafficking

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### SUMMARY

The girl child is discriminated against from the earliest stages of life, through her childhood and into adulthood. In some areas of the world, men outnumber women by 5 in every 100. The reasons for the discrepancy include, among other things, harmful attitudes and practices, such as female genital mutilation, son preference - which results in female infanticide and prenatal sex selection - early marriage, including child marriage, violence against women, sexual exploitation, sexual abuse, discrimination against girls in food allocation and other practices related to health and well-being. As a result, fewer girls than boys survive into adulthood.

UN Division for the Advancement of Women, 1995, art. 259

At puberty, girls can be restricted from going away from the home in an effort to protect their virginity whereas boys can get 'out and about.' All of these factors can disadvantage girls, so there has been a recent trend towards special concern for the vulnerability of girls. However, the danger in this is that we ignore or are unaware of the particular concerns of boys (UN Division for the Advancement of Women, 1995; UNICEF, 2002; UNICEF, 2007). This unit explores the connection between gender and sex trafficking and gives recommendations on further research and work specifically with boys.

### Objectives

At the conclusion of this unit, participants should:

- Understand how boys can be socialised into becoming abusers
- Have insight into how sexual abuse of boys happens but is hidden
- Know how the symptoms of sexual abuse of boys differs from that of girls
- Understand how sexual abuse of boys is damaging to their psyche
- Be able to recognise extreme negative stereotypical views of gender which can undermine healing for boy survivors

### Time

Two 90-minute sessions

### Materials

Flipchart or whiteboard, markers

## INTRODUCTION

### Activity 1

Have participants get into pairs and discuss the following:

- a. A way in which boys and girls are treated differently at different ages in your culture (i.e., birth, aged 7 years, and at puberty).
- b. One thing that you like/dislike about your own sex and one thing you like/dislike about the opposite sex.
- c. Does one gender have more power than the other; if so, how, why and does this effect you personally?
- d. The different cultural attitudes of society towards boys and girls who have been sexually abused.
- e. The different cultural attitudes of society towards boys and girls who have been sexually exploited.

After discussion, have pairs report back one response for each of a) to c) and then list key issues from d) and e) on a flip chart or board.

## SEXUALITY AMONG MEN AND SEXUALLY ABUSED BOYS

Many theories exist about what it means to be a man in society, and this differs among cultures, religions, generations, and individuals. Peer pressure, socialisation processes, and belief systems influence adherence to gender specific stereotypes (Marinova, 2003). Roles are stereotyped from a young age. In each society, gender-based expectations shape children's experience and beliefs about what it is like to be a girl or a boy.

Societies treat girls and boys differently and have different expectations:

From an early age, boys and girls become aware of their sex, and soon they learn of the different gender roles and gender hierarchies in society. As they grow older, girls and boys take on strict gender roles, and they may be punished if they cross the gender boundary (Karlsson & Karkara, 2003, p. 8).

Pressure for boys in particular to start having sex early is accepted in many cultures and societies:

The older generation too often encourages sexual experiences and conquests as a way to manhood, whether the young man wishes to or not. Young boys are expected to get the experience of sexual intercourse from an early age, whether with a prostitute, older women or any women or girl (Runeborg, 2004, p. 54).

Pressure for boys to have sex early combined with sexual abuse may further confuse and alienate boys about their gender role and identity. More research is needed on this and other effects on male sexuality after abuse.

Children and youth's access to pornography is becoming more common even in developing countries. There, restrictions to access are not regulated or age-restricted, so even at a young age, children can be exposed to violent pornography that involves children or

animals. Even 'soft' heterosexual pornography can promote the idea that girls are objects to be used, and boys can feel inadequate when they cannot match the sexual stamina or variety presented in the pornography. In a Cambodian study, Fordham (2005) found that both boys and girls who watched pornographic videos wanted to act out what they had seen. More research is needed to determine the link between pornography and abuse. Also boys need more education in schools and community-based programmes on non-abusive sexual relationships. It is not appropriate for churches and schools to say boys should not be educated about sex or they will want to engage in it. Without appropriate education, they cannot make informed choices and will learn through inappropriate means.

The making and distribution of gay male pornography harms some of the men/boys who are used to perform in it, as well as men/boys in general. As with heterosexual pornography, it uses vulnerable people, sexualises racism, and promotes both homophobia and sexism. It also makes boys feel inadequate if they are not muscular and fit: "Rather than being a tool for liberation, as some gay and bisexual men have argued, [they] conclude that gay male pornography promotes degradation, violence and harm and as such is degradation, violence and harm" (Kendall and Funk, 2003, p. 93).

In Brazil, the non government organisation Estudos e Comunicacao em Sexualidade e Reproducacao Humana (ECOS) made videos of discussions by boys and found boys felt pressure on 'to act like real men,' including pressure from their fathers to become sexually active. Boys were also confused about their role in society, about how to be strong, brave, and in control while also being caring and sensitive (Attawell et al., 2001).

For young men, the teenage years are an age of denial of weakness, which is considered feminine: "In the man's world there are also certain things you do not talk about: mistakes, love, hesitations, social failures, weaknesses, they are often associated with femininity" (Marinova, 2003, p.6).

Monica Ray from The Stairway Foundation has written an innovative play called Cemetery about a young boy's battle with homosexuality, sexual abuse, drugs, and suicide. It is one of few creative tools that explores the issue of male sexuality and abuse.

Homosexual games and practices may be common early in adolescence and do not necessarily mean the young people involved are homosexual. However, adults might react with aggressive prejudice against same sex attraction. Overreactions and punishments can harm the formation of sexual identity in young people. This may be why sexual abuse of boys often goes unreported, as well as why abused boys experience shame, guilt, confusion, and embarrassment (Runeborg, 2004). Some suggest these experiences may push boys into thinking they are homosexual when they otherwise would not have had a same-sex attraction. However, they may be seeking support from those they feel are non-judgemental, leading them to choose the gay lifestyle, which as Christians, cannot be supported, but then an alternative supportive and caring environment needs to be provided. Alternatively, they may themselves become prejudiced against those with same sex attraction, which is also unacceptable for Christians. Like Jesus, Christians must 'hate the sin, but love the sinner.'

For further information on homosexuality issues and debates as well as how to support those struggling with same sex attraction, review the references and website links listed at the end of this unit.

## Activity 2

Work in groups of 5-10 people to design a programme:

Group 1: Teach a group of young teenage street boys about sexuality, including being smart about protecting themselves when possible.

Group 2: Convince pastor and parents of the need, and then teach a Sunday school class of boys about sexual development focusing on relationships rather than biology.

Ask each small group to report back to the entire class.

Consider the differences in the approach needed for each programme.

## SEXUAL ABUSE AND EXPLOITATION OF BOYS

The issue of sexual exploitation of boys may not be acknowledged as a problem because of 'gender' and the male 'gender role.' Stereotyped gender constructions have created myths about male roles and led to inadequate protection of boys in relation to sexual exploitation. (ECPAT, 2006). According to Carmen Madrinan, Executive Director of ECPAT International, "Many misconceptions about prostitution of boys remain and are firmly rooted in the continuing view that it is an issue related solely to homosexuality and child sex tourism" (p. 5). As a result, this phenomenon remains largely unreported, under-reported and misrepresented.

Homosexuality often is linked with sexual abuse and exploitation. As a result, secular organisations and their donors may prefer not to engage in the issues surrounding sexual abuse and exploitation of boys to prevent being seen as anti-gay. In this case, Christians must fill the gap with compassionate ministries to boys, transsexuals, and men.

In cultures which are prejudiced against boys with same sex attraction, this brings shame, guilt and embarrassment upon sexually exploited males; therefore, boys are reluctant to explain what has happened to them. The issue then remains hidden, and the boys become isolated.

Research by ECPAT (2006) in South Asia (India, Pakistan and Bangladesh) shows that prostitution of boys is not a new phenomena. It has existed for a long time and on a large scale on the streets and in markets, bus terminals, hotels, restaurants, and religious places. Local men and, sometimes, local women, rather than sex tourists or homosexuals, inflict the majority of this abuse.

The relationship between gender and abuse is that:

- a. Girl children are more likely to be victims of sexual exploitation than are boy children.
- b. Males are more likely than females to commit sexually exploitative acts for personal pleasure (Karlsson & Karkara, 2003).

However, the covert nature of male sexual abuse and prostitution may mean that the gap is not as wide as first thought.

Feminists suggest masculinity equals to power. Losing masculinity, therefore, means, dependence on society, lack of control, and/or needing help (Admira, 2005). If masculinity is so important, then the effects of abuse of a boy by another man or boy needs careful consideration. What does this do to his sense of maleness? Does he feel he has lost control? Does he feel he needs help? Does he seek help? In South East Asia, there is a deep-rooted secrecy, denial, and a pervasive silence which makes issues of sexual exploitation extremely complex (Warburton, 2001). This appears to be even more the case where boys are involved. The studies and statistics on prostitution of women and girls leave the issue of male prostitution hidden behind a shadow.

Some research indicates that some children 'choose' to become a part of the sex industry although the UN says that when an adult has sexual contact with children under 18 years of age, then these children are sexually abused or exploited whether they consent or not. In a survey, Thompstone (2005) found that many children in Thailand who engaged in prostitution were boys who attracted both male and female clients. This research suggested that they regarded the sale of sex as an easy source of income. Some were even from middle-class or well-to-do homes. The part-time sale of sex by boys has become 'fashionable' among students in high schools, vocational colleges, and universities, with newcomers to the practice including primary school boys: "The guys thought they had nothing to lose by selling sex, some tried it for the experience, but most for the money" (p. 53). This survey shows that not only are the poverty-stricken populations exploited by the sex trade, but also the middle classes.

It appears two main groups of children are sexually exploited: those from poverty-stricken backgrounds and the emerging group of children from middle to higher-class backgrounds:

[However], both basic groupings comprise children who are sexually exploited, at risk of physical and psychological damage, and who experience a violation of their human rights as enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. (Thompstone, 2005, p. 51)

Many are not aware of the physical, emotional, and spiritual consequences that sexual exploitation will have on them.

In some cultures where women are hidden from view and sexuality is heavily restricted, sexual abuse and exploitation of boys may be seen as a legitimate way for men to release their sexual urges. However, as Christians, we believe that God can give self-control and respect towards others that supersedes these desires.

## ***THE EFFECTS OF SEXUAL ABUSE & EXPLOITATION ON BOYS***

It is important to be aware of the consequences of living in a highly masculine culture and how that contributes to and impacts the growth of sexual abuse of all men, women and children. A hyper-masculine culture encourages sexual exploitation and abuse while a tradition of silence continues (Martin, 2005).

Although the effects of abuse on boys are similar in some ways to those of girls, they also are dissimilar. Gender beliefs and issues surrounding it are, for example, gender-based roles, sexuality, relationships, and gender equality and inequality. Both play a huge part in a boy's perception of himself and society and how effectively or ineffectively he can recover and reintegrate into society as a 'healthy' man. These factors also impact whether he will repeat a cycle of abuse.

Other research has shown that adolescents themselves often link their homosexuality to their sexual victimization experiences (Watkins & Bentovim, 1992). In one study, 46% of homosexual men and 22% of homosexual women reported sexual abuse by a person of the same gender. This contrasts with only 7% of heterosexual men and 1% of heterosexual women reporting molestation by a person of the same gender (Tomeo et al., as cited in Dailey, 2007). Another study revealed that of 279 homosexual/bisexual men with AIDS, over 50% of participants in both study and control groups reported having participated in a sexual act with another male by age 16; approximately 20% reported the same by age 10 (Haverkos et al., as cited in Dailey, 2007).

Research on the effects of sexual abuse on boys is limited compared to that on girls and women. According to Hopper (2007), sexually abused males may experience symptoms of anxiety, depression, and dissociation, as well as hostility and anger. The abuse may harm relationships, decrease self-esteem, inhibit healthy sexual function, cause sleep disturbances, and result in suicidal ideation and actions. According to Watkins and Bentovim (as cited in Hopper, 2007), these also occur in sexually abused women, but they are the most common symptoms for men and boys. Males may take on different ways to deal with their past abuse, such as inappropriate attempts to reassert masculinity and victimisation of others.

### ***THE NEGATIVE EFFECT OF THE FEMINIST VIEW***

Be the mother--do the housework--or be the father--carry a big stick. Be the mother--be f\*c\*ed--or be the father--do the f\*c\*ing. The boy has a choice. The boy chooses to become a man because it is better to be a man than a woman. (Dworkin, 1981, ¶ 3)

This statement describes an extreme, generalised, and negative feminist view on men in society. Views and statements such as this contribute little to understanding men and boys or in understanding why men have been given or have taken such an extreme, powerful role in society. These views certainly make no room for understanding gender beliefs of sexually abused boys.

The statement 'the boy has a choice... he chooses to become a man' reflects little understanding of culture, community, or society. In many societies, boys and girls equally have no choice within their expected gender roles. If the boy fights the role, he will be shunned, torn apart, and dismissed from family and community:

Men who have been molested as children and who as adults have a clearly defined homosexual orientation, sometimes express confusion as to whether they did or did not like the experience. Part of the reason for this confusion is that they longed for sexual contact with boys or men but were afraid of discovery or harm. Generally boys and girls who have active sexual longings do not imagine the hit-and-run sexuality of the adult male. (Dworkin, 1981, ¶ 25)

The above statement describes the confusion of a sexually abused boy, but again, where is the research? Statements such as this may have truth in them, but generalising a child's feelings or emotions may not be helpful or accurate.

In recent research in an aftercare facility in the Philippines with seven sexually abused boys, Gallagher (2007) found the following:

1. The group's overall gender beliefs reflected high negative emotions and feelings towards male, female, and homosexual/gay gender roles. They compared the male gender to that of abuser, paedophile, perpetrator, and gay; however, their positive male roles included God, Jesus, and men working at The Stairway Foundation. In contrast, they said women were mainly sexual objects that took on the role of seducer, purely for men's pleasure and gratification. The group also believed women could take on positive roles, such as mother and teacher. They expressed high emotion against homosexual gays, describing them as abusers, dirty, bad, and negative. The group had both positive and negative beliefs about other gender-related themes.
2. All seven boys had been greatly influenced by their backgrounds, forming both negative and positive gender beliefs. Many had bad and traumatic experiences with men in their family, on the street, and in institutions. Those experiences influenced the way they perceived men and male gender roles. Many also had bad experiences with their mothers and women on the streets, thus forming negative beliefs of the female gender role and expectations of females. The boys' past experiences were clearly related to their current gender beliefs.
3. Clearly, the boys' history of sexual abuse and/or exploitation had formed some of their gender beliefs, especially their negative beliefs of men, including homosexual men. Most of the abuse (sexual, physical or mental) was from males.
4. Drama-based workshops were effective in drawing out the boys' gender beliefs. They showed confidence in acting out drama sketches of their experiences; this confidence seemed to come from the fact that they could tell their stories indirectly (behind a character). Through drama, the group appeared to feel at ease in a non-threatening, non-judgemental environment. All the boys appeared to grow in self-confidence, self-belief, and self-expression.

Based on these findings, Gallagher (2007) made the following recommendations:

1. Sexually abused and/or exploited boys, as well as girls, should receive individual counselling in order to process trauma and to begin self-healing to enable recovery. Boy survivors need day care and long-term support specifically focused on their issues, rather than incidental care for the sexual abuse issues in centres that primarily deal with drug misuse or young offenders.
2. Further research is needed in the area of sexuality and gender confusion. This is important for the long-term aftercare of sexually abused boys because the majority have been abused by someone of the same sex, therefore adding confusion about their own sexuality and gender.
3. Further investigation is necessary concerning the beliefs of sexually abused and/or exploited boys, particularly their beliefs about men, women, and homosexuals so that negative beliefs can be challenged and a healthy alternative model of relationships can be proffered.
4. Staff in aftercare facilities become aware of boys' gender-based beliefs, experiences, and influences, as well as the effects of sexual abuse in order to understand how the effects of sexual abuse/exploitation for boys is different from that of girls. This awareness can inform staff of how to modify aftercare interventions and approaches to address boys' needs.
5. Due to the effectiveness of drama in drawing out beliefs, further research is needed concerning the use of drama therapy as an effective approach to child therapy and counselling.

## **THE NEED FOR MORE RESEARCH**

The World Health Organization's review on the health and development of adolescent boys acknowledges important aspects that need to be targeted for change to happen:

Keeping in mind the cultural variations in the concept of adolescence, emerging research on boys' psychological development concludes that boys have different potential crisis points during their psychological development and their own specific vulnerabilities, even though they sometimes appear and are assumed to be less psychologically vulnerable than girls in adolescence. New more targeted research on adolescent boys finds that once we get beyond boys' customary silence, their 'clowning' and their feigned indifferences, boys face their fair share of challenges in adolescence that have often been ignored or sometimes misdiagnosed. (Mikulencak, 2000, p.16)

Clearly, change is necessary. Boys themselves have a need for space where they can discuss, in a non-judgmental setting, questions about masculinity, personal issues, or health related matters. Boys also have indicated they appreciate the chance to discuss their concerns in boy-only groups. However, teachers and other social service staff may not recognise signs and symptoms of boys' needs for such attention:

When staff are adequately sensitive and sensitized to boys' ways of expressing stress, trauma and psychological pain, and staff approach boys in ways that respect their silences, results have shown that boys will make use of mental health and counselling services in greater numbers. (Mikulencak, 2000, p. 50)

For change to happen, listening to the younger generation is necessary. Boys and young men may be more willing to discuss relations and gender equality with a view toward having more respectful and gender-balanced relationships with girls and young women (Runeborg, 2004). However, change is not easy because many people do not like young people talking about issues of gender and sex. Adults' fears include the following:

- Talking about sex promotes promiscuity and encourages young people to become sexually active.
- Sex and sexuality is only for married couples.
- Young people do not have the knowledge or experience to deal with these issues.
- Young people should not be sexually active (even though they already may be).

These fears communicated verbally and non-verbally do not provide hope to children who have been involved with sexual activity through no choice of their own (i.e. sexual abuse). The attitude that sex should not be talked about only increases guilt and shame among abused children, and underreporting may increase.

Focusing only on female issues and female victims of sexual abuse would cut out half of the world population. Female equality has received much attention; what about male equality? Masculine violence and abuse affect and victimises males, as well as females.

### **Discussion Question**

Get into groups of 5-10 people. Discuss the specific needs of an aftercare facility that is meeting the needs of boys rather than girls. Ask each group to report back.

## **CONCLUSION**

This unit has described how boys can be socialised, though not inevitably, into becoming potential abusers through cultural attitudes that pressure boys to have sex and to access pornography. Sexual abuse of boys is hidden behind cultural attitudes of homophobia, which cause boys either to remain in denial or be fearful of admitting they have been abused.

Although girls statistically are more likely to be sexually exploited, the gap may not be as wide as is assumed because of the covert nature of male prostitution. Some boys may choose to be involved in prostitution for money, which may or may not be related to drug misuse. This indicates prostitution of boys is not always as related to poverty as is prostitution of girls. Sexual abuse of boys can be damaging, not only because of HIV and AIDS, but also because of the psychological effects of anxiety, sleeplessness, sexual dysfunction, etc. It can also affect the way they view men and women. Unfortunately, the way that abuse of boys is manifested may be through abusing others.

## **PLANNING A PROGRAMME TO HELP**

The following gender factors should be taken into account when creating an aftercare programme/ministry:

- 1. Sexuality among men and sexually abused boys**  
Pressure for boys to have sex early, along with sexual abuse of boys, causes confusion and alienates boys concerning their gender role and identity. Aftercare staff must be aware of these factors and resulting confusion and be trained to provide support without adding to the shame, guilt, confusion, and embarrassment with which boy survivors already deal.
- 2. Homosexuality and sexual exploitation**  
Homosexuality is often linked with sexual abuse and exploitation. In cultures where women are hidden from view and sexuality is strongly restricted, exploitation of boys may be viewed as a legitimate way for men to release their sexual urges. Understanding these kinds of cultural views regarding homosexuality and abuse of boys is essential for caregivers who want to provide appropriate and effective care for exploited boys. Training for caregivers also should include the opportunity to recognise and evaluate the caregivers' own cultural and religious views regarding homosexuality and abuse of boys.
- 3. The effects of sexual abuse and exploitation on boys**  
While research on the effects of sexual abuse and exploitation on women and girls is substantial, research on the effects on boys is limited. However, aftercare providers must be informed regarding how sexual abuse and exploitation affect boys and girls differently. While some symptoms are similar, some are not. Awareness of the gender differences in effect and symptoms is essential in aftercare training in order to help caregivers provide better care for boys and prevent others from becoming victims in a cycle of abuse.
- 4. Recognising the negative effect of a feminist view**  
Extreme generalist and negative feminist views on men in society do little to aid in understanding gender beliefs among sexually abused boys. A good aftercare programme for these boys requires trained staff who recognise the role of culture and

society in the development of gender roles. Extreme stereotypical statements and beliefs that make either gender the assumed predator and the other the victim do little to facilitate healing in survivors of either gender.

#### 5. Recommendations and research

Planning an aftercare programme for boy survivors of sexual exploitation should include the following: research into the symptoms and effects of sexual exploitation specifically on boys/men; awareness of gender confusion resulting from abuse, and development of interventions that draw out boy survivors' gender beliefs, releasing them to talk about their experiences. Since boys are generally isolated, embarrassed, fearful, and silent regarding their abuse and exploitation, interventions such as drama therapy can provide non-threatening indirect ways of encouraging therapeutic expression and discussion.

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## **Websites**

### **NETWORKS**

Child Rights Information Network: [www.crin.org/themes/ViewTheme.asp?id=9](http://www.crin.org/themes/ViewTheme.asp?id=9)  
Secular NGO network for people working with Children at Risk

End Child Prostitution and Trafficking: [www.ecpat.com](http://www.ecpat.com). Secular International NGO with a particular concern for prostitution of girls and boys.

Viva Network: [www.viva.org](http://www.viva.org). Christian NGO network encouraging collaboration between Christians working with children at risk

### **NGOs WORKING WITH CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION**

Justice for Children International: [www.jfci.org](http://www.jfci.org)

Christian NGO working on prevention, advocacy and rehabilitation of trafficked children

Save Children UK: [www.savethechildren.org.uk](http://www.savethechildren.org.uk)

Secular International NGO working with children at risk

Emmaus Ministries: [www.streets.org](http://www.streets.org)

Christian ministry working with men involved in prostitution in the States

The Stairway Foundation: [www.stairwayfoundation.org](http://www.stairwayfoundation.org). Resources including the VCD 'A Good Boy' about boys and paedophiles. Translated into several Asian languages and including English

## **Research**

Family Research Council <http://www.frc.org>

US based Christian organization 'defending faith, family and freedom'

Jim Hopper: [www.jimhopper.com/male-ab/](http://www.jimhopper.com/male-ab/) Information and research on sexual abuse of boys – secular

NARTH (National Association for Research & Therapy of Homosexuality): [www.narth.com](http://www.narth.com). Information and research on sexuality and boys

Christian alternative lifestyles for Christians PATH (Positive Alternatives to Homosexuality): [www.pathinfo.org/index2.htm](http://www.pathinfo.org/index2.htm)

True Freedom Trust: [www.truefreedomtrust.co.uk](http://www.truefreedomtrust.co.uk)

Exodus Ministries: [www.exodus-international.org](http://www.exodus-international.org). Information for those choosing to leave the gay lifestyle due to Christian convictions



“There was a boy who came to us when he was eight years old. He had been sexually abused, misused, and ill-treated. ... We used to think that this boy only made trouble. ... we thought that he would never change. ... Nearly after four to five years..., this boy was completely different. His interests have changed, his views have changed, his way of looking at people has changed.”  
—*A Caregiver*