**For Reporters and Other Media Professionals:**

**Understanding and Using Correct Sex Trafficking Terms and Vocabulary**

It is critical that you, as a member of the media, use correct terms and vocabulary when talking about sex trafficking and exploitation. Using the wrong words when discussing this important issue can have unintended consequences: revictimizing survivors and misleading the public on the true nature of sex trafficking and exploitation.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Incorrect** | **Correct** | |
| Prostitute  Call girl, escort  Hooker, streetwalker, whore, ho, etc.  Sex worker | Victim/survivor of sex trafficking  Victim/survivor of prostitution  Woman/girl used in sex trafficking/prostitution Prostituted/trafficked woman/girl | |
| **Note:** The correct terminology used above indicates that the vast majority of women/girls involved in prostitution/sex trafficking are *not* there by their own free choice and are victims of traffickers and the men who purchase them.  Survivors of sex trafficking at Breaking Free believe that words like “prostitute” and “hooker” are labeling, insulting, revictimizing, and do not accurately reflect the abuse and oppression they survived.  Survivors also find that the term “sex worker” incorrectly indicates that a victim of sex trafficking is not engaged in a system of abuse and slavery and is instead working in a job/profession like any other person. | | |
| **Incorrect** | | **Correct** |
| Patron, customer  John, trick | | Offender  Commercial sex abuser  Sexual predator |
| **Incorrect** | | **Correct** |
| Pimp | | Trafficker |
| Note: Popular culture has normalized the word "pimp" and made it into a common and even positive word to use to call someone, whether or not they abuse and control women and girls. The word “trafficker” better describes the seriousness of the abuse and oppression such people inflict upon the women and girls they traffic and enslave. | | |

**If you have any questions, please contact Flora Whitfield, Communication and Programs Manager, at**

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