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*UNDERSTANDING
PROSTITUTION AND TRAFFICKING
AS ORGANIZED INTERPERSONAL VIOLENCE*

Sister Oppressions: A Comparison of Wife Battering and Prostitution

Christine Stark
Carol Hodgson

SUMMARY. Little has been written about the similarities between domestic violence and prostitution. It is important for those who come in contact with prostituted women and girls, especially people working in battered women's shelters, homeless shelters, rape crisis centers, and health care professions, to understand prostitution as the battery of women and girls. The similarities between domestic violence and prostitution are discussed here, including the techniques of control used by batterers and pimps, homelessness, physical injuries from battering, healthcare barriers, and substance abuse. Finally, solutions to assist prostituted women and girls are outlined.

INTRODUCTION

A father rapes and beats his daughter throughout her childhood. As an adult she gets into a relationship with a man who beats her, rapes her, and

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This is dedicated to our mothers: Linda Grussendorf and Bernadine J. Upton.
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threatens to kill her. He does this in order to control her and to keep her in line. He says she deserves it because she did not do the dishes the way he wants or because she painted her fingernails like a whore or because she went bowling with her friends and did not check in with him. His friends monitor her activities when he is not around. The money is his even though she earns it. He calls her names like whore and slut to intimidate her and he threatens to hurt their children. He tells her he owns her and that no one else would want her by now, and she believes him. This woman feels helpless and exhausted all the time. Friends and family say she chose to be in the relationship or they say it could not be that bad because if it was that bad she would just leave. Some days, she thinks this must be true. Beside herself with terror and desperation, she dials the number of an advocacy center and asks for help.

If you have identified this woman as a battered woman, you are correct. But have you also identified her as a prostituted woman? Most of the time prostituted women and girls tell advocates and health care workers only part of what is going on in their lives, because to reveal involvement in prostitution can be dangerous, even to those who understand other issues of sexual exploitation.¹ It is important to consider what you would say to a woman if she told you her husband also sells her to other men for sex or makes pornography of her. Would you help her, or would you turn away? If you decided to help her, what services in your community are available to her? Although prostituted women and girls are victims of sexual violence, battered women's shelters, rape crisis centers, therapists, homeless shelters, and healthcare workers have not understood prostitution as battery, thus they have not consistently been able to assist prostituted women and girls. We will discuss the similarities between battering and prostitution, including the victims, the perpetrators, and solutions that advocates can implement to assist prostituted women and girls.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Domestic violence is a pattern of behavior whose purpose is to control women (Walker, 2000). Men are the abusive partners in 95% of domestic violence cases (Island & Letellier, 1991). U.S. men batter four million intimate partners each year (City Club of Portland Report, 1997). Abusive men shove, slap, kick, rape, hit, or bite their partners. They also beat women up and they use weapons to maintain control. Women sometimes die at the hands of their partners, particularly when they try to leave after years of brutal abuse. Our U.S. culture creates a viciously woman-hating environment that supports the

rights and privileges of men who abuse women. This violence is a means of controlling women.

Rape and assault on the street keep women controlled and imprisoned by fear. The war waged against women every minute of every day to maintain male domination permeates society so completely that it is invisible to most people as water is to the fish who swim in it, or air is to those of us who breathe it. Batterers are the home guards of this war. (Garrity, 2002)

Like the battering of women in the home, prostitution is embedded in this culture.

PROSTITUTION

Prostitution is a global industry in which sex is traded for money, clothing, food, drugs, shelter, or favors. Prostitution is an industry of exploitation that includes strip clubs, massage parlors, saunas, pornography, street walking, live sex shows, phone sex, prostitution rings, international and domestic trafficking, internet pornography, escort services, peep shows, ritual abuse, and mail order bride services. Pimps are men who batter, rape, and sell women for sex; they control the systems of prostitution. In the U.S., it has been estimated that over 90% of prostitutes are controlled by pimps (Giobbe, 1993). Tricks are men who buy women and girls for sex; they also batter, rape, and murder prostituted women and girls. Few studies have been done about pimps and tricks, but prostituted women and girls know that they are average, everyday, all-American men.

THE CONNECTION BETWEEN DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, PORNOGRAPHY, AND PROSTITUTION

While some has been written about the connections between rape and prostitution (Russell, 1993, Farley, Baral, Kiremire, & Sezgin, 1998), racism and prostitution (Nelson, 1993), incest and prostitution (Silbert & Pines, 1981, Dworkin, 1988, Hotaling, 1999), little has been written about the connections between domestic violence and prostitution. Women and girls in prostitution can trace their involvement in prostitution to sexual violence that began in the home as physical, verbal, and sexual violence directed at wives, girlfriends, sisters, daughters, and granddaughters. In the U.S. only 10% to 20% of prostitution is street-based

(O'Leary & Howard, 2001). These studies belie the myth that most prostitution occurs on urban street corners. Prostitution that occurs in escort services, strip clubs, and massage parlors is generally assumed to be safe for prostituted women. However, violence is prevalent in all systems of prostitution. One woman, who was used for over thirty years in various systems of prostitution, described being repeatedly beaten and gang raped in the back rooms of strip clubs, in hotel rooms while on out call, and in massage parlors. In more than thirty years, she never prostituted on the streets. In fact, prostitution occurs behind closed doors in homes and businesses, and in suburban and rural areas more frequently than it does on inner city streets.

In addition to domestic violence, most prostituted women also have histories of neglect and abuse from families, social isolation, sexual, psychological and physical abuse, drug and alcohol abuse, and limited alternatives for escaping the abuse (Council for Prostitution Alternatives, 1991). Some people view women as the property of one man in marriage, whereas in prostitution women are the property of many men. Husbands and boyfriends commonly use wives and girlfriends in systems of prostitution, especially pornography. Sometimes prostituted women and battered women are one and the same. For instance, a woman who was battered by her husband for many years was also forced by her husband into prostitution. She testified, "He would read from the pornography like a textbook, like a journal. And most of the scenes where I had to dress up or go through different fantasies were the exact scenes that he had read in the magazine" (Dworkin & MacKinnon, 1998, pp. 113-114).

Pornography's role in domestic violence and prostitution tends to be overlooked. In photographs, articles, and cartoons, pornography depicts many different kinds of violence as erotic, including wife beating, the exploitation of women and girls in prostitution, incest, ethno-rape (abuse committed against a woman or girl based on her skin color or ethnicity), and workplace sexual harassment. Pornography trivializes wife beating by treating physical assault as a joke. For instance, *Hustler* published a photograph of a man pulling a woman covered in batter out of a deep fryer with tongs. The caption read: "Battered Wives. Now he's going to have to beat her just to smooth out all those lumps" (Russell, 1993, p. 43). *Playboy* published a Romanian article titled "How to Beat Your Wife . . . Without Leaving Prints," which gave men instructions as to how they could beat their wives without getting caught (*Playboy Romania*, 2000). The trivialization of wife battering in pornography contributes to social attitudes that condone wife battering, articulate wife battering as humor instead of a crime, and generally teach men to view their wives as whores.

Pornography is itself pictures of acts of prostitution, including the beatings and rapes of prostituted women. Men masturbate to pictures of prostituted women being beaten and raped, and some of them act out what they see in the

pornography on their wives and girlfriends. Men also produce pornography of their wives and girlfriends in their homes. These pictures and videos of women being sexually tortured in the home are sold, and according to definition, these women are prostituted women. The rise of the Internet and the availability of related technology have made it easy for men to turn their wives, girlfriends, daughters, and granddaughters into pornography. There is a large market for these amateur videos and pictures. Amateur pornography websites are prevalent on the Internet with titles like *Turning Wife Into A Whore*, *Forced White Wife: Watch as this Housewife is Raped and Humiliated*, and *Wives That Whore From Home* (*forcedwhitewife.com*, 2002). These sites encourage men to view their wives as whores, and to treat them like whores are treated.

Pornography is central to the battering of prostituted women. Pimps use pornography to season women and girls to acts of prostitution. Thirty percent of the women in one research project reported that their pimps compelled them to imitate scenes from pornography to teach them how to be prostitutes (Giobbe, 1990). One woman, prostituted as a teen and as an adult, said, "The man who prostituted me showed me pictures of what he was going to do to me and he would 'practice' on me what was happening in the picture. That's how I learned what to do for the trick. The hard thing is, I know the pornography he made of me is being used to hurt others" (Stark & Leighton, 2002). In effect, pornography is a training manual that pimps use to show women and girls how to become prostitutes. Pornography is also a record of the sexual torture of prostituted women and girls.

SIMILAR TECHNIQUES OF CONTROL USED BY BATTERERS AND PIMPS

The techniques of control used by batterers to ensure the compliance of their wives and girlfriends parallel the tactics pimps use to recruit and keep women trapped in prostitution. These maneuvers, commonly referred to in shelters as tactics of power and control, include isolation of the woman; minimization and denial of her abuse; the exercising of male privilege; threats and intimidation; and emotional, sexual, and physical violence (Giobbe, 1993). Men who batter women in their homes and pimps who batter women in prostitution use torture techniques consistent with those described in an international summary of torture, in which torturers deprive their victims of social support, eliminate stimuli other than those controlled by the captor, and block noncompliant behaviors (Jones, 1994). Batterers and pimps socially isolate women, thereby diminishing their ability to resist. Many who work with prostituted women have noted the captors' use of extreme violence to

demonstrate the futility of resistance (Giobbe, Harrigan, Ryan, & Gamache, 1990; Minnesota Coalition Against Prostitution, 1997; Holsopple, 1999). Like other batterers, pimps attempt to maintain complete control over “their” women and ensure that the women are too terrified and too psychologically and physically broken down to contemplate escape.

Like pimps, men who batter in the home also exploit their wives and girlfriends economically to maintain control over them. They do this by preventing women from getting or keeping jobs, making them beg for money, giving allowances, taking all their money away, or preventing the women from having access to the family’s income (Pense & Paymor, 1993). Some batterers even go to the women’s workplaces on payday to collect paychecks; and batterers often do not allow women to have money for essentials like shampoo, tampons, or baby food. Batterers may also destroy the women’s possessions, and threaten to hurt or murder them, their pets, or their children if the women try to leave. Often battered women flee their homes, leaving behind their belongings and pets. Women frequently come into shelters with only their purses and the clothes they are wearing.²

Pimps break women down emotionally, psychologically, and physically before they turn women out into prostitution.³ This involves battering her, including hitting, punching, kicking, starving, raping, verbally abusing her, telling her she chose to be in prostitution, and telling her she is good for nothing but sex. Pimps socially isolate prostituted women, threaten to blackmail them with pornography made of them, and keep them from getting jobs outside of prostitution.

Many prostituted women lack job experience and have very little education because they entered prostitution at a young age. This makes it easier for pimps to keep prostituted women in prostitution and out of the work force. Pimps economically exploit prostituted women by keeping all or most of the money the women get in prostitution, and by making the women beg for money. Often pimps do not let prostituted women out of their sight, watching them from across the street or even following them to the emergency room and sitting with women after beating them. As one formerly prostituted woman said, “That’s his gravy train. He’s not going to let her out of his sight.”

Pimps control her sense of self, often to the extent of completely controlling her identity. It is not uncommon for pimps to change the names and appearances of the women once they begin to prostitute. This reinforces the idea that they not only own the women, but have actually created a new woman specifically for the purpose of prostitution. Pimps promote the idea that prostituted women’s exclusive function is to be used sexually by men. Pimps often tell prostituted women, “once a whore, always a whore” in order to establish a sense of futility and separation from other people and society.

A pimp will typically establish a relationship with the woman or girl he wants to turn out in prostitution. He may tell the woman or girl that he is her “man,” or her boyfriend, or promise marriage. Establishing a connection and ownership through traditional husband and boyfriend relationships allows pimps to gain women and girls’ trust and begin the process of coercion. Like other battered women, prostituted women become dependent upon and controlled by the abusers, and escape becomes difficult and dangerous. If the women try to leave, pimps beat, rape, threaten to murder, murder, and steal or destroy prostituted women’s belongings. Most women who escape prostitution leave with few, if any, belongings. One woman, describing her exodus from twenty years of legalized prostitution in Nevada, escaped with no money or possessions (Stark & Hanson, 1998).

Not only are prostituted women battered by pimps, they are also battered and sexually assaulted by the men who buy them for sex. A prostituted woman may be battered and raped by thousands of men every year. It must be recognized that being repeatedly battered by tricks or pimps is similar to being battered by husbands or boyfriends, except that prostituted women have multiple batterers where non-prostituted women have one batterer.

Unless human behavior under conditions of captivity is understood, the emotional bond between those prostituted and pimps is difficult to comprehend. The terror created in the prostituted woman by the pimps causes a sense of helplessness and dependence. This emotional bonding to an abuser under conditions of captivity has been described as the Stockholm Syndrome. Attitudes and behaviors which are part of this syndrome include: (1) intense gratefulness for small favors when the captor holds life and death power over the captor; (2) denial of the extent of violence and harm which the captor has inflicted or is obviously capable of inflicting; (3) hypervigilance with respect to the pimp’s needs and identification with the pimp’s perspective on the world (an example of this was Patty Hearst’s identification with her captor’s ideology); (4) perception of those trying to assist in escape as enemies and perception of captors as friends; (5) extreme difficulty leaving one’s captor/pimp, even after physical release has occurred. Paradoxically, women in prostitution may feel that they owe their lives to pimps. (Farley, 1998, citing Graham, Rawlings, & Rigsby, 1994)

HOMELESSNESS AND BATTERING

Battered women and prostituted women have another experience in common. Both groups of women have high rates of homelessness, and there is

much crossover between battered women, homeless women, and prostituted women. When women battered in their homes leave abusers, they may end up on the streets, at homeless shelters, or with relatives and friends. Lack of affordable housing and long waiting lists for assisted housing mean that many women and their children are forced to choose between abuse at home or on the streets (National Coalition for the Homeless Fact Sheet, 2002). Homelessness leaves battered women and their children vulnerable to economic instability as well as further physical and sexual abuse since many homeless women are sexually assaulted. In one study, 89% of homeless mothers previously experienced some kind of abuse in their lives, including childhood physical and sexual abuse, adult physical and sexual abuse including being beaten up by a partner, and sexual assault, including rape (Goodman, 1991). Another study found that half of all homeless women were beaten by their partners or husbands. This figure is more than twice that of housed women (Goodman, 1991). Many homeless women end up in prostitution, and many prostituted women become homeless, making homelessness both a cause and a result of prostitution. In another study, 90% of prostituted women were homeless for an average of 6.3 years (Council for Prostitution Alternatives, 1991). Violence in the home, specifically wife battering, is for many women the beginning stage of entry into prostitution.

PHYSICAL INJURIES FROM BATTERING IN GENERAL AND FROM BATTERING IN PROSTITUTION

Battered women and prostituted women suffer similar injuries and often have similar experiences with healthcare services when they seek care for injuries inflicted by husbands, boyfriends, tricks, and pimps. Physical injuries among non-prostituted battered women vary widely, and include hematomas, lacerations, contusions, fractures, head injuries, dislocations, burns, and miscarriages (Loring & Smith, 1999). Battered women frequently go to emergency rooms with injuries inflicted by boyfriends and husbands. It is estimated that 40% of all injured women in emergency rooms are injured by an abusive partner (Loring & Smith, 1999).

Prostituted women also have serious physical injuries resulting from rapes and beatings by pimps, tricks, and partners. Like battered women, prostituted women seek emergency care for broken bones, burns, fractured skulls, and other physical injuries (Raymond, Hughes, & Gomez, 2001). In a midwest study, half of the women were physically assaulted by a john, and a third of these experienced assaults at least several times a year. Twenty-three percent of those assaulted by a john were beaten severely enough to have suffered a

broken bone and two women reported assaults so vicious that they spent time in a coma (Parriott, 1994). Another study of 475 prostituted people in five countries found that 73% reported physical assault in prostitution (Farley et al., 1998).

HEALTHCARE BARRIERS FACED BY BATTERED WOMEN AND PROSTITUTED WOMEN

Battered women face many barriers to accessing services, particularly healthcare. Isolation, finances, naive interview questions, blaming the battered woman herself, trauma symptoms, denial, and negative attitudes of emergency room personnel—all prevent intervention on behalf of battered women and contribute to the high recidivism rate (Loring & Smith, 1999). If they are asked, battered women are willing to talk with health care providers about violence in their lives. However, they are often not asked about battery or threat of violence. A 1999 survey found that only 29% of health maintenance organizations in the United States had policies or protocols for domestic violence (Family Violence Prevention Fund Survey, 1999). Ninety-two percent of women who were physically abused by their partners did not discuss these incidents with their physicians; 57% did not discuss the incidents with anyone (Commonwealth Fund Survey, 1993). Yet, in several different studies of survivors of abuse, 70 to 80% of the patients studied reported that they would like their healthcare providers to ask them privately about intimate partner violence (Caralis & Musialowski, 1998; McCauley, Yurk, Jenckes, & Ford, 1998).

It is not known what percentage of women seeking help for injuries are prostituted women, but many of those working with prostituted women believe that a significant percentage of women presenting at psychiatric units and other health care facilities have been in prostitution. Many prostituted women are disabled as a result of years of physical, emotional, and psychological abuse (see Baldwin, 2003, this volume). According to one estimate, a third of prostituted women are disabled from emotional traumas and physical injuries, including brain injury, suffered in prostitution (Parker, 1998). Prostituted women are typically apprehensive about disclosing to health care workers that they are or have been in prostitution. They fear loss of custody of their children, loss of “straight” jobs, judgmental attitudes, and revictimization at the hands of health care providers. According to Parriott (1994), only 35% of the women who had access to primary health care had told their provider about their experience in prostitution.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Many battered women report that they began to use drugs and alcohol as a way to cope with terror (Flitcraft & Stark, 1988). Using substances functions as an analgesic for physical pain from battering and rape. Battered women who are also addicted, reported that every aspect of their behavior comes under scrutiny while the batterer's behavior, his addiction, and his contribution to her addiction tend to be ignored. Women interviewed in shelters have told the authors that batterers encouraged substance abuse while simultaneously using her drug use as a reason to verbally or physically abuse her. As a means of control, batterers sometimes curtail their partners' attempts to seek treatment for substance abuse. Batterers may prevent the women from attending meetings or keeping appointments, or they may escalate violence in order to control the women. The addicted battered woman is then likely to leave treatment in response to the increased danger (Haver, 1987). Battered women may lack access to shelters, because of their substance abuse, since some shelter policies exclude addicted women (Bennett & Lawson, 1994). Women are usually prevented from returning to the shelter while intoxicated, and simply referred to substance abuse programs.

Drug or alcohol addictions function both as a way to survive the violence and as a barrier to escaping prostitution. Most women must be high in order to endure prostitution (see Kramer, 2003, this volume). Being high permits them to detach from the experience of sexual exploitation and to distance themselves from the constant fear of overt violence. Pimps deliberately create addictions by paying women for their prostitution with crack cocaine or other drugs (Maher, 1997; Miller, 1986). Seventy-six percent of the women in one study were paid with crack for prostitution (Parriott, 1994). Some pimps addict women to crack cocaine, hold them captive in drug houses, and force them to submit to other men in exchange for an hourly crack hit. These women may be forced to "sexually service" up to twenty men a day, which is equivalent to being raped twenty times a day. Some men have recruited women into prostitution by addicting wives or girlfriends to drugs and then coercing them into prostitution and other rape scenarios in exchange for drugs. In this instance, there is an intimate relationship between marital battering, prostitution, and drug addiction.

Prostituted women who are addicted may encounter barriers when they seek treatment for alcoholism and other drug addictions. At 12 Step meetings men often exploit prostituted women when the women disclose involvement in prostitution. Prostituted women urgently need their own 12 Step meetings to address addictions. They need to have the freedom to talk about the emotional, physical, and sexual abuse (Stark & Mitchell, 2002).

SOLUTIONS

Currently, the harm of prostitution is culturally, socially, and politically invisible. Solutions to prostitution must be rooted in the understanding that prostitution is violence against women and girls. This knowledge must be brought into public awareness, made into public policy, and structurally implemented in mental health services, homeless shelters, rape crisis centers, battered women's shelters, and public health care.

Understanding prostitution and pornography as battering requires a shift in our way of thinking. Currently, we speak of "domestic violence" or "violence against women in intimate relationships" to describe the battering of a woman by her male partner. These phrases, which reflect an awareness of violence, generally exclude prostituted women in spite of the fact that prostituted women are battered by multiple perpetrators. We recommend the use of more inclusive terms such as "violence against women" or "battering of women" to describe the battery and rape suffered by prostituted and nonprostituted women alike.

Ignorance about prostitution and deliberate misinformation disseminated by pimps, tricks, and their apologists create obstacles for battered women and prostituted women, who are blamed for remaining in violent relationships. There is still little understanding of the brutal terror inflicted by abusers. Battered women's lives are in constant danger from their male partners and prostituted women are in danger from pimps and tricks. No one asks why prisoners of war stay with their captors, yet the question "Why doesn't she just leave?" is regularly asked of women. Attempting to leave a batterer is dangerous and the consequences of doing so may include torture and execution. The argument that women choose to be in prostitution is not an acceptable way to dismiss the harm of prostitution. We do not dismiss rape and battery by saying that women choose to walk down the street alone at night. Or, if a woman chose to get married, we do not dismiss the battery that occurs within the marriage by saying she chose to be with him.

An understanding of sexual abuse, as applied to battered and raped women, can and must be applied to prostituted women. The differences between women battered in their homes and prostituted women are only in the more extreme violence and multiplicity of perpetrators against prostituted women. All abused women and girls, not only those battered outside of prostitution, should receive assistance.

An understanding of prostitution as violence must be structurally implemented in organizations so that the organization itself addresses the issues, for example in its mission statement, rather than its being addressed haphazardly by individuals who may not be long term employees. Posters stating that pros-

titution is violence should be visible. Screening questions should ask whether she has ever been involved in prostitution, had sexually explicit pictures taken of her, and whether pornography played a role in the assault(s).⁴ Women and girls who are in or have been in prostitution will rarely be forthcoming with that information because of social ostracism, and also because they may not recognize what happened to them as prostitution. It is helpful to actually list different types of prostitution, including pornography, strip clubs, massage parlors, saunas, escort services, live sex shows, peep shows, trafficking, phone sex, ritual abuse, mail order bride services, prostitution tourism, and street prostitution.

Anti-rape organizations, homeless shelters, and health care facilities need to reach out to prostituted women, letting them know that the agency understands prostitution as harm, and that help is offered for that harm. The burden cannot be on individual women and girls to risk their emotional or physical safety by disclosing involvement in prostitution. Organizations can reach out to prostituted women and girls on the streets, in schools, in strip clubs, at truck stops, and other areas frequented by prostituted people. Articles, pamphlets, and books with information about prostitution can be placed in libraries and schools.

Programs specifically for prostituted women and girls must be developed in conjunction with battered women's shelters and homeless shelters.⁵ These programs must comprehensively address the multiple needs of prostituted women, which include housing, psychotherapy, physical healthcare, job training and placement, help with disabilities, clothing, food, and treatment for alcohol and drug dependence. The programs need to be culturally sensitive to language, race, class, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and nationality. A national toll free line should offer information regarding services available for prostituted women and girls.

Laws should criminalize pimping and buying women, but it should not be a crime to prostitute or be prostituted. Court outreach advocates must learn to sensitively assess prostitution among women and girls, who are frequently arrested on drug charges rather than prostitution charges.

In summary, social justice organizations and health care services must publicly state that prostitution and pornography are forms of violence against women and girls and their services must be extended to the prostituted. Those prostituted must be humanized, because after all, it is difficult to advocate on behalf of a group of women that is feared, stigmatized, and "other." It is a matter of social justice that all abused women and girls receive the help they need and deserve, not only those battered outside of prostitution.

NOTES

1. Prostituted women and girls are in constant danger from pimps and tricks. Pimps threaten to hurt prostituted women and girls if they tell anyone about their situation. Pimps and tricks often hurt the women and girls by beating, raping, slapping, punching, stalking, and killing them. A Canadian study found that prostituted women and girls have a mortality rate 40 times higher than non-prostituted women and girls (cited in Baldwin, 1992).

2. While shelter staff can provide clothing and personal items, it is often a long, difficult process to obtain police accompaniment so that the women can return for their belongings.

3. Being prostituted is one of the ways that men debilitate women psychologically, emotionally, and physically. A man could verbally berate a woman, pressure her into prostitution, and then use the prostitution itself as a method to break her down further.

4. The way in which these questions are phrased is important. Girls and women use many different phrases to describe their involvement in prostitution and it is important to know what terms are used locally to talk about prostitution. The phrases used to talk about prostitution can vary even within a city; these variations can be attributed mainly to race and cultural differences. It is also common for women in stripping and "escort services" to not identify what they are doing as prostitution and so it is important to meet them on their terms rather than demanding that they have to identify as a prostitute.

When talking with girls and women about prostitution it is important to let her describe her involvement in prostitution in her own words and on her own terms. If she says, "I wouldn't call it that," then say, "How do you describe it?" Statements such as "A lot of people have been approached by people asking them to be in prostitution, or asking if people if they know anyone who might do prostitution. Do you know anybody who has done this? Have you done that?" will help the girl or woman feel less threatened.

The girls and women will want to know the reason why they are being asked about involvement in prostitution. Is the person asking the questions asking because she wants to call the girl or woman a prostitute, or because the person cares about the girl or woman's well being? As one girl said: "It's like breathing air, everybody does it and you're trying to put me into a box and call me a prostitute." It may take some time and trial and error to figure out the best way to approach prostituted women and girls. Often a neutral question such as "Have you ever traded sex for money, gifts, drugs, or survival needs?" is a good beginning (Stark & O'Leary, 2002).

5. A battered women's shelter in Massachusetts recently obtained funding to extend their services to prostituted women. They are using existing organizations that specifically help prostituted women as models to develop their own program. In this way, the shelter is acknowledging prostituted women as battered women and it is creating appropriate services to insure that the needs of prostituted women will be met in the shelter.

Health care facilities can make their services available to prostituted women by including questions on their intake forms, making sure that they interview the women and girls alone in a room without their pimps present, and taking steps to insure that their staff is trained on issues of prostitution to eliminate judgmental attitudes and increase awareness of the physical and emotional harm endured in prostitution.

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