PUBLIC SPEAKING & MEDIA TIPS
for survivors of sex trafficking
and the professionals working with them

Sharing stories of overcoming the trauma of sex trafficking can be a powerful part of healing. A survivor’s point of view can help raise awareness in our community and has a powerful impact on other survivors still struggling with escaping exploitation or making progress in their own healing. There is no substitute for a first hand story. Survivors who are still on their healing path, however, are also vulnerable to being re-traumatized by public exposure. They are at risk of being identified by traffickers or other people who may stigmatize them and may experience psychological triggers from the process of being interviewed or the outcome of the final product.

Given the complexity of the situation, the general rule is that we DON’T facilitate interviews. However, if there are clear benefits to the client themselves, professionals working with survivors of sex trafficking, especially minors, have the responsibility to help determine their readiness to release their story publically, prepare them for the media experience and help them to maintain control of their own story. The following are some guidelines to consider in working with the media.

(1) **BEFORE** considering an interview, survivors should **ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS**.

   - Is there any part of your past that you are ashamed of?
   - Is there any part of your present that you are ashamed of?
   - Is there anything that you don’t want your family knowing?
   - If you met someone in the grocery store who approached you and asked if you were that person in the media, how would you feel?

(2) **ALLOW SURVIVORS TO INITIATE** the discussion on wanting to share their story. Avoid asking them to do it if they've never indicated a desire, as they may still be working on being able to establish comfortable emotional boundaries and agree out of a feeling of obligation.

(3) **SURVIVOR SHOULD HAVE ACHIEVED EMOTIONAL AND PHYSICAL STABILITY**, with an established, consistent, and effective support person/network.

(4) They should have **INSIGHT INTO THEIR EXPLOITATION and TRAUMA PROCESSING**.

(5) Beyond therapy, **LEADERSHIP AND/OR PEER MENTORING TRAINING** is advised.

*Speaking & Media Tips for Survivors of Sex Trafficking © KRISTI HOUSE, INC. / Project GOLD
*with contributions from the participants of Shared Hope International’s Leadership Summit 2011
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INTERVIEWEES SHOULD BE PREPARED in advance about what to expect and their stories written out and rehearsed. Preparation should include knowing how to respond to uncomfortable questions / issues and when to say no or not respond.

PROPER CONSENTS need to be read and signed for media, especially for minors. Add your own parameters for the interview and have media representatives also sign them.

CONCEAL IDENTITY. For minors this is mandatory. For adults, optional. Take special precautions to ensure anonymity. Masking identity needs to be more than just silhouette as they can also be identified by body shape, voice, story details, and hair style in the shadow.

SUPPORT PERSON SHOULD BE PRESENT to offer support, assist in sticking to the agreed upon plan and manage anything unexpected, and clients should be escorted anywhere the media may be near (including lobbies and parking lots).

GET QUESTIONS IN ADVANCE. With client, give feedback. Don’t let them ask sensory questions (“how did it smell / sound?”) or inappropriate questions (“were the johns attractive?”).

ASK TO READ YOUR/THEIR QUOTES to maintain accuracy in facts and details. It is unlikely you will get to read the whole story prior to release, but ask for this as well.

EMPHASIZE USE OF PROPER LANGUAGE and let media know why it’s important to use the proper language, eg: “exploited child” not “child prostitute” and why “hooker” and words like that are derogatory. Ask them to relay the information to others in the editing office who will write headlines and place captions below photos.

TRAIN REPORTERS on the issue of sex trafficking prior to interviews if possible. Generally speaking, the ones who take their time with the story and agree to this will be more sensitive.

DEBRIEF, FOLLOW UP and DEBRIEF AGAIN. This should take place immediately after the interview, a day or two after to manage any possible triggers that arose, and again when the media piece comes out publically.

TITRATE EXPOSURE. Test the water for media readiness with small steps to becoming a public advocate. Peer mentoring a new client, sharing in a group, doing presentations, and writing an article for newsletter are some examples.

COMPENSATE PROPERLY. Survivors are experts sharing their knowledge and should be respected as such.
Tina Frundt is the founder and director of Courtney’s House. Ms. Frundt, herself a survivor of domestic sex trafficking, now dedicates her life to helping women and children heal from domestic sex trafficking and commercial sex exploitation.

After realizing there was no specialized housing available for sex trafficked children in Washington, D.C., Ms. Frundt founded Courtney’s House in August 2008. Since its inception, Courtney’s House and Ms. Frundt have helped over 500 victims escape from being trafficked. She also trains law enforcement and other non-profit groups to rescue and provide resources to victims. She is also a member of the Washington, D.C. Anti-Trafficking Task Force.

Ms. Frundt has been featured on numerous national television shows and publications, including The Oprah Show, The Montel Williams Show, CNN, and Redbook Magazine. In 2010, she was awarded the Frederick Douglass Award. The award is given to an individual who has survived slavery and is using their life in freedom to help others. She also testified before the U.S. Congress about her own experiences and the need for greater protection and services for trafficked persons.

About Tina

Frequently Asked Questions

Does Courtney’s House provide housing for the survivors?
While we operate as a drop-in center for survivors to come by to talk, eat, or pick up items from our donation closet, we do not have housing. However we hope to open a group home whenever we gain the necessary funds.

How did Courtney’s House get its name?
Courtney’s House is named after one of Tina’s daughters. When we open a group home it will be named after her other daughter Shae.

Why do you refer to victims as “survivors”?
We believe that every individual who was trafficked is already a survivor because he or she was surviving every single day on the street.

How do the survivors hear about Courtney’s House?
Some of our survivors hear about our services through street outreach and our by survivors for survivors hotline. However, the majority of our survivors are referred by their parents.

If you would like Tina to speak at an event or training session, please fill out the speaker request form on our website.
www.courtneyshouse.org/Speaker_Request.html
What is DMST?

DMST stands for domestic minor sex trafficking. Domestic minor sex trafficking involves American and lawful permanent residents children/adolescents who are used in the commercial sex industry and are under 18 years of age at the time of victimization.

According to the Federal Trafficking Victims Protection Act “sex trafficking in which a commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such act has attained 18 years of age” is considered a severe form of trafficking.

It is a crime to knowingly recruit, entice, harbor, transport, provide, obtain, or maintain a person who will be caused to engage in a commercial sex act knowing or in disregard of the fact that person is under the age of 18.

- DC Code § 22-1834

DMST includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Prostitution by a pimp/trafficker/family member
- Stripping
- Survival sex
- Pornography

About Courtney’s House

Courtney’s House is a 501c(3) non-profit organization that is committed to providing a loving environment for girls and boys who are survivors of sex trafficking. We currently provide services children in the DC, Northern Virginia, and Southern Maryland area.

Our mission is to provide survivor focused, trauma informed, and holistic services to survivors of sex trafficking.

Services

- Intake Assessments
- Survivor & Parent Support Groups
- Intensive Case Management
- Mentoring
- Tutoring
- Survivor Hotline
- Street Outreach

Volunteer Opportunities

- Mentor
- Tutor
- Fun activity coordinator
- Chaperone
- Street Outreach
- Hotline
- Fundraising

Courtney’s House www.courtneyhouse.org
Common Terms

**Trafficker/Pimp**- Person who buys and sells women and children with no regard for their wellbeing

**John**- Person who buys sex from women and children with no regard for their wellbeing

**Quota**- An amount of money that victims must provide to their trafficker/pimp every night

**Bottom**- A trafficker/pimp who has multiple women/and or girls under his control will pick one of them to help supervise and control the others. The “bottom” will collect money for the pimp and tell on the other girls, but the “bottom” is also controlled by the pimp and most often endures the most abuse.

**Track**- A set area known for prostitution activity where women and girls who are under pimp control are sent by their trafficker/pimp.

**Runway/Kiddie Track**- Where young girls, usually ages 11–16 years old, who are under pimp control are sent by their trafficker/pimp

**Daddy**- What pimps require their victims to call them

**Wife-in-law**- What women are required to call the other women in the “stable”

**Stable**- A group of victims who are under a pimp’s control

**Gorilla pimp**- A violent pimp/trafficker

**“The Life”**- Being involved in pimp control

**Seasoning**- When a pimp rapes, beats, manipulates, intimidates etc a victim in order to her break down

**Trick**- Can mean a person buying a victim or the act of prostitution

**Turn Out Folks**- Pimp who first put the victim on the street

**Turn Out**- To be forced into prostitution

**Folks**- Reference to a pimp

**Renegade**- Someone who is involved in prostitution on their own and has no pimp

**Squaring Up**- Getting away from the trafficking situation

**Trade Up, Trade Down**- When pimps buy and sell women

**Branded**- When pimps tattoo their names on the victims

**Choosing Up**- When a victim looks at a pimp that does not own her in the eye, or when another pimp manipulates a victim into going with him. The victim has to give her new pimp all of the money she made for her old pimp that evening.

**Eyeballing**- Looking into a pimp’s eyes

**Pimp circle**- When several pimps circle a victim and may kick, hit, punch, or scream at the victim to discipline them