

# WHAT IS THE SURVIVOR MODEL?

The Survivor Model seeks to decriminalize individuals who are exploited in the sex trade, while penalizing those who drive the sex trade through penalties for the solicitation and purchase of sex. This legislative framework (partial decriminalization rather than full decriminalization) centers the voices and needs of survivors, promoting safety, dignity, and opportunities for recovery.

## Decriminalize Individuals in Prostitution



The majority of those arrested for prostitution-related offenses are not sex buyers, but the women, girls, and other vulnerable people who are being exploited. Many are trafficking victims, first exploited as minors, with histories of abuse, and no viable way to exit the abuse. The Survivor Model acknowledges the harm and violence inherent to the commercial sex trade.

- The average age of entry into sex trafficking is 12.<sup>1</sup>
- 89% of prostituted people want to escape prostitution.<sup>2</sup>
- 80-90% of prostituted people are controlled by pimps.<sup>3</sup>



## Provide Comprehensive Services and Exit Strategies

The Survivor Model prioritizes providing comprehensive exit strategies and trauma-informed support services, such as safe housing, healthcare, education, job training, and counseling to help individuals rebuild their lives and find safety and security.



## Hold Exploiters Accountable

The demand for paid sex consistently out paces the supply, driving pimps and traffickers to exploit vulnerable people. To end the exploitative sex trade, we must address the root cause—the demand, by holding sex buyers and exploiters accountable for the harms they cause.<sup>4</sup>

1 Office of the Attorney General for the District of Columbia, Human Trafficking Fact Sheet, <https://oag.dc.gov/public-safety/human-trafficking-initiatives/human-trafficking-fact-sheet>

2 Farley, Melissa, Ann Cotton, Jacqueline Lynne, Sybille Zumbeck, Frida Spiwak, Maria E. Reyes, Dinorah Alvarez, and Ufuk Sezgin. 2004. "Prostitution and Trafficking in Nine Countries: An Update on Violence and Posttraumatic Stress Disorder." *Journal of Trauma Practice* 2 (3-4): 33-74. doi:10.1300/J189v02n03\_03.

3 National Organization for Men Against Sexism (NOMAS), "Prostitution: Key Facts and Analysis, in Brief," <https://nomas.org/prostitution-key-facts-and-analysis-in-brief/>

4 "Equality Not Exploitation: An Overview of the Global Sex Trade and Trafficking Crisis, and the Case for the Equality Model" (November 2019), <https://survivormodel.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/Equality-Not-Exploitation-white-paper-November-2019.pdf>