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## About Human Trafficking – Newsletter #11

Human trafficking research is in its infancy, especially research into human trafficking involving boys. Thanks to information contained in the literature and from those working in the field, we know that:

- Boys are exploited at a younger age than girls, with ages 11 to 13 cited as the average for boys.
- Boys may be more likely trafficked for labor purposes.
- The exploitation of boys is less visible on the street and, compared to girls, receives less attention by the press and in awareness campaigns.
- The commercial sexual exploitation of boys is often different than stereotypes of pimps trafficking girls. (More on this in our next newsletter.)
- Peer introduction into “the life” seems more common among boys than girls. Sometimes such introductions are done with the benign intent of helping the victim survive on the street.
- Programs for trafficking victims often focus on girls and women, with fewer resources for male victims.
- Drug abuse by exploited boys seems more likely. Boys may be sexually exploited as a means for them to get drugs for their own use. They may also use drugs to cope being trafficked.
- Boys are less likely to be charged with prostitution than girls. Charges filed against boys are usually not sexual in nature.

Male human trafficking victims often struggle with their sexual orientation and identity.

- Fears of social stigmatization for being perceived as gay

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or being gay may make boys less likely to self-identify as a trafficking victim.

- A boy may be more likely to leave home as a runaway, or be homeless, due to sexual or gender identity issues. This factor should be considered when screening for, and providing services to, boys and transgendered youth.
- Both straight and LGBTQI youth are victims of trafficking. However, a greater proportion of LGBTQI youth are likely to be human trafficking victims.

Earlier this year ECPAT – USA published “And Boys Too”, a discussion paper about the human trafficking of boys in the United States. The paper offers several recommendations:

1. Acknowledge the existence of commercially sexually exploited boys and young men, their risk for physical and mental health harm and need for services. Include both GBTQ and heterosexual boys with attention to their different circumstances and needs.
2. Establish screening and intake systems for commercially sexually exploited boys at runaway and homeless youth centers and social service agencies.

“And Boys Too” is available at [http://ecpatusa.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/AndBoysToo\\_FINAL\\_single-pages.pdf](http://ecpatusa.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/AndBoysToo_FINAL_single-pages.pdf)