



ETHICAL ISSUES

Can Sex Trafficking Ever Be Ethical?

Karyn is a 16-year-old who is being prostituted. She contends that she does this work because she wants to and it earns her enough money to live comfortably. In addition, she earns enough to support her partner, who introduced her to this way of life. Earning money is important since her parents kicked her out when she told them she was a lesbian. Karyn contends no one is making her do it and she should be able to if she wants to. Still, she notes that her partner gets angry and sometimes a little physical if she does not bring home enough cash.

Think About It

1. Karyn is younger than 18 and claims to voluntarily engage in this prostitution. It is noted that many engage

in this behavior to survive because it helps them obtain food, shelter, clothes, and other needed basics. Is it unethical for Karyn to engage in this activity?

2. Is it unethical for this to be illegal? Should the age of the people being prostituted matter?
3. Should it matter if someone lured them into this activity when they were minors?
4. If people state that they are engaged in sex trafficking but have no skills or education and have no other opportunities, is their participation unethical?
5. If their trafficker violently abuses them but they choose not to leave, is this practice unethical?
6. What policies would you implement to deal with this thorny issue?