

Our Content Guidelines

**MY
STORY
MY DIGNITY**

FREEDOMUNITED

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SIGN THE MY STORY MY DIGNITY PLEDGE HERE:

<https://www.freedomunited.org/advocate/my-dignity-pledge/>
or scan the code below on your phone camera.

**OUR CONTENT COMMITMENT:**

Our My Story My Dignity guidelines are developed to ensure we are representing modern slavery and people's experiences of it in a respectful, dignified, accurate and empowering way. All too often, disempowering language and images are used to drive the narratives around modern slavery and extreme exploitation. We must change this so that we are all better informed on the realities of modern slavery and better equipped to end it. These guidelines set out practical steps we are taking at Freedom United to play our role in disrupting unhelpful narratives and provide a blueprint for other organizations to follow.

VISUAL STYLE GUIDE

Within our brand guidelines we have a section on internal training on the importance of choosing ethical images and visual representations of modern slavery.

DO:

- Choose empowering images wherever possible
- Avoid dark and sensationalist imagery such as ropes, chains, people stamped with barcodes or otherwise objectified, sexualized imagery, victimizing imagery
- Obtain full and informed consent from victims and survivors before using any image of them, or any image used to accompany their experiences in text form
- Use illustrations as a creative way of representing a problem if no appropriate photographs are available
- When using photographs of children, ensure that their faces are obscured or that they are otherwise unidentifiable
- Ensure that victims or survivors are represented in a way that conceals their identity wherever necessary

EXAMPLES

1. Campaign image for orphanage trafficking campaign:

We have been careful to select an image that **does not identify the children** and does not show them in a sensationalized way.



2. Campaign image for Nancy's campaign:

Nancy is a victim of trafficking who granted us **permission** to use this photograph of her. She is covering half her face to **protect her identity**.



3. Campaign image for support for slavery victims:

Wherever possible we use **active and empowering** images that show how we are working to solve a problem. In this case, victims in the photo have their backs turned to **protect their identity**.



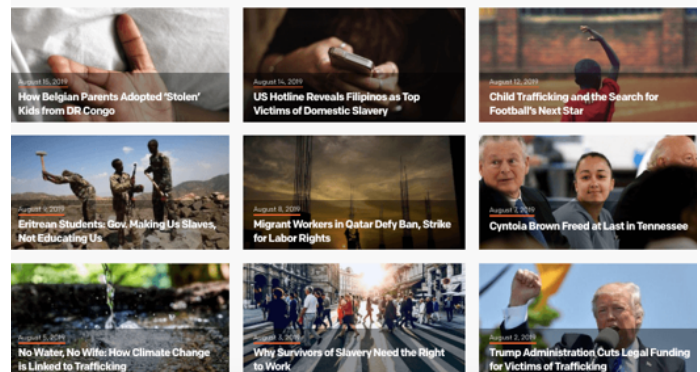
4. Campaign image for forced child marriage pledge:

Illustrations can be creative ways of representing an issue when an appropriate image is not available.



5. A selection of images used in our news stories:

We have used images that do not disempower the individual subjects of the news stories, and we have avoided showing children's faces. Where possible we have used positive images that represent strength such as on the Cyntoia Brown story.



CONTENT CONSIDERATIONS:

DO WE SHOW FACES OF IMPLIED VICTIMS/SURVIVORS?

- For actual victims/survivors? Yes, with permission.
- For representative images? Yes, with disclaimer.
- In other cases: find creative, empowering ways to avoid showing faces without dehumanizing the subject.

WHEN DO WE ADD MODEL DISCLAIMER?

- When representative images are used and face is clearly visible.
- “stock image” or “image for illustrative purposes only”

MY STORY, MY DIGNITY GUIDANCE NOTE

- Avoid exploitative, inaccurate or sensationalized images (bars, chains, duct tape, handcuffs, etc.)
- Protect the privacy and dignity of subjects, esp. children

Avoid dark and depressing imagery and give the individual agency. Do not use images of children where they are identifiable, including when using stock imagery. Do not use images of children depicted in is empowering, sensationalized or sexualised situations.

LANGUAGE AND DEFINITION OF TERMS

This section sets out the definition of terms that we use in conveying modern slavery issues and the reasons for which we have chosen to use these terms

MODERN SLAVERY:

Modern slavery is when one person possesses or controls another person in such a way as to significantly deprive that person of their individual liberty, with the intention of exploiting that person through their use, profit, transfer or disposal. We use this as an umbrella term under which contemporary and emerging forms of slavery can apply, and to differentiate from traditional and historic forms of slavery, such as the transatlantic slave trade.

BONDED LABOR/DEBT BONDAGE:

A situation where a person is forced to give themselves and their family as collateral against a debt and thus comes under the complete control of the money-lender. It often becomes impossible to pay off the debt, which is concurrently passed down, enslaving following generations.

CHILD LABOR:

Work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity, and that is harmful to their physical and mental development. Important to note that child labor doesn't equate to forced child labor.

FORCED CHILD LABOR:

Any work or services which a person under 18 years old are forced to do against their will under the threat of punishment.

CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION:

Forcing or manipulating a child into having sex or performing a sexual act.

CHILD TRAFFICKING:

The illegal movement of children into a situation of exploitation, typically for the purposes of forced labor or sexual exploitation. The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation shall be considered 'trafficking in persons' even if this does not involve any of the means (threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation).

DESCENT-BASED SLAVERY:

Describes a situation where people are born into slavery because their ancestors were captured into slavery and their families have 'belonged' to the slave-owning families ever since. Slave status is passed down the maternal line.

DOMESTIC SERVITUDE:

The exploitation and control of domestic workers in a private home, often through forced labour, bonded labour or trafficking.

FORCED LABOR:

Any work or services which people are forced to do against their will under the threat of punishment.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING:

When adults or children are recruited or brought into a situation of exploitation through the use of violence or deception. People do not have to be transported to a different place for trafficking to occur. Not to be confused with people smuggling which always involves an illegal border crossing. While victims of people trafficking are regarded as commodities, individuals who are smuggled across borders are more like clients who pay for the service.

TRAFFICKING FOR SEXUAL EXPLOITATION:

When men, women or children are brought into a situation of sexual exploitation through the use of violence, deception or coercion.

TRAINING PROCESS

All staff are briefed on the importance of following My Story, My Dignity guidelines:

1. Choose **respectful images that are representative** of the issue. Choose stock images carefully.
2. Select **text that accurately represents** the story. Be careful to avoid sensationalist language.
3. Respect **survivors' right to privacy** and dignity.
4. Obtain **prior consent** to using a personal story, be **transparent** and accurate about the process and how it will be used.

Team members will review all scheduled content to ensure it meets the My Story My Dignity guidelines before publishing any campaign content, news stories and blogs pieces.

Any content developed for Freedom United describing a personal experience will either be drafted by that person or they will be directly consulted on content relating to their experiences. Explicit consent will be obtained from them before publishing.

EVENTS

Survivors invited to take part in any events, hosted or participated in, by Freedom United will be invited on the merits of their expertise and willingness to contribute whatever aspects of their knowledge that they find appropriate, and are comfortable sharing. Survivors will be fairly compensated for their labor in partaking in these events.

We are signatories to the Events Pledge, developed by Survivor Alliance, and commit to:

- Asking survivors for their subject matter expertise. I will not ask them to speak about the worst parts of their trauma.
- Respecting survivors' physical and emotional boundaries. I will not assume shared physical or emotional intimacy. For example, I will ask permission to give hugs. I will treat survivors as a peer and colleague regardless of the survivors' professional status in the anti-trafficking field. I will treat their input with respect and validity.
- Listening to survivors and respect their expertise on their trauma and healing.
- Not telling them how to do their healing better or question their experiences.
- Asking survivors about what kinds of questions they would like to be asked when sitting on a panel or being interviewed. I will not surprise them with unnecessary questions about their life that could be triggering and I will stick to the agreed upon questions.

Sign the Events Pledge here: <https://www.freedomunited.org/advocate/survivor-alliance-pledge/>

MAKING OUR COMMITMENT PUBLIC

We have published these guidelines online and include them at the bottom of all our email communications so that any individual or organization has easy access to our guidelines and the steps we are taking to represent modern slavery appropriately. We invite feedback on our content and invite our community to hold us accountable if there are concerns that our content does not abide by the guidelines set out above.