

Identification & Engagment with Commercially Sexually Exploited Children (CSEC)

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The Department of Justice ("DOJ") estimates that 293,000 children are at-risk of becoming victims of domestic child sex trafficking each year.

● Risk factors for domestic child sex trafficking include but are not limited to:

- > being between the ages of 12 and 14
- > having a history of sexual and/or physical abuse
- > community and family instability and dislocation
- > being a runaway
- > poverty
- > being female or LGBTQQI
- > community culture accepts substance abuse and prostitution

Common traits seen in CSEC

- Visible signs of abuse
- Hyper-vigilance or paranoid behavior
- Changes in behavior
- Relationship with an older male/female
- Evidence of a controlling relationship
- Unexplained expensive personal items
- Language used from "the life"
- Depicts elements of sexual exploitation through artwork, poetry, or journaling
- Truancy from school

Why is it hard to identify these youth?

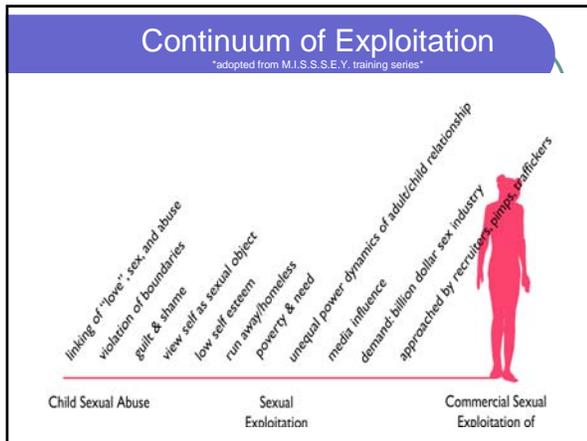
- Physically and/or psychologically controlled by their pimp
- Trained by pimps to tell lies and false stories
- Victims distrust of service providers and law enforcements
- They don't identify themselves as a victim (minimize abuse, aggressive demeanor)
- Frequently move from place to place
- Technology and make up can help disguise the real age of the victim
- Easy to obtain fake I.D.'s

Life path of a survivor

- At 5 months old, "Amber" is taken away from her mother. Later in life she questions why didn't she love me? What did I do wrong?
- Amber and her two brothers were placed with her great auntie. This home had it's own dysfunction with lots of yelling, being talked down to and regular beatings.
- At 11 years old "Amber" was raped by her cousin.
- After holding in her story for years, at 14 "Amber" called her social worker and told her about the rape.
- "Amber" was removed from her auntie's home and placed in a group home. Without forming much connection with the staff, "Amber" began bonding with an older foster youth in her group home who turns out to be a recruiter. This young lady introduces "Amber" to a 26 year old male who later becomes her boyfriend.
- Within a month, this boyfriend is telling her he "wants more from her." He says, "Lets get money for us."
- After being sexually exploited for 1 year, "Amber" is detained in Juvenile Hall and admitted to "Girls Camp" where she can get the treatment she needs.

Poem from "Amber", a CSEC dual status youth

Nothing?
As I'm giving my body
away I believe I'm worth
nothing, nothing more then
What he tells me...
I sleep in my car while he
sleeps in a 8 bedroom house
I will never grow-up
to be anything, my soul
is dying and my heart is
black, I'm nothing I will
never be nothing
I smile as if I'm happy
so you won't see my pain
I frown so people will see
I'm strong but to him I will
never be anything more than
What he tells me I'm worth!
"Nothing"



Adult vs. Child Trauma

- **Trauma in Adults-**
 - Changes their relationship with themselves and the world.

- **Trauma in Children-**
 - Changes the child's character and personal development.

Shared Hope International

Who are our girls in San Mateo County???

- **Average age currently-** 16.7 years old
- **Average age of entry into system-** 10.2 years old
- **Average age of entry into sexual exploitation -** 15.7 years old (range 12 – 16)
- **Race**
 - African American 60%
 - Latina 20%
 - Mixed 20%
- **Previous Abuse (subjects may have multiple forms of abuse)**
 - Physical 50%
 - Sexual 50%
 - Neglect 80%
- **Average Number of Placements**
8.2 placements (range 3 – 20+)
- **80% of subjects had Criminal Involvement** (Including: Theft, False Identification, Vandalism, Gang Involvement, Chronically Runaway, Battery)

Our girls cont...

- **70% had Mental Health Diagnosis (subjects may have multiple diagnoses)**
 - 70% Mood Disorder
 - 30% PTSD
 - 20% Anxiety
 - 30% Sleep Disorders
 - 40% Self Injurious Behavior
 - 80% Subjects had Physical Health Problems (Including: Thyroid condition, Seizures, Obesity, Weight Loss, Asthma, Miscarriages, Abortions, STD's)
- **Educational Progress**
 - 50% Graduate with High School Diploma
 - 20% GED Completion
 - 30% Not Currently Working on Education
- **70% Subjects Engaged in Frequent Substance Use**
 - 20% Alcohol Abuse
 - 70% Self-Medicating with Marijuana
 - 30% Crack/Cocaine

KEYS TO INTERACTION

- Use non-judgmental language
- Address emergency/basic needs first
- Focus on building rapport
- Meet youth where they are at psychologically and emotionally
- Respect their boundaries
- Be transparent: involve the youth in recommended actions when appropriate

INTERVIEWING TIPS

- Start from the premise that the sexual activity is not the fault of the victim, even if the child:
 - Did not say "no"
 - Did not fight back
 - Initiated the contact
 - Accepted gifts of money or other items
 - Actively cooperated
 - Did not tell

INTERVIEW TIPS

- Don't expect to gather all of the information in one day/interview
- Use motivational interviewing techniques
- Position yourself eye level or below
- Minimal interjections, take breaks during interviews
- Ask for permission to take notes and clarify what the information is being used for (ie: her protection)
- Be available
