What is Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC)?

**DEFINITION**

- Sexual activity involving a child in exchange for something of value, or promise thereof, to the child or another person or persons
- The child is treated as a commercial and sexual object
- CSEC is a form of violence against children

**EXAMPLES OF EXPLOITATION**

- Pornography
- Stripping
- Erotic/nude massage
- Interfamilial pimping
- Phone sex lines
- Private parties
- Gang-based prostitution
- Escort services
- Internet-based exploitation
- Street (track, e.14th/San Pablo)

Who Is At Risk?

**RISK FACTORS**

- Earlier childhood sexual abuse
- Homelessness
- Running away
- Inadequate supervision or care
- Inadequate food, clothing, shelter
- Family/community history of exploitation
- Exposure to domestic violence in the home
- In Foster care, staying in group homes
- On probation

**PATHWAYS TO ENTRY**

- Family selling children
- Violence and kidnapping
- Seduction and coercion
- False advertising for “modeling,” “acting,” or “dancing”
- Peer recruitment
- Internet enticement through chartrooms or profile-sharing sites

At least 100,000 to 300,000 youth are at-risk for commercial sexual exploitation annually in the U.S.

The average age of entry into the commercial sex industry in the U.S. is 12 years old.
Continuum of Sexual Abuse

- Isolation
  Deprives victim of social support that is necessary for the ability to resist

- Pimp Tactics
  Of Coercion and Control
  - Enforcing trivial demands
    Develops habit of compliance, damaging to self-esteem
    “No matter what I say your gonna do it!”
  - Demonstrating ‘omnipotence’
    Suggests futility of resistance
  - Threats
    Cultivates anxiety & despair
  - Monopolization of perception
    Fix attention upon immediate predicament; fosters introspection
  - Degradation
    Makes cost of resistance appear easier
  - Induced debility & exhaustion
    Weakens mental and physical ability to respond to resist
  - Occasional indulgences
    Provides positive motivation for compliance

Experiences of a CSEC Victim

1. Losing your identity
   - All of your identification is taken away
   - Constantly having to lie about your name & age
   - Having to change your name
   - Having to completely change your appearance

2. Constantly subjected to violence
   - Being kidnapped, raped or beaten
   - Risk of abuse for not making nightly quota
   - Having constant threats made against you and your family
   - Being punished and beaten when someone else breaks an abuser’s ‘rules’

3. Constant sexual abuse
   - Forced to watch exploiter have sex with other women
   - Having sex with strangers every night
   - High rates of repeated STD’s
Experiences of a CSEC Victim Continued

Suffering psychological abuse
- Being branded with tattoo of exploiters name
- Living with a group of people you call “family” who you could never depend on for support
- Having to call an abusive man who is not your father, “daddy”
- Having to compete for attention from your abuser with other girls

No control over your situation
- Constantly moving wherever someone else wants to
- Not being allowed any contact with the world outside of your abusive situation
- Feeling trapped in an abusive and violent situation
- Unable to make eye contact with men other than your abuser
- Being beat up by a group of 5 pimps for looking one in the eye

Feeling at odds with law enforcement
- Getting arrested again and again
- Having to trade sex with a police officer in exchange for not getting arrested

Psychological/Emotional Impact of CSEC
- Disruption of healthy psychological development
  - Self-concept, intimacy, beliefs and goals
- Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
  - Impulse to revisit traumatic events, intrusive emotions & memories, flashbacks, hyper arousal, exaggerated startle reaction, panic symptoms
- Self-harm and suicidal behavior
- Dissociative disorders
- Anxiety
- Paranoia
- Clinical depression
- Hypersexualization

Emotional Impact of CSEC
- Anger and rage
- Disloyal emotional patterns
- Fear of humiliation
- Stigma of exploitation
- Self-blame
- Loss of sexual desire, feelings, or response

Social Impact of CSEC
- Isolation from peer group
- Disconnection from community
- Isolation from mainstream society
- Homelessness
- Incarceration
- Criminal record as obstacle
- Disempowerment
- Lack of life skills
- Racial violence and discrimination
- Difficulty maintaining relationships

Physical Impact of CSEC
- Continuous physical abuse
- Rape & gang rape
- STDs & STIs
- HIV & AIDS
- Loss of bowel control
- Pregnancy (wanted and unwanted)
- Sterility
- Facial/dental reconstruction
- Tattoos & branding
- Brain damage
- Substance abuse/addiction
- Suicide/Death

Technical Impact of CSEC
- Loss of bowel control
- Pregnancy (wanted and unwanted)
- Sterility
- Facial/dental reconstruction
- Tattoos & branding
- Brain damage
- Substance abuse/addiction
- Suicide/Death

Spiritual Impact of CSEC
- Despair
- Hopelessness
- Lack of faith in humanity
- Lack of faith in spiritual power

Stockholm Syndrome & Trauma Bonds

CSEC victims often form “trauma bonds” with perpetrators. This can be the biggest obstacle in their recovery.

How are trauma bonds formed?
- Violence and threats of violence.
- Alternating violence and kindness increases bonding.
- Believe if they even think a disloyal thought, exploiter will know and retaliate.
- Isolation increases bonding.
- Shame and stigma associated with prostitution, rape, losing virginity increases bonding.
Stockholm Syndrome & Trauma Bonds

What are the major indicators of trauma bonding?

Denial
- Denies anger at exploiter to others and to self
- Denies violence when violence and threats of violence are actually occurring
- Rationalizes violence

Search for control
- Believe they have some control over abuse
- Believe if they control situation it lessens pimps/customers/traffickers control and abuse
- Tries to get inside pimps/traffickers' customers heads

Lack of self
- May or may not have own perspective
- Experiences sense of self through pimps/traffickers/customers eyes

Empathy with exploiter
- Sees world from exploiter’s perspective
- Sees pimp as good guy, protector
- Sees exploiter as victim
- Self-blame for situation and abuse
- Is thankful and grateful pimp/trafficker/customer have not killed them
- Sees outside authorities/people trying to win release (escape) as bad guys

Others
- Shows ongoing symptoms of trauma or PTSD
- Intensely grateful for small kindness
- Hyper vigilant to exploiter’s needs
- Seeks to keep exploiter happy to decrease violence

Identifying CSEC Victims

- Exhibit behaviors including fear, anxiety, “hyper-vigilance”, depression, somatization, tics, and/or hyperactivity.
- Truancy or lateness from school may be a sign that sexual exploitation is occurring during school hours, or during hours when the young person should otherwise be sleeping.
- Keeping late-night or unusual hours
- Unaccounted for time, whereabouts
- A tattoo (on the neck, chest, or arm) the result of branding by a pimp.
- Wearing new clothes of any style, or getting hair or nails done with no independent financial means is a more general indicator of potential sexual exploitation.

- Not in control of their own money. Has two cell phones
- Depicts elements of sexual exploitation in drawing, poetry, music, etc.
- Physical and sexual violence are the everyday reality of many sexually exploited children and may leave visible signs of abuse, such as: unexplained bruises, broken bones, cuts, or marks.
- Wearing sexually provocative clothing can be an indicator of sexual exploitation (but not a warning sign in and of itself)

- Use term “in the life”, or referring to a boyfriend as “Daddy.”
- Has no identification or is not in control of his or her identification documents.

- Renal information – such as age, name, and/or date of birth
- Has no identification or is not in control of his or her identification documents.

- Evidence of controlling or dominating relationships,
- Vague answers to questions about disliking partner.
- Homeless or runaway youth often sourcing on their own may be forced to work for money, shelter, or things of value.

- Youth living in group homes are targeted by exploiters due to the potential to recruit more youth from the same home

- Family dysfunction – including abuse in the home (emotional, sexual, physical, etc.), neglect, absence of a caregiver, or substance abuse.
- Personal information – such as: age, name, and/or date of birth might change with each telling of his/her story, or the information given might contradict itself.

- Has an explicitly sexual online profile via internet community sites, such as Facebook.com, Craigslist.org, My Red Book.com, etc.

- Excessive frequenting of internet chat rooms or classified sites, such as Craigslist.org, known for recruitment.

- Medical staff consider frequent or multiple sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) or pregnancies a warning sign.

- Medical staff consider frequent or multiple sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) or pregnancies a warning sign.

Stages of Change Model

- Continue to show unconditional love
- Open door policy
- Non judgmental

“Understanding it’s a cycle”
“....being in foster care was the **perfect training** for commercial sexual exploitation. I was used to being moved without warning, without any say, not knowing where I was going or whether I was allowed to pack my clothes. After years in foster care, I did not think anyone would want to care of me unless they were paid. So, when my pimp expected me to make money to support the family, it made sense to me.”

- *a recovered youth*

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**Law related to CSEC & Child Welfare**

- Welfare & Institutions Code § 300.2
  
  “…the purpose of the provisions of this chapter relating to dependent children is to **provide maximum safety and protection** for children who are currently being physically, **sexually or emotionally abused**, being **exploited**, and to ensure the safety, protection and emotional well-being of children who are at risk of that harm.

- Welfare & Institutions Code § 300(d)
  
  “The child has been sexually abused….and the parent or guardian has failed to adequately protect the child from sexual abuse when the parent or guardian knew or reasonably should have known that the child was in danger of sexual abuse.”

- Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Act (CANRA) Penal Code
  
  § 11164-11174.3
  
  § 11165(c): “sexual exploitation refers to the following...any person who knowingly promotes, aids, or assists, employs, uses, persuades, induces, or coerces a child...to engage in or assist others to engage in;”

- **Prostitution, Live performance** involving obscene sexual conduct, Production of **pornographic** images

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**Data Related to the Intersection**

- Up to 90% Percent of CSEC have previous history of child abuse and neglect

- Youth who experience sexual abuse are **28 times** more likely to be arrested for prostitution than their non-abused counterparts

- **DATA**: 50-85% have history with the child welfare system prior to exploitation

  - LA County STAR Court
    - Nearly 80% had prior involvement with child welfare
  - Oakland, Two CSEC provider organizations serving 200 youth
  - 53% of youth reported living in group homes

- Trend repeats nationally
## Emergency Response

### NOW
- First Responders
  - Law Enforcement
  - Child Welfare
  - Probation
  - The Hotline
  - Then what?

### NEXT
- Barriers & Opportunities
- Develop Protocols
- No Wrong Door
- When a child runs away or goes missing – what happens in your county?

## What is your Role?

What can you do?

- Social Worker
- Lawyer
- Judges
- Caregivers

- Treatment Staff
- Schools
- CASA
- Mentors

## Strategies to Better Serve CSEC

- Training
- Identification
- Assessment
- Placement
- Treatment
STAR Court

- Funded by a grant from California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation; $300,000 / year for 3 years.
- Dept. of Probation also granted $350,000 / year for 3 years.
- Currently working with 72 girls, ages 12 – 18.
- Generally doing well, or are AWOL.
- Approx. 18 have participated in the prosecutions of their traffickers.

Alienation

- Emotional abuse
- Confinement
- Isolation; removal from familiar places and people
- Re-naming
- Sense of competition

Placement Considerations

Excerpt from Police Report 7/19/13:

Officers investigation revealed that Def.____ was 15 years old. Officers contacted Def.’s mother A. W. who advised that she was far away, but would make arrangement for Def.’s cousin to pick her up from the station. Def. was processed at Van Nuys Jail for 647(b) and released to her cousin Canady, Curtis, driver license number F2551230.
Placement Considerations

- Be clear on who family members are / SILP
- Any change in parents' ability to supervise?
- Dual Supervision 300/602
- Use of house arrest
- Is the home or placement near the pimp or the track?
- Open suitable placement: minimizing AWOL's
- Effectiveness of placement is based upon who is there, not where it is

Placement Options

- Crittenton Services for Children & Families
- Children Are Our Future
- David & Margaret
- Maryvale
- Mary Magdalene Transitional Housing (18+)
Out-of-County Placement Options

Forest Ridge, Iowa

- Both dependents and delinquents
- IV-E eligible
- Licensed, approved through ICPC
- Not locked; in the cornfields
- 106 beds
- On-grounds school, sports

Background & Federal Action

- No Longer Viewed as Solely an International Problem
- Trafficking Victims Protection Act
  - Definition of victim
  - Remedies
  - Trafficking in Persons Report (TIP)
- Action by the Federal Government
  - ACYF Guidance to Child Welfare Agencies
  - Federal Legislation
  - Senate Caucus to End Human Trafficking
+ C  C in California

- California is a hub for exploitation
  - FBI – High Intensity Child Prostitution Areas
  - CSEC specialized providers serve hundreds of youth annually

- Nine Human Trafficking Task Forces identified nearly 1,300 victims in California
  - Over 70% were victims from the United States
  - Over 50% were victims of sex trafficking
  - 360 children arrested for prostitution in California
  - 13% of these children were between the ages of 12-14.

- Last year close to 200 children were arrested for prostitution in Los Angeles County
  - Additionally, 37 girls who were not known CSEC victims disclosed their exploitation while in detention

+ Promising Practices & Collaborative Approaches to ering C  C

- California
  - County Efforts
  - State Efforts

- Other Efforts in California
  - Child Welfare Council
  - SB

- Child Welfare Led No Wrong Door Approaches in Other Jurisdictions
  - Washington
  - Oregon
  - Connecticut
  - Florida
  - Minnesota

+ Child Welfare Council Effort to Fight Commercial Sexual Exploitation

- “Ending CSEC A Call For multi-System Collaboration in California”

- Key Recommendations
  - Overarching state body to monitor and oversee implementation of recommendations
  - Prevalence Assessment
  - Prevention Training
  - Specialized Services
  - multi-System Data Coordination

- State Action Team
  - Subcommittees
ey Components in an effective CSEC ering system

- **Screening** and identifying victims and assessing their needs
- **Education** and **Awareness** - all agencies use the same language
- **Safety planning** for youth, families and the staff serving them
- **Collaboration** among the multiple **child-serving systems** and agencies, including CBOs, FBOs, etc.
- **Tracking, collecting, and sharing data**
- **Trauma-informed** system of care
- **Appropriate placements** trained to serve CSEC
- **Trust and Relationship** building to improve service provision
- **Culturally competent** and appropriate services
- **Survivor involvement** in designing and implementing programming for CSEC

ey Points to are it Colleagues

- CSEC are not “prostitutes” they are victims of serial, child sexual abuse and sexual exploitation
- There is a continuum including early childhood sexual abuse, sexual exploitation and CSEC
- Many CSEC suffer from Stockholm Syndrome and Trauma Bonds with their perpetrators
- Foster care children are at high risk of being recruited into the commercial sex industry
- If you are a mandatory reporter, and you know or have reason to suspect exploitation, you must report it to the child abuse hotline
- Civil legal advocates assist in securing resources and supports to help stabilize youth and their families

esources

- [National Center For Youth Law - Ending the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children: A Call for Multi-System Collaboration in California](#)
- [WestCoast Children s Clinic - Research to Action: Sexually Exploited Minors (SEM) Needs and Strengths](#)
- [Institute of Medicine - Confronting Commercial Sexual Exploitation and Sex Trafficking of Minors in the United States](#)
- [Shared Hope International - Protected Innocence Report](#)
- [ECPAT - And Boys Too](#)
- [Polaris Project](#)
- [Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC) in the Portland metro Area](#)
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