WESTCOAST CHILDREN'S CLINIC

IDENTIFYING COMMERCIALLY SEXUALLY EXPLOITED CHILDREN

Guidelines for Administering the Commercial Sexual Exploitation – Identification Tool: Hotline and Intake Version (CSE-IT: H&I)

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CSE-IT: H&I USER MANUAL

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ABOUT WESTCOAST CHILDREN'S CLINIC

WestCoast Children's Clinic is a community mental health clinic serving children and youth in Oakland, California, and surrounding communities. WestCoast is committed to providing psychological services to vulnerable children, youth, and their families regardless of their ability to pay, and to expanding the reach of psychological services through advocacy, research, and training. To ensure the ongoing availability of these services, WestCoast is dedicated to training the next generation of mental health professionals.

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ABOUT THE CSE-IT: HOTLINE AND INTAKE VERSION AND THIS USER GUIDE

This guide is intended to help users administer the *Commercial Sexual Exploitation Identification Tool* (*CSE-IT; pronounced "See It"): Hotline and Intake (CSE-IT H&I).* It includes information on how to use and score the CSE-IT, background information about Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC), trauma-informed engagement considerations, suggestions for preparing to use the tool, and the federal mandated reporting guidelines.

The content of the CSE-IT (including all versions of the tool and user manuals) is based on research conducted by WestCoast Children's Clinic (WestCoast) and partner agencies. WestCoast gathered data through focus groups, interviews, and expert reviews from over 100 survivors and CSEC providers, in addition to reviewing existing screening tools and literature on risk factors and indicators of commercial sexual exploitation.

WestCoast validated the CSE-IT in 2016 with data from the pilot study that included 52 agencies, over 2,000 service providers, and 5,537 youth. This study revealed that at least 635 young people, or 11.4% of children in our sample agencies, had clear signs of exploitation. During the CSE-IT pilot study, WestCoast received requests from several agencies for a version of the tool designed specifically for use during child welfare hotline calls and at initial intake, when there is relatively little information available and the child or youth is being evaluated for many other safety and well-being considerations.

To develop the *CSE-IT: Hotline and Intake* (CSE-IT H&I), WestCoast formed an Advisory Committee of child welfare hotline and intake workers, supervisors, and managers from five county child welfare agencies, including Riverside, Sacramento, San Francisco, Santa Barbara, and Solano counties. WestCoast gathered input from this advisory committee to determine the best structure and content for the CSE-IT: H&I. Based on their input, WestCoast selected a subset of Key Indicators and Statements to Consider and restructured the scoring for use in this very specific setting.

Though the development of the CSE-IT: H&I was largely motivated by the needs of child welfare hotlines, the tool can be applied in any setting where there is limited information available, such as during initial intake interviews. For example, staff conducting intake in juvenile detention or probation departments often have limited information about a youth's history or current needs. The CSE-IT: H&I should not be

used when more information is available about a youth, as doing so risks missing critical information that can point to exploitation. In any situation or setting where there is more opportunity to talk to youth, review case files, or speak with other family or providers about the youth, the full version of the CSE-IT should be used.

BACKGROUND ABOUT COMMERCIAL SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN

California law defines children who are commercially sexually exploited as children who have been sexually trafficked, as described in Section 236.1 of the Penal Code, or have received food, shelter, or payment in exchange for sexual acts. (California Welfare & Institutions Code § 300(b)(2)). The Federal Trafficking Victims Protection Act defines sex trafficking as "the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for the purposes of a commercial sex act" (18 U.S.C. § 1591). According to these definitions, a young person can be considered commercially sexually exploited whether or not a third party (e.g., pimp) is involved in their exploitation. Additionally, any person who buys or sells sex from a minor can be considered an exploiter.

Service providers report that over three-quarters of the sexually exploited youth they serve had been exploited for two to three years before there was a referral to specialized CSEC services (Basson, Rosenblatt & Haley, 2012). Using an evidence-based tool increases the number of victims who are identified, which allows for their protection from ongoing victimization and accelerated access to services and care.

Identification is key to revealing the prevalence of sexual exploitation. Policymakers and public system leaders need valid, reliable, and timely information on the scope of a problem to make data-driven decisions about where to allocate public resources. Organizations such as the California Child Welfare Council and the President's Interagency Task Force, created by the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000, have highlighted the urgent need for screening to improve identification, early intervention, and understanding of the prevalence of sexual exploitation of children.

For more background information, we recommend the following resources:

- Basson, D., Rosenblatt, E., & Haley, H. (2012). Research-to-Action: Sexually Exploited Minors Needs and Strengths. WestCoast Children's Clinic. http://www.westcoastcc.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/WCC_SEM_Needs-and-Strengths_FINAL.pdf

- Basson, D. (2017). Validation of the Commercial Sexual Exploitation-Identification Tool (CSE-IT): Technical Report. WestCoast Children's Clinic. http://www.westcoastcc.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/WCC-CSE-IT-PilotReport-FINAL.pdf

- Walker, K. (2013). Ending the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children: A Call for multi-system collaboration in California. California Child Welfare Council. http://www.youthlaw.org/fileadmin/ncyl/youthlaw/publications/Ending-CSEC-A-Call-for-Multi-System_Collaboration-in-CA.pdf

- Clawson, H. J., Dutch, N., Solomon, A. & Goldblatt, L.G. (2008). Human Trafficking Into and Within the United States: A Review of the Literature. Report submitted to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation. http://aspe.hhs.gov/hsp/07/humantrafficking/litrev/

PURPOSE AND LIMITATIONS OF SCREENING

Screening for commercial sexual exploitation can improve identification of young people who experience this abuse, which is necessary to provide them with subsequent protection from ongoing victimization. Universal screening is proactive and does not rely on signs or suspicion of exploitation to screen. Instead, universal screening means screening all youth who meet pre-determined criteria and is strongly recommended for early identification.

The Importance of Universal Screening for Identification

Universal screening is the first step to identify the existence of a problem, facilitate early intervention, and prevent complications. For example, universal screening is used in mental health settings to identify youth at risk of suicide and in medical settings for early detection of certain diseases. Medical clinics routinely check blood pressure, pulse, and body temperature on all adults to identify potential health issues. In some outpatient mental health clinics, suicide screening is routine for all patients. In all cases, screening is conducted when pre-determined criteria are met— without regard to the presence of symptoms.

For the CSE-IT, WestCoast recommends that universal screening include all youth ages 10 and over, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, culture, sexual orientation, residence, health, socioeconomic status, appearance, or behavior. In hotline and

intake settings, this may also include screening based on predetermined criteria regardless of referring concern. Where this is not possible, we recommend that hotline and intake settings still ground their implementation plan for the CSE-IT in a universal screening philosophy and screen as broadly as feasible.

Universal screening is predicated on pre-determined criteria partly to minimize the possibility that youth are screened differentially based on their gender, race, public system involvement, or any other aspect of identity.

Youth who fall outside the recommended age range for the CSE-IT but are at high risk of exploitation, for whatever reason, should be screened as well. This is very similar to the principle of universal screening in healthcare settings, where, for example, family history of an illness may result in screening a patient for a health concern even if the patient does not otherwise meet the screening criteria.

Screening Is Not Diagnostic

Screening is a preliminary step that prompts additional information gathering and interventions when problems or areas of potential risk or harm are identified. When a screening tool indicates risk, providers must gather additional information to determine appropriate interventions and response.

For youth at risk of victimization through commercial sexual exploitation, appropriate interventions may include conducting a full assessment of their needs and strengths, safety planning, harm reduction, crisis support, specialized treatment planning, or a forensic investigation, depending on the severity of the situation.

The *CSE-IT: H&I* is a guide to support identification and should not be used as the sole deciding factor to determine whether a youth is sexually exploited. Using other screening and assessment practices in combination with the CSE-IT will greatly enhance the use of the tool.

COMPLETING THE *CSE-IT: H&I* AND GATHERING INFORMATION

The *CSE-IT: H&I* should not be used as an interview script or questionnaire. Instead, it serves as a guide for what information to listen for from the youth or reporting party, and what additional information is needed to determine whether a young person is experiencing sexual exploitation. Using the *CSE-IT: H&I* requires that the user be familiar with the items on the tool prior to screening.

It may be difficult to collect information directly from a reporting party or from a young person. They may be unfamiliar with exploitation, may feel unsure about the circumstances of abuse, or may be unwilling or unable to disclose the abuse for a number of reasons. Familiarity with the Key Indicators and the Statements to Consider help the user of the tool listen for information that potentially points to exploitation and to ask appropriate follow-up questions.

When asking questions directly, it is helpful to use language that is age- and situation-appropriate, choosing words a person will either know or can relate to. This will help put the person—whether a youth or a reporting party—at ease when talking about difficult topics that may include sexual exploitation.

The *CSE-IT: H&I* is organized into 6 Key Indicators (shaded boxes on the CSE-IT form). The indicators are:

1. Housing and Caregiving
2. Relationships and Personal Belongings
3. Physical Health and Appearance
4. Environment and Exposure
5. Coercion
6. Exploitation

Each of the 6 Key Indicators on the tool has the following:

- **Definition** (in the shaded box): A description of the Key Indicator.
- **Statements to Consider** (check boxes): Sub-items to help rate the Key Indicators. The screener has flexibility in how they use the sub-items and are not required to assess them all.

While gathering information to complete the *CSE-IT: H&I,* screeners are encouraged to begin with indicators they already have information about and then explore other areas of potential vulnerability or risk. The indicators and statements to consider are not topics that must be asked about directly. They are areas the provider should consider while screening for commercial sexual exploitation.

When implementing any version of the CSE-IT, always follow your agency's internal guidelines for administering the CSE-IT.

GUIDELINES FOR USE

The guidelines for using the *CSE-IT: H&I* are flexible to accommodate the many ways hotline and intake departments interview youth and receive and process child abuse reports. WestCoast strongly recommends a universal screening philosophy, described previously, to proactively and systematically screen for indicators of exploitation. This approach increases the possibility of identifying youth *before* signs of commercial sexual exploitation become obvious.

When implementing universal screening is not possible, WestCoast recommends the following guidelines:

- Use the *CSE-IT: H&I* to evaluate any child abuse allegation that is explicitly about commercial sexual exploitation.
- Use the *CSE-IT: H&I* anytime you suspect exploitation for any reason.
- For allegations of other forms of child abuse, use the CSE-IT: H&I anytime a reporting party mentions any item on the tool. This requires that hotline and intake workers be knowledgeable about the items on the tool so they can easily recognize when it is appropriate to use it.

STEPS TO COMPLETING THE *CSE-IT: H&I*

1. **Preparing**. Familiarize yourself with the Key Indicators on the *CSE-IT: H&I* so you will know what to listen for in completing the CSE-IT.

2. **Screening**. During your interview with the youth or conversation with the reporting party, listen for Statements to Consider and mark them on the CSE-IT: H&I form by checking the boxes for the relevant items. The Statements to Consider can also be used as a guide for areas to explore with the youth or caller and provide a means of assessing areas of immediate risk or vulnerability. The Statements to Consider can also highlight where more information is needed. Questions should be posed in language that is accessible and comfortable for the youth or caller. If information is not easily available or unknown, use the "no information" answer option.

3. **Completing and Scoring the *CSE-IT: H&I***. Once you gather information and conclude the call, complete the CSE-IT:

a. Refer back to the Statements to Consider to finalize and document all of the information available to you, including what you know about the youth's circumstances and your professional judgement.

b. Consider the number of items marked and the intensity or acuity of the item to determine the rating for each Key Indicator. Circle: "No Information," "No Concern," "Possible Concern," or "Clear Concern" for all six Key Indicators.

In determining the rating for each **Key Indicator** keep in mind:

No Information – Rate a Key Indicator "No Information" if there is insufficient information to determine a level of concern at this time.

No Concern – The information gathered and assessed does not indicate that the Key Indicator requires intervention at this time.

Possible Concern – The information gathered and assessed indicates evidence of a problem that requires intervention, however the problem may not be serious or chronic. Even if the youth or reporting party denies having needs in an area, you may still suspect or have some level of concern. Evidence of a past problem may also be rated as a Possible Concern.

Clear Concern – Rate the Key Indicator a "Clear Concern" when there is clear, discerning evidence that there is vulnerability or risk. Evidence may include disclosure from the youth, from other collaterals about the youth, or from observations or client records. If there is clear evidence of a problem on any Key Indicator or Statement to Consider, determine what interventions may be required, including referring for an investigation, mandated reporting, safety planning, and continued client engagement. See the section titled "Next Steps" for more information.

c. Tally the selected Key Indicator values (for all six indicators) and write the final score in the "Total Score" box at the bottom of the page. The maximum score for the *CSE-IT: H&I* is 22 points. If you calculate a score higher than 22, the scoring has been done incorrectly. Lastly, mark the checkbox next to the level of concern category (No Concern, Possible Concern, Clear Concern) that corresponds with the total score.

UNDERSTANDING THE FINAL SCORE ON THE *CSE-IT: H&I*

The completed CSE-IT will result in a final score that indicates the youth's level of risk at the time of screening. The final score falls into one of three categories: **No Concern, Possible Concern, or Clear Concern**.

No Concern. This final score category indicates that there is no reason to believe the youth is being sexually exploited or there is not enough information to determine a rating at this time. This rating does not state that sexual exploitation categorically does not exist.

Possible Concern. A "Possible Concern" final score indicates that the youth may be at risk for or experiencing sexual exploitation but there is either not enough information available or the current behaviors and circumstances do not clearly indicate exploitation. Providers should consult with a supervisor to determine what course of action is appropriate given the available information. Your agency may decide that this level of risk is sufficient to open an investigation. It is important to actively monitor a young person who receives this rating, fully assess their needs, and initiate preventive actions to ensure that exploitation does not intensify or occur.

Clear Concern. This final score category indicates that numerous risk factors and vulnerabilities are present, suggesting the youth is being commercially sexually exploited or is at high risk for sexual exploitation. This score should immediately trigger actions to address sexual exploitation of the youth. The next section addresses possible next steps, including collaborating and consulting with supervision if a provider is unsure about an appropriate response.

NEXT STEPS

The overall level of risk for sexual exploitation as indicated by No Concern, Possible Concern, or Clear Concern will help the provider determine the next appropriate steps. If the CSE-IT indicates an overall Possible or Clear Concern score, providers should consider the following actions:

- Follow internal protocol for responding to sexual exploitation or other forms of child abuse. This may include a formal investigation, mandated report, safety planning, and referral to community agencies to develop a comprehensive service plan for the youth. (Please see the Mandated Reporting section for additional information on this topic.)
- Refer the youth for a thorough assessment of needs and strengths. This may be through a mental health provider or other program that provides assessment or intensive case management services. One assessment tool that is specific to the needs and strengths of sexually exploited youth is the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths-Commercial Sexual Exploitation (CANS-CSE).
- Collaborate and consult with a supervisor or other providers. Refer the young person to a provider able to develop a comprehensive service plan that addresses the youth's current needs, including safety, physical health, mental health, and access to basic needs.

It is important to remember that clear, unambiguous information about whether a youth is being commercially sexually exploited is not required to provide appropriate followup, whether it be an investigation to reduce uncertainty about the youth's possible exploitation or providing care that addresses the youth's needs.

CSE-IT: H&I KEY INDICATORS

This section provides background information on each of the 6 Key Indicators on the CSE-IT, explains why the indicators are on the tool, and describes each one.

1. Housing and Caregiving. The youth experiences housing or caregiving instability for any reason.

1. HOUSING AND CAREGIVING. The youth experiences housing or caregiving instability for any reason.	No Information 0	No Concern 0	Possible Concern 1	Clear Concern 2
❒ Youth runs away or frequently leaves their residence for extended periods of time (overnight, days, weeks).				
❒ Youth experiences periods of homelessness, e.g. living on the street or couch surfing.				
❒ Youth experiences unstable housing, including multiple foster/group home placements.				
❒ Youth has highly irregular school attendance, including frequent or prolonged tardiness or absences.				
❒ Youth relies on emergency or temporary resources to meet basic needs, e.g. hygiene, shelter, food, medical care.				

Indicators of housing or caregiving instability may be direct or indirect causes of exploitation or they may result from the exploitation. Instability interferes with a person's ability to access resources to meet basic needs, including shelter, food,

hygiene, and health. Instability also hinders a person's capacity for age-appropriate activities of daily living, such as attending school. Instability, especially in residential placement, results in an inability to rely on relationships formed while in a given living arrangement, because caregivers, location, friends, and schools may be constantly changing (Coy, 2009). Lack of adequate, consistent supervision by caregivers may leave a young person vulnerable to those who may exploit them.

Instability in housing and caregiving among exploited youth is well documented in the literature and was frequently reported by service providers who contributed to the development of the CSE-IT. The types of instability include having insecure residential placements (Coy, 2009); lacking caregiver support, being abandoned, experiencing homelessness (Clawson & Dutch, 2008; Basson, Rosenblatt, & Haley, 2012; Covenant House 2013); and running away from or not returning to home or placement (Clawson & Dutch, 2008; Coy, 2009; Mitchell, Finkelhor, & Wolak, 2010; Thomson, et al. 2011; and Estes & Weiner, 2001). This instability in housing or caregiving may result in child welfare involvement. Research shows that many youth who are exploited are served by the child welfare system at some point in their lives (Basson, Rosenblatt, & Haley, 2012; California Child Welfare Council, n.d.; Walker, 2013).

Exploitation is strongly related to continually leaving home or placement for both males and females (Clawson, et al. 2009; Greene et al., 1999). Running away may be a direct or indirect cause or effect of exploitation (Saewyc & Edinburgh, 2010; Saewyc, Solsvig, & Edinburgh, 2008; and Estes & Weiner 2001; Thomson, 2011; Reid 2011). Studies find that approximately 60% of sexually exploited youth have a history of running away (Mitchell, Finkelhor, & Wolak, 2010; Basson, Rosenblatt, & Haley, 2012). Young people are often approached for exploitation when on the streets because their lack of access to resources to meet basic needs related to shelter, food, hygiene, and health makes them vulnerable (Shahera, et al., 2012; Covenant House, 2013; Greene et al., 1999).

A youth's ability to achieve their educational benchmarks is impacted by housing and caregiving instability. Research notes that 50% of exploited youth or at-risk youth are making no progress toward their educational goals or have no goals; 21% have problems with regular school attendance and have been out of school for one year or more; and when in school 35% experience limited or no school success (Basson, Rosenblatt, & Haley 2012). School functioning may also be impacted by peer relationships and bullying or harassment about exploitation (Basson, Rosenblatt, & Haley, 2012). Providers report that youth may be targeted verbally, physically, or sexually, which may lead to school avoidance, tardiness, interrupted learning,

reduction in school performance, or dropping out. (See Indicator 4, Environment and Exposure, to rate bullying.)

2. Relationships and Belongings. The youth's relationships and personal belongings are not consistent with their age or circumstances, suggesting possible recruitment.

2. RELATIONSHIPS AND PERSONAL BELONGINGS. The youth's relationships and belongings are not consistent with their age or circumstances, suggesting possible recruitment by an exploiter.	No Information 0	No Concern 0	Possible Concern 2	Clear Concern 3
❒ Youth has unhealthy, inappropriate or romantic relationships, including (but not limited to) with someone older/an adult.				
❒ Youth receives or has access to unexplained money, credit cards, hotel keys, gifts, drugs, alcohol, transportation.				
❒ Youth meets with contacts they developed over the internet or on their phone including sex partners or boyfriends/girlfriends.				
❒ Explicit photos of the youth are posted on the internet or on their phone.				
❒ Youth has several cell phones or their cell phone number changes frequently.				

Young people may be susceptible to unhealthy, dangerous, or violent intimate relationships due to challenges safely negotiating interpersonal relationships (Barnes, et al., 2010; Rich et al., 2005). Exploiters use emotional connection with youth to lower their defenses and gain trust and dependency (Human Smuggling and Trafficking Center, 2008; Walker 2013). This is a common strategy for grooming or recruitment. An adult may develop a relationship with a youth and become a romantic partner or protector (Human Smuggling and Trafficking Center, 2008; Department of Homeland Security, 2008). For these reasons, the youth may display loyalty or trust towards adult exploiters (Walker, 2013; Clawson & Dutch, 2008; Basson, Rosenblatt, & Haley, 2012), which is often considered trauma bonding or Stockholm syndrome.

Exploiters may become a primary source of basic needs for youth lacking access to shelter, food, health care, or hygiene. Exploiters may also provide material goods as part of the seduction or recruitment process (e.g., cell phones, jewelry, clothes, basic needs, transportation, etc.) (Human Smuggling and Trafficking Center, 2008). Once exploitation has begun, youth may have access to material goods related to exploitation (large amounts of money, hotel keys, transportation, beauty products/services, clothing, technology, etc.). It is useful to notice when a youth's material items are inconsistent with their socio-economic status or age.

Service providers report that technology (cell phones, other devices, and email) is used by exploited youth to communicate with buyers or sellers. Technology is also used by exploiters for control by keeping tabs on a young person's whereabouts and activities. Prepaid, no-contract, and disposable mobile devices facilitate human trafficking because of the potential for anonymity. Law enforcement professionals and researchers find that social networking, online chats, and digital media are commonly and increasingly used by exploiters to access youth and recruit buyers (Cantrell, 2013;

University of Southern California, 2012; Mitchell, Finkelhor, & Wolak, 2010). Youth may have multiple cell phones or their cell phone numbers may change frequently. In settings where contact information for patients is updated, it may be useful to keep a record of these changes.

Because of the nature of exploitation and strategies of exploiters, exploited youth may travel with individuals or groups who are not relatives to places that are inconsistent with life circumstances or age. Exploiters use travel to deliver youth to buyers, increase youth's isolation and limit their control, and reduce risk of being noticed or caught. In situations where travel documents are required, youth's travel documents may be held by someone else or they may be given false identity or travel documents (United Nations, n.d.).

3. Physical Health and Appearance. The youth experiences notable changes in health and appearance.

3. PHYSICAL HEALTH AND APPEARANCE. The youth experiences notable changes in health and appearance.	No Information 0	No Concern 0	Possible Concern 2	Clear Concern 3
❒ Youth presents a significant change in appearance, e.g. dress, hygiene, weight.				
❒ Youth has repeated or concerning testing or treatment for pregnancy or STIs.				
❒ Youth has health problems, sleep deprivation, poor nutrition or irregular access to meals.				
❒ Youth experiences significant change or escalation in their substance use.				
❒ Youth has tattoos, scarring or branding, indicating being treated as someone's property.				

Exposure to chronic violence and abuse (often part of exploitation) can affect the whole body—inside and out. Physical health problems may be a direct result of injury or may be stress-related illnesses (Office of Refugee Resettlement, 2012; Lederer & Wetzel, 2014; Clawson & Dutch, 2008; Grace et al., 2012; Clawson, Saloman, & Grace, 2008). Direct injuries include bruises, black eyes, scrapes, broken bones, concussions, burns, scars, and vaginal or anal injuries, such as tearing. Youth may account for these marks on the body by blaming themselves (saying they are "clumsy" or "bruise easily"). Sexually exploited youth may also present with reproductive health needs, such as sexually transmitted infections, menstrual problems, pregnancies, and abortions (voluntary or forced). Frequent testing for reproductive needs, regardless of test outcomes, can itself be an indicator.

In focus groups conducted by WestCoast, providers reported observing youth with health problems or complaints related to poor nutrition, not having access to regular meals, or eating disorders. Gastrointestinal disorders, including stomach complaints or loss of appetite, are also frequently reported. This can be caused by not having access

to food but might also be related to stress or trauma. Similarly, providers report that exploited youth present with sleep issues. This may be related to not getting enough sleep, not having a regular or safe place to sleep, unusual sleeping patterns (e.g., they sleep during the day and stay up at night), or stress-related disturbances. These physical health issues may impact presentation, hygiene, or appearance.

Service providers also frequently report shifts in how a youth styles themselves or dresses. This may involve dressing in a manner that is atypical for the youth's age, community, situation, or the weather. For example, a young person who is being exploited may wear, carry, or own clothes typically worn by sex workers (United Nations, n.d., Moossy, 2009). There may also be noticeable markings on the body. Tattoos, scarification, and branding are frequently used as mechanisms of influence or control and may indicate an exploiter's treatment of the youth as property (United Nations, n.d.; Cantrell, 2013).

Providers also report that a significant shift or increase in substance use can be linked to exploitation. This can be due to the youth's response to the overwhelming stress of sexual exploitation or abuse, but it can also be a tactic of an exploiter in the recruitment stage or a means of control and influence once exploitation has begun. Substance use is common among exploited youth—both males and females (Lederer & Wetzel, 2014; Roe-Sepowitz, 2012; Reid & Piquero, 2014; Stoltz, et al., 2007; ACYF 2016).

Basson, Rosenblatt, & Haley (2012) found that over 30% of sexually exploited youth had substance abuse problems severe enough to require treatment. Among exploited youth with noted substance use disorders, 94% were using severely for over one year and denied the existence of a problem or need for recovery. Most were in environments or peer groups that encouraged substance use.

4. Environment and Exposure. The youth's environment or activities place them at risk.

4. ENVIRONMENT AND EXPOSURE. The youth's environment or activities place them at risk of exploitation.	No Information 0	No Concern 0	Possible Concern 2	Clear Concern 3
❒ Spends time with people who are exploited, or who buy or sell sex.				
❒ Youth engages in sexual activities that cause harm or place them at risk of victimization.				
❒ Youth spends time where exploitation is known to occur.				
❒ Youth uses language that suggests involvement in exploitation.				
❒ Youth has current or past involvement with law enforcement or juvenile justice.				

It is important to consider the people in a youth's environment, where they spend their time, what they do, and the quality of their relationships when assessing risk for

exploitation. Youth may reside in or frequent locations associated with sex work or exploitation (United Nations, 2013). Physical proximity to exploitation activity is an indicator as it places youth at risk or may be a result of their exploitation. Similarly, exposure to people involved in the sex trade or exploitation may be a cause or an effect of exploitation. A young person may be exposed to sex work in their community, peer group, home, or family (Basson, Rosenblatt, & Haley, 2012), or may have family members who are collaborating with exploiters (Clawson & Dutch, 2008) or who are exploiters.

If a youth is exploited or exposed to exploitation, it may impact their language. Providers report that youth may use terms typically associated with exploitation (e.g., "trick," "john," "date," "bottom," "track," "blade," "pimp," "daddy," etc.) or may have knowledge— not matching their age or life circumstances— of things associated with exploitation, such as sexual knowledge, hotel locations, truck stops, or websites.

Providers report that many exploited youth experience bullying or harassment about exploitation. Youth may be targeted verbally, physically, or sexually by peers, community members, or family members/caregivers. This may lead to increased isolation, defensiveness, aggression, or hopelessness. Bullying about exploitation may also impact the youth's ability or desire to participate in age appropriate activities.

Exploited youth often encounter the legal system and end up involved in the juvenile justice system (Walker, 2013). One study noted that almost 80% of exploited youth receiving services had been incarcerated in the juvenile justice system at some point (WestCoast, 2012). Juvenile justice involvement may be due to status offenses or crimes committed related to exploitation, trauma bonding, or coercion (e.g., theft, drug possession, assault, missing curfews, loitering, false identification) (Cantrell, 2013; Saar, Epstein, Rosenthal, & Vafa, 2015). Some providers report that involving youth in criminal acts can be a form of connection, grooming/recruitment, control, coercion, isolation (e.g. "no one will keep you safe like I can"), or used as a threat to turn them in. Youth may feel more isolated and constrained as they realize that delinquent or criminal acts impact job prospects, credit scores, and other life circumstances.

Gangs recognize the high payout and low risk associated with the sexual exploitation of children (Carpenter and Gates, 2016; Greenbaum, 2014; WestCoast, 2012). Gangs may provide relationship, sense of acceptance, basic needs, and protection for vulnerable youth whose need for these is unmet. Gangs often use coercion and manipulation to recruit and exploit youth. The exploitation may generate income or resources for the gang, or it may entail being traded among gang members as

property. Providers report that exploited youth may report having friends or acquaintances who are in a gang without being affiliated themselves.

5. Coercion. The youth is being controlled or coerced by another person.

5. COERCION. The youth is being controlled or coerced by another person.	No Information 0	No Concern 0	Possible Concern 3	Clear Concern 4
❒ Youth has an abusive or controlling intimate partner.				
❒ Youth travels to places that are inconsistent with their life circumstances.				
❒ Youth is coerced into getting pregnant, having an abortion, or using contraception.				
❒ Someone else is controlling the youth's contact with family or friends, leaving the youth socially isolated.				
❒ The youth or their friends, family, or other acquaintances receive threats.				
❒ Youth gives vague or misleading information about their age, whereabouts, residence, or relationships.				

Coercion indicates that a young person is at very high risk for exploitation or that exploitation has occurred. Even if a youth is not being exploited, evidence of coertion indicators may require intervention to address the youth's safety.

Coercion may involve actual or threatened violence against the youth or someone they know. Fear can be a symptom of coercion. This includes fear of retaliation against the youth or their family, fear of law enforcement and of disclosure (Clawson & Dutch, 2008). Exploiters may exert physical and psychological control over youth. Youth may be kept isolated with no freedom of movement while contact with others is controlled (Clawson & Dutch, 2008). Secrecy is common (Clawson, Saloman, & Grace, 2008), as young people may be asked to lie about topics such as their name or age (Leitch & Snow, 2013).

It is important to keep the dynamics of exploitation in mind when screening for commercial sexual exploitation and supporting youth who are at risk. As Basson, et al. (2018) note, "A damaging misperception about youth who are being exploited is that they choose to engage in their own victimization. This harmful judgment fails to account for the impact of coercive control, whereby a person gains power over another often through intermittent and unpredictable physical and sexual violence alternating between expressions of love and threats of abandonment. This power is buttressed through enforced drug use; control of eating, sleeping, and sexual practices; not allowing youth to attend work or school; and controlling money or access to basic needs. The dependency that results is known as a trauma bond, and it can develop with third party exploiters, buyers, or others involved in the exploitation." This bond is amplified through isolation, economic control, and psychological abuse tactics such as denial of experience and blaming the youth for their situation.

Youth may also have no control over their sexual health or safety. Exploiters may try to enforce whether a youth can or must use contraception, receive an abortion, or maintain a pregnancy. Exploiters may impregnate a youth and then later use the child as a means of ongoing coercion and control over the youth.

6. Exploitation. The youth exchanges sex for money or material goods, including food or shelter.

6. EXPLOITATION. The youth exchanges sex for money or material goods, including food or shelter.	No Information 0	No Concern 0	Possible Concern 4	Clear Concern 8
❒ Youth has a history of sexual exploitation. ❒ Youth is exchanging sex for money or material goods, including food or shelter for themselves or someone else, e.g. child, family, partner. ❒ Youth is watched, filmed or photographed in a sexually explicit manner. ❒ Youth is forced to give the money they earn to another person.				

Sexual exploitation, past or present, includes a range of sex crimes against children, including filming or watching minors in sexually explicit activities. Some service providers ask youth directly if they exchange sex for shelter, food, or other goods, and a young person may disclose their exploitation in response to direct questions (Covenant House, 2013; see also Asian Health Services screening, available at www.asianhealthservices.org/csec_tool. html). However, often youth do not self-disclose their exploitation due to fear, shame, or trauma bonding with their exploiter. They may not recognize their own exploitation or identify as victims (Walker, 2013; Basson, Rosenblatt, & Haley, 2012; Clawson, Saloman, & Grace, 2008). Because of this, disclosure may come from other individuals in their lives or from documentation in their case or medical histories.

USING A TRAUMA-INFORMED APPROACH TO SCREENING

When working with youth who have potentially been exploited or abused, it is essential that providers use a trauma-informed approach. This requires understanding the impact that trauma may have on a youth's life and using interpersonal skills to ensure that interactions are supportive of recovery and not re-traumatizing. Interactions with youth may include forensic interviews, mental health screenings, ongoing meetings or counseling sessions, physical health exams, or an organization's intake process.

It is important to create a positive, trusting relationship with youth or any reporting party prior to asking sensitive questions directly. For example, beginning an interview with a series of sensitive questions, such as, "Have you been sexually abused?" or "Have you ever terminated a pregnancy?" prior to establishing your trustworthiness may cause a young person to become overwhelmed, agitated, or disengaged. They may question the provider's motives and experience the inquiries as being intrusive. Reporting parties may also become reluctant to provide relevant information if they feel challenged.

In interviews where professionals are asking youth to disclose details of traumatic events, the focus should be on creating safety and minimizing distress. It is also helpful to consider what kind of information you need during the hotline call or intake process. If details about trauma are not necessary to determine follow-up steps or to provide care, it may be helpful to focus on addressing safety and creating an environment in which youth (or reporting parties) feel comfortable disclosing personal information.

Trauma-Informed Engagement Considerations[1] for Hotline and Intake Settings

Below are considerations to keep in mind when interacting with youth who have experienced trauma. While these considerations are especially important in intake settings when working directly with youth, they may also be relevant in hotline settings even though you may only be speaking with a reporting party. These considerations can help build trust with a reporting party and may also alert them to what information may be relevant to report about a youth.

These suggestions help providers create a safe, trauma-informed process and environment. Whatever the meeting's setting or purpose, keep in mind the following:

Address basic needs first. If basic needs, such as shelter, clothing, hygiene, medical, and others, are not met, youth will not be able to engage in dialogue. Not attending to basic needs may also inhibit rapport building.

Building trust with youth or a reporting party is an ongoing process. Youth or the reporting party may have had previous negative experiences with or false information about providers, which may result in little initial trust. The information

[1] Interview considerations were adapted from interview guides for asking about exploitation (including the Shared Hope International *Intervene* interview and the Loyola University Chicago interview guides) and from WestCoast's clinical staff experience from working with traumatized youth.

they are willing to provide may evolve as their relationship evolves, regardless of the length of time a provider may have with the youth or reporter.

Be realistic about how much information can be collected during an interview with a child or youth who has experienced extreme trauma or a reporting party who may not have complete information.

Be attentive to signs of distress. If the young person shows signs of agitation, numbing, or feeling overwhelmed, such as changes in breathing, facial coloration, or posture, take a moment to give them a break, shift discussion topics, or delay the interview. Even if they do not show obvious signs, it may be helpful to check in and ask how they're doing. Reporting parties may also need a break depending on their experience with making child abuse reports.

Give the youth space and respect personal boundaries. Consider the youth's emotional as well as physical space. Do not ask a continuous series of invasive or very personal questions, especially if the youth is showing signs of distress. Do not assume the youth will welcome physical contact. Stay attentive to signs of distress related to having access to an exit. Keep a path to the door open for the young person to leave if they'd like to.

Speak with youth in a confidential and safe environment. Aim to create an environment that is not intimidating. If possible, speak with the youth alone. When meeting youth in the community, it is important to make sure both the provider and the youth are safe.

Be non-judgmental. Be kind and empathetic, but also project neutrality. Do not react in an emotional or biased way to disclosures—whether from the youth or from a reporting party—about exploitation or exploiters.

Allow the youth to feel heard. Limiting interruptions, such as references to personal stories or other reactions, can help youth feel heard. While rapport-building can be a reciprocal interaction, when youth are disclosing information about their history, it is important to stay focused on them. The same principle is true when speaking with reporting parties.

Use open-ended questions. Closed-ended questions do not allow youth or other reporters to communicate their story on their terms and in their own words. It is

important to remember that the CSE-IT items are not interview questions and should not be asked verbatim.

Avoid challenging questions. Questions that start with "Why" may be perceived as challenging. For example, a question that starts with "Why did/didn't you…?" may be perceived as questioning the motives or judgment of the youth or reporting party. Opening a dialogue with "Tell me about…" may convey more openness and feel less intrusive.

Don't focus on inconsistencies. Youth may provide inconsistent answers because of a reluctance to disclose or as a result of their adjustment to trauma. In addition, there may be genuine disagreement between the youth's reporting of the facts and the way others who know the youth report them. It can be helpful to ask for clarification in a non-judgmental way, but do not insist on clarity and completeness right away. Remember, it may take time for a youth to tell their story. Similarly, reporting parties may not have complete information. It is important to remember that a report is used to follow up in more detail, and investigations can provide a better opportunity to obtain more complete information.

Commercially sexually exploited children may experience trauma bonding. Trauma bonding (sometimes referred to as Stockholm Syndrome) manifests as an emotional attachment to an exploiter. Do not identify youth as victims, their perpetrator as an exploiter or trafficker, or yourself as offering rescue. The reporting party may be unfamiliar with trauma bonding and may therefore not recognize exploitation.

Avoid clinical or technical language. Do not label a youth's experiences in clinical terms or use language that pathologizes them and their experience. For example, avoid the following words: CSEC, rehabilitation, treatment, coercion, grooming.

Be honest. Providers should introduce themselves, their organization or department, and mandating reporting requirements. It is important to set realistic expectations with youth regarding what can be done on their behalf. For example, it may not be realistic to say, "Everything will be okay."

If using an interpreter, ask if it is OK. The Center for Human Rights for Children at Loyola University Chicago recommends not using as an interpreter someone already known to the child or youth as that person may have been involved in their

exploitation (Walts, et al., 2011). Be sure to introduce the interpreter and explain their role. Avoid having side conversations with the interpreter.

LEGAL ISSUES AND MANDATED REPORTING

Human trafficking is a crime under federal and international law. The Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act (2014) amended the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA 42 U.S.C. § 5106g) to expand the definitions of "child abuse and neglect" and "sexual abuse" to include child sex trafficking. If a mandated reporter suspects that a child is a victim of child abuse, including child sex trafficking, a child abuse report must be filed. Note that reasonable suspicion is sufficient cause for filing a report; confirmation of abuse is not required. The child welfare or law enforcement agency receiving the report is responsible for investigating.

Legally mandated reporters include (but are not limited to) the following professionals:

a. A teacher, teacher's aide or assistant, or other instructional aide employed by any public or private school.
b. A classified employee of any public school.
c. Employees at institutions of higher learning.
d. Directors, employees, and volunteers at organizations that supervise or provide activities for children, such as camps, youth centers, and recreation centers.
e. An administrative officer or supervisor of child welfare and attendance.
f. Health care personnel including physicians, psychiatrists, dentists, nurses, therapists and other mental health professionals, among others.
g. Any employee of any police department, sheriff's department, probation or welfare department.
h. Social workers.

However, not every state responds to child sex trafficking through the child welfare system. To effectively respond to child sex trafficking, agencies using the *CSE-IT: H&I* should research appropriate local agencies to which they can refer children who are identified as exploited. For more information, see WestCoast's "Implementing the CSE-IT", available at this link: http://www.westcoastcc.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/WCC-CSE-IT-ImplementationGuide-FINAL.pdf

The Child Welfare Information Gateway fact sheet "Mandatory Reporters of Child Abuse and Neglect" contains additional information about mandatory reporting, including summaries of state laws. It is available at this link: https://www.childwelfare.gov/systemwide/laws_policies/statutes/manda.pdf

Though law enforcement and other public agencies may be primarily concerned with victimization that occurred within the United States, trafficking situations that occurred outside the U.S. may have significant implications for a victim's legal relief, allowing someone to access benefits or stay in the country legally. Organizations that work with clients who are immigrants to the U.S. should be aware of laws and benefits for individuals in these circumstances. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Refugee Resettlement provides information on these topics (http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/orr/programs/anti-trafficking).

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND TRAINING

Please contact us at screening@westcoastcc.org with any training, technical assistance, and implementation guidance requests, or other questions related to the *CSE-IT: H&I*.

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