

Early Identification of
Commercially Sexually Exploited Children

CSEC TOOLKIT

*Specifically designed for Educators and Administrators in
Elementary, Middle, and High Schools*



WEAVE Learn is a program of WEAVE that provides training and education in hope of preventing and ending sexual violence.

WEAVE's mission is to promote safe and healthy relationships and support survivors of sexual assault, domestic violence, and sex trafficking.

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this toolkit and training program is to create awareness and provide information regarding sex trafficking as it relates to schools and the community. It is meant to be a tool for educators, school staff, administrators, district staff, and others who work within California's education system. This toolkit, in conjunction with WEAVE Learn's training and curriculum guide, can also assist schools in meeting mandated education requirements related to sex trafficking and related topics.

Schools have a unique opportunity to identify warning signs, provide prevention education, promote a safe campus and supportive environment, and offer a trauma-informed and compassionate response to victims.

CA HEALTHY YOUTH ACT & RELATED LEGISLATION

The **California Healthy Youth Act (CHYA)** requires schools to provide education on human trafficking, which includes sex trafficking, at least once in middle school and once in high school. The California Health Education Framework is a resource that can assist educators in meeting these requirements.

The **Human Trafficking Prevention Education & Training Act** expands on CHYA to increase requirements for teacher training and prevention education for students.

The **Trafficking Victims Protection Act** establishes federal law that defines trafficking and requires prevention efforts and education. This law supports the fact that minors engaged in commercial sex are victims of trafficking, without having to be forced, tricked, or manipulated in any way.

CSEC QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE

Anyone under the age of 18 engaged in commercial sex is considered a victim of trafficking. Commercial sex is any form of sexual activity in exchange for anything of value, including basic needs. Trauma-informed response includes recognizing this as a crime against children, regardless of the child's perceived cooperation. There is no such thing as a child prostitute.

In California, the average age that a child is first commercially sexually exploited is 11-13 for boys and 12-14 for girls.

Traffickers may use force, fraud, or coercion to exploit victims. This can include false promises, posing as an intimate partner, or using threats of or actual violence. Some traffickers may exploit youth by exchanging basic needs for sexual acts.

CSEC QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE

Trafficking Indicators:

- Absences from school
- Decreased participation and performance in academics or extracurricular activities
- Sudden change in dress, appearance, or behavior
- Problem behaviors, such as aggression or otherwise acting out
- Withdrawal from friends or usual activities
- Depressed mood or anxiety
- Eating or sleeping disturbances
- Self-harm
- Loss of self-esteem
- Signs of physical or sexual abuse
- Suspicious tattoos/branding
- Multiple cell phones
- Refers to much older boyfriend/girlfriend/partner
- Controlling/dominating relationships
- Monitored movement or communication
- Pressure to keep relationship a secret
- Sexualized behavior
- Dresses provocatively or inappropriately for age
- Unexplained money or gifts
- Unexplained sexually transmitted infections or pregnancies
- Substance abuse or signs of addiction
- Language and terms associated with trafficking (“the life/game,” “daddy,” “trick,” “stroll/track/blade,” “hotel parties,” “trap houses”)

It is important to note that some of the potential indicators may also be indicators of mental health concerns and substance use disorders, adverse childhood experiences, and other issues among vulnerable youth who are not necessarily being commercially sexually exploited.

CSEC QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE

Physical & Emotional Trauma:

- Sexual Assault
- Sexually Transmitted Infections
- Physical and Emotional Abuse
- Branding
- Scarring/Disfigurement
- Unwanted pregnancy
- Forced abortion/forced birth
- Neglect
- Psychological Manipulation and Control

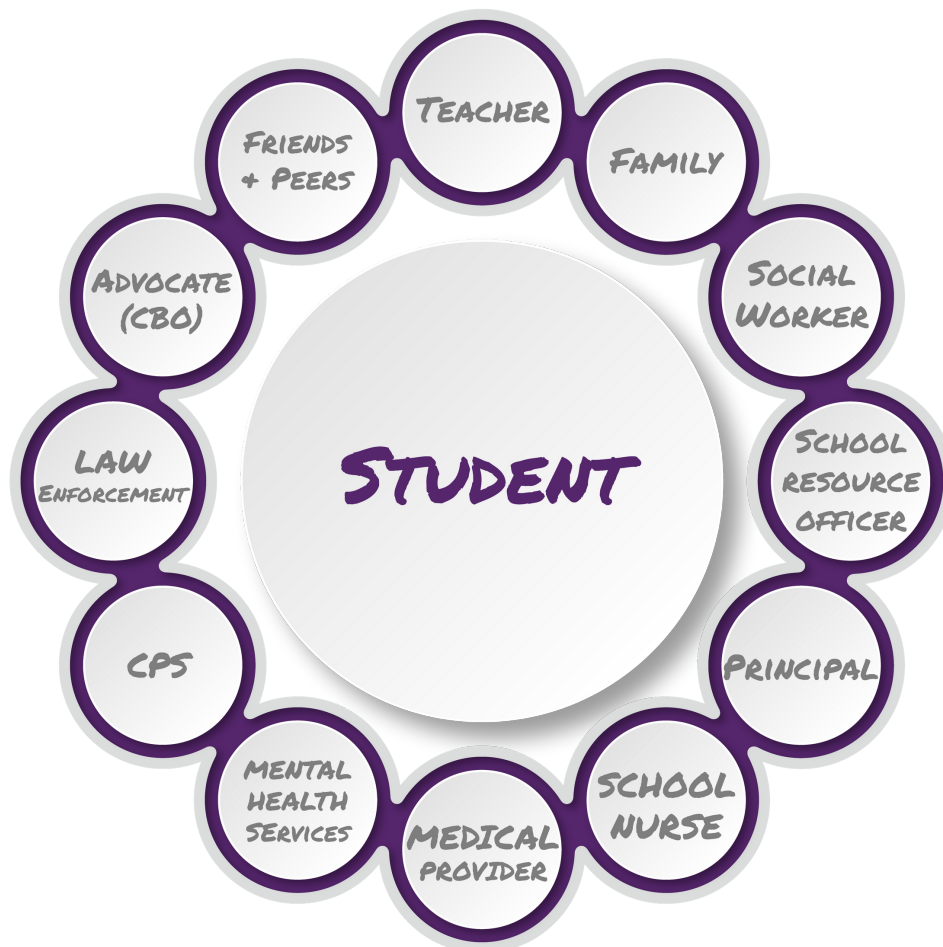
Psychological Impact

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Paranoia
- Helplessness
- Disassociation
- Suicidal Ideation
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder or PTSD symptoms
- Fear
- Anger
- Trauma Bonding

Victims and survivors of sex trafficking, and other forms of abuse, may prefer to self-identify as one or the other, or another term of their choosing. This preference may be influenced by a number of different factors, including the individual's healing process. The language the individual chooses should be honored.

SCHOOL RESPONSE & RESPONSIBILITY

Youth who have been sexually exploited need a multidisciplinary approach with collaboration between internal and external supports. Maintaining confidentiality is critical in supporting positive reentry experiences for students returning to school. Confidentiality is especially important to emphasize considering the number of people who may be involved in the response and support of the survivor.



Schools, districts, and county offices of education can adopt a “Recognize, Respond, Refer” approach to trafficking. Policies should require school- and district-wide training for all staff and personnel to be aware of the issue and be able to *Recognize* signs of sex trafficking. Protocols must be in place to clearly outline how individuals must *Respond* when sex trafficking is suspected. Schools should also have a resource list of identified agencies that can provide additional support, as responding to trafficking takes a community effort. Having a resource list readily available will help school personnel *Refer* students to appropriate services. Sample protocols are available on the following page.

SCHOOL RESPONSE & RESPONSIBILITY

RECOGNIZE

Provide training for all school staff.

Partner with organizations such as law enforcement and local rape crisis centers with expertise regarding sex trafficking and sexual trauma for guidance on awareness training and identification strategies.

Develop a quick reference guide for warning signs, indicators, risk factors, and the response protocol.

Provide staff with in-service and professional development opportunities to stay current on latest trafficking trends and indicators.

RESPOND

Never attempt to intervene by confronting the trafficker or attempting to rescue the victim. Doing so may put the victims, yourself, or others in danger.

If a student discloses, respond with compassion and empathy. Be non-judgmental and provide safety planning. If the student is in immediate danger, contact 9-1-1.

If trafficking is suspected or disclosed, report immediately and follow mandated reporting laws and response protocol.

Maintain student's confidentiality and do not share information with staff or students.

Provide internal support from trained school social worker or counselor.

Provide necessary measures to address needs and support continued education.

REFER

Identify local agencies that provide services to victims of trafficking.

Identify and partner with local expert organizations for information and referrals:

- Rape crisis centers
- Domestic violence agencies
- Youth organizations
- Advocacy organizations
- Mental health service providers
- Medical providers with expertise in adolescent health care and reproductive services
- Substance abuse treatment programs
- Academic support services

Create a resource list for school staff and students that can be made available at the campus student support or resource center.



REPORT

Report suspected abuse/exploitation

INVESTIGATE

Conduct campus investigation

ASSESS

Assess campus & individual safety

SUPPORT

Offer support for student & their family

FOLLOW-UP

Follow-up with student for ongoing support

RESOURCES

National Human Trafficking Hotline

1-888-3737-888 or text 233733

humantraffickinghotline.org and polarisproject.org

Search for local anti-trafficking organizations.

CA Coalition Against Sexual Assault (CALCASA) CA Partnership to End Domestic Violence (CPEDV)

calcasa.org and cpedv.org

Search for local rape crisis centers and domestic violence agencies.

CA Youth Crisis Line

1-800-843-5200

National Dating Abuse Hotline

1-866-331-9474

Text LOVEIS to 22522

National Sexual Assault Hotline

1-800-656-4673

National Domestic Violence Hotline

1-800-799-SAFE (7233)

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

1-800-273-TALK (8255)

National Runaway Safeline

1-800-RUNAWAY (786-2929)

National Center for Missing & Exploited Youth

1-800-THE-LOST (843-5678)

WEAVELEARN.ORG

Early Identification of
Commercially Sexually Exploited Children
Training Program

Access the training and education modules
online, or contact us for more information.
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