



ROAD MAP

FOR TEXAS COMMUNITIES TO ADDRESS
CHILD SEX TRAFFICKING

Acknowledgement

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Executive Summary

Overview

Recognizing the complexity involved in ending child sex trafficking (CST) and the damage CST inflicts on its victims, the state of Texas and its leadership, along with federal and local government and private organizations, are working aggressively to address this problem. However, the state still faces significant challenges in fighting CST. Additional work is needed across the state to prevent future sexual exploitation of children and youth, increase the proper identification of victims, support children and youth who have been victimized to help them live safe and productive lives, and increase the number of perpetrators who are prosecuted and punished for these offenses. To address these challenges, Texas Governor Greg Abbott pursued a multi-pronged strategy to end CST. This strategy culminated in the design and launch of a statewide Child Sex Trafficking Initiative, which includes the Child Sex Trafficking Team (CSTT) within the Governor's Public Safety Office.¹

CST is a widely encompassing term that

describes when an individual or group knowingly traffics a minor under the age of 18 and causes, by any means, the child or youth to engage in or become the victim of sex acts or child sex abuse.² Traffickers include those who receive a benefit from participating in an exchange that involves commercial sex acts or abuse and also those who exchange something of value for sexually abusing a child. Any case that involves selling or buying sex, or benefitting from the exchange, that involves a minor constitutes child sex trafficking, even if the perpetrators are not aware of the victim's age.

Children and youth are sexually exploited in different ways. Some are sold by family members, others are exploited by gangs, and still others are exploited by people who take advantage of vulnerable children and youth by exchanging food, shelter, or money in return for sexual acts. Recent news stories highlight the reality that these exploiters are often the people whom children trust the most – friends, boyfriends, family members, neighbors, teachers,

Definition of Child Sex Trafficking Under Texas Law

The legal definition includes a variety of types of exploitation

Child sex trafficking occurs when a person knowingly:*

- **Traffics** a child under the age of 18 and **causes by any means** the child to engage in or become the victim of **commercial sex acts or child sex abuse**;
- **Receives a benefit** from participating in a venture that involves child sex trafficking; or
- **Engages in sexual conduct** with a trafficked child.

** Regardless of whether the actor knows the age of the child at the time of the offense*

Tex. Penal Code § 20A.02

Traffics	Causes	Commercial Sex Acts or Sex Abuse
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • transports, • entices, • recruits, • harbors, • provides, OR • otherwise obtains by any means 	<p>By any means causes (no force, fraud or coercion required if victim is under 18)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • continuous sexual abuse; indecency with a child; sexual assault and aggravation; • prostitution; aggravated promotion of prostitution; compelling prostitution; • sexual performance by a child; • employment harmful to children; • possession or promotion of child pornography

church leaders, law enforcement, and others.³

As access to technology and the internet advances, children are becoming more vulnerable to exploitation. Traffickers increasingly use the internet to find, lure, groom, and victimize children and youth, while buyers are using technology more to find and purchase sex anonymously. In addition, access to the internet, cell phones, and smart phones makes it easier for traffickers and buyers to communicate with children and youth, and advertise and sell sex.⁴

A University of Texas study conducted in 2016 estimated that 79,000 Texans under the age of 25 had been trafficked for sex at

some point in their lives.⁵ Because sexual exploitation is inherently a hidden crime, we may never know the full extent of the issue. Nevertheless, law enforcement leaders and others report that the crime is growing in Texas, and that increased public awareness about CST has also increased the identification of victims and perpetrators. According to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS), in fiscal year (FY) 2017, law enforcement received 697 allegations of sex trafficking, up from 248 in FY 2016.⁶ Nationally, between 2004 and 2013, the number of suspects in criminal matters referred to U.S. attorneys for commercial sexual exploitation of children increased by 54%, from 2,972 to

4,579 suspects.⁷ As awareness about CST continues to grow, the number of identified cases are also expected to rise.

Ending CST in Texas

The Governor's CSTT has established a comprehensive approach to ending CST in Texas, which involves collaboration with federal, state, and local government agencies; anti-trafficking task forces and coalitions; corporate, nonprofit, and faith-based partners; and survivor leaders. Goals of this initiative include preventing child exploitation, identifying and recovering victims and providing them with the services and supports they need to heal and thrive, and bringing justice by holding exploiters accountable for their crimes.

Subject matter experts and the CSTT recognize that ending child sex trafficking will require collaboration among multiple systems and organizations, as well as strategic actions from a broad range of individuals and organizations at the state and community level. This Roadmap is designed to help community leaders navigate how to start or enhance collaborative efforts for developing strategies and implementing actions that bring communities closer to the goal of ending CST.

Roadmap Overview

The Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute (MMHPI) has been providing technical assistance to the CSTT for various aspects of its work. The *Roadmap for Texas Communities to Address Child Sex Trafficking* (Roadmap) was developed in

close collaboration between MMHPI and the CSTT, with input from a variety of CST experts and local service providers. The purpose of the *Roadmap* is to provide communities with information, research, emerging practices, models, lessons learned, and resources to end CST. Intended audiences include – but are not limited to – leaders in law enforcement; schools; community and religious organizations; health care professionals; judges; and state, municipal, and county agencies. The target audience is broad because ending child sex trafficking and healing victims and survivors requires a multi-systemic approach that:

- Addresses vulnerabilities that increase individual risk,
- Promotes a broad awareness about the issue across communities,
- Includes coordinated and robust screening and assessment,
- Encompasses ongoing and widely available trauma-informed services and efforts to support the long-term well-being of victims and survivors, and
- Develops justice system processes that support victims and deter and prosecute traffickers and buyers.

The Roadmap is organized into five overarching goals that align with the CSTT Child Sex Trafficking Initiative. These goals are:

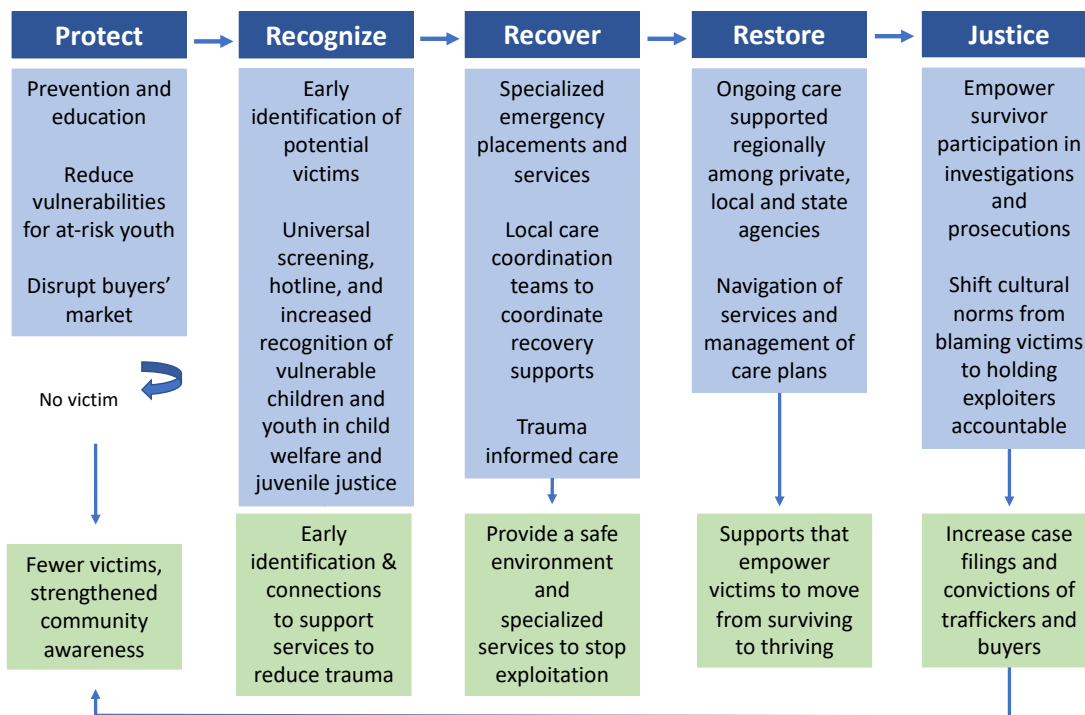
- **Protect** children and youth by building their awareness of and resilience to exploitation and by curbing demand for child sex trafficking.

- **Recognize** child sexual exploitation in all its forms by raising public awareness and implementing screening tools for victims.
- **Recover** victims with protective, empowering (not punitive), collaborative, and coordinated responses that span multiple systems.
- **Restore** survivors through trauma-informed and responsive services and supports that they need to heal and thrive.
- **Bring justice** for survivors by holding traffickers, buyers, and those who profit from trafficking accountable.

The significance of each overarching goal is described in each section, along with key strategies that emphasize targeted areas of importance. Each strategy includes “key actions” that provide specific steps to address the strategy. Each strategy also includes suggestions for guideposts that can help determine if the actions are effective. Some of the key actions listed in the Roadmap are intended for specific audiences; however, each major section includes information that is relevant to everyone.

The material included in the *Roadmap for Texas Communities to Address Child Sex Trafficking* reinforces core messages that emphasize the importance of establishing robust and ongoing coordination and collaboration, creating trauma-aware and trauma-responsive systems and services, and implementing general efforts to increase awareness among the population at-large about the issue. **Appendix 1** provides additional resources to help support efforts to address each goal.

The practice of creating comprehensive, coordinated, and integrated local systems to address CST is still emerging. This Roadmap was developed to support communities in their efforts to end trafficking. However, meaningful change will require continuous communication and the integration of lessons learned into future efforts. The Child Sex Trafficking Team is grateful to the community leaders, subject matter experts, and individuals who have helped inform this work, and will continue to provide updated information as anti-trafficking efforts evolve and improve.



The Governor's Office Child Sex Trafficking Team

¹ Office of the Texas Governor. (n.d.). Child sex trafficking team. Retrieved from <https://gov.texas.gov/organization/cjd/childsextrafficking>

² Texas Penal Code § 20A.02 and 22 U.S.C. § 7102

³ For examples from a national news story, see: Polaris. (n.d.). *Not the same story*. Available at <https://polarisproject.org/stories>

For examples from a Texas news story, see: Walters, E., Satija, N., & Smith, M. (2017, February 13). Sold out: How the crusade against sex trafficking in Texas as left child victims behind. *The Texas Tribune*. Available at <https://apps.texastribune.org/sold-out/>

⁴ Bouche, V. (2018, January). *Survivor insights: The role of technology in domestic minor sex trafficking*. Los Angeles, CA: Thorn: Digital Defenders of Children. Retrieved from https://2715111qnwey246mkc1vzqg0-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Thorn_Survivor_Insights_012918.pdf

⁵ The University of Texas Institute of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault. (2016, December). *Human trafficking by the numbers: The initial benchmark of prevalence and economic impact for Texas*. Retrieved from <https://repositories.lib.utexas.edu/bitstream/handle/2152/44597/idvsa-2016-human-trafficking-by-the-numbers.pdf>

⁶ Texas Department of Family and Protective Services. (2018, May 23). *Annual foster youth runaway report, fiscal year 2017*. Retrieved from https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/About_DFPS/Reports_and_Presentations/Agencywide/documents/2018/2018-05-23-Annual_Foster_Youth_Runaway_Report_FY2017.pdf

⁷ U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs (October 2017). Special report: *Federal prosecution of commercial sexual exploitation of children cases, 2004-2013*. Retrieved from: <https://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/fpcsecc0413.pdf>

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Protect

Strategies to protect children and youth by building their awareness of and resilience to exploitation and by curbing demand for child sex trafficking.



Recognize

Raise public awareness to better identify child sexual exploitation in all its forms and through implementing screening tools to quickly identify those who may be affected.



Recover

Help facilitate appropriate response to identified victims with protective, empowering (not punitive), collaborative, and coordinated responses spanning across key systems.



Restore

Support survivors through trauma-informed and responsive services and supports that they need to heal and thrive.



Bring Justice

Help pursue justice for survivors by holding traffickers, buyers, and those who profit from trafficking accountable.



Appendix



Protect

Overview

Once a young person is sexually exploited, the road to healing is often difficult and involves many ups and downs. Even when a victim successfully finds freedom from exploitation, there are lingering, often devastating, effects from the associated trauma on the survivor and their family, friends, and greater community. This is one of the reasons that the United States Office on Trafficking in Persons recommends a public health approach to human trafficking – it not only affects individuals but also families and communities across generations.¹

A public health approach also includes preventing sexual exploitation from happening in the first place, which subject matter experts recognize as a critical component to reducing sexual exploitation. The federal Trafficking Victims Protection Act addresses human trafficking through a “4P” framework, which includes Prevention as well as Prosecution, Protection and Partnership.² The Centers for Disease Control’s (CDC) approach to violence prevention is also worthy of consideration in

the context of child sex trafficking. The CDC framework includes three complementary types of prevention efforts associated with when the activity occurs:

- **Primary prevention** focuses on stopping violence before it occurs and includes strategies such as fostering healthy relationships.
- **Secondary prevention** focuses on immediate responses to violence such as emergency and medical care.
- **Tertiary prevention** focuses on long-term responses to violence such as approaches to address trauma.³

Despite the recognized value of primary prevention, much of the momentum across the country to address CST has focused on secondary and tertiary prevention. In other words, community efforts, policies, and funding have focused on raising awareness of trafficking in order to identify people who are already being exploited in order to provide assistance, bring justice, and prevent further exploitation. These efforts



are important, but in order to end human trafficking, they need to be complemented by primary prevention strategies that seek to stop victimization before it occurs.

In the **Protect** section, we focus on five themes and provide recommended actions to prevent the proliferation of CST based on strategies that support children and youth and reduce their susceptibility to exploitation. These strategies include:

1. Raising community awareness regarding CST;
2. Strengthening child and youth protective factors;
3. Supporting school-based prevention;
4. Providing prevention education to youth; and
5. Reducing demand

While these actions are focused predominantly on primary prevention, secondary and tertiary strategies are addressed in subsequent sections of this Roadmap.

A study sponsored by the Office of Texas Governor, Greg Abbott, and conducted by researchers at The University of Texas at Austin **explores the experiences of young survivors of sex trafficking in Texas**. The study, published in March 2019, identified the following:

1. Among at-risk participants, 25% of people from the LGBTQ community and 18% of heterosexual females were survivors of sex trafficking. Approximately 7% of at-risk heterosexual males were victims of sex trafficking.
2. After their first experience of exploitation, survivors of child sex trafficking spent about 35% of their lives in circumstances of exploitation.
3. About 33% of sex trafficking survivors who were identified through the study were victimized within the past year.
4. Of those who had experienced sex trafficking victimization, 83% also experienced some other form of exploitation.
5. The average age of onset of sex trafficking victimization among study participants was about 15 years.

6. About half of the people who experienced sex trafficking had been forced to participate in commercial sex by a romantic partner.

7. Participants' economic instability and lack of healthy, trusted relationships in their lives created ideal conditions for exploitation through force, fraud, or coercion.

8. Economic necessity, and the vulnerability it creates, appears to have been a primary influence on people's entry into commercial sexual exploitation.

The full study is accessible online at: <http://sites.utexas.edu/idvsa/files/2019/03/CSTT-HT-Final-Report-3.26.19.pdf>

Reference:

Kellison, B., Torres, M. I. M., Kammer-Kerwick, M., Hairston, D., Talley, M., & Busch-Armendariz, N. (2019). "To the public, nothing was wrong with me": Life experiences of minors and youth in Texas at risk for commercial sexual exploitation. Austin, TX: Institute on Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault, The University of Texas at Austin



Key Strategies to Protect

Protect Key Strategy 1: Raise Community Awareness

One way communities can effectively address and prevent CST is to increase public awareness of this issue. Many people are unaware that CST is a problem, while others have misconceptions about its scope or who is vulnerable. If people do not realize that CST can happen in their community, they are less likely to recognize it as a danger to be prevented.

Public awareness efforts on CST should begin by informing the community about the different types of exploitation, the means used to exploit children and youth, and the needs of children and youth who are at risk of being exploited. It is especially critical for communities to establish a common philosophy and language about CST and make sure that awareness efforts conform to these decisions and are trauma-informed, sensitive to victims’ needs and experiences, and culturally appropriate. Community awareness efforts also need to convey the message that children and youth who are exploited are victims, not perpetrators of a crime or somehow responsible for or complicit in their exploitation, even though the young person may not see themselves in this way. This understanding needs to be represented in the language of public awareness efforts, regardless of the population these efforts target. By conveying this critical message, initial awareness efforts can begin to dismantle misconceptions about CST and its victims.

The following tips should be considered when developing or ramping up public awareness efforts:

- Public awareness efforts should be simple and focused to avoid confusing, frightening, or alienating audiences.
- Efforts to increase awareness of CST and explain how to handle suspected cases should have a clear audience in mind and appropriate messages tailored to each audience. Messages targeted at youth should be designed with sensitivity and avoid scare tactics.
- Trafficking victims come from all walks of life. Many campaigns and messages about child trafficking suggest the primary risk is for people from other countries or for immigrants living in the United States. Many people mistakenly believe that exploitation does not happen in their community. Public awareness efforts should clarify that girls and boys who are born in the United States are also susceptible to CST. Awareness efforts should be relatable, so communities recognize the risk in their own backyards.

Tips for Public Awareness Campaigns

- Define and target your audience
- Keep it simple
- Keep imagery positive and avoid stereotypes
- Include access to resources and a call to action
- Engage and mobilize partners for a widespread and consistent message

Sample Material Language Targeted to Potential Victims

- Are you being forced to work against your will?
- Are you being threatened or tricked by your boss?
- Are you being forced to sell or trade sex acts?
- Do you want to get out of the life, but are trapped and afraid to leave?
- If you are in immediate danger, please **call 911**.
- If you or someone you know needs help, **call 1-888-373-7888 or text 233733. All communication with the hotline is strictly confidential.**



The documentary “Be the One in the Fight Against Human Trafficking” released by the Texas Attorney General, trains viewers to identify and respond to human trafficking. The film can be shown to raise public awareness, and the message to “Be the One” can be incorporated into other campaigns for consistent messaging statewide. <https://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/initiatives/human-trafficking>. Governor Abbott has challenged state agencies to require their staff to view the video. To date, over 100,000 state employees have been educated by it to recognize and report suspected human trafficking.

Key Actions for Raising Community Awareness

DETERMINE GOALS AND POPULATION OF FOCUS

Before developing prevention messages, materials, and an outreach strategy for increasing public awareness about CST, communities need to first determine their target audiences. The audiences for public awareness efforts can range from the general population to a smaller subpopulation that is at higher risk for victimization or witnessing CST. Specific groups of adults that can benefit from public awareness efforts about CST include the child welfare workforce, law enforcement and juvenile justice staff, faith communities, health care personnel, coaches, and after-school care providers. We provide a separate section on school personnel later in this chapter since they are in a particularly advantageous position to engage in prevention and early recognition efforts.

ESTABLISH A COMMON LANGUAGE AND KEY MESSAGES

The language and key messages included in a public awareness effort should be vetted and broadly accepted by people with expertise in child sex trafficking, including survivors. Some key considerations for CST public awareness efforts include the following:

- Avoid language that suggests victims are complicit in their exploitation, such as “sex work” and “prostitute/prostitution.”
- Avoid sensationalized messaging and imagery such as pictures of children in chains or scary looking perpetrators. These images do not accurately depict what trafficking looks like in most cases, so they can actually mislead the public into only recognizing a very limited type of trafficking, such as when there is clear physical force or entrapment.
- Note that exploitation can take many forms – familial, gang-involved, and pimp-controlled, as well as exploitation that does not include a third-party trafficker, but instead involves a buyer exploiting a youth in exchange for something of value (e.g., food, shelter, a job, or money).
- CST can happen in any community and to any child or youth, regardless of their gender, race, age, or socio-economic background.

MAKING USE OF EXISTING RESOURCES

There are many existing public awareness-related resources and opportunities that can be accessed and shared at the community level. The United States Department of Homeland Security provides awareness resources through its Blue Campaign (see <https://www.dhs.gov/blue-campaign/share-resources>). The Office of Trafficking in Persons also has free outreach materials as part of their “Look Beneath the Surface” effort (see <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/otip/resource-library/search?tag=6306>.)

Additionally, the Governor’s Child Sex Trafficking Team partners with national, state, and local agencies to raise awareness, including the National Human Trafficking Hotline, the Texas Attorney General’s Office, and the Texas Department of Transportation as well as many local taskforces, coalitions, and organizations.



Guideposts to Evaluate Public Awareness Efforts

Measuring the success of public awareness efforts is challenging because it is difficult to determine if the efforts have actually raised awareness or spurred action. But there are a few noticeable changes during or immediately after an awareness effort that can indicate if the effort is successful. The following questions may elicit answers that can reveal if change is occurring:

- Has media attention on trafficking and related issues increased?
- Has there been a change in local policies or procedures?
- Has there been an increase in efforts to develop resources?

There are also ways to analyze if a public awareness effort has qualities that will lead to success. The following questions can help identify if there are gaps, unclear messages, or elements that detract from getting and holding the public's attention:

- Were key individuals, including those with subject matter expertise and survivors, engaged prior to establishing the awareness effort?

- Is there a central message? If so, the focus should shift to a positive message, like reminding the viewer they can help solve the problem by being aware.
- Do any of the messages potentially invoke shame or judgement? If so, the tone needs to be changed.
- Do the messages about children and youth seem empowering? If not, the language should be modified to highlight their resiliency and strength.
- Is the message clear and simple?
- Does the message seem appropriate for the intended audience?
- Has feedback – including feedback from survivors – been sought on the public awareness effort and, if so, does the message and strategy align with the feedback?

A successful CST public awareness effort may also lead to noticeable changes such as increased media attention or enactment of local policies to address CST.



Protect Key Strategy 2: Increase Protective Factors

There are many groups of young people who have been identified as having higher susceptibility to exploitation, including involvement in CST. Some of these groups include:

- Youth experiencing homelessness or chronic economic insecurity,
- Youth currently or formerly involved with the child welfare system,
- Youth involved in the juvenile justice system,
- Youth with substance abuse problems, and
- Youth who have experienced violence, including rape and sexual assault.

In this section we focus on two ways to increase and improve protective factors for children and youth that can help counteract risk factors. The first strategy targets direct support to families with very young children and the second strategy aims to help foster safe and trusting interpersonal relationships and a sense of connectedness for older children and youth.



Key Actions to Increase Protective Factors

DEVELOP PROTECTIVE FACTORS IN EARLY CHILDHOOD

The Center for the Study of Social Policy’s Strengthening Families framework provides a set of protective factors that have been shown to help reduce abuse and neglect.⁴ Since there are high rates of child welfare involvement among victims of CST (along with other risk factors for exploitation), these protective factors can help guide community efforts to prevent CST. The protective factors include: parental resilience; positive relationships; understanding child development and parenting strategies; concrete supports in times of need; and social and emotional competence of children.

There are a number of different ways communities can support families and help them build skills in these areas. The Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) division of DFPS promotes family supports to help prevent abuse, neglect, delinquency, and truancy. PEI oversees a variety of federal and state-funded programs that include fatherhood programs, home visitation, youth support, and more. You can learn more about the availability of these programs in your area by accessing the DFPS website at this link: https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Prevention_and_Early_Intervention/Programs_Available_In_Your_County/default.asp

Faith communities and child and youth serving organizations can also initiate and support programs that aim to increase the protective factors noted above. These programs should be culturally competent, non-judgmental, and utilize evidence-based curriculum and practices whenever possible. The California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare (CEBC) advances “... the effective implementation of evidence-based practices for children and families involved with the child welfare system.” CEBC maintains a website that includes a comprehensive database on programming that reinforces protective factors and provides information on the research base for specific programs. Additionally, the CEBC website includes guidance on selecting and implementing programming and tools. These resources can be accessed through CEBC’s website at: <http://www.cebc4cw.org/>

IMPROVE MEANINGFUL CONNECTIONS FOR OLDER CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Research indicates that higher amounts of empathy, connectedness and emotional health, healthy conflict resolution among family members, and academic engagement are all associated with lower rates of perpetration of sexual violence.⁵ Building from research that shows a connection between positive interpersonal connections and improved child and adolescent outcomes, this section focuses on strategies communities can

use to foster positive connections and healthy ties for children and youth, which in turn strengthen protective factors that may reduce susceptibility to exploitation.

There are different ways communities can help strengthen and increase connections between young people and trustworthy adults, or even between peers. Some of these strategies involve strengthening connections at school, which will be discussed later in this chapter. However, there are strategies that can be pursued at the community level to help children and youth establish safe relationships and a sense of connection. Below, we list several options individuals and organizations can implement to support young people in their communities:

- Philanthropic efforts, such as donations of money and volunteer time, can expand access to programs that provide mentoring and positive relationships with children and youth (e.g., Communities In Schools, Boys and Girls Clubs, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, tutoring programs, and, for children and youth involved in the child welfare system, Court Appointed Special Advocates).
- Faith communities can invest in youth programming that is inclusive, and then advertise this programming in the community, offering it to members and non-members.
- Organizations that serve a broad population, like community centers and civic organizations, can develop and promote youth-driven initiatives, committees, and projects designed to empower youth participation and engagement.

The Services to At-Risk Youth (STAR) program operated through PEI also offers services and supports that benefit children, youth, and their families. Through contracts with 28 local community-based organizations, the program offers a broad array of services and supports aimed at keeping families together and preventing children and youth from having to leave home. STAR services and supports include counseling, respite care, crisis services, parenting support, and skill-building classes and training for youth. Information about these services and where they are offered in your area is available on the DFPS website at: https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/prevention_and_early_intervention/programs_available_in_your_county/



Guideposts for Protective Factors

Communities that are working to increase protective factors should evaluate if the programming that is available and offered in their area helps strengthen families and social connections, particularly assessing if programs incorporate evidence-based practices. Some questions that could be used to evaluate the community landscape include:

- What supports and trainings for parents and caregivers are available in the community, and what skills do these programs emphasize?
- Who in the community follows up with families or youth that have been identified as needing support?
- What community organizations include programming or supports for older children and youth? Are these programs widely accessible and do they have adequate capacity?

Children in the child welfare system are vulnerable to sexual exploitation but Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) can provide children and youth in the foster care system with a trusting and healthy adult relationship which can reduce their vulnerability. Texas leads the nation in CASA advocacy for children, with **72 local CASA agencies** supporting more than **10,000 volunteers serving over 30,000 children in 217 counties**. But there are still about 20,000 children in the custody of the Department of Family and Protective Services that do not have a CASA advocate. Recognizing the need to encourage more CASA volunteers, the State of Texas has increased funding over the years to CASA agencies and also has allowed state employees to take limited amounts of paid leave to train for and serve as a CASA advocate. www.texascasa.org

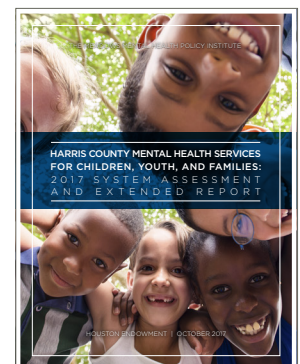


Protect Key Strategy 3: Support School-Linked Prevention

As previously mentioned, establishing trusting and healthy bonds between young people and others has repeatedly been linked to positive outcomes. In fact, connectedness at school has been identified as a consistent protective factor for all genders with respect to decreases in substance use, school absences, emotional distress, early sexual initiation, and violence.⁶ For many reasons, schools are one of the most practical sites for addressing CST prevention. They provide access to the majority of children and youth and they are the predominant setting where children and youth are observed by adults outside of the family.

Schools also have an infrastructure for disseminating information to students, families, faculty, and staff. In this section, we discuss methods schools can use to increase awareness about CST among teachers, staff, and other school-connected personnel and volunteers. This section also includes approaches schools can take to integrate programming that would help diminish CST risk, including improving the school environment, teaching resiliency, and implementing trauma-informed care.

The Mental and Behavioral Health Roadmap and Toolkit for Schools was created by the Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute to provide Texas schools and school districts with information on research-driven, evidence-based practices and practical guidance to help school leaders, teachers, and staff more effectively assess and address student mental and behavioral health needs to improve educational and life outcomes for students. Many of the concepts, tools, and resources provided in the document are complimentary with many of the CST prevention strategies outlined in this section.





Key Actions to Support School-Linked Prevention

INCORPORATE CST AWARENESS STRATEGIES INTO EXISTING SCHOOL PRACTICES AND POLICIES

There are many ways schools can increase awareness about CST among staff and students, including by incorporating related messages into other existing practices and policies. Several examples are summarized below:

- **Train school personnel to recognize and respond to CST**

Texas law requires schools to provide employees with training on techniques for recognizing child sexual abuse and maltreatment.⁷ Training on CST can be incorporated into this existing training or provided as a complementary training. A variety of no-cost resources that support school staff training on CST are available online; in-person trainings are also often offered through human trafficking coalitions, government agencies, and non-profit organizations. In addition, the Texas Human Trafficking Prevention Task Force partnered with the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to create the “Texas RISE to the Challenge,” which is curriculum geared toward education professionals. Any training for school staff and volunteers should include information on how to respond to suspected victimization and how to report suspicious activity.

- **Develop, update, and implement policies and protocols regarding CST**

School districts should establish protocols to ensure that staff across school campuses are appropriately informed about CST. Trafficking is a form of child abuse under the Texas Family Code, and state mandatory reporting laws require teachers and school personnel to report any suspicion of child abuse within 48 hours to law enforcement or DFPS.⁸ Schools can address CST through existing policies and procedures for child abuse, although these policies and procedures should be updated to include practices specific to CST. Also, since confronting a suspected trafficker or attempting to rescue a victim can jeopardize the safety and well-being of the professional and the potential trafficking victim,⁹ schools should consider collaborating with other agencies to ensure the protocols are appropriate.

- **Integrate safety messages into programming and prevention education schools offer to students**

Using available resources, schools can integrate age- and grade-appropriate strategies on their campuses to improve personal safety, security, and boundaries such as appropriate internet use or identifying trusted places to go for support services. These messages can be incorporated in required curricula or disseminated at special events like assemblies

or in campus newspapers and communications. Schools often facilitate prevention activities for other forms of violence such as bullying, sexual abuse, and dating violence. These activities create an opportunity to address risk and protective factors that may also increase resiliency against CST. Schools should also consider the feasibility of providing prevention education specific to trafficking and sexual exploitation. An overview of considerations for these programs is included in Protect Key Concept 4.

- **Inform families and others involved in students’ lives**

Schools can ensure that messages they design to increase CST awareness are shared with families, after-school care providers, coaches, and others who regularly interact with students. Messages for these populations should focus on concrete safety tips to increase awareness, improve youth supervision, and provide key information on what actions to take if they develop a concern about CST for a specific student or group of students.

CREATE A PREVENTION-ORIENTED SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

Schools can address protective factors that may reduce CST susceptibility by making a concerted effort to create a positive school climate, which has been shown to have a positive impact on school safety, grade completion, attendance, sense of community and connectedness, and academic achievement.¹⁰ Such efforts are particularly important for schools that serve students with elevated risk factors such as chronic and persistent poverty, involvement in the foster care system, homelessness, and juvenile justice involvement.

There are different actions schools can take to create a positive school environment, support students, fortify interpersonal connections, and foster healthy relationships among students. Below are some examples:

- Establish formal partnerships with community resources and supports that can enhance school efforts.
- Adopt trauma-informed practices and training to support active and ongoing implementation of these practices.
- Implement student support practices, which can include bullying prevention, mindfulness practice, substance abuse awareness, restorative practices, etc.

Schools can also incorporate skills, concepts, and awareness strategies for preventing sexual exploitation into programs they already offer. They should also establish policies and practices to engage students and their families on the issue of child sex trafficking. For example, Texas schools are legally required to address bullying prevention, substance abuse awareness, and



Children and youth experiencing homelessness are at elevated risk for exploitation. *According to the Texas Homeless Education Office, during the 2014/15 school year, Texas schools identified over 113,000 who experienced homelessness. The Texas Homeless Education Office includes a variety of resources to assist schools in supporting students experiencing homelessness.*

These resources are available online at: <http://www.theotx.org/>

suicide prevention.¹¹ Schools can work with anti-trafficking coalitions and experts to identify ways to integrate key CST prevention messages into existing student awareness efforts. These types of lessons can address concepts like internet safety, personal boundaries, and how to identify a trustworthy adult.

Guideposts for School-Linked Prevention

Communities can work with schools to determine if they have taken proactive steps to acknowledge, prevent, and recognize CST concerns. The following questions can identify a school’s level of CST preparedness and its capacity to promote protective factors:

- What information on CST is provided to teachers and administrators? Is the information comprehensive, clear, and integrated into required trainings?
- Do school policies clarify how school personnel should handle CST-related concerns and are they provided with instruction and reminders regarding those policies?
- Have schools implemented campus-wide initiatives to create a positive school climate? These types of initiatives can include Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports, including social and emotional learning strategies or school-wide behavior plans.

If none of these questions have been addressed, community members and leaders – along with parents and caregivers – will need to work with school districts and schools in their area to make the case for recognizing and preventing CST by developing programs and strategies that promote protective factors and increase awareness of CST.



Protect Key Strategy 4: Provide Youth Education on CST

Middle and high school age students can benefit from specific anti-trafficking education. This type of education can be provided to a broad population in places like schools or churches, or to a more targeted population such as youth involved with the juvenile justice or foster care systems, or people experiencing homelessness. This key concept includes information to help schools and communities identify anti-trafficking education and peer prevention strategies that are appropriate for children and youth.



Key Actions for Providing Youth Education on CST

OFFER ANTI-TRAFFICKING EDUCATION TO YOUTH

While schools and communities should address prevention in the manner that best fits their needs and capacity, they should consider extending their efforts beyond basic awareness to provide youth with the practical skills and knowledge they need to stay safe and recognize trafficking risks. Anti-trafficking education that is targeted to youth should be planned and implemented methodically. Schools and communities that are considering implementing an anti-trafficking prevention program that is aimed at youth should begin by determining who their target population is and what resources and time they have to support the effort. The sensitive nature of CST dictates that specific education about sex trafficking and exploitation should be limited to middle school and high school age students. However, younger students can receive age-appropriate instructions to protect them from sexual abuse, encourage them to identify and talk with a trusted adult, and teach them to stay safe when they use technology.

Ideally, schools and communities would implement evidence-based practices and curricula. However, there is no prevention program specific to CST that has undergone enough evaluation to be fully established as an evidence-based practice. Despite the lack of evidence-based programming specific to CST, strong programs are available, including programs that align with effective promising and research-based practices.

Program Highlight - Not a #Number

Not a #Number is an interactive, five-module prevention curriculum designed to teach youth how to protect themselves from human trafficking and exploitation through information, critical thinking, and skill development. Not a #Number uses a holistic approach focusing on respect, empathy, individual strengths, and the relationship between personal and societal pressures that create or increase vulnerabilities.

<https://love146.org/notanumber>

In many cases, programs that are already working in the community can be expanded to include a focus on CST. *The National Adolescent and Young Adult Health Information Center* provides concepts that are needed for effective instruction for youth, regardless of subject matter. These concepts include:

- Specific knowledge about the issue,
- Specific skills to enable youth to apply this knowledge to their own behavior,
- Motivation to use the skills that are taught,
- An environment (family, school, and community) that supports the use of the knowledge and skills, and
- A policy environment that offers adequate resources and commitment to change social norms and improve adolescent health.¹²

The National Adolescent and Young Adult Health Information Center also provides information on established evidence-based programs for youth. While none of these programs are specific to CST, some can be built upon to include content on trafficking. These resources are available online at: <http://nahic.ucsf.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/Evidence-Based-Guide.pdf>

To help select a curriculum or program, discussing and answering the following questions can help communities implement anti-trafficking programs that are appropriate and effective.

- Who is the target population?
- If the target population is more specialized, what are the unique attributes of those people that should be considered in selecting a teaching modality and core lessons?
- If the target population is broad, what are common messages that will be widely relevant?
- What core messages need to be conveyed, including risks and protective factors? How can those messages be reinforced in other settings?
- How much instructional time is available and what key concepts need to be conveyed?
- Who will provide the training and what qualifications should they have?
- What measures will be taken to vet trainers and curricula? How will these measures ensure:
 - Cultural competency,
 - Age-appropriate material, and
 - Clarity of message?
- What are the desired outcomes and how can they be measured?



Once a community has identified the key elements for establishing an anti-trafficking program, the following tips will help support successful implementation of the program:

- Include parental notification and engagement strategies.
- Avoid scare tactics and sensationalism, which are not effective strategies for influencing youth behavior.
- Avoid language that is exclusionary or places blame on victims.
- Focus on risk factors that can be addressed and avoid stigmatizing certain groups of people.
- Incorporate real-life scenarios and provide skills for handling those scenarios effectively (e.g., internet safety, recognizing and responding to grooming and recruitment, finding and talking to a trusted adult).
- Focus on strengths-based lessons, like building connections and healthy relationships.
- Provide local resources and sources for ongoing support.
- Ensure trainers are prepared to respond appropriately to youth’s questions and disclosure of personal information.

PROMOTE PEER AWARENESS AND SUPPORT

For a young person who is vulnerable to exploitation or directly experiencing it, peers can have a powerful impact – for better or worse. Schools and other organizations can train youth how to respond if they suspect a peer is being exploited or engaged in other dangerous activities. Peer support strategies can be taught as part of youth CST training, or included as a part of

broader youth education programs. Key messages for peers should reinforce the importance of finding a trusted adult to share concerns about a peer who might be exploited, avoiding blame or judgement of the potential victim, and maintaining safety by only speaking to a trusted adult, law enforcement officers, or an appropriate hotline.

Guideposts for CST Education for Youth

Youth-oriented CST education is most likely to have an impact if the teaching strategies that are used meet specific objectives. Below, we listed questions schools and communities should consider for evaluating the clarity and likely value of anti-trafficking education that is targeted toward youth:

- Who is the target audience? Has the teaching approach and methodology reached that audience?
- Have key learning objectives been identified and, if so, are they sufficiently re-enforced?
- Has the material that is being used been vetted to ensure cultural relevancy, age appropriateness, and objectivity?
- How have the trainers been vetted and what types of continuing education are they offered to ensure their approach is consistent with the program design?
- Is there an evaluative component to the programming? If so, does it include clear goals and a way to evaluate results (e.g., shift in beliefs or attitude, anticipated change in behavior, specific knowledge gained)?



Protect Key Strategy 5: Reduce Demand

Human trafficking is an illicit economy fueled by demand for sexual exploitation. Without buyers, CST would cease to exist. Efforts to end CST should include preventing predatory behavior and deterring and interdicting buyers. Law enforcement plays a critical role in reducing the demand that perpetuates the cycle of CST, but other people can take action to support these efforts. The following key actions aim to disrupt the system that enables CST to continue by targeting and reducing demand.



Key Actions to Reduce Demand

ASSESS COMMUNITY RISK FACTORS AND CURRENT LANDSCAPE

Because of the clandestine nature of CST, demand reduction activities should be informed by the broad range of factors that normalize and enable sexual exploitation. Communities should start by evaluating community vulnerabilities and risk factors that enable exploitation, including:

- Prevalence of and culture surrounding sexually-oriented businesses;
- The role and effects of gang activity;
- Regional patterns in drug use and the larger market that supports that use;
- Known areas of prostitution;
- Websites enabling sexually-oriented interaction that are active in the jurisdiction;
- The availability and limitations of economic opportunity in the area; and
- Lack of awareness and understanding of – or community denial of – sexual exploitation.

Communities can also undertake a process for understanding the factors that drive the demand for CST, which could include discussions of topics such as societal norms that support the purchase of sex, community attitudes about holding buyers accountable, and the adequacy of existing sanctions for buyers.

IMPLEMENT TARGETED DEMAND REDUCTION STRATEGIES

Communities can develop a variety of appropriate tactics to reduce the demand for CST. Advocacy and outreach from community members is an important component for building momentum for many strategies. Examples of potential tactics to target demand include:

- Encouraging proactive law enforcement efforts,
- Using public awareness efforts to raise the perceived risk of buying sex,
- Engaging businesses to implement policies to deter sex buying, including those in the Texas Businesses Against Trafficking Program (<https://www.sos.state.tx.us/corp/texas-businesses-against-trafficking.shtml>),
- Establishing programs to help potential buyers reform their behavior, or
- Focusing education and protective factors on youth and young men to prevent the next generation of buyers of sex.

Guideposts to Reduce Demand

Because of the underground nature of the commercial sex industry, it is difficult to connect efforts to reduce demand with outcomes. However, there are certain indicators that can help identify if a community is taking a proactive role in addressing CST by penalizing buyers and traffickers and supporting children and youth. These indicators include:

- Parity of arrests between buyers and sellers for the offense of prostitution;
- Criminal consequences for buyers in the community, including an increase in arrests and convictions;
- Language used by the local media, law enforcement, and the broader community to describe sex buying and exploitative behaviors;
- Recidivism of buyers who have participated in education and reformation programs; and
- Collaboration between law enforcement and victim-oriented support groups.

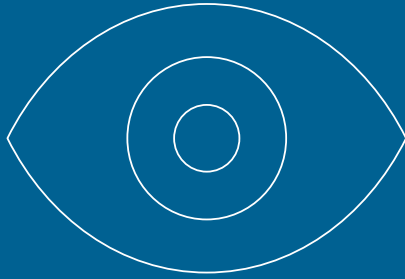
When a community’s criminal justice system is focused on identifying and prosecuting “prostitutes” over buyers, it is often an indication the system is not sufficiently addressing demand for purchasing sex, which would likely to carry over into the area of child sex trafficking. This limited focus is a sign that there is a need to ramp up efforts to address and curb factors that support demand.

Program Highlight – CEASE Texas

The Office of the Governor is providing funding and support to Children at Risk to identify where online selling and buying of commercial sex has migrated in the wake of the shutdown of Backpage.com. Children at Risk will also develop a network of cities committed to stopping the demand for commercial sex. These CEASE (Cities Empowered Against Sexual Exploitation) communities will be trained and empowered to collaborate with law enforcement in Texas to promote demand reduction efforts, including cyber patrols to disrupt online buyers.



- ¹ Office On Trafficking in Persons. (2016, January 11). *The power of framing human trafficking as a public health issue*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children & Families. Retrieved from <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/otip/resource/publichealthlens>
- ² Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2005, 22 U.S.C, Chapter 78, §§ 7101–7112 (2015).
- ³ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (n.d.). *VetoViolence: The levels of prevention*. Retrieved from Prevention <https://vetoviolence.cdc.gov/levels-prevention>
- ⁴ Center for the Study of Social Policy. *Strengthening Families*. Retrieved from <https://cssp.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/About-Strengthening-Families.pdf>
- ⁵ Tharp, A. T., DeGue, S., Valle, L. A., Brookmeyer, K. A., Massetti, G. M., & Matjasko, J. L. (2013). A systematic qualitative review of risk and protective factors for sexual violence perpetration. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, 14(2), 133–167.
- ⁶ Resnick, M. D., Bearman, P. S., Blum, R. W., et al. (1997). Protecting adolescents from harm. Findings from the National Longitudinal Study on Adolescent Health. *JAMA*, 278(10), 823–832.
- ⁷ Texas Education Code, Section 38.0041 (2017).
- ⁸ Texas Family Code, Section 261.101 (2017).
- ⁹ National Center for Homeless Education. (2014). *Sex trafficking of minors: What schools need to know to recognize and respond to the trafficking of students*. Retrieved from <https://nche.ed.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/trafficking.pdf>
- ¹⁰ Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute. (2018, November). *Mental and behavioral health road map and toolkit for schools*. Dallas, TX: Author. Available at: https://www.texasstateofmind.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Roadmap_and_Toolkit-for-Schools_R4b.pdf
- ¹¹ Codified at Texas Health and Safety Code, Section 161.325. Retrieved from <https://statutes.capitol.texas.gov/Docs/HS/htm/HS.161.htm>
- ¹² National Adolescent and Youth Adult Health Information Center. (2014, August). *A guide to evidence-based programs for adolescent health: Programs, tools, and more*. August 2014. Retrieved from <http://nahic.ucsf.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/Evidence-Based-Guide.pdf>



Recognize

Overview: Recognize

Unlike media depictions of child sex trafficking (CST), most children and youth are not abducted, chained, or physically locked up by their traffickers. Exploiters use psychological and economic strategies to engage, manipulate, and control their victims. A young person who is homeless may be lured with food, clothing, shelter, or other things they need to survive. In other cases, a child or youth may be groomed through promises of love, a better life, or membership in a gang “family.” Because the path into exploitation is not always obvious at first, many children and youth do not view themselves as victims and therefore will not make an outcry. Exploiters will use a variety of misleading narratives to manipulate victims, including convincing the child or youth that their involvement in trafficking activity will allow them to achieve independence, wealth, fame, or prove their love and devotion to the trafficker, who may actually be a family member or may seem like family. Additional factors that may influence a young person’s

perception of victimization include incorrect or oversimplified messages in the media and in mainstream culture. For example, messages that equate victimization with being kidnapped, tied up, and physically forced into trafficking activities can serve to downplay other, more common forms of exploitation.

The public’s gaps in understanding the vulnerabilities of youth, coupled with misconceptions about how they become engaged in sex trafficking, has historically contributed to the proliferation of attitudes and descriptions that have penalized victims and tolerated exploiters. In pursuit of their own enjoyment, patrons of the sex industry often dismiss the grim reality of victims by viewing them as willing participants. These types of attitudes dismiss the humanity of those involved and enable attitudes that allow for the proliferation of exploitive practices. Children and youth who engage in sexual acts in exchange for money, shelter, or anything of value are exploited by the people who sell or buy them, and thus should never be referred to as “prostitutes” or “sex workers.”

Such labels imply criminality in situations where the person has unequivocally been victimized. Therefore, anyone interacting with children and youth who are at-risk of or being exploited needs to have the basic perspective that children and youth are not perpetrators of prostitution.

The purpose of the **Recognize** section of this Roadmap is to help communities do a better job at recognizing and responding to CST by increasing their awareness of different forms of CST and the risk factors that increase children and youth’s susceptibility for exploitation. This section also clarifies signs that may indicate that a child and youth is being exploited. With increased awareness about these issues, signs of exploitation may be recognized and addressed earlier and more effectively by a wider variety of people, including: teachers and school staff, child welfare workers or volunteers, health care providers, hotel staff, law enforcement, family and friends of children and youth, and members of the public. This section also includes information on how to screen for and report suspected instances of CST. As communities embark on designing programs and strategies to improve their recognition of CST, the following key strategies and relevant actions can enhance their efforts:

1. Awareness of and understanding CST risk factors and key indicators of involvement;
2. Training for key first responders (health care providers);
3. Training for other organizations that serve high-risk children and youth;
4. Screening for suspected CST involvement; and
5. Awareness of and understanding how to report suspected CST concerns.

COMMON INDICATORS OF CHILD SEX TRAFFICKING



Texas Office of the Attorney General




Key Strategies to Recognize


Recognize Key Strategy 1: Understanding CST Risk Factors and Key Indicators of Involvement

While any child or youth can be vulnerable to CST, certain risk factors can increase their susceptibility to exploitation. Societal and community factors – such as the integration of the internet and social media into daily life and the sexualization of young people in the media and popular culture – contribute to normalizing the objectification of youth. In addition, certain life experiences significantly increase the vulnerability of children and youth. These key risk factors include: child abuse, sexual abuse, homelessness, lack of consistent caregivers or social supports, juvenile justice involvement, substance abuse, and economic hardship.^{1, 2}

CHILDREN AT HIGHEST RISK ARE THOSE MOST TRAUMATIZED




SEXUAL ABUSE,
MULTIPLE
MALTREATMENTS




HOMELESS/
RUNAWAYS/
CONFLICT
AT HOME

Multiple adverse childhood experiences and complex trauma make healing especially difficult.



DRUG/
ALCOHOL USE



FOSTER CARE/
JUVENILE
JUSTICE
SYSTEM

Becoming aware of risk factors can help communities increase surveillance in environments that may be particularly susceptible to recruitment and trafficking activity. There are many online and in-person training opportunities that can help professionals recognize risk factors in children and youth who are vulnerable to sex trafficking and identify the people who exploit them. Texas law includes provisions for the following groups to receive training on CST:

- Law enforcement officers,³
- Educators,
- Child welfare workers,
- Abortion facilities,
- Juvenile correctional officers,
- Commercial driver’s license applicants,
- Cosmetologists, and
- Judges.

In addition to the various risk factors that increase vulnerability to trafficking, it is critical to understand the different types of sexual exploitation and trafficking, which often present differently. Below, we summarize some of the different ways a child or youth may be lured into CST.

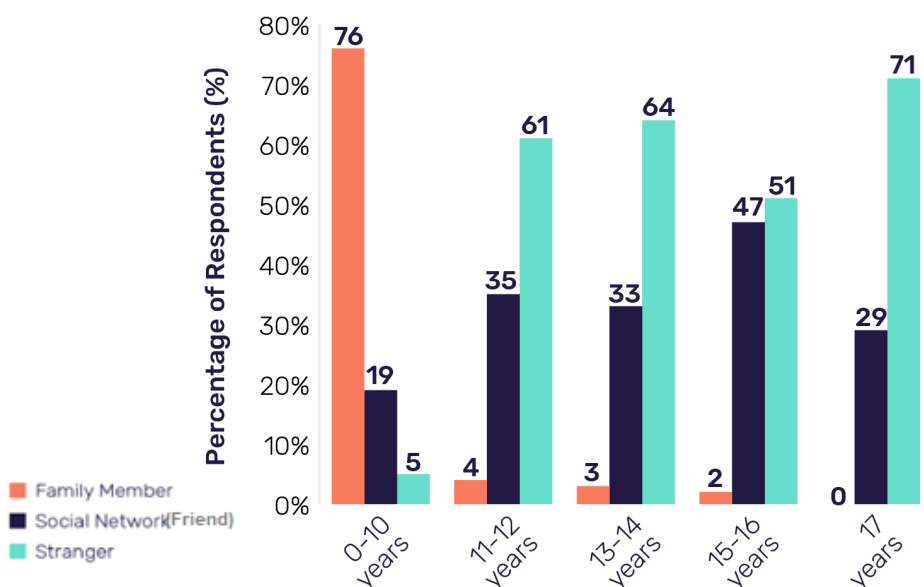
Traditional exploiter or pimp/boyfriend CST often entails recruitment and grooming by a third party. In this scenario,

the trafficker may lure the child or youth by offering material and or immaterial benefits. For example, the trafficker might offer respite from a difficult, dysfunctional, or even dangerous home life by offering food, transportation, and a place to stay. Traffickers can take advantage of a child or youth’s sense of reciprocity by buying them clothing, jewelry, or services, and then request that the child or youth “pay them back” by earning money through the sale of a sexual act. In other cases, the trafficker will exploit a victim’s need to feel cared for or loved by offering emotional support. This interaction of positive reinforcement, combined with abuse and control, can create a trauma bond in which the child or youth feels loyalty to the person exploiting them. The child or youth can also feel – and traffickers can reinforce – a sense of shame or responsibility for the decisions that led to them to their current circumstance.

Familial trafficking occurs when a parent, caregiver, close family member, or intimate partner of a family member sells their child for sexual acts. The child or youth may be exploited in exchange for money, drugs, or other benefits. Familial exploitation may begin very early in life. Studies have found that in cases involving trafficking victims age 10 years and younger, familial trafficking is almost always the cause.⁴ Growing up in a life of familial trafficking affects a child or youth’s sense of self and diminishes their sense of personal value, ability to live in a different way, or chance of escape.⁵

Gang-related trafficking occurs when trafficking is part of

RELATIONSHIP TO TRAFFICKER BY AGE SURVIVOR ENTERED THE LIFE



www.WeAreTHORN.org

Study Insights

- Family member is defined as anyone who might be considered a relative, including stepparents, uncles, or cousins. Seventeen percent (n=20) noted that their trafficker was a family member.
- 76% of those trafficked by a family member were 10 years old or younger when they entered the life, and over half stated their trafficker was their father or stepfather.

gang activity and can take on different types of trafficking scenarios. In some cases, children or youth are recruited with the same grooming strategies used by traditional exploiters. Other scenarios engage the child or youth in commercial sex as a condition for their membership in the gang. In other instances, the child or youth may be coerced, held against their will, and may not receive any money or material benefit from the commercial sex transaction.⁶

Survival sex is a term that can be applied to many different situations. However, in this case we use it to describe the process of a child engaging in sex for some type of material benefit without direct coercion from another person. In this case, the motivation can range from the need to meet basic needs to the acquisition of luxury goods. Because children (under 18 years of age) cannot legally consent to sex, youth who engage in survival exploitation are still victims of commercial sexual exploitation; in these situations, the buyer is the exploiter.

Because there is so much variability in how a child or youth is exploited, it is critical that a broad range of people are educated on the issue, including how to look for warning signs and what to do if a concern is suspected. The following key actions outline various ways to help community members identify and initially respond to suspected cases of CST.

Key Actions for Understanding CST Risk Factors and Key Indicators of Involvement

Regardless of how a child or youth is trafficked, communities need to know what to look for to help identify victims. Often, victims of CST have contact with school officials and law enforcement for reasons that do not appear connected to trafficking. For example, they may be identified by school officials for truancy or by law enforcement for minor offenses. The experience of being trafficked entails instability, so seemingly unrelated behaviors are often tied to exploitation. Therefore, there are no definitive or universal flags to suggest trafficking is occurring, but people who are in frequent contact with children and youth should be aware of the following signs and behaviors:^{7, 8}

- Unusual tattoos or piercings (branding);
- Presence of new and high value material items like clothing and jewelry;
- Signs of physical abuse;
- Unexcused absences from school or work and changes in school habits such as social circle, grades, and attitude;
- Decline in appropriate dress;
- Sexualized comments and behavior;

- Presence of new company who were not previously affiliated with the child or youth;
- More than one phone or multiple social media accounts;
- Provocative photos shared through texts, on phones, or posted online;
- Hotel keys;
- Isolation and withdrawal from people or activities previously valued;
- Unusual behaviors related to food or weight loss; and
- Unexplained or suspicious injuries.

Children and youth who are victims of CST experience multiple types of trauma while being exploited, and most have a history of complex trauma – repeated cumulative trauma over time within specific relationships – predating their exposure to CST.⁹ Early childhood trauma such as sexual abuse, physical abuse, neglect, traumatic loss, separation from caregivers, and family and community violence can increase a child or youth’s vulnerability to exploitation.¹⁰ Children and youth who have experienced trauma may exhibit a variety of behaviors and symptoms, which may include:

- Difficulty regulating affective impulses such as anger and self-destructiveness,
- Dissociative episodes,
- Difficulty trusting people,
- Repetition of destructive patterns,
- Sense of hopelessness and despair,
- Somatic or medical problems, and
- Sense of shame.

Understanding and responding appropriately to the impact that trauma has on a child or youth is critical to recognizing potential victims and engaging with them in a trauma-responsive way. The effects of trauma can shape how a child or youth responds to the well-intentioned efforts of a supportive adult. Children and youth who have been exposed to multiple traumatic events may act in ways that inhibit their ability to view themselves as victims and trust and engage in the supports that are being offered.¹¹

Eradicating CST will require widespread awareness of how to recognize and report CST. It will also require that people who work with children and youth with heightened risk factors for CST are educated to identify signs of sex trafficking. At a minimum, training and reinforcement on how to recognize and respond to CST should be provided to people who work with

children and youth who are experiencing homelessness, have run away from home, or are involved with the foster care and juvenile justice systems.

Guideposts for Understanding CST Risk Factors and Key Indicators of Involvement

People can improve their ability to recognize CST by becoming aware of the following principals and key concepts:

- Risk factors that increase a child or youth's vulnerability

to trafficking;

- Methods of control and coercion, including psychological, physical, and sexual methods as well as through psychoactive substances;
- Various forms of trafficking;
- Red flags that may indicate involvement in CST; and
- How trauma affects behavior, the way traumatized victims view themselves, and intervention methods.



Recognize Key Strategy 2: Training for Key First Responders

Health care providers and law enforcement personnel are two categories of first responders that are most likely to interact with victims. Children and youth experiencing sexual exploitation are at a high risk for mental and physical health concerns, which increases the likelihood they will seek medical care.¹² They may seek care in hospital emergency rooms, at a local mental health authorities (LMHAs), urgent care facilities, family planning clinics, or in outpatient medical settings for a variety of presenting issues, including sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), pregnancy, depression (including suicidality), injuries resulting from assault, substance abuse-related issues, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).¹³ Despite the likelihood of interacting with medical providers, most children and youth who are trafficked are unlikely to disclose that they are being victimized.¹⁴ Since children and youth are frequently reluctant to disclose that are being trafficked, it is critical for the health care workforce to have basic knowledge of CST and for key personnel to be trained in identifying, reporting, and safely responding to it.

Similar to health care providers, law enforcement officers are likely not only to come into contact with exploited children and youth but also to be able to provide immediate assistance. Law enforcement are likely to interact with children and youth who are recovered as a runaway, have committed a crime or status offense (e.g., curfew, minor in possession), are homeless, are abused or neglected, or are just drivers or passengers in a routine traffic stop but who may also exhibit indicators of exploitation. Because traffickers intentionally disguise exploitation as prostitution, and trauma bonding makes victims appear to be willing participants, it is critical that law enforcement officers are trained in recognizing exploitation and how to respond appropriately. More information and guidance on law enforcement training is covered in the Bring Justice section of this Roadmap.

Key Actions to Train Health Care Providers

MAKE SAFETY A FOCUS

When health care providers engage a young person who is a suspected victim of CST, their first concern needs to be safety – for the child or youth and for themselves. Health care settings are generally safe places. However, it is not uncommon for a victim of CST to be accompanied by their trafficker, which increases the level or risk for patients and staff.¹⁵ For this reason, victims should

be offered the opportunity to spend time alone – away from the potential trafficker –with a trained health care professional, and health care providers should be trained to take measures to ensure their own safety and the safety of their patient. Providers should be aware of doors, exits, and other people in the area. Once the health care professional has established a safe environment, they should respond to the young person's immediate and basic needs before attempting to obtain additional information.

FAMILIARIZE HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS WITH TARGETED RESOURCES AND TRAINING

There are several resources and training opportunities for health care providers. The Texas Human Trafficking Resource Center (Resource Center) is a statewide directory of local, state, and national resources for identifying and helping victims of human trafficking. The Resource Center includes specific assistance for health care providers, including information on physical, behavioral, and other indicators of CST that can be used in a clinical setting to identify trafficking (see: <https://hhs.texas.gov/services/safety/protective-services/texas-human-trafficking-resource-center>).

HEAL (Health, Education, Advocacy, Linkage) Trafficking unites a multidisciplinary group of professionals focused on ending human trafficking and supporting survivors with a trauma-informed, public health approach. HEAL Trafficking includes multiple committees that professionals can join to lend support to anti-trafficking efforts. Committees focus on the following areas of work: advocacy, direct services, education and training, media and technology, protocols, and research (see: <https://healtrafficking.org/>).

Shared Hope is an international anti-trafficking organization that has developed resources specifically to help a broad range of health care professionals identify and respond to child sex trafficking cases. The i:Care Health Care Provides Guide to Recognizing and Caring for Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking Victims includes a written guide and an accompanying video series, which can be purchased directly from the Shared Hope website (see: <https://sharedhope.org/product/icare-health-care-providers-guide/>).

CONNECT THE VICTIM TO MOST WELL-EQUIPPED PROVIDER

Whenever possible, children and youth with suspected CST should be directed to a medical professional who has forensic

expertise. Because of the inherent complexity and sensitivity of these cases, health care providers without forensic expertise should train and designate CST responders – professionals who are trained in trauma-informed care practices and appropriate collaboration and reporting procedures. These professionals should be able to commit to supporting a young person throughout the entire examination process. A sex trafficking examination takes between four and eight hours to complete, which includes time for breaks and to tend to the victim’s immediate needs (rest, food, mental respite, etc.). Health care providers also need to test for and treat sexually transmitted infections.

Guideposts for Accountability Measures on Training Health Care Providers

Guideposts for health care providers and administrators should be trained and able to identify the following:

- Key indicators and red flags that suggest CST involvement;
- Questions to ask a suspected CST victim;
- Trauma-informed care practices and principles;
- Names and departments of forensic specialists on staff;
- Names and departments of staff trained to support suspected CST victims if forensic specialists are not available;
- Onsite locations that offer privacy for providing support to suspected victims; and
- The Texas Human Trafficking Resources Center and its resources.

If a health care provider in routine contact with children and youth is not familiar with these flags and referral sources, the facility will need to do more to train its workforce on identifying and responding to CST concerns.



Recognize Key Strategy 3: Ensuring Organizations that Serve Children and Youth with High Risk Factors Understand CST

Other organizations that serve children and youth with an elevated risk for CST involvement – child welfare agencies; juvenile justice agencies; organizations that serve homeless children, youth, and their families; agencies that offer general support for children and youth with complex needs; and others – could benefit from training their staff to identify risks and early signs in children and youth who may be trafficked.

Key Actions for Ensuring Organizations that Serve Children and Youth with High Risk Factors Understand CST

IDENTIFY WHICH COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS SERVE CHILDREN AND YOUTH, AND WHAT TRAINING IS ALREADY PROVIDED TO THOSE ORGANIZATIONS

Many communities have child protection investigators and workers, school personnel, and juvenile probation or law enforcement personnel. Efforts should be made to identify which other local agencies or organizations come into contact with high-risk youth.

- Are there foster care agencies, residential treatment centers, emergency shelters, or other organizations that serve abused and neglected children or runaway and homeless youth in the community?
- Are there after-school programs or Boys and Girls Clubs?
- Are their programs for youth who are involved in the juvenile justice system?
- Are there faith-based organizations or faith communities serving at-risk youth?

All such organizations should be identified, queried about what training is currently offered, and provided access to resources that can fill any identified training gaps.

PROVIDING TRAINING FOR PROFESSIONALS WHO WORK WITH YOUTH

Trainings should include specific topics on working with populations that could potentially be exploited by child sex traffickers. For example, trainings should address trauma, help professionals understand the impact of trauma on children and youth, offer victim-centered and trauma-informed approaches to treatment, and provide developmentally appropriate techniques for engaging with potential victims.¹⁶ Communities that already have an anti-trafficking task force or coalition are likely to have the capacity to provide these types of trainings.

The Governor’s Child Sex Trafficking Team is partnering with the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) to develop, fund, and deliver trainings throughout the state for law enforcement, juvenile justice agencies, and child protective services, as well as other stakeholders. More information on NCMEC is available at: www.ncmectx.org.

Guideposts for Ensuring Organizations that Serve Children and Youth with High Risk Factors Understand CST

Organizations that serve populations with an elevated risk for CST can measure if they have successfully prepared their staff to identify and respond to CST concerns by compiling an inventory of related practices and policies and then determining adherence to those requirements. As part of this process they should consider if they provide the following:

- Training on trauma-informed and victim-centered practices;
- Opportunities for staff to receive CST-specific targeted trainings; and
- Efforts to raise awareness of CST among staff and volunteers, including how to access the “Be the One” video.

Organizations who commit to training staff on CST should also implement policies and procedures to ensure and track compliance. Useful metrics to analyze level of compliance may include determination of staff trained on trauma-informed and victim-centered practices, CST specific training, or exposure to CST awareness raising efforts. If an organization primarily serves children and youth with high risk factors, the goal should be to reach 100 percent of staff within a given year.

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The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) partnered with the Governor’s Office to provide downloadable materials to raise public awareness about sex trafficking, and to provide victims and concerned parties with information on how to get help. These items include posters, wallet cards, restroom signs, and a vehicle card and guide. The materials can all be accessed through the TxDOT website at: <https://www.txdot.gov/inside-txdot/media-center/psas/prevent-human-trafficking.html>



Recognize Key Strategy 4: Screening for Child Sex Trafficking

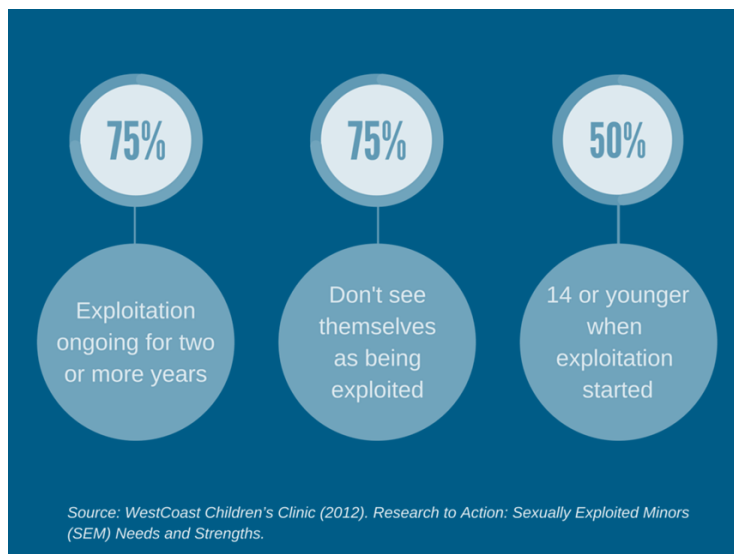
Children and youth who have been exploited are often distrustful and have legitimate safety concerns about speaking out against their exploiter. Other times, they are conflicted about their ongoing involvement in trafficking for many reasons, including economic security, attachment to their trafficker, and a sense of community and belonging. For these and many other reasons, trafficked youth may be reluctant or unwilling to make a direct allegation against their exploiter(s).¹⁷ Consequently, it is uncommon for victims to make an outcry like other crime victims. It is critical, then, that health care providers and child and youth serving agencies do not confirm cases of exploitation by relying on whether youth tell them they are trafficking victims. They need to rely on their own observations and on screening tools to identify CST. While specialized trainings are a helpful first step to recognizing CST, implementing a validated screening tool is an even more effective strategy for addressing challenges with identifying CST. Effective screening tools can help agencies use a more standardized approach to recognizing CST without relying solely on the subjective judgment of employees. Many of these tools are currently available and being used in direct service.

Recognizing Victims

CSE-IT (Commercial Sexual Exploitation Identification Tool)

Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, Texas Juvenile Justice Department, Boys and Girls Clubs, and over 40 youth serving agencies across Texas are using the tool to identify likely victims.

The research that prompted the development of the tool showed that of the youth in the study:



Under the leadership of the Governor's Child Sex Trafficking Team, Texas has widely adopted the Commercial Sexual Exploitation Identification Tool (CSE-IT) developed by the West Coast Children's Clinic. The Team's selection of the CSE-IT was based on a careful examination, supported by the Council of State Governments, of a number of similar tools used nationally. The CSE-IT is suitable for widespread adoption in Texas because:

- It is brief and embeddable in existing services. The CSE-IT can be implemented without additional interviews or intake processes, and it can be completed in five to 10 minutes.
- It is effective in identifying child sex trafficking. The CSE-IT was validated in 2016 following a 15-month pilot study to ensure that it accurately identified children and youth who were being exploited.
- It is appropriate for multiple systems. Uniform screening across multiple systems is a promising practice for identifying victims and creates an environment that is more conducive to evaluating the prevalence of CST, dynamics of trafficking across systems, progress in victim identification, and needs for prevention strategies. The CSE-IT has been successfully piloted and utilized in a variety of agencies.
- It can be used to collect and integrate data. Providers can use the CSE-IT to quickly integrate data they collect during their routine work with children and youth, effectively enabling implementation of the CSE-IT to be embedded into current procedures within child and youth serving agencies.
- It includes necessary and appropriate training. The CSE-IT is accompanied by a three-hour training and includes a train-the-trainer option. The Child Sex Trafficking Team is hosting free trainings around the state. Those interested in training should contact the Governor's Child Sex Trafficking Team at <https://gov.texas.gov/apps/contact/contactus.aspx?contact=6548961>.

Indicators of Child Sex Trafficking Scored with the CSE-IT

(Commercial Sexual Exploitation Identification Tool)

1) HOUSING AND CAREGIVING. The youth experiences housing or caregiving instability for any reason.

2) PRIOR ABUSE OR TRAUMA. The youth has experienced trauma (not including exploitation).

3) PHYSICAL HEALTH AND APPEARANCE. The youth experiences notable changes in health and appearance.

4) ENVIRONMENT AND EXPOSURE. The youth's environment or activities place them at risk of exploitation.

5) RELATIONSHIPS AND PERSONAL BELONGINGS. The youth's relationships and belongings are not consistent with their age or circumstances, suggesting possible recruitment by an exploiter.

6) SIGNS OF CURRENT TRAUMA. The youth exhibits signs of trauma exposure.

7) COERCION. The youth is being controlled or coerced by another person.

8) EXPLOITATION. The youth exchanges sex for money or material goods, including food or shelter.

<https://www.westcoastcc.org/cse-it/>

Key Actions for Screening for Potential CST Involvement

Organizations that serve potential and known trafficking victims in Texas should routinely use a validated screening tool to help identify potential CST cases for follow up. The Child Sex Trafficking Team recommends the CSE-IT, which has already been adopted by the Texas Juvenile Justice Department (TJJD), The Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS), and over 40 other youth serving agencies in Texas. Those organizations interested in implementing the CSE-IT should contact CSTT at <https://gov.texas.gov/apps/contact/contactus.aspx?contact=6548961>.

In addition to the CSE-IT, there are other well documented screening instruments that have been used successfully in various communities across the nation. While the CSE-IT is ideal for identifying CST, other tools can be helpful for broader purposes or in specific settings like a hospital emergency department. For example, other tools also screen for labor trafficking and other types of exploitation.

Whenever an organization decides to implement a screening tool, it will need to develop policies and procedures to ensure effective and appropriate adoption of the tool, including identifying the population of children and youth that will be screened. Agencies that face challenges with logistics and capacity may choose to screen a subset of clients based on certain risk factors. Universal

screening, if possible, is recommended as a promising practice for improving the identification of CST.

Screening is only the first step toward connecting a survivor with necessary services. The primary purpose of screening is to quickly and effectively triage children and youth who are at a higher risk of being trafficked, not to confirm victimization. While screening provides a way to quickly improve awareness of a child or youth's current condition and immediate needs, longer-term planning requires a deeper understanding that is best attained through a comprehensive assessment. Organizations will need to identify and implement assessment tools and procedures for effective service planning.

Guideposts on Screening for Potential CST Involvement

Communities can determine if their efforts to screen for CST are adequate by determining how many local providers – and which ones – are using the CSE-IT or other evidence-based screening tools. In addition to identifying if key agencies (such as juvenile justice, schools, and child protective services) are broadly utilizing the CSE-IT or other tools, communities can also collect data to analyze trends among identified CST victims (marked on the CSE-IT as “clear concern”). The West Coast Children's Clinic can support agencies and providers to analyze screening data and help use the results to guide program development and evaluations.



Recognize Key Strategy 5: Report CST Concerns

One of the most effective and straightforward ways to intercept CST is to report tips, concerns, and known cases. The National Human Trafficking Hotline (Hotline) provides support 24 hours a day, seven days a week (24/7) – in over 200 languages – that is dedicated to the issue of human trafficking, and will triage calls based on urgency, caller preferences, and safety considerations. Through a grant with the Office of the Governor, the Hotline provides enhanced services in Texas, which include awareness raising efforts, strengthening its referral directory, educating callers about mandatory reporting and facilitating those reports with warm transfer to appropriate state agencies, and enhancing protocols to share tips with local and state law enforcement and building intelligence on human trafficking in Texas.

Calls and messages to the Hotline are often the catalyst of an investigation and/or connecting a victim to services. A critical step that communities can take is to promote broad awareness of the Hotline and how it can be accessed. Unfortunately, a Texas-based study on CST that was published in January 2018 reported that the majority of victims who were interviewed stated they never saw information on the Hotline or how to get help.¹⁸

Key Actions to Reporting CST Concerns

People can help identify and address CST by acting to increase community awareness on how to report suspicions and concerns. These efforts should include two key messages:

1. Emergencies and situations posing immediate danger should be reported to 9-1-1.
2. Non-emergency suspicions and concerns should be reported to the **National Human Trafficking Hotline at 1-888-373-7888**.

The Hotline provides many features that support proper handling of CST calls and inquires. Hotline staff are trained to work with any party making the call and can help make service connections and facilitate reports to law enforcement. Advocates working for the Hotline can also guide crisis planning and help establish a safety plan. The Hotline can quickly connect callers with law enforcement or child welfare staff to satisfy callers' mandated duty to report child abuse.

The Hotline offers alternatives to phone contact through its website, including a chat feature and communication via text (by texting 233733). Its chat function can be accessed at: <https://humantraffickinghotline.org/>. The website also allows people to submit anonymous tips. For more information on the Hotline's functions, capabilities and partnership with the State of Texas, see: <https://gov.texas.gov/organization/cjd/child-sex-trafficking-recover>.

PROMOTE AND ADVERTISE THE HOTLINE TO CHILD AND YOUTH SERVING ENTITIES

All youth-serving organizations should have protocols and training on reporting suspected child abuse, including suspected child sex trafficking. Protocols and trainings should include clear guidance on mandatory reporting requirements. Child and youth serving organizations (schools, churches, law enforcement, health care providers, etc.) can facilitate the use of the Hotline by providing training and information to staff and volunteers that clarifies when to call 9-1-1 or the Hotline. Organizations can ensure broad awareness of these resources, training requirements, and outreach methods for reporting CST by including them in organizational protocols and policies. Additionally, public awareness efforts to address CST should include information on how to report concerns and suspicions. A webinar training on the Hotline, it's capabilities, statistics for Texas, and partnership with the State of Texas to enhance its services to Texas can be found at Child Sex Trafficking Team's website at <https://gov.texas.gov/organization/cjd/child-sex-trafficking-recover>.

PUBLIC AWARENESS MESSAGES DIRECTED TOWARD YOUTH should provide clear information about the Hotline

Any efforts to increase youth awareness of CST should include prominently posted information on how to contact the Hotline and explain how it can help. Information about the Hotline that is targeted toward youth, including potential victims, should highlight that the Hotline is caller-driven, confidential, and can connect youth to help for many different issues. Public awareness messages should also use language and images that are relatable to survivors, since many of them do not connect personally with traditional language about human trafficking, which often depict adult victims from other countries. When communities provide resources (including Hotline information) to people who being trafficked, it is critical that they consider the safety of all parties and incorporate those considerations into strategies for outreach and awareness.

Guideposts for Reporting CST Concerns

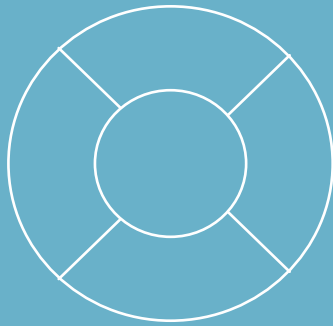
ADDRESS CST REPORTING IN YOUTH-SERVING ORGANIZATIONS' POLICIES

Youth-serving agencies can gauge their progress by determining if they have a protocol or policy that specifically addresses reporting on suspected CST, or if CST recognition and reporting is addressed in other broader organizational policies or protocols. If CST reporting is already addressed in policy, the school or organization should focus on making sure staff are aware of the core requirements. Otherwise, the school or organization should develop reporting requirements, and embed the requirements into policy and practice.

MEASURE HOTLINE CALL VOLUMES

The Hotline collects and shares de-identified data on the calls it receives. Communities can ask the Hotline to provide data on their call volumes, which they can use to track changes over time. As more people and communities become aware of the Hotline, call volumes are expected to increase; however, over the long term (years), there may be a decrease in call volume as broader efforts to combat CST are successful in reducing child sex trafficking.

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Recover

Overview

There are many ways to identify and offer immediate assistance to a child or youth who is a victim of child sex trafficking (CST). Victims may be recognized in the criminal justice system during traditional law enforcement activities or targeted trafficking operations. Others may be identified by health care providers, the child welfare or juvenile justice systems, schools, and other settings. Regardless of how a victim is identified, or whether they are identified in a crisis setting or under stable circumstances, the initial response they receive from those that identify them has a significant impact on their short and long-term healing. The focus in this Recover section is to provide information on important considerations and actions for people working with or supporting a suspected victim of CST within the first 72 hours (approximately) of the child or youth's victimization being recognized.

Historically, a lack of specialized services for victims of CST, the limited statutory jurisdiction of the Texas Department of

Family and Protective Services (DFPS) to intervene with this population, and societal norms that believe these victims are best served through the juvenile justice system, has contributed to the practice of placing these victims in juvenile detention (or adult jail if they are 17 years old or older). This response has been perpetuated by the belief that a secure placement is necessary to protect the child or youth from further exploitation. However, locking up a child or youth in a facility designed for juvenile (or especially adult) offenders for any length of time is likely to exacerbate their sense of fear, expose them to additional trauma, and isolate them further from healthy relationships during a period of intense crisis. Stakeholders who were interviewed in state and regional meetings by the Governor's Child Sex Trafficking Team agree that detaining victims re-traumatizes them and that safe and trauma-informed alternatives are needed.

For safety purposes, first responders (professionals engaging with or acting on



behalf of victims in the initial 72 hours after recognizing the child or youth had been involved in CST) may determine that, under limited circumstances, a secure placement is needed for certain victims until the initial crisis period is over. When initiated, restrictions need to be explained to the child or youth in a respectful and caring manner, emphasizing their time in secure placement will be limited and is necessary to maintain their physical safety, meet their basic needs (food, health care, sleep), and help them access existing or specialized supports. To avoid the risk of further traumatization and to maximize opportunities for therapeutic support, secure placement needs to include clinical interventions and relationship-building supports. These should be free from attributes that treat the child as a perpetrator of a crime rather than a victim.

The **Recover** section of this Roadmap provides detailed information about non-punitive strategies that can help communities recover victims of CST by providing protective and empowering services and supports. This section also offers recommendations for establishing a community infrastructure that

will meet this population's needs and prevent further traumatization. This section first provides a foundation for understanding the key actions by providing a general overview of trauma, its impact on children and youth, and how the behaviors and needs of a traumatized child or youth may be expressed during the recovery period. This section also includes information and guidance – from a trauma-informed perspective – on the following key strategies:

1. Completing a community inventory of active stakeholders, existing activities, and available resources for the CST recovery process;
2. Developing individual organizational response plans, if appropriate;
3. Addressing the immediate needs of victims;
4. Connecting victims to a specialized CST advocate; and
5. Developing local care coordination teams to facilitate a collaborative, coordinated, victim-centered, and trauma-informed recovery process.

This **Recover section** of this roadmap provides detailed information about non-punitive strategies that can help communities recover victims of CST by providing protective and empowering services and supports.



Trauma Considerations

Children and youth who are sexually exploited for commercial purposes experience multiple events of trauma and victimization. These experiences often decrease their resistance to, and increase their vulnerability for, further victimization. Repeated trafficking – whether it occurs intensely over a brief period of time or over a more protracted timespan – results in complex trauma. The psychological and physical effects of complex trauma that results from a child or youth being sex trafficked can be debilitating. Therefore, it is critical that all CST first responders use a comprehensive trauma-informed approach to their interactions with a child or youth to support their short-term stability and overall recovery.

The time immediately after a child or youth is removed from their trafficker is extremely tenuous and demands a focused, well-reasoned, empathetic, and empowering approach to interacting with the victim. The experience of being separated from a trafficker can itself feel devastating to a victim, and the overall sense of devastation is likely to be compounded if the child or youth does not feel physically or psychologically safe and lacks a sense of self-determination. Practices such as locking up a child or youth against their will, threatening them with criminal charges in an effort to motivate them to provide investigative information, interviewing them while they remain physically or emotionally dysregulated, or forcing an interaction with a large number of strangers during this time of distress can all cause additional psychological strain on the victim. Instead, children and youth who have been separated from their traffickers initially need interactions to be limited to a small number of people who will provide emotional support and to be responsive to their basic needs. People who engage with a victim of CST during the recovery period should be trained to expect a range of strong or confusing emotions, use strategies that will limit further exposure to trauma, and help them develop a sense of safety and trust.

Exposure to complex trauma, which is common among people who have been trafficked, can lead to a host of challenging behaviors. Professionals who have helped CST victims through the recovery process have reported the following common reactions and behaviors:

- Ambivalence about, or resistance to making changes that others believe to be healthy for the victim, such as engaging in therapy, staying in an emergency shelter, or assisting with investigation and prosecution of their trafficker;
- Refusal of support beyond supplies to meet basic needs;
- Emotional dysregulation (e.g., presenting affect that does not match the circumstances, such as heightened hostility or dull

calmness; difficulty managing emotions; and, once triggered, difficulty calming down);

- Anger at being separated from their trafficker or the possibility of their trafficker being prosecuted;
- Wavering between the desire for escape from the trafficker and wanting to return to them;
- Artificial sense of their own agency, empowerment, or personal control in the trafficking activity, including difficulty separating their (previous) personal identity from the one developed for them by the trafficker; and
- A sense of detachment from having been mistreated, a sense of self-determination about following their own choices, and an enabling denial that they have been coerced, manipulated, or victimized.

The challenging behaviors described above can hinder a first responder or other professional's ability to meet the complex and varied needs of children and youth who have been sex trafficked. A professional's responses to these behaviors can unintentionally re-traumatize or further harm the child or youth rather than support and protect them, ultimately driving them out of services. A shift in thinking from "what is wrong with this youth?" to "what happened to this youth?" can support an approach that is more trauma-informed. A trauma-informed approach to care does not treat specific traumas or address specific behaviors. Instead, it ensures that services are provided in a way that helps the youth feel safe, accepted, and understood. Trauma-informed core principles and practices that effectively address the trauma-related needs of CST victims are based on a professional's understanding that:

- Trauma is a defining experience that can profoundly shape a child or youth's development and sense of self and others.
- The child or youth's actions and behaviors are a coping mechanism that require understanding and a supportive response.
- Professionals interacting with victims should emphasize the child or youth's strengths and resilience in the face of adversity and also recognize their cultural uniqueness.
- The child or youth is an important contributor to their own safety and service planning.

Regardless of specific services and other resources that may be in place to support victims of CST, being aware and responsive to these principles will improve the quality of care that is provided. Stakeholders who respond to CST victims, or work to improve system responsiveness to trafficking, including investigations and prosecutions of exploiters, will achieve better relationships with victims if they are consistently mindful of these considerations throughout the planning and evaluation efforts recommended in this section.



Key Strategies to Recover

Recover Key Strategy 1: Complete a Community Inventory of Active Stakeholders, Existing Activities, and Available Resources for the CST Recovery Process

Communities across Texas vary in terms of the level of systematic response they have in place to help recover CST victims. Community efforts to recover victims of trafficking should focus on mobilizing and coordinating people who are experienced and trained to work with victims of CST, and support these professionals and the victims of CST with ample support services. Some communities have a robust network of these people and resources, but in other communities, first responders and social service providers do not have CST-specific training or experience.

Communities should strive to have a sufficient number of trained staff in roles and organizations at major entry points to victim recovery who would serve as the first responders when a victim of CST was identified or suspected. Personal advocates for CST victims should be identified or developed from within existing advocacy agencies working on behalf of trafficking victims or represent organizations that provide advocacy to sexual assault or domestic violence victims. In all cases advocacy organizations should provide long-term trauma informed supports, including case management.

Communities who have collaborated on “Recognize” and “Recover” activities, may be ready for the development of a formal survivor care coordination team, which is an inter-agency, multi-disciplinary team that collaborates to coordinate delivery of services to CST victims while supporting law enforcement operations. Members of these teams have formal relationships with specialized CST advocates and care coordinators – professionals who, on behalf of the victim, coordinate supports with law enforcement and a wide range of service providers. CST advocates, care coordinators, and their roles are described in Key Strategies 4 and 5, but their distinction is important to clarify. CST advocates provide emotional support crisis management, and long-term case management to survivors, while care coordinators help develop and monitor the delivery of service plans with partners on the care coordination team. In these instances all parties contributing to a case use trauma-informed practices and follow coordinated protocols to prevent additional traumatization.

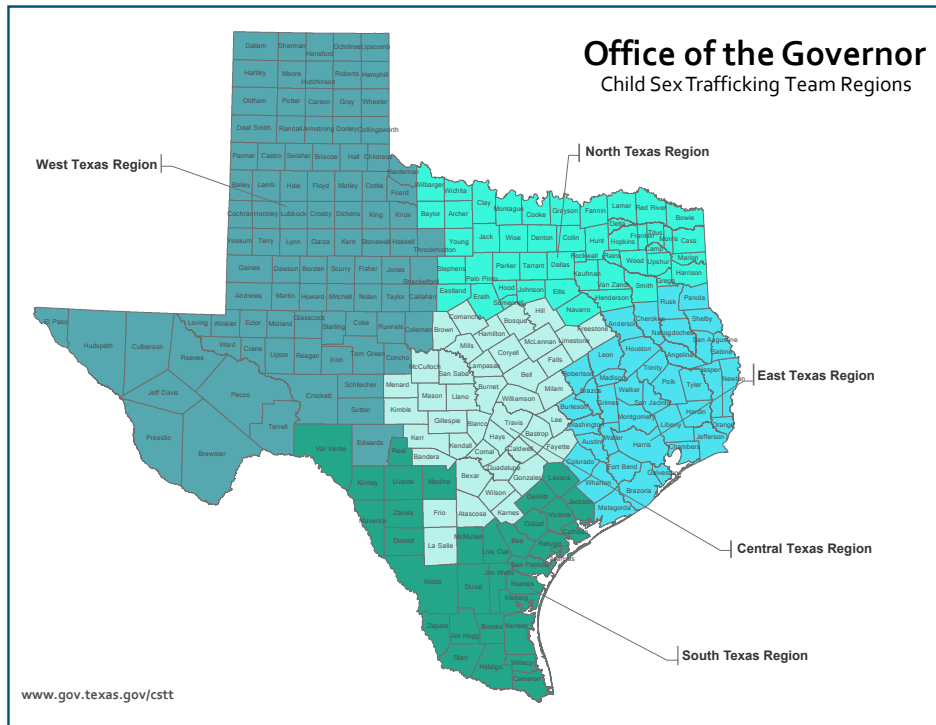
Whether looking to establish a community-wide systematic response to CST or to improve upon an existing model, communities should support collaboration between first responders, state and local organizations that serve at-risk children and youth in the community, and other CST stakeholders, beginning with identifying which organizations currently play a role in responding to or serving identified or potential victims of CST. Once key individuals and organizations have been recognized, communities should then identify system strengths and gaps, which can be accomplished by developing a community inventory of their CST responses. In the next section, we discuss key actions that can support the development of a community inventory.

Key Actions for Completing a Community Inventory

Community collaborations that address CST should be inclusive and provide clearly defined roles for stakeholders. The collaborating group should identify members who have key responsibilities in the recovery process and provide these members with training to work with CST victims. A community inventory on CST can be a useful tool for identifying people who are qualified to assist CST victims in their recovery process and helping them access resources that will reinforce their efforts. All communities

in Texas are served by one of five Regional Administrators who are members of the Governor’s CSTT. An ideal place to begin the community inventory process is to coordinate with the appropriate Regional Administrator who may already have information on local services and supports and can help to identify stakeholders and organizations for participation in the process.

Communities should consider consulting with representatives from the following services and organizations when developing a community inventory:



The Governor's Office Child Sex Trafficking Team

- Local, state and federal law enforcement organizations that respond to suspected child and adult sex trafficking cases in the community, including officers and other personnel who engage directly with suspected CST victims in the field or during investigative interviews;
- Law enforcement officers with specialized CST training or experience;
- The district attorney's office;
- Rape crisis centers, women's services, and other organizations that provide emergency advocacy to victims of sexual assault or domestic violence;
- Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA);
- Specialty residential and advocate services for CST victims;
- Trained CST advocates and care coordinators (if applicable);
- Regional leadership from DFPS and those responsible for, or actively engaged with, agency CST activities, including leadership from special investigations (SI), child protective services (CPS), and child protective investigations (CPI);
- Leadership from health care institutions that provide emergency care to children, including sexual assault forensic examiners and sexual assault nurse examiners;
- Foster care services, including child placing agencies, general residential operations, and residential treatment centers;
- Services for runaway and homeless youth;
- Services to At-Risk Youth (STAR) program;
- Emergency youth shelters;
- Street outreach, drop-in centers, and transitional/independent living programs for young adults who are aging out of the foster care system;
- Substance abuse treatment;
- Psychiatric hospitals;
- Local mental health authorities and other mental health providers;
- Children's advocacy centers (CACs);
- Juvenile justice departments;
- Family, juvenile justice, and child welfare court judges; and
- Other organizations or individuals within or accessible to the community who have training and skills in working with CST victims or children and youth who have experienced complex trauma.

Documenting these types of organizations and their functions, services, and service providers is a key first step for sharing information and ideas about resources that support CST victims.



Contributing agencies should receive a copy of the inventory once it is completed and have the opportunity to update it, as appropriate. It is especially important that professionals who are most likely to have initial contact with CST victims – law enforcement personnel, emergency health care providers, child welfare workers, and juvenile justice staff – contribute to and receive information about the community inventory.

Guideposts Related to a Community Inventory

The existence of a complete and recent service inventory is a marker that can be used to determine if the community is

positioned to provide meaningful recovery activities. Organizations that address their community’s response to CST should determine if they already have a robust inventory of community functions, services, and service providers, and, if so, when it was last updated. Since personnel and program changes are relatively common at public agencies and service providers, existing inventories should be updated at least once a year. If a community is developing an inventory for the first time, they should aim to include all of the services and providers listed above. Communities should also ensure that key service providers are included in the National Human Trafficking Hotline Directory. <https://humantraffickinghotline.org/training-resources/referral-directory>



Recover Key Strategy 2: Organizations Develop an Individual Response Plan

Once potential or existing agencies have been identified through the community inventory, first responder organizations involved in the process of identifying and recovering victims of CST (juvenile justice, CACs, hospitals, law enforcement, DFPS, the district attorney’s office, and specialized advocates, if already in place) should each develop a plan for responding to identified or recovered victims. The plan should direct agencies’ staff on ways to handle suspected CST cases, including identifying which practices to follow – and which ones to avoid – when taking action to meet victims’ needs, as well as when coordinating with other organizations on behalf of the youth or child. While a response plan can be extremely helpful in supporting positive interactions and practices at the organizational level during the recovery period, a meaningful plan requires that staff understand how to carry out that plan through their role in the organization.

Key Actions to Develop an Organizational Response Plan

Organizations should begin CST response planning by first having each responder agency identify the link between their work and child sex trafficking. Next, organizations should determine what decisions and actions are currently taking place when a suspected CST victim is encountered, and then establish what best or promising practices could be realistically implemented that would best meet CST victims’ needs and align with organization and community aspirations (see, for example, Shared Hope’s JuST Council’s Protective Response Model http://sharedhope.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/JRC_ResponseModel_Spreads_web.pdf). These decisions would also include determining who should engage directly with victims, or be involved in decisions related to victims, during the initial recovery period; the roles and responsibilities of involved parties; the requirements for developing a safety plan; and specific trauma-informed practices for all interactions with the victim. These steps will help organizations increase their awareness of existing internal

practices, recognize that CST victims will require a different response than what others may need, and develop a foundation that other organizations operating in a similar role (e.g., other law enforcement or other health care entities) may use for building their own plan.

Guideposts for an Organizational Response Plan

As mentioned above, an organizational response plan is unlikely to be useful if there have been no previous efforts to increase CST awareness or identify key collaborating agencies. If the appropriate groundwork has been laid, organizations that develop a response plan should consider the following questions in developing and evaluating their plans:

- Who has been included in developing the plan? Ideally, a range of people who have an impact on the response process will have contributed, including frontline responders and agency leaders.



- Are all elements represented? This would include signs or tools for screening, crisis and non-crisis responses, victim and employee safety, balancing confidentiality with information sharing, Texas’ mandatory reporting by profession, and accessing external resources.
- Does the plan include specific practices that are trauma-informed, victim-centered and relevant to the needs of those exposed to CST?
- Does the plan cover who should be contacted and involved from within the organization – and outside of it – during the recovery process? The more specific the plan is, the more likely it will be used by a broad group of individuals and agencies.
- Does the plan include processes for monitoring adherence and continuous improvements over time?



Recover Key Strategy 3: Provide for Basic Needs

In the first hours and days after victims are separated from their trafficker, they are likely to experience significant and often overwhelming emotional distress. This period is often marked by fear, distrust, confusion, uncertainty, exhaustion, and concerns about their personal safety. During the first 72 hours of recovery, victims should not be expected to make major decisions or engage in discussions that are focused on the future. Initial contact with children and youth who have been exploited should instead focus on meeting their most basic needs (shelter, food, sleep, clothing, and urgent medical attention), letting them know what they can expect in the ensuing hours, and building a trusting relationship with them.

Key Actions to Respond to Basic Needs

It is important to set realistic expectations and to prepare for a victim’s likely behavior and possible lack of willingness to engage with law enforcement or service providers upon recovery. During the early phases of recovery, victims are likely to be suffering from untreated injuries or illnesses, drug/alcohol exposure, hunger and dehydration, extreme stress, and trauma. They may not see their recovery as a “rescue”; rather, they may see it more as an unwelcome and forced separation from their family, gang, boyfriend, father figure, protector(s), or combination of all of these, depending on how they have come to view their traffickers. Because of these considerations, service providers should focus on basic relationship building, establishing a sense of safety, and meeting the youth’s basic needs. The number of people who directly interact with the child or youth should also be limited. In addition, in order not to compromise the investigative process, the victim should not be asked questions about the trauma they have endured, their willingness to seek justice against their trafficker, or their long-term plans, unless these topics are initiated by the child or youth (and in these cases, discussion should be limited to only what they disclose).

In the long term, a victim will need an in-depth support plan for connecting to short, medium, and long-term services and supports and to help them cope with their reactions to trauma. An essential element of recovering from a crisis is to create an emergency safety plan, which should be done immediately. Service providers can ask victims the following questions to obtain critical information for developing an emergency safety plan:

- What two or three people can they call upon for help, support, or to let them know they are okay?
- How would they reach them? What would they say if they needed help, but could not communicate freely?
- What immediate safety concerns do they have?
- Is there any person, place, or activity that would put them in greater danger? How can they avoid these things?
- What can they do to stay alive and healthy while experiencing ongoing exploitation? If this requires resources, how can they access them?
- Do they have any urgent health concerns such as pain, any part of their body that is not functioning well, or anything causing them to feel anxious or afraid? How can they manage and cope with these concerns if they persist or worsen?



- Where can they go if they get hungry, need a safe place to sleep, or need shelter from bad weather?

While providing for basic needs during the hours following the initial crisis recovery, safety may present as a more critical factor for some, more than other victims. Previous responses from the victim to recovery efforts, limited options to return to an open (foster or family) home, or acute dangers associated with the current crisis may, at times, indicate the need for a secure, specialized, emergency placement. These short-term placements should provide physical and emotional (felt or perceived) safety, protection from triggers in the environment that might dysregulate the child or youth and be tied to longer-term safety and care planning. This should include regular contact while in placement with supports that will be available to the survivor following discharge, such as the CST advocate.

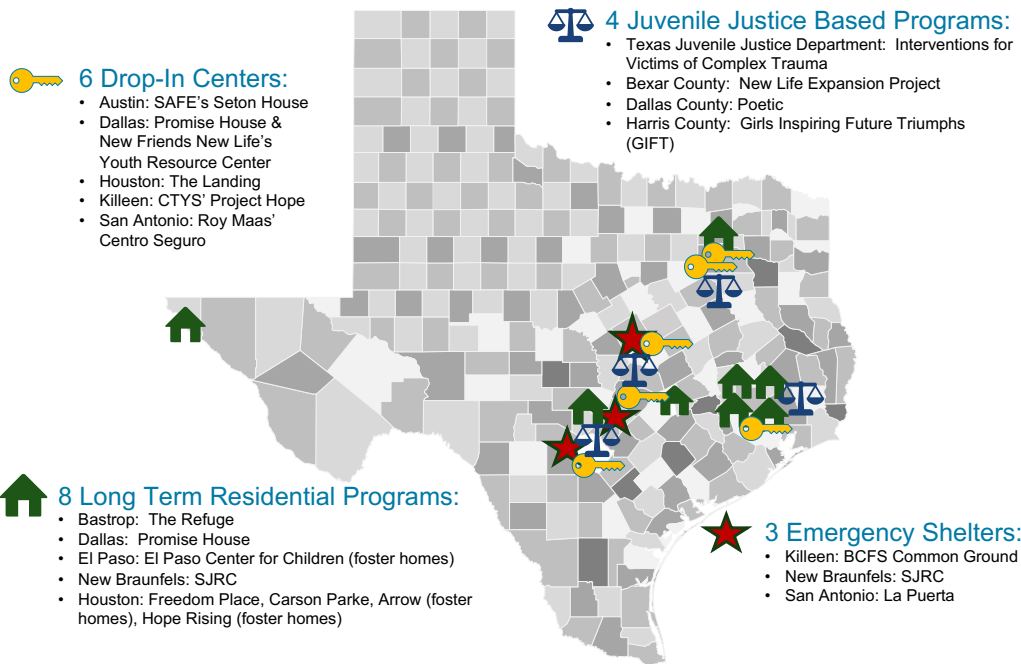
The initial recovery period is not only the sole opportunity to obtain information about the child or youth, in many cases it may be the only guaranteed time to provide the victim with resources and information. For this reason, the emergency response process always includes providing the child or youth with information on emergency responders such as the National Human Trafficking Hotline, role of their CST advocate (if available), or others whom they can contact in the future, regardless of where they are located or what activities they may be engaged in.

Guideposts to Establish if Basic Needs Are Being Met

Organizations that have a role in the initial recovery process (within approximately 72 hours of identification or removal from the trafficker) can track and measure if the basic needs of victims are being met by tracking or analyzing the following:

- Documenting the types of basic needs that are met during the initial recovery process by the organization and, if known, others in the community. Organizations that provide services to victims of CST can create lists or protocols for required supports to be offered during the recovery period. Required elements of support should address, for example, discussions about immediate safety; if water, food, and opportunities for sleep opportunities were offered, etc.
- The Governor’s Child Sex Trafficking Team can provide a set of measures that can help gauge the effectiveness of emergency placements, where available. To learn more, contact the Team here: <https://gov.texas.gov/apps/contact/contactus.aspx?contact=6548961>

Specialized Services for CSEC Youth





Recover Key Strategy 4: Identify and Engage Advocates

When responders first contact a CST victim, they should also engage a CST advocate, whenever possible. CST advocates play a multifaceted role in supporting the victim, which is carried out through three key functions: (1) They provide supervision by staying at the victim’s side, as warranted, during the early hours of recovery, which enhances the victim’s sense of safety; (2) they provide emotional support to empower the child or youth to make safe and healthy choices; and (3) they support law enforcement first responders by assisting them with the victim’s care while the victim is in law enforcement custody during the crisis recovery period. Advocates continue to represent the needs of the child or youth, empower them through the recovery and healing process, and provide case management where needed. By providing unconditional support and access to needed services, a healthy relationship between the advocate and victim can begin to counteract the unhealthy trauma bond the victim had with the trafficker.

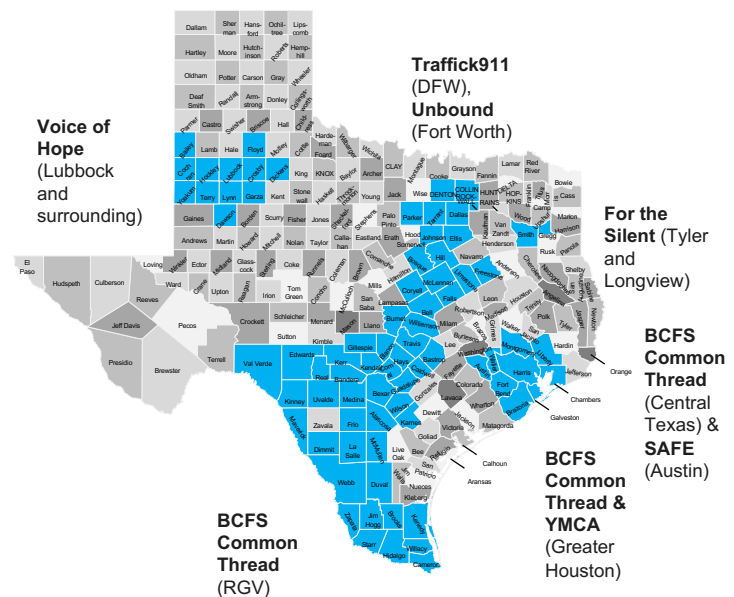
When recovered or identified under crisis circumstances, a trained advocate should arrive onsite and make direct contact with the child or youth within 60–90 minutes of being called (as determined by collaborative partners). During the initial recovery period, advocates support children and youth by being present or available (especially in the first 24–72 hours), explaining what is happening, providing coordination between involved parties, and assisting with the early stages of safety planning. Advocate response timelines and protocols may be different for victims of CST that are identified while under safe and stable circumstances (e.g. self-disclosure made to a parent of victimization that occurred years earlier). Advocates also empower victims to make safe and well-thought-out decisions, such as resisting the urge to run away or return to their trafficker. In addition, they reinforce victims’ independent identity by emphasizing their value and worth. While the advocate’s role with the victim changes over time, e.g., to include more robust case management when the survivor is ready, their presence and support is expected to endure well beyond initial recovery. If the child or youth becomes re-engaged in trafficking, the advocate would remain available whenever the victim reaches out again. By maintaining a relationship with the victim, an advocate sends an important message that the child or youth deserves love and support regardless of their choices or life circumstances.

ADVOCACY PROGRAMS

Key Actions to Identify and Engage an Advocate

Communities should use their community inventory process to identify agencies with trained advocates. Currently, the Governor’s Child Sex Trafficking Team funds and provides regular training and technical assistance to seven nonprofit agencies to provide specialized CST advocates to CST youth (often through age 24) in 76 Texas counties.

In the 76 counties covered by advocacy agencies, law enforcement, juvenile probation departments, the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS), and health care providers should all have established protocols to engage CST advocates as soon as possible after crisis recovery. The first responder should share need-to-know information with the advocacy agency – safety concerns that could help the advocate avoid



*Dallas CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) developing capacity to provide specialized advocacy for exploited youth who are in DFPS custody.

The Governor’s Office Child Sex Trafficking Team



situations and contacts that could endanger the youth and/or the advocate, and general information about the victim to help the advocacy agency make the most appropriate advocate match (e.g., age, gender identity, race, ethnicity, primary language, substance use, and sexual orientation).

If a community does not have trained and available CST advocates ready to fulfill this role, they may have other resources that can be used to provide limited support to victims. Advocates from the following organizations may be appropriate for receiving training to begin serving CST victims:

- Rape crisis centers,
- Domestic violence centers and shelters,
- Victim services personnel within law enforcement agencies,
- Child advocacy centers,
- Court Appointed Special Advocates.¹

Communities need to exercise caution when they use alternative resources and personnel to serve as CST advocates. Advocates can have a significant positive impact on victims, but if the advocate does not have the appropriate mind set, training, and support, they could potentially cause more harm than good. The Governor’s Child Sex Trafficking Team established a number of requirements for CST advocates, including, but not limited to:

- Training and ongoing education on complex trauma and the provision of trauma-informed care;
- Training to refrain from expressing their personal beliefs, values, or morals to the child or youth being served, and to adhere to practices that are child- and youth-driven to instill a sense of personal empowerment in the child or youth;
- Becoming aware of and applying self-care practices, which should be reinforced by supportive employment policies and supports;
- Training and ongoing supervision to ensure they maintain ethical, legal, and professional boundaries.²

Once they are trained, advocates support the children and youth they represent through the following actions:

- Helping victims meet basic needs, including food, sleep, and clothing, coordinating access to housing/shelter, and other forms of case management as needed;
- Building a healthy relationship that affirms and validates the victim’s physical needs and emotional state and helping to regulate the trauma responses that may otherwise result in running, fighting, and behavior relapse;
- Avoiding legal, investigative, custodial or other activities

related to the trafficking episode(s), such as interviewing or asking the victim questions related to investigative information;

- Maintaining a healthy and accessible relationship with the child or youth by not personalizing or becoming defensive when the victim expresses hostility or anger;
- Demonstrating consistent honesty, using professional discretion, avoiding disclosure of any information to the victim that might violate boundaries or impede the efforts of law enforcement or other collaborating partners; and
- Supporting the objectives of other collaborating agencies (investigative, custodial, and service partners) and their own advocacy agency by sharing information obtained by engaging with the victim directly and on their behalf.
- Helping stabilize the victim to assist in the investigation by providing services and support that are beyond the means and expertise of law enforcement.
- Helping the victim move through the stages of change toward healing (The Stages of Change Model and Motivational Interviewing, which is a counseling method that providers use to help youth move through the stages of change, are discussed thoroughly in the Restore Section).
- Providing flexible and long term case management services. If there is a clear case manager already in the child’s life, e.g., child protective services worker, the advocate may be called upon to supplement those services. When case management is provided on a short-term basis by a juvenile justice court, probation officer, law enforcement victim counselor, medical social worker, or community service provider, the advocate’s case management should be overlaying and/or extending these services beyond the time or scope provide long term case management spanning all of these systems.
- Over the long-term if their is relapse, advocates will meet the child where he/she is within the stages of change and help them start to progress again.

Guideposts for Advocacy Engagement

Communities can use their community inventory process to identify if they have an organization that currently provides or could provide specialized CST advocates. If communities do not have active specialized CST advocates, they should explore ways that local agencies such as rape crisis centers, domestic violence shelters/centers, and/or CASA organizations (appointed for children in state custody as a result of evidence of child abuse and neglect) could build capacity to fill this role.

If the community is already served by CST advocates, it should



consider its available capacity of CST advocates, the geographic service area, and projected demand for this service to determine if resources will be able to meet community needs once recognition and recovery efforts start to identify victims that need advocates.

In both scenarios (CST advocates and CST-trained personnel from other organizations), the Governor's Office Child Sex Trafficking Team (CSTT) can assist with identifying potential advocacy agencies and integrating this service into the community's CST victim response. The CSTT can also provide a set of measures

to help gauge the effectiveness of advocate organizations. At a minimum, advocacy agencies should be able to show meaningful engagement and trust-based relationships with youth in the short and long term and collaboration with law enforcement and youth serving agencies. There are other measures that can help determine if the youth they serve are stabilizing over time and eventually gaining in safety, health, and well-being. To learn more, contact the Governor's Child Sex Trafficking Team here: <https://gov.texas.gov/apps/contact/contactus.aspx?contact=6548961>



Recover Key Strategy 5: Mobilize Care Coordination

First responders – and the systems and organizations they represent – can ensure effective victim-centered and trauma-responsive care for a CST victim by fully collaborating and supporting each other's objectives. This vision can be realized when organizational leaders (and their subject matter experts) work across disciplines and professions, commit to enhancing their community's collaborative culture, and are open to aligning internal and external practices with industry best practices. This is one of the most difficult strategies to accomplish and should not be the first or second collaborative engagement that community organizations pursue to respond to trafficking. Rather, this should build upon the success of other collaborative strategies offered throughout this Roadmap. The Governor's Child Sex Trafficking Team has identified two elements that are essential for successful care coordination collaboration: **consensus care coordination protocols and one agency acting as care coordinator.**

Consensus care coordination protocols are designed by each organization, or developed by multiple organizations within a profession (e.g., law enforcement) if there are multiple organizations within that profession that are carrying out the same or similar functions. Protocols should reflect a realistic approach that incorporates current activities and best practices for that profession – and align with organization and community goals – that first responder organizations would use for identifying, recovering, or responding to referrals of CST victims. These protocols are developed by each first responder organization, including the advocate and care coordinator, and incorporate plans for collaborating with other partners. Protocols also include specific strategies for supporting each organization's objectives for providing care for the victim. Individual organization protocols, therefore, become integrated into joint protocols for all first responder organizations that make up the care coordination team. These joint protocols are frequently revised until those organization members of the care coordination team reach consensus that they are all in alignment with and support each organization's activities and objectives.

Consensus care coordination protocols target four objectives. First, they help partners educate each other about their organizations' complex decisions and activities, eliminate misconceptions, and clarify limitations of authority or scope of practice. Second, these protocols allow partners to establish transparency between their organizations' activities by identifying where they need to compromise, provide each other support, and avoid the possibility of undermining each other's efforts. Third, protocols provide partners with a tool for making commitments to act in a supportive and predictable manner. Fourth, the consensus protocols provide a platform for accountability to one another once the protocols are implemented.

The **care coordinator** is the second essential element of care coordination. The care coordinator is one agency, endorsed by the partner organizations, to act as the single point of contact for referrals to care coordination, share victim information between selected partners (as statutorily authorized or with guardian consent), and help multiple systems and organizations collaborate as effectively as possible. This last function, acting as the "air traffic controller," may be the most important.



Victims of CST are often involved in numerous systems such as juvenile justice, foster care, criminal justice, and clinical (mental and behavioral health) services. The agency in the care coordinator role facilitates multi-disciplinary care coordination team meetings for representatives from some or all of these systems, and gathers and disseminates updated information from individual agencies and providers (e.g., the CST advocate) to help all partners make the most informed plans for the victim. Local children’s advocacy centers (CACs) are usually the best resource for this role, reflecting their statutory authority, collaborative structure, and connections with stakeholders who respond to child abuse.³

While the CST advocate focuses on meeting the victim’s needs and provides support through direct interaction, the care coordinator works behind the scenes to gather information about the child or youth and uses the information to coordinate care that best meets their needs. Some of the care coordinator responsibilities include:

- Receiving notification of a recovered child or youth by law enforcement (as capabilities or authority permits) – or a survivor (non-crisis) identified by child welfare or other care coordination partner (upon initiation of law enforcement or DFPS investigation) – and, as agreed upon by consensus protocols, notifying the advocate agency to dispatch an advocate and the medical facility to stage Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) support and/or emergent care;
- Determining if the child or youth is involved in the child welfare or juvenile justice systems, and coordinating with law enforcement, DPFS, and juvenile justice departments as appropriate;
- Identifying and coordinating access to the most appropriate place for the child or youth to stay, which would include working with the CST advocate, family (if they are determined to be safe and protective), law enforcement, DFPS and juvenile probation as applicable; and
- Facilitating a series of multi-disciplinary team (MDT) meetings between engaged partners to address investigative and service planning (depending upon that agency’s statutory authority) on a short- and long-term basis, and seeking accountability from MDT members for carrying out agreed upon service plan recommendations. Family members and the child or youth may participate in service planning MDTs at some point in time.

Key Actions to Mobilize Care Coordination

Just as the community inventory process should help identify advocates, it should also help to determine which agency should serve as the local care coordinator. The local children’s advocacy center (CAC) should be considered first for this role. In order to successfully assume care coordinator responsibilities for a region, the CAC should be willing to assume this role, have the capacity to expand services to take on care coordinator responsibilities, agree to follow the four objectives of consensus protocols, and have the endorsement of first responders and other local care coordination partners to serve as the care coordinator. When these conditions are in place, the identified CAC will be able to receive technical assistance through the Children’s Advocacy Centers of Texas and the Governor’s CSTT. If, for some reason, the local CAC is not the right fit to act as the single care coordination agency, local partners should help identify alternative agencies as potential candidates. When applicable, the CSTT Regional Administrator can provide support to partners with this process. By achieving community consensus and facilitating a transparent process for identifying the care coordination agency, local partners will establish a strong foundation for future collaboration and help ensure first responders know where to go for support when they are involved in the CST recovery process.

Once the care coordinating agency is identified, it should receive training and education on the following topics, as needed:

- Victim-centered and victim-driven case planning processes;
- Cultural awareness and competency;
- Information collection and sharing;
- Effective communication and collaboration with the advocate, law enforcement, child protective services, juvenile justice services, families, health care providers, service providers, and schools; and
- Community resources related to short- and long-term support needs.

Guideposts for Care Coordination

During recovery activities, effective care coordination should adhere to established protocols, lead to well-executed recovery processes, and achieve outcomes of short-term safety and stability for recovered victims. Some children and youth will inevitably run away, relapse, or be re-exploited. However, while recovered victims are still in the care of first responders, an advocate, or a care coordination team, a well-executed recovery can be gauged by the following metrics:



- Number of referrals from each care coordination partner;
- Number of **recovered** victims engaging in a minimum of 48 hours of active care coordination;
- Number of **recovered** victims who are returned or placed into one of the following settings within 48 hours of recovery, as recommended by care coordination staff, where active care coordination is occurring:
 - Family,
 - Paid or un-paid kinship care,
 - Emergency shelter,
 - Foster home,
 - Residential treatment center,
 - Psychiatric hospital,
 - Detention center, or
 - Other;
- Number of **recovered** victims who are returned or placed into a recommended setting within 30 days of recovery, as recommended by care coordination staff, where active care coordination is occurring;
- Number of **recovered** victims accepted into care coordination who remain at a safe and stable non-secure location (placement) for at least 48 hours following the departure of law enforcement, and initial care coordination staff has indicated – or a guardian has determined – that the location is appropriate;
- Number of guardians following the primary care coordination team recommendations from each prior MDT staffing.

¹ Court Appointed Special Advocates are highly trained and staff-supported volunteers appointed by courts to advocate for the best interest of a child in the custody of the Department of Family and Protective Services.

² CST fund are receiving training and technical assistance from Praesidium, a national leader in helping youth serving agencies prevent child abuse and risk to the agency, employees and volunteers and the youth they serve. <https://website.praesidiuminc.com/wp/>

³ Children’s Advocacy Centers in Texas are mandated and funded to facilitate multi-disciplinary child abuse investigations and victim services related to those investigations (Texas Family Code, Chapter 264) Because child sex trafficking is a form of child abuse under Texas law, care coordination is already within the realm of services that CACs provide. Children’s Advocacy Centers of Texas is partnering with the Governor’s Child Sex Trafficking Team to prepare local CACs to provide care coordination of child sex trafficking cases to their communities.



Restore

Overview: Restore

The Restore section of this Roadmap addresses the supports communities need to establish to meet the needs of a survivor of CST over the long term. The concept of “restoring” a survivor to a past level of wholeness or wellbeing is often paradoxical. Many survivors of child sex trafficking CST come from hard backgrounds and may have had little or no experience with emotional or physical safety, security, or stability. Instead of restoring these survivors to well-being, the task may be to help the youth experience some semblance of safety, security and stability for the first time.

Children and youth who have survived sex trafficking have endured ongoing psychological manipulation and trauma. A large number of these children and youth have experienced many other adverse or traumatic experiences in their lifetimes. As many as 93% of children and youth who have been sex trafficked have also experienced sexual abuse, physical abuse, neglect, traumatic loss, separation from caregivers, and family

and community violence.^{1,2} In response, many of these children and youth have adopted behaviors that may help them cope in the short term, but also make it difficult for them to trust people who want to help or to engage in the supports they need for long-term independence.

The restoration process continues to address the survivor’s immediate needs for safety and stability, and extends to longer-term services and supports that help the child or youth achieve a broad level of wellness and maintain previous and current gains toward independence.

Restoration does not necessarily mean that a survivor is completely free from the effects of a traumatic experience. Restoration is an ongoing process that involves a series of decisions made by the child or youth to



address their trauma and to make changes that will improve their life. The process takes time, can ebb and flow, happens in phases, and can be circular. The length of the restoration process will depend on many factors, including the complexity, severity, and duration of the trauma experienced by the child or youth. For some children and youth, it may begin within 72 hours after they have been identified and recovered from their traffickers. For others, it may begin months after they have been identified and recovered and could continue for many years. To successfully move through each phase of the restoration process, a survivor needs access to a range of services and supports designed to meet them “where they are” emotionally, and even physically.

Once a young person is ready to engage in restoration activities, it is important for anyone trying to support them to understand the phases of restoration. Safety and stabilization is always the first need; establishing or re-establishing a child or youth’s physical and emotional safety is the most critical step in the process. Many survivors of CST feel unsafe in their relationships and their bodies, which can result in them having difficulty talking about their experiences and struggling with regulating their emotions in response to everyday life.

Remembrance and mourning is the second phase in the restoration process. The survivor’s tasks during this phase broaden to include processing emotions and mourning the losses related to their trauma. Survivors usually work through this phase with the support of a therapist or a counselor during

individual or group therapy sessions. In this phase, survivors may quickly become overwhelmed when talking about their trauma, requiring a resumption of attention to their need for safety and stability.

The final phase involves reconnection and integration. The tasks during this phase include redefining oneself in the context of meaningful relationships. During this phase, the survivor recognizes the impact of their traumatic experience and is ready to take concrete steps that empower them to determine their own future. Survivors can continue to grow and deepen their healing through opportunities to talk to other children and youth about CST or by mentoring peers who have had similar experiences.

In the restoration process, each survivor’s experience is unique, change is not linear, and relapse is common. Children and youth are susceptible to re-entry into trafficking if the vulnerabilities that contributed to their recruitment are not addressed. Some of these vulnerabilities include a lack of financial and emotional support, difficulty succeeding in school or other mainstream educational settings, difficulty regulating emotions or communicating in socially acceptable ways, criminal and credit histories that prevent access to employment, and difficulties with housing and secondary education.

Survivors are most likely to be successful in gaining independence if they have longer term goals and unconditional access to a reliable network of services and supports that meet a range of needs, including health, mental health, education, legal, housing, and



safety needs. To meet the complex needs of these children and youth and to promote ongoing well-being, a community needs to have the capacity to provide ongoing access to a continuum of trauma-informed traditional and non-traditional community-based services and supports that extend well into a survivor’s young adulthood.

A community’s efforts to build or expand its network of community-based providers can be enhanced by the following key strategies, which are discussed in this section:

1. Support access to a network of community-based providers,
2. Develop or expand intensive case management and wraparound services for children and youth who have been sex trafficked,
3. Build a trauma-informed system of care,
4. Understand and apply the Stages of Change Model,
5. Train key community providers in motivational interviewing, and
6. Train community supports in Trust-Based Relational Interventions®

Specialized Services to Restore Adult Survivors



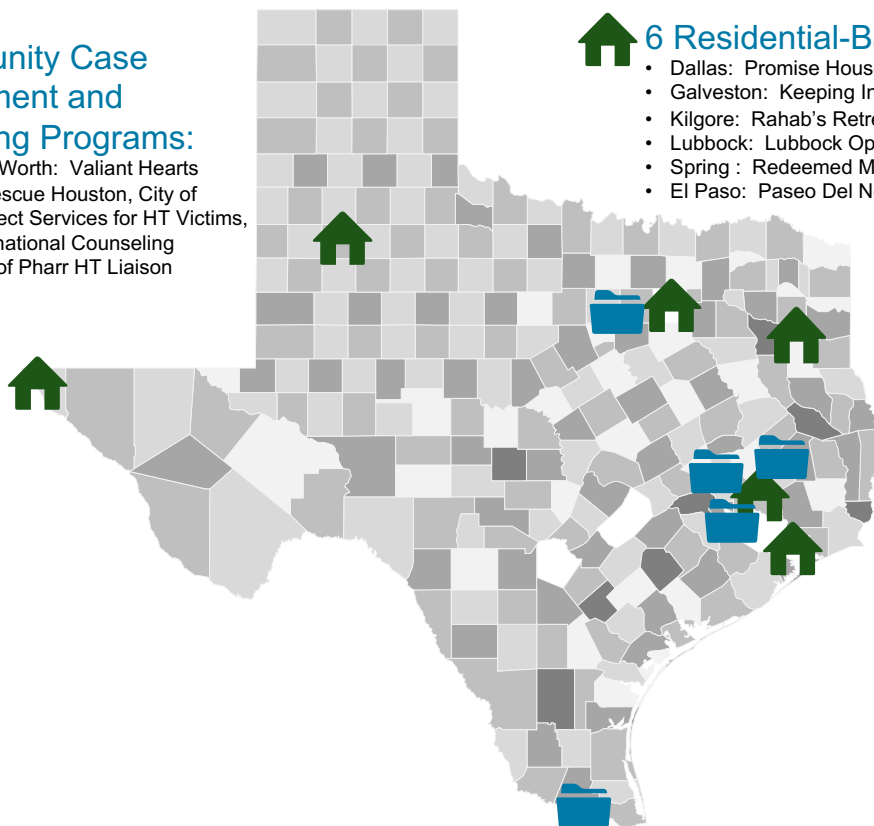
5 Community Case Management and Counseling Programs:

- Dallas, Fort Worth: Valiant Hearts
- Houston: Rescue Houston, City of Houston Direct Services for HT Victims, YMCA International Counseling
- Pharr: City of Pharr HT Liaison



6 Residential-Based Providers:

- Dallas: Promise House
- Galveston: Keeping Innocent Sisters Safe
- Kilgore: Rahab’s Retreat
- Lubbock: Lubbock Open Door
- Spring : Redeemed Ministries
- El Paso: Paseo Del Norte Center of Hope



The Governor’s Office Child Sex Trafficking



Key Strategies to Restore

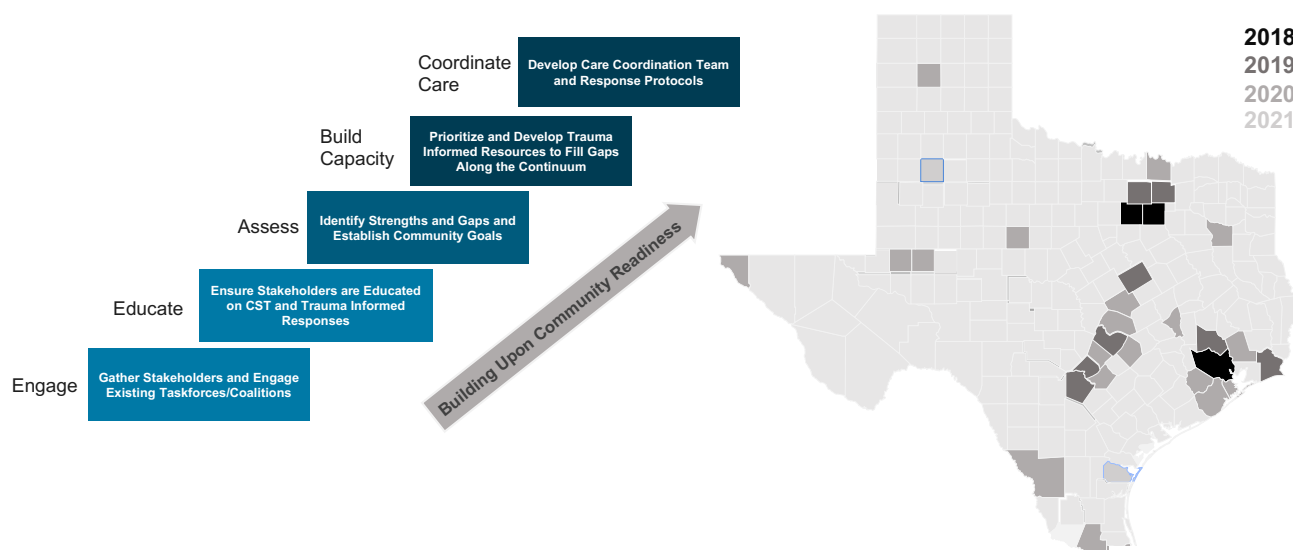
Restore Key Strategy 1: Support Access to a Network of Community-Based Providers

The complex needs of children and youth survivors of sex trafficking can quickly overwhelm a community that has limited resources or a fragmented system of providers. This is not only true for CST survivors in crisis following recognition by law enforcement, but also when planning for longer-term needs. At times, survivors have to relocate to address safety, medical or behavioral health, or other key needs. When relocation occurs, survivors can lose the benefit of natural supports like friends and families. For this reason and as long as safety is considered, community efforts to provide services and support to CST survivors should aim to keep the child or young person as close to home as appropriate.

The first step in developing a comprehensive system of services and supports is to complete a community inventory that covers a broad range of resources for children and youth’s needs. This process begins with a focus on available resources, as discussed in the Recover section, but may continue with smaller groups of stakeholders that address longer-term needs. Restoration resources will include some of those identified in the community inventory mentioned in the Recover section, but others will not be identified until planning begins for CST survivors who have moved beyond immediate crises. Some examples of restoration resources include: specialized CST long-term therapeutic residential placements, intensive case management, wraparound behavioral health, CST advocates, accessible medical and dental care, legal and credit repair services, educational services and supports, and tattoo removal.

The most effective networks of community-based providers are coordinated and involve mutual support on behalf of the child or youth. Developing this network of providers can be carried out in the absence of care coordination in communities that are not ready for it, choose to delay pursuing formal care coordination, or lack sufficient services to form a comprehensive local network. While it is optimal to have a care coordination team in place during the restoration phase, qualified individuals can achieve many of the same goals through facilitating information sharing, service planning, and making and managing service referrals. Communities that have established or are pursuing care coordination will find information about care coordination strategies in Recover Key Strategy #5.

COMMUNITIES CAN LEND MEANINGFUL SUPPORT TO SURVIVORS OF CST WHILE WORKING THEIR WAY TO PROVIDING FULL CARE COORDINATION



The Governor’s Office Child Sex Trafficking



Key Actions for Supporting Access to a Network of Community-Based Providers

A community can best meet the complex needs of survivors – and promote their ongoing path to healing and wellness – if it has the capacity to provide ongoing access to a continuum of trauma-informed traditional and non-traditional community-based services and supports that extend well into a survivor’s young adulthood. Most communities have a number of services and supports that can benefit CST survivors over the long-term. Whatever level of capacity communities may have, it is advisable that all communities committed to supporting CST survivors take regular stock of their existing services, including eligibility for, access to, and capacity of those services; compare those to current needs; identify gaps; and develop or maintain an updated plan to engage providers and funders to expand current capacity, build on the skills of existing providers, and create new services. The steps for supporting access to a network of community-based providers are outlined below.

IDENTIFY OR DEVELOP A COMMUNITY COALITION

The first step in the community inventory process is to create or engage groups of key community stakeholders who are interested in supporting or providing services and supports for children and youth who have been sex trafficked (unless this has already been completed in the community inventory process for identifying recovery resources as outlined in the Recover section). Communities are encouraged to work with existing anti-trafficking coalitions or other collaborative groups that serve children and youth with complex behavioral health or child welfare needs. Potential stakeholders include, but are not limited to, representatives from child welfare, mental health, education, substance use disorder, child advocacy, and juvenile justice agencies, as well as faith-based organizations and community mentor groups.

LIST ALL AVAILABLE SERVICES AND SUPPORTS

Once the group has been formed, the stakeholders should identify all of the services and supports that are currently available that can be provided to meet the needs of CST survivors. Services and supports that are available across the following areas should be identified:

- **Safety Services:** Drop-in and street outreach programs;
- **Health and Behavioral Health:** Emergency and ongoing outpatient and inpatient medical and behavioral health services and tattoo removal;
- **Education and Employment:** Customized education and vocational services and mentoring;

- **Community:** Leadership opportunities for survivors that help them transition back to the community, and to support family members;
- **Housing:** Specialized emergency and long-term placements, in-home care, and supportive housing;
- **Legal:** Legal representation related to criminal history, family matters, protective orders, and other legal needs.];
- **Relationships:** Personal advocates who build trust-based relationships that support survivors and offer case management as warranted; and
- **Financial Stability:** Financial assistance to access services and help with credit recovery and debt issues.

IDENTIFY GAPS, ENGAGE PROVIDERS, AND DEVELOP A PLAN

Once the group has a list of current community supports and service providers, the next step is to determine any remaining gaps in services or service capacity, and identify ways to fill these gaps. Coalitions should engage community supports and providers who are willing to be trained and who have the capacity to expand existing services or develop new programs. Coalitions should also enlist the support of public and private funders that might consider providing funding for these needs. This information will provide the foundation for developing a community plan to ensure that children and youth who have been victims of CST have access to a community-based, trauma-informed continuum of care. Finally, once a community has identified the providers in its current system, it should ensure that all service providers are listed on the service directory of the National Human Trafficking Hotline (NHTH) so that victims can readily access them.

Guideposts for Supporting Access to a Network of Community-Based Providers

Development of a thorough community inventory of resources will establish a foundation to effectively coordinate and provide care to survivors. This activity should involve a broad and diverse representation of stakeholders. While it may be started during the initial community inventory process discussed in the Recover section, additional voices should be included in follow-up gatherings. Contributing stakeholders should receive a copy of the inventory and the ensuing community plan. Communities can also ensure identified resources are being shared by checking to make sure they are listed on the NHTH directory.



Restore Key Strategy 2: Develop or Expand Intensive Case Management or Wraparound Services for CST Survivors

Individuals and organizations that are involved in the process of developing a community-based continuum of care for survivors of CST should ensure that survivors have access to and are able to effectively navigate multiple systems. Intensive case management and wraparound services help survivors gain ready access to the full array of services and supports needed to address their needs, prevent disruptions to contracted placement or the family home, and ensure that services are coordinated to achieve the survivor's goals.

Key Actions to Help Deliver or Expand Intensive Case Management and Wraparound Services

Intensive case management and wraparound services can be provided by multiple organizations, depending on where the child or youth enters the system. In order to be effective, these services need to include many of the following elements:

- Long-term safety planning;
- Identifying short, intermediate, and long-term goals;
- Eliminating barriers to stabilize basic needs such as housing, education, and employment;
- Engaging children and youth in a continuum of community services and supports that align with their needs and promote long-term stabilization and restoration;
- Engaging schools and mental health, child welfare, juvenile justice, or other child serving systems, as needed;
- Advocating to engage children and youth in community services and supports and help them develop trust in providers;

- Engaging children and youth in trauma-informed treatment and mental health recovery designed for CST victims;³
- Seeking ways to engage survivors as leaders to support activities that reinforce the maintenance of recovery; and
- Providing after-hours support to primary caregivers when the survivor is dysregulated and behavioral health assistance is indicated.

Guideposts for Delivering or Expanding Intensive Case Management and Wraparound Services

Existing providers of intensive case management need to be trained to meet the needs of children and youth who have survived CST. Barriers to accessing care, including funding and limited availability of appropriate and effective services (e.g., frequency and duration of services) for this unique population, need to be addressed. Capacity limitations should be resolved to support the needs of survivors cycling through stages of crisis and stability.



Restore Key Strategy 3: Build a Trauma-Informed System of Care ^{4,5}

Community-based services and supports for CST survivors need to be based on trauma-informed principles in order to have positive impact. A system that is trauma-informed understands and recognizes the impact that trauma has on the brain. In this type of system, policies and attitudes reflect understanding that a child or youth can be triggered by everyday experiences and that their reactions may be seen as excessive. A trauma-informed system works to help survivors feel physically and emotionally safe and it provides services that meet their individual needs.⁶ A trauma-informed system has four necessary elements:

- It realizes the widespread impact of trauma and understands potential paths for recovery;
- It recognizes the signs and symptoms of trauma in children and youth and their families, as well as staff and others who work with child and youth victims of sex trafficking;
- It responds by fully integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures, and practices; and
- It seeks to actively resist re-traumatization.⁷

There are no formulas that communities can use to implement trauma-informed care or a trauma-informed approach; trauma-informed care is not prescriptive. A community that is trauma-informed supports a continuum of service providers that adhere to the following six principles, rather than a set of policies and procedures:⁸

- Safety;
- Trustworthiness and transparency;
- Peer support;
- Collaboration and mutuality;
- Empowerment, voice, and choice; and
- Cultural, historical, and gender issues.

At minimum, community providers who are implementing trauma-informed care strive to do no harm and to avoid re-traumatizing or blaming the child or youth.

In recognition of efforts across the state to integrate trauma informed care practices into child and youth services, the Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute examined prevalence estimates, reviewed literature and national best practices, and talked with key informants in Texas to describe how they have operationalized trauma-informed care for children and youth involved with the child welfare system. The report is available online at: <http://35xs6u1zhslu1p3cy926rkn4-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/mmhpi-final-trauma-informed-care-report.pdf>



Key Actions for Implementing a Trauma-Informed Approach

A trauma-informed continuum of service providers requires a commitment from all of its supports and organizations to minimize perceived threats, avoid re-traumatizing the survivor, and support the recovery process.⁹ Communities can develop a trauma-informed approach across a continuum of care by implementing the strategies described below.

TRAINING

Anyone (including all staff, volunteers, and any caring adult) who comes in contact with a child or youth who is a victim of CST should be trained to identify and understand trauma and bereavement, trauma triggers, and behaviors that are a trauma response, and to respond in ways that promote or maintain engagement with the survivor. Training resources on trauma can be found on the National Child Traumatic Stress Network <https://www.nctsn.org/> or on the Trauma Recovery website <http://trauma-recovery.ca>. The Governor’s Office also funds Trust-Based Relational Intervention (TBRI) training for providers who serve CST victims and high-risk youth. More information can be found here: <https://child.tcu.edu/#sthash.TjV4tFNp.dpbs>

ORGANIZATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Organizations and agencies that are providing care to children and youth who are victims of CST should commit to implementing policies, procedures, or interventions that are trauma-informed and empowering, rather than punitive in nature. These policies, approaches, and interventions should ensure services prioritize physical and emotional safety and meet basic needs

at all times. Organizations and agencies should also provide access to trauma-responsive settings and treatment services, and develop alternatives to traditional therapies such as art therapy, journaling, poetry, and yoga. A list of evidence-based trauma-informed treatments can be found on the National Child Traumatic Stress Network (<https://www.nctsn.org/>).

CHILDREN AND YOUTH SUPPORT AND ENGAGEMENT

Trauma-informed care practices help engage children and youth in services, promote safety and security, and encourage children and youth to build healthy relationships. When engaging and working with CST survivors, community providers should promote resilience by focusing on small daily successes (e.g., spending a night in a safe place, attending an appointment) rather than focusing on deficits. They should also plan for disruptions in engagement with the child or youth, including running away and engaging in behaviors that push others away. Providers need to re-engage with children and youth unconditionally every time they return to services. See more about this in the Stages of Change discussion below.

Guideposts for Implementing a Trauma-Informed Approach

Employees and volunteers who are expected to be in contact with or responsible for survivors of CST should be trained in (TBRI) or other recognized promising or evidence-based practices (EBPs) for responding to trauma. Leaders at organizations that serve survivors should also adapt protocols and policies to ensure staff responses and agency practices are trauma informed.



Restore Key Strategy 4: Understand and Apply the Stages of Change¹⁰

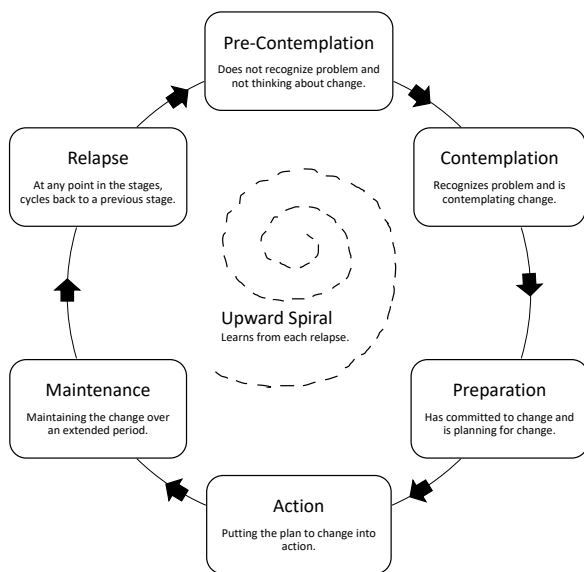
The following key concept presents a framework to help service providers anticipate and properly respond to the process of behavior change. Leaving an exploitative relationship – “leaving the (trafficking) life” – requires a significant change in behavior and mindset. The Stages of Change Model (SCM) is used to treat addiction and other harmful coping behaviors and can be used to address trauma and to meet the needs of youth who have been sex trafficked. The SCM assumes that behavior change does not happen quickly or in one step. Successful behavior change is the result of a child or youth’s progression through a number of stages. This process is not externally imposed – children and youth need to make their own conscious decisions to change and will progress through the stages at their own pace.

SCM, which is child- and youth-centered and trauma-informed, is grounded in the understanding that children and youth will be most receptive to an intervention when their current stage of readiness is recognized by the people who are seeking to help them. In other words, support systems should meet the child or youth “where they are at” when providing services and care. CST survivors may seek support for basic needs and other health or supportive services long before deciding to disclose they have survived sex trafficking or before they take steps to leave the person that is exploiting them. Understanding the steps in the change process can help an advocate or community service provider acknowledge where a survivor is in the change process and provide non-judgmental support.



Lasting Change Takes a Few Setbacks and Lots of Time and Commitment

“It takes time because you have been deeply defined by someone with power and control over you – you feel powerless.” - CST survivor



Adapted by a Prochaska and DiClemente (1983)

The Governor's Office Child Sex Trafficking Team

Stages of Change¹¹ The change process for sex trafficking is categorized into the following stages:

- **Precontemplation** – The child or youth has no concept of alternate choices other than what they are currently doing, or they are aware but do not want to consider change.
- **Contemplation** –The child or youth understands their circumstances behaviors or associations are a problem and are thinking about changing.
- **Preparation** – The child or youth has decided to take measures to leave the life and is willing to take small steps towards making a change.
- **Action** – The child or youth makes the changes needed to breakfree of trafficking (“Willpower” is an especially problematic descriptor given the controversy about victims having a choice to stay in the life).
- **Maintenance** – The child or youth has steered clear of trafficking activities for a while and established supports for their safety to avoid being drawn back into debilitating choices (“the life”).
- **Relapse** – The Stages of Change Model is cyclical. A child or youth may repeat a stage as many times as necessary to progress to or sustain the **Maintenance Stage**.

Tips for Working with Youth in the Stages of Change:

Pre-Contemplation: Build the relationship and establish trust. Identify individual strengths and interests and help the young person develop and build upon those strengths and interests. Create safety plan with the young person.

Contemplation: Validate the youth’s ability to make changes. Help identify sources of personal strength and support, options, and potential results for those options. Discuss triggers and coping strategies. Continue to reevaluate the safety plan.

Preparation: Continue to actively listen. Remain solution focused and strength-based. Find ways for the individual to become involved in healthy social groups and new experiences. Celebrate successes, even small changes. Validate emotions including fear of change.

Action: Support and validate the effort it takes to make changes. Address safety concerns. Help the individual process feelings of anxiety and loss. Reiterate long-term benefits of change. Discuss self-care. Continue to praise and reinforce progress.

Maintenance: Reinforce internal rewards and self-care. Discuss triggers and temptations, creating coping strategies. Discuss coping with relapse. Recognize progress and validate strengths. Maintain patience and keep expectations realistic.

Relapse: Address feelings of failure. Explain that relapse is common. Revisit subsequent stages of change. Jointly evaluate the triggers that caused relapse. Plan stronger coping strategies and make modifications to the safety plan. Express continued belief in the young person’s agency, strengths, and ability to succeed in meeting their goals.



Key Actions for Implementing the Stages of Change Frameworks

The SCM provides a framework for educating community members, agency staff, and advocates on the stages of change. Communities should prioritize training on the SCM. Any person who works with children and youth who have been victims of CST should be encouraged to gather information that will help them understand where a child or youth is in the change process. This information is key to understanding what services to provide to engage the child or youth and support their progression to the next stage. For example, if a youth runs away from a shelter to return to the person who was trafficking her, she may be either in the precontemplation or contemplation stages of change. The precontemplation stage would indicate that that this youth may not be aware that she is engaged in harmful behavior, or if she has been made aware of this by others, she has not begun to consider

making any changes. An example of the contemplation stage would be a conversation between staff and the youth prior to her running away, in which she was able to recognize and consider the risks and reasons not to return to the trafficker, but did not make or follow through on a commitment to act accordingly. When shelter staff acknowledge these stages, they can avoid labeling youth as runaways or kicking them out of services. Welcoming youth back into care encourages continued engagement and helps build the trust needed for progress to the next stage.

Guideposts for Implementing the Stages of Change Frameworks

Staff who are responsible for responding to the needs of survivors of CST should ideally be trained in the SCM. Programs providing care should develop procedures that anticipate and reflect survivors' cyclical movement through the stages of change. Staff expectations of survivors' ability to make and maintain fragile commitments to services will illustrate SCM principles.



Restore Key Strategy 5: Train Key Community Providers in Motivational Interviewing (MI)¹²

Motivational interviewing (MI) is a technique that helps communities successfully engage CST survivors in services and supports. MI assumes that a survivor of CST wants to be healthy and to make positive changes, but is struggling with ambivalence about making and following through with the commitment to do so. MI is a collaborative, goal-oriented, person-centered conversation about change that pays attention to a person's language of change. It is intended to strengthen a child or youth's commitment and motivation for change by exploring their own arguments for change and addressing the problem of ambivalence about changing behavior.

MI is used extensively with the treatment of substance abuse and addition disorders and more recently has been adopted to deal with other health issues.¹³ MI comprises three elements: (1) a therapeutic conversation about change, (2) a person-centered collaborative therapeutic partnership, (3) and suggestions that stem from the person's own motivation and commitment to change. The MI relationship is collaborative, not confrontational. It draws out the child or youth's thoughts and ideas about change, emphasizes their autonomy – the child or youth's decision to change – and develops options for how to achieve their desired change.

Motivational interviewing has five general principles:¹⁴

- Express empathy, collaborate, be non-judgmental, and create a safe environment to examine issues and explore reasons to change.
- Develop a discrepancy between the child or youth's goals or values and their current behavior. MI believes that the child or youth's motivation for change is increased when they perceive the discrepancies between their current situation and their hopes for the future.
- Avoid arguments and direct confrontation. Arguments with a child or youth about problem behaviors are viewed as counterproductive in MI.
- Roll with resistance, including excuses, blaming, minimizing, challenging, or ignoring, in order to diminish these behaviors while connecting with the child or youth.
- Support self-efficacy by eliciting and supporting a child or youth's hope and optimism, and the possibility of achieving change.



Key Actions for Implementing Motivational Interviewing

TRAINING

Communities are encouraged to support institutional implementation of MI. Community service providers should ideally be trained in MI including Child Protective Services investigators, law enforcement, community providers, child welfare and juvenile justice staff, and child and youth advocates. An overview of MI and its required training can be found at <http://www.motivationalinterviewing.org/>.

REVIEW THE COMMUNITY’S CONTINUUM OF SERVICES AND SUPPORTS

Communities should re-assess their continuum of services and supports to ensure that they can provide intervention strategies that align with the SCM principles, which will facilitate engagement with children and youth who are ambivalent about or

resistant to change. Services should be designed to meet the needs identified by the survivor, not those that the caregiver believes would be best. Service providers should start each contact with children and youth by conducting a new assessment of their stage of change and adjusting their approach accordingly.

Guideposts for Implementing Motivational Interviewing

Staff from a wide array of professions in the community that are responsible for responding to survivors of CST will be trained and receive follow-up supervision in MI. Programs providing care will develop procedures that rely upon staff’s MI skills to connect with and guide survivors through their ambivalence, which will be reflected in documentation.



Restore Key Strategy 6: Train Community Supports in Trust-Based Relational Intervention (TBRI)^{15, 16}

The majority of children and youth who are victims of CST have experienced multiple or complex traumatic events that can have a lasting impact on their brain chemistry, development, and ways they cope with problems. For many children and youth, these changes have resulted in coping behaviors that create barriers to building healthy relationships and actively engaging in treatment. Trust-Based Relational Intervention (TBRI) is a therapeutic model designed for any caregiver who interacts with children or youth who have experienced complex trauma. TBRI is one of many approaches to integrate trauma-informed practices into child and youth serving programs. It is best practice for all trauma-informed approaches to be coupled with an evaluative component to ensure fidelity in implementation and determine if desired outcomes are achieved.

TBRI is made up of three pillars that promote safety, establish healing relationships, and teach self-management and coping skills. The goals of TBRI are to help caregivers develop a compassionate understanding of the needs of children and youth who have experienced trauma, and use their knowledge and skills to do what is necessary to meet these needs.¹⁷ TBRI has three sets of principles: empowering, connecting, and correcting.

- **Empowering Principles:** Caregivers can empower a child or youth’s capacity for regulating their own emotions – and decrease the likelihood of disruptive behaviors – if they manage transitions, establishes rituals, encourage regular physical exercise and sensory experiences, and meet nutritional needs. These approaches will also increase the likelihood of the caregiver successfully connecting with a child or youth and correcting their behaviors.
- **Connecting Principles:** The TBRI connecting principles are considered the source of “felt safety” and self-regulation. They are essential for building trusting relationships and ensuring that the empowering and correcting principles work.
- **Correcting Principles:** The TBRI correcting principles are used to shape behaviors. In order to be effective, these principles need to have a firm foundation of connecting and empowering.



Key Actions for Implementing TBRI

TBRI provides a philosophical framework, shared language, and common set of approaches that help all members of a community implement the concept of trauma-informed care. The TBRI framework helps caregivers understand that survivors' behaviors are coping strategies for the trauma they experienced. It also provides them with trauma-informed responses that promote healing and wellness. Caregivers trained in TBRI are encouraged to:

- Meet a survivor's basic nutritional needs by providing appropriate hydration and healthy snacks in order to decrease aggressive behaviors, improve attention and learning, and regulate blood sugar.
- Be mindful of their own stress and style of attachment.
- Check for trauma responses and remember that running away, being aggressive, and limiting eye contact are some of the ways that children and youth experience a fight, flight, or freeze response.
- Look at discipline as a way to connect by using correcting techniques (such as a "do over") that make a youth feel safe and connected to their caregiver.
- Value connecting with the children and youth in their care.

Guideposts for Implementing Trust-Based Relational Intervention (TBRI)

Organizations adopting TBRI can do many things to ensure core TBRI practices and principles are being appropriately and consistently applied to their work with survivors. The following questions can be used to measure if an organization has meaningfully integrated core TBRI principles:

- Have staff and supervisors at all levels across the agency received TBRI training and follow-up support?
- Has the organization intentionally agreed on a common language for communicating about and with CST survivors?
- Are there built-in opportunities to reinforce TBRI principles throughout the year and help staff maintain adherence to those principles?
- Does the organization actively seek to ensure staff are adequately supported by their superiors and promote self-care among all levels of employees?

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⁶ Clawson, H.J., Salomon, A., & Goldblatt Grace, L. (2008).

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¹⁰ Girls Educational and Mentoring Services. (2011, Summer). Stages of change in CSEC counseling. *Connections*, 13, 7–10. Retrieved from http://www.wcsap.org/sites/default/files/uploads/resources_publications/connections/Commercial_Sexual_Exploitation_of_Youth_2011.pdf

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¹² Jones-Smith, E. (2016). Theories of counseling and psychotherapy: An integrative approach. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc. See Part III: The Third Force in Psychotherapy, Chapter 10: Motivational Interviewing and the Stages of Change Theory, pp. 317–344. Retrieved from https://uk.sagepub.com/sites/default/files/upm-binaries/65225_Jones_Smith_Chapter_10.pdf

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¹⁴ Jones-Smith, E. (2016).

¹⁵ Purvis, K. B., Cross, D. R., Dansereau, D. F., & Parris, S. R. (2013). Trust-based relational intervention (TBRI®): A systematic approach to complex developmental trauma. *Child & Youth Services*, 34:360–386.

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Bring Justice

Overview: Bring Justice

Child sex trafficking (CST) is a unique crime with complexities that require focused attention and coordinated action across the criminal justice system. Law enforcement and others involved in the criminal justice system have unique opportunities to improve how communities respond to this problem and to empower survivors to participate in investigations and prosecutions. The manner in which CST cases are identified and handled in the criminal justice system can help shape community awareness and attitudes, improve how survivors are treated, and influence prosecution outcomes for perpetrators.

In many communities, law enforcement, juvenile probation agencies, judges, and prosecutors recognize their vital role in combatting CST and are engaged in targeted and collaborative efforts to meet the challenges associated with this problem. Although approaches vary, these activities often share common values, including the belief that crimes against children and youth must be systematically and strategically

confronted, and that those who buy and market sex with minors should be identified and prosecuted.

Despite their best efforts in addressing CST, law enforcement officers and others working in the criminal justice system often find themselves ill equipped to handle the unique complexities and nuances of human trafficking cases. The use of technology to sell and buy sex allows traffickers to distance themselves from the crime. It also removes evidence of the crime from the streets, which can have “an out of sight, out of mind” effect for law enforcement. Trafficking also presents jurisdictional challenges since it often involves hiding and sometimes moving victims from city to city and state to state. Unlike other crimes, survivors and witnesses are unlikely to come forward, fearing retaliation by the trafficker or arrest for prostitution, drugs, or other crimes related to trafficking. Furthermore, trauma bonds between survivors and their traffickers can complicate cooperation throughout an investigation, which can obscure the process and affect how



judges and juries perceive survivor credibility and culpability.

The National Institute of Justice cites several other challenges that affect investigations and prosecutions of trafficking cases, including:

- Inconsistent prioritization of human trafficking cases across departments;
- Lack of resources to train staff and investigate cases, especially among patrol units and other first responders; and
- Lack of officers properly trained in appropriate interviewing strategies that help facilitate identification of traffickers.¹

The purpose of the **Bring Justice** section of the Roadmap is to provide information and resources that communities can use to support law enforcement and the courts so they can be more effective in handling CST cases. The key strategies included in this section address:

1. Identifying current community efforts,
2. Equipping law enforcement,
3. Supporting judicial education, and
4. Coordinating efforts to identify strategies for removing barriers to the judicial process.



Key Strategies to Bring Justice

Bring Justice Key Strategy 1: Identify Existing Community Efforts

The intensity of criminal justice systems' focus on and response to CST can range greatly across communities. In some places, law enforcement and court officers are just becoming aware of the presence of CST in their community. In other cases, widespread recognition of the issue has led to proactive efforts to identify and prosecute traffickers and buyers, and recognize and support survivors. Communities are most effective in these efforts when they collaborate. Examples of collaborative and effective efforts that address CST include anti-trafficking task forces; targeted and multi-disciplinary teams; and specialized, dedicated law enforcement and prosecution units. Since communities' recognition and response to CST can vary greatly, the first step to improving the criminal justice system's response to CST should be to learn about the current climate in the community and what is being done locally to focus on CST. The key actions described below can help with this process.

Key Actions to Identify Current Community Efforts

DETERMINE LEVEL OF AWARENESS

Before a compelling case can be made to dedicate time and resources to anti-trafficking efforts, there needs to be widespread recognition at the local level that CST is a problem. Communities aiming to work with their criminal justice systems to address CST need to begin by determining if local law enforcement believes CST is a local problem. Without proactive efforts to identify cases, the presence of CST in a community can easily remain hidden. This is especially relevant as trafficking activity shifts from the street to the internet.

In some cases, a key first step in achieving community-wide recognition of CST begins with helping law enforcement recognize the signs of CST activity. Juvenile justice agencies, child welfare staff, health care providers, and other groups who work with victimized children and youth can help inform law enforcement about CST and provide tips on how cases can be found. When law enforcement views CST as a local problem worth addressing, they can become active collaborators in developing a community response.

IDENTIFY CURRENT EFFORTS

In communities where CST is a widely recognized concern, the next important step in supporting the criminal justice system's response to CST is to identify existing efforts to combat CST. Even small-scale efforts that address CST are important because they can offer guidance based on lessons learned and provide a foundation for future initiatives. For communities that are

planning to improve their criminal justice system's response to CST, the following sample inventory can be used to determine existing efforts and who is involved:

- Are there any task forces, roundtables, or coalitions focused on anti-trafficking or CST that include representation from federal, state, and local law enforcement, juvenile probation, judges, or prosecutors? If so, how active are these groups and what are their main objectives?
- Are there strategic partnerships between law enforcement and the community that are focused on CST? Such partnerships can include Child Advocacy Centers (CACs), health care systems, schools, juvenile probation departments, child welfare agencies, etc. If a partnership exists, are their others who support the partnership's efforts?
- Is local law enforcement collecting and analyzing data on CST? If so, what are the findings and how can they be used in the community to develop targeted strategies to address CST?
- Are there opportunities for law enforcement or judges to receive training on CST? If so, who is providing the training? Are the trainings successful? Are they well attended? Do participant evaluations indicate that the trainings are useful?
- Are there any local law enforcement or prosecutor units specializing in and dedicated to anti-trafficking efforts, such as those currently operating in Houston, Dallas and San Antonio?

DETERMINE WHAT ELSE IS NEEDED

Once a community has determined the level of support and resources that are dedicated to CST across the criminal justice system, it can then identify the appropriate next steps for enhancing the system's response to CST. The following questions may be helpful in thinking through next steps:

- Are the levels of recognition appropriate among key parties (law enforcement, juvenile justice, and the courts), or is lack of awareness a concern?
- Along the same lines, is the prevailing culture of the criminal justice system centered on supporting survivors or is a shift in attitude needed?

Before a community takes action to respond to CST, it is crucial that it establishes an understanding of the criminal justice system's culture and learns about existing efforts. Law enforcement and others working in the criminal justice system are vital partners in achieving a strong community response to CST, but efforts to support them need to target the right stage of response. If nothing is being done to address sex trafficking in the criminal justice system, communities need to begin by raising awareness and focusing on efforts to gather information and increase awareness of the presence and toll of CST in the community. In such cases, changing perceptions or increasing awareness is often the right starting place. These efforts should focus on a few key messages, such as the following:

- Children and youth involved in sexual transactions for money are victims/survivors and should be supported through community services and psychological support, not treated as criminals.
- CST is widespread and occurs in all types of communities. No cities or individual groups of young people are immune.
- Traffickers and buyers are the perpetrators of crimes in CST and must be treated accordingly in the criminal justice system in order to curb complacency and increase support for this issue.

IF RECOGNITION OF CST IS WIDESPREAD and anti-trafficking efforts are in place, could those efforts be expanded or strengthened through additional community support?

If law enforcement, juvenile justice, and the courts are aware of CST and agree it is a problem worth addressing, communities can begin to engage representatives from those systems to determine if existing anti-trafficking efforts could benefit from additional support. Responses to human trafficking – both in supporting victims and prosecuting traffickers – are most effective when they include coordination and partnerships among community agencies.² The most helpful types of support will depend on the community's needs, its key partners, and available resources. Below, are examples of things communities can do to support for anti-trafficking efforts.

- Provide space or administrative support for CST coalitions, roundtables, and task forces.
- Introduce new parties to existing collaborations to provide additional subject matter expertise or service support. For example, law enforcement may struggle with where to house a CST survivor when they are first identified. By making a connection to emergency shelter options, communities can provide law enforcement with an alternative to detention, a key step in destigmatizing and providing trauma-informed responses to victims and survivors.
- Identify and secure funding to increase access to training to bolster investigations and prosecutions. Many law enforcement agencies would like to increase the number of officers trained in recognizing and responding to CST, but they have finite training budgets that must cover a broad spectrum of training needs.

Training opportunities for law enforcement and prosecutors include those offered by the Texas Regional Office of the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC), <https://www.ncmectx.org/trainings>, the National Criminal Justice Training Center <https://hcjtc.fvtc.edu/>, and the Texas Attorney General's Office.

You may inquire about training opportunities through the Attorney General by sending a request to: humantrafficking@oag.texas.gov.

WITH PREVAILING ATTITUDES IN MIND, does the scope and reach of existing efforts go far enough or would something new be beneficial?

In some cases, communities may recognize that existing efforts are not sufficient. In these instances, community organizations and leaders can work with law enforcement and key criminal justice partners to identify what new resources or organizations would be the most beneficial. One approach communities can take to determine the best use of additional resources is to engage and consult with entities that have key insights into CST. Law enforcement officers, prosecutors, juvenile justice agencies, and judges should be asked about barriers that currently prevent them from providing optimal responses to identified and potential CST cases, along with what they would need to be more effective. Community organizations, leaders, and CST advocates should not establish new anti-trafficking efforts until they understand the current landscape, are aware of what resources already exist, and have included criminal justice system staff in planning any new efforts.

Guideposts for Analyzing Current Community Efforts

Taking the time to identify the criminal justice system's current response to CST is an important first step before investing in activities to strengthen the system. Answering the following questions will help determine if adequate efforts are being made to understand current attitudes, practices, and resources.

- How well do local law enforcement, juvenile justice systems, and the courts recognize and understand the key aspects of CST?
- Are proactive efforts already in place to systematically address CST? If so, what are the goals, strengths, and challenges of these efforts?
- What opportunities exist within the community to strengthen existing anti-CST efforts or launch new initiatives?



Bring Justice Key Strategy 2: Equip Law Enforcement

Law enforcement agencies and officials play a critical role in addressing CST. They identify and intervene in suspected cases, provide immediate supports to victims/survivors that promote a sense of trust and engagement, and gather information and evidence that is necessary to help prosecute buyers and traffickers.

Law enforcement has great potential to contribute to improving a community's response to CST, but it needs resources and community support to be successful. Law enforcement faces significant challenges in responding to CST cases. Some of these challenges include:

- Staying connected to what is happening on the internet locally and more broadly,
- Keeping up with advances in technology and the tactics that child predators use for exploitation,
- Allocating resources to keep up with a huge volume of potential leads,
- Coordinating across jurisdictions,
- Identifying cases despite survivors' reluctance to disclose (reporting fear),
- Gaining trust and working effectively with survivors who mistrust law enforcement and who exhibit challenging behaviors related to complex trauma,
- Obtaining key information from survivors without further traumatizing or detaining them, and
- Determining how to classify charges believed to be tied to trafficking.

Despite these challenges, law enforcement can be very effective when it has internal support and coordinates with local service providers. In particular, effective coordination between survivors and survivor advocates can establish the trust required for survivors to assist with criminal investigations and help secure convictions for traffickers and buyers.³

The key actions described in this section provide ideas for how communities can help law enforcement with CST cases. These ideas provide potential options; however, in all cases, local law enforcement agencies and their partners will have unique insights into what they need to be successful. **As such, any community-led approach to support law enforcement should begin by engaging them and asking for their input.**

Based on findings from a multi-method research project seeking to understand challenges and barriers to investigating and prosecuting human trafficking cases, the study authors noted the following.

“Police were often unprepared for the amount of trauma suffered by victims. Trauma related symptoms made investigations more difficult and victims often required more services and for a longer period of time than law enforcement could provide. Consequently, law enforcement often resorted to using tactics they would normally use on suspects, including the use of arrest as a means to detain victims and secure their cooperation.”

Identifying Challenges to Improve the Investigation and Prosecution of State and Human Trafficking Cases

Key Actions to Equip Law Enforcement

OBTAIN LEADERSHIP SUPPORT

Local law enforcement entities are generally overtaxed and required to respond to a host of critical issues. Law enforcement departments cannot prioritize CST without support from community and department leadership – this support is necessary before a case can be made to spend scarce dollars on CST-related trainings or personnel. Communities should determine if there is already departmental support for prioritizing anti-CST initiatives before offering assistance or asking law enforcement to take action on CST issues. If it seems that CST is not a priority, the community can engage law enforcement directly or work through local elected officials to bolster awareness of CST. Below, we provide some key messages that could be conveyed to law enforcement leaders who may not already be committed to prioritizing a CST response for the community.

- CST is a concern and occurs in all types of communities, regardless of size, location, or income level. Highlighting known cases in nearby or similar areas can help make this point.

- Children and youth who are involved in trafficking are coerced and manipulated in many different ways, many of which may not be obvious.
- CST is a growing problem that requires a full community response to solve it.
- There are community providers and available resources that can support law enforcement’s work with CST survivors.

IDENTIFY OR DEVELOP TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Once law enforcement is committed to prioritizing CST, it will need training and community support to be effective. A study supported by the National Institute for Justice that examined the challenges involved with identifying, investigating, and prosecuting trafficking cases found that law enforcement was frequently unprepared to handle the challenges associated with trauma experienced by survivors, which often led to the use of tactics normally intended for suspects, including arrest.⁴ Survivors who are traumatized are often reluctant to share incriminating information if they feel bonded to their trafficker. Trauma also affects how survivors provide information. Cognitive functioning is affected by trauma and can impair the brain’s ability to record information in a way that makes it accessible through common interview techniques.⁵

Given the complexities of working with trafficking survivors, law enforcement will be more effective if it is trained in methods that are trauma-sensitive and trauma-informed. The following training topics can help law enforcement officers build trusting relationships with survivors, which will improve the quality and outcome of CST investigations.

Many law enforcement and Children's Advocacy Center forensic interviewers have been trained in the FETI (Forensic Experiential Trauma Interview) method. FETI is a science-based methodology designed to educate professionals who interview victims to use empathic listening and brain-based cues to facilitate collection of psychophysiological evidence from those that have experienced trauma or high stress. www.certifiedfeti.com.

- Information on how trauma affects cognitive function and how to work with these challenges when interviewing survivors;
- Strategies to empower survivors, including engaging and working with a CST advocate
- Key community assets for supporting survivors, including working with the child welfare system, child advocacy centers, juvenile justice system, and health care providers;
- Effective strategies for identifying potential CST cases, including CST-specific indicators to look for on calls related to children and youth; and
- Youth engagement and trust-building strategies.

CST Advocates provide critical personal and emotional support to victims and survivors both in the short and longterm. They also support investigations and prosecutions of exploiters by supporting and empowering the survivor to participate in the criminal justice activities. See Recover section for more on CST advocates.

IDENTIFY OR PROVIDE FUNDING

Professional training can be expensive and requires staff to take time off from work to travel to training locations. Communities can support training needs by providing funding through philanthropic donations, grants, and fundraisers. To help expand access to critical trainings, some law enforcement agencies have established links to foundations that can accept private money to support unmet needs, including training. Communities can help law enforcement agencies acquire and manage funding by working closely with them and helping them articulate their needs and priorities to potential or interested funders or in grant applications. Many communities focus training resources on educating investigators and detectives on CST, but patrol officers and other first responders have an equal need for training since they have the greatest opportunity to identify potential cases.

Texas Department of Public Safety's Interdiction for the Protection of Children (IPC) program has been effective in educating patrol officers and others that are likely to come across indicators of child victimization.

The IPC program has been active in Texas for 10 years with the following results:

- **5446 law enforcement trained in Texas**
- **407 total children rescued in Texas**
- **181 investigations initiated in Texas**

Guideposts Related to Equipping Law Enforcement

One measure communities can use to determine if law enforcement supports efforts to address CST is if there is departmental buy-in that CST is a problem that warrants attention. If not, efforts should focus on making the case that CST is present in the community and requires a focused response. If concern about CST is already present, the indicators listed below can be used to gauge progress:

- Number of trainings attended, by type (e.g., trauma-informed care, effective collaboration to prosecute CST perpetrators);
- Number of participants trained;
- Number of training participants reporting a change in knowledge and understanding, as indicated by end-of-course feedback; and
- Policy or procedural changes resulting from information learned through trainings.



Bring Justice Key Strategy 3: Support Judicial Education and Action

Judges and other court officers play an important role in CST response and can be most effective when they are engaged with local collaborative efforts that address CST. In communities where collaboration has not begun, judges are in a position to effectively initiate these efforts. A key component of judges' critical role in making important child welfare and criminal justice decisions is understanding and accepting that exploited children and youth are not criminals and need support instead of punishment,⁶ and that traffickers and buyers should be prosecuted for their crimes.

The judicial process is intimidating and entails high stakes for survivors. Judges and court officers can reduce this stress by understanding the dynamics of power and control between traffickers and their victims, and taking appropriate measures to minimize fear and secondary trauma, which can be heightened in the court process. The Toolkit for Judicial Officers, published by the Judicial Council of California, includes an example of undesirable power dynamics in the courts. The example describes a juvenile court hearing for CST victim. The victim had to show up in the courtroom in handcuffs and wearing a prison suit while their trafficker, seated with an attorney, was unshackled and wearing street clothing. This example highlights a power imbalance that contributes to secondary trauma and exacerbates inequity for children and youth.

The key actions in this subsection will help communities work with their judges and court officers to effectively address CST and provide better care for survivors. These concepts assume judicial partners have a baseline understanding of the issues underlying CST, including the effects of trauma on children and youth, power dynamics between traffickers and victims, and the belief that survivors deserve support and traffickers and buyers should be prosecuted. If this baseline awareness has not been established, communities should begin by helping judges and court officers increase their understanding of the dynamics of CST.

Collaborative Highlight: In 2018, the Governor's Child Sex Trafficking Team partnered with the Texas Supreme Court's Children Commission, the Texas Center for the Judiciary, and the National Council for Juvenile and Family Court Judges, to train 19 Texas child welfare and juvenile court judges from across the state in best practices in addressing child sex trafficking victims in their courts. More training for more judges is being developed and planned.

Key Actions to Support Judicial Education and Action

COLLABORATE TO DEVELOP AN ACTION PLAN

One concrete strategy for promoting collaboration and judicial involvement in anti-trafficking efforts is to create a community action plan that addresses CST, which, at minimum, should establish and describe the individual roles of child welfare workers, juvenile justice agencies, law enforcement, prosecutors, and judges. The action plan should include a shared philosophy on CST as well as processes each collaborating entity will follow to help support survivors and penalize perpetrators. Communities can receive support from the Child Sex Trafficking Team (CSTT) in the Governor's office to help implement their action plans. Community organizations seeking funding for their

efforts can check for available grant funds from the Governor's Office at <https://egrants.gov.texas.gov/fundopp.aspx>. Judges who are interested in finding local partners or statewide resources for addressing CST can contact the Supreme Court of Texas Permanent Judicial Commission for Children, Youth and Families (Children's Commission) at children@txcourts.gov.

PROVIDE SUPPORT FOR TRAINING

As is the case with law enforcement, training funds can be limited for judges and court officers. Communities can support judicial education, by helping to secure funding so that judges may attend training. Community members can also join with survivors and groups that support them to advocate for more training for their local judges. There are many training topics that can help judges and court officers with CST cases. Some relevant training topics include:

- Human trafficking case law,
- Legal strategies that have been effective in securing prosecutions,
- Best practices for acquiring and utilizing corroborating evidence in human trafficking cases (including evidence in social media posts and communications),
- Information about the impact of trauma and violence on victim behavior,
- How to empower traumatized victims to participate fully in court proceedings,
- How to present victim testimony at trial when the victim may be perceived as less than credible or somehow complicit in their own victimization, and
- The use of expert witnesses to educate the jury on the unique dynamics between traffickers and victims.

In addition to in-person trainings, there are relevant resources available online that address trafficking for judges and court officers. The Children’s Commission contains a resource page on Human Trafficking at <http://texaschildrenscommission.gov/reports-and-resources/>, plus a bench card for judges, which is available online at: http://benchbook.texaschildrenscommission.gov/library_item/gov.texaschildrenscommission.benchbook/184.

Guideposts for Judicial Education

Communities can use many of the same accountability guideposts we included for law enforcement in Justice Key Concept 2, but there are also specific metrics they can use to determine their local courts’ progress in supporting survivors and prosecuting buyers and traffickers. Data elements that can be analyzed include:

- Number of case filings and case dispositions for sexual assault of a child versus child sex trafficking.
- A high number of sexual assault convictions in the absence of trafficking convictions can indicate CST charges are being missed.
- Jurisdictions that wish to monitor case filings and dispositions can collect statistical records from the Texas Office of Court Administration at <http://www.txcourts.gov/statistics/>
- Sentencing records.
- If buyers and traffickers are receiving light sentences, such as fines or community service, then sentencing should be strengthened to reduce tolerance for trafficking activities. Although rare, requirements for traffickers or buyers to pay restitution are a positive sign that courts are taking the issue seriously.

The National Judicial Institute on Domestic Child Sex Trafficking (NJDCST) offers training programs for judges that address the serious issue of child sex trafficking in the United States. Created in partnership with the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention and Rights4Girls in 2014, the Institute provides judges with a highly interactive educational opportunity to expand their knowledge of trafficking risk factors, victim identification, effective intervention strategies, cultural considerations, and much more. The Institute aims to instill a stronger sense of judges’ courtroom and community roles to help prevent and end domestic child sex trafficking. <https://www.ncjfcj.org/DCST>



Bring Justice Key Strategy 4: Identify Strategies to Address Barriers to the Judicial Process

As mentioned throughout this section, there are complexities that impede the investigative and judicial process for CST cases. These difficulties include challenges in obtaining buy-in and support from key leaders to use resources to address CST, identifying CST cases, obtaining survivor trust and cooperation in the investigation process, and establishing and maintaining a coordinated system that supports survivors and prosecutes perpetrators. In this key concept, we provide additional information on ways communities can support the investigative and judicial process for CST cases. As we continue to learn from community efforts, we will add new insights and ideas to this section.

Project 180

“Project 180 of the Harris County District Attorney’s Office is a two pronged attack on sex trafficking in Houston, Texas. The first prong is the diversion program that aims to minimize the harsh effects of misdemeanor prostitution arrests on defendants and their lives by providing an opportunity to make a meaningful advocacy contact in the community with a subsequent dismissal of the charge. A part of the diversion involves the DA social work and prosecution team engaging in a series of meetings with the defendant that net intel for the office and resources for the defendant.

The Second Prong involves a detailed, careful analysis of the misdemeanor arrest by analyst review of databases, social media and digital device report recoveries that develop suspects engaged in Sex Trafficking that would go otherwise undetected by law enforcement. The DA Office, along with the Sheriff, has a team of investigators who work with local agencies to file cases against these Traffickers. We think about 60% of misdemeanor cases have a valid, identifiable nexus to human trafficking that can be investigated and lead to charges.”

~ Johna Stallings, Lead Assistant District Attorney for Project 180

Key Actions to Identify and Address Barriers to the Judicial Process

SUPPORT SURVIVOR-CENTERED PRACTICES AND POLICIES

As noted throughout this Roadmap, communities that support interactions, processes, and systems that empower survivors will achieve the best outcomes all around, including in the judicial process. Professionals throughout the criminal justice system should use survivor-centered approaches that include collaborating with the right partners to understand and respond to individual survivor needs and concerns. Research indicates that children and youth are most likely to stay engaged with law enforcement and participate in an investigation if involved professionals follow certain survivor-centered practices such as meeting survivors’ immediate needs, exercising flexibility to account for survivor needs and preferences while working on the case, and meeting other needs identified by the survivor.⁷

Law enforcement and court officers will need to develop skills to help them shift their daily interactions and practices to a survivor-centered approach. There are many resources that can assist with this process. Below, we list several examples of resources that support victim-centered practices.

- Forensic Experiential Trauma Interview (FETI) – <https://www.certifiedfeti.com/training>
- Forensic interview training through Children’s Advocacy Centers of Texas, Inc. – <https://www.cactx.org/>
- Online toolkits that address victim-centered investigations – <https://www.ovcttac.gov/taskforceguide/eguide/5-building-strong-cases/51-victim-centered-investigations/>

Community partners can play a significant role in helping law enforcement and court officers use survivor-centered strategies when working with children and youth who have been victims of trafficking. Partnerships with community organizations, such as CST advocacy agencies, where available, are vital to helping law enforcement connect survivors to resources that meet their immediate and long-term needs. In particular, survivor advocates can have a significant impact on ensuring that law enforcement uses survivor-centered interactions and practices with children and youth. Community organizations can also help identify, fund, and provide training on survivor-centered practices.

ESTABLISH A DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS PLAN

Ongoing dedication to effectively combat CST should lead to measurable changes in outcomes, but these changes can only be tracked if data are collected. By encouraging their criminal justice systems to collect and analyze data, communities can support efforts to improve outcomes for CST survivors. Some examples of data that criminal justice systems could collect and analyze are listed below:

- Proportion of department staff (law enforcement, courts, etc.) with training on sex trafficking;
- Number of youth including 17 year olds arrested and charged for prostitution and prostitution-related offenses (ideally, communities would end up with no charges of this kind);
- Number of children and youth suspected of CST being trafficked who cooperate with the investigation;
- Number of CST cases identified by law enforcement locally; and

- Number of cases filed and prosecuted, and the sentencing dispositions of these cases.

Working with data collected by law enforcement, communities can determine how to better focus their support to help law enforcement and others working in the justice system achieve desired outcomes.

ADDRESS AND SHIFT CULTURAL NORMS THROUGH COMMUNITY COLLABORATION

Formalized meetings and communication processes between law enforcement and service providers can benefit survivors directly and will help everyone involved improve their understanding of the complexity of CST cases. CST taskforces and roundtables offer an opportunity for information sharing and problem solving in general about local law enforcement efforts and effectiveness. These groups can vary in size and scope and may include service providers, concerned citizens, and agencies that can provide community education and awareness services. Local coalitions can also increase community awareness and understanding, identify needs, and facilitate fundraising efforts.

Local government is responsible for responding to the concerns of its citizens. Concerned citizens have the opportunity to potentially influence or ignite a governmental response to confront businesses that promote or accommodate the sex trafficking industry (e.g., illicit massage parlors, strip clubs, and hotels that knowingly accommodate the buyers and sellers). Community members could also educate and influence key stakeholders who are responsible for setting and maintaining community standards for businesses and events that could attract trafficking.

Community collaboratives can also use education to engage community members. Education efforts could target hotel staff, mall staff, juvenile detention centers (employees and the youth in the facility), and other organizations and businesses likely to come across trafficking activity.

Guideposts to Identify and Address Barriers to the Judicial Process

Because communities vary so widely, there are no across-the-board guideposts for addressing barriers to the judicial process. The actions we offer in this section may provide insights on the types of issues that can affect the judicial process. Depending on their level of awareness, concerns, and goals, communities may benefit from analyzing the following:

- How do local service providers, law enforcement, and those involved with the judicial system promote and use survivor-centered practices?
- What data are collected at a local level on CST and how are they analyzed, shared with the community, and used to shape future practices?
- Is collaboration occurring between those who work in the justice system and others in community (e.g., CST taskforces or roundtables, juvenile justice agencies, services providers, child welfare)?

¹ National Institute of Justice. (2016, September 20). *Improving the investigation and prosecution of state and local human trafficking cases*. Retrieved from <http://nij.gov/topics/crime/human-trafficking/pages/improving-investigation-and-prosecution-of-human-trafficking-cases.aspx>

² U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Victims of Crime. (2015, December). *Building effective collaborations to address human trafficking*. Retrieved from https://ovc.ncjrs.gov/humantrafficking/Public_Awareness_Folder/Fact_Sheet/HT_Building_Effective_Collab_fact_sheet-508.pdf

³ Farrell, A., McDevitt, J., Pfeffer, R., Fahy, S., Owens, C., Dank, M., & Adams, W., (2012, April). *Identifying challenges to improve the investigation and prosecution of state and local human trafficking cases*. Washington, DC: National Institute of Justice. Retrieved from <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/238795.pdf>

⁴ National Institute of Justice. (2016, September 20).

⁵ Strand, R. W. (n.d.). *Forensic experiential trauma interviews – a conversation with brainstem*. Retrieved from http://www.ncdsv.org/images/USAMPS_Strand_ForensicTraumaExperientialInterviewConversationWithTheBrainstem.pdf

⁶ Center for Families, Children & the Courts. (2017). *Human Trafficking in California: Toolkit for Judicial Officers*. San Francisco, CA: Judicial Council of California. Retrieved from <http://www.courts.ca.gov/documents/human-trafficking-toolkit-cfcc.pdf>

⁷ National Institute of Justice. (2016, September 20).

Appendix: Resources

Protect		
Overview	Source	Link
Mental and Behavioral Health Roadmap and Toolkit for Schools	Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute	https://www.texasstateofmind.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Roadmap_and_Toolkit-for-Schools_R4b.pdf
Guide to help school officials understand how human trafficking affects schools and formulate a response	Department of Education	http://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/sites/default/files/HumanTraffickinginAmericasSchools.pdf
Information on recognizing human trafficking in schools	Texas School Safety Center	https://txssc.txstate.edu/topics/school-violence/articles/recognizing-human-trafficking
General information on trafficking and the commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSES)	National Center for Homeless Education	https://nche.ed.gov/csec/
Information on evidence-based programs for children and youth, many of which can be built upon to integrate content on trafficking	National Adolescent and Young Adult Information Center	http://nahic.ucsf.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/Evidence-Based-Guide.pdf
Information and materials to equip members of the business community to address trafficking	Businesses Ending Slavery and Trafficking	https://www.bestalliance.org/
Texas Businesses Against Human Trafficking, established by the Secretary of State to engage businesses interested in preventing and combatting human trafficking	Texas Office of the Secretary of State	https://www.sos.state.tx.us/corp/texas-businesses-against-trafficking.shtml
Anti-trafficking awareness resources provided through the U.S. Department of Homeland Security Blue Campaign	U.S. Department of Homeland Security	https://www.dhs.gov/blue-campaign/share-resources .
Free and downloadable outreach materials through the “Look Beneath the Surface” initiative	Office of Trafficking in Persons	https://www.acf.hhs.gov/otip/resource-library/search?tag=6306
Prevention and early intervention programs	Texas Department of Family and Protective Services	https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Prevention_and_Early_Intervention/Programs_Available_In_Your_County/default.asp
Training to help education professionals identify and assist victims of human trafficking	Texas Human Trafficking Prevention Task Force/Texas Education	https://tea.texas.gov/WorkArea/linkit.aspx?LinkIdentifier=id&ItemID=25769818164&libID=25769818267
Provides safety and prevention resources for families and professionals focusing on child abduction, child sexual exploitation, and internet safety	National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC)	http://www.missingkids.com/home
Provides information and best practices for violence prevention from a public health perspective	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention	https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/index.html
Contains research, tactics, and other resources addressing the demand for commercial sex	Demand Abolition	https://www.demandabolition.org
Web conference series on primary prevention of sexual assault and relationship violence	Prevent Connect	http://www.preventconnect.org/
Online program that teaches children and adults online safety skills	The National Center for Missing & Exploited Children	www.netsmartzkids.org
Information on human trafficking case studies and stories	Office for Victims of Crime	https://ovc.ncjrs.gov/humantrafficking/publicawareness.html
Guidance for schools and organizations to build their capacity for preventing sexual abuse and exploitation	Georgia Statewide Human Trafficking Task Force	https://cjcc.georgia.gov/sites/cjcc.georgia.gov/files/related_files/document/GA%20Child%20Sexual%20Abuse%20and%20Exploitation%20Prevention%20Guide-6.28.17.pdf

Recognize		
Overview	Source	Link
"Be the One" video – free online resource to increase awareness and encourage action	Texas Attorney General's Office	https://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/initiatives/human-trafficking
Commercial Sexual Exploitation Identification Tool (CSE-IT)	Westcoast Children's Clinic	https://www.westcoastcc.org/cse-it/
Statewide directory connecting health and human services staff, health care providers, stakeholders, and potential victims of human trafficking to local, state, and national resources to identify and help people affected by human trafficking	Texas Health and Human Services	Texas Human Trafficking Resource Center
Webinars and self-paced training on juvenile sex trafficking	Shared Hope International	https://www.gotostage.com/
Free webinars on the topic of child sex trafficking	Children's Health Care of Atlanta	https://www.choa.org/search?q=child%20sex%20trafficking&tab=events&zip https://www.choa.org/
Training that provides an overview of child sex trafficking, including risk factors, network characteristics, trafficking indicators, models for institutional response, and practices for serving youth	National Human Trafficking Hotline	https://humantraffickinghotline.org/resources/overview-child-sex-trafficking
Social media toolkit	City of Houston Anti-Human Trafficking	https://humantraffickinghouston.org/social-media-toolkit/
Examples of state and federal policy issues related to child sex trafficking	The National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN)	https://www.nctsn.org/resources/promoting-trauma-informed-policies-and-practices-to-address-child-sex-trafficking
Human trafficking and the health care industry	Polaris	https://polarisproject.org/human-trafficking-and-health-care-industry
Group mobilizing a shift in the anti-trafficking paradigm toward approaches rooted in public health principles and trauma-informed care	Health, Education, Advocacy, Linkage (HEAL) Trafficking	https://healtrafficking.org
Recover		
Overview	Source	Link
National anti-trafficking hotline serving victims and survivors of human trafficking and the anti-trafficking community in the United States	Polaris	https://humantraffickinghotline.org/
Children's advocacy centers (CACs) facilitating a multidisciplinary and coordinated response to victimized children	Children's Advocacy Centers of Texas	https://www.cactx.org/
JuST Response Council's Protective Response Model, which outlines core principles for responding to child sex trafficking and highlights promising practices	Shared Hope International	http://sharedhope.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/JRC_ResponseModel_Spreads_web.pdf
A multi-disciplinary resource guide that provides detailed resources for law enforcement, prosecutors, and court systems	The Office of Victims of Crime E-Guide on Human Trafficking	https://www.ovcttac.gov/taskforceguide/eguide/

Restore

Overview	Source	Link
Trauma-Informed Care Texas Overview	Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute	http://35xs6u1zhs1u1p3cy926rkn4-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/mmhpi-final-trauma-informed-care-report.pdf
Understanding the impact of trauma and providing trauma-informed care	The National Child Traumatic Stress Network	https://www.nctsn.org/trauma-informed-care
Online learning for supporting survivors	International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies	https://www.istss.org/education-research/online-learning.aspx
Prevention and treatment guidelines	International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies	http://www.istss.org/treating-trauma/new-istss-guidelines.aspx
Trust-Based Relational Intervention (TBRI) resources	Karyn Purvis Institute of Child Development (TCU College of Science & Engineering)	https://child.tcu.edu/about-us/tbri/
Sexual assault response team (SART) toolkit	National Sexual Violence Resource Center	https://www.nsvrc.org/sarts/toolkit
Programming and tools for children and families involved with the child welfare system	The California Evidenced-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare (CEBC)	http://www.cebc4cw.org/

Bring Justice

Overview	Source	Link
Challenges faced in identifying, investigating, and prosecuting trafficking cases at the state and local levels	National Institute of Justice	https://nij.gov/topics/crime/human-trafficking/pages/improving-investigation-and-prosecution-of-human-trafficking-cases.aspx
Examples of ways in which courts can better respond to victims of sex trafficking	Human Trafficking and the State Courts Collaborative	http://www.htcourts.org/wp-content/uploads/Ch-2_140723_NACM_Guide_OnLineVersion_04.pdf
Links to leading programs and studies involving human trafficking	National Center for State Courts (NCSC)	https://www.ncsc.org/Topics/Alternative-Dockets/Problem-Solving-Courts/Human-Trafficking/Resource-Guide.aspx
Guide to human trafficking for state courts	Human Trafficking and the State Courts Collaborative	http://www.htcourts.org/wp-content/uploads/Full_HTGuide_desktopVer_140902.pdf
Resources for domestic child sex trafficking	National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges	http://www.ncjfcj.org/DCST-Materials
Identifying challenges to improve the investigation and prosecution of state and local human trafficking cases	National Criminal Justice Reference Service	https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/238795.pdf
Addresses collaboration with law enforcement on trafficking cases	National Human Trafficking Hotline	https://humantraffickinghotline.org/resources/working-law-enforcement
Reports and resources for judges and attorneys handling child protective services cases	Texas Children's Commission	http://texaschildrenscommission.gov/reports-and-resources/
Training resources that can help criminal justice professionals address trauma effectively in trafficking cases	The National Traumatic Childhood Stress Network	https://www.nctsn.org/resources/training
Training opportunities on child sex trafficking, child abuse, and missing children	National Criminal Justice Training Center of Fox Valley Technical College	https://ncjtc.fvtc.edu/training