

Child Trafficking Response Team

CTRT Newsletter | April 2023

Welcome

The Child Trafficking Response Team (CTRT) would like to welcome you to the April 2023 edition of our Newsletter.

What other information would you like to have covered in future editions of this newsletter? Are there announcements you would like us to include? Needs that you would like to have addressed? Use the Submit Your Needs and Ideas Button below to let us know.

[Click here to Submit Your Needs and Ideas](#)

Program Updates

Child Trafficking Response Team Members Wear Blue On January 11th!

January was Human Trafficking Prevention Month, and January 11th was National Human Trafficking Awareness Day. In recognition of this important day, the CTRT joined the Blue Campaign's largest initiative #WearBlueDay where people take photos of themselves, friends, family, and colleagues wearing blue clothing and share them on social

media- along with the #WearBlueDay hashtag. The Blue Campaign is a national public awareness campaign designed to educate the public, law enforcement and other industry partners to recognize the [indicators of human trafficking](#), and how to appropriately respond to possible cases. See the CTRT's #WearBlueDay photo below!

#WearBlueDay



Picture of CTRT Team. Top row: Corene Seaver, Analyst, Ashley Bray, Manager, Kelley Hartman, Manager. Second Row, Lee Turner, Analyst, Mallory Stevens, Analyst, Darrin Holt, Analyst, Jesus Castaneda, Analyst, and Josie Feemster, Analyst.



APRIL IS
NATIONAL
CHILD ABUSE
PREVENTION
MONTH



Child Abuse Prevention Month

April is Child Abuse Prevention Month.

Please visit The Office of Child Abuse Prevention's - [Child Abuse Prevention Month Page](#). Here you will find events that you can participate in during the month of April. This includes the Child Abuse Prevention Month - Wear Blue Day.

Child Labor Trafficking

A Response to Child Labor Trafficking in California

Submitted by the Child and Family Policy Institute of California's (CFPIC) Preventing and Addressing Child Trafficking (PACT) Project.

Everyday children and youth are forced, tricked or coerced to work for little to no pay, in unsafe and abusive working environments. While it is a common belief that labor trafficking only occurs outside the United States, research reveals that the problem in California is more pervasive than perceived and largely under-reported.

Young people are at an especially high risk of labor trafficking as they lack the workplace experience to recognize exploitative employment practices and suspicious job offers. Traffickers target youth vulnerable to the promise of "easy money" to meet basic needs, the lure of a "better future," or to pay off debts. Unaccompanied children, runaway and homeless youth, LGBTQIA2S+, and individuals with experience in foster care or juvenile justice, have increased risk factors.

What is Child Labor Trafficking?

Child labor trafficking is a form of commercial exploitation, in which a trafficker profits off a young person's labor or services through the use of force, fraud, or coercion.

While data is limited, of the **1,334 cases of human trafficking reported in California to the [National Human Trafficking Hotline](#) in 2021, nearly 15percent involved a form of labor trafficking. [A ten-city study](#) on labor and sexual exploitation experienced by homeless youth in Covenant House's care revealed that **1 in 5 of the 641 youth interviewed had experienced some form of human trafficking - and 91 percent had been offered a lucrative work opportunity that turned out to be fraudulent.****

Situations of forced labor may include youth who are working in formal settings such as factories, restaurants or agriculture, more informal situations i.e., domestic servitude, commission-

based sales, or baby-sitting, and may include an element of forced criminality, i.e., peer recruitment, drug smuggling, sales and/or cultivation. There are also instances in which a young person may experience both commercial sexual exploitation and labor trafficking simultaneously.

“As a child I felt invisible. My trafficker moved us frequently and I worked in the family business without pay. At home, I did all the housework and cared for five other kids. When I disobeyed, I was beaten; denied food and isolated from the outside world. Now I’m free – I want others to know they aren’t alone and there is help out there.” – Anonymous Survivor.

Based on recommendations from research conducted by CFPIC’s Preventing and Addressing Child Trafficking Project: [The Child Welfare Response to Labor Trafficking in California](#) featured in [ACIN 1-17-21](#), some California counties have responded by taking initial steps to integrate their local response protocol to address concerns of child labor exploitation and trafficking, through a multidisciplinary approach. This may include comprehensive training on identification, adaptation of screening tools, inclusion of additional community partners and advocacy services to serve individuals at-risk of or experiencing labor trafficking.

Check out the below resources to learn more or reach out to the Preventing and Addressing Child Trafficking Project, to consult on ways your county can begin this process. Email: Melissa.Gomez@cfpic.org.

Resources/References

- [All County Information No.1-17-21](#)
- [The Child Welfare Response to Labor Trafficking in California](#)
- [PACT’s Mini-Desk Guide: Child Labor Trafficking](#)
- [National Hotline Stats: California, 2021](#)
- [Labor and Sex Trafficking Among Homeless Youth. Executive Summary. Loyola University](#)

Did you know? In 2021, SB 584, was signed into law, amending Section 16519.5 of the Welfare and Institutions Code regarding the Resource Family Approval Program in California. This added a topical training requirement on child labor trafficking. To learn about training providers with qualified expertise in your region, view a list developed by the CFPIC PACT Project [HERE](#).

Myth Busters

A youth’s disclosure is needed to identify the youth as a victim.

This is a common myth. It’s important to remember that a disclosure is never necessary. If victimization is indicated by a screening tool, as well as determined likely through the use of the administrator’s clinical expertise, identifying the youth as a victim in Child Welfare Services/Case Management System is sufficient. Due to the complexities of a youth’s victimization when they have been exposed to commercial sexual exploitation, youth may not feel ready to disclose, or even be convinced that they are not being exploited. This, however, does not erase the youths’ experiences, nor does it accurately reflect whether the youth is a victim of Commercial Sexual Exploitation (CSE). Rather, there are screening tools, such as the West Coast Children’s Clinic’s CSE-Identification Tool, which are recommended to be utilized by probation departments, county child welfare agencies, and community partners in determining the likelihood a youth has experienced, is experiencing, or is at-risk of experiencing commercial sexual exploitation. Tools such as these assess for any warning signs, and therefore, can be a sufficient form of ensuring a high likelihood of accurate reporting and documentation.



SNAPSHOT – LIVED EXPERIENCES

Snapshot: Lived Experience Experts

Written by a Survivor-Leader on the Ending The Game and Cool Aunt Series Team who would like to remain anonymous.

Who Are You Calling A Victim?!

Why “Victim” Language may be a Blockage When Working with Survivors of Trafficking & Commercial Sexual Exploitation

Many victims of commercial sexual exploitation voluntarily walk through the doors of direct-serving facilities and do not see themselves as victims. Even more are sitting in detention facilities, foster homes, and court-ordered programs, not seeing themselves as victims either. More likely, they acknowledge having a drug addiction, they talk about being in an abusive relationship, they share their challenges leaving “sex work”, or maybe even share an event in which they were victimized (i.e. being raped or robbed). But the overall label of “victim”—no. Most believe that they chose (or somehow fell into) sex work and almost nobody is comfortable with the vulnerable, disempowering feelings evoked by the term “victim”. While “victim” is a fitting term according to legal definitions of what these women have endured, it is a label that each person has to acknowledge for herself or himself along her own healing journey. And, more importantly, it’s a self-label that we hope will soon be replaced by a more empowering word (i.e. “survivor”) after a person has gained valuable insights, resources, community and hard-won progress on the journey to recovery. In a series of interviews

conducted by **Ending The Game Curriculum** over a 5 year period, it was found that “victim” language may present a barrier to services for clients who do not self-identify as such. It may cause defensiveness, anxiety, perceived lack of relevance in offered services, and a strained ability to build rapport with service providers. While this is not always the case, even a few instances of these negative impacts are worth making a change. **Ending The Game Curriculum** is purposed to help participants have their own ‘light bulb moments’ as a result of learning about psychological coercion, not to force labels on anyone. For participants who still participate in Ending The Game despite rejecting the “victim” language at first, it has been found that by the end of the curriculum, the majority agree that they had been coerced and victimized into exploitation rather than it being their choice. If you are in direct-service work with trafficked or CSE persons, you already well know the importance of meeting your clients where they are. Have you ever used the word “victim” and seen a client pull away from services? What language do you use with clients? Do you change wording as the client progresses? Why or why not? These are some questions we find worth asking as we all grow and strive to progress as service-providers and survivor-leaders.





Author's Note

When I finally joined an online community of survivors over a decade after exiting the sex industry, I wasn't sure if I had been trafficked. I hung around the edges of this group, wondering if I really belonged, wishing someone could tell me with assurance what happened, but ultimately believing that I had chosen to exploit myself when I was younger. I reached out privately to one of the group's survivor mentors and finally learned that I was a victim of trafficking and sexual exploitation over ten years after I had left the sex industry. In many ways, I thought the buyers were more victims than I was a victim; now I know otherwise. When money is exchanged, even when there is no trafficker, there is automatically an imbalance of power. On the one hand you have the powerful and on the other is the powerless. At one time I thought I was the powerful one. But over time I realized that the buyers filled that role and I was the powerless one. I am glad that

today I finally see my time in the sex industry as a form of victimization because it's helped foster self-compassion. Now I know that I was vulnerable to exploitation because I had experienced the perfect storm of past childhood vulnerabilities alongside cunning traffickers that used coercion and fraud to ensnare and deceive me. I don't see myself as a victim today but identifying that I was once a victim has helped me find greater healing and wholeness as a Survivor.



COMMERCIAL SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN PROGRAM

Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children Program Spotlights

Casa de Amparo – Short Term Residential Therapeutic Placement Provider

Casa de Amparo has successfully provided residential care and mental health services for vulnerable children and families for more than 40 years. The organization has deep expertise in providing intensive treatment and acute crisis support for youth who have child welfare and juvenile justice system involvement, including children who have experienced sexual exploitation and complex trauma in their young lives.

Michael Barnett, CEO at Casa de Amparo shared, *“At Casa de Amparo we change lives by empowering our team to meet each client where she is, motivate positive change, and eventually end generational cycles of abuse.”*

Casa de Amparo’s two Short Term Residential Therapeutic Placement (STRTPs), located in San Marcos, CA, offer Casa de Amparo’s two Short Term Residential Therapeutic Placement (STRTPs), located in San Marcos, CA, offer an array of services to female youth ages 12–18-years-old. With a licensed capacity of 16 beds at each location, Casa de Amparo works with youth from throughout the state who are on probation or are part of the child welfare system. Currently,

they hold mental health contracts with San Diego, Alameda, and Butte counties.

Casa de Amparo strives to connect with each youth in their care through the Attachment, Regulation and Competency

(ARC) model of trauma treatment. ARC is based on the premise that youth who have experienced trauma often have difficulty managing challenging experiences and become emotionally guarded and struggle with healthy self-development. These youth often internalize negative experiences and rely on rigidity and dissociative coping methods to protect themselves. Casa de Amparo believes that the more children can develop healthy relationships with staff, the more willing they will become to feel comfortable addressing their high-risk behaviors and traumas they have endured.

Utilizing a harm reduction lens to support youth, the facility is devoted to maintaining safety when their residents go missing from care and ensure inclusive and accepting treatment for LGBTQIA+ youth. Casa de Amparo staff attend internal and external trainings on harm reduction principles and make adaptations as it fits the needs of the facility and clientele. They also work closely with local law enforcement to share their learnings on this topic and increase the likelihood that youth will be met with the same level of care when confronting either system.





A great example of this implemented approach is their work with youth who leave the facility without permission or are contemplating leaving. Staff are trained around behaviors such as going missing from care (how to have conversations before, during, and after to set the stage to make better and safer decisions, calling them in right away, and welcoming them back to ensure youth know this is a safe space). The harm reduction approach implemented by Casa de Amparo is individualized, providing youth with the tools to make small steps towards improvement.

Recognizing that youth who have experienced CSE often want to use their self-determination to feel independent, Casa de Amparo works from that understanding to support the youth through specified, unique interventions. Current

therapeutic interventions utilized at Casa de Amparo include group services focused on social, relational, and coping skills, Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC) education and identity work and individual counseling services including Trauma Focused-Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing, Motivational Interviewing, and various other offerings. Casa de Amparo has the capability of working with youth with co-occurring disorders, tying individualized trauma treatment with substance use treatment. Youth are also engaged in program leadership opportunities and provide regular feedback on program routines. These collective efforts contribute to positive outcomes as the youth are connected to the greater community through enriching activities and an integrated treatment approach.

For additional information on Harm Reduction Strategies see the Harm Reduction Series from CDSS below. For more information on Casa de Amparo please [CLICK HERE](#). To refer a youth to the Casa de Amparo STRTP Program email Autumn Bailey at abailey@casadeamparo.org.

RESOURCES & TRAINING

Resources and Training Opportunities

In this section you'll find links to all current available trainings and relevant guidance the team has released. Please don't hesitate to reach out to us for any questions or suggestions.

Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children – 101 – California Social Work Education Center

This course is designed to provide a broad overview of three types of Human Trafficking and information regarding the ongoing research on the topic; narrowing in on CSEC and Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking (DMST). The course will focus on the impacts and implications for the child welfare system. The course will also provide a brief review of current federal, state, and local efforts to address the wide variety of issues associated with trafficking. Identification, assessment, and promising intervention strategies will also be identified. The course will provide information about the multi-systems response to working with victims and addressing demand.

The overarching goal of the course is to educate and foster a deeper awareness of human trafficking and CSEC throughout the child welfare community.

The course will use lecture, small group discussion, short video clips as well as application activities.

This is an on demand / online course. To register click on the link below:

[CSEC – 101 Training](#) or [CSEC – 101 Training Community Partner Registration](#)





Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children 102: Advanced Curriculum Course Description

Commercially sexually exploited children and youth present with a unique set of needs, requiring a comprehensive approach to engagement and support. Funded by the California Department of Social Services (CDSS), the CSEC 102 training will provide an advanced and comprehensive curriculum on best practices for serving youth that are commercially sexually exploited. This 16-hour training will build on the skills and concepts learned in CSEC 101, including but not limited to: an exploration of common dynamics when serving and supporting commercially exploited youth and how these dynamics impact the work and the providers. We will also discuss how the trauma of exploitation impacts the behavior, health, help-seeking, general engagement, and healing of youth who have been exploited, as well as a consideration of the role of substance in exploitation and trauma. Finally, we will spend significant time exploring and practicing helpful engagement frameworks including: trauma reenactments, the stages (cycle) of change, motivational interviewing techniques and trauma-informed care.

For upcoming dates and registration click the link below:

- [CSEC 102](#)

Advanced Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children Caregiver Training Course Description

The Advanced CSEC Caregiver training will provide an advanced and comprehensive curriculum on best practices for supporting and parenting youth that are commercially sexually exploited. In this 16-hour training delivered by professionals and survivors, we will build on the skills and concepts learned in previous introduction to CSE trainings, including but not limited to: an exploration of common dynamics when caring for and supporting commercially exploited youth and how these dynamics impact parenting/ caretaking and caregivers. This training will also discuss how the trauma of exploitation impacts the behavior, health, help-seeking, general engagement, and healing of youth who have been exploited, as well as a consideration of the role of substance in exploitation and trauma. Finally, we will spend time exploring and practicing helpful engagement frameworks including: trauma reenactments, the stages (cycle) of change, motivational interviewing techniques and trauma-informed care.

For upcoming dates and registration click the link below.

- [Advanced Caregiver Training](#)

Please share this newsletter with your colleagues. To subscribe to the Newsletter, click: [CTRT Newsletter Sign-Up Form](#).

RESOURCES & TRAINING

The Cool Aunt Series

The Cool Aunt Series (TCA), a prevention training curriculum funded by the CDSS, is now available to all counties statewide! The Cool Aunt Series is a 1-hour online, video-based prevention course with resources and support designed for students, teens, and caregivers, to recognize risk factors that lead to human trafficking.

The Cool Aunt has been made available at no cost to your agency.

Benefits of the Cool Aunt Series include:

- Customized homepage, resources, and support for your agency.
- Geared towards educating both system and non-system involved youth.
- Extremely easy to deliver to youth in one sitting; no facilitator training required.
- Can be delivered either directly youth or your child welfare agency's staff OR a designated 3rd party multidisciplinary partnering agency.

To get your county signed up or for more information please contact: Team@TheCoolAuntSeries.com.

The Cool Aunt Calendar of Events is live and active, featuring weekly meetings open to all county staff and foster youth! Weekly virtual meetings include The Cool Aunt Club Youth Meeting, Staff Trainings, and TCA Series Walkthroughs. Register today!

[The Cool Aunt Series Calendar of Events.](#)

County Thoughts on The Cool Aunt Implementation

The CTRT team met with San Francisco County's Health & Human Services CSEC Coordinator, Karina Zhang, who spoke to San Francisco's partnership and collaborative efforts with TCA Series and its creator, Rachel Thomas

According to Karina, "it is exciting what we are accomplishing with Rachel. San Francisco is supporting the translation of TCA into Spanish. Every time I go to a presentation, that is the question that is raised. I am confident the demand is there, and we are making this available not only for San Francisco, but for all those who have access to this series." The translation has been completed and is now available on the TCA homepage for any opt-in county to access. Karina also explained that "Jenny at Safe & Sound came up with the idea to support this translation effort. It is a beautiful collaboration between Safe & Sound and Rachel Thomas."

RESOURCES & TRAINING

Huckleberry Youth Programs, located in San Francisco, put on some of TCA sessions for non-system involved youth throughout San Francisco. Karina said, “[they] spent quite some time preparing, meeting with Rachel a few times to understand how to message it, and the appropriate target population. Huckleberry was ready to roll out their first session on March 1st with existing clients. It is available for others in the community but [they] are working on ways to promote it.”

Karina explained that it is most effective for service providers to sit down with youth to complete the training rather than having youth complete it on their own.

In terms of their continued collaboration with Rachel Thomas and TCA Team, Karina had considerably positive feedback. Karina made a point to say “Rachel has been very helpful so I would encourage others to have a session with her and learn more about the series.”



If any county child welfare agency is wanting to exchange ideas about getting started with or ways to promote TCA with system-involved or non-system involved youth in their communities, Karina can be reached at Karina.Zhang@sfgov.org.

Harm Reduction Guidance Series

- [ACIN I-59-18](#) (September 14, 2018) Introduction to the Harm Reduction Strategies Series Regarding Commercially Sexually Exploited Children
- [ACIN I-28-19](#) (July 22, 2019) Harm Reduction Series – Social Worker
- [ACIN I-50-19](#) (July 29, 2019) Harm Reduction Series – Probation Officer
- [ACIN I-36-21](#) (June 22, 2021) Harm Reduction Series – Law Enforcement
- [ACIN I-31-22](#) (April 8, 2022) Harm Reduction Series – Caretaker

* Coming soon: Harm Reduction Series – Court

- [ACIN 1-14-19](#) – Recommended Practices for Serving Commercially Sexually Exploited Children (CSEC) Missing from Care.
- [ACIN 1-32-21](#) – Recommended Practices Regarding Youth Who Have Experienced Commercial Sexual Exploitation and Their Usage of Cell Phones.



CTRTR EVENTS

Upcoming Events

BOYS' Documentary Film

Throughout the year, the Child Trafficking Response Team will be hosting a screening of the BOYS' Documentary. This screening is about men and boys throughout the United States who fall victim to human trafficking and are forced to sell their bodies for sex. While the movement of sex trafficking has brought significant awareness to female victims of trafficking, males have been starkly overlooked. BOYS' Documentary seeks to do just that – bring validity to the truth that males are victims of sex trafficking here in the United States. The documentary tells the narrative of male sex trafficking through the voices of four brave men and a collection of allies who stand with them in solidarity. BOYS' documentary is a clear statement that absolutely boys and men are sex trafficked, and our humanity's response is to be the antidote to this crime by standing with survivors.

To register for an upcoming screening, click the link below:

- [BOYS' Documentary – Friday 05/19/23 – 10:00 am – 12:00 pm](#)
- [BOYS' Documentary – Friday 06/23/23 – 10:00 am – 12:00 pm](#)

A Guide for Caregivers by the California Commercially Sexually Exploited Children Action Team Advisory Board

Throughout the year, the CTRT will be hosting screenings of a video created by members of the CSEC Action Team Advisory Board to achieve two goals: First, to provide guidance and tools for caregivers, group home staff, STRTP staff, resource families, and others who work directly with youth who have experienced sexual exploitation. And second, to give inspiration that with love and support, youth can recover and achieve amazing things. In this video, you will hear from those with lived experience, and they will share their personal and professional perspective on ways to improve and support youth in care.

To register for an upcoming screening, click the link below:

- [Understanding the Needs of Commercially Sexually Exploited Children – Friday 05/05/23 – 10:00 am – 12:00 pm](#)
- [Understanding the Needs of Commercially Sexually Exploited Children – Friday 06/16/23 – 10:00 am – 12:00 pm](#)



Feedback Needed

Harm Reduction is defined as a set of principles or practices, used to meet the needs of children, with a focus on decreasing the negative impact of risky behaviors over time, rather than attempting to immediately eliminate them altogether. Harm Reduction centers on participant's engagement that is holistic, empowering, non-judgmental, and transparent. The goals of harm reduction include but are not limited to improved youth centered engagement leading to more trust and healing, a reduction in re-traumatization, and an opportunity to assist in building lasting change towards increased safety and success. Harm reduction is a practice framework that aims to reduce the negative impact of risky behaviors over time, versus immediately eliminating them altogether. A harm reduction approach ultimately requires patience, consistency and a recognition that lasting change will take time.

This request is in response to counties requesting more real-life examples to be incorporated into the various trainings the CDSS contracts to create and implement. In efforts to maintain Continued Quality Improvement of trainings provided to county child welfare workers and direct service program providers, the CTRT is requesting counties submit case specific examples detailing complex case scenarios, including those involving harm reduction, such as how online recruitment into CSE is impacting youth and families.

[CLICK HERE TO SUBMIT YOUR CASE EXAMPLES](#)