

No Wrong Door

Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC)

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The Office of Crime Victims Advocacy (OCVA) is working with the Department of Social and Health Services to coordinate trainings for DSHS staff regarding Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC) and how to identify and respond to victims of CSEC as required by Substitute Senate Bill 6476 (June 2010).

Unfortunately, many victims of CSEC have experienced multiple types of victimization. According to the Seattle Homeless Adolescent Research Project, which collected data from three hundred and fifty-four (354) Seattle-area street youth 13 to 21 years of age, the most frequent reasons given for leaving home include physical abuse, violence in the home, and neglect. Sexual abuse was also very common among youth who participated in the study. Given these reasons, street youth are at-high risk of becoming victims of CSEC.

OCVA's goal is to ensure a "safety net" of resources is in place for children and youth at-risk of becoming commercially sexually exploited and for children and youth who have been victims of this crime. Community Sexual Assault Programs (CSAPs) and Crime Victim Service Centers (CVSC) play a vital role in providing a service system to assist and support victims and potential victims of CSEC.

Initial interventions with these youth are key. Victims of CSEC may be very hesitant to trust providers, may not disclose abuse and can be difficult to engage. They have very limited access to services and resources and the likelihood they will return to the street after the first intervention is high. It is critical all agency staff are aware of potential indicators for this crime, that youth are proactively and respectfully screened, and it is overtly communicated to victims that services are safe and consistent.

Every Victim. Every Where. No Exceptions.

OCVA would like programs to focus on how best to serve the child/youth, not necessarily according to the type of trauma they have experienced. Both Community Sexual Assault Program (CSAP) and Crime Victim Services Center (CVSC) staff are in a position to assist victims of CSEC. Programs serving marginalized and Native American communities are also in a position to assist victims of CSEC. The commercial sexual exploitation of children may come in the form of trafficking, domestic violence, abuse and/or neglect, as well as sexual abuse/assault and/or intimate partner (sexual) violence. Domestic violence emergency shelters and Children's Advocacy Centers may also be excellent resources in assisting youth in need of services.

Advocates from any type of program are expected to work with youth to determine the best agency and level of service based on the needs expressed by the victim. It's understood that each victim has a range of needs as well as their own timeframe to access resources. Reducing the amount of distrust and chaos and facilitating service delivery for the client is vital.

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This approach is a “no wrong-door” entry to services. One in which victims receive fully coordinated, comprehensive services no matter where or how they enter the system. While the roles of CSAPs and CVSCs are distinct, it is important that service delivery be seamless. It is very likely that victims of CSEC have been victims of other types of crimes, so assistance from one or both types of programs may be appropriate.

Victim-Centered Services

OCVA is committed to ensuring services for victims and survivors are victim-centered, culturally appropriate and accessible. When services are victim-centered, the victim’s needs take precedence over any system needs. Programs need to work with youth to assess the pro’s and con’s of referring or transferring a child/youth to a different advocate or program based on what is best for the client.

Infonet

OCVA recognizes that grantees operate based on requirements and eligibility criteria set forth by OCVA. CSEC may present as one of several different types of crime such as, sexual abuse/assault, trafficking, child physical abuse, assault, kidnapping, attempted homicide or intimate partner (sexual) violence. OCVA understands that not all cases will be straightforward or easy to enter into InfoNet.

If services provided to a victim are not eligible under the grant that funds a staff person’s position, the services would not be logged on InfoNet. However, OCVA will continue to fund staff time despite the presenting crime type or victim needs. Essentially, serving victims immediately is the primary goal of our grants and data collection supporting the work is secondary. If your agency is concerned that too many services are not being entered, please feel free to track those hours separately and discuss the issue with your program coordinator.

We expect programs will enter data based on the services provided to a victim. OCVA is available to provide assistance with data entry.

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