



Advocacy for Youth Affected by Sex Trafficking

A GUIDE FOR CASA VOLUNTEERS AND STAFF IN TEXAS



Mission

To support local CASA volunteer advocacy programs and to advocate for effective public policy for children and families in the child protection system.

Vision

Texas CASA envisions a safe and positive future for all Texas children.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are grateful to the many groups doing anti-trafficking work in the United States. We have learned from many groups and sourced material included in this guide from a wide variety of organizations. In particular, we wish to thank Dallas CASA and the Modern Slavery Project at Loyola University New Orleans for sharing knowledge and research.

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CONTENT AND SELF-CARE NOTE

Thank you for reading this guide and for your concern for vulnerable young people. Self-care and pacing are important while reading, as the content may stir strong emotions. It includes discussions of child sexual assault and child sex trafficking, as well as descriptions of violence and first-person quotes from survivors. This can be difficult for any reader, so have compassion for yourself while reading.

If you become overwhelmed or saddened while reading this guide, please take a break and take time to recharge. Those reactions are appropriate and deserve care. It is important to be mindful of how you feel as you process this topic and information. Do what you need to do in order to stay present and well, so that you can best expand your knowledge in order to skillfully serve and protect young people.

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WELCOME

*We have an uncompromising belief
that we will achieve what others think is impossible,
and that each of us is an essential part of the solution.*

–The CASA Way

The CASA network of caring community members appointed as volunteers, and the local programs who support them, are an essential part of advocacy for youth in foster care who are affected by child sex trafficking. Youth who have been affected by trafficking in foster care need CASA volunteers who are well-trained, connected and prepared to support their specialized needs. By taking the step to learn more, you are joining an effort to create a linked network of services across the state of Texas. **Texas CASA has developed the CASA Anti-Child Trafficking framework known as CASA ACTs in order to provide resources, training and coordination of services.**

Thank you for taking the step to expand your knowledge of the dynamics of child sex trafficking, and the ways to skillfully advocate for youth who have been affected. It is our deepest hope and belief that prevention is the cure: by strengthening the supports for youth and advocating for *all* of their needs to be met, we can interrupt the risk factors that create their vulnerability to traffickers. By attending to placement safety, mental health needs, educational and medical advocacy, family searching, supporting a web of long-term connections, and doing what CASA volunteers do best—building strong, trusting relationships with youth in foster care—we aim to change the statistics.

Those statistics are staggering. **Research from The University of Texas at Austin reveals that at least 79,000 youth in Texas have been victims of sex trafficking.**¹ The same study estimated that 25% of those in foster care are considered at risk for sex trafficking. Other national studies have put that number anywhere from 25% to 90%, which communicates the scale of the problem and need to provide education and intervention for youth in foster care.

Due to the circumstances of out-of-home placements, youth in the child welfare system are often the targets of sex traffickers.² Youth experiencing homelessness, poverty, substance abuse, neglect, physical violence, sexual abuse and/or involvement in the juvenile justice system are also at greater risk of exploitation, and each of these factors also increases a youth's likelihood of involvement in the child welfare system.

CASA ACTs is a call to action for the CASA network in Texas. We aim to do more than “see something, say something,” and to educate, protect and provide skilled support when youth have been exploited. From identification of at-risk children and youth to advocacy for young survivors, CASA volunteers can take concrete action, and this guidebook shares the methods. With identification and consistent supportive intervention, the victims of child sex trafficking can begin to heal.³

This guidebook goes hand-in-hand with a free e-learning course on the Texas CASA Learning Center called *Advocacy for Commercially Sexually Exploited Children and Youth (CSEY)*. We hope you will also consider taking that course to deepen your skills.

Thank you again for your dedication and commitment. Together, we will create a different world for children and youth. We are motivated by the vision of a Texas where it is safe for all children to grow up and fulfill their brightest potential.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Vicki Spriggs". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Vicki Spriggs, CEO
Texas CASA



1 Understanding Child Sexual Exploitation



THE SCOPE OF THE PROBLEM

Commercial sexual exploitation of youth, also known as child sex trafficking, is one of the worst human rights violations of our time. Sex trafficking is the second most profitable crime in the United States; drug trafficking is the first. Depending on the size of a city, sex trafficking profit margins range from \$39.9 million to \$290 million.⁴

Once a drug dealer sells drugs, the drugs are gone. Yet once a trafficker gains control of a child, that child can be sold over and over again for many years.

The federal Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA), enacted in 2000, defines sex trafficking as a commercial sex act induced by force, fraud or coercion. If the victim is 18 or younger, force, fraud or coercion are not necessary for sex trafficking to occur. Despite trafficking being in the name, transportation of a person does not need to happen for a crime to be considered sex trafficking. Three years after the TVPA was enacted, Texas became one of the first states to enact a sex trafficking statute of its own (Chapter 20A in the Texas Penal Code), following the same guidelines.

According to the National Human Trafficking Hotline, child sex trafficking and exploitation occurs in every state in the United States across rural, urban and suburban neighborhoods, as well as all socioeconomic levels. It was once believed that women and girls made up 85% of sex trafficking cases, but as men and boys feel more comfortable sharing their stories, these numbers are changing. The reality is much more nuanced. Women and girls are more likely to report victimization than men and boys. For men and boys, underreporting is the result of stereotyping, lack of research to understand their experience and underfunded resources to serve them.⁵

Texas ranks second in the nation for the number of incoming tips of child sex trafficking received by the National Human Trafficking Reporting System. The term “child” regarding sex trafficking in Texas and federal law refers to any person under the age of 18. A 16-year-old victim is, legally, to be treated the same as a 12-year-old victim. However, as many older minors look, walk and talk like young adults, they can be mistakenly thought of as having the capacity to make adult choices. They can be seen as criminals engaging in prostitution, rather than as children being assaulted and victimized. Because of this, older youth can be neglected and de-prioritized by law enforcement and judges.⁶

In a study conducted by The University of Texas, titled *To the Public, Nothing Was Wrong with Me*, a 22-year-old man reflected on his past victimization and his belief that law enforcement was not there to help people like him: “They’re not here to help me. When they see me, they want to take me to jail... I get kinda crazy so I can understand that they just don’t want to deal with me. They aren’t here to help me.”⁷

It's vital for CASA volunteers to help bridge the gap in services for these youth, and to have a survivor-centered lens in their CASA advocacy. A survivor-centered lens is a way of viewing victims of sex trafficking that takes their perspectives, feelings and needs into account and prioritizes their ways of seeing the world.



THE UNIQUE VULNERABILITIES OF YOUTH IN FOSTER CARE

Traffickers target vulnerable youth and lure them into exploitation by using physical and emotional manipulation. Youth within the foster care system, who have experienced significant trauma already, are particularly vulnerable to traffickers who take advantage of their emotional and physical needs.

In 2021, 1,695 youth in foster care went missing from Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) conservatorship. As of this writing, 1,495 have been recovered and 200 youth are still missing.⁸ At least 162 youth were physically or sexually abused during the time that they were missing, and 142 of these youth were confirmed sex trafficking victims. It is also important to note that DFPS has no information on youth who are not recovered.

Youth recovered by the foster care system gave several reasons for running away: dislike of the rules of their placement, anger at Child Protective Services (CPS) or the child welfare system, desire to be on their own, frustration or anger with caregivers, desire to see family, or desire to be with a romantic partner.⁹



These numbers do not represent the total number of young people in foster care in Texas being trafficked. They shed light only on the number in foster care who ran away from a placement, were recovered, and then made an outcry of sex trafficking. Most victims will not self-identify as survivors of sex trafficking, for many reasons.

A survivor leader who was interviewed for the “Finding and Stopping Child Sex Trafficking” episode on the National Public Radio podcast *Tell Me More* said that foster care was the training ground to being trafficked. She was trafficked from ages 10 to 17, and understood that as a foster child, she was attached to a check. She also said that her trafficker always told her he loved her. That was something she never heard from her foster parents.¹⁰

CASA Anti-Child Trafficking Action =

CASA ACTION: Be sure to ask the youth about their placement and placement wishes and try to support placement stability as much as possible. This is especially important for youth in unlicensed placements.

The following voices were presented in the 2016 study, *Labor and Sex Trafficking Among Homeless Youth: A Ten-City Study* conducted by the Modern Slavery Research Project at Loyola University New Orleans.

-
- “ A young woman aging out of foster care said, “I even tried the [homeless youth program]...They were like, no, you’re almost 18.” She stated that had the shelter in her area been able to take her in when she ran away, she would not have relied on trading sex for housing. She added, “Nobody should be 17 and not have anywhere to go.”¹¹**
 - “ A young man who left an abusive foster care situation said, “I was in the street because I went to foster care, and then I fled...then we met with another girl... and I went to the girl’s house, and then I did some sort of services for three days while I was staying there.”¹²**
 - “ A young woman ran away from her foster parents who had sexually abused her. As a result, she was homeless at the age of 12, and she was left vulnerable to a brutal trafficker who sold her for sex in a hotel room.”¹³**
 - “ A survivor recounted, “He used to give me money and buy me clothes and shoes. And like, I ran away from home, and he was doing all this stuff, and we was going, you know, to like, upscale places and stuff. And I like that stuff because that wasn’t something that I was doing, you know? And then it made me feel like—Oh, I don’t know how it made me feel. It made me feel good. I’m like, “Damn. I like havin’ money!”...I was going to the shop to get my hair done. I was like, “Yes!” I was feeling grown as hell.”¹⁴**
-

Throughout this guidebook, we excerpt the voices of youth survivors from the Modern Slavery Research Project study and others in order to provide a real-life perspective.

A lack of stability and safe adult support are primary reasons that youth in foster care are disproportionately vulnerable. Youth in foster care may have very little consistency in their lives and may not have anyone they can trust and rely on. They are used to placements, social workers, caseworkers, parole officers, therapists, caregivers, judges and other adults making decisions for them, but not necessarily committing to them over the long term. All these people are in their lives, but youth in foster care want to find their person, someone who is not in an official role, someone who will be involved and care about them long term.

CASA ACTION: To provide relief from adverse experiences focus on systemic issues such as poverty, unemployment, running away from home, lack of mentors and homelessness.

Youth in foster care can begin to believe that they are being used for financial gain in a system where everyone they meet is being paid to care for them. CASA volunteers are an exception to this transactional relationship, but their involvement is time limited. Advocates must be aware that traffickers will also be there to fill emotional and physical needs—especially when these needs are not being met elsewhere.

Youth who have been trafficked face many struggles including severe sexual, physical and emotional abuse that can lead to lifelong consequences. These youth are more likely to suffer from depression, anxiety, drug abuse, forced abortions, sexually transmitted diseases, suicide, incarceration and re-victimization.¹⁵ To prevent these and other devastating outcomes, we must work to prevent child sex trafficking.

THE ROLE OF SYSTEMIC INEQUALITY

Systemic inequalities include racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, classism, ableism, ageism, xenophobia and all other complex social systems that privilege some people in society and disadvantage others. These systemic inequalities are built into history, society and the institutions that people depend on, like education and health care. All systemic inequalities play a role in sex child trafficking, but those inequalities affecting youth of color, youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities, and LGBTQ+ youth are especially important to consider. UNICEF USA identifies systemic inequality as one of the top three factors fueling sex trafficking.¹⁶

A disproportionate number of youth of color are affected by child sexual exploitation. According to the Polaris Project, “Racism has fueled policies that stunted economic opportunity and upward mobility of people of color in the United States for generations.”¹⁷ In Louisiana, according to the study *Human Trafficking, Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes, and Commercial Sexual Exploitation: Annual Report in 2018*, 49% of child sex trafficking victims are black girls, while the community consists of 19% black girls.¹⁸ In King County, Washington in 2017, 84% of child sex trafficking victims were black girls, though the black community at large comprised only 7% of the general population, according to the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.¹⁹ Due to systemic racism, Black Americans and other people of color suffer disparities in healthcare, education, financial services, home ownership and many other arenas—disparities that increase their vulnerability to a system like child sex trafficking.

People with disabilities are especially vulnerable to human trafficking.²⁰ Youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) are at heightened risk. There are many reasons for this, including the tendency for them to be taken advantage of in institutional settings, their unfamiliarity with sex and their potential difficulty understanding the nature of abuse and exploitation. Because people with intellectual and developmental disabilities are often reliant on others to offer assistance, their vulnerability to sex trafficking is increased.

Other risk factors include lack of economic resources and the view that people with IDD are a burden.²¹

Youth who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning (LGBTQ+) are purposefully targeted by exploiters. LGBTQ+ youth face higher rates of discrimination, violence, and economic instability than their non-LGBTQ+ peers. Faced with fewer resources, LGBTQ+ youth who run away are more likely to engage in survival sex to meet their basic needs, and therefore are more likely to be targeted by traffickers. It is difficult for any youth to reach out to support services after exploitation, but this is especially true for youth who fear that they will be mistreated or not believed because of their gender identity or sexual orientation.²² Gender nonconforming and transgender youth have additional issues receiving access to services, including shelters, that are separated by binary gender, making them even more vulnerable to trafficking.²³ The guide [Sex Trafficking and LGBTQ Youth](#) offers a useful overview.



Be careful to pay attention to the role that any bias may play in your advocacy. Consider how best to help a youth from a very different background connect with you and trust you.

Do not assume that all youth are equally abled, even if disabilities are not visible. Equally, do not assume that all youth are heterosexual or gender conforming. Ask them for their pronouns. Confidentiality when discussing sexual orientation and gender identity is of utmost importance; some youth may not have disclosed their identity to their parents, caregivers or support team, and doing so could be dangerous to them. Offer youth support to meet specialized needs with vetted organizations.²⁴

CASA ACTION: Stay mindful of your own racial and cultural background and how assumptions and perceptions may be culturally informed and not universal.

THE ROLE OF GENDER IN SEXUAL EXPLOITATION



The vast majority of reported victims of child sex trafficking are women and girls. The vast majority of traffickers are men, and the field’s assumptions have been built around these two facts. It is important to recognize the role that gender inequality plays in this system: the enduring power of misogyny and male violence against women and girls are core to the dynamics of sex trafficking. At the same time, we must not ignore the very real presence of victimized boys and men, and the tremendous risks for transgender youth—particularly those who are transfeminine. Traditional gender roles and stereotypes have been identified as a root cause of gender-based violence. **Sex trafficking victims can be any “gender, sexual orientation, age, and nationality including documented and undocumented immigrants.”**²⁵

Men and boys are often overlooked as victims of sex trafficking. In 2018, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime stated that of their detected victims in North America, 79% were girls and women. From that, we can extrapolate 21% were male, transgender or nonbinary.²⁶

According to ECPAT-USA, a leading anti-child trafficking organization, contributing factors to the lack of identification of male survivors include:

- An unwillingness to self-identify because of shame and stigma.
- A lack of screening and identification by law enforcement and helping agencies due to a misperception that boys are not often victims of sex trafficking.
- Limited outreach by anti-trafficking nonprofits, task forces and coalitions focusing on areas known for male prostitution.²⁷

Furthermore, an ECPAT-USA study shared, “The little notice given to boys primarily identifies them as exploiters, pimps, and buyers of sex, or as active and willing participants in sex work, not as victims or survivors of exploitation. Discussion of boys as victims or survivors of CSEC (commercial sexual exploitation of children) is frequently appended to a discussion about commercially sexually exploited girls.”^{28,29}

CASA ACTION: Be mindful of the struggles that boys and men victims have in discussing sex abuse and the additional trials they face in disclosing. Be cognizant that all genders share vulnerabilities equally. Become aware of the harmful views of masculinity and learn more about trauma facing men and boys.

“ A young man explained how his girlfriend forced him to have sex with her friends for money, saying, “Sexual exploitation...is such a big stigma, but especially so for males...For females, of course, it’d be hard to admit, but for males, it’s even harder. So, a big problem is that nobody, none of us, would admit it.”³⁰

Transgender youth and adults are also at greatly heightened risk. According to the Center for the Human Rights of Children at Loyola University, Chicago, research shows that transgender youth are five times more likely to engage in survival sex than their peers who are not transgender. Survival sex is another way of describing exploitative relationships in which youth must exchange sex for the basic resources of life like food and shelter. Rejection from families, combined with persistent discrimination in education, employment and housing, may leave transgender youth with few options.³¹

Be cognizant that youth of all genders and gender expressions are vulnerable. Use gender-neutral terms until you know how a youth identifies. Be aware of harmful, limiting views of masculinity and femininity and avoid perpetuating these.

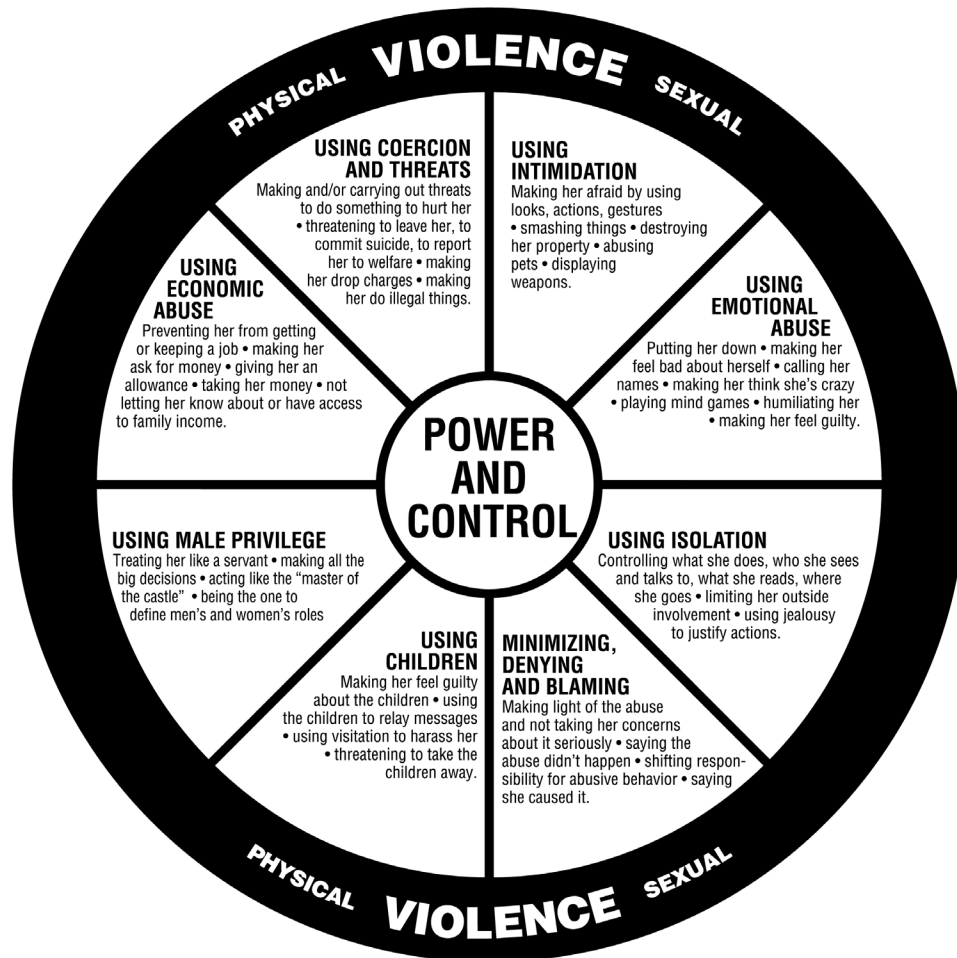
HOW CHILD SEX TRAFFICKING HAPPENS: MODELS AND METHODS

Child sex trafficking is a complex phenomenon. There are multiple models for understanding it, and all of them add depth, nuance and angles that are helpful to consider. No single model can fully explain the complex intersecting factors. **Here, we share helpful information from the following models: Power and Control; Action, Means, Purpose (AMP); Supply and Demand; Chains of Risk; and Stages of Grooming.**

Power and Control Model

Commercial sexual exploitation of youth involves power and control. The Power and Control Wheel, developed as the Duluth Model, reveals overall patterns of abusive and violent behaviors commonly used by exploiters to maintain control over their victim. Often more than one form of power and control is used. There is no single method of force, fraud, or coercion. Power and control methods include intimidation, emotional abuse, isolation, minimizing, denying, blaming, using children, privilege, economic abuse, coercion and threats.³²

Many times, victims are asked, “Why didn’t you leave?” By understanding the methods used by traffickers to exert force, fraud or coercion, caregivers and advocates can begin to understand the complexity of the trauma that survivors have experienced and why they may have stayed.³³



DOMESTIC ABUSE INTERVENTION PROGRAMS

202 East Superior Street
Duluth, Minnesota 55802
218-722-2781

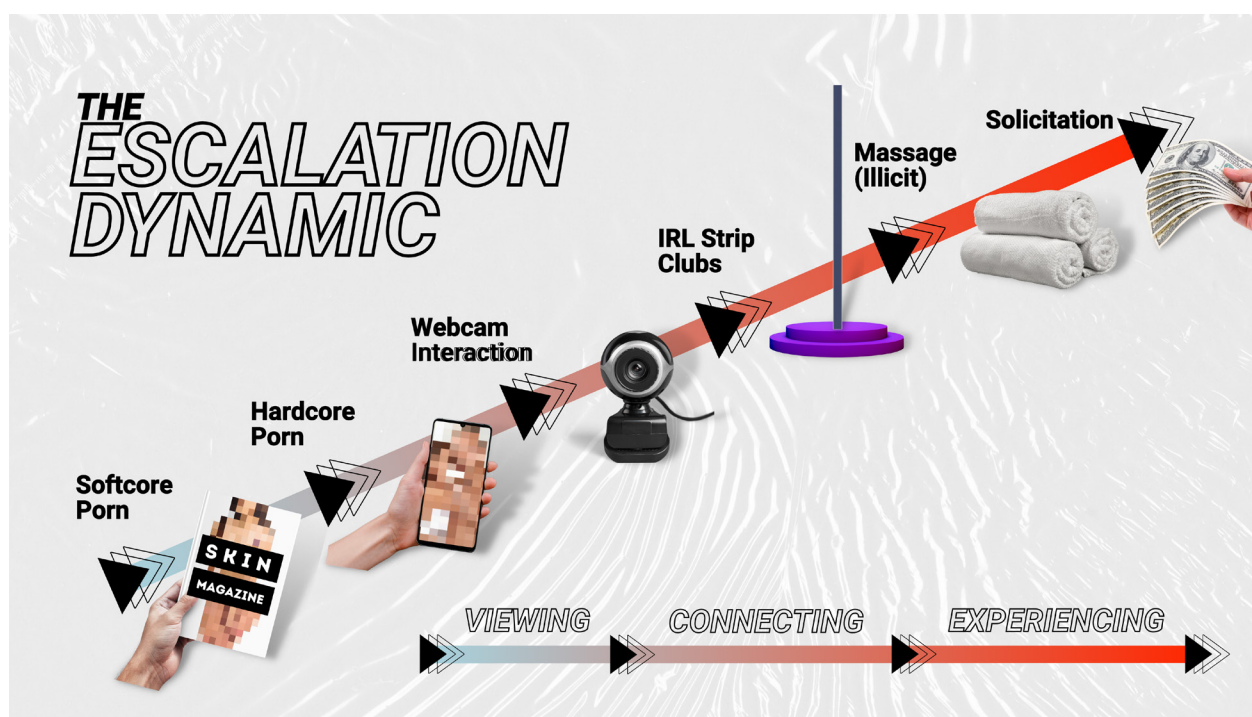
Supply and Demand Model

In the supply and demand model, sex trafficking is viewed as an economic phenomenon. Victims of sex trafficking provide the supply. Buyers of bodies and sex provide the demand. Traffickers are the middle person between supply (victims) and demand (buyers). They groom and control victims in order to fulfill the buyers' desires and make a profit.

According to the concept of the escalation dynamic, buyers may begin watching softcore pornography but soon progress to hardcore pornography. Next, buyers may seek online interaction and engage in voyeur porn/webcams. As this no longer satisfies their desires, buyers progress to strip clubs where buying sex may begin. The buyer, now desensitized by a slow progression, will seek to buy sex from "massage" businesses and eventually

solicit prostitution. This progression moves from viewing sex, connecting to online sex, and eventually paying for in-person sex.³⁴

Many buyers rationalize that this is a victimless crime because they do not understand the people they are buying sex from are being controlled through force, fraud or coercion by traffickers.³⁵



To end sex trafficking, we must end the demand for sex buying.

AMP Model (Actions-Means-Purpose Model)

The AMP Model is used to determine if human trafficking—either sex trafficking or labor trafficking—has taken place. If at least one element from each column has occurred, there is a potential case of human trafficking. If a person induces, recruits, harbors, transports, provides or obtains another person using force, fraud or coercion for the purpose of commercial sex or labor/services, human trafficking has occurred. However, where minors under the age of 18 are concerned, force, fraud and coercion need not be present for the crime to be designated as human trafficking.³⁶

THE A-M-P MODEL

Action	Means*	Purpose
Induces Recruits Harbors Transports Provides or Obtains	Force Fraud or Coercion	Commercial Sex (Sex Trafficking) or Labor/Services (Labor Trafficking)

*Minors induced into commercial sex are human trafficking victims-- regardless if force, fraud or coercion is present.

Chains-of-Risk Model

The chains-of-risk model is a way of understanding what gets a person into the predicament of being a victim of sex trafficking. It refers to a timeline of linked exposures that raise risk because one bad experience or exposure tends to lead to another and then another.³⁷ A study of 42 service providers from 2013-2016 established four main trafficking risk factors: economic insecurity, housing insecurity, educational gaps and migration.

Each of these risk factors restricts a person's options and increases their risk of exploitation. Many youth in foster care continually suffer emotionally as they are moved from placement to placement, often at times in congregate care. The institutional structure of congregate care and the inability to make meaningful attachments from being moved frequently lead to vulnerabilities. An unintended consequence of multiple moves is that youth in foster care often fall behind in education. The inability to attain a solid education prevents opportunities for employment and reinforces economic and housing insecurity.

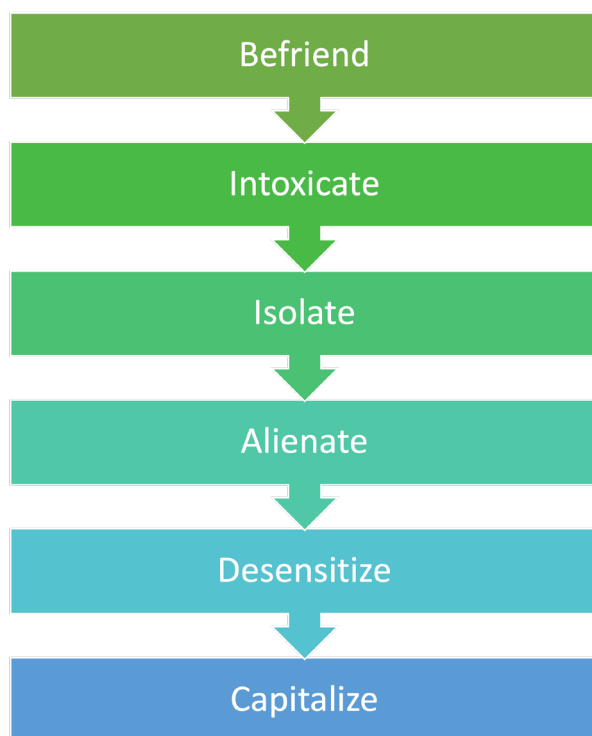
“ I became homeless, let’s see—how did that happen? So, I got arrested, and at that point, I didn’t know what I needed. I didn’t know about cleaning houses or none of that...I just knew, men would come along like, “You’re too cute to be whatever, whatever (homeless). So, I would meet guys to, you know, like,

*give me stuff that I might need, like clothes or like food or whatever it is. In exchange, it would be like, "All I just want to do is screw you," and I'm thinking like, in the end, we're going to get married. And that never happened...So, over time, I kind of just got--I don't want to say used to it, but it's kind of an expected thing...But it's something that I'd rather not do."*³⁸

Stages of Grooming Model

The grooming model is a way of understanding how traffickers manipulate victims. According to John Clark, a Houston-area advocate working with the former Operation Texas Shield, there are six stages to a trafficker's grooming of a youth: befriend, intoxicate, alienate, isolate, desensitize and capitalize.³⁹ While all exploitative relationships may not follow this pattern, it is common to many.

CASA ACTION: By understanding sex trafficking as a continuum of compounded risks, CASA volunteers can intervene to meet specific needs in the moment, thereby, hopefully, reducing the risk that a young person will fall victim to traffickers.



Befriend

Traffickers/recruiters troll looking for someone who is struggling, physically, socially or mentally. The youth is most often in an at-risk population such as foster care, but not always. This phase of the grooming process is non-threatening and is considered fun for the victim who may be gifted money, drugs or alcohol, or be treated to a visit to the hair

or nail salon. Every befriending act is a move toward making the victim dependent on the trafficker.

This phase is hard to identify. It will not be happening in front of the youth's caregivers who could identify problems. It is advisable for caregivers to establish cell phone guidelines with youth, including allowing caregivers to have passwords, scrolling through photos together and keeping cell phones out of bedrooms at night. The Texas CASA guidebook, [Normalcy Matters](#), has more tips on safe cell phone usage for youth.

Intoxicate

The trafficker's goal at this stage is to become part of the youth's circle. Traffickers will introduce or increase the use of drugs and alcohol to begin to separate the youth from their caregivers and friends. It is two-fold: first, this reduces a youth's mental senses and capacity to identify danger, and second, it creates peer pressure to succumb to the behaviors of their new friend group. There is a feeling that everyone does this, and they are just having fun.

Alienate

The trafficker will create a separation between the youth and their caregivers. Traffickers will say things like: "Man, your foster mom is so strict," or "Why do they treat you like you are a child?" The trafficker wants the youth to be dependent only on them. Every teenager goes through a developmental stage of showing defiance, but the trafficker is there and ready to offer the youth a place to stay, a ride home, or anything else that helps them by building an alliance against their caregivers.

This stage is hard to identify because it can be a normal process for youth who are trying to establish their independence. If you have a concern, talk with the youth and share your concerns with them and their caregivers. If appropriate, suggest a caregiver look at the youth's online footprint or cell phone usage to see if they are in frequent communication with a new adult.

Isolate

Traffickers begin to isolate youth from their old friend groups. It is at this stage that caregivers may notice a change. The youth may be missing school more than usual and may not be interested in classes, clubs or sports that they were previously interested in. Caregivers may notice that they do not see their usual friends, and new friends they do not know are frequently discussed in the home. The trafficker creates time to be alone with the victim and may be taking a more active role in their life.

CASA ACTION: Make note of the youth's friends' names and make a point to discuss them. By discussing their activities and interests from the beginning, it will be easier to notice any concerning change in behavior.

Desensitize

In this stage a trafficker works to desensitize youth to commercial sex or drug use and to degrade the youth's values and sense of right and wrong. They may downplay the values established by the youth's family or caregivers. Traffickers may introduce the youth to a drug dealer, explaining a reasonable justification for the drug sales—such as that they are only selling drugs to finish college. They may introduce people who are dancing in strip clubs as people who just want to support themselves and make good money. At this stage, the youth is engaging in increased drug use, alienated from family, isolated from friends, and now a new way of life does not seem so dangerous.

CASA ACTION: Be aware of changes in behavior, drug use, new friends and a change in attitude about communicating with their family, caregivers and you.

Capitalize

Traffickers look for an opportunity for the youth to leave home of their own free will. They are patient, waiting for just the right time. Traffickers are cunning, smart people who may wait for a person to turn 18, as they know it is harder for law enforcement to investigate an adult's interactions with other adults. Slowly the abuse will begin, as the trafficker claims the gifts and services must be repaid and commercial sex is demanded for repayment.

If the youth does run away, know what the options are in your community for recovery, and follow the [missing from care protocols](#) established by your CASA program, which are explored more later in this guide. Try to stay engaged with the youth. It is imperative to not show anger or frustration. Instead, stay connected, express care and show concern for their safe return.



TYPES OF TRAFFICKERS

Traffickers, known on the street as “pimps,” will look for vulnerable youth—particularly those who have run away, or youth in shelters, foster care, group homes and residential treatment centers. A core method is to look for a child in need and to be the only person to help them with that need, whether that is for food, shelter, clothing, love or friendship. This is part of the process that leads to the youth feeling they owe the trafficker for their help.

The role of the trafficker as someone who will earn money by selling the youth's body is often purposefully hidden from the victim. Trafficking victims may view their exploiter as their significant other, close friend, pimp, uncle, aunt, guardian or employer. According to researcher Kimberly Mehlman-Orozco in *Projected Heroes and Self-Perceived Manipulators: Understanding the Duplicitous Identities of Human Traffickers*, traffickers portray themselves as "honest heroes" who are rescuing youth from their circumstances.⁴⁰

Let's look deeper into some of the types of traffickers and how they structure the trafficker-victim relationship. We will look at the types of: Boyfriend, CEO, Familial, Gang Family, and Brute Force Traffickers.

Boyfriend/Romeo

This type of trafficker is the most common. They use sweet talk, compliments, gifts and romance as a means of gaining trust and present themselves as the romantic partner of the victim. They pride themselves on controlling through psychological manipulation. The boyfriend trafficker first becomes involved in an intimate relationship to establish a "love" connection. He/she/they may buy the victim clothes, take them out to restaurants, provide love and affection, and seem to truly care for their wellbeing.

The trafficker's goal is to discover and fulfill the youth's needs—from food, shelter and clothing to emotional acceptance and perceived safety. After the love relationship is established, the trafficker will tell the victim they now need them to help by selling sex. They may claim it will only be temporary. There is no real choice for the victim because abuse and physical violence is commonly used if compliance is not immediate. A trafficker may say, "If you love me, you will do this."

Romeo pimps typically target young people looking for love and acceptance, youth in need of shelter and protection, or youth who will believe the lies the Romeo pimp tells them. They will also encourage teens who still live with their caregivers to run away from home with a promise of a happier life.

Common Phrases

- *I love you.*
- *Nobody else understands me.*
- *I'll give you everything you deserve.*
- *I can't live without you.*
- *Dream with me.*

“ In Labor and Sex Trafficking Among Homeless Youth: A Ten-City Study, a young man discussed how he realized his boyfriend was a trafficker: “It took about three months for me to realize that he has issues—that he is abusive. I got my ass whooped every day. Even if I brought home more money than we talked about bringing home that night, when I had done extremely well...if he got mad, it was my ass.”⁴¹

Business/CEO

Business/CEO traffickers approach sexual exploitation as a business, the buying and selling of human beings as a transaction, and their victims as their property. CEO pimps look for potential victims who are eager for a career in acting, modeling or the music business. They may promise stardom or a successful career in the industry and offer the victim fantasies of the life they desire, promising to be the one to make it happen. These traffickers may call themselves an “agent” or “emcee” and may push for nude photos right away.

Common Phrases

- *You have what it takes to make it in this industry. Trust me.*
- *This is strictly business.*
- *I can make you rich.*
- *Fill out this form (gathering personal information).*

Familial

Familial trafficking begins with a family member—a parent, grandparent, cousin, aunt, uncle or any other relative. Familial traffickers target and abuse members of their own household.

Youth whose parents are selling sex themselves are at a higher risk because it is viewed as a “family business.” This may involve the intergenerational prostitution activity within the family where trafficking is normalized, or it may involve selling children/youth to settle a drug debt or to obtain drugs. Emotional, psychological, physical and relational isolation is a hallmark factor to familial trafficking. There is no standard socioeconomic situation: it impacts people of all races, genders, creeds and religions.

Any sex trafficking victim has trauma, but if the victim is trafficked by a family member it adds another level of complex developmental trauma, making future healthy relationships even more difficult.

Common Phrases

- *You need to talk to him/her, so I don't have to pay rent.*
- *Just one more time so I can buy groceries.*
- *I need you to work so I can buy my drugs.*

Gang Family

In gang trafficking, the exploiter is the entire gang “family” or group, consisting of related or unrelated people who may refer to each other as brothers, sisters, cousins, uncles, elders, etc. Many youth enter gangs between ages 14 and 18 years old.⁴² The gang represents a chosen family to the victim, and they are required to sell sex to be a part of the family. Some

Common Phrases

- *Do it for the family.*
- *It is your job.*
- *Come on and help this homeboy out.*
- *We all have our responsibilities here.*

victims know they will be sold but choose this path for the emotional benefits of belonging. A sense of belonging has often been missing for a youth who becomes involved in a gang, and the gang family fills this gap. Victims of gang trafficking may see prostitution as the “chore” they perform to support the “family.”

Gang-involved sex traffickers mostly target youth who live in the gang’s geographic area. These victims are not able to resist with force, retaliate with violence, or report to the police while they are in the gang’s control.⁴³

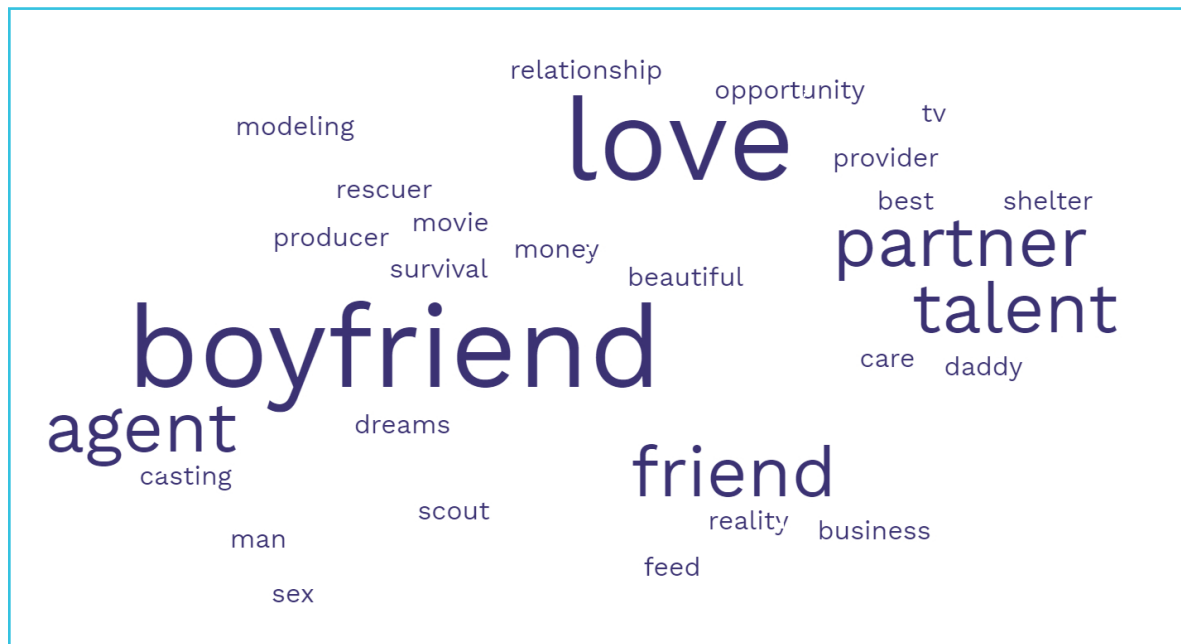
CASA volunteers can help build healthy connections for youth through family searching and Collaborative Family Engagement. Any action to help foster a sense of belonging and safe community is protective.

Brute Force Trafficker

The brute force trafficker operates through force or coercion, including threats, physical violence, drugs, blackmail and sometimes abductions. Although this type of trafficking is commonly portrayed in the media, research shows that the brute force trafficker is actually the least common type. Only 7% of cases studied by the Polaris Project involved kidnapping, force or abduction.⁴⁴ This type of trafficker represents a small percentage of sex traffickers, but they are the most violent.

Common Phrases

- *You will work the streets or get beaten.*
- *If you don’t work, I am going to find your little sister.*



This word cloud presents some common language used to recruit young people into sex trafficking.

TOOLS USED BY TRAFFICKERS

All traffickers use emotional manipulation, intimidation and threats to control their victims. Some also use violence, rape, showing weapons, physical punishments, drugs and addiction, isolation, starvation and humiliation to control victims.

-
- One victim describes her attempt to resist: "He was like, "No, you're going to be having sex for money." I was like, "Oh no! I can't do that!" And that is when I kind of stood up, and he pushed me down. He was like, "You are going to work, or I am going to sell you to another pimp or kill you." Then I got terrified, and he forced me to take pictures in lingerie.⁴⁵**
 - One woman said she felt unable to leave her trafficker because, "he threatened to shoot up my sister's house, and he was crazy...For my sister's safety too, I had to sell for him. He threatened to shoot up the house, and she had kids, so I didn't want that."⁴⁶**
-

In the study *Projected Heroes and Self-Perceived Manipulators*, a trafficker who gained the trust of a 12-year-old runaway girl by offering her food and shelter explains how coercion is used. "People think they can't be trained, but unbeknownst to them I'm actually training, shaping and molding their world view and opinion... A cunning person is very capable of making the other person believe that he/she is in control, concealing their intentions until they lead the person to the edge of the cliff."⁴⁷

Sextortion is another tool. It takes place when an exploiter trolls games, conversation apps, or social media looking for victims. Youth may think they are communicating with someone their age, but it is often an experienced adult exploiter. Youth are manipulated with romantic fantasies into sending explicit photos. Once these photos are sent, the exploiter blackmails the youth. They may demand money and threaten to release the photos to their online accounts, friends and caregivers. When youth do not have someone to confide in, they are left with feelings of fear, helplessness, hopelessness, humiliation, self-blame and shame.



If you suspect sextortion, first discuss with the youth about reporting the crime to law enforcement. Talk to your CASA supervisor about potentially filing a report with the [FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center](#). You can also report an incident to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children by calling 1-800-THE-LOST or online at their [CyberTipline](#). To be prepared, CASA volunteers can add these resources to their phone contacts so they are readily accessible when needed. It is imperative to report crimes of sextortion with the approval of youth involved because making any reports will involve them or their personal information.

Traffickers will claim they have improved the financial and social circumstances of their victims. However, research into patterns of payment shows that they do not share profits with victims to use independently. It is more likely that they may pay for beauty maintenance and "enhancements." This false story of financial independence is another method traffickers use to coerce victims into the commercial sex trade.⁴⁸

CASA ACTION: Listen for signs that a youth is being sextorted, and talk to them about how to protect themselves. Keep an open line of communication.

WHERE AND HOW DOES TRAFFICKING TAKE PLACE?

Following are some of the settings and types of environments where trafficking is common. This list is adapted from the Polaris Project's *Typology of Modern Day Slavery: Defining Sex and Labor Trafficking in the United States*.⁴⁹

Escort Services – commercial sex that occurs at a temporary indoor location. The operations are often described as either "out-call," where traffickers deliver victims to a buyer's hotel room or residence for a "private party," or as an "in-call," where potential buyers cycle in and out of a hotel room where the trafficker has confined the victim for extended stays. Traffickers will post sexual advertisements on websites where potential buyers call and make arrangements for escort services.

Illicit Massage Businesses – a façade of a spa service conceals that the primary business is sex trafficking. Although they seem to be a single storefront, the majority of illicit massage businesses are controlled as part of a larger network, with multiple people owning several businesses at a time. It is estimated there are at least 7,000 illicit massage businesses in the U.S.

Outdoor Solicitation – commercial sex in which victims are required to find buyers in an outdoor, public setting. In many cities this occurs on particular blocks or cross streets known for commercial sex. They are often referred to as a "track" or "stroll." Outdoor solicitation

where younger victims can be purchased is called a “kiddie stroll.” In rural areas, outdoor solicitation often occurs at truck stops or rest stops along major highways.

Residential – brothels run by a network of traffickers or within private households. Residential brothels tend to cater to buyers from similar ethnic background and/or language and advertise through word of mouth or covert business cards. Sex trafficking within residences used as brothels typically involves child victims, with boys making up a growing percentage.

Bars, Strip Clubs and Cantinas – front as legitimate bars, restaurants or clubs selling food and alcohol while exploiting victims who are forced to provide customers with flirtatious companionship. Victims entice patrons to purchase high-priced alcohol beverages that often come with an explicit or implicit agreement for commercial sex acts. Some of these establishments are run by organized trafficking networks, while others are run by an agreement between a trafficker and business owner.

Pornography – sex traffickers earn profits from producing and distributing a victim’s appearance in pornographic material or child sexual abuse material.

Personal Sexual Servitude – a youth is sold to an individual buyer for the purpose of engaging in sex acts over a long period of time. This can be done by a family member and can also occur within a commercial non-consenting marriage situation. Youth are victimized when they are coerced to engage in sex on an ongoing basis in exchange for basic needs such as shelter, food, clothing or medications.

“ One youth explained, “I was living in my car at the time, so I kind of needed—I didn’t have a job, so I kind of needed money. So, I had to do something. I just, you know, resorted to that.”⁵⁰

“ At the age of 17, after a dispute with family, one young woman left the house. She described, “And it was cold. It was in the wintertime...I was just upset, walking around. Then, this dude walked up to me and started talking to me. And at first I was ignoring him, but then, he kept walking up to me. I didn’t know him from a can of paint. And then you know, I ended up coming in the dude’s house, and I spent the night. I actually stayed there for like a week. And you know, it was like the worst mistake I ever made. I slept with this guy. He gave me chlamydia.”⁵¹

Remote Interactive Sexual Acts – live commercial sex acts simulated through remote contact between the buyer and the victim through technologies such as webcams, text-based chats, and phone sex lines become sex trafficking if victims are compelled through force, fraud, or coercion, or the victim is under the age of 18.



2 **CASA Advocacy for Affected Youth**



WHAT CAN CASA VOLUNTEERS DO?

A March 2015 study by Harvard University's Center on the Developing Child revealed, "Every child who winds up doing well has had at least one stable and committed relationship with a supportive adult." CASA volunteers can work hard to listen to youth, form supportive relationships and be non-judgmental. It is important to wait patiently for a window of opportunity to connect without being deterred by avoidance, distancing or even hostility.⁵²

This will require a commitment of time and emotional labor on the CASA volunteer's part. Do not be deterred by a youth's reactions to you. They likely have been violated, manipulated, and harmed by many people in their life. To be successful, CASA volunteers and staff must try to understand the experience of the youth, build rapport, be trauma-informed, build a harm reduction lens, expand access to care, and be consistently available and supportive. These ideas are explored further in the text that follows.

WHAT TO DO IF A YOUTH MAKES AN OUTCRY

When a youth makes an outcry of abuse, exploitation or any other upsetting and harmful issue, a natural human reaction is to react emotionally and share distress. However, it is very important to not overreact, even though it is very hard to hear abuse information, especially if it pertains to sexual abuse. Youth who are trafficked will not want to share details if the CASA volunteer is frantic, shocked or expressing their emotions. Remain calm and listen to the youth. **Reassure them that you are there for them, you appreciate their trust in you and you will work together with them to keep them safe.** CASA volunteers should not attempt to inquire about the full story or seek out details. Let the youth know that a report must be made to Child Protective Services and local law enforcement.

Texas law requires that any person suspecting child abuse or neglect, which includes child sex/labor trafficking, must make a report. For suspicion of child sex/labor trafficking, this report must be made within eight hours. Suspecting child sex/labor trafficking means that you have a reasonable belief and concern that trafficking has occurred. You are NOT expected to prove that trafficking has occurred. A person who reports trafficking in good faith is immune from civil or criminal liability. Anyone who does not report suspected trafficking can be held liable for a misdemeanor or felony.

CASA ACTION: It is important to never blame a victim for the crimes committed against them, even if they do not appear to be a victim. Remember that many trafficking victims do not self-identify as victims.

If someone is in immediate danger, call 911 before making a report to DFPS. If you are unsure about the need to make a report or are uncomfortable making a report, you are encouraged to discuss this with your CASA supervisor first. However, you do not need your CASA supervisor's permission to make a report, and no one can tell you not to make a report.

DFPS utilizes a statewide intake system. Reports of child trafficking within Texas are to be reported by phone at 1-800-252-5400.



What to Expect When Making a Report

1. DFPS cannot accept anonymous reports. You will give your first and last name and phone number. Your identity as the reporter will remain confidential from those outside DFPS unless court-ordered by a judge or law enforcement.
2. Before you make a report, remember the “5 Ws” – who, what, when, where and why you are concerned. Focus on the details of the youth's life that resulted in the outcry.
3. You should not interview the youth about the crime. It is not the role of the CASA volunteer to take an investigatory approach.
4. It is important to provide the DFPS intake worker with as much information as you have. However, even partial information is still helpful. If you do not have everyone's full name or only know the general information, it is still important to make a report. You should not delay in making a report to gather complete information.
5. It is critical to be fully honest and transparent when making a report. If you are asked specific questions for which you do not have an answer, it is acceptable to simply say, “I do not know.”

6. Ask the youth if they want to be present when you make the report.
7. Report to DFPS statewide intake by phone at 1-800-252-5400 followed by reporting to local law enforcement, both within eight hours. Online reporting options should not be used.
8. It is recommended but not required to discuss the need to make a report with your CASA supervisor prior to making the report so you can talk through the reporting process ahead of time. If you are not able to communicate with your CASA supervisor prior to making a report, inform them of the safety concern and situation as soon as possible after making the report.
9. You should notify the child's caseworker and supervisor of the outcry and report being made, and recommend a referral to care coordination and CSEY Advocate Agency.
10. You should notify the youth's Attorney ad Litem if they have one.
11. If safe and appropriate, support a safety planning process with the youth in collaboration with the care team.
12. It is best to be honest, consistent and caring. Respect the youth's voice and desires.
13. If safe and appropriate, you should provide the youth's caregiver with resources, including prevention information, signs of victims being trafficked and information about trauma-informed care. These resources can include this guidebook. Offer an open dialogue.

What Happens After Making a Report?

The DFPS unit reviews reports to determine if they meet criteria for investigation. Sometimes reports are not investigated. This could happen if the situation reported is already under investigation, the allegations reported do not appear to involve a reasonable likelihood that the youth is likely to be harmed in the future, or if there is not enough information to locate the youth.

If the report is assigned for investigation, it will go to the local CPS office nearest to where the youth is located. Depending on the nature of the allegations, CPS investigators have to initiate the investigation within 24-72 hours. DFPS should follow the [DFPS Human Trafficking Response Protocol](#) to investigate sex trafficking cases. (This document is applicable to all regions in Texas except for the information on the CSE-IT screenings, which are not currently performed in all areas.)



UNDERSTAND THE EXPERIENCES OF AFFECTED YOUTH

Trauma Bonds

Youth who have been sexually exploited have often developed trauma bonds with those who have harmed them. Trauma bonds are intense, powerful, enduring—and can feel like love to those who experience them.

Trauma bonds develop through manufactured love which gives the victim the perception that they are a willing participant, despite being exploited for the gain of the trafficker. Episodes of pleasant experiences coupled with episodes of abuse create emotional bonds that are difficult to break. The 2020 Trafficking of Persons Report stated the most common definition of a trauma bond in this context as “when a trafficker uses rewards and punishments within cycles of abuse to foster a powerful emotional connection with the victim.”⁵³

In *Projected Heroes and Self-Perceived Manipulators: Understanding the Duplicious Identities of Human Traffickers*, the authors write, “Strong emotional attachments formed through intermittent abuse inhibits the ability for sex trafficking victims to leave exploitive relationships and increases the likelihood of returning to the sex trafficker after separation.”⁵⁴

The foundations of trauma bonding are laid at the neurobiological level. During a single incident of trauma, the limbic system, the brain's emotion center, over-activates; and the prefrontal cortex, the brain's logic center, shuts down. Repeated trauma exposure results in a victim becoming numb and disconnected from themselves.⁵⁵

“ One young woman reported that her boyfriend forced her to sell sex. “He got to the point where he was like, ‘I’m gonna leave you,’ and I would be like, ‘No, don’t leave me because my whole life, I felt like nobody loved me. You were always telling me like, I love you. I support you. I’ll do everything for you.’”⁵⁶

These feelings of love give the victim the perception that they are a willing participant in their abuse. Due to trauma bonds, fear, loyalty and shame, many youth do not understand that a crime has occurred and do not identify as victims or survivors. Youth should always be empowered to select their own language and words to explain their experience that best reflects them.

Barriers to Self Identification

Youth likely do not use the terms “child sex trafficking,” “trauma bonds,” or “commercial sexual exploitation.” Many youth believe it was their choice to sell their bodies and they were helping people they love. It is the job of adults to support them in healing until they are strong and secure enough to view their situation differently. CASA volunteers should support them, regardless of wherever they are in the process.



It is only through intervention, therapy and support that young people begin to understand a crime has occurred. Fear is a common barrier. Threats of violence toward themselves or their family, or feeling as though they are in debt to a trafficker, may deter the young person from an outcry. CASA volunteers who suggest to a youth that they may be exploited by a trafficker can expect to be met with anger and hostility, and should not take this personally. Choose words carefully, and do not attempt to quickly change how the youth views themselves or their situation. It will take time to build trust and rapport, and the youth should have safety, stable housing and therapeutic resources before they can begin to shift their perspective. When visiting with the youth you are appointed to serve, make space to talk about the little things; anything at all that the youth would like to share with you.

Once they begin to recognize that they have been harmed, victims often wrongly believe that they are to blame. If they agree to accept food, shelter or expensive gifts, they can see culpability. If they fell in love with their trafficker or told them that they loved them, the youth may feel responsible. Traffickers trick victims into thinking everything is their fault. For example: A trafficker may say, "You are the one who wanted to be a model. If you tell anyone, they will blame you. You wanted to be a model." These tactics are very convincing to young minds.

Victims may also see their trauma as normal. Victims often deny that any violence is occurring, rationalize violence and believe that they have some control over the abuse. Overall, victims have complicated coping mechanisms for survival that are barriers to them making an outcry or self-identifying. We must trust their own internal sense of timing.

Signs of Victimization

Child sex trafficking is a crime hidden in plain sight. As a CASA volunteer, be on the lookout for signs of victimization with the youth you are appointed to. It is important to share information about trafficking with the youth's caregivers. **Education and awareness about trafficking, and the presence of a consistent caring adult, can go a long way to prevent this type of abuse.**

According to the Nevada Attorney General's Office's Human Trafficking Initiative, some indicators that a person may be a victim include:

- Appearing malnourished
- Showing signs of physical injuries and abuse
- Avoiding eye contact, social interaction and authority figures/law enforcement
- Seeming to adhere to scripted or rehearsed responses in social interaction
- Not being allowed to speak while alone or seeking another's approval before speaking
- Describing inconsistent life events
- Describing multiple unexplained trips to other cities or states
- Serious changes in school attendance, habits, friend groups or vocabulary
- Having refillable gift cards
- Wearing or owning sexually provocative clothing
- Lying about the existence of social media accounts
- Any reference to a "pimp"
- Speaking of making money for their significant other
- Any reference to prostitution, pornography or commercial sex acts
- Lacking official identification documents
- Appearing destitute/lacking personal possessions
- Living at their place of employment

- Checking into hotels/motels with older individuals, often of the opposite sex, and referring to those older individuals as boyfriend/girlfriend
- Calling a trafficker “daddy,” which is street slang for pimp
- Poor dental health
- Tattoos/branding on the face, neck and/or lower back
- Untreated sexually transmitted diseases
- Not knowing where they live and inability to provide a home address

If you see or hear of any of these red flags for the youth you serve, discuss them with your CASA supervisor.

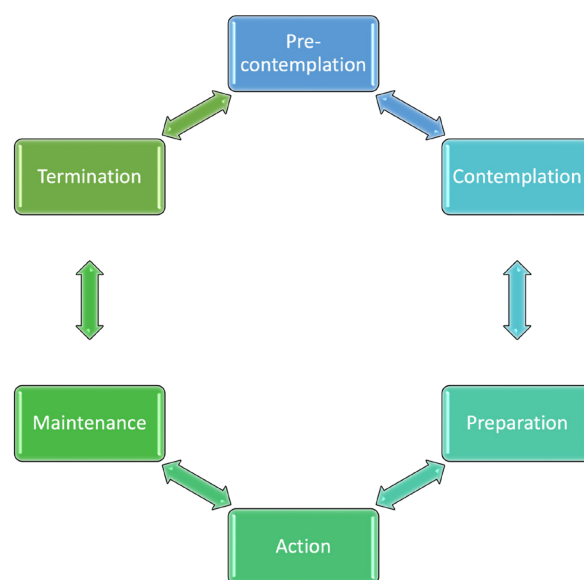
The Stages of Change

The Stages of Change model was developed over 40 years ago by researchers J.O. Prochaska and Carlo C. DiClemente and detailed in their book *Changing for Good*. It was created as a result of the authors’ work with people who smoked. They studied more than 1,000 people and observed that some who smoked could quit by themselves, but others required the help of professionals—concluding that people will change behavior only when they are ready to do so. They developed the Stages of Change model to help people make permanent and positive life changes. The National Cancer Institute found this program more than twice as effective as standard smoking cessation programs. The model has proven resilient over time and is applicable to many situations.

The Stages of Change model is helpful to understand the complicated processes that survivors experience as they begin to understand their victimization and decide to leave “the life.”⁵⁷ There are six stages:

1. Pre-contemplation
2. Contemplation
3. Preparation
4. Action
5. Maintenance
6. Termination

If you have the opportunity to help a young person make a profound life change, it’s useful to work with this model—and share it with them. No one can push or move a person to a different stage. Trying to do so is ineffective. But by helping a person see what stage of change they are in, and that change is a process, you can support them and help them have hope.



Youth who have been exploited may enter and exit different stages, moving from Preparation, back to Contemplation, and then forward again to Preparation. This movement can occur multiple times before a person takes Action or establishes stable behavior in the Maintenance stage, or achieves permanent change in the Termination stage. Relapse is part of recovery.

Let's look a little closer at how these stages apply to youth who have been sexually exploited.

Pre-contemplation

In this stage, people don't have the intention to change behavior in the foreseeable future. In this stage, victims have not changed any behaviors because they do not self-identify. They may be agitated, defensive or refuse services. Victims may identify with their trafficker as their partner or family member. They may deny any exploitation. Victims may acknowledge commercial sex has occurred, but they will say no force, fraud or coercion was used. **They will appear as willing participants.**⁵⁸ The hallmark of Pre-contemplation is a resistance to recognize a problem.

The anti-trafficking group Saving Innocence has identified ways to support youth during the stages of change, and these ideas are drawn from their excellent work.

To support youth during the Pre-contemplation stage:

- Ask how they feel
- Do not react or respond to outbursts
- Help the youth set boundaries
- Discuss options to increase safety with the youth
- Support the youth
- Never speak down about or degrade the exploiter
- Establish regularly that you care about the youth
- Ask the youth what they like to do for fun and set a date to do some of those things (or arrange for someone in their network to do them with the youth)
- Follow through on your commitments to the youth
- Help them create a healthy support system with others
- Always make them feel safe and secure and never judged
- Keep open and inviting body language

Contemplation

In the Contemplation stage, victims know there is a problem and are considering overcoming it, but there is not yet a commitment to take action. A victim enters this stage when they decide they want to change the environment they are in. This stage can be triggered by a traumatic event such as a beating, sexual assault, injury or arrest. As they

weigh their situation, they begin to decide if they want to remain or escape. They may be unsure of their decisions or next steps, or be fearful.

To support youth during the Contemplation stage:

- Be ready for the youth to come to you
- Be ready for the youth to be unsure and unable to make decisions
- Continue listening with an open mind
- Talk to the youth about completing or furthering their education
- Try to get them involved with different activities
- Discuss healthy coping skills
- Offer lots of praise for big and small successes
- Talk with the youth about constantly growing
- Continue connecting them with other positive and supportive people

Preparation

Now victims have made the decision to change and enter the planning and preparing phase. This stage used to be called decision making. It can be explained as the “early stirrings of the Action stage.” Victims begin to look at their choices. The youth will think about what leaving the trafficking situation will mean for them, what they will be required to do, and whom they can rely on. During Preparation, a victim may decide quickly, or they may go back and forth between Contemplation and Preparation.

To support youth during the Preparation stage:

- Focus on the youth’s strengths and help them move past their imperfect moments
- Help them to communicate in different ways than they may be used to
- Help them continue to cope with trauma reminders or triggers in a healthy way
- Inform them that all the bad things they feel are not always because of their trauma
- Help them to move from the victim/survivor role into a leader
- Continue establishing boundaries
- Continue to show and tell them that you like and care about them

Action

In the Action stage, the victim will change their environment and behavior to overcome their problems. The victim decides to act and move forward with the plan to leave the life. During the Action phase, there may be one small movement, or a slow transition. It may include enrolling in a restorative care facility. They may also begin to cut ties with their traffickers and others who are still in the life. Victims may feel fearful or loyal to their trafficker. They can also feel relieved after leaving the situation.

To support youth during the Action stage:

- Be present
- Have regular contact with them
- In the early days, check in with them every day or a couple of times a week to help build rapport and trust

Maintenance

There is not a clear timetable between the Action and Maintenance stages. There may be relapses that send a victim back to Contemplation. Relapse means that the victim returns to a previous stage in the model, or the victim returns to sex trafficking.

Traffickers are extremely manipulative using a variety of methods explained in the Power and Control Wheel. Once an action has taken place, the victim enters the Maintenance stage where they continue to work on stable behavior, or relapse.

With therapy and support, victims can understand their triggers and how to respond to them. In the maintenance stage, the victim may become employed, live on their own, engage in trauma therapy or develop healthy relationships.

To support youth during the Maintenance stage:

- Be patient
- Maintain open lines of communication
- Check in regularly
- Continue to be a consistent and calm presence in their life
- Show understanding and care should relapse occur
- Offer praise and recognition for their bravery and commitment

CASA volunteers are very important to youth who are at-risk or are trafficked. Being consistent, present, patient and caring while understanding the youth's trauma is key to a successful relationship between the CASA volunteer and the youth they serve.

Although it is not included as one of the Stages of Change in the traditional model, relapse is part of the process.

For many youth who have been trafficked, their needs were met by their traffickers. Because of this, and the dependence on their exploiter, it is common that survivors will relapse by running away multiple times before finally leaving. In fact, this is an expected part of the recovery and healing process. It is necessary for CASA volunteers to give "time to engage with (the youth) and to establish a supportive relationship despite episodes of 'going missing.'"⁵⁹



Most victims will relapse, possibly multiple times. Each time they relapse, they may do something different the next time. Triggers or events may cause the victim to return to a trafficking situation or into a previous stage in the model. Relapsing is hard and a natural part of this process. It is not reasonable to expect a victim to flow through all the stages without trials and struggles.

Relapsing happens for many reasons such as leaving a restorative care facility, questioning why they left the life in the first place or struggling to find a job. Victims may still feel loyal to their trafficker, feel uncomfortable in new surroundings and have a difficult time coping with the expectations of others. They may also feel discomfort in new environments and seek familiarity.

CASA ACTION: If relapse happens, continue to be a consistent and stable support person for the youth. This is a crucial time for the youth to receive care and patience from those around them.

To support youth during relapse:

- Meet them where they are, saying, “I am so glad to see you. How are you doing? Is there anything you need right now?”
- Do not be negative or authoritative
- Do not ask pointed questions or put them on the spot to give you details about the reason for their absence or what happened
- Help the youth move through negativity and get to positivity
- Do not judge relapses
- Celebrate small successes
- Support them to be independent
- Continue to model effective communication
- Work with the care team to have a safety plan re-established
- Check with your supervisor to see if a CSE-IT screening should be performed when a youth is recovered after going missing

Termination

The Termination stage is the time when a youth has no desire to return to unhealthy relationships or behaviors. They may be sure they will never relapse. For many, this stage will take the longest to attain. A lot of time is spent in the Maintenance stage dealing with relapse, continuing services and building healthy networks. To be in the Termination stage, youth must be safe and not at high risk of being pulled into trafficking, be aware of healthy behaviors, know their emotions, and be able to determine who they want to be. This includes deciding to commit to changed behavior, find supportive relationships and reward themselves for positive changes. In the Termination stage, youth build positive relationships while ending unhealthy ones.⁶⁰

To support youth during the Termination stage:

- Help them plan for the future
- Speak about healthy relationships
- Share the importance of continuing therapy
- Celebrate their successes
- Plan fun events to encourage growth
- Discuss new hobbies or outlets to pursue
- Listen for cues that might mean a youth may not be in the Termination stage
- Stay connected and supportive

Build Rapport

It is important to remember that victims are dealing with extensive trauma and that this may manifest itself in different ways. Youth who have been exploited may be prone to mistrust those around them, especially law enforcement and those perceived to be tied to law enforcement.

Several organizations have identified ways to build rapport with youth, including the Vera Institute for Justice and the National Human Trafficking Resource Center. This list is adapted from their contributions.

Ways to Build Rapport with Youth

1. Ensure that their basic needs are being met.
2. Ensure that they feel safe in the interaction.
3. Be prepared to build a relationship over multiple interactions before the youth shares any information with you.
4. Be honest and upfront about the confidentiality limitations you are bound by as a CASA volunteer and a mandated reporter. Young people might only disclose situations of exploitation to trusted individuals that will not use the stories they share against them, not tell anyone else, not judge them, and not call law enforcement.
5. Work **with** the youth, not for them. A strengths-based, trauma-informed approach is the best practice.
6. Help youth build self-efficacy (confidence in the ability to complete a task or achieve a goal) and agency (ability to act independently).
7. Recognize that many victims do not view themselves as victims.
8. Be sensitive to any fears the youth has about a trafficker's retaliation against them or their family. These fears are real and should be treated as such.



9. Assure youth that they are not responsible for the exploitation and are not responsible for staying in a dangerous situation.
10. Do not speak negatively about the trafficker. Some youth still have complex bonds to their exploiters.
11. Be aware of their trauma while being real and present as a caring adult. Victims are smart, and they will know if their CASA volunteer is not genuine.
12. Support their voices and actively listen, so that young people gain empowerment, self-worth and decision-making skills.

CASA ACTION: Actively listen and support youth to have a voice in their life choices. This will help them feel empowerment and self-worth, learn decision-making skills, build rapport, and restore power and control.



CASA volunteers should understand the following when communicating with youth who are in a dangerous or potential trafficking situation:

1. Recognize that the youth in the situation knows their situation best, and it is necessary to honor their requests to ensure their safety.
2. Maintain open and nonjudgmental communication, ensuring they know they can reach out at any time, and end the call when they need to.
3. If they are alone, try to establish safety words: one word to indicate it is safe to talk/ the youth is alone (for future communications) and one to indicate it is no longer safe to talk and what they would like done (cease communication immediately or contact law enforcement, etc.).
4. Try to learn more about safety concerns.
5. Try to learn more about the youth's needs and wishes moving forward (like reporting, shelter, counseling, legal services, etc.).

Choose Respectful Language

Language matters. The words you use to engage youth in foster care could determine whether they will open up or stay quiet and retreat.

1. Avoid any language that implies the victim is to blame.
2. Avoid terms such as "trafficking" or "exploitation." These terms are probably unfamiliar to them, and many youth do not self-identify as a victim of a crime.
3. Do not use acronyms or professional jargon with youth. Never refer to them as a child sex trafficking or CST victim, or as CSEC or CSEY. These are terms they do not identify with and are counterproductive to building rapport.
4. There is no such thing as a child prostitute. Do not use that phrase. According to Texas statute, children cannot consent to commercial sex; therefore, they are always considered a victim of sex trafficking. However, youth may not identify with the word victim, either. When speaking with the youth, use the words they introduce unless you have carefully chosen the moment for education and to introduce new ideas to their vocabulary.
5. Do not use the phrase "sex work" unless the youth themselves employ that phrase.
6. Avoid accidental victim blaming. Put the buyer or trafficker into the action verb of the sentence. Instead of "Lauren solicited men," say, "Men solicited Lauren."
7. Use person-first language that does not attribute a permanent identity to temporary conditions. Instead of describing a youth as a "sex trafficked youth," use "a youth who escaped sex trafficking." Stay mindful of using person-first language in all settings, such as "youth with a disability" rather than "disabled youth."

Following is a list of language to generally use and avoid. Above all, however, follow the lead of the youth you are speaking with.

<i>Instead of...</i>	<i>Use...</i>
• Child pornography	• Child sexual abuse material
• Pimp	• Trafficker
• Prostituted	• Exploited
• Case	• Child/Parent/Family
• Child Sexual Assault Victim	• Child
• Brothel	• Illicit Massage Business
• John/Trick	• Buyer
• Prostitute	• Person who was Prostituted

Be mindful of the ways that rape culture can creep into everyday language—phrases like pimp that ride, food porn, house porn, or car porn can be subtly damaging by normalizing commercial sexual exploitation. It is only by changing the everyday language that we use that we begin to respect survivors and educate our communities.⁶¹

FIND PROVIDERS WHO USE TRAUMA-INFORMED CARE PRACTICES

Youth who have been exploited benefit from their care team using a trauma-informed care approach. As a CASA volunteer, you can be very helpful in screening and locating qualified providers of health care and mental health care services.

Trauma-informed care includes four areas:

1. An awareness of the prevalence of trauma;
2. An understanding of the impact of trauma on physical, emotional, behavioral and mental health;
3. An understanding that current service systems can retraumatize children and families, and
4. A commitment to creating services and an environment that heal and do not retraumatize.⁶²

There are five guiding principles that serve as a framework for trauma-informed care: **safety, choice, collaboration, trustworthiness and empowerment.**

Trauma-informed care occurs when we understand, respect, and appropriately respond to how trauma affects a survivor's life, behavior and sense of themselves.

CASA volunteers will enhance their advocacy by being trauma informed for all children they are appointed to serve. A non-judgmental, caring and understanding demeanor can mean the difference between building rapport or the youth refusing to engage. One way of holding a trauma-informed lens is to remember that if youth come off as rude, it is not intentional; they grew up surviving the best they could and may not have had healthy relationships to learn from. Do not take it personally. Be consistent and caring, and it will make a difference.

[Understanding Trauma-Informed Care in the Texas Child Welfare System](#) by Texas CASA provides more information on the best trauma-informed care practices.

BUILD A HARM REDUCTION PERSPECTIVE

Evidence shows that victims will leave a trafficker, be in contact with their friends, family, or network, and then go missing for periods of time. CASA volunteers can be stable people in the youth's life throughout these episodes. A harm reduction principle is to stay in contact by offering continued help. If you are appointed to a youth who has run away or is missing, answer your phone even if you don't recognize the number.⁶³

"Rescuing victims...from their abusive relationships as a strategy is now recognized as being unlikely to end the relationship nor is it likely to encourage help-seeking behaviors. We would do well to understand that child sexual exploitation is not a simple case of rescue, abstinence, or victim-blaming when a young person does not willingly leave an exploitive relationship."⁶⁴

Harm reduction strategies include:

1. Developing interventions that promote rights to health, well-being and safety even in the midst of maintaining unsafe relationships and engaging in unsafe behavior.
2. Providing peer support and group work which helps to bring awareness to victimization and promote engagement with those likeminded.
3. Providing opportunities for education, employment and exploring new interests.
4. Keeping your words encouraging and uplifting even though you may be worried.



Do all you can to make sure that youth have access to sexual health care such as HIV/STD testing, HIV prophylaxis, barrier methods such as condoms or female condoms, contraception and emergency contraception. This is a vital harm reduction strategy. Empower youth to make safe choices, ensure they have resources and know their options.

Experiences founded in harm reduction can promote feelings of empowerment and improved self-esteem while weakening connections to perpetrators. Through empowerment, behaviors may change and harm be reduced. All of these steps promote resiliency, which is a needed component for leaving and beginning again.

“ One youth expressed, “I was living with my friends. They knew what I was doing. They just made sure I used protection. They knew where I was going. They always had the phone number to the person and the address...I always got picked up in a public area, so if people would see me get into a car, my friends always knew the number, the address, car make, car everything. They knew everything so I’d be safe. And essentially it was safe for me.”⁶⁵

Teaching harm reduction strategies does not demonstrate an acceptance of sex trafficking. Rather, it demonstrates respect and care for the youth and belief in their own ability to make choices to promote their safety, when given support.

SHARE PREVENTION AND SAFETY INFORMATION WITH ALL YOUTH

Help protect youth by making them aware. *Child Sex Trafficking in America: A Guide for Child Welfare* states that adults should, “share the dangers of sex trafficking with youth and challenge myths and misconceptions that glamorize sex trafficking.”⁶⁶ Educating caregivers and placement facilities is equally important. Sharing these factors and building awareness is a key way to prevent trauma.

Use discretion when deciding when and how to share safety information with youth. Do so in discussion with the rest of the youth’s care team (caregivers, caseworker, therapist, etc.). Information should never be shared in secret or isolation, and always shared in an age and developmentally appropriate way. It is more important to listen and be trusted than to teach. However, education and awareness are an important part of preventing sex child trafficking.

Define Sex Trafficking

It is important that youth understand what sex trafficking is, especially if they are under the impression that sex work or sexual servitude can be part of a romantic relationship.

This legal definition needs to be rephrased into language that is youth friendly and more casual when speaking with young people. The legal definition reads, “child sex trafficking takes place when a youth under the age of 18 is involved in commercial sexual activity, which is prostitution, promotion of prostitution, sexual performance and child pornography, and another person receives a benefit from participating in such behavior. This benefit is a transaction which usually includes an exchange of money, but it can also include exchanging sex for food, clothing, shelter or entertainment items such as concert tickets. Child sex trafficking occurs regardless of whether the actor knows the age of the child.”

To explain this to a young person if needed or appropriate, use language that is familiar to them. You might say something like, “sex trafficking is when someone uses your body or has sex with you for their own pleasure—or takes sexual video or pictures of you. If they or you or someone else gets paid for it, either in money or some other kind of goods like food, shelter, drugs or clothes, that is sex trafficking. A person under age 18 involved in this is never at fault and will never get in trouble with police; they are a victim. Only the adults involved are at fault.”



Discuss Red Flags

The following scenarios could be red flags for relationships that may develop into sex trafficking. This list is not exhaustive and it is intended to provide ideas of what CASA volunteers can listen for, when interacting with the youth. If in doubt, and as age appropriate, the CASA volunteer can ask the youth about if any of the scenarios has happened to them or someone they know, and what they might do should it happen. It is important to ask the youth, rather than tell, and to provide an open-ended dialogue.

- Comes on very strongly (love bombing) and promises things that seem too good to be true – e.g. record deal, modeling contract
- Denies contact with friends or family or attempts to isolate the youth from their social networks
- Constantly checks on youth and stays in constant contact
- Does not allow youth access to money
- Asks youth to do things outside of their comfort zone such as performing sexual favors for friends
- Displays signs/characteristics of a dangerous person, including attempts to control movement and behaviors, exhibits jealousy, lashes out or delivers punishment in response to noncompliance, is verbally, emotionally or physically abusive
- Uses threats or displays of violence to create a culture of fear⁶⁷

Share General Safety Guidelines with a Youth

In these tips, “you” is referring to the youth.

- a. Trust your judgment. If a situation/individual makes you uncomfortable, trust that feeling.
- b. Let a trusted friend or relative know if you feel like you are in danger or if a person or situation is suspicious.
- c. If possible, set up safety words to share with friends or family. One word can mean that it is safe to talk, and you are alone. A separate word can mean you are not safe. It is also important to communicate what you would like done (cease communication immediately, call 9-1-1, meet somewhere to pick you up, etc.).
- d. Always keep all important documents and identification in your possession. Your partner does not have the right to take or hold your documents without your permission.
- e. Always keep important numbers with you, including the number of someone you feel safe contacting if you are in trouble. Write phone numbers down in case you are separated from your phone.

- f. Make sure that you have a means of communication (cell phone or phone card), access to your bank account if you have one, and any medication that you might always need with you.
- g. If you find yourself without a place to stay and need help, contact 1-800-RUNAWAY. You can call, chat, text or email. The National Runaway Safeline provides confidential, non-directive and non-judgmental support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- h. If you think you might be in immediate danger or you are experiencing an emergency, contact 9-1-1 first.⁶⁸

More information about online safety to share with youth is included in the Appendix.

SUPPORT AND EXPAND ACCESS TO CARE

Many resources are available to CASA volunteers to help them support a youth's access to care. Helping youth access services to address all of their needs is a core part of advocacy. Let's look deeper at how to help access supports for physical, mental and behavioral health, housing, education and legal services.⁶⁹

Physical Health

Victims may have experienced neglect, violence and physical abuse. Along the invisible emotional scars, they may suffer from untreated injuries, sexually transmitted diseases and malnutrition. Their overall health may reveal poor or no medical or dental care. In a 2012 study, 95% of victims admitted to being the victims of violence and abuse including forced rapes, being kicked, punched or strangled. Victims also frequently lack "adequate nutrition, medical care, education, and stable living conditions, while being subjected to brutal physical, emotional, and sexual abuse."⁷⁰

CASA volunteers should make sure youth have access to quality, compassionate medical screenings and treatment. When identifying a potential clinic, doctor or nurse practitioner, you can call ahead to ask them if they use trauma-informed practices or if they have served survivors of sex trafficking before. Connecting



with a trauma-informed health care provider who has experience with victims may be crucial to ensuring a positive experience—especially for a youth who may be reluctant to seek care, or fear judgement.

CASA volunteers can help advocate for and make referrals to resources for both immediate and long-term health care. Volunteers can also ask the youth’s caseworker about regularly scheduled medical appointments and medications, as part of their medical advocacy.

BEHAVIORAL, MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL HEALTH

Youth in foster care often have complex behavioral, mental and emotional health needs. Qualified behavioral health providers can be the first step in getting help.

Most youth escaping victimization need long-term, intensive treatment that can help them move forward into a new and healthier life. In *Health Consequences of Sex Trafficking*, 92% of victims were found to have neurological health problems, 89% suffered from depression with crippling shame, guilt and post-traumatic stress disorder, 42% attempted suicide, and 84% of victims admitted to substance abuse of some form.⁷¹

Impacts of trauma include:

Loss of safety – Victims do not know what will happen next. Although CASA volunteers might assume the youth is in a stable environment receiving therapy, the youth must also feel they are safe. This takes time; it does not happen overnight.

Loss of danger cues – In a world where someone has hurt them and this is their new normal, it is difficult for youth to be able to assess the danger around them. CASA volunteers can help reaffirm ways for the youth to keep themselves safe through the safety planning process.

Loss of trust – Although a crime of child sex trafficking does not require fraud or coercion in the legal system, it is very common during the grooming process. The most common type of trafficker is the boyfriend/Romeo trafficker. Those who are groomed by a boyfriend trafficker believe the trafficker loves and cares for them, and then, without any warning, their environment changes. Youth who are trafficked by family members or close friends also have a difficult time with a loss of trust.



Shame – Debilitating, overwhelming shame. As a child, getting a wrong answer on a test can trigger shame. Unaddressed shame will have lasting effects on the mental and physical health of the victim.

Dissociation – To cope with trauma during abuse, a child, youth or adult will dissociate (disconnect from their conscious self so they do not feel what is physically and emotionally happening). Later, this can be a coping mechanism.

Loss of physical connection to the body – Survivors of physical and sexual abuse have a hard time being in their body. At some level they may feel their bodies have let them down, so they become less aware of physical sensations.

Loss of self-worth – Victims often feel they are “bad” or “dirty.”⁷²

Just as you would do to find a physical health practitioner, you can contact behavioral, mental and emotional health services to determine if they are trauma informed and have worked with survivors of sex trafficking before—and if they feel competent and confident in doing so. You can also help locate providers who accept STAR Health and are taking new patients. Once an appointment is secured, you can help arrange transportation.

For more information, see the [Health Advocacy Guide: How CASA Volunteers Can Support Medical and Mental Healthcare for Children in Foster Care](#) published by Texas CASA.

ADVOCATE FOR SAFE HOUSING, EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

Advocate for Safe Housing

Advocate for the best placement possible. Children in foster care need a safe place to live. Their background may make them vulnerable in a traditional foster care setting, and many foster families are unprepared to parent a child who has been trafficked. Some shelters and group homes have developed their programs specifically for youth who have been trafficked, and those might be an option.

Communication with the youth’s caseworker and your CASA supervisor will be helpful for the area of housing advocacy, as they might have current information about resources available. There is fluidity in housing options with statute changes that are a factor to be considered. CASA volunteers can advocate for the youth to be connected with a Preparation for Adult Living (PAL) worker who should have housing knowledge and know what resources are locally available.

Advocacy for safe housing for a youth who has been trafficked includes ensuring the housing is safe, secure, accessible, equipped to meet basic needs, and has supportive people who will regularly be present or checking in. Safe housing can include a variety of scenarios, from staying with a trusted friend who is not connected to trafficking in any way, to staying in a treatment facility. Safe means not in a trafficking situation or where there is further risk of harm, and not homeless or in insecure housing. CASA volunteers can research housing options in their area and make recommendations about this to the court and caseworker.

Advocate for Educational Supports

Youth who've been affected by trafficking are often months or years behind their classmates in educational progress. CASA volunteers can remind them that this is not their fault and help them understand their educational options. While some may feel comfortable in a traditional school setting, others may prefer untraditional options like online school or a vocational training program. A small school, charter school or single-sex school (all girls, or all boys) may be appealing. CASA volunteers can ask for educational screening and tutoring to occur, if needed. Seeking the youth's wishes and desires is imperative.

See the [Educational Advocacy Guidebook](#) by Texas CASA for more information on how to support a young person's educational needs.

Support Youth in Seeking Safe Employment

Many young people desire to obtain employment but find options are limited due to lack of education, work experience, missing identity documents or difficulties with transportation. If they were arrested while trafficked it may be difficult to pass background checks required for some employment opportunities. Some youth are used to making large sums of money and do not see entry-level positions or pay as viable or desirable.

CASA volunteers can explain the positive aspects of seeking employment and help navigate job training and job skills. They can also serve as a liaison with prospective future employers to answer questions and provide support to the youth. The Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) has made youth in or formerly in foster care a priority population to help them obtain employment opportunities. To research employment opportunities, CASA volunteers can visit [TWC Foster Care Programs](#). Making an appointment for the youth you serve to discuss employment or apprenticeship options with an employment specialist at TWC is an excellent way to advocate for them. The [Foster Care Workforce Resources Map](#) also lists employers that specifically hire foster youth across Texas.

HELP YOUTH ACCESS SKILLED LEGAL SUPPORT

There are times when a young person may need legal support, such as if they are charged with a crime, or are in need of establishing their identity/identification, or need help accessing resources that have been denied to them. The [Texas Foster Youth Justice Project](#) provides free legal services for current and former foster youth throughout Texas. Youth can call the Foster Youth Justice Project for legal advice and support. Talk to the youth's caseworker or Attorney ad Litem about their legal needs and coordinate with them whenever possible.

If trafficking has been confirmed, youth are entitled to various benefits and protections under both federal and Texas law. CASA volunteers can advocate for full protection.

The TVPA requires that victims should be treated with a "victim-centered" approach. Confirmed victims of trafficking are legally entitled to safety, privacy, information about their case, legal representation, being heard in court, medical attention, access to social services, and compensation for damages. Non-U.S. citizens are entitled to repatriation (returning home), or residence (staying in the U.S.) assistance.

Restitution is when the criminal offender is required to repay, as a condition of their sentence, the victim or society, in money or services. Under federal and Texas anti-trafficking laws, child victims are eligible for mandatory restitution for the value of the services performed to the trafficker. Restitution is usually part of a plea agreement or can be issued by a judge during sentencing. Prosecutors and judges include victim impact statements, financial harm to the victim, emotional distress, lost wages, and educational or vocational expenses when deciding restitution orders.

If involved in a case, CASA volunteers can make sure that prosecutors and judges have all the information needed to maximize a restitution order. Advocate with the youth to make sure all the items are in their victim impact statement.⁷³

For non-U.S. citizens, traffickers use the threat of being deported to maintain silence. Under federal and Texas law, child trafficking victims are eligible for various forms of short- and long-term immigration relief including a T-visa.



FOLLOW MISSING FROM FOSTER CARE PROTOCOLS

As established in the Stages of Change, relapse is not uncommon when victims are healing. It is extremely difficult to navigate a world unfamiliar to them. There may be decisions made about their care, housing or other factors that the youth does not agree with. It may be tempting to return to a trafficker who is always going to answer when the phone rings.

According to DFPS, of youth who are recorded as having run away from 2016 to 2020, 62% had been involved with the child welfare system. Youth who run away are at a higher risk of sex trafficking. These same youth may experience higher rates of poverty and unemployment and may have a history of sexual abuse and mental health needs. A confluence of factors makes youth in foster care run away at a higher rate.

In 2016, a study of 10 cities revealed that 68% of youth who had been sex trafficked engaged in survival sex or commercial sex while homeless.⁷⁴ One in seven endangered runaways reported to the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children are trafficking victims, with the average age of reported victims being 14.⁷⁵ In [“For Runaways, Sex Buys Survival,”](#) New York Times journalist Ian Urbina explains, “A runaway’s relationship with a pimp does not occur by accident. It takes work.... More than two dozen convicted and still incarcerated pimps described the complicated roles they played as father figure, landlord, boss and boyfriend to the girls who worked for them.”⁷⁶ [Please note that CASA volunteers should not refer to youth as “runaways,” but use person-first language, saying “youth who have run away.”]

Running away increases vulnerabilities to sex trafficking, especially with younger-aged youth.⁷⁷ Now that we know the links between running away and trafficked youth, we must ask what they are running away from and what are they running to.

The [“Let’s Talk: Runaway Prevention Curriculum”](#) is a free, 14-module interactive curriculum intended to educate young people about alternatives to running away, as well as to build life skills so that youth can resolve problems without resorting to running away. CASA volunteers can consider going through this curriculum with youth in foster care as a preventative measure.

CASA ACTION: Try to show care and concern instead of anger when a youth is missing from foster care. Expressing desire for their safe return is an important message to give.

It is stressful, scary and worrisome when a youth goes missing. Some things to remember:

1. If you realize a youth has run away or is missing, contact your CASA Supervisor who will implement [Missing from Foster Care Protocols](#).
2. Continue searching for the youth through avenues established in your advocacy.
3. DFPS will require a [Recovery Meeting](#) within two days for confirmed sex trafficking cases. The purpose of the Recovery Meeting is to collaborate with stakeholders to create a Recovery Plan. Stakeholders include the DFPS caseworker, DFPS supervisor, DFPS Special Investigator, CASA staff/volunteer, primary caregiver, law enforcement, CSEY Advocate, probation or parole officer, CAC staff, and relatives and fictive kin. A Recovery Plan is a coordinated outline of all planned and active efforts to recover a youth, and preliminary interventions and services to be initiated as needed. The plan will include but is not limited to: information regarding locating the youth, tasks assigned to participants, potential engagement with a care coordination team, CSEY Advocate, or a Children's Advocacy Center (CAC), youth's placement upon recovery, and a communication plan which includes the frequency of updates and meetings. A confirmed victim for DFPS is when evidence supports the conclusion that the youth has been trafficked. This supporting evidence must be more than just an allegation or suspicion and does not have to be a direct outcry from the youth. CASA volunteers should attend Recovery Meetings. During this meeting, a Recovery Plan will be developed and decisions about future meetings. Recovery Meetings are optional on a case-by-case basis for any child who is not confirmed as a victim of sex trafficking and is missing.
4. CASA programs, CASA volunteers and DFPS will work in collaboration to recover youth.
5. Never demean or guilt trip a youth once they are recovered. They should receive an empathetic and grateful response upon their return. CASA volunteers can tell the youth how happy they are to see them again and ask if there is something they need.
6. Consider using open-door questions. Instead of "Where have you been? I've been so worried," say, "I am so glad you're back safely. When you're ready, I'd love to know how you managed."



Learn more:

- [Texas CASA Missing from Foster Care Protocols](#)
- [Texas DFPS Runaway Prevention Resource Guide](#)
- [Texas DFPS CPS Locating Missing Children in DFPS Conservatorship – Resource Guide](#)

As a CASA volunteer, it is hard to understand why a youth would run away from a home where they may seem safe. It is important to understand that even though we may believe they are safe, the youth does not feel safe. When they return, meet the youth with open arms, thankful they have returned. It is much better than the alternative.

CASA ACTion: Everyone supporting the youth can be invested in their safety, and advocacy efforts in this area should be shared and coordinated.

LEARN ABOUT SAFETY PLANNING



A safety plan is a conversation and co-created document used in many helping professions. It originated in the domestic violence movement as a way to help survivors prepare for risks facing them, identify their options and make choices about what to do in dangerous situations. While conversations about safety can be helpful anytime, CASA volunteers should talk to their supervisor about doing a safety plan with a youth, if the need is identified. A safety plan is best done in conjunction with the professional care team supporting the youth.

A key principle of safety planning is that the person experiencing violence is in the very best position to assess their own level of safety and what will increase or decrease their safety. Every plan should be tailored to the individual and their circumstances, and should follow the lead of the person it is about. This isn't an outside person telling a youth what to do, but a series of questions and conversations to help the youth find the safest options.

A safety plan includes preparations and contingency plans, so that when faced with a critical situation or a dangerous encounter, the youth is prepared with next steps and doesn't have to come up with them in the moment. In the most serious situations, a safety plan will guide a person away from options that might appear helpful but could actually increase their risk of being harmed.

In the case of a youth attempting to leave the control of a trafficker, a safety plan might outline the exact steps the youth could follow if the trafficker contacts them, such as who to call and where to go—as well as how to calm themselves emotionally, so they don't respond on impulse. A safety plan may include getting a Protective Order or going to a shelter with high security if they are being followed or stalked, or calling emergency services if they are faced with threats or an altercation.

Thinking through what the youth will need (medicine, documents, phone, clothes, money, etc.) and what to have in a bag that is packed could be part of the safety plan, as well as checking for location tracking apps the trafficker may have installed on their cell phone, or GPS tracking devices in their belongings. Every safety plan is different, and helping the youth understand the risks and benefits of every choice—and how to maximize their safety with the different choices and options that they have—takes time. In dangerous situations, this should be done in collaboration with a trained professional.

Deciding on what order to do things (such as when and how to leave, who to tell about their plan, when and how to change their phone number, where to go first, whether or not to go to familiar places, etc.) can involve many factors that should be discussed with a trained CASA volunteer.

Some questions that are helpful to ask when discussing safety with the youth:

1. What situations may lead to you being unsafe?
 - » What red flags can you look out for?
2. What can you do to keep yourself physically safe?
 - » Is there somewhere specific you can go to be safe?
 - » Who will be there with you?
3. Is it safe to leave your home?
 - » Where are locations you can go to that you know won't put you at more risk?
4. Are there tools or weapons you could hide to be more safe?
5. Who can you talk to if you feel unsafe, such as friends or family?
6. Who can you reach out to for emotional support?
7. Do you have the phone numbers of hotlines (suicide, runaway, human trafficking, etc.)?
8. Who has helped you before?
9. What can you do to keep yourself distracted when you don't feel okay?
 - » Can you go for a walk, watch TV, call a friend, take a bath, cry, scream into a pillow?
10. What support do you need that you do not have right now?

If it is a step approved by the CASA program and the volunteer is comfortable, then the CASA volunteer and youth in foster care can complete a safety plan together. Safety

planning with youth is best done in conjunction with the youth's therapist and/or care team. The desires and concerns of the youth are the highest priority. Safety planning is a process that can be spread over multiple times with the youth, rather than covered in one visit.

The following information is adapted from the National Human Trafficking Hotline.

Tips for Engaging with Youth Who Are Confirmed Victims

1. First prepare for your visit with the youth.
 - a. Where is the youth's placement? Foster home, apartment, RTC, unauthorized placement or has the youth run away?
 - b. Who lives at the youth's placement? Be aware of who is living at the placement, meet those parties, and voice concerns about any household members.
 - c. Are there criminal charges pending for the youth, or others involved in the case?
 - d. Where will the visit occur? Is it a safe place? Does the CASA supervisor need to attend? What time of the day would be safest for the youth? Is anyone else coming? What if someone shows up unexpectedly?
 - e. Bring a hygiene pack (baby wipes, nail clippers, comb, razor, toothpaste, deodorant, toothbrush, bath soap, shampoo, etc.) for the youth if they are in an unstable placement.
 - f. At the beginning, engage in lighter conversations and topics the youth feels comfortable sharing about. Ask questions to try to make the youth feel safe and comfortable. It does not need to be about trafficking, abuse or any hard subjects. The youth may be confused, angry or scared. Engaging in casual conversation helps to build trust and set the tone for less defensive behavior.
 - g. Try to focus on their service needs. Other questions may come up naturally and this is okay.
 - h. Be careful about asking too many questions too soon. Most victims may be reluctant to answer questions about how their trafficker treated them and the abuse they endured. Trauma bonds prevent victims from seeing their trafficker as solely an abuser.
 - i. Be conscious of the language you use. Mirroring the language the youth uses can be helpful. Above all, it must be genuine. For example: If the youth refers to the trafficker as their boyfriend, you should do the same. If you refer to the exploiter as a pimp or trafficker this could be upsetting to the youth.
 - j. Victims have been conditioned by their trafficker to not trust law enforcement or other helping agencies. It is the CASA volunteer's role to build trust and rapport.
 - k. Rehearsed stories dictated by their trafficker are normal. The real story may not be shared until more trust is built. An open dialogue over time can bring the full story to light.

- l. Youth survivors will likely not tell you their history from beginning to end in a neat package. It will come in pieces, snippets and nonchronological events. This is the nature of trauma. More details are shared as trust is built.
 - m. Remain flexible and always prioritize the needs of the youth and safety as the primary reason for safety planning.⁷⁸
2. It is best to speak to the youth face to face, but sometimes this is not possible. If speaking with the youth on the phone or texting, ask:
 - a. Are you in a safe place? Can you tell me where you are?
 - b. If not in a safe place, ask, "Would you prefer to call me back when you are in a safe place?"
 - c. Is there anything that would help you to feel safer while we talk?
 - d. Are you injured? Would you like for me to call 911/an ambulance?
 - e. If someone comes on the line, what would you like for me to do? Hang up? Identify myself as someone else, a certain company/person/friend?
 - f. Remind them to feel free to hang up at any point during the conversation if they believe that someone may be listening in.
 - g. Ask, "How can we communicate if we get disconnected? Would I be able to call you back/leave a message?"
 - h. If possible, make arrangements to meet in person.
 - i. Report to your CASA supervisor all of your communications with the youth and next steps.⁷⁹

LEARN ABOUT THE CSE-IT

CSE-IT stands for the Commercially Sexually Exploited Identification Tool and is pronounced "see it." Some CASA programs in Texas and some CPS regions or Community-Based Care providers are using this tool. The purpose of this tool is to help identify youth who are at risk of being trafficked.

CASA program staff complete the CSE-IT tool. The CASA volunteer does not complete the tool, and the youth is never directly involved in the actual assessment. However, CASA staff may ask CASA volunteers for their insights as part of the screening. At no time should a CASA volunteer quiz a youth in foster care for a CSE-IT screening.

CASA volunteers may hear a story that makes them concerned about the risk of sex trafficking with the youth they are appointed to. If the CASA program is using the CSE-IT tool and there is a concern, the CASA volunteer can request a CSE-IT be performed by the

CASA ACTION: Ask your supervisor if your program completes the CSE-IT.

youth's caseworker or by a CASA supervisor. Volunteers should talk to their supervisor about options for completing this screening, if needed. If months later, and other concerning information is shared with the CASA volunteer, another CSE-IT can be requested. Be aware of the experiences shared in normal conversations, and if there is a concern, ask for a CSE-IT screening to be completed.

PRIORITIZE COLLABORATIVE FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Collaborative Family Engagement (CFE) is a structured approach to engage caring and positive adults to support children who are in the foster care system, with the goal of ensuring that all children have meaningful connections during their time in foster care, and after. CFE encourages youth and families to advocate for themselves and aims to establish a lifetime network of family and community members who can support the youth or family.

CFE focuses on four practice approaches, called *The 4Cs of CFE: Collaborate, Cultivate, Convene and Connect*. Collaborate as a team to plan and set goals, and to involve families and build networks. Cultivate using creative tools to engage, find and grow a support network for children and parents. Convene family meetings to discuss and share progress. Connect is the end goal for a lifetime network of supportive relationships.

Learn more:

- Complete the [CFE Training](#)
- Read [Collaborative Family Engagement: Creating and Strengthening Lasting Connections](#)

LEARN ABOUT THE GOVERNOR'S CHILD SEX TRAFFICKING TEAM (CSTT)

Texas CASA, local CASA programs, Child Advocacy Centers of Texas, local Child Advocacy Centers, Texas Department of Family and Protective Services and the Office of the Governor's Child Sex Trafficking Team work closely together to advocate for youth who have been trafficked.

The CSTT coordinates a holistic response to child sex trafficking in Texas. The CSTT's mission is to build sustainable capacity, enhance expertise, promote policies and leverage collaborations to:

1. Protect children and youth from sexual exploitation.
2. Help the public recognize sexual exploitation.
3. Help victims recover.
4. Support healing.
5. Bring justice to those that exploit children.

In the Texas CSTT model, the state is divided into five regions overseen by Regional Advisors in the north, south, east, west and coastal regions. Commercially Sexually Exploited Youth (CSEY) Advocacy is an essential part of the CSTT Texas Model for addressing child sexual exploitation. CSEY Advocacy programs are nonprofit agencies that engage employed advocates to provide individualized 24/7 crisis response and ongoing, long-term, trust-based relational support to children and youth survivors.

Potential victims under the age of 22 who are identified as likely exploited by a “Clear Concern” score on the CSE-IT may be referred by law enforcement, medical providers, child welfare, other first responders, community members, or survivors themselves from identification of circumstances which suggest exploitation. They may be in out-of-home placements, juvenile justice, a child welfare placement or at home.⁸⁰

CSEY advocates are the first responders in instances of trafficking, responding as soon as possible when a survivor is identified. They commit to continue in a supportive relationship with the survivor throughout their progression through the stages of healing. CSEY advocates will work alongside CASA volunteers in support of the victim-centered goals for survivors and organizations that support them including law enforcement, child welfare, juvenile justice, healthcare and other partners. CSEY advocacy agencies are supported by the CSTT with funding, training and/or technical assistance, and abide by a set of common risk management minimum standards and best practices developed by the CSTT.⁸¹

When working with a youth who has been trafficked, CASA volunteers should inquire about who the CSEY advocate is and stay in regular contact with them. CSEY advocates may be included in CFE team meetings and other meetings about/for the youth.

Visit the [Office of the Governor’s Child Sex Trafficking Team](#) to learn more about anti-child sex trafficking efforts at the state level.



Polaris Project created a [Referral Directory](#) of anti-trafficking organizations and programs that offer emergency, transitional or long-term services to victims and survivors of human trafficking as well as those that provide resources and opportunities in the anti-trafficking field.⁸²

Learn more:

- [CSTT Implementation Toolkit](#)
- [Foster Family Resource Directory by CSTT Regions](#)
- [CSEY Advocates Two Pager](#)

DEVELOP AN APPROACH OF CULTURAL HUMILITY

CASA volunteers should be prepared to respectfully engage with youth from all racial, ethnic, religious and cultural backgrounds and with youth of all genders and sexual orientations. The way a CASA volunteer grew up personally may be very different than the young person they are appointed to.

Be sensitive to the unique cultural needs and experiences of trafficked youth in foster care.

Be aware of your own beliefs, biases and cultural worldview. Make sure your personal views do not influence your advocacy.

The following practice principles for cultural humility are provided by the National Child Welfare Workforce Institute:

1. Embrace the complexity of diversity
2. Be open to individual differences and the social experiences due to these differences
3. Reserve judgment
4. Relate to others in ways that are most understandable to them
5. Consider cultural humility as a constant effort to become more familiar with the worldview of others
6. Instill a spirit of collaboration
7. Demonstrate familiarity with children and families' living environments, building on strengths while reducing negative factors
8. Know yourself and the ways in which biases interfere with an ability to objectively listen to or work with others
9. Critically challenge one's "openness" to learn from others⁸³

UNDERSTAND SECONDARY TRAUMA/COMPASSION FATIGUE

According to Olga Phoenix in *Victim's Guide to Wellness*, vicarious trauma "is an occupational hazard, and unavoidable effect of trauma work, a 'human consequence of knowing, caring, and facing the reality of trauma.'"

⁸⁴ Secondary traumatic stress, also called compassion fatigue, is the experience of having emotional duress from being in direct contact with a trauma survivor. Compassion fatigue metaphorically points to the physical exhaustion that helpers feel over extended periods of dealing with the trauma of others.⁸⁵

Some signs of vicarious trauma are exhaustion, insomnia, hypersomnia, headaches, susceptibility to illness, use of drugs and alcohol, overeating, absenteeism, anger, avoidance of clients, blurred boundaries and isolation.⁸⁶

Phoenix explains that dealing with vicarious trauma is a two-fold process. One aspect is self-care. Fundamental skills for self-care include improving sleeping habits, developing healthy boundaries, learning breathing techniques, practicing mindfulness, stretching, visualization and grounding techniques. The less-discussed method is creating a fulfilling life, focusing on accomplishing personal goals and pursuing passions.⁸⁷ Ms. Phoenix created the [Self-Help Wheel](#) which can be downloaded to help find ways to cope with vicarious trauma.

Working with youth who have been exploited is difficult. How do CASA volunteers gauge whether they are managing their stress well? Consider taking the [ProQOL: Professional Quality of Life Self-Test](#). The assessment is 30 questions with a five-point scale and has been in use since 1995. (When the test refers to "patients," think of the youth you serve.)

To be the best advocate for the youth you wish to help, it is imperative that you are well and have mechanisms in place for self and community care. You have a team at your CASA program who are there to support you in your volunteering journey; reach out to your supervisor or other program staff as needed. Don't hesitate to let your supervisor know if the toll of volunteering or the information you hear becomes too heavy. It's also important to know that you are not and cannot be the only adult offering support in the youth's life; that is not the intended CASA role. By working with the youth to develop their network of support, they will have other people rallying around them.

CASA ACTION: Discuss with your supervisor if you feel the toll the work is taking on your wellbeing is greater than you can manage.

COMMIT FULLY TO THE YOUTH YOU SERVE

Understanding child sex trafficking is a multifaceted and ongoing process, and healing from exploitation is also a complex and layered journey. Your role as a CASA volunteer in the lives of youth who have suffered this crime, or are at risk of it, is critical. We hope that you feel better prepared to advocate for all youth in foster care after reading this guide, and understand the risks, peril and challenges facing them as they move through the system. If you have the honor of serving a youth who has suffered sexual exploitation, remember that you are not alone, and reach out for support when you need it. **Committing to a youth over the long and winding process of healing is a true act of service.**

THE CASA WAY

Thank you for all that you do, and never forget The CASA Way:
We have an uncompromising belief that we will achieve what others think is impossible, and that each of us is an essential part of the solution.



Appendices



SHORT LINKS FOR HYPERLINKS IN THE GUIDE

Sex Trafficking and LGBTQ Youth	https://bit.ly/sextraffickinglgbtq
Top 10 Most Dangerous Apps	https://bit.ly/10dangerousapps
Health Advocacy Guide: How CASA Volunteers Can Support Medical and Mental Healthcare for Children in Foster Care	https://bit.ly/txcasahealthadvocacy
TBRI® 101	https://bit.ly/tbri101
TBRI® Animate: Human Trafficking	https://bit.ly/tbrihumantrafficking
TBRI®: Trust-Based Relational Intervention®	https://bit.ly/tbrianimate
Understanding Trauma-Informed Care in the Texas Child Welfare System	https://bit.ly/txcasaunderstandtraumainformedcare
CFE Training	https://bit.ly/txcasacfe
Collaborative Family Engagement: Creating and Strengthening Lasting Connections	https://bit.ly/txcasacfemanual
DFPS Human Trafficking Response Protocol	https://bit.ly/dfpshtresponse
Referral Directory	https://bit.ly/htrereferraldirectory
CSTT Implementation Toolkit	https://bit.ly/csttimplementation
Foster Family Resource Directory by CSTT Regions	https://bit.ly/csttfosterfamilyresource
CSEY Advocates Two Pager	https://bit.ly/csttcseyadvocate
Privacy & Safety on Facebook: A Guide for Survivors	https://bit.ly/safetyonfacebook
BSafe	https://www.getbsafe.com
Let's Talk: Runaway Prevention Curriculum	https://bit.ly/letstalkrunawayprev
Missing from Foster Care Protocols	https://bit.ly/txcasarunawayprotocols
Texas DFPS Runaway Prevention Resource Guide	https://bit.ly/dfpsrunawayresource
Texas DFPS CPS Locating Missing Children in DFPS Conservatorship – Resource Guide	https://bit.ly/dfpslocatingmissingkids
ProQol Assessment	https://bit.ly/proqolassessment
Self-Help Wheel	https://bit.ly/selfhelpwheel
Advocacy for Commercially Sexually Exploited Children (CSEC)	https://texascasa.org/csec/
The Life Cycle of Human Trafficking: Training for Professionals	https://learn.texascasa.org/resource/the-life-cycle-of-human-trafficking
How to Talk about Human Trafficking with Children and Adolescents	https://learn.texascasa.org/resource/key-elements-of-resiliency
Key Elements of Resiliency for CASA Staff and Volunteers	https://bit.ly/keyelementsresiliency

COMMON SEX TRAFFICKING TERMS AND SLANG

This glossary is adapted from the organization Shared Hope and was originally published in *Renting Lacy: A Story of America's Prostituted Children* by Linda Smith, a fictional book based on interviews with teen survivors.⁸⁸

304 — Three numbers that turned upside down spell out the word “hoe” on a calculator. This is a secretive way to advertise commercial sex acts on social media platforms.

Automatic — A term denoting the victim’s “automatic” routine when their pimp is out of town, in jail, or otherwise not in direct contact with those they are prostituting. Victims are expected to comply with the rules and often do so out of fear of punishment or because they have been psychologically manipulated into a sense of loyalty or love. All money generated on “automatic” is turned over to the pimp. This money may be used to support their concession/ phone account or to pay bond if they are in jail.

Bottom — A woman appointed by the trafficker/pimp to supervise others and report rule violations. Operating as the pimp’s “right hand,” the bottom may help instruct victims, collect money, book hotel rooms, post ads or inflict punishments on other girls.

Branding — A tattoo or carving on a victim that indicates ownership by a trafficker/pimp/gang.

Brothel (also Cathouse or Whorehouse) — These establishments may be apartments, houses, trailers, or any facility where sex is sold on the premises. Most brothels have security measures to prevent attacks or provide a warning if law enforcement is nearby. The security is two sided—to keep the victims in, as well as keep other criminals and police out. The places often are guarded (and open) 24 hours a day, but some have closing times in which the victims are locked in. Victims may be kept in this location for extended periods of time or rotated to other locations.

Caught a Case — A term that refers to when a pimp or victim has been arrested and charged with a crime.

Choosing Up — The process by which a different pimp takes “ownership” of a victim. Victims are instructed to always keep their eyes on the ground. According to traditional pimping rules, when a victim makes eye contact with another pimp (accidentally or on purpose), they are choosing them to be their pimp. If the original pimp wants the victim back, they must pay a fee to the new pimp. When this occurs, they will force the victim to work harder to replace the money lost in transaction. (See **Reckless Eyeballing**)

Circuit — A series of cities among which trafficked people are moved. One example would be the West Coast circuit of San Diego, Las Vegas, Portland and the cities between. The term can also refer to a chain of states such as the “Minnesota pipeline” by which victims are moved through a series of locations from Minnesota to markets in New York.

Daddy — The term a male pimp will often require his victim to call him.

Date — The exchange when prostitution takes place, or the activity of prostitution. A victim is said to be “with a date” or “dating.”

Escort Service — An organization, operating chiefly via cell phone and the internet, which sends a victim to a buyer’s location (an “outcall”) or arranges for the buyer to come to a house or apartment (an “in-call”); this may be the workplace of a single woman or a small brothel. Some escort services are networked with others and can assemble large numbers of women for parties and conventions.

Exit Fee — The money a pimp will demand from a victim who is thinking about trying to leave. It will be an exorbitant sum, to discourage them from leaving. Most pimps never let their victims leave freely.

Family/Folks — The term used to describe the other individuals under the control of the same pimp. He plays the role of father (or “Daddy”) while the group fulfills the need for a “family.”

“John” (a/k/a Buyer or “Trick”) — An individual who pays for or trades something of value for sexual acts.

Kiddie Stroll — An area known for prostitution that features younger victims.

Lot Lizard — Derogatory term for a person who is being prostituted at truck stops.

Madam — A woman who manages a brothel, escort service or other prostitution establishment. She may work alone or in collaboration with other traffickers.

Out of Pocket — The phrase describing when a victim is not under control of a pimp but working on a pimp-controlled track, leaving them vulnerable to threats, harassment and violence to make them “choose” a pimp. This may also refer to a victim who is disobeying the pimp’s rules.

Pimp Circle — When several pimps encircle a victim to intimidate them through verbal and physical threats, either for discipline or to force them to choose up.

Quota — A set amount of money that a trafficking victim must make each night before they can come “home.” Quotas are often set between \$300 and \$2,000. If the victim returns without meeting the quota, they are typically beaten and sent back out on the street to earn the remainder. Quotas vary according to geographic region, local events, etc.

Reckless Eyeballing — A term which refers to the act of looking around instead of keeping your eyes on the ground. Eyeballing is against the rules and could lead an untrained victim to “choose up” by mistake.

Renegade — A person involved in prostitution without a pimp.

Seasoning — A combination of psychological manipulation, intimidation, gang rape, sodomy, beatings, deprivation of food or sleep, isolation from friends or family and other sources of support, and threatening or holding hostage a victim's children. Seasoning is designed to break down a victim's resistance and ensure compliance.

Squaring Up — Attempting to escape or exit prostitution.

Stable — A group of victims who are under the control of a single pimp.

The Game/The Life — The subculture of prostitution, complete with rules, a hierarchy of authority, and language. Referring to the act of pimping as "the game" gives the illusion that it can be a fun and easy way to make money when the reality is much harsher. Women and girls will say they've been "in the life" if they've been involved in prostitution for a while.

Track (a/k/a Stroll or Blade) — An area of town known for commercial sex activity. This can be the area around a group of strip clubs and pornography stores, or a particular stretch of street.

Trade Up/Trade Down — To move a victim like merchandise between pimps. A pimp may trade one person for another or trade with some exchange of money.

Trick — Committing an act of prostitution (**verb**), or the person buying it (**noun**). A victim is said to be "turning a trick" or "with a trick."

Turn Out — To be forced into prostitution (**verb**) or a person newly involved in prostitution (**noun**).

Wifeys/Wife-in-Law/Sister Wife — What women and girls under the control of the same pimp call each other. (See **Family/Folks** and **Stable**.)

ONLINE SAFETY INFORMATION TO SHARE WITH YOUTH

Internet Safety

- a. Use public computers to access help whenever possible. Public computers at local public libraries or community centers are more difficult to trace.
- b. Delete search history. Search engines track your online searches, and this information can be accessed by others using the same computer. Clear your search history after each session. Here are instructions at [Google](#), [Yahoo](#), and [Bing](#).
- c. Delete browser history. Internet browsers save a list of all the websites visited, and should be cleared after every session, especially if sites visited should be kept private from a trafficker. Learn how to delete search history on [Chrome](#), [Safari](#), [Internet Explorer](#), [Firefox](#), and [Toolbar](#).

Social Media Safety

- a. When posting on social media, double check privacy settings and remove any geographical check-in points or automatic GPS tags on photographs. [Privacy & Safety on Facebook: A Guide for Survivors](#) is an in-depth guide on how to best manage privacy on Facebook. Learn more about safety and privacy on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#).
- b. Be cautious not to provide unnecessary information regarding daily activities or close friends and family.
- c. Consider blocking anyone believed to be dangerous or who cannot be trusted. Blocking a user provides extra levels of privacy and security.⁸⁹

Email Safety

If needed, create a new email account from a free email provider such as [Gmail](#) or [Hushmail](#).

- a. Choose a gender-neutral, non-specific username that is not like one used before and is not @yourname or using parts of your name. Don't reference favorite hobbies or birthdates in your username, or anything that might disclose your identity.
- b. You can block specific email addresses or have designated senders' emails sent to a specific folder so you don't have to read it but still have a record.
- c. Change passwords and PINs frequently, and never give your passwords/PINs to anyone. If you need to write it down, write down a hint rather than the actual password. Do not allow the computer to remember passwords.

SAFETY TIPS FOR YOUTH LEAVING SEX TRAFFICKING

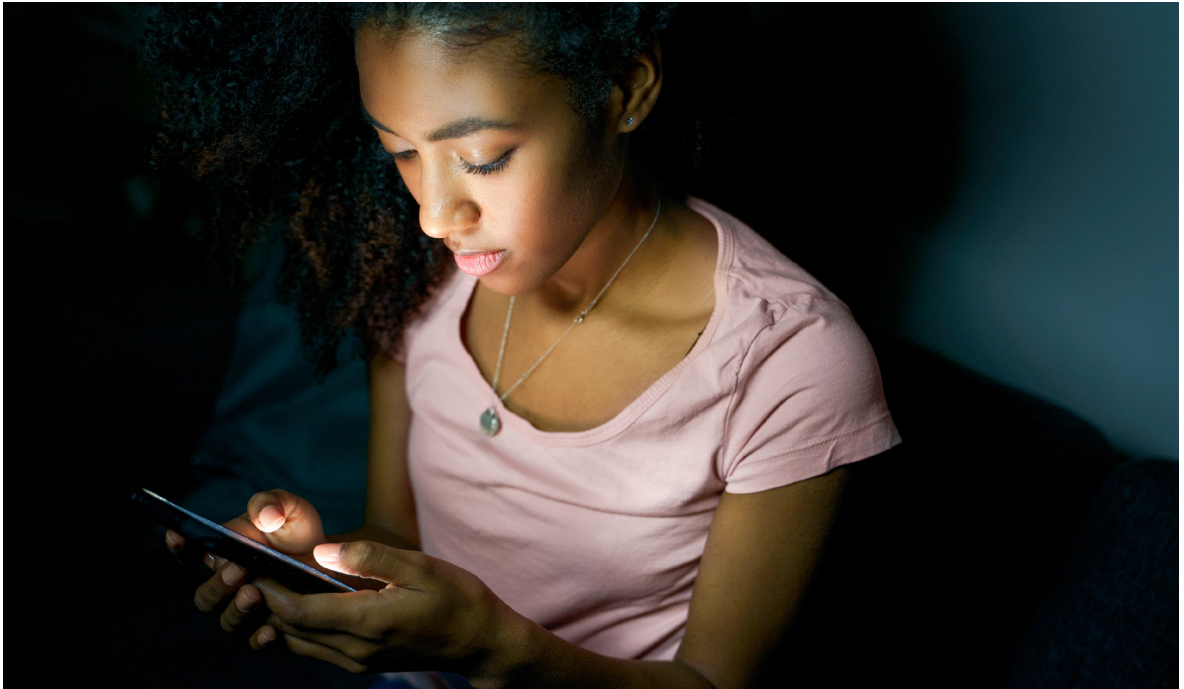
In some cases, leaving or attempting to leave a situation may increase the risk of violence. It is the most dangerous time. It's important for the youth to trust their own judgment when taking steps to ensure their safety. Tips for the youth include:

- a. If you are ever in immediate danger, the quickest way to access help is to call 9-1-1.
- b. If you are unsure of your current location, try to determine any indication of it such as street signs or landmarks outside the residence or place of employment, or newspapers/magazines/mail that may have the address listed. If it is safe to go outside, see if the address is listed anywhere on the building. If there are people nearby and it is safe to speak with them, ask them about your current location.
- c. Plan an escape route or exit strategy and rehearse it if safe to do so.
- d. Keep any important documents on or near you to be ready for immediate departure.
- e. Prepare a bag with any important documents/items and a change of clothes.
- f. Keep a written copy of important numbers on you at all times in case your phone is taken or destroyed at any point. Memorize important numbers/hotlines.
- g. Think about your next steps after you leave the situation.
- h. Contact trusted friends or relatives to notify them or to ask for assistance if you feel comfortable.
- i. Contact the National Human Trafficking Hotline 24-hour hotline at 1 (888) 373-7888 to obtain local referrals for shelter or other social services and support. The Hotline can also connect you with specialized law enforcement referrals. However, if you are ever in immediate danger, contact 9-1-1 first.

SAFETY APPS FOR SMARTPHONES

There are a variety of apps for smartphones to help keep youth safe. Learn about and share the apps that you think would work best. Remember that technology changes rapidly.

BSafe - BSafe offers six features. The Alarm feature sets off a siren (optional), and BSafe starts recording video and voice as well as sending your GPS location to your chosen friends. The Follow Me feature lets friends follow your movements on the mobile map. Once you have arrived home safely, your friends will be notified. The Fake Call feature will make your phone call you. You can also set it on a timer in advance to have an excuse to leave a situation. The Recording feature automatically starts recording video and audio and the recording is sent your primary person's mobile phone. The I Am Here feature shares your location with your friends. The Timer feature notifies your friends if you have not checked in within a certain time.



RESOURCES FOR FURTHER LEARNING

To provide advocacy for youth who have been victimized, it is vital that CASA volunteers seek out literature, webinars, research and studies to continue their learning. Participate in training and education to learn more about the issues survivors of child trafficking experience and the specific ways you can help. Ideally, training will be alongside others who you can partner with to address concerns (e.g. educators, trauma specialists, child welfare professionals, public health providers).

E-learning courses at the Texas CASA Learning Center, learn.texascasa.org:

- [Advocacy for Commercially Sexually Exploited Children \(CSEC\)](#)
- [The Life Cycle of Human Trafficking: Training for Professionals](#)
- [How to Talk about Human Trafficking with Children and Adolescents](#)
- [Key Elements of Resiliency for CASA Staff and Volunteers](#)
- [Locating Missing Children in DFPS Conservatorship](#)

Another useful resource for understanding how trauma in early childhood development can be healed and how to skillfully interact with youth who have experienced complex trauma is Trust Based Relational Intervention® or TBRI® created by the Karyn Purvis Institute of Child Development at Texas Christian University. Some of the TBRI® resources are listed below:

- [Healing Families Video Series](#)
- [TBRI® 101: A Self-Guided Course in Trust-Based Relational Intervention® \(a series of whiteboard video lessons\)](#)
- [TBRI®: Trust-Based Relational Intervention® \(a 3-minute overview of TBRI®\)](#)
- [TBRI® Animate: Human Trafficking \(a 3-minute overview of the application of TBRI® to human trafficking\)](#)

Through a partnership with the Office of the Texas Governor Child Sex Trafficking Team, the Institute is currently involved in a statewide project focused on implementing TBRI® with professionals who support survivors of sex-trafficking and other forms of commercial sexual exploitation. They write, "Individuals who have experienced exploitation are among the most traumatized groups. Sadly, the risk factors that often predispose these individuals to exploitation in the first place are related to early childhood trauma. As our late founder and director Dr. Karyn Purvis once said, 'Relationship-based trauma must be healed relationally.' It is our hope that TBRI® can support survivors of exploitation as they seek healing."

HOTLINES

Hotlines for Reporting

Texas Abuse Hotline

To report child abuse or neglect

1-800-252-5400

Txabusehotline.org

Information shared with law enforcement.

Polaris National Human Trafficking Hotline

1-888-373-7888

Text "BeFree" to 23373

Accepts referrals from the general public.

Report all allegations of human trafficking, labor and sex trafficking of adults and minors.

Information shared with child welfare agencies and law enforcement.

National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC)

1-800-843-5678

Report all allegations of missing children. Information shared with DFPS and law enforcement.

Parents and placement providers may report to NCMEC.

DFPS must report to NCMEC if youth is in DFPS conservatorship.

U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division – Human Trafficking Hotline

1-888-428-7581

This hotline number is used to report cases of human trafficking (sex and labor) to federal law enforcement; reporting a case will open an investigation at Department of Justice (DOJ).

Hotlines for Victim/Survivor Support

National Human Trafficking Hotline

1-888-373-7888

Text 233733

Chat humantraffickinghotline.org

National Runaway Safeline

Homeless or thinking of running away? Get confidential, caring support from someone who will not report you.

800-RUNAWAY (800-786-2929)

Text 66008

1800runaway.org

Texas Foster Care Ombudsman

Having a problem with your foster care placement, have a question, or need help?

844-286-0769

hhs.texas.gov/foster-care-help

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

Thinking of hurting yourself? Get free, confidential support.

800-273-8255

suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Love is Respect: National Teen Dating Abuse Helpline

Unsure if what you are experiencing is dating violence, or have a question?

866-331-9474

Text/chat "LOVEIS" to 22522

www.loveisrespect.org/get-relationship-help

National Domestic Violence Hotline

Are you or is someone you know in an abusive relationship?

800-799-SAFE (7233)

thehotline.org

Trevor Project Lifeline

A hotline for LGBTQ+ youth who are in crisis or just need a safe place to talk.

866-488-7386

Text 678-678

RAINN (Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network) Hotline

Counselors offer anonymous, confidential support for survivors.

800-656-HOPE (4673)

Chat rainn.org

Texas Youth Helpline

1-800-989-6884

<https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/youth-helpline/default.asp>

Free and confidential services to youth in crisis, their parents, and other caregivers who need help finding a counselor, safe shelter, legal information, or other local referral information, or just someone to talk to.

International Organization for Migration (IOM)

Assists foreign-born child trafficking victims who are interested in returning home.

IOM will also assist in obtaining identification documents and contacting family members in home countries.

202-862-1826

TIPDC@iom.int

Hotlines for Service Providers

National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC)

NCMEC works with families, victims, private industry, law enforcement and the public to assist with preventing child abductions, recovering missing children and providing services to deter and combat child sexual exploitation.

<https://www.missingkids.org>

1-800-THE-LOST

report.cybertip.org

National Human Trafficking Resource Center Hotline

Provides referrals for service providers in your area.

Does not open an investigation.

888-373-7888

U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division – Victim Witness Coordinator

DOJ Civil Rights Division prosecutes human trafficking cases in the U.S. involving U.S.-citizen and foreign-born victims. Victim witness coordinators can assist with case management referrals and provide information about resources to assist victims of human trafficking.

<https://www.justice.gov/usao-sdtx/victim-witness-program>

Victim Witness Coordinator

1000 Louisiana

Houston, Texas 77002

713-567-9335

TEXAS NETWORK RESOURCES

Local Human Trafficking Coalitions, Task Forces and Teams

This is a resource available per request at casaacts@texascasa.org.

Local Anti-Trafficking Organizations by DFPS Region

https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Investigations/Human_Trafficking/resources.asp

Anti-Child Sex Trafficking Team – Office of the Governor

512-463-1919

<https://gov.texas.gov/organization/cjd/childsextrafficking>

Protect children and youth from sexual exploitation. Help the public recognize sexual exploitation. Help victims recover. Support healing. Bring justice to those that exploit children.

Texas Attorney General

<https://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/initiatives/human-trafficking>

In 2016, the Human Trafficking and Transnational/Organized Crime Section (HTTOC) was created in the office of the Attorney General.

Texas Department of Public Safety

<https://www.dps.texas.gov/section/criminal-investigations/human-trafficking-program>

The Human Trafficking Program is charged with the overall direction of the state's enforcement efforts against human trafficking in Texas. They work with local, state and federal agencies across the state and nation to identify, investigate, disrupt and/or dismantle major human trafficking organizations.

Texas Health and Human Services

The [HHSC Provider Guidebook: Services for Victims of Human Trafficking in Texas](#) lists available services from HHSC and its affiliates to survivors of sex trafficking. It also serves as a resource for HHSC staff, contractors, providers, and stakeholders when supporting those who have experienced human trafficking.

Texas Human Trafficking Prevention Coordinating Council

<https://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/human-trafficking-section/texas-human-trafficking-prevention-coordinating-council>

Created by the Texas Legislature in 2019, this Council works towards effectively and efficiently eradicating human trafficking through the coordination and collaboration of programs, services, and state resources.

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