

Understanding Victims of Human Trafficking

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Identification of Potential Victims

- Over-sexualized behavior
- Controlling older companion or “boyfriend”
- Highly Controlled or restricted schedule, money or communications
- Unidentifiable source of income, large amounts of cash, or unexplained source of new clothing and personal items
- Bruises or other physical signs of abuse



Identification of Potential Victims

- A Tattoo that the young person is reluctant to explain (for instance being “branded” with an exploiter’s name on the neck, chest or arms)
- Gaps in life story or defensiveness in response to questions or concerns
- Malnourishment
- Untreated health and dental problems

Identification of Potential Victims

- Cannot identify address or residence/gives false information/no ID
- Homeless
- Involvement in chat rooms
- Using lingo associated with the “life”

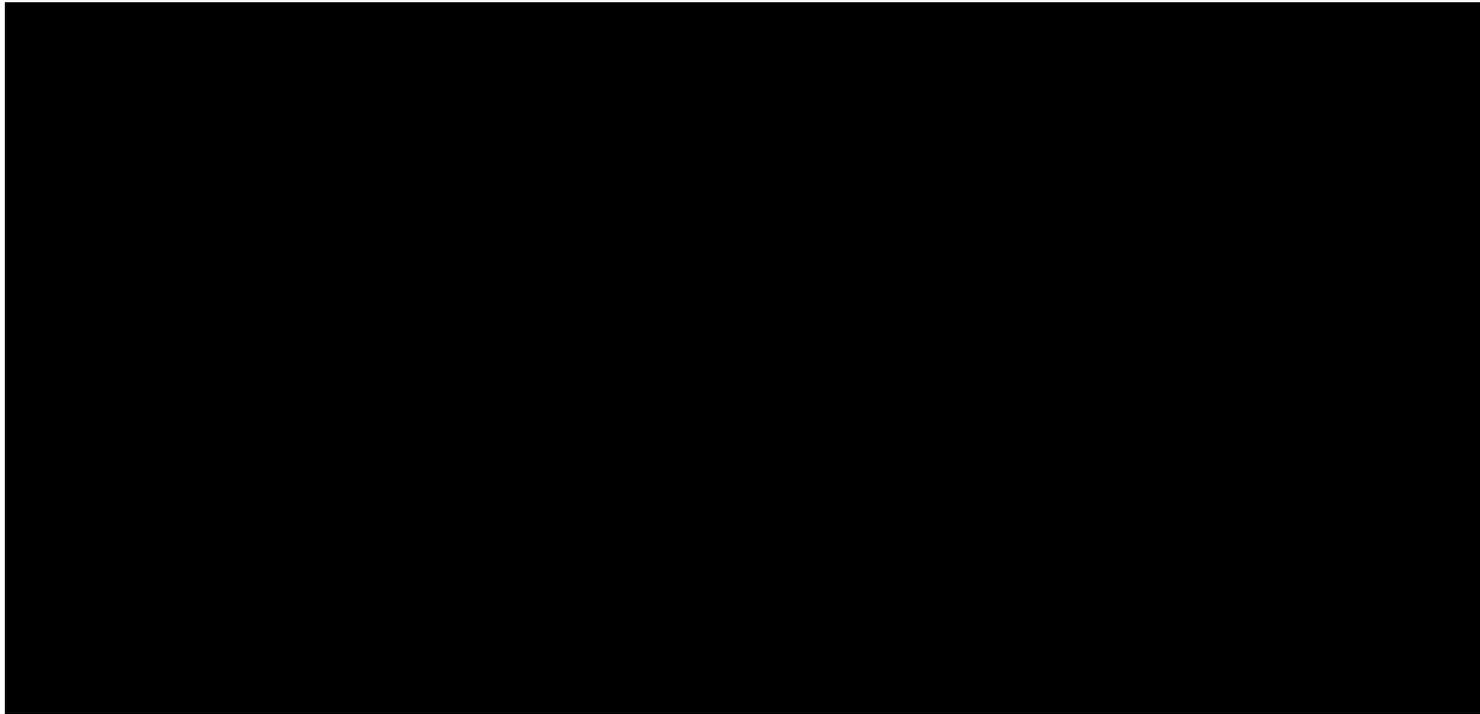
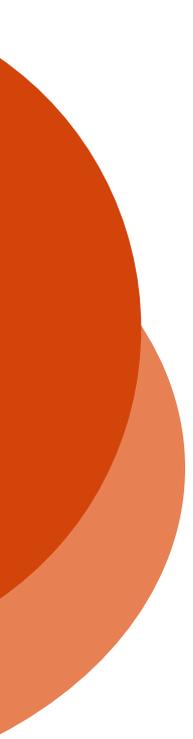
*Us Department of Health & Human Services: Family and Youth Services Bereau

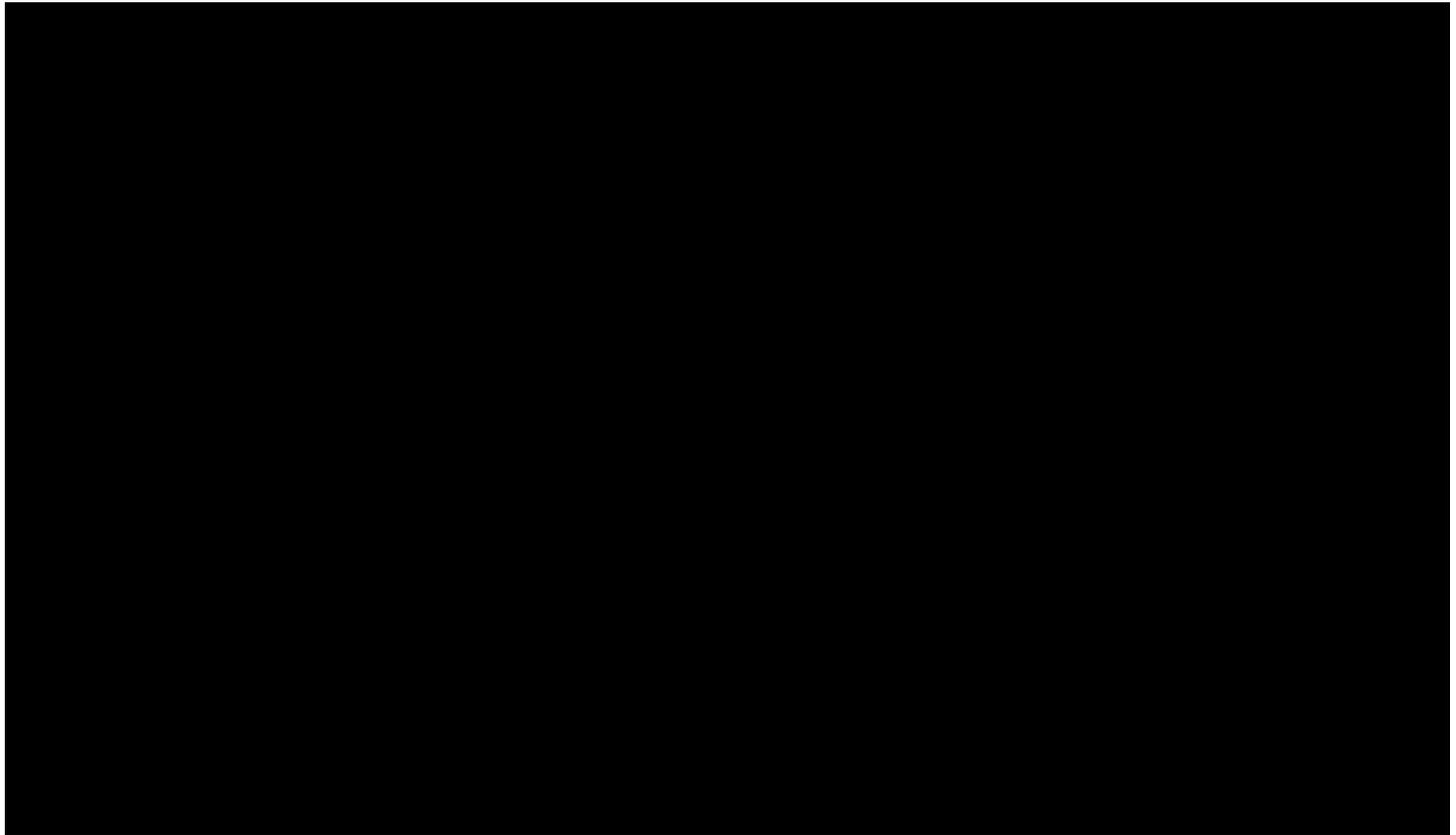
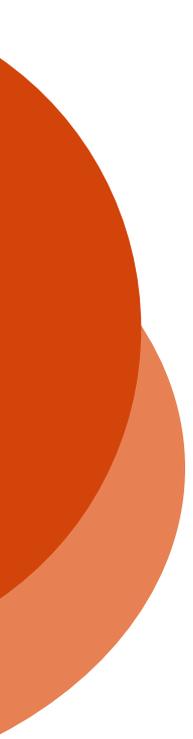
Screening Questions

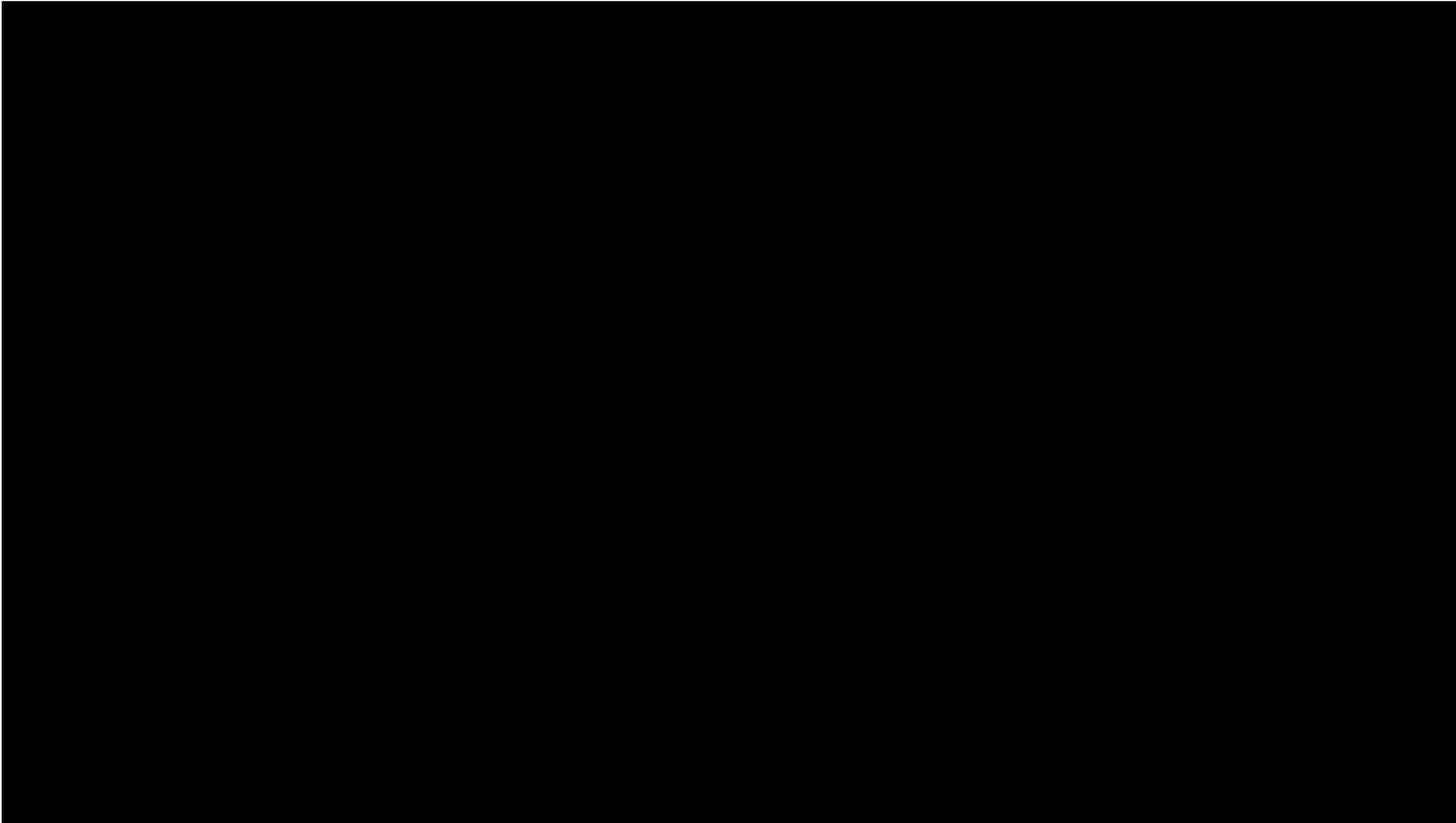
- Are you paid for any type of work that you do?
- Are working conditions safe for you?
- Have you or your family been threatened?
- Do you have a safe place to sleep/eat?
- Do you have to ask permission to sleep/eat/or use the bathroom
- Are there locks on any doors/windows so you cannot get out?

Screening Questions

- Has your identification/documentation been taken from you?
- Is anyone forcing you to do anything you do not want to do?
- Have you ever been used or hurt for your personal belongings?
- Is anyone forcing you to make money for them?
- Note: most victims come into contact with law enforcement and medical personal, but are reported by others









Physical Impact of CSEC

- Continuous physical abuse
- Rape and gang rape
- STDs and STIs
- HIV and Aids
- Loss of bowel control
- Pregnancy (wanted and unwanted)
- Sterility



Physical Impact of CSEC

- Facial and/or dental reconstruction
- Tattoos and/or physical branding
- Brain Damage
- Substance abuse and/or addiction
- Cutting or self-mutilation
- Suicide or death



Social Impact of CSEC

- Isolation from peer group
- Disconnection from community
- Isolation (real or perceived) from mainstream society
- Homelessness
- Incarceration or criminal record
- Disempowerment
- Lack of life skills



Social Impact of CSEC

- Trust issues or difficulties maintaining relationships
- Obstacles to vocation
- Lack of access to legal economies, lack of job experience and work skills
- Educational deprivation—missed school, disconnection with school system



Emotional Impact of CSEC

- Anger and rage
- Deep emotional pain or grieving
- Feelings of humiliation or shame
- Stigma of exploitation
- Self-blame or self-loathing
- Loss of sexual desire, feelings, or response

Psychological/ Emotional Impact of CSEC

- Disruption of healthy psychological development—self-concept, intimacy, beliefs, and goals
- Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)—re-experiencing traumatic events in various ways, avoidance of stimuli associated with the trauma and numbing of general responsiveness and persistent symptoms of increased arousal



Victims Immediate Needs

- Safety
- Emergency Shelter
- Basic Necessities
- Language Interpretation
- Emergency Medical Care



Ongoing Needs

- Physical health
- Mental health
- Substance abuse
- Child custody
- Vocation Needs

Long-Term Needs

- Life skills
- Language skills
- Education and job training
- Permanent housing
- Legal advocacy
- Family reunification

*Hammond and McGlone, 2014

Stages of Change and Appropriate Responses

Pre-Contemplation:

- Not ready to talk
- Defend trafficker
- Refuse Help

Appropriate Response:

- Validate feelings and experiences
- Look to provide basic needs
- Encourage thoughts/self-exploration, not actions

Stages of Change and Appropriate Responses

Contemplation

- Acknowledges the pain of being in the life
- Not ready to talk about the abuse
- Willing to talk, but ambivalent about leaving

Appropriate Response:

- Listen and affirm their feelings and efforts
- Affirm their ability to make a change
- Help identify support and problems

Stages of Change and Appropriate Responses

Preparation:

- Made the commitment to leave
- Taking small steps to leave
- Helps to research resources

Appropriate Resposne:

- Create a safety plan
- Solid case management (housing, education, employment, etc.)
- Affirm their skills

Stages of Change and Appropriate Responses

Action:

- Leaving the life

Appropriate Response:

- Support and validate feelings and effort
- Address short-term needs while reinforcing long-term benefits of change
- Process pain and loss

Stages of Change and Appropriate Responses

Maintenance:

- Remains free of the life
- Developing new skills
- Avoiding triggers

Appropriate Response:

- Plan for follow-up support
- Focus on strengths and coping skills to overcome triggers
- Be patient and realistic

Stages of Change and Appropriate Responses

Relapse:

- Returns to the life

Appropriate Response:

- Address grief from failure
- Revisit progress and triggers
- Plan for barriers and more coping skills

Challenges Law Enforcement and Youth Workers Face

- “I’m not a victim”—pushback because they do not see themselves as a victim
- May not realize the trafficker is opposed to her welfare
- Often disrespectful because they are groomed by their pimp to be this way—“I’m the only person here for you”.
- Criminal propensity driven by their trauma. Common crimes include: drug use (means of control and enticement), petty theft, assault, and prostitution

Challenges Law Enforcement and Youth Workers Face

- Victims believe they have committed so much criminal activity that only the trafficker can understand and relate to them
- Victims blame themselves for making bad choices—running away, posting ads, using chat rooms, etc.
- Victims may fear for not only their own safety, but also for that of their families

Challenges Law Enforcement and Youth Workers Face

- Tools currently in place to “help” are viewed as punishment. Examples: foster care, arrest, residential facilities, in-patient substance abuse treatment, and psychiatric hospitalization