WESTCOAST CHILDREN'S CLINIC

The Commercial Sexual Exploitation – Identification Tool

Early identification is critical: Commercially sexually exploited youth come into contact with multiple child-serving systems, including child welfare, probation, schools, health care, foster care placements, mental health, and homeless services. Each of these systems is in a unique position to identify, intervene, and protect exploited youth, and must be equipped with the tools to do so. By the time youth are referred to services, many have already been sexually exploited and subjected to ongoing violence for 2-3 years. We must identify youth more quickly to protect them from ongoing victimization and get them the help they need.

Need for an evidence-based tool: In order to know whether a screening tool meets a minimum standard of accurately discriminating between youth who are and are not CSEC, it must be validated. Yet currently, no standardized and validated CSEC screening tools are available. To address this critical need, WestCoast Children's Clinic developed the Commercial Sexual Exploitation – Identification Tool (CSE-IT) to be used in multiple settings, including child welfare, juvenile justice, mental health and primary care. Data collected during the pilot phase will be used to validate the tool.

Consensus-based tool: To develop a screening tool that is useful and reflects the insight of survivors and those working directly with exploited youth, we spoke with key stakeholders across California. Our interviews and focus groups included survivors of sexual exploitation and staff who work with exploited youth in a variety of settings, including child welfare; juvenile justice; school settings; law enforcement; homeless shelters; mental health clinics; and primary care.

Site partnerships: WestCoast provides sites with training and technical assistance on how to operationalize the tool on the ground.
Trainings include:
1. **How to identify CSEC:** Training on using the screening tool and how to score it. We will provide a user's guide to clearly define the items on the tool.
2. **How to have the conversation:** Training will include suggestions for how to engage youth in a conversation about being involved in sexual exploitation.
3. **Data collection:** Training for end-users on data collection and the validation process.
Technical assistance includes:
1. **Site assessment:** Screening and assessment occur at key moments during a youth's involvement with services. WestCoast will work with leadership at each site to integrate the tool into existing processes and protocols. This will improve service planning, placement considerations, and referrals to relevant services.
2. **Ongoing consultation**: During the pilot we will meet with sites on an ongoing basis to address any questions and concerns as they arise.
3. **Interim reports:** We will provide sites with information on CSEC gathered from data during the screening process.

For more information, visit www.westcoastcc.org/cse-it