

Trading Sex

What is CSET? (Commercial Sexual Exploitation & Trafficking)

Commercial Sexual Exploitation: Any sexual activity that is traded or exchanged for something of value (or the promise of something of value), often for the purpose of survival

- *Sexual activity* also includes survival sex/prostitution, sexting (sending nude or sexual pictures), pornography, stripping, exotic dancing, escorting, erotic massage, survival sex, internet and street exploitation
- *Something of value* includes, but is not limited to, money, a place to stay, food, clothes, rent, transportation, drugs, alcohol, medication, protection, diapers, a job, or survival

Exploitation occurs when a more powerful person benefits/profits from the unfair or abusive treatment of another

Trafficking: Any commercial sexual activity where there is a third-party involved (partner, date, friend, “daddy,” pimp, trafficker, manager, facilitator, recruiter, etc.) that profits, facilitates, or aids in the commercial sexual exploitation of another individual



Minnesota Safe Harbor Law

Under the Safe Harbor Law, any Minnesota youth age 17 and younger who engage in (regardless of whether they agree to it or are forced) the exchange of sexual activity for money or “something of value,” are considered crime victims. Under the law, minors 17 and younger are decriminalized and will not face prostitution-related charges. Youth age 23 and younger are eligible for safe housing, advocacy, counseling, and supportive services.

People of all ages and genders can be commercially sexually-exploited and trafficked.

Grooming

A person may be “grooming” you for sexual exploitation/The Life/sex industry if they/he/she/ze...

- Is a gang member, deals drugs, or is in The Life themselves
- Has sex with other people or has multiple girlfriends or “wives”
- Tries to get you to have sex with other people
- Promises you money, protection, a job and/or a better life if you are with them or work for them
- Tells you they have a job, yet doesn't tell you explicitly what or where it is
- Is very generous and often gives gifts
- Pressures you to get a tattoo
- Is secretive and doesn't want you looking at their phone
- Pressures you to keep secrets about them and what you do together
- Invites you to parties/hangouts with drugs, alcohol, and older men
- Controls who you hang out with, what you wear, what you do etc.
- Makes you feel very special, and plays a partner or parental role
- Tells you how attractive you are and says you should model
- Often has new, nice things
- Has a lot of cash on-hand
- Asks for nude or sexual pictures and videos
- Is preoccupied with your sexual history

Grooming:

the process of “preparing” someone to be abused/exploited

Sometimes grooming can take place over a long period of time and be very subtle

or asks you very personal questions soon after meeting you

- Pressures you to do sex acts that make you feel uncomfortable
- Invites you to travel with them
- Takes you shopping, offers you money, or buys you things after you have sex with them/others
- Has you lie about your age to other people
- Lives in a motel/hotel
- Lives with many women
- Gets serious too quickly and speaks of marriage early on in the relationship
- Tells you to call them “Daddy” or “Mama”
- A woman offers you to have sex with her boyfriend
- Watches porn with you
- You feel used



Anyone can be a trafficker!

How do I know if I am being pimped/exploited/trafficked?

A trafficker can be someone you know, trust, and love (a date, intimate partner, family member, male or female friend) or a stranger!

- Arranges “clients,” dates, or people with whom you are asked to do sexual things with



- Gives gifts, promises to take you shopping, or buys you things after you do what they say (sexually) with them or other people
- Takes all or some of the money you earn
- Takes nude or sexual pictures and videos of you and shares them with other people or puts them up on the Internet and/or porn sites
- Makes you hustle drugs or steal for them
- Coaches you on what to say or tells you to lie about your age, address, or other personal information
- Has you work at places where you are legally required to be 18 years old

Do you know the signs of an abuser?

- Is possessive and jealous
- Discourages you and makes you feel bad about yourself
- Expects you to take care of them, yet gets bothered or annoyed when you express your own needs or have expectations of them
- Tries to damage your relationships, school work, job performance, etc.
- You often feel confused, anxious, and/or afraid
- Tells you that you are “too sensitive,” or that you overreact
- Denies or justifies hurtful things
- Makes jokes about women, degrades women, or makes sexist comments
- Wants to spend all their time with you and controls who you get to hang out with
- Manipulates you, blames you, and twists your words to make you feel like everything is your fault
- Tells you they are the only person who will ever love you
- Tries to make you feel crazy or irrational
- Accuses you of being unfaithful or untrustworthy
- Guilts you or makes you feel like you are a burden/inconvenience
- Says they’ll self-destruct (drink, use drugs, commit suicide) if you leave
- Punishes you (i.e., withholds affection, money, or care, if you don’t do what is asked of you)
- Acts like the victim and talks about how everyone has wronged them
- Intimidates you when they’re angry
- Holds double standards- a different set of rules for your behavior versus their own behavior

Abusers desire **power** and **control** over you.

They often feel entitled to your time, your body, and your constant attention and affirmation.



I think someone I know is being sexually exploited. What do I do?

Call CMSAC to speak with an advocate. We serve all survivors of sexual violence (all ages, genders, and forms of sexual violence) in Stearns, Benton, Sherburne, and Wright counties.

Whether you've been sexually assaulted, abused, harassed, had pornography made of you, or had to trade sex to survive, we are here to help and assist you in getting the services you need and addressing safety concerns.

We offer free, non-judgmental, and confidential services. We can meet you at our center, your school, shelter, treatment center, church, group home, or another public location of your choice!

Phone

Crisis Line: 320-251-4357 (available 24/7)

Text-only line: 320-297-4357

Office

15 Riverside Drive NE

Saint Cloud, MN 56304

Open M-F, 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

W.O.W. is a weekly 10-session educational group for adult women who are, or who have been commercially sexually exploited in any form. Topics covered include: healthy relationships, self-esteem, shame, abuse, and recovery. Call us to learn more!

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