

RECOMMENDED INTERVIEWING TECHNIQUES WITH YOUTH

- Refrain from judgmental or shaming statements during ongoing assessment and familiarize yourself with language about the commercial sex industry (link to terms/lingo commonly associated with Commercial Sexual Exploitation).
- Begin with rapport building questions, such as “How are you?”, “Would you like something to drink?”
- Follow the youth’s lead and use of terminology in discussing their experiences. Don’t use clinical jargon, and refrain from using the term Commercially Sexual Exploited Child, as many youth do not identify with this term. Also, do not refer to the child as a “prostitute”, as they are victims of a severe form of child abuse, not “working” prostitutes that willingly choose to sell themselves for sex.
- Ask if there were any prior incidents, even if the youth denied any current exploitation - CSEC youth often deny allegations during an initial interview, only to acknowledge at a later date that the incident did occur.
- Avoid labeling the youth a “CSEC” or a victim and continually view the youth as a whole and not just their exploitation.
- Request the youth’s phone number, nicknames and social media usernames, if they are willing, for the purposes of maintaining communication (have them show you their pages/accounts). Indicate to youth that you are doing this for the purposes of being a support if they are ever in need and to develop a relationship.
- Avoid using clinical terminology (i.e. rape; exploitation; domestic violence; sexual abuse), as CSE youth may not associate their experiences with those concepts.
- Ask the youth about any past or current internal pain, injuries, untreated medical conditions, pregnancies, or medication needs. If appropriate, ask the family or caregiver as well.
- Make best efforts to interview known or suspected CSEC victims during the initial contact, as they are prone to runaway episodes.
- Assess thoroughly for past and current drug/alcohol consumption by the youth - exploiters often rely on substance use/dependency as a means of controlling CSEC victims.
- Assess thoroughly for any past and current contact with Law Enforcement

and the Probation Department.

- Ask the youth if they have had contact with service providers or other professional or community services.
- Ask the youth about all tattoos, and have them describe their tattoos and ask how/where the tattoo was obtained (this information should be well-documented).
- Encourage the youth to describe their experience or relationship with their exploiter (remember to use the term that they use for their exploiter, which they may refer to as “boyfriend” or “daddy”) and ask clarifying questions throughout.
- Begin to identify youth’s short and long-term goals, using their terminology.
- The use of open-ended questions helps to avoid “yes,” “no,” “I don’t know” responses:
 - How are you feeling?
 - Where have you been staying?
 - How do you get clothing, food, etc.?
 - Who do you spend time with?
 - Where do you stay or sleep if you aren’t at home/placement?
 - How is school going? How often do you go to school? When you are not in school during the week, what do you do?
 - How do you support yourself?
 - How do you get around (means of transportation)?
 - Is there anyone who might be worried about your safety?
 - What do your parents/siblings/relatives know?
 - Are you afraid of anyone?
 - Is anything worrying you or not going well?

If the youth is not forthcoming, consider asking more specific questions:

- Has anyone ever paid in order to have sex with you?
- Has anyone given you drugs or gifts to have sex with you?
- Did you keep or have to share the money?
- Have you ever had to do things in order to stay somewhere?
- Have you had pictures taken that were advertised on the internet or social media? (e.g. Craigslist; Instagram; SnapChat)
- Are you, your family, or any of your friends associated with a gang? Do you party/hang out with them? Do you need to do anything from them?

