

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 survival

- *Sexual activity* includes, but is not limited to, survival sex/prostitution, sexting (sending nude or sexual pictures), pornography, stripping, exotic dancing, escorting, erotic massage, sugar daddy arrangements, webcamming, 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/Pimping: Any commercial sexual activity where a third person profits, facilitates, or aids in the commercial sexual exploitation/prostitution of another individual

Minnesota Safe Harbor Law (For Sexually-Exploited Youth)



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.

People of all ages and gender identities can be sexually exploited and trafficked.

Grooming Indicators

A groomer, recruiter, abuser, or trafficker...

- May be involved in gangs, drug-dealing, The Life, or the sex industry
- May be a man who 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 to remind you of them
- 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, and what you do
- 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 or asks you very personal questions

Grooming

Grooming: A process of manipulation that an abuser uses to lower the defenses of a potential victim (and her/his community).

- gaining trust • meeting a need • flattery • special favors • isolation • secrecy • boundary violations • obligation • threats • fear • control • intimidation

soon after meeting you

- Pressures you to do sex acts that make you feel uncomfortable
- Invites you to move or travel with them for a “job”
- Takes you shopping, offers you money, or buys you things before/after you have sex with them/others
- Has you lie about your age to other people
- Lives in a motel/hotel
- Gets serious too quickly and speaks of marriage early on in the relationship
- Tells you to call them “Daddy” or “Mama”
- Makes you walk behind them
- Encourages you to watch porn
- You feel used by them

A groomer, recruiter, or trafficker can be anyone, but is usually someone you know—often someone you may even trust or love.

They could be a friend, date, intimate partner, spouse, family member, stranger, caregiver, guardian, residential care provider, employer, professional, or person in a position of authority.

You may be experiencing exploitation if someone:

- Says, “I’ve done so much for you—you can’t do this one thing for me?”
- Arranges “clients,” dates, or people with whom you are asked to do sexual things
- Gives gifts/money, 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 or government benefits you receive
- Makes you sell drugs or steal for them
- Takes nude or sexual pictures/videos of you (they may also share them with other people or post on the internet)
- Coaches you on what to say or tells you to lie about your age or other personal information
- Uses you, takes advantage of you, intimidates, scares, or makes you feel you can’t say no to them
- Makes you feel like you will be punished or hurt if you leave
- Has you work at “adults-only” 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
- Often makes jokes about women, degrades women, or makes sexist comments
- Wants to spend all their time with you, isolates you, and controls who you 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

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

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

- 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

Contact CMSAC

24/7 Crisis Line: 320-251-4357

Website: www.cmsac.org

15 Riverside Drive NE Saint Cloud, MN
56304

Office open M-F 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

I think someone I know is/has been sexually violated. What do I do?

Call CMSAC to speak with an advocate/sexual assault counselor. An advocate is a person that is here for YOU.

We're here to help you find support, safety, navigate services and resources, answer questions, inform you of your options and victims' rights, and come alongside you during the criminal/legal process (if you choose to report).

We serve youth and adult survivors of all gender identities and forms of sexual violation in Stearns, Benton, Sherburne, and Wright county.

Whether you've been sexually assaulted, abused, harassed, trafficked, 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.

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

If you have been prostituted, in the sex industry, trafficked, or been sexually-exploited, here are a few things our advocates want you to know:

- You are not alone. We're here for you.
- You are not to blame. Any type of sexual violation is 100% the choice (and fault) of the perpetrator, abuser, trafficker, or buyer *alone*.
- You never owe someone sexual favors: even if they provided for you, bought you things, took care of you, did a favor for you, or they are your date/spouse/partner; even if they were "turned on," even if it's in the middle of a sexual act, even if you consented to other sexual acts or did sexual acts with that person in the past.
- You have a right to decline, stop, or change your mind at any time when it comes to touch or sex. People should always respect your "no/not now" and stop immediately. Consent can only be given in the present moment.
- No one should ever have to endure sexual violence to survive or be cared for.
- You deserve dignity, safety, boundaries, respect, non-judgment, and your basic needs met.
- We believe prostitution/sex trafficking is always a form of exploitation and sexual violence.
- If you agree to sexual acts because you have no other options, no other ways to survive, or you are afraid to say "no," this is not consent or a free choice.
- It is normal to feel bonded to, love, and care for people who have hurt, violated, or betrayed you. This may feel confusing, but is a normal reaction called "traumatic bonding."
- If you leave a person/situation that is harmful and go back, we understand. Change is hard for everyone. We'll be here to support you no matter what: if you want to stay, if you reluctantly stay, if you leave permanently, or if you leave and go back. No one should shame you for the difficult decisions you have to make to be safer or survive.
- Our services are voluntary and can be accessed anonymously. You decide/control what information you share and want to talk about. We will go at your pace/comfort.
- Even though sometimes people are charged for "prostitution," you are not a criminal, and we believe you should have never faced charges.