



# RESPONSIBILITY + ACTION = POWER

CRIME PREVENTION WEEK ~ NOVEMBER 1 - 7, 2014

Crime Prevention is Everyone's Responsibility

## Sexual Exploitation of Children & Youth

### What is Sexual Exploitation?

Sexual exploitation of children and youth is any type of sexual activity with children and youth under the age of 18 in exchange for money, drugs, food, shelter or any other considerations.

This is the case whether or not children or youth consider themselves to be consenting. Sexual exploitation of children and youth is never considered prostitution or consensual.

### Who is Vulnerable?

- Sexual exploitation can happen to anyone. This can include children and youth of different ages, genders, abilities, sexual orientations, and cultural and economic backgrounds in both rural and urban areas.
- Sexual exploitation is not just a big city issue; perpetrators are active in smaller communities as well.
- The average age when youth are first exploited (male or female) is 13 to 15 years old.
- Lesbian, gay and bi-sexual youth are at higher risk of sexual exploitation than other youth.
- Youth are at an increased risk of sexual exploitation if they have been kicked-out or have run away from home.
- Young males are just as likely to be sexually exploited as young females.
- Systemic factors, such as racism, colonization and residential schools have put Aboriginal youth at an increased risk of sexual exploitation.

### Forms of Sexual Exploitation include:

- The abuse of children and youth by those who are in positions of trust and authority, or upon whom the young person depends.
- Through control of survival needs – exchanging sexual acts for drugs or alcohol at parties, or for a ride, shelter, food or other necessities. These hidden forms of sexual exploitation often go unnoticed and can be seen as “normal” by both the victim and the offender.
- On the internet, youth can make and distribute, or be manipulated to post sexual images of themselves, their peers or their sexual partners that are then distributed online. Young people can be lured into sexually exploitative situations by people they meet in online settings. Youth can use websites to seek out adults willing to provide them with shelter, food or money in exchange for sex acts.
- Human trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation: is the recruiting, harbouring and/or controlling of a person for the purpose of exploitation. Youth trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation can be forced into the sex trade and forced to perform other sexual acts including exotic dancing, massage and the production of pornography.



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## How You Can Help:

- Many sexually exploited youth face realities of drug use, homelessness, past trauma, and other factors which have led them in to the survival sex trade or other exploitative situations. Other youth may have no such history and may have been lured, tricked or forced in to being sexually exploited. Regardless of their personal history and life experience, it is important to respect the identities of these youth while also recognizing that any sex act between youth and adults is abuse.
- Preventing sexual exploitation is an important goal that many services in BC work toward through education and action. Knowledge about specific risk factors and how they interact in the lives of youth can help with designing programs for youth and their families.
- If you are a parent trying to get your child out of a sexually exploitative situation, don't try to do it alone. Seek support and information from the appropriate authorities and community agencies.
- Build positive, open, trusting relationships with the youth in your life. Speak to them about healthy relationships and sexual exploitation, and tell them you are available to talk if they have questions or need support.
- If you know a child who wants to leave and exploitive situation, or if you believe a young person is in need of protection contact the Ministry for Children and Family Development by calling the **Helpline for Children at 310-1234 (no area code required)**.
- Let the police know if you have heard about or seen a recruiter or trafficker operating in your community.

## Resources:

**Children of the Street Society:** dedicated to preventing the sexual exploitation and human trafficking of children and youth in BC through education strategies, public awareness initiatives, and family support. [www.childrenofthestreet.com/](http://www.childrenofthestreet.com/) or Toll-Free 1-877-551-6611

**PLEA Community Services of BC-Onyx:** Onyx provides support services to youth who are or have been sexually exploited. This is a voluntary program that assists male, female, or trans-gender clients that are 18 years of age and under that are trying to exit from sexually exploitative situations. 1-877-411-PLEA(7532) or [onyx@plea.bc.ca](mailto:onyx@plea.bc.ca)

**SafeOnline** (formerly SOLOS) provides education and information for professionals, parents and youth about online sexual exploitation and the use of new technologies in child sexual abuse. The website includes resources designed for youth, as well as for parents and service providers. [www.safeonlineoutreach.com](http://www.safeonlineoutreach.com)

**Office to Combat Trafficking in Persons (OCTIP):** an office of the Ministry of Justice responsible for the overall coordination of BC's strategy to address human trafficking. OCTIP is focused on the protection of trafficked persons, the prevention of human trafficking and the coordination of services for trafficked persons. [www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/octip](http://www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/octip) or toll-free 1-888-712-7974

**Cybertip:** a national tip line for reporting the online sexual exploitation of children and youth. Cybertip is part of the National Centre for Child Protection, which also provides prevention and education resources. [www.cybertip.ca](http://www.cybertip.ca)

**VictimLink BC:** Free and confidential services are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week in over 100 languages, providing crisis and referral information. 1-800-563-0808 or [www.victimlinkbc.ca](http://www.victimlinkbc.ca)



[www.bccpa.org](http://www.bccpa.org)

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