

# Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC) Protocol for San Luis Obispo County

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Created by CSEC Collaborative Response Team

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

(Click to select topic)

County Policy.....	2
Memorandum of Understanding.....	2
Legislation.....	2
Background.....	3
Glossary.....	3
Training and Prevention.....	3
Practices.....	3
Prevention Efforts.....	4
Target Population.....	4
Identifying Commercial Sexually Exploited and At-Risk Youth.....	5
Identification.....	5
Risk Factors.....	5
San Luis Obispo County Screening Tool.....	6
San Luis Obispo County Screening Tool User Guide.....	6
Intervention.....	6
San Luis Obispo CSEC Response Team Roles.....	6
Community Partners and other Agency Roles.....	7
County Jurisdiction.....	8
Placement.....	8
CSEC and At-Risk Youth Continuum of Care.....	9
Key Principles.....	9
San Luis Obispo County Service Providers.....	9
Data and Coordination.....	11
Data Collection.....	11

## **County Policy**

The Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC) Collaborative Response Team of San Luis Obispo County is taking a victim centered approach to ensure that youth who are sexually exploited get the support and services they need. The primary goal is to help youth of Commercial Sexual Exploitation (CSE) heal, address their trauma, build skills to enter adulthood and contribute to society regardless of race, citizenship, sexual orientation, religion, gender, or age.

The purpose of this protocol is to ensure that CSE youth are successfully placed in a protective environment that offers therapeutic programming, specific to their trauma, in order to best stabilize them during this most critical time.

It is the County's desire to strategically respond to existing gaps in knowledge and practice around CSEC, in order to help agencies, who have direct contact with CSE youth, understand the extreme physical, psychological, emotional, and social harms associated with CSEC. This will include a range of victim services across a number of agencies, that will provide a continuum of care model to fully address the CSE youth's needs. In addition, an interagency collaborative approach will be utilized to outreach to the CSE and at-risk youth population so they can better protect themselves from CSEC and recognize risky situations.

## **Memorandum of Understanding**

The Memorandum of Understanding for the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children is between the San Luis Obispo County Department of Social Services, San Luis Obispo County Law Enforcement, SART, RISE, and other identified community partners. This Memorandum of Understanding, hereinafter referred to as "MOU", shall stand as evidence that the above parties agree to participate in an exchange of services by coordinating the County Purpose of the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children Collaborative Response Team.

The crime of human trafficking requires a comprehensive and collaborative response between law enforcement, service providers, and the community. The MOU sets out the mutual understanding of the principles underlying the relationship between the parties in matters concerning the planning and delivery of law enforcement investigations, victim-centered services and promoting public awareness. All parties have agreed to the eight Articles listed and signed by their directors.

## **Legislation**

The United States passed its first comprehensive human trafficking bill in 2000, the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act, since renamed the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA). The TVPA has long focused on the three P's: Prevention, Protection, and Prosecution. More recently, a fourth P, Partnership was added. Under the current version of the TVPA, all minors who engage in commercial sex acts are victims of trafficking, period.

The TVPA treats sex trafficking as a severe form of human trafficking, carrying increased penalties for perpetrators. The TVPA now also provides that the trafficking of a minor does not require proof of force, fraud, or coercion of a minor.

Currently, California Legislation AB 2035 addressing Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children is currently pending. It will include a new **Welfare & Institution Code (k)**. This legislation states: the child is a victim of human trafficking, as described in §Section 236.1 of the Penal Code, is a victim of sexual exploitation, as described in §Section 11165.1 of the Penal Code, or receives food or shelter in exchange for, or is paid to perform, sexual acts described in §Section 236.1 or 11165.1 of the Penal Code, and the parent or guardian failed or was unable

to protect the child. Despite the pending legislation, San Luis Obispo County will proceed with this CSEC Protocol to meet the needs of a CSEC and at risk youth.

## Background

Historically, Law Enforcement has been the first agency to interact and respond to victims of CSE. Law Enforcement would determine whether to release or arrest the minor. Once arrested, the Deputy District Attorney would file charges directly to the court or the case would be sent to Probation. Probation would then determine if proceedings in the juvenile court should proceed.

When appropriate, Law Enforcement would contact Child Welfare Services (CWS) and complete a Suspected Child Abuse Report (SCAR).

Formal collaboration efforts with multi-agencies have not existed in the past in response to CSEC.

## Glossary

**CSEC (Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children) or CSE (Commercial Sexual Exploitation):** The sexual abuse of a minor “entirely” or at least primarily, for financial or other economic reasons. The economic exchanges involved may be monetary or non-monetary (i.e., for food, shelter, drugs, etc.).

**SART (Suspected Abuse Response Team):** Provides forensic medical exams for residents of San Luis Obispo County, State agencies, and other Counties upon request. SART brings together specifically trained forensic doctors and nurses with Law Enforcement agencies, CWS, and advocates in a multi-disciplinary team approach to provide compassionate, comprehensive, and culturally sensitive treatment for sexual assault victim.

**SART Exam:** An exam performed by a SART physician and/or nurse for victims of suspected sexual abuse/ sexual assault.

**SCAN Exam:** An exam performed by a SART physician for victims of suspected child abuse and neglect (SCAN), as well as for drug-endangered children (DEC).

**SCAR (Suspected Child Abuse Report):** A Suspected Child Abuse Report (Form SS 8572) should be completed and sent to Child Welfare Services when there is suspicion of child abuse or the Screening Tool Risk Assessment is a high to very high level.

**CAIT (Child Abuse Interview Team):** A multi-disciplinary team who coordinates activities to achieve the mutual goals of reducing trauma to child victims of physical and sexual abuse, neglect, and emotional maltreatment, and enhancing the probability of conviction for child abusers.

## **Training and Prevention**

### Practices

CSEC Collaborative Response Team will provide training for all professionals working with youth in child-serving systems, as well as provide annual training. Agencies will include, but are not limited to, Child Welfare Services, Law Enforcement, Probation, Mental Health, Family Resource Centers, and San Luis Obispo County Educators. The training will bring awareness to help identify sexually exploited and at-risk youth, provide service and supports for CSEC, as well as educate on the use of culturally competent and trauma-informed practices.

In collaboration, identified agencies will develop a standardized curriculum to provide ongoing training and mentoring for all staff. In addition, CSEC training should be infused into existing training curricula.

### Prevention Efforts

Prevention efforts are designed to utilize outreach and education. Prevention begins with identifying youth who are at risk for exploitation and connecting them with services and support before victimization occurs.

### Target Population

The purpose of identifying San Luis Obispo's target population is to make CSEC training available to all Community Partners that directly work with youth. This population can assist with identifying and providing services to CSE and at-risk youth.

Identified target population includes:

- Aaron's Home
- Achievement House
- Animal Control
- Big Brother/Big Sister
- California Polytechnic State University
- California Youth Connection(CYC)
- Code Enforcers
- Community Action Partners of San Luis Obispo (CAP-SLO)
- Community Schools
- Controlling Anger and Learning to Manage It Program (CALM)
- Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA)
- Cuesta College
- Drug and Alcohol
- Elementary Schools
- Emergency Medical Services/ Paramedic
- Faith based societies
- Family Resource Centers
- Fire Department
- Foster parents
- Foster Parents Association
- Gay and Lesbian Alliance (GALA) of the Central Coast
- Grizzly Youth Academy
- High Schools
- Homeless Shelters (ECHO, Maxine Lewis)
- Independent Living Program (ILP)
- Law Enforcement
- Mental Health
- Middle Schools
- Nurses and Doctors
- Parent Connections
- Parent's Resource for Information Development and Education (PRIDE) Training
- Parents, Family, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG)
- Parents/Guardian
- Parks and Recreation
- Probation
- Public Health
- Restorative Partners
- RISE
- San Luis Obispo County Child Abuse Prevention Council (SLO-CAP)
- Sexual Abuse Response Team (SART)

- Sober Schools
- Teachers
- The Boys and Girls Club
- Therapists
- Trans Central Coast
- Tri-Counties Regional Center
- United Cerebral Palsy
- Women's Shelter Program
- Work Investment Act (WIA)
- YMCA
- Youth Treatment Program (YTP)

## **Identifying Commercial Sexually Exploited and At-Risk Youth**

### Identification

In order to understand the scope and nature of the problem in San Luis Obispo County and provide appropriate services, professionals will screen youth and assess their related needs on an ongoing basis.

### Risk Factors

The following risk factors have been identified by Community Partners as being the most prevalent for youth in San Luis Obispo County:

- Child Welfare history\*
- Cutting / Self-Harm
- Developmental delays
- Drug or substance use
- Entertainment and Modeling Profession (interest or participation)
- Gang affiliation\*
- High number of moves in placement
- History of Criminal Record/ Arrest History/ Probation\*
- History of pregnancy or child birth
- Knows someone who has had sex for drugs, shelter, goods, or money.
- Lack of permanency – No adult or mentor they trust in their life
- Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual, Transgender, Questioning, Queer, Intersex (LGBTQQI)
- Low Attendance / Truancy
- Low self-esteem
- Migrant workers
- Multiple incidents of running away
- Poor School Performance
- Probation\*
- Suicidal thoughts
- Tattoos

\*Generational history if applicable

## San Luis Obispo County Screening Tool

A universal Screening Tool will be used amongst local agencies to identify CSE or at-risk youth, and be utilized to inform and improve service delivery. The agencies that complete the tool (not in the presence of the youth) will need to determine the level of risk the youth is at based on the number total from the questions that were answered by the screener. Some of the risk factors have a higher ranking number than others, but it is up to the screener on how they are answered. The screener at the agency can refer the youth to services in the community that will meet their needs or continue providing services for them. There are certain questions on the Screening Tool that if marked yes, will require an immediate Suspected Child Abuse Report (SCAR) to Child Welfare Services called into (805) 781-KIDS or faxed to (805) 781-1803.

For Data Collection purposes, local Community Partners completing the Screening Tool will be asked to submit a copy to the Department of Social Services, who will track the data. Once the data has been accumulated, it will be available to all San Luis Obispo County CSEC Collaborative agencies. The youth's name must be redacted by the agency submitting the Screening Tool due to confidentiality. The information required for Data Collection will include: the age of the youth, gender, zip code in which they reside, risk level assessed, services provided, name of agencies the youth is referred, if the youth is identified as being a CSEC victim, and whether a SCAR is made to Child Welfare Services. These items will be available to document on the front and back of the Screening Tool.

The redacted copy of the Screening Tool for Data Collection will be sent via fax or mail to:

- Belinda Benassi, Program Manager in Child Welfare Services  
P.O. Box 8119., San Luis Obispo, CA 93401-8119  
Office number: (805) 781-1841  
Fax: (805) 781-1846  
[bbenassi@co.slo.ca.us](mailto:bbenassi@co.slo.ca.us)

## San Luis Obispo County Screening Tool User Guide

The purpose of the Screening Tool User Guide is to expand and clarify items on the Screening Tool. This allows the screener to have a better understanding of what to look for when screening a possible CSE or at-risk youth. Sample questions are provided to help guide the screener on how to approach the youth, when the screener does not know the answer to a Screening Tool question or needs further clarification on what the youth disclosed. In addition, the Screening Tool User Guide indicates certain information that if disclosed, will require and immediate Suspected Child Abuse Report (SCAR) to Child Welfare Services.

## **Intervention**

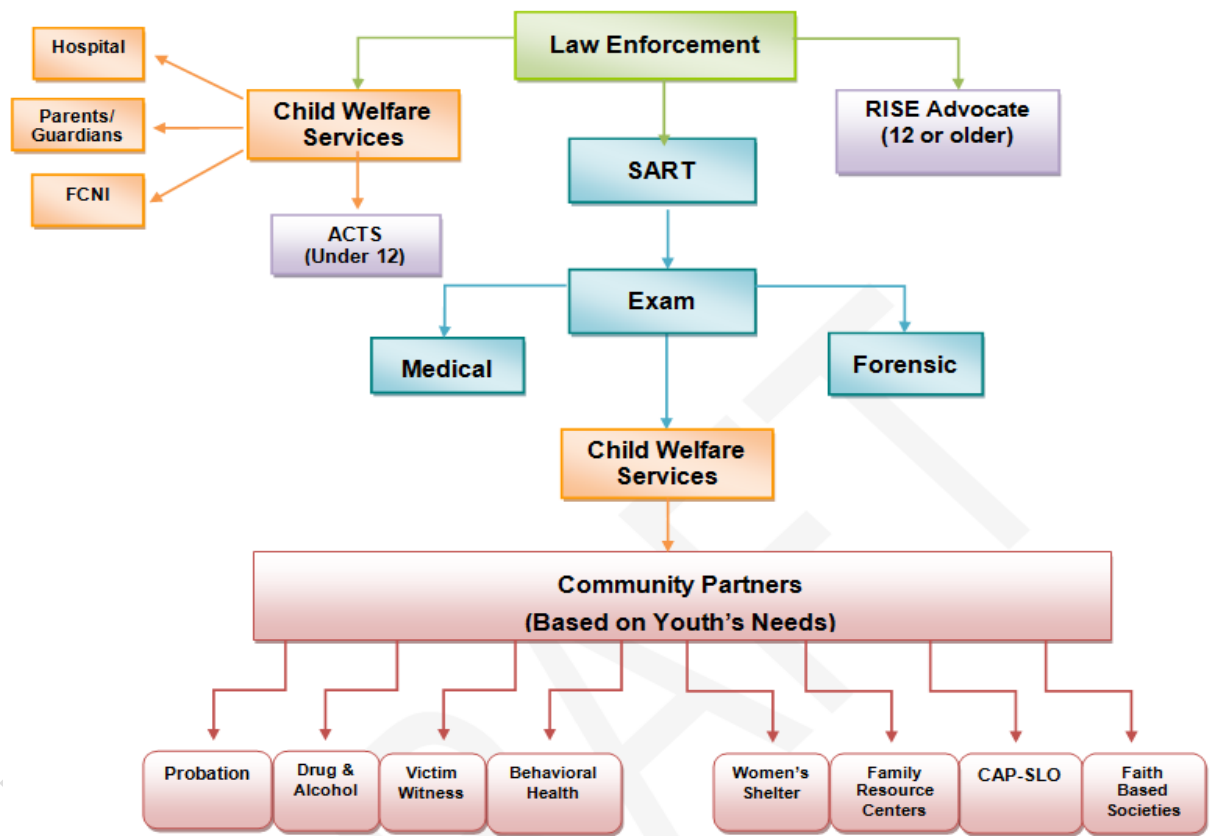
### San Luis Obispo CSEC Response Team Roles

The following agencies are identified as the primary CSEC Response Team:

- **Law Enforcement** – If Law Enforcement is the first on the scene when a CSE youth is identified, their role is to contact Child Welfare Services (CWS), Suspected Abuse Response Team (SART), and RISE.
- **Child Welfare Services (CWS)** – The CWS Social Worker will respond all CSEC referrals and assess the needs of the CSE youth to ensure the proper treatment (SART or hospital) and placement is made for them (return to parents/guardians or placed in a specialized home).

- **Suspected Abuse Response Team (SART)** – The Nurse or Physician will engage the youth in receiving a medical exam and/or for gathering forensic evidence only if the youth approves.
- **RISE** – An Advocate will respond to offer assistance and accompany the youth during the exam process through SART and/or Law Enforcement interview. Advocates can also provide support to the family of the CSE youth.
- **Cross reports will be done if applicable between agencies.**

Response Team Process Flowchart



Community Partners and other Agency Roles

- **Department of Homeland Security** – Referrals can be made to the agency when Commercial Sexual Exploited victims are identified as being undocumented. The Department of Homeland Security can issue T visas and U visas when they meet the criteria for human trafficking or the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) under SB 1064, W&IC Sections 10609.95 and 10609.97.
- **Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI)** – FBI will assist Law Enforcement. Through the use of two national initiatives, the FBI investigates crimes against children and civil rights violations involving the alleged human trafficking of adult and minor individuals. These federal investigations may involve U.S. Citizens or individuals from other countries, including person(s) who are undocumented. The FBI, through its Child

Exploitation Task Forces and collaborative partnerships with local Law Enforcement assist 'locally led' efforts to investigate human trafficking, criminal activity of pimps and traffickers for the recovery of child victims. The FBI's Victim Assistance Program works with federal and local law enforcement, Child Protective Services and other local government and non-profit agencies to assist identified victims of trafficking with a multitude of services including, but not limited to; crisis intervention, specialized referrals, and legal or immigration remedies (as appropriate). Cases investigated by the FBI may be referred to the U.S. Attorney's Office for federal prosecution or to the local District Attorney for state prosecution.

### County Jurisdiction

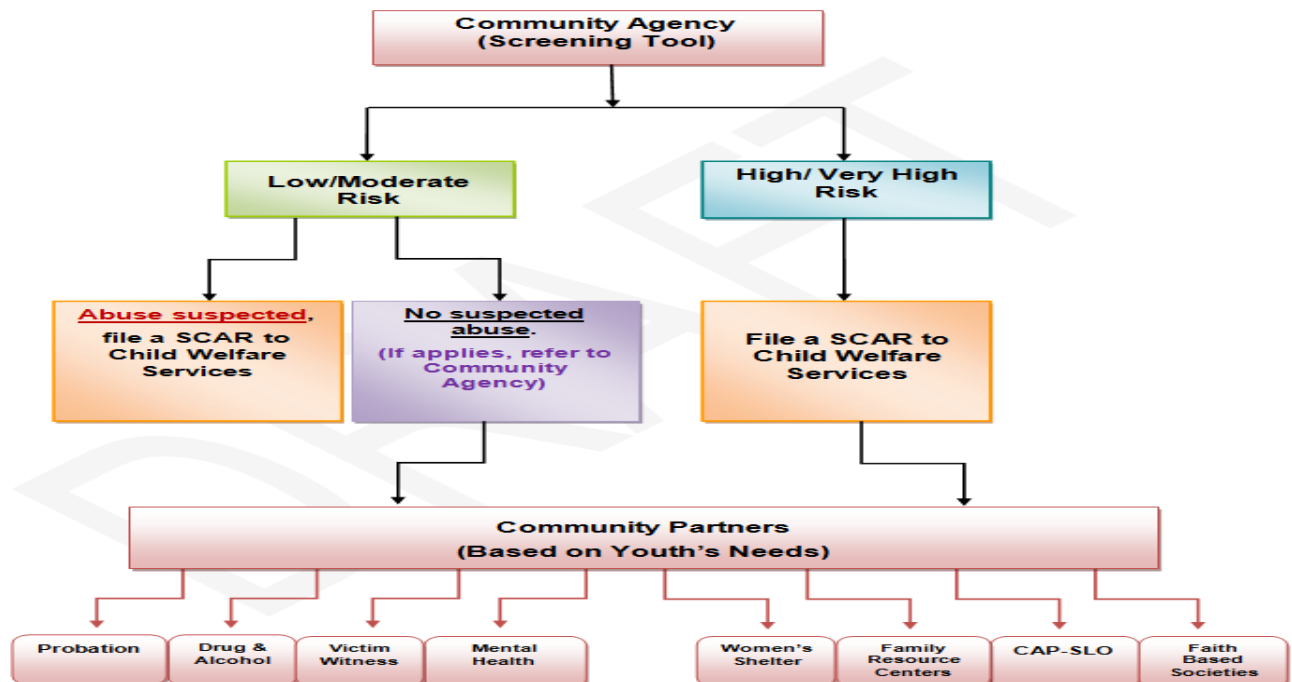
When CSEC victims are taken into protective custody from Law Enforcement or Child Welfare Services, Child Welfare Services will determine the county of origin. If the county of origin is San Luis Obispo, the Social Worker will assess the youth for placement needs and ongoing services.

If the youth has come from another county and that county has jurisdiction, then the Social Worker will communicate with the other county while transportation and placement arrangements are made. The Social Worker will attempt to have services in place for the youth when they return to their county of residence.

### Placement

Child Welfare Services will establish safe and secure emergency transitional placements for CSE youth. Based on the situation, emergency placement may include the hospital, parents/guardians, or Family Care Network Incorporated (FCNI) specialized foster home. The department is committed to provide the youth with services in their placement based on the youth's needs.

### Community Agency Response:





## **CSE and At-Risk Youth Continuum of Care**

### Key Principles

The expectation of Community Partners as a whole will collectively stress the importance of providing a continuum of care to CSE youth which will include public health, harm reduction, and re-programming “in the life” mentality.

Key Principles to serving CSE youth:

1. Safety planning for both the youth and the service providers
2. Collaboration across the agencies
3. Trust and relationship building to foster consistency
4. Culturally competent and appropriate service provision
5. Trauma-informed interventions

### San Luis Obispo County Service Providers

- **Child Welfare Services San Luis Obispo County – (805) 781-KIDS**  
3433 S. Higuera St., San Luis Obispo, CA 93401
  - Provide a 24-hour Immediate Response to assess the needs of the youth.
  - Connect and assist the youth in navigating local resources.
  - Fostering connections to develop a safety network for the youth.
  - Connecting the youth to local resources for life skills development.
- **Family Care Network Incorporated (FCNI) – Ph: (805) 781-3535 Toll Free: 866-781-3535**  
1255 Kendall Rd., San Luis Obispo, CA 93401
  - Provide a CSEC trained and skilled Therapeutic Foster Family within its Wraparound Foster Care Program (when referrals received by the Department of Social Services)
  - Utilize a Child & Family Team (CFT) to facilitate a strength-based, needs-driven, trauma-informed treatment plan for every client
  - Provide social work, case management, therapeutic/mental health services and "whatever it takes" to promote health and well-being for victims of sexual exploitation
- **Mountainbrook Abolitionist (MbA)– Contact Rebecca Turner or Luke Hickman during office hours M-Th 9-5 at (805) 543-3162, for After Hours contact MbA at 1775 Calle Joaquin, San Luis Obispo, CA 93405**
  - Assess needs at the time of referral, including but not limited to: food, clothing, family support, housing, employment, mentorship, counseling, and meet needs when possible.
  - Assist youth and/or family in navigating local resources.
  - Connect referred youth to local survivors of CSEC for mentorship support.
  - Connect at-risk youth and victims of CSEC with select members of Mountainbrook Abolitionists (MbA) who are qualified to mentor by providing emotional, educational, and developmental support.

- Encourage lasting connections and ties to the community for on-going support.
- Provide guidance and emotional support to non-offending family members of victims of sexual exploitation.
  
- **Juvenile Probation Department San Luis Obispo County, (805) 788-2118**
  - Any minor booked into the Juvenile Hall is assessed during the admission process.
  - Should the minor be determined to meet CSEC criteria based on either the booking charge, or admission investigation process, a Suspected Child Abuse Report (SCAR) will be completed.
  - The SCAR will be forwarded to both Child Welfare Services and the appropriate Law Enforcement Agency having jurisdiction over the suspected CSEC matter.
  - Should the minor require any medical or therapeutic services while detained which are not available in custody, Juvenile Hall Staff will ensure transportation to those services are provided.
  - Probation will collaborate with other agencies to ensure a service plan is in place prior to releasing the minor from Juvenile Hall and consider the elements of the CSEC matter in determining whether the filing of a WIC 602 petition should be requested.
  
- **RISE – Office hours (805) 226-5400, Toll Free 24-HR Crisis Line 1-855-886-RISE**  
51 Zaca Ln. Suite 140, San Luis Obispo, CA 93401  
1030 Vine St., Paso Robles, CA 93446
  - RISE will provide services and support through a confidential state-certified crisis counselors.
  - For survivors 12 years and older, services may include:
    - 24-hour crisis line
    - Walk-in crisis support sessions
    - Temporary restraining order assistance
    - Accompaniments to all Law Enforcement interviews and SART exams
    - Advocacy on behalf of client with Law Enforcement, SART Office, DA's Office, Social Services, etc.
    - Individual clinical counseling
  - For survivors over 18 years old, services may include:
    - All services listed above
    - Shelter in a RISE safe house (up to 90-days)
    - Case management
    - Group clinical counseling
  - For family and friends of survivors, services may include:
    - 24-hour crisis line
    - Walk-In crisis support sessions
    - Individual clinical counseling

- **Suspected Abuse Response Team (SART) – Contact Buffy Ramirez (805) 440-4392, During office hours call (805) 781-4878, or After Hours call Dispatch (805)781-4550**

2180 Johnson Ave., San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

- Provide a comprehensive exam and evaluate the patient’s medical needs (if patient has severe injuries or strangulation they must be seen at a Hospital Emergency Room).
  - Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI) testing included in the examination and medication to treat.
  - Provide medication for any vaginal infections present (other than STI's).
  - Emergency contraception and prophylactic antibiotics for GCand Chlamydia are discussed.
  - Connect patients with advocacy from RISE.
  - Referrals are provided for follow-up medical care, family planning, and counseling.
- 
- **Women’s Shelter Program – Contact (805) 473-6507 for Counseling Intake hours are M-5, 9-5pm**

PO Box 125, San Luis Obispo, CA 93406

- Free trauma-informed counseling for children/teens, ages 3 through 17, who have been abused.
- Counseling available in SLO, South County and local school sites.
- Additionally, counseling available for victims of intimate partner violence (over 18).

## **Data and Coordination**

### Data Collection

Protocols and strategies will be utilized to coordinate, collect, and share data across systems. This will be done to better understand the scope of work between agencies, identify issues within the system and process, track youth who have been sexually exploited, and document which resources are being used.

Each agency will be responsible for collecting and maintaining a data system that tracks the following: Number of youth screened, age, gender, risk level assessed, services provided, name of agencies youth is referred to, if youth is identified as being a CSEC victim, and if a SCAR is made to Child Welfare Services. This data will be submitted to and housed by the Department of Social Services and will be available to all San Luis Obispo County CSEC Collaborative agencies. The youth’s name must be redacted by the agency submitting the Screening Tool due to confidentiality. These items will be available to document on the front and back of the Screening Tool.

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