Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC) and Youth affects communities at worldwide, national and local levels. CSEC is defined as sexual abuse of a minor for economic or power gain. It can involve physical abuse, coercion, pornography, emotional abuse and the smuggling/transporting of children for unlawful purposes. **CSEC is a form of human trafficking.** Human trafficking is a worldwide, billion-dollar-a-year industry and human trafficking is the world’s second most profitable criminal enterprise but fastest growing.

**CSEC is a rampant and fast-growing problem:** The central coast is considered a hub & corridor to sex trafficking/exploitation according to the FBI.

### VICTIMS
- ALL CHILDREN (girls, boys, and transgender youth) from any background can be targeted and exploited. Average age victims enter trafficking is 12-14 years old.

### VICTIMIZATION-HOW IT HAPPENS
- Victims are often hidden from view, often going unnoticed
- Pimps and other exploiters scout bus stations, arcades, malls and social networking websites, honing in on girls/boys who appear to be runaways without money or skills, or who may be experiencing trouble at home
- They befriend the youth by showing them affection; buying them clothes, meals, jewelry, beauty/grooming (i.e., manicures) and/or offering shelter in exchange for sex
- False promises of a “better life” are an important recruitment tool. Reality: All money is turned over to the pimp/trafficker and children are exploited for monetary gain and sexual gratification of the exploiters and their clients
- The pimp/trafficker creates a seemingly loving and caring relationship with the child in order to establish trust and loyalty.
- Pimps and exploiters eventually (as little as 2 weeks) use the child’s emotional and financial dependency to coerce them into selling sex for money
- The manipulation tactics used by the exploiter ensures that the child will remain loyal to him/her despite acts of violation and severe victimization against the child
- Children are threatened or may be assaulted to guarantee obedience and prevent their escape

### PERPETRATORS (EXPLOITERS, TRAFFICKERS OR PIMPS)
- Predators who seek out vulnerable victims
- Can be anyone, including family members, boyfriends or other trusted adults
- Although exploiters often target children outside of their family, a family member may also exploit a child

### CSEC INDICATORS-WHO IS AT RISK?
- Homelessness/runaway youth
- Children with sexual abuse histories, foster care, group homes etc.
- Kids with history of violations (i.e., truancy, curfew violations or involvement with juvenile justice system)
- There is a presence of an older “boyfriend” or adult who is controlling in the youth’s life
- Youth has tattoos, brandings or markings
- Signs of violence (i.e., cuts, bruises or burns on child’s body)

### PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT
Abused and exploited by the pimp, the child is then left traumatized, alone and without support. In addition, the victim may experience a range of emotional or psychological distress, including:

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<th>Anxiety</th>
<th>Attention deficit/impulse control issues</th>
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<td>Difficulty forming positive relations with others</td>
<td>“Brainwashed”</td>
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<td>Difficulty managing moods</td>
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<td>Aggression</td>
<td>Addiction</td>
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<td>Thoughts of suicide or self-destructive behavior</td>
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RETHINKING THE PERCEPTION OF VICTIMS

An important part of taking action against CSEC is reframing perceptions about its victims and fighting the stigma that surrounds this issue.

Here are some facts:
- Many victims of sex trafficking have been molested, raped and/or sexually assaulted by a family member or close family friend. 95% of CSEC were victims of earlier childhood sexual abuse.
- Given the few choices some youth have, when he/she sells sex at the hands of an exploitative adult, it is largely a means of survival.

Shifts in Legislation:
SB 855 (2014):
- Makes the commercial sexual exploitation of a minor a mandatory child abuse report
- Clarified that a child who is sexually trafficked and whose parent or guardian has failed or is unable to protect him or her, can be served through child welfare as a victim of abuse and neglect

SB 1322 (2017):
- ‘Decrim’ law: Decriminalized the crimes of prostitution and loitering with intent to commit prostitution (crimes listed in 647 and 653.22 of the Penal Code) for minors
- Peace officer who encounters a child involved in a commercial sex act pursuant shall report suspected abuse or neglect of the minor to the county child welfare agency

RESOURCES
Child Welfare Hotline: 1-800-367-0166
Santa Barbara County Behavioral Wellness: 24/7 Mental Health Hotline (888) 868-1649
SBCo Beh Wellness RISE Project (CSEC Specific Treatment Program): (805) 346-1488 or email to BWELL.RISE.SM@co.santa-barbara.ca.us
National Human Trafficking Hotline: 888-373-7888
Shared Hope International: http://sharedhope.org/
National Center for Missing & Exploited Children® at 1-800-843-5678 or visit www.cybertipline.com

SPECIAL REPORTS:
National Institute of Justice Special Report:
“Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children: What do we know and what do we do about it?”
https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/215733.pdf