


[Understanding Sexual Violence](#)
[Working with Survivors](#)
[Preventing Sexual Violence](#)
[Addressing Public Policy](#)
[Trainings & Events](#)
[Resources & Publications](#)
[WCSAP News](#)
[About Us](#)
[Home » Preventing Sexual Violence » Resources & Publications » Prevention Tips](#)
Like 2

Tweet

G+1 0

2

Considerations for the Primary Prevention of CSEC

Commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) is a form of child sexual abuse. It is sexual activity involving a minor in exchange for something of value, or promise thereof, to the child or another person or persons. The young person is treated as a commercial and sexual object.

Often when schools and communities request a CSEC program this is connected to increased media attention of CSEC or in response to a recent incident. Programming that defines the violence and focuses on protecting potential victims is considered awareness and risk reduction, not primary prevention. For more information on how to distinguish these types of activities read our tip on "[Moving Further Upstream](#)".

Primary prevention approaches focus on shifting community norms, values, and beliefs that allow for perpetration to occur. The prevention of CSEC is multifaceted so any one approach taken alone is unlikely to address all of the contributing factors. Similar to the progression of child sexual abuse prevention best practice, turning attention towards adults and communities (and away from potential victims) is crucial. However, work with young people to build skills to cultivate healthy communities and counter factors that normalize sexual exploitation is also part of a comprehensive prevention strategy.

Designing Your Approach

If we understand that CSEC falls within the sexual violence continuum, efforts to reduce or prevent this form of violence can draw on the best practices utilized in other sexual violence primary prevention work. Therefore CSEC primary prevention programming should be:

- consistent with [The Principles of Prevention](#) (especially important that these efforts be comprehensive and multi-session),
- integrated into general sexual assault prevention programming,
- and developed with an understanding of what CSEC looks like in that community.

For some communities CSEC is happening as part of an abusive relationship where a person is being exploited by a "boyfriend" pimp. In these cases, addressing it will fit naturally into other intimate partner and sexual violence discussions. The following are suggested starting points to integrate CSEC into other gender-based violence prevention work.

Sexual Coercion

- Teaching meaningful consent is essential for young people to develop personal skills and counter harmful community and social norms
- CSEC grooming techniques share many things in common with sexual coercion including power differentials, violence or the threat of it, survival or basic needs, or the promise of love or career possibilities

Dating Violence

- Some CSEC 'red flags' can be similar to common unhealthy relationship dynamics; such as significant age differences, control of money and time, isolation from family and friends, and emotional, sexual, and physical abuse
- Similar to the Cycle of Violence:
 - Honeymoon= promises of "I will take care of you"
 - Tension-building= bargaining with "I need you to do this to support our lifestyle"
 - Explosion= violence or the threat of it forces compliance

Rape Culture

- Include CSEC when explaining the continuum of sexual violence.
- Misogyny, sexist jokes, cat calls, etc. all serve to degrade and objectify women, which is deeply connected to all SV and CSEC.
 - Language and media can create a climate that justifies and glorifies pimps and johns and keeps women 'in their place'.

Bystander Intervention

- Friends and peers can help build each other's protective factors and address the vulnerabilities that exploiters prey upon by:
 - Identifying unhealthy relationship dynamics, helping friends feel supported, and challenging sexist and violent language.

Additional Considerations:

[Community sexual assault service providers](#) are well positioned to deliver this type of prevention work due to:

- Experience with multiple forms of violence and the continuum of sexual violence
- Understanding of mandated reporting and referrals for services
- Ability to provide victim-centered and trauma-informed education

When delivering this type of programming in school settings, it is recommended that school staff receive basic information and training on sexual violence and CSEC, and get connected with their local sexual assault service provider.

- This is important as education and prevention work can increase subsequent disclosures and this will prepare school staff to respond and make referrals appropriately.

Reviewed: November 19th, 2015

Washington Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs | [4317 6th Ave. SE, Suite 102 | Olympia, WA 98503](#)

info@wcsap.org | Phone (360) 754-7583 | TTY (360) 709-0305 | Fax (360) 786-8707

[Site Map](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Site Credits](#) | Copyright © 2010-2015 WCSAP 

This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 3.0 Unported License](#).