



## Office of the Texas Governor Child Sex Trafficking Team

Greetings,

With winter fading, the vibrant Texas bluebonnets are beginning to bloom, welcoming us into a refreshing and rejuvenating spring! As we welcome spring, we remain inspired by the incredible efforts across our state to protect children and youth and support their healing from commercial sexual exploitation.

In this Spring Edition of our newsletter, you'll find valuable information and resources to raise awareness, prevent child abuse, and combat sexual assault. We also celebrate the launch of Care Coordination Teams to support children and youth, highlight a new training strategy for law enforcement and prosecutors to strengthen human trafficking investigations and prosecutions across Texas, and share upcoming webinars, training opportunities, and resources to support those who have experienced sexual assault or trafficking.

Thank you for partnering with us in this vital work. Together, we can continue making Texas a safer place for our children.

Warm regards,

The Child Sex Trafficking Team

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### **Child Abuse Prevention Month and Sexual Assault Awareness & Prevention Month**

April is around the corner, as is our observance of [Child Abuse Prevention Month](#) and [Sexual Assault Awareness & Prevention Month](#). There are strong intersections between child sex trafficking, child abuse, and sexual assault.

- **Child sex trafficking is a form of child abuse**, and is codified as such under [Section 261.001](#) of the Texas Family Code.
- **Child sexual abuse increases vulnerability to exploitation.** The [National Survivor Study](#), published by Polaris in 2023, found that of 450 trafficking survivors surveyed, a staggering 84% experienced sexual abuse in their childhood.
- **Sexual violence is present within human trafficking.** A global study published by the [Journal of Migration and Health](#) in 2021 found that 54% of female trafficking survivors experienced sexual violence during their exploitation. Additionally, the [National Human Trafficking Hotline](#) reported 12% of all sex trafficking victims identified through hotline contacts between 2015 and 2021 experienced sexual abuse as a method of control.

We proudly stand alongside survivors, organizations, and communities who work tirelessly to prevent child abuse and sexual assault. Click below to learn more about Child Abuse Prevention Month and Sexual Assault Awareness & Prevention Month and see the resources section of this newsletter for additional prevention information.

[Child Abuse Prevention Month](#) [Sexual Assault Awareness & Prevention Month](#)

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## Community Spotlight



## Exciting News in Care Coordination!

The Texas Model of Care Coordination for CSEY promotes sustainable autonomy, healing, justice and stability for children and youth who are at risk of or who have experienced commercial sexual exploitation. Care Coordination employs awareness, education, creativity, collaboration, and capacity building to identify and recover CSEY, and to

facilitate tailored, accessible, trauma-informed and holistic resources through a coordinated network of providers.

We're thrilled to announce the launch and re-launch of several Care Coordination Teams dedicated to serving youth who are at risk of or have experienced commercial sexual exploitation:

- **Williamson County Care Coordination Team** launched on **1/24**.
- **Travis County Care Coordination Team** re-launched on **1/31**.
- **Galveston Care Coordination Team** launched on **1/31**.
- **Bexar County Care Coordination Team** re-launched on **2/3**.

**Unbound Now** serves as the Care Coordinator for Williamson, Travis, and Galveston Counties, while **BCFS Building Bridges Against Trafficking** leads as the Care Coordinator for Bexar County.

These Care Coordination Teams are instrumental in providing critical support and services to youth, and we are excited to see their continued impact in 2025 and beyond!

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### Human Trafficking Institute (HTI)



The Child Sex Trafficking Team is proud to partner with the [Human Trafficking Institute](#) (HTI), an organization dedicated to combatting human trafficking at its source. HTI works within criminal justice systems to equip law enforcement and prosecutors with the training, resources, and expertise needed to identify and prosecute traffickers.

In our recent webinar, [Strengthening Human Trafficking Investigations and Prosecutions: HTI's Approach in Texas](#), HTI introduced its mission and discussed a new pilot project

aimed at enhancing human trafficking investigations and prosecutions across the state. The discussion covered trauma-informed investigations, the role of care coordination, and the importance of CSEY advocacy in building stronger case and achieving justice for survivors.

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## **2025 National Crime Victims' Rights Week**



Every April, the Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) leads communities throughout the country in their annual observances of National Crime Victims' Rights Week (NCVRW).

Through NCVRW we honor crime victims and survivors, recognize the professionals and volunteers who provide critical services to victims of crime, and raise awareness about crime victims' rights and services.

OVC is pleased to announce that NCVRW will be commemorated April 6–12, 2025, with the theme—

### **Connecting < KINSHIP > Healing**

This year's theme of KINSHIP is a call to action to recognize that shared humanity should be at the center of supporting all survivors and victims of crime. KINSHIP is a state of being with survivors that drives vital connections and increases access to services, rights, and healing. KINSHIP is where victim advocacy begins.

For more information about National Crime Victims' Rights Week and activities around the country, visit the [OVC Website](#).

For resources and information for crime victims, please see the Office of the Attorney General's [Crime Victims Webpage](#).

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## **Child Sex Trafficking Team Monthly Webinars**



## **Preventing Trafficking Among Vulnerable Youth**

Unbound Now

March 19th, 2025 | Virtual

Sara Nellis and Chloe Gallagher with Unbound Now will present *Preventing Trafficking Among Vulnerable Youth*. This webinar installment will focus on strategic approaches to address the issue of human trafficking among at-risk youth. The key topics covered include:

- Reaching Vulnerable Youth: Strategies for effectively connecting with youth who are at risk.
- Engaging Youth: Methods to actively involve young people in prevention efforts.
- Early Identification: Techniques for recognizing signs of high-risk behavior and potential trafficking situations early on.
- Building Prevention Education Curriculum: Developing educational materials aimed at prevention.
- Direct Services: Providing support and services to at-risk youth.
- Case Management: Coordinating care and resources for individuals who may be vulnerable.
- Bridging the Gap: Strategies to connect prevention efforts with identifying and supporting victims.
- Engaging Families: Involving family members to strengthen support systems for youth.
- Collaboration: Working together with other service providers to enhance prevention and support efforts.

This webinar aims to equip participants with the knowledge and tools necessary to make a positive impact in their communities regarding the prevention of trafficking.

[Register for this Webinar](#)

## **Hiring and Supporting Staff with Lived Experience in Commercial Sexual Exploitation**

Texas Alliance of Child and Family Services

April 30, 2025 | Virtual

Join Sarah Hall and Tiffany Greco as they present on how to effectively hire and support individuals with lived experience in commercial sexual exploitation. Topics include how to find individuals with lived experience who are seeking employment, organizational qualities that can prompt survivors to want to work for your team, essential competencies for interviewing and onboarding, how to support survivors through effective management techniques, survivor-specific challenges and corresponding supportive practices, and tackling issues with other workplace-specific dynamics. Sarah, a survivor-leader in the anti-trafficking field, and Tiffany, a noted ally and Sarah's supervisor of four years, will discuss lessons learned, best practices, and practical insights from their unique perspectives.

[Register for this Webinar](#)

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## **Training Opportunities**

### **Recorded Webinar: Addressing College Campus Sexual Assault: Prevention, Response, and Support**

Sexual Assault Survivors' Task Force

Listen to a panel of experts from the fields of campus advocacy, campus health, Title IX, campus police, and prosecution for a conversation on critical issues and best practices in the prevention of and response to campus sexual assault. The panel participants also discuss their perspectives on providing support for survivors in the aftermath of sexual assault.

[Watch the Recorded Webinar](#)

## **CST Forensic Interview Training (CST FIT)**

National Criminal Justice Training Center

April 1-3, 2025 | Virtual

Develop the skills and techniques to conduct developmentally appropriate forensic interviews with victims of child sex trafficking. Learn the differences between interviewing children in child abuse cases and interviewing child sex trafficking victims. Review victim-centered interview methodology with special emphasis given to understanding the factors contributing to child sex trafficking victimization and the impact on development and effects of trauma. Learn to gather information regarding the use of technology in the child sex trafficking business model and the multitude of crimes that traffickers commit, including the use of child sexual abuse material (CSAM).

[Register for this Training](#)

### **Presenting Evidence in Child Forensic Interviews**

National Criminal Justice Training Center

April 8-9, 2025 | Virtual

Explore how different types of evidence can be used in forensic interviews of children who have experienced abuse and exploitation or have witnessed violence. Learn how to present different types of evidence in the context of a child-centered, trauma-informed, and legally defensible forensic interview approach. Practice techniques and develop skills to present different types of evidence in child forensic interviews.

[Register for this Training](#)

### **Following the Evidence in Child Abuse and Child Exploitation Cases**

National Criminal Justice Training Center

April 9-10, 2025 | Virtual

Examine the importance of multidisciplinary team (MDT) case coordination and evidence corroboration in the investigation of child abuse cases. Learn how to evaluate evidentiary findings through crime scene images, interviews and case studies. Understand



multidisciplinary team members' roles and responsibilities for protecting child victims and prosecuting offenders.

[Register for this Training](#)

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## **Directories**

### **Resources for Sexual Assault Survivors Online Directory**

The Sexual Assault Survivors' Task Force has assembled a [searchable on-line directory](#) containing up-to-date information about resources for survivors.

This service provider directory is searchable by organization name, services, and city. Search results may include local and statewide service providers. If you are unsure about which services are included under each category, please visit the [Service Definitions](#) page.

### **The National Human Trafficking Online Referral Directory**

The online [Referral Directory](#) from the National Human Trafficking Hotline is made up of anti-trafficking organizations and programs that offer emergency, transitional, or long-term services to victims and survivors of human trafficking as well as those that provide resources and opportunities in the anti-trafficking field. *If you would like to add your organization to the directory, please review the [National Human Trafficking Referral Directory Guidelines and Expectations](#).*

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## **Report Human Trafficking**

If you believe someone is in immediate danger, call 911.

[iWatch Texas](#) – Tips made to iWatch are investigated by the Texas Department of Public Safety.

[National Human Trafficking Hotline](#) – Call the toll-free hotline at 1-888-373-7888. Tips made to the hotline are reviewed and routed to local law enforcement. This hotline also offers 24/7 confidential support for survivors.

[Texas Child Abuse Hotline](#) - Report child neglect and abuse, including sexual exploitation of a child, to the Texas Abuse Hotline at 1-800-252-5400.



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