



Commercial Sexual Exploitation-Identification Tool (CSE-IT) Frequently Asked Questions

What is the CSE-IT?

- The CSE-IT is an evidence-based tool to help professionals who interact with youth identify the presence of indicators of commercial sexual exploitation.
- There are two versions of the CSE-IT, and other adaptations in development.
 - The *CSE-IT 2.0* is intended for those individuals who will have direct interactions with youth longer than one day.
 - The *CSE-IT: Brief Version*, also known as the *CSE-IT: Hotline and Intake*, is designed for practitioners who have limited interactions with youth, or only interact with someone reporting a crime or allegation of abuse. Child abuse hotline operators, child abuse special investigators, and law enforcement may use this brief version to determine possible occurrence of child sex trafficking in order to guide further investigation or assessment.

How is the CSE-IT used, and what does the final score mean?

- The tool is not a survey questionnaire and the items should not be read directly to the youth as an interview.
- The CSE-IT is an information integration tool to be completed after the routine processes that providers already conduct.
- The tool is used by professionals who work directly with youth. These professionals already collect information needed to complete the CSE-IT by talking to the youth, observing the youth's appearance or behavior, gathering documents from other sources, and speaking with people involved in the youth's life (e.g., social workers, teachers, caregivers, etc.).
- The final score on the CSE-IT indicates the level of concern regarding a youth's potential involvement in exploitation and if additional follow-up is warranted.

Is the score on the CSE-IT legal evidence that trafficking has occurred?

- No, the CSE-IT is not a legal investigation tool. It is a tool to help child-serving systems and agencies determine which children would benefit from services to prevent or treat child sex trafficking.
- The score on CSE-IT reflects information available to the provider at the time of screening. This may result in varying scores depending on the role of the person conducting screening, what information they have, and the length of time they have known the youth. For example, a law enforcement officer may have limited information from a caregiver and no opportunity to speak with a missing youth; a therapist working with a young person for a year may have a deeper understanding of their experiences. These two professionals may get different scores on the tool, however the scores will be

meaningful to help them make a decision about how to respond based on the information available to them.

How is the CSE-IT structured?

- The CSE-IT includes items that research has shown are correlated with exploitation and that were identified by practitioners and survivors as being important indicators.
- The tool consists of key indicators with supporting statements to help users assess whether a youth is showing signs of being exploited.
- The supporting statements help practitioners familiarize themselves with what to look for so they can screen youth consistently.
- Once providers become fluent in using the CSE-IT, they are able to score the key indicators quickly.

Who should screen and when?

- All youth age 10 and older should be screened, regardless of gender. Providers should not wait for suspicion of commercial sexual exploitation to screen. If younger youth are considered to be at high risk for exploitation for any reason, they should be screened.
- The CSE-IT can be used even if providers only meet with clients once. Survivors noted there were many missed opportunities during even brief encounters for service providers to notice the signs and intervene on their behalf.
- Screening can occur at different points in time, depending on the setting. WestCoast Children's Clinic (WestCoast) works with partners to determine when youth should be screened based on each agency's services and case flow. Generally, we recommend screening each youth within 30 days of intake, and again every 6 months to continually monitor for signs of exploitation.

Is the CSE-IT supported by evidence?

- WestCoast validated the CSE-IT in 2016 to ensure that it accurately identifies youth who have clear indicators of exploitation.
- To collect the data needed to validate the CSE-IT, WestCoast piloted the tool in 56 agencies in 22 California counties.
- Validation included statistical analysis, qualitative methods, and comparison to existing data sources for sites where such information was available.
- As of September 2017, WestCoast trained **4,500 service providers** to recognize the signs of exploitation. These providers **screened 14,500 youth** and **identified 1,700 youth** with clear indicators of exploitation.