

Guide to Responding to Exploited Youth

Support to End Exploitation Now (SEEN) Coalition

What can I look for?

STEP
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Any youth who discloses or raises concern that they may be trading sexual acts (in-person or online) for shelter, food, money, drugs, clothing, or anything of value to the youth. Risk factors may include: frequent running away, has new clothes or accessories with no explanation, has been associated with a known pimp, has been found in an area or on a website known for commercial sexual activity, or has scars or “branding” (i.e., tattoos, exploiter’s name).

What should I do?

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File a mandatory report of suspected child abuse (51A) with DCF’s Child Abuse Emergency Line: 1-800-792-5200. As a mandated reporter, you can file a 51A or contact a SEEN Case Coordinator directly.

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Whenever possible, alert a SEEN Case Coordinator that you have made this report by calling Sheelah Gobar at 617-304-4263 or emailing sheelah.gobar@mass.gov

What will happen?

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DCF will likely screen in the report and make an immediate, mandatory referral to the District Attorney (DA)’s Office.

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The DA referral will immediately be sent to a SEEN Case Coordinator.

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The SEEN Case Coordinator will contact by phone or email each provider connected to the child and convene a Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) conference call (typically within 48 hours of receiving the referral, or immediately in an emergency).

What will my involvement be?

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During the conference call, each Team member will share what they know about the exploitation concerns, including (if known): the level of youth’s involvement, nature of recruitment, connection to the perpetrator, and stage of recovery.

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The call will include risk assessment and result in “action steps” in the following areas: shelter/placement, interpersonal support, mental health care, medical/health care, criminal investigation of the alleged perpetrator and perpetrator lethality. Follow-up steps in each area will be articulated and a Team member will be identified as the person responsible for executing these steps.

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The Case Coordinator will facilitate ongoing communication among the Team, primarily via email. Team members will forward any updates or changes to the MDT plan to the Case Coordinator who will then inform the rest of the Team.

Why is this process necessary?

Sexually exploited youth have a variety of needs - that no one agency or discipline can meet. This Team response ensures that (1) each child will have access to the programs and services of the SEEN partnership (over 35 agencies in the Boston region), (2) no child is further victimized by the system and a lack of proper communication and coordination, and (3) pimps and other offenders are held accountable.

Who can I contact if I have questions?

Director of Anti-Trafficking & SEEN:

Sheelah Gobar | 617-304-4263 | sheelah.gobar@mass.gov

