



## Support to End Exploitation Now

A Multi-Disciplinary Response to Commercial Sexual Exploitation Of Youth

### A Ten Year Progress Report

2015

BOSTON, MA

The [SEEN \(Support to End Exploitation Now\)](#) program of the **Children's Advocacy Center of Suffolk County (CAC)** changed our community's response for child victims of [commercial sexual exploitation](#). In 2001, less than a dozen juveniles were arrested for prostitution in Massachusetts, let alone identified as victims deserving and in need of help. Over the last ten years, **SEEN** has received referrals and provided a coordinated, multidisciplinary response for more than 970 exploited and at-risk children in Suffolk County, alone.

Before **SEEN**, young victims in Massachusetts were statistically invisible. If recognized at all, exploited teens were frequently viewed as delinquents and treated as criminals. In turn, victimized youth did not benefit from the vital support services they so badly needed.

A lack of identification of exploitation and lack of communication among youth-serving agencies indicated a fractured system. The absence of protocol, universal screening & reporting, and data collection kept exploitation off the community radar. The most vulnerable youth remained invisible and endangered by the perpetrators and traffickers who relentlessly targeted them.

The **CAC**, committed to the safety and well-being of every child, took action. Along with law enforcement and service provider allies, the **CAC** led an unprecedented effort to change the system. Focusing on revolutionary cross-systems partnership, genuine collaboration, and mutual trust, the **CAC** created a groundbreaking exploitation-specific [response model](#).

Since 2004, **SEEN** has grown into a network of more than 35 partner agencies that strives to ensure every exploited child can access services and continue on a path towards healing. **SEEN** helps ensure that victims are not punished as "delinquents" and that true perpetrators are held accountable for their crimes.

During 2011 **SEEN**, together with the **Office of District Attorney Daniel F. Conley**, was instrumental in drafting the [Safe Harbor](#) provisions in Massachusetts's first-ever anti-human trafficking law. Today, across the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, commercial sexual exploitation is statutorily defined as child abuse and recognized as a reportable condition.

The **CAC's** commitment to victims and those at risk is as strong today as it was on the first day. In 2014 alone, referrals reached a new high of 167 **SEEN** cases. In the coming years, as Massachusetts's Safe Harbor legislation is implemented statewide, and as community awareness of commercial sexual exploitation continues to grow, **SEEN** will continue to identify children in need of help and connect this most vulnerable population to the support it deserves – and just as important - that is now available.

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*For more information about raising awareness and prevention of the commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC): contact SEEN Coordinator [Elizabeth Bouchard](#) at 617.779.2145. For more information on how professionals can effectively use and implement a multidisciplinary response to CSEC: contact [Susan Goldfarb](#) at 617.779.2146.*

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