

Guide to Responding to Exploited Youth Support to End Exploitation Now (SEEN) Coalition

What to look for?

STEP
1

Any youth who discloses or raises concern that he/she may be trading sex for shelter, food, money, drugs, clothing or anything of value. Risk factors or signs 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/pimps name).

What to do?

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File a mandatory report of suspected child abuse (51A) with DCF (Child-at-Risk Hotline: 1-800-792-5200). If you are not a mandated reporter, you can file a 51A or contact the SEEN Case Coordinator directly.

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

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).

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The DA referral will immediately be sent to the 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 conference call (immediately in an emergency; typically within 48 hours of receiving the referral).

What will my involvement be?

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During the conference call, each Team member will share what he/she knows about the exploitation concerns, including (if known) 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.

STEP
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The Case Coordinator will facilitate ongoing communication among the Team, primarily via email. Team members will forward 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 (1) each child will have access to the programs and services of the SEEN partnership (over 35 agencies in 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?

SEEN Program Manager:

Sheelah Gobar @ (617) 304-4263 or sheelah.gobar@state.ma.us

