



The Goal: Eliminate Child Sex Trafficking

A Guide for Coaches

What is CST?

Child Sex Trafficking (CST) is a form of child abuse that occurs when a child under 18 is advertised, solicited or exploited through a commercial sex act in which sex is traded for something of value – such as money, drugs, or a place to stay.

It's important to remember – there is no such thing as child prostitution and that phrase should never be used when referring to child sex trafficking.

Who is Involved?

A trafficker is anyone who profits from selling a child for sexual acts. This includes family members, friends, gang members foster parents, or romantic partners. In some cases, there is no identified trafficker and it is the buyer who is directly exploiting the child's vulnerabilities.

CST victims could be anyone. The National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC) has received reports of child sex trafficking from every U.S. state and type of community. Victims of these reports represent all genders, ages, socioeconomic backgrounds, citizenship status, and family types.

While **any child can be targeted**, research has revealed that youth who lack strong support networks, have historical trauma, are experiencing homelessness, are being bullied, or are marginalized by society are at a higher risk.

What Can Coaches Do?

As a coach and trusted adult, you play a major role in a child's support network. You are uniquely positioned to spot changes in a child's behavior that may indicate potential abuse. It is important to know the red flags of child sex trafficking, such as when a child:

- Has unexplained absences from school/ practice
- Chronically runs away from home
- Has a close association with an overly controlling adult (may claim this is a boyfriend/girlfriend)
- Significantly changes their behavior, including their online activity
- Abruptly disconnects from family or friends
- Has tattoos or branding, such as those symbolizing money, and that the child is reluctant to explain
- Stops engaging in activities they previously enjoyed
- Has secret cellphones or multiple cellphone numbers
- Is in possession of material goods inconsistent with the child's access to money
- Has unexplained access to large amounts of money, prepaid credit cards or hotel keys
- Uses language associated with trafficking such as "Trick", "The Life" or "The Game"

How to Take Action

No single indicator noted above necessarily means a child is being trafficked, nor is it a comprehensive list of red flags, but it may be indicative of other types of abuse. If something doesn't seem right, ask questions. Your time with the child before, during or after a sports practice provides an excellent opportunity to **ask questions** or offer support. The child may be unwilling to talk about any problems at first, and CST victims may not see themselves as victims or disclose their abuse because of fear, shame or loyalty to their trafficker. Remember, it's not a child's responsibility to ask for help: it's the responsibility of the adults to support and protect children.



If you believe a child is being trafficked, **make a report to the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children at 1-800-843-5678 or online at [CyberTipline.org](https://www.cybertipline.org)**



[SafetoCompete.org](https://www.SafetoCompete.org)

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