

CHILD AND ADOLESCENT SEX TRAFFICKING FOR SCHOOL COUNSELORS

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 **800-THE-LOST**
NATIONAL CENTER FOR MISSING & EXPLORED CHILDREN

OBJECTIVES

1

Increase awareness of sex trafficking among children and teenagers in school settings

2

Describe indicators and symptoms of sex trafficking among children and teenagers

3

Explore various trauma-informed interventions when working with this population, as well as cultural, ethical, and legal implications for clinical practice.

LOI: INCREASE AWARENESS OF SEX
TRAFFICKING AMONG CHILDREN AND
TEENAGERS IN SCHOOL SETTINGS

Youth Sex Trafficking In Texas

- The Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) of 2000 defines sex trafficking, a type of human trafficking, as “a commercial sex act induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such an act has not attained 18 years of age” (Pub. L. No. 106-386).
- **Sex trafficking is trading sex acts for anything of value (food, money, drugs, alcohol, gifts, place to stay, rent)**
- In Texas, almost 79,000 minors and youth victims of sex trafficking were reported by the end of 2016 (Institute on Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault, [IDVSA], 2016).
- 20% of all Human trafficking cases come out of Texas
- 13 years old is the average age a child is first exploited through prostitution (IDVSA, 2016)
- Highly correlated with substance use, mental health diagnosis, physical conditions, and suicidal behavior (Cole, Sprang, Lee, & Cohem 2016; Edinburgh, Pape-Blabolil, Harpin, & Saewyc, 2015; Muftic & Finn, 2013; Ulloa, Salazar, & Monjaras, 2016).

Common Misconceptions

(Kunz, Baughman, Yarnell, & Williamson, 2018)

- ❖ Human trafficking only happens in poor countries.
- ❖ Human smuggling is an example of trafficking.
- ❖ Only girls and women are victims.
 - 80% of all victims are female
 - Males are also trafficked
- ❖ Most people in the commercial sex industry choose to do it, earn a lot of money, and find pleasure and enjoyment in their work.
- ❖ Child trafficking victims are usually kidnapped.
- ❖ The typical pimp looks like what used to be portrayed in the media.
- ❖ Why don't they just run?

Current Recruitment And Types Of St

Types

- Commercial sexual exploitation
- Pimp-controlled trafficking
- Gang related trafficking
- Survival sex
- Familial trafficking
- Forced marriages

(National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, 2018)

Targeted

- **Online**
- **Shopping malls**
- **Bus stops**
- **Schools**
- **After school programs**
- **Foster homes**
- **Parks**
- **Restaurants**
- **Other places where teens gather**

Tricked

- **Gifts**
- **Place to stay**
- **Affection before revealing their true intent**

Traumatized

- **Psychological manipulation**
- **Threats to self or loved ones**
- **Force**
- **Coercion (e.g. photos, videos)**
- **Physical violence**
- **Sexual violence, harassment, and rape**

Sex Trafficking Power and Control

(Polaris Project, 2010)



Recruitment Tactics

- ❖ Grooming by providing expensive items or basic needs
- ❖ Grooming by fulfilling emotional needs (spending, time, listening, giving compliments)
- ❖ Peer pressure
- ❖ Using pictures, personal information, or anything else that might cause fear of embarrassment or fear of getting in trouble with family, school, law, etc.
- ❖ Engaging in survival sex to fulfill basic needs
- ❖ Online recruitment through social media or chat rooms

Traffickers find victims through:

SOCIAL NETWORK

HOME NEIGHBORHOOD

CLUBS OR BARS

INTERNET

SCHOOL

And lure them through promises of:



Protection



Love



Adventure



Home



Opportunity

(Shared Hope International, 2019)

Force, Fraud and Coercion in the Context of Sex trafficking

❖ **Force**

- Physical Assault
- Sexual Assault
- Physical Confinement or isolation

❖ **Fraud**

- Fraudulent employment offers
- False promises about living or work conditions
- Withholding wages
- Posing as a friend or romantic partner

❖ **Coercion**

- Threats to life, safety, family members or others
- Threats of deportation or arrest
- Debt bondage
- Withholding legal documents
- Psychological manipulation
- Blackmail

Sex Trafficking And Social Media

- The availability of mobile technology to American youth makes them especially vulnerable to sex traffickers. Most of today's youth (75%) possess cell phones which has increased the number of teens receiving unwanted texts or spam and sexually suggestive text messages, including nude photographs (Lenhart, Ling, Campbell, & Purcell, 2010).
- Youth are recruited through social media in places like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, online gaming chat rooms, or dating apps looking for someone who is having trouble at home, or with friends.
- 58 % of victims eventually meet their traffickers face to face, 42 % who initially met their trafficker online never met their trafficker in person and were still trafficked (Kunz et al., 2018).
- Technology offers traffickers ease in advertising multiple victims at one time.
- Several advertising and sales sites browsed by "johns/sugar daddies," such as Cityxguide, Skipthegames, Bedpage, Seekingarrangement.com and sugar-babies.com also put youth at risk to be easily recruited (Kunz et al., 2018).

**LO2: DESCRIBE INDICATORS AND SYMPTOMS
OF SEX TRAFFICKING AMONG CHILDREN AND
TEENAGERS**

Contributing Factors of Vulnerability and Risk

- Developmental disabilities
- Physical, sexual, and psychological abuse, and neglect
- Risky Sexual Behavior including multiple partners and unprotected sex, history of STIs
- Running away and involvement with Law Enforcement
- Contact with child welfare
- History of drug and alcohol use
- Family dysfunction, chaotic parenting, poverty, and/or history of exploitation in the family
- Immigration status
- Mental health concerns
- Academic issues
- Gang affiliation
- Low self-esteem
- Bullying
- Wanting love, affection, and attention
- Peer pressure



(Greenbaum, 2018; Kim, Maclaughlin, Fuentes, 2019)

Populations Especially
Vulnerable To Sex-trafficking

Racial/Ethnic
minorities

LGBTQ
identities

Lower
socioeconomic
status

Foster care

Ability
(disability)

Foreign
populations

Activity

(Kim, Maclaughlin, Fuentes, 2019)

What vulnerabilities can you identify in the populations that you work with? What services or resources are in place for addressing those vulnerabilities in your school and community? How can you better coordinate responding to disclosures?

- It is important to remember that all youth regardless of income, family composition, and school have some level of risk. All people, both adults and youth, have moments of vulnerability. Create two lists that represent the following:
 1. The most likely vulnerabilities of a youth from an under-resourced family.
 - *Examples: Pressure to provide financially, homelessness*
 2. The most likely vulnerabilities of a youth coming from a middle-class family.
 - *Examples: Low self-esteem, pressure to fit in and be accepted, loneliness*

Potential Presenting Concerns

- ❖ Socializing problems
- ❖ Problematic behaviors
- ❖ Depression and suicidal ideations or attempts
- ❖ Psychosis
- ❖ Trauma symptoms
- ❖ Poor school performance
- ❖ Teen pregnancy
- ❖ Substance use
- ❖ Traumatic injury



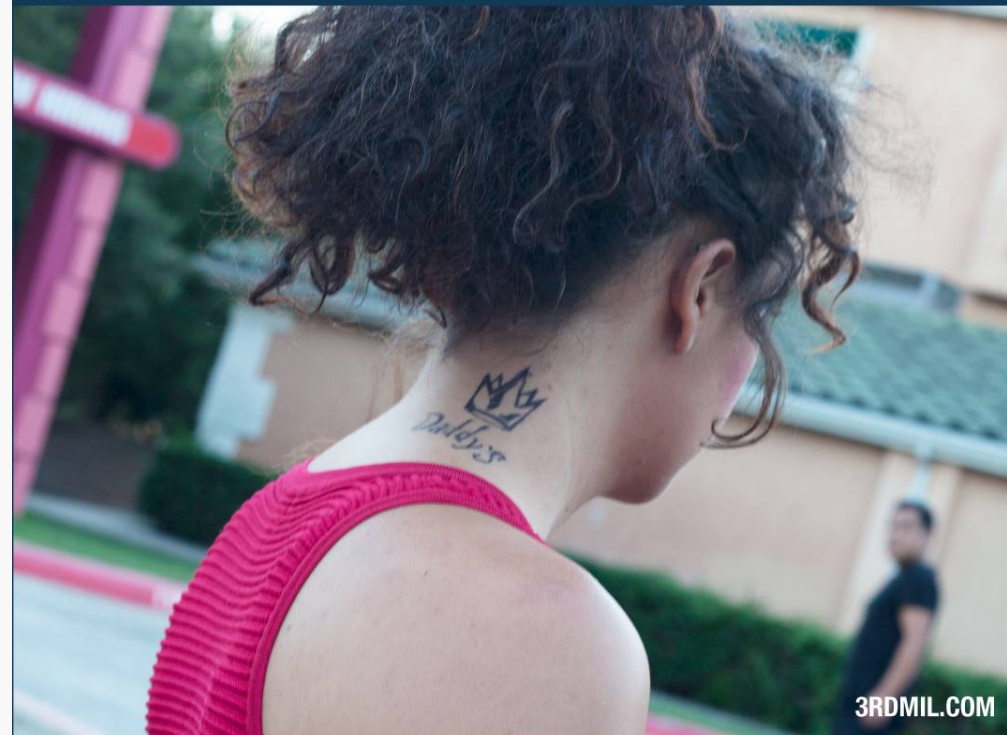
Red Flags Indicators: Behavioral

- ❖ Seems depressed or anxious
- ❖ Significant change in behavior, including increased virtual behavior, or associates with a new group of friends
- ❖ Avoids answering questions or lets others speak for him or her
- ❖ Appears frightened, resistant, or belligerent to law enforcement
- ❖ Seems coached in talking to law enforcement or other figures of authority
- ❖ Lies about age and identity
- ❖ Looks to others before answering questions
- ❖ Does not ask for help or resists offers to get out of the situation (child does not self-identify as a victim)
- ❖ Uses trafficking-related terms like “Trick,” “The Life,” or “The Game”
- ❖ Is preoccupied with “getting money” (e.g., displaying photos of cash)

Traffickers “stamp” their victim with "brand" or "logo", often a tattoo on the shoulder, neck, or back.



STYLISH TAT?



3RDMIL.COM

OR BRANDING TATTOO FROM HER TRAFFICKER?

Red Flag Indicators: Physical

- ❖ Flat affect, withdrawn or hostile/aggressive
- ❖ Signs of PTSD
- ❖ Suspicious injuries
- ❖ Evidence of substance use/misuse
- ❖ Signs of malnutrition
- ❖ Has large amount of
 - ❖ Cell phones and/or electronic devices
 - ❖ Large amounts of cash or pre-paid credit cards
 - ❖ Has items that do not fit his or her current situation
- ❖ Has no ID
- ❖ Has unusual and unexplained sexual paraphernalia
- ❖ Unusual or unexplained travel and or hotel/motel stay
- ❖ Has a tattoo or has been burned or branded on the shoulder, neck, or back
- ❖ Presence of an overly controlling "boyfriend" or older female
- ❖ References online classified ads or escort websites
- ❖ Has notebooks or slips of paper containing phone numbers, dollar amounts, names, or addresses



Child Traumatic Stress

- ❖ Physical and emotional responses of a child to events that threaten the life and or physical integrity of the child or someone important to the child
- ❖ Repeated exposure to traumatic events are likely to affect a child behaviorally, socially, cognitively, physically, and psychologically.
- ❖ Severe, prolonged, and uncontrolled life stressors, activate a prolonged biological stress response
 - ❖ Physiological and Neurological Responses to Trauma

LO3: EXPLORE VARIOUS TRAUMA-INFORMED INTERVENTIONS WHEN WORKING WITH THIS POPULATION, AS WELL AS CULTURAL, ETHICAL, AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS FOR CLINICAL PRACTICE.

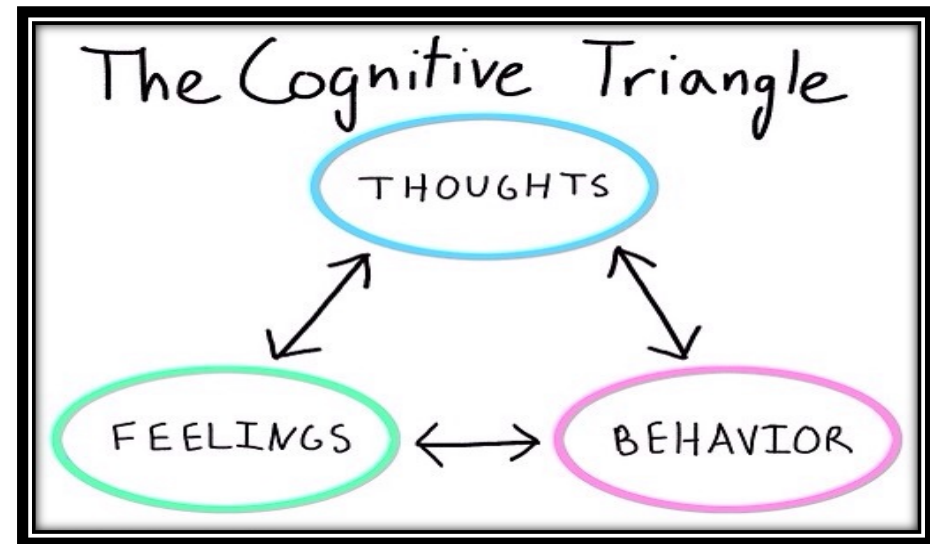
Trauma Informed Interventions

- ❖ Cognitive Behavior Therapy (CBT)
- ❖ Solution-Focused Brief Therapy (SFBT)
- ❖ Creative/Expressive Art Interventions



Cognitive Behavior Therapy (CBT)

- ❖ Cognitive Behavioral Therapy is a problem-focused and time-limited psychotherapy that is grounded in the CBT theory(Beck, 1989)
- ❖ Individuals in CBT learn to **identify and correct problematic behaviors** by applying a range of different skills that can be used to stop problem-behavior and to address the **underlying thought process** that lead to wide range of other problems that often co-occur with it.



Resources for CBT in Schools

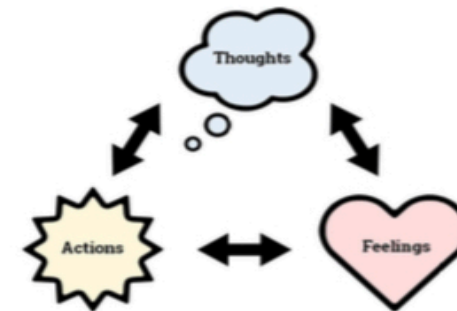
<https://www.therapistaid.com/worksheets/cbt-for-kids.pdf>

Thoughts Feelings Actions

Everyone has problems, both big and small. To better solve your big problems, it helps to learn how your **thoughts**, **feelings**, and **actions** are connected.

Imagine you have an upcoming test, and you think "I'm going to fail". Because of this thought, you start to worry. You are so worried that you feel sick just thinking about the test. Because it's so uncomfortable, you decide not to study.

The thought ("I'm going to fail") led to a feeling (worry), which led to an action (not studying). What might have changed if you had a different thought?



Thoughts are the words that run through your mind. They're the things you tell yourself about what's going on around you. There are many different thoughts you could have about a single situation.



Feelings come and go as different things happen to you. You might feel happy, angry, and sad, all in one day. Some feelings are uncomfortable, but they are not bad. Everyone has these feelings from time-to-time.



Actions are the things you do, or the way you behave. Your thoughts and feelings have a big impact on how you act. If you feel happy, you are likely to do nice things. But if you feel angry, you might want to act mean.

Solution-Focused Brief Therapy (SFBT)

- ❖ Strengths-based and Positive orientation
- ❖ Growth and future oriented
- ❖ Shift from problem-orientation to solution-orientation
- ❖ Emphasis on constructing solutions rather than focusing on problem-solving
- ❖ The goals define what clients want to be different in their lives, and resources are identified to help meet these goals
- ❖ With SFBT, the conversation is directed toward developing and achieving the client's vision of solutions.

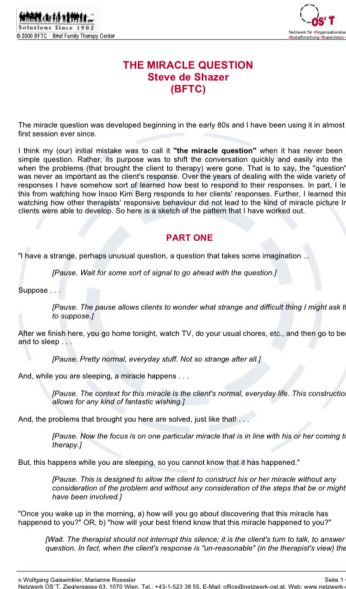


Solution-Focused Brief Therapy (SFBT) Resources

- ❖ Developed in the 1980s by Steve de Shazer and Insoo Kim Berg from the Brief Family Therapy Center (BFTC) in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. (De Shazer, 2007).

- ❖ “The Miracle Question”, “Problem-Talk”, “Solution-Talk”

<http://www.netzwerk-ost.at/publikationen/pdf/miraclequestion.pdf>



The Miracle Question



? If a miracle happened overnight and your problem is solved, if **things went better** (a little bit less worse)...

? ...How would you know?

? ...WHAT would you notice?

? ... WHAT would be different?

? WHAT else?
(SILENCE)

? WHAT else?
(SILENCE)

✓ We want as rich a description as possible of the **solution state**:

? What would you **see**? (Visual)

? What would you **hear**? (Auditory)

? What would you **feel**? (Kinesthetic)

? What would you be **doing** differently?

✓ The **miracle question** gives us the **good goal** in the **client's key words**.

Creative-Expressive Art Interventions

- ❖ Painting, Drawing, Journaling, Art trading cards (Garrett, 2015)
- ❖ Mindfulness (Ortiz & Sabinga, 2017)
- ❖ Chair Yoga (Gulden & Jennings, 2016)



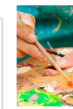
Drawing



Art



Collage



Painting



Dance/Drama



Pottery



Meditation



Journaling



Letter-writing



Visualization



Music



Photography

Stress Management Activities for School Settings



1. Coloring 5-10 minutes
2. Bubbles-5-10 minutes
3. Aromatherapy-5-10minutes
4. Play-Dough-make something fun!-5-10 minutes
5. Mindfulness Meditation 5-10 minutes

What is Mindfulness?



Mindfulness means maintaining a **present-moment awareness** of our thoughts, feelings, bodily sensations, or surrounding environment. (Hayes, Follette, & Linehan, 2004.)



It also includes the **intentional** nurturing of **positive states** of mind such as kindness and compassion.

MINDFULNESS BENEFITS

Lowers stress

Improves focus
and
concentration

Develops
empathy

Improves sleep

Improves
impulse control

Increases self-
awareness

Improves ability
to manage
emotions and
behaviors

Where does mindfulness fit in schools?

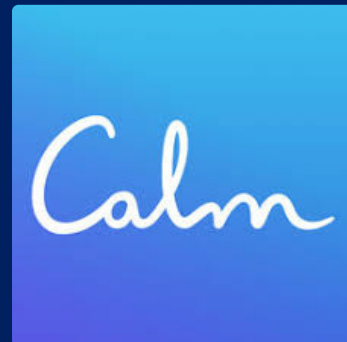
Mindfulness can support student learning and wellbeing in two important, and interconnected, ways. (ASCA, 2019)

1. As a program to support readiness for learning across all curriculum areas.

2. As an important component of a social and emotional learning curriculum.

Mindfulness Resources

<https://www.therapistaid.com/worksheets/mindfulness-for-children.pdf>



Practice Mindfulness Meditation: Meditation Apps-
Simple Habit & Calm
5-10 minutes of meditation a day for busy lives!

Mindfulness Exercises for Children

Build a Stress Ball

If you're feeling brave, and are prepared to clean up a mess, provide the children with balloons, flour, and funnels to build their own stress balls (you may want to double-layer the balloons). Some other filling options include rice, small beads, or the leftover dots from punched paper. Once the kids have built their own stress balls, try using them with *The Feeling Exercise*.

The Body Squeezing Exercise

Have the children sit or lie down in a comfortable position, and ask them to squeeze and relax each of the muscles in their body one-by-one. They should hold each squeeze for about five seconds. After releasing the squeeze, ask the kids to pay attention to how it feels when they relax. Children understand this exercise better if you help them visualize how they can squeeze a particular muscle using imagery, such as the following:

1. Curl your toes tight like you are picking up a pencil with your feet.
2. Tense your legs by pretending like you are standing on your tippy-toes, trying to look over a fence.
3. Suck in your stomach as if you are trying to slide through a narrow opening.
4. Make fists with your hands and pretend like you are trying to squeeze all of the juice out of an orange.
5. Pretend like a bug landed on your nose, and you're trying to get it off without using your hands. Try to scrunch your face and move your jaw to make it fly away!

The Five Senses Exercise

Take the children outside if the weather is nice, and have them lie silently in the grass. Begin to call out each of the five senses in turn (sight, smell, sound, taste, touch), and ask the children to notice everything they can with that particular sense, until you call out the next one. This exercise can also work well on walks, and in a number of other situations.

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Mindfulness Exercises for Children

The Feeling Exercise

Collect a number of interesting objects such as feathers, putty, stones, or anything else that might be interesting to hold. Give each child an object, and ask them to spend a minute just noticing what it feels like in their hand. They can feel the texture, if their object is hard or soft, and the shape. Afterwards, ask the children to describe what they felt. With bigger groups, pair children off to take turns completing the exercise together.

The Seeing Game

Ask the children to spend one minute silently looking around the room. Their goal is to find things in the room that they've never noticed. Maybe there are some big things like a poster or a picture, or just little details like cracks in the ceiling or an interesting pattern on the door. After the minute is up ask the kids to share the most interesting new things they noticed.

Ocean Breathing

Have the children sit or lie down in a comfortable position. Ask everyone to slowly breathe in through their nose, and then out through their pursed lips (as if they are blowing through a straw). Point out that the slow and steady breathing sounds like ocean waves, gently crashing on shore. Let the children continue breathing and making the ocean sound for one to two minutes.

The Power of Listening

Ring a bell, a wind chime, or anything else that creates a long trailing sound. Ask each child to listen, and silently raise their hand when they can no longer hear the sound. After the ringing ends, ask the children to continue listening to any other sounds they can hear for the next minute. When the minute ends, go around the room asking everyone to tell you what sounds they heard.

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Mindfulness Practice



Mindfulness Meditation



Chair Yoga

Body Movement 5 minutes -Activity



[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=erj8eaD_OmM#
action=share](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=erj8eaD_OmM#action=share)

Office of the Governor's Initiative on Child Sex Trafficking

- ❖ Increased community awareness to improve protection and decrease overall numbers trafficked
- ❖ Early identification and connections to services to reduce trauma
- ❖ Recover via safe place and specialized services to stop victimization
- ❖ Heal by providing supports to allow survivors to thrive
- ❖ Justice via increase case filings and convictions of both traffickers and buyers



Protection Strategies

- ❖ Raising community awareness regarding CST
- ❖ Strengthening child and youth protective factors
- ❖ Supporting school-based prevention
- ❖ Providing prevention education to youth
- ❖ Reducing demand



What Can I Do In The School Setting?

- ❖ Train School Personnel to recognize and respond to CST
- ❖ Develop, update, and implement policies regarding CST
- ❖ Integrate safety messages into programming and prevention education services
- ❖ Inform families and other supports involved in students' lives
- ❖ Create a prevention-oriented school environment
- ❖ Provide youth education on CST
- ❖ Promote peer awareness and support
- ❖ Interventions for different ages
- ❖ Teaching internet safety
- ❖ Refer to appropriate support services



DO's

- ❖ "I" questions can be very helpful. For example, "I am concerned because..."
- ❖ Pay attention to your body language. Face the child/youth and make eye contact. Show interest, empathy and understanding through words, nods, and facial expressions. Speak calmly.
- ❖ Pay attention to a child's/youth's body language during and after their response to your question. Their body language should be congruent with what they are verbalizing.
- ❖ Label the behavior, not them. For example, "you're involved in prostitution" rather than "you're a prostitute."
- ❖ Emphasize the child's/youth's own choice and wishes in the recovery process.
- ❖ Assess client's stage of change
- ❖ Focus on the reduction of shame and the building of resiliency and self-efficacy

DON'Ts

- ❖ Dispute facts or comment on the child's/youth's motivations. This is likely to stop the flow of information.
- ❖ Expect the child/youth to recognize their situation as exploitative or to present themselves as a victim in need of immediate intervention or rescuing.
- ❖ React verbally or physically in a way that communicates disgust or disdain.
- ❖ Expect the child/youth to disclose all of the details of their abuse. Sometimes difficult information will need to be gathered in stages.

Cultural, Ethical, And Legal Implications For Clinical Practice

What other ethical and cultural considerations exist when working with this population?

- ❖ Cultural consideration for different interventions
- ❖ Presentation of symptoms (Chico, Laura, Shipler, 2009)
- ❖ Ethical and Legal Considerations
 - Duty to report: Need to be aware of policies and procedures in your campus and school district
 - Limits to confidentiality and privacy
 - Scope of practice
 - Documentation
 - Knowledge of community resources



Action Plan



QUESTIONS?

THANK YOU!

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