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# Florida Department of Children and Families Annual Human Trafficking Report 2014-15 Federal Fiscal Year



Mike Carroll  
Secretary

Rick Scott  
Governor

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Mission: To work in partnership with local communities to protect the vulnerable, promote strong and economically self-sufficient families, and advance personal and family recovery and resiliency

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## Florida Department of Children and Families

### Annual Human Trafficking Report December 2015

#### Background

Section 39.001(5), F.S., establishes the following goals for the treatment of sexually exploited children who are residing in the dependency system:

- Ensure these children are safe.
- Provide for the treatment of such children as dependent children, rather than as delinquents in the criminal or juvenile systems.
- Sever the bond between exploited children and traffickers, and reunite these children with their families or provide them with appropriate guardians.
- Enable these children to be willing and reliable witnesses in the prosecution of traffickers.

#### Purpose

This report provides information as required in section 39.524(3), F. S., as follows:

- The number of children placed in safe houses and safe foster homes during the year.
- The criteria used to determine the placement of children.
- The number of children who were evaluated for placement.
- The number of children who were placed based upon the evaluation.
- The number of children who were not placed.
- The number of children who were referred to a safe house or safe foster home for whom placement was unavailable.
- The counties in which such placement was unavailable.

The majority of activities described within this report cover activities that occurred between October 1, 2014 and September 30, 2015 (Federal Fiscal Year), unless otherwise noted.

From October 1, 2014 through June 2015, the Department of Children and Families recorded Human Trafficking allegations by four primary categories:

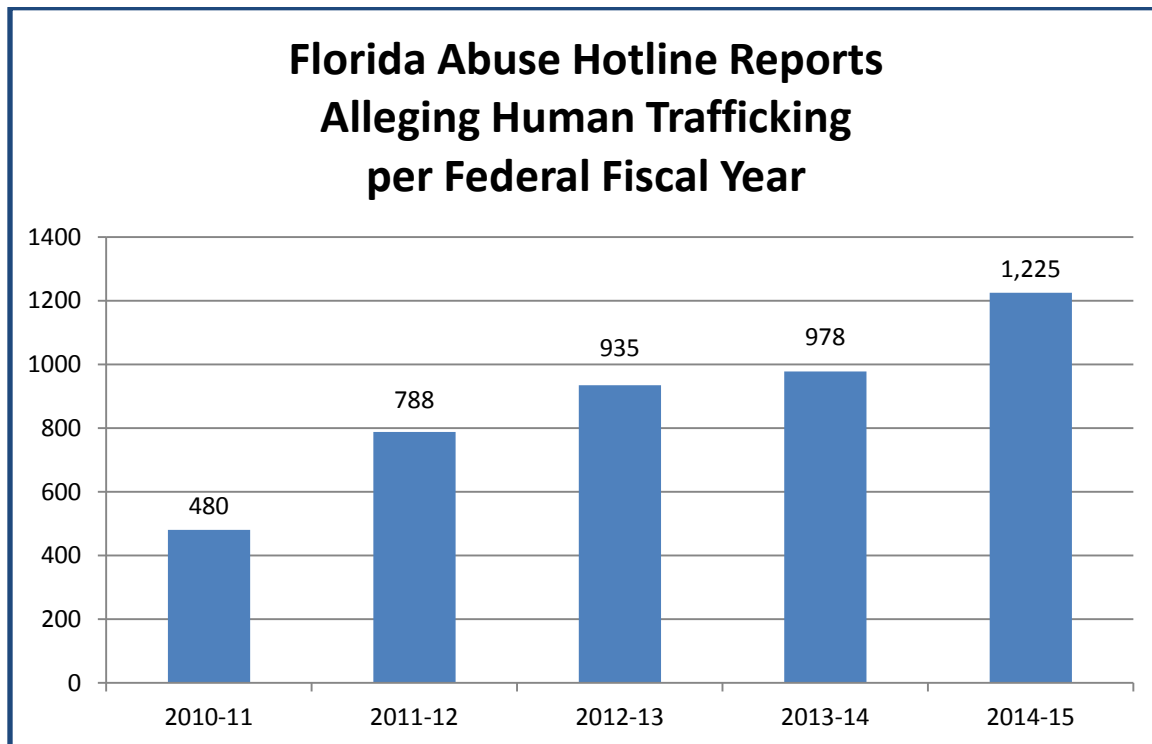
- *Human Trafficking-Commercial Sexual Exploitation of a Child (CSEC) Non-caregiver*: This maltreatment type was used for those cases in which the allegations appear to involve commercial sexual exploitation of a child (e.g., adult entertainment clubs, escort services, prostitution, etc.), and the alleged perpetrator is not considered to be a parent, legal guardian or caregiver.
- *Sexual Exploitation*: This maltreatment type was used for those cases in which the allegations appear to involve commercial sexual exploitation of a child (e.g., adult entertainment, escort services, prostitution, etc.), and the alleged perpetrator appears to be a parent, legal guardian or caregiver.
- *Human Trafficking-Labor*: This maltreatment type was used in those cases in which the allegations appear to involve issues associated with labor trafficking, slavery or servitude that do not appear to be sexual in nature.
- *Human Trafficking*: This maltreatment type was used solely by the Florida Abuse Hotline and was a general maltreatment code for both labor and commercial sexual exploitation forms of human trafficking.

Beginning in June 2015, the Department began recording Human Trafficking allegations by only two primary categories. The change in the way reports alleging human trafficking are recorded was aimed at better identifying and serving victims of human trafficking. The change was a part of revisions to update the Department's Maltreatment Index in order to ensure consistency with the new Child Welfare Practice Model. The two remaining categories used to record Human Trafficking allegations are:

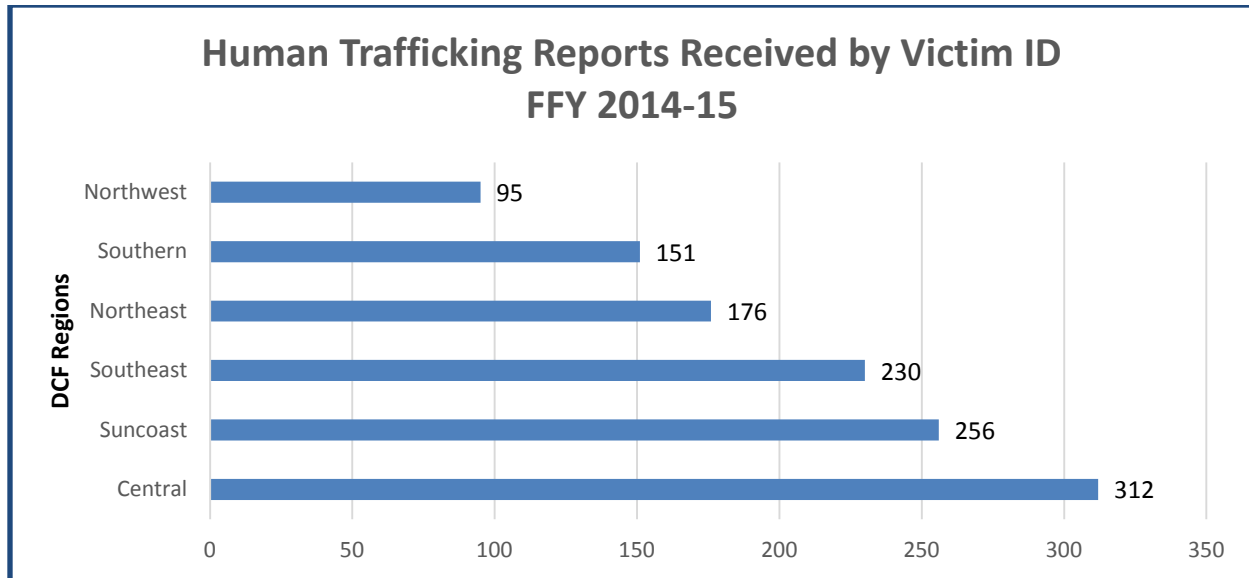
- *Human Trafficking-Commercial Sexual Exploitation of a Child (CSEC)*: This maltreatment type is used for those cases in which the allegations appear to involve commercial sexual exploitation of a child (e.g., adult entertainment clubs, escort services, prostitution, etc.). Investigative types for this category may be: *Caregiver*, *Other* or *Institutional*. This distinction separates reports based on whether or not the alleged perpetrator appears to be a parent, legal guardian or caregiver, or the alleged perpetrator appears to be an institution.
- *Human Trafficking-Labor*: This maltreatment type is used in those cases in which the allegations appear to involve issues associated with labor trafficking, slavery or servitude that do not appear to be sexual in nature.

## Investigative Intake

The number of reports to the Florida Abuse Hotline alleging human trafficking has increased each year since FFY 2010-11. During the FFY 2014-15, the trend continued with a 62 percent increase in the number of human trafficking reports to the Hotline over FFY 2013-14. During FFY 2010-11, the total number of reports, initial and additional, received by the Florida Abuse Hotline alleging one of the human trafficking maltreatments was 480. In FFY 2011-12, this number increased to 788, and over the course of FFY 2012-13, this number increased to 935. In FFY 2013-14, this number continued to increase to 978. In FFY 2014-15, there were 1,225 total reports received.



The Florida Department of Children and Families identifies the number of reports received by Victim ID Number per region. During the FFY 2014-15, there were a total of 1,220 victims identified in the 1,225 reports received. The Central Region received the highest number of alleged victims (312). Approximately 15% of the reports received statewide were male victims, which is consistent with the volume of reports received during the prior four years.



## Available Safe Houses and Safe Foster Homes

### Safe Houses

In FFY 2014-15, there were six safe houses available with a total of 32 beds. All of the safe houses are gender-specific and serve only females. Although the number of identified child victims of human trafficking is higher than the number of beds available in safe houses, these beds may not be filled at all times because decisions to place an individual child are based on the existing make-up of residents and the individual's specific needs. The complexity of the residents' needs may limit the number of children a safe home takes at any given time. Often, there is a desire to not introduce too many new children into a placement at any given time, to ensure good assimilation of the children into the program and staff engagement with the existing children. Each facility has its own intake and assessment process, and ultimately, determines the appropriateness of that child for that specific placement.

### Residential Campuses

There are two residential campus settings that have a specialized CSEC treatment for child victims of commercial sexual exploitation. The residential campus settings are able to serve female, male and transgender children. The beds available on these campuses fluctuate based on the total number of residents in all programs offered. These residential campuses also each have additional specialized treatment for CSEC victims experiencing substance abuse and for CSEC victims with intellectual disability.

## Safe Foster Homes

There were 12 beds available within the existing Citrus Helping Adolescents Negatively Impacted by Commercial Exploitation (CHANCE) Program, a pilot treatment program by Citrus Health Network, implemented in Miami-Dade County, Florida, to address the unique mental and behavioral health needs of youth who have been commercially sexually exploited.

In addition, Devereux Florida has begun recruiting in the Central Florida region for its DELTA Foster Home programs. In FFY 2014-15, Devereux had one Safe Foster Home bed available in the Central Region. The Safe Foster Home model will be able to serve male, female or transgender children; there is a one-child-in-a-residence standard.

## Adult Programs

Adult programs exist in the Suncoast, Southern and Central regions, with approximately 45 beds. Camillus House opened 12 beds in Miami this year.

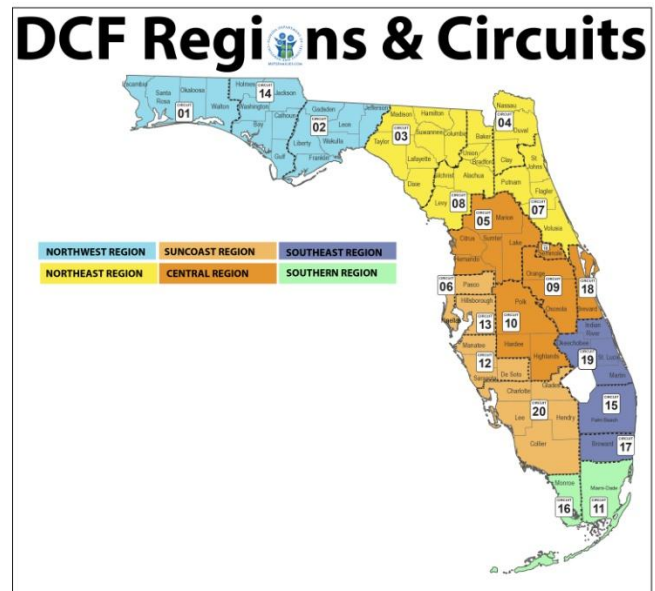
## Drop-in Centers

In addition, there are three drop-in centers located in the Southern and Suncoast regions. Kristi's House Project Gold is located in the Southern Region. The Wayne Foundation opened in May 2015 in the Suncoast Region, providing case management and therapeutic intervention. More Too Life, also located in the Suncoast Region, offers victim services, housing assistance, prevention and advocacy. Both of the programs in the Suncoast Region are led by human trafficking survivors.

## Availability of Specialized Placements

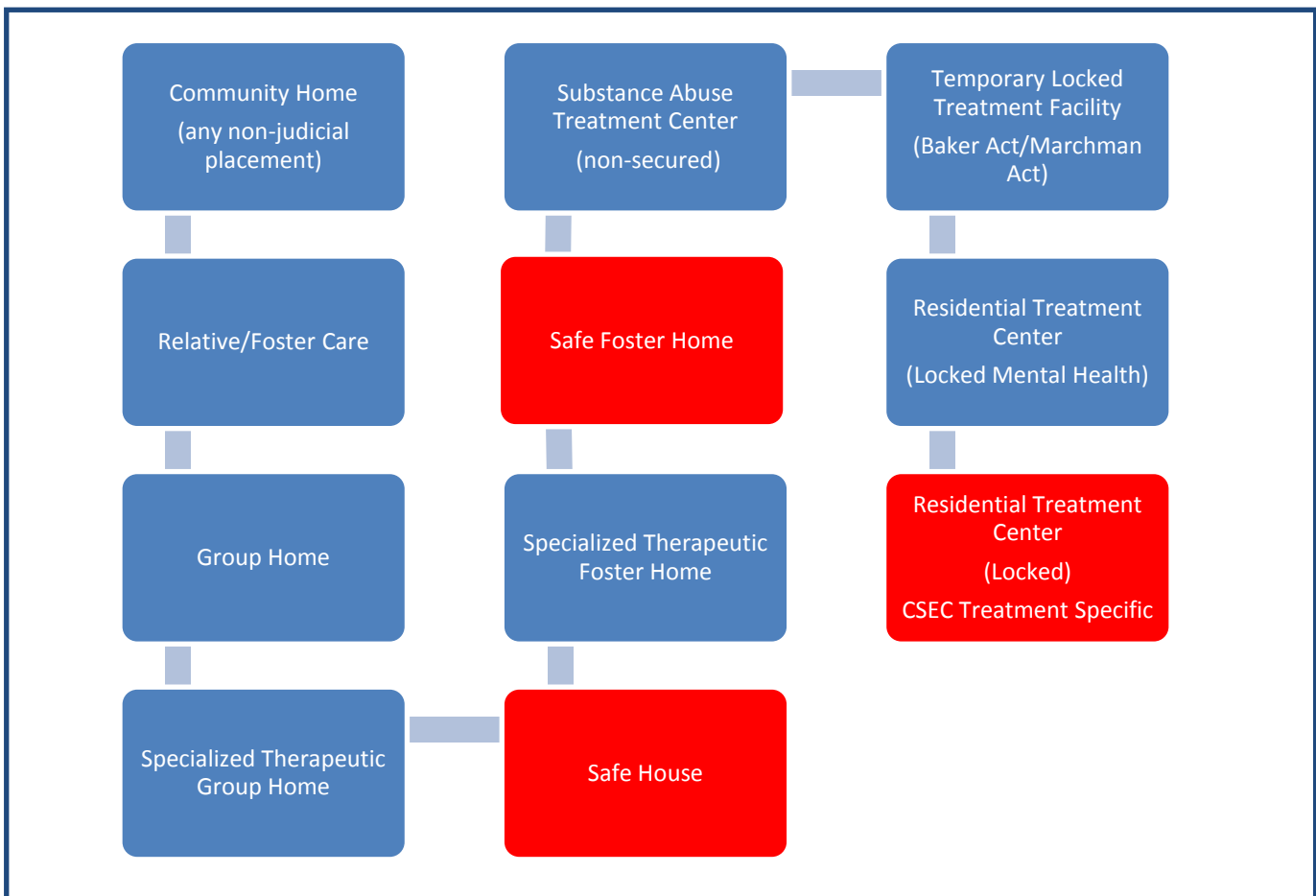
All specialized placements at this time exist in the Central, Suncoast, Southeast and Southern Regions. No CSEC programs exist in the Northeast or Northwest Regions. With the exception of the CHANCE program, which takes only children from the Miami area, all of the specialized programs are available to any child in the state of Florida. Therefore, while safe homes have not currently been established in the Northeast or Northwest, placement in specialized programs is available in the other regions.

As the number of treatment programs for human trafficking victims has increased, the need for even more specialized treatment has become more apparent. One example was discussed during the May 20,



2015 meeting of the Legislative and Special Initiatives Committee of the Florida Statewide Council on Human Trafficking. University of South Florida Assistant Professor of Criminology Dr. Joan Reid presented research findings focused on the issue of intellectual disability among human trafficking victims. “The percentage of girls with intellectual disabilities among sex trafficking victims was 30 percent, which is significant because only 1-3 percent of the population has an intellectual disability,” Dr. Reid said, citing her review of case records of trafficked girls from 2007 through 2014 in Tampa and Miami.<sup>1</sup>

### Florida’s Placement Continuum of Care for CSEC Victims Ages 18 and Under



*The above graphic illustrates the full continuum of care for child victims of commercial sexual exploitation in Florida. Children have the ability to move up and down from least restrictive to most restrictive, dependent on their needs. Placements in red reflect specialized CSEC placements.*

<sup>1</sup> University of South Florida. **Professor’s Research Focuses on Girls with Intellectual Disabilities.**  
<http://www.usfsp.edu/home/2015/05/28/professors-sex-trafficking-research-focuses-on-intellectual-disabilities/>

## Effectiveness of Specialized Programs

The University of South Florida has begun to evaluate the CHANCE program. Its most recent progress report, dated April 6, 2015, identifies promising outcomes. In particular, the report notes, “key behaviors such as school attendance, runaway behaviors, substance use, conduct problems, and delinquency have shown considerable improvements during their first six months of treatment (Armstrong, 2014).” The initial conclusions, such as “trauma in particular is very complex and may take considerable time before youth completely stabilize,” will aid in informing practice throughout the state.<sup>2</sup>

The Department is spearheading a clinical work group, which includes a goal of identifying performance metrics and outcomes for safe houses and safe foster homes. The research being generated by the University of South Florida will be used by the clinical work group to inform recommendations. The work group includes representatives from service providers, child welfare, community-based care lead agencies, juvenile justice, and survivor/advocacy organizations.

## Placement of Victims in Safe Houses and Safe Foster Homes

A Human Trafficking Screening Tool has been developed within the joint Department of Children and Families and Department of Juvenile Justice Statewide Tools workgroup. This tool is designed to assist child welfare professionals and Department of Juvenile Justice staff with identifying youth who have been victims of commercial sexual exploitation and determining the appropriate level of services needed. The tool aims to initiate a comprehensive conversation of the child’s needs and which components should be a priority in determining placement needs. The Department of Juvenile Justice launched the tool in its Juvenile Assessment Centers (JAC) statewide beginning February 27, 2015. The Department of Children and Families in April initiated the use of the tool among child protective investigators in two regions, with statewide implementation planned by early 2016.

Upon identification of a child victim of commercial sexual exploitation, community-based care lead agencies assess the child to determine the most appropriate placement. The current mechanism for assessment of placement is through the Multidisciplinary Team staffing (MDT). These staffings include a conversation between the child protective investigator, dependency case manager, criminal justice coordinator, and any other participant identified as relevant to the conversation, such as active law enforcement agents. The team discusses the specific needs of the child, risks or dangers to the child,

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<sup>2</sup> Armstrong, M., Johnson, M. Anderson, R., Landers, M., & Dollard, N. (2014). **Citrus Helping Adolescents Negatively Impacted by Commercial Exploitation (CHANCE) Pilot Study: Progress Report.** Tampa, FL; Louis de la Parte Florida Mental Health Institute. University of South Florida.



engagement of the child's family/support center, and the potential placements that exist. This conversation will also include any specific substance abuse and/or mental health treatment needs.

Between October 1, 2014 and September 30, 2015, community-based care lead agencies reported evaluating a total of 204 children for placement in a safe house or safe foster home. One hundred one (101) of the children were placed in a safe house or safe foster home based on evaluation.

Of the children evaluated for a safe home placement, 91 were not placed in a safe house or safe foster home, for a variety of reasons, including the ability to remain safe with a parent or with relatives with wraparound services, the child's refusal to participate (which is required by all CSEC safe houses), the child running away, the child "aging out" of foster care, the child being admitted to a juvenile justice program, specialized services sought for substance addiction or a higher level of mental health services required.

For 72 of the children referred for CSEC placement, such placement was unavailable. Community-based care lead agencies cited the following reasons safe homes were not available:

- Lack of capacity (no vacant beds).
- No available local resources.
- Program refusal due to the child's recruitment behavior; substance abuse; mental health; history of running away.
- Non-dependent children who were unwilling to engage in services.
- Non-dependent children who were involved with diversion services and not sheltered.
- Pregnant youth, who are not accepted into any specialized CSEC program.

At this time, there are no emergency placement options specifically for CSEC victims. There is often a delay between identifying the victim and placement in a specialized program. Available programs that focus on the specific trauma needs of these children have their own individualized intake and assessment processes. Such processes often require an interview of the child and/or a willingness of the child to participate in the program. Limitations on placement can also include factors such as gang affiliation and commonality of exploiter – meaning these types of factors must be considered in determining placement and the makeup of the safe house or CSEC program. Children who have a shared gang affiliation or a conflicting gang affiliation, or children who have shared exploiters, often cannot be placed together due to the degree of conflict it may cause in the home. Safe homes frequently refuse children who engage in recruitment activity, who display significant history of violence, or who have complex unmet needs, such as active drug use or non-compliant mental health treatment.

## Expenditures for Human Trafficking

In 2015, \$3,000,000 was appropriated from the General Revenue Fund to serve the needs of children who are victims of sexual exploitation and have been adjudicated dependent or who are the subject of an open investigation due to allegations of abuse, neglect or exploitation. As directed by the Legislature, the funds were provided to community-based care lead agencies for costs associated with placement and services for sexually exploited children.

Expenditures reported by the community-based care lead agencies indicate that they spent a total of \$3.99 million on CSEC services and placements for 191 youth during state fiscal year 2014-15. During this time, the number of days per child in a CSEC placement ranged from one to 390 days. Individual client expenses ranged from \$48 to \$122,688. Devereux Foundation received the largest share of the funding, serving 27 clients at a rate of \$432 per day for a total of \$1.3 million. Eight service providers received 81 percent of payments, based on data in the statewide automated child welfare information system, the Florida Safe Families Network (FSFN). Those eight providers were Devereux Foundation (36%), Citrus Health Network (19%), Redefining Refuge (6%), Wings of Shelter International (6%), Chrysalis Center Lilac (5%), Aspire Health Partners (3%), Vision Quest Sanctuary Ranch (3%) and Florida Baptist Children's Home – Porch Light (3%).

## Conclusion

Florida continues to lead the nation in its response to the issue of commercial sexual exploitation of children. During the 2014-15 federal fiscal year, there was increased progress in the identification of victims and increased awareness of the specialized needs of these victims in placement and treatment. The number of CSEC beds has increased, as well as the number of drop-in centers in the state. Child welfare professionals continue to see a need for the independent evaluation of placements and programs to fully understand and identify the best intervention options for the children served.

**To find out more about the legislative changes to support child victims of commercial sexual exploitation, go to this link:**

<http://centerforchildwelfare.fmhi.usf.edu/LegislativeChanges/HB7141.shtml>

**Child welfare professionals can find additional resources about human trafficking at:**

<http://centerforchildwelfare.fmhi.usf.edu/SexualExploitation/SexualExploitation.shtml>