

# Resiliency Interventions for Sexual Exploitation

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## Summary

R.I.S.E (Resiliency Interventions for Sexual Exploitation) is committed to the restoration and empowerment of female and LGBT/GNC youth exposed to, or at risk of, sexual exploitation and trafficking. Through trauma-specific services, collaborative partnerships and community outreach, RISE works to restore and reintegrate survivors, eradicate sexual exploitation and reduce the stigma surrounding sexual trauma in Santa Barbara County. RISE is committed to promoting hope and resiliency in female and LGBT/GNC youth, guiding them to be leaders in their pursuit of meaningful and enriching lives.

## Overview of Promising Practice

### Purpose/ Description

**The RISE Project is officially “featured as a promising practice identified by the [HEAT Institute](#)”**

Collaborating with several other Santa Barbara County government agencies, community-based organizations and spiritual groups, RISE Project seeks to develop and deliver a survivor/victim centered multi-layered approach consisting of gender-specific, trauma-focused, and biopsychosocial interventions and supports to restore and empower young females experiencing, or at risk of sexual exploitation and trafficking.

The core principles of RISE are EMPOWERMENT and RESTORATION achieved through a non-judgmental/non-shaming “survivor-driven”, community and system based service delivery program. Simply put, RISE meets youth where they are, both figuratively and literally. Each youth’s unique strengths, needs and preferences will be assessed through a comprehensive trauma-informed screening process designed to identify several biopsychosocial and “hierarchy of needs” factors including, trauma related symptoms, risk/protective factors, safety, socioeconomic/cultural/spiritual background, natural supports, education, AOD supports, medical/reproductive needs, housing/placement, vocational/pro-social, legal restoration and readiness for engagement. RISE works toward supporting each youth find their own sense of self, hope, purpose and belonging so she/he/they can become empowered in their own destiny.

### Geographic Scope

RISE services will be offered countywide to target populations residing in the Santa Maria, Lompoc, and Santa Barbara regions of Santa Barbara County. Due to a higher rate of sex trafficking activity, the Santa Maria and Lompoc regions will be allotted more resources and focus.

### Target Population(s)

The priority populations served by the RISE Project are females aged 10-19 and their families, specifically underserved African-Americans, Asian/Pacific Islanders, Latinas, indigenous Native Americans, and those identified as LGBTQ at risk of sexual exploitation or trauma; identified as Commercially Sexually Exploited Children (CSEC); or at risk of out-of-home placement, are residing in Juvenile Hall, foster care or group homes or “runaway youth”.

### Key Implementation Components and Partners

#### Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs

By adapting Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs (see CSEC Hierarchy of Needs Matrix) to promote a true biopsychosocial treatment model, RISE attends to each girl’s **Physiological**, **Safety**, **Social**, and **Esteem** needs while simultaneously providing intensive victim centered, trauma-focused and CSEC specific therapeutic interventions. RISE hopes to support and empower girls to advocate for their own lives in order to reach **self-actualization**, which will fortify/reinforce their complete exit from a life of sexual exploitation, trauma and unbalanced relationships. We believe our focus on the CSEC Hierarchy of Needs will fulfill previously unmet basic necessities which will reduce the ability for exploiters to use those unmet gaps to exploit girls and young women.

Please refer to the RISE Program Matrix to further understand how RISE uses traditional evidence-based and best practice therapy models, biopsychosocial therapy enhancements, and data tools to serve its clients.

## **Adapting Traditional Therapy Models and Biopsychosocial Therapy Enhancements**

Traditional trauma-informed evidence-based and best-practice therapy models will be enhanced with biopsychosocial activities and resources. Although RISE will use some traditional interventions and curriculums, due to the multi-faceted and complex issues of trauma and exploitation, significant cultural adaptations will be made to ensure that interventions resonate with the realities of this unique client population. RISE will use utilize traditional therapies such as Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT), Seeking Safety, Motivational Interviewing and Stages of Change Model (SCM) ([GEMS Stages of Change](#)). DBT is a therapy that helps clients regulate their extreme and opposing emotions and thoughts through developing skills in mindfulness, distress tolerance, interpersonal effectiveness, and emotional regulation. Seeking Safety is a female specific therapy model which helps people experiencing trauma and/or subsequent substance abuse to cope with and find safety in their lives.

The biopsychosocial therapy enhancements include individual and group wellness activities/supports, skill-building classes, psychoeducation, awareness courses and coercion resiliency through **Ending the Game™**. The enhancements can be broken down into three categories, biological, psychological, and social.

1. **Biological** enhancements attend to the physiological, medication, neurochemical, and genetic factors
2. **Psychological** enhancements validate the lived experiences of survivors, and attend to the emotional, learning, behavioral, belief and stress management factors
  - a. [Carissa Phelp's--Ending the Game™](#), a trauma-informed curriculum written by survivors to help survivors remain resilient to the psychological coercion that forestalls them from complete exit of sexual exploitation ("coercion resiliency").
3. **Social** enhancements attend to the familial, peer, cultural, socioeconomic, gender/racial oppression, love and belonging factors contributing to each girl's trauma experience.

These enhancements are provided through classes in Yoga, meditation, intentional thinking, interpersonal skill-building, artistic self-expression, self-care through hygiene, diet, exercise and cosmetology, vocational skill-building and spiritual awareness; and psychosocial education on gender oppression, impact of cultural norms, emotional/social/biological effects of trauma, socioeconomic inequalities, racism and gynecological health.

## **Program Tools**

RISE will use many tools throughout the program for collecting and evaluating information to monitor program efficacy and guide program development decisions. Some tools include: Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) Assessment, Social Emotional Health Scale, First Responder CSEC Screening Tool, Health and Wellness Needs Assessment, Commercial Sexual Exploitation Identification Tool (CSE-IT), My Social Inventory, Self-Care Safety Plan, Satisfaction Surveys etc.

## **Partnership and Collaboration**

Central to the success of the model was the pre-planning process and ongoing collaboration between all partners including: Law Enforcement, Juvenile Probation, Courts, Public Defender, District Attorney, Rape Crisis, DSS, Victim Witness, Santa Barbara County Human Trafficking Task Force, Department of Behavioral Wellness, Local Schools, CALM, UCSB, Medical Community, EMT's, Community Based Organizations, Guardians, Foster Parents, Peers/Mentors/Survivors, Spiritual Community and others. These collaborative partnerships have been key in shifting toward a CSEC or Trauma Lens and changing the culture from criminalization to treatment and support.

The importance of a multi-layered collaborative effort is illustrated via the Santa Barbara County Interagency Protocol, a memorandum of understanding (MOU) summarizing the roles and responsibilities of all partner agencies. The protocol establishes a multi-disciplinary team that assesses acute and long-term medical, psychiatric, housing, safety and forensic service needs for our girls.

Recognizing the importance of the faith community, RISE has partnered with Uffizi Order in efforts to educate the community on CSEC early interventions, develop a flex fund account to create a way to support non-traditional needs for CSEC that are not typically funded through other resources, and create transitional shelter/placements for sexually exploited girls and young women.

## Components of RISE:

- **A Female-Exclusive** trauma-informed team
- **Client/Family Driven** goal identification and treatment planning
- **Clinical Lead:** Licensed behavioral health clinician who is specifically trained to work with sex trauma and sexual exploitation survivors/victims
- **System Navigator:** A member of RISE who has built rapport with each girl to ensure consistent and easy access to services through providing transportation, “warm handoffs”, and advocacy within the child welfare, juvenile justice, educational, medical and mental health systems
- **Health and Wellness Advocate:** A licensed medical professional to attend to medical, reproductive, AOD and overall physical wellness. Physical health is greatly impacted by childhood trauma and attending to the biological health needs is paramount to assist in restoration
- **Rehabilitation Specialist:** An experienced practitioner that will work with each girl on developing a plan which includes numerous community based resources/supports to address vocational, pro-social and educational restoration and reintegration
- **Peer/Survivor Recovery Assistant:** A trained peer or survivor that can provide a unique parallel and empathetic perspective as well as act as a role model and advocate
- **Biopsychosocial Treatment Model** focusing on wellness, resilience and recovery supports which attend holistically to each girl through a biological, social, psychological, spiritual, cultural, and strengths based approach
- **CSEC Hierarchy of Needs** to address environmental needs, basic necessities and inalienable human rights i.e., food, clothing, shelter, safety, love, belonging, purpose, self-esteem and self-actualization
- **Coercion Resiliency** through Runaway Girl/Ending the Game™ program
- **Comprehensive Assessment, Screening and Identification Tools** that are culturally sensitive and trauma-informed. RISE helped to create a Santa Barbara County multi-collaborative “First Responder CSEC Identification Tool”
- **Non Traditional and Easy Access** to services, providers and supports through 24/7 crisis hotlines, mobile intake/treatment, flexible scheduling, transportation to and from appointments/supports, “warm hand-offs” and welcoming intake process
- **Non-Judgmental and Non-Shaming:** RISE will provide a “safe haven” for trauma exposed and exploited girls where they feel free to express themselves in an environment free of shame or judgment
- **RISE Center:** Outside of scheduled classes, groups, wellness activities and counseling, RISE provides a welcoming home-like setting for our girls to come and rest, make a meal, talk to their support team, work on projects, listen to music or obtain reproductive/hygiene/educational supports even if they don’t have an appointment
- **Outcome Measures** and ongoing multi-agency CQI/QA (Continuous Quality Improvements/Quality Assurance). RISE Project will also collect data on service delivery fidelity and outcomes to test for programmatic efficacy. We believe RISE can be used as a learning tool for providers to develop more effective ways of successfully treating this high risk population and provide insight into preventative measures
- **Early Intervention** to address ways to make our youth more resilient and knowledgeable in order to make them less susceptible to victimization (early social emotional skills training, social media awareness for youth and parents)
- **Outreach** for unidentified and underserved trauma exposed youth
- **Shelter/Placements:** RISE has contracted with Uffizi to seek out ways to fund and furnish 2-3 apartments to provide temporary to longer term shelter/placements for sexually exploited females between the ages of 18-25
- **Flexible Funds** effort to create a way to support non-traditional needs for CSEC that are not typically funded through other resources
- **Psycho-education and Trainings** to improve CSEC identification and Trauma/CSEC informed interventions and protocols county wide
- **Multi-Disciplinary Teams:** RISE regularly facilitates or participates in MDT’s and is an active member in SB County District Attorney’s HART Court (“*Helping Achieve Resiliency Treatment*”; a multi-disciplinary treatment team for CSEC youth involved in the Juvenile Justice system)

## ***Outcomes for Human Trafficking Victims***

The desired outcomes for Survivors:

- Move toward “self-actualization” through participating in the Four Stages of RISE and Ending The Game™ curriculum
- Increase understanding of sexual exploitation and the impacts on one’s life
- Increase emotion regulation and distress tolerance skills to gain mastery over negative emotions, reactivity and challenging life experiences
- Reduce incidents of running away by replacing with less harmful alternatives and “safe havens”
- Reduce substance abuse
- Improve physical health
- Improve stable housing
- Support Restoration and Reintegration by increasing access to and providing support for pro-social and vocational opportunities
- Reduce recidivism
- Reduce self-harm or suicidal thoughts and behaviors
- Improve social-emotional health
  - Build trust and practice healthy communication with safe caregivers and supports
  - Increase healthy boundary setting and attachments to develop and maintain positive interpersonal relationships
  - Improve positive self-regard, competency and leadership through realistic short and long term goal attainment and improved interpersonal interactions
  - Reframe negative self-identifications of “victim”, “damaged”, “worthless” to “survivor”, “resilient”, “valuable”
- Increase awareness of social media, grooming, domestic violence cycle of abuse, trauma bonding to build resiliency and reduce vulnerabilities to exploitation
- Increase awareness of gender oppression and the role “sisterhood” plays in female empowerment

## ***Funding***

The passage of California Proposition 63 Mental Health Service Act (MHSA) established funding to support county mental health programs and monitoring progress toward statewide goals for children, transition age youth, adults, and older adults and families. The Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission (MHSOAC) is the administrator of this fund.

## ***Additional Information***

**Traffickers/Exploiters often follow this process:**

- Identify the need of the child or individual
- Fulfill the need
- Remove any other resources and isolate the child or individual from safe providers or supports
- Exploit the child’s or individual’s dependence for need fulfillment

RISE Utilizes a **CSEC Hierarchy of Needs** approach to neutralize vulnerability for exploitation

## Sources

- National Child Traumatic Stress Network. (2015, October).
  - Facts for policymakers: Commercial sexual exploitation of youth
  - Ten things every Juvenile Court Judge Should know About Trauma and Delinquency
  - Trauma-Focused Interventions for Youth in the Juvenile Justice System
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children, Youth and Families (ACYF): “Guidance to States and Services on Addressing Human Trafficking of Children and Youth in the United States ”
- Child Welfare Council CSEC Action Team: Core Competencies for Serving Commercially Sexually Exploited Children (CSEC)
- National Human Trafficking Resource Center (NHTRC)
- National Center for Mental Health and Juvenile Justice Massachusetts School of Professional Psychology: “A Primer for Mental Health Practitioners Working With Youth Involved in the Juvenile Justice System, Robert Kinscherff, Ph.D., Esq.
- Center for Mental Health Services Research University of Massachusetts Medical School: “Traumatized Girls in the Juvenile Justice System”, Kenneth E. Fletcher, Ph.D.
- Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000 [United States of America].
- Southern Area Consortium of Human Services. (2014). Literature review: Commercial sexual exploitation of children.
- Shared Hope International. (2014). Protected innocence challenge: 2014 Analysis and recommendations California.
- Institute of Medicine and National Research Council of the National Academies. (2013). Commercial sexual exploitation and sex trafficking of minors in the United States.
- California Department of Social Services. (2015). Commercially sexually exploited children program fiscal year 2015-2016 allocation methodology and county plan instructions (All County Letter No. 15-48).
- The Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Youth: Stages of Change in CSEC Counseling. (2011, Summer). Connections: A Biannual Publication of Washington Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs, XIII, 7-10.
- Welfare & Institutions Code Sections 16524.6 – 16524.11. (2014).
- Senate Bill (SB) 855, Chapter 29, Statutes of 2014. (2014).
- California Child Welfare Council: Ending the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children: “A Call for Multi-System Collaboration in California”

# RISE Project CSEC Hierarchy of Needs Matrix

## BIO PSYCHO SOCIAL MODEL

	PHYSIOLOGICAL <sup>1</sup>	SAFETY <sup>2</sup>	LOVE/BELONGING <sup>3</sup>	ESTEEM <sup>4</sup>	SELF-ACTUALIZATION	TOOLS
<b>STABILIZATION:</b> <b>“Out of the Fire”</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food and clothing</li> <li>• Hygiene</li> <li>• Immediate medical care</li> <li>• Gynecological care</li> <li>• Immediate sexual trauma support Rape Crisis and/or SART exam</li> <li>• Substance abuse intervention</li> <li>• Immediate placement and planning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-care safety plan</li> <li>• Suicide intervention</li> <li>• Daily check-ins</li> <li>• 24/7 Crisis Response information</li> <li>• Trauma-informed DBT Crisis Interventions</li> <li>• Self-soothing supports and tools</li> <li>• Short-term goals and initial treatment planning</li> <li>• “Warm handoffs”</li> <li>• Moving On: Am I ready for the next step?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rapport building with first responder</li> <li>• Assign systems Navigator</li> <li>• Welcoming intake process into RISE program</li> <li>• Begin to create sense of belonging</li> <li>• Identify primary care providers (i.e. therapist, counselors, peer advocate, family, teacher, friends, etc.)</li> <li>• “Warm handoffs”</li> </ul>			First Responder CSEC ID Tool, SEHS Self Care Safety Plan
<b>COPING STRATEGIES:</b> <b>“Rise and Shine”</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Long-term placement</li> <li>• Assign Health and Wellness Advocate</li> <li>• Mind/Body/Spirit Wellness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Triggers and coping strategies plan</li> <li>• Accepting reality</li> <li>• Short and Long-term goals</li> <li>• Client driven Treatment Plan</li> <li>• Interact with Peer/Survivor Advocate.</li> <li>• “Warm handoffs”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continued rapport building with treatment team</li> <li>• Outreach to families and community supports</li> <li>• Reconnect with primary care providers</li> <li>• Social/emotional skills building</li> <li>• “My Social Inventory”</li> <li>• Identifying therapy interfering behaviors</li> <li>• Challenging thought distortions</li> <li>• “Warm handoffs”</li> <li>• Moving On: Am I ready for the next step?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social/emotional skills building</li> <li>• Short Term Goal Attainment</li> <li>• Improved relationships</li> <li>• Returning to baseline sooner</li> <li>• Building trust in others and self</li> <li>• Gaining knowledge through Ending the Game</li> <li>• Resiliencies are building</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CANS</li> <li>• SEHS</li> <li>• Identify Needs and Strengths</li> <li>• Short and Long Term Goals</li> <li>• Client Driven Treatment Plan</li> <li>• Begin Ending the Game Curriculum</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> Physiological needs: food, shelter, water, and homeostasis.

<sup>2</sup> Safety needs: security of body, employment, resources, morality, family, health, property.

<sup>3</sup> Love and Belonging needs: friendship, family, intimacy.

<sup>4</sup> Esteem needs: purpose, confidence, self-efficacy and self-esteem.

Hierarchy of Needs Cont...	PHYSIOLOGICAL <sup>5</sup>	SAFETY <sup>6</sup>	LOVE/BELONGING <sup>7</sup>	ESTEEM <sup>8</sup>	SELF-ACTUALIZATION	TOOLS
<p><b><u>MAINTENANCE-Practice</u></b>  <b><u>Being the “REAL ME”:</u></b>  <b>“Walking in my new shoes”</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Psychosocial education: Reconnecting with the body</li> <li>• Assign Health and Wellness advocate</li> <li>• Mind/Body/Spirit Wellness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meditation</li> <li>• Trauma-informed group therapy activities</li> <li>• Family therapy</li> <li>• “warm handoffs”</li> <li>• Individual and group counseling</li> <li>• Emotional regulation skills development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interpersonal skills building and repairing relationships</li> <li>• Group and individual counseling</li> <li>• Group therapy activities</li> <li>• “warm handoffs”</li> <li>• Trauma-focused family therapy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practice being the REAL ME</li> <li>• Building positive self-regard</li> <li>• Reframing life story</li> <li>• Radical acceptance</li> <li>• Psychosocial education: gender oppression, racism, socioeconomic inequalities, effects of trauma, coercion resiliency</li> <li>• Sharing testimonies</li> <li>• Group therapy activities</li> <li>• Reproductive/wellness education and consultation</li> <li>• Short and Long term goal attainment</li> <li>• Moving On: Am I ready for the next step?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-efficacy and advocacy</li> <li>• Self-Acceptance</li> <li>• Starting to experience internal validation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CANS</li> <li>• SEHS</li> <li>• Complete Ending the Game Curriculum</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>LEADERSHIP:</u></b>  <b>“Don’t talk about it, be about it”</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mind/Body/Spirit Wellness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing trauma-focused counseling</li> <li>• Seeking Safety</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New healthy and markedly improved relationships</li> <li>• Increased opportunities to participate in the facilitation of RISE services</li> <li>• Strong rapport with treatment team</li> <li>• Has specific leadership role within RISE and the community</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leadership roles within RISE and own life</li> <li>• Mentoring other survivors or those in need</li> <li>• Vocation/Education/Financial Life Skills</li> <li>• Employment/Education attainment</li> <li>• Fine tuning coping strategies and skill development</li> <li>• Life Skills</li> <li>• Wellness-Mind-Body-Spirit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Automatic Pilot</li> <li>• Living the authentic self</li> <li>• Moved from external validation to internal validation</li> <li>• Reality testing and revisiting goals</li> <li>• Identifying skills that need strengthening or patch work</li> <li>• Discharge Planning/Referrals</li> <li>• Graduation Certificate</li> <li>• Moving On: Am I ready for the next step?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CANS</li> <li>• SEHS</li> </ul>

<sup>5</sup> Physiological needs: food, shelter, water, and homeostasis.

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<sup>8</sup> Esteem needs: purpose, confidence, self-efficacy and self-esteem.