

Sexual Exploitation of Youth & Language Use

The way we talk about issues helps to frame and shape them. The language we use often reflects moral stances, and opinions about the topic.

When discussing the sexual exploitation of youth, **language is extremely important.** Certain language is tied to shame, blame, and choice. For example when discussing a youth who has been sexually exploited it is important **not to refer to the youth as a child prostitute.**

Prostitute is an out-of-date and derogatory term which originally meant "to sexually dishonor yourself." This language implies choice (which is removed when discussing sexual exploitation of youth) and degradation.

A youth who has been sexually exploited did not have choice, nor did they degrade themselves, as youth can recover from the trauma of sexual exploitation.

Be sure to use **person-centered language.** Avoid placing blame on the child/youth. Avoid language steeped in stigma (e.g. child porn). Do not imply the youth had a choice in their exploitation.

Need support? Want to learn more? Call or text the CASEY Coordinator at (709) 771-1706

The phone is checked 9-4 Monday-Friday.

Language Use when Discussing Youth Sexual Exploitation

Instead of

Child Prostitute

Child Porn

Choice/Consent

Sex Trade/Industry

Replace with

Youth who has been sexually exploited

Child Sexual Exploitation Material (CSEM)

Exploitation

Child Sexual Exploitation Market

