

MISSING FROM CARE

Preventing and Responding to Child Trafficking



NATIONAL CENTER FOR
**MISSING &
EXPLOITED**
CHILDREN®



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PRESENTER



Melissa Snow

Executive Director of Child Sex Trafficking Programs

The National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC)

Melissa Snow has worked in the anti-trafficking field for over 20 years, developing trauma-informed, survivor-informed, and survivor-centered programs and services. Additionally, her work has included successfully advocating for stronger policies and laws to protect children and hold offenders accountable. Prior to joining NCMEC, Melissa served as the Child Victim Program Coordinator for the FBI, where she provided guidance and technical assistance to special agents and victim specialists on trauma-informed response in crimes against children cases. Melissa authored resources on child sex trafficking, including INTERVENE: Identifying and Responding to Child Sex Trafficking, an assessment tool and resource. She served on several state and local task forces, including serving as Co-Chair of the Maryland Human Trafficking Task Force, Victim Services Committee.

Children can be trafficked
without ever **leaving** home.



Pimp
Controlled
Trafficking

Gang
Controlled
Trafficking

Familial
Trafficking

Buyer
Perpetrated

A MISSING CHILD ISSUE

Trends show us that when children run away frequently or for long periods of time, they tend to be running from an unsafe situation or to an unsafe situation.



1 in 6

of the children who ran away and were reported missing to NCMEC in 2021 were likely **child sex trafficking** victims.

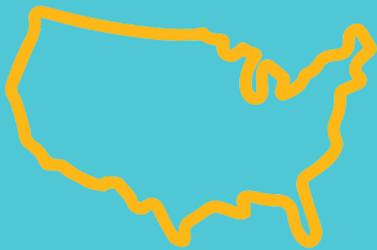
2021 CHILD SEX TRAFFICKING (CST) TRENDS

19% of the children reported missing to NCMEC who had run from the **care of social services** were likely victims of CST.

NCMEC received over

17,200

reports of possible CST.



NCMEC has responded to reports of CST in every state and the District of Columbia.



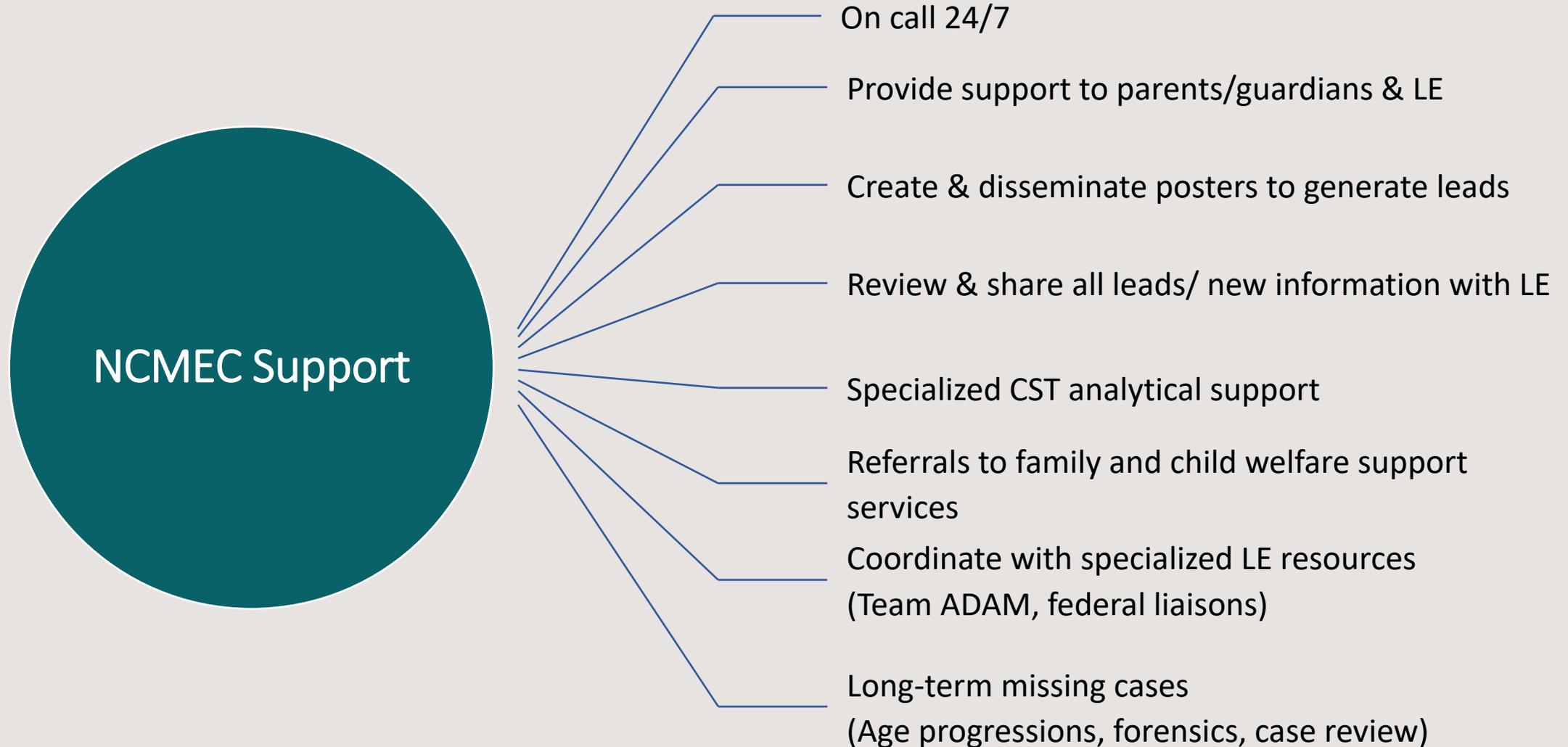
Cases reported to NCMEC include victims of all gender identities.

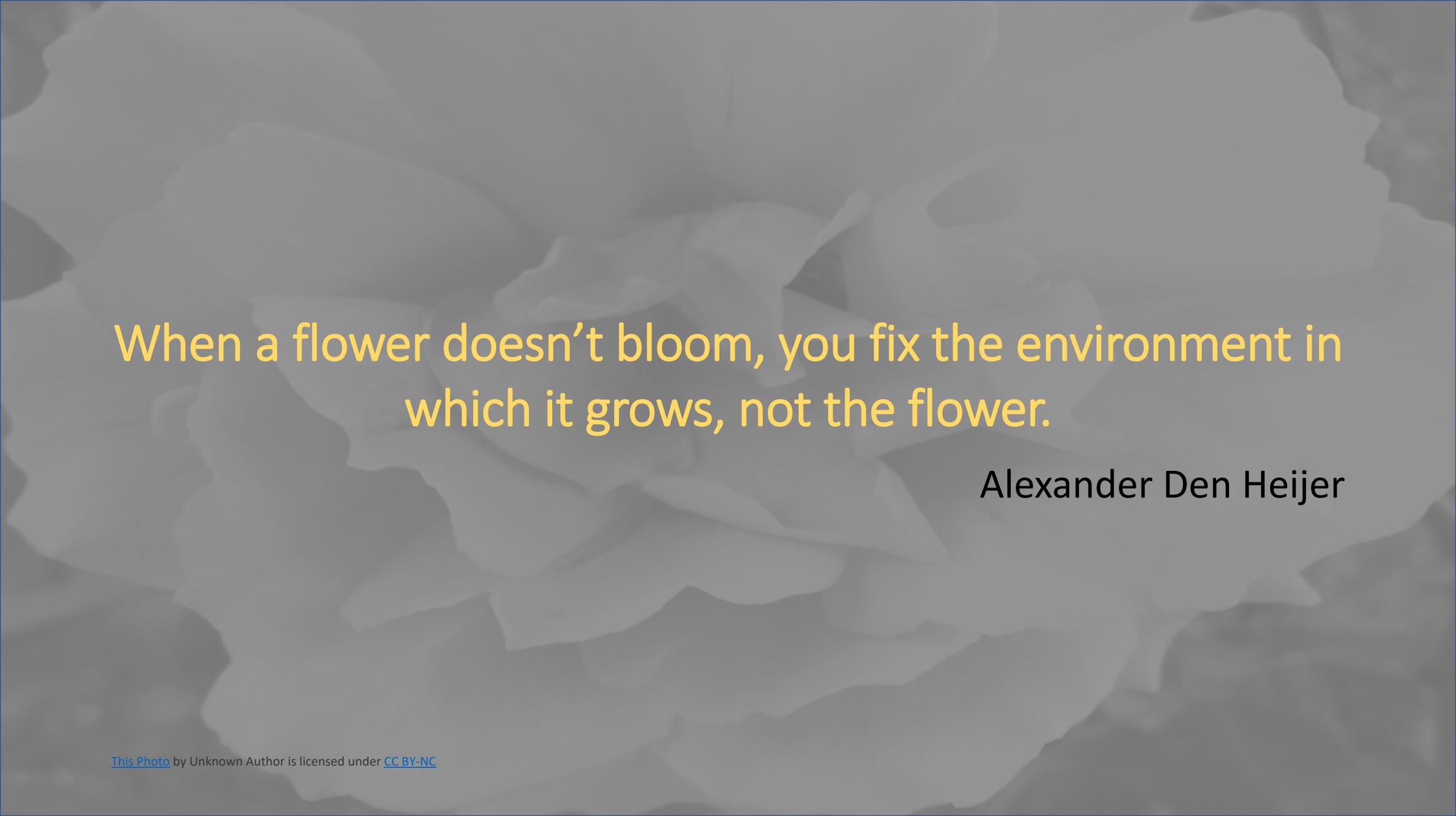
PREVENTING SEX TRAFFICKING AND STRENGTHENING FAMILIES ACT – P.L.113-183 (H.R.4980)

For children who go missing from foster care, the state shall:

- Develop specific protocols for expeditiously locating a child missing from foster care, determine primary factors for running away, and screen the child's experience while absent from care (one year – Fall 2015)
- Immediately report information on missing and abducted children both to law enforcement and NCMEC (two years – Fall 2016)

HOW DOES NCMEC HELP?





When a flower doesn't bloom, you fix the environment in which it grows, not the flower.

Alexander Den Heijer

PLANNING FOR RETURN OR RECOVERY

- Return to care, medical intervention, or recovery by LE = a disruption in victimization.
- The more prepared we are for this moment, the better the outcome.
- Recoveries that are intentional, trauma-informed, and victim-centered have the potential to break the trafficker-victim trauma-bond and begin to build the foundation for healthy relationships and support.
- Goal to improve victim rapport and engagement, build trust, and develop opportunities for increased safety and access to services.



CHILD SEX TRAFFICKING RECOVERY SERVICES TEAM



- Specialized, case-based assistance to child welfare professionals and other MDT members for children missing from care who have been exploited through CST
- Promising practices in recovery planning
- Connection to local and national specialized services for CST
- Resources and support on meaningful youth engagement, effective approaches to trauma responses, strategies to address running behavior, and safety planning

Email RecoveryServices@NCMEC.org to request assistance.

OUR IMPACT IN 2021



1,070

1,067

Recovery Planning Support

1,126

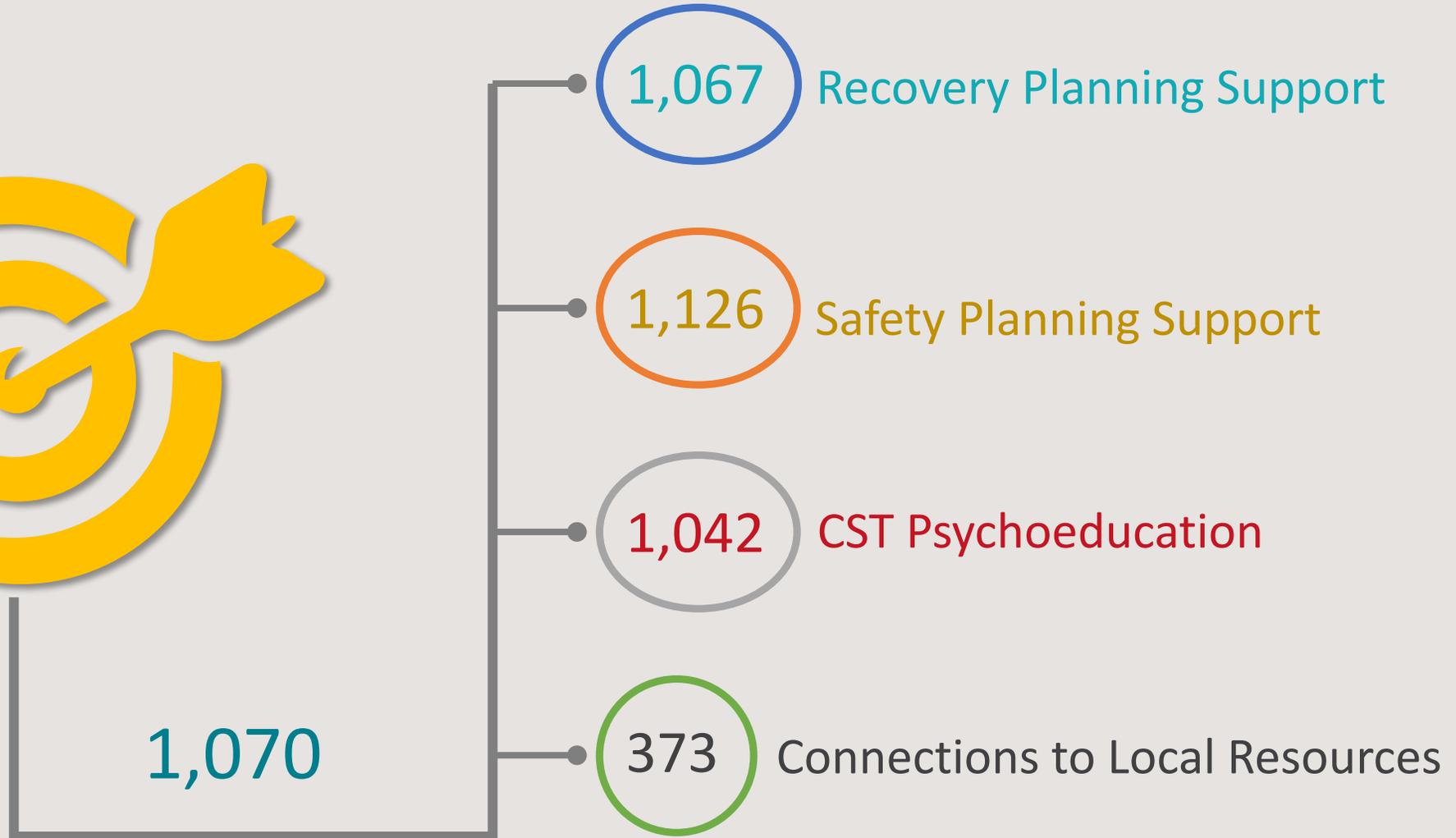
Safety Planning Support

1,042

CST Psychoeducation

373

Connections to Local Resources



SHIFTING THE LANGUAGE, ATTITUDE, & PERSPECTIVE



WHAT WE DO...

- Troubleshoot to offer solutions
- Reframe harmful language
- Rebuild empathy & hope
- Normalize their expectations
- Psychoeducation to shift the narrative
- Safety & Recovery Planning Assistance
- Connections to resources
- Build relationships with child welfare

NORMALIZING EXPECTATIONS

- Victims have been in survival mode and have not thought about or started processing their victimization.
- Most victims under the control of a trafficker are required to recruit.
- Normal isn't normal anymore, and we should not assume that the survivor has a foundation or understanding of what stable and healthy looks like.
- A victim's perception of safety and danger is VERY skewed.
- The stabilization/healing process is rife with expected and unexpected triggers – expect relapse!



RECOVERY IS JUST THE FIRST STEP

TANGIBLE

Shelter/Home	Money/Job
Food	Toiletries
Clothes	Vital Records
Medical	Psychological

INTANGIBLE

Connection	Love
Belonging	Support
Empowerment	Trust
Comfort	Hope



Q&A

Please type your questions into the Q&A box.

Resources

- [CBLCC's Shareable Social Media Resources for National Human Trafficking Prevention Month](#)
- [How to Talk to Youth About Human Trafficking](#)
- [Let's Talk: Runaway Prevention Curriculum](#)
- [State Missing Child Clearinghouse](#)
- [SOAR Online: Responding to Human Trafficking Through the Child Welfare System](#)
- [Information Memorandum: Responding to Human Trafficking among Children and Youth in Foster Care and Missing from Foster Care](#)
- [Child Sex Trafficking in America: A Guide for Child Welfare Professionals \(English\)](#)
- [Child Sex Trafficking in America: A Guide for Child Welfare Professionals \(Spanish\)](#)
- [Children Missing from Care](#)
- [OTIP](#)
- [Child Welfare Information Gateway](#)



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Thank you for joining us!

