

# REFERENCE PROTOCOL STRUCTURE IN PREVENTING THE SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF YOUTH

---

## 1. DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES

Protecting both children and adolescents represents a shared goal among groups who work towards preventing youth sexual exploitation. Indeed, the various problems entailed by sexual exploitation demand concerted and coordinated intervention. To that effect and in order to act effectively and benefit from many different forms of expertise, this protocol encourages collaboration between multiple sectors, while also taking their limits into account.

## 2. DEFINITION OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

Sexual exploitation consists of gaining profit from a person's or a group of people's sexuality (i.e. abusing) with no considerations for their overall well-being or desires. This practice strips individuals from their human rights, more precisely their rights to dignity, freedom, equality and autonomy. Sexual exploitation can imply an exchange of money and/or of goods, a use of power or status in order to obtain sexual gratification, and it encompasses multiple realities such as sexual slavery, forced marriage, prostitution, human trafficking for sexual exploitation purposes, pornography, the sharing of intimate photos without consent and the exchange of sexual favors.

## 3. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Sexual exploitation is inscribed within both provincial and federal legal frameworks. While some laws examine the criminal nature associated to specific forms of sexual exploitation, others enable socio-judicial intervention with the victims. This protocol is inspired primarily by the *Criminal Code* and the *Youth Protection Act*.

## 4. GOALS

This protocol aims to help people working in schools, community centers and social institutions to:

- **Identify** and/or prevent possible cases of sexual exploitation in their given sector;
- **Instigate** realistic social interventions within the sector's realm of possible actions;
- **Refer** cases to proper and specialized resources.

## 5. COMMUNITY AND SECTOR SPECIFIC RESOURCES

To be completed by the sector: identify those who work with youth, for instance the specialized social worker who will act as a person of reference if sexual exploitation occurs in your sector, and describe their role.

*School principals :*

*Teachers :*

*Social workers :*

*Faculty and staff :*

*Parents :*

*Students :*

## 6. DATA COLLECTION

**6.1.** Determine the sector's means of collecting information in regards to sexual exploitation cases (denunciation, disclosure): telephone lines, email addresses, communication with the social workers, etc.

**6.2.** When people working with youth (teachers, social workers, facilitators, among others) sense that sexual exploitation might be an issue, they must consult the *List of Possible Indicators of Sexual Exploitation of Youth* and verify potential risk and protection indicators observed.

**6.3.** Once the list of possible observable indicators is completed (1<sup>st</sup> level), the person will then seek the specialized professional in their sector (e.g. the social worker) who will then take the report and determine the next steps.

**6.4.** Once the specialized professional has received the list of possible observable indicators and has determined the need to follow-up on this information, they will complete the *Grid of Risk and protective Factors*.

## 7. INTERVENTION AND REFERRALS

**7.1.** After using the *List of Possible Indicators of Sexual Exploitation of Youth* and/or the *Grid of Risk and protective Factors*, the person of reference in the sector will determine the strategy needed. This strategy can include a meeting with the youth involved.

**7.2.** All people who know of or who sense that the security and/or development of the youth is/are compromised need to report the circumstances, or asked that they be reported, to the Director of Youth Protection (DYP). The modifications being done to the *Youth Protection Act* reaffirm that sexual exploitation or a situation of risk directly compromise the youth's security and development.

**7.3.** The person who reports a case of sexual exploitation of a youth is not required to determine and/or disclose who committed the act of violence, nor whether sufficient proof is available to justify an investigation. However, they have to communicate to the DYP all known additional information regarding the presumed act of sexual violence. The identity of the person who reports a case is protected.

## 8. FOLLOW-UP

**8.1.** In the event of a report made to the DYP, the person of reference is invited to do a follow-up, if possible.

**8.2.** If the person of reference does not report the case to the DYP, they have to determine the need and the best way to follow-up on the case.

**8.3.** If the case involves specific needs, the person of reference can contact resources that are specialized in sexual exploitation. To do so, they can use the *Resource Guide - Sexual Exploitation - Montreal and Surrounding Areas*.