



COPE (Collaborative Outreach Preventing Exploitation) Cheat Sheet North- East Central Zone (Wainwright, Vermilion, Provost, Lloydminster and areas)

The Collaborative Outreach Preventing Exploitation (**COPE**) Program supports youth aged 12 -24, who are at risk of, or experiencing sexual exploitation within Central Alberta.

This voluntary program helps youth, and their families reduce the risks of sexual exploitation in the community and online.

We support youth and their families to:

- Learn strategies to increase personal safety
- Build and maintain healthy relationships
- Make informed choices about their care and plan for the future
- Navigate education, intervention and support
- Access supports and referrals available through community resources
- Increase the youth's self-efficacy and independence.

COPE also provides education and awareness building in various community settings. Our Community Education Series helps organizations and communities learn more about sexual exploitation, healthy relationships and personal safety.

Process for Accessing Supports:

If you are worried or concerned that a youth is at risk of /or currently experiencing sexual exploitation, there are two avenues that you can follow to receive support:

If you are concerned about risks that involve immediate safety concerns, have evidence or information about a youth's exchanging or active involvement in sexual exploitation or you are worried about exploitation and child intervention concerns, please call: **Children's Services at: 1-800-638-0715**

➤ **Or**

If the risks involved are more on the preventative side (ie. They have started sending inappropriate photos to friends; they are spending time with negative peers, struggling in social situations, not returning home often etc.) you can make a direct referral to McMan's COPE program by connecting with:

McMan Collaborative Outreach Preventing Exploitation (COPE) Program:

Email: cope@mcmancentral.ca

Call: 1-800-743-6179

Local contact: paula.williamsiverson@mcmancentral.ca

If you have questions, want to brainstorm or problem solve around current concerns/risks feel free to connect with the COPE Program and we can help you assess if a call to Child and Family Services is necessary and to support you through the process.



PSECA Legislation: Protection of Sexually Exploited Children's Act is unique to Alberta. This legislation gives us the ability to access voluntary and involuntary supports that address sexual exploitation concerns with youth 12-17, and until 24 in some circumstances.

Sexual Exploitation is a **spectrum** – Sexual Exploitation can be identified as looking for ways that youth are being 'taken advantage of' by other people where youth are being asked/forced to perform sex or sexual acts in exchange for things that the youth may want or need.

THINGS that could be considered **exchange**: money, clothing, shelter, rides, electronics, phones, food, jewelry, material items, sense of belonging, protection, a 'relationship', gift cards, drugs/alcohol etc. (We often consider or are shown through media and understanding that 'exchange' is limited to that of receiving money, but that is not the case – it is more often occurring by meeting a 'need' for that young person that is unique to that individual)

Youth/young adults and families can access supports under PSECA anytime between the ages of 12-18 and can even receive supports up to the age of 24 if they have had previous connection to PSECA services (COPE or Children and Family Services stream) prior to turning 18.

If someone under the age of 12 is experiencing sexual exploitation risk it is best to reach out to **Children and Family Services** at 1-800-638-0715, **Police/RCMP Non-Emergency Line Wainwright** 780-842-4463, **Vermilion** 780-853-4441, **Provost** 780-753-2215, **Lloydminster** 780-808-8300. **Office of the Child Advocate:** Toll-free: (800) 661-3446 or (780) 422-6056 or Email: ca.information@OCYA.alberta.ca OR Call:

Options for Sexual Exploitation Support in Central Alberta:

Voluntary:

- Access to PSECA Children and Family Services workers – opportunity to sign a Voluntary Service Agreement (VSA)
- Access to McMan's COPE (Collaborative Outreach Preventing Exploitation) Program.

Involuntary:

- Access to Children's Services PSECA Team (Through a VSA when appropriate to receive safety focused planning, sexual exploitation education and network support).
- Confinement is only accessed by Children and Family Services or on an emergency basis through Police/RCMP when immediate safety needs take priority and other less intrusive avenues may be unable to maintain a youth's immediate safety. Confinement can be accessed for a period of up to 47 days and is the option that is explored **after** other methods of creating safety have been exhausted.
- There are two Protective Safe Houses within Alberta (Edmonton & Calgary). These locations are kept confidential to protect the youth accessing from being found while they receive the support they require to reduce their risk in the community, online and within their natural support network.