



October 28, 2013

To Whom It May Concern,

Maryvale highly recommends Sowers Education Group to all organizations seeking expert training on issues surrounding Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC). The training provided to our employees has greatly improved their knowledge and understanding of CSEC and will help to guide Maryvale in the way we interact with our CSEC clients.

Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children is a huge concern and rapidly growing problem for all organizations like Maryvale working with youth. Survivors of this heartbreaking crime deserve to be cared for by knowledgeable staff that have a compassionate understanding of what these youth have experienced. To address these needs, Maryvale asked Sowers Education Group to lead training sessions pertaining to Serving Sex Trafficking Survivors. The sessions were attended by a mixed audience of residential counselors, social workers, therapists, nurses, general staff and administration. The training has proven to be invaluable in providing our staff with knowledge and tools to use when working with CSEC youth

Rachel Thomas led this one-day training with expertise both from her experience as a survivor of sex trafficking and her extensive research on current trafficking strategies, CSEC policies, and best practices for treatment. She gave perceptive insight on each topic she covered, including how pimps lure victims, why victims sometimes deny victimization and how to set boundaries as a service provider. The training was well organized, all materials were helpful and Rachel responded effectively to questions, and brought clarity and dignity to a sensitive topic where so many misconceptions and labels have been misplaced. During the second half of training, the role play portion was especially helpful in that Rachel tackled the tough scenarios our staff were facing and gave practical techniques that fit perfectly into Maryvale's trauma-informed care model of care.

Rachel's training received high ratings across the board. Participants felt she had relevant, real life examples and the information could be applied in their everyday work environment. Additionally, we invited Rachel back for a second training for staff that were unable to attend the first session. Participants came with high expectations, as word spread quickly about her excellent presentation on such an important topic. The second training received outstanding feedback as well.

Sincerely,
B. Monique Cando, M.A.