DECISION TREES

THE FOLLOWING DECISION TREES WERE DEVELOPED AS A TOOL TO ACCOMPLISH THE DUAL GOALS OF IDENTIFYING AN IDEAL AND mapping a process for communities to work toward that goal by starting with the ideal: a primary prevention approach where investments in the community are sufficient to prevent the vulnerabilities that lead to trafficking. Then, recognizing that children and families may still experience crises and that system involvement is not only embedded in most current Safe Harbor responses but also is appropriate and necessary in certain circumstances, the remaining decision trees identify an ideal approach when these responses are triggered.

As described below, the decision trees are also color-coded to reflect the different stages of the process at which a stakeholder may be encountering a youth survivor, as well as the opportunities throughout the process to connect that young person with services and supports in their community and reduce, or limit, their interaction with a system response. By evaluating the many doors that a young person may enter and be identified as a trafficking victim, these decision trees seek to provide a framework for assessing existing responses, identifying potential gaps, and building the infrastructure and coordination necessary for community-led and child and family-centered responses to trafficked children and youth.

THE "STAGES OF THE PROCESS" ARE COLOR-CODED AS FOLLOWS:

ORANGE: IDENTIFICATION & SCREENING

RED: INITIAL/EMERGENCY RESPONSE

BLUE: MULTIDISCIPLINARY TEAM/COLLABORATIVE REFERRAL PROTOCOL

GREEN: SAFETY/HARM REDUCTION STRATEGIES

YELLOW: CONTINUUM OF CARE/PATH TO HEALING

RESPONSE TYPES

PRIMARY PREVENTION APPROACH

HOUSING INSECURITY AND FAMILY CRISIS

IDENTIFIED BY LAW ENFORCEMENT

DIRECTED INTO JUVENILE JUSTICE

REFERRED TO CHILD WELFARE

ACRONYM KEY

CB: Community-based
CBO: Community-based organization
CSE: Commercial sexual exploitation
CSEC/Y: Commercial sexual exploitation of children/youth
CST: Child sex trafficking
CW: Child welfare

JJ: Juvenile justice
LE: Law enforcement
MDT: Multi-disciplinary team
NGO: Non-governmental organization
RHY: Runaway and homeless youth
TPC: Temporary protective custody

PRIMARY PREVENTION APPROACH

DECISION TREE

ASSUMPTION #1: Focusing on harm prevention from the outset reduces the need for deeper system involvement and prevents future harm. Even where children have experienced trafficking, primary prevention efforts can still be utilized to prevent future harm and/or revictimization.

Child is at risk of trafficking, experiencing circumstances related to increased vulnerability to victimization

ASSUMPTION #2: Primary prevention-focused community-based services are appropriately funded, reducing costs related to system involvement and the long-term effects of preventing future harm and/or revictimization.

Preventive services available for child and their family as needed; low barrier access to services does not require identification of trafficking victimization **TRAFFICKING PREVENTED AND VULNERABILITIES ADDRESSED**

Are a wide range of community-based services available to address the child and family's needs without requiring system involvement or law enforcement intervention?

NO

See **COMMUNITY-BASED SAFE HARBOR RESPONSE FACT SHEET** for more information and tips on building/shifting to a community-based response

YES

Multidisciplinary, community-based response commenced and system responses engaged only where necessary

Is the child experiencing homelessness/housing insecurity, a family crisis, or have they run away from a placement? See **RUNAWAY AND HOMELESS YOUTH RESPONSE TREE**

Has the child been directed into the juvenile justice system due to their victimization or other vulnerabilities? See **JUVENILE JUSTICE RESPONSE TREE**

Is the child already involved in the child welfare system, or did their identification as a potential victim trigger a mandatory report? See **CHILD WELFARE RESPONSE TREE**

Color Key

| Identification & Screening |
| Initial/Emergency Response |
| Multidisciplinary Team/Collaborative Referral Protocol |
| Safety/Harm Reduction Strategies |
| Continuum of Care/Path to Healing |

Shape Key

Start/End

Process

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Relationships

HOUSING INSECURITY AND FAMILY CRISIS

DECISION TREE

Child experiencing family crisis

Trafficked child identified by LE/first responder and is not able to live with family

Child experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity

Child is connected to RHY provider through self-referral, street outreach, other NGO referral, LE referral, or McKinney-Vento Homeless Liaison.

Periodic and ongoing assessment for CSEC, referral to specialized services as needed

If child is not system-involved, RHY provider may provide services, including specialized CSEC services if initially identified as such.

Youth and their families have access to wide range of supportive services, depending on needs (e.g., shelter services, transitional housing, educational support, family reunification, and aftercare services.

Initial screening for services eligibility: low barrier, if child is in need of support for wide range of reasons, no need to identify victimization

If child is system-involved, RHY provider may assist if the child is considered not housed.

Coordinate access to continuum of care through community-based services

Child is in foster care and considered housed.

RHY provider connects with CW to provide voluntary services to child.

Color Key

- Identification & Screening
- Initial/Emergency Response
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- Safety/Harm Reduction Strategies
- Continuum of Care/Path to Healing

Shape Key

- Start/End
- Process
- Input
- Decision
- Reference
- Relationships →

ASSUMPTION #1:
State law prohibits arrest of CST victims for prostitution and other offenses related to trafficking victimization.

Suspected child sex trafficking victim identified by law enforcement

ASSUMPTION #2:
Law enforcement have received training on appropriate, noncriminalizing responses to child sex victims and have developed a service response referral protocol in collaboration with other relevant stakeholders, including NGOs and survivors.

Through collaborative relationship with NGO, caseworker assists on the scene.

If report to child welfare is mandated, see **CHILD WELFARE RESPONSE TREE**

Child in dangerous circumstances and unable to return home, necessitating TPC.

Child taken into TPC, reported to child welfare, parents notified, and immediate referral to community-based partner. Team response commenced.

IMPORTANT: TPC should be used with great caution, only when necessary to prevent immediate harm to the youth and in conjunction with mitigating actions to prevent unnecessary involvement in child welfare, particularly for non-offending caregivers.

Child not in dangerous setting and/or safe for child to return home

MDT response commenced

LE coordinates with MDT partners to place child in safe setting.

LE returns child to family/kinship care.

Refer child to CBO partners for navigation and case management.

Child and family (where appropriate) connected with a service response.

Supportive services for family; no CW involvement for family unless cause or family seeks CW support

Child and family receive ongoing services and navigation supports in their community

Child is connected with service coordination program (e.g., Regional Navigators).

See COMMUNITY-BASED SAFE HARBOR RESPONSE FACT SHEET for ideas on developing and utilizing alternative approaches for connecting young people with services and supports

See COMMUNITY-BASED SAFE HARBOR RESPONSE FACT SHEET for more information and tips on building/shifting to a community-based response

Color Key

Identification & Screening

Initial/Emergency Response

Multidisciplinary Team/Collaborative Referral Protocol

Safety/Harm Reduction Strategies

Continuum of Care/Path to Healing

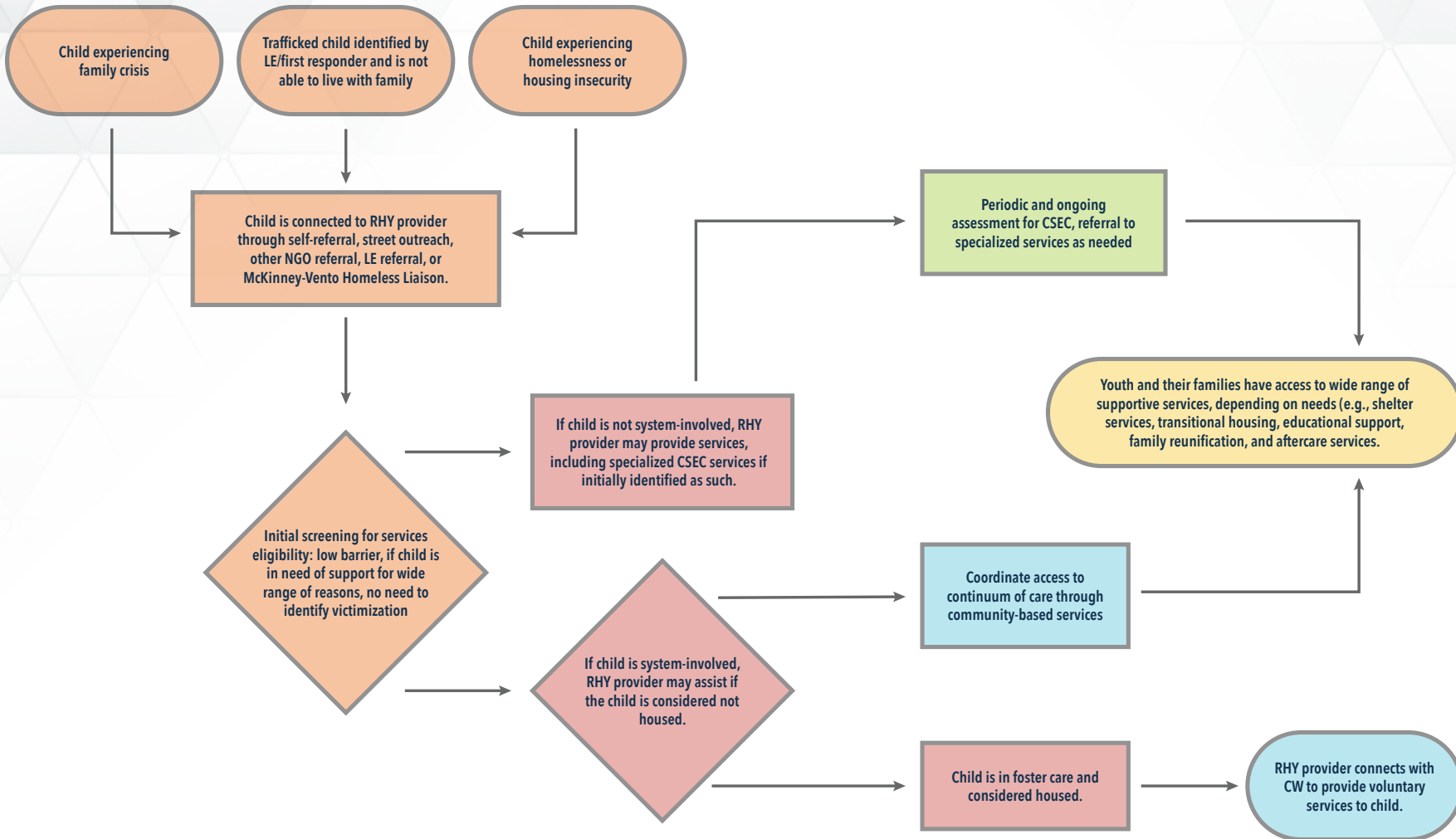**Shape Key**

Start/End

Process

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Relationships

Entry into JJ due to misidentification other charges and/or lack of noncrim protections under state law

JJ only case

Suspected history or experience of CSE/trafficking

Dual jacket case

Ensure coordinated **RESPONSE PER CW DECISION TREE**

Validated screening tool used by trained professional (includes screening for LT polyvictimization)

Disclosure or "determination" of CSE history made based on use of screening tool

No disclosure made and no history of CSE suspected based upon use of screening tool

Child and family connected with discretionary services to address and mitigate risks (for CSE) associated with JJ involvement

If safe, parent/guardian notified, provided access to support/services, and invited to participate in MDT

Court notified; hearing scheduled to brief presiding judge/mag.

Case assessed to determine if charges (pending or adjudicated) are connected to, or occurred concurrently to, victimization

If related to victimization, pending charges dropped or, if case has already been adjudicated and child has been disposed, sentence reviewed and terminated and child directed out of JJ system

All records (including arrest) expunged and sealed

If charges unrelated to victimization, all necessary measures taken to ensure trauma-informed approach utilized in adjudication/disposition

All records (including arrest) expunged and sealed upon completion of sentence to mitigate vulnerabilities resulting from records

MDT convened

Elective service plan developed (with child) in coordination w/ CB service providers

Financial support provided to family to support access services (if needed)

Forensic interview (if appropriate)

Color Key

Identification & Screening

Initial/Emergency Response

Multidisciplinary Team/Collaborative Referral Protocol

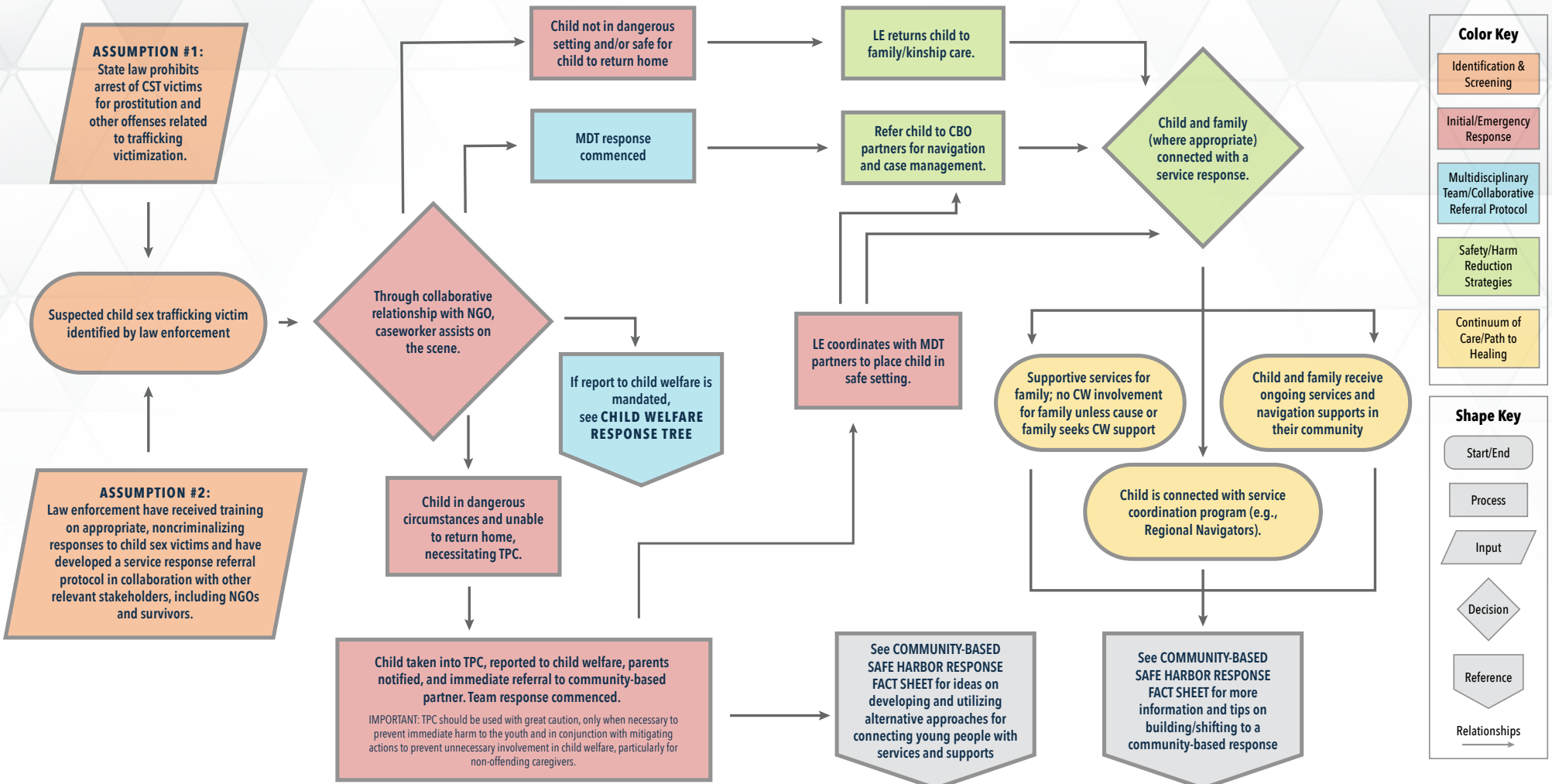Safety/Harm Reduction Strategies

Continuum of Care/Path to Healing

Shape Key

Start/End

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Input

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Relationships

REFERRED TO CHILD WELFARE

DECISION TREE

Suspected CSEC/Y reported by parent/caregiver (e.g., CHINS petition)

No CST finding made; CW case closed

Parent provided immediate referral to CBO services/supports to address factors prompting report

Screens out for any form of abuse, including CST

Finding of non-caregiver CST victimization made

If intensive, out-of-home/residential therapy is requested, family is supported (included financially) in locating specialized treatment

Protocol for connecting child and family with community-based services

Financial support provided to access services (if needed)

Forensic interview (if needed)

Elective service plan developed in coordination w/ CB service providers

Non-caregiver trafficking response commenced; child connected to community-based services

CW screens case for abuse, including CST

CST-specific MDT convened

"Exit" plan developed to prevent unnecessary or extended system involvement

Suspected CSEC/Y reported by mandatory reporter

Investigation commenced; forensic interview if appropriate

Indicators of possible caregiver CST victimization; refer to familial trafficking assessment

Finding of caregiver CST victimization made

Protocol for connecting child (and family where appropriate) with community-based services

Forensic interview (if appropriate)

Screens in for abuse other than CST

Familial trafficking assessment/ investigation commenced

Service plan developed in coordination w/ CB service providers

Petition filed to remove offender from child's environment/home (efforts taken to maintain child in home; remove offender so long as safe)

Where appropriate, child and family connected with community-based services to address circumstances leading to finding or report of abuse

No CST finding made; CW case closed

If removal of child is necessary, kinship placement in community is prioritized and foster care reimbursement provided to kinship care providers

Color Key

- Identification & Screening
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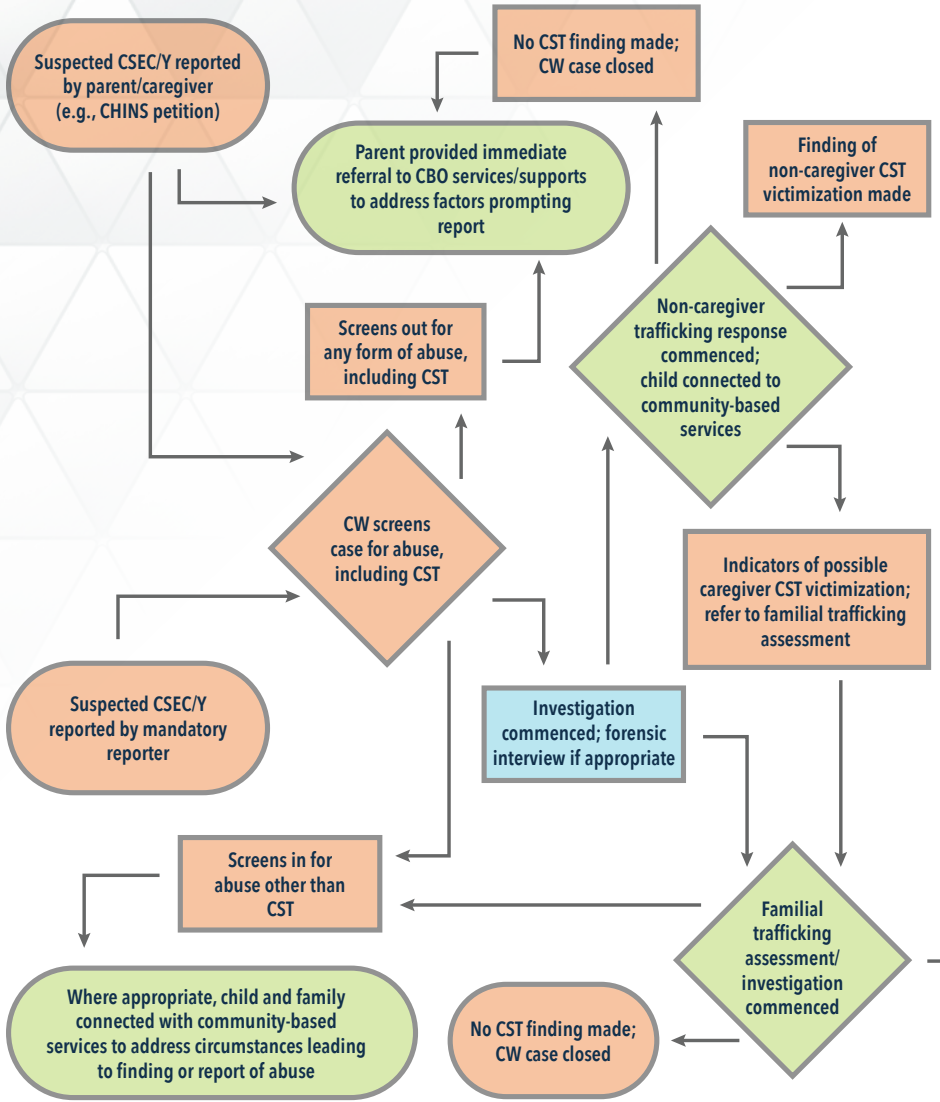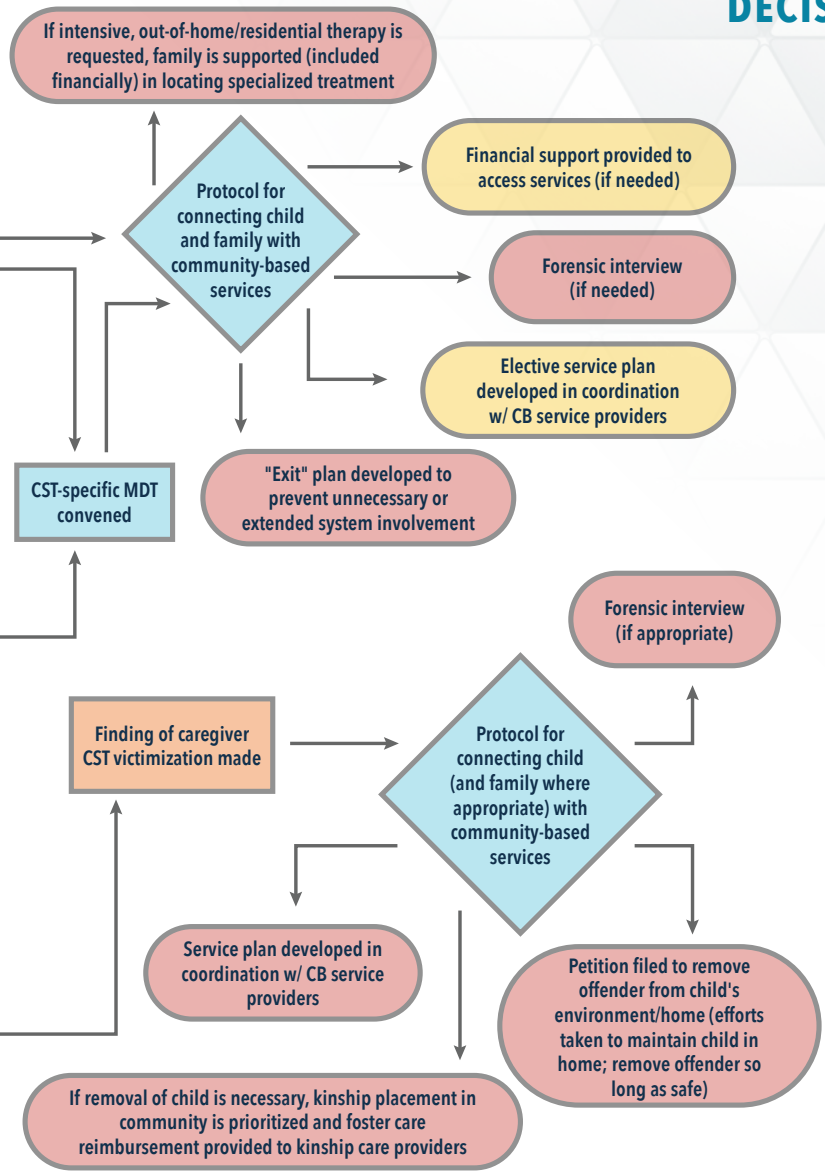- Input
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