

# Human Trafficking Resource Manual *for Advocates*

## A Comprehensive Guide to Serving Trafficking Survivors at Texas Rape Crisis Centers and Domestic Violence Agencies



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# HUMAN TRAFFICKING RESOURCE MANUAL FOR ADVOCATES

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and Domestic Violence Agencies

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*For their steadfast support and review of this manual.*

## **USING THIS MANUAL**

This human trafficking resource manual is designed for use by advocates and staff at sexual assault and domestic violence agencies in Texas. It includes a recommended philosophical framework, technical information about the dynamics of trafficking, in-text practical guidance for centers, and extensive resources. Additionally, the tool [“Creating Safer Spaces: Tips for Advocates”](#) can be found in the appendix section of this document and may be used as a practical applications summary.

**For ease of reference, topics within this manual are distinguished by category:**



**Philosophical Approach**



**Technical Information**



**Practical Application**

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## CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

### PROJECT SUMMARY

This resource manual was created to facilitate an understanding of the complex needs of human trafficking survivors and reduce service barriers faced by our stakeholder agencies. Our goal is to support you in delivering quality, trauma-informed, survivor-centered, and evidence-based practices and services. This is an accessible guide for advocates who are new to the field as well as more experienced professionals in the space who want to expand their knowledge.

### RESOURCE MANUAL OBJECTIVES

This manual aims to assist TAASA member agencies and stakeholders in strengthening their expertise in supporting clients who are survivors of human trafficking and incorporating trafficking awareness into outreach and prevention programs. Though this manual is designed for Texas rape crisis centers and dual domestic violence agencies, the information presented is applicable across a range of human trafficking crisis response, advocacy, and prevention education programs. Information presented in this manual and reference materials will equip advocates with the ability to:

- ◆ Learn about human trafficking, risk factors, warning signs, and intersecting domestic violence and sexual assault dynamics.
- ◆ Understand that trafficking survivors, while under-identified, are not a new population to be served and likely exist within the current clientele at most centers.
- ◆ Better understand the complex needs of trafficking survivors and trauma response.
- ◆ Make informed decisions about the language used to describe trafficking, exploitation, and sex work.
- ◆ Understand the cultural and ecological context in which trafficking occurs and implement culturally responsive interventions.
- ◆ Understand the value of Survivor Leadership and empowerment-based work.
- ◆ Build collaborative relationships with partner organizations for continuity of services for human trafficking survivors.

### TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

For human trafficking training and technical assistance, please contact TAASA at [info@taasa.org](mailto:info@taasa.org) or (512) 474-7190.



## CHAPTER II: PHILOSOPHY OF CARE

### ESTABLISHING A PHILOSOPHY OF CARE

For survivors of human trafficking, we must consider not only what kinds of services and legal remedies we can offer but also our overarching philosophy of care. How we see and approach our advocacy work is just as important as what we do.

When responding to the complex needs of survivors, our core values provide a powerful source of guidance for how we make decisions. The Four Pillars of Survivor Care below outline some of the foundational principles to consider when choosing how to best support your client.

As those who are devoted to supporting survivors of human trafficking, we commit to being:

#### 1 **TRAUMA-INFORMED, PROACTIVE, AND RESPONSIVE**

To be trauma-informed means, we approach our work with a meaningful understanding of the neurobiological impact of trauma and design responses that reflect this knowledge in every aspect of our agency.

We understand human trafficking results in trauma and may be compounded by developmental trauma, which usually occurs before the trafficking experience.

We acknowledge that previous trauma has contributed to vulnerabilities often exploited by the trafficker, including poverty, child abuse, and neglect.

We consider the impact of trauma in all contexts, implement measures, such as the Adverse Childhood Experience scores (ACE)<sup>1</sup>, and evaluate factors, such as historical trauma, faced by marginalized communities.

Equipped with a holistic view of how trauma shapes a person's sense of safety, worth, and power, we create programs, policies, and responses that reflect the latest, cutting-edge research on trauma treatments.

We understand this is a rapidly evolving field and commit to ongoing education in trauma studies related to survivors of human trafficking and their well-being.

In addition, we commit to creating a culture of empathy, inclusion, and respect within our agency that encourages the trauma healing of our own staff.

We choose to offer evidence-based trauma therapies that help regulate the nervous system and relieve symptoms of complex trauma, developmental trauma, and structural dissociation so our clients feel a greater sense of safety, power, and self-worth.

We acknowledge that human trafficking is not only an assault on the body. It is an assault on the core identity of a trafficking survivor. Being trauma-informed means understanding the unique facets of survivor psychology, as well as the strategies traffickers use to control a survivor's sense of identity.

<sup>1</sup> Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). (2021). Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/aces/index.html>

## 2 STRENGTHS-BASED

As advocates, we understand the trauma human trafficking survivors endure does not in any way engage or diminish their inherent strengths. We see their ability to survive and overcome this violence as a sign of their innate power.

We do not treat them as helpless or broken. We know that part of extending empathy is acknowledging both the impact of the harm and the remarkable resilience of our clients.

We commit to holding a vision of their potential instead of reducing them to their challenges. We choose to see all survivors as emerging leaders, capable of defining their own lives and creating the changes they desire to see in their community.

We acknowledge that survivors may need support identifying and cultivating their unique strengths, gifts, and interests. We commit to helping them create the future they desire instead of focusing only on healing their relationship to their past.

Due to developmental trauma, many trafficking survivors may not feel they have a past life they want to “reclaim” or an “original self” they can return to. As we utilize a strengths-based approach, we support survivors in creating their future self and life by practicing new behaviors in the present.

We focus on the qualities and skills they already possess to create their dreams rather than trying to take back a previous life they may not want to return to. We encourage them in a mindset of growth through self-compassion.

In addition to providing crisis response and advocacy in the early stages of recovery, we invest in leadership development and mentoring opportunities. We understand that part of breaking the cycle of power and control in human trafficking is to equip survivors to express their authentic power and capacity for leadership in whatever arena they choose.

We trust survivors of trafficking are experts in their own experience and have much to teach us about the nature of this trauma and how to best respond to those we support.



### 3 INCLUSIVE

As advocates, we are devoted to being safe, welcoming, and supportive of a diverse range of clients. We develop treatment plans and environments that affirm the identities of all survivors across a spectrum of race, gender, sexuality, and religion.

We are committed to learning about our clients' needs, challenges, and concerns within their specific cultural contexts. This includes examining our biases and learning more about the histories and values of communities that are different from our own.

We tailor our treatment and advocacy plans to what is most relevant and resonant for the client rather than impose our cultural worldview on their recovery journey. We exercise cultural humility when engaging with survivors from different cultural contexts.

Our commitment to inclusivity means we understand the trauma of human trafficking intersects with other forms of trauma experienced by marginalized groups.

Discrimination against historically oppressed communities, particularly based on race, gender, and sexuality, makes these groups more vulnerable to trafficking.

It also compounds the trauma a survivor may need to address in their recovery process. We acknowledge these intersecting trauma histories need to be addressed to support survivors in a holistic and culturally relevant way.

To be inclusive is to be intersectional in how we view the injustice of human trafficking. Trafficking is not an isolated phenomenon. It intersects with every other human rights issue we face.

As service providers, we use a human rights framework, as outlined by the UN Declaration on Human Rights, to affirm the inherent worth and universal rights of all human trafficking survivors.

Utilizing this framework allows us to stand in solidarity with survivors and all their rights, including the right to freedom from violence and modern-day slavery.

As human rights defenders, we invest in a global narrative of survivor dignity by showing survivors not only what they deserve but have a universal right to.

This can help dispel some of the shame and self-blame survivors feel when they view their trauma as something individual and isolated. Seeing their experience as part of a global framework of human rights issues allows them to be included in a greater story that addresses their intersecting identities.

#### 4 **SURVIVOR-LED**

A Survivor Leader is a person who has experienced human trafficking and chooses to share their expertise to inform and guide the anti-trafficking movement. In addition to overcoming trafficking, Survivor Leaders may have additional volunteer, professional and educational experiences that contribute to their unique insights on the issue.

We acknowledge that Survivor Leaders are diverse and do not have a singular voice and point of view. We welcome this diversity of lived experience, perspectives, and expertise. Just as we have varied strengths and backgrounds, so do Survivor Leaders.

Survivor Leadership appears in all aspects of movement-building, including policy recommendations and best practices in service provision.

Survivor Leaders have far more to offer than their personal stories. We will not dehumanize survivors by treating them as if publicly sharing their trauma story is their primary value in the anti-trafficking movement.

As advocates, we commit to a process of informed consent when asking survivors to participate in public events and media, particularly when asking survivors to share their trauma narratives.

We acknowledge there is a power dynamic in asking survivors to speak when they have received services at our agency since they may feel they “owe” it to us for helping them.

We understand that it is best to employ survivor leaders that have not previously received services at our organization. We recognize that service provider and employer roles should not be merged, as this dynamic could be triggering and harmful to a survivor.

Since survivors have been exploited financially in the past, we plan and create a budget to fairly compensate Survivor Leaders as professionals for their labor. This affirms the dignity and power of survivors and breaks the cycle of financial abuse.

In addition, when a survivor chooses to share their story, we will ask what kind of support they may need, including a therapist or mentor to help them develop their message.

As advocates, we recognize the value of Survivor Leadership to ensure we are designing responses and solutions that are innovative, effective, and relevant to the clients we serve. We hire Survivor Leaders as staff members and consultants, consistently allocating funds to sustain this.

We also understand that by investing in leadership training for emerging leaders and helping survivors develop their expertise, we are creating a culture of collaboration by sharing power with survivors rather than having control over survivors.

Please see the appendix for a helpful assessment tool, [“Is Your Agency Survivor-Led?”](#).



## CHAPTER III: HUMAN TRAFFICKING OVERVIEW

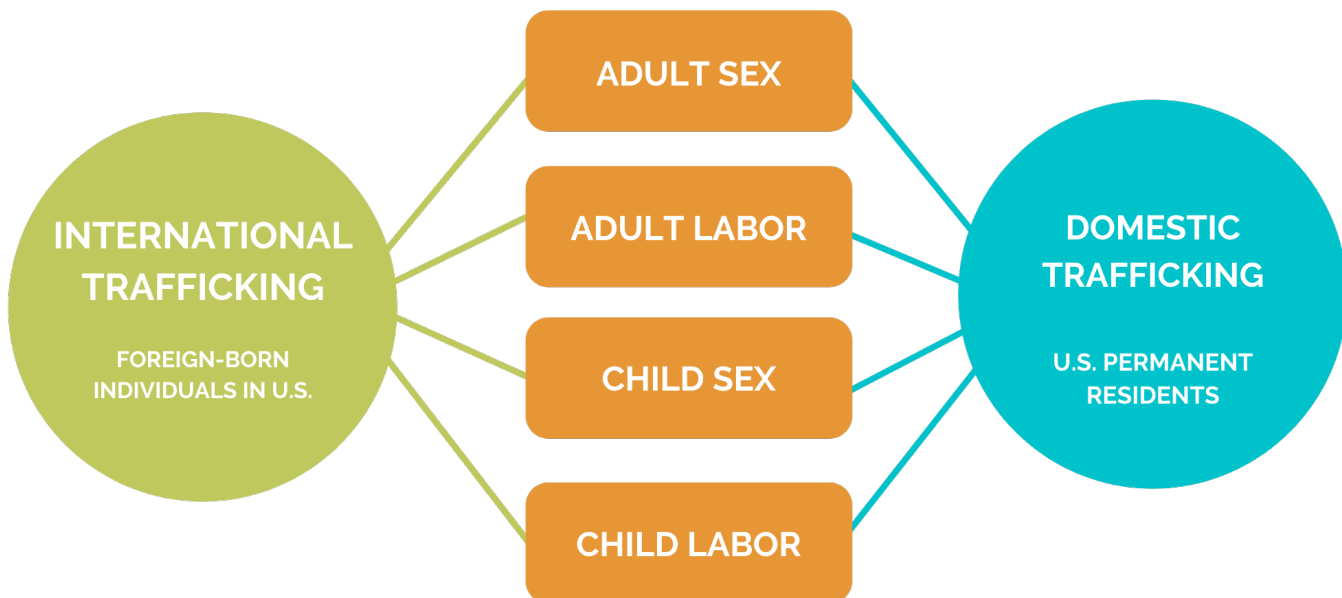
### DEFINITIONS & TYPOLOGIES

Human trafficking is the exploitation of men, women, and children for forced labor or forced sex for the benefit of a third party. According to the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000, human trafficking is defined as:

- a) Sex trafficking in which a commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such act has not attained 18 years of age; or
- b) The recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery.<sup>2</sup>

The federal age of consent is 18 years. Since children cannot consent to sex before that time, they cannot consent to and be charged for the activities involved in commercial sex. Though the age of consent in Texas is 17 years, youth are still considered children under the human trafficking statute until the age of 18.<sup>3</sup>

### CATEGORIES OF TRAFFICKING



<sup>2</sup> 22 US Code § 7102

<sup>3</sup> Government Code Section 20A.01

## ROOT CAUSES OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Human trafficking survivors frequently contact our shelters and crisis centers for help, whether they are identified as trafficking survivors or not. There are many intersections of human trafficking with other forms of gender-based violence<sup>4</sup>, including relationship violence and sexual assault. We need to be aware of the unique dynamics of human trafficking to be better equipped to provide clients with trauma-responsive, survivor-centered, and culturally resonant services.

Through the crime of human trafficking, a human is treated as a commodity, a good to be bought and sold, and someone benefits from that exploitation. It is a multibillion-dollar industry and one of the second fastest-growing black-market industries in the world. You can sell guns or drugs once; you can sell a person repeatedly.

It happens all over the world and right here in Texas. Traffickers can be members of sophisticated transnational criminal organizations, gang members, boyfriends, girlfriends, or family members.

The root causes of trafficking and gender-based violence are inherently interwoven. You cannot discuss sex trafficking without understanding the direct link to domestic violence, sexual assault, and child abuse. For this reason, our stakeholders must be at the forefront of the anti-trafficking movement.

Traffickers and perpetrators of interpersonal violence have similar mindsets, including the devaluation of women and children, the need to exert power and control, and the ability to exploit vulnerabilities. Environmental factors such as war, poverty, ecological devastation, and demand for cheap labor are also at the foundation of trafficking.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Gender-based violence includes harmful acts directed at an individual based on their gender. This form of violence is rooted in gender inequality, the abuse of power, and harmful ideologies (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2021).

<sup>5</sup> Wheel adapted by the Polaris Project (2010) from the Domestic Abuse Intervention Project's Duluth Model Power and Control Wheel

INTERSECTING DYNAMICS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE/SEXUAL ASSAULT



This figure demonstrates the various power and control dynamics that traffickers use to control their victims. It is comparable to the power and control wheels used in domestic violence education.

In addition to physical, sexual, economic, and emotional abuses, violence is about living in a climate of fear, shame, coercive control, and dehumanization. This fear can immobilize survivors and create further barriers to accessing help.

This control and devaluation can be exacerbated by oppressions based on race, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, type of labor performed, level of education, class position, disability, and immigration or refugee status.

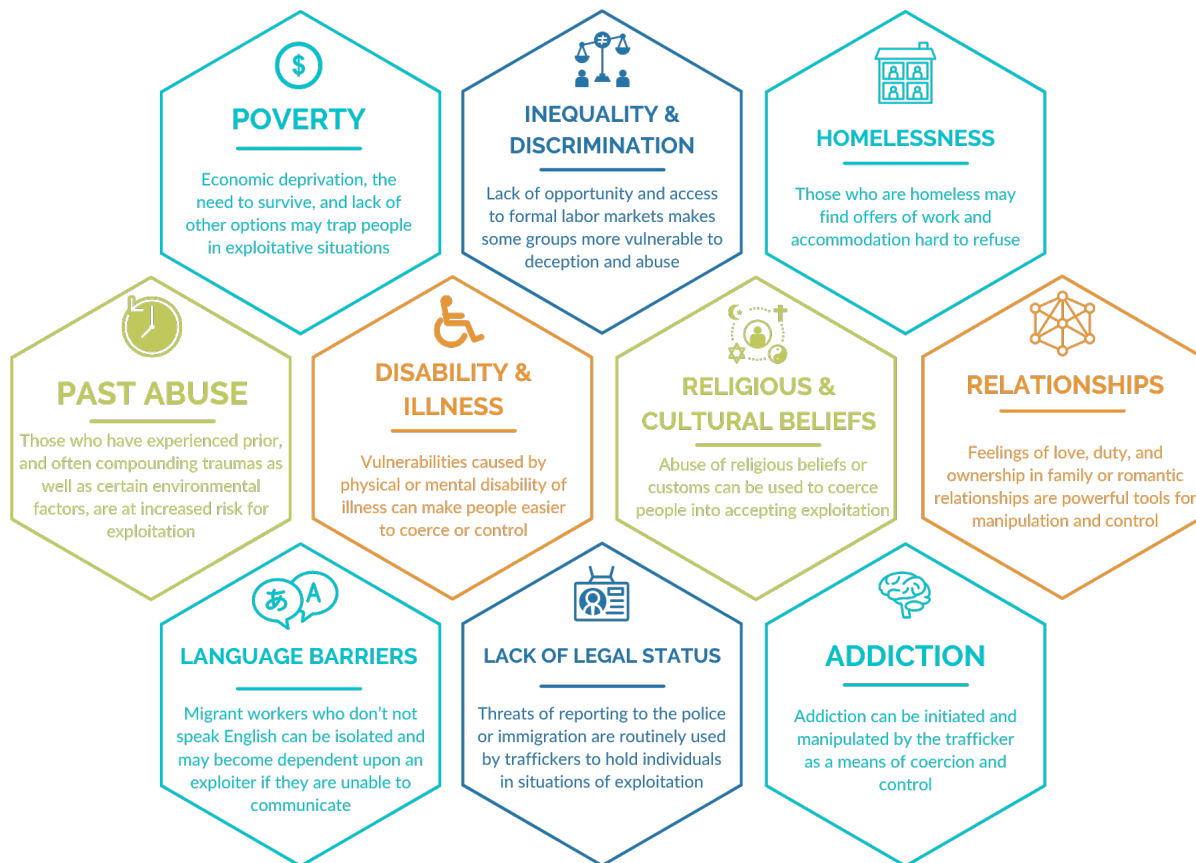
Survivors who have experienced violence and discrimination in their home countries because of sex, gender identity, and sexual orientation are more vulnerable to human trafficking. Traffickers also exploit the effects of trauma that survivors/victims have experienced in their homes and previous abusive relationships.

Raising awareness about the historical and intersectional nature of trafficking and gender-based violence confronts victim-blaming, informs advocacy, and empowers survivors.

## VULNERABILITIES

We know that anyone can be trafficked; however, certain characteristics or aspects of a person’s life may make them inherently more vulnerable.

### FACTORS SHAPING VULNERABILITY TO HUMAN TRAFFICKING



#### Poverty

Economic deprivation increases vulnerability to trafficking. The need to survive and provide for a family can drive individuals to accept offers of work which may appear at first to be legitimate but turn out to be highly exploitative. Many stay in situations of exploitation either because they are unable to escape or because they fear that they will not be able to find any other work. The lack of alternative options causes people to risk being trafficked rather than starve or leave their families in poverty. Food insecurity is a high indicator for many forms of trafficking. Lack of access to food can be both recruitment and daily compliance tools. Poor nutrition can indicate vulnerability and a potential control point for a trafficker or handler.

#### Inequality and Discrimination

The lack of equal opportunities for women, migrants, or members of minority groups means that they may have fewer rights and options. These limitations make them more vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. Stigma and social isolation may be excluded from legitimate labor markets and force them to find alternatives. Despite having the same rights as others, some marginalized individuals might believe they are not entitled to those same rights or protections.

#### Lack of Legal Immigration Status

Those with insecure or no legal status are often fearful of authorities and are less likely to report abuse. Traffickers routinely use threats of reporting to the police or immigration officials to

hold individuals in situations of exploitation. Even after exiting exploitation, many are reluctant to contact law enforcement or report what has happened for fear of being arrested or deported.

### Homelessness and Destitution

Traffickers often target people experiencing homelessness and extreme financial hardship. They are lured in by the promise of work and accommodation. Mental health issues and substance misuse may also increase vulnerability among the homeless since these challenges make individuals easier to coerce or control.

### Illness and Disability

Physical or mental illness and disability can increase vulnerability to exploitation as those affected may be more dependent on others, have impaired judgment, struggle to advocate for their own needs, or be more physically vulnerable to abuse.

### Religious and Cultural Beliefs

Religious and cultural beliefs and practices may influence the way individuals perceive their situation. Some may feel their exploitation is deserved or determined by factors beyond their control. Exploitation within religious or cultural communities may also occur when leaders use authority and fear exclusion to control individuals.

### Emotional and Romantic Relationships

Relationships may be used to exert pressure and influence over individuals who feel they must submit to the will of a partner or family member out of duty, love, or loyalty. Trauma-bonding may occur when a romantic partner engages in gas-lighting, manipulation, and control tactics such as intermittent acts of kindness and cruelty or indifference to create real or perceived dependencies. Additionally, the responsibility of providing for family members is often a driving factor in accepting exploitative working situations when it appears that there is no alternative.

### Language Barriers

Those with limited English proficiency, including migrant workers, can become isolated and dependent upon an exploiter. Communication barriers and little knowledge of labor laws and the criminal justice system makes asking for help challenging. Traffickers prevent escape and maintain control through possession of immigration documents, threats of violence, and deportation.

### Addiction

Those struggling with addiction are easily exploited as they can become dependent on the trafficker for substances. Additionally, addiction can be initiated and manipulated by the trafficker as a means of coercion and control.

### Past Abuse

Those who have experienced prior and often compounding traumas and certain environmental factors are at increased risk for exploitation.

## CHARACTERISTICS OF TRAFFICKERS AND ABUSERS

### Who are the Traffickers?

Traffickers are masters of the art of seduction. They are experts at identifying a specific victim's inadequacies and vulnerabilities and exploiting those. Such tactics consistently lead to obedience and the breakdown of personal agency and autonomy. Traffickers also leverage anti-immigrant sentiment to help maintain control of their victims.

Traffickers can be anyone and do not always fit the stereotype:

- ◆ Family members
- ◆ Family friends
- ◆ Caregivers/child care workers
- ◆ Intimate partners
- ◆ Peers
- ◆ Neighbors
- ◆ Employers
- ◆ Gang members
- ◆ Online acquaintances
- ◆ Community or religious leaders

### Familial Trafficking

Familial trafficking is particularly traumatic because victims are being hurt and exploited by the very people who are supposed to love and protect them. Familial trafficking can happen in any community. This could be those impoverished or addicted that exchange sexual abuse of their children for drugs or rent. Familial trafficking can also occur among the wealthy that appear to be “the perfect family.”

- ◆ Culture of violence, hopelessness, and chronic trauma
- ◆ Sexual and physical abuse can start at birth
- ◆ A familial trafficker will usually be well-known in the community
- ◆ Rape is normalized
- ◆ A familial trafficker will lead a double life and have connections to criminal networks
- ◆ The family will attempt to look normal from the outside
- ◆ All forms of violence are used to control trafficking victim
- ◆ Family members will always accompany a child to med/social service visits

### Gang-Facilitated Trafficking

Gang-facilitated trafficking is steadily on the rise. More gangs are now selling the chance to sexually exploit people. There is higher profit and lower risk for selling people than other criminal enterprises such as drugs and guns. Young women and girls can also be used for sexually violent gang initiation. There can also be increased violence and internal conflict over loyalty to the gang and the “boyfriend.” The tattooing of gang names and symbols is common. This is a dangerous and highly coercive dynamic to leave, as a gang may be the only “family” a youth has.



## Romantic Partner-Controlled Trafficking

Traffickers that are romantic partners utilize psychological coercion and manipulation to make the survivor “fall” for him. The survivor is made to believe that they are in a loving romantic relationship and will be a family. The dynamics are very similar to an abusive relationship, with all the barriers to leaving, only now there is money involved and even more shame and stigma. In reality, the relationship is fraudulent, and violence is almost always present.

- ◆ **CEO Pimps and Madams** are all about the money and the “business” aspect of trafficking. They will approach young and vulnerable people about fake business opportunities and claim connections to industries such as modeling, music, dance clubs, etc. The survivor thinks they will be engaging in legal and well-paid work based on their talents, not commercial sexual exploitation for someone else’s gain.
- ◆ **Guerrilla Pimps** are known for their extreme violence and brutality. This term has previously been misused but has become a common phrase used in trafficking. This type of trafficker may force survivors to become addicted to drugs as another means of control. They are also known for kidnapping young and vulnerable people to beat, rape, and exploit. Use of weapons and threats to kill the survivor and their family are common if victims do not bring in enough money or try to leave.

Shared Hope International has adapted Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs to illustrate how pimps and traffickers identify and exploit the needs of trafficking survivors to create further dependence and barriers to leaving.

BIDERMAN'S CHART OF COERCION



## INDICATORS

Screening for trafficking is vital for rape crisis centers and domestic violence agencies. It assists in putting the pieces of information together that, if taken separately, might not raise concern but could reveal a trafficking situation when assessed accurately.

### Essential Information for Identifying Trafficking Survivors

- ◆ Many trafficking survivors will not self-identify, sometimes because they do not realize they have been trafficked or do not feel safe.
- ◆ Survivors are likely not aware of the legal definitions of human trafficking. In sex trafficking, they may use terms like “the life,” “the game,” or “working.”
- ◆ It is unlikely a survivor will tell you their entire story at the beginning of receiving services. In addition to fear and shame connected with their trauma, they have been told what not to say and sometimes are given a false story to tell.
- ◆ Take time to build rapport and trust, so clients feel comfortable telling you about their experiences in a safe, survivor-centered, and empowering environment.
- ◆ The goal is not to identify trafficking survivors for the sake of identifying them but to provide additional resources to meet their specialized needs.

### General Trafficking Indicators

- ◆ Do not make assumptions based on one indicator but look at the totality of the situation.
- ◆ Inconsistencies when reporting where they live or lack of knowledge about the city/state they currently reside may come up. They also may be in shock and not able to tell any of their story or very little of it at all. They may also seem reticent or resist talking.
- ◆ Someone is always with them (or they may be nearby watching). They are not allowed to speak for themselves.
- ◆ Little to no eye contact when spoken to.
- ◆ No access to a bank account or other money/financial resources.
- ◆ Not free to come and go as they wish.
- ◆ Living in the same place that they work.
- ◆ Does not have access to passport, visa, other immigration status documents, driver’s license, or state ID. Is someone else holding these documents?
- ◆ How many cell phones do they have? Who is in charge of the phone bill?
- ◆ Does the person appear disconnected from family, friends, community organizations, or faith communities?
- ◆ Has a child stopped attending school?
- ◆ Has the person had a sudden or dramatic change in behavior?
- ◆ Is the person disoriented, confused, or showing signs of mental or physical abuse?
- ◆ Does the person have bruises in various stages of healing?
- ◆ Is the person fearful, timid, or submissive?
- ◆ Does the person show signs of being denied food, water, sleep, or medical care?
- ◆ Is the person often in the company of someone to whom they defer? Or someone who seems to control the situation (for example, where they go or who they talk to)?
- ◆ Does the person appear to be coached on what to say?
- ◆ Is the person living in unsuitable conditions?
- ◆ Does the person lack personal possessions and appear not to have a stable living situation?

### Sex Trafficking-Specific Indicators

- ◆ Been forced by a partner or family member, or gang member to provide sexual favors
- ◆ Poor health or has multiple untreated sexually transmitted infections or related injuries
- ◆ Hypersensitive to touch, no eye contact
- ◆ Has had to terminate one or more pregnancies over a short period
- ◆ Signs of branding such as tattoos with abuser's/trafficker's/gang name, dollar signs
- ◆ Using terms from "The Life" like hustler or wifey
- ◆ Has pictures/intimate information posted online about them
- ◆ Carrying multiple condoms, extra clothes that do not match the weather or normal circumstances, wet wipes, hotel room key(s)
- ◆ Severe preoccupation with cell phone(s)

### Labor Trafficking-Specific Indicators

- ◆ Has been forced by a partner or family member to work inside the home in a situation of domestic servitude or outside of the home without access to earnings
- ◆ Was recruited through false promises concerning the nature and conditions of their work
- ◆ Debt owed to an employer
- ◆ Not allowed to leave working situation unless monitored
- ◆ Works excessively long hours and is unpaid, paid very little, or paid only through tips

Additional identification resources, such as the Commercial Sexual Exploitation Identification Tool (CSE-IT), can be found in the [resource section of this manual](#).



## CHAPTER IV: HUMAN TRAFFICKING PROGRAM RESPONSE FOR RCCS AND DV SHELTERS

The intersections of domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking require that our stakeholders have an integral role in the anti-trafficking movement. Advocates with knowledge of interpersonal violence dynamics, systematic responses, referral resources, and professional boundaries are already poised to work well with trafficking survivors.

Our crisis centers have the long-term respect within their community and the internal infrastructure to support staff and survivors with complex needs. They also already engage in frequent interactions with criminal justice and community systems. We know there can be hesitancy to expand services to trafficking survivors who require more assistance when resources and staff are already stretched thin. The reality is that our centers are already serving trafficking survivors whether they are being identified and provided specialized services or not.

Foundational work has been done to help facilitate success in service expansion. You will find [multiple resources](#) to help you with this endeavor, including links to webinars from experts and other stakeholders doing intersectional work in this field.

### IDENTIFICATION AND HOTLINE RESPONSE

Identification is one of the biggest hurdles in expanding services for trafficking survivors. Research and anecdotal information confirm that most sex-trafficking survivors do not self-identify. Human trafficking survivors often come into contact with our centers by seeking shelter or other services by calling a crisis hotline or through a sexual assault advocate at the hospital after an assault. Below is more detailed information about screening tools and trafficking indicators for minors and adults.

Our centers are constantly striving to put trauma-informed and survivor-centered policies into practice. This is especially important for trafficking survivors gaining access to services via crisis lines. We know that centers must utilize every resource to its fullest, and shelter space is almost always at capacity. This results in strict shelter admittance policies and long waiting lists to ensure the most critical cases have access to those limited resources.

However, long intake practices and strict admittance through the crisis hotlines create further barriers for trafficking survivors. Many sex trafficking survivors are trauma-bonded to their trafficker and may downplay the severity of the abuse. Also, the movements and communication of sex trafficking survivors are often monitored even more closely than other survivors making multiple calls for help almost impossible. Policies that require survivors to keep calling back until a bed is available create further barriers to leaving the trafficker and getting assistance.

A policy requiring that a survivor call the hotline directly can create another barrier to service. This is usually enacted to encourage empowerment and ensure a survivor is ready for assistance. However, this can be a huge hurdle if you are getting a referral from law enforcement, victim services, or an outside agency. Having to repeatedly tell one's story can lead to disengagement from the system and services.

## SHELTER INTAKE

Requiring detailed information about the abuse and exploitation can trigger the trafficking survivor and add to existing shame and self-blame. Think about why you are asking those questions. Is there another way to phrase them? Are they even necessary to determine services? Also, consider when the intake information is required. Has the survivor had a chance to sleep, eat, and reacclimate before completing all of the paperwork?

### Basic Trafficking Assessment Questions

- Is anyone watching you right now?
- Do you have children and who has them? Traffickers often hold onto children so that the victim protects the trafficker.
- Gang trafficking: How did you get involved in the gang? How were you initiated into the gang? What is your role in the gang?
- What type of work do/did you do? Are you being paid? How are you being paid?
- Do you feel you or your family is unsafe? Have you or your family been threatened?
- Do you feel unsafe around any family members?
- Has any family member threatened to abandon or hurt others in your family if you didn't do what they said?
- Have you done any work you did not want to do? Has anyone forced you to work?
- Did anyone ever make you do work you didn't want to do by using threats or violence?
- Do you have your documents? Who does?
- How did you meet this person? How did you find out about this job?
- Have you been hurt or feared you would be injured if you didn't do the job you were asked to do?
- What did you expect would happen if you didn't do what was asked of you?
- Are you required to earn a certain amount of money/meet a quota for anyone? What happens if you don't meet your quota?
- What are your living conditions like?
- Are you free to come and go as you please?

## RESIDENTIAL SAFETY AND ACCESSIBILITY

We understand that shelters must take particular security and safety measures, including having locking doors and surveillance cameras. Human trafficking survivors should be informed of this in the initial intake to lessen the chance of being triggered and explain how they still have agency and control over their environment.

Please consider alternatives to hard cut-off dates and other benchmarks of success. The communal living structure of shelters may trigger trafficking survivors, leading to conflicts with staff and other residents.

Trafficking survivors may need additional privacy measures to feel safe and secure, including private rooms. Recruitment is a concern when housing trafficking survivors, but that fear should not be an excuse to exclude a person from services and shelter.

**The complex nature of trafficking and exploitation often requires survivors to stay at shelters longer than domestic violence or sexual assault survivors.**

### Essential safety planning for human trafficking survivors:<sup>6</sup>

- ✓ Maintain an awareness of the survivor's vulnerability and the impact of trauma bonding. Survivors often develop loyalty and dependency through a cycle of violence and/or psychological coercion with small rewards.
- ✓ If a minor, consider whether the parent or guardian is involved in the youth's trafficking.
- ✓ Advocates and law enforcement need to listen before attempting to fix the situation or offering advice.
- ✓ Introduce survivors to an advocate and include them in the safety planning.
- ✓ Help the survivor assess immediate emotional and physical needs, focusing on their strengths.
- ✓ Focus on empowerment and collaboratively build a safety plan with the survivor. The survivor is an expert on what they need to stay safe.
- ✓ Give them autonomy when helping to create a safety plan. This doesn't mean they will be ready to exit trafficking at this time, but you can give them resources for when they are ready.
- ✓ Instead of trying to "rescue" them, meet them where they are with compassion and resources. They may have children with the trafficker, other family members working with them, or a drug addiction they are not ready to kick.
- ✓ Consider and allow for the possibility that the survivor may not act on all or part of the safety plan. Provide various options that will keep the survivor safe.
- ✓ Ask the survivor to identify family members or other positive, healthy adults who can help support the safety and service plan. Include these persons in the planning.
- ✓ Consider whether a supportive role by law enforcement (when applicable) and targeted services will increase the likelihood of the plan succeeding. Law enforcement may effectively break the connection between a survivor and trafficker through arrest and prosecution of the trafficker.
- ✓ Safety Plans should prioritize physical and emotional safety, including:
  - ◆ Immediate assistance (housing, food, medical, safety, and security)
  - ◆ Mental health assistance (counseling)
  - ◆ Income assistance
  - ◆ Legal status (certification, immigration)

<sup>6</sup> See The National Human Trafficking Hotline's Safety Planning Information and the VIGOR Safety Plan for complete guides.



## CHAPTER V: TRAUMA IMPACTS FACED BY SURVIVORS

### SURVIVOR PSYCHOLOGY

The trauma of human trafficking profoundly impacts a survivor’s identity. This is often most visible in the way survivors relate to their safety, self-worth, and power. To survive human trafficking requires tremendous resilience, yet it also ruptures a victim’s relationship with their core sense of self.

As advocates, we are supporting survivors not only in leaving behind violence and exploitation but also are supporting them on their journey of redefining their identity. Part of this work is helping survivors reconnect with and trust themselves.

**Traffickers typically create a new identity for their victims through psychological coercion and violence related to their exploitation.**

This is one of the primary tactics of control. If a trafficker can control a victim’s sense of self, they don’t have to control every behavior. The victim will act according to the limits of their new self-image.

control who they believe they are and what they think they deserve. Once a victim experiences what is clinically called Identity Disturbance, it is far more challenging for them to leave their abusive situation.

Traffickers do this because it is easier to control a person’s actions if you can

This strategy to break a person’s will and instill a new identity can occur in many ways. This is designed to make it easier to traffic the victim and provide “evidence” that this is who they are.

**In sex trafficking, visible signs of identity can be altered by forcing a victim to dye their hair, change their style of clothing, answer to a new name, take illicit substances, participate in pornography, accept a tattoo with the trafficker’s name or symbol, and perform the illusion of consent with sex buyers.**

Victims also experience Identity Disturbance, a disruption of their sense of self, when they are forced to commit criminal acts under duress, inflict harm on others (including recruiting more victims), and generally adhere to the norms the trafficker has invented. In a sense, the trafficker builds a world for the victim that must be treated as absolute truth. The cost of non-compliance is further abuse for the victim.

For a victim to be safe, they not only have to escape the physical realities of their trafficking experience. They have to escape the world the trafficker has created for them, including the limits of the false self-image.

Writer and activist Brooke Axtell refers to this false self as the “Survival Self.”<sup>7</sup> This is the person a victim has to become to survive their trafficker.

**The Survival Self serves a trafficking victim by keeping them alive.**

The Survival Self protects the victim from feeling all the pain of repeated sexual assault and abuse. The Survival Self expects this and, over time, learns how to numb the suffering by normalizing the harms of exploitation.

The Survival Self can also have feelings of loyalty to the perpetrator due to trauma-bonding. The trafficker often manipulates unmet needs for safety and affection to ensure control over the victim.

Intermittent rewards for compliant behavior keep the victim desperate for the trafficker’s approval. Fear of punishment and the desire for love feed the cycle of dependency. Since traffickers isolate their victims and try to cut them off from anyone who would challenge the “reality” they have built, victims lose access to their own truth.

**Like domestic violence, traffickers in the sex trade often groom their victims, selling the dream of a future, ideal life together, creating a sense of family, and promising whatever the victim desires most.**


In labor trafficking, this control over identity can be achieved by forcing them into labor and living conditions they would never otherwise accept, threatening to hurt others if they don’t comply, and treating them in increasingly dehumanizing ways. Traffickers don’t just want the person to engage in unpaid, forced labor. They want the labor trafficking victim to believe this is who they are now and all they can have access to. Controlling the victim’s sense of self is the only way to ensure compliance. The trafficker uses these coerced behaviors to “prove” to the victim who the trafficker says they are.

**In general, during victimization, the trafficker is systematically breaking down the will and identity of the person by coercing them to do things that violate their values or sense of self.**

Brazilian educator, Paulo Friere, referred to this phenomenon as “internalized oppression.” He writes, “The oppressed, having internalized the image of the oppressor and adopted his guidelines, are fearful of freedom.”

<sup>7</sup> “Beautiful Justice: Reclaiming My Worth After Human Trafficking and Sexual Abuse” by Brooke Axtell



 **Things You Can Do as an Advocate**

As advocates, we are called to empathize with the experience of the Survival Self and yet gently invite our clients to question the self-image the trafficker instilled. If we push them too soon to change their beliefs and behavior, they will experience Cognitive Dissonance, a sense of stress over conflicting internal ideas of who they are. This can lead to a survivor defending the limits the trafficker placed on them.

We can say, “It makes sense that you feel that way, considering everything you’ve been through,” without agreeing with their limiting beliefs. We can assure them that we understand how their current beliefs helped them survive while offering the possibility that one day they may not need them anymore.

We can continue to affirm their worth and power to choose while recognizing that they may be resistant and even angry when they hear these positive messages. Holding space for this resistance is one way to encourage their journey to redefining their identity.

We can best support them through compassionate listening and helping them connect with the truth of their desires in the present. Naming and acting on one small desire each day is a way to rebuild their will.

Their identity and will have been brutally assaulted. It will take time for them to tune into and trust their bodies as a source of wisdom. This is why body-centered trauma treatments can be a powerful resource. Even though the mind carries conflicting ideas about their identity, the feelings and sensations in the body can be unifying and grounding.


Survivors need a reason to live, a reason to fight for recovery.

They need far more than physical safety or what is often referred to as “life skills.”

They need a dream, a desire, a hope. This is why mentoring is so vital. Mentoring is not just a practical tool to help someone start a new career or educational path.

**Mentoring is life-saving because it helps instill a new sense of identity and provides a reason to stay in services beyond just focusing on resolving the pain of the trauma. It affirms their humanity and shows them that their desires matter.**

Through mentoring, a survivor doesn't just learn a new skill. They have the opportunity to become a new person. They become more than what happened to them: a writer, an artist, an entrepreneur, an activist—a person with passions.

 **As advocates, we need to offer more than physical safety planning and social services. We need to affirm their potential as emerging leaders who can create what they desire for themselves and their communities.**

Mentorship is where Survivor Leadership begins.

Mentorship for economic empowerment is essential because it provides survivors with real choices. But survivors also need support to dream, desire and decide who they want to be beyond work, money, and utilitarian needs.

Mentorship programs that support the unique gifts, strengths, and passions of a survivor also help build what Axtell calls “relational resilience.” She defines this as the capacity “to make empowered, personal choices within the context of a safe, supportive community.” Long-term mentoring creates a continuity of relationship that can continue after case management and trauma therapy.

The trafficker often tries to create a sense of “family” and belonging among victims. Physical safety is essential, but it is only the first step. Genuine, long-term relationships based on what a survivor deeply cares about are the true safety net.

## UNIQUE TRAUMAS

As mentioned throughout this guide, we know that *human trafficking survivors often experience poly-victimization or complex trauma*. While physical and emotional trauma is commonly referenced in human trafficking education, this subsection sheds light on less often discussed traumas.

### Betrayal Trauma

Betrayal trauma is a human relationship trauma. It occurs when the people or institutions on which a person depends for survival violate their trust or well-being in a significant way. Human trafficking survivors are likely to have experienced one or many forms of relational betrayal, whether that's before or during their commercial exploitation.

Physical, emotional, or sexual abuse perpetrated by a caregiver is a clear instance of betrayal trauma. One study found approximately 93% of trafficked youth experienced previous neglect or abuse.<sup>8</sup> A prime example of intimate partner betrayal might be a boyfriend coercing or forcing his partner to engage in commercial sex. Unfortunately, institutions that exist to protect us often become unintentional perpetrators of betrayal trauma. Examples of this include but are certainly not limited to child welfare not intervening or dismissing an earlier case of child abuse, law enforcement arresting a victim for prostitution, or judges not granting protective orders.

When someone an individual depends on for basic needs, love, or protection violates that trust, the betrayed individual may not have the option or means to leave. A coping response may be to accept the betrayal and the possibility of future betrayals. This process can prove damaging to emotional well-being and healthy attachment to others.

### Intergenerational Trauma

Intergenerational trauma is a phenomenon in which trauma experienced by an individual affects the health and well-being of descendants of future generations.<sup>9</sup> Very little research exists identifying this form of trauma in the children or families of trafficking victims. However, trafficking survivors take on a life-long journey of healing and often express fears that their children will fall victim to some form of violence or even trafficking. These might include clinical trauma treatment such as eye movement desensitization and reprocessing (EMDR), survivor support groups, parenting courses, and family-based safety planning.

**The most common perpetrators are parents or other childhood caregivers, intimate partners, and institutions.**

**To mitigate the potential for, or fear of, intergenerational trauma, trafficking survivors deserve the opportunity to access a wide variety of supportive networks.**

<sup>8</sup> Basson, D., Langs, J., Acker, K., Katz, S., Desai, N., & Ford, J. (2018). *Psychotherapy for Commercially Sexually Exploited Children: A Guide for Community-Based Behavioral Health Practitioners and Agencies*. Oakland, CA: WestCoast Children's Clinic.

<sup>9</sup> "APA Dictionary of Psychology." American Psychological Association, American Psychological Association, 2020, [dictionary.apa.org/intergenerational-trauma](https://dictionary.apa.org/intergenerational-trauma).

## Religious Trauma

Religious trauma is any form of trauma, including emotional and sexual abuse, that is perpetrated by a spiritual leader or a religious person under the guise of religious purpose. It also occurs when the perpetrator uses religious ideologies, rituals, scriptures, or symbols in an abusive manner or uses religious explanations to justify abuse.

Religious trauma can result in a pervasive sense of shame, confusion, and anxiety, causing victims to feel they cannot trust their own experiences and perceptions. Perpetrators of religious abuse try to define and control a person's sense of reality.

Human trafficking occurs within all sectors of society, including religious institutions. We refer to this trafficking typology as "Religious Trafficking."

**The primary objective of religious abuse is to use religion to exercise power and control over the victim. The perpetrator of this abuse often presents their behavior as "God's will."**

**💡 To be trauma-informed, all agencies serving human trafficking victims should screen for religious trauma that may have occurred before or during the trafficking experience.**

This is particularly important for faith-based organizations that offer religious teachings and spiritual practices as an option for survivors in their treatment plan.

What might be a source of comfort for an advocate might also be deeply triggering for a survivor of religious trauma.

Religious trauma impacts survivors' sense of self, worldview, and how they interpret their trafficking experience. Spirituality can be a source of solace, healing, and hope for survivors, but it doesn't negate the need for evidence-based trauma therapies.

Through empathy, respect, and inclusivity of all religious backgrounds, we can support survivors to make informed choices about religious and spiritual practices that support their safety and well-being. The following questionnaire can help you assess whether your client has experienced religious trauma.

**💡 As advocates, it is essential to evaluate whether a survivor has experienced religious abuse to create a holistic, trauma-informed treatment plan.**

### Questionnaire for Evaluating Religious Trauma

- ◆ Have you been abused by a religious person?
- ◆ Has anyone ever used religious terms or "God" to justify abusing you?
- ◆ Have you been shamed or hurt within a religious context or faith community?
- ◆ Did your abuser/trafficker make you attend religious services?
- ◆ How would you describe your childhood religious background?
- ◆ Do you feel safe around religious language and symbols?
- ◆ Do any religious or spiritual practices feel supportive to you?
- ◆ Do you want to participate in any kind of religious services or classes?
- ◆ If not, what other options would you be interested in? Here you can offer expressive arts therapies, mindfulness practices, equine therapy, or other nature-based experiences. The goal is to help the survivor connect with something else that feels sacred or supportive.



## CHAPTER VI: BEST PRACTICES AND SERVICE PROVISION

As discussed in previous chapters, we are aware that human trafficking survivors often experience sexual assault and domestic violence before, during, and after their trafficking victimization. Despite these intersecting victimizations, it is crucial to recognize that the crime of human trafficking is unique and therefore requires distinctive practices and services.

### PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF THE PHILOSOPHY OF CARE

We recommend organizations review, develop, and implement human trafficking policies and programs through the lens of the Four Pillars of Survivor Care established in [Chapter 2](#) of this guide. Under this model, services should be trauma-informed, strengths-based, inclusive, and survivor-led.

Understanding the impact of trauma on survivors, and the direct service professionals they work with, is at the cornerstone of a trauma-informed approach.

**The Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) shares the following three elements for victim-centered practices<sup>10</sup>:**

- 1 Realizing the prevalence of trauma.
- 2 Recognizing how trauma affects all individuals involved with the program, organization, or system, including its own workforce.
- 3 Responding by putting this knowledge into practice.

Information on evidence-based interventions, such as Trust-Based Relational Intervention (TBRI), can be found in section D of this chapter and the [resources list at the end of this manual](#). The resources list also includes links to online resources for trauma-informed training.

<sup>10</sup> "Human Trafficking Task Force e-Guide." Office for Victims of Crime Training and Technical Assistance Center, U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office for Victims of Crime, bit.ly/Trauma-Informed-Approach.

### TRAUMA-INFORMED BASICS

#### Person Centered Approach

- Be mindful of trauma responses (physiological and emotional)
- Offer individual services and supports
- Remain responsive and flexible
- Affirm and validate feelings and experiences
- Practice active and engaged listening
- Convey empathy
- Move at a speed comfortable for the individual

#### Empowerment

- Restore power, control and self-efficacy
- Identify victim-survivor strengths, resources and skills
- Allow the victim-survivor to "steer" or lead the conversation

#### Dignity and Respect

- Respect and uphold boundaries, allowing distance or time where requested
- Convey worth and value of the victim-survivor
- Remain professional and courteous
- Be mindful of own language, word choice and non-verbal cues
- Be attentive to basic needs (medical care, shelter, nourishment, sleep)

#### Safety and Security

- Maintain a non-threatening and comfortable environment
- Ensure privacy
- Clearly explain your role, intent, objective(s) and purpose
- Ensure initial - and ongoing - affirmative consent
- Employ non-threatening body-language and tone-of-voice
- Allow individual "an out" and refrain from physically blocking exits
- Offer comfort items such as blankets or bottled water

#### Voice and Choice

- Listen
- Offer choices and options
- Do not attempt to sway decision-making
- Mirror terminology that the victim-survivor uses
- Avoid possessive pronouns ("your trafficker", "your situation" or "your assault")

## CULTURALLY RESONANT PRACTICES

### Cultural Competency and Cultural Humility

In service provision, cultural competence is the ability to connect effectively and supportively with clients from different cultures.

**By increasing our knowledge of the values, traditions, and beliefs of other communities, we increase our ability to communicate and advocate for diverse survivors in a meaningful way. This includes identifying their unique challenges and sources of cultural resilience.**

For instance, a member of a historically oppressed community may not trust or want to engage with law enforcement. They also may feel they have to protect members of their community from additional policing and incarceration, even when those individuals have exploited them. It is important to validate these concerns as you communicate their legal options.

Some survivors have been raised in cultures where therapy is stigmatized or Western mental health modalities are viewed as too individualistic. They may need support identifying healing practices from their own culture to include in their treatment plans.

Others may come from religious communities that promote victim-blaming or sexual shaming that make it more challenging to speak about sexual trauma. They may need help identifying the aspects of their faith tradition that feel supportive and those that do not serve their recovery.

Although learning how a culture or community may broadly view certain types of experiences is essential for effective case management and trauma therapy, there are limitations to a model of cultural competence. As advocates, we can learn more about unique beliefs and practices.

If we do not belong to a particular culture or community, increasing our general knowledge will not be enough. We will remain limited by our lack of lived experience and need to commit to an ongoing process of engaging with curiosity, compassion, and humility.

To be trauma-informed, we need to practice cultural humility in addition to cultural competence. We are culturally competent when we use our knowledge of cultural norms to communicate more effectively and

**Still, we need to be aware that making claims about broad differences between communities can lead to stereotypes and assumptions about an individual survivor.**

offer relevant support. Cultural knowledge is typically viewed as a subject matter you learn about rather than a dynamic, evolving process of reflection and growth.

We also recognize our own cultural worldview and values, taking responsibility for the assumptions and biases that are often invisible to us because we live inside of them every day.

**Cultural humility is a way of being in a relationship where we humbly commit to life-long learning about a culture that is not our own.**

While basic cultural competence is an important first

step to clear communication and building trust, we must embrace being students of different cultural histories, values, and traditions.

Without a practice of cultural humility, it is easy to believe we understand the realities of a specific culture. As a humble, curious, life-long learner, you can continuously grow in your ability to be a more attuned and empathetic advocate.

## TIPS AND TOOLS FOR CULTURALLY COMPETENT ADVOCATES <sup>11</sup>

### Communication

1. Listen patiently, show interest, and demonstrate empathy.
2. Be aware of confidentiality. Self-disclosures may be a concern to some survivors.
3. Validate the survivor's explanation of the crime and its repercussions.
4. Be flexible, alter an action plan to fit the survivor's cultural framework, and negotiate a compromise, whenever possible.
5. Reassure the survivor that the best will be done to help them.
6. Practice effective cross-cultural communication: Awareness and sensitivity to non-verbal cues, body language, gender roles, and face-saving needs.
7. Ask for clarification and check for understanding. Even though the same term is used, it may mean different things to the advocate and the survivor.
8. Keep it simple and free of clinical or criminal justice jargon.
9. Recognize your communication style and acknowledge when it may clash with the survivor.
10. Utilize the same language a survivor uses to describe their experience.
11. Refer to the perpetrator by the same name a survivor uses. The survivor may still be attached or loyal to their trafficker and initially unable to identify them as abusive or exploitative.
12. Know and manage your personal hot buttons.

### Relationship Building

1. Take time to build trust and rapport.
2. Build a relationship with the family and extended family, when appropriate.
3. Work within the survivor's system or negotiate/compromise.

### Self-Awareness

1. Be aware of your own biases/stereotypes and put them aside.
2. Reduce ethnocentrism and respect the survivor's worldview, even if it does not mesh with yours.
3. Recognize your limitations, ask for clarification, and seek cultural informants to understand better.


<sup>11</sup> Texas Association Against Sexual Assault. (2016, November). Sexual Assault Advocate Training Manual. <http://taasa.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/2016-Sexual-Assault-Advocate-Training-Manual.pdf>

### Discerning Cultural Patterns

1. Recognize and work within cultural norms when appropriate.
2. Elicit the survivor's concept of the crime, safety, grief, and healing.
3. Acquire cultural knowledge, which will enable you to react positively to unfamiliar practices.
4. However, be careful not to stereotype. Treat each case uniquely.

## HEALING MODALITIES AND EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICES

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 **When engaging with clients, direct service providers should use evidence-based trauma treatment modalities and healing tools.**

Suggested modalities and tools are provided below. Some are only to be used by a licensed clinician, and others may be utilized by all advocates. Whether or not you become formally trained to use a particular method, learning more about the basic approach and benefits of these practices will help you support survivors in exploring options for recovery. It will also give you a more comprehensive understanding of the neurobiological impact of trauma.

### Trauma Treatment

- ◆ Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)
- ◆ Dialectic Behavioral Therapy (DBT)
- ◆ Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR)
- ◆ Internal Family Systems
- ◆ Neurofeedback
- ◆ Sensorimotor Therapy
- ◆ Somatic Experiencing (SE)
- ◆ Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT)

### Other Tools

- ◆ Expressive arts therapies
- ◆ Mindfulness Meditation
- ◆ Motivational Interviewing
- ◆ Nature-based therapies
- ◆ Non-Violent Communication
- ◆ Personal growth work
- ◆ Trust-Based Relational Intervention (TBRI)

For more information about these healing modalities and tools, visit our [resource list at the end of the guide](#). You will find recommendations for books, online resources, and training.



## Ethical Boundaries

To provide the best possible services to survivors, advocates must be familiar with and consistently model good ethical behavior. This includes setting and maintaining ethical boundaries when working with clients. Unfortunately, people are rarely taught healthy boundaries in life, which can make boundary setting a difficult task for both service providers and clients alike. When you consider the additional needs and challenges of working with trafficking survivors, this work becomes very nuanced.

Benefits of well-maintained boundaries:

- ◆ They protect both you and the survivor
- ◆ Modeling healthy boundaries can empower your client to do the same
- ◆ Reduces risk of advocate burnout and turnover

### Helpful pointers:

- ◆ Refrain from interjecting personal experiences. Doing so can cause unintentional harm to survivors whose reality may look very different from our own. Keep the focus on the survivor's perspectives and needs.
- ◆ Clearly define and communicate boundaries, so you are not creating confusion
- ◆ Do not evade questions or requests that fall outside of your role; address them head-on.
- ◆ Do not complicate or over-explain. Be concise when you provide information about boundaries.
- ◆ Help clients to understand why the boundary is important.
- ◆ Consistently act within boundary limits. This is essential to maintaining a survivor's trust and sense of safety
- ◆ Establish clinical supervision of direct service staff as a core component to advocacy and case management programs. Group and individual supervision create a space for advocates to receive support and boundaries to be monitored.

### When working with youth:

- ◆ Equip your agency with a written policy defining appropriate and inappropriate physical contact between staff and youth. High-fives and side hugs (with permission) are examples of appropriate contact. Lap sitting and wrestling fall under inappropriate contact.
- ◆ Talk with youth about appropriate boundaries between adults and youth. Explain your organization's policies about staff and youth interactions, and tell youth about what they can do if someone violates their boundaries. This empowers youth as agents of their own safety.

- ◆ Have a clear policy regarding one-on-one interactions with youth to mitigate risk. Some examples might include leaving office doors open during sessions, meeting in public places, and documenting all interactions.
- ◆ Some centers may take on a more involved and long-term form of advocacy called Commercially Sexually Exploited Youth (CSEY) Advocacy. Those advocates should receive additional training on electronic communication with youth survivors (social media, phone, etc.), travel and transportation of clients, and risk for codependency, to name a few. Please see Chapter X for more information and minimum standards for CSEY advocates.

#### **Other Best Practices:**

- ◆ Empower one or more staff persons to seek out and share information on human trafficking learning opportunities, events, and specialized programs with other staff.
- ◆ Provide opportunities for advocates to receive one-on-one counseling to address vicarious trauma and challenges related to working in direct services.



## CHAPTER VII: SPECIAL POPULATIONS AND ACCOMMODATIONS

### UNDERSTANDING BIAS

Understanding bias can provide insight into the victim-blaming culture and institutional oppression perpetuating violence and creating further barriers to receiving assistance. Advocates need to understand how biases impact all of us.

#### Implicit Bias

Implicit bias refers to the attitudes or stereotypes that affect our unconscious understanding, actions, and decisions. These biases encompass both favorable and unfavorable assessments and are activated involuntarily without an individual's awareness or intentional control. Residing deep in the subconscious, these biases are different from known biases that individuals may conceal for social or political correctness.

#### Explicit Bias

Explicit bias refers to the attitudes and beliefs we hold about a person or group on a conscious level. These biases and their expression often arise as the direct result of a perceived threat. When people feel threatened, they are more likely to draw group boundaries to distinguish themselves from others.

Working with underserved populations requires a foundational consideration of the invisible external forces of marginalization and oppression and the disparate effect on segments of the population in your area. Although elements of marginalization and oppression are present in sexual violence, it is important to differentiate the impact of both outside the context of sexual violence.

- ◆ **Marginalization** - treating a person, group, or concept as insignificant or peripheral.
- ◆ **Oppression** - unjust or cruel exercise of authority or power.

As we have stated, anyone can be a victim of violence. However, certain experiences can increase vulnerability. See [Vulnerabilities to Exploitation in Chapter 3](#).

### PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Traffickers often target people with intellectual, developmental, and physical disabilities. Survivors can also develop disabilities due to violence, abuse, and injuries they may sustain during their exploitation. Several factors make people with disabilities vulnerable to trafficking. People with disabilities often rely on others to meet their basic needs. This can provide unscrupulous caregivers with opportunities to exploit them for sex and labor. There can be communication barriers that make outcries even more difficult. If someone has limited mental, emotional, or developmental capacities, they may not know that they are being exploited.<sup>12</sup>

**Know what organizations in your area specialize in working with clients with mental health needs and disabilities so that you can refer for specific resources and partner on outreach and education campaigns.**

<sup>12</sup> See Office for Victims of Crime



## MINORS AND YOUTH SURVIVORS

Because of their age and psychological development, youth can never be in the same position of power as an adult. That is why we have laws on consent. Like many trafficking survivors, minors and most youth do not identify as trafficking survivors because of their dependence or attachment to traffickers. The trauma that they experience due to their abuse and exploitation can affect their development and ability to form secure healthy attachments later in life. Youth victims often fear reporting and interacting with law enforcement and child welfare organizations. Research indicates significant intersections between child abuse, delinquency, and trafficking. Additional materials on working with minor trafficking survivors can be found in the [resource list of this manual](#).

### Key Considerations When Working with Minor and Adolescent Victims

- ◆ **Identify an appropriate guardian.** In some cases, it is possible to reconnect and build positive ties to family and community (including family support and reconciliation, if appropriate). In other instances, connecting minors with alternative placement builds new ties, such as foster care.
- ◆ **Utilize the child welfare and protection system.** Identify key personnel at your local child welfare office who can assist in navigating the system and obtaining services.
- ◆ **Become familiar with the Child Advocacy Center (CAC) in your area.** CACs are child-focused, facility-based programs in which representatives from many disciplines, including law enforcement, child protection, prosecution, medical and mental health, victim advocacy, and child advocacy, work together to conduct interviews and make team decisions about investigation, treatment, management, and prosecution of child abuse cases.
- ◆ **Advocate for a forensic interviewer** or law enforcement professional trained in interviewing children and adolescents to conduct the investigative interviews.

### Unaccompanied Minors

The Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR), within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), provides funding and oversight to state-licensed shelters throughout the United States for unaccompanied children (UC). This population of children may have entered the U.S. without their parent or legal guardian or been separated from their parent or legal guardian for other reasons.

HHS is charged with the legal responsibility to provide care for all UC until they are released to a suitable sponsor, which is typically a parent or close relative. UC are released to the designated sponsor until the time of their immigration proceedings. Alternatively, children may leave HHS care if they return to their home countries, turn 18 years of age, or gain legal immigration status. The same applies to children that are separated from their parents due to criminal activity or jeopardy. The Texas Family Code has very specific language about providing shelter to minors without the consent of their parent or guardian.

### Support for Foreign National and U.S. Citizen Juvenile Victims

- ◆ Child Protective Services (CPS) programs operate in every state, providing services for children who are abused or neglected, offering case management, the establishment of a legal guardian, and housing options including foster families and group homes. This falls under the [Texas Department of Family and Protective Services in Texas](#).
- ◆ For foreign national juveniles, it is important to note that the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) administers the [Unaccompanied Refugee Minor \(URM\) program](#). Under state law and in coordination with state-level CPS, the program establishes legal responsibility to ensure that unaccompanied refugee and immigrant minors, including human trafficking victims, receive the full range of assistance, care, and services available to all foster children in the state. Legal authority is designated to act in place of the child's unavailable parent(s).
- ◆ [The Child Welfare Information Gateway](#), Children's Bureau, Administration for Children and Families (ACF), HHS, provides a clearinghouse for child welfare professionals and serves as the first stop for organizations that work on child protection/abuse, family and domestic violence, foster care, health, mental health, and substance abuse.
- ◆ Children are not required to cooperate with law enforcement to receive assistance, regardless of citizenship. For minor victims who are foreign nationals, short-term and long-term immigration relief is available.

### LESBIAN GAY BISEXUAL TRANSGENDER QUEER INTERSEX ASEXUAL (LGBTQIA)+

Queer youth and adults are more vulnerable to violence and exploitation in the U.S. and in other countries. Many service providers in the anti-trafficking movement come from a faith-based perspective that may not welcome or affirm queer survivors.

**The intersections of gender identity, sexual orientation, poverty, homelessness, substance abuse, and distrust of systems can increase vulnerability and decrease successful interventions.**

When working with LGBTQIA+ survivors, make sure you create a safe, welcoming, non-judgmental, and affirming space. Start by making sure you are using their preferred name and pronoun. If you are unsure, just ask them what they feel most comfortable with. Centers are encouraged to partner with LGBTQIA+ organizations for referrals, awareness, and outreach campaigns. LGBTQ communities might have specific needs related to their sexual orientation. Survivors should always be empowered to express how they want to identify.

**There can be increased stigma, shame, and fear of being "outed" that create barriers to seeking help or law enforcement interdiction.**

**The Minnesota Coalition to End Sexual and Domestic Violence provides this list of helpful tips when working with LGBTQIA+ survivors:**

- ◆ Build adaptable service models that allow for dropping in and out of service.
- ◆ Give attention and energy to the prevention of trafficking. This means investing in all that aids LGBTQ+ people in securing housing, healthcare, jobs, food, clothing, and community support.
- ◆ Edit forms to allow additional options beyond Male or Female or do not ask.

### IMMIGRANT SURVIVORS

Immigrant survivors are particularly vulnerable to human trafficking for a variety of reasons. Some of these include the presence of language barriers, separation from family and friends, lack of understanding of U.S. laws, concerns of retaliation either to themselves or their families, worry that they will not be believed, and fear of deportation.<sup>13</sup> Additional information about serving this population can be found in Chapter VII, Legal Remedies for Human Trafficking Survivors.

### PEOPLE OF COLOR

In cases of human trafficking, we see an increased vulnerability to violence and exploitation based on race.

According to Cheryl Nelson Butler,

*“Race intersects with other forms of subordination including gender, class, and age to push people of color disproportionately into prostitution and keep them trapped in the commercial sex industry. Its intersectional oppression is fueled by the persistence of myths about minority teen sexuality, which in turn encourages risky sexual behavior. Moreover, today’s anti-trafficking movement has failed to understand and address the racial contours of domestic sex trafficking in the United States and even perpetuates the racial myths that undermine the proper identification of minority youth as sex trafficking victims.”<sup>14</sup>*

According to Rights 4 Girls<sup>15</sup>, young Black girls are disproportionately victims of trafficking.

- ◆ In King County, Washington, Black girls are less than 1% of the population but are more than 50% of all child sex trafficking victims
- ◆ In Louisiana, Black girls comprise only 19% of Louisiana’s youth population but are 49% of child sex trafficking victims.
- ◆ Black children account for nearly 53% of all juvenile prostitution arrests, more than any other racial group.

<sup>13</sup> United States, Congress, United States Citizenship and Immigration Services. U And T Visa Law Enforcement Resource Guide, Department of Homeland Security, 2016, pp. 9–9.

<sup>14</sup> Butler, C. (2015). The Racial Roots of Human Trafficking. UCLA Law Review, 62(1464).

<sup>15</sup> Sex Trafficking Resources & Info. (2020, December 4). Rights4Girls. <https://rights4girls.org/sex-trafficking-resources-info/>

Though we have safe harbor laws in Texas and educate law enforcement on not arresting minors involved in commercial sexual exploitation, this still happens. Additionally, people of color are more likely to be detained for status offenses and end up in the juvenile justice system.

**Communities of color are more likely to have historical trauma associated with institutions like law enforcement and our criminal justice systems that create further barriers to seeking help and achieving justice.**

Indigenous communities have suffered from unimaginable historical trauma and institutional oppression. There are multiple reasons why they are more vulnerable to violence and have increased barriers to receiving assistance and any form of “Justice” through traditional systems-based means. Jurisdiction is difficult to determine when investigating and prosecuting trafficking and other forms of violence and exploitation. This is true

whether the trafficking took place on or off tribal lands and whether the trafficker is Native or not. Some parts of Texas are close to tribal lands. Survivors may be trafficked on and off reservations and in high commerce areas such as casinos. Please see more culturally specific resources in later chapters of this guide.

**Cultural humility is paramount when serving all survivors, especially persons of color and historically oppressed populations.**

## MALE SURVIVORS

When people think about trafficking survivors, they typically picture young females. Although women and girls experience higher rates of sex trafficking, men and boys are being trafficked for both sex and labor in Texas and across the U.S. Below are some key considerations when working with male victims from the Office for Victims of Crime, Task Force Guide.<sup>16</sup>


 **Be aware of increased stigma.**

We live in a culture that engenders toxic masculinity and punishes men and boys for showing emotional or physical vulnerability. It takes so much courage for any survivor to speak out about exploitation, but this

is especially true for men and boys. Male survivors may have privacy concerns and fear publicly talking about their experience with abuse and trafficking. According to OVC, “Psychological outcomes can be severe for men socialized to believe that they are immune to sexual violence or fraud; that they are responsible for providing financial support to their families; and because societal reactions to these types of experiences can be isolating.”

Do your homework and know which shelters accept teen and adult male clients ahead of time. Policies will vary from agency to agency. Sometimes there are hotel funds available for male survivors that cannot be housed at emergency shelters. Ask the male survivor if they are comfortable with this option. Many survivors are trafficked out of motels, which could be a trigger or safety concern. Remember the importance of self-selection of services.

Try not to make assumptions, especially around gender identity and sexual orientation. Don’t assume that if a male has been sexually exploited by other men, they identify as gay. If they do identify as queer, make sure that LGBTQIA+ specific resources are available.

 **Be thoughtful and knowledgeable when discussing housing options for male victims of trafficking.**

<sup>16</sup> Human Trafficking Task Force e-Guide. (2021). OVC TTAC. <https://www.ovcttac.gov/TaskForceGuide/eguide/>



## RURAL COMMUNITIES

Love 146 does an excellent job of shedding light on myths and misconceptions in rural communities. They coined the phrase “FAR APART DOESN’T = SAFER.” Trafficking does not just happen in large cities.

**In addition, there are well-documented barriers to identification and service provision for trafficking survivors in rural areas across Texas and the U.S.**

## Geography

In Texas, there are 254 counties, many of which are sparsely populated and geographically far apart. Bystander intervention is even less common in rural areas where people live far from their closest neighbors. Transportation to crisis centers and emergency shelters is even more difficult when there is no reliable public transit. Police and medical response can also be delayed, increasing severe injuries and fatalities.

## Poverty

Rural America has a greater poverty level than the rest of the nation. This is true for Texas as well. According to a report from the U.S. Department of Justice, rates of violent victimization are associated with poverty levels. Forty victims per thousand persons are categorized as poor (household income below \$15,000) versus 18 victims per thousand persons categorized as high income (household income above \$75,000) (Harrell, 2014).

**Survival sex is also more common when intersections of poverty and substance abuse exist.**

## Lack of Confidentiality

It is almost impossible to seek services in a completely confidential setting in small towns. According to the Michigan Coalition’s Human Trafficking Tool Kit, “Even if a site is secret, people may see a survivor walking or driving up to it and recognize them. There simply is no anonymity. Staff at agencies frequently encounter relatives or acquaintances when attempting to deliver services. Remaining professional and guarding confidentiality is especially important, but some survivors cannot be convinced that their secrets will remain private.” Organizations should take extra steps to separate clients from any staff member they may know from their daily or personal lives.

## Lack of Resources

More traditional gender roles, the lack of consistent job opportunities, and heavy reliance on the oil, gas, and agriculture industries can increase sex and labor trafficking.

## Prevalence of Truck Stops

With Texas’ vast interstates and long stretches of highways in between towns, truck stops are commonplaces of recruitment and the selling of sex. According to Love 146, “Truck stops, state-operated rest areas, and welcome centers are common sites where trafficking and exploitation are present. These locations are often isolated, making them convenient for transient customers to purchase sex with minimal detection concern. A truck stop can be an easy place for a trafficker to sell their victims night after night to a new group of customers.”





## CHAPTER VIII: LEGAL REMEDIES FOR HUMAN TRAFFICKING SURVIVORS

Both foreign-born and domestic human trafficking survivors have additional legal and administrative remedies available to them that go beyond those available to domestic and

**Effective survivor support includes a full exploration of legal remedies to help survivors address safety concerns, minimize revictimization, remove barriers to healing and stabilization, and improve immigration status.**

sexual violence survivors. Remedies can be obtained through the criminal justice system, the civil justice system, immigration relief, and administrative agencies. This section explores these options and is supported by a robust set of linked legal resources and statutes found in the resource list at the end of this manual. [please link resource page here for ease of access]

### CRIMINAL PROSECUTION

#### Restitution through Federal Law

U.S. federal courts “shall order restitution for any offense<sup>17</sup>” committed under federal anti-trafficking statutes. Convicted traffickers are required to pay the actual losses caused to the victim in addition to the defendant’s ill-gotten gains, or the value of the victims’ labor (whichever is greater), regardless of whether the work was lawful.<sup>18</sup>

#### Restitution through State Law

Texas state law<sup>19</sup> only mandates restitution for child victims of trafficking or compelling prostitution. Defendants convicted of these crimes must pay restitution sufficient to cover the cost of necessary rehabilitation, including medical, psychiatric, and psychological care and treatment, for any victim of the offense who is younger than 18 years of age. The court determines how the defendant pays restitution and may hold special meetings for failure to pay. Restitution orders are enforced by the state, or by a victim named in the order through civil action.

#### What You Should Know

- ◆ Unless prosecutors calculate and specifically ask for monetary restitution, it’s likely none will be awarded. Despite their legal mandate, the Human Trafficking Legal Center found that federal courts awarded restitution in only 27% of human trafficking cases in 2017.
- ◆ Even when restitution is ordered, trafficking victims rarely receive these funds or may only see a small fraction of the actual amount granted. In 2016, the U.S. government could only collect 2.8% of the \$9,166,689 ordered to be paid by defendants.

<sup>17</sup> The Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA), 22 US Code § 7101 (2000).

<sup>18</sup> Mandatory restitution, 18 US Code § 1593 (2010).

<sup>19</sup> Texas Government Code Section 42.0372.

### **What You Can Do**

- ◆ Make a difference by imploring prosecutors to seek restitution.
- ◆ Support prosecutors in this effort by conducting an independent analysis of associated damages or working with partners like the U.S. Probation Department and U.S. Department of Labor Wage and Hour Division to assess damages.
- ◆ Know and tell others that restitution is more likely to be granted if a specific motion is brought asking for it.
- ◆ Connect trafficking survivors with a victim-witness counsel to advocate for restitution and other victims' rights issues before the court.

## CIVIL LITIGATION

Under Texas law, traffickers can be held civilly liable, and survivors can be entitled to monetary damages. An alleged trafficker does not have to be charged or prosecuted as a trafficker to be held civilly responsible.

### **Liability for Trafficking of Persons** <sup>20</sup>

The 81st Texas Legislature passed House Bill 533 in 2009, which created a private cause of action for victims of trafficking under Texas Civil Practice and Remedies Code Chapter 98. Under this statute, victims may be awarded a judgment against their traffickers for damages, including actual damages, damages for mental anguish, exemplary damages, costs of court, and attorneys' fees.

### **Civil Racketeering Related to Trafficking of Persons**<sup>21</sup>

In 2013, the 83rd Texas Legislature passed House Bill 3241, granting the Office of the Attorney General (OAG) authority to bring civil suits against individuals and entities that engage in human trafficking. The remedies provided by Texas Civil Practice and Remedies Code Chapter 140A include monetary damages of up to \$250,000 per victim of human trafficking (paid to the state or local law enforcement, and the Crime Victims' Compensation Fund) and an injunction that prohibits a person or business from continuing operations in the State of Texas. The statute also authorizes the OAG to issue civil investigative demands, which allow the state to gather evidence prior to filing suit and without alerting alleged traffickers. The OAG has statewide jurisdiction over these types of civil cases but must give notice to local prosecutors before initiating an investigation.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Texas Civil Practice & Remedies Code, Section 98 (2009).

<sup>21</sup> Texas Civil Practice & Remedies Code, Section 140A (2013).

<sup>22</sup> Texas Human Trafficking Prevention Coordinating Council. (2020, May). Strategic Plan: Charting an End to Human Trafficking. Office of the Attorney General of Texas.

## MITIGATION OF CRIMINAL BACKGROUND

It is common for survivors of human trafficking have to have criminal records as a result of or in connection to their trafficking victimization. Survivors are often forced or coerced into commercial sex, drug sales, or theft, among other offenses. They usually come into contact with law enforcement as offenders first and as victims second. A 2016 survey conducted by the National Survivor Network (NSN) found that an astounding 91% of 130 trafficking survivors surveyed reported having been arrested.

These survivors deserve the chance to have their records cleared. The existence of a criminal record creates significant barriers to a survivor's ability to find gainful employment, secure affordable and safe housing, continue their education and obtain financial aid for tuition, maintain custody of their children, and receive vital government benefits. In the case of foreign national survivors, a criminal record impacts their ability to retain status and work in the U.S.

### Expunctions

Expunctions remove information about an arrest, charge, or conviction from an individual's permanent record. Rules about expunctions are dictated by the Texas Code of Criminal Procedure Chapter 55. Not all trafficking survivors will be eligible for an expunction, but this determination should be made by a legal professional as a nuanced understanding is necessary.

### Orders of Nondisclosure

The court may grant orders of nondisclosure under certain circumstances. This type of order releases survivors from having to disclose certain criminal offenses. It also prohibits certain agencies and entities from disclosing certain criminal records. There are specific requirements and rules for obtaining an order of nondisclosure as a survivor of trafficking in Texas.<sup>23</sup>



#### What You Can Do

Connect survivors with criminal records to legal aid organizations and defense attorneys who can provide legal advice and take steps to clear criminal history.

<sup>23</sup> Texas Government Code Section 411.0728

## IMMIGRATION RELIEF

### U Visas

The U nonimmigrant status program, or U visa, was established by Congress in 2000 through the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Prevention Act (VTVPA). This program was created to improve the prosecution of violent crimes against immigrants and strengthen relations between law enforcement and immigrant communities. U visas are set aside for victims of certain crimes who have suffered mental or physical abuse and are helpful in the investigation or prosecution of criminal activity.<sup>24</sup>

#### U Visa Requirements

- ◆ Must be a victim of a qualifying criminal activity such as domestic violence, sexual assault, or trafficking, OR suffered substantial physical or mental abuse as a result of victimization.
- ◆ Must possess information about the crime.
- ◆ The crime must have occurred in the U.S. or violated U.S. law.
- ◆ The victim has been, is being, or is likely to be helpful to law enforcement in the detection, investigation, prosecution, conviction, or sentencing stages. [Examples include: calling 911, providing a description of the offender, allowing photographs to be taken, giving information about an offender's location, providing a statement about prior criminal acts.]

#### U Visa Facts

- ◆ Only 10,000 granted annually
- ◆ If granted allows for a 4-year stay
- ◆ Some may qualify for lawful permanent residency (LPR)
- ◆ Path to citizenship is possible
- ◆ Background and biometric checks are conducted numerous times

#### U Visa Process

- ◆ First, **certification** must be completed to file an application
- ◆ Second, the **application** is completed by an advocate or immigration Attorney
- ◆ Third, the Department of Homeland Security makes a **decision**. This can take 36-48 months.
- ◆ Fourth, approved applicants are placed on a **waiting** list for their U Visa. The waitlist is substantial and may take 3-4 years.

<sup>24</sup> Victims of Criminal Activity: U Nonimmigrant Status. (2018, June 12). USCIS. <https://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/victims-of-human-trafficking-and-other-crimes/victims-of-criminal-activity-u-nonimmigrant-status>

## T Visas

T visas can provide immigration relief for those trafficked (both labor and sex) into the US. It allows trafficking survivors and their immediate family members to remain and work temporarily in the United States and creates a path to a green card. Clients should be informed that they will not go to jail or be deported if they are undocumented.<sup>25</sup>

### T Visa Requirements

- ◆ Must be a victim of a severe form of trafficking as defined by federal law
- ◆ Must be in the U.S. due to trafficking
- ◆ Must comply with reasonable requests by law enforcement in the investigation or prosecution of the trafficking. (Examples: interviews, photo line ups, providing or releasing documents, etc.)
- ◆ Would suffer extreme hardship if removed from the U.S.
- ◆ Must be considered “admissible” to the U.S. based on criminal history, immigration violations, and other factors. However, individuals may apply for a waiver of inadmissibility.

### T Visa Facts

- ◆ No more than 5,000 T Visas can be awarded annually, but this cap has never been reached
- ◆ Specific to victims of trafficking
- ◆ Allows victims to stay in the U.S. for four years and obtain an Employment Authorization Document (EAD)
- ◆ Status may be adjusted to Lawful Permanent Resident (LPR) after three years
- ◆ Allows certain family members to obtain nonimmigrant status as T Visa derivatives

### T Visa Process

- ◆ Victims **apply** directly to DHS/U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) for T nonimmigrant status. A Law Enforcement Declaration<sup>26</sup> may be provided as a supplement to demonstrate victim cooperation in an investigation.
- ◆ The USCIS **decides**. This process usually takes about one year.

<sup>25</sup> Victims of Human Trafficking: T Nonimmigrant Status. (2021, October 20). USCIS. <https://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/victims-of-human-trafficking-and-other-crimes/victims-of-human-trafficking-t-nonimmigrant-status>

<sup>26</sup> Declaration of Law Enforcement Officer for Victim of Trafficking in Persons, Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Citizen and Immigration Services. <https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/document/forms/i-914supb.pdf>

## Continued Presence

Continued presence (CP) is a temporary immigration status requested by law enforcement that allows potential victims to work legally and remain in the United States without accruing unlawful presence. Law enforcement may apply to USCIS immediately after identifying a potential victim. CP does not guarantee any form of long-term immigration and can be revoked. Benefits of CP:

- ◆ Victim cooperation is **not required**
- ◆ It is **expedient**, only taking about 30 days to process and be approved.
- ◆ It **provides stability** for victims while completing or awaiting the results of their T or U visa applications.
- ◆ It is granted for **two years** and can be renewed.

## Deferred Action

Deferred action is essentially a short-term tool that protects individuals from deportation. Only law enforcement may request deferred action, and it should not be used instead of CP for CP-eligible victims. Deferred action may be appropriate in very limited circumstances, such as an emergency measure to prevent the removal of a trafficking victim or if a trafficking victim's CP is not renewed and they are still awaiting approval of their T visa. Drawbacks of Deferred Action:

- ◆ Recipients are not eligible for federal and state benefits
- ◆ Does not guarantee any immigration relief
- ◆ USCIS must be provided with a victim's personal information

## Health and Human Services Certifications

*Certification Letter.* If you're assisting a foreign-born, adult trafficking survivor, an HHS (US Department of Health and Human Services) Certification Letter may allow them to meet certain eligibility rules and apply for the same benefits and services as refugees. A foreign national adult must have Continued Presence, a T Visa, or a bona fide T Visa application to request an HHS Certification letter.

*Eligibility Letter.* If you're assisting a foreign-born, minor trafficking survivor, an HHS Eligibility Letter can allow them to apply for the same benefits and services as refugees. You can contact OTIP (Office on Trafficking in Persons) Child Protection Specialists at 202-205-4582 and complete the Request for Assistance Form through their office.

The Certification Letter for adults and Eligibility Letter for children allow survivors to apply for TANF, Medicaid, CHIP (if a minor), and SNAP.

## PROTECTIVE ORDERS

A protective order (PO) is a court order that protects victims of domestic abuse, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, and human trafficking from their abusers. The abuser may have previously been violent or has threatened violence. In most cases, a protective order will last up to two years. Texas Code of Criminal Procedure Chapter 7A allows Protective Orders for victims of human trafficking. For this type of Protective Order, the court needs to be certain there are reasonable grounds to believe the survivor is a victim of trafficking.

A PO orders an abuser:

- ◆ not to hurt, threaten, or harass the named victim or their children, either directly or through another person;
- ◆ to stay away from the named victim, their family, home, workplace, and children's daycare or school;
- ◆ not to carry a gun, even with a license

## ADMINISTRATIVE REMEDIES

- ◆ **Crime Victims Compensation (CVC Program)** - supports a range of costs such as medical assistance and relocation, for crime victims and their immediate family members from the Texas Office of the Attorney General. \$50,000 is available for victims of violent crime.
- ◆ **U.S. Department of Labor, Wage and Hour Division** – investigates complaints of wage theft and other violations
- ◆ **U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Safety and Health Administration** – handles occupational safety complaints and retaliation
- ◆ **Anti-discrimination complaints** - these can be brought in a variety of circumstances such as employment and housing. For employment discrimination complaints and information on accessing state and local equivalents, see the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's website. For housing discrimination complaints, see the Texas Workforce Commission and the Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity (FHEO)'s websites.

### 💡 Things You Can Do as an Advocate

- ◆ **Public benefits** - seek assistance from advocates or civil legal service providers to connect survivors with public benefits including, but not limited to: unemployment insurance, denial/loss of occupational licenses, food stamps, Medicaid and Medicare, Social Security, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Supplemental Security Disability, Income (SSDI), admission to public housing, and housing subsidies and vouchers.



## CHAPTER IX: MULTIDISCIPLINARY WORK

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### THE IMPORTANCE OF A MULTIDISCIPLINARY APPROACH

Multidisciplinary means the combination or involvement of more than one discipline or field. Multidisciplinary teams (MDTs) exist across many sectors such as healthcare, education, child abuse, and sexual assault.

The immediate and long-term needs of trafficking survivors are complex. The physical and emotional effects of trauma, difficulty accessing appropriate shelter and referral services, and intersections with the civil and criminal justice systems make successful intervention and long-term recovery rare. A functional multidisciplinary response can help streamline services and improve communication and coordination.

Having these moving parts working together in a trauma-informed and survivor-centered capacity ensures a better chance at success and access to “Justice” for the survivor.

We know that this task is easier said than done; however, our stakeholders are already in an excellent position to do this collaborative work. Many DV and SA centers have established roles in their communities, working with Sexual Assault Response Teams, Coordinated Community Response Coalitions, and Anti-Violence Taskforces. Does your community currently have a human trafficking coalition? What is your organization's role? Are your groups effective, purposeful, and productive?




## BUILDING TO SUCCESS

When collaborating in the service area of human trafficking, domestic violence, and sexual assault, you first need to understand what is currently happening in your community. All relevant community partners should be at the table before a genuinely successful collaboration can develop.

The manual, *Expanding Our Reach: Equipping North Carolina's Rape Crisis Centers to Serve Survivors of Human Trafficking* lists the elements of a successful team as:

- ◆ Willingness to learn and grow.
- ◆ Patience: focus on long-term growth and sustainability rather than the short-term “win.”
- ◆ Familiarity with victim/survivor service agencies and organizations.
- ◆ Good working relationships with agencies and willingness for candid conversations about any differences
- ◆ Regular communication and presence.
- ◆ Understand and respect other agencies' roles and goals in the community.
- ◆ Know how to refer, how best to contact.
- ◆ Ethical communication.
- ◆ Honor other agencies' confidentiality practices and standards.
- ◆ Show up: attend and participate in meetings.
- ◆ Willingness to stay at the table, even if it's uncomfortable

 **When coming together as an MDT, identify your collective goal, ensure all team members understand that goal and identify each organization's role in making the goal a reality.**

You will likely find your agency working alongside other advocates that serve mutual clients. This is a good thing as survivors benefit from a vast and supportive network. When this occurs, agreements should be made that identify the responsibilities and boundaries for each advocate and outline a communication plan so that both agencies may work collaboratively.

If your organization participates in specialized advocacy for commercially sexually exploited youth (CSEY), MDT work plays a vital role. CSEY Advocacy is explained in greater detail in Chapter 10 of this manual. Further guidance on building an MDT can be found in the Roadmap for Texas Communities to Address Child Sex Trafficking.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Roadmap for Texas Communities to Address Child Sex Trafficking. (2019, April). Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute. [https://mmhpi.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/CST\\_FullReport.pdf](https://mmhpi.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/CST_FullReport.pdf)

## INFORMATION SHARING AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Clear communication and a transparent process will streamline this process. Policies around this topic should be determined by the client's age and the community's network of providers.

Sexual assault survivors 18 years of age and older may choose not to disclose their assault to law enforcement. Communication between an advocate and a survivor in the course of providing sexual assault advocacy services is confidential, as is identifiable information and historical information.<sup>28</sup> For this reason, a survivor must consent to any information shared between partners. They should select which agencies may (and may not) participate in the survivor's coordinated care.

In the case of minors, this process is different. Whether or not a minor chooses to report their assault to law enforcement, sexual assault advocates are mandated reporters. Any suspicions or knowledge of child abuse or neglect, including human trafficking, must be reported within 48 hours. Sexual assault agencies will still need to obtain consent from a youth's legal guardian or conservator in order to share information with other agencies. For the handful of rape crisis centers in Texas that are signed members of their CAC's MDT, this is not necessary unless communicating with an agency outside of the CAC MDT.

Additionally, a survivor of sexual assault under 18 years of age may utilize a pseudonym during civil court proceedings to keep their identifying information confidential.<sup>29</sup>

**Multidisciplinary teams should develop clear, agreed-upon policies and protocols to ensure successful information sharing is taking place and confidentiality standards are respected.**

<sup>28</sup> Texas Government Code 420.071

<sup>29</sup> Texas Government Code Section 32.013



## CHAPTER X: OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR'S CHILD SEX TRAFFICKING TEAM OVERVIEW

### INTRODUCTION

Governor Abbott's Child Sex Trafficking Team (CSTT) was created by the 84th Legislature to coordinate a holistic response to child sex trafficking in Texas. CSTT is a division within the Public Safety Office. Its mission is to build sustainable capacity, enhance expertise, promote policies, and leverage collaborations to:

- ◆ **Protect** children and youth by building their awareness of and resilience to child exploitation and by curbing demand for child sex trafficking;
- ◆ **Recognize** sexual exploitation by raising public awareness and implementing screening tools to identify potential victims;
- ◆ **Recover** victims with protective and empowering collaborative responses;
- ◆ **Support healing** of survivors through a variety of trauma-informed and responsive services and supports; and
- ◆ **Bring justice** for survivors by holding exploiters accountable.



The CSTT advances these five points through significant funding and programmatic support across the state. The team leads collaborative efforts with governmental and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) statewide to build sustainable capacity and implement coordinated strategies to prevent and address the commercial sexual exploitation of youth. Core components of the CSTT model are the development of care coordination and specially trained Commercially Sexually Exploited Youth (CSEY) Advocates. CSTT partners with the Children's Advocacy Centers of Texas and the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services to develop multidisciplinary care coordination teams to staff cases of survivors and ensure effective victim-centered care while supporting the investigation and prosecution of exploiters.

## COMMERCIAL SEXUALLY EXPLOITED YOUTH (CSEY) ADVOCACY MODEL

CSEY Advocacy programs are nonprofit agencies that engage employed advocates to provide individualized 24/7 crisis response and long-term, trust-based relational support to children and youth survivors up to age 22.

CSEY Advocates are requested immediately upon the crisis recovery of a survivor. They meet youth where they are, both geographically and figuratively. An advocate is present even when the survivor is not yet aware of their own victimization and need for help. They also respond immediately to calls from youth in crisis. They commit to continue a supportive relationship with the survivor throughout their progression through the stages of healing, including relapse, without judgment.

CSEY Advocates work collaboratively with stakeholders to support victim-centered goals for survivors, law enforcement, child welfare, juvenile justice, healthcare, and other partners. They help survivors gain the strength needed to participate in the investigation and prosecution of exploiters.

## MINIMUM STANDARDS

CSTT supports CSEY Advocacy agencies through funding, training, and technical assistance. These programs abide by a set of common abuse risk management, quality and effectiveness minimum standards, and best practices developed by CSTT in coordination with Praesidium.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Praesidium. <https://www.praesidiuminc.com/>



### What this Means for Rape Crisis Centers (RCCs) and Dual Agencies

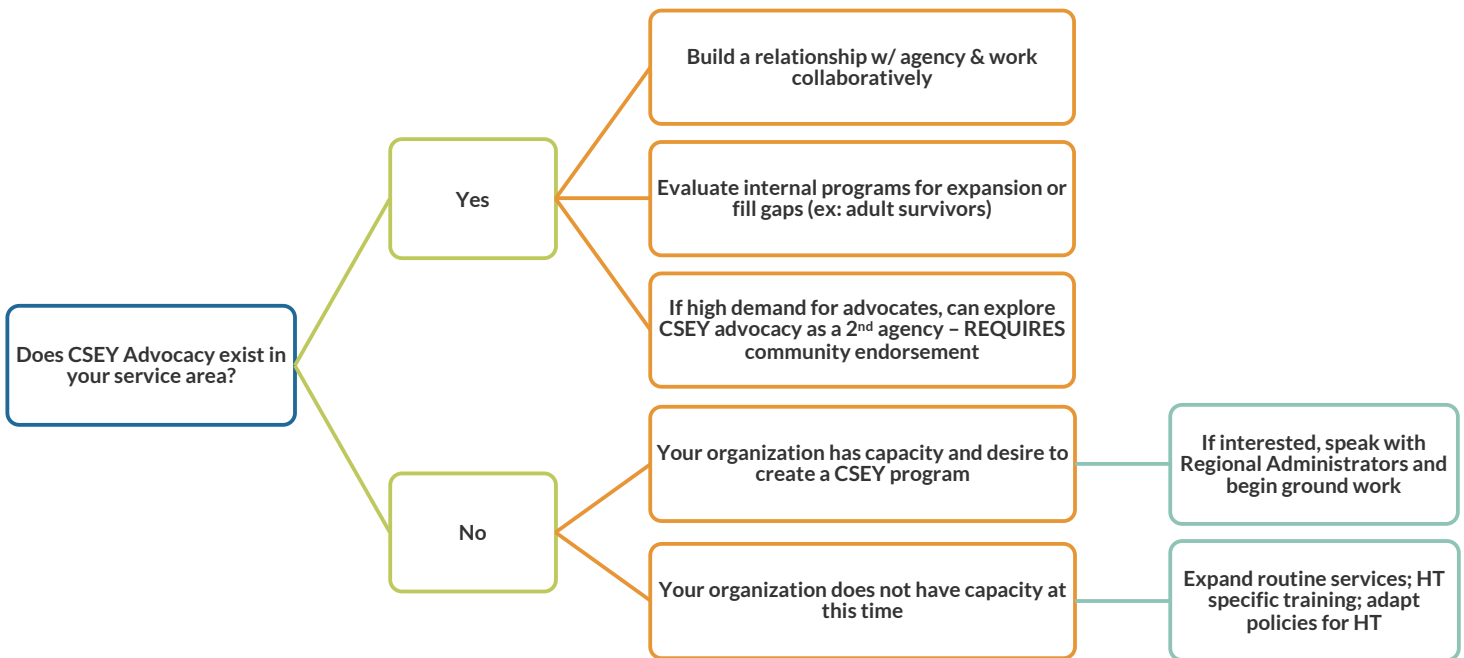
Fortunately, a large portion of the state already has access to CSEY Advocacy. A handful of RCCs currently operate in the role of CSEY advocates. They have been endorsed by local care coordination teams or law enforcement task forces for that role. Along with training and other supportive resources, these RCC CSEY Advocate programs may be receiving financial support from the OOG.

However, there is a continued and significant lack of services for human trafficking survivors in rural communities. CSEY Advocacy is needed in these areas, and RCCs, with their years of sexual assault advocacy and crisis experience, are well-positioned to meet that need. RCCs

may choose to bring the expertise and programming of CSEY Advocacy on board to better serve trafficked persons within their existing sexual assault and domestic violence response.


**For those centers in areas where CSEY Advocacy already exists, it is equally important that both agencies support one another in their work.**

Assess the needs of your community and contemplate how your organization could fill an existing gap such as mental health services, advanced advocacy for adult survivors of sex and labor trafficking, education and outreach, etc.



## LAYING THE GROUNDWORK

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 **If CSEY Advocacy does not already exist in your area, and your center is interested in filling that role, you can begin to lay the groundwork for a CSEY advocate program in the following ways:**

- ◆ Take advantage of specialized human trafficking trainings for staff
- ◆ Connect with your local Regional Administrator from the CSTT team
- ◆ Provide staff with copies of this manual and the “Creating Safer Spaces: Tips for Advocates”
- ◆ Develop relationships with your regional partners (DAO, CAC, JP, LE, DFPS, etc.)
- ◆ Screen clients for trafficking indicators utilizing the Commercial Sexual Exploitation Identification Tool (CSE-IT) for youth and the Vera Institute’s Out of the Shadows Tool for Identification of Victims of Human Trafficking
- ◆ Begin to track trafficking data
- ◆ Work towards meeting Praesidium minimum standards
- ◆ Develop a funding strategy

In summary, your agency will need to build staff capacity and funding, attend specific trainings such as Motivational Interviewing and Trust-Based Relational Intervention, meet Office of the Governor and Praesidium minimum standards, and secure endorsement for this role from partner agencies. TAASA is here to support sexual assault and domestic violence programs through this process through training and technical assistance.



## CHAPTER XI: FUNDING BLUEPRINT

We know that domestic violence and sexual assault agencies do excellent, life-saving work every day in the face of limited resources and space. For these reasons, we acknowledge that sufficient funding and the infrastructure must be in place before taking on the full breadth of CSEY Advocacy or specialized services for adult survivors of trafficking. Having secure resources and additional trained staff will better ensure the success of advocates and survivors.

As our stakeholders seek funding to serve trafficking survivors better, we encourage starting small and implementing what is feasible within current budgets. Perhaps offering additional human trafficking training for your staff and boards is the first step. Or, when trafficking is suspected, consider providing follow-up advocacy for a longer period. Even without a formalized CSEY Advocacy program, or a specific trafficking program for adults, the reality is that survivors are and will continue to seek services at sexual assault and domestic violence agencies.

With this in mind, we have supplied an overview of funding strategies and opportunities.

- ◆ General Funding Categories
- ◆ State
- ◆ Federal
- ◆ Private Foundations
- ◆ Private Donors
- ◆ Social Enterprise (Income Generated by Organization)
- ◆ Braided Funding (Combined Sources)

### Development Best Practices

- ◆ Develop a Strategic Fundraising Plan, engaging the board of directors
- ◆ Utilize a combination of funding methods
- ◆ Employ a development director or staff dedicated to fundraising efforts
- ◆ Establish a structured giving program
- ◆ Prioritize donor management and donor engagement
- ◆ Utilize a donor management software
- ◆ Invest more time in cultivating a major donors' program that stand-alone fundraising events
- ◆ Establish clear and consistent data collection
- ◆ Provide staff and board members with salary and accounting transparency
- ◆ Accurately calculate the cost of providing direct services (i.e., the rent, staff, electricity, materials, etc.)
- ◆ Accurately anticipate and prepare for staff time that will be required to meet grant reporting requirements
- ◆ Rotate your funding so as not to overtax one foundation or source
- ◆ Develop a contingency plan for the loss of significant funding



## Major Sources of Human Trafficking Funding

Please note that funding opportunities are cyclical and change frequently. Check program websites for the most up-to-date funding announcements.

### Office for Victims of Crime (OVC)

OVC also administers grants to fund national-scope demonstration projects and training and technical assistance delivery. OVC routinely provides human trafficking-related grant opportunities, including the Enhanced Collaborative Model Task Force to Combat Human Trafficking.<sup>31</sup>

### Office of the Governor, Public Safety Office

This office administers more than \$375 million in federal and state grant funding, including grants for dedicated CSEY Advocate Programs. This office distributes funds to improve public safety, support victims of crime, prevent terrorism, and prepare communities for the threats and hazards that pose the greatest risk to Texans.<sup>32</sup>

### Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC)

The HHSC administers a wide variety of state and federal grant programs. This includes the Family Violence Program (FVP), which may be appropriate for some centers.<sup>33</sup>

### Victims of Crime Act Funding (VOCA)

Congress created the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) Fund in 1984 to provide federal support to state and local programs that assist victims of crime. The Fund is financed by fines and penalties paid by convicted federal offenders. The federal government distributes funds to states annually. States, in turn, distribute VOCA funds to eligible public and nonprofit organizations.<sup>34</sup>

### Violence Against Women Act (VAWA)

The Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) administers 19 grant programs authorized by VAWA. Four programs are "formula," meaning the enacting legislation specifies how the funds are distributed. The remaining programs are "discretionary," are designed to build capacity to reduce domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking by strengthening services to victims and holding offenders accountable.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>31</sup> Funding & Awards | OVC. (2021). Office for Victims of Crime. <https://ovc.ojp.gov/funding>

<sup>32</sup> Public Safety Office. (2021). Office of the Texas Governor. <https://gov.texas.gov/organization/cjd>

<sup>33</sup> Grants | Texas Health and Human Services. (2021). Texas Health and Human Services Commission. <https://www.hhs.texas.gov/business/grants>

<sup>34</sup> Crime Victims Fund. (2013). Office for Victims of Crime. <https://ovc.ojp.gov/sites/g/files/xyckuh226/files/pubs/crimevictimsfundfs/intro.html>

<sup>35</sup> OVW Grants and Programs. (2021, September 8). U.S. Department of Justice. <https://www.justice.gov/ovw/grant-programs>



## CHAPTER XII: RESOURCES

In the following resource guide, you will find books, trainings, hotlines, and referrals to help you understand and support survivors of human trafficking. We have included books and trainings created by Survivor Leaders and culturally resonant agencies serving refugees, immigrants, and communities of color.

Many of the recommended books are not explicitly written to address the trauma of human trafficking but highlight evidence-based models that have been helpful for a broad range of clients who have experienced trauma. Since research on treating human trafficking survivors is more limited in trauma studies, we have chosen to identify effective treatments for psychological issues, such as dissociation and PTSD, commonly seen in human trafficking survivors.

Some books will be more relevant for licensed therapists and social workers who offer trauma therapy. Other resources will be accessible for advocates at any stage of their career, such as professional trainings in Trust-Based Relational Intervention and Motivational Interviewing. As research into effective treatments for human trafficking survivors expands in neurobiology and trauma studies, we expect to offer more resources for our stakeholders.

### BOOKS

#### By Survivor Leaders\*

- ◆ *Beautiful Justice: Reclaiming My Worth After Sexual Abuse and Human Trafficking* by Brooke Axtell
- ◆ *Runaway Girl* by Carissa Phelps
- ◆ *What Happened to Me?: Healing for Sex Trafficking Survivors* by Toni McKinley
- ◆ *Walking Prey* by Holly Smith
- ◆ *Survivors Guide to Leaving* by Sheila White and Rachel Lloyd

#### Communication and Personal Growth

- ◆ *Self-Compassion* by Kristin Neff
- ◆ *Non-Violent Communication* by Marshall Rosenberg

#### Trauma Treatment

- ◆ *Healing the Fragmented Selves of Trauma Survivors: Overcoming Internal Self-Alienation* by Janina Fisher
- ◆ *Neurofeedback in the Treatment of Developmental Trauma: Calming the Fear-Driven Brain* by Sebern F. Fisher
- ◆ *Healing Developmental Trauma: How Early Trauma Affects Self-Regulation, Self-Image, and the Capacity for Relationship* by Aline Lapierre and Laurence Heller
- ◆ *Waking the Tiger and In an Unspoken Voice* by Peter Levine
- ◆ *Sensorimotor Psychotherapy: Interventions for Trauma and Attachment* by Pat Ogden
- ◆ *Stranger in the Mirror: Dissociation-The Hidden Epidemic* by Marlene Steinberg, M.D. and Maxine Schnall
- ◆ *The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind and Body in the Healing of Trauma* by Bessel van der Kolk

## General State Resources

- ◆ [HHSC Provider Guidebook: Services for Victims of Human Trafficking in Texas](#)
- ◆ [Human Trafficking and Transnational Organized Crime Section \(HTTOC\)](#), Office of the Attorney General of Texas.
  - ◆ [Be the One Training Tool](#), Office of the Attorney General of Texas
- ◆ Human Trafficking Survivor Leadership Council (Texas)\*
- ◆ [Office of the Governor Child Sex Trafficking Team \(CSTT\)](#)
- ◆ [Roadmap for Texas Communities to Address Child Sex Trafficking](#). (2019, April). Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute.
- ◆ [Texas Association Against Sexual Assault \(TAASA\)](#)
  - ◆ Texas Association Against Sexual Assault. (2016, November). [Sexual Assault Advocate Training Manual](#).
- ◆ [Texas Council on Family Violence \(TCFV\)](#)
  - ◆ For more information about serving human trafficking survivors in the domestic violence setting please watch TCFV's webinar, [Serving Human Trafficking Survivors in a Domestic Violence Setting](#).
- ◆ [Texas Human Trafficking Prevention Coordinating Council](#)
  - ◆ [Strategic Plan: Charting an End to Human Trafficking](#). Office of the Attorney General of Texas.
- ◆ [Texas Human Trafficking Prevention Task Force](#)
- ◆ [Texas Human Trafficking Resource Center \(Texas Health and Human Services\)](#).

## National Resources, Training, and Tools

- ◆ [Elevate Academy \(Survivor Mentorship\)\\*](#)
- ◆ [Ending the Game by Rachel Thomas](#) (Healing the impact of psychological coercion and trauma-bonding)\*
- ◆ [Freedom Network USA](#)
- ◆ [Futures Without Violence - Webinars](#)
- ◆ [HEAL Trafficking](#)
- ◆ [Human Trafficking - Office for Victims of Crime Training and Technical Assistance Center \(OVC TTAC\)](#)
- ◆ [Human Trafficking Capacity Building Center](#)
- ◆ [Labor Trafficking Resource Guide \(OVC Human Trafficking Capacity Building Center\)](#)
- ◆ [National Criminal Justice Training Center \(NCJTC\)](#)
- ◆ [National Human Trafficking Hotline](#)
- ◆ [National Human Trafficking Training and Technical Assistance Center \(NHTTAC\)](#)
- ◆ [National Survivor Network](#)
- ◆ [Office on Trafficking in Persons \(OTIP\)](#)
- ◆ [Office on Violence Against Women \(OVW\) Technical Assistance to Technical Assistance Provider Resource Center](#)
- ◆ [Survivor Created Training for Professionals \(GEMS\)\\*](#)
- ◆ [Survivor Leadership Institute \(Survivor Mentorship\)\\*](#)
- ◆ [The Community Toolbox \(University of Kansas Center for Community Health and Development\)](#)
- ◆ [Training & Resources - Coalition Against Slavery and Trafficking \(CAST\)](#)
- ◆ [VAWNet.org - Human Trafficking Special Collections](#)
- ◆ [Women of Color Network - Publications](#)

## Identification Tools

- ◆ [CSE-IT](#) (Commercial Sexual Exploitation Identification Tool): designed to improve early identification of children who are commercially sexually exploited.
- ◆ National Human Trafficking Resource Center's [Comprehensive Trafficking Assessment](#) (inclusive of both labor and sex trafficking), [Potential Indicators of Human Trafficking](#), and [Human Trafficking Assessment Information for Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Programs](#)
- ◆ Polaris Project outlines 25 different types of trafficking and the signs of each identified sector in their report, [The Typology of Modern Slavery: Defining Sex and Labor Trafficking in the United States](#).
- ◆ Vera Institute's [Out of the Shadows Tool for Identification of Victims of Human Trafficking](#)

## Trauma-informed Interventions

- ◆ [Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing \(EMDR\)](#)
- ◆ [Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy \(TF-CBT\)](#)
- ◆ [Motivational Interviewing](#)
- ◆ [Trust-Based Relational Intervention \(TBRI\)](#)
- ◆ Trauma-Informed Care through [Victim Assistance Training \(VAT\) Online](#)
- ◆ Project Reach, [Utilizing Trauma-Informed Approaches to Human Trafficking Related Work](#).

## Working with Minor and Adolescent Children

- ◆ [Guidance to States and Services on Addressing Human Trafficking of Children and Youth in the United States](#), Department of Health and Human Services
- ◆ [National Children's Alliance](#)
- ◆ [The National Center for Missing & Exploited Children](#)
- ◆ [Capacity Building Center for States](#)
- ◆ [Office of Refugee Resettlement](#) (ORR)

## Legal Resources & Information

- ◆ [American Immigration Council](#)
- ◆ Continued Presence. [Department of Homeland Security's Blue Campaign](#) offers additional information about continued presence.
- ◆ Crime Victims Compensation ([CVC Program](#))
- ◆ [Declaration of Law Enforcement Officer for Victim of Trafficking in Persons](#), Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Citizen and Immigration Services.
- ◆ Employment discrimination complaints and information on accessing state and local equivalents, see the [U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's](#) website.
- ◆ Expunctions information at [Texas Law Help](#) and in the "[Expunctions in Texas](#)" brochure by the Texas Young Lawyers Association and the State Bar of Texas.

## Legal Resources & Information Con't

- ◆ Find more information about obtaining this type of Protective Order at [WomensLaw.org](http://WomensLaw.org). [Texas Law Help](http://TexasLawHelp.org) and [Texas Advocacy Project](http://TexasAdvocacyProject.org) also offer resources on protective orders.
- ◆ [Health and Human Services Certification for Adult Victims of Human Trafficking](#), the Administration for Children and Families. [Regional Refugee office](#) in your area.
- ◆ Housing discrimination complaints, see the [Texas Workforce Commission](#) and the [Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity \(FHEO\)](#)'s websites.
- ◆ Occupational safety complaints and retaliation [U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Safety and Health Administration](#)
- ◆ Orders of Nondisclosure information at Texas Law Help's, [What Is a Nondisclosure Order and How Do I Get One?](#) page offers excellent information. The [Expunction & Nondisclosure](#) guide published by the Texas District & County Attorneys Association.
- ◆ [Services Available to Victims of Human Trafficking: A Resource Guide for Social Service Providers](#)
- ◆ T visas, eligibility, and requirements is available at [Immigrant Legal Resource Center](#) and [Texas Law Help](#).
- ◆ [U.S. Department of Labor Wage and Hour Division](#)
- ◆ Wage theft and violations - [U.S. Department of Labor, Wage and Hour Division](#).

## Cultural Competency

- ◆ [Asian Family Support Services of Austin](#) - Margins to Center Approach to Advocacy
- ◆ [Mosaic Family Services \(DFW/North Texas\)](#) - Can provide training and technical assistance
- ◆ Resettlement agencies
- ◆ National Coalition Building Institute [www.ncbi.org](http://www.ncbi.org)
- ◆ [OVC TTAC Victim Assistance Training](#) - Culture, Diversity, and Inclusion
- ◆ [Georgetown University National Center for Cultural Competence \(NCCC\)](#)
- ◆ [Cultural Humility Training - Coalition Against Slavery and Trafficking \(CAST\)](#)

## Language Access

- ◆ The [Interpretation Technical Assistance and Resource Center](#) offers language access, interpretation, and translation services.
- ◆ [Google Translate Web \(itool.com\)](#) - Translates any website page into multiple languages; just add the URL or website
- ◆ [Breaking Silence: Interpreting for Victim Services Resources \(Ayuda\)](#)

### Culturally Resonant Resources

- ◆ [Asian Pacific Institute on Gender-Based Violence](#)
- ◆ [Gender Based Violence and Intersecting Challenges Impacting Native American & Alaskan Village Communities \(VAWNet.org - Special Collections\)](#)
- ◆ [HEAL Research Webinar: Experiences of Racism Among African American Women Impacted by Commercial Sexual Exploitation](#)
- ◆ <https://www.apa.org/pi/women/programs/trafficking/african-american.pdf>
- ◆ [National Indigenous Women's Resource Center](#)
- ◆ [Refugee Services of Texas](#)
- ◆ [StrongHearts Native Helpline: 1-844-7NATIVE \(762-8483\)](#)
- ◆ [Tahirih Justice Center](#)
- ◆ [The Latino Face of Human Trafficking and Exploitation in the United States](#)
- ◆ [Webinar: Experiences of Black Survivors and Exploring the Intersections of Survival Sex and Sex Trafficking](#)

### LGBTQIA+ Resources

- ◆ [LGBT Hotline/LGBT National Help Center](#)
- ◆ [Trans Lifeline](#)
- ◆ [Preventing and Responding to Domestic Violence in Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, or Queer \(LGBTQ\) Communities \(VAWNet.org Special Collections\)](#)
- ◆ [Serving Trans and Non-Binary Survivors of Domestic and Sexual Violence \(VAWNet.org - Special Collections\)](#)
- ◆ [Improving services for LGBTQ individuals, VAW Net](#)

### Male Survivors

- ◆ [Freedom Network USA](#)
- ◆ [Housing Solutions for Male Survivors of Trafficking \(Freedom Network USA\) Webinar](#)
- ◆ [Webinar: Boys: The Forgotten Sex Trafficking Victim](#)
- ◆ [Assisting Male Survivors of Human Trafficking, U.S. State Department](#)
- ◆ [Office for Victims of Crime, Task Force Guide. <https://www.ovcttac.gov/taskforceguide/eguide/4-supporting-victims/45-victim-populations/male-victims/>](#)

### Disability Resources

- ◆ [The Trafficking of Youth with Disabilities: What Youth Service Providers Need to Know, Vera Institute](#)
- ◆ [Ensuring Access for People with Disabilities \(The Community Toolbox\)](#)

### Other

- ◆ [Dallas Crimes Against Children Conference \(CACC\)](#)
- ◆ [Conference on Crimes Against Women \(CCAW\)](#)
- ◆ [Rural Health Information: <https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/topics/violence-and-abuse>](#)

\* Indicates resource created by a Survivor Leader



## APPENDIX A

### QUESTIONNAIRE: IS YOUR AGENCY SURVIVOR-LED?

 **Here are some questions to consider to evaluate whether your agency is both survivor-led and supporting the leadership development of emerging leaders.**

- Do you hire survivors as full-time staff members?
- Do you hire survivors as consultants?
- Do you make funding for Survivor Leadership a priority in your annual budget?
- Do you use trainings, books, and resources created by survivors?
- Do you regularly create opportunities for survivors to receive leadership training?
- Do you address the blocks and limiting beliefs survivors may have about leadership due to their experiences with power being abused?
- Do you hire survivors as professional speakers to share more than just their trauma stories?
- Do you view survivors as subject matter experts?
- Do you receive recommendations from a diverse range of survivors (across race, gender, sexuality, religion, country of origin, age, and trafficking typology)?
- Do you address and combat common negative stereotypes about survivors that can hinder their ability to be treated as professionals?
- Do you offer strengths and personality assessments for survivors to understand how they might want to make a unique contribution to your agency?
- Do you have a mentorship program so survivors can move beyond trauma recovery and achieve their professional goals?
- Would you be confident having a survivor lead your organization?



## APPENDIX B

### CREATING SAFER SPACES: TIPS FOR ADVOCATES



#### DEFINITIONS AND RESPONSES FOR HUMAN TRAFFICKING SURVIVORS

- » Human trafficking is typically divided into the following typologies:
  - *Sex trafficking*: the recruitment, harboring, transportation, providing, or obtaining of a person for a commercial sex act, in which a commercial sex act is induced by **force, fraud, or coercion**, or in which the person made to perform such an act has not yet reached 18 years of age. It's important to note that any minor who is performing commercial sex acts is considered a trafficking victim under the law.
  - *Labor trafficking*: The recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of **force, fraud, or coercion** for the purpose of involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery.
  - *International trafficking*: Trafficking of foreign-born individuals. Individuals could have been moved into the United States by traffickers or been trafficked after they arrived in the United States. Smuggling a person across an international border does not constitute human trafficking.
  - *Domestic trafficking*: Trafficking of US permanent residents. Commonly used acronyms are DMST for Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking survivors and CSEC for Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children.
- » [Federal legal protections](#) for trafficking survivors are provided through the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) of 2000 and were strengthened by the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act (JVTA) in 2015.
- » State criminal offenses for trafficking survivors are outlined in [Chapter 20A](#) of the Texas Penal Code.
- » A person does not need to be moved internationally or otherwise to be trafficked. In the case of familial trafficking, they do not even need to be moved from their home.
- » The [National Human Trafficking Hotline](#) can give you guidance and help identify specific resources in your area and provide basic safety planning for survivors. Reach the hotline at 1-888-373-7888.

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#### SAFETY INFORMATION

- » Basic safety planning for human trafficking survivors:
  - Check out The National Human Trafficking Hotline's [Safety Planning Information](#) and the [VIGOR Safety Plan](#) for complete guides.
  - Maintain an awareness of the survivor's vulnerability and the impact of trauma-bonding. Survivors often develop feelings of loyalty and dependency through a cycle of violence and/or psychological coercion with small rewards.
  - If a minor, consider whether the parent or guardian is involved in the youth's trafficking.



**SAFETY  
INFORMATION  
CONTINUED**

- Advocates and Law Enforcement need to listen before trying to fix the situation or offer advice.
- Introduce an advocate to them and include in the safety planning.
- Help the survivor assess immediate emotional and physical needs with a focus on their strengths.
- Focus on empowerment and collaboratively build a safety plan with the survivor. The survivor is an expert on what they need to stay safe.
- Give them autonomy when helping to create a safety plan. This doesn't mean they will be ready to exit trafficking at this time, but you can give them resources for when they are ready.
- Instead of trying to "rescue" them, meet them where they are with compassion and resources. They may have children with the trafficker, other family members working with them or a drug addiction they are not ready to kick.
- Consider and allow for the possibility that the survivor may fail in all or part of the safety plan by providing different and various options that will keep the survivor safe.
- Ask the survivor to identify family members, or other various positive healthy adults that can help support the safety and service plan and include these persons in the planning.
- Consider whether a supportive role by law enforcement (when applicable) and targeted, concrete and effective services will increase the likelihood of the plan succeeding. Law enforcement may be effective in breaking the connection between youth and exploiter through arrest and prosecution of the exploiter.
- Safety Plans should prioritize physical and emotional safety including:
  - \* Immediate assistance (housing, food, medical, safety and security)
  - \* Mental health assistance (counseling)
  - \* Income assistance
  - \* Legal status (certification, immigration)
- » [Texas Code of Criminal Procedure Chapter 7A](#) allows Protective Orders for victims of human trafficking. For this type of Protective Order, the court needs to be certain there are reasonable grounds to believe the survivor is a victim of trafficking. Find more information about obtaining this type of Protective Order at [WomensLaw.org](#).
- » For more information about serving human trafficking survivors in the domestic violence setting please watch TCFV's webinar, [Serving Human Trafficking Survivors in a Domestic Violence Setting](#).

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**ELIGIBLE  
REMEDIES**

- » Human trafficking survivors can be eligible for the following programs and remedies:
  - [Crime Victim's Compensation](#), which supports a range of costs such as medical assistance and relocation, from the Office of the Attorney General.
  - [T Visas](#) can provide immigration relief for those who are trafficked (both labor and sex) into the US. It allows trafficking survivors and their immediate family members to remain in and work temporarily in the United States and creates a path to a green card. Inform them they will not go to jail or be deported if they are undocumented. Get more information about T Visas, eligibility, and requirements at the [Immigrant Legal Resource Center](#) and [Texas Law Help](#).

**ELIGIBLE  
REMEDIES  
CONTINUED**

- Under [Texas Civil Practice and Remedies Code Chapter 98](#), traffickers can be held civilly liable and survivors can be entitled to monetary damages. An alleged trafficker does not have to be charged or prosecuted as a trafficker to be held civilly liable.
- If you're assisting a foreign-born, adult trafficking survivor, an [HHS \(US Department of Health and Human Services\) Certification Letter](#) may allow them to meet certain eligibility rules and apply for the same benefits and services as refugees. A foreign national adult must have Continued Presence, a T Visa, or a bona fide T Visa application to request an HHS Certification letter. If you need assistance with this process you can contact the [Regional Refugee office](#) in your area.
- If you're assisting a foreign-born, minor trafficking survivor, an [HHS Eligibility Letter](#) can allow them to apply for the same benefits and services as refugees. You can contact OTIP (Office on Trafficking in Persons) Child Protection Specialists at 202-205-4582 and complete the [Request for Assistance Form](#) through their office.
- Both the Certification Letter for adults and Eligibility Letter for children allows survivors to apply for TANF, Medicaid, CHIP (if a minor), and SNAP. For an exhaustive guide on available benefits and who would be eligible for them please see [Services Available to Victims of Human Trafficking: A Resource Guide for Social Service Providers](#).

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**ADDITIONAL  
RESOURCES**

- » Human trafficking survivors can be eligible for the following programs and remedies:
  - [Texas Association Against Sexual Assault \(TAASA\)](#) – Texas membership agency supporting sexual assault programs and online resources, Call: 512-474-7190
  - [Texas Attorney General](#) – Be the One Awareness Campaign [Freedom Network](#) – national coalition of US anti-trafficking organizations with online resources and policy information.
  - [Futures Without Violence](#) – national organization with resources and advocacy on the intersections of human trafficking, domestic violence, and sexual assault, including an inclusive list of [Anti-Human Trafficking Resources](#).
  - US Department of Health & Human Services [Office on Trafficking in Persons](#) – federal governmental office with resources and services available for all forms of trafficking survivors.

## HUMAN TRAFFICKING INDICATORS

### BASIC INFORMATION FOR IDENTIFYING TRAFFICKING SURVIVORS

- » Many trafficking survivors will not self-identify, sometimes due to not realizing they have been trafficked or not feeling safe to do so. Your program is likely serving survivors, but may be unaware of the legal definitions of human trafficking. In sex trafficking, they may use terms like the life, the game, or working. You can use this language to build rapport.
- » It is unlikely for a survivor to tell you their entire story at the beginning of receiving services. In addition to fear and shame connected with their trauma, they have been told what not to say and sometimes are given a false story to tell.
- » Take time to build rapport and trust so that they feel comfortable telling you about their experiences in a safe, survivor-centered, and empowering environment.
- » The goal is not to identify trafficking survivors for the sake of identifying them, but to provide additional resources to meet their specialized needs.

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### GENERAL TRAFFICKING INDICATORS

- » Do not make assumptions based on one indicator, but look at the totality of the situation.
- » Inconsistencies when reporting where they live or lack of knowledge about the city/state they currently reside may come up. They also may be in shock and not able to tell any of their story or very little of it at all. They may also seem reticent or resist talking.
- » Someone is always with them (or they may be nearby watching). They are not allowed to speak for themselves.
- » Little to no eye contact when spoken to.
- » No access to a bank account or any other money/financial resources.
- » Not free to come and go as they wish.
- » Living in the same place that they work.
- » Does not have access to passport, visa, or other immigration status documents, driver's license or state ID. Is someone else holding these documents?
- » How many cell phones do you have? Who is in charge of the phone bill?
- » Does the person appear disconnected from family, friends, community organizations, or the faith community?
- » Has a child stopped attending school?
- » Has the person had a sudden or dramatic change in behavior?
- » Is the person disoriented or confused, or showing signs of mental or physical abuse?
- » Does the person have bruises in various stages of healing?
- » Is the person fearful, timid, or submissive?
- » Does the person show signs of having been denied food, water, sleep, or medical care?
- » Is the person often in the company of someone to whom they defer? Or someone who seems to be in control of the situation (for example, where they go or who they talk to)?
- » Does the person appear to be coached on what to say?
- » Is the person living in unsuitable conditions?
- » Does the person lack personal possessions and appear not to have a stable living situation?

**SEX  
TRAFFICKING  
INDICATORS**

- » Been forced by a partner or family member or gang member to provide sexual favors
- » Poor health or has multiple untreated sexually transmitted infections or related injuries
- » Hypersensitive to touch, no eye contact
- » Has had to terminate one or more pregnancies over a short period of time
- » Signs of branding such as tattoos with abuser's/trafficker's/gang name, dollar signs
- » Using terms from "The Life" like hustler or wifey
- » Has pictures/intimate information posted online about them
- » Has condoms, extra clothes that do not match the weather or normal circumstances, wet wipes, hotel room key(s)

**LABOR  
TRAFFICKING  
INDICATORS**

- 
- » Has been forced by a partner or family member to work inside the home in a situation of domestic servitude or outside of the home without access to earnings
  - » Was recruited through false promises concerning the nature and conditions of their work
  - » Debt owed to employer
  - » Not allowed to leave working situation unless monitored
  - » Works excessively long hours and is unpaid, paid very little, or paid only through tips

**BASIC  
TRAFFICKING  
ASSESSMENT  
QUESTIONS**

- 
- » Is anyone watching you right now?
  - » Do you have children and who has them? Traffickers often hold onto children, so that the victim protects the trafficker.
  - » Gang trafficking: How did you get involved in the gang? How were you initiated into the gang? What is your role in the gang?
  - » What type of work do/did you do? Are you being paid? How are you being paid?
  - » Do you feel you or your family is unsafe? Have you or your family been threatened?
  - » Do you feel unsafe around any family members?
  - » Has any family member threatened to abandon or hurt others in your family if you didn't do what they said?
  - » Have you done any work where you did not want to do it or had anyone forced you to work?
  - » Did anyone ever make you do work you didn't want to do by using threats or violence?
  - » Do you have your documents? Who does?
  - » How did you meet this person? How did you find out about this job?
  - » Have you been hurt or fear you will be hurt if you didn't do the job you were asked to do?
  - » What did you expect would happen if you didn't do what was asked of you?
  - » Are you required to earn a certain amount of money/meet a quota for anyone? What happens if you don't meet your quota?
  - » What are your living conditions like?
  - » Are you free to come and go as you please?

**DOMESTIC SEX  
TRAFFICKING  
EXAMPLE**

- » Amy comes to an appointment with her counselor where she talks about her relationship with her past boyfriend. They had a five-year relationship, and she talks about how the first year and a half he was the perfect partner. He became emotionally and physically abusive after that time and started controlling most of her movements. After another year, he started bringing his friends to their house and forcing her to have sex with them using threats and coercive tactics. She recently found out that he was profiting from these encounters to buy drugs. Amy originally came to your agency for domestic violence and has never mentioned anything about trafficking.

**FAMILIAL  
TRAFFICKING  
EXAMPLE**

- » Tanya is a 20 year old female looking for shelter. She called a shelter and confides she is hiding from her mom. She says her mom has been selling her for drugs since she was 14. The shelter provides a place for her temporarily. During that time Tanya meets with a case manager. She described that her mom taught her how to attract men and get money from them through sex. Mom started inviting men over and she would have to service them. Mom got her hooked on heroin and she has been in and out of detention for drug and theft charges. When she would be released from detention she would live with her grandma, but her mom always came back and she would start making her exchange sex for money.

**LABOR  
TRAFFICKING  
EXAMPLE**

- » Maria was referred to the shelter by law enforcement after they responded to a domestic violence call and issued an Emergency Protective Order. When the advocate asks her about employment during her intake, Maria details 12-hour shifts working at her husband's restaurant. She talks about how her husband would make her work long shifts by threatening her and her children. She didn't have any control of the family's money and never received a paycheck. In recent days, the abuse had gotten worse and after hearing about the shelter was glad to come with her children and wanted help from an advocate to look for another job. Do you have children and who has them? Traffickers often hold onto children, so that the victim protects the trafficker.

**OTHER  
RESOURCES  
FOR  
IDENTIFYING  
TRAFFICKING  
SURVIVORS**

- » Polaris Project outlines 25 different types of trafficking and the signs of each identified sector in their report, [The Typology of Modern Slavery: Defining Sex and Labor Trafficking in the United States](#).
- » Vera Institute's [Out of the Shadows Tool for Identification of Victims of Human Trafficking](#).
- » National Human Trafficking Resource Center's [Comprehensive Trafficking Assessment](#) (inclusive of both labor and sex trafficking), [Potential Indicators of Human Trafficking](#), and [Human Trafficking Assessment Information for Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Programs](#)
- » Allies Against Slavery's [Screening Platform](#).
- » [CSE-IT](#) (Commercial Sexual Exploitation Identification Tool): designed to improve early identification of children who are commercially sexually exploited.

Find more of our Advocacy Tip Sheets at [tcfv.org/policy/creating-safer-spaces/](https://tcfv.org/policy/creating-safer-spaces/)







