



ADMINISTRATION FOR
CHILDREN & FAMILIES
Office on Trafficking in Persons



**NATIONAL HUMAN TRAFFICKING
TRAINING AND TECHNICAL
ASSISTANCE CENTER**

Toolkit for Building Survivor-Informed Organizations

Trauma-informed resources and survivor-informed practices to support and collaborate with survivors of human trafficking as professionals

February 2018

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

“A survivor-informed practice acknowledges the unique perspectives of survivors with relevant expertise based on knowledge of their trafficking experiences and challenges they have faced in their efforts to regain and rebuild their lives. A survivor-informed practice includes meaningful input from a diverse community of survivors at all stages of a program or project, including development, implementation and evaluation.” -- (Human Trafficking Leadership Academy, 2017)¹

Survivor engagement allows organizations to better serve clients, craft programs, identify challenges and opportunities, and achieve agency missions and mandates. As a primary stakeholder in the anti-trafficking field, survivor leaders offer invaluable insight and expertise. Anti-trafficking efforts can only be successful with comprehensive inclusion of diverse professionals, including survivor leaders. It offers insight into the anti-trafficking field that, through application, adaptation and validation, will contribute to the development of evidence-based practices.

This Toolkit is a collection of new and existing resources that build organizational capacity to collaborate with and support staff, volunteers, and consultants who identify as survivor leaders. It is appropriate for use by anti-trafficking organizations, coalitions, task forces, volunteer programs, and other organizations who wish to improve collaboration with those impacted by human trafficking.

Many successful leaders did not have formal education when they began their careers. Survivor leaders often use their knowledge and lived experience to improve program performance, and many gain success through professional experience and/or supplementary education as their careers evolve. This Toolkit helps organizations create opportunities for survivors to be recognized as subject matter experts, opening doors where no other entry point may otherwise exist. For individuals seeking to escape trafficking, the presence of someone who has similar lived experiences often outweighs degrees or formal education.

The National Human Trafficking Training and Technical Assistance Center (NHTTAC) developed this Toolkit with the support of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office on Trafficking in Persons. Through a team that includes survivor leaders and other anti-trafficking leaders, this Toolkit provides guidance, tools, and resources to build organizational capacity on professionally engaging survivors of human trafficking in the development, delivery, and evaluation of programming.

How to Use This Toolkit

In Chapter 1, you have the opportunity to assess your organization’s level of being survivor-informed with strategies and tips on how to further assess your capacity. Chapters 2–8 provide an opportunity to go a little deeper in assessing your organization’s readiness to collaborate with survivor leaders in

¹ The Human Trafficking Leadership Academy is funded by the Office on Trafficking in Persons (OTIP) and the Office on Women’s Health (OWH) at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) through the National Human Trafficking Training and Technical Assistance Center (NHTTAC). Six survivor leaders and six non-government service providers work collaboratively to provide recommendations to a project question proposed by OTIP and OWH. In 2017, fellows collaborated to identify how OTIP grantees can improve services using trauma-informed principles and survivor-informed practices. For more information, visit <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/otip/resource/htla>.

specific areas. Each chapter provides strategies, tips, and resources, including case examples, of how to meaningfully collaborate with survivor leaders as staff, consultants, or volunteers.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Guiding principles create an overarching framework for thoughtful engagement of survivor leaders as staff, volunteers, and consultants. These principles are essential in successfully collaborating with individuals who have been impacted by human trafficking and are relevant for all staff, volunteers, consultants, and organizations participating in anti-trafficking work to create a person-centered environment. This Toolkit discusses ways to practically apply these principles in transforming into a survivor-informed organization.

Empowerment-Based Engagement: Fosters strengths, respects autonomy, builds leadership and skills, and increases inclusive and solutions-focused practices (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2014).

Trauma-Informed Engagement:

Uses the [Guiding Principles of Trauma-Informed Care](#) to build trauma-sensitive environments and practices (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2014).

Culturally Relevant, Sensitive, and Inclusive Engagement:

Increases community leadership; builds inclusive practices; respects individuals; and utilizes culturally relevant and sensitive practices, language, and communication (Office of Minority Health, 2014)

Ethical Engagement: Identifies ethical codes and frameworks, implements ethical principles in organizational decision making and practices, and ensures ethical accountability (Office of Minority Health, 2014).

Six Principles of a Trauma-Informed Approach



Terminology: Survivor Leaders

NHTTAC strives to use language that reflects how those who have experienced human trafficking describe their experiences recognizing that terminology may evolve. While some individuals who have been trafficked choose to embrace the title “survivor,” others do not. Moreover, organizations will collaborate with professionals who do not share that they have experienced trafficking. Disclosing such information should always remain in the control of the person who experienced trafficking. It is important to recognize individuals’ full life experiences, skill sets, and professional goals—and not focus solely on the trafficking that occurred. For the purposes of this Toolkit, the term, “survivor leader” is used to describe an individual who has experienced human trafficking and is making an empowered choice to engage in anti-trafficking and/or other allied fields. However, do not assume that someone who identifies as a survivor leader should be referred to as such in a professional setting or that identification as a survivor leader makes it acceptable to inquire about someone’s past experience with human trafficking.

CHAPTER 1. GETTING STARTED: ORGANIZATIONAL ASSESSMENT

Understanding the degree to which your organization is survivor-informed is a critical first step. You can assess your organization by eliciting feedback from staff, consultants, and clients through surveys, focus groups, or exit interviews. Regularly assess across the entire organization, including mission, vision, and culture; approach to program development, implementation, and evaluation; outreach and awareness-raising activities; fundraising strategies; and human resource and staffing development. The Human Trafficking Leadership Academy developed the Survivor-Informed Practice Self-Guided Assessment Tool (below and Appendix A) in 2017 to self-assess your organization.

Survivor-Informed Practice Assessment (Human Trafficking Leadership Academy, 2017)

Instructions: For each line, circle one answer (0, 1, or 2), indicating the degree to which the practice is adhered to (never, occasionally, or always). Section scores identify areas of strength and weakness; total score indicates the degree to which a program or project is survivor-informed.

	Never	Occasionally	Always
Meaningful input			
Program/project provides employment opportunities for survivors.	0	1	2
Survivors serve in leadership positions for the program/project (management, advisory board, etc.).	0	1	2
In the absence of survivor staff, survivor consultants are hired to provide input.	0	1	2
If direct survivor input is unavailable, survivor-developed guidance and resources are utilized.	0	1	2
From a diverse community of survivors			
Survivor input represents both sex and labor trafficking perspectives.	0	1	2
Survivor input represents both domestic and foreign-national perspectives.	0	1	2
Survivor input represents other diverse survivor perspectives (adults, minors, LGBTQ survivors, etc.).	0	1	2
Project/program incorporates promising practices from other survivor-informed fields (domestic violence, etc.).	0	1	2
A strengths-based process is in place for determining appropriate areas and levels of survivor engagement.	0	1	2
At all stages of a program or project			
Survivor expertise is accessed in the development of initial program/project design.	0	1	2
Survivor input is incorporated into development of policies and procedures.	0	1	2
Survivor input is incorporated into the creation of program/project materials.	0	1	2
Survivor expertise is accessed throughout program/project implementation.	0	1	2
Survivor expertise is accessed in evaluation of program/project.	0	1	2
A process is established and utilized for obtaining feedback from survivor participants.	0	1	2
TOTAL SCORE:	_____ out of 30		

Practical Strategies and Tips

There are many other ways to solicit input from your staff, volunteers, consultants, partners, clients, funders and other key stakeholders on how your organization is doing:

- Implement an annual anonymous survey to check on how the organization is doing, ways it could improve, and areas of achievement, with a focus on the guiding principles.
- Conduct frequent self-assessments. Solicit ongoing feedback as new policies and procedures are incorporated into the guiding principles.
- Use anonymous surveys and group discussion to meet diverse communication preferences.
- Ask key stakeholders in the field to provide feedback—this provides invaluable information on programs, practices, and mission alignment. In addition, conduct an annual survey with guiding principles application for partners, survivor leaders, and other stakeholders.
- Make sure organizational boards have access to evaluation outcomes and assist in making changes as it pertains to the governance of the agency.
- Partner with a firm that specializes in organizational evaluation and change management. If your budget does not support the costs, see if this could be an in-kind donation. It is important for organizations to participate in self-assessments, but it can also be helpful to have an external organization-led evaluation to ensure objectivity.
- Work with survivor leader consultants to assess for areas to improve survivor-informed practices

Promising practices for Survivor Engagement (Human Trafficking Leadership Academy, 2017)

- Continuously and appropriately access survivor expertise at all appropriate stages throughout program development, implementation, and evaluation.
- Incorporate diverse human trafficking survivor perspectives (sex and labor trafficking survivors, adult and minor survivors, LGBTQ survivors, and foreign-national and domestic survivors), and integrate promising practices among other parallel movements, including domestic violence, sexual assault, and labor exploitation, when appropriate.
- A strengths-based approach should be used to determine appropriate places and levels of engagement for survivors within an organization or project. Such an approach should consider:
 - Survivors' expertise and strengths
 - Survivors' length of time out of their trafficking situation
 - Training on trauma-informed, victim-centered, and survivor-informed practices
 - Effective management of survivors' triggers
 - Organizational or project need
 - Organizational capacity to appropriately support survivors

Resources

Survivor-Informed Practices

- [Human Trafficking Leadership Academy | Survivor-Informed Practice: Definition, Best Practices, and Recommendations](#)
- [Trauma Informed Oregon | Assessing Physical Environmental Components](#)
- [Georgetown University | Cultural Inclusivity Assessment Resources](#)
- [Georgetown University | Family Organizational Assessment Tool](#)
- [Georgetown University | A Guide for Using the Cultural and Linguistic Competence Policy Assessment Instrument](#)
- [THRIVE Guide to Trauma-Informed Organizational Development](#)

CHAPTER 2. MISSION, VISION, AND LEADERSHIP

Mission and vision are often the leading forces of an organization, task force, coalition, or other anti-trafficking organization. Incorporating a survivor-informed approach must start at the top of an organization and reflect thoughtful application across the organization. The executive management and board members are charged with ensuring that the mission and vision of your organization is actualized. Assess your organization by answering the following questions:

Assessment: Mission, Vision, and Leadership

Instructions: For each line, circle one answer indicating the degree to which your organization applies the approach (0=never, 1=occasionally, or 2=always).

	Never	Occasionally	Always
Leadership is provided with training and professional development that pertains to the guiding principles.	0	1	2
Leadership, including board members, assists in building a framework reflective of the guiding principles at all levels of the organization.	0	1	2
Leadership comprises diverse members, including survivor leaders.	0	1	2
Aspects of the guiding principles are reflected within your mission and vision.	0	1	2
Guiding principle are included within formal values.	0	1	2
Finances are allocated to support survivor-informed input across all levels of the organization.	0	1	2
Decisions are made with inclusive and diverse voices.	0	1	2
Section Score:	_____ out of 14		

Practical Strategies and Tips

What now? How did you do? Based on the assessment results above, consider the following strategies to improve your results.

- Provide a diverse scope of leadership opportunities within an organization that also match the skills and interests of survivor leaders.
- Ensure that survivor leaders are empowered to make informed choices and are given real opportunities to build professional skills such as marketing, accounting, graphic design, human resources, peer-to-peer programs, mentoring, or volunteer positions.
- Make leadership and professional development opportunities available outside the anti-trafficking field so that survivor leaders are able to make real choices about their career path that is not limited by narrow choices offered within an agency.
- Provide leadership with annual or biannual training and professional development that pertains to the guiding principles. Educate participants on your guiding principles, and provide practical examples of how the agency is or can utilize these to guide their work. Ensure that your

Beware of Tokenism: a superficial practice to create the appearance of social inclusivity and diversity; includes members of minority or underrepresented groups, including survivor leaders, as a symbolic gesture to avoid criticism (Bender, 2014)

organization’s board knows the importance of these principles and will assist leadership in building a reflective framework at other levels of the organization.

- Comprise leadership with diverse members, including survivor leaders. Expand board membership to increase diverse participation of survivor leaders and community stakeholders, and consider advisory committees for boards that include survivor leadership. Avoid tokenism: Do not assume one member represents all members of an underrepresented group. There may also be board members who chose not to disclose that they have experienced trafficking.
- Reflect aspects of the guiding principles in mission and vision. Get creative in how this is applied to the existing mission. Host an organizational discussion with the board on how these guiding principles will help the organization to better achieve the existing mission.

Sanar's Mission: *The Sanar Wellness Institute provides transformational healing services for survivors of gender-based violence and their communities.* **Sanar's Vision:** *All survivors of gender-based violence have access to therapeutic wellness services that foster resiliency, inspire hope, and support survivors in meeting their own definition of success (Sanar, n.d.).*

- Include the guiding principles in formal values. Let your values set the tone for how work is conducted at all levels of an organization. If your organization has defined values, include additional language to areas where the guiding principles can be applied.
- Allocate finances to actualize a survivor-informed organization. Discuss with leadership how current funds or resources can be used to support survivor leader’s professional involvement across your organization.
- Develop a specific fundraising approach to support the financial costs to collaborate with survivor leaders to inform and transform your organization.

Designate a portion of your annual budget (suggested 2–3 percent) for implementation of your survivor-informed plan, including consultant fees. (Human Trafficking Leadership Academy Cohort 2017).

PROMISING PRACTICES | POLICIES AND PROCEDURES APPLICATION

Janet is the vice president of an advocacy organization. After conducting an agency assessment, she realized that 45 percent of her staff, including board members, were unaware of how the agency’s mission and vision related to their guiding principles and 60 percent of staff were unsure of how to practically apply the guiding principles to their work. Janet collaborated with staff to develop an annual training for board members and staff that provides concrete examples of how their organization applies the guiding principles. During team meetings and case reviews, she encouraged discussion on how services could be improved to better apply the guiding principles.

One year later, Janet completed a second assessment, in which she found that since implementing these strategies, 87 percent of staff felt strongly that they knew how to apply the guiding principles to their work. Janet continues to solicit feedback from leadership and staff about how to strengthen the agency’s ability to use the guiding principles.

Resources

Leadership Development

- [Office for Victims of Crime \(OVC\) Professional Development Scholarship Program](#)
- [Saber Passport to Freedom | Survivor Leader Educational Scholarship](#)
- [Sun Gate Leadership Scholarship](#)
- [Girls Educational and Leadership Institute](#)
- [Human Trafficking Leadership Academy](#)
- [National Survivor Network](#)
- [Rebecca Bender Initiative Elevate Academy](#)
- [Survivors for Solutions](#)
- [Survivor Leader Network of San Diego](#)
- [Wichita State University Center for Combatting Human Trafficking's Pathway to Prosperity Program](#)

CHAPTER 3. ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

Like individuals, organizations also have a shared set of values and beliefs that influence how members of the organization think and act. Cultural norms can become so ingrained in the daily routine that organizations may be unaware of its existence. Understanding your organization’s culture is a key step in becoming a survivor-informed organization. Formal dress codes, the ability to telecommute, expectations around self-care, or how individuals socialize in the workplace are all part of the organizational culture. With planning, your organization can create an intentional, survivor-informed work environment. Assess your organization by answering the following questions:

Assessment: Organizational Culture

Instructions: For each line, circle one answer indicating the degree to which your organization applies the approach (0=never, 1=occasionally, or 2=always).	Never	Occasionally	Always
Routine discussions on the policies associated with the guiding principles are standard.	0	1	2
Organizational practices promote sharing and collaboration.	0	1	2
Staff and leadership actively provide spaces for continued team building.	0	1	2
Wellness is promoted as an organizational practice.	0	1	2
Organization members are encouraged to be creative and share innovative solutions.	0	1	2
The work environment promotes connection and collaboration.	0	1	2
Leadership values feedback and the opportunity to grow.	0	1	2
Team debriefs are conducted at the end of challenging work days.	0	1	2
Section Score:	_____ out of 16		

Practical Strategies and Tips

What now? How did you do? Based on the assessment results above, consider the following strategies to improve your results.

Promote Collaboration Across the Organization

- Hold an organizational discussion on the policies associated with the guiding principles on practical daily implementation, and create a list of shared examples.
- Promote the sharing of thoughts and ideas where individuals feel more creative and connected to the work. Host an open meeting for all team members or employees to offer suggestions on creative ideas.
- Create opportunities for getting to know each other outside of the office. This practice builds comradery and strengthens trust among teams.
- Encourage your team to be creative and share innovative solutions. Develop a way to acknowledge and reward creativity and innovation across the organization.
- Encourage employees to interact throughout the day and collaborate on projects—this creates a more supportive and effective work environment. Make team collaboration part of the performance review process for staff.

- Encourage staff, consultants, and volunteers to recognize and acknowledge their own biases, prejudices, privileges, and oppressions and receive training on how to mitigate these in their work on behalf of the organization.

Strengthen Feedback

- Take time to meet with team members to discuss areas that are working well and where there is room for growth. These conversations can be utilized in organizational strategic planning, growth management, and even during the creation of annual budgets. This provides opportunities for a participatory work culture.
- Partner with companies that offer professional development to support survivor leaders and other staff and volunteers in building their skillset. Many of these activities could be listed as in-kind services on an organizational budget.
- Seek out feedback from survivor leaders and integrate into organizational plans, policies, and programs.

Encourage Self-Care.

- Reach out to your board, community, and local businesses to provide pro bono services to your team on wellness and self-care.
- Consider providing an hour a week for staff and volunteers to engage in their own self-care activities.
- Offer a self-care practice to show that organizations prioritize employee wellness, and make sure that leadership models this behavior. Offer yoga, dancing, or other activities once a month.
- Incorporate wellness benefits such as paid staff breaks, mental health leave, and other practices that allow individuals to engage in self-care.
- Establish a regular process to debrief at the end of challenging days to reduce trauma triggers and promote a culture where trauma responses are understood and destigmatized. Remember, anyone can experience trauma, and it is important to check in with all staff. Do not single out only those staff who identify as survivor leaders.

PROMISING PRACTICES | ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

Anastacia has been working at Organization X for 5 years. At the agency, Anastacia provides case management for young survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking. Anastacia chooses to disclose to her supervisor that she experienced human trafficking 5 years ago. Her supervisor is the only staff member with whom she has disclosed this information, and her supervisor worked with Anastacia to identify ways in which she wanted to build out her professional identity. Anastacia shared that while this was an important experience that led her to this work, it was not one that she wanted to include in her professional identity. The organizational culture of respect and confidentiality created an environment that allowed Anastacia to explore her own professional identity and engage in long-term reflection in a safe and nonexploitive manner.

Resources

Organizational Culture

- [SAMHSA | Cultural Competence](#)
- [GEMS | From Victim to Survivor, From Survivor to Leader: The Importance of Programming and Opportunities for Commercially Sexually Exploited and Trafficked Young Women and Girls](#)
- [Rebecca Bender Initiative | Speaking Topics](#)
- [The Sanctuary Model | Trauma-Informed Means Changing Organizational Culture](#)
- [Center for Health Care Strategies, Inc. | Webinar Series: Implementing Trauma-Informed Care Into Organizational Culture and Practice](#)
- [Transformational Leadership and Organizational Change: How Do Leaders Approach Trauma-Informed Organizational Change...Twice?](#)
- [Trauma-Informed Organizational Toolkit for Homeless Services](#)

CHAPTER 4. ORGANIZATIONAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Your organization’s policies and procedures provide a unique opportunity to operationalize a survivor-informed approach. Policies and procedures are guidelines and practices adopted by an organization to ensure it functions effectively in reaching its goals. Policies and procedures can focus on a variety of topics and often include things such as benefits, dress code, vacation time, absenteeism, recruitment and hiring strategies, staff development and more. Assess your organization by answering the following questions:

Assessment: Policies and Procedures

Instructions: For each line, circle one answer indicating the degree to which your organization applies the approach (0=never, 1=occasionally, or 2=always).

	Never	Occasionally	Always
Policies are clear, transparent, and easy to access for all employees and volunteers.	0	1	2
Policies and procedures on conflict resolution are clearly defined.	0	1	2
Policies outline ethical codes and guidance that ensure confidentiality for staff, consultants, and volunteers who disclose trauma.	0	1	2
Policies provide guidance on culturally sensitive and empowering language.	0	1	2
Policies are routinely reviewed, discussed, and open for feedback.	0	1	2
An Employee Assistance Program (EAP) or similar employee wellness programs are established and staff, consultants, and volunteers are encouraged to develop self-care plans and access assistance, if needed.	0	1	2
Policies and procedures celebrate and encourage diversity.	0	1	2
Safety measures and procedures are defined and accessible to all staff, volunteers, and consultants,	0	1	2
Section Score:	_____ out of 16		

Practical Strategies and Tips

What now? How did you do? Based on the assessment results above, consider the following strategies to improve your results.

Policies should be clear, transparent, and easy to access for all employees and volunteers. On a regular basis, solicit feedback from survivor leaders on how current policies are working. Respond quickly to feedback—this demonstrates that organizations are listening and value survivor leaders. Be sure to regularly monitor and assess the impact of primary and secondary trauma and uses it to inform organizational practices, policies and procedures.

Ethical Guidelines

- Information on resolving conflict using a trauma-informed framework.
- A clear, scenario-based training on potential ethical conflicts that may arise in the workplace. All individuals aligned with the organization, leadership, board members, staff, consultants and volunteers take the training annually.

- Ethical codes that normalize the disclosure of trauma and ensure confidentiality. Each individual should remain in control of how, when, and why their personal story is shared.
- Guidance on using culturally sensitive and empowering language. Be mindful that individuals are not referred to as “survivors” unless the individual chooses to self-identify in that manner. Individuals should remain in control of the language they choose to define their experience.

Human Resource Guidelines

- Well-defined safety measures that ensure a safe environment, and encourage individual autonomy.
- Financial compensation policies that ensure fair market compensation for any time or work intended to benefit the organization.
- Guidelines that eliminate risk of dual relationship (e.g., supervisor and client). Dual relationships should be understood and avoided at all levels of the organization (see Chapter 6 for additional information on what to consider when/if a client applies to work with the organization as a staff member, consultant, or volunteer).
- Some funding sources may place specific requirements on the qualifications or background of individuals working on a program that they fund. Assess any constraints that may impact hiring decisions for staff or consultants that have a criminal history as a result of their trafficking, and identify a clear policy and be transparent about it and provide the basis for it.

Self-Care Guidelines

- Information on self-care and wellness strategies. An Employee Assistance Program (EAP) provides a range of employee support. For organizations that do not have the funding for this service, create internal wellness programs or reach out to partners for pro bono support.
- Guidelines on optional debriefing for all staff, volunteers, and consultants who participate in speaking engagements. Remember, anyone can be impacted by traumatic stimuli, and triggers look different for everyone. Never assume a survivor leader will want to debrief, but do have procedures in place that make this option accessible, confidential, and nonstigmatizing.
- Guidelines for creating a physical environment that utilizes sensory-based resources to reduce trauma-related symptoms.

PROMISING PRACTICES | POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Christopher is a consultant at an anti-trafficking agency hired as a survivor leader who will engage in trafficking training, including speaking engagements and mentoring groups. The organizational policies outline that staff have the autonomy to choose who they disclose to within and outside of the agency. Christopher’s supervisor explained to him that he may accept or decline participation in any activities for any reason. Before confirming a speaking engagement, Christopher’s supervisor provides him with the event details, including topic, audience, event space layout, and whether or not the media will attend. They also ask him how he would like to be introduced at the event.

In accordance with organizational procedures, staff continuously check with Christopher and receive his permission for his preferred title in business cards, social media, training materials, and other promotional items. Event planners and staff know his preferences for disclosure and are trained to utilize empowering language that fosters respect and appreciation.

Resources

Policies and Procedures

- [American Bar Association | Model Rules of Professional Conduct](#)
- [American Medical Association | Code of Ethics](#)
- [American Nurses Association | Human Trafficking](#)
- [American Psychological Association | Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Codes of Conduct](#)
- [OVC TTAC | Ethics in Victim Services](#)
- [Office of Personnel and Management | Federal Employee Assistance Programs](#)
- [Justice Research Center \(JRI\) Project Reach](#)
- [National Association of Social Workers | Code of Ethics](#)
- [OVC TTAC | Using a Trauma-Informed Approach](#)
- [Resologic's Guide to Trauma Informed Mediation](#)
- [Sanctuary Model](#)
- [SAMHSA Concepts of Trauma and Guidance for a Trauma-Informed Approach](#)
- [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services CLAS Standards](#)
- [The Sanctuary Model | Vicarious Trauma](#)

CHAPTER 5. HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

The recruitment, hiring, onboarding, and training processes may be the first interaction someone will have with your organization. This provides opportunity to incorporate a survivor-informed approach within job postings, volunteer programs or consultancy positions through ongoing training and professional development. Organizations that work with volunteers and consultants should create formalized programs with selection, onboarding, training, and advancement procedures. This should include volunteer position descriptions and matching of consultants or volunteers with appropriate skill sets. Assess your organization by answering the following questions:

Assessment: Human Resource Development

Instructions: For each line, circle one answer indicating the degree to which your organization applies the approach (0=never, 1=occasionally, or 2=always).	Never	Occasionally	Always
Job postings, including volunteer and consultant positions, explicitly state the organization's commitment to the guiding principles.	0	1	2
Job postings invite and encourage survivor leaders and individuals of culturally diverse backgrounds to apply.	0	1	2
Job postings do not specifically ask survivor leaders to disclose trauma history.	0	1	2
Policies address how your organization can support survivor leaders who are qualified for the position but who have a criminal history because of a trafficking experience.	0	1	2
Positions are available for survivor leaders who do not require public speaking or disclosing their trauma history.	0	1	2
Staff, volunteers, and consultants receive appropriate training on trauma, trauma reactions, and trauma-informed responses during the onboarding process and on an annual basis.	0	1	2
Staff, volunteers, and consultants are trained on safety and crisis protocols.	0	1	2
Staff, volunteers, and consultants receive appropriate training on linguistic and cultural diversity during onboarding and on an annual basis.	0	1	2
Section Score:	_____ out of 16		

Practical Strategies and Tips

How did you do? Based on the assessment results above, consider some of the following strategies to improve your results. Talk with your leadership team, human resources department, and/or legal team about ways to implement these strategies across staff, volunteers, and consultants.

Recruitment

- Create job postings that invite and encourage survivor leaders and individuals of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds to apply. For example, include an additional sentence that says, “Survivor leaders are encouraged to apply.”
- Include language skills (verbal and sign) as part of required or preferred qualifications, when appropriate to the job.
- Advertise positions in places relevant to diverse communities to avoid limiting a candidate pool.
- When including educational qualifications, as appropriate, provide an option that education may be replaced by a particular amount of experience. For example, a master’s degree in social work required may be met by a bachelor’s degree in a related area and 3 years of professional experience.
- Be transparent about your organization’s requirements for positions that require a background check.
- Develop positions that do not require public speaking or sharing personal history.

Interview Questions

- Assess a candidate’s skillset by asking questions relevant to the job duties. For example, for a grant writing position, ask for a sample grant narrative as part of the application process.
- Ask questions in all interviews about self-care, including what they would be looking for from your organization. Examples can include, “What do you do for self-care,” and “What can your supervisor or team do to support your self-care?”
- Use questions that incorporate the application of guiding principles. For example, “When developing a volunteer program, what are some ways you would conduct recruitment and onboarding to develop a diverse group of volunteers?”
- Share information about your organization’s mission, vision and values as it relates to the guiding principles and expectations for staff, volunteers and consultants in helping the organization apply the principles

Caution!

Do not ask if someone is a survivor—whether they are applying for a position or already working with your organization as staff, consultant, or volunteer. If they choose to self-identify, do not ask for their trafficking story. Individuals should not be required to disclose details of trauma to qualify for positions. This can be re-traumatizing and result in further exploitation.

Background Checks

- Policies and practices should address how your organization can support survivor leaders who are qualified for the position but who have a criminal history because of a trafficking experience.
- Know what criminal history your organization and funders can and cannot work around. Be transparent about these limitations, including explaining why they exist.
- Before asking applicants to complete a background check, discuss the extent that background check screens for criminal history. Explain that the organization recognizes and supports survivor applicants who have a criminal history as a direct result of victimization.
- Listen to survivors who disclose that they have a criminal record related to their trafficking experience, and discuss your process to navigate potential barriers.

Onboarding

- When someone identifies themselves as a survivor leader, ask how they prefer to be identified. Do not assume that those who have experienced trafficking will want to use the term “survivor” or that they will want their experience with trafficking shared with colleagues.
- Provide training and paperwork that includes clear guidance on policies, procedures, and resources. Make sure there is plenty of time to ask questions.
- Create a buddy program for the first 3 months, where all new hires or volunteers are paired with a peer who can help answer questions and provide support in integrating into the organization.
- Include training on trauma, trauma responses, and trauma-informed practices, including self-care and wellness to all new staff, board members, and volunteers—regardless of their position.
- Develop a consultant orientation that introduces consultant(s) to your organization, including its mission, values, goals, policies, and ethical expectations of consultants. Include information on your organization’s approach to be survivor informed, including self-care and trauma-informed practices, and ways that you promote cultural and linguistic diversity with your consultants.

Development of Staff, Consultants, and Volunteers

- Offer ongoing training on cultural relevancy and sensitivity and trauma, trauma responses, and trauma-informed practices.
- Match your team with professional training opportunities that complement their role or desired area of professional growth.
- Encourage individuals to obtain additional training, certifications, or other professional development opportunities that will support their broader career goals. Provide incentives, either financial or in kind. For example, if financial resources are limited, provide recognition for individuals who go above and beyond their current job duties to build their skills.
- Staff, volunteers, and consultants are encouraged to debrief, as needed, after engaging in professional activities. This can be done through a variety of ways, including development of informal or formal peer-to-peer support or formal employee assistance programs.
- Engage staff, volunteers, and consultants in the creation of performance measurements that incorporate guiding values.

Advancement

- Provide clear and measurable qualifications required to advance within the organization.
- Give annual raises to staff who meet their performance objectives each year, and/or build in room for growth in each position. If your budget does not allot for annual raises, give other types of compensation, such as bonus time off or flexible work schedules.
- Encourage survivor leaders to identify their strengths and opportunities for advancement that do not rely on sharing their personal history of human trafficking.
- Conduct annual performance reviews of both staff and supervisors that include questions that assess the application of the guiding principles.

CHAPTER 6. MOVING FROM PROGRAM PARTICIPANT TO AGENCY REPRESENTATIVE

Within the anti-trafficking field, if your organization provides services to individuals who have been trafficked, some of your clients may want to become involved in the anti-trafficking field. Understanding how to support your clients in achieving their aspirations, while maintaining clearly delineated and defined professional policies and procedures to support survivors who transition from client to employee, consultant, or volunteer, is important in being a survivor-informed organization.

With existing clients, supportive services should always take precedence over any transition to a professional role, including consultant and volunteer positions. Unless internal leadership development programs are in place, transitioning a program participant to an agency representative can present ethical violations that should be discussed with human resources. Assess your organization by answering the following questions:

Assessment: Moving from Program Participant to Agency Representative

Instructions: For each line, circle one answer indicating the degree to which your organization applies the approach (0=never, 1=occasionally, or 2=always).	Never	Occasionally	Always
Policies and procedures establish clear boundaries to avoid dual relationships for staff, consultants, and volunteers in need of agency services.	0	1	2
Policies and processes are in place to assess a client’s readiness to transition to an employee.	0	1	2
Confidentiality continues to be maintained with all information learned during service provision.	0	1	2
Fair compensation is provided for any professional role; volunteer positions are not offered as an alternative to compensation.	0	1	2
Partnerships with agencies that specialize in leadership development are established.	0	1	2
Clients asked to participate in activities that benefit your organization are ensured that their engagement will not impact their access to service provision.	0	1	2
Supportive services for current clients take precedence over any transition process to a professional role.	0	1	2
To avoid dual relationships, current clients interested in professional development are provided with leadership resources through other agencies.	0	1	2
Survivor leaders are consistently engaged in discussions about their professional goals.	0	1	2
Policies encourage self-care strategies and offer resources to all staff, consultants, and volunteers.	0	1	2
Section Score:	_____ out of 20		

Practical Strategies and Tips

How did you do? Based on the assessment results above, consider some of the following strategies to improve your results. Talk with your leadership team and human resources department about how to effectively support survivors transitioning from clients to agency representatives.

Ethical Considerations

- Establish policies and procedures on assessing readiness and appropriateness of clients to transition to staff positions. Policies and procedures should ensure that those who are transitioning from client to agency representative are doing so in a way that is not exploitive.
- Anticipate and develop clear guidance to avoid dual relationships. Dual relationships occurs when a professional holds more than one relationship role with a client, survivor leader, volunteer, or staff member. This often occurs when one person is in a position of power (e.g., supervisor and client, manager and staff, organization and survivor leader consultant).
- Empower clients as survivor leaders. Cases where survivor leaders have recently exited trafficking situations, have open legal or civil cases, or are experiencing high levels of trauma-related symptoms should all be taken into account when building policies to assess readiness and needs. Ask survivor leaders who have active cases if a professional opportunity, such as a media interview, could impact their hearing. Do not limit professional engagement to public facing opportunities.
- Consider working with partner agencies for employment or consultant options specific to survivor leadership to avoid dual relationships with your organizations clients.
- Never share details of a survivor leader's trafficking case or experience without their explicit informed consent. Organizations that have provided services to survivor leaders as a part of exiting a trafficking situation must continue to maintain strict confidentiality.

Be mindful of power dynamics!

If a case manager working with a survivor as a program participant asks their client to participate in a speaking engagement, it is a violation of ethics. Not only is this a dual relationship, in a role of helping professional and employer, there are also clear power dynamics in this relationship that might make it difficult to say no.

Professional Considerations

- Provide fair, market-reflective compensation to survivor leaders who transition into any professional role. This includes a survivor leader who mentors, advises, or consults with an organization in any form. Volunteer positions should not be offered as an alternative to compensation for survivors seeking compensated work.
- Offer professional opportunities that do not solely revolve around publicly speaking about trafficking or disclosing of personal stories.
- Provide survivor leaders with choices in the kind of leadership they want to develop. Partner with leadership programs both inside and outside the anti-trafficking field. Equally important is proper research and vetting for all referral partners.
- Elicit feedback on interests and goals as people grow professionally—their goals may frequently change—and strive to honor these interests.

PROMISING PRACTICES | PARTICIPANT TO AGENCY REPRESENTATIVE

Jade, a survivor of trafficking, learned of a job opening on an anti-trafficking coalition from which she previously received support as a client. The position was for a volunteer coordinator and encouraged survivors to apply. Jade was relieved to see they accepted applications regardless of criminal history. Jade felt comfortable applying because the position outlined the coalition's commitment to social justice, empowerment, and inclusion of survivors in their work. The human resources department reviewed their policies about employing past clients as staff. Because it had been 5 years since Jade was a client, they offered her an interview.

During the interview, Jade was asked about her experience with training volunteers and was not required to disclose her trauma history. Jade left the meeting feeling valued, respected, and acknowledged. Jade was offered the position and met with human resources to receive her initial training on policies, operations, and safety procedures. As she began her role, she received ongoing professional development on trauma-informed work practices, leadership development, and on the coalition's crisis protocols. Jade was able to grow as a professional and felt that the agency was investing in her career.

Resources

Ethical Considerations

For additional resources and information, see Chapter 4: Organizational Policies and Procedures

- [American Bar Association | Model Rules of Professional Conduct](#)
- [American Nurses Association | Code of Ethics](#)
- [American Psychological Association | Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Codes of Conduct](#)
- [National Association of Social Workers | Code of Ethics](#)
- [GEMS | From Victim to Survivor, From Survivor to Leader: The Importance of Programming and Opportunities for Commercially Sexually Exploited and Trafficked Young Women & Girls](#)
- [Peer Support Toolkit](#)

Leadership Development

For additional resources and information, see Chapter 2: Mission, Vision, and Leadership

- [Girls Educational and Leadership Institute](#)
- [Human Trafficking Leadership Academy](#)
- [Rebecca Bender Initiative Elevate Academy](#)
- [Wichita State University Center for Combatting Human Trafficking's Pathway to Prosperity Program](#)

CHAPTER 7. TRAUMA-INFORMED SUPERVISION

Supervision provides an ongoing opportunity for support, professional development, and accountability across the organization. While staff are most frequently in contact with the supervisor of a project or program, this also applies to your work with volunteers and consultants. Assess your organization by answering the following questions:

Assessment: Supervision

	Never	Occasionally	Always
Instructions: For each line, circle one answer indicating the degree to which your organization applies the approach (0=never, 1=occasionally, or 2=always).			
Supervisors receive training in trauma-informed management and supervision skills.	0	1	2
Supervision include a discussion of self-care and wellness, creating space for staff to identify their personal self-care goals.	0	1	2
Supervisors model self-care and encourage its practice within an organization.	0	1	2
Staff contribute equally to supervision agenda, discussion, and workplan.	0	1	2
Supervisors receive training on how to supervise a culturally and linguistically diverse staff, consultants, and volunteers.	0	1	2
Supervision asks questions that will assist the team in identifying its strengths and opportunities for growth.	0	1	2
Supervisors provide confidential space for staff to process their experiences, how they felt, and what emotions were elicited.	0	1	2
Performance improvement plans and disciplinary actions are addressed appropriately and in a confidential manner.	0	1	2
Section Score:	_____ out of 16		

Practical Strategies and Tips

How did you do? Based on the assessment results above, consider some of the following strategies to improve your results.

- Ensure supervisors have the necessary tools and training to support their teams. Provide ongoing trauma-informed management and supervision training that reiterates the culture of the organization’s supervision structure.
- Move beyond task management and include reflection between the supervisor and supervisee that fosters and builds on strengths of the individual while identifying growth areas.
- Encourage supervisors to model self-care. Include discussions on self-care and wellness, creating space for each staff to identify their personal self-care goals.
- Encourage and ensure survivor leaders are empowered to decide if, when, where, and how they want to disclose their personal experiences.
- Ensure staff contribute equally to the agenda, discussion, and workplan. Survivor leaders’ opinions and experiences are encouraged and incorporated.
- Encourage staff to assess professional opportunities for possible trauma triggers and encouraged to discuss these with their supervisor or human resources.

- Establish clearly written job descriptions, roles, and responsibilities that are accessible and understood by your team. Share updates as positions evolve.
- Encourage clear communication from staff, consultants, and volunteers that respects boundaries and limitations of each individual.
- Consider hosting supervision outside of your office and in a space that feels neutral.
- Do not wait until annual reviews for feedback from your team. Allow for feedback during supervisions and team meetings to make improvement and growth an ongoing positive part of the organizational culture.
- Proactively check in on staff, consultants, and volunteers about how they are feeling about their workload, especially when responsibilities change.
- Train supervisors on how to normalize trauma responses and support their staff, consultants, or volunteers in a confidential and individualized manner.
- Encourage supervisors to identify their own personal biases, prejudices, privileges, and oppressions and receive training on how to mitigate these in their supervision of staff, consultants, or volunteers.
- Expose new staff to as many facets of the organization as possible during their orientation.
- Encourage peer-to-peer exchanges among staff, consultants, and volunteers. Some may benefit from shadowing other members of your team to improve understanding of their work, their role, the roles of others, and opportunities for collaboration.
- Address growth areas and disciplinary actions confidentially. Avoid overuse of disciplinary actions for slight infractions—this can be interpreted as a tool for control by instilling fear in employees.
- Use individualized growth plans for areas where staff can improve their performance.

PROMISING PRACTICES | TRAUMA-INFORMED SUPERVISION

Morgan exited a trafficking situation 6 years ago and has a passion to help others who have been exploited. Currently, he is a case manager for adolescents. Morgan's supervisor, Tasha, received management training that included trauma-informed supervision practices. Tasha and Morgan meet in a confidential space for weekly supervisions to discuss an agenda they develop together. Tasha encourages Morgan to engage in self-care and routinely solicits feedback regarding Morgan's experience of supervision.

Because Tasha creates a welcoming atmosphere, Morgan feels comfortable disclosing that he has been having nightmares about his trafficker. He thinks it's important to discuss this since he has had difficulty sleeping and arrived late three times this week. Tasha thanks Morgan for sharing what was impacting his work performance. They discuss strategies for self-care, and Tasha provides a list of counseling referrals and self-care resources that can accommodate his needs. Their conversation remains confidential.

Resources

Trauma-Informed Supervision

- [Trauma Informed Oregon: Attunement and Self-Assessment in Supervision](#)
- [Supervision for Trauma-Informed Practice](#)
- [Reflective Supervision as Trauma Informed Care: One Agency's Experience](#)

CHAPTER 8. MARKETING, TRAINING, AND FUNDRAISING

Media and presentations can be thwarted by sensational stories and graphic or exaggerated images used for shock value. Sharing graphic stories may grab the audience’s attention, but highlighting salacious details to shock your audience perpetuates myths and misconceptions about victims of human trafficking that can be damaging to survivor leaders. Assess your organization by answering the following questions:

Assessment: Marketing, Training, and Fundraising

Instructions: For each line, circle one answer indicating the degree to which your organization applies the approach (0=never, 1=occasionally, or 2=always).

	Never	Occasionally	Always
Survivor leaders are not pressured to share their trauma story.	0	1	2
Survivor leaders have control of when, how, and why they share personal details about their story.	0	1	2
Survivor leaders are offered diverse opportunities to participate in marketing, training, and fundraising that do not involve public speaking.	0	1	2
Survivor stories are shared only with their explicit knowledge and informed consent.	0	1	2
Full disclosure of event details are provided to survivor leaders before they consent to participate. Survivor leaders are encouraged to reflect on the permanency of video recordings and photography before they consent to participate in an event.	0	1	2
Marketing, training, and fundraising reflect accurate and diverse stories of survivor leaders, including in branding and across all public facing materials and training. Stereotypes and misconceptions are dispelled.	0	1	2
Survivor leaders are fairly compensated for participating in any organizational activities.	0	1	2
Minors are not asked to share their personal history of exploitation publicly.	0	1	2
Training, fundraising, and media are not focused on recounting traumatic events from trafficking situations. Stories are not overgeneralized or sensationalized.	0	1	2
Survivor leaders are offered relevant skill training before engaging in events.	0	1	2
The organization has a clear policy on the process in which clients may engage in outreach, awareness raising, or fundraising opportunities. The opportunity clearly provides the client with leadership development, compensation, and/or other agreed upon benefits to their own personal journey.	0	1	2
Survivor leaders are encouraged to assess and mitigate safety risks with support from the organization.	0	1	2
Resources for support and self-care are provided as needed.	0	1	2
Section Score:	_____ out of 26		

Practical Strategies and Tips

- Survivor leaders should always remain in control of the when, how, and why of sharing personal details about their story.
- Be mindful of power dynamics. If a case manager working with a survivor as a program participant asks their client to participate in a speaking engagement, it is a violation of ethics. Not only is this a dual relationship, in a role of helping professional and employer, there are also clear power dynamics in this relationship that might make it difficult to say no.

- Do not ask minors to share exploitation publicly, including use of their photos, because this can lead to safety concerns, victimization, and further exploitation.
- Consider additional ways survivor leaders can participate in organizational marketing, training, and fundraising efforts that do not include public speaking or sharing any aspect of their personal trauma history. Make an effort to match this with their skill set and personal career goals. For example, if someone enjoys writing, they can support the creation of an awareness blog or media campaign or edit a training curriculum.
- Offer relevant skill training for survivor leader staff and volunteers. Relevant training for the role can also include training on office-related computer programs such as Excel, Publisher, Outlook, and other office related work.
- Offer diverse opportunities for professional engagement and include training, researching laws and policy, peer mentoring, leading support groups, communication manager, blogging, newsletters, and social media editorial calendars.

Compensation

- Include a budget for engaging with survivor leaders as consultants.
- Conduct research on payment and benefits for comparable positions across the United States, and ensure fair compensation for anyone who perform any work that benefits the organization.
- Develop a contract that outlines the scope of work, hours, and compensation.
- If a survivor leader is accepting a role solely due to financial necessity, work with them to identify other means of employment to avoid exploiting their situation for the benefit of an organization.

Marketing

- Apply guiding principles to evaluate requests for survivor leader story sharing, and ensure the principles take precedence over marketing, training, and fundraising needs.
- Move away from trauma history-focused training, fundraising, and media. Expand the trafficking narrative beyond that of victimization to empower communities and individuals with a focus on resiliency, strength, and healing.
- Avoid sensationalized stories and images such as dark, shadowy alleys; women and children with little clothing; individuals with tied, bound, or chained hands; gagged or taped mouths; and inaccurate representations of communities. Instead, consider images that depict resiliency, diversity, and strength through animations, drawings, or photos of locations.
- Hire a survivor leader consultant or consult with survivor leader networks and other advisory councils if you are unsure if materials are misleading.
- Reflect accurate and diverse stories in marketing, branding, and communication. Be mindful of perpetuating any cultural stereotypes. Some cultures and ethnicities are often attributed to certain types of trafficking. For example, labor trafficking does not always involve migrant farmworkers from Central America, and child trafficking does not always occur to children from Southeast Asia. Organizations have the power to change public perception with more culturally sensitive and responsive narratives of trafficking.
- Assess outreach and marketing opportunities and materials to avoid stigmatizing certain communities or cultures.
- Ensure cultural diversity of perspectives and cultures. Do not ask individuals from a specific group to speak for an entire group (e.g., all survivor leaders, tribal members, or other minority or underserved communities).

Informed Consent and Confidentiality

- Ensure confidentiality and disclosure preferences of the survivor leaders are discussed early on and revisited as necessary.
- Do not pressure survivors to share their trauma story. Survivor leaders should be encouraged to share their expertise without focusing on their trauma story.
- Do not share survivor stories without explicit knowledge and informed consent.
- Consult with survivor leaders to provide informed consent each time they choose to share their story.
- Ensure full disclosure and informed consent for all requests by providing a clear understanding of exactly what an engagement entails. This includes:
 - Audience information, including background (general public, law enforcement, etc.) and the anticipated amount
 - Duration of time
 - Video recordings, photography, and media presence
 - Compensation
 - Question-and-answer format
 - Responsibilities such as facilitation or training
- Never assume that a survivor leader who agreed to one engagement will agree to another. Each engagement is separate and distinct.
- Support survivor leaders in assessing and mitigating safety risks associated with speaking events, media engagements, or other projects so they can make an informed choice. Remember, it is important to provide information for survivor leaders to make informed choices and that these choices are made by the individual, not the agency.
- For safety and confidentiality, the survivor leader's preference for use of their name, likeness, and story should be honored and protected. The choice of having their information published belongs to the survivor leader and should always be discussed prior to the event.

Media, Photography, and Video Recordings

- Process the long-term impacts of media interviews and public speaking with survivor leaders who are new to the field. Help them think about the long-term nature of online media that may result in people recognizing them in public places as a survivor of human trafficking or the impacts it might have if they do not choose to participate in future anti-trafficking activities.
- If a survivor leader's story is recorded but the individual does not give consent for ongoing use of organizational activities, it is a violation of confidentiality and informed consent to use it in other settings. Audio and video recordings should never be used as a way to avoid continued compensation for survivor leaders in organizations but can be a helpful tool for survivor leaders who might want to share parts of their story with anonymity.

Self-Care

- Recognize that survivor leaders are diverse in experience levels, preferences, and needs.
- Be ready to provide resources and supportive services to survivor leaders when appropriate.
- Discuss with survivor leaders what would be helpful for them.

- Do not force anyone to use resources offered. One survivor leader might welcome access to supportive services if they experience a trauma response, while a seasoned speaker might prefer to use their own established self-care strategy.

PROMISING PRACTICES | MARKETING, TRAINING AND FUNDRAISING

Tracy asks Organization X to refer her for any speaking engagements. Knowing Tracy has minimal experience in public speaking, Organization X sends Tracy to a training that helps her refine her skills. A month later, Tracy agrees to speak to a college campus with an experienced co-presenter from Organization X. Organization X prepares her by discussing in detail the purpose of the training, the target audience, the number of participants, the timeframe, and other logistics. They even prepare Tracy for the types of questions that may be asked. Organization X offers to help Tracy practice her presentation, and they encourage her to bring a support person to the event. They encourage Tracy to only share what she feels comfortable sharing about her trafficking experience.

The presentation goes well. Tracy debriefs with her support person and Organization X. Organization X encourages Tracy to continue talking to her support system about this experience, and provides her with some information on self-care strategies that have worked for other colleagues.

Resource

- [U.S. Department of State Media Best Practices](#)

CONCLUSION

This Toolkit is a part of a movement to improve survivor leader engagement in broad anti-trafficking efforts. In working with diverse stakeholders and partners to develop the guiding principles proposed in this Toolkit, two things became clear. First, it is not enough for these practices to be selectively applied for individuals who outwardly identify as survivor leaders. They must be woven into the fabric of how organizations engage with all staff, volunteers, consultants, and other professionals in person-centered environments. In essence, successful survivor leader engagement will only be possible when agencies are able to build thoughtful, empowering, trauma-sensitive, ethical, and culturally relevant practices for everyone, including individuals who experienced human trafficking.

Second, it is essential that organizations allow each individual to lead their own personal and professional journey. This means individuals, not organizations, decide how, when, and where to share their experiences with human trafficking. It challenges the field to get more creative about the language it uses, the types of roles and engagement that are designed, and the ways in which survivors are engaged as leaders. As a part of this, we must cast aside assumptions about survivors, which can be harmful and lead to the isolation, disqualification, or tokenism of individuals who have experienced human trafficking in organizational engagement.

This Toolkit will continue to grow with the feedback, perspectives, and inclusion of diverse stakeholders. With collective commitment from diverse organizations and institutions to integrate meaningful changes, there is a substantive opportunity to improve the way in which all stakeholders of the anti-trafficking field, including survivor leaders, are engaged with dignity, respect, and value for their expertise to create a world free of exploitation.

To request training and technical assistance to build your team's capacity in applying these principles, or if you have resources or information that you would like to see included in this Toolkit, email info@nhttac.org.

GLOSSARY

Anxiety	A mental health response that frequently occurs after an individual experiences psychological trauma. Anxiety impacts the nervous system and causes uncomfortable body sensations such as hypervigilance and heart palpitations. A high rate of anxiety has been reported among survivors of human trafficking due to heightened stress hormones in the body, which are released in response to compromised safety and abuse. Anxiety can also be triggered during trainings, presentations, and other stressful work situations for individuals with a history of trauma (American Psychiatric Association, 2013).
Autonomy	The ability to be free from external control or influence. Survivors of trafficking have often lost the freedom to make decisions or exert control over their own life while exploited. Gaining back control and self-determination is central to healing and to creating a life of one's choosing (<i>Sanar Wellness Institute</i> , 2017b).
Burnout	A phenomenon experienced by professionals or community members when they are frequently exposed to traumatic situations. Burnout is increased by the severity of the trauma such as working with individuals who have been impacted by human trafficking, training on trauma-related content, and working environments that do not promote self-care or trauma-informed practices. Burnout can impact executive function, mental health, physical health, and the ability to continue providing effective support. Individuals experiencing burnout may report feeling tired, have difficulty sleeping, or even use substances for self-medication to relieve burnout symptoms (<i>Sanar Wellness Institute</i> , 2017b).
Commercially sexually exploited child or youth	A child or youth who is exploited in the commercial sex industry for the financial benefit of another person. Because minors exploited in the commercial sex industry do not have the ability to consent to a sex act, the elements of force, fraud, and/or coercion are not necessary. Therefore, youth ages 18 and younger engaging in the commercial sex industry rise to the level of human trafficking. This can include vulnerable youth and children engaging in survival sex (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 2014).
Community-led	Includes a participatory process where community stakeholders identify and define locally owned goals. Community members are leaders and active participants in change efforts (Movement for Community-Led Development, 2017).
Compassion fatigue	A form of burnout that impacts staff, volunteers, mentors, and other professionals' ability to feel empathy toward individuals who have experienced human trafficking or other forms of trauma. For example, a professional can become desensitized to the severity of hearing trauma stories due to how often they are exposed to severe trauma. Compassion fatigue is different than setting health self-care boundaries because it manifests often in feelings of resentment, minimizing, and disconnection. Compassion fatigue may also impact one's personal life and impair the ability to feel empathy toward family or friends (Baird & Kracen, 2006).

Complex trauma	The lived experience of multiple traumatic events over one's lifetime (e.g., a human trafficking situation, ongoing physical or sexual abuse, or intimate partner violence) (<i>Sanar Wellness Institute, 2017a</i>).
Conflict of interest	An ethical conflict that can arise in diverse professional practices and includes exploitation for individual or organizational gain, dual relationships, and solicitation of a client for testimony for personal or organizational gain (<i>National Association of Social Workers, 2008</i>).
Culture	Customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits of a racial, religious, or social group; also includes the characteristic features of everyday existence shared by people in a place or time (<i>Office of Minority Health, 2014</i>).
Cultural competency	Ability to interact respectfully and effectively with individuals from different cultural backgrounds and practices (<i>Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2016</i>).
Cultural norms	Behavioral standards that a culture follows, which dictate how individuals within the culture interact with one another (<i>World Health Organization, 2009</i>).
Cultural sensitivity	Knowledge and respect for the morals, behaviors, and beliefs of other cultures, which can include race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender roles, and religion. Acknowledges that no one person can be completely competent in culture but takes cultural differences into account when providing competence and specialized care to meet an individual's needs (<i>World Health Organization, 2009</i>). Cultural sensitivity also includes an understanding of how exploitation occurs in various cultures to avoid triggering, minimizing, or inadvertently blaming survivors (<i>Author</i>).
Dissociation	A mental health condition with symptoms that create a feeling of disconnection from an individual's body and mind. Symptoms include short-term memory loss, difficulty in concentration, and forgetfulness. A person who has dissociated often has a sense that they lost track of time. Dissociation can be triggered as a part of the individual's stress response in the workplace during trainings, speaking engagements, or other trauma triggers in settings like supervision (<i>American Psychiatric Association, 2013</i>).
Dual relationship	Occurs when a professional holds more than one relationship role with a client, survivor leader, volunteer, or staff member. This often occurs when one person is in a position of power (e.g., supervisor and client, manager and staff, organization and survivor leader consultant). This presents unequal power dynamics in relationships that result in ethical conflicts and potential exploitation and re-traumatization (<i>National Association of Social Workers, 2008</i>).

Empathy	Awareness and sensitivity to another individual's experience based on the ability to understand the pain or challenges they are experiencing. This is different from sympathy, in that empathy is based on the human connection to access the feelings of pain and discomfort from their experience and apply it to someone else. Empathy does not mean that one can understand exactly what another is feeling but acknowledges the human connection of many of these feelings (Author).
Employee Assistance Program (EAP)	A voluntary program offered and operated by employers to assist employees with mental health, well-being, and other personal challenges. EAPs offer services in a confidential manner and can include counseling, assessments, and referrals for alternative services. These services help employees work through various situations that may adversely affect job performance, health, and personal well-being (United States Office of Personnel Management, 2008). EAPs can provide advanced planning for situations like organizational changes, legal considerations, emergency planning, and responses to unique traumatic events. For more information, please visit https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/worklife/reference-materials/eapguide.pdf
Evidence-based practices	Measures supported through scientific and rigorous research. Evidence-based practices include a measurement of reliability and validity and have a statistical significant casual impact on expected positive outcomes. These practices have also undergone multiple research studies to ensure that the outcomes are clinically significant. Evidence-based practices are strongly recommended in all programs and organizations (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2017).
Gender-responsive	Awareness surrounding the different needs for various genders and responding in appropriate ways to fit the needs of each gender and gender expression. Gender responsiveness also includes awareness of the added vulnerabilities for individuals who are female identified or on the LGBTQI spectrum (Author).
Human stress response	A reaction during a stressful situation that can include the basic human instinct of fight, flight, or freeze. The human stress response is triggered during situations of trauma, including human trafficking. Stress responses can also be triggered in the workplace after watching a particularly graphic video, telling a trauma history story, or even through the tone in which an individual is addressed by a colleague, supervisor, or client (<i>Sanar</i> Wellness Institute, 2017a).
Human trafficking	The Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (TVPA) as amended (22 U.S.C. § 7102) defines "severe forms of trafficking in persons" as: Sex trafficking: the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, obtaining, patronizing, or soliciting of a person for the purpose of a commercial sex act, in which the 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; (and) 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 subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery (OTIP, 2017).

Informed consent	Involves the full disclosure of any risks of benefits to an individual as a part of consenting to any service, relationship, or engagement. Informed consent includes providing this information in language that is accessible to the individual (American Psychological Association, 2016).
LGBTQI	An acronym referencing the spectrum of various sexual orientations and gender expressions. The acronym stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, and intersex. Sexuality and gender expression can often be expressed along the spectrum, and individuals with similar sexual orientation may identify with different labels (Author).
Mindfulness	Focused attention on sensory experiences such as breathing, eating, walking, meditation, and felt body sensations. It is focused awareness that is deliberate and intentional. It also includes the observation of one's own thoughts and feelings, without judging them or identifying with them, recognizing them as passing thoughts or feelings, like passing images projected onto a blank screen. Mindfulness is an important tool in creating trauma-informed workplaces and trainings, and it is a wonderful self-care tool (<i>Sanar</i> Wellness Institute, 2017b).
Neuroplasticity	The brain's ability to heal from traumatic experiences. Studies in neuroplasticity show that the neuro networks in the brain can be healed and reconnected with the right trauma recovery modalities. Individuals who actively experience trauma symptoms can often benefit from trauma-specific therapy and evidence-based modalities to overcome past trauma (Van der Kolk, 2015). This is an important part of readiness for survivor-identified or individuals who have been trafficked working in the anti-trafficking field.
Organizational culture	Shared missions, values, beliefs, and norms that influence and define how groups of individuals working in an organizational environment think, act, and behave. Organizational culture can trigger trauma for individuals in certain situations where trauma-informed practices are not followed (Author).
Parasympathetic nervous system	A bodily system that slows down the heart rate, calms the muscles in the body, and helps with digestion and wound healing. Activities such as yoga and meditation engage the parasympathetic nervous system. The sympathetic nervous system governs the basic human instinct of fight, flight, or freeze, and the parasympathetic nervous system engages the "rest and digest" functions of the body (putting the body into a state of "coherence") and engages the body's natural healing response (Author).
Person-centered	Practices that give the client control to select services that are appropriate to them, including the amount, duration, and scope of services, as well as choice of providers (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2016).

Posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD)	A mental health condition that often occurs after a traumatic experience. PTSD symptoms include vivid flashbacks, repetitive thoughts or images of the traumatic event, or sensory triggers that re-create the felt experience of the traumatic incident. Individuals experiencing PTSD often benefit from trauma-informed services such as psychotherapy, mindfulness, trauma-sensitive yoga, expressive arts therapy, and other sensory-based modalities that assist in symptom reduction (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2015).
Primary trauma	First-hand trauma, that is, trauma that happened to a person (<i>Sanar Wellness Institute, 2017b</i>).
Privacy and confidentiality	Involves more than withholding personal information. This also includes not asking for unnecessary information from an individual that is either not relevant or could result in any form of harm. This includes not asking for information on trauma history of an individual when it is irrelevant to provide services or carry out a role (American Psychological Association, 2016).
Promising practices	Programs or modalities that have shown positive results but have not undergone the rigorous evaluation of evidence-based practices. These practices are emerging and/or newly utilized practices with survivors of human trafficking that have shown initial positive outcomes (Author).
Re-traumatization	The feeling, sensations, and symptoms of being traumatized due to a reminder of an individual's trauma history. Re-traumatization can happen when individuals are asked to share their story or are in public arenas where they may experience shame or embarrassment about their trauma. It can also occur in the workplace when individuals have experiences that mirror their abuse, power dynamics, or relationships from past trauma and/or their trafficking situation (<i>Sanar Wellness Institute, 2017b</i>).
Secondary trauma	Exposure to trauma through a secondary source, for example, a hotline operator or case manager hears graphic details of a trafficking situation from a client (<i>Sanar Wellness Institute, 2017b</i>).
Secondary traumatic stress	A situation that occurs when an individual is exposed to traumatic situations in their job responsibilities or are exposed to traumatic content that triggers responses to trauma and stress. Secondary traumatic stress presents with the same symptoms as PTSD and may include nightmares, intrusive thoughts, hypervigilance, and many other severe symptoms (Baird & Kracen, 2006).
Self-care	The practice of incorporating personal care routines and tools into daily life. Methods include regular exercise, healthy daily habits, emotional support, and activities for stress relief such as yoga, expressive arts or creative expression, and other holistic treatments such as massage therapy. Self-care is a critical part of trauma-informed work cultures and prevents burnout, secondary traumatic stress, and vicarious trauma (<i>Sanar Wellness Institute, 2017b</i>).

Sensationalism	The use of shocking stories, images, or accounts focused on increasing public attention without the consideration of accuracy, impact, or the further negative perception and stereotypes it may cause (Bender, 2014).
Sensory-based modalities	Methods that incorporate the five senses: smell, touch, hearing, taste, and sight. Examples of these modalities include aromatherapy for the sense of smell, the use of stress balls in a therapeutic session for the sense of touch, playing the piano for the sense of hearing, or using visual art in an expressive arts therapy session for the sense of sight. (<i>Sanar Wellness Institute, 2017a</i>).
Sensory-based resources	Resources that incorporate the five senses: smell, touch, hearing, taste, and sight (e.g., aromatherapy, stress balls, music, and art). Incorporating sensory-based grounding tools in the workplace creates a trauma-informed environment (<i>Sanar Wellness Institute, 2017a</i>).
Sensory memory	During stressful or traumatic situations, the brain encodes memory through the senses. Memory is not stored as a linear timeline perspective but is based on the five senses of smell, taste, sight, hearing, and touch (Van der Kolk, 2015).
Sexual exploitation	The use of force, fraud, or coercion to manipulate an individual to engage in sex acts that do not always include a commercial element. This can include sexual abuse, pornography, and other forms of sexual violence (U.S. Department of State, Office to Combat and Monitor Trafficking in Persons, 2017).
Simple trauma	The lived experience of a single traumatic event such as a car accident, sexual assault, or divorce (<i>Sanar Wellness Institute, 2017b</i>).
Solutions-focused	An approach to identify strengths of individuals and apply a goal-focused orientation to problem solving. These strengths and problem-solving skills are highlighted and used to overcome challenges that may arise (Author).
Survivor (of human trafficking)	Someone who has survived the trauma of being a victim of human trafficking. It has been seen by many as an empowering term in the social services field to promote strength and resiliency for the individual who has experienced trauma. However, identification as a survivor is a choice, and each person with a trauma history has the right to choose how they self-identify. Do not assume that someone who has experienced human trafficking identifies as a survivor or should be referred to as such in a professional setting (Author).
Survivor leader	An individual who has survived human trafficking and is making an empowered choice to engage in anti-trafficking and/or other allied fields. Survivor leadership is a choice made by some individuals that should not confine or limit the types of engagement to just that of their experience as a survivor. Do not assume that someone who identifies as a survivor leader should be referred to as such in a professional setting or that identification as a survivor leader makes it acceptable to inquire about someone's past experience with human trafficking and/or trauma (Author).

Survivor-centered approach	A human rights-based approach that holds the survivor's needs as paramount in service and program delivery. The approach ensures survivors are treated with respect and avoids exposure to adverse effects such as victim blaming. Program delivery is predicated on providing survivors with up-to-date comprehensive information that allows a survivor to make an informed decision in choosing his or her own course of action. A survivor's privacy and confidentiality is protected, and services are delivered in a nondiscriminatory manner (Author).
Strengths-based	Refers to services that focus on the resiliency and strengths of individuals and seeks to draw out and highlight capabilities—as opposed to deficits. This term is often used in the social services field as an internal organizational cultural element (Author).
Sympathetic nervous system	A bodily system responsible for the arousal response such as the fight, flight, or freeze response experienced in a traumatic situation. This nervous system is easier and faster to engage than the parasympathetic system. The nervous system is like a huge electric wiring network that connects the brain to every single part of the body (Author).
Tokenism	A superficial practice to create the impression or appearance of social inclusivity and diversity; includes members of minority or underrepresented groups, including survivor leaders and individuals who have been trafficked, as a symbolic gesture to avoid criticism (Bender, 2014).
Trauma-informed	A methodology or approach of an organization in how it operates, provides services to clients, and is reflective at all levels of an agency. Trauma-informed practices include mindfulness of comprehensive factors that may impact individuals who have experienced trauma or come in contact with trauma. It also incorporates a strong understanding of how trauma affects the brain, including PTSD and other common responses to trauma (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2015).
Trauma-related symptoms	Physical, emotional, and psychological manifestations that include anxiety, depression, dissociation, suicidality, hypervigilance, and a diverse range of other symptomology. These symptoms can be a direct correlation to the trauma experience and can impact executive functioning such as concentration and memory. Some individuals who experience trauma may have existing mental health conditions exasperated by the trauma they endured (<i>Sanar</i> Wellness Institute, 2017a).
Trauma response	A reaction triggered when exposed to a highly stressful situation; can include the basic human instinct of fight, flight, or freeze. Trauma responses can also be triggered in the workplace after exposure to trauma-related stimuli (Van der Kolk, 2015).
Trauma-sensitive	To respond mindfully, with care, to the physical, emotional, and psychological trauma that may impact individuals who have experienced human trafficking. Responses to each individual are unique and cater to each person's specific experience (Author).

Traumatic stress

Stress induced during a traumatic event, often resulting in symptoms of anxiety, depression, and hypervigilance (Baird & Kracen, 2006).

Vicarious trauma

A response that can occur when a helping professional or community member internalizes the trauma experienced by an individual they are helping as if it is their own. The helper may start to have similar trauma symptoms, experience disturbing thoughts, and feel hypervigilant (*Sanar Wellness Institute, 2017b*).

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APPENDIX A

**Survivor-Informed Practice
SELF-GUIDED ASSESSMENT TOOL**

This document was developed by fellows of the 2017 Human Trafficking Leadership Academy (HTLA) organized through the National Human Trafficking Training and Technical Assistance Center (NHTTAC) and Coro Northern California. A team of six non-government service providers and six survivor leaders worked together to develop recommendations on how to enhance service provision to survivors of human trafficking or those at risk of human trafficking using trauma-informed practices and survivor-informed principles. The fellowship is funded by the Office on Trafficking in Persons (OTIP) and the Office on Women's Health (OWH) at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The recommendations and content of this document are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of OTIP, OWH, or HHS.

A survivor-informed practice includes meaningful input from a diverse community of survivors at all stages of a program or project, including development, implementation, and evaluation. The following tool has been developed to assist organizations in (1) assessing the degree to which their project or programming is survivor informed and (2) in identifying areas for improvement. Three areas for assessing survivor-informed practice are included.

Instructions: For each line, circle one answer, indicating the degree to which the practice is adhered to (never-0, occasionally-1, or always-2). Section scores identify areas of strength and weakness; total score indicates the degree to which a program or project is survivor informed.	Never	Occasionally	Always
Meaningful input			
Program/project provides employment opportunities for survivors.	0	1	2
Survivors serve in leadership positions for the program/project (management, advisory board, etc.).	0	1	2
In the absence of survivor staff, survivor consultants are hired to provide input.	0	1	2
If direct survivor input is unavailable, survivor-developed guidance and resources are utilized.	0	1	2
Section Score:	_____ out of 8		
From a diverse community of survivors			
Survivor input represents both sex and labor trafficking perspectives.	0	1	2
Survivor input represents both domestic and foreign-national perspectives.	0	1	2
Survivor input represents other diverse survivor perspectives (adults, minors, LGBTQ survivors, etc.).	0	1	2
Project/program incorporates best practices from other survivor-informed fields (domestic violence, etc.).	0	1	2
A strengths-based process is in place for determining appropriate areas and levels of survivor engagement.	0	1	2
Section Score:	_____ out of 10		
At all stages of a program or project			
Survivor expertise is accessed in the development of initial program/project design.	0	1	2
Survivor input is incorporated into development of policies and procedures.	0	1	2
Survivor input is incorporated into the creation of program/project materials.	0	1	2
Survivor expertise is accessed throughout program/project implementation.	0	1	2
Survivor expertise is accessed in evaluation of program/project.	0	1	2
A process is established and utilized for obtaining feedback from survivor participants.	0	1	2
Section Score:	_____ out of 12		
TOTAL SCORE:	_____ out of 30		