

SEPTEMBER 2021



CORE COMPETENCIES FOR HUMAN TRAFFICKING RESPONSE IN HEALTH CARE AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SYSTEMS

SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL FOR HEALTH CARE AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ORGANIZATIONS



National Human Trafficking Training
and Technical Assistance Center



ADMINISTRATION FOR
CHILDREN & FAMILIES
Office on Trafficking in Persons



NATIONAL HUMAN TRAFFICKING
TRAINING AND TECHNICAL
ASSISTANCE CENTER



International Centre
FOR MISSING & EXPLOITED CHILDREN



National Association of
Pediatric Nurse Practitioners™





Assess your organization’s capacity to identify, respond to, and serve individuals who have experienced or are at risk of trafficking with trauma-informed, culturally responsive, and patient-centered principles. Research suggests that most individuals who have experienced trafficking sought care from health care and behavioral health practitioners during their trafficking experience. The evidence-based core competencies are designed to help you and your organization in the identification, response, and provision of services to potential and identified individuals who have experienced trafficking and at-risk populations through diverse partnerships, delivery of specialized training and resources, and rigorous training evaluation.

To learn more about where you fall on the spectrum, please take the time to assess your organization’s capacity. Every member of the organization (health care providers, case managers, leadership, front office staff, security, etc.) plays a role in responding to and actively advocating on behalf of individuals who have experienced or are at risk of trafficking. Consider having multiple staff members from various functions read over each competency and note how often their work reflects the competency. This self-assessment should take only 20 minutes to complete.

Instructions: For each line, type one answer (0, 1, 2, or 3), indicating the degree to which the practice is adhered to (never, occasionally, often, or always). Section scores identify areas of strength and weakness; total score indicates the extent to which the organization is implementing the core competencies

Never	Occasionally	Often	Always
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 **Universal Competency: Trauma Informed Approach**

Trauma-Informed Care

Provide ongoing training and regularly assess staff’s capacity to demonstrate a trauma-informed approach when interacting with individuals at risk of trafficking.	
Integrate trauma-informed and bias-reduction approaches into intake and screening protocols.	
Implement informed consent policy for all aspects of care.	
Establish an agencywide commitment to trauma-informed care and its principles (i.e., safety, trustworthiness, choice, collaboration, and empowerment); engage in regular self-assessment; and adapt policies, principles, and practices to reflect a trauma-informed approach to service delivery.	
Create a supportive environment and promote employee wellness in the agency; take proactive steps to preserve the emotional and psychological welfare of frontline professionals working with clients and patients at risk of trafficking, including providing adequate training and supervision related to vicarious and secondary trauma.	

Lived Experience Expertise and Leadership

Develop a lived experience expertise/leadership strategy to ensure all programs, policies, and procedures are survivor informed; prioritize recruitment of experts with lived experience who have diverse trafficking experiences.	
Engage patient feedback (through surveys, focus groups, advisory boards, etc.) about the medical and behavioral health needs of patients/clients who have experienced trafficking, policies/ programs, and appropriate service delivery; when possible, engage leaders/researchers with lived experience.	
Use findings from patient feedback to improve health care delivery.	

Culturally Responsive

Implement a cultural responsiveness and implicit bias training program for staff in all areas; provide supplemental resources and refresher training.	
Include culturally responsive behaviors in clinical performance evaluations.	



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Universal Competency: Trauma Informed Approach (cont.)

Engage professional, trauma-informed interpreters who are not from the same community as the individual; avoid using a family member (especially children) or accompanying adult as a translator.

Provide trafficking resources and awareness materials that reflect all types of trafficking and in all languages prevalent among the patient or client population.

Implement a zero-tolerance approach to bias/discrimination toward patients and establish a safe method in which staff, patients, and families can report concerns.

Develop and implement hiring plans at all levels that reflect diversity and representation from the local patient or client population.

Total Score for University Competency: Trauma-Informed Approach **Score:** out of 42



Competency 1: Nature and Epidemiology

Nature and Scope of Trafficking

Provide role-specific training to all staff on federal and relevant state definitions of trafficking and on the scope of exploitive activities that constitute labor and sex trafficking

Trafficking and Social Determinants of Health

Integrate a social determinants of health approach into all staff training and policies, including information on the relationship between ACEs, socioeconomic challenges, and risk/protective factors of trafficking

Total Score for Competency 1: Nature and Epidemiology **Score:** out of 6



Competency 2: Risk

Indicators of Trafficking

Train and regularly update all staff on potential indicators of trafficking.

Make information on trafficking available to all patients/clients.

Evidence-Informed Assessment of Risk

Create a setting for the patient that supports confidentiality and is trauma informed and culturally and linguistically appropriate.

Determine and train appropriate personnel to conduct assessments of trafficking when indicators have been recognized.

Establish a systemwide policy to see patients alone and conduct assessment only when alone with patient.

Develop and implement a protocol for conducting assessments that limits assessments to appointed personnel.

Total Score for Competency 2: Risk **Score:** out of 18



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 **Competency 3: Needs Evaluation**

Needs Assessment

Train and supervise relevant personnel to conduct individual needs assessments for patients or clients identified as individuals who have experienced trafficking or individuals who are at risk of trafficking.	
Create protocols for crisis intervention for emergent situations involving patients identified as individuals who are at risk of trafficking, including individual patient mental health crises and risk associated with potential for trafficker interference in the health care setting.	

Plan of Action

Integrate into organizational protocols the clearly articulated responsibilities of staff in responding to individuals who present with potential indicators.	
Create policies and procedures that ease access and lower barriers for those identified as individuals who have experienced trafficking or individuals who are at risk of trafficking for in-network medical and behavioral health referrals.	
Ensure that a dynamic directory of service providers and local/regional/national resources is maintained and easily available to HCPs.	
Conduct patient/client service coordination in institutional and (where possible) community multidisciplinary teams to ensure streamlined service delivery and avoid re-traumatization of patients or clients.	

Practice Within Scope and Community Referrals

Assess and develop relationships with community service providers, experts with lived experience, and government agencies.	
Create a dynamic directory of available services and include processes for community referrals in the organizational policy/procedure for human trafficking.	

Total Score for Competency 3: Needs Evaluation **Score:** out of 24

 **Competency 4: Patient-Centered Care**

Patient-Centered Approach

Create safety procedures for all patients or clients who are identified as individuals who have experienced trafficking, including separation methods for examining patients who might be accompanied by their traffickers.	
Ensure clear policies and procedures for staff to assess when a need for security and/or law enforcement response may be necessary, considerations for patient or client safety and confidentiality, mandatory reporting requirements, and potential harms, including those particular to undocumented patients, people of color, or individuals engaged in grey or informal economies.	
Diversify access and engagement with patients through non-clinical aspects of care (e.g., translation/interpretation, transportation, coverage, mobile/remote health, telehealth).	
Use feedback mechanisms (surveys, focus groups, etc.) to gather patient input on various modalities of care.	
Conduct case review on patient outcomes with staff and multidisciplinary partners involved in case coordination.	
Ensure providers have the baseline knowledge/training they need to properly support and address trafficking, including PTSD and motivational interviewing.	



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Competency 4: Patient-Centered Care (cont.)

Resiliency-Focused Care

Integrate resiliency into guidelines for addressing the needs of patients or clients who have experienced trafficking and their families.

“No Wrong Door” Access to Diverse Health Services

Institute a “no wrong door” policy that recognizes the potential for individuals who have experienced trafficking and their families to access care across diverse specialties.

Lower all identified barriers to accessing general and specialized care for individuals who have experienced trafficking.

Design and implement protocols to ensure appropriate referrals.

Total Score for Competency 4: Patient-Centered Care **Score:** out of 30

Competency 5: Legal/Ethical Standards

Mandatory Reporting Responsibilities

Conduct required, regular trainings on updated federal, state, tribal, and local requirements related to mandatory reporting of trafficking.

Develop partnerships with appropriate, trusted, and properly trained law enforcement or protective services representatives who will respond to mandatory reporting calls.

Create policies for patients’ rights protection within the institution in compliance with federal-or state-mandated law enforcement reporting and require adult patient consent before law enforcement contact if there is no mandatory reporting requirement.

Identify organizations that can provide prompt immigration assistance for foreign nationals who may have experienced trafficking and their families.

Legal Rights

Provide relevant staff with training and resources related to protection of legal rights and connection to services for legal remedies for individuals who have experienced trafficking, including issues about civil claims and restitution, vacating and expunging criminal records, family law, victim/witness advocacy, identity theft, and immigration.

Establish working relationships with relevant law enforcement professionals and advocates for individuals who have experienced trafficking to help facilitate protection of patients’ rights.

Offer to connect foreign nationals who have experienced trafficking with service organizations that can provide pro bono legal services and immigration services promptly.

HIPAA and Patient Consent Compliance

Conduct mandatory, regular trainings on HIPAA regulations and patient consent laws, with special attention to consent laws specific to the care of minor or unattended youth.

Documentation Considerations


Provide all staff with guidance on discussing health record documentation and ICD-10 coding with patients and how to use the institutional confidentiality measures (e.g., “masked” areas of a report, separate charts).

Provide special consideration to confidentiality of minor patients with respect to parent or guardian access to information.



Instructions: For each line, type one answer (0, 1, 2, or 3), indicating the degree to which the practice is adhered to (never, occasionally, often, or always). Section scores identify areas of strength and weakness; total score indicates the extent to which the organization is implementing the core competencies

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 **Competency 5: Legal/Ethical Standards (cont.)**

Design and implement confidentiality measures for health record documentation that maximize the safety and confidentiality of patients, while including important clinical information. This includes consideration of information in the electronic record, online patient portal, intake and discharge paperwork, billing and insurance information, and the response by the medical records department to subpoenas and other court requests.

Total Score for Competency 5: Legal/Ethical Standards **Score:** out of 33

 **Competency 6: Prevention**

Primary Prevention: Preventing Any Trafficking

Train staff and providers on how to offer education to all patients about the connection between violence and their health and engage them in strategies to promote wellness and safety and connect with community resources. Ensure staff have the capacity to offer resources that address ACES and the social determinants to prevent trafficking.

Establish standards for anticipatory guidance and psychoeducation, including adult populations, on the intersections between other forms of violence (e.g., domestic violence, child abuse) and risk of trafficking.

Train HCPs on harms associated with ACES and intergenerational trauma to support prevention of trafficking, including among adult populations.

Assure an institutional environment free of human trafficking by establishing policies, procedures, and best practices addressing risks of trafficking in procurement of services or goods supporting the health care setting.

Establish partnerships with community-based resources that provide services designed to improve social determinants of health (housing stability, employment/job training, education, etc.) that reduce risk to trafficking.

Secondary Prevention: Risk Reduction

Train all health care staff in basic principles of anticipatory guidance so that they may help reduce harm for patients or clients who have experienced trafficking or are at risk of trafficking, and other forms of exploitation.

Integrate trafficking prevention advocacy efforts into all wellness or preventive programming.

Provide HCPs with up-to-date information on the local context of trafficking in their communities, informed by experts with lived experience.

Ensure HCPs have easy access to a list of community, state, and national resources to address vulnerability factors identified in patients or clients who have experienced trafficking (e.g., refugee support organizations, intimate partner violence shelters, food banks, childcare, transportation to improve access to the services), including resources that use risk reduction models of care.

Tertiary Prevention: Prevention of Re-Trafficking

Invest in long-term health care and behavioral health strategies for identified patients who have experienced trafficking and their families.

Adopt a multidisciplinary team approach to health care and behavioral health for patients who have experienced trafficking and their families to ensure that their long-term recovery is sustainable.

Total Score for Competency 6: Prevention **Score:** out of 22

Congratulations! In taking this self-assessment, you are actively working to improve patient outcomes for the individuals in your organization's care who have experienced or are at risk of trafficking. We recognize that health systems are highly individualized, and not all these core competencies will apply to every organization. We encourage you to review and explore your results to determine which ones apply to your unique health care setting — even if you are not aware of previously serving individuals who have experienced trafficking. As you review your results, note the following:



- Collate the results from across the individual responses in your organization.
- Identify the competencies where you most often marked NEVER or OCCASIONALLY. Look deeper into those competencies to explore the sub-competencies, and prioritize from among those. Leverage the literature and resources shared in the core competencies to focus on building your skills in these areas.
- Identify the competencies where you most frequently marked OFTEN. These are ones you are confident and comfortable using every day. Think of ways you can share your skills with other organizations in your community.

This is an iterative process, one that we hope you will consider making a regular and sustained commitment. Take time to really reflect on what you have learned about your organization through this assessment, and develop a plan. The implementation process will be different with each health system, and those in charge of implementation should identify ways to address leadership buy-in, resources allocation/ funding, and bandwidth (especially during a pandemic). Take it in steps. Identify a goal you can commit to completing in 10 days, 1 month, 3 months, 6 months, and 1 year. Once you complete your plan, come back and retake the self-assessment to measure your organization's growth.

We are grateful to share this resource with you and look forward to seeing the positive progress our collective health system continues to make in service of individuals who have experienced or are at risk of trafficking.



In Partnership

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office on Trafficking in Persons
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, SOAR Coordinating Group
HEAL Trafficking
International Centre for Missing & Exploited Children
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
National Human Trafficking Training and Technical Assistance Center