

SEPTEMBER 2021



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

SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL FOR HEALTH CARE AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS



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 skills 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. These evidence-based core competencies are designed to help you serve 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.

We encourage you to review and explore these competencies through this self-assessment 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. This self-assessment should take only 20 minutes to complete. Read over each competency, and note how often your work with patients reflects the competency.

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 an individual is implementing the core competencies

Never	Occasionally	Often	Always
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Universal Competency: Trauma Informed Approach

Trauma-Informed Care

Apply key principles of trauma-informed care into work with patients or clients who have experienced trafficking, patients or clients who are at risk of trafficking, and affected family members.				
Attend to building trust and rapport with patients who have experienced trafficking or patients who are at risk of trafficking.				
Understand that trafficking is inclusive of a wide spectrum of potentially overlapping abuses, exploitation, violence, and trauma.				
Recognize that racial, cultural, historical, and other inequities and marginalization can exacerbate trauma.				
Apply knowledge of trauma to understanding patient or client reticence to disclose trafficking.				
Avoid demeaning or accusatory language such as “child prostitute” or “illegal alien.”				
Acknowledge potential impacts of secondary exposure to trauma and seek trauma-informed supervision and support to prevent and address signs of vicarious trauma and burnout.				

Lived Experience Expertise and Leadership

Understand that patients are the experts of their own experiences and needs and actively use strategies to integrate their input into all decisions for care.				
Recognize that individuals who have experienced trafficking have expertise that extends beyond their experience of exploitation.				
Be aware that experiences, perspectives, and needs of individuals who have experienced trafficking vary tremendously, so that input from leaders with a diversity of lived experiences will best inform an HCP’s clinical practice.				
Understand that identifying publicly as a “survivor” or “victim” for individuals with lived experience is a choice, and mirroring the language used by patients is a key component to survivor-informed and patient-centered care.				



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 **Universal Competency: Trauma Informed Approach (cont.)**


Culturally Responsive

Demonstrate understanding of potential cultural factors influencing health care professional/patient or client interactions and take steps to overcome cultural barriers with sensitivity and respect.				
Seek and use knowledge about the major cultures represented in the local patient or client population as it pertains to medical and behavioral health beliefs and practices.				
Demonstrate cultural humility, adaptability, and responsiveness to patients from different cultures, nationalities, gender identities, sexual orientations, races, ethnic and religious groups, abilities, and geographic locations.				
Be aware of and counter aspects of privilege, explicit and implicit bias, or discrimination that may negatively impact patient/client interactions, health care practices, and decisions related to referrals and resources.				
Total Score for University Competency: Trauma-Informed Approach				Score: out of 45

 **Competency 1: Nature and Epidemiology**

Nature and Scope of Trafficking

Recognize the scope of exploitive activities that constitute both labor and sex trafficking.				
Be able to define sex and labor trafficking; differentiate severe forms of sex trafficking from commercial sex, severe forms of labor trafficking from labor exploitation, human trafficking from human smuggling.				
Understand and apply federal and state definitions of trafficking to accurately identify situations that may be trafficking.				
Trafficking and Social Determinants of Health				
Identify economic, cultural, and social contexts that contribute to the risk of trafficking, including adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), economic pressures, racial inequities, homelessness, migration, marginalization, mental illness, and cognitive and developmental disabilities.				
Apply knowledge of a social determinants of health approach to cases of trafficking.				
Total Score for Competency 1: Nature and Epidemiology				Score: out of 18

 **Competency 2: Risk**

Indicators of Trafficking

Detect existence of presenting indicators (“red flags”) of trafficking in patients or clients.				
Demonstrate the ability to develop rapport, build trust, and facilitate conversations with patients/ clients when encountering indicators.				
Evidence-Informed Assessment of Risk				
Refer patients or clients who present with potential indicators of trafficking to appropriate personnel for assessment.				



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 an individual is implementing the core competencies

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Competency 2: Risk (cont.)

For those who are trained to assess trafficking only: Educate the patient on confidentiality, privacy, and mandatory reporting requirements before conducting an assessment and empower patient autonomy to share only what they feel safe sharing. Use evidence-based or evidence-informed tools to assess the risk of trafficking

Total Score for Competency 2: Risk **Score:** out of 12

Competency 3: Needs Evaluation

Needs Assessment

Understand the common and varied needs of individuals who have experienced trafficking, individuals who are at risk of trafficking, and their families.	
Conduct individualized needs assessments with all patients or clients identified as individuals who have experienced trafficking or individuals who are at risk of trafficking.	
Conduct safety planning with all patients or clients identified as individuals who are at risk of trafficking; give particular consideration to the context of trafficking, including potential familial abusers or traffickers.	

Plan of Action

Create, in collaboration with patient/client and colleagues, an individualized plan of action specific to the patient's or client's needs with consideration to age, developmental level, cultural and linguistic context, citizenship, family, ACEs and social determinants of health.	
Apply a strengths-based approach in planning with the patient, emphasizing existing protective factors and resiliency to support patient outcomes.	
Use shared decision-making processes to empower the patient or client to express their needs and preferences (as developmentally appropriate).	

Practice Within Scope and Community Referrals

Understand and remain within the appropriate scope of practice for their role and license.	
Determine appropriate culturally responsive referrals, in collaboration with patient or client, using knowledge of available institutional, community, regional and national resources.	

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

Competency 4: Patient-Centered Care


Patient-Centered Approach

Use age-appropriate and developmentally appropriate shared decision-making strategies applying a "stages of change" framework for collaboratively determining a patient care plan; receive informed consent for all tests and treatment to ensure the patient's right to self-determination.	
Offer information about potential treatments/services (including potential risks and benefits) through methods that are understandable to the patient/client (e.g., through various modalities, different languages, information adapted based on developmental level).	
Prioritize patient or client safety and well-being (over disclosure) while delivering care.	



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 an individual is implementing the core competencies

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 **Competency 4: Patient-Centered Care (cont.)**

Identify events that indicate a potential need for security and/or law enforcement response, considerations for patient or client safety and confidentiality, mandatory reporting requirements, and potential harms, including those particular to undocumented patients, people of color, or those engaged in grey or informal economies.

Understand mental and physical health needs of families of individuals who have experienced trafficking as integral to care and well-being and offer familial support and referrals as appropriate.

Resiliency-Focused Care

Integrate knowledge about protective factors against trafficking and resiliency of individuals who have experienced trafficking into treatment plans.

Work collaboratively with patients or clients to identify and develop protective or resiliency factors.

“No Wrong Door” Access to Diverse Health Services

Detect cases of all types of trafficking in diverse health care settings and specialties.

Establish professional partnerships across public and private, inpatient and outpatient, rural and urban institutions providing primary or specialty care.

Total Score for Competency 4: Patient-Centered Care **Score:** out of 27

 **Competency 5: Legal/Ethical Standards**

Mandatory Reporting Responsibilities

Understand and comply with state and federal requirements for mandated reporting of adults and minors who are identified as individuals who have experienced trafficking or individuals who are at risk of trafficking, treating child trafficking as a form of child abuse.

Understand that mandatory reporting laws may be a risk for individuals who are undocumented, forced to commit a crime as part of their trafficking, or for those who might otherwise fear unequal protection due to race or other status; administer a safety assessment to determine level of risk in conjunction with all reporting.

Be transparent and explicit with all patients or clients, regardless of age, about mandatory reporting, discussing the possibility before asking sensitive questions (when possible) and discussing the act of reporting with the patient or client once the decision has been made.

Advocate for the needs of the individual who has experienced trafficking when making a mandatory report, focusing on the status of the patient or client as a victim.

Recognize that reporting may affect the patient–HCP relationship.

Legal Rights

Provide information on labor, immigrant, and victim rights and community resources to individuals who have experienced trafficking and individuals who are at risk of trafficking.

Recognize the opportunities and harms potentially associated with connecting patients or clients to enforcement agencies, including for patient–HCP relationship and trust.

Understand state laws related to patient rights, consent for services, and confidentiality to ensure that patients (including minors) understand the services to be provided and can give consent.



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 an individual is implementing the core competencies

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Competency 5: Legal/Ethical Standards

HIPAA and Patient Consent Compliance

Apply patient consent laws and HIPAA regulations (with relevant state exceptions) to all encounters with individuals who have experienced trafficking.	
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Documentation Considerations

Discuss health record documentation with patients, respecting their right to privacy while balancing this with the need to provide information for continuity of care and for legal disclosures if subpoenaed.	
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Provide documentation in the record that meet standard guidelines on the level of detail with appropriate billing and diagnostic codes for those identified as individuals who have experienced trafficking or individuals who are at risk of trafficking.	
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Total Score for Competency 5: Legal/Ethical Standards	Score: out of 33
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Competency 6: Prevention

Primary Prevention: Preventing Any Trafficking

Integrate concepts of nurturing and attachment, knowledge of parenting and child development, parental and child resilience, supportive adults, and social and emotional competence of children into anticipatory guidance and psychoeducation in pediatric or young adult settings.	
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Routinely screen for risk of various forms of exploitation including trafficking, domestic violence or child abuse, as well as ACES and the social determinants of health.	
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Offer education and resources to patients and clients on healthy relationships, internet safety, labor rights, and potential indicators of exploitation.	
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Connect at risk patients and clients to community resources that address risk factors for trafficking victimization and perpetration, identify protective factors, and promote resiliency for the individual and their family.	
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Secondary Prevention: Risk Reduction

Apply concepts of risk reduction to all interactions with individuals who have experienced trafficking or are currently experiencing trafficking, or other forms of exploitation.	
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Offer anticipatory guidance, psychoeducation, and resources to patients or clients who present with any indicators of trafficking in any health setting or to any member of staff, including guidance that addresses any other historical, intergenerational, or collective trauma that may further impact a patient or client.	
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Make referrals to services that use risk reduction approaches and that address social determinants of health.	
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Tertiary Prevention: Prevention of Re-Trafficking

Include strategies for long-term, sustainable care in health and behavioral health planning with patients or clients who have experienced trafficking and their families.	
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Connect identified individuals to appropriate social services for long-term care, interpersonal trauma, and treatment for substance use disorders, as appropriate.	
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Address protective factors and resiliency strategies with patients to reduce re-trafficking.	
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Total Score for Competency 6: Prevention	Score: out of 30
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Congratulations! In taking this self-assessment, you are actively working to improve patient outcomes for the individuals in your 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 health care practitioner. 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:

- 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 colleagues to help their growth.

This is a journey, so take time to really reflect on what you have learned about your skills through this assessment, and develop a plan. Take it in steps. Identify a goal you can commit to completing in 10 days, 1 month, 3 months, 6 months, and 1 year. This is an iterative process, one that we hope you will consider making a regular and sustained commitment. Once you complete your plan, come back and retake your self-assessment to measure your 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