



Toolkit for Building Survivor-Informed Organizations

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

Updated 2023

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- Priority Action 4.3.1: Prioritize implementing recommendations of the United States Advisory Council on Human Trafficking
- Priority Action 4.3.2: Leverage federal survivor-consultant networks and federal training and technical assistance centers to ensure survivor input is consistently incorporated into policies and programs

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The 2021 update expanded content to support organizations in building diversity, equity, and inclusion, in support of Executive Order No. 13985 (2021) and was developed by:

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The *Sanar* Institute was the lead consultant and contributor in creating this toolkit, originally published in 2017. In addition, a team of six NHTTAC consultants with diverse backgrounds contributed throughout the development process. Collectively, diverse perspectives are reflected between *Sanar* and the NHTTAC Advisory Team, including many survivor leaders and other professionals who develop and deliver social services to people who have experienced trafficking, as well as academia, criminal justice, and public health professionals. In addition, several leading anti-trafficking organizations provided feedback and recommendations to strengthen the toolkit content.

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Executive Summary

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

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 entities that wish to improve collaboration with those impacted by human trafficking.

Survivor leaders can use their knowledge and lived experience to improve program performance; many survivor leaders achieve 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 exist. For people seeking to escape trafficking, the presence of someone with similar lived experience often outweighs degrees or formal education.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office on Trafficking in Persons developed this toolkit through its National Human Trafficking Training and Technical Assistance Center. A team of survivor leaders and other anti-trafficking leaders designed this toolkit to provide guidance, tools, and resources to build organizational capacity for professionally engaging survivors of human trafficking in developing, delivering, and evaluating policy and programming.

“ 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, 2017¹

¹ The Human Trafficking Leadership Academy (HTLA) 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 through the National Human Trafficking Training and Technical Assistance Center. In each HTLA class, six survivor leaders and six nongovernmental service providers collaborate to provide recommendations to a project question proposed by OTIP and OWH. In 2017, HTLA fellows collaborated to identify how OTIP recipients can improve services using trauma-informed principles and survivor-informed practices. For more information, visit <https://nhttac.acf.hhs.gov/survivor-involvement/human-trafficking-leadership-academy>.

How to Use This Toolkit

In Chapter 1, you will learn about organizational readiness and its importance. Chapters 2 and 3 will help you refine your mission, vision, and leadership and learn more about organizational culture. Chapter 4 discusses how to assess your organization's level of being survivor informed and how to assess capacity further. Chapter 5 discusses the overarching principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion and how they impact policies and decision-making across your organization. Chapters 6 through 11 provide opportunities to go a little deeper into assessing your organization's readiness to collaborate with survivor leaders in specific areas. Each chapter provides strategies, tips, and resources, including case examples, on meaningfully collaborating with survivors in various capacities, ranging from volunteers to board members.

Audience for This Toolkit

This toolkit is designed to assist many audiences, including anti-trafficking organizations, coalitions, task forces, volunteer programs, and other entities that wish to improve collaboration with those impacted by human trafficking. The benefits of having a trauma- and survivor-informed workplace include creating a welcoming, safe, and collaborative atmosphere for staff and clients and increasing the applicant pool for positions to include survivor leaders and/or those who may have a history of trauma.

Organizations of any size will find information in this toolkit to help them build a survivor- and trauma-informed practice. Entities dedicated solely to anti-trafficking efforts should consider fully implementing the strategies and tips provided in the toolkit. For entities devoting a portion of their programming to anti-trafficking efforts, the strategies and tips can be fully implemented within the anti-trafficking program and used to incorporate best practices into the overall organization.

Guiding Principles

Guiding principles create an overarching framework for all involved in an organization and can ensure thoughtful engagement of survivor leaders as staff, volunteers, and consultants. These principles are essential to creating a person-centered environment and guide successful collaboration with people who have been impacted by human trafficking, whether they are independent of the organization (e.g., consultants) or staff within the organization. These principles are critically important for all leadership, staff, volunteers, consultants, and organizations participating in anti-trafficking efforts.

This toolkit discusses how to practically apply these principles as an organization transforms into a survivor-informed organization. These principles incorporate the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA) Six Principles of a Trauma-Informed Approach. Using a trauma-informed approach to create a survivor-informed and survivor-engaged organization guides the treatment of leadership, staff, consultants, volunteers, and clients in a supportive, respectful, and valued way. A trauma-informed approach encourages flexibility, wellness, self-care, diversity, equity, and inclusion. Special attention must be paid to the unique needs of survivors. A trauma-informed and ethical approach acknowledges areas that disproportionately affect survivors and highlights important areas. Important areas could include increasing job opportunities, valuing lived experiences, being mindful of re-victimization and exploitation, and crafting policies and procedures that consider confidentiality and informed consent.



1. **Safety**
The organization ensures that staff, partners, and clients feel physically and psychologically safe.
2. **Trustworthiness and Transparency**
The organization conducts all operations and decisions transparently to build and maintain trust with staff, partners, clients, and their family members.
3. **Peer Support**
Peer support and mutual self-help provide key vehicles for establishing safety and hope, building trust, enhancing collaboration, and using stories and lived experiences to promote recovery and healing.
4. **Collaboration and Mutuality**
The organization places importance on partnering and leveling power differences between staff and clients and among organizational staff and leadership. The organization recognizes that healing happens in relationships and through the meaningful sharing of power and decision-making; everyone has a role to play in a trauma-informed approach.

5. Empowerment, Voice, and Choice

People's strengths and lived experiences are recognized and valued within the organization and among clients. Clients are empowered to make choices, are included in decision-making and goal-setting, and are supported in cultivating self-advocacy skills. Clients and staff contribute to organizational decision-making and policy-setting.

6. Cultural, Historical, and Gender Issues

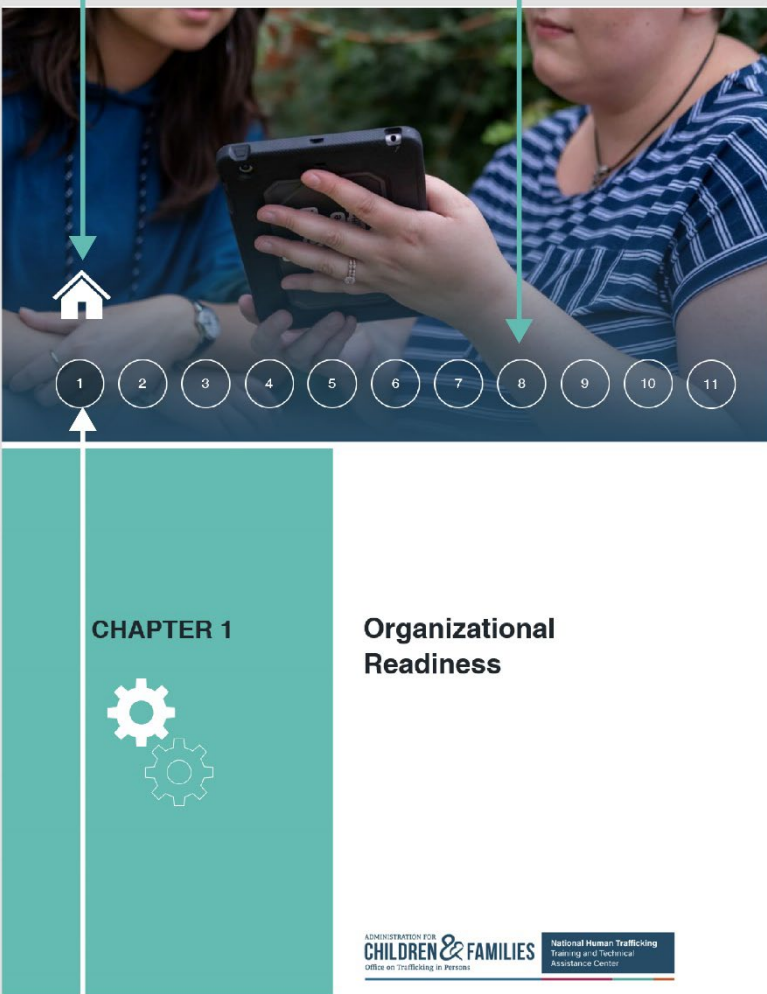
The organization recognizes and addresses explicit/implicit biases and historical trauma; practices cultural humility; offers culturally and gender-responsive services; leverages the healing value of traditional cultural connections; avoids stereotyping, ableism, and tokenization; incorporates policies, protocols, and processes that are responsive to the racial, ethnic, and cultural needs of people served; and prioritizes diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Navigation Tools

To navigate through the document there are buttons on the side of the page, as well as on the chapter pages.

Chapter Page Divider Instructions

Click the house icon to take you to the first page of the toolkit. Click the circle to take you to the individual chapter.



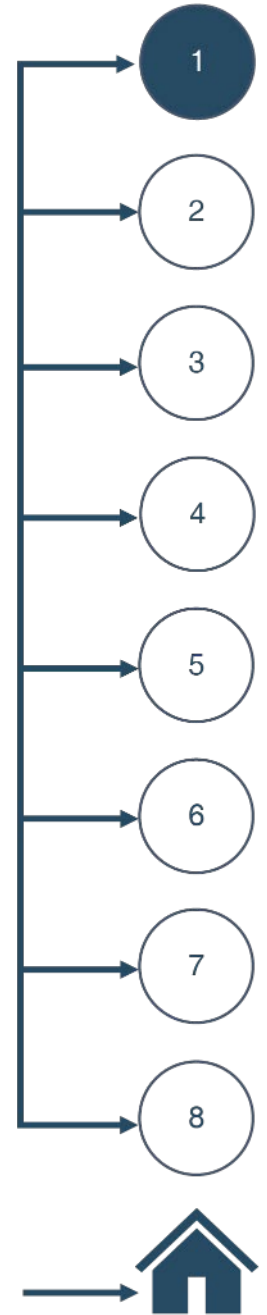
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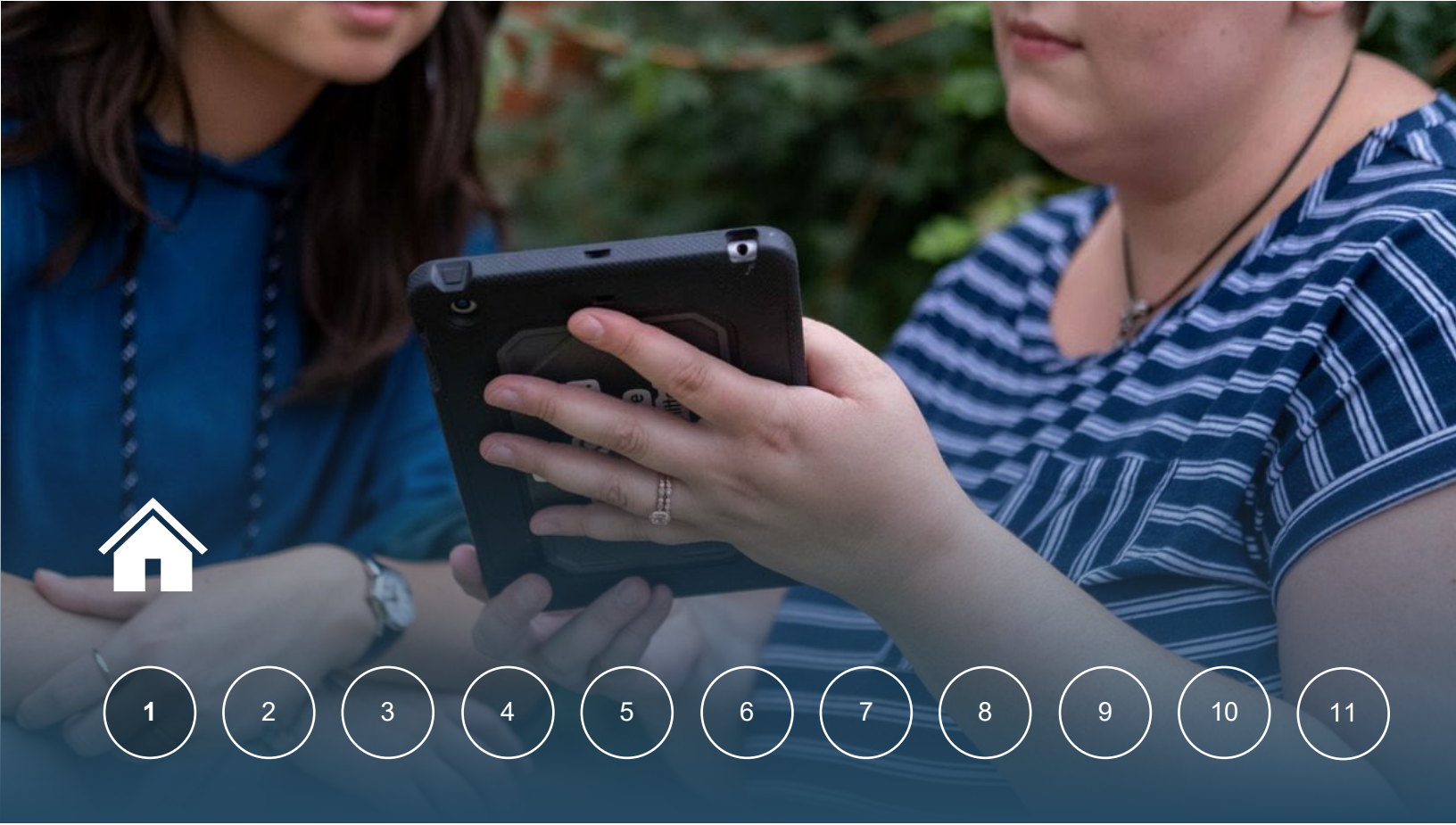
Page Sidebar Instructions

Blue button indicates current chapter

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CHAPTER 1



Organizational Readiness

Chapter 1: Organizational Readiness

Organizational readiness is the extent to which an organization is ready to identify and effectively respond to trafficking in a survivor-informed way. Assessing organizational readiness can help align existing programs and organizational structure with survivor-informed principles and inform the development of new programs and organizations. Assessing organizational readiness benefits leadership, staff, clients, and communities by soliciting, valuing, and encouraging diverse perspectives. By reviewing the 10 distinct dimensions of organizational readiness, organizations can bring awareness and clarity to their planning and development of new and existing programs. These dimensions are:

1. Mission, Vision, and Leadership
2. Organizational Culture
3. Survivor Leader Engagement
4. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
5. Organizational Policies and Procedures
6. Human Resource Development and Training
7. Wellness
8. Trauma-Informed Supervision
9. Moving From Program Participant to Agency Representative
10. Marketing, Media, Presentations, and Fundraising

The following 10 chapters cover one of these dimensions. Each chapter includes a self-guided organizational assessment to score on that dimension. This is followed by practical tips and strategies for strengthening the organizational readiness to build capacity to serve people who are currently experiencing trafficking, have increased risk factors for trafficking, or have experienced trafficking — and their families.

Terminology: Survivor Leaders

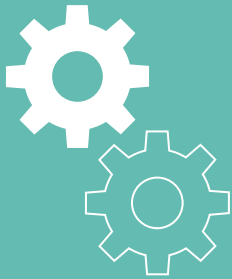
NHTTAC strives to use language reflecting how those who have experienced trafficking describe their experiences, recognizing that terminology may evolve. While some people who have experienced trafficking choose to embrace the title “survivor,” others do not. Moreover, organizations will collaborate with professionals who do not share that they have experienced trafficking. Disclosing such information should always remain in the control of the person who has experienced trafficking. It is important to recognize people’s full life experiences, skillsets, and professional goals — and not focus solely on the trafficking that occurred. For this toolkit, the term “survivor leader” describes 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 experience with human trafficking.





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CHAPTER 2



Mission, Vision, and Leadership

Chapter 2: Mission, Vision, and Leadership

Mission and vision are integral to defining the organization's framework and motivating a team toward a common goal. **Mission statements** are usually action-oriented and answer the question of what the organization does, who it serves, and how it serves them. **Vision statements** look to the future for what the organization hopes to solve, create, or influence. Members of the organization at all levels can look to mission statements for a sense of purpose and vision statements for inspiration, innovation, and hope for positive change. Together, these elements are often the driving force of an organization or program and should be clearly defined, well-communicated, and interconnected to the goals and values of the organization.

Whether an organization is dedicated to human trafficking or integrating human trafficking-related programming, its mission and vision statements should be informed by persons and community members from the populations it seeks to serve. This inclusion fosters buy-in from the community and staff and leadership within the organization, promoting a collective commitment to the mission and vision.

Examples of mission and vision statements informed by and written in collaboration with people with lived experiences of exploitation:

Sanar's Mission: The Sanar 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 Institute, n.d.).

Human Rights for Kids' Mission: Human rights abuses involving children are perpetrated around the world by government entities, private companies, and individuals. We're a non-profit organization dedicated to the promotion and protection of human rights for children. We use an integrated, multi-faceted approach which consists of research and public education, coalition building and grassroots mobilization, and policy advocacy and strategic litigation to advance critical human rights on behalf of children in the United States and around the world. **Human Rights for Kids' Vision:** We envision a world where society protects children from violence and harm, provides treatment and care to those children who do suffer harm, rehabilitates and forgives children who make mistakes or harm others, and ensures that all children are healthy and have equal opportunity in the race of life so that they may pursue their dreams and reach their full potential (Human Rights for Kids, n.d.).

Notice how both mission statements clearly explain the organization's what, who, and how, and both vision statements point to what each organization hopes to create.

Leadership includes executive management and a board of directors. It is their responsibility to ensure the mission and vision of the organization are met. When working in service provision/programming, leadership should represent the populations served. Other functions include promoting consistency in decision-making, communication, and messaging from all levels of organizational leadership to reinforce the agency's direction further and ensure buy-in from staff, volunteers, and those being served.

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Assessment: Mission, Vision, and Leadership

Assess your organization’s readiness by answering the questions below.

<p>Instructions: It’s important these ratings come from a staff and management perspective. Make sure both are engaged when answering these questions. For each line, circle one answer indicating the degree to which your organization applies the approach (0=no/never, 1=occasionally, and 2=yes/always). Please do not write in the dark grey-shaded boxes.</p>	No/Never	Occasionally	Yes/Always
Your organization has a clear, concise mission statement that communicates its overall intent and purpose.			
Your organization has a clear, concise mission statement that communicates its overall intent and purpose, AND such statement was informed by people with lived experiences, community members, or collaborators from those being served or impacted by human trafficking.			
Your organization’s mission guides its work and is based upon the guiding principles of survivor-informed practice.			
Your organization’s vision reflects its commitment to serving those impacted by human trafficking and is understood by the board, leadership, and staff.			
Your organization regularly reviews its mission and vision to ensure they continue guiding its work.			
The mission and vision of your organization are referenced in orientation, meetings, and planning for services/programs.			
Leadership, staff, and volunteers show commitment to your organization’s ability to achieve the mission.			
Your organization’s vision includes vicarious trauma support to ensure staff at all levels practice self-care and remain healthy to serve those impacted by human trafficking.			
Leadership decisions are reflective of the mission and vision of your organization.			
Leadership provides opportunities for staff, clients, and community members to provide feedback and incorporates feedback into future planning and development.			
Board members know current issues relevant to your organization to make effective decisions.			
Board members and executive leadership collaborate openly in an ongoing effort to address organizational strengths and gaps.			
Finances are allocated to support the resources needed to accomplish your organization’s mission and vision.			
Leadership and staff receive training on the guiding principles.			

Section Score: out of 28



1

Practical Strategies and Tips

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

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Evaluate Alignment

- Use strategic planning to boost and retain organizational capacity. If your organization has a strategic plan, examination of that plan will be necessary to ensure your organization's response to exploitation is trauma informed and person-centered and embeds a public health approach.
- If existing strategic plans do not address human trafficking, or if your organization does not have a strategic plan for responding to human trafficking, work with technical assistance organizations, people with lived experience, community members, collaborators, and diverse populations to integrate a trafficking response into programming.
- Ensure existing strategic plans support continued cohesion between mission, vision, and leadership and are updated to reflect significant changes to those elements as needed and recommended by people with lived experience.
- Ensure job descriptions for staff, leadership, volunteers, and people with lived experience reflect your organization's mission, values, and goals. Welcome a wide range of expertise/experience, and indicate that survivor leaders are encouraged to apply.
- Ensure all job descriptions highlight that people with lived experience are encouraged to apply, suggesting the value of such expertise across your organization's leadership.
- Recruit board members with trafficking expertise, particularly those with lived experience.
- Review recent leadership decisions for alignment with fulfilling your organization's mission and whether leadership supports an environment for change and learning.
- Ensure equitable input in creating and distributing internal resources between leadership, junior staff, and any staff with lived experience.
- Ensure frontline staff have access to materials, electronics, and other resources needed for implementation. Verify there is no discrepancy between the resource access of executive leadership and other staff.
- Allocate finances to include survivors who can inform your organization. Discuss with leadership how current funds or resources can be used to support survivor leaders' professional involvement across your organization, like leadership development, project management, and other related skills.

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Promote Training and Cross-Training

- Ensure all training, regardless of the topic, concerning human trafficking and/or parallel crimes or experiences, uses a trauma-informed, victim-centered, and survivor-informed framework.
- Educate all staff and leadership on your organization's mission and vision and provide practical examples of how your agency is equipped to address human trafficking.
- Educate all new staff and leadership on the guiding principles (SAMHSA's Six Principles of a Trauma-Informed Approach). Provide ongoing training on the guiding principles.



- If members of your agency are unsure about implementing new programming to address human trafficking, consider what training has been provided on the subject. Consult with anti-trafficking experts in your state about additional training that can be provided.
- Either provide ongoing, annual compliance/recertification and continuing education training within an organization or outsource such to local, state, or national anti-trafficking entities to allocate for new research, best practices, and evidence-based strategies.
- Consider trainings a vetted person with lived experience can facilitate; inquiry regarding such services should become best practice across all training topics and audiences.
- Identify training opportunities within the community being served to foster collaboration and possible cross-training opportunities, specifically related to organizations serving populations experiencing marginalization, like transgender and gender non-conforming people; persons with disabilities; Two-Spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex, asexual, plus (2SLGBTQIA+) people; and Black, Indigenous, and people of color populations.
- Build a proposal or business case that supports the need to begin anti-trafficking work. Make sure the proposal gives a compelling rationale for (1) the need, (2) how it relates to your mission and appeals to your vision, and (3) how outcomes will be measured for the project. To believe it is achievable, team members must understand the task demands, including scope and time.
- Provide a diverse scope of leadership opportunities within your organization that match the skills and interests of staff and survivor leaders, highlighting areas for cross-training in the community.
- Provide leadership with annual or biannual training and professional development that pertains to your mission and vision and collaborative partnerships that complement and/or support organizational outcomes.

Empower Members

- Create an environment where team members can openly communicate with leadership, and leadership reflects the value of such contributions. Leadership should actively seek input from others on decision-making and demonstrate the value and influence all staff have on organizational topics.
- Create multiple pathways for communication with appropriate structured and natural settings.
- Ensure staff, survivor leaders, and other invested partners have accessible methods to contribute and provide insight into topics. Make equitable opportunities to build professional skills in the anti-trafficking field available internally or through partnerships.



Questions to Consider

- How does your organization ensure that team members feel they can make appropriate decisions independent of leadership?
- How do team members demonstrate confidence in their ability to deliver on program goals?
- How are team members encouraged to engage in self-care, given the impact of vicarious trauma and compassion fatigue for staff exposed to trauma? How does leadership model this?

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- Contact agencies that understand the importance of organizational readiness and strategic planning in implementing trauma-informed principles at workplaces if your organization wishes to hire or engage professionally with people with lived experience about responding to human trafficking or a related issue (e.g., domestic violence, sexual assault, system involvement).
- Private and public organizations and entities can use a trauma-informed approach to support staff, board members, volunteers who may have experienced human trafficking, and individuals working within your organizations. By applying this framework, organizations can ensure that any staff, regardless of their disclosure, are supported, protected, and valued.
- Ensure marketing, accounting, graphic design, human resources, peer-to-peer programs, mentoring, and volunteer positions are informed by people with lived experience and diverse perspectives and community identities.
- Use a strengths-based approach to identify staff interests, expertise, and talents that can be infused into all aspects of organizational work. This creates buy-in, increases feelings of inclusion, and promotes job retention.
- Reflect periodically on the existing mission and its alignment to current programs, staff positions, and overall outcomes of your organization; this can alleviate internal and external mission drift and miscommunication.
- Demonstrate how your organization's guiding principles inform your organization's values; using values to set the tone of the work and how it is conducted establishes an internal culture that highlights people over profit or numbers. If your organization has defined values, include additional language in areas where the guiding principles can be applied.

Promising Practices | Policies and Procedures Application

Imani is the vice president of an advocacy organization. After conducting an agency assessment, she realized that 45% of her staff, including board members, were unaware of how the agency's mission and vision related to its guiding principles, and 60% of staff were unsure how to apply the guiding principles to their work practically. Imani 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 apply the guiding principles better.

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

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Resources

Leadership Development

- » [Elevate Academy](#)
- » [Girls Educational and Mentoring Services | Leadership Institute](#)
- » [Institute for Transformative Emancipation Center for Combating Human Trafficking | Pathway to Prosperity Program](#)
- » [National Survivor Network](#)
- » [Office on Trafficking in Persons | Human Trafficking Leadership Academy](#)
- » [Office for Victims of Crime | Professional Development Scholarship Program](#)
- » [Sun Gate Foundation | Leadership Scholarship](#)
- » [Survivor Alliance](#)

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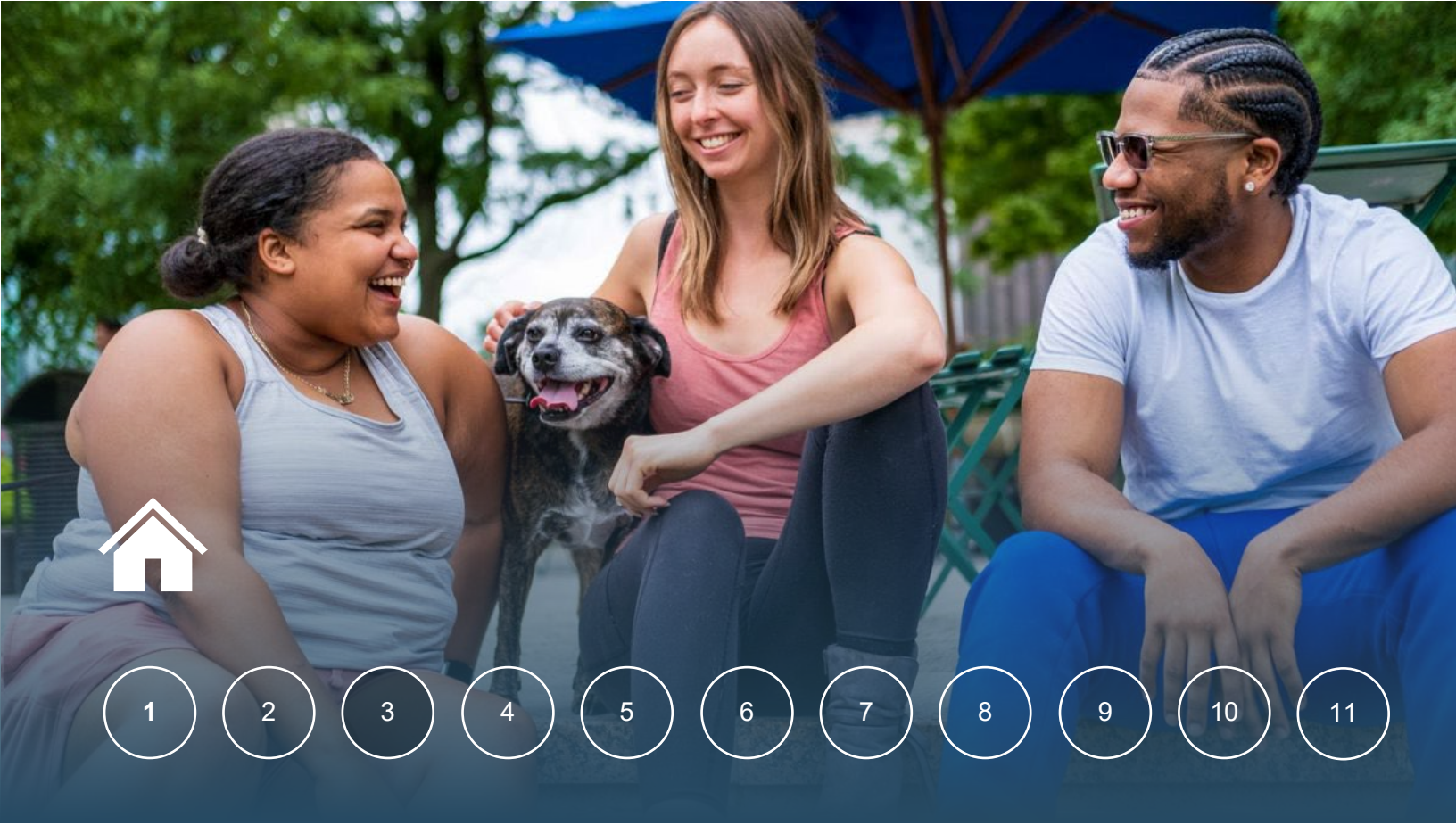
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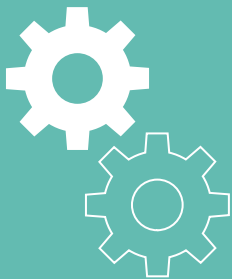
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CHAPTER 3



Organizational Culture

Chapter 3: Organizational Culture

Like individuals, organizations have a culture or shared set of values and beliefs that influences how organization members think and act. An organization's culture influences every part, including policies and procedures, human resources, and service delivery. An organization can develop cultural norms that become so ingrained in daily routines that organizations may be unaware of their existence. An unhealthy organizational culture can lead to high employee turnover and failure to meet goals and objectives. A healthy and robust organizational culture can lead to high morale and strong alignment to mission and vision. Understanding your organization's culture is a critical step in assessing organizational readiness to address human trafficking. It may be necessary to change your organizational culture to do this work. A strong survivor- and trauma-informed organizational culture will be immediately apparent to those interacting with the organization for the first time.

Many aspects of organizational culture need to be addressed. This chapter will focus on promoting collaboration or buy-in; welcoming and valuing staff feedback helps create a healthy organizational culture. Survivor leader engagement and diversity, equity, and inclusion are two **key** areas of organizational culture, which will be addressed in Chapters 4 and 5. Supporting and fostering employee wellness, another important area, will be covered in Chapter 8.

Limited Ability and Crisis Mode Operations

Organizations operating with limited ability or in crisis mode should address contributing factors before launching a new program. Indicators that an organization is operating with these limitations might include the following:

- Inadequate time to address organizational challenges
- Constant staff or leadership turnover
- Inability to fill positions or board seats
- Staff expressing feelings of inadequate training or preparations
- Failure to meet goals and objectives
- External factors that displace or limit staff capacity (e.g., pandemics, natural disasters)

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Assessment: Organizational Culture

Assess your organization’s readiness by answering the questions below.

Instructions: It’s important these ratings come from a staff and management perspective. Make sure both are engaged when answering these questions. For each line, circle one answer indicating the degree to which your organization applies the approach (0=no/never, 1=occasionally, and 2=yes/always).



Your organization embodies survivor- and trauma-informed perspectives incorporating the guiding principles.

Your organization allows time for thoughtful analysis of programs and policies to address organizational limitations and/or crisis mode operation.

Your organization respects the confidentiality and boundaries of self-identified persons and/or disclosure from survivors at all times.

Your organization seeks to minimize tokenization, re-victimization, and re-exploitation as outlined by SAMHSA’s Six Principles of a Trauma-Informed Approach. Staff should not be asked to speak directly to their personal lived experience but instead integrate messaging about exploitation and trauma based on their experience.

Your organization gives survivors control over when, how, and why they share their stories. Informed consent is always obtained each time a story is shared.

Organizational practices promote and value mutual sharing and collaboration through multiple avenues of exchange within leadership, staff, volunteers, and key partnerships.

Leadership values and incorporates feedback from staff, volunteers, and key partnerships.

Leadership actively encourages and provides accessibility for staff to be creative and share innovative solutions whenever possible.

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 Your Organization

- Hold an organizational discussion on the policies associated with the guiding principles on practical daily implementation and create a list of shared examples.
- Encourage and promote sharing thoughts and ideas where people feel creative and connected to the work. Host an open meeting for all team members or employees to suggest creative ideas.



- Create opportunities for staff connections outside the office to build camaraderie and strengthen team trust.
- Develop a way to acknowledge and reward creativity and innovation across your organization. Encourage employees to interact throughout the day and collaborate on projects; this creates a more supportive and effective work environment.
- Foster trauma-informed collaboration among survivors, allies, and partner organizations that emphasizes respecting boundaries and avoiding re-victimization.
- Build relationships with diverse communities that foster capacity building across organizations and leverage partnerships that may lead to employment.

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 used in organizational strategic planning, growth management, and even during annual budget creation. This provides opportunities for participatory work culture.
- Some team members may not be comfortable providing feedback face-to-face. Create an anonymous feedback process for team members in addition to meeting with them.
- Partner with companies that offer professional development-building skillsets. Many of these activities could be listed as in-kind services on an organizational budget. Skill-building should include all staff and volunteers who need similar opportunities. Identifying opportunities for joint professional development furthers camaraderie within the workplace and avoids singling out survivors.
- Seek compensated feedback from survivors and program participants, particularly as they exit services, and integrate the feedback into organizational plans, policies, and programs. Feedback is critical to assessing and improving service delivery.

Offer Trauma-Informed Tasks and Roles

- Base tasks on the position's goals, not only on a person's lived experience.
- Hire those with lived experience for all jobs (e.g., accounting, training, human resources, executive-level).
- Allow staff to share their experiences and ask questions as needed, not on demand.
- As your organization actively moves past cultural stereotypes and biases (based on race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, geography, etc.), offer gender-responsive services, leverage the healing value of traditional cultural connections, and recognize and address historical trauma.
- Help staff integrate their personal experience in delivering a message to inform the identification of and/or service delivery to survivors of human trafficking by:
 - Participating in strategy sessions around coordinating community response and outreach planning
 - Reviewing organization and program documents of products

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- Delivering remarks to organizations, social service providers, and the media that are not centered around their personal lived experience but on the lived experience of trafficking and trauma in general
- Offer staff the option to work on specific projects and respect staff members' decisions without judgment.

Promising Practices | Organizational Culture

Rodrigo has been working at Organization X for 5 years. At the agency, Rodrigo provides case management for young survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking.

Rodrigo chooses to disclose to his supervisor that he experienced human trafficking 5 years ago. His supervisor is the only staff member with whom he has disclosed this information, and his supervisor worked with Rodrigo to identify ways in which he wanted to build out his professional identity. Rodrigo shared that while this was an important experience that led him to this work, he did not want to include it in his professional identity. The organizational culture of respect and confidentiality created an environment that allowed Rodrigo to explore his own professional identity and engage in long-term reflection in a safe and nonexploitative manner.



Resources

Organizational Culture

- » [Center for Health Care Strategies | Webinar Series: Implementing Trauma-Informed Care Into Organizational Culture and Practice](#)
- » [Rebecca Bender Initiative | Speaking Topics](#)

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CHAPTER 4



Survivor Leader Engagement

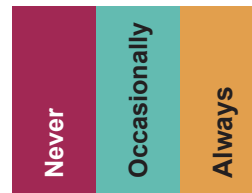
Chapter 4: Survivor Leader Engagement

Understanding the degree to which your organization engages survivors is a critical first step in assessing organizational culture and readiness. Survivor leader engagement is the foundation upon which anti-trafficking organizations and programs should be built. Throughout this toolkit, approach each dimension through a survivor-informed and survivor-engaged lens. You can assess your organization by eliciting feedback from staff, consultants, and clients through surveys, focus groups, and exit interviews. Regularly assess the level of survivor leader engagement throughout the entire organization, including mission, vision, and leadership; organizational culture; diversity, equity, and inclusion; organizational policies and procedures; human resource development; trauma-informed supervision; moving from program participant to agency representative; and marketing, media, presentations, and fundraising.

The Human Trafficking Leadership Academy developed the Survivor-Informed Practice Self-Guided Assessment Tool (below) in 2017 to self-assess your organization.

Survivor-Informed Practice Self-Guided Assessment Tool

Instructions: It's important these ratings come from a staff and management perspective. Make sure both are engaged when answering these questions. 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; the total score indicates the degree to which a program or project is survivor informed.



Meaningful input

The program/project provides employment opportunities for survivors.

Survivors serve in leadership positions for the program/project (management, advisory board, etc.).

In the absence of survivor staff, survivor consultants are hired to provide input.

If direct survivor input is unavailable, survivor-developed guidance and resources are developed.

Section Score: out of 8

From a diverse community of survivors

Survivor input represents sex and labor trafficking perspectives.

Survivor input represents domestic and foreign national perspectives.

Survivor input represents other diverse survivor perspectives (adults, minors, 2SLGBTQIA+ survivors, etc.).

The project/program incorporates promising practices from other survivor-informed fields (domestic violence, etc.).

A strengths-based process is in place for determining appropriate areas and levels of survivor engagement.

Section Score: out of 10



Instructions: It's important these ratings come from a staff and management perspective. Make sure both are engaged when answering these questions. 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; the total score indicates the degree to which a program or project is survivor informed.



At all stages of a program or project	
Survivor expertise is accessed in developing the initial program/project design.	
Survivor input is incorporated in developing policies and procedures.	
Survivor input is incorporated in creating program/project materials.	
Survivor expertise is accessed throughout program/project implementation.	
Survivor expertise is accessed in evaluating the program/project.	
A process is established and used for obtaining feedback from survivor participants.	
Section Score:	out of 12
Total Score:	out of 30

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Practical Strategies and Tips

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

- Access survivor expertise continuously and appropriately throughout all program development, implementation, and evaluation stages.
- Incorporate diverse perspectives (from survivors of sex trafficking and survivors of labor trafficking, adult and minor survivors, 2SLGBTQIA+ survivors, and foreign national and domestic survivors), and integrate promising practices among other related movements, including domestic violence, sexual assault, and labor exploitation, when appropriate.
- Use a strengths-based approach to determine appropriate places and engagement levels for survivors within your organization or project. Such an approach should consider the following:
 - 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



- Allocate finances to promote a survivor-informed organization. Discuss with leadership how current funds or resources can be used to support survivor leaders' 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%) for implementing your survivor-informed plan, including consultant fees (Human Trafficking Leadership Academy, 2017).



Incorporate Feedback and Evaluation

- Implement an annual anonymous survey to check on how your organization is doing, ways it could improve, and areas of achievement, focusing 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 discussions to meet diverse communication preferences.
- Ask key collaborators in the field to provide feedback; this provides invaluable information on programs, practices, and mission alignment. In addition, conduct an annual survey on applying guiding principles. Send the survey to partners, survivor leaders, and other collaborators.
- Make sure organizational boards can access evaluation outcomes and help make agency governance changes.
- 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 areas to improve survivor-informed practices.

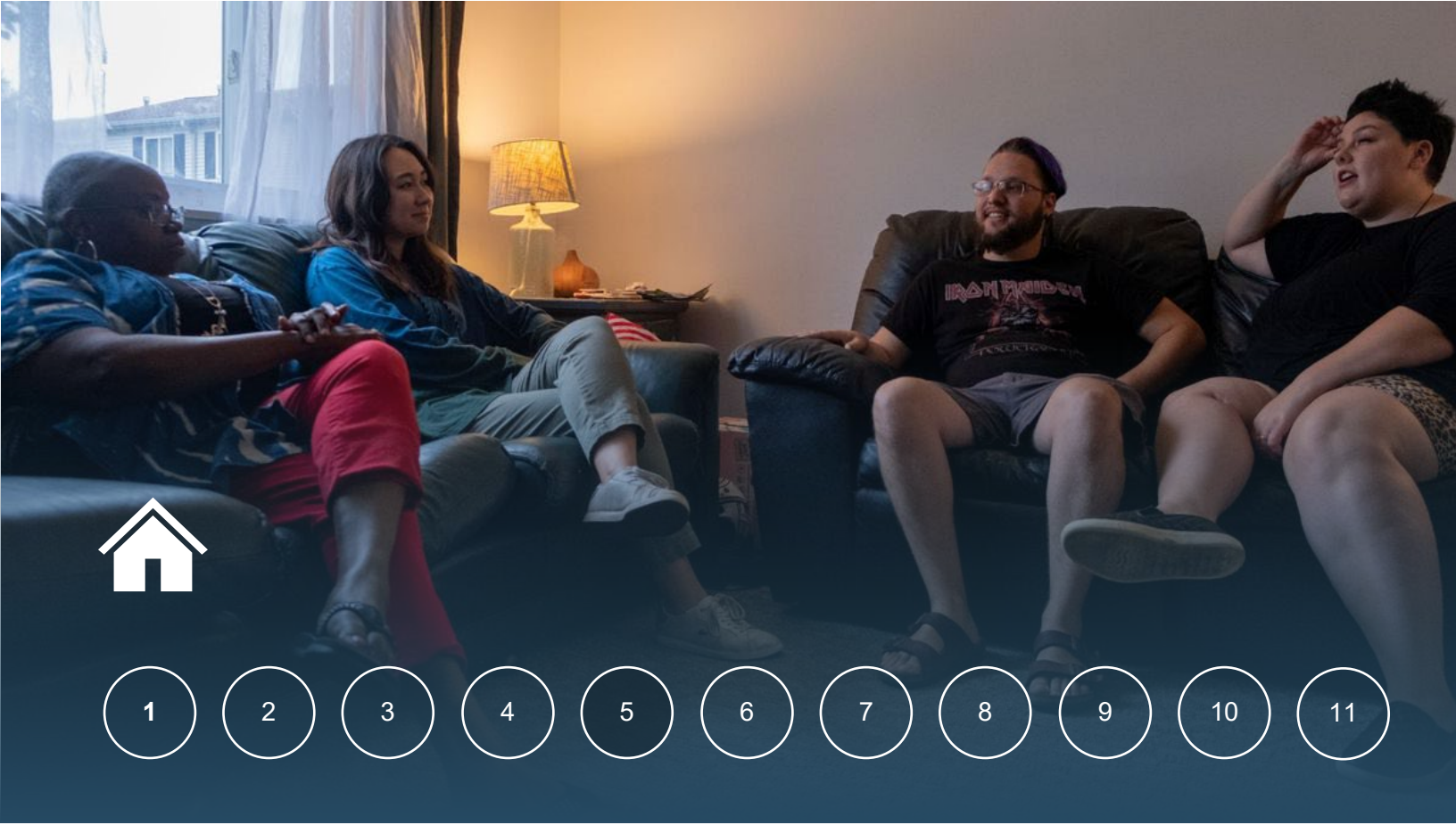


Resources

Survivor-Informed Practices

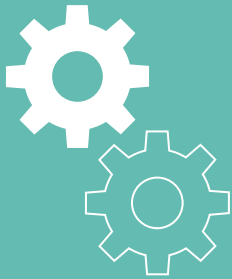
- » [National Center for Cultural Competence at Georgetown University | Self-Assessment Resources](#)
- » [THRIVE | Guide to Trauma-Informed Organizational Development](#)
- » [Trauma Informed Oregon | Organizational Assessment of Agency Environmental Components for Trauma-Informed Care](#)





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CHAPTER 5



Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Chapter 5: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Human trafficking affects people of all backgrounds, and organizations must be able to serve all survivors in a trauma-informed and culturally sensitive manner. An organization serving survivors of trafficking must have an organizational culture that emphasizes the inclusion of diverse voices in an equitable manner. There has been an increased focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion in recent years. As culture shifts and new generations enter the workforce, more attention is being paid to corporate social responsibility, a self-driven mechanism through which an organization integrates social concerns, social accountability, and social justice into organizational practices in meaningful, transparent, and consistent ways. Newer generations of workers have different expectations than previous generations. These expectations include linking work to social movements and impacts, amplifying the voices of *all* employees, and increasing opportunities for communities that have been historically oppressed and marginalized. Coupled with the strong examination of racial injustice in 2020, focusing on diversity, equity, and inclusion is more important than ever.

Diversity refers to how people differ from one another, including, but not limited to, race, ethnicity, culture, sexual orientation, gender expression, national origin, and religion. **Equity** refers to providing fair treatment, access, and opportunities to all while identifying and eliminating barriers and outcome disparities that affect specific groups disproportionately. **Inclusion** refers to creating spaces where everyone is valued, supported, and respected; differences are celebrated and embraced; and everyone feels welcome and able to participate fully. Incorporating a diversity, equity, and inclusion framework is critical to any organization, particularly for organizations dedicated to anti-trafficking efforts.

Diversity, equity, and inclusion must exist in all aspects of an organization, from leadership and staffing to decision-making and policy-setting. Hiring practices must be tailored so that people of culturally diverse and nontraditional backgrounds are encouraged to apply and are considered for advancement. Leadership should be diverse and reflect the demographics and lived experiences of the community served. Staff and leadership must receive ongoing training on cultural humility and implicit and explicit bias.

As you use this toolkit, remember to incorporate diversity, equity, and inclusion at all levels of your organization.

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Assessment: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Assess your organization’s readiness by answering the questions below.

Instructions: It’s important these ratings come from a staff and management perspective. Make sure both are engaged when answering these questions. For each line, circle one answer indicating the degree to which your organization applies the approach (0=no/never, 1=occasionally, and 2=yes/always).



The leadership engaged in anti-trafficking efforts is diverse and reflects the demographics and lived experiences of the community served.	
Decision-making and policy-setting are always made with inclusive and diverse voices and demographics, like those with lived experience, 2SLGBTQIA+ persons, and culturally and linguistically diverse people.	
Your organization provides a work environment that promotes diversity, equity, and inclusion, supporting members of communities that have been historically oppressed and marginalized.	
Your organization serves all survivors of trafficking (either directly or through vetted referrals), including communities of color, 2SLGBTQIA+ persons, and culturally and linguistically diverse people. Your staff reflects the community you serve (culture, ethnicity, gender, race, sexuality, and citizenship).	
If staff do not reflect those communities and/or your organization does not specialize in those communities, your organization partners with another organization that provides services and allows survivors to choose which provider to access services.	
Inclusivity, bias, racial equity, and cultural humility are part of discussions and ongoing development.	
Your organization’s policies provide guidance on culturally appropriate and person-first language.	
Your organization’s policies and procedures celebrate, encourage, and foster diversity, inclusion, and racial equity.	
Job postings are in plain language. Those with lived experiences, 2SLGBTQIA+ persons, and culturally and linguistically diverse people are encouraged to apply. No barriers prevent the hiring and retention of diverse candidates (e.g., name-blind submission systems, preventing the submission of headshots with résumés, eliminating questions around previous engagement with law enforcement unless pertinent to/required for the position).	
Organizational advancement opportunities are open and transparent; ensure unbiased, equal opportunities; and include those with lived experiences, 2SLGBTQIA+ persons, and culturally and linguistically diverse people.	
All staff, volunteers, and consultants receive appropriate training on working with 2SLGBTQIA+ persons and culturally and linguistically diverse people during onboarding and annually.	



Instructions: It's important these ratings come from a staff and management perspective. Make sure both are engaged when answering these questions. For each line, circle one answer indicating the degree to which your organization applies the approach (0=no/never, 1=occasionally, and 2=yes/always).



All staff, volunteers, and consultants receive training on explicit and implicit bias, with annual training sessions building on the program's foundation.

Your organization's policies and procedures are inclusive of reasonable accommodation requests around disabilities and accessibility. They provide equitable access to success and opportunity.

Supervisors receive effective training on supervising staff, consultants, and volunteers, including those with lived experience, 2SLGBTQIA+ persons, and culturally and linguistically diverse people.

Section Score: out of 28



Practical Strategies and Tips

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

Representation Matters

- Place the same value on lived experience, educational experience, and work experience.
- Expand agency leadership and board membership to increase diverse participation to reflect the demographics and lived experiences of the community served. Consider advisory committees for boards that include survivor leadership.
- Create a representative diversity, equity, and inclusion committee to provide recommendations, protocols, policies, and procedures to promote a work environment supportive of members of diverse communities.
- Have clear, long-term organizational plans to address bias, lack of access, and barriers to employment and service deliveries for communities of color, 2SLGBTQIA+ community members, and other communities that have been oppressed and marginalized.
- Hire staff who reflect the diversity of the population served; invite and encourage those with lived experience, 2SLGBTQIA+ persons, and culturally and linguistically diverse people to apply.
 - Example: A job posting with the guiding principles listed clearly states that those with lived experiences, 2SLGBTQIA+ persons, and culturally and linguistically diverse people are encouraged to apply.



Beware of Tokenism

Tokenism is a superficial practice to create the appearance of social inclusivity and diversity; it includes members of underrepresented groups, including survivor leaders, as a symbolic gesture to avoid criticism (Bender, 2014). All positions should have an equal stake in decision-making to ensure true representation.

- Continue to track and address organizational impacts internally and externally by examining benefits and burdens for the survivor community, including communities of color, 2SLGBTQIA+ persons, and culturally and linguistically diverse people. These systems should include examining the cultural validity of client services and organizational aptitude for diversity, inclusion, and racial equity.
- Reflect accurate and diverse stories in marketing, branding, and communication. Be mindful of perpetuating any cultural stereotypes or stigmatizing specific cultures or communities. 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 can change public perception with more culturally sensitive and responsive narratives of trafficking. Ensure that supervisors and your entire organization receive training on trauma and trauma-informed practices. Your organization must be in tune and responsive to not only trauma from trafficking experiences but other trauma experiences one may have faced and current events. Be responsive to experiences of anti-Black or Brown violence in the media, pandemics, and so on. Acknowledge the diversity of experience staff have.
- Ensure cultural diversity of perspectives and cultures. Do not ask people from a specific group to speak for an entire group (e.g., all survivor leaders, tribal members, people from communities of color, or under-resourced communities).
- Ensure reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities protected under the [Americans With Disabilities Act](#). People should have minimal barriers to making requests or using accommodations.

Check Bias

- Encourage all staff, consultants, leadership, board members, and volunteers to recognize and acknowledge their own biases, prejudices, privileges, and oppressions and train on how to mitigate these in their work on behalf of your organization.
- Ensure organizational development includes strategies to address inclusivity, bias, and racial equity within the workplace, as prerequisites for a plan to address human trafficking.
- Promote using culturally appropriate and person-first language within your organization and when working with community members.
- Encourage supervisors to identify their own personal biases, prejudices, privileges, and oppressions and train on how to mitigate these when supervising staff, consultants, or volunteers.

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Resources

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

- » [Independent Sector | Why Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Matter](#)
- » [National Center for Cultural Competence at Georgetown University | Cultural Inclusivity Assessment Resources](#)
- » [National Center for Cultural Competence at Georgetown University | Family Organizational Assessment Tool](#)
- » [National Center for Cultural Competence at Georgetown University | A Guide for Using the Cultural and Linguistic Competence Policy Assessment Instrument](#)
- » [SOAR | Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services](#)
- » [Vivian Chavez | Cultural Humility: People, Principles, and Practices \(YouTube video\)](#)

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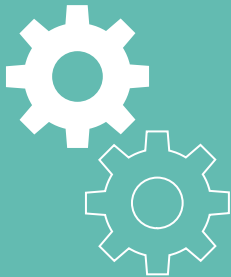
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CHAPTER 6



Organizational Policies and Procedures

Chapter 6: Organizational Policies and Procedures

An organization’s policies and procedures provide insight into its culture, processes, and priorities. They are the guidelines that support the practices within the organization to meet its goals and objectives in alignment with its mission. To develop or adapt policies and procedures tailored to anti-trafficking efforts, an organization must examine structural aspects that (1) support or create barriers to this work, (2) achieve a person-centered approach, and (3) incorporate guiding principles (including a trauma-informed approach and ethical behavior).

Policies should be clear, transparent, and easy to access for all staff and volunteers. Organizations must solicit feedback regularly from all staff and volunteers on how current policies are working. Organizations must respond quickly to feedback; this demonstrates that organizations are listening and value all feedback. Organizations should also regularly monitor and assess the impact of primary and secondary trauma to inform organizational practices, policies, and procedures.

The next few chapters will cover the following dimensions of organizational readiness: human resource development and training, wellness, trauma-informed supervision, and moving from program participant to agency representative. This is not an exhaustive list of policies and procedures that should be assessed. It is a starting point for organizations looking to expand their capacity to serve survivors of trafficking. Each chapter includes assessment tools, practical strategies, and tips.

Assessment: Organizational Policies and Procedures

Assess your organization’s readiness by answering the questions below.

<p>Instructions: It’s important these ratings come from a staff and management perspective. Make sure both are engaged when answering these questions. For each line, circle one answer indicating the degree to which your organization applies the approach (0=no/never, 1=occasionally, and 2=yes/always).</p>	No/Never	Occasionally	Yes/Always
Your organization’s policies outline communication systems that allow for new ideas and suggestions from frontline staff to leadership.			
Your organization implements policies and practices that foster diverse feedback from staff at all services, programming, or outreach levels.			
Your organization implements policies and practices that foster diverse feedback from services, programming, or outreach participants.			
Feedback is reviewed, analyzed, and discussed, paying close attention to negative impacts from all participants. Assessments include how the impact may vary for different people who are part of a subpopulation (e.g., race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation) to ensure equity.			
Your organization’s policies are clear, transparent, and easy to access for all employees and volunteers.			
Your organization’s policies and procedures on conflict resolution are clearly defined.			



Instructions: It's important these ratings come from a staff and management perspective. Make sure both are engaged when answering these questions. For each line, circle one answer indicating the degree to which your organization applies the approach (0=no/never, 1=occasionally, and 2=yes/always).



Your organization's policies outline ethical codes and provide guidance to ensure confidentiality for staff, consultants, and volunteers who disclose trauma.

Your organization's policies are routinely reviewed, discussed, and open for feedback from all staff and include an equity analysis.

Your organization's safety measures and procedures are defined and accessible to all staff, volunteers, and consultants.

Section Score: out of 18

Practical Strategies and Tips

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

Be Responsive

- Respond quickly to staff and client feedback regarding services offered and needed within the community.
- Evaluate whether policies allow for response to immediate community needs and issues identified at all levels of the agency, from frontline workers to executive leadership.
- Adopt a trauma-informed framework for conflict resolution.
- Establish widely accessible anonymous feedback procedures reviewed by executive leadership, including board members, for all staff.





Resources

Policies and Procedures

- » [American Bar Association | Model Rules of Professional Conduct](#)
- » [American Medical Association | Code of Ethics](#)
- » [American Nurses Association | Ethics Topics and Articles — Human Trafficking](#)
- » [American Psychological Association | Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct](#)
- » [Clackamas Community College | Interim Equitable Decision-Making Framework](#)
- » [Creating Presence | Becoming a Trauma-Informed Organization](#)
- » [Justice Research Institute | Project Reach](#)
- » [Ohio Department of Education \(as adapted from the Minnesota Department of Health\) | Policy and Process Review Through an Equity Lens Tool](#)
- » [National Association of Social Workers | Code of Ethics](#)
- » [Office for Victims of Crime Training and Technical Assistance Center | Ethics in Victim Services](#)
- » [Office for Victims of Crime Training and Technical Assistance Center | Using a Trauma-Informed Approach](#)
- » [Office of Minority Health Think Cultural Health | National Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services Standards](#)
- » [Office of Personnel Management | Federal Employee Assistance Programs](#)
- » [Resologics | Trauma-Informed Mediation](#)
- » [Sanctuary Institute | Sanctuary Model](#)
- » [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration | Concepts of Trauma and Guidance for a Trauma-Informed Approach](#)

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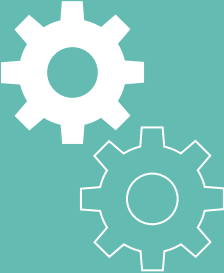
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CHAPTER 7



Human Resource Development and Training

Chapter 7: Human Resource Development and Training

The recruitment, hiring, onboarding, and training processes may be the first interaction someone will have with your organization. The guiding principles of a program that serves survivors of human trafficking should be evident at the very moment potential employees come into contact with the organization, during the hiring process, and throughout their employment.

Job postings, salaries, interview processes, background checks, training, supervision, and advancements must reflect the organization’s guiding principles. Organizations that work with volunteers and consultants should be held to the same standards as all staff and afforded opportunities for specialized training to ensure their efforts are aligned with the overall guiding principles of the organization/program. Training needs to be intentional and mandatory and range from the basics (e.g., confidentiality, mandated reporting, informed consent, policies and procedures) to more in-depth topics (e.g., implicit bias, the impact of trauma, trauma bonding, 2SLGBTQIA+ terminology).

A. Recruitment, Hiring, and Advancement

Assessment: Human Resource Development

Assess your organization’s readiness by answering the questions below.

<p>Instructions: It’s important these ratings come from a staff and management perspective. Make sure both are engaged when answering these questions. For each line, circle one answer indicating the degree to which your organization applies the approach (0=no/never, 1=occasionally, and 2=yes/always).</p>	No/Never	Occasionally	Yes/Always
<p>Job postings, including volunteer and consultant positions, explicitly state your organization’s commitment to the guiding principles.</p>			
<p>Your organization developed compensation calculation policies supporting equity and accounting for traditional and nontraditional expertise.</p>			
<p>Salaries are inclusive, equitable, and calculated without explicit or implicit bias.</p>			
<p>Policies address how your organization can support the potential employment of people with lived experiences or people from communities of color who are qualified for the position but have barriers that may make them ineligible. For example, include exceptions for those with a criminal history or remove drug testing requirements.</p>			
<p>Your organization’s interview process is trauma informed and culturally competent, supports inclusivity, addresses implicit bias, and does not require personal disclosures.</p>			
<p>Your organization’s interview process is survivor informed, including questions developed in collaboration with survivor leaders. Where possible, survivor leaders are a part of the interview team.</p>			



Practical Strategies and Tips

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

Strengthen Recruitment

- Create job postings that clearly articulate the guiding principles, are accessible through multiple avenues, and use plain language to describe job requirements.
- Evaluate compensation calculation policies to ensure equity across your organization and account for the expertise of those with lived experiences.
- Provide an option that education may be replaced by a particular amount of lived or professional experience, as appropriate.
 - Example: A master's degree in social work requirement may be met by a bachelor's degree in a related area and 3 years of professional experience.
- Develop policies and practices for hiring people with lived experience despite challenges (e.g., legal, work, education history). Employment gaps and education could be due to lived experiences.
- Include multiple language skills (verbal and sign) as part of required or preferred qualifications, when appropriate to the job, and compensate accordingly.
- Advertise positions in places relevant to diverse communities to avoid limiting a candidate pool. Consider building a recruitment relationship with culturally specific schools, like historically Black colleges and universities or tribal colleges and universities.
- Expand program capacity to serve underserved and under-resourced populations specific to all aspects of human trafficking, like labor trafficking, men and boys, and youth who have run away and are experiencing homelessness.
- Send job postings to listservs and share them with organizations that work with survivors of trauma, like anti-trafficking organizations like [Survivor Alliance](#) and [National Survivor Network](#). Employers can also use nontraditional methods and social media (e.g., radio, print, Facebook, Twitter) to announce job postings in communities where those with lived experience are more likely to hear or see them.
- Develop hiring policies and practices inclusive of all human trafficking experiences and address barriers to employment, like criminal history and employment gaps.
- Analyze policies for recruitment to include survivors who meet the requirements but may have a criminal history related to their trafficking experience.
- Know what criminal history your organization and funders can and cannot work around. Be transparent about your organization's requirements for positions that require a background check, and explain why they exist.
- Eliminate credit checks, as possible. If exploitation was a component of the trauma, a trafficker or perpetrator of violence might have ruined the person's credit history and score.
- Inform applicants that reference checks must be conducted and completed before an offer.
- Limit the requirements for background checks to only positions that require it and ensure that access to the results is only on a need-to-know basis.

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- Eliminate drug testing requirements as possible. Survivors may have been forced to use drugs that could still be detectable in their system.
- Review policies and procedures for supporting a safe environment and encouraging personal autonomy.
- Create guidelines that eliminate the potential for “dual relationships” (like between a supervisor and client) with consideration of the potential for clients to later work in a more formal position within your organization (e.g., staff, volunteer).
- Develop positions that do not require sharing personal experiences with human trafficking, trauma, or other personal histories.

Align With the Guiding Principles

- Assess a candidate’s skillset by asking questions relevant to the job duties using industry terminology. Ask relevant questions about the skills needed for the position.
- Inquire in all interviews about self-care, including what applicants would be looking for from your organization. Examples include “What do you do for self-care?” and “What can your supervisor or team do to support your self-care?”
- Use questions informed by those with lived experience. An ideal interview would include survivor leaders asking some of the pre-planned questions.
- Share information about your organization’s mission, vision, and values related to the guiding principles and expectations for staff, volunteers, and consultants in helping your organization apply the principles.



Caution

- Sign confidentiality agreements.
- Do not ask any applicant (verbally or in writing) if they have experienced trafficking, even if the individual is known to your organization.
- If an applicant discloses they have experienced trafficking, do not ask them for their trafficking story, which can be re-traumatizing.

Promote Advancement

- Conduct annual performance reviews using goals determined in supervision.
- Provide clear job descriptions with measurable qualifications required to advance within your organization.
- Give annual raises to staff who meet their performance measures each year. Adjust and/or set budgets that allow for annual raises and multiple types of compensation.
- Explore flexible work schedules as a standard for promoting employee wellness instead of something that should be earned. Determining schedules should be a collaborative effort between the organization and employees.
- Ensure that raises and incentives are fair, consistent, and transparent.

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B. Onboarding and Training

Assessment: Training

Assess your organization’s readiness by answering the questions below.

Instructions: It’s important these ratings come from a staff and management perspective. Make sure both are engaged when answering these questions. For each line, circle one answer indicating the frequency to which your organization applies the approach (0=no/never, 1=occasionally, and 2=yes/always).



Staff, volunteers, and consultants are trained on all types of human trafficking before direct work with people. Your organization regularly updates trainings to reflect evolving knowledge and an evidence base.

Staff, volunteers, and consultants are trained on safety and crisis protocols before direct work with people and receive annual updates.

All staff, volunteers, and consultants are trained on confidentiality, mandated reporting, and/or reporting requirements and how to respond to disclosures before direct work with people and/or working within your program.

All staff, volunteers, and consultants receive appropriate training on trauma, trauma bonding, trauma reactions, and trauma-informed responses during the onboarding process.

Trainings are up to date, documented, and kept current in staff files.

Section Score: out of 10

Practical Strategies and Tips

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

Support Onboarding

- Develop an orientation program for staff, volunteers, and consultants that includes the guiding principles of your program, program model, available services for clients, client codes of conduct, and other unique aspects of your program.
- Provide training and paperwork that includes clear guidance on policies, procedures, and resources, including employee assistance programs, if available. Consider employee sign-off on policies and procedures annually.
- Provide all required training before direct work with clients, ensuring your supervisor processes what they have learned and experienced. Training should include all areas listed in the above training assessment with the included timeframes. Human Trafficking 101 should consist of training on all forms of human trafficking, even if your organization only specializes in one type.



- Create a buddy/mentor program for the first 3 months, where all new hires or volunteers are paired with a peer who can help answer questions and support learning the responsibilities and integrating into your organization.
- Ask everyone how they prefer to be identified, using culturally appropriate references (like Two-Spirit) and their pronouns. Until clarified, default to non-gender-specific pronouns like they/them.
- Do not assume that persons who have experienced trafficking or any crime will want to use the term “survivor” or will want their experience with trafficking shared with colleagues.
- Schedule regular supervision sessions from the beginning to process initial experiences, lessons learned, and self-care. Consider employee assistance programs that can provide a diverse range of supports and clear boundaries with work and personal experiences.
- Require annual training on ethical conflicts using workplace scenarios for all staff, volunteers, consultants, and board members.
- Ensure reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities protected under the Americans With Disabilities Act. People should have minimal barriers to making requests or using accommodations.
- Train staff to conduct conflict resolution using a trauma-informed framework.
- Train staff on practices related to the person’s ability to control the disclosure of trauma and personal experiences.
- If the person has self-disclosed a trauma history, highlight benefits like paid time off, wellness benefits, Family and Medical Leave Act leave, and short-term disability when needed.
- Remember that training should not be a crisis response, so plan accordingly.



Suggested Required Training Topics

- Human Trafficking 101
- Safety and Crisis Protocols
- Confidentiality, Mandated Reporting, and/or Reporting Requirements
- Response to Disclosures
- Linguistic and Cultural Diversity
- 2SLGBTQ2IA+
- Trauma, Trauma Bonding, Trauma Reactions, and Trauma-Informed Responses
- Equity and Inclusion
- Explicit and Implicit Bias

Foster Professional Development

- Offer ongoing training in the areas identified in the training assessment and other areas identified by program leadership, employees, and clients.
- Make it clear whether there is a continuing education requirement or certification necessary to keep the job, and identify resources to support staff in meeting this requirement.
- Engage staff, volunteers, and consultants in creating performance measures that incorporate your program’s guiding principles and support professional growth.
- Match your employees with professional training opportunities that complement their role or desired area of professional growth.



- Encourage people to obtain additional training, certifications, or other professional development opportunities that will support their broader career goals.
- Provide financial or in-kind incentives; recognition for accomplishments makes a positive impact.
- Explore potential scholarships for those with lived experiences that may be available through schools, faith-based organizations, and nongovernmental organizations.
- Communicate expectations, including intended outcomes, often and clearly to avoid surprises.



Develop Intentional Performance Measures

- Develop measures together between supervisor and employee.
- Include professional growth, program development, and self-care.
- Use performance measures as a foundational component of regular supervision.
- Celebrate successes and plan for additional development.

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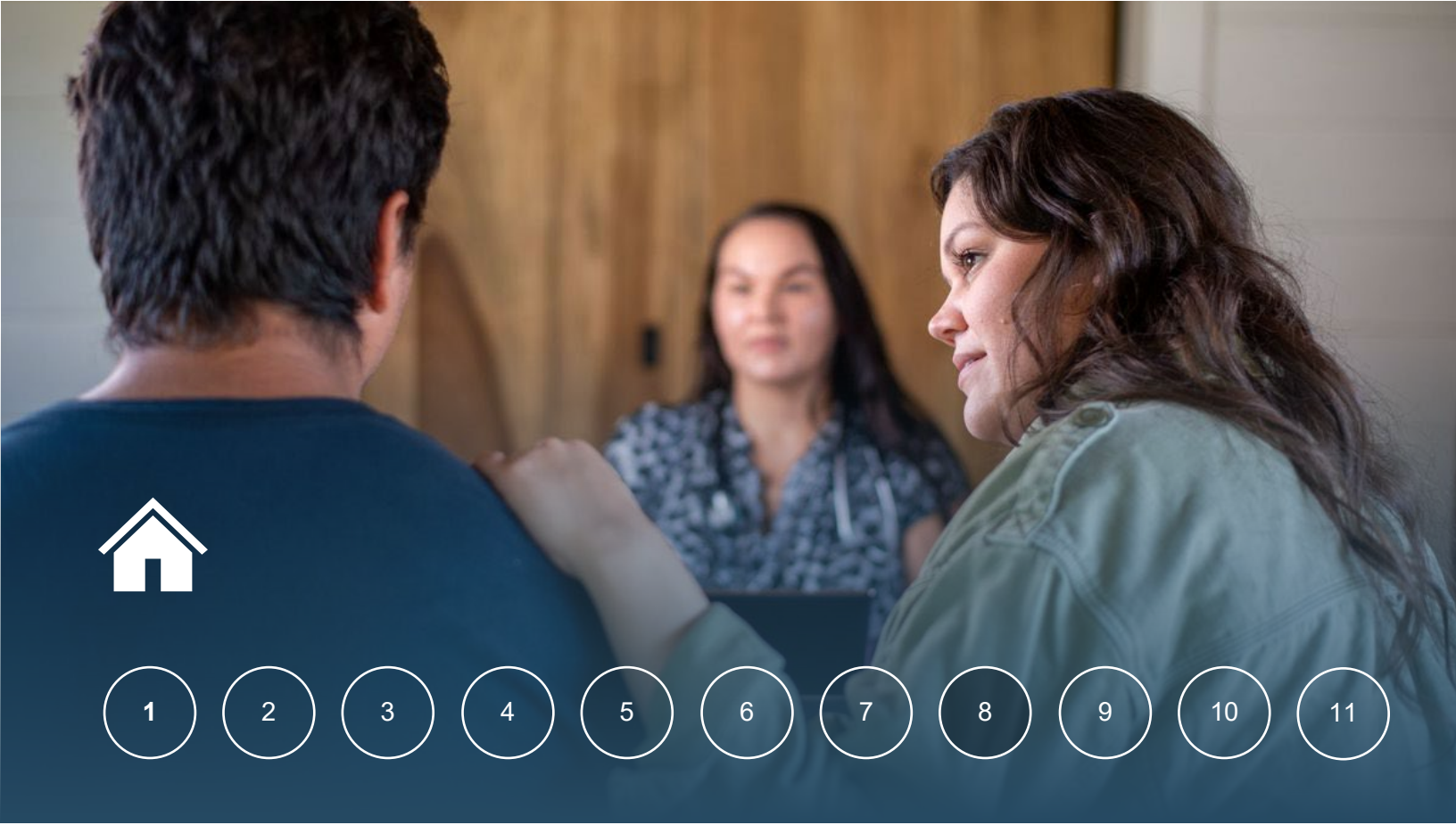
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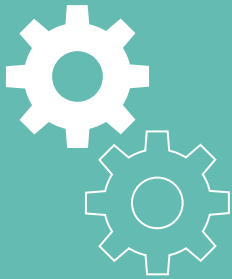
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CHAPTER 8



Wellness

Chapter 8: Wellness

Wellness is a broad term that refers to the state of being in and/or pursuing good emotional, mental, and physical health. Incorporating wellness practices into an organization has many benefits, including employee retention, satisfaction, and buy-in. A wellness program can help employees struggling with vicarious trauma, secondary traumatic stress, compassion fatigue, etc. While many of these terms sound like buzzwords, they are all very real consequences that can take a toll on the toughest employees.

Assessment: Wellness

Assess your organization’s readiness by answering the questions below.

Instructions: It’s important these ratings come from a staff and management perspective. Make sure both are engaged when answering these questions. For each line, circle one answer indicating the degree to which your organization applies the approach (0=no/never, 1=occasionally, and 2=yes/always).



Wellness and self-care are included in your organization’s policies and practices.	
Your organization’s policies foster self-care strategies and offer resources to all staff, consultants, and volunteers.	
Options for small group and one-on-one reflections are available and voluntary to all to regularly share experiences related to work, work-life balance, and related topics.	
Staff are encouraged to self-assess for possible trauma triggers and discuss these with their supervisor or human resources.	
An employee assistance program or similar employee wellness program is established for staff to access short-term counseling.	
Staff, consultants, and volunteers are encouraged to develop self-care plans, and accessing assistance is encouraged and not stigmatized.	
The supervision structure includes regular trauma-informed and culturally competent sessions and opportunities to address vicarious trauma and self-care.	
Your organizational culture and policies do not differentiate between a person’s physical and mental health paid time off needs.	
Staff receive training on vicarious trauma, secondary traumatic stress, and how to develop healthy coping skills.	

Section Score: out of 18



Practical Strategies and Tips

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

Support Self-Care and Wellness

- Establish employee wellness and self-care practices, like providing an employee assistance program, and create supervision time to update, discuss, and debrief on self-care practices.
- Work with human resources and other leadership to identify ways to formalize policies that encourage self-care and create resources within your organization to reduce burnout, vicarious trauma, and other topics of need.
- Consider providing an hour a week for staff and volunteers to engage in their own self-care activities.
- Incorporate wellness benefits like paid staff breaks, flexible schedules, mental health leave, and other practices that allow people to engage in self-care.
- Offer a self-care practice to show that your organization prioritizes employee wellness, and make sure that leadership models this behavior. Offer yoga, dancing, or other activities once a month.
- Incorporate sensory-based grounding tools. Resources incorporating the five senses (i.e., smell, touch, hearing, taste, and sight), such as aromatherapy, stress balls, music, and art, create a trauma-informed environment.
- Assess your organizational culture and policies that support paid leave for mental and physical health needs.
- Create guidelines for supporting staff and volunteers who perform speaking engagements. Support may include debriefs in a confidential, non-stigmatizing, and optional manner. (For more information, see Chapter 10.)
- Consider allowing flexible work schedules if adequate staffing allows for them. Flexibility is especially important for things like childcare, elder care, and unexpected life events. Having schedules that recognize life outside of work helps to retain staff. If job duties do not require one to be onsite, consider the ability to work virtually full-time or part-time.
- Reach out to your board, community, and local businesses to provide pro bono services to your team for wellness and self-care.
- Establish a regular, voluntary 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 checking in with **all** staff is essential. Do not single out only those staff who identify as survivor leaders.
- Promote a culture of learning and sharing between all employees. Ensure there is an ongoing process in which leadership receives feedback from staff and clients and regularly assesses the impact of workplace policies and practices on diversity and inclusion.
- Continue to have conversations and ongoing training around vicarious trauma and compassion fatigue, and take time to acknowledge resources for staff support.

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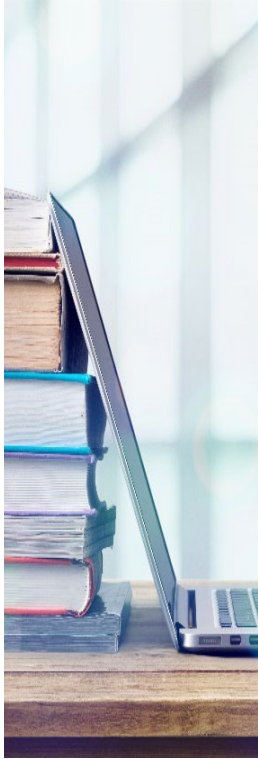
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Resources

Policies and Procedures

- » [American Medical Association | Code of Ethics](#)
- » [American Nurses Association | Ethics Topics and Articles: Human Trafficking](#)
- » [American Psychological Association | Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct](#)
- » [Office for Victims of Crime Training and Technical Assistance Center | Ethics in Victim Services](#)
- » [Office of Personnel Management | Federal Employee Assistance Programs](#)
- » [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration | Concepts of Trauma and Guidance for a Trauma-Informed Approach](#)
- » [The Sanctuary Model | Vicarious Trauma](#)

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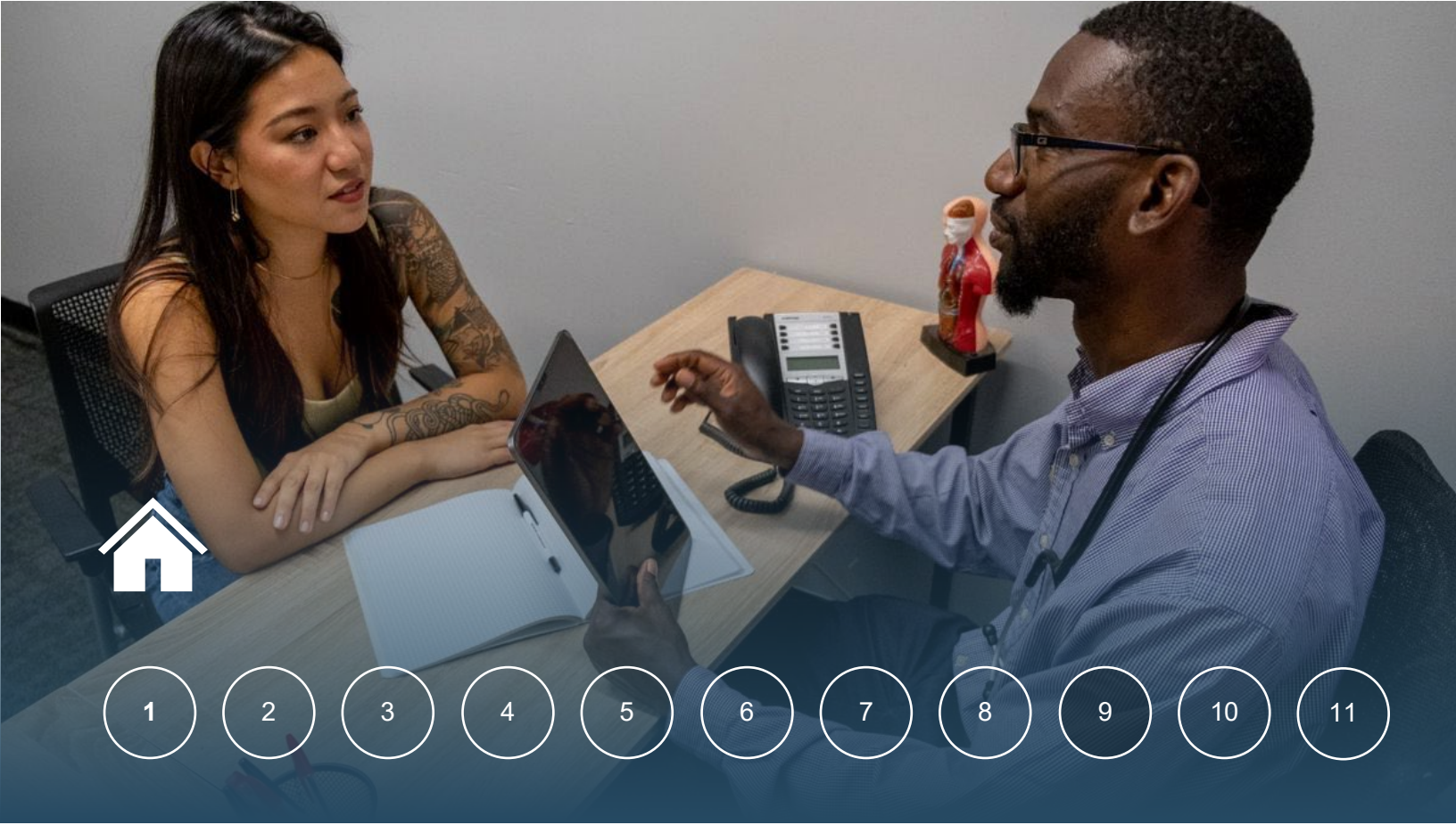
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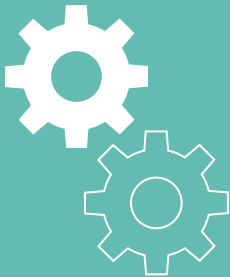
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CHAPTER 9



Trauma-informed Supervision

Chapter 9: Trauma-informed Supervision

Supervision provides an ongoing opportunity for support, professional development, and accountability across the organization. It is also a key opportunity for leadership to reflect on the organization’s mission, vision, and culture and receive feedback from staff at varying levels. Supervisors and all processes related to supervision should adhere to the guiding principles of a program that serves people who have experienced human trafficking. While staff are most frequently in contact with the project or program supervisor, this also applies to your work with volunteers and consultants. Trauma-informed supervision is extremely important for survivors moving from a client to a staff role. (For more information on such a transition, see Chapter 10.)

Assessment: Trauma-Informed Supervision

Assess your organization’s readiness by answering the questions below.

Instructions: It’s important these ratings come from a staff and management perspective. Make sure both are engaged when answering these questions. For each line, circle one answer indicating the degree to which your organization applies the approach (0=no/never, 1=occasionally, and 2=yes/always).



Supervisors receive training in trauma- and survivor-informed management and supervision skills.

Supervision includes regularly checking in on self-care and wellness, creating space for staff to identify their personal self-care goals, and supporting them in achieving those goals.

Supervisors model self-care and healthy professional boundaries and encourage and facilitate these practices within your organization, supporting the use of vacation and sick days or mental health days, flexible work schedules, and working virtually when needed.

Supervisors receive ongoing training on vicarious trauma and provide opportunities to proactively address it in a way that is supportive of their staff and focused on ensuring wellness.

Staff contribute equally to the supervision agenda, discussion, and workplan.

Supervisors ask questions that will assist staff in identifying their strengths and opportunities for growth.

Supervisors provide a confidential and safe space for staff to process their experiences, how they felt, and what emotions were elicited.

Performance improvement plans and disciplinary actions are addressed appropriately and confidentially. There is accountability for how supervisors respond to grievances brought by the employees they manage regarding workload sustainability and work-life balance.

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.

Equip Personnel

- Provide supervisors with mandatory advanced training in identifying their personal biases, prejudices, privileges, and oppressions and how to mitigate these in their supervision of staff, consultants, and volunteers.
- Empower supervisors with the necessary tools and training to effectively support their teams. Provide ongoing trauma- and survivor-informed management and supervision training that reiterates the guiding principles and culture of your organization's supervision structure.
- Seek opportunities and materials that allow for self-assessment of vicarious/secondary trauma.
- Establish clearly written job descriptions, roles and responsibilities, and organizational structures accessible and understood by your team. Share updates as positions evolve.
- Expose new staff to as many facets of your organization as possible during their orientation.
- Encourage paid peer-to-peer exchanges among staff, consultants, and volunteers. Some may benefit from shadowing other members of your team to improve their understanding of their work, their role, the roles of others, and opportunities for collaboration. Staff participation should be integrated into regular duties rather than a secondary, uncompensated job expansion.
- Use individualized growth plans for areas where staff can improve their performance.

Support Staff

- Move beyond task management and include reflection between the supervisor and supervisee that fosters and builds on the person's strengths while identifying growth areas.
- Provide a safe and confidential space for staff to process experiences and feelings and discuss work-related issues.
- Encourage and ensure that everyone feels supported if, when, where, and how they want to disclose their personal experiences.
- Ensure staff contribute equally to the agenda, discussion, and workplan. Encourage and incorporate staff opinions and experiences.
- Consider hosting supervision outside your office and in a neutral space.
- Offer opportunities outside of annual reviews for feedback from your team. Allow for feedback during supervision and team meetings to make improvement and growth an ongoing positive part of your organizational culture.
- 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.

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Promote Wellness

- Encourage supervisors to model self-care and healthy ways of dealing with vicarious trauma. Include discussions on vicarious trauma, self-care, and wellness, creating space for staff to identify their personal self-care goals.
- Ensure supervisors regularly check in with their staff to assess workload, stress levels, and resilience and actively encourage their staff to leverage paid time off and flexible work schedules.
- Analyze workloads, tasks, and day-to-day schedules to assess whether they promote and create a space for personal and professional wellness.
- Promote opportunities for supervisors to model healthy professional boundaries (e.g., mindfulness of hours worked, schedule, availability outside of working hours) to the extent possible.
- Train supervisors to identify when a staff member may experience a trauma trigger. Normalize trauma responses and support staff, consultants, and volunteers in a confidential and individualized manner.
- Encourage supervisors to proactively check in on staff, consultants, and volunteers about how they feel about their workload, especially when responsibilities change.
- Encourage clear communication from staff, consultants, and volunteers that respects the boundaries and limitations of each person.

Promising Practices | Trauma-informed Supervision

Morgan exited a trafficking situation 6 years ago and is passionate about helping others who have experienced exploitation. Currently, they are a case manager for adolescents. Morgan's supervisor, Vidya, received management training that included trauma-informed supervision practices. Vidya and Morgan meet in a confidential space for weekly supervision to discuss an agenda they are developing. Vidya encourages Morgan to engage in self-care and routinely solicits feedback regarding Morgan's supervision experience.

Because Vidya creates a welcoming atmosphere, Morgan feels comfortable disclosing that they had nightmares about their trafficker. They think it's important to discuss this because they have had difficulty sleeping and arrived late three times this week. Vidya thanks Morgan for sharing what was impacting their work performance. Vidya and Morgan discuss strategies for self-care, and Vidya provides a list of counseling referrals and self-care resources that can accommodate Morgan's needs. The conversation remains confidential.

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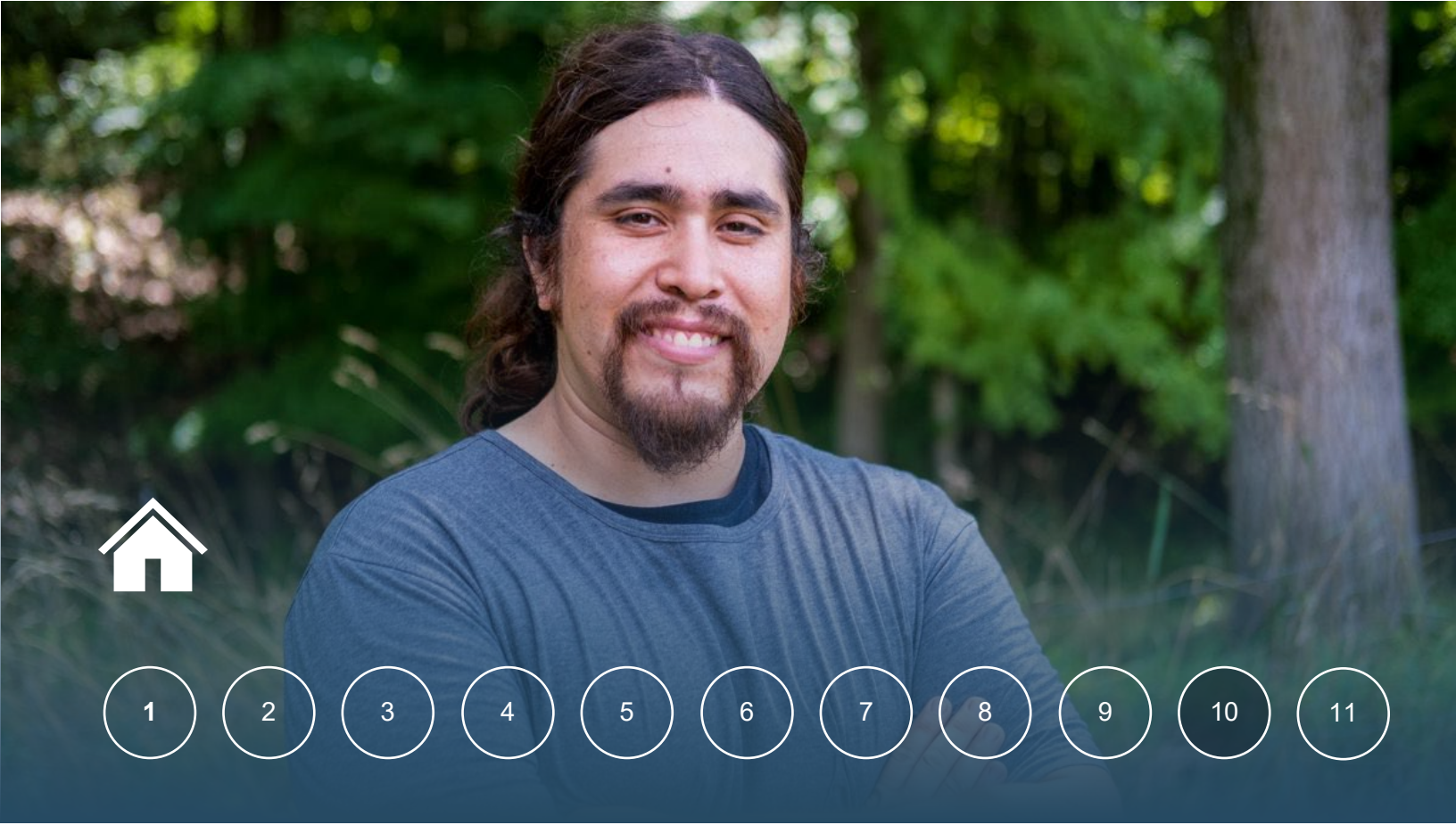


Resources

Trauma-Informed Supervision

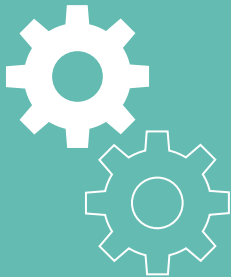
- » [American Psychological Association | Supervision for Trauma-Informed Practice](#)
- » [Multiplying Connections | Reflective Supervision as Trauma Informed Care: One Agency's Experience](#)
- » [Trauma Informed Oregon | Attunement and Self-Assessment in Supervision](#)





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CHAPTER 10



Moving from Program Participant to Agency Representative



Chapter 10: Moving From Program Participant to Agency Representative

Within the anti-trafficking field, if your organization provides services to people who have experienced trafficking, 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 defined professional policies and procedures to support survivors transitioning 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.

Assessment: Moving From Program Participant to Agency Representative

Assess your organization’s readiness by answering the questions below.

Instructions: It’s important these ratings come from a staff and management perspective. Make sure both are engaged when answering these questions. For each line, circle one answer indicating the degree to which your organization applies the approach (0=no/never, 1=occasionally, and 2=yes/always).



- Your organization’s policies and procedures establish clear boundaries for staff, consultants, and volunteers needing agency services, focusing on equity and accessibility.
- Trauma-informed policies and processes are in place to support a client’s transition to an employee.
- Confidentiality continues to be maintained with all information learned during service provision.
- Fair compensation is provided for any professional role; volunteer positions are not offered as an alternative to compensation.
- Leadership development programs, full scholarships, and opportunities are available and accessible to clients. These include internal and external learning opportunities.
- Supportive services for current clients take precedence over any transition process to a professional role.
- Performance is analyzed based on professional outcomes and goals achieved through a strengths-based lens.
- Survivor leaders are meaningfully supported by leadership and consistently engaged in discussions about the professional goals they draft. Their professional goals develop their skills further and are not limited to survivor-only roles.

Practical Strategies and Tips

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

Empower Survivors

- Refine policies and procedures to empower people transitioning from a client role to an agency representative role, including supports for professional success and prohibition of further exploitation by embedding trauma-informed practices.
- Offer positions at all levels to people with lived experience, including agency leadership and board membership, focusing on client services, peer support, and other topics.
- Anticipate and develop clear guidance to facilitate multi-layered relationships survivor leaders may hold. Multi-layer relationships occur with survivor leaders in professional roles who may be providing services to their peers from a new position of power. Transitioning clients often have more than one relationship role: client, peer, survivor leader, volunteer, and/or staff. These multi-layered and dynamic situations should be handled carefully to avoid projecting stigma or shame on a client's previous relationship with the service population.
- Ensure there is no potential for "dual relationships" (e.g., client and employee).
- Give special consideration when assigning survivor leader staff to provide services to clients. Supervisors must ensure that survivor leaders working with clients do not have a past personal history with the client, including through participating in your organization's program as clients. These past experiences can be triggering to staff and clients. New service-based relationships can be confusing to navigate. Still, they can be successfully established without perpetuating negative power dynamics that often occur when a 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 be considered when building policies to assess readiness and needs. Ask survivor leaders who have active cases if a professional opportunity, like a media interview, could impact their healing. Do not limit professional engagement to public-facing opportunities.
- Maintain confidentiality. 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 sure to regularly check for consent, and don't assume one instance of consent implies consent for all instances.



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 violates ethics. This is a dual relationship between a helping professional and an employer, and clear power dynamics might make it difficult to say no.

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Support Professional Development

- Provide fair, market-reflective compensation to survivor leaders transitioning 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.
- Provide professional opportunities that do not solely revolve around publicly speaking about trafficking or disclosing personal stories and allow for future career growth and upward mobility.
- Some survivor leaders may choose to share their personal stories. Develop training for those who desire to incorporate personal experiences into their outreach, emphasizing how to inform and educate for improved response and not focusing on sharing details about the exploitation itself — for example, sharing red flags that a professional might identify during their first interaction with a client.
- Provide survivor leaders with choices in the leadership skills they want to develop — partner with leadership programs inside and outside the anti-trafficking field. Equally important is proper research and vetting for all referral partners. Understand survivor leaders’ experience using the program: What can they expect?
- Elicit feedback on interests and goals as people grow professionally because their goals may frequently change. Strive to honor these interests.

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Resources

Ethical Considerations

- » [American Bar Association | Model Rules of Professional Conduct](#)
- » [American Nurses Association | Ethics and Human Rights](#)
- » [American Psychological Association | Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct](#)
- » [City of Philadelphia’s Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual disAbility Services | Peer Support Toolkit](#)
- » [National Association of Social Workers | Code of Ethics](#)
- » [Survivor Alliance | The 6 C’s of Becoming an Advocate](#)

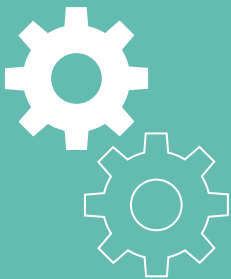
Leadership Development

- » For information and resources on leadership development, see [Chapter 2](#).





CHAPTER 11



Marketing, Media, Presentations, and Fundraising

Chapter 11: Marketing, Media, Presentations, and Fundraising

Media and presentations can be thwarted by sensational stories and graphics or exaggerated images used for shock value. Sharing graphic stories may grab the audience’s attention, but highlighting those details to shock your audience can create myths and misconceptions about victims of human trafficking that can be damaging to survivor leaders.

Assessment: Marketing, Media, Presentations, and Fundraising

Assess your organization’s readiness by answering the questions below.

Instructions: It’s important these ratings come from a staff and management perspective. Make sure both are engaged when answering these questions. For each line, circle one answer indicating the degree to which your organization applies the approach (0=no/never, 1=occasionally, and 2=yes/always).

No/Never	Occasionally	Yes/Always
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- Survivor leaders are not pressured to share their trauma stories.
- Survivor leaders control when, how, and why they share personal details about their stories.
- Survivor leaders are offered diverse opportunities to participate in marketing, media, presentations, and fundraising that do not involve public speaking.
- Survivor stories are shared only with survivors’ explicit knowledge and informed consent.
- Full disclosure of event details is 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.
- Marketing, media, presentations, and fundraising reflect accurate and diverse stories of survivor leaders in branding and across all public-facing materials and training. Stereotypes and misconceptions are dispelled.
- Survivor leaders are fairly compensated for participating in any organizational activities.
- Minors are not asked to share their personal history of exploitation publicly.
- Marketing, media, presentations, and fundraising do not focus on recounting traumatic events from trafficking situations. Stories are not overgeneralized or sensationalized.
- Survivor leaders are offered relevant skill training before engaging in events.
- Your organization has a clear policy on how clients may engage in outreach, awareness-raising, or fundraising opportunities. The policy clearly provides leadership development, compensation, and/or other agreed-upon benefits for clients’ personal journeys.
- Survivor leaders are encouraged to assess and mitigate safety risks with support from your organization.
- Resources for support and self-care are provided as needed.



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Practical Strategies and Tips

- Allow survivor leaders to always remain in control of the when, how, and why of sharing personal details about their stories.
- Do not ask minors to share exploitation publicly, including the 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, media, presentations, and fundraising efforts that do not include public speaking or sharing any aspect of their personal trauma history. Try to match this with their skillset and personal career goals. For example, if someone enjoys writing, they can support creating an awareness blog or media campaign or editing 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 (like Excel, Publisher, and Outlook) and other office-related work.
- Offer diverse opportunities for professional engagement, including training, researching laws and policy, peer mentoring, leading support groups, managing communications, blogging, writing newsletters, and managing social media editorial calendars.

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Compensation

- Include a budget for engaging with survivor leaders as consultants.
- Research payment and benefits for comparable positions across the United States and ensure fair compensation for anyone who performs any work that benefits your 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 your organization.

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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 marketing, media, presentations, and fundraising. Expand the trafficking narrative beyond victimization to empower communities and people with a focus on resiliency, strength, and healing.
- Avoid sensationalized stories and images like dark, shadowy alleys; women and children with little clothing; people 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 whether the materials are misleading.

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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 stories. Survivor leaders should be encouraged to share their expertise without focusing on their trauma stories.
- Do not share survivor stories without explicit knowledge and informed consent.
- Consult with survivor leaders to provide informed consent each time they share their stories.
- Ensure full disclosure and informed consent for all requests by clearly explaining what an engagement entails. This includes:
 - Audience information, including background (e.g., general public, law enforcement) and the anticipated number of attendees
 - Duration of time
 - Video recordings, photography, and media presence
 - Compensation
 - Question-and-answer format
 - Responsibilities, like facilitation or training
- Never assume that a survivor leader who agreed to one engagement will agree to another. Each engagement is separate.
- Support survivor leaders in assessing and mitigating safety risks associated with speaking events, media engagements, and other projects so they can make informed choices. Remember, it is important to provide information for survivor leaders to make informed choices and that the person, not your agency, make these choices.
- For safety and confidentiality, the survivor leader's preference for using their name, likeness, and story should be honored and protected. The survivor leader should choose whether to publish their information, which should always be discussed before the event.

Media, Photography, and Video Recordings

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

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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, intended audience, number of participants, 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 encourages her to bring a support person to the event and 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

- » [Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons | Media Best Practices](#)

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Conclusion

This toolkit is part of a movement to improve survivor leader engagement in broad anti-trafficking efforts. In working with diverse collaborators and partners to incorporate SAMHSA's Six Principles of a Trauma-Informed Approach recommended in this toolkit, two things became clear:

First, these practices cannot only be selectively applied to people who outwardly identify as survivor leaders. They must be woven into 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 can build thoughtful, empowering, trauma-sensitive, ethical, and culturally relevant practices for everyone, including people who have experienced human trafficking.

Second, organizations must allow each person to lead their personal and professional journeys. This means people, not organizations, decide how, when, and where to share their experiences of human trafficking. It challenges the field to get more creative about language, roles and engagement, and engaging survivors as leaders. As part of this, we must cast aside assumptions about survivors, which can be harmful and lead to the isolation, disqualification, or tokenism of people who have experienced human trafficking in organizational engagement.

This toolkit will continue to grow with diverse collaborators' feedback, perspectives, and inclusion. With collective commitment from diverse organizations and institutions to integrate meaningful changes, there is a substantive opportunity to improve how all collaborators 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 you would like to see included in this toolkit, email info@nhttac.org.

Glossary

Anxiety: A mental health response that frequently occurs after a person experiences psychological trauma. Anxiety impacts the nervous system and causes uncomfortable body sensations like 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 people 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 lives while experiencing exploitation. Gaining back control and self-determination is central to healing and creating a life of choice (*Sanar Institute*, 2022).

Burnout: A phenomenon experienced by professionals or community members when frequently exposed to traumatic situations. Burnout is increased by the severity of the trauma, like working with people who have been impacted by human trafficking, training on trauma-related content, and working in environments that do not promote self-care or trauma-informed practices.

Burnout can impact executive function, mental health, physical health, and the ability to provide effective support. People experiencing burnout may report feeling tired, have difficulty sleeping, or even use substances for self-medication to relieve burnout symptoms (*Sanar Institute*, 2022).

Commercially sexually exploited child or youth: A child or youth who experiences exploitation in the commercial sex industry for the financial benefit of another person. Because minors who experience exploitation in the commercial sex industry cannot consent to a sex act, the elements of force, fraud, and/or coercion are unnecessary. Therefore, youth younger than age 18 engaging in the commercial sex industry rise to the level of human trafficking. This can include youth and children with increased risk factors engaging in survival sex (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 2014).

Community-led: Includes a participatory process where community collaborators identify and define locally owned goals. Community members are leaders and active participants in change efforts (Movement for Community-Led Development, n.d.).

Compassion fatigue: A form of burnout that impacts staff, volunteers, mentors, and other professionals' ability to feel empathy toward people 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 healthy self-care boundaries because it often manifests 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, intimate partner violence) (*Sanar Institute, 2022*).

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 (National Association of Social Workers, n.d.).

Corporate social responsibility: Self-driven mechanism through which an organization integrates social concerns, social accountability, and social justice into organizational practices in meaningful, transparent, and consistent ways (United Nations Industrial Development Organization, n.d.)

Cultural competency: Ability to interact respectfully and effectively with people from different cultural backgrounds and practices (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2019a).

Cultural humility: Ability to recognize one's own preconceived stereotypes of other cultures paired with the understanding that what we learn and think about other cultures must come from members of that culture. This involves critical self-reflection, lifelong learning, recognizing and challenging power imbalances, and institutional accountability (Chávez, 2012).

Cultural norms: Behavioral standards that a culture follows, which dictate how people within the culture interact with one another (World Health Organization, 2009).

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. Cultural sensitivity acknowledges that no person can be completely competent in culture but considers cultural differences when providing competence and specialized care to meet a person's needs (World Health Organization, 2009). Cultural sensitivity also includes understanding how exploitation occurs in various cultures to avoid triggering, minimizing, or inadvertently blaming survivors (*Sanar Institute, 2022*).

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 (Think Cultural Health, n.d.)

Dissociation: A mental health condition with symptoms that create a feeling of disconnection from a person's body and mind. Symptoms include short-term memory loss, difficulty in concentration, and forgetfulness. A person who has dissociated often feels that they lost track of time. Dissociation can be triggered as a part of the person's stress response in the workplace during trainings, speaking engagements, or other trauma triggers in settings like supervision (American Psychiatric Association, 2013).

Diversity: All the ways people differ from one another including, but not limited to, race, ethnicity, culture, sexual orientation, gender expression, national origin, and religion (College of the Environment, n.d.)

Dual relationship: Occurs when a professional holds more than one relationship role with a client, survivor leader, volunteer, or staff member, often when one person is in a position of power (e.g., supervisor and client, manager and staff member, organization and survivor leader consultant). This presents unequal power dynamics in relationships that result in ethical conflicts and potential exploitation and re-traumatization (National Association of Social Workers, n.d.).

Empathy: Awareness and sensitivity to another person'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 own 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 (*Sanar Institute, 2022*).

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 confidentially offer services 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 (U.S. Office of Personnel Management, 2008). EAPs can provide advanced planning for 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>.

Equity: The consistent and systematic fair, just, and impartial treatment of all individuals, including those from communities that have been underserved and denied such treatment. For example, Black, Latine, and Indigenous and Native American persons; Asian Americans, Pacific Islanders, and other persons of color; members of religious minorities; Two-Spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and asexual (2SLGBTQIA+) persons; foreign nationals; persons with disabilities; persons who live in rural areas; and persons otherwise adversely affected by persistent poverty or inequality (Exec. Order No. 13,985, 2021).

Evidence-based practices: Measures supported through scientific and rigorous research. Evidence-based practices include a measurement of reliability and validity and have a statistically significant causal impact on expected positive outcomes. These practices have also undergone multiple research studies to ensure clinically significant outcomes. Evidence-based practices are strongly recommended in all programs and organizations (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2019b).

Gender responsiveness: Awareness surrounding the different needs of various genders and how to respond appropriately to fit the needs of each gender and gender expression. Gender responsiveness also includes awareness of the added vulnerabilities for people who identify as female or are on the 2SLGBTQIA+ spectrum (*Sanar Institute, 2022*).

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 trauma situations, 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 a person is addressed by a colleague, supervisor, or client (*Sanar Institute, 2022*).

Human trafficking: The Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000, as amended (22 U.S.C. § 7102), defines “severe forms of trafficking in persons” as follows:

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.

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.

(Office on Trafficking in Persons, 2017)

Inclusion: Creating spaces where everyone is valued, supported, and respected; differences are celebrated and embraced; and everyone feels welcome and able to fully participate (College of the Environment, n.d.)

Informed consent: Involves fully disclosing a person’s risks or benefits by consenting to any service, relationship, or engagement. Informed consent includes providing this information in language that is accessible to the person (American Psychological Association, 2017).

Mindfulness: Focused attention on sensory experiences like breathing, eating, walking, meditation, and body sensations. It is deliberate, focused awareness. It also includes observing 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 is a wonderful self-care tool (*Sanar Institute, 2022*).

Neuroplasticity: The brain’s ability to heal from traumatic experiences. Neuroplasticity studies show that the brain’s neuro networks can be healed and reconnected with the right trauma recovery modalities. People 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 people who have experienced trafficking while working in the anti-trafficking field.

Organizational culture: The shared missions, values, beliefs, and norms that influence and define how groups of people working in an organizational environment think, act, and behave. Organizational culture can trigger trauma for people in certain situations where trauma-informed practices are not followed (Stupak, 1985).

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 like 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 the body’s natural healing response (*Sanar Institute, 2022*).

Person-centered: Practices that give the client control to select appropriate services, including the amount, duration and scope of services, and choice of providers (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2019-a).

Person-first language: A way of speaking about people wherein the person is defined as a whole person instead of defining them by race, gender, sexuality, cultural identity, disability, or lived experience (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2022).

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 traumatic incident experience. People experiencing PTSD often benefit from trauma-informed services like psychotherapy, mindfulness, trauma-sensitive yoga, expressive arts therapy, and other sensory-based modalities that assist in symptom reduction (American Psychological Association, n.d.).

Primary trauma: First-hand trauma that happened to a person (*Sanar Institute*, 2022).

Privacy and confidentiality: Involves withholding personal information and not asking for unnecessary or irrelevant information that could result in harm. This includes not asking for information on a person's trauma history when it is irrelevant to provide services or carry out a role (American Psychological Association, 2017).

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 used practices with survivors of human trafficking that have shown initial positive outcomes (*Sanar Institute*, 2022).

Re-traumatization: The feeling, sensations, and symptoms of experiencing traumatization due to a person being reminded of their trauma history. Re-traumatization can happen when people are asked to share their stories or are in public arenas where they may experience shame or embarrassment about their trauma. It can also occur in the workplace when people have experiences that mirror their abuse, power dynamics, or relationships from past trauma and/or their trafficking situation (*Sanar Institute*, 2022).

Secondary trauma: Exposure to trauma through a secondary source (e.g., a hotline operator or case manager hears graphic details of a trafficking situation from a client) (*Sanar Institute*, 2022).

Secondary traumatic stress: A situation that occurs when a person is exposed to traumatic situations in their job responsibilities or to traumatic content that triggers responses to trauma and stress. Secondary traumatic stress presents 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 exercises, healthy daily habits, emotional support, stress relief activities (like yoga, expressive arts, or creative expression), and other holistic treatments like massage therapy. Self-care is critical to trauma-informed work cultures and prevents burnout, secondary traumatic stress, and vicarious trauma (*Sanar Institute*, 2022).

Sensationalism: The use of shocking stories, images, or accounts focused on increasing public attention without considering accuracy, impact, or negative perception and stereotypes they may cause (Bender, 2014).

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 (i.e., smell, touch, hearing, taste, and sight) (Van der Kolk, 2015).

Sensory-based modalities: Methods that incorporate the five senses (i.e., smell, touch, hearing, taste, and sight). Examples include aromatherapy for the sense of smell, using stress balls in a therapeutic session for the sense of touch, playing the piano for the sense of hearing, and using visual art in an expressive arts therapy session for the sense of sight (*Sanar Institute*, 2022).

Sensory-based resources: Resources that incorporate the five senses (i.e., smell, touch, hearing, taste, and sight). Examples include aromatherapy, stress balls, music, and art. Incorporating sensory-based grounding tools in the workplace creates a trauma-informed environment (*Sanar Institute*, 2022).

Sexual exploitation: The use of force, fraud, or coercion to manipulate a person 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 (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 2014).

Simple trauma: The lived experience of a single traumatic event like a car accident, sexual assault, or divorce (*Sanar Institute*, 2022).

Solutions-focused: An approach to identify the 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 (Institute for Solution-Focused Therapy, n.d.).

Strengths-based: Refers to services that focus on the resiliency and strengths of individuals and seek 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 (Jones-Smith, 2014).

Survivor (of human trafficking): Someone who has survived the trauma of being a victim of human trafficking. It is widely seen as an empowering term in the social services field to promote strength and resiliency for the person 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 (*Sanar Institute*, 2022).

Survivor leader: A person who has survived human trafficking and is making an empowered choice to engage in the anti-trafficking and/or other allied fields. Survivor leadership is a choice made by some people 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 (*Sanar Institute*, 2022).

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 like 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 their own course of action. A survivor's privacy and confidentiality are protected, and services are delivered in a nondiscriminatory manner (*Sanar Institute, 2022*).

Survivor-informed: 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*).

Sympathetic nervous system: A bodily system responsible for the arousal response, like 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 connecting the brain to every single body part (*Sanar Institute, 2022*).

Tokenism: A superficial practice to create the impression or appearance of social inclusivity and diversity; includes members of communities of color or underrepresented groups, including survivor leaders and people who have experienced trafficking, as a symbolic gesture to avoid criticism (*Bender, 2014*).

Trauma response: A reaction triggered when one is exposed to a highly stressful situation; this 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-informed: A method or approach of an organization involving how it operates and provides services to clients reflective at all levels of the organization. Trauma-informed practices include mindfulness of comprehensive factors that may impact people who have experienced 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, including anxiety, depression, dissociation, suicidality, hypervigilance, and a diverse range of other symptoms. These symptoms can directly correlate to the trauma experience and impact executive functioning, like concentration and memory. Some people who experience trauma may have existing mental health conditions exasperated by the trauma they endured (*Sanar Institute, 2022*).

Trauma-sensitive: To respond mindfully, with care, to the physical, emotional, and psychological trauma that may impact people who have experienced human trafficking. Responses to each person are unique and cater to each person's specific experience (*Sanar Institute, 2022*).

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

2SLGBTQIA+: An acronym referencing the spectrum of various sexual orientations and gender expressions. The acronym stands for Two-Spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, intersex, asexual, and other identities outside the cisgender/heterosexual orientation/expression. Sexuality and gender expression can often be expressed along the spectrum, and people with similar sexual orientations may identify with different labels. The addition of the Q for “queer” is a more recently preferred version of the acronym as cultural opinions of the term “queer” focus increasingly on its positive, reclaimed meaning. The Q can also stand for “questioning,” referring to those still exploring their own sexuality and/or gender. The “+” represents those who are part of the community but for whom 2SLGBTQIA does not accurately capture or reflect their identity (PFLAG, 2021).

Vicarious trauma: A response that can occur when a helping professional or community member internalizes the trauma experienced by a person 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 Institute*, 2022).

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