

A RESOURCE GUIDE

# Human Trafficking for Runaway and Homeless Youth Serving Programs



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# Contents

	<b>Page</b>
HUMAN TRAFFICKING: The Legal Framework and Legislative Updates .....	1
Defining Human Trafficking .....	1
Recent Relevant Federal Legislation.....	3
State Laws.....	4
HOMELESS YOUTH AND TRAFFICKING: What Does the Research Say? .....	6
Homeless Youth Vulnerability to Trafficking .....	6
Recruitment of Homeless and Runaway Youth into Labor and Sex Trafficking.....	7
Sex Trafficking of Boys and Young Men.....	9
Understanding Youth Homelessness as a Precursor to Trafficking.....	10
Demographic Disparities.....	11
Labor Trafficking.....	13
THE ROLE OF RHY PROGRAMS IN PREVENTING, IDENTIFYING, AND SERVING TRAFFICKED YOUTH.....	15
Street Outreach Program.....	15
Basic Center Program .....	17
Transitional Living Program and Maternity Group Home.....	19
THE FUNDAMENTALS: What Every Staff Member Needs to Know .....	22
Guiding Principles.....	22
Identifying Trafficking: Risk Factors.....	23
Youth Disclosures.....	28
Mandatory Reporting .....	29
Screening and Assessment .....	32
Victim-Centered and Trauma-Informed Care.....	33
Crisis Intervention.....	36
Therapeutic Intervention Methods .....	41
Safety Planning .....	44
Cultural Competence .....	45
PROGRAM MODELS .....	48
Specialized Programs.....	48
Integrated Programs .....	49
BUILDING A COLLABORATIVE COMMUNITY RESPONSE.....	51
Survivor-Informed Services .....	51

Special Considerations for Incorporating Survivors in RHY Programs .....	52
Peer Mentorship .....	53
Multidisciplinary Teams .....	54
Legal Assistance for Youth Victims of Trafficking .....	56
Confidentiality in MDTs.....	57
Working with Law Enforcement .....	57
Federal Resources .....	59
Conclusion .....	62
Appendix A. Glossary of Common Terms: Words, Phrases, and Acronyms.....	A-1
Appendix B. Sample of Human Trafficking Safety Protocol .....	B-1
Appendix C. Street Outreach Tips .....	C-1
Appendix D. Intake and Interviewing.....	D-1

## Exhibits

	<b>Page</b>
Exhibit 1. Physical and Mental Health Indicators of Runaway and Homeless Youth and Trafficking.....	27
Exhibit 2. Elements of a Trauma-Informed Services Approach.....	35
Exhibit 3. Therapeutic Intervention Modules .....	41
Exhibit 4. Effective Safety Planning Sample .....	44
Exhibit 5. Comprehensive Services .....	55

# HUMAN TRAFFICKING: The Legal Framework and Legislative Updates

## Defining Human Trafficking

The federal Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) defines “severe forms of trafficking in persons” as:

*Sex Trafficking:* The recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, obtaining, patronizing, or soliciting of a person for the purpose of a commercial sex act in which the commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such act has not attained 18 years of age.<sup>1</sup>

*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 purposes of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage or slavery.<sup>2</sup>

Essentially, *trafficking* is any compelled activity, whether the activity results in commercial sex or forced labor. Force, fraud, and coercion are the methods used by traffickers to compel a person to engage in commercial sex or forced labor. Under federal law, any individual under the age of 18 who has been trafficked into commercial sex is a victim of sex trafficking. No force, fraud, or coercion should be proved—homeless youth under the age of 18 who engage in trading sex to a person for anything of value are considered victims of sex trafficking. Youth workers and counselors should be familiar with the definitions of trafficking and should consider all the factors before determining whether a youth has been trafficked and the next steps.

Although many runaway and homeless youth (RHY) programs have trained extensively on human trafficking, there is often still some confusion about what constitutes force, fraud, and coercion. Because force, fraud, and coercion are the defining characteristics of trafficking, it is important that service providers have a clear understanding of these terms to be able to identify the indicators of trafficking when working with youth who may have been victimized.

*Force* is defined as “power, violence, compulsion, or constraint exerted upon or against a person or thing. Power dynamically considered, that is, in motion or in action; constraining power, compulsion; strength directed to an end.”<sup>3</sup>



<sup>1</sup> Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) of 2000, 22 U.S.C. § 7102, and U.S. Code › Title 18 › Part I › Chapter 77 › § 1591 - Sex trafficking of children or by force, fraud, or coercion.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Lehman, Jeffrey, and Shirelle Phelps, eds. 2004. *West's Encyclopedia of American Law*, 2nd ed., 08. Retrieved from [http://library.stic.et/documents/30479/31723/vol.13 - Dictionary\\_%26\\_Indexes+%281%29.pdf/560ff285-ee44-9c2e-63d9-045b596747d8?version=1.0](http://library.stic.et/documents/30479/31723/vol.13 - Dictionary_%26_Indexes+%281%29.pdf/560ff285-ee44-9c2e-63d9-045b596747d8?version=1.0)

Force is an act of violence or constraint. For example, a person who is beaten when they threaten to quit a job, someone who is locked inside a trailer or apartment when they are not working, or someone who is physically restrained by their employer against their will may be a victim of trafficking. A person who is forced to labor or compelled to perform a commercial sex act through violence and/or physical constraint is a victim of trafficking.

*Fraud* is defined as “A false representation of a matter of fact—whether by words or by conduct, by false or misleading allegations, or by concealment of what should have been disclosed—that deceived and is intended to deceive so that the individual will act upon it to her or his legal injury.”<sup>4</sup>

Fraud occurs in trafficking when someone is promised a certain rate of pay, form of work, type of visa and legal residential status, or contractual terms. Typically, for fraud to be tantamount to trafficking, the situation has to involve an extreme form of fraud (such as unpaid labor) or document tampering (such as visa fraud). Even criminal activity can be a form of trafficking, for example, forcing a young person to transport, sell, or distribute illegal or prescription drugs.

*Coercion* is defined as “the intimidation of a victim to compel the individual to do some act against his or her will by the use of psychological pressure, physical force, or threats. The crime of intentionally and unlawfully restraining another’s freedom by threatening to commit a crime, accusing the victim of a crime, disclosing any secret that would seriously impair the victim’s reputation in the community, or by performing or refusing to perform an official action lawfully requested by the victim, or by causing an official to do so.”<sup>5</sup>

When a trafficker threatens violence or other harm, coercion occurs, for example, threatening to kill the victim if the victim does not comply or threatening the family or a family member of a victim if the victim does not comply. Service providers should be aware that trafficking does not always include physical violence. New data indicate that traffickers use all three methods (force, fraud, and coercion) to compel victims to do their bidding. Youth workers, outreach staff, and counselors should be aware of these three means because they are important factors in determining whether a youth has been trafficked and in developing strategies to prevent human trafficking.

It is important for RHY service providers to understand that it is difficult for youth to survive on the streets and that youth may have to trade sex to meet their basic needs. When youth have few alternatives for work in the formal economy, whether because of their young age, their lack of address, their lack of experience, or their need for significant funds to support their families, they sometimes resort to survival acts. Runaway and homeless youth who engage in survival acts are not criminals. They are young individuals trying to survive on the streets and should be provided with services to address their basic needs. RHY programs are well positioned to provide these services to these youth.

**Note.** *A young adult age 18 to 24 engaging in sex acts as a means of survival to meet their basic needs may not meet the federal definition of sex trafficking. However, these young adults have very few options to survive when living on the streets, and RHY programs should support and advocate on their behalf. They may need support to deal with issues related to criminal charges; eviction, including from public*

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.



*housing supports; and negative impact of criminal history resulting in limited employment opportunities. In addition, RHY service providers can show support to these youth by understanding their experiences and avoiding any judgmental behaviors or language toward the youth.*

The following are forms of force, fraud, and coercion that are common in situations of trafficking:

- **Lack of mobility.** Perhaps the person is unable to change locations or homes without permission of someone else.
- **Debt bondage.** Debt bondage happens when someone is working only to pay off a debt. Sometimes, the employer continues to add debt for housing or transportation, so the employee will never work his or her way out of the debt.
- **Document confiscation.** Many times, traffickers will confiscate the youth's identification card, driver's license, passport, or other legal documents to maintain control over them and to threaten the possibility of deportation for the trafficked individuals if they report to the police.
- **Recruitment fraud.** This fraud happens when a person recruits someone to a job with false promises of pay or kind of work.
- **Lack of payment.** Sometimes, people are not paid at all, and, if they are unable to quit the job, that is trafficking.
- **Long hours without reprieve.** Employers forcing people to work excessive hours can be a red flag—this situation is often accompanied by other forms of coercion on this list.
- **Inability to walk away.** A likely sign that someone is being trafficked is that the individual feels that he or she cannot quit the job. These victims sometimes use the words *escape* or *run away* to describe quitting their jobs.

## Recent Relevant Federal Legislation

In addition to the TVPA, several other laws address human trafficking in the United States. For example, in the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act (JVTA), Congress amended the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act to expand eligibility for:

- Identification services
- Street-based services
- Building capacity on human trafficking by accessing training

JVTA also includes a provision called the Survivors of Human Trafficking Empowerment Act.<sup>6</sup> The Human Trafficking Survivors Relief and Empowerment Act<sup>7</sup> provides for a process by which survivors of trafficking can move to vacate a nonviolent conviction that was committed as a direct result of trafficking.

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<sup>6</sup> This bill was incorporated into: [S. 178](#): Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act of 2015. Enacted—Signed by the President on May 29, 2015.

<sup>7</sup> This bill was incorporated into: [S. 178](#): Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act of 2015. Enacted—Signed by the President on May 29, 2015.

Knowing and understanding current legislation related to human trafficking can assist RHY service providers in delivering effective prevention and intervention services to victims.

## State Laws

Although federal statute provides legal definitions of *trafficking* and provisions for victim protections, states across the nation have enacted their own human trafficking legislation. State definitions, penalties, and processes may vary from those used by the federal government and between states. State laws are now extensive, nuanced, and constantly changing. Victim Law ([www.victimlaw.org](http://www.victimlaw.org)) is a user-friendly database of victims' rights laws, including all state and territorial anti-human trafficking laws.<sup>8</sup>

*Safe Harbor Laws.* In addition to legislation to combat human trafficking, many states have enacted safe harbor laws that carve out special protections for minors who have been commercially sexually exploited. These special protections are not available to minors who have been trafficked for purposes of forced labor. The basic premise of safe harbor laws is to give law enforcement and prosecutors a way to divert minors who have been trafficked away from a juvenile delinquency proceeding and, instead, put them into what is called a *child in need* proceeding. The hope is to foster a change in the criminal justice system so that a child who has been recruited into the sex trade is always treated as a victim, not as a criminal. Safe harbor laws vary widely by state and jurisdiction.<sup>9</sup> In one jurisdiction, the law may automatically convert criminal charges for sex-related offenses into family court proceedings that offer support and services. In another state, the law may bar prosecution, but does not mandate services. In many states, the prosecutor or the court still has discretion to proceed with prosecution of minors who are sexually exploited.<sup>10, 11</sup>

In response to the growing awareness of human trafficking, some states and municipal courts have established specialized or diversionary courts for victims of trafficking. "Specialized courts take into consideration the needs of victim-defendants and seek to address such needs as a way to intervene in and prevent further trafficking exploitation. It is important to acknowledge that diversion and court-mandated services are not appropriate for all victims and that some stakeholders oppose requiring victims to receive services in order to receive lesser charges or sentences. Taskforces should work with courts in their jurisdictions to respond in a trauma-informed and victim-centered way that does not punish a victim-defendant. To date, specialized courts are only addressing sex trafficking, so it is also important

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<sup>8</sup> US Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office on Trafficking in Persons. *Efforts to Combat Human Trafficking: State & Territory Profiles*. Retrieved from <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/otip/resource/profiles>. The [Administration for Children and Families website](https://www.acf.hhs.gov/otip/resource/profiles) (URL: <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/otip/resource/profiles>) provides state profiles regarding their antitrafficking efforts and available resources.

<sup>9</sup> Polaris Project. *Human Trafficking Issue Brief: Safe Harbor*. Retrieved from <https://polarisproject.org/sites/default/files/2015%20Safe%20Harbor%20Issue%20Brief.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> Shields, Ryan T. and Elizabeth J. Letourneau. 2015. "Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children and the Emergence of Safe Harbor Legislation: Implications for Policy and Practice." *Current Psychiatry Reports* 17, no. 3 (February): 1–7.

<sup>11</sup> Wasch, Sarah, Debra Schilling Wolfe, Elizabeth H. Levitan, Kara Finck. 2016. "An Analysis of Safe Harbor Laws for Minor Victims of Commercial Sexual Exploitation: Implications for Pennsylvania and Other States." Philadelphia: The Field Center for Children's Policy, Practice & Research, University of Pennsylvania. Retrieved from <http://fieldcenteratpenn.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/SafeHarborWhitePaperFINAL.pdf>



to consider how other types of human trafficking cases could be identified in the court system.”<sup>12</sup> RHY service providers should be aware of any specialized or diversion courts that might adjudicate cases of sex trafficking for children or young adults in their jurisdiction. This is critical because the TVPA ensures victims that commit an ancillary crime (or crimes) in connection with being trafficked may *not* be prosecuted for that crime regardless of whether they accept additional support and services immediately.

In many cases, community partners (even law enforcement, prosecutors, defense attorneys, and judges) may not be aware of current legislation regarding trafficking, especially in terms of remedies and restitution currently available to victims. When reviewing statutes and regulations, RHY program staff should analyze the facts of the case in light of possible benefits available for trafficking survivors, in addition to what may be available through the state’s *Safe Harbor* law. The inquiry cannot end there. Some victims of crime are eligible for victim compensation, and some state trafficking laws provide funding for case management and/or social services. In the best of all possible worlds, RHY programs should partner with local law firms to provide trafficking victims with legal assistance and advice to address their many needs.

**Note.** *Statutes and regulations are subject to change. Make sure your agency has the latest information about the laws in your state and locality.*

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<sup>12</sup> Office for Victims of Crime Training and Technical Assistance Center. n.d. *Human Trafficking Task Force e-Guide* (Role of the Courts—Innovative Court Responses 6.4). Retrieved from <https://www.ovcttac.gov/taskforceguide/eguide/6-the-role-of-courts/64-innovative-court-responses/>

# HOMELESS YOUTH AND TRAFFICKING: What Does the Research Say?

Although attention to human trafficking has dramatically increased in recent decades, considerable challenges remain in obtaining reliable and accurate information to guide the development of policies, programs, and practices. Prevalence estimates vary widely, and practically nothing is known about city- or state-level prevalence of homeless youth and trafficking in the United States. For example, there is significantly more research conducted about domestic minor sex trafficking of girls than there is about the trafficking of boys, youth in communities of color, Native American youth, youth with disabilities, or about labor trafficking in general. We should always be wary of claims of a city being a “hub for human trafficking” or that particular highways are conduits of trafficking. All cities and, indeed, all rural locations are potential sites for trafficking, and the highway system as well as small rural roads are used for trafficking purposes of all sorts.



The most recent research has provided evidence of the link between runaway and homeless youth and human trafficking. These studies have shifted attention from a punitive model focusing on arrests and prosecution of traffickers to a rights-based, victim-centered approach that is grounded in prevention and support for young survivors. Although these studies do not represent all homeless populations or all youth or even all homeless youth, and they cannot be used to estimate the prevalence for any other demographic, these studies can provide insight into how trafficking affects the runaway and homeless youth population. The findings from this research can help prepare RHY staff to discuss human trafficking among runaway and homeless youth with community partners and interested community members.

## Homeless Youth Vulnerability to Trafficking

Although there is no agreement about prevalence, research shows that runaway and homeless youth are at a particularly high risk of becoming trafficking victims.<sup>13, 14</sup>

- In two separate studies, nearly all trafficked youth surveyed had experienced homelessness or significant housing instability, and their exploitation occurred while they were homeless.<sup>15, 16</sup>
- One study found that as many as one in five sheltered homeless youth had experienced trafficking victimization in their lifetimes.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Institute of Medicine and National Research Council. 2013. *Confronting Commercial Sexual Exploitation and Sex Trafficking of Minors in the United States*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press.

<sup>14</sup> Williams, Linda M. and Mary E. Frederick. 2009. *Pathways into and out of Commercial Sexual Victimization of Children: Understanding and Responding to Sexually Exploited Teens*. Lowell, MA: University of Massachusetts Lowell.

<sup>15</sup> Curtis, Ric, Karen Terry, Meredith Dank, Kirk Dombrowski, and Bilal Khan. 2008. *Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in New York City, Volume One: The CSEC Population in New York City: Size, Characteristics, and Needs*. New York: Center for Court Innovation.

<sup>16</sup> Gragg, Frances, Ian Petta, Haidee Bernstein, Karla Eisen, and Liz Quinn. 2007. *New York Prevalence Study of Commercially Sexually Exploited Children*. Rockville, MD: Westat.

<sup>17</sup> Murphy, Laura T. 2017. *Labor and Sex Trafficking Among Homeless Youth: A Ten-City Study*. New Orleans, LA: Modern Slavery Research Project at Loyola University New Orleans.

- Another study in Arizona, found that nearly 41% of the homeless youth interviewed had been trafficked for sex alone.<sup>18</sup>

Factors that significantly correlate with trafficking include a history of physical or sexual abuse; witnessing violence in the home; having mental health issues, including a history of suicidality; poor family or community connections, history of running away, ; a history of being arrested; or having a disabling condition.<sup>19</sup> Numerous studies confirm these factors as risk factors, and the studies add poverty or economic hardship, unstable living environments, and substance abuse.<sup>20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28</sup> Youth who have had a foster care or other child welfare experience seem to be at a particularly high risk of trafficking.<sup>29, 30, 31</sup>

## Recruitment of Homeless and Runaway Youth into Labor and Sex Trafficking

There is no typical trafficker. Traffickers might be parents or other close family members, family friends, intimate partners, employers, labor brokers, smugglers, friends, or strangers. Traffickers use multiple ways to recruit runaway and homeless youth into trafficking situations. For example, traffickers recruit some potential victims for sex trafficking through the use of love, affection, support, and gifts to lure

<sup>18</sup> Middleton, Jennifer, S., Rebecca Ghent, Maurice N. Gattis, Dominique Roe-Sepowitz, Rebecca Goggin, and Laura M. Frey. 2016. *Youth Experiences Survey (YES): Exploring the Scope and Complexity of Sex Trafficking in a Sample of Youth Experiencing Homelessness in Kentuckiana*. Louisville, KY: Human Trafficking Research Initiative of University of Louisville.

<sup>19</sup> Gluck, Elliott, and Richa Mathur. 2014. *Child Sex Trafficking and the Child Welfare System*. Washington, DC: State Policy Advocacy & Reform Center.

<sup>20</sup> Gluck, Elliott, and Richa Mathur. 2014. *Child Sex Trafficking and the Child Welfare System*. Washington, DC: State Policy Advocacy & Reform Center.

<sup>21</sup> Burke, Nadine J., Julia L. Hellman, Brandon G. Scott, Carl F. Weems, and Victor G. Carrion. 2011. "The Impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences on an Urban Pediatric Population." *Child Abuse & Neglect* 35, no. 6: 408–13.

<sup>22</sup> Courtney, Mark E., Sherri Terao, and Noel Bost. 2004. *Midwest Evaluation of the Adult Functioning of Former Foster Youth: Conditions of Youth Preparing to Leave State Care*. Chicago, IL: Chaplin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago.

<sup>23</sup> Courtney, Mark E., Amy Dworsky, Adam Brown, Colleen Cary, Kara Love, and Vanessa Vorhies. 2011. *Midwest Evaluation of the Adult Functioning of Former Foster youth: Outcomes at Age 26*. Chicago IL: Chaplin Hall at the University of Chicago.

<sup>24</sup> Oldmixon, Elizabeth Anne, and Brian Robert Calfano. 2007. "The Religious Dynamics of Decision Making on Gay Rights Issues in the US House of Representatives, 1993–2002." *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 46, no. 1 (March): 55–70.

<sup>25</sup> Pecora, Peter J., Ronald C. Kessler, Jason Williams, Kirk O'Brien, A. Chris Downs, Diana English, James White, Eva Hiripi, Catherine Roller White, Tamera Wiggins, and Kate Holmes. 2005. *Improving Family Foster Care: Findings from the Northwest Foster Care Alumni Study*. Seattle, WA: Research Services at Casey Family Programs.

<sup>26</sup> Tucker, Christina M., Ellen K. Wilson, and Ghazaleh Samandari. 2011. "Infant Feeding Experiences among Teen Mothers in North Carolina: Findings from a Mixed-Methods Study." *International Breastfeeding Journal* 6, no. 14 (September).

<sup>27</sup> Tyler, Kimberly A., and Ana Mari Cauce. 2002. "Perpetrators of Early Physical and Sexual Abuse Among Homeless and Runaway Adolescents." *Child Abuse & Neglect* 26, no. 12: 1261–1274.

<sup>28</sup> Hannan, Madeline, Kathryn Martin, Kimberly Caceres, and Nina Aledor. 2017. Children at Risk: Foster Care and Human Trafficking." In *Human Trafficking Is a Public Health Issue: A Paradigm Expansion in the United States*, edited by Makini Chisolm-Straker and Hanni Stoklosa, 105–121. Cham, Switzerland: Springer International Publishing AG.

<sup>29</sup> Gragg, Frances, Ian Petta, Haidee Bernstein, Karla Eisen, and Liz Quinn. 2007. *New York Prevalence Study of Commercially Sexually Exploited Children*. Rockville, MD: Westat.

<sup>30</sup> Freeman, Lance, and Darrick Hamilton. 2013. *A Count of Unaccompanied Homeless Youths in New York City*. New York, NY: New York City Coalition on the Continuum of Care.

<sup>31</sup> Lankenau, Stephen E., Michael C. Clatts, Dorinda Welle, Lloyd A. Goldsamt, and Marya Vost Gwadz. 2005. "Street Careers: Homelessness, Drug Use, and Sex Work Among Young Men Who Have Sex with Men (YMSM)." *International Journal of Drug Policy* 16, no. 1 (January): 10–18.

vulnerable youth.<sup>32</sup> Many youth report that they were introduced to the sex trade by a friend.<sup>33</sup> Traffickers can be part of an organized enterprise, or they can work alone. Gangs, for example, are known to traffic youth into the drug and sex markets. Some youth join these gangs just to get a sense of belonging or family.<sup>34</sup> Familial trafficking among runaway and homeless youth (youth being trafficked by family members) is also common in both labor and sex trafficking situations.<sup>35</sup>

Recruiting for sex trafficking may look different than recruiting for labor trafficking; however, street youth are at high-risk for both. A study conducted in 2017 demonstrated that runaway and homeless youth are particularly vulnerable to be recruited into labor trafficking. Scam traffickers who pose as job recruiters approach the youth and offer them lucrative work opportunities in commission-based, seemingly legitimate industries, such as sales, modeling, domestic work, agriculture, and drug dealing.<sup>36</sup> Traffickers in these industries recruit runaway and homeless youth through online job advertisements, on social media, outside government assistance offices, in malls, outside homeless shelters, and at parks and bus stops—essentially anywhere vulnerable youth gather.

Trafficking—whether it be for sex or labor—can happen to anyone, of any age, gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, or socioeconomic class. US citizens are trafficked in the United States; foreign national citizens are trafficked into the United States. However, lack of housing is one of the main contributing factors to the recruitment of street youth. Trafficking has been found across a wide spectrum of industries. Most people think of sex trafficking when they hear the word *human trafficking*, but trafficking for purposes of labor also occurs in agriculture, hospitality, food services, janitorial and commercial cleaning, traveling sales crews, domestic workers in private residences, construction, carnivals and fairs, factories, and assisted living facilities.<sup>37</sup> Industries with high environmental dangers and risk, such as mining, fishing, agriculture, and herding, are also common places for trafficking.<sup>38</sup> Polaris Project recently listed 17 different types or sites of labor trafficking occurring in the United States alone, as well as 8 types of sex trafficking.<sup>39</sup>

Sometimes traffickers promise \$1,000 a day for simple secretarial work. Or they promise that youth can make \$100 for every cell phone they give away. Or they tempt youth with modeling or acting or music industry jobs. In a study of more than 640 homeless youth in the United States and Canada, 91% of the youth interviewed had been approached by someone offering them lucrative job opportunities that were

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<sup>32</sup> Lutnick, Alexandra. 2016. *Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking: Beyond Victims and Villains*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.

<sup>33</sup> Dank, Meredith, Jennifer Yahner, Kuniko Madden, Isela Bañuelos, Lilly Yu, Andrea Ritchie, Mitchyll Mora, and Brendan Conner. 2015. *Surviving the Streets of New York: Experiences of LGBTQ Youth, YMSM, and YWSW Engaged in Survival Sex*. Washington, DC: Urban Institute.

<sup>34</sup> Bouché, Vanessa. 2017. *An Empirical Analysis of the Intersection of Organized Crime and Human Trafficking in the United States*. Retrieved from <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/250955.pdf>

<sup>35</sup> Lutnick, Alexandra. 2016. *Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking: Beyond Victims and Villains*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.

<sup>36</sup> Murphy, Laura T. 2017. *Labor and Sex Trafficking Among Homeless Youth: A Ten-City Study*. New Orleans, LA: Modern Slavery Research Project at Loyola University New Orleans.

<sup>37</sup> Owens, Colleen, Meredith Dank, Amy Farrell, Justin Breaux, Isela Banuelos, Rebecca Pfeffer, and Jack McDevitt. 2014. *Understanding the Organization, Operation, and Victimization Process of Labor Trafficking in the United States*. Washington, DC: Urban Institute.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Polaris. 2017. *The Typology of Modern Slavery: Defining Sex and Labor Trafficking in the United States*.

Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved from <https://polarisproject.org/sites/default/files/Polaris-Typology-of-Modern-Slavery.pdf>

too good to be true and that the youth understood to be exploitative.<sup>40</sup> These situations are not necessarily trafficking on their own, but when force, fraud, or coercion are used to compel youth to work against their will or without pay or in exploitative conditions, the situations are considered trafficking (even if the work is in a criminal industry, such as drug dealing, smuggling, or cultivation of illegal crops, or in cases of labor trafficking as a guard or driver within the sex industry).<sup>41</sup>

In the Urban Institute's 2014 study of the underground commercial sex economy, interviews with sex traffickers and pimps revealed that pimps target individuals who are vulnerable due to trauma in childhood, broken families, and mental and physical health issues. The interviewed traffickers often knew that the potential victims they recruited tended to have histories of sexual assault. The traffickers used a wide variety of tactics ranging from romance, friendship, to physical violence to coerce victims into engaging in the sex trade.<sup>42</sup>

## Sex Trafficking of Boys and Young Men

A much neglected, but very important part of the problem of human trafficking is the trafficking of boys and young men. As one researcher noted, nearly all the attention of state and local governments, law enforcement, and service providers has been focused on sexually exploited adolescent girls. Although there has been some increased awareness about sexually exploited boys in the United States during the past several years, most law enforcement and service providers often miss them entirely or view them as too few to be counted or not in need of services.<sup>43</sup> Researchers found that boys and young men are ignored, underreported, and underserved for a number of reasons, including the following:

- Unwillingness of boys to self-identify as sexually exploited due to shame and stigma about being gay or being perceived as gay by family and community.
- Lack of appropriate screening and intake by law enforcement and social services agencies rooted in the belief that boys are not victims of commercial sexual exploitation.
- Limited outreach to areas and venues where boys and young males engage in the sex trade.
- Oversimplification of the reality that boys are not generally trafficked, which hides the needs and misinforms potential services.<sup>44, 45, 46</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Murphy, Laura T. 2017. *Labor and Sex Trafficking Among Homeless Youth: A Ten-City Study*. New Orleans, LA: Modern Slavery Research Project at Loyola University New Orleans.

<sup>41</sup> Rizen, C. M. 2015. "Are Juvenile Gang Members Victims of Forced labor?" *Children's Legal Rights Journal* 35, no. 2: 163–176.

<sup>42</sup> Dank, Meredith, Bilal Khan, P. Mitchell Downey, Cybele Kotonias, Debbie Mayer, Colleen Owens, Laura Pacifici, and Lilly Yu. 2014. *Estimating the Size and Structure of the Underground Commercial Sex Economy in Eight Major US Cities*. New York, NY: Urban Institute. Retrieved from <https://www.urban.org/research/publication/estimating-size-and-structure-underground-commercial-sex-economy-eight-major-us-cities>.

<sup>43</sup> ECPAT-USA. 2013. *And Boys Too: An ECPAT-USA Discussion Paper about the Lack of Recognition of the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Boys in the United States*. Brooklyn, NY: Author. Retrieved from <https://traffickingresourcecenter.org/sites/default/files/And%20Boys%20Too%20-%20ECPAT%20USA.pdf>

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Estes, Richard J., and Neil Alan Weiner. 2001. *The Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in the U.S., Canada and Mexico*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania, School of Social Work, Center for the Study of Youth Policy.

<sup>46</sup> Curtis, Ric, Karen Terry, Meredith Dank, Kirk Dombrowski, and Bilal Khan. 2008. *Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in New York City, Volume One: The CSEC Population in New York City: Size, Characteristics, and Needs*. New York: Center for Court Innovation.

Although the study was small, modest but clear findings surfaced: The scope of commercial sexual exploitation of boys is vastly underreported, and much more needs to be done to identify sexually exploited boys as young people in need of protection, to raise awareness about the impact of commercial sexual exploitation of boys, and to provide specialized services for them.

## Understanding Youth Homelessness as a Precursor to Trafficking

When Covenant House and Fordham University conducted a study among homeless youth in New York, they found that nearly 50% of the respondents who had engaged in commercial sex had done so to secure a place to sleep for the night.<sup>47</sup> In a separate Street Outreach Program (SOP) study, funded by the Family and Youth Services Bureau, 873 “street youth” were interviewed. The SOP study found that more than a quarter of the youth interviewed had traded sex with at least one person for money, more than a quarter of them had traded sex for a place to stay for the night, more than 18% had traded sex for food, 12% for protection, and 11% for drugs. More than 10% of the interviewed youth had been asked by an intimate partner to trade sex with a third party for money.<sup>48</sup> A study in New York City found that, among the 249 sex trade–engaged youth included in the study, the most pressing needs reported as necessary to exit the trade were food (60%), education (51%), and housing (41%).<sup>49</sup> A 2016 study of domestic minor sex trafficking found that, among youth receiving services related to human trafficking, the most frequent services the youth requested were long-term housing, crisis intervention, mental health services, food and clothing, employment, medical assistance, and sexual health education—all signs that many young people seek services to assist them in avoiding or exiting the sex trade, but are often ultimately forced to engage in survival acts to meet their basic needs.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Bigelsen, Jayne, and Stefanie Vuotto. 2013. *Homelessness, Survival Sex and Human Trafficking: As Experienced by the Youth of Covenant House New York*. New York, NY: Covenant House and Fordham University.

<sup>48</sup> Whitbeck, Les, Melissa Welch Lazowitz, Devan Crawford, and Dane Hautala. 2014. *Street Outreach Program: Data Collection Project Executive Summary*. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska–Lincoln.

<sup>49</sup> Curtis, Ric, Karen Terry, Meredith Dank, Kirk Dombrowski, and Bilal Khan. 2008. *Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in New York City, Volume One: The CSEC Population in New York City: Size, Characteristics, and Needs*. New York: Center for Court Innovation. (p. 103)

<sup>50</sup> Lutnick, Alexandra. 2016. *Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking: Beyond Victims and Villains*. New York, NY: University of Columbia Press. (p. 48)



## Demographic Disparities

Although there is little research that illuminates demographics on race in trafficking, some new studies suggest that people of color are disproportionately recruited into trafficking situations. An early report on suspected human trafficking incidents between 2008 and 2010 indicated that people of color were significantly more likely than white citizens to be trafficking victims.<sup>51</sup> Arrest reports suggest that more than half of minor trafficking victims are African American—or at least that the majority of young women who are arrested for trading sex as minors are black.<sup>52, 53, 54</sup> In a national study on youth involvement in trafficking, researchers found a large majority (70% of 949 youth interviewed) were black/African American. This percentage reflects significant disproportionate representation of African American youth involved in trafficking in comparison to the percentage of African Americans in the cities where youth were interviewed. For example, according to the 2010 United States Census, 28% of the total population of Oakland, California, was African American, yet 47% of youth interviewed in Oakland were African American; 19% of the population of Miami, Florida, was African American, but 92% of youth interviewed in Miami were African American; and, although Chicago, Illinois, had a 33% African American population, 80% of youth interviewed were African American.<sup>55</sup> Much more research is needed on this front to be able to make an accurate assessment of the racial disparities associated with this issue. However, it is important to recognize that runaway and homeless youth from underserved populations

### BREAKING BARRIERS: TOP 10 LIST (Polaris Project)

1. BUILD PARTNERSHIPS IN YOUR COMMUNITY.
2. TRAIN STAFF TO CREATE a trauma-informed organization.
3. IMPROVE ABILITY TO IDENTIFY youth at risk and youth victims of trafficking in RHY settings.
4. REVIEW YOUR INTAKE PROCESS to ensure human trafficking elements are incorporated.
5. REVISIT YOUR PRACTICES ON CONFIDENTIALITY and protocols.
6. ADAPT YOUR SERVICES TO BE INCLUSIVE.
7. ADJUST YOUR SAFETY PLANNING PROCESS.
8. ALLOW FLEXIBILITY IN TREATMENT OR CASE PLANNING.
9. HOST INCLUSIVE EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES to encourage inclusion and diversity.
10. ADVOCATE for youth from underserved populations.

<sup>51</sup> Banks, Duren, and Tracey Kyckelhahn. 2011. *Characteristics of Suspected Human Trafficking Incidents, 2008–2010*. Washington, DC: US Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics. Retrieved from <http://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/cshti0810.pdf>.

<sup>52</sup> US Department Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Criminal Justice Information Services Division. n.d. *2014 Crime in the United States* (Table 43). Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved from <https://ucr.fbi.gov/crime-in-the-u.s/2014/crime-in-the-u.s.-2014/tables/table-43>

<sup>53</sup> Ocen, Priscilla A. 2015. "(E)racing Childhood: Examining the Racialized Construction of Childhood and Innocence in the Treatment of Sexually Exploited Minors." *UCLA Law Review* 62: 1586–1640. Retrieved from [https://www.uclalawreview.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Ocen-final\\_8.15.pdf](https://www.uclalawreview.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Ocen-final_8.15.pdf)

<sup>54</sup> Nelson Butler, Cheryl. 2015. "The Racial Roots of Human Trafficking." *UCLA Law Review* 62: 1466–1480. Retrieved from <https://www.uclalawreview.org/racial-roots-human-trafficking/>

<sup>55</sup> Swaner, Rachel, Melissa Labriola, Michael Rempel, Allyson Walker, and Joseph Spadafore. 2016. *Youth Involvement in the Sex Trade A National Study*. Retrieved from <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/ojjdp/grants/249952.pdf>

who are victims of trafficking will need culturally appropriate services to assist with their recovery and healing process.

Although lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people make up approximately 20% of the United States population, they account for up to 40% of the homeless youth population.<sup>56, 57, 58</sup> Several studies have shown that a disproportionate number of homeless trafficking victims are LGBT.<sup>59, 60, 61, 62, 63,</sup> <sup>64</sup> LGBT youth report they often are not accepted at home and in school, and they face discrimination in schools and workplaces. These problems are the main reasons they run away, and then once on the street, they find it difficult to access services. These barriers increase the prevalence of homelessness within this community and thereby increase the risk of trafficking for LGBT youth. The Urban Institute reports, “LGBTQ youth, YMSM [young men who have sex with men], and YWSW [young women who have sex with women] lack access to voluntary and low-threshold services, including short- and long-term housing, affordable housing and shelter options, livable-wage employment opportunities, food security, and sexual orientation-affirming and gender-affirming health care.”<sup>65</sup> According to the Urban Institute, this lack of access and opportunity lead LGBTQ<sup>66</sup> individuals to engage in survival sex.<sup>67</sup> Many of the services provided for sex trafficking victims are focused on heterosexual female youth. However, there is significant evidence that LGBT youth are disproportionately victimized; thus, service providers should ensure that screening and assessments are extended to all youth, regardless of sex, gender

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<sup>56</sup> Cochran, Bryan N., Angela J. Stewart, Joshua A. Ginzler, and Ana Mari Cauce. 2002. “Challenges Faced by Homeless Sexual Minorities: Comparison of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Homeless Adolescents with Their Heterosexual Counterparts.” *American Journal of Public Health* 92, no. 5 (May): 773–777.

<sup>57</sup> Durso, Laura E., and Gary J. Gates. 2012. *Serving Our Youth: Findings from a National Survey of Service Providers Working with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Youth Who Are Homeless or at Risk of Becoming Homeless*. Los Angeles, CA: The Williams Institute with True Colors Fund and The Palette Fund.

<sup>58</sup> Ray, Debraj. 2007. Development Economics. Prepared for the *New Palgrave Dictionary of Economics*, edited by Lawrence

Blume and Steven Durlauf. London, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.

<sup>59</sup> Walls, N. Eugene, and Bell, Stephanie. 2011. Correlates of Engaging in Survival Sex among Homeless Youth and Young Adults. *Journal of Sex Research* 48, no. 5: 423–436.

<sup>60</sup> Murphy, Laura T. 2017. *Labor and Sex Trafficking Among Homeless Youth: A Ten-City Study*. New Orleans, LA: Modern Slavery Research Project at Loyola University New Orleans.

<sup>61</sup> Institute of Medicine and National Research Council. 2013. *Confronting Commercial Sexual Exploitation and Sex Trafficking of Minors in the United States*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press.

<sup>62</sup> Xian, Kathryn, Shaylin Chock, and Dustin Dwiggins. 2017. “LGBTQ Youth and Vulnerability to Sex Trafficking.” In *Human Trafficking Is a Public Health Issue: A Paradigm Expansion in the United States*, edited by Makini Chisolm-Straker and Hanni Stoklosa, 141–152. Cham, Switzerland: Springer International Publishing AG.

<sup>63</sup> Dank, Meredith, Jennifer Yahner, Kuniko Madden, Isela Bañuelos, Lilly Yu, Andrea Ritchie, Mitchyll Mora, and Brendan Conner. 2015. *Surviving the Streets of New York: Experiences of LGBTQ Youth, YMSM, and YWSW Engaged in Survival Sex*. Washington, DC: Urban Institute.

<sup>64</sup> Xian, Kathryn, Shaylin Chock, and Dustin Dwiggins. 2017. “LGBTQ Youth and Vulnerability to Sex Trafficking.” In *Human Trafficking Is a Public Health Issue: A Paradigm Expansion in the United States*, edited by Makini Chisolm-Straker and Hanni Stoklosa, 141–152. Cham, Switzerland: Springer International Publishing AG.

<sup>65</sup> Dank, Meredith, Jennifer Yahner, Kuniko Madden, Isela Bañuelos, Lilly Yu, Andrea Ritchie, Mitchyll Mora, and Brendan Conner. 2015. *Surviving the Streets of New York: Experiences of LGBTQ Youth, YMSM, and YWSW Engaged in Survival Sex*. Washington, DC: Urban Institute. (p. 1)

<sup>66</sup> The acronyms LGBT and LGBTQ have been utilized to maintain consistency with the cited research.

<sup>67</sup> Homeless Hub. 2016. *Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Transsexual, Queer, Questioning, and 2-Spirited (LGBTQ2)*. Retrieved from <http://homelesshub.ca/about-homelessness/population-specific/lesbian-gay-bisexual-transgender-transsexual-queer>

identification, or sexuality.<sup>68,69, 70</sup> Polaris Project recently produced a report that provides 10 ways to improve services for LGBT youth affected by trafficking (see box on page 12).<sup>71</sup>

## Labor Trafficking

Although many RHY programs have increased their attention to and services for youth victims of sex trafficking in the past 10 years, labor trafficking among runaway and homeless youth has been largely overlooked. Because of economic vulnerabilities of runaway and homeless youth, they are prime targets for individuals who exploit them for labor, just as much as they are for sex. In fact, in a study of homeless youth sheltered at Covenant House New Jersey, 51% of the identified cases of trafficking were cases of labor trafficking.<sup>72</sup>

One challenge to identifying labor trafficking is that much of the work involved is not inherently illegal. It is easy to hide this victimization within a legitimate business or industry. Unfortunately, because the business is legitimate, the victim may not recognize his or her trafficking situation.

Furthermore, although there are distinct legal definitions of *sex trafficking* and *labor trafficking*, there can be overlap between the two types of trafficking. For example, forced labor can occur in commercial sexual exploitation. In one case, a young person who was trafficked into the sex trade was also forced to sell drugs. As another example of the intertwining of the types of trafficking, young adults working as dancers in a club were being forced to engage in sex acts to receive their paychecks for the hours spent dancing.<sup>73</sup>

Throughout this resource guide, *human trafficking* refers to both labor and sex trafficking. The recommendations contained here refer to both types of trafficking as well, unless specifically indicated otherwise.

### Labor Trafficking versus Labor Exploitation

Some runaway and homeless youth are exploited for labor, but their cases do not have all the elements necessary to prove human trafficking in a court of law. If this is the case, these youth may not meet the eligibility criteria for human trafficking victims' services, but they can be eligible for other victim services and they still have rights under labor law. The US Department of Labor has a Wage and Hour Division that investigates claims of nonpayment, underpayment, or child labor abuse. Investigations to recover back wages for undocumented youth should not jeopardize their status. For more information about labor exploitation, visit [www.dol.gov/whd/](http://www.dol.gov/whd/) or call 1-866-4US-WAGE.

<sup>68</sup> Marshall, Brandon D. L., Kate Shannon, Thomas Kerr, Ruth Zhang, and Evan Wood. 2010. "Survival Sex Work and Increased HIV Risk among Sexual Minority Street-Involved Youth." *Journal of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndromes* 53, no. 5: 661–664.

<sup>69</sup> Whitbeck, Les B., Xiaojin Chen, Dan R. Hoyt, Kimberly Tyler, and Kurt D. Johnson. 2004. "Mental Disorder, Subsistence Strategies, and Victimization among Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Homeless and Runaway Adolescents." *Journal of Sex Research* 41, no. 4: 329–342.

<sup>70</sup> Cochran, Bryan N., Angela J. Stewart, Joshua A. Ginzler, and Ana Mari Cauce. 2002. "Challenges Faced by Homeless Sexual Minorities: Comparison of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Homeless Adolescents with Their Heterosexual Counterparts." *American Journal of Public Health* 92, no. 5 (May): 773–77.

<sup>71</sup> Polaris. 2015. *Breaking Barriers: Improving Services for LGBTQ Human Trafficking Victims: A Top Ten List for Service Providers and Criminal Justice Professionals*. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved from <https://polarisproject.org/sites/default/files/breaking-barriers-lgbtq-services.pdf>

<sup>72</sup> Chisolm-Straker, Makini, Jeremy Sze, Julia Einbond, James White, and Hanni Stoklosa. 2017. *Recognizing Human Trafficking Among Homeless Youth*. Newark, NJ: Covenant House New Jersey. (p. 41)

<sup>73</sup> Murphy, Laura T. 2017. *Labor and Sex Trafficking Among Homeless Youth: A Ten-City Study*. New Orleans, LA: Modern Slavery Research Project at Loyola University New Orleans.

### **Labor and Sex Trafficking Among Homeless Youth: A Ten-City Study**

In 2017, Modern Slavery Research Project at Loyola University New Orleans released a study of 641 homeless youth sheltered at Covenant House International's programs in 10 cities across the United States and Canada.

The results of the study showed that nearly 20% of the youth had experienced some form of trafficking: 13% of the youth had been trafficked into prostitution; 8% of the youth had been trafficked for forced labor. Of the youth interviewed, 7% of females and 9% of males reported they had experienced forced labor, resulting in a finding that 1 in 11 of the males interviewed had endured some form of forced labor. Of the males identifying as having experienced forced labor, 81% indicated the forced labor involved illicit labor, such as drug dealing or work for gangs or work in the illegal drug-farming industry.

These numbers reveal that labor trafficking is a significant issue for runaway and homeless youth. Indeed, 91% of the youth interviewed indicated that they had been approached by someone offering them lucrative work opportunities that were too good to be true. Although these opportunities may not have all been situations that would lead to trafficking, it is clear that runaway and homeless youth are being targeted for exploitative situations; thus, runaway and homeless youth are very vulnerable to being trafficked.

Understanding this information and applying it at the local level can help RHY programs better identify needs and gaps in services for trafficking victims and can also help to improve access to quality services that meet the comprehensive needs of victims.

Ultimately, the best source of information is from data collected at programs in local neighborhoods. The most pertinent data are drawn from local sources and inform local programs and projects. National studies on prevalence and risk, even if available, may not be helpful in addressing the problem in a local community.

# THE ROLE OF RHY PROGRAMS IN PREVENTING, IDENTIFYING, AND SERVING TRAFFICKED YOUTH

RHY programs have always provided services to youth who meet the definition of trafficking victims or who are at higher risk for trafficking, regardless of whether the youth are aware that their situations may include trafficking. Because of the established correlation between being homeless and being trafficked, RHY programs are likely to encounter youth who are trapped at this intersection. Youth who are on their own, with no resources and little support, have long been exploited and victimized. The federal RHY legislation is grounded in the belief that young people who are on their own are at risk of exploitation or victimization and deserve a safe alternative to the streets. RHY programs have always served in this capacity by providing comprehensive services, such as shelter, food, security, safety planning, support systems, mentoring, and job skills, to these vulnerable youth. RHY programs have already developed street outreach, trauma-informed services, and other programs that are likely to be valuable in addressing human trafficking. Access to other grantees for knowledge sharing and skill development can further expand the capacity of RHY programs to contribute or provide leadership to local collaborations.



RHY programs assist young victims of trafficking and prevent the recruitment of these youth in many ways. When it comes to engaging, preventing, and serving trafficking survivors, flexibility and creativity may be the most important assets. Street Outreach (SOP), Basic Center (BCP), and Transitional Living (TLP) Programs have an important role to play not only in identifying and serving victims of trafficking, but also in preventing trafficking of runaway and homeless youth through their program framework.

RHY programs can increase their capacity to identify and provide services and/or service referrals to trafficked youth by participating in professional trainings, integrating trauma-informed approaches, supporting youth survivors' voices to inform programs, and adding human trafficking elements into existing screening and assessment tools. RHY programs are encouraged to enhance their human trafficking prevention and intervention efforts by minimizing risk factors and building safety nets for street and vulnerable youth.

## Street Outreach Program

The Street Outreach Program (SOP) enables organizations around the country to help young people leave the streets. To that end, the program promotes efforts by its grantees to build relationships between street outreach workers and street youth. SOP grantees also provide support services that aim to move youth into stable housing and prepare them for independence.

The primary purpose of SOPs is to provide street-based services to runaway, homeless, and street youth less than 22 years of age who have been subjected to or who are at risk of being subjected to sexual abuse, prostitution, sexual exploitation, and severe forms of trafficking in persons. The intent of SOPs is to increase young people's personal safety and to help them move off the streets by building permanent connections with families, communities, schools, and other positive social networks. In addition, SOPs must work toward reducing sexual exploitation and human trafficking incidents among at-risk, runaway, and homeless youth.



While providing outreach services, outreach workers should employ trauma-informed and harm-reduction approaches that include sensitive and competent responses to reflect the fact that youth feel in control when they are on the streets. Street outreach workers and SOPs must focus efforts on preventing trafficking by providing information about shelters and referrals, as well as identifying and providing street services to youth victims of trafficking.

Street outreach workers must build their capacity to recognize sex and labor trafficking and maintain safety for themselves and the youth they serve by understanding the threat that traffickers present or the control they have over the youth victims. An understanding of the signs and symptoms of various mental health problems is essential, in addition to a deep understanding of the impact of trauma on adolescent development. Outreach workers also need a comprehensive knowledge of services in the community and positive working relationships with referral resources. SOPs are encouraged to integrate into their existing outreach plans key strategies to address human trafficking when conducting outreach work. For instance, outreach workers should know the indicators of sex trafficking and labor trafficking and should be prepared to respond and assist a street youth where indicators are present, regardless of whether the youth self-discloses a trafficking incident.

Safety is a primary consideration for the worker, as well as for the youth on the street. For example, a grantee outreach effort may include the use of a van with a big sign that allows the community, homeless, and street-involved youth to easily recognize assistance. However, when trying to engage a trafficked youth, a covert approach may be safer and more effective. Make sure outreach material includes but is not limited to cards with the agency's information—some youth like to stash important numbers in a shoe. When working an area known to have trafficked youth, the outreach team might want to design a card with a hidden message, like this one (note the embedded hotline number).



This card might be ignored by a trafficker as something the victim picked up along the way. The card is unisex and does not provide specific messaging other than the hotline number. The outreach worker verbalizes the message and then provides the card as a reminder. It is important to remember that youth victims of trafficking do not self-identify, and they may not consider themselves victims of trafficking.

### Victim-Centered Approach

The victim-centered approach is defined as the systematic focus on the needs and concerns of a victim to ensure the compassionate and sensitive delivery of services in a nonjudgmental manner. A victim-centered approach seeks to minimize re-traumatization associated with the crime of human trafficking by providing the support of victim advocates and service providers, empowering survivors as engaged participants in the process, and providing survivors an opportunity to play a role in seeking their recovery and processes. A victim-centered response is comprehensive. A comprehensive effort should include organizations with expertise in reaching targeted populations in culturally sensitive and linguistically correct ways, as well as organizations with expertise in trauma, emotional bonding, climate of fear, and other circumstances. The victim-centered approach plays a critical role in supporting victims' rights, dignity, autonomy, and self-determination, regardless of whether they choose to report or cooperate with law enforcement. For victims who do choose to work with law enforcement, employing a victim-centered approach to criminal investigations is fundamental to a successful criminal case.



Although standards and protocols are still in a nascent stage for some outreach and shelter projects, it is critical to have skilled outreach workers who understand the importance of establishing trusting relationships with youth and young adults. Street outreach workers should focus on getting youth out of the street when trying to build trust and connection. Some trafficked youth may be afraid of calling any hotline number or of disclosing their situations because they do not know what will happen next. Outreach workers must support the youth and assist in meeting their basic needs before discussing additional assistance or their victimization. Outreach workers can use easy screening questions to determine if the youth is a victim of labor or sex trafficking or if he or she is at high risk for any other type of victimization. Outreach workers should always carry the human trafficking hotline number, the National Runaway Safeline hotline number and text, as well as local hotline and referral numbers, in case a youth asks for the opportunity to call at a later time. Some street outreach programs are attached to a drop-in center or other physical location and have been able to establish special groups just for street youth—many or most of these street youth will have experienced some form of trafficking. To be most effective, staff and volunteer workers involved in street outreach efforts should be knowledgeable about trauma and its impact on development and behavior. In addition, SOPs must integrate victim-centered approaches tailored to runaway and homeless youth into their outreach plan and strategies.

## Basic Center Program

The Basic Center Program (BCP) provides youth under 18 years of age with emergency shelter, food, clothing, counseling, and referrals for health care. Basic centers can provide up to 21 days of shelter for youth and seek to reunite minors with their families, whenever possible, or to locate appropriate alternative placements.

The intent of BCPs is to prevent youth from becoming homeless, whenever possible, by increasing young people's safety and social and emotional well-being and by helping them build permanent connections with families, communities, schools, and other positive social networks.

When a young person enters an emergency shelter, grantees have limited opportunity to gain his or her trust and connect the youth with appropriate services. Because BCPs have short-term stays, BCP staff may have limited opportunities to assess a trafficking situation. However, it is important that BCPs use this limited time to screen for human trafficking without being intrusive and by using a trauma-informed approach. For example, a BCP works with a youth to meet the youth's basic needs and to develop a plan to address some of the problems and challenges the youth confronts. By listening to the youth, BCP staff can identify some elements of trafficking and determine if the youth is at high risk for trafficking or has experienced trafficking. Remember, intake and screening are the first opportunity to learn about each young person but hopefully will not be the last opportunity. It is best to first build trust with the youth and get detailed information later. The goal of screening is not to secure a disclosure from the youth, but a process to learn about the youth's experiences and their immediate needs.

Youth who run away or experience homelessness may have a history of complex trauma and, more than likely, are not going to share all their life experiences during the first few encounters with staff in a BCP.

Trafficked youth, in particular, experience unremitting trauma and stress as a result of their victimization.<sup>74</sup> Nonetheless, by employing some of the strategies described later in this guide for building rapport and sensitively discussing strategies for surviving on the street with potential trafficking victims, it is possible to encourage honest conversations that create opportunity for youth to disclose victimization, labor or sex trafficking, or engagement in survival acts. BCP staff should be prepared for these disclosures and have referrals and trained counselors at the ready to provide much-needed service to youth who have been trafficked.

For youth services professionals, the task is to provide a safe space for young people and to introduce them to opportunities to reduce their risks while building their capacity to achieve positive outcomes. Confronting a young person with “the truth” is often unhelpful. Our truth is irrelevant—only their truth matters. Young people often believe engagement in illicit activities to be the only route available to them in their time of crisis. RHY professionals have a responsibility to provide services to all youth based on the premise of *unconditional, positive regard* of trauma-informed principles. Using a confrontational approach is seldom beneficial when an RHY professional is trying to establish himself or herself as a trustworthy person—a person the youth deems safe to share experiences, hopes, and dreams with while dealing with significant trauma. Addressing the basic needs that youth express as their priorities is often the most direct route to gaining their trust and, fortunately, can often be the most direct route to providing youth with the economic and physical security they need to leave their current situations.

Youth often choose emergency, crisis, or short-term shelters when they think the environment of a long-term shelter will prevent them from maintaining relationships with the very people who are exploiting them. Drop-in centers and short-term shelters can provide a “quick fix” to the immediate needs of hunger or a warm place to sleep for the night. With this information in mind, BCP staff can be cognizant of the indicators of trafficking (discussed later in this guide) when interacting (i.e., intake, casual conversations) and working with youth. Youth may seek help from a short-term or drop-in program precisely because they are being trafficked. Although the youth may leave the shelter in the morning or after just a short stay, BCP staff should “plant a seed” of information about exit strategies with the youth (via safety planning and other suggestions discussed at length later in the guide). Staff should assure youth that services will be available to them any time they return, regardless of what kinds of experiences they may have. These early discussions are imperative with youth who choose the short-term shelter route.

All staff working with trauma survivors must also have some understanding of trauma bonding. Traumatic bonds can be formed when youth seek attachment in the face of extreme danger or “when there is no access to ordinary sources of comfort, people may turn towards their tormentors.”<sup>75</sup> Traumatic bonding is the result of cognitive distortions, such as the equating of terror and love.<sup>76</sup> Two conditions must be present for the formation of traumatic bonds: (1) a marked power imbalance resulting in feelings of powerlessness, helplessness, and vulnerability, and (2) intermittent abuse that alternates with positive or

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<sup>74</sup> Reichert, Jessica, and Amy Sylwestrzak. 2013. *National Survey of Residential Programs for Victims of Sex Trafficking*. Chicago, IL: The Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority. Retrieved from [http://www.icjia.state.il.us/assets/pdf/ResearchReports/NSRHVST\\_101813.pdf](http://www.icjia.state.il.us/assets/pdf/ResearchReports/NSRHVST_101813.pdf).

<sup>75</sup> van der Kolk, Bessel A. 1989. “The Compulsion to Repeat the Trauma.” *Psychiatric Clinics of North America* 12, no. 2: 389–411.

<sup>76</sup> Reid, Joan A. 2014. *Trauma Bonding: Research, Theory & Practice* (National Webinar). Sponsored by the Family and Youth Services Bureau, U.S. Department of Health & Human Services.

neutral interactions.<sup>77</sup> Traumatic bonding complicates victim identification, because young people do not recognize their exploitation. In addition, for youth who separate from an abuser, the concepts of safety and self-determination are challenging and may be frightening for the young person.<sup>78</sup>

By the end of a young person's short stay, BCP staff may not have gathered a comprehensive assessment; however, the youth will know the agency is a reliable and safe ally to return to, if needed. BCP staff should be trained on human trafficking screening to learn about the youth's life experiences and gather information as a way to provide the support and services needed by the youth at the time of entering the program or seeking shelter.

For youth who leave the agency without a planned discharge, knowing they have a safe place to return to and that they will not be rejected if and when they return is crucial.<sup>80</sup> Remember, all your early efforts must be always aligned to the program's strategic plan and outcomes.

## Trauma Bonding in Human Trafficking

### *Basics of Bonding*

- Bonding is a biological and emotional process that makes people more important to each other over time.
- Bonding is, in part, why it is harder to leave a relationship.
- Experiencing extreme situations and extreme feelings together tends to bond people in a special way.
- Growing up in an unsafe home makes later unsafe situations have more holding power. This has a biological basis beyond any cognitive learning.

### *Trauma Bonding*

Trauma bonds are formed only because human beings have a biological need to form attachments with others.<sup>79</sup> Any attachment is better than no attachment at all, a fact that is evidenced by the reality of relationships that are otherwise incomprehensible. In times of stress and danger, people have a greater need to be cared for and attach to others.

## Transitional Living Program and Maternity Group Home

The purpose of the Transitional Living Program (TLP) is to implement, enhance, and support effective strategies for successful transition to sustainable living for runaway and homeless youth ages 16 to under 22 and/or pregnant and parenting youth ages 16 to 22 and their dependent children. TLPs are designed to provide a range of support services to assist transition into self-sufficiency.

In many ways, TLPs offer the best opportunity for successfully and sustainably working with trafficked youth and for integrating trafficking prevention strategies into their programs. The extended housing support increases opportunities for disclosures of trafficking that youth may initially hide. Once young persons' basic needs are met, they are more likely to be open to exploring the more complicated aspects of their personal and emotional lives. The environment of the long-term program allows for the intensive, trauma-informed counseling and services that all trafficking victims need. TLPs provide a dedicated support system while encouraging independence, both of which trafficked youth are typically seeking. TLPs are in an ideal position to provide the job skills, healthy relationships, and life skills training that

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Bowlby, John. 1988. *A Secure Base: Parent-Child Attachment and Healthy Human Development*. New York, NY: Basic Books.

<sup>80</sup> Delores Barr Weaver Policy Center. 2014. *In Harm's Way: Child Abuse, Child Rape, Sex Trafficking*. Retrieved from [https://www.seethegirl.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/In-Harms-Way\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.seethegirl.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/In-Harms-Way_FINAL.pdf)

youth need to sustainably leave and avoid future trafficking situations. TLPs are also well positioned to discuss human trafficking prevention and develop and sustain community collaborations to ensure youth, especially trafficked youth, have access to community support and safety nets or networking before leaving the program.

Nonetheless, this work is not without its challenges. A history of complex trauma impacts how a young person develops mentally and emotionally; that impact is greatly exacerbated by the existence of trauma bonds. One challenge faced by many programs is the young person who leaves a program to return to the exploiter, only to return to the shelter a few days, a week, or even a month later. Staff should be aware that, much like with domestic violence, victims of trafficking often return to their exploiters several times before they are able to leave permanently. If at all possible, young people should not be rejected if they return to a shelter after they have cycled back to their exploiters. Programs should develop specific protocols for working with youth who are unable to successfully engage in their initial contact or even in a second or third encounter with RHY programs. Patience is a critical part of gaining trust and building a relationship with good outcomes for the young person. Also, programs should develop and implement some trauma-informed strategies when dealing with peer recruitment in their programs. In the majority of these situations, youth who recruit other youth for trafficking purposes are also victims of their traffickers and staff must be trained and prepared to respond to these situations from a trauma-informed perspective.

Many homeless youth have education deficits. When they run away from home, some also leave school and do not complete middle or high school. Runaway and homeless youth served by TLPs have suffered complex trauma; education deficits; physical, sexual, and/or emotional abuse; episodic violence; and/or criminal involvement. For youth who have been trafficked, it is likely they have endured multiple traumas. Staff must be versed in trauma-informed care and trauma-informed consequences. Addressing complex trauma may be a challenge for many TLPs when faced with doing so much in a relatively short period of time. Eighteen or even 21 months to work with youth may seem like a long time, but, when a young person has been victimized and violated and is on the streets for long periods of time, a great deal of the initial stay has to be spent building a trusting relationship to support the healing process.

A specialized approach to trafficking victims requires that service providers are aware of the repercussions of operating in the informal economy—whether in the sex trade or the drug trade or in “under the table” work. Often, trafficked youth adjust to the danger of their previous situations; in some cases, employment in the formal economy can seem mind numbing or boring. The low rate of pay in minimum wage jobs can be perceived as inadequate to meet the needs of a young adult trying to live independently, especially in comparison with money made in informal economies. Trafficking survivors can also have problematic spending habits if they are accustomed to having either large amounts of money or to making “fast money” that they spend immediately. Trafficked youth often also have anxieties about authority because, in the informal economy, they are taught to fear or reject authority figures such as police officers, law enforcement officials, social workers, and other individuals in the juvenile justice system.

Furthermore, youth who are trafficking survivors may struggle to tolerate the structure of a TLP. They may rebel against curfews or strictures on their movements or behaviors. Due to their smaller capacity and longer stays, TLPs are more intimate than crisis shelters where young people come and go quickly. It is because of that intimacy that young people can exert influence over each other and the whole group.

Most of the time, the influence is positive—but not always. Competitiveness fostered between trafficked youth by traffickers can encourage youth to have negative interactions with other youth long after exiting their trafficking situations. The inability to conform and acclimate may impact all the other residents.

These challenges are best addressed in supportive, trauma-informed environments like TLPs. Trafficked youth can benefit significantly from the structure and support of these programs. TLPs should actively work to provide specialized care tailored to address the unique challenges faced by trafficking survivors.

Creating trauma-informed TLPs may include building capacity for:

- Understanding indicators to identify victims of human trafficking,
- Developing effective screening, assessment, and referrals systems,
- Understanding and adopting trauma-informed, victim-centered, and strengths-base strategies,
- Fostering community collaborations with multiple stakeholders to support youth, and
- Integrating human trafficking prevention elements into programmatic activities to minimize risk factors.

# THE FUNDAMENTALS: What Every Staff Member Needs to Know

## Guiding Principles

We know youth survivors of human trafficking need a wide array of services; however, they will not access services in the absence of a relationship with the youth services professional and, ultimately, the program or organization. If an honest relationship is not established and maintained, the youth will have difficulty trusting a program or referral network enough to obtain services and support beyond basic survival aid on the street. Building relationships is a process that begins with establishing rapport, moves to developing trust, nurturing and maintaining the relationship, and, finally, creating lasting support systems.

- **Rapport.** Rapport building takes time. It is important to use a victim- or youth-centered approach to build rapport, leading to increased trust from the youth. Youth workers will likely need to “show up,” being honest with the youth, and support the youth’s decisions multiple times before trust begins to be established.
- **Trust.** Trust building takes time and consistency. Remember, trust doesn’t just happen; RHY workers will need to show up, be present, and be consistent. Trust building requires youth workers to do what they say, when and how they said it would be done. During the trust-building phase, youth will give a little information to see how you react and to test your commitment to follow through on what you have previously stated would happen when they shared information.
- **Relationship.** Establishing and maintaining the relationship begins when there is proactive interaction from the youth. Proactive engagement is evidenced by the youth contacting an organization rather than waiting for you to find them. Maintaining the relationship requires continued consistency, availability, and presence while advocating for the youth’s best interest. For the relationship to grow, all interactions related to safety planning must be trauma informed, youth centered, and harm-reduction focused. Safety planning includes increasing internal and external protective factors, making sure youth know where they can find immediate help: Is there an emergency room or first responder location they can go to for help? Youth workers should be prepared to share some resources with the youth, such as the National Runaway Safeline phone number or TEXT 66008.





- **Accountability.** Remember, supportive, advocacy-based relationships include holding the youth accountable and helping them to navigate systems of care. Victims of trafficking have experienced significant trauma, and traditional methodologies can fail to recognize victims' perspectives, leading to a sense of vulnerability—using traditional methodologies can result in re-traumatization. Accountability with compassion leads to stronger relationships between RHY workers and the trafficked youth. Ultimately, stronger relationships lead to victims feeling safe and, thereby, capable of overcoming the impacts of trauma while being held accountable. Compassionate accountability results in trafficking victims being able to accept responsibility for their actions and behaviors while feeling respected and safe.<sup>81</sup>
- **Support Systems.** Establishing long-term and permanent support systems is the final stage of relationship development. Sometimes youth workers act as if a relationship with a youth is proprietary and prevent other providers from engaging with the youth. Such actions are detrimental to the youth and, ultimately, to the program. Once the relationship is established, it is imperative for youth workers to leverage the relationship to help youth expand their support system beyond a particular person or program. Helping a youth identify and connect with family, extended family, community-based organizations, survivor networks, mentors, and so forth that the youth will not age out of ensures support systems the youth can access beyond RHY programs.

## Identifying Trafficking: Risk Factors

Homelessness itself is a primary risk factor for trafficking. As discussed throughout this guide, homeless youth are at increased risk of trafficking because their basic needs for shelter, sustenance, and security are not being met.

Work with a young person can start with an inventory of additional risk factors for trafficking. RHY program intakes typically collect information about adverse life experiences. The Adverse Childhood Experiences assessment advocated by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is one tool that can be used to attend to both general and human trafficking specific risk factors in a youth's life.<sup>82</sup> One study found that 94% of youth who were identified as trafficked had at least six of the Adverse Childhood Experiences factors, and 61% of the youth had nine of those experiences, compared to only 11% of youth who had not been trafficked.<sup>83</sup> In addition, RHY programs can utilize the Human Trafficking Screening Tool developed by the Urban Institute or the Life Experience Human Trafficking Tool for Child Welfare and Runaway and Homeless Youth Settings. Both tools were recently released by the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) to better assess if a youth entering services has experienced trafficking or is at high risk for being recruited into a trafficking situation.<sup>84</sup>

A youth having one or even multiple risk factors does not automatically mean the youth has been trafficked. What it does mean, however, is that his or her vulnerability is increased, and increased vulnerability alone demands immediate intervention.

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<sup>81</sup> Cimmarusti, Rocco A., and Soe L. Gamero. 2009. "Compassionate Accountability in Residential Care: A Trauma Informed Model." *Residential Treatment for Children & Youth* 26, no. 3: 181–193.

<sup>82</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2016. About adverse childhood experiences. Retrieved from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Web site: <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/acestudy/index.html>.

<sup>83</sup> Chisholm-Straker, Makini, Julie Einbond, Jeremy Sze, and Jim White. 2017. *Recognizing Human Trafficking Among Homeless Youth*. Newark, NJ: Covenant House New Jersey.

<sup>84</sup> Urban Institute, Human Trafficking Screening Tool pretest validation study 2017.

Risk factors involved with vulnerability in becoming a victim of trafficking appear, at first, to be very broad. On the surface, some risk factors may appear as the same attitudes, behaviors, and characteristics that most adolescents exhibit as they proceed through typical adolescent development. For this reason, it is important to look for clusters of risk factors and assess these factors within the context of protective factors, both internal (within the young person) and external (within the family, the community, and the unique cultural context with which the young person identifies).

The following are some of the most common risk factors that increase a young person's vulnerability to exploitation—recognizing these risk factors will assist RHY staff in identifying human trafficking victims. The list is in no way exhaustive.

**History of abuse or neglect.** Placing trust in the person who cares for a youth, when that person also harms the youth, can lead a young person to normalize abusive relationships.

**History of sexual abuse.** Young people who have histories of sexual abuse may have been taught to be secretive. They may feel that they are powerless against those individuals who exploit them. Many young people who have been sexually abused feel that they are reduced to their sexuality alone and are good for little else.

**Family involvement in illicit or illegal activities.** Youth whose parents engage in the sex trade, drug trade, or informal or illicit employment grow up believing these activities are normal and are more likely to engage in them. This is also true for children who grow up in families with relatives who are members of criminal street gangs or other criminal gangs or networks.

**History of foster care and state care.** Young people need a connection to at least one adult who is consistent and supportive and provides unconditional love and acceptance. Most youth who grow up in the care of the state have not made that connection. With limited role models for healthy relationships, they can become involved in unhealthy and abusive relationships. In addition, removal from family and community may be traumatic.

**Lack of support system or safety net.** Youth who have little or no social or familial network on which to rely are often lured into prostitution or another type of commercial sexual exploitation or are tricked into scam jobs or exploitative work situations.

**Few or no employment options.** Young people who have left school, who have criminal histories, who identify as transgender, or who have not connected with adults who can assist them with employment can feel they have few formal employment options, leaving them vulnerable to labor and sex traffickers.

**Job history.** If a young person has been exploited or abused at work or in the sex trade, he or she is more likely to accept further exploitation. Furthermore, some trafficked youth were born into a culture of trafficking, with one or both parents either a victim or perpetrator, which lowers the barrier to being trafficked.

**Lack of stable housing.** Living on the street is dangerous, and homeless youth may trade sex for a place to stay, a warm shower, and a bed. For youth under the age of 18, trading sex for anything of value constitutes trafficking, even if there is no third-party exploiter (i.e., trafficker or pimp) involved.

**Poverty or lack of opportunities.** A history of extreme poverty can often mean a history of extreme deprivation. Getting basic needs met becomes an everyday challenge that can leave a young person vulnerable to exploitation. Also, the lack of opportunities for homeless youth to find a job to pay for their basic needs is a contributing factor to human trafficking incidents.

**Untreated mental health issues.** Many youth with untreated mental health issues and even some youth with treated mental health issues will self-medicate with street drugs, which, for all the reasons above, makes these youth vulnerable. There are additional vulnerabilities with youth who have mental health problems in that their mental health may have caused disruptions in their education and other developmental tasks. These disruptions may result in a diminished capacity to make sound decisions and to work and support themselves.

**Low cognitive functioning and learning disabilities.** Some youth with developmental delays and low cognition have trouble reading danger signals and may become involved with persons who can easily take advantage of them. An IEP can be a warning sign of vulnerability to trafficking.

**Relationship history.** The need for acceptance and a sense of belonging can be powerful determinants when it comes to relationships with peers as well as with individuals who are outside of a peer reference group, especially regarding perceptions of power and wants and needs. Trafficking victims often feel like outliers because of what has happened to them in the past and because of judgmental attitudes people have, particularly about sex trafficking.

**Emotional reasoning.** Young people who make decisions on the basis of subjective feelings and opinions are more likely to demonstrate impaired judgment and poor impulse control.

**Substance abuse or dependence.** Some homeless youth rely on drugs, including alcohol, to help them sleep, to mask hunger, to tolerate the weather, and/or to suppress fear. Substance abuse makes young people vulnerable due to loss of judgment when they are high. Some youth engage in the sex trade to maintain their drug habits. Their need or desire for drugs makes them vulnerable to individuals who sell or supply drugs. Some youth experiencing homelessness also have family histories of drug abuse, which contribute to youth running away or developing similar addictions when living in the streets as a way to cope with their homelessness situations.

**Immigration status.** Young people who have issues related to their immigration or residential status in this country may be at risk of labor or sexual exploitation and may lack the ability to explain their situations or may fear repercussions for speaking up. In addition, traffickers exploit lack of legal residential status in the United States by threatening to report victims to authorities.

**Identification as LGBTQ.** Evidence suggests that LGBTQ youth can be up to five times more likely than heterosexual youth to be victims of trafficking, due to increased susceptibility that comes with the feelings of rejection and alienation that are often experienced by LGBTQ youth.<sup>85</sup> These challenges can push these youth to run away, but, once in the streets, they have very few options to meet their basic needs.

Many more risk factors are in evidence every day at programs that serve homeless youth. The previous list is a snapshot of some of the most common risk factors that place homeless, runaway, and street-

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<sup>85</sup> Yates, Gary L., Richard G. MacKenzie, Julia Pennbridge, and Avon Swofford. 1991. "A Risk Profile Comparison of Homeless Youth Involved in Prostitution and Homeless Youth Not Involved." *Journal of Adolescent Health* 12, no. 7: 545–548.

involved youth in situations where they are at the greatest risk of being trafficked. When youth care workers encounter all youth, and especially those with risk factors for human trafficking, the need to look for indicators is key to identifying youth who would benefit from additional efforts to ascertain if the youth has been or is currently being trafficked.

The chart below includes examples of indicators that youth care workers may notice when working with youth. Not all youth with risk factors will present with the indicators as identified below and not all youth with indicators have been trafficked. However, it is important to acknowledge the link between risk factors, subsequent indicators of trafficking, and the need for further assessment.



## Identifying Trafficking: *Indicators*

Risk factors and adverse childhood experiences are certainly common among runaway and homeless youth. These experiences can translate into behaviors which youth care workers can identify during interactions with youth. It is important to also keep in mind behaviors that may be a sign that youth are currently being trafficked. The following list of possible indicators is drawn from the National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments.<sup>86</sup>

► Indicators of victimization include but are not limited to the following:

- Frequently running away
- References made to frequent travel to other cities
- Bruises or other signs of physical trauma, withdrawn behavior, depression, anxiety, or fear
- Lack of control over a personal schedule and/or identification or travel documents
- Hunger, malnourishment, or inappropriate dress (based on weather conditions or surroundings)
- Signs of substance abuse
- Coached or rehearsed responses to questions
- Sudden change in attire, behavior, relationships, or material possessions (e.g., expensive items)
- Uncharacteristic promiscuity and/or references to sexual situations or terminology beyond age-specific norms
- “Boyfriend” or “girlfriend” who is noticeably older and/or controlling
- Attempt to conceal scars, tattoos, or bruises
- Sudden change in attention to personal hygiene
- Tattoos (a form of branding) displaying the name or moniker of a trafficker
- Hyperarousal or symptoms of anger, panic, phobia, irritability, hyperactivity, frequent crying, temper tantrums, regressive behavior, and/or clinging behavior

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<sup>86</sup> National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments. 2018. *Human Trafficking in America's Schools: Risk Factors and Indicators*. Retrieved from <https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/human-trafficking-americas-schools/risk-factors-and-indicators>



## Identifying Trafficking: *Indicators*

- Hypoarousal or symptoms of daydreaming, inability to bond with other individuals, inattention, forgetfulness, and/or shyness
- Owing a large debt and being unable to pay it off
- Not being allowed breaks at work or being subjected to excessively long work hours
- Being overly concerned with pleasing an employer and/or deferring personal or educational decisions to a boss
- Not being in control of his or her own money
- Living with an employer or having an employer listed as a student’s caregiver
- Desire to quit a job but not being allowed to do so

These indicators do not automatically equate to trafficking, but they do suggest a human trafficking assessment is in order.

The exhibit below includes additional indicators specific to physical and mental health indicators/responses.

### Exhibit 1. Physical and Mental Health Indicators of Runaway and Homeless Youth and Trafficking

Physical	Mental
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multiple pregnancies, pregnancy terminations, miscarriages, exposure to HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs),</li> <li>• Serious communicable diseases (e.g., tuberculosis, hepatitis)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and somatic complaints (e.g. headaches, stomach aches, difficulty sleeping) resulting from trauma.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bruising, burns, and scars</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimizes abuse</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Signs of self-harm</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guilt and shame about experiences</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weight loss, malnourishment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hyperalert; anxiety and agitation, and fear</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Substance and alcohol use and abuse</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Depression and self-destructive behaviors</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fatigued, lack of sleep, reports of nightmares or unusual dreams</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changed relationships with others (including the inability to trust), including dissociation.</li> </ul>

Additional indicators can sometimes be community specific. For example, it may be a red flag for labor trafficking when a young person frequents an area where day laborers congregate. In every community,

RHY programs should compile a list of local potential indicators and risky locations for the staff to reference. Indicators should include labor and sex trafficking.

**Important note:** There is no magic number of risk factors or behavioral indicators that translate into proof of trafficking, because every youth is unique, with his or her own strengths, protective factors, and risk factors. Internal assets, such as a commitment to learning, a positive identity, values that reinforce constructive problem solving, and decision-making and social competencies, are some of the individual qualities that guide positive choices and help youth to develop a sense of confidence, passion, and purpose. These assets can provide youth with some degree of resilience, even in the riskiest situations.

## Youth Disclosures

Although youth may be less intimidated by the idea of talking about labor trafficking or exploitation when commercial sex is not involved, they are still reticent to discuss experiences in which they have been exploited or victimized regardless of the specific situation.<sup>87</sup> They do not want to reveal their vulnerability to other individuals. Situations that require youth to disclose information about gang involvement or other criminal activity are particularly sensitive because of their fear of negative repercussions and because of the culture of silence regarding gangs. Youth repeatedly have indicated that they think of service providers, case managers, and social workers as “gossips” who might share what the youth disclose.<sup>88</sup> Youth who were working on particular life skills and outcomes in their case plans didn’t want to have those plans altered as a result of disclosing victimization. Some youth did not want their particular life skills plans derailed by disclosures that they were trafficking victims, particularly if the disclosures meant having to begin new programs more focused on human trafficking.<sup>89</sup> Therefore, the context in which we discuss disclosures is crucially important.

Youth are seeking a confidential environment in which they can talk about their victimization or life experiences, a place where there will be no negative consequences or judgment. Such an environment can be difficult for service providers to offer, so full disclosure of what protections can be guaranteed to a youth when the youth discloses is crucial. If at all possible, questions regarding sex or labor trafficking should be asked in an environment that can protect a youth’s confidentiality. Special protocols could be put in place specifically for cases of trafficking disclosure. Because there are mandatory reporting laws, staff should explain the limitations of confidentiality and the difference between *confidentiality* and *privacy*, as well as the mandatory reporting laws in the service area. Youth need to understand what happens when they disclose. It is critical for staff to understand that they must *not* make promises they cannot legally keep.

Researchers from the Modern Slavery Research Project suggest that using the word *sometimes* helped youth realize that their situations were not so different from situations of other individuals in their circumstances. For instance, a service provider might say, “Sometimes when youth find themselves in dire situations and don’t know where to turn, they do things that they would not otherwise do. Have you

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<sup>87</sup> Paola Michelle Contreras, Diya Kallivayalil, and Judith Lewis Herman. 2017. “Psychotherapy in the Aftermath of Human Trafficking: Working Through the Consequences of Psychological Coercion,” *Women & Therapy* 40, 1–2: 31–54.

<sup>88</sup> Murphy, Laura T. 2017. *Labor and Sex Trafficking Among Homeless Youth: A Ten-City Study*. New Orleans, LA: Modern Slavery Research Project at Loyola University New Orleans.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.



ever...?” When youth recognize that other individuals have struggled in the same way they have, they are more likely to be more open.

Similarly, if youth believe that they will be stigmatized because of what they have been doing on the street, they are likely to remain silent about it. However, if service providers show that they are open minded and understanding about what homeless youth have to do to survive on the streets, they are more likely to build rapport with the youth and increase the potential for disclosures of human trafficking. One way to show you are open minded and understanding is to say, “Although there are formal jobs that most people do, there are also a lot of things that people do when they are trying to meet basic needs. These forms of work are sometimes called *hustles*, and they can range anywhere from hairdressing to drug dealing to commercial sex.” Once youth see you as understanding what it is like to be out on the street and recognizing that they may have resorted to illicit activities to survive, they are more likely to trust that you will be able to hear what they have to say. Similarly, an *employer* may be the boss of a business or may be a friend, boyfriend, family, or neighbor. A young person may not know that he or she has been trafficked and may need a description of how what happened was exploitative.

## Mandatory Reporting

By federal law, trafficking is now considered a form of child abuse, regardless of whether the minor identifies as a victim and whether a trafficker is involved. Therefore, all cases of sex trafficking involving minors fall under mandatory reporting regulations.

All states, the District of Columbia, and U.S. territories have statutes identifying professions in which members are mandated by law to report child maltreatment. Individuals designated as mandatory reporters typically have frequent contact with minors. Such individuals may include but are not limited to the following:

- Social workers
- Teachers, principals, and other school personnel
- Physicians, nurses, and other healthcare workers
- Counselors, therapists, and other mental health professionals
- Child care providers
- Medical examiners or coroners
- Law enforcement officers
- Domestic violence workers
- Probation or parole officers
- Substance abuse counselors
- Employers and volunteers in organizations providing services to victims

Court-appointed special advocates; members of the clergy; as well as faculty, administrators, athletics staff, employees, and volunteers at institutions of higher learning are also designated as mandatory reporters in many states. The list of mandatory reporters covers anyone working in an RHY program—all

staff should be trained on mandatory reporting and conform to the mandates of the law. Violation of this law can lead to federal prosecution.<sup>90</sup>

The circumstances under which a mandatory reporter must make a report vary from state to state.<sup>91</sup> Typically, a report must be made when the reporter, in his or her official capacity, *suspects* or *has reason to believe* that the minor has been abused or neglected. Another reporting standard frequently cited in state law is when the reporter *has knowledge of, or observes a child being subjected* to conditions that would reasonably result in harm to the child. In Maine, a mandatory reporter must report when he or she *has reasonable cause* to suspect that a child is not living with the child's family.

Mandatory reporters are required to report the facts and circumstances that led them to suspect that a child has been abused or neglected. They do not have the burden of providing proof that abuse or neglect has occurred. Permissive reporters follow the same standards when electing to make a report.

Supervisors are responsible for ensuring that *everyone* working within their program receives this training before their work begins and that the training is updated regularly. Ideally, this training should be conducted by a program that has been approved by the state agency that oversees the county child welfare programs.<sup>92</sup> Check the date of the approval to be sure it reflects any child welfare policy and policy implementation change. Knowing the specific child welfare legislation in your state is not enough because child welfare policies and policy implementation regulations are likely to change every time the highest court in your state rules on a child welfare case that is brought before it through appeals at the lower court level.

It is never a staff member or provider's responsibility to investigate and decide if, in fact, child abuse or trafficking has occurred. This authority lies within the justice sector of our society. Program staff and providers, licensed and unlicensed, are required to report suspected child maltreatment. Those individuals sanctioned through the justice sector are the professionals authorized to substantiate a complaint received (observed or suspected incidence of child maltreatment). Most states keep the name of the individual making the report confidential, but they will ask for the reporting individual's name. A staff member or provider can also call the state's hotline for consultation in situations where he or she is not certain about whether a report is required. Names are not necessarily requested for consultation calls.

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<sup>90</sup> The only exception for RHY staff might be domestic violence or sexual assault crisis center workers who are not mandatory reporters if the victim is 18 years of age or older.

<sup>91</sup> Child Welfare Information Gateway. 2016. *Mandatory Reporters of Child Abuse and Neglect*. Washington, DC: US Department of Health and Human Services, Children's Bureau. For up-to-date state-by-state policies, see <https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/systemwide/sgm/?CWIGFunctionaction=stateguidesmanuals:main&facetName=topicName&facetPicked=Mandatory%20reporting&topicName=&audienceName=&states>

<sup>92</sup> It is critical to train all RHY staff. There have been cases in which a youth discloses to the cook because food has a way of connecting people, and the cook may not have any idea what to do with a disclosure. RHY staff such as janitors, cooks, and receptionists should all be trained to document and inform a specific person in the agency to ensure mandatory reporting procedures can be followed.

# The Importance of Honesty Regarding Mandatory Reporting

## DETERMINING WHETHER REPORTING IS MANDATED

Learn about reporting requirements in your state. Each state has laws covering mandatory reporting of suspected child abuse and neglect. A list of state reporting requirements can be found at <https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/systemwide/laws-policies/state/>. Tribal jurisdictions follow specific requirements as well. Staff working with teens may be required to report other types of behaviors, such as imminent harm to self or others (including intimate teen partner violence or bullying) and statutory rape.

Identify who is required to report. Most states specifically make reporting mandatory for professionals such as social workers, medical and mental health professionals, teachers, and child care providers. However, many states also require other professionals who may have frequent contact with children to report, and specific agencies may have policies with additional requirements.

1. Learn what types of situations or incidents must be reported and to whom reports must be made.
2. Develop clear policies and emergency contact lists for frontline staff, including the specific supervisor, to contact before making a report to authorities.
3. Develop a checklist of information for staff in case a mandatory reporting situation occurs. The checklist should include:
  - a. Local numbers for child protective services and law enforcement
  - b. National child abuse hotlines, such as the Childhelp National Child Abuse Hotline (1-800-422-4453 or <http://www.childhelp.org>)
4. Create a sample reporting form that provides the basic information needed to make a report. The form may include the following:
  - a. Type of maltreatment to report (e.g., physical or sexual abuse)
  - b. A reminder that the reporter must have only a reasonable suspicion that someone is in danger rather than hard evidence (the case will be investigated by law enforcement and/or child protective services)
  - c. The process to report either by phone (including reporting hotline and other important contact information) or in a written report
  - d. Consequences for not reporting or following established reporting procedures
5. Train all levels of staff on your organization's procedures and your state's mandatory reporting laws. Frontline staff should first document the incident and report it to their supervisor. Supervisors must be aware of reporting requirements and ensure that reports are made in a timely manner to the appropriate authorities.
6. Get to know the staff in your local child protective services unit to gain a better understanding of how your local program is structured and to develop relationships and rapport before emergencies occur.

## The Importance of Honesty Regarding Mandatory Reporting

7. Be honest with the youth. Service providers should inform the youth about the limitations of confidentiality. Youth (and parents or legal guardians if you are working with them) need to know at the beginning of project activities that staff are mandated to report when they suspect that the minor is in danger.
8. Develop a list of mental health resources to provide youth with information about who they can reach to talk and seek some support.

(Broner, Nahama, Venita Embry, Merissa G. Gremminger, Frances E. Gragg, and Olivia S. Ashley. 2013. *Mandatory Reporting and Keeping Youth Safe*. Washington, DC: Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Family and Youth Services Bureau.)

## Screening and Assessment

Some jurisdictions mandate the reporting of suspected incidents of human trafficking. RHY grantees are strongly encouraged to review their jurisdiction policies. In the instance a suspected trafficker is a caretaker, child abuse and neglect laws will also be implicated, which will trigger the reporting of suspected abuse and/or neglect. Before young people are asked questions, they must be provided with information regarding the consequences of disclosure so that they can make informed decisions. A young person who is not ready to be interviewed by investigators and is not fully informed of the consequences of disclosure is more likely to leave the facility and not return—placing the youth in an unsafe situation. During the assessment process, it is important to understand the young person needs to feel in control. Ultimately, young people who are told the truth about reporting requirements will be in a much better and stronger position to disclose information.

### *Assessing for Trafficking History and/or Risk*

A number of interview tools have been developed, tested, and validated to help determine if a person has been trafficked. The key for effectively screening or assessing a youth is to find the right time and the most appropriate tool for your program. Programs should ensure any tools they consider adopting can assess for both sex trafficking and labor trafficking. In addition, it is important to remember that disclosure is not the final goal when conducting screening and assessment with the youth. The following screening tools are a few examples of recommended, validated tools.

Researchers with **John Jay University and the Urban Institute** validated the Human Trafficking Screening Tool (HTST), a 6-question short tool as well as a 19-question longer version that screens for both labor and sex trafficking experiences.

**Covenant House New Jersey**, in partnership with researchers from Mt. Sinai Hospital, recently tested the validity and sensitivity of a shorter version of the previously validated Human Trafficking Interview and Assessment Measure-14 (HTIAM-14). Their Quick Youth Indicators for Trafficking (QYIT) screening tool has 87% accuracy in identifying potential victims of trafficking. It is useful for youth care worker “yes/no” intakes as well as for more in-depth counselor and social worker assessments. The questions included in the QYIT provide the rapport-building context so critical to establishing a connection with youth. These yes or no questions can be used at any stage in working with a youth.

### Sample from Quick Youth Indicators for Trafficking (QYIT)

- It is not uncommon for young people to stay in work situations that are dangerous, simply because they have no other options. Have you ever worked, or done other things, in a place that made you feel scared or unsafe?
- Sometimes people are prevented from leaving an unfair or unsafe work situation by their employers. Have you ever been afraid to leave or quit a work situation due to fears of violence or threats of harm to yourself or your family?
- Sometimes employers don't want people to know about the kind of work they have young employees doing. To protect themselves, they ask their employees to lie about the kind of work they are involved in. Have you ever worked for someone who asked you to lie while speaking to others about the work you do?
- Sometimes young people who are homeless or who are having difficulties with their families have very few options to survive or fulfill their basic needs, such as food and shelter. Have you ever received anything in exchange for sex (e.g., a place to stay, gifts, or food)?

Both the QYIT and the HTST-SF are reliable methods for identifying trafficking among runaway and homeless youth.

**Staff who are untrained in counseling or social work should not be engaging youth in drawn-out conversations about these experiences of exploitation or trafficking.** Regardless of what screening tool you use, what is important is that the questions are asked by the appropriate personnel and in the appropriate setting. Both screening tools can be utilized on intake by any staff member, if the questions are asked only in a yes or no fashion. In a clinical, counseling, or case management setting, the questions can be asked first as yes/no, and then the youth can be asked to expand on their answers to determine the extent of the exploitation. In job skills and job placement settings, the labor trafficking questions can be used as a point of entry into talking about safe job search practices and may also help to identify trafficking victims. Regardless, the conversation about these issues should be nonjudgmental, trauma informed, and strengths based to ensure the safety and well-being of the youth. Services and referrals should be offered to anyone who is identified as a trafficking victim.

## Victim-Centered and Trauma-Informed Care

Each year in the United States, 46 million children are impacted by trauma.<sup>93</sup> Trauma can be the result of one horrific event or the result of years of abuse and/or deprivation. Complex trauma is the result of multiple exposures or prolonged exposure to traumatic events or experiences, which can disrupt a young person's ability to form healthy attachments to other individuals.<sup>94</sup> Because runaway and homeless youth often have histories of violence, rejection, abuse, poverty, and more, staff working with the population should be knowledgeable about trauma and its negative impact and should be skilled in working with traumatized youth in a way that does not re-traumatize. It is likely that close to 100% of youth in RHY

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<sup>93</sup> Listenbee, Robert L., Jr., Joe Torre, Gregory Boyle, Sharon W. Cooper, Sarah Deer, Deanne Tilton Durfee, Thea James, Alicia Lieberman, Robert Macy, Steven Marans, Jim McDonnell, Georgina Mendoza, and Antonio Taguba. 2012. Report of the Attorney General's National Task Force on Children Exposed to Violence. Washington, DC: Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. Retrieved from <http://www.justice.gov/defendingchildhood/cev-rpt-full.pdf>

<sup>94</sup> Klain, Eva J. 2014. Understanding Trauma and Its Impact on Child Clients. *Child Law Practice* 33, no. 9 (September): 181–186.

programs will have experienced trauma or complex trauma. Youth who are trafficked experience trauma simply from being trafficked.<sup>95</sup> The trauma that trafficked youth endure is often more complex (or multilayered), often resulting from violence; abuse; loss of control; physical and psychological coercion; victimization; hunger; sleep deprivation; fear of retribution; use of threats toward family and loved ones; and other elements of force, fraud, exploitation, and coercion. There are also many homeless youth who have had experiences throughout their young lives that have resulted in complex trauma. For many homeless youth who are victims of trafficking, their trafficking situations were not their first experiences of victimization and abuse. Trauma impacts both mental and physical development, affects behavior, and interferes with a young person's ability to function and engage with other individuals.<sup>96</sup> During the past two decades, the relationship between trauma and risk has been proven. For example, the Adverse Childhood Experiences Study has been recording the adverse effects of trauma on children since 1995. The study documents the relationship between childhood trauma and increased risk taking.<sup>97</sup>

Programs serving runaway, homeless, and street-involved youth have always served trauma survivors, sometimes without the knowledge base to recognize trauma or the skills to address trauma's impact.<sup>98</sup> To address this need, many programs have adopted a trauma-informed approach to working with trauma-impacted and trafficked youth. All staff working with trafficked youth (not just clinical staff) can and should use a trauma-informed approach. In fact, evidence suggests trauma-informed settings provide the foundation for more formal therapy and are an essential prerequisite for that clinical work.<sup>99</sup>

Implementing trauma-informed services will often require a philosophical and cultural change within an agency—at every level, whether chief executive or line staff.<sup>100</sup> RHY service providers working with trauma survivors have identified common themes, on which programs have been designed, including trauma awareness, an emphasis on safety, opportunities to rebuild control, and a strengths-based approach.<sup>101</sup>

Exhibit 2 provides a description for each element of a trauma-informed services approach.

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<sup>95</sup> Heffernan, Kristin, and Betty Blythe. 2014. "Evidenced-Based Practice: Developing a Trauma-Informed Lens to Case Management for Victims of Human Trafficking." *Global Social Welfare* 1, no. 4 (December): 169–177. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s40609-014-0007-8>

<sup>96</sup> Klain, Eva J. 2014. Understanding Trauma and Its Impact on Child Clients. *Child Law Practice* 33, no. 9 (September): 181–186.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> Hopper, Elizabeth K., Ellen L. Bassuk, and Jeffrey Olivet. 2010. "Shelter from the Storm: Trauma-Informed Care in Homelessness Services Settings." *The Open Health Services and Policy Journal* 3: 80–100.

<sup>99</sup> Bath, Howard. 2008. The Three Pillars of Trauma-Informed Care. *Reclaiming Children and Youth* 17, no. 3, 17–21. Retrieved from <http://www.cyc-net.org/journals/rcy/rcy-17-3.html>

<sup>100</sup> Hopper, Elizabeth K., Ellen L. Bassuk, and Jeffrey Olivet. 2010. "Shelter from the Storm: Trauma-Informed Care in Homelessness Services Settings." *The Open Health Services and Policy Journal* 3: 80–100.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.



## Exhibit 2. Elements of a Trauma-Informed Services Approach

Trauma Awareness	An Emphasis on Safety	Opportunities to Rebuild Control	A Strengths-Based Approach
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recognizing symptoms</li> <li>Understanding how behaviors are adaptations to traumatic experience</li> <li>Providing routine screening (not just at intake)</li> <li>Recognizing vicarious trauma and implanting self-care strategies</li> <li>Avoiding victim re-traumatization</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Creating an atmosphere of physical and emotional safety</li> <li>Developing a trauma-informed response</li> <li>Understanding potential triggers</li> <li>Establishing clear roles and boundaries</li> <li>Utilizing harm-reduction strategies</li> <li>Respecting privacy and confidentiality</li> <li>Valuing differences and diversity in all their forms</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Creating opportunities for choice within a safe, predictable environment</li> <li>Incorporating youth survivor input into program design and program evaluation</li> <li>Implementing and embracing an organizational trauma-informed environment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identifying youths' strengths</li> <li>Recognizing coping skills</li> <li>Providing future-focused services</li> <li>Offering skill building to develop resiliency</li> <li>Providing options and encouraging youth to make decisions about their next steps</li> </ul>

**Special note:** *Because trauma can impact a young person's ability to concentrate and remember, having one conversation about confidentiality and its limits is simply not enough. Before beginning any new conversation with a youth who may be a trafficking survivor, be sure the young person is aware of what information will be shared and with whom that information will be shared.*

**The ARC Framework.** One model for implementing a trauma-informed care approach is the ARC framework (attachment, self-regulation, and competency)<sup>102</sup> utilized by the Hollywood Homeless Youth Partnership. Its focus on consequences extends the theoretical model of Alfred Adler, who emphasized the importance of feeling adequate. Feeling adequate links closely to theories that emphasize need, especially Abraham Maslow's emphasis on the need for belonging and acceptance. This is a critical need for all young people and is a need that can lead them into a situation where they are trafficked or can keep them entrapped once they are lured into this culture. The framework concentrates on assisting youth in forming and maintaining a healthy relationship with at least one person (attachment); assisting youth in recognizing and controlling their feelings and emotions (self-regulation); and working with youth in mastering their developmental tasks and their ability to plan for their future (competency).<sup>103</sup> An integral part of the ARC framework is the implementation of trauma-informed consequences as an alternative to traditional punishments. Hollywood Homeless Youth Partnership explains the difference:

1. Punishment is used to enforce obedience to a specific authority. It is usually used to assert power and control and often leaves a young person feeling helpless, powerless, and shamed.
2. Consequences are intentionally designed to teach, change, or shape behavior.

<sup>102</sup> Kinniburgh, Kristine Jentoft, and Margaret Blaustein. 2005. "Attachment, Self-Regulation, and Competency: A Comprehensive Intervention Framework for Children with Complex Trauma." *Psychiatric Annals* 35, no. 5 (May): 424–430. Retrieved from <http://psychrights.org/research/Digest/CriticalThinkRxCites/kinniburgh.pdf>

<sup>103</sup> Hollywood Homeless Youth Partnership. n.d. *Guide to The ARC Framework for Runaway and Homeless Youth Serving Agencies*. Retrieved from [http://hhyp.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/HHYP\\_ARC\\_Framework.pdf](http://hhyp.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/HHYP_ARC_Framework.pdf)

3. Logical consequences are clearly connected to the behavior, given with empathy and in a respectful tone, and are reasonable based on the behavior.<sup>104</sup>

**The Sanctuary Model.**<sup>105</sup> The Sanctuary Model is a widely accepted whole-organizational approach to working with survivors of trauma. The goal of The Sanctuary Model is to help youth who have experienced the damaging effects of interpersonal violence, abuse, and trauma. The model is intended for use by residential treatment settings, public schools, domestic violence shelters, homeless shelters, group homes, outpatient and community-based settings, juvenile justice programs, substance abuse programs, parenting support programs, acute care settings, and other programs aimed at assisting children. It is an evidence-supported, trauma-informed, evolving, whole-system organizational change process that recognizes that trauma affects organizations as much as it does individuals. The model is based in a process that helps service provider programs share, debate, and finally agree on shared values, beliefs, and guiding principles. It is grounded in commitments to nonviolence, emotional intelligence, social learning, open communication, democracy, social responsibility, and growth or change. The Sanctuary Model is not a “thing” but rather is a set of interactive tools to change people’s minds and behaviors and the way people go about working together, thinking together, acting together, and living together.<sup>106</sup>

Some grantees within the RHY community have utilized aspects of The Sanctuary Model methodology in their efforts to serve youth victims of human trafficking. The model is not trauma specific; it requires the whole agency to commit to altering the organizational culture to support positive change. The Sanctuary Model creates a psychologically and socially safe environment, with all staff trained in effective communication. Utilization of The Sanctuary Model fosters a sense of safety for youth survivors, often revealing risks and vulnerabilities to be addressed through stabilization services. Benefits can include an increase in safety, social and emotional well-being, and self-sufficiency for the victims and the practitioners. These practices can assist trafficked youth in building permanent connections to families, local communities, school, the workforce, and other positive social networks.

## Crisis Intervention

Providers know that runaway, throwaway, homeless youth involved in human trafficking are youth in crisis, but it is important to remember that the trafficked youth might not perceive the situation the same way. Some youth might perceive their situation as an improvement over the one they left behind, when they first became involved in trafficking. The person who recruited the victim most likely misrepresented the relationship or opportunity initially. The young person may have been lured into sex trafficking by promises of love. He or she may have understood the offer of work as a means to inclusion in a gang. Or a youth might have identified what turned out to be forced labor as a means to material resources that would be difficult to obtain because of the youth’s homelessness. Inclusion can be a strong motivating force for acting on an offer from a trafficker.

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<sup>104</sup> Schneir, Arlene, Daniel Ballin, Heather Carmichael, Nikolaos Stefanidis, Lisa Phillips, Coreena Hendrickson, and Lisa de Gyarfas. 2009. *Trauma Informed Consequences for Homeless Youth*. Los Angeles, CA: Hollywood Homeless Youth Partnership. Retrieved from <http://hhyp.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/Trauma-Informed-Consequences.pdf>

<sup>105</sup> For more information about The Sanctuary Model®, visit <http://www.sanctuaryweb.com>;  
<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/266721082>

<sup>106</sup> Dr. Bloom, The Sanctuary Model

If the young person does realize the degree of entrapment, exploitation, and danger associated with the trafficking situation, the degree of anxiety accompanying this realization could easily become overwhelming, a degree of anxiety that he or she might not have adequate coping skills for. When coping skills are inadequate, young people may resort to more primitive defense mechanisms, such as projection, denial, repression, displacement, reaction formation, intellectualization, or rationalization. The challenge for providers is to figure out a way to break through these defense mechanisms without precipitating a limbic fight, flight, freeze response; a suicidal response; or an actual psychotic breakdown. Providers recognize a crisis, but the youth involved might not yet recognize a crisis. Failure to recognize a crisis, combined with the defense mechanism of denial, allows a person to continue functioning as opposed to being overwhelmed with emotions such as anxiety, anger, sadness, and so forth. It is good practice to help the youth build coping skills first, before addressing the failure to recognize and/or deny.

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## Essential Components to Effective Recovery

Three essential components contribute to effective recovery from crisis:

- 1 An accurate understanding of what really happened
- 2 Functional social support
- 3 Higher level coping skills

All three components must be present. Crisis intervention, therefore, must begin with an in-depth assessment of each component. Because a provider doesn't have the time-based luxury of completing an in-depth assessment before intervening in a trafficking crisis, the assessment process is continuously being updated as the intervention process is taking place. With each assessment update, the intervention plan must be updated and revised. Provider staff and other members of the crisis intervention team need to have an ongoing way of communicating between and among themselves to integrate these assessment and intervention updates for each youth.

Everyone must be "on the same page" in reinforcing an intervention that is taking place within the program, within the shelter or treatment facility, and within any community groups (e.g., family, school, recreational activities) involved.

- 1** **The first of the three essential crisis intervention components is an accurate understanding of what really happened to the young person.** Because avoidance is a symptom of acute stress disorder and/or post-traumatic stress disorder, an accurate understanding doesn't manifest itself initially. New research on this phenomenon, called *incremental disclosure*, demonstrates that traumatized young people often tell their stories in bits and pieces, as they begin to feel safe enough to lower their defenses enough to acknowledge, feel, and express the frightening things that occurred.<sup>107</sup>

The team of providers also needs accurate information, but accurate information goes well beyond the simple facts about what happened to the young person. The team needs to understand the symbolic meaning that the young person assigned to what happened, for example, the things that the young person might have thought about or said to himself or herself to make sense of it all. These internal thoughts and meanings can be inaccurate (e.g., "If I had been a better child, this wouldn't have happened to me"). These thoughts can also be based on the developmental stage the young person was in when the first crisis occurred. For example, a teen who was trafficked into the sex trade during the middle school years might remain, cognitively, at a ninth-grade level many years later. Crisis can delay development.<sup>108</sup>

As another example, the adult(s) or peer(s) involved in grooming the young person might be perceived in very concrete all bad or all good terms. Some young trafficking victims may have been led to believe they were chosen by the trafficker because they were "special." Crisis intervention in this situation is going to be different than crisis intervention with a young person who understands that he or she was exploited.

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<sup>107</sup> Dr. Yaro Garcia, testimony, OSCE Hearing on The Health Consequences of Human Trafficking.

<sup>108</sup> Zimmerman, Cathy, and Rosilyne Borland, eds. 2009. *Caring for Trafficked Persons: Guidance for Health Providers*. Geneva, Switzerland: International Organization for Migration. Retrieved from [http://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/ct\\_handbook.pdf](http://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/ct_handbook.pdf)

The crisis intervention team should also assist youth to accurately understand the losses and perceived losses that led up to the trafficking experiences. It may be difficult for team members to think of leaving a trafficking situation as a loss, but it is important to empathize with the youth about perceived losses. For example, the victim may feel that leaving the trafficker means the victim will lose a sense of belonging, inclusion, and affiliation or will lose the security of food, clothing, shelter, and other necessities the trafficker provided or will lose a sense of purpose, identity, or special ability the victim had when he or she was trafficked.

As another example, losing contact with someone a youth has a trauma bond with may be perceived by the youth as an additional trauma—at least until the youth is able to develop an understanding of trauma bonding and of his or her status as a victim of trafficking. Traffickers see the people they traffic as their property, and they are highly skilled at grooming the youth to accept this ownership. Much of this grooming involves tactics that the young person is probably not aware of. It is this lack of awareness that elicits cooperation on the part of the victim. The youth's own defenses maintain the bond. The goal of crisis intervention is to help the individual return to his or her pre-crisis state of equilibrium or, as a result of the crisis, to bring the individual to a higher level of functioning than the pre-crisis state of equilibrium. If you break through a defense mechanism too quickly, you can precipitate a breakdown or suicide attempt. Effective crisis intervention involves continuous reassessment and revision of the intervention process so that a breakdown or suicide attempt can be avoided. Appropriate pacing is the key to success.<sup>109</sup>

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**The second essential component of crisis intervention is functional social support.** Too often, crisis intervention providers define social support on the basis of having access to people who care about the victims; but, having people who care about the trafficked youth isn't enough. The youth services provider should assess the way that the "caring" manifests itself in terms of the reciprocal interactions that take place daily. For example, the caring parents of a young person who was identified as a victim of trafficking might lose capacity for empathy and limit setting because they are overwhelmed and traumatized by learning about what happened to their son or daughter. Caring program staff can lose empathy because of compassion fatigue or vicarious traumatization. Service providers or educators can become intimidated by things that the young person reveals to them or by what they learn about the young person's past. The victim can feel a sense of stigma because of subtle differences in how teachers, family members, and other individuals interact with him or her as opposed to how they interact with nontrafficked youth.

In addition to funding services for the involved youth, providers need to set aside some funding for both the formal and informal support systems involved with the youth. These support systems could include something as simple as extra staff time being made available for collaborative contacts (e.g., phone calls, video conferencing, and on-site meetings) with anyone who wants to be a part of the crisis intervention process and with anyone who meets the established criteria for involvement. Never assume that what appears to be social support is the same as functional social support. Enabling can look like social support. Relational aggression, the intentional damaging of a victim's relationships and/or social status and network, on the part of peers or siblings can look like social support at first. The best way to maximize functional social support is through communication and monitoring. If something appears to be dysfunctional in the

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<sup>109</sup> O'Connor, Monica, and Grainne Healy. 2006. *The Links between Prostitution and Sex Trafficking: A Briefing Handbook*. Retrieved from <http://www.catwinternational.org/Content/Images/Article/175/attachment.pdf>

relationship arena, ask about it. Dysfunctional process only succeeds when it remains hidden and unexposed. Youth, if asked in an appropriate way, will let you know how they feel about the support systems and what they perceive about the way that individuals in those support systems interact with them.

**3** **The third essential component of crisis intervention is higher level coping skills.** *Higher level* here refers to those skills that come from the neocortical subsystem of the central nervous system, as opposed to the more emotionally based, impulsive, or playful limbic subsystem. Crisis intervention teams and providers should assess the degree to which these higher level coping skills existed before the crisis occurred. If history and evidence suggest that the young person did have some higher level pre-crisis coping skills (e.g., problem-solving skills; assertiveness skills; constructive conflict resolution skills; negotiation skills; mediation skills; the ability to recognize a need for boundaries, along with the ability to establish them), intervention simply involves helping the young person move forward to access dormant coping skills to applying the skills. This process might involve regulating emotion enough to engage in a bridging activity (e.g., journaling or asking to discuss or process feelings with a trusted adult team member). Bridging activities help the young person learn to move away from the limbic fight, flight, or freeze mode to the more rational and logical neocortical processing mode.

During the immediate crisis intervention period, providers and team members won't get to see the higher level coping skills that existed before the crisis because the young person is probably too overwhelmed by the crisis itself, along with the emotional reactions, to apply the skills. This is the reason why a mental status evaluation at this time may be inaccurate. An assessment in the immediate aftermath of a crisis reflects a young person's mental status as impacted by the crisis, which is also why mental health labels should never be used in the aftermath of a crisis. Just about everyone will demonstrate symptoms of some type of mental or behavioral health disorder when they are stuck in the crisis-based emotional quicksand of limbic reactivity. All the crisis team can do at this time is get a small glimpse of any higher level coping skills that might already exist.

Trafficked youth who never developed any higher level coping skills before the crisis should be triaged as an emergency. Intervention for this young person must come from a developmental perspective. Visualize this young person as an emotional toddler or preschool aged child filled with limbic impulsivity and raw emotion. The crisis is an ideal time to plant the seeds of higher level coping skills and then nurture those seeds daily to help them grow. Unless there is neurological damage, the neocortical subsystem can start to grow and develop at any chronological age if it is given the information (the "seeds") and the follow-up nurturing that it needs. Remember, there can be as much as a two-year gap between knowing something at the cognitive level and spontaneously applying it to one's everyday life. Crisis team members might never see the long-term results of the work they did with a young person during a crisis, but many high-functioning adults will testify to the positive life changes that took place as the direct result of the right intervention in the immediate aftermath of a crisis, sometimes before they even knew that they were in a crisis.<sup>110</sup>

In summary, crisis intervention is both an assessment and an intervention tool that everyone who works with trafficked youth should know and use. Crisis intervention integrates well with other assessment

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<sup>110</sup> Christopher, Margaret. 2017. Unpublished manuscript.



and/or intervention modalities. Remember, it is the perception and symbolic meaning of the crisis (not just the factual events) that must be understood and addressed. Also, remember to think of crisis intervention as a cyclical process of assessing, intervening, and then immediately reassessing and revising the intervention repeatedly until the crisis is effectively managed and the individual is restored to his or her previous level of functioning or to a higher level of functioning. Most important, remember that the young person involved may, one day, achieve cognitive mastery over what happened and look back on your involvement as a critical factor that resulted in tremendous post-crisis growth.

## Therapeutic Intervention Methods<sup>111</sup>

Few interventions have been specifically tested among the population of human trafficking victims. However, because human trafficking results in complex trauma, trauma-focused interventions are appropriate. New research has documented the importance of trauma-informed approaches for victims of human trafficking. A selected list of these interventions, the populations in which they have been tested, and any cautions or modifications, are provided in Exhibit 3. Please note this list is not exhaustive and may change as new research is conducted.<sup>112</sup>

### Exhibit 3. Therapeutic Intervention Modules

Intervention and Goal	Population	Cautions and Modifications
Harm Reduction Reduce the risk of sex and labor trafficking.	Adolescents	None
Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) <sup>113</sup> Process trauma.	Recognized effectiveness for depression, anxiety, eating disorders	CBT has not been empirically tested with trafficking victims, but it has demonstrated effectiveness in a variety of other populations and should be considered and researched. Modifications can be made to include the victim/survivor's cultural beliefs.

<sup>111</sup> This section was pulled in from <https://rhyttac.memberclicks.net/assets/docs/Resources/resources%20-%20outreach%20and%20engagement%20with%20survivors.pdf>

<sup>112</sup> Christopher, Margaret. 2017. Unpublished manuscript.

<sup>113</sup> Hodge, David R. 2014. Assisting Victims of Human Trafficking: Strategies to Facilitate Identification, Exit from Trafficking, and the Restoration of Wellness. *Social Work* 59, no. 2: 111–118.

doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/sw/swu002>

Intervention and Goal	Population	Cautions and Modifications
<p>Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT)<sup>114</sup></p> <p>Process trauma.</p>	Child sex abuse survivors	Parental involvement, gradual exposure, and the trauma narrative may be problematic for trafficking victims/survivors, especially youth. Modifications should be made to address these potential issues.
<p>Multi-Systemic Therapy (MST)<sup>115</sup></p> <p>Reduce juvenile delinquency.</p>	Sex trafficking victims with criminal charges	This intervention may not be appropriate for foreign victims/survivors due to a lack of understanding of cultural equivalents within the treatment model.
<p>Animal-Assisted Therapies</p> <p>Learn about attachment, trust, emotional regulation, and behavior change through work with animals and/or obtain emotional support from animals.</p>	Those individuals affected with PTSD and very likely those individuals affected with complex PTSD	Research with veterans demonstrates effectiveness for some PTSD symptoms; however, this method might not work with all trafficked youth because it requires a neocortical functioning that some youth might not be at.
<p>Developmental Therapy</p> <p>Facilitate mastery of a previous life-stage challenge and promote development of neocortical subsystem within the central nervous system.</p>	Complex trauma victims and some individuals who have experienced single episodes of severe preverbal psychological or psychosocial trauma	Developmental therapeutic methods can take a long time and must be paced appropriately. Case management can be paired with this method in a way that identifies signals for each new round of developmental therapy and a need for rest from therapy so that new gains can be consolidated and integrated.
<p>Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT)</p> <p>Regulate emotion so that higher level cognitive processing of trauma and other upsetting experiences is possible.</p>	Any individual who had difficulty regulating emotion, assuming cognitive functioning is reasonably intact	Some of the strategies used with DBT might lead to dissociation, especially among those individuals who have dissociated previously in conjunction with severe traumatic exposures. Research protocol is recommended.

<sup>114</sup> Fong, Rowena, and Jodi Berger Cardoso. 2010. Child Human Trafficking Victims: Challenges for the Child Welfare System. *Evaluation and Program Planning* 33, no. 3: 311–316.

doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.evalprogplan.2009.06.018>

<sup>115</sup> Ibid.

Intervention and Goal	Population	Cautions and Modifications
<p>Socio-Behavioral Therapy and/or Functional Behavioral Analysis</p> <p>Promote behavioral change through effective positive reinforcement and substitution of adaptive behaviors in place of those behaviors that are maladaptive.</p>	<p>Youth who have disorders significant enough to impair cognitive processing of new insights used in talk therapies (e.g., youth who acquired brain injury or traumatic brain injury, youth on the autism spectrum, youth with major intellectual disability)</p>	<p>When used improperly, this intervention method can be another type of abuse or neglect. When used appropriately, this method can still be perceived as such and trigger episodes of affect dysregulation (e.g., emotional meltdowns, externalization of anger, violence).</p>
<p>Solution-Focused Therapy</p> <p>Teach youth to use a sequential method of processing to think through problems and potential solutions and to think ahead about the consequences (good and not so good) of each potential solution. Also, teach youth how to evaluate the outcomes of choices made about solutions and to either retry the chosen solution in a different way or select a different solution.</p>	<p>Research has demonstrated effectiveness with youth as young as age five; this method can be used throughout the lifespan</p>	<p>Youth can use this method to manipulate systems, staff, parents, caregivers, teachers, and so forth.</p>
<p>Task-Centered Therapy</p> <p>Use with involuntary clients.</p>	<p>Research from as early as the 1960s demonstrates effectiveness when used appropriately with adults; use as a research protocol with trafficked youth</p>	<p>When tasks selected by the youth and provider together are not completed between meetings, a person can become discouraged and depressed and fail to return unless the person has been instructed about the importance of returning to examine what the obstacles and challenges to task completion were.</p>
<p>Therapeutic Use of Art, Music, Drama, Play, and Recreation</p> <p>Use with anyone who is unable to communicate verbally about traumatic experiences and/or for those individuals with fragmented memories of trauma.</p>	<p>Effective with just about anyone when used appropriately and with training</p>	<p>A youth should never be forced or coerced to use these methods. Also, it is important for providers and staff to avoid contaminating the young person's work with suggestions and/or their own thoughts, feelings, playfulness, and so forth.</p>

## Safety Planning<sup>116</sup>

A safety plan is an individualized plan that incorporates practical application strategies to increase safety by reducing or avoiding harm or harmful situations and triggers. Safety plans cannot be solely focused on getting youth “out of the life” or “leaving the bad job” or away from their traffickers; rather, safety plans must look toward the long-term needs of victims/survivors and assist them to identify how to increase their safety now and skills for maintaining safety in the future.

Safety plans include five components:

- Identification of sources of support;
- Identification, development, and practicing of coping strategies;
- Creation of detailed plans to respond to or prepare for dangerous situations;
- Identification of safe(r) strategies for youth who are still being trafficked; and
- Development of mini-plans with conversations and role-playing opportunities to increase skills.

### Exhibit 4. Effective Safety Planning Sample

Safety Domain	Action Steps
Sources of support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ms. Gina at the HT Counselor Center</li> <li>• My stepbrother Derrick</li> <li>• Youth support group</li> <li>• My boss at my job</li> <li>• My new dog Jazzy</li> <li>• Outreach teams</li> <li>• Schedule and participate in biweekly follow-up sessions with Ms. Gina</li> </ul>
Coping strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Journal or listen to music</li> <li>• Positive imagery</li> <li>• Connect with my AA sponsor</li> <li>• Practice positive self-talk daily</li> <li>• Call my mentor</li> <li>• Painting, writing, or drawing</li> </ul>
Planned responses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Call the police and advocate if my trafficker locates me</li> <li>• Say “NO” to my trafficker if he or she contacts me</li> <li>• Avoid hanging out with other people still involved in trafficking situations</li> <li>• Be prepared to relocate if necessary</li> <li>• Discuss any danger situation with the trusted adult</li> </ul>

<sup>116</sup> Runaway and Homeless Youth Training and Technical Assistance Center (RHYTTAC) (2017). “*Understanding Cultural Competence and Developing Culturally Competent Services for Victim-Survivors of Human Trafficking*” <https://rhyttac.memberclicks.net/assets/docs/Resources/resources%20-%20cultural%20competence.pdf>

Safety Domain	Action Steps
Safe people and places	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shelter and places where youth feel comfortable staying or sharing with peers</li> <li>• Outreach teams and survivors</li> <li>• My job at the nursing home</li> <li>• My healthcare provider</li> <li>• My mentor</li> <li>• My case manager</li> <li>• My best friend</li> </ul>
Harm-reduction strategies (Encourage youth input and decisions for harm-reduction strategies.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tattoo removal</li> <li>• Continue monthly sexually transmitted infections testing</li> <li>• Seek out short- or long-term housing</li> <li>• Share the story and assist other victims (if possible)</li> <li>• Build job skills and seek employment</li> <li>• Serve in the community to develop safety nets</li> <li>• Learn about youth employment rights and responsibilities</li> <li>• Learn about healthy relationships and boundaries</li> </ul>

## Cultural Competence

To understand cultural competence, it helps to start with the definition of *culture*. In their seminal work *Cultural Issues and Responses: Defining Cultural Competence in Child Welfare* (1989), Cross et al. write that culture involves the “integrated pattern of human behavior that includes thoughts, communications, actions, customs, beliefs, values and institutions of a racial, ethnic, religious or social group.”<sup>117</sup> Cultural competence involves having the capacity to function proficiently within the context of a particular culture.

Competence is based on a set of harmonious actions, approaches, environment, and policies that come together and enable the people working with the system of care to work effectively in cross-cultural situations. Culturally competent services, then, refer to “understanding the importance of social and cultural influences on patients’ health beliefs and behaviors; considering how these factors interact at multiple levels of the healthcare delivery system (e.g., at the level of structural processes of care or clinical decision making); and, finally, devising interventions that take these issues into account to assure quality health care delivery to diverse patient populations.”<sup>118</sup>

<sup>117</sup> Cross, Terry L., Barbara J. Bazron, Karl W. Dennis, and Mareasa R. Isaacs. 1989. *Towards A Culturally Competent System of Care, Volume I*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Child Development Center, CASSP Technical Assistance Center Retrieved from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED330171.pdf>

<sup>118</sup> Betancourt, Joseph R., Alexander R. Green, J. Emilio Carrillo, and Owusu Ananeh-Firempong. 2003. “Defining Cultural Competence: A Practical Framework for Addressing Racial/Ethnic Disparities in Health and Health Care.” *Public Health Reports* 118: 297.

According to Cross et al., creating a culturally competent organization requires the presence of five key components:

- Valuing diversity.
- Being capable of honest self-assessment.
- Being conscious of the dynamics inherent when cultures intersect.
- Having institutionalized cultural knowledge.
- Having developed approaches and treatment modalities that are adapted to diversity.<sup>119</sup>

Having these five components in place at one level of an organization is a good start. In addition, a culturally competent organization proactively works to obtain commitment and involvement from every division—administration, professional staff, support staff—of the organization. The three major factors impacting cultural competence are attitudes, policies, and practices. Organizations become more culturally competent as their attitudes become more open and welcoming to diverse populations and communities, their policies become more flexible and culturally objective, and their practices become more harmonious with the culture of youth and families.

Adopting the five-component framework for creating a culturally competent organization is one critical step in building competence. Incorporating these five points into attitudes, policies, and practices of the organization is the next step. Finally, it is important to understand your community: What are the demographics of your community? What community resources are in place to serve people of diverse backgrounds? What resources are needed?<sup>120</sup>

Next, learn about the resources in your community by creating a community map, sometimes called an *asset map*.

### Culturally Competent Programs

Culturally competent programs maintain a set of attitudes, perspectives, behaviors, and policies—both individually and organizationally—that promote positive and effective interactions with diverse cultures. Practicing cultural competence to honor diversity means understanding the core needs of your target audience and strategically designing services and materials to meet those needs. It is important to regularly and honestly evaluate your organizational and operational practices to ensure all voices are heard and reflected. Key considerations for a program include the following:

- Conducting a needs assessment and a capacity assessment to identify cultural commonalities and differences to be addressed and the ability of your program to address them
- Involving individuals representing the diversity of your community around the planning table of your organization and encouraging cross-cultural dialogues
  - Facilitating both formal and informal opportunities for cross-cultural interactions among both program recipients and program staff

(HHS, Office of Adolescent Health. 2017. *Cultural Competence*. Retrieved from <https://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/resources-and-training/tpp-and-paf-resources/cultural-competence/index.html>)

<sup>119</sup> Cross, Terry L., Barbara J. Bazron, Karl W. Dennis, and Mareasa R. Isaacs. 1989. *Towards A Culturally Competent System of Care, Volume I*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Child Development Center, CASSP Technical Assistance Center Retrieved from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED330171.pdf>

<sup>120</sup> For information about the demographics of your service area, go to <http://www.census.gov/2010census/popmap>.



The map will help you achieve several important goals:

- Identify locations where runaway, homeless, and street youth are known to congregate and where local cases of trafficking have already occurred, which will enable you to conduct outreach in a strategic manner and help you connect with youth eligible for FYSB-funded RHY services.
- Identify other community assets, especially for trafficked youth that can benefit the youth, as well as specific assets used by underserved populations.
- Identify resource issues, such as overlaps, gaps, bottlenecks, “hidden” resources, and barriers, which can impact the implementation of programs and services.
- Identify opportunities for coordination and collaboration with existing service providers and community-based organizations that are known and trusted by underserved populations.
- Develop or enhance partnerships with other service organizations, which will enable all parties involved in the mapping process to get to know the community as well as each other’s organizations.
- Set the stage for lasting, working relationships based on trust, which will ultimately increase your organization’s ability to serve youth from underserved populations.

Engage other service providers, youth and families, and community stakeholders working on similar issues and populations. For example, host focus group discussions to gather input about existing resources and promising practices and to identify gaps that need to be addressed.<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> Get more information about community mapping at <https://youth.gov/map-my-community>.

## PROGRAM MODELS

The following information is provided to highlight alternative program models utilized by organizations across the country. These models may not be perfectly aligned with RHY program services, and yet they provide a different perspective on the types of services available for victims/survivors as offered by other not-for-profit organizations. Some RHY service providers have public and private sector funding that may support utilization of similar models.

The types of service models offered in the community may depend more on geography than philosophy. In large urban areas, often, there are, unfortunately, enough homeless youth to support a variety of service options: single sex, LGB, transgender, pregnant and parenting, trafficked, and programs that are open to all. New York City, for example, has separate transitional living programs for each of the subpopulations mentioned above. Projects in less populated areas will likely have one or maybe two options for all homeless youth, including youth who are trafficking survivors or youth who remain at high risk of becoming victimized.

Where the project does have some choice, the agency will want to research whether the trafficking survivors will be best served by a segregated or integrated facility and how much security is necessary to protect youth and staff.

### Specialized Programs

Programs specifically designed for trafficked youth can have their benefits. Trafficking survivors need extensive support and resources rarely found via stabilization services.<sup>122</sup> Specialized recovery programs can offer shelter, trauma-informed care, nutrition, and appropriate medical assessment and treatment, as well as psychological evaluation, counseling, alcohol and drug treatment, education and employment opportunities, life skills training, and safety planning. Compared with other survivors of abuse, trafficking survivors are more likely to have mental health problems, experience trauma, be more isolated, have fewer resources, and be less aware of the workings of government systems.<sup>123</sup> If every young person in the facility is a survivor of trafficking, the level of need and types of services provided will be more consistent for all youth in the program, and youth will not feel isolated or different because they will be in an environment where everyone has shared common experiences. Trafficking survivors may require longer periods of time to stabilize and build trusting relationships than traditional RHY services provide. Survivors may also need additional security measures to feel safe, measures that might make other youth feel uncomfortable and spied upon.

Programs designed to serve trafficked youth will be more costly because a higher staff-to-youth ratio is needed. Staff will have to be more experienced and better trained, and services offered in-house must be therapeutic by design. It is especially important to keep the location of the program confidential due to the



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<sup>122</sup> Reichert, Jessica, and Amy Sylwestrzak. 2013. *National Survey of Residential Programs for Victims of Sex Trafficking*. Chicago, IL: The Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority. Retrieved from [http://www.icjia.state.il.us/assets/pdf/ResearchReports/NSRHVST\\_101813.pdf](http://www.icjia.state.il.us/assets/pdf/ResearchReports/NSRHVST_101813.pdf)

<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

likelihood of exploiters and traffickers gathering in the area if the location is known. Despite the best attempts to keep a location confidential, traffickers are known to recruit in locations where vulnerable youth reside, such as group homes, shelters, and juvenile justice facilities.<sup>124</sup> Keeping the location confidential is almost impossible because the young people, especially those youth who are experiencing trauma bonds, will be more likely to reveal where the facility is located.

Street life can be addicting, and one of the challenges to a segregated program is making sure young people do not feed each other's addiction to the street. Although young people need to be able to share their stories as a way to heal, program staff must be vigilant in ensuring the sharing does not result in re-traumatization or refueling of the addiction.

## Integrated Programs

While advocating to increase availability of facilities and services dedicated to supporting the unique needs of trafficking victims/survivors, we must be prepared to serve these youth within the scope of existing programs. Most programs for runaway, homeless, and street-involved youth have always served young people who have experienced what is now defined and recognized as human trafficking. These youth may exhibit problems and needs that can strain resources, particularly in a short-term BCP. RHY grantees certainly have experience developing strategies to serve a diverse group of young people with unique needs. As we learn more about what interventions work best for survivors of human trafficking, we will refine those strategies for integrating their needs into our program design and evaluation.

We do know some of the challenges in serving trafficked youth in integrated environments. It is not uncommon for trafficking survivors to present with physical, emotional, behavioral, mental health, and/or substance abuse problems. Because of all these needs, one young person can absorb a disproportionate amount of staff time, which can alter the dynamic of a residential program. Trafficked youth may also struggle exceptionally to develop trust and share their histories.

RHY programs can meet these challenges by applying their strengths and building their capacities to effectively meet the needs of young survivors in integrated environments. For example, an agency that also provides medical or clinical mental health services can quickly connect youth and dedicate necessary resources to address those needs. Other agencies might seek to collaborate with local partners to achieve the same result. When facing personnel limitations, an agency may explore additional funding specific to human trafficking to increase case management services for those youth who may have exceptional needs for individualized time and attention. Although some agencies may not have the resources to train their full workforce, investing in professional development for specialized staff and assigning victims/survivors to their caseloads or utilizing a train-the-trainer approach with youth care workers may be places to start.

Among the skills essential to serving trafficked youth is recognizing when to shift focus off history and work with young people on the areas they identify as immediately troubling. Whether they are concerned about physical ailments or feelings of anxiety or the need for an advocate to accompany them to the police station or to court, those needs must be addressed first. Crisis shelters will face the greatest challenge because there may simply not be enough time to build a trusting relationship with the trafficked

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<sup>124</sup> Ibid.

youth, but connections to community services, after care, and follow-up care can help. Providers working with trafficking survivors advocate for a minimum length of stay of 18 months. TLPs with longer term services may have greater opportunity to build capacity for serving trafficked youth. Another possible application of agency strengths might be for TLPs to share their knowledge, skills, and programmatic lessons learned with BCPs and SOPs.<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> Clawson, Heather J., and Brace L. Goldblatt, Grace. 2007. Finding a Path to Recovery: Residential Facilities for Minor Victims of Domestic Sex Trafficking. Caliber, an ICF International Company. Retrieved from <https://aspe.hhs.gov/system/files/pdf/75186/ib.pdf>

# BUILDING A COLLABORATIVE COMMUNITY RESPONSE

Although many RHY programs can provide comprehensive services for youth and young adult victims of trafficking, they cannot work alone. Survivors of trafficking can be a tremendous resource in all aspects of your work—they can assist in outreach, program planning, drafting policies and protocols, and much more. A community multidisciplinary team (MDT) approach that brings service providers, local government representatives and policymakers, and law enforcement officials together is key to successfully assisting youth who have been trafficked, both in terms of protecting them from re-traumatization and of ensuring that they receive comprehensive services. In addition to establishing working relationships with law enforcement, RHY programs must collaborate with a wide range of



service providers and stakeholders to meet the needs of victims of trafficking and to learn about the latest trends related to human trafficking. These stakeholders include but are not limited to first responders, health and mental health providers, dental care providers, pro bono law firms, translators, education specialists, mentors, faith-based organizations, job training and employment specialists, and short- and long-term housing representatives. Collaborate in your community. Recognize the industries, areas, intersection points, and demographic profiles specific to your community, and build cooperative service models related to those needs. (A more expansive section on the use of the MDT approach is included later in this guide.)

## Survivor-Informed Services

The purpose of survivor-informed programs is to integrate survivor perspective and expertise into programs serving vulnerable youth. A survivor-informed program model can be an empowering approach to improve services delivery. Incorporating survivor feedback must be an ongoing process because survivors have different experiences and perspectives to contribute. Furthermore, local trends in human trafficking and general changes in youth culture necessitate ongoing youth feedback on programs. Seeking survivor feedback cannot simply involve asking one or two survivors what they think about a program or practice. One idea is to create a small diverse survivor advisory group or network for guidance, advice, and overarching goals and objectives. Survivors can be sustainably integrated into RHY program activities and leadership in a variety of areas

- **Outreach.** Program leaders need to think about if, when, and to what extent to involve survivors for on-the-street outreach. Survivors can be involved in all aspects of outreach, including assisting outreach workers in developing outreach plans and maps to include places that potential youth victims may hang out, how to approach youth who may be trafficking victims, and what materials are most effective for reaching potential victims and building rapport.
- **Community education.** Depending on the RHY program, the part of the community you target could be different. However, in all RHY programs, the survivor leaders can help provide insight about where to conduct community education on issues related to RHY and human trafficking.

- **Design of programs.** Survivors are a great resource when it comes to assisting in designing programmatic activities. They can use their skills and knowledge to assist RHY programs in developing consistent, on-target messaging and communications. In addition, since RHY are also recruited via social media or online survivors can help RHY programs understand where to advertise online to reach victims and potential victims, what kind of messages might be most effective, and how to track trends and patterns in trafficking to design materials that are accurate and up-to-date.
- **After care and mentorship.** When survivors are healed, they can decide to work as aftercare specialists or mentors or to assist in designing components of the aftercare program to increase youth participation. RHY programs should incorporate opportunities for youth survivors to participate or join the workforce. Youth survivors should be invited to apply for positions with clearly defined roles and responsibilities. RHY programs are encouraged to review their organizational structure to ensure policies will support the inclusion of survivors to the workforce.

The following are essential components of successful survivor-informed programs:

- Use a trauma-informed approach.
- Obtain input and guidance from survivors.
- Get support from the organization's upper management.
- Set aside adequate resource allocation for survivor stipends, honoraria, and/or salary.
- Empower the survivors—ensure that survivors feel they can advocate on their own behalf as well as on behalf of other victims, that they have a sense of control over the program and how it is implemented, and that they know their voices will be heard and honored when designing and implementing programs and services.
- Arrange ongoing support as needed or desired after the survivor completes the program and/or chooses to exit prior to completion.

## Special Considerations for Incorporating Survivors in RHY Programs

Survivor feedback and input should be incorporated into all aspects of programming and services throughout the organization. Providing this type of feedback to programs can take an emotional, physical, and psychological toll on victims. Programs must consider the impact on the victims and how it differs depending on the victim's stage of recovery. Victims will need to be engaged at their individual level of readiness which takes into account potential triggers. Programs should offer victims an opportunity to participate in leadership while minimizing the risk of them being unsuccessful.

Programs can prepare survivors to be active participants in design and implementation of services by providing training and support including assisting them to develop safety plans, providing practice opportunities that are low risk and high reward, and assessing the individual victim's emotional, psychological, and physical readiness for the proposed role.

Organizations should provide opportunities for feedback and leadership – but this should never be a requirement or expectation in order to access services or continue receiving services once engaged. Survivors need to be ready to work in programs and should always be paid a stipend or salary in alignment with stipends and salaries received by other subject matter experts and presenters.



## Peer Mentorship

Program administrators may be reluctant to incorporate peers into their settings, but the efficacy of peers in mental health settings has been validated when viewed through the lens of five specific theoretical frameworks: social support, experiential knowledge, helper therapy principle, social learning theory, and social comparison theory.<sup>129</sup> Hearing from and being counseled by someone who has actually gone through a similar experience adds credence and gravitas. Research has validated peer support as a way to bridge the divide for youth just coming into a program by creating a “buffer against stressors and adversities.”<sup>130</sup> The experiential knowledge peers bring makes them uniquely qualified to relate to young people coming from similar circumstances and validates the strategies, approaches, and advice being given.<sup>131</sup> The peer can be a positive role model in exemplifying positive coping strategies, a technique used effectively in programs incorporating social learning theory.<sup>132</sup> Social comparison theory also supports the use of peers, because young people who have been trafficked can compare themselves to the peers and develop a sense of normalcy that is lost during the trafficking experience.<sup>133</sup>

Peers can facilitate groups, offer encouragement on a one-to-one basis, serve as role models, work on outreach teams, and much more. Peers can be especially effective in gaining community support for programs and for advocating for additional services and support. Peers can serve as the face of success without revealing details of current or former youth.

### Peer Mentorship

The use of peers as supports and service providers has long been recognized as an effective addition to more traditional interventions. The use of peer supports has been effectively integrated in mental health services since the 1970s.<sup>126</sup> Peer survivors are a manifestation of hope, a living example that a young person can get beyond his or her victimization and become a survivor as well.<sup>127</sup> Program staff spend a great deal of time establishing trust. Peers, on the other hand, can gain a young person’s trust right from the start of the relationship.<sup>128</sup> For example, someone who has exited the sex trade can convey hope in a way that motivates victims to receive support. Peer survivors also serve as living proof that victims can survive and thrive after a trafficking experience. Finally, peer mentors sharing their stories often paves the way for other victims to open up and begin the healing process.

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<sup>126</sup> Solomon, Phyllis. 2004. “Peer Support/Peer Provided Services Underlying Processes, Benefits, and Critical Ingredients.” *Psychiatric Rehabilitation Journal* 27, no. 4: 392–401. Retrieved from <http://www.freedom-center.org/pdf/peersupportdefined.pdf>

<sup>127</sup> Clawson, Heather J., and Grace L. Goldblatt, Grace. 2007. *Finding a Path to Recovery: Residential Facilities for Minor Victims of Domestic Sex Trafficking*. Caliber, an ICF International Company. Retrieved from <https://aspe.hhs.gov/system/files/pdf/75186/ib.pdf>

<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

<sup>129</sup> Solomon, Phyllis. 2004. “Peer Support/Peer Provided Services Underlying Processes, Benefits, and Critical Ingredients.” *Psychiatric Rehabilitation Journal* 27, no. 4: 392–401. Retrieved from <http://www.freedom-center.org/pdf/peersupportdefined.pdf>

<sup>130</sup> Ibid.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

Peers can benefit from helping other individuals.<sup>134</sup> However, young people who have survived any trauma remain vulnerable to that trauma for a very long time and, therefore, must be closely supervised so that they do not become re-victimized. How, when, and where a program utilizes the expertise of a peer survivor is a case-by-case decision, and it is critical for the program to closely supervise the peer to ensure the peer helper is not experiencing secondary trauma. Boundaries are crucial—for the peer helpers as well as for the young people they are trying to help.

The peer survivor can be a powerful presence in the lives of other youth ready to make a change. Research has found positive role models highly successful in encouraging youth who are ready to adopt a strategy that has worked for the role models.<sup>135</sup> Programs working with trafficked youth or youth at high risk of victimization must proceed slowly when implementing a peer provider element into their services. Agency policies and procedures, training protocols, supervision lines, and codes of conduct must be firmly in place and understood by all staff before the first peer survivor is on board. A practical tool to guide an agency through the process is the My-Peer Toolkit [1.0], a free resource that can guide programs from implementation of peer-based services through the evaluation of those services.<sup>136</sup>

## Multidisciplinary Teams

Multidisciplinary teams (MDTs) involve community-based meetings that convene as much as once a week to review cases of trafficking. MDTs are most often associated with child abuse, mental health, and chronic physical healthcare services, but they can be employed for child, youth, and adult trafficking cases with great success. Some states require all cases of child abuse, including child trafficking, be investigated by an MDT. The *Human Trafficking Task Force e-Guide* developed by the US Department of Justice's Office for Victims of Crime and Bureau of Justice Assistance describes the multidisciplinary task force response model as the "best practice" in response to human trafficking.<sup>137</sup>

MDT members may include law enforcement, prosecutors, child protection agencies, mental health clinicians, case managers, educational and vocational services, housing and shelter providers, and other service providers actively working with a survivor or populations at risk of trafficking. MDTs serving human trafficking survivors should ideally include survivor advisors or consult with a survivor advisory board. A coordinated and consistent MDT model is considered best practice in response to human trafficking because no single organization has the capacity to meet all the diverse needs of trafficking survivors. Each organization, including RHY programs, has its own abilities and limitations. An effective multidisciplinary approach to combat human trafficking includes cooperation and collaboration between law enforcement and service providers to meet the needs of victims while simultaneously pursuing criminal cases against exploiters and buyers.

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<sup>134</sup> Ibid.

<sup>135</sup> Lockwood, Penelope, Christian H. Jordan, and Ziva Kunda. 2002. "Motivation by Positive or Negative Role Models: Regulatory Focus Determines Who Will Best Inspire Us." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 83, no. 4: 854–864. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1037//0022-3514.83.4.854>

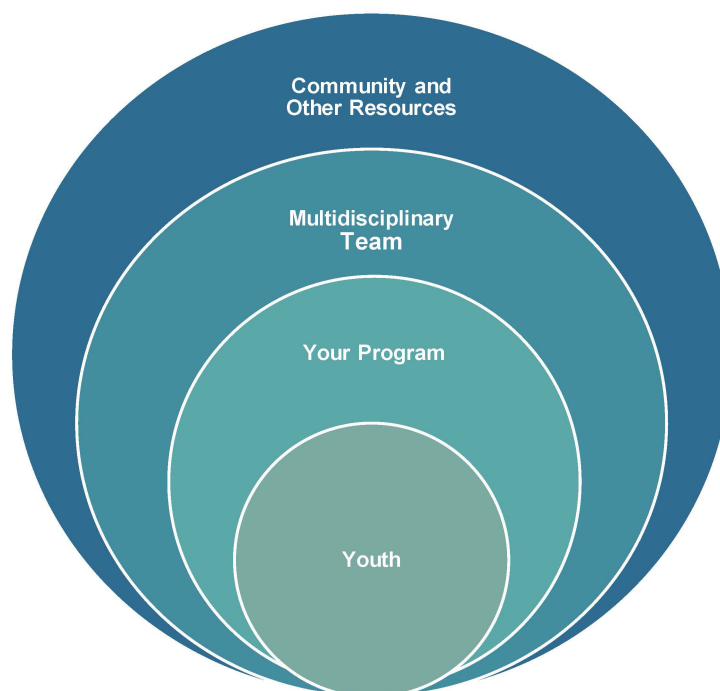
<sup>136</sup> Hildebrand, Janina, Roanna Lobo, Jonathan Hallett, Graham Brown, and Bruce Maycock. 2012. "My-Peer Toolkit [1.0]: Developing an Online Resource for Planning and Evaluating Peer-Based Youth Programs." *Youth Studies Australia*, 31, no. 2 (June): 53–61.

<sup>137</sup> Office of Victims of Crime Training and Technical Assistance Center. n.d. *Human Trafficking Task Force e-Guide: Strengthening Collaborative Responses* (Introduction). Retrieved from <https://www.ovcttac.gov/taskforceguide/eguide>

RHY programs can be integral partners on MDTs because they are key service providers for trafficked youth. For RHY programs, participating in MDTs for trafficking cases may offer unique challenges: Young people in the RHY system are not in state care and are not in the custody of the programs that serve them, confidentiality is a key component of service delivery, stays are voluntary, and lengths of stay are variable. Several of these challenges can be solved with RHY programs implementing interagency agreements or memorandums of understanding with the core agencies on the MDT that allow for information sharing for the purpose of service provision. Although youth may elect to leave an RHY program before a service plan is implemented, youth participating on the MDT could also connect the youth to several other agencies or supports.

The MDT is a layer in the bigger picture of comprehensive services (see Exhibit 5).

### Exhibit 5. Comprehensive Services



MDTs can assist RHY programs in addressing and planning for a wide range of issues. Young people who access program services directly from or shortly after being trafficked will have several unmet needs. These needs may include but are not limited to assistance for victims of crime, legal representation, clothing, case management, dental and/or medical care, education, English as a second language, family contact and reunification, food, housing, identification documents, job skills training, safety planning, substance abuse treatment, and mental health care. For example, trafficked youth may experience exhaustion yet will be unable to sleep well; they may be malnourished, but unable to keep food down or enjoy food. Each of these issues may have both a medical and an emotional component—a nutritionist and a mental health therapist may be valuable to have at the table. One primary goal for MDTs, in putting a team together, is to work with the youth to establish their priorities.

## Legal Assistance for Youth Victims of Trafficking

RHY programs should expand collaboration with a pro bono attorney or learn ways to connect youth with legal services whenever possible. If the youth has an attorney, programs may want to coordinate with key stakeholders (e.g., child welfare, legal guardians) before discussing or encouraging the youth (a minor or a young adult) to reach out to that attorney to act as a support. The attorney may also be able to assist the young person with expunging criminal records in those jurisdictions where the option exists. When the youth is a victim or witness in an ongoing trafficking investigation, law enforcement and prosecutors will be present at MDT meetings to ensure they have the information necessary for arrest and effective prosecution of traffickers. RHY service providers must ensure that trauma-informed and victim-centered approaches are utilized by both legal and law enforcement representatives when discussing trafficking issues with the youth. For trafficked youth who are not involved in law enforcement investigations, RHY professionals should consult with the youth when determining whether to involve law enforcement. For youth victims who decide not to prosecute or do not fall under state mandatory reporting age requirements, RHY programs should provide youth with information and support regarding victims' rights in case the young person decides to involve law enforcement or a legal representative. It is important to remember that the role of service providers is to advocate and support youth regardless of their decisions to prosecute or to cooperate with law enforcement in trafficking investigations or in prosecution of their traffickers. Youth should also receive information regarding victims' rights and benefits.

### Basic Legal Services for Trafficked Youth

- Obtaining basic identification documents:
  - Birth certificate
  - Social security number
  - Driver's license or other form of photo identification
- Obtaining basic medical attention:
  - Medical appointments where legal issues are involved
  - Medications for physical and mental health issues
  - Specialized treatments when necessary
  - Bills owed for emergency room, ambulance, and other health problems
- Representing runaway and homeless youth in legal proceedings:
  - Custody issues
  - Family disputes
  - Domestic violence issues (e.g., temporary restraining orders)
  - Emancipation issues
  - Criminal justice issues (many runaway and homeless youth have committed petty crimes)
  - Expunging and sealing of document issues
  - Children of youth—all the above and more
  - Guardian ad litem issues
- Assisting runaway and homeless youth in obtaining Social Security Income (SSI) or other disability, welfare, and other status
- Vacating criminal record when crimes were committed while trafficked

Because youth at RHY programs are their own key decision makers, RHY programs should advocate for and facilitate the involvement of youth in service planning and MDTs.<sup>138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143</sup> Although some MDTs may not traditionally include youth voice, incorporating youth voice into the MDT process will increase youth's sense of autonomy and self-esteem and will lead to greater cooperation and acceptance of services. Some MDTs may allow youth to attend case consultations, and other MDTs may appoint an advocate to represent the youth voice and concerns. With the consent and involvement of the youth, RHY program staff may be in a unique position to represent the youth voice. Except in cases of mandatory reporting of abuse as required by state law, informed consent is needed prior to any discussion about or with the young person with anyone from outside the agency. The consent must be both time and person limited, and the youth may withdraw consent at any time.

## Confidentiality in MDTs

MDTs should adhere to strict confidentiality policies. Any confidential material or verbal information obtained by a team member should be disclosed only as necessary to other team members and should not be disclosed to any agency or individual not represented on the MDT unless otherwise required by law. RHY programs should ensure that all agencies participating on the MDT provide the protection of confidentiality as afforded by the RHY system. If the RHY program is part of a newly formed MDT, one challenge will be negotiating the regulations each member operates under and how much time and effort members can contribute. Many other service systems do not provide the protection of confidentiality as afforded by the RHY system. Working collaboratively will necessitate an understanding by all those other systems of the level of confidentiality required. Collaboration may have to be viewed as a long-term goal. A short-term objective may be to learn about other systems and how to access services. If an MDT identifies stable housing as an essential service, but the community does not have affordable resources, the team will have to come up with a plan to address the gap. If one of the team members offers a direct service the young person needs, there is still no guarantee the youth will receive it, because there may be a long waiting list and/or express criteria the youth does not meet. Regardless of whether the program is able to participate on a true MDT, there is value in bringing people from diverse service arenas to the table on a regular basis to find ways to work in coordination, if not in true collaboration.

## Working with Law Enforcement

Runaway and homeless youth who are trafficked may interact with law enforcement on a variety of levels. They may be arrested or identified as a witness—in those cases, law enforcement interactions may not

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<sup>138</sup> Mental Health Commission. 2006. *Multidisciplinary Team Working: From Theory to Practice* (Discussion Paper). Retrieved from <http://www.mhcirl.ie/file/discusspampmultiteam.pdf>

<sup>139</sup> Walker, Kate E., and Fiza Quraishi. 2015. *From Theory to Practice: Creating Victim-Centered Systems of Care to Address the Needs of Commercially Sexually Exploited Youth*. Pioneering Change: Innovative Ideas for Children and Families. Retrieved from <https://firstfocus.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/From-Theory-to-Practice.pdf>.

<sup>140</sup> Coyne, Imelda. 2008. "Children's Participation in Consultations and Decision Making at Health Service Level: A Review of the Literature." *International Journal of Nursing Studies* 45: 1682–1689.

<sup>141</sup> Coyne, Imelda, Amory, A., Kiernan, G., & Gibson, F. 2014. "Children's Participation in Shared Decision Making: Children, Adolescents, Parents and Healthcare Professionals' Perspectives and Experiences." *European Journal of Oncology Nursing* 18: 273–280.

<sup>142</sup> Elwyn, Glyn, Dominick Frosch, Richard Thomson, Natalie Joseph-Williams, Amy Lloyd, Paul Kinnersley, Emma Cording, Dave Tomson, Carole Dodd, Stephen Rollnick, Adrian Edwards, and Michael Barry. 2012. "Shared Decision Making: A Model for Clinical Practice." *Journal of General Internal Medicine* 27, no. 10: 1361–1367.

<sup>143</sup> Kunneman, Marleen, Victor M. Montori, Ana Castaneda-Guarderas, and Erik P. Hess. 2016. "What Is Shared Decision Making? (and What It Is Not)." *Academic Emergency Medicine* 23, no. 12: 1320–1324.

be voluntary. But for most trafficked youth, deciding whether to cooperate with law enforcement is an important decision that requires an understanding of as many of the risks and benefits as can be identifiable at the time youth are making decisions.

Some law enforcement personnel are increasingly trained to recognize human trafficking and assist in connecting affected minors to services such as those services provided by RHY programs. Identifying trained officers who are sensitive to the needs of survivors can be an asset to any program that works with youth victims of trafficking, whether for mandatory reporting or for receiving referrals when law enforcement officials identify victims. It is imperative to work with local law enforcement officials to educate them about how trafficking intersects with runaway and homeless youth. It is equally important to advocate for practices and policies that treat youth as victims/survivors, not as criminals. Homeless youth and youth who have experienced trauma, including trafficking, will often present as defensive, uncooperative, ungrateful, and disinterested, straining any positive working relationship the police may want to establish. Police officers are rarely fluent in the psychological impact of complex trauma, trauma bonding, or the complicated relationships victims often have with their traffickers. The trafficker may be the victim's sole source of income, the youth's only housing resource, his or her family member, or the youth's love interest.<sup>144</sup> Youth from underserved populations may have a mistrust of law enforcement and view police officers as an occupying force in their communities.<sup>145</sup> In addition, an RHY program's legal obligation to maintain confidentiality, which often is seen by law enforcement officials as an obstruction to their work, sometimes creates challenges.

Despite these challenges, social service providers and law enforcement officials can forge partnerships on specific cases—those cases in which a young person wants what the justice system can offer and the police, prosecutors, and other individuals are willing to listen to that young person and understand the limits of what he or she can or will provide. With each case in which legal remedies are sought, the program, youth, and law enforcement officials must find a delicate balance so that every partner understands that the youth's safety and well-being must be the first priority. The power dynamic between the young person and law enforcement is not equal, and there have been instances when prosecutors have arrested victims/survivors as a way to gain information about a trafficking ring. To maintain contact with that victim, law enforcement has used an arrest as a negotiating tool and release or a conditional plea as a bargaining chip for information.<sup>146</sup> When law enforcement officers become impatient, young people can easily end up being detained. Detention re-traumatizes a young person, undoing trust that has been established, and, although the youth may be physically present due to being detained, damage to the youth's emotional, behavioral, social, and other development may be devastating.<sup>147</sup>

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<sup>144</sup> Hersh, Lauren. 2013. "Sex Trafficking Investigations and Prosecutions." In *Lawyers Manual on Human Trafficking: Pursuing Justice for Victims* edited by Jill Laurie Goodman and Dorchen A. Leidholdt, 255–70. New York, NY: Appellate Division, First Department, Supreme Court of the State of New York and New York State Judicial Committee on Women in the Courts.

<sup>145</sup> Dank, Meredith, Jennifer Yahner, and Lilly Yu. 2017. *Consequences of Policing Prostitution: An Analysis of Individuals Arrested and Prosecuted for Commercial Sex in New York City*. New York, NY: Urban Institute. Retrieved from <https://www.urban.org/research/publication/consequences-policing-prostitution>.

<sup>146</sup> Hersh, Lauren. 2013. "Sex Trafficking Investigations and Prosecutions." In *Lawyers Manual on Human Trafficking: Pursuing Justice for Victims* edited by Jill Laurie Goodman and Dorchen A. Leidholdt, 255–70. New York, NY: Appellate Division, First Department, Supreme Court of the State of New York and New York State Judicial Committee on Women in the Courts.

<sup>147</sup> Institute of Medicine and National Research Council. 2014. *Confronting Commercial Sexual Exploitation and Sex Trafficking of Minors: A Guide for the Legal Sector*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press.



Police departments around the nation have instituted some innovative approaches that have benefited both the police department's crime-fighting efforts and the social service sector's person-centered approach to working with individuals. A number of law enforcement agencies and prosecutors have taken advantage of available trainings to develop an understanding of human trafficking, the role each agency plays, and the collaboration needed to assist victims of trafficking. Although these are important steps in the fight against human traffickers, the vast majority of law enforcement training is limited to sex trafficking and minors, leaving older youth, street youth involved in survival acts, or youth victims of labor, including victims forced into illegal activities, without the same recognition and response.

Young people who are not yet ready or able to sever all ties with their traffickers run great risks if they cooperate with law enforcement agencies, including risks to their safety, health, and life. **Only the youth can decide when and how law enforcement is contacted.**

## Federal Resources

The Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (TVPA) put into place a multidepartment effort to combat human trafficking and established the President's Interagency Task Force to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons. The task force includes representatives from 19 federal entities.<sup>148</sup> It is charged with creating a plan outlining the steps to be taken to identify and serve victims/survivors. Although the plan recognizes the critical role both prosecution and prevention play, the focus of the task force is the victim. The current plan spans four years and includes four overarching goals: (1) align efforts, (2) improve understanding, (3) expand access to services, and (4) improve outcomes.<sup>149</sup> Each member entity of the task force implements its own programs in the areas of prevention, intervention, education, prosecution, or any other segment of a comprehensive approach to the problem.

Each of the federal program efforts may have a direct benefit for trafficking survivors accessing RHY services, and federal websites should be monitored to determine whether any new opportunities are available. Some federal programs have less than obvious direct benefits for homeless, runaway, and street-involved youth, but these programs should be explored, because there may be services or supports that can be accessed only through those programs. The Departments of Labor, Transportation, and Agriculture each have a seat on the task force. There may be opportunities now or in the near future for young people through these agencies. These federal programs may also provide supporting information to educate elected officials on how agencies can support youth more directly.

The most obvious service partners for programs working with homeless, runaway, and street-involved youth are agencies that fund programs or offer support to programs working with youth. The US Department of Health & Human Services (HHS) issues funding opportunities through ACF. ACF provides funds to organizations serving domestic and foreign victims of trafficking through the Office in Trafficking in Persons, The Office of Refugee Resettlement, The Department of Justice and its Office of Justice Programs, which includes the Office for Victims of Crime, the Office on Violence Against Women, and the

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<sup>148</sup> President's Interagency Task Force to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons. 2014. *Federal Strategic Action Plan on Services for Victims of Human Trafficking in the United States 2013–2017*. Retrieved from <http://www.ovc.gov/pubs/FederalHumanTraffickingStrategicPlan.pdf>.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid.

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention also fund direct services, as well as training and educational services for programs working with trafficking survivors.

The Department of Labor (DOL) is a critical partner in the fight against forced labor. The DOL offers job training and referrals for services that many youth may be able to access through local agencies. DOL is also the agency charged with investigating complaints of labor violations. For undocumented youth, it is important to know that the DOL is not concerned with immigration status despite being a federal agency. DOL's role is to ensure fair labor practices, not to initiate deportation proceedings. The DOL is particularly useful in assisting youth victims of labor exploitation and labor trafficking, and the agency is actively pursuing cases of wage theft, debt bondage, and involuntary servitude that occur in industries as varied as agriculture, factory work, and commission-based sales. These cases are not limited to immigrant laborers.

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is the agency charged with enforcing immigration policy and other aspects of national security functions. DHS, as part of its anti-trafficking efforts, created the Blue Campaign, which provides training, educational videos, public awareness campaigns, and victim assistance in conjunction with ongoing investigations into trafficking. DHS materials are provided free of charge and can be used to initiate conversations with youth who are suspected victims of trafficking. The DHS portfolio includes investigating all cases of child sex tourism, and the agency can often be of assistance in child sex trafficking cases, even if the minor is a US citizen.

The US Department of Education (DOE) offers information and resources for schools, including a fact sheet about trafficking indicators. DOE also provides links to referrals. DOE has a resource guide entitled *Human Trafficking in America's Schools* that provides guidance for schools in identifying victims of trafficking and responding appropriately.<sup>150</sup> The fact that DOE provides information and resources may offer an entry for programs to approach schools and offer to provide school personnel with training and supports.

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<sup>150</sup> <https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/human-trafficking-americas-schools>

### **Federal Resources on Human Trafficking—Agency Links**

The US Department of Labor (DOL) is a critical partner in the fight against labor trafficking. The DOL offers job training and referrals for services that many youth may be able to access through local agencies. DOL is also the agency charged with investigating complaints of labor violations.

<https://www.dol.gov/wb/media/reports/trafficking.htm>

The US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is the agency charged with enforcing immigration policy and other aspects of national security functions. DHS, as part of its antitrafficking efforts, created the Blue Campaign, which provides training, educational videos, public awareness campaigns, and victim assistance in conjunction with ongoing investigations into trafficking.

<https://www.dhs.gov/blue-campaign/what-human-trafficking>

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) is the federal agency with the responsibility for enforcing antidiscrimination laws. It is possible an antidiscrimination claim could be made against a trafficker if the young person faced any type of discrimination based on race, national origin, or sex, or other protected classes. <https://www.eeoc.gov/>

The US Department of Education (DOE) offers information and resources for schools, including a fact sheet about indicators. DOE also provides links to referrals.

<https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oese/oshs/humantraffickin101-schldadmin.pdf>

### ***Federal Supported Hotline***

If you think you've encountered a victim of human trafficking, call the National Human Trafficking Hotline. The hotline's multilingual operators can help service providers with identification. This hotline may also help you connect victims and survivors to available resources and can connect you to the appropriate law enforcement authorities.

National Human Trafficking Hotline  
HOTLINE: 888-373-7888  
TEXT: BeFree (233733)

National Runaway Safeline  
1-800-RUNAWAY or  
1-800-786-2929  
TEXT: 66008

### ***Additional Resources***

The RHYTTAC website includes several resources to assist RHY programs to build capacity on human trafficking. Please visit <http://www.rhyttac.net>.

## Conclusion

Labor and sex trafficking of vulnerable youth and street youth is often a complex and misunderstood issue. Homelessness puts vulnerable youth at higher risks, and RHY programs have been building their capacities to prevent, identify, and make effective referrals to assist these youth for many years. Youth services professionals in the RHY field continue to be a key players in minimizing the risks of youth becoming victims of trafficking and in providing support and appropriate services and referrals to youth survivors. However, more research and resources are needed to increase prevention efforts and provide appropriate responses to human trafficking in runaway in homeless youth settings.

Collaboration is a key element to support trafficked youth and expand safety-nets for youth at risk of human trafficking. RHY program are encouraged to continue their outreach and partnerships at the local level and increase community awareness and education on the intersection of human trafficking and runaway and homeless youth. Communities and other shareholders should learn about how to work with RHY programs to better meet the complex needs of trafficked youth and maximize the local resources available.

## Appendix A. Glossary of Common Terms: Words, Phrases, and Acronyms

Working effectively with youth who have been trafficked requires an understanding of the terms used by law enforcement and/or government entities, service providers, and advocates. Some of the most frequently heard terms are defined in this appendix. In some instances, the definition is supplemented with legal, policy, and/or practice implications. This list does not include street vernacular, because those terms are usually regional in nature and change frequently.

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<b>Coercion</b>	This term is an element of the TVPA and many state laws and refers to one of the means traffickers use to obtain and maintain a trafficking victim within their control. Coercion can be found where a victim was subjected to threats of harm to self or others, such as family members; the threat of turning a victim over to law enforcement, including immigration officials; or the threat of reporting family members to those officials. Any act that would make trafficking victims believe they or a loved one would be seriously harmed if the victim failed to comply with the trafficker can be considered coercion.
<b>Commercial Sex Act</b>	This term refers to any sex act done in exchange for something of value, such as food, drugs, a place to stay, hormones, money, and so forth. The Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) does not specifically define what constitutes a sex act. Other federal agencies that work with trafficking victims have crafted more specific descriptions of what constitutes <i>commercial sexual exploitation</i> (CSE). For example, the Office of Refugee Resettlement includes in its definition of CSE specific references to prostitution, pornography, stripping, live-sex shows, and mail-order brides. This distinction may be critical for youth under the age of 18 because, for example, a federal judge may or may not consider stripping by itself a commercial sex act, and a youth would have to then prove force, fraud, or coercion to be treated as a forced labor victim.
<b>CSEC</b>	<i>Commercial sexual exploitation of children is often used synonymously with domestic minor sex trafficking (DMST).</i> As with sex trafficking, there must be some commercial or economic transaction. The commercial aspect is what sets it apart from child sexual abuse.
<b>Debt Bondage</b>	This term is used in the federal definition for <i>forced labor</i> and refers to the services provided by a debtor to another person in payment of, or as security for, a debt. The person forced to work in a debt bondage situation may be the debtor, but sometimes the debtor substitutes another individual to pay the debt. An example of this situation is a parent who incurs a debt to a human smuggler and sells a child into forced labor to pay the debt. Debt bondage and peonage are often used interchangeably.

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<b>DMST</b>	<i>Domestic minor sex trafficking</i> (DMST) is often used synonymously with <i>commercial sexual exploitation of children</i> (CSEC). The requirement for a commercial or economic transaction is what sets it apart from child sexual abuse.
<b>Fraud</b>	Fraud is an element of the federal law and many state laws that refers to the use of deceit or trickery to cause someone to act against their own best interests. Fraud involves purposefully misleading another individual about the facts of a situation, such as the promise of lawful employment.
<b>Human Smuggling</b>	This term refers to the act of illegally helping another individual cross a national border. Colloquial names for smugglers include <i>snakeheads</i> and <i>coyotes</i> . Snakeheads are most commonly associated with smugglers from across Asia, and coyotes are usually associated with those persons who smuggle people across the southern border of the United States.
<b>Human Trafficking</b>	This term refers to the use of force, fraud, or coercion to compel a person into any form of work or service against his or her will. Under federal law, minors who are victims/survivors of sex trafficking do not have to prove force, fraud, or coercion.
<b>Immigration Relief</b>	This term refers to the process through which an undocumented immigrant qualifies for legal status. Young people can seek relief under a number of special programs, including Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS), T visa (for victims of trafficking), U visa (for victims of crimes), Violence Against Women Act (VAWA; for victims of domestic abuse or children of victims of domestic abuse), or asylum. Youth who have been residing in the United States continuously since 2007 and arrived before their 16th birthday may qualify for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), which does not change their immigration status but does prevent deportation for a set period of time.
<b>Innocence Lost</b>	This term refers to a joint initiative of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the Department of Justice's (DOJ's) Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section (CEOS), and the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children and was formed to address domestic sex trafficking of children. The program encourages the development of task forces and work groups that comprise state and local law enforcement agencies.
<b>Involuntary Servitude</b>	This term is used in the federal definition for <i>forced labor</i> and refers to forced labor through the use of harm or threats of harm, including the threat of being turned over to law enforcement authorities.
<b>LEA</b>	This acronym refers to law enforcement agency. When working with a youth who is undocumented and who meets the criteria for a T visa, certification by an LEA is required to start the process. An LEA can be any number of federal law enforcement agencies, such as the FBI, US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), US Marshals Service, and so forth.



<b>Peonage</b>	This term is used in the federal definition for <i>forced labor</i> and refers to the condition of being held against one's will for the purpose of paying off a debt. The person forced to work in a peonage situation may be the debtor, but sometimes the debtor substitutes another individual to pay the debt. Peonage and debt bondage are often used interchangeably.
<b>Runaway and Homeless Youth Act</b>	This is the legislation that authorizes the Runaway and Homeless Youth Program. The RHY Act is Title III of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974. It was last amended by the Reconnecting Homeless Youth Act of 2008 (P.L. 110-378).
<b>Safe Harbor Laws</b>	These laws are state laws enacted to protect minor victims of sex trafficking from prosecution and to provide services to those victims.
<b>Trauma Bonding</b>	This term refers to a form of coercive control characterized by the strong emotional ties that can develop between a victim and a perpetrator. Trauma bonding has been described as a survival or coping mechanism when other strategies to protect oneself are not feasible.
<b>Trauma-Informed Care</b>	This term refers to a strengths-based approach to service provision that acknowledges the impact trauma has on an individual and integrates that understanding into all policies and practices.
<b>Trauma-Informed Consequences</b>	Trauma-informed consequences are behavior modification tools that acknowledge the impact of trauma on a young person's behavior and development. Trauma-informed consequences are individualized to meet the unique needs of each young person.
<b>TVPA</b>	The Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) is the federal law that defines human trafficking, protects victims/survivors, punishes traffickers, and establishes prevention programs. The TVPA was originally signed into law in 2000 and was reauthorized in 2013 as part of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA).
<b>VAWA</b>	The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) includes a section on immigration relief for undocumented adults and children who have been abused by US citizens or lawful residents. The following sections of the VAWA relate to providing assistance to youth: Section 302 enhances youth safety; section 1101 reduces sexual abuse in custodial settings; section 1241 provides assistance to domestic minor sex trafficking victims/survivors; section 1262 strengthens child advocate programs for unaccompanied children.
<b>VOCA</b>	The Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) includes some provisions for immigration relief for undocumented persons who have been victims/survivors of certain delineated crimes.

The following federal agencies are involved in work with trafficking victims/survivors:

<b>HHS</b>	<b>Department of Health &amp; Human Services</b>
	<i>ACF</i> Administration for Children & Families
	<i>ACYF</i> Administration on Children, Youth & Families
	<i>FYSB</i> Family and Youth Services Bureau
	<i>ORR</i> Office of Refugee Resettlement
<b>DOJ</b>	<b>Department of Justice</b>
	<i>BJA</i> Bureau of Justice Assistance
	<i>COPS</i> Community Oriented Policing Services
	<i>FBI</i> Federal Bureau of Investigation
	<i>FBI OVA</i> Federal Bureau of Investigation Office for Victim Assistance
	<i>NIJ</i> National Institute of Justice
	<i>OJJDP</i> Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention
	<i>OJP</i> Office of Justice Programs
	<i>OVC</i> Office for Victims of Crime
	<i>OVW</i> Office on Violence Against Women
<b>DHS</b>	<b>Department of Homeland Security</b>
	<i>CBP</i> Customs and Border Protection
	<i>ICE</i> Immigration and Customs Enforcement
	<i>ICE VAP</i> Immigration and Customs Enforcement Victim Assistance Program
	<i>USCIS</i> US Citizenship and Immigration Services
<b>DOL</b>	<b>Department of Labor</b>

The following are additional related acronyms:

<b>BFT</b>	Bona fide T visa (enables VSFT to access refugee benefits)
<b>CEOS</b>	Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section, Criminal Division, US Department of Justice
<b>CERT</b>	Certification by HHS for refugee benefits
<b>CP</b>	Continued Presence (temporary immigration relief)
<b>CRT</b>	Civil Rights Division, Criminal Section, US Department of Justice

<b>DSS</b>	Diplomatic Security Service, US Department of State
<b>EAD</b>	Employment Authorization Document (comes with CP)
<b>IER</b>	Immigrant and Employee Rights Section
<b>IOM</b>	International Organization for Migration
<b>J/TIP</b>	Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, US Department of State
<b>JVTA</b>	Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act of 2015
<b>LEA</b>	Law enforcement agency
<b>LEA-Supp</b>	T visa (I-914B) form prepared by LEA regarding VSFT and assistance
<b>LPR</b>	Lawful Permanent Resident (available to T visa holders after three years)
<b>MAA</b>	Mutual Assistance Association
<b>NGO</b>	Nongovernmental organization (provides social services)
<b>PHAB</b>	Parole and Humanitarian Assistance Branch (ICE)
<b>PSTSFA</b>	Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act of 2014 (foster care law)
<b>SOL</b>	Statute of limitations
<b>SPBP</b>	Significant public benefit parole (temporary immigration relief issued by PHAB)
<b>T visa</b>	Trafficking visa (three-year status; may become LPR)
<b>TIP</b>	Trafficking in persons
<b>TP-WETF</b>	Trafficking in Persons and Worker Exploitation Task Force (complaint line)
<b>TVPA</b>	Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000
<b>TVPRA</b>	Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2003, 2005, 2008, 2013
<b>URM</b>	Unaccompanied Refugee Minors Program (for alien juveniles/ORR)
<b>USAO</b>	US Attorney's Office
<b>VOT</b>	Victim of trafficking
<b>VSFT</b>	Victim of a severe form of trafficking
<b>WHD</b>	Wage and Hour Division, US Department of Labor

## Appendix B. Sample of Human Trafficking Safety Protocol

If you suspect a young person is involved in human trafficking, observe the following guidelines for the intake and interview process:

- Establish trust and explain your role as an advocate.
- Tell the youth what will happen to the information he or she gives you. Consider the following issues as you progress through the interview process:
  - Self-identification as a victim is not likely.
  - Several nonintrusive conversations may be necessary.
  - Do not interrogate.
  - Be empathetic.
  - Do not use derogatory terms when discussing the youth's life experiences.
  - Be sensitive and honest. Keep youth informed about mandatory reporting or next steps.
  - Safety is paramount.
  - Coordinate with other service providers.
  - Take personal and cultural context into account.
  - Communicate with your Supervisor
  - Be prepared to make referrals as needed and requested by the youth

If a runaway and homeless youth (RHY) provider needs assistance with safety planning or screening questions or translators, the National Human Trafficking Hotline counselors are ready to assist youth serving professionals in determining the best course of action to find a suitable translator or provide assistance to potential youth victims.

RHY service providers can also reach out to the National Human Trafficking Hotline if the intake and interview process continues to affirm suspicion of the young person's involvement in human trafficking. Consulting the hotline advocate will assist you in determining the level of risk and the best course of action for ensuring the safety of the young victim, other youth from your program, and your staff.

You may ask legal questions and access assistance by contacting the Department of Justice, Trafficking in Persons and Worker Exploitation Task Force Complaint Line at 888-428-7581 (voice and TTY).

## Appendix C. Street Outreach Tips

### ***Identification and Awareness: How to Recognize a Youth Victim of Trafficking***

- What is human trafficking, and who are the victims?
- What are indicators of trafficking victimization?
- Who is a victim of human trafficking?

Conventional wisdom is often wrong! Trafficking need not involve a person being moved across any border, foreign or domestic. Victims of trafficking need not be transported at all—they may become trafficked persons in their own communities.

### ***Identification: Recognizing Trafficking Youth Victims***

In most cases, the victims/survivors may not be aware they have been trafficked, and they may not recognize what services may be available to them. Usually, victims/survivors of trafficking—especially minors—will present for other reasons, such as abuse, neglect, or intervention. Identification of victims/survivors of trafficking thus requires awareness of potential indicators.

*Situational indicators* may be present in the history of the victims, their current living situations, and their relationships:

- Live in locations with peculiar or excessive security
- Are unable to articulate where they are staying or to remember addresses
- Are not in control of their own identification documents
- Have injuries, signs of physical abuse, and/or signs of torture
- Are malnourished
- Seem to lack the freedom to end employment or leave living conditions
- Are underage and have provided commercial sex (de facto human trafficking)
- Offer inconsistencies in where they've been and what they've been doing
- Are unpaid, paid very little, or paid only through tips in their work environment
- Will not cooperate, for example, provide wrong or misleading information about identity and living situation

*Behavioral indicators* may be observed, and they are general psychological responses to trafficking or other forms of victimization.

Some victims/survivors are held captive, battered, and/or sexually violated. Other youth victims are subjected to psychological abuse and threats, living in fear of harm to themselves or their loved ones. Effects of this abuse may manifest itself in any number of ways, and the following indicators are not exhaustive:

- Are unsure of their whereabouts (e.g., what city they are in).
- Show signs of fear, anxiety, irritability, depression, submission, and/or nervousness.
- Show other signs of mental, physical, or sexual abuse.
- Work excessively and/or unusual hours.
- If employed, are not permitted breaks during work.
- Exhibit a prolonged lack of health care.
- Are fearful or nervous regarding discussion of law enforcement.
- Exhibit hypervigilance or paranoid behavior.
- Are emotionally detached.



## Appendix D. Intake and Interviewing

Intake procedures for youth who have been trafficked are similar to general intake procedures, including establishing guardianship and conducting immediate needs assessments, but victims/survivors of trafficking are very likely to be traumatized.

As with any potential survivor of trauma, care must be exercised to ensure the individual does not feel interrogated.

Victims/survivors of trafficking may be threatened, or their families may be threatened, if they cooperate or appeal to authorities. Thus, any adversarial or authoritative questioning is likely to be counterproductive for purposes of assessment.

### Additional Questions to Ask

In addition to asking questions designed to identify the flags listed above and to determine whether the person has engaged in commercial sex, when asking the following questions to explore the living situation of the individual, trafficking may become apparent.

- Where does the person bathe, eat, and sleep?
- Where does the person go when he or she isn't at work?
- How often does the person go on errands away from home or work?
- Who does the person live with?
- What are the relationships between the people there?
- What do friends or cohabitants do with their time?
- Does the person live with "coworkers"?
- How are food, rent, and utility bills paid?
- How did the person come to live there?

If you think you've encountered a victim of human trafficking, call the National Human Trafficking Hotline. The hotline's multilingual operators can help service providers with identification. This hotline may also help you connect victims/survivors to available resources and connect you to the appropriate law enforcement authorities.

#### **National Human Trafficking Hotline**

**HOTLINE: 888-373-7888**

**TEXT: BeFree (233733)**

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## Contact

Runaway and Homeless Youth Training and Technical Assistance Center  
Operated by National Safe Place Network

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