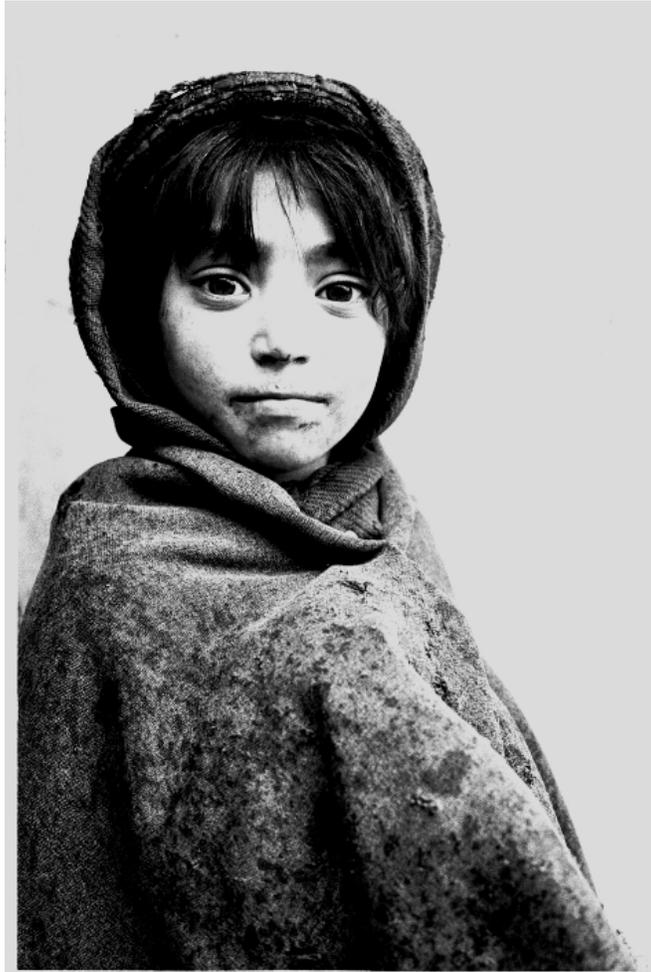


WORKING WITH SURVIVORS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING:



A BRIEF MANUAL FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT

**Brought to you by Project REACH,
Crisis Mental Health Services for Victims of Human Trafficking**

Working with Survivors of Human Trafficking: **A Brief Manual for Law Enforcement**

CONTENTS

- Human Trafficking: An Overview
- Identification of Victims of Trafficking
- The Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000
- Safety Issues for Victims of Trafficking
- Traumatic Stress Reactions in Victims of Trafficking
- Hints for Working with Survivors of Trafficking and other Trauma
- Conducting Interviews with Survivors of Trafficking
- Referrals for Dealing with Traumatic Stress Reactions in Victims of Trafficking
- Vicarious Trauma and Self-care for Law Enforcement

Human Trafficking: An Overview

What is human trafficking?

Human trafficking is a form of modern-day slavery. Traffickers target people, often women and children, who are poor and have limited resources. They attract individuals with the promise of a better life and then force them to live and work in unfair, inhumane, or abusive conditions.

Human trafficking has been defined as:

sex trafficking in which a commercial sexual 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; or

the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery.

Human trafficking involves the use of coercion, fraud, or force to control another person. Human trafficking is a crime under U.S. Federal Law, the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000.

Who are the victims?

Hundreds of thousands of people are trafficked across international borders each year. Although there is significant variation in the estimates of the prevalence of human trafficking in the United States, most recent State Department estimates indicate that between 14,500-17,500 people are trafficked into the country each year. People who have been trafficked into the United States come from all over the world, including Mexico, Central and South America, and the Caribbean; Europe and Eurasia; the Near East; Africa; East Asia and the Pacific; and South and Central Asia. Other victims are U.S. citizens who are trafficked within country borders.

What types of work are people trafficked into?

Commercial Sexual Exploitation

- Prostitution
- Pornography
- Erotic massage
- Exotic dancing

Forms of Labor Exploitation

- Domestic servitude
- Sweatshops and factories
- Restaurant work
- Hotel/motel housekeeping
- Construction work
- Begging
- Agricultural work

Methods Used By Traffickers to Control Victims

- Deception, fraud, intimidation
- Illegal contracts and debt bondage
- Holding documents, withholding pay
- Lack of information
- Isolation
- Social and cultural disorientation
- Dependence on trafficker for sustenance, work
- Withholding basic needs- adequate food, shelter, clothing, medical care
- Threats
 - Threatening family or friends in home country
 - Threats to report illegal immigration status to authorities
 - Threats of violence against victims
- Distortion of cultural and religious beliefs
- Migration, movement
- Imprisonment
- Emotional and psychological abuse
- Physical abuse and violence
- Sexual assault and rape
- Torture

What have victims experienced?

Many trafficked persons are forced into the sex industry, which may involve prostitution, pornography, or other commercial sexual services. Other individuals are trafficked into forced or bonded labor, such as domestic servitude, labor in prison-like factories, or peonage.

Individuals who have been trafficked are often vulnerable and isolated. They have been separated from their family, friends, home, and anything that is familiar or safe. They may have experienced a number of traumatic experiences, including: early traumatic experiences in their home country (loss of family members, assault, war trauma, forced migration); violence and abuse during migration; and psychological, physical, and sexual abuse during trafficking. Victims of trafficking often lose their sense of identity and worth while they are trafficked; they are treated as property and may lose their sense of self and their will to resist.

Even after victims of trafficking are rescued or escape, they face many stressors. They are in a foreign country where they may not speak the language or understand the customs. They often have immigration issues and may face possible deportation to unstable or dangerous conditions in their home country. They often do not have work permits, so they are unable to support themselves. They usually lack support and face a host of unmet physical and psychological needs.

Identification of Victims of Human Trafficking

How do I know if a person is a victim of trafficking?

Victims of trafficking typically have limited freedom of movement and have been under the control of the traffickers. Traffickers often recruit victims, make promises that are later broken, and organize the victims' migration. Traffickers may confiscate victims' identification documents before or upon arrival in the destination country. They often charge exorbitant fees for the migration and hold victims in debt bondage when they are unable to pay the fees. Fees may be increased once victims reach the destination country. Victims are often threatened and may be physically or sexually abused. Trafficked persons often have poor working conditions, are paid little if at all, and are unable to leave their place of work. Trafficking victims are often afraid of their traffickers.

See the attached list of questions to assist you in identifying whether someone may be a victim of trafficking.

- How did you get to the U.S.? Did someone help you?
- Do you owe money for your trip?
- What did you think you were going to be doing?
- Can you come and go as you please?
- Are there usually people around, watching you?
- Do you have any papers? Who has them?
- What kind of work do you do?
- Are you paid? Regularly? How much?
- Is your boss holding your money?
- Do you owe money to your boss or anyone else?
- Can you leave if you want to?
- Has your boss or anyone else threatened to report you to the authorities?
- Do you feel scared?
- Has your boss or anyone else threatened to hurt you or your family?
- Has your boss or anyone else hurt you?
- Did you get medical care/ dental care/

What is the difference between smuggling and trafficking?

In both smuggling and trafficking, an individual is charged money in order to be transported across international borders. In both cases, there may be an unauthorized crossing of borders.

However, in smuggling situations, there is no coercion. The relationship between the smuggler and immigrant typically ends at the border and is akin to a business transaction. In the case of trafficking, there is force, fraud, or coercion. The trafficker continues to exploit the victim after the victim has been transported across borders. Immigrants who have been smuggled illegally into the country are seen as criminals by the U.S. government, while people who have been trafficked are viewed as victims.

What should I do if I suspect that someone may be a victim of trafficking?

You may wish to contact law enforcement agents who have worked on previous trafficking cases. You may also contact social service agencies who have expertise in working with victims of trafficking. They will be able to coordinate needed services such as safety planning, shelter, medical, and mental health needs.

Agencies that you may wish to contact include: agencies funded by the Office for Victims of Crime to provide services for pre-certified trafficking victims (such as Project REACH), agencies funded by the Office for Refugee Resettlement to provide similar services, or other agencies who have worked with trafficked individuals.

The Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act (TVPA) of 2000

The TVPA is the first federal law directly addressing human trafficking and is the largest anti-slavery law that the U.S. has adopted since 1865. The act defines human trafficking and takes a three-pronged approach to combating trafficking, including: prevention, prosecution, and protection.

Prevention

- Identifies at-risk populations and encourages public awareness
- Established the Interagency Task Force to Monitor and Combat Trafficking
- Country reports which evaluate countries' efforts to fight trafficking
- Allows for assistance to foreign countries to fight trafficking

Prosecution and Punishment

- Established felony criminal offenses for trafficking
- Allows prosecution of both physical and non-physical types of coercion

Protection and assistance to victims

- Permits continued presence of a victim who is a potential witness for the prosecution of a trafficking case. "Continued presence" refers to a deferred immigration status of one year duration, in which federal law enforcement officials "request the continued presence in the United States of certain victims of severe forms of trafficking in persons, who are aliens and are also potential witnesses, in order to effectuate the prosecution of those responsible." In order to receive continued presence, a victim must be identified as a victim of a severe form of trafficking as defined by the TVPA, must be a potential witness, must be willing to assist in the prosecution of the trafficker, and must be sponsored by a law enforcement agent. Continued presence is authorized by the Department of Homeland Security and also provides a temporary work permit.
- TVPA regulations include procedures to protect victims and their families from intimidation, threats of reprisals, and reprisals from traffickers and associates.
- The TVPA established a certification process that allows some trafficking victims to be eligible for benefits and services similar to those offered to refugees, including cash assistance, medical care, food stamps, and housing.

Why is the TVPA important for law enforcement?

Human trafficking, a form of modern-day slavery, is a federal offense. People who have been forced or coerced into labor or the sex industry are now viewed by law enforcement as victims and as potential witnesses to a crime.

What support does the TVPA allow for victims of trafficking?

The TVPA provides certain benefits to victims of trafficking who are willing to assist in the prosecution of a trafficker. Individuals who are "certified" by law enforcement as a victim of a severe form of trafficking may be eligible for some of the same public benefits as refugees. In addition, these victims may apply for a T-visa, a visa that allows them to remain in the country for three years. The TVPA was reauthorized in 2003 and 2005, adding additional benefits for victims and their families, strengthening law enforcement's ability to prosecute traffickers, and providing additional funding for anti-trafficking efforts in the U.S.

Safety Issues for Victims of Trafficking

What safety considerations should I keep in mind when working with a victim of trafficking?

- Risk of harm to the victim from trafficker or associates
- Risk of harm to the victim's family from trafficker or associates
- Risk of harm by returning victim to country of origin
- Potential risks by linking victim to his/her ethnic community (consider potential connections to trafficker or associates)
- Other safety considerations (any other risk of harm)
- Psychological safety of the victim

How do I assess the safety of these situations?

You may wish to refer the survivor to a social service provider to conduct a safety assessment and needs assessment. A safety assessment will assess current risk of harm to the survivor or survivor's family members. You can then work with the social service provider to establish a basic plan to protect your witness. A standard safety assessment will include the following:

- Basic information about the trafficker and associates
- Fears that the client has about potential safety issues
- History of threats or violence against client or others
- Current threats or violence against client or others, including risk of lethality
- Connection to traffickers or associates (from same community, located in nearby area, recent contacts)
- Legal status of the case (criminal or civil case in progress, client's participation in prosecution, risk of retaliation, traffickers in custody)
- Any concurrent safety issues

Maintaining confidentiality

Maintaining client confidentiality is essential to the victim's safety and psychological healing, as well as to the maintenance of a trusting relationship. Clients should be informed at the beginning of any meeting or interview your policy on client confidentiality and the limits of confidentiality. You should be careful not to disclose identifying information about your clients to other parties. Consultation can be obtained by describing the general situation, without identifying information.

Media requests

Media requests should be approached with caution, particularly regarding specific individuals. A good rule of thumb is to avoid media coverage of specific cases unless there is a compelling reason to do so. Even if a survivor provides informed consent for you to speak with the media, that individual's identifying information should never be released, even if the case is closed.

Traumatic Stress Reactions in Victims of Trafficking

Many trafficking victims have been exposed to chronic trauma. Traumatic experiences that victims may have endured include: victimization in their country of origin; abuses in the context of the trafficking situation including psychological abuse, lack of basic human necessities, physical violence, and sexual violence; and displacement and isolation after their escape. Such chronic, repeated trauma is associated with a range of psychological effects that may include depression, anxiety, and posttraumatic stress responses. Some of the reactions they may be experiencing include:

- Isolation
- Shame and guilt; Self-blame
- Anxiety, fears
- Panic
- Physical symptoms (headaches, stomachaches, muscle tension)
- Feeling helpless or trapped
- Problems trusting other people
- Posttraumatic stress symptoms
 - Flashbacks, intrusive thoughts and memories, nightmares, triggers
 - Avoidance of reminders of the trauma, social withdrawal, emotional constriction, inability to recall details of the trauma
 - Sleep disturbance, concentration problems, irritability, hypervigilance, startle response, generalized anxiety
- Complex PTSD- includes a wide range of areas, including ability to manage moods and impulses, somatic complaints, views of self and others, etc.
- Depression
 - Depressed mood
 - Feelings of worthlessness or excessive guilt
 - Problems with concentration or decision-making
 - Hopelessness
 - Suicidal thoughts
 - Irritability
 - Significant weight loss or gain
 - Insomnia or hypersomnia
 - Psychomotor agitation or retardation
 - Fatigue or loss of energy
- Behavioral re-enactments
 - Identification with aggressor (“Stockholm syndrome”)
 - Re-victimization
 - Poor boundaries
 - Submission, loss of will, feelings of hopelessness and helplessness

Hints for Working with Survivors of Trafficking and Other Trauma

This handout is a guide for law enforcement officials working with survivors of human trafficking. Any interactions with survivors of trafficking have the potential to be re-traumatizing or to be beneficial. Victims of human trafficking will be better able to tell their story and to be a helpful witness if they feel safe and have had an opportunity to stabilize. This guide is intended to 1) assist law enforcement in their given role with the survivor; and to 2) encourage interactions which will contribute to the healing of survivors.

- Avoid re-traumatization (don't repeat patterns of control and coercion)
- Work to re-establish safety (physical and psychological safety): Traumatic events threaten a person's basic sense of safety. They can also weaken faith in the ability of authorities to provide protection.
 - Current safety needs: Ensure that a safety assessment has been conducted, including safety issues regarding the trafficker and trafficking situation as well as any other current safety issues (see previous section on safety issues for victims of trafficking)
 - Work to create a psychological sense of safety
 - Consider atmosphere where you are working with them (noise, structure, predictability)
 - Safety objects (do they have belongings that make them feel safer? Photographs, spiritual items, etc.)
 - Help restore a predictable order and routine.
 - Consider their needs re: privacy and connection with others
 - Identify triggers- places, people, sights, sounds, smells, feelings that act as reminders of traumatic experiences
 - It is important to remember that many trafficking victims come from countries in which law enforcement may be corrupt and may be either implicitly or explicitly involved in the trafficking schemes. As such, uniforms, badges, and guns can be major triggers for trafficking victims. When possible, law enforcement interviews should be conducted with a plainclothes officer without a visible gun or badge.
- Help them rebuild a sense of control and empowerment
 - Provide accurate, complete information
 - Introduce yourself and explain who you are (your role and purpose)
 - Explain clearly how your organization operates
 - Provide a contact person for questions
 - Provide information about trafficking and services available
 - Provide information about legal issues
 - Explain the length and purpose of meetings and interviews
 - Provide information in a language that they can understand, and at a level that they can understand

- Give choices/options
 - Find out their priorities/ wishes. Make these priorities for you as well.
 - Utilize opportunities for offering choices (small choices matter)
- Give them control
 - Make sure that you have their permission to interview them (that they have made an informed choice to participate)
 - Allow them to take breaks, to decline answering questions, or to stop interviews at any point
- Trust is established slowly
 - Don't expect to get a complete story when first meeting the client
 - Individuals who have been trafficked have often been coached or have had experiences that have led them to mistrust authorities, particularly law enforcement. Therefore, the slow building of a trusting relationship is particularly important in these cases.
 - Research their background to increase understanding
 - Political situation of country of origin
 - Ethnic conflicts
 - Main cultural values
 - Ask if you don't understand
 - Use open-ended questions without many interruptions. This technique of open-ended questions allows you to build empathy and trust.
 - Help them meet concrete needs. This "gift" helps to build a real connection.

Conducting Interviews with Survivors of Trafficking

When interviewing a person who has undergone traumatic experiences, your approach towards that person is very important. If you appear intimidating or push too hard, you may elicit a traumatic reaction that will interfere with the purposes of your interview. Alternatively, if you approach the survivor in a sensitive and concerned manner, you are much more likely to both obtain the information you need, as well as to form a positive relationship with the interviewee. You are more likely to end up with a good witness, strengthening your case against the trafficker.

Law enforcement agents need to be aware of the ways in which psychological trauma may impact the interview process. It is important to be aware of environmental factors such as lighting, space, and privacy. The interview setting may in some way be a reminder of previous traumatic situations. For instance, if the client feels coerced into answering questions or pressured to give certain responses, this may act as a trigger to previous times in which they felt manipulated or controlled. Therefore, if the client appears uncomfortable with the setting, it is important to address this and to accommodate the client as much as possible. There should be significant amount of time for the interview, there should be pauses to allow client to regain his composure if difficult material was covered, and enough time at the end of the interview for the client to ask questions and to get feedback. Offer the client choices along the way, such as whether or not to answer certain questions. If the interview seems too overwhelming, it may be more prudent to postpone the interview for some future date until the client is more stable or has more supports.

General interview guidelines

- **Setting.** Consider issues such as lighting, space, and privacy. Certain settings may be reminders of traumatic events. For instance, holding victims in prison-like detention facilities can elicit traumatic stress reactions in some people.
- **Nonverbal behaviors.** Pay attention to your nonverbal behaviors: posture, tone of voice, etc. Nonverbal behaviors such as nodding your head, using appropriate (particularly culturally appropriate) eye contact, and speaking in a calm, concerned tone are likely to make the survivor feel more comfortable.
- **Body Language.** Use body language to communicate support and concern. Make sure that you are seated at the same level as the person you are interviewing to minimize power dynamics. Keep an open stance rather than crossing your arms. Be cautious about personal space issues.
- **Sensitivity and empathy.** Ask about experiences & reactions in a sympathetic, non-judgmental way. Keep in mind the seriousness of what this person has experienced, and the current stressors they are experiencing.

- **Timing of the interview.** Approach the interview in three phases.
 - (1) **Introductions and rapport-building:** Spend a little time settling in and making small talk. Make sure that you allow adequate time for the survivor to develop a basic comfort level with you and the surroundings. The amount of time spent in this phase should be culturally informed.
 - (2) **Goal-centered interviewing:** The bulk of the interview will be directed towards your purposes as a service provider.
 - (3) **Resolution and wrap-up:** At the end of the interview, allow plenty of time to wrap up, including time to deal with emotional reactions the survivor may have. Allow time for the survivor to ask questions and address concerns. Also make sure you address future steps, or what will happen next.

Working with an interpreter

Caution should be exercised when selecting and working with interpreters. Several factors about the interpreter should be taken into account during the selection process, including: age, gender, general translation experience, experience with the field you are working in, cultural background, and potential connection with the survivor or trafficker. Interpreters may be used as both language translators and culture brokers. They should be able to translate the nuances and meanings of language, versus simply a literal translation. On the other hand, they should be instructed to completely translate all communication. Be aware of cultural differences in material that is deemed “acceptable” to discuss. For instance, some translators may avoid material that is sexual in nature, due to cultural taboos. Be cautious about selecting a translator who may have connections to the trafficker or their associates. Also be aware of potential vicarious trauma responses in the translator, and provide a forum for them to process the difficult material that they have heard.

Strategies for managing affective reactions during an interview

As you are conducting an interview, it is also helpful to be aware of the interviewee’s physiological and psychological reactions related to traumatic events. Often victims will not be aware of their own reactions or may feel that they are not in a position to speak up for themselves about their distress. It is up to the interviewer set a comfortable pace and to time the interview so as not to re-traumatize the victim.

Individuals who have been trafficked may wish to be helpful to the interviewer. They may ignore their own reactions and follow the lead of the authority; therefore, it is important that the interviewer pay attention to cues from the client. Cues such as facial expression, eye contact, breathing, etc. may be helpful indications about how the person is doing. Trafficking victims may attempt to get through the interview by continuing forward as rapidly as possible, ignoring distress, in an attempt to be “done” with both the interview and with memories of traumatic experiences. They may unwittingly be retraumatizing themselves during this process.

Emotional distress may be expressed in a variety of ways: some people may shut down emotionally, others may react with anger or rage (sometimes directed towards people

who are trying to help them), some may minimize the experiences that they went through or the reactions that they are having, and others may experience distress through somatic reactions such as stomachaches or headaches. It is important to maintain a broad view as to how survivors may express their emotional reactions. Just because a client is not expressing emotion does NOT mean that they have not been traumatized.

- Pay attention to cues from the client: If client is showing signs of distress or numbing, you should consider taking a break or postponing the interview.
 - Distress cues: physical arousal reactions (such as rapid speech, shallow breathing, being jumpy, restlessness or shifting around), outward signs of distress (such as shaking, crying, or verbally expressing being upset)
 - Numbing/avoidance cues: avoidance of eye contact, talking in a flat tone or without emotion. Don't interpret calmness or composure as indications that the client has not undergone traumatic experiences or is "fine;" shock, numbness, avoidance, and dissociation are common reactions to trauma.

- What can you do to *decrease hyperarousal*?
 - Take a break
 - Use a calm, relaxing tone of voice and slow your speech
 - Name what is happening (i.e., "It seems like this is difficult for you to talk about and that you are getting upset.")
 - Use distraction- move the topic of conversation to something innocuous
 - Have the client come back to the "here and now" by noticing current surroundings, using their senses (sight, sound, touch, etc.)

- What can you do if the survivor seems *numb, spacey, or dissociated*?
 - In some cases, this may be an adaptive reaction; avoidance can be a useful coping strategy for getting through difficult times. If the client does not wish to talk about their traumatic experiences, you should respect this way of coping, while providing them with resources should they want to talk.
 - If a client appears to mentally "disappear" or if their expression "goes blank," it may be helpful to talk to them in a calm voice about where they are and that they are safe. You may also attempt to have them connect to their current surroundings by noticing things with their senses. For instance, have them name things that they see or hear in the room.

Creating a "safety net" for survivors

- Develop a team of providers to meet the basic day-to-day needs of the survivor
- Provide appropriate referrals and make sure that the survivor has contact information for a variety of resources
- Ensuring that the trafficking survivor has adequate social supports will increase their stability and improve their ability to cooperate with law enforcement as a witness to a crime.

Information and Referrals for Survivors of Human Trafficking

To report human trafficking, call the Trafficking in Persons and Worker Exploitation Task Force Complaint Line: 1 (888) 428-7581

Government Organizations:

- **Department of Justice**
Provides background and helpful links
www.usdoj.gov/trafficking.htm

The Office of Victims of Crime, Dept. of Justice
Provides general information on trafficking
www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ovc/help/tip.htm
- **U.S. Department of State**
Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons. Includes the annual Trafficking in Persons report. Also offers an E-Journal dedicated to human trafficking issues.
<http://usinfo.state.gov/g/tip>
- **The Department of Health and Human Services/ Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR):** Provides certification that allows human trafficking victims to receive benefits and services similar to those offered to refugees
<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/orr/programs/astvict.htm>

Trafficking Victim Verification Line: Toll-free (866) 401-5510
- **Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services, Department of Homeland Security District Offices, U.S. Department of Justice:** Immigration services

For general information about trafficking, see
<http://uscis.gov/graphics/shared/lawenfor/interiorenf/antitraf.htm>

Non-governmental Organizations:

- **Project REACH, The Trauma Center at JRI**
(617) 232-1303 x211
www.traumacenter.org/projectreach
- **FREEDOM Network**
www.freedomnetworkusa.org
- **Safe Horizons, New York, NY**
<http://www.safehorizon.org>

- **International Rescue Committee**, Miami, FL; New York, NY; Tucson, AZ
<http://www.theirc.org>
- **Center for Multicultural Human Services**, Falls Church, VA
www.cmhsweb.org
- **Boat People S.O.S.**, Washington, DC
<http://www.bpsos.org>
- **Salvation Army**, National Headquarters
<http://www.salvationarmyusa.org>
- **YMCA International Services**, Houston, TX
<http://www.ymcahouston.org>
- **Mosaic Family Services**, Dallas, TX
<http://www.mosaicservices.org>
- **Heartland Alliance for Human Needs and Human Rights**, Chicago, IL
<http://www.heartland-alliance.org/>
- **CAST**, Los Angeles, CA
<http://www.castla.org>
- **Asian Pacific Islander Legal Outreach**, San Francisco, CA
<http://www.apilegaloutreach.org>
- **National Domestic Violence Hotline:**

(800) 799-SAFE, (800) 799-7233 or (800) 787-3224 (TTY)
- **The Protection Project**, Washington, D.C.
<http://www.protectionproject.org>
- **Vital Voices**
Global partnership focusing on women's issues, including an anti-trafficking initiative
<http://www.vitalvoices.org/programs/anti-trafficking/>
- **Polaris Project**, Washington, D.C.
<http://www.polarisproject.org>

Referrals for Dealing with Traumatic Stress Reactions in Victims of Trafficking

Even if survivors appear to be fine, they may be struggling with posttraumatic reactions. Avoidance and numbness are common reactions to traumatic events. These people will not complain of being upset. Instead, they may have stress reactions such as muscle tension, physical complaints, or insomnia.

Victims of trafficking from other countries may be wary of going to see a therapist or counselor. Instead of calling it “mental health,” you may describe it as talking to someone about their feelings/ how they are doing. Many victims of trafficking experience insomnia, so some social service providers have offered victims the opportunity to see “a sleep doctor” to address this symptom.

Additionally, it may be helpful to explore non-traditional forms of therapy with survivors of trafficking. Aspects of folk healing from their culture may be incorporated into a non-traditional form of therapy. Body-oriented or non-verbal types of therapy may be easier for some individuals than traditional talk therapy. Individuals may wish to use herbal medicines that they used in their home country. Victims of trafficking may also be able to identify “helpers” that they feel comfortable going to, such as religious or spiritual leaders. Any resources that are identified by each individual should be explored as potential mechanisms for healing.

Who can I contact for help dealing with stress reactions in victims of trafficking?

- Project REACH provides crisis-oriented mental health services to pre-certified victims of trafficking throughout the Eastern seaboard and Texas.
- You may also contact local agencies funded by OVC or ORR to provide services to victims of trafficking.
- Finally, you may wish to contact local refugee and immigrant services agencies to request assistance. Agencies who offer services to asylum seekers, refugees, and victims of torture may be familiar with many of the issues facing victims of trafficking.

What services does Project REACH offer?

Project REACH offers two basic categories of service: direct service and education/outreach. In terms of direct service, you may request a phone-based consultation about a victim of trafficking that you are working with. Or you may request that Project REACH staff members travel to your area to meet with the victim and provide assistance. In terms of education and outreach, you may request that Project REACH conducts a training on trafficking and mental health issues with your organization.

Direct service:

- The team conducts **psychosocial needs assessments** and **safety assessments** of individuals who have been trafficked. The needs assessments encompass all areas of life, including safety and physical care, medical care, mental health care, legal aid, language training, educational and occupational assistance, social networks, and spiritual needs.
- Project REACH offers **linkages** between trafficked individuals and local providers to help meet these needs and assists with **case coordination**.
- The team organizes **service planning meetings** with local service providers to coordinate services and works with local providers to develop **individualized service plans** for safety and ongoing care.
- Trauma specialists provide **case consultation** to local health providers regarding individuals who have been trafficked. We offer **expertise on trauma and mental health** to local providers.
- Upon request, Project REACH staff members are available to conduct **trauma-focused psychological evaluations** of human trafficking victims.

Education and Outreach:

- Project REACH is working to establish a **coordinated community response** to human trafficking.
- Trauma specialists offer **informational meetings** about trafficking, the psychological effects of trauma, and services for trafficked persons.

Vicarious Trauma and Self-care for Law Enforcement

What is vicarious trauma?

Law enforcement agents often investigate crimes in which horrible atrocities have been committed against victims. Officials working with people who have been exposed to severe forms of violence may experience traumatic reactions because of hearing horrible stories. Be aware of the following signs of vicarious trauma within yourself:

- Feeling burned out/ loss of pleasure in your work
- Loss of interest in your usual activities
- Withdrawal from others
- Irritability
- Compulsive work, lack of balance in your life
- Feeling cynical or negative about clients
- Numbing
- Nightmares
- No time or energy for yourself
- Increased sensitivity to violence
- Loss of hope and faith in people

How can law enforcement agents take care of themselves to minimize vicarious trauma?

- Pay attention to your stress level
- Notice any stress reactions or physical reactions as you are working on cases
- Practice good self-care
 - Get enough sleep
 - Exercise regularly
 - Eat regular, balanced meals
 - Make sure you are drinking water throughout the day
 - Take breaks during your day
 - Set detailed, daily, manageable goals
 - Balance your workload, leaving time for family, friends, and leisure
- Identify your own personal ways of coping and use them
- Practice relaxation techniques
- If you notice stress reactions in yourself, seek help

PROJECT REACH

A Program of the Trauma Center at Justice Resource Institute

Phone: (617) 232-1303 x211; (617) 232-1280

Email: ProjectREACH@traumacenter.org

Website: www.traumacenter.org/projectreach

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"Putting Victims First"

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