



A program for survivors of human trafficking

Consider the following to determine if this program is appropriate:

- Survivor of Human trafficking/commercial sexual exploitation
- Basic needs – such as food, clothing, shelter, and immediate physical safety should be met before we can effectively work on higher level needs, such as self-confidence, empowerment and self-realization
- Engagement in mental health and/or addiction recovery if applicable
- Ability and willingness to work in a group setting and understand that their actions can affect other members
- A willingness to keep the identities and shared experiences of other members confidential, “what is shared here, stays here”.
- A willingness to be open-minded, kind, non-judgmental and to respect other people's experiences.
- A certain degree of awareness of personal stressors, resilience strategies, areas of strength and areas still requiring attention. Path Found has the potential to further develop each person's ability to be more self-aware.
- Willing to engage with staff in creating a safety plan If needed.

STAGES OF CHANGE

Stage	Characteristics	Service Provider Actions
Pre-contemplation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ambivalence to change ● Does not recognize exploitation as a problem ● May not see current circumstance as exploitative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Work quickly to engage and build trust - deliver on resources and maintain consistency ● Safety plan ● Provide harm reduction supplies & information relevant to individual circumstances (safe injection supplies, condoms, etc.) ● Do not rush individual into action – this will only put them in a position to defend behavior and/or trafficker ● Emphasize individual strengths and survival skills - affirm the decision to be engaged in services even if there is a mandated component ● Work with individual's understanding of situation ● Convey non-judgemental attitude and gently query the individual's sense of safety and support
Contemplation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Thinking about change ● Beginning to recognize exploitation, but may not see a way out of situation ● May begin talking about dreams/goals ● Processing abuse and effects of abuse/exploitation ● Open to self-reflection, weighing consequences and talking about feelings ● May begin talking about alternatives to current situation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Continue to build trust and assess safety ● Demonstrate warmth, empathy and respect ● Assess pros and cons of change ● Address the cognitive dissonance and work to gently challenge belief systems as dictated by the pros and cons list ● Build motivation for change ● Take dreams and goals seriously and use this as a way of exploring individual needs, values, and desires ● Facilitate self-reflection, assist self-discovery talk and exploration of feelings and beliefs ● Affirm the willingness of the individual to address the situation ● Recognize changes in talking about change ● Validate abilities ● Assist in problem solving ● Build skills for coping with trauma
Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Getting ready for change ● Can get overwhelmed with barriers to change ● Commitment to leave situation and/or thoughts about leaving ● Exhibits signs of independence, may begin to take small steps towards change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Present realistic choices ● Encourage individual to set goals and develop an action plan ● Deal with increased anxiety ● Advocate for services and respectful treatment ● Develop a plan based on individual's unique needs ● Revisit safety plan and modify as necessary ● Help to build new skills and/or access relevant services and supports - have tangible resources to help in describing what leaving would look like

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Connect with therapist/counselor to deal with traumatic impact of trafficking ● Remind individual of their desire for an alternate future if they go back to the contemplation stage – build hope and support in individual’s own abilities ● Affirm the individual’s strength and courage to have the conversation and to begin thinking through leaving
Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Individual is ready for change ● Leaving trafficking situation ● Often stages of exiting require action on one or more aspects (i.e. housing, relocation, substance use, disengaging with pimp) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Assist with ongoing development of coping skills ● If many changes are occurring, encourage manageable goals, or one change at a time is necessary ● Encourage self-care ● Consistent support is essential ● Reiterate long term benefits of change ● Focus on building social supports ● Connect change and long-term goals to values and dreams discussed in previous stages ● Reflect past success back to clients – enforce strengths and validate work done to date
Maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Remains out of trafficking/exploitive situation ● May maintain job/school ● Develops new network of support ● Continues to address trauma of exploitation and impact trafficking has had on life 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Plan for follow-up ● Discuss coping with relapse/return ● Be patient and realistic ● Look out for signs of boredom ● Work to help the individual build a broader support system – engagement in activities, services and supportive relationships ● Affirm the individual’s strength and courage in getting free from exploitation ● Recognize that while the individual may have left the trafficker, they may continue to engage in some aspects of the commercial sex industry
Relapse/Return	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Returns back to previous situation ● Re-establishes contact with exploiter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reframe relapse/return as a learning opportunity ● Maintain contact ● Reassure individual that relapse is a natural part of change ● Affirm the individual’s value ● Talk through triggers and precipitated relapse/return ● Remind individual of success, positive feelings and accomplishments during action or maintenance period

*Helping Trafficked Persons – A Resource Handbook for Service Providers (2014). MCIS Language Services: Ontario.
 Social Work Practice with Survivors of Sex Trafficking and Commercial Sexual Exploitation (2018).
 Columbus University Press.*