

*Journey to Connectedness Through Survivor Leadership  
from victim to survivor, survivor to leader*

**Readiness Considerations for Potential Project Members**

- 18-30 years of age
- Lived experience of commercial sexual exploitation and/or domestic trafficking
- Ability and willingness to commit to the project for up to three years (4 training weeks + two-day conference)
- Having exited a life of commercial sexual exploitation and/or domestic trafficking for one year
- 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-realisation
- The Stages of Change* is an important model to consider with regards to assessing member readiness. *The Stages of Change Model* describes how a person modifies their behavior through six stages: pre-contemplation, contemplation, preparation, action, and maintenance. Potential members who are unwilling to commit to change are likely to be unsatisfied with the objectives of Path Found. Recognizing where a potential member is in terms of *The Stages of Change* can help determine their readiness for Path Found.
- Agreement to *Member's Rights and Responsibilities* under the project and/or willingness to discuss those rights and responsibilities with staff that may be of concern. Path Found will re-orient and/or re-frame *Member's Rights and Responsibilities* after members have been selected, so as to include their input.
- Engagement in mental health and/or addiction recovery if applicable
- A willingness to keep the identities and shared experiences of other members confidential, “what is shared here, stays here”.
- A certain degree of awareness of their 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.
- Does the potential member have an existing support system? Is the potential member willing to engage with staff in creating a safety plan if they have not done so already?

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*Stages of Change Model*  
**Working with survivors of CSE + DT**

<b>Stage</b>	<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Service Provider Actions</b>
<b>Pre-contemplation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ambivalence to change</li> <li>• Does not recognize exploitation as a problem</li> <li>• May not see current circumstance as exploitative</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work quickly to engage and build trust - deliver on resources and maintain consistency</li> <li>• Safety plan</li> <li>• Provide harm reduction supplies &amp; information relevant to individual circumstances (safe injection supplies, condoms, etc.)</li> <li>• Do not rush individual into action – this will only put them in a position to defend behavior and/or trafficker</li> <li>• Emphasize individual strengths and survival skills - affirm the decision to be engages in services even if there is a mandated component</li> <li>• Work with individual’s understanding of situation</li> <li>• Convey non-judgemental attitude and gently query the individual’s sense of safety and support</li> </ul>
<b>Contemplation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thinking about change</li> <li>• Beginning to recognize exploitation, but may not see a way out of situation</li> <li>• May begin talking about dreams/goals</li> <li>• Processing abuse and effects of abuse/exploitation</li> <li>• Open to self-reflection, weighing consequences and talking about feelings</li> <li>• May begin talking about alternatives to current situation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to build trust and assess safety</li> <li>• Demonstrate warmth, empathy and respect</li> <li>• Assess pros and cons of change</li> <li>• Address the cognitive dissonance and work to gently challenge belief systems as dictated by the pros and cons list</li> <li>• Build motivation for change</li> <li>• Take dreams and goals seriously and use this as a way of exploring individual needs, values, and desires</li> <li>• Facilitate self-reflection, assist self-discovery talk and exploration of feelings and beliefs</li> <li>• Affirm the willingness of the individual to address the situation</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflect change talk back to client so that individual is the one talking about the change process</li> <li>• Recognize changes in talking about change</li> <li>• Validate abilities</li> <li>• Assist in problem solving</li> <li>• Build skills for coping with trauma</li> </ul>
<b>Preparation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Getting ready for change</li> <li>• Can get overwhelmed with barriers to change</li> <li>• Commitment to leave situation and/or thoughts about leaving</li> <li>• Exhibits signs of independence, may begin to take small steps towards change</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Present realistic choices</li> <li>• Encourage individual to set goals and develop an action plan</li> <li>• Deal with increased anxiety</li> <li>• Advocate for services and respectful treatment</li> <li>• Develop a plan based on individual's unique needs</li> <li>• Revisit safety plan and modify as necessary</li> <li>• Help to build new skills and/or access relevant services and supports - have tangible resources to help in describing what leaving would look like</li> <li>• Connect with therapist/counselor to deal with traumatic impact of trafficking</li> <li>• 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</li> <li>• Affirm the individual's strength and courage to have the conversation and to begin thinking through leaving</li> </ul>
<b>Action</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual is ready for change</li> <li>• Leaving trafficking situation</li> <li>• Often stages of exiting require action on one or more aspects (i.e. housing, relocation, substance use, disengaging with pimp)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assist with ongoing development of coping skills</li> <li>• If many changes are occurring, encourage manageable goals, or one change at a time is necessary</li> <li>• Encourage self-care</li> <li>• Consistent support is essential</li> <li>• Reiterate long term benefits of change</li> <li>• Focus on building social supports</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Connect change and long-term goals to values and dreams discussed in previous stages</li> <li>• Reflect past success back to clients – enforce strengths and validate work done to date</li> </ul>
<b>Maintenance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remains out of trafficking/exploitive situation</li> <li>• May maintain job/school</li> <li>• Develops new network of support</li> <li>• Continues to address trauma of exploitation and impact trafficking has had on life</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan for follow-up</li> <li>• Discuss coping with relapse/return</li> <li>• Be patient and realistic</li> <li>• Look out for signs of boredom</li> <li>• Work to help the individual build a broader support system – engagement in activities, services and supportive relationships</li> <li>• Affirm the individual’s strength and courage in getting free from exploitation</li> <li>• Recognize that while the individual may have left the trafficker, they may continue to engage in some aspects of the commercial sex industry</li> </ul>
<b>Relapse/Return</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Returns back to previous situation</li> <li>• Re-establishes contact with exploiter</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reframe relapse/return as a learning opportunity</li> <li>• Maintain contact</li> <li>• Reassure individual that relapse is a natural part of change</li> <li>• Affirm the individual’s value</li> <li>• Talk through triggers and precipitated relapse/return</li> <li>• Remind individual of success, positive feelings and accomplishments during action or maintenance period</li> </ul>

*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.*