



# Intersection of Human Trafficking & Substance Use Disorder

December 15, 2022

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# Presenters

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she/her/hers



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# Content Overview

Human trafficking

Intersection with SUD

Victim identification

Practical tools

# What is human trafficking?

Definitions, misconceptions, and elements

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# Misconceptions

- **Mentimeter:** Ask audience what are things you've heard about HT? (True, unsure, or false?) free form question
- **Mentimeter:** have you ever served a human trafficking survivor before? Yes/no/not sure
- **Mentimeter:** Culturally specific, type of demographic you primarily serve? Men/women, rural, other, etc. (check all the boxes)
- **Mentimeter:** Questions or what you're hoping to learn (leave this open during presentation so folks can ask/ we revisit at end)

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# Definitions - Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA)

The term “severe forms of trafficking in persons” means—

- **Sex trafficking** in which a 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; or
- **Labor trafficking** the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery.

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# Components

**FORCE**  
VIOLENCE / THREAT OF VIOLENCE

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# Components

**FRAUD** =  
DEBT BONDAGE, DECEITFUL RECRUITMENT



# Components

**COERCION**

EMOTIONAL MANIPULATION, THREAT OF LAW  
ENFORCEMENT/IMMIGRATION, THREATS AGAINST  
FAMILY

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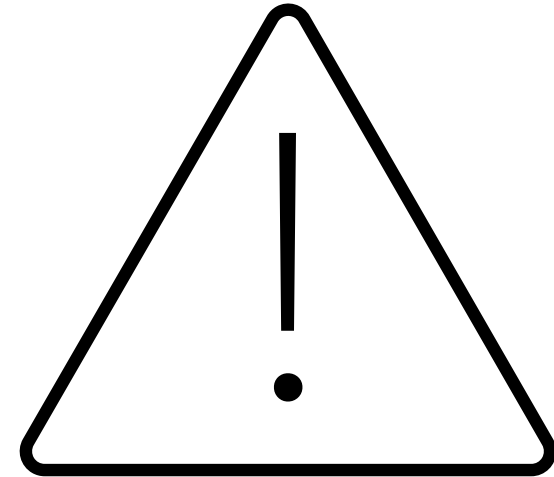
# Dismantling misconceptions

- Labor trafficking is real
- All gender identities / all ages are vulnerable
- Human trafficking happens in the US
- Trafficking does not require movement
- Sex work and sex trafficking are not the same
- Regardless of industry (legal or not) can be trafficking

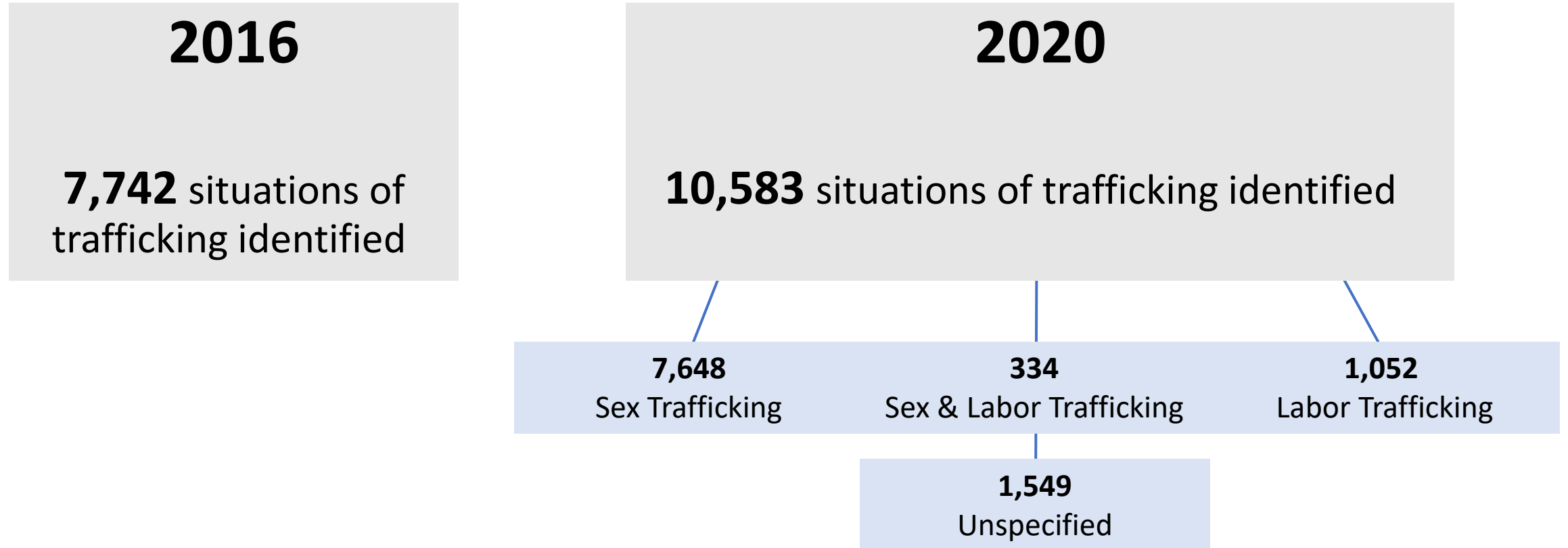
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# Who Experiences Human Trafficking

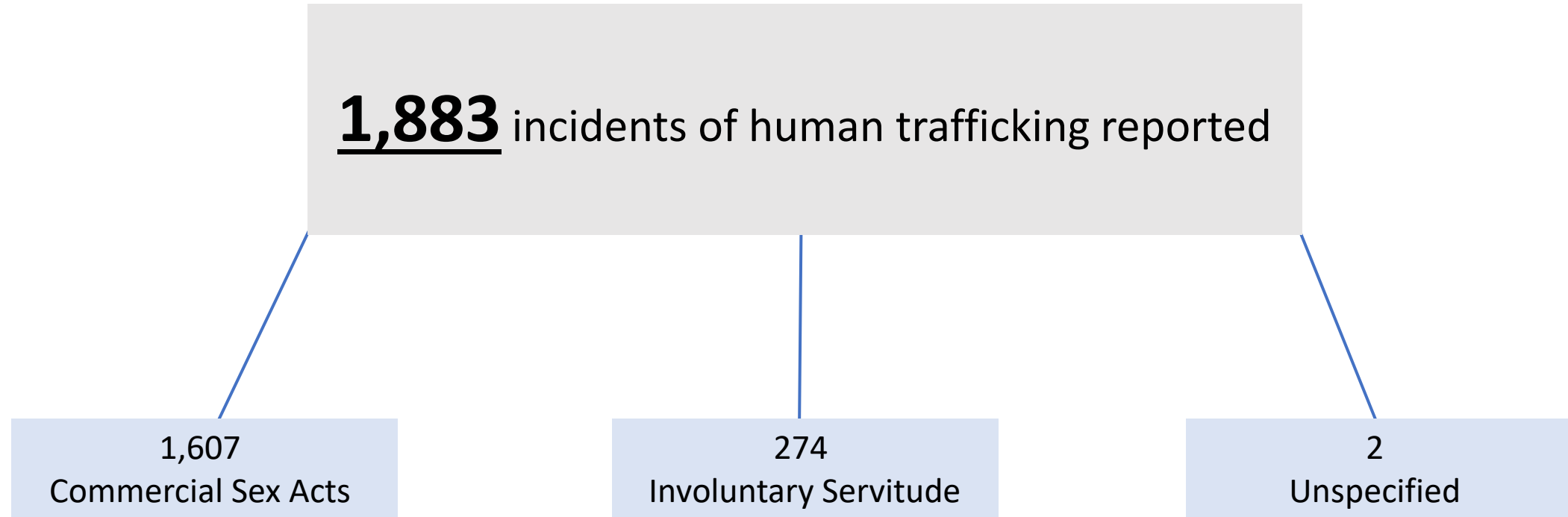
- **Disclaimer:** Statistics and prevalence of human trafficking are challenging given the hidden nature of this crime.



# National Human Trafficking Hotline Contacts



# Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program – 2019



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**Anyone can experience  
human trafficking.**

**However, some people  
are at higher risk  
because of  
systemic vulnerabilities  
and historic oppression.**

- Foster system involvement
- Immigrants/ non-English speakers
- LGBTQIA2+
- Racial minorities
- Unhoused/ unstably housed
- Child abuse experience
- Substance use disorders



# Intersection with Substance Use

Understanding the overlap between trafficking and substance use

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# National Human Trafficking Hotline (NHTH) Cases



## Substance use

is a top vulnerability  
factor for trafficking

According to Polaris, Substance Use Concerns were named one of the Top 5 Risk Factors / Vulnerabilities for **both sex and labor trafficking cases** reported to the NHTH in 2020.

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# Substance Use



84.3%

Percent of survivors who **used substances during their trafficking experience** (survey of US survivors of sex traffickers).

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# Arrests of trafficking survivors



91%

Percent of trafficking survivors who **reported having a criminal record** as a result of their trafficking experience.

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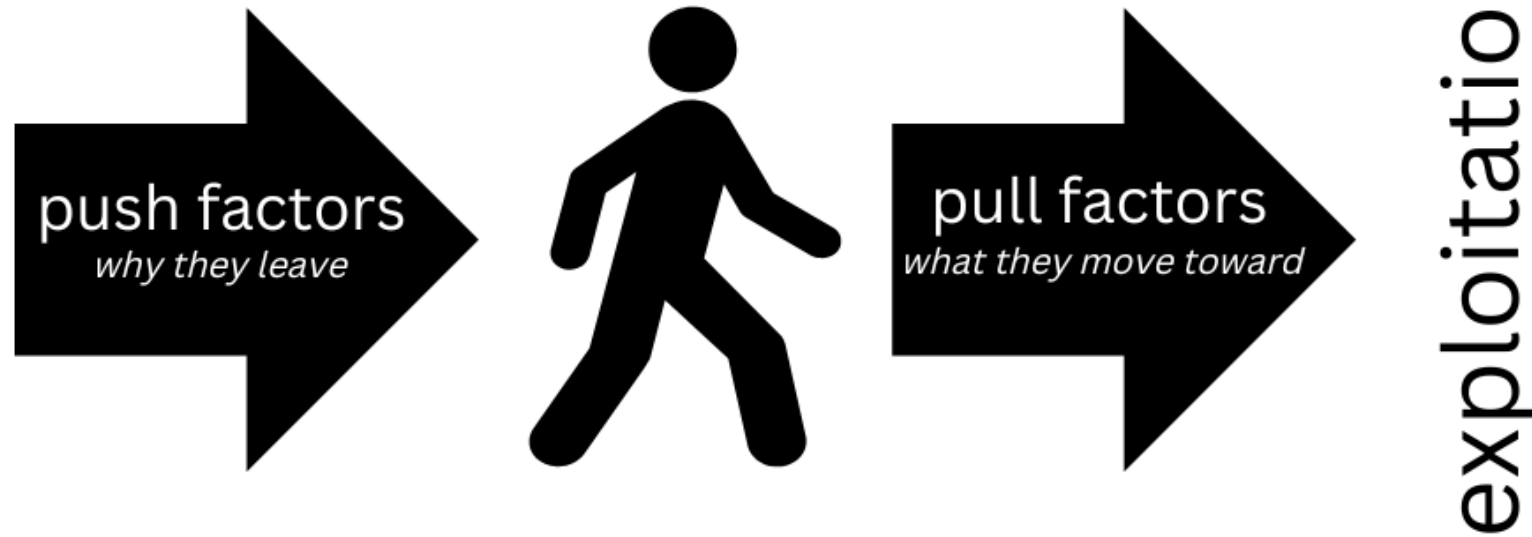
# Means of Recruitment and Control

Push and Pull Factors

Intersecting Vulnerabilities

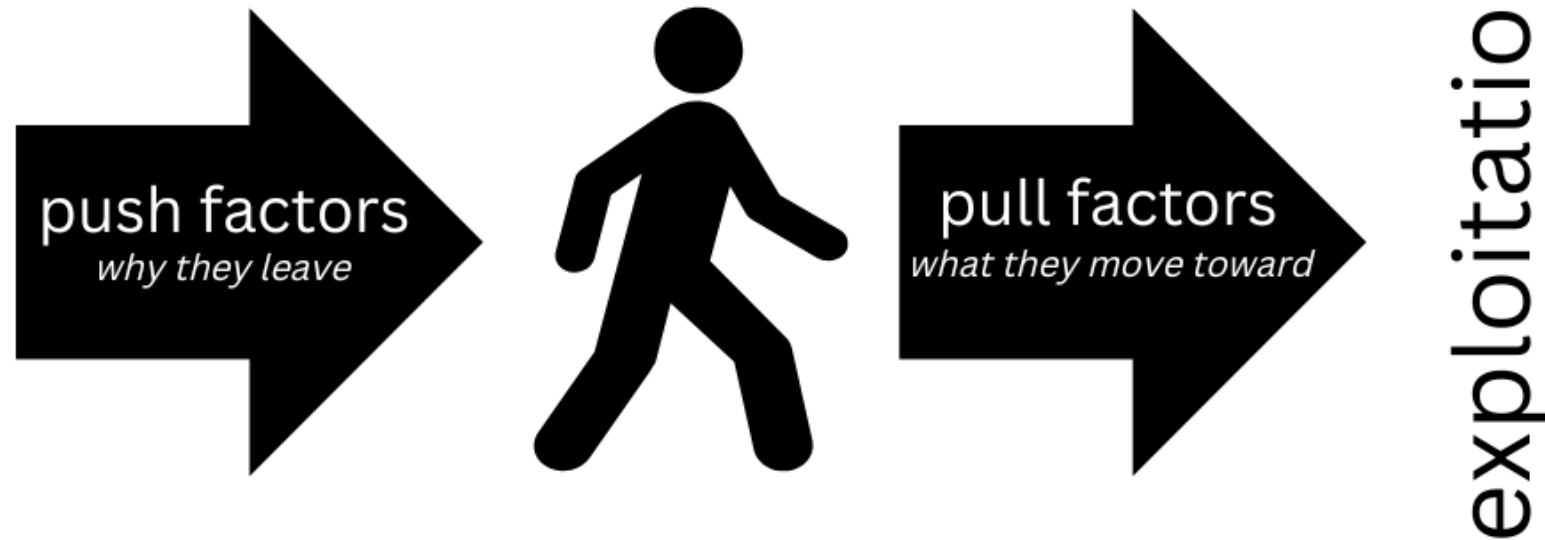
High-Risk Industries

# Push and pull factors



# Push and pull factors

Traffickers recruit people with substance use disorders  
Traffickers use substances as a means of control



## Sex Trafficking

- Street-based sex work
- Pornography/ CSAM
- Brothel-based trafficking

## Labor Trafficking

- Gang-based trafficking
- Forced criminality
- Familial/ family-facilitated trafficking
- Massage parlors
- Strip clubs/ exotic dancing
- Cantinas
- Panhandling, begging
- Marijuana farms
- Substance use treatment facilities

High-Risk Labor Industries



# Identification

Barriers and facilitators to identification

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# Barriers to self-identification

- Danger and fear
- Shame, guilt
- Cultural norms
- Trauma
- May not know their rights
- Misconceptions about human trafficking
- Trafficking may not be the primary trauma in their life
- Fear of engaging with systems



# Documented barriers to SUD care access

- Sobriety requirements
- Program duration/ length
- Judgement
- Stigmatizing language
- Lacking acknowledgement of racism/oppression

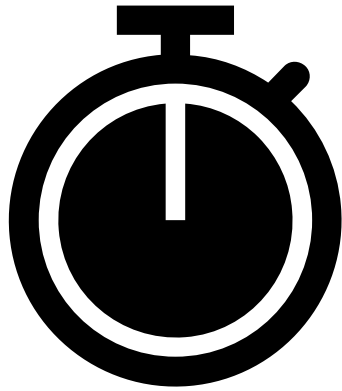
*Lara B. Gerassi. 2018. Barriers to Accessing Detox Facilities, Substance Use Treatment, and Residential Services among Women Impacted by Commercial Sexual Exploitation and Trafficking. Behavioral Medicine, 44:3, 199-208.*

- Limited beds/ spots available
- Criminal record barriers
- Mental health diagnoses
- Rules & requirements
- Re-engagement / relapse rules

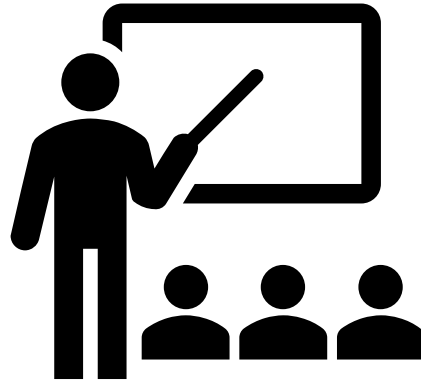
*Greater New Orleans Human Trafficking Task Force. 2019. Opening Doors: Louisiana Human Trafficking Survivor Housing Report.*

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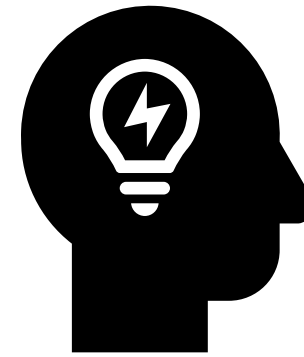
# Provider barriers to identification



Time



Education



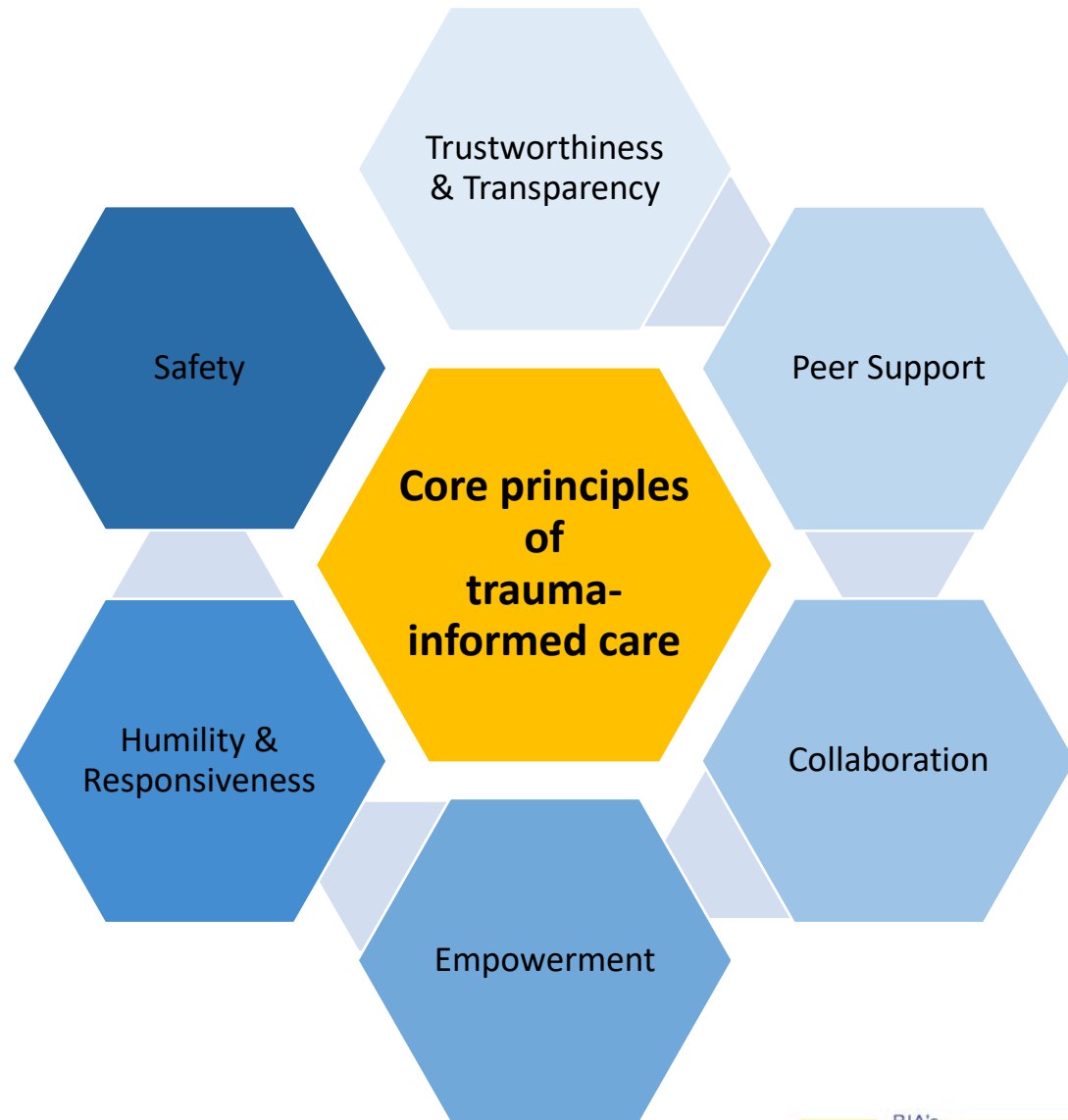
Misdiagnosis

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# Trauma-Informed Care

- **Trauma-informed care seeks to:**
  - Realize the widespread impact of trauma and understand paths for recovery
  - Recognize the signs and symptoms of trauma in patients, families, and staff
  - Integrate knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures, and practices
  - Actively avoid re-traumatization

# Trauma-Informed Care



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# Positive attributes of care for trafficking survivors

- Open environment to disclose sex trade (or other crimes related to trafficking experience)
- Maintaining sobriety requirements
- Prioritizing self-identified needs

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# Disclosure is not the goal

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## High quality care is the goal

- Treat the client's immediate needs
- Offer resources & referrals
- Disclosure highly unlikely and delayed disclosure is normal



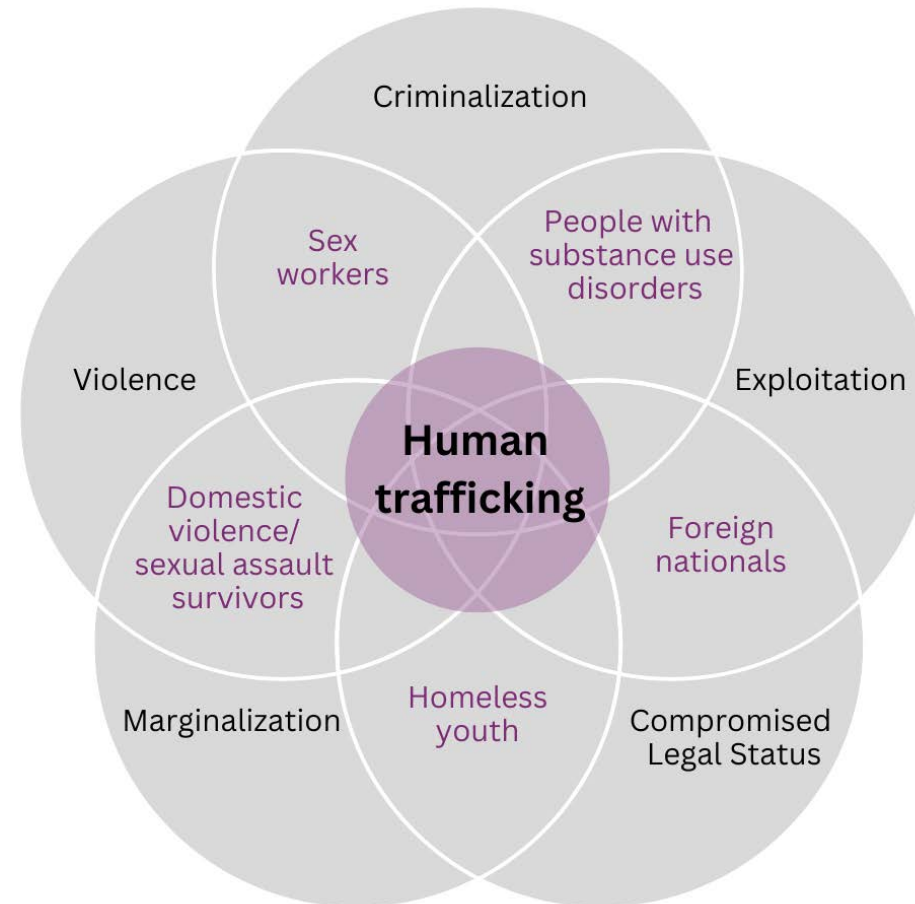


# Practical Tools

Screening, partnerships, and applying skills

Human trafficking survivors have many identities.

You are skilled and already have many tools to support them!



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# Practical Tools

Screening tools

Multidisciplinary collaboration

Ongoing education

# Benefits of screening tools

- **Documenting** relevant information to serve a client appropriately
- **Validating** the client qualifies for your program or benefits
- **Removing** bias & assumptions of a screener
- **Standardizing** approach to our clients



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# Validated screening tools

- Human Trafficking Interview and Assessment Measure Tool (Covenant House Tool, HTIAM-14)
- Quick Youth Indicator Tool (QYIT)
- Trafficking Victim Identification Tool (TVIT, Vera tool)
- Comprehensive Human Trafficking Assessment Tool (Polaris tool, NHTRC tool)

# Multidisciplinary partnerships

- Trafficking survivors engage with many different systems
- Collaborative partnerships:
  - Improve client outcomes
  - Prevent duplication of efforts
  - Improve criminal legal outcomes



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# Creating partnerships

- **Consider** your highest-risk populations, internal gaps serving those clients
- **Engage** with survivor leaders and people with lived experience
- **Identify** community champions of anti-trafficking work to partner with
- **Establish** boundaries around roles, responsibilities, and engagement

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# Ongoing education

SOAR To Health and Wellness (ACF)

[www.nhttac.acf.hhs.gov/SOARtoHealthandWellness](http://www.nhttac.acf.hhs.gov/SOARtoHealthandWellness)

HEAL Trafficking Network

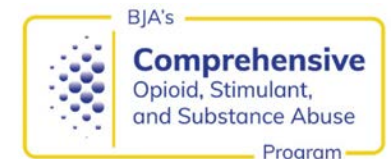
[www.healtrafficking.org](http://www.healtrafficking.org)

OVCTTAC

[www.ovcttac.gov](http://www.ovcttac.gov)

Polaris (formerly Polaris Project)

[www.polarisproject.org](http://www.polarisproject.org)





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# Questions and Answers

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# Contact information

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