



**NATIONAL HUMAN TRAFFICKING
TRAINING AND TECHNICAL
ASSISTANCE CENTER**

ASK AN EXPERT SERIES

MALE VICTIMS AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Ensuring equity and inclusion of services for all individuals who experience human trafficking means addressing the needs of men and boys. On April 28, 2022, a panel of experts convened to discuss men and boys' experiences with human trafficking during a live [Ask an Expert webinar](#). The Ask an Expert series is sponsored by the Office for Victims of Crime (OVC), [Human Trafficking Capacity Building Center](#). This webinar session was offered in partnership with the Office on Trafficking in Persons' (OTIP) [National Human Trafficking Training and Technical Assistance Center \(NHTTAC\)](#). Moderated by [Suleman Masood](#), NHTTAC Senior Training and Technical Assistance Specialist, [Bandak Lul](#), [Lenny Hayes](#), M.A., and [Steven Procopio](#), ACWS, LICSW, shared their insights on needed services, how to talk about human trafficking and develop outreach materials in ways that are inclusive of males, and where to find resources on this topic.

This document is not intended to be a comprehensive resource on the topic. It is a summary of the live questions and abbreviated answers provided by the panel of experts and offers panelist responses to submitted questions that were not able to be answered live. Editor's notes are included in a few areas to provide additional information not stated by the panelists. The responses found in this document do not necessarily represent the views of OVC or OTIP.

What services and support are needed for men and boys who experience human trafficking?

Within tribal communities, there is a need to understand that when we talk about healing, that means all genders, including males, females, and Two-Spirit people. That has been a challenge in our tribal communities because individuals who identify as Two-Spirit or Native LGBTQIA+ are not always welcomed. Human trafficking is an issue also impacting males, specifically males who identify as Two-Spirit or LGBTQIA+. There is a need for education and awareness about male victimization. Good men in Indigenous communities are helping other men heal from the different forms of victimization; invite them to start having these conversations. Some of the men doing healing work include Whirlwind Bull, who

comes from the [Three Affiliated Tribes](#) and is leading Talking Circles for men as part of the [North Segment Fatherhood](#) program. [Greg Grey Cloud runs an equine therapy program](#) working with men and boys. Remember, within tribal communities, victimization is not related to just one gender. It's impacting everyone. Create space for these conversations and victimization impacting males. Create safe spaces to have conversations throughout Native communities on this topic of male victimization.

Current services and support for individuals who experience human trafficking are female-centric, including policymaking, victim identification, and personal-level services; anti-trafficking services are not adequately serving males who have experienced trafficking. Looking back, maybe 10 years ago, this might have been because there was much to be learned about human trafficking victimization of males. Recent studies, however, particularly by the [Arizona State University Office of Sex Trafficking Intervention Research](#), show males are vulnerable to both sex trafficking and labor trafficking in the U.S. Vulnerable populations include youth who have run away or are experiencing homelessness and migrant workers. Negative life experiences, adverse childhood experiences, mental health, medical issues, as well as substance use issues are contributing factors to men and boys experiencing human trafficking.

It is imperative that males who have experienced human trafficking in the United States receive the same level of attention and specialized services as females who have experienced trafficking. Just like women and girls, men and boys need housing assistance, mental health services, medical assistance, employment services, emotional support, as well as legal assistance. Just like women and girls, men and boys also experience forced criminalities while they are being victimized. They are forced into other crimes that are not related to human trafficking with their experience.

Fifteen years ago, there was no research or data on boys and young men in relation to sex trafficking or the commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC). Many thought this was not an issue facing men and boys. So, we have come a long way. What was important to me [Steven] at that time was to [find data through my own research](#). So, I did a series of focus groups with Boston youth from the ages of 13 to 16 and 16 to 24. These discussions focused on many topics related to trafficking and core issues for needed services. The core issues that came out of that study were: (1) housing, (2) educational opportunities (all 50 states have a [Rehabilitation Services Administration](#) offering job counseling, testing, referrals, and coaching), (3) trauma-informed behavior health services, and (4) compassionate medical care.

Remember that each client is unique unto himself. And with that is a specialized individual treatment plan to be able to deal with all the myriad of other areas they need to work on from the case manager. All of this really needs to be done from a multidisciplinary perspective.

Are the needs and services of someone in a labor trafficking situation different from someone who has experienced sex trafficking?

The first [Day Labor Outreach Project](#) funded by OTIP, with support from Arizona State University, was conducted in 2021 with a majority male population in Phoenix, Arizona. The findings showed the needs and services of someone in a labor trafficking situation have no significant differences from someone experiencing sex trafficking. Additionally, the [Human Trafficking Leadership Academy Class 6 Recommendations Report](#) exploring labor trafficking risk factors emphasizes that providing person-centered and trauma-informed services to survivors of human trafficking is essential. Survivors can become economically and personally independent when they obtain an education, gain new job skills, develop life and social skills, learn a new language, and gain or obtain employment.

How can an organization get the word out about its services for men and boys?

Internal training is critical to work with staff on any biases they might have working with this particular population. For organizations specific to trafficking, offering ongoing training and reading the latest research is critical. Develop partnerships within your community with other community-based organizations so they know you offer services for men and boys, including housing, medical, mental health, emergency rooms, and educational systems. Consortiums that meet monthly for networking meetings do case consultation and help survivors deal with the various systems, which can be helpful as well.

How can we combat biases and be more inclusive in our anti-trafficking work?

Coming from an Indigenous community perspective, we do not talk about violence perpetrated upon men and boys through sexual assault and human trafficking. The way Indigenous communities view the Two-Spirit/LGBTQIA+ population has changed because of colonization. When I present about this issue, I remind people that my identity as a Two-Spirit person does not define what happened to me through my own sexual violence that was perpetrated upon me. I was born a Two-Spirit. I am a Two-Spirit male who is impacted by some form of violence; that is who I am. We are stuck on the idea that it is individuals who identify that are the ones who are impacted by these different forms of violence, and that is not true. We need to work on our biases – our own personal biases and our biases within our organizations. There is so much work to do; being part of this movement can create change in our tribal communities.

How do gender roles play into offering provisional services for men and boys?

Gender plays a huge role in societal expectations and contributes to male survivors' vulnerabilities. Many migrant men in labor trafficking are given only one choice – to work long hours for little or no pay – due to machoism mixed with racial and gender inequality. Traffickers prey on the masculine identity and

responsibility to care for one's family. Men and boys often do not question their lifestyle in labor trafficking. We have a duty to change that narrative. Men do experience hardships and pain. Survivors seeking emotional support and safety planning and mental services should not be treated as a sign of weakness. It should be treated as a strength. Bring communities together to collaborate to fill in those gaps.

Please help me understand the daily experience of a male survivor of trafficking. What might be some day-to-day challenges and realities?

First, we need to check our own biases in order to support Two-Spirit, LGBTQIA+, and male survivors. I [Lenny] had a female advocate reach out to me asking, “How do I work with a man who was raped by another man?” My response to her was to work with him like you would work with a female. By the time we were done with our conversation, she was able to define that she had personal biases regarding a man raping another man. Until we start addressing bias, we are never going to properly serve male survivors. If we are going to heal our communities, that must include all of our genders – including females, males, and Two-Spirit people. We have so much more work to do. I want to acknowledge all the Native women who are my teachers, my mentors, who brought me to this place of being able to speak about the violence that is perpetrated upon men and boys. Remember to tailor your approach. Treat each client or individual who you are providing services for differently depending on their unique needs. Many times, youth come from a long history of trauma starting long before they are 16 years old. You can have a [general framework](#), but you need to be flexible enough to accommodate the diverse needs. There is not a lot of difference between males and females when it comes to needed services. This is not a sexual orientation issue. Regardless of sexual orientation, individuals are at risk for being trafficked when experiencing any number of pre-trauma or adverse childhood experiences in life, particularly youth with complex trauma and prior sexual victimization. This is a human issue.

Please expand on the impact of universal education and motivational interviewing on all genders.

Often a common struggle in the victim services field is, "We're not serving boys, because they're not identifying." Building rapport and trust with male clients requires providers to recognize and understand the unique risk factors and exploitation that male clients experience. While [motivational interviewing](#) is a good tool, a lot of it is relational; kids need to trust an adult before they will open up and share, and this can take time. The burden needs to shift to service providers to help create an open, safe, and inclusive space instead of focusing on the survivor to self-identify. Explain the purpose of the conversation. The goal is not disclosure. The goal is to empower your client with information and knowledge and to support them in their journey to make lasting change. Be aware, especially for non-2SLGBTQIA+ youth, of the shame and guilt of sexual victimization if the perpetrator is a male. There is enough shame and guilt that goes on for

boys, generally speaking, but especially in the non-2SLGBTQIA+ community; these boys are so underground with this situation based on shame and guilt and their fear of how they are going to be identified if they do disclose.

How can we address men and boys being hesitant to report because of societal perceptions of masculinity and victimization?

Look at perspective and bias when it comes to gender. We often see gender-based violence, even in academia, that is mostly female-centric. It is not always inclusive of all genders and sexual orientations. Treat people for who they are and how they identify. Ask open-ended questions. Listen to how men speak about their experience without blame or shame. Remember the intersection between [labor](#) and [sex trafficking](#); be aware of keeping an open mind of that intersection when working with boys and males. Labor trafficking and sex trafficking do overlap a lot. There are a lot of sexual assaults that are happening and commercial sex of male survivors. Sometimes Western tools do not always work for individuals who identify as Native. For myself [Lenny], healing from the violence that was put on me, I healed both the Western way, but also a huge part of it was that cultural and spiritual aspect of healing. Sometimes interviewing tools do not always work in our communities. There are some [Native-specific tools](#) to use in our community. Culture plays a part in healing and accommodating each survivor's needs and aftercare.

Is there a reason for using the term “victim” instead of “survivor”?

While many service providers use the term “survivor” when referring to an individual who is no longer in their trafficking situation, many government entities use the word “victim.” [The Human Trafficking Task Force e-Guide](#) notes that the term “victim” has legal implications within our criminal justice system and provides those who suffered harm as a result of a crime legal protections and rights. Meanwhile, the term “survivor” is seen as more empowering, trauma-informed, and strength-based for those providing direct services. Therefore, while both terms are correct, the use will likely depend on the discipline or environment in which services are being provided.

Are there specific topics men and boys need to address in their aftercare?

From a Native perspective, remember that a lot of the men who have healed are standing in the background, not coming forward to help. For example, the Western word “trigger” is used often. Looking at it from a cultural perspective, it is a very powerful, negative word keeping us stuck. Native people believe everything has a Spirit. So, when I [Lenny] watch a movie or read a book that has to do with violence, and it impacts me, I acknowledge it and say, "I see you; I feel you. And now you can go away," knowing that Spirit is going to come back and visit. Think about how much shame comes from sexual violence and trafficking.

Understand that each survivor has to come to that place to identify that is what happened to him. Shame can prevent somebody from healing. The adult males I [Steven] work with, regardless of where they are in their lives now, may still feel shame, guilt, and anger. I have worked with a 57-year-old man who was trafficked at age 16 who says, "I feel like I should have stopped it, I was the guy." That underlying shame and guilt and anger and depression are lifelong. We must help survivors nurture and support themselves so as those memories come, they can move on and go back to life. The most difficult thing is at a certain point in development boys get this notion that they are supposed to be self-sufficient and keep their feelings to themselves. That is often due to fear or peer pressure. It is okay for a man to be vulnerable. It is okay to speak about your experience. Vulnerability is one thing that can get you through your experience as a survivor of human trafficking.

Victim services have seen significant growth over the past decade in best practices. What is the most recent change in best practices you've each seen in your field or organization?

Talking openly about [human trafficking](#) is fairly new within Indigenous communities, especially when it comes to the male and Two-Spirit genders. Sex trafficking has always been a one-gender issue. In the work that I [Lenny] have been doing, I have been reminding Indigenous communities that in order for our communities to heal, we must include all genders, which means female, male, and Two-Spirit and Native LGBTQIA+ people. It's good that we are now talking about this from a male and Two-Spirit perspective.

What recommendation(s) would you have for the U.S. Government anti-trafficking community to improve on our efforts to combat human trafficking among males?

Just like for their female counterparts, male victimization is a significant public health problem. To better improve our efforts to combat human trafficking among male survivors, the anti-trafficking community can first understand the specific experiences of male survivors of human trafficking. The federal government can prioritize specific funding for male survivors for research, prevention, and intervention. Additionally, federal governments can lead efforts in ensuring services are sensitive to the needs of all survivors, regardless of gender or other types of demographics. While federal policies are important, implementing and maintaining policies and programs at the ground level has the biggest impact in communities.

Have you noticed male survivors of violence by the hands of a woman showing apprehension when presented with a female advocate?

At times this apprehension will occur for male survivors of female offenders. It is very individual. When possible, having both male and female staff and inviting the client to decide the gender of the advocate creates space for the survivor to decide what is best.

In presentations, how do you address the bias of gendering victimization and who is seen as a potential perpetrator? Do you have recommendations for specific resources we can access?

The documentary titled [Boys](#) is a helpful tool to begin the conversation about the trafficking of boys and men. Also, NHTTAC's [How to Improve Services for Males Experiencing Trafficking](#) fact sheet shares suggestions on building rapport with male clients, motivational interviewing techniques, differentiating between trauma and exploitation, and accessing services.

With the implicit bias with male victims, do you have suggestions on how to start a conversation about male victimization?

The survivors are the experts. Learn from them and do not assume to know their experiences. Never put labels on them until they are ready to come forward and identify their experiences. If we are openly having conversations, then we create a safe space for them. Sometimes we just need to listen rather than trying to fix it. I [Lenny] will often make recommendations to Indigenous communities to create campaigns to begin the conversation. Maybe have a panel like this one to help begin the conversation in your community. NHTTAC's [How to Improve Services for Males Experiencing Trafficking](#) fact sheet shares suggestions on building rapport with male clients.

When it comes to labor trafficking, how do we get males to see that it is trafficking and not someone giving them an opportunity to work?

For many male survivors, stereotypes about masculinity can make it hard for them to define their experiences as labor trafficking. Raising awareness about male victimization can help individuals see their experiences with [sex](#) or [labor trafficking](#) as a violation of their rights. Most people (both males and females) think trafficking comes through force only, which is not always how it happens. [Use OVC videos and materials](#) as educational resources on victims' rights with vulnerable males and the public.

Please share more about Two-Spirit individuals. Do you believe non-Native people can also be Two-Spirits?

Two-Spirit is a direct translation of the Ojibwe term, Niizh manidoowag, *Two-Spirited* or *Two-Spirit*, and is usually used to indicate a person whose body simultaneously houses a masculine spirit and a feminine spirit. Male Two-Spirits were considered a "third gender," and female Two-Spirits were considered to be a "fourth gender." The term "Two-Spirit" emerged in 1990 at the third annual intertribal Native American/First Nations Gay/Lesbian conference in Winnipeg, Canada. The term Two-Spirit was created for Native American individuals who wanted to take a step back from the mainstream language of LGBTQIA+ and connect specifically to culture and spirituality. It was also a way to claim their Native identity and their roles in community. The term Two-Spirit is a universal term used across Indigenous communities.

Remember, the term “Two-Spirit” is a concept that was created by Native people and should only be used by Native people who identify. Also, remember some Indigenous communities may not use or identify with the word Two-Spirit because of their own unique cultural beliefs embracing Two-Spirit or Native LGBTQIA+ relatives. Before colonization, Two-Spirit and Native LGBTQIA+ people were looked up to as “Spiritual Beings” because of the role they played in community. They were considered healers or medicine persons, parents of orphaned children, conveyors of oral traditions and songs (Yuki), foretellers of the future (Winnebago, Oglala Lakota), name-givers of children or adults (Oglala Lakota, Tohono O'odham), nurses during war expeditions, potters (Zuni, Navajo, Tohono O'odham), matchmakers (Cheyenne, Omaha, Oglala Lakota), makers of feather regalia for dances (Maidu), and special role players in the Sun Dance (Crow, Hidatsa, Oglala Lakota). Today, they are looked upon as “Sexual Beings” and frowned upon. Ask someone who is Native, and who you think identifies, “How do you identify?”

Do you have suggestions on how to support a male client going through a criminal case and is a survivor of labor trafficking? Due to his culture and family being threatened, he cannot go back to his country.

[States may offer support](#). For example, Arizona and Texas provide financial assistance, emotional support, medical assistance, and mental health services through the [crime victim compensation](#) programs. Contact nonprofit organizations serving foreign nationals, such as the International Rescue Committee. Learn about a [Continued Presence](#) temporary visa so the criminal case can continue to move forward. Additionally, when a client cannot go back to his own country, he may be able to [seek asylum](#).

Can you speak to experiences of the intersectionality of disability and the supports needed?

A lack of awareness exists about the [sexual exploitation of those with disabilities or mental illness](#). This population has been a major target of exploiters. Victim service providers need to offer training to support individuals with disabilities and mental illness, raising awareness and providing necessary services for survivors of human trafficking. The traits and characteristics of victimization of those individuals with disabilities are the same as those of other vulnerable populations.

Are men who are commonly victimized through labor trafficking also victimized through sex trafficking?

Increased unemployment, poverty, and subsequent reduced access to food, housing, and health care are some of the factors contributing to increased financial insecurity that force people to resort to commercial sex and informal labor. Men and boys experiencing labor trafficking may experience sex trafficking as well. Traffickers use sex trafficking as a form of control or vice versa. It is important to note that boys who run away, immigrant men and boys, and LGBTQIA+ members are more likely to experience both sex and labor trafficking concurrently.

Is there a particular demographic for men or boys that is at a higher risk for trafficking? What might be some signs that someone is being trafficked?

Trafficking can happen to anyone; traffickers look for the most vulnerable. This may include individuals who come from families with a high rate of alcohol and drug use. In addition, Indigenous communities and Two-Spirit individuals are at higher risk of experiencing trafficking. Use resources [like the OVC Identifying Indicators of Human Trafficking fact sheet](#) to learn the signs of human trafficking.

Editor’s Note: While there is no defining characteristic of a human trafficking victim, in the United States, workers who are undocumented, youth who run away or are homeless, and those with a disability are considered vulnerable. Additionally, individuals lacking social support networks or employment, coming from an unstable home, or desiring to escape physical and/or sexual abuse are more at risk to experience human trafficking. Learn more through the [SOAR training series](#) from NHTTAC, which includes in-person, customized live sessions and online training (i.e., customized virtual sessions or standardized, on-demand, and pre-recorded content). The [Understanding Human Trafficking](#) online training series and [Faces of Human Trafficking](#) video series from OVC can be used in outreach and training events.

Address the role of organized crime and how the term "cartel" re-directs the attention.

While any individual or group of individuals might engage in trafficking, transnational organized criminal organizations play a significant role in human trafficking both domestically and abroad. Organized criminal entities are often engaged in more than one type of illegal activity, such as drug or weapons trafficking, financial crimes, and corruption-based crimes. Additionally, when organized crime is involved in human trafficking, the criminal activity is often more sophisticated. The United Nations [states](#), “When organized criminal groups are involved, many more victims are trafficked, often for longer periods, across wider distances and with more violence.” Learn the [myths and facts](#) about human trafficking, take [training on human trafficking](#), [listen and engage with survivors](#), and [work together as a community](#) to respond to human trafficking in a community.

What are the risk factors for adolescent males and sex trafficking? Do they differ from females?

The risk factors between males and females are more related than different. [Adverse childhood experience\(s\)](#) can increase either gender’s risk. These trauma categories can provide education as to the risk level for youth who are trafficked. When four or more of these categories are present in a youth’s history, that is considered [complex trauma](#) and, therefore, they are considered to be at high risk for human trafficking. Some of the trauma may include a history of childhood sexual abuse, runaway behavior(s),

homelessness, families with issues related to substance use, domestic violence, gang-related activity, multiple foster care placements, poverty, experiencing bullying, community violence, depression, self-harm, anxiety, and social isolation.

Are there more common traits for how trauma presents for men in boys compared to how it presents in women and girls?

Trauma in males can present itself in various ways: depression, anxiety, social isolation, substance use, self-harm, extremely poor sense of self-esteem, oppositional behavior(s), poor decision-making abilities, poor academic performance, eating disorders, lack of effective social connections, and lack of trust in authority figures. These are common trauma indicators with women and girls as well.

What type of housing is most effective and needed for male survivors?

Stable and safe housing for men and boys continues to be a challenge for males who may be at risk of human trafficking. Service providers can learn from agencies that already work with populations experiencing homelessness and explore tools that could be applicable. There is a huge need for housing services for men and boys across all lived experiences. [Freedom Network USA](#) hosted a [webinar on Housing Solutions for Male Survivors of Trafficking](#). Contact training@freedomnetworkusa.org to request additional assistance on housing options for males.

Are there any human trafficking-specific shelters in the Midwest for males?

In general, all services specific to men and boys need to be increased. This need must also be responsive to members of the LGBTQIA+ community who may identify as male. [The National Human Trafficking Hotline](#) created an [online referral directory](#) with a filter by gender functionality. The directory shares anti-trafficking organizations and programs offering emergency, transitional, or long-term services to victims and survivors of human trafficking as well as those that provide resources and opportunities in the anti-trafficking field. Reach out to [OVC-funded human trafficking programs and taskforces](#) in your area to request additional support in serving victims of human trafficking.

What are some of the best partnerships to grow at the organizational level to help support people identifying as men and boys who have lived experience of trafficking?

The answer will vary depending on the program's location and available community resources. Some areas are better equipped to form partnerships than others. Reaching out to [OVC-funded human trafficking programs or task forces](#) in your area can offer a starting point in exploring how to better meet the needs of

men and boys in your area. Also, [the Collaboration Toolkit for Anti-Trafficking and Housing Programs and Housing and Economic Mobility Toolkit](#) share strategies for meeting the housing needs of survivors.

Does anyone know a good program for male survivors of human trafficking in Florida that offers housing or shelter? Many programs only accept female survivors.

The [U.S. Institute Against Human Trafficking's Florida Safe Home](#) is one of the first safe homes for boys in Florida dedicated to the care of males who experienced trafficking under the age of 18. The home offers a trauma-based care approach, developed as a 6–9-month program, but allows children to stay as long as necessary for their proper care.

As a male victim of childhood sexual abuse and trafficking, I only started remembering those experiences a few years ago. Is there a directory for organizations focusing on male survivors?

Yes, the National Human Trafficking Hotline created an [online referral directory](#) with a filter by gender identity. It compiles organizations and programs offering emergency, transitional, or long-term services to victims and survivors of human trafficking. You can also find a list of OVC funded human trafficking grantees by state at ovc.ojp.gov/program/human-trafficking/map.

I have had male clients who, after I detect they may have been victims of sexual abuse or trafficking, they say they do not want to remember, or it was nothing. What would help them to be more forthcoming or recognize that what they suffered was not nothing? What would make them feel at ease to share the information to seek services?

What you can do is simply listen and create a safe space for the individual to tell their story. Never put our opinions of what we think they experienced on them. If we create that safe space, then we create a time for them to come forward. They must acknowledge their experience and bring it forward when they are ready to disclose. We must acknowledge how painful it is for someone to talk about what they went through. For minors the shame and guilt of the experience and fear of being defined as gay, if the offenders are male, may create the concern of possible retribution by the offender if they disclose (especially if the offender is within the family). Remember youth respond to relational development with a provider which takes time. Exercise patience with that unfolding process and provide supplementary services the youth may need to build on the engagement process.

What are the best strategies to get a male survivor to engage in therapy?

First, the provider needs to be trained in [trauma-informed care](#), identify personal biases they may have related to male survivors, secure a supervisor who is trained in trauma-informed care, seek ongoing

training on human trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation of males, and group supervision, if possible. Not all males have a definition for their lived experience(s) and may not see their victimization in the same way the provider does. Walk through the process next to your client, not ahead of them. Therapy takes patience and relational development to see progress. A survivor may have an active mistrust of “authority” figures, difficulty with memory and detail(s), cognitive distortions, guilt, shame, and social disconnection. The therapeutic process will have steps forward and then backward as the memory and information surface. Be there when they can be there; be supportive in the need for them to step away and come back to you without judgment.

Editor’s Note: The [How to Improve Services for Males Experiencing Trafficking](#) fact sheet from NHTTAC shares suggestions on building rapport with male clients, motivational interviewing techniques, differentiating between trauma and exploitation, and accessing services.

Sometimes when we work with clients who identify as male, we hear the clients feel "shame" because they are not following gender roles. How do we support someone in discussing those gender roles?

In the world of human trafficking, machismo may be used as a negative motivator for survivors to succeed. The masculine identity and responsibilities to care for one’s family are preyed on, while traffickers trick their victims into working in unsafe environments by paying below-market value. Men and boys may not question their lifestyle or the way they live while priding themselves on providing for their families. As a society, we need to change the narrative. Men often send signals in non-verbal communication. Sometimes through anger, sometimes through silence. To support and speak about their experiences, as the provider, try to understand his feelings; listen, observe, and do not judge. Additionally, don’t try to rush the healing; be patient. At times when they talk a lot or at odd hours, be there and give comfort.

How do we advocate for victims of sex trafficking within the criminal justice system, so they are not further victimized by the criminal system?

The criminal justice system can be a triggering experience for individuals who experience human trafficking. Historically, victims of human trafficking have been, and continue to be, criminalized for engaging in criminal acts as a result of their trafficking situation (e.g., solicitation of sex, document fraud, drug trafficking). Additionally, re-telling their experiences, being questioned about their truth, and/or having to face their trafficker in court are all inherently traumatic experiences that victims will likely face within the criminal justice system. Implementing trauma-informed approaches is critical so victims are not further traumatized by their experiences. The United Nations published a [toolkit for criminal justice practitioners](#) in the human trafficking field. Additionally, the National Institute of Justice published an

article with recommendations titled [For Human Trafficking Survivors, Justice Is More About Healing and Preventing Future Trafficking](#). Finally, the OVC Training and Technical Assistance Center's Human Trafficking Task Force e-Guide provides a chapter on [using a trauma-informed approach](#), and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services maintains numerous [resources](#) on trauma-informed care for human trafficking victims.

How much involvement should the parents of the child who was trafficked have in the process?

If the parents are the traffickers, there would be no involvement, as that would involve a survivor interacting with the perpetrator of a crime. If the parents are not connected with the human trafficking experience, there may be involvement from other agencies and the treatment process may determine parental involvement. Therapy for the parents may be suggested when parents have a history of trauma. When clinically indicated, a family therapist may work with the family. The youth may also benefit from a mentor/survivor network that can be available to work with them to support their healing process. Various developmental stages will require additional and different therapeutic interventions. The ultimate goal here is family reunification as long as the parents are not the traffickers.

What is going on at the southern border? How much of it is trafficking, is it trafficking coming to the border, and does it continue beyond?

Based on research and case studies (e.g., [Dismantling Migrant Smuggling Networks in the Americas](#), [Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling Highways](#), and [Migrants and Their Vulnerability](#)) the amount of human trafficking coming through the southern border is hard to detect because it often coincides with human smuggling. Law enforcement agents with custom and border patrol at the southern border often look for signs and red flags of human smuggling, which is a crime against a sovereign state (in this case, the United States). In the contrary, human trafficking is a crime against a person's human rights. The [common myth](#) is that trafficking involves smuggling people across a border. However, the reality of human trafficking is that movement is not required. Trafficking victims can be U.S. citizens or non-U.S. citizens. While smuggling is a crime of transporting a willing person across the border illegally, it is also good to keep in mind that smuggling can also turn into trafficking once the destination is reached. Victims of human trafficking who are smuggled into the United States are not often identified until they arrive in cities and towns in the United States.

Please share any evidence-based training and community response curricula for a CSEC program.

[Love 146](#) in New Haven, Connecticut, and [UNITAS North America in New York City, New York](#), are doing this type of work in their communities. NHTTAC's [SOAR framework](#) is a trauma-informed and culturally and

linguistically appropriate response to human trafficking. It provides a quick reference for professionals to keep in mind the best way to help individuals who are at risk of or have experienced trafficking. The SOAR for School-Based Professionals online training will equip those serving middle and high school age students to better understand the issues surrounding human trafficking and its impact on youth. It will describe possible indicators of human trafficking in youth and how to identify protective factors you can use to support youth at highest risk. Please note that these SOAR modules are not just for professionals serving CSEC populations but are inclusive of minors who may be survivors of sex and/or labor trafficking.

Editor's note: Although not considered evidence-based, My Life My Choice, PROTECT, and Love146's Not a Number curricula are considered "research-based." Love146 recently announced the start of a [new evaluation](#) that would further align with evidence-based standards.

What types of outreach materials or events are there to help these men know agencies can help?

Identify the human trafficking and CSEC organization resources for males in your community. Network with youth drop-in centers and related youth programs (both outreach and in office) to identify materials or programs they have. Create male-focused outreach or pamphlet materials and make those available in various locations. Educate staff about male survivors and integrate that information into the services the organization provides. Inquire in your state whether there is a statewide human trafficking coalition. Review the [National Human Trafficking Hotline Referral Directory](#) for resources in your state.

Editor's Note: [OVC-funded human trafficking services grantees and task forces](#) are another resource to learn about human trafficking in your area. You may reach out to [NHTTAC](#) for support around the creation and/or peer review of outreach materials.

Are there any tools available on conversations with male survivors? It can be difficult at times to do so.

There are currently no male-specific screening tools. However, NHTTAC developed an [Adult Human Trafficking Screening Tool and Guide](#) or public health, behavioral health, health care, and social work professionals who wish to be trauma informed and survivor informed. Additionally, the [How to Improve Services for Males Experiencing Trafficking fact sheet](#) can help with conversations with male survivors.

How has COVID-19 impacted support to men and boys with the lived experience of being trafficked?

COVID-19 has impacted all communities. It has created a space of pain and grief. It has also silenced and put people in a place of not being able to get the proper services they need. One of the healthiest activities

I have seen across the country is support groups of many forms. However, accessing virtual resources was difficult if individuals did not have access to a computer.

Is the question “Have you been abused/trafficked?” on your intake forms?

In the [Adult Human Trafficking Screening Toolkit](#) and [How to Improve Services for Males Experiencing Trafficking](#) fact sheet, individuals are not asked directly if they have been abused or trafficked. The toolkit provides information to help service providers better understand indicators of human trafficking. In most situations, individuals who have experienced victimization may not fully understand they have been trafficked or be able to articulate their lived experience that equates to human trafficking.

If we screen more, then we identify more men and boys who have experienced human trafficking and need more specialized services. Supportive services/solutions are not often in place for this population. How do we reconcile this challenge in our work to better reach/support men and boys?

Service providers have a responsibility to ensure males have equitable access to gender-responsive services. By creating a gender-responsive environment that welcomes clients from all genders experiencing human trafficking, service providers can minimize the stigma male clients face when accessing services. Disclosure is often required to access services, and providers may not consider that men could be victims of human trafficking. This bias puts the responsibility on male clients to self-identify to receive services that can help in their healing. Building rapport and trust with male clients requires providers to recognize and understand the unique risk factors and exploitation that male clients experience. Universal education and motivational interviewing are two tools that can transform a provider’s rapport with at-risk males and increase equitable access to services for male survivors. Universal education is an empowerment-based approach that provides clients with information about exploitation to normalize support-seeking and allows clients to consider whether it applies to their circumstances. Motivational interviewing is a person-centered approach to service provision that helps people commit to the process of change. More information can be found in the [How to Improve Services for Males Experiencing Trafficking fact sheet](#).

Is there a place or resource for men over the age of 24?

Sadly, there are limited resources for men over the age of 24. My hope is that the more we talk about this topic, the more resources will be created.

Editor’s Note: Please check the [National Human Trafficking Referral Directory](#) for a list of organizations that serve males who have experienced trafficking.

Can you speak to the opportunities social media platforms offer to propagate awareness of human trafficking, its risks, protective factors, and victim and survivor resources?

Traffickers are increasingly finding vulnerable people online and luring them into exploitative situations. Traffickers use social media to recruit, traffic, and exploit young people. Educating yourself and others about the language traffickers use on social media can increase awareness about trafficking and its connection to social media. Recognizing hashtags and language typical in the online trafficking subculture can help you spot indicators that someone might be a victim or a trafficker.

Discuss forensic interviews and young adult/adult trafficking victims.

Forensic interviewing for young adult and adult victims of human trafficking does occur as a means of helping law enforcement obtain information and determine if a crime occurred. In addition, many [child advocacy centers](#) and medical centers conduct forensic interviewing.

Please discuss the need within health care settings to screen boys and men who may walk into facilities.

Males who are being exploited may not recognize their own situation as trafficking. Providing awareness within health care settings to screen men and boys is critical. Male survivors of labor trafficking may often experience injuries or ailments because of manual labor performed for their employer. They may also have injuries or sexually transmitted infections from the trafficking experience, making it especially important for health care professionals to ensure they are creating an equitable and inclusive space for their patients to feel comfortable sharing instances of victimization.

In the [Adult Human Trafficking Screening Toolkit](#), information is included to help service providers better understand indicators of human trafficking in adults. The [Quick Youth Indicators for Trafficking Youth](#) tool is a validated screening tool for identification of labor and/or sex trafficking among young adults experiencing homelessness in service provision settings. In addition, the Core Competencies for [Human Trafficking Response in Health Care and Behavioral Health Systems](#) helps pinpoint skill sets that health care and behavioral health practitioners should acquire to identify, respond to, and serve individuals who have experienced trafficking and individuals at risk of trafficking.

What about the role of police in recognizing trafficking versus prostitution?

Federal and local law enforcement play a critical role in identifying, protecting, and referring services for human trafficking victims. Different levels of understanding about human trafficking exist among the numerous police departments across the country. [The International Association of Chiefs of Police](#) provides training for law enforcement on human trafficking identification and trauma-informed response to

victims of human trafficking. Strong relationships and partnerships between victim service providers and local law enforcement are critical to a community-wide, trauma-informed response to human trafficking. Futures Without Violence has numerous resources on [building collaborative responses to human trafficking](#), including webinars and toolkits. Law enforcement-specific resources such as [How Local Police Can Combat the Global Problem of Human Trafficking](#), [Partnerships to Address Labor Trafficking Toolkit](#), and the [Blue Campaign](#) offer anti-trafficking tools and resources. In addition, clients may need legal services. The [Human Trafficking Legal Center](#) connects survivors with pro bono representation.

Additional Information

Contact the Human Trafficking Capacity Building Center at contact@ovc-htcbc.org or 1-844-682-0411.

Contact NHTTAC at info@nhttac.org or 1-844-648-8822.