



MEETING THE NEEDS OF VICTIMS FROM UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES

Overview

While there is no universal characteristic of a human trafficking victim, traffickers often target vulnerabilities (e.g., lack of social support networks, financial or housing insecurity, or language differences). These vulnerabilities are often found in underserved communities. The term “underserved populations” encompasses populations who face barriers in accessing and using victim services. These barriers can include geographic location, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, underserved racial and ethnic populations, and populations underserved because of special needs.

Strategies for Overcoming Barriers for Accessing Services

Offering inclusive services to meet the individual needs of survivors from underserved communities requires an organization to be intentional and adaptive. The strategies below are intended as a starting point in thinking about how to make services more accessible and are grouped into physical, programmatic, organizational, and partnerships categories.

Physical

- **Offer physical accessibility and accommodation** for survivors with disabilities.
- **Provide fidget and sensory objects** for neurodivergent survivors.
- **Create a safe and trauma-responsive service physical environment** focusing on survivor comfort.

Programmatic

- **Provide trauma-informed and meaningful language access** by offering interpreters, translating materials into different languages, and developing a language access policy for how to provide services to limited English proficient individuals.
- **Offer peer mentorship opportunities** to provide survivors a platform to connect with others who have similar lived experiences.

- **Seek out culturally responsive resources** and include them in healing practices, counseling, and written literature. Periodically review your resources to ensure they provide spiritual, cultural, and linguistic needs of the populations you serve.
- **Offer culturally specific healing methods** that may include traditional healing through ceremony, song, or a traditional healer.

Organizational

- **Create an inclusive work environment** by recruiting, hiring, and sustaining diverse program staff.
- **Practice cultural humility** by constantly learning and adapting organizational programs to meet the needs of underserved communities.
- **Engage survivor-leaders** from diverse populations by including their feedback and input into organizational policies and service offerings.

Partnerships

- **Create equitable partnerships** ensuring budgets, staff/resource availability, and organizational priorities adequately support the partnering organization's work.
- **Educate yourself about underserved communities** and apply learnings to day-to-day operations.
- **Collaborate with partners** to develop screening tools and referral networks.
- **Promote equity, inclusion, and meaningful engagement** through transformational collaboration.

Additional Resources

[The National Resource Center for Reaching Victims](#)

[The Human Trafficking Capacity Building Center](#)

[The Office for Victims of Crime](#)