

BEST PRACTICE GUIDE

HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN A CLINICAL SETTING



VICTIM-CENTERED AND TRAUMA-INFORMED CARE

WHAT IT IS

- A multidisciplinary approach to decrease trauma, increase access to services, and strengthen participation in the legal system
- An approach that considers the specific needs of individuals who have experienced trauma such as psychological, physical, or sexual abuse
- Compassionate and sensitive delivery of services in a nonjudgmental manner

METHODS

- Encouraging privacy, safety, trust, relationship-building, and cultural appropriateness
- Giving the patient control in decision-making

WHY IT MATTERS

- Improves a patient's overall short-term and long-term care and health outcomes
- Improves legal efforts and outcomes

Best Practice Steps with Potential Victims

1 SPOT THE SIGNS

There are common physical, behavioral, and emotional signs that indicate a patient could be a victim of human trafficking. You might observe these signs in a waiting room, in notes on the intake form, or during a standard clinical assessment.



2 SEPARATE THE PATIENT

If a potential victim is accompanied by a friend, relative, or employer, find a way to separate the patient from the other person. Look for a natural separating point in your organization, clinic, or unit.

To the patient:

"We're going down for a [procedure] now. You can leave your stuff here and we'll be back in a few minutes."

"I will need to collect a urine sample, so please come with me to the bathroom." Or "Please see the nurse down the hall to the right to help you collect your urine sample."

To the other person:

"We can't have others in the room for the [procedure]. We'll be back in about 20 minutes. You can wait here or go to the waiting room."

"I need to do the exam now. I need you to step out of the room please and I will call you when we are done."

"Our policy is patient only, so please wait in the waiting room."



3 PROVIDE VICTIM-CENTERED SCREENING

For a victim-centered screening, you should keep a few central practices in mind before and during the screening.

Before the screening, ensure:

- Communication needs are met (use your organization's interpreter/translation app if needed)
- Basic care and emergency needs are met
- You receive patient consent to screen

During the screening, ensure you are:

- Nonthreatening
- Nonjudgmental
- Compassionate
- Patient

During the screening, ensure the patient can:

- Be in control
- Share concerns
- Make decisions

4 PROVIDE TRAUMA-INFORMED TREATMENT

With your organization's policies in mind, use the following trauma-informed care best practices when you provide patient treatment:

- Give the patient decision-making authority; ensure consent before all exams/treatment
- Provide trauma-related services and referrals
- Properly document abuse and assault

5 REPORT

The most important goal is getting a trafficking victim the help they need. Do so by:

- Following the law (adult vs. minor victim)
- Following organizational policies and procedures
- Assessing threat and potential danger to patient and others

Homeland Security Investigators
1-866-347-2423 | www.ice.gov

National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC)
1-800-THE-LOST (1-800-843-5678) | www.missingkids.org

National Human Trafficking Resource Center (NHTRC) Hotline
1-888-373-7888 | www.traffickingresourcecenter.org

Hope for Justice
615-630-1739 (Investigations) | info.us@hopeforjustice.org



READY TO ACT TODAY?

Visit www.hopeforjustice.org/get-involved
to support the effort to end human trafficking.

