

Connected for Freedom

The Impact of Human Trafficking: Survivor's immediate and long-term needs
Key Takeaways



The Moments at Exit



Exiting What?

Survivors may not identify that what they are exiting is a trafficking situation or they may not understand the situation they are in.



Beyond Physical Exit

There is a need for connection and establishing felt safety. Identifying immediate needs are individual and may take time for survivors to identify.



Navigating Risks

Providers should take into account that the unknown, fear of systems, or trafficker threats play a huge role in exiting or fleeing a trafficking situation.



But you cannot get to those bigger needs until you meet the most basic needs

Kathy Givens

...just because you tell me that I'm safe does not mean that I feel safe

Elise Gill

I do believe one of the biggest risks is being re-traumatized, or not having the resources necessary so you don't be re-trafficked.

Ingrid Guerrero

Long-Term Needs



Reconstructing Identity

Survivors often need space to rediscover who they are outside exploitation, their personal goals and navigating healthy relational boundaries



Mental and Physical Health Needs Evolve

Immediate stabilization differs from deeper trauma processing, while physical needs may appear months or years after a trafficking situation.



Building Community & Connection

Supporting survivors identify safe relationships and create opportunities for new, healthy connections outside of their trafficking experience.



...the version of me that exited immediately, right, that first week of exit, is a very different version of me 3 months down the road.

Kathy Givens

People are gonna remember the way you made them feel... their body is gonna remember. Way past remembering what you said or what you did for them.

Elise Gill

Recommendations

01 Prioritize meaningful connection and relationship to identify the individual needs of survivors. Remember that one size does not fit all.

02 Offer consistent choice, flexibility, and survivor-led pacing in service provision, interviews, and program development.

03 Strengthening cross-sector partnerships to ensure survivors have sustained access to housing, mental health care, economic opportunities, and community connection.