

## FEATURES OF PSYCHOLOGICAL REHABILITATION OF VICTIMS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING

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**Abstract.** *The article presents an analysis of information and sources on a scientific basis about the criminal legislation in force in our country and its practical application, as well as the role of international legal norms in these processes and the methods of its implementation in the legal structure of our country.*

**Keywords:** *trauma, traffic, violence, psychologic, health, victims, practices, Standard operating procedures.*

### INTRODUCTION

This module focuses primarily on the effects of sexual abuse and exploitation on victims of trafficking in persons. It starts with a general overview of psychological reactions and then outlines some of common trauma-inducing experiences of victims before and during the trafficking process. The effects of these experiences are then listed and explained. Finally, this chapter explores the implications that these reactions may have for investigators and suggests methods to avoid re-traumatizing victims and to help them begin the recovery process. This chapter also provides guidance on how to minimize the impact that psychological reactions may have on investigations. There is very little information on the physical or psychological health of victims of trafficking. Much of this chapter is based on or adapted from research reports by the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine in conjunction with NGOs.

Psychological reactions on victims of trafficking. Traumatic experiences suffered by victims of trafficking in persons are often complex, multiple and can occur over a long period of time. For many individuals who are trafficked, abuse or other trauma-inducing events may have started long before the trafficking process. Studies of trauma in cases of trafficking in persons have been conducted, but there are few of them. Studies so far tend to focus on trafficking for sexual exploitation but yet to cover victims from every origin location. However, they offer some guidance and conclusions, especially when they are considered in conjunction with what is generally known about trauma and anecdotal evidence from around the world. It is essential you are aware of these conclusions and to you are able to identify how they might affect your work as a criminal justice practitioner. No two victims of trafficking are the same and the impact trafficking has upon each individual varies. You cannot make assumptions about how individuals might or should react. You must treat each person as an individual and on his or her own merit. Individuals will react to you in different ways. Do not expect a victim of trafficking to see you as their rescuer or savior: Some might, but many may see you as an unwelcome interlocutor, which may further compound what is already a very complex situation. If a victim reacts in a hostile or aggressive way, it may have nothing to do with you as a person, your role or the organization you work for. Victims may have adopted these tactics and emotions to cope with or to survive their ordeal. It is likely that they would react to anyone in the same way.

Restriction of movement. By definition the trafficking process involves removing control from victims. This applies to all forms of trafficking. Control has been found to cover all aspects of life, even the most intimate: when a victim eats, goes to the toilet, works, sleep, where they go, who they are with. In some cases, victims may have been controlled from the outset, for example if they have been abducted. In other cases, control may have been relatively weak in the early stages but increased as the victim went through the trafficking process, becoming strongest as they near and reach the destination location/exploitation phase Control may be subtle, involving direct or implied threats or making the victim feel responsible for their own behaviour. Sexual exploitation victims may be given a small amount of money for what they do; others may be involved in petty crime such as stealing from shops, street begging or working in illegal industries, for example drug trafficking. This can lead to feelings of guilt and revulsion, which makes it even more difficult to tell anyone what has happened.

Violence. Victims may have been subject to violence before and during the trafficking process. Violence before trafficking has been seen in a substantial number of victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation, with around 60 per cent reporting experiencing some form of violence before trafficking in one study.<sup>4</sup> Pre-trafficking violence in other forms of trafficking has not been researched. Once engaged in the trafficking process, victims may be subjected to a range of violent acts from threats to serious assaults. Again, the intensity of violence varies. In sexual exploitation cases, up to 70 per cent of women have reported physical violence and 90 per cent sexual violence while being trafficked.<sup>5</sup> Children recruited/abducted to fight as soldiers have been controlled by beatings and rape.<sup>6</sup> The picture in domestic servitude cases is not clear, but anecdotal evidence suggests that assault is commonly used by “employers” to control victims. Threats of various kinds are used frequently by traffickers to control victims and can target the victim, their family or friends. The threats may be of direct violence to a particular person or a threat to expose the victim to the authorities, for instance, where they are in a location illegally or have been involved in criminal activity. Threats may be implied, for example, arranging that the victim witness the abuse of another individual in the same circumstances or simply making the victim aware that the trafficker is part of a very violent gang. The power of these threats should not be underestimated. Even where the traffickers are not in a position to carry out the threats, the victim may believe they are. Victims may have been brought across many miles and territories by a gang who appears powerful, sophisticated and organized with links in many locations; these links may include law enforcement and other officials. Traffickers may have demonstrated they are capable of violence.

**BEST PRACTICES.** This study has identified a set of good practices for the provision of shelter care to victims of trafficking. Given the range of trafficking situations and the varied needs of trafficking victims, these practices are not applicable to all shelters at every stage of the rehabilitation, recovery, and reintegration process. Rather, they should be used selectively and adapted to accommodate the differing needs of victims throughout the process.

Standard operating procedures. Standard operating procedures are necessary to outline the criteria for victims entering facilities and the procedures to follow when assessing, caring for, and referring victims to other facilities or integrating them into society. Exemplary operating standards developed for children in need of special protection in Nepal include provisions for protecting children’s rights and ensuring their safety; developing guidelines for case and staff management, psycho-social interventions, and disciplinary procedures; monitoring health, nutrition, and education; and establishing guidelines for physical facilities and the provision of recreational and

cultural activities.<sup>66</sup> The development of a code of conduct for visitors to shelters also has received greater attention in recent years. Outside visitors may be asked to sign a form concerning what they can and cannot do during their visit, and the international NGO Terre des Hommes' code of conduct for their shelter staff and visitors includes a policy requiring that an adult never be alone with a child.

Linkages. Shelters are just one part of a process in the protection and recovery of victims and the prosecution of the traffickers. As such they must have links and good working relations with other actors in this process. Strong coordination and cooperation among civil society and international agencies, as well as government organizations — formal or informal — are integral to effective anti-trafficking prevention, prosecution, and protection efforts. The U.S. Government supports the efforts of the non-governmental Anti-trafficking Coordination Unit of Northern Thailand (TRAFCORD). This coordinating body has become a pioneering force in advocacy and capacity-building for NGOs, government entities, and other concerned agencies in the anti-trafficking movement. TRAFCORD has been instrumental in rescuing victims of human trafficking and prosecuting their exploiters.

### **CONCLUSION**

Shelters differ in location, size, services provided, and population served. To be successful, they must link their services to wider networks of care that are better equipped to provide legal help, protection, education, and training to victims while they are residing in a shelter, and when following up with a victim during the long and often difficult reintegration process. This process is filled with uncertainties that result from exogenous factors, including the religious, ethnic, and cultural background of the victim, and economic and educational opportunities available to the victim before being trafficked and during her rehabilitation and recovery. The particular trafficking experience of each individual victim, including whether her family or friends were complicit, and the abuse the victim suffered, for example if the victim has become infected with HIV, is an extremely important consideration.

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