



# Jumping Hurdles: Engaging Trafficked, Homeless Youth

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# Definitions

- Sex Trafficking: Exchange of a commercial sexual act for monetary value, through the use of force, fraud or coercion.
- Labor Trafficking: The recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage or slavery
- Runaway, Homeless Youth (RHY): The Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (RHYA) defines homeless youth as individuals who are “not more than 21 years of age...for whom it is not possible to live in a safe environment with a relative and who have no other safe alternative living arrangement.” This definition includes only those youth who are unaccompanied by families or caregivers.
- Survival Sex: exchanging one's body for basic subsistence needs, including clothing, food, and shelter

Sources:

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/otip/resource/fact-sheet-labor-trafficking-english>

<http://youth.gov/youth-topics/runaway-and-homeless-youth/federal-definitions>

<https://www.1800runaway.org/2016/01/survival-sex-homeless-youth-reality/>



# Why do we talk about RHY & Trafficking...

- ▶ Youth Experience Survey (YES) conducted between Tumbleweed, a service of UMOM, Our Family Services, One N Ten and Native American Connections
- ▶ In 2016, 33% of youth surveyed reported a sex trafficking experience
- ▶ 1 out of every 3 females reported being trafficked
- ▶ 1 out of every 4 males reported being trafficked
- ▶ Average age of the 1<sup>st</sup> experience was 17.9, 36% reporting being trafficked as a minor



# Those who were trafficked, were more likely to...

- ▶ Be LGBTQ
- ▶ Be addicted to drugs
- ▶ Have a suicide attempt & participated in self harming behaviors
- ▶ Have a mental health diagnosis
- ▶ Been in residential treatment
- ▶ Have been bullied by peers
- ▶ Have a history of dating violence
- ▶ Have a history of physical and emotional abuse by a caregiver
- ▶ Have a history of sexual abuse



# Hurdles



- ▶ Trafficker uses fear and coercion to ensure victims do not disclose
- ▶ Lack of trust in service providers
- ▶ Gaps in contact with victim
- ▶ Gaps in available services needed
- ▶ Trauma bond between victim and trafficker



# Step 1: Create a Safe Space

- Challenge: Many victims struggle to define what “safe” means to them and how to create a safety plan.
- Strategies:
  - Physical Spaces: Resource Centers, Library, Church, Community Centers within the area
  - Physical Spaces: Creating an environment that is warm and inviting, use “check in” with clients (where are you staying?)
  - Language: Use conversation to help define “safe”
  - Language: Conversations do not have to always be “business”
  - Education: Teaching how to be safe (safety plan, identification of triggers, how to help self regulate)



## Step 2: Train & Educate Staff

- ▶ Challenge: Staff are avoidant, uncomfortable asking appropriate questions and/or lack training on how to identify victims and agency steps to take.
- ▶ Strategies:
  - ▶ Provide ongoing trainings or connect to a provider in your area to educate staff on what human trafficking looks like, red flags and how to support a victim of trafficking
  - ▶ Create agency policy/procedure around how you screen for a victim of trafficking, next steps, and available services internally and externally
  - ▶ Coach and support staff, give people who might not be as comfortable an opportunity to role play and/or sit in and observe



# Step 3: Create Opportunity for Education

- ▶ Challenge: Most victims are not aware or identify as victims of trafficking.
- ▶ Strategies:
  - ▶ Use visuals such as posters, shoe cards, and survivor leadership aids (books, posters)
  - ▶ Create agency policy/procedure around how you screen for a victim of trafficking, next steps, and available services internally and externally
  - ▶ Coach and support staff, give people who might not be as comfortable an opportunity to role play and/or sit in and observe
  - ▶ Provide psycho-educational groups to inform and education around the impact of trafficking



# Step 4:

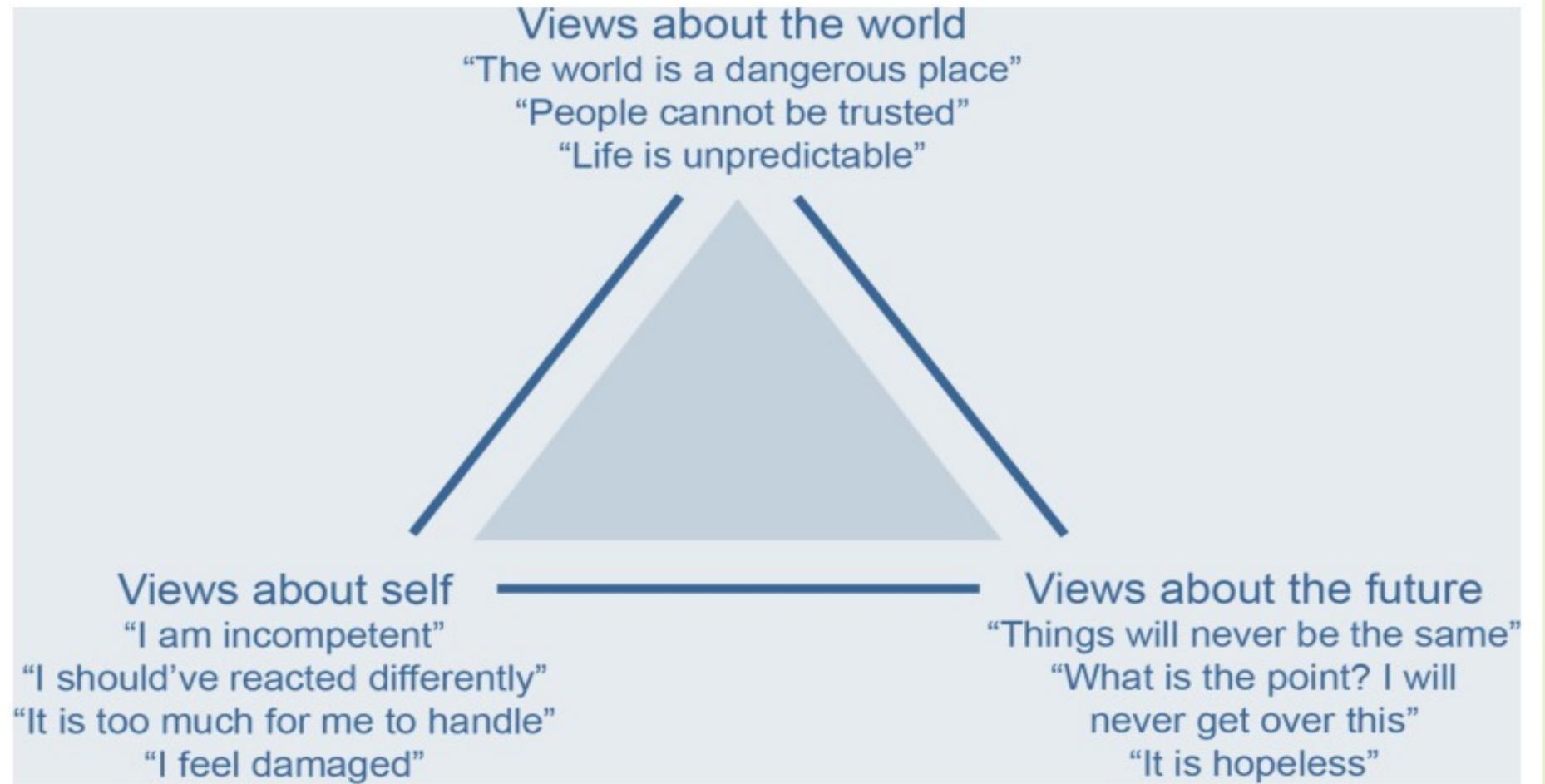
## Tools for Intake and Identification

- Challenge: Victims are reluctant to share exploitation and trauma
- Strategies:
  - Allow yourself enough time
  - Outline your own expectations (what information you need, why you need it and benefit to the client)
  - Create scenarios that are relatable (Polaris assessment)
  - Provide immediate needs (clothing, phone)
  - Consistency & Follow Through
  - Be present, be available and recognizable to your client
  - Respect and offer choices!

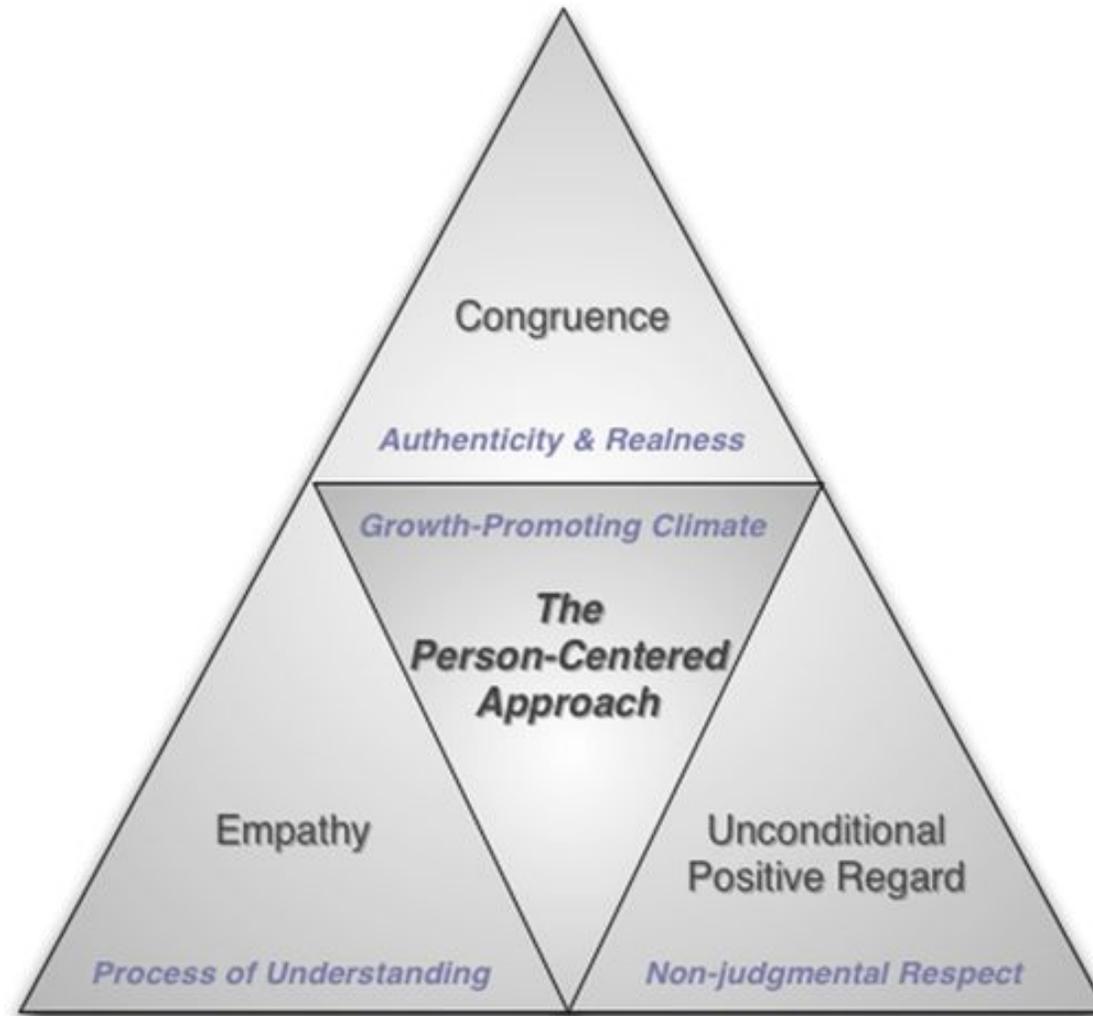


# Step 5: Tools for Case Management

- ▶ Challenge: Engaging and build rapport can be a struggle and case managers can feel discouraged by the lack of contact with a victim
- ▶ Strategies:
  - ▶ Recognize strengths and resiliency
  - ▶ Move strengths to the forefront if you are getting resistance OR
  - ▶ While going through questions, identify the individuals strengths and share with them!
  - ▶ Use techniques, such as Motivational Interviewing to help guide your clients to create choice, change and see value in their efforts
  - ▶ If possible, have concrete services available to leverage in engagement (phones, shelter, clothing, food)



Center for Substance Abuse Treatment (US). Trauma-Informed Care in Behavioral Health Services. Rockville (MD): Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (US); 2014. (Treatment Improvement Protocol (TIP) Series, No. 57.) Exhibit 1.3-2, Cognitive Triad of Traumatic Stress. Available from: [https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK207191/figure/part1\\_ch3.f1/](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK207191/figure/part1_ch3.f1/)



[http://pamyount.blogspot.com/2012\\_05\\_01\\_archive.html](http://pamyount.blogspot.com/2012_05_01_archive.html)



# Step 6:

## Group Based Interventions

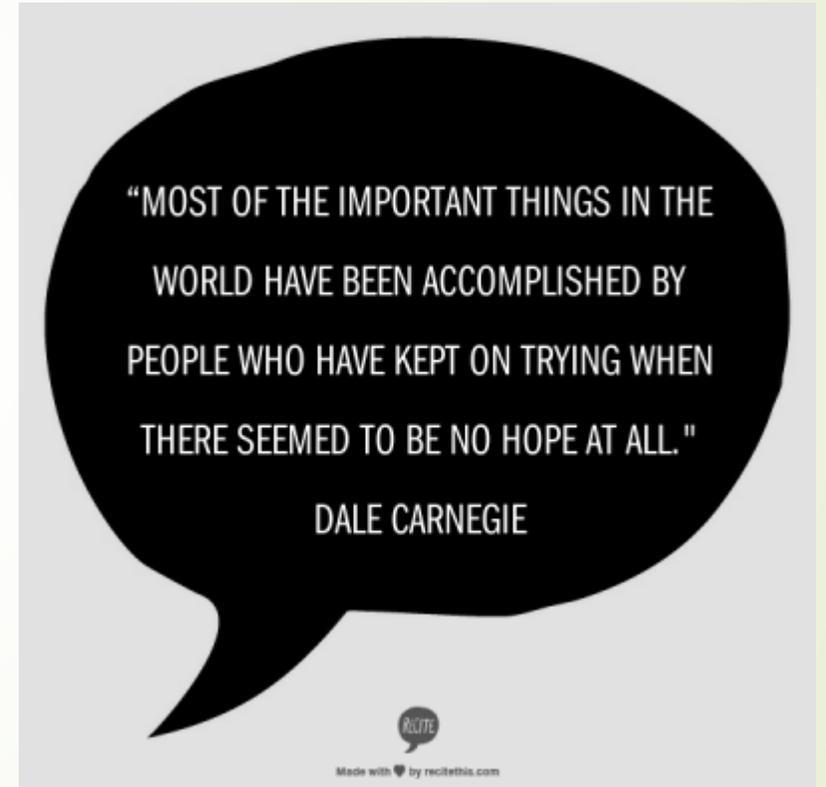
- ▶ Challenge: One on one education and assessment can be too triggering for someone to disclose
- ▶ Strategies:
  - ▶ Create multiple opportunities for a victim to identify their experience
  - ▶ Psycho-educational groups are informative and help discuss trafficking without shame and blame on the victim
  - ▶ Helps normalize the language around trafficking and removes the isolation
  - ▶ Groups review trauma, human trafficking, homelessness
  - ▶ Talking and teaching assists in normalizing current emotion and effects of trauma
  - ▶ Identification of strengths, building resiliency & peer support
  - ▶ Empathy without sympathy. Empower your clients.



# Programmatic Shifts

- ▶ Challenge: My agency isn't a "human trafficking agency" or we don't receive any funding to work with victims of trafficking
- ▶ Strategy:
  - ▶ Use the data nationally and locally to educate Executive Teams
  - ▶ Use P & P create by others to inform your agencies options on serving victims
  - ▶ Engaging trafficking victims is a "lens" similar to domestic violence
  - ▶ Identify agencies in your community that have funding
  - ▶ Modify the current programming to support tools working with victims, partner with other agencies!

# Self Care





# Self Care



- Challenge: How do you manage your own experience and secondary trauma to provide the best care for your clients?
- Strategies:
  - Use tools to support your own beliefs (visual reminders)
  - Apply what you tell to your clients to yourself
  - Educate your supervisor on how you care for yourself or as a supervisor ensure you are providing opportunities of self care to your team and honoring how they take time for themselves
  - You are not a rescuer.



# Questions?

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