

Runaway and Homeless Youth Training & Technical Assistance Center



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Runaway and Homeless
Youth Training & Technical
Assistance Center

Operated by:



Using a Survivor Leadership Model to Address Human Trafficking

This resource guide was developed to provide the Family and Youth Services Bureau Runaway and Homeless Youth grantees with information on developing a survivor-leadership model within their organizations for survivors of human trafficking. It is intended to serve as a supporting resource for the accompanying webinar titled, “Using a Survivor Leadership Model to Address Human Trafficking.” The resource sheet provides information on what a survivor-leadership model looks like, including essential components. Also included are additional resources on the topic, such as sample internal policy documents.

What is a survivor-leadership model?

The purpose of a survivor-leadership model is to develop the leadership and advocacy skills of human trafficking survivors for awareness-raising and advocacy efforts in the anti-human trafficking movement. Survivor-leadership models take an empowerment approach, working with survivors to self-lead, as opposed to a dependence approach, in which others do for the survivors.

What are the components of a survivor-leadership model?

Essential components of a successful survivor-leadership program include:

1. Using a trauma-informed approach
2. Input and direction from survivors
3. “Buy-in” from the organization’s upper management
4. Adequate resource allocation by the organization’s management
5. Empowerment of the survivor
6. Post-graduation support

What support and skills could a survivor-leadership program offer to a survivor?

1. Survivor support
2. Peer mentorship
3. Leadership skills
4. Advocacy skills
5. Public speaking skills
6. Community organizing skills

Implementing a survivor-leadership model in RHY programs

1. Use a trauma-informed approach
2. Be mindful of survivors safety
3. Have written policies and procedures about the survivors roles and responsibilities

4. Know which survivors to work with (Are they far enough away from the trauma? Are they adults?)
5. Have “buy-ins” from organization’s management and survivors
6. Know when to involve survivors to raise community awareness

Implementing in RHY-SOP

1. Outreach
2. Community education
3. Outreach material
4. Community mapping
5. Outreach schedules/ strategies

Implementing in RHY-BCP

1. Community education
2. Program development and design
3. Aftercare
4. Mentorship

Implementing in RHY-TLP/MGH

1. Community education and awareness
2. Program development and design
3. Aftercare
4. Mentorship

Outreach: Program leaders need to think about if, when, and to what extent to involve survivors for on-the-street outreach. Considerations for this include: the age of the survivor and time out of trafficking (this should be dictated within your policies and procedures). A further consideration is when survivors should blend in and when they should be clearly identifiable as outreach workers.

Community education: Depending on the RHY program, the part of the community you target could be different. However, in all RHY programs the survivor leaders can help provide insight to potential partners/organizations needing the information and the resources.

Outreach material/Program development and design: Survivor leaders are a great resource when it comes to designing the materials and programs used because they are the experts. The survivor leaders can help RHY programs develop outreach materials and assist in program development and design to ensure victim survivors are receiving the proper services.

Aftercare/Mentorship: Survivor leaders can work as aftercare specialists, mentors, or help design components of the aftercare program to increase participation.

Community mapping/Outreach Schedule and Strategy: Survivor leaders are a great help when it comes to determining when and where to conduct outreach. They are also valuable in determining outreach strategies.. Organizations can take this information and translate it into a “map” that indicates the best days and times to conduct outreach in specific areas.. The map can also indicate the type of trafficking occurring in these s areas.

Using a Survivor Leadership Model to Address Human Trafficking - Resources

FREEDOM NETWORK USA: A RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH TO COMBATING HUMAN TRAFFICKING

The Freedom Network's rights-based approach takes many forms: client-centered service provision; dedicated criminal justice advocacy; representation of trafficked persons in civil litigation; evidence-based research and legislative advocacy; and survivor-led campaigns to end worker exploitation and economic injustice. <http://freedomnetworkusa.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/Freedom-Network-A-Rights-Based-Approach-September-2010.pdf>

Girls Education and Mentoring Services (GEMS) provides a list of survivor-led and survivor-informed organizations: <http://www.gems-girls.org/survivor-leadership/resources/survivor-led-organizations>

From Victim to Survivor, From Survivor to Leader: The Importance of Leadership Programming and Opportunities for Commercially Sexually Exploited and Trafficked Young Women and Girls by Rachel Lloyd <http://www.gems-girls.org/WhitePaper.pdf>

Article by Holly Smith, advocate and human trafficking survivor. *Human Trafficking: Do Our Advocacy Efforts Dehumanize Victims?* <http://elitedaily.com/news/world/human-trafficking-advocacy-efforts-affecting-problem/916217/>