



During Framework's **Survivor Perspectives: Increasing Identification Through Labor Trafficking Outreach** event on September 25, 2020, panelists Bella Hounakey, Buki Domingos, Evans Breus, and Julissa Ponce shared practical tips on trauma-informed and effective outreach to help providers connect with people experiencing labor trafficking, and provided important insights to increase providers' understanding of the issue.



PRACTICAL TIPS

- Resources should be easy to read and understand, and accommodate accessibility needs across language, literacy, and audio/visual ability levels. Resources should also be available for a variety of age groups.
- Consider communicating your message through a variety of methods—not only through brochures or hand-outs, but also through radio advertisements or provider representatives informing workers of their rights at/near the worksite, frequently visited businesses, or community spaces (access points).
- For many survivors, reaching out for help can be intimidating or overwhelming. Service providers may only have one opportunity to make a good impression and convey to the survivor that they will be able to help. Trauma-informed engagement is the work here.
- Some survivors may not initially (or ultimately) identify as a victim of labor trafficking. That's okay. Providers can describe components of trafficking (e.g., abuse, withholding of wages, controlled movement, confiscation of documents) instead of "trafficking" to help survivors to understanding that what they experienced was illegal, that they have rights, and they are not alone. This is an important step in the healing process.
- When developing partnerships, do not assume that stakeholders have an adequate level of knowledge or skills. Engage in cross-training to ensure mutual understanding of the issue, practical applications of a trauma-informed approach, and respective roles.

Outreach is Only the Beginning

When survivors connect with a service provider, they are at an important tipping point. The factors that initially created vulnerability to trafficking still exist, and potential for re-trafficking and other exploitation is high. Service providers have a responsibility not just to help survivors exit an exploitative situation, but to meet immediate needs, create a plan (in partnership with survivors) to address longer-term goals, and ensure survivors know their rights, have access to resources, are informed of all their options, and are empowered to make their own decisions.



INSIGHTS AND IMPORTANT CONTEXT

- The panelists cleared up some common misconceptions they've seen from providers regarding what labor trafficking looks like compared to their lived experiences. By understanding that these misconceptions exist, providers can select language and imagery that better connects with victims and survivors who may otherwise be overlooked. **Here are the realities:**
 - Labor trafficking can happen to a person of any age, ethnicity, race, gender, legal status, or socio-economic background.
 - Though labor trafficking can be a violent crime, there are often psychological components that keep a person in the situation. This can include the exploitation of intergenerational or familial pressures and stigmas. These tactics are more common than physical restraints to prevent victims from leaving a labor trafficking situation.
 - Traffickers can be individuals acting alone or with the support of an external organization. They can be family members, friends, acquaintances, or strangers.
- Panelists also made an important point about engaging with survivors in a consultative capacity. Providers must provide **compensation** in recognition of the survivor's time and expertise and as a measure to prevent unintentional re-traumatization or re-exploitation.
- Finally, panelists urged providers to recognize the ways in which they may be causing **unintentional harm**. This includes embracing a "rescue" mentality that centers the "rescuer" and mirrors the power dynamic between traffickers and victims. Creating hierarchies of trauma is also harmful. All forms of trafficking strip human beings of their natural and lawful rights and freedoms and deserve equal attention.

RESOURCES

- **Conducting Outreach to Labor Trafficking Victims** - Resource from the National Human Trafficking Hotline on conducting outreach to potential victims of labor trafficking
- **Outreach During COVID-19** – A summary from Framework's "Together, Apart: Outreach During COVID-19" event on providing safe outreach during the pandemic

To learn more about Framework or to request training, technical assistance, or individualized support on labor trafficking, visit us on our website.

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