



During Framework's Naming & Healing event on April 28, 2022, Survivor leader, Eva Eakins (they/them) and trauma expert, Charlee Borg (she/hers) provide an overview of the abuse experienced by labor trafficking survivors and the trauma symptoms they cause.

### Interpersonal violence

A person commits it against another human, and it includes physical, emotional, or sexual abuse. Human trafficking is an example of interpersonal trauma.

### Definitions:

#### Marginalized:

When you push people to the edge of society by not allowing them a place within it, you marginalize them. A society that labels certain people as outside the norm- weird, scary, hateful, or useless - marginalizes those people and edges them out.

#### Peer-support specialists

They support individuals experiencing mental health issues and substance use. They provide coaching, resource linkage, and skill-building. They advocate for collaboration with other service providers. They empower individuals in their healing journey using trauma-informed care. They also assist in developing skills such as safety and crisis planning in groups or individually.

## Survivor Trauma

### Working conditions

- Dangerous work
- Exposure to elements
- Marginalization
- Racism
- Prejudice
- Isolation
- Financial Abuse

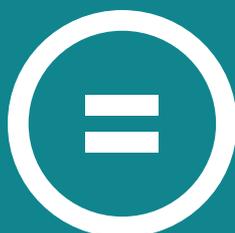
### Common Experiences of Trauma for Survivors

- Physical Abuse
- Deprivation
- Sexual Abuse
- Emotional Abuse
- Forced Substance Use
- Social Restrictions
- Legal Insecurity

perpetrators take advantage of the individual's lack of support from society/their community.

overlapping identities affect one's access to services

Misconceptions about the identities of survivors



The types of systems and services available

Individuals with compounded marginalization might increase their vulnerability

- Family involvement
- Physical of cognitive differences
- Adverse Childhood
- Chronic health conditions
- Socio-economic status
- women/girls
- BIPOC
- LGBTQIA+
- Immigrants/Refugees
- Religious minorities

preconceived notions about a person's identity can lead to a survivor being overlooked as a potential survivor of labor trafficking.

such as minors & U.S. nationals

# The importance of naming trauma

What is it

- |                         |                             |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Shame/Guilt             | Dissociation                |
| Fear                    | Distraction/ Doing too much |
| Mistrust of self/others | Feeling Numb                |
| Stomach issues          | Confusion                   |
| Self-blame              | Testing Boundaries          |
| Sadness                 | Changes in Appetite/Sleep   |
| Anger/Irritability      | Hopelessness                |

"When the truth is recognized, survivors can begin healing"  
-Judith Herman

What does it sound like

- I'm better off alone
- I need to try harder
- I thought they loved me
- Everyone will see me as my trafficker did
- I'm a bad person
- This is my only option
- I can't trust myself

Every reaction to an abnormal event is a normal reaction

**Naming and identifying Trauma-bonding**

can happen through familial ties, romantic relationships, friendships, chosen family. Survivors are willing to do anything for their abuser to prove their love for the person.

## Healing

"It is naming the trauma that may give you a sense of power that was taken away from you. You can take that power back"  
-Judith Herman

basing your service on compassion and values and not on task oriented results

what values are important to you and how to carry them into your work?

which might lead to burnout/ and internalizing the results.

- Opportunities to Decrease Retraumatization**
- Empower and validate experiences
  - Seek to increase identification
  - Decrease separation of trafficking
  - Increase access
  - Encourage staff bias insights
  - Use culturally appropriate tools

### What Prevents Self-Compassion?

#### Comparing

- Others can do better than me
- Others have it a lot worse
- Others have it easier

#### Judging

- Not good enough
- "Should/shouldn't" statements
- Intolerant of own flaws and inadequacies

#### Fixing

- I must control my anger/anxiety/fear
- Self-improvement projects
- Always problem-solving

#### Tools for Creating Self-Compassion

- Meditation
- Gratitude diary
- Building a collection of self-supportive resources (songs, pets, quotes)



## and additional resources

**Q.** How can being self-compassionate make us better providers?

**A.** Self-compassion practice is when we know how to be kind to ourselves and know how to go through difficult times in a compassionate, kind, and balanced way. You can then extend that to the clients you serve. The power of modeling and setting the tone is based on how we treat ourselves and the people we are working with. We tell service providers to be willing to do the work and go through what we ask our clients to do, but that also includes self-compassion, not just the hard work.

**Q.** What should I do if my client has a lot of trauma, but says that they're fine and only want help with more logistical issues? (housing, legal, etc..)

**A.** Let your clients lead you. When a person comes from an open heart, you can never do wrong. Even if the answer is 'no'. There was a time when I faced life-threatening danger, and there were a couple of people tried to who meet my concrete needs and help, but the results did not come through. I don't hold grudges when things didn't come to fruition, but I still am grateful for those who tried. Starting where the client is at and being curious is the best practice. Be curious about what their priorities are and how you and your agency can support them. When your client can not focus on their healing for various reasons, that is when we should think about how else we can resource people. Also, it often comes down to empowering them by offering resources in any way that you can. Ask them what they are able to do, maybe when they drive to work or walk somewhere. They can try to be mindful there too. They might already be using their own methods as well too, and acknowledging that is helpful too.

**Q.** What is your advice for people who might be hesitant to address trauma in their non-clinical role? How do you define the barrier between compassion-based support and the role of a more formally trained clinical worker? How do we address this in a responsible way?

**A.** It can help to ask yourself what does this person need? Are they looking for clinical help or are they looking for a person to care for and listen to them? That can help direct you on what you need to do.

It's helpful when the client is engaged in therapy to have a place to explore what they need more deeply, but when clients are not engaged in therapy and might not have a lot of relationships to talk to. So you have to be mindful of boundaries because you can't support them at the level that they need, and you might not have the time to dedicate to those needs either.

You can direct them to self-compassion meditation, which will allow them to call back the feelings of support they may have received at any point in their life on their own.

You can also let them know that you appreciate them sharing with you, whatever your clinical training may be, you can always show empathy.

**Q.** How would you help identify the labor trafficking that people may be experiencing in order to help them heal from that specific type of exploitation?

**A.** It helps to just pause in your screening. Go seek insight from someone else in your agency if you feel like you might not have the screening tools ready.

[Identifying Effective Counter-Trafficking Programs and Practices in the U.S.: Legislative, Legal, and Public Opinion Strategies that Work](#)

[National Criminal Justice Reference Service](#): An Exploratory Study of Labor Trafficking Among U.S. Citizen Victims

[Urban Institute](#): Understanding the Organization, Operation, and Victimization Process of Labor Trafficking in the United States

[The Migrant Farm Worker Division of Colorado Legal Services](#): Overworked and Underpaid Report

[Microaggressions video](#)

[Project TRUST](#) resource list

[Framework's "Healing from Trauma Online Gallery"](#)

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

[www.frameworkta.org](http://www.frameworkta.org)