

Runaway and Homeless Youth Training & Technical Assistance Center



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HTR 3 : Outreach to and Engagement with Victim Survivors of Human Trafficking Resource Guide

Runaway and Homeless
Youth Training & Technical
Assistance Center

Operated by:



This resource sheet was developed to provide Family and Youth Services Bureau Runaway and Homeless Youth grantees information as they conduct outreach to and engage with victim-survivors of human trafficking. It is intended to serve as a supporting resource for the accompanying webinar titled: "HTR³: Outreach to and Engagement with Victim-Survivors of Human Trafficking." The resource sheet provides a brief discussion of "what outreach is," safety tips for workers conducting outreach, engagement and relationship building, and safety planning with youth.

What is outreach?

Outreach to street youth is typically described as including four basic components:

- meeting youth where they are (physically and emotionally)
- provision of service information to address immediate concerns and basic needs
- building a trusting relationship
- linking them with services and supports beyond the street including services from your organization as well as other organizations (Saldanha & Parenteau, 2013; Connolly & Joly, 2012; Gibson, 2011).

In 42 studies reviewed by Connolly and Joly, there were three core premises for conducting outreach to youth:

- relationship
- a youth-centered approach
- service linkages to assist youth with access to needed supports (Connolly & Joly, 2012).

Saldanha and Parenteau describe outreach as "an active form of waiting" and consistency (Saldanha & Parenteau, 2013). This concept is important to remember as youth workers prepare to "do" outreach. Active waiting means:

- being present when the youth is accessing information and services
- being available where youth are when they are ready to engage
- being consistent in terms of days/times of outreach as well as services and supports available from outreach teams, their organization and their referral network
- being consistent in terms of attitude or culture of care – demonstrating unconditional positive regard for the youth.

Engagement and Relationship Building

Now that we have discussed what outreach is we need to delve into the purpose of outreach: engagement and building relationships with youth. What does it mean to say "the relationship IS the intervention?" We know victim-survivors of human trafficking need a wide array of services; however, they will not access services in the absence of a relationship with the outreach worker and ultimately the program/organization. If relationship is not established and maintained the youth will have difficulty trusting you/your program, or referral network, enough to engage with services and supports beyond basic survival aid on the street. Building relationships is a process that begins with rapport building, moves to building trust, establishing and maintaining the relationship, and finally support system building.

- **Rapport building takes time.** It is important that we use a victim/youth-centered approach to build rapport leading to increased trust from the youth. Youth workers will likely need to 'show up' multiple times before trust begins to be established.

- **Trust building takes time and consistency.** Remember, trust doesn't just happen; you will need to show up and be present and be consistent. Trust building requires youth workers to do what they say, when and how they said it would be done. During the trust building phase youth will give you a little information to see how you react and to test your commitment to follow through on what you have previously stated would happen when they shared information.
- **Establishing and maintaining the relationship begins when there is proactive interaction from the youth.** Proactive engagement is evidenced by the youth contacting you/your organization rather than waiting for you to find them. Maintaining the relationship requires continued consistency, availability and presence while advocating for the youth's best interest. In order for the relationship to grow all interactions must be trauma informed, youth-centered and harm reduction focused. Remember, supportive, advocacy-based relationships include holding the youth accountable and helping them to navigate systems of care.
- **Establishing long-term/permanent support systems is the final stage of relationship development.** Sometimes youth workers act as if the relationship is proprietary and prevent other providers and supports from engaging with the youth. This is detrimental to the youth and ultimately to the program. Once the relationship is established it is imperative for youth workers to leverage it to help youth expand their support system beyond a program. Helping youth identify and connect with family, extended family, community-based organizations, survivor's network, etc. that youth will not "age out of" ensures their support system is with them beyond our programs.

What is a Safety Plan?

A safety plan is an individualized plan incorporating practical application strategies to increase safety by reducing or avoiding harm/harmful situations and triggers. Safety plans cannot be solely focused on getting youth 'out of the life' or away from their trafficker; rather, they must look toward the long-term needs of victim-survivors and assist them to identify how to increase their safety now and skills for maintaining safety in the future.

Safety plans include 5 components:

- Identification of sources of support
- Identification, development and practicing coping strategies
- Creating detailed plans to respond to or plan for dangerous situations
- Identification of safe(r) strategies for youth who are still being trafficked
- Development of mini-plans with conversations and role playing opportunities to increase skills

Sample Safety Plan

Safety Domain	Action Steps	Self- Evaluation Notes
Sources of support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ms. Gina at the HT Counselor Center ○ My step brother Derrick ○ Women’s Support group ○ My boss at my job ○ My new dog – Jazzy ○ Outreach teams ○ Polaris ○ Schedule and participate in bi-weekly follow-up sessions with Ms Gina 	
Coping strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Journal or listen to music ○ Positive Imagery ○ Connect with my AA sponsor ○ Practice positive self talk daily 	
Planned responses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Call the police if my trafficker locates me ○ Say “NO” to my trafficker if he contacts ○ Avoid hanging out with others still in the “Life” ○ Be prepared to relocate if necessary 	
Safe people/places	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Church ○ Women’s Abuse Shelter ○ Police ○ Outreach teams ○ My job at the nursing home ○ My medical physician 	
Harm reduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Tattoo/brand removal ○ Continue monthly STI testing ○ Continue weekly counseling ○ Seek out long- term housing ○ Share my story and help others 	

Resources

Able-Peterson, T. & Hooks Wayman, R. (2006). *StreetWorks: Best Practices in Outreach Methodology to Homeless Youth*. Minneapolis: Freeport West.

Connolly, J.A. & Joly, L.E. (2012). Outreach with street-involved youth: A quantitative and qualitative review of the literature. *Clinical Psychology Review*, 32, 524-534.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.cpr.2012.05.006>

Department of Homeland Security – Blue Campaign www.dhs.gov/blue-campaign

Gibson, K. (2011). *Street kids: Homeless youth, outreach, and policing New York's streets*. New York: New York University Press.

National Criminal Justice Training Center www.ncjtc.org

National Human Trafficking Resource Center www.traffickingresourcecenter.org

Saldanha, K. & Parenteau, D. (2013). “Well, if you can’t smile you should go home!” Experiences and reflective insights on providing outreach to young sex trade workers. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 35, 1276-1283. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2013.04.015>

