



# Community-Based Strategies to Combat Human Trafficking in Toronto, Canada

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# The Problem

Human trafficking involves the recruitment, transportation, harbouring and/ or exercising control, direction or influence over the movements of a person in order to exploit that person, typically through sexual exploitation or forced labour. While trafficking can impact anyone, it remains a highly gendered crime, with increased vulnerability observed among Indigenous women and girls, migrants, recent immigrants, 2SLGBTQI+ individuals, children and youth within the child welfare system, and those experiencing socio-economic disadvantages<sup>1</sup>.

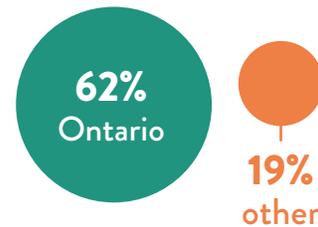
## Canadian Statistics



Women and girls are more likely to become victims of human trafficking<sup>2</sup>.



Most women and girls are under the age of 25 years when first trafficked<sup>2,3</sup>.



Ontario accounted for 62% of reported incidents of human trafficking<sup>2,3</sup>.



## A Community-Based Approach

A community-based approach involves collaborating with groups of people to tackle issues impacting their well-being<sup>4</sup>. Utilizing this approach in anti-trafficking efforts brings advantages such as integrating perspectives from those with lived experiences and leveraging the skills and knowledge within these groups to enhance prevention, intervention, and recovery solutions.



# Providing Trauma-Informed Care

Trauma-informed care is an essential skill for service providers when caring for victims and survivors of human trafficking. Using a trauma-informed approach can be instrumental in preventing re-traumatization, emphasizing an understanding and response to the impact of trauma that prioritizes physical, psychological, and emotional safety.

## Six Principles of Trauma-Informed Care:

- Safety
- Trustworthiness and Transparency
- Peer Support
- Collaboration and Mutuality
- Empowerment, Voice, and Choice
- Cultural, Historical, and Gender Issues

## Practices To Avoid

### Tokenism

Engaging with survivors solely as a check box exercise after the work is completed.

### Saviorism

Believing that it is your duty to save or rescue survivors.

### Favoritism

Relying on the same survivors for insights and opportunities.

### Exploitation

Failing to compensate survivors for their expertise.

# Recommendations

## Creating a safe space for victims<sup>5</sup> :

- Listen.
- Use open-ended questions.
- Do not identify the client as a “victim” (mirror language used).
- Do not make assumptions.
- Be sensitive to asking too many questions or too personal questions.
- Try to spread the conversation over multiple sessions.
- Remain
- non-judgmental.
- Encourage self-agency.
- Validate/normalize their feelings.

## Supporting survivors in their recovery<sup>6</sup> :

- Empower survivors to seek justice for their own lives.
- Enable survivors and their community to take responsibility for one another.
- Understanding survivors' behaviours may be a response to their trauma.
- Expect survivors to make mistakes and be able to repair these mistakes.
- Look for their story of bravery and resilience.



# Community Resources

## Toronto

### Covenant House

Anti-human trafficking team/ [endht@covenanthouse.ca](mailto:endht@covenanthouse.ca)

### Victim Services Toronto

### Native Women's Resource Centre of Toronto

### Aura Freedom

## Canada

### Canadian Centre to End Human Trafficking

National Human Trafficking Hotline  
1-833-900-1010

### Public Safety Canada

### What is Sex Trafficking?

**Note:** This list is not exhaustive but represents some of the available resources in Canada



# Citations

1. Canada, P. S. (2021, July 30). Government of Canada. Retrieved April 28,2022, from <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-safety-canada/campaigns/human-trafficking.html>
2. Conroy, S. (2022). Trafficking in persons in Canada, 2020. *Juristat* 85(5)3-18 <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-005-x/2022001/article/00001-eng.htm#r23>
3. Conroy, S., & Sutton, D. (2022). Trafficking in persons in Canada, 2020. *Juristat* 85(2), 3–23. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2022001/article/00010-eng.html>
4. The concept of resilience is founded on the observation that undertraumatic or otherwise adverse circumstances, some people cope relativelywell while others fail to do so ... When applied to people, it describes thecapacity of the person to ‘bounce back.’” Community Mobilization, Actionfor the Rights of Children (ARC) Resource Pack, January 2001, p.11.
5. Trauma-informed care. Human Trafficking Collaborative. (2021, May 12). <https://humantrafficking.umich.edu/education/trauma-informed-care/>
6. Dang, M., Sanders, S., & Leyden, S. H. (2020). *Allies Toolkit for Survivor Empowerment: Second Edition*. Nottingham, UK: Survivor Alliance. Retrievedfrom: <https://www.survivoralliance.org>

