

Counselor Experiences Working with Sex Trafficking Survivors

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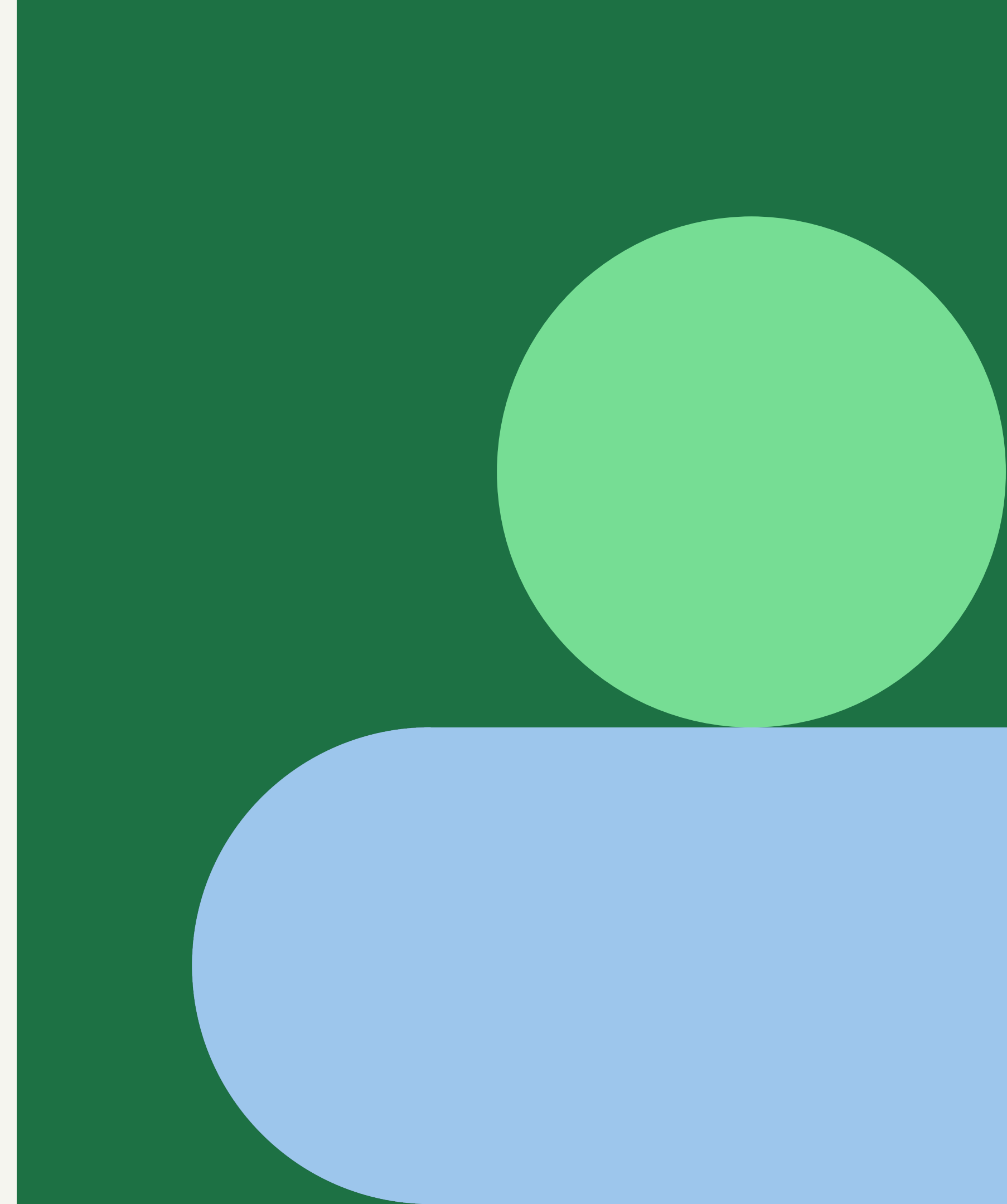
Agenda

- Introduction
- Methodology
- Results
- Discussion

APRIL 2022

Introduction

— PART 1



Sex Trafficking: Which a commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or which the person induced to perform such act has not attained 18 years of age; or the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery.

(Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000, Pub. L. No. 106-386, 114 Stat. 1464-1548, 2000, p. 1470)

Objectives

Learn about sex trafficking and sex trafficking research in the counseling literature.

Increase awareness of the counselors' experiences working with sex trafficking survivors using findings from interviews from a phenomenological study.

Become familiar with implications for clinical practice and strategies for counselors when working with sex trafficking survivors based on empirical findings.

Need for the Study

- 01 Literature on Counseling Sex Trafficking Survivors is limited but has increased in recent years.
- 02 Limited training is available for counselors wishing to work with Sex Trafficking Survivors.
- 03 Litam & Lam (2020) study reported that counselors who received sex trafficking training had a greater awareness than those who did not.

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Methodology

— PART 2

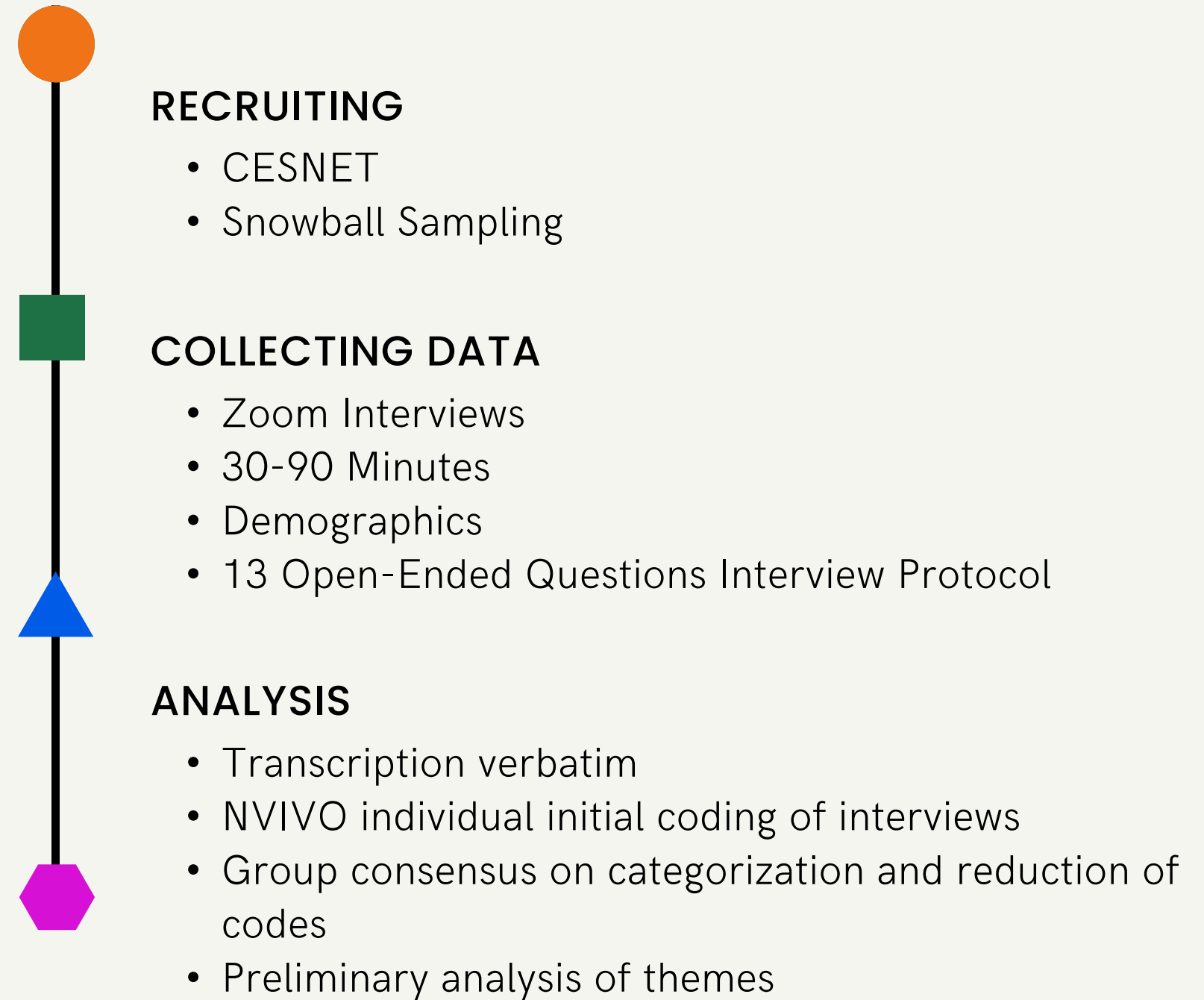


Qualitative Transcendental Phenomenology

- Intentionality
- Intuition
- Description
- Experiences
- Grounded Data

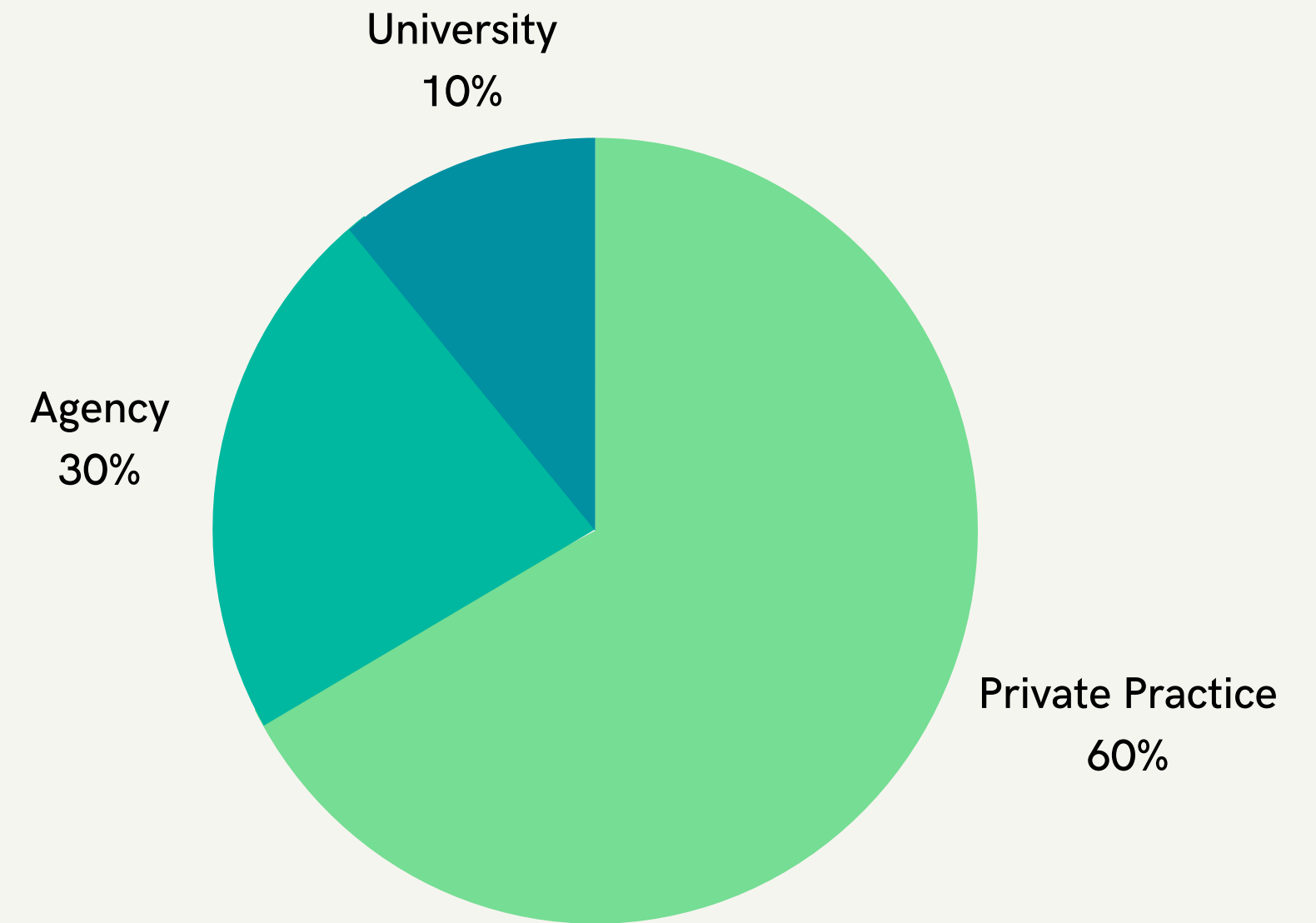


Research Timeline



Participant Demographics

Participant	Age	Gender	Race-Ethnicity
P1	48	Female	White
P2	38	Male	White
P3	33	Female	White
P4	54	Female	Hispanic
P5	39	Female	Asian
P6	33	Female	White
P7	27	Female	White
P8	29	Female	White
P9	61	Female	Hispanic
P10	45	Female	White



Results of the Study

— PART 3

Themes

DESCRIPTIVE OUTCOMES OF THE STUDY

- Counselor Knowledge ($n = 10$)
- Counselor Skills ($n = 10$)
- Counselor Attitude ($n = 10$)
- Counselor Action ($n = 10$)



Counselor Knowledge

"LEARNING CURVE"

UNDERSTANDING TRAUMA WORK

- Boundaries
- Ethics
- Legal
- Multicultural
- Stages of Change
- Telehealth
- Understanding Healing
- Understanding the Role of the Counselor

UNDERSTANDING SEX TRAFFICKING WORK

- Barriers
- Factors for Relapse
- Impact of Sex Trafficking
- Protective and Risk Factors
- Recruitment
- Understanding Sex Trafficking, Terms, and Types of Traffickers

"I think it's really important that counselors know that it[Sex Trafficking] takes many different forms and different shapes and some of them can be quite um I don't know what the word would be, hard- hard to see, or you wouldn't immediately think this is sex trafficking, although in the reality it is."

Counselor Skills

"CREATING A SAFE SPACE TO DIVE INTO WORK"

INITIAL ASSESSMENT AND ENSURING SAFETY

- Assessment
- Crisis Skills
- Intake
- Treatment Planning

PROCESSING TRAUMA

- Consulting
- Counselor Self-Care
- Countertransference
- Foundational Skills
- Teach Basic Skills
- Types of Interventions
- Types of Therapy

"I think the biggest thing like when working with sex trafficking is creating that safe place for them and like internally where they can go um and then like externally in their environment, like making sure they feel safe before, really like diving into the trauma work"

Counselor Attitude

"BEING ABLE TO LISTEN TO THE CLIENT'S STORY"

PROVIDING EMPATHY

- Counselors should be genuine, authentic, open-minded, supportive, sensitive, warm, patient, not judgmental, respect choices, listen to survivors, worthy, and a wellness perspective

PROVIDING SAFETY

- Counselors should be consistent, provide safety, be dependable, provide a homey counseling space homey, protect the client, discuss difficult topics, and provide predictability.

PROVIDING HOPE

- Empowerment
- Clients need Encouragement

"One thing which I absolutely profess to my students, to my you know, supervisees, is you know just making them feel safe...that is more needed, because at times there are, there is shame, there is guilt, there is fear, and apprehension of being caught and just, you know, really, different legal implications. So, uh one has to make them feel safe and just that you know, their voice is heard, any anything is between me and you, unless there is any kind of physical threat."

Counselor Action

"IT TAKES A TEAM"

ENGAGING IN SOCIAL WORK

- Case Management
- Resources

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ADVOCACY

- Awareness
- Follow-up
- Legal Support
- Leaving Trafficking
- Older Victims Placement
- Advocates
- Pro Bono Services
- Sex Trafficking Specific Clinic
- Detention Center Support

"Safety planning with clients is super important, and connecting with resources again like that kind of like social thing of like here's friends, but like here's agencies in town and like do you have a psychiatrist, or do you need one? Do you have a medical doctor, or do you need one? A little more of that like case management type stuff to make sure that they have stuff and the resources, if and when they want out."

P6

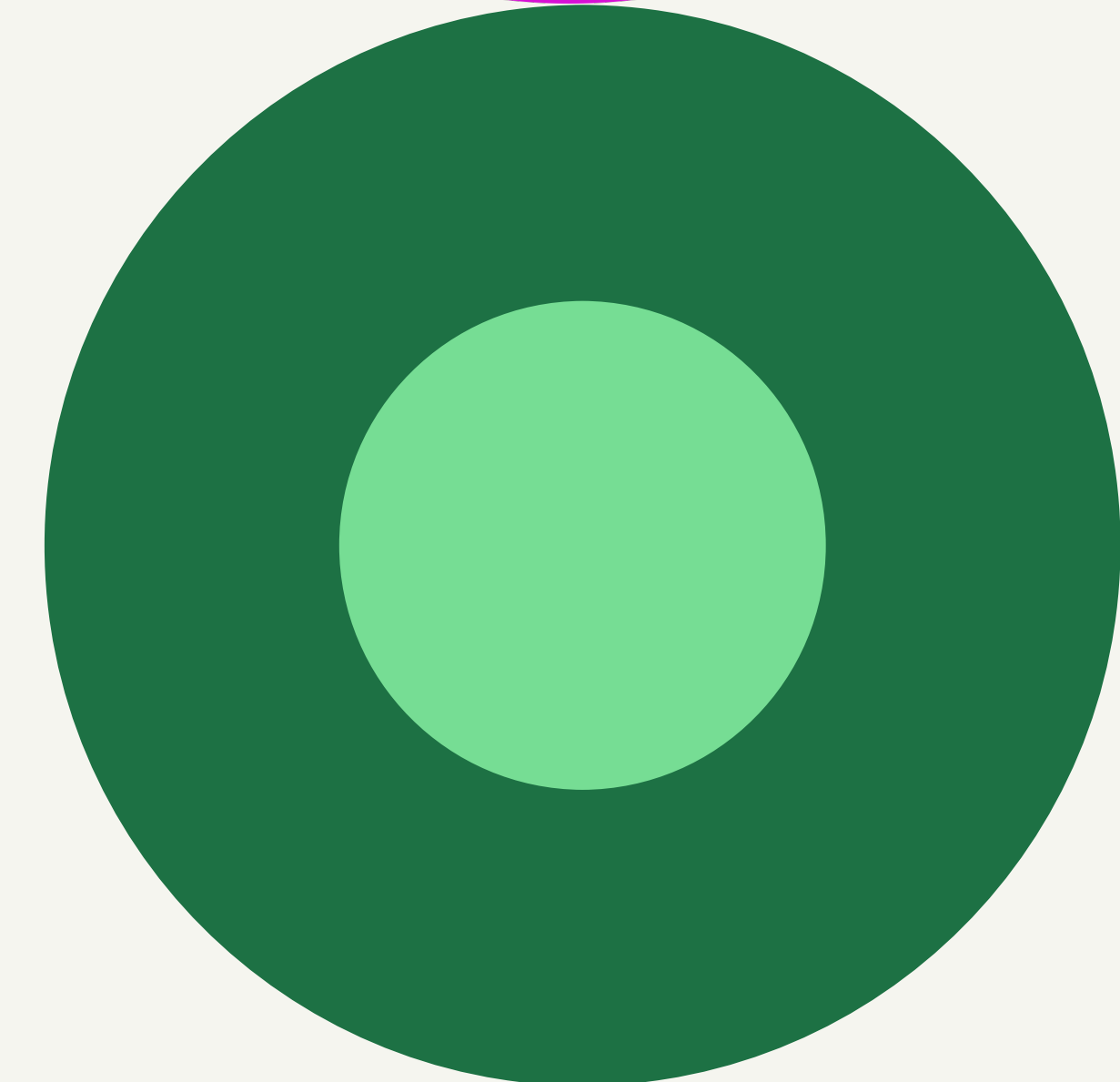
Discussion

— PART 4

Limitations

CURRENT STUDY

- Preliminary analysis
 - Member checking
 - External auditing
- Self-Report
 - Impression management
 - Social desirability



Impacts

CONNECTION WITH SIMILAR EXPERIMENTS

- Called to work with this population
 - First responders
- No specialized training
- Learning curve
 - Trauma does not equal sex trafficking knowledge
- Presents the shared experiences of what counselors needed to know, skills, attitudes, and action
- Training grounded in data
 - Answers the literature



Thank you!



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