

A “HOW-TO” TRAINING GUIDE FOR EFFECTIVELY SERVING CLIENTS IMPACTED BY SEX TRAFFICKING

ACA, 2023

TORONTO, CANADA

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OBJECTIVES

1	Foundational knowledge on ST
2	Overview of our scholarly, empirical, and clinical work with ST
3	A practical guide for clinical practice

Foundational Knowledge of ST

LET'S LEARN



What is Sex Trafficking (ST)?

- The legal definition of the term sex trafficking is the recruitment, harboring, transportation, patronizing, soliciting, or obtaining of a person for the purpose of a commercial sex act.
- **Sex trafficking exists in every town, city, and community nationally and internationally and is perpetrated by every nationality, occupation, and ethnicity.**
- Because sex trafficking is inherently a hidden crime, we may never know the full extent of the issue. Recent reports indicate that the crime is growing in Texas and in the United States.

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



Nature, Scope, and Prevalence of ST

- Any minor under the age of 18 **CAN NOT** consent to commercial sex and is considered a victim of human trafficking regardless of whether force, fraud, or coercion is used.
- The age of onset has been reported as young as under the age of 8, with most individuals around 15–17 years of age when trafficking began.
- 1 in 6 runaways reported are probable victims of sex trafficking.
- 6.3 million people are estimated to be trapped in forced sexual exploitation globally on any given day.
- Texas contains around 25% of all trafficked persons in the United States at any given time.

BASIC STAGES OF **GROOMING** for sexual exploitation END SLAVERY NOW 

(v) to prepare or train someone for a particular purpose or activity



TARGETING A VICTIM
Traffickers target victims who have some noticeable vulnerability: emotional neediness, low self-confidence or economic stress.



GAINING TRUST & INFORMATION
Obtaining information about the victim is key. This can be done through casual conversations with the victim or with parents. Traffickers often mix well with other adults.

FILLING A NEED
The information gained allows the trafficker to fill a need in the victim's life, making the victim dependant on them in some way: buying gifts, being a friend, beginning a love relationship or buying soft drugs and alcohol.

“Up until this point they had never tried to touch me, they had not made me ever feel uncomfortable or ever feel unsafe or that they could harm me.”



ISOLATION
The trafficker creates times to be alone with the victim. The trafficker will also begin to have a major role in the victim's life and attempt to distance the victim from friends and family.



ABUSE BEGINS
The trafficker begins claiming that a service must be repaid whether money spent on cigarettes or drugs, car rides or mobile phones. In most cases, the trafficker demands sex as payment for such services.

“I trusted them, they were my friends as I saw it, until one night my main perpetrator raped me, quite brutally as well, in front of a number of people.”

MAINTAIN CONTROL

“Well if I didn't go out and see them they are going to get my mum and are going to rape her.”

In many cases, the trafficker maintains control of the victim through threats, violence, fear or blackmail.

Source: <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-2849188>, http://www.mcaas.org/_media/96/ep-content/uploads/2012/03/Behaviors_of_Sexual_Predators_Grooming.pdf, <http://www.stockjournal.com.au/news/world/world/general/rochester-child-abuse-scandal-jericoa-story/2710229.aspx?storypage=0>

Warning Signs and Symptoms

- Medical Concerns
- Trauma or Mental health Concerns
- Criminal and Legal history or Concerns
- Personal Concerns Related to Locus of Control
- Social Concerns



Populations with Increased Vulnerability

Racial/Ethnic minorities

LGBTQ identities

Lower socioeconomic status

Foster care

Homeless

Children and Youth

Physical and Cognitive Disabilities

Refugees, Asylum Seekers, and
Migrants

Services and Community Resources

Short-Term

- Housing and shelters
- Comprehensive trauma-informed medical care
- Screening/survivor identification protocols

Long-Term

- Limited life-skills
- Limited community
- Legal assistance
- Physical and Psychological injuries

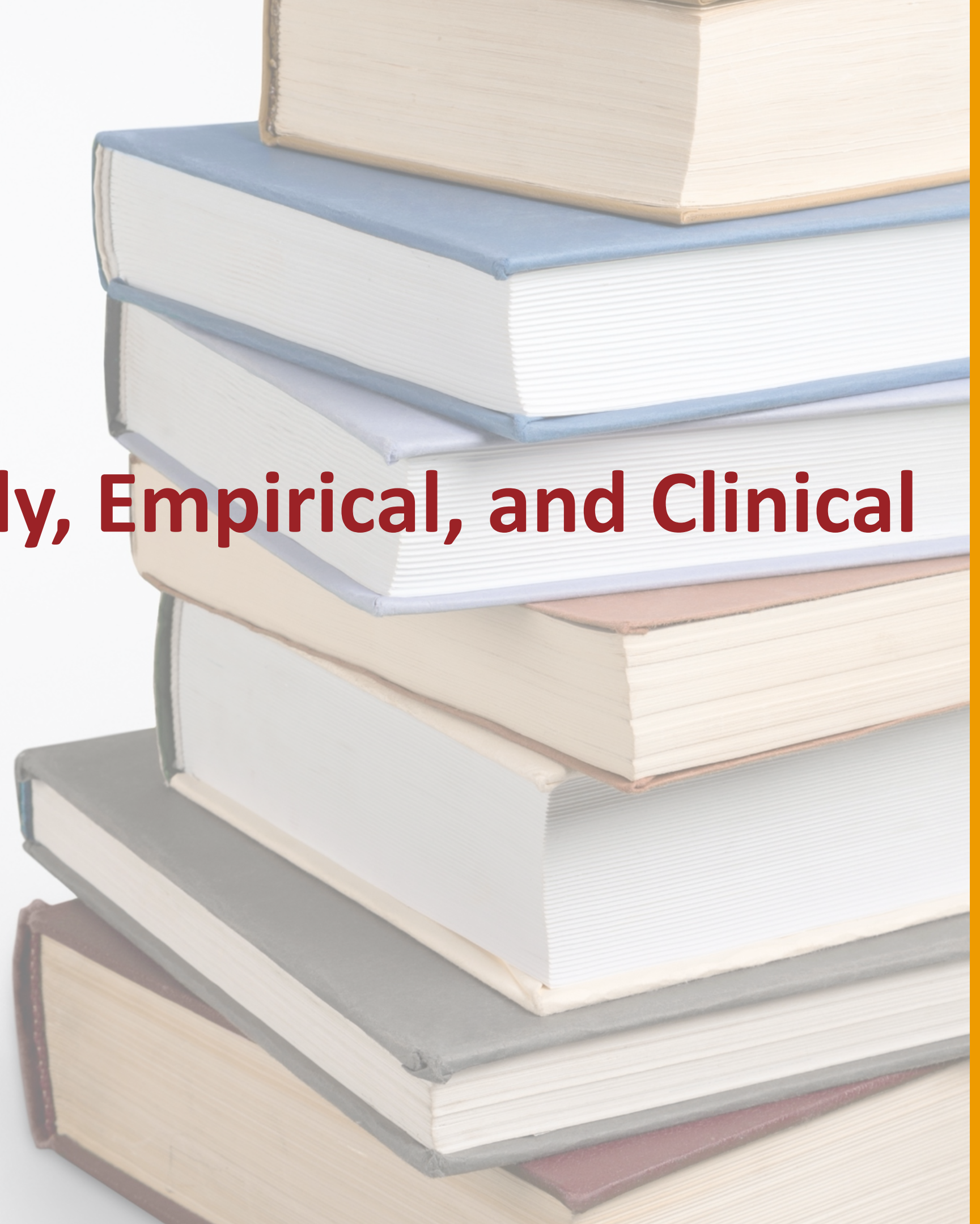
Important ST Related Policies/Laws to Know

- The Palermo Protocol—International Law
- U.S. Code, Title 22, Chapter 78- Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA)



COUNSELORS
AGAINST SEX
TRAFFICKING

Overview of our Scholarly, Empirical, and Clinical Work with ST



Counselors Against Sex Trafficking (CAST)



The screenshot shows the website for Counselors Against Sex Trafficking (CAST). At the top, there is a navigation menu with links for "About Us", "Our Work", and "Events". Below the navigation is a large banner image of a landscape with mountains and a field. Overlaid on the banner is the text "COUNSELORS AGAINST SEX TRAFFICKING RESEARCH LAB". Below the banner, a paragraph states: "We focus on developing research towards improving the identification, intervention, and advocacy to reduce sex trafficking in the United States." On the left side of the screenshot, there is a sidebar with a link to a journal article: "A Review of Child Sex Trafficking" by Devon E. Romero, Claudia Strentzsch, and Julie Strentzsch. The article is published in the "Journal of Child and Adolescent Counseling" and has a DOI link: https://doi.org/10.1080/23727810.2020.1811111. The website also features a "Check for updates" button in the top right corner.

Counselors Against Sex Trafficking (CAST)

**Texas Higher
Education**
COORDINATING BOARD

Minority Health Research and Education Grant Program

ST Clinical Placements

- Added 10 new internship sites
- A total of 27 student placements

ST Training to Counselor-Trainees

- 2 days of ST-Specific training

ST Training to Supervisors and Counselors in the Community

- A workshop to be offered with CE



Research with Sex Trafficking Content Experts

Child Sex Trafficking Counseling Competencies

The CST Competencies for Counselors present 128 competency statements were organized into five domains:

- (a) intervention strategies and the helping relationship
- (b) trauma and sex trafficking
- (c) assessment of risk factors and indicators
- (d) ethical practice
- (e) cultural diversity and human growth and development.



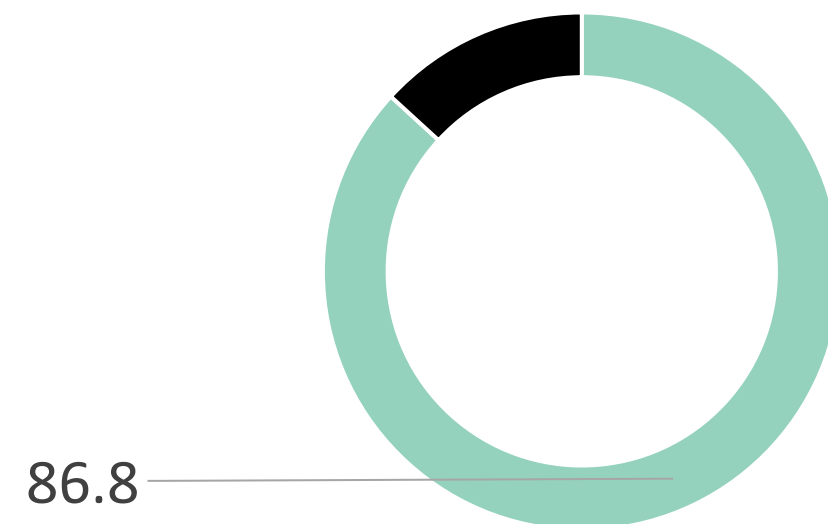
Research with Professional School Counselors (PSCs)

- To investigate PSCs' beliefs on the possible impact of the COVID-19 pandemic for vulnerable youth.
- To understand the self-reported needs of PSC's concerning preparedness to identify and work with youth exposed to CST.

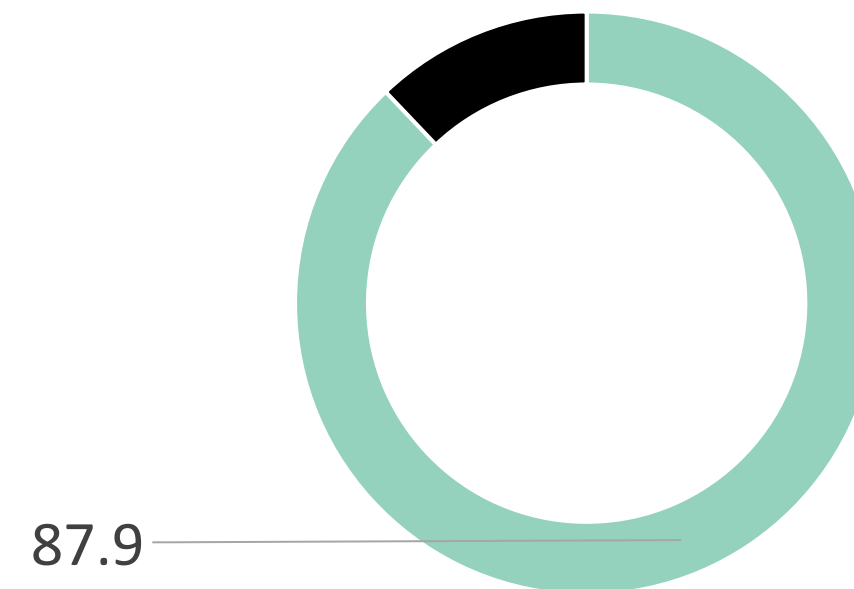
PSCs' Reported Concern for Increased Risk of CST (%)



PSCs' Reported Concern for Increased Barriers (%)



PSCs' Reported Desire for CST Training (%)



Research on the Mental Health of Survivors of Sex Trafficking

Interviews with:

- 10 counselors with clinical experience of working with survivors of sex trafficking
- 10 survivors of sex trafficking



Phenomenological analysis on the lived experiences of counselors working with ST survivors in the United States



Phenomenological analysis exploring the mental health experiences of survivors of sex trafficking



Grounded theory analysis seeking to understand how post trauma growth manifest in the lives of sex trafficking survivors in the United States



Grounded theory exploring how do social determinants of health play a role in the lives of sex trafficking survivors in the United States

A Practical Guide for Clinical Practice

Considerations for Clinical Practice

- Phase 1: Initial Screening and Ensuring Safety
- Phase 2: Processing Trauma
- Phase 3: Fostering Flourishing

Considerations for Assessment

- Assessment selection
- Knowledge of warning signs
- ST Specific Instruments
 - Commercial Sexual Exploitation Identification Tool (CSE-IT)
 - Trafficking Victim Identification Tool (TVIT)
- Clients impacted by ST will likely present with co-occurring concerns.
- *Messages from Survivors*



What does addressing safety look like?

- ❑ Risk assessment
- ❑ Establishing bodily safety (e.g., abstinence from self-injury)
- ❑ Establishment of a safe environment (secure living situation, safety planning, non-abusive relationship, job, adequate support)
- ❑ Creating a safe environment to process their experiences



Phase II – Processing Trauma

Processing Shame

- *“They're just gonna feel shame and they're not gonna want to tell you that they went back, and they might even just not come into their counseling session.”*

Processing Grief

- *“Teasing out the identity of the perpetrator versus the victim and helping them know that those are two separate things I think that's where it starts. Is just um helping them divorce their identity.”*

Addressing Substance Use

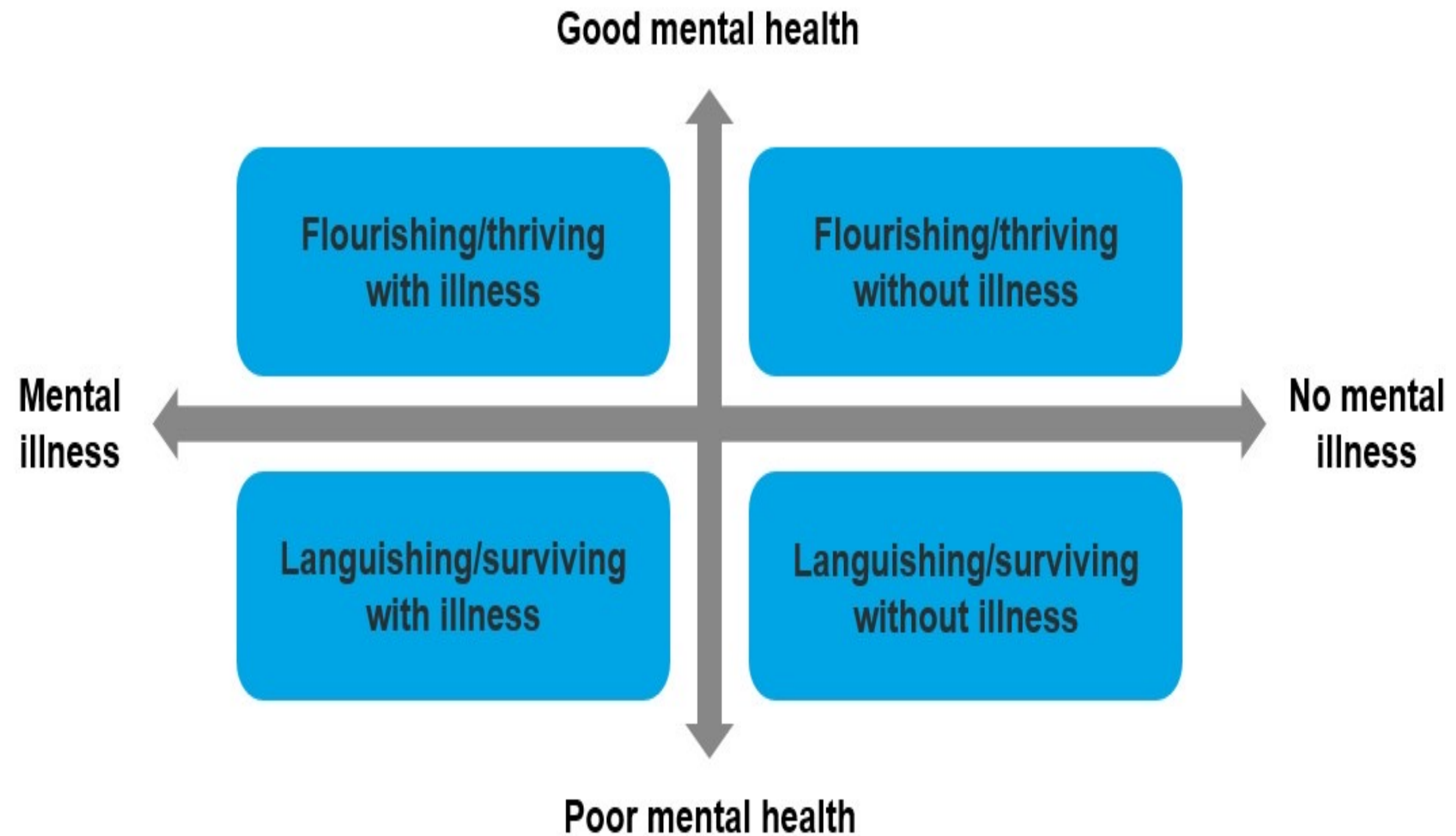
- *“Supposedly statistics are like 80% of women or men, children being trafficked are on drugs, I can guarantee you if they know it or not, it's like 99 or 100.”*



Use of Theoretical Frameworks and Modalities

- Dialectical Behavioral Theory (DBT)
- Feminist Theory
- Narrative Therapy
- Neurofeedback
- Relational Cultural Therapy (RCT)
- Revictimization Theory
- Social-Ecological Model
- Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT)
- Trust-Based Relational Intervention (TBRI)
- Talk therapy
(individual, group)
- Expressive arts and
creative techniques

Phase III – Fostering Flourishing



Positive Psychological Interventions

Character Strengths

Gratitude

Self-Compassion

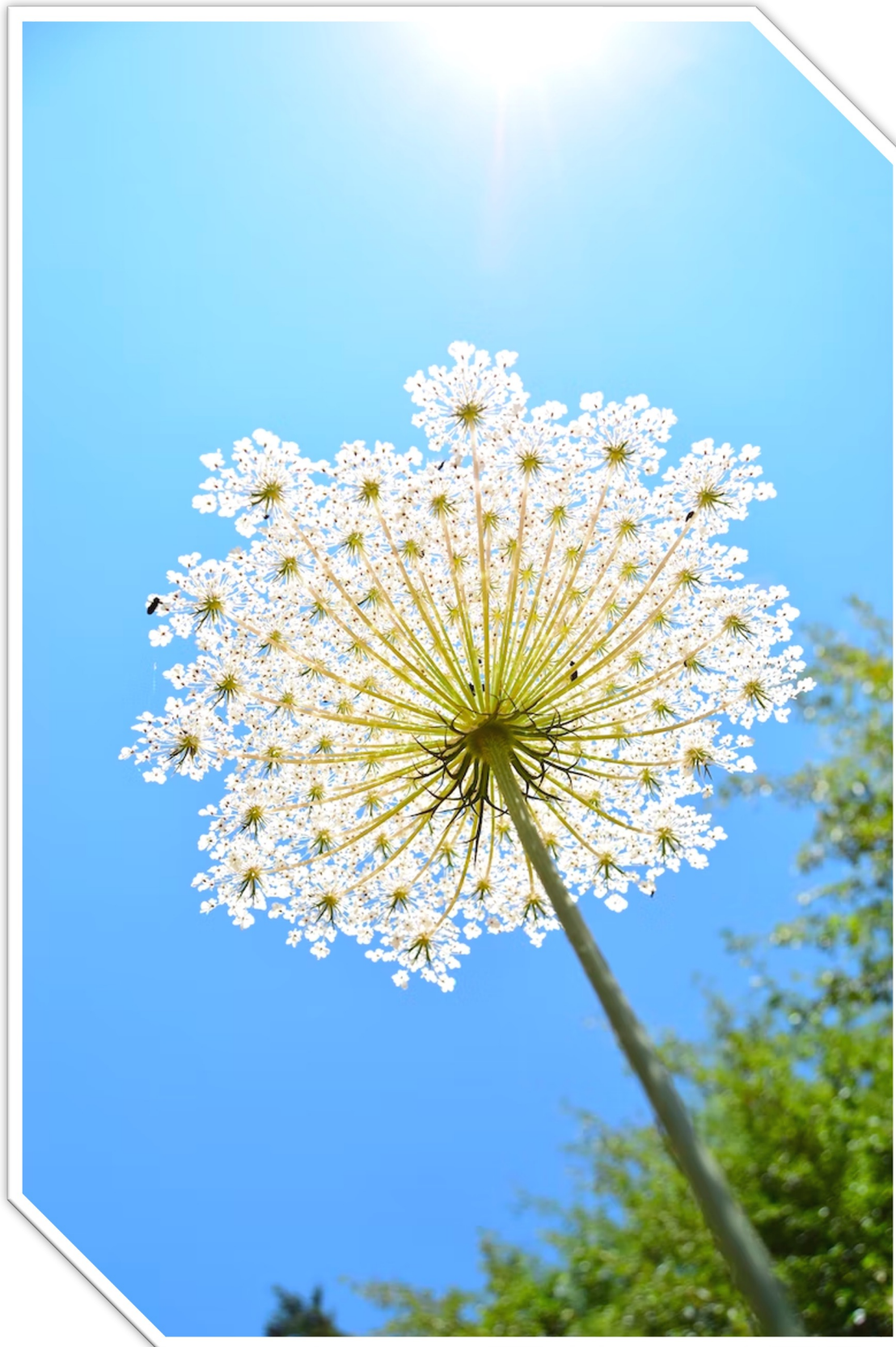
Forgiveness

Post-Trauma Growth (PTG)

Psychological Capital (PsyCap)

PERMA Well-being

Quality of Life (QOL)



Character Strengths

Positive aspects of one's personality that impact how one thinks, feels, and behaves

What are character strengths?

Identifying strengths

Strengths development strategies

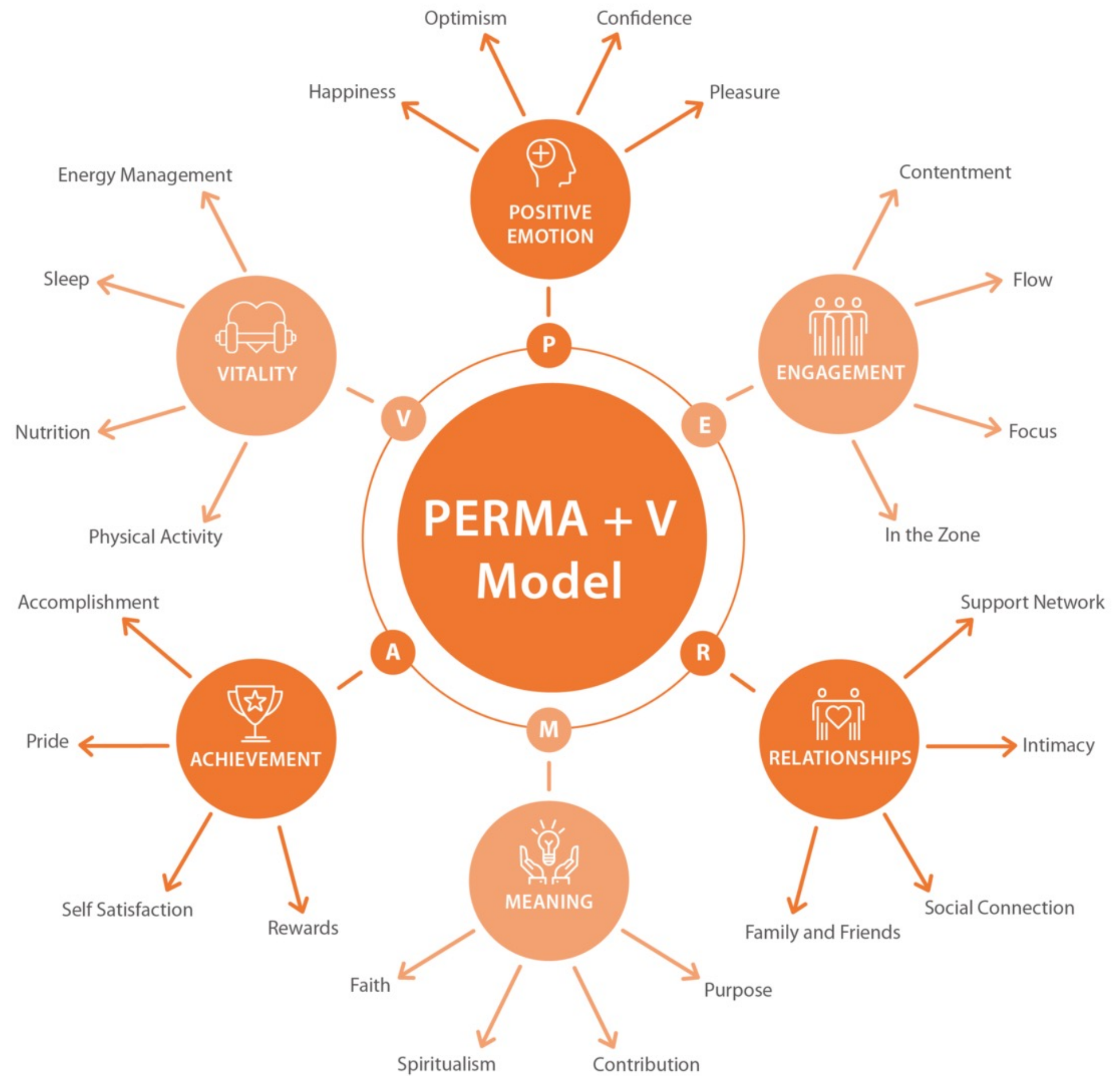


The VIA Classification of Character Strengths and Virtues

VIRTUE OF Wisdom	CREATIVITY Original & Adaptive, Clever, A problem solver, Sees and does things in different ways	CURIOSITY Interested, Explores new things, Open to new ideas	JUDGMENT A critical thinker, Thinks things through, Open minded	LOVE OF LEARNING Masters new skills & topics, Systematically adds to knowledge	PERSPECTIVE Wise, Provides wise counsel, Takes the big picture view
VIRTUE OF Courage	BRAVERY Shows valor, Doesn't shrink from fear, Speaks up for what's right	PERSEVERANCE Persistent, Industrious, Finishes what one starts	HONESTY Authentic, Trustworthy, Sincere	ZEST Enthusiastic, Energetic, Doesn't do things half-heartedly	
VIRTUE OF Humanity	LOVE Warm and genuine, Values close relationships	KINDNESS Generous, Nurturing, Caring, Compassionate, Altruistic	SOCIAL INTELLIGENCE Aware of the motives and feelings of others, Knows what makes others tick		
VIRTUE OF Justice	TEAMWORK Team player, Socially responsible, Loyal	FAIRNESS Just, Doesn't let feelings bias decisions about others	LEADERSHIP Organizes group activities, Encourages a group to get things done		
VIRTUE OF Temperance	FORGIVENESS Merciful, Accepts others' shortcomings, Gives people a second chance	HUMILITY Modest, Lets one's accomplishments speak for themselves	PRUDENCE Careful, Cautious, Doesn't take undue risk	SELF-REGULATION Self-controlled, Manages impulses and emotions	
VIRTUE OF Transcendence	APPRECIATION OF BEAUTY & EXCELLENCE Feels awe & wonder in beauty, Inspired by goodness of others	GRATITUDE Thankful for the good, Expresses thanks, Feels blessed	HOPE Optimistic, Future-minded	HUMOR Playful, Brings smiles to others, Lighthearted	SPIRITUALITY Searches for meaning, Feels a sense of purpose, Senses a relationship with the sacred

PERMA-V Well-Being

Theory of well-being



References

- Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000, Pub. L. No. 106–386, 114 Stat. 1464–1548, 2000, p. 1470)
- International Labour Organization, Walk Free, and International Organization for Migration, 2022
- Bureau of Justice Statistics, Human Trafficking Data Collection Activity 2022, 2022