

SEX TRAFFICKING: WHAT INTEGRATED HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS NEED TO KNOW



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Introduction of CAST Speakers



Counselors Against Sex Trafficking (CAST)



The screenshot shows the homepage of the Counselors Against Sex Trafficking Research Lab. The browser address bar displays 'castrl.com'. The page features the organization's logo, a navigation menu with 'About Us', 'Our Work', and 'Events', and a 'Check for updates' button. The main content area has a background image of a landscape with mountains and a field. Overlaid on this image is the text 'COUNSELORS AGAINST SEX TRAFFICKING RESEARCH LAB' and a mission statement: 'We focus on developing research towards improving the identification, intervention, and advocacy to reduce sex trafficking in the United States.'

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A Review of Child S

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ABSTRACT

Child sex trafficking (CST) h
often goes unidentified or
Often generalized as human
who fall victim of sex traffick
With social platforms becom
increasingly vulnerable to CS
victimization. Counselors wor

uments

mero¹

Media, LLC, part of Springer Nature

e for the screening of sex traf-
sight into the features of sex
his phenomenon. The authors
tial use of 13 instruments and
procedures. The final analysis

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.





COUNSELORS
AGAINST SEX
TRAFFICKING

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 25+ student placements

ST Training to Counselor-Trainees

- 2 days of ST-Specific training

ST Training to Supervisors and Counselors in the Community



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

OBJECTIVES

1	Introduction to Sex Trafficking
2	Considerations for Assessment
3	Impact of Sex Trafficking
4	Foundational Skills

Introduction to Sex Trafficking

Human Trafficking

- Modern-day slavery
- Human trafficking is the business of stealing freedom for profit
- Sex trafficking and forced labor
- Illegal exploitation of a person
- Estimated to gross \$150 billion annually (International Labor Organization, 2014)

Sex Trafficking

Sex trafficking is the recruitment, harboring, transportation, patronizing, soliciting, or obtaining of a person for the purpose of a commercial sex act.

Any minor under the age of 18 **CAN NOT** consent to commercial sex and is considered a victim of sex trafficking regardless of whether force, fraud, or coercion is used.

6.3 million people are estimated to be trapped in forced sexual exploitation globally on any given day.

The US is listed among the top three countries of origin of victims along with Mexico and Honduras.



Reframing Common Misconceptions

- ST does occur domestically.
- ST can but does not have to include some form of travel, transportation, or movement across state or national borders.
- ST can but does not always include elements of physical force, restraint, bondage, and/or violence.
- If a person receives any kind of payment for sex (e.g., money, food, shelter), they can still be trafficked.
- Although an estimated 80% of victims are female, males are also trafficked.
- Trafficking victims are not usually kidnapped.
- Sex traffickers are not always easy to identify.
- A person who is trafficked will not always feel negatively toward the person(s) trafficking them.

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



Get sex trafficking facts.

I WAS SOLD TO THE
HIGHEST BIDDER.

Lacey's Hope
PROJECT

RW

Considerations for Assessment

Considerations for Assessment

- Knowledge of warning signs
 - Medical Concerns
 - Trauma or Mental health Concerns
 - Criminal and Legal history or Concerns
 - Personal Concerns Related to Locus of Control
 - Social Concerns
- ST Specific Instruments
 - Commercial Sexual Exploitation Identification Tool (CSE-IT)
 - Trafficking Victim Identification Tool (TVIT)
 - Human Trafficking Screening Tool (HTST)

Content Areas in Sex Trafficking Instruments

Commercial sexual exploitation

- “Are you kept from contacting your friends and/or family whenever you would like?”
- “Do you have to ask permission to eat, sleep, use the bathroom, or go to the doctor?”
- “Did you ever have sex for things of value (for example money, housing, food, gifts, or favors)?”
- “Has anyone ever asked or forced you to do some sexual act in public, like dance at a bar or a strip club?”
- “Has anyone ever asked you to pose in a sexy way for a photo or a video?”
- “Did anyone ever take a photo of you that you were uncomfortable with?”

Risk factors

- “Youth gives vague or misleading information about their age, whereabouts, residence, or relationships”
- “Youth has witnessed domestic violence.”
- “Knows someone who has had sex for drugs, shelter, food, goods, or money.”
- “Youth has current or past involvement with law enforcement or juvenile justice.”
- “Do you owe money to someone for travel to this country?”
- “Youth receives or has access to unexplained money, credit cards, hotel keys, gifts, drugs, alcohol, transportation”

Content Areas in Sex Trafficking Instruments

Forms of abuse

- “Did someone you work for force you to do something sexually that you didn’t feel comfortable doing”
- “Has a boyfriend or girlfriend in a dating or serious relationship ever physically hurt you or threatened to hurt you (hit, pushed, kicked, choked, burned or something else)?”
- “Is someone else in control of your money?”

Mental and physical health assessment

- “Exhibits psychological stressors: withdrawn behavior, low self-esteem, depression, fear, and evidence of self-harm”
- “Youth has difficulty detecting or responding to danger cues”
- “Youth is sleep deprived or sleep is inconsistent”
- “Youth has tattoos, scarring or branding, indicating being treated as someone’s property”
- “Identifies themselves as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Questioning, Intersex (LGBTQQI).”
- “Have you ever had any sexually transmitted infections, like herpes, gonorrhea, chlamydia or trichomonas?”

Unstable living conditions and caregiving

- “Youth runs away or frequently leaves their residence for extended periods of time (overnight, days, weeks)”
- “Lack of positive relationship with a productive/nurturing adult”
- “Youth relies on emergency or temporary resources to meet basic needs, e.g., hygiene, shelter, food, medical care.”
- “Unsuitable/inappropriate accommodation”
- “Youth has current or past involvement with the child welfare system.”

Considerations for Assessment

- Clients impacted by ST will likely present with co-occurring concerns.

- *Messages from Survivors*

“there's probably a lot of people being trafficked, and you have no freaking clue. And so, treat everyone the same and don't assume. Show up for them, without assumption, without judgment, and just listen to them. And then help them navigate the boundaries of our system so that you can best meet their needs. I would be asking like the basic questions about housing, about food, about you know, do you have a mattress that's on a frame?”

- Jes

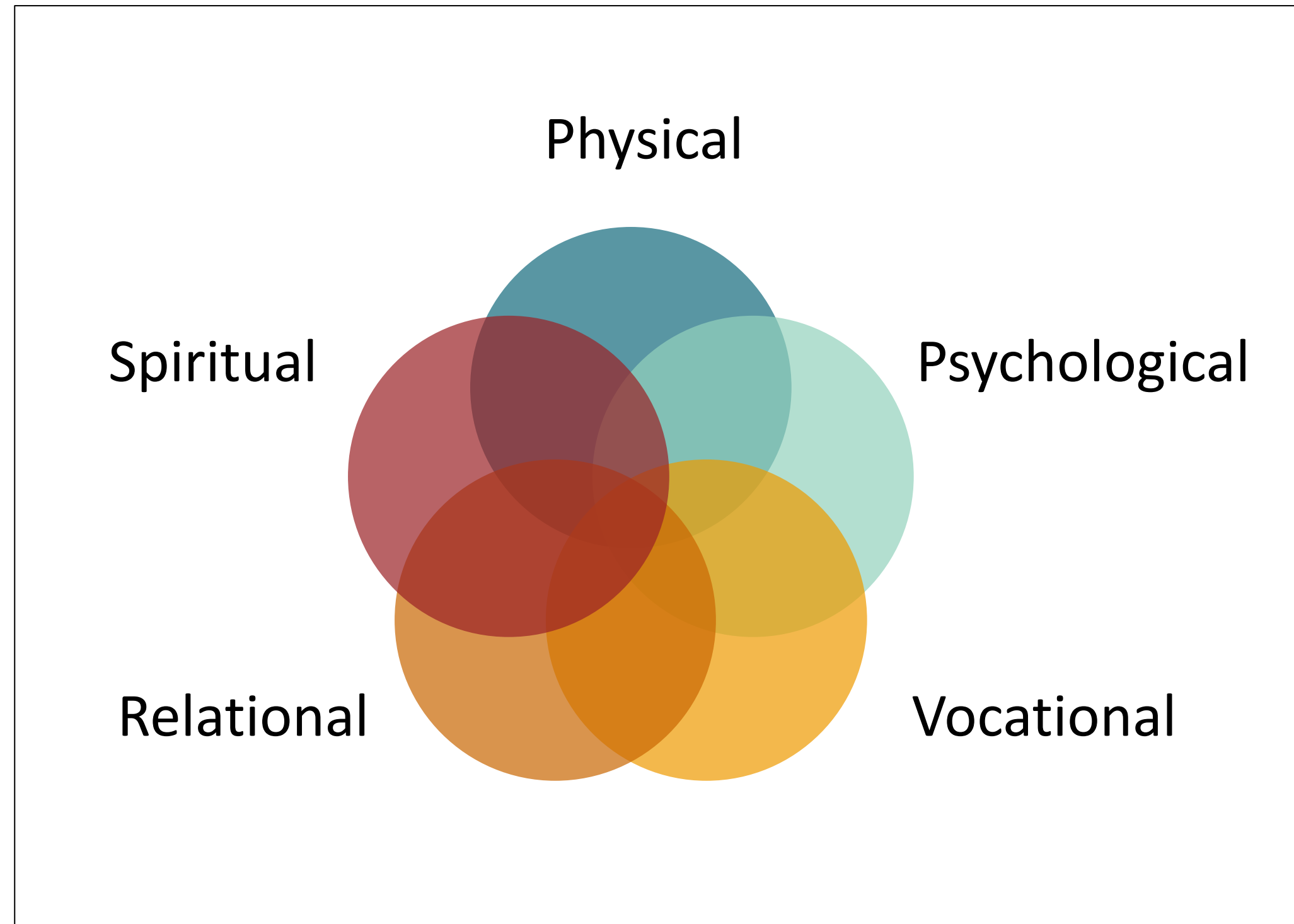


Impact of Sex Trafficking

Multidimensional Impact of Sex Trafficking

*“It's something that impacts
your life forever, even if you
don't want to it to.”*

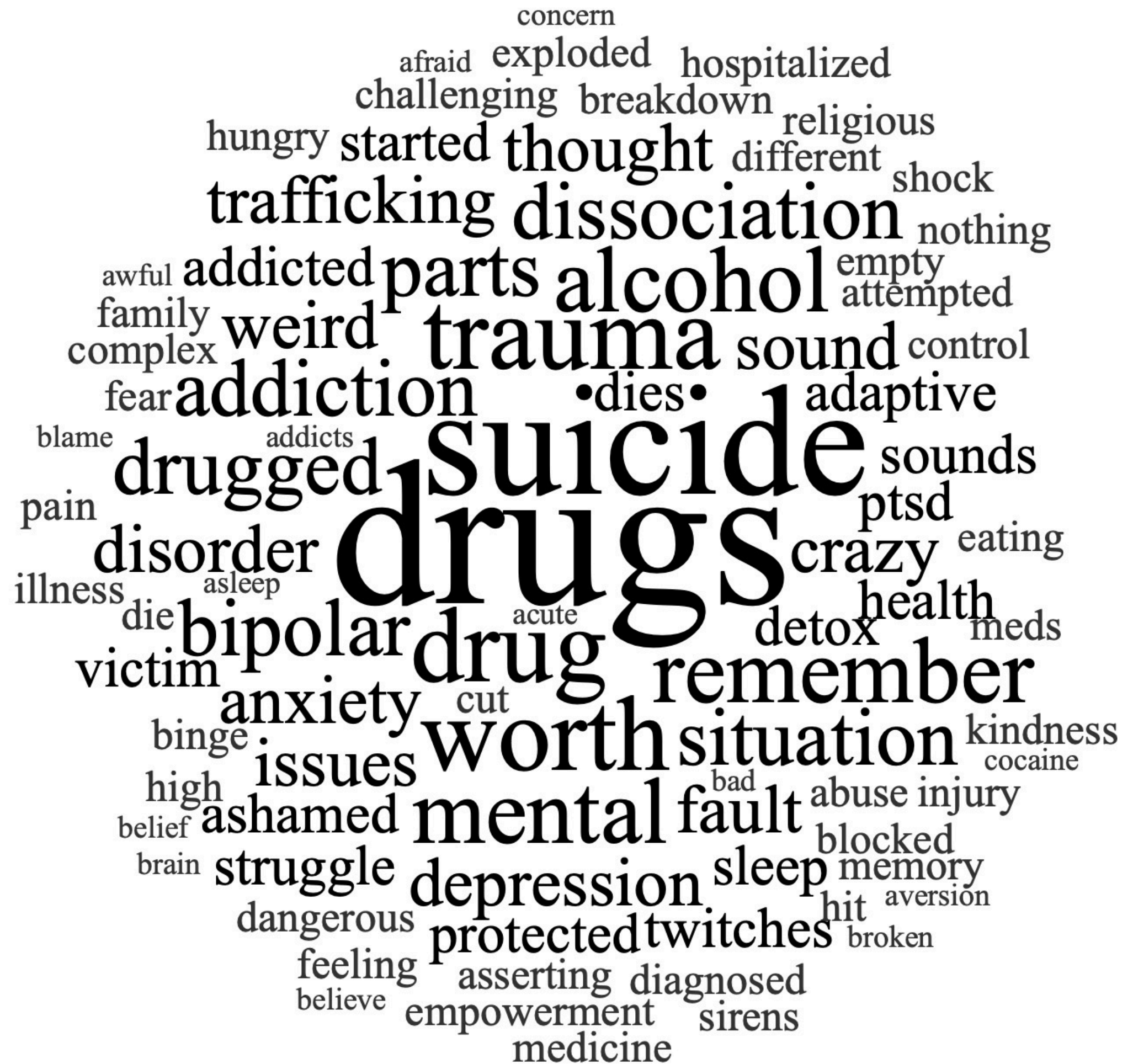
- Crystal



Mental Health Concerns

“Trauma, trauma, trauma. Um on every aspect like from self-worth, to a new relationship, to how do you trust anybody again. Is it grooming or is it love? So, this one [that] is so so widespread, I mean everything is involved.”

-Crystal



Understanding Shame

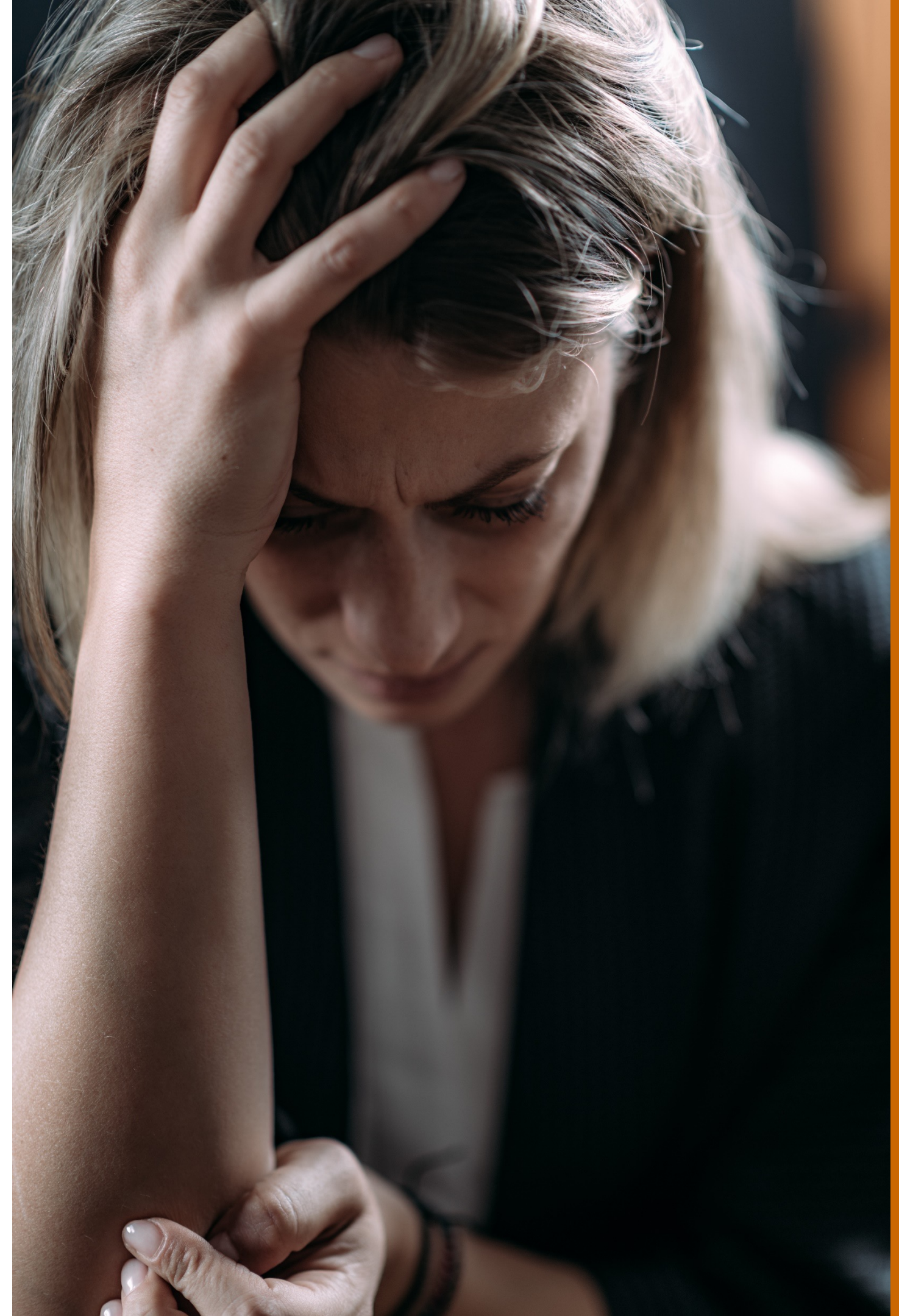
- *“They're just gonna feel shame and they're not gonna want to tell you that they went back, and they might even just not come into their counseling session.”*

Understanding 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.”*



Other Mental Health Concerns

“All of the challenges that come along with reintegrating back into society. So maybe criminal background....Drug and alcohol abuse or addiction...healthy relationships ...Things like that self-worth...We're so empty or like at this empty shell when we come out of that and, it takes so much work and time for us to get better.”

-Cassie



Addressing Safety

- ❑ Risk assessment
- ❑ Establishment of a safe environment (secure living situation, safety planning, non-abusive relationship, job, adequate support)
- ❑ Creating a safe environment to process their experiences



“So I think for clinicians it's important to create a neutral space...It doesn't mean they can't have their own belief systems, but they need to understand that maybe the things that bring them solace are things that were instruments of oppression for other people.”

- Annabel

“I think a lot of it is going to be looking for the signs, reading the body language...they're going to have their arms crossed, they're not going to look you in the eye, they're gonna lie to you because they're afraid to tell you the truth”

-Crystal

“Just be there to listen and don't try to like give them answers to their problem like they know what's best for them...don't like tell them like you need to do this because that's like another way of controlling someone. You know, like a word like ‘rescue someone’ is like something that needs to be taken out of the trafficking language. Because they're not rescuing a person, they've suffered like they've gone through hell, they know how to survive, they don't need to be rescued”

-Gretchen

Attributes

- Safe
- Trustworthy
- Relational
- Validating
- Empathic
- Honest
- Humility

Knowledge and Skills

- Addressing non-verbal behavior
- Knowledge of sex trafficking and trauma
- Assessment and identifying sex trafficking
- Understanding client's level of engagement

Helpful Practices

- Providing resources
- Providing support
- Empowerment of the client
- Modeling healthy boundaries

Foundational Skills



Skill	Intention
<p>Direct Eye Contact</p> <p>Voice tone</p> <p>Body Language</p>	<p>“I am attentive and listening.”</p> <p>Considerations for direct eye contact</p> <p>Paying attention to what the client’s voice tone is saying, (e.g., “I am doing well”)</p> <p>Using voice tone to connect/mirror/reflect empathy</p> <p>Posture of involvement: Open and relaxed</p> <p>Pay attention to body language as nonverbal communication (e.g., crossed arms, fidgeting).</p>

Closed questions

- Asks for specific information and requires a short factual response
 - Are you thinking of killing yourself?
 - Are you afraid?
 - Do you feel safe?
 - Has a boyfriend, girlfriend, or anyone else asked you or forced you to do something sexual with another person?

Open ended questions

- Allows more freedom of expression and is perceived more helpful.
 - How is your relationship with your partner/parent/guardian?
 - What do you mean by that?
 - In what ways are you coping with the pain?

Encouragers: Statements

Door openers: Non-coercive statements that invite someone to talk

- Positive and nonjudgmental response
 - Tell me what is on your mind
 - Tell me more about that.
 - You look down this morning.



Minimal Encouragers

Verbal Encouragers

Brief supportive statements that convey attention and understanding

“I see”

“Yes”

“Right”

“Go on”

“Hmmm...hmm..”

“Mmm”

Non-verbal Encouragers

Use of gestures and expressions to convey attention and understanding

Head nod

Facial expression

Direct gaze

Eye contact

Hand gesture



Art of Questioning

Beware of evaluative or judgmental phrasing.

- You let your friend talk you into going to that party.
- Why did you not leave?
- I'm sure you knew better than to go into that club.
- Oh, I would expect that from the modeling industry.
- But you're a man? Help me understand how this happened to you.

Don't answer your own question.

- You won't say yes to that, will you?

Don't give options after you pose a question.

- How would you say it makes you feel? Happy or sad?

Don't compound your questions.

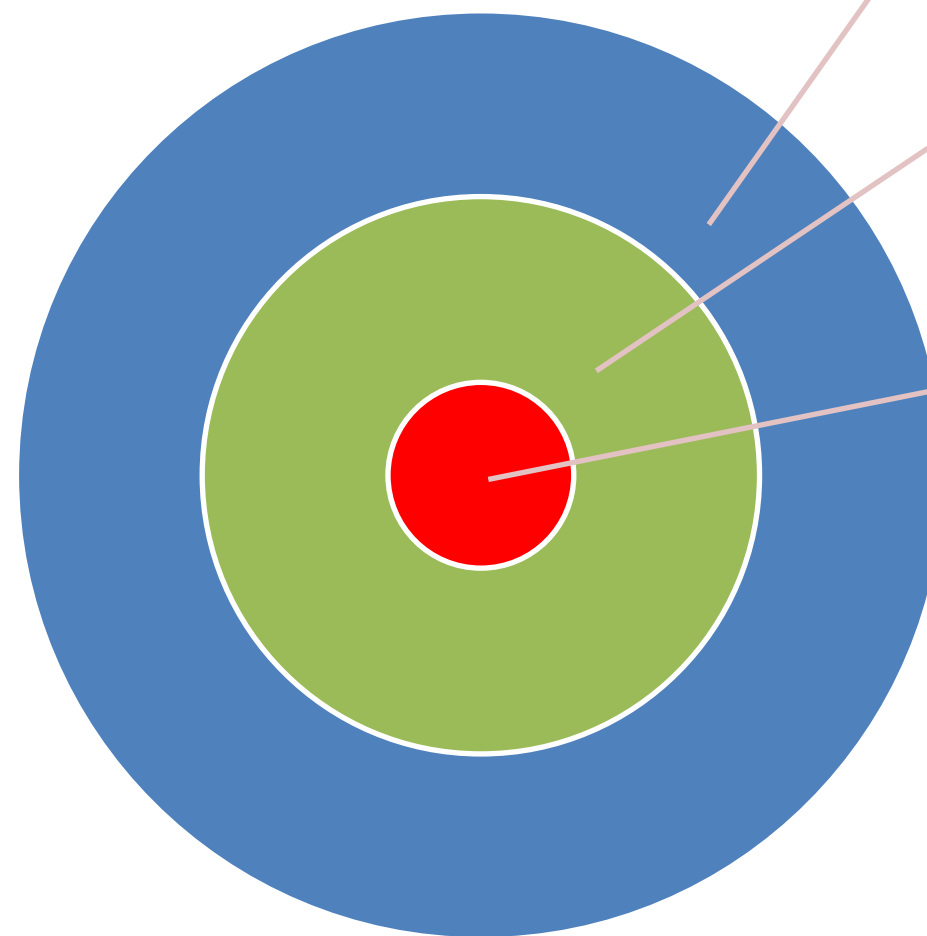
- What do you do to deal with the pain? It must be hard living like this. When it gets hard, is there something you do that is helpful? Like, may be people to talk to? Or may be, counseling?



Reflecting

But to say when it started, I'm not sure because like I said you don't know that grooming process. I have physical scars on my body from when I was a child that no one will admit to...I couldn't tell you when it started but I know there's been that brainwashing and that psychological, sexual, physical, mental abuse all my life that led up to it.

-Crystal



Facts and thoughts:
Paraphrasing

Feelings:
Reflecting
Feelings

Hidden Meaning:
Reflecting
Meaning

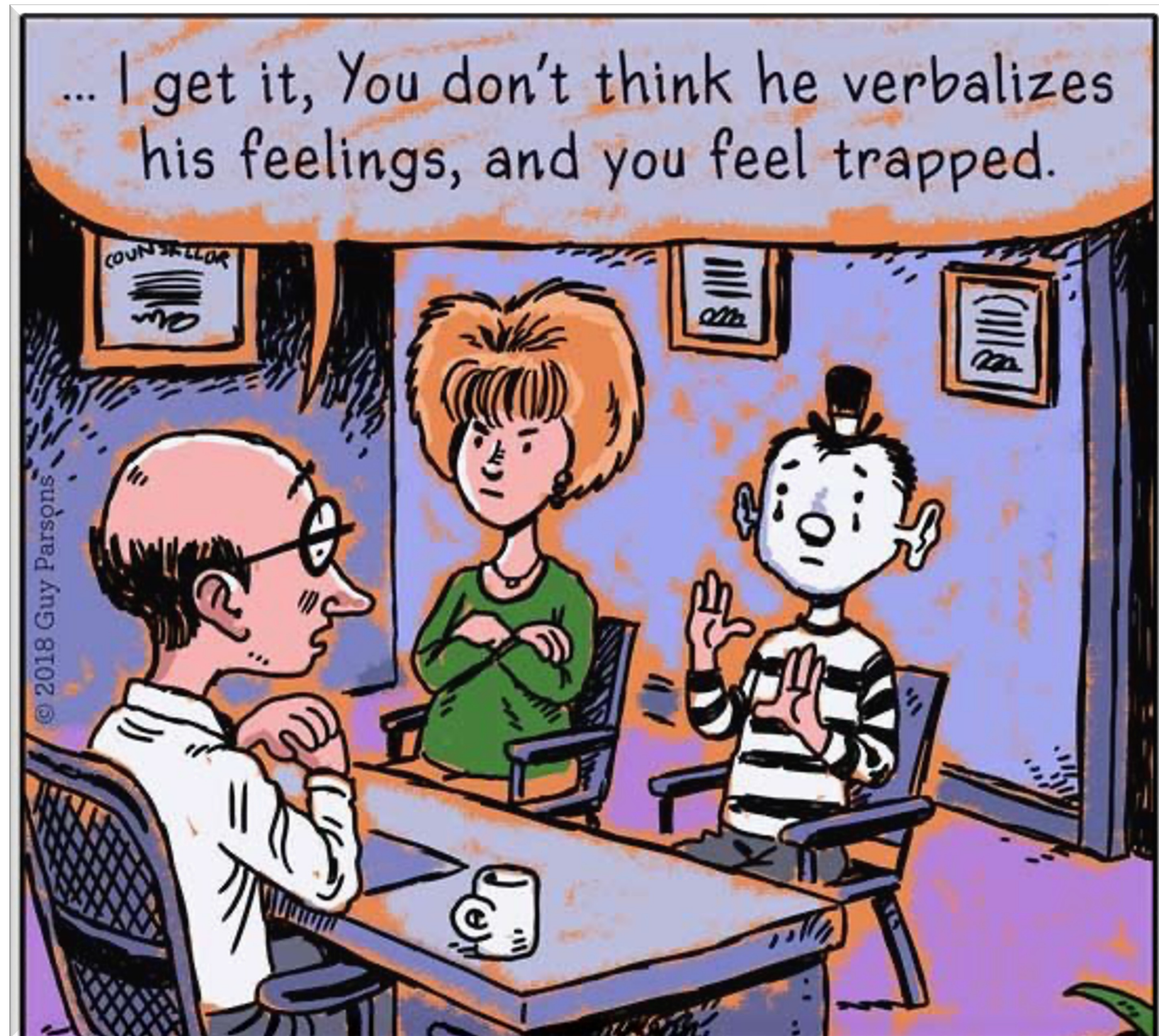
The grooming process has made it difficult for you to pinpoint the beginning of your trafficking experiences.

It could be frustrating to not have a clear timeline of how and when it all started.

It must be painful for you to now see how you were groomed from a young age which eventually led to your sex trafficking experience.

How do we reflect feelings?

- Reflect either the stated emotion or the implicit
 - I am just so mad at her
 - You feel furious
 - I just lost my job (looks down)
 - You feel sad and hopeless



Shades of Feelings

Consider:

- Cultural Expression of Emotion
- Age
- Qualifiers (somewhat, little)
- Two or more feelings



How to reflect nonverbal language



“You see?”

- You seem...
- I can see that you are...
- Based on what you are telling me I can see that...
- So it seems...
- You look...
- These are ambiguous - summarize & reflect to ensure correct interpretation

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