



Standards for Working with Human Trafficking Survivors:

Community-Based Victim Advocates

Introduction

The crime of human trafficking is complex and the needs of human trafficking victims are unique and far-reaching. In reality, human trafficking often involves multiple, repeated victimizations. Victims may present with acute medical conditions or suffer from medical neglect. Others have experienced prolonged mental abuse at the hands of their trafficker. Often victims of this crime develop strong trauma bonds and suffer from Stockholm syndrome¹ due to the power and control mechanisms exerted by their exploiter. The level of complex trauma experienced by some victims is similar to that of torture survivors.² As a result, victims of this crime suffer from a multitude of negative physical and mental health outcomes such as depression, anxiety, self-hatred, dissociation, substance abuse and PTSD.³ Many foreign-

¹Stockholm syndrome is a psychological phenomenon in which a hostage [victim] expresses empathy, sympathy and positive feelings towards their captor [perpetrator], sometimes to the point of defending and identifying with the perpetrator. These feelings are generally considered irrational in light of the danger or risk endured by the victim, who essentially mistakes a lack of abuse from their captures for an act of kindness. Stockholm syndrome can be seen as a form of traumatic bonding, which does not necessarily require a hostage scenario, but which describes strong emotional ties that develop between two persons where one person intermittently harasses, beats, threatens, abuses, or intimidates the other. For more information on Stockholm Syndrome, see de Fabrique, et al. (2007). Understanding Stockholm Syndrome. FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin. 26(7), 10-15. Retrieved on November 12, 2015 from <https://leb.fbi.gov/2007-pdfs/leb-july-2007> and Task Force on Trafficking of Women and Girls. (2014). *Report of the Trafficking Task Force on Trafficking of Women and Girls*. Retrieved on October 25, 2015 from <http://www.apa.org/pi/women/programs/trafficking/report.pdf>

² Hopper, E. (2004). Under-identification of Human Trafficking Victims in the United States. *Journal of Social Work Research and Evaluation*. 5(2), 125-135. Retrieved on November 12, 2015 from http://www.traumacenter.org/products/pdf_files/underidentification_traf.pdf

³ For more information on the impact of trauma on victims of violence, see Williamson et al. (2010). Evidence-Based Mental Health Treatment for Victims of Human Trafficking, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, US Department of Health and Human Services. Retrieved on November 12, 2015 from <https://aspe.hhs.gov/basic-report/evidence-based-mental-health-treatment-victims-human-trafficking>
Herman, J.L. (1992). Complex PTSD: A Syndrome in Survivors of Prolonged and Repeated Trauma. *Journal of Traumatic Stress* Vol 5, 377-391.

national victims have unstable immigration statuses, often as a result of their trafficking situation, which can limit access to the necessary physical, mental and emotional care. Some victims face language barriers and lack the social supports that one turns to in times of crisis, such as family and friends. Other victims cannot rely on such supports because the trafficker is a parent, close relative or family friend.

Due to the complex nature of victimization these individuals experience, it is the responsibility of the Colorado Human Trafficking Council (CHTC) to develop a response that is multifaceted and takes into consideration the many, varied and often long-term needs of trafficking victims. This victim population is unique from other crime victims and therefore requires a distinctive and individualized response. It is for these reasons the CHTC was established and why the Council was given the task to address the potential need for standards for organizations that serve this victim population.⁴

In 2015, as part of their annual report, the Council recommended that standards for organizations that provide services to victims of human trafficking be established. However, it was the opinion of the Council that standards should apply to only a subset of professional sectors, which included: community-based victim advocates; mental/behavioral health professionals; housing program providers; case manager and social services providers. The Council further recommended that standards **only** apply to those organizations and professionals who provide direct services to victims of human trafficking. In 2016, the Council prioritized the development of standards for community-based victim advocates and mental/behavioral health professionals and published the approved standards documents in their annual report.

Standards and Guidance

Community-based victim advocates play a critical role in providing long-term assistance to human trafficking survivors. Community-based victim advocates render advice, counsel and assist victims⁵ in accessing services, promote healing, and help victims regain control.⁶

⁴ Through HB 14-1273, the Colorado General Assembly tasked the CHTC to make recommendations on whether to establish standards and a process for the certification of organizations that provide services to victims of human trafficking

⁵ C.R.S § 13-90-107(k)(II)(A).

Community-based victim advocates often provide case management.⁷ Case management is defined as the provision of services tailored to the unique needs and goals of the trafficking survivor⁸ on his or her path to healing and independence.

The standards contained in this document apply only to **community-based victim advocates who want to specialize in serving human trafficking survivors**. These standards do not apply to community-based victim advocates who work for private non-profit organizations that are either employed by or have contracts with a District Attorney's office or law enforcement agency to provide victim advocacy services. Please note that community-based victim advocates play a key role in maintaining confidentiality of the victim and in some circumstances may have legal privilege per Colorado statute (*Reference C.R.S § 13-90-107(k)(I-II)*). It is not the intent of these standards to alter the current privilege statute referenced above.

The goal of these standards is to provide overarching guidance to community-based victim advocates on the training and experience needed to be a successful advocate on behalf of human trafficking survivors as well as provide an overview of the promising practices emerging from the anti-trafficking field on how best to serve and engage with victims of this crime.

Role of Community-Based Victim Advocates

The community-based victim advocate plays an important role in maintaining the confidentiality of the victim and assists the victim in determining not only whether information will be shared, but also what specific information should be shared. Due to this confidential relationship, community-based victim advocates are in a unique position to help the victim to process in a safe environment when, how, and if information is shared. Representing victim experiences and perspectives is unique to victim advocates. The victims of these intimate, complex, and dangerous crimes require a specialized victim advocacy approach and advocates who are highly trained, experienced, knowledgeable, and skilled professionals.

⁶ Colorado Organization for Victim Assistance. (2006, April 10). Code of Professional Ethics for Victim Assistance Providers. Retrieved on March 18, 2016 from <http://www.coloradocrimevictims.org/colorado-advocate-certification-prgram-cacp.html>.

⁷ The word victim is used in this definition as that is the language used in both the C.R.S. and COVA Code of Professional Ethics.

⁸ The terms "human trafficking survivor" and "human trafficking victim" are used interchangeably throughout these standards.

REQUIREMENTS

Qualifications for Community-Based Victim Advocates Working with Human Trafficking Survivors

I. Fully Certified Community-Based Victim Advocate Requirements

A fully certified community-based victim advocate is someone who is an active advocate already working in the field, who has already completed a minimum of 140 experiential direct services hours, and 60 hours of basic advocate training (which includes the following subject areas: Victim Topics [15hrs], Advocate Skills [15hrs], System Agency Response [15hrs], and Electives [15hrs]).

A. Obtain the *Basic* certification from:

1. The Colorado Advocate Certification Program (CACP), administered by the Colorado Organization for Victim Assistance (COVA).

Website URL: <http://www.coloradocrimevictims.org/colorado-advocate-certification-prgram-cacp.html>.

- a. You may participate in the Colorado Victim Assistance Academy offered by COVA in order to meet the requirements for the *Basic* certification. To learn more about the academy, visit:

<http://www.coloradocrimevictims.org/colorado-victim-assistance-academy-cvaa.html>

Attention: Please note that obtaining the BASIC certification through the CACP program does not require you to participate in trainings offered by COVA or any other organization. You may fulfill the training requirements for the BASIC certificate by completing any training that covers the content areas listed and by providing proof of your attendance with your CACP application.

- b. Additional resources for training that could satisfy the above requirements are listed in Appendix 1.

- B. These standards require that the 15 hours of elective training prescribed through the CACP shall include the content areas below. This requirement is to ensure proper training on human trafficking and how to best engage with a human trafficking survivor. Due to the rapidly evolving nature of the anti-trafficking field,

all human trafficking-related courses must have been completed within the last three years.

REQUIRED COURSES/TOPICS (five hours total):

- Colorado Human Trafficking 101 (120 minutes)
- Community-Based Victim Advocates and the Human Trafficking Survivor: This course must cover understanding service needs of human trafficking survivors, providing intensive case management, understanding challenges to service delivery, and utilizing local resources.
- Applying Trauma-Informed Care to Human Trafficking Cases

ELECTIVE COURSES/TOPICS⁹

(at least five out of the seven content areas for a minimum of 10 hours)

- Human Trafficking in Rural Communities
- Overview of Labor Trafficking Cases
- Gang Involvement in Human Trafficking
- Child Trafficking
- Immigration Relief for Trafficking Survivors
- The Intersection Between Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault, and Child Sex Abuse and Human Trafficking
- The Importance of Collaboration in Human Trafficking Cases

C. Experiential hours according to the COVA requirements, which can be found in the CACP application (<http://www.coloradocrimevictims.org/colorado-advocate-certification-prgram-cacp.html>). *Experiential hours refer to paid or volunteer work experience in the field of victim advocacy as well as service hours, which include direct service to victims (e.g., case review meetings, hotline work, shadowing, case management, call out time, etc.)*

⁹ Training resources for elective courses/topics can be found in Appendix 1.

II. Entry-Level Community-Based Victim Advocates

An entry-level community-based victim advocate is someone who is just entering the field of victim advocacy and has completed a minimum of 70 hours of experiential direct service and a minimum of 30 hours of basic advocacy training.

A. Training Hours:

1. A minimum of 30 initial hours of basic advocate training must be completed to serve as an entry-level community-based victim advocate and shall include: victim advocacy, human trafficking dynamics, victimization, and safety planning.
2. The remaining 30 hours of training required to become a fully certified community-based victim advocate shall be achieved within the first year of work as an entry-level community-based victim advocate and shall include the 15 hours of elective course training focused on human trafficking as listed previously.

B. Experiential Hours:

1. A minimum of 70 hours of experience working with crime victims must be completed to serve as an entry-level community-based victim advocate. Five of the 70 hours must be dedicated to working directly with human trafficking survivors. These hours may be earned through any combination of employment, volunteer work, or internships.
2. The remaining 70 experiential hours required for a fully certified community-based victim advocate shall be earned within two years.

III. Continuing Education and Renewal of Advocacy Certification

A. Renewal of CACP certification every two years.

B. Over a two-year period, dedicate eight of the required 32 hours of continuing education for CACP renewal to human trafficking-related courses/topics, which cannot include the original required training courses for the human trafficking specialty. *Refer to elective list of courses/topics for ideas.*

IV. Victim Advocates Shall Be Knowledgeable About Local Resources

Survivors of human trafficking have a myriad of needs, needs that cannot be fulfilled by a single agency. It will be critical in your work as an advocate to be knowledgeable about the availability of resources in your community. The following is a list of common needs survivors of human trafficking might present (*please note that this list is not exhaustive*):

- Safety planning
- Food, clothing, and other basic needs
- Legal guardianship (*for minors only*)
- All forms of housing
- Legal assistance,¹⁰ which may include
 - Filing for immigration relief
 - Reunification/repatriation
 - Civil litigation, family, and other civil matters
- Vacating/expunging criminal convictions
- Translation services
- Child care
- Transportation services
- Address confidentiality program
- Victim/witness notification
- Victim compensation
- Medical and dental health services
- Behavioral health services
 - *May include substance abuse treatment*
- Life skills education
- Education
- Job training/employment placement assistance, and
- Culturally and linguistically appropriate services

PROMISING PRACTICES IN VICTIM ADVOCACY FOR HUMAN TRAFFICKING SURVIVORS

Guiding Principles

Community-based victim advocates should provide assistance that is:

- **Survivor-informed**: Listening and learning from survivors.¹¹ Giving survivors the tools to do for themselves rather than doing for them.
- **Culturally responsive**: Paying particular attention to social and cultural factors in managing encounters with clients from different social, cultural, and religious backgrounds. A basic premise is to recognize the client's culture, your own culture, and how both affect the client-provider relationship.¹²
- **Trauma-informed**: Recognizing that trauma can have a broad and pervasive effect on a client's personhood, which affects every area of human functioning—physical,

¹⁰ Please note that trafficking survivors have many legal needs some of which may not necessarily be directly related to their trafficking experience.

¹¹ Definition adapted from the Freedom Network, Retrieved on June 23, 2016 from <http://freedomnetworkusa.org/>

¹² Definition adapted from Dimension of Culture: Cross-Cultural Communications for Healthcare Professionals, Retrieved on June 23, 2016 from <http://www.dimensionsofculture.com/2010/10/576/>

mental, behavioral, social, and spiritual. It also involves creating an environment for clients that conveys dignity, respect, hopefulness, and the opportunity for choice and empowerment among clients.¹³

- Individualized and need-based: Services should be tailored to the unique needs and background of each client, taking into consideration the spiritual, cultural, intellectual, physical, and emotional dynamics resulting from his or her trafficking experience.
- Legally informed: Understanding the laws governing mandatory reporting, confidentiality, and the limitations of legal privilege; should be familiar with Victim Compensation program's abilities and reimbursable expenses; knowledgeable regarding the rights afforded to and the limitations on the rights of victims under the Colorado Victim's Rights Act. Advocates should not provide legal advice without a law license, and should refer questions regarding charging, legal violations, and other legal proceedings to the criminal justice advocate or lawyer handling the criminal or civil case.
- Accessible: Services should be accessible based on literacy level, language, financial considerations, ADA, etc.

Peer Consultation

Peer consultation with other fully certified community-based victim advocates or consultation with local victim service providers is strongly encouraged. Peer consultation may include:

1. Sharing information about training opportunities and resources
2. Confidentiality issues
3. Advocacy on behalf of a specific population
4. Technical assistance and safety planning

Advocacy Contacts

Advocacy contacts with the victim shall address the following:

1. A brief explanation of the advocate's role and why he or she is making contact.
2. Explanation of confidentiality, including limitations.

¹³ Definition from the National Council for Behavioral Health, Retrieved on June 23, 2016 from <http://www.thenationalcouncil.org/areas-of-expertise/trauma-informed-behavioral-healthcare/>

3. Conducting a needs assessment and honoring the victim's self-determination in providing information and resources.
4. Determination of whether or not the victim wishes to be contacted, including preferred and most secure method of contact. Social media or similar electronic/digital communication avenues should be used with caution and only when appropriate to contact victims, as confidentiality may be jeopardized.
5. Any concerns about safety that the victim may have.
6. Referrals and resources.

Victim Confidentiality

I. Importance of Victim Confidentiality

It is critical for victims of human trafficking to have confidential communications with and confidential assistance from community-based victim advocates. The ability to receive confidential services can both enhance victims' safety and their ability to reach out to and to trust advocates. However, it is important for advocates to explain the benefits and limitations of confidentiality to the victims they assist.¹⁴

II. Duty of Confidentiality

Generally speaking, the duty of confidentiality for community-based victim advocates is to not reveal any confidential information relating to assistance provided on behalf of, or communications with, a victim of human trafficking. Community-based victim advocates shall know and adhere to their agency's confidentiality policies and procedures.

A. Consent to Release Information:

Community-based victim advocates shall not disclose personally identifying information about victims, unless the individual consents to having her or his information shared.

1. Victims shall be informed of the benefits and potential consequences of having their information shared.

¹⁴ For additional information, refer to Confidentiality Institute. (2015). A Primer on Privilege & Confidentiality for Victim Service Providers. Retrieved on May 19, 2016 from: http://nnedv.org/downloads/NNEDV_CI_Primer_on_Privilege_2015.pdf.

2. Victims' consent to a release of information shall be specific, written, and reasonably time-limited.
3. Community-based victim advocates shall share only the minimum amount of information necessary to meet the victim's needs, or, in other words, release information on a "need to know basis."
4. Community-based victim advocates shall honor victims' rights and choices regarding what, if any, victim information will be shared, and with whom, including:
 - a. What specific victim information the advocate will be sharing
 - b. Who the information is to be shared with
 - c. How that information may be utilized
 - d. When that information will be shared
 - e. The time period for the release of information
5. The victim can revoke the release of information at any time

B. Exceptions to Victim Confidentiality

1. Reporting of suspected abuse or neglect of children:
 - a. All community-based victim advocates have a responsibility and shall report suspected abuse or neglect of children. (*Reference C.R.S. § 19-3-302*)

Special Note: As of 2016, human trafficking of a minor for sexual servitude (C.R.S § 18-3-504) and the commercial sexual exploitation of children have been added to the definition of child abuse or neglect (C.R.S § 19-1-103)
 - b. Advocates shall inform victims of this exception upon initial contact and as appropriate during victim contacts.
 - c. Victims should be notified when a report is made for suspected child abuse or neglect, or when their information is shared under a court order.
2. Court ordered release of information
 - a. The community-based victim advocate or the advocate's records could be subpoenaed.

Appendix 1: Training Resources for Community-Based Victim Advocates

Below is a list of national and Colorado-based organizations, conferences, and online resources where you can obtain training in the human trafficking content areas recommended in the standards. Please note this is not an exhaustive list. There are many more organizations, conferences and online resources available for training.

National Training Resources:

Online training courses available to help fulfill requirements necessary for the CACP *Basic* certification:

- National Organization for Victim Assistance (NOVA)*
 - 40-hour live distance learning training
Website URL: <https://www.trynova.org/help-crime-victim/nalc/nvaa/>
- Office for Victims of Crime (provided for free)*
 - 40-hour online Victim Assistance Training program
Website URL:
https://www.ovcttac.gov/views/TrainingMaterials/dspOnline_VATOnline.cfm

Please Note: if you utilize a national training course to fulfill your requirements for the BASIC certification, you will have to obtain training locally on the Colorado Victim Compensation program and Colorado Victim Rights Act as these two content areas are unique to victim advocacy in Colorado. Training for both content areas are available through the Colorado Department of Public Safety's Division of Criminal Justice, Office for Victims Programs. Visit <http://dcj.state.co.us/> for more information.

Online training courses and webinars available to fulfill human trafficking elective requirements:

- National Human Trafficking Hotline (Polaris)
 - Website URL: <https://traffickingresourcecenter.org/training-resources/get-training>
- Futures Without Violence
 - Website URL: <https://www.futureswithoutviolence.org/resources-events/webinars/>
- Office for Victims of Crime Training and Technical Assistance Center (OVC-TTAC)
 - Website URL:
<https://www.ovcttac.gov/views/HowWeCanHelp/dspHumanTrafficking.cfm>

- “Implementing Trauma-Informed Case Management Services: 4 Part Series,” *presented by OVC TTAC and the Freedom Network*
 - Available as a webinar at: <http://freedomnetworkusa.org>

Annual Anti-Human Trafficking Conferences:

- The Freedom Network (*usually takes place in April*)
 - Website URL: <http://freedomnetworkusa.org>
- The National Human Trafficking Hotline provides a regularly updated schedule of conferences that are taking place around the country.
 - Website URL: <https://traffickingresourcecenter.org/types/conference>

Colorado Training Resources

Annual Conferences in Colorado that would fulfill victim advocacy and human trafficking training requirements

- Colorado Advocacy in Action Conference (*usually takes place in June*)
 - Website URL: <http://coloradoadvocacy.org/>
- COVA Conference (*usually takes place in October*)
 - Website URL: <http://www.coloradocrimevictims.org/cova-conference.html>
- COVA Victim Assistance Academy (CVAA) (*usually takes place in June*)
 - Website URL: <http://www.coloradocrimevictims.org/colorado-victim-assistance-academy-cvaa.html>

Organizations that provide training courses that would fulfill human trafficking elective requirements:

- Colorado Legal Services
 - Website URL: <http://www.coloradolegalservices.org/>
- Colorado Human Trafficking Council (CHTC): The CHTC website contains a calendar of training events that are taking place across the state. In early 2017 the website will also contain e-learning training opportunities.
 - Website URL: <https://sites.google.com/a/state.co.us/cdps-prod/home/human-trafficking-council>
- Colorado Organization for Victim Assistance
 - Website URL: <http://www.coloradocrimevictims.org/human-trafficking-program.html>
- The Laboratory to Combat Human Trafficking
 - Website URL: <http://www.combathumantrafficking.org/>