

## Guidelines for Collaborating With Survivors

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# Health Subcommittee

SAN DIEGO COUNTY REGIONAL HUMAN TRAFFICKING  
& CSEC ADVISORY COUNCIL

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Survivors are one of your best resources in understanding the nuances of human trafficking and should be involved the development and implementation of protocols for your system. ([Ladd, Sarah K., and Laurel Neufeld Weaver. "Moving forward: Collaborative accompaniment of human trafficking survivors by using trauma-informed practices." \*Journal of Human Trafficking\* 4.3 \(2018\): 191-212.](#))

- **Use the preferred title** (Survivor leader, lived experience expert, consultant, CEO etc).
- **We can't do this work effectively without Survivors.**
- Please resist anything that would [cause retraumatization](#). Limit your inquiries to information that will help you prevent future harm.
- **Make sure that your consultant has been out of their trafficking experience for at least 2 years.**
- **Ensure Survivors are compensated for their contribution.** Some Survivors are funded through government programs or philanthropic organizations. If not, secure funding and make sure that you have a mutual, written agreement of fair compensation, expectations, and boundaries before making or scheduling commitments. Survivor leaders often sacrifice their valuable personal time to do the emotional work that contributes to solutions. A written agreement in advance protects Survivors emotionally and financially.
- **Avoid sensational images, as well as gender and ethnic-biased images.**
- **In general, avoid referring to consultants as victims.** (Victim is an appropriate term to use in adjudicating a criminal case. But, it is often unhelpful in other settings.) Never tell a Survivor's story for them. Don't speak over them, etc. [Please read this article by Survivor and CEO of GEMS Rachel Lloyd.](#)
- **Ask for boundaries. Reinforce and honor their boundaries. Boundaries are not negotiable.** Healing is a process and boundaries make for healthy relationships.
- **Do not film or take pictures without permission.**
- Ask for a professional bio and/or acknowledge Survivor accomplishments, credentials and professional goals as you would for any other professional.
- If you let them, Survivors may teach you. But, don't demand it.
- Follow up with a thank you note and ask for feedback. Feedback reinforces the value of their input and helps everyone to improve future experiences.

**Additional resources regarding working with Survivors:**

- [Sharing the Message of Human Trafficking: A Public Awareness and Media Guide by Wichita State University.](#)
- [Tips for Anti-Trafficking Professionals When Working with Survivor Leaders Written by: Catie Hart, Celia Roberts, Genèvieve T. Tiangco, Kae Kae Baybie, Monica Anderson, Ummra Hang, Alix Lutnick, Minh Dang](#)
- The Irina Project [Language Matters](#) tips for sensitive words and alternatives
- The Irina Project [Images of Human Trafficking: Moving Beyond Sensationalism in Journalism](#)
- [Tips for Survivor Leaders Working in the Anti-Trafficking Movement Written by: Catie Hart, Celia Roberts, Genèvieve T. Tiangco, Kae Kae Baybie, Monica Anderson, Ummra Hang, Alix Lutnick, Minh Dang](#)
- [Toolkit for Building Survivor-Informed Organizations](#) Office on Trafficking in Persons (OTIP)
- [Toolkit for Building Survivor-Informed Organizations: Trauma-Informed Resources and Survivor-Informed Practices to Support and Collaborate with Survivors of Human Trafficking as Professionals](#) United States. Administration for Children and Families
- [Lewis-O'Connor A, Warren A, Lee JV, Levy-Carrick N, Grossman S, Chadwick M, Stoklosa H, Rittenberg E. The state of the science on trauma inquiry. Women's Health. 2019 Aug;15:1745506519861234.](#)