

Establishing an Evidence-Based Trauma Informed Care Pathway for Survivors of Modern Slavery

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Abstract : Modern Slavery is a serious crime, where often the victims are unable to leave their situation of exploitation, being controlled by threats, punishment, violence, coercion, and deception. In the UK, this term encompasses both Slavery and Human Trafficking. The number of potential victims who were referred to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) increased exponentially in the past decade, passing from fewer than 700 potential victims referred in 2010 to more than 12.000 in 2021. Our study aims to explore how the concept of Trauma-Informed Care (TIC) approach can be adopted by services working with survivors of Modern Slavery and Trafficking (MST). Notably, in this paper, we will elaborate on how the complex needs of survivors are related to their traumatic experiences and what are the necessary steps and resources for implementing a Modern Slavery Trauma-Informed model. While there are relatively few services in the UK that have a deep understanding of the survivors' and practitioners' views of how trauma impacts their daily life, there is a strong need for developing services that are organised and delivered in ways that prevent retraumatisation and enable trauma survivors to engage safely with the right professionals at the right time, promoting healing through positive relationships. Such models, known as Trauma-Informed Approaches (TIAs), are seen as crucial to the empowerment of survivors, yet they remain a marginal implementation model by governments, law enforcement, judiciary, or care providers, who are frequently survivors' first point of contact in the recovery process. In order to understand better how to provide best practice and to adopt the concept, this study is based on a multi-disciplinary approach, encompassing both theoretical perspectives and co-production. By combining qualitative and quantitative research and comparing different analysis of applied examples of TIC in the US and the UK, we gained important insights about the prevention and impact of trauma on survivors' life. The articulation between more general expertise on Trauma-Informed Care developed by other institutions operating in the field, and the SJOG delivery, based on the Salvation Army's Modern Slavery Victim Care and Coordination Contract (MSVCC) and the Care Quality Commission regulations, allowed to identify on one side what are the complex needs of survivors derived from their traumatic experiences, and on the other side, how could MST services prevent retraumatisation. Additional, two in-depth interviews with survivors, who receive support from one of our services at Olallo House in London, and a survey shared among all colleagues working with MST services completed the findings of the research with their personal experience and knowledge. Ultimately, we developed an evidence-based Trauma-Informed Care Pathway that aims to improve the wellbeing of survivors and to support them to live a meaningful life. The established pathway delivers three main outcomes belonging to the social determinants of health criteria - health and wellbeing, purpose and relationship, and covers key themes of the context of trauma, needs of individuals, and service support.

Keywords : trauma-informed care, modern slavery, human trafficking, trauma, retraumatisation

Conference Title : ICHTSE 2022 : International Conference on Human Trafficking, Slavery and Exploitation

Conference Location : London, United Kingdom

Conference Dates : August 16-17, 2022