IOM • OIM

# Understanding and Counteracting
# Trafficking in Persons

## The Acts

## of the Seminar

## for Women

## Religious

International Union
of Superiors General

USMI
unione superiore
maggiori d'Italia

# Understanding and Counteracting

# **Trafficking in Persons**

## The Acts of the Seminar for Women Religious

IOM is committed to the principle that humane and orderly migration benefits migrants and society. As an intergovernmental body, IOM acts with its partners in the international community to: assist in meeting operational challenges of migration; advance understanding of migration issues; encourage social and economic development through migration; and work towards effective respects of the human dignity and well-beings of migrants.

# Understanding and Counteracting
# Trafficking in Persons

## The Acts of the Seminar for Women Religious

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IOM International Organization for Migration
OIM Organizzazione Internazionale per le Migrazioni

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# Preface

## Acknowledgements

Combating trafficking in human beings is one of the most pressing challenges facing the international community today. The victims of this insidious crime each year number in the hundreds of thousands, possibly millions. They are often the poorest and most defenseless members of the human family. Today, trafficking in persons rivals arms and drug trafficking as one of the most lucrative criminal enterprises in the world.

President George W. Bush emphasized America's commitment to defeating this modern day slavery when over the past two years he brought his concerns to the floor of the United Nations General Assembly twice and laid the problem before the world. As he observed, "There is a special evil in the abuse and exploitation of the most innocent and vulnerable. Those who create these victims and profit from their suffering must be severely punished. Those who patronize this industry debase themselves and deepen the misery of others."

The United States is profoundly concerned about this human tragedy, and also deeply committed to ending it. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security has announced that federal, state, and local law enforcement officials are joining together in an unprecedented initiative to combat human trafficking and the suffering it has generated.

Because of its transnational nature, no individual country has the power to eradicate trafficking in persons alone. For this reason, the United States supports the efforts of individual countries, as well as those of international organizations such as the International Organization for Migration (IOM), that are working in new ways to combat this terrible worldwide plague. Additionally, we are encouraging the United Nations, NATO, and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) to begin to institutionalize comprehensive programs aimed at combating trafficking in persons. Only by working together will we be able to stamp out the scourge of 21st century slavery.

The United States committed to joining the fight against trafficking several years ago, and passed the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act in 2000. To further encourage international cooperation against trafficking, the Department of State provides the U.S. Congress with an annual Trafficking in Persons Report that examines how countries are faring in their national efforts to prevent trafficking, prosecute traffickers, and protect victims. The United States is prepared to help countries that demonstrate a sincere commitment to combating this modern day slavery.

We at the U.S. Embassy to the Holy See are very focused on this new assault on human dignity and are working actively both to enhance awareness of this problem and to prevent and deter it through expanded training. We have been privileged to work with the Rome office of IOM, the sisters of the Italian Union of Major Superiors, and the International Union of Superiors General to coordinate this program to train women religious in anti-trafficking strategies and skills. It is a groundbreaking program that has already proven its success. We hope that the information contained in this project report will serve as a useful tool for others in their efforts to put an end to trafficking in human beings. The United States sees people of faith as key partners in this work.

We have a moral responsibility to help the millions of people worldwide who are bought, sold, transported, and held against their will in slave-like conditions. We will continue to work with all people of good will to bring light to the dire circumstances of today's slaves. We put an end to slavery once before, we can-and must-do it again.

*Jim Nicholson*

U.S. Ambassador to the Holy See

December 2004

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# Introduction

**T**his document is intended to serve as one of the instruments for women religious who are active or who are willing to become active in counter-trafficking[1] efforts associated with prevention activities and victim assistance. It is a part of the *Counter-Trafficking Training Program for Religious Personnel* project supported by the US Embassy to the Holy See, funded by the US Government (Department of State/Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration), and conducted by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), in collaboration with the Union of Major Superiors of Italy (USMI), the International Union of Superiors General (UISG) and ICMC/Fondazione Migrantes (Rome) of the Episcopal Conference of Italy (CEI).

The contents of this document were used during four separate training courses held in Italy, Albania, Nigeria, and Romania in which a total of 87 women religious participated. These countries were deliberately selected for their diverse political, social, and cultural conditions.

Trafficking in persons is a phenomenon inextricably linked to the geopolitical transformation of the last two decades, resulting in the increased connectivity and interdependence of world markets. Globalization of the world economy not only impacts those with leading roles such as policy makers, entrepreneurs and businesspeople; it also influences welfare networks, criminal syndicates and the world's disadvantaged. This reality forces reconsideration of development strategies and the distribution of wealth in countries of origin (usually developing countries) and countries of destination (usually industrialized or developed countries). To be precise, countries of destination must find a way to reconcile legitimate economic interests, which often rely heavily on cheap labor to remain competitive and maintain profitability, while respecting the human rights and dignity of those who invest in migration in hopes of improving their condition.

Furthermore, globalization has favored the increase of migration particularly among women and minors, groups previously far less involved in labor migration. Seeking improved conditions for themselves and their families, thousands of women have migrated, enticed by the possibility of finding work in the high-demand domestic services sector of wealthy countries. The promise of financial independence gained by offering services such as child and elder care and housekeeping attracts women of all ages to relocate. In many cases, however, the

**Luke 4: 18-19**

*18 "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, 19 to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord."*

**notes**

1. Throughout this document *trafficking* and *counter-trafficking* will refer exclusively to trafficking and counter-trafficking in *persons*.

promises have not been kept. Rather than benefitting from the promised employment and its accompanying wages, many women experience threats, forced labor, and sexual exploitation and are blackmailed because of their irregular migration status[2]. Unable or too frightened to seek help, they are often obliged to pay exorbitant amounts of money for their travel and accommodations.

In many countries, labor exploitation is often accompanied by sexual exploitation. Victims are typically coerced (with or without abuse) into providing sexual services. Many women tolerate such conditions either to keep their dream of improving their circumstances alive or simply to survive.

Civil society has responded with a series of actions to reduce the risk of involvement and all forms of harm linked to trafficking. Consistent and strategic implementation of these measures, with attention to the nuances of the different cultural, national and regional contexts, will lead to their refinement and improve their efficacy. In many areas, especially in countries of origin, religious personnel are the unique resource able to provide continuous social intervention. Providing religious personnel, therefore, with the professional skills to deal with the particularities of the problem is a means of facilitating coordinated and effective counter trafficking actions.

Intervention and approaches must be deliberate and constantly reconsidered and updated to ensure that they remain context appropriate. Further, assuring that caregivers are provided with the most effective tools possible contributes to increasing efficacy and supporting the women religious who face various risks associated with this particular field.

## Structure of the document

Generally, two schools of thought characterize counter-trafficking action:

1. The first could be considered gender oriented since it attaches trafficking to prostitution. This perspective recognizes trafficking mainly as a form of sexual exploitation supported by the sexually distorted appetites of men in wealthier countries. This school contends that the demand for paid sex acts constitutes the primary pull factor for the trafficking of women. Thus it contends that trafficking is demand driven and should be tackled accordingly.

2. The second school of thought is often articulated in countries of origin but also arises in countries of destination. It could be characterized as "holistic", as it seeks to consider trafficking in its entirety, taking the complex implications of trafficking into account. This approach analyzes relevant economic factors and migration policies, considering the profound evolution of gender roles and relationships. From this perspective, exploitation, sexual or otherwise, is at the center of trafficking.

Giving precedence to the inclusive second perspective, this document strives to offer the reader a professional and practical instrument for counteracting trafficking and supporting victims. It does so by promoting **three fields of action**:

1. Prevention of conditions (poverty, inequality, familial abuse) favoring the

involvement of the women in trafficking;

2. Assistance to victims, supporting their physical and psychological rehabilitation and assisting them in social reintegration;

3. Coordination of activities with already existing support networks.

The document explains the phenomenon of trafficking in persons and its corollaries by first defining the subject, and then looking further into its various implications. The main topics related to trafficking are divided into seven chapters, each one presenting a basic explanation as a launching pad for further exploration. Chapters 1-3 are closely linked to migration, therefore, they begin with discussion of migrants or migration before moving on to trafficking and its victims.

The division of themes and the consistent arrangement of each chapter makes it possible for the reader to consult specific sections according to interest or need, as well as level of knowledge.

This document is intended for those familiar with the educational process. It takes into account adult methods of learning and it strives to be user friendly.

Two kinds of approaches to teaching and learning were adopted: rational and metaphoric. The rational content represents what one wants to communicate in terms of logic and meaning. The metaphoric approach taps into the imagination, creating an analogy describing the same idea in a more personal or colorful way. During the four trainings programs, this approach took on a concrete form through a daily exercise experienced by the participants. They were asked to suggest and elaborate Scripture passages (from either Testament) relevant to the theoretical presentations of the day. This exercise promoted deeper discussion on the spiritual foundations that sustain the actions of women religious in counteracting trafficking in women and children.

## Editorial Note

It should be noted that consistent use of the feminine in this text does not imply that men are never victims of the phenomenon. Though it is less frequent, it does occur. The information in this guide is not gender specific and could also be applied when working with male victims.

Use of the terms potential victim, victim, and survivor are consistent with the various phases of trafficking: before recruitment, during exploitation, and upon escape, respectively. Use of the term "the person assisted" to refer to the potential victim, the victim, and the survivor occurs in Chapter 5 which deals with the Helping Relationship.

Moreover, the word victim is used simply for ease of communication, and in no way suggests frailty or inferiority on the part of the individual. Indeed, when working with survivors, it is imperative not to use such terminology.

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**Luke 9: 10-17**

*10 On their return the apostles told him what they had done. And he took them and withdrew apart to a city called Beth-sa'ida. 11 When the crowds learned it, they followed him; and he welcomed them and spoke to them of the kingdom of God, and cured those who had need of healing. 12 Now the day began to wear away; and the twelve came and said to him, "Send the crowd away, to go into the villages and country round about, to lodge and get provisions; for we are here in a lonely place." 13 But he said to them, "You give them something to eat." They said, "We have no more than five loaves and two fish unless we are to go and buy food for all these people." 14 For there were about five thousand men. And he said to his disciples, "Make them sit down in companies, about fifty each."*

**notes**

**2.** Most of the women are recruited with a tourist visa which expires within the allotted time, leaving them without the basic legal protection and the possibility of converting the tourist visa into a stay permit.

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*15 And they did so, and made them all sit down. 16 And taking the five loaves and the two fish he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke them, and gave them to the disciples to set before the crowd. 17 And all ate and were satisfied. And they took up what was left over, twelve baskets of broken pieces.*

# Trafficking: Setting the Stage

**1**

rise to the phenomenon of trafficking in persons. It clarifies why, at the end of the 1970s, women accounted for less than 10 per cent of the total figure for migrants, while today they make up about 50 per cent. Trafficking is cast in all its complexity with the intention of provoking reflection on prevention actions as well as tactics to assist victims in overcoming the wounds left by this scourge.

Responses from local and international institutions and civil society as well as the importance of establishing reliable networks are also addressed in this section.

## 1.1    Trafficking in Persons and Migration

Trafficking is intrinsically linked to migration. Though it is important not to confuse one for the other (**trafficking is not irregular migration**) or use the terms interchangeably, it is true that trafficking is rooted in the correlation between the quantitative increase of the number of migrants from developing countries and the difficulties in movement they encounter[3]. Plainly stated, migrants from the South seeking work or residency abroad (typically in the North) currently face discouraging restrictions on their movement and employment prospects.

To understand the increase of migration flows, it is necessary go back to 1989. After the fall of Communism, and the virtual amalgamation of the First and Second worlds that followed, a new geopolitical order emerged, provoking profound changes in support policies for the poorer regions of the world. Throughout the Cold War developing countries were supported by one of the two superpowers. However, when the Soviet Union fell, the politically strategic propaganda discouraging Communism in the South was no longer necessary. Before long, global order based on Cold War bipolarity was exchanged for *globalization*, a system that recognizes and values the intrinsic mutual relationship between States as well as the benefits of Western economic policy.

Globalization, however, would quickly prove to have the unintended effect of swelling migration flows, not only in number but also in gender. Two major explanations account for this change. First, the fall of Communism set in motion hundreds of thousands of people previously forced to remain inside their countries' borders. Second, funding that shrank or disappeared with the departure of the "patron" superpowers provoked an exodus from South to North and East to West. Nevertheless, even without the element of a patron-state, this Northward tendency exists in other countries such as China and other South Asia and African countries.

### 1.1.1  Push Factors

From 1990 onwards both men and women began to cross-borders in search of employment. Men, in a grueling effort to maintain their identity as providers and heads of household, became more willing to accept low wages and less satisfying jobs outside their home countries. The alternative, remaining in the country of origin, is also a push factor since those who do not emigrate spend hours in the streets and cafes, awaiting a possible call for a precarious job. As a consequence of these factors, in addition to the central role of alcohol in many of these countries,

**notes**

**1.** The generalization that the phenomenon occurs from North to South or East to West is used throughout this document. However, trafficking occurs all over the world; it is indeed a global network where countries of origin, transit and destination are tied together.

**2.** In most cases Western women can no longer afford not to work outside the home.

## Chapter summary

In this chapter the roots of the trafficking phenomenon, its dimensions and the global response from civil society and international and local institutions are addressed. This chapter uses the modern proliferation of women's migration as its starting point. Focusing on both aspects of trafficking - labor and sexual exploitation - it calls attention to the fact that trafficking in persons denotes more than sexual exploitation. It is a violation of basic human rights that may involve but is not limited to prostitution. Prostitution can be a desperate choice resulting from lack of opportunity and gender discrimination. The implicit compulsory nature of sexual exploitation, is an indisputable violation of human rights representing the most contemptible form of exploitation. This chapter, therefore, emphasizes that eradication of trafficking requires that certain undesirable push-pull factors be considered. It points out that women from the South do not migrate North[1] without reason. It is a rational response to market demand. The invisible hand gestures North where caregivers such as nurses and elder care assistants, nannies and housemaids (the traditional duties of women that Western women[2] cannot or do not want to do anymore), are in short supply. We could, therefore, argue that migration and trafficking are linked to the changing role of women vis a vis domestic chores and the world of work.

The first step for counteracting trafficking is represented by the actions of public institutions at local, international and inter-governmental levels. This chapter explains how this has already begun with the adoption of United Nations (UN) protocols, regional legislation, the appointment of the Special Rapporteur, European Union (EU) recommendations, counter-trafficking laws adopted in several countries, and bilateral and multilateral agreements. Lastly, it is essential that civil society, including its religious components, continually strives to organize itself in a cohesive network to better implement prevention projects and victim assistance.

## Introduction

This section is dedicated to defining the socio-cultural and economic factors giving

**notes**

**3.** More precisely, an increase in migration generally leads to an increase in migration barriers in countries of destination.

men often fall prey of alcoholism, which is a push factor toward migration for many women.

Usually, while their men are working abroad, women have to face the absence of their spouses in an **ambience** of economic and social deprivation. When this precarious situation is combined with the further adversity created by the general condition of women in many developing and transition countries another push factor can be seen. Restrictive norms and structures unfavorable to women in the labor market have not yet caught up with the demands placed on women, leaving them simultaneously with less opportunity than male counterparts, yet forced to fulfill financial responsibilities.

The following examples are illustrative:

In the Nigerian Edo State, from **which** most trafficked Nigerian women come, women do not have the right to inheritance. Should the father or husband die, properties pass either to sons or to the family of the husband.

In Eastern European countries, the use of alcohol further increases sexual and physical abuse inside the family, which, as will be discussed later, can produce micro traumas in children. Often, as soon as young people have an opportunity, they escape their family, becoming easy prey for traffickers or recruiters.

### 1.1.2 Unintended Effects of Migration Policy

The responsibility for the proliferation of trafficking can be attributed to countries of destination as well as to countries of origin. Though globalization embraces global interdependence of world markets, it fails to accommodate individuals who wish to cross borders with the same ease as the goods produced in their countries. However, the exodus from Southern and former Eastern-bloc countries has been met with an increasingly defensive barrier, ostensibly to protect national labor markets, combat crime, and in some cases preserve the national character. Even if a migrant manages to outsmart border controls, innumerable bureaucratic obstacles conspire to keep residence and work permits inaccessible. In Europe this situation was exacerbated by the decision of some EU member states to make the permit of stay contingent on the possession of a labor contract.

The dream of many people to emigrate with hopes of improving their lives becomes a nightmare when it meets such policy barriers. Recent laws have narrowed the dividing line between legal and illegal status. Any change in an individual's circumstances can lead a regular migrant to become irregular or clandestine in a short time, placing her/him in a situation of extreme vulnerability likely to result in exploitation and/or mistreatment. One common example of effortlessly crossing this fine line is the case of a woman joining her husband in his country of origin. Should the relationship end before the specified period of time for residency or citizenship, the foreign partner, in this case the wife, loses the right to remain in the country. Well aware of the status of their employees, unscrupulous business owners can increase their margin of profit by overworking and underpaying undocumented workers. These entrepreneurs can sleep easily

*Exodus 3: 7-12*

*7 The LORD said, "I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering. 8 So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey-the home of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. 9 And now the cry of the Israelites has reached me, and I have seen the way the Egyptians are oppressing them. 10 So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt." 11 But Moses said to God, "Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?" 12 And God said, "I will be with you. And this will be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you will worship God on this mountain."*

assured that undocumented workers will keep business secrets confidential since reporting them would alert the authorities to the migrant's irregular status.

## 1.2    Trafficking and Gender

In developed countries the shrinking of worker's rights along with the decline of social protection measures have influenced the participation of women in the labor force. Since the 1970s women have been entering the global labor force in record numbers, yet comparatively lower wages and higher unemployment rates (of women wishing to work) mean that they still represent 60% of the world's working poor. In 2003, 40 per cent of the world's 2.8 billion workers were women, representing a worldwide increase of 200 million women in employment in the last ten years alone[4].

These figures have profound implications for society in both the North and the South. In both hemispheres women's entry into the labor market has generated marked social change, undermining traditional roles that outwardly served to fortify social/familial stability. Traditionally expected to look after domestic concerns and take care of vulnerable family members (children, elderly, the ill), women presently have less time to dedicate to the daily demands of nurturing and caring for the family. Consequently, a relatively new pull-factor has emerged in the North: a soaring demand for inexpensive domestic workers. Seeking to provide for their families, many women from the South have responded to the demand for domestic work, often leaving behind their own children in the care of female relatives or friends[5]. A result of the absence of effective caregivers is the weakening of the social fabric in developing/transition countries and the breakdown of the fundamental importance of the family.

In the past, male immigrants could find work in sectors local men found unattractive such as agriculture, factory and construction work. Now, immigrant women have an easier time securing work in societies with an increased demand but short supply of domestic workers. Thus, the global neighborhood has shrunk and even on the individual level our interdependence becomes clearer. Outdated notions of leaving the kids with grandparents, aunts and friends (most of whom also work outside the home) have been replaced by calling upon the services of immigrants.

### 1.2.1  Obstacles on the Road to full participation

Nevertheless, the explosive growth of women in the work force clearly does not translate to true socio-economic empowerment of women. The consequences of these changes on gender relationships both in developing and developed countries are challenging. In the countries of origin, women find themselves replacing men as financial providers, thus striking a blow to notions of male identity. Incidence of abuse has increased, perhaps as a result of men searching for an expression of their masculinity. Since men have used violence throughout history to reaffirm their masculinity, one hypothesis suggests trafficking can be viewed as a way to substantiate the primacy of men over women[6].

Gender relationships have changed in both hemispheres. Gender stereotypes suggest that women are uniquely suited to look after the family, yet experience shows that women are either financially pushed or genuinely interested in entering the labor force. Further, cultural norms are slow to catch up with the economic reality of women working outside the home, illustrated by global lack of male interest in fulfilling the domestic chores and care giving in their own homes. Consequently, primarily in the South but also in the North, when women spend long hours or months away from the home, the quality of family life often plunges even if there are financial benefits.

Hypothetically, increase in demand for prostitution may be linked to the male search for an asymmetrical relationship allowing him to be the dominant, ruling element of the relationship. By paying for the experience, he is also able to provide financial assistance to the woman. In this case the immigrant woman is called upon to deliver yet another service.

## 1.3 Dimensions and Process of Trafficking

Trafficking must be included in the broader framework of rebalancing the macroeconomic gaps which characterize globalization. For instance, conditions in countries of origin that create an uneven distribution of wealth such as lack of opportunity accompanied by high unemployment, push individuals to areas where there is demand for their labor. These push factors conspire to create an atmosphere that lowers the prospective migrant's defenses, making her overlook potential risks, seeing only the possibility for improving her circumstances and taking care of her family. Traffickers, mindful of market mechanisms and the local social climate, seize the occasion to respond to Northern demand with seemingly unlimited supply from the South. This equation of desperation and need, met with persuading/pressuring victims to take "low status" jobs abroad only to exploit them upon arrival, smacks of modern-day slavery.

The clandestine and dynamic nature of the phenomenon conceals its magnitude since precise figures are impossible to obtain. Its dynamic nature makes this issue a concern for the entire planet since mobility allows it to move from one place to another responding to the needs of each society. Global figures on the number of trafficking victims yearly range from 500,000 (IOM), to 1,000,000 (Interpol), to 700,000 (US State Department)[7]. Estimations are calculated depending upon the total stock of migrants.

Furthermore, the routes of trafficking have reached a startling dimension that is of worldwide concern. Previously, trafficking routes could be drawn without complication, generally from a Southern country of origin to its Northern correspondent. For example, routes ran from Nigeria to Italy or from Mexico to the United States. However, factors such as modification of migration policies, increased border controls and patrols, as well as corruption in migration institutions (embassies, ministries, police/immigration officers) are constantly redrawing trafficking routes since criminal organizations modify their itineraries to accommodate such change. This creates an intricate web where countries of origin,

transit and destination are no longer distinguishable.

Though routes are constantly shifting, the various phases of the process remain steady and universally consistent:
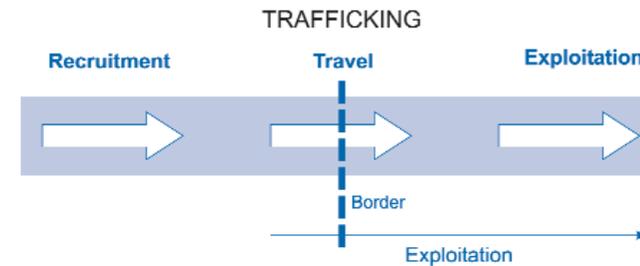


Trafficking is a lengthy process that can last many years. This process is composed of three key steps: recruitment, travel and arrival in the country of destination (this destination is not always the agreed upon location). The exploitation implicit[8] in trafficking, differentiating it from smuggling, can occur in both the second and third steps.

**Recruitment schemes** include the following:
- False job offer in agencies,
- False job offer or study offered by friends,
- Kidnapping, coerced recruitment by relatives or acquaintances,
- Sale by parents.

Even though the four modes of recruitment occur worldwide, each country has its own social climate that favors one over the others. Recurrence depends on the skill of the recruiters and on the quality of the networks they develop. In many Eastern European countries, announcements supposedly advertising opportunities in employment agencies are the tool of choice. Sometimes these agencies are entirely fictitious and sometimes they are legitimate but employ corrupt staff with ties to traffickers. Often, however, the agencies are genuine but incompetence and/or irresponsibility mean that staff have little, if any, information on the employer (the individuals requesting services). The sinister reality of seemingly credible announcements luring the potential migrant with promises of work in hotels, restaurants, and families, is only revealed after the migrant arrives in the country of destination, when she is no longer in a position to seek recourse.

In other countries, Nigeria for example, recruitment is undertaken in person, usually by family friends or relatives (considering the wide concept of family in Africa). Deception is veiled behind a generous opportunity (travel for education, employment) from a trusted family member unlikely to raise suspicion. The recruiter may or may not know the extent of the misery that awaits the potential victim, but is cognizant of the deception.

Though kidnapping exists, it is more the exception than the rule. Statistics can sometimes be misleading such as an article reporting the case of Lithuania where

two girls per high school "disappear" annually. That article contends that in 2001, statistics indicated that with "600 high schools, 1200 girls had disappeared"[9]. One must be very cautious with such terminology. "Disappeared" does not suggest that the girls were kidnapped. In many cases worldwide, girls may fall prey to recruiters' promises but, at the request of the recruiter or for other reasons[10], they do not tell anyone.

Nevertheless, worldwide, **the most common approach is direct recruitment**. A person known and trusted by the victim actually works on behalf of the trafficker by supplying victims. This **familiar figure** can be a:

- Stranger
- Acquaintance
- Neighbor / Family friend
- Relative
- Friend
- Fiancée
- Husband
- Parent(s)

**Offers used to entice** potential victims are (in order of frequency):

- Employment
- Study
- Escort for a business trip
- Marriage
- Entertainment (dancers, escorts etc.)
- A combination

The most common offer is a legitimate job, but many are persuaded by marriage proposals or the possibility of working in the "glamorous" world of entertainment. Even if they suspect that more personal services may be expected, they have no idea that they will exercise no control over the type, frequency and conditions of these services and that they will be mistreated and abused, maintain irregular migrant status and receive only a fraction of their earnings.

In general, upon arrival in countries of destination or transit, the following are **ways in which victims are exploited**: (frequency depends on the country):

- Prostitution
- Field work
- Factory work
- Housekeeping
- Waitressing
- Dancing/entertainment
- Private sexual exploitation.

In Europe, Israel and Asia the most common and visible forms of exploitation are

of a sexual nature, while in the United States and the Middle East, labor exploitation such as housekeeping and factory/agricultural work are more frequently visible, even if sexual exploitation occurs.

## 1.4    Responses: Institutional

Since the late nineteenth century, the international community has implemented a range of jurisprudence to control slavery and its derivatives. Below is a selection of **major legislation intended to counteract such exploitation**:

- International Agreement for the Suppression of the White Slave Traffic, 18 May 1904,
- International Convention for the Suppression of the White Slave Traffic, 4 May 1910, International Convention against Trafficking, 1921,1923,1926,
- Convention for the Suppression of Traffic in Women and Children, 1921,
- Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948,
- Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others, 2 December 1949,
- Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade, and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery, 7 September 1956,
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, 1979,
- Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, Supplementing the UN Convention against Transnational Crime, 2000[11].

For specifically counteracting trafficking, the European Union has been the first regional body to implement **legislative tools**.

- Resolution on Trafficking in Human Beings, 18 January 1996, European Parliament. This resolution maintains that trafficking is an illegal act which favors the entrance and stay of a foreign citizen for his/her exploitation using deception or any other form of coercion or taking advantage of a situation of vulnerability or of administrative uncertainty;
- Common Action 97/154/GAI, 24 February 1997;
- The 1997 Hague Ministerial Declaration on European Guidelines for effective measures to combat trafficking in women for the purpose of sexual exploitation, April 1997.

As **operational tools** the European Commission has launched several programs.

- STOP I (from 1996 to 2000) and II (from 2000 to 2002): The objectives of the STOP Program are to encourage, support and reinforce networks and practical cooperation between the various persons responsible for action against trafficking in human beings and sexual exploitation of children in the Member States, and to improve and adapt their training and skills. The program is aimed at judges, public prosecutors, police departments, civil servants, and public services concerned with immigration and border controls, NGOs, social

*Luke 18: 1-8*

*1 And he told them a parable, to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart. 2 He said, "In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor regarded man; 3 and there was a widow in that city who kept coming to him and saying, 'Vindicate me against my adversary.' 4 For a while he refused; but afterward he said to himself, 'Though I neither fear God nor regard man, 5 yet because this widow bothers me, I will vindicate her, or she will wear me out by her continual coming.'" 6 And the Lord said, "Hear what the unrighteous judge says. 7 And will not God vindicate his elect, who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long over them? 8 I tell you, he will vindicate them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of man comes, will he find faith on earth?"*

and tax legislation, trafficking and sexual exploitation, victim-support and treatment for perpetrators.

- The Daphne Programme: This program (from 2000 to 2003) is a four-year community action program on preventive measures to fight violence against children, young people and women. The Initiative arose as part of the European Commission's response to growing concern about violence against children, young people and women in Europe. Its sphere of activity was wide: to facilitate NGO and multi-sectoral action. Violence was understood in the widest possible sense, from sexual abuse to domestic violence, from commercial exploitation to bullying in schools, from trafficking in women to discrimination-based violence against disabled, minority, migrant or other vulnerable people.

- HIPPOKRATES: A multi-year program of incentives and exchanges, training and cooperation for the prevention of crime in the European Union.

- AGIS: AGIS is a framework program replacing, among others, the STOP and HIPPOKRATES programs. It runs from 2003 till 2007. Its purpose is to help legal practitioners, law enforcement officials and representatives of victim assistance services from the EU Member States and Candidate Countries to set up Europe-wide networks, exchange information and best practices. It also aims at encouraging member states to step-up co-operation with the applicant countries and other third countries. AGIS will support trans-national projects for a maximum duration of two years[12].

Furthermore, based on the experience of the above tools, the **Brussels Declaration on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Human Beings** (2002) established guidelines and good practices for coordinated action toward prevention and victim assistance. The Brussels Declaration is the outcome of grassroots initiatives undertaken by states, international bodies, religious institutions, and national and international NGOs.

In spite of these efforts by the EU, only in 2000 did we begin to see a cohesive global mobilization against trafficking with the **U.N. Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons**. Article 3 of the Protocol offers this definition of trafficking:

"Trafficking in persons shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labor or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs".

The Protocol aims to offer a wider, more comprehensive definition, assuring that interpretations are consistent from one country and international organization to the next. In the past, varying definitions of trafficking have led to the adoption of

different policies based on diverse points of view. For example, Europol focused on the coercive element of trafficking while IOM emphasized the relationship between trafficking and irregular migration as well as on the traffickers themselves. Other organizations concentrated on the significant illegal movement of people, while still others were concerned with exploitation. Thanks to a precise definition consistent from one signatory country to another, institutions can use the Protocol to support their own individual mandates in a more coordinated way.

The U.N. Protocol specifically mentions assistance to be provided to victims (arts.6, 7, 8), suggesting the adoption of measures to fulfill these demands (art.9) as well as envisaging measures for collaboration among States (art.10 e 11). Furthermore, it is important to highlight paragraph 2 of Art. 3, which explicitly states that the consent of the victim is not relevant when considering the victim's awareness and co-responsibility, especially during a trial. This means that even if the victim agrees to the trafficker's promises, s/he cannot be considered guilty or responsible for his/her own trafficking.

"The consent of a victim of trafficking in persons to the intended exploitation set forth in subparagraph (a) shall be irrelevant where any of the means set forth in subparagraph (a) have been used".

The U.N. protocol came into force on 25 December 2003, a full three years after its approval, thanks to its ratification by 45 States[13]. This suggest the desire of UN member states to establish effective legislative tools against the scourge. One economic reason (among many other political ones) is that many developing states base part of their Gross National Product on money earned from their migrants, trafficking victims included.

## Legislation

At national levels, the most effective tools against trafficking are clear and enforced national laws specifically against trafficking in persons. Few countries, however, have actually produced anti-trafficking laws. Among the countries that have taken such action are Italy (Italy was one of the first nations that has implemented forms of protection for the victims under Art.18 of the Migration law), Sweden, Spain, Romania, the Dominican Republic and Nigeria[14]. Clear legislation and penalties to deter and punish traffickers are critical to strengthen the capacity of a country to combat the phenomenon. Without legislation on trafficking, it is necessary to charge the accused trafficker with other, often less serious crimes such as pimping, physical abuse, smuggling, and engaging illegal workers. For example, in some countries traffickers are usually charged with forced prostitution. But if the victim is trafficked for labor rather than sexual exploitation, it becomes difficult to charge the trafficker. To better understand the effectiveness of a country's legislation on anti-trafficking or anti-exploitation, it is useful to ensure that a country's legislation reflects the type of trafficking relevant to that country, whether it is a country of origin, transit or destination. This information is valuable when organizing prevention or assistance actions and it is necessary for working effectively with law enforcement agents and/or judges.

## 1.5 Responses: Social

Civil society at local and international levels has moved promptly to counteract the scourge. In many areas women religious have been among the first on the scene to call attention to trafficking. In countries of destination and origin many working groups have been established and a number of houses have been opened by different religious congregations to assist an increasing number of women escaping exploitation.

As already reported, the EU has played a fundamental role in supporting programs to counteract trafficking. Other significant actors sustaining counter-trafficking initiatives are the UN (and its individual agencies) and the US Government. Such supports, governments and NGOs involved in counter-trafficking have multiplied and have been able to implement specific programs to help victims of trafficking.

Articulated and multidimensional interventions are required to counteract trafficking. Information campaigns and preventative measures must be approached with the involvement of the local populations. Collaboration with law enforcement and with projects aimed at updating knowledge and increasing awareness is also valuable. IOM provides a good example of sectoral integration articulated along six key points:

1. Victims' protection, return and reintegration activities: in coordination with NGOs, international organizations and government agencies, IOM provides shelter and assistance for victims of trafficking. In addition, IOM offers assistance to voluntary return and reintegration to trafficked migrants. Return and reintegration assistance is tailored to the individual situation of the migrant;

2. Counseling and medical support: IOM provides legal and medical counseling and assistance to trafficked migrants in transit and receiving countries. In co-operation with NGOs and/or Ministries of Health and other concerned parties, IOM seeks to address the health and psychological implications of trafficking for the migrants' benefit;

3. Information dissemination / awareness raising: IOM organizes mass information campaigns in countries of origin in an effort to make potential migrants aware of the risks of irregular migration and trafficking;

4. Technical cooperation/Capacity building: IOM provides training to increase the capacity of governmental and other institutions to counteract trafficking in migrants;

5. Research and information gathering: IOM undertakes research to focus attention on the problem of trafficking, raise general awareness and provide governments and other actors with essential information for developing various forms of intervention;

6. Seminars and forums: IOM organizes seminars and forum activities in order to raise general awareness on trafficking, share experience amongst the various partners, disseminate results from research, co-ordinate/harmonize policies and measures and create formal and informal networks dealing with the issue.

Aspects of prevention and assistance are **synthesized** in the following figure:
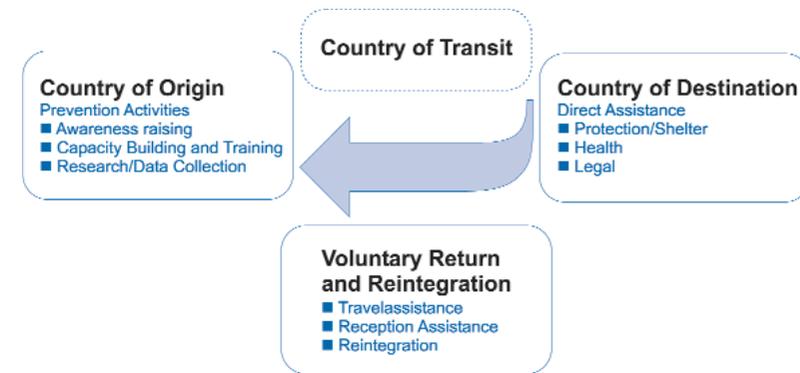


## 1.6 Responses: Networking

Civil society, governments, international religious and lay organizations must keep in mind **the critical importance of coordination**. A basic goal of collective action is to increase the intended effects of the actions (prevention, assistance and training) while avoiding fragmentation of the economic and human resources.

For this reason counter-trafficking initiatives create **networks and working groups** of lay and religious (also interdenominational) organizations at local and international levels, such as:

- The USG/UISG Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Working Group on Trafficking in Women and Minors;
- The Caritas Network (local and international);
- The European Network Against Trafficking in Women (ENATW);
- Call centres (toll free numbers) created in several origin and destination countries.

Although the value and benefits of coordinated intervention are indisputable, it is often challenging to initiate such collaboration. Often complications relating to methodology, contents, politics and ideology get in the way of achieving the common goal. Some major **consequences resulting from lack of coordination** are:

1. Waste of resources: Clearly any action yields greater impact if all interested parties are working together

2. Failure to realize a common objective. An articulated strategy avoids gaps and overlapping in meeting the needs. Different organizations carrying out the same activity, at the same time in the same area while neglecting other concerns and geographical areas is a common problem. Redundancy of a project is not a problem in collective action, since similar activities, if proven effective, can be undertaken in different areas or with different target populations. Nevertheless, coordination of organizations and funding is crucial to identifying needs.

3. Lack of agreement on the problem among countries of origin and destination leading to incoherent intervention: an example of this as it relates to trafficking has been to overlap trafficking in persons with prostitution, minimizing the key elements of labor and/or sexual exploitation. This has been

known to mislead potential victims into thinking that as long as they avoid prostitution, they will also avoid falling prey to traffickers. Victims have reported that since they had not been recruited as prostitutes, they assumed they were not at-risk for being trafficked and therefore were not inclined to address counter-trafficking resources.

To strengthen the effectiveness of activities and set up networks, it is important to be familiar with local and international organizations as well as local actors in counter-trafficking. It is suggested that the reader associate each agency with its stated "core business" in order to understand its agenda and its areas of intervention. With this preliminary action one can more quickly decipher which areas are uncovered and with whom it is possible to work.

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# Profiles: Migrants, Victims of Trafficking, Traffickers, Exploiters

2

*Chapter summary*

This chapter, based on operational experience and statistics from the IOM anti-trafficking team, suggests that the victim profile portrays a combination of abuse, deprivation and violence that pushes young women to seek hope elsewhere, despite the risk. Traffickers are well aware of this desperation and exploit the natural desire of individuals to improve their lives.

## Introduction

This section offers a profile of those entrapped in trafficking, those who profit from it, and those who perpetuate it by paying for services and labour. As mentioned in the introduction of this document, though victims of trafficking in persons are both women and men, focus is given to women.

While individual characteristics of victims from each country of origin will not be explored, analysis focuses on general characteristics found to be common among victims of trafficking.

## 2.1    Migrants

As we saw in Chapter 1, women have entered the workforce in record numbers, yet they represent 70 per cent (1.2 billion) of the world's poor. In an effort to break the chains of poverty and seek economic autonomy, more women are willing to migrate than ever before. While general push-pull factors encouraging women to migrate can be identified, the issue is more complicated, since culture specific studies are also necessary to identify the social factors that lead women to take the decision to migrate. In other words, in economically impoverished societies, where most members of the community experience an equal level of poverty, what is it that separates the migrants from those who remain?

First, the migration process represents a substantial upheaval in an individual's life. Leaving the familiar (social networks, culture, language) in exchange for the unknown is a risk that not everyone is capable of taking. Migration history reveals that only the strongest and most competent individuals in a family, village or

**Book of Esther**
**2: 5-8, 16-17;**
**3: 2, 5-6, 8-9;**
**4: 7, 15-16;**
**5: 3-4; 7: 3-4**

*2: 5 Now there was a Jew in Susa the capital whose name was Mor'decai, the son of Ja'ir, son of Shim'e-i, son of Kish, a Benjaminite, 6 who had been carried away from Jerusalem among the captives carried away with Jeconi'ah king of Judah, whom Nebuchadnez'zar king of Babylon had carried away. 7 He had brought up Hadas'sah, that is Esther, the daughter of his uncle, for she had neither father nor mother; the maiden was beautiful and lovely, and when her father and her mother died, Mor'decai adopted her as his own daughter. 8 So when the king's order and his edict were proclaimed, and when many maidens were gathered in Susa the capital in custody of Hegai, Esther also was taken into the king's palace and put in custody of Hegai who had charge of the women.*

community have been entrusted to seek fortune abroad. Often the livelihoods of many people depend on the migrant's success; thus, selection is deliberate. To a large extent this continues to hold true in many countries of origin. It is important to keep this in mind when trying to assess the psychological condition of the migrant, as it may explain the relational difficulties that these individuals express after an experience of exploitation. Their failure to meet the expectations of those counting on them is a heavy burden.

Generally, the migrant is an individual who feels pushed by necessity. Rarely does the whole family move together. If reunification in the country of destination occurs, it happens after a job and accommodations have been firmly secured. This often produces the "migrant chain" effect: one person from a community finds favourable living conditions abroad and encourages family and friends from the same community to join him/her. With a viable social network already in tact in the country of destination, individuals are more comfortable with the idea of migration. In Europe this is occurring with the Filipino, Peruvian, and North African communities. It also occurred throughout Europe after World War II, when millions moved from South to North to find work and earn a living.

**Motivational factors** can be voluntary or coerced; though in some cases it is difficult to make a clear distinction between the two. Migration is considered forced when it involves physical protection such as in the case of refugees and asylum.

### 2.1.1  The Process

The following represent the **phases of the migration process**: **leaving**, **arrival** and **conclusion**.

a)  **Leaving**: the departure process can be lengthy. Months or years of consideration and planning may pass before a migrant feels psychologically and practically prepared for the ordeal.

b)  **Arrival** in the country of destination: the impact of the new environment is often hostile, always competitive and the most delicate moment of the process. This is the moment when solutions to previously unconsidered problems must be found. Such problems usually have little to do with employment, accommodations, or physical survival. They concern the feelings of solitude, the different weather, the drastic change of culture, and the migrant's own personality, which often turns timid when confronted with an overload of the unfamiliar. Migrants are usually unaware of these personal tribulations, which pose the greatest threat to her/his psychological well-being.

A series of **variables could influence this phase**:

  ■  resourcefulness of the individual: the quality of preparation and education, knowledge of the language, culture, psychological and emotional condition;

  ■  presence of other persons from the country of origin as an element of support;

  ■  existence of assistance services by various institutions.

c)  **Conclusion**: the migrant often feels that she must integrate or face failure. Since many people may be relying on the success of her endeavour, returning home empty-handed is too disappointing for most migrants. Many migrants consider fruitless return as failure and consequently there arises loss of self-esteem and community status. To avoid perceived shame and support their families, thousands of women endure deplorable living and working conditions.

## 2.2    Migrants as victims of trafficking

The same phases of migration also apply to the trafficking process. Trafficking involves clear phases of leaving, arrival and conclusion (of the exploitation). The **key difference** is that trafficking relies on deception, and bad faith. This places the victim at a considerable disadvantage: her planning process is rooted in a fictitious world (the "friend", the proposal, the promises), making her wholly unable to appropriately plan her strategy for the journey and arrival. Since victims of trafficking are promised a future entirely inconsistent with the reality that awaits them, they are unprepared to deal with the shock. In the face of the horrible reality, their aspirations remain and, with neither an emergency plan nor the will to surrender to failure, they tolerate exploitation. This explains why many women prefer to either stay abroad even if sexually exploited, or to disappear from their families rather than go back home.

Common **push factors for victims of trafficking** are similar to those of migration. Some of them are listed in order of importance:

  ■  Need to leave the country

  ■  Lack of employment

  ■  Desire to visit foreign countries

  ■  Desire to meet friends, parents or relatives

  ■  Family reunification

  ■  Study

"Need to leave the country" is at the top of the list because it is valid for both genders. For men, the need to leave the country is usually due to war, conflict, ethnic/political/religious persecution as well as for economic reasons. Women often leave their countries to escape abuse or discrimination and for economic reasons. In both situations, traffickers use the strategy of short term notice to prepare and plan the trip and arrival. Such haste leads to overlooking doubtful proposals and loopholes in the contracts and thus weakens the defences of the victim who becomes an easy prey to the traffickers precisely during these periods of desperation.

Among the assisted victims there are a few with higher levels of education who have middle-upper class backgrounds, but this is the exception. Victim backgrounds share a common theme of psychological vulnerability, and/or severely adverse living conditions. The difference between victims from more stable backgrounds and those who are psychologically vulnerable is found in the victim's ability to escape the exploitation. It has been observed that healthy doses of self-esteem enable an

individual to respond more swiftly and appropriately in the face of emergency.

The majority of victims, therefore, share a similar basic profile:

- Victims of familial abuse
- Low level of education
- Rural origins

These characteristics make them prime targets for recruitment, as they tend to be naive and strongly motivated to change their lives.

Often, the time between the first contact with the traffickers and the departure is so long that it can be measured in years. It is a process in which an affectionate or trusting relationship is built and is one of the main traumas for the victim to overcome. The presumed emotional relationship linking the victim to her trafficker fulfils the needs of both the actors. First, it allows the trafficker to manipulate the victim with the false promise of a future together. Simultaneously it serves as a psychological purpose for the victims: "I left because I was in love with him not because I'm stupid and fell into his tricks."

During the reintegration process it is important to carefully consider the psychological effect the fictitious relationship has on the victim who probably already had familial or other relationship problems in her life. As a sort of distorted defence mechanism, a victim of this kind of deceptive relationship often justifies her trafficker/partner's behaviour by convincing herself that she did not really love the partner. Given the victim's willingness to relocate, she concludes that she was never in love with the partner, but was simply using him as an escape.

This distortion of reality leads the victim to punish herself in two ways. On one hand, by concluding that she deserved mistreatment because her love was disingenuous, she justifies the deplorable behaviour of the former partner. By doing so, she negates the trafficker's role and responsibility and blames herself for the entire situation. This scenario can hold true also for female relationships. In time the victim must be helped to realize that the lies and fantasy world created by the trafficker were far beyond her control.

The non-linear, sometimes contradictory decisional process that leads to regular migration must be taken into consideration when implementing trafficking prevention and assistance programs in countries of origin. One strategy of counteracting trafficking is to take advantage of the time between the contact with the trafficker and the departure. The lengthy process of winning the trust of the victim can be thwarted by the relationship between the helper and the potential victim. This relationship can assist the potential victim to articulate or reformulate her intentions concerning migration, the process to be undertaken, and the decision to leave.

The uniqueness of trafficking rests in the **arrival phase**. This is the time when the veil of lies hiding the trafficker's intentions begins to slip away. Until this point the victim had been mistaking trafficking for regular migration (sometimes irregular but fair). Upon arrival at the destination the deception dramatically unfolds, even if abuse does not take place. When the victim realizes what she is expected to do

(labour or sexual exploitation) and the accompanying change in the behaviour of the partner/friend, the betrayal comes crashing down. The exploitative conditions are severely compounded by the effects of the betrayal, which leads to further loss of self-esteem for having made such a bad decision.

The loss of self-esteem usually remains with the victim throughout exploitation and after escape. To initiate a recovery process, the victim will need help to regain her self-esteem and focus on rebuilding the future.

As mentioned above, generally individuals with a background outside the predominant victim profile have a greater capacity to escape. The greater the resourcefulness of the victim the more swiftly she can flee traffickers and recover from the experience. Upon escape she can take advantage of the opportunities offered by various available rehabilitation programs.

However, there are those whose profile leads to their inability to react in a life-saving manner. They are exploited for months if not years, literally imprisoned by their shock, unable to flee, probably because to react means to face the failure. This is the moment when the victim develops substantial psychological dissociations which will inhibit her ability to make a decision toward change. Usually such victims are eventually rescued by law enforcement. The beginning of recovery is often arduous since the victim must face that she was tricked, exploited and that her endeavour took a terrible turn. The victim may vacillate between returning home or remaining in the host country (if it is possible). The trauma compiled from the experience, the feeling of letting down one's family, the loss of self-worth, and the betrayal will slow down the recovery process since victims often abandon and restart rehabilitation programs. The helper should keep this in mind and not force the steps of the recovery process.

### 2.2.1  The Scenarios

The following accounts offer a glimpse of the tens of thousands of men and women assisted by IOM. While assisting trafficked women, stories involving males often emerge (boys as beggars, adolescents as prostitutes, men as exploited workers). Male exploitation is not new. However, the new element is that some men have begun to report the exploitation and ask for help.

The following are some excerpts of conversations with the victims of trafficking from different countries. They suggest similar experiences of poverty, abuse, and redemption.

"I was born in Albania, in a family with eight children. My parents were poor but poverty wasn't the real problem. My father was very violent with his children especially with the daughters. We had to submit to every kind of abuse. It was bad. I couldn't see any way to escape. My mother, even though she witnessed the unbearable situation, pretended not to know and see: maybe she couldn't find any solution. When she decided to react it was too late for me and for my sisters…"

"When I was little I used to live in a remote village, far from the city, and my parents were always concerned about my health since I had tuberculosis. When I

was fifteen, a lady, a distant relative, talked my parents into making me marry her son, who was my age. My father accepted the proposal since he thought it would be easier for me since I had medical obligations. So I went to live with her and her son. Of course the wedding was fake and they forced me to follow him to Italy. There, I was sent on the street..."

"My name is Andrea, I'm from Romania and I am twenty years old. My story starts a year ago, when I took the decision to go to Italy to earn a living. In Romania my economic situation was very precarious. A friend of mine, older than me, who I had met five months earlier, convinced me to follow her. I decided to trust her since she already worked abroad, and it seemed to be safer to travel in two. I hoped to find a job as housemaid in a family..."

"At a certain point in my life I found myself in serious difficulties: with two children to look after, the rent, the bills. Then I realized that the only way was to go abroad, to Europe, to work as housemaid. I knew where to go, my niece moved there five years earlier, so I only had to find the way to get there. I tried with the Embassy, but they didn't issue the visa, so after a while I found the solution, an announcement in a newspaper. A man offered to take me to Italy..."

These testimonies vividly reveal the overwhelming conditions which can push an individual to throw caution to the wind and leave her country without warning, and without adequate information and guarantees.

## 2.3    Other Actors: A cast of antagonists

### 2.3.1    The Traffickers

In this cast of characters, the leading role is that of the trafficker. Though much has been learned about victims and their profile, far less has been documented concerning traffickers and other involved exploiters.

The few studies available indicate that at the inception of the phenomenon in the early 90s, trafficking was not governed by criminal organizations, but rather it was a form of migration, sometimes involving exploitation, managed by family and friends. A spontaneous network of compatriots from the same village favoured clandestine migration and, upon the newcomer's arrival in the country of destination, facilitated employment. Migration based on this type of social network in the country of destination has evolved in many countries and often includes a trafficking component.

Consequently, trafficking emerged spontaneously, by means of discouraged migrants with contacts in their countries of origin and host country. Over time these individuals' efforts required structure, and small groups specializing in trafficking were set up. Soaring migration flows and the resulting increased job competition among migrants in the country of destination, created a market for criminal activity for men and forced women into prostitution. The average trafficker's very keen understanding of market demand and human nature is made dangerous by his/her total lack of ethics, allowing him/her to exploit this knowledge (and therefore compatriots) to his/her advantage.

Seeing the opportunity to make a profit with the "voluntary" help from these small trafficking entrepreneurs, criminal organizations arrived on the scene. These organizations asked occasional favours of the traffickers such as smuggling weapons and drugs in exchange for the organizations' good graces. The good graces include permitting the migrant to safely (safe from the criminal) run an illicit business involving trafficking in persons. These criminal organizations may also offer such "services" as liaising with corrupt law enforcement agents, lawyers or logistical assistance (for storing "goods") etc.

As we can see, criminal organizations actively support trafficking in persons, but generally they do not play a direct role nor are there syndicates specifically organized around trafficking.

### 2.3.2    Profile of the trafficker

But what kind of person is capable of directly causing so much pain and suffering? Remarkably, the profile is not vastly different from the victim profile. Studies indicate that **traffickers tend to have the following background**:

- Serious childhood abuse,
- Experiences of desperation and poverty,
- Distorted value system overemphasising strength and wealth (regardless of how it was obtained) over civil behaviour and the rule of law.

In this scheme of things, we can see how easy it is to turn to criminal behaviour to earn a living and build an identity. Attempting to ease the heavy burden of an empty, out of control life, traffickers seek an identity capable of eliciting power, respect and wealth.

At the outset traffickers were men, probably because they migrated in far greater numbers than women. But by the 90s many women started to set up the same services with a startling degree of success, thanks to the trusting nature of close female friends.

The scenario: a trafficked woman in prostitution is asked by her boss if she can help provide girls for the business. By doing so, she will not only earn money, but her status in the business will rise, she will be better treated and may be regarded even as a partner. Thereupon, this latter befriends girls/women, promises them legitimate jobs and convinces them to relocate with her. Upon arrival, the newcomers realize that they have been tricked. The trafficked woman, now a trafficker herself, desires to avoid failure and retrieve self-esteem.

The role of the men in trafficking is usually assigned to the trafficker and exploiter. Unfortunately, statistics on traffickers are rare, making it difficult to know exactly who is more likely to be a trafficker, a man or a woman. This would be relevant information for prevention campaigns.

Though solid figures are lacking, victim accounts indicate the prominent role women play in trafficking and exploitation. They are often reported as serving as managers of the accommodation where trafficked victims are kept, as the intermediaries with the family, and as the trafficker herself.

### 2.3.3 The Exploiters

Here we have both labour and sexual exploiters. Though we know plenty about sexual exploiters (those who purchase sexual services), in Europe we know little about labour exploiters (those who abuse foreign workers by overworking, underpaying and/or mistreating them). This is because in many European countries only sexual exploitation has been linked to trafficking and therefore given precedence in the struggle against it. The implication is that labour exploitation appears somewhat less offensive.

As for the consumer of sexual services, they are often aware of the problem of women trafficked for prostitution, but are not discouraged. Often they seek an asymmetric relationship with prostitutes to reaffirm their identity as a man able to control a relationship and another person. It is a way for a man with a distorted notion of masculinity to fulfil his duties in a relationship. This may be a man confounded and perhaps offended by evolving relationships between men and women and seeking to reaffirm the primacy of his role.

The prostitute represents the "place" where a man can reaffirm what he would like his identity to be. It is important to keep in mind that this relationship is based on sexual services by means of economic transaction and is not trafficking. The consumer may be profiting from the trafficked victim's occupation, but his exploitation of the victim is not the same as that of the trafficker. In some cases, though this should not be overstated, the consumer actually helps the woman escape exploitation by giving her necessary information and convincing her to denounce the traffickers. Even here, however, there is a distorted relationship in which the man affirms his masculinity by establishing himself as a "hero".

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# 3

# Trafficking and Health

*Chapter summary*

This chapter considers the health risks related to migration and trafficking, the pathologies observed during travel and upon arrival, as well as health issues facing the survivor after the return home. The effects of exploitation and violence impact the victim's psychological state as well as her physical well being. It is strategically important that those engaged in victim assistance and prevention of the phenomenon are aware of the pathologies related to trafficking. It is equally important for the survivor's physical and psychological recovery, that the helper is familiar with effective helping strategies. Ethical and theoretical elements associated with public and private health issues are also explored in this chapter.

## Introduction

Migration poses health risks due to the physical and mental stress it inevitably produces, as well as changes in lifestyle such as nutrition and environment (in the broad sense of hygiene, pollution, crowded living conditions, etc.). Despite health risks, migrants tend to avoid medical care for several reasons. First, if they are clandestine or have an irregular status, they do not want to risk being reported to the authorities. Second, without a profound understanding of one's new surroundings, it is difficult to know who to call, what to expect and where to go. Further, different cultural approaches to medicine can be daunting.

This being the case for regular and irregular migrants, it is further amplified for victims of trafficking given horrific conditions and lack of access to sanitary care. In this section, the most frequent health risks are presented, though the accent will be on the relationship between the helper and the assisted person.

## 3.1 The Health Risks: Physical and Psychological

As a consequence of sexual exploitation there is a tendency in counter-trafficking to limit health risks to HIV/AIDS and STIs. However, anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder experienced by victims of trafficking can spring up at any

time. Caregivers must be skilled in helping the victims to be aware of the possible health risks and learn how to deal with them.

## During the trip

When traveling without documents by ground or sea travel, the unhygienic and crowded conditions in which the trafficked people travel (in order to elude law enforcement) lead to physical problems such as gastrointestinal diseases and marked changes in sleep patterns. The body is further distressed by exposure to heat and long periods of immobility (in case of trips by boat and truck).

If the victim realizes the extent of the deception during the trip it is very likely her physical well being will be at risk. In this case, the physical and sexual violence perpetrated in order to break the will of the victims and weaken their capacity to react poses a very serious health risk. Such practices considerably diminish the likelihood that the victim will attempt to negotiate her treatment and conditions.

During travel, acute trauma, resulting from a high level of anxiety, has been observed. Sometimes, when the trauma is severe, the victim may psychologically "remove" herself from the situation in an effort to protect herself. This "removal" is a survival mechanism. It works to preserve a person's psychological stability by preventing her total collapse into desperation. However, the trauma and "removal" of oneself from the horror produces two other challenges upon escape: the lack of will to talk about the experience and the obstruction of the memory. The latter accounts for the fallibility of the victim's memory during trials or social program interviews. Some helpers have misunderstood this lack of communication and assumed that the victims wanted to protect the traffickers. On the contrary, lack of willingness to speak about the experience does not suggest lack of willingness to collaborate, but may indicate profound psychological scars.

Another crucial point to consider is that trafficking takes a tremendous toll on the victim's self-esteem. All of these elements weigh on the relationship between victims and helpers.

## At the destination

Exploitation damages health at different levels: physical, mental and social.

a) Physical: survivors may suffer fractures, lesions and bruises, loss of consciousness, headaches, fever, gastrointestinal and dermatological diseases, and oral complications. Injury to reproductive organs, pelvic inflammatory disease, pregnancy, abortion (unprofessional, without hygienic standards) and other gynecological problems are also common, especially if sexual exploitation is present. Many women exploited as prostitutes have been pushed to use drugs in order to sustain the relationship with the clients or to withstand the slavery. Drug abuse is a common way to cope with the shattering experience. It is also observed among male irregular migrants, helping them to deal with unbearable adversity.

b) Mental: Psychological problems are constantly reported and are a result of

trafficker's strategies to break the will and resistance of the victim. By continually alternating threats ("if you don't do what we say we will beat you") and false promises ("if you cooperate, tomorrow you can leave") the psychological equilibrium of an individual is modified and placed in jeopardy. Depression is a common symptom but degrees of schizophrenia, dissociation and self-mutilation (even suicide) have also been observed.

c) Social: trafficking is an experience of

- Segregation/Isolation
- Control of the movements of a person.
- Lack of affection/ lack of close relationship
- Deprivation due to the linguistic and cultural challenges

## Back to the country of origin

Once back home, overwhelmed by the experience, survivors often wish to keep to themselves in isolation. As a result of betrayal and living in fear and suspicion of everyone, they have difficulties interacting and trusting others.

Furthermore, the shame of failing to have met individual and community expectations and the shame for having endured the abuse are great. Consequently, many cannot face their families and communities, thus they do not return. This is another delicate issue, easy to misinterpret. The helper should try to decipher if the refusal to return home is due to shame or a psychological disorder. In neither case should the survivor be forced to return (if it is legally possible for her to remain), but in the case of psychological disturbance, she will have to be helped in recovering her capacity to interact and trust others.

## 3.2 Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)

The typology of sexually transmitted pathologies is of interest to migrant health in general, not only sexually exploited victims of trafficking. Since migrants are often a low profile population that receives little or no health care, their health risks are great.

Much has been said about the emotional wounds suffered by migrants in general. Isolation and the search for familiarity and intimacy often encourage individuals to seek comfort in one another. In many cases prostitutes are the only "partners" male migrants have for fulfilling their sexual desires. This poses a significant problem since lack of information about STIs exposes them to the risk of contagious disease.

Although HIV/AIDS is considered to be the most prominent threat, the number of trafficked women with the HIV virus is actually low (it is actually lower than the general populations of both countries of origin and destination). On the contrary, there are other pathologies such as hepatitis B and C, syphilis, candida that are more common and pose risks to health.

Though a profound education in medicine is unnecessary for our needs, it is

important to be familiar with the most common STIs, their symptoms, diagnosis, treatment, and long term effects. This information can be useful in calming a survivor about health concerns and in making reference to appropriate medical professionals.

It is imperative that the survivor feels free to speak about sexuality and STIs. If these pivotal subjects are avoided, survivors may interpret such a behavior as lack of interest in their story (especially if sex played a role) or as judgment on the part of the helper.

**Table 1.** *The most common STIs, the symptoms and the long-term effects:*

| Name | Short term symptoms | Long term effects |
|---|---|---|
| AIDS: virus | None | Death |
| Syphilis: bacterium | Degeneration of meninges and blood vessels | Degeneration of vascular system and central nervous system |
| Gonorrhea: bacterium | Burning during urination and discharge | Degeneration of the infections |
| Hepatitis B: virus | Flu | Bacterial infections and metastasis |
| Herpes: virus | Genital infection/burning/pain | Blisters and difficulties in walking |
| Genital warts: Papilloma virus | Warts | Carcinogenic (possible) |
| Pubic pediculosis: crab lice | Dermatitis - Itching | Bacterial infections, dermatitis |

**Table 2.** *Routes of transmission of the above STIs:*

| | |
|---|---|
| HIV/AIDS | Sexual intercourse, Blood, Sperm, Vaginal secretions, Mother milk |
| Syphilis | Sexual intercourses, blood |
| Gonorrhea | Sexual intercourse, No immunity |
| Hepatitis B | Sexual intercourse, blood |
| Herpes | Sexual intercourse |
| Genital warts | Sexual intercourse |
| Pubic pediculosis | Sexual contacts |

**Table 3.** *How to diagnose them:*

| | |
|---|---|
| HIV/AIDS | Elisa, western blot, rapid test |
| Syphilis | STS, Serological Test for Syphilis |
| Gonorrhea | Urethral secretion test, Culture exam |
| Hepatitis B | Markers |
| Herpes | Swab, culture exam |
| Genital warts | Visual examination, biopsy |
| Pubic pediculosis | Visual examination |

**Ezekiel 34: 11-16**

*11 "For thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I, I myself will search for my sheep, and will seek them out. 12 As a shepherd seeks out his flock when some of his sheep have been scattered abroad, so will I seek out my sheep, and I will rescue them from all places where they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness. 13 And I will bring them out from the peoples, and gather them from the countries, and will bring them into their own land; and I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, by the fountains, and in all the inhabited places of the country. 14 I will feed them with good pasture, and upon the mountain heights of Israel shall be their pasture; there they shall lie down in good grazing land, and on fat pasture they shall feed on the mountains of Israel. 15 I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I will make them lie down, says the Lord GOD. 16 I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the crippled, and I will strengthen the weak, and the fat and the strong I will watch over; I will feed them in justice.*

## 3.3    Health: a human rights component

It is important for those helping or willing to help trafficked survivors to consider that health is a sensitive (but also strategic) issue that can influence the relationship. It is sensitive because the health status of an individual is not only a personal concern, but also of community interest due to the nature of communicable diseases. It is also sensitive because we are dealing with women who have been forced to expose themselves to infectious diseases.

At the same time we cannot forget that though health is a recognized human right, health care cannot be forced, only negotiated. In a helping relationship with an adult it is mandatory to recognize her right to make health decisions for herself even if the helper, believes the decision is inappropriate, dangerous for the individual or a threat to the community. The right to health care implies the right to be in charge of its delivery. In this respect the helper can provide information, but the survivor is the decision maker. This right must be respected because of the psychological consequences that can result from the stress of a positive diagnosis of an STI. Furthermore, this stress can provoke other latent psychological disorders in the subject and lead to self-abuse. It is crucial that the survivor knows her health status, but it is not the role of the helper to oblige the survivor to visit a doctor.

But how can one walk this fine line between an individual's rights and public safety? On the one hand the helper recognizes the importance of autonomy, on the other she is aware of the health risks that the survivor could pose for herself and others. In this situation, health support must be negotiated. **In helping relationship, when faced with a possible health problem, there are two strategies for managing the situation:**

1. Forcing the survivor to undergo a screening in order to know her health status;

2. Suggesting and explaining the importance and benefits of health testing to the survivor, but respecting and waiting for her decision of a) being tested and b) when.

Consideration of one's own health indicates willingness to take care of oneself. It can, therefore, be a sign of a new outlook and new beginning of life. **Thus, the second strategy is highly recommended for two reasons:**

■ Not only does it respect basic ethical principles, but it also puts the survivor in the "driver's seat" of her own recovery, thereby reinforcing the helping relationship. The helper can explain the benefits of testing and treatment, but ultimately these explanations are geared toward empowering[1] the survivor to make the final decision. By making this clear, the helper indicates that she respects the intellectual and psychological capacity of the survivor to make her own decisions. The survivor feels both respected, empowered and in control of her life again. It is strategic because in most cases the survivors suffered a sort of "self-dispossession" even before being trafficked. Respecting her will and decisions means that, for the first time in her life, somebody is respecting her as an individual, putting her at the centre of a relationship.

■ It is more effective because it helps the survivor feel good about herself, improving her self- image. If the survivor responds well to the process, she can

**John 9: 1-4**

*1 As he passed by, he saw a man blind from birth. 2 His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" 3 Jesus answered, "Neither did this man sin, nor his parents; but, that the works of God might be revealed in him. 4 I must work the works of him who sent me, while it is day. The night is coming, when no one can work.*

**Mark 10: 46-52**

*46 They came to Jericho. As he went out from Jericho, with his disciples and a great multitude, the son of Timaeus, Bartimaeus, a blind beggar, was sitting by the road. 47 When he heard that it was Jesus the Nazarene, he began to cry out, and say, "Jesus, you son of David, have mercy on me!"*

**notes**

**1.** Here, the survivor is "empowered" with information. A helper does not have the ability to empower another individual. Empowerment comes from within an individual. A helper can only guide the survivor toward recovering the self-esteem necessary for overcoming the wounds of the past and starting a new life.

*48 Many rebuked him, that he should be quiet, but he cried out much more, "You son of David, have mercy on me!" 49 Jesus stood still, and said, "Call him." They called the blind man, saying to him, "Cheer up! Get up. He is calling you!" 50 He, casting away his cloak, sprang up, and came to Jesus. 51 Jesus asked him, "What do you want me to do for you?" The blind man said to him, "Rhabboni, that I may see again." 52 Jesus said to him, "Go your way. Your faith has made you well." Immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way.*

pass more quickly from a passive condition to an active one. We know that in a helping relationship, the two main actors, the helped and the helper, play two different roles, characterized by a strong asymmetry. This asymmetry can lead to conflicts which if not reconciled, can compromise the relationship and as a consequence compromise the recovery of the survivor. Respecting the decision-making capacity of the survivor reduces the asymmetry in the relationship. Furthermore, the time dedicated to the re-building of the person and her personality can speed up if tension or conflicts are immediately resolved[2].

This forces the helper to think about the implications of the relationship. It is fundamental to keep in mind that she is dealing with adults who have the right to make their own decisions. Her role is to help them make decisions by providing information and helping them to use what they already know about themselves as a guide in the decision-making process. Importantly, the role is to help inform them about their options (on health care, jobs, education, etc), respect their decisions and provide them with a positive image of themselves and their potential. In this way one deals with the person rather than label them as "a victim, a survivor, a prostitute, a clandestine migrant". In working with people undergoing great difficulties, the helper must avoid doubly stigmatizing them by assigning a predefined role.

## 3.4    For more information

Butcher K., 2003 Confusion between prostitution and sex trafficking. *The Lancet*, Volume 361, Issue 9373, page 1983

McKay L., Macintyre S., Ellaway A., 2003 Migration and Health: a review of the international Literature in *MRC Occasional Paper* n.12

Zimmerman C., Yun K., Shvab I., Watts C., Trappolin L., Treppete M., 2003 *The Health Risks and Consequences of trafficking in women and adolescents, findings from a European Study*, London, London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine

**notes**

2.  This topic will be further discussed in Chapter 5.

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# 4

# Prevention

*Chapter summary*

Prevention theory and activities are the themes of this chapter. It explores three different types of prevention activities (primary, secondary and tertiary) intended for countries of origin and destination. The chapter clarifies that primary prevention predominantly concerns the countries of origin, while secondary prevention is more relevant to those of destination and tertiary affects both. Though prevention activities are intrinsically linked to educating individuals and society in general, these activities should not be confused with information campaigns. Lastly, the chapter underscores that prevention strategies must be careful to avoid exacerbating social stigmas, which can lead to the further marginalization of victims.

## Introduction

Activities for the prevention of trafficking have a single primary goal:

**To modify the combination of factors that compel individuals to change their lives despite inadequate information, and lack of backup plans and safety guarantees[1].**

In this section various kinds of preventive activities are presented along with suggestions for avoiding social stigmatization of those entrapped in trafficking as well as for discouraging complacency among those who believe they are not at-risk.

## 4.1    The theoretical framework of prevention

In medicine, prevention activities are intended to deter the target audience from contracting an unpleasant physical affliction, or from exacerbation or spreading of the affliction once contracted. Prevention can be divided into three phases: primary, secondary and tertiary. Whereas the social science concept of the three phases of prevention refers to the corresponding age groups (children, adolescences, adults), the medical notion refers to the modification of objectives according to the stage of the problem. Though trafficking in persons is a social problem, tackling it from the medical perspective of *prevention* is indeed effective.

**Jona 3: 1-10**

*1 Then the word of the LORD came to Jonah a second time: 2 "Go to the great city of Nineveh and proclaim to it the message I give you." 3 Jonah obeyed the word of the LORD and went to Nineveh. Now Nineveh was a very important city-a visit required three days. 4 On the first day, Jonah started into the city. He proclaimed: "Forty more days and Nineveh will be overturned." 5 The Ninevites believed God. They declared a fast, and all of them, from the greatest to the least, put on sackcloth. 6 When the news reached the king of Nineveh, he rose from his throne, took off his royal robes, covered himself with sackcloth and sat down in the dust.*

**notes**

1.  Interesting information about prevention theories available at www.phac-aspc.gc.ca

pass more quickly from a passive condition to an active one. We know that in a helping relationship, the two main actors, the helped and the helper, play two different roles, characterized by a strong asymmetry. This asymmetry can lead to conflicts which if not reconciled, can compromise the relationship and as a consequence compromise the recovery of the survivor. Respecting the decision-making capacity of the survivor reduces the asymmetry in the relationship. Furthermore, the time dedicated to the re-building of the person and her personality can speed up if tension or conflicts are immediately resolved[2].

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**notes**
1.  Interesting information about prevention theories available at www.phac-aspc.gc.ca

*7 Then he issued a proclamation in Nineveh: "By the decree of the king and his nobles: Do not let any man or beast, herd or flock, taste anything; do not let them eat or drink. 8 But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth. Let everyone call urgently on God. Let them give up their evil ways and their violence. 9 Who knows? God may yet relent and with compassion turn from his fierce anger so that we will not perish." 10 When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, he had compassion and did not bring upon them the destruction he had threatened.*

From a medical perspective, **primary prevention** is aimed at preventing contact with an undesirable event. Once a pathology has attacked an individual, **secondary prevention** seeks to control its evolution while maintaining the body in stable condition (avoid deterioration of the situation). **Tertiary prevention** aims to control the pathology from spreading and/or causing serious problems leading to death. Continuing the medical analogy, these three stages can be applied to trafficking accordingly:

- **Primary prevention is an action oriented to deter individuals (a specific social group with elements of vulnerability) from getting in contact with a trafficker (the pathological agent) whose aim is to find a victim with conditions favorable for recruitment (infection).** As we have already seen, the process of recruitment is very long. The victim's agreement to the trafficker's services arises from a corps of positive and negative elements. Positive when the person wishes to go abroad in order to achieve an objective, negative when the person is trying to escape something/body. Primary prevention in the field of trafficking is aimed at **removing the pathological elements of migration** (as for example the asymmetric condition of women in relationships and society) by means of the following

  1. Providing information on a correct and safe migratory process;

  2. Supporting the elimination of the unfavorable conditions that push individuals to migrate.

- Secondary prevention activities are oriented differently depending on where they are implemented.

  1. In countries of origin they are intended to reduce the condition of danger or vulnerability of those who have already decided to go abroad;

  2. In countries of destination beneficiaries are victims of trafficking. The focus is twofold:

     a) Offering health support (physical and psychological) to avoid that the trauma or the living conditions lead to at risk behavior (drug, alcohol, self abuse);

     b) Offering spiritual and psychological support aimed at rehabilitating the person and restoring her personality.

- Tertiary prevention activities are aimed at helping the survivors overcome the life-altering experience of trafficking. They seek to avert destructive behavior such as suicide and help the survivor make a new beginning and re-plan the future.

Each stage foresees the implementation of context-specific ad hoc activities to achieve their goals.

## 4.2   Prevention and Information

When prevention activities toward counter-trafficking are undertaken, consideration is often limited to primary prevention. In health care, on the other hand, when primary prevention fails and the victim comes in contact with disease, this does not indicate the end of preventive actions. Prevention merely enters a new and perhaps more urgent phase, just as in trafficking.

Furthermore, in counter-trafficking, prevention activities are often confused with information activities. Information and prevention initiatives do not share the same goal and, therefore, they do not use the same strategies. Information is crucial and its role in prevention activities is to serve as the logical foundation in which prevention activities are rooted. Information campaigns diffuse information about a phenomenon to a wide part of a population (if not the whole of the population) by means of specific communication techniques (TV spots, radio jingles, street billboards, posters, leaflets, community lectures etc). This information increases the population's level of knowledge about the phenomenon. It is important that the language be neutral, making it possible to implement specific sub-campaigns addressed to special target groups (such as students).

Nevertheless, information in itself cannot fulfill the goal of prevention: to modify behavior that could lead to contact with the undesirable event/affliction. As illustrated in the graph below, information activities are expensive and increase in cost according to the level of sophistication of the technology (from leaflets to radio to TV). Their efficacy is lower because though they inform, they do not modify behavior. Behavior modification can be achieved through direct contact with the target population. For example, if we consider students the target group, a first step toward primary prevention would to implement information activities in the schools using the student's own language. This could then be followed up with class presentations from trainers using a warm, friendly, accessible approach to further elaborate and respond to questions on the topic.
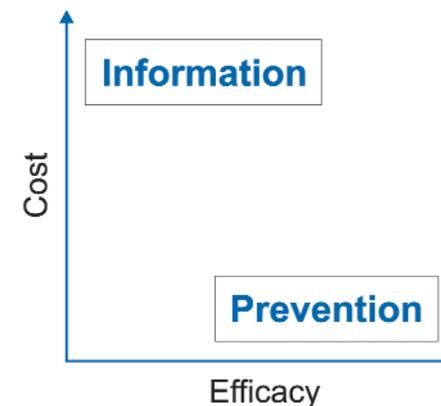


## 4.3   Prevention strategies

If information alone is ineffective, how can prevention activities capable of modifying behavior be organized? Again, it is important not to lose sight of the definition of prevention:

**An educational activity aimed at increasing the awareness of vulnerable people**

as well as their commitment to the solution. **For this reason it has to be implemented and shared with beneficiaries via personal interaction.**

Therefore, the goal is to acknowledge the existence of the problem and provoke a change in attitude from indifference towards self-protection and protection of others. It means involving the whole community in a process of reconsideration, and perhaps, modification of social values. This is why the medical concept of prevention is preferred since it is inclusive, focusing on the entire community (the whole body), not just one age group (the infected area).

### 4.3.1 Primary prevention

In countries of origin primary prevention activities should implicitly respect the value of the person regardless of gender or social class. It should also include a significant component aimed at improving skills, enhancing education, and providing micro-credit schemes to those interested in starting business. This strategy is consistent with the second goal of primary prevention: elimination of the conditions that compel one to migrate.

In countries of destination primary prevention should be aimed at spreading information to entrepreneurs concerning ways to:

- make a profit while respecting human rights and dignity
- respect market rules,
- use economic resources and how to better share them,
- mainstream gender consideration.

Clearly, primary prevention is implemented by a number of different types of organizations (human rights, development, migration, women's, and business organizations). But it is an expansive, multi-faceted, long-term commitment that is not always undertaken with an eye toward the distant future. This is perhaps why some people are inclined to reduce primary prevention to generic diffusion of information. It is faster, easier and in one way, it raises awareness about the problem. But this only addresses the awareness raising component, leaving the target responsible for figuring out how to modify behavior so as to avoid the problem.

Primary prevention tools are those commonly used in education, such as **peer education** and **self help groups**.

- With peer education we can increase the impact of prevention activities and provoke behavior changes by involving the "opinion leaders" or respected people in schools, the work place and among communities.
- With self-help groups, personal discomforts can be shared with others experiencing the same thing. An example of this are groups in countries of origin where those interested in migration meet to discuss the details of their project and share information, doubts, etc. In countries of destination and origin, groups of trafficked people can help each other by sharing their experiences (therefore the psychological burden) and finding solutions for going forward.

**Luke 13: 6-8**

*6 He spoke this parable. "A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it, and found none. 7 He said to the vine dresser, 'Behold, these three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree, and found none. Cut it down. Why does it waste the soil?' 8 He answered, 'Lord, leave it alone this year also, until I dig around it, and fertilize it. 9 If it bears fruit, fine; but if not, after that, you can cut it down.'"*

### 4.3.2 Secondary prevention

**Secondary prevention** in trafficking can be implemented both in countries of origin and destination. There are numerous activities that aim at achieving different objectives:

a) In countries of origin, the beneficiaries of the secondary prevention activities are those who, oppressed by a problematic situation due to economic or political reasons, seek the resolution of their problems abroad.

Since the migration process is lengthy, it is in this timeframe that we can reduce the risks linked to the project itself by:

- Giving information about documents: explaining procedures to obtain documents (what to expect), how to ensure that documents are legitimate and meet the requirements for travel abroad, and information about the permit of stay and work abroad;
- Cautioning about possible offers from friends, acquaintances, or strangers that include suspicious solutions such as promises that "everything will be solved once you arrive." Providing information about realistic wages and warning about eventual discrepancies between the job and the salary promised;
- Assuring that in case of suspicion it is possible to negotiate a delay in the leaving;
- Giving out plenty of contact points (telephone numbers, addresses…) in the country of destination (congregations, churches, NGOs, health facilities, etc).

Secondary prevention acts as a sort of parachute. It can be accomplished by producing simple leaflets, perhaps in collaboration with local institutions or embassies (local IOM offices have copies of the legislation of many countries of destination and photocopies can be made for communities where we are working). The goal is to provide information and suggestions in case things go wrong not to discourage migration itself. It is important not to come across as a pessimist, but as an advocated for the success of the migration project. Those who have decided to migrate will do so in one way or another, hence it is useless to apply scare tactics. It is better to provide practical information in order to become a reliable focal point on migration inside the community.

Again, working in a network is crucial, therefore it is strongly advised to get in contact with embassies or international organizations in order to familiarize oneself with "the system" as it relates to migration. In this way, one can better provide information to prospective migrants especially on administrative issues. A good idea is for each woman religious to stay in contact with her own embassy in order to maintain a privileged channel of information, access to documents, visa procedures and emergency numbers migrants can contact once in the country of destination. Though the importance of having contact numbers seems banal, many migrants in distress and victims of trafficking were able to escape exploitation thanks to

**Numbers 21: 6-9**

*6 Then the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many people of Israel died. 7 And the people came to Moses, and said, "We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD and against you; pray to the LORD, that he take away the serpents from us." So Moses prayed for the people. 8 And the LORD said to Moses, "Make a fiery serpent, and set it on a pole; and every one who is bitten, when he sees it, shall live." 9 So Moses made a bronze serpent, and set it on a pole; and if a serpent bit any man, he would look at the bronze serpent and live.*

information they had about assistance centers, addresses, telephone numbers or the small "emergency" vocabulary they memorized.

b) In countries of destination, secondary prevention is more sensitive because the goal is not to help the victim escape exploitation (tertiary prevention), but to keep their health status in stable condition in a very precarious moment. In countries of destination, secondary prevention action has only had women engaged in forced prostitution as beneficiaries and the main goal was to prevent STIs and their transmission.

Secondary prevention activities have been primarily undertaken by going to the street and reaching out to the victims where they are visible and accessible. A great number of women religious have already participated in these activities, called mobile outreach units. By going to the street it is possible to reach women in need and build relationships with them as well as diffuse information about assistance facilities where women can go for support (many of them do not usually know where to go).

It is very important not to begin the relationship with information concerning escape since we do not want the woman to feel that we are judging her. The goal is to start a relationship where the only goal is her well-being. If we immediately approach her with information about how to leave prostitution we are communicating that we disapprove of what she is doing and, by extension, it would appear we are judging her. By spreading information about assistance centers and building relationships, she is free to come at will and raise her own questions. Experience shows that in this way women respond well to the helping relationship, especially since they desperately need friendly contact and spiritual support.

### 4.3.3 Tertiary prevention

**Tertiary prevention** is the combination of activities aimed at helping the victims to escape and recover from their experience with trafficking. This can be achieved by establishing places where they can feel safe.

Several kinds of shelters already exist. It is ideal if they create a continuum of assistance from the country of destination to the one of origin. In countries of destination there are "escape shelters", where survivors can spend a few days after having escaped from the traffickers. It is the most dramatic and emotionally painful moment because they have taken their lives back into their own hands. The responsibility of being in control again can be overwhelming. After a while, the survivors may begin to express the will to plan for the future. At this point they can move to other shelters where they can start a new life, and receive training and support.

Those eager to return home can be referred to a shelter in the country of origin in order to slowly get used to the return to the country of origin. In the shelter, survivors can more easily decide if they should go back home, stay in another city, contact their parents or stay away from them and start over elsewhere.

In some countries IOM provides shelters that are usually run by local NGOs and in some cases with the help of religious personnel. In larger countries (such as Romania or Nigeria) the main shelters should be reinforced by smaller "subsidiaries" in rural areas. Religious personnel living and working in rural areas could fulfill this role. In this way the survivor is never abandoned in the difficult process of returning to a normal and fulfilled life.

## 4.4    Prevention and Social Stigma

Prevention activities often have contents that can reinforce prejudices toward a community or social group. An example is the overlapping of the prevention of trafficking with prostitution. In many countries of destination, especially in Europe, many activities have been organized in schools aimed at the education of the male population on gender and sexuality issues. Undoubtedly, these are very important topics, but not focused on trafficking and therefore not very helpful. The core issue of trafficking is not sexuality but rather the relationship between genders and inequality in the access to the labor market for women. Women from developing countries would be less vulnerable and less likely to be on the street of developed ones if there were no demand for such services and if they did not have to escape discrimination at home.

Nevertheless, the main problem is not when prevention activities are poorly focused, but when they contribute to exacerbating the problem. When prevention and information campaigns overlap trafficking with prostitution, prospective migrants also associate prostitution with trafficking. Therefore, logic dictates that if one avoids getting mixed up with prostitution, one can also avoid being trafficked. With this in mind, thousands of women left their countries convinced they were not at risk since their traffickers said nothing about working in prostitution. This kind of misunderstanding facilitates the work of the traffickers because they know which words to avoid and how to assuage fear ("you won't have anything to do with prostitution").

Further, once back home, freed from exploitation, all victims are considered prostitutes (even if their exploitation did not include prostitution). Clearly, this makes rehabilitation even harder since it increases their chances of marginalization. In many cases they have to hide out somewhere else with a new identity in order to reintegrate themselves in their country of origin.

Another example is the stigmatization of migration that occurs when the risks of trafficking are confused with the risks of migration. Migration is not the risk. The uninformed and unplanned process of migration creates the risks associated with crossing borders. If we attempt to persuade that "migration is very dangerous", we appear unreliable since millions of migrants have witnessed the contrary.

When risk is generalized people lose confidence in the messenger. Our role is not to scare people into making decisions, it is to help them obtain correct and reliable information and assist them in reorienting their migration project so that it avoids or reduces risk.

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**Luke 15: 1-7**

*1 Now all the tax collectors and sinners were coming close to him to hear him. 2 The Pharisees and the scribes murmured, saying, "This man welcomes sinners, and eats with them." 3 He told them this parable. 4 "Which of you men, if you had one hundred sheep, and lost one of them, wouldn't leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and go after the one that was lost, until he found it? 5 When he has found it, he carries it on his shoulders, rejoicing. 6 When he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!' 7 I tell you that even so there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents, than over ninety-nine righteous people who need no repentance.*

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**Luke 15: 11-32**

*11 He said, "A certain man had two sons. 12 The younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me my share of your property.' He divided his livelihood between them. 13 Not many days after, the younger son gathered all of this together and traveled into a far country. There he wasted his property with riotous living. 14 When he had spent all of it, there arose a severe famine in that country, and he began to be in need. 15 He went and joined himself to one of the citizens of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed pigs. 16 He wanted to fill his belly with the husks that the pigs ate, but no one gave him any. 17 But when he came to himself he said, 'How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough to spare, and I'm dying with hunger! 18 I will get up and go to my father, and will tell him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in your sight. 19 I am no more worthy to be called your son. Make me as one of your hired servants."' 20 "He arose, and came to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him, and was moved with compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.*

In conclusion we can see why it is so important to develop prevention activities with the guidance and input of the beneficiaries themselves. In this way we can more easily avoid confusion of needs as well as stigmatization of victims of trafficking and migrants.

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# The Helping Relationship

# 5

*Chapter summary*

This chapter addresses the concept of the helping relationship, a delicate approach intended for those already working in education or support and therefore seasoned in the educational and helping processes. The non-directive technique was favored because it is based on a helping process that guides the assisted to find the intellectual capacity and emotional and spiritual strength she needs to help herself.

The primary interest in the helping process is to promote self-help/growth such as coping skills and solving one's own problems by drawing on one's own inner resources and strengths. Four steps, undertaken conscientiously and professionally make this goal attainable:

- Welcoming, or simply letting the person assisted know she can count on the helper,
- Support,
- Autonomy,
- Empowerment.

These steps hinge on listening, mirroring and accompanying the assisted. It is, therefore, closely related to the Gospel message and the behavior of Jesus towards women of his times. This in fact is the source from which women religious draw their inspiration in their ministry on behalf of women who are trapped by trafficking for sexual exploitation.

In helping relationships women religious typically pay attention to the many variables that come into play in efforts to provide assistance to women. Thus, the helping relationship is situated within a very broad framework. It focuses on the healing of psychological, social and spiritual distress, aspects that interact and mutually condition one another in the process of rebuilding the personality of the assisted person.

Moreover, since complete self recovery of the assisted person depends also on the retrieval of her juridical personality, attention is paid to the support required in following up legal proceedings and efforts to regularize status and re-acquire personal documents. Attending to such matters, in fact, can boost the general well

being of the assisted person by helping her regain her juridical personality and her status as a citizen.

Another dimension that requires specific attention is the professional training aimed at helping the assisted person to become re-inserted into the world of work, thereby acquiring economic security and autonomy.

In all these different aspects, knowledge of the culture of origin of the assisted person or cultural mediation is imperative. The many requests for women religious from the countries of origin to collaborate in this service prove the central role that the cultural element plays in the different interventions inherent to helping relationships. Experiences show that the lack of attention to the cultural aspect can jeopardize the entire helping relationship.

A multifaceted and holistic approach can be realized only by a team of persons. Women religious fulfill such a requirement in the ambience of their community where the assisted persons are surrounded and accompanied by different members playing different roles and in relationship with other institutions, agents and actors. The community dimension, therefore, is indispensable in the interventions of women religious because it enables the convergence of the necessary range of actions required for the complete rehabilitation of the assisted person and creates a social support system conducive to a rebirth into a new life.

The approach adopted for the presentation of the helping relationship in this chapter is strictly psychological. However, the discussions during the training programs included a holistic view of the person assisted and her need for physical, social and psychological wholeness as well as economic autonomy.

## Introduction

In the realm of tertiary prevention activities the helping relationship plays a key role. When a survivor finds herself in severe psychological distress and her future is at stake, psychological support is necessary. This support can find its response in the helping relationship. Developing a helping relationship with a survivor is critical to changing conditions or patterns of behavior that keep her from overcoming her pain and difficulties caused by the trafficking experience. Developing helping alliances with survivors is challenging because they may have a history of difficulty in forming and sustaining relationships. This task, therefore, requires deliberate professionalism on the part of the caregiver.

In this chapter suggestions for an effective helping relationship (specifically with persons involved in trafficking) are presented.

## 5.1    The Evolving Helping Relationship

In the last 30 years the complex panorama of the world of help and support has increased and developed various models of intervention, schools of thought, and techniques that provide a variety of methodological and operational proposals. The stimulation for this theoretical and operational research stems from a common presupposition: that physiological and psychological needs are deeply **interconnected**. Another factor influencing and perpetuating research and interest in the field of helping relationships has been the emergence of new forms of discomfort.

Ever-increasing migration flows and the resulting enrichment and diversity of cultures, have clearly modified the social fabric of countries of origin and destination. By introducing new elements, cultural diversity has also had an effect on traditional notions of helping alliances and techniques. New actors and new needs have called for the modification and updating of helping interventions aimed at assisting those in distress.

## 5.2    Helping Relationship Models

Before suggesting specific operational interventions, it is useful to understand the two main ways of offering help. In interpersonal relationships, for example when a friend comes to us with a problem, we tend to select one or the other of these methods instinctively, depending on our relationship with the person and our own personality. We might tell our friend what we would do in the same situation or how we responded to similar problems in the past. Sometimes we might give our opinions on the issue itself or tell our friend what we think she should do. Or maybe we assist the friend by calming her down and helping her to think clearly. Those who work in human-contact occupations, however, must deliberately select an approach that is most likely to support the person assisted. The two models of helping relationships can be associated with the following methodological principles:

- The directive system
- The non-directive system

The **directive system** is based on the assumption that the helper is able to understand and interpret the needs of the person assisted and to identify how to achieve the solution. In interpersonal relationships, many people spontaneously choose this approach when they offer advice about what they would do to solve the problem.

The **non-directive system** relies on the belief that the person assisted is the only one who can truly understand her problem and is therefore the only one able to plan and carry out a process to resolve the problem. From this perspective, the duty of the helper is focused on putting the person assisted at ease and helping to rebuild her self-esteem and self-confidence allowing her to stimulate her own supporting action. For example, by listening and providing her with relevant information we show her that she is in control of her life and that we think she is more than capable of making her own decisions.

As we can see, the two models are opposites. The directive system relies entirely on the professional and persuasive abilities of the helper since she "steers" the relationship by telling the person assisted how to solve her problems. Consequently, should things go wrong for the assisted who follows this advice or remains unconvinced, the helper often feels responsible. The non-directive system, on the contrary, is rooted in the reawakening of the personal resources of

the assisted, helping her acquire coping skills so that she can plan her future and resolve her problems.

## 5.3    Psychological profile of the survivors in the helping relationship

The theoretical/operational model must be consistent with the characteristics of the beneficiaries. The pain of the survivors usually runs deep, stimulating intense needs for affection, safety, and protection. At first, the person assisted puts forward only the part of the pain that she feels comfortable allowing the helper to see. The helper must keep in mind, however, that this is only one component of the pain that also includes the effects of experiences before being trafficked, during the trafficking experience itself, and, often, the return home.

Another element characterizing the emotional condition of survivors is the perceptible state of confusion. Confusion can lead the individual to *rumination*, the incessant, cyclical contemplation of her past mistakes leading up to her current problem. This is an attempt at problem solving, but the logic is incoherent and focuses on the past, keeping solutions for the future elusive. Rumination is a mental state where the person continuously and emotionally thinks about the problem, dramatizing it, associating further catastrophe to possible solutions. She becomes a prisoner of her own thoughts and feels as though she is prey to future events. Though she thinks her thought process is an effort to solve her problems, this kind of thinking actually precludes viable solutions and leads to depression. The figure below illustrates that the condition of rumination is a vicious cycle. The person assisted is trapped in the circles of rumination, unable to break through the barrier of the circle of pain, to follow the tangent line leading to growth.
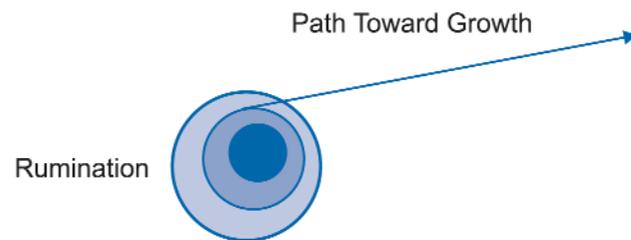


The presence of rumination worsens with feelings of neither being listened to nor understood. This feeling results from educational and cultural influences characteristic of some countries of origin. For example:

- A vision of the woman and her social role that can be defined as passive-aggressive. Although survivors from these contexts may appear very dynamic and resolute, they often are people who have great difficulty when they must make a decision. They are less able to make decisions because they have never been free to make their own choices. Though it may be difficult for her at first, it is crucial that the survivor make all of her own decisions. The helper may misinterpret women from this context, assuming that they are as bold,

confident and decisive as they appear.

- A strong internal conflict that arises after having learned new models of socialization in the country of destination. These new models often stand in contrast with those of the country of origin. The survivor may have appreciated certain elements of social models in the country of destination and find it difficult to reconcile them with her life at home. The helper may not understand that some of the survivor's issues stem from feeling alienated from her own culture.

- A different way of conveying sentiments of the love between a man and a woman and of love among the family members. Sending money home is important not only because it is a response to a real problem of the family, but also because it is a significant way to show the love towards them. The helper must recognize the pressure that the person assisted feels to help her family and not trivialize the importance of this factor.

It is clear that social, psychological, cultural and spiritual components play an important role in helping alliances. The document, therefore, relies on the non-directive technique that portrays a vision of the helping relationship characterized by the concept that the client is the center of her own intervention.

In sum, the individual is the focus of our attention not the problem. By focusing on the individual and her abilities, the helper promotes self-help and dispels the perception that the helping relationship is a road map for the assisted to overcome her problems. The best the helper can do in the directive scheme is hope that she has made an accurate assessment of the problems of the person assisted and that the proposed advice will be effective. If the helper fails, which she is likely to do since she can only have an acquaintance with, rather than a profound understanding of the problems of the assisted, there is a danger of becoming "burned out".

## 5.4    Proposal of an operational model: "the basic postulate"

The **helping relationship model** can be summarized as follows:

*The helping relationship is an action, based on communication[1], with the aim of reactivating and reorganizing the resources of the person assisted.*

This statement exemplifies the kind and style of intervention we will propose within our treatment. The definition implies three concepts. First, the helping relationship is described as an "action," therefore it consists of active behavior with clear guidelines and procedures, which the helper applies toward the benefit of the person in need of assistance. It is, therefore, a structured and proven technique, not a "feel good" philosophy or a pop psychology approach for prompting troubled individuals to cheer up.

Second, the action performed by the helper is rooted in communication since helping someone does not refer to doing something *for* her, but assisting her in accomplishing the task she has already identified.

**notes**

**1.** *Communication* is any observable behaviour inside the relationship.

The third concept represents a key element of the intervention methodology. It identifies the goal and lays out the road map leading to its realization. **The support action of the helping relationship has the distinctive and sole purpose of "awakening" the resources of the person assisted.** The resources already exist within the person, but due to her intense emotional state she is unable to awaken them alone.

The benchmarks that embody the non-directive helping relationship are summarized below. **The helping relationship is:**

- An active behavior with clear guidelines,
- An action rooted in communication,
- A reawakening of the personal resources of the person assisted.

An example will illustrate the use of the non-directive helping relationship. The scenario: A friend calls you in a state of panic because she can't find a document absolutely necessary for a meeting the following day. You respond to her plea for help and hurry to her room to find her desperately going through her things to find the document. The room appears to have been turned upside down. She is restless, anxious, and deeply worried, using dramatic and pessimistic tones. At this point you genuinely want to help alleviate your friend. You can choose one of two different ways to do so:

- You could put yourself in your friends shoes, assume her preoccupation, reorganize the room to make it easier for you to look through all the possible hiding places until you find the document.
- Or you could first try to calm down your friend while offering a healthy dose of moral support. Then you help her plan what to do next. You support her in her decision to reorganize the room until reaching the objective; however, during the planning phase, you also encouraged her to develop an alternative plan should the mission to retrieve the document be unsuccessful.

The above scenario illustrates the antithetical nature of these two approaches. The second approach is preferable to the first since it stresses autonomy in the process of solution. It should be noted, however, that the non-directive helping relationship is not a sort of cold, "tough love" approach, leaving distressed individuals to their own devices while the helper looks on wondering how they manage to get themselves into such predicaments. To the contrary, it accompanies and supports the person in distress (or friend or colleague, etc) by providing information (when asked) and helping her to reorganize in a manner that she thinks is appropriate. She remains in the "driver's seat," driving herself to the solution. At her request, the helper is beside her in the "passenger seat," actively supporting her in following the map she herself devised with the emotional and technical (information) support of the helper.

This support action helps the assisted person to realize that interdependent relationship actually promotes self-help. The directive approach, on the other hand, stimulates a sense of dependence, impotence and ineptitude even if our friend is clearly relieved when we find it.

It is likely that the next time she has a problem she will lack confidence in her

ability to solve it and contact us for its solution (dependence system). By using the non-directive technique the helper spurs the thought process and awakens and reorganizes her own experiential "knowledge".

The task of the helper is to make the person assisted become aware that both her problem and any possible solutions are unique and subjective. This helps to establish the nature of relationship since it suggests that helper does not intend to dictate strategies, but rather help outline the resolution of her problems. The person assisted can more readily become conscious of the real problem and the subjective available solutions. The active accompaniment and support of the helper encourages the person in distress to look at herself (self-refer), her experiences and skills and recognize her problem-solving skills.

At this point we may question why the person assisted, the individual who is most familiar with the intricacies of her problems and who has the resources within her to solve them, does not carry out the problem-solving actions on her own. The reason she cannot do so is because the confusion phase is so powerful that it actually blocks access to the cognitive (rational thought), emotional and behavioral resources that she possesses.

In such a context, the non-directive helper reflects the thoughts of the assisted, purifying them from the influence of depression. The person assisted can then recognizes her own thoughts, revised, and simplified by the helper, allowing her to reach inside herself (or self-refer) and transform her thoughts into a plan and goals for the future.

To summarize, **an effective and efficient support relationship** is characterized by a sequence of actions whose objectives are:

- To encourage the "emancipation" of the assisted person from her past and from her negative self-image (I am able to handle my problems)
- To raise awareness of the social context by familiarizing individuals with problems relating to trafficking.

## 5.5    Proposal of an operational model: "the psychic system"

To fully understand the approach to the proposed model, a look at the theory that supports the method would be useful. A simplification of how the mental, or psychic, system of an adult (without psychic pathology) functions will help to clarify the theory. There are three mental stages that can be found in each individual: **ME**, **SELF**, and **I**. They are the three parts of a unique apparatus that makes up the mental universe of each individual. Each of these parts has a duty. For example, try to imagine our psychic system as a library, with three employees. The first one, **I**, greets the donors who give books to the library. **I** welcomes and interacts with them while receiving the books. In our metaphor, these books represent thoughts, information and emotions that are given to **I** so that she can increase her knowledge, culture and experience. The second employee, **Me**, works in a room beside **I**. **Me**'s duty is to examine each book that has been taken by **I** and

study its content, in order to understand what kind of book it is and what the contents include. Once understood, the books are arranged according to content on a small holding shelf. The third employee, **Self**, is entrusted for the whole archive of the library. **Self** must organize all the books on the shelves and manage the library efficiently. **Self** receives the books ready to be archived from **Me**. But how and with which method will **Self** archive the books on the shelves? First, **Self** reads through the books that **Me** has already categorized. She then tears out each page of every book and inserts the pages according to content into her archived books made up of pages she has torn out of other books. In this way **Self** constantly has new or revised books. The library is growing continuously. When the new contents arrive, every book is enriched with more pages, becoming more complex and detailed. What if we ask **Self** who is the author of these unique compilations (thoughts) made up of pages from many different books (experiences)? **Self** could rightly respond, "They are mine".

This metaphor helps us to understand that each experience lived by an individual can be expanded or elaborated and inserted into one's own archive of experiences. To further illustrate, the three parts of the system have the following duty:
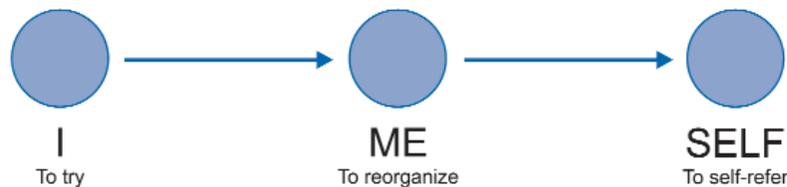


Now let's use this theoretical metaphor to examine the psychological profile of a survivor. The first thing that can be noted is that the person assisted is attempting to make decisions to change in order to begin her new life but these decisions are not producing the expected results. This is due to the state of confusion that invades the mental capacities of the person in difficulty. This confusion occurs and produces its negative effects precisely in the stage of **Me**. The first effect is that **Me** is not able to organize the books on the holding shelf, or the survivor is unable to understand her experiences enough to organize them. The second effect is that this profound confusion prevents her from using previous experience (**Self**) as a guide to understanding her new experiences and dealing with her problems. The helper's duty is to reactivate the stage of **Me**, helping the person assisted to reorganize her thoughts so that she can access her archive of experience to help her in the problem-solving process.

## 5.5.1  The becoming of the SELF

During the growing process, the psychic system of the assisted is being modified. Metaphorically, this means that her library must acquire larger shelves to accommodate the new books that have arrived. **Self** must enlarge the entire library to make room for the larger shelves; therefore, the flexible walls will have to be pushed apart to enlarge surface space. Through the helping relationship the person

assisted discovers that the problem is not gigantic and unwieldy. She realizes the problem is her own and that by focusing her energy on the meaning of the problem (rather than on the details of the problem itself) she can more easily deal with it. The person assisted can then analyze her own sense of herself, expanding it or renovating her previous concept to fit her new needs. The effort to expand the borders of the self increases proportionally with knowledge and consciousness. This is the becoming of one's Self.
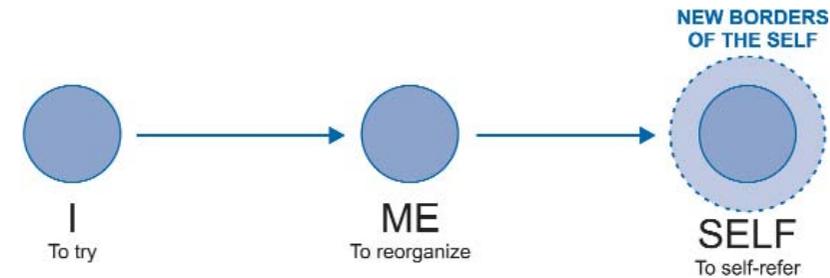


The intended goal is the enlargement of her Self and the recognition of her own resources on the part of the person assisted. This experience with the non-directive helper will help to form a body of information and experiences that she can use to address and solve other problems when they arise. More confident in her resources and knowing how to access them, the person assisted will become increasingly autonomous, diminishing the need of external help.

## 5.6    Proposal of an operational model: "the helper skills"

Now we can examine the skills that the helper needs in order to help the assisted through the difficult moment of confusion. To support the person in difficulty, the helper must be an expert in:

- The management of the interpersonal communication (The media of the interpersonal communication: **observation**, **listening**, **response**.)
- The use of a methodology of work
- Negotiation

### Management of Interpersonal Communication: Observation

Observation is more than the passive act of looking at something. Let's imagine someone standing in front of a picture in a museum. If the person does not have technical knowledge about art or drawing, she will observe the picture in order to receive pleasure and give a personal judgment. To do so, she will activate certain emotions or memories linked to a personal experience. The drawing has the capacity to stimulate positive emotions of appreciation or negative emotions of dislike. In either case, the assessment is based on the person's personal experience and preference. If the person were an art critique, she would observe the same

*20 and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him. 21 But we were hoping that it was he who would redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things happened. 22 Also, certain women of our company amazed us, having arrived early at the tomb; 23 and when they didn't find his body, they came saying that they had also seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive. 24 Some of us went to the tomb, and found it just like the women had said, but they didn't see him." 25 He said to them, "Foolish men, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! 26 Didn't the Christ have to suffer these things and to enter into his glory?" 27 Beginning from Moses and from all the prophets, he explained to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself. 28 They drew near to the village, where they were going, and he acted like he would go further. 29 They urged him, saying, "Stay with us, for it is almost evening, and the day is almost over." He went in to stay with them. 30 It happened, that when he had sat down at the table with them, he took the bread and gave thanks. Breaking it, he gave to them. 31 Their eyes were opened, and they recognized him, and he vanished out of their sight.*

picture from another perspective. The observation would be aimed at de-coding the technique used by the artist, examining the aesthetic choices, the lines, the use of color, deciphering what the artist wanted to convey, etc. An art critique would focus her observation on the painting using learned techniques and skills, rather than simply basing her opinion on experiences and self-reference.

However, the goal of the helper's observation is not to judge the person assisted, but to understand useful information for obtaining a clearer picture of the person. To do so, the helper will observe:

- **The verbal sphere** (words, semantics, etc.)
- **The para-verbal sphere** (tone, volume, speed, etc.)
- **The non-verbal sphere** (gaze, gesture, distance, physical contact, etc.)

A significant part of understanding the person assisted comes from keen observation that can be linked to the other data coming from the listening phase.

## Listening

Likewise, listening implies more than just hearing. The attention of the listener must be focused on the other person in the conversation. Explicitly, listening means not feeling the need to express an opinion before the person speaking has finished developing her thoughts. To listen means being able to summarize in our mind what the other person has said.

## Responding

Responding represents the most visible action of our participation in communication. Communication analysis indicates that several typologies of response exist and that each one influences the future of the relationship. Keeping in mind that the helping relationship is a methodical rather than spontaneous approach, it is important to recognize our own natural way of responding to problems. If we know how we are likely to naturally respond to a situation, we are better able to control ourselves in the helping relationship since one's natural response may not always be the most effective.

Those interested in discovering their own "natural response" can take the test below.

For those who have already participated in the exercise,

## 5.7    Test: The Natural Response

### Part 1

For each of the following 10 cases, choose the response that most closely matches how you would reply.

**CASE 1**: woman, aged 37 (wearily)

*" I really don't know what to do. I mean, I don't know if I should keep my job as an operator... it drives me crazy... I can hardly stand it anymore... but, in the end, it is a full-time job with a good salary. I guess I could give it up and start something else more interesting, maybe a less monotonous job. But this in the beginning this would mean a lower salary and I've got a family to support... I'm not sure if I'd be able to cope with it."*

**Responses**

1. First of all, you say you'd like something more interesting. How about we take a look at what you're interested in?
2. Be careful before jumping into something new. You should be confident about the advantages of a new endeavor before leaving your old job.
3. C'mon, cheer up, there's nothing to be afraid of! We just need to figure out which branch of the company you could be moved to. I could arrange a meeting with the person in charge...
4. You are basically upset for two reasons: on one hand you are hesitant in leaving your current job even though you hate it, on the other you are unable to point firmly to another one...
5. Wow, it is really a hard decision, isn't it? You either run the risks related to a possible new job or you stick with the monotony of the one you have...
6. You are such a worrier! Wasting time worrying won't lead to a solution; nor will making a snap decision. You shouldn't push yourself to this point of preoccupation. Relax and everything will be worked out.

**CASE 2**: man aged 30 (drained voice, naive, dejected character)

*"I tend to respond in a very strange way: when something good happens to me, I simply can't believe it and I pretend nothing happened. I'm so angry! I was so crazy about Laura; I really wanted to get to know her. I followed her for weeks before getting up the courage to ask her out to dinner... and, amazingly, she said yes!! I couldn't believe it. I couldn't believe it so much that... in the end I didn't go..."*

**Responses**

1. You have to grow up, my friend, and try to be more realistic regarding women. They are human like all of us: they have the same desire to meet and be with people just like you do...
2. So, anything good seems unreal when it happens to you...
3. You are so convinced that nothing good can happen to you that when good

things happen you are not able to consider it as true...

4. I wonder if your "emotional block" is related to a particular event that happened in your life. Would you mind elaborating on "when something nice happens to me"?

5. Do you think it's worth talking so much about this? All of us have to overcome difficulties about relationships. I'm sure that you learned from mistake with Laura and the next time you'll respond appropriately.

6. I suspect this experience will teach you something. Next time you will just have to accept your good luck...

**CASE 3**: man aged 35 (talking loudly, aggressively, fast)

*"I'm ready to do something! I'm not afraid of hard work. I'm not afraid of adversity provided I can "see" where I'm going. I'm ready to deal with those who get in my way because I realize they only want to see me fail or take what should be mine. I realize that I'm just not the average person who can feel satisfied with a normal job! I want to reach my goals and to be someone..."*

**Responses**

1. Come on, your blind ambition is simply a defense mechanism, an effort to prove your value, of which you seem unconvinced, to yourself...

2. Do you believe that the most important thing is to be the first/wealthiest, and that the efforts and the ways to achieve the goals are incidental?

3. What is pushing you to try to be someone?

4. Would you be interested in some tests to determine where you could succeed? It could be worthwhile for you, even if it is possible that, with your strong determination, you could succeed in many fields...

5. A great ambition can be useful...however, are you really convinced about what you have said, that you'll be "ready to deal with anyone who gets your way" to success? Don't you think this could turn, at the end, more in negative than positive for you?

6. Your opinions are firm! I think that you are reacting to recent delusion. You should calm down and reflect carefully; in this way you will be able to reach your goals with enthusiasm...

**CASE 4**: woman aged 30 (quiet, timid voice)

*"I've been living in this city for ten years and in the same apartment for seven but I still haven't met anyone. It seems impossible to make new friends in the office, it's as if I were paralyzed. I am kind to my colleagues but I feel uncomfortable, awkward. Finally, I just tell myself that I don't care. You can't rely on people anyway. Everyone for himself. I don't need really friends and sometimes I can convince myself..."*

**Responses**

1. What a pessimist! Things can't go on like you describe forever. Sooner or later

you will see other people coming to you...

2. I know other people in the same situation. They were able to build some fulfilling relationships by joining an association called "Our Leisure Time". You must not convince yourself that you should be alone...

3. Maybe if you tell me something about your strategies in seeking friends we will have a clearer idea about what you're doing wrong...

4. This situation has lasted so long that you've managed to convince yourself that you don't mind being alone. Is this the meaning of what you've said?

5. Maybe you are not interested in friendship because you are protecting yourself from something else?

6. The lack of friends is unpleasant therefore we must figure out how to address the problem. There are a number of things that you could do to learn to make friends and the sooner you start the better.

**CASE 5**: man (former soldier) aged 30 (strong and clear voice)

*"Who cares? Nothing is fair anyway. Those who stayed at home during the war have had the best chances. They took advantage of us while we were out fighting! I curse them all. They have cheated us. Regarding my wife... (silence)... ah, well..."*

**Responses**

1. Did you begin to say something about your wife...

2. You feel exploited and this makes you angry...

3. You consider yourself discriminated against and this makes you angry because you feel that you are more entitled to more support than others...

4. I do understand your feelings, but if you want to get ahead you'll have to overcome these feelings of victimization...

5. You are not the only one who feels furious. And your reasons are valid. However, as time goes by you will get past it and start again...

6. You seem jealous and vengeful, but this is very problematic, isn't it?

**CASE 6**: man aged 36 (loud, confident voice)

*"I know that I can easily overcome the financial problem and start my business. All I need is to outline the problem in its entirety and with a bit of rationality and some audacity I'm on my way. I'm smart enough, and if I were helped with some money, I wouldn't hesitate to try..."*

**Responses**

1. Maybe you need a good financial advisor. You can always use some information before getting loans...

2. Perfect! You have to be very confident in yourself if you want to reach a goal. Hesitation and self-doubt can lead to failure. You are on the right track and I hope you succeed...

3. If you were financially supported you would be sure to obtain a profit...

4. You are self confident about your project because you are aware of what is needed for the success of your business. Self-confidence arises by itself when you see the things so clearly...

5. Have you already considered all the risks?

6. You are very concerned about money, the way to get it and how to use it...

**CASE 7**: man aged 46 (harsh and nervous voice)

*"So, he is the new one that just joined the company, but he is very clever, he always has the right answer, he thinks he's a genius. And his fancy car and big office. Bah, he doesn't know who he is dealing with. I could do better than him if I had the chance!"*

**Responses**

1. Why do you think you always have to be the first and the best?

2. With this attitude toward him you are not behaving in the best way...

3. You need a strategy to handle properly the situation. You have to be careful...

4. This newcomer seems so ambitious that it stimulates your willingness to do better...

5. Just relax! Why do you think it's so important to perform better than him?

6. Have you got some information about his former position and his current role within the company? What do you know about it?

**CASE 8**: woman aged 28 (angry and nervous voice)

*"When I look at her! She's neither the sharpest nor most attractive knife in the kitchen. She has no charm, let alone style. How is it possible that so many people like her? They must have incredibly low standards. I can't stand her! She drives me crazy! She gets everything she wants! She's been given the most interesting cases at work, she literally stole Marcus from me and then tried to deny it. When I confronted her and told her just what I thought she just replied: "Oh, I'm sorry". I'm sorry?! Oh no, no, she's not sorry yet, but she will be..."*

**Responses**

1. Does she seem like someone else who you already dealt with?

2. You think she gets what you believe is yours.

3. It could be said that you have a sort of unfair attitude toward her. We all have prejudices towards others but this is useless.

4. It is a typical case of jealousy caused by someone that maybe is more skilled than us.

5. Why don't you observe her carefully and try to defeat her on her field?

6. At your age you are very sensitive to frustrations, but at the same time you're young, you can learn from this, and move on.

**CASE 9**: conversation between Luka and his company's psychologist.

*Psychologist: "So Luka, how is it going with your colleagues?"*

*Luka: "Ah, they can go to hell! I tried to do my best, but the director and his secretary got angry with me because I made some mistakes filling out a complicated invoice. I did my best, I really did, but when they tell me it's not enough... this clearly shows me that I'm useless..."*

**Responses**

1. Come on Luka, don't miss the point! Is it really so bad? They just told you that the work had errors. Don't panic...

2. In other words, when you are criticized you have the tendency to feel guilty?

3. You did your best, but when they showed you some of your mistakes you suddenly started to feel worthless.

4. Come on, if you let this discourage you, then you really do show yourself to be of no value.

5. Tell me, Luka, it is only this that leads you to underestimate yourself?

6. At this point, you should take into consideration all the goals that you have achieved and disregard the imperfections. It would help if you make a list of your successes.

**CASE 10**: dialogue between a student and his/her tutor

*Tutor: "Come in! What can I do for you?"*

*Student: "I was wondering if you could help me plan my schedule for next semester. I've asked for advice on my choices, but everyone has different suggestions and it is very difficult for me to take the right decision. I'm indecisive because I'm attending my first year and I really don't know what would be best for me..."*

**Responses**

1. If I understand correctly, you think that your problem needs an external aid, in other words it is something that you are not able to face by yourself.

2. Would you like to talk about what you intend to focus on or major in, as well as about the different options that you might insert in your program?

3. Come on! It would be more helpful if you valued yourself more, then you could decide by yourself what you need and what you do want, instead of listening to others' suggestions.

4. I'm wondering whether the solution to your problems depends on trusting yourself or on the choice about the courses.

5. I know, sometimes it is quite difficult to find your place inside the university structure.

6. Have you already verified if the hours of the courses you've already selected match your time availability?

## Part II

Now insert your answers in the following table, being careful to consider the cases horizontally: for example if you have chosen response No.3 in the first case, you will choose the cell under the letter "E". For each case you will have a corresponding letter.

| | A | B | C | D | E | F |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| CASE1 | 2 | 4 | 6 | 1 | 3 | 5 |
| CASE2 | 1 | 2 | 5 | 4 | 6 | 3 |
| CASE 3 | 5 | 1 | 6 | 3 | 4 | 2 |
| CASE 4 | 6 | 5 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 4 |
| CASE 5 | 6 | 2 | 5 | 1 | 4 | 3 |
| CASE 6 | 2 | 6 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 3 |
| CASE 7 | 5 | 1 | 3 | 6 | 2 | 4 |
| CASE 8 | 3 | 4 | 6 | 1 | 5 | 2 |
| CASE 9 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 5 | 6 | 3 |
| CASE 10 | 3 | 2 | 5 | 6 | 4 | 1 |

## Part III

Once you have associated the appropriate letter to each case, count how many of each letter you have. The most prevalent letter with the prevalence of cases is the one that indicates your natural response. Four cases in a column express a strong tendency. If you have a column with 4 and another one with 3 it means that your natural response vacillates between the two.

## Part IV

Compare your natural response to the six explanations below:

**Prevalence**:

**A Evaluation Attitude**

You tend toward an evaluative response; often they imply a personal ethic evaluation and a judgment towards others.

**B Interpretation Attitude**

Your responses are an interpretation of what you are told. You understand what you want to understand, seek what seems to be important for you and look inside yourself for an explanation. You may distort what the other wanted to say.

**C Emotional Support Attitude**

You tend to offer supporting responses, intended to encourage, console or compensate. You are very welcoming and convinced that it is important not to dramatize.

**D Investigation Research Attitude**

Your answers are investigating, you want to know more and tend to orient communication toward what you think is important for you. It may seem as though you are accusing the other because they are reticent and are wasting your time. You are pushing the other in telling you what it is important (for you).

**E Problem-Solving Attitude**

Your response is aimed at finding a quick solution to the problem. You immediately understand and propose a solution to the problem as if you were in the same situation of the client. By solving what you believe to be the problem, you liberate yourself from the client's complaining.

**F Understanding Attitude**

Your responses attempt to really understand the problem as it is lived by the client. In the beginning you want to be sure to have understood and this behavior earns the trust of the client encouraging her to express herself. Your behavior further encourages her because she feels you are listening without prejudices.

The above responses must be considered as a natural way to interact in relationships. As said before, when the natural response of a helper isn't helpful, the communication has to be modified.

The following are some rules for avoiding domination of communication:

1. Be sure to have understood the others point of view (improves communication and allows the interlocutor to express herself);

2. If you aren't sure to have understood, ask for clarification to better understand (it shows interest in the story of the person assisted);

3. Respond to the content (pay attention to what has been said not how it has been said);

4. Don't ask ambiguous questions (clarify the questions that aren't clear, it avoids mistakes and confusion);

5. Respond briefly and clearly (long answers create confusion and seem like a monologue from which the person assisted is excluded);

6. Avoid interpretation (if it is incorrect the person assisted thinks she is misunderstood, or that she's in the wrong place);

7. Avoid judgments and evaluation (this deters the person assisted from communication, increases aggression since the person assisted feels she's under attack. It also diminishes self-esteem. Evaluations are an imposition of one's personal values and lifestyle on the person assisted);

8. Use a response that conveys understanding (synthesizing what the person assisted has said in order to confirm meaning and contents).

## 5.8    Proposal of an operational model: "the methodology for the implementation of the help model"

**John 8: 3-11**

*3 The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman taken in adultery. Having set her in the midst, 4 they told him, "Teacher, we found this woman in adultery, in the very act. 5 Now in our law, Moses commanded us to stone such. What then do you say about her?" 6They said this testing him, that they might have something to accuse him of. But Jesus stooped down, and wrote on the ground with his finger. 7 But when they continued asking him, he looked up and said to them, "He who is without sin among you, let him throw the first stone at her." 8 Again he stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground. 9 They, when they heard it, being convicted by their conscience, went out one by one, beginning from the oldest, even to the last. Jesus was left alone with the woman where she was, in the middle. 10 Jesus, standing up, saw her and said, "Woman, where are your accusers? Did no one condemn you?" 11 She said, "No one, Lord."*

Now that we understand the theory behind the process which leads the person assisted to identify, articulate, and solve her problem, what are the practical steps we can take to implement the theory? Below is the list of the **9 steps of a non-directive helping relationship**. The list is followed by a detailed explanation of each step.

1. Welcoming
2. Identifying, along with the client, the problem
3. Clarification of the problem
4. Understanding the problem
5. Prioritization (with the client's input)
6. Self -determination
7. Solving Action (with client's input)
8. Results
9. Self-Referring

Though it may seem commonplace, **welcoming** is one of the most delicate moments in the helping relationship since it sets the tone and ambience of the process. During the welcoming or reception of the person assisted, after having prepared the setting (the place where the relationship will be situated) the helper should establish a serene rapport aimed at calming and reassuring the person assisted. The helper must introduce herself identifying clearly her role and intentions. She must also allow the person assisted to explain her problem when she's ready. It is not advisable to start the meeting asking the person assisted about her problems; it is more effective to wait for her to find the way and the words to communicate them to the helper.

After the person assisted has articulated her difficulties, the helper and the person assisted can begin to agree on a "contract" which clarifies the rules and goals of the helping relationship.

*Suggestions on communication with the trafficked women*: speak clearly without promising miracles, be firm and coherent, and follow the same line without change of directions[2]. At the end of the welcoming meeting, the helper can agree with the person assisted about the next meetings.

Below are **specific techniques for welcoming** and building a productive and friendly relationship with the person assisted:

- Approach each individual with an open mind.
- Use mirroring. Take note of words used and try to incorporate them into your conversations with her.
- Listen to explanation of the situation without correcting or arguing.
- Ask questions rather than making firm statements. "So you feel confused about what you should do?" rather than "You're obviously feeling confused."
- Clarify expectations and purposes. Clearly explain the helping process and your role in working together toward solutions.

**notes**

2. From the intervention of Pauline Aweto - Nigerian cultural mediator - during the first training course held in Rome, from 26 Jan to 6 Feb. 2004.

- Help retain a sense of control; for example, involve her in scheduling appointments and ask how she would like to be addressed.
- Clarify commitment and obligations to the working relationship.
- Acknowledge difficult feelings and encourage open and honest discussion of feelings.
- Be consistent, persistent, and follow through.
- Promote participatory decision-making for meeting needs and solving problems.

The helper can **identify the problem** by listening to the person assisted. During these first meetings, the person assisted often speaks about her discomfort in a generic and spontaneous way. The role of the helper is to find out, with the help of the person assisted, the real problems causing the discomfort. Then, the person assisted can be stimulated to **clarify the problem** by reflecting on how she feels about it. The helper must help the person assisted to become aware that the problem is unique and subjective just as the solution is also unique and subjective (there are no formulas).

**To understand the problem**, the person assisted should divide the problem into sub-elements. This action is necessary to help the person assisted understand that the problem is a sum of various factors. This is useful because it leads to examining different spheres where it will be necessary to work to find an articulated solution.

**Prioritization** is the action undertaken to organize the sub-elements be addressed in order to solve "the problem." The helper should ask the person assisted which among the sub-elements are the most urgent and the most important to her. In this way the person assisted will produce a ranking of the sub-elements of the problem. At the end of this phase the helper can ask the person assisted to concentrate on the most urgent and important element identified, leaving aside for the moment the others.

**Self-determination** is the moment when the person assisted can gather the fruit of her work and decide to act, translating what has been planned "theoretically" into behavior. This is a revitalizing moment that comes before the action.

**The solving action** is the phase in which the person assisted plans and does a series of behaviors aimed at solving the problem recognized as the most important and urgent. This phase is articulated in the following steps:

- Set the goal. The person assisted turns the problem into a goal.
- Develop a plan. The person assisted has to point out behavior or action necessary to solve the sub-element.
- Set a timetable. In this stage the person assisted estimates the amount of time necessary to reach the goal.
- Prepare the realization of the steps. The actions necessary and the time needed to execute each step are pointed out.
- Follow up. For each of the steps or actions identified and executed by the person assisted, it is useful to envisage time to discuss the experience of executing each step with her (was it difficult, if it is so why, where were the problems, etc).

**The result** is what has been achieved at the end of the action.

To **self-refer** a result implies that the person assisted become aware of the value of the action and the fact that her goal has been achieved.

The realization of the above steps allows the helper to "accompany" the person assisted towards the solution of one of her problems, in order to establish a precedent in her life. This precedent will support her and give her confidence in finding the solution to other problems.

## 5.9    Negotiating conflict in the helping relationship

It must be kept in mind that context influences communication, particularly in the framework of trafficking. It is crucial therefore to analyze the setting of the shelters and other institutions dedicated to those who decided to escape exploitation. Over the years we have observed recurrent problems inside these structures. These problems usually relate to conflict, either between person assisted and helpers or among the assisted persons.

### 5.9.1  Definition of conflict

*Conflict is the mutual interference of inconsistent acts. The interference provokes a change in usual behavior by increasing dissonances or polarities.*

Each individual possess a behavior or demeanor that is the product of her acquired knowledge and experiences. The "experienced knowledge" comes from the abilities gathered by individuals from previous phases of conflict in life. Our own experience is rich in events marked by conflict, but how many times have we questioned ourselves about our behavior during a conflict? Did we use, consciously or unconsciously, strategies capable of producing a solution? If we did, what kind of solution did we find?

Those questions represent the starting point towards an analysis of the relational event called *conflict* and of its solution, called *negotiation*. Every single behavior is connoted by a continuous flow of actions that are ruled by an inner harmony resulting from experiences of everyday life. When this harmony is abruptly interrupted by an unexpected internal or external reaction, a crisis in the normal flow of our behavior is produced, provoking an instinctive counteraction.

**Conflict provokes a change in the individual's resources** in three psychological "sectors":

- The mutual interference of inconsistent acts provokes **tension**. This tension can be spotted in light forms such as nervousness, in more serious forms such as anger or rage and on occasion it can provoke anguish and an emotional block.
- Our behavioral capacities decrease. The normal wide range of behavioral options to respond to different situations shrinks.
- The behavioral models of an individual become distorted. This distortion can lead to aggression, or perceived incapacity and self-limitation.

The **dynamic of the conflict** can be expressed in two different ways: internal or external.

- Internal conflict acts inside the psychic system. The interfering acts are lived by an individual without the involvement of the external world.
- External conflict is provoked by a series of inconsistent reactions produced inside relationships of one or more persons.

External conflict is activated between two or more persons and has implications both in the psychic sphere of an individual and in the social one. The former implies a reaction within one's self, concerning expectation, pride, strength, etc. The latter implies one's role and cultural and historical variables.

### 5.9.2  Definition of negotiation

*Negotiation is the relationship between individuals with diverging interests, in a situation with limited resources. The individuals are interdependent and willing to seek a solution for the common good (reducing dissonances or polarities).*

It has been proven that the capacity to solve a conflict relies proportionally on the variety of problem-solving options/techniques acquired over time. Consequently, for those having experienced few options/techniques, the capacity to reach a solution is limited; therefore they encounter more problems and conflicts than those who have acquired a variety of techniques.

To solve a conflict the only escape is negotiation or mediation. Negotiation begins by opening a communication channel (an exchange), a process to be articulated across time. **There are two theoretical models of negotiation: divisional and generative.**

- Divisional negotiation involves two key elements: who wins and who looses; who is right and who is wrong. The goal of this model of negotiation is the achievement of the **lowest disadvantage possible**. This is the "I win - you lose" mentality. It indicates a strong competition between the actors and is driven by an interpretation of conflicts as a way of expressing dominance and supremacy. Authoritarian, aggressive characters impenetrable to reason are examples of a personality who choose this kind of negotiation. This model represents the general approach to solving conflicts, despite the fact that it often leads to greater conflict or war.
- Generative negotiation is aimed at the integration of resources and the interrelation of abilities such as creativity and problem solving. The goal of generative negotiation is **maximum mutual advantage**. This modality, referred to as "I win - you win", is the preferred option for achieving an advantageous mutual solution. Parties must be willing to be flexible and open to solutions that may require compromise and alteration of one's own position. This model requires characteristics such as respect, creativity, awareness, confidence in one's own capacities, cooperation etc.

We can consider negotiation as communication among different, sometimes asymmetric parties (experience and social role). To engage in negotiation two prerequisites are necessary: will and strategy. Negotiation foresees certain

phases, or logical steps, toward realizing a strategy aimed at a "negotiation action": pre-negotiation, negotiation and post negotiation.

Pre-negotiation requires a series of actions aimed at clarifying the situation. These actions are:

1. Information gathering
2. Diagnosis of the situation:
   - What does each actor need?
   - Are other actors willing to negotiate?
   - What are the chances for a satisfactory conclusion?
   - How can time influence negotiation?
3. Draft a backup plan:
   - What happens if the agreement is not reached?
   - What happens if the agreement is only partial?
4. Identify general goals:
   - What are my objectives?
   - What are his/her objectives?
5. Identify the scenario:
   - What is the social context?
   - What are the roles and values of each party?
   - What are the general characteristics of behavior of both negotiators?
   - What is the motivation of each party?
6. Select a strategy:
   - Divisional
   - Generative

Once the pre-negotiation phase is accomplished negotiation can begin. This phase is aimed at reducing the dissonances between the two positions. **Three prerequisites are needed for negotiation**:

- Willingness of each party to confront the other (recognize the existence of the other and his /her grievances)
- Mutual interests (recognize the common values, ideas, interests of both subjects)
- Identifying divergences of opinion (recognize different interests)

Negotiation foresees the use of verbal and non-verbal techniques such as the following.

- The use of few and concise topics to illustrate the point: too many topics generate confusion, increase the risks of dissonances and bring up the weak points.
- The use of anticipatory signals: revealing one's own position followed by the disagreements.
- The use of questions: shows interest in the other while putting the dissonances

on the table in a non-threatening way.

- The verification of comprehension: reformulating what has been said in order to better understand the situation.
- The manifestation of appropriate emotion: improves the climate and can illustrate good will.

Situations to be avoided are:

- Indecisive communication: "That might be acceptable, I'm not sure..."
- Devaluation: "Don't worry about it, in any case, I was just upset, it's not important..."
- Attack/defense: "Your grievances reflect your inability to understand..."
- Evaluation: "You should accept my proposal because..."
- New proposal perceived as "bargaining:" "If you agree, I'll see to it that you receive..."
- Too many topics

Post negotiation is aimed at "signing" the agreement. It is composed of the following phases:

- Documentation of the agreement: instead of signing an agreement which may imply distrust, the parties involved may want to "seal" the agreement by exchanging personal belongings, having a meal together, or simply shaking hands.
- Spreading the word: communicate to others (to other guests if in the shelter) that the conflict has been solved and explain the process.

The resolution of a conflict by negotiation implies that each individual renounces a prejudicial part of his/her personality. That is why conflict represents a chance for individuals to enrich their growth by experimenting. Conflict represents a veritable laboratory where adaptive capacities and cognitive and emotional resources are developed.

## 5.10   For more information

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# 6

# Empowerment

sequence of life. The victim, unable to think clearly, is torn between remaining in the situation and hopefully fulfilling her dream or leaving and facing failure.

In the **second phase**, the victim realizes she must rely on her own resources to get out of the situation. At this point, she feels more optimistic and finds new hope and strength. The new attitude awakens resources that had previously remained "frozen".

The **third phase** allows the individual to understand the importance of what has happened. It provokes consideration of both the negative and positive aspects of the experience. The survivor now has to face a sort of new identity whose foundations rest in the past and whose pillars will be erected with each new relationship experience.

Therefore, understanding the level of consciousness of the person assisted is the starting point for helping the person assisted awaken her resources and realize her value as a human being. Empowerment can be considered the desired outcome of helping relationships.

## 6.1    Empowerment

Empowerment is an action aimed at increasing levels of energy and awareness that already exist but are undeveloped.

The psychological basis of empowerment is: **self-esteem**.

Self-esteem is the perception of one's Self in terms of value and ability to face and solve life's problems (Self refers to the totality of thoughts and emotions concerning one's self).

In other words, self-esteem is not merely a thought, but a durable state of self-approval. Self-approval is one's own endorsement of her actions, feelings, thoughts and behavior. A healthy self-esteem is fundamental to being able to take responsibility. An individual who values herself will take care of her health (physical and psychological) and will be respectful of her quality of life. When in trouble she will not expect someone else to solve her problem, though she may recognize that she needs assistance and seek a helping relationship.

Moreover, the experience of the assisted person with empowerment also becomes the experience of the helper and the organizations fighting against trafficking (IOs, NGOs, policy makers, etc.). Empowerment actions, thus, have multiple beneficiaries since they also awaken and reinforce the resources of the others.

Helper ⟷ Empowerment ⟷ Trafficked person

**Empowerment is the key to turning feelings of impotence and passivity into a new feeling of power.**

*Chapter summary*

The goal of the helping relationship is to facilitate the empowerment[1] of the person assisted. Empowerment can be defined as an action that helps to stimulate an increase or recovery of one's self-esteem. Self-esteem is the mechanism that allows one to undertake new experiences. When the assisted persons are emotionally blocked, unable to make decisions to change their circumstances, this is often due to impoverished self-esteem. In this chapter we will explore the psychological structure that governs self-esteem. At the same time we will learn how to use "tools" capable of improving self-esteem. This type of support helps the person assisted reorganize and reintegrate herself back into society. The approach to the topic, as in the previous Chapter, is specifically from the psychological point of view.

## Introduction

During the phases of the helping relationship, the degree of preparation of the helper and the person assisted is an important variable for the success of the process. The helper relies on her theoretical knowledge and practical experience, while the person assisted relies on her life experience and her relationship with others. The level of preparation of the person assisted, however, is affected by the overwhelming emotional state in which she is immersed. An experience of coercion, abuse, and limitation of personal liberties modifies an individual's mental balance and self-perception. Survivors of trafficking have undergone three different emotional phases, each one of which can potentially disturb or favour recovery.

The first phase begins with disillusion concerning the unfolding migration. The disillusion may have begun during the trip or upon arrival in the country of destination. The survivor can only surrender to the emotions overtaking her during the experience. Powerful defence mechanisms such as denial and psychological distancing manifest themselves in an effort to survive and to aid the threatened psychological balance. This becomes a sort of limbo where only the present is relevant and there is no connection between the days, hours or moments. In this situation, one no longer sees a chain of events nor logical timeframes or a

**notes**

1.  It is important to keep in mind that since empowerment comes from within, one individual can never empower another; s/he can only aid the process.

*24 But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, wasn't with them when Jesus came. 25 The other disciples therefore said to him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he said to them, "Unless I see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe." 26 After eight days again his disciples were inside, and Thomas was with them. Jesus came, the doors being locked, and stood in the midst, and said, "Peace be to you." 27 Then he said to Thomas, "Reach here your finger, and see my hands. Reach here your hand, and put it into my side. Don't be unbelieving, but believing." 28 Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" 29 Jesus said to him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen, and have believed."*

## 6.2    Background, process, tools of empowerment

Since healthy self-esteem is a prerequisite for empowerment, the first step is to help the person assisted recognize that she is indeed a person capable of improving her condition. The persons in distress go through a difficult process in implementing positive changes in their lives because their self-esteem has been eroded. Some of the external manifestations are loss of capacity or willingness to take care of themselves and address their needs. For this reason, the helper must guide the client to recognise her own self-worth as well as the fact that she is a person worthy of self-love and the love of others.

In order to help remove blocks to self-esteem, we need **tools conducive to self-exploration**. Some of these tools are:

■ consciousness,

■ self-reflection,

■ self-dialogue.

**Consciousness** is the capacity to understand what is happening inside and outside of us (to decipher the elements of what is happening and their significance), being aware that reality is what we actually live and perceive. For example, I could observe: "I said hello to a Sister and she didn't reply." Consciousness is the capacity to perceive an emotion (I feel ignored), consider this emotion as mine and accept that from my point of view it has sense and meaning (I feel mistreated). In spite of all of this, my feeling of being hurt does not represent the objective reality (maybe the Sister was simply immersed in her thoughts, or didn't see me etc.).

**Self-reflection** is the capacity to think about an occurrence, analysing all relevant components, without being selective. For example "the Sister doesn't like me" is only a single possibility accounting for her lack of response.
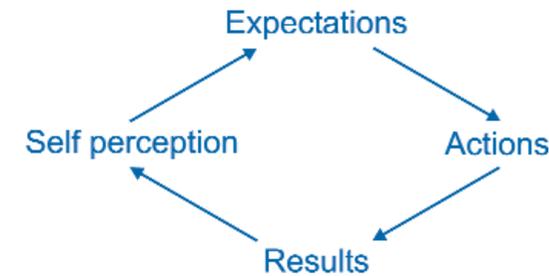
Self-dialogue is the capacity to speak with ourselves. It is a form of discourse we address to ourselves in order to understand what is around us. Example: "I consider the Sister a person who doesn't like me, but as usual I'm being too sensitive. I often take things too personally and then don't make an effort to find out what the problem is or if there even is one."

These tools are useful for reframing the experience of trafficking (and of the failure of their migration project) of the person assisted.

Still, the person assisted remains blocked, even if she is beginning to feel a bit relieved. Now, with the proper tools for our exploration we can approach a door called **self-perception**. Self-perception is to be in touch with the thoughts and sensations that characterize us as individuals (I am the totality of my thoughts and emotions). Self-perception enables us to enter into relationships. Self-perception can be metaphorically considered as the "foundation" of the relationship.

As individuals we provoke expectations inside ourselves and in others. These expectations produce actions (our own and those of others), which produce results (successful or not) that will influence our self-perception (I value myself, I don't value myself).



As we can see in the diagram above, self perception is at the beginning of the track (it is the first step) and at the same time it is also at the end (it is the final step). To illustrate, we could say: "I felt happy yesterday (self perception) I expected that my Sisters would also share my good mood (expectation)... I went to visit them (action)... they were as happy as I was and we had a good time together (result)... I feel good when I am with them because I see that they value me (self perception)." Therefore, we can say that self perception is the product of internal (as we perceive our value as persons) and external factors (as others perceive us).

But where does self-perception come from? It is acquired during infancy, when personal value was associated with what our parents thought of us. We then extended this model to those around us, assessing if they valued us or not. The first model, however, is crucial because it is the one with which we associate most closely and the one that most affects our self perception.

On this point a Sister made the following contribution at the first training course:

> "...it has to be said that some mothers lead their daughters towards a future of exploitation: they dressed them in a certain way, they taught them certain behavior and so on... and I say mother because it was her job to manage the family. Consequently, it has happened that traffickers offer jobs to sons (males) abroad by negotiating the identification of girls from the country of origin to be brought abroad. The sons suggested their sisters, cousins, relatives..."

From this experience, the "passive" role of girls in some contexts can be observed. This passive role leads to her undervaluing herself and can influence the rest of her life.

Starting from the concept of self-perception we can use the first tool to reframe the experience of the person assisted: consciousness. We are conscious that self-perception is made up of different components, some depending on us and some on others. We can therefore use consciousness as a tool to alter self perception. For example: "My parents thought I was worthless and are still disappointed with me. But this is their point of view, mine, on the contrary, is..."

Working on self-perception allows the person assisted to explore new phases of the growing process. The goal of these initial phases is to reach more positive self-perception in order to positively influence her self-esteem.

With our support and with her new expectations, the person assisted will have to

**Luke 18: 18-25**

*18 A certain ruler asked him, saying, "Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" 19 Jesus asked him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good, except one--God. 20 You know the commandments: 'Don't commit adultery,' 'Don't murder,' 'Don't steal,' 'Don't give false testimony,' 'Honor your father and your mother.'" 21 He said, "I have observed all these things from my youth up." 22 When Jesus heard these things, he said to him, "You still lack one thing. Sell all that you have, and distribute it to the poor. You will have treasure in heaven. Come, follow me." 23 But when he heard these things, he became very sad, for he was very rich. 24 Jesus, seeing that he became very sad, said, "How hard it is for those who have riches to enter into the Kingdom of God! 25 For it is easier for a camel to enter in through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of God."*

move to the "action" phase in our diagram. This means she will have to take a risk.

Risk is the perception of danger and resulting fear which emerges when we enter new situations. Fear is a natural occurrence whose job is to act as warning alarm. When we are able to control our fear, or listen to it wisely, we allow ourselves to grow.

## Consciousness + Risk = Growth

Hence, only by using our consciousness as a tool for assessing situations and eventually taking risks, can we experience growth. Often, as already mentioned, there is resistance blocking an individual's initiation of this process. Resistance to risk-taking can be associated with fear of disapproval or of failure. This means that an individual's natural inclination toward growth is blocked by a series of issues that raise doubts about her capacity to act in an unfamiliar situation (new territory). For example: "I'd like to have that new job… but what if I can't cope with the situation?… What if I'm not smart enough to handle the duties? What if I simply don't have the skills?" These are relevant, and inevitable questions but if they increase anxiety they destabilize well-being.

If we consider the internal conflict of the person assisted we see that she is afraid to fail, she feels pushed to give up before the failure has a chance to happen. In this scheme of things, it is frequently observed that the assisted persons are inclined to give up because it seems easier or preferable to failure. The logic: "I decided not to take the job. Now I feel better and I can think about something else." This position is disadvantageous because even if the person assisted really does feel immediate relief, she will self-refer or consider herself as an individual with little self worth and thus diminishing her self-esteem: "I'm unable to improve myself."

From this we can draw an important conclusion:

**Managing anxiety** produced by conflicts or risks **is what allows us to increase our self esteem**.

For example, "The more I am able to manage the anxiety that grows inside me because I am afraid of looking foolish or failing, the more I will be able to risk."

Low self-esteem is influenced by the use of an **avoidance/run away** strategy in a situation of conflict. Its antidote is to **face** the situation. By avoiding the situation we deny that we have the capacity to cope with conflict and anxiety. On the other hand, by confronting our anxiety we affirm our abilities, thereby increasing our self-esteem.

But how can we control anxiety? How can we restrain the instinct to protect ourselves by running away from the possibility of psychological pain linked to failure? First, it is necessary to tap into **our own resources that allow us to experiment and learn**. Second, we must then know when to apply them. These resources are already present in the individual but they require training by means of:

- feedback
- self dialogue

We are already familiar with self dialogue, the capacity to talk with ourselves. The word feedback contains two words: feed, meaning to nourish, and back, indicating

away from the front. We can therefore say that feedback can be considered "nourishment" from the past. For our purposes, it is the information that we gather after trying something (an act or behaviour). For example: "I suggested starting a new activity for the prevention of trafficking and my Religious Superior was very open and available to discuss this with me…" Feed back: "I'm a person who can be considered interesting and worthwhile to others." Or, if the Superior was busy and showed little interest: "I'm unable to express myself and my skills as I thought."

The person assisted has begun reconsidering her past (with the help of the tools), she now has new expectations and with our support she has begun to try new things. At this point she is ready for the second step: the consolidation of self-approval, or of rebuilding self-esteem. During the second step, the awakening of the resources, the helper will:

- use self-evaluation,
- disarm the criticism,
- disarm the "must".

**Self evaluation** is an internal observation through which we identify conflicts before they happen.

For example: "I want to apply for a certain job, but I know that in situations like this I become anxious and nervous. I have to prevent these feelings and stay calm and I have the capacity to do so."

Pathological criticism is the tendency to identify with internal criticism (self-criticism) that forms the basis of self-depreciation and worthlessness, such as "You won't be able to do that", "You aren't smart enough" or "You're always the same, never finishing what you start." etc.

Criticism is a sworn enemy because:

a) It combats our will to try and therefore diminishes our self-worth and self-esteem,

b) It maintains *au jour* our internal archive of past failures.

**To disarm self-criticism** we have to be familiar with its "weapons" of cognitive distortion:

**Generalization** occurs when an individual infers a general rule from a single event and applies it to every future event.

Ex: It was a mistake to change jobs. I'll never do that again.

**A stereotype** is a kind of generalization based on a label rather than a rule. Ex: Women aren't suitable for managerial roles, men simply can't be trusted.

**Selective reality** refers to a phenomenon in which an individual "filters" reality by focusing on negative details.

Ex: Your Superior gives you both positive and negative feedback on your work. You dismiss the positive and dwell on the negative.

**Polarization** is expressed in seeing the world only in black and white, without

*10 Now there was a disciple at Damascus named Anani'as. The Lord said to him in a vision, "Anani'as." And he said, "Here I am, Lord." 11 And the Lord said to him, "Rise and go to the street called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for a man of Tarsus named Saul; for behold, he is praying, 12 and he has seen a man named Anani'as come in and lay his hands on him so that he might regain his sight." 13 But Anani'as answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to thy saints at Jerusalem; 14 and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call upon thy name." 15 But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel; 16 for I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name." 17 So Anani'as departed and entered the house. And laying his hands on him he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus who appeared to you on the road by which you came, has sent me that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit." 18 And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes and he regained his sight. Then he rose and was baptized, 19 and took food and was strengthened. For several days he was with the disciples at Damascus.*

shades in between.

Ex: Since I seem to be a born a loser, I can't expect to succeed in life. This subject is impossible. I'll never be able to understand it.

**Self-reproach** is a distortion of those who apologize for events not entirely under their control. Ex: You suggested a daytrip but bad weather "ruins" the day. You feel responsible and apologize profusely as if it were your fault.

**Interpretation** involves "reading into" or decoding someone else's thoughts, attributing our own negative perceptions to them. Ex: My colleague explained that she didn't have time to help me with a report. She must be angry with me.

**Omnipotence/Impotence**. Omnipotence involves feeling responsible for everyone and everything. It is a result of a feeling of excessive control. Ex: "I must do the job so that everything goes perfectly" in a situation that you can't control, or, "The fate of the organization rests on the quality of my document." Impotence is when we feel unable to control anything. Ex: "It's no use because someone else will decide as usual. My efforts don't even matter since no one ever listens to me anyway."

The helper's duty is to support the person assisted in recognizing the pathological criticism that are basic to her inability to recover. By helping the person assisted to use the above reported tools (self-dialogue, self-reflection, feedback etc.), she can then disarm the criticism, reducing their corrosive effect on the self-esteem.

Once self-criticism has been neutralized, the helper can support the person assisted in disarming the inner **"Must"**. The inner "Must" is a set of internal rules, some are our own and some are the result of cultural norms. The latter "Must" is dangerous for positive self-perception, because they tend to be rigid rules inherited from family and elders. An example of inner "Musts" are: "You have to be the best one of your class", "You mustn't argue", "Don't get hurt".

The inner "Must" threatens self-esteem because they are external rules that have been interiorized, therefore they tend not to be useful for us. They indicate what is right and what is wrong based on assumptions that are not our own. To disarm the "Must", the helper uses the same tools as above: self-dialogue, self-reflection and feedback. These handy tools are able to identify inner "Musts" and substitute new, more personal rules. Ex: "I must sacrifice myself for my family".

**Identification** of the "Must": "My mother always said this, but even though I want to take care my family, I also want to live my life."

**Substitution** of the "Must": "I want to send money back home and at the same time feel satisfied as a person".

Now that we have identified that the goal is "to send money home and feel more satisfied as a person" we must identify how we can reconcile the two. A possible strategy could be "I won't send money back home for two months in order to improve the quality of my life (i.e. attending a training for a job). This will affect my earning potential and allow me to send money home more easily."

Many inner "Musts" can be erased by means of self reflection and substitution of personalised rules.

The new rules will be effective only if linked to authentic values and are functional. Therefore, they should be:

- **Flexible** and adaptable according to growth;
- **Personal** rather than the internalization of other's values;
- **Realistic**, relying on reasonable criteria;
- **Enriching rather than restrictive** (they should foster, not stifle growth).

To summarize our exploration of the complex mechanism of self-esteem, the process of developing and reinforcing self-esteem produces a perception of energy and control of the self, both of which serve as the foundation of empowerment.

## 6.3    Peer Support

Once the survivor has carried out the above steps (solution of some of her problems, consciousness of her self-esteem, empowerment) she can then share what she experienced with other survivors of trafficking. She possesses a series of valuable characteristics that make her particularly qualified for participating in helping relationships. She can share with other persons the same life-experience (trafficking) and at the same time she understands the motivations despite the survivor's country of origin. As already seen in the previous chapters, though there is some variation among countries, there are also many similarities. In this way the effects of the helping relationship can be multiplied by beneficiaries who are willing and able to help others. This strategy, called peer support, is very useful for reaching survivors who appear completely blocked or who refuse help.

Peer support is a structured relational methodology of intervention that originated with Alcoholics Anonymous in 1935 and began to flourish by the 1960s. It may appear to be a recent approach, however, the basic characteristics and components of the relational exchange of peer support have been present from the dawn of the humankind.

Peer support has been used in many fields, from alcoholism to drug addiction, from women groups to single parenting. The factors which render communication more effective are:

1) Sharing the same language, in terms of "keywords". Some groups develop a proper language (i.e. the slang of the drug consumers) with a proper syntax already shared by all members of the group;

2) This favourable condition increases the mechanism of identification. Each member can have a "playground" where she can express herself and listen to the others' experiences;

3) In particular, the group setting helps survivors overcome suspicions or fear that information may be used for further manipulation.

Peer support is an intervention that constitutes a laboratory where survivors can train themselves in an emancipation process aimed at autonomy. By sharing their personal experiences, they provide ideas for feasible and reachable solutions. The common experience, use of language, and background, as well as being part of

**Luke 10: 25-37**

*25 A certain lawyer stood up and tested him, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" 26 He said to him, "What is written in the law? How do you read it?" 27 He answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself." 28 He said to him, "You have answered correctly. Do this, and you will live." 29 But he, desiring to justify himself, asked Jesus, "Who is my neighbor?" 30 Jesus answered, "A certain man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who both stripped him and beat him, and departed, leaving him half dead. 31 By chance a certain priest was going down that way. When he saw him, he passed by on the other side. 32 In the same way a Levite also, when he came to the place, and saw him, passed by on the other side.*

*33 But a certain Samaritan, as he traveled, came where he was. When he saw him, he was moved with compassion, 34 came to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. He set him on his own animal, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. 35 On the next day, when he departed, he took out two denarii, and gave them to the host, and said to him, 'Take care of him. Whatever you spend beyond that, I will repay you when I return.' 36 Now which of these three do you think seemed to be a neighbor to him who fell among the robbers?" 37 He said, "He who showed mercy on him." Then Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."*

group, make this a very effective tool.

## 6.3.1  How to start a peer support intervention

Peer support is, therefore, a good way to amplify a counter trafficking intervention aimed at both prevention and assistance. To initiate a peer support group we must accomplish two steps:

1) Identify candidates for the role of the peer supporters;
2) Arrange necessary training.

Some **characteristics of peer supporters** that helpers can assess during the empowerment process are:

- The motivation of the survivor who expresses interest in this role;
- The ability of the survivor to adapt to different social contexts.

Once identified, the peer supporter will need training based on two topics:

1) Relationship techniques;
2) Information (in the case of trafficking, all the basic information about trafficking as discussed in this document).

The peer supporter will develop her skill in both face-to-face relationships and among groups. In the beginning supervision of peer supporter is recommended in order to offer assistance and advice and to ensure that she does not "take advantage" of the role (this concern is not referred to a possible economic advantage, but rather to a psychological one, such as the sense of power, that can be damaging to herself rather than to the members of the group).

## 6.4    For more information

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# 7

# Burn out

*Chapter summary*

Persons who are effective in the helping professions recognize the importance of a holistic approach to maintaining personal health and wellbeing. This chapter describes the phenomenon of burn out, presents a psychological perspective on burnout prevention, and discusses some spiritual dimensions of caregiver stamina and resilience.

## A Psychological Perspective

Caregivers who are highly motivated and dedicated to their work are likely candidates for stress, compassion fatigue and physical and psychological symptoms of burn out. Intense contact with persons who are suffering can gradually wear down a caregiver. To avoid burn out, it is critical that those in helping relationships develop preventive measures. Caregivers must learn to pay attention to their personal emotional states and levels of physical and psychic fatigue. Fatigue, which is often observed when one executes his/her functions in a weary haste, can significantly diminish one's capacity to be effective.

In the helping relationship, the helper uses knowledge and skills to build productive alliances. Even the most skilled professionals must recognize their personal needs and limitations. This is particularly important for idealistic persons who place great value on generosity and availability to meet the needs of others.

## 7.1    Burn out syndrome

Burn out is a syndrome manifested by a combination of symptoms difficult to link with specific ills or troubles. It is a form of stress related to one's profession, though it particularly affects those who work with people in need. Burn out is characterised by a state of discomfort that has the capacity to negatively influence the motivational inspiration that prompts an individual to fulfil her professional duties. This condition, given the difficulties in diagnosis, is usually subtle in its onset and can be experienced passively or unconsciously. It develops over time and is a highly corrosive, dynamic process that, after a while, impedes

### Luke 10: 38-41

*38 It happened as they went on their way, he entered into a certain village, and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house. 39 She had a sister called Mary, who also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word. 40 But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she came up to him, and said, "Lord, don't you care that my sister left me to serve alone? Ask her therefore to help me." 41 Jesus answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things, 42 but one thing is needed. Mary has chosen the good part, which will not be taken away from her."*

professional growth, contributes to job dissatisfaction, and diminishes one's professional capacities.

Burn out is characterized by fatigue (perceived or real), lethargy, loss of objectivity, inability to make decisions, irritability and difficulty in fulfilling the daily routine which, in turn, causes psychological unrest and anxiety leading to the inability to accomplish one's tasks. Helpers experiencing burn out usually look for external reasons to account for their distress or discomfort such as noisy offices, the weather, problems of conflict with others etc. Burn out is, therefore, difficult to diagnose and address since the person affected typically is convinced that the root of her problem rests elsewhere.

Burn out is a syndrome of particular interest to those in helping or human-contact occupations. When the helper is working, she is moving along **two axes**:

- The first axis can be defined as the "psychological energy" of the helper. Its polarities are omnipotence and impotence;
- The second axis can be defined as "psychological distance" from the client. Its polarities are proximity and distance.
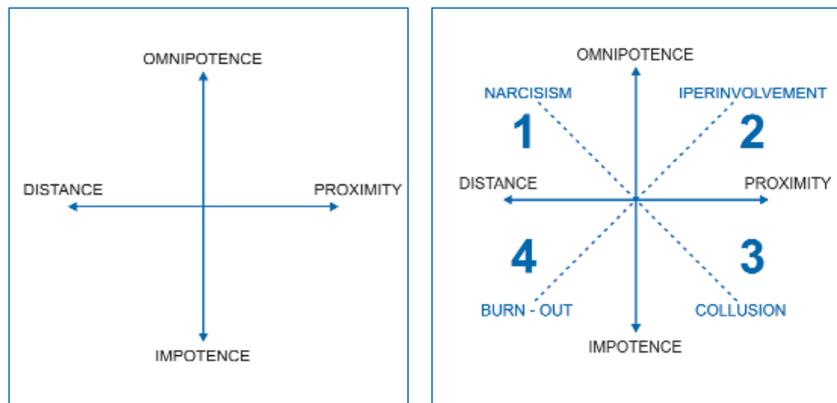


Our position along the axes changes constantly since it is linked to our moods, energy and self-esteem.

The movement along the two axes can be summarized in four different psychological positions: narcissism, hyperinvolvement, collusion and burn out.

The experience of the helper is summarized in the figure above. The inevitable act of moving along the axes necessarily affects the quality of the relationship.

Helpers do not usually enter **quadrant 1**, Omnipotence/Distance, since this quadrant concerns professionals who are not in contact with or in direct service to persons being assisted. Individuals in this quadrant are managers, directors and supervisors.

In **quadrant 2**, Omnipotence/Proximity, we find the profile of the individual who is pushed by strong motivation and personal involvement. This person tends to spend a lot of time working. She is in close contact with the person she is assisting and may ask her to "see the light" and change her perception of reality so that she can begin the growing process as quickly as possible. This kind of helper often asks

for and gives a vast amount of information and expresses frustration when the woman is slow to improve her situation. This is a result of the helper's strong and sincere desire to end the distress and suffering of another.

In **quadrant 3**, Impotence/Proximity, we find the helper who, unable to reach the person being assisted or effectively implement the helping action, becomes a party to the frustration. She may even reinforce the stalemate with regressive and negative attitudes ("It's impossible like this! We'll never progress to the next stage.")

In the **fourth quadrant**, Impotence/Distance, we find the helper whose motivation has faded but who has chosen to remain in the helping profession even if she is suffering through each appointment or work-related task.

The position which theoretically represents harmony and balance of emotion and professional performance of the helper is in the centre of the diagram where the two axes are equidistant from the extremities. The helper, using the same tools as reported in chapter 6 (self dialogue, self reflection and feed-back) can check her position along the axes and implement countermeasures if necessary.

## 7.2    Measures for preventing burn out

It is instinctive to seek the root of our own distress in external events or persons rather than looking at our own psychological state of mind. To counter this tendency and face burn out directly, five steps that promote self care are recommended:

1. Identify and recognize the condition of burn out.
2. Become conscious of the state of distress and suffering.
3. Re-appropriate the personal motivational lever.
4. Redefine goals.
5. Redefine the role considering goals and limits.

1. The root of burn out can be:

- Sense of isolation/solitude (physical or psychological): occurs when we feel that we have no counterparts or peers with whom to collaborate or when we feel that nobody cares about our job and the quality of our work;
- Sense of impotence: occurs when the issue we are counteracting seems to be too wide and powerful;
- Absorption of other's pain: even if we are unaware, we lighten the burden of the person being helped by taking their burden on our own shoulders.

It is the combination of these factors that leads to burn out. The third factor is particularly difficult to manage (once discovered) because it is impossible to measure how much of the other's pain a helper absorbs. A warning signal is when we cannot maintain an appropriate distance between ourselves and the person being assisted (we cry when the client recounts her story) or when our capacity to empathize dwindles (we lose patience with the person). If we do not maintain appropriate distance, or if we believe that maintaining distance

### Luke 22: 33, 54-62

*33 He said to him, "Lord, I am ready to go with you both to prison and to death!" (...) 54 They seized him, and led him away, and brought him into the high priest's house. But Peter followed from a distance. 55 When they had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard, and had sat down together, Peter sat among them. 56 A certain servant girl saw him as he sat in the light, and looking intently at him, said, "This man also was with him." 57 He denied Jesus, saying, "Woman, I don't know him." 58 After a little while someone else saw him, and said, "You also are one of them!" But Peter answered, "Man, I am not!" 59 After about one hour passed, another confidently affirmed, saying, "Truly this man also was with him, for he is a Galilean!"*

*60 But Peter said, "Man, I don't know what you are talking about!" Immediately, while he was still speaking, a rooster crowed. 61 The Lord turned, and looked at Peter. Then Peter remembered the Lord's word, how he said to him, "Before the rooster crows you will deny me three times." 62 He went out, and wept bitterly.*

is a cold approach, our emotional resources will eventually be depleted.

2. We have seen the roots of burn out, but what are the observable long-term effects? Some typical manifestations of stress and burn out are:

- Exhaustion or fatigue
- Insomnia
- Anxiety
- Headache
- Gastrointestinal disorders

We must listen to our body's warnings and recognize that we have a problem, only then can we begin to look for antidotes to free ourselves from this burden. To do so, we must be willing to suspend our activities or sometimes even assume a different role within our organization or congregation. Ideally, this role would include less intense involvement with persons in crisis situations.

3. It is imperative to reconsider our "emotional levers" or **mission**. It is normal for those who spend a considerable amount of their time helping others to be emotionally "touched" and highly motivated from an ethical/moral point of view. For religious workers these motivations are reinforced by spiritual ones. It is important to recognize when these motivations that prompt us to alleviate the pain of others threaten our physical and psychological well-being and when they support and sustain us in our daily action.

4. Linked to point 3, there is the reconsideration and the eventual redefinition of our **goals**. Goals act as our compass when we work in helping occupations. They point us in the right direction and guide us when we need to get back on track. Goals should be:

**S** - specific

**M** - measurable

**A** - attractive

**R** - reachable

**T** - time framed

Once goals have been set, they must be checked with our "moral filter" (is this goal consistent with my spiritual mission?) and subsequently realised with an adequate plan of action within an appropriate timeframe. Often, in the face of an urgent need to "do something" we forget the significance of establishing concrete particulars detailing how we intend to do it. For example, if we consider "taking action to eradicate the scourge of trafficking" as a goal without developing specific, measurable, and reachable strategies to be accomplished within a reasonable period of time, we will be overwhelmed by a sense of frustration, isolation and impotence. Without clear and feasible steps toward reachable goals we are prone to experience burn out.

5. We must start with our motivation in order to identify our SMART goals. SMART goals can then guide our daily work and balance our energies, making it easier for us to achieve our objectives and perform our duties effectively.

## 7.3 Spiritual Support

For religious workers in the helping professions, faith, spirituality, religious practices and spiritual support are important factors contributing to the ability to sustain one's health and wellbeing for prolonged periods of time. Whereas the psychological model of burn out emphasizes the concepts of stress and depletion, a spiritual approach focuses on drawing strength from inner resources to keep one's outlook healthy and positive. For persons of the Christian faith, it is desire to participate in the healing and liberating mission of Jesus that motivates and sustains direct service to persons in urgent need. Building on proven psychological principles for appropriate self-care, persons of faith have an internalized meaning system that enables them to place human suffering in the context of one of the foundational tenets of Christianity the suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus.

Caregivers who approach their work from a stance of faith are sustained by a spirit of hope. Hope inspires confidence that God will attend to the cries of the poor and suffering, and that God's grace acting in human caregivers will enable much to be accomplished. Spiritual support flows from the conviction that caring for those in need is the work of God.

Persons rooted in faith recognize that they are "wounded" and limited but also that they are strengthened and healed by God. As "wounded healers," they are able to empathize with others who suffer and accompany them in steps toward healing. This does not exclude them from the experience of stress, fatigue, disappointment or depletion, but rather it provides access to spiritual stamina that enables them to hold up under pressure or difficulty.

Writing from the perspective of a counsellor, Cynthia J. Osborn[1] developed the concept of "stamina" to draw attention to the importance of using one's strengths and resources rather than focusing one's energies on ridding one's self of a problem. Interior stamina is a dynamic life force that moves one toward growth, productivity and health.

Osborn recommended seven activities or dispositions for reinforcing stamina and resilience in caregiver relationships: selectivity, temporal sensitivity, accountability, measurement and management, inquisitiveness, negotiation and acknowledgment of agency. Each of these is relevant to the concept of spiritual support.

*Selectivity* refers to the setting of appropriate limits on what one can and cannot do. Viewed in the context of spiritual support, selectivity involves recognizing that one is not and cannot be a "savior". For persons of faith, there is one Savior who loves each person infinitely more than one can ask or imagine. Selectivity enables the caregiver to place her role within the broader perspective of God's healing action in the lives of those who suffer.

*Temporal Sensitivity* involves making the best use of time in the time allotted. Persons with a healthy spirituality realize that they cannot do everything but that they can do something to assist a person in need. They cultivate an attitude of doing the best they can in the time available and focus on the opportunity of the present moment.

**notes**

**1.** See the complete reference at the end of this chapter.

*Accountability* takes into consideration appropriate ethical standards, guidelines and professional practices. Religious workers in helping professions are used to working in collaboration with others and realize the importance of peer support and peer evaluation of one's work. Welcoming feedback from others helps to maintain balance and to ensure ongoing growth and development.

Measurement and Management refers to appropriate protection and conservation of one's energy and resources. This can involve sharing one's experiences with a trusted colleague. Spiritual direction can be a context in which religious workers can explore their needs to manage their internal resources and lifestyle in healthier ways.

Inquisitiveness is concerned with retaining a healthy sense of openness and wonder. In helping relationships it is easy to become disillusioned. The spiritual perspective that each person is a unique manifestation of the creativity of God can help one to view those in need in a non-judgmental way. It can foster a freshness of approach and offset tendencies to generalize and depersonalize persons in need of assistance.

*Negotiation* refers to the importance of flexibility and give-and-take in helping relationships. Persons who believe that the Spirit of God is ever making all things new remain open to new ways of doing things for the sake of the mission. The experience of being part of a community provides religious workers with transferable skills of negotiation and a capacity to give-and-take in inter-personal relationships.

*Acknowledgment of Agency* has to do with experiencing of a sense of making a contribution. For religious workers, the experiences that take place in helping relationships contribute to a sense of efficacy. In the encounter with the person in need, one encounters God and experiences a sense of meaning and purpose. For persons whose way of life is based on the following of Jesus, experiencing one's efforts to serve as meaningful and significant fosters resilience and counters burn out.

## 7.4    For more information

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notes