

Principles of Survivor Engagement in the Anti-Trafficking Field

As service providers, we believe that survivors are individuals with lived experience who bring valuable perspectives to the anti-trafficking field. As such, we encourage the field to engage survivors within service provision, considering every aspect of provision, from program design, implementation, and evaluation.

We ground this belief in three core principles:

1. Survivors are more than their lived experience.
 - a. Recognize the capacity of survivors to be engaged in a multitude of roles, i.e., direct service professionals, executive officers, board members, trainers and community educators, policy advocates, contractors and consultants, and volunteers.
 - b. Be strategic in engaging survivors – know what qualifications would best suit the roles needed.
2. Engaging survivors as partners requires intentionality.
 - a. Engage survivors beyond stories of trauma and recovery. Take a step back and see the broader array of holistic skills, knowledge, and abilities that inform the unique perspectives survivors bring.
 - b. Respect survivors' lived experience and approach partnerships with survivors with authenticity. Take the time to learn about what your partners bring to the table and be prepared to do the same.
3. Supporting partnerships with survivors requires commitment and investments of resources.
 - a. If there are gaps within the collective skills, knowledge, and abilities of the partnership, be willing to explore community-based resources.
 - b. Consider expanding current in-house resources to acknowledge the inevitability of having staff with trauma in their background, i.e., human resources policies, benefits, accommodations, onboarding procedures, and trainings.

Our organization is committed to working diligently in reflecting these principles as we engage survivors. We strive to seek diverse perspectives in our work and will continue to look for opportunities to partner with survivors in meaningful ways.