



Human Trafficking in **AMERICA'S SCHOOLS**



Human Trafficking Webinar Series - Effective Engagement of Individuals with Lived Experience

Wednesday, January 26, 2022 | 3:00 – 4:15 PM ET
Transcript

Tim Duffey:

Good afternoon. Welcome to today's webinar, Effective Engagement of Individuals With Lived Experience. This is the fifth in a series of webinars sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education since January of 2020 to focus on the critical role America's schools play in addressing human trafficking. We're glad to have you with us today. My name is Tim Duffey, training specialist for the National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments or NCSSLE. NCSSLE is funded by the Office of Safe and Supportive Schools in the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education at the U.S. Department of Education.

At the center, our aim is to build the capacity of state education agencies, districts, and schools to make school climate improvements, foster school safety, and maintain supportive, engaging, and healthy learning environments to support the academic enrichment and success of all students. To learn more about NCSSLE and to access a range of resources that address school climate and conditions for learning, we encourage you to visit our website. To give you a sense of what the website looks like and what it includes, here we share some of our most popular products on the left side of the screen and an image of our homepage on the right.

Please note that all materials that you'll see today, including the slides, reference resources and the archive version of the recording of this session will be available on the event webpage within this website. A link to this web page will periodically be posted in the chat for your reference. In fact, some items, including the slides for today and the bios of today's speakers have already been posted to that site. Please also note you can access previous webinars in the human trafficking series by visiting the webinar series webpage, which is also listed here and will be posted in the chat for your reference.

Please note that the content of this presentation does not necessarily represent the policy or views of the U.S. Department of Education, nor does it imply endorsement by the U.S. Department of Education.

All right, let's move on then to a few minutes of time where we will hear about the work of the Department of Education in addressing human trafficking. Joining us today from the department is Ruth Ryder. Ruth serves as the deputy assistant secretary in the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education at the Department of Education. She has provided significant leadership to the department's efforts to address human trafficking over the past several years, as we at NCSSE have come to know. A more detailed bio for Ruth can be found at the NCSSE webpage for today's event. So without any further words for me, I'll turn the show over to Ruth.

Ruth Ryder:

Thank you, Tim. And I appreciate the work that you and NCSSE are doing to support the Department's human trafficking efforts. And I want to welcome all of you who are joining us for this important discussion today. On behalf of the Department, I extend our appreciation to all of you for the work that you do, your commitment to the field, and your passion for ensuring a positive school climate for all students is a hallmark of education in America. I hope you find today's content helpful in your continued efforts to build that safe, supportive climate for every student. This webinar reflects the Department's commitment to addressing human trafficking and the role educators can play in engaging individuals with lived experience, as we work together to prevent trafficking. The work the Department is now undertaking to address child trafficking is an extension of our ongoing focus on nurturing safe and supportive school learning environments, places in which all student feel safe and connected to meaningful adult and peer relationships.

Our shared efforts to address trafficking are especially important to highlight during National Human Trafficking Prevention Month, which we recognize is January. We at the Department join our federal partners and all of you in the field in committing ourselves to sustained efforts to prevent human trafficking. As part of the Department's role in the interagency task force to monitor and combat trafficking in persons, we are committed to helping educators support students affected by trafficking.

Since early 2020, the Department has led a series of projects to strengthen that support. First, we've produced with the support of the National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments, a series of webinars addressing human trafficking. Today's webinar is the fifth in that series. Earlier events in the series have discussed the latest research in child trafficking, the critical nature of online safety as students found themselves increasingly engaged in virtual environments, and the reintegration of students into school settings after extraction from trafficking. We hope you'll check out the archived version of the past webinars in this series in the chat box and join us for future webinars on the topic of human trafficking.

Our second major activity has been production of two critical reference documents related to child trafficking. The first document is a revision of a popular resource, Human Trafficking in America's Schools. The update was released in January of 2021 with a goal of bringing the document up to date with recent developments in the field. This downloadable resource supports school personnel in their role as caring, principled adults who can monitor for warning signs of trafficking involvement of students and engage appropriate interventions as warranted. You can access this guide at the link now appearing in the chat. The second document we've prepared is addressing the growing problem of domestic sex trafficking of minors through PBIS. This practice brief addresses how domestic minor sex trafficking can be approached using existing school strategies, such as positive behavioral interventions and supports. The link to this brief now appears in the chat box for your reference.

Our third major activity related to child trafficking was the development of a dedicated human trafficking webpage on the Department of Education's website. The webpage is committed to providing key resources and reference documents to educators who are supporting students impacted by trafficking on a daily basis in America's schools. You will note that the webinars and resources I described a few minutes ago are available for your access on this webpage.

All of the resources are rooted in the latest research and best practice information available while drawing from the wisdom of individuals with lived experience and trafficking advocates. Our work on these resources has been an important part of the Department's commitment to supporting your efforts to address the trauma of trafficking. We look forward to bringing additional resources to you in the months to come. I want to thank you again for joining us today. I and the entire Department of Education recognize the important work you are all undertaking to create safe, supportive environments for all students. Thank you much for all that you do. I'll now turn the session back over to Tim. Tim.

Tim Duffey:

Thank you, Ruth. We greatly appreciate those words and your continued leadership in this effort. And that leadership has included information that will be released starting on Monday, which is a three part staff development series that Ruth has also been instrumental in guiding through the channels of the Department. And so you'll see some reference materials to that on screen now, but that information again, will be released this month starting next Monday.

So, thank you again, Ruth, appreciate that. And let's move on to do a quick overview of where we're headed for today and to meet the panelists who will be part of our presentation. So we have already concluded the first three sections of the agenda. We've welcomed you. We've got the overview of the logistics in place. We're looking at the events now that's scheduled for the day and we've heard from Ruth. So following my introduction of the panel members next, we will certainly introduce the panel and get started.

Before we do proceed with the webinar though, I need to take just a moment here to discuss the critical issue of the language that's used when discussing human trafficking. How an individual who has lived through trafficking experience chooses to describe that situation and its impact on them is a deeply personal matter. It's up to each person to determine the words they prefer to use to reflect their own personal truth. In preparing for this webinar and in our work creating other resources related to trafficking on behalf of the Department of Education, we've chosen to use the term quote, individual with lived experience, end quote, nearly exclusively when describing these people. You may hear other people use terms like trafficking survivor, trafficking victim, or subject matter expert in trafficking. Our use of individual with lived experience is not intended in any way to reduce the importance or relevance of other terms that may be used and preferred by others. We appreciate your understanding of our need to settle on a consistent way of referring to those whose lives have been directly impacted by trafficking.

With that, let me introduce you to our panel and we will be moving into hearing discussions from them. We are honored to be joined today by a panel of speakers with a tremendous experience to share and how we can effectively engage individuals with lived experience. Our first panelist is Kimberly Casey, prevention and communication specialist at the Office on Trafficking in Persons. Based on and her work at OTIP, Kimberly will share information about her experience working with and implementing recommendations from individuals with lived experience.

We'll also hear from Bella Hounakey, former member of the U.S. Advisory Council on Human Trafficking. As an advocate of anti-trafficking initiatives, Bella has provided recommendations on human trafficking to a variety of organizations, including the federal government.

Also joining the panel today is Judge Robert Lung. Judge Lung serves as a district court judge in Colorado and speaks nationally and internationally on issues such as human trafficking, childhood trauma, and resiliency. Our next panelist is Suleman Masood. Suleman currently serves as council chair for the U.S. Advisory Council on Human Trafficking, where he provides leadership to recommendations for federal anti-trafficking policies.

If you saw the announcement for this event, you knew that Suamhirs Piraino-Guzman was also slated to be a panelist today. Unfortunately, this morning we heard from Suamhirs that his wife has tested positive for COVID and he's providing childcare and unable to be a part of today's event.

As noted at the bottom of the slide, bios for today's speakers are available on a webpage for this event and that link will also be posted into the chat for easy access. So with that, let's move to a conversation with our panelists around a series of questions that are often raised by school staff who are looking to strengthen their engagement of individuals with lived experience in their trafficking prevention efforts. So the first question, and I'll start with you, Judge

Lung, on this one. What are some examples of how individuals with lived experience can help ensure their human trafficking prevention efforts are effective?

Judge Robert Lung: Thank you. I think the easiest answer that I would want to give on that issue is trying to identify... The people who are attending, identify what level you're at, where you're beginning with your policy, whether you're in local schools, in state schools, if you're a policy, if you're advocates, and trying to figure out where you're at. What we often think of when we're doing anti-trafficking advocacy or consulting is figuring out, are we talking about level one folks or level two folks? And are you just starting out? Or you already have something, you're just trying to improve your policy or your structure. Figure out where you are in that process. That's the first step. And then after that is to include individuals with lived experience at really any level. If you're beginning out, you need somebody with a lived experience to help develop your program, to research what is specific to your local school or community or state, because obviously what human trafficking looks like in New York is completely different in some ways than it is in Wyoming, or in my state in Colorado.

So having something that is specific to your community would be important, but I think that regardless of what stage or step or level you are, including somebody with a lived experience is critical because they are your experts. The same as you would hope that a state legislature wouldn't pass laws about schools without consulting with school administrators and teachers and superintendents and all. The same should be with developing policy for any other program. So I would just encourage you to access somebody with a lived experience as an expert to help advise on any stage, any level.

Tim Duffey: Thank you for those comments. That's an important context, I think, for this question. Suleman, what would you like to add to this discussion about engagement of individuals with lived experience for schools' efforts?

Suleman Masood: Yeah. Thank you. So I just want to start off by saying that partnering with survivors or partnering with individuals with lived experience, honestly, is one of the most efficient ways to implement change in the education sector. As Judge Lung mentioned, wherever you are in your spectrum of understanding of what human trafficking is, any type of outreach efforts or awareness campaigns that you wish to raise to educate parents, educators, other members that participate in that school district, working with somebody with lived experience to have a peer review, if it's an annual peer review of curriculum, being able to participate and provide expertise on protocol, whether it's mitigating, obviously this current pandemic and how education is delivered virtually versus in person. It's also making sure that prevention efforts is addressed in a way that individuals with a lived experience of either sex trafficking or labor trafficking can help update language and imagery.

I'll just briefly state, when it comes to protocol, it's widely understood that each school district obviously has their own rules and regulations. But through that

partnership of an individual with lived experience, you're giving them the opportunity to add or create modifications that allow teachers, administrative, principals, and on campus police, provide instruction through both a trauma informed and survivor informed approach. To provide some brief examples, when teaching a curriculum on safety, an individual who's asked to present should help lead the way in public outreach and awareness campaigns. If there's specific curriculum developed for teachers to deliver in a week's time, in a semester's time, or a quarter's time, it's the ability to not only review those materials, but if they so wish, also help to present those materials in a trauma informed way.

Tim Duffey: Thank you, Suleman. Good. Beautiful points for us to consider. And thank you for the specificity of recommendations. Bella, let's go to you next. What would you have to say?

Bella Hounakey: Hi, Tim. Can you ask that question again?

Tim Duffey: Sure. What are examples of how individuals with lived experience can help schools ensure their human trafficking prevention efforts are effective?

Bella Hounakey: I think Honorable Judge Lung and Honorable Suleman answered this perfectly. I would like to add that, that question poses responsibility on people with lived experience. And so we have to watch our language, because it's not individuals with lived experience's responsibility to ensure that schools' prevention efforts are effective. It's the school's responsibility, schools' administrators' responsibility to make sure that their prevention efforts are engaging those individuals with lived experiences. It's their responsibility to ensure that their advocacy and how it shows in their school system reflect their mission of providing education or providing support to those who have had this experience. And I think Honorable Suleman and Honorable Judge Lung have covered that pretty well.

Tim Duffey: Very good. Thank you. Thank you for that important point. Yes. All right. So Kimberly, in your experience at OTIP and working with various sites around the country, what have you seen work effectively or what would you have to add?

Kimberly Casey: Thank you. So my colleagues on the panel have already provided really good examples of ways to engage survivors in this work. We're seeing some of these examples being implemented through the OTIP-funded Human Trafficking Youth Prevention Education Demonstration Program, which funds local education agencies to develop and implement human trafficking programs in schools.

This is the first year this program has been implemented. So there has been a lot of lessons learned. And one of those is in how we can continue to better support the engagement of those with lived experience. But as part of their intervention, schools are required to create and implement a human trafficking school safety protocol that provides clear instruction to staff and administration on how to respond to concerns in a student-centered, trauma-informed and

culturally and linguistically appropriate way. Some LEAs are hiring consultants with lived experience to inform the development of these protocols. And the input they've provided so far has really been critical as districts have learned how to respond to students who are at risk and those who are currently experiencing human trafficking.

And then also, how to ensure that students are connected to the right internal and external resources to support the really varied and complex set of education, social, emotional, and physical needs that they have as a result of their exploitation, and their whole lived experience. Some grant recipients are also hiring consultants, like Suleman mentioned, to support the development of training materials for staff and to update existing student curricula. There's no one size fits all curriculum that exists for every region. I think Judge Lung referenced the fact that what happens in New York is different than what happens in other parts of the country.

And so having individuals whose experience is reflective of that can be really helpful in setting everyone up for success. Those with lived experience have first person insights into the push and pull factors associated with trafficking that professionals like myself will never have. And so, they not only understand the mechanics of the grooming process, but they have personal experience with the somatic and psychological effects and how those match the vulnerabilities they were experiencing. And all of that information, when it feeds into curriculum training policies, is really critical to helping to make sure that we break down barriers to seeking help, their input on what worked and what didn't work when they ultimately asked for help or were identified, are really irreplaceable in our efforts to develop effective prevention strategies. And something we're looking forward to see continue happen through the HTYPE program and other work that schools are doing.

Tim Duffey: Excellent. Thank you for that important context about what you're seeing happening nationally. I want to provide, we have a bit of time. Bella, would you like to say some more?

Bella Hounakey: Oh no.

Tim Duffey: Oh no, okay. I'm sorry. I just want to provide some additional time if anyone else has additional comments on this first question from the field.

Okay. Let's move. We can obviously cycle back if that works out as a need, as we move forward. Let's explore a second question. And for those of you who are participating and joining us today, to remind you of the question posed, Daniel is posting those into the chat. So if you want to reference them there as our panel is responding, you'll remember the context for their responses.

So, the next question I'll pose to each of you and Bella, we'll start with you this time. What advice do you have for education staff about how they can most

effectively engage people with lived experience as expert consultants in their efforts to prevent trafficking?

Bella Hounakey:

Thank you, Tim. I would say as a survivor consultant myself, some of the things that have been very helpful is when organizations, including schools, provide full disclosure of the event that I'm supposed to speak at or however they engage me, provide information on permanency of the video or photography that they'll be using, really gives me an option to decide if I want to participate or not. And I think survivor consultants or individuals with lived experiences by and large, I think, would appreciate just being able to consent to how long their photography or their video will be used for. In addition to that, we've talked about this and those that are engaged in anti-trafficking movement, including the advisory council, fair compensation. You should be able to pay individuals with lived experience the same amount that you are paying someone with higher education who you might hire for the same event.

So don't low ball them and see them as professionals as you are professionals. I think too, this might go on, so bear with me for a minute. I think also engaging them in a way that they remain in control. I think, Tim, you mentioned this earlier. They remain in control of when, how, or if they want to share any detailed information about their story and not feel pressured to do so, or feel the need to give a full recount of their trafficking story as they relate to the education or whatnot as a part or as a requirement of the project you're in involving them in.

And this is my last point is be mindful of power dynamics. Keep in mind that you're engaging them as professionals. So there need not be any undertone of a... Yeah. Be mindful of your power dynamics so that they're comfortable, in order to optimize and bring their full selves to what you're engaging them in. Thank you.

Tim Duffey:

You're very welcome, Bella. Very important thoughts for us to keep in mind as we explore this topic and consider it for how schools can advance their work in meaningful and significant ways, and treating those with lived experience as valuable partners in that process. Judge Lung, how about you? What would you have to add or to say about that second question?

Judge Robert Lung:

I have to start off by recognizing the wisdom of Bella there. One of the things I love about these panels is that I literally learn from my colleagues. I wrote down notes from what she said. Like, "Oh, that's a great point." Now I'm writing notes down, so hats off to Bella for some great wisdom she shared with us.

So, some of the things I would share or that I would add to that, and likewise, I always identify as a survivor. I have reasons for not accepting the other descriptions, but that's how I identify. The things that I would add, I don't want to repeat what Bella said, the things that I would add is that when you're engaging with people with lived experience or survivors, I would encourage you first to see if you can become trauma informed yourself.

I know that there's lots of programs that OVC or OTIP or NHTTAC could provide, and there are free resources. And that's the great thing is that I really hope that everybody out there knows that the federal government has been working on this issue for a couple of decades. And while, like any other organization, probably had some slips and some mistakes and some things to learn along the way, they're doing phenomenal work. It's just mind blowing. And so I would just encourage you to explore the resources that have been provided in this webinar and find what works for you. But when engaging with people with lived experience or survivors of human trafficking, the first thing I suggest is that you become trauma informed so that you know how to engage them in a respectful way. I think it's really critical.

It's something that's worth repeating what Bella said is, not saying, "Oh well, I'm hiring you as a lived experience expert. Tell me what happened to you." That couldn't be the most offensive thing I can think of.

You wouldn't say that to a victim of anything else. Tell me what happened to you before I engage you as a professional. If you get a referral to somebody with lived experience and you get those referrals from your local anti-trafficking organizations or even from... OVC has a referral system. So does the State Department, so does NHTTAC. They have referral systems for experts. It's not the first thing you ask is, "What happened to you?" Or, "Give me a description." That's just very offensive.

So, number one is become trauma informed when you're engaging with somebody with this experience. Number two would be, approach them as much as you approach them with that they are an expert and they are a professional. You should also be approaching them with compassion, understanding that what they're coming to speak to you about is very powerful and very difficult. The same would be if there's an expert. I think of my former spouse is a professional in a school administration. They've had to engage with folks here in Colorado, of course, with first person shooter scenarios. You're not going to ask somebody to describe what happened in that instance. You're going to have them go through your school and consult on what needs to be changed in your school. So it's the same category. It's the same thing, paying them respect and identifying name as an expert.

The other thing I would add would be know your environment and see if you need to consult with more than one expert on this issue. There are communities in our state in Colorado that the victims of trafficking are far more victims of labor trafficking, rather than sex trafficking. And those experiences might very well be different for your school administration and for your policies. And so you might consider two different consultants or asking the expert you're working with if they are able to consult on both issues or if there is some distinction between those for risks and identifiers and what have you. I, for myself, I defer to professionals that I know that are experts in labor trafficking, because it wasn't my experience and it would be really misplaced for me to advise on labor trafficking identifiers or the trauma related to that. So know

who you need for your community or for your policy or develop two policies. And yeah, trauma informed and compassion for professionals. Thank you.

Tim Duffey:

Oh, absolutely. Thank you. Really valuable and important information for us to consider there. Kimberly, let's turn it to you next. So what do you have to say about this idea about how best schools can engage people with lived experience as experts?

Kimberly Casey:

Such good information shared already. I'll echo Judge Lung. I love these discussions because even though I've had the opportunity to work with these individuals on the panel in many different capacities, each question frames a different perspective and we can all learn so much from this process. And I think that's actually one of the lessons for us to learn is we are continually learning how to do this work.

And so, one of the lessons that I personally, and I think a lot of those of us who work in the field have learned is it's important to remember that survivors can inform a spectrum of human trafficking responses. From responding to high risk indicators, identification, support, and if relevant, reintegration back into schools. Their expertise is not limited to what happened while they were being and trafficked. Their insights include their lives prior to trafficking, which can help us when we're trying to go upstream and prevent trafficking from happening in the first place.

They lived a whole life while they were experiencing trafficking. In many cases, youth were not solely confined to their trafficking experience. They were out in the world and navigating the challenges that all children and students experience going through these stages of life. And then after their trafficking experience, they have a wide range of both personal and professional experiences that's all relevant to the work. And so making sure that we're looking at the individuals as a whole person to engage them in this effort, I think is really important and not putting them in the box of, "Come tell us about your experience as a survivor of trafficking," and expect that their lens is only going to be limited to that small portion of their lives. As impactful as that portion of their lives was, I don't want to dismiss that in experience at all.

And reiterating what was already mentioned by Judge Lung and Bella, there's a tendency to just ask survivors to share their story or to provide a final stamp on approval of a policy training or resource that has been developed that they weren't actually asked to inform the development of and they're not really asked to do any type of substantive review of. And that is something that really significantly impacts the potential impact of engagement in this type of effort. And then reiterating with that, individuals should be invited into the process early. So again, we don't want to bring them in after everything has been fully formulated, but giving them the opportunity to actually inform and develop and have hands on in the work, either as a staff member. So hiring people on your staff who have lived experience or as a short term consultant, depending on

your school's capacity or needs for specific projects. And their opportunities should be similar to other professionals who you are engaging in this work.

So, Bella mentioned the importance of providing fair compensation and equal compensation. Also, equal opportunity to provide input. Again, just not asking them to put that stamp of approval in a really cursory way, but involving them in the deep mechanics of the work. And then just recognizing that this type of deep engagement will allow schools to better serve students. We'll be able to craft better policies and programs. And then identify challenges and opportunities to inform the work, again, from that lens that someone like myself who doesn't have lived experience would not be able to inform. I know there have been so many cases where we have come up with an approach and immediately those with lived experience, as soon as they're seeing the conversation unfold, identify the initial challenges with that. One example of that recently, I think, in the COVID environment has been with virtual learning.

So, a lot of organizations and schools are trying to figure out how to reach students in a virtual environment about this topic, because we know it's such an important topic during this time, but recognizing that in some cases, families are involved in trafficking situations. And so if you're going to be implementing this type of program in a virtual environment, it's really important to think about the safety of the students and the ability for them to hear and engage with this type of material in a place where they're trafficker or those who know about their trafficking experience may be present. And thinking through what are the safety components, what are the ways to do that effectively is something that, again, those who've had those personal experiences can really inform us in ways that we wouldn't be able to consider ourselves.

Tim Duffey:

Thank you, Kimberly. All very important things. I certainly will take away as a hallmark out of there that whole utilizing people throughout a process, bringing them in early for engagement, as opposed to an approval process. Think we can get caught in thinking that that's active engagement when really it's disempowering action steps. So thank you for reminders about all of those points. Suleman, what would you like to add to this discussion on this question?

Suleman Masood:

Sure. Yeah. So I'd like to say, one of the most meaningful ways for education staff to engage with survivors as expert consultants is to first make sure that, as Honorable Bella and Judge Lung mentioned, making sure that the individual that you're reaching out to, that has lived experience, that they're actually ready to contribute. As many of us on this panel have, I'm sure in many instances has talked to other sectors, right? Criminal justice, social services, public health, et cetera. When working with somebody with lived experience, you want to make sure that the curriculum that they're reviewing, the information that they're wanting to express or take in, it's not providing any unwanted triggers or reminders of their traumatic past. It's making sure that they're put in a space where they feel empowered and they feel safe to share information.

They're in the driver's seat of determining how much of their lived experience they want to share. Oftentimes, organizations, non-profit organizations, feel that the best way to provide community outreach is by bringing in somebody with lived experience to just only detail the trauma and give intimate details of their past. Right?

Tim Duffey: Yeah.

Suleman Masood: In my experience, what that's doing is you're painting a story of somebody that's not giving the community any incentives to find ways to create solutions and to find ways to collaborate. Instead, what it's doing is it's painting a story that many people with a traumatic past have shared, just in different variations. So it's really important that when working and engaging with somebody with lived experience, that they first feel ready. Typically, if the next question is, well, how do you know when somebody is ready? Sometimes, and I would love to hear perspectives from, my colleagues on this panel, but sometimes most organizations and administrators like to look to make sure that an individual with lived experience has between three to five years outside of their experience and they feel ready. But of course, everybody is on a spectrum as far as how much information they can share and how much intimate details that they feel comfortable sharing.

I'd also say, with engagement, as Kimberly had mentioned, the expertise that individuals with lived experience have go beyond that traditional classroom setting. That information and that outreach efforts can extend to juvenile detention centers, can extend the foster care institutions. For my personal belief and one area I'm passionate about is making sure that this information is provided to people that are in vocational training programs. With my expertise on labor trafficking, it's really important to make sure that individuals with both sex trafficking and labor trafficking, when providing information to the community, that anybody who may be at risk is aware of their rights, their state rights, their wage rights, et cetera. And then I'd also just want to touch on real quick is the level of engagement that you want to provide, you want to make sure it's as diverse as possible.

When I use the term diversity, it doesn't just stop at just skin color. It's ensuring that the people that you are inviting to speak to your communities, these experts, they have specific expertise in understanding and expressing their recommendations on how to further assist and engage with marginalized communities. When I say marginalized communities, that could be male victims, boys, young boys, indigenous communities, indigenous families, those at risk of labor trafficking, families who identify as refugee or foreign national, members of the LGBTQIA+ community, et cetera. You know?

Tim Duffey: Yeah.

Suleman Masood: I think I had one more thing and I'll say, a really strong model as far as engagement when working with... And saying that it extends beyond just a

traditional classroom is, depending on budget, is being able to develop after school programs. So I know that Honorable Bella talked about equitable pay. So my colleagues talked about the need for individuals to be paid, being able to be paid as a full-time employee is much more beneficial than a consultant because consulting does not include benefits, paid benefits like health insurance. Does not include retirement, does not create sustainability for that partner, that individual you want to partner with in order for them to continue to serve that community just as school districts have this similar mission.

Tim Duffey: Yes. Thank you. Bella?

Bella Hounakey: I just want to add to what Honorable Suleman said. I think that also be open to criticism. Advocacy, regardless of sector, is about reaching within and their reaching out. And so if you engage individuals with lived experiences and they have... They can critique your outline, your project. Be open to that. They're there to assure that you don't stay at a stasis stage, that you're able to improve so that you can make an impact. So as Ms. Casey said, it's not just about engaging them so they'd agree with what you already have in place, but be open to restructuring. And that's what you're engaging them for. So be open, be innovative, and just be reminded that the other part of prevention work or protection, prosecution is partnership. And sometimes we lack our partners, sometimes we don't, but sometimes time they can provide some really good input.

Tim Duffey: No, very important addition, Bella. Thank you for bringing that in. Our objective with this webinar was in fact to allow people to really improve their efforts at addressing human traffic. And sometimes that means we have to hear things that are hard to hear. And so thank you for stating that clearly and not just leaving it as maybe an assumed on some people's parts. Very important addition.

There's a bunch of things in there that I would love to, if we have time or if we have additional time some other time to follow up on. You all are just deep wisdom and a lot of important information being shared here. But let me move on to this question next. And perhaps we can come back to some of those others later. You may have touched on some of this already in your earlier comments, but I invite you to consider what do you see as essential for schools that they keep top of mind when they're using a trauma informed approach? And Judge Lung in particular, you've alluded to this a couple of times in comments. And Suleman, I believe you as well were speaking to that pretty directly. So what's important to stay top of mind when they're using a trauma informed approach in this engagement process? And we'll start with Suleman with you this time.

Suleman Masood: Sure. Yeah. I mean, as my colleagues have touched on and I've spoken directly to, one important thing to keep in mind when engaging with the lived experience community is to acknowledge and understand what cultural context looks like. So what I mean by that is prior to even engaging, and this is a really

great point that Judge Lung mentioned at the beginning. Prior to even engaging with somebody with lived experience in order to further a campaign or awareness or outreach, or even reevaluating curriculum. Before even getting into any of that, it's making sure that you understand what your community looks like. You understand the cultural makeup of your community.

It's making sure that having an understanding of the type of trafficking that exists, the type of demographics that are most affected. It's making sure that everything that you observe of in your community, you're also making sure that those that are wanting to represent or present to the community have detailed knowledge and understanding of what that looks like. I think the analogy that was used is what happens in New York is different from what happens in another state. This is true. I mean, simple example I can provide is I work with an organization that they wanted to provide outreach. They were in the very early stages of developing a task force. This was out in New Mexico and they wanted to bring the local school district in New Mexico on board and wanting to work with law enforcement to provide a collaborative engagement.

But one of the things that they would relay to me is, "Well, we're looking to see what this national organization is doing." And I'll keep the name private, but they looked at a lot of different national models. And they wanted to just basically replicate that without having any cultural context of the... In mind of the cultural community that they're serving, the type of trafficking that was rampant in the rural area as a part of oil rigs, for example. Workers in the oil industry unfortunately we're subject to labor exploitation, which is not something that you would typically find in a national campaign. So it's making sure that your approach and your outreach is really tailored to the community you serve. And most importantly, making sure that that individual with lived experience really has a detailed knowledge on what that looks like and how they can better assist.

Obviously, when it comes to outreach in the schools, it's obvious that social media and the trends of social media, and I know that that's been addressed and will continue to be addressed on how children are engaging with social media, different levels of apps. It's always going to be there, but being able to address that, address the current state of the pandemic, but also addressing how the pandemic affects that community specifically, how the use of these apps affects that community specifically through the use of highways, freeways, industries where employers are exploiting employees for labor. Being able to have that cultural context really is going to strengthen that outreach approach. And it's going to ensure that everything that you do is trauma informed because you're first informed by what your community's doing.

Tim Duffey:

Thank you, Suleman. Excellent points all around. Kimberly, what would you have to add to this discussion?

Kimberly Casey:

Sure. So putting on my hat of the person who loves theoretical approaches for a moment, just referencing the fact that many of us already know the principles

of a trauma informed approach. There are six that are most commonly used. Excuse me, used, and educators are already applying to the other work that they're doing.

And those same principles can support a framework for engaging individuals with lived experience. Principles of safety, trustworthiness, and transparency, peer support, collaboration, empowerment, voice, choice, cultural, historical, and gender considerations, any of which. Suleman just did a great job of outlining. The National Human Trafficking Training and Technical Assistance Center, also referred to as NHTTAC. The training and technical assistance arm of OTIP has published a toolkit for building survivor informed organizations that talk about these principles and apply them to different efforts. I'll note that the toolkit was really designed for organizations who are doing work in service provision, but there are so many of those principles that I think can be pulled from and implemented within the school setting as well. That could be helpful.

And then also just noting, similar to working with individuals who've experienced other forms of violence and discrimination, Bella referenced this briefly, remember it's not the responsibility of the person who's experienced a form of violence or discrimination to teach us how to engage with them effectively. It is not their role. They shouldn't be carrying that burden. It's our responsibility to do the work in advance to make sure that our organizations and our teams are ready to support colleagues with lived experience.

Tim, you described earlier an important first step is recognizing that individuals who've experienced trafficking identify in different ways. Some may change or adapt the way they identify based on the setting or the work that they're doing. At OTIP, we lean towards using the language of individual with lived experience because it leads with a person and not the experience. Another helpful tool that could be useful for schools is the CDC's Principles for Inclusive Communications. That can help just navigate the use of language in these spaces for those who are at risk and then also experiencing trafficking.

One way to start really practically in a trauma informed way is by doing this, asking survivors, how do they want to self-identify? Not just in that label. Like, "Do you want to be identified as a survivor? Do you want to be identified as an individual with lived experience?" But how they want that experience to be framed in different environments. And so many of the professionals and individuals that I work with don't lead with their human trafficking experience as their primary identity in those spaces. Some may not even reference it in a bio or in a discussion with someone while they're introducing themselves. And so really making sure that we're pausing to say, "How do you want to talk about this?" Not everyone at the table actually needs to know that that person has lived experience because they're bringing so many of those other professional attributes and lenses, and using their person experience to inform that work.

And then one other note, again, as a person who hasn't experienced trafficking, I've learned of accepting the possibility and probability that you are going to

mess up in this work. You're going to make mistakes. It's just inevitable, but if you are being really intentional about implementing those principles of trauma-informed approaches, you can create an environment where that feedback is possible.

So, Bella mentioned it in reference to feedback on materials or policies or work, but also in how you have approached this. And you've slipped up saying a word or you've thoughtlessly said something that impacted someone negatively. By creating those spaces where they can voice those concerns, you can address the harm and change things moving forward.

And then finally, remembering that while vicarious trauma is a real threat for all of us who are doing this work, survivors of trafficking may be affected differently. They may be triggered differently while doing this work. And so it's really important to create spaces for trauma informed supervision and meeting people where they are in particular circumstances so that we can make sure that they can safely engage in this work and tell us what they need if they're experiencing some difficulty, but you really do have to create the space for that to happen.

Tim Duffey:

A kudo to you and then a reference to the chat. The kudo is Kimberly, thank you for following the thread back to discussing triggering again. Suleman in particular has hit that nail right on the head in previous comments and that was one of those things I wanted to come back for a little more dive into. So thank you. And then you mentioned two specific resources and Greta posted links to those resources in the chat. So if you have not seen that, please, those of you who are listening in, please go to the chat for those links. Judge Lung, additional comments you might want to make in regarding this question?

Judge Robert Lung:

Yes. Thank you. I actually wrote down a bunch of notes. My colleague's speaking, and so I wanted to touch back on them. In fact, one of them comes from what Kimberly had said earlier. I'll start with some principles that I would highlight or emphasize that I think my colleagues mentioned earlier. When engaging with experts of this kind, it is absolutely critical that the relationship that you build or you develop with this expert is based on trust and transparency and safety. And safety being very important. I think depending on where you are in your development and your policies, your programs, if it's a ground level start, one of the first things you might engage the expert with is, "Tell us if the environment we're working in is trauma informed."

Some of the work I've done with organizations is saying, "You need an expert to come in here and tell if your office, your conference room, or if your school environment is trauma informed and consider what changes might be made." I think of my former spouse. Her primary work was middle school, high school counselor and trying... Even the counselor room, it's important to know, is that a space that would feel safe and trauma informed for a person to engage in that kind of work?

So, starting off, essentially just grassroots, ground level, in the bunker beginning might be what is necessary. Kimberly said it earlier in the response to the last question as well and I wanted to chime in on that because it was my experience was that if you're doing this work, it is important to know that some of your... If you're doing this in schools yourself, it's important to know that some of the victims of human trafficking might have been trafficked by their own family members.

And so, if somebody's disclosing to you and say, "Well, let's call your parents." You might be calling the trafficker. You have to be aware that who you think is safe, it might be the least safe person on the planet to this person. So being hyper aware of safety is important. But the other thing I would say is that the important thing to understand is that survivors have a perspective that can't be taught. I appreciate what Kimberly said. I think it was probably the best thing I ever heard anybody say in this field and I appreciate. In the one moment I'm thinking to myself, "Why is she discounting her herself?" I appreciate or recognize that she says, "Well, I'm not a survivor." And so, heads up, you might make mistakes.

I appreciate that honesty and it's true, but if you are actively engaged, you can learn from it. And it's a great learning experience of like, "Oh, you're right. I shouldn't have said it in that way, or I shouldn't have phrased it that way, or I shouldn't have assumed that." And that's good. And being able to see a person, learn from that in process, that is a good, healthy thing. But I think doing the work and that the principles being that when you're engaging these experts, that you are ensuring that the engagement is based on trust, transparency and safety is a very important first step.

Tim Duffey:

Thank you, Judge Lung. Yes, indeed. Very important. Well, we have one more person on this question to tap and that's Bella's brain on what's important around the trauma informed approach. What would you like to add, Bella?

Bella Hounakey:

Thanks, Tim. And thanks everyone else for sharing your thoughts. I come from a trauma informed background educationally. And so this is something that I'm really passionate about, but I first just want to recognize that anti-trafficking advocacy, it's a lot of work. It's a lot of things to keep in mind. It's a lot of things to make note of, both for those of us who engage in it and those of who are also engaging in service provision or whichever sector you're in. And I also just want to recognize that I want to use this analogy of dating somebody who's emotionally unavailable. I don't know if you've done that, but I've done that. But it's the same concept here, right? It's that you, as an organization, you can't provide or you can't be trauma informed if you're rotten within. And so I think at time organizations in their culture, or even schools in their culture can be so ingrained in your daily activities, daily work, daily hustle of your work so much that you don't pay attention to the culture you're facilitating.

And I think Honorable Suleman mentioned this a little bit and to further respond on that. When we talk about culture is understanding that, just like you can't

date somebody who's emotionally unavailable, if you're emotionally available, you can provide trauma informed care or actually understanding the principles of trauma informed care if your organization or your team is very toxic. And survivors can pick up on that very much so. However, if they come from a structured educational background or not, they can pick that up.

And so, in order for you to be able to provide a trauma informed approach to those in the lived experienced community, you have to really pay attention to your internal structure. Does your environment facility want that, appreciate collaboration and coordination and promote cohesiveness? And so I think when you engage those in the lived experience community or survivors, pay attention to your organization culture. If it's toxic, what do you think you're going to... Your message you're going to send out?

And so, pay attention to that so that you are able to what is host internally really communicate externally. So if you are a healthy environment and you're engaging survivors, then they are able to be in an environment where they feel safe, where they can promote, and where they could connect and collaborate. If otherwise I struggle, I don't even know how to say... I don't know how to be diplomatic.

And so, I would say, "If you're toxic, you engage survivors, they're going to pick up on that toxic culture." And so they might not be a part or they might not work with you again. And the whole goal here is advocacy, because all of you here, I guess I will assume you're not just here because of your profession, but because you identify as allies, you identify as those of you who are saying no to trafficking. So constantly ask yourself, "Does my culture facilitate connection? Does it facilitate a culture that accepts constructive criticism? Does it accept when someone wants to collaborate, but they are not on the same page with me? So pay attention to that. So that's what I would say about that. I think we can't be trauma informed unless we facilitate an environment that's trauma sensitive.

Tim Duffey:

Gotcha. Yeah. Thank you for that. Years ago in my work in alcohol and other drug abuse field, we used to talk about, you cannot give what you do not have. And I think that's what you're referring to, which is if we don't have a healthy environment, we're not going to give that to anybody else. So it's a good reminder for sure about that important work.

I'm looking at the clock and realizing time has flown by. We have about five more minutes before we need to go move to closing. So in this final question I have for you all, we have about out a minute each for you to respond. And what I'm curious about is specific suggestions you might have for how to engage people with lived experience in assessing all of these great resources that exist out there in the world to address this issue. And so, I mean, people can do that on their own, but they ought not. They ought to involve people with lived experience in that process. So what suggestions do you have for them? And Kimberly, can we start with you in responding to that?

Kimberly Casey:

Absolutely. So this has already been mentioned, but I want to reiterate it here because I think it's such an important point. When engaging individuals for this work, it's important to remember, like with every other issue, one person cannot represent the experience of all people. And so it's important to hire individuals who reflect the population that you're serving, and if possible, engage a diverse group of individuals to do the work.

So, it's already been mentioned the importance of having people who have experience in labor and sex trafficking with different cultures, with different types of trafficking experiences. The experience of men and boys is different than the experiences of girls and women. Those who've experienced familial trafficking is very different than those who've experienced through a gang or through a romantic relationship. And so making sure that you're either engaging individuals who have that personal experience or many of the individuals that I've worked with have also done the work to understand the experience of other people in those spaces and can at least provide references or carry that information forward into discussions.

And so really making sure that you are thinking through that process specific to what you need to review. Education staff should also consider the type of projects that they're working on and the expertise gaps that may exist. We know that in this work we need a multidisciplinary approach. And so while I do, thank you Judge Lung for making sure I'm not discounting my experience, I do bring a specific set of experience to this work.

I've had the opportunity to work with a lot of individuals with lived experience who've allowed me to carry what I've learned from them into the work that I'm doing now, but it is still critically important to make sure that we're engaging those people who have lived experience. And also recognizing that different people, different survivors, have experience in different types of work. So this panel's a really good example of people who bring their lived experience to their professional spaces. And we can continue to learn from those who are experts in education, training, outreach, all of those spaces, depending on the work that we're doing.

Tim Duffey:

Thank you for that. Yes, indeed. Suleman, anything to add to that in terms of assessing resources?

Suleman Masood:

Yeah. I'll keep it brief. It was mentioned earlier I think at the very first question, but any type of resources that we want to evaluate, we want to look at, resources we're creating, it's really important to know and to keep in the back of your mind that at some point that's going to be outdated. Everything we do when it comes to prevention, we have to be able to be honest with ourselves and transparent and know that there is an expiration date the minute you put that resource out. You may be wanting to speak to one community or you may be wanting to be speaking to a generation of parents, but those generations change. The information and the way that trafficking comes about through

labor, sex, and additional forms of trafficking, they continue to get more advanced with technology.

So, what we look at is OnlyFans or Instagram now. Five years from now, that's going to be obsolete and something else is going to come in place. So we really have to be strategic and transparent, and know that every time that we're looking to look at prevention, we have to be open to evolving and be open to updating our resources and have that understanding that, as we move forward, the things that we've done in the past will be outdated.

Tim Duffey: Thank you. Thank you, Suleman. Bella, anything to add in terms of assessing resources?

Bella Hounakey: Yeah. I think we've mentioned for the most part the resources that we have available. I'll also say, don't reinvent the wheel. You already have a lot going on, so don't reinvent the wheel if you don't have to. The Advisory Council in Human Trafficking has had many, many reports out over the years to utilize those as a resource. The State Department have a lot of resource out. Department of State and Department of HHS, Human Health and Human Services. I forgot my employer. Also have resources out, so don't reinvent the wheel if you don't have to. Tap into communities around you that have been doing this work for a while. Like Honorable Suleman said, traffickers change their strategies all the time. And so, we have to catch up. That's it.

Tim Duffey: Yeah. Thank you, Bella. And Judge Lung, we're tight on time here, but I do want to give you a chance to add anything you might want to for this final question.

Judge Robert Lung: Yeah, 30 seconds or less. The thing is that when you're engaging, have pride in what work you've done, but be open to change. Some experts do approach this, they're going to criticize your work, but I always endeavor when I'm doing this kind of work to offer constructive criticism of like, "Hey, I see that there's these strengths in your programs and here's what you're missing. How can we develop it?"

I think it needs to be reemphasized the concept that you have to update your policies. You may have the greatest 2022 policy ever, but in five years, it's going to be outdated because trafficking went from the streets, to the websites, to the phones, and probably is headed to the virtual world next. So your program, how great it is today, is going to be outdated in three to five years just like a computer.

Tim Duffey: Yeah. Yeah. Thank you so much, Judge Lung. And to each of you as panelists. I'll give my own personal thanks to you in a moment. I do want to invite Ruth back in to make some closing comments on behalf of the Department of Education before I move to wrapping up. Ruth, I'll turn it to you.

Ruth Ryder: Thank you so much, Tim. And thank you to all of our panelists. What an exceptional set of information you've provided. Like Judge Lung, I have pages of

notes here that I've been taking as you've been talking. I did want to quickly mention one thing and that is yesterday The President's Interagency Task Force to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons met and it included this... Led by the secretary of state, Anthony Blinken, and a number of representatives from the different agencies presented. I was able to listen in. I heard, Suleman, you gave some excellent remarks on behalf of the council. And we, the Department nominated Tanya Gold for the President's Award for Extraordinary Efforts to Combat Human Trafficking and she was presented that award as part of the PITF meeting. So that was very exciting. A former member of the Advisory Council and someone who has been very helpful to the Department in our work related to human trafficking.

So, Tim, I will turn it back to you to close things out and thank you so much to all of our panelists. Excellent panel.

Tim Duffey:

Thank you, Ruth. And yes, I concur. I really extend my heartfelt appreciations to our esteemed speakers for today. Each of you, very significant inspiration, certainly to me and I think probably to everyone who participated today and provided us with a huge amount of things to consider. We all have pages as of notes, as Ruth referenced. Thanks too to our audience today. Really appreciate your commitment to this issue and for being with us. It's been posted in the chat throughout, but here's a link also to the SurveyMonkey. We would like to get your feedback on how helpful this was today and how we can make events like this in the future helpful for you as well. All of you in the field, we greatly appreciate what you do every day and we thank you for your focus and attention.

I do encourage you too, before you sign off, if you haven't yet, check the chat because there have been a host of resources to that final question we had being posted in the chat by Daniel, by Greta, perhaps by panelists themselves. So do check the chat before you sign off to make sure you have access to those.

And finally, I will mention that we do have... This series continues and we have a number of additional high interest webinars on human trafficking topics that will happen throughout 2022. And as a participant in today's event, you'll receive notice about those upcoming webinars as they're finalized. So please do stay tuned for that and we hope to see you in attendance at some of those future events as well.

Thank you again for joining us today, for being a part of this effort to address trafficking in America's schools. I hope we see you next time that we are back together for one of these events. Have a wonderful rest of your day. Thank you again to all of our presenters. Bye bye.