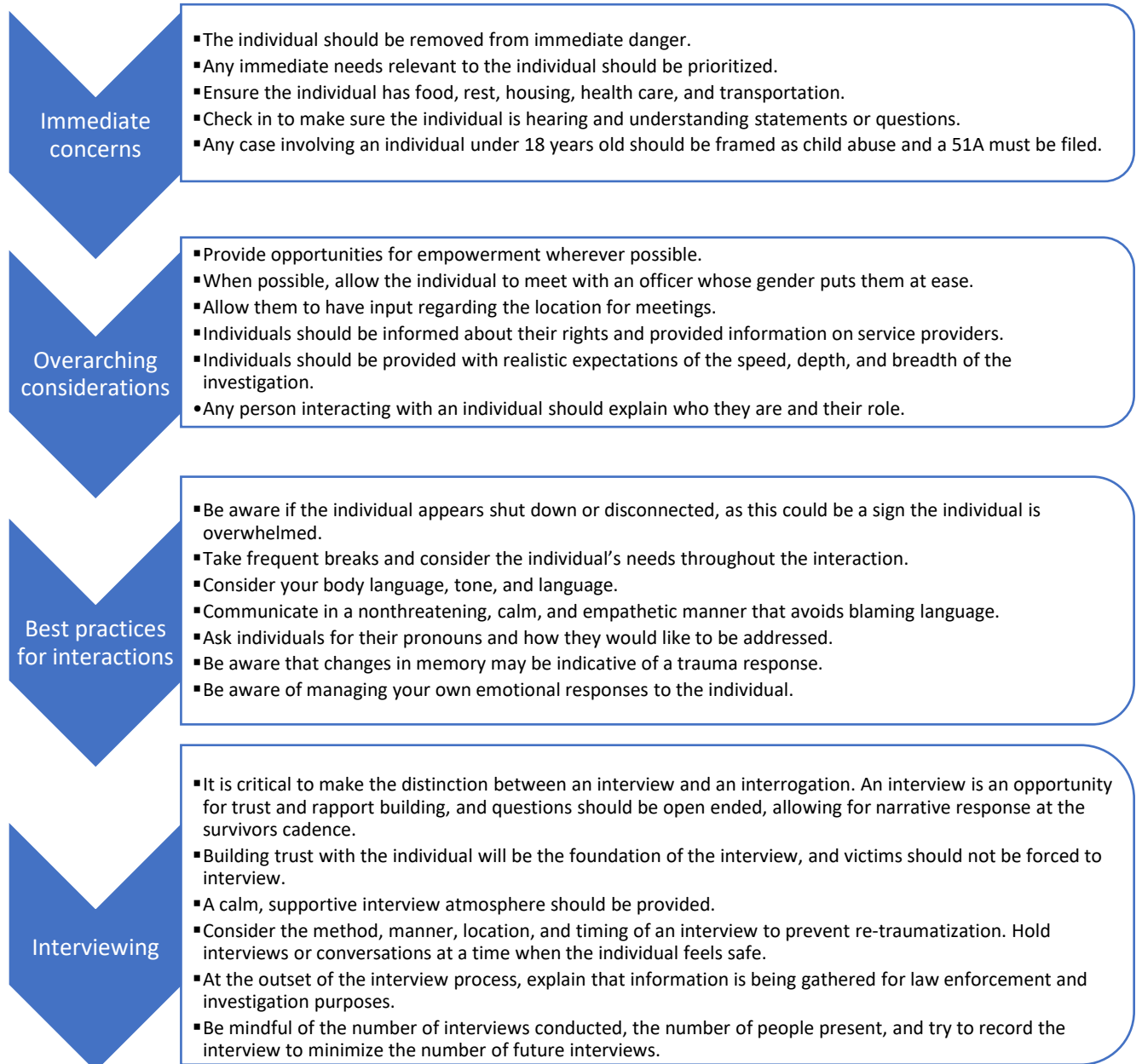


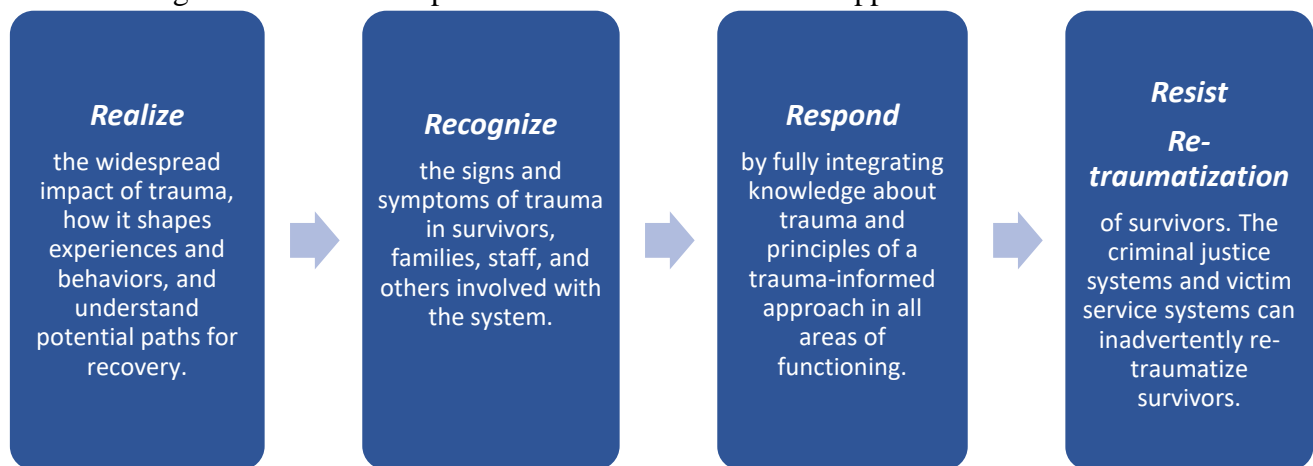
# Law Enforcement Brief: Implementing a Trauma-Informed Approach to Responding to Victims

The following checklist provides considerations for law enforcement during interactions with survivors. Taking the following steps can have an impact on the individual's sense of safety.<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup> Adapted from Justice Resource Institute, 'Utilizing Trauma-Informed Approaches to Trafficking-related work.' [https://www.duq.edu/assets/Documents/forensics/Forensic%20Fridays/2018/MAR%209/H-O%20Trauma-Informed%20Case%20Study\\_final\\_2.pdf](https://www.duq.edu/assets/Documents/forensics/Forensic%20Fridays/2018/MAR%209/H-O%20Trauma-Informed%20Case%20Study_final_2.pdf)

Having knowledge of trauma and a trauma-informed approach can provide skills needed to work with survivors of human trafficking. **Individual trauma** results from an event, series of events, or set of circumstances that is experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or life threatening and that has lasting adverse effects on the individual's functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being.<sup>2</sup> A **trauma-informed approach** comprises victim-centered practices that acknowledge a victim's trauma, avoids re-traumatization, and allows victims to begin processing their trauma while participating in the criminal justice system.<sup>3</sup> The following elements are incorporated into a trauma-informed approach:<sup>4</sup>



A trauma-informed approach to addressing human trafficking is structured around several key principles:<sup>5</sup>

- **Safety:** It is imperative to ensure the physical, psychological, and emotional safety of survivors.
- **Transparency and honesty:** To build trust with survivors, transparency, honesty, and clear communication are key. At each stage of the process, information should be communicated to survivors<sup>6</sup> and officers should follow through on statements made.
- **Collaboration and empowerment:** Law enforcement officers need to understand the importance of power differentials. It is important to restore feelings of self-efficacy and control to victims by providing them with opportunities for choice.<sup>7</sup>
- **Equity and Cultural Affirmation:** A response to human trafficking should be free from gender discrimination, racism, xenophobia, homophobia, transphobia, and value judgements. Officers should acknowledge biases and power dynamics.

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<sup>2</sup> SAMHSA's Trauma and Justice Strategic Initiative, HHS (2014) *SAMHSA's Concept of Trauma and Guidance for a Trauma-Informed Approach*

<sup>3</sup> Milam, Borrello & Pooler (2017) "The Survivor-Centered, Trauma-Informed Approach." *United States Attorneys' Bulletin*.

<sup>4</sup> SAMHSA's Trauma and Justice Strategic Initiative, HHS (2014) *SAMHSA's Concept of Trauma and Guidance for a Trauma-Informed Approach*, 9-10.

<sup>5</sup> Heffernan & Blythe. "Evidence-Based Practice: Developing a Trauma-Informed Lens to Case Management for Victims of Human Trafficking." Published 1 April 2014. Springer International Publishing. *Glob Soc Welf*. Also, see SAMHSA and IACP resources

<sup>6</sup> When needed, an interpreter will be available to ensure effective communication between the investigative team and survivors.

<sup>7</sup> Milam, Borrello & Pooler (2017) "The Survivor-Centered, Trauma-Informed Approach." *United States Attorneys' Bulletin*.

# Commonwealth's Anti-Trafficking Task Force

## Victim Service Providers Contact Information

### **The Eva Center**

Location: Boston, Massachusetts Phone: (617) 779-2133

Website: <https://www.evacenter.org/>

The EVA Center provides a wide range of continuous and comprehensive services for women exploited through prostitution and sex trafficking.

### **Living in Freedom Together (LIFT)**

Location: Worcester, Massachusetts Phone: (508) 762-9660

Website: <https://liftworcester.org/>

LIFT is a community of unquestionable support for survivors of the sex trade. LIFT provides community programs and advocacy for survivors.

### **Garden of Hope**

Location: Queens, New York & Brooklyn, New York Hotline Phone: (718) 886-1960 Phone: (718) 321-8862

Website: <https://gohny.org/>

Garden of Hope has served hundreds of Chinese-speaking immigrants who are at risk of being trafficked or have been trafficked,

### **Sojourner House**

Location: Providence, Rhode Island Hotline 24/7: (401) 765-3232 Main office: (401) 861-6191

Website <https://www.sojournerri.org>

Committed to ending domestic, sexual violence human trafficking through emergency safe shelter, transitional and permanent housing. Immigration services and case management.

### **Boston University School of Law Immigrants' Rights and Human Trafficking Program**

Location: Boston, Massachusetts Contact: Julie Dahlstrom Office: (617) 353-2807

Website: <https://www.bu.edu/law/current-students/jd-student-resources/experiential-learning/clinics/immigrants-rights-human-trafficking-clinic/>

Services: Legal services for trafficking survivors, including immigration legal services, victim rights advocacy, record clearing, and civil legal assistance. We also provide referrals to survivor-led and victim services agencies locally as well as technical assistance about legal issues.

Geographic region: Massachusetts (state-wide)

### **My Life My Choice**

Location: Boston, Massachusetts Phone: (617) 396-7807 Email: [mlmcfinfo@jri.org](mailto:mlmcfinfo@jri.org)

Website: [www.mylifemychoice.org](http://www.mylifemychoice.org)

My Life My Choice provides Survivor-led Mentoring to young victims of commercial sexual exploitation as well as to youth identified as high-risk for exploitation. My Life My Choice accepts referrals for minors (up to age 18) of all genders. To make a referral or learn more go to:

[www.mylifemychoice.org/get-help-here](http://www.mylifemychoice.org/get-help-here)

### **Support to End Exploitation Now (SEEN)/Children's Advocacy Center of Suffolk County**

Location: Boston, Massachusetts 24/7 Phone: (617) 504-6777

Website: <https://www.suffolkcac.org/what-we-do/seen>

The SEEN (Support to End Exploitation Now) Program coordinates the multidisciplinary response to child trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation of children across Suffolk County, MA. SEEN receives referrals for high-risk and exploited youth under the age of 18 in Boston, Chelsea, Revere, and Winthrop. Together with partners, spanning law enforcement, child welfare, medical & mental health providers, and community-based organizations, SEEN is available 24/7 to respond and provide immediate and ongoing case coordination to support multidisciplinary investigations and delivery of services