Block 4

Interpersonal Communication Skills
BLOCK 4  INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS

This is the block on Interpersonal Skills.

It covers the following Units

Unit 16  Interviewing skills.
Unit 17  Interrogation techniques.
Unit 18  Counselling methods.
Unit 19  Best Practices.
Unit 20  A Mock Exercise /Case study Simulative Exercises

After reading this Block the student should be able to:

1. discuss the Journey of a survivor of trafficking;
2. analyse the problems faced by them;
3. describe the key concepts of supporting the survivors of trafficking and ways to outgrow the pain of their experiences;
4. discuss the Micro-skills for Therapeutic and Evidentiary Interviews;
5. have an idea of the element of an evidentiary interview; and
6. learn the first hand response to survivor of trafficking

The Unit 19 and 20 will run parallel to all the other Units as the best practices for counseling, the Case Studies and Simulative exercises are outlined in all the Units.

The document is divided into the following sections:
I) Understanding the Survivors of trafficking
II) First response
III) Mental Health Interventions
IV) Therapeutic Assessments and Interventions
V) The Evidentiary Interview

All the sections in this document are derived from the author’s prior writings on supporting survivors of human trafficking.

These include:
1) The Sounds of Silence
2) Enable
3) Ensure
4) Outgrowing the pain
5) The Mind of the Survivor

The above have been published by UNIFEM.

The Journey to Justice a manual for investigating officers and judicial officers was published by UNODC.

These manuals should form essential reading for students interested in providing psycho-social support for the survivors of trafficking.
I. Understanding the Survivors of Trafficking

A) A Letter from Tara

Namaste, I am Tara. This is the story of my life. This is also the story of my friends. You too have been a part of this story. You have met me many times, but you do not know me. I have met you many times and I am afraid of you. I wish I had not met any of you, ever. I wish my life was a film and it could be replayed and I could banish my thoughts and memories.

But life is not a film and I cannot edit it or keep it aside. I have decided to outgrow my pain by sharing with you what happens to people like me everyday. I am sharing with you my story in the hope that you will not let what happened to me, happen ever again to anyone else.

Let me ask you a question. When you get up in the morning, do you remind yourself, who you are? Do you tell yourself, “I am a police officer or I am a lawyer”; Do you tell yourself, “I am this colour, this caste, this height; Do you tell yourself, “Yesterday I had a tooth ache, my family spoke rudely to me, my boss did not consider my effort and I will have sondesh today.” Do you tell yourself these things? No? I guess not. All this is a part of you. You do not have to remind yourself of your experiences.

But I am reminded repeatedly about my experiences. Every moment, every day I am told I am a victim of trafficking. There are stares and there are sniggers. There are frowns and there are pitying glances. The way my life is touched by all of you is through blame. I am defined by traumatic experiences by you. I am blamed by you for my experiences.

Let me ask you, when you read my story, can you stop for a moment and think of me as a person? A person not much older than your child. A person who smiles, who aspires, who works very hard at forgetting that she is a victim? I am a person. I think, I feel and I get hurt just like you. I have been hurt so many times and I am so afraid now that I do not do anything. It is better to be paralyzed than get hurt again. Please make sure no one hurts me again. Please! I am a person!

I do not even remember now where my story starts. The beginning is so misty and far away. I can perhaps tell you my story in flashbacks. I live my life in flashbacks. They are scary but that is all that is left.

A memory starts with a smell. The smell of overflowing diesel in a bus. It mingles with the noise of the engine and a feeling of nausea. This is the first time I am leaving my town. I am sitting next to him. He tries to reassure me and gives me some water. My eyes are aching and red. I have cried all night. I do not know where I am going. He told my father I would get a job. But I also saw him giving some money to my father. All through the night he kept touching me. I knew it was not right. But what could I say? I hate bus journeys now and I hate people offering me water when I am crying.

The scene fades away. I am lying in a corner of a large room. I am curled up. I can feel the hard floor pressing my body. I am scratched and hurting. I do not know what has happened to me. I am hiding my face in my arms. I am tired of sobbing. I lapse into being unconscious. It seems easier that way. I do not have to fear what will happen next. From my corner sometimes the sounds of what must be the street envelope me. I can smell burning meat. For a moment I think I must be burning. I turn on my back. I see the ceiling. It is a disfigured white because of water. I can see faces in it. When anyone stares at me now, the faces come back. So many faces, uniformed, rough, fair,
smooth, bearded faces...discolored teeth and nameless scary faces. Each face looming and each face making me scream.

My screams must be my imagination. I do not remember the sound of my screams. But I must have screamed, must I not?

I can feel the slippery dirty notes. I remember the cigarettes and the burns. I remember the smell of alcohol. I remember my first drink, my first lip stick, the first time I was raped. When it happened I did not even have a word to describe it. Then, it all kept on happening so many times that it even began to seem normal. Aunty told me that I owed her twenty five thousand rupees, money she had spent on me. I had to pay off that loan and then I would be free to do what I wanted.

I remember being pushed into a hole behind the wooden partition. No windows, no doors, just a blue wooden wall in front of me with a small crack and another cold wall behind me. There were two of us there or maybe three. I remember Sonia breathing. She was more scared than I was. She had been through this before. Was the third one Laxmi? It does not matter. It was one of them. Then I remember Sonia screaming. She was yanked out of my sight by a hand pulling her hair. Then the same hand came in and pulled me out. The roots of my hair still hurt. I cut my hair after that so that no one should be able to pull me by hair again. They kept on saying something. I felt really scared. These were policemen.

Remember, the nasty things the police can do. Raghu had told me about a girl who was taken to the police station and was later found in the gutter. “Pieces”, he said, “No one could recognize her.” Will they do that to me? I was shivering. I was so scared that I did not answer any questions they asked me. Aunty took them aside. But their boss was there. We were all pushed into a large bus like thing. It had no windows and one entered from the back. Aunty whispered to me loudly, “You speak a word and I will cut your tongue and throw it to the dogs.” She meant it.

I did not speak for the next two months.

Sonia went back. It seems she was older. I do not know why that happened. Sonia and I are the same height. She did not want to go. Laxmi stayed with me, but her daughter Pinki was left behind. Who will feed Pinki now? No one listened to Laxmi. She cried. I cried. We were so scared. I used to think that after seeing so many faces I would never be scared now. I had come to believe that once I was dead, how could I be scared? But that night could have scared even the ghosts.

No one told me anything. I was asked the same questions about sixteen times. I kept quiet or lied. I did not want them to hurt me when they got hold of me. If you have been huddled in that large room once you do not want to be there again.

Some people kept on saying that they would help me go home. They did not understand, I could never go home. What will I tell my family? What was the job I was doing?

Are you still thinking of me as a person? Or do you feel safe now by calling me a victim?

I went through all this and lived. If only you could read my mind. What lives there is very murky. I fear to voice it. If I had voiced it then I would have been so angry that I would not have been able to help you stop this from happening to others.

I once told my counsellor, “I am so angry that I could kill the people who did this to me.” She said that it would not be fair to them because they had a right to be heard and tried under law. She said that I am human, so I should not intentionally hurt anyone. I could not understand the logic that the law had to be fair to them and not fair to me.
I do not think I will ever kill anyone. But they killed me many times. Many times over. Many people with many faces. Will you catch those faces for me?

Again the faces come back. Now the faces are different. They are dressed well. They seem to listen. But they do not actually listen. When they get angry with me, they scold me. They do not tell me when I will go home. They call me to court every few months. They keep me locked and do not let me go out. I sing songs and make some handicrafts. But I do not want to do any of this. I do not know what the purpose of my life is. Is my life any different here than in that cold room with the smell of burning meat? I do not know. Once nameless faces stopped being nasty, at times they did smile at me. These faces that I live with now have names but I do not have a name as far as they are concerned. I am another victim. Or maybe a survivor. Or maybe a case study. Or maybe a voice that completes a conference. Or a witness.

I do not trust you. I am being honest. Why should I? I am extremely angry with you and everyone else. I blame myself for my miseries. I do not think there is a future. I do not think these flashbacks will ever leave me. I hate faces. I hate kindness. I hate being a victim. I am paralyzed. I still cannot hear my screams. Can you hear the sounds of my silence? Will you dare to hear my screams?

I do not know the last time someone thought of me as Tara. Do you? I do not know when was the last time I thought of myself as Tara. Tara does not smile now. Tara does not dream now. Tara exists. I am Tara. This is my story.

B) Understanding Tara’s Letter: Common Mental Health Impacts on the Survivor of Trafficking Due to Their Experiences in the Process of Trafficking

Let us first revisit the Journey of Exploitation that Tara described to us.

Let us give words to the survivors’ pain by understanding what happens to the way they think and feel during the process of trafficking.

Tara first described the Journey of her life in five parts:

1. Pre-recruitment
2. Recruitment
3. Transit
4. Destination
5. Exploitation

Pre-Recruitment

Remember, survivors may have faced poverty, discrimination and violence before they are recruited by the traffickers. A number of survivors have experienced violence in their homes. They have seen their mothers being beaten up. They learn to accept such behaviour of men towards woman as normal. They have also witnessed helplessness through this violence and through other discriminatory experiences that their families may have faced. The experience of helplessness may also have been normalized. They may see themselves as duty bearers or saviours to support the rest of the family and their siblings. They may have experienced sexual abuse themselves.
All these experiences will determine their ability to cope with future stressful experiences that they may face on being trafficked. They are not likely to complain in the face of violence or try to escape because of the inherent helplessness of the situation. They are also likely not to communicate their anguish to strangers. They are unlikely to be aware of the provisions of law, the process of trafficking or that they have rights which cannot be violated.

The long term psychological impact of these experiences is the survivor thinking of herself as not a good enough human being and believing that nothing is in her control.

**Recruitment**

The survivor may be recruited through lure, manipulation, debt bondage, coercion and violence. The survivor may not have been involved in the discussion regarding the relocation or the purpose of the relocation. It may be a discussion with the family which the survivor is not even told about. The family members may or may not sense the truth behind what they are being told. They may either overlook the risks or do not have a choice and keep quiet about the risk. Some families may actually collude with the traffickers.

Sometimes the survivor may be directly lured by the trafficker by a promise of love, job, an acting career or marriage. The trafficker sells a mirage to the survivor, a mirage that sounds definitely more attractive than the reality that the survivor faces in her own home. She may then seem to have consented to the travel. But the deception and lure is obvious and the consent which is given in this manner cannot be construed as a sanction to be trafficked. No individual can give consent for a crime to be committed against him or her, let alone a child who is made further vulnerable by the threats and manipulations that she faces.

Some survivors have been sexually abused during the course of recruitment. Some may also have been blackmailed due to pre-marital sexual relations or the fear of being pregnant.

The long term impact of the recruitment process is that the survivor views everything through a lens of mistrust. She wonders if people who trust her have betrayed her how she can ever trust anyone. She also starts blaming herself for her own woes. She feels guilty for not having been able to protect herself from being abused and trafficked.

**Transit**

The transit process reinforces her feelings of helplessness and guilt. She may experience sexual assault during the transit. She also feels angry at this point but does not know what to do with her anger and her feelings. She gradually detaches herself from painful experiences.

She is demolished, yet she survives.

**Destination**

By the time the survivor reaches the destination she knows that she is being cheated. She has experienced life-threatening assaults on herself as a person. She has been humiliated, her privacy intruded upon and she thinks that she may die. She also knows that she is likely to be exploited sexually. Her integrity is challenged and her individuality destroyed.
At this point the survivor may start developing a psychiatric disorder called Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder is a significantly disabling disorder. The disorder starts after a life threatening event or events. It is characterized by marked anxiety and reliving of traumatic experiences through flashbacks. This anxiety and reliving of experiences leads to avoidance of all things and triggers related to the trauma. Each time the person experiences the triggers that remind the person of the trauma that she went through, marked anxiety returns and the person is unable to do everyday things. She becomes numb and detached.

Post traumatic stress disorder is particularly disabling for survivors of trafficking because they are likely to experience retraumatizing triggers every moment of their life for many years. As we would learn later, retraumatization is a key risk that the survivor faces during the journey to justice. One of the key elements of an aware response by law enforcement and judicial process is to ensure that the survivor is not retraumatized. A survivor of trafficking may also experience the onset of symptoms of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder later on, particularly after being rescued.

Exploitation

As the exploitation process continues, the psychological maltreatment increases. The survivor is belittled. There is name calling, humiliation and threats to life. At the same time there is episodic caring, bonding and protection. This confuses the survivor. To trust or not to trust? What should she make of this relationship that hurts so much and then suddenly indulges her?

She is told that her family is being sent the money. She is told that she is repaying a debt. She is also made to believe that she is being protected from the police who will imprison her for what she is doing. She is confused. She does not want to be exploited. She does not want to be raped. She has no options. She also feels indebted to the people who are exploiting her and she has to woo the people who traumatize her.

She continues to experience symptoms of post traumatic stress disorder and suffers in silence. She also tries to seek approval of the peer group and the environment by playing by the rules of the environment. She dresses up, her behaviour becomes sexualized, she eats different food from what she was accustomed to and she seems like a different person.

To the casual eye she may even seem compliant and consenting. However, her feeling of mistrust is permanent, her criticism of herself is permanent, her guilt that she is the cause of her problems is permanent and her trauma defines her.

Negative Mental Health Impacts of Interventions during the Journey to Justice

When the Journey to Justice begins, it can be divided into the following components:

1. Rescue
2. Rehabilitation
3. Redress and judicial process
4. Repatriation
5. Reintegration
Unfortunately the negative experiences of the survivors continue during the Journey to Justice.

Over the past ten years, during individual and group counselling sessions for survivors, Saarthak team has documented examples of the following experiences that reinforce the negative mental health impacts across all phases of Journey to Justice:

**Blaming the survivor:**
The survivor gets blamed for her experiences.

For example,

1. Survivors being called ‘Gandinali ka Keera’ (A worm from a filthy drain) by Superintendent of a Protection Home

**Denial of basic needs of the survivor**

For example

1. Survivors not having access to underclothes on being rescued in a rescue operation in Delhi nearly seven years ago
2. Survivors not being allowed to meet their children in a rescue operation in Delhi nearly seven years ago
3. Survivors being denied food, if they do not get up on time in a government home
4. Survivors not having shelter after being rescued in an operation by an NGO, local police, a television channel and a statutory body

**Violation of dignity**

For example

1. Survivors being pulled by their hair during rescue operations recently in Delhi
2. Being leered at and sexually assaulted by the policemen rescuing them in Delhi
3. Survivors being beaten up by the landlords of a home run by a non governmental organization in Bihar

**Labeling of the survivor**

For example

1. Being called ‘goongi’ (dumb) or ‘mental’, implying psychiatric disorder during evidentiary interview process when the survivor did not speak during the interview process
2. Survivor being called a ‘stray’ woman during an interview with a prosecuting officer
3. Survivor’s sister who was living in the same home as her not being allowed to meet with the survivor and labeling the survivor as ‘nympho’.

**Survivor’s behaviour ascribed to her character**

For example

1. Sexualized behaviour being seen as evidence of a character fault, and blaming and ‘labeling’ the family of origin in Delhi, Kolkata, Hyderabad, Mumbai and Bihar by police officers, doctors, NGO workers, Judges and counsellors
Angry outbursts of a survivor being responded to by ‘the caregivers’ with the following comments: “Hai hi aisi, Patanahinkaise ma baapkibetihai. Aapkonahinpata, ye to aisi hi hotihain. Inko sex kiaadat pad gayihai, wohyahahnmitanahin...” (“She is like this only. Who knows what kind of parents she has. You do not know these girls. They are used to having sex. It is a habit and they do not get it here....”) 

Re-triggering of trauma in the judicial process

For example:
1. Being asked to travel with the accused in the same vehicle while going to court
2. Being charged under the Foreigners’ Act and being pushed back across the border between India and Bangladesh
3. Majority of the survivors being charged for soliciting
4. Medical examinations which are insensitive and incomplete
5. Cross-examination in the court which is traumatic and revictimising
6. Judges and officers of the court who blame the victim

Lack of choices

For example:
1. Survivor’s head being shaved to avoid lice
2. No choices on training, food, clothes, films she can see or even the posters she can put on the walls
3. Being made to sing the same song or follow the same dance movement or the same yoga lesson day after day, month after month, year after year

Inordinate and unreasonable delays in the judicial process

For example:
1. Survivors who spend four months in a brothel after being trafficked and then another eight years waiting for repatriation

Restriction on repertoire of activities of the survivor in the name of safety

For example:
1. Being locked and not being allowed to go out of the rehabilitation home to pursue livelihood opportunities

Primacy of institutional needs over the survivor’s needs

For example:
1. Being forced to meet visitors and sing songs to praise the NGO who helped her
2. Being forced to get up at 3 am to cook breakfast in the name of ‘participatory activity’
3. Being herded into one locked room, which is locked because of low staffing in the NGO
Lack of acknowledgment of the survivor’s development during the period of trafficking as a natural part of growing up

For example:

1. “Iskenakhre to dekho, lipstick lagatihai, jabaanchalatihai. Ine bade breasts hain, jaroor silicon injection lagvayahoga.” (“Just see her tantrums! She likes to wear lipstick. How she talks back. She has such large breasts, must have got silicon injections.”)

Lack of confidentiality and lack of consent

For example:

1. Featuring survivors in documentaries about the organization
2. Media coverage with names and photos
3. Publishing books with case studies about survivors without consent
4. Being photographed without consent
5. Being part of research without informed consent
6. Changing the name of the survivor without consent
7. Mandatory testing for HIV and sharing of survivor’s HIV status with her family, peers and Home authorities

Lack of information about intervention processes

For example:

1. Survivors in the government home not being informed about the status of their court case or not being met by anyone for months and years regarding their court case

Lack of information about rights

For example:

1. When no information is shared with the survivors about their legal or human rights
2. More often than not there is no access to legal aid
3. Child survivors are isolated from other children in need of care and protection due to circumstances like parental death, sexual abuse, and violence in their life

Lack of accountability of intervention processes and lack of good practice benchmarks contribute to the helplessness of the survivors and maintain them in a ‘victim’ role.

There is also a lack of continuity of care. Interventions begin afresh with each new phase of rehabilitation process. The survivor is rescued from the brothel and lives in a custodial environment for months or years without receiving much information. She is then sent to a local NGO in the country or region of origin and undergoes a similar process there for a few years. Everyone repeats the process of assessments and some intervention, without any knowledge or consideration of the survivor’s needs. The same story continues after repatriation.

At the end of the journey, the person is best prepared for being a ‘professional custodial home inmate’, and not a productive member of her community.
Potential Risks that the survivor faces during the investigation and rehabilitation:

Risk of criminalization: Even as late as August 2007 there are reports of reactive investigations arresting and charging survivors/victims of sexual exploitation in Delhi.

Risks of reprisal against survivors of trafficking by traffickers: An investigation may lead to arrest of people fronting the trafficking business; the nexus that is organizing the crime continues to threaten the survivor and her family. Such fear of reprisal by traffickers who are left out of the net leads to the survivor being a reluctant witness.

Risks due to poor planning of the rescue process: A poorly planned rescue (due to lack of time or resources) may lead to a sudden increase in the following risks to the survivor:
1. Survivors may be returned to the exploitative situation
2. Survivors may be left in exploitative situations
3. Care and Support service providers may be unable and unprepared to take on all the rescued survivors

For example, in the year 2006, a police party from Andhra Pradesh visited Delhi to rescue some victims of trafficking with an NGO from Andhra Pradesh. The girls were rescued. However, it was alleged that as Delhi Police was unable to find a safe place for them in post rescue scenario the girls were sent back to the brothel. The Delhi Police, however, claim that the girls who were rescued were not victims of trafficking as they were not children. The reality is that the poor planning of the rescue operation led to increased risks for the survivors.

Risk of retraumatization: A reactive investigation has few sources of information. The need to seek evidence at times makes the investigative agencies become firm and aggressive with the survivor, rather than giving themselves time to build trust and allowing the survivor time to express what she wants to. This can be significantly retraumatizing for the survivor and may lead to her clamming up and not cooperating with the investigating process.

Risk to privacy and dignity of the survivor: A poorly planned rescue intervention may not be able to protect confidentiality of the survivor from the media. A hurriedly organized intervention may not be able to organize requisite resources like vehicles, clothes, places of safety, NGO support workers, counsellors and women police officers. There may be no time to organize a reconnaissance of the target of the intervention. Such lack of information and resources may lead to survivors feeling that they have been treated in an undignified manner. They may end up using such an experience as an evidence for the fear of the police that they carry in their mind. They may identify with the traffickers and may be uncooperative as witnesses.

The net result of all these experiences is anger towards all the people who are supposed to help the survivor. The survivor believes the exploiters and identifies with them. This gives the exploiter a point of re-entry into the survivor’s life and facilitates re-trafficking. There are reports of re-trafficking being as high as forty to sixty per cent. It also contributes to some trafficked survivors themselves becoming traffickers.

In most anti-trafficking processes this impact on the mind of the individual is overlooked. The personal tragedy is buried under a plethora of ‘feel good’ activities ranging from conferences, workshops, visitors, short-term financial assistance, celebration of the success of the rescue, judicial activism, etc.

The Journey to Justice may end up being only a journey of silent screams for the survivor. Every player who supports the survivor in this journey has his/her assumptions about the survivor. The space to be heard and make sense of one’s traumatic experience is
Rehabilitation and Prevention

almost non-existent. The process is usually not geared to protect the survivor from retraumatization. Silence pervades the life of a survivor. Silence exists in the midst of chaotic activity of statements to the police, visits to the court, testimonies and cross examinations. The return of the survivor to a state of being able to acknowledge herself as a person is rarely focused upon.

There is also a tokenistic livelihood program and some counselling. Notwithstanding the fact that this activity is perhaps well-intentioned and is trying to return the person to the mainstream of the society, the survivor continues to deteriorate and does not heal.

We started this manual with the story of Tara. This is not one person’s life. This is a story of many realities that many survivors have shared with us. Tara is not any single person whom you may have met, but you may have met many Taras. This is their voice. It is a story of survival. It is a reality which if you and I had to face, we might not have survived. They have. We need to respect their survival.

Let us work with their abilities, and not just their problems.

Let us learn to respect Tara and her rights.

The next time you meet Tara, please stop and think. Please do not be just a face. Stop and think. Stop and feel. Tara is a person, a person not much older than your child. Stop and be with her as a person. For a moment…Please!

Remember, to be able to work with Tara’s reality, you will have to prepare yourself. This manual is a part of that preparation. Thank you for taking time out for this preparation.

Lessons learnt from Tara

Let us see what Tara has told us till now. When you respond to her you have to be aware of the following:

- Trafficking begins with recruitment of the victim of trafficking.
- Recruitment involves lure, deception and/or coercion.
- Even if the victim seems not to protest to the recruitment or later on believes that what she is doing is out of her own choice, this cannot be considered as her consent. Trafficking should be considered to have occurred, even if there is a possibility of consent obtained by lure, deception or coercion.
- The victim is sexually abused even during transit.
- The victim is likely to have been raped and traumatized on multiple occasions. Each instance of trauma maybe relived later. Each traumatic incident maybe stored as a memory that can be triggered by smells, sounds, words, people, questions, colours and any other thing linked to the trauma.
- The victim may end up perceiving that she is somehow responsible for her misery.
- The victim is made to feel that she is under a debt to traffickers.
- The victim cannot trust anyone.
- The victim does not like to be thought of as a victim, but wants to be considered as a person.
- The victim is usually afraid of police. She is often scared about what the police may do to her. She may also have had experiences of witnessing collusion between some police officers and traffickers. She may also have been abused or hurt by some police officers.
- The victim finds the process of rescue threatening and traumatic.
The victim needs to have more information regarding what is going to happen to her after rescue.

The victim is worried about her safety. The victim may lie and not speak against the traffickers because of fear of being hurt or fear of retribution to her children or family.

The victim finds the post rescue medical examination traumatic.

Some victims may not be rescued because of error in estimating age of the victim.

The victims find the court process repetitive and it leads to reliving of traumatic experiences.

The victims want to be heard and treated like a person by those who help them, and not treated like nameless cases.

The victims want to decide what they will do in future.

While there is need to respect the survivor’s need and right to decide for herself, it is also important to recognize that all of us need support to recover from our traumas, it is important to offer the same support to the survivor of trafficking. Survivor of trafficking is a person, with very similar needs that all people have.

II. The First Response to the Survivor

First Response to the victims of the crime of trafficking is a psycho-social response that helps the victim cope with the traumatic impact of the crime. It treats the survivor as a person. It is a response that treats the survivors with dignity. It ensures that they are safe and not harmed further. It informs them about what is going to happen next. It provides for their immediate needs for food, shelter, clothing and any medical complaints.

It is the duty of all people who come in contact with the survivors of trafficking during time of rescue to coordinate their activities into a single way of working, so that all the survivors’ needs and concerns are addressed. A coordinated first response can ensure that the best interest of the survivor is served.

As you are the first person who comes in contact with the survivor of trafficking, your response to her will help restore her sense of trust and security and help her feel in control of her life.

Ideally the first response to the victim should be a multi-disciplinary response. The law enforcement officer is a key part of the team and on most occasions leads such a team. The circumstances of crime and the mental state of the survivors are so complex that the law enforcement team by itself cannot provide an adequate first response. While it is important to seek support from others to ensure a complete first response, it is also essential to ensure that survivors’ safety and well being is not compromised due to delegation of responsibility.

Even today when such multi-disciplinary response is not knit together there are many professionals who come in contact with the survivors after the rescue from the exploitative situation. The survivor is likely to blame law enforcement officers in her mind for hurtful behaviour of any of these professionals. If a medical examination is humiliating it is likely to be attributed to the law enforcement, if the rehabilitation home is not welcoming, it is the law enforcement officers who are blamed.

It is imperative that law enforcement officers are watchful of the rights of the survivors of trafficking. This watchfulness needs to be reflected not only in their own behaviour, but also in the effort that they put into sensitizing and seeking support of other players in the first response. The key people amongst other professionals involved in the first
response are health professionals, counter trafficking NGOs, child welfare committee, the prosecuting team and the judiciary. Law enforcement officers should prepare and rehearse the first response to the victims of crime where there is likely to be a significant psychological impact on the victim.

a. YOU ARE THE DUTY BEARER

You are the upholder of the rights of the survivors. The survivors of trafficking have the following key rights that should form the basis of your first response:

1. The right to be treated with dignity
2. The right to feel safe and not to be harmed
3. The right to have information regarding what is going to happen next
4. The right to have access to resources like food, clothes and shelter
5. The right not to be retraumatised
6. The right not to be criminalized

Even if there is no other resource available, the way you interact with the victim/survivor determines whether these rights are fulfilled or not.

It does not require resources or sanctions, it just requires you.

I. ENSURE HER RIGHT TO BE TREATED WITH DIGNITY

You can ensure her right:

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a. Introduce yourself

Tell her your name, rank and the objective of your interaction

Example:
My name is Ramnath Dinkar. I am a police officer in Danapur Police Station, My team and I have reasons to believe that some women and children are being exploited in this place. We feel that you may be one of the people who were being exploited. My team and I are here to protect you and ensure your safety. We will make sure that no further harm will come to you.

b. Address the person politely as you would address an elder

By addressing the person politely you are treating the person with respect. She has very little experience of being treated with respect in the recent past. This will definitely surprise her and will help build up trust.

Example:
Do let me know if you face any difficulties. My team, members of the NGO and I are all here to help you. If you have any questions or face any difficulties do let us know. We will try to help. Do talk to us.

c. Seek permission

You must make the survivor feel in control of the situation. It helps the survivor feel in control if you seek her permission to begin a conversation with her after you have introduced yourself. It is helpful to seek permission from the person before you sit
d. Validate her anger and fear

Validation is a skill of communication. It involves letting the survivor know that her feelings are justified. It helps build trust between you and the survivor.

Everyone has a right to his or her feelings. So, if a survivor feels angry with her trafficker and feels that she should kill him, it is important for the counter trafficking professional to acknowledge the survivor’s feeling. As a police officer you will obviously not support the survivor’s idea of killing the trafficker, but it is important for the survivor to know that her anger is justified.

Survivors of trafficking want to hear from people who respond to them that what they are feeling is justified. Most survivors of trafficking are extremely angry. When they hear from you that they are not to blame and that what has been done to them was wrong, it makes them feel that someone is actually concerned about their circumstances. This reassures them that they will not be harmed further. If on the contrary they hear and feel that the first response team has a blaming stance towards them, they are likely to feel humiliated and the anger of so many years is transferred on to the first response team and to you as the most important member of that team.

Validation is done through two direct methods by the first response professional:

1. Justifying the survivor’s feeling
2. Expressing the survivor’s feelings on her behalf.

Your response may be something like this:

**Example**

**Situation:** The survivor is extremely angry and is aggressively saying that she will kill the trafficker.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Usual Unhelpful Response</th>
<th>Helpful Response Using Validation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| “What is the point of being angry now? All this is a drama. If you were so angry why did you continue to do what you did? At that time didn’t you think it was fun? Now, you try to convince me that he did this to you” | “I can see that you are extremely angry about what was done to you. What was done to you was wrong and an act of exploitation. Just listening to what was done to you makes me feel angry.

You have experienced it. You are obviously very angry. I know that when one is angry one sees few solutions. Let us discuss what will be the best way to feel that you have been avenged, without hurting yourself further.” |


e. Treat her mistrust as normal

Survivors have experienced betrayal so often that they find it difficult to trust anyone who offers to help them. The automatic and normal response of the survivor is to mistrust you. It is not about you, this is how she feels about everyone.
Rehabilitation and Prevention

Reflect

Here is a task for you.

Imagine, you are blindfolded and you have to cross a busy highway. Someone offers to help you cross it. He holds your hand and then takes you to the middle of the road and leaves you there. Imagine if you were to have experienced this many times. Would you trust the next person who might offer to help you? What would you do? What would anyone else in your position do? They would resist this offer of help. It is normal for them to resist this offer of help.

The same is true of the survivor of trafficking. She has trusted and her trust has been betrayed by people who were the most likely people to protect her. That she mistrusts you is normal. If you want to regain her trust and her ability to trust, then you have to respond to her mistrust with acceptance rather than anger.

Sometimes it is also helpful for people to know how other people would behave in similar situations. This allows them to feel that their response is not inappropriate. This is particularly relevant as most survivors mistrust the police and all people who try to offer help and support. Remember, this is because they have been betrayed so many times that it is difficult to trust. It is not about you. You have to reassure them that it is alright to mistrust you. This acceptance of their mistrust will help them trust you as they see you behaving differently from other people in the past.

If on the other hand you become upset with her silence or her changing her statements repeatedly, you will only increase her reason to mistrust you.

Example:

“I know it is difficult for you to talk to me and trust me right now. This is expected and normal. I would also find it difficult to trust a stranger, especially when I am not sure whether I am safe.

My guess is that you have been through a lot. When I meet other survivors they also want to take their time and be sure about talking to me before they begin to trust me. I think it is alright not to trust me right now.

Do let me know if I can help you in any manner or if you need more information than what I shared with you or if you need clarifications about what I have said.”

The acknowledgement and acceptance of their mistrust allows survivors to be more responsive to the information that is being provided to them.

DO NOT LET ANYONE

Abuse her

Some examples of Abuse:

Touching her, sexual gestures, violence, use of obscene language and looking at her to convey a sexual intention

Label her or call her names

Calling her names like randi (whore), gandinali ka keera( a worm from a drain ), behaya (characterless)

Humiliate her

By blaming her for her predicament

Making fun of her
Being dismissive of her
Being dressed inappropriately like leaving your shirt buttons open
Being too familiar with her
Touching or scratching yourself inappropriately
Staring at her
Leaning forward towards her
Using force
Raising your voice
Pointing fingers at her
Threatening her

II. ENSURE HER RIGHT TO BE SAFE AND NOT BE HARMED AGAIN

It is the right of every person that her safety is ensured when she is with the custodians of law. It is important that you take active steps to be able to ensure that all survivors/victims and their significant others are not exposed to any risk when you make contact with them or when you rescue them. There are certain dos and don’ts to be able to achieve this.

Reflect
Here is a task for you!
Imagine that you are at the site of a fire on the first floor. The fire brigade is still checking whether the fire has spread to other floors or not. What would be your response to people on the other floors? Would you help them come out or would you tell them, “Call me when the fire spreads to your floor.” Also, what would you say to people who have come out of the fire and are standing in the middle of road in front of the building? Would you divert the traffic to make the people in shock safe or would you scold them for not using the footpath?

We all can normally find out what would be a future risk if we look out for it.

DO

a. Make sure all people who are at risk are offered safety

The first rule of preventing further risk is to identify victims as victims. All victims who are left back in exploitative situations or in contact with people who have exploited or harmed them may be left behind for a lifetime of exploitation. Each victim who is not rescued because of an oversight in the rescue process is unlikely to be rescued soon and is destined to continue to spend a significant time in the exploitative situation. Look out for covert signs of who is a victim when you are assigned to a rescue operation.

You must consider whether a person is at risk:
1) All persons under the 18 years of age (definitely)
2) When she is quiet and still
3) She is restless
It is sometimes difficult to judge immediately whether the person is a victim or not. It is useful to err towards considering the person as a victim, even when there is doubt in your mind.

Sometimes there have been instances that some traffickers or people colluding with traffickers have posed as victims and thus have had access to the victims. This may pose a risk to other victims. It is important not to isolate and withdraw support from a person who is potentially a victim due to this reason. Please treat all potential victims as victims, but it is important to continue to be observant about the interactions between the victims. It should be ensured that workers from supporting NGO and peer counsellors are with victims all the time while formalities are being completed. It is a fine balance that needs to be created between watchfulness and trust.

b. Assess Future Risk

All survivors who are rescued from exploitative situations are at further risk to be manipulated, coerced or exploited again. It is your duty to assess this risk and address it. It is similar to a situation where you know that someone has just faced an attempt to murder, where your first responsibility is to ensure that another attempt is not made. You will not leave this victim in the custody of someone who has attempted to murder her or in any situation where the potential perpetrator has access to the victim. The same is true of a survivor of trafficking as she may face a similar risk to her life and safety if she is exposed to traffickers.

1) Do make a list of all the victims/survivors. Reassure them as a group and individually.
2) Ensure that a woman police officer (or a responsible woman member of an NGO) is always with the survivors.
3) Ensure that NGO workers and counsellors are always with the survivors.
4) First, make a statement to the survivors about how at times in the past the victims have sought help when they have been threatened, frightened or worried about their safety or the safety of their loved ones.
5) After making the statement this should be followed by a reassurance that it is the duty of the police to protect them. Also, share with them information about routine measures which are taken to protect victims. This reassurance can also be in the form of a communication through a video of a senior woman police officer (for example a recorded video message by senior person like Ms. Kiran Bedi, India’s
first woman police officer, ensuring the survivor that the police are there to help them). The reassurance can be further reinforced by the NGO workers talking to the survivors who have been rescued.

6) You could also show a video of a survivor in which she shares and explains her own journey to the survivors rescued recently.

7) Ask the victims/survivors whether they feel at risk or if someone significant to them may be at risk.

8) Ask them, from whom they perceive risk to themselves.

9) Make a list of significant people regarding whose safety the survivor is worried.

10) Reassure them that no one amongst the people who have hurt them or who make them feel afraid can reach them.

11) Keep a watch on interactions between the survivors. Understand and assess the risk and take immediate steps to prevent that.

12) Look out for change of behaviour, isolation of some of the survivors or one of the survivors taking charge of all of the others, as all these could be indicators of the survivors’ safety being compromised.

13) As a routine make sure that the alleged traffickers do not have direct or indirect access to the victim.

14) Ensure that they travel in separate vehicles. If your station does not have two vehicles make sure that you use another vehicle, like an ambulance or a vehicle of the NGO. You can also use any private vehicle if there is an emergency.

15) Ensure that the victims do not have to share space or facilities with alleged traffickers. If there is a lack of space it is alright to identify places of safety which can be used at such times. Remember, in a crisis the police bandobast can be moved to any place of safety.

16) Let the survivors be aware of all these measures that you have taken for their safety.

17) Remember, it may be possible for the survivor to directly go to the place of safety for the night, rather than going to the police station.

18) During rescue operations the mobile phone may be used by the traffickers to reach and threaten the victims. The merits of unsupervised access to phone during the immediate circumstances of rescue should be reviewed on a case to case basis.

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**DO NOT**

Allow the traffickers or those who represent the traffickers have any access to the victims/survivors

Threaten to turn over the victims/survivors to the traffickers

Insist on a detailed interview at this stage

Leave behind minors

Do not leave behind survivors’ children or belongings
III. ENSURE HER RIGHT TO INFORMATION ABOUT WHAT IS GOING TO HAPPEN NEXT

All people who are faced with an uncertain stressful situation which affects their lives want to know what will happen to them next. Survivors of trafficking are no different.

Reflect
Imagine that you have pain in your abdomen, and you are immediately rushed to a hospital. The doctor looks at you with a worried face and does not tell you anything. He goes away without saying anything. Another person comes in, draws a blood sample and walks away. Yet another person comes in and takes your blood pressure. Someone comes and applies a sticky substance to your chest, arms and legs and then attaches some wires and just looks at you quizzically for sometime.
Then they tell you to go home. No one tells you anything. You still have the pain in your abdomen.

How would you feel in such a situation?

DO

a. Provide her information regarding the following
You need to give this information in parts so that the survivor can understand it.
Whenever you provide information, do so in the language the survivor is likely to understand. If you do not have access to someone who knows her language, reassure her through signs or pictorial representation. Use short sentences.
Give information before you ask questions. Repeat the information if you think the person may not have understood. Give the person opportunities to ask you questions or clarifications.

1. Who are you?
1. What is the purpose of this activity?
1. Who all are participating in this activity?
1. Inform her that she is not a criminal. No harm will come to her or people dear to her.
1. What all will happen in the next twenty-four hours?
1. What will happen next week?
1. What will happen later?
1. Where are facilities like toilet?
1. Where can they get food, water, some clothes, a blanket or bed sheet if they need?
1. Who do they ask if they want something?
1. Who do they ask if they are not feeling well?
1. Who do they talk to if they are feeling confused, angry, sad or hurt?
1. To whom can they complain if they feel they are being mistreated?
1. Before taking each person for medical examination inform the person about the reason and nature of the medical examination.
Tell them that they have a choice not to undergo tests if they do not want to.
Inform them of the safety measures that you have taken.
Introduce them to the NGO and its personnel.

**DO NOT**

- Give incomplete information
- Make promises that you cannot keep
- Confuse the person with too many details in one go
- Narrate scary stories of negative experiences
- Be dismissive
- Trivialize what survivors are asking and what they are saying
- Sound extremely cheerful and hopeful

The information can be provided in various formats.

- It is useful for the officer in-charge to address the group and introduce his/her colleagues.
- It is also useful for a very senior officer to do a welcome reassurance address. This can be video taped and played back to the survivors.
- The survivors may be provided a one page leaflet giving names of key people that they can contact.

**IV. ENSURE HER RIGHT TO HAVE HER IMMEDIATE NEEDS MET**

Each survivor has some immediate needs. The rescue process takes a significant amount of time. During the process of rescue some of the needs of the survivors may have to be addressed immediately.

- Arrange for a light meal and water.
- Make provisions for toilets.
- You may also need to organize enough clothing for the survivors appropriate for the season.
- It may be useful to arrange for a “welcome kit”, so that the survivors do not need to ask anybody for their basic requirements.
- Advise the victim if she needs to undergo a medical examination for rape or sexual assault

Even if the rescue operation is not able to organize all the things for the survivors, it is your attitude that matters more than the things that may be provided to them. Your attitude must convey, “You are important, your needs are important, and we will do all that we can to help you”.
V. ENSURE HER RIGHT NOT TO BE CRIMINALIZED AND RETRAUMATIZED

a. Do not insist on making the first contact as the evidential interview

It is essential for the law enforcement officers or their NGO associates to interview the survivors very soon after the rescue. But this interview is the first contact interview and should restrict itself to establishing the fact (bare essentials like probable age of the person, issues which require immediate medical attention) and process of trafficking, rather than details and nature of the exploitation. It is alright even if process of trafficking is not established on the basis of the victim’s first statement. There still may be enough material evidence that may be useful in establishing the prima facie fact of trafficking.

The first contact interview is essentially an introduction. It should aim to form a relationship of trust with the survivor. The hurry to treat the first contact interview as the evidential interview is likely to jeopardize the cause of justice that is being pursued. The victims may be traumatized by the process of this hurried interview. The interview may make the survivor revisit the details of her traumatic experiences. This is unnecessary and should definitely be avoided.

The list of what may be explored in the first contact meeting is mentioned below. This is the outer limit of what may be explored. This should be done after giving the survivor information, reassuring her, giving her time to settle down, validating her anger and normalizing her mistrust as mentioned above:

1. Name: The survivor may not reveal her true name till much later in the process. We should accept it as normal.
2. Age: The survivor may have been tutored to say that she is an adult whereas she is not. Rather than confronting what she is saying just document the possibility of her age being lower in your view and treat her as you would treat a child in need of care and protection using the provisions of Juvenile Justice Act.
3. Nationality: Even if the child is not an Indian national she needs to be recognized as a child in need of care and protection. In case of the survivor being an adult the provisions of international covenants on human rights, trafficking, organized crime and victim assistance should be used to provide support and care as a victim of trafficking, as opposed to making her answerable to the charge of illegal immigration.
4. Family
5. Any significant others

One can also explore the following in a non-threatening manner:

1. Which city has the survivor come from?
2. When did the survivor come to the present living arrangements?
3. Who accompanied the survivor when she first came?
4. Were any promises made to her when she came?
5. What were the means of transport that were used to bring her to this place?
6. How did she spend her time in the present situation?
7. What was her typical day like?
8. Has she visited other parts of the city?
Were there any restrictions on her movement?

What would she do if she became unwell?

What used to happen if people who were managing the place were unhappy with her?

What made her feel happy in the present circumstances?

What made her feel sad or angry?

Each question needs to be built into a conversation and the person asking the question should not insist on the answer. This is an exploratory interaction, not an interview for the purposes of evidence. This definitely is not an interrogation. It is important not to confront the survivor.

The first contact meeting should be closed by thanking the survivor for her help and a reassurance to ensure her safety. The person conducting the first contact interview should give his/her contact details to the survivor.

The first contact meeting should be documented and made a part of the case diary.

b. Do not insist on the survivor being the complainant

It is normally believed by the investigators that if the survivor is herself the complainant the evidence becomes more credible. However, this needs to be weighed against the fact that if the survivor were to be the complainant her life and her healing process would have to wait for the closure of the case. She would be reminded of her traumatic experiences for a long time after the rescue. She would also remain under the threat from traffickers as they might try to subvert the cause of justice by threatening her. There are many other possible people who can be complainants in the FIR. The list of these people is outlined in the standard operating protocols for the police published in this series by UNODC.

Remember! The Survivor may not agree to be a witness

Your investigation to establish the crime of trafficking can be based on material evidence and testimonial evidence. One of the key testimonial witnesses is the victim/survivor herself. All witnesses have a right to be informed about the process, advantages and disadvantages of being a witness. Sometimes the survivor may feel unable to be a witness. It is alright at this time not to pressurize the survivor. Give her time. She may change her mind over the next month after being at a safe place for some time and spending time with the NGO workers.

There is a misperception that if the survivors’ statement is not obtained within twenty four hours it will be difficult to get custody of the alleged traffickers. It is important to recognize that early evidential interview may contribute to the victim changing her statement later and this can lead to a question of the veracity of the statement. It is best to allow a period of reflection and settling to the victim/survivor and then conduct the evidential interview.

c. Do not charge her as the perpetrator of the crime

For many years the victims of sex trafficking have been charged as themselves being the perpetrators of crime. This has been an unfortunate practice and is against the principles of natural justice. It is like blaming them for their exploitation. Here is an analogy to help reinforce why the victim should never be seen as a criminal for the acts that she may have done during the time she was being exploited.
Rehabilitation and Prevention

Reflect

If I am forced to drink alcohol and then I am forced at gun point to drive a car, if I cannot keep the car straight on the road and end up hitting someone because of the fear of the gun and the influence of alcohol, can I be held responsible for the accident? I have driven the car in a risky and dangerous manner knowing that I might hurt someone, but I have done so under threat to my life.

Similarly a survivor may have been forced to migrate in an illegal manner, solicit customers, live off the earnings of her own sexual exploitation and forced to harm other survivors like herself, but the overriding factor determining all these acts is the overt or covert threat or coercion which has influenced her during all this time. It would be unfair and unjust to view her as a criminal in this process.

The criminalization of survivors will only lead to furtherance of crimes like these, as the traffickers will be able to use the threat of the police to keep the survivors quiet and remain caught in the cycle of exploitation.

The criminalization will also compound the trauma that the survivor has faced in her life. One more time in her life someone with the role of protecting her would have betrayed and harmed her. It is difficult to survive when people who are likely to harm you cause harm to you, but it is more difficult to survive when people who have the duty to protect you end up harming you instead. Criminalizing the survivor is pushing them to be retrafficked. Make sure you do not end up colluding with traffickers inadvertently.

C) Common Obstacles in First Response

Where is the time?

Commonly what comes in the way of survivors’ rights being addressed is the issue of time. Most police officers are overworked. They have to fulfill a number of investigative and law and order duties. Also police officers consider apprehending the suspect as their primary duty. The argument for counter-trafficking work is that this helps not only the present victim but further potential victims as well. Lack of time is a real difficulty but victim care is a duty that cannot wait.

She is not a victim!

The second common obstacle in responding to these rights is the way one perceives the victim. Some police officers may have a moral viewpoint about ‘prostitution’ and in their mind may blame the victim for her behaviour. Some other police officer may be of the view that the person had consented to the “work” that she was doing and thus she cannot be seen as someone who has been exploited. There are many instances where police officers were more likely to wrongly charge the victim with the crime of soliciting or living off the earnings of prostitution, rather than charge the traffickers.

After due deliberation and collation of experience, national and international laws consider survivors of trafficking as victims who need to be supported and protected, and not criminalized.

It is imperative that you are able to challenge your assumptions and stereotypes about the survivor.

She is a human being who has been traumatized and is a victim of a multiple crimes. She needs your sensitivity and empathy.
A coordinated first response to the survivor involves many professionals of different background and ensures that the survivor is safe and treated with dignity.

A law enforcement officer is the most visible and important part of the team and inevitably the first respondent. Law enforcement officers have to ensure that not only they but others also protect the rights of the survivors. Law enforcement officers must seek collaboration of NGO partners, health professionals, child care protection professionals and any other professionals who come in contact with the survivors.

The first response must work towards building a relationship with the survivor. This involves informing and reassuring the survivor about what happens to them, justifying their anger and acknowledging mistrust that the survivor may hold.

The survivor should be treated as the victim of a crime, protected from further exploitation and trauma.

The survivor should not be forced to be the complainant.

The survivor should not be criminalized.

The initial contact with the survivor should not be used as an opportunity for an evidentiary interview. She should be given the space to be able to reflect on the events and calm down. The first response is about beginning a process of recovery and journey to justice. The first response is the time to protect your most important witness and not antagonize or traumatize her.

### III. What are Mental Health Interventions? What is required for the person to heal?

#### a. What is not counselling?

First let us focus on what is not counselling.

At present most interventions which go by the name of counselling are at best advice to the survivor to change her behavior, and at worst, outright violation of the rights of the survivor.

The following paragraphs describe some examples of what is not counselling.

**Counselling before rescue**

A decoy customer forms a relationship with a survivor. He does not share with her the real purpose of his visit. He tries to influence her decision regarding being away from the brothel. He lures her with the promise of providing a source of support in her life.

This is not counselling. It may be an action done with the intent of helping a survivor escape the exploitation, but it is not counselling. It is a relationship in which the survivor has no control and no information. It makes the survivor dependent on the rescuer and makes her indebted to him.

There is also a chance of feeling rejected in such a relationship. What if the survivor were to actually start believing that the decoy customer has a special relationship with her? What if the decoy customer seeks a personal gain from the relationship? What are the checks and balances?

**Counselling at a police station**

Advice given by the police constable regarding what to say and what not to say in the first information report is not counselling. It is a threat.
Counselling before the medical examination

The doctor tells the survivor, “Why do you do this bad business? Now that the police have rescued you, you must use the opportunity to mend your ways. Nice girls do not do such things.”

This doctor is actually retraumatizing her. There is an assumption that she had control over what was being done to her. He is also labeling her as ‘bad’.

Counselling at the Government home

On finding a Salman Khan poster in the survivor’s bag, the counsellor tells her, before slapping her, “You will never change till you are taught a lesson. You were born of bad parents. You only want sex. You should not have hot things. You are a worm from the dirtiest drain.”

Counselling at an NGO home

The leader of the NGO home ‘counsels’ the survivor, “We did so much for you. You backed out of giving the evidence at the last moment. Why did you do this? If you had told me that you would not give the evidence, we would have made sure that you did not have to go to the court.”

This conversation is about blaming the survivor. There is an expectation of a certain behavior and there is a provocation of guilt for not doing what was expected. Of course, if the survivor had shared that she did not want to go to court for giving the evidence, things would not have been any different. There would have been pressure on her from all concerned, her fears would not have been heard and she might have felt as helpless as she did in her past experiences.

The counsellor at the NGO home counsels the survivor, “I understand your pain. Now you have to do ‘anger workout’. All your anger will flow out. You have to take this stick and beat the cushion. Your pain will be over.”

Sometimes such simplistic methods from popular psychology books or from repertoires of faith healers are more harmful than helpful. They create a hope of magical recovery. When the survivor continues to feel the same way as she did before the ‘cure’, she tends to blame herself and label herself as ‘inadequate’.

The leader at an NGO home called a psychologist at Saarthak about a survivor. The complaint was about a survivor who had been violent. On further enquiry it was found out that this survivor had broken the door of the toilet, where she had been locked because she had an outburst of anger. The leader of the NGO demanded, “This girl needs counselling. She has created too many problems for us. Please come and counsel her immediately. Her behavior must change quickly.”

Unfortunately counselling is not a magical wand which changes people. It is also important that in a hurry to counsel the child, we do not forget that most of the time it is the child’s context that is precipitating a response, which is then labeled as a negative behavior. After a few such incidents the child is called a ‘problem child’ and all the other information about the child becomes secondary. By not analyzing the systemic causes for the child’s problems, we may end up hurting the child and not helping her.

b. What is counseling / what are mental health interventions?

Mental Health like health is an inherent need of all human beings and should thus be seen as a right.
Mental Health is a description of the way people think, feel and act.

A **positive state of mental health** is defined by people’s ability to view themselves, their relationships, their resources and their vulnerabilities in a reasonable and adaptive manner. It includes the ability to relate, to solve problems, set goals and work towards achieving them through various multiple alternative paths of accessing resources and addressing limitations. The impact of this adaptive view of self and surroundings is a
subjective sense of well-being. This sense of well-being further reinforces the positive state of mental health.

The operational point of all vulnerability of people is their mental health.

Trafficking, rape, violence, homelessness, drugs, HIV, gender biases, poverty, riots and disasters all impact people by impacting the way they think, feel and act.

When an individual gets overwhelmed by disadvantages, it is due to the impact on the way she views herself. For example, a child who has been sexually abused may think of herself as being responsible for abuse or the farmer who finds himself in a debt-trap may think that there is no future, and attempts to commit suicide or sell his daughter to cope with the lack of options.

At other times negative state of mental health may make the person not access the resources that will help him or her to cope with the vulnerabilities that he or she faces. So, if someone thinks of herself negatively because she has been told repetitively that she is ‘good for nothing’, inspite of many reassurances that she is capable and she can be independent, she is unlikely to be able to use the income generation program.

To be able to access resources of help when one is vulnerable, one has to have belief in oneself. This belief in oneself is challenged. Unless there are efforts to address the mental health impact of vulnerability, most programs of empowerment and participation cannot achieve their objectives fully.

c. What is required to enable the survivor to heal?

A survivor needs the following to be able to heal and have a positive mental health.

Mental health, however, is often confused with presence or absence of mental illness. Given the stigma attached to mental illness, mental health interventions in most programs either ignore mental health needs of the person or address them through a euphemistic process of counselling or psychosocial interventions. Counselling further gets confused with ‘providing information’ or ‘correcting people’s behavior’.

Mental health Interventions for a survivor of trafficking include:

1. A process of creating an enabling environment
2. A process of forming safe and therapeutic relationships
3. Processes of helping the person recover from unhelpful thoughts and feelings and recognize her abilities.

Mental Health Interventions
An **enabling environment** that helps the person:

1. By providing opportunities to experience an identity beyond being a survivor
2. By providing relationships that are not based on the principle of give and take (non-expectant), non-abusive and non-directive
3. By helping people have a voice in shaping their future
4. By providing opportunities to all survivors according to their needs and abilities
5. By providing information to survivors regarding community resources which can help them in fulfilling their needs
6. By enhancing skills of the survivors to help them achieve their full potential

**Safe and trustworthy professional relationships** which ensure that:

1. There is no further abuse, neglect or maltreatment
2. Confidentiality is maintained
3. There is no retraumatization by probing and reminding the survivors about the past over and over again
4. No blame is assigned to the survivors for their experiences
5. There is a validation of the survivors’ feelings, and not dismissal of the survivors in an arbitrary manner
6. Realistic goals are set in a collaborative manner
7. There is enhancement of the survivor’s skills
8. There is no pressure on the survivor to be an advocate for the cause of survivors

Counselling processes that can help the survivors recover and recognize their abilities by learning the following skills:

1. Skills to make sense of their experiences of the past
2. Skills to participate in experiences that allow them to see themselves beyond their experience of trafficking
3. Skills to challenge their negative thought patterns which arise due to the trauma faced by them
4. Skills to cope with difficult situations in the present and in future
5. Skills to ensure that they can make informed choices about their future

**Remember, Individual Counselling Interventions succeed only if the survivor is in an Enabling Environment**

All helping processes (like rescue by police, rehabilitation, judicial process etc.) for the survivor must follow basic principles of counselling

1. Encourage the person to talk by creating safe boundaries
2. Listen in a non-judgmental manner
3. Validate
4. Assess and prevent danger of further abuse
5. Assess and prevent retraumatization
6. Document
7. Provide Support, treatment and referral
IV. Therapeutic Assessments and Interventions

a) Conceptual framework for Mental Health Interventions

The Conceptual Framework for Mental Health Interventions

This section covers the following topics:
1. The rights of the survivors
2. Cognitive Behavior Therapy
3. Systems Theory
4. Overview of Individual Interventions

i) Conceptual framework

In this manual an attempt has been made to make the process of healing predictable. This manual is based on a model of therapeutic interventions that the Saarthak team has been using for the last four years while working with the survivors of trafficking. This model is based on the following conceptual framework:

1. Human Rights of Survivors
2. Cognitive Behavior Therapy
3. Systems Theory

Human rights of survivors

Survivors should be viewed as people, people who have rights. The basic principle of this model is that rights are rights, even if they are infringed.

All interventions must be measured on the scale of their ability to protect and ensure the rights of the survivor.

1. They have a right to dignity
2. They have a right not to be re-traumatized
3. They have a right to confidentiality
4. They have a right to judicial redress
5. They also have a right to access to trained care and protection professionals who can facilitate their healing
6. They have a right to self-determination and participation
7. They have right to choices
8. They have a right to information
9. They have a right to education, shelter, health and vocation

Counselling process is a service being delivered to the survivor. It is not a favour being done by one individual to another. The survivor has some rights in counselling relationships. These are rights. They exist even when they are infringed. They cannot be compromised.

Where there are rights there are duty bearers. The counsellor is a duty bearer for the survivor and so are the police, the judiciary, the government, care and protection programs, non-governmental organization, the family and the community. It is the

...
counsellor’s duty not only to provide a therapeutic space for the survivor, but also ensure that other duty bearers are sensitized to the best interest of the survivor, and do not put in place processes that are retraumatizing for the survivor.

**Cognitive Behavior Therapy**

There are two kinds of therapy. The first type of therapy focuses on the ‘*why and how*’ of the problems faced by people i.e., the focus is on understanding events in the past and it is thought that by revisiting these events the pain arising from them will somehow decrease.

The other therapy called Cognitive Behavior Therapy recognizes the reality of the survivors, and helps them find solutions for the difficulties that they are facing. Cognitive Behavior Therapy is a ‘*now and how*’ method. It accepts that some experiences have been difficult. It assesses the impact of these experiences on the thoughts, feelings and actions of the person. It helps them understand this impact and discover methods of coping with it and mitigating it.

Cognitive Behavior Therapy is the process of managing unhelpful thoughts, feelings and actions. It is a collaborative process in which the process of therapy is shared with the survivor and the therapist does not enjoy any power due to a ‘mystical’ process of therapy.

The process requires the survivor to acquire the skills to **discover a pattern of their behavior and feelings.**

The survivors then **understand the thoughts underlying these feelings and behavior.** Once they identify the patterns of unhelpful thoughts, they can learn ways of challenging them.

This method of **challenging unhelpful thoughts** allows the survivors to access resources for achieving their potential, put the past in perspective and see themselves as persons beyond the experience of trafficking.

They **regain the capacity of being able to trust themselves** and can challenge the process of blaming themselves. They can see and plan a future. They can gather information and make choices by analyzing the information.

**The most important part of therapy is the belief that they have been in control of the process,** rather than being dependent on someone else. This belief and the skills they acquire allows them to cope with challenges that they may face later in life.

Cognitive Behavior Therapy is the most researched and most commonly used technique for helping people who are facing difficult circumstances. This is the most practiced method of psychotherapy nowadays.

1. It helps people discover their way of thinking.
2. It helps them challenge their unhelpful thoughts about themselves and the future.
3. It helps them recognize that these thoughts are a result of their past experiences, and may not be valid for their present circumstances.
Rehabilitation and Prevention

**Process of Cognitive Behaviour Therapy**

Discover the links between thoughts feelings and actions

Allow one to have experiences that challenge the past negative thoughts

Challenge negative thought and see how they arise from past experiences

Identify the ways of thinking, feeling and actions that are unhelpful

Replace the unhelpful thoughts and actions with helpful thoughts and actions

**Systems Theory**

An individual does not live in a vacuum but is a part of a system.

A system is sum of many individual components and their interactions which work towards a common objective. A system has abilities and characteristics more than its parts. A system is in constant interaction with other systems around it and is affected by changes in them. A system also affects other systems which are interacting with it.

Individuals are a part of systems like a family, an organization, a society and a world. This world around them impacts them, just as they impact their world. Sometimes the individual is denied the power to impact his or her world. This renders them helpless. It is therefore important to work with the system around the survivor so as to enable her participation in it.

**Systems Theory and Mental Health Interventions**

As applied in this model of mental health interventions, Systems Theory implies that:

1. **Impact of Context**: The context and the environment of a person have a significant impact on the person’s thoughts, feelings and actions. It determines people’s response to difficulties faced by them, and influences their recovery.

2. **Impact of Care Practices**: The model emphasizes that all care practices should be evaluated for their potential to have a negative impact the survivor.

3. **Integration of Care Practices**: All care practices should be directed so that they work in harmony with individual interventions and therefore have a significant impact on the recovery of the individual.

4. **Changing the Survivor’s Response**: Systems Theory also sees the survivors having the ability to influence the system by changing their response from the response of a victim to the response of a survivor. A victim is seen as a helpless recipient to be saved by the system. It gives the system a choice of rejecting the victim’s needs...
as unnecessary. A survivor is someone who is a person, who has rights and even though her rights may be infringed and denied, the rights remain rights.

ii) An Overview of Individual Interventions

The following cycle is a framework of stages of individual interventions for survivors of trafficking. The following chapters will acquaint you with the skills and process of the interventions.

The stages described in the following diagram are not linear and at times overlap each other. Some stages like building trust, ensuring safe boundaries and assessment of needs are continuous processes. The process therefore should be seen as many parallel processes.

The treatment goals for the individual interventions vary from one person to another, but the range of goals is described here.

Individual interventions can be seen as the following five parallel processes:

**Overview of Individual Interventions**

- **Forming therapeutic relationships**
  - This is done through seeking permission, creating safe boundaries and sharing information to make the intervention predictable.

- **Understanding and assessing the person, the problem and the context**
  - It is important to understand and assess the person’s needs, feelings, thoughts and actions. It is equally important to understand their problems and the context. Understanding can be done by using the skills of observation, listening, and clarification.

- **Making Sense**
  - This includes helping the survivors understand their past experiences and the impact which the experiences had on them. This phase of individual interventions allows the survivors to see their traumatic experiences as a part of their reality, and not the only reality.
Rehabilitation and Prevention

Outgrowing the Pain

This includes helping the survivor learn skills to set goals for themselves and to be able to resolve the difficulties that they face in achieving these goals. This also includes the survivor being able to learn to challenge any negative thoughts that she may have about herself or her future.

Closure

Therapy is not an endless process. Closure of therapy is an important part of therapy and begins almost as soon as therapy starts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Treatment Goals for Individual Mental Health Interventions for Survivors of Trafficking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Assist in regaining control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Assist in reconciling with the past</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Assist in redefining self and identity</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Developing a sense of mastery and competence</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Assist in planning the future</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Assist in challenging automatic negative thoughts, feelings and unhelpful behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Assist in challenging permanent negative thoughts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Assist in managing a difficult context</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Advocate for change</td>
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</table>

Before you start to learn new skills, it is helpful to consolidate your existing skills. The next section is a brief summary of skills of listening and forming a relationship with the survivor.

b) You are the Guide, not the Traveler

This section covers the following topics:

| 1. What is a therapeutic relationship |
| 2. Steps in forming a therapeutic relationship |
| 3. Skills of forming a therapeutic relationship |
|   - Being Empathetic |
|   - Being Non-judgmental |
|   - Listening skills |

The process of recovery of a survivor is a process of guided discovery. You know the path of recovery and at times you may also be familiar with solutions. But the survivors need to have a sense of control in their lives. The survivors have not experienced control or dignity for a long time. They have stopped expecting it, but they do need it. It is also their right. The relationship with you offers this opportunity for them to have the experience of someone treating them differently.

The nature of the relationship that you have with the survivor probably has more of a potential of helping them, than the skills you could teach them.

This chapter describes the dimensions of a therapeutic relationship and methods of achieving the same.
i. The therapeutic relationship

A therapeutic relationship is a relationship that heals. It is a safe relationship.

It is different from friendship. It is not a parent child relationship.

It has some characteristics:

1. It ensures that the survivor is treated with dignity and respect.
2. This is a relationship of equality, without a hierarchy.
3. It leaves control in the hands of the survivor.
4. It allows the survivor to use the space of the relationship as she or he wants it. The therapist does not use the space for his or her own needs. There is no personal gain for the therapist.
5. It is consistent and predictable.
6. There is no expectation in the relationship from the survivor.
7. It provides information to the survivor and enables her to exercise her rights.

Steps in forming a therapeutic relationship

1. Introducing yourself
2. Seeking permission
3. Assuring the survivor about confidentiality
4. Sharing the process of counselling and clarifying the survivors doubts about the process

Introducing yourself

Chances are that you will have some knowledge about the survivor before she comes to know you. This establishes a sense of hierarchy of information which needs to be demolished immediately.

You must begin by introducing yourself. Tell them about your role in the organization. Tell them how you communicate with other members of the team and how your role will overlap with the roles of other team members. If your organization has an induction process, you must make sure that the role of the counsellor is clearly outlined in that process.

Remember, you have one definite role apart from the role of the therapist that you are about to begin. Your role is to be the person who keeps a watch on all care and support processes, and helps the team members keep the focus on survivors’ rights.

You have to ensure that processes, even inadvertently, do not dilute the survivors’ voice, do not violate their dignity and help them achieve their goals completely. If you see the processes not being in the best interest of the survivors, it is your role to ‘push back’ and question the system.

Example

“My name is Bharti. I work with Saarthak. Saarthak helps people who have gone through difficult circumstances in life to achieve what they want to in life. We do so by learning about people’s experiences and needs. We help them discover their own solutions to their problems. I would like to spend time with you so that I can explain to you what we can do together…”
Seeking Permission

It is important to seek the survivors’ permission to begin therapy. The survivors need to know that they have an option to say ‘no’. During the process of induction, peers who befriend them should be able to explain to them the benefits and difficulties of therapy, so that they are able to make an informed choice about it.

Example continued

“Is it alright for me to sit down with you for some time? I would like to explain to you how I work and how that may help you. Then you can think about it. You have a choice whether you want to work with me or not. If you do not think that you want to work with me, it is alright and there will be other ways of help that will be available.”

Assuring the survivor about confidentiality

You must assure the survivor that any information shared by her with you during therapy will remain confidential i.e., it will be shared by you only with the helping team. You must inform her that you work with other team members and it is important for the information to be shared with significant team members.

The issue of confidentiality leads to several difficulties between the counselling team and other care and support team. The organization should have a clearly documented confidentiality policy. The counsellor should not be seen as someone who nurtures power for herself/himself by not sharing vital information about the survivor. The care and support staff is equally responsible for the care of the survivor, and it is important for the information to be shared.

The difficulty arises when the survivor has a conflict with one of the care and support team members and she does not want this person to know about her difficulties. In such a situation it is important to have a team meeting to decide what is appropriate to share and what is not. The team should be mature enough not to take this request for confidentiality as a personal affront.

Another difficulty arises when the organization that is providing care and support is also a well recognized advocacy organization for anti-trafficking. The mere mention of a relationship between the survivor and the organization reveals the history of the person. Though it would be ideal to have organizations with different roles, it is seldom possible. It must then be imperative that there is no difference in the way in which survivors and staff are introduced to the outside world. This is likely to decrease the chances of assumptions regarding the survivor.

Example continued

“We work together as a team in Saarthak. We make sure that what you share remains between you and the Saarthak team. It is your right that your experiences are not shared with anyone else but the team.

There are two reasons why we share it among the team members. The first is that there will be many people supporting you. Beena will work in court with you because she is good at that. Shweta will make arrangements for you to go back to Nepal, if you want to.

I will help you to learn to decrease the distress caused by the problems from the past so that you can start planning for a future, without the thoughts and feelings of the past bothering you. Ratna will try to help you find work, if you want to. So, as all of us will work together, it will be important for us to know you and your difficulties.
The second reason is that there could be times when I may not be here. I may go somewhere for some work or I may be on leave. I go away for at least two to three weeks in a year. It is important for you to have someone to talk to when I am not here.

When you talk to me you may tell me some details of your problems. Everyone does not need to know all the details. If there are some details that you do not want to be shared, do let me know. We can discuss what needs to be told to others which would be helpful.”

Sharing the process of counselling and clarifying the survivors’ doubts about the process

It is important to make the process of therapy predictable for the survivors.

1. They need to know **what to expect**.
2. They need to know the **purpose** of what is being done.
3. They also need to be able to **set goals** for themselves and determine the pace of therapy.

The following example is one way of describing how the therapy works; it is not the only way.

1. You could modify the information and make it more understandable for the survivor.
2. Please use examples which the survivor can understand.
3. The information given here may be too much for the survivor to understand at one time. Please divide it appropriately over periods of time.

**Example**

**You:** Let me share with you how I work and how it may help you.

When people go through difficult times, it affects their thoughts and feelings. Let us take an example. When Anjali is angry and does not talk to Shweta, what happens to Shweta? She does not like it and feels sad… If we asked Shweta what made her sad, what would she say?…She might say that she thinks that Anjali does not like her. So, if a small thing like Anjali becoming angry can affect her, there could be so many other difficult experiences that she might have had, that could also affect her thoughts and feelings.

So, what we do together is we talk about these difficulties and thoughts. By talking about them we feel better. Then we can discuss these difficulties with someone and find out how to deal with them, so that we do not remain upset because of them.

**Deepa:** So, we will only talk about the past?

**You:** Sometimes we go through many difficulties and thoughts for a long time. This changes the way we view the world. We start feeling negatively about ourselves, about the future and we think that others think negatively of us. This makes us feel sad and unhappy. As so many people have been bad to us, we find it difficult to believe that there are people who may not be bad. We also find it difficult to try new things and make new friends.

Therapy is a way of learning from past experiences. It is not a way of forgetting past things. What has happened is difficult to forget. It is a part of us. Therapy is a way of decreasing the negative effect of past events on future life.
Deepa: When therapy is over, will I start thinking differently.

You: It is also a way of learning new skills to cope with any future problems that we may have. Therapy is not magic. It does not change life suddenly. It is gradual. It only helps us cope with life differently, so that we can achieve what we want to.

Deepa: You are like my friend?

You: This is slightly different from a friendship. If a friend was helping you do this, then she might also expect something from you, like she might want you to listen to her problems. I will not expect that from you. I will not do that. It is not that you cannot help me. If I were to share my problems with you, our focus would shift to me and that would come in the way of finding solutions to your problems. Also, if I became your friend then it might be that I would not be neutral about what I say to you.

You need help from someone who does not expect you to be a particular way, someone who does not tell you what to do, who lets you make your own choices and who allows you to be yourself.

As your therapist, I will make sure that you review the choices that you make and you look at the advantages and disadvantages of your decisions. But I will not tell you what to do.

The time we spend together is your time. I will not use that time for myself. My role is to help you discover your thoughts and feelings, help you understand your problems and discover your solutions.

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ii. Skills of forming therapeutic relationships

The foundation of such a relationship is based on three skills:

1. Being Empathetic
2. Being Non-Judgmental
3. Skills of listening

Being Empathetic

Everyone has different feelings. People can have different feelings and thoughts, even when they have the same experiences. This is so because people view their new experiences based on the permanent thoughts that they have developed because of the past experiences.

To be able to understand people, one has to understand their feelings and their thoughts. This requires us to have the skills to be able to downplay the ‘noise’ in our mind that we have from our own thoughts about them.

This skill to be able to accurately understand the survivors’ thoughts and feelings is called empathy. **Empathy is the counsellor’s skill to match his or her feelings and thoughts with those of the survivor.**

In a counselling situation you will have three kinds of thoughts and feelings:

1) You will have thoughts and feelings about *your own circumstances and problems*
2) You will have thoughts and feelings about the *survivor’s situation*
3) You will have the *knowledge of what survivors’ think and feel* about their own situation.
The first two kinds of thoughts and feelings come in the way of identifying and understanding the third. However, the third kind of thoughts and feelings i.e., **accurate knowledge of the survivor’s thoughts and feelings, is the most important skill for working with the survivor**.

Let us understand this through an example:

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**Example**

A woman is facing violence at home. She is being hurt repeatedly by her husband. When you hear about her, you may feel angry that she is being hurt by her husband. This would be *your* feeling about her situation, not *her* feeling. She may be angry, hurt, helpless and confused.

**In order for you to be able to help her, you would need to know all the feelings that she is experiencing. This is empathy.**

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**Counsellors have their own thoughts and feelings about their own life situations**

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**Counsellors also have thoughts and feelings about the survivor’s situation**

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**Counsellors also have to identify the actual thoughts and feelings that the survivor has about her (survivor’s) situation**
Empathy makes a relationship authentic and is the basis of all therapeutic help.

**Steps to be empathetic**

1. Know your own difficulties and preoccupations, and seek support for them.
2. Know the patterns of your thoughts and feelings (Please refer to Annexure I called Reflect. You could use it to get to know yourself better.)
3. Listening actively.
4. Modulating your tone, gestures and posture to match those of the survivor.
5. Expressing what you feel through a skill of reflection, so as to let the survivor know that you are trying to match her feelings and thoughts.

**Being Non-judgmental**

It is human nature to judge. All of us think in terms of good and bad, right and wrong. We all do. We have opinions about people and their behavior. Some of these opinions are formed due to social experiences and learning, and others are formed by our personal experiences.

When we are in new situations or meet new people, we evaluate them based on our past experiences. In some situations, especially when we have strong opinions, we evaluate quickly, without waiting for all the information. We evaluate and judge people and situations by generalizing and making assumptions about them. The process of being judgmental is automatic and quick. We do not even realize that we have made a judgment.

**Common Judgments**

**Judgments about gender roles**

1. Men who cry are weak
2. Men who talk like women are homosexual
3. Men should be able to take on anything
4. Men cannot control their sexual urges
5. Women who wear short dresses are demanding sex
6. Women who smoke and drink are of questionable character
7. Women who do not try to adjust with their families are cruel
8. Women who live on their own are ‘easy’

**Judgments about socio-economic class**

1. People who drive big cars are educated
2. People who are fat are rich
3. Rich people cannot work on social issues
4. Poor people will do anything for money
5. Poor people cannot make decisions about their lives
6. Only poor people are violent to women

There could also be judgments about ethnicity, professions, differences in behavior, religion and sexuality.
Making judgments can be very unhelpful in counselling situations. A judgment will change your behavior towards the survivor and make it difficult for you to form a relationship with him/her. However, you will certainly form some judgments. **It is therefore necessary to learn to identify the judgments as soon as you make them, and also learn to challenge them.** This will decrease the risk of judgments affecting your relationship with the survivor or the survivor being harmed by your judgments.

**Steps to know and Challenge our judgments**

1. Acknowledge that you can be judgmental.
2. The best way not to be judgmental is to know your social and personal judgments.
3. The second most important way to be non-judgmental is to look for early signs of being judgmental. To know your personal judgments:
   1. Make a list of things about which you have strong opinions.
   2. Divide the list into three different sheets of paper.
      1. *One:* things you can share with everyone
      2. *Two:* things you can share but would want to be anonymous
      3. *Three:* things you cannot share, even anonymously

**Early identification of judgments**

You may be being judgmental in situations:

1. When you have extreme feelings
2. When you are using strong adjectives
3. When you are avoiding situations or people
4. When you have a fixed response to a group of people, whatever the situation may be
5. When you are being very persistent

**Challenging your judgments**

You can challenge your judgments about people by asking yourself the following questions:

1. What is the evidence for what I am thinking about this person?
2. Is my opinion based on some past experiences with similar people?
3. What is the impact of my judgment on the survivor with whom I am working?
4. Is my judgment helpful for the survivor?
5. What can I do differently with this person, so that I do not repeat the same judgment with her next time?

**iii. Skills of listening and clarifying**

To know a person one has to listen and clarify.

Listening and clarifying are skills. Though all of us listen, there is a way in which the counsellor listens, that makes sure that the other person gets the time and space to say what she or he wants to, without being influenced by the counsellor’s opinions, likes or dislikes.
Rehabilitation and Prevention

The objective of learning certain skills of listening is to be able to:

1. Learn more about survivors, their problems and their context
2. Help the survivors express their feelings
3. Convey a sense of togetherness and empathy to the survivors
4. Help the survivors feel that they are in control and respected
5. Help the survivors discover patterns in their thoughts, feelings and actions
6. Help the survivors discover patterns in their problems
7. Help the survivors discover solutions to their problems

Initially, when counsellors start using the skills of listening, it seems to them that this is an artificial way of talking. However, eventually, as the counsellors are able to practice the skills and these skills become more integrated into their way of working, the interaction with the survivor becomes like any other conversation, but it ensures that above mentioned objectives are achieved.

Listening Skills

The key skills of listening include:

1. Show that you are listening
2. Summarizing
3. Paraphrasing
4. Reflection
5. Validation

Show that you are listening

It is important for people to know that you are listening. This can be done through small gestures, posture and some affirmative sounds. However, the timing is important. If used at the wrong time in the conversation or done in a repetitive mechanical manner, these efforts backfire and actually make the survivor feel that you are not listening.

Summarizing

If you repeat briefly what you have heard from the survivor at appropriate intervals, the survivor recognizes that you are listening. After summarizing, if you confirm with the survivor if you have missed out anything that she had said or if you had misunderstood what she had said, it will give her an opportunity to clarify and add to what you have understood. It also gives her a sense of control.

Summarizing is an easy skill and new counsellors tend to overuse it. It makes you feel skillful if you use it, but if it is used too often it hampers the flow of the conversation.

Here are some suggestions where using summarizing will be appropriate.

1. When the survivor has shared a lot of information that spans a long period of her life
Interpersonal Communication Skills

**Example**

“You have shared some very significant experiences with me. Let me see if I have heard it right. You talked about your experiences as a child when your mother had to go to work and you were left with your aunt who was hurtful to you. Then you mentioned the time when you started going to school and how you were a quiet child and felt left out of what others were doing. You then talked about one particular difficult event in your life when your uncle verbally abused you and you got extremely angry with him. After this you described your current life situation where you feel that at work no one likes you.

I may have missed out some facts that you said. Do let me know if I have heard you correctly.”

When you want to structure the session more and focus on a new area that the survivor has not talked about, you can summarize the conversation till then and explore the new area.

**Example**

You: Till now you have shared with me how badly the police behaved with you. I have to talk to you about what will happen in the court tomorrow. So, can I briefly remind myself about what you have told me about the policeman’s behavior and then we talk about the court? We can talk about the policeman’s behavior again if you wish to, either later today or tomorrow.

When the survivor has shared information about many areas of her problems or experiences / when the survivor has moved from one issue to another very quickly

**Example**

Veena: Life is bad, no one cares for me. Rakesh hurt me, so did Anjali. Even you hurt me sometimes. Why did you come late today? I am not important. I went to find out about the car driving lessons and they said, “Why should a girl want to be a driver? It is not a safe job.” I think I will sell bracelets… But no one buys them. When is my case date coming up?

You: I can see that you have been thinking about a lot of things at the same time. I am sorry about being late. Let me briefly go over what you have told me so that we do not forget anything and then we can discuss things one at a time. Let me try to remember. You must remind me if I forget anything. First you said you were upset that people hurt you. Specifically you felt Rakesh, Anjali and I hurt you. Then you were thinking about what you want to do in future. You enquired about car driving lessons but those people tried to discourage you. You talked about other options like selling bracelets. You also wanted to know when your court case would come up.

So there seem to be three things that we need to talk about today: one, how you can tell Rakesh, Anjali and me about what makes you upset. Second, we need to think a bit about what you want to do in future, especially about being a driver. And then we need to talk about the court case and how to find out more about it. Is that alright or have I missed anything?

**Paraphrasing**

This is a skill to help the survivors recognize that not only are you listening, but you are also understanding and analyzing their problems. In using this skill you repeat what you
have heard from the survivor in your own words, without changing the meaning of what has been said. **The goal is to integrate what the survivor is saying and feeling into one comment.**

Paraphrasing, especially by using easily understandable metaphors, is a useful skill. Sometimes it is possible to use diagrams or visuals while paraphrasing. By using this skill the survivors’ understanding of their own problems increases significantly.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example</th>
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</table>
| **Survivor:** They put me in cupboard when the police came. I was very frightened. I wanted to cry, but stopped myself from doing so because they might have beaten me up. I wanted to shout so that someone would take me out of there. I could see some light coming in from the door of the cupboard. I wanted to scream.  
**You:** It seems that you felt paralyzed by fear in that situation. You wanted to get out but there did not seem to be any way of doing so. It must have been very scary. |

**Reflection**

**Reflection involves the therapist sensing the feeling that the survivor is experiencing and giving a name to the feeling.** Reflection is the paraphrase of the perceived feeling. If the reflection process is accurate, it is an effective way of conveying empathy. Reflection is a skill more often used by mature counsellors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example</th>
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</table>
| **Example**  
A survivor was quiet and not saying too much and then seemed distracted.  
The therapist reflected: “It seems to me that you are preoccupied with something. Do you want to share it with me?**  
**Example**  
A survivor was overactive and trying to get other people in the group to become very active. However, she was also wringing her hands from time to time.  
The therapist reflected back in the session, “I saw you were trying very hard to be active and happy today, but I also saw that you were wringing your hands. It made me wonder if you were tense about something.”  
On hearing this, the survivor started crying and said that she had received a threat from the Madam who had exploited her, warning her not to appear in the court. |

**Validation**

**Validation is the skill of letting people know that their feelings are justified.** Everyone has a right to his or her feelings. So, if a survivor feels angry with her trafficker and feels that she should kill him, it is important for the therapist to acknowledge the survivor’s feeling. The therapist obviously will not support the survivor’s idea of killing the trafficker, but it is important for the survivor to know that her anger is justified.

In the above scenario the therapist’s response may be something like this:
Example continued

“I can see that you are extremely angry about what was done to you. What was done to you was wrong and an act of exploitation. Just listening to what was done to you makes me feel angry.

You have experienced it; you are obviously very angry. I know that when one is angry one sees few solutions. Let us discuss what will be the best way to feel that you have been avenged, without hurting yourself further.”

Validation is done through three direct methods by the therapist:

1. Justifying the survivor’s feeling
2. Expressing the survivor’s feelings on her behalf.
3. Normalizing the survivor’s experience.

The first two methods are used in the example given above.

Sometimes it is important for people to know how other people will behave in similar situations. This allows them to feel that their response is valid and not inappropriate. However, one has to be careful that this does not become a comparison with other people’s feelings. That is not helpful as everyone may have different responses and making a comparison may make the survivors feel that their feelings are being trivialized or dismissed.

Example

A survivor who was talking about her sexual abuse felt guilty, and thought that she was to blame as she was not able to do anything to stop the abuser.

You: I recognize that you feel that you are to blame and feel that you were not able to do anything to stop the abuser.

Let me share with you Deepa’s story. She was also sold by her uncle and she felt that she was not able to protect herself. So, Deepa and I thought that we should find out what happens to other people in the same situation. We talked to many other people like Deepa and you. Most people we talked to said that they could not protect themselves.

Then Deepa and I sat and talked about how things were in those days. We realized that though Deepa felt that she had not done anything to protect herself, she like you had tried whatever was possible, given that she was so scared of those people. Deepa and you tried to protect yourselves, you did not want to be hurt.

When people are in that situation, it seems to them later that they did not do anything and they feel distressed about it. But when they really think about that situation, they recognize that in their mind they were resisting it all the time. Even if they were not resisting, no one had the right to hurt them or you.”

iv) Skills of Clarifying: Questions that help

It is important not to ask the survivors too many questions. First, you must form a relationship with the survivor and give information, rather than seek information.

It is important to remember that as the survivor has been hurt so many times, she is bound to doubt your intention when you try to seek information from her. She is unlikely to tell you her reality. It takes weeks, even months, for the survivor to trust, so do not
be surprised if after many weeks of knowing the survivor you realize that whatever information you have is not the real information. Do not be angry. You need to understand that it is her strategy to protect herself. Normalize it. Begin again.

There are some specific types of questions that help you inquire and clarify.

Let us first understand the nature of the questions and then see the application while understanding and assessing the person, her problems and her context.

**Open questions**

Open questions are a tool for exploration. Open questions are questions that help the survivor to share information about herself with you. These questions do not limit the answers to a particular issue or aspect of the issue. The survivor has a choice as to what information she provides or in which direction she takes the conversation forward.

**Examples:**

1. Tell me more about yourself.
2. What are the areas in which you need help?
3. What experiences from your childhood still bother you?
4. What makes you happy?
5. What kind of people do you generally like to be with?

**Specific questions**

Specific questions are a tool for clarification. Questions that explore the details of one issue or an aspect of information that is being provided are called specific questions. These questions are linked to each other, and when asked in series and together with using other listening skills, they can be a very effective method of clarifying information. The answers to the series of questions become more specific with each question. Very specific questions or closed questions expect a ‘yes’ or ‘no’ answer or some specific information like, “What is the time?”

It is generally useful to begin the conversation with open questions and then gradually make them more specific to seek clarification.

A series of specific questions given below allow you to understand the expectations of the survivor from the organization. Please notice how other skills of listening are used in an integrated manner in the conversation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You: Thank you for talking to me today. How was the last week for you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survivor: Just like any other. Just waiting for the court date and doing nothing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>You:</strong> (using validation and reflection) It seems the wait for the decision is upsetting for you. It is a difficult situation and it makes you feel helpless.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survivor: Hmm…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You: I was wondering in what way Saarthak can help you while the court case is continuing?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survivor: I do not know. What can you do?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Interpersonal Communication Skills**

You: *(remaining neutral and not rushing to make promises)* I will not know till I talk to you more about it. *(Seeking permission)* Shall we think more about it?

Survivor: OK.

You: What are the things that make you feel bad about the court case?

Survivor: Right now, everything. Right now I do not know when the date is, I do not know who will go with me, I do not know what they will ask me. I am told in the morning or at best the evening before… *Kal date hai.* *(You have a court date tomorrow)*. I get up and I go. I am scared. I see those people every time I go. You don’t know them. They know my village. They will tell everyone. Then that fat man keeps on asking me questions. Why cannot I ask questions to these people? Why do they have to ask all the questions? I feel bad talking about it.

You: That is frightening! Listening to you I can sense how scared you must be in that situation. It is important that you are talking about it now and we can find solutions together.

In order for me to suggest what may make things better, let me understand the situation further. So, one problem is that you are not prepared for the date, the next is the behavior of the lawyer and you are afraid what they might do. Let us explore each of these separately and see if we can find answers. What do you know about the court case at the moment?

Survivor: That if I have to go back home, the court has to order it. Also, they will get punished if I tell the judge they did wrong things to me. I want them to be punished.

You: It is important that people who harmed you are punished. So, who are all the people with whom you discuss the case?

So gradually you are getting to know the situation of the survivor more specifically.

**Moving from open to closed questions**

One can also move from Open Questions to Closed or Specific Questions and move from Specific Questions to Open Questions to move the conversation forward.

**Here some examples of the same**

**Situation**: You are exploring the environment of the government home at night

1. How do people spend time at the home nowadays?
1. How is the home different in the night?
1. Who all are here at night?
1. When do the night shift caretakers come in?
1. What time do people sleep?

**Moving from closed to open questions and then back to closed questions**

1. When do the night shift caretakers come in?
1. When they come, what happens next?
1. Are you able to interact with them?
1. How do they behave with you?
Is there anything about them that you would like to share?

So, when they are angry, how do they respond to you?

Do they, at times, hurt you?

I believe things have been difficult. To be able to understand your problems better, it will be useful for me to know you better. Could you tell me a bit more about yourself?

How do you spend your time?

When you are faced with difficult situations, how do you cope with them?

What are the things that make you happy?

What makes you angry?

What kind of people do you like?

How would your friends describe you?

How would those people describe you who do not like you?

When you have a lot of work to do, what is your usual response?

Are there any rules that you have set for yourself?

How are you in social situations?

c) Understanding and Assessing

This section includes the following topics:

- Process of Understanding and Assessing
  - The Survivors
  - Their Problems
  - Their Context
- Process of Analyzing

i) Getting to Know the Survivors, their Problems and their Context

After introducing yourself to the survivor, giving her introduction about the service and generating trust, the next phase is to get to know her.

You goal is to understand the person, not just gather information. Anyone can ask a series of questions. Your role is to gather information, make sense of the information and while doing so also help the person in making sense of the information. The exploration is done on the following three dimensions:

- The person
- The problem
- The context

UNDERSTANDING AND ASSESSING
It is important to keep the following issues in mind when carrying out a conversation with a survivor:

1. Do not go through this as a form you have to fill. You are a counsellor, not a police inspector.
2. Do not force the pace at which she gives you information about herself. She would want to talk about her problems, but she would also want to talk about her life. Your focus is trafficking, her focus is *life*. Allow her to determine the focus and direction of the conversation.
3. Whenever the conversation allows an entry point to know more about her or her context, do try to gather more information. This information will help you when you are trying to help her solve her problems.
4. If she gets too anxious when talking about something, you can say, “It seems to me that talking about this issue is upsetting for you.” After you have made this reflection, wait for some time. Give her time to recognize that it is alright to talk about her anxiety.

The person

You may get answers to some of the following questions. Remember, it is not necessary to cover all the information. Please do not use this as a checklist. Just have a conversation with the survivor keeping these questions in mind; don’t hold an inquisition.

It is alright to take time and not to explore all the areas in one session. It is also important to allow her space to say what she wants to and not press on with what you want to. The rule is to listen. Do not ask!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area/Issue to be explored</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identification data, Name, Age, Education, Place of origin, When she was rescued, Present status of the case</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patterns of Thoughts, Feelings and Actions in the past (about herself, about her future and about the way people perceive her)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needs including health, nutrition, judicial redress, sexual, relationships, emotional support, education, livelihood, coping with trauma and protection from re-trafficking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key influences from childhood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key educational experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key work experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key limitations that she sees in herself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key strengths that she sees in herself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key memories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key habits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key influencing experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key influencing relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present plan for future</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Problems

It is important to keep the following issues in mind while trying to understand the survivors’ problems:

1. They might have multiple problems.
2. They might be very anxious while expressing these problems. They may be silent or they may be angry.
3. They would want to talk about their problems only, but it is important to understand them as people as well.
4. They would come up with an overwhelming amorphous mass as a problem. Something that goes like this:
   - Life is bad
   - I am bad
   - Everybody is bad
   - No one loves me
   - Everybody thinks I am no good
   - My future is no good

Everyday as they face stress, each new experience is added to this mass of a problem. It seems difficult to find solutions and this makes them helpless. So, when you assess the problems, it is important to use the opportunity to make the problem into small “solvable” parts.

Their problems are real, but you have to try and define them more clearly. Defining the problems and categorizing them gives people hope that they can cope with them. They can then try to start thinking of solutions, and not get overwhelmed with the problems.

Common problems that the survivors may have

1. Difficulties in making a choice about judicial redress
2. Relationship difficulties at the home
3. Reliving the past
4. Feeling low about themselves
5. Being very anxious about the future
6. Being aggressive
7. Being isolated
8. Being unable to control their anger
9. Being unable to express their needs
10. Being unable to plan a future
11. Having negative thoughts and feelings about themselves and their future
12. Trying to please everyone
13. Not being able to say ‘no’
14. Being addicted to tobacco and/or alcohol
15. Living with HIV/AIDS
Questions that you can ask

**Description of the Problem**
- What do you see as the problem in this situation?
- How do people around you describe the problem?
- When or in what situations does the problem occur?
- Where or in what circumstances does it occur?
- What makes the problem worse?
- What makes the problem better?
- What are the related problems associated with this problem?
- Is there a pattern in the problem?

**Impact**
- What is the impact?
- Who all are impacted?
- What decreases the impact?
- What makes the impact worse?
- What is the risk of the future impact?
- What is the response of the person?

**Solutions**
- What solutions has the person tried till now?
- What has worked?
- What has not worked?
- Who/what has supported the solutions?
- Who/what has been an obstacle?
- What help does the survivor want now?
- What help are you able to offer presently?
- What will be the impact, if you are not able to provide the help that the survivor wants?

For further details on how to understand the survivors’ problems better and also on how to help them solve them, please refer to section on *Problem Solving* in chapter 5. Please also refer to chapter 7 for skills for helping people deal with some of the problems mentioned above.

**The Context**

The background of the survivor and her circumstances contribute to her problem. It is important to know this information to be able to help her. But more importantly, *talking about the background makes the survivor and you discover possible support systems* that both of you may have overlooked.

**Personal context and social context**

The context includes personal context and social context. Please keep the following areas and issues in mind while you are exploring the context.

1. **Personal Context** includes the people, relationships and institutions with which the survivor has a direct contact.
Social Context includes the people, relationships, institutions and patterns which affect the survivor indirectly. Again it is not important that all the areas have to be explored in one session. Assessment is an ongoing process. These are possible areas of exploration. The survivor may have some more specific issues that have influenced her. It is also very important to make sure that sharing is collaborative, and assessment does not become an interrogation.

Personal Context

Present/immediate context
Pre-trafficking Context
Her possible future context

Present / Immediate Context

Where is she based presently?
Where does she come from?
How was she trafficked?
How was she rescued?
What are her feelings and thoughts about the rescue process?
What are her feelings and thoughts towards the people with whom she was living before she was rescued?
Does she have close relationships with those people?
Are there any reasons for the survivor to be indebted to them?
Are there reasons for the survivor to be afraid of them?
Are there any reasons for the survivor to trust them?
What is her present knowledge about the organization where she is based?
What does she consider as her resources in the present context?
What does she perceive as her risks in the present context?
What information does she have about her options?
What information does she have about the current situation/issues in the world around her?

Pre-trafficking Context

Who all are at home?
What do her parents do?
What does she think about the family?
What does she like about the family?
What does she not like about her family?
Whom does she hold responsible for her trafficking?
What does she think about her community?
What contact has she had with her family after trafficking?
What does the family know about her experiences?
What does she want to tell her family about her experiences?
Possible future context
1. What resources does she access when she needs information?
2. What is the level of her awareness about issues like rights of women, court process, and her rights as a survivor?
3. Who influences her decision about the future?
4. Who helps her set goals about the future?
5. What does she aspire to be?

Social context
The counsellor has to arrive at information about the social context through reading and other sources. The survivor may not be the best source of such information.
1. What are the patterns in her culture?
   1. About treatment of women
   1. About education
   1. About trafficking
   1. About stigma related to HIV/AIDS
2. The economic situation
3. The changes that the society is experiencing e.g., political, demographic, etc.
4. Disparity between the context before she was trafficked and the contexts she experienced after trafficking and after rescue.
   1. The judicial process
   1. Political situation
   1. Bilateral relationships between the countries in which she has lived
   1. Non-governmental cooperation across the borders to ensure continuity of care
   1. Anti-trafficking law
   1. Anti-trafficking policy

ii) Analyzing the information that you receive in the first phase of therapy

After the first three to four sessions you would have formed a safe and trustworthy relationship with the survivor.

The survivor now wants to find solutions and not just talk about her problems.

At this point most counsellors lapse into the mistake of keep on gathering more information about each week that the survivor experiences, and at times spending too much time on solving some immediate problems e.g., during the therapy session, time may be spent on talking about how one of the other survivors is getting better treatment from one of the caregivers, or how there was a fight in the home about which TV channel to watch. At that time they may seem to be the most important issues for the survivor, but with each passing session you will recognize that the survivor learns from your response and continues to bring issues to the session that she thinks you want to hear.

The process of therapy starts to stagnate after some time. The survivor may respond in three ways at this time:
1) She may start voicing more and more new difficulties because she feels that the therapist will lose interest in her if she does not tell the therapist new problems.

2) She may become detached from the process of therapy and feel that nothing can change for her.

3) The third common response is that she may feel angry and let down that she has not been helped by the therapist.

The best way to avoid these situations is to analyze the information that you have. Summarize and share it with the survivor and work together to complete the information. Also, if you explain the information that you have, then it is possible to set common goals for therapy.

The following three grids help us analyze the information that we have about the survivors, their problems and their context.

**The Person**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Past</th>
<th>Present</th>
<th>Future</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Needs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thoughts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feelings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Needs

The needs may be:

1. **Biological** needs like food, sleep, sexual needs and health related needs
2. **Psychological** needs like coping with the trauma, attachments and belonging, dignity, sense of control, purposefulness and validation
3. **Social** needs like shelter, livelihood, relationships, legal support and information about rights

**Thoughts, Feelings and Actions**

Thoughts, feelings and actions describe the survivors’ response in day to day situations. These are thoughts that people have about themselves, their future and what people think about them.
Remember, you have explored thoughts, feelings and actions in many situations.

**Look for patterns that repeat across situations. Look for patterns that are helpful and those that are unhelpful.**

After placing the information in this grid, ask yourself the following questions:

1. What are the needs that the survivor has been able to fulfill in the past and in the present?
2. What are the needs that are not met?
3. What are the reasons for that?
4. What are the impacts of past experiences on the person’s thoughts, feelings and actions?
5. Which of the thoughts, feelings and actions are becoming unhelpful for them?
6. Which of the thoughts, feelings and actions are helpful for them?
7. What will be the survivor’s needs in the future?
8. Which of her thoughts, feelings and actions will come in the way of fulfilling her needs and which ones will support fulfillment of these needs?

Please note that information in this grid (The Person Grid) needs to be understood together with information in the other two grids, The Problems Grid and The Context Grid.

**The Problems Grid**

This purpose of this tool is to explore the problem on three dimensions:

1. Predisposing factors
2. Precipitating Factors
3. Maintaining Factors

### The Problems Grid

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Biological</th>
<th>Predisposing Factors</th>
<th>Precipitating Factors</th>
<th>Maintaining Factors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Psychological</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Rehabilitation and Prevention

Example
In Deepa’s situation what precipitated the trafficking was the fact that her uncle who was working in Delhi came back to influence the father and took her away. The uncle was interested in her as she was reaching puberty.

The other precipitating factor was that the NGO providing relief in the area after the cyclone could not continue to provide the support anymore. This led the father to have little resistance in sending her away.

Precipitating factors for Deepa’s problem of being trafficked are as follows:
1. Biological: Deepa reaching puberty
2. Psychological: Helplessness of father
3. Social: Return of uncle, change of project plan of the NGO

Predisposing Factors

Predisposing factors are those factors which were present before the problem started. These factors contribute to the problems which the survivor experienced.

Example
For example, Deepa lost her mother at the age of 4 and had a stepmother. Her father became an alcoholic after the cyclone in Andhra Pradesh.

Predisposing factors for Deepa’s problem of being trafficked are as follows:
1. Biological: Mother’s death, natural disaster and father’s alcohol problem.
2. Psychological: Psychological Impact of low self-esteem and difficulty in being able to trust, due to neglect by father because he had an alcohol problem and maltreatment by the stepmother.
3. Social: Economic difficulties faced by the family after the cyclone and father’s alcoholism.

Precipitating Factors

Factors that trigger the problems to become visible or evident are called Precipitating factors.

It is important to understand Precipitating and Predisposing factors, as such factors increase the chances of recurrence of the problem.

Maintaining Factors

These factors contribute to the problem being maintained.

Example
In Deepa’s situation the factors that maintain her problems include the corruption of the police, the coercion and violence of the traffickers and her mistrust of anyone who tries to help her.

Maintaining Factors
1. Biological: HIV/AIDS?
2. Psychological: Mistrust and helplessness as a result of violence
3. Social: Exploitation, violence and corruption
The Context Grid

The context grid helps you to collate information about the personal and social context of the survivor. The information about the context is further categorized as:

1. Risks
2. Resources
3. Patterns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Context Grid</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Risks</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Immediate/ Present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Past Pre-trafficking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Trafficking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Post Rescue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Context</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Risks**
The first column documents the risks faced by the survivor. These are risks that become obstacles for the survivors in achieving their full potential.

**Resources**
The second column documents the resources that can help the survivor achieve her full potential. These are resources in the context and not the abilities of the survivor. Though there may not have been many resources in the context in trafficking and pre-trafficking situations, it is important to explore this, because these resources may have been in the form of important emotionally supportive and validating relationships. One cannot assume that all experiences of trafficking period were risks.

**Patterns**
Patterns are repetitive ways of functioning in a system. These ways of functioning are predictable and influence how the context responds to the person. Sometimes the patterns are helpful and at other times the patterns are unhelpful.

The analysis helps design interventions for the survivor that addresses her needs, helps her recognize her strengths, challenge her thoughts and manage her risks and resources better.

It is important to simplify the analysis before sharing it with the survivor. For example:

1. The patterns of needs, thoughts, feelings, resources and risks can be depicted as diagrams.
2. The predisposing factors, precipitating and maintaining factors can be explained using a metaphor e.g., the problem of catching a cold. The predisposing factors can be seen as the cold weather in winter, getting wet in the rain can be seen as a precipitating factor and the person not seeking treatment can be seen as the maintaining factor.
Once the person has understood that problems can be maintained, it is then possible to share with her what maintains her own problems.

In this chapter we learned skills and process of understanding the survivor, her problems and her context. We also learned the methods of analyzing the information that we are able to get from the survivor. The analyzed information is then shared with the survivor, so that she can participate in forming treatment goals for herself.

The next chapter focuses on the process of recovery. It shares with you three areas of skills to help the survivor to outgrow her pain. It helps you learn skills for setting goals, solving problems and challenging negative thoughts.

The skills for regaining control are described in another manual called *The Sounds of Silence*.

d. The Process of Recovery: Outgrowing the Pain

This section includes information about the following skills:

1. Setting goals: helping the survivors to set goals for themselves
   - Problem solving skills
   - How to identify and challenge negative thoughts

These skills enable you to help the survivors make sense of their traumatic past and begin to outgrow the pain.

The survivors want to regain control of their lives. They want information. They want to contain negative feelings and thoughts. They want to be able to distract themselves by being involved in activities most of the day, yet they want to have the ability to make choices. They want to be able to withdraw from others and from activities from time to time. The need is to have an enabling environment that will ensure this balance.

*Strategies for regaining control* are described in the first manual of this series called *Sounds of Silence* and the method of creating enabling environments is described in another manual of this series called *Enable*.

This section of the manual describes an array of skills which can be used to help the survivor at different stages of the therapy. The description of skills is followed by a listing of various situations that the survivor is faced with and the use of the skills in the same.

Setting Goals

It is important to help the survivors set goals for their future. There are three difficulties that the therapist may face in this task:

1) The survivors do not think beyond the very short-term.
2) They do not see any future for themselves.
3) Even if they see a future, their response to it is either a fantasy of a completely normal and brilliant life which ignores the realities they face or a future which is limited by their sense of hopelessness and helplessness.

It is therefore important to remember that whatever the intervention, there will be a constant struggle to help the survivors challenge their negative thoughts. The cognitive
strategies to discover and dispute the negative thoughts will necessarily run parallel to all other strategies.

The method of setting goals for a survivor of trafficking includes the following steps:

**Step 1**

**This step involves helping the survivor have a view of life, without the limitation of exploitation of trafficking.**

Help the survivor recognize that she has a right to make decisions about her future. In doing so, focus on how she feels when she has control and work towards achieving small goals.

This also includes creating avenues for the survivor to experience achievement and success in a small manner. For example, she could set a goal of visiting the market to buy a special dress for herself. If she is not interested in a dress, try shopping for food, seeing a film or learning to cook. There is always something that will interest her. Our team has worked with survivors who have enjoyed buying bangles for themselves to survivors whose faces lit up with excitement when they had a camera in their hands to make a film.

If you are able to offer only limited opportunities or fixed opportunities, then the survivor does begin to lose hope. Skills for goal-setting without achieving hope and mastery are difficult to practice.

Once the survivor is ready, move to step 2

**Step 2**

**Help the survivor visualize which needs she wants to fulfill in a few weeks’ time.**

To be able to do this, first let her brainstorm what she is doing at present. Remember, it is easier for the survivor to think in terms of what she is doing now; the usual strategy of looking into the future does not work with the survivor. She has to work with the present and then work towards future goals.

When she brainstorms she will recognize that she spends her time doing certain activities to fulfill her needs. Help her make a list of her needs which are met by doing these activities and those needs which are not met or only partially met. Let her decide what she wants to do to fulfill her needs more completely in the next few weeks. Once she has a list of which needs she wants to fulfill and also how she wants to fulfill them, let her divide the needs into activities which she will need to do to fulfill these needs.

Ask her how she would feel if she were to complete what she had planned.

**Step 3**

**Help her meet other survivors who have set goals for themselves and achieved them.**

To be able to set goals for herself, the survivor needs three kinds of information:

1) What kinds of goals can she have for herself. Her exposure to possible work goals for herself is limited. The work areas she has seen for women are stereotyped or those depicted in films. She has a limited number of role models.

2) The knowledge that the survivors can achieve the goals they set for themselves.
3) Like other people survivors also have strengths to achieve their goals. It is important for the survivors to have accessible role models i.e., these role models should not be limited to a few activists or police women. These role models should not only share with them what they do and how they went about preparing for their roles, but also the difficulties they faced. The role model should also be able to share information about her present life. The effort should be an authentic sharing, not glossing over the difficulties.

**Step 4**

Help the survivor outline the work goals that she wants to set for herself.

Once she has selected the area of work, she can then look forward into the future and ask herself the question, “What do I want my life to be in two years’ time?” Then she can work backwards from this question and think of what needs to be achieved by the end of one year, if she has to achieve her overall goal for two years. After that she needs to ask herself what should be the target for six months, three months and so on. This outlines her goals for work.

**Step 5**

Then help her ask herself what support she would need to achieve her goals. What resources does she already have? What obstacles would she face? What would she need to do differently, if she faced those obstacles?

**Step 6**

Help her set a measure of how she would come to know if she has been able to achieve her goals completely. It will also be helpful for her to outline how she would cope, if she was not able to achieve her goals.

**Step 7**

Help her see what will be the first steps she will need to take to be able to move towards the goals that she has set for herself.

**Step 8**

This is a parallel step. Help her look at other goals that she needs to have, apart from work goals. These could be goals about relationships, working towards independent living, seeking compensation, learning music, traveling, etc.

It is important for the survivor to have goals beyond going back home or fighting the case against the trafficker. She has to build an identity beyond that of a survivor of trafficking.

**Step 9**

This is also a parallel step. She has to have an alternative plan i.e., plan B for every step that she takes towards her goal. She has to brainstorm more than one solution. Being prepared for the possibility that some things may not be as she intends them to be, will be helpful for her, as she will not lose hope in the face of failure or disappointment.
Interpersonal Communication Skills

Example

A group of survivors felt the need to have a livelihood and earn some money. What steps would they have to take?

Step 1: Recognize the need and how the group will benefit by the fulfillment of this need.

Step 2: Brainstorm ways and options for livelihoods. What kind of options? For example, if they want to start a shop, what kind of a shop would it be?

Step 3: Do a cost-benefit analysis of each option for the shop based on what would be a profitable business. Which shops already exist in the community? What do we know about the business, etc?

Step 4: Choose the option with the most benefits and least costs. For example, having a stationery shop may be most beneficial as there is no shop in the area and there are a number of schools in the area.

Step 5: Make a plan for how we will go about starting the shop. What will be needed? Who can help us? What information do we need to gather?

Step 6: Make a backward plan of activities and tasks starting from the end point of having a shop till today e.g., if we want to start the shop by the end of two months i.e., in July, what should we have done by the 25th of June, what should we have done by the 15th of June and so on till you reach the immediate plan for this week.

Step 7: Divide the tasks among the members e.g., who will do market survey, who will practice accounts, who will learn about pricing etc.

Step 8: Talk about what might come in the way and how we will manage the obstacles.

e. Problem Solving Skills

Problem solving includes the following steps:

A. Define the areas of problems
B. Detail other problems
C. Prioritize the problems
D. Break the problem down into smaller components
E. Address each component separately
F. Brainstorm possible solutions
G. Finding pros and cons of each solution
H. A composite solution
I. Summarize the process of problem solving

A) Define the areas of problems

It is important to define and chisel out the problems from the amorphous mass of feelings that the survivors have.

The problems can be defined clearly using a skill called **Downward Arrow Questioning**. This technique can be used to explore the problem, define it and understand the impact of the problem more clearly by asking “what” questions about it.
**Example:** Using Downward Arrow Questioning

Deepa: My problem is that my life is bad.
You: What makes life so bad this week?
Deepa: Everything.
You: When was it last week that you felt that life was really bad?
Deepa: Yesterday.
You: So, what was happening yesterday?
Deepa: Nothing.
You: Did you get up feeling that life was bad?
Deepa: No.
You: So, life was not that bad when you got up. It became bad as the day went on.
Deepa: Yeah.
You: Do you want to take me through the day? What were you doing?
Deepa: I was helping in cooking when I got a phone call.
You: What happened then?
Deepa: He said he wanted to meet me. I felt he was trying to waste my time. I wanted to go. But he was saying nice things. He wanted me to come and meet him.
You: How did you feel about that?
Deepa: I felt confused. Nobody listens to what I think and want. Here was this man whom I had met only twice at the shop and he said he cared for me. I was not sure if this was for real.
You: So, what did you do next?
Deepa: I said that I was not sure. I will not meet him alone.
You: So how did he respond?
Deepa: He told me that I was being snooty, that he knew that I wanted to meet him and I was just making him think that I would not meet him.
You: How did you feel when he said that?
Deepa: I felt angry. He was taking me for granted. Like everyone else.
You: So, one of the reasons life is bad is that you feel that people take you for granted.
Deepa: Yes, I am a slave, I have to jump when people say ‘jump’.
You: That is a difficult feeling to cope with. Are there times when you are able to say ‘no’ to people?
Deepa: I do not think I can say ‘no’. I feel that people will give up on me if I say ‘no’. I have lost too many people in my life, I do not want to lose more people.

Through this process of Downward Arrow Questioning you have been able to help the survivor clarify the *real* problem. The real problem presently is that the survivor feels taken for granted and is not able to say ‘no’ because of the fear of disapproval. This is an easier problem to try and resolve than the big problem of ‘life being bad’.
The next step is to get more information about this problem by asking questions like:

- What makes you feel the way you do?
- When was the last time you felt like this?
- What was happening?
- What triggered it off?
- How did you respond to it then?
- How do you react to such situations generally?
- Are there other things that make you feel like this?
- Which are the other situations in which you find yourself in this predicament?
- Who are all the people who provoke such a response from you?
- Are there times when you do not have the problem?
- What is different about these times?
- How do you cope with it?
- What are the effects of the problem on you and the way you do things?
- Who is supportive?
- What helps? What does not?
- Are there times when you feel so distressed that you feel like giving up?

Notice that you are asking all kinds of questions to elaborate the nature of the problem, but you are not asking the question, “Why is the problem there?”

‘Why’ is a difficult question to answer. People either become defensive when you ask them ‘why’, or they start a long drawn out explanation blaming someone else. Both these situations are not helpful, because the opportunity to work with the problem and find solutions is lost.

After one problem has been detailed, summarize what you have heard.

Ask what other problems she faces.

**B. Detail other problems**

In this step you ask her about other problems which she is worried about.

**C. Prioritize**

Help her to consider all the problems in terms of their importance/urgency and decide which problem she would like to address first.

**D. Break the problem down into smaller components**

For example, the problem ‘I cannot get sleep’ can be broken into four sub-problems:

1) How to cope with the worry of not being able to get to sleep?
2) What to do before you try to sleep?
3) What to do when you are lying on the bed and cannot get to sleep?
4) How to cope with the after effects of not being able to sleep?

**E) Address each component of the problem separately**
F) Brainstorm possible solutions

Brainstorming means thinking of all the possible solutions to a problem, including any unusual or seemingly impossible or fantastic solutions, without subjecting them to any criticism at that stage. The purpose of this technique is to be as creative as possible and to have a wide range of solutions and try and see which one of those can be made possible.

You could explain the process of brainstorming to the survivor somewhat like this:

‘When the problem is difficult to solve, sometimes it helps to think about all that you could have done if there were no constraints.

Like, if you had a magic wand, and you could make the obstacles to solutions disappear, then what would be the possible solutions to your problems? A brainstorm of solutions for overcoming the problems faced in the court.

The possible solutions could be:
1. Talking to the counsellor about your fear of a court appearance.
2. Getting information from the lawyer about what is likely to happen in the court.
3. Visualizing the court appearance in detail, imagining yourself facing it confidently.
4. Learning techniques of relaxation from the counsellor.
5. Rehearsing relaxation techniques to control anxiety in response to difficult situations.

If the survivors find it difficult to get started on brainstorming solutions, you could come up with some possible solutions and kick start the process.

G) Pros and Cons of each solution

This can then be considered by doing:
1. assessment of the benefits that the solutions would offer
2. the obstacles that would have to be faced in putting these solutions in place or the costs of these solutions. The costs may be terms of resources such as time and money and also emotional costs.

This can be done by making a three-column table for each solution as given below:

| Example |
|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Pros and cons for Sonu who wants to get married to a cleaner who comes to the Home | Pros and cons for Sonu who wants to get married to a cleaner who comes to the Home |
| What are the benefits of this solution? | What are the costs of this solution? | What are the obstacles that I will face to put the solutions in place? |
| | | |
| | | |

H) A composite solution

Finding a composite solution which brings together the advantages of each of the possible solutions and minimizes the possible obstacles is the next step.
No solution is complete in itself. Each solution can be made more complete. This step helps the survivor to add up solutions to each other and formulate the most complete solution. She will also be able to predict the obstacles and her responses to these obstacles. For example, if you have to solve the problems of traffic in Delhi, you will need to consider a composite solution that includes rapid mass transport system, local networks of small buses connected to the transport system, enhancing driving skills of drivers, better policing and integrating respect for traffic rules into the education curriculum.

Similarly if we were to work towards helping the survivors become independent, the solution will include helping the survivors through a healing process, providing vocational training, increasing their employability through exposure to work ethics, preparing them for independent living and providing them ongoing legal and emotional support.

I. Summarize the process of problem solving

In this step you can summarize the process of problem solving and invite the survivor to use the process for other problems.

After the survivor has used this method of problem solving for one or two problems with the help of the therapist, she can document what the method was and how it worked for addressing complex problems. She can then be encouraged to use the same method to resolve her other difficulties.

f. Challenging Negative Thoughts

Remember, we all think. We all feel. We all act. Our actions are determined by the way we think. This section includes a description of how we develop negative thoughts. Thereafter it focuses on skills to help the survivor identify various forms of negative thoughts, methods of decreasing the impact of these thoughts by replacing these with lesser negative thoughts and challenging them.

Different people can have different actions and feelings in the same situation. This is because they have different thoughts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If it starts raining and you are outside, what are you most likely to do? You will probably run for a shelter, but a friend of yours might want to start dancing in the rain. You will run because you think, “I will get wet, I may become unwell.” Your friend may think, “Oh! What a wonderful day! It is raining after so many days. Let me enjoy.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As people have different thoughts and different feelings, it is difficult to guess anyone’s thoughts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I once had a friend who became very famous. After he became famous I lost contact with him. I happened to see him in the market one day. I waved to him. He did not respond and looked past me. I was very angry with him and I did not talk to him for two years. Then we met again. I asked him about that day when he ignored me. He did not really remember the day. But he said that around the time he had lost his mother and was not feeling very good. I felt sorry that I had misunderstood him.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
These thoughts which I had when my friend did not greet me are called automatic thoughts.

**Automatic thoughts**

Automatic thoughts are the thoughts that we have each time we interact with our environment. These thoughts are related to our present experiences.

**Automatic negative thoughts**

Sometimes our thoughts become negative and we start thinking negatively about ourselves and our future. We also think that other people around us think negatively about us. These are called automatic negative thoughts. Mostly when we feel bad about our experiences, we are having automatic negative thoughts. Automatic negative thoughts lead to unhelpful behavior. Due to these automatic negative thoughts we develop negative feelings and our actions and behavior also change.

**Example**

Shivani got admission to a college outside her city recently. She had always lived in a small town and had done well in her education. Now she had colleagues mainly from the city who were more communicative than her and also more able to express themselves in the class. Shivani started feeling sad. Her thoughts were, “I am no good! I have no future. No one can help me. Everyone feels that I am a stupid person.” Shivani started avoiding people and situations.

The example given above shows an unhelpful way of thinking. This way of thinking develops when there is an error of thinking about all our interactions and experiences.

**Errors of thinking**

Errors of thinking are fixed ways of looking at all our experiences. These errors of thinking make us view all our experiences as negative. This then becomes further evidence in our mind that our situation cannot be changed.

The common errors of thinking include the following:

1. All or None thinking
2. Negative Focus
3. Personalizing
4. Catastrophising
5. Jumping to conclusions

**All or None thinking**

In this error of thinking we think in terms of ‘black and white’. We label ourselves and our experiences as negative if they are not perfect. We say to ourselves, ”If I cannot do any one thing right, then I cannot do anything right.” or, ”If I fail at a single thing, I cannot ever succeed.”

**Example**

A survivor was making rice for the first time and it got burned. She had also made some vegetables and pulses that day which turned out to be good. She started crying and said that she did not know how to cook rice and would not cook again.
**Negative Focus**

In this error of thinking we try to find out only negative aspects in ourselves, our actions and experiences. We overlook or minimize our positive experiences or our strengths. When we succeed, we say to ourselves, “Oh, that is nothing, anybody could have done that.” It is as if we were looking at our negative aspects with a magnifying glass. We may also blame ourselves for all the negative outcomes in our lives.

**Example**

A survivor who could sing very well once went to another organization and sang a song. She was appreciated by all the people. When she returned she was very sad. I asked her what had made her sad. She said that everything had gone wrong during the visit. She counted ten mistakes in her singing. These included not smiling while accepting the gift and not singing the last stanza of the song.

When I asked her how people had responded to her song she said, “Oh, that was not special. They have to try to please every performer.”

**Personalizing**

In this error of thinking we attribute a personal meaning to all our experiences.

**Example**

A counsellor had a headache one day and could not conduct the group session that she was supposed to do. A survivor asked her next week, “Didi, isn’t it true that you did not take the session last week because you were angry with me that I was not speaking in the group?” The counsellor obviously said, “No.” and told her that it was because of the headache. The survivor’s response was a worried question, “Do my problems give you a headache?”

**Catastrophising**

When we think of the future we always worry that it will be disastrous.

**Example**

Before the start of each project a survivor would always say, “This will never be completed. I know that. People will catch us and send us back to the government home.”

No amount of reassurance or information would help her look at the possibility that there could be positive outcomes to the efforts being made.

**Jumping to conclusions**

In this error of thinking we arrive at a decision about someone or some situation without having enough information. We do this by overgeneralization of the information which we have.

**Example**

A survivor would not attend the life skills group. Her reasons were that all counsellors were alike and as her last counsellor had broken her confidentiality, she felt that this team would also not respect her confidentiality. Once she saw the team having a meeting immediately after her session with the counsellor. This made her conclude that her confidentiality could not be granted by this team.
Permanent negative thoughts

The errors of thinking arise because of traumatic experiences in our lives that cause us to have permanent negative thoughts. These permanent negative thoughts influence our view of all other experiences in our lives.

Survivor’s negative thoughts

Survivors have many traumatic experiences and these lead them to have permanent negative experiences. These thoughts are the windows through which they look at all their experiences and relationships. The survivors usually have the following negative thoughts:

1. Self-blame and Guilt
2. Identification with the aggressor
3. Unfairness
4. Mistrust
5. Helplessness and Hopelessness
6. Risk taking
7. Anger

Self-blame and Guilt

Survivors may develop thoughts that they were responsible for their abuse. They would look for evidence in their behavior to prove this to themselves. These are the examples of thoughts they may have.

1. I could not save myself.
2. I have no right to live.
3. I must have asked for it.

Identification with the aggressor

To be able to live through such traumatic experiences, the survivors may even start thinking like the aggressor. They start believing that whatever the aggressor is doing is to help them and fulfill their interest. Their thoughts may include:

1. Even though he hurts me, he protects me from the police.
2. He is the only one who is concerned about my welfare; he has a right to be angry with me sometimes.
3. There is a reason for his anger.

Unfairness

Most of us want to believe that life is fair and that we should be treated fairly. The survivors have innumerable experiences of being abused and treated unfairly and they start believing that:

1. I do not have any rights.
Life is unfair.

Mistrust
The survivors have two contradictory permanent negative thoughts about trust: one leads to difficulty in trusting and the other leads to trusting too easily.
1. If I trust, I will be hurt.
2. If I do not trust then I will not be liked.

Helplessness and Hopelessness
The survivors have been traumatized and they may believe that their situation is too difficult and nothing can help them. They may develop the following thoughts.
1. Nothing is in my control. I give up.
2. What is the future?
3. I have such silly problems. They do not matter at all.

Risk taking
Survivors may start believing that they are invincible, that nothing or nobody can harm them any more. They may not recognize the risks they may face nor have fear of any consequences e.g., using harmful and addictive substances or practicing unsafe sex, without any precautions.
Their thoughts may be:
1. If this has happened, anything can happen.
2. I have to survive today.
3. It does not matter what will happen tomorrow.
4. Who can foresee tomorrow?

Anger
The survivors may have thoughts that make them angry:
1. Why me?
2. Nobody helped me. I will not help anyone.
3. I must have done something wrong to be hurt and punished like this.

These permanent negative thoughts are based in reality. These have developed due to the survivor being abused, exploited and traumatized. However, if these thoughts come back to them in situations that may not harm them and in relationships that are not exploitative, the survivors may not be able to use the opportunities which they are receiving now. Their mistrust may come in the way of accessing resources.

These thoughts are understandable and justified. Yet they can be unhelpful and increase the pain of the survivor when they become rules by which the survivors live their life.
g. How to Identify and Challenge Negative Thoughts

It is important to help the survivor to learn strategies to identify negative thoughts.

Explaining the rationale

The first step is to explain how thoughts, feelings and actions are linked. Then we need to explain how the experiences influence our way of thinking and how it is unhelpful to let past experiences color our way of looking at our present experiences.

It is important to explain how negative thoughts and errors of thinking not only cause us distress, but they also come in the way of our achieving what we want to. It is only when the survivors recognize that their thinking is coming in the way of achieving success, that they feel motivated to address it. It also makes them feel more in control of themselves. This does not minimize the negative experiences that they have faced; on the contrary, it helps them recognize that negative experiences do not have the power to destroy them as people.
Example

Sonu is a survivor who has been meeting a counsellor for nearly four weeks now. The counsellor is going to explain in this session how thoughts, feelings and actions are linked, and how if we learn to change the way we think, we can change our responses to become more helpful, and the situation will be less distressing.

Counsellor: So, Sonu, how was this week for you?
Sonu: As bad as can be!

Counsellor: Oh! That must have been difficult. What was it about the week that made it so bad?
Sonu: No, nothing. But I know no one cares.

Counsellor: What is it that people do that makes you feel that no one cares?
Sonu: Nobody told me that they were going out. They all went out and left me at home. Are they friends? These … what should I call them, selfish women! They do not care. I will not talk to them ever! Let them try to talk to me. I will show them.

Counsellor: It seems you are very upset. It also seems people excluded you from what they were doing and you feel hurt about it. I will like to share with you a way to make you feel less upset. Will you like to learn this method?
Sonu: Ok… whatever! But they should not have done this. I will teach them a lesson!

Counsellor: Do you know what makes us do what we do?
Sonu: (After some thought) No. What?

Counsellor: Let me ask you with an example. If you were walking outside and it started raining what would you do?
Sonu: I will run inside.

Counsellor: And what will Ranju do?
Sonu: She will start dancing!

Example continued

Counsellor: So, What will make you run inside and Ranju dance?
Sonu: We are different people. So!

Counsellor: That is true! What makes you different?
Sonu: So many things! I am fair, she is dark. Also she makes friends easily and I take time.

Counsellor: Also the way you think! So, when it rains she may think, “Oh! I will enjoy myself, it raining after all the heat. And you may think, “I’d better get inside quickly, if I do not want to catch a cold.”

Sonu: That is true! I do not want to get sick. If you get sick you are put in the sick room.

Counsellor: So, the way we think determines what we do. Let us go back to what you were telling me about what you felt when your friends went out without informing you. I once had a similar experience. I also felt very upset that one of my friends did not speak to me when we met in the market. He just looked at me and walked away without stopping. And we were very close friends.

Sonu: So, what did you do then?
Counsellor: I was very upset. I did not talk to him for two years.
Sonu: Oh! That is a long time! That is sad!

Counsellor: Yes, it was sad! So, why do you think I did not talk to him?

Sonu: He did not talk to you, that is why!

Counsellor: No, not that he did not talk to me, but the real reason was that I thought he did not talk to me because he did not care for me.

Sonu: Just like I thought about my friends. So what happened then? How did you start talking again?

Counsellor: We met again at another friend’s place. He asked me why I was not talking to him. I said, “Well you did not even recognize me the last time we met.” He asked, “When was that?” I told him about the incident. He said, “Oh! That was the time I heard about my mother being very unwell and I was too stressed. I was probably lost in my worries when you saw me in the market. I did not see you that day.” So if I had thought differently that day and said to myself, “Vinod is normally not like this, let me call him and find out if everything is alright.” Instead of thinking what I did, I would not have been angry with him and I would not have stopped talking to him.

Sonu: That is true!

Counsellor: Sometimes the way we think is negative. This makes us feel negatively and makes us do things that are unhelpful. If we learn to find out if our way of thinking is negative, then we can change it and be better able to do what we want to. It is possible to learn this method. Would you like to learn it?

Sonu: Is it tough? Do I think negatively?

Counsellor: All of us do at one time or the other. It is a simple method. You have to write your thoughts in different situations. We can do it together in the sessions first and then you can do it in between sessions as well. It will really help as you will learn to think positively about your abilities and about the future. You will also learn to think positively about people who are friends and find out how to respond to those people who should not be trusted.

### Identifying Automatic Negative Thoughts

The next step is to help the survivor keep a record of her thoughts in between sessions. Thoughts can be described as what you say to yourself in different situations. It is useful to demonstrate the thoughts in different situations before she starts recording.

If she is literate she could be helped to keep a ‘thought recorder’. (For an example of a thought recorder, please refer to Annexure I Reflect) A thought recorder is a diary. The survivor writes this every day. It has four columns. The first column is the record of situations in a day that made her feel bad or upset. The second column describes how she felt in that situation. The third column is a description of what she thought in that situation. The last column describes what she did in the situation.

If she is not literate she could be helped to make a thought recorder through a collage of pictures from magazines. Each column could have pictures depicting the situation, the feelings, the thoughts and the response respectively. Then during the session she can be helped to recognize the pattern as to how in some situations she has particular kind of thoughts and these thoughts lead to unhelpful actions.
Finding Alternate Thoughts

Once the survivor recognizes the patterns of thoughts, she can then be helped to brainstorm thoughts which are less negative (or more helpful) than the ones that she has. As she starts using this strategy of finding alternate lesser negative thoughts during the session, she can be encouraged to use the same strategy outside the session in real life situations.

Example

Sonu got an opportunity to run a small business to sell Ice creams. She felt very anxious and did not want to do it. The counsellor helped her think what it is about the situation that made her anxious.

Sonu said, “People will recognize me and say bad things about me.”

The counsellor then asked her if this thought was an unhelpful thought or helpful thought. Sonu recognized it as an unhelpful thought. Then together Sonu and the counsellor brainstormed more helpful thoughts.

They came up with the following list:

1. The chances of meeting people who know me are low.
2. Even if people say bad things about me, I do not have to react to them.
3. I know that I am not a bad person. This fact will not change whatever people may say.
4. If people say bad things about me, it says more about them than me.

Sonu then asked herself what she should do if she believed in these lesser negative thoughts.

She decided to take up the opportunity to sell ice creams.

Discovering and labeling errors of thinking

This step will be followed by helping the survivor to label her errors of thinking. This is done by describing the errors of thinking during the session by using flash cards and examples that she can understand. The counsellor can have a set of picture cards that describe the errors of thinking in story format. Once the survivor knows what kind of errors of thinking exist, then during the session she can discover her own errors of thinking through looking out for themes in her thought recorder.

The survivor can learn to say to herself which error of thinking she is making and how it is unhelpful for her each time she finds herself in situations where she feels bad. However, it is also important to continue to emphasize that there are times when it is not her thoughts that need to change, but the situation.

Challenging Negative Thoughts

The survivor then learns to use the following questions to challenge her negative thoughts:

Is this thought helpful or unhelpful for me?

If this thought is unhelpful, what will be a more helpful thought?

or

What is the evidence for the way I am thinking?

Am I making an error of thinking in focusing on this evidence?
These questions are asked together with the therapist first and gradually the survivor becomes proficient in using these skills in everyday situations.

As the survivor learns to use these techniques, she is able to set targets for herself, solve the problems that she faces and gradually challenge the negative thoughts that make her feel that she will not be able to achieve what she wants to.

The process of recovery is slow and gradual and has to be accompanied by the survivor having access to opportunities to be able to make choices, work and form relationships. If these avenues do not exist in the milieu in which she is staying, then it is difficult for her to be able to challenge her own thoughts.

h. Making Sense of the Experiences

This section deals with the following topics:

- Making Sense of the Experiences
- Dealing with Impact of Abusive Experiences

Making Sense of the Experiences

This is an ongoing process that starts when the survivor is feeling in control and wants to understand her exploitative and abusive experiences. Revisiting these experiences too many times and in too many details carries a risk that these memories may lead to retraumatization. However, the survivor also has a need to understand her experiences, and the therapist’s unwillingness to talk about these experiences may be interpreted by the survivor as a blame being attributed to her. She may think, “*It must have been my fault; that is why they are not talking about it*?”

The survivor may also end up reenacting the dynamics of abusive relationships in her other relationships by trying to please people, by not being able to trust or trusting too easily. This may need to be addressed by helping the survivor understand how those thoughts and behaviors that might have been helpful to her when coping with the abuse, may not be helpful for her now.

It is important to address these issues only when the survivor is willing to address them. A good indicator may be when the survivor is able to have a schedule for the day, participate in group activities, trust the therapist and understand how therapy works for her.

The first step is to seek the survivor’s permission to talk about the past and its impact on her.

The basic **skills required** in this process include:

- Validation
- Reflection
- Normalization

For details of the above skills, please refer to the manual *Sounds of Silence.*

The **objective** of the process is to help the survivor reattribute the blame away from herself, and to be able to voice what she feels and think about her exploitation, without being judged.
It is important to use indirect techniques for validation in groups before starting individual work on this issue e.g., using metaphors to help them understand their experiences.

Using Metaphors

*The Train Journey metaphor*

The journey of the survivor can be seen as equivalent to a train journey in which she has had to visit some stations where she was not treated well and some stations where she has been treated well. Now that she is at the station where she is safe and is being treated well, it is time to learn to cope with difficult stations/points in her life. This can be done by understanding how she was affected by the treatment at the other stations and also understanding what makes life unsafe.

*The purpose of this activity is to learn to protect one’s rights.* It is ideal to use this metaphor when the survivor is not showing too many impacts of trafficking, except having anger about how she was treated. This helps her outline what should change in the journey and also to express her anger.

*The Shattered Mirror metaphor*

*This is a useful tool for the survivor to understand the emotional impact of trafficking.*

Ask her:

1. If she was to look at her face in a mirror, what would she see? She would see her face in its completeness.
2. If she were to see her face in a shattered mirror, what would she see? She would see her face in parts.

The trafficking experiences have had a similar effect on her. There is a risk that she may see herself as ‘parts’. There are parts where she sees herself as a victim and helpless, and there are parts where she sees herself as a young person with needs and feelings as any other young person has. Sometimes she will see only the feelings and experiences related to trafficking as the experiences that define her future and this may limit her potential in life.

*The purpose of understanding her experiences related to trafficking is to help her see herself in completeness,* so that the reality of being helpless while she was being exploited does not become the *only* reality that she has to live with. Through recognizing the thoughts and feelings that belong to the point in her life when she was being exploited, she would be able to stop these thoughts, feelings and experiences controlling the rest of her life.

*Connecting the Dots*

*This is a metaphor to explain to the survivor how her thoughts and feelings become disoriented due to traumatic experiences.* This is a process to connect the experiences with each other to understand a complete whole, just as a picture emerges after connecting the dots.

*Dealing with Impact of Abusive Experiences*

The impact of abusive experiences on the survivors results in:

1. Self-blame and humiliation
2. Numbness, withdrawal and helplessness
Self-blame and Humiliation

The survivors of trafficking have experienced multiple traumas. They remember some key traumatic incidents vividly, but what remains largely is the loss of dignity, a sense of shame and excessive guilt for somehow being responsible for what happened to them. To be able to make sense of the trauma, the survivors need to be able to reduce the sense of self-blame and the sense of being humiliated.

It is important to deal with these impacts with two different strategies:

1. Distraction and Relaxation techniques: The events for which the survivor has a vivid memory come back to her and overwhelm her. This leads to avoidance by the survivor of anything that triggers the memory. The survivor may not recognize triggers to such memories. One strategy is to learn to deal with the anxiety through distraction and relaxation techniques.

2. Challenging Negative Memories: The most important strategy is to remind oneself that the type of vulnerability that was associated with the feeling of anxiety at the time of the trauma is not valid anymore; that they are valid thoughts from the past that have lost their significance now.

Challenging the vivid negative memories through placing the thoughts in the past gradually decreases the reality of these memories. It is then possible to cope with the anxiety and not avoid it. As there is no avoidance, the person is able to manage the anxiety, and the cycle gradually stops.

Similarly self-blame can also be conceptualized as a negative thought and the method described to challenge negative thoughts can be used to decrease self-blame.

Numbness, Withdrawal and Helplessness

The second type of impact of abusive experiences on the survivors is the amorphous sense of numbness, withdrawal and helplessness.

1. Having a structured routine: To be able to challenge the feelings of numbness and withdrawal, the survivor needs to be helped to structure her day. You must begin by helping the survivor have some schedule of activities in the week e.g. she could be invited to participate in the community meeting or walk with the person who befriends her when she joins the home, or listen to music. Then gradually you can help her add more activities that she enjoys so that she can develop a sense of mastery through them.

Once the activities have become a schedule, ask the survivor to rate on a scale of 0 to 10 as to how much pleasure she got if she was able to complete an activity, and also ask her to rate on a similar scale how difficult it was for her to complete the activity. This measurement helps her in two ways. One, it allows her to recognize how much pleasure or mastery the activity gives her. It also helps her not to minimize the achievement later.

Gradually she will be able to develop a sense of control over her immediate environment.

2. Challenging Negative Thoughts: The parallel activity that needs to be done is to help the survivor recognize the permanent negative thoughts underlying this feeling of helplessness. As she recognizes the permanent negative thoughts, she is able to learn to label them and challenge them. This allows her to feel less helpless.
The techniques of discovering negative thoughts and challenging them are mentioned in chapter five.

i) “What if?” Situations

This chapter includes some situations the counsellor may face during therapy with the survivor and how to deal with them.

1. What if the survivor cannot see any options and wants to hurt herself
2. What if the survivor is silent
3. What if the survivor is very anxious
4. What if the survivor wants a personal relationship with you
5. What if you have extremely positive or negative feelings towards a survivor

What if the survivor cannot see any options and wants to hurt herself

1. **Any statement by a survivor that she wants to hurt herself must be considered very seriously by you.**
2. Most people who want to hurt themselves do so. At some time, before they commit such acts, they may have shared the intent with someone whom they trust. Unfortunately, quite often the communication is lost because the person who is hearing it is not able to address it.
3. It is important to document and assess each person’s risk if she expresses the intent.
   1. The person has a **low risk** when she is getting occasional thoughts of harming herself, she does not really see it as an option and the factors stopping her and supporting her are more than the reasons to harm herself.
   2. The person has a **moderate risk** if she has thought about the self-harm event, if her support systems are not adequate and if she does not have any alternative coping strategy.
   3. The person is likely to have a **high risk** when she has thought and planned the self-harm event, when she is also abusing substances like drugs or alcohol, when there are no emotional attachments and if there is a history of self-harm in the past.
4. You must explore sensitively whether the survivor has been thinking about hurting herself, especially if she survivor seems to hint hopelessness or helplessness or she says that she is very distressed or if there is a sustained change in her mood or behavior.

**Start broadly and sensitively:**

**Examples:**

“Do you feel so desperate at times that you do not know what to do?”

“Does this feeling of hopelessness make you feel that the effort is not worth it, let me end it all?”

“Sometimes, people who have had difficult experiences in their lives end up feeling that they cannot cope with their difficulties any more. At times they get thoughts of harming themselves. Have you ever experienced such thoughts?”
If the answer to this series of questions is ‘yes’, then you need to explore further without panic.

The survivor trusts you. Do not say immediately, “No, you cannot do it.”

Start by saying, “If you are feeling so desperate, then things must be really bad.” Let her talk further about how she feels.

Then while she is doing that, explore about possible supportive people in the survivor’s life.

Go back to exploring more about the suicidal thought after you have some more information about who may help.

Has she contemplated this thought before this? Has she hurt herself in the past?

If the survivor has planned the act in detail, then she is more at risk.

If she has attempted a similar act in the past, she is more at risk.

If she does not see a future for herself, she is more at risk.

Still, do not panic yourself.

Ask her:

- What purpose would it fulfill?
- Who will be affected by her act?

By asking these questions, you just correct the balance sheet of reasons. All people who are suicidal also have reasons not to hurt themselves. If you can help them discover those reasons and highlight the reasons for not being impulsive, they can focus on other things.

Sometimes people can be talked out of the impulsive feelings by supporting them to think about their broad long-term goals. In the face of the long-term goals, the present difficulties look small.

The other technique is to talk about the present difficulty being only a phase of life, and that this difficulty will pass eventually. Use the simile of a fracture of a leg. Say that when you have a fracture of a leg you should not run. Similarly when you have a fracture of your confidence, it is important not to try and take important decisions in life.

When you end the session, do summarize an action plan for the survivor and also the possible support systems that she may have.

If the person has:

- **Low risk** you can end the session with an action plan for the next week.

  If the person has **moderate risk** then you should schedule to meet the person again and alert the care home to be more observant and have an action plan for the survivor.

  For all people who have a **high suicidal risk**, it is important to involve the local psychiatrist and ensure that there is someone with the person through the time till the risk is thought to be lower. Unfortunately this can lead to a heavy load on the care staff.

As the person who is at risk may feel secure and acknowledged through this process, it may become difficult to find an end point for this close observation. It is important to discuss a plan with the leadership and the whole team for any person who is at high risk for self harm or suicide.
Try and help them explore different solutions and possibilities.
Focus one dream, one hopeful event, one reason not to do it.
Get an access into their world of negative thoughts and you would help them hope again.

What If the survivor is silent

1. Do not switch off.

1. If you are meeting her for the first time:
   1. If the survivor is silent, introduce yourself and introduce the service.
   1. Give her space to say something.
   1. If she still does not speak, repeat the information in different words.

1. If she still does not talk:

   Reflect
   “You may be finding it difficult to say what you want to. It is difficult to talk to a stranger about what you are feeling, but sometimes it may help.”

1. Give space, if the silence continues. You can use the silence by just being with the person. Remember, if you are thinking about her and trying to be with her, your posture and tone of voice will convey that. It will be easier for the survivor to respond.

1. Highlight the need
   “I know that you are trying to make a decision whether to talk or not. It may be helpful to at least say what you are feeling about that; it may help you clarify some things.”

1. Highlight confidentiality and non-judgmental nature of the service.
1. Reestablish credibility by talking about how people feel when they are able to use the service and normalize the experience of not being able to talk.

“We are a service to help young people who have gone through difficult circumstances in their lives. When I meet people for the first time, initially there is a degree of hesitation in their minds. They do not know whether I would be able to understand them or not. What I say to them is, ‘I will definitely try to understand your point of view.’

Most people who use these sessions feel that they have been heard during the session. Of course, I do not have a magical wand, and everyone’s difficulties are unique to that person.

What I do is that I try to be with people through their times of distress. I do not tell people what to do or what not to do. I try and help them look for solutions that work for them....It helps...I know it is difficult, but it may be useful to try sharing some of what you are going through.”

This is a gist of what to say. It is useful to say it with a lot of pauses and continuously observing any sound that you catch, even the change of breathing, or a change of expression or posture. It is useful to reflect and use these as entry points for further conversation. The sounds and changes can be explored and reflected.
Rehabilitation and Prevention

If you are not getting a response after quite some time, try this:

“May be if I ask you questions, it will help you to say to me what you are going through. It is alright if you do not want to speak.

I will ask you a question. You can tap once if the answer is ‘yes’ and twice if it is ‘no’... You can then speak when you feel comfortable.”

If the survivor still does not respond, retry.

If the survivor has not responded for a significant time, you could say:

“May be you are finding it difficult to take a decision right now. Do you want to think about it for some more time?

You have a choice: I could be with you while you think or you may want me to come back later. If you want me to be with you while you make up your mind, you can nod and let me know.”

j. Never Leave the Space without Planning the Next Meeting

Also, you must discuss with the care home staff what happened in the session.

If the survivor is silent for long periods, she may be going through some situations/issues that are still hurting her at present. You must consider all survivors who are not talking as being at risk. Make sure the observation and attention levels are high for them.

What if the survivor is very anxious

You would have to take more control.

If she is unable to say what she wants because of her anxiety, say to her:

“I know things are very difficult for you. You sound extremely anxious. It will help me understand you better if you were to slow down a bit, and tell me what you are going through, one step at a time.”

She will slow down after this and then you would need to use summarizing to keep on letting her know that she is being heard.

It might also be useful to do frequent checks with her as to how she is feeling.

If she does not slow down, it may be important to try and make her go through a breathing exercise.

I am going to help you breathe fully, so that you feel less anxious.

Put one hand on your abdomen, open your mouth.

Take a deep breath and see your hand rise. Do not breathe through the chest, but through your abdomen.

Let the breath out now, slowly. Let us try it once more. Gradually take a breath in. Slowly see your hand rise, hold for a few seconds and then slowly breathe out.

You must try to do about twelve breaths per minute.

What if the survivor is very angry?

The survivor can be angry. She may be angry about the organization being too controlling, people not being accessible, not having information about the court case and when she will return home and people giving inconsistent messages to her.
The best way to cope with the survivors’ anger is to acknowledge it. It is important to acknowledge people’s feelings. Everyone has a right to feel what they are feeling. You may not agree with their reasons for feeling the way they do, but they have a right to their feelings.

“I hear you saying that you are angry with the service. It will really help me to help you, if you tell me more about what you are feeling and thinking.”

Another way to cope with anger is to find a point of agreement with the survivor.

“Yes, you are right. I have been extremely busy and you may have had difficulty in getting through to me. I can understand how you may be upset about it.”

After acknowledging anger and accepting feedback, you could suggest going back to what the issues were before the survivor became angry.

Do not be angry yourself, do not raise your voice, do not argue, and do not be defensive.

If a complaints and grievance procedure is available, you must help the survivor use the process and feel in control of her own situation. The team must know that it is your role to help the survivor use the process.

Also, a responsible person in the organization should make sure that there is an organizational response to the complaint made by the survivor.

If there are personal issues among staff members that arise out of this situation, the team process should have the space to discuss such issues, rather than sweeping them under the carpet.

Be careful that you do not end up criticizing your colleagues without understanding the complete issue. If after understanding the complete issue and hearing all perspectives you do feel that the survivor has been wronged, it is important for you to deal with it at the staff forum.

What if the survivor wants a personal relationship with you?

Sometimes the survivor may start seeing you in a role beyond that of a counsellor. She may see you as a parent, fall in love with you or think of you as an aggressor. The survivor projects on to you what belongs to other relationships. This may happen as a part of therapy. You are one of the few caring and consistent relationships that she has had. It is possible for her to misinterpret this caring as a personal liking for her. This is called transference.

It is important not to start seeing it as real. You cannot start believing that you have a special relationship with the survivor or some special skill because she likes you.

It is important to talk about this in your therapeutic sessions. It is important to redefine your role. You are a counsellor, your role is to help people find solutions for themselves. It is unhelpful for the survivor and you to have any other role or relationship.

It is also important to normalize the survivor’s experience by saying that it is not unusual for someone in therapy to feel the way she is feeling and this is more a result of the safety she feels in the relationship, as opposed to a special relationship.
If the survivor is unable to accept your role as a professional and challenges the boundaries of the relationship by making a special effort to meet you, trying to be too caring or too close, it is important to **discuss this with your supervisor with a neutral person being present.**

The important thing is **not to blame the survivor but to know the boundary of what is not acceptable in your role as a counsellor.**

**If the issue persists it may be useful to consider a change of therapist.**

The temptation to **use this relationship to motivate the survivor to do something for herself may carry a risk of hurting her** unwittingly. She may start having expectations from you that you cannot fulfill.

**It is important for the therapist to be consistent in his or her words and actions.** You cannot say that you have a professional role with the survivor and yet expect the survivor to do things for you that she does not do for others.

**If the survivor has negative feelings towards you, acknowledge this feeling.** Ask her what it is about your behavior that makes her feel threatened or angry with you.

- Be watchful of setting off triggers for such behavior by the survivor.
- Remain consistent in your behavior and within the boundary of your role.
- Do not feel personally hurt or see it as a reflection of you as a person.
- If the situation does not change, the survivor has a right to have another counsellor.
- Make sure there is no retribution or reprimand of the survivor because you have not been accepted as the therapist.

**What if you have extremely positive or negative feelings towards a survivor?**

Your role as a counsellor and your knowledge of the boundaries of your role protect you from having extreme positive or negative feelings towards survivors. Sometimes, however, all therapists may have to deal with a survivor who can trigger a response in the therapist. This response may be an extreme response like anger, rejection or even compassion or love. This is your response and belongs to your experiences. You may project on to the survivor what does not belong to her. This is called **counter transference.**

It is not for the survivor to deal with these extreme emotions that you have towards her, it is for you to deal with them in your supervision process. It is important that you bring this up in your supervision.

If you see your emotions being expressed behaviorally, it is important that rather than impacting the survivor, you withdraw from therapy and transfer care to some other counsellor.

However, even if you transfer care, it is still important to bring up the issue in your supervision process.

**k. Closing Therapy**

This chapter covers the following topics:

- How to plan closure of therapy
- How to deal with unplanned closure of therapy
Interpersonal Communication Skills

It is important to start the therapy with the intention of closing it. This will make the survivor understand that the process of therapy will come to a close.

Reasons for following a Process of Closure

It is important to follow a process of closure and termination for therapy. It helps the survivor cope with the issues of dependence and loss that she may have. It also helps the therapist to underline the gains that the survivor has made during the process of therapy. It emphasizes the survivor’s own abilities to cope with ongoing issues in life. It also helps the survivor to attribute the changes that have occurred during the therapy to herself i.e., that she was able to achieve these changes through her own efforts.

The process for planned closure of therapy

- It is important to share a possible endpoint for therapy when the assessment is over.
- It is important to review the progress of therapy every six sessions.
  - It allows the survivors to be able to correct course of their goals.
  - It also helps them recognize that they are moving towards their goals.
- Mid Therapy Review: After around six months of therapy, it is important to have a mid therapy review in which all the goals of therapy are reviewed, the progress is reviewed and new goals are set for the next six months.
  - It is also important to review the closure date at this time and have a tentative time frame for closure.
    - You must also bring up the issue of how the survivor will feel around the time of closure. It has been one the most important trustworthy relationships for the survivor. It will be normal for the survivor not to want to end this relationship, but the knowledge that she can close such a relationship and survive is also extremely empowering.
    - After this the reviews continue as before. Another three months later it will be useful to finalize the date for closure and spend some time discussing the needs of the survivor after closure. If it seems that the need for therapy will continue, it is important at this stage to discuss this with your supervisor and change the date, if the survivor agrees to do so. Trying to extend therapy at the last minute is never helpful for the survivor.
- When nearly four to five weeks are left for therapy it is important to work on the following issues:
  - Though it is important to focus on closure, it is also important to continue to work on other issues as well.
    - Date of ending: Make sure that it does not coincide with any anniversaries or other significant events in the survivor’s life. Make sure that there are no other predictable stressful events in her life around that date.
    - Acknowledge the feelings of the survivor: She may have feelings of sadness about the loss of the relationship. She may feel angry with you. She may
question the basis of the relationship by saying that you were not as affected by the closure as she was.

The best way to deal with her feelings is to acknowledge the feelings, and at the same time emphasize the benefits of closure and gains that she has made in the therapy.

It is alright to acknowledge your feelings about the closure. You can be a role model in how you acknowledge the feelings, but do not get overwhelmed by them.

Help the survivor plan possible stressful situations in the future:
- It is important to go over the possible stressful situations that the survivor may have gone through, and then help her brainstorm the response, while using the skills that she has acquired.
- She must prepare a calendar of events and her possible responses.
- It is important for her to prepare a list of successes that she has had in the last year.
- It is also useful to have a list of skills and supports that she has had at present.

Help her recognize the gains that she has made. It is important that she has been able to attribute the new skills and abilities that she has acquired as something which was the result of her own work, rather than your effort.

Plan a review meeting around three months after you end therapy.
Also ask her how she would like you to respond to her, if you were to meet her in social situations or in some other context.

Help her have a list of other support systems that she may be able to use when the therapy ends.

Deal with your own feelings about closure in your supervision.

Unplanned Closure of Therapy

If the counsellor cannot complete the therapy

If for any reason you cannot complete therapy with the survivor, it is important to inform her that you will not be available.

You should arrange a meeting with her so that she can express how she feels about your not being able to complete the work.

You must introduce her to another counsellor.

It is also important to summarize the work done and share the plan with the new counsellor.

If for any reason a meeting is not possible, it is important to write to the survivor.

If the survivor terminates the therapy

If the survivor terminates therapy or has to leave in an unplanned way, it is important to do the following:

Summarize the issues discussed and skills gained in the therapy.
A tool that is extremely effective is writing a joint letter to the next therapist in the organization. It helps the survivor to be in control of the situation and the therapeutic process.
If no further therapy is available or needed it is important to summarize the skills gained.

It is also important to brainstorm the difficult situations that the survivor may come across in the next few months.

I. Clinical Supervision

This section covers the following topics:
- Need for Clinical Supervision
- Important issues for Supervisee
- Important Issues for Supervisor

Clinical Supervision

It is important to have regular clinical supervision as part of the process of helping survivors deal with their trauma.

Clinical supervision process is different from administrative supervision. Administrative supervision addresses the roles, activities and infrastructure support that a counsellor requires to complete his or her work.

Clinical supervision is a process of learning which enables the counsellors to do the following:
- Learn skills of counselling through role modeling
- Learn how to analyze the difficulties that the survivors are facing, and conceptualize interventions for them
- Become aware of their professional role and how to maintain the boundaries of this role
- Become aware of the emotional impact that the counselling process has on them
- Become aware of the pattern of the survivor’s response to various situations, and how it impacts the survivor
- Be able to evaluate their skills and grow further as professionals

A counselling process without supervision is unsafe. It is important to put in place a supervision process, even if it is once a month with someone who has significant clinical experience, and is able to clearly watch out and observe the following:
- The pattern of response that a counsellor has so as to ensure that the counsellor’s judgments/biases do not impact the survivor negatively.
- The boundaries between the professional and personal life are maintained.
- The process of counselling remains focused on the needs of the survivor, and not on the needs of the counsellor.

A Note for the Supervisee

As a supervisee it would be useful for you to keep the following issues in mind:

Not sharing all the information
- Supervision is an important tool for you to grow as a counsellor. At times there is resistance in one’s mind about sharing information with the supervisor about what is happening in the therapy sessions. The reason for this may be your belief that by
hiding your mistakes you will be able to impress the supervisor that you are a good counsellor.

If you find yourself doing this, you have to remind yourself that it may help you feel more confident in the short-term, but you will always be unaware of what belongs to you and what belongs to the survivor. You will feel unsure as a counsellor if you are not able to utilize the process of supervision.

Becoming too dependent on the Supervisor

Another common response of supervisees to supervision process is becoming excessively dependent on the supervisor. You may end up asking the supervisor about every word and gesture that you need to make. This deskills you. To be a good therapist, you must believe you have the skills to work with people.

It is important to prepare for your sessions with your supervisor. It is important to share your anxieties with your supervisor, but it is also important to share your solutions.

Your personal need for therapy

You also need to recognize that the supervisor is not your personal therapist. The supervision session is only an opportunity for you to discuss any difficulties in your experiences at work. If there is a personal need for therapy and you recognize it, it is important to seek professional help for yourself from a therapist other than your supervisor.

A Note for the Clinical Supervisor

To be able to fulfill the role of a clinical supervisor, it is important to recognize that you will have to use different strategies at different stages of supervision.

Advise and instruct: In the initial phase of supervision with a new counsellor it is important to advise and instruct as a strategy. This is completed with modeling of skills and professional boundaries.

Consultative: As the counsellor grows, the role of the supervisor becomes more consultative.

Collaborative: Eventually supervision becomes a collaborative relationship where both the supervisee and supervisor can share and support each other.

Monitoring and evaluation of skills and boundaries are the most important roles that the supervisor has.

It is important to give feedback to the supervisees. It is their right to receive feedback.

As there are very few mental health professionals in South Asia, Saarthak offers supervision to counsellors through e-mail and phone consultations.

Sarthak also helps people start peer supervision groups. Peer supervision groups of new counsellors without experienced trainers being involved can become risky as the mistakes might be compounded by the group consensus.

VI) The Evidentiary Interview

Evidentiary interview is the interview that is conducted to enable the survivor to narrate her experiences which provide the statement of evidence against traffickers. The objective is to get an accurate and a reliable statement from the survivor. You do not have to
determine what the survivor says. You only have to make it possible for the survivor to say what she wants to say.

The evidentiary interview may be the interview which is conducted by the Investigative Officer for the purposes of a statement under Section 161 IPC or it may be an interview in front of the magistrate under Section 164 IPC.

The present practice of the survivor being interviewed by multiple people with multiple objectives at multiple times can be and should be easily replaced by following a multidisciplinary approach to the interview and by working as a team. The approach goes against the objective of being survivor friendly and also alienates the survivor.

This chapter is divided into following sections:

A) The Interview Process
B) The Interview Skills

A. The Interview Process includes the following stages

   I) Preparatory Stage of the Interview

The process of preparing for the interview has the following stages:

   a) Preparing yourself for the interview
   b) Organizing a team for interviewing
   c) Analyzing the available information
   d) Preparing the survivor for the interview
   e) Preparing the space for the interview

II. The Interview:

   a) The beginning of the interview
   b) The middle of the interview
       Free Narrative
       Seeking Clarifications
   c) The closure of the interview
   d) Documenting the Interview

The section on Interview Skills includes five Helpful Methods:

Helpful Method 1: Be Non Judgmental
Helpful Method 2: Be an Active and a good listener
Helpful Method 3: Asking Helpful Questions
Helpful Method 4: Preventing Retraumatization
Helpful Method 5: Managing Difficult Situations during the Interview

A) THE INTERVIEW PROCESS

I) The Preparatory Stage

a) Preparing yourself for the interview

It is very important for the interviewers to have the background knowledge of the issues of trafficking and impact of trauma on children.
Rehabilitation and Prevention

Counter trafficking is a significant area of your work. You should prepare yourself for working with the survivors.

You need to become familiar with the provisions of the law, best practices and Standard Operating Protocols and the Legal Framework to address trafficking.

You should also obtain information about the process of trafficking and modus operandi of traffickers in your area. Understand possible source areas, transit points and destination areas for the survivors you may come across in your jurisdiction. Be aware about the modes of transport usually used, train routes, key junctions on such routes and road transport. You must gather information about points where exploitative ‘work’ takes place. If you have marked the journey, the traveler i.e., the survivor would feel at ease with you when you are listening to her story.

You must read chapter 1 of this manual which outlines key psychosocial impact of trafficking. It will be helpful to meet a few survivors of trafficking who have been rehabilitated through your associate NGO. If they consent take feedback from them about what could have been done differently for them during the rescue and judicial process. Ask them what helped and what did not. This feedback is the most important way of learning because it points out what goes wrong in investigative and judicial process from the survivors’ perspective.

It is easy to understand all the above by associating yourself with the local NGO working on the issue of counter trafficking. If you know these details then it is easy for you to be aware of the issues and respond to the survivor in an informed manner. However, prior knowledge of the process of trafficking should not lead to any fixed assumptions about experiences of a particular survivor. Each survivor has her own story to tell, even if she went through the same traumatic process. The knowledge however, enables you to explore what the survivor is saying in a more facilitative manner.

Make a resource directory for your police station. It can be a file with a few pages containing information about local resources that you could seek support from for the care of the survivor during and after rescue. It should have list of possible NGOs and people who could be involved in the first response and during the interview process. It should also include a list of safe places and rehabilitation processes which can provide for the needs of the survivors. It should also have names of experts on the issue of interviewing children and survivors of trafficking who will be willing to support you in the interview process.

b) Organizing a team to interview

The Interviewing Team should include a police officer (IO), a member of the NGO with interview skills specially experience and training of conducting interviews with traumatized individuals and of providing support the survivors of trafficking. It may be useful to include a counsellor who is trained to facilitate such a process of giving evidence. At least one of these three people should be a woman.

It is important to try to ensure that people who have multiple skills can be part of the team. The counsellor or the person from the NGO should have knowledge of the rights of the survivor and local law which facilitates those rights. Another option could be that a Victim Assistance Lawyer is included in the team. The provision for a victim assistance lawyer exists in the case law in India especially in the cases of sexual violence. Such a lawyer would be aware of the rights of the survivors of trafficking and can also be trained in facilitative interviewing techniques.
A common argument as to how we will find such people in the interiors of India needs to be addressed squarely by policy makers by ensuring that all professionals who may come in contact with survivors of trafficking are at least trained in basic survivor friendly interviewing skills as a part of their continuing professional development.

c) Analyzing the Available information

The team should ideally meet before the interview. This is to acquaint themselves with each other and with existing information about the case.

The existing information can be divided along two dimensions:

The first dimension is information that is available regarding:

1. Recruitment
2. Transit
3. Destination
4. Nature of Exploitation and its impact on the survivor

You may have:

1. Information that needs to be confirmed
2. Information that has already been corroborated
3. Information that you think the survivor is likely to have but you do not know the exact details

It is best to make a grid of the existing information so that unnecessary duplication is avoided and also nothing is missed out. The second dimension that may help you prepare for the interview is to analyse the information that you have on the basis of what the survivor has already shared, what they have alluded to but not detailed, what they do not realize to be important and relevant because of how they have normalized their experiences.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information which has been corroborated specify sources</th>
<th>Information which needs further detailing by the survivor</th>
<th>Information that the survivors normally may be able to provide</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre Recruitment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Transit</td>
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<tr>
<td>Destination</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Exploitation and Its Impact</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

After analyzing the existing information along these dimensions, it will be necessary to prioritize which areas of the survivor’s experiences need to be explored further and exploration of which areas may retrigger the traumatic memories.
Such an approach will ensure that there is no duplication of questions that are explored with survivors by professionals from agencies of law enforcement and care and support.

d) Preparing the survivor for the interview

There are three steps in preparing the survivor for the evidentiary interview:

1. Assessing the survivor for fitness to be interviewed
2. Informing the survivor about the process of interview
3. Seeking Consent

1) Assessing the survivor’s fitness for interview

A survivor may not be in a fit state of mind to be able to participate in the interview immediately after the rescue. The rescue is an end point of many years of trauma. It is like a fast train coming to a sudden halt. It jolts you. The rescue process itself may have been traumatic for the survivor. The survivor is unlikely to be able to make an accurate recall of the events in such a state of mind and is unlikely to cooperate with the process because she is preoccupied with her own safety.

Assessment of fitness of the survivor is best done by a counsellor through the process of observation and not the law enforcement officer.

If the survivor is fit for the interview then the survivor should be informed about the process and objective of the interview.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>While assessing whether the survivor is fit for participating in an evidentiary interview watch out for the following:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Survivor is able to understand and communicate simple requests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Survivor is accepting food and water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Survivor is able to look after personal hygiene</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Survivor is of average intelligence and is able to understand what is required of her in the interview process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Survivor is not silent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Survivor is not isolating herself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Survivor is not being irritable and aggressive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Survivor has been able to sleep for a few hours after the rescue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Survivor is orientated to time, place and person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Survivor is not showing any abnormal behaviour (like smiling/laughing/crying inappropriately, talking to herself, gesticulating as if she can hear or see people who are not there, not being aware of herself, socially inappropriate behaviour, being extremely suspicious etc.) which shows that she may be suffering from a mental illness</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2) Informing the survivor about the Interview

It will be useful for a counsellor to sit with the police officer and help the survivor understand the process of the interview. During this preparatory stage no questions regarding the process of trafficking and the trauma thereof should be asked of the survivor.

The survivor does not know the technical words or at times may not even recognize that she was trafficked. She perhaps does not know that there is a law which protects
her rights as a person. She may not know that what was done to her was a crime.

So start with a statement which tells the survivor that the reason she is being interviewed is because law enforcement agencies and NGO are of the view that a crime was committed against her. Then describe the process of trafficking in general without mentioning any details of this particular case and what activities are recognized as criminal activity by the law.

Then explain to her that her help is being sought to understand what was done to her and help the police ensure that the people who committed this crime are brought to justice. Let her know that it is not she who is going to ‘take revenge’ but the government whose laws have been broken which has this process to ensure that no one is harmed. She is only helping in the process because she may have been witness to things that happened. Remind and reassure her that she is not in any way being considered as a person who committed any crime.

It is important for the survivor to know the answers to the following questions while you are interviewing her:

1. What is the crime of trafficking and what is recognized as criminal activity by the law?
2. What is the purpose of the interview?
3. Where will the interview take place?
4. Who all will be part of the interview process?
5. How will the interview be recorded/documentated?
6. How will documentation be stored?
7. Who will have access to the record of interview/statement?
8. How much time will the interview last for?
9. Whether she can talk to her counsellor or lawyer during the interview process?
10. Will she and her significant others be safe and what measures will be taken to ensure this safety?
11. How can she stop the interview process if she feels distressed?
12. Can she stop the interview if she does not want to talk any more without ascribing any reason?
13. Who can she complain to if she feels harmed or negatively affected by the process

Reassure her that she will have full control of the interview process. She can see the room where she is going to be interviewed. She can meet the people who will interview her. She will have someone from the NGO working with her- a person whom she trusts to support her during the interview process.

Explain to her the importance of her being able to say what happened and how it will help ensure that such crime of trafficking decreases and also ensure that people who harmed her face consequences.

Share with her how the purpose of interview is to get on record her statement about events in her own words. Let her know that she is not being tested. There is no right or wrong answer to the questions that are asked. She just has to say what she knows. She does not have to make up things she does not remember and she does not have to know why things were done. She can only talk about what happened, when it happened, who were involved and how it happened. She can also talk about the impact it had on her. She can take her own time to say what she wants.
Let her know she can stop the interview at any time, take a break, eat food and just be with the NGO counsellor if recounting of the events makes her upset. She can also reschedule the interview if she feels unable to continue with it.

Explain to her that she will have to appear before a court to repeat what she says here. Let her know that there maybe a considerable period of time between the present statement and appearance in the court. Inform her that her life will not stop during this waiting period.

Reassure her that the process of appearing before the court will be safe and she will get more information regarding that process. Let her know that the people who are accused of the crime will have access to her statement and may ask her questions about what she has said in the court. At the same time reassure her that such questioning is controlled by the judge to ensure her safety and dignity.

Ask her if she has any more questions that come to her mind. Give her time to make up her mind. Arrange to meet her later for her to consent to be interviewed.

The above session requires time. You need to practice sharing of information with a person who has already been part of such a session. It is important to remember that the survivor may not understand you if you use technical/police language, so simplify your language.

The survivor may feel threatened and confused if you rush through the sharing of information process.

e) Preparing the place for the interview

Ideally the interview should take place in a neutral environment not the police station. The office or the counselling room facilities of the NGO working with the survivor may be a good place to interview the survivor.

If the interview/statement is being conducted under Section 164 with the involvement of the magistrate, it is better to try and arrange this interview in the magistrate’s chamber rather than in the court. If the court is the only option where the interview can be conducted, then the survivor needs to be prepared beforehand regarding the process, place and people who will be present during the process.

Even if police station is the place of interview it can be made into a neutral place.

All places of interview need to make the survivor feel safe and comfortable.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A survivor friendly place for interview</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Should not be</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. In a custodial environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. A place where traffickers and their representatives have access to the survivor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Make the survivor feel that they are being accused of any crime or misdemeanors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Should not be used for other purposes during the course of the interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Should not allow access to any persons other than those responsible for the interview or supporting the survivor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Should be:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. A room which is not too large or too small, which offers privacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. The room should be well lighted and airy, with light colours on the wall, with a simple decoration on the wall to make it look pleasant.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The room should have an arrangement of three to four comfortable chairs, with a centre table. The space between the chairs should be such as to allow enough leg space and chairs should not be so far apart from each other that it is difficult for people to listen to what the survivor is saying. Ideally only two to three other people should be in the room with the survivor.

If a room is not available for interviewing it may be possible to cordon off an area and use a screen to create privacy and safety. If it is not possible to do this it may be possible to create a tented room in the grounds to create a place for interviewing. It is also possible to use floor seating with durrie if chairs are not available.

In a rural environment where the interview is to be conducted away from the police station and resources of the NGO, the police officer can choose to use any of the community spaces that may exist. School classrooms, gram sabha room or primary health care centre could all be spaces for talking with the survivor. It is important to follow the process of having a woman officer or support worker with whom the survivor feels comfortable and let the survivor be in control of the process.

The reason these alternatives are being mentioned is to remind ourselves that it is the attitude and stance of the police officer to try to ensure the best interest of the survivor that matters to convey a sense of security to the survivor of trafficking, not just the presence of some soft toys in the room. Limitations of space and resources can never come in the way of a survivor friendly police officer.

If the location allows (the likelihood of this is rare, but with decreasing cost of such equipment it may soon be possible for some police forces to have access to such interview rooms) it may be possible to have other people to be in an adjacent room with a close circuit camera looking into the interview room and with cordless mikes for the survivor and the interviewers. Or there could also be a one way mirror between the two rooms. It possible to use such technology, there is case law that allows for use of such technology during the court room process. (See the methods in the next chapter) But whenever such technology is used the survivor needs to know that such technology is being used and needs to give consent for the same.

The advantage of using the technology is that it decreases the need for multiple interviews as senior police officers can ask whatever is missed out through the interviewer in the room. The other advantage is that the interview can be recorded by the close circuit camera and such a videotaped interview may be allowed as evidence.

II) Stages of Interview

a) The Beginning: Introduction and Rapport Building

It is imperative to introduce yourself and the objective of the interview. Aspects of introduction and providing the information to the survivor have already been discussed and are not being repeated here.

You can use this phase to provide information to the survivor as described earlier.

This phase can also be used to get to know the survivor by talking about neutral things and their likes and dislikes.

Some survivors may get restless if this phase lasts for too long. So be flexible and see how she is responding to the conversation about things other than what you are meant to discuss.
Reassure her that it is alright if she does not know all the answers. She can say, “I do not know.” in response to questions for which she does not have answers.

b) The Middle of the Interview

*Free Narrative*

After the introduction to the interviewer and the process of interviewing the survivor should be helped to recount her experiences of trafficking. No clarifications should be sought at this stage. It is important to use the skills of listening during this stage. It is alright to set the context by saying,

“Today we will talk about the time between your leaving home and family till now. I will like you to tell me about your experiences during this time.”

The survivor is likely to talk about her problems, especially problems which she is facing now rather than what happened in the past. Do not stop her, hear her out.

She will want to talk only about her problems, but it is also important to understand her as a person.

The following issues should be kept in mind while trying to understand the survivor’s problems:

1. **She may have multiple problems.**
2. **She may be very anxious while expressing these problems. She may be silent or she may be angry.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The survivor will come up with an overwhelming amorphous mass as a problem, something that goes on like this:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Life is bad</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>I am bad</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Everybody is bad</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>No one loves me</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Everybody thinks I am no good</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>My future is no good</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Common problems that the survivor may have:**

1. Difficulties in making a choice about being a witness
2. Relationship difficulties at the protection or shelter home
3. Reliving the past
4. Feeling low about herself
5. Being very anxious about the future
6. Being aggressive
7. Being isolated
8. Being unable to control her anger
9. Being unable to express her needs
10. Being unable to plan future
11. Having negative thoughts and feelings about herself and her future
12. Trying to please everyone
13. Not being able to say ‘no’
14. Being addicted to tobacco and/or alcohol
15. Living with HIV/AIDS
As she narrates her problems after some time summarize the problems and help her move towards recounting her experiences during the process of trafficking.

You could say something like:

“From what you have told me it seems that you have faced a number of difficulties. Sometimes people have done things that you did not want them to do or did not expect them to do. This seems to have hurt you. You are now finding it hard to trust people and think about a future where there will be no problems. You also feel extremely helpless. Have I understood your difficulties to some extent when I say this? Would you want to tell me more?”

You can then guide the conversation towards the process of trafficking.

As a broad framework it is useful to divide the time that elapsed between the survivor leaving home and present into smaller segments:

In the first instance you could divide the time elapsed into:

**Pre-recruitment stage:** This implies the condition of the survivor in her family of origin. Some survivors face difficult circumstances like violence and abuse even before they are trafficked. It is important to know this reality of the survivor because it affects her ability to be hopeful about future and she may normalize the experiences during the exploitative stage.

**Recruitment Stage:** During the process of recruitment the survivor may not know that she was bought or sold, even till the time she starts this interview. The survivor may still be under the deception that she was brought to the destination point for work. It is essential to assess the survivor’s perception about recruitment, because this will influence the level to which she may co-operate with the law enforcement agency. If the survivor feels strongly that she was not recruited for trafficking and this is contrary to what you know, just make a note of it in the early stages of the interview. It is best not to confront her or clarify anything during free narrative stage of the interview.

**Transit:** The description of the transit of the survivor from the source area to the destination is extremely important, not only for the evidence in the present case, but it could also reveal a pattern across cases and thus expose the nexus of an organized crime. The interviewer must explore all forms of transportation, transit safe houses or guest houses, eating places etc. The transit process may also include temporary destination points where the survivor may have been exploited for a few months before moving her to the final destination.

**Destination and Exploitation:** The description of destination overlaps with the description of the exploitative process. The description may include points of exploitation and methods of exploitation.

The survivor is likely to jump in her narrative from one phase of this time to another phase. It is alright, do not get unruffled by this hopping from one time zone to another. The division is only to help you address all elements of the process of trafficking and analyse the information. The division is not to structure the interview in this manner.

**Seeking Clarifications**

The free narrative of the survivor should be followed by a stage of clarification. It is important to explore the following areas during the clarification stage to ensure
completeness, at the same time enabling the survivor to go back to spontaneously recounting the experiences once you have triggered the conversation through a clarifying question.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area/Issue to be explored</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identification data, Name, Present Age, Age at the time of being recruited, Education, Place of origin, When she was rescued, Present status of the case</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview date, Interviewers, Place of Interview, Consent for Interview</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Pre recruitment:**
1. Who all are at home?
2. What do her parents do?
3. What does she think about the family?
4. What does she like about the family?
5. What does she not like about her family?
6. Whom does she hold responsible for her being trafficked?
7. What does she think about her community?
8. What contact has she had with her family after trafficking?
9. What does the family know about her experiences?
10. What does she want to tell her family about her experiences?
11. Does she fear the family?
12. Is someone from the family or the community in touch with the traffickers?
13. Does fear that some one from the family may be harmed by the traffickers?

**Recruitment:**
The survivor obviously does not understand the word recruitment, so the word may be replaced by “brought to Delhi (or any other the place of destination)
1. What was she told at the time of recruitment?
2. What were the means of recruitment?
   - Lure
   - Coercion
   - Manipulation
   - Deception
   - Debt Bondage
3. Who all recruited her?
4. Did they have any associates who helped them?
5. What role did the family play in the recruitment process?

**Transit**
1. How much time did it take from the place of origin to the final destination?
2. What were the means of transport?
3. Who helped in the transport process?
4. Was there any familiarity between the recruiting person and the person who helped in the transport?
5. Where all did they stop during the transit?
6. Did the recruiting person seem to know the people whom they met during the transit?
Interpersonal Communication Skills

Were any phone calls made at this time?
Were any entries made in guest house registers?
Did the survivor face any atrocity or exploitation during the transit?
If yes, did it amount to justiceable offence? Who committed the offence?

Destination
To whom did the recruiting person transfer the custody of the survivor?
Were any other people involved in the transaction?
Was the survivor witness to any agreement between the two parties? Did money exchange hands? Was any other promise made to the recruiting person by the person who took the custody of survivor?
Who all were aware of this transaction?
Who all benefited from this transaction?
What means of threat, lure, manipulation or coercion were used to begin the exploitation of the survivor?

Exploitation
What was the nature of exploitation of the survivor?
Was there any immediate sexual abuse or physical violence to ensure that she was compliant with what the traffickers wanted her to do?
Was she influenced to think of police as a threat?
Were her travel and identity documents taken away from her?
Was she restrained from all social contact and kept under constant supervision?
Was she moved from location to location to ensure that she was not able to form any relationships?
Did the survivor face sexual exploitation?
Did the sexual exploitation amount to rape?
Was the survivor’s movement restricted by the traffickers?
Was an attempt made on the life of the survivor as part of threatening her?
Was she given to understand that she would have to pay off a loan?
Was she made to feel that she was under debt?
Was her money or property taken away from under false pretext and misappropriated?
What were the means employed by the traffickers to sell sex?
Who were the customers/exploiters of the survivors?
Was the survivor forced to participate in any perverse act? Was the survivor forced to or manipulated to participate in making of pornographic material?
Was this pornographic material distributed through channels like Internet?
Did she suffer from any disabling injury or chronic physical or mental illness as an impact of the trafficking?
What was the psychological and developmental impact on the survivor because of trafficking?

For some of these areas the survivor will be able to give information directly, but for other areas the survivor may need help in the form of clarifying questions. The survivor’s statement may be corroborated by material evidence or by expert testimonial evidence wherever possible. It is important to search for evidence at all points of the chain of trafficking to be able to identify all the people involved in the process of trafficking.
c) Closure of the interview

It is important to bring the interview to closure by summarizing and thanking the survivor for her support. The closure of the interview should start at least half an hour before actually closing the interview so as to help the survivor regain her composure and say anything that she might have wanted to say but avoided saying. So when you think you are nearing the close of the interview you could say, “We will soon be coming to the end of this interview I am going to think for sometime if I have missed out on anything that I wanted to know but have not been able to ask. I want you also to think if there is anything else that you wanted to tell me.”

You could also acknowledge the psychological impact of the interview on the survivor by saying, “This conversation must have brought back many difficult memories to you. You have been brave by participating in this process. If any of the memories continue to bother you please do let your counsellor know, she will be able to help you put them to rest.”

You could also leave room for further disclosure and contact by letting her know how she can contact you or other members of the team if she has anything to ask for say regarding the case.

She may begin to trust you and she may contact you for her concerns beyond the judicial process. At that time it is best to guide her to establish contact with the counsellor.

d) Documenting the interview

It is possible to keep the name and other identification details of the individual confidential and use only a pseudonym or girl or person in the records that are likely to be made public so as to limit access to the survivor and protect her rights.

It is essential to transcribe the interview verbatim. As far as possible the words of the survivor should not be paraphrased. The information should be categorized under different phases of the trafficking process to ensure no information is lost in the flowing verbatim account.

A videograph or audio recording of the interview may be helpful but may not be admissible as evidence. All the same if the survivor gives consent it is useful to videograph the interview as it can act as a good method of refreshing one’s memory while transcribing and this can also be extremely useful as a way of helping the survivor refresh her memory before the court appearance.

The survivor, especially a child, may use other methods of communication like drawing the process of trafficking or make indicative representation of the sexual exploitation rather than saying it in words. It is important to preserve this paper as part of evidence.

It is also useful to get the NGO members of the interviewing team to document their perception of the survivor’s mental state during the interview. They could be seen as experts and their comments be treated as those of an expert witness.

The description of the demeanor and the expressions of the survivor while they are telling their story is equally important to document and can be included in the case dairy.

B) THE INTERVIEW SKILLS

These are skills and principles that we all use in our daily conversations. This part of the manual will allow you recognize the helpful methods of interviewing that you already use and help you name them, so that you can rehearse and use the helpful methods over
and over again. This part of the manual will also outline some unhelpful methods and skills of interviewing which the survivors find difficult and do not respond well to such methods.

HELPFUL METHOD 1: BE NON-JUDGMENTAL

All of us are judgmental from time to time. We form judgments about people and things that we have an experience of and sometimes we form judgments about groups of people we have not met too often but have heard about in our everyday life.

Reflect:
For example, if you see someone in a wheelchair you may form a judgment about their capacity to do things for themselves.
If you see a senior officer who is polite you may form judgments about his being able to control his officers.
These judgments may not be true representation of the facts and may just be generalizations we have made based on very little information.
Obviously all of us have seen people on the wheelchair who are very effective workers and we know police officers who are polite and great leaders of their officers.
Similarly, we may carry judgments about the survivors of trafficking. These judgments stop us from observing the survivor accurately and also come in the way of our forming a professional relationship with the survivor.

Some common judgments which people carry about the survivors of trafficking include:
1. She is doing it for easy money.
2. She likes it.
3. She is characterless and she deserves what happened to her.
4. She could have stopped these people from harming her if she wanted to.
5. She could have run away from that place.
6. All of them are a part of the gang.
7. She is used to lying.
8. She is habituated to sex.
9. She comes from a bad family.
10. This is the only way she can survive her poverty.

It is difficult to respect someone if you have such judgments about them. If you have these judgments these will become mental blocks which may stop you from understanding the pain of the survivor. These judgments are likely to be reflected in your behaviour and use of language with the survivors.
Do you have these judgments about survivors?

Find out for yourself:
For each of the statements given above say whether you Strongly Agree, Agree, Do Not Know, Disagree or Strongly Disagree.
If you do not know, disagree or strongly disagree write down what is your alternative belief about the survivors as far as that statement is concerned.
If you agree or strongly disagree ask yourself, “What is the evidence that I have to support this belief? Read the first chapter of this manual and help yourself challenge the belief.

How to recognize if you are being judgmental?
If you try to avoid taking on cases of human trafficking
If you have strong negative feelings towards survivors of trafficking
If you become tense (your muscles become taut, you are worried, you become restless etc.) or detached while interviewing survivors of trafficking
If you use adjectives or negative descriptions for survivors which treat them as a group (examples: ‘Ye saabladikyan to aisi hi hotaai hain’, all these girls are the same.’)
If you find yourself being dismissive of the survivors’ stories
If you find yourself enjoying the stories told by the survivors
If you find yourself mentally arguing with what the survivors are saying

If we think of the survivor in a judgmental manner then we are likely to blame her, moralize to her, become detached from her pain or be angry with her. If we act on the basis of our judgments about the survivors rather what they are saying about their experiences and how they are feeling, we will end up being neglectful and hurtful.

While listening to evidence please do not form conclusions about the survivor, she is not on trial.

HELPFUL METHOD 2: BE A GOOD AND ACTIVE LISTENER:
Active listening involves listening in a manner the survivor know that you are listening and you care. This can be done through non verbal communication, not interrupting her, summarizing what she has said and asking clarifying questions after the survivor has finished what she wants to say.

WHAT NOT TO DO WHILE LISTENING:

Reflect
Imagine you want to share something extremely important to you with your life partner. She/he continues to either keep on speaking or doing something else. Or she/he looks away or looks into distance or begins justifying herself/himself. Imagine how would you feel? Worse if she/he starts arguing with you or blaming you. Would you continue to talk? It is quiet likely that you would stop speaking or feel angry. The survivor is no different.

Do not keep on speaking while you are trying listen: If you do not give space or time to the survivor when you are interviewing and you keep asking questions and answering them yourself or narrating your own experiences it becomes difficult for the survivor to say what she wants to.
**Do not be inflexible:** While it is important to know which areas you need to explore, you do not have to go sequentially through a structured form. Allow the survivor to take the lead in what she wants to say. Follow her and explore what she is saying as you would in any conversation. If there are things that are left out of what you wanted to explore, you can always come back to them. The best way to learn and document the experiences of a survivor will be through an unstructured interview with very few clarifying questions.

**Do not be straight faced:** Listening without reacting and showing any emotions is not helpful when you are listening to the survivors of trafficking. Survivors are looking for your response to know whether you blame them or understand them. However, in your response you have to be sure that you are not suggesting or directing the survivor to a particular statement. So respond to the pain and anguish by validating it, but refrain from guiding the survivor about what they should say.

**Do not be controlling of the survivor:** It is important that the survivor determine the process of the interview.

**Do not become over emotional in your response:** Sometimes the story told by the survivor or the resistance of the survivor during the course of the interview may make you angry or frustrated. It is important to recognize this response early and take a break in the interview at that point so as to be able to refrain yourself from expressing the response in front of the survivor. It is, however, natural and helpful if you express anger at the fact that the survivor might have been traumatized by the traffickers.

**Do not make promises that you cannot keep:** The survivor may seek reassurances from you that you cannot provide. For example, the survivor may want you to promise that you will not share some parts of what she tells with anyone. It will be difficult to make a commitment to that effect. It is best to be transparent and say that you understand her anxiety and whatever she gives as a statement will only be available to those who are legally required to have access to it. Although it is important not to overreach in what you promise, there are things that you can say to reassure the survivor and these must be said. For example, you can say that the media will have no access to her.

**Do not interview the survivor repetitively:** The survivor of trafficking gets interviewed by many people, many times. Each interviewer asks the same questions over and over again. This is harmful to the survivor. After the first evidential interview any subsequent interviews that are conducted should be in consultation with the IO and with a specific purpose, and with no repetition of exploring the areas that have already been explored. No interview with a survivor should be conducted only for the reason that the senior officers of the IO need to know the information first hand. The consultation with the senior officer should happen prior to the interview to prevent deficiencies.

**Do not go into unnecessary questioning about traumatic events repetitively:** It is not necessary for the purposes of evidence to go into the details of traumatic experiences that the survivor may have faced each time the survivor is interviewed. It is important to document sexual violence and the extent of it and the alleged perpetrators of such violence, but it is not necessary to question in a manner that humiliates the survivor. When you ask details of the sexual violence and once you have established the nature of violence, and the course of the events, ask yourself whether any further detail will be relevant for the purposes of the prosecution. If information is not needed to establish the crime and its perpetrator beyond reasonable doubt, restrict yourself.

**Do not hop from topic to topic:** It is necessary to be flexible but it is also necessary
not to change topics suddenly and hop from what is being discussed to some other issue randomly and return back to the first issue almost equally randomly. This destroys the chain of thought that the survivor may be developing. However, sometimes it may be important if the survivor seems to be very distressed while talking about some memory to ask the survivor if she would want to talk about something else and come back to the traumatizing event later. In such a situation a strategic change of topic may be helpful for the survivor. But this should be done only if the level of distress is extremely disturbing for the survivor.

**Do not break silences too quickly:** The survivor may pause to recollect something or may be experiencing a strong emotion after having told you about some event. If she pauses let her pause. There is no hurry.

**Do not get into a mental argument with the survivor:** If the survivor says something that you think is not true or which contradicts what you already know, make a mental note of it, and come back to it when you are clarifying the details of her story. Please do not get into an argument with her even in your mind. Such a mental argument will come in the way of your listening what she is saying to you subsequently.

**Do not be lost in your own thoughts:** If you are lost in your own thoughts while pretending to listen to the survivor the survivor can notice that as you would have a glazed look in your eye or it would seem to her that you are staring into the distance and not listening to her.

**SKILLS YOU MUST USE WHILE LISTENING**

**Do show that you are listening:** Make appropriate eye to eye contact (do not stare at her but meet her eye when she looks at you, do so not in a hard and glaring manner but in an encouraging manner). Nod when necessary and spontaneously, (do not nod like a spring doll monotonously after every few seconds as she will be able to understand that you are pretending to listen).

**Do make non verbal reassuring sounds** like ‘hmm’ or single words like ‘achha’, ‘phir’, ‘uhoh!’ But these have to be spontaneous, non threatening and used at appropriate points. The tone always has to be soft and should not stop the survivor from saying what she is saying. Sometimes there may not be a need or space for such non verbal communication. The survivor may be saying things at a fast pace and trying to add non verbal communication on your part may seem completely inappropriate.

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Survivor Uma is telling you about how she was not stopped for going to see a doctor and you are listening.

She: I was very unwell. I had high fever and I was vomiting. I thought I would die that day. No one came to my bed. No one. No one asked me to have food. (Pauses) You: (leaning forward ever so slightly, softly almost not wanting to disturb her in her thought) Hm

She: You know how it feels when you are unwell. (She looks you in the eye) You: (You look back at her make eye to eye contact and nod briefly. She does not want you to speak. She wants to continue herself. Sense that and give her space.)

She: I felt so angry. Then I felt so helpless. I kept on crying and then slept You: (Slowly, after a pause) That must have been a difficult night for you.
**Do Summarize:** It is important to repeat what the survivor is saying to you in brief. This is particularly helpful when the survivor is saying too many things at the same time. It is also helpful to summarize when there is a need to change topics or move from one phase of trafficking to the other. But it is unnecessary and at times funny if you repeat last few words of whatever the survivor says. This is evidence of lazy listening and is more a reassurance to yourself than the survivor.

Here are some suggestions where using summarizing will be appropriate.

1. When the survivor has shared a lot of information that spans a long period of her life

   **Example**
   “You have shared some very significant experiences with me. Let me see if I have heard it right. You talked about your experiences as a child when your mother had to go to work and you were left with your aunt who was hurtful to you. Then you mentioned the time when you started going to school and how you were a quiet child and felt left out of what others were doing. You then talked about one particular difficult event in your life when your uncle verbally abused you and you got extremely angry with him. After this you described your current life situation where you feel you can trust no one. I may have missed out some facts that you said. Do let me know if I have heard you correctly.”

2. When you want to structure the interview more and focus on a new area that the survivor has not talked about, you can summarize the conversation till then and explore the new area.

   **Example**
   You: Till now you have shared with me how badly the people with whom you lived behaved with you. I have to talk to you about what will happen in the court tomorrow. So, can I briefly remind myself about what you have told me about the behavior of those people and then we talk about the court? We can talk about their behavior again if you wish to, either later today or tomorrow.

3. When the survivor has shared information about many areas of her problems or experiences / when the survivor has moved from one issue to another very quickly

   **Example**
   Veena: Life is bad, no one cares for me. Rakesh hurt me, so did Anjali. Even you hurt me sometimes. Why did you come late today? I am not important. I went to find out about the car driving lessons and they said, “Why should a girl want to be a driver? It is not a safe job.” I think I will sell bracelets… But no one buys them. When is my case date coming up?

   You: I can see that you have been thinking about a lot of things at the same time. I am sorry about being late. Let me briefly go over what you have told me so that we do not forget anything and then we can discuss things one at a time. Let me try to remember. You must remind me if I forget anything. First you said you were upset that people hurt you. Specifically you felt Rakesh, Anjali and I hurt you. Then you were thinking about what you want to do in future. You enquired about car driving lessons but those people tried to discourage you. You talked about other options like selling bracelets. You also wanted to know when your court case would come up.
So there seem to be three things that we need to talk about today: one, how you can tell Rakesh, Anjali and me about what makes you upset. Second, we need to think a bit about what you want to do in future, especially about being a driver. And then we need to talk about the court case and how to find out more about it. Is that alright or have I missed anything?

**Do Validate:** Validation is a skill that you have learned earlier. It is the skill to justify the feelings and actions of survivors. The survivor needs validation at all points of the interview process. A description of how to validate is already given in the first contact interview.

**Do Normalize:** It is important to normalize the experiences that the survivor is sharing.

**Example**

She: You all are the same. I will kill anyone who says that he will help me. Why should I tell you anything? You just want your photo to appear on the TV. I am just another girl from the street for you. Why should I trust you?

You: I can see that you are extremely angry. I think you have a reason to be angry. You have been hurt so many times. It also seems that people who promised to help you have hurt you the most and you find it difficult to trust now. I know anyone in your position would find it difficult to trust. (pause) I can only say that I will try to be transparent with you and not make promises that I cannot keep.

**Do reflect:** Reflection is an important skill of listening.

Reflection involves the listener sensing the feeling that the survivor is experiencing and giving a name to the feeling.

If the reflection process is accurate, it is an effective way of conveying that you understand how the survivor is feeling and thinking.

**Example**

A survivor was quiet and not saying too much and then seemed distracted.

The officer reflected: “It seems to me that you are preoccupied with something. Do you want to share it with me?”

**Example**

A survivor was overactive and trying to show that she was very happy. However, she was also wringing her hands from time to time.

The officer reflected back, “I see that you are trying very hard to be active and happy today, but I also see that you are wringing your hands. It made me wonder if you were tense about something.”

On hearing this, the survivor started crying and said that she had received a threat from the Madam who had exploited her, warning her not to talk to the police.

Do look out for any patterns in what the survivor is saying or if there may seem to inconsistencies in accounts given by the survivor at different times.

Do assess the degree to which the survivor knows the language in which she is being interviewed, as you may realize late in the interview that the silence that you attributed to the survivor being sad is actually due to the survivor not understanding what was being asked.
HELPFUL METHOD 3: ASK QUESTIONS THAT HELP

It is important not to ask the survivors too many questions.

Do not be surprised if after interviewing the survivor you realize that whatever information you have is not the real information. Do not be angry. You need to understand that it is her strategy to protect herself. Normalize it. Begin again.

There are some specific types of questions that help you inquire and clarify.

Let us first understand the nature of the questions and then see the application while understanding and assessing the person, her problems and her context.

Open Questions

**Open questions are a tool for exploration.** Open questions are questions that help the survivor to share information about herself with you. These questions do not limit the answers to a particular issue or aspect of the issue. The survivor has a choice as to what information she provides or in which direction she takes the conversation forward.

Examples of open questions:

1. Tell me more about yourself.
2. How have you spent time these days?
3. How is it different from the way you spent time before you were rescued?
4. What experiences from your childhood still bother you?
5. What makes you happy?
6. What kind of people do you generally like to be with?

Specific or Closed questions

**Specific questions are a tool for clarification.** Questions that explore the details of one issue or an aspect of information that is being provided are called specific questions. These questions are linked to each other, and when asked in a series and together with using other listening skills, they can be a very effective method of clarifying information. The answers to the series of questions become more specific with each question. Very specific questions or closed questions expect a ‘yes’ or ‘no’ answer or some specific information like, “What is the time?”

Further Examples of specific questions:

“What can I do to help you trust me?”

“Is it alright for us to break for lunch and meet in half an hour?”

“Would you like didi to bring you lunch here or would you like to go with didi and see what you want to eat?”

It is generally useful to begin the conversation with open questions and then gradually make them more specific to seek clarification.

A series of specific questions given below allow you to understand the experiences of the survivor during the transit when she was being trafficked. Please notice how other skills of listening are used in an integrated manner in the conversation.
Example

You: Thank you for talking to us today. How was the last week for you?
Survivor: Just like any other. Just waiting for the police to come and doing nothing.
You: (using validation and reflection) It seems the wait for this meeting has been upsetting for you. It is a difficult situation and it makes you feel helpless.
Survivor: Hmm…
You: I will like to ask you about the time that you traveled from your home to Delhi the first time. Is it alright for us to talk about it?
Survivor: I do not know. Okay. I will tell if I remember
You: (remaining neutral and not rushing to say anything) (Seeking permission) Shall we start and see how it goes?
Survivor: OK.
You: When did you first come to Delhi?
Survivor: Many years ago.
You: Have you gone back since?
Survivor: No
You: It must have been an important journey for you. Do you remember what you felt at the time when you started?
Survivor: Tired and Scared
You: What made you feel tired and scared?
Survivor: We had been awake the whole night before we started and I did not know what kind of a job she would get me.
You: Did she say that she would get you a job? (Making a note of the means of recruitment but not pursuing that line of questioning.) Tell me from the beginning, you said you lived in Biratnagar. So how did you travel to Delhi?
Survivor: Well My mausi and I traveled to Kathmandu by bus and there we stayed in a relative’s house for the night and we met two other girls. I do not remember their names. My mausi said we did not have the passport so we could not take the aeroplane to Delhi. That is when I knew she was lying. She had said earlier that we would go by plane but then she said we could not go by plane. We took another night bus. I do not know for where. I was feeling like vomiting.
You: Do you usually feel like that when you travel in buses?
Survivor: I do not know. I have never traveled in a bus after that.

So gradually you are getting to know the situation of the survivor more specifically.

Moving from Open Questions to Closed questions

One can also move from Open Questions to Closed or Specific Questions and move from Specific Questions to Open Questions to move the conversation forward. Some examples are mention in the table:
Situation: You are exploring the environment of the brothel at night
You: What did you call the place you lived in Delhi?
She: Home.
You: How did you and your friends spend time at the home?
She: Nothing. Talking, washing clothes, eating food, sleeping in the day. And watching films. Buying make up and bangles. Fighting with each other.
You: What would you fight about?
She: I did not fight. Pinki used to fight. She would keep on fighting. Night and days she would fight.
You: How is the home different in the night?
She: We had a lot of visitors at night. Every girl had to attend to visitors.
You: Who all visited at night?
She: Many men. I do not know.
You: How many visitors did each one of you have?
She: Twenty. Sometimes less. Sometimes more. (Becomes quiet for sometime)
You: That must have been difficult. What if you were not well and you did not want visitors.
She: No, no. You cannot say ‘no’. Visitors have to be seen. If you do not attend to visitors then you get beaten up.
You: Did you get beaten up?
She: Not now. Before... when I came, all new girls get beaten up.
You: That must make people angry.
(Smiles wryly. Shakes her head as if you will not understand, then looks away, her eyes welled up but not crying.)
Pause. You towards her and slowly move a box of tissues towards her. You do not touch her, do not say anything.
She wipes her face with her dupatta. Continues to look away for sometime and then looks back at you briefly. Says nothing.)

Examples of Moving from closed to open questions and then back to closed questions

1. What time did the visitors start coming?
2. When they came, what happens next?
3. After they have paid the money what used to happen then?
4. How did they behave with you?
5. Is there anything more about that experience that you would like to share?
6. So, when they are angry, how do they respond to you?
7. Did they hurt you?
HELPFUL METHOD 4: PREVENT AND ADDRESS RETRAUMATIZATION

Do ensure that the survivor is not retraumatized. The reliving of traumatic experiences can be triggered by the interview process which asks the person to restate the trauma. For the survivor of trafficking restating the trauma is reliving it and experiencing it all over again.

To ensure that you are not traumatizing the person:

**Be aware of what can be traumatizing and be extremely sensitive while exploring these issues**

Possible areas/action which could precipitate retraumatization
- Memories of childhood
- Discussion about her family
- Memories of physical violence
- Memories of sexual violence
- Actions of the interviewer or events of the interview that trigger a feeling of helplessness
- Actions of the interviewer or events in the interview process which the survivor sees as threatening, and may include a touch, a stare or a gesture

**Be Aware that the information provided by the survivor is likely to change**

It is normal for a traumatized person to not trust the person interviewing her and provide information which is incomplete or not true. Once the trust builds the survivor may want to state new facts or even contradictory facts. Instead of getting angry with the survivor for this it is better strategy to expect and accept such variations as a norm. Another explanation for an evolving statement may be that the survivor because of her anxiety and reliving of experience may not remember the details of the exploitative events.

**While interviewing the survivor check over and over again that you are seeking permission and that she feels safe and in control**

- You can show that they are in control by:
  - Matching your pace with her pace,
  - Let her choose which chair she wants to sit on
  - Seeking her permission if you need to take a break or if you need to attend a phone call
  - Not forcing her to stop crying or asking her to sit down if she feels better pacing up and down
  - If she wants to smoke during the interview and you work in a non smoking environment, it is best to take a break for her to be able to smoke

Begin to explore the potentially retraumatizing areas with a pre-emptive statement, “We are going to talk about some issues which may make you anxious. It is important for us to explore and understand what happened during these traumatic times but do stop me if you feel uncomfortable or anxious talking about these events. It will be alright to stop at any time that you want to.”


**Observe and reflect distress**

Look out for features of Anxiety and stop the interview if the survivor seems to be extremely anxious

- Change of the expression on the face and eyes of the survivor
- Restlessness
- Muscles being taut
- Change in the tone of the survivor
- Survivor starts making errors in her language
- Survivor looks blank and aghast
- Survivor has a benumbed shocked expression on her face

**Managing an anxious survivor during the course of the interview**

In case you observe distress ask her what help she wants.

1. If she is unable to say what she wants because of her anxiety, say to her:
   
   “I know things are very difficult for you. You sound extremely anxious. It will help me understand you better if you were to slow down a bit, and tell me what you are going through, one step at a time.”

2. She will slow down after this and then you would need to use summarizing to keep on letting her know that she is being heard.

3. It might also be useful to do frequent checks with her as to how she is feeling.

4. If she does not slow down, it may be important to try and make her go through a breathing exercise.

   1. *I am going to help you breathe fully, so that you feel less anxious.*
   2. *Put one hand on your abdomen, open your mouth.*
   3. *Take a deep breath and see your hand rise. Do not breathe through the chest, but through your abdomen.*
   4. *Let the breath out now, slowly. Let us try it once more. Gradually take a breath in. Slowly see your hand rise, hold for a few seconds and then slowly breathe out.*
   5. *You must try to do about twelve breaths per minute.*

**HELPFUL METHOD 5: DEALING WITH DIFFICULT SITUATIONS DURING THE INTERVIEW**

**Blocking**

Survivors may block the interview by using some blocking statements. The reason a survivor blocks the interview is because talking about the issue is difficult for her or she feels threatened by someone.

A few examples of possible blocking questions and statements include:
It’s a secret
I can’t tell you.
What else could I have done?
I did not do anything
He said I’ll go to prison.
Can I live with you?
No one in family will talk to me if I talk to you.
Promise you won’t tell anyone else?
Will you look after me now?

It is best to acknowledge these statements. The survivor will return to asking or saying these things whatever you may do, unless you respond to their satisfaction.

So when you hear these statements or questions during the interview, acknowledge the survivor’s need to know answers about her future or clarifications about the past as the case may be. Answer to the best of your knowledge what you know. Do not give false reassurances.

So if the survivor seems worried about whether she will be abandoned by her family you could respond by saying,

“‘We both do not know what will be the response of your family if you tell the truth about them. We can only hope that they will understand how you felt and what made you say what you said. If they care for you as much as you seem to care for them, it is possible that they will appreciate your being honest. We can try to communicate with them and see how it works. Maybe they are only fearful and anxious and a reassurance that police will help them may make it easier for them to respond positively to you.’”

If they are worried about what will happen to them and they ask you if you will take them home, you could say,

“I can see that you are anxious about how things will work out for you, I am aware that the government has many ways of helping you so that no harm comes to you and you will be able to grow to your full potential. We can discuss some of these measures today or now along with your counselor who knows more about the support that is available to you.’”

If the child starts crying or becomes silent you could try the following strategies to help the situation. If the situation does not respond to these techniques, it may be appropriate to take a break and discuss as a team what needs to be done to help the survivor continue with the interview process.

If the survivor cannot see any options and wants to hurt herself

1 Any statement by a survivor that she wants to hurt herself must be considered very seriously by you.

1 Most people who want to hurt themselves do so. At some time, before they commit such acts, they may have shared the intent with someone whom they trust. Unfortunately, quite often the communication is lost because the person who is hearing it is not able to address it.

1 If the survivor talks about harming herself, take it seriously. Do not be brave to try to manage it on your own.
Whatever you do, do not panic. The survivor has trusted you and told you that she is going to harm herself. She is open to seeking help and you can enable her to do so.

If the counsellor who is participating in the interview is the survivor’s regular counsellor and equipped to deal with such situations, get her to take the lead.

If the counsellor has just met the survivor or if she has not dealt with the issue of self harm seek help from a mental health professional.

It is important to document and assess each person’s risk if she expresses the intent of self harm.

The person has a **low risk** when she is getting occasional thoughts of harming herself, she does not really see it as an option and the factors stopping her and supporting her are more than the reasons to harm herself.

The person has a **moderate risk** if she has thought about the self-harm event, if her support systems are not adequate and if she does not have any alternative coping strategy.

The person is likely to have a **high risk** when she has thought and planned the self-harm event, when she is also abusing substances like drugs or alcohol, when there are no emotional attachments and if there is a history of self-harm in the past.

You must explore sensitively whether the survivor has been thinking about hurting herself, especially if she survivor seems to hint hopelessness or helplessness or she says that she is very distressed or if there is a sustained change in her mood or behavior.

**If the survivor is silent**

Do not switch off.

If you are meeting her for the first time:

- If the survivor is silent, introduce yourself and introduce the service.
- Give her space to say something.
- If she still does not speak, repeat the information in different words.

If she still does not talk:

**Reflect**

“You may be finding it difficult to say what you want to. It is difficult to talk to a stranger about what you are feeling, but sometimes it may help.”

**Give space, if the silence continues.** You can use the silence by just being with the person. Remember, if you are thinking about her and trying to be with her, your posture and tone of voice will convey that. It will be easier for the survivor to respond.

**Highlight the need**

“I know that you are trying to make a decision whether to talk or not. It may be helpful to at least say what you are feeling about that; it may help you to clarify some things.”

**Highlight safety and non-judgmental nature of the service.**

**Reestablish credibility** by talking about how people feel when they are
Rehabilitation and Prevention

able to use the service and normalize the experience of not being able to talk.

“We are a service to help young people who have gone through difficult circumstances in their lives. When I meet young people for the first time, initially there is a degree of hesitation in their minds. They have a fear of police. They do not know whether I will be able to understand them or not. They fear that if I will act against their interests. What I say to them is, ‘I will definitely try to understand your point of view and definitely make sure that no harm will come to you.’

Most people who are able to participate in this kind of an interview, feel reassured that they have been heard. Of course, I do not have a magical wand, and everyone’s difficulties are unique to that person.

What I do is that I try to help people express what they have experienced so that people who have been responsible for exploiting them or harming them can face the course of law.”

This is a gist of what to say. It is useful to say it with a lot of pauses and continuously observing any sound that you catch, even the change of breathing, or a change of expression or posture. It is useful to reflect and use these as entry points for further conversation. The sounds and changes can be explored and reflected.

If you are not getting a response after quite some time, try this:

“May be if I ask you questions, it will help you to say to me what you are going through. It is alright if you do not want to speak.

I will ask you a question. You can tap once if the answer is ‘yes’ and twice if it is ‘no’... You can then speak when you feel comfortable.”

If the survivor still does not respond, retry.

If the survivor has not responded for a significant time, you could say:

“May be you are finding it difficult to make a decision right now. Do you want to think about it for some more time?

You have a choice: I could be with you while you think or you may want me to come back later. If you want me to be with you while you make up your mind, you can nod and let me know.”

Never leave the space without planning the next meeting. Also, you must discuss with the staff of the care home what happened in the session.

If the survivor is silent for long periods, she may be going through some situations/issues that are still hurting her at present. You must consider all survivors who are not talking as being at risk. Make sure the observation and attention levels are high for them.

If the survivor is very angry

The survivor can be angry. She may be angry about the organization being too controlling, people not being accessible, not having information about the court case and when she will return home and people giving inconsistent messages to her.
The best way to cope with the survivors’ anger is to acknowledge it. It is important to acknowledge people’s feelings. Everyone has a right to feel what they are feeling. You may not agree with their reasons for feeling the way they do, but they have a right to their feelings.

“I hear you saying that you are angry with the service. It will really help me to help you, if you tell me more about what you are feeling and thinking.”

Another way to cope with anger is to find a point of agreement with the survivor.

“Yes, you are right, I should have informed you before arranging to meet you. I can understand how you may be upset about it.”

After acknowledging anger and accepting feedback, you could suggest going back to what the issues were before the survivor became angry.

Do not be angry yourself, do not raise your voice, do not argue, and do not be defensive.

If a complaints and grievance procedure is available, you must help the survivor use the process and feel in control of her own situation.

Also, a responsible person should make sure that there is a response to the complaint made by the survivor.

Be careful that you do not end up criticizing your colleagues without understanding the complete issue. If after understanding the complete issue and hearing all perspectives you do feel that the survivor has been wronged, it is important for you to deal with it.

The survivor wants a personal relationship with you

Sometimes the survivor may start seeing you in a role beyond that of a police officer. She may see you as a parent, fall in love with you or think of you as an aggressor. The survivor projects on to you what belongs to other relationships. This may happen to anyone who interacts with the survivor and seems to be trustworthy. You are one of the few caring and consistent relationships that she has had. It is possible for her to misinterpret this caring behaviour as a personal liking for her. This is called transference.

It is important not to start seeing it as real. You cannot start believing that you have a special relationship with the survivor or some special skill because she likes you.

It is important to talk about this with your team. It is important to redefine your role. You are a police officer, your role is to help people and investigate the crime. It is unhelpful for the survivor and you to have any other role or relationship. It is useful if this happens for the counsellor to take lead in the interview process.

It is also important to normalize the survivor’s experience by saying that it is not unusual for someone in their situation to feel the way she is feeling and this is more a result of the safety she feels in the relationship, as opposed to a special relationship.

If the survivor is unable to accept your role as a professional and challenges the boundaries of the relationship by making a special effort to meet you, trying to be too caring or too close, it is important to discuss this with your supervisor to
address the issue and changing the role that you have. You should definitely not meet the survivor without a neutral person being present.

The important thing is not to blame the survivor but to know the boundary of what is not acceptable in your role as a police officer.

The temptation to use this relationship to motivate the survivor to do something for herself may carry a risk of hurting her unwittingly. She may start having expectations from you which you cannot fulfill.

It is important for the officer to be consistent in his or her words and actions. You cannot say that you have a professional role with the survivor and yet expect the survivor to do things for you that she does not do for others.

If the survivor has negative feelings towards you, acknowledge this feeling. Ask her what it is about your behavior that makes her feel threatened or angry with you.

1. Be watchful of setting off triggers for such behavior by the survivor.
2. Remain consistent in your behavior and within the boundary of your role.
3. Do not feel personally hurt or see it as a reflection of you as a person.
4. Make sure there is no retribution or reprimand of the survivor because you have not been trusted.

What if you have extremely positive or negative feelings towards a survivor?

Your role as a police officer and your knowledge of the boundaries of your role protect you from having extreme positive or negative feelings towards survivors.

Sometimes, however, all officers may have to interact with a survivor who can trigger a significant emotional response. This response may be an extreme response like anger, rejection or even compassion or love. This is your response and belongs to your own experiences as a person. You may project on to the survivor what does not belong to her. This is called counter transference.

It is not for the survivor to deal with these extreme emotions that you have towards her; it is for you to deal with them in your supervision process. It is important that you bring this up in your supervision.

If you see your emotions being expressed behaviorally, it is important that rather than impacting the survivor, you withdraw from the case and transfer the investigation to some other officer.

However, even if you transfer the case, it is still important to bring up the issue in your supervision process.

**Summary**

Prepare for the interview to avoid multiple interviews by multiple people. Such a preparation would also help in exposing the organized nature of the crime.

Challenge your judgments. The survivor is also a person, no different from you, and will be hurt irreversibly by your judgments.

Both you and the survivor need to know and believe that the interview of the survivor is not an interrogation. She has the right to control the process.

A survivor friendly interview place is possible to set up at low cost and with innovation of a survivor friendly police officer.