



Primary Prevention of Human Trafficking Position Paper

By: Oregon SATF's Statewide Prevention & Education Committee (PEC)

Resource Overview

This paper provides an overview of effective strategies for the primary prevention of human trafficking. **It is meant to provide context and support to people in Oregon interested in preventing human trafficking before it happens. It may be particularly relevant for those implementing violence/abuse prevention programming in Oregon's communities, as well as policy makers, community members, violence/abuse responders, etc.**

Oregon SATF's Prevention and Education Committee (PEC) developed this resource at the request of multiple stakeholders across the state. These requests sought support in uplifting the connections between human trafficking prevention and the prevention of other forms of violence and abuse. This included requests to help identify existing prevention strategies being implemented throughout the state in order to help identify opportunities to improve collaborative human trafficking prevention efforts in Oregon.

We recommend reviewing the paper in its entirety from start to finish, as there is key context provided early on that informs and shapes the highlighted prevention strategies. The paper includes the following:

- [A Brief Overview of Prevention, Human Trafficking, and Human Trafficking Prevention](#)
- [A Quick Note on Language and Other Important Information](#)
- [Examples of Human Trafficking Prevention Strategies focused on:](#)
 1. Promoting Community Action;
 2. Norms Change, and;
 3. Changing Individual's Capacity for Prevention through Education and Skill-Building

- [Additional Resources to Support Human Trafficking Prevention in Communities Across Oregon](#)
- [Summary One-Pager](#) providing a visual representation of the overarching prevention strategies represented in this resource.

This paper is not meant to be a comprehensive resource on the dynamics of human trafficking. There is a resource list included at the end, along with footnotes throughout which include additional links/information to help people further their learning and implementation of human trafficking prevention and intervention. Additionally, more resources may be developed by Oregon SATF to further support human trafficking prevention.

To find more information about best practices in preventing multiple forms of violence and abuse, please access additional resources on the [Oregon SATF website](#), like our Comprehensive Prevention Toolkit and Oregon SATF's statewide Prevention and Education Committee's [other position papers](#) (ex. Primary Prevention of Sexual Violence Position Paper, Intersections of Oppression and Sexual Violence Position Paper, and Promoting Healthy Sexuality as Sexual Violence Prevention Position Paper).

Acknowledgements

Deep appreciation to the members and guests of Oregon SATF's statewide Prevention and Education Committee (PEC), for developing this paper with thoughtful contributions to the many drafts through which it has evolved. The purpose of PEC is to bring together stakeholders across sectors, movements, and prevention to define and promote effective violence and abuse prevention practices. This group engages in activities to increase awareness of prevention strategies, and to provide support, guidance, and training relating to prevention.

Extensive gratitude to the survivors and people with lived experience for providing feedback and review of this resource. We are especially grateful for their expertise and perspective.

Additional appreciation to the following groups for helping review this resource before it was published (in no specific order): Representatives from [Oregon SATF's seven other subcommittees](#) (Advocacy Response, Campus,

Criminal Justice, Legislative and Public Policy, Men's Engagement, Medical Forensic, and Offense Management); the Oregon Department of Justice's Trafficking Response & Intervention Program (T.R.I.P.) Team; County Human Trafficking Intervention Coordinators across Oregon and their varying advisory bodies; and the Multnomah County Sex Trafficking Prevention and Public Awareness Subcommittee. These groups provided feedback, wisdom, expertise, and experience to clarify parts of this resource.

As this resource was collaboratively created, with lots of statewide input, it is important to note that it does not reflect the sole viewpoint of any one organization or individual.

Oregon SATF's Approach to Prevention

The Oregon Sexual Assault Task Force (Oregon SATF) defines primary prevention as approaches that seek to eliminate the root causes of violence and abuse to stop harm from ever occurring in the first place. Primary prevention seeks to identify and change the conditions that cause violence, working comprehensively with individuals, families, communities, institutions, and society as a whole. Oregon SATF recognizes oppression as the root cause of violence and abuse and uses an anti-oppression and social justice framework for its prevention work.

We follow the public health approach, defining the problem, identifying risk and protective factors, testing interventions, and ensuring widespread adoption of what works. Oregon SATF partners with communities in our prevention work, joining our expertise with theirs; and works towards practicing trauma-informed prevention to honor the presence of survivors in every community. We are guided by the conviction that: **Violence and abuse are preventable, and everyone has a role and a responsibility in preventing them.** For more information on preventing violence and abuse, please visit Oregon SATF's website: www.oregonsatf.org.

What is Human Trafficking?

According to the United States Department of Justice, human trafficking is “ a crime that involves compelling or coercing a person to provide labor or

services, or to engage in commercial sex acts.”¹ While this description is meaningful, it is helpful to understand human trafficking with more complexity. Multnomah County’s Sex Trafficking Prevention and Public Awareness Subcommittee offers this definition **“Human trafficking is when one person, a group of people, and/or a business forces or manipulates a person or group of people into working for the trafficker’s economic gain. The trafficker(s) may recruit, transport, harbor, and/or receive their victim(s) by using threat, physical violence, fraud, deception, and other tactics with the aim of exploiting the victim(s) for profit. Profit could be money, but it could also be other goods such as housing, favors, etc. It’s important to note that sex trafficking of youth does not require force, fraud, or coercion, nor a third-party exploiter. This is because youth [under the age of 18] cannot consent to sex work, and a power dynamic already exists between adults and minors.”**² Human trafficking is often separated into two very broad categories of sex and labor trafficking (including domestic servitude). This paper addresses all forms of human trafficking prevention.

What is Human Trafficking Prevention?

All forms of violence and abuse are connected. Efforts to prevent one form of violence or abuse will impact efforts to prevent other forms of violence. This is because there are shared factors that increase someone’s risk for experiencing or perpetrating violence, and shared factors that protect against the same things. These are known as risk and protective factors.³ In particular, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) emphasizes that **“trafficking victimization and perpetration share risks and consequences associated with child abuse and neglect, intimate partner**

¹ *What is human trafficking?*. Human Trafficking. (2023, June 26). <https://www.justice.gov/humantrafficking/what-is-human-trafficking>

² Multnomah County Sex Trafficking (ST) Prevention and Public Awareness Subcommittee. (2024). Human Trafficking Prevention Toolkit. Portland, OR. <https://sites.google.com/multco.us/trafficking/resources/human-trafficking-prevention-toolkit?authuser=0>

³ Oregon SATF Prevention & Education Subcommittee (PEC). (2014). Primary Prevention of Sexual Violence Position Paper. Oregon. <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/636973864f6528145b7b9b13/t/63d9a890b80bf373e6c9a8d2/1675208849915/Primary-Prevention-of-Sexual-Violence-FINAL-1.pdf>

violence, sexual violence, and youth violence.”⁴ Additionally, several studies have recognized that experiences with other forms of violence and abuse increase the risk for human trafficking. This includes, but is not limited to, emotional, physical, and sexual abuse, interpersonal violence, bullying, community violence, neglect, racism, and other adverse childhood experiences (ACEs).⁵ For these reasons, efforts that effectively work to prevent other forms of violence and abuse are critical human trafficking prevention efforts as well.

When we understand how interrelated prevention efforts are, we can begin to focus more on building comprehensive prevention approaches to effectively end human trafficking. **Comprehensive Prevention approaches work across communities, individuals, organizations, governments, systems, and more, to ensure everyone is finding and playing their role in ending violence and abuse across the lifespan.** This means there are efforts focused on preventing first time perpetration as well as efforts focused on addressing community-wide tolerance and facilitation of human trafficking. As human trafficking is a societal and community problem, it requires societal and community approaches to prevent it. Individuals exist within these communities and this society, and so effective prevention is aided by strategies focused on educating individuals as well. No single strategy will end human trafficking on its own. This is why we advocate for comprehensive approaches where everyone plays their role.



To examine more about what effective comprehensive human trafficking prevention could, and does, look like in Oregon’s communities, we offer a series of strategies in the next sections. **These include strategies focused on changing individuals’ skills, behaviors, and knowledge as well as strategies focused on creating communities that protect against human trafficking.**

⁴ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2022, February 4). Sex trafficking | violence prevention | injury Center | CDC. https://www.cdc.gov/sexual-violence/about/about-sex-trafficking.html?CDC_AAref_Val=https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/sexualviolence/trafficking.html

⁵ Adverse Childhood Experiences | National Human Trafficking Training and Technical Assistance Center. https://nhhtac.acf.hhs.gov/soar/eguide/stop/adverse_childhood_experiences

Without activities in both of these categories, prevention is not possible. Fortunately, due to Oregon's extensive efforts to bolster violence and abuse prevention throughout schools, communities, policies, etc., we have existing robust prevention infrastructure to help guide and sustain this work.

A Quick Note on Language and Important Information

Alongside the prevention strategies listed below, it is important to ensure that the information people are using and offering others is accurate. Awareness-raising efforts elevate survivor voices and focus on helping people understand what human trafficking actually looks like and where to get meaningful help when it is occurring or after it has occurred. When inaccurate information is provided, a lot of harm can come to individuals, and it becomes that much harder to actually prevent human trafficking. Below we have offered some key foundations that are important for people to use when implementing the prevention strategies noted in this paper.

- Use factual and relevant data and information about what is really happening in our communities instead of scare tactics. This ensures better clarity around what human trafficking commonly looks like, instead of relying on outdated concepts, harkening back to misconceptions like a "stranger danger" mentality, that is not inclusive enough to capture the real extent of human trafficking involvement. We must look at things like familial issues, trading sex for survival, and all the types of coercion that can impact a survivor's experience, as well as systemic violence and oppression. Understanding the dynamics of human trafficking, including finding accurate information and data, can be overwhelming. This includes basic accurate prevalence data and how human trafficking shows up in different communities and within Oregon more broadly. Around the world, there are extensive resources on this, and many do not use the most up-to-date information.

Throughout this paper, as footnotes, there are resources to support more accurate and nuanced representation of human trafficking dynamics that can be helpful to anyone trying to contribute to preventing it.

- Consider how the language used to talk about trafficking affects how people think about the issue. There are a lot of different ways that people might talk about the same/overlapping forms of violence and abuse. It is important that effective human trafficking prevention efforts focus on the expansive realities, and root causes, of all forms of human trafficking, which is hard to do when the complexities and nuances are misrepresented. This involves a shift in language (moving beyond harmful and outdated language like ‘pimps’)⁶ and instead elevating factual data. A large amount of misinformation about human trafficking exists. As a result, many people in anti-violence movements are trying to shift language away from ‘trafficking,’ or clarify it as much as possible, because the word itself holds so much connotation and assumptions that can lead to additional harm. One example of this would be better discernment between slavery and human trafficking, which is often referred to as “modern-day slavery.” While both human trafficking and slavery are extreme violations of human rights, the struggle to end them diverges in several ways. “All forms of chattel slavery fit the U.S. definition of human trafficking; not all forms of human trafficking fit the definition of chattel slavery.”⁷
- Unlearn harmful assumptions about human trafficking, like examining the racism and transphobia built into sensationalized/fear-focused materials which are not reflective of what human trafficking most often looks like. Many solutions are proposed to address trafficking that don’t take into account the ways the proposed program, practice, or law may disproportionately impact some communities. For example when the Allow States and Victims to Fight Online Sex Trafficking Act/Stop Enabling Sex Traffickers Act (FOSTA-SESTA) passed in 2018 it was billed as a set of strategies to cut down on sex trafficking online. When they passed, many LGBTQ2SIA+ individuals engaging in consensual sex work lost access to safer mechanisms for working. This increased their risk for

⁶ Definitions. National Survivor Network. (2024, November 4).

<https://nationalsurvivornetwork.org/definitions/#:~:text=This%20then%20creates%20challenges%20when,complex%20abolition%20at%20transformharm.org>.

⁷ Croft, C. Human Trafficking Prevention Toolkit. Raleigh, NC: NC Coalition Against Sexual Assault, 2020. https://cm20-s3-nccasa.s3.us-west-2.amazonaws.com/ResourceFiles/18188f59d6a040e4988eab0926672469HT_Prevention_Toolkit.pdf

violence and harm. “A study of FOSTA's effects on sex workers showed that it increased economic instability for about 72% of the study's participants and nearly 34% reported an increase of violence from clients.” Almost 80% of study participants identified as LGBTQIA+ and 24% identified as trans.⁸ Although this data is from one study, there is a wealth of shared experiences about how laws, including FOSTA-SESTA, can and have harmed certain communities. This example highlights the need for the inclusion of a broad range of diverse voices and experiences built into any planning process before implementing new programs, policies, or laws, as a mitigating factor against unintended consequences that could be harmful to members of our communities, even when the proposed solutions are well intentioned.

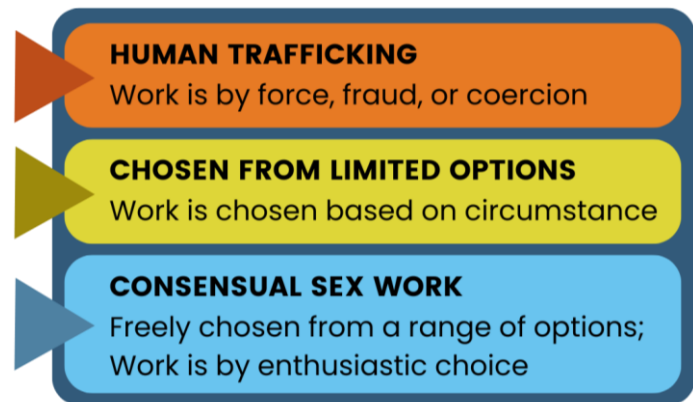
- Distinguish better between sex work and human trafficking, as these exist along a continuum of consent from enthusiastically chosen to violently coerced. “People trade sex from a wide range of circumstances. Sometimes they choose it freely from many work options [sex work]. Sometimes they have very limited work options and trade sex for survival. Sometimes they are being forced, threatened, or manipulated into trading sex [human trafficking]. Harmful and exploitative workplaces exist in all types of labor under capitalism, including sex work.”² Not all sex work is exploitative, and not all exploitation is human trafficking. But, all human trafficking is done by force, fraud, and/or coercion. We are better able to prevent human trafficking when we are addressing the root causes and dynamics of human trafficking and survivors are served best when people can hold the complexity and nuance of their lived experiences across this continuum of consent.²

When working to prevent violence like sex trafficking within a society or community that reinforces more negative ideas about sex (eg., that it should only happen in certain settings, always be abstained from, not

⁸ Blunt, D., & Wolf, A. (2020). Erased: The Impact of FOSTA-SESTA & the Removal of Backpage. Hacking//Hustling. <https://hackinghustling.org/erased-the-impact-of-fosta-sesta-2020/>

talked about, and/or that people who engage in sex outside of these “rules” are bad, dirty, or problematic), it becomes harder to recognize the nuances of each person’s lived experiences. It makes it harder to collaboratively distinguish those experiences along the continuum of consent that exists between freely chosen sex work and human trafficking. It makes it harder to then implement supports and solutions that can effectively prevent sex trafficking in each community, with each population.

- Increase information and education around labor trafficking and the understanding of conditions folks experience that contribute to this (ex., lack of access to housing, living wages, healthcare, connection to community, etc.). Economic stress is one of the biggest factors increasing risk of being targeted for human trafficking. Understanding the conditions that increase and enable this risk, helps us better pinpoint strategies to mitigate it.



- Examine laws, policies, and other legal frameworks around human trafficking intervention and prevention and how they impact individuals and communities differently, positively and negatively.
- Increase resources available in our communities and intentionally look at how they may not serve all survivors equitably based on identities, religious affiliations, age, etc.
- Understand how behaviors that are used to facilitate human trafficking, like coercion, force, and fraud (including gaslighting and manipulation) can show up in all types of relationships, including when meeting new people as well as within families and close relationships where familial

trafficking can occur. Additionally, these dynamics can be reinforced or exacerbated by systems and policies that make it harder for victims and survivors to access help, especially when the risk of criminal charges are present (ex, criminal charges that may be a risk for undocumented immigrants, sex workers, etc).

It is important that people and communities accurately and thoughtfully represent and address human trafficking. Improving collective understanding of the issue is a necessary step for prevention. The above foundations provide us with a meaningful starting place for increased learning and collaboration to better prevent human trafficking in all forms.

Human Trafficking Prevention Strategies

Considering the above framing, it is important to identify effective prevention strategies that can help us collectively get closer to comprehensively preventing human trafficking in Oregon's communities and beyond. This includes preventing multiple forms of human trafficking (ex., labor, sex, etc.) as all of these forms of violence and abuse are interconnected. For all of the example strategies listed below, it is most impactful to start by identifying risk and protective factors^{9,10} to better collaborate with other people, groups, organizations, and institutions in our communities working to promote health and safety. When we understand the roots of the problems we are trying to solve, we can better identify opportunities to support each other's efforts, collaborate, share resources, and create shared goals. None of us can prevent trafficking (or other forms of violence and abuse) alone, so it is important to start from a place of partnership if we want our efforts to be sustainable.

⁹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Division of Violence Prevention. (2017, November 7). *Discover Connections*. Connecting the dots.

<https://vetoviolence.cdc.gov/apps/connecting-the-dots/node/5>

¹⁰ Office for Victims of Crime. (2020, September). Socio-Ecological Model and Human Trafficking.

https://justice.oregon.gov/crime-victims/pdf/ovcttac_socio_ecological_model_and_human_trafficking_508c_10_20_20.pdf

Included prevention strategies focus on bringing about change in three different ways:

- **Promoting Community Action:** refers to efforts that increase actions taken within the community to better respond to and prevent human trafficking from occurring in the first place.
- **Norms Change:** refers to changing the systems, policies, values, and structures in communities that increase risk for human trafficking and reduce protections from human trafficking.
- **Changing Individuals' Capacity for Prevention through Education and Skill-Building:** refers to educational programming focused on promoting skills, knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs that enable healthy relationships and healthy lives for all people while addressing the root causes of human trafficking (what causes it to happen in the first place and what enables it).

Without changing community and societal structures that enable human exploitation, we will likely be unable to end human trafficking. Individual level prevention efforts on their own are not enough to end all human trafficking.

By also changing systems, structures, etc., we shift the likelihood that people may be trafficked as well as the community's willingness to tolerate/ignore the violence – making it much more likely that we will stop human trafficking before it ever happens.

When we only implement individual focused prevention strategies, we risk putting the responsibility for protecting oneself from violence entirely on the people experiencing it or at risk for experiencing it. It is important to broaden our strategies to address this misplaced burden and get closer to actually preventing human trafficking from happening in the first place. This is where prevention strategies focused on community and societal change come in.

Some Strategies Focused on Promoting Community Action

- Promote education and accountability for organizations and businesses. (especially those that employ migrants, immigrants, people who are foreign-born, people with disabilities, and young adults) about

what these businesses can do to support employees to minimize exploitation in the workplace and reduce elements of power and control that allow for human trafficking to exist. Businesses play a key role in reducing and mitigating this violence through implementing business practices that minimize risk factors for human trafficking (ex., economic stress, community violence, weak health/educational/economic/social policies, and harmful norms around masculinity and femininity).^{9,10,11} This is also true of landlords and rental property owners. From rental costs to application requirements (ex., rental, credit, or employment history which may be limited for human trafficking survivors); these can reinforce economic barriers that increase risk for human trafficking. There is much opportunity for all of these community partners to help make our communities healthier and safer from human trafficking and other violence. Paid Leave Oregon¹² is an example of a supportive state program working to address these shared risk and protective factors. Although preventing human trafficking is not the main focus of this program, by addressing risk factors around economic stress, it is helping to reduce factors that increase the likelihood that someone might experience human trafficking. This is primary prevention in action. Another example is Oregon's housing rights for victims of different forms of interpersonal violence, which allows survivors to: end a lease early to move to safety, request changes to locks for safety, not be held responsible for property damage caused by an abuser during a domestic violence incident, etc.¹³ Rights like these can help mitigate increased risk for human trafficking by ensuring that survivors are able to access safe and affordable housing.

¹¹ Oregon SATF and PCAO. (2024). *Welcome to Prevention Land! – Video Series*.

https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLEZezUDIdyPU3ZXOr0y_beMfK1G3IFLMR&si=n8t7dkziWxWEi46-

¹² Oregon Employment Department. (n.d.). Paid Leave Oregon. <https://paidleave.oregon.gov/>

¹³ Oregon State Bar (OSB), Oregon Judicial Department (OJD), Legal Aid Services of Oregon (LASO), Oregon Law Center (OLC), Oregon Law Foundation (OLF), and Oregon Consumer Justice (OCJ). (n.d.). *Housing Protections for Victims of Domestic Violence and Certain Other Crimes*. Oregon Law Help. <https://oregonlawhelp.org/topics/housing/rental-housing/housing-protections-victims-domestic-violence-and-certain-other-crimes>

- Support connections to community, intergenerational relationships, and to culture. Positive connections increase the felt sense of belonging that encourages people to engage with safe, supportive resources to have their needs met. Human trafficking frequently thrives when people are seeking to have their needs met and are exposed to individuals who will exploit that desperation.¹⁴ Bolstering community connections and relationships can help protect against human trafficking before it ever occurs, and help interrupt the violence when it does occur, especially within cycles of intergenerational trauma.⁹ An example of efforts existing in Oregon that bolster connections include community mentorship programs (ex., Big Brothers, Big Sisters) which can be really meaningful, especially when combined with elements of prevention education.
- Support people who have received prevention education to share the information back to others in their lives (including families and communities) that don't have the same education. This helps fill gaps and provide more education for parents, caregivers, and youth. Askable adult workshops are an example strategy that promotes well-informed adults serving as resources for young people – ultimately enhancing factors that protect against violence and abuse.¹⁵
- Collaborate with prevention partners beyond human trafficking prevention. Many prevention efforts exist in our communities from suicide prevention, substance misuse prevention, drunk driving prevention, dating violence prevention, child abuse prevention, and more. As noted above⁴, human trafficking shares risk factors with these other issues, and therefore human trafficking is impacted when these prevention efforts are being implemented. Additionally, broader

¹⁴ Wilkins, N., Tsao, B., Hertz, M., Davis, R., Kleven, J. (2014). Connecting the Dots: An Overview of the Links Among Multiple Forms of Violence. Atlanta, GA: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Oakland, CA: Prevention Institute.

¹⁵ Vermont Department of Health, Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence. (2021). Askable Adults: A Summary of Best Practices – What makes an “Askable Adult”? and how can prevention programs equip adults for this role? VT. <https://www.nsvrc.org/sites/default/files/2021-02/Askable-Adults-Summary-of-best-practices.pdf>

prevention efforts share protective factors, which make communities healthier and safer for all people. These often overlap meaningfully with the social determinants of health (Economic Stability, Education Access and Quality, Health Care Access and Quality, Neighborhood and Built Environment, and Social and Community Context).¹⁶ Efforts that improve these help prevent human trafficking. Although these efforts might utilize different languages; the goals, impacts, and intentions are often shared or overlapping. Collaborating with efforts and people doing broader work at the community level, including confidential anti-violence advocates, will help ensure we are closer to effectively preventing human trafficking.¹⁷

Some Strategies focused on Changing Community Norms

- Addressing stigma around human trafficking and utilizing a norms change approach to **help change how people think about human trafficking**. This includes community/state-wide approaches, as well as organizational ones.
 - **Within anti-violence organizations/institutions** some necessary strategies focus on **shifting how we do our response and prevention work**. Adjusting our ways of doing the work will mitigate unintentional harm and shift how we, in communities across Oregon, can stop human trafficking from occurring in the first place. This includes:
 - Approaching our anti-violence work as ‘accomplices,’ not as ‘saviors.’¹⁸ People approach anti-violence work from different places. Sometimes this can be over-simplified into

¹⁶ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. (n.d.). *Social Determinants of Health*. Social Determinants of Health – Healthy People 2030.

<https://odphp.health.gov/healthypeople/priority-areas/social-determinants-health>

¹⁷ Foster, M.H., Rohner, C.D., Addington, A., Cunningham, N., (2021). Communities of Prevention Collaboration Toolkit. V 1.0. Salem, OR: Oregon. Attorney General's Sexual Assault Task Force. Retrieved from <http://www.oregonsatf.org>

¹⁸ Love, A. (2020, September 9). Allies, Accomplices, and Saviors: Knowing the Difference to Maximize Impact. *Diversity & Inclusion, Workplace Culture*. September 26, 2024, <https://ideas.bkconnection.com/allies-accomplices-saviors-knowing-the-difference-to-maximize-impact#:~:text=Sometimes%20these%20three%20overlap%20and,saviorship%20as%20%E2%80%9Cme%20first.%E2%80%9D>

'savior,' 'ally,' and 'accomplice' approaches to the work. These approaches differ based largely on focus, motivation, and action(s) taken. 'Saviors' often focus on short-term, quicker solutions for an individual (ex. to remove someone from a violent situation), and have (consciously or subconsciously) a desire to be the one to solve the problem, to be the rescuer or savior, often at the expense of themselves, and sometimes the expense of the individuals/communities they are trying to help. This approach can create barriers for accessing/receiving the specific help someone might need or want, as well as barriers to successful prevention because it does not include a focus on what caused, led to, and created the violence in the first place. Allies tend to focus more on longer-term support for individuals and communities that are guided by those individuals and communities, but try not to take up much space in the work. Accomplices are similar to allies, but tend to take a more vocal/visual stand and action about an issue. This includes learning where/how they have power and using that power to address systemic injustice. "Nothing about us without us"¹⁹ should serve as a key foundational pillar against saviorism.

- Holding more space, voice, and decision-making power for people and communities who experience marginalization and increased risk for being targeted for human trafficking (ex., youth, migrants, immigrants, etc.). We must be more intentional in how we include the voices, experiences, expertise, lenses, and insights from these populations as that will be most effective for uncovering what they know is needed. Dismissing these voices, even unintentionally, contributes to the discrimination and structures that reinforce the increased risks for human trafficking.

¹⁹ Khedr, R., & Etmanski, A. (2022, June 29). *Nothing about us without us*. Disability Without Poverty. <https://www.disabilitywithoutpoverty.ca/nothing-about-us-without-us/>

- Utilizing nuance, and listening to lived experience, to support better understanding of “the face of human trafficking.” Too often we focus on “stranger danger” as it can feel easier to confront than the reality that human trafficking often starts in less overtly threatening ways, including within families, by employers, and/or by a chosen partner. While strangers can certainly commit human trafficking, this particular scenario is disproportionately overrepresented in media depictions of human trafficking and does not reflect the reality for most victims/survivors. It is important that we are ensuring we are listening to people with a wealth of lived experience. One individual's experience does not necessarily represent the majority of experiences for those who experience human trafficking.
- Moving away from fear, blame, and shame-based approaches to human trafficking prevention. This means ensuring that health promotion is foundational to our prevention efforts. It's not enough to focus on what we do not want (human trafficking), we have to work towards a future where people are thriving. This includes replacing stereotypical images and tropes about human trafficking in our work to better interrupt harmful representations.²⁰
- Along with the organizational shifts mentioned above, **norms change efforts beyond our agencies** are meaningful because they change how we in our organizations, communities, and state understand human trafficking, and the systems and structures that reinforce it. Some examples include:
 - Listening to and believing the experiences of human trafficking survivors to better understand the complex dynamics of trafficking. This means not just focusing on the experiences and realities of some survivors as noted above. This could also include education for self and others about

²⁰ Oregon SATF's Prevention and Education Committee. (2015). Talking Points: A Guiding Document for Media Response and Community Conversations. Salem. <https://oregonsatf.org/resources-for-prevention>

shared experiences of isolation, control, and manipulation that are paralleled in cult environments, slavery, and other situations where rights and autonomy are compromised for individuals. By listening to and believing survivors, we are better able to uplift efforts that interrupt, prevent, and stop human trafficking from happening before, during, and after it has occurred.

- Interrupting familial norms of human trafficking as a family business. These interventions strive to break intergenerational cycles of trafficking and/or change the conditions within a family that might cause them to engage with trafficking. This might include family healing, resourcing families, bolstering community connections, and ensuring economic support is available to help meet the needs of families. Home visiting programs are an example of this work in Oregon as they seek to provide resources, connections, and support to families before they are in crisis.
- **Create, pass, and implement policies** that address factors that increase the risk for, or protect against human trafficking. This includes statewide, community-wide, and organizational policies. Some examples include:
 - Increasing support around immigration and for immigrants/migrants (including refugees and asylum-seekers): For a myriad of reasons (ex., disconnection from community, lack of access to government/other supports, fleeing violence, etc.) migrants, or people moving from their usual 'home,' are at increased risk of being targeted for human trafficking. Increasing supports for these populations includes efforts that reduce isolation for immigrants/migrants, especially those who are undocumented, which can help mitigate increased risk for experiencing human trafficking. One example of policies around this include House Bill 4002 passed in 2022 which established a

formal 'workweek' for agricultural workers in Oregon, meaning that for the first time, starting in January 2023 employers were required to pay overtime to agricultural workers.²¹ Although not all agricultural workers are migrants, basic protections like these help mitigate exploitation and labor trafficking for all agricultural workers.

- Decriminalizing sex work: There is a range of decriminalization that may occur when it comes to sex work. Full decriminalization refers to removing all criminal penalties for consensual sex work (i.e., it would no longer be considered a crime for either the person trading sex or the buyer). This is not the same as legalizing sex work, which includes developing regulations around it while it occurs legally. Partial decriminalization often refers to decriminalizing the sale of sex while having legal penalties for the purchase of sex work. Decriminalization of any kind would not apply to those under the age of 18 as laws regarding statutory rape, etc. would still apply.

As noted earlier in this paper, sex work and human trafficking exist on a continuum of consent. Not all sex work is human trafficking. Decriminalizing sex work allows for increasing transparency and promoting safer, more ethical, environments for work, including sex work. This can help reduce some opportunities for exploitation. A 2020 brief published by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), looking at more than 70 empirical studies on sex work, concluded that "decriminalization would result in improved conditions for those who engage in sex work, particularly those most marginalized, and would help to reduce the crisis of police violence and mass incarceration in the U.S."²² Much research has

²¹ *Minimum wage and overtime in agriculture*. BOLI: Minimum Wage and Overtime in Agriculture : For Employers : State of Oregon. (n.d.). <https://www.oregon.gov/boli/employers/pages/minimum-wage-and-overtime-in-agriculture.aspx#:~:text=Starting%20January%201%2C%202027%2C%20employers,to%20paying%20overtime%20in%20agriculture%3F>

²² Sakha, S., Greytak, E., & Haynes, M. (n.d.). ACLU. Is Sex Work Decriminalization The Answer? What The Research Tells Us. https://www.aclu.org/sites/default/files/field_document/aclu_sex_work_decrim_research_brief.pdf

shown that decriminalizing sex work is an option that should be considered when working to prevent human trafficking, but the research is continuing to grow about what the safest, most ethical approaches to it are, and there is still much to learn.

- Non-criminalization of Juvenile Sex Trafficking Victims: This is sometimes referred to as safe harbor laws. These vary by state but generally refer to laws that offer youth (sometimes defined as minors, other times as young people up to age 26) victims/survivors of human trafficking, particularly sex-trafficking, a non-punitive response that directs them towards restorative, trauma-informed, and protective services. This helps ensure the victims/survivors of child sex trafficking/commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) are not prosecuted for prostitution, and are not detained and interrogated against their will by law enforcement. This mitigates their involvement in the juvenile or criminal justice systems which otherwise could have additional life-long impacts on the youths' abilities to navigate employment, housing, and more; which can increase someone's risk for experiencing violence or abuse.²³ Historically, youth trafficking victims (which include any youth trading sex regardless of a third party trafficker) have been criminalized under prostitution laws, in spite of the fact that they are victims in these cases. Safe Harbor laws change this by defining youth as victims, not criminals. As of 2024, over half of all states in the USA have some sort of safe harbor law.²³ Similar to decriminalizing sex work, the research around non-criminalization is also growing. Current existing research shows that it should be considered as a strategy when working to prevent human trafficking.
- Keeping trans youth and adults safe: This includes addressing systemic Transphobia and Queerphobia pervasive in our systems and structures in Oregon. One example of efforts to do this include the Supporting Gender Expansive Students: Guidance for

²³ Green, B., Gies, S. V., Healy, E. B., & Bobnis, A. (2018, December). Safe Harbor Laws: Changing the Legal Response to Minors Involved in Commercial Sex Phase 3. The Qualitative Analysis. Bethesda, MD; Development Services Group, Inc. <https://www.ojp.gov/pdffiles1/ojdp/grants/253244.pdf>

Schools²⁴ released by the Oregon Department of Education in 2023, which built on the 2016 Guidance to School Districts on Creating a Safe and Supportive School Environment for Transgender Students. This resource provides specific recommendations to schools around nondiscriminatory practices making schools safer, and increasing the likelihood that individuals will reach out for help if they are experiencing violence, like human trafficking. Supplemental materials focus on student rights, discrimination complaint processes, creating Gender-Affirming Schools Action Plans, and more. All of these resources make our schools safer, by not tolerating violence towards some students, which helps protect all students from harm.

- Reducing barriers to healthcare (including trauma-informed and sexual and reproductive healthcare) and other supports. Access to comprehensive healthcare reduces/mitigates other social and economic harms, such as lasting or frequent illness, economic insecurity, and targeted biases. Since these harms are shown to increase the risk of being targeted for human trafficking, reducing barriers to healthcare is an effective harm reduction and anti-trafficking strategy.^{2,7} In 2023 Oregon passed a law protecting access to reproductive healthcare for all people, including youth, and also expanded insurance coverage for gender-affirming healthcare. Efforts like this help ensure people can get necessary supports to keep them healthy and safe.²⁵ “Harm reduction is a framework that emerged out of the field of substance use disorders as a strategy for reducing the negative consequences associated with drug use. Harm reduction has been used with people involved in the sex trade as a way of improving safety conditions and access to supports for both sex workers and human trafficking survivors. Harm reduction meets people where

²⁴ *Supporting gender expansive students: Guidance for schools*. Oregon Department of Education : Supporting Gender Expansive Students: Guidance for Schools : Civil Rights : State of Oregon. (n.d.).

<https://www.oregon.gov/ode/students-and-family/equity/civilrights/pages/gender-identity-guidance.aspx>

²⁵ House Bill 2002. (2023). Enacted Bill. Oregon 82nd Legislature. Oregon Legislative Information System.

<https://olis.oregonlegislature.gov/liz/2023R1/Measures/Overview/HB2002>

they are to allow for lower-barrier services. It allows for increased feelings of safety and self-determination in situations where immediate exit from the human trafficking situation is not desired or feasible. By prioritizing both safety and self-determination, it repairs the fundamental harm of human trafficking: the limiting of a survivor's agency by the trafficker. Its nonjudgmental, non-coercive approach does not minimize harm that is occurring, but rather looks at it in its social, cultural, and interpersonal context.”⁷

- Helping people meet basic needs: Efforts that help address significant risk factors and strengthen protective factors for being targeted for human trafficking, including: recent migration or relocation, substance use/misuse, mental health concerns, involvement with the child welfare system, poverty, disability status, belonging to a marginalized race/ethnicity group, houselessness, and age (being a minor specifically) -- help address underlying causes that can increase vulnerabilities that traffickers might use to increase dependence.² By helping people meet their needs (whether physiological, safety, emotional, or more) people become less vulnerable to human trafficking. Some examples of these prevention policies in Oregon include: the Just Cause Eviction and Rent Increase Protections bill passed in 2019²⁶, Chloe's Law passed in 2019 providing excused mental health days for Oregon youth²⁷, the Reproductive Health Equity Act passed in 2017 and Reproductive Healthcare Access bill passed in 2023.²⁸ Each of these laws helps people access supports to maintain

²⁶ Housing Security and its Connections to Sexual and Domestic Violence Prevention: A PreventConnect Conversation with The Oregon Attorney General's Sexual Assault Task Force and Oregon Law Center

<https://www.preventconnect.org/2019/08/housing-security-and-its-connections-to-sexual-and-domestic-violence-prevention/> and <https://www.preventconnect.org/2019/08/collaboration-partnerships-and-changing-conditions-to-prevent-sexual-and-domestic-violence/>

²⁷ HB 2191: Chloe's Law. Oregon Laws 2019. Chapter 393.

https://www.oregonlegislature.gov/bills_laws/lawsstatutes/2019orlaw0393.pdf

²⁸ *Legal rights and privacy*. Oregon Health Authority : Legal Rights and Privacy : Abortion Access in Oregon : State of Oregon. (n.d.). <https://www.oregon.gov/oha/ph/healthypeoplefamilies/abortionaccess/pages/legal-rights-privacy.aspx#:~:text=In%202023%2C%20Oregon%20lawmakers%20expanded,or%20to%20terminate%20their%20pregnancy.>

healthy and safe lives.

- Addressing economic insecurity and factors that promote poverty (ex., increasing accessible and affordable daycare, labor protections, financial support for food -- like addressing barriers to TANF²⁹, promoting housing stability and access, increasing opportunities for debt reduction, affordable healthcare, and changing systems to better support individuals and families who are struggling.) Financial wellness avenues work to provide financial stability and help alleviate financial vulnerability which is often a key factor in human trafficking involvement. In 2023, Oregon passed HB 2717A, making Oregon the third state to allow licensed outdoor preschool, helping to address child care shortages and promote health and wellbeing by connecting children to the outdoors.³⁰ This is one example of creative ways to increase access to supports that help mitigate poverty.

Some Strategies Focused on Changing Individual's Capacity for Prevention through Education and Skill-Building

- **Strategies Primarily Focused on Adults:**
 - Bolstering opportunities for parents, caregivers, and other adults to gain education and information that is factual, relevant, and supports the continued learning for youth in their lives. This may include focuses on media literacy, effective resources, common language, and tools to continue education at home. Facilitating parent nights at schools that include human trafficking prevention (that is factual, relevant, and not fear-based) as a topic is one example of this.

²⁹ *TANF Cash Benefits*. Oregon Department of Human Services : TANF Cash Benefits : Cash Benefits : State of Oregon. (n.d.). <https://www.oregon.gov/odhs/cash/pages/tanf.aspx>

³⁰ *Oregon Passes Momentous Outdoor Preschool Legislation*. Outdoor Early Learning Alliance of Oregon. (n.d.). <https://licensingoutdoorpreschoolsinoregon.org/#:~:text=In%202023%2C%20Oregon%20passed%20HB,new%20pilot%20program%20in%20Maryland.>

- Increasing individual knowledge that promotes positive community norms about bodily autonomy, equity, and eliminating structures of oppression that encourage power imbalances in relationships and other root causes, etc. This knowledge helps adults model healthy relationships, promote autonomy and agency, and not reinforce relationship dynamics rooted in power imbalances or transactions. By modeling healthy relationship skills we promote positive behavior for others in our lives and communities. Skills-based mental health therapy can be a meaningful way for adults to individually learn and cultivate skills. Parent Cafes that include these topics can be another meaningful strategy to bolster community, offer skills practice, and increase focus on establishing positive community norms.³¹
- Implementing education efforts focused on reducing the demand for human trafficking, and unethically sourced and exploitative labor in general. Promoting skills to not cause harm towards others, to have consent and boundaries respected, and to respect others' boundaries and consent, can be a meaningful starting place for this. This type of education can help refocus on the role people consuming services have in not causing additional harm and/or violence. This shifts focus away from just the people who are trafficked, and in turn gets closer to preventing the violence from being perpetrated in the first place.

Additional education around safer, more ethical business models that promote health and safety of all involved, workers and consumers, can help consumers/buyers make more ethical purchasing decisions and reduce human trafficking. Consumers play a role in choosing the labor they are accessing (including sex work). In the United States for example, erotic dancers or strippers are often considered independent contractors, which means they are commonly paid entirely in tips, instead of wages.

³¹ University of Oregon Center for the Prevention of Abuse and Neglect. (n.d.). *Parent cafés*. 90by30. <https://blogs.uoregon.edu/ninetybythirty/parent-cafes/>

As contractors, they often have to ‘pay to work,’ through what are called stage or house fees. If they are unable to pay those fees in a night, the dancer is still likely to owe that money to the club. This model can increase power dynamics that enable violence and increase risk for experiencing human trafficking. In 2023, dancers at a strip club in Portland, Oregon became only the second strip club in the country to unionize after striking over concerns of safety and unfair terminations. Learning more about power dynamics, safety mechanisms, and more can help consumers better identify places to patronize that work to mitigate violence towards workers.

- Encouraging adults to utilize and follow resources that are created by survivors and people with lived experience to inform what actually works to stop and prevent human trafficking. Some of these resources are highlighted throughout this paper.

- **Strategies Primarily Focused on Youth:**

- Health Education and Comprehensive Sexuality Education: helps interrupt shame and silence, which are powerful tools human traffickers use. Oregon’s updated health education standards³² (published October 2023) more explicitly name human trafficking in several awareness-raising education standards starting in fifth grade. Additionally, many of the education standards (kindergarten through 12th grade) incorporate skills development focused on healthy relationships, anti-oppression, respecting boundaries, healthy communication, consent, dynamics of power/control, etc. This highlights the ways in which Oregon’s health education standards have mapped out key prevention education frameworks that can be implemented in the 197 school districts across Oregon to better contribute to human trafficking

³² 2023 Oregon Health Standards, K-12 Health Education, Adopted October 19, 2023
https://www.oregon.gov/ode/educator-resources/standards/health/Documents/Health%20Standards%20Adopted%2010.19.23.pdf?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery

prevention. Alongside these standards are the Transformative Social Emotional Learning Standards³³ (established in 2023) and key educational infrastructure to support student success³⁴ (ex. African American/Black Student Success Plan, American Indian/Alaska Native Student Success Plan, Latino/a/x & Indigenous Student Success Plan, and LGBTQ2SIA+ Student Success Plan). Together these resources offer people interested in doing human trafficking prevention education with youth a clear roadmap to do this work effectively.

- Implementing online and social media safety programming rooted in literacy promotion, healthy online access, and online community building education. Specific focuses for this education are also included in the 2023 Oregon Health Education Standards in age-appropriate ways.
- Intentional outreach, focus, and prevention education with populations at higher risk, like youth and immigrants, and in government systems like foster care or juvenile detention. This could also include LGBTQ2SIA+ communities, People with Disabilities, and other communities with additional identity intersections. By providing both focused education (to specific groups) and universal education (to all youth) we are better equipping and ensuring young people are learning skills to navigate health and safety in meaningful ways. Oregon SATF's [curriculum review summary](#) document is one resource that can help to identify some educational programming to utilize with these youth populations.

³³ *Oregon's transformative social and emotional learning (TSEL) framework and standards*. Oregon Department of Education : Oregon's Transformative Social and Emotional Learning (TSEL) Framework and Standards : Social and Emotional Learning : State of Oregon. (n.d.). <https://www.oregon.gov/ode/educator-resources/standards/sel/pages/framework-standards.aspx>

³⁴ *Statewide Education Initiatives Account*. Oregon Department of Education : Statewide Education Initiatives Account : Student Success Act : State of Oregon. (2024). <https://www.oregon.gov/ode/studentssuccess/pages/statewide-education-initiatives-account.aspx>

- Grief and counseling support for youth who have experienced loss of family and other traumas to support healing and mitigate Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs).³⁵ This may include connecting, referring, and ensuring youth have access to a wealth of resources like therapists, confidential advocates³⁶, mentors, and others.

Conclusion

Preventing human trafficking, as with all forms of violence and abuse, is possible when we all find and play our roles in prevention. The strategies included in this paper are intended to be a meaningful start to exploring how we can comprehensively and more effectively prevent human trafficking in Oregon. Without changing community, systemic, and societal structures that enable human exploitation, we will likely be unable to end this violence. Individual level prevention efforts on their own are not enough to end all human trafficking. Together, with multiple strategies, and through collaboration across prevention efforts, we can get significantly closer to preventing and ending human trafficking. To continue learning about human trafficking prevention, please explore the resources listed below as well as those included throughout this paper as footnotes.

Resources to Support Human Trafficking Prevention in Communities Across Oregon:

- **The Human Trafficking Response and Intervention Program** at the Oregon Department of Justice (ODOJ). This program is working to develop a comprehensive statewide response to human trafficking that encourages cooperation and coordination across state and local

³⁵ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2019). Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) Prevention Resource for Action: A Compilation of the Best Available Evidence. Atlanta, GA: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. https://www.cdc.gov/violence-prevention/media/pdf/resources-for-action/ACEs-Prevention-Resource_508.pdf

³⁶ Foster, M.H., (2023). Mandatory Reporting and Privileged Confidential Advocacy Partnership Guide V 1.0 Keizer, OR: Oregon Attorney General's Sexual Assault Task Force. Retrieved from <http://www.oregonsatf.org>

agencies. They assist counties and tribal communities in developing infrastructure to identify human trafficking victims, provide training and technical assistance for law enforcement and community partners, and assist with the development of victim service programs for human trafficking survivors. **Find information on their webpage, including contacts for County Trafficking Intervention Coordinators and Task Forces across Oregon.**

- [Human Trafficking Prevention Toolkit](#) from Multnomah County's (ST) Prevention and Public Awareness Subcommittee – This resource provides a unified understanding of what human trafficking is (both sex and labor trafficking), how it has operated in past & present, and how to engage in effective, best practice prevention. It additionally includes a listing of many human trafficking prevention and intervention efforts across Oregon.
- [Human Trafficking Prevention Toolkit](#) of the North Carolina Coalition Against Sexual Assault (NCCASA) – This toolkit includes a Human Trafficking Prevention Overview, an overview of what human trafficking is and the public health approach to violence prevention, an exploration of the historical context that informs current frameworks and gaps, tips for effective upstream prevention, and strategies for incorporating a harm reduction lens into human trafficking prevention work, as well as critical considerations in selecting a prevention strategy. Additionally check out NCCASA's [Human Trafficking Prevention Curriculum Matrix](#) to find recommendations for prevention curricula.

Some Additional Resources

- [Freedom Network](#) is a national organization working to implement a transformative approach to human trafficking. They offer services for survivors and a wealth of resources to learn more about human trafficking.
- [Shared Hope](#) is an international organization working to bring child trafficking prevention, restoration, and justice initiatives to communities throughout the world. Additionally find resources to support human trafficking prevention and intervention on their website.

- [National Immigrant Women's Advocacy Project](#) (NIWAP) exists to educate, train, offer technical assistance and public policy advocacy, and conduct legal and social science research promoting the development, implementation, and use of laws, policies, and practices that benefit immigrant crime victims, women and children. Find training, research, legal resources, and more on their website.
- [HEAL](#) is an integrated network of over 4,000 survivors and multidisciplinary professionals in 50 countries dedicated to ending human trafficking and supporting its survivors, from a health perspective. Find a wealth of resources on their website.
- [National Indigenous Women's Resource Center](#) provides national leadership to end violence against American Indian, Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian women by uplifting the collective voices of grassroots advocates and offering culturally grounded resources, technical assistance and training, and policy development. Their resource library covers a variety of overlapping forms of violence and abuse.
- [The Life Story Initiative](#) works to address exploitation in the sex trade through an intersectional, systems-based, survivor-centered and trauma-informed lens. Find resources in English and Spanish on their website.
- [National Human Trafficking Prevention Framework: A Public Health Approach to Preventing Human Trafficking](#) from the US Department of Health and Human Services “includes eight mutually reinforcing strategies and 32 approaches that build protective factors against human trafficking across contexts to achieve maximum impact. It provides methods to bolster prevention efforts at primary, secondary, and tertiary levels to stop human trafficking before it occurs, reduce its impact, mitigate lasting effects, and prevent it from recurring.”

This paper was written by Oregon SATF’s statewide Prevention and Education Committee and review was conducted by representatives from all eight of [Oregon SATF’s statewide advisory committees](#) as well as statewide partners working in anti-trafficking, prevention, advocacy, and those with lived experience. The people who contributed to this resource have a compilation of knowledge, experience, and expertise and drew upon

a wealth of sources. It does not reflect the sole viewpoint of any one organization or individual.

To find more information about best practices in preventing multiple forms of violence and abuse, please access additional resources on the [Oregon SATF website](#).

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SOME EFFECTIVE HUMAN TRAFFICKING PREVENTION STRATEGIES

Learn more in Oregon SATF's Statewide Prevention & Education Committee's (PEC) Primary Prevention of Human Trafficking Position Paper: www.oregonsatf.org.

Promoting Community Action

Education to organizations and businesses

Supporting connections to community, intergenerational relationships, and to culture

Supporting people who have received prevention education to share the information back to others in their lives

Collaborating with prevention partners beyond human trafficking prevention

1

2

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4

Norms Change

Addressing stigma around human trafficking

Listening to and believing the experiences of trafficking survivors

Creating, passing, & implementing statewide, community-wide, and organizational policies that protect against human trafficking.

Interrupting familial norms of human trafficking as a family business

Changing Individual's Capacity for Prevention through Education and Skill-Building

STRATEGIES FOR ADULTS

Bolstering opportunities for parents, caregivers, and other adults to gain education

Increasing individual knowledge that promotes positive community norms

Implementing efforts focused on reducing demand

Encouraging adults to utilize and follow resources that are created by survivors and people with lived experience

1

2

3

4

STRATEGIES FOR KIDS/YOUTH

Providing health education and comprehensive sexuality education

Increasing mental health supports for youth, including grief and counseling support

Implementing online and social media safety programming

Implementing intentional outreach, focus, and prevention education with populations at higher risk