

VOL. IV

Support Manual for Survivors of Trafficking in Persons

PRACTICAL STEPS TO
IMPLEMENTATION

FOCUS ON ONLINE SCAM OPERATIONS
& FORCED CRIMINALITY



In collaboration with



Foreword

Survivors of forced criminality face unique challenges that require specialised care. Unlike other trafficking survivors, those coerced into criminal activities often grapple with a dual identity—seen by **society as both victims and perpetrators**. This complex psychological burden makes it particularly difficult for them to view themselves as survivors deserving of help. It also amplifies the trauma they carry, rooted not just in the exploitation they endured but also in the actions they were forced to take.

Adding to this complexity is the misconception of the “perfect victim.” Many survivors may not fit the traditional narrative. Some had minor criminal records before their trafficking experience; others may have initially entered the fraudulent industry willingly, lured by false promises of quick earnings. As the violent and coercive nature of their situations became clear, they were trapped in exploitation. Despite their past actions, their experiences of coercion make them no less worthy of care. In fact, their unique circumstances often require more urgent and focused support.

This manual challenges the notion of what a “worthy” survivor looks like, emphasising that all survivors deserve dignity, healing, and reintegration, regardless of their past. Caregivers and communities must adopt best practices that drop preconceived ideas and focus instead on survivors’ current needs. **The trauma, shame and anger these survivors experience are deep and often unprocessed, which if left untreated, can have delayed and far-reaching effects**, not only on the survivors themselves but also on the community.

To ensure effective reintegration, this manual outlines a comprehensive approach, focusing on long-term, sustainable solutions that go beyond initial aftercare. It addresses survivors’ mental health, fosters economic stability, and promotes community support, fulfilling both protection and prevention. By addressing the deeper layers of trauma and the societal stigma that often accompanies survivors of forced criminality, this manual aims to help them rebuild their lives with dignity and security.

Ultimately, the need for this manual is rooted in the urgency to provide survivors with the holistic, specialized care they require to truly heal. **It is a guide for practitioners, communities, and caregivers** to understand the complexities of forced criminality cases and to respond with empathy, respect, and a commitment to sustained, meaningful support. By focusing on survivors’ present needs rather than their past actions, we can ensure that no one is left behind.

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Introduction

This manual has been developed to empower community-based organisations and NGOs to address the complex challenges faced by survivors of cyber scams and forced criminality. Survivors of these forms of trafficking require specialised care due to the dual burden of being both exploited and perceived as perpetrators. This manual offers a comprehensive framework for supporting their reintegration, with a focus on long-term, sustainable solutions that extend beyond initial aftercare.

The primary aim is to equip community leaders and NGOs with practical tools, training, and guidelines to support the recovery of survivors. Each country will have designated support leaders who will act as local project managers, coordinating efforts to facilitate reintegration. Through regular collaboration, monthly support groups, and culturally sensitive training programmes, these leaders will be prepared to manage the complexities of survivor care within their specific contexts.

Asia Freedom Network (AFN) will assist with training and ongoing guidance, addressing any questions that arise during implementation. This collaborative effort aims to strengthen community-based support systems across countries where survivors are repatriated, ensuring they receive effective, dignified, and comprehensive care.

How We Will Implement the Manual

- **Identify Local Partners:** Working with local NGOs, AFN maps and selects community-based organisations or community leaders in areas where survivors are repatriated.
- **Build Collaboration:** AFN connects these organisations with NGOs to form a strong support network.
- **Provide Training:** Culturally relevant training, conducted in the local language, is provided to community leaders and teams.
- **Support Implementation:** Training will equip communities to understand and apply the manual effectively, ensuring trauma-informed and sensitive care.

VOL. IV

PRACTICAL STEPS TO IMPLEMENTATION



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Part 1: Step-by-Step Implementation

1.1 Initial Reception of Survivors

Identify one contact person in your team to be responsible for coordinating with partners (NGOs, healthcare team, training team, legal team).

This will ensure a smooth and supportive reception for the survivor.

Preparation

- **Private and Safe Space:** Create a private, safe space for the survivor's arrival. This space should be quiet, comfortable, and free from distractions to help the survivor feel secure.
- **Staff Training:** Train staff in trauma-informed care, cultural sensitivity, and how to recognise symptoms of trauma. This allows them to be equipped to handle the survivor's emotional and psychological needs throughout the process.
- **Basic Necessities:** Prepare necessities such as clothing, food, water, and hygiene products for the survivor to meet their immediate physical needs upon arrival.

Action

- **Warm Welcome:** Greet the survivor warmly, explaining their rights and the support available to them. To make them feel comfortable, incorporate culturally relevant gestures such as offering a warm drink like tea or coffee, cool water in hot climates, or a traditional greeting (e.g., a bow, handshake, or verbal welcome in their native language). Creating a calm and neutral environment, combined with a simple effort to make them smile or laugh, can help ease tension and foster a sense of safety and belonging.
- **Initial Risk Assessment:** Conduct an initial risk assessment using the checklist provided below. This will help gauge any immediate threats or needs and provide a foundation for ongoing support.

- Confidentiality and Trust: Emphasise that all information shared will remain confidential. This helps to build trust between the survivor and the support team.

Follow-Up

- **Documentation:** Record the details of the initial interaction and assessment to ensure that all relevant information is properly captured for the survivor's care plan.
- **Assign Case Manager:** Assign a case manager to the survivor through an NGO partner, who will be responsible for managing the survivor's ongoing care and services.
- **Schedule Follow-Up Meeting:** Plan a follow-up meeting within 48 hours to review the survivor's immediate needs and create a comprehensive plan for the next steps.

Checklist for Initial Reception

- Private space available.
- Staff trained in trauma-informed care and cultural sensitivity.
- Basic necessities prepared (clothing, food, water, hygiene products).
- Initial risk assessment conducted using the provided checklist.
- Confidentiality maintained and trust established.
- Documentation of the initial interaction and assessment completed.
- Case manager assigned through NGO partner.
- Follow-up meeting scheduled within 48 hours.

Note:

The initial interaction between the support team and the survivor is a vital opportunity and should focus on making the survivor feel safe, comfortable, and understood. Engaging them with a warm, relaxed approach will help ease any immediate stress and can make a significant difference in their ability to trust the team and open up about their experiences.

1.2 How to Conduct Risk and Needs Assessments

Preparation

- Partner with a trusted NGO to conduct the initial risk and needs assessment, ensuring a thorough and trauma-informed approach.
- Establish connections with mental health professionals and medical care providers to address survivors' immediate and ongoing health needs.

Action

- Collaborate with an NGO or healthcare organisation, evaluate the survivor's physical, mental and emotional needs using a trauma-informed approach.
- Assess for urgent concerns, such as threats from traffickers or pressing physical and mental health issues, and address them promptly.
- Create an individualised care plan based on the findings of the assessment.

Follow-Up

- Regularly update the care plan as new needs or risks are identified. This will also help with effective communication within the support team.
- Monitor the survivor's progress and adjust the plan as necessary.

Checklist for Risk and Needs Assessment

- Assessment tools prepared.
- Access to mental health and medical professionals identified.
- Comprehensive assessment conducted.
- Immediate risks identified.
- Personalised care plan developed.
- Regularly updated care plan.

1.3 How to Provide Legal and Documentation Assistance

Appoint someone who will work with the NGO to monitor the development of this process.

Preparation

- **Agency Connection:** Build relationships with legal aid organisations and relevant government agencies to streamline support for survivors. Ensure you have clear contact points for immediate assistance.
- **Create a Standard:** Develop and maintain templates for commonly required documents, such as identity recovery forms, legal petitions, and consent agreements, to ensure a consistent and efficient process.

Action

- **Secure Identification:** Assist survivors in recovering identification documents, referring to legal aid or government agencies if risks are involved.
- **Support Legal Development:** Check-in with an NGO for clearing charges or addressing legal issues related to forced criminality.
- **Support Informed Survivors:** Educate survivors about their legal rights and available resources.

Follow-Up

- **Complete Legal Processes:** Ensure all legal processes are completed and the survivor's rights are fully restored.
- **Ongoing Legal Support:** Provide continuous legal support as needed.

Checklist for Legal and Documentation Assistance

- Legal aid connections established.
- Document templates prepared.
- Identification documents recovered.

- Legal issues addressed.
- Survivor educated on legal rights.
- Ongoing legal support provided until the legal process is completed

Community Reintegration

(Partnership with local Civil Society Organisations)

How to Prepare the Community for Reintegration

- Educate the community about the survivors' experiences and the importance of acceptance and support.
- Organise community meetings, workshops, and awareness campaigns to dispel myths, reduce stigma, and create a supportive environment.

How can Communities Reduce Stigma

- **Normalise Acceptance:** Use inclusive language and messaging to portray survivors as integral members of the community deserving of respect and care.
- **Build Awareness Through Action:** Organise community-driven initiatives, such as volunteering or skill-sharing events, where survivors and community members collaborate, fostering mutual understanding.
- **Challenge Stereotypes:** Provide clear, factual information about forced criminality to dismantle harmful stereotypes and encourage empathy toward survivors' experiences.

How to Promote Inclusion for Survivors in the Community

- Encourage community activities and support networks to foster inclusion and acceptance.
- Create spaces where survivors can share their stories and participate in community life. Promote social integration through events, support groups, and peer mentoring programmes.

2.1 Community and Family Reintegration

Community and family reintegration focuses on helping survivors rebuild relationships and re-establish their roles within their families and local communities.

This process involves fostering acceptance, addressing stigma, and creating supportive environments that promote healing and long-term stability.

Preparation

- Addressing Stigmas: Develop community education materials to address stigma (training available).
- Leadership Appointment: Identify key community leaders to support reintegration efforts.

Action

- Community Education: Conduct community workshops to educate the public about forced criminality and reduce stigma.
- Support System Engagement: Facilitate meetings between each survivor and their families. Provide counselling support as needed.
- Community Engagement: Encourage community involvement in supporting the survivor's reintegration. Examples can include, neighbourhood welcome programmes, shared initiatives like cooking or art projects, and mentorship pairing, all aimed at fostering connections and creating a supportive environment for survivors' reintegration.

Follow-Up

- Continued Monitoring: Monitor the survivor's reintegration progress within the community.
- Continued Support: Continue to provide counselling and support for both the survivors and their families.
- Active Advocacy: Address any emerging community resistance or stigma through additional education efforts.

2.2 Checklist for Community and Family Reintegration

- Community education materials developed (available upon request).
- Key community leaders identified.

- Workshops conducted.
- Family meetings facilitated.
- Counselling support provided.
- Reintegration progress monitored.
- Additional education efforts planned if needed.

3.1 Support Services and Interventions

Support services and interventions provide survivors with access to critical resources such as mental health care, medical assistance, vocational training, and legal aid to address their immediate needs and facilitate long-term recovery.

Mental Health Support

- Provide access to mental health services, including individual and group therapy.
- Ensure regular counselling sessions to help survivors process their experiences and develop coping strategies.

Medical and Legal Assistance

- Ensure survivors receive comprehensive medical care to address physical injuries and chronic health conditions resulting from their exploitation.
- Provide legal assistance to help survivors navigate issues related to their coercion into criminal activities and to secure their legal rights.

Educational and Vocational Training

- Offer educational and vocational training programmes to help survivors acquire new skills and improve their employability.
- Partnering with local businesses and educational institutions to provide opportunities for sustainable employment and further develop education. Both areas of support will enhance survivors' economic independence.

3.2 Long-Term Support and Follow-Up

How to Sustain Mental Health Support

- **Build Peer Support Networks:** Establish peer-led groups where survivors can share experiences, offer mutual support, and develop coping strategies together in a safe and empowering environment.
- **Integrate Wellness Activities:** Offer therapeutic activities such as mindfulness, meditation, or creative arts to support emotional well-being and complement traditional counselling.

Exploring culturally relevant practices, like traditional healing methods or community rituals, can enhance sustainable, long-term mental health support.

How to Monitor Progress Over Time

- **Schedule Regular Check-Ins:** Conduct monthly or bi-weekly follow-ups to discuss survivors' progress, challenges, and any adjustments needed in their care plan.
- **Set and Review Goals Together:** Collaborate with survivors to set realistic recovery and reintegration goals, reviewing and updating them based on progress and changing circumstances.

How to Secure Sustainable Reintegration

- Develop long-term strategies to ensure survivors can sustainably reintegrate into society.
- Include ongoing education, employment support, and community engagement in these strategies.
- Collaborate with local organisations, businesses, and community leaders to create a supportive environment for survivors.

FAQs, Checklists & Resources

In this section, we provide detailed step-by-step instructions, checklists, and additional resources to ensure the strategies outlined in this manual are effectively implemented by communities and NGOs.

4.1 FAQs and Troubleshooting Common Challenges

In this section, we address common challenges and questions that may arise during the reintegration process while offering practical solutions to ensure each survivor receives the support they need.

4.2 Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1. What should I do if a survivor refuses help or is reluctant to engage in the reintegration process?

- Understand the reasons for reluctance: Survivors may be hesitant due to trauma, fear, or mistrust. Engage in active listening and try to understand their concerns without pressure.
- Build trust gradually: Use trauma-informed care principles to create a safe environment where the survivor feels heard and respected.
- Offer choices: Allow the survivor to have control over their decisions. Provide them with options rather than directives and encourage small steps towards engagement.
- Involve a trusted intermediary: If possible, involve someone the survivor trusts to help bridge the gap and encourage them to engage in the process.

2. How can we address community resistance or backlash against the reintegration of a survivor?

- Educate the community: Hold workshops and sessions to raise awareness about forced criminality and the experiences of survivors, fostering understanding and support.

- Engage local leaders: Work with respected community leaders to advocate for acceptance and support of survivors.
- Highlight positive stories: Share success stories of other survivors who have reintegrated successfully, focusing on their contributions to the community.
- Monitor and address issues: Actively monitor any negative reactions or behaviours in the community and address them promptly through further education and dialogue.

3. What if the survivor is facing legal issues that complicate their reintegration?

- Connect with legal aid: Ensure the survivor has access to legal assistance to address any charges or legal barriers.
- Advocate for the survivor: Work with legal professionals to advocate for the survivor's status as a victim of trafficking rather than a perpetrator.
- Provide documentation support: Assist the survivor in obtaining necessary documentation, such as identity papers, to facilitate legal processes and access to services.

4. How can we support a survivor who is experiencing severe trauma and is not responding to standard support methods?

- Refer to specialised care: If the survivor is not responding to initial support, consider referring them to specialised trauma care or a mental health professional with experience in severe trauma.
- Ensure a supportive environment: Make sure the survivor is in a stable and safe environment, free from triggers that could exacerbate their trauma.
- Be patient: Trauma recovery can be a slow process. Give the survivor time and space to heal at their own pace.

5. What if the survivor lacks motivation or seems disengaged in vocational training or education programmes?

- Identify barriers: Talk to the survivor to identify any barriers that may be affecting their motivation, such as mental health issues, fear of failure, or external pressures.
- Personalise the approach: Tailor the training or education programme to the survivor's interests and strengths. Offering courses that align with their passions can increase engagement.
- Provide incentives: Offer small incentives for participation or completion of tasks to help build motivation.
- Include peer support: Encourage the survivor to join a peer group where they can share experiences communally and motivate each other.

Troubleshooting Common Challenges

5.1 Challenge 1: Resistance from Family Members

Problem: Family members may be resistant to accepting the survivor back into the home due to stigma or fear.

- Family counselling: Offer family counselling sessions to address concerns and rebuild relationships.

In some cultures, talking to individuals informally or in an informal group discussion might be an option. We have available alternatives that are culturally relevant.

- Education: Provide the family with education about the survivor's experiences and the importance of support. Prepare before meeting with the family.
- Gradual reintegration: Consider a gradual reintegration plan where the survivor spends increasingly more time with their family as relationships heal.

5.2 Challenge 2: Survivor's Fear of Retaliation from Traffickers

Problem: Survivors may fear retaliation from traffickers, making them reluctant to engage in reintegration activities.

- Safety planning: Work with the survivor to create a safety plan that addresses their concerns and provides them with strategies to stay safe.
- Law enforcement coordination: Coordinate with local law enforcement to ensure the survivors' safety and address any threats.
- Relocation options: If necessary, explore options for relocating the survivor to a safer area.

5.3 Challenge 3: Financial Instability Affecting Reintegration

Problem: Survivors may struggle with financial instability, which can hinder their ability to reintegrate successfully.

- Financial literacy training: Offer financial literacy programmes to help survivors manage their finances effectively.
- Employment support: Provide ongoing support in finding and maintaining stable employment.

5.4 Challenge 4: Burnout Among Support Teams

Problem: Team members may experience burnout due to the emotional demands of supporting survivors.

- Regular supervision: Ensure that staff have access to regular supervision and debriefing sessions where they can discuss challenges and receive support. Local NGOs most often provide these support services.
- Self-care strategies: Encourage staff to engage in self-care activities and provide resources on managing stress and burnout prevention. (Training available)
- Team support: Foster a supportive team environment where staff can rely on each other and share the emotional load.

5.5 Challenge 5: Difficulty in Sustaining Long-Term Support

Problem: Maintaining long-term support for survivors can be challenging due to limited resources or shifting priorities.

- Build partnerships: Develop partnerships with other organisations that can share the responsibility of long-term support. (Resources available)
- Secure funding: Seek out funding opportunities, specifically for long-term survivor support programmes. (Resources available)

- Regular check-ins: Establish a system for regular check-ins with survivors to ensure they continue to receive the support they need.
- Create survivor groups: Forming a survivor support group can provide survivors with a platform for mutual emotional support, sharing experiences, and exchanging valuable information. These groups can foster resilience and empowerment, helping survivors to maintain long-term healing and reintegration. Survivor groups can also serve as a resource for information about legal processes, employment opportunities, or mental health services, strengthening the overall support system.

5.6 Challenge 6: Addressing Survivors' Focus on Immediate Needs (Debt and Employment)

Problem: Survivors often prioritise immediate concerns, such as paying off debt or securing employment, over long-term recovery and reintegration.

- **Address urgent needs first:** Help survivors stabilise by providing immediate support, such as financial guidance or connecting them with short-term job opportunities.
- **Explain sustainability steps:** Reassure survivors that their goals are achievable and explain the importance of long-term strategies, such as financial literacy and skill-building, to ensure lasting stability.
- **Build trust through gradual support:** Introduce long-term support elements gradually, showing how these steps contribute to their overall recovery and independence.

5.7 Challenge 7: Survivors Seeking Employment Overseas

Problem: Survivors Seeking Employment Overseas

- **Provide safe migration education:** Equip survivors with tools to identify legitimate job opportunities and understand their rights as migrant workers.
- **Partner with ethical organisations:** Collaborate with ethical recruitment agencies or labour rights groups to ensure survivors have access to verified opportunities.

- **Maintain ongoing communication:** Encourage survivors to stay connected with their support networks and share their plans, ensuring they have resources and assistance if challenges arise.

By addressing these FAQs and troubleshooting common challenges, the support team can be better prepared to navigate the complexities of the reintegration process. This makes sure that survivors receive consistent, effective and compassionate care.

Emergency Protocols

In this section, we outline clear procedures for handling emergencies that may arise during the reintegration process, including threats from traffickers and severe mental health crises. These protocols are designed to affirm the safety and well-being of survivors and support teams and provide a structured response to urgent situations.

6.1 Emergency Protocol 1: Dealing with threats from Traffickers

Objective: To protect survivors from potential threats or retaliation by traffickers and ensure their immediate safety.

Step-by-Step Procedure

1. Immediate Risk Assessment

- Action: As soon as a threat is identified or reported, conduct an immediate risk assessment to determine the level of danger to the survivor and support team.

Checklist

- Establishing the survivor's current location is safe.
- Collect and document details of the threat.
- Ensure law enforcement contact information is readily accessible and prioritised, for credible and immediate threats.

2. Activate Safety Plan

- Action: Implement the survivor's pre-established safety plan. This may include relocating the survivor, changing contact information, or securing their current location.

Checklist

- Relocation options are identified and secured.
- Survivor's contact information is updated or made confidential.
- Safe communication channels are established.

3. Engage Law Enforcement

- Action: Notify local law enforcement and provide them with all relevant information about the threat. Request additional protection if necessary.

Checklist

- Law enforcement is notified and briefed.
- Any necessary protection orders are requested and confirmed.
- Survivor's location and identity are kept confidential from potential threats.

4. Provide Emotional Support

- Action: Offer immediate emotional and psychological support to the survivor. Ensure they have access to a trauma counsellor or psychologist.

Checklist

- Law enforcement is notified and briefed.
- Survivor's emotional state is monitored.
- Regular check-ins are scheduled to provide ongoing support.

5. Follow-Up

- Action: Continue to monitor the situation closely. Maintain regular contact with law enforcement and the survivor to assess all ongoing risks. (This is the responsibility of the NGO.)

Checklist

- Law enforcement is notified and briefed.
- Ongoing risk assessments are conducted.

- Survivor is kept informed of any developments.
- Law enforcement updates are received and acted upon.

6.2 Emergency Protocol 2: Responding to Severe Mental Health Crisis

Objective: To provide immediate and effective intervention during a severe mental health crisis, ensuring the safety of the survivor and those around them.

Step-by-Step Procedure

1. Immediate Crisis Assessment

- **Action:** Assess the severity of the mental health crisis. Determine if the survivor poses a risk to themselves or others.

Checklist

- The survivor's current mental state is assessed.
- Risk of self-harm or harm to others is determined.
- Emergency services are contacted if the situation is critical.

2. Engage Mental Health Professionals

- **Action:** Contact a mental health professional, such as a psychologist or psychiatrist, to provide immediate intervention. Resources should be the highest priority.

Checklist

- Mental health professional is contacted and briefed.
- Survivor is kept in a safe, calm environment.
- Emergency mental health intervention is provided if needed.

3. Ensure Safe Environment

- **Action:** Remove any objects or substances that could be used for self-harm or that could pose a danger to the survivor.

Checklist

- Environment is checked and secured.
- Survivor is supervised continuously.
- Emergency services are on standby if needed.

4. Provide Emotional Support

- Action: Offer compassionate support and reassurance. Maintain a calm and non-judgmental tone to help de-escalate the situation.

Checklist

- The survivor is spoken to in a calm and supportive manner.
- Any immediate needs (e.g., water, a quiet space) are provided.
- The survivor is reassured and actively informed of what steps are being taken.

5. Follow-Up Care

- Action: Arrange for follow-up care with mental health services. Ensure that a comprehensive care plan is developed to prevent future crises.

Checklist

- Follow-up mental health appointments are scheduled.
- A comprehensive care plan is developed and agreed upon.
- Survivors are provided with crisis hotline numbers and support resources.

6.3 Emergency Protocol 3: Managing Medical Emergencies

Objective: To provide immediate medical assistance to survivors in the case of a health emergency, assuring prompt and effective care.

Step-by-Step Procedure

FIRST STEP IS TO CALL A MEDICAL PROFESSIONAL

1. Initial Assessment

- **Action:** Assess the survivor's medical condition to determine the urgency of the situation. Check for signs of serious illness or injury.

Checklist

- Survivor's condition is quickly assessed.
- Vital signs are checked if possible.
- Determine if emergency services need to be contacted.

2. Contact Emergency Services

- **Action:** If the situation is life-threatening or requires urgent medical attention, contact emergency services immediately.

Checklist

- Emergency services are contacted with details of the situation.
- Survivor is kept as comfortable and stable as possible until help arrives.
- Relevant medical history or information is prepared for first responders. (NGO should have conducted assessment upon initial reception.)

3. Provide First Aid

- **Action:** Administer basic first aid if necessary and if it is safe. Make sure the survivor is not left alone.

Checklist

- First aid is administered where applicable.
- Survivor is not left unattended.
- Continuous monitoring of the survivor's condition is maintained.

4. Support Upon Arrival of Emergency Services

- **Action:** Provide emergency responders with all relevant information and assist as needed. Confirm the survivor is transferred to medical care smoothly.

Checklist

- Information is provided to emergency responders.
- Survivors' transfer to medical care is supported.
- The support team follows up with medical providers to stay informed of the survivor's condition.

5. Post-Emergency Follow-Up

- **Action:** After the immediate crisis is resolved, establish whether the survivor receives any necessary follow-up care. Review the incident to improve future responses.

Checklist

- Follow-up medical appointments are arranged.
- Incident is reviewed and documented.
- Protocols are updated if necessary, based on the incident.

By following these emergency protocols, the support team can respond swiftly and effectively to urgent situations. This supports the essential safety and well-being of survivors. Regular training on these protocols is essential to ensure that all staff members are prepared to handle emergencies with confidence and competence.