

Developing Child-Friendly Spaces for Child and Adolescent Trafficking Victims

A WARNATH GROUP PRACTICE GUIDE



The WARNATH GROUP

Developing Child-Friendly Spaces for Child and Adolescent Trafficking Victims

PRACTICE GUIDE
by The Warnath Group

“Creating safe and age-appropriate child-friendly spaces for use by professionals trained and experienced in interacting sensitively and knowledgeably with children is one of the most important elements of a country’s response to support the needs of trafficked children. Child-friendly spaces are an essential part of providing a holistically safe and protective environment designed to promote trust and support the transformation of survivors – enabling the emergence of their resilience and healing. It is the essence of a committed victim-centered, including trauma-informed, approach to human trafficking cases.”

-Stephen Warnath, President & CEO, The Warnath Group

AT A GLANCE

Intended Audience:

This practice guide is for practitioners – any professional who may interact with child and adolescent trafficking victims in the course of their day-to-day work. This includes, but is not limited to, child protection specialists, counselors, forensic interviewers, healthcare professionals, job counselors, law enforcement, lawyers, paralegals, psychologists, researchers, school administrators, shelter staff, social assistants, social workers, teachers, therapists, and vocational trainers, among others.

Takeaways:

Child and adolescent trafficking victims are uniquely affected by trafficking experiences due to their inherent vulnerability. This requires that special and additional measures be

implemented to ensure the safety and well-being of child and adolescent trafficking victims at every stage of their lives after trafficking. At all of these stages, child-friendly spaces are important. Child-friendly spaces can be located anywhere a child trafficking victim may interact with a practitioner. It is good practice for child-friendly spaces to be used any time a practitioner interacts with a child or adolescent trafficking victim. Practitioners should consider the 4S Approach when developing and utilizing child-friendly spaces – Space, Staff, Standards, and Sustainability.

In This Practice Guide:

An explanation of what child-friendly spaces are and who the practitioners are who may utilize them when interacting with child and adolescent trafficking victims.

What is a child-friendly space?

A child-friendly space (CFS) is an environment designed to help children feel safe, calm, and comfortable while they are interacting with practitioners. While child-friendly spaces can be used by all children (anyone under age 18), they are commonly used in working with vulnerable children, as well as those who have experienced trauma. A child-friendly space should be healthy, accepting, protective, participatory, and youth-inclusive (HAPPY).



Healthy by promoting children's psychological and physical well-being. Well-being is a combination of feeling positive and functioning well. Promoting the well-being of children is the ultimate goal of child-friendly spaces.



Accepting by being welcoming, non-discriminatory, and non-judgmental. A child-friendly space must not exclude or marginalize any child based on their personal characteristics. Practitioners should be sensitive to the diversity of children they may encounter (including differences in race, ethnicity, culture, religion, national origin, language, disability, sexual identity, gender identity and expression, and socio-economic status).



Protective by offering a secure physical location and an emotionally safe place for children to interact with practitioners who are trained in child protection. This also involves strengthening local mechanisms for the support, protection, and care of children (such as engaging with parents, mobilizing other community resources, and raising awareness about children's rights).

Definition: Child-Friendly Space

A child-friendly space (CFS) is an environment designed to help children feel safe, calm, and comfortable while they are interacting with practitioners.

Definition: Child

A child is anyone under the age of 18.

Definition: Practitioner

A practitioner is any professional who may interact with a child or adolescent trafficking victim in the course of their day to-day work.



Participatory by recognizing that children have the right to participate and must be provided with opportunities to voice opinions about decisions that affect them. Children’s views should be given due weight according to their age and stage of their development.



Youth-Inclusive by ensuring that both younger children and older children (adolescents) are considered in all aspects of the space. Adolescents may feel excluded if a physical space is set up and designed with only younger children in mind (for example, in the artwork used, the size of furniture, the activities available). Youth-inclusive means recognizing that a child is anyone under the age of 18 and that children and adolescents have different needs at different ages and stages of development.



The use of child-friendly spaces originated in emergency and humanitarian settings as a means to provide children whose lives have been disrupted by conflict, disaster, or other emergencies with a sense of normalcy and safety, as well as opportunities to engage in learning and developmental activities.

Child-friendly spaces have also been used in working with child victims of abuse and violence and are increasingly being used in the provision of assistance and support to child and adolescent trafficking victims.¹

¹ See, for example, J/TIP (2021) ‘Child-Friendly Spaces for Survivors of Human Trafficking’, *Trafficking in Persons Report*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of State Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, pp. 40-41.

Any interaction that a child trafficking victim has with a practitioner has the potential to be re-traumatizing, intimidating, and/or highly stressful. These interactions can include, but are not limited to:

- with child protection authorities, social workers, or other practitioners during initial conversations or while seeking assistance
- with medical professionals or others in a healthcare setting while seeking medical care
- with law enforcement through identification, rescue, or even arrest
- with legal professionals once identified as a victim or witness of a crime
- with law enforcement and legal professionals through forensic interviews and providing testimony
- with child protection authorities, social workers, or other practitioners while receiving assistance as a result of being identified as a trafficking victim

These practitioners are the first point of contact between a child or adolescent and the official child protection system. A child-friendly approach is critically important to begin a child trafficking victim's journey to recovery in a way that will protect them, enhance their meaningful participation, and allow investigations of trafficking crimes to proceed more effectively.

Definition: Victim-Centered

Being victim-centered means engaging with victims in a way that prioritizes their self-articulated needs and concerns and empowers them as engaged participants in the interaction.

Definition: Trauma-Informed

Being trauma-informed means realizing that trafficking victims have experienced trauma, recognizing the signs of trauma, appropriately responding to trauma, and avoiding re-traumatization.

Recalling painful events can be very stressful and even traumatizing for child trafficking victims, and if the environment and processes in which they receive protection and

assistance are not child-friendly, this may have long-term and harmful consequences for the child's recovery. A child-friendly space is part of enabling children to participate in their protection and to exercise their rights in a safe, meaningful, and dignified manner.

Child-friendly spaces can be used to mitigate and avoid re-traumatization and feelings of intimidation and stress by providing an environment that fosters victim-centered and trauma-informed care.

[Locating Child-Friendly Spaces for Child and Adolescent Trafficking Victims](#)

Children and adolescents who are exploited as trafficking victims are uniquely impacted by their trafficking experiences due to their inherent vulnerability.²

- Children and adolescents, by virtue of their age and stage of development, have often not developed the tools and skills needed to cope with and overcome exploitation and trauma suffered while trafficked.³
- A child's age and developmental abilities influence their perception of an experience and the amount of information that they can store in long-term memory.
- Children and adolescents may not know the words to describe what has happened to them.
- There may be nowhere or no one for a child or adolescent to go back to after a trafficking experience – some child and adolescent victims of trafficking are unaccompanied when recovered or their families are involved in their exploitation.
- The child or adolescent may not want to return to their family or home situation.
- With a lack of life experience, some children and adolescents may consider abnormal conduct to be "normal".⁴

² Special attention should be paid to assessing and meeting the requirements of children and adolescents with additional vulnerabilities, such as the very young, those who identify as LGBTQ+, those with disabilities, those who do not speak the language of practitioners, and those who have suffered severe exploitation and abuse. Surtees, Rebecca and Laura S. Johnson (2021) *Special and Additional Measures for Child Trafficking Victims: A Practitioner Guide*. Bangkok: Regional Support Office of the Bali Process (RSO) and Washington, D.C.: NEXUS Institute.

³ Surtees, R. (2014) *Re/integration of trafficked persons. Working with trafficked children and youth*. Washington, D.C., United States: NEXUS Institute and Brussels, Belgium, King Baudouin Foundation, p. 23.

⁴ UNODC (2003) *Anti-human trafficking manual for criminal justice practitioners. Module 9: Interviewing child victims of trafficking in persons*. Vienna, Austria: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), p. 2.

As a result, special and additional measures, including the use of child-friendly spaces, should be implemented at every stage of a child's life after trafficking:

1. Identification and Immediate First Steps
2. Protection and Support
3. Non-Criminalization and Non-Detention
4. Supporting Children as Victim-Witnesses
5. Reintegration of Child Trafficking Victims

In determining where to develop child-friendly spaces to support interactions with child and adolescent trafficking victims, it is important to consider the different locations that they will potentially visit and the different practitioners with whom they will potentially interact as they move through these different stages. These are discussed in turn.

Reflection Question: What are the interactions that you have had or might have with a child trafficking victim in the course of your day-to-day work?

1. Identification and Immediate First Steps

The immediate and accurate identification of child trafficking victims is vital to their protection and ensuring that they have access to the assistance that they need to begin their recovery. If a practitioner believes that a child is a potential trafficking victim, they should immediately involve child protection authorities. If a child in a precarious situation is not assessed to be a trafficking victim, they should nonetheless be referred to child protection authorities for protection and support.⁵

If a practitioner encounters a child or adolescent who may be a trafficking victim, a child-friendly space can be used to support initial conversations or interactions. This can facilitate trust between the child victim and practitioner, as well as mitigate the risk of re-traumatization and intimidation in the identification process.

⁵ Surtees, Rebecca and Laura S. Johnson (2021) *Special and Additional Measures for Child Trafficking Victims: A Practitioner Guide*. Bangkok: Regional Support Office of the Bali Process (RSO) and Washington, D.C.: NEXUS Institute, p. 2.

Different examples of locations where child-friendly spaces might be developed and utilized to support the identification and referral of child trafficking victims include, but are not limited to:

- child protection agency offices
- Children’s Advocacy Center or Barnahus
- police stations
- emergency rooms
- healthcare facilities
- in temporary or mobile settings (such as during rescues, in hard-to-reach settings, or within migration flows)

Child-friendly spaces play a critical role during screening interviews with child trafficking victims, including during identification. However, it is important to remember that child-friendly spaces should be utilized throughout the entire process of identification and immediate first steps.

Some questions you can consider in determining where to develop and utilize child-friendly spaces for trafficking victims at this stage include:

- In what situations and locations do practitioners in your community screen for indicators of trafficking among children and adolescents?
- In what situations and locations do child trafficking victims interact with practitioners during identification and immediate first steps?
- If children in your community need emergency medical care, where do they go?
- If children in your community need emergency accommodation and/or to meet their basic needs, where do they stay? Where do they have access to take care of personal hygiene? Where do they eat?
- If children are identified as potential trafficking victims in your community, what locations do they go for first steps?

Definition: Children’s Advocacy Center

A children’s advocacy center (CAC) is a child-friendly, trauma-informed, interdisciplinary and multi-agency center for child victims and witnesses of abuse. In Europe, this model is known as the Barnahus (“children’s house”). A CAC or Barnahus is a safe location where children can be interviewed and medically examined for forensic purposes, comprehensively assessed, and receive all relevant therapeutic and legal services from appropriate practitioners.

Reflection Question: What are the spaces currently used when children and adolescents are identified as trafficking victims in the course of your day-to-day work?

2. Protection and Support

After exiting trafficking, children should be provided with protection and support without delay. In the immediate, this involves ensuring the child is removed from the trafficking environment and is settled in a safe place with trusted adults. Protection and support should be provided from identification through reintegration, recognizing that the forms of assistance needed will change depending on the phase of the child’s recovery after exit from trafficking.

Phases of Recovery⁶		
Crisis	Transition	Reintegration
Most victims exit trafficking in a state of crisis, being physically, psychologically, and/or emotionally unwell and facing problems related to their life situations. In this phase, child and adolescent trafficking victims generally require extensive protection and support.	Following the crisis phase is a period of stabilization and transition when victims begin to make the transition to “normal life”. At the transition phase, victims have generally recovered physically from their trafficking experiences and have started to process their trauma and develop coping skills.	Reintegration is the process of recovery and social and economic inclusion following a trafficking experience. The reintegration phase begins when the victim is ready to return to a more independent life, either with their family or in a new setting.

⁶ Surtees, R., M. Meshi, S. Tanellari, A. Lila and O. Hinaj (2022) *Stages of recovery and reintegration of trafficking victims. A reintegration guide for practitioners*. Tiranë: Different and Equal and Washington, D.C.: NEXUS Institute, p. 9; Surtees, R. and L.S. Johnson (2021) *Recovery and Reintegration of Trafficking Victims: A Practitioner Guide*. Bangkok: Regional Support Office of the Bali Process (RSO) and Washington, D.C.: NEXUS Institute; Surtees, R. (2017) *Supporting the Reintegration of Trafficked Persons. A Guidebook for the Greater Mekong Sub-Region*. Washington, D.C.: NEXUS Institute and Bangkok: UN-ACT and World Vision; Surtees, R. (2013) *After Trafficking: Experiences and Challenges in the (Re)integration of Trafficked Persons in the Greater Mekong Sub-region*. Washington, D.C.: NEXUS Institute and Bangkok: UNIAP; and Surtees, R. (2010) *Monitoring anti-trafficking reintegration programmes. A manual*. Washington, D.C.: NEXUS Institute and Brussels: King Baudouin Foundation.

Child-friendly spaces should be used while providing assistance and support through the crisis, transition, and reintegration phases of recovery.

Different examples of locations where child-friendly spaces might be developed and utilized to provide protection and support include, but are not limited to:

- child protection agency offices
- Children’s Advocacy Center or Barnabus
- hospitals and medical facilities
- psychological care facilities and counseling centers
- drug treatment centers
- educational centers and schools
- social worker offices
- shelters

Some questions you can consider in determining where to develop and utilize child-friendly spaces for trafficking victims at this stage include:

- What forms of assistance do child trafficking victims have access to and what are the locations where they go to receive these?
- What forms of assistance do child trafficking victims need that they do not have access to? Do these forms of assistance currently exist for adult trafficking victims or for children who are victims of other crimes/abuse?
- What are the locations where child and adolescent trafficking victims interact with practitioners while receiving protection and support? For what purposes? At these locations, where do child trafficking victims wait to interact with a practitioner?

Reflection Question: What are the spaces currently used when child trafficking victims receive protection and support in the course of your professional work?

3. Non-Criminalization and Non-Detention

The third stage at which special and additional measures should be implemented for child and adolescent trafficking victims emphasizes the importance of recognizing the victimhood of children and adolescents who have been exploited. Child and adolescent

trafficking victims should not be criminalized for status-related offenses or crimes that they were forced to commit while trafficked. Examples might include unlawful entry into a country, illegal work, engaging in commercial sex where it is criminalized, drug crimes, among other criminal acts.

If arrested or temporarily detained, children and adolescents who are identified as potential trafficking victims should be placed in accommodation that is appropriate for their needs. They should never be detained with adults such as in a police cell, prison, or immigration detention facility. The best interests of the child are to be held paramount in considering accommodation.

Child-friendly spaces highlight a child or adolescent trafficking victim's situation as a victim in need of protection and support. Different examples of locations where child-friendly spaces might be developed and utilized to emphasize the non-criminalization and non-detention of child and adolescent trafficking victims include, but are not limited to:

- police stations
- Children's Advocacy Center or Barnabus
- shelters

Child-friendly spaces in police stations or other law enforcement facilities should be separate from interrogation or interview rooms that are associated with detention and criminalization. In a child-friendly space, child and adolescent victims should feel reassured that they are not going to be treated as a criminal or as if they have done something wrong. Any decision to place trafficked children and adolescents in a shelter should be made on a case-by-case basis and in the best interests of the individual child, for the shortest possible time, and subject to independent oversight and review.

Some questions you can consider in determining where to develop and utilize child-friendly spaces for trafficking victims at this stage include:

- Are criminal justice professionals trained to screen for indicators of trafficking among children and adolescents who are arrested or detained?

- Where are arrested or temporarily detained children and adolescents accommodated?

Reflection Question: Does your country's law protect child and adolescent trafficking victims from criminalization for criminal acts committed while trafficked?

4. Supporting Children as Victim-Witnesses

Child and adolescent trafficking victims should never be forced to testify or participate in criminal justice proceedings. Trafficking victims must always voluntarily decide whether or not they wish to participate as a victim-witness. For children and adolescents, this decision should be made in consultation with a parent/guardian and child protection authority or victim-witness advocate.

If a child or adolescent trafficking victim serves as a victim-witness, any interactions at this stage should take place in a child-friendly space. Different examples of locations where child-friendly spaces might be developed and utilized during the criminal justice process include, but are not limited to:

- police stations
- Children's Advocacy Center or Barnabus
- prosecutor's offices
- courthouses
- any other location that a child victim may visit while acting as a victim-witness

Many children and adolescents who are in contact with the law find the experience of legal proceedings to be a source of fear, distress, and even re-victimization. It is not unusual for children and adolescents to find it difficult to communicate with the adults involved, to mistrust criminal justice practitioners, to lack basic information and understanding about processes and procedures, and to face discrimination because of their age or other characteristics.

For children who are interviewed during the criminal justice process, child-friendly interviewing practices should be used. Good practice is for the interview to be able to be observed by relevant parties in a space other than in the interview room (such as through a one-way mirror or audio-visual feed) to eliminate the need for multiple

interviews. Ideally interviews should also be recorded. During interviews, good practice is also to ensure privacy of those in the space (children and/or their family members/guardians). Separate areas should be made available so that individuals may privately discuss aspects of their case. If possible, physically separate, soundproofed areas should be provided so that conversations and interviews cannot be overheard (other options to consider might include using stereos or “white noise” machines in rooms to block sound).

For child trafficking victims who testify in court proceedings, policies and procedures should be in place to ensure the best interests of the child (for example, providing a support person during testimony, the use of comfort items or animals during testimony, the use of child-friendly language and mannerisms, closing the courtroom when children are testifying, taking age-appropriate breaks, and offering closed-circuit, remote broadcasting testimony). Child-friendly spaces in a courtroom should be secure and keep children and adolescents separate from the accused and their associates.

Some questions you can consider in determining where to develop and utilize child-friendly spaces for trafficking victims at this stage include:

- What are the locations where children and adolescents go when they serve as victim-witnesses? For what purposes? At these locations, where do child trafficking victims wait to interact with a practitioner?
- For children and adolescents who serve as victim-witnesses, is the recording of interviews possible?
- For children and adolescents who serve as victim-witnesses, is remote testimony possible?

Reflection Question: What are the spaces currently used when child trafficking victims serve as victim-witnesses in your community?

5. Reintegration of Child Trafficking Victims

As noted above, reintegration is the process of recovery and social and economic inclusion following a trafficking experience. The reintegration phase begins when the victim is ready to return to a more independent life, either with their family or in a new setting. At this stage of life after trafficking, child-friendly spaces should be used to support the reintegration of child-trafficking victims back into their families and communities as safely and seamlessly as possible.

Different examples of locations where child-friendly spaces might be developed and utilized during recovery and reintegration include, but are not limited to:

- child protection agency offices
- Children’s Advocacy Center or Barnabus
- hospitals and medical facilities
- psychological care facilities and counseling centers
- drug treatment centers
- educational centers and schools
- social worker offices
- community centers
- youth centers

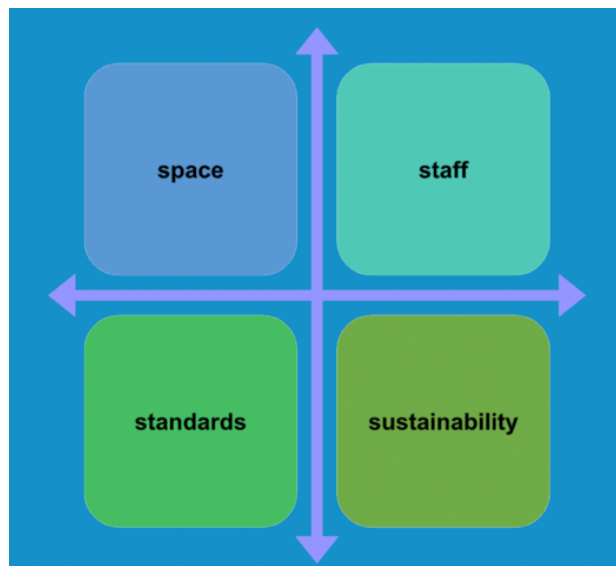
Some questions you can consider in determining where to develop and utilize child-friendly spaces for trafficking victims at this stage include:

- What forms of reintegration assistance do child trafficking victims have access to and what are the locations where they go to receive these?
- What forms of reintegration assistance do child trafficking victims need that they do not have access to? Do these forms of reintegration assistance currently exist for adult trafficking victims or for children who are victims of other crimes/abuse?
- Where do child trafficking victims wait to interact with a practitioner while receiving reintegration assistance?
- What are the locations where children and adolescents interact with practitioners while receiving reintegration assistance? For what purposes are these locations used?

Reflection Question: What are the spaces currently used when child trafficking victims receive reintegration assistance in the course of your professional work?

[Developing Child-Friendly Spaces for Child and Adolescent Trafficking Victims](#)

A child-friendly space is an environment that children and adolescents recognize is for them and that makes them feel safe, calm, and comfortable. A child-friendly space is more than just the physical setting. How practitioners interact with children in the space will ultimately determine if the environment is child-friendly. Once a location has been selected to develop a child-friendly space to support interactions with child and adolescent trafficking victims, practitioners can utilize the Warnath Group 4S Approach to design and develop the environment. This involves being focused on considerations of space, staff, standards, and sustainability. These are discussed in turn.



Space

The physical space where practitioners interact with children should be safe, calm, and comfortable.

Making a space safe. The physical space used for a child-friendly space must conform to building codes, fire codes, and other safety codes. A space does not need to be large

to have enough room but it is necessary to consider the goals of the space and what different areas/rooms will be needed to meet those goals.⁷

The space must also meet basic child protection standards. This includes ensuring that perpetrators and their associates do not have access to the space and providing adequate supervision of children and adolescents while they are in the space. Children and adolescents should be within sight or hearing distance of practitioners at all times. Good practice is ensuring the waiting room can be seen by a receptionist or guard. Another option would be to have volunteers or staff scheduled to supervise children and adolescents in the waiting room whenever the space is open to children.

Other physical space considerations related to health and safety include having separate, secure restroom facilities with hand washing areas with soap. Restrooms should include supplies such as sanitary napkins. Children and adolescents should also have access to clean drinking water.

Making a space calm. Decorations and furnishings in a child-friendly space should be welcoming and there should be some indication that the area is specific to children and adolescents. It is important to consider decorations and furnishings that benefit a range of different stages of development and personal characteristics. Good practice in making a space feel calm for children and adolescents includes the use of a calm color palette, soft carpets, and furniture appropriate to a range of ages and interests. Connecting to nature in painting, artwork, and decorating is an effective way to make a space feel calm for a wide range of ages (from children to adults).⁸

Making a space comfortable. A child-friendly space should be inclusive and non-discriminatory, so that it feels comfortable for any child or adolescent trafficking victim. Different characteristics of children and adolescents should be taken into account in designing and developing the physical space, including, but not limited to:

⁷ What comprises a “room” can be flexible depending on the available space. For example, in some contexts where practitioners interact with child and adolescent trafficking victims, space limitations have been addressed by making a child-friendly corner (instead of an entire room).

⁸ Local artists can be engaged to create artwork for a child-friendly space or it’s also possible to obtain pre-printed artwork and wall decals. In decorating, it is important to consider lighting – soft or natural lighting is more calming – and also the arrangement of furniture. Remember to pay attention to the small details, such as smells and sounds. Trafficking survivors with whom Warnath Group has worked have noted that the use of a fountain or playing meditative sounds from nature has been helpful to their well-being in waiting areas.

- Different age ranges
- Different genders
- Accompanied or unaccompanied
- Adolescents who are pregnant and/or have their own children (young parents)
- Children with disabilities
- Children from other countries or who speak different languages than practitioners
- Children from minority groups
- Children from different religious groups
- Members of the LGBTQ+ community

Depending on the purpose of the space, as part of making the experience comfortable, some practitioners choose to provide child victims with small gifts or care packages to take home.⁹ If the purpose of the space is for participation in the criminal justice process, it is important that any gift or care package be given after the interview or interaction so that it is not perceived as influencing the child's decision to participate in the criminal justice process.

Staff

All practitioners who interact with child trafficking victims should be trained to understand trafficking in persons, child trafficking, child protection, trauma-informed practices, children's rights, and child-friendly interactions and communication. Providing trauma-informed care is part of fostering a child-friendly space and requires that all staff be trained accordingly. A physical space alone is not enough to ensure the best interests of the child when child victims are interacting with practitioners. It is vital that

⁹ Examples of gifts or items that might be included in care packages:

- Personal care items
- Quilts or blankets
- Coloring books (child & adult) and coloring supplies (crayons, colored pencils, markers)
- Tokens or jewelry that symbolize bravery
- Journals
- Small games/puzzles
- Sensory toys (squishy, texturized toy items), stress balls, other small comfort items
- Inspiration stones
- Jump ropes
- Small stuffed animals
- Any small toys or games that could assist a child or adolescent in distracting themselves from upsetting feelings or thoughts

practitioners be trained on interacting with child trafficking victims specifically to avoid re-traumatization, intimidation, and stress. If a child trafficking victim is not able to trust and feel comfortable and safe with a practitioner, it will hinder their recovery and reintegration, as well as the practitioner's ability to support the child victim effectively.

Standards

To reinforce training, it is necessary to have protocols and policies in place to guide all interactions with children and adolescents. Guidelines for interactions with child and adolescent trafficking victims help ensure consistency and build trust between the victim and practitioner. Standards also allow for monitoring and evaluation to determine when practices should be improved or altered over time.

Standards should address the maintenance of the space itself. It is recommended to have an organized plan for cleaning and updating the space. For example, a weekly rotation of who participates in cleaning and maintaining the space with a checklist of particular areas to focus on, as well as a quarterly or annual meeting on updates or improvements that should be made.

Sustainability

It is critical to consider sustainability in the design and development of child-friendly spaces, including how a child-friendly space will be maintained over time and in response to any changes or challenges that arise. This can include ensuring the space is consistently in an adequate state to be used, as well as remaining open to adapting the space. Over time, practitioners may discover or decide that some aspects of the space or its design are not a best fit for their location or community. Having monitoring and evaluation practices in place can assist in this process. This also requires keeping up with new research on child trafficking victim interactions, trauma-informed design, and other developments that may be presented from scholars and practitioners.

Conclusion

Child-friendly spaces play an important role in the protection of child and adolescent trafficking victims. They are critical to supporting trauma-informed interactions and safeguarding the rights of child trafficking victims at every stage of their lives after trafficking. For example:

1. Conducting victim identification and screening interviews in a child-friendly space, with trained and sensitized practitioners and according to established standards, is key in creating a sense of safety that can lead to disclosure of harm.
2. Offering protection and immediate support to child trafficking victims in a child-friendly space can aid practitioners in ensuring the best interests of the child.
3. Trafficked children should not be criminalized or held liable for any offenses that they were forced to commit while trafficked. If they are not able to return home, they should be placed in appropriate child-friendly accommodation, with any decision to place trafficked children in a shelter made on a case-by-case basis and only in their best interests.
4. Child-friendly spaces should be utilized by investigators, in prosecutor offices, and courtrooms to protect and support children who are serving as victim-witnesses.
5. Child-friendly spaces can promote the longer-term reintegration of child and adolescent trafficking victims, not only in the places where they receive services, but also in the places where they rebuild their lives – from classrooms to community facilities to youth centers.

Creating this environment requires a multidisciplinary lens and recognition that a child-friendly space is about more than just the physical space. In many contexts, a child-friendly space will need to be developed within specific parameters (including the available resources, existing legal and protection frameworks, focus of the space, and so on) and will therefore need a tailored approach.

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The Warnath Group offers professional education and advisory services in the development of child-friendly spaces, in the form of in-person and virtual training, and technical assistance from design to implementation. We have worked in diverse settings to successfully develop child-friendly spaces for child and adolescent trafficking victims. This includes the facilitation of frontline working groups and multidisciplinary teams and providing training and technical assistance for practitioners to put protocols and practices into action. We encourage you to contact us with questions or to learn more about our peer-to-peer professional anti-trafficking training and technical assistance packages and to visit our website www.childfriendlyspaces.com.

CFS Development Checklists

These checklists are designed to be used in information gathering when deciding where to locate a child-friendly space for child and adolescent trafficking victims.

Overview		
	Where is the space located?	Please describe:
	Is the space accessible (How safe is the neighborhood? Do you have to drive to get there? Is the location obvious?)	Please describe:
Number:	How many rooms comprise the facility/location in total?	Please describe:
Number:	How many rooms and/or areas are designated for use with children?	Please describe:
Number:	How many practitioners work in the space?	Please describe:
Number:	How many practitioners in the space work directly with children/adolescents?	Please describe:
Are there child protection policies / protocols in place that practitioners are aware of?		Please describe:
Does the space include a restroom? Is the restroom specifically for children and adolescents		Please describe:

or shared with adults? Does the restroom include a shower?	
What is the purpose of the rooms and/or areas designated for use with children and adolescents in general? What ages and other characteristics of children and adolescents will most typically be in the space?	Please describe:

What is the purpose of the rooms and/or areas designated for use with child trafficking victims specifically?

Please check the relevant stages.

✓

Identification and immediate first steps
(for example, interview rooms)

Please describe:

Protection and support
(for example, exam rooms or for counseling)

Please describe:

Non-criminalization and non-detention
(for example, temporary shelter)

Please describe:

Supporting children as victim-witnesses
(for example, police stations, prosecutor offices, courtrooms)

Please describe:

Reintegration
(for example, service providers)

Please describe:

Other

Please describe:

What is needed to make the room(s) and/or area(s) child-friendly?		
✓	Safety considerations – infrastructure <i>(for example, conforming to building codes, fire codes, air conditioning)</i>	Please provide initial observations:
✓	Safety considerations – protecting victims <i>(for example, offenders do not have access to building, children are adequately supervised)</i>	Please provide initial observations:
✓	Privacy considerations <i>(for example, separate rooms for interviews or examinations or provision of services, partitions, secure storage of personal information)</i>	Please provide initial observations:
✓	Technology considerations <i>(for example, recording equipment installed for interviews? Is office equipment needed?)</i>	Please provide initial observations:
✓	Physical space considerations – infrastructure <i>(for example, small repairs to walls, painting, carpeting or area rugs, storage spaces)</i>	Please provide initial observations:
✓	Physical space considerations – furnishings <i>(for example, tables, chairs, couches)</i>	Please provide initial observations:
✓	Physical space considerations – children	Please provide initial observations:

	<i>(for example, artwork, murals, toys, furnishings)</i>	
✓	Other	Please provide initial observations:

For more information about child-friendly spaces for child and adolescent trafficking victims, contact the Warnath Group at info@WarnathGroup.com.

To access additional practical tools and resources, please visit our website at www.WarnathGroup.com.

Resources on the development of child-friendly spaces are available at www.childfriendlyspaces.com.

End Note

“Laura Story Johnson has been a leader in expanding understanding of the importance of incorporating child-friendly spaces into countries’ holistic responses to child trafficking and related cases of exploitation, violence and abuse. I thank Laura, the primary author of this Practice Guide, and Megan Coughlin and colleagues at the Warnath Group who collaborated in producing this Guide that further contributes to the Warnath Group’s pioneering work on the creation and use of child-friendly spaces for children who have suffered the severe exploitation of human trafficking.”

-Stephen Warnath, President & CEO, The Warnath Group

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