

Helping survivors of human trafficking

An online course for addiction & mental health service providers

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Human trafficking is commonly referred to as¹ **“a modern form of slavery.”**



Over **1,200** cases were reported to police in Canada between 2009 and 2016.²



Two-thirds of these cases were in Ontario.²

Large majority of people trafficked in Canada are



girls and women.²

Why are addictions relevant?

- Having an addiction can make people more vulnerable to trafficking.
- Traffickers often use substances to recruit, control, or exploit their victims.
- Trafficked persons commonly use substances to cope with their experiences.^{6,7}

What mental health problems are a concern?

- complex trauma and post-traumatic stress
- depression
- anxiety
- problems with dissociation.^{8,9}

At-risk populations in Canada

Indigenous peoples are trafficked at higher rates. Unfortunately as a result of stereotyping, systemic racism, and lack of knowledge, people often fail to identify Indigenous women and girls who are being trafficked.³

Youth are one of the groups with the highest risk of exploitation by traffickers. This is especially the case for youth with history of abuse, family instability, homelessness, or foster or residential care.⁴

Temporary foreign workers are at risk of labour exploitation for a number of reasons, including: restricted work permits; debts to recruiters; and lack of access to labour rights and support services.⁵

What is the format of the course?

The course has five, 30-minute self-directed online modules covering the following topics:

1. What is human trafficking?
2. Impacts and indicators.
3. Trauma-informed care.
4. Culturally-competent intervention.
5. Referral resources and considerations.

How was the course developed?

The Evidence Exchange Network (EENet), which is part of the Provincial System Support Program at CAMH, led the development process. The following principles guided the work:

- Engage people with lived experience throughout the process.
- Deliver accessible, self-directed training.
- Use a competency-based educational framework.

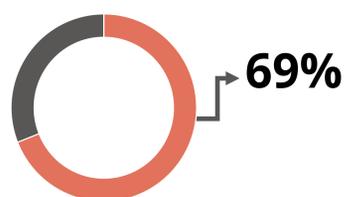
How was the course evaluated?

The team evaluated the training using the following instruments:

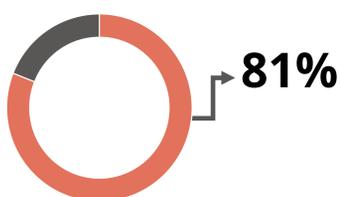
- Pre- and post-course surveys.
- Satisfaction surveys at the end of each module.
- A follow-up survey sent to participants approximately three months after their registration.

What were the findings of the course evaluation?

Over 2,200 people have registered for the course. Based on the 1,456 who completed the **pre-course** survey:

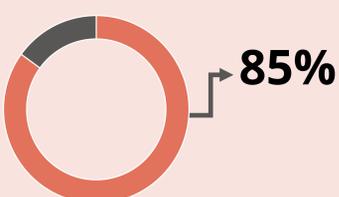


Work in addictions and mental health

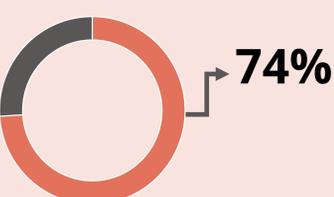


Reported it is their first course about human trafficking

104 participants responded to a **follow-up** survey that was emailed in April 2019.



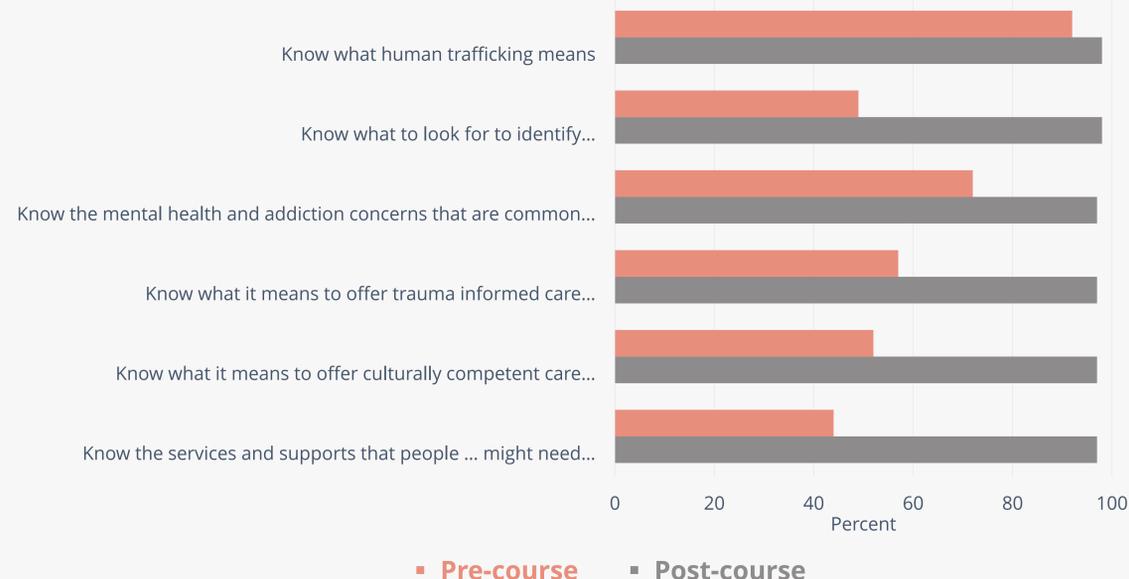
Were able to use something they learned



Recommended the course to others

Comparison of pre- and post-course surveys

Participants were asked about their knowledge of human trafficking topics prior to taking the course and again upon completion. Based on 821 individuals who completed both the pre- and post-course surveys, almost all indicated they had knowledge of the surveyed topics after completing the course.



References

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2. Ibrahim, D. (2018). *Trafficking in persons in Canada, 2016* (No. 85-005-X). Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Statistics Canada website. *Note: This article acknowledges that rates of human trafficking in Canada are difficult to gauge because it remains a largely hidden crime.*
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6. Lederer, L. J., & Wetzel, C. A. (2014). The health consequences of sex trafficking and their implications for identifying victims in healthcare facilities. *Annals of Health Law*, 23(1), 61-87.
7. Stoklosa, H., MacGibbon, M., & Stoklosa, J. (2017). Human trafficking, mental illness, and addiction: Avoiding diagnostic overshadowing. *AMA Journal of Ethics*, 19(1), 23-34.
8. Ottisova, L., Hemmings, S., Howard, L. M., Zimmerman, C., & Oram, S. (2016). Prevalence and risk of violence and the mental, physical and sexual health problems associated with human trafficking: An updated systematic review. *Epidemiology and Psychiatric Sciences*, 25(4), 317-341.
9. Williamson, E., Dutch, N. M., & Clawson, H. J. (2010). *Evidence-Based Mental Health Treatment for Victims of Human Trafficking*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation website.

Scan the QR code to find the course or visit www.eenet.ca/initiative/HT

