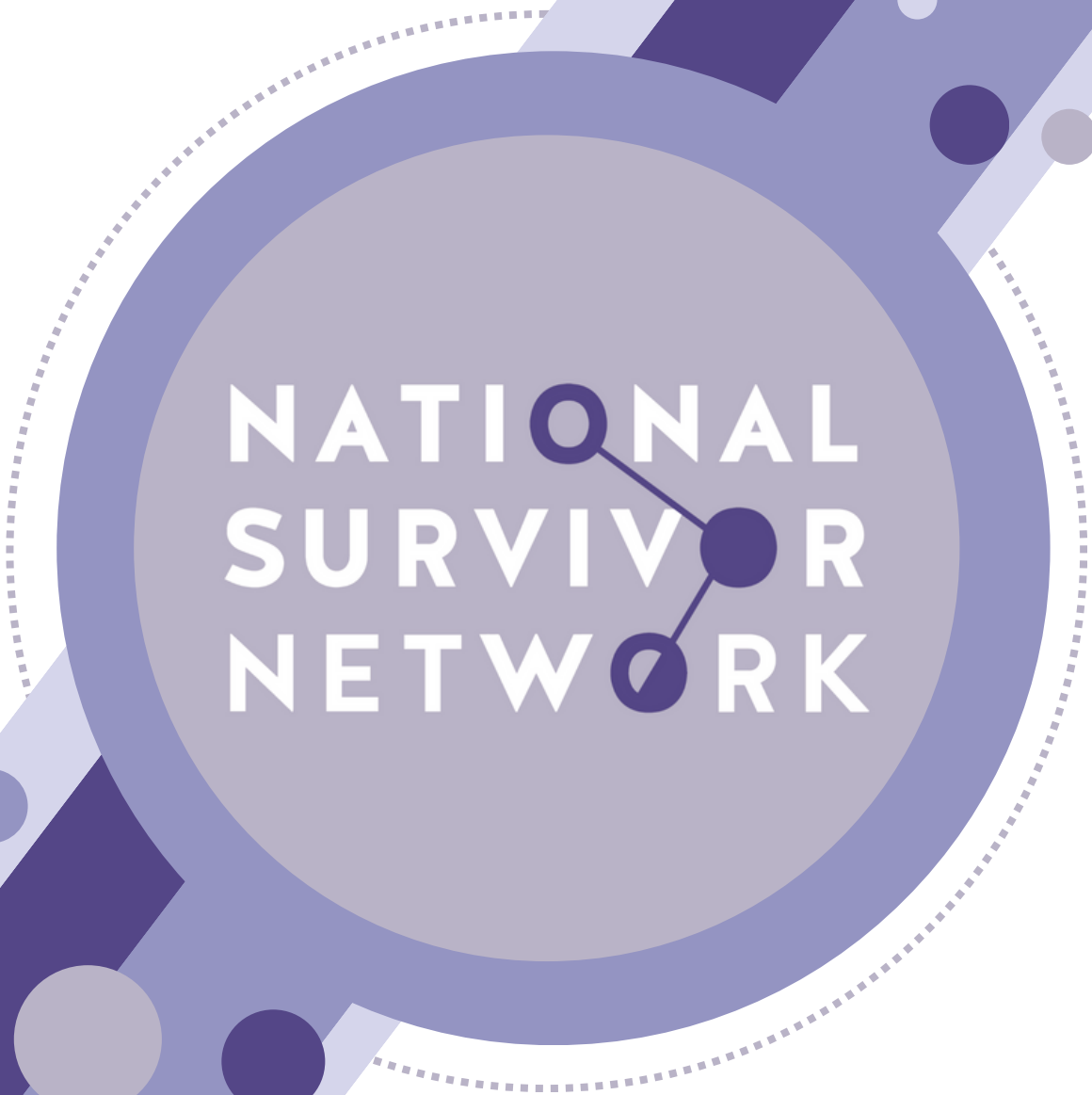


FOCUSING ON A SUSTAINABLE FOUNDATION

The logo for the National Survivor Network is centered on the page. It consists of a large, light purple circle with a darker purple border. Inside this circle, the words "NATIONAL SURVIVOR NETWORK" are written in white, uppercase, sans-serif font. The word "NATIONAL" is on the top line, "SURVIVOR" is on the middle line, and "NETWORK" is on the bottom line. A small, dark purple circle is positioned between the words "SURVIVOR" and "NETWORK", connected to the "O" in "SURVIVOR" and the "W" in "NETWORK" by thin, dark purple lines. The background of the entire page is white, with several diagonal, overlapping bands of light and dark purple. There are also several small, solid circles of different shades of purple and grey scattered across the design, particularly along the diagonal bands and around the central logo.

NATIONAL
SURVIVOR
NETWORK

The 2023 Report of the
National Survivor Network

“

"Finally, a place where those of us erased and pushed out of the mainstream movement can thoughtfully gather together, live into our complexities and lean into the emergent principles that shape the equitable future we all deserve."

– NSN Member

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Introduction



The National Survivor Network (NSN) is a values-based, survivor-led professional membership community for survivors of human trafficking who are engaged in or preparing for leadership in the many movements to end violence using human rights, public health, and harm reduction approaches.

The NSN is a program of the Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking (Cast) that was founded in 2011 to foster connections between survivors of diverse forms of human trafficking and to build a national anti-trafficking movement in which survivors are at the forefront and recognized as leaders. Because there are not many strong examples for how survivors can do powerful, systems-change work in sustainable and collaborative ways, we spent 2021-2023 focused on laying the foundation for the powerful work we hope to do in the future.

In 2022, we clarified our values and worked to determine what structures we would need in place to begin our full rollout. In 2023, we rolled out a horizontal leadership model of working groups rather than an executive committee (learn more later in this report!). You can view current members of our working groups and leadership on our [About page](#). While we initially offered anonymity to all Restructure Team members to buffer them from some of the harassment that is common in the sector, all working group members except for our two newest additions (who are still onboarding) have now expressed interest in being honored for their work.

Our work in 2023 had been slow, steady, and sustainable. We've learned that the way we do our work is at least as important as the work itself, and we hope that the foundation we are laying will allow us to continue providing space for survivor advocacy by those whose voices have been historically marginalized from the mainstream anti-trafficking conversation.

With these survivors at the forefront, I believe we can envision a world without trafficking. Under their leadership, we can prevent and respond to trafficking.



Chris

01

Values in Action: Horizontal Structure

Rather than a static executive committee of a small number of people who maintain leadership positions for a long period of time, we have successfully begun implementing our vision of working groups – a more horizontal leadership strategy. In late 2022, we put out a call for interest for members who might be interested in serving on working groups, and working group rollout began in 2023. Working group members were selected based on a match of skills/interests to the work, as well as a strong equity focus to ensure the representation of populations at the highest statistical risk of trafficking. Working group members are contracted for a set number of paid monthly hours for consulting on operations.

Current and planned working groups are Membership & Community (MCWG), Learning and Training (LTWG), Steering Group (SG), and Policy (PWG).

**What makes the working group structure less hierarchical?
Consider how members might rotate in and out of working group positions in the hypothetical examples below!**

"Ellie" <i>Joined 2022</i> MCWG/SG 2023-2024 LTWG 2026 SG 2028-2029	"Javier" <i>Joined 2022</i> LTWG 2023 PWG 2024-2025 SG 2025	"Mel" <i>Joined 2024</i> LTWG 2025 PWG 2026-2027 MCWG/SG 2029
"Tyrell" <i>Joined 2023</i> MCWG/SG 2024-2025 PWG 2027-2028 SG 2029	"Mary" <i>Joined 2022</i> LTWG 2025 PWG 2026-2027 MCWG/SG 2028-2029	"Alix" <i>Joined 2025</i> MCWG/SG 2027 PWG 2029

Given the number of working group opportunities this would mean that over a period of several years, we would have a solid foundation of NSN members who are intimately familiar with how we operate. This improves our programming through diverse insights, builds community transparency and buy-in, and strengthens sustainability for work that is community-driven rather than dependent on the strength or personality of any one leader.

Steering Group (est. 03/2023)

Restructure Team (est. 01/2022)

- Clarified and finalized NSN values statement
- 4 of the original members had the capacity to return for ongoing policy/procedure revisions as part of the Steering Group
- Revised and finalized Expectations for How We Show Up (formerly Code of Conduct)
- Finalized grievance procedures and safeguarding policies
 - Currently working on disability justice framework

Membership & Community Working Group (est. 01/2023)

- Currently 3 members + SLPM
- Conducts applicant interviews, makes decisions about applications, & conducts new member onboarding
- Supports community-building and conflict resolution

Survivor Leadership Program Manager

Our SLPM *currently* sits on all working groups, although as groups are fully onboarded/ established the SLPM is not needed at all meetings and working groups will function more independently.

Learning & Training Working Group (est. 07/2023)

- Currently 2 members
- Works on schedule for weekly skill sessions and other learning opportunities
- Currently developing curriculum and program plan for an NSN mentorship program

Policy Working Group (Expected rollout in 2024)

Document	Highlights
Fee Structure	<p>Our first four meetings in the fall of 2022 were largely focused on developing a fee structure to guide our work. You can view that fee structure here:</p> <p>https://nationalsurvivornetwork.org/about/consultant-speakers-bureau/#pay</p>
Community Agreements	<p>Over our first several meetings we collaboratively developed a series of community agreements to guide our meetings and shared space. Each meeting we review them and ask two important questions: "Are there any of these we cannot agree to during our time together? Are there any we are missing or need to add?" You can view this living document here:</p> <p>https://nationalsurvivornetwork.org/membership/#agreements</p>
Expectations for How We Show Up	<p>In early 2023, our Code of Conduct was revised by the Steering Group to outline our expectations for members' treatment of each other and our partners in this work. These emphasize confidentiality and privacy, prioritizing a mutually respectful environment in alignment with our purpose, being conscious of your status as a member in certain settings, and navigating conflict and boundaries between members in alignment with our values.</p>

“

"The NSN has provided me with the foundation needed to make my work in the anti-trafficking sector both tenable and sustainable. Through participation in the NSN's working groups and professional development spaces, I continue to cultivate my skills in community with other lived experience experts."

- Anastasia Lynge,

Membership and Community Working Group / Steering Group

New Member Levels



This year we introduced a new membership structure to support creating a container of growing trust with new members, and to ensure that our global partners who wanted access to our learning opportunities could tap into our strong educational components.

Membership Category	Requirements	Benefits
Provisional Member	Any members (in the US or otherwise) who have been accepted but not yet completed orientation or submitted signed membership documents.	Access to members-only newsletter.
Junior Member	Above, plus: have completed orientation and submitted signed membership documents.	Above, plus: Access to interactive spaces (monthly meetings, weekly skill sessions, other trainings, and discussion group [Slack]).
Full Member	Above, plus: a full year of junior membership with either no grievances or demonstrated effort in resolution of grievances.	Above, plus: Increased contract opportunities, access to less structured community spaces.
Associate Member	Non-US Based Members who have completed onboarding and submitted signed membership documents. This category of membership is not intended to exclude anyone from participation, but rather to make our educational and peer mentoring opportunities available to survivors outside the US who align with our values.	Access to member newsletter, weekly skill sessions, all other educational events, and our group discussion space (Slack).

Slow and Steady Growth

o o o o

Why the slow growth?

Because we're being careful, intentional, and in close alignment with our values this time around. We open the application period for 6 weeks at a time and then work on getting to know applicants well before acceptance, engaging our MCWG in making final determinations of membership, and thoroughly onboarding new members. This takes as long as it takes to do well, and we do not rush the process. Additionally, in 2023 we got to practice putting our values and agreements into action with accountability and made the choice not to bring in new members while we are in more intense periods of thoughtfully navigating intra-community harm. Therefore, we only had two open application periods in 2023. As we continue to build our Membership and Community Working Group's capacity to onboard new members and our community's capacity to engage in conflict in generative ways, we expect the time between open application periods to shorten.



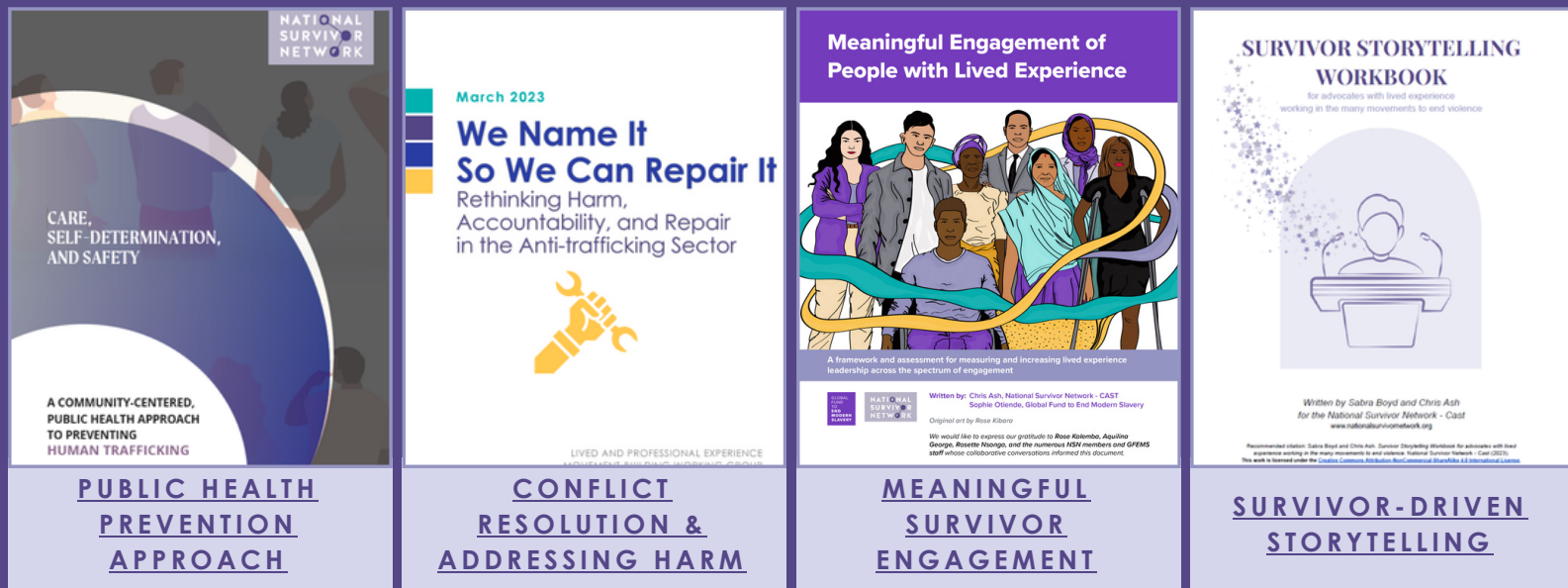
Every member applicant interviews with a MCWG member and attends a 2-hour onboarding session.



"Before joining the National Survivor Network, I felt so isolated in my work as a survivor advocate.

I am immensely grateful for NSN's community of survivor leaders that I can lean on and ask for advice in navigating professional development. NSN makes me feel supported in ways I never knew was possible."

- NSN Member



Public Health Prevention Approach

Care, Self-Determination, and Safety: A community-centered, public health approach to preventing human trafficking

In January of 2023, the NSN published our groundbreaking work on a public health approach to trafficking prevention that outlines often-ignored drivers of human trafficking. For each driver, we offer an opportunity for investment and change to prevent violence and exploitation. You can view the document, a summary of highlights, and an associated video here:

nationalsurvivornetwork.org/publichealth

Public Health Curriculum Development

Over the 2022-2023 school year, the NSN supervised a team of Masters in Public Health students from UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health. Together, we created a team of graduate students and individuals with lived

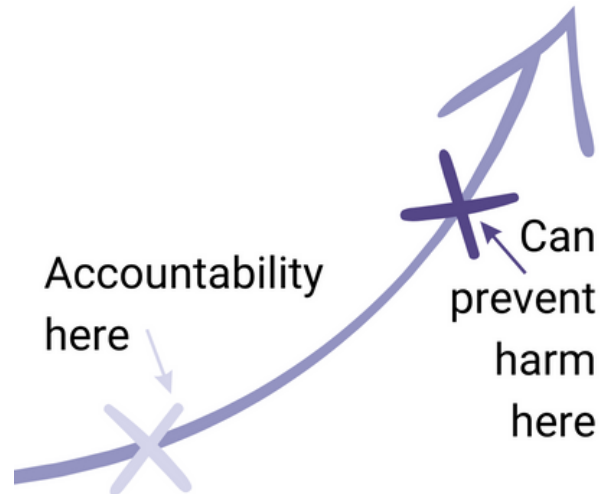
experience to work on the development of a 6-module training curriculum to introduce a public health approach to preventing trafficking. While this training is designed to give an accessible, plain-language introduction for people with lived experience wanting to integrate a public health approach into their work, this high-quality curriculum will have wide appeal to a diverse number of stakeholders who have previously been intimidated by jargon and complicated frameworks. We anticipate rolling out this training in mid-2024.

Conflict and Resolution: Addressing Harm

One key element of our work this year has been addressing conflict resolution and harm in the anti-trafficking sector. As part of our regular learning, we offered members:

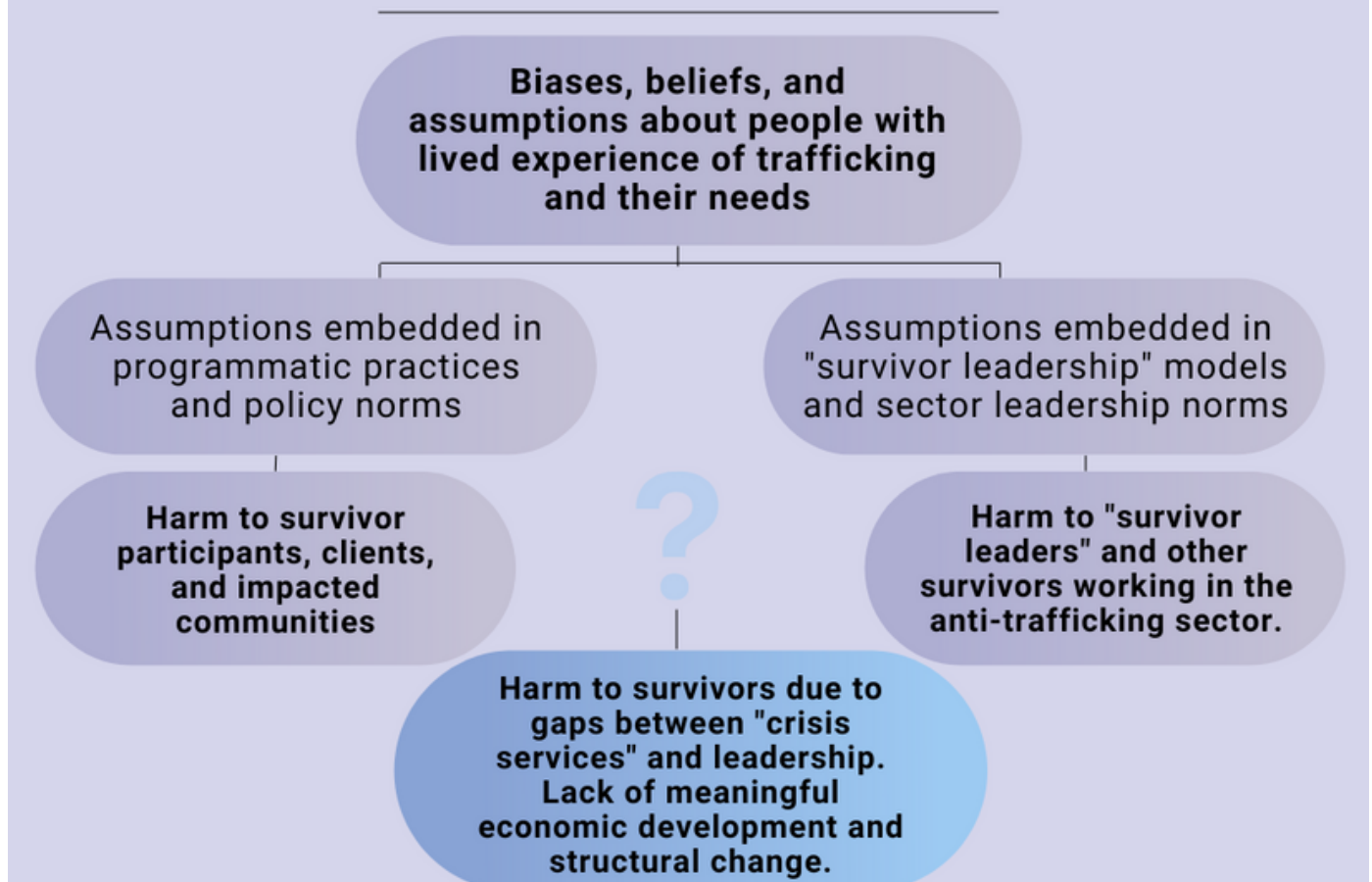
- A [4-part introduction to Community Accountability](#) in February;

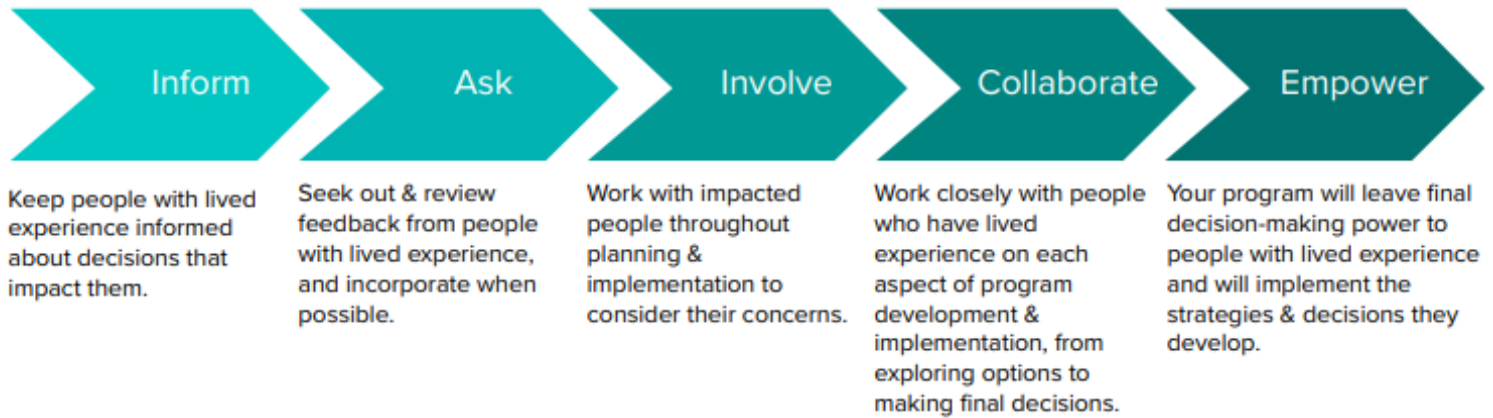
- Workshops on [Navigating Professional Boundaries](#) and [Active and Reflective Listening](#), and a session on [What Is Trauma](#) designed to increase recognition of trauma responses in ourselves and others.
- Supporting member attendance at conflict resolution and transformative justice trainings through paying registration fees and stipends, including [Unwinding the Trauma Conflict Web](#) (late 2022) and [Foundations in Somatic Abolitionism](#) (late 2023).



In late 2022-early 2023, NSN was able to engage in work funded by Humanity United focused on outlining and providing recommendations for addressing harms experienced by survivors of trafficking in and from the anti-trafficking sector. From this work, we produced a publication outlining our findings and recommendations: [We Name It So We Can Repair It](#). We were able to present this work at the Freedom Network USA 2023 conference, where it was well-received.

How survivors experience harm





Adapted from the International Association of Public Participation's [Spectrum of Public Participation](#) by Chris Ash for [Expanding Our Reach](#), 2019.

Meaningful Survivor Engagement

Meaningful Engagement of People with Lived Experience: A Framework and Assessment

In early 2023, we rolled out a framework developed in partnership with the Global Fund to End Modern Slavery throughout 2022. This framework provides a way to understand and increase meaningful engagement of people with lived experience in anti-trafficking work. This resulted in the publication of *Meaningful Engagement of People with Lived Experience* – a groundbreaking text that offers a new way of understanding meaningful engagement as well as a framework for evaluating an organization's progress toward meaningful engagement along the Spectrum of Survivor Engagement.

This framework provides **horizontal guidance in the Lived Experience Engagement Spectrum** ("Are you engaging survivors well in all the ways you need to?"). It also provides **vertical guidance in the Lived Experience Engagement Ladder** ("What is the highest level of engagement you are doing well? How can you improve or increase that level?"). The NSN's Survivor Leadership Program Manager

(SLPM) was able to bring this model into the plenary panel at Freedom Network USA's annual conference – a discussion on meaningful engagement – and supported Freedom Network staff in facilitating a brief training on it at their annual member meeting (which was entirely focused on how to use the toolkit).

This framework has also become part of **ICF's Office for Victims of Crime-funded Survivor Engagement Training and Technical Assistance (SETTA)**, and **the NSN is a partner on this project**. 18 NSN members and 7 Azadi Kenya members were trained on how to provide technical assistance regarding meaningful engagement, with 14 NSN members and 5 Azadi Kenya members completing the full 15-hour training. These NSN members are now part of the NSN's consultant pool for ICF's SETTA project, and the Azadi Kenya members are working with the Global Fund to End Modern Slavery to develop revised versions of the *Meaningful Engagement* toolkit specific for use in different African contexts. Our work on SETTA has been so strong that it will be highlighted by OVC as part of 2024 National Crime Victims' Rights Week.

Additionally, 14 NSN members and 5 Azadi Kenya members completed a 4-hour training-of-trainers to equip them to deliver the NSN's foundational training: "Rethinking Survivor Leadership." Three of these participants (2 NSN and 1 Azadi Kenya) co-facilitated a public training of this through the NSN's Training Institute in the fall of 2023, and more deliveries of this training are anticipated in 2024.



The NSN is one of the very few places in the anti-trafficking movement where myself & my relative who is a fellow survivor have been treated like valued human beings with skills & knowledge to share, not just sad stories or a cautionary tale. To be treated this way feels empowering & healing in & of itself.



Advisory Council for Global Conference

The NSN's SLPM was selected out of over a hundred applicants to serve on the Advisory Council of the 2023 Equity in Evidence conference, convened by the Modern Slavery and Human Rights Policy and Evidence Centre (PEC), the Global Fund to End Modern Slavery, and the Freedom Fund to facilitate discussion of lived experience engagement in research about human trafficking and modern slavery. At this global gathering in London, they served on the plenary panel and 4 other members of the NSN were in attendance – all of whom were on panels or facilitating discussions. You can learn more about the findings here: [Equity in Evidence conference: three key takeaways for researchers](#).

The NSN has maintained and strengthened its commitment to gathering and disseminating evidence on promising practices in survivor engagement.

Modern Slavery and Human Rights Policy & Evidence Centre Project This Year

In 2023, the SLPM was again able to serve as a research consultant for the PEC’s research project on lived experience engagement, and NSN members again provided key insights to the work. Drawing upon [the findings of our 2022 work](#), this year’s project focused on the role of survivor storytelling in anti-trafficking work, hoping to identify what a survivor-driven model of storytelling might look like. View storytelling findings here: [Whose story, whose benefit? Returning \(to\) the power of authentic narrative](#).

Key Findings:	
Review of existing storytelling models	While most “ethical storytelling” models provide broad guidance, they rarely offer practical details for implementation.
Motivations of survivors	Some survivors want to tell their stories, but often to counter mainstream narratives about trafficking rather than contribute to them.
Educating about services	Survivors interviewed were more interested in sharing their experiences of services (received, missing, or that might have helped) than sharing details of their trafficking experiences.
Internal vs external tellings	“When people outside of the impacted community share stories of in-community violence, they often tell cautionary tales that highlight the importance of doing things ‘right’ so that you don’t experience harm. In-community storytelling is more often a warning tale alerting people that there are harms you may experience even if you do everything right. The use of warning tales for education is focused instead on helping people learn to ‘anticipate reactions from the larger community through the lens of those stories.’ Cautionary tales often perpetuate and are driven by paternalism and saviorism, leading to the development of ineffective and harmful programming and prevention policies that rely on stereotypes and ‘rescue.’”
Trauma-informed	Survivors interviewed included the trauma impacts on the audience in their considerations for trauma-informed storytelling.

Recommendations

- Allowing survivors to voluntarily **opt-in to speaker collectives** rather than asking survivors directly based on a single engagement;
- Ensuring that survivors newly interested in public speaking have **regular and unmediated access to mentoring and support from more experienced “elders” in survivor leadership**.
- Survivors who are connected to **collectives** outside their workplace (rather than just a single mentor or supervisor) will be better protected from organizational manipulation.
- Invest in the **ongoing financial stability** of impacted populations so that economic pressures do not lead to taking on exploitative labor (including storytelling), and develop structures that reduce economic pressures such as a **fellowship model** or ensuring that paid storytelling work is only offered when there is comparably-paid non-storytelling work also available.
- Survivors can be provided with **access to independent coaching and development on storytelling and strategy** so that they are less reliant on (and vulnerable to exploitation in the context of) external framing for their stories.
- Recognize that while graphic details and thrilling narratives of rescue or transformation are titillating, they may not be the stories survivors want to share or feel would be useful. **Sensationalized storytelling that moves the donor or policymaker to action may have the unintended impact of reinforcing stereotypes, myths, and exploitation of survivors** (this time for their stories).



Survivor Storytelling Workbook

As the PEC research was happening, it became apparent that independent support for survivor storytellers was lacking. To address this gap, the NSN hired Sabra Boyd to co-create the [Survivor Storytelling Workbook](#) – a workbook designed to help people with lived experience determine if, when, and how they want to tell their stories; how to adapt their storytelling to different audiences and purposes; and how they can plan ahead for their safety and wellbeing when sharing their story publicly.

Building the evidence base about survivor storytelling

Even before this year's PEC research project, we had begun plans to develop a **media-savvy training** for survivors in collaboration with Sabra Boyd and The Irina Project of the UNC School of Journalism and Media. Part of this project involves a **preliminary needs assessment** to enable us to provide training that addresses attendees' most pressing needs. However, we realized that being able to share the information we learned would prove valuable to the broader anti-trafficking movement. We added in questions of research value, received IRB approval through UNC Chapel Hill, are currently collecting responses, and look forward to sharing our findings (as well as the associated training) next year.

Azadi Kenya Storytelling Model Training

While preparing the PEC research, our team wanted more information on Azadi Kenya's fellowship model of creative storytelling. (See: [2022 Exhibition](#), and [2023 Exhibition](#)). On August 10, NSN members were joined by Azadi staff and 2023 fellows, who presented their process and structure and shared their final art pieces from this year's fellowship.

71%

identified as
Black, Indigenous,
Asian, or Latine

87%

identified as
LGBTQIA+, with 23%
identifying as
transgender

74%

indicated having a
physical disability or
being blind, deaf, or
hard of hearing

58%

have experienced
labor trafficking
outside of
commercial sex

71%

have been
unsheltered homeless
in the past 5 years

In 2023, we paid out

\$202,179*

directly to survivor leaders in the form of
scholarships, business
startup microgrants, professional development
registration fees, emergency funds, or contract
payments.

Emergency microgrants:

\$68,715

Professional development, education, and
business support:

\$28,613

Contract payments:

\$104,861

The NSN does not limit emergency, microgrant, or scholarship funds only to active members who support our values. Applicants do not need to support our specific values or strategies as a prerequisite for funding.

We do use an equity matrix for our microgrant process. See results from who was funded through our most recent round of microgrants in the chart to the left.

*A previously released version of this report included only partial amounts; This is the correct, updated final amount for 2023.

Partnerships, Policy, and Collaboration

2023 was a year for building values-aligned partnerships. Meaning: We partner with other organizations where there are points of alignment.

- **Global Fund to End Modern Slavery:** As GFEMS went through its strategic reset, it prioritized survivor engagement as one of the pillars of its new strategy. In this work, GFEMS partnered with the NSN on this work, including the Meaningful Engagement toolkit.
- **Survivor Engagement Training and Technical Assistance (SETTA, ICF):** SETTA is an ICF project providing training and technical assistance on meaningful survivor engagement to any organizations receiving OVC funding for human trafficking work. The NSN and Survivor Alliance are the key partners on this project.
- **Humanity United:** We have partnered with Humanity United on movement-building work to discuss, address, and repair harm experienced by survivors in the anti-trafficking sector.
- **Project Roadmap (ICF):** Project Roadmap is an ICF project providing training and technical assistance to OVC-funded enhanced collaborative task force grantees. The NSN has been a key partner in their work to strengthen sector understandings of “victim-centered” and “trauma-responsive,” and was able to send a member to attend this year’s convening in Colorado.
- **Futures Without Violence:** The NSN has a seat on the curriculum development advisory councils for both the Survivor Leadership Cohort (SLC) and Promoting Employment Opportunities for Survivors of Trafficking (PEOST) teams, and provides additional support to the SLC.
- **Polaris:** In 2023, Polaris began work to develop The Resilience Fund – a project that would provide direct cash assistance to survivor leaders building stability (\$500/month over 18 months). The NSN was offered a role on its advisory council and has been actively engaged in conversations about accountability and ethics.
- **Freedom Network USA:** NSN had continued strong partnerships with FNUSA in 2023. We were able to contribute 20 hours each for two consultants with backgrounds in both anti-trafficking and sex worker organizing to support the development of a document providing guidance to anti-trafficking organizations on how to do their work while minimizing harm to sex workers. Additionally, the NSN provided support to FNUSA’s work with the Department of Housing and Urban Development on how to best address the housing needs of survivors. Finally, the NSN was able to negotiate a flat annual fee that allows the NSN two free attendees at any FNUSA paid webinars and all NSN members free access to any paid on-demand webinars offered by Freedom Network’s Training Institute.

- **Survivors Agenda:** In 2022, the NSN had a spot on Survivors Agenda's communications committee. In 2023, we were welcomed onto their Steering Committee and Civic Engagement Committees and were able to send two members to attend the two-day retreat in Washington, DC, at MeToo International's headquarters.
- **White House Gender Policy Council:** In 2023, the NSN supported Freedom Network in the coordination of a listening session for the White House Gender Policy Council on the impacts of partial criminalization. Several speakers were NSN members; additional speakers came from sex worker harm reduction, migrant rights, and substance use harm reduction fields.
- **Human Trafficking 101 Congressional Briefing:** On September 14, 2023, the NSN will host an entirely survivor-organized (with support from ATEST and Freedom Network) and survivor-delivered human trafficking 101 for Congress.

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The NSN has made us feel invested in and valued as survivor leaders, and we have never once been pressured to share the details of our trauma which often occurs elsewhere in the movement.



Where We're Going



As you see, we had a wonderful and vibrant 2023, and we are looking forward to continued slow, steady growth throughout 2024. We will continue our work with the primary themes that were part of our 2023 work.

Public Health & Policy: In mid-2024, we plan to roll out the first round of our public health training that we developed in collaboration with UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health this year. We also plan to continue building resources to support public understanding of the impacts of criminalization on vulnerability to trafficking. With the launch of our Policy Working Group we hope to increase survivor policy advocacy to prevent and respond to trafficking. We are currently seeking funding for a rebooted Policy Academy to prepare people with lived experience to be the anti-trafficking movement's policy strategists.

Meaningful Engagement: We plan to continue offering the Reframing Survivor Leadership training and supporting SETTA for OVC grantees. Additionally, we intend to continue partnering with similarly collective-minded local survivor leadership groups on building capacity for narrative change in their regions.

Storytelling: We continue offering trainings on our Survivor Storytelling Workbook and look forward to being able to offer our Media and Storytelling Training for Survivors (in partnership with UNC Hussman School of Journalism and Media). We are enthusiastic to continue the production of research-based evidence about survivors' experiences of sharing their stories publicly so that we can be at the forefront of developing evidence-based practices for survivor-driven storytelling for social change.

Community-building: We continue to build out our offerings educating members on community accountability skills to support healthy conflict resolution, and have plans to offer a series of somatic trainings on how to manage trauma responses in workplace interactions in early 2024. In 2023, we were able to pay for a small number of members to attend Mental Health First Aid certification trainings.

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We look forward to your continued partnership on this journey and are grateful for your support!