



EVI NETWORK

EMPOWERMENT
THROUGH
VOCATIONAL
INTEGRATION

GUIDANCE FOR COUNSELLING CENTRES ON AWARENESS-RAISING AND TRAINING OF EMPLOYERS

CONCERNING THE EMPLOYMENT
OF VICTIMS OF GENDER-BASED
VIOLENCE IN PROSTITUTION



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Notes: The terms "women" and "clients" refer to all those people who define themselves as women. This of course also applies to trans, inter or non-binary people.

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INTRODUCTION AND TERMINOLOGY

This guidance is aimed at counselling centres that want to offer the best possible support and accompaniment to women affected by violence who are or have been involved in prostitution, during the transition and integration into a new, secure job. In order to achieve this goal as comprehensively as possible, the EVI project was launched.

EVI stands for "Empowerment of Victims of Gender-based Violence through Vocational Integration".

The aim of the project is to enable the successful integration of women affected by violence in the context of prostitution into the labour market, through the widest possible network of business and support partners who, together with you as the counselling centre, stand by the clients' side. The counselling and preparation of the clients in this process is just as crucial to success as the close cooperation with suitable employers.

AFFECTED PERSON / CLIENT: Persons affected by violence and sexual exploitation in the context of prostitution, who are striving for, or have started, a professional change or reorientation of their life circumstances.

(NEW) EMPLOYEE: A client who will enter, or has entered, into an employment relationship with an employer.

NETWORK / EVI NETWORK: Participants from the business sector as well as from public and private social institutions pool existing resources locally in order to close gaps in provision for the target group. Companies and employers are key partners in these networks, because only they can provide women with low-threshold access to the labour market.

COUNSELLING CENTRE: Institution run by municipalities, churches, associations or societies that provides care and support to those affected by sexual exploitation or other forms of violence in the context of prostitution.

COMPANIES / EMPLOYERS: Companies and employers who are interested in employing suitable clients in their company.

PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS: WHY TRAINING FOR EMPLOYERS?

BEST POSSIBLE PREPARATION OF ALL PARTICIPANTS

As with all recruitment, it is not only the matching of required skills and competencies that plays a role, but also the understanding of employers and employees on a personal and team level. In cooperation with victims of sexual exploitation and other forms of violence in the context of prostitution, the best possible preparation and support of all parties involved plays a key role.

With regard to the clients in the integration process, the task of the best possible preparation and support lies on the side of the social workers of the respective counselling centre. In addition to basic social counselling topics, workplace-specific aspects are increasingly included in the counselling during the course of the process. Our experience from the last few years shows that under certain circumstances it can be necessary, or at least very beneficial, to prepare not only those affected, but also the employers for the upcoming cooperation, and to offer counselling and support in this regard during the integration process. Due to the often complex life situations of the clients after leaving prostitution, there are special needs as well as challenges: for example, some clients suffer from trauma-related disorders months or years after leaving prostitution, which can affect their ability to perform and concentrate, their ability to form relationships at work or their ability to regulate their emotions. Additional worries about housing, finances, children, family and health can also have an effect on the performance of work for those affected (see also TOLERANT www.tolerantproject.eu). At the same time, the prospect of a new, secure job, meaningful work and cooperation in an appreciative team can promote motivation and commitment. In this respect, it becomes clear that a successful integration process is not solely based on the fit of job requirements and competencies, but that numerous other factors can inhibit or indeed promote the integration process.

We therefore focus on cooperation with employers who want to face these challenges, together with the clients and the counsellors from the counselling centre in charge, in order to make it as easy as possible for those affected to start a new job and to shape a successful cooperation together. The willingness of all those involved in the process both to learn from and with each other and to make necessary adjustments is important here. The new employees to be integrated, the contact persons at the employers and the counsellors at the counselling centre all have a key role to play. In the company, it will make sense to involve not only the company management, but also human resources managers and the direct superiors of the new employee.

TRAINING OR RAISING AWARENESS?

With regard to future employers and teams, a trauma-informed approach to potential new employees is the desired goal. Unfortunately, in some cases this is precisely where successful labour integration fails. Therefore, appropriate awareness-raising work and the use of training material should help to prepare supervisors and teams as best as possible for their contribution to a successful integration process.

Depending on the extent of the needs and wishes of the clients, as well as the need for information and the willingness to learn on the part of the employers, information about clients can be made accessible or not. Protecting clients from re-traumatisation or stigmatisation, ensuring their empowerment and decision-making authority are top priorities at all times. The aim is to achieve a sustainable cooperation based on discretion, confidentiality, appreciation and commitment. Observing and strictly adhering to ethical criteria in the targeted selection of employers is therefore of central importance.

If necessary, employers can be provided with more in-depth content and information about the living environment and challenges, as well as the support options for those affected, during work integration. The approach should be "as much as necessary and as little as possible": there should be as much awareness-raising, preparation and training as necessary for successful onboarding, while at the same time ensuring discretion and anti-discrimination at all times, with as little "special treatment" as possible. Given the emphasis on careful selection of employers, it can be assumed that all companies already have a high level of motivation, integrity and commitment to discretion. In the vast majority of cases, it can therefore be assumed that the preparation of employers is less like "conventional training" and more like a partnership-based sensitisation approach. It will depend heavily on the organisational structure of the employer who is to be involved in this exchange, and at which company level.

The following contents and modules can be helpful in the initial contact and help employers to be clearer in their decision-making. It is important that all parties involved agree that a basic willingness to learn, good expectation management, transparency, as well as commitment and confidentiality, are just as critical for success as the best possible fit between clients and job requirements.

The primary and common goal should always be the empowerment and the successful and sustainable integration of the new employees in the working environment.

QUESTIONS ON PREPARATION AND ACCOMPANIMENT

The following questions can be important for the preparation of the counselling centre regarding selected employers. If there is already one, or even several clients, for placement, the questions can be clarified very concretely and specifically. If no placement is pending yet, the questions can serve as a basic clarification of the joint work and procedure.

Initial contact and preparation phase

- What is the best way to communicate the basic purpose of cooperation for work integration to employers? (→ many companies need initial help in understanding why cooperation is needed for the target group in the first place)
- Is there knowledge about the integration of target groups with special needs?

- What knowledge and competencies, but also concerns or fears, exist on the part of employers with regard to trauma-informed interaction with employees? What information and/or training needs does the employer have in this regard and how should this be addressed?
- What are the possible jobs in the employing company? (incl. analysis of advantages and risks)
- How should the application, selection and onboarding process of the future employees be designed together in concrete terms? Who has what expectations?
- What formal steps follow a possible cooperation agreement by employers (e.g. reference to inclusion in the employer database of the respective counselling centre)?

Onboarding phase

- What details need to be clarified with regard to onboarding? (It may be useful to draw up a specific checklist for all those involved.)
- What specific needs, hurdles and challenges exist on the client side and should these be made known to the employing company in whole or in part?
- Which crisis situations, and how to deal with them, should be discussed? How can crises that are brewing be recognised at an early stage?
- What should on-the-job process support on the part of the counselling centre look like – with a view to clients as well as employers?
- When / how should a joint evaluation take place?

On-the-job phase *(if required and desired)*

- How is the cooperation experience so far? Where is there a need for adjustment?
- What accumulated experience can be drawn?
- What else is needed for good further cooperation?

Especially in the case of a first cooperation, it will be important to carry out this evaluation.

Depending on the client's needs and wishes, it can be agreed with the employer that regular evaluation meetings will take place, which serve the learning process of all parties involved and define the path for the further process. Depending on the client's wishes, discussions can take place with or without a social worker.

After a period of four to six weeks following onboarding, an exchange meeting should take place. This should serve all participants in the respective process and also help the network as a whole to improve communication, content and processes. The evaluation form in the appendix can be used for this purpose.

In the following, concrete contents for sensitisation and training for employers are presented, which can serve as preparation and support.

AWARENESS RAISING AND TRAINING MODULES

Personal data protection and data privacy have the highest priority at all times of potential contact between the counselling centre, the person concerned and the employer. Security for the clients, as well as discretion and confidentiality in communication, must be guaranteed at all times.

In the concrete interaction with employers, revictimisation and discrimination represent the greatest danger for the clients. The willingness of the employers and counselling centre staff to be professional and trauma-sensitive is therefore a basic prerequisite for any form of cooperation.

The following contents and modules can be used for awareness-raising and training talks with employers. They do not claim to be exhaustive, and they can be adapted, supplemented and combined as desired. The main concern of sensitisation or training of employers is to deal with trauma-informed persons in the respective work context.

Other objectives of awareness-raising and training:

- Employers understand the current living environment of the new employee, and create a working environment in which the employee can feel comfortable or safe.
- Employers commit to a discrete process that focuses on the successful and sustainable work integration of the new employee.
- Employers, clients and social workers have a common understanding of the application, selection and onboarding process, as well as on-the-job counselling and support.
- Supervisors or contact persons in the company have competencies on necessary measures in the event of a crisis (e.g. methods for reorientation, emergency number).
- Employers are willing to engage in evaluation discussions and joint learning processes.
- At the request of the client: employers are aware of specific hurdles or personal concerns of clients (e.g. specific triggers to avoid, see Module 2).

We assume that these goals are best achieved in personal exchange and dialogue with the respective employers. In the following, we therefore propose checklists and questionnaires that can be used to prepare and conduct interviews.

In individual cases, if necessary, specific topics can be deepened or even developed into further training. However, this should never be at the expense of discretion, confidentiality and anti-discrimination of the persons concerned. Sensitive consideration of the needs of clients and employers is therefore essential.

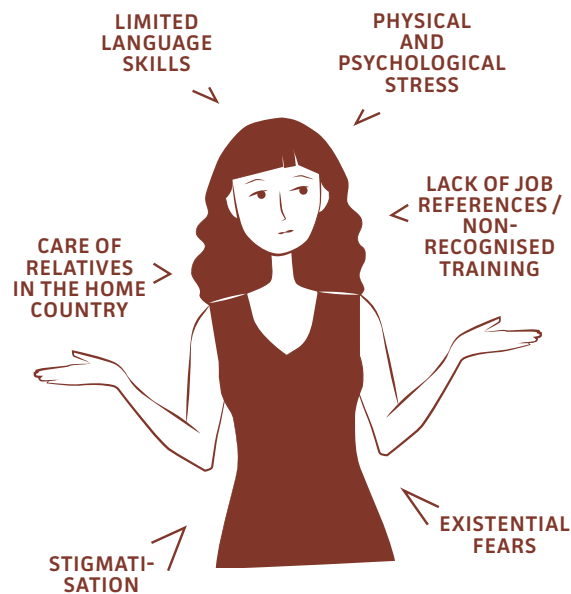
The selection of content for the following interview modules is based on our everyday experience of working with trafficked persons, as well as previous EU projects on the labour integration of persons trafficked for sexual exploitation (see GIPST <https://gipst.eu> and TOLERANT www.tolerantproject.eu)



MODULE 1: SENSITISATION TO THE LIVING ENVIRONMENT OF THE CLIENTS

The following content on the client's living environment can be deepened if there is a specific need, if the employer has follow-up questions or queries, or for a better description of the client's living situation. Rough outlines of information can also be given in initial interviews, so that client-specific topics are only discussed in more detail if there is a concrete need.

POTENTIAL CHALLENGES IN VOCATIONAL REORIENTATION:



In order to better represent the target group in its complexity and diversity, and to avoid further stigmatisation, the following spectrum of examples can be used so that employers can get an idea of what to expect. At the same time, clients should also be protected from the effects of prejudices related to their previous experiences.

Depending on the life situation, the support and accompaniment needs for clients can vary:

The easiest way to integrate into the labour market is with a client who, with the support of the counselling centre, discovers a new future perspective for herself and then takes it. She is very independent and needs little support from outside sources. After the next steps have been discussed and planned with her, she takes them independently and is very motivated and reliable.

The process is more challenging for a client who has a strong desire to leave prostitution, but at the same time feels high financial pressure and potential devaluation. She has lost confidence in her own abilities outside of prostitution. She sees no other options and the high hurdles on the labour market make it difficult for her to reorientate herself. The client needs several attempts to take the step out of prostitution and into new employment. She needs a lot of support and close supervision from the social workers and behaves erratically. Nevertheless, she has good basic conditions, e.g. she already has her own flat or a bank account, she speaks the language well and already has contacts outside the milieu.

It is particularly difficult for a client who would like to leave prostitution but is not officially registered anywhere. This means that she has no entitlement, or at least no immediate entitlement, to social benefits that she would need to tide her over. She has no flat of her own and no bank account of her own. Furthermore, she speaks no or little German and has pronounced psychological problems due to her trauma. This could lead to restrictions or difficulties in organising her everyday life. She is very disoriented, without a plan and urgently needs money. The client needs intensive support and stabilisation, and, at the beginning of the process, only a few hours of work would be possible for her.

When accompanying the clients, the tension between the need for security and support and the simultaneous desire for autonomy and independence can be observed repeatedly. It is a balancing act to find the right level of support without endangering independence. One should not expect too much from the clients and thereby overburden them. These sometimes contradictory factors can be a challenge, but knowing about the strains on a person can be the key to a successful exchange and good cooperation. For example, in comparison to a condescending answer, a patient face-to-face response might be helpful, where there is no loss of face for the client.

COMMON HURDLES ON THE WAY TO PROFESSIONAL REORIENTATION

Due to the often complex life situations of clients exiting prostitution, there are particular personal needs and challenges to consider. These can have an impact on the professional sphere. In order to make these various life situations more tangible and understandable, some specific challenges are outlined in the following examples.

- Many clients **live in a milieu** away from society. This can mean that they are neither officially registered, have their own home or social contacts (outside the milieu), nor have access to help and the health system. This means that some of the most basic needs are only very inadequately met, which contributes to an extremely insecure and unstable living situation.
- Clients are met with many prejudices, which expose them to **stigmatisation and discrediting**. They often live in a field of tension: on the one hand, prostitution is recognised as a profession in German-speaking countries, but on the other hand, the activity of prostituting is strongly stigmatised.
- The client may be under **financial pressure from home**. Possible reasons for this could be debts, or if the client is the sole financial support for her children and/or family members in the home country.
- For clients with children, the issue of **children/motherhood** plays a major role. Often the children live in the home country and are raised by the grandparents. The clients sacrifice

themselves for their children and provide for them financially, but because of the separation they cannot build up and maintain a close relationship with them. This often leads to feelings of shame and guilt. Depending on the culture of the clients, family is the most important aspect of their life. The fact that they cannot take care of their child in person can make them feel very ashamed, putting an additional burden on themselves. When the children live with them, the clients cannot take up a full-time job, depending on the age of the children.

- Clients of the target group often struggle with **isolation**. They experience the loss of family and social contacts. In addition, some of them lead a double life, as they cannot disclose where and in which field they work in front of their family. They fear violation by the family or prohibition of contact with their children.
- They may have **increased problems with authorities** and the justice system because they do not know the laws and regulations, or have got into difficulties due to relationships or financial crises (→ **debt spiral**).
- Often the clients know the local language only very little or not at all. These **language difficulties** are a major obstacle to independently mastering everyday life and finding a job outside the low-wage sector.
- As the TOLERANT project¹ has already found out, the **lack of school-leaving qualifications, work experience or letters of reference** certifying work experience are a major obstacle for many clients in their search for a job. Feelings of shame about working as a prostitute often play a big role, so that clients do not want to reveal how they have earned their money so far. Learning how to **speak** confidently **about their professional background** in order to be able to respond assuredly in job interviews or in contact with future colleagues is a necessary step.
- **Non-recognition of qualifications** can lead to unemployment or underemployment and thus marginalisation. Due to this, stigmatisation and lack of language skills, clients usually have only a few areas of work available to them, which are mostly in the low-wage sector, such as cleaning, housekeeping, kitchen or hotel services (see TOLERANT Guide, Chapter 4²).
- There may also be **cultural differences** that lead to difficulties in everyday life or during professional reorientation: depending on the culture, there may be different views on punctuality, efficiency and cleanliness rules, or there may be different role models and understandings of working in (flat) hierarchical structures.
- The target group is very often not aware of their rights and obligations, so vocational integration requires education about **rights and obligations in the workplace** (see TOLERANT Guide, Chapter 4²).
- Due to the experience of gender-specific violence in the context of prostitution or already in the run-up to it, education about **equal rights for men and women** makes sense for the target group. This can help those affected to be able to defend themselves better in certain situations or to address incorrect behaviour on the part of the opposite sex directly or in the work context, e.g. with superiors - or even to report an incident. Here, too, culturally shaped norms and role models can play a major role. This makes education and conscious reflection all the more important to strengthen the ability to act in the current environment and everyday life.
- The **relationship between time and money can be strongly influenced by the past**: the clients are usually used to a different day-night rhythm and to direct payment of their wages ("from hand to mouth"). Due to the financial pressure mentioned above, the first small adjustments could be made here to improve the step into a new employment relationship:

¹ www.tolerantproject.eu

² <https://www.tolerantproject.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/tolerant-guide-DE.pdf#page=29>

for example, weekly or half-monthly wage payments could be helpful. At the same time, slowly increasing working hours could be a helpful way to get used to the new situation.

- People in this target group may have been used or exploited in prostitution. They may not have been perceived as human beings for a long time or no one may have been interested in them. They may not have been self-determined and **their boundaries may have been disregarded**. As a result, they often get into **dependencies** and later cannot see any other perspectives for their lives on their own (see GIPST).
- Their entire life situation, possible experiences of violence in their past or just the activity of prostitution itself can lead to high psychological stress, up to illness and trauma. In the face of boundary violations, coercion or sexual exploitation, **psychological and physical illnesses** as well as a disturbed relationship to one's own body are among the probable consequences. This also means that mentally ill or traumatised people may well feel the effects of their illness in their everyday (work) life and in their dealings with other people. Consequently, a period of adjustment or acclimatisation or special arrangements may be necessary. In the following module 2, there is a more in-depth explanation and sensitisation about traumatisation. In the appendix there are examples of successful integration in the workplace as well as how to deal with crisis situations and difficulties.

CONCLUSION

Clients can find themselves in a field of tension between security, support, autonomy and independence. By knowing about this field of tension, one can better classify ambivalent signals and thus create a basis for a successful exchange and good cooperation.

On the way into everyday work, many possible hurdles arise for the clients that make it more difficult and therefore require a sensitive approach.

Basically, it is important to educate clients about their rights and duties at work and about gender equality. Likewise, it is necessary to pay attention to individual needs in the context of mental and physical illnesses.



MODULE 2:

RAISING AWARENESS OF TRAUMA SEQUELAE AND THEIR POSSIBLE IMPACT ON WORKPLACE EXPERIENCE AND BEHAVIOUR

As explained in Module 1, the activity of prostitution is often accompanied by physical and psychological violence. This does not only affect persons trafficked for sexual exploitation, but also persons in prostitution who themselves state that they have chosen the activity voluntarily and autonomously. Studies report frequent physically violent assaults, rape and verbal humiliation and the desire of trafficked persons to leave prostitution. It is also common for trafficked persons to experience symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorders (e.g. experiencing flashbacks in the form of involuntary memories, nightmares and sleep disturbances, avoidance of anxiety-provoking situations, physical overexcitement and associated restlessness, concentration problems, jumpiness, irritability, changes in emotion and impulse control, depressive moods, changes in personality and perception, altered relationship behaviour, dissociation) as well as a significantly increased risk of (re)becoming victims of violence (Farley et al., 2003; DeGPT 2022; Potterat et al., 2004).

Not all people in prostitution experience all forms of physical and psychological violence, or are victims of human trafficking and exploitation. However, studies and the practical experience of the field experts involved here suggest that no experience of violence during the practice of prostitution remains the exception, and that it must therefore be expected that the clients placed within the framework of the EVI project belong to the group of those affected by violence.

In this context, the question often arises: why don't those affected leave prostitution sooner and look for another occupation? The answer to this question is derived from the factors that both lead people into prostitution in the first place and keep them there. If you look at the complex living environment of people in prostitution, it quickly becomes clear that it is the financial existential fears (often in connection with providing for the family in the country of origin) as well as the numerous other hurdles in exiting (see Module 1) that make this seem impossible. Our experience shows that an exit from prostitution is often only considered when the physical and/or psychological strain on the person concerned has reached an almost unbearable level, and the idea of remaining in prostitution any longer seems even more frightening than the anticipated uncertainties of the exit.

Under certain circumstances, the physical and/or psychological stress of a client may be so high that an immediate change to a new work environment is not feasible and a longer stabilisation phase is necessary. Other clients manage to change jobs on their own despite traumatic experiences, or at least with socio-psychological support from an appropriate network. Within the framework of our EVI project, the focus is mainly on clients who have a psychosocial stability in which successful professional integration can be assumed through the accompaniment of a supporting network (e.g. existence of a counselling centre, sufficient integration in the health and social services, basic physical and psychological stability, straightforward housing situation).

Case studies from everyday work can be found in the appendix. When working with employers, it is recommended to use specific case studies that are comparable to the life of the specific client, in order to illustrate how the client can be supported in the workplace in the best possible way.

IMPORTANT DISTINCTION: STRESS EXPERIENCE AND TRAUMA SEQUELAE DISORDER

It should be mentioned at this point that the term "trauma" has now entered everyday language and is often used in an inflationary manner to the wrong degree. In raising awareness among potential employers, it is therefore important to make it clear that certainly many employees have had difficult life experiences and may exhibit stress reactions in certain situations. In contrast to the experience of stress, which is often expressed in the short term and triggers reactions that are either accepted in the workplace or clarified together in the team (e.g. irritability, short-term withdrawal, occasional verbal lapses), symptoms and reactions in the context of a trauma disorder (e.g. post-traumatic stress disorder) can develop in different ways. These may manifest themselves in the workplace over a longer period of time and to a socially unacceptable extent (e.g. panic attacks, physical defence in the case of emotional overload) due to altered brain structures and fear reactions that can hardly be controlled at will, if at all. It is important to recognise here that the affected persons themselves often suffer from these reactions and cannot directly control them at will. The difference between a "stress reaction" and a diagnosed trauma sequelae disorder is considerable and must be taken into account when dealing with those affected, as otherwise there is a danger of simply labelling the affected person as "incapable, difficult and unwilling", thus exacerbating the stigmatisation.

The German Society for Psychotraumatology (DeGPT) writes about this:

"The term trauma (Greek: wound) can be understood figuratively as a 'mental injury' that can occur when the psychological protective mechanisms are overtaxed by a traumatising experience. In general, events such as serious accidents, illnesses and natural disasters, but also experiences of considerable psychological, physical and sexual violence as well as severe experiences of loss and neglect are described as traumatising.

Colloquially, the term trauma is often used to refer to a wide variety of events that are experienced as distressing, to indicate that they were particularly stressful for the person concerned. In the medical classification systems (ICD-10 and DSM-IV), which are authoritative for the professional assessment of psychological complaints, however, the term is defined much more narrowly and only includes events that have been

- objectively 'involve extraordinary threat or catastrophic magnitude' (ICD-10) or 'involve actual or threatened death, actual or threatened serious bodily harm, or a threat to the physical integrity of self or others' (DSM-IV), and*
- would subjectively 'cause deep despair in almost anyone' (ICD-10) or was experienced with 'intense fear, helplessness or horror'.*

Events experienced as traumatic can cause a deep emotional shock in almost everyone, resulting in an overload of the innate biological stress system. Thus, trauma not only affects the soul, but also the body. The flooding of the brain in the context of an overwhelming stress reaction hinders the appropriate processing of what has been experienced, with the result that the person affected cannot integrate the experience made into his or her store of experience as usual and

then gain distance from it again. This circumstance can lead to the organism remaining at an elevated stress level and developing characteristic secondary complaints. (...)

How well a trauma can be coped with and processed depends on many factors. The individual life history and personal state of mind at the time of the traumatic event play a role here, as do existing environmental factors, risk and protective factors, but also the severity and duration of the traumatisation. Fortunately, most people's post-traumatic symptoms subside on their own after a while. The person's own self-healing powers allow the so-called acute stress reaction (ABR) to subside and the person affected can leave the experience behind without it significantly affecting his or her future life. However, if several stressful factors act together, the post-traumatic symptoms can persist even though the traumatic event occurred weeks or months, sometimes even years ago. These people are then referred to as having a trauma sequelae disorder." (DeGPT, 2022)

Not all persons in prostitution develop trauma sequelae. In addition, not all persons who experience assaults and catastrophes develop trauma. The development of trauma sequelae depends not only on what was experienced, but, above all, how the person was able to react in the threatening situation. However, since most people in prostitution have repeated experiences of violence, and, not infrequently, experienced physical as well as psychological violence in childhood, the development of a trauma sequelae disorder is relatively common (Farley et al., 2003).

Future employers should be aware of this fact and, if necessary, brief supervisors and team members without stigmatising those affected.

POSSIBLE EFFECTS OF PAST EXPERIENCE OF VIOLENCE AND ACUTE TRAUMATISATION ON EXPERIENCE AND BEHAVIOUR AT WORK

Past experience of violence and trauma sequelae can express themselves in different ways in the experience and behaviour of those affected. So-called "triggers" often play a special role here: triggers are environmental factors that can "trigger" the memory of traumatising experiences from the past anew in the here and now. For example, the experience of fireworks can trigger the memory of a battle and the associated panic and fear of death in war veterans. Affected persons may then show reactions in the present that ensured survival in the situation at the time (e.g. fight, flight, dissociation), but which are not functional and appropriate in the here and now. Often, these triggered reactions cause negative consequences in the current environment (e.g. lack of understanding, anger, withdrawal), which can further intensify the affected person's fear reaction.

From the point of view of the experts involved here, examples of the experiences and behaviour of those affected by sexual exploitation and/or other forms of violence in the context of prostitution can be



EMOTIONAL LEVEL

- Emotional overexcitement (person experiences flooding of fear, disgust, shame → frequently accompanied by flashback, dissociation as well as inability to react rationally)

- Emotional under-excitement (person appears emotionally uninvolved or "frozen")
- "Inappropriate" emotional reaction (person shows exaggerated or contradictory reaction to a triggering event)



COGNITIVE AND MOTIVATIONAL LEVEL

- Motivation difficulties (person cannot develop any motivation him/herself, appears listless and aimless)
- Concentration difficulties (person shows very short attention span)
- Slowed learning (person shows significantly slower learning compared to a person without trauma sequelae disorder)
- Acute mental block (person appears unfocused and cannot proactively or independently retrieve attention)
- Dissociation (person shows disturbance of the orderly interaction of body, psyche and mind and often appears "absent-minded" or "spaced out")



BEHAVIOURAL LEVEL

- Auto-aggressive behaviour (person shows self-injurious behaviour)
- Aggressive behaviour (person shows behaviour that hurts others)
- Withdrawal behaviour (person withdraws, interrupts communication or ends relationship)
- "Unreliability" (person shows behaviour of being late, not keeping agreements or appointments, or seemingly arbitrarily admitting and cancelling obligations).

A trauma-sensitive approach to those affected and a willingness to learn on the part of all those involved is therefore of elementary importance for a successful new professional start.

TRAUMA-INFORMED HANDLING AND SUPPORT OF TRAUMA VICTIMS AT THE WORKPLACE

The so-called "trauma-informed approach" shows how the needs of those affected can be met in a safe, compassionate and co-created environment: it focuses on both avoiding re-traumatisation, using the strengths and resilience of the affected person themselves, and considering trauma-informed principles in the workplace. Since the focus is often on the increased need for support for female clients, it is essential to focus on the client's skills and competencies. In this way, revictimisation can also be avoided.

Counselling or raising awareness among colleagues and superiors can also be considered in individual cases. It is important to protect the privacy of those affected and to prevent stigmatisation.

The trauma-informed approach assumes that a person's behaviour is their best attempt to cope with and overcome traumatic experiences. The resulting behaviours or habits may not

always seem functional or socially acceptable to outsiders. However, in the lives of those affected, these behaviours have ensured survival. Some of these strategies may have been necessary for survival in the past, but today they may be inappropriate or irritating to those around them. Here, the trauma-informed attitude of the so-called "good reason" can be very helpful: the behaviour once had the good reason to contribute to survival - no matter how "irritating" the specific behaviour may currently seem to outsiders. People in today's immediate work environment can show understanding for those affected by accepting the good reason, without having to agree with the individual behaviour. Such an atmosphere of acceptance offers them the chance to gradually process traumatic events and to develop new, positive and relationship-strengthening strategies in safe relationships that are appropriate to the current environment.

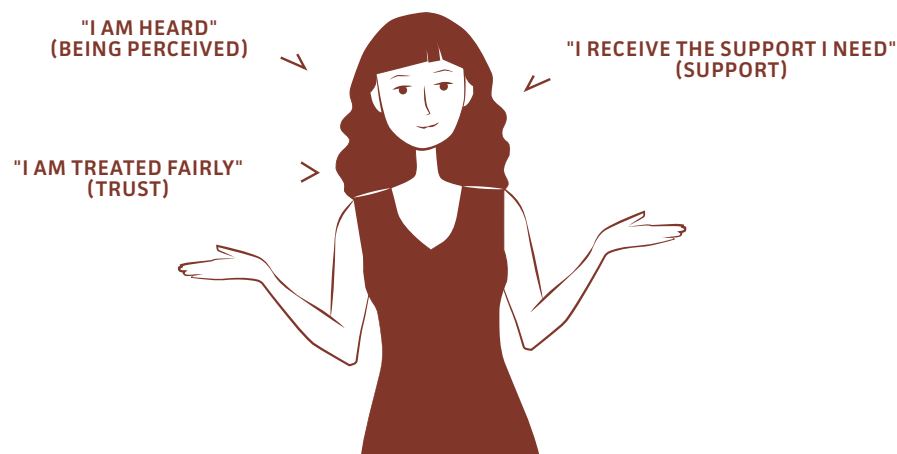
The American "Center for Preparedness and Response" (CPR) of the "Centers for Disease Control and Prevention" (CDC), together with the "National Center for Trauma-Informed Care" (NCTIC), has defined the following six pillars for a trauma-informed approach:

1. Security,
2. Trustworthiness and transparency,
3. Support from the environment,
4. Cooperation and reciprocity,
5. Empowerment and choice, as well as the
6. Consideration of cultural, historical and gender-specific aspects.

It becomes clear that a trauma-informed approach is not based on a singular, trained way of dealing or the adherence to a rigid checklist. Rather, it requires constant and caring attention, sensitivity, a holistic approach and a willingness to learn and change on the part of all those involved. Ideally, this is a continuous improvement process that takes place at eye level and is characterised by mutual trust and openness.

The rule is: prevention is better than intervention and aftercare, because most difficult situations can be avoided or improved through trust-building, attentive observation, sensitive questioning and giving feedback, as well as caring cooperation and a collegial attitude.

Katharine Manning, President of Blackbird DC (training and counselling on empathy in the workplace) and author of "The Empathetic Workplace: 5 Steps to a Compassionate, Calm, and Confident Response to Trauma on the Job" summarises the trauma-informed principles in her Harvard Business Review article "We need trauma-informed workplaces" in the following three statements from the perspective of trauma victims:



What becomes clear in all of this is that safety and the experience of control are the most important aspects for trauma victims themselves, for it is precisely these that were violated in their traumatic experience. If employers manage to create a working environment in which new employees who suffer from trauma disorders experience being perceived, support and a trusting relationship, then workplaces are created in which those affected have a real chance to contribute with all their strengths and abilities, to develop further and to make their best contribution to their environment.

CONCLUSION

Not every person in prostitution is trafficked and/or develops a trauma disorder. The decisive factor is the fulfilment of the defined criteria.

Experiences of violence in prostitution can include psychological as well as physical violence, and those affected can develop single symptoms, a combination of symptoms up to complex trauma sequelae.

As a rule, the more numerous or complex the symptoms, the more difficult and protracted the process of work integration. A trauma-informed approach in the workplace can accelerate or improve the process, as it consciously focuses on the experience of safety and independence as well as supportive and trustworthy cooperation with others.

EXCURSUS: TRAUMA-INFORMED INTERACTIONS IN THE WORKPLACE

The suggestions listed here do not claim to be exhaustive, but serve to create a basic understanding in dealing with employees who suffer from a trauma sequelae disorder. More in-depth aspects on the respective points can be found in the listed modules on the respective topic

THE RIGHT SUPPORT LAYS THE FOUNDATION

- › As an employer, adopt a basic attitude of appreciation and acceptance.
- › The assumption of the "good reason" can be helpful: every behaviour (even those which are undesirable) has a "good reason" - this may lie in the trauma experience of the new employee and may have favoured behaviours that were part of the survival strategy.
- › "Accepting behaviour without agreeing to it" makes it clear to the employee that workplace relationships or employment per se are not jeopardised by unwanted behaviour.

Example

Magda stands by transfixed during the training from her forewoman, and does not move. Eye contact with Magda is impossible, nor does she ask any questions.



Negative interaction: The forewoman reproaches Magda for not paying attention and for being disinterested.

Positive interaction: The forewoman assumes that there is a good reason, interrupts the induction and tries to get Magda's attention by addressing her in a calm, friendly manner. Magda dares to say that she is overwhelmed by all the information.

SAFETY REQUIREMENTS AS A BASIC PREREQUISITE

- › External and internal security must be guaranteed in every workplace. The extent to which, or at what point, security is perceived can vary among those affected by trauma sequelae.
- › "Safety" can be a very broad term, ranging from external factors such as lighting in dark rooms or access to the private telephone, to internal feelings about eye or body contact with colleagues and/or clients.
- › As an employer, make sure that the external and internal safety of employees is guaranteed. If necessary, ask whether adjustments are needed.

Example

Cova makes the same mistake for the fifth time in one day - the numbers just don't add up. Another member of the team gets annoyed, as he relies on having the correct numbers.

Negative handling: After the complaint by the team member, the team leader calls Cova to a conflict meeting and criticises her lack of concentration. Cova does not dare to say anything at all.

Positive interaction: In an appreciative, trusting conversation, the team leader learns that the glassed-in office is giving Cova a hard time. The hustle and bustle in the corridor and around her makes her feel very insecure and thus impairs her ability to concentrate. A solution is found by installing a privacy screen on the glazing of Cova's office.

TRAUMA-SENSITIVE COMMUNICATION FOSTERS REALITY

- › As an employer, promote regular opportunities for exchange - especially during the onboarding phase of new employees.
- › Convey an "open door" attitude, or indicate specific times when you are available for questions or exchanges.
- › Initiate conversations yourself to give positive feedback - not only in the case of criticism or requests for improvement.
- › Explain that proactive feedback to you as an employer is welcome, and when, or by what means, you or a responsible person would like to receive it.
- › Choose a setting that is comfortable for the employee: many people with trauma disorders prefer a quiet setting. However, some employees may find it better not to have to be alone with their supervisors.
- › Use calm, clear language in conversation. Avoid strong emotions. Maintain eye contact (according to the culture) and ensure appropriate physical proximity/distance.
- › Give the employee regular space for questions and comments in the conversation.



- › Use interpreters where necessary in difficult situations.
- › Use techniques such as active listening, mirroring and paraphrasing to establish a positive conversation culture for the employee.

Example

Melli has been working for a painting company for two months. She rarely sees her direct supervisor. When she feels overwhelmed with tasks, Melli does not know who to turn to. The colleagues seem friendly, but also very stressed. When Melli makes a mistake, she tries to cover it up and hopes that no one notices. She does not feel comfortable at all.

Negative handling: Melli's supervisor only finds out after another three weeks, when Melli wants to quit, that she feels left alone and often overwhelmed.

Positive interaction: Even when Melli's supervisor is working on other construction sites, he always seeks a brief conversation with her and asks how she is doing. He shows understanding of Melli's fears and encourages her to ask colleagues more questions. He informs them that there should be space and time for this. Melli feels noticed through the regular short conversations and learns who she can turn to when she has questions. She increasingly trusts herself to do this

TRANSPARENCY AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHOICE CREATE CONTROL

- › As an employer, ensure maximum transparency regarding working hours, processes, responsibilities, expectations on your part, etc. At the same time, information overload and excessive demands should be avoided. The right measure and timing are crucial.
- › Clarify your questions and those of the new employee in advance or at the beginning of onboarding. Give her the opportunity to ask questions at any time, especially in the first few weeks. If necessary, also ask proactively.
- › Announce changes or innovations as far in advance as possible. Also provide space for questions and exchange.
- › Choice increases everyone's sense of control. Provide choice to staff wherever possible. At the same time, be careful not to overburden them. Again, moderation and timing are important.

Example

Stella has been working at the new cleaning company for half a year now. Even though this is not yet her final dream job, she is happy about the opportunity and wants to do her best. She is curious about what the forewoman wants to tell her today...

Negative example: In a conversation with the forewoman, Stella learns that the company is very happy with her and that she will therefore be allowed to work in a new district and clean the building of a new client as early as next week. She would find out the details when on site. Stella feels overwhelmed. Panic rises in her. In conversation she can no longer react at all.

Positive example: Stella's forewoman informs her that the company has gained new clients and thus some cleaners would change their place of work. In the conversation, the forewoman discusses what this would mean for Stella. A change would be possible in four weeks at the earliest. Fortunately, Stella could decide for herself in which team she wanted to work in the future. The company is very happy with her.



TRIGGERS AND THEIR AVOIDANCE IN EVERYDAY LIFE

- › "Trigger": a triggering stimulus that consciously or unconsciously recalls an aspect of the traumatic event and thereby stirs up traumatic memories that lead to certain unwanted experiences (e.g. negative emotions, feelings of overwhelm, flashbacks) or behaviour (e.g. aggression, flight, freezing) in the here and now.
- › Examples of common triggers: certain smells, sounds, times of day or year, certain materials (e.g. wood, metal), visual stimuli (e.g. photos, films), places, people, bodily impressions (e.g. touch), emotions or situations.
- › The stimulus itself does not have to be dangerous, but can simply be related to memories. Triggers can be subtle and difficult for outsiders to understand. Most of the time they are very individual. Recognising, understanding and dealing with triggers is of great importance for those affected. An accepting and appreciative environment plays a major role in this.
- › Depending on the work relationship, affected workers may be willing to talk about triggers if they are aware of them. Depending on the work setting, it may be imperative to talk about possible triggers at work in advance (e.g. in a work context of loud, banging noises or work with strong physical contact).
- › If you (as an employer) are aware of any triggers, try to exclude or minimise them from the employee's daily work wherever possible.
- › In consultation with the employee, consider which people in the work environment can be informed about specific triggers, if any, in order to avoid them where possible.

Example

Nora waits for an answer, but there is no reaction from Carmen. They were standing in the team kitchen, unpacking their lunch and talking happily about the past weekend just a moment ago. Suddenly Carmen seems completely absent and has stopped listening to Nora at all...

Negative example: Nora is irritated. What is going on with Carmen all of a sudden? She stands right in front of her: "Hello?! Anyone at home?! What's wrong with you today?!"

Positive example: Nora realises that something is wrong. In a calm voice she says: "Carmen, look at me. You are here in the team kitchen right now. Everything is okay. Take a deep breath in and out...". Nora opens a window and after a few minutes Carmen feels better. Later she confides in Nora that the smell of the washing-up liquid quite unexpectedly triggered a flashback to a traumatic event from her past. Nora listens attentively to Carmen. Together they decide to swap the washing-up liquid for another one.

EVERYDAY KNOW-HOW FOR DEALING WITH STRESS SITUATIONS

- › Triggers cannot always be removed or avoided and sometimes those affected do not know their triggers themselves (or at least not all of them). If a stressful situation or conflict arises, understanding the "tolerance window" can be helpful:

The "tolerance window" describes the range of our emotional intensity in which we feel comfortable, can be relaxed and attentive, and in which we have the best

learning conditions. Here we are neither under- nor overstrained, our body and our psyche are at a comfortable level of arousal. If we leave the inner tolerance window - for example due to an unpleasant event or a triggering stimulus - two directions are possible: either our inner life and our body come into increased or even very high tension (up to "fight or flight mode") or into increasing under-excitement (up to "freezing"). Each person's tolerance window is different. For people with trauma sequela(e), the window can be very narrow and consequently over-excitement or under-excitement can occur very quickly.

- › As an employer, promote a basic understanding of the tolerance window in your teams - this is helpful for any cooperation and can promote mutual understanding.
- › One goal of trauma therapy or counselling is so-called "stabilisation" - here, factors are specifically strengthened that can permanently expand the tolerance window (so-called "*resources*", see Module 3) and skills for dealing with over- or under-excitement are practised ("*skills*"). A basic understanding of stabilising factors in the workplace, and their promotion, can become a practical part of occupational health management and help not only those affected by trauma disorders.
- › You and your staff become experts in what is called "co-regulation": co-regulation is the process between two or more people who dynamically coordinate their actions with the aim of regulating under- or over-excitement. The best example of this is the co-regulatory interaction of a parent with a crying toddler, in which the parent gets down on his or her knees and tries to calm the child in calm, friendly language. Co-regulation can also be understood as the following attempt: "I lend my nervous system to your nervous system by offering you the experience and behaviour you are lacking". In teams and staff circles, everyone can benefit from this kind of "lending".
- › For those affected by trauma sequelae, situations of unwanted under- or over-excitement (e.g. heavy sweating, aggressive behaviour or blocked thinking, apathy) as a reaction to a triggering event in the work context (e.g. time pressure, stressed colleagues, restless working atmosphere) are very unpleasant. Depending on the working relationship, the stressors can be worked out together and, where possible, reduced or avoided.
- › Shortly after a stressful situation, it may be helpful for the employee concerned to have some time to calm down (e.g. a short walk in the fresh air). Avoid trying to get the employee to have a conversation of clarification immediately after a conflict or stressful situation. Give her the opportunity to calm down herself or, if necessary, offer team-appropriate co-regulation (e.g. a walk together without necessarily talking).



MODULE 3:

RAISING AWARENESS OF THE EXISTENCE OF RESOURCES AND THE EMPOWERMENT APPROACH

When working with people affected by trauma sequelae, it can easily happen that the focus is on the past, the trauma or the suffering of the person affected. Often this happens unconsciously in the environment, yet looking at things in a negative way can paint a distorted picture of those affected. In reality, every person, regardless of past experiences, illnesses or potential traumas, also carries a great treasure of strengths, resilience and so-called resources. Psychology understands resources as all of the competencies and possible actions that are available to a person in order to influence situations, minimise unpleasant influences and optimise functional stress or guarantee the achievement of a desired goal. Resources can be of a material, social or psychological nature and can lie within a person (e.g. physical and psychological abilities) or outside of him/herself (e.g. finances, relationships, state or social support).

When accompanying people in their professional reorientation, it is important to make everyone aware of these resources: both the person concerned as well as future employers. It is not uncommon for people to be unaware of the multitude of resources they have. Actively addressing these resources can not only raise awareness of their existence, but also strengthen the self-confidence of the person concerned. Raising awareness and actively using resources is a central factor in stabilisation work with people with trauma sequelae. The more real resources can be recognised and used, the higher the probability of increasing stabilisation in everyday (work) life.

Resource work has found a firm place in trauma counselling and therapy. In cooperation with employers, this approach should be emphasised so that individual or team resources can also be worked out together in the workplace, in the team or with superiors, and used in the context of professional activities.

THE EMPOWERMENT APPROACH

The resource and competence perspective is also found in the empowerment approach: empowerment is understood in a broader sense as all processes, influences and dynamics that consciously aim to make a person or group of people feel encouraged to master their own affairs, to discover or develop their own skills and competencies necessary for this, as well as to promote the finding and application of their own solution strategies and to appreciate their successful implementation. The empowerment approach also includes the idea of "rights and duties", and emphasises the necessary support from outside as well as one's own responsibility and ability to find solutions.

Empowerment plays a central role in the integration of victims of violence and/or trauma disorders into a new, safe work environment: while feelings of helplessness, powerlessness and



the experience of oppression were often in the foreground in the past, new experiences with one's own competencies, strengths and abilities can now be made. According to empowerment researchers (Conger & Kanungo, 1988; Spreitzer, 1995), the following four basic beliefs shape the experience and behaviour of empowered people in the workplace:



Here, the importance of identification with the company and one's own contribution, being convinced of one's own abilities, personal freedom of decision and exertion of influence become clear. Managers who want to positively encourage and challenge their female employees should be constantly aware of these four components.

HOW CAN EMPOWERMENT BE PROMOTED IN PRACTICE? HERE ARE SOME TIPS:

- Promote identification with the corporate vision and one's own contribution to it
- Assign female employees according to their strength profile
- Delegation of responsibility where possible - while providing guidance and support where necessary
- Regular opportunities for staff to receive feedback on their work (positive feedback as well as constructive criticism)
- Positive error culture (errors are anticipated, normalised and understood as part of a learning organisation)
- Regular opportunities for staff to broaden their knowledge and skills (possibly through job enlargement, job enrichment or job rotation)
- Maximum freedom of action and decision-making for staff (according to their role, competencies and personality)
- Cultivate a culture of recognition and enable female employees to participate in team and company successes (praise and recognition as well as financial bonuses)
- Assign increasing responsibility or further tasks according to the development of the employee
- Celebrate (partial) successes together (here it can be helpful to develop concrete ideas with employers that are appropriate to the respective context)

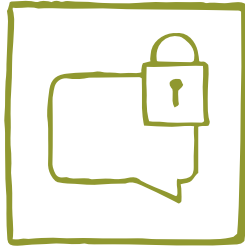


Promoting empowerment in the workplace naturally serves all employees. Moving from a critical, deficit-oriented style of leadership towards a supportive, empowerment-oriented style of leadership can have a positive impact not only at the individual level, but also at the level of the team culture.

CONCLUSION

Resources refer to all of the competencies and possible actions that are available to a person to optimise stress, influence situations or minimise unpleasant influences. They can be of a material, social or psychological nature and can be located inside or outside a person.

Empowerment consciously aims at strengthening the resources of a person or group, and emphasises support from outside as well as one's own responsibility. The significance of a task or matter for female employees plays just as important a role as their competencies, self-determination and possibilities of influence. Empowerment can be specifically promoted by managers and other employees and has a positive effect on individuals as well as the entire team culture.



MODUL 4: RAISING AWARENESS OF THE NEED FOR DISCRETION AND ANTI-DISCRIMINATION AND ANTI-STIGMA IN THE WORKPLACE

People are often quick to categorise their environment despite incomplete knowledge, and make rash or false assumptions about people in their environment. Stereotypes or even prejudices are quickly formed, which can influence a person's attitude towards other people and also their behaviour. Some of this may happen consciously, but much also happens unconsciously. These quick judgements generally help a person to deal with a complex environment, but often lead to inadmissible evaluations. As soon as such assessments, particularly those which are negative, trigger certain behavioural reactions (for example, unequal treatment, preference for others), we speak of discrimination.

People who have been affected by sexual exploitation and/or other forms of violence in the context of prostitution are exposed to such phenomena in several ways: many of them experience attributions based on their gender and based on their migrant status. In addition, they are stigmatised because of their past in the red light milieu. In some cases, they are prematurely ascribed a "victim role" that they themselves would not support and that does not do justice to their strengths. It is also possible that what they have experienced is played down and the hopelessness of their past situation is not believed. As a result, they are often not treated as equals and with the necessary interpersonal respect. Thus, even in a new working environment, there is a danger that new employees will be marginalised and, despite all good intentions, become outsiders within the team. This must be prevented or counteracted by raising awareness among colleagues. Here it can be useful to develop a tailor-made awareness programme for the respective team, or to support the finding of appropriate providers of such training.

Some companies now offer general training on diversity and inclusion or on unconscious bias. Such training covers the specific challenges at hand. After all, it is about approaching new staff with an open mind, without judgement or bias, welcoming them, treating them with patience and empathy, and taking into account one or another of their additional needs. These are behaviours that we all want from colleagues.

It is for these reasons that a very precise and case-specific analysis should be made in the run-up to employment, as to who in the new work environment should be made aware of the background or aspects of the life history of the new employee. For successful work integration, it may be useful and helpful to share certain information with the employing company. However, this must first be agreed with the client, and, secondly, is subject to a strict principle of confidentiality - also on the part of the employing company. The first step should therefore be to agree with the client whether she wants to share her past history and experiences, and, if so, how much. Once this content has been determined, it must be decided sensitively to



which persons at the workplace this information will be made available and with what objective. It may be useful to make clients aware of the fact that it is easier to share information later in the process than to take back what has already been shared.

DATA PROTECTION, RETENTION AND DELETION

The GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) applies in all EU member states, as far as personal data is concerned. It must be clearly documented which personal items of data for a person are stored for which purpose, and when they are to be deleted again. Furthermore, highly sensitive data, such as case histories of clients who have experienced sexual violence, must be handled in a highly confidential manner. It is imperative that organisations that serve these clients formulate and adhere to precise processes in this regard. If in networks (such as the present EVI network) individual clients are cared for by several organisations, as well as at a workplace, these processes and structures must be adapted to the situation.

CONCLUSION

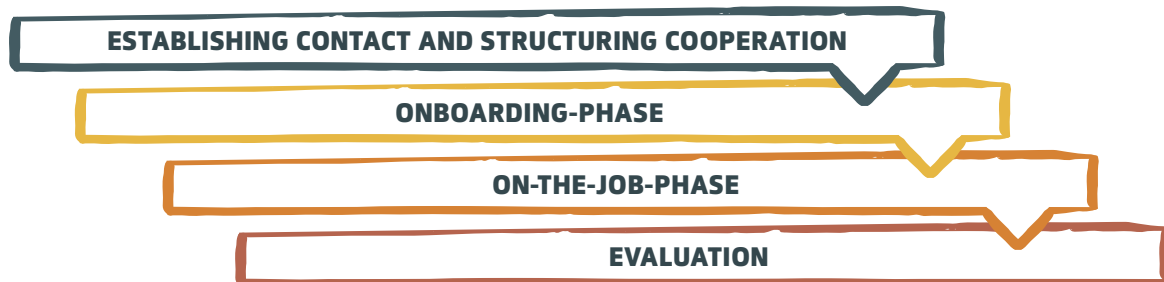
We all tend, consciously or unconsciously, to make hasty assumptions or faulty or inadequate assessments or judgements of others.

With regard to the labour integration of persons who have already experienced discrimination or stigmatisation due to their life circumstances, or who are at risk of experiencing this (repeatedly), supervisors and teams should be made aware and, if necessary, specifically trained to avoid (renewed) discrimination and stigmatisation in the workplace.

Strictly confidential handling of personal data, information and the personal history of those affected has the highest priority at all times.

ASPECTS OF THE CONCRETE COOPERATION BETWEEN COUNSELLING CENTRE AND EMPLOYER FOR ONBOARDING AND ON-THE-JOB SUPPORT

In order to best integrate those affected into a new field of work, it is important to define the interaction between employers and the counselling centre(s) in advance. Expectations, but also concrete steps of the cooperation should be clarified early in the process. As mentioned above, various topics and questions arise in the preparation phase, but also in the familiarisation phase or the later on-the-job phase of the persons concerned, which should be addressed together. Some of these issues are listed below.



ESTABLISHING CONTACT AND STRUCTURING COOPERATION

A) INITIAL INTERVIEW / COOPERATION AGREEMENT

As described in more detail in the *EVI Guide to Networking*, it is important to make potential new employers aware of their key role in work integration in the initial interview. Depending on the context and the size of the company, this may involve different organisational levels (director, HR, team management, etc.). Both the living environment of the new employee and the expectations of the company should be addressed early in the process in order to find common ground and gain an understanding of the objective of the cooperation.

Leitfragen für die Gesprächsführung (im Erstgespräch sowie in vertiefenden Gesprächen):

- What are the goals of the cooperation? What are the benefits for all involved (e.g. reference to *corporate social responsibility strategies*)?

- What does the cooperation look like in concrete terms? What is the role of the respective partner? What is expected of the company?
- What can (and can't) the employing company offer? What kind of jobs would be conceivable for clients in the respective company?
- What does the employing company need for the successful integration of the new employee?
- What does the support from the counselling centre look like? For example, are background social work, training and, if necessary, on-the-job coaching possible? It should be clearly defined here where the limits of support lie.

Employers should be informed that they will be included in an employer database if they agree to cooperate, depending on whether and how the respective counselling centre offers this. If necessary, a privacy statement can be filled out at this point. In any case, it should be made clear that this does not create an obligation for employers to actually employ clients in their company later on, but only a general willingness to cooperate.

B) PREPARATION OF A GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE EMPLOYING COMPANY AND CONCRETE JOB PROFILES

If an employing company agrees to consider clients, it is important to evaluate which job profiles of the company could be a good fit in order to enable victims of sexual exploitation and/or other forms of violence in the context of prostitution to reorientate themselves professionally. For a first start, all activities that allow for a relatively quick familiarisation and for which basic knowledge of the German language is sufficient are suitable. In the longer term, however, depending on the clients' previous knowledge, activities that require a higher skill set should also be considered. It is also important in this process to clarify the expectations of the employing company towards the new employee. After all, the goal is to achieve a good match between the needs of the company and the client to be placed.

The job profiles should contain as precise a description as possible of the job or a typical working day in order to give the client a good picture of the future tasks. A description of the environment (team, colleagues, spatial conditions, tone of voice, etc.) should also be included.

In order to be able to present the range of employers to the clients in advance of applications, it will also be useful to prepare a general description of the respective employers available to the counselling centre (example in the appendix).

Guiding questions that can help to achieve a good match:

- How much guidance can be given by the company?
- How much independence / what previous knowledge is expected from the new employee? (e.g. certain level of language skills)
- How long can the onboarding phase last from the company's point of view?.

C) DESIGN OF THE APPLICATION OR SELECTION PROCESS

The application process should basically be as similar as possible to a normal application. This means that the submission of application documents and the invitation to a formal interview should take place in any case. However, different arrangements are possible in this phase. This will also depend on how the client herself would like it to be organised. The client should be involved in the design of this phase. It is important to clarify: how involved should the

counselling centre be in this phase? Should a joint discussion (employer, client, social worker) take place right at the beginning, or should the counselling centre remain in the background during this phase?

It is also important to clarify in advance who in the company (for example, only managerial level, or also direct superiors) should know about the background of the new employee during the application and selection phase.

D) PLANNING THE ONBOARDING PROCESS

Before the concrete planning of the onboarding process, it should again be clarified in detail what the specific working environment of the new employee will look like:

- Who will work directly with the new employee as a supervisor or in the team?
- To what extent does this team already have knowledge about trauma-informed interaction with others?
- Are there specific hurdles or challenges with the new employee that should be communicated to the employing company?
- Is there a need for briefing or awareness-raising in this area? How or in what form should this be addressed? (For example, with an information sheet or specific trauma training?)
- When should a first evaluation take place?

If necessary, the counselling centre will prepare suitable modules for a briefing or training of the members of the new employee's future team, and will also conduct this training if requested.

In order to plan the onboarding process, it is important to understand the client's support needs, hurdles and challenges, both in general and with regard to the specific workplace. In consultation with the client, it should be clarified to what extent this should also be communicated to the company (extent of acute traumatisation or stability, need to avoid specific triggers, need for support in regulation of emotion, etc.).

Depending on the needs of the employing company or the new employee, it must be agreed how closely and in what form (by telephone, in person, etc.) the social support provided by the counselling centre should be, especially in the onboarding phase. The type of support should also be discussed: is the counselling centre available to the client as emotional support and/or to the company as a mediator in case of conflicts? How directly are difficulties at the workplace communicated, and is this linked to a mandate to intervene directly? At what point, and how should de-escalation take place? It may be useful to provide for a gradual de-escalation.

Finally, it should be clarified in advance when a joint evaluation of the onboarding or on-the-job process should take place

INDUCTION PHASE (ONBOARDING OF THE NEW EMPLOYEE)

Setting goals (agreement between employer and employee) is of course important in any work context. When integrating this target group, it is even more important to set realistic and intermediate goals. Thanks to the preliminary support provided by the respective counselling centre, the employer can certainly give input on the topic of realistic goals. Especially

in the familiarisation phase, the counselling centre will usually still provide relatively close support, but this has to be adapted to the respective situation/the persons involved.

- Have all labour law/company-specific framework conditions been clarified?
- Wage payment modalities: for example, it can sometimes make sense to pay the wage more frequently than monthly, at least to start with.
- What goals or intermediate goals can be set for the familiarisation phase?
- How are the employee interviews organised (between employer and employee or in the presence of a social worker)?
- Frequency of Check-Ins/Meet-Ups
- The possibility of coaching at the workplace (by the counselling centre) over a defined period of time.
- How can the employer company intervene in crisis situations? (For example, if the new employee dissociates at the workplace.)
- How does the counselling centre provide support in case of difficulties?
- How does the extended support network of the counselling centre assist? Who should be approached for which topics?
- How can it be defined when the familiarisation phase is completed, or from when the involvement of the counselling centre can be reduced?

After successful onboarding, the on-the-job phase of the new employee must define how the long-term cooperation between employer and counselling centre should be structured.

ON-THE-JOB PHASE AND CONTINUOUS EVALUATION

For some clients, these first new work experiences in a safe working environment are very important. In due course, a common view can be worked out as to when the guidance provided by the counselling centre can be terminated. Ideally, this is when the client has found her role in the company as a fully integrated employee. However, setbacks or termination of the employment relationship may occur due to various reasons (e.g. extent of an existing trauma sequelae disorder). Even in such cases, maintaining open and constructive communication is key. It is important to see that even small or partial successes are successes nonetheless.

Therefore, it is important to keep longer-term goals for the client's further development in mind throughout the on-the-job phase

- What should the longer-term support provided by the counselling centre look like?
- How and when should the success of the work integration process be evaluated?
- How are successes / partial successes defined and how are they celebrated?
- What should the long-term development of the new employee look like? What are the next sensible steps inside or outside the company?

Everything is strongly based on learning from experience to shape the future in the best possible way.

Finally, a joint project evaluation should ensure sustainable cooperation - also with a view to potential placements of further clients with the same company (if possible and desired). For such a final project evaluation with the respective company, the form in the appendix can be used. The following applies: the evaluation serves the participants and should therefore be designed as efficiently as possible. The scope or content of the evaluation can be jointly determined or the accompanying counselling centre can make suggestions. The clients' feedback to their social workers should also be included in order to be able to incorporate the learning experiences and suggestions for change of all those involved.

In this final evaluation, it is jointly examined how well the selection process, the onboarding and the on-the-job support worked out, and what could still be improved from respective points of view. After two years at the latest, a more detailed evaluation of the cooperation between the employer and the counselling centre is recommended, which can go beyond discussing the work integration process of an individual employee. On this basis, it can then be defined whether both sides will continue to strive for cooperation in the future and if so, whether there are new concerns or ideas for this.

How often, and in what detail, evaluations with employers should, or can, be carried out depends on the individual case. The main concerns of the evaluation processes are to ensure the best possible work integration of the persons concerned, and to ensure the longest possible cooperation with suitable employers.

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ATTACHMENTS

**CASE STUDY: WORK INTEGRATION OF
A CLIENT**

**CASE STUDY: CRISIS MANAGEMENT
BETWEEN COOPERATION PARTNERS**

**TEMPLATE "COOPERATION AGREEMENT
INCL. DATA PROTECTION AGREEMENT"**

JOB DESCRIPTION TEMPLATES

**EVALUATION FORMS FOR INTERVIEWS WITH
EMPLOYERS AND CLIENTS**

CASE STUDY: WORK INTEGRATION OF A CLIENT

MARIPOSA COUNSELLING CENTRE: OUTREACH WORK, CONTACT POINT, COUNSELLING AND SUPPORT FOR WOMEN* IN PROSTITUTION

CLIENT: HUNGARIAN, 2 CHILDREN (9 AND 15 YEARS), 36 YEARS OLD, NO KNOWLEDGE OF GERMAN

We have been accompanying our client G.* through counselling in the process of quitting for three quarters of a year. We got to know her before that during outreach work in street prostitution. However, she only sought help when she had a serious health emergency and had to be admitted to hospital. There, she named Mariposa as her contact address and contact person, so that we could visit her in the hospital and start intensive counselling and support. Her health situation made her realise that she did not want to, and could no longer, do the work. Our first steps for the exit then included: applying to the job centre, applying for health insurance to cover the hospital costs, and looking for accommodation in an exit flat or in legal accommodation for the homeless.

Contrary to our recommendation not to bring her 9- and 15-year-old children to Germany and to create a more stable environment first, she brought her two children to the Mariposa for the first appointment after the hospital stay, for whom suitable schools now had to be found. Before the job centre benefits were approved, we helped them out with food parcels from TAFEL (food bank) and shopping vouchers to tide them over. Due to the language barrier, accompaniment to all official appointments was necessary, and only little independent action was possible. G.'s high self-motivation was very helpful in tackling and overcoming all the different issues. She wanted a safe environment for her children with a new flat away from the milieu. As she had not received the approval from the Job Centre until shortly before the end of the month, she was afraid that she would not be able to pay the rent for her overpriced room in the milieu in time. The financial pressure was enormous, and we met her again on the street. Fortunately, when the approval finally arrived, it also meant that the health insurance was valid retroactively and the hospital costs were covered. The termination process of the room in the flat in the milieu was long and difficult, the rent assumption of the Job Centre did not cover all the requirements and she was left with debts to her former landlord. She and her children finally got accommodation in a shelter under homeless law. A lot of bureaucratic work was needed to register the children: documents had to be sent from Hungary and translated into German, and additional Job Centre appointments had to be attended. Regarding her professional experience, she had already worked as a cleaner in addition to working in prostitution. We suggested a suitable job for her at our cooperation company.

G. was interested in the job, so she applied for it with the help of the EVI Job Guide (counselling guide for professional reorientation of people working in prostitution) and practised for the interview. It was a complete success: she was accepted for a part-time job with 15 hours per week. At the same time, G. came to our almost weekly counselling sessions at Mariposa to continue working on the issues that still needed to be addressed. As a counselling centre, we were in contact and received feedback from her team leader at the company. G. was also overjoyed when the Job Centre-funded language course started and the children finally got their school places - everyone seemed to be taken care of.

However, during the onboarding phase, events in the family back in Hungary came thick and fast, throwing G. completely off track. Due to her quick and substantial life change, she had

become the key person in the rest of her Hungarian family. Everyone wanted to share in her success, which caused great turmoil and problems for her. Distracted by this, she failed to show up at work without excuse. It remained unclear to us how much money she continued to send to her family in Hungary. The handling, and particularly the allocation, of her financial resources seemed to overwhelm her. It gradually became clear that the children were not going to school and G. was therefore unable to attend the language course, which she eventually dropped out of. When we contacted her employer, we learned that G. was often up to 45 minutes late, made phone calls during working hours and had not worked her contracted hours. In addition, a health emergency occurred in G.'s family in her home country and she hurriedly travelled to Hungary with her children for several weeks without consulting her employer.

Her team leader had no choice but to terminate her employment, although she could personally show her utmost understanding for the difficult time. In addition, G. lost her accommodation at short notice because she had violated the house rules by having her whole family staying with her.

After she had found her own flat with the help of a pilot project and her housing situation had stabilised again, it was also possible to settle family conflicts and difficulties in matters of upbringing and compulsory schooling in cooperation with the General Social Service. As a result, we were able to work together more on G.'s professional reorientation. Another support organisation took over the processing of a part of G.'s life, so that in our counselling appointments we could take care of the search for a new job and language course, as well as coming to terms with the loss of her old job.

In retrospect, G. can reflect that she was overwhelmed with her changing life situation and had not managed to coordinate home life, child rearing, language school and work. During contact with the former team leader, it became clear that closer and more regular consultation during the familiarisation phase would have been useful, and would be helpful for future cases. As an added value, G. was nevertheless able to take away a positive, valuable, stigma-free and supportive first work experience, a great job reference (for the time she was present), as well as a strengthened self-confidence. This is a great starting point for future jobs.

*Details of the persons have been changed to protect their personalities.

CASE STUDY: CRISIS MANAGEMENT BETWEEN COOPERATION PARTNERS

HOPE FOR THE FUTURE: WORK TRAINING, VOCATIONAL PREPARATION AND GERMAN COURSES FOR TRAFFICKED PERSONS

CLIENT: ROMANIAN, 24 YEARS OLD, LITTLE KNOWLEDGE OF GERMAN

Client K.* had lost both her parents at the age of 14 and had to survive through exploitative working conditions. She came to us when she was about 20 years old, started a German language training and received social support. K. was withdrawn, anxious and insecure, but participated regularly in the programme and the appointments.

Soon the opportunity arose for a part-time job in a hotel outside Vienna with an employer who was well-disposed towards us. Although K.'s German skills were still developing after about four months of German training, we were confident that it would work. The tasks she was supposed to do were relatively simple and quickly explained or demonstrated. K. was to be employed for 20 hours a week at the hotel, and to receive social work support on site to help with life issues such as organising leisure time, dealing with finances or nutrition.

The induction phase at the hotel did not go smoothly. It turned out that K. often overslept and came to work late, that she seemed to forget even simple work instructions and that the lack of language skills became more of a hurdle than expected. The employer showed a lot of understanding at the beginning, but after some time he demanded progress, which was not forthcoming. This led to a crisis meeting a few months later. It was discussed whether it made sense at all to continue the work and care relationship under the current conditions.

Finally, it was agreed that K. should have a psychological assessment to get a better understanding of her possible support needs. It turned out that K. had partial performance deficits and a slight cognitive impairment. The way forward was then discussed again with the employer and it was decided to continue the employment relationship for the time being. Due to the diagnosis, it was now possible to take advantage of job security support. Furthermore, the client was given access to personal job coaching at one of our partner organisations. Due to this cooperation, support was easier and the situation was also more acceptable for the employer.

Cases like these can occur again and again. It shows that it is important to ensure sufficient language skills before starting a job and, if possible, to introduce the clients to the upcoming workday through pre-job training or internships where they do not yet have to fully "function". In this specific case, it was also extremely helpful and welcomed by the employer that the hotel team received training on the topic of "trauma and its effects". Regular discussions between the employer and us were also important, as our supplementary care was more difficult to organise due to changes in working hours that were often necessary, especially in the hotel sector. The repeated adjustment of our support structure proved to be unavoidable in order to meet the changing circumstances in the hotel (especially in the Covid-19 period, which is difficult to plan).

In the meantime, the client has finished her first years of employment at the hotel and has found a new job in a restaurant.

*Name and identity changed for personal protection reasons.

TEMPLATE "COOPERATION AGREEMENT INCL. DATA PROTECTION AGREEMENT"

COOPERATION AGREEMENT

between

Counselling Centre
Number, Street
City, Postcode

and

Cooperation Partner
Number, Street
City, Postcode

- hereinafter referred to as "Counselling Centre" and "Cooperation Partner" -

Preamble

Women, both with and without a migration background, who want to leave prostitution often face significant problems such as financial poverty, lack of German language skills, lack of education, poor health as well as difficult access to the German social system.

Direct entry into the regular labour market is made significantly more difficult by other aspects such as an incomplete CV, lack of knowledge of typical work structures and procedures, lack of social skills, lack of stability in stressful situations, and stigmatisation due to previous work in prostitution. Due to this lack of prospects, only a few dare to leave prostitution, or, after an unsuccessful attempt to leave, end up back in it.

The counselling centre has been working with the project's target group for several years. Many women want to leave prostitution and are looking for ways to achieve this. We support them through the complex exit process.

The EVI network exists to pool resources so that together as a society we can offer more equal opportunities for people in prostitution.

Goals of the EVI network

The goal of the EVI network is to provide the best possible support and guidance to people working in prostitution during their transition and integration into a new, secure job. The counselling and preparation of the clients in this process is just as crucial for success as the close cooperation with the right employers.

Joint projects

- (1) Inclusion in the "Employer Database" by the counselling centre. The database serves to show clients potential job opportunities and occupational profiles. Inclusion in the

database does not oblige the cooperation partner to actually take on a client, but serves to provide the client with comprehensive information and to present potential career change opportunities.

- (2) The cooperation partner assures the willingness to give clients from the counselling centre a serious chance for the applied position in case of an application.
- (3) The cooperation partner assures the counselling centre that it will provide information about current job opportunities in its own company at regular intervals.
- (4) If a client is successfully placed, the cooperation partner guarantees confidentiality about the client's past and, if necessary, cooperates with the counselling centre to support the client's labour integration.
- (5) The cooperation partner guarantees fair working conditions and unconditional equal treatment of the placed client with employees in comparable positions.
- (6) The counselling centre assures that it will continue to accompany the client and the cooperation partner closely and as intensively as necessary in the work integration process.
- (7) After a successful placement, the cooperation partner agrees that person responsible for the client in the company will participate in a training course conducted by the counselling centre before the start of work. The cooperation partners agree on regular feedback meetings.
- (8) Despite all efforts and thorough support, successful integration of the client into the labour market is not guaranteed. The counselling centre can only accompany this process, but cannot assume any liability for the placed client.

Data protection

The cooperation agreement is fundamentally subject to the provisions of data protection law, to which express reference is made at this point.

Both partners confirm that the partners involved in the implementation of the cooperation agreement collect, process and use data exclusively for the preparation, implementation and accounting of the measures.

With this cooperation agreement, the cooperation partner agrees to be included in the employer database of the Counselling Centre. The Counselling Centre assures that this database will only be used for the purposes of the objectives agreed here.

Extension / Amendment / Termination

The cooperation agreement can be extended and / or amended by mutual agreement of the cooperation partners if necessary.

Extensions or amendments to this agreement must be made in writing.

Termination of this agreement may be made in writing in electronic form. The cooperation partner and all associated professional profiles will consequently be deleted from the employer database.

Declaration of consent

There are no costs or other obligations for the cooperation partners beyond those that have been and will be agreed.

The following agree to the present cooperation agreement:

.....
Place, date

.....
Signature Counselling Centre

.....
Signature cooperation partner

JOB DESCRIPTION TEMPLATES



JOB

EMPLOYER

SALARY

HOURS

GERMAN LANGUAGE SKILLS

LEVEL OF EDUCATION

LOCATION

REQUIREMENTS

POSSIBLE ENTRY

DESCRIPTION OF THE JOB



EMPLOYER

SALARY

HOURS

GERMAN LANGUAGE SKILLS

LEVEL OF EDUCATION

LOCATION

DESCRIPTION OF THE JOB

REQUIREMENTS

POSSIBLE ENTRY

EVALUATION FORMS FOR INTERVIEWS WITH EMPLOYERS AND CLIENTS

RECOMMENDED PERIODS FOR THE EVALUATION WITH EMPLOYERS AND CLIENTS

- During the onboarding phase: 4 weeks after the start of work (earlier if necessary).
- After 3-5 months (earlier if needed).
- In case of changes (e.g. increase in hours) or if the client leaves the project.

FOR EMPLOYERS

Satisfaction in general

1.) How satisfied are/were you with the cooperation?

Feedback in general: positive and potential for improvement

2.) Can we improve the preparation to ensure that important topics and information are fully covered? Are there certain topics that should be explained in more detail in the meeting/training? From your point of view, what works / worked optimally, and what should have worked differently / better, or had to be adapted?

Experience in crises / conflicts

3.) How do / did you feel about dealing with crises or conflicts? What could be improved here?

Conclusion / Lessons Learned

4.) What are your experiences from the process so far? Are you willing to continue working with us as a cooperation partner?

A look into the future

5.) Are there any change requests or new requirements for future cooperation with us? Should adjustments be made to the application, selection or onboarding process, as well as the on-the-job support?

6.) In your opinion, what are the prerequisites for good long-term cooperation?

JOB FEEDBACK SHEET FOR CLIENTS

1.) How was the start of your new job for you? What went well, what should have been different / better?



→ What would you have needed to make it work better?

2.) Is the work as you imagined it?



→ if 😊 😊 : why?

→ if 😞 😞 : why not?

3.) With regard to the job: how satisfied are you with yourself professionally? What is going well and what would you like to improve / change?



4.) Did you find our support helpful? Was the support sufficient?



→ if 😞 😞 :

were there moments when you would have liked more or different from us?

5.) How do you feel about your superiors and the team? Do you feel well guided and looked after at work? Do you know who to contact if you have questions or difficulties?



6.) Are the working environment and working hours suitable for you? Should anything be adjusted? (Can you imagine taking on more responsibility or working more hours if needed?)



7.) Do you need anything else to be able to work well? (Ask questions about personal or family issues, if necessary.)

