

Human Trafficking Survivors, After Care Services, and Institutional Betrayal:
A Qualitative Perspective on the Effectiveness of a Victim Advocacy Program

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative study was designed to evaluate the effectiveness of the Missouri Sheriff's Association Victim Advocacy Program in rehabilitating human trafficking survivors. The conceptual framework for this study includes betrayal trauma theory and, more specifically, institutional betrayal. Betrayal trauma theory expounds on the posttraumatic effects of trauma on persons when betrayal occurs in an attachment relationship; the concept of institutional betrayal builds on this theory and outlines the significance of an institution betraying an individual who trusts or depends upon that institution just as they would another person (Parnitzke, Smith, & Freyd, 2014).

Data collected from the one-on-one interviews will provide a more thorough understanding of human trafficking survivors and will be coded for consistencies and emerging themes in terms of trauma, betrayal, and after care. The aftermath survivors experience will be examined through the lens of institutional betrayal, specifically focusing on the services provided by the Victim Advocacy Program. This data will increase understanding of human trafficking, the impact of secondary trauma of betrayal, and why effective after care services are crucial.