



**NATIONAL
HUMAN
TRAFFICKING &
DISABILITIES
WORKING GROUP**

National Human Trafficking And Disabilities Working Group (NHTDWG) National Data and Assessment Survey 2020

Report Summary

March 2022

**International Organization for Adolescents (IOFA)
National Human Trafficking and Disabilities
Working Group (NHTDWG)**

**Prepared by
Sara Bovat, Jody Haskin,
Jessica Hinman & Sari Latomaa**

About NHTDWG

The National Human Trafficking and Disabilities Working Group is a volunteer run collaboration founded by the International Organization for Adolescents (IOFA). NHTDWG consists of experts and self-advocates from both human trafficking and disability communities.

MISSION

The mission of the National Human Trafficking and Disabilities Working Group (NHTDWG) is to promote a survivor-centered, collaborative approach steeped in disability and racial justice for the prevention of trafficking of individuals with disabilities and Deaf individuals, to advance the health and well-being of trafficking survivors with disabilities and Deaf survivors of trafficking and to ensure an accessible and appropriate response to survivors through research, policy analysis, technical assistance, and training.

ABOUT IOFA

IOFA is an independent, non-partisan, international organization with 501(c)(3) status in the United States. IOFA was founded in 1999 by Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health Students in response to a gap in programs and services for adolescents worldwide. IOFA's mission is to eliminate human trafficking and exploitation of adolescents worldwide through innovative programming and solutions to empower and protect young people. Since its inception, IOFA has worked to end the trafficking and exploitation of young people across 5 continents and in more than 23 countries (IOFA, 2019). In 2014, IOFA began coordinating with partners in the human trafficking field to determine why anecdotally we were aware that people with disabilities were targeted in human trafficking, but that data was not reflecting what we were aware of happening. IOFA officially joined with the HT Legal and the National Disabilities Rights Network (NDRN) in 2016 to create the National Human Trafficking and Disabilities Working Group (NHTDWG).



Why Launch the Survey



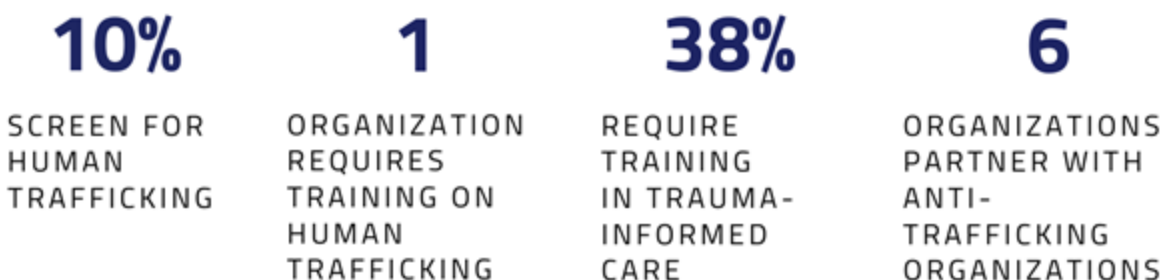
Members of the NHTDWG anecdotally knew human trafficking of people with disabilities was happening a lot more than was acknowledged in discussion and policies. Furthermore, NHTDWG suspected many human trafficking survivors with disabilities were left unidentified, and wanted to see if research supported these anecdotal findings.

The National Data and Needs Assessment survey was launched in August, 2020 to learn more about the prevalence of individuals with disabilities who have experienced trafficking. Two separate surveys were launched among disability service providers and human trafficking service providers to learn if data was being collected at the intersection of human trafficking and disabilities in direct service organizations, how such data was collected, if and how direct service providers were assessing for all forms of human trafficking and all forms of disability and if screening for human trafficking and disabilities was a part of overall protocol or policy of service providers.

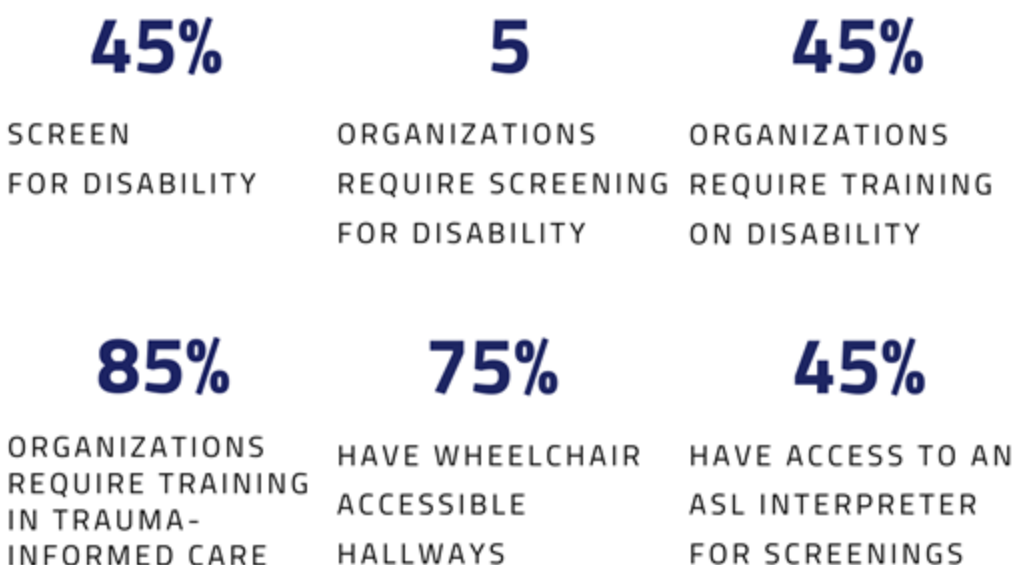
Results at a Glance

Participants were asked about their screening practices related to the intersection of disability and human trafficking. 29 Disability Service Providers and 20 Human Trafficking Service Providers responded to the survey. The results revealed, that the majority of disability providers responding to the survey do not have screening in place for human trafficking, and less than half of anti-trafficking providers screen for disabilities. Furthermore, very little collaboration existed between human trafficking and disability service providers.

Of the 29 Disability Service Providers surveyed



Of the 20 Human Trafficking Service Providers surveyed



Disability Service Providers

29 disability providers from 14 states across the United States completed the survey, the majority of responders providing services in Illinois.

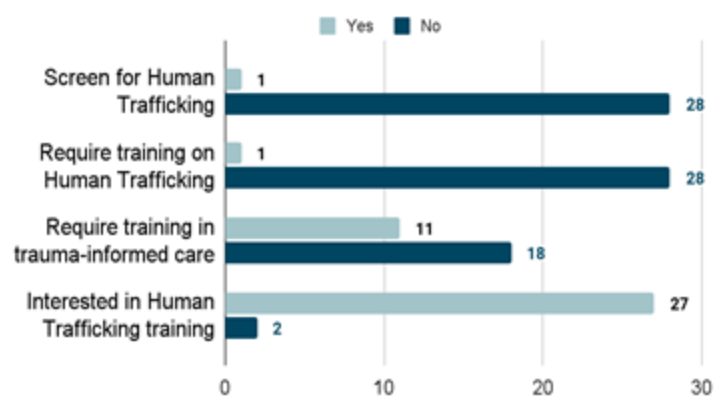


The survey results revealed a gap in both screening and training on human trafficking amongst disability service providers. Only one of the disability providers surveyed reported that their organization required screening participants for human trafficking and three professionals indicated they personally performed such screening. Similarly, only one out of 29 disability service providers reported that their organization required training on human trafficking.

This means that human trafficking is not something disability providers regularly screen for, and an overwhelming number of disability providers likely are not being properly educated and trained on the prevalence of human trafficking of persons with disabilities or risk factors making them susceptible to being trafficked.

Human Trafficking Screening and Training Practices

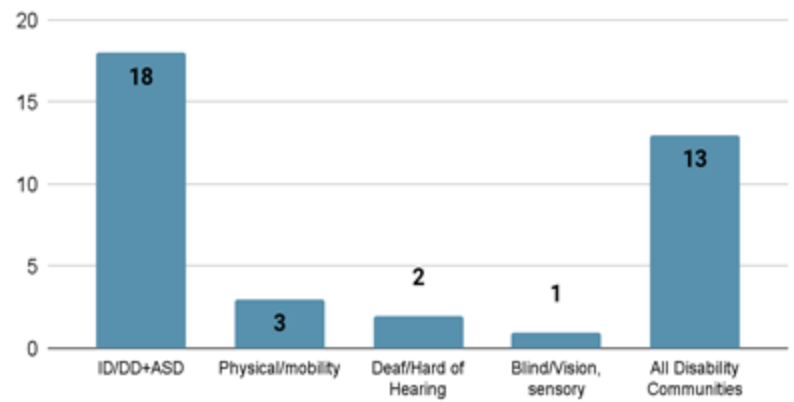
Screening and training on human trafficking among disability service providers



Disability Service Providers

- Only one client who had experienced human trafficking had been identified in the past year.
- Three clients were identified in the past five years.
- Two of the clients identified were white and one Asian.

What Disability Population Your Organization Primarily Serves

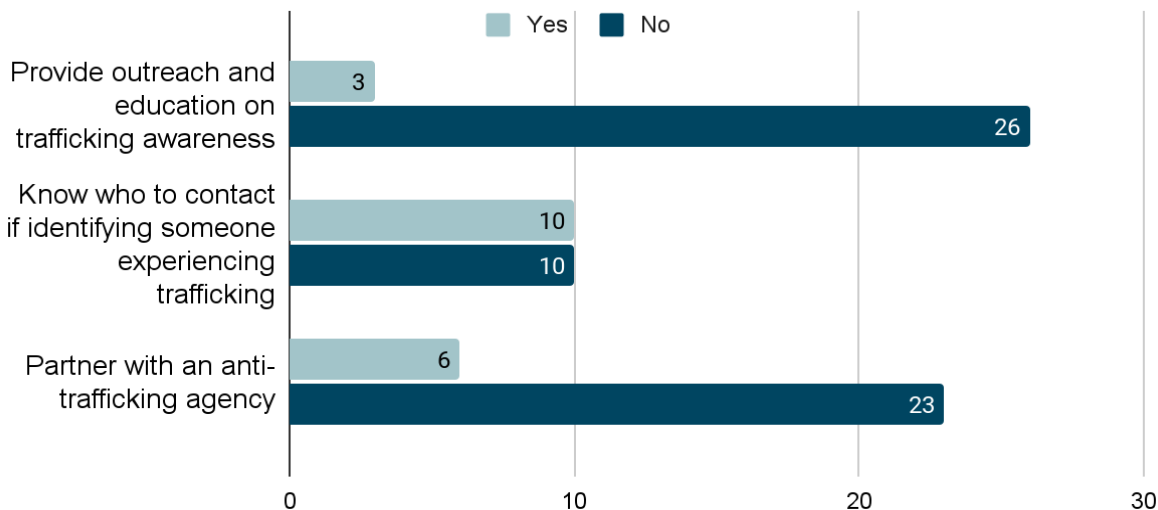


Only one of the disability providers who screened for human trafficking reported having identified clients who had experienced human trafficking, the number of these clients being three in the past five years. As NHTDWG anecdotally knows that trafficking of people with disabilities is a lot more prevalent, the results indicate that something is missing in the screening process.

Very little collaboration was reported between disability providers and anti-trafficking agencies. Only six disability providers had existing partnerships in place with an anti-trafficking agency or working group, and less than half of respondents knew who in their community they could contact for additional support if they identified a client who was experiencing human trafficking.

Outreach and Partnership

Disability Service Providers



Screening

The majority of disability providers do not have human trafficking screening in place, and likely fail to identify and address service needs of human trafficking survivors they may be working with. Regular screening and more effective screening tools are needed to better identify people with disabilities who may have experienced human trafficking.

Collaboration

Most disability organizations do not partner with anti-human trafficking service providers and few knew who they could contact if they identified someone had experienced trafficking. In order to effectively serve human trafficking survivors with disabilities, more collaboration and partnership is needed between disability service providers and anti-trafficking professionals.

93% of disability providers expressed interest in receiving training on human trafficking

Training

Only one disability organization required their service providers received training on human trafficking. If disability service providers are not properly educated and trained on the prevalence of human trafficking of persons with disabilities and risk factors making them susceptible to being trafficked, it is likely that many survivors with disabilities are left unidentified and may not get the assistance they need.

Requiring disability providers to be trained in human trafficking could significantly improve recognizing survivors in disability communities, and ensure their specific service needs are being addressed

Human Trafficking Service Providers



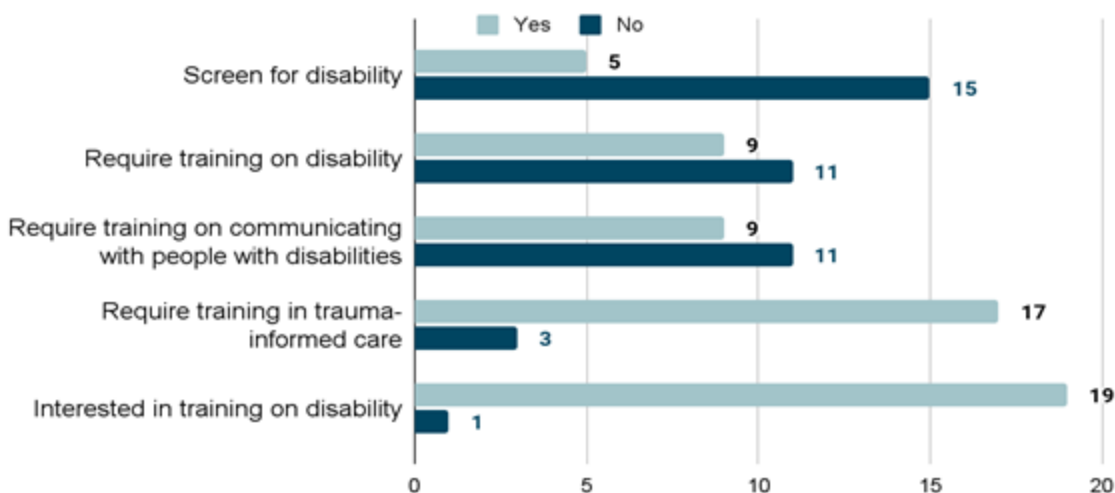
Results from surveying anti-trafficking professionals revealed similar gaps in screening and training as were found amongst disability service providers. Only 5 out of 20 anti-trafficking providers reported that their organization required participants are screened for disability. While most anti-trafficking organizations required their workers to be trained in trauma-informed care, less than half required training on disability or how to communicate with persons with disabilities.

Accessibility of anti-trafficking organizations varied. 75% of providers reported that the hallways in their organization were large enough for wheelchairs, but less than half had access to a sign language interpreter to help facilitate a screening should they need one.

If anti-trafficking service providers are not screening survivors for disabilities, or educated on different forms of disability and how to communicate with people with disabilities, it is likely that many survivors with disabilities are not identified or getting the assistance they need.

Disability Screening and Training

Screening and training on disability among human trafficking service providers



Human Trafficking Service Providers

6 Service-providers had identified clients with disabilities who were experiencing human trafficking in the past year.

5 service providers had identified clients with disabilities who were experiencing human trafficking in the past 5 years.

Race of clients identified

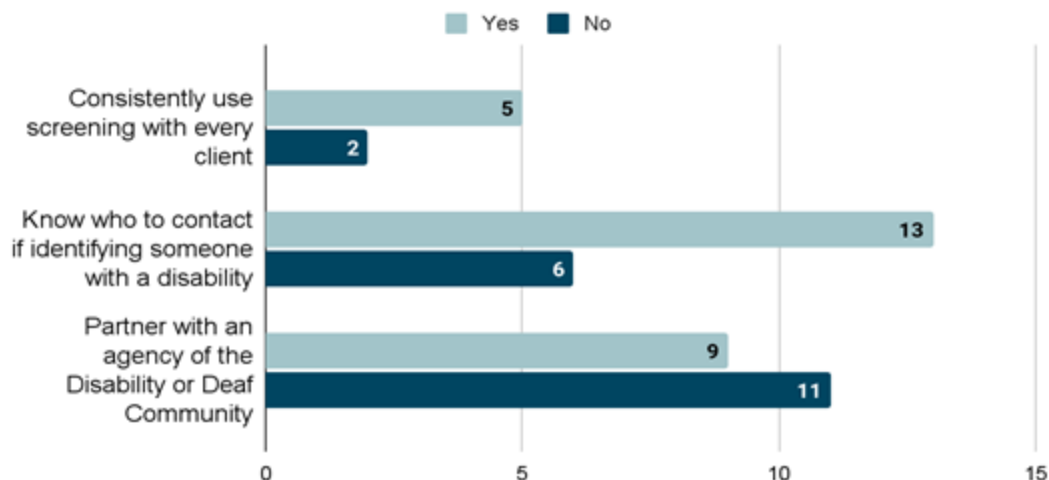
- 38 Black
- 23 Latinx
- 5 Asian
- 2 Indian/Native
- 41 White

The results of surveying anti-trafficking professionals support the anecdotal findings that human trafficking of people with disabilities is a lot more common than acknowledged. Few anti-trafficking service providers screened for disability, but most of the ones who performed routine screenings had identified multiple survivors with disabilities. With adequate screening tools and consistent screening in place it is likely, that a lot more survivors with disabilities would be identified.

Gaps were also found in collaboration between anti-trafficking and disability providers. While less than half of the anti-trafficking providers had existing partnerships in place with disability service providers, 65% knew who to contact for additional support if they identified a survivor with a disability or a Deaf survivor.

Screening and Partnership

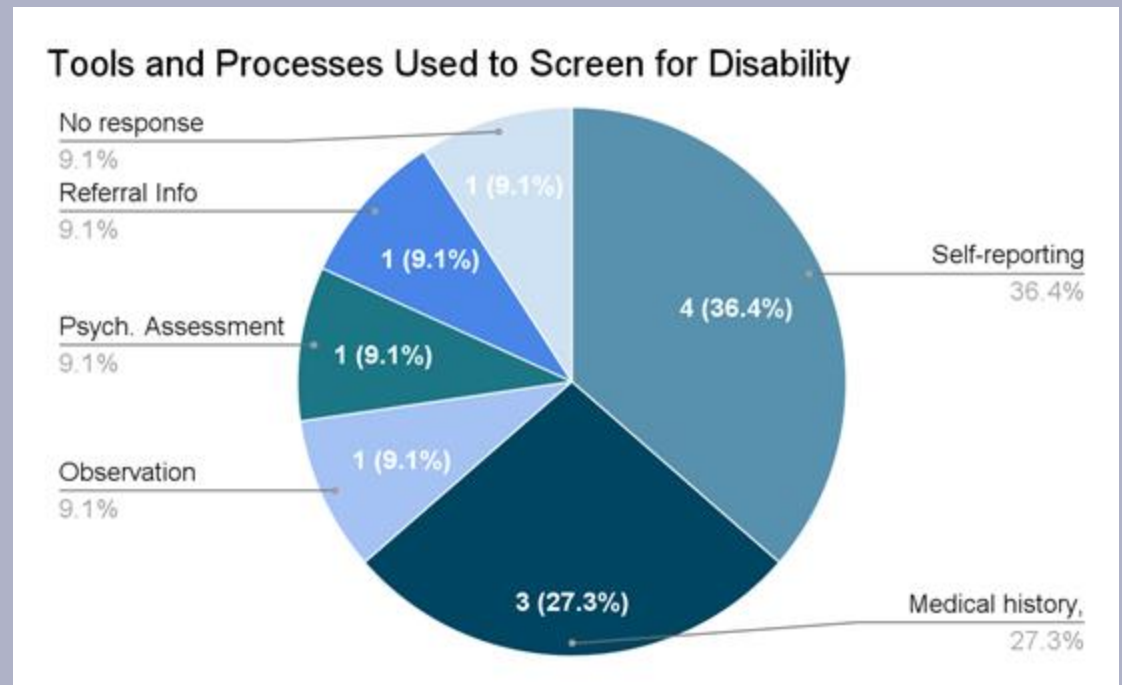
Anti-trafficking Service Providers



Screening Process

Of the five human trafficking providers who screened for disabilities

- All 5 screened for Vision Impairment, Physical Disabilities, Developmental Disabilities, Neurological Disabilities and Autism Spectrum Disorder
- 4 screened for Hearing Impairment
- 2 screened for other disabilities



Anti-trafficking providers who had screening tools in place screened for different types of disabilities. Screening tool used varied largely, from self-reporting and medical history to psychological assessments and observation. Relying on self-reporting or medical records raised concerns of the effectiveness of screening, as survivors often don't self-identify, and there may not be any previous record available of the disability, because survivors may have lacked access to medical care, grown up in a chaotic household where disability was not recognized, left school before the disability was noticed, or the disability occurred while they were trafficked.

Screening

Screening human trafficking survivors remains uncommon, and the screening methods used might not be sufficient to identify those survivors who do not self-report or have a record of their disability. This raises concerns about the number of survivors with disabilities who go unidentified and may not be getting the support that they need. Consistent screening and more effective screening tools are needed to better identify trafficking survivors with disabilities.

95% of anti-trafficking providers respondents were interested in receiving training regarding disability

Communication

Communicating with those with disabilities is essential for accurately assessing for risk factors and signs of human trafficking. If anti-trafficking service providers are not equipped to effectively communicate with persons with disabilities, it is safe to assume that many survivors with disabilities will not get the services they need.

More collaboration and partnership is needed between disability service providers and anti-trafficking professionals in order to effectively serve human trafficking survivors with disabilities.

Training

The study found that anti-trafficking providers do not receive a significant amount of training to fully support survivors with disabilities, but many expressed interest in receiving more relevant training. Lack of training and understanding on different types of disabilities makes it difficult for anti-trafficking providers to be able to ensure survivors with disabilities are identified. Further training and education for human trafficking professionals on disabilities would significantly improve chances of identification and appropriate assistance for survivors with disabilities.

Lack of identification shows there is a need for more comprehensive screening practices, tools, and training to recognize individuals who have a disability and are experiencing human trafficking.

Key Initiatives

Despite its small sample, the results of the Needs Assessment clearly highlight the need for:

- More training and education on the intersection of human trafficking and disabilities among both disability and human trafficking providers.
- Increasing and improving screening of clients for human trafficking and disabilities and enhancing collaboration between human trafficking and disability organizations.
- Further research and data collection on training to be able to give specific policy recommendations for required cross-training.