Trauma-Informed & Lived Experience-Informed Language Options

1. **Member or Client**

   a. To be used as a replacement for "case."

   b. It is important that we are not viewing the individuals we serve as "cases" and instead as people – individuals we are providing trauma-informed care or assistance to.

2. **List of Care:**

   a. To be used as a replacement for "caseload."

   b. It is important that we are not viewing the individuals we serve as "cases" and instead as people – individuals we are providing trauma-informed care or assistance to.

3. **Care Team:**

   a. To be used as a replacement for "assigned staff member."

   b. To be used in reference to staff that is "assigned" to work with an individual for assistance or services (i.e., when an individual is assigned to different staff in an organization such as an advocate, mentor, therapist, etc.)

4. **Working With or Working Alongside**

   a. To be used as a replacement for "working on."

   b. The use of the term "working on" reduces the individual being served to being a case or project. Trauma-informed service provision is a collaborative process with the individual being served and the service provider, so we want to be working *with* or *alongside* the individuals we serve.

5. **Rounds or Staffings:**

   a. To be used as a replacement for "case review."

   b. It is important that we are not viewing the individuals we serve as "cases" and instead as people – individuals we are providing trauma-informed care or assistance to.

6. **Missing from Care:**
   a. To be used as a replacement for "runaway" or "elopement."
   b. The terms "runaway" or "elope" tend to have negative stigmas attached to them, which can impede the view of those working to assist in recovering the missing individual. Often when a youth is missing from care, it is for a reason, and they are rarely "running" to do so.
   c. The term "missing from care" takes away the connotation that the youth made a choice and it's their fault; it places more urgency to try to find and assist the child.

7. **Buyer Exploitation**
   a. To be used as a replacement for "youth that is exploiting themself" or, in other words, to be used in reference to specify a trafficking situation that does not have a third party/trafficker
   b. Youth cannot consent to sex and, therefore, certainly cannot consent to sexual abuse/trafficking/exploitation. Furthermore, it is not trauma-informed to state that a youth is "trafficking themself."

8. **Assist or Recover**
   a. To be used as a replacement for "rescue" or "save."
   b. The use of the words "rescue" or "save" perpetuates saviorism, and operating from this perspective of saviorism completely dismisses the courage, autonomy, and decision-making that it took for an individual to leave a trafficking situation or for them to reach out for assistance.

9. **Exploitation, Sexual Exploitation, Commercial Sexual Exploitation, Sex Trafficking, Labor Exploitation, Labor Trafficking, Human Trafficking**
   a. To be used as a replacement for "prostitution" or "slavery."
   b. The word "prostitution" carries with it a lot of stigmas, which can impede the view of those working to assist individuals who are experiencing trafficking.
   c. Historical slavery in the United States and human trafficking have similarities. However, framing human trafficking as "slavery" is not accurate and often problematic because they're not the same. Using the word "slavery" in place of "human trafficking" takes away from the historical impact of the enslavement of African and Indigenous people in this country. At the same time, it also minimizes some of the experiences and impacts of human trafficking in the lives of those affected by it. As a result, it's a term that we want to encourage all to steer away from and not utilize because it doesn't really match what it is that the experience of human trafficking is like. They are two different things.

10. **Youth/Individual Impacted by Exploitation (or use any relevant term in #9 above), Youth/Individual Who's Experienced Exploitation (or use any relevant term in #9 above)**
    a. To be used as a replacement for the words "victim," "survivor," or "Commercially Exploited Child," and other such labels.
    b. "Victim," "survivor," and "Commercially Exploited Child" are all labels and carry stigmas, perpetuate stereotypes, can prevent people from accessing services, limits our scope of perception as a service provider, and impacts our interactions and approach with the individuals we serve.
    c. Using the terms "individual impacted by exploitation/sexual exploitation/trafficking/etc." or "individual who has experienced exploitation/sexual exploitation/trafficking/etc." is person-centered language that doesn't limit the individual to their experience.

11. **Non-Possessive Statements**
    a. To be used as a replacement for possessive statements such as "they're one of *my* clients/members," "my kids" (in reference to minor clients/members), etc.
    b. Instead of saying, "that's one of *my* clients/members," one might instead say, "they're one of the clients/members on my List of Care," or "I'm on that client's/member's Care Team," etc.

12. **The use of "I" Statements**
    a. Particularly to be used when expressing any challenges experienced when working with a client/member.
    b. Many challenges are experienced in social work, and people sometimes reference a client/member they are experiencing some challenges with by saying that the individual is a "difficult case" or that the individual themself is "difficult," which is labeling the individual and is not considering their trauma history or trauma responses. Instead, to discuss these challenges in a trauma-informed way, one might instead use "I" statements such as "I am experiencing this particular challenge when working with this individual," "I am having trouble navigating this," etc.

13. **Think Twice About Using the Word "Pimp"**
    a. There are three kinds of pimps: Romeo pimps, Gorilla pimps, and CEO pimps. All pimps are traffickers, but not all traffickers are pimps. It's important to know the difference.
    b. Pimping is a very specific culture – "pimp culture," which has very specific rules and ways of operating. For example, parents sexually exploiting their child in exchange for money or drugs is trafficking, but it is not pimping, so in this instance, we would refer to them as traffickers. A Romeo Pimp who has groomed a child into a trafficking situation is a pimp and is trafficking this youth.

14. **Think Twice About Referring to Someone With Lived Experience As a Survivor**
    a. "Survivor" seems to be the term most "accepted" in the Anti-Trafficking Movement as it implies the individual has progressed from being a "victim," however, "survivor" is not person-centered and is also a label with stigmas attached to it.
    b. People who have lived experience that work within the Anti-Trafficking Movement will likely want to identify as the professional and individual that they are in their respective roles as anyone else would.

15. **Gender Inclusivity**
    a. It is important that we are mindful that *all* genders can be subject to trafficking, so we don't want to default to any one gender, such as "she," when referencing individuals who've experienced trafficking. Instead, one might use "they," "youth," "individuals," etc., depending on the demographic they are referring to (youth/adult).
    b. We also don't want to assume the gender an individual identifies as, so being mindful of this is essential when providing services.

16. **Overall Mindfulness**
    a. In general, we want to be more mindful of the language and words we choose so that we are not labeling individuals, being person-centered, and being inclusive.