

Restoration is the process of rebuilding safety, identity, and belonging after exploitation. Reintegration is the supported transition back into community life — with dignity, stability, and choice.

Key Themes

- Rescue is not the end; aftercare is lifelong and non-linear.
- Safety comes first — physical and emotional — before therapy or reintegration.
- Presence matters: be open to learning, conversation, and truly seeing people.
- Aftercare is both evidence-based and deeply human; love is foundational.
- A transitional, supervised independence phase (≈2–6 months) helps build sustainable freedom.
- Barriers include rigid systems, survivor-centered gaps, and stigma that forces repeated retellings of trauma.
- For minors, care is longer-term with education until adulthood before transition planning.

Community & City Leadership Perspective — Councillor Lily Cheng

- Human trafficking and gender-based violence are deeply interconnected in Toronto.
- The City of Toronto has declared gender-based violence an epidemic and is working across Council, Police Services Board, and community partners.
- Survivors can access shelter supports, transitional housing, and rent-geared-to-income priority placement.
- Frontline workers carry emotional weight in this work — encouragement and support are vital to sustain it.
- Collaboration matters — “We are stronger together.”

Quotes from Panelists

- “Rescue is not the end of the story.” — Ashley Gaudry, Survivor and Advocate
- “Rescue brings liberation. Aftercare provides freedom.” — Monica McIntyre, Aftercare International
- “It doesn't mean that they're broken or incapable — they're more intuitive, and they're more resourceful.” — Jenea Gomez, The Salvation Army Illuminate
- “Be open — to learning, conversation, and seeing people.” — Jessica Ortiz, Fight4Freedom
- “Love has to be the foundation.” — Monica McIntyre, Aftercare International
- “From dependence to sustainable freedom.” — Ishani Slocombe, Aftercare International and Consider the Lily

Tangible Actions You Can Take

- Center survivor choice: ask trauma-informed, non-blaming questions (avoid “why didn't you leave?”).
- Practice presence: notice changes, ask “How are you?” and be ready to listen.
- Design flexible, survivor-centered pathways that reduce retelling of trauma; address stigma in your setting.
- Use transitional supports that build real-world confidence, income, and community ties.
- Bring both competence and compassion to the work — evidence-based care + human warmth.

Reflections to Sit With

- Where can we return choice and control in everyday interactions?
- How can my organization reduce stigma and limit re-traumatizing “why” explanations?
- Who can we partner with this month to strengthen survivor-centered supports?

Resource Hub + Replay

UprootingTrafficking.com/resource-hub