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Timeline

2023-2025

Study Status

In Progress

Study Type

Randomized Evaluation

Sample Size

302 survivors of human trafficking

Improving Mental Health Outcomes for Survivors of Human Trafficking in Uganda

Researchers are partnering with IPA Uganda to conduct a randomized evaluation to measure whether a mental health program for human trafficking survivors that incorporates yoga, mindfulness techniques, and group discussions improves their mental health, physical, and social well-being.

The exploitative, coercive, and often violent experiences endured by survivors of human trafficking put them at high risk for significant mental health challenges, which can increase the risk of experiencing future human trafficking if unaddressed. In most low-resource settings, survivors of human trafficking do not have access to evidence-based mental health care that is tailored to their needs.

In Uganda, the organization Healing and Resilience after Trauma (HaRT) developed Move with HaRT, a 12-session, weekly mental health intervention for survivors of human trafficking. The program includes breathwork, yoga poses, guided meditations, and themed discussions to increase survivors' selfhood, ability to trust others, and control over their bodies.

Researchers are partnering with IPA Uganda to conduct a randomized evaluation to measure whether Move with HaRT improves human trafficking survivors' mental health outcomes and their physical and social well-being. A total of 302 human trafficking survivors were randomly assigned to either receive the Move with HaRT program or services as usual.

Results will be available in 2025 and will inform the feasibility of future implementation and scale-up.

Sources

¹ Hom, Kristin A., and Stephanie J. Woods. "Trauma and its aftermath for commercially sexually exploited women as told by front-line service providers." *Issues in mental health nursing* 34, no. 2 (2013): 75-81.

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Walker, Rebecca, and Elsa Oliveira. "Contested spaces: Exploring the intersections of migration, sex work and trafficking in South Africa." *Graduate Journal of Social Science* 11, no. 2 (2015): 129-153.

² Namy, Sophie, Catherine Carlson, Kelsey Morgan, Violet Nkwanzi, and Jessica Neese. "Healing and Resilience after Trauma (HaRT) Yoga: Programming with survivors of human trafficking in Uganda." *Journal of Social Work Practice* 36, no. 1 (2022): 87-100.

³ Collins, Shane P., Shira M. Goldenberg, Nancy J. Burke, Ietza Bojorquez-Chapela, Jay G. Silverman, and Steffanie A. Strathdee. "Situating HIV risk in the lives of formerly trafficked female sex workers on the Mexico-US border." *AIDS care* 25, no. 4 (2013): 459-465.

Partners

THE UNIVERSITY OF
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Healing and Resilience After Trauma (HaRT)



DWELLING PLACES

Dwelling Places



EverFree



Hope for Justice



Rahab Uganda



Set Her Free



The Remnant Generation



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