



Recover

Module 5: Developing Coaching and Instruction Strategies that Encourage Participation of Victims of Trafficking (VoTs)



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Module Overview

- Duration: approximately **3–4 hours** (adaptable to training needs)
- Target group: **sports coaches, trainers, social workers**, and professionals working with **victims of trafficking**
- Delivery mode: **face-to-face or blended**
- Methodology: **Constructive Alignment** – learning outcomes, methods, and assessments are fully integrated
- Aim: to understand how to **develop Coaching and Instruction Strategies that Encourage Participation of Victims of Trafficking (VoTs)**.



Learning Objective

By the end of this module, participants will be able to:

1. **Recognise** signs of stress or overwhelm.
2. **Use** predictable, clear instruction.
3. **Build** skills step-by-step.
4. **Support** autonomy without pressure.
5. **Respond** safely to trauma reactions.
6. **Give** progress-oriented feedback.
7. **Adapt** group activities for mixed groups.
8. **Use** simple grounding and rhythm.
9. **Respect** cultural norms and communication needs.



What Makes Trafficking-Related Trauma Unique?

Trafficking experiences often include:

- long-term control and threat
- unpredictable environments
- pressure to obey without choice
- restricted movement and autonomy

These can strongly influence participation in training sessions.



How Trafficking Experiences Affect Learning & Participation

Instruction must support:

- Safety: feeling protected and not judged
- Trust: knowing what will happen next
- Agency: having real choices
- Self-regulation: staying present, managing stress

When these are supported, participation increases.





Part 1 – Instructional Foundations for VoTs



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Signs of Possible Trauma Responses in VoTs

Common reactions linked to exploitation:

- Freezing or sudden stillness,
- Avoiding decisions,
- Scanning the environment,
- Shutting down or withdrawing,
- Confusion during complex tasks.

These are automatic stress responses, not misbehaviour.



Using Predictable, Containable Structure

Predictability reduces threat. Use:

- session overview at the start,
- stable warm-up and closing routine,
- clear transitions (“In one minute we will change...”),
- stable emotional tone from the coach.

This helps participants feel secure enough to take part.



Why Sudden Changes Can Trigger Distress

Trafficking situations often involved:

- Rapid shifts,
- Unexpected demands,
- Punishment for mistakes,
- Unannounced changes in training can recreate this tension.

Simple warnings reduce stress and increase engagement.



Step-by-Step Learning for Survivors of Exploitation

Support participation by offering:

- Very easy starting level,
- Optional higher levels,
- Low-intensity versions,
- Short check-in moments (“How does this feel?”).

This protects participants from overload and shame.



Observation as a Valid Start

Many VoTs need time to feel safe before acting.

Allow:

- Starting by watching,
- Partial participation,
- Optional entry points.

This keeps the person included without forcing visibility.





Part 2 – Agency and Power Dynamics



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Instructional Language that Supports Autonomy

Instead of: “Everyone must do this now.”

Use: “You can choose the slower or faster version.”

Avoid pressure.

Support real choice.

Choice rebuilds agency, something that is often taken away during trafficking





Part 3 – Responding to Overwhelm



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Understanding “Freeze” in VoTs

- Not refusal
- Survival response, triggered by stress or pressure

If someone becomes still, quiet, or confused:

- offer a slower or simpler option,
- normalise short pauses (“Breaks are part of training”),
- avoid asking for explanations,
- use clear, simple cues.



Why Competition Can Be Stressful for VoTs

- Fear of failure,
- Memories of punishment,
- Social comparison as threat.

Cooperative Group Design

- Shared tasks,
- Team challenges,
- Low-pressure group formats,
- Rotating small groups.

This keeps participants connected without social threat.



Strengths-Based, Non-Comparative Feedback

Feedback should:

- name specific progress (“Your rhythm was steadier today”),
- avoid comparison with others,
- avoid mixing praise with criticism,
- reinforce effort, presence, and regulation.

This builds confidence and reduces shame.



Empowerment Through Transparent Coaching

Empowerment grows when participants see that:

- choices are real
- decisions are explained
- their voice matters
- the environment is consistent

This supports recovery from experiences of coercion and control.



Multiple Pathways to Participation

Participation does not always mean full physical activity.

Offer roles such as:

- Timekeeper,
- Organiser,
- Equipment helper.

This maintains belonging without forcing physical engagement.



Coaching Mixed Groups

In many groups only some participants are VoTs.

Use group rules that help everyone:

- No comments on others' pace,
- Ask before giving feedback,
- Options for different intensities.

This avoids identifying or singling out VoTs.





Part 4 – Embodiment & Regulation



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How Trafficking Affects Body Awareness

- Disconnection,
- Dissociation,
- Confusing body signals.



Supporting Embodiment and Regulation

Simple physical cues help participants reconnect safely:

- “Notice your feet on the floor.”,
- “Move in a rhythm that feels comfortable.”,
- Slow, repetitive movements.

These help calm the nervous system without emotional pressure.





Part 5 – Cultural and Contextual Needs



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Cultural and Contextual Responsiveness

Be sensitive to:

- Personal space,
- Gender norms,
- Touch boundaries,
- Language differences.

Use visual instructions and offer distance options.

Respecting cultural comfort reduces stress and supports participation.



Summary: What Helps VoTs Participate

- Predictable structure,
- Clear, simple transitions,
- Step-by-step learning,
- Autonomy-supportive language,
- Safe responses to overwhelm,
- Progress-oriented feedback,
- Cooperative group formats,
- Grounding cues,
- Cultural sensitivity.



Assessment of Learning

Participants can complete a short quiz to check their understanding of the module content.

The trainer is available to answer questions and explain the reasoning behind the correct answers.



Assessment Quiz

1) Trauma-Informed Instructional Foundations for Coaching

Question: Which behaviour shows a problem with agency rather than with skill?

- A. Avoiding eye contact
- B. Forgetting multi-step instructions
- C. Letting others make decisions for them
- D. Trying too hard to win approval



Assessment Quiz

1) Trauma-Informed Instructional Foundations for Coaching

Question: Which behaviour shows a problem with agency rather than with skill?

- A. Avoiding eye contact
- B. Forgetting multi-step instructions
- C. Letting others make decisions for them**
- D. Trying too hard to win approval



Assessment Quiz

- Why C is correct: It reflects reduced autonomy and difficulty making personal choices.
- Why A is incorrect: Avoiding eye contact reflects social discomfort, not loss of agency.
- Why B is incorrect: Forgetting steps is related to cognitive overload, not autonomy.
- Why D is incorrect: Approval-seeking is linked to shame patterns, not loss of agency.



Assessment Quiz

2) Predictable Session Structure (Scenario)

During an activity, the coach suddenly changes to a new exercise without warning. One participant immediately stops moving and looks around quickly.

What would best prevent this reaction next time?

- A. Give a short warning (1–2 minutes) before changing to a new exercise
- B. Use louder instructions during changes
- C. Let the group switch exercises whenever they want
- D. Add surprise tasks to keep the session exciting



Assessment Quiz

2) Predictable Session Structure (Scenario)

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Assessment Quiz

Why A is correct: A warning makes the change predictable and reduces stress.

Why B is incorrect: Volume does not reduce unpredictability.

Why C is incorrect: Random switching increases uncertainty.

Why D is incorrect: Surprise tasks increase unpredictability.



Assessment Quiz

3) Step-by-Step Skill Development

Which approach best prevents overwhelm during new skill learning?

- A. Offer a simpler entry level of the skill first
- B. Start with the full movement so athletes see the whole picture
- C. Allow faster athletes to demonstrate the advanced version
- D. Give long verbal explanations before starting



Assessment Quiz

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Assessment Quiz

Why A is correct: A simple starting point reduces cognitive load.

Why B is incorrect: Full movements can overwhelm regulation.

Why C is incorrect: Advanced demonstrations add social pressure.

Why D is incorrect: Long explanations increase cognitive demand.



Assessment Quiz

4) Supporting Agency

A participant stands still and keeps shifting weight from one foot to the other, looking unsure which version to try.

Which instruction best supports their sense of choice?

- A. “You can choose the slower version or the faster version. Both are okay.”
- B. “Choose now; the group is waiting.”
- C. “Everyone must do the same version today.”
- D. “Take the harder version; you can handle it.”



Assessment Quiz

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Assessment Quiz

Why A is correct: It offers a clear, pressure-free choice.

Why B is incorrect: It adds time pressure.

Why C is incorrect: It removes choice completely.

Why D is incorrect: It pushes performance over comfort.



Assessment Quiz

5) Managing Trauma Responses

During a movement sequence, a participant suddenly becomes completely still and does not respond to your cues.

What is the trauma-informed interpretation?

- A. Their system was overloaded, and they entered a freeze response
- B. They need more technical explanation
- C. They are refusing to take part
- D. They are tired of the exercise



Assessment Quiz

5) Managing Trauma Responses

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What is the trauma-informed interpretation?

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- B. They need more technical explanation
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Assessment Quiz

Why A is correct: Freeze is an automatic survival reaction.

Why B is incorrect: More information does not resolve freeze.

Why C is incorrect: Freeze is not a voluntary refusal.

Why D is incorrect: Tiredness does not cause sudden stillness and unresponsiveness.



Assessment Quiz

6) Strengths-Based Feedback

A participant who was hesitant earlier now completes the sequence with steadier pacing and fewer pauses.

Which feedback best matches a strengths-based, trauma-informed approach?

- A. “You kept a steadier rhythm this time. That shows good progress from earlier.”
- B. “Great, you’re starting to perform more like the others now.”
- C. “Nice work—try to push yourself a bit more next round.”
- D. “Your rhythm is good, but there’s still a lot to improve.”



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Assessment Quiz

Why A is correct: It highlights specific personal progress without comparison.

Why B is incorrect: It compares the participant to others.

Why C is incorrect: It adds pressure and shifts focus to performance.

Why D is incorrect: It mixes praise with evaluation and reduces confidence.



Assessment Quiz

7) Empowerment

What best reflects empowerment in coaching VoTs?

- A. Explaining the purpose of an activity and inviting questions
- B. Giving all decisions to the athletes
- C. Avoiding structure to reduce pressure
- D. Praising athletes loudly to motivate them



Assessment Quiz

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Assessment Quiz

Why A is correct: Transparency and collaboration support empowerment.

Why B is incorrect: Too much freedom creates uncertainty.

Why C is incorrect: Lack of structure reduces safety.

Why D is incorrect: Loud praise increases social pressure.



Assessment Quiz

8) Cooperative Group Design

A normally engaged VoT participant withdraws during a competitive exercise.

What is the best redesign?

- A. Turn the exercise into a shared team task with a common goal
- B. Keep the exercise but remove the prize
- C. Encourage the group to cheer louder
- D. Ask everyone to compete in pairs instead



Assessment Quiz

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Assessment Quiz

Why A is correct: Shared goals reduce social threat and pressure.

Why B is incorrect: Removing the prize does not remove competition.

Why C is incorrect: Cheering increases attention and stress.

Why D is incorrect: Pair competition still creates comparison.



Assessment Quiz

9) Multiple Pathways to Participation

A participant steps away from the activity and sits on the bench with their head lowered.

How can the coach keep them included without pressure?

- A. Offer them a light role such as keeping time or counting repetitions
- B. Ask them to explain why they stepped out
- C. Ask them to return immediately
- D. Give them a harder exercise to motivate them



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Assessment Quiz

Why A is correct: A small role keeps them connected without forcing action.

Why B is incorrect: Asking for explanations can create shame.

Why C is incorrect: Immediate return removes autonomy.

Why D is incorrect: Increased difficulty adds pressure.



Assessment Quiz

10) Mixed Groups

Which group rule best protects participants with trauma without identifying them?

- A. "Only give feedback to someone if they ask for it."
- B. "Encourage slower teammates loudly."
- C. "Give advice whenever you think it helps."
- D. "Try to match the fastest person today."



Assessment Quiz

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Assessment Quiz

Why A is correct: It reduces unwanted attention and unclear social cues.

Why B is incorrect: Loud encouragement increases pressure.

Why C is incorrect: Unsolicited advice creates stress.

Why D is incorrect: Matching speed increases comparison and threat.



Assessment Quiz

11) Embodied Responsiveness

During a slow movement activity, one participant begins staring at the floor and moving much more slowly than before.

Which coaching cue best supports body awareness without pressure?

- A. "Feel your feet on the ground as you move."
- B. "Tell me what emotions are coming up right now."
- C. "Try to speed up so you stay with the group."
- D. "Continue the activity without checking in."



Assessment Quiz

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Assessment Quiz

Why A is correct: It is a simple grounding cue that supports regulation.

Why B is incorrect: Emotional questions add pressure.

Why C is incorrect: Speeding up increases stress.

Why D is incorrect: Not checking in gives no support for regulation.



Assessment Quiz

12) Contextual Responsiveness

During a partner activity, the coach asks participants to work in pairs. One participant quickly steps back and crosses their arms when assigned a partner of a different gender.

What is the most culturally responsive action the coach can take?

- A. Offer an alternative that does not require close contact or pairing
- B. Explain that mixed-gender pairing is normal in this context
- C. Encourage them to continue so they “get used to it”
- D. Ask the partner to stand closer to help them feel included



Assessment Quiz

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Assessment Quiz

Why A is correct: It respects personal and cultural boundaries while offering a safe way to stay engaged.

Why B is incorrect: Explaining norms does not remove discomfort and may increase pressure.

Why C is incorrect: Pushing through discomfort ignores cultural and trauma-related boundaries.

Why D is incorrect: Reducing personal space increases threat and discomfort.





Congratulations for finalizing Module 5!



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