

Barbara Preitler, *Psychologist, Psychotherapist, Austria: 'Forced to give up control and autonomy about its own life means a traumatic loss of human dignity and has dramatic consequences.'*

Human trafficking (modern slavery) has an immense impact on the psychological health of victims

- Victims of human trafficking become helpless, they lose control over their own lives. They are vulnerable to become victims of all forms of abuse and human right violations.
- Human rights are neglected - so human dignity and trust in other humans is destroyed.

Psychological rehabilitation (if possible) will need a long time - special in cases when human trafficking was experienced in childhood or/and last for a long period of time.

Victims of human trafficking have no voice

To become helpless means often that the victims can not address their misery to anybody - nobody will listen. Often victims don't even have words to express their suffering and so they stay silent about their traumata.

From the psychological point of view it would be important to give them the chance to speak out and to listen to them - in words but maybe also in different forms of art expression.

Asylum rights and migration are not the same

There is a human right for asylum - we should not mix it permanently with migration. Who needs asylum should not become "illegal" - and so vulnerable for any form of human exploitation. We need systems of protection from the first moment on when they start their way (f.e. safe corridors)

Empowerment

Human trafficking makes victims totally helpless and powerless. so we should find ways of empowerment. Even helpers might feel powerless and traumatized working with this group. We should use the concept of "compassion fatigue" to analyse the problem of victims, helpers and politicians.

It needs a good system of selfcare also for the social workers, psychologists, police women and men, volunteers who are working in this field . And we need the support and backing of our politicians!