CARLY KALISH
Social Justice

Carly Kalish is a champion for survivors of human trafficking. Early in her professional career, as a trauma therapist at East Metro Youth Services (EMYS), she saw just how pressing and underrecognized human trafficking was in Toronto. She became a critical ally and counsellor for hundreds of girls and women – many of whom were unaware of the crimes being perpetrated against them. Her knowledge of exploitation and tireless efforts to improve support services led to the formation of an anti-human trafficking coalition of 30 community partners. At EMYS, Carly designed Toronto's first-ever human trafficking trauma program – and earned a $500,000 grant to sustain it long-term.

As Executive Director, and now Chief Executive Officer of Victim Services Toronto, she leads a team of counsellors, social workers and advocates who provide 24/7 support to over 18,000 survivors of crime each year, including many fleeing gender-based violence.

One of her biggest successes is the expansion of Exit Route, a program that provides rapid and seamless support to survivors of human trafficking and intimate partner violence by embedding resources directly into police divisions across the city.

Another of Carly's significant accomplishments is Reclaim, a program that alleviates the burden of fraudulent debt that traffickers often force upon survivors—a devastating, often overlooked issue. Using this project as evidence, she worked with a range of multi-institutional partners to help draft Bill 41, which legally frees survivors from their coerced debt, and ensured that the bill passed all three readings in Queen's Park.

Carly is the recipient of several awards, including the prestigious Attorney General's Victim Services Awards of Distinction (2018) and Justice Canada's Excellence in Victim Service Award (2024).

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