



Human Trafficking Awareness Month *Dos & Don'ts* Tip Sheet

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• **Dos:**

- Be familiar with street language and slang that children or youth might use.
- Use language and terms that are appropriate and sensitive to a young person's experience as a victim.
- Take a young person and their reporting seriously
- Pay attention to your body language. Show interest, empathy, and understanding through verbalizations, nods, and facial expressions. Speak in a calm and even tone.

• **Don'ts:**

- Expect immediate gratification when supporting a young person who may be experiencing exploitation.
- Question or engage a young person at a location where they feel threatened or unsafe.
- Expect or push a young person to disclose all the details of their experiences. Sometimes heavy information needs to be handled in stages.
- Dispute facts or comments on a child's motivation. This will likely stop the flow of information.
- Rely on stereotypes to identify or engage with you who may be experiencing exploitation.

• **Important Notes**

- Any case involving a child under 18 who is engaged in a commercial sex act is a crime regardless of force, fraud, or coercion.
- Family members are involved in nearly half of the child trafficking cases worldwide
- Family involvement in exploitation of children is nearly 4x higher than in cases of adult trafficking.
- Child Trafficking IS Child Abuse. Laws are worked on to better protect children against this crime.
- Children may not see themselves as victims and those in position to help, may not identify it as exploitation. If they've not been taught about human trafficking, they're unlikely to seek out help from a trusted adult.
- Children also may have fears about disclosing, including fear of law enforcement, fear about returning to an abusive home, fears of being deported, fears of harm to themselves or their loved ones, guilt, or shame.
- Language is important. It's important to use words like trafficker, buyer, and victim.
- Trafficking is highly relational. It is important to create healthy and safe relationships while using a trauma informed response.
- Often traumatic events involve loss of control and/or chaos.