

Do's and Don'ts: What to Do and What to Avoid When Working with Victims of Human Trafficking

What to DO*

- ✓ Identify yourself. Make eye contact.
- ✓ Explain how you can help.
- ✓ Make all interaction respectful and considerate of cultural differences.
- ✓ Listen actively. Show interest. Let them speak for themselves.
- ✓ Empathize. Empathy encourages a relationship of trust.
- ✓ Be patient. Do not rush the client if they are confused or angry or do not know the answer to a question.
- ✓ Ask open-ended questions to guide the client and to determine nature of the problem.
- ✓ Limit the number of people the client has to talk with about the situation.
- ✓ Offer to connect the client to other support services and community agencies.
- ✓ Encourage return visits for follow-up or additional help.

What to AVOID

- ✗ Using derogatory names or terms (such as prostitute, promiscuous, bad decision)
- ✗ Making negative assumptions or quick judgments
- ✗ Being abrupt, peremptory, or dismissive
- ✗ Blaming the victim
- ✗ Pressuring or threatening a client to talk
- ✗ Saying whatever is happening is “all in their head” or “due to stress”
- ✗ Assuming a client’s pregnancy and/or family planning intentions
- ✗ Exhibiting negative body language (poor eye contact, crossed arms, defensive posture, taking other calls or typing while the client is talking)**

* Note: The provider should minimize the questions asked about trafficking, asking only questions that help assess risk, identify needs, address health/mental health issues and safety. When asking questions, use an open-ended format when possible, and do not ask sensitive questions prior to building rapport and trust.

***Note: Cultural norms surrounding eye contact differ across cultures. In some cultures, direct eye contact can be read as overly aggressive. Cultural norms should be taken into consideration in responding to victims of trafficking.

Do's and Don't: What to Say and What to Avoid When Working with Victims of Human Trafficking

What to SAY*

- ✓ Hi, I'm _____, your nurse. I am going to be helping you today. How are you doing?
- ✓ Can you tell me a bit about what brought you here today?
- ✓ So, it sounds like you are saying your partner beat you because you are pregnant. Is that right?
- ✓ Have they hit you or been violent before? How often?
- ✓ That sounds awful. You don't deserve that. I am sorry to hear this.
- ✓ Can you tell me more about them? How did you meet?
- ✓ Do you ever feel like they are pressuring you to do something you don't feel comfortable doing? Do they let you keep your ID?
- ✓ Do you feel comfortable telling me more about that? It is safe to talk here. This is a safe place.
- ✓ Thank you for trusting me enough to tell me what's happening. I'm sorry this is happening to you.
- ✓ I'd like to help if I can. What do you think would help you at this time? You're the expert on yourself.
- ✓ We've talked a lot and I have some ideas for possible resources you may find helpful, if you'd like to hear them.
- ✓ I'd like to hear your thoughts too.
- ✓ So, it sounds like you're interested in housing and food. I can get you contact information.
- ✓ Would you like to call them from here? Would you like me to call them for you?
- ✓ You know we will help in any way we can. Please feel free to return for a follow up visit.

What to AVOID

- ✗ I think I've seen you on the corner before.
- ✗ Here you may need these (offering bowl of condoms).
- ✗ I don't know what's wrong with you – are you sure it's not just stress?
- ✗ Has this guy beaten you before? He doesn't sound like he loves you.
- ✗ It sounds like you've been trafficked – why don't you tell me your story again.
- ✗ I can't help you if you don't tell the truth.
- ✗ We're really busy today. You'll have to come back some other time for those other issues.

* Note If a minor reveals involvement in commercial sex during the visit to the clinic, it triggers mandatory reporting requirements.