



Preventing and Responding to Human Trafficking

For Law Enforcement and First Responders

Law enforcement and first responders often see the inside of homes and private spaces during emergency situations, giving them the opportunity to engage with those who may be traffickers or experiencing trafficking. Due to the nature of human trafficking, survivors may be fearful of law enforcement and may not want to interact. This fear can come from physiological manipulation from their traffickers, fear of deportation, negative perception of law enforcement and fear of persecution from crimes committed while trafficked. When responding to suspected or confirmed human trafficking cases, building trust and rapport with survivors is key.

Building Trust and Rapport

- **Trauma-Informed Techniques:** Human trafficking survivors endure complex trauma. To respond to these survivors, use a trauma-informed approach, such as sensitive interviewing, which avoids further traumatization by explaining to the survivor the purpose of the interview, what the information will be used for and allowing choices for the individual.
- **Cultural Competency:** Use interpretation services to help bridge language barriers and work with cultural liaisons to help build trust.
- **Rapport Building:** Allow time for the survivor to feel safe and comfortable before beginning to interview. Offer choices whenever possible to begin building trust and safety.
- **Confidentiality:** Ensure you are complying with your organization's confidentiality procedures and protocols when interviewing/talking with a survivor. Explain to the survivor what information will be shared with others and what will remain confidential to help build trust with the survivor.
- **Collaboration with Community Services and Resources:** Partner with care providers who can support survivors' safety and address immediate needs. This can include housing, food, identification documents and basic needs.

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Resources

Building Strong Cases. OVC TTAC: Office for Victims of Crime Training & Technical Assistance Center. (n.d.). <https://www.ovcttac.gov/taskforceguide/eguide/5-building-strong-cases/>
Cople, J. (2023, April). *Human Trafficking: The Crucible of Training*. *Human trafficking: The crucible of training*. https://cops.usdoj.gov/html/dispatch/04-2023/crucible_of_training.html
Madonna Novock, M. (n.d.). *Share Putting the Emphasis on "Human" in Trafficking Cases*. *Policechiefmagazine.org*. <https://www.policechiefmagazine.org/putting-emphasis-human-trafficking-cases/>