

CAREGIVER REMINDERS & RESOURCES

This is a quick reference guide to help support parents and caregivers who are supporting a young person who may have experienced human trafficking. It includes some information about the impact trauma may have on a youth as well as actions you can take as a caregiver to support them. This can be applied when you have concern or challenges, or proactively ahead of time.

Trauma from human trafficking can result in long-term mental, behavioral, and emotional health needs.

- These experiences can create unique physical, mental, and emotional safety needs.
- Survivors may experience impacts on school life, such as educational disruptions due to truancy, frequent school changes, behavioral changes and challenges managing emotions, and cognitive delays caused by trauma.

COMMON TRAUMA RESPONSES

- Fight (anger, outbursts, physical reactions, intimidation)
- Flight (elopement, leaving home, panic/ anxiety/ compulsion)
- Fawn (avoiding conflict, prioritizing others' needs, difficulty setting boundaries)
- Freeze (spacing out/dissociating, isolation, numbness, difficulty making decisions)

Healing is a long journey- it is not instant or consistent.

- While you can't control how a youth heals, you can control your actions to support them by creating physical, emotional, and psychological safety when possible.
- Youth who have experienced trafficking deserve to feel safe as members of families and communities, which requires a space that acknowledges the impact trauma may have on them.
- Supportive relationships and opportunities to develop skills increase young people's resilience. Multiple studies have found that a stable and supportive relationship with an adult has positive impacts on youth.
- No matter how positive their new home life is, youth may leave or return to an exploitative situation. If that happens, be a safe and steady person for the youth to come to when they are ready.
- Running away or returning to the trafficking does not undo all progress the youth has made toward healing. If a youth leaves your care, find ways to support their safety and well-being when they return.

Youth have important insight on their experiences, needs, wants, behaviors, and communication style.

- Talk to youth. Use the worksheet at the end of this document as a starting place.
- When possible, let youth make choices about their own care while they are in your home.

UNDERSTANDING AND ADDRESSING SAFETY

PHYSICAL SAFETY

Concerns: “I’m worried about...”	Supports and Plans: “Things I can do”
Youth leaving the placement (“running away”)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have an open and honest conversation about fears, anxieties, or triggers that could lead them to want to leave their placement. Normalize those feelings and offer support. • Provide contact information and methods to the youth in case they leave. Make sure they know you are someone they can trust and safely contact- no matter what. • Consistently check in with the youth while they are away from the placement, even if they are not responding. A simple text or voicemail can go a long way! • If the youth leaves, review agency policy regarding holding a bed for them. Call a team meeting to prevent or address the placement disruption, and offer a safe, non-judgmental return when possible.
Internet safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk to the youth about how they can enhance safety in online interactions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Make any social media profiles private. ◦ Limit personal information being shared online like locations or schedules. • Have clear and transparent conversations around for any guidelines or restrictions you have in your home around internet use.
Contact with traffickers/ exploiters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help youth recognize and communicate their needs. That can include needs being met by a trafficker/exploiter. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Strategize healthy ways within your means to address those needs. • Discuss healthy relationships and model those behaviors. • Make sure they know you are someone they can trust and come talk to about anything. <div data-bbox="980 1451 1497 1906" style="background-color: #e0f2f7; padding: 10px; margin-top: 10px;"> <p style="text-align: center;">Healthy Relationships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listening to each other • Reflecting support and trust • Refraining from judgment • Showing respect • Communicating in a way that you both feel heard and honored, including acknowledging harm </div>

UNDERSTANDING AND ADDRESSING SAFETY

PSYCHOLOGICAL (MENTAL, EMOTIONAL) SAFETY

<p>Considerations: What are we worried about</p>	<p>Supports and Plans: “I can do this”</p>
<p>Youth navigating contact with family</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider engaging with the youth’s chosen support system (family, friends, etc.) and look for opportunities to spend time with them. • Attend meetings/staffings involving the youth to show your support and investment in their life. • Communicate consistently, transparently, and respectfully.
<p>Trauma reminders and responses</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remember that behavior can be a response to trauma (see Trauma section above). They are not a bad kid. You are not a bad caregiver. • Identify things that may remind a youth of a traumatic experience and plan for how to remove/address them. • Refer to the coping strategies identified in the worksheet and brainstorm ways you and the youth can support/build on those strategies.
<p>Youth feeling, “othered,” fear of abandonment and rejection</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider how youth can make choices in their environment (e.g. room decorations, family outings, activities) and how to integrate their preferences into the household. • Attend meetings/staffings involving the youth to show your support and investment in their life. • Communicate consistently, transparently, and respectfully.
<p>Youth feeling like their needs are better met in their exploitative situation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help youth recognize and communicate their needs, including those being met by a trafficker/exploiter. • Strategize healthy ways within your means to address those needs.

RESOURCES

DISCLOSURE OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING, EXPLOITATION, SEXTORTION

Youth who have experienced trafficking may or may not disclose this information to anyone. If they do disclose to you, consider the following as you respond, react, and engage in conversation with them. Also remember, to best take care of the youth, you also need to take care of yourself.

- Reflect calm, controlled, non-judgmental verbal and nonverbal communication.
- Be patient and listen carefully to what they're saying.
- Do not press for additional information (listen, do not investigate).
- Affirm and validate their willingness to talk to you.
- Believe and reassure them.
- Do not blame or shame them, including if it happened while they were on the run or in another risky situation.
- Do not retaliate.
- Ensure they feel safe and supported.
- Discuss and seek any short and long-term support they might want or need.
- Explain anything you are required to do next.
- Do not make any promises or agreements you cannot keep.

Make a report as required and engage with the youth's team on next steps.

It is important to be transparent with youth about your mandate to report. To see an example of someone explaining mandated reporting in action, check out this video from Futures Without Violence. The video depicts a different context but shows some language you could use or adapt.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T-ykBVx_asw



TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF

- Understand how secondary trauma (emotional distress from hearing about another person's trauma) impacts you.
- Work as a team alongside other social workers and supports for the youth.
- Identify a support person.
- Prioritize self-care and mindfulness.
- It is ok to not be ok and ask for help early. Lean into networks, local resources and caregiver/foster parent support groups.

HOW MY CAREGIVER CAN HELP ME

Help the youth complete this worksheet template (next page) using the instructions in orange below. This worksheet can be conversation starter for a broader discussion of the support they need while in your care as well as a reference document for later.

MY STRENGTHS:

- 1: Get creative for this section. Think about what makes the youth special. Examples are resiliency, making friends, or sharing their feelings.
- 2:
- 3:

MY LIKES AND INTERESTS:

What are things that make the youth happy or excited?
Examples might include football, dancing, reading, spending time with friends....

MY COPING STRATEGIES

(THINGS I LIKE TO DO WHEN I FEEL STRESSED, ANGRY, OR ANXIOUS):

Examples might be to read a book, play a sport, call a friend....

HOW I LIKE TO COMMUNICATE:

Have a conversation about how they feel safe, loved, valued, and respected. What helps the youth feel heard? What approach helps them feel safe to listen and engage? Are they sensitive to raised voices? Where to stand or sit in proximity to them for safety?

HOW MY CAREGIVER AND I CAN WORK TOGETHER:

A set of agreements that can provide space for this youth use their coping strategies. Meet them where they are at. Flexibility in supporting the youth's needs and wants while teaching them skills to deal with situations in a healthy way. Transparent conversations that address boundaries and expectations on your end ("the youth agrees to") and space and flexibility on their end.

KEY CONTACTS:

- Case manager: A mentor, sibling, caregiver, cousin, youth worker - who is someone the youth feels supported by (and it is appropriate to engage with)
- Chosen supports:
- Other:

HOW MY CAREGIVER CAN HELP ME

Name: _____

Date: _____

MY STRENGTHS:

MY LIKES AND INTERESTS:

MY COPING STRATEGIES

(THINGS I LIKE TO DO WHEN I FEEL STRESSED, ANGRY, OR ANXIOUS):

HOW I LIKE TO COMMUNICATE:

HOW MY CAREGIVER AND I CAN WORK TOGETHER:

KEY CONTACTS:

Case manager:

Chosen supports:

Other:

CONTACT INFORMATION

Complete this form with contact information that will help you and the youth. Guiding instructions are in orange below.

IMMEDIATE DANGER

Call 911 and or your local law enforcement and follow mandated reporting guidelines.

CHILD IS MISSING FROM CARE

INSERT NEXT STEPS FROM YOUR AGENCY

MANDATED REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

INSERT MANDATED REPORTING REQUIREMENTS AND GUIDELINES AGENCY

ADDITIONAL REPORTING & RESOURCE HOTLINES

24/7 Reporting and Info For Trafficking:
National Human Trafficking Hotline
1-888-373-7888
Text: 233733

24/7 reporting and Info for Minors:
NCMEC's CyberTipline®
www.cybertipline.org
1-800-THE-LOST® (1-800-843-5678).

LGBT National Youth Talkline:
1-800-246-7743

LOCAL SERVICES AND SUPPORT

INSERT LOCAL SUPPORT CONTACTS: MEDICAL, ADVOCATES, RUNAWAY AND HOMELESS YOUTH SERVICES, MULTIDISCIPLINARY TEAMS, AND OTHER OPTIONS.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Complete this form with contact information that will help you and the youth.

IMMEDIATE DANGER

Call 911 and or your local law enforcement and follow mandated reporting guidelines.

CHILD IS MISSING FROM CARE

MANDATED REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Blank area for MANDATED REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.

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LOCAL SERVICES AND SUPPORT

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LEARN MORE

CAREGIVER REMINDERS & RESOURCES

About the Authors

This resource was developed by Kentucky Cabinet of Health and Human Services' Division of Protection and Permanency in partnership with Bethany Gilot. This content was adapted and designed by the RTI Improving Outcomes Training and Technical Assistance team.

To learn more about the Kentucky team, visit <https://improvingoutcomestta.org/kentucky-state-highlight/>.

About the Improving Outcomes project

The Improving Outcomes for Child and Youth Victims of Human Trafficking (Improving Outcomes) grant program, funded by the Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) since 2016, awards state or Tribal entities funds to develop state- or Tribal-based approaches to improve the identification of and coordinated response to child and youth victims of human trafficking within their states or territories.

Learn more at <https://improvingoutcomestta.org/>.

ADAPT THIS DOCUMENT FOR YOUR JURISDICTION

This document has been designed to be adapted.

To learn more, contact the Improving Outcomes TTA team at improvingoutcomestta@rti.org.

Disclaimer

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