

If someone chooses to disclose to you that they have been raped or sexually assaulted:

-**LISTEN** (Don't talk over them, or ask them pointed questions, i.e. "what were you wearing?" Listen to what they are telling you.)

-**BELIEVE** (It is very hard to come forward, and it can be traumatizing in itself. They are not gaining anything from lying about this.)

-**REACT** (A reaction from someone who they trust enough to disclose to can often help a survivor process and deal with what has happened to them. Be supportive. Show concern. If appropriate, outrage on their behalf. Read the situation. They need to know that they have your support and help. Offer resources: STAR, police, etc)

How to better interact with survivors of sexual violence, as medical and social work professionals:

-Be aware that the dynamics of physical touch have likely changed for this person.

-If you need to touch them for medical exams/procedures, etc, explain what you are going to do and why, obtain their consent.

- Keep an appropriate tone of voice (pleasant, serious etc), don't be dismissive of them or act disgusted/unsympathetic.

Resources that you can give to survivors of sexual violence:

-**STAR**: offers free counseling, legal services, advocacy, a 24-hour hotline, and more to survivors.

Baton Rouge Office: (225) 615-7093

New Orleans Office: (504) 407-0711

Alexandria Office: (318) 625-7592

24 Hour Hotline: 855-435-7827

Signs that someone may be being trafficked:

-They are never left alone, or allowed to speak to someone by themselves. The person with them does a lot of the speaking for them/answers questions about them.

-They are wearing clothing that does not fit them.

-They do not necessarily know an address for where they are staying.

-Odd or suspicious pairings: Older male escorting a younger woman.

-Visible injuries (busted lip. Black eye. Scratches.)

-Extreme emotional duress and signs of trauma (crying, panic attacks, high anxiety, reactive to physical touch) or completely shut down, no reactions to anything.

How to interact with human trafficking victims:

-Start small. Only talk with them about this if they are alone.

-If they came in with another person, do not ask any of this if the person that the victim came in with is within hearing distance/visual range of the victim.

-Ask if they are ok.

-Do not judge them, it will show in your interactions and lose their trust.

-Ask if they need help. The victim may prefer that you call a social worker with resources to help them, rather than the police initially.

-Do not force your assistance. Keep in mind, many human trafficking victims will not have a safe place to go to, so a human trafficking shelter and safe transportation to it may need to be provided. A victim can only get help when they are ready and in a good place to do so.

Resources/assistance that you can give to someone being trafficked:

-You don't want to give them anything that their trafficker can find on them and punish them for. Ask them what they are ok with having: Pamphlets? STAR pens? Writing info down? Potentially saving a resource phone number (STAR, Covenant House, Healing Place Church Dream House, National Human Trafficking Hotline) in their phone as a different name?

-Do they want you to call the police? Be careful, as this question could scare them off. If they do want you to call, call the police and say that you need assistance ASAP. NOW. STAT. They may be able to isolate the trafficker before they escape.

-Many victims may not want you to call the police. Keep in mind, their trafficker has likely forced them to do many illegal things themselves (prostitution, drugs, etc) and the police are often unfortunately just as likely to arrest and prosecute the victim as the trafficker.

-STAR offices listed above

-HP Serve in Baton Rouge: 225.236.5249

-National Human Trafficking Resource Center:

1 (888) 373-7888

SMS: 233733 (Text "HELP" or "INFO")

Hours: 24 hours, 7 days a week

Languages: English, Spanish and 200 more languages

Website: traffickingresourcecenter.org