



# A TOOLKIT TO COMBAT HUMAN TRAFFICKING

FOR THE TRAVEL PLAZA/  
TRUCK STOP INDUSTRY IN THE  
UNITED STATES & CANADA



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CREATED BY TRUCKERS AGAINST TRAFFICKING  
TO AID TRAVEL PLAZAS/TRUCK STOPS IN EQUIPPING THEIR MEMBERS WITH  
THE INFORMATION THEY NEED TO COMBAT HUMAN TRAFFICKING

# THE PROBLEM OF TRAFFICKING

Human trafficking — or modern-day slavery — is a global problem in which people are illegally bought and sold for forced labor or commercial sex. Traffickers use means such as force, fraud and coercion, including abduction, deception, torture and/or the abuse of power, to prey upon their victims' vulnerabilities — such as their youth, condition of poverty, migration status or dreams of love and opportunity<sup>1</sup> — while profiting off their exploitation. It's a crime of greed and egregious abuse.

Globally, there are an estimated 50 million victims of human trafficking, including thousands of children and adults in the United States and Canada. Human trafficking has been reported in all 50 states and 10 Canadian provinces.

Traffickers exploit locations in the sale of their victims, often bringing their crime to the doorstep of legitimate and wholesome businesses. This toolkit is intended to guide travel plazas and truck stops on steps they can take to equip their members to combat human trafficking when it does arrive at their location, including how they can partner with Trucking Against Trafficking (TAT) to implement anti-human trafficking training and policies in their operations.

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of State, "2019 Trafficking in Persons Report," available at <https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/2019-Trafficking-in-Persons-Report.pdf>, pg. 4 (June 2019).

## *The stages of human trafficking*

### RECRUITMENT

Traffickers target people in vulnerable situations and recruit them by building trust and offering safety and support. During the recruitment stage, victims may or may not be suspicious of their trafficker. If traveling to meet them, they may believe they're going to a new boyfriend or starting an exciting new job.

### EXPLOITATION

Once a trafficker has recruited his/her target, the exploitation begins. During this stage, the trafficker forces, coerces or manipulates the victim into performing commercial sex and/or labor. Traffickers will continue to use psychological or physical abuse to keep their victims from leaving.

### EXIT

The methods of control employed by traffickers makes it difficult for victims to leave. When victims are able to escape, they are often in extremely vulnerable situations and in need of immediate support and services in order to prevent returning to their trafficker or being exploited by someone else.

### RECOVERY

When victims do manage to exit their trafficking situations, they then embark on the journey of rebuilding their lives. During this stage, they may need support in managing mental and physical health concerns, working to vacate criminal records accrued during their exploitation and securing stable employment and housing.

# HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND TRUCKING: INTERSECTIONS

Members of the travel plaza/truck stop industry may intersect trafficking at a number of its stages.

Traffickers emerge from all walks of life; they see the exploitation of someone else as an easy way to make more money. Consequently, a trafficker may be the guy next door, a fellow employee or someone who acts like he or she is simply helping out, doing a favor for someone in need. While recruitment would seldom happen at a travel plaza or truck stop, traffickers are opportunistic, so it could. In this **recruitment stage**, travel plaza/truck stop industry members at work might see a lone child, teen or young adult woman in what appears to be the company of a non-relative, who is either offering or is providing long-distance transport, food, housing or gifts, trying to gain confidence and trust by being a benefactor. They may be entering or eating in the restaurant or talking in the lot or by the gas pumps. The potential victim may seem suspicious, uncomfortable, scared or reticent, while the recruiter may be fast talking, sweet talking or commanding.

Because traffickers look for large groups of men to purchase their commercial sex, during the **exploitation stage**, members of the travel plaza/truck stop industry might intersect with victims who are being sold or offered for sale to truck drivers on your lot or to men who may drive up in cars and park back by the trucks. These victims may come into the store/restaurant area of your location to use the restroom, to eat, or to escape a buyer or a trafficker. In the 2018 Polaris Report "On-Ramps, Intersections and Exit Routes: A Roadmap for Systems and Industries to Prevent and Disrupt Human Trafficking," potential sex trafficking at truck stops comprised 37 percent of the 1,983 cases described as "the outdoor solicitation business model" and recorded by the National Human Trafficking Hotline since December 2007.<sup>2</sup> Additionally, if there are hotel/motels, restaurants, massage parlors, strip clubs or any similar operation nearby, a trafficker may target your area even more.

TAT has received numerous accounts from the National Human Trafficking Hotline, as well as other sources, of truck drivers and truck stop employees who have been involved in helping victims during the **exit stage**. Victims seeking a way out may be encountered anywhere, whether they're actively being exploited and in need of someone to recognize this or are in the process of escaping a trafficker or are feeling hopeless and trapped until someone engages them in conversation ... someone who is compassionate, caring, victim-centered in perspective and willing to take the time to help the victim receive the help she/he needs.

<sup>2</sup> Polaris, "On-Ramps, Intersections, and Exit Routes: A Roadmap for Systems and Industries to Prevent and Disrupt Human Trafficking," available at <https://polarisproject.org/on-ramps-intersections-and-exit-routes>, pg. 32 (July 2018).

# BEST PRACTICES FOR TRAVEL PLAZAS AND TRUCK STOPS

As with any endeavor, while it's possible to only do the minimum to get by, implementing best practices ensures that all employees will be ready and able to recognize a problem and have a hand in saving a life, should human trafficking take place on your premises. These best practices include:

## 1. IMPLEMENT INDUSTRY-SPECIFIC TRAINING FOR ALL EMPLOYEES

In addition to NATSO's online human trafficking training and toolkit (see pg. 7 for additional information), TAT also offers free, industry-specific training materials designed to train any member of the travel plaza/truck stop industry, in addition to truckers who stop at your location, on how to recognize and report signs of human trafficking they may be seeing in the course of their everyday jobs. These materials are primarily comprised of a 26-minute, documentary-style training video, a brochure titled *Dealing with Human Trafficking ... when this crime arrives at your doorstep*, and a wallet card or app. The TAT video is a self-sufficient, anti-trafficking training tool; however, TAT advises that management/training instructors supplement the video training with information specific to the organization's internal policies and, when possible, provide examples from their local context. (See Appendix A: TAT Training Resources.)

## 2. ATTEND AND/OR HOST COALITION BUILDS

TAT Coalition Builds are half-day events that bring together key industry leaders from the trucking, truck stop and bus industries along with local, state and federal law enforcement. TAT conducts these meetings in partnership with state trucking associations and Attorney General's offices nationwide. At these invite-only events, general managers gain direct access to leading law enforcement and government officials in their communities and are able to create a localized response to human trafficking. Participants have the opportunity to network with other industry leaders and learn from a law enforcement panel that will delve deeper into trends officers are seeing locally, share case studies, discuss victim-centered approaches and offer recommendations for industry partners wanting to get involved. By coming alongside industry, and simultaneously training the law enforcement who will be the first ones arriving on the scene, TAT has seen a much more coordinated approach in combating this crime at a local and state level.



### 3. LAUNCH A VICTIM-CENTERED AND PUBLIC AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

Travel plaza/truck stop entities can help members of the communities in which they live and work, as well as truckers, the general motoring public and even victims who find themselves at your location, understand more about human trafficking by using their stores, rest rooms, shower areas, truck gas pumps, etc. to display pertinent information. Posting TAT decals and posters can be one way of bringing awareness, increasing the mobile army of transportation professionals fighting this crime and, hopefully, provide the number to victims to self-report. Creating buttons in your restrooms, along with appropriate verbiage, that victims can press if they're in danger and need help is another way.

### 4. INVITE TAT TO SPEAK AT ANNUAL LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

TAT staff, including a TAT field trainer and survivor leader, can provide a one-hour presentation at your next leadership conference. One of the most inspiring and impactful ways to train your employees on human trafficking is by having them hear from a survivor who has lived the horrors of human trafficking first-hand. This builds empathy in your staff and helps create a victim-centered company culture.

### 5. ESTABLISH AN ANTI-TRAFFICKING-IN-PERSONS POLICY WITH A DEMAND-REDUCTION FOCUS

Sex trafficking — including sex buying — poses a risk to employers and harms vulnerable people in our community. Employers have many policies and procedures in place to protect the company and employees from certain behaviors that create a hostile work environment, hurt the company's reputation, reduce employee productivity, or place the company at legal or financial risk. National survey results by Demand Abolition show that up to 20 percent of adult men ages 18-64 have bought sex or would buy sex if the circumstances were right. Thirty-five percent of men have searched online sex ads but failed to act on the desire. Data suggests that most men shop online ads during the workday, and many prostitution transactions take place on the way to work, during lunch, or after work. Some transactions occur at the place of business or are set up using work-issued property (e.g. cell phones, computers, credit cards, or vehicles). Do you really want your employees using company time for these types of purchases and actions? These can end up creating blow back on your company at some point, including your company's name and reputation being tarnished. Employers can create policies that help mitigate the potential risk and protect employees from harm. Examples of these anti-trafficking-in-persons policies with a demand-reduction focus are available at <https://truckersagainstrafficking.org/man-to-man-campaign>.

## TAT IN ACTION

***In January 2015, truck driver Kevin Kimmel caught a glimpse of a distraught-looking young girl in the darkened window of an RV parked back by the trucks at the truck stop where he'd stopped to sleep. He decided things didn't look right and called the police. When police responded, they found an Iowa couple in the RV, along with a 20-year-old malnourished and frightened young woman, who said the couple had kidnapped her two weeks earlier in Iowa and forced her into prostitution. The couple was arrested and charged with sex trafficking. Kimmel, who has daughters and granddaughters, learned the gruesome details of the case through the news. "I'm just happy I helped her," he said.***

# TAT IN ACTION

*In conjunction with its TAT partnership, Sapp Brothers Travel Centers initiated Help Now, a program designed to identify victims of human trafficking and provide them with immediate help. Working with TAT and law enforcement, Sapp Brothers designed its program to include:*

- *Buttons in restrooms with verbiage that says, “If you are in danger, need help now or this area needs attention, press this button.”*
- *Posters near the buttons with the text and phone numbers for the National Human Trafficking Hotline, as well as the location phone number for the travel center itself.*
- *Training for employees on using a victim-centered approach when interacting with victims, as well as contacting law enforcement for help.*

*Sapp Brothers also participates in quarterly meetings of the Coalition Against Human Trafficking in Omaha and holds educational/awareness sessions at its locations in Omaha/Council Bluffs for customers, employees and surrounding businesses, complete with law enforcement providing TAT training and a special lunch menu for those participating in the training.*

## 6. ESTABLISH AN INTERNAL REPORTING POLICY

In establishing an internal reporting policy, travel plaza/truck stop entities should strive to ensure that their employees or members know the steps they’re expected to take, from the company’s perspective, if they suspect human trafficking is occurring, or if they believe they may have come into contact with a potential victim.<sup>3</sup>The policy should accomplish the following:

### ESTABLISH

that management cares about combating human trafficking and will support its employees in being on the lookout for this crime and reporting it.

### EMPHASIZE

that the safety of the employee and potential victim is paramount, highlighting that observing human trafficking and reporting it doesn’t mean trucking employees should get physically involved or try to “rescue” victims themselves.

### OUTLINE

the steps employees should take to get law enforcement and/or victim services involved and to either inform management of the incident that occurred or enroll their assistance. At a minimum, the policy should guide employees on when to call 911, when to call the hotline, when to notify the company and how to file an incident report. Inform employees that when they report human trafficking, the company would really like to know as the employee may qualify to be nominated for TAT’s Harriet Tubman Award, which carries with it a \$2500 cash award.

### PRESERVE

evidence from the incident in question, such as names, dates, times, specific locations, descriptions of people, descriptions of cars, license plate numbers, surveillance footage, etc. This kind of information can be critical for law enforcement in an anti-trafficking investigation.

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Department of Transportation Advisory Committee on Human Trafficking, “Combating Human Trafficking in the Transportation Sector,” available at <https://www.transportation.gov/administrations/office-policy/advisory-committee-human-trafficking>, pg. 8 (July 2019).

# RED FLAGS FOR TRAVEL PLAZAS/ TRUCK STOPS

Every travel plaza/truck stop employee should know the red flags to look for that indicate human trafficking may be taking place. Remember that forced prostitution is human trafficking. These red flags signal signs of control, vulnerability, recruitment and active exploitation. They are listed on the wallet card and on the TAT app (see Appendix A: TAT Training Resources). They are:



## HUMAN TRAFFICKING HOTLINE

If you are witnessing a crime in progress, call 911 and report it immediately. For questions (about what you may or may not be witnessing) or to access victim services, please call either the United States or Canada human trafficking hotline, whose advocates are available to answer calls 24/7, every day of the year.



Calls received by either hotline are always anonymous, unless the caller chooses to provide the operator with his or her name and contact information and authorizes its use. This information is not given to law enforcement, other individuals or other agencies without prior consent.

Once a call is received, next steps may include:

- An additional call to the caller to confirm the accuracy of information (with the caller's consent);
- Provision of materials and/or referrals to organizations in the caller's area serving trafficking victims;
- A report to a local anti-trafficking organization, service provider, or law enforcement.

# OPTIONS FOR IMPLEMENTING TAT TRAINING OR NATSO TRAINING

There are three ways travel plazas/truck stops can share free training materials with their employees:

## 1. IN-PERSON TAT TRAINING:

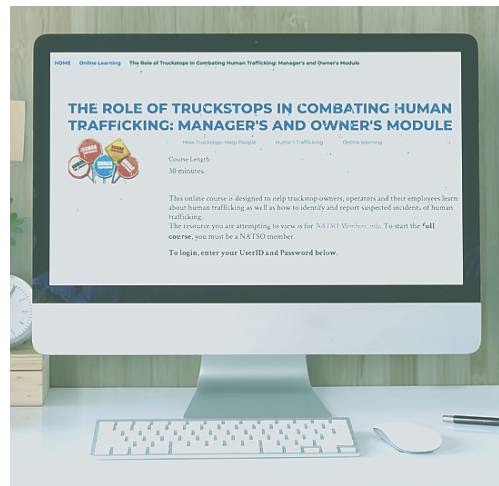
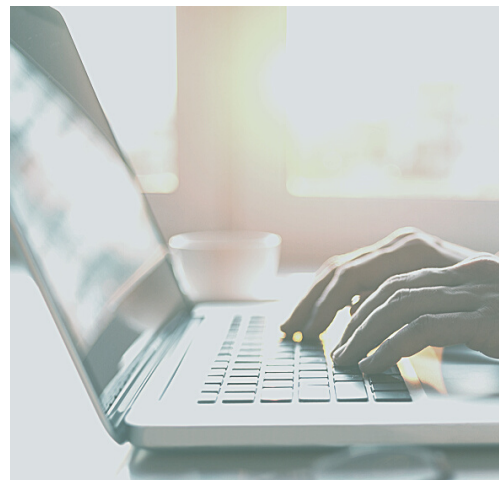
A safety instructor facilitates showing the 26-minute TAT video to a group that has gathered in person and then passes out the wallet card. The trainer can either use a DVD or download the training video as an mp4 file. (See Appendix B: Implementation Guide for In-person Training.)

## 2. ONLINE TAT TRAINING: IDENTIFYING AND INTERACTING WITH VICTIMS

TAT has created a 45-minute online travel plaza/truck stop-specific training that goes beyond the video. This training is delivered live by TAT staff and includes a Human Trafficking 101, procedures to follow if trafficking is expected and survivor testimony with victim-centered advice and tips. If you are interested in an online TAT training for your staff or group, please email us at [info@truckersagainstrafficking.org](mailto:info@truckersagainstrafficking.org).

## 3. NATSO ONLINE TRAINING:

The NATSO Foundation has created an online learning tool designed to help teach travel plaza/truck stop owners, operators and employees how to respond if they suspect human trafficking. The course is available free of charge to any member of the travel plaza/truck stop community at [www.natso.com/onlinelearning](http://www.natso.com/onlinelearning).



### Please register your training numbers with us!

This helps us measure our reach and better understand how and where our training is being used.

To register your training numbers, visit:  
[TRAINED.TRUCKERSAGAINSTTRAFFICKING.ORG/REGISTER](http://TRAINED.TRUCKERSAGAINSTTRAFFICKING.ORG/REGISTER)  
or contact [info@truckersagainstrafficking.org](mailto:info@truckersagainstrafficking.org).



## TAT IN ACTION

*Tracy Mullins, general manager of the Petro Shopping Center®, was walking into a restaurant near her travel plaza to talk to the manager. She noticed two young girls sitting with an older man and, recalling her TAT human trafficking awareness training, she thought it seemed suspicious. “Not that the situation was odd,” she said, “but the man looked as if something could be wrong. I positioned myself close enough to the table to hear the young girls ask for a ride to Seattle. At this point, the images of all the young girls from the training video were going through my mind. I approached the table and asked the girls if everything was okay. One of them told me the man was her uncle. The man seemed very uncomfortable and removed himself from the situation. The young girls then asked other drivers for a ride.”*

*Mullins realized there was a problem and notified law enforcement. The girls turned out to be runaways from a neighboring state with only \$5 between them. She stated, “As a mother, I know I helped two young girls not become a statistic that day.”*

*TA Travel Plaza Field Manager Debo Adepiti in Jessup, Maryland was making a premise check, including the fuel desk, mechanics shop and hotel, when Alan Bailey, the night porter, told him a young lady had recently come in dressed provocatively; the porter suspected prostitution. After speaking with both the driver of the van that brought the girl, as well as the young lady when she left the hotel, Adepiti believed the girl was being trafficked. He contacted Howard County police. When detectives arrived, they recognized a woman from one of the “X-Factor” ads they’d been investigating for two months on Backpage.com. As a result of Adepiti’s call, they arrested two men and a woman on human trafficking charges. The trio were advertising as many as 12 women from various states, posting ads, renting hotel rooms, scheduling appointments for prostitution and taking money from the women after they were forced to perform sex acts. Detectives also learned all three individuals provided drugs to keep the women high, making them work without sleep, assaulting them and forcing them to perform sex acts with them under threat. Police were able to locate and recover six of the women being abused by the ring of traffickers.*

# APPENDIX A: TAT TRAINING RESOURCES

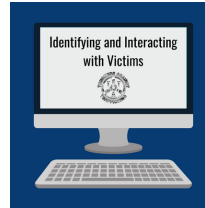
Training Video



Nikki's Story Video



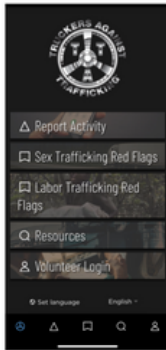
Online TAT Training



Wallet Card



TAT App



Everyday Heroes Poster



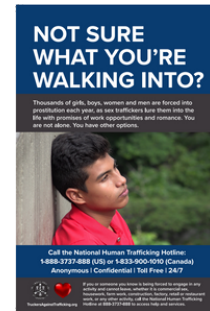
Signs to Look For Poster



Want Out Poster



Not Sure Poster



General Brochure



Doorstep Brochure



Labor Trafficking Brochure



Anti-Trafficking In Persons Policy



## HOW TO ORDER

For orders or questions, please email [info@truckersagainsttrafficking.org](mailto:info@truckersagainsttrafficking.org). In your email, please include the amount of each material needed, mailing address, and training date. TAT materials are available in English, Spanish and French Canadian.

More information is available at [HTTPS://TRUCKERSAGAINSTTRAFFICKING.ORG/GET-OUR-MATERIALS](https://truckersagainsttrafficking.org/get-our-materials)

# APPENDIX B: IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE FOR IN-PERSON TRAINING

## OVERVIEW AND OBJECTIVES

Human trafficking happens everywhere, including in large and small communities throughout the United States and Canada. Members of the travel plaza/truck stop industry have an important role to play in combating it, as traffickers literally bring this crime to your doorstep when they're selling their victims. In this training session, travel plaza/truck stop employees will learn how this crime relates to them and understand how to recognize and report it effectively.

## MATERIALS NEEDED

- TAT DVD or digital video, Nikki's Story digital video
- Video/audio capability to show video
- TAT wallet cards (1 per trainee)

## TIMELINE OF ACTIVITIES

Task	Description	Time
<b>1. Introduction</b>	<p>Introduce the topic by sharing these facts about human trafficking and trucking:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• There are an estimated 50 million victims of human trafficking globally, including thousands of children and adults in the US and Canada.</li><li>• Human trafficking has been reported in all 50 states and 10 Canadian provinces.</li><li>• There are several points of intersection between travel plaza/truck stops and human trafficking: Traffickers sell their victims at truck stops and nearby businesses, such as hotels/motels, restaurants, massage parlors, strip clubs and other locales truck drivers may frequent. In addition, traffickers have recruited truck drivers to transport their victims from one location to another. When you're at work, you know what's normal and what looks off in the lot, whether it's cars, vans or RVs parked where they don't belong or customers that act suspicious, distraught or out-of-place with the person/s they're with.</li><li>• Trucking members, along with travel plaza/truck stop and other transportation industry members, have now made thousands of calls into the National Human Trafficking Hotline, as well as to local law enforcement, resulting in the recovery of hundreds of victims. Take a second look and get involved ... you could be saving a life!</li></ul>	5 minutes

## TIMELINE OF ACTIVITIES (CONTINUED)

Task	Description	Time
<b>2. TAT Video</b>	Show the 26-minute TAT video.	30 minutes
<b>3. Discussion</b>	<p>Invite trainees to share their reactions and/or takeaways from the film. Use the discussion questions at the end of this lesson plan to guide the conversation.</p> <p>Refer to the TAT in Action cases studies in this toolkit to illustrate how travel plaza/truck stop employees are already making an impact.</p> <p>Be sure to share the internal reporting protocol your company has and outline the steps all employees are expected to take if they suspect human trafficking is occurring or if they believe they have come into contact with a potential victim.</p> <p>If you would like to supplement the TAT training video with data from your area, use the resources listed in the "References/Additional Info" section below. You can also consult your local anti-human trafficking task force.</p>	15 minutes
<b>4. Wallet Card</b>	Show the 6 minute video of Nikki's Story. While you do this, pass out a wallet card to each trainee and be sure to let each person know that all the information on the wallet card is also on the free TAT app that is compatible with Androids and iPhones.	10 minutes

## REFERENCES / ADDITIONAL INFO

TAT website: [www.truckersagainstrafficking.org](http://www.truckersagainstrafficking.org)  
Polaris: [www.polarisproject.org](http://www.polarisproject.org)  
US Data: <https://humantraffickinghotline.org/states>  
Canada Data: <https://www.canadianhumantraffickinghotline.ca/statistics>

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Use these questions to guide group discussion about the TAT training video:

### **What surprised you in the film? Do you have a better understanding of human trafficking and what it looks like?**

#### *NOTES/POSSIBLE ANSWERS:*

With modern-day slavery, actual chains and locked doors are rarely used. Instead, traffickers use the invisible chains of force, fraud, or coercion to keep their victims compliant. In addition, traffickers come from all types of racial, ethnic, gender and socio-economic backgrounds. They could pose as a friend of the family, as in the film, or someone with a listening ear, the heart to help, or someone who thinks the potential victim they're grooming is the most fantastic, beautiful, amazing person in the world. They most likely will not match stereotypes or inaccurate media depictions of pimps. Anyone could be trafficked, but children in foster care, runaway youth, the homeless, immigrants, LGBTQ or those with a history of abuse are particularly susceptible.

### **What are some signs you might notice that could indicate human trafficking?**

#### *NOTES/POSSIBLE ANSWERS:*

Indicators of control, such as people who are not allowed to speak for themselves or make eye contact or come and go as they please; minor girls (and maybe boys), as well as women, scantily dressed, coming in to use your restroom facilities; anyone who mentions needing to make a quota or having a pimp/daddy; a van, RV or vehicle on the lot who has dropped off individuals and then returns a short while later to pick them up; an adult accompanying a minor into the trucker shower area; trucks in the lot flashing their lights as cars drive up; or an individual who follows or watches someone going from truck to truck; fearful individuals or signs of bruising.

If you're able to engage these people in conversations, ask them the following questions:

- Are you okay? Can I help you with something?
- Do you know where you are?
- Can you call or text whoever you want?
- When was the last time you saw your family?
- Are you having to do something you don't want to do?
- Do you want us to get you some help?

Once they've asked for help or agreed to the help offered, ask:

- Are you thirsty? Do you want something to drink? I have water, pop, juice ...
- Are you hungry? We have some chips or cookies (or whatever you all decide)
- I want you to know all the local law enforcement are knowledgeable about this issue and they'll help you. Would you like me to call them or do want to call them with me?
- Would you like to sit over here in the restaurant while we wait?
- Is there anything else you need?

There are also some things you should never say, such as:

- Never refer to the person as a prostitute or ask them how long they've been in prostitution.
- Don't ask about the pimp/trafficker.
- Don't pry into their personal life.
- Don't tell them they could be doing so much more with their life.
- Stay away from how they got in or asking about drugs/alcohol, etc.
- Don't shame them.

## **If you noticed some of these red flags, what would you do?**

### *NOTES/POSSIBLE ANSWERS:*

In an emergency or if someone is in immediate danger, call 911. Report to local law enforcement and/or the National Human Trafficking Hotline (US) or the Canadian Human Trafficking Hotline. Follow your company or agency's internal reporting protocol. Note: Even if you call local law enforcement, you should also call the human trafficking hotline. The hotlines geo-track data, so they're able to determine hotspots and networks traffickers are using. Without also calling or texting the hotline, that national data will be lost. Also, you can call the hotline even if you're not 100 percent sure. The hotlines have trained specialists available 24/7, who can help you determine if you are interacting with a victim. Calls to the hotlines are anonymous and confidential, and a trained specialist is there waiting to take your call.

TAT tells truck drivers if they encounter human trafficking at a truck stop or travel plaza, they should not only make the call but go inside the well-lit safety of the building and report this lot activity to the manager-on-duty. Because drivers aren't attached to your community, it's important local staff make a report to community law enforcement as well.