



National Tribal Sexual Assault Resource Center

What to Do If Someone Goes Missing: For Families, Communities, and Advocates

*This information is meant to help families and communities find and protect people they care about. This is not everything that may need to be done and is simply meant to be a starting point. **You are not alone.** Connect with organizations, local MMIWR programs, and others for help.*

Make the Call

- Many family members do not want to call law enforcement because they think they are “overreacting”.
- They don’t want to cause trouble for a family member because they may be doing something illegal.
- Law enforcement may not be “responsive” to calls for help; this is shifting in many communities, though.
- It is not normal behavior to be gone for long! Trust your instincts.

Beginning your Search

- Learn local laws
- Document everything/protect “evidence”
- Use social media
- Create a poster
 - Use clear pictures including both face and body
 - Known location(s)
 - Contact Information
 - Medical Information, including identifiable birth marks, tattoos, etc.

Planning should include who will help to;

- Document everything
- Make calls
- Monitor social media
- Put up posters
- Search immediate & frequented areas
- Identify your contact person for media and other questions



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Join our Email List at
miwsac.co/NTSARC



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Start a Timeline

The most crucial information comes from tracking your loved ones last known location and up to 72 hours before their disappearance.

- Answer the who, what, where, why, and when?
- *** If your search passes the 48-72 hour mark, days & weeks start to blend together and you'll have to rely on your timeline.
- Work with Law Enforcement to preserve phone information.
- Additional apps on the phone will require a separate letter directly to the App provider (texting apps, Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram, etc)

Be watchful for potential fraudsters or opportunists

- People wanting financial gain
- If fundraising, be careful with who acts as financial agent
- People taking advantage of vulnerable families
 - For example, providing “services” for a cost
 - Most legitimate helpers do not charge

A family member, friend, or loved one going missing is an incredibly difficult time.

Even if this isn't happening to you currently, you still play a role in creating change

- Learn local and national statistics
- Attend MMIW-R events
- Support families when someone goes missing, however you are able!
- Support legislation or other efforts to create lasting change



This information was adapted with permission from work by Lissa Yellowbird-Chase.