



A GUIDE: WHAT TO DO WHEN YOUR TEEN IS FOUND

If your teen has been missing and is now safely recovered, it's important to take the right steps to support their well-being and prevent future incidents. This guide provides key actions to help your child feel safe, heard, and supported.

1. ENSURE IMMEDIATE SAFETY AND CARE

- Make sure your teen is safe, warm, and has food and water.
- Seek medical attention if they are injured, sick, or show signs of distress.
- Stay calm and offer reassurance. Your child may feel overwhelmed or scared.

2. LISTEN WITHOUT JUDGEMENT

- Allow your teen to share what happened as they are ready.
- Avoid immediately punishing them. Instead, focus on understanding their experience.
- Acknowledge their emotions and let them know you're there to support them.

3. ASSESS WHAT HAPPENED

- Find out where they were and if they were in any danger.
- Look for signs of abuse, exploitation, or trafficking. If you suspect harm, contact authorities or a crisis service. (Contact information included in Trafficking Resource List)
- If your teen ran away, try to understand why- there may be underlying issues that need attention. If your teen left due to family conflict, consider allowing them to stay with a

safe, neutral family member or friend as a cooling off period allowing everyone to work through the conflict in a healthy manner.

4. IF TRAFFICKING IS SUSPECTED

The process should always be guided by principles of empathy, respect, and empowerment, ensuring that the victim's voice and choices are central to their recovery journey. This type of victimization can cause teens to become disconnected from the world around them and unable to see themselves as victims.

- **Remove from Danger:** Ensure your child is in a safe environment away from the trafficker or any immediate threats.
- **Secure Location:** Place your child in a secure, confidential location where they can be protected from retaliation or re-trafficking.
- **Medical Evaluation:** Provide a thorough medical examination to address any physical injuries or health issues. This includes drug testing, testing for sexually transmitted infections, and a forensic exam if necessary for prosecutorial reasons.
- **Psychological Support:** Offer immediate psychological support or counseling to address trauma and stress. Trauma-informed care is crucial.
- **Forensic Interview:** Ensure law enforcement conducts a forensic interview with a trained professional. This structured, trauma-informed interview is essential for gathering evidence while minimizing further psychological harm.
- **Report & Seek Help:** Contact law enforcement and organizations specializing in human trafficking recovery, such as the **National Human Trafficking Hotline** at 1-888-373-7888 or text **"HELP" to 233733**.
- **Resources:** Please see attached resource list for additional resource information.

5. PROVIDE EMOTIONAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT

- Your teen may feel scared, ashamed, or confused. Reassure them that they are loved and safe.
- Consider seeking professional counseling or support groups.
- If your child is hesitant to talk to you, encourage them to speak with a trusted adult or therapist.

If You Need Urgent Mental Health Support: Mind 24/7

Mind 24/7 is an urgent care facility specializing in mental health. They provide immediate assessments and crisis support for teens and families. If your teen is struggling emotionally or mentally, they can help determine the next steps.

Mind 24/7 Locations:

- **Mesa:** 1138 S. Higley Rd., Mesa, AZ 85206

- **Phoenix:** 2423 W. Dunlap Ave., Phoenix, AZ 85021
- **Open 24/7, No Appointment Needed**

6. WORK WITH AUTHORITIES AND SUPPORT SERVICES

- Notify law enforcement that your teen has been found so they can close the missing person case.
- If necessary, work with child protective services or advocacy groups for additional support.
- Keep records of any legal concerns, such as exploitation or coercion.

7. STRENGTHEN FAMILY COMMUNICATION AND TRUST

- Have open conversations about safety, peer pressure, and online dangers.
- Encourage honesty and let them know they can talk to you without fear of extreme consequences.
- Set boundaries together rather than imposing strict rules without discussion.

8. CREATE A SAFETY PLAN TO PREVENT FUTURE INCIDENTS

- Establish a check in routine (text messages, location sharing, or calling at set times.)
- Teach your teen where to go if they feel unsafe and who they can call for help.
- Discuss online and in-person safety, including the risks of running away or meeting strangers.

9. FOLLOW UP AND PROVIDE CONTINUED SUPPORT

- Monitor their emotional and mental well-being in the weeks following their return.
- Stay involved in their daily life—know their friends, activities, and struggles.
- If challenges persist, consider long-term counseling or mentorship programs.

10. USE LOCATION TRACKING FOR SAFETY

Using tracking technology can help parents ensure their child's safety and provide peace of mind. Many apps allow location sharing while respecting your teen's privacy and independence.

- **Apple's "Find My" App:** Allows real-time location sharing with family members on iPhones.
- **Life360 App:** A family safety app that provides location tracking, alerts, and emergency features.
- **Google Maps Location Sharing:** Enables real-time location sharing with trusted contacts.

Make Location Sharing a Family Effort

- Instead of making tracking feel like surveillance, **consider a family-wide approach** where **everyone shares their location, including parents.**
- This can foster **mutual trust and safety** rather than making your teen feel singled out.
- Explain that this isn't about control—it's about ensuring **everyone knows where to find each other in an emergency.**
- Set expectations for when and how location sharing will be used.

Helpful Resources for Parents

- **National Runaway Safeline:** 1-800-RUNAWAY (1-800-786-2929)
- **National Center for Missing & Exploited Children:** 1-800-THE-LOST (1-800-843-5678)
- **Arizona Human Trafficking Hotline:** 1-877-429-8477
- **National Human Trafficking Hotline:** 1-888-373-7888 or text "HELP" to 233733
- **Crisis Text Line:** Text HOME to 741741

Your child's return is just the beginning of the healing process. With patience, open communication, and the right support, you can help them move forward in a safe and healthy way. If there is anything we can do to help on your journey to healing please do not hesitate to reach out.



MISSING PERSON RESOURCES

[Missing In America Network](#) Non Profit dedicated to managing missing person campaigns, fostering online awareness, and engaging communities to reunite family with their loved ones.

Contact: 844-MIA-LOST (642-5678)

We are not trained counselors or mental health professionals. We are simply sharing suggestions that have worked for other families in similar situations. If your teen is in crisis, we encourage you to seek professional help from a qualified expert or mental health provider.