**HUMAN TRAFFICKING**

**How Can Our Community Respond to this Growing Problem?**

**MODERATORS GUIDE**

Many Americans are unaware of the extent to which human trafficking is an issue in their communities. Others may be aware of some aspects of the problem, but may feel powerless to do anything about it.

But as law enforcement and others document a growing industry in human trafficking across the country, what can and should our community do to combat the problem?

The data about human trafficking, including sex trafficking, show that this is a devastating and growing problem right here in our own community, but one that many may feel powerless to address.

***So what can we do to address these issues?***

***What are we prepared to do?***

During the dialogue, we will consider different perspectives on what to do to combat human trafficking and to assist victims of trafficking. Our task is to weigh the advantages and drawbacks of different approaches to the issue.

*Here are descriptions of the options you can use to introduce the issue guide:*

**APPROACH ONE: Focus on Families’ and the Community’s Roles**

According to this approach, many minors end up being trafficked after experiencing problems at home. This approach says we need to do more to help parents and families to be successful in providing safe and supportive homes. It also argues that community members in general need to do more to be informed about trafficking issues and engaged in looking for and reporting suspected trafficking situations.

**APPROACH TWO: Focus on Schools, First Responders and other Professionals**

This view says that professionals working in schools, medical and mental health professions, and emergency first responders are best suited to identify and respond to instances of human trafficking. It suggests having these professionals all be held accountable and provided support to more actively combat human trafficking.

**APPROACH THREE: Reform Laws and Policies**

This approach says that we need to reevaluate how we arrest and prosecute crimes related to prostitution and gang activity in order to identify victims of human trafficking and get to the leaders and organizers of these criminal enterprises. Law enforcement reform should treat trafficking victims as victims in need of support, rather than criminals.

**STAGES OF A FORUM**

**Welcome**The convenor or moderator introduces the topic and explains the format for the forum.

**Ground rule**Participants and the moderator review desired outcomes and agree on ground rules.

**Getting started / Personal Stake**One good way to start is for participants to take a few minutes to talk about their personal experiences with the issue and tell their stories. Sometimes the convenor or moderator begins by showing a starter video that reviews the problems underlying the issue.

**Deliberation**Participants examine all the options. An approximately equal amount of time should be spent on each option.

**Ending the forum**Participants reflect on what has been achieved.

**IF THIS IS YOUR FIRST EXPERIENCE AS A MODERATOR**

**You don’t have to be an expert on the issue.**Read the issue guide thoroughly. Consider questions that get to the heart of the issue and think through the essence of each option. This is a critical part of preparation.

**Stay focused on what the forum is about—deliberation.**Ask questions that probe the underlying motivations of each option, the trade-offs it might require, and the willingness of the participants to recognize them. Listen to others; remain neutral.

**Keep the discussion moving and focused on the issue.**Sometimes it’s difficult to move on to another option when there is so much more that could be said. But in order to make progress, participants need time to weigh all the major options fairly. Be mindful of the time.

**Reserve ample time for reflections on the forum.**In many ways, this is the most important work the group will do. The moderator will provide reminders that time is passing, but it is up to all the participants to help preserve the time to reflect on what they have said and what they might want to do about it.

**COMMON GROUND RULES**

**Before the deliberation begins, it is important for participants to review guidelines for their discussion. Groups often use ground rules such as these:**

**•** Everyone is encouraged to participate,

• No one or two individuals should dominate,

• The discussion should focus on the options,

• All the major options should be considered fairly,

• No silent disagreement\*

• They will maintain an open and respectful atmosphere for the discussion, and

• They will listen to each other.

**HERE ARE SOME QUESTIONS YOU CAN USE TO START THE DELIBERATION**

**APPROACH ONE: Focus on Families’ and the Community’s Roles**

• What are we currently doing in our community that exemplifies this option?

• Do the suggestions listed under “What Could Be Done” seem realistic? Why or why not?

• What other suggestions can you think of that would fall under this approach?

• Whose responsibility is it to raise awareness about human trafficking? What can or should they be doing that is not already taking place?

• What more could we be doing, as individuals, businesses, community organizations, and public agencies?

• What are the drawbacks or trade-offs of this option for our community?

**APPROACH TWO: Focus on Schools, First Responders and other Professionals**

• What are we currently doing in our community that exemplifies this option?

• What do you think about the suggestions, tradeoffs, and consequences in this approach?

• If these suggestions make sense, why isn’t more being done to implement these strategies?

• Is it realistic to expect school officials, teachers, medical professionals and emergency responders to take on these added responsibilities? Why or why not?

• What more could we be doing, as individuals, businesses, community organizations, and public agencies?

• What are the drawbacks or trade-offs of this option for our community?

**APPROACH THREE: Reform Laws and Policies**

• What are we currently doing in our community that exemplifies this option?

• Which of these suggestions about law enforcement policy reforms do you agree with? How can ordinary citizens have any say or influence on these types of policies and decisions?

• What other concerns do you have about laws and law enforcement policies related to human trafficking?

• What more could we be doing, as individuals, businesses, community organizations, and public agencies?

• What are the drawbacks or trade-offs of this option for our community?

**ENDING A FORUM: REFLECTIONS**

**Before ending a forum, take time to reflect, both individually and as a group, on what has been achieved. Consider the following kinds of questions:**

**I. Individual reflections**

How has your thinking about the issue changed?

How has your thinking about other people’s views changed?

How has your perspective changed as a result of what you heard in this forum?

**II. Group reflections**

What didn’t we work through?

Can we identify any shared sense of purpose or direction?

Which trade-offs are we willing to make to move in a shared direction?

Which are we unwilling to make?

**III. Next-step reflections**

What do we still need to talk about?

How can we use what we learned about ourselves in this forum?

Do we want to meet again?