

Creating a welcoming space to accommodate their needs

When a counsellor or worker in any setting thinks they may be in contact with a victim of sexual exploitation or a person who wants to find a way out of prostitution

Victims of sexual exploitation and individuals who are trying to find a way out of prostitution are faced with many obstacles. You can help to break their isolation and encourage disclosure.

Propose a conversation in a private space to foster trust and ensure confidentiality.

Let the person explain their situation and what they need in their own words.

If the person you are talking to is a minor, explain your role and **your obligation to report their situation to the Director of Youth Protection.**

Tell them about the various resources that are available to provide support.

If you aren't sure, **ask exploratory questions, such as** "Are you being forced to do something against your will?"



Helpful attitudes

1. Use the **same words** that the person uses to describe their situation.
2. **Ease their burden of guilt** and normalize their emotions. Make sure your body language does not express judgement.
3. Ask open-ended questions to **understand the person's needs**. Avoid questions starting with “why.”
4. Work with the person to draw up a **security plan** based on their reality. Don't leave them in isolation.
5. Remind the person that they are free to ask questions or put an end to the conversation at any time. Encourage them to **assert their independence** at their own pace.

Resources

People need to know that getting out of the prostitution milieu is a very real possibility and that others have succeeded. There are many resources that offer a multitude of different services—**housing/shelter, mental health, addiction, finding a way out, etc.**

The Sexual Violence Helpline provides support for victims, their loved ones and the people that work with them.

Call 1-888-933-9007 or chat at sexualviolencehelpline.ca to learn more about victims' needs, available resources and intervention strategies. This service is anonymous, confidential, free of charge and offered in both French and English 24/7.

This document was prepared by the Sexual Violence Helpline of the Montreal Sexual Assault Centre (Centre pour les victimes d'agression sexuelle de Montréal). It is the summary version of a more comprehensive guide; both documents are available on the cvasm.org site, under “Publications.”