

# Ten Guidelines for Representing Children Involved in Human Trafficking

## **1. Educate yourself, educate others.**

Familiarize yourself with federal law, state law, and “pimp” law. Be prepared to inform the prosecutors and courts about Safe Harbor laws, affirmative defenses, and alternatives to delinquency processing.

## **2. Be adversary counsel.**

Meet your clients where they are, mentally and emotionally. Advocate for their expressed wishes.

## **3. Use proper interview techniques.**

*Listen* to your clients. Consider the adolescent brain, competency issues, and behavior exhibited by a typical victim. Explain the legal process and options. Take the time to gain trust; then explore neglect and abuse issues.

## **4. Make collateral contacts.**

Advise police, the FBI, state and federal prosecutors, probation officers and social workers that you are the child’s representative.

## **5. Be cautious when involving “family” and “friends”.**

The family member or friend may be the trafficker, may have a relationship with the trafficker, or may be receiving a financial benefit from the trafficking. Sharing of information with these people may violate confidentiality, be inaccurate, or increase risk of danger for your client.

## **6. Advocate for your clients as victims.**

Work tirelessly to secure clients’ release from detention. Use dependency options. Access victim/witness protections. Protect your client from re-victimization by the juvenile justice system.

## **7. Be present for your clients.**

Attend police and prosecutor interviews. Attend jury trials and grand juries in which your client is a witness. Attend plan of care meetings and intake interviews.

## **8. Protect your clients from prosecution.**

Secure letters of cooperation/proffers/immunity. These letters may protect your client from further prosecution and help to obtain a desired disposition. Negotiate dependency options in lieu of delinquency.

## **9. Seek out support services.**

Become familiar with programming in your jurisdiction. Look for treating professionals that are well-versed in the area of human trafficking of children.

## **10. Prepare your clients for post-representation.**

Provide clients with information and resources necessary to protect themselves once you are no longer their attorney.

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