

Tips for talking with teens about Represent from other teens who've participated

<p>Do give positive feedback to the youth for being willing to talk about it at all. "Thanks for talking with me about this group. I appreciate you being open to the idea."</p>	<p>Don't treat the group like a it's a consequence or penalty for sexual exploitation. 'This happened to you, so you need to go this group now.'</p>
<p>Do explain how the sex trade means all kinds of things like having a sugar daddy, sex for a place to stay, getting money for all kinds of sexual stuff, & stripping at clubs.</p>	<p>Don't say the group is for "trafficking victims." Youth often don't like the word victim and we encourage youth to define their own experiences.</p>
<p>Do let the youth know it's completely voluntary.</p>	<p>Don't tell youth that this group is mandated or required. Don't suggest we will make them change or stop being themselves in order to participate.</p>
<p>Do stress all the positives like snacks, cash/gift cards after participating for 10 times, the group facilitator has her own life experiences in the sex trade as a teen and she isn't a mandated reporter.</p>	<p>Don't express disappointment if the youth discloses sexual exploitation. As an alternative, share your feelings with your support system instead of the youth who is already struggling.</p>
<p>Do respect the privacy of the group. Resist the temptation to ask about other youth in the group.</p>	<p>Don't expose, reveal or talk about a youth to other youth or other adults. Don't out youth you've seen when you drop someone off.</p>
<p>Do offer to help with transportation. Consider that public transportation can be very unsafe too. Safe transportation is a great way to assist us!</p>	<p>Don't use the group as a privilege to take away when you want.</p>
<p>Do talk about how the group offers options, positive conversations, and no judgments.</p>	<p>Don't put down other youth in the group. "I knew that girl was up to something, look at how she's dressed right now."</p>
<p>Do be ready for the youth to be either more open about their experiences with you after attending the group or more inclined to keep their sharing inside the group.</p>	<p>Don't expect youth to tell you about what we share inside the group.</p>
<p>Do be open to youth meeting teens who might be struggling more and sometimes still involved in trading sex for money or survival.</p>	<p>Don't say the group is just for girls. It's actually for girls, boys and gender non-conforming youth who have life experience in the sex trade and the streets.</p>
<p>Do encourage the youth to take care of themselves. Sometimes it's the not the right time to talk about experiences in the sex trade. That's okay.</p>	<p>Don't try to scare youth. "You need this group to put some fear into you."</p>
<p>Do tell the youth if you need to tell parents or other people about a youth participating in Represent.</p>	<p>Don't use participating in Represent as proof that a youth has been trafficked.</p>
<p>Do arrange for the teen to come by the group space on their own or with someone they trust to get comfortable and learn more about the group.</p>	<p>Don't wait until you think a youth is complying with everything else before recommending the group. Sometimes Represent works for youth even when they aren't in school or participating in other services.</p>