

IT IS REALLY IMPORTANT TO

- Answer questions truthfully.
- Talk to the family member/friend about how they are feeling, reassure them that any feelings they have are normal.
- If you're able to be with them while on the investigator call, use your body language to reassure (nod, smile, etc). The call will probably take longer than anyone expects.
- At some point during the call, the investigating officer will probably ask about the missing person's race. They may say, "is the person white or caucasian?" Many people worry that if they say the missing person is First Nation/Aboriginal/Native/Indigenous, police won't take the call seriously or act diligently.

IDENTIFYING AS ABORIGINAL

It's important to know that some police forces, including the RCMP, now have policies that are intended to ensure that police treat Indigenous missing persons reports very seriously. It is important to discuss with the family member/friend how they will handle this question. It is ultimately their choice what they choose to say. There is a reasonable expectation that providing this information will be helpful to finding the missing person but previous trauma and historical experiences may make this a difficult decision.

HOW TO END THE CALL

At the end of the call, ask when you can expect to hear back. Ask the officer whether they will be the person who calls back. Ask how you can reach the officer if you don't hear back or if you have new information/find the person/remember something else.

As the support person, if you think that something got forgotten, bring it to the attention of the family member/friend by writing it down and showing them. Do not intervene directly with the officer as that can undermine the confidence of the family member/friend and may cause confusion.

AFTER CALL DEBRIEF

The family member/friend may want to go over what was said during the call with you. It is a good idea to take notes during the call, even if you can only hear one side of the conversation and to also take notes during the debrief. Make sure that you write down the contact information for the follow-up and the time for the call back. Ask the family member/friend how they are feeling and promise to follow-up with them the following day and invite them to keep you up to date as well. Reassure them that they did the right thing by calling and that they did a good job explaining the situation to the police. Invite them to share any concerns they may have about the call.



This Helpline is part of the Looking Out For Each Other project managed by the New Brunswick Aboriginal Peoples Council

To learn more:

<https://nbapc.org/programs-and-services/lofeo/>



Social Sciences and Humanities
Research Council of Canada

Conseil de recherches en
sciences humaines du Canada

Canada



Status of Women
Canada

Condition féminine
Canada

LOOKING OUT FOR EACH OTHER



LOFEO HELPLINE

Missing and Murdered Indigenous
Families In Need of Direction

1-833-MMI-FIND
(1-833-664-3463)

WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN CALLING THE POLICE

- In order to know what police force or detachment is responsible, go by the place where the caller knows the person was last seen or where they believe the person to be now. You can help them find the right number.
- If you don't know what police force is responsible for that location, call your local police (not 9-1-1) and ask them to help you find the right number.
- When you call a police station directly, the first thing you will hear is a recording asking you whether this is an emergency. Knowing this will help the caller prepare. Talk about the fact that they have already made a decision that it is not an emergency, so this is not about them. Just stay on the line.
- The call will be answered by an officer who will determine who can help further. The intake officer (person who answers the phone) will need to know why they are being called.

AS THE SUPPORT PERSON:

Remember that you may feel anxious or upset after the call. Even if you think you are doing ok, make sure to check in with someone else in your workplace to debrief on what happened and how you felt. Don't hesitate to contact an LOFEO team member for help with finding resources for you and/or the family member/friend.

MAKE SURE YOU HAVE THE FOLLOWING

(It often helps to write it down)

- Name of the caller.
- Phone number of the caller (a lot of people don't know their own cell number), write it down!
- Name of the missing person (be prepared to spell first and last names; let the police know if they sometimes go by a different name).
- The relationship between the missing person and the person reporting the disappearance.
- What happened (answer who, what, when, where, how) ?
- Explain why the caller is concerned.

If the family member/friend is nervous or upset or would just prefer not to be the person making the call, you can also offer to make this first call for them. This is a good thing for them to know and may result in getting a better response. It can help the person feel more confident and it will signal to the police that the caller has support.

The intake officer will ask for a number where the police can reach you and likely promise a call from an officer assigned to investigate (investigating officer).

WHAT TO ASK THE INTAKE OFFICER

- When can you expect a call-back?
- When can you follow up, if you don't get a call?
- What is your name?
- What can I do now?

Write down this information. Don't hesitate to ask the person to slow down and/or spell things so that you can be sure you have the right information.

When the investigating officer returns the call, the family member/friend can expect all the same questions. This is normal and does not mean that the police do not believe them. It is important to prepare people for the fact that they will likely have to answer the same or very similar questions multiple times. This is routine police procedure and it can help people remember more details and it helps to ensure that nothing gets forgotten.

People may experience repeat questions as if the police were doubting them, or they may want to end the call. Encourage the family member/friend to stay on the line, and to answer all questions as patiently and thoroughly as they can.

**There is no cost for legal advice
through the LOFEO Legal Team, via
LA Henry, LLB, PhD at 506-455-5245
or law@la-henry.ca**