



## **What to Do if Someone Goes Missing:**

*\*This information was adapted from work by Lissa Yellowbird-Chase, Sahnish Scout of North Dakota. For more information, visit <https://www.facebook.com/ScoutsND/> or email [sahnishscouts@gmail.com](mailto:sahnishscouts@gmail.com)*

*This information is meant to help families and communities find and protect people they care about. This is not everything that may need to be done and is simply meant to be a starting point. You are not alone. Connect with organizations and people for help.*

### **Make the Call!**

- Many family members do not want to call law enforcement because they think they are “overreacting”
- They don’t want to cause trouble for a family member because they may be doing something illegal
- Law enforcement may not be “responsive” to calls for help
- Get the Report Number
- It is not normal behavior to be gone for long
- Document EVERYTHING

### **Beginning your Search:**

- Document EVERYTHING
- Learn local laws
- Important tools include a journal and digital audio recording device
- Protect your scene/evidence
- Set aside items for canine searches/DO NOT TOUCH to retain scent
- Identifying information sources
- Use social media
- Create a poster
- Use clear pictures including both face and body
- Known location(s)
- Contact Information
- Medical Information, including identifiable birthmarks, tattoos, etc.

### **Planning should include who you can ask to help with:**

- Documenting EVERYTHING
- Making calls
- Monitoring social media
- Putting up posters
- Searching immediate & frequented areas
- Identifying who the contact person/s

- Taking photos of different possible locations ASAP for future reference

### **Start a Timeline:**

- Document EVERYTHING
- The most crucial information comes from tracking your loved one's last known location and up to 72 hours before their disappearance
- Answer the who, what, where, why, and when?
- \*If your search passes the 48-72-hour mark, days & weeks start to blend together and you'll have to rely on your timeline.
- Ask your Law Enforcement Agent to file a "Letter of Preservation" to Cell phone company
- Most cell phone companies begin to purge info within 72 hours
- Additional apps on the phone will require a separate letter directly to the App provider (texting apps, Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram, etc.)
- In many cases the concern for "preservation" happens too late

### **Additional sources to track:**

- Bank records
- Social service ~ EBT cards
- Child support
- Social Security
- Tribal/BIA accounts
- Digital footprints
- Document EVERYTHING

### **Be watchful for potential fraudsters or opportunists:**

- Document EVERYTHING
- People wanting financial gain
- If fundraising, be careful with who acts as financial agent
- People taking advantage of vulnerable families
- For example, providing "services" for a cost
- Most legitimate helpers do not charge

### **Self-Care:**

- It can be easy to exhaust yourself under these circumstances.
- BREATHE!
- Remember to sleep, nap, rest as you are able
- Drink lots of water
- Eat nourishing food
- Seek out spiritual help. Remember spiritual help is not always human.