

Human Trafficking: A Shocking Reality with Sharan Dhanoa, Detective Gurbaksh Sohal, Swostika Timalsina, and Nandini Ray

**Nandini:** Hello everyone. Welcome to the Maitri podcast Between Friends, conversations with Maitri. This is your host, Nandini Ray, my production team member. We are always excited to bring new topics and guests to you so that we can engage all our listeners in making a better community where there is no interpersonal violence and abuse, and everyone feels safe and respected. In today's episode, we will be discussing a very serious crime, and that is human trafficking. Every year millions of vulnerable people are trafficked, and it is still assumed by many of us that human trafficking is happening somewhere else, in a different country, far from us. But that is a myth. It is happening everywhere, including in the US. It's happening literally in our backyards and listeners; you will be surprised to know that California consistently has the highest rate of human trafficking in the United States with 1,507 cases reported in 2019. So today we have invited some distinguished guests who have vast experience working with trafficked victims who are very much engaged in ending this modern-day slavery. It is my pleasure to introduce our guests today: Sharan Dhanoa, Detective Gurbaksh Sohal, and Swostika TimeLine. Sharan Dhanoa is the director of strategy development for the south bay coalition to end human trafficking. Sharan facilitated the largest multi-county workgroup in the bay area: No traffic ahead. Prior to that, Sharan worked with sex trafficking victims in India by aiding their development through economic empowerment. Sharan has worked in crime surveillance and emergency psychiatric facilities. Swastika Timalsina is a volunteer at Asian women's shelter, and she works as a multi-lingual language advocate for domestic violence and human trafficking survivors. Swastika has been working in Nepali communities supporting groups assisting and navigating immigrant populations through county services. Officer Gurbaksh Sohal has been with the san Jose police department for the past eight years; he is currently assigned to the ASTP division and prior to that, he was assigned to the ASTP human trafficking task force. Officer Sohal also worked on the AAPI human trafficking task force and investigated juvenile and adult sex trafficking, labor trafficking, and sexual assault. He conducted multiple undercover rescue missions to locate human trafficking survivors and to apprehend traffickers and sex buyers. Thank you so much, all of you for coming to our show.

**Sohal:** thank you for having us. This is a conversation that needs to be had, and so I look forward to having it.

**Nandini:** so, listeners, let me tell you that human trafficking involves the use of force, fraud, and coercion to attain some type of labor or sex act. It can happen in any community and victims can be of any race, gender, or nationality. Traffickers might use violence, manipulation, or false promises of well-paying jobs or romantic relationships to lure victims into trafficking situations. There are many aspects of this serious problem that we know from our distinguished guests today who have lots of experience working in this field. So, my first question to all three of you is how do you recognize a trafficked victim? Is there any easy way to find out?

**Sohal:** I can go first, thank you for inviting us today. Generally, I, when I talk with survivors I go with how, if there is any reverse and repeated information. When they talk with us, they will

repeat what they are told. It sounds reversed, and it sounds unnatural in conversation even when you are speaking to them. That is one red flag we see in survivors. Next, a common thing that I have found while working with SA survivors is they tend to, if you are to ask their salary, how much they earn, they tend to tell it on other country's currency. If they are from Nepal, they will say it in rupees. If they are from India, they will say it in that currency and generally they don't understand how much they are supposed to be earning with the job they are working. Those are two things that are very common among survivors that I have noticed.

**Nandini:** Sharan, what about you?

**Sharan:** So, we do a lot of training for the community and one of the main things we try to communicate is that trafficking can often look like a lot of other forms of exploitation or abuse so those red flags might be similar. You might see a situation where somebody, their answers are rehearsed, or someone is speaking for them. You may be looking for individuals who do not seem like they are very well kept, they might not have clothes that are appropriate for the season, or they might look malnourished. They may be very careful to make eye contact with you, so they seem fearful about how they are communicating with you. There are obvious signs of exploitation, sometimes when we are talking about individual who are being trafficked in the sex industry. So, if you see someone under the age of eighteen and they are engaging in commercial sex, that is trafficking on its face so that's a clear indicator. Oftentimes, victims will have very few possessions on them so when we are training hotel staff, we tell them if you use someone to check in and they have very few belongings, that's a red flag. Or what about their actual personal documents? Do they have their passport or their identity card in their possession, is somebody else controlling their finances? These are key questions that indicate if someone else is in control of their life and is controlling how they are moving, operating, and earning a wellbeing.

**Nandini:** But sometimes it is also possible that they look so normal, and it is very hard for community members, people like me, I may not find out that this person is trafficked. This is also possible.

**Sharan:** It is. So, what's important is that you don't have to make that distinction as a community member. You may see something in a neighbor who suddenly has relatives living with them but they have a young boy who is doing yard work for them all of the time and you may not say definitively that's trafficking but you know that something doesn't feel right and that is really all you need to know that there is something wrong in this situation and then taking the next step and reporting it to your local law enforcement or you can report it to the national human trafficking hotline. When you start bringing in other experts who can start to flush it out, you can refer to a service provider. Let's say you're speaking to somebody, and it really looks like they need help in some way, we will connect them to a service provider so that they can start to figure out if this is trafficking, maybe it's a situation of domestic violence, maybe this individual has some other issue. You don't have to make the determination, but you can see the red flags that may indicate that they need help.  
Officer Sohal, do you want to add anything?

**Sohal:** Everyone brought up great points, just to quickly touch upon a couple of the indicators, one of the big things is, especially for sex trafficking, that type of violation, there is a lot of movement. So if you have, especially younger aged survivors that are moving from city to city, if you have in labor trafficking, people that are working unusual hours, never going on vacation, some of those things that especially, when you bring in a culture component, a lot of people understand from culturally, when you start educating yourself as far as what are signs of trafficking and put it within the cultural context, a lot of times it is people that you know that you might have not known so you have to just ask a couple questions like Sharan mentioned. One of the biggest things we tell people in law enforcement is try not to make those determinations yourself. The whole, it might be clique, but if you see something, you say something because you never know what indicators you might be seeing. A lot of people say you must follow your gut and a lot of cases end up being solved that way.

**Nandini:** So, swastika, I know that you have a lot of experience working with south Asian human trafficking survivors, so tell us, what are the unique challengers that immigrant trafficking survivors face? What did you notice?

**Sharan:** There are a lot of challenges for immigrant people to start with. There are language barriers, people who have been trafficked don't really know the language the people they are traveling with don't know the common language or hand gestures. They will be communicating with people from third countries and languages, not even their own. It is very difficult for them to understand what is going on. There was one of my clients I work with, he was trafficked for five years of his life, and he didn't know the places; there were places he stayed for months, and he didn't know what the place was named, where they were. So, language barriers are one thing and not just while traveling. Even after entering the US, if there are underrepresented communities, they don't get help to really talk to officials about what is really going on. And somebody else must chime in and say you know what let's speak some other language like Hindi. I speak Chinese and they will be helping, and when going through those processes, the technical errors matter, and this would not be happening. They will be denied asylum. One way to guess survivors, we had some, this is one basic challenge we have, there is lack of information, they are not informed what is going on. They will be told once you enter the US there will be jobs everywhere, you will be staying with my people, and they will not be informed that they will be abused, they will be taken like their stuff would be taken away and they will be deprived of information and the process really from after entering the US. the details of travel are not told to them, it is difficult in that part too. Fear is another thing, they are always controlled and made to believe that they must stay under control. It really goes through the process; they fear for their lives. Many, and there is hesitation to reach out for services even though we have services and communities to help them. We have some limited services, and it is tough on their part.

**Nandini:** So, I was reading research that of the nearly 48,000 trafficking victims who were reported to the trafficking hotline, information about immigration status was collected for about only 36%, that means that the immigration status of 64% is unknown. So, I don't know, maybe

people are so scared that they know that if my immigration status is revealed, I will be in big trouble, so I don't know what the reason is. So, officer Sohal, you have worked with many immigrant survivors, so please tell us how immigration status can make a victim more complicated and what they can do about it.

**Sohal:** Yeah, no, absolutely. Th immigration status is obviously a huge barrier for a lot of survivors coming to law enforcement and reporting. One of the big things, at least, every country and state has different rules and laws. Fortunately, in Santa Clara County, we are a sanctuary county, so we don't work with any type of federal immigration agencies. We make it very clear to the community that hey, if you, whatever immigration status is, we do not care as a law enforcement agency, all we care about is providing services. So, if you have been a victim of trafficking, that is the only thing that matters, we do not care about your immigration status. That message is important where it applies to get out into the community. That is why we, as I learned quickly, is the only way you can fight human trafficking is working collaboratively with hoya local community. The south bay coalition to end human trafficking which Sharan runs, we couldn't do without them. They have a full legal team. Maybe Sharan can talk about that and really point towards...our job is we get the survivors and make sure that they can openly talk to us and not allow any type of immigration status to affect that. That's where we as a community make sure that everyone around us understands that and isn't afraid to come forward. That's where, doing those partnerships are important. Luckily, there are remedies available for people that may be worried about that status once the case moves forward.

**Nandini:** So, what are the remedies?

**Sohal:** So, there's a t-visa, which is the trafficking visa that's available. There's also the U-visa, which is for general assault, but there are specifically the t-visa available. With the immigration portion of it, there are some survivors who don't want to go through the legal process and so there are processes available to just go through it on the civil side of things and not have to go through the criminal aspect of it as well. I don't know if Sharan wants to chime in if there are other remedies on her side...it's our job to make sure that we connect them to those organizations that can give the amenities. One of the biggest factors especially with labor trafficking is for the survivors to ensure that now that I'm here sometimes mostly...because you can have labor trafficking from domestic individuals as well but for foregin born it's okay what are the next steps? Am I going to get deported, and what does that look like? The one thing we can say in sanctuary counties is no you're not. A lot of organizations and resources both within cultural competency are available for survivors.

**Sharan:** So, what you are saying, Officer Sohal, is a very important message for all community members to know so that they know if anyone is suffering, if anyone is trafficked, if that person is thinking that if I talk to a police officer, I'll be deported or face some serious legal consequences. So, they should know that no matter what their immigration status is, they can get help from the police in this county if they are trafficked and call the police. Right? Absolutely. The one thing that I really want to stress is that every country, every state, every locality has their own laws and so that's where it's important to have these community liaisons where people can feel comfortable. I can say very comfortably that within Santa Clara County,

that is what the case is. If someone comes to us with any type of incident of trafficking, anything that they feel like might be trafficking, like we said, a lot of times people don't know what it is and what it is not, they can talk to a detective and not be worried about their immigration status. In fact, you know, there's a lot of organizations out there that will lend work and assist and help on legal services as well as other types of victim services that might be needed as far as transitioning back into society, especially for people that have been in some type of trafficking situation for a while.

**Nandini:** so, what are the important steps as an officer to helping human trafficking victims  
So, one of the big things is, like we said, human trafficking is something that is a type of violation which is all around us. A lot of times it's a misconception that it is a violation that affects us across the border but it's something that affects us within our own neighborhoods. That's a big thing with all police departments but here in the bay area, partnering with the south bay coalition to end human trafficking, that way when we meet survivors of trafficking, the first thing we do is we rely on our community partners. We call them over, that way we can have culturally competent services, whether that's food, translation, Swastika mentioned being able to communicate in your local language is a huge, sometimes barrier just within, being able to communicate what happened as far as the trafficking situation. Familiarity, comfort, because a lot of people maybe don't trust law enforcement, and so we make it a point to go out there to explain to communities, we've done presentations with teachers, real estate agents, the Mexican consulate, local affinity groups, and community locations just to explain to people this is what trafficking is, these are signs, these are where you can go out and reach it. At the end of the day, with trafficking, the very nature of the violation, it is very tough sometimes for the survivor to come forward and a lot of times, takes the community, a neighbor, a customer, a family member to really identify that survivor and maybe alert somebody that can provide them with resources and so it's a combined effort. It's not something that the police department itself can take on alone.

**Nandini:** Yeah, and I also know that you are doing an ad campaign to raise awareness and Sharan if you want to chime in, because I know that South Bay Coalition is a big part of that ad campaign.

**Sharan:** Yeah, I'll speak to that. So san Jose police department and the city of san Jose, they really identified that, you know, even though we do all this outreach, we see very low numbers of reporting from Asian pacific islander communities, including the south bay Asian community and so we really wanted to create a campaign that's spoke to these specific communities about what trafficking is and how you can either get support with services or report it to law enforcement. We worked with AACI and Maitri, with community solutions. Several community members helped us to really create a campaign that speaks directly to Asian pacific islander communities, and you'll see the images include members from the community. You'll recognize Officer Shoal's face in some of the ad campaigns. And we have it translated into Hindi, Vietnamese, Chinese, Korean, Tagalog, and English. And you can also check it out on our website [southbayendtrafficking.org](http://southbayendtrafficking.org). So south bay ends trafficking.org. You'll see all the images from the billboard campaign as well as core information in all of those languages because we

knew that, again, being able to communicate with potential survivors or community members who may know survivors is really important and it goes back to what Sohal was saying which is we know that for a lot of individuals who are being exploited, it's sometimes just, you just need a little bit of support and encouragement from your loved ones or from a friends to actually reach out for help so that's what we're really trying to encourage from our own community.

**Nandini:** yeah, that's a wonderful initiative and I hope that people should visit your website to find more information about the ad campaign and they really help someone who needs help to get out of these trafficking situations. Swastika, one question for you, can you please share some community resources out there that can help end how one can find these resources? People may not know where to find these resources that can help.

**Swastika:** before answering your question, I would like to talk more about the fear and ST cases not being reported from the AAPI community because I have been volunteering here and there and working with them in collaboration with different programs. One thing about our departments is that in the past years, hate crimes have really increased in our community and people are very intimidated by the system because the process and services for visas are very, very long and intimidating. Even filling out simple forms, it feels like moving mountains to immigrants who have been traumatized and have come all the way from their country and those transitional visas and the information that comes with being here is very intimidating and they must really qualify as survivors in the first place. That is the next whole process. I was there, for one of my clients, trying to prove that she was a ST survivor. We couldn't do that, instead of all the help we had because there is a lack of evidence. The system asks for evidence, they have none of it. They have evidence before they enter the United States, but they are taken, their cellphones are not with them, they have nothing with them to prove and they have no contacts, they have no evidence, it's all been erased. At this point, only one physical, their presence, their physical presence in the United States is evidence. When having one, one piece of evidence for a crime, to make the system work on it is very difficult. This has been one of your biggest challenges. One of the most intimidating challenges as community advocates. The ad campaigns, these people, we must really prepare them to say, you know what, all the systems here, we can navigate that. We don't have our rights and we can claim our rights saying I am a survivor of this, I want to be helped. If there is something going on with translators because the language barrier is so important and such a big obstacle, it's very difficult for us to prove what's happened. We are on the defensive side, and we are not proving why their life is in danger if they are to go back to their countries, at this point we are proving that that interview was wrong. It's not about the survivor anymore, it's about the system itself. So, there is one clash between the system and the challengers' survivors deal with and so I wanted to put this out there.

**Nandini:** thank you, thank you for sharing your experiences with us, and that leads to, we can come later with the resource question, but your experience is prompting me to ask another question to Sohal that if a traffic victim doesn't have enough evidence that they've been trafficked then how can the police department provide the right help?

**Sohal:** That's one of the trickiest parts about labor trafficking, especially when you have survivors coming from so many different locations where a lot of the fear comes from places while they were in a different country or jurisdiction. It's not an easy answer. It's an answer that police departments are still trying to understand as far as labor trafficking goes and how to properly investigate it. My biggest point that I want to bring across with Atha question is that make sure it's reported. The police departments have no connection with the asylum processes. The place=police department is hey was there some type of criminal violation that occurred and if there is any type of information, sometimes I tell people like we were talking about earlier, you don't, you might feel like there's not enough evidence but if there is a report made, you never know that there might be some type of pattern that gets established. Multiple people start talking about this, this becomes something that the department and communities can work together on; they become topics that aren't taboo and are kept quiet. Just coming from the bay area, within the Indian community, there are a lot of people in businesses, and they could be people that are exploited from other countries that maybe don't have documents. If there's people that are afraid to talk about this at the temple, at community events, then it becomes very difficult for corporations with law enforcement to move forward and have that understanding. That's my biggest thing is that the next step is yes, we can connect you to resources and that's what Swastika is mentioning. The visa is a very long process and tough because you're trying to figure out your housing, your status, you have family back home and on top of it all, there's, you might deal with corruption back home and you're not sure what the timeline is, so it becomes a very complicated process. A very draining process, just going through the trafficking situation and navigating past the other parts. My biggest thing is that if we really open that conversation, we make those reports with police departments that are working together with the community, then maybe we can identify five, six, seven different people that came here and were exploited by this one business, okay now we can work with federal agencies and figure out a larger nexus and going through that. It needs to be looked at from a different perspective. Maybe you had each individual case itself that didn't work out then maybe look at it from a broader perspective. That first starts with having community support so that way when people come forward, they're not worried about the community pressure. That's what I've noticed. I've worked cases with labor trafficking cases, where that's the one big problem. This is someone who came from the same village as the store owner that trafficked them and so now them getting that person in trouble affects their family status back home and becomes very multi-layered and those are things that maybe police departments maybe aren't privy to and they don't understand why that survivor isn't cooperating. That's the other part of it. Law enforcement workers must continue to educate themselves on the cultural aspects of it. I think the short answer is basically working with the community and partnering with and hearing stories of survivors that can highlight deficiencies within the system so that way we can continue to go through it. I agree, when there's so much trafficking around us, there should be more cases, and Sharan mentioned, there's a huge underreporting about that.

**Nandini:** You are right, officer Sohal. It's a very complicated issue and the more we talk about it, the more we talk to victims we will be able to advocate better because we know the roadblocks. We can do, we can provide, better help, and the community... you are absolutely, we need to work with th community and work in partnership to end human trafficking. It is also important to

talk about community resources that can help survivors. So, speaking of which, Sharan and Swastika, if you can share some resources and how one can find those resources, that will be helpful.

**Sharan:** Yeah, I mean, our website is probably the easiest way to find resources in Santa Clara County, but we also list others throughout the bay area. But I did also want to point out, we're talking about the system and...the criminal justice system has a high standard of proof but for a lot of survivors they can get different remedies through the civil justice system so you can work with the department of labor, the EOC, the department of housing, they have a lot of tools as well that can help survivor of trafficking that's a different standard of proof and so what I would really recommend is that even if individuals is hesitant to go to, say the police department, you can reach out to a service provider or attorney, to start to figure out what kind of help can I access for my situation. Immigration systems have a different standard of proof than the criminal justice system at the state level so you might qualify for a visa even if your trafficker isn't prosecuted. So, realize that there's a lot of intersecting systems when we talk about it, so we really want to encourage individuals who may be in situations where they are being exploited, take that first step of seeing there are service providers that can help or attorneys who you might be able to speak to about your situation especially if it deals with an employer and that's a good way to deal with your situation. You even have your local labor commissions, and they can help in different ways too. So, there are some resources on our website, you can also check out the national human trafficking hotline is where you can report 888-3737-888 and you can also check out their website national human trafficking resource center. They're the ones who run that website as well. You'll find several local agencies as well, we have AACI, we have Maitri, Asian women's shelter, is part of that so there are a lot of culturally specific organizations and culturally responsive organizations that kind provide help. I don't know if you wanted to speak more to that.

**Swastika:** yes, I have been working with the Asian Women's Shelter closely with survivors, that could be one source which is accessible and culturally understanding. The center for empowering refugees and immigrants has been one for mental health issues and really making that transition from foreign countries to the United States and processing their traumas and understanding their traumas and how and where it comes from. These are good resources. The Family Justice Center is helping as well. I have been hired as a case navigator for this organization and will be working full time with them. The Korean Justice Center, as well. There are various community resources, but there are also very diverse options for survivors to access. There are lesser populations that are underrepresented in the system and that is one of the challenges. The Nepalis community is really underrepresented, as well as other communities. It is high time we must start thinking of having at least translators or at least fliers in those languages so they feel welcomed when they come to county offices. Welcome centers have been a huge issue for these communities. There are no welcome centers or community centers that they can go to and access. That has been our goal. One of our missions is to introduce people in the Asian community to welcome centers and culturally appropriate centers where they can feel safe and stable to share their experiences and their stories. Storytelling, different programs from different immigrant communities are doing this well. These programs



are targeted for immigrants and refugees, and they are reaching out with mental health service and free counseling services and professionals who work; they have pro bono lawyers with them and health counselors who work for free. There are resources but one challenge is that we have limited resources and community advocates and underrepresented communities which makes it more difficult.

Nandini: hopefully after listening to this podcast, many community members will jump in and will advocate and will do something to help survivors and I'm sure that many people will visit South Bay coalition and the website to find out the resources there, to find out about the billboard campaigns so that they can provide the right help. Sometimes it's so complicated, the issue is so complicated and so multifaceted as Officer Sohal said, that sometimes victims don't understand that it is...they were trafficked and can report their abuse to get help so they think that, you know for example at Maitri we are seeing that some survivors, they think that they are victims of domestic violence when they are victims of human trafficking because when they come here, they are, all their official documents are confiscated by their, that person who brought them here. Their working nonstop, for an outrageous hour, they can be used as sex slaves, but they think that their someone's partner. It is very complicated to even get them to understand that they are not victims of domestic violence but victims of human trafficking. And, yeah as you said, as we are discussing here, a lot of discussions and understanding this issue so that we can understand victims, survivors, and provide the right help. I was just wondering; how can we educate community members about the distinction between partner violence and human trafficking is someone is coming here, and they are a victim of trafficking, but they think that they are the victim of domestic violence. How can you raise awareness and educate that person? Is there a simple way to educate all of us on the distinction between human trafficking and domestic violence?

**Sharan:** I would kind of go back to what I said in the beginning which is we don't want community members to feel like they are responsible for determining if someone is responsible for trafficking a survivor. If you see indications of domestic violence, and you connect them with a service provider, those service providers have the tools to see that intersection but for community providers it is important for them to understand that it is not either/or it can be an intersection. We often see intersections with domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking or you may see interstition's and wage theft. So, it's important for community members to look for the red flags, see if you can refer to an appropriate service, or to report to law enforcement, and then those agencies can start to look for the specifics to see if this quality as human trafficking, are they eligible for immigration relief, they can start to figure out those specific pieces. For community members, it's really about what doesn't feel right, is this person having somebody who is taking control of their finances, or their life. Are they in harm's way? And then move from there to getting them help.

Nandini: yeah, I think that if somebody is facing some issues with their partner like, and they don't know if human trafficking or onto, the best way to find out is to connect with an agency that can educate them about the issue and that they can guide them to find out if they are a victim of human trafficking or not.

**Sohal:** just to piggyback off what Sharan said, was the public, if it feels wrong, call an advocate, call your local law enforcement agency as well. The big thing is doing the podcast like this right? Getting it out to different community members about what human trafficking is and what it looks like in your community. Whether that's regionally or cultural. And making the space where you feel comfortable about bringing it up, having avenues to report it, through the South Bay Coalition, there's so many agencies that you can report trafficking to. Just to highlight where the public doesn't need to know, if they feel like it's wrong, maybe they see something that's DV (domestic violence) they call the PD (police department) at San Jose, every domestic violence call that any officer goes to, a human trafficking screening tool on there as well. At every DV call, their screening for human trafficking as well. Same thing with advocacy groups. I know that an extra solution, you know, if they get a DV survivor, they're going to go through it and be HT screened as well. The biggest thing is if you see something, report it. The other half of it is educating your community on what trafficking is, what it looks like, what are the signs, and what are agencies you can report it to so that way, when people do see something that doesn't look right, they know where to go and who to reach out to.

**Swastika:** I would like to add on this too, Nandini, as the community advocates the first thing when somebody sees something, if they see something in their community, we must have the right help. When immigrant populations are intimidated by police departments, we cannot right away call 911 and say there is something fishy and you should be coming to the scene with the sirens on. We cannot do that. As community advocate the first thing I would do is think about the safety, are they safe, are they comfortable talking about this. The first thing that comes to mind when we meet vulnerable groups, survivors, they're not ready for the big words like domestic violence, human trafficking survivors. If I am to say, and the first conversation when I meet them, and I know those are the red flags, but I cannot be breaking those big words to them and say they are a survivor. I cannot do that. I must do it in a subtle way and find the right help and introduce them to the community agencies and mentors. In that kind of language, gentle language, we must really make it cultural and family or coffee meeting, something casual to break those intense words and phrases out and say you need to report this to the police. It is sensitive, and it is difficult. They are not ready to even accept and act on this because they don't want to, nobody wants to be a victim or survivor. When we talk about these things, we must find the right person and the right time. I agree on the part that we need to call the police and we need to call professionals, but before professionals we need to convince them and educate them. The best time when, when community advocates stepped in...I did have a client who was in a DV situation, I could not convince her that she was in a DV situation. I was saying all the things around DV, and I asked her if she was safe and repeatedly reached out to her and told her to contact me. I said everything other than domestic violence and help because I am an advocate, I'm not going to say that to my community or not even the southeast Asian community. I'm not going to go to community meetings and saying I am a community advocate; I phrase it differently to start these conversations.

**Nandini:** it is right to provide a lot of information and support to victims and survivors so that they can make informed decisions. Thank you all for sharing, I'm sorry for rushing it off, but it is almost time to end. I have one last question I really want all of you to answer that if you can

share at least one or two tips community members can do to support human trafficking survivors and preventing human trafficking.

**Sohal:** Yeah, the biggest thing that we can do is to educate ourselves about it, talk about it, and have conversations amongst each other. If you know that a person or have a family member that works at the store or knows that person that is, came from a different country or was born here and is going through some type of trafficking situation, or that community member, work with your local community centers, work with your local schools, really make sure that the message of what trafficking is put out like I said, the only really real way to investigate this and provide help is if there is a comprehensive team around the survivor. It's like, it's been mentioned before, people don't want to go right away to law enforcement, they need to make sure they have the resources around them. That comes from communal support. One educates, and when you do see something, report it, those are the two things.

**Sharan:** Yeah, I think Sohal gave the best advice. It's about learning about trafficking, learning what those red flags are, and then each of us has our own circle of influence, we might have a community group that we always go to, so sharing the information with that community group so we're really building capacity, not just to identify trafficking but also really normalize talking about this type of exploitation when there's so much shame surrounding this that really opening these conversations is a great way to start to break down some of those barriers for a lot of survivors.

**Swastika:** I would say use of media. Everyone is in the media, everyone has facebook, most of them have twitter and what we can do as community member is we can come got our media and say all those single stories in the US about trafficking, it's not how you enter, if your passport it taken away and your documents are controlled by someone other than you and you don't have access to them, then you should be really careful because that's a red flag. You should be well informed about what's going on around you, what are the things you are going through. You must be well informed. That way we can bust those single stories and bust the myth about how great america is. We must educate ourselves and our community and say heads up, this is how the system works here.

**Nandini:** Wow, using social media, good advice. Thank you so much to all of you for sharing your information and knowledge. I really appreciate you for coming to our show to educate us. I'm looking forward to seeing those ad campaigns in the airports and other places. Hopefully people will come forward if they see anything suspicious and will report human trafficking. Sharan, you shared lots of great resources. Hopefully people will use them and connect with south bay coalition and law enforcement and talk to each other to educate each other about the issue. I'm sure if we all do our part, we can end this heinous crime. For our listeners, if you or someone you know is a survivor of human trafficking, and if you are listening to our show, please know that resources are out there to help. Contact san Jose police department, visit south bay coalition for human trafficking, call the human trafficking hotline or any local agency that help human trafficking survivors and victims. This is your host, Nandini Ray signing off today. I will be back soon with another important topic. Keep listening to the Maitri Podcast Between Friends: conversations with Maitri. Find all our episodes on sound cloud and on other

podcast apps. Please like and share if you haven't already. Bye for now, stay safe, and stay happy. Thank you all for listening.

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