

## Human Trafficking Screening Tool (HTST) Instructions

---

This guide<sup>1</sup> is designed to help child welfare and delinquency professionals screen for possible youth victims of human trafficking. Protocol specifically for Florida Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) staff has been inserted. Human trafficking may be suspected for a number of reasons. The following indicators will trigger JAC screeners and JPO intake staff to conduct the HTST with a youth:

- History of running away or getting kicked out 4+ times
  - Definition of running away or getting kicked out of home: Include times the youth did not voluntarily return within 24 hours, and include incidents not reported by or to law enforcement.
- History of sexual abuse
- Current incident or history of sexual offense

*Note: the three triggers above will be pulled by JJIS. JAC screeners and JPO intake staff will be notified by their computer if the youth has any of the above three triggers.*

- Youth's acknowledgement of being trafficked
- Report of human trafficking by parent/guardian, law enforcement, medical or service provider, teacher, child protective services, and/or juvenile probation officer

*Note: JAC screeners and JPO intake staff must evaluate whether the youth has either of the two screening triggers above. The computer will not do this for you.*

To ensure that the instrument is administered effectively, all screeners should follow the screening protocol set forth in this guide. It is important for screeners to understand that questions designed to screen for human trafficking are invasive by nature and may reveal that a youth is suffering from the effects of exposure to trauma. As such, screeners must take care to create a safe environment in which they establish rapport and trust with the youth. Additionally, screeners should be prepared to call upon therapeutic and legal staff in responding to the needs of trafficking victims.

Youth may be reluctant to respond due to a lack of trust, fear of consequences related to disclosure, and/or not viewing themselves as a victim. Strengths-based, non-judgmental, and trauma-informed approaches should be used to engage youth in a conversation to secure answers to the questions within the instrument, rather than reading items verbatim. Motivational interviewing techniques may also be used to gently question inconsistencies and encourage disclosure. The guidelines that follow provide instruction for following the screening protocol for administering the HTST and should be adhered to each time a screening is conducted.

---

<sup>1</sup> The contents of this guide and the screening tool were informed by the Shared Hope International (2010) Intervene Practitioner Guide and Intake Tool (see [www.sharedhope.org](http://www.sharedhope.org)), the research and reporting of the Vera Institute (2014) *Screening for Human Trafficking: Guidelines for Administering the Trafficking Victim Identification Tool (TVIT)* the Polaris Project (see [www.PolarisProject.org](http://www.PolarisProject.org)), and the Covenant House (2013) *Human Trafficking Interview and Assessment Measure*.

## HTST Screening Protocol

---

### Screening Preparation

The screening should be conducted in a safe and non-threatening environment. Screeners should be well-prepared, comfortable working with victims of trauma, and recognize the need to ask questions in an appropriate manner that is sensitive to the needs of youth. The following guidelines should be followed when preparing to conduct a HTST screening:

- Read through the entire screening instrument and this Administration Guide, so that you are familiar with the instrument and able to conduct the screening in a conversational style, allowing the youth to direct the flow of discussion.
- Conduct the screening in a private, quiet environment designed to make the youth feel physically comfortable and safe.
- Be prepared to provide the youth with basic needs such as an interpreter, tissues, drink, food, clothing, medical or therapeutic care, and/or access to services, as appropriate.
- If an interpreter is necessary, he/she should be trustworthy (unknown to the youth being interviewed) and able to use the same wording as the screener when asking questions and the same wording as the youth when answering questions. Use of an agency or certified interpreter is preferred, and interviewers need to offer such to the youth when possible.
- Do not interview a youth in front of a suspected trafficker or individual who is exhibiting controlling behavior over the youth. Do not allow this person to interpret for youth if he/she does not speak fluent English.
- Recognize that dressing in uniforms, suits, or other formal attire may cause youth to fear that you are with immigration services or other enforcement agencies.
- Use strengths-based and trauma-informed care approaches during the screening, allowing youth to lead the direction of the conversation.
- The screening process may need to take place over multiple contact points if the screener judges that the youth needs more time. The screener may postpone the discussion to a later time when the youth is ready to discuss his/her experiences. When a youth displays acute signs of anxiety, the screener should consider contacting a trained mental health professional to complete a session with the youth.

The screening instrument contains a number of techniques used to help screeners administer the tool properly. Screeners should be familiar with these techniques which include the following:

- Instructions to screeners are provided in the HTST in *italics* throughout the instrument. These instructions guide screeners as to sub-questions that may need to be asked, sections that require information to be filled in, and questions that include prompts for further explanation.
- Introductory comments and questions to youth are in **bold typeface**. Introductory comments should be read to the youth. Screeners should use a conversational approach to secure answers to the HTST questions, being sensitive to the needs of youth who may be suffering from the effects of exposure to trauma.

- Singular items that in themselves require a mandatory report to the Florida Abuse Hotline will be highlighted in gray. An example is provided below:
  - Report of human trafficking by parent/guardian, law enforcement, medical or service provider, teacher, child protective services, and/or juvenile probation officer.
- Screeners should use professional judgment in deciding whether to preface a question or a prompt with phrasing such as, "Please tell me more about that" or "If you are comfortable, could you tell me about that?"
- Sections A, B, H, and I are preceded with the instruction – *(DO NOT READ TO YOUTH)* – these sections are intended to be completed by the screener and not asked of the youth.
- Please use the lines provided within the instrument to record youths' responses to open-ended questions.
- At the end of selected questions you will see this symbol ➤ which asks that screeners code for the likelihood that the youth's responses suggest any evidence of the problem targeted by the preceding item(s). An example is provided below:
  - Evidence of Unsafe Living Environment: (*Check one*) Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

## Item-by-Item Guide for Administering the Instrument

---

*Section A is to be completed by the screener and not asked of the youth.*

### Section A – Background Information

*(DO NOT READ TO YOUTH)*

*Note: JJIS will prepopulate some of this demographic data.*

1. Date Screened: \_\_\_ / \_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ (MM/DD/YYYY)
2. Screening Center: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Screener Name: \_\_\_\_\_
4. Reason for Screening: (*Check all that apply*)
  - Law enforcement reports behaviors or circumstances indicative of youth being trafficked
  - Department of Juvenile Justice staff observations are indicative of youth being trafficked
  - School personnel report behaviors or circumstances indicative of youth being trafficked
  - Medical provider reports behaviors or circumstances indicative of youth being trafficked
  - Parent/guardian reports behaviors or circumstances indicative of youth being trafficked
  - Suspected trafficking is reported to the Abuse Hotline
  - Youth is referred by someone else (*Fill in*) \_\_\_\_\_
  - Youth acknowledges behaviors or circumstances indicative of being trafficked

- Youth has a history of running away 4 or more times, as indicated on the Positive Achievement Change Tool (PACT) assessment
- Youth has a history of sexual abuse, as indicated on the PACT assessment
- Youth's presenting offense is for prostitution or youth has a prior prostitution charge
  
- Youth has a history of sexual perpetration (as indicated by sex offense charges)

5. Mode of Screening:

- Interview completed without need for interpreter
- Interview completed with the assistance of an interpreter
- Interpreter needed, but unavailable

*Section B is to be completed by the screener and not asked of the youth.*

## Section B – Demographic Information

*(DO NOT READ TO YOUTH)*

- 6. Youth's Name: \_\_\_\_\_
- 7. DJJID: \_\_\_\_\_
- 8. Referral ID: \_\_\_\_\_
- 9. DCF FSN#: \_\_\_\_\_
- 10. SSN (last four digits): \_\_\_\_\_
- 11. Sex: \_\_\_\_\_
- 12. Race/Ethnicity: \_\_\_\_\_
- 13. Preferred Language: \_\_\_\_\_

*Begin the screening by reading the following introductory comments to the youth:*

**This is an interview to better understand your current situation and experiences. I will be asking you questions about yourself. Try to be as honest as you can. Some questions may be sensitive and hard for you to answer. You do not have to answer anything you don't want to answer. You can take a break at any time, ask to finish at a later time, or stop the session. I want you to know that you can trust me and that your safety is my priority. Everything you say will be kept completely confidential, unless you describe a situation where you or someone else is in immediate danger or at risk of being abused or hurting someone else. Before we get started, do you have any questions?**

## Section C – Youth Personal Background

---

I'd like to begin with some general questions about you and your personal background.

14. What is your date of birth? \_\_\_ / \_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ (MM/DD/YYYY)

15. What country were you born in? \_\_\_\_\_

16. What city do you live in? \_\_\_\_\_

16a. (DO NOT READ TO YOUTH) Was youth arrested outside the city in which he/she resides?

- No
- Yes

17. Do you go to school?

- No (If 'no,' skip to Item 18)
- Yes (If 'yes,' proceed to Item 17a below)
- Refused to answer

17a. Where do you go to school? (If school entered, ask item 17b)

---

17b. How many days have you attended school in the last two weeks?

- 0 days
- 1-5 days
- 6-10 days
- Not applicable/school not in session

18. Do you get on the Internet, Wi-Fi, or use phone or tablet apps?

- No (If 'no,' skip to Item 19)
- Yes (If 'yes,' ask Item 18a below)
- Refused to answer

18a. What kind of sites or apps do you use? (Check all that apply)

- Twitter
- Instagram
- Snapchat
- Online game chat
- Instant messaging
- Facebook

- Tinder
- Craigslist
- Backpage
- Other apps or sites *(fill in)* \_\_\_\_\_
- Refused to answer

**19. Have you ever agreed to meet someone you met online or through the Internet or through a phone app?**

- No
- Yes *(If 'yes,' prompt by saying, Tell me more about that.)*
- Refused to answer

**20. So, do you currently have a boyfriend or girlfriend?**

- No *(If 'no,' skip to Item 21)*
- Yes *(If 'yes,' ask Item 20a and Item 20b below)*
- Refused to answer

**20a. How old is he/she?**

- Less than 10 years old
- 10 to 15 years old
- 16 to 17 years old
- 18 to 21 years old
- 22 years or older
- Refused to answer

**20b. How did you meet?**

- Through a friend
- At school
- Through a family member
- Online (Facebook, Internet, game console)
- Public place (mall, movies, sports event)
- Work
- Other *(Fill in)* \_\_\_\_\_
- Refused to answer

**Evidence of Unsafe Online Activity:** *(Check one)* Yes  No

**21. Do you have any tattoos?**

- No *(If 'no,' skip to Item 22)*
- Yes *(If 'yes,' ask Item 21a through Item 21c below)*

Refused to answer or responded no

Staff observed tattoos *(If selected, ask items 21a through 21c below)*

21a. **What is the tattoo(s)?** *(Screener may respond to this item based on youth response and/or based on observation of the tattoo) (Check all that apply)*

Dollar/currency sign, money bags

Star/hearts

Male name

Female name

Nickname or street name

Refused to answer

Other *(Describe)* \_\_\_\_\_

21b. **What does your tattoo(s) mean?** *(Check all that apply)*

Family connection

Personal meaning *(Fill in)* \_\_\_\_\_

Romantic partner's name

Gang-related

Suspected trafficker's name/initials

Forced branding/ownership

No meaning

Don't know the meaning

Refused to answer

Other *(Fill in)* \_\_\_\_\_

21c. **Who was with you when you got your tattoo(s)?** *(Check all that apply)*

Family member

Friend

Romantic partner

No one

Suspected trafficker

Gang member

Refused to answer

22. **Do you have any scars or brands that were made intentionally, not from an accident or injury?**

*(Screener should respond based upon youth answer and/or observation of visible scars)*

No *(If 'no,' skip to Item 23)*

Yes *(If 'yes,' ask Item 22a)*

Screener observes mark(s), but youth denies mark(s) made intentionally

Refused to answer

22a. **Who was with you when you got your brand(s) or when you received the scar?**

*(Check all that apply)*

- Family member
- Friend
- Romantic partner
- No one
- Suspected trafficker
- Gang member
- Refused to answer

➡ **Evidence of Suspicious/Trafficking-Related Tattooing/Branding:** *(Check one)* Yes  No

## Section D – Living Conditions

---

**Next, I'd like to talk to you about where you live and the people you live with.**

23. **So, tell me about your current living situation. What type of place do you live in?**

*(Screener may prompt the youth by listing examples from below) (Check all that apply)*

- House
- Apartment
- Group/foster home
- Car/van
- Shelter
- Rehabilitation facility
- Hotel or motel
- Part of a residence – garage, basement, shed
- Squat
- Traveling/in-between residences
- Homeless
- Refused to answer
- Other *(Fill in)* \_\_\_\_\_

24. **Who lives with you?** *(Check all that apply)*

- Father
- Mother
- Both parents
- Guardian
- Step-parent
- Relative(s)
- Friend(s)
- Romantic partner (girlfriend/boyfriend)



- By myself
- Refused to answer
- Other (Fill in) \_\_\_\_\_

**25. Do you pay for where you live?**

- No (If 'no,' skip to Item 26)
- Yes (If 'yes,' ask Item 25a below)


25a. How do you pay for where you live? (Check all that apply)

- Parents/relatives
- Friends
- Romantic partner
- Myself through employment/job
- Myself through selling drugs
- Myself through stealing
- Myself through engaging in sexual acts for money/material gain
- Panhandle/beg
- Refused to answer
- Other (Fill in) \_\_\_\_\_

**26. Have you ever had any contacts or visits from the Department of Children and Families?**

(Note, youth may use other terminology including HRS, CPS, CBC, and/or The State)

- No
- Yes
- Refused to answer

 **Evidence of Unsafe Living Environment:** (Check one) Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

## Section E – Work Information

---

Now I'd like to ask you some questions about work situations. What I mean by "work" is anything you have done where you have received something of value, like money, food, clothing, a place to stay, drugs, or gifts, in exchange for your efforts. This could include a more typical job like working at a fast-food restaurant or store, but may also include things that some kids have to do to survive when away from their homes, anything where you were given something of value for your efforts. So your boss may have been a typical employer or may have been a family member, friend, boyfriend or girlfriend, or someone you lived with or had a relationship with.

**27. So, do you have a job or did you have one before coming here?**

- No (If 'no,' skip to Item 35)

- Yes (If 'yes,' continue to Item 28 below)

28. **What type of work do you do?** (Check all that apply)

- Agricultural/farm work
- Housekeeping/janitorial work
- Door-to-door sales
- Restaurant work
- Construction
- Retail
- Nails/hair
- Massage
- Personal dancing, stripping, or similar activity
- Refused to answer
- Other (Fill in) \_\_\_\_\_

29. **How much money do you make an hour?** (Screener may ask relative to the minimum wage rate)

- Below minimum wage (Minimum wage is \$8.05/hour in Florida)
- At or above minimum wage but less than \$15 an hour
- \$15-\$25 an hour
- More than \$25 an hour
- Does not know
- Refused to answer

30. **Does your boss or supervisor owe you money?**

- No
- Yes
- Refused to answer

31. **Do any of your family members owe your boss money?**

- No
- Yes
- Refused to answer

*Screener may prompt for something else that is owed like a favor, house, property, or land.*

32. **Have you ever worked or done something for your boss without getting the payment that you thought you would get?**

- No (If 'no,' skip to Item 33)
- Yes (If 'yes,' ask Item 32a through Item 32c below)
- Refused to answer

32a. **What kind of work was it?** \_\_\_\_\_

32b. **What payment did you expect?** \_\_\_\_\_

32c. What did you receive? \_\_\_\_\_

➡ Evidence of Deceptive Payment Practices: (Check one) Yes  No

33. Do you live and work at the same place?

- No
- Yes
- Refused to answer

34. Can you quit or could you have quit your job at any time without punishment from your boss or supervisor?

- No
- Yes
- Refused to answer

➡ Evidence of Forced Labor: (Check one) Yes  No

35. When you think about the future, what do you want to do when you get older? (Fill in) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Section F – Leaving or Running Away from Home

---

I'd like for you to think about the past 12 months and times when you have been away from home.

36. Have you run away, stayed away, or left your home without permission in the past year?

- No (If 'no,' skip to Item 37)
- Yes (If 'yes,' ask Items 36a through 36k below)
- Refused to answer

36a. How many times have you run away or left without permission?

- 1 to 5 times
- 6 to 10 times
- 11 to 20 times
- More than 20 times
- Refused to answer

36b. How long were you gone the last time you left home?


- 1 to 6 days
- 1 to 4 weeks
- 2 to 3 months
- 4 months or longer
- Refused to answer

36c. Where did you go when you left? (Check all that apply)

- Friend's place
- Relative's place/other biological parent's place
- Romantic partner's place
- Motel/hotel
- Street
- Out of town
- Pro-social adult's place
- Anti-social adult's place
- Street gang
- Refused to answer

36d. **While you were away, how did you support yourself?** *(Check all that apply)*

- Family/relatives took care of me
- Friend(s) took care of me
- Romantic partner helped
- Worked (legal employment/jobs)
- Money through drugs
- Money/material gain/favors from prostitution, stripping or similar activities
- Didn't stay away long enough to need support
- Stealing
- Government assistance
- Panhandling
- Borrowed money from friends
- Trafficker/pimp
- Refused to answer
- Other *(Fill in)* \_\_\_\_\_

 **Evidence of Excessive Running Away:** *(Check one)* Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

36e. **While you were away, were you in control of your own money?**

- No
- Yes
- Refused to answer

36f. **Who were you with while you were away?** *(Check all that apply)*

- No one
- Friends
- Romantic partner
- Suspected trafficker/pimp
- Guardian
- Family/relatives
- Street gang
- Refused to answer

36g. **Did that person(s) ever give you things like money, drugs or clothes?**

- No
- Yes
- Refused to answer

 **Evidence of Questionable Financial Support While Away:** *(Check one)* Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

36h. Did you leave town while you were away from home?

- No
- Yes
- Refused to answer

36i. While you were away, did anyone you were with not allow you to go back home?

- No
- Yes
- Refused to answer

➔ Evidence of Coercion to Stay on the Run: (Check one) Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Sometimes people find themselves in situations where they feel unsafe, threatened, controlled or even tricked into doing something they didn't want to do. I am going to ask you a few questions about things that might have made you feel unsafe, threatened, controlled or tricked into doing something you didn't want to do.

36j. While you were away, did you experience anything that made you uncomfortable?

- No
- Yes; if so, what? (Fill in) \_\_\_\_\_
- Refused to answer

36k. Sometimes young people who are away from home can be taken advantage of and asked to do sexual activities in exchange for something of value. These activities can include dancing, stripping, posing for photos, or sex of any kind. While you were away, did anyone ever ask you to do something like that?

- No
- Yes
- Refused to answer

➔ Evidence of Sexual Activities for Money, Support, or Gifts: (Check one) Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

## Section G – Sexual Exploitation/Coercion/Control

---

37. In thinking about your past experiences, has anyone ever locked doors or windows or anything else to stop you from leaving work or home?

- No
- Yes
- Refused to answer

➡ Evidence of Inability to Leave: (Check one) Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

38. Has anyone ever forced you to get or use false identification, like a fake ID or fake green card?

- No
- Yes
- Refused to answer

➡ Evidence of Forced Identity Deception: (Check one) Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

39. Has anyone ever pressured you to touch someone physically or sexually when you didn't want to?

- No
- Yes
- Refused to answer

40. Has anyone ever asked/made you do anything sexually that you didn't want to do?

- No
- Yes
- Refused to answer

41. Has anyone in your home ever done anything sexually to you that you didn't want?

- No
- Yes
- Refused to answer

➡ Evidence of Sexual Exploitation: (Check one) Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

42. Have you or someone else received something of value like money, a place to stay, food, clothes, gifts, favors, or drugs in exchange for your performing a sexual activity?

- No
- Yes
- Refused to answer



➡ Evidence of Compensation for Sexual Activity: (Check one) Yes  No

*Screener, close out the interview by saying the following to the youth:*

**I want to thank you for being open with me and answering these questions. Do you have any questions or is there anything that you would like to talk about?**

## Section H – Parent/Guardian Information

(DO NOT READ TO YOUTH)

*Section H is to be completed by the screener.*

43. Did you speak with the child's parent(s) or guardian(s)?

- No
- Yes (If yes to whom did you speak? \_\_\_\_\_)

*If yes then ask items 44-47.*

44. Does the parent/guardian report that youth has a cell phone that a third party/trafficker pays for or might be paying for?

- No
- Yes

45. Does the parent/guardian report that youth returns home from running away with hair/nails done, new clothing or money that were not provided by the parent/guardian?

- No
- Yes

46. Does parent/guardian report that youth has internet postings or text/cell phone messages that indicate youth may be exchanging sex for something of value to him/her?

- No
- Yes

47. If youth has a tattoo of someone else's name, does guardian verify this person is who youth says they are?

- No
- Yes

➡ Evidence of Potential Trafficking: (Check one) Yes  No

Section I – Post-Screening Assessment

(DO NOT READ TO YOUTH)

Section I is to be completed by the screener.

48. Did you observe any nonverbal indicators of past victimization? (If so, explain) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

49. Did you observe any indicators that the youth's responses may have been false? (If so, explain)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

50. Indicate the likelihood that the youth is a victim of trafficking:

- Definitely not
- Likely not
- Not sure
- Likely is
- Definitely is

51. Provide up to three reasons for your answer in Item 50:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

If you answered "not sure," "likely is," or "definitely is" call the Florida Abuse Hotline at 1-800-962-2873

Reminder: If you have personal knowledge that the youth is a victim of human trafficking, you must call the Florida Abuse Hotline.

If call is accepted by DCF:

- Email the completed tool to local DCF staff.
- Enter the appropriate human trafficking alert into JJIS.

52. What kind of service referrals, if any, will you make for the youth?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_