Trafficking Screening Tools

There are a growing number of screening tools for identifying youth at risk for sex trafficking. These vary in length and the settings for which they are appropriate. Some tools tend to focus on adults, with some of the questions potentially less applicable to youth and children (e.g., not allowed to hold onto travel documents). The goal of most of these screening tools is not to obtain a disclosure of child sex trafficking (commercial sexual exploitation) but to assess the level of risk, in order to offer youth services that address specific vulnerabilities.

(Note: This listing of tools is not exhaustive. Please take the time to thoroughly research tools appropriate for your setting and service population.)

- **Commercial Sexual Exploitation-Identification Tool (CSE-IT)**: The CSE-IT is an identification tool that does not involve structured questioning of clients. Instead, it outlines 48 factors for collecting information and assessing while speaking with the client and accessing other sources of information. To be used by a wide-range of professionals who work with the youth. (https://www.westcoastcc.org/cse-it/)

- **Human Trafficking and Assessment Measure (HTIAM-14)**: The HTIAM-14 is designed for use with youth who are experiencing homelessness. This tool has 14 categories of questions (some with sub-questions) and has been validated in a population of 18-23 year olds. (https://humantraffickinghotline.org/resources/homelessness-survival-sex-and-human-trafficking-experienced-youth-covenant-house-new-york)

- **Quick Youth Indicators for Trafficking (QYIT)**: The QYIT allows social service providers to quickly detect and serve young adults experiencing homelessness who have been victims of labor and/or sex trafficking. (https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0190740918307540)

- **Short Screen for Child Sex Trafficking (SSCST)**: The SSCST is a rapid screen designed for healthcare settings that consists of 6 questions regarding risk factors for commercial sexual exploitation. Youth screening positive are identified as at-risk and the clinician then follows up on the positive responses with open-ended questions to assess the level of concern for exploitation. The tool has been evaluated with adolescents ages 11-17 years, primarily those born or residing in the U.S., in emergency departments, teen clinics, and child advocacy centers. (https://www.choa.org/-/media/Files/Childrens/medical-services/child-protection/cst-screen-with-explanation-and-criteria.docx?la=en&hash=A9D296796EB81643D5B0E1AACF5FFF0F630F932D)

- **Trafficking Victim Identification Tool (TVIT)**: The TVIT has two versions (validated for adults) the 'short' screen with 16 questions and the full version with 39. The English and Spanish versions of the tool can be used by victim service providers and law enforcement when faced with someone who may be a victim of sex and/or labor trafficking. (https://www.vera.org/publications/out-of-the-shadows-identification-of-victims-of-human-trafficking)

If you are not able to access or use a trafficking screener, you are encouraged to add a trafficking item to standard trauma history screening and to incorporate questions for intake interviews with clients, such as the following:
- *Has anyone ever asked or pressured you to engage in any type of sexual act?*
- *Have you ever had to exchange sex for money, food, shelter, to survive, or to get something you needed?*
- *How do you get by when you are on the run?*
- *Do you know anyone who has been pressured by someone to do any type of sexual act with other people for money, drugs, food shelter, or protection?*

In most—if not all—states, mental health professionals are required by law to report a reasonable suspicion of commercial sexual exploitation of children and child sex trafficking to authorities. However, the provider does NOT need to be certain that abuse or exploitation has occurred before making a report. Please take the time to educate yourself on your own state's mandated reporting laws.