Other Trafficking Indicators

Federal Law Enforcement identifies a number of indicators that signal a person is a victim of

human trafficking.

 Is the victim in possession of identification or travel documents; if not, who has control

of those documents?

 Was the victim coached on what to say to law enforcement or to immigration officials?

 Was the victim recruited for one purpose and forced to do some other job?

 Is the victim’s salary being garnished to pay off a smuggling fee or another debt?

 Was the victim forced to perform sexual acts?

 Has the victim or family been threatened with harm if the victim attempts to escape?

 Has the victim been threatened with law enforcement action or deportation?

 Has the victim been harmed or deprived of food, water, sleep, medical care, or other life

necessities?

 Can the victim freely contact friends or family?

 Is the victim a juvenile engaged in commercial sex?

 Is the victim allowed to socialize or attend religious services?

 Is someone controlling access to controlled substances?

 Is there an identifiable source of income?

Interviewing Potential Victims

Asking the right questions may help determine if someone is a victim of human trafficking. It is

important to meet with a potential victim in a safe and confidential environment. Victims may

not self-disclose if they do not feel safe or if they believe you won’t be able to help. Regardless

of whether the victim is accompanied by someone who may or may not seem controlling, it is

best practice that practitioners separate the victim from the person accompanying her/him. When

talking to a possible victim, be mindful of the literacy or education level of the individual and

any language variances that may exist. Modify your questions to be accessible for the individual.

Sample questions to ask include:

Living Situation and General Wellbeing

 How do you feel? Tell me about ways/places in which you feel safe. Tell me about

ways/places in which you feel unsafe.

 Describe your current living situation. What are the people you live with like?

 Help me understand what a day in your life is like. What kinds of activities do you do

throughout the day?

 Who are the people closest to you? Which friends or family do you feel you can confide in?

Work Situation

 Do you have a source of income?

 How do you get by?

 Tell me about your job. What type of work do you do? Do you like your job?

 What are your working conditions like? What is your workspace like?

 How are you compensated for the work that you do? Are there specific work rules that you

have to follow?

 Can you leave your job if you want to? Tell me why you do the job that you do.

Freedom of Movement

 What are the sleeping arrangements where you live?

 Are there activities that you enjoy outside the home? How often or for what reasons do you

leave your home?

 Tell me what would happen if you left your home or job.

 Tell me about the rules in your home. Are there specific rules about your schedule for eating,

sleeping, or using certain rooms in the house?

 Tell me about why you stay in your home. Are there locks on your doors and windows? (If

yes): Are these locks there to prevent you from leaving?

 Has there ever been a time when you went without food, water, sleep, or medical care? How

often does this happen?

Safety Issues

 Has there ever been a time when someone made you do something you didn’t want to do?

When was this? How did it happen? How often does this happen?

 Tell me about things you worry about or are scared of.

 Have you ever been threatened? What kind of threats have you experienced?

Note: It is best practice to resort primarily to open-ended questions and allow the victim to tell

her/his story. A Screening Tool with additional interview questions is available on page 86 of the

Appendix.